

Moderna de Pueblo: A self-aware series of graphic novels about hipster hijinks in Madrid

I have been using Spanish graphic novels in an attempt to learn slang and expletive phrases in order to reinforce my grasp of the language. While browsing volumes in [La Central](#), one book caught my eye. *El Cooltureta* is a relatable story because it follows a group of young people that live in Madrid. The creator, Raquel Córcoles, is credited by her pen name, [Moderna de Pueblo](#), which doubles as the name of the series.



The skyline of Madrid, as envisioned by the artist

The artist nails the portrayal of my adopted city. The first panel of the book begins with the protagonist on his balcony in Anton Martin, admiring the street below while thinking to himself, "*Acaba de mudarme y estaba totalmente enamorado del barrio.*"

The first story follows its titular protagonist as he adopts a hipster identity. *El Cooltureta* relocated to Madrid from an unnamed, generic pueblo and seized the opportunity to recreate himself as a stylish, trendy, pseudo-intellectual.

Each panel portrays a broad spectrum of scenarios that young people can relate with—**dealing with roommates, unrequited love, awkward communications via Whatsapp and the troubles that stem from relentless over thinking.**



El Cooltureta, the protagonist of the first book

The central conflict of this first story is that El Cooltureta wants to engage in the vast cultural offerings of Madrid, such as screenings in the Cine Dore, but he is too awkward to go alone. El Cooltureta searches for a social circle that he can thrive in, and **gradually meets several characters whose names are their endearing archetypes:** the tortured friend, the cinefile, *la chica de la bici*, *la mariliendre* etc.

The series is full of cultural references, both mainstream and otherwise. There is one instance where the protagonist is *de*

resaca and watching the mindless television series *New Girl*. When a friend calls to check up on how he's doing, he lies to maintain the illusion of his dignity by telling her that he's watching (my favorite series) *The Wire*. A climactic scene of the story occurs during a performance by *Die Antwoord*, which the protagonist only attended begrudgingly. At every stage the characters are either heavily endorsing, or making snarky comments about, various forms entertainment and media. One character is often seen wearing a shirt that says in bold lettering "All blogs post the same stuff."

After becoming heavily emotionally invested in the characters I picked up the second book, *Los Capullos no regalan flowers* (Dickheads don't gift flowers) which follows an unnamed female protagonist. The second book outshines the first in my opinion because it has more of a clearly defined plot. Similar to *El Cooltureta*, the female lead moved to Madrid from a generic pueblo and hopes to take advantage of her recently acquired freedom. Each chapter, titled after different *capullo* archetypes, follows her endearingly awkward search for love. It is neatly fitting that she has a poster of Woody Allen's classic film, *Manhattan*, right above her bed. She is a hopeless romantic **who gets swept up in the world of Tinder, nightclubs, & Whatsapp courtship**. Although her view on relationships and romance evolves as she adjusts further to her new environment, the old-school romantic in her secretly hopes that one of her partners will bring her flowers.



The female protagonist of the second book bears a striking resemblance to the series creator.

One of her many less than ideal dates was with the male protagonist of the first book, who stayed true to his character and talked her ear off. Her internal dialogue as she makes decisions throughout the story is quite comical. She does her best to be open to the various types of modern flings—open relationships, long distance relationships, and relationships with flatmates. As the chapters progress, the female lead becomes increasingly frustrated with her circumstances.

SE HABLA MUCHO DE SI ESTÁ BIEN TENER SEXO EN LA PRIMERA CITA PERO...
¿Y SI NO HAY NI CITA? ESO ME PRODUJO UN DILEMA:



Internal dialogue

She returns to her pueblo temporarily to seek clarity. While away from Madrid she has the epiphany that I've had time and time again—**Madrid is a uniquely special city** to which my hometown (as much as I respect it) pales in comparison. Upon

returning to Madrid she continues her personal journey with further conviction.

Although both books were *lleno* with unfamiliar slang, which I've had to pause at intervals and ask my roommate to explain to me, **I was laughing at every turn**. This self-aware series is a must-read for young adults living in Madrid because it pokes fun at us and the spectrum of *tonterias* that we partake in. Numerous panels of the comic, which still make sense out of context, are free on their Facebook page & website, "Moderna de Pueblo." If you become hooked, I encourage you to purchase both texts at your nearest [La Central](#).

