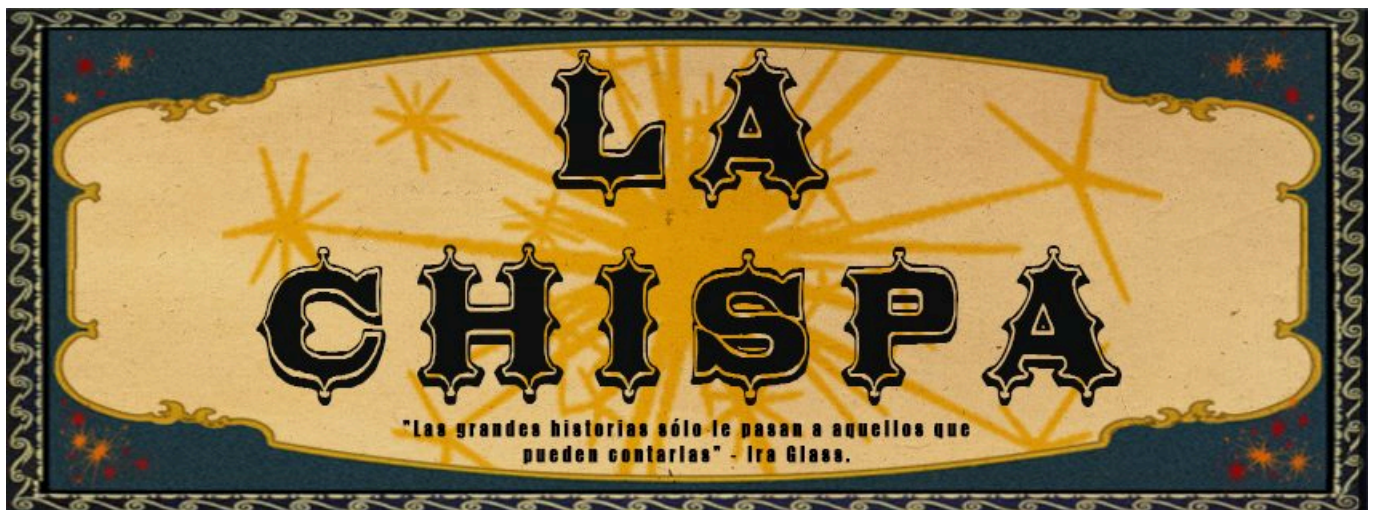


# La Chispa, Live Storytelling in English and Spanish in Lavapiés

Misunderstanding—now there's a theme to which everyone can relate. The fourth incarnation of [La Chispa](#), a live storytelling event held on March 1, offered storytellers a platform to share tales of malentendidos with an audience gathered at [Atelier Café de la Llana](#) in Lavapiés. La Chispa takes its inspiration from [The Moth](#), an organization that hosts storytelling events across the globe and radio and podcast editions as well. La Chispa's coordinator, Natasha Yaworsky, gave birth to the idea of hosting a Moth-like event in Madrid after listening to many of the organization's programs. "The stories are always good," she explained when asked why The Moth had become an auditory staple in her life, "no matter what," she added.



As event organizer Dan Catalan (featured in the photo above) put it, a "passionate and clever little team" started La Chispa and has been keeping it running since September of this year. Animation student Diego Salas joins Yaworsky and Catalan to round out the co-founding group. The three started working on the idea for the event and from there, according to Salas,

“our support network, friends, everyone stepped up to help.” After wandering around Lavapies, it was decided that [Atelier Café de la Llana](#) was the most qualified space, and owner Enrique de la Llana was willing to offer the setting as a background for the event.



Natasha Yaworsky

At the most recent event, the theme of malentendidos produced narratives that produced laughs. Catalan explained, “there is always a theme to the events, but it is purposely vague so that storytellers have freedom to take it and run with it.” What better theme than malentendidos for a gathering with an audience heavily comprised of expats for whom life is a landmine of misunderstandings when daily interactions must be carried out in a foreign language? Not only are the themes meant to be broad, they are also meant to be widely relatable. One story, dealt with a series of business interactions ridden with misunderstanding due to language difference. There was a moving account focusing on the themes of identity and

acceptance all through an account of being misunderstood as a famous Asian prostitute while at a dance club in Tel Aviv. Another wove an elaborate saga about a misunderstanding that happened years ago in a summer camp bathroom. The stories ran the gamut, each with their own flair and intrigue.



Diego Salas

Storytellers participating in La Chispa are asked to keep their tales between 8 and 10 minutes. To mark the time, harmonica player extraordinaire, Diana Dwyer, alerted the speakers when their spot is about to end. If the harmonica sounds (pun-intended) kitschy, it did not seem at all out of place at the event. It was just another piece of the patchwork.

