

Dating in Madrid for Foodies, part 3

Covered some art, some nice trees and parks but really **you are a foodie deep down inside**. If your stomach is empty you are not going anywhere except for the next all-you-can-eat buffet. The route is a collection of little restaurants to enjoy the tapas culture that exists in Madrid. Not going to beat around the bush, **this is my preferred type of date**. I love food and talking about food. It is also nearly impossible to not talk about food, what food your mother always cooked or what local delicacies freaked out your foreign friends the first time you told them the recipe.

This route is also the most flexible and varied. I have named some of **my favourite restaurants** below, which I have visited frequently and allow for some bites to eat without having to order the coffee and dessert. Go for **3 relatively different restaurants**, not only makes it more exciting for your taste buds but it will give you a lot more to talk about. Now it might seem strange to invite someone to 3 different restaurants rather than just have the 3 courses at one.

However, we don't want this to be a regular run of the mill date; this has to be more memorable and make you change from place to place. Plus it makes splitting the bill so much less awkward as you can pay the first bill, your date then gets the next and dessert will be handled by the organiser. After all, if you make it to dessert you will want to leave a good impression.

ACT ONE. The Starter. Naïf.



Image from [Naïf's FB](#)

[Naïf in Calle San Joaquín 16](#) <m> Tribunal

This restaurant, just like your attitude to the first date, is understated and cool; not trying too hard to impress and it has a terrace. You will want to ask the waiter to put you on the waiting list if the terrace is full. For extra brownie points you will do this 10 minutes before you expect your date to arrive so you already have a table waiting for him/her. The starters I recommend would be the **mini hamburgers** (that arrive multicoloured) as well as **the hummus**. All the starters are very nice and not too large. One quick warning—please do not order the white wine, as me and my friends have never had a positive experience. **Red wine** and **Tinto de Verano** (red wine mixed with lemonade) are both great alternatives.



Image from [Nanai's FB](#)

Alternative: [Nänai in Calle Barco 26](#) <m> Tribunal

No terrace but also has a very alternative, understated and cool interior to start your date. Have 7 dishes to share with the **tztaziki**, **cheese selection** and **hummus**, all ideal choices to start the dinner experience. This bar will be exhibiting different works of art in their restaurant during the month.

ACT TWO: The Main Course. Olé Lola or Mercado de San Anton

Honestly both options are just as great. It depends on what you want for your date, if you prefer some intimacy then choose **Olé Lola** if you prefer variety and greater stimulus of the senses choose the **Mercado** (which has a great rooftop bar).



Image from Olé Lola on [google](#)

[Olé Lola in Calle de San Mateo 28](#) <m> Tribunal & Alonso
Martínez

This restaurant/bar is a very popular place on weekends so try to arrive a little earlier than 21h. The brilliant reason to go to this restaurant is how the chefs are fusing the traditional Spanish kitchen with more contemporary elements, my favourite being the **duck breast served with a puree of pear and pistachio**. The dishes range between €6 – 14 and are not too large in size to miss out on dessert. Adding the good selection of wines on offer, this restaurant boasts many advantages. Yet this still isn't the best reason to visit. The interior of **Olé Lola** makes it very easy for couples to have a little privacy. Small tables all situated one after another means you don't have someone left or right listening in on your conversation.



[Mercado de San Anton in Calle de Augusto Figueroa 24](#) <m>
Chueca

Here you have the hustle and bustle of a market with everyone looking for the right tapas to suit their appetite. The choice of food is enormous and if you are unsure of your date's culinary likes and dislikes, then this is the safer choice. Plus it is exciting; you can start with some sushi, move onto a **burrata** (mozzarella), head to a **salmon sandwich** and finish with **jamón**. The different stalls on the 2nd floor offer a great variety and it also induces some energy, as you have to get up off the table.

FINAL ACT. Dessert.



