

San Ildefonso Market, Malasaña's new food palace

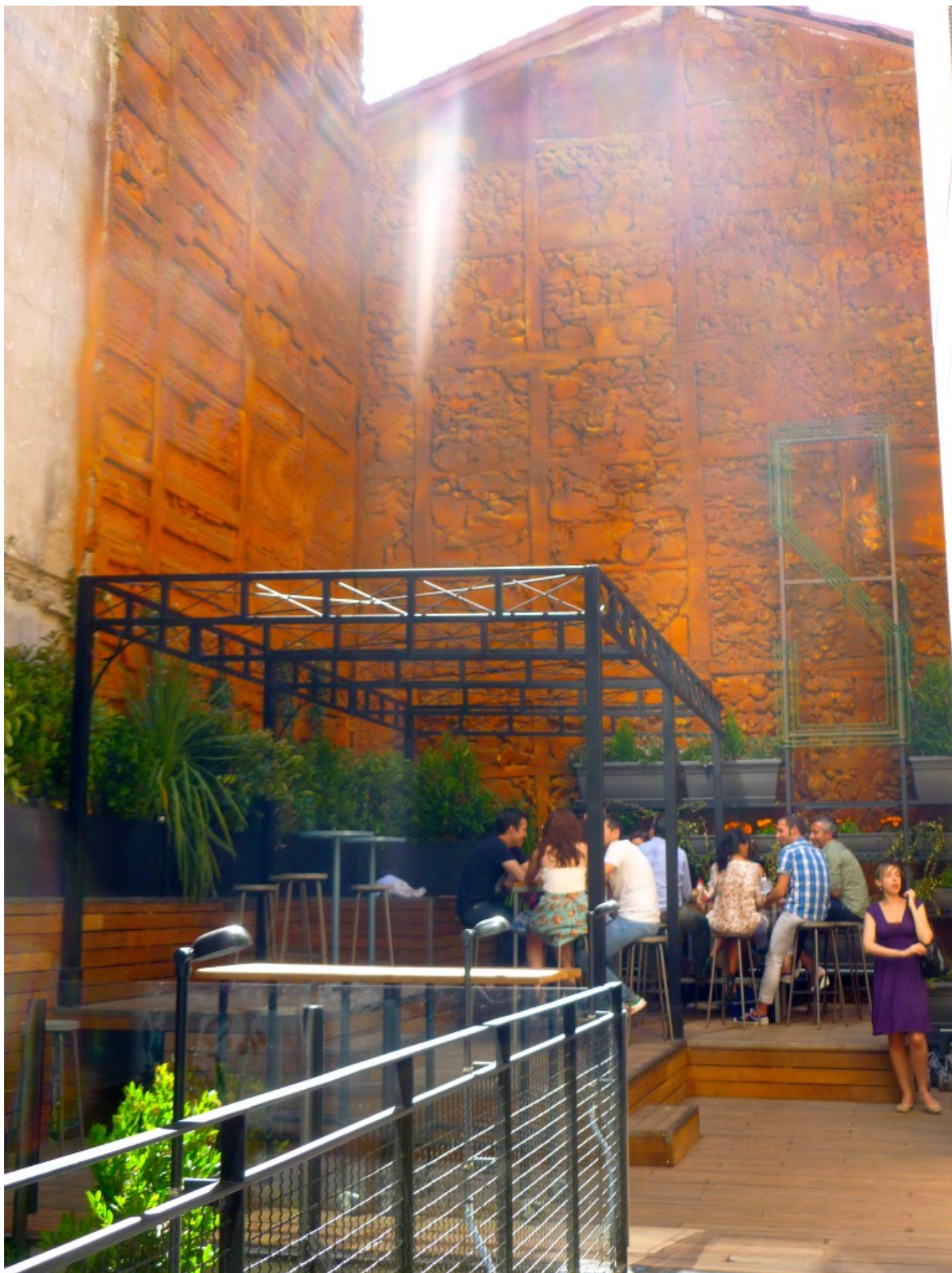
[Mercado del San Ildefonso](#), a three-story food emporium, has just opened on calle Fuencarral, 57, in Madrid's trendy area of **Malasaña**. Its open architecture and urban design are so cool that I think this market is already looking as good, if not better than Madrid's other amazing food markets—Mercado de San Antón and Mercado de San Miguel. Here's a look!

