

Running Events in Madrid: February

Put your running shoes on this February! From cross country routes, to half marathons and duathlons...whatever floats your boat!

As always, Madrid has come up trumps this month with a range of different runs to choose from. I have listed all the runs I could find, some in central Madrid, while others are further afield in **Torrejón de Ardos**, **San Sebastian de Los Reyes** and **Parla**, to name a few.

I'm getting nervous already for my second half marathon ([10a Media Maratón de La Latina](#)), as I've already signed up for it, no going back now...

So here is what February has in store for you:

1. Corre por una causa

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 1st February, 9:30 am

Where: Lago at Casa de Campo

[Website](#)

2. II Maratón Via Verde del Tajuna

Distance: 42 kilometres (21 k & 30 k also possible)

When: Sunday, 1st February, 8:50 am

Where: Madrid, Metro: Arganda del Rey

[Website](#)

3. I Carrera Popular villa de Brunete

Distance: 42 kilometres (21 k & 30 k also possible)

When: Sunday, 1st February, 11:00 am

Where: Madrid, Metro: Arganda del Rey

[Website](#)

4. XV Dos Leguas Fuente de La Chopera

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 1st February, 10:45 am

Where: Leganes, Madrid, Parque de la Chopera

[Website](#)

5. I Campeonato Duatlon Circuito del Jarama Gran Premio Fangio

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 1st February, 11:00 am

Where: San Sebastian de los Reyes, Madrid

[Website](#)

6. XIII Cross del Rector de La Universidad Camilo Jose Cela

Distance: 4 & 8 kilometres (cross country)

When: Saturday, 7th February, 12:00 am

Where: Villafranca del Castillo, Madrid

[Website](#)

7. IV Carrera Solidaria Manos Unidas

Distance: 5 kilometres

When: Saturday, 7th February, 12:00 am

Where: Torrejón de Ardoz, Parque del Ocio, Madrid

[Website](#)

8. II We Run 10k Ciudad de Parla

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 8th February, 10:00 am

Where: Parla, Los Prados

[Website](#)

9. Medio Maraton Distrito de Fuencarral

Distance: 21 kilometres

When: Sunday, 8th February, 9:00 am

Where: Madrid

[Website](#)

10. III Maratón de Cobena

Distance: 42 kilometres

When: Saturday, 14th February, 12:30 am

Where: Cobena, Madrid

11. Cross Universidad de Alcalá de Henares

Distance: 4 & 8 kilometres (cross country)

When: Saturday, 14th February, 12:00 am

Where: Alcalá de Henares, Madrid

12. Patones Xtrem 2015

Distance: 14 kilometres (mountain running)

When: Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am

Where: Frontón de Patones de Abajo

[Website](#)

13. 1a Carrera Popular Cerro Tablado

Distance: 10 kilometres (cross country)

When: Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am

Where: Granja Cerro Tablado

[Website](#)

14. Cross de Valdebebas

Distance: 10 kilometres (cross country)

When: Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am

Where: Madrid

[Website](#)

15. V Raid Villa de Madrid

Distance: 20 kilometres

When: Saturday, 21st February, 08:30 am

Where: Jardines de Sabatina, Madrid

[Website](#)

16. XI Combi-Dos Torrejón

Distance: 25 kilometres

When: Sunday, 22nd February, 10:30 am

Where: Torrejón de Ardoz, Madrid

[Website](#)

17. 10a Media Maratón de La Latina

Distance: 21 kilometres

When: Sunday, 22nd February, 9:30 am

Where: Madrid, C/ Guareña, Metro: Aluche

[Website](#)

18. II Carrera Solidaria Medula para Mateo

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Saturday, 28th February, 10:00 am

Where: Parque Juan Carlos I, Madrid

[Website](#)

If you are interested in staying up to date on running events in Madrid, or reading my “running diary” please subscribe to [GoGuri](http://www.gogui.com) (www.gogui.com) my personal running blog.



**Baobab, an Authentic
Senegalese Restaurant in**

Lavapiés

Plaza Nelson Mandela, near *Calle Cabestreros*, is my favorite communal space in Madrid. The plaza is a concrete social hub, perfect for *botellon* and people watching. Situated here is **Baobab, a Senegalese restaurant** that is always *petado* (packed). I had been living near the restaurant for several months before I made a point of seeing what all the hubbub is about.





Baobab did not disappoint—at the time I called it the final frontier of my palate. My first dish was the **Maffe**, a warm peanut and veal curry containing an assortment of vegetables, served with rice. Another popular dish, **Thieboudienne**, consists of fish, onions, cabbage, carrots and peanut oil and a dulce mystery vegetable with a distinct creamy texture. **The skewers of chicken or lamb** and caramelized onions are served over potatoes and salad that become soaked in the delicious juices from the meat. At any given time the restaurant only serves half of what is offered on their menu, with an unpredictable rotation. The plates available are recited quickly by the server—I often need to ask him to repeat himself.

