

Mini Madrid

The Spanish capital offers plenty of chic hotels for a stylish city break, writes **Jo Fernández**

madrid's sunny climate and infectious energy are irresistible. Clients can explore some of the greatest art museums in the world, unwind in swathes of urban greenery, admire aesthetically appealing architecture and tantalise their taste buds in tapas bars. According to the city's tourist office, Madrid attracted more than 11 million visitors in 2024, up 5.5% from 2023.

Madrid's hotel industry is blossoming too. One noteworthy newcomer is Marriott's spectacular The Palace, a Luxury Collection Hotel, which reopened this month following two years of restoration. Alongside that arrival, plenty of budget-friendly options are coming to market in 2025, including three new Ibis hotels.

However your clients want to experience Madrid, *Travel Weekly* rounds up a few of the finest places to rest their head.

BEST FOR...ART AFICIONADOS

Housed in a 19th-century apartment block, five-star Villa Real has a winning location. It's a 10-minute walk from the so-called golden triangle of Madrid's best three museums – the Prado gallery, the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum and the modern-art-focused Reina Sofia. Villa Real also houses its owner's collection of Roman mosaics and statues.

Decor is classic old-school, with marble, polished wood and leather across suites and public spaces. Just off the lobby, the Warhol-inspired bar has a patio for alfresco tapas tasting, plus there's a seasonal splash pool and sunbathing spot on the roof.

Book it: Kirker Holidays offer three nights at Villa Real from £879, based on two sharing a Superior Double on a B&B basis, including tickets to the three museums, flights from Heathrow and private transfers in May or June.

kirkerholidays.com ➤

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DESTINATIONS

SHORT BREAKS | MADRID



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch, Prado Museum; rainbow flags during Madrid Pride; Hotel Regina's rooftop terrace; Avani Alonso Martinez in the Chamberí neighbourhood

PICTURES: Shutterstock/muratart, Unai Huizi; Andy Huntley



BEST FOR...TAPAS TRAWLS

The Avani Alonso Martinez is housed in a freshly renovated 1920s building on a wide avenue in Chamberí, a bar-and-restaurant-lined *barrio* (neighbourhood) that feels authentically Madrid. Elegant Chamberí is home to a fascinating museum of Madrid's metro system, located in a disused station built in 1919, as well as a selection of retro cinemas.

Inside the Avani, on-site restaurant The Pantry fits with Chamberí's fabulous food scene: clients can chow down on dessert-like breakfasts such as chocolate and churros, Spain's famous dipping treat, or traditional dishes such as cheese, fruit and ham.

Book it: EasyJet holidays offers five nights at Avani Alonso Martinez Madrid from £1,720, based on two sharing, including breakfast and flights on April 24. easyjet.com/holidays

BEST FOR...SHOPPERS

With a prime location just off the impressive Gran Vía, home to department-store-sized branches of Primark and Spanish retail giant Zara, Room Mate Oscar is a shopper's delight. The hotel is on Plaza de Pedro Zerolo, the heart of the city's gay community – Madrid Pride kicks off here from June 27.

Room Mate Oscar's boxy black exterior belies the colourful lobby, where light streams through blue-and-green glass. Compact rooms featuring playfully curved furniture reflect the city's ever-present blue sky and sunshine, with pops of orange and turquoise. Head to



Hisham Mahmoud, agency sales manager, Kirker Holidays

"Whenever I'm asked about my recommendations for a European city break, Madrid is always near the top of the list. In the past five years it has replaced Barcelona as our most popular Spanish city – there is a wealth of art and culture, as well as incredible tapas bars, restaurants and food markets. However, the best part about visiting Madrid is simply soaking up the atmosphere of a bustling, authentic Spanish city, where the local Madrileños still outnumber tourists. We also offer tapas tours, which are a fun way to explore the city through its cuisine."

the roof terrace for cocktails under the stars and a seasonal swimming pool with rooftop views.

Book it: Tui offers three nights' room-only at Room Mate Oscar from £456 per person, based on two sharing, including flights from Gatwick on April 29.

tui.co.uk

BEST FOR...HISTORY BUFFS

Hotel Regina occupies a chic modernist building, mere minutes on foot from Puerta del Sol, the heart of historic Madrid and the symbolic centre of Spain – a plaque in front of the clock tower reads 'Kilometre Zero', marking the point where all distances in the country are measured from. Clients are also only 10 minutes away from the grand Habsburg-era Plaza Mayor, an expansive public square with traditional restaurants and confectionery shops radiating off in all directions. Art-deco-styled rooms at the hotel look directly over bustling Alcalá street, as does the roof terrace, which is ideal for people watching.

Book it: Osprey Holidays sells three nights at Hotel Regina from £760 per person, based on two sharing, including breakfast, transfers and flights departing May 12.

ospreyholidays.com **TW**