

La Bicicleta – Ultramodern Cycling Café and Workshop in Malasaña

It was love at first sight for me with La Bicicleta. [La Bicicleta Café](#) fills a void in a city filled to the brim with bars serving coffee, but sparsely populated with the type of homey workplaces that I hold dear to my heart. There is something comforting about spending hours holed up in a cafe, calmed by the stop and go of an espresso machine. I like to search out spots where I can stake out territory and sit while minutes tick into hours, my fingers hammering at a keyboard or eyes scanning over pages of a book. La Bicicleta is one such spot where this is possible and encouraged and might I say, all the rage. It fosters productivity and sociality and the consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages: what could be better?



[La Bicileta](#) bustles at pretty much any given hour of the day. While the sun is still out, it functions more or less just as it bills itself: a cycling workplace and café. You will see people perched in the windowsills with their laptop and coffee within equal reach. Cyclists come and go with their bikes. They barge through the front door and head downstairs to where they store or repair their rides. All of this while waiters bustle about with salads and tostas, cañas and coffees. Once the sun goes down, it becomes progressively unlikely to find anyone doing work. The place metamorphosizes into a social hub with so much traffic that the entryway is hardly ever free of spillover customers.





Coffee drinks come in all shapes and sizes. The standards are available, but innocent intentions of ordering a cortado may be redirected upon a glance at the spunkier options on the menu like the oreo frappuccino, for example. As can happen at the Bicicleta, one may feel torn between alcohol and caffeine. Options abound on both listings. The food landscape includes sandwiches, salads, tostas, a [pricey] brunch menu on the weekends, and a display case stocked with baked goods: cookies, cakes, and the like.



As Yogi Berra once said: “Nobody goes there anymore. It’s too crowded.” Well, not quite. There are still plenty of people at La Bicileta; but Yogi was right, it’s definitely crowded. Real estate is hard to come by despite the plethora of sofas, elongated work tables, and quaint table and chair setups available to patrons. While it attracts a determinedly international crowd who may not (probably are not) natives to Madrid, it feels like that good ol’ neighborhood joint on the corner.

Info

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Where: Plaza de San Ildefonso 9 (also known as Plaza del Grial o Plaza de la Niña)

Metro: Tribunal, Gran Vía, Noviciado

Just around the corner, you’ll find these amazing spots:

Mercado de San Ildefonso – Malasaña’s new food palace

Naif: King of Burgers

Greek & Shop in Malasaña

La Paca – the perfect Malasaña café

Aiò – Sardinia, pizza and bike haven in Malasaña

Gluten free pastelerías in Madrid: Part 1- Confitería Marqués

Sugar dusted pastries, chocolate dipped palmeras and fruit filled tarts: gluten free friends, the search is over. If you're a foodie who just happens to be of the gluten free inclination, finding delicious confectionary in the city can be a little, shall we say, challenging.

We all know that there are the international coffee shops that serve the same chocolate brownie and the supermarket aisles that sell the same two or three packaged cookies, but where do you go when your **traveller, foodie heart** wants to spring out into the city and explore its **homemade artisan treats**?

This series is dedicated to **Madrid's best hidden corners for delicious homemade cakes and cookies, gluten free style**. You can even take your non-gluten free friends, and I promise you that they will not be able to tell the difference; they may even find their new favourite spot!

[Confitería Marqués](#)

Tucked away on Fernando el Católico, Confitería Marqués is the little Madrid bakery where it feels like everything has been made especially for you. With its tea party bunting and dainty glass cake stands, it has an element of the Alice and Wonderland to it, with everything in miniature.

There are **fruit tarts, mini croissants, individual loaf cakes, savoury empanadas, palmeritas, apple slices, jam tarts, and more**.

The sheer selection that they offer is fantastic for any [gluten free Madrid](#) foodie, as well as any foreigner in Madrid

that wants to try some local pasteles with a reminder of home. Everything is made in the pasteleria and tastes as homemade as it sounds.





As well as all of the above, another reason why Confitería Marqués is so unique is that it also makes savoury food such as **empanadas**, filled with cheese, vegetables, fish and meat. These crispy, buttery little pastry puffs make for a delectable little lunch.



Then there are the pastries, tarts, palmeritas, fruit slices and loaf cakes. Each are exactly as they should be, and some are even better.

The **apple loaf cakes** have a base of sweet apple pieces and raisins, are soft on the inside and scented with vanilla. The **palmeritas** are crispy and flaky and come traditionally plain, or coated in dark chocolate. Plus, the **chocolate orange tart** is rich and decadent, filled with dark chocolate cream, and hints of citrusy orange.



