

Tribuetxe, a Basque Pinchos Bar in Lavapies

I was recommended [Tribuetxe](#) by one of my former students, a stoic Basque Señora, who wanted me to try the cuisine of her region's chefs. I haven't yet explored Pais Vasco, but I have every intention to due to the hype surrounding their food culture. I sampled Tribuetxe's fried shrimp tapa during Tapapies, the competitive international food festival of the barrio—I was not surprised to learn later on that they had won.





A fairly new location, situated behind [Mercado San Fernando](#) on Calle Tribulete, [Tribuetxe](#) is always *petado*. I clearly understand why after consuming four of their excellent pinchos alongside glasses of vino tinto. One of my new years resolutions was to incorporate more **eggplant** into my diet after sampling their **berenjena pincho**. I followed this up with **duck**, a skewer of **shrimp** and **octopus** and a skewer of fried merluza. Each filling pincho costs between 3€ and 3.50€.







[Mercado San Fernando](#) is one of my favorite hubs of community within the barrio. If you are exploring that area on a pleasant weekend afternoon, I strongly advise you to venture to Tribuete for your daytime drinking and snack endeavors.

[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle de Tribuete 23

Metro: Lavapiés

Here's a full article on El Mercado de San Fernando, entitled: ['Lavapiés and its market: the real food emporium!'](#)

Another Basque pincho bar in Lavapiés and La Latina that we love is: [Lamiak](#)

If you're looking for wonderful wine bars in La Latina, check out: ['The cosiest wine bars in La Latina \(with gluten free options!\).'](#)

Baobab, an Authentic Senegalese Restaurant in Lavapies

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.

