

# Satisfaction Guaranteed at Santo Pecado

Among my friends it's no secret that in the summer you can't keep me in. I'm more than happy to play the part of being a social butterfly and my flat is rarely where you'll find me between the months of May to September. But as the temps start to drop and the dark nights draw in, it becomes harder and harder to prise me off the sofa and to step away from the cocoon of scented candles, red wine and of course, Netflix.

But you know, a girl's gotta eat. So when I heard about a new burger place that was literally a mere hop, skip and a jump from where I reside, I switched my pyjamas for a playsuit and headed out on the town.



The place in question was [Santo Pecado](#). At first glance it could easily be dismissed as just another place to grab a burger, but appearances can be deceptive and [Santo Pecado](#) is not your average burger joint. First things first, the owners are serious about the good stuff, aka – the meat. The beef hails from a farm in Toledo and there is nothing remotely McDonalds-esque here about what's between the buns.



All organic and responsibly sourced, the taste of the meat (having been cooked over carbon) was most definitely worth leaving the toasty confines of my casa. Next came the burger toppings. If you're indecisive (quite possibly one of my worst afflictions), trying to decide what was going to delicately rest upon my beaut of a burger was not an easy choice. Along with all your standard options, cheese, bacon and the like – there was foie gras on offer – meaning that you could quite literally pimp your dins so to speak.





Aside from the Toledo hailing beef, Santo Pecado boasts having Wagyu beef on the menu – see, I told you this was pretty far removed from Maccies. My friend assured me that the Wagyu option melted in the mouth and was essentially accountable for us not having room for dessert (although that could also be partly due to us indulging in both nachos and chicken fingers to start – both of which were equally delicious).



The restaurant loving folks of Madrid can be a tough crowd. In these post crisis days (of which we're all grateful for), you really need to have something that little bit special to cut it in an increasingly crowded market place. There are literally more restaurants popping up on a weekly basis in Madders, than Elizabeth Taylor had diamonds. So if you don't have that USP nailed – you'll struggle to survive. The fact that Santo Pecado has taken the humble hamburger and elevated it to gourmet status, suggests to me that they have what it takes.

Again, located in the ever increasingly popular barrio of Chamberí, there's no shortage of nearby bars, making it the ideal place to line your tum before a night of drinking, dancing and debauchery. If good meat equals good times in your language, halt that Netflix binge momentarily and binge on a burger instead.



## Santo Pecado

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Glorieta de Quevedo, 4
  - **Metro:** Quevedo
  - **Phone:** 91 057 13 66
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## That's Amore at Aió

Following numerous debates, with numerous friends, I've come to the conclusion that Tuesdays are officially THE worst day of the week. Mondays, well, I can just about grin and bear them – especially if you're still all warm and fuzzy from weekend based fun.

But by Tuesday, the forthcoming weekend just feels way out of reach and if you're like me, it's the day when you decide to haul yourself back to the gym – usually after a couple of days of complete over indulgence.

In light of this newly held belief, a good friend of mine suggested that we should always have dinner together on a Tuesday; purely to take the sting out of its tail. **So last Tuesday we found ourselves happily ensconced at [Aió](#), my local Italian in Malasaña that could give any spaghetti serving spot in Sardinia a run for its money.**



To kick off proceedings we both opted for a Negroni to transport us to sunnier days spent in Italy, rather than a somewhat chilly and crisp November evening in Madrid. The spritz alone raised a smile and that was before the eating part of the evening had commenced, of which there was a lot.

Where Italian food is concerned, I can exercise next to no self restraint – suffice to say, we feasted. With such a tempting menu on offer, boasting all the well loved (and well known) classics, it would have been hard not to.





Like many other semi foodies, I've found myself arguing with pretty much every Spaniard on Earth regarding the fiercely coveted title of 'the best cuisine in the world' – because of course, it comes as no surprise that Spaniards (in general) feel that they deserve the crown.



