

Mercadillo Lisboa: A fun Portuguese snack bar in Mercado San Fernando

Brand-new Portuguese eatery Mercadillo Lisboa was waiting for the right moment to join the *mercado* scene until, six weeks ago, just in time for Tapapiés, it finally opened up in the best spot in [Mercado San Fernando](#). Enter through the main doors, head straight to the middle and turn right – they're there next to the fun bar Sondelata, which sells blue wine and carrot cava.

Mercadillo Lisboa is owned and run by three pals – two from Lisbon and one from the Canary Islands. Only two of them are in this photo because the other is camera-shy – he hid around the corner.

This is a great place to get authentic Portuguese food, from a variety of quiches and the classic *Pastéis de Belém*, to *empanadas*, *arancini* and everything *bacalao*. Here are a few photos of their snack food, very proudly displayed by the jolliest of the three musketeers:



Vegetarian spinach quiche



There are lots of quiches here



Empanadas and cod croquettes



Arancini



Strawberry cheesecake (wow)

You can also buy a selection of Portuguese beers and wines (including *vinho verde*), plus an almond liqueur (*licor de amêndoa*) specially driven over from Portugal by the guy on the right. I bought their last bottle a couple of weeks ago and with it came this story – suddenly €12 seemed like an absolute steal. You'll be glad to know that they've since been back to Portugal and brought another few bottles for us, but get it while you can – or I will!



Lots of Portuguese wines and liqueurs



A selection of Portuguese beers

Pull up a chair at Mercadillo Lisboa or mingle in its sphere of influence with a *vinho verde* and a *bocadillo de bacalao*. And just so you know, you'll probably bump into me.

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** C/ Embajadores, 41
- **Metro:** Lavapiés/Embajadores

Opening hours:

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

La Latina's 'seafood party' in Mercado de La Cebada: The place to see and be seen!

Mercados are the heart and soul of any Spanish city. If you want to get under the skin of the place you're visiting, make a beeline for the city's biggest food market. Wander around each section (meat, vegetables, fish, etc.) and you will instantly see what the region's all about. Then make your way to the *mercado's* busiest bar, order what everyone else is drinking and demand your rightful complimentary *tapa*. If it's something you've never clapped eyes on, even better.



La Latina's [Mercado de la Cebada](#) is no exception. The place encapsulates Spanish culture to almost cliché levels: **the heart and soul of Madrid is right here.**



Every weekday, [Mercado de la Cebada](#) will sell you fresh produce from all over Spain. There's also a good selection of local bars in the labyrinth of alleys both upstairs and downstairs, and even a few clothes stalls, toyshops and cobblers for some of the market's more devout punters.



But then, every Saturday at lunchtime, [Mercado de la Cebada](#) transforms into what I will describe as nothing less than a **seafood party**.





The atmosphere is electric; iced molluscs and pulpo are flowing, and groups of friends doing what they do best:

sharing food and belly-laughing, plastic cup of valdepeñas in one hand, half-eaten shrimp in the other.





Grab a few friends and get there **no later than 2:30pm**. Find one of the aproned chaps hovering in front of his stall, affectionately touching everyone with his fishy hands, and place your order per *ración* or by weight.



Before you take your polystyrene plates to the nearest paper-covered stack of crates, don't forget to pick up your **complimentary bottle of wine or cans of beer. Yeah... COMPLIMENTARY!** Due to licensing rules, these shops can't sell drinks. I imagine there's a slight markup on the prices of seafood but, having said that, **the prices are some of the lowest I've seen in Madrid, and the quality is some of the best.**

There are cups, serviettes, toothpicks and mussel 'spives' (spoon-knives) strategically strewn around the stalls – a seafood spectacular with no frills, and all the better for it.

Info

[Web](#) – [Facebook](#)

Address: Plaza de la Cebada, La Latina, 28005

Metro: La Latina (right outside)

Opening hours: Mon – Fri 9am-2pm / 5-8:30pm; Sat 9am-3pm

Another soulful neighbourhood market, not too far away, is [Mercado de San Fernando in Lavapiés](#)

Stunning Local Olive Grove Tour, in English! – Proyecto Los Aires

In 2013, biologists **Guillermo and Laura** – Spain's newest generation of **olive farmers** – took over the family business and embarked on an innovative mission: to connect the local countryside with the city of Madrid and make farming a **sustainable way of life** once again.

How it all started:

Over a century ago, in a small town in the region of **Toledo**, Guillermo's great grandfather planted his first grove of around 200 olive trees, and between the evenly spaced olive saplings grew rows of sun-drenched grapevines.

A hundred odd years later, only the footprints of the old

vines are visible, but the olive trees have grown beautifully gnarled and twisted, with silver miniature leaves and shiny hard fruit, ready for the annual harvest of some of the tastiest **organic extra virgin olive oil** in Spain.