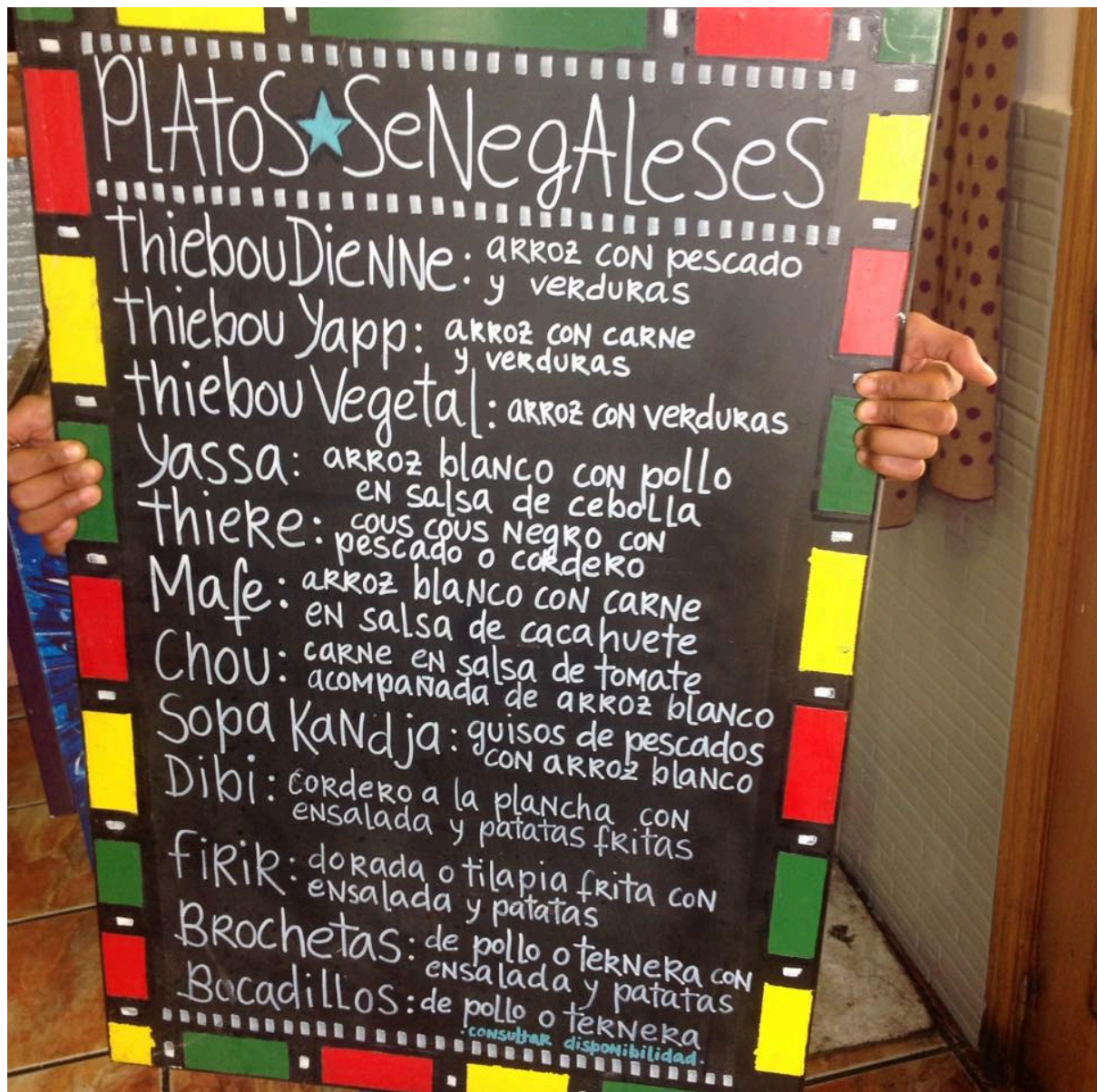


What amazed me about this establishment is that **each portion is monstrous**—often too much to eat in one sit down, even for a notoriously hungry foodie such as myself. **Leftovers can be rationed for several days.** It is known that diners are rewarded with even larger portions for ordering their food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

Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 2!

Welcome to round two of the [best cafe-bookshops in Madrid](#)! As you may have noticed in [round one](#), Madrid's central neighborhoods boast quite a lot of quaint coffee shops and bars that encourage drinking and reading under one roof.

There's something about drinking coffee or wine amidst a sea of books that makes me feel right at home. Whether you're looking for the perfect place to enjoy a quiet conversation or a good read, here are five more wonderful cafe-bookshops in Madrid that you're bound to fall in love with.

1. La Central de Callao



La Central (featured in the cover photo) is a trendy bookshop near Callao and hands down the most modern of all on this list. It boasts three floors, a happening café with a full menu and a selection of much more than books on offer. At La Central, you can also find funky mugs, quirky bags, useful calendars, board games, wrapping paper, you name it. It's a great place to get [gifts in Madrid](#).

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** C/ Postigo de San Martín, 8
- **Metro:** Callao

2. J&J Books and Coffee





A long-time staple among Madrid's expat community, this corner bar has a downstairs bookstore selling a large selection of primarily used English-language books, including ESL resources. Up at the bar, you can get craft beer, wine, coffee, bagels and other things to munch on. Also check out J&J's free events, including language exchanges and pub quizzes (trivia nights). Lots of fun!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Espíritu Santo, 47
- **Metro:** Noviciado

3. italiana_madrid





This Italian café and bookshop is located on one of Madrid's most vibrant streets – Corredera Baja de San Pablo – which is lined with great bars, cafes and restaurants, such as [Aió Pizzería](#), [Elemental Bistro](#) and [Gymage](#) with its rooftop terrace. At [italiana_madrid](#), you can get a strong espresso or Aperol Spritz, plus browse through a wide selection of Italian reads ranging from cookbooks to children's books. It's also across the street from one of the city's favorite theaters, Teatro Lara.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 10
- **Metro:** Gran Vía

4. La Ciudad Invisible



A travel bookshop selling food and drinks, this two-level cafe boasts huge windows, high ceilings, and plenty of large tables, couches and comfortable armchairs to choose from, making it a great place for getting work done and meeting friends. Plus it sells a killer **Rebujito for 2€** (a really refreshing yet deceptive drink from the South containing sherry, white wine and soda water). It's also across the street from one of my favorite restaurants in Madrid, [Bar Lambuzo](#).

▪ [Facebook](#)

- **Address:** *c/ Costanilla de los Ángeles, 7*
- **Metro:** *Opera & Santo Domingo*

5. María Pandora



María Pandora is one of my favorite spots in the city. Perched atop a hill overlooking Parque las Vistillas, behind the Royal Palace, here you'll find the perfect place to watch the sunset while enjoying a glass of champagne (the house specialty) or your drink of choice. Although María Pandora is more of a bar than a coffeeshop, it still deserves a spot on this list of literary cafés. It also holds events such as [poetry nights](#), microtheater, and book readings. [Check out our full article on María Pandora here.](#)

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- **Phone:** +34 910 42 82 13

- **Address:** Plaza de Gabriel Miró, 1
- **Metro:** La Latina or Ópera

Make sure to read: “[Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1](#)”

Also check out our [favorite bookshop in the city, Desperate Literature](#)

Los Chuchis Bar, Downright Good Food in Lavapiés

[Los Chuchis](#) is a sweet little bistro bar that sits on calle Amparo, one of those typically narrow and sloping streets in Lavapiés. The bar lures you in with its white-and-blue-striped awning and funky decorations. Although it seats no more than fifty people – you may have to squeeze in at the bar or pounce on one of the few tables – what it lacks in size, it truly makes up for in quality. If you are a foodie, then dining at **Los Chuchis** is a must.



Los Chuchis was opened by Scott, an Englishman who has called Madrid home for about three years. Scott not only owns and runs the restaurant, but the kitchen, too. **Los Chuchis'** cuisine is British at heart; many dishes are inspired by Jamie Oliver, although touches of Spain can be noticed in its ingredients, drink selection and ambience.



