

Fish & Chips 2.0. – made in Spain with local, fresh ingredients

Building on its success in Barcelona, [The Fish & Chips Shop](#) has just opened its first restaurant in Madrid's Chueca neighborhood, and aren't we lucky! The Alam brothers, Mani and Majid, decided to open their first location in Barcelona in February 2015, after searching the city for a fish and chips antidote to a long night of partying, to no avail.

Since then, they've opened eight Fish & Chip Shops in Barcelona, and now their first in the capital.



Image by Cristina Góngora

Situated on Calle Campoamor 2, their Madrid location is a lovely, small eatery with an open kitchen, modern decor and international magazines dispersed throughout.



Image by Cristina Góngora

The menu features an updated version of the traditional British comfort food, made with top-quality, locally-sourced ingredients. It'll cure your hangover—as it should—but without leaving you regretting a single bite.

All the dishes here are made with prime ingredients from across Spain. For example, the potatoes and hake fish come straight from Galicia; the highly refined extra virgin olive oil that they fry with, [Olis Bargallo](#), comes from Barcelona; the bread comes from [Panic](#), an organic bread shop in Madrid's Conde Duque area; the probiotic drinks come from [Rudo](#), also based in the capital. Just to give you an idea.

What we ate and drank

I ordered a natural white wine, and James chose an IPA. The manager, Gonzalo, told us they'll soon be serving beer from [Oso Brew](#), a local brewery that we've written about on several occasions, with a bar in La Latina. Next time I want to try their kombuchas and homemade lemonade.



Accompanying our drinks were delicious edamame, cooked in extra virgin olive oil and topped with [maldon salt](#).

As for the food, Gonzalo recommended we order a few menu highlights. To start, we had the artichoke flowers coated and sauteed in extra virgin olive oil. They were so tender and flavorful.



We also had the “bravas de pulpo rebozadas” which I’d roughly translate as fried octopus balls! Gonzalo told us it’s made with battered octopus that’s fried in tempura with panko breadcrumbs, dressed with a spicy sauce of rocoto pepper, ají and chipotle; and topped with Kimchi, mint and citric mayonnaise. Plus perfectly cooked French fries with paprika. This dish was amazing.



Image by Cristina Góngora

For the main dishes, we went with the two stars: The Fish & Chips (the photo features a medium-sized portion) and The Lobster Roll.



Their version of fish and chips is made with fresh fish from Galicia, battered in tempura, with cereal to give a bit of

crunch. It comes with a side of French fries made with fish masala spices, plus a homemade tartar and mango chutney sauce. So satisfying.



Image by Cristina Góngora

The lobster roll is made with fresh lobster sautéed in smoked butter, drizzled with a lobster head, celery and mayonnaise sauce, heaped on a buttered brioche with lamb's lettuce. Served with a side of authentic coleslaw and addictive sweet potato fries. Heaven.



For dessert we had the chocolate ganache, typical of Cataluña. The portion was the perfect compliment to our meal.

All in all I'd say this was one of the tastiest meals I've had in a long time, and I'm happy that this restaurant is supporting local producers while giving a quality spin to the

UK's most traditional fast food dish, as well as many other menu items that I can't wait to try.

The Fish & Chips Shop Madrid

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [IG](#)
 - Address: Calle Campoamor 2
 - Metros: Alonso Martínez or Chueca
-

Shooloongkan: Madrid's most authentic Chinese restaurant and hot pot experience

Finding Chinese food in Madrid is easy, but finding authentic Chinese food requires some work. It's normal for flavors to be subdued and menus to be adapted in order to please the local taste palate, but sometimes you just want to order the real deal. And even though inauthentic doesn't necessarily translate to a bad meal—just because they don't eat chow mein in China doesn't make it less delicious—there is a glorified quality about eating a meal as it's prepared in its home culture.

In the case of hot pot, that home culture is Sichuan province in southwest China. A quick Google search for “hot pot Madrid” brings up plenty of options to choose from, but if

authenticity is what you're after, Xiaolongkan (sometimes spelled ShooLoongKan) in Legazpi has a leg up on the others: the restaurant actually comes from Sichuan.



“This is one of the only real Chinese restaurants in Madrid,” proclaims Ella, one of the restaurant’s managers. “Everything

you see inside here came directly from China,” she says, pointing to the stone tables, the paper lanterns, the bamboo dividers.

Xiaolongkan is a franchise that has roots in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan. The Legazpi location opened in August 2020 in the middle of the pandemic and is the company’s debut in Spain. Just a stone’s throw away from Madrid’s Chinatown in Usera, the entire meal—from the ornate decor to the complimentary orange slices after eating—is designed to perfectly replicate an experience of eating hot pot in China.



