

Lockdown diaries: Cat, primary school teacher & Naked Madrid contributor

Madrid is on its third day of lockdown. For 15 days we aren't allowed to go outside unless it's to the supermarket, to walk our dog, or to the pharmacy (or for urgent matters, i.e. going to the hospital). And we must go alone if possible. This has all happened very abruptly and it seems as though the rules keep changing every day. It's hard to explain what it feels like to be here right now, which is why I'd like to share personal stories of Madrid residents who are currently living through this.

First up is Cat Powell, a primary school teacher who works at a British school in Madrid. Originally from the UK, Cat has been living in Madrid for nearly a decade and she's also a key contributor to Naked Madrid.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

So this time last week looked a whole lot different to today. I'd never really spent time thinking about my freedom; only now do I realise how much I took it for granted. My workdays always start by grabbing a coffee on my morning commute, followed by a post-weekend catchup with colleagues and then being cheered by the faces of the children in my class. My evenings would more than likely be spent at a spin class or having a *caña* with my partner at our local. As of today, none

of that is an option. We're on lockdown in Madrid and now it's painfully clear to me how much of my daily life (and the seemingly mundane activities that it's made up of) are actually a true source of pleasure.

What does the street look like?

I live on Calle Ponzano, a street that even has its own hashtag #ponzaning. You usually can't move for revellers enjoying post-work drinks, tapas with friends and hives of *madrileños* sitting on benches watching the world gone by. It's now a ghost town, eerily quiet. I'm already longing for the days when we can all be fighting for a spot in the sunshine. Madrid without people on its *terrazas* truly feels like a city without its soul.

Have you noticed any random acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

I'm a primary school teacher so I'm receiving daily acts of kindness from my students who are sending in their work with sweet little notes and well wishes. As a natural extrovert and someone who loves to socialise, not having human contact is tough, but being able to give students praise (even from afar) is now raising my spirits as the first weekend of lockdown was tough. I'm not really a homebird and more than a few hours at home does not come naturally to me. In addition, the applause for healthcare workers at 10pm on Saturday was also incredibly uplifting and it really helped to create a feeling of unity within the city that I call home.

How are you coping?

If you ask my boyfriend, he'd probably say not very well! We've gone through a few moments of panic and wanting to go home (to the UK) but I think we're now in a place of knowing that this situation is for the greater good. We've slowed down and we're going to try to find the simple pleasure of having more time, as really that's all we now have. I never had a breakfast that isn't rushed, so today we've just enjoyed pancakes. My skincare routine has ramped up as I've really no excuse now not to luxuriate in doing a face mask. I love reading, but it rarely happens with any regularity unless it's during the summer and on a sun lounger. I plan to read lots now and try to limit my screen time. Aside from that, I think my flat will never have been cleaner, I'll enjoy these days of 8 hours sleep and I'm thinking about signing up for an interior design course – let's see how much of Netflix I can work my way through first though!

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over ?

The first thing I'll do when lockdown is over is get to the beach. It's my birthday this coming Saturday and I was due to spend it in Valencia. I'm craving time with sea and sand, so my plan is to book a trip to Tarifa (my happy place) and throw caution to the wind – meaning treating myself to the fanciest hotel I can afford after being cooped up. Bring on room service and a glass of fizz on a rooftop.

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

If I could tell the government to do one thing, it would be please allow the elderly or high-risk members of society to go to the supermarkets for one hour each day before the general public. I cannot imagine how overwhelming it must be to be swept up in this state of unknown and panic as an 80-something-year-old. I think that having that time period before others can go out would help to lessen the feeling of potential chaos in the few public places that are open.

- Cat Powell is also a key contributor to Naked Madrid. [Check out all her articles!](#)

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If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com