



FINANCIAL  
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## The hottest hotels in Madrid

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Spain's capital is home to some of Europe's most exciting places to stay — from the grand to the groovy



*This article is part of FT Globetrotter's [guide to Madrid](#)*

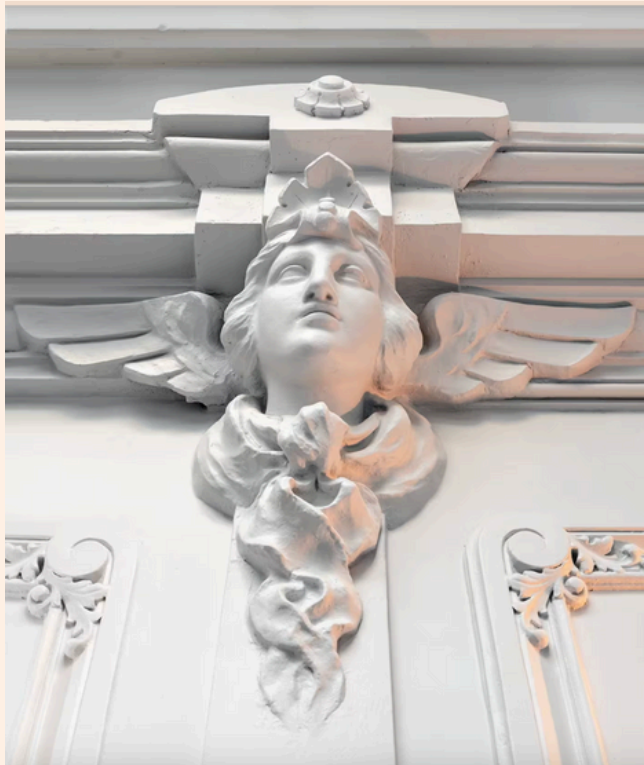
It's a bold choice to call a hotel "CoolRooms". For some, the name may conjure memories of backpacks and youth hostels; for others, it had better provide exactly what it says on the tin. CoolRooms Atocha, a 19th-century *palacio* that has been transformed into a boutique hotel in Madrid's eclectic [Lavapiés](#) district, does the latter.

The 34 cool rooms range from comfortable doubles to "Coolsuites" — all vast by European standards. The Coolsuites are particularly special, and well appointed for those having a hedonistic holiday in Madrid (as if there is any other kind), with large terraces, including an outdoor Jacuzzi, and, from the indoor living space, 360 degree views of the city skyline. All rooms include the essential mod cons to awaken after a siesta and get ready for a Madrid night out: an espresso machine, a Bang & Olufsen speaker and a GHD hairdryer and straightener (and a mini bar, of course).





The elegant decor throughout the hotel, by local firm Proyecto Singular, strikes a stylish balance between the classic and the contemporary, much like the building itself, which offers glimpses of its origins as a palace that dates back to 1852. Above the entrance, a sculpture of the Greek god Hermes nods to the area's heritage. Many of Madrid's streets, fountains and historic buildings are dotted with sculptures and busts of Greek, Roman and Egyptian gods thanks to Spain's Charles III, who reigned from 1759 to 1788 and whose efforts to beautify the city centred around adding Neoclassical features, specifically the area around the Paseo del Prado, which includes Atocha, where the hotel is based. (The *palacio*'s original owner, Nemesio Sancha, was a high-ranking navy official and a knight in Charles's order.)



Inside, the designers have made the most of the building's characterful features, with soaring ceilings and large windows that showcase the capital's famously cloudless sky. Throughout, pretty parquet flooring, rich fabrics and interesting nooks and spaces have been reworked for their new life in hospitality. The swimming pool, for example, is plopped right at the heart of the hotel, in a courtyard garden with rich foliage and an all-day café, El Patio de Atocha, which is open-air in summer and surrounded by floor-to-ceiling glass walls otherwise.

Like the rest of the hotel, the kitchen — under the purview of chef Eduardo Gutiérrez — takes its cue from mixing the old and the new, serving traditional Spanish dishes with a contemporary, cosmopolitan twist, such as the silky-smooth grilled confit artichokes and a refined take on the usually rustic shrimp and rice. It also serves excellent cocktails and a popular weekend brunch, while more casual fare is found at El 34, the hotel's taverna-style bar and restaurant.





For a venue so, well, cool, I was almost taken aback by how friendly the staff were and how quick they were to respond to any issues. This may be Madrid, where everything happens at a slower pace and a later hour, but when the lights in my bathroom weren't working properly (read: the writer's ineptitude with technology), a member of the hotel team was on hand within minutes to help out.

Its location is also hard to beat, set among one of the city's most diverse areas and within walking distance of plenty of Madrid's hippest bars, restaurants, and nightlife venues, as well as old-school tavernas, flea markets and its world-class museums. Within minutes guests can be perusing the [Prado](#), the vast and impressive Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection or taking in Picasso's mammoth "Guernica" at the Reina Sofia (pro tip: a [pass to access all three](#), which is good for a year, is only €32). Also, keep an eye out for the nearby Sociedad Cervantina, where the first copy of *Don Quixote* was printed.

#### *At a glance*

- **Rooms and suites:** 14 rooms, 20 suites
- **Good for:** Contemporary luxury in the heart of one of Madrid's most diverse districts
- **Not so good for:** Traditionalists
- **FYI:** The hotel is well located for museums, restaurants, bars and nightlife
- **Rates:** Double from €285
- **Address:** Calle de Atocha 34, 28012 Madrid
- [Website](#); [Directions](#)