One of the biggest obstacles to trying a new cuisine is the fear of not knowing what to do and committing some type of

faux pas. And while there is no way to stop that from happening—you just have to graciously accept it—there are **a few tips to keep in mind if you've never had hot pot so you don't feel completely clueless.**

1. Hot pot is a type of fondue, not a soup.

When you sit down with your placemat-sized paper menu, it's hard not to feel immediately overwhelmed by the number of options, especially if you're unsure of what hot pot is. You'll choose the type of broth and then an assortment of raw meats and vegetables, which are cooked by being dipped or bathed in the boiling liquid. You'll remove the cooked items, dip them in your sauce, and eat them, but you generally don't drink the broth, as with soup.



2. Don't be overeager with your level of spiciness.

The three broth options at Xiaolongkan are the traditional Sichuan chili broth, a mushroom broth, and a tomato broth. Only the Sichuan chili broth is spicy and you can choose the level of spice, from one chili pepper to three chili peppers. If you are clearly unfamiliar with the menu, the server will politely but assertively recommend you choose the one chili pepper option, and you should follow their advice.

Remember, this is a menu that was designed in Sichuan for Sichuanese tastes. If you want to add more spice later, you always can. You can also have multiple broths at your table if

you want to try more than one.

3. Explore options outside of your comfort zone for your dipping items.

If you've ever been curious about eating innards, this is the place to try them. After all, hot pot is all about playing with texture, since everything ends up tasting like your broth and dipping sauce. Many of the "recommended" menu items are visceral—thinly-sliced kidneys, blood sausage, duck gizzards—but only because they're crowd pleasers. If you have the stomach for it, give at least one of them a try.



4. Order your veggies à la carte.

The mixed plate of vegetables may look appetizing, but it includes an unnecessary amount of romaine lettuce. Don't skip your vegetables, just handpick the ones you most want to eat. And while an assortment of vegetables may sound ideal for non-meat eaters, none of the broths are vegetarian.

5. The sesame dipping sauce will be your best friend.

After a big pitcher of water, that is. The bowl of Chinese sesame paste you're given when you sit down is to dip your cooked items after pulling them from the chili broth, so the sweetness of the sesame paste can mellow out the intensity of the chilis. You can keep the sesame sauce as is or add to it from the buffet-style condiment bar with items like fresh cilantro leaves, chopped scallions, oyster sauce, different vinegars, or even more chili oil if you're feeling particularly intrepid.



Final thoughts on Shooloongkan (a.k.a. Xiaolongkan)

At Xiaolongkan, the ritual of preparing the food is just as enjoyable as actually eating it. There's a carnal satisfaction that comes from gliding a thinly sliced piece of Wagyu beef over the surface of the bubbling broth, watching as it literally cooks before your eyes.

And the highlight of your meal may very well be finding that meatball or mushroom that you had lost in the pot and completely forgotten about—until you unsuspectingly fish it back out 20 minutes later, imbued with the maximum amount of flavor it can possibly hold. Imagine the feeling when you find a five euro bill in your pocket, and the sensation is similar.

After a year that's been all about social distancing, there's something refreshing about a meal that's so brazenly communal. Hot pot is unavoidably served family-style, where everyone at the table flavors the same broth by dipping their food (there's a temperature check for everyone who enters and the boiling liquid is a natural disinfectant, so use the same precautions you would when visiting any restaurant). It's fun and sociable and authentic, but, above all, it's tasty.

Hot pot at Xiaolongkan checks all the boxes, just as long as you can withstand the heat.

Shooloongkan info

- IG: [Shooloongkan](#)
 - Address: Calle Maestro Arbos 3
 - Metro: Legazpi
 - Reservations recommended
-

Roll Me Up leads the pack in Madrid's cinnamon roll craze

It seems like each year, Madrileños become fixated on a different dessert from a faraway land. There was the arrival of huge homemade cookies a few years ago, then for a while it was pancakes, then [specialty \(vegan\) donuts](#), ice cream served in fish-shaped cones, waffles shaped like vulvas...

This year, the buzz seems to be about cinnamon rolls. The hippest Malasaña bakeries and cafes have started to offer these homemade treats that are most commonly found in the US and Northern Europe.

But as with anything, *some do it better than others*. In this case—in my humble opinion—the winner is **Roll Me Up**. So new on the scene they don't have a physical location yet. This small family company operates through Instagram and WhatsApp, taking orders the day before.

