

Escape the Crowds and Recharge in Style at **Nobu Barcelona**

This beautiful hotel is the perfect place to base yourself for a visit to this multifaceted Spanish city

By Wendy Helfenbaum

Tucked away in a quieter corner of the bustling Catalan capital famous for its jaw-dropping architecture, sprawling beaches and thriving gastronomy scene, the 23-story Nobu Barcelona is just far enough from the throngs of tourists to provide a welcome respite. Within minutes of stepping off the train at the Sants railway station linking Barcelona to Madrid and Paris by high-speed rail, I reached the luxury property that was once a drab 1970s office building.

Since opening in 2019, Nobu Barcelona helped transform a not-so-sexy neighbourhood into one humming with eclectic vermouth bars and hip eateries.



An elegant setting

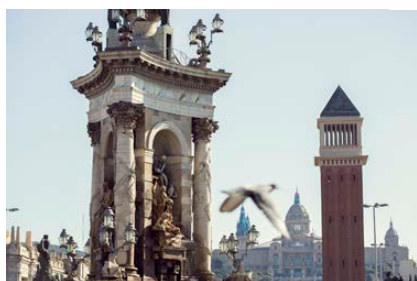
Inspired by a traditional Japanese Shinto Temple gate, the hotel's entrance sets the tone for a serene escape with soaring ceilings, warm wood panelling, soft lines and natural materials. Abstract tapestries inspired by sumi-e, Japanese ink art, adorn the common areas.

The hotel's 259 uber-sleek guest rooms and suites continue the Zen vibe. The minimalist décor in our airy Sake Suite set off the stunning views. A plush bed with a custom headboard inspired by Gaudi's trencadís (a mosaic technique he developed using broken ceramics) and a traditional Japanese cedar-wood 'Onsen' bathtub overlooking the Sagrada Familia and city skyline enveloped us in comfort after a frenzied day of touring. I found it easy to reach the city centre via a 10-minute taxi or train ride, or a brisk 35-minute walk.

A subterranean spa

Wellness options abound in Nobu Barcelona's serene urban spa, which features three treatment rooms for massages and facials, along with a dry sauna, a steam bath and a thermal water circuit that restored my tired muscles after exploring the city on foot. It's not large—there are a handful of loungers plus a few chairs—so I was glad a late-afternoon visit found the spa uncrowded.

Spa access is included for guests staying in the Sake, Nobu or Umi suites; an additional fee applies if you're staying in other rooms. There's also a 24-hour gym onsite, with free yoga classes for guests on the rooftop pool deck.



Barcelona's highest rooftop terrace

While tiny, the terrace's plunge pool is perfect for a quick pre-dinner dip to cool off before heading to the open-air bar and restaurant for handcrafted cocktails and Nobu-inspired tapas and snacks. There are three cabanas, a few hammocks and comfy loungers to relax in. The showstopper, of course, is the panoramic view over the city—don't miss the sunset.

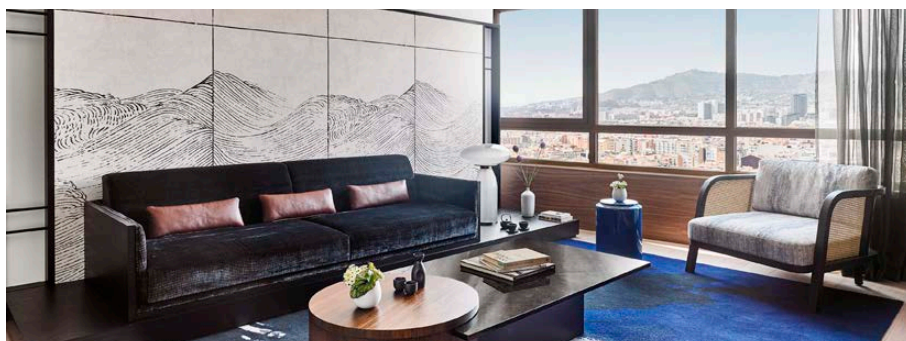
Innovative dining

The renowned Nobu brand is best known for its Japanese restaurants led by celebrated chef Nobu Matsuhisa, so we were eager to experience the 'Omakase Barcelona' six-course menu at the hotel's 23rd floor eatery.



Highlights included sea bream in kumquat sauce, mackerel tacos, rock shrimp tempura and the city's famous Iberian pork, which was marinated in paprika, soy, ginger and sesame oil. Dessert, served in a huge bowl packed with ice lit with LED bulbs from below, featured chocolate lava cake with green tea ice cream, mocha crème brûlée and vanilla mochi—a delicious end to an unforgettable meal.

For more information, visit
nobuhotels.com/barcelona.



Taste your way through Barcelona with a walking tour

Walking food tours are one of the first things I do when arriving in a new city. In Barcelona, we enjoyed two experiences that offered a crash course in Catalan culture and history. Eating Europe recently expanded into three Spanish cities, and our Canadian tour guide Lindsay showcased Barcelona's diverse culinary traditions, hidden gems and storied history on the Tapas and Wine Tour. We sipped vermouth and cava by the sea and sampled patatas bravas, bomba, paella and pinchos as we wandered through the Gothic Quarter, El Born and La Barceloneta.

A few days later, we joined Devour's Barcelona Tapas, Taverns & History Tour, where James took us through the city's medieval plazas and winding alleys to try authentic tapas and regional wines. We visited a century-old tavern that served cured meats, Spanish cheese and tapas, and a local bar that's served the same four tapas dishes since 1945, including local butifarra sausage and crispy fried fish.