

# Taberna Alipio Ramos

I'm not so much a picky eater as extremely finicky about when my food arrives. There is a specific window between having ordered and the food actually arriving that is crucial to my enjoyment of a restaurant meal. If I ever find myself thinking that, really, my order should have arrived by now, the meal starts to go downhill from that moment on – regardless of the dish that eventually arrives.

You could place the finest cuisine in the world in front of me but if the wait has been just *slightly* too long, you've lost me. The best restaurants in my book deliver the meal moments before the "where's our food?" thought has had a chance to cross anyone's mind.

**In regard to The Taberna Alipio Ramos, it wasn't only their timing that was perfect.**

An old friend and I had decided to take a long weekend break in Madrid. We wanted to say our farewells to another old friend who had died the Christmas before and to spend some time with his wife and two grown-up children. Our Galician hostess, Lines, had laid on a delicious buffet lunch for us and this was to be my introduction to Iberico ham – and what a wonderful experience that was. I have never tasted cooked meat quite like it and, together with French (Spanish?) bread, great company and a delicious salad, we were welcomed to Madrid.

We'd made no plans for our last day in the city but Chris had come armed with the addresses of two or three Galician restaurants which had been recommended by a friend in the United States. The only information on the scruffy piece of paper advised that the Taberna Alipio Ramos: "*...did a good seafood special*". We had no idea where Ponzano was except somewhere in the North of the city and a taxi dumped us in an

unremarkable one-way street just off the main drag. None of the restaurants appeared open and had I been on my own, might well have gone round the corner to a Macdonalds instead.

**But it was 1pm and that's the time us Brits need to eat. So eat we must.**

The Spanish dine late and we quite surprised the young girl behind the bar when we walked in. Entering a restaurant which appears unprepared for guests is a bad sign in my book.

***"Yes, we're open...but we weren't expecting customers!"***

Certainly in England, the sudden presence of people who want to eat in an otherwise empty restaurant seems to immediately engender resentment by staff at the intrusion and not least from an invisible chef heard taking it out on the pots and pans in the kitchen. Had this been an English establishment in an English town we'd probably have walked straight out, avoiding a sub-standard meal and surly service.

The waitress was business-like and showed us to a small area towards the back of the restaurant. There was only a Spanish menu (I don't remember one in English) but somehow we successfully ordered drinks and the seafood special. Both arrived almost seconds later.

At this point in the review I am supposed to start listing the types of seafood contained in the special, the sauces, side salads and the dressings. But I can't. I'm afraid you are just going to have to go there and experience it for yourselves. All I can remember are the Razor clams. Mmmm...mmm.

There must have been fish, prawns, yet more clams, possibly lobster, crab, (yes, I'm sure there was crab) but my only true recollection is that the dish the Alipio Ramos served up that lunchtime— and at lightning speed — was perfect in every way. Stunning fresh ingredients and simple sauces thrown into a pan

and served up way before my stomach had even the slightest chance to grumble.

And at the end of the delicious meal, while toasting our dear friend, Paul – the reason for us being in Madrid in the first place – we couldn't help but wonder if perhaps he just might have had a hand in guiding us to this place, filling our glasses, and preparing the food.

And I have one niggling thought that keeps running through my head when I think back to that lunch. Perhaps, just perhaps, the Taberna Alipio Ramos is not alone and that we could have eaten almost as well in a hundred Madrid restaurants and enjoyed similar fabulous cooking. So, even if I've reviewed completely the wrong restaurant (the card lists three names) I have absolutely no doubt you will eat well.

But for Chris and I it was the spontaneity and unexpectedness of such a great meal that made lunch at the Taberna Alipio Ramos so perfect. And isn't that what life is all about?