As you enter you find food stalls and a few stools. And then...





As you walk up to the second floor, you'll find a cozy outdoor seating area sandwiched between the market's neighbouring buildings.




On this floor you can delight in little food stalls serving up simple dishes, such as croquettes, meat skewers, seafood and

more. At the tables you can look up to see beams, lights and windows.

Va de Gamba

Le Croquetier

myVeg 

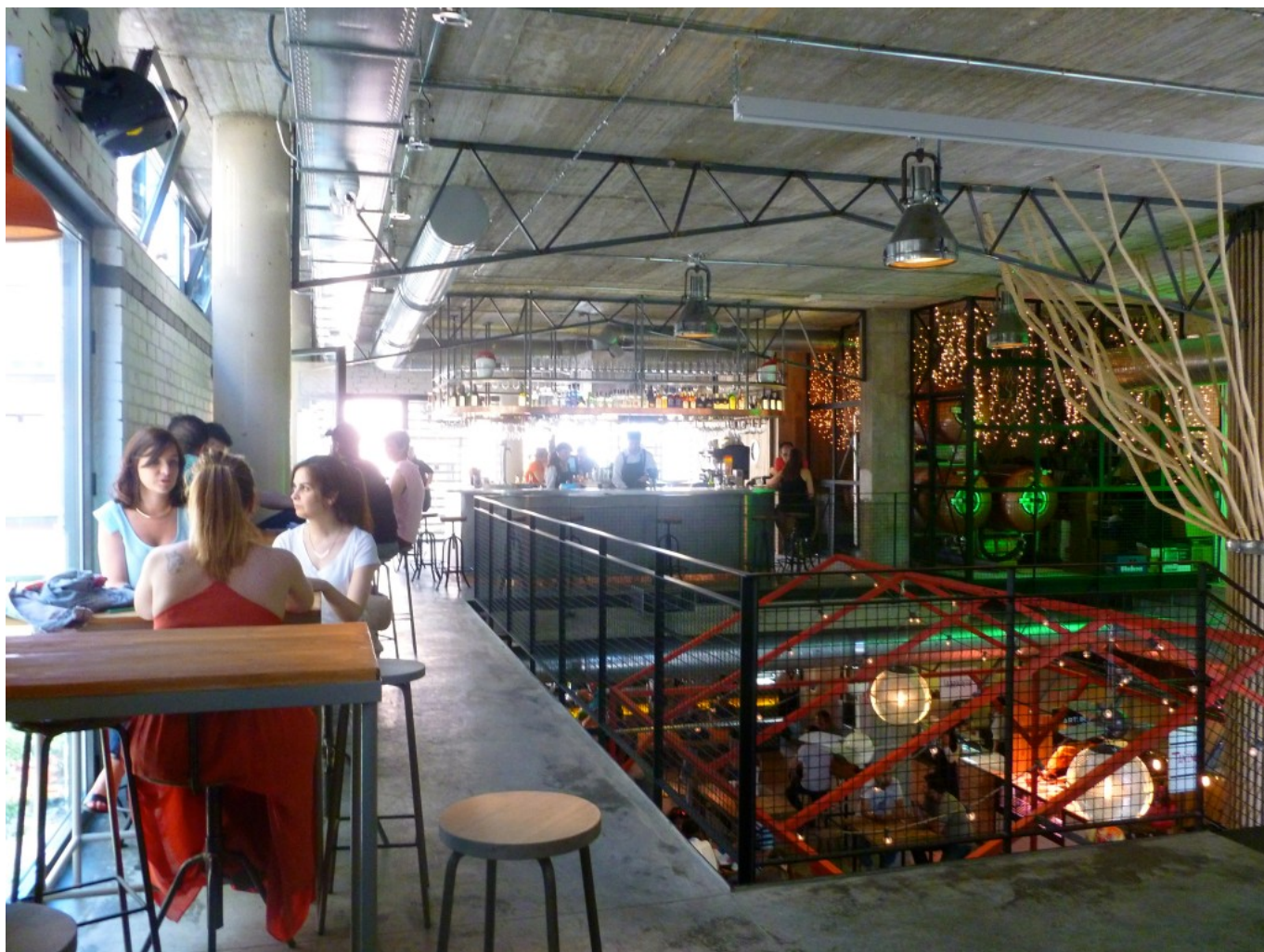
GRANJA
DP1
TAITE







On the top floor there's a full bar which also gives you views to the floors down below. You've just gotta go!



Here's the facade, since it's not as pretty on the outside, we've saved this photo for last...



[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Fuencarral, 57

Metro: Gran Vía and Tribunal

If you are into food, markets and eating outdoors, here are some other posts you might like:

- [Lavapiés and its market, the real food emporium](#)
- [Mercado de Motors, Madrid's coolest monthly market](#)
- [Madrid's best rooftop bars](#)
- [Beer state of mind in Madrid \(best craft beer\)](#)
- [Top 4 swimming pools](#)

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 Curiosity

As far as gift shops go, this one is quite original. At [Curiosity](#), 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 ☐

La Buena Cerveza, all things beer in Madrid

My first encounter with beer was many years ago (well, not too many). When I was a child in **Madrid**, I used to go to the **bar** with my dad to watch football and spend the afternoon

together. My father, an Englishman with a Spanish family, always said that I should get used to **beer** as soon as possible so I'd appreciate it better. To help me along, he would always pass me his glass and look away so that I could take a few sips, feeling like I was doing something wrong.



A few weeks ago, I was running late to meet up with friends at [Mercado de San Anton](#), when a little sign caught my attention: “*talleres de elaboración de cerveza*” (or in English, **homemade beer workshop**). Once again, as if I were a little boy, the feeling of doing something wrong popped into my head. My friends will have to wait, cause I’m going in!



