Perdizione, a hidden Tex-Mex Burrito shop in Lavapies

Until quite recently, kebabs and falafels had the monopoly over nighttime snacks in Lavapies. **My favorite new Tex-Mex hole in the wall is hidden due to its awkward branding**.



Perdizione, a pizza franchise with another location in Legazpi, has partial ownership of this site—the sign above the door says "**Perdizione Pizzeria**" which causes passersby to be none the wiser that inside can be found hearty and filling burritos and other Mexican treats.



For **4 euros** you can get an **enormous burrito** of cochinita, vegetables or chicken, and for an additional €1.50 you can add on nachos, guacamole and a beer. **Tacos cost 1.50**. I smiled when I saw that they offered **Negra Modelo,** my Dad's favorite beer from his native city of Mexico D.F. The staff of this location have always been super *majo*.



Once I earned regular status I offered my council to the owner—this establishment needs to focus on its strengths and prioritize the burritos and its branding as a Mexican joint.

Info

Facebook
Where: *Calle Miguel Servet 9*
Metro: *Lavapies, Embajadores*

For more on Mexican food in Madrid, check out:

Madrid's Best Mexican Joints

Also in Lavapiés:

- **Baobab, an Authentic Senegalese Restaurant in Lavapiés**
- **Tribuetxe, a Basque Pintxo Bar in Lavapiés**
- **Cafelito, a trendy spot for coffee lovers in Lavapiés**

La China Mandarina, a Flashy New Bistro in Plaza de Cascorro

La China Mandarina, a bistro situated in **Plaza de Cascorro**, was previously an antique shop that underwent a loud and prolonged renovation over the course of several months. Upon its completion, I peered in through its glass windows in an attempt to scope it out. **I'm always on the prowl for affordable & pseudo-classy locations to write about.** La China Mandarina is a large space, dimly lit, with **a long communal table in the center.** The crowd in the establishment was young and well-dressed. The interior design of the place was a little bit swankier than the older businesses in the zone that remain frozen in time.





Their 11€ menu del dia changes daily, **offering a broad spectrum of healthy & gastronomic snacks**. The menu that was available on the day that I entered consisted of a **thick and spicy lentil soup** followed by a plate containing three small

portions, **a salad with apples and olive-based dressing, a couscous curry with vegetables and a salmon tartar.** I traded a wine/beer in favor of a *cafe cortado.* I was tempted by their delicious desserts on display although in this instance I exerted restraint for once.





I learned that the location **offers a brunch for 16€** on weekends which I will absolutely return for. I can imagine the spot, like all businesses in this area, being thumping on Sundays due to Rastro traffic. **The location doubles as a coffee shop with wifi during non-meal hours** which allowed me to chronicle my foodie experience while it was fresh in my head. With their gastronomic menu del dia changing every day in all likelihood it will be impossible for me to sample all of their offerings. This ambiguity as to what else they can whip up in the future furthers my desire to return.

Info

Facebook
Address: *Plaza de Coscorro, 17*
Metro: *La Latina*

Looking for more spots in La Latina and Lavapiés? Check out:

- **Cosy Wine Bars in La Latina (with gluten-free options!)**
- **Taberna Lamiak, a Basque pintxo bar with Tuesday-night wine tastings**
- **Tribuetxe, another Basque pintxo bar you have to try**
- **Baobab, an authentic Senegalese restaurant in Lavapiés**

Moderna de Pueblo: A self-aware series of graphic novels about hipster hijinks in Madrid

I have been **using Spanish graphic novels in an attempt to learn slang and expletive phrases** in order to reinforce my grasp of the language. While browsing volumes in ***La Central***, one book caught my eye. *El Cooltureta* is a relatable story because it follows a group of young people that live in Madrid. The creator, Raquel Córcoles, is credited by her pen name, **Moderna de Pueblo**, which doubles as the name of the series.



