

AREA Madrid: A coworking space with plants, pups & perfect vibes

If you found yourself working an office job in early 2020, you've probably had the same flurry of questions in the past two years as I have: Will the office shut? Will we work from home forever? What does the future of work look like? How will company culture survive???

And while we don't quite have all the answers yet, one thing is for sure: the pandemic has ushered in a new era of hybrid working that is here to stay. When we at NakedMadrid (and [VeraContent](#)) closed our physical doors in summer 2021, we opened many non-physical ones: flexible working, more time with our pets at home, and a membership to a very cool coworking app called [Croissant](#).

Croissant is an app that allows you to cowork in sick spaces in almost every major city around the world. Just in Madrid, we have about 11, and they all have their unique perks.

After trying out a good number of them, though—alongside many normal, non-Croissant cafes—a favorite of mine has emerged. It's called [AREA Madrid](#), and it's perfect.

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For those not enrolled in Croissant, the price for a hot desk is €180/month, which includes unlimited access Monday-Friday 9am-7pm. The price for a fixed desk is €240/month, which includes a personal space that's all yours and 24-hour (!!!) access Mon-Fri to the facilities. Both options include the

benefits I enjoy as a Croissant user: super-fast wifi, meeting room use, private lockers, showers, bike parking, printing, anti-Covid ventilation, 24/7 security, and more.



And while they're still a pretty young company, they're starting to host some really cool events, from yoga sessions to indie film screenings and more. If you're looking to book a space for an event—either for yourself or your company—you can chat to them about it [here](#).

Either way, enjoy these photos of my favorite place to work in Madrid.





AREA Madrid

- **Address:** C/ Tomás Bretón, 50
- **Metro:** Delicias
- **Instagram:** @area_madrid Website: www.areamadrid.es/

Top 5 specialty coffee shops

in Madrid

The rich and earthy flavor of coffee in the air, La Marzocco espresso machine sitting on the counter, the obligatory map of Africa on the wall, cartons of Oatly milk stored in the fridge, at least one man bun... these and more are the characteristics of specialty coffee shops in Madrid. So, if you find a specialty café to be quirky and even eccentric, it means you're in the right place, and someone is about to brew the heck out of your cup of coffee.

Specialty coffee shops have a distinct and unique way of doing things that communicates in no subtle way, their high regard for good quality coffee. The coffee beans sourced directly from farms in Puerto Rico, Colombia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Brazil, or Guatemala, etc. have premium flavor profiles curated perfectly through every step from planting, to production and roasting. Besides the obvious benefits this has on the brew quality, it's also quite sustainable. If you can trace a coffee to its source, then it's more likely from a sustainable source.

Specialty coffee is relatively new in Madrid, but it has risen in popularity in the last two to three years with new cafés opening up all over the city. So if you're in Madrid and you're craving a cup of coffee with a distinct flavor profile, below are the top specialty coffee shops in Madrid you can check out!

Toma Café



Toma Café is located in the Malasaña neighborhood which boasts lots of the arts, cultural scenery in Madrid. Put succinctly, Malasaña is the hipster capital of Madrid so it's no surprise you can find specialty coffee there.

Toma Café is easily one of the best places to find good coffee in Madrid. Each cup of coffee is brewed expertly by experienced baristas. The atmosphere is relaxed, comfortable, and friendly. Toma Café has something that a lot of specialty coffee shops in Madrid don't have – **a really good breakfast and brunch menu.**

They have a working kitchen, and the menu has delicious offerings like avocado toast, yogurt and fruit bowl, and a bunch of pastry offerings made fresh daily. Their lattes and flat whites are specifically delicious with a distinct taste that can be traced back to the careful and patient brewing process of the baristas, and the filtered water.

- **Facebook** & Instagram: [@tomacafe](#) & [@tomacafewarriors](#)
- **Address 1:** Calle de la Palma, 49 (metro: Noviciado or Tribunal)
- **Address 2:** Calle Santa Feliciana 5 (metro: Iglesia or Quevedo)

Hola Coffee



Hola coffee is located in Lavapiés, which is known for being the cultural hub of different types of ethnic restaurants, bars, and tapa places in Madrid. Hola coffee has a very light and airy vibe and atmosphere.

Picture this: it's Saturday morning and you're sitting on one of their benches, sunlight is sipping in through the windows and bouncing off their white walls. You can hear the machine brewing coffee, James Blake is playing softly in the background, you've been served a freshly brewed drip, and you can feel the different flavor profiles in each sip while you enjoy a good read or talk about your love for Madrid's art scene with a friend. It's a good day.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@holacoffee](#)
- **Address:** Calle del Dr. Fourquet, 33
- **Metro:** Embajadores or Lavapiés

Acid Café



Prepare to be out-hipstered at Acid Café. Concrete walls and floors, minimalist decor, metal tables, wooden stools, strategically placed plants, toasted scones, metal straws (because the planet), gluten-free vegan cookies and yes, delicious and high-quality coffee brewed intricately with all the hipster love they can muster.