[Web](#)
[Shop](#)

Image credit: All of the imagery that appears above are samples from the Moderna de Pueblo website and their [Facebook page](#)

For more on good reads in Madrid, check out:

Desperate Literature, for book lovers in Brooklyn, Santorini and now Madrid

Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, round one

Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, round two

Pecados Argentinos, Freshly-baked Argentine Empanadas in Plaza de Cascorro

When I am scurrying between my private lessons I sometimes get swept up in a blinding hunger. Empanadas are often the most practical solution because they can be both served and consumed quickly, leaving me full, satisfied and capable of fighting onwards. [Pecados Argentinos](http://www.pecadosargentinos.com) is a shop situated in Plaza de Cascorro that sells delicious, filling Argentine empanadas as well as other products from the land of silver.



Earlier this year I was dabbling with the idea of relocating

next to Buenos Aires and I made a point of befriending the staff of this establishment so that I could pick their brains as to what life there entails. The staff of this shop are a group of lovely ladies that greet their clients with terms of endearment such as *mi amor* and *cariño*. The Porteño accent is my favorite of the various forms of Spanish that I've been exposed to—when they speak it's almost as if they're singing and my instinctive response is to melt. Several times I have entered this location while rushing between point lessons and have lost track of time due to the hypnotizing nature of their accents during our small-talk.



The establishment offers 11 different types of empanadas and my intention is to eventually sample all of them. My favorite thus far is filled with mushrooms and both mozzarella and parmesan cheese. Another that has aided my recovery from crippling resacas is their empanada of chicken, mozzarella cheese and caramelized onions. I've also enjoyed their staple

empanada, which is filled with tuna, red pepper, & onion. The empanada stuffed with mushrooms makes my mouth water.

Not to mention their typical Argentine desserts filled with dulce de leche...



The next time you find yourself navigating the **Rastro flea market**, I strongly recommend you picar a few snacks from this charming establishment.

Info

Web

Facebook

Address: Plaza de Cascorro 11

Contact: 910 840 505

Looking for other spots in La Latina and Lavapiés area? Check out:

Tribuexxe, a Basque pintxo bar

Los Chuchis Bar, downright good food in Lavapiés

Cafelito, a trendy spot for coffee lovers in Lavapiés

Lavapiés and its market – the real food emporium!

Cosy Wine Bars in La Latina

Mastropiero, Indulgent Gourmet Pizzas in Malasaña

A few evenings ago I was trading notes with an enthusiastic foodie friend who pointed me in the direction of Mastopiero, **a gourmet pizzeria in Malasaña operated by Argentines**. As you might already know, the Porteño accent just slays me. I was not led astray when I followed up and checked out the establishment for myself. A cozy and intimate space, Mastopiero is dimly lit and smells absolutely delicious.



Their *carta* offer a broad range of gourmet pizza variety. I like to consider myself to be an imaginative person yet **I never would have previously fathomed that *pulpo gallego* on a pizza could be a thing.** Of course when I saw that as an option I ordered a pizza that was half octopus. I asked the staff to surprise me with the other half and their creation entailed **spicy peppers, chorizo, olives, and caramelized onions.**



The literal icing on the cake of this experience is that diners are given a **free slice of chocolate fudge cake** accompanied by creamy *dulce de leche* to top off their experience. If it were possible I would totally have an IV drip of their dulce de leche installed into my body. The service in this establishment was absolutely stellar and I am confident that I will return soon to sample their other pies.



Facebook

Address: Calle San Vicente Ferrer, 36

Metro: Tribunal/Noviciado

**Looking for other nice spots in Malasaña?
Check out:**

Aiò, a piece of Sardinia in Malasaña

Toma Café, Fuel up, Feel Hip

La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café

Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think

The 4 Coziest Cafés in Chamberí

The district of Chamberí is the heart of Madrid's university life. During the week, the neighborhoods of Moncloa, Islas Filipinas, and Guzmán El Bueno are bustling with students. It only makes sense that some of Madrid's best cafes are located in this area. After all, university students need their caffeine! The following is a short list of my personal favorites. These four cafes are all perfect for that much needed study break!

1. La Rollerie





I discovered this adorable cafe about a year ago and fell absolutely in love with it. And I'm not the only one! Any day of the week you can find La Rollerie filled with people, especially during lunchtime. What I love most about this cafe, besides its friendly staff, is its extensive menu. La Rollerie is the perfect place for a coffee break (a delicious cappuccino) or a full meal (try their beef burger or their salad with goat cheese).