The skyline of Madrid, as envisioned by the artist

The artist nails the portrayal of my adopted city. The first panel of the book begins with the protagonist on his balcony in Anton Martin, admiring the street below while thinking to himself, *“Acaba de mudarme y estaba totalmente enamorado del barrio.”*

The first story follows its titular protagonist as he adopts a hipster identity. **El Cooltureta relocated to Madrid from an unnamed, generic pueblo and seized the opportunity to recreate himself as a stylish, trendy, pseudo-intellectual.**

Each panel portrays a broad spectrum of scenarios that young people can relate with—**dealing with roommates, unrequited love, awkward communications via Whatsapp and the troubles that stem from relentless over thinking.**



El Cooltureta, the protagonist of the first book

The central conflict of this first story is that El Cooltureta wants to engage in the vast cultural offerings of Madrid, such as screenings in the Cine Dore, but he is too awkward to go alone. El Cooltureta searches for a social circle that he can thrive in, and **gradually meets several characters whose names are their endearing archetypes:** the tortured friend, the cinefile, *la chica de la bici, la mariliendre etc.*

The series is full of cultural references, both mainstream and otherwise. There is one instance where the protagonist is *de resaca* and watching the mindless television series *New Girl. W*hen a friend calls to check up on how he's doing, he lies to maintain the illusion of his dignity by telling her that he's watching (my favorite series) *The Wire.* A climactic scene of the story occurs during a performance by *Die Antwoord*, which

the protagonist only attended begrudgingly. At every stage the characters are either heavily endorsing, or making snarky comments about, various forms entertainment and media. One character is often seen wearing a shirt that says in bold lettering “All blogs post the same stuff.”

After becoming heavily emotionally invested in the characters I picked up the second book, *Los Capullos no regalan flowers* (Dickheads don’t gift flowers) which follows an unnamed female protagonist. The second book outshines the first in my opinion because it has more of a clearly defined plot. Similar to El Cooltureta, the female lead moved to Madrid from a generic pueblo and hopes to take advantage of her recently acquired freedom. Each chapter, titled after different *capullo* archetypes, follows her endearingly awkward search for love. It is neatly fitting that she has a poster of Woody Allen’s classic film, *Manhattan,* right above her bed. She is a hopeless romantic **who gets swept up in the world of Tinder, nightclubs, & Whatsapp courtship.** Although her view on relationships and romance evolves as she adjusts further to her new environment, the old-school romantic in her secretly hopes that one of her partners will bring her flowers.



The female protagonist of the second book bears a striking resemblance to the series creator.

One of her many less than ideal dates was with the male protagonist of the first book, who stayed true to his character and talked her ear off. Her internal dialogue as she makes decisions throughout the story is quite comical. She does her best to be open to the various types of modern flings—open relationships, long distance relationships, and relationships with flatmates. As the chapters progress, the female lead becomes increasingly frustrated with her circumstances.



Internal dialogue

She returns to her pueblo temporarily to seek clarity. While away from Madrid she has the epiphany that I've had time and time again—**Madrid is a uniquely special city** to which my hometown (as much as I respect it) pales in comparison. Upon

returning to Madrid she continues her personal journey with further conviction.

Although both books were *lleno* with unfamiliar slang, which I've had to pause at intervals and ask my roommate to explain to me, **I was laughing at every turn**. This self -aware series is a must-read for young adults living in Madrid because it pokes fun at us and the spectrum of *tonterias* that we partake in. Numerous panels of the comic, which still make sense out of context, are free on their Facebook page & website, "Moderna de Pueblo." If you become hooked, I encourage you to purchase both texts at your nearest ***La Central.***

> ***Web***
> ***Shop***
> ***Image credit:*** *All of the imagery that appears above are samples from the Moderna de Pueblo website and their* ***Facebook page***

For more on good reads in Madrid, check out:

> **Desperate Literature, for book lovers in Brooklyn, Santorini and now Madrid**
>
> **Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, round one**
>
> **Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, round two**

Pecados Argentinos, Freshly-baked Argentine Empanadas in Plaza de Cascorro

When I am scurrying between my private lessons I sometimes get swept up in a blinding hunger. Empanadas are often the most practical solution because they can be both served and consumed quickly, leaving me full, satisfied and capable of fighting onwards. **Pecados Argentinos** is a shop situated in **Plaza de Cascorro** that sells delicious, filling **Argentine empanadas** as well as other products from the land of silver.



