

La Espumosa – a little bit of what you fancy (does you good)

Does anyone else find the run-up to Christmas just one big guilt-laden box of chocs? Surely it can't just be me? As soon as December 1st swings around, I struggle not to be reaching for the party favours and my booze intake sky rockets – well it 'tis the season. So in an attempt to not become 50% mulled wine, 50% *turrón*, I headed to La Espumosa, the new Chamberí hotspot which combines healthy grub and bubbles, of the champagne variety.



Myself and my vegetarian date (who is dragging a self-confused carnivore kicking and screaming into healthier habits) headed

out last Tuesday and found ourselves salivating over La Espumosa's menu. Juliette, the owner who coincidentally quit her day job to follow her dream of opening La Espumosa, has curated a menu that sits perfectly within the era of clean eating. These days millennials (much like myself) enjoy a tippie but then again, we also love an avo – everything in moderation is my mantra.

So to this end, the menu sounded delicious, but not dangerously calorific. We split the following offerings; sautéed veggies which provided an instant shot of virtuousness, a burrata with pesto, halloumi fingers (I could've eaten a bucketload of these) and La Espumosa's take on 'patas bravas' that was baked sweet potatoes with a vegan mayonnaise, which were less of the naughty, and a lot more of the nice.



In addition to the nutritious nosh, the cocktails were to die for (I wasn't polishing my halo the entire time, we definitely embraced the notion of 'a little bit of what you fancy does you good'). The waiter whipped us up a gin-based cocktail using my all-time favourite gin, G'vine and a yuzu-based bitter hailing from Japan which was dangerously more-ish. However, as it was a Tuesday evening and not a thirsty Thursday, we exercised a bit of self restraint. Come the

weekend though, La Espumosa is the perfect place to enjoy a hard-earned glass of champers to toast farewell to the working week.





One of the other somewhat unique aspects of La Espumosa in a city with more restaurants than you can shake a stick at, is

that the owner Juliette really wants the restaurant to become a social hub. There are already live music nights, fashion brunches and a whole host of events in the pipeline, even one of my own @littlemissmadrid mixers is pencilled in – so watch this space. And when Madrid edges its way out of its recent cold snap and people can feel their toes once again, I predict that the terraza will become quite the hotspot for Sunday morning brunches and post work cañas too.



La Espumosa looks set to to become my local, and not just for fizzy Fridays. It's hard to walk on by when a venue boasts a

menu that's going to leave you feeling great, rather than guilty. The decor, the food and indeed the concept got my corks popping *couldn't resist a champagne pun. And to this end, we all know there's only one thing better than a glass of champagne, a bottle.



2020 update: monthly brunches!

Given the healthy nature of La Espumosa, the Chamberí locale is now offering what is currently planned to be a HIIT workout followed by a healthy brunch. As La Espumosa does a great line in champagne, the combination of burpees and bubbles is sure to be an appealing one! One Sunday per month, you can workout for 30 minutes at the venue with a fully qualified UK personal trainer and then enjoy a delicious (and nutritious brunch) – ensuring that there's zero guilt about the calories. The brunch includes a healthy detox juice including green apple, cucumber, ginger and pineapple. A coffee of your choice meaning you get an endorphin and a caffeine hit. Followed by either scrambled eggs or avocado on toast. So don your leggings, grab a friend and put your Sunday to good use. Stay tuned to Naked Madrid for the date of the next one and kickstart your 2020 fitness goals.





La Espumosa

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@laespumosa.es](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia 60
- **Metro:** Iglesia

Have your cake with coffee or gin at La Prima Lejana

Thanks to waking up early for work during the week, I'm pretty much a guaranteed earlybird at the weekends. Luckily for me, this meant that last Saturday I had first dibs of the delectable treats on offer at La Prima Lejana. The cool little cafe that's just a stone's throw from C/ Huertas and offers up 'gram worthy decor and cakes worth setting an alarm for.

A venture that's the birthchild of three friends hailing from Galicia, La Prima Lejana combines two of my great loves – cake that's worth the calories and gin. The gin needs no further explanation. Forget strawberries and cream, bangers and mash, fish and chips, there's no pairing that I could love more. Especially when all of the gins on offer are Spanish, including one of my current fave, Nordes.



Now don't get me wrong, I didn't swerve my Saturday morning spin class to swig gin before midday, there's great coffee on offer as well as fresh lemonades in a variety of flavours – I opted for lemon and ginger which was zingy and fresh and was an attempt to offset the cake-shaped goodies.



Now, onto the decor which was basically my own version of utopia. A mix of pinks, gold and marble –essentially the mood board for my own recent flat renovation – had me hot footing it to Maison du Monde to snap up the same shelving that they have there. The attention to detail is second to none, partly due to one of the lovely business partners being an architect, and clearly one with excellent taste.



I often find Spanish cakes waaaaay too sickly sweet but the cakes here were some of (if not the best) that I've tasted in

the capital. I had carrot cake which was inhaled at breakneck speed and we also tried the courgette cake with lemon icing. Again, the plate was all but licked clean.



La Prima Lejana is as pleasing to the eye as it was to the tastebuds and I plan to work my way through their menu, I urge you to do the same.

La Prima Lejana

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@laprimalejanamad](#)
 - **Address:** Calle Lope de Vega, 7
 - **Metro:** Antón Martín
-

Summertime and the livin is easy in Los Caños, Cádiz

✖ So, for those of you who are up to speed with my slightly sporadic Naked Madrid musings (here's looking at you Mum and Dad), you may have noticed that my insta handle is @littlemissmadrid, so I'm asking you to forgive me in advance for this post; I'm going somewhat off piste.

Having recently celebrated living in this ferociously fun and frenetic city for a decade, I do consider myself to be an adopted Madrileña. But even us city folk need to escape the bright lights from time to time, and as summer sadly begins to draws to a close (I am not a jeans and jumper gal), I headed south to seek out the dregs of summer and to have some fun in the sun.