The minimalist decor is perfect to put you at ease. The vibe is toned down and usually quiet, making it ideal for spending an afternoon reading a book and sipping on some good coffee. It's also quite big so there's more than enough sitting for

groups.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@acid.cafe](#)
- **Address:** Calle de la Verónica, 9
- **Metro:** Antón Martín

Ruda Café



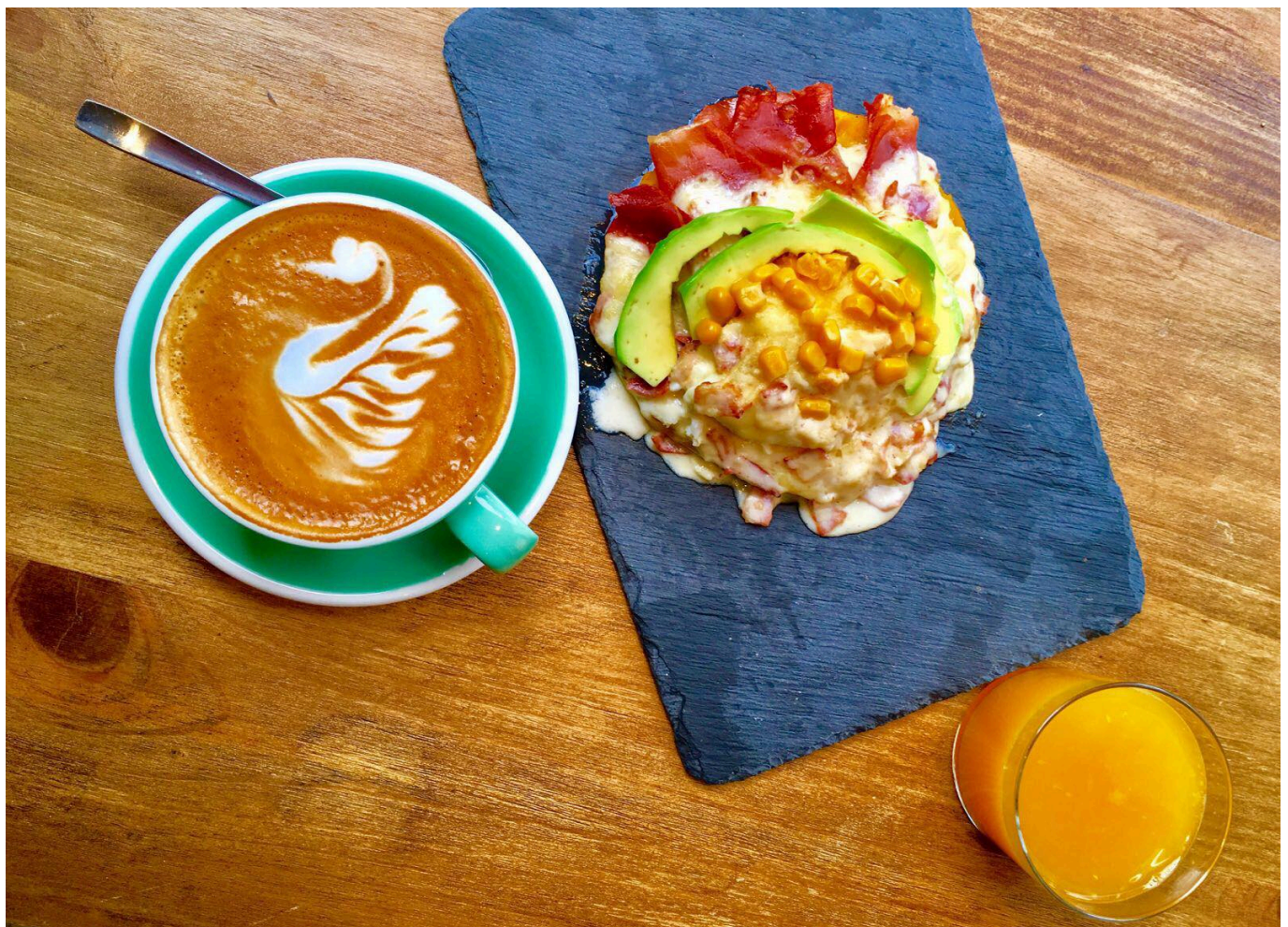
Ruda Café is located in the neighborhood of La Latina, known for having a wide variety of cocktail bars and tapa spots.

Ruda Café has a quaint and rustic vibe with exposed brick walls and wall-mounted shelves stacked with tons of coffee and coffee paraphernalia.

It's quite small and embodies more of a coffee tasting room vibe with just enough sitting to host those who truly appreciate their finely brewed coffee. Also if you're looking to get a bag to go for your French press at home, Ruda has some of the finest beans.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram [@rudacafe](#)
- **Address:** Calle de la Ruda, 11
- **Metro:** La Latina

Boconó Coffee



Bocono Coffee is located in La Latina/Embajadores neighborhood. It's a good-sized café that can take large

groups. They also have a delicious brunch menu that's very affordable, and a fine collection of cakes baked in house. The scenery and atmosphere are very welcoming and great for an afternoon coffee date! While you're there, check out their impressive gallery wall which is perfect for the gram.