The centenarian olive trees

Guillermo and Laura's story:

Olive farming has been in both of their families for generations, inspiring them to study biology at university, which is where they met. From early on, they drew sketches on scraps of paper illustrating grand ambitions to re-bond our booming capital with its rural backyard, enthusiastically telling anyone who will listen about the genius that is the organic farming ecosystem (it's genius).

By mid 2014, their dream had gathered enough steam for them to **quit their jobs** and make [Proyecto Los Aires](#) their life, and for being in the midst of an **economic depression**, it's incredible how much they've already achieved.

The tour:

On Saturday, we headed out to their stunning olive grove in **Arcicóllar**, about an hour south of Madrid. When we arrived, we met up with our fellow tour buddies and set off on our educational meander through the olive trees.

Guillermo and Laura led us around their oldest plot and explained the **process of creating olive oil**: from planting and harvesting to filtering and bottling. Their scientific angle on the entire practice is fascinating, but I won't say any more – the oohs and aahs are all part of the fun!



The walking tour begins



Taking a closer look at the trees

After the walking tour (and tanning opportunity), we sat down at a shaded table nestled idyllically among the centenarian trees. It was time for the **tasting**. This involved professionally sampling several olive oils in little blue glass cups, and learning how to tell the difference between generic **supermarket oil** and **top-quality organic oil** such as theirs.

And then came the food and wine. Through local connections and friends and family, Guillermo and Laura brought together a plethora of **Iberian foodie gems** for us to eat. A *mercado* on a table came to mind, and our tour companions' similarly delighted reactions included lots of "mmm"s and "oh my God"s and jokey squabbles over who liked the **pumpkin morcilla** most. We chatted, talking about Guillermo and Laura's endeavours as well as our own, then gratefully accepted Guillermo's offer of

a top-up of wine to accompany our final wander through the trees (and take a few grove-selfies). Finally, we had the opportunity to buy some of the delicious products we tasted that day.



The tasting (and eating and drinking)



The quaintest little market stall in the world

After an **eye-opening and mouth-watering experience**, we said our goodbyes to the lovely Guillermo and Laura and hopped on the bus back to Madrid, desperate to get the word out to you!

The project explained:

[Proyecto Los Aires](#) aims to **promote local agriculture** by running **educational tours & tastings** on their farm and forging a direct link between urban consumers and the rural economy. Their oil (Los Aires Extra Virgin Olive Oil) can be found in **gourmet shops** such as Oleoteca Murúa at [Mercado San Antón](#). Guillermo and Laura also regularly sell their oil in **markets across Madrid** such as [Mercado de Motores](#), [Mercado Central de Diseño](#), [Nómada Market](#) and [Gastro Market](#). Next time you're there, **go and say hello!**



Los Aires olive groves

How to get there:

The **meeting point** for the tour is the bus stop in the town of **Arcicóllar** (see location [here](#)). Regular buses (see timetable [here](#)) will get you there from Madrid's **Méndez Alvaro** bus station in **just over an hour**. If you're driving, it takes around **50 minutes** from central Madrid.

Details & Contact Info:

Tours run **year-round** on **any day of the week or weekend** and must be booked at least **48 hours in advance**.

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

The website is in English and Spanish! For more information about the tour, pricing, and to book, click [here](#).

Gastro Market at la Industrial II

Spend your weekend tasting quality organic products and browsing through artisan crafts at the new edition of Gastro Market in [La Industrial](#) in Malasaña. At this new gastronomic marketplace, you'll get to enjoy both local and international products.

Diferente Market – Christmas Pop-up Market in Malasaña

Madrid's most popular Spanish blog – [Madrid Diferente](#) – is breaking away from the internet for the first time to throw a Christmas pop-up market that will take place on December 11-14 and 18-21 in Malasaña. I expect it to be very cool...

Madrid's Best Christmas Markets 2014!

Madrid's *navideño* spirit is as bright and festive as in any other European capital. Rows of lights down Paseo de la Castellana, *chocolate con churros* on New Year's Day, the Three

Kings' parade... But before all that, there are the Christmas markets setting up all over the city and stocking their stalls with handcrafted wares, jewelry, gourmet delicacies and [unique gift ideas](#) from independent designers. Here are some of the **best Christmas markets** to mark in your calendars and flock to when you start your holiday shopping:

The Hovse:



image from [el club express](#)



image from [La Vermutería](#)

For the curious and nosy ones out there, an excuse to peek into a beautiful Madrileño home seems too good to be true. After the success of last year's pop-up market, 'The Apartment', this year brings '[The Hovse](#)' – one house, three floors, and 80 designers selling one-of-a-kind creations. There's also a bar on the top floor run by pop-up [La Vermuteria](#) – a great excuse for those who aren't into shopping but want to tag along anyway. Now open until 24 December.