**By Hugh Trethowan.**

**[Taberna Alipio Ramos](#)**

**Address:** Calle Ponzano, 30

**Metro:** Ríos Rosas or Alonso Cano

**Tel:** 91 441 49 61

**For more on our favorite *tabernas* in Madrid, check out:**

- [Bodegas Rosell](#)
- [Bar Lambuzo](#)

- [Taberna Lamiak](#)
  - [Casa Mingo](#)
- 

# Madrid's Best Christmas Markets 2014!

Madrid's *navideño* spirit is as bright and festive as in any other European capital. Rows of lights down Paseo de la Castellana, *chocolate con churros* on New Year's Day, the Three Kings' parade... But before all that, there are the Christmas markets setting up all over the city and stocking their stalls with handcrafted wares, jewelry, gourmet delicacies and [unique gift ideas](#) from independent designers. Here are some of the **best Christmas markets** to mark in your calendars and flock to when you start your holiday shopping:

## The Hovse:



image from [el club express](#)



image from [La Vermutería](#)

For the curious and nosy ones out there, an excuse to peek into a beautiful Madrileño home seems too good to be true. After the success of last year's pop-up market, 'The Apartment', this year brings '[The Hovse](#)' – one house, three floors, and 80 designers selling one-of-a-kind creations. There's also a bar on the top floor run by pop-up [La Vermuteria](#) – a great excuse for those who aren't into shopping but want to tag along anyway. Now open until 24 December.

*Calle General Arrando 40*

*Check out our [events page](#) for more details.*

## **Mercado de Motores:**





Hosted in the old train museum, 'Museo de Ferrocarril', this market takes place in between old tracks and steam engines. Vintage clothing, a live band, artisanal products and trendy crowds are all to be found. The next and last running weekend for this market is the 20-21 December.

*Paseo de las Delicias 61*

*Also check out our full post on [Mercado de Motores](#)*

## **Nomada Market:**











There is something of a recent trend in transforming train stations into markets. [Nomada](#) is a great place to find original creations and craftsmanship from emerging designers, alongside DIY workshops; all below the glass ceiling of Madrid's Chamartin train station. Pull out the sweater Grandma gave you last year and join in on National Ugly Christmas Sweater day for the market's funniest [Christmas edition](#), which only lasts for a few days. 12-14 December.

*Attic of Estacion de Chamartin, Calle Agustín de Foxa*

*Check out our [events page](#) for more details.*

**La Industrial:**



A tiny market in comparison to the rest, but a great place to hunt for gifts you won't find anywhere else. From hand-made bags printed with the map of the world to note books bound in Japanese origami paper, this Malasaña market is not one to miss when shopping for that quirky, special friend. Throughout December.

*Calle San Andres 8*

## **Ciento y Pico:**



image from [Ciento y Pico](#)

Now in its fifth year, Ciento y Pico unites over 30 small, local brands under one roof to sell their handmade crafts, original jewelry, vintage goods, or home decor worthy of any hipster's haven. 18 – 21 December

*Calle Velarde 14*

## **Madrid Diferente:**





One of Madrid's most established city-guide blogs is branching out into retail and hosting its own **Christmas pop-up**. With the name 'Diferente Market' we can only imagine that it will be stocked full of curious knick-knacks and unusual gift items. It will run over two weekends: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

*Calle San Vicente Ferrer 33*

## 1001 Atmosphaera:

# Le marché de Noël

VENTA ESPECIAL DISEÑADORES Y CREADORES  
CAMPAÑA DE NAVIDAD

27, 28, 29 Y 30 NOVIEMBRE  
C/ General Pardiñas, 50  
Madrid

Jueves de 17:00h a 21:00h  
Viernes y sábado de 11:00h a 21:00h  
Domingo de 11:00h a 15:00h



[www.1001atmosfera.com](http://www.1001atmosfera.com)

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it-girl by Maria Cuervo

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LUSSTRA



The pop-up gallery, [1001 Atmosphaera](#), is holding three high-end Christmas Market editions. The first **Le Marché de Noël** will be held this weekend 27-30 November in honor of Black Friday! Among over 90 participating vendors, you'll find designer handbags, shoes, accessories and more from brands such as Eme-Ele, Letter&U and Molé Molé, as well as gourmet food stalls from the likes of [Ma Petite Creperie](#), BorchCakes and El Rincón del Pirineo. Don't worry if you can't make it out this weekend, because the market will return for two weekends in December: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

