

Santo Bakehouse: You knead this place in your life

The Atkins diet has a lot to answer for. It essentially demonised bread, and that is not okay. Carbs were out, and *carne* was in. But let's be real, what is life without eating carbs? Not one worth living if you ask me. And with this logic, off I went in search of some banging bread at Santo Bakehouse, the recently opened bakery on Calle Espíritu Santo, hence the name.

[Santo Bakehouse](#) is owned by the most warm and welcoming pair, George and Valerie. George hails from Bristol in the UK and not to perpetuate the self-deprecating nature of Brits, but he was so modest about what quickly became his very obvious talents as a baker.



It was only when Valerie was talking about their past, that it come to light that George was a participant on the hugely

popular British show, Masterchef. Suffice to say, what he doesn't know about pastry and sourdough starters isn't really worth knowing.

Valerie's background is in education, but when the pair met by chance when George was visiting a friend, they bonded over their mutual love of everyone's favourite carbohydrate, and the rest, as they say, is history.



With their combined expertise and energy, they have formed the ultimate dream team at Santo. Having found the ideal location in Malasaña to make their bread baking dreams a reality, they survived the (sometimes arduous task) of renovating premises, tackling red tape and jumping through numerous Spanish

bureaucratic hoops. But having come out the other side, what they're left with is **a little haven of artisan bread and pastries** that would give a Parisian a run for their money.



As I inhaled a pain au chocolat, whilst simultaneously firing questions at the couple, I discovered that supporting organic suppliers is of the utmost importance to them. Yes, the price is undoubtedly going to be higher than the standard baguette

that perhaps you're used to picking up from your local *supermercado*, but there's a good reason why. The ingredients used are top-notch quality, often from local producers and we all know that the same cannot be said of *pan bimbo*.



Perhaps most excitingly of all was the discovery (as a fellow Brit) that they sell sausage rolls. **I repeat, they sell sausage rolls.** Since I'm unlikely to be in the vicinity of a good-old Gregg's anytime soon (please don't judge my guilty

pleasure), Santo's sausages rolls are a work of art. Buttery, flakey pastry, coupled with some well-seasoned sausage is the kind of indulgent treat that would have me queuing round the block.

In an era where we all seem to be moving at breakneck speed, and before we've even enjoyed what's right in front of us (as we're almost always 'onto the next' fix), there is a lot to be said for people who are honing their craft and pouring not just flour, but a whole lot of love into what they're putting out into the world.

If, like me, the bread basket is your Achilles heel in life, I urge you to pay Santo a visit because frankly, you 'knead' this place in your life.

Santo Bakehouse

- Follow them on Instagram: [@santobakehouse](#)
- Address: Calle Espíritu Santo 25

Article by Cat Powell [@littlemissmadrid](#)

Nest Boutique: A local gift

shop that's far from an empty nest

Like most people who live abroad, there's a multitude of things that I miss from home. Marmite, check. Being the happy recipient of a Colin the Caterpillar cake on my birthday, double check. Perhaps most surprisingly of all, I still pine for greetings cards. Back when I lived in London, I could spend hours (and inevitably a small fortune) in both Paperchase or Oliver Bonas. I'd gladly while away hours mooching through the aisles to find the perfect card for any occasion.

What came next was a move to Madrid; land of cheap wine, but sadly, no greetings cards. Save for some sad excuse of a birthday card in VIPs and El Corte Inglés, I felt almost tempted to make my own. You see, for me, the cards that you send are just as important, if not more so than the gift. You get to pen a heartfelt message, and show the recipient how much you care.







The store enjoys pride of place on “Plaza San Ildefonso” – one of the most popular and picturesque squares in the thriving barrio of Malasaña. Nadine recalled shopping regularly at the clothes shop that was once next door, and as she got along with the girls who worked there, a good word was put in – and the rest they say, is history.

Nest is, and was, an original concept store in a city that is now awash. The idea of having a one-stop shop where you could buy cards, gifts, trinkets and more was completely novel back in May 2008, and its uniqueness played a huge part in its success. Coupled with the prime location, the fact that there was nothing else quite like it, enabled business to boom, and for the shop to become synonymous with good taste when you were looking to buy a quirky, yet affordable gift.





Having spoken to Nadine at length, times haven't always been plain sailing. With any small business comes inevitable challenges and those more "unprecedented" ones too – such as a nine-week lockdown. COVID obviously put the brakes on Nadine's ability to keep the store open, but it did provide what Nadine referred to as "a much needed time to reset and reflect."

Being given the gift of time, Nadine leaned in and nurtured her creative side, and began illustrating postcards and cards which can now be found on sale in the shop. A fact that I imagine conjures up great feelings of pride.