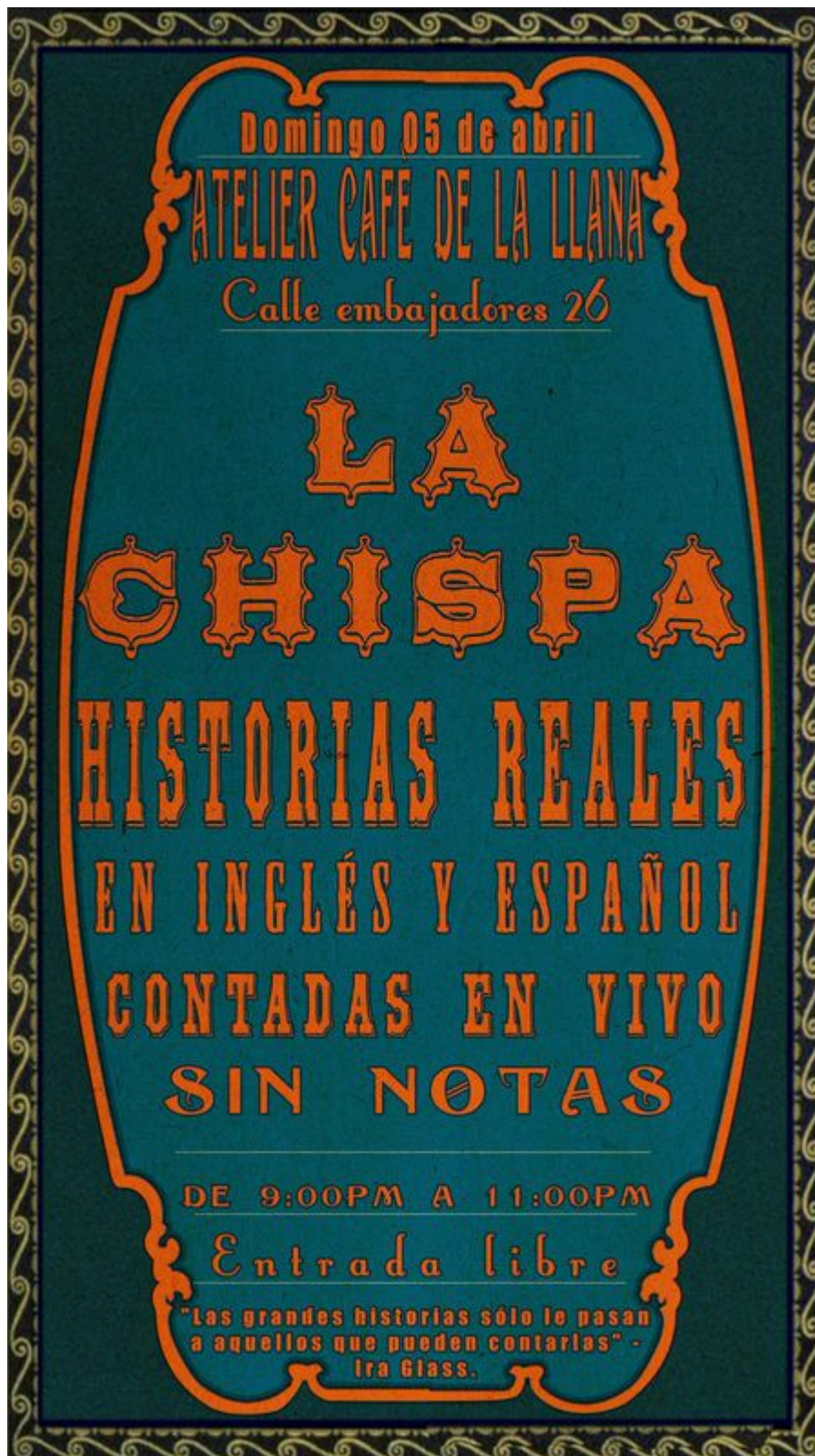


Inside the space, chairs were so crammed into the small cafe space that when one person would get up, another person would sit down in their chair, which also added to the collective ambience of the event. The pre-show period became a bit like a game of musical chairs, but what better way to circulate and share some of your own stories except not in front of a mic?



At La Chispa: Malentendidos, expats comprised most of the crowd, but according to various event-goers, the audience makeup has been different with each go-around. Yaworsky remarked that she liked the idea of hosting the event in Madrid because of its potential to **“offer a middle ground to English and Spanish speakers.”** Storytellers may tell their accounts in either English or Spanish (as long as they tell them without notes) and the pre-selected themes guarantee that speakers of either language will relate. The organizers expressed a desire for more Spanish storytellers to come forward and have their voices heard.

Another hope for future events is for the event to showcase stories from a broader range of perspectives, specifically and to have participants from a wider range of ages. Yaworsky’s ultimate goal for the project is to have The Moth come to Madrid and host an official event.



In the meantime, the event coordinators want to encourage storytellers—**seasoned and burgeoning alike**—to share their stories at upcoming events. The organizers were quick to acknowledge that the general public may think that they cannot tell a story, but were even quicker to offer assurances that story tellers will receive ample assistance in preparing for

the event.

Once the story tellers have committed, **the event organizers host workshops to rehearse the stories**, hash out details, and give performers the chance to work out how exactly they want to spin their tales. At the workshops, storytellers hear feedback on how to crystalize the three main parts of the story: the beginning, conflict, and end as well as receive tips on how to “pretzel” or tie it all together. The theme for the next scheduled La Chispa has been set for ‘Las desgracias nunca vienen solas’ or ‘When it rains, it pours.’



The [event](#) will be held on **Sunday, April 5 at 9 pm**. Both storytellers and story-listeners are welcome. Yet another event is planned for Sunday, May 3. Keep an eye out for posters designed by Salas advertising the event. In the words of the event’s mastermind Nastasha Yaworksy: The more you

listen, the more you realize that you have a story to tell. The photographic services company, Imagimedia, was on site to video record the event and the stories will be available for viewing on YouTube and [Facebook](#).