*Calle General Pardiñas, 50*

## Plaza Mayor:



Image from [Blog Es Madrid](#)

One of the oldest and most well-known Christmas markets in the Spanish capital, we couldn't forgo mentioning it. Wooden huts take over Madrid's most prominent square for a month to sell Christmas decorations, live trees, costumes and the elaborate Spanish nativity scenes. Worth a stroll through the crowds,

even if it's just for a bit of contagious holiday buzz. 28 November – 31 December

*Plaza Mayor*

## **Plaza Jacinto Benavente:**

Also known as the “Christmas Card Market” this mercadillo is best known for, what else, its elaborate Christmas cards, among other handicrafts. Traditional “casetas” are set up throughout the square to mimic a medieval town and there's also a bar serving not-so-traditional, crowd-pleasing mojitos. 28 November – 6 January

*Plaza Jacinto Benavente*

## **Navidad en Oriente:**

This “Feria Dulces de Navidad” sets up shop in front of the Royal Opera House and sells sweet Spanish delicacies. Turrón lovers rejoice! Right next to it is also an ice rink, which opens every holiday season with a view of the Royal Palace. 28 November – 6 January

*Plaza de Oriente*

by Ardena González from [a wanderer's path](#) blog

**If you're looking for unique gift ideas from Madrid, make sure to check out our post, [Best Gifts from Madrid](#), and our [Naked Madrid Events Page](#) to find out**

about other markets and fun things going on in the city!

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## Gourmet Experience at El Corte Ingles in Callao

Spain's major department store, El Corte Inglés, first opened in the 1940's. Today, many of us Spaniards love El Corte Inglés as it sells virtually anything under the sun, from your laptop and underwear to your mattress and plane ticket. A little outdated indeed, one of the stores decided it was time for a facelift – a few months ago, the Corte Inglés in Callao converted the top floor into **Gourmet Experience**, a tantalizing food hall with stunning views of Madrid's Gran Vía and the emblematic Schweppes sign.





But why is it so special it? First off, we have a variety of food stalls serving anything you can think of – sushi, pizza, quesadillas, pinchos and hamburgers, etc. – all in the same space. You can also have your meal at each individual stall, or in the main dining area where the views will take your breath away. On the same floor, there's also a supermarket specializing in international gourmet products, like sauces, jams and olive oil, just to name a few.







Here's a look at all the food stalls you can find at this gourmet heaven:

## 1. HAMBURGUESA NOSTRA





**Hamburguesa Nostra** is one of the most popular stalls. Trying to ask for a burger during the weekend can be a complicated task. And we're not surprised. HN offers us a variety of more than **30 types of meat, as well as sauces and unique breads**. Yet, surprisingly enough, it's easy to order! You just have to choose the burger meat you want and customise it with your choice of bread sauce and other garnishes. Then wait for the call so you can pick it. You won't regret it ... we always end up returning.

Prices range from 9€ for a basic burger to 13€ for a gourmet burger. For 0.50€ and 1€ euro you can customize it.

## **STREET XS0**



Street XS0 serves modern and contemporary food. Chicken marinated in sweet chilli, smoked razor clams in olive oil and grilled tataki butter fish are just some of the wonderful dishes that you can enjoy in this great stand.

**LA MAQUINA**





If you're in the mood for traditional Spanish cuisine, then go to La Maquina, where you can find delicious tapas and pinchos. Tortilla de patatas, *pincho de jamón*, cheese, and delicious *bocadillos*. We love the food but we love the prices even more. What truly stands out about La Maquina is its simplicity and good quality food.

## CENTRAL MEXICANA





One of our favourites is always crowded and don't get me wrong, I understand why. On the menu, we can find all types of delicious Mexican dishes, from traditional enchiladas to wonderful tacos. And let's not forget about the generous salads and nachos topped with cheese and guacamole. My favorite dishes are the chicken taco Coyoacan and the nachos with guacamole. The prices are very reasonable. You can get two tacos for 6€.

