

Peyote San, Mexican fusion at its most fabulous

I love Mexican food. I mean, I properly **LOVE** it. A holiday spent in Tulum with tequila on tap was possibly as close to utopia as I'll ever get on the food front. Tacos, guac, and burritos – I love them all equally and don't get me started on margaritas – second to gin (and possibly water due to pure necessity) it definitely edges its way into my three most supped liquids. So imagine my intrigue when I'd heard about the menu at [Peyote San](#) – **a place that's managed to fuse Mexican munchies with sushi**. Definitely worth a gander I mused and suffice to say it was.

Located near Colon (or as I affectionately refer to the area with the 'giant flag') [Peyote San](#) restaurant is en route to where the good shops are. From the outside looking in it could easily be missed, but the interior is anything but shy and retiring. **It's instantly instagramable** (yes, that's now a word along with with TMI and FML) largely due to the bold graffiti-type images that adorn most of the walls.



If you've travelled to the Big Apple it certainly feels reminiscent of somewhere swish that you'd find on the Upper West Side – choc-a-bloc with beautiful people sipping elaborately prepared cocktails. However, fear not, it wasn't a case of style over substance as **every last morsel was utterly delicious and well worth the late school night in my case.**

I've yet to visit Japan (although it's on my bucket list) and the cuisine at Peyote San was the next best thing. I worked my way through A LOT of food to make this review as authentic as poss so drumroll please – I can vouch that the **tatiki tuna,**

chicken gyoza, black cod and the Japanese curry with bonito were all delectable as were the pretty potent Asian Malgalita's – a Peyote San take on a classic Marg and unquestionably are to be enjoyed with an air of YOLO – and not the worry of reaching for ibuprofen the following day.



Given the uniqueness of the food, it was also a really nice touch that the chef came over to talk us through the menu and his knowledge and evident passion for the food made the evening all the more gratifying. Peyote San definitely isn't the type of locale to visit if you've got too much month left

and not enough money. **It's definitely more of a date night treat or a birthday splurge.**



Having said that, come Saturday nights, tables are shuffled to the sidelines so that patrons can get their groove on. Having lived in Madrid long enough now to know that Madrileños would favour spending their last fiver on a night out (than something sensible), Peyote San shouldn't remain on your wish list, **pop it in on your hit list now.**

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Marques de la Ensenada 16
- **Metro:** Colon
- **Phone:** 91 088 22 12

You'll also like:

- [Sahuaro, Mexican magic in Plaza Cascorro](#)
- [El Sombrero Azul, pupusas, yuca, enchiladas and more](#)