Image from [La Cocina de mi Vecina's FB](#)

[La cocina de mi vecina in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo](#)
[15](#) <m> Tribunal

Our final destination is specifically geared towards delicious cakes, brownies and cookies. The **carrot cake** is one of the best that I have had in Madrid and all cakes are homemade. The service is friendly and helpful to make a recommendation if you can't choose.



Image from [Greek&Shop's FB](#)

Alternative: [Greek&Shop in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo 9](#) <m> Tribunal

This Greek delicacy shop offers a brilliant Greek nut tart or *kataifi*, also a Greek dessert made of nuts and cream. The shop is a mix between a take away and a sit-down shop, so sitting inside is an experience in itself.

If you've missed them, here's "Madrid Best Date Ideas", the series, [part 1](#) and [part 2](#)

Taberna Lamiak, my favorite

Basque pintxo bar with Tuesday night wine tastings

If you've got the urge to fight those beginning-of-the-week blues, go to Taberna Lamiak on Tuesday nights for a free wine tasting and a few heavenly tostas. You will love it.

A few months ago, my sister-in-law, [Laura](#), told me I had to go to this bar called [Lamiak](#), and write about it for Naked Madrid. So I went, and ever since, Lamiak has turned into one of those bars that I actually have cravings for. This beloved Basque tavern has two locations—one near metro Antón Martín and the other on La Latina's most popular street, La Cava Baja. Both locations boast brick walls, tiny stools, a great wine list and delicious food.





[Taberna Lamiak](#) serves some of the tastiest **tostas** and **pintxos** I've ever had in this city (better than [Lateral](#)'s), and they only cost **€1,90 each**. The photos below can attest to the beauty and generous portions of these simple, yet delicious treats. And while a picture alone may speak a thousand words, I still hope you'll trust me when I say that the food here at Lamiak is so good, I sometimes wonder why it is that I ever eat anywhere else. It would seem the word is already out. **Lamiak's** divine offerings are no secret amongst Madrileños, who keep the place packed every night, clamouring for their weekly pintxo fix! Don't let the hungry throngs stop you, as this boisterous atmosphere is all part of the fun.

My favorite tostas here are the **queso de cabra con tomate y cebolla caramelizada** (goat cheese with caramelized onions and tomato) and the **empanada de confit de pato con pasas** (duck and raisin empanada). James' favorite is the **solomillo con cebolla y oporto** (pork tenderloin with onions cooked in a port wine sauce). James is a big meat eater, so he also orders the **jamón**

ibérico con tomate (Iberian cured ham with tomato), but there are plenty of **vegetarian options** here too, such as roasted vegetables, smoked salmon, cod and hummus.





Last Tuesday night, as I had my usual craving for Lamiak, James and I went to get my goat cheese fix at the location near Antón Martín, and were lucky enough to find a seat. At 9pm, mid-way through our second round of drinks and *tostas*, a man from [Vinocora](#) came up to us and said they were about to give a free wine tasting. Everybody in the bar got a free glass of Rioja to drink during the 30-min presentation. After that, a glass of that same wine cost just €1 for the rest of the night. What a lovely surprise!









[Facebook](#)

Locations:

- C/ Cava Baja, 42. Metro: La Latina
 - C/ de la Rosa, 10. Metro: Antón Martín
-

Where to swim in winter in Madrid: top 3 and much more.

Where can you jump off a 10-meter high springboard in olympic style? Play waterpolo? Or swim laps? Look no further, cause we're about to tell you...

Summer is technically over in September, yet that doesn't mean the pool fever has to stop. Quite the opposite, actually, as winter is the perfect time to suit up your speedo, dive into the water, take a deep breath and start moving like a dolphin (or a shark) in the pool. And the best part is that you can do all this without having to share your pool lane with a thousand people.

Madrid boasts many state-of-the-art sports complexes with indoor pools around the city, allowing you to splash around all year long. Whether you like the front crawl, backstroke, butterfly, breaststroke or even just floating around and enjoying the silence (my favorite style), you'll be able to do it all. What's more, you can also partake in water sports like **waterpolo**, **scuba-diving** or, the coolest option, **springboard jump**!

