Sahuaro: Mexican magic in the heart of Madrid

Hecho en México. That's the slogan of this brand new eatery located right in the historic heart of the city, in La Latina's Plaza de Cascorro.

If you've spent any time in the homeland of the Aztecs, the Mayas, and the michelada, you've probably already fallen in love. Mexico is a country of rich history, cultural diversity, and undeniably delicious food. A couple of years ago I spent a summer living in the rural part of the Yucatán peninsula, and I still dream about it to this day… especially the tortillas.

No, I'm not talking about the egg and potato variety (although those have a special place in my heart as well). And don't give me any of those floppy flour burrito wrappers. I'm talking about fresh tortillas made from corn, water, and salt.

That’s it.

Look at that bundle of pure, corn-based joy.

Sahuaro’s got ’em. As soon as I saw the basket of tortillas arrive at the table, lined with a linen cloth and covered to keep in the warmth, I knew this place was the real deal.

But I’m getting ahead of myself. As soon as we sat down we dealt with the primary priorities: drinks and guacamole. Sahuaro’s drink menu is one of the most exciting things I’ve read in a while. They offer frozen margaritas and classic mojitos for just €3.90, with a choice of strawberry, tamarind, guava, and passion fruit flavors. There are also several other options for under €6, including tropical cocktails and several variations on the iconic michelada (beer with lime juice and spices).

Passion fruit mojito and frozen margarita, with a guest appearance by guacamole

Every self-respecting Mexican establishment offers guacamole; but few do it as well as Sahuaro. They serve it right in the avocado skin, atop a mountain of crunchy *totopos* (corn chips). It’s the perfect blend of avocado, salt, olive oil, and lime, proving that good guacamole doesn’t need to be fancy—just fresh. We were also brought a selection of four sauces with varying levels of spiciness. Each one was unique, and spice-seekers will be satisfied, if not particularly challenged.

When it comes to guacamole, Sahuaro keeps it simple.

For the next course, we ordered the house selection of tacos. It includes one of each variety offered on the menu: Guerreros (pork *carnitas*), Norteños (marinated beef), Del campo (grilled veggies), and Yucatecos (*cochinita* pork). They were all delicious, but the Yucatecos were the clear winner (although maybe that’s just my nostalgia speaking). The sauce was rich and tangy, the pork tender and juicy, and the pickled onions the perfect accompaniment.

My personal taco motto: always get one of each.

Finally, we dug into the chipotle chicken entrée. It was swimming in creamy, slightly spicy sauce, served with refried beans and (hallelujah) more guacamole. Naturally, of course, we ordered an extra basket of tortillas to go with it. But the surprise hit here was the rice, which came in a coconut shell etched with intricate designs. Soft and subtly seasoned, it provided the perfect complement to the rich and hearty dish.

Pollo al chipotle

I’ll certainly be returning as soon as humanly possible to sample the rest of the menu, from the salads and ceviche to the enchiladas and desserts. Sahuaro also offers a *menú del día* during the week and brunch on the weekends, so you can satisfy your cravings no matter what time it is. It’s the perfect place to come for a casual drink with friends or even a date; the interior is elegant and colorful, and the enclosed outdoor patio features tropical plants and comfy couches (plus plenty of fans).

Whether you're nostalgic for your own travels to Mexico, or you've always wanted to visit and see what all the hype is about, this place is for you. Sahuaro has done what few restaurants can, combining authentic regional cuisine with an ideal atmosphere, a prime location, and affordable prices. Come, relax, and let yourself be carried away to paradise.

Info

- **Website**
- **Facebook** & **Instagram**
- **Phone:** 914 29 64 49
- **Address:** Plaza Cascorro, 2
- **Metro:** La Latina & Tirso de Molina

Taco Maya: A brand-new no-frills taco joint

José Manuel – a well-known chef in the Madrid taco scene – has just opened a brand new, no-frills taco joint in Madrid with his partner, Joe. This colourful and fun eatery is located in a beautiful old building just a five-minute walk from barrio Lavapiés, and has a lovely chilled terrace plus a cosy dining area inside.

Taco Maya’s cosy, minimalist dining area

It’s possible that you may have stumbled across José Manuel before: he used to own Taquería Maya in Huertas, where José met Joe! With a new team member and a more relaxed location, Taco Maya has a winning formula, and dare I say the best Mexican food I’ve had in Madrid?

THE FOOD

Everything is made from scratch by José himself, from the nachos to the tacos and every ingredient is bought in fresh that morning. It’s for this reason that the menu sometimes varies depending on what order comes in that day, and there’s an array of tacos, quesadillas and nachos to try.

The menu – full of options for all!

This is what we had:

Lemon and Strawberry Margaritas

First of all, the Lemon and Strawberry Margaritas are incredible – like nothing you've ever had before, I promise! The strong kick of tequila was also a great start to the evening.

The Nachos

We had three types of nachos: Courgette and corn from the cob (vegan), Guacamole and coriander (also vegan), and beef. All were absolutely delicious, and the guacamole was like something I'd make at home in secret so that I could put in as much coriander and fresh red onion as I wanted.

The Beef Tacos

2 x Cheese Tacos and 2 x Lamb Tacos

The beef and guacamole tacos were juicy and moreish, and that extra squeeze of lime cut through all that tender meat perfectly. The veggie options included cheese and guacamole quesadillas, but pictured above we have courgette tacos and two tacos with a creamy vegetable and corn mix and plenty of fresh coriander on top. Having said all that, the tacos themselves were so fresh and you could really decipher their flavour.

Tequila!

