Art lover’s guide to Madrid: 7 resources to keep you up to date

Happy 2020! Perhaps you’re one of the many people who have made various resolutions to start the year afresh and become a better version of yourself. Is one of your resolutions to increase your cultural knowledge and take full advantage of the art offered by this great city? Even if you’re not the resolution type and you’re just looking for some guidance in terms of where to find out more about art in Madrid, never fear! We’re here to guide you to the relevant information.

1. EsMadrid

Now let’s say you don’t speak Spanish. In that case, your best choice to find information about art in English in Madrid is from the Art and Culture section of Madrid’s official tourism website, **EsMadrid**. In addition to English and Spanish, this site is available in 7 other languages, including Japanese and Russian. Now one of its great pluses is that it breaks down the various tourist passes available like the Paseo del Arte Pass which grants the holder one visit to the permanent collection of each of the city’s main museums, the Prado, The Reina Sofia and the Thyssen-Bornemisza. This pass is great for

visitors who are just in the city for a short while and who only want to dive into the big ticket sites but there are other passes which give you access to more museums for periods such as ten to fifteen days for the consummate art lover.

EsMadrid's great strength is the breadth of its scope – it covers cultural centres to exhibition halls to house museums and contains the most pertinent information at a glance, including the location, price, opening hours and best transport options. And if you want a great overview of Madrid's art offerings, be sure to take a gander at the Art in Madrid Guide PDF which is an unbeatable introduction to both the leading museums and their holdings as well as some of the lesser known but just as formative art centres like the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, just off of Sol.

2. Time Out Madrid



Now if you're looking for information that is a bit more curated, don't miss **Time Out Madrid**. While the English version of their website is not quite as comprehensive as the Spanish one, there are still a number of articles, which are constantly updated, highlighting the most popular, current exhibitions, free art, street art and graffiti as well as the

city’s most celebrated paintings and museums.

Time Out is an incredibly well-known and versatile publication with branches all over the world and it has even recently launched a print magazine here in Madrid which releases monthly. You can often find the print magazine being given out for free at major metro stations just after release, or later, in trendy cafes, independent bookshops and some libraries. I would highly recommend grabbing a copy if you can because it goes into even more detail of certain expositions and features some recommendations and interviews which are exclusive to the magazine.

3. Madrid Diferente

Continuing on to Spanish-language recommendations, another favourite is **Madrid Diferente**. Similar to Time Out Madrid, Madrid Diferente publishes a weekly agenda of things to do over the entire upcoming week, not just the weekend. Their picks are often eclectic and a little bit off the beaten path. I almost always discover some activity or event that I’ve never heard of before and that is only happening for just this weekend and that’s why I try to check every Thursday because you don’t want to miss out!

Madrid has so much to offer it can be overwhelming but here you have a streamlined list of options. Now, if you check their “Es Capital” section, you will be exposed to a host of activities and spaces that are intimate and rewarding like Madrid’s smallest photo gallery or a self-guided tour of Madrid’s most unusual, outdoor sculptures. And if you want to kill two birds with one stone, Madrid Diferente’s writers have

recently begun including suggestions for recommended restaurants or cafes near to the gallery or museum they're currently highlighting. A win win, in my book!

4. Madrid Free

Perhaps your number one New Year's resolution is to sort out your finances and you're afraid that this is all sounding very expensive. Well, did you know that there's a website dedicated solely to free cultural activities in Madrid? It's called **Madrid Free** and it has a dedicated section for Expositions which is updated frequently. It also covers exhibitions from contemporary art galleries as well as the ones from museums and cultural centres like CentroCentro Cibeles and the Matadero. If you want even more up to the minute information on free activities, be sure to also follow them on Facebook if you have it because they update it often.