For me, it didn't take much more than scrolling through their (very aesthetic) photos to know deep in my bones that these rolls were going to be mouthwateringly amazing.



So I got in touch with one of the owners, Daniela, to get the scoop on their story, their products, and their plans for the future.

Roll Me Up's story

Lenin and Daniela are a couple from Venezuela who started their business in the middle of the pandemic (brave, right?). Lenin is an accountant and Daniela, an architect—and they have continued working in those roles (pun intended) as they've grown the business as a side hustle. Lenin has loved baking

his whole life, and has been making cinnamon rolls for his family since he was young.

So **they form a perfect team**: Lenin in the kitchen, and Daniel working with customers and handling the design aspect of the company.



Their products

Roll Me Up started in summer with just six flavors, and has since expanded to 11 delicious options:

- Classic
- Choco coco

- Pistachio (my fav)
- Crispy cookie (Lotus creme)
- Choco nut
- Sweet pecan (up there with pistachio)
- Lemon shot
- Black Oreo
- Nutella
- PB&J
- Chips Ahoy

I also had the exclusive privilege of trying a brand spanking new, not-yet-announced product: the **vegan roll**. This ended up being one of my favorites! I wouldn't have known it was vegan if they hadn't told me. The icing is so creamy and the dough tastes pretty much the same to me!



My box of 9 mini cinnamon rolls. My top picks: pistachio, crispy cookie, and Nutella!

Something that really stood out to me about the products was the packaging—**100% zero-waste boxes** (made from the husk of cane sugar). Even the little reminder about the rolls being great heated up for 20 seconds in the microwave (can verify this is true) is stamped onto the box rather than included in a sticker or card. The whole process is totally plastic free, and can be tossed into the organic bin.

Their plans for the future



Daniela and Lenin know what they're doing. Unlike a lot of small bakeries who start their businesses the day they open a physical shop, Roll Me Up is playing it safe. Their business operates strictly virtually for now, using WhatsApp Business to communicate with customers and arrange deliveries.

Daniela tells me that they plan to build a strong customer base before **opening a physical shop towards the end of next year** (they also need the time to plan their wedding, which is next summer! We stan!). As for the products, they say they plan to continue experimenting, trying out some savory flavors and more gourmet options.

Roll Me Up's info

Now more than ever, we should support small businesses! Here's how you can order cinnamon rolls from Roll Me Up:

- Follow them: [@rollmeup.es](https://www.instagram.com/rollmeup.es) and check out the options
- Use the [link in their bio](#) to place your order via **WhatsApp**
- Receive your delivery during these available time slots:
M-F 7pm-9pm, weekends noon-9pm

You may also like:

- [La Desayunería: An American diner food wonderland in Madrid](#)
- [5 best places to order vegan and vegetarian takeout in Madrid](#)

- [Bite Me Café: Secretly vegan, obviously delicious donuts in Madrid](#)
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Gustazio: Enjoy pizza that isn't pizza near Legazpi

When I tell my friends they have to try the *pinsa* at Gustazio, one of Legazpi's most unique Italian restaurants, the response is always a confused stare. "Are you saying pizza?" they inevitably ask.

"No, *pinsa*."

And just like the subtle difference between the words pizza and *pinsa*, it's just as easy to mistake the physical foods, as well. The *pinsa* at Gustazio looks like, well, a pizza. It has a crusty bread base and most of the topping options sound familiar from any pizzeria—margherita, four cheese, vegetarian—but once someone begins to point out the differences, the *pinsa* begins to set itself apart.



What's the difference between pinsa and pizza?

For starters, pinsa dough is too delicate to be tossed like its pizza cousin, so it's stretched and squeezed by hand, resulting in an oval shape instead of the classic pizza pie circle. And while a Neapolitan pizza has a relatively smooth finish, **a defining feature of pinsa are the crackly hills and crevasses that crater the surface.**

The differences between them, however, are not just aesthetic. Traditional pizza dough is made entirely with wheat flour, while pinsa is made with a precise mix of wheat, rice, and soy flours and a lot more water, creating a **much lighter crust that's easier on the stomach.**



Anyone who's been to a [Neapolitan pizzeria](#) is no stranger to that moment after drinking a beer or two and eating three-quarters of a pizza where you just can't go on and you want to save the rest but then you regrettably wonder... *is it even worth saving just a quarter of a pizza?*

And even though you know the answer is yes, you decide no, it's not worth it, and persevere until your plate is empty and your insides are bloated, left only with a familiar and satisfying sense of self-loathing.



But after eating an entire *acciuga pinsa* topped with caramelized tomato, capers, black olives, and anchovies, I was full but not bursting. I even had room for a ricotta-filled and pistachio-topped cannoli dessert, which was just the sweet ending I needed.