Hola
Peque

I LOVE YOU...



STAYIN' ALIVE!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



As someone who is anchored by the routine that comes with being a teacher, I asked Nadine what was her favourite thing about running her own business – the answer was immediate. “I love being my own boss” was the response, without missing a beat.

As independent gift stores continue to pop up throughout the city, there is something to be said for being the OG. When guests visit, we always drop by Nest, safe in the knowledge that there’s always something that you will make you reach for your purse. Far from just being the top spot for cards, there’s candles, wall prints and jewellery all vying for your attention. A fact that even a global pandemic seems unlikely to change, as we continue to view our homes as our sanctuaries.



As the seasons change and those darker nights draw in, there's never been a better time to "Nest." If the last 18 months have taught me anything it's that Amazon doesn't need anymore of your custom, and the power of a good gift can never be underestimated. So for me, I will always support small, and support local.

These wonderful words are by [Cat Powell](#) ([@littlemissmadrid](#))

And these beautiful photos are by [Brett Hastie](#) ([@b.hastie](#))

Nest Boutique

- [Website](#) & IG: [@nestboutiquemadrid](#)
 - **Address:** Plaza de San Ildefonso 3
-

Mercado Acre, shop small to keep dreams big

An Aladdin's cave of goodies that will perk up any Madrileño during lockdown

If you're like me, one of the things you're likely to love about Madrid is the lack of chains. Don't get me wrong, they're creeping in. Brands such as 'Five Guys' appearing on

Plaza Santa Ana do prompt an eye roll, but in comparison to countries such as the UK and the US, Madrid exists comparatively chain free.

As we're in full-on lockdown, I'm missing one of my favourite pastimes, which is to simply stroll around various barrios to see what small business gems I can find. I always buy my weekly flowers at [Botanyco](#) without fail. I buy my bread at the local bakery, and it's a given that all fruit and veg is purchased from the grocers next door to my flat. So I was pretty thrilled when I discovered via the 'gram that Mercado Acre was still open and offering free home deliveries.

Mercado Acre is an Aladdin's cave of goodies that will perk up any Madrileño during lockdown. It's an organic store selling homemade bread, nuts, fruit, every type of grain/flour/rice/pastas that you can imagine, and frankly, whilst in the midst of a global pandemic, I don't think there's ever been a better time to invest your money in eating well and eating healthily.

But what really made my Sunday (when in all honesty I was struggling after our lockdown being extended) was that they sell plants. With a new green friend purchased and now fully ensconced in my *piso*, it felt great to bring something living into the flat and being able to support a small, local business.



If you don't live nearby and can't walk there yourself, the beauty is that you can order online. The store itself is gorgeous, but you can console yourself by making your home more lovely (it can't just be me that's in nesting overload). They stock vases, plant pots and dried flowers, so if you've Marie Kondo'd your place, I'm sure you can find something online that would definitely help to spark joy.

There's a well-known British supermarket whose slogan is

‘every little helps’ – and in this instance it’s true. Support small business if and when you can and before long, hopefully we’ll all be back out discovering them for ourselves, en route to the nearest sun-drenched plaza.

Article by Cat Powell, aka [@littlemissmadrid](#) / Feature image by [@the_interiorshopkeepers](#)

Mercado Acre

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@mercadoacre](#)
- **Address:** Calle Noviciado, 18, Madrid
- **Metro:** Noviciado

Read Cat’s previous articles:

- [Order pizza from Lab 84 and take the sting out of lockdown](#)
- [Madrid lockdown diaries: Cat, primary school teacher & blogger \(UK\)](#)