5. Arte Informado

ARTEINFORMADO
Espacio iberoamericano del arte

So if you want the absolute, most comprehensive list of temporary art offerings in the city, look no further than **Arte Informado**. This is basically a holy grail for art lovers as this website aims to serve almost every country in the Iberian-American space and includes a magazine, art courses and art prizes. However, even if you just want to know about art expositions, they compile those too with an incredible search engine that allows you to narrow down your choices by

date, city or country and even specify the type of art.

At this very moment, if you search for exhibitions in Madrid, narrowing it down no further, it shows 19,787 exhibitions available. You can't deny – that's a lot of art. If that sounds like a bit much, Arte Informado also has a weekly newsletter which you can sign up for that delivers some of the most prominent exhibits right into your mailbox.

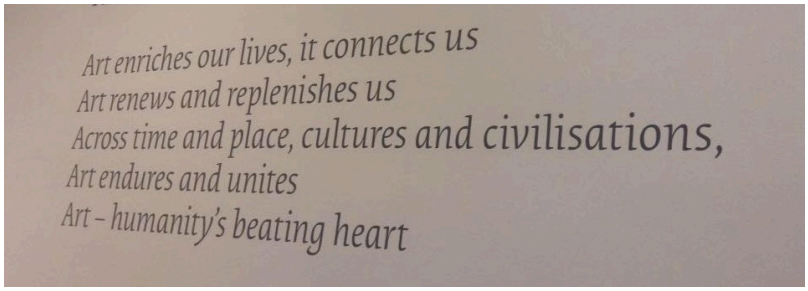
6. Museo del Prado's Instagram account



If you want your Instagram experience to be more positive and enlightening, follow the **Museo del Prado's official account**: @museoprado. Every weekday morning, they do an Instagram Live video highlighting either an art work or a room of the museum, which is then left up for the rest of the day so you can check it out when you can. Additionally, in their posts, they often share videos showing the mounting of exhibits as well as other day-to-day aspects of working and running a major museum. It's a fantastic, accessible way to flesh out your art history knowledge.

7. Madrid Art and Culture Facebook

group



Finally if you'd like to get more of my insight into Madrid's cultural goings-on, feel free to join my Facebook group, **Madrid Art and Culture**, which is meant to showcase the many different sides of this city, although it is quite heavy on art and film. I created it about a year and a half ago and the group now has just over 1400 members with frequent posts about film festivals, art exhibits, plays and much more. Furthermore, as it's a Facebook group, all members are able to post about activities and events that interest them or that they are taking part in.

I hope I've given you the tools to hit the ground running this year when it comes to art. To a culturally enriching 2020!

By Kristen Wiltshire (IG: @makidocious)

When she's not at a museum or the movies, Kristen can usually be found trying to make headway in her giant pile of books or her miles long Netflix queue. She also runs Madrid Art and Culture, a Facebook group dedicated to Madrid's myriad cultural offerings.

A look at the history and food of Aragón, Spain

Between the Spanish metropolises of Madrid and Barcelona, forgotten from Michelin-guided itineraries focused solely on the Basque Country, and otherwise seen as a pass-thru city, lies Zaragoza, the capital of Aragón. If you've seen *The Tudors*, maybe you remember Henry's first wife: the pious Catherine of Aragón, played by Irish actress Maria Doyle Kennedy. Perhaps that is all you've ever heard of Aragón, a region whose middle and southern depths were once described by a friend as "a nuclear wasteland."



View of Zaragoza from one of the towers of the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar

And yet, Aragón’s southern capital, Teruel, is famous for its

cured ham, effortlessly produced in the dry, windy climate of Aragón. The “Lovers of Teruel” were supposedly Shakespeare’s inspiration for Romeo and Juliet, even. And there’s certainly no love lost by Spaniards for Aragón’s northern territory, cities like Huesca and Jaca, lush and green and gateways to the Pyrenees and affordable skiing.