The first time I heard of [Los Chuchis](#) was when Spain's newspaper, **El País**, came out with an article on [10 Madrid Expats' Favorite Bars](#). A photo of **Los Chuchis** and **Scott** was featured at the top of the article. That photo stuck with me.



Since **Los Chuchis** had been lingering on my list for weeks,

James and I went for a *menú del día* (€11.50), which, I can assure you, is the best time to go. When I saw the menu, I was blown away by the number of succulent ingredients in each and every dish. Everything was so fresh and the presentation was delightful. I was smitten.

After much deliberation, here's what we ordered for lunch:

For starters, I had a salad with fresh greens, watermelon and fetta cheese. James went for the cold avocado soup.





For the main course, I ordered **hake fish with pesto and clams** and James got the **breaded veal with a lovely side salad of mango, tomato, avocado and onion**.





While we could have written this post right then and there, we decided that it was only fair that we try out **Los Chuchis** for dinner too. We just wanted to make sure it was as good as we thought it was. So we went back for dinner the other night and guess what? It was.

Dinner at Los Chuchis means *raciones* with friends

At night, **Los Chuchis** serves *raciones* (large dishes which you can either share or eat on your own). As we entered the bar on a Tuesday night, James and I were hit with all types of wonderful smells and instantly started gazing over at the patrons beside us, admiring the dishes they were devouring. The star dish that kept on coming out of the kitchen was the **potato skins with sour cream and hot sauce** (€8.50).

The menu also featured tantalizing concoctions such as **Stinking Bishop cheese with grapes** (€13,50), **Isle of Mull**

cheddar with chilli peppers (€13.50), oven-baked Camembert cheese with roasted garlic and rosemary (€12.50). Then there were the more classic dishes such as **roasted chicken with lemon and rosemary (€10.50)** as well as **arugula salad with roasted tomato, red onion and Stilton cheese (€11.50).**

James and I decided to share the **lamb chops with yogurt and mint sauce (€14.50).** James liked the sauce so much that he took it home with him in a coffee cup.



Los Chuchis should be on the top of your list if you're into food, want to satisfy your tastebuds and appetite, and like discovering unique little restaurants that truly surprise you.

I recommend making a reservation for lunch and dinner. You can eat at the bar too.

Price range & hours:

- Lunch: *menú del día* – weekdays €11.50 & weekends €14.50. From 2pm-4pm.
- Dinner: *raciones* – 20-25€/person. Kitchen opens at 8:30pm.

[Facebook](#)

Address: c/ Amparo, 82

Metro: Lavapiés

Phone: 911 27 66 06

Madrid's Best Ice Cream Shops!

Summer, sun, heat, walks... When I think of all these things, only one thing comes to mind—ice cream! Madrileños love ice cream. In the same way that in winter we never say no to a good hot chocolate with churros, during the summer, it's all about ice cream. *Granizados* and *horchata* are also big winners.

Virtually all cafes and bakeries in Madrid offer a wide range of ice cream flavors and other refreshing treats. But finding the highest quality homemade ice cream isn't so easy. That's why we've brought you this list of our favorite ice cream shops, which are conveniently located in different neighborhoods across the city so you'll have easy access whenever you get a craving!

Here a few key words when ordering ice cream in Spanish:

Ice cream: *helado*

Flavor: *sabor*

Scoop: *bola*

Cone: *cucurucho*

Cup: *tarrina*

Now, here's the inside scoop on our favorite ice cream shops in Madrid:

1. Mistura



Owned by young entrepreneurs who were inspired by a different way of making ice cream in India, Mistura serves up

handcrafted ice cream in the heart of Madrid with a smile, using local and healthy ingredients. The first time I went there I was smitten. The guys who work there are really nice and they personalize your ice cream. Right in front of you, they mix the different flavors and toppings of your choice on a cold slab of granite (apparently to enhance its texture). I ordered *maracuyá*. Not to mention they've expanded their coffee and breakfast list.

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Augusto Figueroa, 5

Metro: Chueca

2. Sani Saporì



Run by very friendly and chatty Italians, [Sani Saporì](#) is by far one of our favorite shops in the city for its high quality ice cream (would you expect anything less from Italians?) and host neighborhood, Lavapiés! Situated on Calle Lavapiés 31, right in front of a million Indian food restaurants, you'll find this little cozy shop a godsend after a big dinner or

during a nighttime summer stroll. Last time I went, we had to have two rounds each... They didn't have vanilla which was odd to me, but they made up for it with their mix of classic and innovative flavors. My favorite was the chocolate (simple I know, but truly divine). They also have a few tables set up outside which makes it a perfect experience all around.

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

Price range: €2.50-3.50, check out the full price list [here](#)

Address: Calle Lavapiés 31

Metro: Lavapiés or Tirso de Molina

3. Los Alpes



[photograph: 11870.com](#)

Founded in 1950 by Pedro Marchi and Marcelina Ladero, Los Alpes is a real institution in Madrid. Located in the Moncloa area, the variety of flavors is infinite, from the most traditional to the most innovative. As a Madrileña I have to say, it makes me very happy that places like Los Alpes are

still here after all these years.