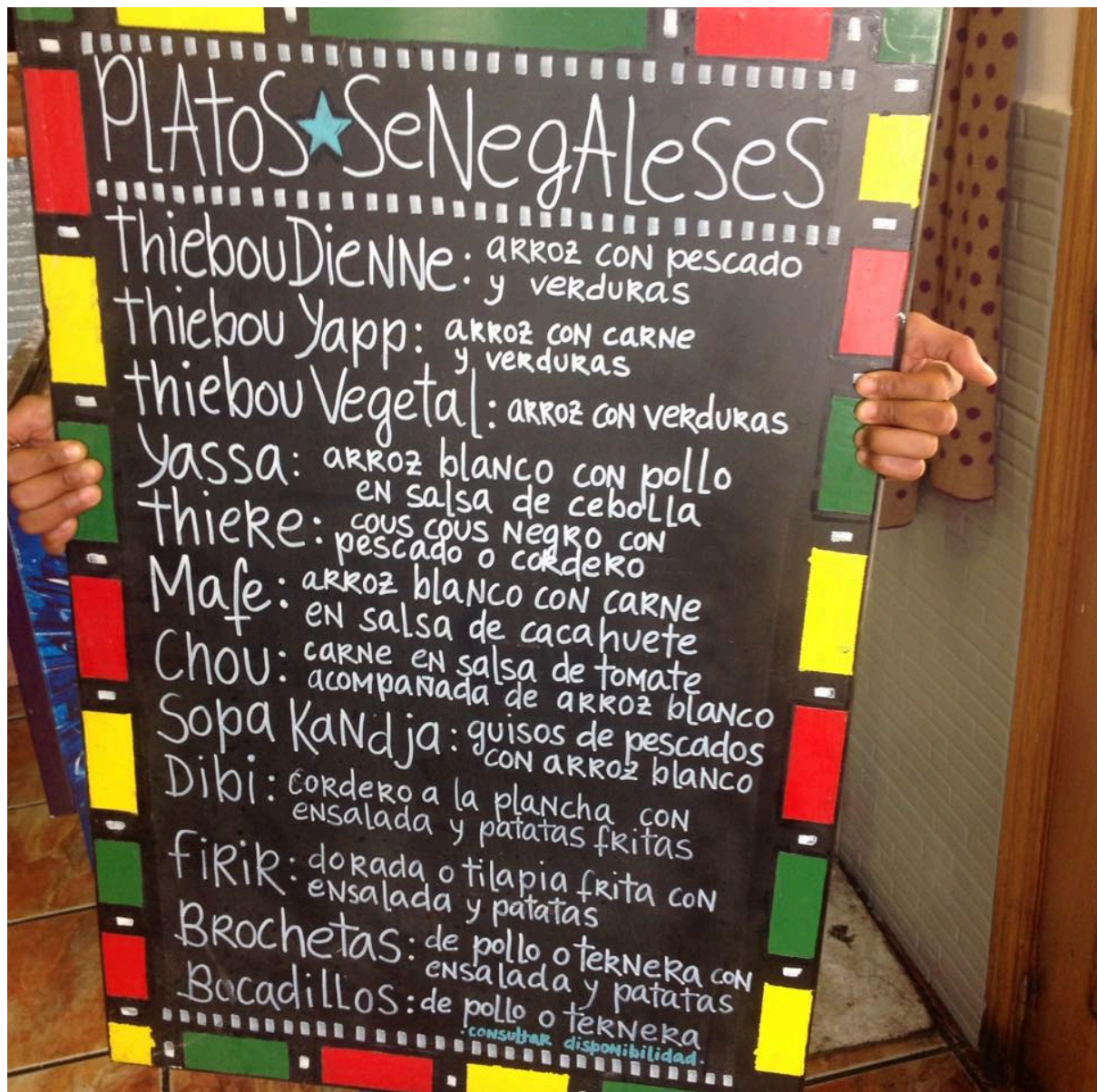


What amazed me about this establishment is that **each portion is monstrous**—often too much to eat in one sit down, even for a notoriously hungry foodie such as myself. **Leftovers can be rationed for several days.** It is known that diners are rewarded with even larger portions for ordering their food take-away.



In the warmer seasons, **Baobab's terraza** is a desirable location for diners who wish to observe the lively happenings in **Plaza Nelson Mandela**. I've seen large groups of young people swing dancing, children assembling DIY badminton or tetherball, with a vast majority of the chatter in languages that are not English or Spanish.





It is important to note that the terraza is a common target for petty criminals—especially after the Rastro on Sundays—because they are aware that the restaurant is popular amongst Madrileños who hail from outside the barrio. Be wary of your possessions and the occasional pickpockets who often have noticeable lingering presences.

Contact: 91 530 4611

Address: Calle Cabestreros 1

Metros: Tirso de Molina or Lavapies

Products & Prices: All rice dishes: 7€. Skewers of Chicken or Lamb: 8€

Casa Adela, a Revered Hole-in-the-Wall Rotisserie in Lavapies

[Casa Adela](#)'s chickens have been a staple for cheap eats during my time abroad. A tiny and intimate space on Calle Embajadores, Adela's is a watering hole for the residents of the barrio. **Adela's is a family-owned business operated by Señora Adela and her sons.** During their 20 years of business they have refined their process of preparing rotisserie chickens and fried chicken breasts to perfection.



