

24 hours in Madrid

“Only talk business after dessert...”

No politics, religion or football chat either, says digital guru Pedro Sánchez Pernia on how to tackle the business lunch in the Spanish capital



AS ONE OF THE countries hit hardest by the 2008 economic crisis, Spain has since bounced back, with Madrid's startup

scene at the centre of its financial renaissance. Tech companies have set the agenda in recent years, with Google opening one of its innovation campuses in the city, Amazon launching a tech hub and BBVA, the Spanish banking group, running a fintech incubator in the capital. Why? The property bust swamped the market with cheap office space, while the cost of living is a fraction of that in, say, London. Plus, relative wages are low and there are three first-rate business schools

in the city. This month, Pedro Sánchez Pernia, a business developer at digital accelerator EIT Digital, gives us the inside track on where to go during a flying visit.

00.00 Somewhere to stay

“Madrid is so big that I recommend staying in the heart of the city, where you'll have easy access to the Metro and be within walking distance of the sights during your downtime. The four-star Hotel Santo Domingo is an independent, upscale, boutique hotel that once held a Guinness World Record for the world's biggest interior hanging garden. It is amazing – as is the pool, which looks over the old centre of Madrid.”

1 San Bernardo, 28013. hotelsantodomingo.es

8.00am Time for breakfast

“In Madrid, you'll find many cafés serving the usual pastries and eggs Benedict, but don't come all the way to this city without trying a traditional *chocolate con churros*; fried dough sticks, sprinkled with sugar and served with hot dipping chocolate. My choice is Chocolatería San Ginés, where the hot, dark-chocolate dipping sauce has been custom made since 1894.”

Pasadizo San Ginés, 28013. chocolateriasangines.comw

11.00 Take in some culture

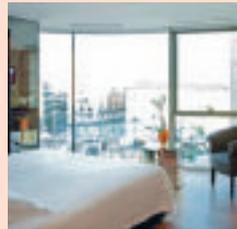
“The famous Prado Museum is the go-to reference point for most visitors, but I'd rather spend my time in the Reina Sofía Museum. Experiencing the mural-sized

Madrid, as seen from Plaza de Cibeles, one of its many beautiful squares





From left catch some world-class art at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía; stay at the city-centre Hotel Santo Domingo



Guernica by Pablo Picasso up close is very special."

52 Calle Santa Isabel, 28012.
museoreinasofia.es

13.30 Enjoy a business lunch

"A Madrid business lunch is often a three-course affair, so expect to spend some quality time with your colleagues and don't forget the business-lunch rule in Spain of avoiding talk about politics, religion or football. Also, only discuss business after dessert – meals are all about building trust and relationships. A great place to do this is Orgaz. You'll have to take a taxi, as it's a little out of town, but it's worth it. They even produce their own vegetables – the artichokes with salt and olive oil are a must-try."

Avenida de los Andes s/n esquina Avenida del Arroyo del Santo, 28042. orgazmadrid.com

15.30 Stop for coffee

"If you have *café con leche* (coffee with milk), almost any bar will be OK. However, it's unfortunately easy to find bad black coffee, as the beans are often over-roasted and acidic. A safe bet is Beer Station, a bar where they're serious about serving good coffee."

22 Cuesta Santo Domingo, 28013.
beerstation.com

16.30 Get out and explore

"If you have just one afternoon to discover Madrid, walk from the Plaza Santo Domingo towards the Plaza de Oriente,

and past the Royal Palace. Then on to the Plaza Mayor – a grand, historic square where you can sit and people watch."

20.00 Enjoy an after-work drink

"The Sunset Lookers lounge terrace specialises in cocktails and refreshing gin and tonics. It's the perfect place to relax in summer. You'll enjoy a unique view over the rooftops of the city and there's a glass floor with a beautiful blue swimming pool underneath."

13 Plaza Santo Domingo, 28013.
sunsetlookers.es

21.30 Go for dinner

"For a good mix of traditional Spanish cuisine with a modern approach, the Restaurante Sandó is the place. The service is excellent and it's a quiet, cosy place to sit and spend a few hours. If you're celebrating a deal, it should justify the degustation menu, which is expensive, but incredible."

2-4 Calle Isabel la Católica, 28013.
restaurantesando.es

22.00 Go out on the town

"Please do not lock yourself inside a club in Madrid – that's not how the night life works here. Enjoy the streets and open bars, where you can switch between tapas and drinks. A popular, vibrant spot with lots of international visitors is El Barrio de las Letras, a pretty, pedestrianised part of town. Or, for a younger, hipster vibe, try Malasaña."

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The tastemaker

Joel Filipe

@joelfilip

An acclaimed digital designer and creative director, Filipe also has an eye for photography, particularly when it comes to capturing stunning examples of local architecture.



The chef

Paco Roncero

@PacoRoncero

A pioneer of Spain's new wave of gastronomic heroes, Paco Roncero is the executive chef of the NH Collection Casino de Madrid, as well as the avant garde Sinergias in Platea Madrid.



The writer

Annie Bennett

@madridexpert

Quite possibly one of the city's most fervent online cheerleaders, Bennett is a specialist travel writer on Spain for a number of international publications and the author of both *National Geographic Traveler Madrid* and *Blue Guide Madrid*.



The DJ

Javi Redondo

@javiredondo_

Redondo started DJing in the 90s and has helped define Madrid's electronic music scene. A prolific producer and musician, he has held several DJ residences and performed across Europe.