Calle General Arrando 40

Check out our [events page](#) for more details.

Mercado de Motores:



Hosted in the old train museum, 'Museo de Ferrocarril', this market takes place in between old tracks and steam engines. Vintage clothing, a live band, artisanal products and trendy crowds are all to be found. The next and last running weekend for this market is the 20-21 December.

Paseo de las Delicias 61

Also check out our full post on [Mercado de Motores](#)

Nomada Market:







There is something of a recent trend in transforming train stations into markets. [Nomada](#) is a great place to find original creations and craftsmanship from emerging designers, alongside DIY workshops; all below the glass ceiling of Madrid's Chamartin train station. Pull out the sweater Grandma gave you last year and join in on National Ugly Christmas Sweater day for the market's funniest [Christmas edition](#), which only lasts for a few days. 12-14 December.

Attic of Estacion de Chamartin, Calle Agustín de Foxa

Check out our [events page](#) for more details.

La Industrial:



A tiny market in comparison to the rest, but a great place to hunt for gifts you won't find anywhere else. From hand-made bags printed with the map of the world to note books bound in Japanese origami paper, this Malasaña market is not one to miss when shopping for that quirky, special friend. Throughout December.

Calle San Andres 8

Ciento y Pico:



image from [Ciento y Pico](#)

Now in its fifth year, Ciento y Pico unites over 30 small, local brands under one roof to sell their handmade crafts, original jewelry, vintage goods, or home decor worthy of any hipster's haven. 18 – 21 December

Calle Velarde 14

Madrid Diferente:



One of Madrid's most established city-guide blogs is branching out into retail and hosting its own **Christmas pop-up**. With the name 'Diferente Market' we can only imagine that it will be stocked full of curious knick-knacks and unusual gift items. It will run over two weekends: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

Calle San Vicente Ferrer 33

1001 Atmosphaera:

Le marché de Noël

VENTA ESPECIAL DISEÑADORES Y CREADORES
CAMPAÑA DE NAVIDAD

27, 28, 29 Y 30 NOVIEMBRE
C/ General Pardiñas, 50
Madrid

Jueves de 17:00h a 21:00h
Viernes y sábado de 11:00h a 21:00h
Domingo de 11:00h a 15:00h



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✧ MOLÉ MOLÉ ✧ NAÏVE ✧ NINAS VINTAGE ✧ ÔH MY COLLECTION ✧
✧ PEPPERONI BAND ✧ PETITSUI ✧ POSTCARD ✧ SAYAN ✧ SIETE PECAS ✧
✧ TABATA GLAM ✧ THE MUST HAVE ✧ TIENDAS BY GIFT ✧
✧ TRES SIETE ✧ VINTAGE ✧ VOLVORETA CLOSET ✧

✧ EL RINCÓN DEL PIRINEO ✧ MA PETITE CREPERIE ✧

 fashion

COLUMNA
ZERO

it-girl by María Cuervo

 manirid

LUSSTRA

The pop-up gallery, [1001 Atmosfera](#), is holding three high-end Christmas Market editions. The first **Le Marché de Noël** will be held this weekend 27-30 November in honor of Black Friday! Among over 90 participating vendors, you'll find designer handbags, shoes, accessories and more from brands such as Eme-Ele, Letter&U and Molé Molé, as well as gourmet food stalls from the likes of [Ma Petite Creperie](#), BorchCakes and El Rincón del Pirineo. Don't worry if you can't make it out this weekend, because the market will return for two weekends in December: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

Calle General Pardiñas, 50

Plaza Mayor:



Image from [Blog Es Madrid](#)

One of the oldest and most well-known Christmas markets in the Spanish capital, we couldn't forgo mentioning it. Wooden huts take over Madrid's most prominent square for a month to sell Christmas decorations, live trees, costumes and the elaborate Spanish nativity scenes. Worth a stroll through the crowds,

even if it's just for a bit of contagious holiday buzz. 28 November – 31 December

Plaza Mayor

Plaza Jacinto Benavente:

Also known as the “Christmas Card Market” this mercadillo is best known for, what else, its elaborate Christmas cards, among other handicrafts. Traditional “casetas” are set up throughout the square to mimic a medieval town and there's also a bar serving not-so-traditional, crowd-pleasing mojitos. 28 November – 6 January

Plaza Jacinto Benavente

Navidad en Oriente:

This “Feria Dulces de Navidad” sets up shop in front of the Royal Opera House and sells sweet Spanish delicacies. Turrón lovers rejoice! Right next to it is also an ice rink, which opens every holiday season with a view of the Royal Palace. 28 November – 6 January

Plaza de Oriente

by Ardena González from [a wanderer's path](#) blog

If you're looking for unique gift ideas from Madrid, make sure to check out our post, Best Gifts from Madrid, and our Naked Madrid Events Page to find out

about other markets and fun things going on in the city!