Contact Info:

[Facebook](#)

Guzmán el Bueno 105, 28003

Phone: +34 91 399 2193

Metro: Islas Filipinas

2. Chocolate y Nata





What's really nice about this cafe is how small and quiet it is. Never very noisy, Chocolate y Nata provides a cozy and authentic atmosphere. Enjoy their mixed croissant or any of their succulent cakes! As its name would suggest, this cafe offers some of the best chocolate pastries in the area.

Contact Info:

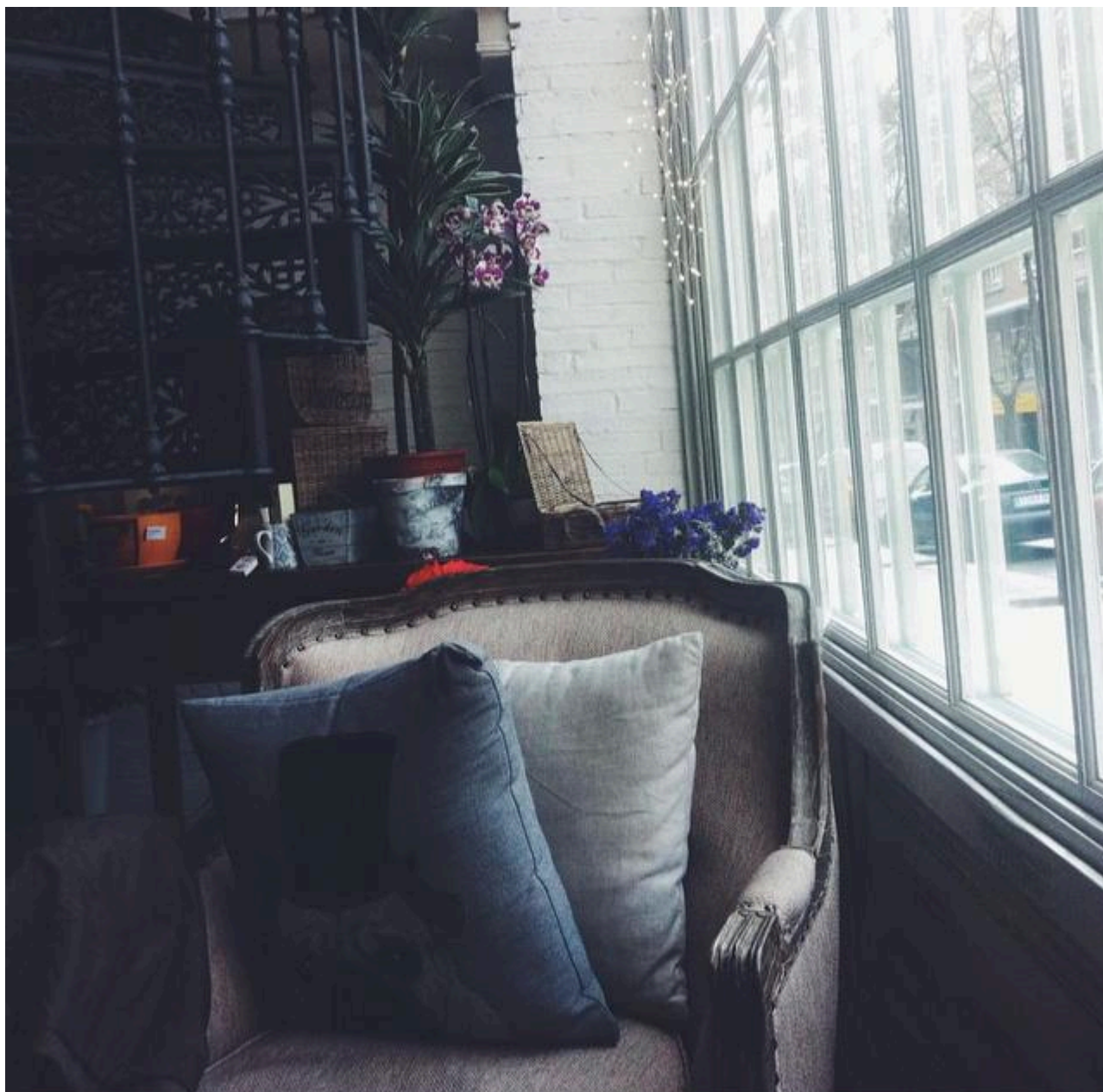
[Faceook](#)

Paseo de San Francisco de Sales, 21, 28003

Phone: +34 915 44 73 64

Metro: Guzman el Bueno, Islas Filipinas

3. Salon des Fleurs



Out of the four cafes on this list, Salon des Fleurs has been open the shortest amount of time. Still, it has created the biggest buzz! Customers are eager to enter into the unique experience that results from the fusion of a cafe and a flower shop. The flowery decor paired with a delicious selection of teas, coffee, and pastries sets Salon des Fleurs apart. You can also check out a previous article on Salon des Fleurs [here](#).