The owner of the shop is extremely friendly and can help you pick out something from the counter, or choose something from the incredible handmade confectionary that they have to the left of the counter and throughout the rest of the shop, including **small boxes of cookies** and **beautifully presented chocolates**. These would be perfect as a thoughtful little gift or -why not- a special treat for yourself.

You can even buy a **homemade birthday cake**, **chilled desserts** or a **traditional Christmas Roscón de Reyes** from the tall stand to the right of the counter; any would make a great surprise for a gluten free friend on a special occasion or a delicious traditional dessert to share after a meal at home with friends.

Another little tip is that they can make **gluten free bread** in house to order; just ask the lady at the counter when you would like it for.

Info

Web: www.confiteriamarques.com

Address: Calle Fernando Católico, 76

Metro: Argüelles

Extra notes

Don't forget to ask about the delicious foods available for **lactose and nut allergies**. You can go with all of your friends!

You'll also like:

[Cosy Wine Bars in La Latina – with gluten-free options!](#)

[Rayen Vegano – a vegan “gem” of a restaurant in Huertas](#)

Federal Café Madrid – Hipster in a Very Good Way

Not too long ago, Madrid's breakfast scene was limited to traditional croissants, toast and churros. Now, however, it's rivalling cities like New York and London. How did this happen so quickly? Don't know. But boy are we loving it... One of the [best places for brunch in Madrid](#) is [Federal Café](#),

which may look like a stylish restaurant in Soho, but it's actually located in Malasaña, near [Conde Duque](#).



Last Sunday, I went for brunch with three lovely ladies – [Cat](#), Aifric and [Helen](#).



We all started with fresh smoothies. Mine had pomegranate and organic apple juice – health in a glass.



To eat, I ordered toast with avocado, poppyseed and lemon.



Aifric got the same, although with poached eggs (smart choice).



Helen had a veggie burger with freshly squeezed orange juice.



Then there's Cat, who wins first prize by a landslide with her full-on plate of poached eggs, bacon, potatoes, sausage and toast. Damn.



The first time I went to [Federal](#) was actually over a year ago

with my friend, Nina (who's sitting in the window looking at the little kid). We stumbled upon [Federal](#) while strolling around and were instantly lured in by the comfy window seats that allowed us to dangle our legs onto the sidewalk.



We started with a coffee.



That ended quickly. The menu featured such a wide variety of dishes that were chock full of local, organic and fresh ingredients – we just couldn't help but order something to eat. I got a sandwich with feta cheese, spinach and olive tapenade. Nina had a burger. Simple but so good!





So if you're looking for a hip place with healthy food in the center of Madrid, I think you've found it!



Info

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Address: [Pl. de las Comendadoras 9](#)

Metro: Noviciado

You may also like:

[Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid](#)

[Little Big Café – my little big pick-me-up](#)

[Toma Café – Fuel Up, Feel Hip](#)

[Mamá Campo – a Restaurant/Market of Organic Delights in Plaza Olavide](#)

Monkee Koffee: Amazing coffee next to Canal Isabel II

Like any good native New Yorker, and like every *madrileño* for that matter, there's nothing like a great cup of coffee, and preferably it's not costing you an arm and a leg like that *relaxing cup of café con leche in Plaza Mayor*. I yet again found out about [Monkee Koffee](#) through [Cup of Couple](#)'s Instagram account, and was ecstatic to have it be within a 20-minute walk of my apartment.



On a Saturday afternoon I headed to [Monkee](#) to meet a friend, looking forward to having my mind blown by coffee. The first thing that strikes you when you pull up is the sliding door (which is an absolute rarity, except for maybe Panaria).



When you walk up to the counter, you'll find a menu not only

with different kinds of coffee, but also smoothies, AND food. Not only can you get standard baked goods (like cookies, cakes, and some tostadas), BUT there are a number of sandwiches or salads to really be able to get your munch on.

It's a great spot for cold-brewed iced coffee, which in Madrid can be a little bit of a challenge to find. The one caveat for me was that there was no skim milk, but I'd be willing to indulge in soy milk in my cold-brew. For those of you who were big Blue Bottle Coffee fans in San Francisco and New York, this is the closest you'll get to it in Chamberí.



There are a variety of seating arrangements, including a smaller table with big, comfy chairs, where my friend and I got lost in conversation. If you want to get work done, you can sit at the long, communal table in the middle à Le Pain Quotidien, or on another long table just along the brick wall where you can see the Monkee logo and a bright letter o. For groups of friends, there are also some other tables where you can pull up chairs and seat groups of three, four, or five comfortably. I can definitely see myself coming here to write, study, or get lost in a good book.