Earlier this year I was dabbling with the idea of relocating

next to Buenos Aires and I made a point of befriending the staff of this establishment so that I could pick their brains as to what life there entails. The staff of this shop are a group of lovely ladies that greet their clients with terms of endearment such as mi amor and cariño. The Porteño accent is my favorite of the various forms of Spanish that I've been exposed to—when they speak it's almost as if they're singing and my instinctive response is to melt. Several times I have entered this location while rushing between point lessons and have lost track of time due to the hypnotizing nature of their accents during our small-talk.



The establishment offers 11 different types of empanadas and my intention is to eventually sample all of them. My favorite thus far is filled with mushrooms and both mozzarella and parmesan cheese. Another that has aided my recovery from crippling resacas is their empanada of chicken, mozzarella cheese and caramelized onions. I've also enjoyed their staple

empanada, which is filled with tuna, red pepper, & onion. The empanada stuffed with mushrooms makes my mouth water.

Not to mention their typical Argentine desserts filled with dulce de leche…



The next time you find yourself navigating the **Rastro flea market**, I strongly recommend you picar a few snacks from this charming establishment.

Info

Web
Facebook
Address: *Plaza de Cascorro 11*
Contact: *910 840 505*

Looking for other spots in La Latina and Lavapiés area? Check out:

Tribuetxe, a Basque pintxo bar

Los Chuchis Bar, downright good food in Lavapiés

Cafelito, a trendy spot for coffee lovers in Lavapiés

Lavapiés and its market – the real food emporium!

Cosy Wine Bars in La Latina

Mastropiero, Indulgent Gourmet Pizzas in Malasaña

A few evenings ago I was trading notes with an enthusiastic foodie friend who pointed me in the direction of Mastopiero, **a gourmet pizzeria in Malasaña operated by Argentines**. As you might already know, the Porteño accent just slays me. I was not led astray when I followed up and checked out the establishment for myself. A cozy and intimate space, Mastopiero is dimly lit and smells absolutely delicious.



Their *carta* offer a broad range of gourmet pizza variety. I like to consider myself to be an imaginative person yet **I never would have previously fathomed that *pulpo gallego* on a pizza could be a thing**. Of course when I saw that as an option I ordered a pizza that was half octopus. I asked the staff to surprise me with the other half and their creation entailed **spicy peppers, chorizo, olives, and caramelized onions**.



The literal icing on the cake of this experience is that diners are given a **free slice of chocolate fudge cake** accompanied by creamy *dulce de leche* to top off their experience. If it were possible I would totally have an IV drip of their dulce de leche installed into my body. The service in this establishment was absolutely stellar and I am confident that I will return soon to sample their other pies.



Facebook
Address: *Calle San Vicente Ferrer, 36*
Metro: *Tribunal/Noviciado*

Looking for other nice spots in Malasaña? Check out:

Aiò, a piece of Sardinia in Malasaña

Toma Café, Fuel up, Feel Hip

La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café

Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think

Naif, the king of burgers in Malasaña

La Maruca, a Swanky Cantabrian Restaurant in Barrio Salamanca

My Dad comes to Spain frequently in order to see myself and his close friends, Rafael, Catherine, Alfredo & Ruth. It has been hugely comforting to have such trusted and accessible "real adults" during my time abroad. In addition to being warm, generous, and offering of exceptional council, my Dad's friends are in the know in regards to **Madrid's ritzier restaurants**. I was fortunate to have been invited to tag along to their **dinner at La Maruca**, an establishment in **barrio Salamanca** that I certainly would not have discovered under different circumstances.


