

NAP, real Neapolitan pizza in the heart of Lavapiés

Ahh, pizza. The star of so many childhood memories, last minute dinners, college dorm room feasts, and drunken (or sober) declarations of love. At this point pizza is more than a food; it's a cultural emblem, no matter what country you're in.



But if you want the real deal, you'll have to go to Naples, where the original Margherita pizza was invented in 1889. And if RyanAir flights to Italy aren't quite within your budget, head to NAP–Neapolitan Authentic Pizza in Madrid.

As soon as you walk through the doors, you'll be greeted by a rainbow-hued mural by Okuda, the famed Spanish street artist. Check out the wood-fired pizza oven (essential for true Neapolitan crust) as you settle into the bright and airy space.

Obviously, the specialty here is pizza. They offer everything from the classic Margherita (tomato, mozzarella, olive oil, basil, and parmesan) to spicy salami and speck, to anchovies and eggplant, to innovative daily specials. If you want to get creative, you can add as many extra toppings as you like (for a small fee).

The pizza is made in the true Neapolitan style: a thin, doughy, and bubbly crust composed of nothing but flour, yeast, water, and salt, topped with tantalizingly fresh ingredients. Each one is enough to fill up one very hungry diner—but if you're like me you'll want to save some for lunch (or breakfast) tomorrow. At 6-10 euros per pie, it's affordable either way.



Marinara pizza: tomato, garlic, olive oil, oregano, and basil

There's plenty more on the menu, too. Don't miss the

bruschetta, burrata, and baked eggplant, plus tiramisu for dessert. If you're going for the full experience, have a limoncello digestif, and then sit back and enjoy the satisfaction that only pizza can impart.



Eggplant bruschetta, one of the four varieties offered

Pizza may be beautiful in all its various forms (deep dish, frozen, square-shaped cafeteria style...) but if you ask me, nothing beats the original. Give me a charred and slightly sour crust with a thin layer of sweet ripe tomatoes, and I'm sold.

NAP provides just that: pizza in its simplest, truest, and freshest form. Forget Telepizza, get off your couch, and make the trek to Lavapiés—it's not Naples, but it might just be the next best thing.