**To find out about upcoming La Chispa events, check out:**

[La Chispa's Facebook group](#)

[Naked Madrid's event page](#)

[Atelier Café de la Llana \(event venue\)](#)

---

## **The Quest for Bagels in Madrid: 5 Locations Offering the Elusive Comfort Food**

Bagels were a staple of my life back home in the outskirts of New York City—the **inaccessible status of bagels was the only demerit against Spain** in an earlier draft of my “Should I Move to Spain” pros & cons list. I’ve craved them badly during my time abroad, to the point where I have even asked my closest friend from home, Jake, to allow me to witness his consumption of authentic bagels via Skype. Bagels are a foreign concept here—whenever I’m describing them to Spanish folks, they can’t visualize the distinction from a donut or *roscon de reyes*.

However, due to **Madrid's growing American expat population**, I held out hope that opportunist business owners would step up and fill the circular void. The ensuing investigation had me scouring the city, running down every lead and pressing on

every underworld connection. These are my findings: I strongly advise purists to **manage their expectations** when sampling imitations of such an esteemed snack from the old country.

**So here, my friends, is a list of Madrid's bagel joints. In true form, I've saved the best bite for last...**

## **1) Restaurante Olsen – Calle del Prado 15 (CLOSED DOWN)**

The pursuit began with a rocky start for me and my friend Julie. Although the servers at Restaurante Olsen, a Scandanavian restaurant near the Prado, were kind enough to give us their leftover “bagels” for free, they weren't at all what we were hoping for—in fact I would go as far as to call these circular bread sticks **an abomination of nature**. This restaurant, which has since closed down, established the precedent low standard to which the ensuing specimens were held.



## 2) La Bicicleta Cafe – Plaza San Ildefonso, 9

This popular hipster cafe in Malasaña has a few bagel sandwiches under the display case by the bar. They're **a bit too dry** (and expensive) for my liking. Served with arugula and *jamon*, **this sandwich might as well be served on any other type of bread.**



### 3) La Libre – Calle de Argumosa, 39

This [cafe/bookshop](#) in Lavapiés offers a broad variety of *tostadas*, one of which is called “El Larson.” The bagels are imported from England and kept frozen, served to diners with cream cheese and lox and little bits of avocado. Due to its status as the bagel most accessible to me within my *barrio*, this is my default when the craving overwhelms me. Although not as crisp as I would like, it does the job adequately. The **added sesame seeds** are indeed a pleasant touch.



#### 4) Mür – Plaza Cristino Martos, 2

A large and comfortable brunch spot, Mür offers an 8.50€ euro “American” breakfast entailing a toasted bagel sandwich with cream cheese & lox, steak fries, and a cup of coffee. This location earns points for its product’s toasty crispness and presentation but loses points for its small size. The first bite is accompanied by the **familiar crunch sound**.



## 5) J&Js Books and Coffee – Calle del Espíritu Santo, 47

This popular expat [bar/English language bookstore](#) swiftly cornered the market with their vast selection of homemade bagels. **The only known establishment that manufactures bagels from scratch**, it is apparent that they have a concise understanding of both the product and the expectations held by the consumer. Their offerings are flavorful, especially when served fresh during their weekend brunch. The pictures below document the process in which their bagels are produced.







Have I missed anything in my investigation? Feel free to share the details of any other Bagel providers in the comments section!

**Also check out our series on Madrid's best cafe-bookstores!**

**Round 1**

## Round 2

---

# Pancomido: A French bakery where your bread will most certainly be eaten all up

When I used to live right near the [Museo Sorolla](#) and took the Number 16 bus every morning to work, I had to be out the door in time for my first coffee run before the bus would take me over the Castellana to Chamartín. Like clockwork, I would be out of my apartment around 7:55 so that I could be one of the first in line at 8 AM sharp when the doors of the **Pancomido Café** would open. I would walk in, order my coffee with skim milk and sweetener in a to-go cup, and as I had the amount it cost memorized, have the change ready to give out at a moment's notice so I could merrily sip my coffee as I fell asleep on the bus to the *colegio*.

Sometimes, on Saturday mornings, I would drink that coffee more slowly (and albeit in a much more madrileño manner than a New York one) while one of my friends would order a **croissant with raspberry jam and butter**, but I stuck with my coffee. But the robin egg blue (or better Tiffany blue) inside and out with the menu items offered on a blackboard allured me.



One of the biggest disappointments of having to move after the holidays was not being able to stop there on my daily commute.

After my move, I decided to have a breakfast adventure to celebrate being able to actually order something other than coffee.

Besides coffee with skim milk (and having skim milk is a vital component of my coffee consumption), **Pancomido** has a whole variety of breads and pastries.



