

Taberna Griega, a real neighborhood Greek restaurant in Madrid

It took me seven years of searching, but only one bite to know I had finally discovered Madrid's most authentic Greek restaurant, **Taberna Griega**.

Although I grew up in New York City, my father was born and raised in Greece. Like many Greek-American families, we were the proud owners of a Greek restaurant. We also took regular month-long summer vacations to Greece, eating our way through small mountain villages, seaside spots and family gatherings large and small. So I do feel somewhat of an authority on Greek food to tell you that **Taberna Griega** is the real deal!



Taberna Griega is owned and run by Teo, a Greek man from Volos who has been living in Madrid for 37 years. Located in a residential neighborhood near metro Pacífico, this restaurant is the kind of place you won't find out about in guidebooks, mainly because of its location and lack of modernity, which is precisely what gives it its charm. I only heard about it from a friend who lives in the area.



The after-dinner shot lit all our throats on fire, except for Kaloyan, who says it's nothing compared to some Bulgarian alcohols he's tried. I'll take his word for it.

My friends and I had been planning on getting Greek food for a while because we like to try each other's home cuisine. We've gone to [Taberna Bulgara](#) with Kaloyan, and to a Filipino restaurant with Lorelie. With James it's pretty easy, as he's from Spain. With Edison, however, it's a bit tricky as he's from Taiwan and there are no Taiwanese restaurants that we know of in Madrid. But since he's also of Japanese heritage, he makes us Japanese curry at home and we frequent Japanese restaurants like [Kintaro](#) and [Sumo](#).

So it was time for us to eat Greek food in light of where my father's from. When we arrived at **Taberna Griega** on a rainy Sunday at 2pm, we instantly realized how wonderfully Greek this place was. The walls are painted blue and white to match

the Aegean sea. In case that's not enough to tell you it's Greek, you can also look around at the statues of Greek gods, or of course, at the Greek flags displayed in every corner.





But these over-the-top decorations shouldn't surprise you if you've seen the film, 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding'. What will surprise you, however, is the delicious meal you can get for under 20€.

We started with a round of drinks at the crowded bar alongside neighborhood patrons. Teo appreciated my effort to speak in the little Greek I remembered (my vocabulary is that of a three-year-old). Make sure to thank him and the staff with an enthusiastic *efharistó* (thanks) when leaving! When we moved to our table beside Aphrodite, we ordered four starters to share – a Greek peasant salad, taramá, tzatziki and spinach and cheese pies.



A typical way to start a Greek meal is with different dips, salads and pita bread.



Tzatziki is a dip made of yogurt, cucumber, garlic and dill. Absolutely delicious with pita bread.



Taramasalata is a creamy dip made of fish roe, usually mixed with either bread crumbs or mashed potatoes.



Spanakopita (spinach pie) and tiropita (cheese pie). On the menu you'll find them called 'empanadas griegas'

For the main course, Kaloyan ordered **souvlaki** (meat skewers), and I ordered **gemistá** (roasted red pepper stuffed with meat and rice). And James, Edison and Lorelie ordered the mixed meat platter of two chicken skewers, **befteki** (Greek hamburgers filled with feta cheese) and gyro meat.



Souvlaki, either lamb or veal skewers (Kalo ordered veal)



Gemistá, stuffed bell peppers filled with meat and rice. So good.



Mixed meat platter for 2-3 people

For dessert, we got the two most popular and delicious Greek sweets, **baklava** and **kataifi**, both made of honey, nuts and filo dough.



Baklavi



Kataifi

At the end of our meal, Teo gave us a round of shots to help us recover from what we had just devoured, and the bill came out to 20€ each. So if you've craving some real Greek food or want to experience an unpretentious neighborhood restaurant in Madrid, then here you are!

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Address: Juan de Urbietta, 6

Metro: Pacífico

Phone: 914 34 89 19

If you're looking for a more take-away Greek place in the center, you should definitely go to Greek & Shop in Malasaña.

And if you're looking for an authentic Bulgarian restaurant, you must go to Taberna Bulgaria.