In the wrong hands, pinsa can easily turn into something pretentious, like when you talk about sushi with a food snob friend (oh that isn't sushi you're eating, it's *nigiri*). Thankfully, the unassuming staff at Gustazio never cross that line.

The server Daniele, a native Roman, introduces himself and then the menu to each table with natural affability, educating

diners about pinsa without any hint that he's done so hundreds of times before and recommending a suitable wine or craft beer, all from Italy.

Should you need a drink to whet your appetite, Daniele pours an aperol spritz that's perfectly proportioned.



Pinsa is generally associated with Rome, but Gustazio's owners all hail from Milan. **Luca, Fabrizio, Brunella, and Vania**

opened their pinseria in 2018 in Legazpi, which also serves home-baked focaccias and fresh pasta that's imported directly from Italy.

Even though 2020 has been just as hard on them as other restaurants, all three expressed an endearing gratitude for the neighborhood.

"This barrio is amazing," Vania professed while talking about the support they've received. **"We're really lucky to be where we are."**

We can't wait for "aperitivo" nights to return

More than anything, the neighborhood is eagerly awaiting the return of the Wednesday aperitivo, a weekly event that's on hold until further notice due to COVID restrictions. In classic Milanese fashion, customers buy a drink and then have unlimited access to a revolving selection of appetizers, with options including tostadas topped with burrata and Sicilian pistachios, roasted slices of eggplant, various Italian cold cuts, and of course, pinsa.

Until aperitivo nights return, **Gustazio is open Wednesday to Sunday for lunch and dinner to dine in or pick up, and will be available for delivery via Glovo by the end of November.**

So the next time you have a craving for pizza, don't dismiss the idea of a pinsa from Gustazio to satisfy the urge. And

since you're choosing the "light" option, don't feel guilty about capping off the meal with a fluffy piece of tiramisu to reward yourself.

Gustazio

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [gastrobargustazio](#)
- **Hours:** Wednesday–Sunday for lunch and dinner (indoor dining and pickup); and delivery via Glovo will be available by end of November.
- **Address:** Calle Embajadores, 197
- **Metro:** Legazpi

Looking for more Italian spots in Madrid? Here's a few of our favorites:

- [Fratelli Figurato](#) (Alonso Cano)
 - [Nina Pasta Bar](#) (La Latina)
 - [Retrogusto Bar](#) (Ópera or Sol)
 - [Casa Picsa](#) (Rios Rosas)
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Nina Pasta Bar: Don't walk right past'a

Like most people living their best PL life (post lockdown, incase you were wondering), I am making it my mission to eat out with gusto, and plough some money back into the hospitality industry—albeit rather selfishly as I wind up well fed, so it's not entirely altruistic.

However, there's one place in the city that I keep going back to. Not only in order to support a small business, but because their food is beyond delicious and the service feels akin to being greeted by old friends. Nina Pasta Bar is the restaurant equivalent of my new favourite toy, and long may it continue.

Nina's is tucked away, just off of Calle Ruda, making it easy to miss and the definition of a hidden gem. The menu isn't overly long; instead they focus on a few specialities, such as spaghetti carbonara which they absolutely nail, every.single.time.



Spaghetti carbonara (image by @pria.rao)

I'm currently in the midst of a love affair with their gnocchi bravos, an Italian take on the Spanish classic. They're little panfried pockets of deliciousness, served with a spicy bravas sauce and a creamy alioli. Challenge yourself to share the dish: I inhale an entire serving these days and don't break a sweat.



Pizzeta (image by @pria.rao)

There's no shortage of places to dine out at in Madrid, but there is a shortage of places (in my opinion) where you literally don't want the meal to end. From the cosy yet understated decor, to the reasonably priced vino tinto and the delectable specials, each morsel tastes as heavenly as the next—you can taste that it's been cooked with love.



Most recently, I had the pumpkin gnocchi with pancetta and I genuinely had to pace myself, such was the urge to faceplate into this hug in a bowl of meal.



Pumpkin gnocchi with pancetta

In light of the weird times that we're currently living through, Nina's feels homely and a safe cocoon (when, frankly, the outside world is leaning heavily towards doom and gloom).



Tiramisu

The service is always warm and welcoming, the tiramisu always decadently rich and the glasses of wine always err on the side of what I affectionately refer to as a 'generous pour'.

Torn between shouting about Nina Pasta Bar from the rooftops and wanting to keep it quiet so that I can still get a 'reso', here I am recommending it wholeheartedly as words cannot 'espresso' how much I love this spot. Sorry, couldn't resist topping and tailing with a pasta pun.