But I beg of you (and please don't kill me for saying so) that in my humble opinion, Italian food is where it's at. Nobody does comfort food better and on a Winters evening, a big bowl of pasta feels like being enveloped in a hearty hug; and I'm all for a cuddle when it's cold.





We split a **burrata** and a **carpaccio** because quite frankly, any good Italian joint worth its salt should be able to deliver deliciousness on both. Aió didn't disappoint, both were inhaled without a second thought in all their luscious, lovely glory.



The starters were followed up with a glorious **gorgonzola based pasta dish** that was **peppered with prawns** and a **quattro formaggi pizza** (half of which came home with me in a doggy bag) as my eyes had clearly been bigger than my belly at this point.





Saying that though, is anyone capable of saying no to a cheeky

pudding? I'm evidently not, as we rounded off the previously nicknamed 'Bluesday Tuesday' with a **tiramisu** and a **gin tonic** for the road. We left with vows of friendship having been reaffirmed, appetites having been satiated and the edge having been well and truly taken off a potentially terrible Tuesday.

Aiό's charm is found in the home cooked feel of the food and the fizz in their Aperol spritz.

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** [Calle Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 25](#)
- **Phone:** 910 096 469

Also check out a previous [Naked Madrid post on Aiό](#)

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## Gin and on it at Le Cocó

Sundays (if you let them) can frankly be a little bit rubbish. And in the winter – even worse. Chances are you're nursing a mild to moderate hangover. There's life admin to smash. And then the potential doom that often comes when you spy the return to work on the horizon.

This often means that Sundays don't have that carefree Friday feeling. They're the waiting room for the working week. However, as I discovered last Sunday, it definitely doesn't have to be that way and Sunday Funday most certainly doesn't have to remain as some intangible insta friendly phrase – especially not in this city.





[Le Cocó](#), the cosy little Chueca spot that I [reviewed](#) back in the summer, is now playing host to '**Gin and Cookie**' **afternoons**. You show up, you drink gin, you eat cookies. There's not much not to love. Between 5-8pm on both Saturdays and Sundays, there's a DJ on the decks helping you to keep your party pants on until your alarm pretty much goes off on a Monday morn.



In my [previous Le Cocó post](#) I mentioned just how how lovely the decor is and now that winter is really starting to bite, it's the perfect place to bunker down for an afternoon and enjoy some copas in good company.





It goes without saying that each bite of the cookies was well worth the calories. The red velvet ones in particular deserve a mention as I could've happily munched the lot – but clearly needed to leave some room for the perfectly mixed G&Ts.





Seagram's 7  
The American

Isabeli Fontana  
CON TUZ...

NZÁLEZ  
EJOR MOMEN  
U VIDA

VIRIDOL

ABRIC  
ESPE  
ROJO

So if like me, you're keen to eek out the dregs of the weekend until the bitter end, make a date at Le Cocó. Remember, the weekend isn't over until the fat lady sings. Or in this case, you've eaten all the cookies.