[Web](#)

Price Range: €1.50 – €7.80 (giant)

Address: Calle del Arcipreste de Hita, 6

Metro: Moncloa or Arguelles

4. Labonata





Without a doubt, if we talk about Chueca we're talking about good restaurants, shops, cafés and, of course, ice cream is no exception. Located in Plaza de Chueca, this is a wonderful place for anyone who enjoys trying out new flavors, as this shop offers all the traditional kinds as well as more innovative options such as *violet*, *marzipan* and *watermelon*. I chose *lemon pie*... and it was pure pleasure.

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Price Range: €2.90 – €4.50

Address: Plaza de Chueca, 8

Metro: Chueca

5. Kalúa Helado Artesanal



We couldn't leave [Kalúa](#) out of this list. This ice cream shop has been around for ages, or as they say in Spanish, "*ide toda la vida!*" Located on Calle Fuencarral, in between metros Bilbao and Quevedo, Kalúa has been a staple among locals for many years and hasn't lost its popularity despite the appearance of more stylish ice cream parlours like Mistura. The key to this place's success is its **100% handcrafted ice creams**, affordable prices and delicious flavors, like **dulce de leche**, **kinder bueno** and **red velvet**. Kalúa is definitely a must when it comes to summertime treats in Madrid.

[Web](#)

Address: Calle Fuencarral, 131

Metros: Bilbao & Quevedo

6. Palazzo



Here's another institution: Palazzo, an ice cream chain that has a place in every Madrileño's childhood. If you don't believe me, try this: ask any Madrileño about the best ice cream in the centre and their answer will probably be the same "Palazzo". Few places have endured the passing of time as well as Palazzo. Its range of flavors is classic: chocolate, lemon, pistachio, mint...etc. All of them are famous for being entirely artisanal. My favorite flavors are the pistachio and *Turron* (a very traditional Spanish sweet eaten at Christmas time, similar to nougat).

[Facebook](#)

Address: *among their various locations, we have: Plaza de la Puerta del Sol, 11 and Calle Goya, 49*

Metro: *Sol or Goya*

7. Giuseppe Ricci



Located in Huertas, also known as Barrio de las Letras, this is a wonderful place if you're looking for great handcrafted ice cream. They have a wide variety of flavours.

[Web](#)

Price range: €2.20 – €3.20

Address: Calle de Las Huertas, 9, 28012 Madrid

Metro: Sol, Sevilla or Tirso de Molina

After posting this article, many people have recommended Heladerías La Romana on Paseo de la Habana, 27 (metros: Cuzco, Colombia, Pío XII)

Feel free to recommend us any other places – we'll add them to the list!

Enjoy!!

Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 1!

Coffee shops selling books? Bookshops selling coffee? However you call them, here are five wonderful café-bookshops in Madrid where you can enjoy a cup of coffee or a glass of wine while surrounded by good reads. (See [round two](#) for more!)

1. [Ocho y Medio Libros de Cine](#)



This charming bookshop (featured in the cover photo) specializes in cinema, and boasts a cozy café and outdoor seating area. I love going here for a drink and a *tosta* right before [seeing a film](#) at one of the independent movie theaters just across the street. All screenings are in original version with Spanish subtitles. A tip: this makes for a great date night!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Martín de los Heros, 11
- **Metro:** Plaza de España

Also read: [Where to enjoy good film in Madrid](#)

2. [La Libre](#)



This is my mom's favorite cafe in Madrid. Why? Because a few years ago while she was visiting me in the dead of winter, we went in to warm up after a visit to the [Reina Sofia Museum](#) around the corner. When she ordered a coffee, the server said, **"No ma'am, I think you need a whisky."** He couldn't have been more right! They also have nice teas and snacks to nibble on, from breakfast pastries to empanadas.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Argumosa, 39
- **Metro:** Atocha

3. [La Infinito](#)



This little café-bookshop lies on a corner in Lavapiés and serves up coffee, books and art on a daily basis. Not only does it have a welcoming ambience and lots of light streaming in through its tall glass windows, but it also throws great events, from **micro-theater performances** (one of which took place in the café's bathroom!) to popular weekend brunches.