Once I got through [La Buena Cerveza](#)’s door, I found Nacho across the shop, a **Madrileño** from **Vallecas** (a south-east neighbourhood of Madrid). As we started talking, he kindly offered me a cold *La Cibeles stout*—a **Spanish craft beer** from Madrid. As we drank, he told me he had always dreamt of opening a **beer shop** in the center of **Madrid**. In his dream shop, a customer could find not only 1,000 different kinds of beer , but also a place to taste and experience the deeply

cherished beverage.



At **La Buena Cerveza**, feel free to ask the owners to open up a beer for you from the fridge. Though it's not a bar, you're welcome to buy a beer and drink it there (for tasting purposes, obviously!)



Nacho and Manuel (brothers and co-founders of **La Buena Cerveza**) organize **beer tastings** every two weeks. They cost **15€** and include at least 5 different beers. Here you'll also find the reason why I first came in. For a reasonable price of **85€**, you can see yourself making your own beer in a seven-hour workshop. And if that's not enough, you can even make beer at your own home, and have them store it for you in the right conditions until it's good enough to drink!



If you're interested in going to the tasting but aren't comfortable with your Spanish just yet, get in touch with us and we can help out!

Address: c/ Pelayo 5

Metro: Chueca or Gran Vía

[Facebook](#)

Tlf 910060524





El Matadero, a slaughterhouse turned phenomenal cultural hub

If you're looking for something as impressive as the Prado or the Reina Sofia, but off-the-beaten-path, it's [El Matadero](#). The perfect place to spend a leisurely afternoon alone or with friends in Madrid, here you can calmly diddle daddle through a maze of **art exhibits** and **designer market stands**. Then, enjoy a *café con leche* or a cold Madrid brew outside. **El Matadero** has it all—from Spain's national dance company performances to international innovation conferences.