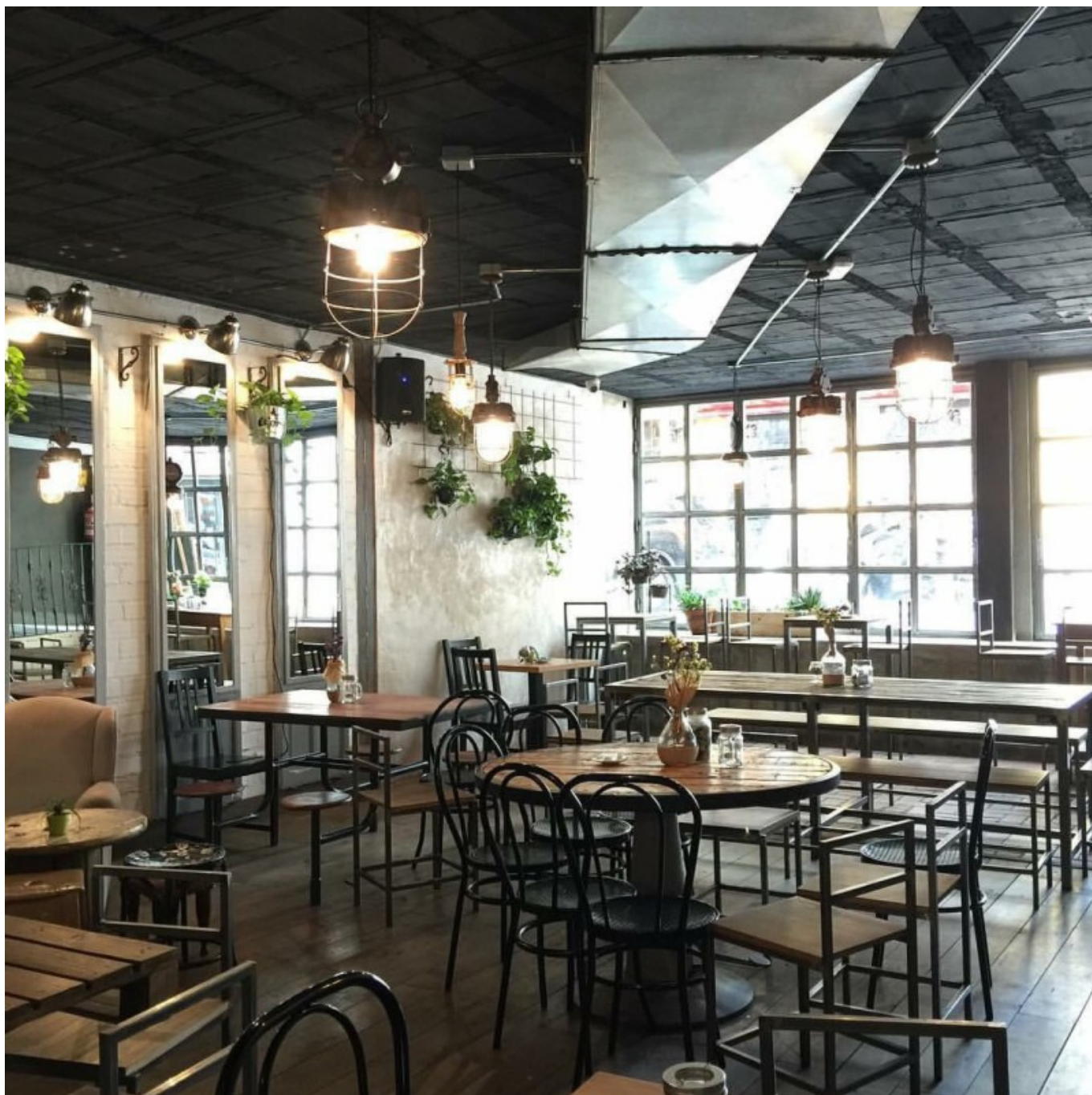
## Info

- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) & [Website](#)
  - **Address:** C/ Calle de Barbieri, 15
  - **Metro:** Chueca
  - **Phone:** 915 21 99 55
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## Slow down at Slow Mex Madrid

Julie Andrews once sang about *these are a few of my favorite things* and if I were to pen some similar lyrics they would read along the lines of: *margaritas, tacos and anything with a bit of spice*.

In light of this, a long Saturday lunch spent at [Slow Mex](#) wasn't exactly a hardship. **A low key Mexican joint on Calle San Vicente Ferrer, that does a very nice sideline in craft beers** is the ideal place to bunker down for the afternoon now that coat season is well and truly upon us in Madrid.



Slow Mex has a big open space that feels slightly reminiscent to a pub back in Blighty (again, this could be thanks to the array of beers on tap). It feels like an unpretentious neighbour who invites you over and makes you feel instantly at home.

As it's essentially a mecca for all things Mexican, all the standard offerings are present on the menu. **Tacos, nachos, burritos** – they're all there. However, the homemade grub does offer a couple of **fun twists** on the to-be-expected tortilla based treats.