Besides her culinary expertise, Adela radiates a real affection for her diners. She shows it by showering recurring clients with terms of endearment such as *corazon* and *cariño* and by taking the time to stop and talk to them about their lives, always remembering particular details from the previous conversations. I would never have discovered **this hidden gem** had my first Madrid apartment not been directly across from it—we would often joke about creating a delivery system via basket and pulleys.



Adela's holds a tender place in my heart because **I have learned so much Spanish slang from listening to their banter** amongst themselves and with their clients. Here, the unique sense of community in **Lavapies** is visibly apparent. I

initially met two of my neighbors, fellow *extranjeros* Matt and James, while waiting in line for a chicken during my first year. This chance encounter directly resulted with my absorption into the larger social circle that has now become my family.

After I moved out of my initial apartment on Calle del Oso, I feared that I would lose such easy access to my primary source of protein. Fortunately, I was told that they hired an employee to make deliveries on his scooter within the barrio for a 0.50€ cent supplement. I often stop by and say hello while grabbing a bite when walking down Calle Embajadores. It's comforting to frequent an establishment that is visibly frozen in time and has gone unchanged for 2 decades.

Would you like to try Adela's revered chickens?

Facebook

Contact: 91 530 4611

Address: Calle Embajadores 28

Metros: La Latina or Tirso de Molina

Products & Prices:

Half rotisseries chicken or fried chicken breast + fries or rice (5.50€)

Full rotisserie chicken (7.50€)

Hamburger (2€)

Albondigas (meatballs) (5€)

Our other favorite place to get rotisserie chicken is [Casa Mingo](#), which is an absolute must in Madrid. If you haven't been, check out our post on it [here](#).

StreetX0 – An Eclectic Fusion of High and Low, East and West

If you're a foodie living in Madrid, then you've probably heard of [DiverX0](#), the Michelin three star gourmet restaurant born from the wild mind of Mohawk-totting creator and chef **David Muñoz**. If you haven't, watch [this video](#) first.

Muñoz has been omnipresent in gossip media ever since TV personality **Cristina Pedroche** recently confirmed rumors about their relationship on Twitter. Though, young, punkish, and charming, Muñoz is a celebrity in his own right – he even stars in his own [Mercedes ad](#), playing cheeky about his Michelin accolades.

A quick look at DiverX0's reservations online shows there are no openings till June; however, luckily for those of us who don't have reservations or who can't wait to sample Muñoz's creations, there's **StreetX0**. Originally opened in 2012, StreetX0 is Muñoz's more casual and affordable restaurant.



Recently relocated at **El Corte Ingles's Gourmet Experience** on Serrano 52, the restaurant boasts exciting decor, delicious cocktails, and intriguing food. It's no surprise that Muñoz serves up Asian-inspired dishes seeing as he cut his teeth at Nobu and Hakkasaan in London. His fare, though, is a little grittier, as the name of his new restaurant implies – the decor and the food are supposed conjure up a wet market in Hong Kong or a food alley in Singapore (minus the cockroaches). Upturned crates serve as bar stools and neon signs line the walls.





First things first, as soon as you sit down, somebody comes and gets your cocktail order – doesn't matter if you're coming

for lunch or dinner. The cocktails are beautiful, perfumed concoctions that put you in the right mood for the feast to come.



An open kitchen sits at the heart of the restaurant breathing hot and loud as chefs wearing straight-jacket-like coats call

out the orders and stoke the coals. Definitely try to get a bar seat, you'll get dinner and a show.





When you hear '**sandwich**' called out every few minutes you know that's one thing on the menu you *have* to order. The *Sandwich Club* sounds inconspicuous and unexciting compared

to the rest of the menu, but that is where your assumptions would be wrong.



Now, does that look like any club sandwich you've ever had? I thought not. The fried egg tops a Chinese *bao* filled with succulent, melt-in-your-mouth pork. Bizarre, unlikely, and strangely good. Then there's the Korean inspired wonton lasagna dish and the Mexican mole dish with obligatory chips drizzled over tender quail.





The mole is served on a thick, waxy paper, no plate. When you're done, they just crumple the paper-plate up and take it away. If you're craving desert after, you'll have to take yourself to the frozen yogurt stand on the same floor, as StreetX0 doesn't serve sweets. But hey, who needs sweets when you have cocktails?



With the music pulsing in the background and a delicious, albeit expensive, cocktail list, it's easy to see why this spot is so hot – no matter the time of day, there's always a line. Atmosphere and energy trump food here, but the food is worth it, too, just be sure to get there very early (at least half-an-hour before opening) or very late (past nine-thirty) if you don't want to have to wait in line.

Address: Serrano, 52

Times: Sun 11:00 am – 12:00 am. Mon – Sat 10:00 am – 12:00 am.

There's also a happening [Gourmet Experience at the Corte](#)

[Inglés at Callao](#) with an outdoor rooftop terrace. Check out our previous article on it [here](#).

Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid

It's noon on a Sunday, you have just peeled off the covers and opened the blinds, and it's decision time: breakfast or lunch? Who says you have to choose? Brunch, combining the best of both meals, is a concept quickly growing in Madrid, and with multiple affordable options, you don't have to break the bank to enjoy a delicious meal!

1. Ojalá (featured in the cover photo and rightly so)



Located on one of Malasaña's narrow streets, you might walk right past Ojalá without realizing the hidden treasure that lies inside. At first glance, this café appears to be another one of Malasaña's trendy locales, with groovy colored light bulbs dispersed around the café, and bleacher-like seating across from the kitchen, with a clear window allowing a look inside as mouth-watering food is being prepared. Head downstairs for more seating, and you will find yourself being transported quite literally to a sandbar, with sand serving in place of carpet or wood flooring. Get comfy on the lounge

chairs and tables low to the ground, feeling warmed immediately by the heat lamps for added effect. A tikki bar completes the look at one end of the “beach.”



The extensive brunch menu offers a little something for everyone, and is all-encompassing, including a coffee or tea (taking care of caffeination needs), and the choice of juice, soda, beer or wine. No detail is overlooked, with fresh juice accompanied by a paper crafted straw served in a tasteful glass bottle.

As for the food, options include something for those looking for something on the sweeter side, with offerings of pastries and fresh fruits, or savory platters, including “World Mix”: organic cornbread with hummus, guacamole, poached egg, and a side of fruit salad and arugula lightly dressed, artfully served on a wooden plank.

It’s hard to leave the oasis that is Ojalá, but it provides the ultimate refuge for a weekend afternoon no matter the season, with outdoor seating when the weather permits.

Facebook

Price for brunch menu: €8-12€

Where: Calle de San Andres, 1

Metro: Noviciado/Tribunal

2. Little Big Café



With less than 10 tables inside, the Little Big Café is a cozy spot situated in Chamberí, with chalkboards inside advertising the expansive menu offerings. You are drawn in immediately by the cakes, pies, brownies, and other assorted bakery items displayed on the counter before you have even glanced at the brunch menu. (Don't worry, the sweets are on that menu too).



This café, with the tagline “A little café with a big heart,” is just that, with friendly staff willing to spend time explaining the menu to you. Wooden benches and tables add to the neighborhood feel of the café, along with the bulletin board with Polaroid’s of the “Club VIP” of Little Big.



The brunch menu allows diners the “Menu Cerrado,” a hearty offering that includes both a savory and sweet dish, choice of beverage, a dessert (head to the counter to survey which pastries suit your fancy), and a coffee or tea. Alternatively, diners can pick and choose from sandwiches, French toast or pancakes with your choice of toppings, or the brunch classic Eggs Benedict. The Eggs Benedict don’t disappoint, with an accompanying delicate side salad, and the pancake topping selection is overwhelming, served alongside the thin “tortitas” that won’t last long on your plate.

But the real star of the show is the previously mentioned dessert. Options vary, but the carrot cake is perfection, while the chocolate frosted chocolate cake will delight chocoholics. The best thing about the vast selection of desserts: you'll have an excuse to return and try them all.

Facebook

Price of brunch menu: €16.50

When: offered Saturdays and Sundays-11am-4:30pm

Where: Calle Fernández de los Ríos, 61

Metro: Moncloa/Islas Filipinas/Quevedo

3. Martínez Bar

For those who have given up on finding any resemblance of a bagel in Madrid, wander over to Martinez on Sundays for a gourmet Bagel Brunch at a reasonable price. Soft jazz greets you as you enter Martinez, followed by mouth-watering smells you'll find yourself hoping are coming to your table. The aesthetically simple design of Martinez has an antiquated feel reminiscent of times past, and the small tables lining the restaurant make it an ideal destination for smaller groups.



Start off with a fresh orange or grapefruit juice, and then dive into the bagel selection. Bagels are served with a variety of accompaniments, including the salmon and cream cheese, hummus, or goat cheese and marmalade. The warm, freshly toasted bagel is presented on round wooden boards, with the option of a supplemental Bloody Mary or Mimosa to complement your meal. The bagel toppings are not overpowering, and allow diners to enjoy the simplicity of the bagel below at the same time.



The brunch concludes with a coffee or tea, and one of Martinez's fresh desserts. The cheesecake, topped with a berry jam and a perfectly thick graham cracker crust is a guilty pleasure to be enjoyed slowly. Other dessert options include a brownie, carrot cake, or apple tart.



The simplicity of Martinez's Bagel Brunch is what makes it so enjoyable-minimal ingredients allow diners to enjoy fresh flavors without any unnecessary additions.

[Facebook](#)

Price of bagel brunch: €9.90

When: Sundays 1pm-4:30pm

Where: Calle Barco, 4

Metro: Gran Vía

4. Carmencita Bar

Located on an unassuming street in Malasaña, Carmencita is

anything but ordinary. Reservations are a must here, and you might even find yourself out of luck if you dare call past Thursday for the coming weekend. A popular expatriate hangout, you will hear a fair amount of English spoken here, and the restaurant offers a language exchange on Tuesday evenings starting at 9pm.