What is it?

Just a 10-minute subway ride from Sol, **El Matadero** is a culture/innovation hub and architectural treasure. The **former slaughterhouse** (hence, the name) is now a public-private entity offering book-readings, theater and music performances, photography exhibits and independent cinema on a nightly basis, most of which are **free**.



on día internacional de la danza, image from Matadero's Facebook page

Not to be compared with any other space in the city, **El Matadero** is an ambitious project and the fruit of a most innovative and modern Madrid. **This cultural center** also provides ongoing activities for families as well as a space for local innovators to develop their projects, all of which you can see while wandering through its enormous labyrinth of warehouses (naves) and open work spaces.



There are six **naves**, each used for a different purpose. For example, the **Nave Español** holds theater and dance performances. The **Cineteca** showcases international and independent film festivals. The **Música Nave** holds concerts and recording studios.



The **old oven** has now been usurped by the café, **La Cantina**, that sells locally produced food and wines, and has the kind of atmosphere that makes you want to stay forever. Plus, it has one of the **best terrazas** (outdoor seating areas) in all of Madrid, in my opinion at least.



When the weather's nice, my husband and I like to go there by bike; it's a breezy 30-minute ride from *Principe Pio* along Madrid's river (*Madrid Río*), which the city has done an amazing job of revamping. The river is now lined with bike and pedestrian paths, unique bridges, playgrounds (for grown-ups too!), street workout equipment, sprawling green zones and sprinkler areas. Plus it's a straight shot to **El Matadero**.



Last summer I took my sister, Amanda, from New York, to **El Matadero** for the whole afternoon. We first slipped into what used to be the slaughterhouse's fridge area, where an odd fire exhibit was being showcased. When we stepped out onto the courtyard, a group of flamenco dancers were *zapateando* (stomping) and smoking in a circle, getting ready to go on stage in the **Nave Español**. Then we parked ourselves at **La Cantina** for a glass of wine and a plate of delicious vegetable dishes made from **Madrid's local gardens**.

Amanda was amazed how all of this was so open to the public, and that it wasn't even packed. She said that if this were to be opened in Brooklyn, lines would be stretching to Queens.

History

El Matadero was built in the 1920s as a pig slaughterhouse, and was turned into a cultural center in 2006. When they renovated the slaughterhouse, the goal was to keep the original columns, the beams, the ovens and exterior structure in tact. For example, the first room you see on the left of the entrance used to be the freezer. Now it's an exhibition space. The dark, sinister feel makes you ponder what really went on in there. The interior was designed to be versatile and sustainable – most of the walls can be rolled away or folded up to make way for projects and events of all scale.

What to do?

Even if you're in Madrid for a few days, don't be intimidated by the amount of things going on. I highly recommend checking out their [activities list](#) (which is in English) or just stopping by to see the architecture and the vibe. As you stroll through the different spaces, you'll stumble upon anything from an indoor garden to a conference on new technology. Activities are open to the public in the afternoon, and you're free to walk around the plaza, find a nook to study in or have a drink at the café anytime.

What's new?

Since October 2013, El Matadero has its own independent market—[El Mercado Central de Diseño](#).



El Matadero's monthly market—[El Mercado Central de Diseño](#)—is one of Madrid's first design markets for entrepreneurs in the worlds of fashion, design and arts & crafts. During the two-day market, various free **music concerts** and **events** are put on as well, making it a **hot spot** to go with friends on the weekend!



Information:

El Matadero

Facebook

Where: Paseo de la Chopera 14 Metro: Legazpi (line 3, yellow)

Hours: Tuesday to Friday from 4pm to 10pm Saturday to Sunday from 11am to 10pm

Telephone: 915 17 73 09

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1

Madrid has **magnificent rooftop bars**, and you'll find them perched atop unexpected places. Here's round one of my favorites. What's more, all of these places are within **walking distance** from one another, so you could turn this list into a **rooftop bar crawl** if you had the whole day to spend atop

buildings, watching the sky change colors. Here's a list of Madrid's best rooftop bar.