Contact Info:

[Facebook](#)

Calle Guzman el Bueno 106, 28003

Phone: +34 91 535 23 48

4. Miga



Miga is a popular choice for students of Saint Louis University Madrid and CEU because of its convenient location, delicious coffee, and young (good-looking) staff. Often you will find Miga packed with customers but in the afternoon the cafe proves a perfect environment for unwinding and conversation. Miga provides a warm and friendly atmosphere definitely worth checking out. Try their delicious chocolate

muffins!

Contact Info:

[Facebook](#)

Calle Julian Romea, 8, 28047

Phone: +34 917 52 46 35

Metro: Guzman el Bueno

*Photos provided by Charlotte Geier, instagram:
@charlotte_geier*

You may also like:

La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café

Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think

Toma Café, Fuel up, Feel hip

El Cafelito, a trendy spot for cafe lovers in Lavapiés

Madrid's best cafe-bookshops, round 1

Madrid's best cafe-bookshops, round 2

Helena Rohner, handmade

jewelry in the heart of La Latina

When you think of **La Latina**, you generally think of tapas, vermouth, the tortilla de patata with caramelized onions at [Juana La Loca](#), and of course, El Rastro. You wouldn't normally think of handmade jewelry, but on **Calle del Almendro**, just off of Cava Baja (by way of Grafal), you'll find the [Helena Rohner](#) showroom.



Originally from the Canary Islands, Rohner bases her designs on the simplicity of shapes and pure lines. She mixes silver

(there are gold-plated pieces as well) with a variety of materials (some of her pieces use porcelain, wood, and stones) to create simply beautiful designs. In addition to jewelry, Rohner has designed a variety of other products for companies such as Bodum and Georg Jensen. She's also the **2014 winner of the Medalla de Oro en Bellas Artes.**



Over the holidays, I stumbled upon her jewelry at [The Hovse](#), an amazing pop-up shop a short walk from my then-apartment. I'm always on the lookout for something different, especially things made in Spain. And this is where it all began. I'm a sucker for jewelry since it's normally something you can't outgrow, well at least in theory. I was looking for little **presents to bring to my parents and sister** in New York and I love bringing things that they can't get there.



What captivated me when I stumbled upon her station that very fateful day? Bracelets with simple silver or gold-plated pieces on colored cord. I began trying everything on, and I was sold. I also found a **gold-plated ring** that was a band in the form of a fishtail braid; it was just my style and fit on the exact finger I was looking a ring for. After picking up some items for my parents, sister, and one of my best friends from home, I snagged most of my made-in-Spain **Chrismukkah loot**.

