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# Gemma Arterton

*The GRAVESEND GIRL, who became  
a HOLLYWOOD REVOLUTIONARY*



Lifestyle › Travel

## Seville: where to stay, eat and drink

Small bites rule in the jewel of Andalucia, says Aoife O'Riordain

AOIFE O'RIORDAIN | an hour ago | 0 comments



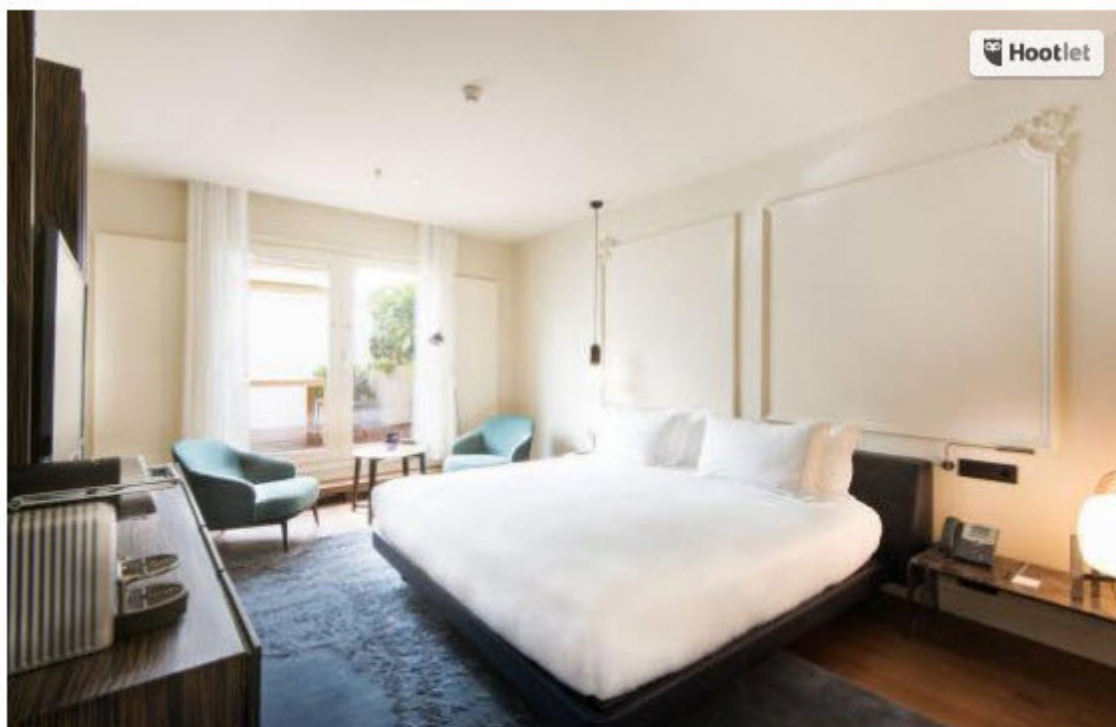
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Seville is an easy city to be seduced by. Set on the banks of the Guadalquivir River and gateway to the New World in the 16th century, the Andalusian capital [↗](#) is a beguiling blend of architecture, cuisine, culture and tradition with a relaxed, southern Spanish charm. In April, the intoxicating fragrance of orange blossom wafts through the city.



Game of Thrones fans are in for a [treat](#) as scenes from the upcoming series seven were shot in and around the city – several cast members stayed at the Hotel Alfonso XIII. This year has also been declared the “Year of Murillo” ([sevilla.org/murillo](http://sevilla.org/murillo)) as it marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of one of Spain’s most celebrated painters. Some of his work can be seen in Europe’s largest Gothic building, Unesco-listed Seville Cathedral, along with the tomb of Christopher Columbus. The Giralda bell tower is the symbol of the city and a masterpiece of Almohad architecture to rival those in Marrakech and Rabat.

## Where to stay



Mercer Hotel

Another more recent arrival in Seville is the newly opened, ultra-luxurious, 12-room Mercer Sevilla (00 34 95 422 30 04; [mercersevilla.com](http://mercersevilla.com)). Doubles from €630.



## Eating and drinking

Tapas was allegedly invented in Seville, so do as the locals do – most Sevillanos wouldn't dream of heading out until after maybe 10pm, though if you go earlier you are more likely to get a seat. Most bars offer slightly larger portions called “raciones” and half “raciones” – the bartender keeps a tab for you and you pay as you leave.



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Food at Mercer Sevilla

Try the potato salad and prawns from nearby Huelva at Bodeguita Casablanca (00 34 954 224 114; [bodeguitacasablanca.com](http://bodeguitacasablanca.com)) and order plates of jamón ibérico de bellota at the old-school Las Teresas (00 34 954 213 069; [lasteresas.es](http://lasteresas.es)) in the tangle of streets of Santa Cruz. A warm “piripi” sandwich of bacon and ham is another must-eat at Bodeguita A Romero (00 34 954 223 939; [bodeguitaantonioromero.com](http://bodeguitaantonioromero.com)) near the bull ring.



Tapas crawls in the Santa Cruz district (Alamy Stock Photo)



## Shopping



Pick up a sombrero at Antonio Garcia. (Alamy Stock Photo)

Calle Sierpes and Calle Alfonso XIII are the main retail thoroughfares, while upscale shops such as Loewe and Carolina Herrera cluster around Plaza Nueva. For a more local flavour, head down the streets around the San Salvador church, where boutiques such as Antonio Garcia (00 34 954 222 320; [sombrosrogarcia.com](http://sombrosrogarcia.com)) sell sombreros and equestrian goods.

Stop at La Despensa de Palacio (00 34 955 914 5251; [ladespensa.depalacio.com](http://ladespensa.depalacio.com)), a sweet shop that wraps chocolates in vintage-inspired packaging. Also visit the Mercado Encarnación food market ([setasdesevilla.com](http://setasdesevilla.com)) in the mushroom-shaped Metropol Parasol.

## Culture



Real Alcázar. (Alamy Stock Photo)

Seville has a new cultural landmark with the new CaixaForum ([lacaixa.es](http://lacaixa.es)) on Isla de la Cartuja that incorporates the city's tallest building, the Torre Sevilla. There will be two exhibition spaces, a restaurant and shops. A must-see is Real Alcázar (00 34 954 50 23 24; [alcazar-sevilla.org](http://alcazar-sevilla.org)), the city's royal palace. Dating to the ninth century, it combines Moorish, Gothic and Renaissance styles in its azulejo-tiled rooms with coffered ceilings and stunning gardens.

### Details: Seville

Doubles at the Hotel Alfonso XIII from €247, B&B. British Airways ([ba.com](http://ba.com)) and easyJet ([easyjet.com](http://easyjet.com)) fly from Gatwick, Ryanair ([ryanair.com](http://ryanair.com)) from Stansted. ■