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

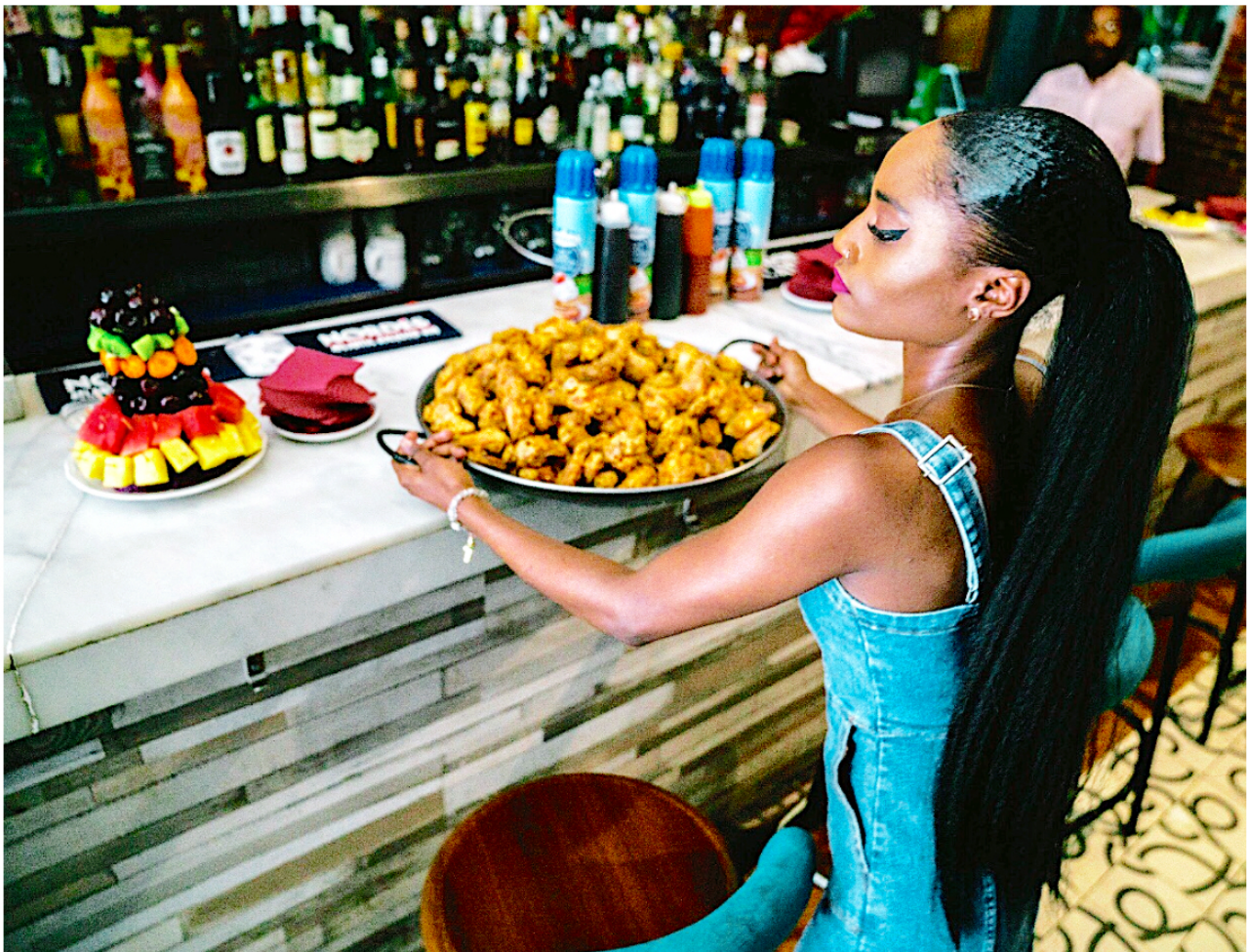
If you’d like to get involved and share a compelling story from this ongoing chapter of history, reach out to Daphne Binioris (daphne@veracontent.com) and Daniel Catalan (a96039@aup.edu)

Atlast Alitas – a chef from Atlanta introduces Madrid to Chicken & Waffles, Wings, and more!

Atlanta native Tara Brown was teaching English in Madrid for three years and noticed an essential piece of American culture was missing from the rapidly globalizing Spanish capital: the classic Southern-style brunch. And that's why she created Atlast Alitas, her very own pop-up feasts in the heart of Madrid.

Recognizing this vacuum prompted Tara to give notice and resign from the school where she was teaching in order to pursue her passion: cooking and creating a community around food. Tara used the popular hospitality platform [Workaway](#) to volunteer and train in the culinary arts in Haifa, Israel and brought the knowledge gained during this stay back to Madrid.

In collaboration with [La Pasa Gin Bar](#), Tara hosts pop-up "Wing & Beats Nights" that are DJ'd by local artist [Profesoul](#) on Friday nights. On select weekend days you can come to her pop-up all-you can eat "Chicken & Waffles Brunch."



This mouth-watering feast is the real deal, and can offer the American abroad a taste of home. Alternatively, to people from outside of the United States who have never before experienced the blend of **sweet and savory that is chicken and waffles**, Tara offers a heartfelt window into the gastronomy of the southern United States. Tara creates her own sauces from scratch: **Lemon Pepper, Jack Daniels BBQ, Honey Sriracha and Buffalo Hot.**

Tara's culinary ambitions do not end there as she seeks to expand to catering events and to eventually open her own restaurant in Madrid. The pursuit of an international experience in the culinary world was what brought Tara to Haifa, Israel. There she studied under the chef Koby Carolla, co-founder of the social vegan restaurant [Robin Food](#), whose team rescues discarded fruit and vegetables from Haifa's central market every day at 6am. The rescued produce are

adapted into various dishes in an ever-changing daily menu. Patrons here pay as they please, deciding for themselves the value of their meal.