With my AVE ticket purchased to Malaga (seriously, Spain's high-speed train is undoubtedly one of the greatest inventions known to man, up there with Netflix and hair serum I reckon), the train takes a paltry 2 hours 20 and you're down on the coast before you can say sundowner. However, Málaga was merely where I alighted before heading to the hidden gem that is Los Caños de Meca for the weekend.



Now having been living on Spanish soil for a while, I've started to twig that all the best places are reached by car.

In spite of this, it's in all motorists' interests that I remain firmly off the road, so with a willing (and driving) partner in crime, we set off towards Los Caños armed with swimwear and SPF. The beach itself is a beauty – turquoise tides and golden sand prevail.

As we've just edged into September, it had also lost the patchwork quilt effect that comes with swarms of tourists, and it now had an all together more sedate vibe which I was all in for; less tourists equals less time spent queuing at the bar for those all-important beach beers.



Before having road tripped to Los Caños, Tarifa well and truly had my heart in the seaside stakes – but now it's getting too close to call. Having travelled to the Caribbean coast of Columbia back in July, Los Caños de Meca has more than a touch of the quirky cool that can be found there. There's a stretch of bougainvillea lined road called Avenida Trafalgar that hosts a number of surf shack-type bars – where folks spill out

onto the street as easily as the drinks flow.

My hands-down favourite beach bar is cocooned in the Mercado de Artesania and called [La Perlita](#). It's hard to describe just how picture perfect it is – but I'll give it a go. Imagine your ideal back garden, by the sea and the dreamiest piña colada/carrot cake combo and yeah, you're about halfway there.



Pic from [@streetfoodcadiz](#)

Now I love a food truck as much as the fellow millennial, but this one can't be beat. The cocktails are fantastic, the food fresh (we had falafel, prawn dumplings, veggie noodles and a veggie burger – yes, I'm aware that gluttony is one of the seven sins) but with prices that definitely don't match

Madrid, it was nigh on impossible not to over order. The menu is what I'd call healthy hipster and the nice touch is that's everything's recyclable. As we all try to slide into sustainable socialising, La Perlita is ahead of the curve, with their food being served in paper bags and the gently lulling reggae tunes that swayed in the background added to my food coma.



No trip to Los Caños is complete without a trip to the infamous beachside mecca, La Jaima. Birthplace (I imagine) to

thousands of insta stories, it's so idyllic even the most hardwired stresshead would struggle not to be lulled into a zen-like state here – the views can't be done justice on an iPhone (and god knows, I tried) but as the golden hour kicked in and the *café del mar* type tunes ramped up, I was positively horizontal on my beanbag and felt about a million miles away from the chaos and crowds of a city. The bar boasts live music and quite possibly the friendliest staff I've ever met – although who wouldn't be beaming from ear to ear if you got to call the beach your 'office'.



Feeling satiated having spent the day bar hopping and getting bronzed, we decided that we should try to find a place stay.

Word of warning: it's not easy. Los Caños is clearly not one for mass tourism, as we painfully discovered.

Spontaneity doesn't always pay off so what I will say is book ahead. Clearly we weren't the only ones hoping to sizzle our way into September so, sadly, there was no room, quite literally at the Inn(s) for this Mary and Joesph, but I did spot Hotel Guadalupe, a gorgeous looking boutique hotel on the aforementioned Avenida Trafalgar. Seriously, I can sniff out a decent-looking hotel like a bloodhound. Sadly, I just don't seem to have the foresight to book them.

So whilst I didn't get to stumble back to a beachfront abode, I did get to enjoy a pretty perfect day that filled my cup right up and should keep me feeling warm and fuzzy into autumn (or maybe that was just my slightly sunburnt nose). Either way, cities are great and all, but sometimes your bod just craves some Vitamin Sea and ultimately the heart wants what the heart wants. In this case it was a delicious dose of daiquiris and downtime.

[Los Caños de Meca, Cádiz](#)

Bless Hotel rooftop bar – beautiful sunsets, bebidas and bowling!

One of the major perks of being a teacher (which is my day job), has undoubtedly got to be the holidays. Let's be real... Yes, teaching is a vocation for most, but I defy anyone to shirk the idea of having two blissfully sun-soaked months off

each summer. The benefit of being a part-time lady of leisure is that when I've not escaped to the coast (it's no joke that Madrid is literally an inferno come July), but on the plus side, the city feels like a veritable playground for all those left sweltering in the city.



So with all this free time, I've found myself strolling round barrios that I tend to neglect in favour of my own and as a result, I stumbled upon the holy grail of hotels that is the BLESS hotel on Calle Velázquez. From the rooftop bar slash restaurant, to the clandestine bowling alley nestled below the

lobby, the hotel offers a taste of luxe living – and in my case, all within walking distance. Who doesn't love to get their steps up before sinking a G&T guilt free?

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So let's talk terrace – Madrid has really upped its game when it comes to rooftop vistas of late and there's plenty of competitors vying for your attention, and your hard-earned cash. However, in my humble opinion, BLESS has the edge as its pleasingly buzzy, not overwhelmingly busy, and has beautifully considered decor, rather than your bog standard minimalist modern vibe that currently prevails. Most recently, my friends and I managed to snag a beaut of a booth and it wouldn't be out of place at a beach club in the south of France.



But the big draw is ultimately that the views are to die for – nab a spot for golden hour and watch the sky resemble Monet at

his best as it changes from azure blue, to blush pink, to burnt orange – all whilst sipping on a perfectly prepared cocktail of your choice. On this note, don't get me wrong, BLESS is not cheap – but what you splurge on the drinks you slightly claw back on the naughty but nice nibbles that accompany each tipple. And the service is faultless – I can attest to this given the patience and perseverance to get the perfect shot of me and my amigas for the 'gram.



So having been up top I returned to see what was down below and it didn't disappoint. Tucked under the hotel is a

speakeasy-type bar that houses... a BOWLING ALLEY! Yes, limber up and get ready to strike. We booked a lane on a Saturday night and continually cursed our lack of bowling prowess but it still made such a welcome change from the usual dinner-then-drinks drill. I bowled in vertiginous heels assuming that (like my humble megabowl back home) they'd give you those Velcro shoes that make you feel about 5 years old – anyways, they do not.