Monkee Koffee also has a choice location this time of year. It's located just around the corner from Parque de Santander and the Instalaciones Deportivas del Canal Isabel II, which is my swimming pool of choice on hot summer afternoons.

I'm glad to have found a place to get my cold-brewed iced coffee and food to-go before I relax by the pool, or stay in and get some fuel and some work done.

Info

[Web](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle Vallehermoso, 112

Tel.: +34 915 45 66 09

Metro: Canal (Lines 2 and 7)

Here's a list of more of our favorite cafés in Madrid:

[Little Big Café: my big little pick-me-up](#)

[4 Coziest Cafés in Chamberí](#)

[Cafelito: for coffee lovers in Lavapiés](#)

[Toma Café: Fuel up, Feel hip](#)

[Pepe Botella: a coffee place where you can think](#)

[La Paca: the perfect café in Malasaña](#)

Maria's: Sensational Sweets on Calle Zurbano

I heard from a few friends that a [recent New York Times article](#) had rated **Calle Zurbano** one of the writers' "favorite streets in Europe." I remembered Zurbano; I had stayed in a hotel on the north side as my introduction to both Madrid and my teaching program. While the people I met and the things I learned on Zurbano were of the highest quality, the street itself did not surprise or amaze me eight months ago. Nevertheless, my friend and I committed to revisiting Zurbano and seeing if anything inspired us. We stumbled upon inspiration. Hidden in the article's recommendations sits a tiny bakery hiding between ritzy hotels, bustling banks, and mainstream restaurants: **María's Bakery**.



María's looks like it crashed onto **Calle Zurbano** straight out of your Pinterest news feed. The place oozes chic hipness—grey wood panels lead to off-white walls, chalkboard paint menus, reclaimed benches with homemade cushions, and wooden card tables covered in doilies and faux-70s tablecloths. Like your Staten Island grandmother got a hold of a Paula Dean magazine.



The bakery's eponymous María is apparently famous around these parts. **Locals pop into her ten square meters of space just to say hi**, read her newspapers, drink her coffee, and grab a baguette or a pastry to-go. Even the other staff know visitors by name, asking about babies or job lay-offs or who won the Real-Juventus match.

And, of course, there's the food. María and company arise before the sun to proof, knead, and bake the day's glutinous goods. *Pistolas*, *artisanas*, croissants, cookies – all things line María's stuffed shelves. **The cake selection includes dozens of decadent decisions:** "Muerte por chocolate," "mousse

de Bailey's," "tarta de queso con salsa de mora," even the oft-elusive "red velvet."



Maria's Bakery in Zurbano

As you get a high from the smell of bubbling yeast and caramelizing sugars, take a look at **María's eclectic selection of international sweets**, like *bonbones*, *alfajores*, tarts, *pasteles de Belén*, *dulces de leche*, macarons, and much more.

However, a proper critic has to judge any bakery by the Spanish classic: *pan con aceite*, with a coffee. Luckily, María's does not disappoint, masterfully toasting its 8-cereal brown bread, complimenting its nutty savoriness with peppery Andalusia olive oil and ground rock salt. Washed down with frothy milk and brewed beans, it makes for a **great breakfast deal around €2**.



Stick around long enough and you'll get to try some of **María's** newest experiments. While we crunched and munched our *pan*, we also were brought small plates of other samples, new treats that the bakery's working on right now. This season, María's is toying with **nut and oat hard crackers**, thin biscotti to market as "light" for snacking clients. To go with the recent holiday, we also tried María's ***rosquillas de San Isidro***, the *listas* covered in orange and lemon glaze, the *tontas* smacking of anis and cloves.



As we got *napolitanas* and *medias lunas* filled with *dulce de leche* to go, Erika told us from behind the cash register that we weren't the first Americans to visit; the **New York Time's** "favorite streets in Europe" gave the bakery a steady drop of international attention. Since then, Anglos amble around Zurbano, waltzing into María's and placing their orders with a combination of gestures, grunts, and broken English. While we laughed, I taught the staff how to say "home made," hoping it would help guide our more linguistically ignorant compatriots.

If you're walking down Zurbano and trying to see what all the fuss is about, give María's a try. It's small, it's strange, it's out of place – and it's adorable.