- **Facebook** & Instagram: [@bocono.coffee.roaster](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Embajadores, 3
- **Metro:** Tirso de Molina or La Latina

Specialty coffee shops in Madrid are on the rise

There are more specialty coffee shops in Madrid with new ones opening up every day. I recommend these five places because they come up on top. I've also spent a considerable amount of time and money in each, so I make these recommendations with certainty. If you're a coffee nerd, feel free to chat up the baristas at any of these places and learn more about where they source their beans and their brewing process.

By Jiji Majiri Ugboma (IG: [@Jiji129](#))

Jiji is the Creative Director of [Clever-ish Magazine](#) (IG: [@cleverishmag](#))

All images are from each cafés respective social media accounts

10 Great Second-hand and Vintage Shops in Madrid

Fed up of queues in Primark, everyone having the same dress from Zara, and the unsustainable waste produced by fast fashion? Ditch the high-street chains and get ready to rummage! From cheap and cheerful thrift shops to high-end boutiques, there's something for everyone when it comes to second-hand and vintage shops in Madrid.

1. Vintalogy



- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle de Atocha, 10
- Opening Hours: 11am-10pm every day

A good place to start is Vintalogy, Europe's largest vintage

store, set up by the team behind the [Mercado de Motores](#). Forget delving into bargain bins; think of Vintalogy as a vintage department store. They make the most of the huge floor space and high ceilings with great merchandising, making it easy to find what you're looking for. The clothes are divided neatly into sections, and sizes are easy to find. If you fancy a splurge, there is also a separate room for luxury and designer clothing, all in mint condition and, like the rest of the store, beautifully presented.

The shop building is emblematic. Vintalogy replaced the historic cloth shop Sobrino de J. Martí Prats and the original signage has been preserved, in keeping with the philosophy of repurposing, reusing, and rediscovering gems from past eras. As you might have guessed from the late opening hours, **they often host events and DJs.**

2. La Mona Checa Vintage Market and Art



- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Velarde, 2
- Opening Hours: 11:30am-9pm Mon-Sat; 11:30am-3pm/4pm-9pm Sun

La Mona Checa is a cute boutique (with an equally cute name) on Calle Velarde, a mecca for vintage shoppers in Madrid. Thanks to its bright sign and distinctive monkey logo, you can't miss it walking past. Once inside, you could be at the circus, thanks to the quirky red-and-white, striped, fabric that decorates the ceiling, like the inside of a tent. They have a great selection of brightly-patterned shirts for men and women, some great party dresses, and sunglasses of all shapes and sizes (I even managed to find a pair to fit my tiny head).

3. Malasaña Vintage Outlet

- Address: Calle San Vicente Ferrer, 39
- Opening Hours: 12pm-3pm/5pm-8pm Mon-Sat

If you're looking for a bargain, this is your place. This outlet stocks clothes from La Mona Checa and Biba Vintage, all at up to 70% off. It's a true, no-frills, thrift shop experience, with no changing rooms and clothes racks full of stock. But it's not hard to find something you'll like. I walked out with two shirts and a skirt for under €10.

4. Magpie



- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Velarde, 3 and Calle Manuela Malasaña, 19
- Opening Hours: 11:30am-9pm Mon-Sat; 12pm-9pm Sun

With a cavernous space on Calle Velarde and a small, newly-opened shop on Calle Manuela de Malasaña, Magpie Vintage has all the clothes you could wish for. There is an extensive range of both men's and women's clothing, everything from

jeans and sportswear to sequinned mini-dresses and floor-length evening gowns. I also love the range of accessories and jewellery. The prices are more than reasonable, with most items a bit less than they would be in your average high-street shop.

5. Heritage and Rare

- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle del Pez, 36
- Opening Hours: 11am-3pm/5pm-9pm Mon-Sat; 12pm-2pm Sun

One for the vintage purists, Heritage and Rare stands out for its beautiful, authentic, and well-cared-for vintage pieces. All items carry a label specifying the country and decade they were made in. From delicate Italian lingerie to heavy wool coats, everything is in perfect condition and shows no signs of use. A lot of the stock has never been used, having been rescued after shop closures. The shop is small but manages to squeeze in a good selection of men's and women's clothes, including shoes and bags.

6. Alphaville



- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle Velarde, 7 y 16 and Calle del León, 29
- Opening Hours: 11am-9pm every day

Alphaville has several locations, with two shops on Calle Velarde and another on Calle del Leon. On Calle Velarde, one shop is dedicated solely to vintage sportswear and the other has a bit of everything. Good for winter coats and shoes, my favourite of the three is the shop on Calle del Leon. With its cosy atmosphere and retro furniture, I sometimes feel like I'm shopping in someone's living room.

7. Humana, Malasaña

- [Website](#)
- Address: Calle de la Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 23
- Opening Hours: 10am-pm every day

Bear with me on this one... With shops across the country, Humana is the biggest second-hand chain in Spain, but it doesn't have a reputation for being the most stylish. Think Humana and you're more likely to be picturing frumpy

throwaways than quirky vintage finds.

However, the Malasaña branch, on Calle de la Corredera Baja de San Pablo, has a carefully selected collection. There is a mix of good-quality, on-trend, high-street items, and vintage stock. It's well worth a browse, whether you want to pick up some of last season's fashion at a fraction of the price or a more individual vintage piece. They get new stock regularly, **as the best items from the other branches are brought here.** The last time I went, there was even a vintage wedding dress!