Image from Gau&Café's Facebook page

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars

1. Gau&Café: on top of a university

Considered one of [8 Hidden Gems in Madrid](#) by the Guardian newspaper, this rooftop bar truly deserves **first place** on my list. Tucked away on a side street in **Lavapiés**, Gau&Cafe rests atop one of UNED University's historic campus buildings. As you enter the university and walk up four flights of stairs, you'd never imagine that [Gau&Café](#) would be so chic, inviting and beautiful—you'd never even know it was there. The space is divided into two sections: one for drinks, and one for dinner. In the drink section, you can order a delicious **8€ hamburger**.

If you're looking for a sit-down dinner, do [make a reservation](#) (the [menu](#) features lots of local, seasonal products, namely *zucchini*, *cous cous*, *eggplant* and *hummus dishes*).

[Address](#): *c/ Tribulete 14, 4th floor*

[Metro](#): *Lavapiés*

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)



2. Casa de Granada: on top of a residential building

At home in the sky, this **rooftop bar** holds a special place in my heart as it will always be the first rooftop I ever went to in Madrid. **Casa de Granada** is essentially a regular **Spanish restaurant**, situated on a roof that has outdoor seating and an

enclosed area. Nibble on traditional **Spanish dishes** as you look out on Madrid's short-story buildings, plazas, and terracotta-tiled roofs. You may also catch women hanging clothes out to dry and maybe even listen in on the neighbour's telephone conversation. Although **Casa de Granada** has recently renovated, it's maintained its nonchalant style which is what makes it fun. When it comes to food, you should stick to the **Spanish staples**—*croquetas, huevos rotos, pimientos de padrón, calamares*, you name it.

Address: *c/ del Doctor Cortezo, 17, 6th floor*

Metro: *Tirso de Molina or Sol*

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)



3. Mercado de San Antón: on top of a gourmet market

This **gourmet market** is the hipper version of its uber-upscale pedestrian competitor, *Mercado de San Miguel*. In other words, **Mercado de San Antón** is infinitely cooler and more enjoyable. First of all, it's in Chueca (enough said). Secondly, it has three floors and therefore much more seating area. And then there's a stunning **rooftop bar**, perfect for people-watching! What's more, the rooftop bar's prices are reasonable; a glass of wine costs the same as at any other bar on street level. So why not pop up to the roof and have your drink there? Sometimes they have free live music too.

Address: C/ Augusto Figueroa 24, 3rd floor

Metro: Chueca

[Facebook](#)



4. Tartan Roof: on top of **Círculo de Bellas Artes** (Fine Arts Building)

The sky is the canvas atop this fine arts institution. Overlooking the *Castellana* and *Plaza de Cibeles*, and perched on top of the exquisite *Circulo de Bellas Artes* building, it's no wonder why [Tartan Roof](#) has the most breathtaking views out of all on this list. For 3€, anyone can go up to the roof to have a look. The fee is waved if you have **dinner reservations** (an absolute must). My friend's earlier post says it all [here](#). This is also a really popular place for cocktails, though slightly expensive, you're paying for the view, not the drink itself. The first time I went to this roof was on **Día de la Música** (Music Day). The **Azotea** (rooftop) was participating by holding a free swing and tap dance performance. It was incredible to be up there looking out on Madrid's skyline.

Address: c/ Alcalá 42

Metro: Banco de España or Sevilla

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

If you're looking for more, here's [Madrid's best rooftops, Round 2](#) and [Round 3](#)!

And feel free to let us know about your

favorite Madrid rooftop bars!

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 5E , 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 old-fashioned Bar Barroso isn't going anywhere!



the "ecological" fruit seller

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*
-

La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café and bar with art exhibits, movie nights and Chema...

