Casa Adela, a Revered Hole-in-the-Wall Rotisserie in Lavapies

Casa Adela's chickens have been a staple for cheap eats during my time abroad. A tiny and intimate space on Calle Embajadores, Adela's is a watering hole for the residents of the barrio. **Adela's is a family-owned business operated by Señora Adela and her sons**. During their 20 years of business they have refined their process of preparing rotisserie chickens and fried chicken breasts to perfection.



Besides her culinary expertise, Adela radiates a real affection for her diners. She shows it by showering recurring clients with terms of endearment such as *corazon* and *cariño*

and by taking the time to stop and talk to them about their lives, always remembering particular details from the previous conversations. I would never have discovered **this hidden gem** had my first Madrid apartment not been directly across from it—we would often joke about creating a delivery system via basket and pulleys.



Adela's holds a tender place in my heart because **I have learned so much Spanish slang from listening to their banter** amongst themselves and with their clients. Here, the unique sense of community in **Lavapies** is visibly apparent. I initially met two of my neighbors, fellow *extranjeros* Matt and James, while waiting in line for a chicken during my first year. This chance encounter directly resulted with my

absorption into the larger social circle that has now become my family.

After I moved out of my initial apartment on Calle del Oso, I feared that I would lose such easy access to my primary source of protein. Fortunately, I was told that they hired an employee to make deliveries on his scooter within the barrio for a 0.50€ cent supplement. I often stop by and say hello while grabbing a bite when walking down Calle Embajadores. It's comforting to frequent an establishment that is visibly frozen in time and has gone unchanged for 2 decades.

Would you like to try Adela's revered chickens?

Facebook
Contact: *91 530 4611*
Address: *Calle Embajadores 28*
Metros: *La Latina or Tirso de Molina*
Products & Prices:
Half rotisseries chicken or fried chicken breast + fries or rice (5.50€)
Full rotisserie chicken (7.50€)
Hamburger (2€)
Albondigas (meatballs) (5€)

Our other favorite place to get rotisserie chicken is Casa Mingo, which is an absolute must in Madrid. If you haven't been, check out our post on it here.

Jewish Culture in Madrid & An Interview with ‘Easy Latkes’, a Pop-up Potato Pancake Delivery Service!

As an American Jew living in Spain, a country with a seemingly ominous absence of Jewish activity and culture, myself and my contemporaries often yearn for the taste and comfort of Bubbe’s cooking. When I was a cultural ambassador, responsible for teaching the English language and United States culture in Spanish schools, I was often questioned about the typical foods of my home, New York. Describing a bagel—and explaining its distinction from a donut or the Spanish ro*scon*—has been surprisingly difficult.

A dash of insight and a dollop of news regarding Spain’s Jewish population



A street sign in Segovia’s old Jewish Quarter

During my time abroad I’ve investigated **Madrid’s tightly knit Jewish population**. I received my first window into their world when I was invited to celebrate Rosh Hashanah with a lovely Sephardic family in their Arturo Soria residence. From them I learned that there are **3,000 Jews living in Madrid, 3,000 in Barcelona, and 12,000 scattered all over the rest of the country**—concentrated in locations such as Toledo, Cordoba, and Ceuta y Melilla.

This number is expected to increase dramatically now that **Spain has opened its doors to the descendants of those exiled during the Spanish inquisition.** I am following this process closely because it directly affects my paternal family who are all Jews hailing from Mexico. The Spanish consulate of Tel Aviv has been flooded with inquiries by young Israelis who hope to move to Spain for its pristine weather and low cost of living. Their impending migration here will have unprecedented anthropological effects for all parties involved—ideally in

the form of fusions between their cuisine and Spanish cuisine.

Some helpful info for Jews and Jewish culture enthusiasts in Madrid

For now, the Jews among the current American English teaching expatriates are slowly creating a sub-community amongst ourselves.

- We recently created a **Facebook Group**, **Jews in Madrid,** which welcomes any Jew or Jewish culture enthusiast to join.
- You can also join **Marom España, a Jewish organization** associated with Congregation Bet-El. This "young adult" group organizes holiday activities in Madrid.
- I've discovered a **Jewish product store** called **Judaica Los Olivos** located on Calle General Ricardos 190 by metro Oporto, which imports **Kosher products, texts and art from Israel**.
- Madrid also has a **Synagogue and Jewish Community Center** called **La Sinagoga de Madrid,** located at *Calle Balmes 3*, ironically by metro Iglesia. Officially inaugurated in 1968 though holding ceremonies since 1907, it was the first synagogue in Spain to be constructed since the inquisition. My friend Paige and I took our cameras there in the hopes of snapping a few photos for this article. Unfortunately, the security guards politely requested that we delete the photos we had taken, but extended a warm invitation for us to return for the **open services on Friday evenings**—as long as we bring our passports and NIEs.