We tried a fairly unusual starter. It was sort of similar to a kind of chowder but with a kick and studded with spicy prawns; it brought me back to life after a particularly boozy evening the night before. We rounded off the leisurely lunch with a brownie.

Again, it was a slightly pimped up version of an old favorite as this pud offered up sugar and spice – as it had just touch of chilli in it. It was downright delicious and had us reaching for one last margarita for the road.



**Special mention has to go to the Maitre D, Mark.** He towed the line between clearly knowing his stuff (and wanting to share it with us) and being attentive enough without us feeling like we had a third person dining with us, which can sometimes be the case. He also pointed out that they have a happy hour. Am I the only one who views winter as the perfect excuse for day drinking? Surely not.

Either way, **we left Slow Mex giggling and gloriously full.** Thanks to the crispy duck tacos that I'm still thinking about, the diet can always wait until tomorrow. I'm just thinking of my winter insulation and working on my extra layer in the meantime.

**by @littlemissmadrid**



## Slow Mex Madrid

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle de San Vicente Ferrer 33
  - **Metro:** Tribunal or Noviciado
  - **Phone:** 915 326 791
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## Loveliness at Lateral

When I first moved to Madrid I walked that well trodden path like so many ex-pats had done before me; the month long TEFL course. I rocked up with my Spanish phrase book, some SPF 20 and the overwhelming desire to live abroad. With no set plan (well, with no actual plan at all having quit my job in PR back in London) I quickly got into the groove of my new TEFL timetable; which essentially meant a 3pm finish. As soon as my 'working' day was done, I would wile away afternoons in Plaza Santa Ana.



Plaza Santa Ana

Now I don't spend too much time around that neck of the woods these days, but back then I was literally intoxicated by that square. The beautiful balconies, the long sunny days (I arrived in August) and I even found charm in the guys who play the accordion and then hustle for your change. The large majority of those afternoons were spent on the terraza of [restaurante Lateral](#).

Seriously, the limited savings that I arrived with dwindled at lightning speed thanks to my newfound obsession with their ***croquetas de jamón*** and ***tinto de verano***. It became a spot that I still think of fondly, as it kind of represents those heady first months when everything was an adventure and my sole preoccupation was how many hours could I spend tanning that day and where was I going out that night.





So [Lateral](#) and I have enjoyed an enduring partnership and now that I live on the other side of Gran Via I thought I'd mix

things up and visit one of their other outposts on Calle Fuencarral. I'd heard on the grape vine that it had undergone a recent renovation (and I can't just rely on Pinterest for interiors inspo) so it seemed like a win win.



So onto the décor, it is in a nutshell delightful. But obviously we're talking about a restaurant here, so I can't not mention the food. Lateral is all about the tapas – so you can literally try a little bit of everything in perfectly bite sized portions.

In addition, if you have [visiting guests](#) or you're just a first timer to the city, you'll love that Lateral puts a modern spin on Spanish classics. You can find all the well-known favourites such as **tortilla de patata** and **albondigas** (meatballs); alongside more inventive small plates such as delicious **duck ravioli** and a melt-in-the-mouth **carpaccio**.





Food wise [Lateral](#) is what I would describe as a safe bet. Yes it might not be the most inventive cuisine, but what they offer up always hits the spot. It also doesn't hurt that it's super reasonably priced for a city centre find, and **they serve food all day.**

My friend and I were also pleased as punch to discover that they boast a **happy hour on drinks** – ideal if you enjoy a lunch that's more liquid than most and I can attest that the service is always friendly and fast. Whilst the terraza isn't quite as pleasing on the eye as the Plaza Santa Ana locale, the phrase "it's what's on the inside that counts" that rings true here.



**Inside it's an oasis within the city,** filled with plenty of plants and enough greenery to make you feel like you're embracing nature, in spite of being mere moments from the hustle and bustle of one of Madrid's main shopping streets. If spontaneity is your thing (let's face it, we're not talking about a country when peeps really plan ahead), restaurante Lateral is the kind of place that you can pitch up at, eat well and feel as though you've sampled a little bit of Spain's finest.