As you walk through [La Paca](#)'s door, you feel like you're in the right place. This **funky café in Malasaña** is always a good choice when you're in the mood for a coffee, a beer, or something stronger.



La Paca's facade on calle Valverde in Malasaña (image from [Facebook](#))

La Paca is divided into two areas: the ground bears a worn-out floor from a different time period, when the place used to be a family's house. **Vintage furniture** from every single corner of Spain fills the room: old sofas, lamps, Galician mirrors, and bird-cages. **La Paca's** owner is an antique collector who travels across Spain in pursuit of treasure troves. You can find his finest pieces either sold at his **vintage store** [La Republicana](#), or displayed at La Paca.



funky furniture at La Paca

One step up and you'll find **Chema**, the star bartender and the man who runs the show. As I say in Spanish, he's "**un terremoto de felicidad**" (an earthquake of happiness). Working alongside Chema is his sister, **Vero**, who's also the perfect host. Feel free to ask them both about the place and their drinks.

La Paca's menu has different types of tea and coffee served with cakes (carrot, cheese or *couland* which is an oozy chocolate muffin-type cake), and *bizcocho* (pound or sponge cake). If you're looking for a drink, they also have a wide collection of **craft beers** (made from Madrid breweries) on tap, **wines** and **cocktails**.

In this quintessential **Malasaña café**, you've also got to try their **tortilla de patatas** (homemade Spanish omelet), it is my favourite!



my favorite tapa at La Paca

Another feature that makes **La Paca** so special is its **events**. On Wednesdays at 9pm, they have **free movie night downstairs**. They prepare the room in a way that reminds me of a **movie night** at a friend's house; sofas and people scattered about with no order whatsoever (plus the popcorn is also free!). I went last Wednesday and saw **Kill Bill I**, and the week before they had shown **Taxi Driver** (in Spanish with no subtitles).



free movie nights on Wednesdays at La Paca in Malasaña (image from [Facebook](#))

On Thursdays, **La Paca** holds **acoustic music performances**, making room for **up and coming Spanish artists**. Although Wednesday movie nights and Thursday concerts are held regularly, La Paca showcases several other events such as theater performances, **independent markets**, English classes, clown shows, and **art exhibitions**. In fact, when it comes to **art exhibits**, they're booked until 2016!



Theater performance at La Paca (image from [Facebook](#))

What I like most about **La Paca**'s events is the way they're set up. Last time I was there, I ended up sharing a few beers with **Chema** and **Vero**, and I asked them how they make money from their events. Their answer was as simple as it was nice: **they just want to help people from the neighborhood**. If you have a **creative project** and you need a place to start, you shouldn't think twice about getting in touch with them.

Shhh..... today is Wednesday night and **the movie** is about to start!

La Paca

[Facebook](#)

Address: c/ Valverde 36

Metro: Gran Vía or Tribunal

Adelita Market, sell and buy second-hand treasures

Last weekend I finally got to sell the mountain of clothes that I love but just never wear. Out of the blue, a friend called me up and said I could share a stand with her on Sunday at [Adelita Market](#), a second-hand market that takes place every month in a cultural center in Malasaña, called [Espiritu 23](#) (named after its address), with lots of events and collaborative projects going on all the time.

I had shopped at **Adelita Market** many times, because I have a thing for **second-hand clothes** (it's love, really). After digging through baskets and racks, I've always been able to find great items there, especially one time where I really hit the jackpot—a girl who was a fashion designer was emptying out her wardrobe and she was my size. I paid 20E for a bag full of clothes that I could now not live without.



Anyone can purchase a stand at **Adelita Market**, either for two days (**60E**) or for one day (**35E**), and you're welcome to share the stand with a friend to split the cost. So if you have a bunch of clothes you're looking to pass on, this is the place to do it. It's also one of the best places **to shop for second-hand clothes in Madrid**. Unlike cities such as New York and London, good quality and cheap thrift shops are hard to come by here.