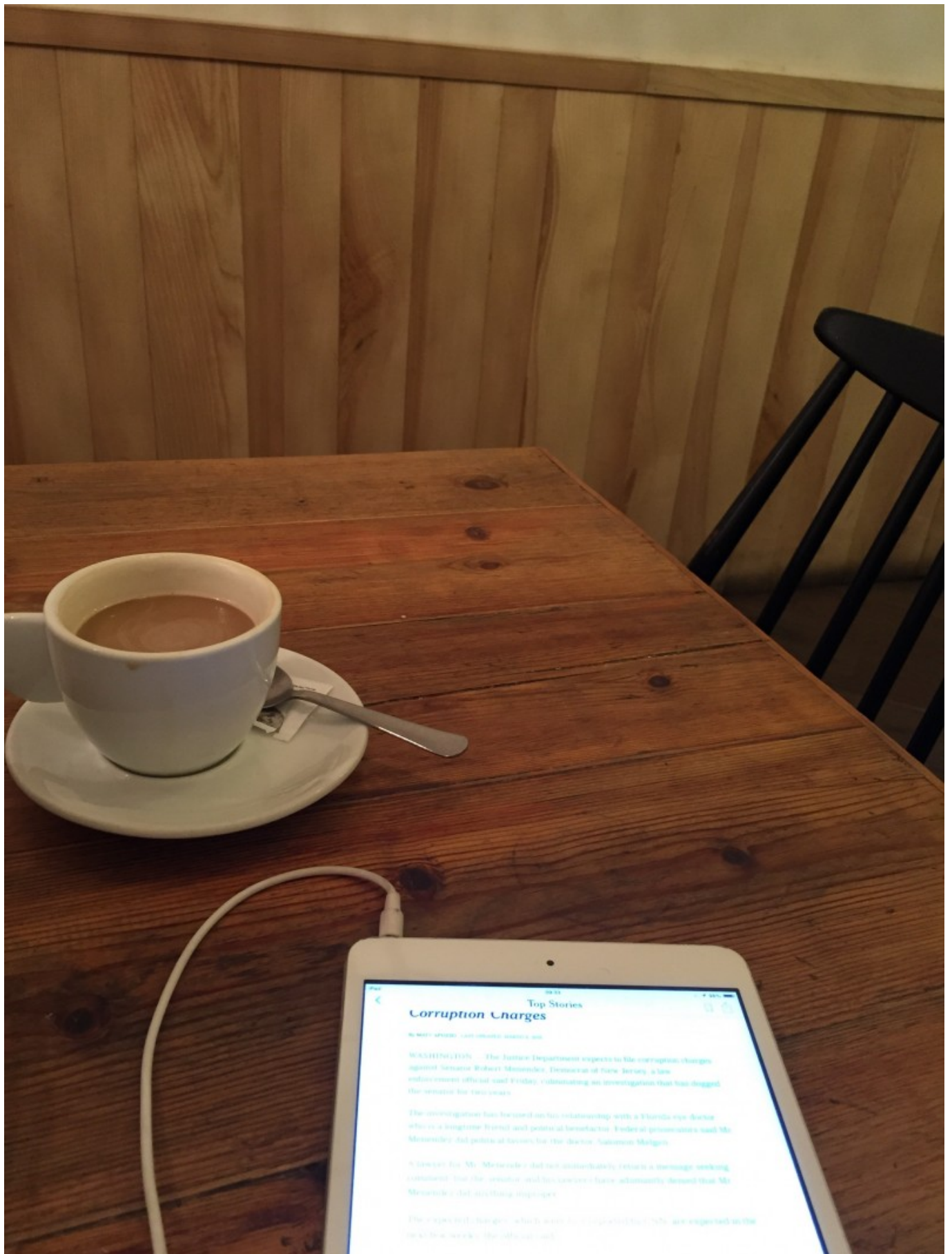
As you can tell...



The **French-style pastries** look absolutely exquisite (even though I can't have any), and you can take my friend's glowing recommendation for croissants as proof.

If you happen to be in the vicinity for lunch, there are also a number of salads and sandwiches as well as soups that look like an excellent little *menú*.

The **Zurbano** location has plenty of seating space in the back which I have taken full advantage of reading *The New York Times* on my iPad on one of those weekend mornings after a long, hard workout at the gym.



If you're on the other side of the Castellana in **Barrio de Salamanca**, there's another **Pancomido** very close to IE Business

School and the US Embassy.

Your bread will most certainly be eaten up, as the name *pan comido* implies, and your little breakfasts will have an extra spring in your step.

***Pancomido Café (Chamberí)***

***Where:*** Calle Zurbano, 50

***Tel.:*** +34 913 08 25 06

***Metro:*** Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10), Rubén Darío (Line 5), or Iglesia (Line 1)

***Pancomido Café (Salamanca)***

***Where:*** Calle del General Oráa, 22

***Tel.:*** +34 617 54 03 19

***Metro:*** Núñez de Balboa (Lines 5 and 9)

---

## Pasta Mito, an Italian Eatery in Mercado de Chamartín – a gem!

In [Mercado Chamartin](#), in the central aisle on the lower floor, you'll find a brand new, chic little Italian eatery called [Pasta Mito](#). All food is freshly prepared in the on-site kitchen, and the owners definitely know what they're doing. Also, the brilliant thing about eateries in neighborhood markets is that the ingredients they cook with tend to come directly from the market's food stalls, so at the same time as being **top-quality stuff**, eating there is great for local businesses too.



My fella and I sat in the cosy 3-tabled dining area and, based on enthusiastic recommendations by the owner, we had... (ima write a list):

- *Glass of the house white each*
- *Complimentary and HUGE antipasto appetiser*
- *Burrata Caprese with fine green pesto*
- *Truffle ravioli with only butter sauce and fresh parmesan sprinkled on top*
- *Tiramisu in a cup*
- *All accompanied by a fresh basket of focaccia*



The food was absolutely incredible and plenty between us – we're glad we shared! The bill came to **€26** exactly, which felt

very reasonable for the quality of food and wine and friendly service.

Whilst we were sat there, we saw lots of people ordering to take away. Great idea too, but the dining experience was way more fun.



**The owners are a husband and wife duo. She's Italian, he's Spanish and speaks fluent English.** We got chatting and he told us that he spent 4 years cooking under Heston Blumenthal, then worked in one of the UK's top restaurants for a few more years before coming back to Madrid.

I asked him about future plans and he said that next month, they're expanding into the veg stall just opposite, which will mean **an extra 6 or so tables**. Having only opened in September

'14, they'll be staying put in [Mercado Chamartín](#) for now as the business is going well and they seem to love what they have.