LA MARUCA



A large space with a stylish staff and a cozy fireplace by the bar, the location radiates class. Catherine took the initiative to order several appetizers—***croquetas de carne cocido*, a tartar of smoked salmon & avocado** as well as a plate of delicious anchovies with red bell peppers. We drank wine and had a pleasant conversation with a lot of swift code-changing between Spanish & English.



For my main course I ordered pluma de cerdo, a delicious dish of perfectly cooked pork. Rafael ordered *pulpo a la plancha,* which was presented quite aesthetically. Enrique, my Dad, consumed the *albondigas*, which he enjoyed greatly. Catherine's dish was the *tajada de merluza*. Ruth ordered *canelones rellenos de poularda con salsa de foie*, another incredibly photogenic plate.



Initially I believed that this restaurant would be well above my pay grade, but that was not the case—each plate cost between **10-14€**. This isn't the first time that the "real adults" have introduced me to a seemingly unapproachable establishment that ultimately turned out to be reasonably priced. I can imagine tactfully utilizing this location in the future in order to put up a front of fanciness while on a date.



Contact info

Facebook
Website

Where to find La Maruca

Address: Calle de Velázquez 54
Metro: Velasquez
Phone :917 81 49 69

You may also check out series on best first date ideas in Madrid:

Flowers are nice, but this first date is better (part 1)

Chocolates are nice, but this first date is better (part 2)

Dating in Madrid for Foodies (part 3)

Cafelito, a trendy spot for coffee lovers in Lavapies

In a *barrio* undergoing the gradual process of gentrification, chic cafes are a dime a dozen. **Cafelito**, situated on Calle Sombrerete near **Mercado de San Fernando**, quickly stood out amongst the crowd as my go-to spot for coffee and studious activity in the barrio. The owner, Julio, imports his coffee from locations such as Kenya, Ethiopia and Mexico.



During my first two years abroad I lamented the absence of iced-coffees, especially during the pinnacle of the Madrid summers. This past summer, when **Cafelito** opened, they boasted of offering **homemade iced-coffee using cubes of frozen coffee as the ice**. Since then, I have gone through 6 full punch chards and been rewarded for my loyalty with as many free drinks.



My favorite winter drink, which I typically take to go, is **dirty chai**. When I need to sit and be studious as I write assignments like this, I usually take **a double espresso of whichever imported coffee is available that week.**



Cafelito is now a hub for the writers amongst us in the barrio. The charms of the cafe are enhanced by the recycled furniture and open library. Coffee drinkers can borrow books—on the honor system—and leave books in the hope that they in turn will be borrowed.



They have cakes too.



Web
Facebook
Address: *Calle Sombrerete 20*
Metro: *Lavapiés*

Looking for other spots in Lavapiés? Check out:

- **Baobab, an authentic Senegalese restaurant**
- **Tribuetxe, a Basque pintxo bar**
- **Mercado de San Fernando, the real food emporium**
- **Taberna Lamiak, another Basque pintxo bar with free wine tastings**

Cerveceria Catalana, Tapas and Raciones in Barcelona

I sing praises about **Barcelona**, a city where I am accepted as an outsider by Catalan people due to the nature of my surname. **Cerveceria Catalana** is a popular *raciones* bar and restaurant located on Carrer de Mallorca, just off of Passeig de Gracia. A location that I discovered initially when visiting Barcelona with my parents, I now make a point of dining at this establishment during my excursions to the Catalan capital city.



They feature a broad variety of typical *raciones* and a bountiful selection of beers, wines and cavas. I am passionate about shrimp in all of their forms, and have acquired a taste for *pulpo gallego.*



Cerveceria Catalana does not accept reservations and diners must wait patiently for their names to be called in order to be seated. In one instance of good fortune, the host allowed me to bypass the line due to my surname. Diners can watch the paella chefs work their magic while ordering drinks at the bar.