You can't mention Carmencita without talking about the 1€ mimosa. Little hair of the dog never hurt anyone! You can treat yourself to one (or two, who's counting?) without putting a dent in your wallet.



The brunch plates include Huevos Rancheros, Eggs Benedict, French Toast, and the “American Plate” complete with fried egg, sausage, bacon and hash browns. The fixed price brunch menu is generous: Eggs Benedict with your choice of salmon, avocado, or bacon, your preferred side (hash browns, potatoes, or salad), dessert of the day, coffee and mimosa.

The hollandaise sauce can be a bit excessive, but by the time you get to the hash browns you will have forgotten; these crispy potatoes are beyond compare, and a rare find in Madrid at that.



If you find yourself still having room left for a bit of dessert, you can't go wrong with the dessert of the day. The fluffy cakes are featured on the counter of this small restaurant, so you will be tempted throughout your meal. Finishing the last sips of your mimosa you might find yourself already planning your next trip to Carmencita.

Facebook

Price for complete brunch menu: €14.

*When: brunch served Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays
12pm-4:30pm.*

Where: Calle San Vincente Ferrer, 51

Metro: Noviciado

[La Gringa](#) (Carmencita Bar's sister restaurant a few doors down)

Carmencita Bar has a sister location right down the street called [La Gringa](#) that serves the same delicious brunch. When it's not holding brunch, it's a fun Mexican restaurant that organizes language exchanges and offers great deals on Mexican beers, cocktails, *tacos*, *burritos* and *Micheladas*. Here's a sneak peak of their brunch menu, filled with a variety of burgers, egg dishes and of course, mimosas and bloody marys.



[Facebook](#)

Where: San Vicente Ferrer 57

When: Saturday & Sunday 12pm-4:30pm. Best to make a reservation: 679 183 399

Metro: Noviciado

5. The Toast Café

From the hanging light bulbs encased in mason jars to the freshly squeezed orange juice served in champagne flutes, The Toast is an Instagrammer's paradise, and will satisfy your grumbling stomach too. Just one street over from the Little Big Café, The Toast is nearly always full of content diners lingering over the tasty two course brunch (coffee or tea and juice included) offered on weekends.



Start off with a generous Bloody Mary as you consult the

comprehensive brunch menu. The first plate options include pancakes, tostada, salad with light vinaigrette, or a croissant.



The fluffy pancakes don't disappoint, while the mixed greens salad is artfully topped with fresh vegetables.

The first course is just a warm-up for the second plate options: the obligatory Eggs Benedict, Huevos Rancheros, Breakfast Burrito, omelet, or salmon bagel.

The breakfast burrito is complemented with guacamole, pico de

gallo, while the filling inside surprises with potatoes.

The Toast is a popular weekend destination, so make sure to reserve a table ahead of time, so that the toughest decision will be whether to top your Eggs Benedict with salmon, avocado, or bacon!

Facebook

Price for brunch: €14

*When: brunch served Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays
11am-5pm*

Where: Calle Fernando El Católico, 50

Metro: Arguelles/Moncloa/Quevedo/Islas Filipinas

By Meredith Parmalee

Jewish Culture in Madrid & An Interview with 'Easy Latkes', a Pop-up Potato Pancake Delivery Service!

As an American Jew living in Spain, a country with a seemingly ominous absence of Jewish activity and culture, myself and my contemporaries often yearn for the taste and comfort of Bubbe's cooking. When I was a cultural ambassador, responsible for teaching the English language and United States culture in Spanish schools, I was often questioned about the typical foods of my home, New York. Describing a bagel—and explaining its distinction from a donut or the Spanish *roscon*—has been surprisingly difficult.

A dash of insight and a dollop of news regarding Spain's Jewish population



A street sign in Segovia's old Jewish Quarter

During my time abroad I've investigated **Madrid's tightly knit Jewish population**. I received my first window into their world when I was invited to celebrate Rosh Hashanah with a lovely Sephardic family in their Arturo Soria residence. From them I learned that there are **3,000 Jews living in Madrid, 3,000 in Barcelona, and 12,000 scattered all over the rest of the country**—concentrated in locations such as Toledo, Cordoba, and Ceuta y Melilla.

This number is expected to increase dramatically now that **Spain has opened its doors to the descendants of those exiled during the Spanish inquisition**. I am following this process closely because it directly affects my paternal family who are all Jews hailing from Mexico. The Spanish consulate of Tel Aviv has been flooded with inquiries by young Israelis who

hope to move to Spain for its pristine weather and low cost of living. Their impending migration here will have unprecedented anthropological effects for all parties involved—ideally in the form of fusions between their cuisine and Spanish cuisine.

Some helpful info for Jews and Jewish culture enthusiasts in Madrid

For now, the Jews among the current American English teaching expatriates are slowly creating a sub-community amongst ourselves.