## **TSE YANG DIMSUM CLUB**



If you love sushi and Japanese cuisine in general, then TYDC is for you!

**AMORINO**





If you've got a sweet tooth, Amorino will be your parries. Here you can enjoy ice cream, sorbets, waffles and pancakes with an infinite variety of toppings. They also serve great drinks, like milk shakes and frappes. Now they also sell macaroons that are out of this world!

**AL CUADRADO**





There can be no Gourmet space without a place for pizzas and the ones here are simply delicious. These are served “*al corte*” and “*al taglio*” as the Italians say, and the price depends on the weight. What we like the most about this pizza place is that they try to innovate, although always with a very Mediterranean touch.

## HARINA



Perfect for breakfast, lunch, dinner or an afternoon tea. Many Madrileños already know this space because it's not the only Harina. We love how they mix the minimalist touch of their decoration with the more traditional cuisine. The breads and cakes are simply delicious. Our suggestion: "empanada de bonito" (tuna empanada) and a cup of coffee.

## **JUANILLO CLUB**





A 1950's-style cocktail bar located in the heart of Madrid! Here you can enjoy traditional cocktails as the caipirinha, mojitos, bloody marries, cosmopolitans, etc., to the most avant-garde cocktails. In addition, you can accompany them with some delicious oysters. What else can you ask for?

**ASADORES IMANOL**





Here we can find a piece of San Sebastian and its traditional “pintxos”. We’ve fallen in love with their simple and unpretentious menu. Our suggestions: For cold pintxos, go with the Iberian ham and *boqueron en vinagres* (anchovies in vinegar). For hot pintxos, go with the croquettes and *solomillo* (pork tenderloin). When it comes to tapas: We are passionate about the *tortilla española* (Spanish potato omelet) and *huevos rotos con jamón* (french fries topped with two fried eggs and ham).

Plus, the prices are more than reasonable: 2.35€ and 2.50€ for any of the pintxos. 4.90€ for desserts. The price on tapas ranges from 8 to 11 euros.

*So, what do you think? Are you going to leave Madrid without having had a gourmet experience atop El Corte Inglés?*

**Where:** Corte Inglés Callao. 9th floor.

**Metros:** Callao, Sol and Gran Vía.

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## **Tacos, tamales and tequila: the best Mexican joints in Madrid**

If you had to eat just one type of cuisine for the rest of your life, what would you choose? For me, Mexican food wins hands down every time. I could happily munch on chilaquiles for breakfast, enchiladas for lunch, pozole for dinner and still have room for a few tacos al pastor or some juicy tamales...all washed down with several delicious micheladas of course. I spent a year working in Mexico after I finished university and it wasn't nearly long enough to sample all the delicious treats on offer, although I did manage to squeeze in tequila ice cream, grasshoppers and mezcal with worm salt, amongst other things!

So where can you get your Mexican fix in Madrid? Avoid the expensive chain restaurants and the Tex-Mex joints, and instead try one of these gems:

**[Taquería Mi Ciudad](#) (Calle Hileras 5 and Calle Fuentes 11 <m> Sol/Ópera)**



The infamous Gringa at Taquería Mi Ciudad

As the name suggests, tacos are the star of the show here: pastor, cochinita pibil, tinga, carnitas...they've got them all, as well as the usual staples like guacamole, quesadillas and frijoles. My personal favourite is the Gringa, a heavenly combination of carne al pastor, cheese and pineapple sandwiched between two flour tortillas...it needs to be eaten to be believed! If you sit at the bar you can watch the taco man work his magic, although there are plenty of tables for larger groups. Alternatively, you could hop one street over to the original restaurant on Calle Fuentes, which has standing room for about 10.

**[La Malinche](#)** (Calle Torija 10 <m> Santo Domingo)





Image from [www.facebook.com/lamalinche.madrid](http://www.facebook.com/lamalinche.madrid)

This place is the real deal, a Spanish-Mexican husband and wife dream team. He concocts delicious micheladas and margaritas at the bar upstairs, whilst she rustles up delicious sopas, huaraches and all other manner of delights in the kitchen below. Even the tortillas are homemade. The portions are very generous so make sure you go with an empty belly! Great value for money.