The tasteful decoration and elegant dress of the crowd could mislead travelers into thinking that this is a *pijo* establishment and above their pay grade—this is absolutely not the case. Plates are affordable, each ranging between 4-6€.

Facebook
Address: *Carrer de Mallorca 236*
Phone: *932 16 03 68*
Metro: *Diagonal*

Also check out our post on 'How to get to Barcelona from Madrid' (in which we suggest another great neighborhood bar!)

Tribuetxe, a Basque Pinchos Bar in Lavapies

I was recommended **Tribuetxe** by one of my former students, a stoic Basque Señora, who wanted me to try the cuisine of her region's chefs. I haven't yet explored Pais Vasco, but I have every intention to due to the hype surrounding their food culture. I sampled Tribuetxe's fried shrimp tapa during Tapapies, the competitive international food festival of the barrio—I was not surprised to learn later on that they had won.





A fairly new location, situated behind **Mercado San Fernando** on Calle Tribulete, **Tribuetxe** is always *petado*. I clearly understand why after consuming four of their excellent pinchos alongside glasses of vino tinto. One of my new years resolutions was to incorporate more **eggplant** into my diet after sampling their **berenjena pincho**. I followed this up with **duck**, a skewer of **shrimp** and **octopus** and a skewer of fried **merluza**. **Each filling pincho costs between 3€ and 3.50€.**







Mercado San Fernando is one of my favorite hubs of community within the barrio. If you are exploring that area on a pleasant weekend afternoon, I strongly advise you to venture to Tribuetxe for your daytime drinking and snack endeavors.

> ***Facebook***
> *Address: Calle de Tribulete 23*
> *Metro: Lavapiés*

Here's a full article on El Mercado de San Fernando, entitled: 'Lavapiés and its market: the real food emporium!'

Another Basque pincho bar in Lavapiés and La Latina that we love is: Lamiak

If you're looking for wonderful wine bars in La Latina, check out: 'The cosiest wine bars in La Latina (with gluten free options!)'

Baobab, an Authentic Senegalese Restaurant in Lavapies

Plaza Nelson Mandela, near *Calle Cabestreros,* is my favorite communal space in Madrid. The plaza is a concrete social hub, perfect for *botellon* and people watching. Situated here is **Baobab, a Senegalese restaurant** that is always *petado* (packed). I had been living near the restaurant for several months before I made a point of seeing what all the hubbub is about.





Baobab did not disappoint—at the time I called it the final frontier of my palate. My first dish was the **Maffe**, a warm

peanut and veal curry containing an assortment of vegetables, served with rice. Another popular dish, **Thieboudienne**, consists of fish, onions, cabbage, carrots and peanut oil and a dulce mystery vegetable with a distinct creamy texture. **The skewers of chicken or lamb** and caramelized onions are served over potatoes and salad that become soaked in the delicious juices from the meat. At any given time the restaurant only serves half of what is offered on their menu, with an unpredictable rotation. The plates available are recited quickly by the server—I often need to ask him to repeat himself.