- We recently created a **Facebook Group**, [Jews in Madrid](#), which welcomes any Jew or Jewish culture enthusiast to join.
- You can also join [Marom España](#), a **Jewish organization** associated with Congregation Bet-El. This “young adult” group organizes holiday activities in Madrid.
- I’ve discovered a **Jewish product store** called [Judaica Los Olivos](#) located on Calle General Ricardos 190 by metro Oporto, which imports **Kosher products, texts and art from Israel**.
- Madrid also has a **Synagogue and Jewish Community Center** called [La Sinagoga de Madrid](#), located at *Calle Balmes 3*, ironically by metro Iglesia. Officially inaugurated in 1968 though holding ceremonies since 1907, it was the first synagogue in Spain to be constructed since the inquisition. My friend Paige and I took our cameras there in the hopes of snapping a few photos for this article. Unfortunately, the security guards politely requested that we delete the photos we had taken, but extended a warm invitation for us to return for the **open services on Friday evenings**—as long as we bring our passports and NIEs.

Interview with Easy Latkes, a Pop-Up Potato Pancake Delivery Service in Madrid



2014 saw my third consecutive *Januca* spent abroad and it has been the most bountiful. I caught word on the *Auxiliares en Madrid* Facebook page, that one of my English teaching contemporaries, Casey, with the help of her Spanish boyfriend, Jose, had begun selling latkes and delivering them fresh to the homes of Madrid's Jewish expatriates and Jewish culture enthusiasts. I purchased a portion of latkes and apple sauce with every intention of sharing with my friends and private lesson students, but once I smelled them, immediately devoured them all without hesitation or *verguenza*. I applaud Casey and Jose for recognizing that there was a niche to be filled and that the Jews of Madrid would have *ganas* to support their operation. Casey has so generously allowed me to interview her about her operation and future culinary endeavors.

DC: How did this latke delivery service idea occur to you in

the first place?

Casey: Latkes have always been a true wintertime staple for me back at home in New York. This year, away from home during the holidays for the first time, I broke out the potatoes, onions, and oil, and whipped up a couple batches of them for my housemates—none of whom had ever heard the word “latke” before. Needless to say, they were a hit! In between scrumptious bites, we joked around about the idea of opening a Jewish deli, we realized that that wouldn’t be feasible, and then decided on the next best thing. Easy Latkes was our attempt at filling that same void of crispy deliciousness for the rest of the Jewish community in Madrid.

DC: How many orders did you serve in total? Which barrios of Madrid have the largest population of Chosen People?

Casey: Our latkes operation was active for a total of 72 hours and, in that time, we made and delivered over 200 latkes! The truth is that Madrid’s latke enthusiasts were not concentrated in any particular barrio, but rather all over the *centro*, namely in *Sol*, *Malasaña*, *La Latina*, and *Lavapies*!



DC: Did you meet any elusive Sephardic Jews? Have you had any previous experiences with Madrid's Jewish community during your time here?

Casey: I was hoping I might encounter some Spanish latke lovers during this project, but the clientele turned out to be American Jews and more American Jews, mostly English language teaching assistants, who missed holiday tastes of home. This might be attributed to the fact that I simply did not know how to best reach out to the Spanish Jewish community in spreading the word about my service, so tended mostly to advertise to an *extranjero* Jewish demographic.

DC: What are your comfort foods? What do you like to cook at home?

Casey: Latkes have always been one of my greatest and most beloved comfort foods, with a warm oniony deliciousness that takes me right back to many Hanukkahs in my Grandmother's dining room on eastern Long Island. Besides that, I am a huge

fan of macaroni and cheese, anything with avocado, and egg sandwiches.

DC: Is there a cute story about the circumstances under which you met in 2013?

Casey: Jose was my “language exchange partner” in Sevilla during my semester abroad. “Intercambio” quickly turned into something more, and the rest is history! We maintained the relationship across the Atlantic for a whole year and reunited last summer in Madrid. Even though our relationship has surely evolved, we still enjoy the perks of our intercambio/cultural exchange: This Hanukkah was the first we’ve spent together; I taught him what a latke was, and a couple days later he was making hundreds of them for Jews all over Madrid.



DC: Can we expect your service to be seasonal now that you’ve asserted your brand and established a client base? Do you imagine that you will prepare the typical food of the other

Jewish holidays? I'm imagining Matzoh balls, challah, hamanstachen, gefiltefish etc.

Casey: Yum, yum, and yum. I've been thinking about future food projects in Madrid, but it's too early to announce anything for sure. Before we can do anything too large-scale, though, we may have to supplement our 2-person team and bust out of our tiny Malasaña kitchen! Check back on our Easy Latkes Facebook page for updates!

DC: Now that I think about it, small *raciones* of typical Jewish foods would make excellent tapas. Do you have any ideas in regards to fusion with Spanish cuisine? (latkes bravas for example)

Casey: The possibilities are endless: Tortilla-latke, croqueta-latke, gefiltefish montadito, matzoh ball salmorejo (not sure how I feel about that one). As amazing of an idea as this may be, I'm gonna focus on finishing my first year as an English teacher, then I'll see about revolutionizing Spanish cuisine! Regardless, we are thrilled with all of the positive feedback and support this first project has yielded! Stay tuned!

Want to get some homemade latkes delivered fresh to your door during the holidays?