**Antigua Taquería** (Calle Cabestreros <m>  
La Latina/Tirso de Molina/Lavapiés and  
Calle Áncora 19 <m> Palos de la Frontera)



## Antigua Taquería

An amazing hybrid of traditional bar de toda la vida and Mexican hipster joint. The menu here is limited – just tacos, nachos and quesadillas – but everything on it is absolutely divine. I have a particular weakness for their quesadillas and always end up ordering the huitlacoche one...it translates as corn smut which sounds grim, but don't knock it until you've tried it. Heap some of their delicious salsas on top and you're good to go...just watch out for the red one! Luckily they also make a mean margarita for you to wash it all down with.

**Tepic (Calle Pelayo 4 <m> Chueca)**



Image from [www.facebook.com/restauranteTEPIC](https://www.facebook.com/restauranteTEPIC)

I had my first ride in a pick-up truck, learned to dance to banda and tried ceviche for the first time in the Mexican state of Tepic, so I'll always think of it fondly. Tepic in Chueca doesn't disappoint either, with its varied menu of tacos, flautas, enchiladas and other tasty treats. They even have soups, salads and vegetarian options, just make sure you leave room for one of their delicious desserts! If you're looking for a more upmarket meal in a swanky restaurant which manages to avoid all the usual Mexican clichés whilst still being thoroughly Mexican, this is your place.

For more on **Tepic**, check out our friends [post here](#) with mouth-watering photos.

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# Hattori Hanzo, Japanese food straight-up. No sushi.

I rekindled my love for Japanese food when I went for dinner at [Hattori Hanzo](#) with friends on Tuesday night. Our group of seven had no reservation, yet the waiters fit us in at the bar and then moved us to a table just in time for our first round of dumplings.



Located a few steps from Gran Vía, **Hattori Hanzo** is a Japanese *izakaya*, meaning a casual bar that acts as a



gathering place for coworkers and friends. It's similar to a Spanish tapas bar; food is served to accompany drinks, not the other way around. That's why the ambience here is rather laid back.

**Hattori Hanzo** specializes in a variety of traditional Japanese dishes such as *okonomiyaki*, *takoyaki*, and grilled meat and fish skewers, offering a number of combination platters and sizes. Plus it's vegetarian-friendly, affordable, and has a big space with a great seating arrangement.

In the front room, you can dine at the bar (note: no sushi!) or at a six-person table under a red canopy, where we sat. The red canopy sheds a fiery red hue over everything, so we apologize for the red-tinted food pics you're about to see.



You can also sit in the back room at tables sunken into the



floor. I can't quite explain it so please have a look at the photos below.





When it comes to food, you've got a ton of options. The menu is separated into three parts: the first includes starters such as **Nira Gyoza** delicious pork **dumplings** with a spicy sesame sauce.



The second part includes larger plates meant for sharing between two or three people, such as the **Omu-yakisoba** (Japanese yakisoba noodles in a thin and flavorful tortilla) and **Dorayaki Shuriken** (Japanese pancakes).



Lastly, the third column offers tapas-sized skewers of Japanese delights such as chicken ginger meatballs and marinated eggplant and salmon. You can order these skewers individually (ranging in price from 2-5€). Or you can order them in platters: the **7 Samurai** platter includes Hattori's seven most popular skewers for **€16.20** (which I ordered with James) and the **3 Imperial Treasures** platter (which I'll try next time) includes three Japanese delicacies such as **Unayi Kabanaki** (grilled eel) and **Taro** (tuna) for €18.90.





For dessert, we got **Kuro Goma Matcha Ice Cream** (black sesame and matcha ice cream) and **Matcha Ichigo Roll Cake** (rolled pastry with matcha, strawberry and anko, meaning red bean paste).







So you're probably wondering about the price. Each of us had a few drinks, split a starter and shared a main dish and dessert. The bill came out to **18€ per person**. For the quality and the ambience, I'd say it was absolutely worth it.