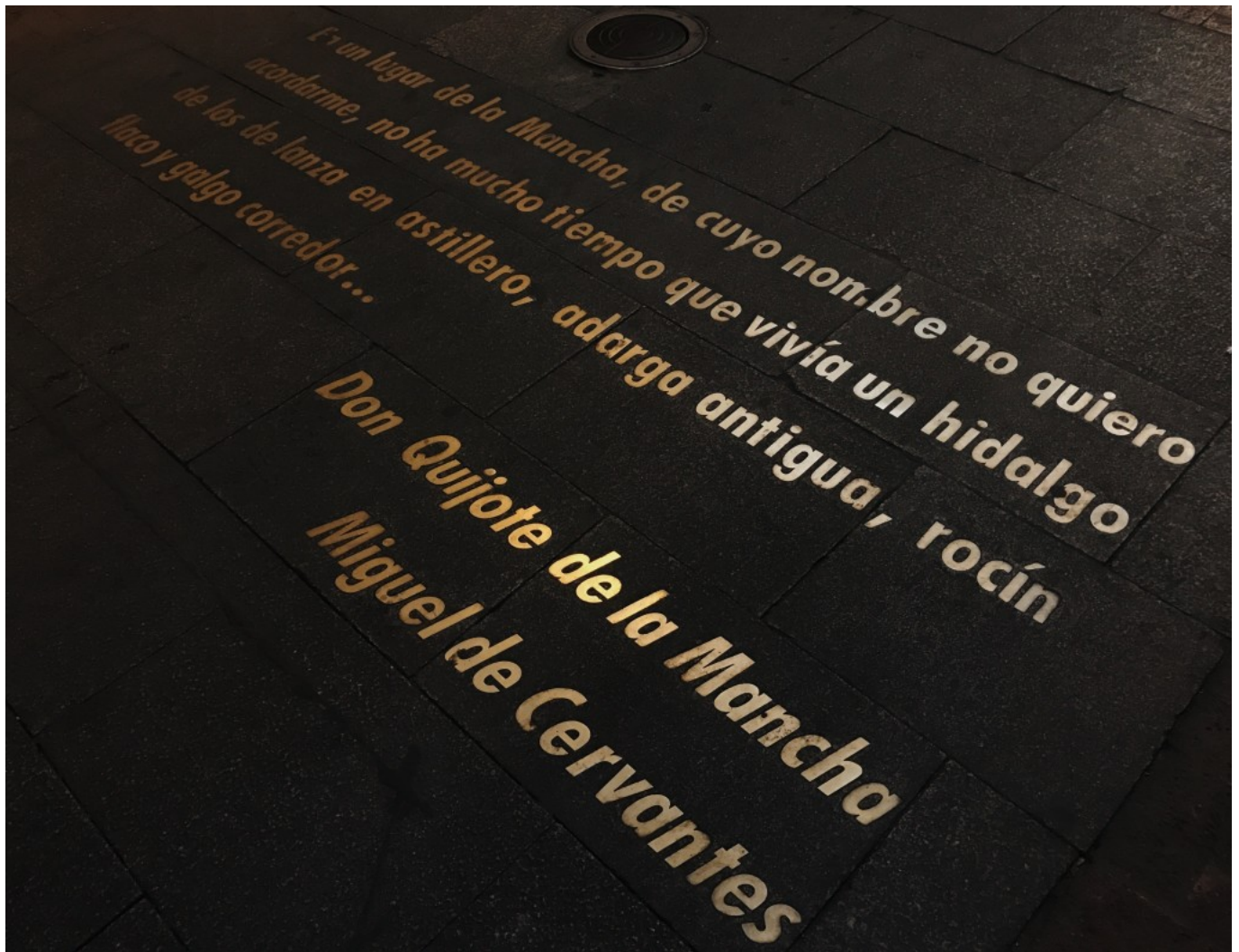
What to See in Barrio de Las Letras

Madrid's [Barrio de las Letras](#) is a timeless neighborhood that stays true to its Spanish roots, while still giving a modern feel that leaves visitors coming back for more. With its amazing food, culture, and ambience, you can't go wrong when it comes to exploring this classic barrio.

Here are a few insights into its history, [hotspots](#) and 3 restaurant recommendations!

History with a Modern Twist

Barrio de las Letras, also known as Huertas, is less than a 10-minute walk from Sol and was once home to some of the greatest Spanish writers. The streets are paved with recognizable quotes from writers such as, Miguel Cervantes and José Echegaray.



There are even plazas and streets dedicated to writers such as Plaza Jacinto Benavente and Calle Lope de Vega. The houses of some of these writers still stand today and are open to the public, such as [Casa Museo Lope de Vega](#) which offers free guided tours.



Plaza Jacinto Benavente



Calle Lope de Vega

Nowadays, this historic neighborhood has become a trendy spot for people to get together and have a drink paired with a few tapas. Calle de las Huertas is the main street where you can easily find great shops, cafes, and some of Madrid's finest eateries.





While exploring the side streets that branch off the main road, keep an eye out for the various boutiques, art galleries, bookstores, and antique shops that make this neighborhood so authentic.





Must-Sees in Barrio de las Letras

Plaza Santa Ana is a well-known hangout spot in this neighborhood. Here you can find a number of restaurants with outdoor seating areas that are perfect for enjoying the ambience with a nice wine or beer.





Plaza Santa Ana is also where you can find monuments of Calderón de la Barca, Federico García Lorca, and the Teatro Español, making it a popular spot for tourists.



Monument Calderon de La Barca



Monument Federico Garcia Lorca



Teatro Español—Madrid's oldest theater

3 Restaurants in Barrio de las Letras

This neighborhood is a hot spot for some of Madrid's oldest taverns and restaurants that serve typical Spanish dishes and tapas. Here are some of the best ones.

[Cervecería Cervantes](#) is a favorite among the locals. It's decorated with beautiful tiles that give a traditional Spanish feel. Every time I walk past this bar, it's always packed with people enjoying tapas and beer. This *cervecería* is known for its seafood that can be ordered in small portions. So stop in and try them all!



Another go-to place is [El Lacón](#) on Calle de Manuel Fernández y González. This place has been around since the 60s and has been considered a classic ever since. It's known for its drink and tapa deal, meaning that with each beer you order, the waiter will bring a small plate of tapas to your table. Not only is this restaurant famous for its incredible deal, but it's also known for its full plates such as, *cocido Madrileño* and the meat or fish *tablas* that can easily feed 3 people or more.