[Pasta Mito](#) is by far the best Italian food we've had in Madrid yet – it's really quite a gem.

**By Leah Pattem**

## Info

Mercado de Chamartín: [Facebook](#) & [Web](#) (*calle Bolivia 9 <m>Chamartín*)

Pasta Mito: [Facebook](#) (*inside the Mercado de Chamartín, central aisle, lower floor*)

**Another market we recommend:**

[Mercado de San Fernando in Lavapiés – the real food emporium!](#)

---

## Los Porfiados, an inviting Argentine bistro in Lavapies

I routinely walk by [Los Porfiados](#) and have always been intrigued by what I could glimpse from the outside. I was thrilled when I finally had the opportunity to enter and scratch it off of my shortlist. An Argentine bistro situated on **Calle Buenavista**, this establishment radiates elegance and class. The decor and lighting are cozy and inspire diners with

a sense of comfort. **Reservations are necessary in order to be seated due to its popularity.** I saw many people enter and then be turned away due to this spot being so trendy.



The staff all hail from Buenos Aires, sans one who is from Barcelona. I was told that the location is only a year and a half old, swiftly ascending to local fame. Upon being seated, the attentive waiter relayed to me my options from their **vast menu**. It was difficult to choose from their selection—they offer **Argentine empanadas** and **gourmet pizzas**, fillets of meat and a many **fresh salads**. To start I had a smooth **cream of broccoli soup**, accompanied by a glass of *vino tinto*.





The main course was a ***solomillo de cerdo*** with **sweet potato chips**. Absolutely excellent, the meat was savory and cooked to perfection. After using *eenie meanie minie mo* to make a decision of which of their assortment of desserts to consume, I was presented with a delicious chocolate cake. The check was slightly steeper than most of the other locations I've written about, coming out to **19€**. Keep in mind that this is a cash only business. I recommend this location to anyone who wants to be classy for a night, whether to impress a date or to celebrate a personal achievement, or to merely hone the skill of pretending to be classy.



## Info

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

*Address: Calle Buenavista 18*

*Metro: Anton Martin or Lavapiés*

*Contact: 910842945*

## Other restaurants we love in Lavapiés:

[Los Chuchis Bar, downright good food in Lavapiés](#)

[Tribuetxe, a Basque Pintxo bar in Lavapiés](#)

[Restaurante Badila – you need this restaurant in your life](#)

---

# Ostras! Spanish food phrases for aspiring natives

Want to sound like a true *madrileño/a*? Then you'd better learn about food. When foreigners first arrive in Madrid, eavesdropping can confuse. Why is everyone talking about milk? What do politicians have to do with cured sausages? Why do my students shout "oysters!"?

**The answers lie somewhere in Madrid's food culture.**

All things Madrid revolve around food. Work, school, family, and free time all have their feet firmly planted in gastronomy. Veteran Auxiliares not-so-fondly remember that first day home from school. Bewildered that Spaniards go 8 hours between *desayuno* and *comida*, you greedily shove muesli, bread, and ham into your starving jaws—a cruel introduction into how Spaniards think of food.



Other mealtime nuances scream “welcome to Madrid!” No, you can’t find a good lunch before 1PM, or any food except cold *tapas* and coffee between the hours of 4PM and 7PM. Half of the reason for eating *cocido* is for the next day’s *ropa vieja*—always made best by someone’s *abuelita*, who fusses over you and asks why you don’t want another glass of wine at 3PM during your *sobremesa*. Sharing *churros con chocolate* with your friends at dawn after a night of *discotecas* is a rite of passage into *la vida castiza*.

*Madrileños* have always loved food, and their language is no

exception. Madrid's people garnish, pepper, and marinate their speech with **food phrases**. From idioms to exclamations, residents of Madrid use food and food words to discuss politics, time, emotion, death, and much more.

**So, here's my guide for the aspiring hispanophone to some of Madrid's best food phrases.**

You'll see the usual (I'm convinced that oblong vegetables in any language are *always* sexual) and the not-so-usual (playground bullies "give you milk" while they take your milk money). And all will help you spout the foodie Spanish of a proper Madrid resident.

We'll stick to a typical Madrid diet: a mountain of bread, a hunk of meat and seafood, good eggs, milk & dairy, a glug of booze, and a small side of greenery and citrus.

## Bread

***Al pan, pan, y al vino, vino***



Quick-marts have plenty of idioms for the curious linguist.

Let's start with two of Madrid's favorites: bread and wine.

For these two cornerstones of Spanish food, *madrileños* would appreciate you to be direct—the meaning of this particular phrase. “Al pan, pan, y al vino, vino” (“To bread, bread, and to wine, wine”) is a request to be direct. Using this phrase means you want someone else to call it like it is. Don’t beat around the bush and talk in circles—call your bread “bread!”

## ***Hostia***

Speaking of bread and wine, Madrid’s food phrase dictionary deserves an entire page to Communion bread (*la hostia*). The supposed body of Christ can mean anything from a grave insult to a killer descriptor. Simply shouting “hostia!” (if you’re surprised, or you just smashed your toe on a sofa, or Sunday’s *El Clásico* is not going your way) is kosher between friends or younger people, but many *madrileños* may take offense. To describe something as great or large, try *de la hostia*. After a night of a few too many, you may hear “***Hostia! Tengo un melocotón de la hostia!***” (see “Fruit & Vegetables” to know why).

## ***Con las manos en la masa***

Even the beginnings of bread are not sacred from Spanish turns of phrase. To see someone “con las manos en la masa” (“with their hands in the dough”) is to catch them red-handed. Did you just see Jesús cheating on his exam for the hundredth time? His hands were in the dough!