Worth bearing in mind if you're competitive and I still maintain that it was my stilettos and not my lack of technique

that hampered my score. Again, the bowling alley may be underground but bargain basement this ain't. Games cost €12 per person so whilst it's a bit of a treat, it was well worth it to be cocooned in what felt reminiscent of a prohibition-era speakeasy.



You might be getting the gist that I like the BLESS hotel and you'd be right. The vibe in Madrid is shifting, business is booming, tourists are appearing in their droves and whilst this is all economically excellent, I still like my social scene to come with a side of secrecy. BLESS is a gem in barrio Salamanca, just go wielding cash (and comfy shoes).

Bless Hotel Madrid

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@blesshotelmadrid](#)
- **Address:** Calle Velázquez, 62
- **Metro:** Velázquez

Follow @littlemissmadrid on Instagram for more gems in the city!

Beautiful blooms at Botanyco – a haven for flower fans in Madrid

Much to the dismay of my bank manager, it's a given that I spend pretty much all my cash on fashion and food. (Sorry if you're reading this folks, I promise the odd tenner gets bunged into savings). My monthly bank statement often reads like a roll call of where to shop and where to eat, but having bought a pad last year, there's definitely been a shift in my spends – from fashion to furniture and more noteworthy, given the theme of this post, now to flowers.



Over the past year I have gone hard on nesting. There's no such thing as too many cushions or candles in my book, and

blooms have become a weekly indulgence that I now pick up with the same level of regularity as I do milk, almond of course. This has largely been encouraged by the fabulous florist that's now within walking distance of my casa, Botanyco.





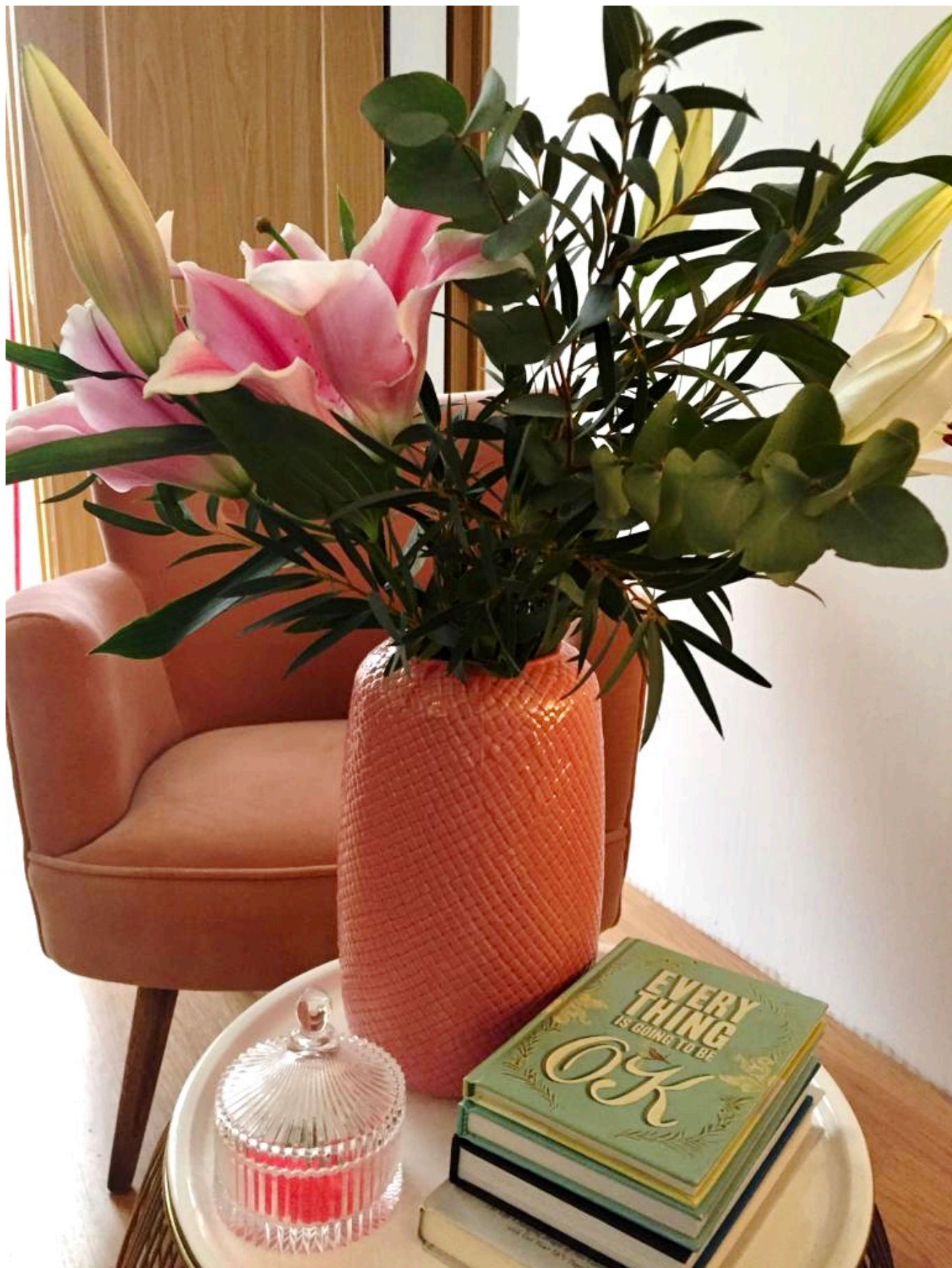
In a city which is often lacking in much other than fairly insipid-looking florals, Botanyco is a haven for flower fans

and has real pavement appeal. For a start, the shop itself is stunning. You almost feel like you're entering into someone's gorgeous garden thanks to the patio area at the back that's cutely concealed from street view.



Now if you like your flowers, this is your one-stop shop. They whip up bouquets, stock insta-friendly blooms such as peonies

(it can't just be my 'gram feed that's littered with them come May time) and there's a collection of cacti that wouldn't be out of place in the desert.