Dating in Madrid for Foodies, part 3

Covered some art, some nice trees and parks but really **you are a foodie deep down inside**. If your stomach is empty you are not going anywhere except for the next all-you-can-eat buffet. The route is a collection of little restaurants to enjoy the tapas culture that exists in Madrid. Not going to beat around the bush, **this is my preferred type of date**. I love food and talking about food. It is also nearly impossible to not talk about food, what food your mother always cooked or what local delicacies freaked out your foreign friends the first time you told them the recipe.

This route is also the most flexible and varied. I have named some of **my favourite restaurants** below, which I have visited frequently and allow for some bites to eat without having to order the coffee and dessert. Go for **3 relatively different restaurants**, not only makes it more exciting for your taste buds but it will give you a lot more to talk about. Now it might seem strange to invite someone to 3 different restaurants rather than just have the 3 courses at one.

However, we don't want this to be a regular run of the mill date; this has to be more memorable and make you change from place to place. Plus it makes splitting the bill so much less awkward as you can pay the first bill, your date then gets the next and dessert will be handled by the organiser. After all, if you make it to dessert you will want to leave a good

impression.

ACT ONE. The Starter. Naïf.



Image from [Naïf's FB](#)

[Naïf in Calle San Joaquin 16](#) <m> Tribunal

This restaurant, just like your attitude to the first date, is understated and cool; not trying too hard to impress and it has a terrace. You will want to ask the waiter to put you on the waiting list if the terrace is full. For extra brownie points you will do this 10 minutes before you expect your date to arrive so you already have a table waiting for him/her. The starters I recommend would be the **mini hamburgers** (that arrive multicoloured) as well as **the hummus**. All the starters are very nice and not too large. One quick warning—please do not order the white wine, as me and my friends have never had a positive experience. **Red wine** and **Tinto de Verano** (red wine mixed with lemonade) are both great alternatives.



Image from [Nanai's FB](#)

Alternative: [Nänai in Calle Barco 26](#) <m> Tribunal

No terrace but also has a very alternative, understated and cool interior to start your date. Have 7 dishes to share with the **tztaziki**, **cheese selection** and **hummus**, all ideal choices to start the dinner experience. This bar will be exhibiting different works of art in their restaurant during the month.

ACT TWO: The Main Course. Olé Lola or Mercado de San Anton

Honestly both options are just as great. It depends on what you want for your date, if you prefer some intimacy then choose **Olé Lola** if you prefer variety and greater stimulus of the senses choose the **Mercado** (which has a great rooftop bar).



Image from Olé Lola on [google](#)

[Olé Lola in Calle de San Mateo 28](#) <m> Tribunal & Alonso
Martínez

This restaurant/bar is a very popular place on weekends so try to arrive a little earlier than 21h. The brilliant reason to go to this restaurant is how the chefs are fusing the traditional Spanish kitchen with more contemporary elements, my favourite being the **duck breast served with a puree of pear and pistachio**. The dishes range between €6 – 14 and are not too large in size to miss out on dessert. Adding the good selection of wines on offer, this restaurant boasts many advantages. Yet this still isn't the best reason to visit. The interior of **Olé Lola** makes it very easy for couples to have a little privacy. Small tables all situated one after another means you don't have someone left or right listening in on your conversation.



[Mercado de San Anton in Calle de Augusto Figueroa 24](#) <m>
Chueca

Here you have the hustle and bustle of a market with everyone looking for the right tapas to suit their appetite. The choice of food is enormous and if you are unsure of your date's culinary likes and dislikes, then this is the safer choice. Plus it is exciting; you can start with some sushi, move onto a **burrata** (mozzarella), head to a **salmon sandwich** and finish with **jamón**. The different stalls on the 2nd floor offer a great variety and it also induces some energy, as you have to get up off the table.

FINAL ACT. Dessert.



Image from [La Cocina de mi Vecina's FB](#)

[La cocina de mi vecina in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo](#)
[15](#) <m> Tribunal

Our final destination is specifically geared towards delicious cakes, brownies and cookies. The **carrot cake** is one of the best that I have had in Madrid and all cakes are homemade. The service is friendly and helpful to make a recommendation if you can't choose.



Image from [Greek&Shop's FB](#)

Alternative: [Greek&Shop in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo 9](#) <m> Tribunal

This Greek delicacy shop offers a brilliant Greek nut tart or *kataifi*, also a Greek dessert made of nuts and cream. The shop is a mix between a take away and a sit-down shop, so sitting inside is an experience in itself.

If you've missed them, here's "Madrid Best Date Ideas", the series, [part 1](#) and [part 2](#)