8. El Rincón de Tía Jo





- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Velarde, 4
- Opening Hours: 12pm-3pm/4pm-9pm Mon-Thurs; 12pm-9pm Fri-Sat; 1pm-9pm Sun

El Rincón de Tía Jo is my favourite second-hand shop on Calle Velarde. It seems like a little, narrow shop but is much bigger once you get inside. With a distinctly less hipster vibe than the other shops on this street, the best vintage stock tends to be in the room right at the back. In another small room, they have vintage furniture and knick-knacks. The selection of coats is great; I bought my beloved, black, fake-fur jacket here. Most importantly, the staff are friendly, helpful, and always give good advice about what suits you.

9. The Loop



- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Velarde, 1
- Opening Hours: 11:30am-9pm Mon-Sat; 11:30am-3pm/4pm-8:30 Sun

Banish thoughts of rifling through musty cast-offs. The Loop's tagline is "Fresh Vintage for Fresh People." Though "Fresh Vintage" is a bit of an oxymoron, I think they mean that all their vintage clothes are on trend, in good condition, and clean. The stock is well selected, with well-known brands like Moschino, Armani, Valentino, Calvin Klein, and Levi's. The shop is bright, modern, and feels more like a quirky designer boutique than a thrift store.

10. Johnny and Velvet



- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle Embajadores, 42
- Opening Hours: 11am-2pm/5:30pm-9pm Tues-Sat; 11am-4pm Sun

Johnny and Velvet, named after the owner's two greyhounds, is perfect if you want to pick up some €20 Levi's jeans. It's a bit away from the main hub of vintage shops in Madrid, located south of the centre on Calle Embajadores, making it a good choice if you don't feel like facing the bustle of Malasaña. The clothes are quirky, original, and reasonably priced.

By Ellen
Fouweather (*Instagram: [@efouwee](#)*)

Know any other great second-hand and vintage shops in Madrid? If so, let us know!

Lúa Vermutería, a charming new bar with an old spirit in Lavapiés

Serendipity. It's a funny thing. My friends and I used to go to a bar several nights a week where the head server, Alberto, treated us like royalty. It was our hangout spot.

Fast-forward a few years, and I was wandering around Lavapiés with a friend on a Saturday night and we stumbled upon Lúa Vermutería on the (very cool) Calle Doctor Fourquet. We were in the mood to try something new and this place immediately lured us in. After squeezing through the crowd and making our way to the bar, to our surprise, there was Alberto!



At 56 years old, Alberto is now the owner of this new venture which he named after his daughter, Lúa (meaning “moon” in Galicia, where he’s from). And he took the head chef, Rosa, from the former bar along with him.

Although they completely gutted and refurbished an old night club, today Lúa Vermutería looks like a traditional *taberna* that underwent a high-quality facelift. It has an old-fashioned feel to it, with high tables and stools set out in the front, and just a handful of sit-down tables in the back.



Lúa Vermutería is located on a street that's full of new art galleries and trendy shops in the ever-changing neighborhood of Lavapiés. That's why it stands out for its charming and classic vibe. It's already becoming a favorite in the barrio, with visits from the likes of celebrities including Almodóvar. The music ranges from soul to blues, and they've started showcasing exhibits from local artists.



As for the drinks, you'll find Zecchini vermouth on tap and a list of Spanish wines and beers. Of course, each round comes with a complementary tapa. The menu features homemade Spanish dishes, along with a number of modern and vegetarian options. For lunch, you can also order the daily special: a €5 *plato de cuchara* (usually a hearty stew), such as lentils, *cocido*, or *la olla gitana* (pictured below).



So far we've ordered the *entraña* (steak), *tacos de bonito* (tuna slices over black pasta with cuttlefish and alioli), and the *pisto manchego* on toast.



Everything was absolutely delicious. The steak was cooked perfectly and came with *patatas bravas*, one of the house specialties. Alberto also treated us to a side of caramelized onions prepared with vermouth – it was so sweet and so good.



The Italian-inspired pasta mixed with alioli and tuna was a burst of different textures and flavors. It's one of Lúa's star dishes that came highly recommended by Alberto.



And my favorite was the *pisto* – a slice of toast topped with a heaping portion of freshly cooked vegetables that tasted even better once the yolk from the fried egg spilled all over it.

It was wonderful to see Alberto there after so many years. We'll definitely be back again and again.

Lúa Vermutería

- [Facebook](#)
- **Instagram:** @lua_vermateria
- **Address:** Doctor Fourquet, 28
- **Metro:** Embajadores or Lavapiés
- **Phone:** 637 65 27 51

Street spotlight: Calle Ruda, a tiny portal between La Latina and Embajadores

It goes without saying that there's no shortage of things to do in Madrid. In fact, sometimes there's so much, you don't know where to start. On those days when the sun's shining and you're itching to get out of the house, **sometimes it's best to just walk to a cool part of town and let the city do its thing.** We're here to give you some inspiration.

Calle de la Ruda

La Latina and Embajadores—bustling multicultural hubs—are connected by a string of tiny streets full of surprises. One of them is **Calle Ruda**, which takes you straight from Mercado La Cebada to Plaza Cascorro, and makes the very short walk well worth it.