Teruel (image source)

For tourists or non-Spaniards unfamiliar with the Pyrenees valley, knowing little to nothing about the once-mighty kingdom of Aragón is not surprising. Similarly, feeling overlooked or forgotten is not a foreign sensation to the Aragonese, beset on every side by regions more famous for various reasons: Cataluña, Castilla y León, Navarra, Valencia, and, of course, Madrid. And yet, Aragón was once, arguably, one of the most important and powerful regions in Spain.

History of Aragón, Spain



Aragoń, Spain | ©Jrpvaldi / Wikimedia Commons

In 1469, in the capital city of Valladolid (Castile and León), Ferdinand II of Aragón and Isabella I of Castile were married. Seventeen and eighteen, respectively, these two monarchs were known as the "Catholic Monarchs" (los Reyes Católicos) and, one falsified papal bull later, Isabella and Ferdinand went on to rule an Iberian peninsula many historians credit as being unified under their influence.

Americans, Barcelona tour guides, and other history buffs may also recognize them as being the monarchs that Christopher Columbus sought financial support from in his mission to colonize the Indies, originally, and whose trips and conquests would end up for the benefit of the Spanish crown. Or rather,

the Castilian crown, since it was Isabella who had provided the money, not Ferdinand and his Aragonese court.

The imbalance in the power of their kingdoms, Castile and León richer and more powerful, was heightened by the fact that both Castile and Aragón retained their respective autonomy despite Isabella and Ferdinand's marriage. So to amend an earlier, arguable statement, perhaps it is better said that Aragón was a *part* of the most powerful and important union in Spain.

Cuisine of Aragón, Spain



Zaragoza



Aragón’s supporting role in the unification of Spain during the Middle Ages and relative present-day anonymity among the

Iberian regions notwithstanding, Aragón has maintained a proud culinary tradition.