So lets go dive into Madrid, shall we?

Real Canoe



The club was established in the 1930's. Since then, it's been a home to all kinds sports like rugby, basketball, squash, football, and of course, water sports such as swimming, synchronized swimming or waterpolo. Today you have many different ways to enjoy the place, from becoming a full member to having the swim pass to enjoy your favorite sport. They've also got a **scuba-diving club**!

Facilities

- 2 main pools
- Basketball court or multisport center
- A few squash and *pádel* courts
- Fully equipped gym

- Cafeteria







Fees

They have a few options and ways to enjoy their facilities, but these are the main ones:

A) Full Canoe membership. This option is really good if you are planning on staying in Madrid long term.

- Schedule from **7am to 9.55pm (everyday – no limitations)**
- It costs **500€ (one time fee) + 97,52 € every two months**. Although it can be expensive to become a full member, sometimes they offer promotions, such as by

waiving the initial fee or reducing the membership fee

B) Free use of pool in Canoe. They have more options but these are the ones I would get:

- **Schedule**

- Mondays to Fridays.....7am-4pm (option 1)
- Saturday and Sunday.....8pm-9.55pm (option 2)

- **Fees**

- 1 month.....62€ (option 1) | 50€ (option 2)
- 2 months.....101€ (option 1) | 77€ (option 2)
- 3 months.....150€ (option 1) | 113€ (option 2)
- 4 months.....189€ (option 1) | 143€ (option 2)

*For more options check out this [link](#) (only in spanish)

Contact Canoe

- **Adress:** *Calle Pez Volador, 30*
- **Neighborhood / District:** *Estrella, Retiro*
- **Tel:** *91 504 40 45*

[Centro de Natación mundial 86](#)



In the summer of 1986, Madrid was home to the World Aquatics Championships, therefore, the city built a complex to celebrate such an event. Today, thousands of Madrileños enjoy the facilities all year long; in the summer pools where you can spend the day swimming and having fun, and in the winter pools, where you can swim at your leisure or take affordable swimming lessons.

Here you will find a very special class: **Springboard jump**. No matter your age or level, [prepare to learn how to jump off a 10-meter high springboard in olympic style!](#) Continue reading for more details.