Onis, for old-school charm



If you enter the street from Calle Toledo, you're greeted by the classic corner bar, Onis.

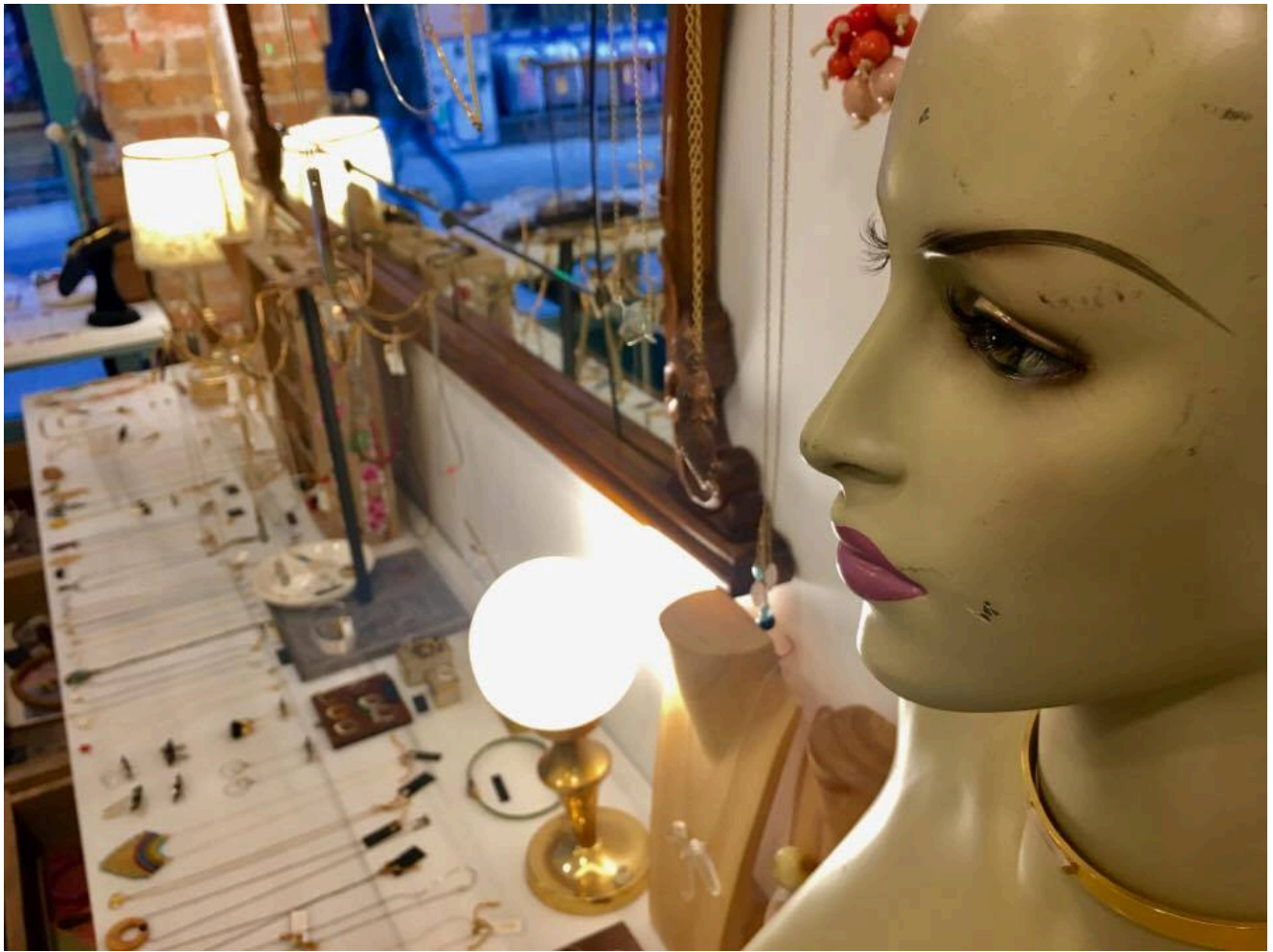
This place is the definition of *castizo*. Tapas in the glass display case, tobacco machines, weird arcade games, and a grumpy server who has probably been here since the place opened (which was 1976, I've learned).

Ruda Café, for coffee



Looking for something more modern? We got you. Keep heading down Ruda and you'll come across [Ruda Café](#), a new (opened last year) coffeeshop that's riding the wave of java experts that has hit Madrid in recent years. We're not mad about this trend. And yes, they have wifi. They also sell packaged artisanal coffee and tea, jam, art, and coffeemakers.

De Piedra, for handmade jewelry



But there's only so much coffee you can drink (unfortunate, I know). So now that you're fueled up, you're ready to browse the cute little shops of this gem of a street. If you're a fan of jewelry and creepy mannequins, pay a visit to **De Piedra**, an artisanal jewelry shop at C/ Ruda 19. They haven't been at this location long, but the store has been open for some 15 years.

Molar, for records, books and cassette tapes



Next you'll come across my personal favorite place on the street, **Molar**. Think record store meets bookshop. They even sell cassette tapes, which is not something you see every day in Mad City.