Contact: Send a message to **Easy Latkes** via [Facebook](#) to place your order (currently only available during the holidays)

Products & Prices: Batch of 13 homemade potato pancakes (8€). Homemade cinnamon-sugar applesauce (4€) Sour cream sauce (2€)

Have any other tips on Jewish culture in

Madrid? Leave us a comment!

By Dan Catalan

You can find more articles from Dan on his personal blog, [The Expatriate Adventures](#)

All photos of potato latkes and the 'making of' are from [Easy Latkes's Facebook Page](#)

Let's hit the slopes! Ski and snowboard in Madrid

Yep, that's right. Just when you thought Madrid couldn't get any better, that it was a city purely of terrazas, tapas, cañas and sunshine, winter rolls around and you discover it has yet more to offer. What's not to love about a place where you can soak up the sun by the pool in the summer, then ski the hell out of some mountains in the winter? After an unseasonably warm start to the season, it looks like we're finally in for some snow, so get your gear on and let's go!

Where?

There are three ski areas near the capital:

[Puerto de Navacerrada](#)



Image from [Puerto de Navacerrada's Facebook](#)

Puerto de Navacerrada is the closest ski area to Madrid, around 65km away, but it's also the smallest. You can download the piste map [here](#).

[Valdesquí](#)



Image from [Valdesquí's Facebook](#)

Valdesquí is around 75km from Madrid, in the next valley over from Puerto de Navacerrada. Although it's a little further away, it's worth the extra mileage as it's a lot bigger than its neighbour (see the piste map [here](#)). However, its proximity to the capital means it can get very busy.

[La Pinilla](#)



Image from [La Pinilla's Facebook](#)

La Pinilla is located just over the border in Castilla y León and is the furthest ski area from the capital, around 120km away. It also covers a fairly large area (piste map [here](#)) but there are usually fewer people, due to its more remote location. Most of the people I know who ski or snowboard in Madrid say this is the best area to go to.

How do I get there?

I'm not going to lie, the easiest way to get to all three areas is by car, particularly if you're taking ski or snowboard equipment with you. If you haven't got a car, you could rent one, persuade a nice friend with a car to take you or use a service like [BlaBlaCar](#). Or steal one if you have to. Seriously though, it is possible to get there on public

transport but it takes a while and the buses and trains aren't at the most convenient times, especially at weekends. You can get the Cercanías Line C8b to Cercedilla then jump on line C9, getting off at the Puerto de Navacerrada stop or the Cotos stop for Valdesquí, but you still have to take a taxi or a shuttle bus to get to the actual ski areas. Bus 691 from Moncloa is also an option but takes about 90 minutes and only goes once an hour at weekends. La Pinilla is even harder to get to on public transport, with just a few Alsa buses going to Riaza, a nearby village. However, there is a company which runs a shuttle bus at weekends from Atocha and Plaza de Castilla. More info [here](#).

When can I go?

All the ski areas are now open and will be every day until March or whenever the snow disappears, maybe April if we're lucky. However, they're sometimes forced to close due to strong winds or other adverse weather conditions, so make sure you check the website or ring beforehand. Whether you're going by car or by public transport, and I can't stress this enough, get there AS EARLY AS YOU CAN. Although the ski areas don't open until 9am, I wouldn't recommend leaving Madrid any later than 7am. Once the car parks are full, they stop letting people in and you'll be going home disappointed. Some of my friends like to head up even earlier and enjoy a leisurely breakfast there, thereby avoiding queues and stress.

What facilities do the ski areas have?

All the ski areas have all the normal facilities you'd expect: ski and snowboard rental, restaurants, bars, hotels, etc. You

might want to consider renting equipment in Madrid before you go, as the official rental places in the ski areas can have pretty long queues and some of the other non-official places, although quicker, often don't have such good equipment. Another option would be to go up the day before, sort out equipment rental and ski passes in the afternoon and stay the night in a hotel, meaning you're all ready to catch that first chairlift in the morning!

How much does it cost?

The price of ski passes, or *forfaits*, varies depending on the ski area and how many days you want to go for, but the usual cost is around 30-40 euros per day. Food and drink are typically expensive at the ski areas, so take your own if you want to save money.

Other options

[Madrid SnowZone at Xanadú](#)



Image from [Madrid SnowZone's Facebook](#)

Of course, you don't have to limit yourself to skiing in the winter. At Madrid SnowZone in the Xanadú shopping centre you can ski and snowboard all year round if you want. It's not quite the same as being in the great outdoors surrounded by snow-capped mountains, but it's great for learning to ski or just practising your technique. You can get there on buses 528, 534 and 539 from Príncipe Pío. Check out their website for offers, classes and more.

[Club Amistad](#)

Madrid's oldest and largest ski club organises buses to the ski areas, classes and equipment rental, amongst other things. They also organise trips to ski areas in other parts of Spain and abroad. Check out their website for details.