- *image from La Infinito*
- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Tres Peces, 22
- **Metro:** Antón Martín & Lavapiés

4. [La Fugitiva](#)



Books are the centrepiece at this cafe, and I love how its window seats and tiny bar are nestled between towering bookshelves and overflowing tables displaying bestsellers and rare reads. La Fugitiva has all you need from a café (coffee and sweets) and all you could ask of a bookstore – readings, talks, workshops, and of course, that distinct smell of books.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ de Santa Isabel, 7
- **Metro:** Antón Martín

5. Tipos Infames. Libros y Vinos



Wine and books? Quite a killer combination in my opinion. Located right off the popular Calle Fuencarral, this trendy bookshop, café and wine bar is a favorite of many in Malasaña. Tipos Infames offers a much appreciated rest from the bustling shops and streets in the area. It has a lot of seating area, a full bar and high ceilings, making it feel open, friendly and comfortable. It's a great place to go with friends for a quieter conversation in the afternoon. Plus they throw fun events, so make sure to follow them on social media.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ San Joaquín, 3
- **Metro:** Tribunal

Keep reading [Round 2 of Madrid's Best Cafe-bookshops](#)

And if you're looking for a few of our favorite cafe in Madrid *without* books:

- [Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think](#)
- [Toma Café, fuel up, feel hip](#)
- [Acid Café, seasonal, minimalist and just good coffee](#)

Best Gifts from Madrid

Buying gifts for friends and family in Madrid can be a difficult task. Pretty much everything can be found everywhere nowadays. I often see the same Spanish brand names and products when I walk around my neighborhood in New York. So I think to myself, why did I even bother lugging that bottle of *Marqués de Riscal* all across the ocean? If you find yourself faced with this same problem (and not inclined to buy your mom

a keychain or a magnet), here's a list of well thought-out **gift ideas from Madrid**. Hope it helps!

First let's quickly name some of the **more obvious gift ideas**, which are also good but run the risk of being found in your hometown (scroll down if you're all too familiar with these):

Handheld fans, flamenco shawls, ceramic tiles and dishes, paella pans, recipe books, aprons with a flamenco dancer or the flag of Spain, **football/soccer jersey, wine, cured ham and sweets** with long shelf-lives such as *mazapán*, *turron* and *polvorones* (can be bought at [El Riojano](#) or [Casa Mira](#), two very traditional pastry shops in the city center) or a **swiss army/pocket knife** (best from Toledo but also sold in Plaza Mayor). While it's always best to buy these items from independent sellers (which you will find below), if you're pressed for time you can find absolutely everything at **El Corte Inglés**, the country's major department store with locations all around.

Now let's move on to the **more original gift ideas**:

1. Anything from La Violeta



La Violeta is a candy shop located in the center of Madrid. It must be included in this list because it is a typical place **where Madrileños buy gifts for other Madrileños**. *Las violetas* are purple-colored sucking candies wrapped in pretty little boxes and ribbon. You can buy them plain or *escarchadas*, meaning sugar-coated. You can also find *cajas de bombones* (boxes of chocolates) and many other sweet treats. Prices range from **€5** to **€15**.

[Web](#)

Address: Plaza de Canalejas, 6

Metro: Sol and Sevilla

2. Saffron or a pack of mixed Spanish spices for anyone who likes to cook

My sister, Amanda, actually gave me this idea. Her boyfriend's family is originally from the Basque Country. Her father-in-law loves little trinkets from Spain and also makes **paella** every year for the whole family. So she had the bright idea of buying him a pack of **azafrán** (saffron). **Yes, saffron!** It costs

peanuts in comparison to what it costs in the States. She bought it at **Corte Inglés** and he was over the moon when he received it. For non-purists, you can also buy **sachets**, which is a bag of mixed Spanish spices, also used **for making paella**. Anyone who likes to cook will enjoy this gift!

3. Berets; can be bought at a charming century-old hat shop right in Plaza Mayor



Founded in 1894, Madrid's oldest hat shop—[La Favorita C.B.](#)—is now in the hands of its family's fourth generation. It remains in its original location in Plaza Mayor and sells all types of traditional Spanish hats that make for fun and useful gifts. Amanda gave me this idea too. She bought a **black beret** for her stylish sister-in-law which cost €19. Although the black beret is traditionally worn in the Basque Country, where it's called

a **Boina**, it very well looked like it could have been bought at Top Shop. I'm sure anyone could rock this look in any city around the world, and they'd have a nice story to tell when someone asked them where they bought it.



[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: Plaza Mayor, 25

Metro: Sol or Opera

4. Chocolate for dipping churros; can be bought at the famous Chocolatería San Gines (near Sol)

In Spanish, this is simply called **chocolate a la taza** or **chocolate *caliente***. However, for English-speakers this can be quite confusing—this is not just hot chocolate. It refers to the thick chocolate that you **dip churros** into. When my husband's relatives from California were visiting, they bought bags and bags of this chocolate as a present for all their friends back home. It was a hit! And it's not exclusive for dipping *churros*, you can also use it for dipping

strawberries, bananas—anything you like! You can buy it in bags by the kilo at Madrid's most famous churros shop, **Chocolatería San Ginés**, open 24/7 and just a stone's throw from Sol.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: Pasadizo de San Gines, 5

Metro: Sol

5. Peseta; for millions of small gift ideas made in Madrid, using fabrics from around the world (in Malasaña)



Named after Spain's former currency—**las pesetas**—this charming store was founded by Laura Martínez del Pozo around ten years ago. She collects fabrics from all over the world and uses them to make unique, creative and very handy items, from **tablet** and **laptop cases** to **handbags** and **wallets**. They even sell beautiful shoes, also typical from Spain—**espadrilles** and **alpargatas**—though with a nice twist as the fabric is a hundred

percent unique. Seeing as these everyday items are useful for everyone, you're sure to find great gifts here.