And if you're looking for a place that has it all, [Casa Alberto](#) is the place for you. This restaurant is hard to miss with its red exterior, antique writing, and open door which allows people to take a peek inside.



When first entering **Casa Alberto**, it's hard to get past the crowd of people drinking and ordering tapas at the bar. But once you're in the dining room, you are guaranteed a great sit-down meal. For starters, the *croquetas de jamón* are an amazing way to start your meal. Another great starter is the *gazpacho de melon* with a prawn tartar. This gazpacho gives a modern twist on the classic Spanish plate by creating a sweet but savory infusion.

Not only are their appetizers high quality, but so are their main dishes. Casa Alberto makes an incredibly flavorful and hearty *callos a la Madrileña* that's perfect for a mid-day feast. As a U.S. Midwestern girl who loves red meat, I had to second guess myself after trying the *ventresca de bonito*. This fish plate was grilled to perfection topped with quality olive oil, fresh garlic, and a side of potatoes.

Make sure to leave room for dessert because **Casa Alberto** won't disappoint. Their cream-filled crepes topped with homemade blueberry and cheese ice cream are the perfect go-to dessert. But if you're looking for something with a bit of an alcoholic twist, the apple and cider sorbet is highly recommended.



Check out [all the spots in Barrio de Las Letras](#) featured on Naked Madrid!

Kittens & coffee at Polineko, an ethical cat cafe in La Latina

You may have heard of the Japanese concept of a '**neko café**,' or a cat cafe, which has made a splash in the world's biggest cities in recent years.

In Japan, the idea was born because most landlords don't allow pets. So animal lovers go to a cat cafe and pick which cat they'd like to play with. Each time they visit, they spend time with the same cat, forming a relationship with him or her. It's kind of like having a part-time pet.

In other cities though, like London and New York, it works a bit different. You simply pay to **hang out in a feline-filled cafe**, and the cats roam free while you sip a latte and relax.



The latter has arrived to Madrid. There are a handful of options, but my favorite is [Polineko](#), recently opened in La

Latina. It stands out for several reasons:

- **Its authentic Japanese style.** Between the decor, the Japanese snacks like doriyakis, and the anime-themed items in their shop, you'll feel like you've stepped into a real neko café.



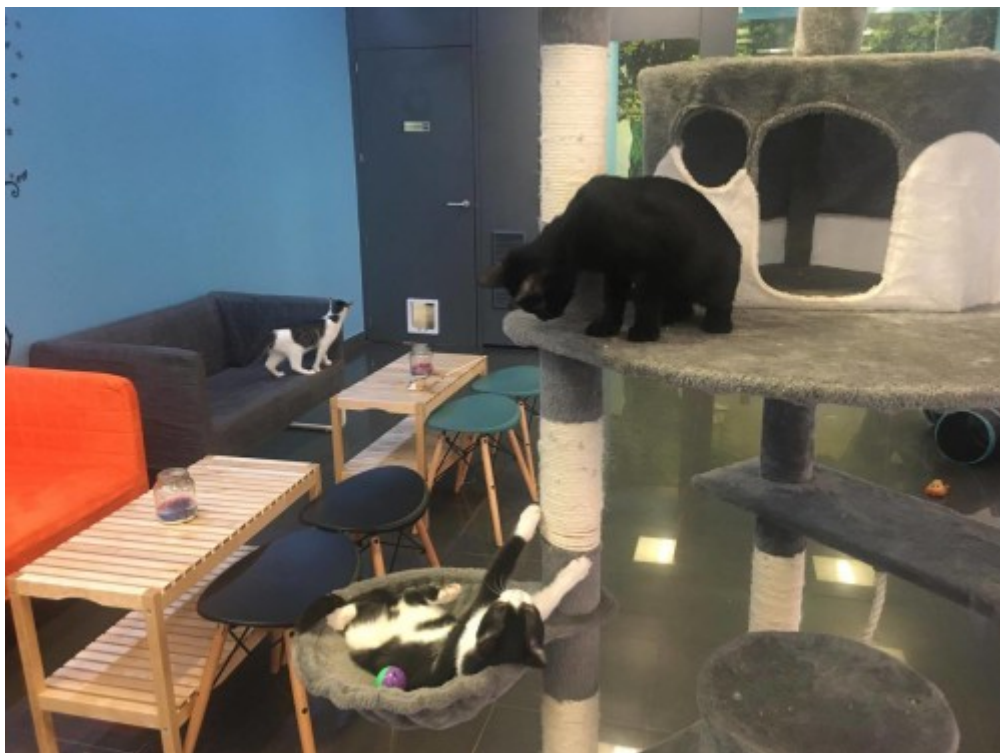
- **Its mission.** Above all, Polineko aims to foster loving relationships between humans and their feline friends. Unlike other cat cafes in Madrid, you can touch and play with all the cats, and almost all of them are available for adoption. They partner with animal protection agencies like [ALBA](#) that facilitate the adoption process, guaranteeing that all cats are healthy and vaccinated, and that they end up in loving and reliable 'forever' homes.