By Cat Powell [@littlemissmadrid](#)

Nina Pasta Bar

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@ninapastabar](#)
- **Address:** [Calle de Santa Ana 21](#)
- **Metro:** La Latina
- **Phone:** +34911374660

Also check out:

- [El Brote: a new mushroom restaurant in the heart of El Rastro](#)
- [Camoatí: an incredibly romantic Argentinian bistro in La Latina](#)
- [Retrogusto Bar: my best-kept Madrid secret](#)

Retrogusto Bar: My best-kept Madrid secret

I never thought I'd share this place with the world, but the time has come. Retrogusto is a little Italian bar and kitchen located near Plaza Mayor and Opera, right in the city center. Yet it doesn't feel that way. It feels more like you're in a small town, as it's situated in a quiet plaza with tables set out under a beautiful tree that provides warmth and shade.

I've been living in Madrid for over 12 years now, and this is by far one of my favorite spots in the city. One of the main reasons is that big tree! Another reason is because it's so simple and down to earth.



The restaurant has two terraces: one in the plaza; and the other under a residential building. The indoor area is small and cute, decorated with mis-matching vintage furniture and nicknacks.



You can sit anywhere and enjoy your time here. But that tree is something special; I've spent many wonderful evenings under its canopy...



James and I first stumbled upon Retrogusto when we were living near Sol a few years ago, and it quickly became our oasis. We'd always find a table under the tree on weeknights and order several glasses of wine or beer—each round would come with delicious olives, Italian cheese or a surprise *aperitivo* that was always good. For dinner, James would get the meatballs and I'd go for the piadina or eggplant parmesan.



But last time we went, the menu had changed so we tried something new. James got the pasta special with zucchini cream sauce that he's still dreaming about, no joke. I went for the Caprese salad—light and fresh.



We didn't get a spot under the tree last time either, because we went on the weekend for a change and it was full. Instead, we grabbed a seat in the other outdoor area, and now we know where all the owners' friends and regulars hang out!



Before leaving we asked the owner, Silvana, if she could tell us a bit about her story. She's originally from Sardinia, Italy, and came to Madrid 12 years ago, after living in Ireland and working in accounting. She wanted a change and decided that Spain was pretty similar to Italy, without it being Italy (if that makes sense).



Silvana started out working at a bar in La Latina. Her friends owned Retrogusto at the time, and she would come to hang out and help them. When they decided to leave Spain, she naturally took over and has been running it for seven years now. Her brother works in the kitchen and she's out front. "I don't cook," she says.

Our conversation went on for quite a while, covering the new laws restricting Madrid restaurants and business owners, to the lives of freelancers. I won't get into the details but I will say that she treated us to a round of shots by the end of our meal. Grazie!

Before leaving I asked Silvana what her favorite thing about the bar is: "Its simplicity. It's like being with your family

in a small town.”

I couldn't agree with her more. Although the secret's out, let's make sure it stays that way.

Retrogusto Bar:

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@retrogustobar](#)
- Address: Plaza del Biombo
- Metro: Opera or Sol

Note: Because of the restricted closing hours for bars and restaurants right now (11pm) she's opening a little earlier lately, around 7:30pm.

Amicis Restaurant: Now's the time for Madrid locals to go to Sol

As in many cities around the globe, Madrid's city center has been transformed by tourism over the years. Several old taverns and traditional shops have been replaced by chains and souvenir stores, and the streets are usually packed with tourists—which is why locals often avoid the center. But there

are independent businesses in and around Sol that are worth a visit, and now's the best time to go.

So, I decided to go on a little adventure with my food partner in crime and search for hidden gems near Sol. Our first stop: Amicis Restaurant.

A terrace that transports you to a small town in a big city

What first lured us in was Amicis' spacious terrace. Situated right across from Mercado de San Miguel and Plaza Mayor, Amicis has its own private square surrounded by centuries-old buildings and a pedestrian street. So it feels like you're dining anywhere but smack in the city center. We like that.



Fresh products straight from the market

Local, fresh ingredients are the base of all their dishes, and there's something on the menu for everyone. We started out with two recommendations from our server. First, the fresh guacamole that came in a mortar and pestle, so you get to smash the large chunks of avocado yourself and then slather them on your tortilla chips.



Guacamole in a mortar and pestle

Second, the Peking duck tacos that we'll be coming back for. You can't go wrong with either of these.



Peking duck tacos

As for the main dish, I have a rule now: “If they name a dish after the restaurant, I eat it.” For many years, I had problems deciding what to order, so I decided to always ask for anything that the restaurant considers deserving of its own name.

