

# Refusion Delivery: Where refugee chefs prepare authentic flavors from Syria, Sudan and Venezuela

Refusion Delivery opened last year with a powerful mission: to help refugees find a new home and stable job in Madrid, while also giving them the opportunity to share their culinary culture with their adopted city. All the restaurant's chefs are refugees who bring their family recipes to the menu—that's why you'll find Sudanese falafel, Syrian hummus and Venezuelan tequeños in the same place.

I first found out about Refusion Delivery through one of the five owners, Tina Samson, who also co-founded [Madrid for Refugees](#), a nonprofit organization that's played a big hand in creating this restaurant. But I finally went for the first time last Friday with a good friend of mine, and I'm so glad we went!



*From left to right: me (US), Tina (US), Alex (Sudan), Danny (Venezuela), Hala (Syria) and Souhaib (Morocco)*

Located in Madrid's Tetuan neighborhood, the restaurant has a welcoming and down-to-earth vibe. It's small and narrow, with just a few tables set up alongside the long metallic bar. The food is delicious, vegan friendly and great for sharing. Luckily, throughout our meal we had the chance to talk with Tina and the chefs who were preparing deliveries, serving tables, and chatting with customers non stop. It was great to see how busy they were.

Since opening in May 2019, Refusion Delivery has been featured in major publications. The first article to cause a lot of commotion was by [El Comidista](#), El País' food column. This led to a more [in-depth article and video](#) by El País in March—once

it was published, Tina tells me that they couldn't even handle all the orders and crowds that started flooding in.

*In this video interview by El País (in Spanish), the chefs at Refusion Delivery say they learned how to cook from their mothers and love being able to share their home recipes. Working here also allows them to have a stable job and future.*

Although Refusion Delivery limited their hours and menu a bit due to the pandemic, they've been open for business for the past several months, offering in-person dining, takeout and delivery. Tina also says it's been amazing how much support they've received from the neighborhood.

## **Now, back to our night.**

As soon as we walked in, Tina started telling us the whole story and introduced us to the chefs. First we met Alex from Sudan, who's been in Madrid for four years and likes to sing while she cooks. Part of her family is from Egypt, so her dishes have a mix of Egyptian-Sudanese flavors. Then we met head chef Hala, who's originally from Damascus, Syria, and studied Fine Arts. She came to Madrid with her family in 2013 and together they owned a Syrian restaurant in Alcobendas for many years.

Lastly, we got to talk to Danny from Venezuela, who's been living in Madrid for one year and previously worked in several restaurants in Colombia. He also helped my friend Riju and I place a tack on the world map near the entrance, indicating where we're from (New Delhi and NYC, respectively). It's a fun way to show how international the eatery is.



*When you go, make sure to place a tack on the world map to indicate where you're from!*

## **Here's what we had:**

First we tried Alex's amazing **falafels** inspired by Egyptian and Sudanese recipes. They're made with garbanzo, parsley and onion, and come with the sauce of your choice—Riju had the spicy peanut sauce from Sudan and I went for the cooler yogurt and garlic sauce from Venezuela.



*Egyptian-Sudanese falafels (vegan)*

We also had the **Fatush salad** that came with fried Arabic bread on top; the crunchiness gave a wonderful contrast to the fresh veggies. Both of these starters are vegan and perfect for sharing!



*Fatoush salad topped with fried Arabic bread (vegan)*

Onto the main dishes: **Hurak bi isbau** was my favorite dish of the night, and also one that Tina raved about. It's a traditional Syrian stew made of lentils and homemade wheat dough—with a rich, hearty and sweet flavor. For me, it's the epitome of comfort food. For Hala, it's much more than that.

Hala told us (in fluent English) that back in Damascus, this was a typical dish that women would make for each other—they'd start cooking it in the morning and then once it was room temperature in the evening, they'd sit around in a circle and gossip while eating bowls of stew. Sounds like a fun evening!



*Hurak bi isbau: comforting lentil stew (vegan)*

We also ordered **Shish**, a Syrian skewer with chicken and fresh vegetables. It's covered in a flavorful sauce that you get to sop up with Arabic bread and freshly made rice—the plate was sparkly clean by the time we were done with it.



*Shish: chicken skewer with rice and vegetables*

To top it all off, Tina surprised us with **baklava**. My dad's from Greece so I've had my share of baklava growing up, and I can tell you this was totally different! Hala makes it with her own syrup mix instead of honey, so it's very vegan friendly, sweet and tasty.



*Baklava with a honey substitute (vegan)*

The quality of the food is fantastic and prices are very reasonable. Not only that, but by coming here or ordering delivery, you're supporting a sustainable mission while getting a wonderful taste of family-style dishes and stories from around the world.



All in all, I felt uplifted by going to this restaurant. It gave me hope that there are good things being done—that there

are places that are helping people find new, safe homes, so they can build a life for themselves where they can be themselves.

I'll definitely be going back (specifically to try the hummus and tequeños) and if I ever throw a big event in the future, I'll contact them for catering. I hope that by sharing this article, you'll want to come here too and enjoy Refusion Delivery as much as I do.

## Refusion Delivery

Read more about the restaurant in English in [Global Shakers'](#) article.

Meet the [team behind Refusion Delivery here](#).

See the full [menu and order here](#).

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@refusiondelivery](#)
- Address: Calle Capitán Blanco Argibay 65
- Metro: Valdeacederas (line 1)
- Phone: 669 581 992
- Hours: Wed-Fri 7:30-11pm | Sat 1-4pm & 7:30-11pm

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