Mamá Elba, for something sweet



Got a sweet tooth? [Mamá Elba](#) has been open a mere 3 weeks, and is already drawing a loyal customer base. Their selection of ice cream (including vegan and gluten-free), cakes, and coffee will leave you overwhelmed by heavenly choices.

Erre Catorce (R14), for art and design



[R14](#) is another **brand new spot** on the street, just open for a month. It's a modern interior design shop, with local art, restored vintage furniture pieces (from around the world, namely Scandinavia and the US), apparel, and lots of cool home decor.

Soon they'll be putting on events to promote and discuss interior design and art, so keep your eyes peeled and follow them on [Facebook](#).

La Tienda de Cerveza, for craft beer



Next up: craft beer. Okay, I lied before, THIS place is my favorite. [La Tienda de Cerveza](http://www.latiendadecerveza.es) is a must in La Latina (and in the city, really). The shelves are lined with hundreds of bottled or canned craft beers and ciders from both Madrid and around the world. They have a few tables in the back, and they hold tasting events often. An absolute must for *cervecerxs*.

Tienda Biológica, for something healthy

Something I love about Madrid is that **you can eat healthy without going bankrupt**. Tienda Biológica is living proof of this. This small organic food shop sells health products at reasonable prices, and it's run by the sweetest lady.

La China Mandarina, for a great meal in a modern space



And last but not least (and not even covering half of the street's spots), for a great meal and a laidback ambience, visit [La China Mandarin](#) at the end of Calle Ruda (closest to Plaza Cascorro). It's one of those places that masters the art of offering both very traditional and very modern cuisine on the same menu. So if you're craving a *tortilla de patatas* but your friend has a hankering for a vegan burger, there's something for everyone.

They have great wifi and won't roll their eyes if you work on your laptop all morning (I know from experience).

There's also a mushroom-themed restaurant called El Brote! Check out Leah's article about it here:

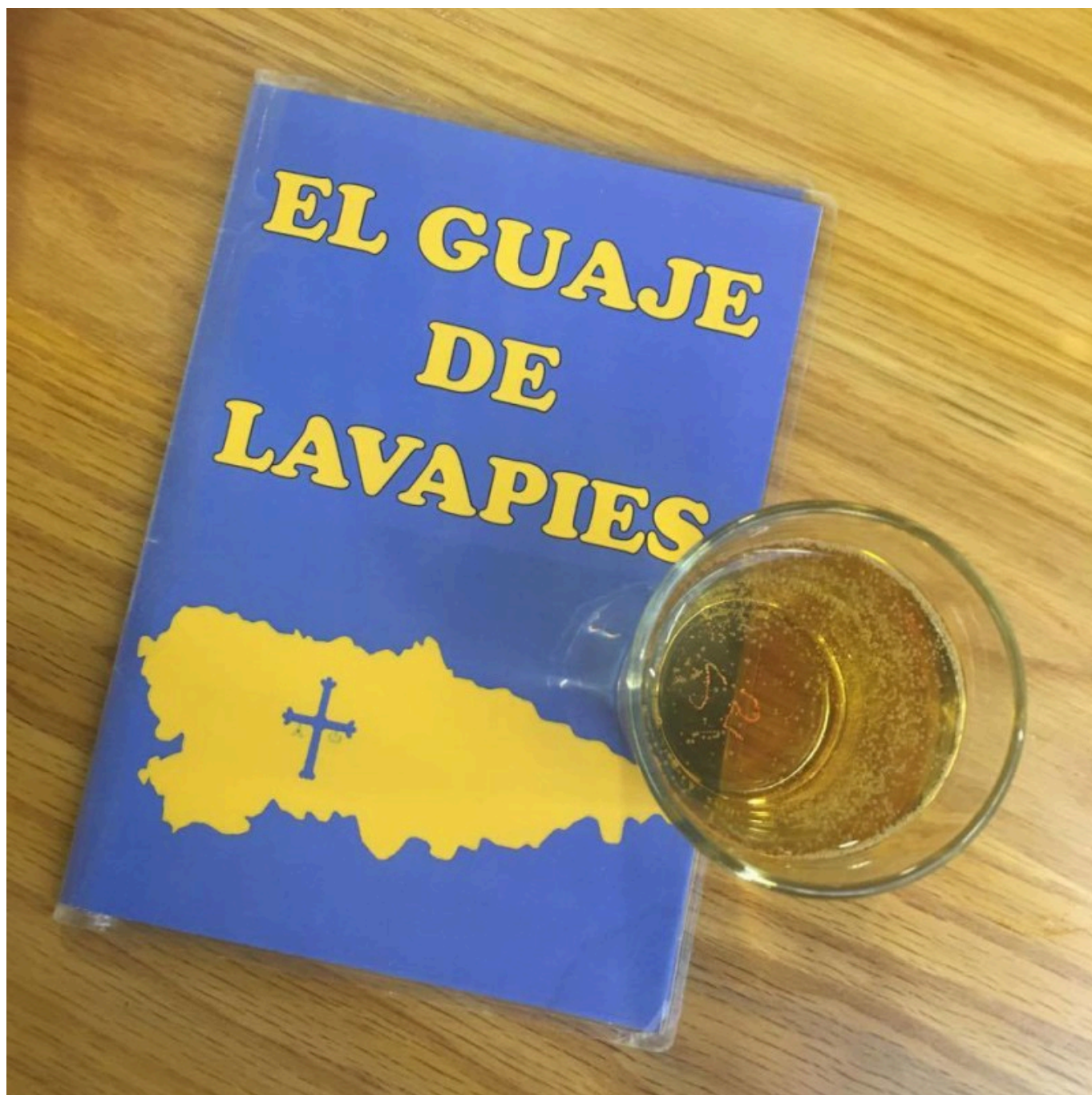
[*El Brote: a brand-new mushroom restaurant in the heart of El Rastro*](#)