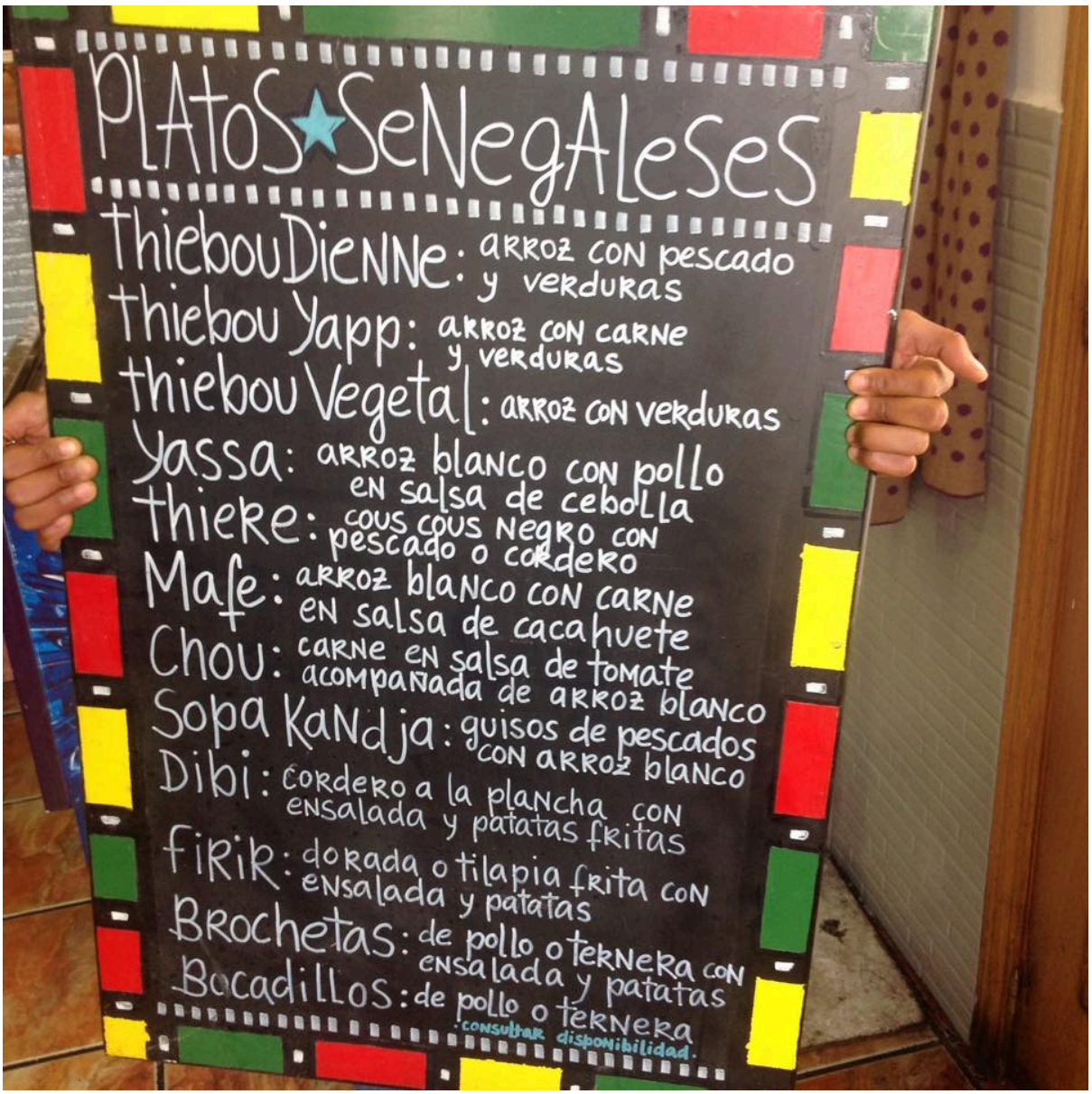


What amazed me about this establishment is that **each portion is monstrous**—often too much to eat in one sit down, even for a notoriously hungry foodie such as myself. **Leftovers can be rationed for several days**. It is known that diners are rewarded with even larger portions for ordering their food take-away.



In the warmer seasons, **Baobab’s terraza** is a desirable location for diners who wish to observe the lively happenings in **Plaza Nelson Mandela**. I’ve seen large groups of young people swing dancing, children assembling DIY badminton or tetherball, with a vast majority of the chatter in languages that are not English or Spanish.





It is important to note that the terraza is a common target for petty criminals—especially after the Rastro on Sundays—because they are aware that the restaurant is popular amongst Madrileños who hail from outside the barrio. Be wary of your possessions and the occasional pickpockets who often have noticeable lingering presences.

Contact: *91 530 4611*
Address: *Calle Cabestreros 1*
Metros: *Tirso de Molina or Lavapies*
Products & Prices: *All rice dishes: 7€. Skewers of Chicken or Lamb: 8€*