## ***Estar empanado/a***



This one is a great image. To describe the time when someone's brain isn't operating at full capacity, a *madrileño* will say "estoy empanado" ("I am breaded"). Whether that person needs a coffee, is distracted, or simply doesn't want to focus, their brain is battered.

***Un churro***



While these [fried chunks of bread and sugar are usually excellent](#), using “churro” to describe something else means that it lacks quality. For example, you may hear one of your students complaining “he hecho un churro en ese examen” (“I made a churro on that exam”), meaning he or she utterly failed.

### ***Esto es pan comido***

Is something incredibly easy? Then you may hear a Madrid resident exclaim “esto es pan comido” (“this is eaten bread”). English speakers aren’t too far off from their “[piece of cake](#)” or “easy as pie” with this one. Practice these phrases enough, and they’ll be like eaten bread.

# Meat



Beautiful people and corrupt politicians.

## ***Estirar la pata***

Are there things you want to do before you go into the great beyond? Is someone going to croak? Kicking the bucket? Well, in Madrid, death is like a slaughtered animal—they lie you down, do the job, and then you “estirar la pata” (“stretch out the hoof”).

## ***Jamón***

Madrid and pork go together, and so do Madrid Spanish and pork products. After seeing someone attractive across the room, you may hear them described as “el/ella está jamon” (“he/she is ham”). If you refuse to do something, shout “Y un jamón con chorreras” (“Ham with frills!”) to show your disgust.

## ***Chorizo***

Pork sausage gets a special mention. While usually a spicy, smoky treat, the word *chorizo* also means “thief.” A *carterista* (“pickpocket”) may be described with “qué chorizo!” (“what a sausage!”). Sausage also extends to politics—protestors love the phrase “no hay pan para tanto chorizo” (“there isn’t bread for all this sausage”) to describe corrupt politicians.

## ***Poner toda la carne en el asador***

If you’re taking a huge risk, then you’re putting all your meat on the grill (“poner toda la carne en el asador”). Best used at gambling halls, or literally when at a barbeque.

# **Seafood**



Sure it's on sale, but who's cutting it?

## ***Ostras!***

The quintessential exclamation of Madrid, outside of *joder*! My guess is that “oysters!” (“ostras!”) is a tamed-down version of “hostia.” Akin to the English “darn” and “damn,” just more nautical.

## ***¿Quién corta el bacalao?***

A phrase asked of mafia bosses is “who cuts the cod?” (“¿quién corta el bacalao?”). While seemingly random, the phrase has its origins in industrial traditions; in the *comidas* of old Madrid, guild masters and supervisors were the ones who served fish to their underlings. Whoever was at the head of the table carving the filet was the big boss.

## ***Me siento como un pulpo en un garaje***

Feeling out of place? Like a fish out of water? Then say that you “feel like an octopus in a garage” (“te sientes como un

pulpo en un garaje”) for the authentic Madrid vibe.

## Eggs



You're worth a lot!

## ***Tener huevos***

Aside from the obvious connection between eggs and rounded male genitalia, *madrileños* will also shout “la cosa tiene huevos” (“the thing has eggs”) if something doesn’t work properly. Did your blender just start to spark and smoke? It has eggs.

## ***Pisando huevos***

Like any big city, Madrid’s day-to-day life can be pretty fast-paced. And, like any big city, you’ll come across people on the sidewalk who are simply walking too slow. While you dodge tourists to get around them, you can mutter that they’re “pisando huevos” (walking [on] eggs).

## ***Te quiero un huevo***

Are you crazy about your significant other? Then you “love them an egg” (“querer un huevo”). It’s because “un huevo” can mean “a lot.” Don’t ask. Just say it.

## ***Hasta luego, cara huevo***

If you want to sound cutesy, try the Spanish version of “see you later, alligator”: “until later, egg face” (“hasta luego, cara huevo”). It makes about as much sense.

# **Milk and Cheese**



Bags have this stuff printed on them.

## ***Ser la leche***

If “hostia” deserves its own page in Madrid’s food dictionary, milk merits its own chapter. As an opaque white liquid, milk has its sexual euphemisms. But, if something “is the milk,” it’s quite awesome. If everything’s going your way, try “hoy ha sido la leche” (“today has been the milk”).

## ***Estar de mala leche***

Milk is good, but all milk will go bad. In this case, Madrid speakers say someone “está de mala leche” (“is of bad milk”) when they’re grumpy. Chronic/permanent sufferers of bad milk “tienen mala leche” (“have bad milk”) in their systems.

## ***Me cago en la leche***

By itself, “I crap in the milk” (“me cago en la leche”) can be a general exclamation of disappointment or anger. But, in conversation, it can hold all the hatred and disgust that a bowl of milky waste can possess. Save this one for when you mean it: “me cago en la leche de la puta que te date la luz/la puta madre que te parió” (“I crap in the milk of the whore mother that birthed you”).

## ***Ir a toda leche***

When someone is “going full milk” (“ir a toda leche”), they’re running full out. Full milk’s opposite would be “pisando huevos” (see “Eggs”).

## ***Dar una leche***

When someone smacks or hits you, they “give you milk” (“te da una leche”).

## ***Que no me lo des con queso***

A bit of gastronomy trivia: very high-quality wine is enjoyed by itself. For the snobby, consuming cheese with wine ruins the experience of both. The fats from the cheese coat the

inside of your mouth, limiting how much you can taste the wine.