## Restaurante Lateral:

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle Fuencarral, 43
  - **Phone:** 915316877
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## Navare Bar – The Secret's Out

You always feel quite smug when you stumble across somewhere that feels yet to be discovered. I was mooching around Chamberi on my way to an appointment, when I mindlessly spotted [Navare Bar](#) – and it piqued my interest.



Inside there were groups of friends chatting animatedly, enjoying a late afternoon merienda. But upon closer look, there was also a downright delicious evening menu. I papped the name of the restaurant on my phone and made a mental note to return with a friend in tow.



Fast forward a week and I found myself to be one of the locals enjoying this new neighbourhood hotspot. [Navare Bar](#) is somewhat impossible to be shoehorned into any set category. You want you breakfast? They serve it. A leisurely lunch with colleagues? You've got it. Dinner with your nearest and dearest. They offer it. It's basically your one-stop shop for all your culinary needs.





Now to be all things to all people is no mean feat. However, after meeting (and chatting with the owner) it's clear that the vision for Navare Bar is to be a local place for local people; somewhere that no matter the time of day, you can grab a coffee or indeed a copa with friends.

I was a fan of this concept from the get go. Coming from the UK, I'm used to eating when I want – whether or not that ties in with siesta culture is of little importance. If I'm hungry I want options that will keep my renowned (within my social circle) 'hanger' at bay. It also didn't hurt that the décor was a delight and the plates satiated my fetish for all things chintzy when it came to crockery.





So the food. In a nutshell it was lip smackingly good. After a full-on week at work I was in need of all the treats. We split **prawn croquetas** (you get eight, I could've quite easily refused to share). This was swiftly followed by **grilled vegetables** that conjured up the feeling of summer barbecues (and made me feel slightly virtuous after the deep fried delight that was the first tapa).

But **the jewel in the crown was undoubtedly the solomillo** that came with crushed new potatoes and some kind of sauce that I could've quite happily guzzled as though it were a G&T. To surmise, the food is heavenly and I left eager to return for breakfast, lunch **AND** dinner.

I have no doubt that Navare bar will be a success. The passion of the owner coupled with the zest for life that the local peeps possess, makes it an inevitable recipe for success.

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Rafael Calvo, 29
- **Metro:** Iglesia & Rubén Darío
- **Phone:** 910 26 87 57

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# Let's Raise a Toast to The Toast Café

If you're lucky enough to live in Madrid, as I do, it often



feels like the city is your playground. There are exhibitions to see, bars to frequent, parks to embrace, [restaurants](#) to sample and of course, come the weekend, long, lazy [brunches](#) to be had. I always have the intention to be one of those people who whips up breakfast without breaking a sweat.



I buy the eggs, the avo, occasionally the chorizo, but when Saturday morning rolls around, frankly, my working week is done and the desire to cook (or clean) for that matter often falls by the wayside. I want to go out. To get dressed up and to head to a place where the mimosas are free flowing and the washing up is SEP (someone else's problem). So to kick start a week off from work, I headed to [The Toast Café](#) so that someone else could poach the perfect egg on my behalf.



A sister restaurant of [Roll Madrid](#) (a [recent review](#) of mine), it's clear to see that good breakfasts run in the family. There's a fixed brunch menu, which my friend and I plumped for. Needless to say, I don't think either of us needed feeding again until the evening had swung round as the portion sizes were far from stingy.

We both had coffees to start (natch), followed by croissants, eggs benedict and an omelette respectively. We chased this up with multiple mimosas and to conclude our breakfast of champions we split a cheesecake which was as good as any that I'd had in the States: I'm a fan of a buttery base and this one was so delish that I could've eaten it twice.





With Halloween on the approach and the city turning its attention to all things gruesome and ghoulish, [Toast](#) is getting in on the act by offering its own version of a fright night. Order yourself a beer and the bartenders will toss a coin – if it lands on pay, you pay. But... if it lands on freebie, you get to enjoy your tipple on the house. There's nothing scary about that. Well, apart from maybe the hangover that'll follow come November 1st.