Chef Carolla taught Tara how to lead by example in the kitchen and how to be spontaneous and innovative with whatever ingredients are available. After three months of cooking with and living alongside an [international team of Workaway volunteers](#), Tara returned to Madrid from Israel, empowered to begin her project.



The owner of La Pasa Gin Bar, Adolfo Lorenzo, agreed to collaborate with Tara without much convincing. In addition to granting her access to the kitchen and space of their two locations on Calle San Bernardo and Calle Huertas, he has been sponsoring the costs of the events, which has allowed Tara to reduce risk as she grows her brand.

Tara was the first to introduce the combination of fried Chicken and Waffles to some of her international patrons in

Madrid and Haifa, who had never before fathomed such a combination. Tara's expert opinion on the best way to actually eat this meal is to use your hands to make sure both the sweet and savory flavors are equally represented in each bite.



Atlast Alitas

You can stay up-to-date via her Facebook page at [Tara Brown](#) and her instagram: [@brownskin_mochadiva](#) and be sure to come to her next pop-up brunch party at [La Pasa Gin Bar](#)!

If you would like Tara to cater your next party she can be contacted at Tara.brown93@yahoo.com.

Photography by [Joel Potter](#)

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



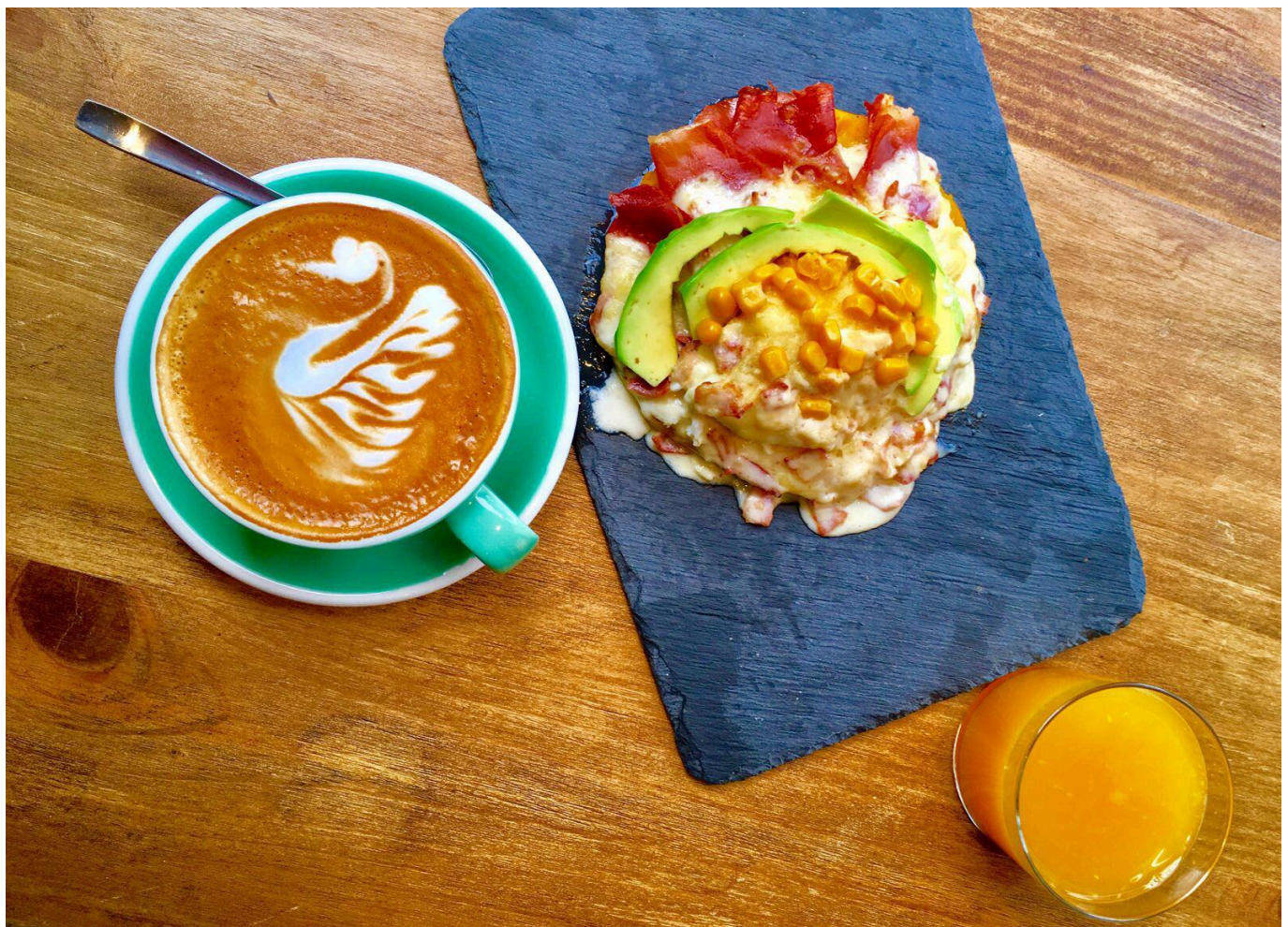
Ruda Café is located in the neighborhood of La Latina, known for having a wide variety of cocktail bars and tapa spots.