Since I'd always been the one buying and not selling, here's what my first experience on the other side of **Adelita Market** was like:

I arrived on Sunday at 10am with three suitcases, and two huge bags overflowing with stuff. I set up the stand in the basement with my friend, Sol, who also had loads to offer. She brought the clothing racks, hangers and baskets (the center doesn't provide you with anything but the space). She also bought a folding screen so that people could try on clothes behind it.



As soon as the market opened to the public at 11am, it was non-stop **selling** and **bargaining** all day long. It was actually really fun and exciting, and even nerve-racking. We had no idea if we were going to sell anything or not. Not to mention, price-wise, it's not so easy to know what people will pay for **used clothing items**.

Fortunately, our stand was really successful, partly because of our portable dressing room, and partly because we engaged with every person we caught peering through our items. We held up our best dresses and leather boots, showed them off, and told people they looked great in them. It worked!

We didn't get out of there until 9pm. Good thing for the stand selling quiche and coffee. And I must say, it felt like I had only been there an hour. The time just flew.



Whether or not you want to get a stand, or just browse through **second-hand goods**, Adelita Market is great. Some of the vendors are rookies, like me, and some have been doing this for years and have racked up great collections. You're bound to find something amidst the labyrinth of stands, and even if you don't, you'll be in Malasaña so you can grab a beer right afterwards.

In the photo below, the lady standing on the left is wearing the **Swedish Hasbeens boots** that I sold her for 10E!



Check out their [Facebook page](#) where they announce the dates.

Adelita Market:

Hours: **12am-9pm**

When: **one weekend per month (usually both Sat and Sun, but it's best to check out their Facebook page for specific times and dates)**

Address: **c/ Espiritu Santo, 23**

Metro: **Noviciado/Tribunal**

*They've also started to hold Adelita Market in Majadahonda. See dates on FB page.

Mercado de Motores, Madrid's coolest market

Toot toot! Old trains mixed with vintage clothes and hot dogs.

Once a month, [El Mercado de Motores](#) (meaning the Engine Market) takes over an old train museum in downtown Madrid for a **unique flea market experience**. Independent collectors and designers set up vintage stands right alongside Madrid's old trains, creating a mix of 20th century charm with cluttered treasure madness.

As you walk along the platform, amidst the stands you'll find handmade leather shoes, vintage jewellery, funky upholstered arm chairs, quirky lamp shades, and much more. The market started out as a community-led effort to popularize second-hand goods. Now it sells everything from current designer items, chic furniture, rare art and even retro pieces, plus it also offers tons of **outstanding food, a happening outdoor space, and free live music**.





One of the other highlights of the market is its **outdoor ambience**. On a sunny day, it's such a nice place to eat outside with friends and family. Sample from all types of food stalls, some selling regional Spanish dishes such as **paella** and **fabada** (Asturian white bean stew), others selling **sandwiches**, **hamburgers** and **hot dogs**, and find a place to sit.

Here's when you should start to linger and enjoy the ambience, listening to live music as it spontaneously comes on.





My friends always get the **hamburgers** or **hot dogs**, as is tradition at an outdoor market. But I love the ***bocadillos de jamón serrano*** with a glass of **red wine** in a plastic cup. That's my favorite outdoor treat.





After eating through fideau (a traditional noodle dish from Valencia) and finishing your beer or **Asturian cider**, feel free to move on to the **cocktails**. Don't hold back.

And grab a gelato on your way out, or hop on a new bike!



Mercado de Motores gets packed to the brim, as it caters to whole families and hipsters alike. So I highly recommend going on *off* hours, such as 11am or right after lunch, around 4pm. Or just be prepared for a huge crowd.

Mercado de Motores:

Where: Paseo de las delicias, 61

Metro: Delicias

When: one weekend (Sat & Sun) per month, check out their [Facebook](#) page

Hours: 11:00-22:00