It's worth mentioning that the aforementioned [Roll](#), will also be on the Halloween bandwagon and are offering the exact same deal – pretty tempting with Madrid enjoying a bank holiday the following day. I fully expect most of the city will be nursing sore heads.

Fast forward to November and **Toast is hosting its very own Thanksgiving celebration** – I'm spotting a pattern, this is a place that likes a party, we'll get along well. With a menu that will appeal to people from not just across the pond, it's well worth a look if you know you'll be pining for turkey and for time spent with friends.

So if boozy brunches are your bag and potential freebies float your boat there's really only one thing for it. Check out The Toast Café. Great food, great service, and a great excuse to dodge doing the dishes.



## Info

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** C/ Fernando el Católico 50
  - **Metro:** Moncloa, Arguelles, Quevedo
  - **Phone:** 915493802
- 

## Make plans to meet at Meat Madrid

A few years back, I was lucky enough to visit Chicago and let's just say that the food in the windy city is up there with its architecture; it's pretty memorable. It helped enormously that I was visiting a friend who is quite the foodie and had mapped out a dining odyssey that ensured that I needed two seats on the flight home, given the cal's I'd ingested in the space of one week.

One meal that stood out was a burger at the now-infamous hotspot, Au Cheval. My friend nonchalantly explained that given the reputation of the burgers there, we'd need to put our names down and head off for drinks before we'd actually get to chow on down. Obviously this seemed absurd as a visiting Brit, but I duly did as I was told. Fast forward a couple of hours and boy did I eat my words (and what remains to be THE most epic burger I've ever tasted).



It's hard to explain what made it so unforgettable, but it's certainly not just me that feels that way. Google the burger at Au Cheval and it's been hailed by almost every Tom, Dick and Harry as the best in the world. Since that fateful evening in Chi Town, I've been on the hunt for the next best thing and I think my search is over upon discovering [Meat](#).





[Meat](#) is tucked away down a street that offers plenty of eating options such as Boca Calle and Cripeka. But if you're in the business of beef, Meat is where it's at. The concept and menu are equally similar, **they do two burgers (along with with fries, onion rings and salad) and that's it. There's the perennially popular Cheeseburger and whatever happens to be the monthly special.**



We ordered the whole shebang and it was a treat for the old tastebuds. I'm known for being quite the carnivore so suffice to say, Meat may be my happy place. I don't need bells and whistles when it comes to a decent-tasting burger and **what makes Meat so good is that they focus on the basics and execute them to perfection.** A buttery brioche bun, paired with perfectly seasoned beef makes you happy to indulge even when your jeans are feeling slightly snug.





**MEAT**

It didn't go unnoticed to me that there's Aesop products in the bathroom and G'Vine gin on offer which elevates Meat in my opinion from some of its more humble carnivorous competitors. On a Tuesday evening it was mildly busy but not eardrum shatteringly so, making it the **ideal spot for a midweek bite** to eat which will leave you with change from a twenty.

*Make plans to meet at Meat.*

## Info:

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
  - **Phone:** 910 29 60 41
  - **Address:** [Calle Santa Teresa 4](#)
  - **Metro:** Alonso Martínez & Bilbao
- 

## Picsa, got a 'pizza' my heart

I don't know about you but when I hear the word 'Argentina', pizza isn't usually the first word that springs to mind AND I've been. I think of tango. I think of steak. I think of wine (more specifically I think of ruby red Malbec). I also think of the multiple jars of *dulce de leche* that I put away, for my sins.

So upon hearing that Argentinian pizza was able to rival a slither of wafer-thin New York pizza, I figured it was worth further investigation to see if the Argentinians didn't just talk a good fight.





Photos by @adam\_w\_potts

**Picsa is the Argentinian pizza mecca on Calle Ponzano.** Foodies in the know will already be well aware that this street boasts a plethora of options that are all first class. However, in order to stand out you'd better have a strong USP up your sleeve and Picsa definitely has that; I'm yet to find anywhere else in Madrid that offers such gourmet pizzas in such a clinically chic setting – if there's such a thing.