I've often nipped in to pick up a last-minute gift that always surpasses the price tag. Don't get me wrong, the flowers

aren't cheap, but this is a swish little spot where you can sit and enjoy a coffee post shop on the house.



I'm often berated by friends and fam for what on the surface might appear to be a rather frivolous and costly habit, my response – stop and smell the flowers, quite literally. Who doesn't love walking into their *piso* to find a pretty little posey and of all the things that I splash the cash on (of which there are a few), a bunch of blooms that spark joy is not what's going to break the bank.





In addition to being your neighborhood florist, Botanyco supplies flowers for events – weddings and the like. And if you fancy yourself as a frustrated florist in the making, they even do classes on weekday evenings where they'll teach you the tricks of the trade. It's a blooming lovely spot (sorry, couldn't resist the pun) and I urge you to not leaf it out on your to-do list.

Botanyco

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@botanyco_](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia, 59
- **Metro:** Iglesias

10 Best restaurants in Madrid, according to Little Miss Madrid

So, if you're a long-time Madrid dweller, you'll remember the harsh days of the financial crisis which are now (thankfully) a sort of blip on the landscape of Madrid's *movida*. Business is booming and as a result, the culinary scene in the city now packs more than just a punch. It positively sizzles with the best of Spanish produce and rustic neighbourhood joints that can't be missed.

It's a tough one to call, but I'm not sure what I've done more of since having moved to the land of *jamón* – eat out, or treat myself at the Zara sale. Either way, I've had a lot of hot dinners and have whittled down my favourites for you to work your way through. A sort of foodie bucket list as it were.

If traditional cuisine is your thing, hopefully I've got you covered. However, as the city lets go of its slightly conservative culinary roots, the patrons of the plazas and the tourists on the *terrazas* now greedily gobble ramen, cervices and bao buns with as much gusto as the locals love their pinchos. Many to-do lists are a chore, make this one a pleasure.

Here's a round-up of the 10 best restaurants in Madrid. You'll also find my full restaurant review of each one if you click on the link in the titles!

1. Lady Madonna – take a day off the diet



If you're in the mood for a great bit of grub without breaking the bank (and aren't we all?) head to Lady Madonna. Definitely the kind of place where you can dress up for dinner, it's just a stone's throw from Alonso Martínez and a little oasis in the heart of the city. Its charming little terrace is the perfect place to people watch, and the Sunday brunch is pretty damn delish.

- **Facebook & Instagram:** [@ladymadonna_restaurante](#)
- **Address:** Calle Orellana, 6
- **Metro:** Alonso Martínez
- **Phone:** 915 02 41 82

2. Bosco de Lobos – a casual-chic

restaurant in Chueca



Oh how I love this place. Let me count the ways... It's a favourite in the same way as a beloved leather jacket is. [Bosco de Lobos](#) is the perfect place for a casual yet chic dining experience. The menu covers every foodie fad but is complete with classics such as *arroz* and steak tartare. The desserts are to die for, as are the interior vibes – all dim lighting and shelves groaning with books. A must visit.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@boscodelobosmadrid](#)
- **Address:** COAM, Calle de Hortaleza, 63, 28004 Madrid
- **Metro:** Alonso Martínez, Chueca & Tribunal
- **Phone:** 915 24 94 64

3. Ana la Santa – baby it's cold outside



Situated on one of the most beautiful plazas in the city, Ana La Santa is housed in the ground floor of the Hotel Me. Beyond cosy in the winter and perennially popular, Ana La Santa always delivers on excellent service and an awesome ambiance.

- Facebook & Instagram: @analasantamadrid
- Address: Plaza Sta. Ana, 14
- Metro: Sol/Sevilla
- Phone: 917 01 60 13

4. Bar Tomate – modern minimalism at its best



Somewhat off the typical tourist trail, this is a great neighborhood spot. Chamberí is somewhat of a foodie mecca and [Bar Tomate](#) combines minimalist decor at its best and delicious cuisine. The vibe is rustic and the food is fresh. A winning combo if I ever saw one.

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Fernando El Santo, 26
- **Phone:** [+34 917 023 870](#)
- **Metro:** Colón

5. [Luzi Bombon](#) – get ready to luck out



Situated on the swish and swanky Paseo de la Castella, [Luzi Bombon](#) is a stylish restaurant offering flawless service and utterly divine food. It's part of [Grupo Tragaluz](#), meaning you're in safe hands when it comes to enjoying some marvelous munchies.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@luzibombon](#)
- **Address:** Paseo de la Castellana 35
- **Phone:** 917 02 27 36
- **Metro:** Rubén Darío