Today’s choice is the **Classic Amicis Burger**: a generous piece of meat, fresh tomato, arugula, melted cheese, caramelized

onion and the secret (I forgot to ask what it was) house sauce. It made me very happy.



Classic Amicis Hamburger

We also ordered the red tuna tataki that hit the spot.



Red tuna tataki with sashimi, avocado and wasabi mayonnaise.

After dinner, we had the chance to chat with one of the owners, Fabio, who's originally from the UK and has Italian and Spanish heritage. During our meal we saw him greeting everyone in different languages, including all the street musicians by name. Fabio knows about good service; he started working in hospitality at the age of 12, cleaning his father's Italian restaurant back in the UK.

Years later, Fabio and his partner Maria—who's also from the UK and grew up in a family food business—stumbled upon a closed taberna that was in desperate need of a renovation. They remodelled it entirely, including the downstairs bodega

which is now used as an intimate room for private dinners (apparently Fabio gives you an iPad with Spotify and lets you stay there for hours).

Fabio talks with passion about their restaurant, team and menu, and he hopes they can continue with their personal venture for many years to come.

Amicis restaurant:

- IG: [@amicisrestaurant_madrid](#)
- Web: <https://amicisrestaurants.com/>
- Address: Plaza del Conde de Miranda, 4
- Metro: Ópera
- Phone: +34 91 058 78 80
- Schedule:
 - **Bar** 13:00/00:00 (Fri & Sat 13:00-01:00)
 - **Kitchen** 13:00/16:00 · 20:00/00:00 (Sat & Sun 13:00/ 00:00)

Los Costilla: BBQ ribs and pulled pork sandwiches that

will blow your mind

A few weeks ago I heard about a place called Los Costilla that serves *really* authentic ribs and pulled pork sandwiches. One person came to mind: Gwildor... I was just a toddler watching TV with my dad (not sure the movie was appropriate for my age, oops!) but I'll never forget Gwildor drinking BBQ sauce and having ribs and chicken in *Masters of the Universe*. Since then, pork ribs covered in real American BBQ sauce have been one of my favorite dishes.



But back to the present. So, I went to Los Costilla on calle Ayala on a Friday night, wearing my best clothes for the occasion: shorts and a loose-fitting t-shirt. It was long

enough to cover my belly—very important for a meal like this. We got there a little after 8 pm, a bit too early for Spaniards, but I just couldn't wait any longer.

As soon as I saw the menu written over the counter, I started wondering what I was going to devour. Good thing we didn't have to choose—Los Costilla offers a tasting menu (pictured below) that comes with four *sanduches*, fries, salad and a rack of fall-off-the-bone oven-baked pork ribs. And you can dip it all in a selection of their delicious homemade sauces.



It's perfect for two people, you'll most likely have to take some of it home.

Less talk, more food.

My first bite went to the Porchetta sandwich: Two different pork meat cuts—tender loin and rib—mixed with sweet onion and arugula. My second bite went to the pulled pork with coleslaw salad and BBQ sauce. No words.



Once my side of the table was empty, I finally got to meet my beloved ribs. Los Costilla do not play around. The meat just fell softly off the bone with a little help of my teeth.



Finally, as if that wasn't enough, we ordered dessert: fried oreos topped with vanilla ice cream and caramel and chocolate syrup. Yeah, I walked home.



But before I did, I had the chance to talk to one of the owners, Juan. He and his friends started their adventure in 2014 in their hometown of Caracas, where they opened up a stand at a baseball stadium. It got so popular that they started expanding in Venezuela and now, lucky for us, in Madrid.

I can't wait to go back to experience Los Costilla all over again, and have to try the fried chicken sandwich that Juan says is out of this world. I believe him.

Los Costilla:

- IG: [@loscostillaes](#)
 - Web: <https://www.loscostilla.es/>
 - Address: Calle Ayala, 81
 - Metro: Goya (Line 2)
 - Phone: +34 (913) 56 67 31
 - Schedule:
 - Sun – Wed: 1 pm – 4.30 pm & 8pm – 11pm
 - ☐Thur – Sat: 1 pm- 4.30 pm & 8 pm – 11.30 pm
-

La Desayunería: American diner food wonderland in Madrid

There aren't many things I miss about America, but of the things I do, almost all are food-related. Nothing beats the artery-clogging indulgence of comfort food, and the queen of comfort lies in American diner food.