You can also find Peseta's products sold at an awesome book store and cafe near Callao called [La Central](#), which will talk more about below.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Noviciado, 9

Metro: Noviciado

6. Summer shoes; can be found in stores everywhere (also in Peseta)



alpargatas at the top and mallorquinas at the bottom

Esparto (espadrilles), **alpargatas** and **mallorquinas** are the **three most popular summer shoe styles** originating from Spain. All can be found in any colour and in any standard shoe store (the center is littered with typical shoe stores, especially around **Plaza Mayor** and **Calle Carmen** which is right off of Sol). The latter two styles are unisex, so you're bound to find something for both your male and female friends and family. Since Spain is well-known for its amazing shoes, why not wow them with some Spanish summer footwear they can strut around their own city in style? Plus you don't have to limit yourself to the traditional ones. You can find snazzier versions too. You can also check out our post on "[3 Places to Find Espadrilles in Madrid](#)" for more recommendations.



This photo is from a new store called [Alpargatus](#) which is located just off of Plaza Mayor on Calle Postas. They have all types of *alpargatas*, *espadrilles* and *mallorquinas*, plus other souvenirs. It's really convenient.

[Facebook](#)

Address: *C/ Postas, 20 (just a few steps away from Plaza Mayor)*

Metro: *Sol or Opera*

Or check out another post of ours dedicated solely to espadrilles: "[3 Places to Find Espadrilles in Madrid](#)"

8. Traditional gloves with silk lining from 100-year-old glove shop in Sol

Just a note—I couldn't get a photo because the owner closed the shop for the whole weekend to go to Lisbon and watch the football match...

Believe it or not, Spain still has entire shops dedicated solely to **gloves**! One of Madrid's most well-known and oldest glove shops is called [Guañtes Luque](#), nestled between the streets of Sol and Sevilla. Entering the shop is an experience in and of itself. These elegant gloves take you back to

another era, when items were not mass produced and were meant to last a lifetime. Understandably on the **expensive** side, these traditional **Spanish gloves** are not only beautiful, but have silk lining which is a godsend in winter.

No web, but they're on [Yelp](#)

Address: c/ Espoz y Mina, 3

Metro: Sol, Gran Vía or Sevilla

7. Gift Basket – 3 simple and delicious ingredients



image from gastronosfera.com

When I asked around for good gift ideas, one expat said that he always brings home a basket of 3 items: **pimientos de piquillo** (roasted red peppers), **aceitunas campo reales** (olives) and a really fancy **aceite de oliva** (olive oil). After speaking with many foreigners living in Spain, it became clear that **campo real olives** are a major hit among the gift-giving crowd. Though if you don't like olives, you can always replace them with a bottle of wine (my favorite red is **Ribera** and my favorite white is **Albariño**), a box of **marzipan** from Toledo or

sweets from **La Violeta** (mentioned #1).

Where to buy: while you can buy these items all over the city and of course at **El Corte Inglés**, we recommend you go to [Mercado de Antón Martín](#) or [Mercado de San Fernando](#). These markets are very traditional, unlike many of the others that have become over-priced and over-touristy. You can also go to Qué Rico Tó, mentioned #2 on this list.

Mercado de Antón Martín

[Facebook](#)

Address: C/ Santa Isabel, 5

Metro: Antón Martín

Mercado de San Fernando

[Facebook](#)

Address: C/ Embajadores, 41

Metro: Lavapiés or Embajadores

8. Spanish Comic Books



For your alternative or comic-book loving friends, a **Spanish comic** could be a really cool gift. It's always fun to read comics in other languages, especially because the drawings and images help you figure out the story. But of course this gift isn't for everyone. The above photo is of [El Coleccionista](#), a well-known **comic shop in Lavapiés** with a wide collection. My sister, Amanda (also in the photo), bought a few rare books for her friends here. When I asked Amanda if I could include her photo in this article, she said of course—she'd be happy to support any type of independent shop like this one which make up the backbone of a city's personality and charm. I've also just found out that one of the world's best comic stores is located in Madrid too, it's called [Akira Comics](#) and is located a bit further out in the city.