As such, *madrileños* shrewdly ask “que no me lo des con queso” (“don’t give it to me with cheese”) to tell someone to stop ripping them off. It’s to help avoid life’s various glasses of *tintorro* (see “Alcohol”).

### ***Blanco y en botella? Leche***

Do you want to say that something’s obvious? As obvious as something that’s white and in a bottle (“blanco y en botella”)? Then try this phrase. Duh.

## **Alcohol**



### ***Botellón***

Stay in Madrid for more than an afternoon with the younger crowd, and you’ll have learned *botellón*. Part hang-out, part

pre-game, part illegal, Madrid's party crowd gather in public spaces to drink "a big bottle" ("botellón"), usually of *tinto de verano* (red wine and fruit soda), *calimocha* (red wine and Coca-Cola), beer, or something harder. Controversial yet characteristic.

## ***Garrafón***

Some people swear that some bars will "give it to you with cheese" by filling their empty bottles of fancy liquor with trashy, bottom-shelf spirits. These liquors, the ones that melt your brain and lead to the worst *resacas* you've ever had, are called "gas cans" ("garrafondes").

## ***Tintorro***

There is [the good stuff](#), and then the not-so-good stuff. The wine equivalent of a *garrafón*. Usually used to make *calimocha* during a *botellón*.

# **Fruits & Vegetables**



## ***Ajo y Agua***

The Hispanic world likes optimistic phrases. Some choose “no pasa nada” (“nothing happens”). Others choose “resolver” (“determine”). Some *madrileños* go for the vulgar: “garlic and water” (“ajo y agua”), a shortening of *ajoderse* (“to f\*ck yourself”) and *aguantarse* (to suck it up). A nice message wrapped in a bitter casing.

## ***Campo de nabos***

What did I say about oblong vegetables? A “turnip field” (“campo de nabos”) is a “sausage fest”—a party with only men. You understand the image.

## ***Melocotón***

If you “have a peach” (“tienes un melocotón”), you have a hangover. An alternative is *cebollón* (“big onion”), meaning

the same thing. Who knew having produce meant you had one too many last night?

### ***De uvas a peras***

There's someone you get along with really well, but you only see him/her once a year or so. What we'd call "once in a blue moon" in English changes to "from grapes to pears" ("de uvas a peras") in Madrid Spanish. The expression comes from the agriculture—vintners harvest grapes in September, and farmers pick their pear orchards in August. If counting from grapes to pears, there's nearly a full year before you'll see that person again.

**Also check out Madrid Food Tour's post – [5 Spanish Food Idioms and How to Use Them!](#)**

---

## **Mamá Campo: A restaurant-market of organic delights in Plaza de Olavide**

Plaza de Olavide is one of Madrid's hidden gems. Situated in the heart of Chamberí between the Iglesia, Bilbao, and Quevedo Metro stops, it's a perfect place to sit on spring days or balmy summer nights. This leads me to [Mamá Campo](#), another one of those places I discovered thanks to an exquisite brunch photo on the Cup of couple Instagram account. Mamá Campo has an organic market as well as a restaurant and children's store/center.

The Mamá Campo restaurant serves all ecological products, epitomizing the eco trend all over the city. One Friday in between doctor's appointments, interviews, and private lessons, I took advantage of the first of many sunny Madrid spring days to FINALLY get a chance to eat lunch at [Mamá Campo](#).



The décor inside the restaurant is very cool. There's reusable wood and other products, making you feel one with nature. There are communal tables (where I sat as I was flying solo), very reminiscent of Le Pain Quotidien, as well as normal

tables for groups of friends. The best part about sitting at the communal table was being perched high above on the stool (especially choice for taking pictures with my iPhone).



As for for choice of dish, I ordered a grilled sea bass filet with sorted vegetables. I was also given an aperitivo of salmorejo with some delicious whole-wheat bread. I was extremely satisfied with my choice and can't wait for my next visit.

But, like I said, the magic of Mamá Campo isn't just that it's

a restaurant. The market, on the part of Calle Trafalgar more towards the Bilbao Metro stop just off of Olavide, has a great selection of products to enjoy at home.



As you walk in, the whole left wall is full of a whole range of produce. You can also buy a sample of organic breads that look absolutely amazing, as well as bio embutidos, sauces, rice milk, almond, coconut milk, and more.



The aesthetic is very similar to the restaurant, with minimalist painting on the walls, splashes of color, wooden cartons to store all of the produce (as you can see here), and classic woven baskets to store your wares. And it looks like that this could have been kale...



which for this New Yorker is definitely great news if kale can be found.

The next time you discover Olavide on a sunny day and are looking for some organic produce or a delicious, sustainable meal, then Mamá Campo is your go-to place in this little hidden rincón of Madrid.

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

*Restaurante Mamá Campo*

*Plaza de Olavide*

*28010 MADRID*

***Metro:*** *Iglesia, Bilbao, or Quevedo*

*Tel.: 91 447 41 38*

*Mamá Campo*

*Calle Trafalgar, 22*

*28010 MADRID*

# Krachai, a Cozy & Elegant Thai Restaurant in Chueca

**Krachai** is yet another seemingly upscale establishment that was first introduced to me by my Dad's friend, Rafael. This fantastic Thai restaurant, situated near metro Alonso Martinez, offers a satisfying 13€ *menu del dia*. My friend Diana and I have eaten here on a handful of special occasions; somehow each time it slips my mind to reserve a table. This is strongly advised due to the location's popularity, otherwise diners are condemned to wait in line. The wait was worth it today. This spot is cozy, dimly lit, and has two floors. The ambiance is calming and the servers are highly attentive and efficient.