Picsa is almost sterile in terms of its appearance – it's all white tiles and bare bulbs, but this just allows the food to take centre stage. Obviously the **pizza is the big draw here**, but the range of sharing plates isn't to be dismissed. The **bellota ham** all but dissolved in your mouth and the **Armenian roasted peppers** were the perfect zingy compliment to the indulgence of the fat rippled *jamon*.

So after considering that a mere 'warm up', we plumped for a pizza to share and luckily (considering my topping tastes are relatively mainstream) **you can do half and half and keep everyone at the table as happy as a clam.**





On one side we split a **chorizo criollo with provolone** (a heart attack waiting to happen in all honesty but I was willing to take the risk). Whilst the other half was laden with **roast duck and figs**, like I said, Picsa isn't serving up your basic margarita here. At this point, barely able to move and already pining for the thought of an elasticated waist, we figured in for a penny, in for a pound and split a **chocolate cake with dulce de leche ice cream** to really round things off.

If you're working on your beach bod I strongly advise swerving Picsa unless you're able to show any kind of restraint – of which I'm not. Picsa is not your average pizza joint and in light of this it was packed to the rafters on a Saturday night with patrons all looking for a 'pizza the action' – sorry, couldn't resist one last pizza pun. Be sure to book, maybe skip lunch in preparation and stretchy pants are well advised.

# Picsa

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

Read a previous [Naked Madrid review on Picsa here!](#)

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## Brunch at Roll Madrid – Gotta Roll With It

We've all had those Sunday (or indeed Saturday mornings) when you wake up, well, how should I phrase this – praying for death? Your mouth's dryer than the Sahara, there's nothing in the fridge to quell your sickness and it feels as though someone's taken a teeny, tiny jackhammer to your head. In situations such as the aforementioned (which happen far more frequently than I'd care to admit), **the only solution for me is a boozy brunch.**





When you just can't face waves of nausea coupled with beer fear, there's nothing for it in my view except for hair of the dog. If this sounds familiar, **let me introduce to to the perfect spot to cure your hangover; or perhaps indeed to just top up – [Roll](#)**. My friend and I pitched up a few Sundays ago, starved and in need of **Bloody Mary's**.





Luckily due to the ongoing Indian Summer, we were able to take advantage of the cute little terrace outside and enjoy some fresh air along with with our food. **Roll takes the business of brunch seriously.** The menu is akin to many that I've seen Stateside with plenty of choices that made deciding what to opt for quite the quandary.





In the end we plumped for **fried green tomatoes** (they were unbelievable and I'm a girl who rarely gets her 5 a day), **southern fried chicken** (with mac 'n cheese) and a **cheeseburger teamed with sweet potato fries** – I think you could've spotted our hangovers from 50 paces but the combo of carbs and cava sorted us right out.



I'm not saying that [Roll](#) is just a remedy for when you're feeling rough. Far from it. They do a roaring trade on the **craft beer** front and plenty of **tasty tacos** to boot.







Meaning that there really is something for everything menu wise. The staff were happy to make suggestions given our slightly fragile state but recommendations or not, I have no doubt that everything would've been lip-smackingly good.

If you're an American in the city I anticipate Roll alleviating some of your homesickness. However, yank or not, if you like good food and find yourself enjoying one too many canãs at the weekend, when you've enjoyed the rock side of things, head to Roll.

*For more Madrid tidbits check out @littlemissmadrid on Instagram.*

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Amainel, 23
- Metro: San Bernardo / Noviciado



- Phone: 918 057 930

## **You might also like:**

- [Lady Madonna, because Sundays are made for brunching](#)
- [Plenti, a great new coffee & brunch spot in Barrio de las Letras](#)
- [Best brunch on a budget in Madrid](#)
- [Federal Café Madrid – hipster in a very good way](#)