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

9 Low-key rooftop bars in Madrid to enjoy year round

This city may be landlocked, but the sky's the limit when it comes to rooftop bars in Madrid. From fancy restaurant-hotels like [Picalagartos](#) and [Hotel Óscar](#), to emblematic buildings like [Palacio de Cibeles](#) and the picture-perfect [Tartan Roof](#) at Círculo de Bellas Artes, the options seem endless. And if you're in the mood for something a little more casual, we've got you covered.

Here are our top picks for rooftop bars in Madrid that are low key and winter friendly.

1. The Hat



Photo from [The Hat Madrid](#)

This popular rooftop bar is located atop one of the city's coolest hostels, right off Plaza Mayor. It provides a great escape from Madrid's crowded center. Pop up for a few drinks with friends or a full meal, whatever you fancy.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Imperial 9
- **Metros:** Sol and Tirso de Molina

Check out our full post on [The Hat Madrid](#)

2. Mercado de San Antón



Photo from [Mercado de San Antón](#)

This is a perfect place to start your evening with friends. As

you enter Chueca's beloved food market, Mercado de San Antón, first you'll walk through various food stalls and tapas stands. Then make your way up to the fourth floor for a drink any time of day, any time of year.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Augusto Figueroa, 24
- **Metro:** Chueca

3. El Viajero





This plant-laden rooftop bar has been a staple in La Latina for years. Situated atop El Viajero restaurant, it offers a laidback atmosphere, plus a full bar and food options. It's a great place to spend a winter evening with friends.

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: Plaza de la Cebada 11
- Metro: La Latina

4. Gymage



Photo from [Gymage](#)

Gymage is a multi-level recreation center located in Plaza de la Luna, just off Gran Vía. Inside you'll find everything from a full-on gym to a health food store. But the best part is the two-level rooftop lounge with a bar, restaurant, and pool! Although you don't get to take a dip in winter, you still get to take in that chill Ibiza vibe and enjoy those gorgeous Madrid sunsets.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle de la Luna, 2
- Metro: Callao

5. Forus Barceló



This spacious rooftop restaurant is a green oasis in the middle of Chueca and Malasaña. Situated atop the Barceló food market, here you can enjoy creative and healthy cuisine, in a friendly urban garden environment. It's also open every day of the week.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: @azoteaforus
- **Address:** Calle Barceló 6
- **Metro:** Tribunal and Alonso Martínez

6. Doña Luz



This is one of the newest rooftop bars in Madrid, situated right in the heart of Sol, on Calle Montera. The street-level entrance is tiny, so it's easy to miss. But once you enter the Doña Luz Hotel, squeeze through the door and take the elevator to the top floor. There you'll find plenty of room to enjoy a nice break on the roof. There's an indoor and outdoor area, plus a full restaurant and bar.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle Montera 10-12
- Metro: Sol