Diana and I were well aware of what we would be ordering off of their *menu del dia* by the time we were seated. We both got the mixed appetizers which consists of the **chicken and peanut sauce skewer**, a spring roll, and a crispy shrimp dumpling. Diana followed this up with the spicy **red curry with chicken strips**, vegetables and jasmine rice. My main course was a **yellow curry with prawns** and vegetables. I am a huge fan of shrimp in all of their various forms.







I voiced that all of my life decisions were validated due to their preceding the moment where this **indulgent feast** was in front of me. By the time the rice expanded in our stomachs, our desserts arrived. I had a scoop of strawberry ice cream, and Diana a small flan, in order to end our experience on a sweet note. I strongly recommend this location and its *menu del dia* when you have a craving for Thai cuisine.

[Facebook](#)  
[Website](#)

**Address:** C/ Fernando VI, 11

**Metro:** Alonso Martinez

**Contact:** 91 833 65 56

***More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:***

▪ *Ramen Kagura, Madrid's (almost) perfect ramen bar*

- Kintaro – Oy Vey
  - Sumo – This Japanese restaurant's name says it all
  - Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food
  - Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant
  - Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.
  - Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!
  - Soy Kitchen – a fusion of Asian flavors
- 

## **Gibraltar, an authentic Moroccan restaurant in Lavapies**

My close friend Kameron “el ProfeSoul” Sterling has been an excellent resource to me in my mission to shed light on the endearing establishments hidden within our multi-cultural barrio of Lavapies. “It’s all about the fellas,” he said charismatically as he led me into Gibraltar, a charming Moroccan restaurant situated on C/ Casino by the Embajadores park. Entering this location was akin to leaving Europe and entering Morocco—the authenticity made visible by its lively crowd of Moroccan gentlemen who were sipping tea, bantering in French and casually shooting the shit.



Kameron was greeted warmly by the head server, who presented us with **delicious mint tea**. Kam is well acquainted with this establishment considering its essentially in his backyard. He recommended that I try the **al harira**, a thick, spicy soup containing chicken, tomatoes and ginger with other herbs.





This was followed up by our respective main courses: a **Tajine of chicken with prunes, almonds, egg, and vegetables** & a **Tajine of Lamb, couscous and vegetables**. Both of these Tajines were phenomenal, with their spectrum of fresh flavors dancing on our palates.



The staff of this establishment are extremely amicable and efficient. The head server, who was quite vocal to me about exactly how fond he is of Kam, was able to guess correctly based on my accent that I'm from New York. I felt very much accepted as an outsider.

Kam and I left this establishment incredibly full and pleased with ourselves—the check was **11€ each**. I strongly recommend this establishment to any adventurous eaters who are searching for a **colorful window into a completely different world**.

## Info

**Address:** *Calle Del Casino 16*

**Metro:** *Lavapies, Embajadores*

**Phone:** *606 78 75 67*

## Also check out:

[Baobab, an Authentic Senegalese Restaurant in Lavapiés](#)

[Tribuetxe, a Basque Pintxo Bar in Lavapiés](#)

[Lavapiés and its market: the real food emporium!](#)

[Badila – you need this restaurant in your life](#)

---

# Best place to get your mop chopped in Madrid, the minefield of avoiding a mullet

I remember it well: My first hairdressing experience in Madrid. There were tears. There was a tantrum. There was most certainly no danger of me leaving a tip.

The scene of the **hairdressing crime** was a little place near to Sol. In hindsight this was probably my first error, **guiri central** and clearly not the kind of place that a *madrileño* would frequent. My dirty blonde locks were left with a definite tinge of ginge and it took months (and a great deal of expense) to restore my battered tresses to their former 'glory'.

**Enter Aveda.** The holy grail of hairdressers and one of my favourite spots to head to when TLC is needed. Situated on

**Calle de Jose Ortega y Gasset**, it's smack bang in the middle of what is the essentially the swishest of barrios, so if you're judging a book by its cover, you can rest assured that you're in good hands. \*I always leave feeling like a blissed out little Buddha!

Upon arrival you're greeted with Vogue, an array of coffee options and a head massage. I'd pay **40 euros** for that alone after a tough day at work. What comes next is a masterclass in keeping the customer sweet. They talk through your hair type, your style, (how early you're willing to get up in the morning to tame your natural curls in my case) and only then will they help you to decide on a cut (or colour) that's going to work. More often than not **this chat happens in English** – so if your pigeon Spanish won't cut it you need not worry as it's unlikely that they mistake the term 'highlights' for a 'buzzcut'.

I admit that I am pretty picky when it comes to hairdressers and never really quite understand why I don't leave a salon looking like Giselle (despite the fact that I've taken in a picture to show the stylist and everything!) but I have genuinely never left **Aveda** feeling anything less than chuffed. Word of warning: I am rarely able to leave without purchasing some of their gorgeous products or taking a cheeky dip into the nearby Lavinia for a post haircut tipple. (More of that in a future post).

**Steer clear of any pretenders, Aveda is top of the chops.**

[Web](#)

**Where:** Aveda Calle de José Ortega y Gasset, 26, 28006 Madrid

**Phone:** 914 32 22 46

**Metro:** Núñez de Balboa or Velázquez

## Another option:

**Leo** is a great hairdresser in Madrid, bilingual in English and Spanish. His haircuts cost around **20€** (including blowdrying and styling). He also does hair coloring and makeup. Contact him through his page on **Facebook**.

## Also check out:

**Beauty Series for the Ladies – Madrid's Best Nail Salons**