Info

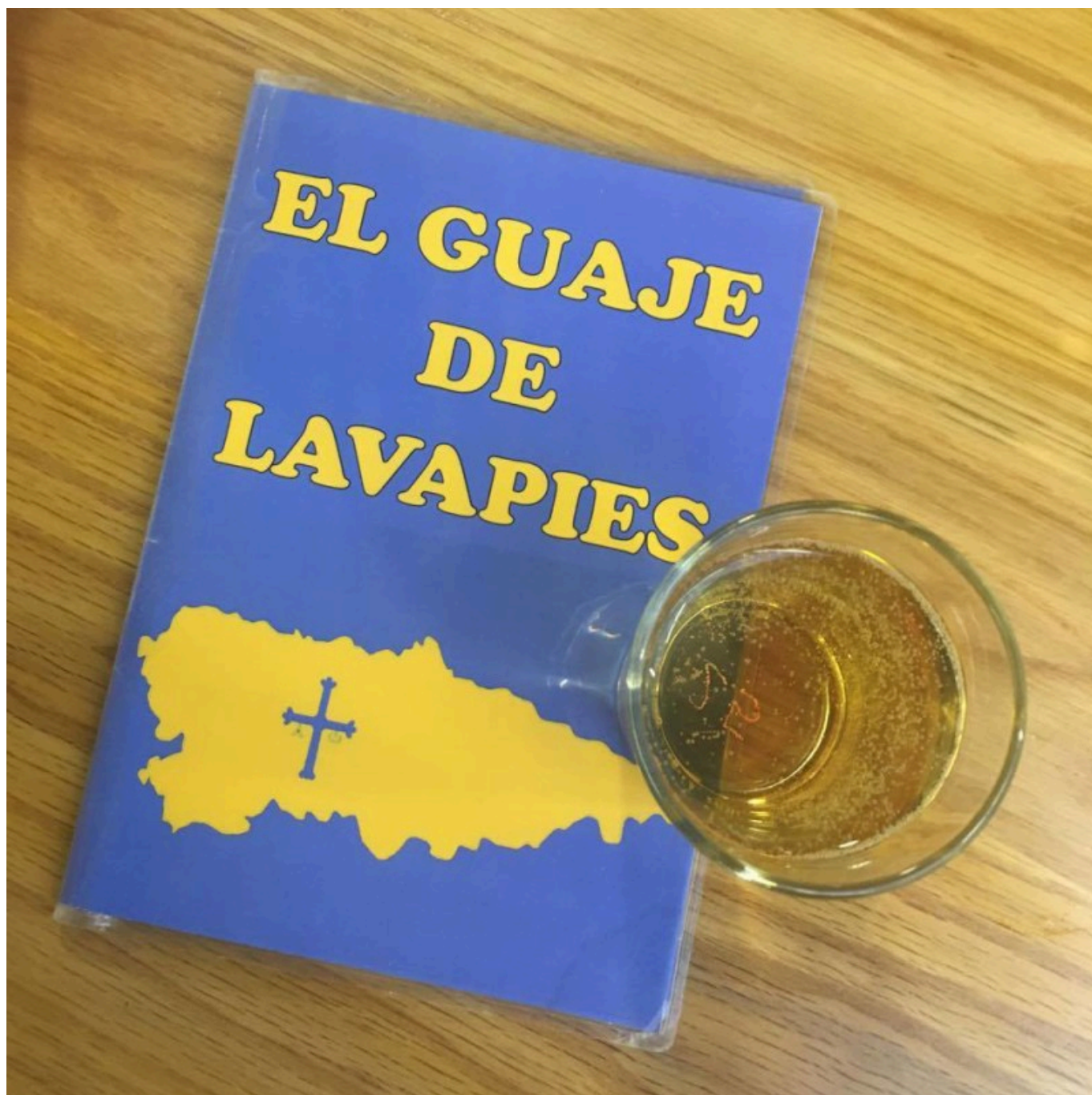
- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Ave María, 19
- **Metro:** Lavapiés & Tirso de Molina
- **Phone:** 932 46 26 15

(Pro tip: NAP also has two locations in Barcelona; Madrid is the latest addition.)

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!

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*

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](#)
-

Pum Pum Cafe, a new Lavapiés coffeeshop and weekend brunch spot

Situated on C/ Tribulete, 6 is the new establishment [Pum Pum Cafe](#). It was brought to my attention by the charismatic Jordan, well known by the coffee-lover community for his tenure as a barista at the popular [Toma Cafe](#) in Malasaña. The tastefully exposed brick pattern of the wall is a remnant of the conversion process from the butcher shop that previously occupied the space. I'm always keen on discovering new cafes to perch with my laptop. One can easily foresee this business becoming another thriving watering hole in the barrio.



Pum Pum stands out amongst the competition for its breakfast/brunch offerings: a splendid eggs benedict and avocado tostada, an assortment of healthy juices, baked goods and organic products. **Their mission is to offer breakfast at all hours of the day as to not discriminate against those who wake up at 5pm after a rowdy night.** Aficionados of coffee will be as thrilled as I was to see that Pum Pum is equipped to prepare V60 and chemex filter coffees.



The owner Papo is from Argentina, his brother Dam operates the kitchen, barista Jordan hails from Australia and the cafe manager Ira is from Ukraine. Papo has an adorable and well behaved infant son who can be seen on site at the weekend. Their hours during the week are 9am-9pm and their weekend brunch hours are 10am-9pm. This location is strongly recommended to any lovers of coffee and breakfast.



