

MARBELLA

Beyond the party



Excuse yourself from the party and step, instead, into the endless serenity of Amàre Marbella. This beachside residence is a world in itself: its own spa, restaurants, roof terrace and slice of perfect beach make it unquestionably hard to leave. Amàre is the amalgamation of two Spanish words – amor (love) and mar (sea) – and hearing the latter lap rhythmically onto the sand from my room made it easy to love the hotel and, indeed, to fall into the gentle rhythm of life there.

In the evening, you can venture into the old town for dinner at one of the local tapas restaurants, or you might decide to explore the area's famous nightlife. We did neither, however, on the night of our arrival – the hotel's restaurant was hosting a soul night along with a tasting menu of local seafood and plenty of wine, so we introduced ourselves to Marbella that way.

Mornings at Amàre are equally lovely. One might enjoy a yoga class on the beach or a few laps of the pool before indulging in the breakfast buffet – a leisurely and abundant service that goes on till late in the morning. Following that, a tour of the aforementioned old town is a wonderfully enjoyable way to spend the next few hours. It's only five minutes from the hotel on foot and its narrow lanes, part shadowed by overgrown, flowering vines, are a delight to explore.





On one road, you'll stumble across a boutique selling handmade jewellery and delicate local dresses; on another, a tiny chapel that seemingly appears from nowhere. In spring, the perfume-like smell of orange blossoms – sweetened by the sun – floats through the lanes, mingling, sometimes, with the alluring smoke of a local restaurant. After you've wandered the many shops, a stop for food is almost mandatory. Marbella is located on the Costa del Sol in southern Spain, so the fruit of the ocean is bountiful.

Another place to enjoy such specialties is Soleo Marbella. This Riviera-esque establishment is set right on the sand, so you can enjoy a glass of local wine and a plate of fresh sardines with a direct view of the sea. They serve paella here, too, and a large tuna steak with samphire that's not to be missed. After long, late lunches at such eateries, a few languorous hours on Amàre's private beach or perhaps a massage in the spa are fitting ways to prepare for another evening – quiet or otherwise.

– By Becky Zanker

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