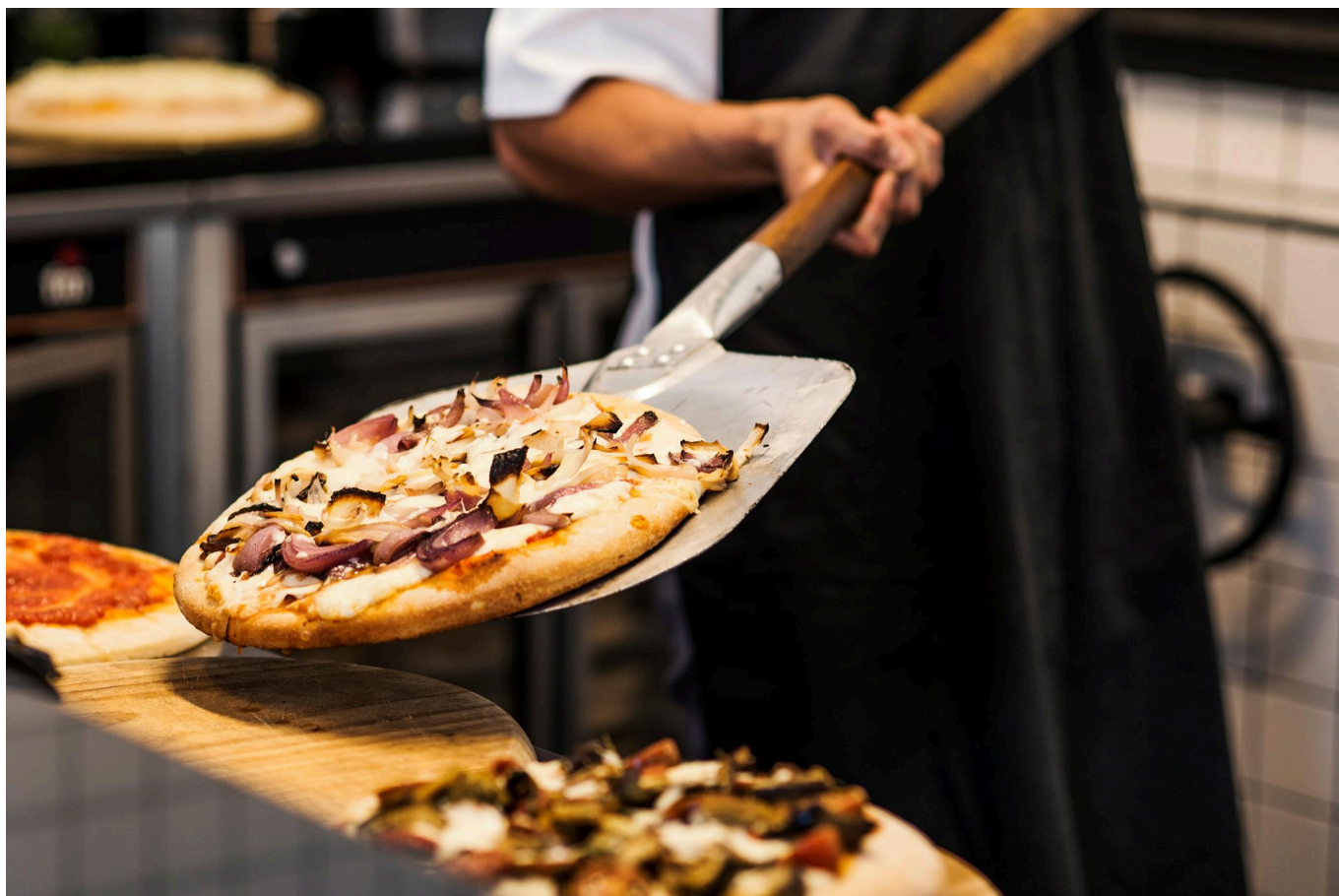
6. [Somos Restaurant](#) – the jewel in Barceló Torres's crown



Located in what's become the iconic Torre de Barcelona, [Somos Restaurant and Garra Bar](#) have become the type of places to splash your hard earned cash. In an undeniably stunning setting overlooking Gran Vía, the outstanding cuisine is not too be missed and neither is the sunset as the sunshine bids the city goodnight.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@somosgarra](#)
- [Located in: Barceló Torre de Madrid](#)
- [Address:](#) Plaza de España, 18

7. [Picsa](#) – got a ‘pizza’ my heart



On one of the hippest streets in Madrid (ok I'm biased, I live here) [Picsa](#) serves up delicious Argentinian pizzas that rival any that BA has to offer. The flavour combos are to die for – I never resist the lure of the chorizo criollo with provolone and hey Heber should you.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@picsa.madrid](#)
- **Address:** Calle Ponzano 76
- **Phone:** 915 34 10 09
- **Metro:** Ríos Rosas or Cuatro Caminos

8. [Gracias Padre](#) – you'll be thankful for this Mexican restaurant



In the barrio of Salamanca, [Gracias Padre](#) is hands down one of Madrid's best Mexican restaurants. Here'll you'll find treats as tasty as tacos hailing from Tulum. Their frozen margs always hit the spot and the rainbow-esque surroundings are a riot of crayola colour.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@gracias.padre](#)
- **Address:** Calle de José Ortega y Gasset, 55
- **Phone:** 910 66 00 85
- **Metro:** Lista

9. [Nubel](#) – the Reina Sofia Museum's stunning restaurant



Nubel is the beautiful restaurant housed in the world-famous Reina Sofía museum. It's a hybrid that feels like part restaurant/part nightclub as there's often a DJ playing a delectable mix of club classics that adds to the buzzy energy that envelops you on arrival.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@nubelmadrid](#)
- **Address:** Museo Reina Sofía, Calle de Argumosa, 43
- **Metro:** Atocha
- **Phone:** 915 30 17 61

10. [Picalagartos](#) – dine sky high on a gorgeous rooftop bar overlooking Gran Vía



Picalagartos is quite literally (in the words of the song) up on the roof. Towering above Gran Vía, it's perched atop the NH hotel. It boasts 360-degree views of our beloved city and combines great cocktails with great cuisine.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#), & Instagram: [@picalagartosmad](#)
- **Address:** C/ Gran Vía 21
- **Metro:** Gran Vía

All photos from each restaurant's respective social media accounts

By Cat Powell, aka @littlemissmadrid

Have any favourites that we should include in a second “best restaurants in Madrid” list? Let us know in the comments!

Have a fine old time at Faraday

So for once I’m going to keep this short and sweet. Possibly as short as my time spent at the lovely Faraday, my current top pick when it comes to a cracking cup of coffee, in a spot as cosy as cashmere.