Interview with Easy Latkes, a Pop-Up

Potato Pancake Delivery Service in Madrid



2014 saw my third consecutive *Januca* spent abroad and it has been the most bountiful. I caught word on the *Auxiliares en Madrid* Facebook page, that one of my English teaching contemporaries, Casey, with the help of her Spanish boyfriend, Jose, had begun selling latkes and delivering them fresh to the homes of Madrid's Jewish expatriates and Jewish culture enthusiasts. I purchased a portion of latkes and apple sauce with every intention of sharing with my friends and private lesson students, but once I smelled them, immediately devoured them all without hesitation or *verguenza*. I applaud Casey and Jose for recognizing that there was a niche to be filled and that the Jews of Madrid would have *ganas* to support their operation. Casey has so generously allowed me to interview her about her operation and future culinary endeavors.

DC: How did this latke delivery service idea occur to you in the first place?

Casey: Latkes have always been a true wintertime staple for me back at home in New York. This year, away from home during the holidays for the first time, I broke out the potatoes, onions, and oil, and whipped up a couple batches of them for my housemates—none of whom had ever heard the word "latke" before. Needless to say, they were a hit! In between scrumptious bites, we joked around about the idea of opening a Jewish deli, we realized that that wouldn't be feasible, and then decided on the next best thing. Easy Latkes was our attempt at filling that same void of crispy deliciousness for the rest of the Jewish community in Madrid.

DC: How many orders did you serve in total? Which barrios of Madrid have the largest population of Chosen People?

Casey: Our latkes operation was active for a total of 72 hours and, in that time, we made and delivered over 200 latkes! The truth is that Madrid's latke enthusiasts were not concentrated in any particular barrio, but rather all over the *centro*, namely in *Sol*, *Malasaña, La Latina,* and *Lavapies*!



DC: Did you meet any elusive Sephardic Jews? Have you had any previous experiences with Madrid's Jewish community during your time here?

Casey: I was hoping I might encounter some Spanish latke lovers during this project, but the clientele turned out to be American Jews and more American Jews, mostly English language teaching assistants, who missed holiday tastes of home. This might be attributed to the fact that I simply did not know how to best reach out to the Spanish Jewish community in spreading the word about my service, so tended mostly to advertise to an *extranjero* Jewish demographic.

DC: What are your comfort foods? What do you like to cook at home?

Casey: Latkes have always been one of my greatest and most beloved comfort foods, with a warm oniony deliciousness that takes me right back to many Hanukkahs in my Grandmother's dining room on eastern Long Island. Besides that, I am a huge

fan of macaroni and cheese, anything with avocado, and egg sandwiches.

DC: Is there a cute story about the circumstances under which you met in 2013?

Casey: Jose was my "language exchange partner" in Sevilla during my semester abroad. "Intercambio" quickly turned into something more, and the rest is history! We maintained the relationship across the Atlantic for a whole year and reunited last summer in Madrid. Even though our relationship has surely evolved, we still enjoy the perks of our intercambio/cultural exchange: This Hanukkah was the first we've spent together; I taught him what a latke was, and a couple days later he was making hundreds of them for Jews all over Madrid.



DC: Can we expect your service to be seasonal now that you've asserted your brand and established a client base? Do you imagine that you will prepare the typical food of the other

Jewish holidays? I'm imagining Matzoh balls, challah, hamanstachen, gefiltefish etc.

Casey: Yum, yum, and yum. I've been thinking about future food projects in Madrid, but it's too early to announce anything for sure. Before we can do anything too large-scale, though, we may have to supplement our 2-person team and bust out of our tiny Malasaña kitchen! Check back on our Easy Latkes Facebook page for updates!

DC: Now that I think about it, small *raciones* of typical Jewish foods would make excellent tapas. Do you have any ideas in regards to fusion with Spanish cuisine? (latkes bravas for example)

Casey: The possibilities are endless: Tortilla-latke, croqueta-latke, gefiltefish montadito, matzoh ball salmorejo (not sure how I feel about that one). As amazing of an idea as this may be, I'm gonna focus on finishing my first year as an English teacher, then I'll see about revolutionizing Spanish cuisine! Regardless, we are thrilled with all of the positive feedback and support this first project has yielded! Stay tuned!

Want to get some homemade latkes delivered fresh to your door during the holidays?

Contact: Send a message to **Easy Latkes** via **Facebook** to place your order (currently only available during the holidays)

Products & Prices: Batch of 13 homemade potato pancakes (8€). Homemade cinnamon-sugar applesauce (4€) Sour cream sauce (2€)

Have any other tips on Jewish culture in

Madrid? Leave us a comment!

By Dan Catalan
You can find more articles from Dan on his personal blog, The Expatriate Adventures
All photos of potato latkes and the 'making of' are from Easy Latkes's Facebook Page