Photo: Steff Gutovska

Info

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- **Adress:** Calle Tribulete 6
- **Metro:** Lavapiés

You may also like:

- [Toma Café, Fuel up, feel hip](#)
 - [El Cafelito, for coffee lovers in Lavapiés](#)
 - [Best brunch on a budget in Madrid](#)
 - [Swinton & Grant, art, books and coffee in Lavapiés](#)
-

Leave El Barrio for El Imparcial, in Tirso de Molina

I've started jokingly referring to Gran Vía as my Madrid version of the River Thames. Should you know London, you'll know that when it comes to being a dweller of the affectionately nicknamed 'smog', you very much fall either the North or South camp thanks to the watery divide; and to this end I feel that the same can be said for Madders. If you're Fuencarral side of Gran Vía you tend to spend your free time hot footing it around the streets of Malasaña and Chueca. Whereas if you veer down towards Sol, you can usually be found whiling away time between La Latina and Lavapiés. Either way, had I not crossed the 'symbolic' gulf provided by our very own Oxford Street equivalent, I may never have found [El Imparcial](#).



Inconspicuous and almost completely nondescript from the exterior, [El Imparcial](#) is quite the find upon entering. On the right hand side you're greeted by a pocket-sized bar where you can grab a coffee or a cana. However, make your way up the

impressively sized staircases and you enter into an Aladdin's Cave of all round prettiness. I'm loathe to bandy around this term liberally, but the high ceilings and beautifully restored décor can almost be described as '*breath taking*' – close one eye and squint with the other and it does have a touch of the old Palace De Versailles about it.



Part concept store, part restaurant, El Imparcial straddles a line where you literally want **everything** that you see. Cocktails, they've got them in spades. Food, well there are morsels so delicious that it wouldn't be uncommon to not want to share your starter *apologies to my fam as I inhaled the bao buns without as much as a thought of 'did you want to try one?!'



Last but not least are the Wallpaper magazine worthy purchases waiting to adorn your casa. El Imparcial stocks a carefully (and I'd hazard a guess, lovingly) curated range of stationary, magazines and books – apt really considering the building once housed a newspaper.



Food wise they offer a complete smorgasbord of delights. We wolfed down (amongst other treats) Roasted black cod with miso edamame beans, oxtail croquettes and a lip smackingly good buttifara pizza with scamorza. Our lunch lasted for hours, dinner...even longer. It really is one of those places that seems to draw you in and make you not want to leave (or maybe after the array of cocktails placing one foot in front of other could've been tricky and partly to blame for the desire not to budge).

Did I mention just how pretty it is? *and that's just the staff. Book well ahead or find yourself lingering outside, nose pressed against the glass wanting to get in.

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Web](#)
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-

YOKA LOKA

Squeezed between aisles of fruit vendors and meat merchants in the lively Mercado Antón Martín, you can find [Yoka Loka](#), a **sushi restaurant** worth your euros.



Their hours may not jive with the Spanish schedule of eating dinner around nine or ten p.m., (since the market in which the restaurant is located closes its doors at nine), but you may want to consider eating out earlier than usual to get a taste of the **maki** and **nigiri** rolling out of the kitchen. Or perhaps, it may be better suited for a lunch out on the town.

Happening upon this locale is delightful in itself. It is unexpected to find a sushi stall in the midst of the traditional market products. The restaurant is tiny; a small counter to place your order, a small matchbox kitchen, and a dining room that is comparable in size to a train car. Flanking the small dining area and kitchen are narrow bar areas set up to accommodate a few extra diners. If seated here, you can peek into the kitchen to see what the chefs are up to.



Prices aren't outrageous. For example, eleven euros will buy you **the Yoka Loka sampler box** with between nine and thirteen

pieces depending. Yoka Loka offers some of the truest-to-form sushi in Madrid. Rolls are not sullied by sugary rice or tasteless fish as some sushi establishments in the city are prone to do. Here, quality comes out of the kitchen and is presented beautifully to boot.



Order a bottle of Japanese beer to round out the meal and savor the taste of something different than Mahou.



Info

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-

Courage on the corner: a window into the life of a Senegalese migrant and Baye Fall culture

Barrio Lavapiés can be personified by its many smells: the Indian curries and scents escaping from the ethnic restaurants and the grit of the infrequently cleaned streets. Least subtle of all is the lingering scent of weed and hash smoked by entrepreneurial gentlemen on the corner, who actively solicit the business of passersby. People of all ages congregate and *botellón* when the weather allows it. There is a strong sense of community here among the international and local residents. In recent years the neighborhood of Lavapiés has become trendy and has been slowly undergoing the inevitable gentrification process.