Facilities

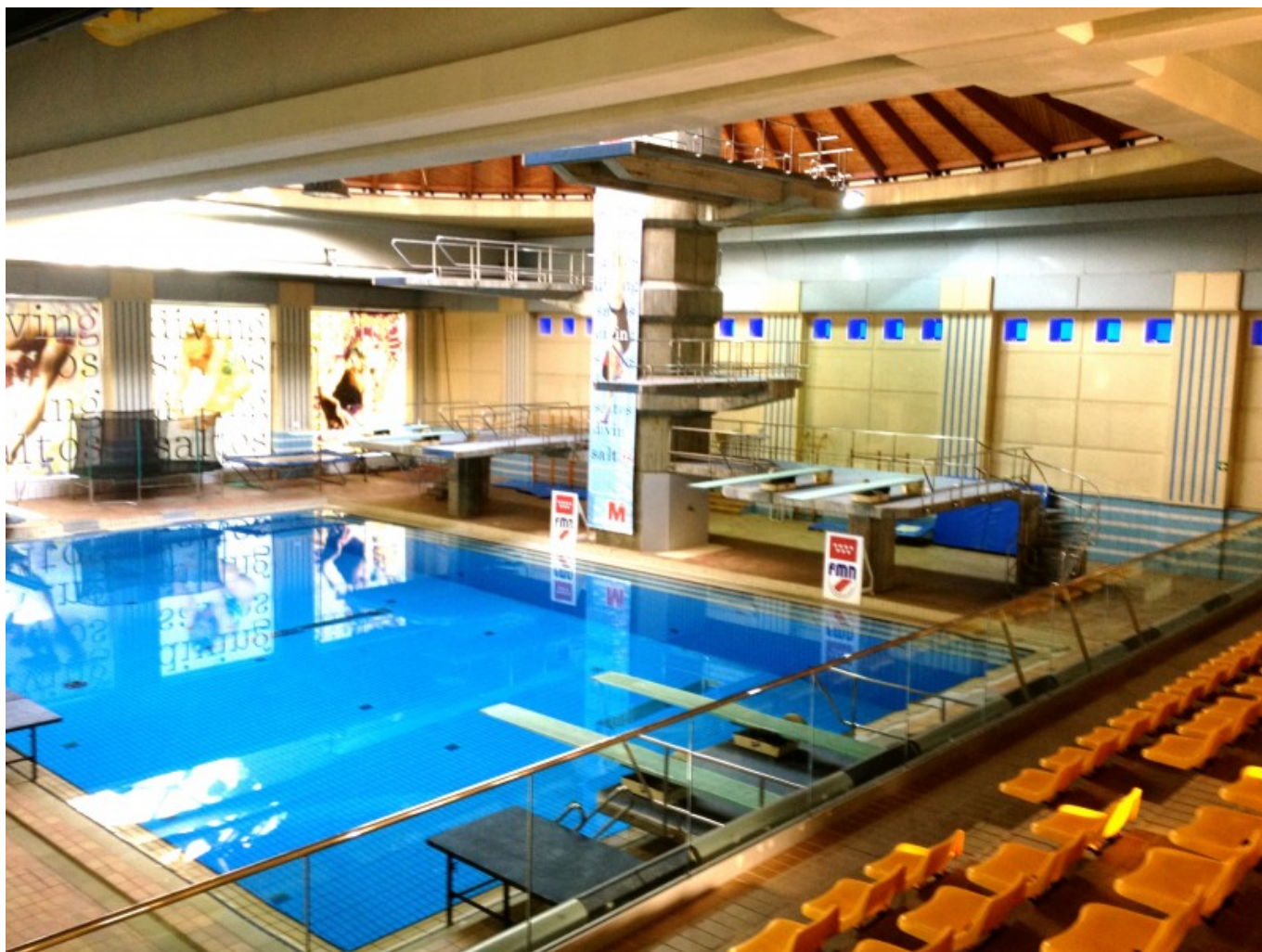
- Two olympic size pools (10 and 8 lanes)
- Springboard jump / diving pool

- Fully equipped gym
- Sauna

1. High dive / springboard jump (max. 10 meters high). Main activities:







What you have to know about the class:

- **Schedule:**

- Monday to Friday1.30pm-3.30pm

- **Price 60€ (10 hours per week)**

One-time trial class: **15€**

*They are working on new schedules and rates, depending on how many people would like to join the class.

**For more info, keep an eye on our [Facebook](#).

Contact: Álvaro 636 628 455 / alvaroprietolafuente@gmail.com
(only Spanish)

2. Free use of pool, Mundial 86.



Here is what you should know:

▪ **Schedule:**

- Monday to Friday8.30am-10pm
- Saturday & Sunday..... 9am-1pm

▪ **Price**

- Abono club (Highly recommended)**43,15€/monthly fee**
- Other rates for less young people:
 - Senior (55 – 64 years old) 39,05€
 - 65 years old or more 22€

Contact

- **Adress:** *Calle José Martínez de Velasco, 3*
- **Neighborhood / District:** *Estrella, Retiro*

▪ **Tel:** 914 091 026 | 663 854 716

Some other options: Piscinas Municipales (Public Pools)

If going to Estrella doesn't sound good to you, or you just want to go to the closest public sport center, there is also a wide variety of places where you can swim. The one that I, along with many Madrileños, like the most, is [Escuelas de San Antón](#), which we mentioned in a previous post on the [Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid](#). Although you can also have a look at the list of [Madrid's public gyms](#) to find the most convenient center for you.