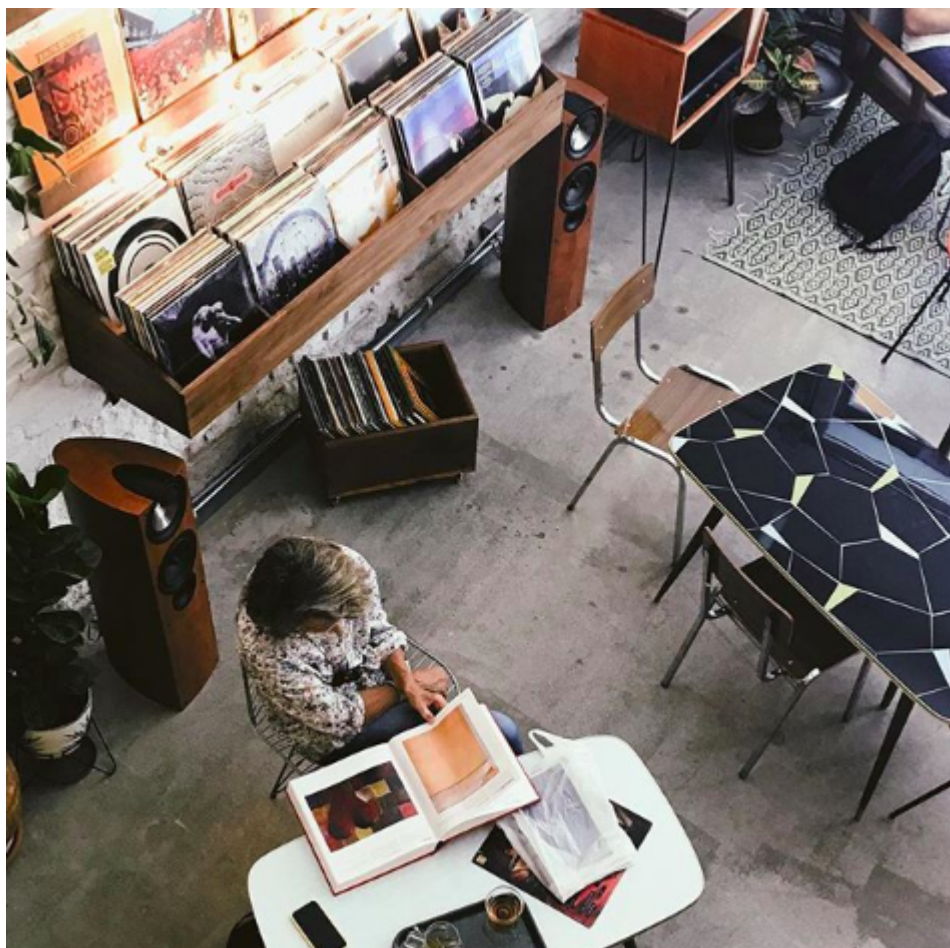
Nestled on Calle San Marcos in the perennially popular Chueca, I first suggested it to a pal for a quick post-work drink a few Friday's ago. Quick disclaimer – they do not bear booze. So if you're after *vino*, *cañas* and the like, just walk on by. But if you're after coffee with a kick, served in surroundings that make you forget that you were craving a G&T, then this may well be the place for you.



It's worth me noting that it's hipster heaven. There's luxe leather chairs aplenty and vinyls (to be purchased) galore. Faraday's USP in a city heaving with coffee competitors is that it's a coffee shop slash mini-concept store. Aside from the vinyls there were other vignettes to be snapped up post flat white.



Whilst I was there to chew the fat with my mate, there was no shortage of folk taping away on their Macs, making it a desirable locale for a digital nomad. The eclectic tunes being pumped out also made it fiesta friendly but not deafeningly so.



Although I eventually left to sink my well-earned G&T at a neighbouring waterhole on the nearby Calle Belen, Faraday proves that sometime's there's some fun to be had in abstaining.

All photos from Faraday's instagram account

Faraday

- Instagram @faradaymadrid
- Address: Calle San Lucas, 9
- Metro: Chueca

Also check out:

- [Gin 0'clock – time to enjoy Madrid's finest G&T's](#)
- [5 Work-friendly cafés in Malasaña with great WiFi](#)

Picalagartos, dine sky high on a stunning rooftop overlooking Gran Vía

This year myself and one of my best friends have been on pretty different trajectories. Whilst she's been globe trotting galore having taken a sabbatical, I've never felt more aware of putting down "roots" – having finally become a home owner, cue quite the case of FOMO.

After 11 months of not being able to enjoy so much as a glass of fizz together in person, last weekend we were finally reunited for the *puente* in my adopted city of Madrid. This called for a special venue for a special lunch.



Now I love a rooftop. I'm not sure if it's something to do with being a city dweller who's constantly on the search for cleaner air, but I feel it's probably more to do with the "grammable" views that are pretty much guaranteed when you

head sky high.

Having done my research, [Picalagartos](#) was booked, the restaurant perched atop the NH Hotel on Gran Vía, boasts 360 views of the city. Not too shabby, eh? Now most hotel restaurants have a bad rep, often found to be overpriced and underwhelming, but not the case here. The standard of food matched the view, to be summed up in a word, it was stunning.



Feeling the kind of giddy high that I can only imagine toddlers feel at soft play, we started with a cocktail to

toast our reunion. This was the start of a true Spanish *sobremesa*, with neither of us keen to leave until the sun had well and truly set over Gran Vía.

My friend's a veggie (no I don't know how we dine out together either, being a self-confessed carnivore Queen) but it was pleasing to find that this wasn't an issue – the menu offering a variety of veggie options, all of which were more tempting than the standard offering of *tortilla*.



We split a mille feuille of patatas bravas that is in the running for being the best carb that's ever passed my lips. Layers of buttery potatoes formed into giant "chips" were served with a piquant *bravas* sauce and a mouth-wateringly good aioli. They were so downright divine, case in point, we ordered a second portion and not one part of me regrets having to work them off the following Monday at spin.



I plumped for a steak (cooked perfectly), while my *amiga* sampled the delights of a vegetable garden – which looked so temptingly tasty that it could almost have lured me away from my meaty marvel, but not quite.



A couple of chocolate soufflés later, gin and tonics sunk – our vows of friendship reaffirmed, there was nothing left to do but harass the waiter to take (multiple) pics of us with Madrid in all her dusky delight in the background – luckily he obliged, I have a feeling we weren't the only ones bowled over by the *vista*.



Picalagartos is the kind of “oooh and aaah” inducing spot that will have you falling in love with Madrid all over again (in case your affections have ever waned). The food, and in my case, the friendship, were faultless and it was the perfect place to spend a free Friday afternoon that combined both gorgeous grub and plenty of glamour.