- **Its staff.** Everyone who works here is incredibly friendly and knowledgeable, from Steven (the warm and open co-owner), to Juan (barista extraordinaire), and its other co-owner, Melisa, who I didn't meet but is a veterinarian and does free behavioral consultations for your cat every Friday!



- **The environment.** The cafe is spacious and opts for couches instead of tables and chairs. There's free wifi and they won't bat an eye if you choose to work on a laptop, or if you prefer to sit on the ground and play with the kitties.



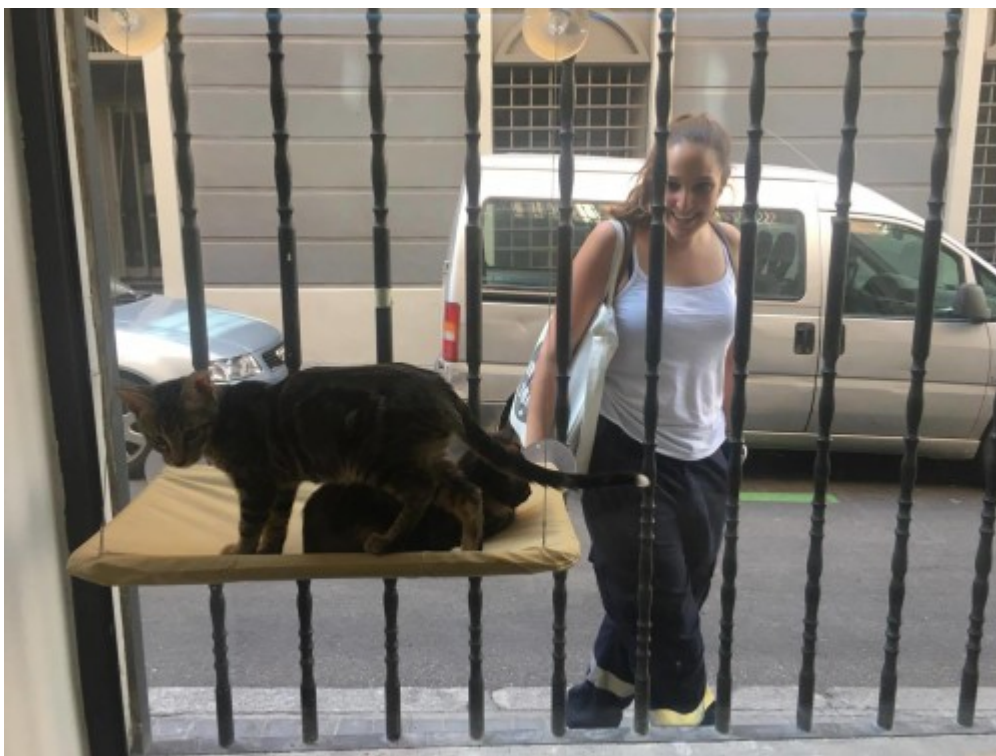


- **The coffee.** It's delicious. That's all. Oh, and they have every kind of milk variety you can think of. Try it with almond milk!





In addition to coffee and Japanese snacks, Polineko also offers bowls of cereal (Froot Loops and Lucky Charms, oh my!) and Japanese beer and tea.



Polineko is open Sunday-Thursday from 11am-10pm, and Friday and Saturday from 11am-11pm.

Prices are as follows:

- 4€ for 30 minutes and a beverage
- 6€ for 30 minutes, a beverage, and a Japanese snack
- 6€ for an hour and a beverage
- 8€ for an hour, a beverage, and a snack

The staff is also planning to launch **intercambio nights** soon—stay tuned for more info by following them on social media.

Here are more cat pics.







Photos courtesy of Polineko and the author.

Info

- **Address:** Carrera de San Francisco, 11
- **Metro:** La Latina
- **[Facebook](#)**
- **Instagram & Twitter:** @polineko_madrid
- **Website:** www.polineko.com
- **Phone:** 680 85 83 89