Calle Ruda is just one of a plethora of tiny goldmines in Madrid. If none of these spots call your attention (tough crowd!), we suggest you still come to the area on a beautiful day and just get lost. You can't go wrong.

El Guaje de Lavapiés, an Authentic Asturian Oasis

Tucked into the [Mercado de San Fernando](#) is a tiny piece of Asturias. From the *queso gamoneu* to the blue-and-yellow flags marking their territory on every spare inch of the bar, you'll feel like you're really there.

[El Guaje de Lavapiés](#) is a *sidrería* that offers some of the most high-quality Asturian ciders, cheeses, and cured meats Madrid has to offer.



Rafael, the owner, is known around town as “[El Guaje](#),” a term used to refer to someone younger than you in Asturias. El Guaje opened up shop 10 months ago, and is happy with his success, although his dream is to open a full-size restaurant.



Is the space enormous? No. Does it have wifi? Also no. But what it does have it much better: delicious food, good prices, and no big chain of production and distribution—everything comes straight from our northern neighbors and is grown and made naturally.

Here you see El Guaje's *tosta con membrillo y cabrales*—toast with quince paste and blue cheese produced by rural dairy farmers and cured in natural caves (€3.50).



Of course, you can also buy these products in bulk to take home and enjoy later.



But if you're like me, and nothing hits the spot like a good craft beer, El Guaje's got you covered, with a selection from Caleyá of pale ales, IPAs, ambers, etc., as well as your trusty Estrella and Mahou.



If you're lucky, you'll arrive in time for the show—there's an open space at the center of the market, which happens to be right in front of this bar, where they put on dancing shows, plays, and other cultural events.

iPuxa Asturias!

Information

- [Facebook](#)
- Address: C/ Embajadores, 41 inside [Mercado de San Fernando](#)
- Hours: Vary by the day, but typical market hours. Most business on weekends!

PS: Right in front of El Guaje is another one of our favorite stands, [Mercado de Lisboa](#). Check it out!

El Andariego, Your Argentinian Corner Bar in Madrid

A few years ago I went out with friends to see a play at a small theater in downtown Madrid. I don't remember where we went (we took a taxi there and back, and I just followed along), but I do remember the street was lined with independent theaters and arts spaces, and afterwards we went to **a sweet corner bar** that I instantly fell in love with. I'd always wondered where that bar was...

Here comes the crazy part. Last month I moved to **Calle Ercilla, near Embajadores**. As I was walking down my new street one day, I started seeing theater after theater... It all looked too familiar, so I kept on walking and low and behold, there it was! The bar I had gone to all those years ago is called [El Andariego](#), and it's just how I remembered it.



It turns out **El Andariego** is a neighborhood favorite and pretty well known throughout Madrid. It specializes in Argentinian dishes, the star being the “**entrañas**” (entrails) which are out of this world, and other **grilled meat dishes** (€12.50).



Then of course they have a selection of **homemade empanadas** (€2.50-3.50). We tried the spinach and criolla ones which both hit the spot.





We also ordered an off-the-charts **quiche made with spinach, squash and pumpkin seeds**; plus the **provoleta**, melted provolone cheese (€6 each and delicious).





El Andariego also offers **vegan options like baba ganoush and hummus**, plus a selection of **Mexican dishes**. As I was watching other plates land on patrons' tables, I spotted an impressive mountain of quesadillas that I'll have to try next time.

So far I've eaten here twice and each time the bill came out to a total of just **22 euros for 2**, including a glass of red wine each. Granted we shared everything but still, it's very affordable.

So I can say the food, drinks and prices are all great. The only downside? It can get a bit cramped but that's pretty typical of Madrid bars, especially the good ones. Everybody wants in!

Info

- [Facebook](#)
 - **Address:** Calle del Labrador, 12 (corner with Calle Ercilla)
 - **Metro:** Embajadores
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Mercadillo Lisboa: A fun Portuguese snack bar in Mercado San Fernando

Brand-new Portuguese eatery Mercadillo Lisboa was waiting for the right moment to join the *mercado* scene until, six weeks ago, just in time for Tapapiés, it finally opened up in the best spot in [Mercado San Fernando](#). Enter through the main doors, head straight to the middle and turn right – they're there next to the fun bar Sondelata, which sells blue wine and carrot cava.

Mercadillo Lisboa is owned and run by three pals – two from Lisbon and one from the Canary Islands. Only two of them are in this photo because the other is camera-shy – he hid around the corner.