Info

Web

Facebook

Address: Calle Zurbano, 15

Metro: Alonso Martínez

Phone: 91 702 63 02

Also check out:

Mama Campo – a restaurant/market of organic delights in Plaza Olavide

Harina – for something sweet or savoury

Pan Comido – a French bakery where our bread will most certainly be eaten all up

4 Coziest Cafes in Chamberí

El Jardín Secreto de Salvador Bachiller – A Secret Rooftop Paradise on Calle Montero

Among the constant crowds along Calle Montero, there is a hidden little paradise nestled atop the rooftop of an accessories shop: [El Jardín Secreto de Salvador Bachiller](#). Access to this magical new [rooftop bar](#) is still a secret, so enjoy it before the word gets out.

At night, the shop is empty and the security guard invites you to take the elevator, which makes you feel just like you're in a James Bond movie. As you walk in, you no longer feel as though you were in the city centre but rather, in a lush and soothing garden. The place offers a romantic atmosphere with flowers everywhere and dim lighting.



The cocktail menu offers creative drinks, ranging from a **Mango Margarita** to a **Berry Mojito**, which sets them apart from more traditional bars in the area. Also, candies are served with your cocktails and a bowl of nuts with your wine.



Image from [FB](#)

As for the food, it's healthy and served with multi-grain bread. Perfect for breakfast or a *merienda* (afternoon snack). And for dessert, I highly recommend the exquisite *Coulant de Chocolate* with passion fruit.



Image from [FB](#)

The prices are rather high but the experience is unique and worth it. A terrace tax of 20% will be added to orders.

Info

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Montero 37
- **Phone:** 915 31 02 60

Also check out:

- [Discover the Hat's Secret Rooftop Bar. You're welcome.](#)

- [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1](#)
 - [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 2](#)
 - [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 3](#)
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Swinton & Grant: Art, Books, Coffee

We wandered Lavapiés on an overcast day, searching for our regular *dosis* of *cafeína*. As we crept to the door of [our usual haunt](#), my friends and I found a CLOSED sign awaiting us.

Spain's *siesta* schedule had tricked us yet again – even baristas need a break. The time had come to try a new café.