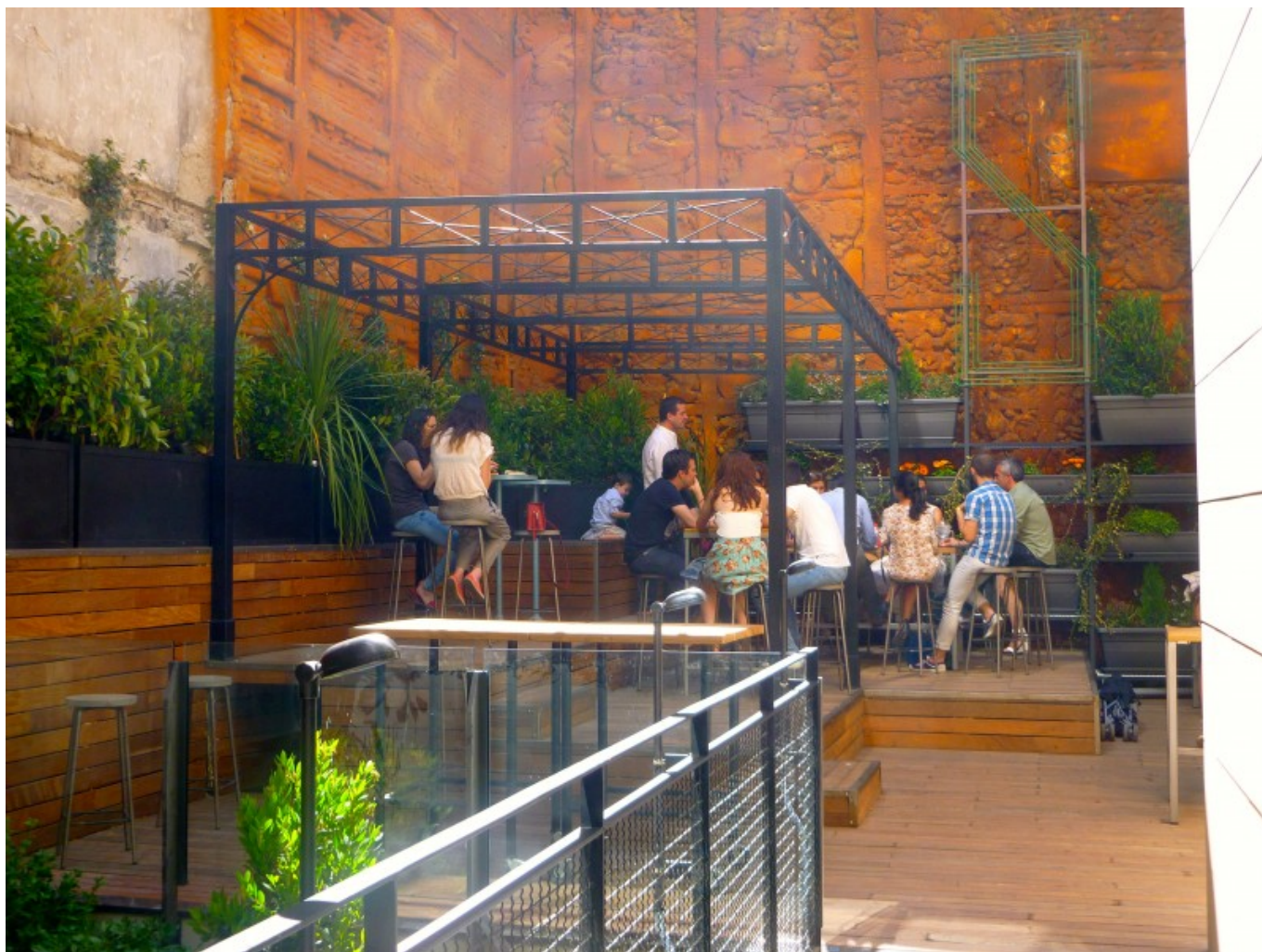
7. Jardín Secreto



This rooftop is also situated on Calle Montera, and it's called Jardín Secreto (although it's not that much of a secret anymore). Step inside the accessories store, Salvador Bachiller, and take the elevator up to the top floor to discover a small yet charming rooftop absolutely covered in plants and flowers. Although you won't find much of a view, you will discover a nice change of scenery from the busy city center.

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle Montera 37
- Metro: Gran Vía or Sol

8. Mercado de San Ildefonso



This isn't exactly a rooftop bar, but it still deserves a spot on our list. This outdoor terrace is located inside an ultra modern food market in Malasaña, [Mercado de San Ildefonso](#), right on Calle Fuencarral. So once you grab a drink and a bite to eat from the array of food stalls, find a seat in this fun patio area.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: C/ Fuencarral, 57
- Metros: Tribunal

9. Casa de Granada



In Tirso de Molina, you'll find Casa Granada situated on the top floor of an unassuming residential building. This rather old-school restaurant has been around for ages and is definitely the least "chic" option on the list. The menu features traditional Spanish dishes, from *croquetas* to *patatas bravas*. It's well insulated during the chillier months of the year and when the awnings are up, you get great views of the heart of the city.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle del Doctor Cortezo, 17
- Metro: Tirso de Molina

Did we miss any other low-key rooftop bars in Madrid open year round? Let us

know and we'll add them to the list!

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!