[El Coleccionista](#)

Address: C/ Tribulete, 5

9. Second-hand books with personality from Desperate Literature



At [Desperate Literature](#), a new international bookstore located in the center of Madrid (close to the Royal Palace), you can find good quality used books in English, Spanish and French, many of which are related to Spain and can make for a great, personalized gift. Also, this bookstore has a nice story behind it, as its three young owners—Michael, Corey and Craig—have opened used international bookstores in Santorini,

Greece and in Brooklyn, New York. With the recent opening of Desperate Literature in Madrid, they aim to provide a literary haven for travellers, expats and Madrileños alike. [Here's a long article on Desperate Literature.](#)

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Address: c/ Campomanes, 13

Metro: Santo Domingo and Opera

10. New books and much more from a La Central, an ultra hip bookstore/cafe near Callao



While my first suggestion would be to go to Desperate Literature, if you're looking for all kinds of new books in

Spanish (i.e. children's, novels, poetry, you name it) or other gift ideas such as **board games, notebooks and fun nicknacks**, then this is the store you should be going to.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: Postigo de San Martín 8

Metro: Callao

11. Trinkets from a Funky Madrid Gift Shop called Curiosite

As far as gift shops go, this one is quite original. At [Curiosite](#), you can get maps of Malasaña and Chueca for €12, which look great framed, as well as tons of other fun little *tchotchkes*. This gift is recommended for someone who has lived or spent a good amount of time in Madrid.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 28

Metro: Tribunal

Any other gift ideas? Please share! We'll be happy to add more to this list ☐

Flowers are nice (but this First Date is better) Part 1



The moment: Check your phone or ditch all together

I get nervous and will probably continue to get nervous when planning a first date. It's not easy. It can even be daunting. You might have just met the girl/boy on a drunken Saturday night and you find yourself trying to come up with a way to entertain, show off, and come across as interesting and intelligent all at once. So I'm back to getting nervous and with little idea of what might or might now work.

Topics of interest can be hard to find but I believe that the location of the date should tie into the conversation. So rather than the usual routine of restaurant then drinks, this is a bit more dynamic and Madrileño (known for going to lots of places on one night).

The idea behind my method is to take your date to at least 3 different places on a given night. Each place will compliment each other and yet offer a very different component of the night. I have included a route order to help. All the places will be in walking distance from each other.

Part 1 is taking the arts and culture route. Not the Prado and its thousands of archangels, but more modern and contemporary offerings. Something more quirky to get the conversation flowing.

This in no way will guarantee you get laid on the first night. Too many factors depend on that result. However, it should reduce those awkward silent moments because you're grasping for a common topic. Quick tip for the awkward moment, just kiss him/her. There is no perfect moment. Only the courage to move your head forward 5 inches.

Act One: [Fundacion Telefonica](#) in Calle Fuencarral 3



Fundación Telefonica

We start in the Fundacion Telefonica on Fuencarral. This gallery is always free and almost always open, except Mondays. It regularly changes the collections and usually has photography showing. I am no art student but when you are confronted with space geese and watching a video of their training to fly to the moon, it makes you smile and realise we live in a great place (Moon Goose Analogue, 2011-1012, Agnes Meyer-Brandis). So quickly check out the website and see

what's on, the stranger the better as you don't need to be knowledgeable. Only a sense of humour is required.

Best time: 18-20h

Metro: Gran Via

Act Two: [Aiò](#) in Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 25 (mentioned in a [previous article](#))



Now that we have started down the cultural road, we cannot go too formal with the restaurant. It needs to fit the setting but shouldn't cost too much. Aio is an Italian restaurant that offers aperitivo for dinner. Aperitivo means you just buy

drinks at a slightly higher price and are able to eat from the buffet at your heart's content. The food is typical Italian with pizza, pasta and salads on offer. Aperitivo is incredibly popular in Italy since the crisis hit, as a way to entice consumers to leave their homes. You cannot reserve a table but there's always a positive atmosphere.

Best time: 20-22h

Alternative: la Mucca is an excellent restaurant. You can make reservations and also sit outside on the terrace. It is the more high quality and expensive option.

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao

[Facebook](#)

Act Three: [Microteatro](#) por dinero in Calle de Loreto Prado y Enrique Chicote, 9



What surprise will await?

You then continue the night by going to Micro Teatro, a bar where you can watch a small theatrical performance for only €4. You can enjoy drinks upstairs and then when your number is

called out, you will descend the stairs into the basement and go into the designated room. All groups are at most 15 people and you come face to face with the actors in the small room. Each little play lasts around 15 minutes, which is good because not all are great. It never fails to create another conversation and even if you only understand 50%, it will still be entertaining.

Best time: 22-24h

Alternative: [Bar Lambuzo](#): an Andalusian tavern offering Micro Teatro every Thursday night from 9pm-11pm in their downstairs wine cellar (21h-23h if you will J!), with sessions every half hour for 4€ (more information in a [previous article](#))

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao

The Final Act: [El Perro de la parte de atras del coche](#) (or just el Perro) in Calle de La Puebla, 15,



Once you still have energy and need a club, I recommend El

Perro, which is around the corner. This club is free entry before 24h, otherwise entry is €10. The music varies a lot. Not a huge dancing room means even if it is not packed will have you feeling like enough people are present.