Centro Deportivo Municipal Escuelas de San Antón



Facilities

- Swimming pool
- Spa
- Gym

Schedule

- Monday to Friday.....7am-10.30pm
- Saturday.....8am-8.30pm
- Sunday.....9am-6.30pm

[*All classes schedule](#)

Fees

Monthly fee **47,45€**

* [All fees list \(Spanish\)](#)

Contacto

- **Adress:** *Calle Farmacia, 13*
- **Neighborhood / District:** *Justicia, Centro*
- **Tel:** *918 289 006*

[Lista completa de Piscinas climatizadas pública](#)

As you may already know, Madrid has a wonderful world of swimming pools that open up during summer. Here are my favorites:

- [Madrid's Best Public City Swimming Pools](#)
- [Madrid's Best Natural Swimming Pools \(in the mountains\)](#)

If you're looking for the best gyms and fitness clubs in Madrid, check out:

- [Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid](#)

Bolero Meatballs... You Gotta Try These Balls!

‘Spicy balls?’ ‘Juicy balls?’ ‘I want cheese on my balls.’ Let me explain...

I first stumbled upon [Bolero Meatballs](#), a fun new meatball shop in the center of Madrid, while walking around town with James. I saw the red MEATBALLS sign and my heart jumped. See, in New York (where I’m from), a restaurant called “The Meatball Shop” opened up a few years ago and it got so popular that it now has several locations. Whoever came up with this idea is a genius. Who doesn’t like meatballs?



I asked the two young ladies who own and run **Bolero Meatballs** – Nina, from Russia, and May, from Spain – if they had gotten the idea from The Meatball Shop in NYC, but they said they had gotten it from elsewhere, as meatballs were already becoming trendy in Moscow and Paris too. In fact, when I asked Nina if she was nervous about opening up a restaurant dedicated solely to meatballs in Madrid, she said no. She was more afraid that someone else would beat her to it.

Prior to opening **Bolero Meatballs**, both Nina and May had worked a few different jobs (among them, May had been a pastry

chef and Nina, a translator), yet both wanted to do something else. As roommates, they spent a lot of time in the kitchen preparing meals. But it wasn't until Nina returned from a trip to Moscow, where she witnessed the meatball craze, that she returned to Madrid and, coincidentally, May was cooking up a batch of meatballs for dinner. They saw it as their sign. The two foodies immediately began experimenting with meatball recipes in their home and soon started looking for a place to open a shop. And now, thanks to these two brave ladies, we in Madrid can feast on **meatball sandwiches and platters** too!



Opened in April and located on Calle de las Conchas, **Bolero**

Meatballs has a few tables outside and a few stools inside. Their friend from [newmadprojects](#) did the design, making the place look colorful, inviting and fun. It's a great place for a quick bite on the go or to get a few balls to take away. All their meatballs and desserts are homemade from original recipes. Apart from their regular menu, they also serve a weekly special, such as **Greek balls with yogurt sauce, mint and Greek herbs**. Last time I went, they had a dessert special too—**red velvet cheesecake**, which was beyond delicious.

At **Bolero Meatballs**, you can choose from **four types of homemade *albondigas* (meatballs)**—***La Abuela*** (veal, garlic and parsley, in a roasted vegetable and tomato sauce), ***Oriental*** (pork balls dressed with cilantro and ginger, in a coconut milk and peanut sauce), ***Parm & Chick*** (chicken parmesan balls in mushroom sauce) and ***Vegana*** (quinoa, tofu, rice, shiitake mushrooms and caramelized onion).





My favorite so far are the ***albondigas orientales***, because the coconut and peanut sauce is heaven, and James' favorite is ***la abuela***, as he thinks his grandmother might have actually made them. I recommend ordering the ***ración*** (platter) of four balls so you can try each one, and it also comes with your choice of potatoes or rice for **6.50€**. You can also get a ***bocata*** (meatball sub) for the same price. Lastly, do not miss out on the homemade desserts here which range in price from 1.20€-4.50€—***Oreo Brownie with Ice Cream, the Cookie, the Cookwich or Banana Bread***.