The Lobstar – bringing authentic New England comfort food to Madrid

We can now savor authentic lobster rolls in Madrid thanks to The Lobstar. Situated near Bilbao, this newly opened restaurant is bringing the best of New England comfort food to the city, with hearty dishes like clam chowder, lobster bisque and shrimp rolls.



The decor is inspired by restaurants you'll find along Maine's quaint coastal fishing towns. It mixes industrial touches with

a casual vibe. Lots of light streams in through the tall storefront windows, and the brick and metal walls contrast with the wooden floor.

There are just a few tables and booths, and an open kitchen where you can see the chefs preparing casual American seafood dishes following traditional recipes. As for the music, classic hits are played back to back, so you'll probably know all the lyrics. Feel free to sing (or hum) along.



In true “lobster bar” fashion, we first ordered beer – a trusted Sam Adams and an excellent pilsner from Marbella. As for the menu, our servers were very helpful and recommended we start with the buffalo shrimp tacos.



We also asked for a bowl of rich clam chowder, for nostalgia's sake. Both were delicious and filling enough to be a complete meal on their own.



Next up, our main dishes. Of course we ordered the star of the show – “the lobster roll” – and it was the real deal. The lobsters arrive alive from Canada, boiled up and served on a toasted and buttered homemade brioche bun, with lots of flavorful mayonnaise. Absolutely perfect.



We also ordered the swordfish burger which was gigantic. It had several generous-sized pieces of grilled fish along with the works: lettuce, tomato, onion and mayo, also on a sweet bun. Both were served with a heaping portion of the best sweet potato fries I've tried in the city so far.



And the most surprising part for me? The side of coleslaw. It was real coleslaw! The kind you find at New York City delis. We also couldn't help but take a peek at the delicious-looking mac and cheese dishes that kept coming out of the kitchen. We'll definitely be going back for those next time.



We needed to take a short pause before we could even consider having dessert. After two slowly sipped cups of espresso (each served with a cute “Lobstar” marshmallow), we decided to go for it. The first items to catch our eyes were the cider donut and the butterscotch with honeycomb milkshake...



They sounded amazing, but given the meal of champions that we'd just devoured, we asked for a lighter option. The server recommended the key lime pie, one of my favorite desserts and the perfect finishing touch for an incredibly satisfying meal. Let's just say we walked all the way home, happy.

The Lobstar

- **Website:** www.thelobstar.es
 - **Instagram:** @thelobstarbar
 - **Address:** Calle Carranza, 4 (Madrid)
 - **Metro:** Bilbao
-

Crumb, signature sandwiches that truly hit the spot

I've always loved sandwiches, particularly the kind that are made with several ingredients and creative combinations. When I was growing up, my family owned a sandwich shop where my siblings and I would get to experiment with all different types of breads, ingredients and spreads.

Needless to say, when I'm in the mood for a good sandwich, the typical "bocadillo" or "bocata" usually just doesn't cut it. That's why I was so happy to discover Crumb, a small restaurant in the charming Conde Duque area. Crumb serves signature, gourmet sandwiches and dishes, along with the bread they bake daily with organic flour and sourdough starter.



The menu is simple, and is divided into four parts: dishes without bread (starters and salads that are great for sharing); with bread (dishes that range from Fish&Chips to meatballs, with bread served on the side); on bread (open-faced sandwiches, similar to *tostas*); and between bread (the amazing sandwiches). You can order your sandwich with a side of fries or a salad. Crumb also serves tempting international specials, so make sure to ask.



We started out with two dishes *sin pan* (without bread): The first was gyozas made with chicken, garnished with pineapple and soy sauce. They were so delicious that we highly regretted ordering the half portion. We also tried the *patatas revolconas* (mashed potatoes) which was heaven in a bowl. It had a perfectly smooth texture and was topped with *torrezno* (bacon). Great comfort food for one of the coldest days of the year in Madrid.



Then we each ordered a sandwich (*entre pan*). The first had roasted chicken, guacamole, herbs, lettuce and *alioli*, on delicious toasted homemade bread. Now that's what I call a sandwich. Seemingly simple ingredients that make for an amazing combination. You can imagine why the paper wrapping came in handy.



And the second was the veggie sandwich, made with tahini pesto, dried tomatoes, grilled eggplant and zucchini, sweet potato and goat cheese. For me, pretty much anything that involves pesto and goat cheese is bound to be delicious. But if you add toasted bread and flavorful vegetables, let's just say it turns into the kind of sandwich that I could eat every day and never get tired of.

We finished off our meal with a luscious chocolate cake with walnuts and vanilla ice cream. Everything truly hit the spot and had us savoring the very last crumb...