Best time: after 24h

Alternative: Wind down with a cocktail instead of some dance moves at [1862 Dry Bar](#) in Calle Pez 27, which is open to 1.30am and until 2am on weekends. The martini like many of their cocktails is thoroughly worth it.

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao



For other great date ideas in Madrid, check out these off-the-beaten-path cultural centres, restaurants and bars!

- [El Matadero](#), a slaughterhouse turned cultural hub
 - [Bar Lambuzo](#), a family-run Andalusian tavern in the centre of Madrid offering activities in their wine cellar, from wine tastings to microteatro!
 - [La Paca](#), the perfect Malasaña bar & café offering movie nights, art, markets, music and Chema!
 - [Mercado de Motores](#), Madrid's coolest vintage & food market that takes over the city's old train museum once a month!
 - [La Buena Cerveza](#), an international and imported beer shop in Madrid offering beer tastings, workshops and more...
 - [Beer State of Mind](#), go on a route to discover Madrid's best craft beer bars, you'll love them all ☐
 - [Martinis, Margaritas and More](#), where to get the best cocktails in Madrid...
-

Lavapiés and its Market: the real food emporium!

Grab a round of imported **German beers** at wholesale price, share a bottle of **local Spanish wine** for as little as 2€ (bottled and corked right before your eyes), and all the while, snack on **kalamata olives**, **manchego cheese** or even **sushi**. How nice does that sound?

Madrid's [Mercado de San Fernando](#), or "el mercado de Lavapiés", as it is more commonly known, is a vibrant indoor market where bars selling imported German beers, local Spanish wines, Italian breads, sushi, homemade Greek food, oysters and much, much more are nestled in right alongside the cobbler, grocer and butcher.



Local Spanish wines for less than 5€ , bottled and corked right before your eyes. Makes for a perfect gift.



Greek Kalamata Olives, my favorite

As in all big cities, neighborhoods go in and out of style as fast as Zara's storefronts. Madrid is no exception. Once considered a dodgier side of town, **Lavapies is fast becoming the city's newest nightlife destination**, attracting Madrid's trendiest young hipster crowds. Great restaurants and bars, from urban chic to authentic Moroccan, are interspersed within the demographic makeup of the neighborhood. And the prices are still modest in comparison to other hotspots like Malasaña and Chueca.



Colorful handmade leather goods

All neighborhoods of Madrid have their local markets. Many, especially in the more upscale areas, have been refurbished and turned into fashionable displays of Spain's haute cuisine, such as Mercado de San Miguel and Mercado de San Anton. But in 2012, [Mercado de San Fernando](#) – el mercado de Lavapiés – decided to reinvent itself making it more reflective of the eclectic tastes of its host neighborhood. Unlike the others, **Lavapiés' market** has managed to embrace the new while maintaining its laid-back, local and traditional essence.



The streets of Lavapiés are lined with **Indian restaurants**, hipster cafés and independent boutiques, and its market is just as diverse as all the small alleys and plazuelas surrounding it. Here you will find a wonderful mix of

traditional Spanish shops and foreign options. The fruit-seller and the good old Bar Barroso blend happily together with the higher-end oyster/wine bar, Bond 40, and the stylish leather handbag maker.



Cocktails and oysters



oyster bar and butcher shop sit side by side

When I first went to [Mercado de San Fernando](#), it was by chance. I was walking up Calle Embajadores and stumbled upon a rather austere building with a grey facade. Little did I know that I was about to slip through the market's winding aisles to discover stands selling quiches and empanadas, as well as full bars crowded with patrons from all walks of life—families with children, the older generation, groups of hipsters, foreigners and locals alike.



Homemade food from quiche to meatballs



Sushi!

I like to start off by browsing through the market's many stands, and graze a bit before I settle down at the German bar for an imported beer. Then I head over to the Greek's for dinner—moussaka, **kalamata olives**, feta cheese and spinach pie. It just doesn't get any better than that. For me, that is. For you, who knows?



irresistible Greek food

Though the possibilities are endless when it comes to food, here you can expect, above all, a great ambience. Judging from the live music and boisterous company I experienced the last time I went, it's safe to say that the word is out.



Oysters, clams and pimientos de padron



bread and empanadas... mmmm



the quintessential Spanish butcher

While I think the monthly [Mercado de Motores](#) is Madrid's "coolest" market, **Mercado de San Fernando** is much different. This one's open every day and it's totally unexpected!



Spanish-style treats and snacks



Mercado de San Fernando/Lavapiés' facade on calle Embajadores, 41

Plus, on **Sundays** they throw different events, such as **Swing Dancing** and **Salsa Lessons** (free...)!

Information:

[Facebook](#)

Metro: Embajadores/Lavapiés (yellow line 3)

Address: C/ Embajadores, 41

Email: mercadosanfernandomadrid@gmail.com

Schedule:

- *Mon: Fri: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm*
- *Sat: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm*
- *Sun: 11:00 am – 5:00 pm*