

NEW DESIGN HOTELS

# Three fascinating cities, three hotels to match



## Kyoto

The month of April in Japan's historic capital is bookended by two week-long periods of excitement: a pink-tinged one when the city's cherry trees burst into life, and the national holiday cluster of Golden Week beginning on the 29th. It's during the slight pause in between that **Ace Hotel Kyoto** will be welcoming its first guests. The design hotel group, which began in Seattle in 1999, picked renowned Japanese architect Kengo Kuma to oversee the project for its first opening in Asia. Built partly in a heritage building (the brick-clad 1920s former Kyoto Central Telephone Exchange) and partly in an extension that echoes the wooden grids of the city's traditional townhouses, the 213 rooms are kitted out with artisan textiles and other craft details. The hotel is at the crossing of Kyoto's two subway lines, allowing quick access to historic sites, while the Kyoto International Manga Museum is a short walk away. [acehotel.com/kyoto](http://acehotel.com/kyoto)



Top left: A balance of Japanese and Western design at Ace Hotel Kyoto. Above: An evening view over Kyoto from the terrace of Kiyomizu-dera temple. Left: Most of the rooms come with turntables

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## Amsterdam

Since 1961, a totem-pole-like advertisement hoarding known as Het Signaal has stood in Europaplein, a big square two miles south of Amsterdam's Old Town. The triangular segments of this local landmark have now been echoed in spectacular style by a new neighbour, the **nhow Amsterdam RAI**. This just-opened hotel is the largest in the Benelux region, with 650 rooms, and is linked to the RAI Convention Centre next door. The three giant triangles seem to point to distant horizons, appropriately enough in a city built on centuries of global trade. Rooms sport rich and far-flung designs, from Indian lattices to Japanese kimono patterns. Thanks to a Metro line opened in 2018, the city's historic heart is just three or four stops away, but there's also much to be gained by exploring locally on foot or by bike, from the mishmash of cuisines and shops in De Pijp, to green spaces such as Amstelpark, with its Riekermolens windmill. [nhow-hotels.com/en/nhow-amsterdam-rai](http://nhow-hotels.com/en/nhow-amsterdam-rai)



Clockwise from top left: The 91-metre-high tower that houses nhow Amsterdam RAI; the favourite way to get around town; Mexican inspiration in one of the hotel's public areas



## Beirut

It's been a long time coming, but this spring should see the opening of **Arthaus Beirut** – book a trip before word spreads, or high summer in the city. A villa dating back to the Ottoman era has been turned into a graceful 26-room boutique hotel. Owners Nabil and Zoé Debs have been active in the struggle to preserve the heritage of the Lebanese capital, where old buildings that have survived both conflict and modern development are often in a neglected state. The Debs' efforts first turned to making an exhibiting space in the house for both Lebanese and international art, including Cuban murals. The gallery-like experience will continue in the villa's new guise. The surrounding Gemmayzeh neighbourhood has until now been light in quality hotels, though it's one of the best places to eat out and shop in this famously high-energy city. The bar scene here has matured, too, though light sleepers may yet disagree. [arthaus.international](http://arthaus.international)

Left: The Corniche wraps around Beirut's Mediterranean coast. Above: A peaceful corner at Arthaus Beirut