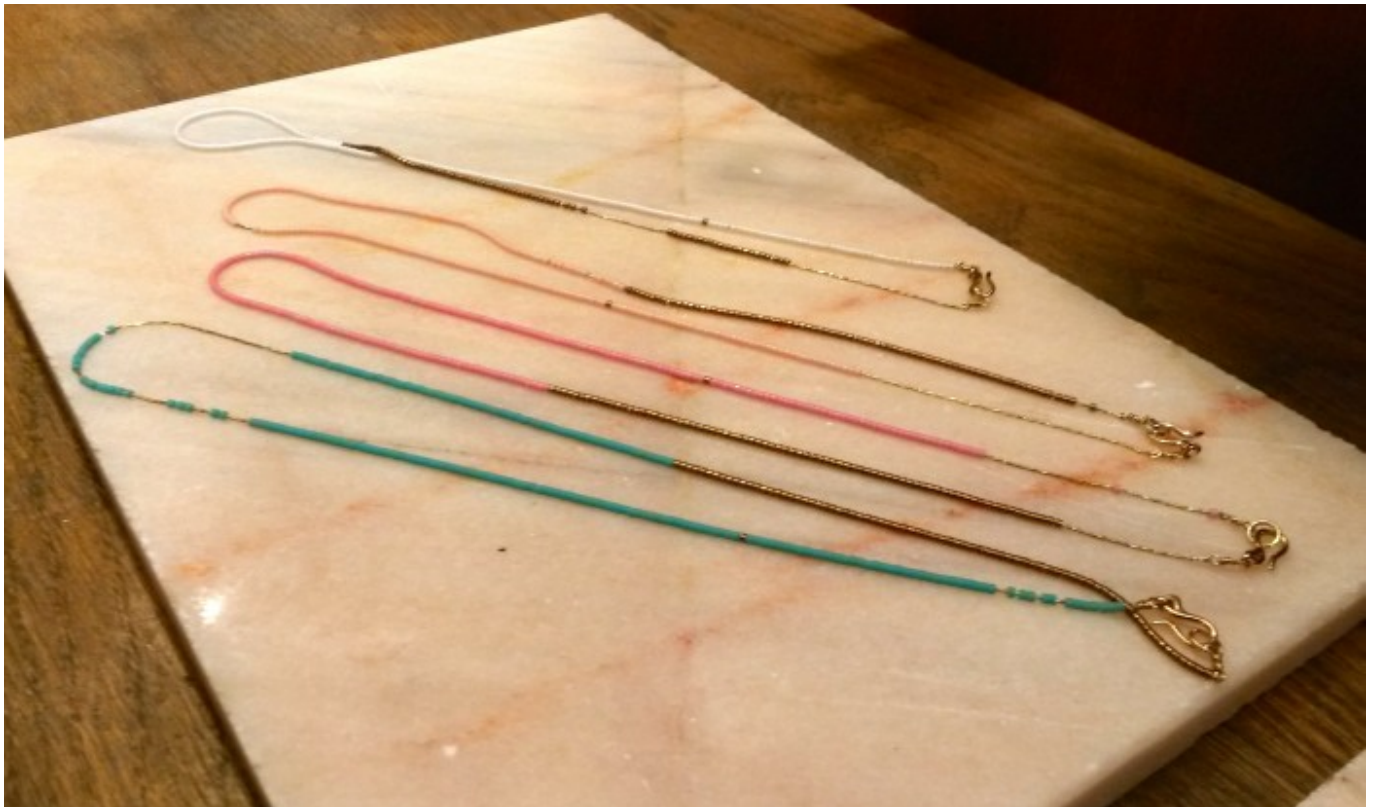


Once I got back, I knew that I wanted more and decided to take a trip to the studio and store. As you enter, you can see the center displays with all of the different styles with the workspace on the left and offices on the right.



On my first visit, I was first drawn to the selection of

bracelets that I had seen at The Hovse in various colors with simple shapes. There was a bright blue that I'm absolutely in love with (I have several pieces in that color), but the saleswoman guided me towards the **granada cord** (it's a very pretty pink that contrast well, in Spanish, granada means pomegranate).



The bracelets on the colored cords are okay to wear in the shower and one of the saleswoman proudly reported that the silver pieces **can be worn while swimming** in the summer and can hold up well. In addition to those bracelets, I then got a bangle with a noted etching to fill a void left by one of my presents that broke. On subsequent visits, I got more bracelets like this, including a gold-plated circle on red cord. I also got a pair of small studs in the form of a knot (most earrings are sold individually). Other pieces I've snagged are a necklace with a knot pendant and another that can be worn as a headband (something I've definitely done to dress up my late-day ponytail on occasion).



When you go to Helena Rohner, you'll come out with more than you planned on getting, but trust me, you'll never want to take them off.

Info

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

Calle del Almendro, 4

Metro: La Latina

Hours: Monday-Friday 9 AM-8:30 PM; Saturday 12:00-2:30 PM and 3:30-8 PM; Sunday 12-3 PM

You'll also like:

Dime que me quieres: Personalized jewelry to show how much you love someone (or yourself)

La Maruca, a Swanky Cantabrian Restaurant in Barrio Salamanca

My Dad comes to Spain frequently in order to see myself and his close friends, Rafael, Catherine, Alfredo & Ruth. It has been hugely comforting to have such trusted and accessible “real adults” during my time abroad. In addition to being warm, generous, and offering of exceptional council, my Dad’s friends are in the know in regards to **Madrid’s ritzier restaurants**. I was fortunate to have been invited to tag along to their **dinner at La Maruca**, an establishment in **barrio Salamanca** that I certainly would not have discovered under different circumstances.