## Info

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Mesoneros Romanos 15

Metro: Callao or Gran Vía

**More Asian restaurants featured on Naked**



## Madrid:

- [Ramen Kagura, Madrid's \(almost\) perfect ramen bar](#)
  - [Kintaro – Oy Vey](#)
  - [Sumo – This Japanese restaurant's name says it all](#)
  - [Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food](#)
  - [Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant](#)
  - [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](#)
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**The Table By: A new gastronomic concept to bring restaurants from across Spain (including chefs and utensils) to Madrid!**

### The Table: a new gastronomic concept

Over the next six months, six leading restaurants from across Spain will come to Madrid for one month at a time. Along with them, they'll be bringing their very own dishes, cuisine, local products and chefs to offer a truly unique gastronomic experience in the heart of the Spanish capital. [The Table](#) calls itself a pop-up restaurant, although it's much more; it is a new gastronomic adventure that is taking the

idea of “pop-up” to a whole new level.

# THE TABLE

BY

ABASTOS 2.0





Image from: [The Table By](#)

## The Team: [Better](#)

[Better](#) is the young and creative team behind [The Table](#). An unconventional agency that organizes pop up markets and events, Better's projects have one thing in common: they are unique, creative and innovative. On this occasion, Better is creating **The Table** in collaboration with Hotel Urso and Alejandra Anson, Director of Elite Gourmet. Together they have brought a new concept to Madrid.

## The Place: [Hotel Urso](#)



Image from: [URSO Hotel & Spa Madrid](#)

Located in the center of Madrid, [Hotel Urso](#) opened its doors in August and its building dates from 1915. Urso was a fine choice to host such an event, as it is one of the most

beautiful hotels I have ever seen.

## The Idea: Bring a whole restaurant to Madrid

The core idea behind **The Table** is essentially common – hotels invite star chefs to their kitchens all the time. However, Better has gone even further, as they thought: **Why only bring a chef when you can bring the whole restaurant?**

**The Table** invites restaurants to come to Madrid for a month to serve their dishes while using their own utensils and products, as well as promote their region's cuisine. What's more, the team at Better visits the original restaurant prior to the event to get inspiration from its surroundings and decorate the space at Hotel Urso accordingly. So it's as if you were transported to a restaurant in Galicia, Bilbao, Barcelona, Cantabria ....

## What's on now: Abastos 2.0 from Galicia

For this first event, **The Table** is recreating Galicia. Until November 23rd, you can enjoy authentic dishes by two young Galician chefs, Marcos Cerqueiro and Iago Pazos, from Abastos 2.0, a restaurant that has three locations: Taberna, Galphón and 0 Loxe.



The decor is also original, elegant and minimalist.





For this first occasion, the team bought bottles, buckets, plates, etc., and pasted them to the wall to reflect different cultural traits of the region.

**Abastos** is located in the wonderful city of **Santiago de Compostela**. Their kitchen is 100% Galician, and so is the wine. You'll notice that the products they use are not only fresh but also completely authentic. Here in Madrid, at Hotel Urso, you'll find yourself eating the same fish from the same fishmonger that the restaurant uses back home in Galicia, as they made sure to get it delivered to Madrid for The Table.



This is a “recogedor de migas de pan” (a crumb duster), the original one that the restaurant uses in their galician restaurant.

Galicia’s cuisine is known for its “materia prima” (raw material) which is why the tasting menu focuses on just a few star ingredients from the region, such as octopus (pulpo), pan gallego (Galician bread), and marisco (seafood). The restaurant has prepared two typically Galician tasting menus for the event. The first menu consists of **9 dishes (45€)** and the second, **12 dishes (60€)**. Wine is not included.

So, friends, if you want to enjoy a bit of different Spanish cuisine, do not miss out on **The Table**.

We will let you know about future restaurants, but we’ll give you a hint now: the next event is scheduled for December and will be Basque-inspired..