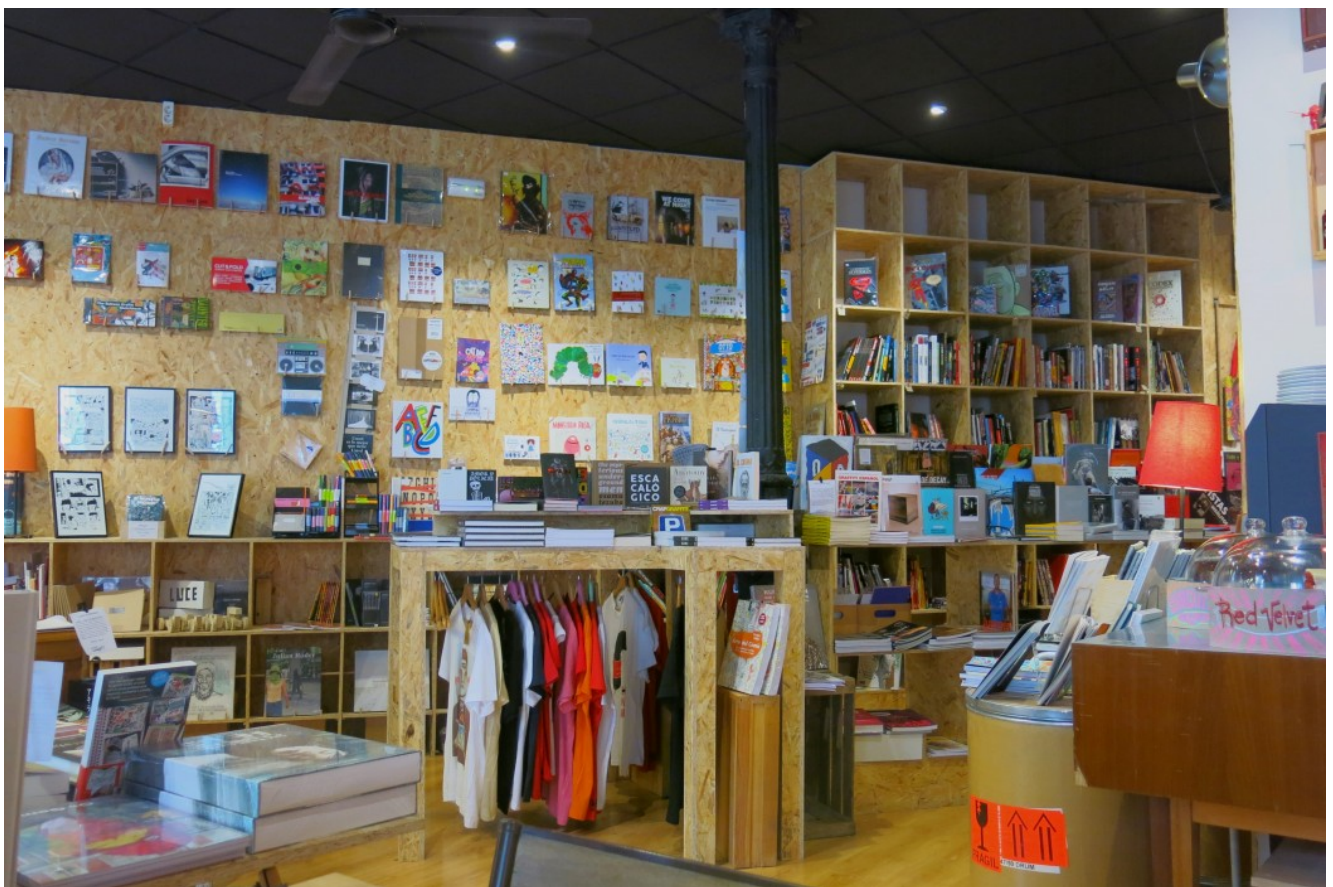
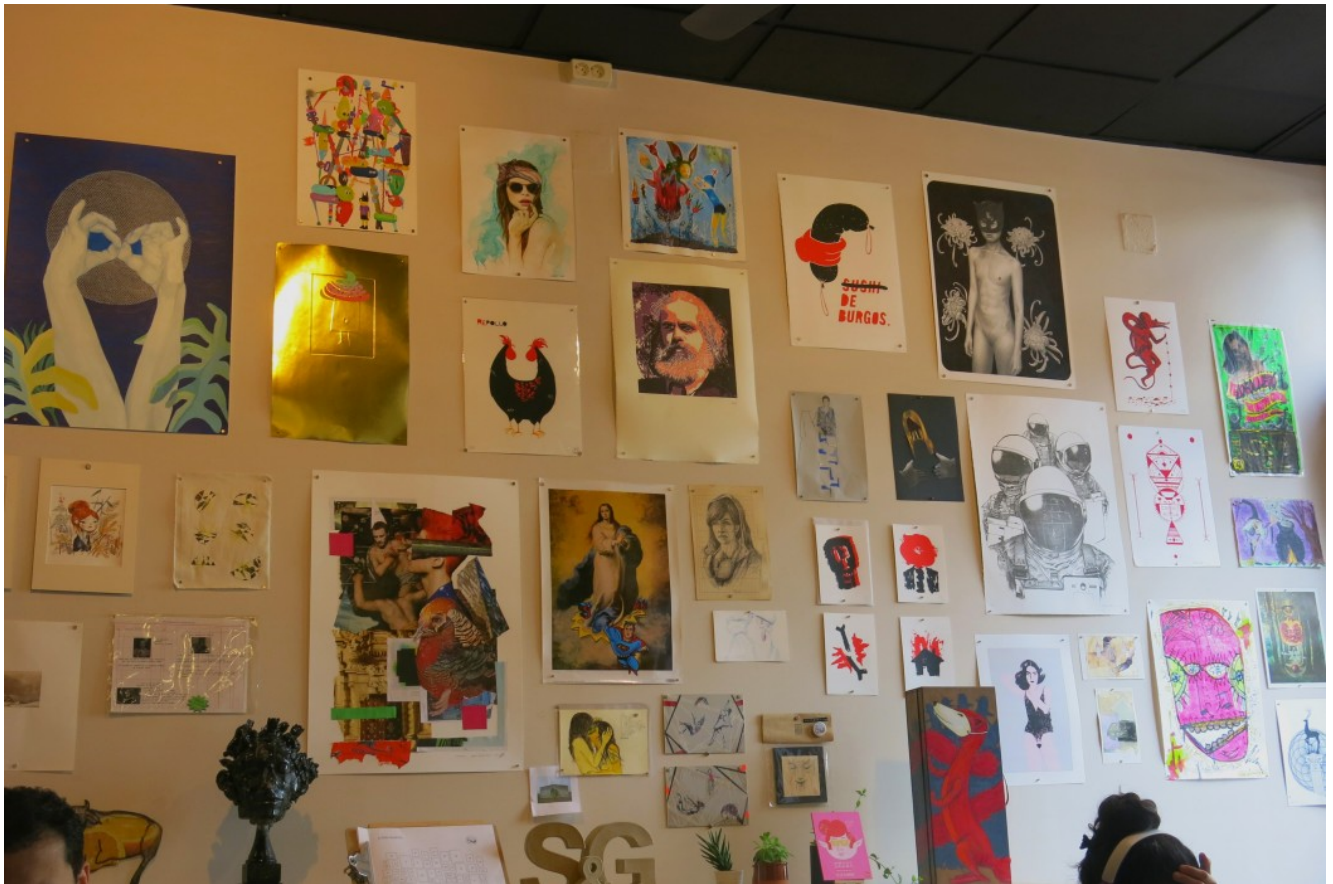
Open since last May, [Swinton & Grant](#) sits just off the Glorieta de Embajadores, amid North African falafel joints, street art, and cherry blossom trees. As you walk down **Calle Miguel Servet**, you'll first notice just how big the place is.