A large space with a stylish staff and a cozy fireplace by the bar, the location radiates class. Catherine took the initiative to order several appetizers—***croquetas de carne cocido***, a tartar of smoked salmon & avocado as well as a plate of delicious anchovies with red bell peppers. We drank wine and had a pleasant conversation with a lot of swift code-changing between Spanish & English.



For my main course I ordered *pluma de cerdo*, a delicious dish of perfectly cooked pork. Rafael ordered *pulpo a la plancha*, which was presented quite aesthetically. Enrique, my Dad, consumed the *albondigas*, which he enjoyed greatly. Catherine's dish was the *tajada de merluza*. Ruth ordered *canelones rellenos de poularda con salsa de foie*, another incredibly photogenic plate.



Initially I believed that this restaurant would be well above my pay grade, but that was not the case—each plate cost between **10-14€**. This isn't the first time that the “real adults” have introduced me to a seemingly unapproachable establishment that ultimately turned out to be reasonably priced. I can imagine tactfully utilizing this location in the future in order to put up a front of fanciness while on a date.



Contact info

[Facebook](#)

[Website](#)

Where to find La Maruca

Address: Calle de Velázquez 54

Metro: Velasquez

Phone : 917 81 49 69

You may also check out series on best first date ideas in Madrid:

[Flowers are nice, but this first date is better \(part 1\)](#)

[Chocolates are nice, but this first date is better \(part 2\)](#)

[Dating in Madrid for Foodies \(part 3\)](#)

Salón des Fleurs – Flowers, Tea, and Vintage, Oh My!

Every day is Spring inside [Salón des Fleurs](#). Step inside this quaint store that doubles as a **florist and tea room**, with a side of vintage products, and breathe in the fresh smell of flowers that are carefully displayed throughout the space.



Twinkling lights adorn the large paneled windows, adding to the charm of this café, if you could even call it simply that. Bright pink, red, and orange flowers are displayed outside next to small tables for those wanting to soak up the sun in good weather.



Sink into one of the comfy armchairs as you consider the all-encompassing tea list. There is nothing standard about the menu at Salón des Fleurs, descriptors such as “black tea,” and “green tea” are merely side notes offered to try to explain the flavoring of such teas as *Apple Pie*, *Cookie*, and *Champagne*

and Strawberries. Coffee is offered too, but with such exotic tea flavors, why bother?



Served in beautiful painted mugs, the tea puts your morning Earl Grey to shame. If you're looking for a side treat to indulge in, [Salón des Fleurs](#) offers cakes and desserts also, including a two-layered fluffy carrot cake topped with rich cream cheese frosting.

Once you have savored your tea as long as possible, explore the rest of the store a bit. There is more than meets the eye,

and you might find yourself discovering little quirks throughout the store, such as the multiple clocks in unusual places, all displaying a different time.



A spiral staircase leads to an upstairs vintage section, while the downstairs is more dedicated to the flowers, with a florist freshly cutting stems.

Like their alluring tea selection, [Salón des Fleurs](#) offers a variety of flowers, in bright colors, in pots, long stemmed; come here for any occasion and you won't regret it. Don't need

flowers? Browse the vintage section or warm up with a mug of tea, any excuse to visit this charming spot will do.