## Details:

Make a reservation at [The Table](#)

[URSO Hotel & Spa](#)

**Location:** Mejía Lequerica, 8

**Metro:** Chueca or Tribunal

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# Exercise opportunities in Madrid

This Saturday, I went to my first zumba class in Madrid. I was excited about my first taste of zumba in Madrid, but going the morning after Halloween was a bit of a blunder. For those who haven't heard of it before, zumba is basically a mix of latino style dancing, which is especially great for those who lack much coordination and/or rhythm like me because the moves are repeated and straight-forward (and you can get away with the moves which you should never really show in public).

So with my back-combed hair, splodges of face paint, fake blood and "bruises" from my "Freaky Doll" costume from the night still partially visible, I put on my sunglasses and dragged my sorry hungover self to my first zumba class.





This is what I looked like *after* the zumba class... ;)

When we arrived at the mercado on Calle de Santa Isabelle by San Antón metro we discovered that the building was covered in scaffolding, and looked fairly desolate. We were on the verge of giving up when we eventually followed some people into the building (so those who wish to try out the first zumba class on the list, persevere my friends, you will find the door eventually!)

To my relief it appeared that the entire class was suffering from the “Halloween Hangover”, even the instructor, which really helped the group to bond as we discussed where we had gone the night before. The class started promptly with some warm-up routines, followed by routines of varying intensities. A special mention to the “sunshine dance” which really makes you smile (until you catch a glimpse of yourself in the

mirror!) There was a great mix of music from the likes of Enrique Iglesias, prompting salsa style movement and more hip hop and Bollywood music influences. You literally can't wipe the smile off your face at times as you see yourself with arms and legs flailing all over the place, (well in my case at least!) The incredibly smiley instructor had so much energy and lead the class well, with lots of encouragement and occasional "whooping"! By the end of the class, everyone was sweaty but smiley and we paid our 5 euros (which is great value I think!) and left, promising that we would come again next week. I had almost forgotten about my Halloween hangover, until that is I gorged myself on some delicious Mexican food, after which point I decided it was about time I went home and had a nap.

After my zumba experience, which my friend Mita stumbled across on [Lingo Bongo](#), I decided to investigate further and discovered a wealth of exercise opportunities, especially on lingobongo and [Meet ups Madrid](#). Cheap zumba classes like this are among Madrid's best kept secrets, especially for those who don't wish to fork out their well-earned wages on gym fees. To save you some time, I've compiled a list of some of these weekly classes, activities and clubs to join, (but bear in mind there are a wealth of options available). It is a great way to meet people and even practice some Spanish, for those who are getting tired of doing intercambios over a beer and fancy trying something new.

**If you are into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: [www.goguiiri.com](http://www.goguiiri.com) where you can also read my running diary.**

## **Exercise opportunities: Zumba &**

# Yoga

## Zumba classes

**What:** Cheap zumba classes in the centre of Madrid with a very smiley English instructor.

**When:** Every week on Saturday 1pm and Wednesday 9pm,

**Where:** metro Anton Martín. Calle de Santa Isabelle (the big market building) don't be deceived it is open, keep trying all the doors. Upstairs Sala 4 of Amor de Dios Flamenco School

**Price:** €5

## Bootcamp España

**What:** A group which was formed in 2009, which combine a variety of outdoor exercises inspired by US marine an effective way to get into shape.

**When:** Madrid Rio (Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8pm – 9pm) and Retiro (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday various times & Saturday 10:30 am –12 pm)

**Where:** Madrid Rio and Retiro Park

**Price:** First session for free (sign up online), then €52 for a month.

**Check it out:** [Boot Camp España](#)

## Weekend yoga retreats

**What:** Regular weekend retreats organised by Yogamente including healthy food (all vegetarian and homemade), yoga sessions all in English. No need for previous yoga experience.

**When:** Weekend retreats, check Facebook for regular updates.

**Where:** In the beautiful countryside around Madrid.



**Price:** Depends on retreat, but average 190 euros (includes accommodation, homemade food and all activities)

**Check it out:** email [info@yogamente.com](mailto:info@yogamente.com) for availability. Follow on Facebook for regular updates of new retreats: [Yogamente Facebook](#)

## **Hatha Yoga and Zumba classes**

**What:** Two instructors from Colorado who have started up zumba and yoga classes. They offer affordable classes for all levels (seasoned and beginners).