This is a great place to get authentic Portuguese food, from a variety of quiches and the classic *Pastéis de Belém*, to *empanadas*, *arancini* and everything *bacalao*. Here are a few photos of their snack food, very proudly displayed by the jolliest of the three musketeers:



Vegetarian spinach quiche



There are lots of quiches here



Empanadas and cod croquettes



Arancini



Strawberry cheesecake (wow)

You can also buy a selection of Portuguese beers and wines (including *vinho verde*), plus an almond liqueur (*licor de amêndoa*) specially driven over from Portugal by the guy on the right. I bought their last bottle a couple of weeks ago and with it came this story – suddenly €12 seemed like an absolute steal. You'll be glad to know that they've since been back to Portugal and brought another few bottles for us, but get it while you can – or I will!



Lots of Portuguese wines and liqueurs



A selection of Portuguese beers

Pull up a chair at Mercadillo Lisboa or mingle in its sphere of influence with a *vinho verde* and a *bocadillo de bacalao*. And just so you know, you'll probably bump into me.

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** C/ Embajadores, 41
- **Metro:** Lavapiés/Embajadores

Opening hours:

- *Mon: Fri: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm – midnight*
- *Sat: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm*
- *Sun: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm*

Taco Maya: A brand-new no-frills taco joint

José Manuel – a well-known chef in the Madrid taco scene – has just opened a brand new, no-frills taco joint in Madrid with his partner, Joe. This colourful and fun eatery is located in a beautiful old building just a five-minute walk from barrio Lavapiés, and has a lovely chilled terrace plus a cosy dining area inside.



Taco Maya's cosy, minimalist dining area

It's possible that you may have stumbled across José Manuel before: he used to own [Taquería Maya](#) in Huertas, where José met Joe! With a new team member and a more relaxed location, [Taco Maya](#) has a winning formula, and dare I say the best Mexican food I've had in Madrid?

THE FOOD

Everything is made from scratch by José himself, from the nachos to the tacos and every ingredient is bought in fresh that morning. It's for this reason that the menu sometimes varies depending on what order comes in that day, and there's an array of tacos, quesadillas and nachos to try.



The menu – full of options for all!

This is what we had:



Lemon and Strawberry Margaritas

First of all, the Lemon and Strawberry Margaritas are incredible – like nothing you’ve ever had before, I promise! The strong kick of tequila was also a great start to the evening.



The Nachos

We had three types of nachos: Courgette and corn from the cob (vegan), Guacamole and coriander (also vegan), and beef. All were absolutely delicious, and the guacamole was like something I'd make at home in secret so that I could put in as much coriander and fresh red onion as I wanted.



The Beef Tacos



2 x Cheese Tacos and 2 x Lamb Tacos

The beef and guacamole tacos were juicy and moreish, and that extra squeeze of lime cut through all that tender meat perfectly. The veggie options included cheese and guacamole quesadillas, but pictured above we have courgette tacos and two tacos with a creamy vegetable and corn mix and plenty of fresh coriander on top. Having said all that, the tacos themselves were so fresh and you could really decipher their flavour.



Tequila!

To end the evening, José Manuel offered us a wonderfully smooth tequila. He also gave us a salt-sugar-chilli mix for the usual tequila ritual, and now I'll never be able to have just salt again.



José Manuel himself!

The tacos are great and the terrace is a real treat. This humble eatery has a bright future – check it out and be a part of it.

Info

- **Address:** Paseo de Santa María de la Cabeza, 60
- **Metro:** Embajadores
- [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Phone number: 911 733 374 / 642 194 285

Also check out:

- [Tacos, tamales and tequila: Madrid's best Mexican joints!](#)

Café Barbieri: A 114-year-old Art Nouveau café in Lavapiés

[Café Barbieri](#) first brought modernist charm to Madrid's working class district, Lavapiés, in 1902, and although the *barrio* has evolved dramatically over the last 114 years, the interior of this elegant bar hasn't changed one bit.

Some things have changed though – Café Barbieri is owned by a charismatic chap from New Delhi and staffed with bilingual youngthings. It also now has a small terrace, but this is not why you'd come here – its appeal is truly the interior.

The whole place is lined with mirrors which back then were a symbol of wealth. These mirrors are now aging well, stained a smoky bronze colour with dots of grey rust creeping in from the edges. The ceiling is framed with grids of ornate girders that are connected to decorative cast-iron beams, typical of older buildings in Lavapiés. Although never on, there are ceiling fans too – something increasingly rare in Madrid.

At the back of the bar is a grand piano on a small raised stage. Almost every evening there's a live music session often featuring the piano, and this place does food too – typical Spanish stuff but with an edge.

The worn white marble table tops and red velvet seating lining the dining area mark this place out as opulent, but that's really not the vibe – it's chilled and cosy and attracts a spectrum of people, from the intrepid tourist who's braved it down the hill, to the unassuming local who fancies a read of one of the papers on offer.



Café Barbieri by day



Café Barbieri's beautiful ornate ceiling



The grand piano taking centre stage, and look at all those beautiful mirrors



Look at that original tiled floor!



The bar has a great selection of spirits & vermouth on tap



Café Barbieri by night

Café Barbieri is also on the same street as the Greek foodie place, [Egeo](#), so there you have it, your night is planned!

Info

- C/Ave María 45
- Metro: Lavapiés
- [Website](#) [Facebook](#)