[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle de las Conchas, 4

Metro: Callao, Opera, Santo Domingo

Hours: 2pm-4:30pm & 8pm-11:30pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

Phone: 911 10 60 41

Sumo, this Japanese

restaurant's name says it all

Eighteen packed punches of flavor... three rounds... **This Japanese restaurant near metro Bilbao** will have you scrambling to the finish line and gasping for air, making you and your friends feel like sumo wrestlers. Dining at Sumo is an experience.



oooh.... the lamb chops

If you've ever been to [Kintaro](#), an all-you-can-eat Japanese/Chinese buffet we wrote about in a previous post, you'll find that [Sumo](#) has a similar vibe, leaving you with the same overly-full feeling without taking too big a bite out of your wallet. However, at Sumo, all this comes with better

quality food, friendlier service and a nicer atmosphere.



If you pass the sushi bar, you'll find an enormous dining room providing space for plenty of hungry eaters

One of the reasons why [Sumo](#) is so unique is that you can have a 3-course meal consisting of 18 dishes. Yes, you heard correctly. That's 18 dishes. Plus it's inexpensive and you have tons of options, ranging from sushi and soups to salad and rice dishes. All this will cost you **13,50€** (lunch, Mon-Friday) and **15€** (dinner, Mon-Thurs) and **17,95€** (Fri night-Sun). Although Sumo's dishes are delicious, we dare you to eat 18 of them, as portions are not skimpy.



My favorite are the tuna and avocado rolls. Anything with avocado actually.

You should know that Sumo's ordering process can be a little complicated. Your table gets one sheet of paper with three columns and a list of numbers for each dish on the menu that you tick to order. Everyone orders three times (6 dishes per round) using the same sheet of paper.

This seemingly hectic procedure will become a piece of cake (or a piece of sushi) in time. We've developed a system in which one person is appointed scribe (make sure he or she is up to the challenge) and then each person can start out by calling out his or her smallest number, then if someone else hears the same number, the repeated dish can be jotted down. Final check is also done to ensure the number of dishes is correct before turning it into the waiter.



Steamed dumplings... a must



So many choices of sushi! Good thing you have 18 chances to find your favorite...

By the third round (that is, if we make it to the third round), we usually can't order all six dishes. Our friend, Edison, has a great technique to make it all the way—during the last round he orders salads and small, light dishes such as *navajas* (razor clams) and *mejillones* (mussels). I, on the other hand, start off with salad and make sure to include at least three light dishes in every round.



Seaweed salad, also a great lighter dish to order at Sumo

A few more things you should know about Sumo—there's a **2€ penalty for any plate left uneaten** (it can be half finished, don't worry). While you may find this annoying (as did our friend, Kyle, who was really ticked off about that), it does make sense. You shouldn't order all 18 dishes if you know you can't finish them, as it really is a waste of food. So, if by the third round, you've already had 12 dishes and your stomach tells you that you can only have two more, then just order two more. You will still feel like you got what you're paying for, trust me.

Lastly, if the 18-dish menu is too daunting, you can order individual dishes off the menu, which cost from 3-8€ each. But if you do that, the whole table has to follow suit. You can't have one person at the table ordering the 18-dish menu, and others not (no sharing nor taking away allowed). It's all or nothing. Again, Kyle found this to be very irritating, but I get it. It wouldn't be very economical for the restaurant, nor would you feel like a sumo wrestler...

Up until now, I've had the pleasure of going to Sumo twice, although Edison goes so often with friends that he's on a first-name basis with the owner. It's a great place to take people with **gigantic appetites** and those who enjoy new gastronomic experiences. It's hands down one of our favorite restaurants in Madrid.