Crumb

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: @crumbmadrid
- **Address:** Calle Conde Duque 8
- **Metro:** Plaza de España or Ventura Rodríguez

5 Work-friendly Cafes with Great Wi-Fi in Madrid

While setting up a home office in a café is typically not part of Madrid's culture, there is a large population of international people and students living here who enjoy finding places where they can spend hours on end with their laptops.

As there is an abundance of quaint, work-friendly cafés in the city, the struggle primarily lies in finding one with strong Wi-Fi. So here's a list of lovely cafes with great Wi-Fi in Madrid. They all boast a comfortable working space and delicious coffee beverages to help you get your work done!

[Lolina Vintage Café](#)



As its name suggests, this cozy café will instantly make you feel as though you've stepped back in time. Its vintage décor, comfortable sofas, and lamps create a comfortable, cozy atmosphere that invites all to sit and do work. There is an upstairs and downstairs area, both with plenty of space and tables. The Wi-Fi is provided upon placing your order and is quite strong, almost never fading out. Depending on how crowded the café is, the Wi-Fi may be slightly weaker downstairs. Nevertheless, **Lolina Vintage Café's Wi-Fi is definitely dependable for those who need to work online.**

This café offers a variety of dishes and coffee beverages, including vegan milk for individuals of all dietary restrictions to enjoy. Once you've finished your work, the signature cocktails may be just the post-work treat that you and your friends are looking for.

- *Photo from* [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle del Espíritu Santo, 9
- **Metro:** Tribunal

[HanSo Café](#)



If you prefer to work more so in the “hustle and bustle” of the city, you’ll love the trendy HanSo Café. Located on Calle del Pez, this café is famous for its picture-worthy coffee beverages that taste just as good as they look. While this

café has good Wi-Fi, you may find that it is better suitable for light work assignments, where peace and quiet are not a necessity. With the visually appealing coffee beverages that attracts the crowds, HanSo Café is definitely not a substitute for a library. Nevertheless, if you're looking to switch up your work place, this is a fabulous café to explore both alone and with friends.

- *Photo from* [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle del Pez, 20
- **Metro:** Noviciado

[La Bicicleta](#)



Perhaps you prefer natural light or people watching while you work. If so, you'll love the bar window seating at La Bicicleta that looks over the charming Madrid street and square. If the window seats are taken when you arrive, there are plenty of large tables in the café to spread out and do your work.

You'll find many people working from their laptops in this café, taking advantage of the strong Wi-Fi and top quality 100% Arabic coffee that is offered. If you're in need of a quick pick-me-up meal while working, you may treat yourself to one of La Bicicleta's delicious tapas dishes. Also read our

[previous article about La Bicicleta.](#)

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Plaza de San Ildefonso, 9
- **Metro:** Tribunal

[Café de la Luz](#)



If you're in need of a cozy place that feels as though you're in your own home living room, Café de la Luz may become your new work place of choice. Located on Calle de la Puebla, this charming café offers a couple of tables along the windows, bar seating, comfortable sofas, and a wood-burning stove fireplace. The warm, comfortable atmosphere that this café boasts will surely eliminate any work-related stress you may have. The reliable Wi-Fi connection will also make working a breeze, where you won't have to worry about losing connection at any moment while feeling productive.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle de la Puebla, 8
- **Metro:** Chueca / Gran Vía

[La Colectiva Café](#)



University students will love La Colectiva Café, which offers the same working atmosphere as a campus study center does. Upon entering the café, it may not seem like much, with only a few bench seats and tables. However, if you go downstairs, you will find plenty of space with large tables and comfortable sofas.

Many people choose to work at La Colectiva Café because it is very quiet downstairs, making it quite easy to focus. The strong Wi-Fi allows you to do anything from searching online to enjoying a Netflix study break. While the menu may be

slightly more on the pricey side compared to other cafes, it may be well worth it if you're searching for a work-friendly, comfortable space to complete your tasks.

- [Facebook](#)

- **Address:** Calle Francisco de Rojas, 9

- **Metro:** Bilbao

While there are numerous cafes and quaint locations in Madrid to work at, these five destinations will surely inspire you to get quality work done without the hassle of having to seek out strong Wi-Fi. With this list of cafes, you'll no longer have to worry about arriving to the café, ordering your drink, and setting up your computer, only to discover that the Wi-Fi isn't strong.

Thanks to these work-friendly cafés with great WiFi in Madrid, you can enjoy feeling part of the vibrant city while accomplishing your daily online tasks and treating yourself to delicious coffee beverages!

By Haley Grant