Salón des Fleurs

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

Where: Guzman el Bueno, 106

Phone: 915 35 23 48

Prices: Tea, €2.6

1862 Dry Bar – Perfection Served in a Glass

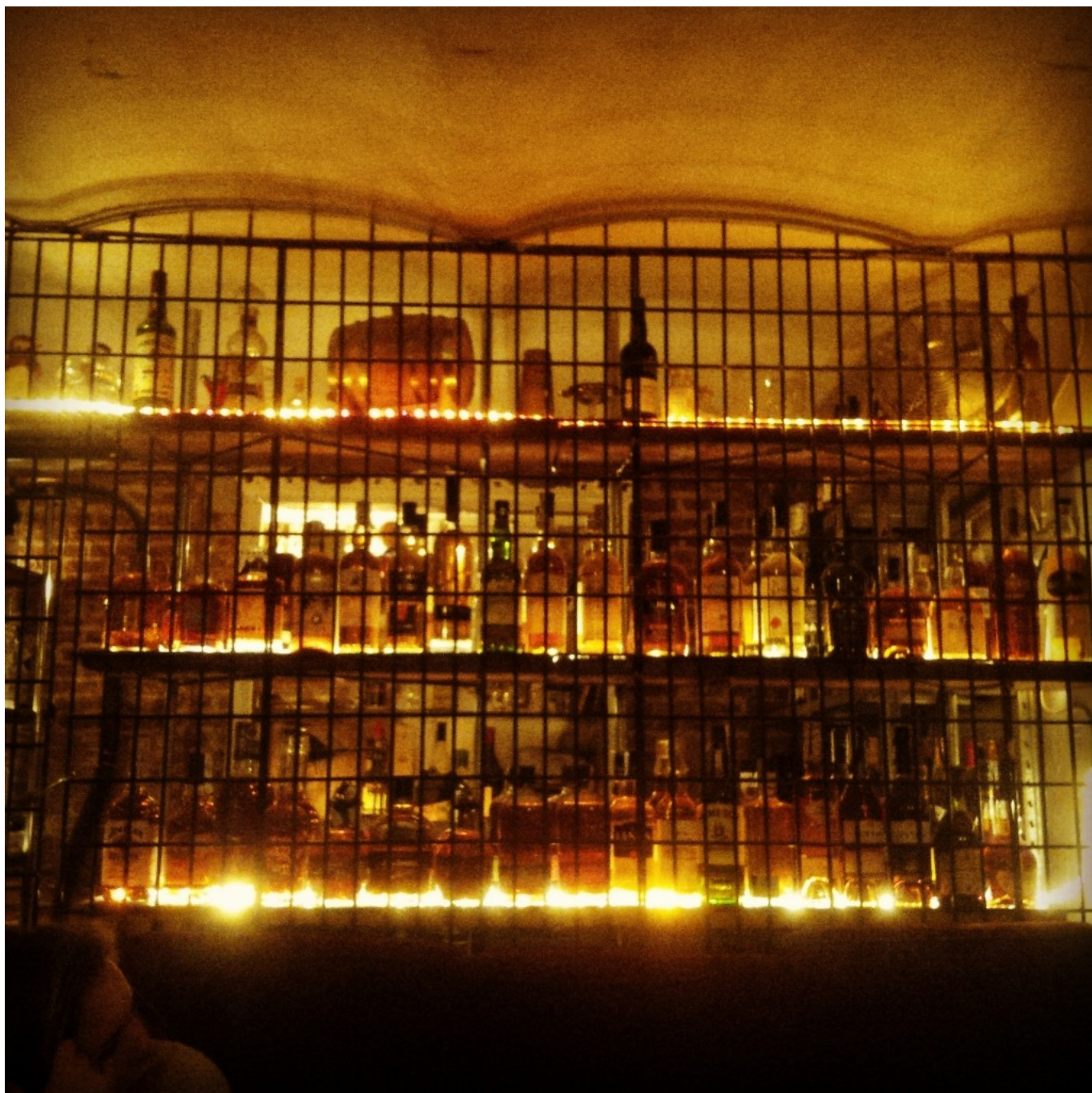
Looking for a perfectly crafted cocktail? Do you prefer the classics, or something a little more adventurous? No matter your taste, there is a spot for you at [1862 Dry Bar](#), located in the heart of Malasaña.

If you need structure, snag a table on the street level, with tables peppering the perimeter of the room, and the bar as the center of attention. For those looking to lounge and drop into a comfortable sofa, head to the dimly lit basement, and find yourself losing all concept of time.

The cocktail menu is comprehensive – running the gamut from Old Fashioned to Cosmopolitan; you name it, they serve it. Don't miss out on the house specials on the backside of the menu, with intricate mixes that you didn't know you wanted until you saw it on the menu.



If you are indecisive like I tend to be, simply ask for a recommendation-the service is friendly and can help you craft your drink based on your likes and dislikes without a second thought. Each careful creation is fairly priced at **8€**.



The basement displays quite literally a cage of alcohol, decoratively illuminated in case you still aren't sure what you're in the mood for.

If you are able to climb out of your comfortable seat on the couch, look beyond the curved archway in the basement that gives way to a smaller bar counter, with old fashioned photos, exposed brick walls, and hanging stemware.