I was moved by a Vice documentary titled ["Storming Spain's Razor-Wire Fence"](#) that depicts the odyssey undertaken by many **African migrants in their attempts to enter mainland Spain** via the border shared between Morocco & Ceuta y Melilla. The documentary provided a brutal window into their journeys but didn't go into any detail as to how those who had succeeded would go on to assimilate. My curiosity was piqued as to **potential stories that could be shared by my neighbors in Lavapiés** if they were granted an adequate platform to do so.



My close friend Kam “El Profesoul” accompanied me as my barrio ambassador; together we scoured the block, my notebook in hand as we searched for subjects to interview. As an active musician and long-term resident of the neighborhood, Kam has befriended many members of the African community. One such friend of Kam’s was responsive to my interview request and invited us to join him and his crew on the smoky stairs where they were strategically perched. **Moha**, a bearded African with dignified posture, kept his eyes hidden behind yellow plastic sunglasses. In the background was [Zikr music](#) from Senegal playing softly. **Moha and his companions identify themselves as [Baye Falls](#), a sub-group of the Mouride Brotherhood that is prominent in Senegal.** The ensuing conversation took place in Spanish with my notes taken in English.

My interview with Moha



Where are you from? Do you feel at home here?

I am from Senegal and I am grateful to be a documented resident of Spain for five years. My family moved here before I did and I was fortunately granted permission to join them. Many of my friends were separated from their families during their journeys or after arriving here because without legal papers they cannot leave Spain. Every resource of value was taken from our Africa and we come here to have a better life. We've made this barrio our home. We bring our music, our food our culture and our love.

What do you want members of my community

to know about yours?

Baye Fall culture is about respect, love and valor. We don't steal. We love our neighbors. If we see one of our own misbehave, we confront them and put them on the right path. (During our conversation one of Moha's peers catcalled a passerby and was swiftly berated by the group, exemplifying these principles.) We believe in nonviolence and love. We're open to outsiders. See him? My white friend below, we're teaching him *Baye Fall*. We don't fight, when we do it's not with the world but within ourselves. "Su lucha es suya misma"

What is a typical day like on the corner? What qualities have helped you survive here?

"Si no trapicheos, no comes" – If we don't hustle, we can't eat.

Many are obligated to stay in the game, whether or not it's what we want. We meet a lot of people this way. On a typical day we can work the corners and do our parts in peace and there is no problem. Sometimes we are confronted by the police. I have seen many friends detained and disappeared for not having their legal documents. Without my documents I would not have the freedom and peace that I am blessed with now. To avoid police, it helps to change our clothes several times throughout the day. Without papers, one must find alternatives to contracted work. Many of us have mastered a trade or art form. **We're painters, drummers, singers, sculptors, woodworkers.** We are many things. We gather on Sundays to teach our skills to each other and anyone else who seeks it.



The police interrogating my African neighbors in a previous Lavapies apartment

What can be done to improve the assimilation process in the future?

We must be reminded that we are all equal. That we can forget our differences. **Opportunities that we create ourselves cannot be taken away from us.** We must not fall weak and be foolish. We must be able to ask for help when we need it and then give it back.

What is your happiest memory in the barrio?

There is a yearly grand party of *Baye Falls*. The exact date depends on the lunar cycle; this past year it was in November.

People come from all over to celebrate and dance in the streets. It is beautiful.

How do you feel that Lavapiés is now becoming a “trendy” neighborhood? Are you concerned that it will become gentrified and lose its charm and essence?

The Spanish youth that live in the barrio are not affecting it in a negative way. The students and artists are innovative and have many ideas that could work. They have clear hearts and have *Baye Fall* in them even if they don't know it. **Lavapiés is the heart of Madrid, let's not forget that.**



Please share any comments you may have, and stay tuned – Dan will be providing us with more special

articles like this one over the coming months.