Natural light streaks through black velvet curtains, revealing two main areas: on the first floor, **Ciudadano Grant**, a café-bookstore. In the basement, the **Swinton Gallery**, a large space for local artist exhibitions.



Swinton & Grant, Embajadores





Hip folks feel at home here. Bare bulbs and LEDs light customers' way to the pressboard bookshelves lined with English and Spanish biographies, comics, and children's

picture books. Jars of LEGOs and framed pictures of Leonard Nemo draw your eye to bottles of Arizona Tea, Jones Soda, and fresh cakes and cookies. Bon Iver, Jorge Gonzalez, and Fleet Foxes tickle the ears while you waltz through the space.

The menu, with its own abstract artwork, impresses. **Coffees** come cheap (around €1.40). For a small charge, you can enjoy the flavor palates of **special bean blends** from Costa Rica, Kenya, Colombia, and other countries. **Teas** come in all sizes, colors, and temperatures.



The café offers a **desayuno special** before 1PM every day.

While you appreciate the art that is half-Banksy, half-neoclassical, you can try the classic *pan con tomate*, a ham and cheese sandwich, or a slice of cake with your choice of beverage – all for **€2-4**. If you're still hungry, go for a full-size *bocadillo* or a giant cookie.





After your *sobremesa*, take a look downstairs, where artists hang their work in **rotating exhibits**. Next on the program are characteristic contemporary pieces from [Luis Pérez Calvo](#),

[Victor Solana](#), and [Antonyo Marest](#). If you're feeling fancy, feel free to buy the art, with prices ranging from a few euros to a few hundred.





Since my first fateful detoured day into Swinton & Grant's doors, it's quickly become one of my favorite Madrid spaces. These days, when I'm in the mood for comfort, cake, and

caffeine, I invariably make my way to Embajadores.

Info:

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Address: *Calle Miguel Servet 21*

Metro: *Embajadores*

Some photos courtesy of Keith Lema

You may also like:

[Best Cafe-bookshops round 1](#)

[Best Cafe-bookshops round 2](#)

[El Cafelito – for coffee lovers in Lavapiés](#)

[Desperate Literature – Santorini, Brookly and now, Madrid!](#)

Discover The Hat's secret rooftop bar. You're welcome.