Picalagartos

▪ [Facebook](#), [Website](#), & Instagram: [@picalagartosmad](#)

- **Address:** C/ Gran Vía 21
 - **Metro:** Gran Vía
-

Not much not to love at NuBel – The Reina Sofia's stunning restaurant

We really are spoilt in Spain. From the glorious blue skies to the culture of napping not being frowned upon, we really do enjoy the good life. So when it rains, I have to admit that I've become one of those people who hunkers down and reaches for the remote and Netflix.

However, this last Saturday, in spite of the torrential rain and the fact that my hair was starting to look more and more like Rod Stewart's (I'll thank the humidity for that) I donned my gladrags and kept my dinner date at [NuBel](#) – the quite frankly stunning setting that's part of the Reina Sofia museum on the south side of the city.



So before a mere morsel had passed my lips, the first thing that floored me on arrival was the space. Lofty and chic, yet deceptively cosy, [NuBel](#) is kind of like entering a club, albeit, one without the sticky carpets and two for one drinks that littered my youth. There was a DJ playing dance classics that I remembered from the days where I didn't turn into a pumpkin if I stayed out past midnight; and the whole 'vibe' was one of people ready to party (just not on an empty stomach).

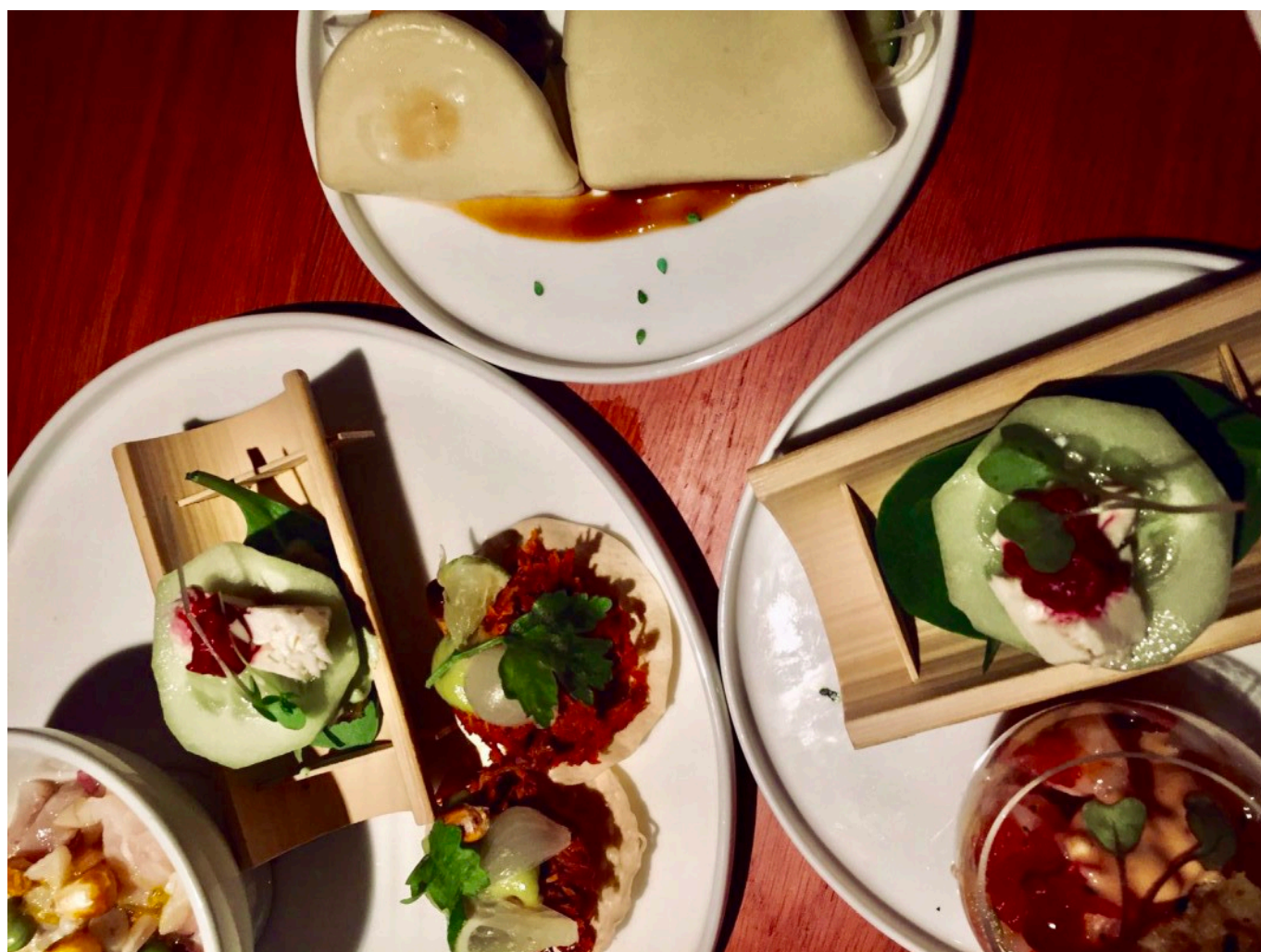
So having taken our seats for dinner (pretty pink velvet ones

in case you're interested) we plumped for some cocktails, a pisco sour for me and a 'hard drink' for my pal – I can attest, it was indeed strong, absinthe will do that I guess.



We perused the menu and our waiter, Angel, suggested that we try a range of the mini plates so that we could salivate over

a spectrum of flavours. I think we ordered ten in total and each little bite was as delicious as the last. I loved the mange tout falafel with feta, while my *amiga* lapped to the snow crab cocktail. The mains were every bit as delectable as the desserts. I don't have the sweetest tooth but my deconstructed lemon meringue pie was so good that I was not one for sharing.



However, food aside, what I really loved about [NuBel](#) was the atmosphere. So often these days I go for dinner and feel ready to be rolled home, the lure of my pyjamas too great to resist. [NuBel](#) manages to straddle the line of being a restaurant/club perfectly – the music will have your toe tapping away and ready to ditch the dessert in favour of the dance floor.



For art aficionados, the proximity to renowned works from the likes of Picasso, adds that little extra pizzazz that a regular restaurant would find hard to rival.