Info

[Web](#) – [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#)

Address: c/ Fuencarral 116

Phone: 910864497

[Reserve online](#)

Restaurant Hours: Sun-Thurs 13:00-00:30, Fri/Sat/Holidays
13:00-01:00

Sushi Bar Hours: 16:30-19:30

More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:

- [Ramen Kagura, Madrid's \(almost\) perfect ramen bar](#)
- [Kintaro – Oy Vey](#)
- [Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food](#)
- [Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant](#)
- [Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.](#)
- [Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!](#)
- [Soy Kitchen – a fusion of Asian flavors](#)
- [Karachai – A cozy and elegant Thai restaurant in Alonso Martínez](#)

Where to enjoy good film in Madrid

You'll find cinemas all over the city, but there are a few independent movie houses that deserve special mention. If you're looking to see good film in Madrid, whether that means independent, foreign, blockbuster or simply in original version (versión original, i.e. V.O.), check out the list below.

A great website to find out about free or €3 film screenings in original version every week is madridfree.com. You can also use entradas.com for complete listings and buying tickets online throughout the city.

Also note that most cinemas have a "*día del espectador*" when tickets cost less, and if you have a "*carnet joven*" or one of many types of discount cards, you can usually get a few euros knocked off.

1. Plaza de los Cubos, (metro Plaza de España)

Right by Plaza de España, you'll find two cinemas – [Cines Renoir](#) (c/ Princesa, 3 & Martín de los Heros, 12) and [Golem](#) (c/ Martín de los Heros, 14) – showcasing films from around the world in original version, with subtitles in Spanish. Prices are standard. [Cines Renoir](#) has another location near **Retiro**, on calle Narváez, 42 (metros Goya & Ibiza).

I recommend getting a drink before your movie starts at the film-bookshop across the street, [Ocho y Medio Libros de Cine](#).

2. Yelmo Cines Ideal, Plaza de Jacinto Benavente (metros Sol & Tirso de Molina)

Cine Ideal is perhaps the most popular movie theater in Madrid showing films in original version. I highly recommend this cinema because they feature great blockbuster movies as well as independent films, from Spain and around the world, and they're never dubbed.

3. La Filmoteca Española (Cine Doré), c/ Santa Isabel, 3 (metro Antón Martín)

One of Madrid's most special places, **Cine Doré** sits in a very old theater and revives all types of films from different eras and corners of the world. Here you can see movies from the 50's from Korea, to the 90's from France, and even more recent films from the US – you never know! Nevertheless, if you go, you'll be happy to find yourself in a charming atmosphere and tickets are extremely cheap, just **2,50€**! (and only 2€ if you have a student ID or *carnet joven*)

4. La Cineteca, Plaza de Legazpi, 8 (metro Legazpi)



Inside [El Matadero](#), a former slaughterhouse turned cultural hub, La Cineteca is an awesome theater showcasing all types of films, from documentaries to independent foreign film festivals, at an unbeatable price: **3,50€**. Some are even free. Plus you get to walk around [El Matadero](#), which, if you haven't been, is an absolute must.

5. Sala Berlanga, c/ Andrés Mellado 53 (metros Islas Filipinas & Argüelles)

If you're looking to see Spanish films, this is the place. Sala Berlanga showcases Spanish-language films for **3€**, and it is a hallmark of Spanish cinema culture in Madrid.

6. Cultural Centers

You can also see screenings at some of Madrid's most welcoming cultural centers and embassies (usually for free), such as the [French Institute](#), [Korean Cultural Center](#) and [Russian Cultural Center](#).

7. Outdoor Summer Cinema

Madrid's cultural centers, museums and municipal buildings are also great at putting on films outside, either on their terraces or rooftops, or in their indoor patios, making the most of the city's cool summer nights. [Espacio Madrid](#) usually puts up a good listing.

**What's your favorite cinema in Madrid?
Have we missed something? Let us know!**

Also check out: [Salaquis, a former XXX theatre that's been transformed into one of the city's hotspots near Tirso de Molina](#)