

# 5 Restaurants Around the World that Echo Their Exotic Locale

These eateries in Istanbul, Charleston, New York, Málaga and Madrid tip their hat to their surroundings, offering patrons a true-to-place experience like no other

Imagine breaking bread on a boat, or by a volcano, or in New York in the 1960s, while having arm's length access to a gallimaufry of plats du jour. No scenario among these is a chimaera, nor is any particularly difficult to achieve, as the diners at the Turkish heritage-inspired KAIMAKK in Istanbul or the old-world-style Sorelle in Charleston or even the Mad Men-esque Ned NoMad's Club Dining Room in New York, will confirm. These restaurants, in addition to Gota in Madrid, which channels the inside of a brooding cave, and Nota Blu Marbella in Málaga, which harks to its golden seaside locale, aren't so much places for dining as they are for delighting. These are where the indoors and outdoors, people and place are seemingly two halves of a whole.

Read on to get a peephole into each, so you know what to bookmark the next time you're near.

## KAIMAKK in Istanbul by Sanayi313

At the Istanbul Airport International Terminal, amidst the glittering duty-free boutiques and shoulder-to-shoulder lounges, hides KAIMAKK, a delightful Turkish restaurant designed by Istanbul-based studio [Sanayi313](#). Sprawled across 5,600 square feet, the eatery is composed of a sequence of interconnected realms, namely an à la carte restaurant, a patisserie, a sherbet bar and a kiosk for to-go orders. The interior is informed by soft and sandy tones that exude a sense of calm, and elevated by gold and bronze accents that add a dash of luxury. And yet, despite its contemporary expression, it echoes an ancient Ottoman grammar discernible only to those who stop long enough to notice. The time capsule-like space stays true to the studio's mantra of 'maximalist expressions in minimalist details', channelling a luminous oasis with traditional Mesopotamian details, an Arabian Nights-inspired marble mosaic pathway, and wall sconces that reference the historical site of Mardin. However, the crown jewel, the architects insist, is none of these, but rather the 4-metre-tall, Syriac-style pillared cocoon that envelops the space. Cloaked in a pearlescent microtopping, the structure is a hat-tip to the magical stoneworks of Mardin.

## Sorelle in Charleston by Meyer Davis

A brainchild of [Meyer Davis](#), Sorelle is a noshery in Charleston, South Carolina that is special in more ways than one. It is an Italianate jewel box that nods to the history of the city, yes, but also to the building it inhabits. Named after the Italian word for 'sisters', the interior pays ode to the sisterhood that once ran a school at this address in the late 1800s, by way of artworks that enliven their bond. The multi-level restaurant—housed inside three former townhomes and encompassing a mercato, central bar, wine room, pizza counter, pasta counter and grand dining

room—is a snowglobe of brushed oak honey millwork, venetian plaster walls, chevron wood flooring, beautiful detailing and striking stonework that hold a mirror, equally, to the Italian and South Carolina low country. Many of the structure's original hallmarks, including the classic mouldings, expansive windows and double-height ceilings have been elevated for modern times, but its old-world spirit remains intact. Whether you opt for an aperitif at the curved Calacatta Monet marble bar, a slice of Margherita by the midnight-blue tile wood-fired pizza oven, or a tippie (or two) at the gunmetal bar gantry, the place promises something for each moment.

## Ned NoMad's Dining Room in New York by Stonehill Taylor and Soho House Design

The Dining Room by Ned NoMad is a scene straight out of Mad Men, with 1960s glamour (think Art Deco meets Manhattan allure) writ large across the interior. Designed by Stonehill Taylor and Soho House Design, the members-only restaurant is a distilled version of the Ned lexicon, offering a Don Draper-style setting for socialising around the clock. Amongst its reigning hallmarks? Brooding finishes and curved coffers, stained glass panels and Murano glass pendants, and fluted leather dining chairs around burl wood tables. The place has everything you need for a quiet night out. The only thing missing, perhaps, is the leading man himself.

## Nota Blu Marbella in Málaga by Astet Studio

Málaga is a haven of golden beaches, boutique stores and Andalusian architecture that pays homage to the Renaissance, Baroque, Gothic and Moorish styles. With so much to do and so much to see, there's little reason to retreat indoors. It's a memo Barcelona-based Astet Studio received—and acted upon—when designing Nota Blu Marbella, a brasserie in Málaga just strides from the seafront. In a bid to blur the line between outside and inside, they exercised a sleight of hand, created a foldable facade that provides patrons with a luxurious dining experience, while still keeping the landscape within eyeline. Deeper inside, where the view is bleaker, they echoed the surroundings across the interior with high arched doorways, cascading foliage, natural stone finishes and mosaic floors, in a way that makes you wonder where, or whether, the outdoors end and the indoors begin.

## Gota in Madrid by Plantea Estudio

Gota in Madrid is no cave, but it certainly feels like it is. Designed like a gritty, monolithic grotto, the wine and small plates bar, designed by Plantea Estudio, inhabits the ground floor of a neoclassical building in Madrid's Justicia barrio, but no one could fault you for thinking it burst out of a volcano. The dining room is an amorphous space with heavy granite ashlar walls—some exposed, others concealed in plaster and grey lime paint. A bench grows out of one wall, while an expanse of crooked red brick, seemingly frozen in motion, juts out of another. The central table, 10 centimetres thick, is a particular curiosity. Haloed by an alabaster lamp by Santa & Cole and surrounded by aluminium Tasca chairs by Frama, it could have been made of lava, although the architects are quick to point out that it's an optical illusion of granite. Other things that characterise the realm include smaller birch tables, a volcanic stone floor, slender

pendants and a curiously bygone air. As the designers explain, the space's vaulted brick character isn't particularly unusual in Madrid. "You'd usually find it in the basements of old buildings, but this, being on the ground floor, was a welcome departure from the norm."