All photos from NuBel

NuBel

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@nubelmadrid](#)
 - **Address:** Museo Reina Sofía, Calle de Argumosa, 43
 - **Metro:** Atocha
 - **Phone:** 915 30 17 61
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Massa Pizza, perfect pizza made with pride in Chueca

The barrio of Chueca is known for many things, perhaps most famously though as the epicenter for the world-renowned Madrid gay pride festival – which is ultimately when the barrio becomes a riot of all things rainbow coloured and the always lively neighborhood really ramps things up a notch.

But over recent years I've noticed a shift from Chueca being all about bars. More foodie spots have sprung up encouraging you to part with your hard-earned cash. Just last week I accidentally sampled yet another insta-worthy poke bowl place which continues to be all the rage across the city. But what I'm getting to with this review (and I will get there eventually) was **the most perfect pizza place that I stumbled across a few weeks back.**



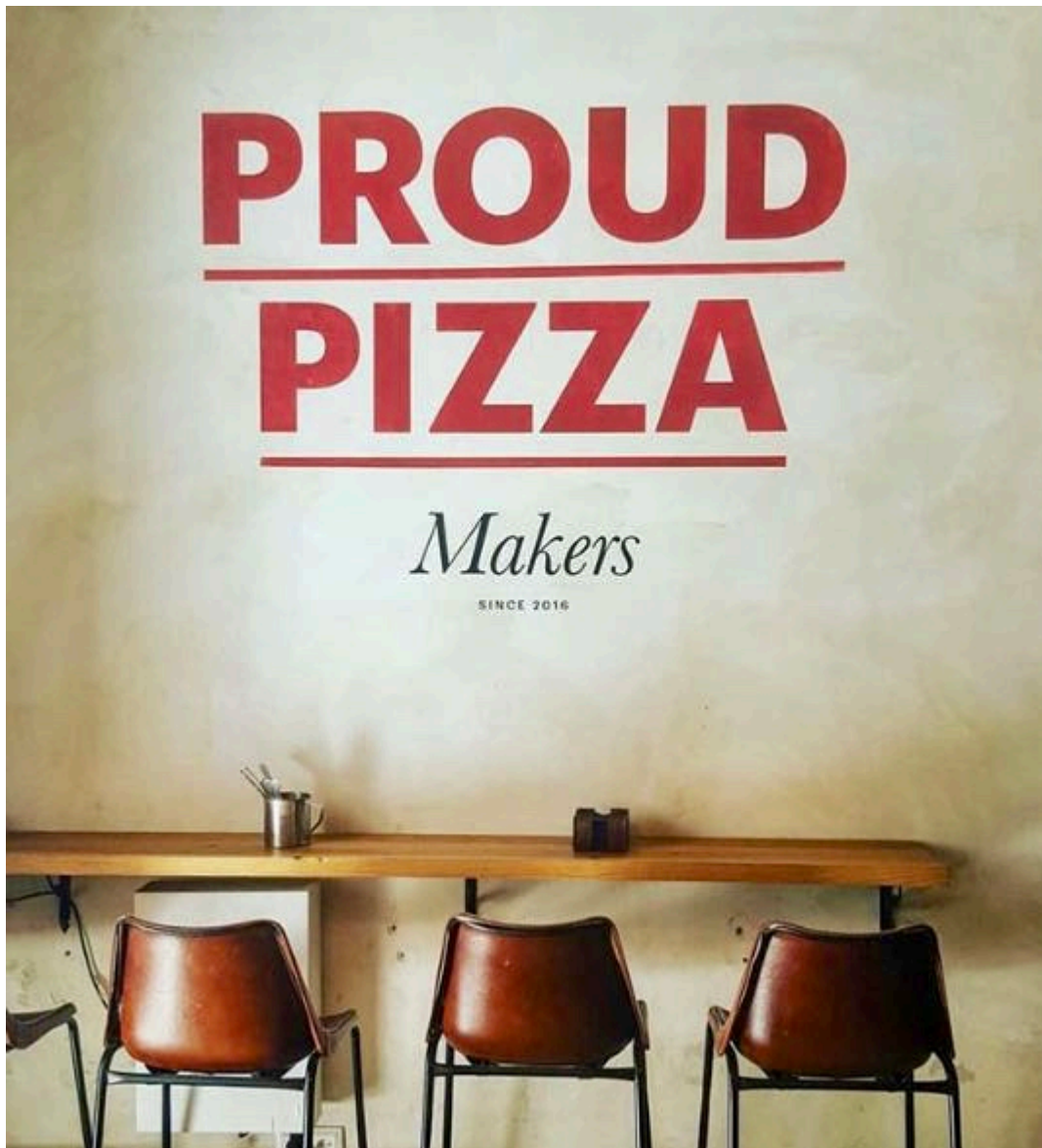
[Massa Pizza](#) is a stone's throw from the perennially popular [Mercado de San Anton](#) and could certainly be described as warm and inviting upon entering. A couple of gin fizzes in, myself and my dinner date selected some starters and neither one disappointed. Beef carpaccio (which is always up there as one of my death row dinners) and roast chicken croquetas which were bites of utter joy – now I realize it might sound strange for croquetas to have made their way into an Italian menu but I'm all for fusion food that's filling and fun.



We both then opted for individual pizzas (I'm grateful that the concept of a doggy bag is becoming increasingly popular in Madrid) – eyes bigger than Nelly much? Both pizzas were lush, doughy but not soggy, crisp on the edges but not burnt and the perfect cheese/tomato ratio in my humble opinion.



Now some people at this point might have needed to be rolled home. Not us. We saved space for the extremely cute (and Instagram worthy) dessert tray/box which was heaving with bite-sized little puds for you to select from. The cheesecake and tiramisu were to to die for but alas, all good things must come to an end.



[Massa Pizza](#) makes for the perfect low-key date night (as it did for us) and it's ideally located smack back in the centre of the city. What do you get when you combine pizza and pride? A combo that's as appealing as gin coupled with tonic.

Massa Pizza

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- **Address:** Augusto Figueroa 21
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