**When:** Usually Saturday afternoons – check out Facebook for regular updates. Next zumba class: Date: Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2.30 pm. Next yoga class: November 8<sup>th</sup>, 3.30 pm.

**Where:** El Horno C/ Esgrima, 11. It's in studio 9 which is up the stairs when you first walk in, then enter the main doors and make a right and another right, go down towards the end of the hall and you are there!

**Price:** only 5€ (because everyone should be able to afford fitness, and it's for an hour and a half!)

**Check it out:** [Z & Y Fitness Madrid](#)

## **Hiking**

### **Intercambio hiking group**

**What:** Group called Hiking Madrid that organises weekly hiking events for mountain lovers who wish to meet new people of all nationalities who have a mutual interest in hiking.

**When:** weekly events

**Where:** mountains in Madrid. Each event will give you information about where to meet and catch the bus from.

**Price:** Depends on the expedition, it is often simply the cost of transport.

**Check it out:** Website [Hiking Madrid](http://Hiking_Madrid) or email [hikingmadrid@hikingmadrid.com](mailto:hikingmadrid@hikingmadrid.com) and you can sign up for regular newsletters. Follow on Facebook for regular updates and upcoming events: [Facebook Hiking Madrid](https://www.facebook.com/HikingMadrid)



Organised by Hiking Madrid. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

## Spanish hiking group

**What:** Regular hikes organised by “*senderismo entre semana*” on meet up website. This group has great reviews and it is a good opportunity to meet more Spaniards.

**When:** Weekly hikes.

**Where:** Mountains around Madrid.

**Price:** Transport to mountains, dependent on hike.

**Check it out:** [Senderismo entre semana](#)

## Join a sports team: Basketball and Football

### Babelsket Madrid (beginner's basketball)

**What:** Free basketball for beginners. *Babelsket* Madrid is a motley bunch of not very skilled basketball players who heartily welcome all those who want to join their nice-and-friendly games in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

**When:** On Sundays at 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

**Where:** The court is in Calle Puerto Rico 54 (metro Colombia)

**Price:** It's free!

**Check it out:** Add your name to the list at: [Babelsket](#)

### More competitive basketball (and practice your Spanish too!)

**What:** Competitive basketball team in Madrid for those who have played before and would consider themselves good players. Join a friendly Spanish team that play in the Majadahonda league.

**When:** Training once a week on a Wednesday.



**Where:** Majadahonda (you may need to catch the cercanías).

**Price:** Not specified.

**Check it out:** email: [ivanalvarez74@hotmail.com](mailto:ivanalvarez74@hotmail.com) and double check price and location.

## **Competitive Football teams**

**1. What:** Fútbol Club Británico 1st team is looking to welcome new players to the club for this new season. You can train with a UEFA licensed coach and play against other teams. Home and away games so lots of opportunities to travel and see more of Spain too.

**When:** Get in touch for more details.

**Where:** Get in touch for more details.

**Price:** Get in touch for more details.

**Check it out:** website [FCI Britanico](http://FCI_Britanico) or email [regional.manager@fcbritanico.com](mailto:regional.manager@fcbritanico.com) or whatsapp 609754169. Follow on twitter: @BritanicoFC or on Facebook: [Facebook Fútbol Club Británico](https://www.facebook.com/FutbolClubBritanico)



The Fútbol Club Británico team after 2-2 draw against visiting side Brent FC. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

**2. What:** *International 5-a-side Football League* has been connecting foreigners and locals in Madrid since 1988. So get in touch and sign up!

**When:** Get in touch for more details.

**Where:** Get in touch for more details.

**Price:** Get in touch for more details.

**Check it out:** website: [IFL Madrid](#) and Facebook: [IFL Madrid](#)

**If you know of any more clubs, societies or groups that I forgot to mention, or if you are starting up your own classes or your team needs new members**

– please leave a comment!

Also, check out our post: [Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid](#) for more ideas!