You may also like:

- Baobab, an authentic Senegalese restaurant in Lavapiés

Egeo, delicious Greek cuisine in Lavapiés

New bars and restaurants seem to open up constantly in the diverse neighborhood of Lavapiés. Among these additions is [Egeo](#), a Greek *souvlakeria* situated on the corner of C/ Ave Maria and C/ San Carlos. Here you'll find several Greek-style street food dishes, including pita sandwich options (€3-4), as well as salads and skewers (€5-7).



Egeo has quickly become my go-to place for take-away in the barrio, due to the quality of their ingredients. Zanas, the proprietor of the restaurant, is from Greece and is pleased that his establishment has been so well received by residents of the neighborhood.



The Greek salad is served with a very generous portion of feta cheese and warm slices of pita bread.



The souvlaki and skewers are hearty and filling. The one pictured here is the “hamburger” gyro – it has both veal and lamb meat, plus a fried egg! There are more traditional gyros on the menu as well, such as pork with tomato, onion and tzatziki. Also worth noting is their vegetarian option, a delicious pumpkin souvlaki.



Sometimes they introduce new menu items, like grilled Haloumi cheese (made from a mix of goat's and sheep's milk).



Most of the main dishes come with homemade fries and tzatziki. Otherwise you can order them as sides, as we did. Tip: order the potatoes with feta cheese on top. Amazing.



And what better way to end your Greek meal than with baklava? Plus you have the option of adding vanilla ice cream to it. Can't say no to that...



**This article was updated in February, 2019*

Info

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 - **Address:** C/ San Carlos nº 17 (on the corner of C/Ave María)
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-

La Falda, a cheeky new wine bar and restaurant in Lavapiés

When a restaurant welcomes me with a wine list featuring labels like 'The Madman's Inn' and 'The Perfect Boyfriend', I'm intrigued. When they accompany it with a quality Thai-Spanish tapa and Motown, I'm hooked.



A deliciously smooth glass of Delito Garnacha

[La Falda de Lavapiés](#) is just the kind of tongue-in-cheek tavern that the neighborhood needs, offering quirky bites and a one-of-a-kind wine list to the wide variety of patrons that Calle Miguel Servet attracts. I've stopped in for a bite a few times since it opened in early October, and each time the menu, which only features about ten dishes, has been edited to

include the week's freshest ingredients. Aside from the ever-evolving menu, they also feature a distinctive [menú del día](#) plus daily specials that range from ramen to *callos*, highlighting the kind of international versatility that is all too often hard to find in Madrid.

On my most recent visit, we were offered *secreto ibérico* in sweet and sour sauce as our free *aperitivo* as we browsed the menu. The Thai flavors and fantastic cut of Spanish pork paired nicely with the Delito Garnacha wine we had chosen, and by the time we waved down the waitress to order, our appetites were more than piqued.

We chose four small plates to share between the two of us, testing La Falda's version of the Spanish classics of jamón croquettes and cured beef, or *cecina*, and their ability to **fuse Castillian products with Asian flair** in their pork spring rolls and octopus sandwich.



Mouth-wateringly marbled cecina



Vietnamese pork spring rolls

The *cecina* was some of the best I've tried in Madrid, and I consider myself something of a cured beef expert, ordering it any time I spot it on a menu. While all of the flavors were impeccable, the winner had to be the octopus sandwich with its mixture of Thai herbs and Spanish paprika.



Thai-style octopus sandwich

We only stopped ooh-ing and ah-ing over each bite to sing along with the Motown greats that enveloped the room, and reluctantly put our forks down to watch in awe as the couple next to us jumped up to ballroom dance to James Brown's "It's a Man's World."

La Falda is the perfect example of what makes Lavapiés so special: it puts quality at the forefront and serves its food with a wink, but recognizes that in the end, it's only a space for the vibrant community to enjoy life, and does everything it can to facilitate that. Go for a drink or go for a date. Go, eat, watch the people and leave content in mind, body and soul.

Info

- [Facebook](#)
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