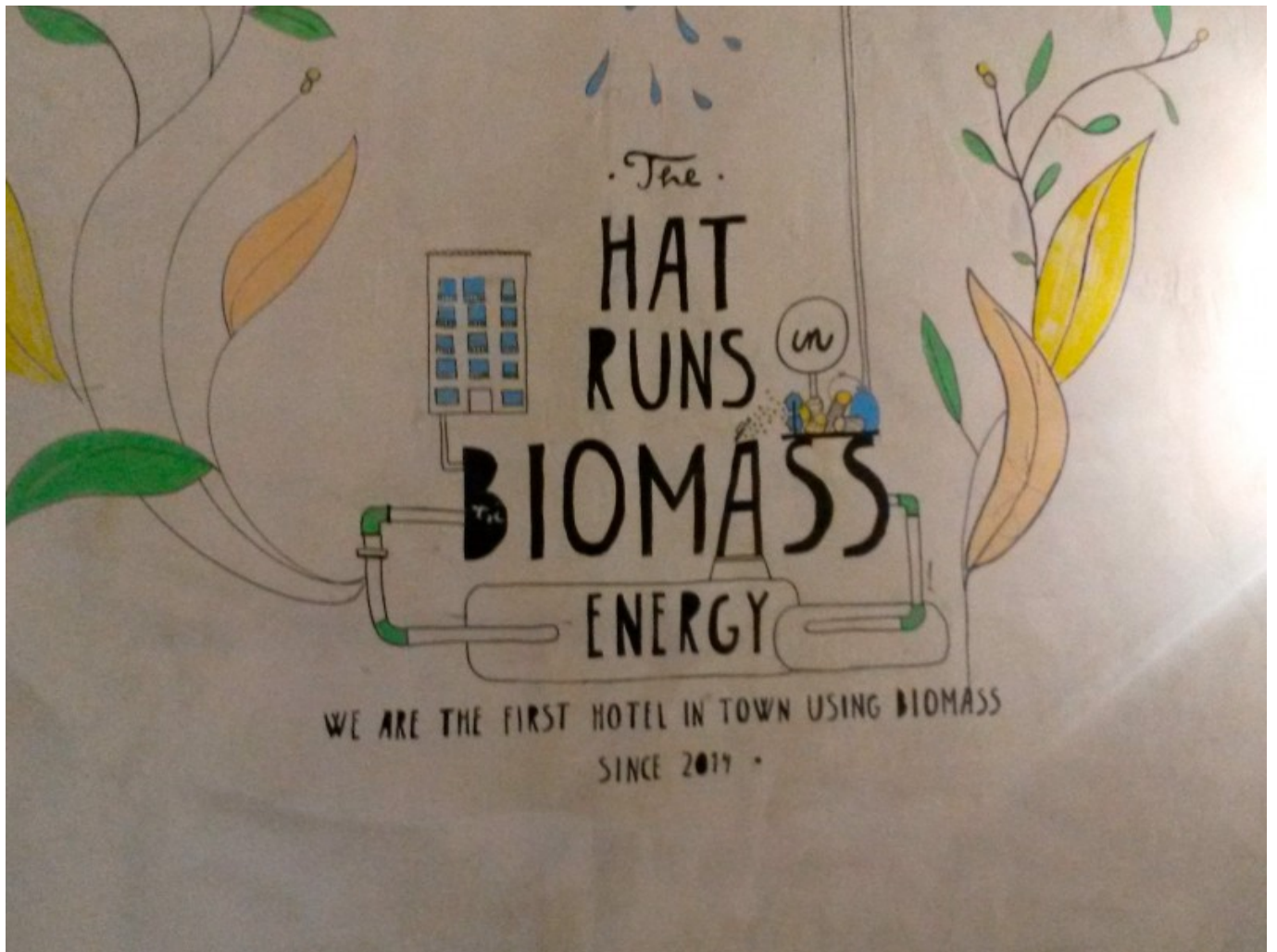
Madrid may be landlocked, but it has some pretty unbelievable [rooftop bars](#), and you'll find my favorite at **The Hat**. Why? Because it's laid-back, central and totally unexpected.



Just a stone's throw from Plaza Mayor, **The Hat** is a hotel –

but the kind you've never seen before. The first hotel in the city to run on biomass energy and appeal to 'smart travellers', The Hat boasts ultra-modern interior design and also holds free walking tours and markets.





But the best part is the rooftop bar, where you can enjoy the quaint views of Madrid's old buildings while basking in the sun and sipping on your favorite **iced** drink... How could you not want to spend the whole day up here?





James and I first discovered this secret **terraza** during winter, thanks to a small yet very clear sign out on the street.



With **outdoor heating and a nice indoor space**, The Hat's rooftop bar quickly became our spot. It's cozy on even the coldest winter night in Madrid. Along with a glass of red, I always ordered the **tosta de queso de cabra con cebolla caramelizada** (toasted bread with goats cheese and caramelized onions) and James got the **pincho de tortilla**. Both come with a **side of potato chips and a shot of salmoneiro** (a wonderful little addition to an already delicious treat). I've also got my eye on their **quiche**, although I haven't tried them yet.



Yesterday, we finally made it up to **The Hat's rooftop bar** for the first time this Spring. On one of those perfect sunny days in Madrid, we thought it would be impossible to find a table – but we did! And it was simply the nicest place to spend a day like that in the bustling city center. The only downside is that if you don't get a seat in the shade, Madrid's sun can be quite intense. So remember to get something to cool off – I recommend a **mojito** or **tinto de verano**.







The Hat will certainly be included in the upcoming round four of our series on [Madrid's best rooftop bars](#), though it deserved its own post too.