To end the evening, José Manuel offered us a wonderfully smooth tequila. He also gave us a salt-sugar-chilli mix for the usual tequila ritual, and now I'll never be able to have just salt again.

José Manuel himself!

The tacos are great and the terrace is a real treat. This humble eatery has a bright future – check it out and be a part of it.

Info

- **Address:** Paseo de Santa María de la Cabeza, 60
- **Metro:** Embajadores
- Facebook and Instagram
- Phone number: 911 733 374 / 642 194 285

Also check out:

- **Tacos, tamales and tequila: Madrid's best Mexican joints!**

Maya, a cozy Taqueria & Mexican product store in Huertas

Maya is a new Mexican establishment, situated on C/Echegaray in Huertas. The owner & chef, Jose Manuel, hails from Mexico City. Jose previously worked in **the hidden burrito shop in Lavapies**, notably wearing a customized chef's hat. We met during his tenure there and became fast friends due to his approachable nature. After having not seen him in several months, I was taking a stroll through Huertas with a friend and we both noticed a Taqueria. She and I pondered whether it was new or had always been there. Jose surfaced and summoned us to the bar, inviting us to a drink in order to catch up and show us his new business endeavor. Jose's grand ambition is to make **quality Mexican products** more accessible to consumers in Madrid.

VIVACE

El Sarape
LA MORENA
chiladas

Knowing that Americans are always on the prowl for new places to satisfy their taco cravings, I took it upon myself to do my community a service and sample a handful of Jose’s creations in order to share my findings.

First I sampled the *taco de pastor*, cilantro and onion with green lime.

The second specimen was *Cochinita de Pibil* with achiote.

The last taco was *Fajitas Alambre de ternera*

All of these treats were followed by a Tamale served on a plantain leaf.

They were all yummy, my favorite being the *taco de pastor*. I found everything about the establishment quite familiar. Their regular, a pipe-smoking elderly writer, took pride in presenting me with a poetry anthology that had his face on the back cover. This location is young, and thus the experience is quite personalized. For those of you who are seeking a venue for your taco Tuesdays, or a place to find unique Mexican ingredients to be used in your culinary endeavors at home, I strongly recommend this establishment.

Info

Facebook
Where: *Calle Echegaray 29*
Metro: *Anton Martin*
Contact: *600 68 73 51*

Also check out:

- **Best Mexican Joints in Madrid**
- **Perdizione – a hidden hole-in-the-wall burrito bar in Lavapiés**

Tacos, tamales and tequila: the best Mexican joints in Madrid

If you had to eat just one type of cuisine for the rest of your life, what would you choose? For me, Mexican food wins hands down every time. I could happily munch on chilaquiles for breakfast, enchiladas for lunch, pozole for dinner and still have room for a few tacos al pastor or some juicy tamales…all washed down with several delicious micheladas of course. I spent a year working in Mexico after I finished university and it wasn't nearly long enough to sample all the delicious treats on offer, although I did manage to squeeze in tequila ice cream, grasshoppers and mezcal with worm salt, amongst other things!

So where can you get your Mexican fix in Madrid? Avoid the expensive chain restaurants and the Tex-Mex joints, and instead try one of these gems:

Taquería Mi Ciudad (Calle Hileras 5 and Calle Fuentes 11 <m> Sol/Ópera)

The infamous Gringa at Taquería Mi Ciudad

As the name suggests, tacos are the star of the show here: pastor, cochinita pibil, tinga, carnitas…they've got them all, as well as the usual staples like guacamole, quesadillas and frijoles. My personal favourite is the Gringa, a heavenly combination of carne al pastor, cheese and pineapple sandwiched between two flour tortillas…it needs to be eaten to be believed! If you sit at the bar you can watch the taco man work his magic, although there are plenty of tables for larger groups. Alternatively, you could hop one street over to the original restaurant on Calle Fuentes, which has standing room for about 10.

La Malinche (Calle Torija 10 <m> Santo

Domingo)

Image from www.facebook.com/lamalinche.madrid

This place is the real deal, a Spanish-Mexican husband and wife dream team. He concocts delicious micheladas and margaritas at the bar upstairs, whilst she rustles up delicious sopes, huaraches and all other manner of delights in the kitchen below. Even the tortillas are homemade. The portions are very generous so make sure you go with an empty belly! Great value for money.

Antigua Taquería (Calle Cabestreros <m> La Latina/Tirso de Molina/Lavapiés and Calle Áncora 19 <m> Palos de la Frontera)

Antigua Taquería

An amazing hybrid of traditional bar de toda la vida and Mexican hipster joint. The menu here is limited – just tacos, nachos and quesadillas – but everything on it is absolutely divine. I have a particular weakness for their quesadillas and always end up ordering the huitlacoche one…it translates as corn smut which sounds grim, but don’t knock it until you’ve tried it. Heap some of their delicious salsas on top and you’re good to go…just watch out for the red one! Luckily they also make a mean margarita for you to wash it all down with.

Tepic (Calle Pelayo 4 <m> Chueca)

Image from www.facebook.com/restauranteTEPIC

I had my first ride in a pick-up truck, learned to dance to banda and tried ceviche for the first time in the Mexican state of Tepic, so I'll always think of it fondly. Tepic in Chueca doesn't disappoint either, with its varied menu of tacos, flautas, enchiladas and other tasty treats. They even have soups, salads and vegetarian options, just make sure you leave room for one of their delicious desserts! If you're looking for a more upmarket meal in a swanky restaurant which manages to avoid all the usual Mexican clichés whilst still being thoroughly Mexican, this is your place.

For more on **Tepic**, check out our friends **post here** with mouth-watering photos.