Diner food hasn't historically been a thing in Madrid. But with the influx of *guiris* in the last decade or so, the city has welcomed some very Yankee trends: craft beer, artisanal donuts, burger and hotdog joints, you name it. But although flavored lattes and eggs benedict have been prancing the *calles* of the capital for a few years now, it wasn't until July 2020 that true American diner food arrived.

La Desayunería was born in Barcelona—and soon after, opened a second location in the same city. Having seen such success in Madrid's sister city, the owner decided to replicate the concept here. And we are not upset about it.

The menu at La Desayunería leaves nothing to be desired: from specialty pancakes, to full American breakfast platters, French toast, bagels, chicken & waffles, omelettes... and that's just the breakfast menu. Go for lunch if you have a hankerin' for sirloin, salads, chicken parm, juicy burgers, fried chicken, buffalo wings, mac n' cheese, and pretty much any other classic American grub you can think of.



Chicken & waffles with fried eggs

To wet your whistle, choose from flavored lattes (they make their very own maple syrup which you can buy bottled), chai iced tea, fresh fruit smoothies, golden mylk, and more. Pick your favorite milk for coffee: dairy, oat, rice, soy, or almond.

The backdrop for this greasy diner food wonderland is appropriate: kitschy Southern decor in a cozy spot nestled in the heart of Chueca. From the quirky dog painting at the entrance, to the neon sign that reads “Pancake House,” you’ll feel like you never left the cursed motherland.



The Marie Antoinette

When my girlfriend and I arrived, we were greeted with smiles and an offer to explain the (very comprehensive) menu. We

landed on a stack of cinnamon roll pancakes, the “Manchito’s tail” platter, and a maple latte and americano to drink.



We got the “Manchito’s tail” platter

Everything we ordered was delicious and authentic. In fact, I couldn’t tell you which part was my favorite. But I will say that I’ll be back as soon as possible to try the red velvet flapjacks. Or perhaps to cave and buy a bottle of maple.

La Desayunería

- IG: [@la_desayuneria_madrid](#)
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M0 de Movimiento: the sustainable star of Madrid's restaurant scene

For those in the know, Madrid is not really a city to visit in July and August. To be frank, it all but becomes a ghost town. This is largely due to sweltering temperatures that have Madrileños bolting for the beach – 41 degrees and counting this week. However, 2020 is not your average year (slight understatement there). But with people not upping sticks for the summer as freely as before, for those of us that are sweating in the city, we can at least take advantage of getting reservations at hotspots more easily.

In spite of the city feeling quieter than a church mouse, there's one place that has still proven very tricky when it comes to getting a table – that place is M0 de Movimiento. Tucked away on a rather inconspicuous street, it is the place to see and be seen. A claim that I'm sure will surpass just the summer season, and become a Chamberí cult classic.

The founders have put sustainability and social responsibility at the forefront of their business.



My organic aloe vera was served with a tonic hailing from Sevilla.

First things first, MO de Movimiento is not your bog standard restaurant serving up standard fare. What makes it unique in a saturated market (because let's face it, Madrid is not short on trendy places to *tapear*) is that **everything is organic and sourced from within Spain. They also hire staff who are at risk of social exclusion, and sustainability is one of their pillars.**

In all instances, the team at MO de Movimiento is working hard to find locally produced ingredients and not just paying lip service to the current trend to be hip, healthy and holistic. The menu has changed during the four visits that I've made (I told you it's become a real fave) and the always-adapting menu reflects which foods are available and in season.

Aside from the ethics of the restaurants being on point, it also helps that the food is downright delicious.