Info

[Facebook](#)

[Website](#)

Tel +34 917 72 85 72

Address Calle Imperial 9

Also check out:

[Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1](#)

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 2

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 3

Pancomido: A French bakery where your bread will most certainly be eaten all up

When I used to live right near the [Museo Sorolla](#) and took the Number 16 bus every morning to work, I had to be out the door in time for my first coffee run before the bus would take me over the Castellana to Chamartín. Like clockwork, I would be out of my apartment around 7:55 so that I could be one of the first in line at 8 AM sharp when the doors of the **Pancomido Café** would open. I would walk in, order my coffee with skim milk and sweetener in a to-go cup, and as I had the amount it cost memorized, have the change ready to give out at a moment's notice so I could merrily sip my coffee as I fell asleep on the bus to the *colegio*.

Sometimes, on Saturday mornings, I would drink that coffee more slowly (and albeit in a much more madrileño manner than a New York one) while one of my friends would order a **croissant with raspberry jam and butter**, but I stuck with my coffee. But the robin egg blue (or better Tiffany blue) inside and out with the menu items offered on a blackboard allured me.

After my move, I decided to have a breakfast adventure to celebrate being able to actually order something other than coffee.

Besides coffee with skim milk (and having skim milk is a vital component of my coffee consumption), **Pancomido** has a whole variety of breads and pastries.



As you can tell...



The **French-style pastries** look absolutely exquisite (even though I can't have any), and you can take my friend's glowing recommendation for croissants as proof.

If you happen to be in the vicinity for lunch, there are also a number of salads and sandwiches as well as soups that look like an excellent little *menú*.

The **Zurbano** location has plenty of seating space in the back which I have taken full advantage of reading *The New York Times* on my iPad on one of those weekend mornings after a long, hard workout at the gym.



If you're on the other side of the Castellana in **Barrio de Salamanca**, there's another **Pancomido** very close to IE Business

School and the US Embassy.

Your bread will most certainly be eaten up, as the name *pan comido* implies, and your little breakfasts will have an extra spring in your step.

Pancomido Café (Chamberí)

Where: Calle Zurbano, 50

Tel.: +34 913 08 25 06

Metro: Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10), Rubén Darío (Line 5), or Iglesia (Line 1)

Pancomido Café (Salamanca)

Where: Calle del General Oráa, 22

Tel.: +34 617 54 03 19

Metro: Núñez de Balboa (Lines 5 and 9)

Mamá Campo: A restaurant-market of organic delights in Plaza de Olavide

Plaza de Olavide is one of Madrid's hidden gems. Situated in the heart of Chamberí between the Iglesia, Bilbao, and Quevedo Metro stops, it's a perfect place to sit on spring days or balmy summer nights. This leads me to [Mamá Campo](#), another one of those places I discovered thanks to an exquisite brunch photo on the Cup of couple Instagram account. Mamá Campo has an organic market as well as a restaurant and children's store/center.

The Mamá Campo restaurant serves all ecological products, epitomizing the eco trend all over the city. One Friday in

between doctor's appointments, interviews, and private lessons, I took advantage of the first of many sunny Madrid spring days to FINALLY get a chance to eat lunch at [Mamá Campo](#).



The décor inside the restaurant is very cool. There's reusable wood and other products, making you feel one with nature. There are communal tables (where I sat as I was flying solo), very reminiscent of Le Pain Quotidien, as well as normal tables for groups of friends. The best part about sitting at the communal table was being perched high above on the stool

(especially choice for taking pictures with my iPhone).



As for for choice of dish, I ordered a grilled sea bass filet with sorted vegetables. I was also given an aperitivo of salmorejo with some delicious whole-wheat bread. I was extremely satisfied with my choice and can't wait for my next visit.

But, like I said, the magic of Mamá Campo isn't just that it's a restaurant. The market, on the part of Calle Trafalgar more towards the Bilbao Metro stop just off of Olavide, has a great

selection of products to enjoy at home.



As you walk in, the whole left wall is full of a whole range of produce. You can also buy a sample of organic breads that look absolutely amazing, as well as bio embutidos, sauces, rice milk, almond, coconut milk, and more.



The aesthetic is very similar to the restaurant, with minimalist painting on the walls, splashes of color, wooden cartons to store all of the produce (as you can see here), and classic woven baskets to store your wares. And it looks like that this could have been kale...



which for this New Yorker is definitely great news if kale can be found.

The next time you discover Olavide on a sunny day and are looking for some organic produce or a delicious, sustainable meal, then Mamá Campo is your go-to place in this little hidden rincón of Madrid.

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Restaurante Mamá Campo

Plaza de Olavide

28010 MADRID

Metro: *Iglesia, Bilbao, or Quevedo*

Tel.: 91 447 41 38

Mamá Campo

Calle Trafalgar, 22

28010 MADRID

Metro: Bilbao