Further afield

While the ski areas in Madrid aren't bad for a day trip, they can get extremely busy and the snow isn't always the best. There are ski areas all over Spain, so if you have a weekend or a few days to spare, I'd recommend going to one of the following:

[Sierra Nevada](#) (Andalucía)



Image from [Sierra Nevada's Facebook](#)

The big daddy of southern Spain, Sierra Nevada is a massive ski area just outside Granada (see piste map [here](#)). It often has sunny weather and is very popular with Spaniards, with a fantastic après-ski scene. They get a lot of snow but because of the temperature cycles it can quickly get icy. Not the best place if you're looking for powder.

Formigal (Aragón)



Formigal is the biggest ski area in Spain and generally has more reliable and better-quality snow than the south. Your *forfait* also includes the neighbouring resort of Panticosa, so when everything is open that's 176km of skiable terrain (see piste map [here](#)). The nearby village of Formigal is pretty small so it can get booked up quickly. The same company also owns another great resort called [Cerler](#), which more difficult to get to but generally has better snow and fewer people.

Astún (Aragón)



Powder day in Astún!

Smaller than Formigal and less crowded, if you get Astún on the right day the snow can be incredible (see piste map [here](#)). You can stay in the town of Jaca and get a bus, so it's perhaps slightly easier for a last-minute trip than Formigal. There's another resort right next to Astún called [Candanchú](#) which is also excellent, although the terrain is considerably more challenging.

Even further afield...

Of course, you don't have to stop there! There are plenty of resorts in Catalonia ([Baqueira/Beret](#) is the most famous one) and Andorra has some fantastic areas such as [Grand Valira](#).

See you on the slopes!

Barcelona

What to see:

La ciutat condal (as it's also called in Spanish) has everything you'd like to see in a city: crazy **Gaudi architecture**, great food and of course, the Mediterranean. One of the most visited cities in the world, Barcelona has been written about a lot and it's not our mission at **Naked Madrid** to show you what the city has to offer. We just want to tell you how to get there!

From Madrid, there are many ways to get there, although I highly recommend the **high speed train (AVE)**. It takes barely 3 hours and most importantly, it picks you up and drops you off right in the center city (a true godsend). You'll also skip the waiting time at the airport and the annoying 6-hour drive from Madrid. Plus, it's not too expensive if you get the ticket in advance and choose the right date (be aware of the [public holidays](#)).

To get your trip started, you should read [Barcelona yellow post](#). Here, you'll find the 10 must-see sites in Barcelona such as **Sagrada Familia**, **Montjuic** or **Barrio Gótico**. Another good one is Devour Barcelona's [blog](#). But I find my favourite tips in [El boquerón viajero](#).



One place to eat at that we recommend is: Colmado

Our friends Bianca and Gaby took us to Colmado, a traditional Spanish restaurant and bar with a terrific atmosphere. You must order their **patatas bravas** (Potatoes with alioli sauce) and **pan tumaca** (bread with tomato and olive oil). It was really remarkable. You should call to book a table (a barrel with stools around it) ahead, as the place gets really busy.

Colmados's main info:

- [Website](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- Address C/ Provença, 236
- Tel 935 46 20 06





How to get there:

- By Train (High Speed Train – AVE)

Depart from: Atocha train station

Schedule:

Departure [Madrid-Barcelona \(AVE\)](#)

Return [Barcelona – Madrid \(AVE\)](#)

Duration: approx. 2.45 hour

Price: 50€ (round trip approx. 100€).

*[Link to Renfe's Web Site to get the tickets](#)

▪ **By bus (Alsa)**

Depart from: Avenida de America or Barajas airport

Duration: approx. 7 hour 30 min

Price: 32,46€ (round trip 64,92€)

*[Link to Alsa's web site to get your tickets](#)

Where to find it on a map:

Toma Café: fuel up, feel hip

[Toma Cafe](#) could very well be a coffee shop in a hipster mecca like San Francisco or Brooklyn. Upon wandering into the sparse space with narrow benches lining the walls and a bicycle dangling from the ceiling, one might wonder: "Have I wandered onto the set of Portlandia?"



People peck at their laptops while seated at teensy tables. The baristas take their posts at the helm of the espresso machine seriously. More seats can be found in the back, but space is rather cramped. One's daily dose of **espresso** can be consumed in various different forms. Options extend beyond the

confines of *café con leche*.



A gem on the beverage menu: ***chocolate picante***. In this concoction, bitter chocolate and prickly heat make ordinary chocolate seem lame.



A limited **breakfast** list exists offering a few variations on toast (tomato and olive oil, butter and jam, not much more). Alternatively, as Marie Antoinette famously did not say, *let them eat cake*. The chocolate cake is made with Madrid's own **Cerveza La Virgen**—what could be better for breakfast?



The omnipresent **carrot cake** also beckons from the pastry case. Here, the crowd-pleaser takes on a spicy character and the cream cheese frosting makes an already good cake better.



Luckily for those in search of a caffeinated workspace, **Toma Cafe** opens for breakfast at early hours. Come here to fuel up and to fill hip.



[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: calle La Palma 49

Metro: San Bernardo or Noviciado

Hours: M-F 8am-8pm. Sat & Sun 10am-8pm

Here are some more of our favorite cafes in Madrid:

Pepe Botella, a Coffee Place Where You Can Think

La Paca, the Perfect Cafe in Malasaña

Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1 & Round 2