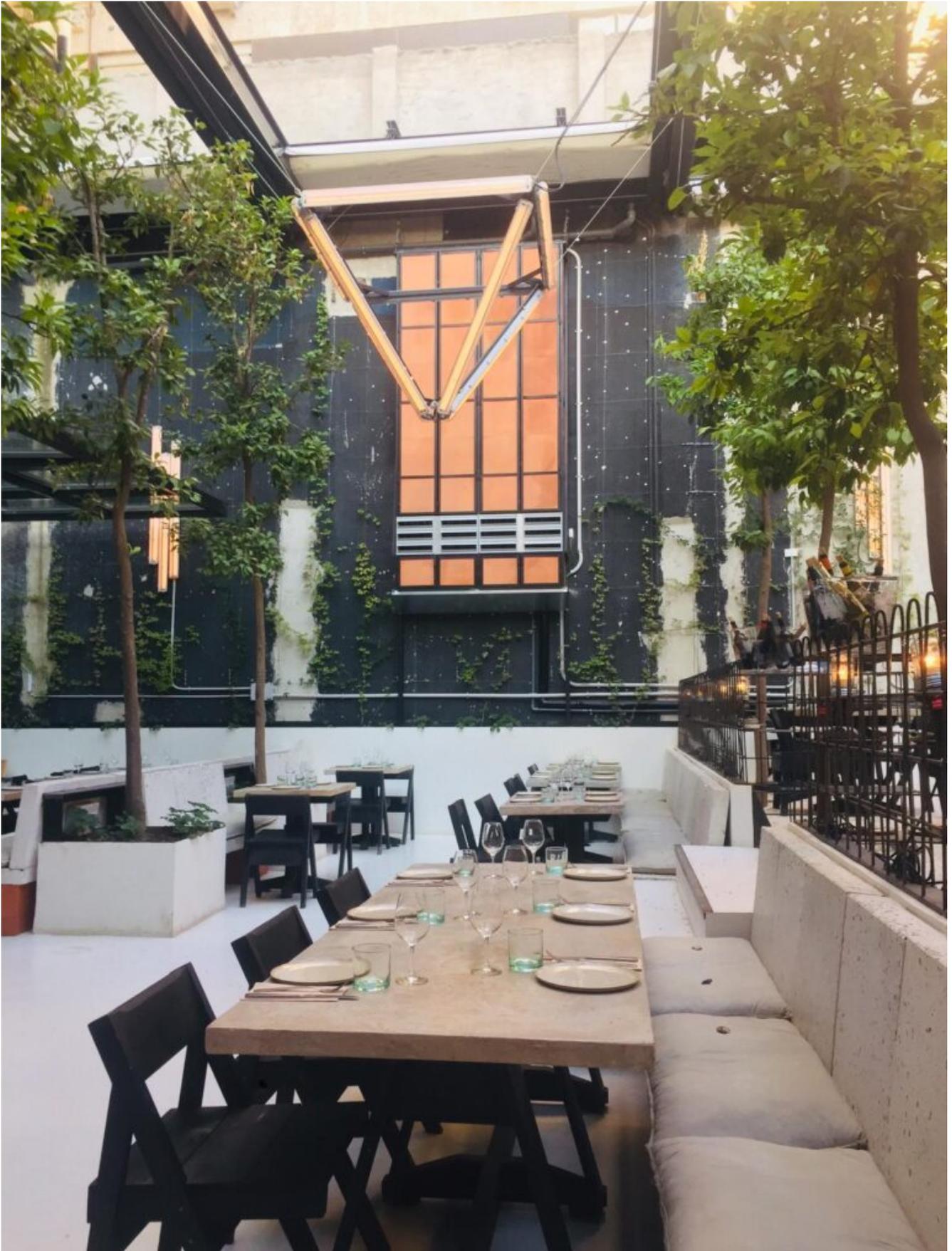


I'm slowly but surely working my way through all that's on offer. Current highlights include the sun-dried tomato and mozzarella ravioli which was wafer thin and melts in the mouth. As well as courgettes fritters which we had to order more of, to avoid a tussle at the table – they were that good.



However, on each visit I have tried a different pizza, and having just returned from Puglia in Italy the stakes were high. I can confirm that the pizzas were every bit as stunning as the decor (more of that later). Napoli-esque in style with soft doughy bases and a whole host of toppings (I plumped for asparagus and Serrano ham) my appetite happily satiated but still with room to sample their lip smackingly good tiramisu.

It's striking, like walking into a secret garden.



Now onto the decor. For someone who religiously pours over Architectural Digest, MO de Movimiento is a masterclass in

chic and understated style. You can dine out under the stars at their huge terrace, which captures that perfect golden-hour light. There's also a smaller area of the restaurant overlooking the talented chefs inside.

It is literally the perfect place to while away the hours in the heart (and the heat) of the city.



As I said, it does feel somewhat of a secret, irrespective of the burgeoning waitlist, which makes me almost reluctant to share this locale (*it's a short five-minute stroll from my flat). And I do worry that when the cat's fully out of the bag, its rapidly growing popularity is going to go through the roof.

Post lockdown I couldn't wait to dine out. Eager to dress up and enjoy the thrill of perusing a menu (and the pleasure of not washing up), MO de Movimiento didn't disappoint when it came to that inaugural dinner.

Set to become the darling of Madrid's dining scene, I suggest you make a booking before it's busier than the Bernabéu on match day *pre-lockdown life of course.

MO de Movimiento

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@modemovimiento](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Espronceda 34
- **Metros:** Ríos Rosas, Gregorio Marañón or Alonso Cano

By Cat Powell (IG: [@littlemissmadrid](#))

These pics were taken by Cat and by her friend Paul ([@pkear](#))