Ham from Teruel

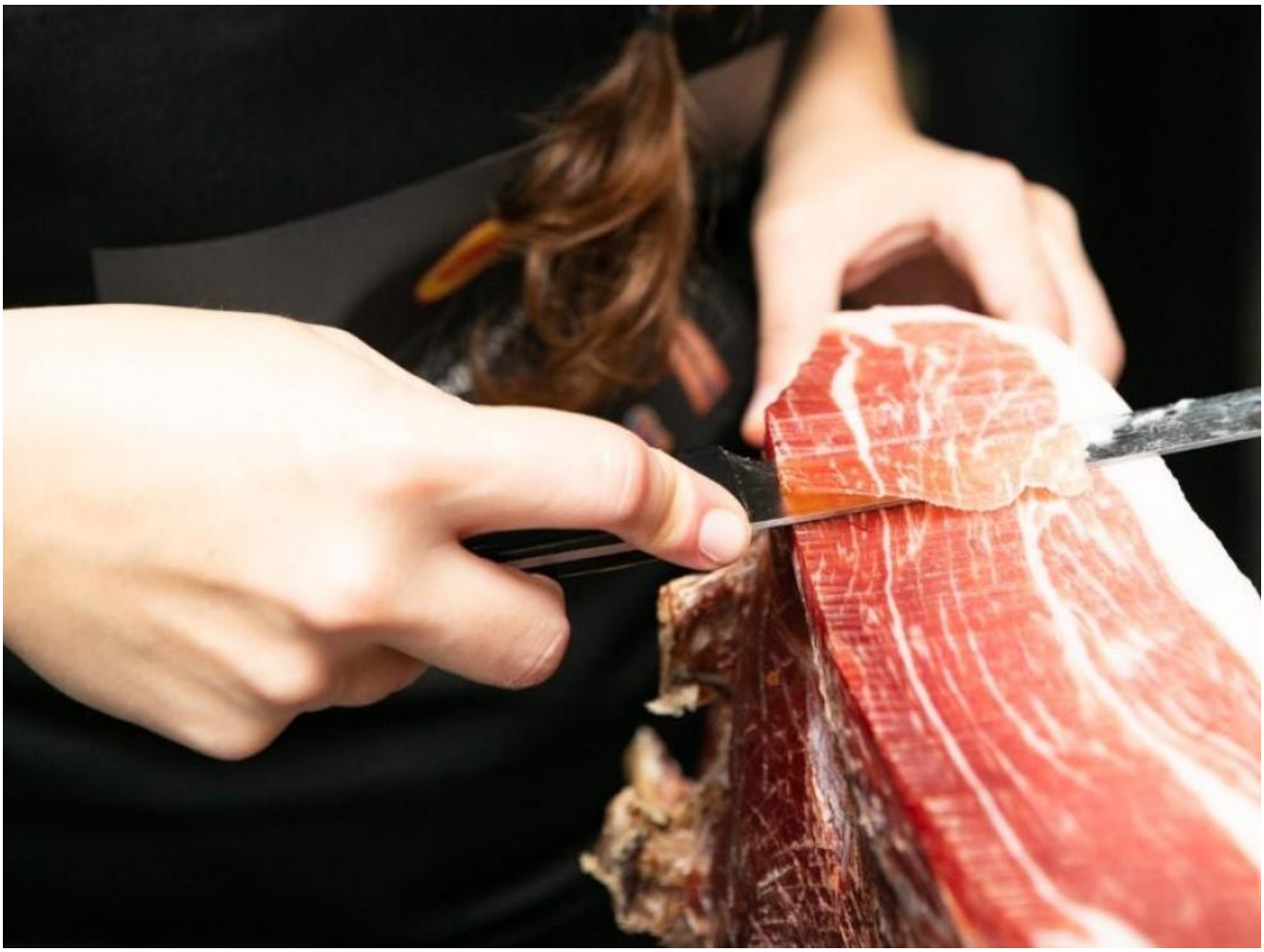


Image credit

Teruel is indeed known for its ham, dark and richly-colored with an unmistakable pork taste and, if cured long enough, jerky texture. In fact, Teruel hams were the first in Spain to be regulated by the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA – *Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación*), an office in Spain that ensures the regulation and controlled production of items originating from a certain region, giving them the coveted DOP seal (*denominación de origen protegida*). In the case of Teruel, for a cured ham leg to be considered a ham from Teruel, and to legally be marked with the eight-pointed star of Teruel and thus the DOP, the

pig must have been bred, raised, and then cured to certain specifications. This regulatory and strict adherence to established protocol applies to cheeses from DOP Castilla-La Mancha, wines from DOP La Rioja, and more.

Purple olives



Image credit

Aragón's purple olives are also known the peninsula over for their bitter, sharp taste. Small and round, colors ranging from dark purple to almost black, they're often sold in huge bags at supermarkets in Aragón. They're salty, dry, and, the more wrinkly the olive, the stronger the taste when it comes

to these olives (some even look like huge raisins).

Sweets



Image credit

Every Spaniard loves a good *dulce* during fiestas and the Aragonese are no exception. Popular during Pilares, Zaragoza's own festival in honor of its patron Our Lady of Pilar, are "frutas de Aragón" which, despite the word fruit in the name, are actually only fruit-flavored candies encased in chocolate. Soft and a bit like jelly bonbons, these candies are made in the traditional way by coating the candy in sugar and dipping in chocolate. Some confectioner's even use small diced orange pieces (with rind intact) for the orange ones.



Image credit

And no post-baptism party is complete in Aragón without another popular treat: trenza de Huesca. Especially the Trenza de Almudévar brand. Originating in the northern province of Huesca, this braided sweetbread is a cross between a danish and a flaky pastry, striped with cinnamon and coated in a thick sugar glaze. Its traditional flavors are cinnamon with raisin and nuts, however, orange-infused and chocolate trenzas are also popular varieties.

Roast lamb



Image credit

Another delicacy Aragón is known for is its roast lamb, called “ternasco” or “paletilla.” Walking into the big, main central market in Zaragoza, an entire section of the butchers’ aisle is dedicated solely to lamb. They have any and every cut you might want, and several organs as well. A shock to some might be the sight of piled lamb heads at the meat counter of a grocery store in Zaragoza, but this is very standard here.