[1862 Dry Bar](#) has all you could ask for-aesthetic appeal in a comfortable setting, affable, knowledgeable employees, and expertly crafted cocktails. But don't take my word for it-start tasting your way through the menu and decide for yourself if you're more of the traditional type, or if you can handle something a little different.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Where: Calle del Pez, 27

Metro: Noviciado

Looking for more on Madrid's bar scene?
Check out:

[Madrid's Best Cocktail Bars](#)

[Madrid's Best Craft Beer Bars](#)

[Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars](#)

Naïf: King of Burgers

In a city so jam-packed with restaurants that one could eat out in a different place every meal and never repeat, it's saying a lot to return to a place more than once, and then too many times to count. Such is the case with [Naïf](#), a cozy/grunge burger spot nestled into Plaza de San Idelfonso serving burgers, with a side of sass. Ask for a glass of water and one of the snarky waiters will return saying they've run out of water, but they do have gin. Alternatively, copas of beer and wine are available for cheap and are a must for washing down the grub.



The jocular banter with the waiters, the hype that comes with having to (almost) yell over the music in order to be heard across the table, the flickering candles of the dining room, all contribute to making repeat [Naif](#) visits, **but the real reason to return is for the burgers. Never a disappointment, never.**



Here, the king of burgers, is, undoubtedly, the Hamburguesa de Trufa: **hamburger gold**. The rich flavor of truffles oozes out of the burger with every bite. La Ibérica also pleases with its hefty slices of jamón and manchego respectively. [Naif](#) has the Goldy Locks principle working to its advantage: the burgers are not too big, not too small— they're just right. Nevertheless, they can be a challenge to eat; baskets of napkins are placed on the tables for this very reason. Don't mind about minding manners.



A large chalkboard wall boasts nachos among the house specialities. What comes to the table is a **casserole dish of chips bathing in a tangy bath of cheese, plus some avocados and peppers for a spicy punch**. These are not skating rink nachos. They can be a meal in itself or something to share—cheesy fingers for all.



And beyond burgers, dessert awaits on the horizon. There is **carrot cake**, of course, as well as **cheesecake** and **American Pie**. It's not your mom's recipe, but it's pie! Inexplicably,

it lacks the bottom layer of crust, but there's a top. Let's not be too picky, now. The **carrot cake** benefits from the **addition of nutella and walnuts**.



Eating at [Naif](#) is addicting. You want to be there, wrapped up in this rough and rugged metropolitan environment, until closing time. [Naif](#) can serve as the backdrop for any social situation: **friends, dates, and parental visits alike**. The soundtrack somehow always fits the occasion and the dim lighting makes everything seem cooler than it probably is.



[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Where: Calle San Joaquín, 16

Phone: 910 07 20 71

Photos courtesy of Pablo Arias

**Looking for other cool spots in Malasaña?
Check out:**

[La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café and bar](#)

[Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think](#)

[Toma Café, Fuel up, Feel hip](#)

[Best Café-Bookshops in Madrid](#)

[Best First Date Ideas in Madrid for foodies](#)

Cafelito, a trendy spot for coffee lovers in Lavapies

In a *barrio* undergoing the gradual process of gentrification, chic cafes are a dime a dozen. [Cafelito](#), situated on Calle Sombrerete near [Mercado de San Fernando](#), quickly stood out amongst the crowd as my go-to spot for coffee and studious activity in the barrio. The owner, Julio, imports his coffee from locations such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Mexico.



During my first two years abroad I lamented the absence of iced-coffees, especially during the pinnacle of the Madrid summers. This past summer, when **Cafelito** opened, they boasted of offering **homemade iced-coffee using cubes of frozen coffee as the ice**. Since then, I have gone through 6 full punch cards and been rewarded for my loyalty with as many free drinks.



My favorite winter drink, which I typically take to go, is **dirty chai**. When I need to sit and be studious as I write assignments like this, I usually take a **double espresso** of **whichever imported coffee is available that week**.



[Cafelito](#) is now a hub for the writers amongst us in the barrio. The charms of the cafe are enhanced by the recycled furniture and open library. Coffee drinkers can borrow books—on the honor system—and leave books in the hope that they in turn will be borrowed.



They have cakes too.



[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle Sombrerete 20

Metro: Lavapiés

**Looking for other spots in Lavapiés?
Check out:**

Baobab, an authentic Senegalese restaurant

Tribuetxe, a Basque pintxo bar

Mercado de San Fernando, the real food emporium

Taberna Lamiak, another Basque pintxo bar with
free wine tastings