The key to the lamb roast is minimal working of the meat; allowed to come to room temperature, seasoned usually only with salt, garlic, perhaps some herbs of preference, and served with a side of well-salted potatoes. Or, in true Spanish fashion, letting the ingredients speak for themselves.

Culinary traditions of Aragón

Aragonese cuisine is, like its region, not well-known but still celebrated and valued within its borders. There is a fierce pride to the restaurants in Zaragoza, serving hearty,

uncomplicated dishes that are a marker of Aragón's food culture. Disregarding the new age and high-brow experimental cuisine restaurants to focus on the traditional spots that close on Sundays right beside them, one notes the richness of dishes which, on the surface, seem quite simple.

Take "migas," for example. Though translated to breadcrumbs, this dish is actually the fluffy inside of bread, crust removed, that's broken up and pan-fried in olive oil with chopped onions, garlic, red pepper, sausage, and many other ingredients according to taste. It requires no fancy cookware, radical ingredients, or incredible skill to make, and yet it remains flavorsome and capable of vast interpretation. Something as simple as varying the bread used can produce a wide variety of results, from especially crispy to more tender, to say nothing of the type of olive oil and accompanying sauté ingredients.



Plate of “migas” at the popular La Miguería restaurant in Zaragoza’s tapas bar district known as “El Tubo”



The plate of “migas” after being mashed up

Migas are all over Spain, and there is much contention over which region, exactly, is the originator, but green grapes, blood sausage, and a fried egg (for good measure) are decidedly Aragonese toppings to it.

Perhaps, if not blood sausage for your migas, you’d like “longaniza,” Aragón’s proprietary sausage. Unlike many Spanish sausages, longaniza is not made with pimentón (sweet paprika) but heavy on the pepper and, depending on the Aragonese producer, even hints of nutmeg or parsley make it in the mix. You might want this longaniza fried and topping not migas but “huevos rotos”, an uncomplicated and incredibly satisfying dish of thinly-sliced, fried potatoes with fried eggs whose

yolks have been broken. Equally common is eating huevos rotos with cured ham… from Teruel, if you're a real maña/o.

Aragón has a lengthier list of traditional dishes, but the markers of simplicity and heartiness pervade it. Overlooked and sorely underrated, Aragón and its three provinces have been able to preserve and cherish their culinary histories without great external influences that uniquely shape other culinary traditions. The largest changes to Aragonese cuisine comes from the cooks of the meal themselves, who on one day might decide to fry up migas with hojiblanco olive oil instead of arbequina, or flavor a candy with fig and chili pepper instead of cherry.

By Alegra N. Padrón

Alegra N. Padrón is a creative who loves to write about food, travel, and culture. Living between Spain and the US, she documents food and fun on Twitter @an_padron

You may also like:

- **¡Ostras! Spanish Food Phrases for Aspiring Natives**

The best places for breakfast and brunch in Madrid

Madrid is better known for never-ending, three-course lunches and late-night tapas than breakfast. The Spanish are famous for staying up late. So, maybe it's not surprising that the first meal of the day doesn't seem to get as much attention.

But the humble Spanish breakfast has a lot going for it. Firstly, it's common to have two breakfasts, one first thing

in the morning and one between 10-11am to tide you over until lunch. What breakfast lover would say no to a second opportunity to enjoy your favourite meal of the day? During the working week, the second breakfast is also a great chance to have a quick break from work and chat with your colleagues. Secondly, eating cake for breakfast is perfectly normal. Yes, cake for breakfast. I'm already won over. Finally, pretty much every bar and cafe in Madrid serves my all-time-favourite breakfast: toasted bread, drizzled with oil and topped with crushed, fresh tomato (and some *jamón ibérico* for an extra treat).

Brunch has become more and more popular in recent years and with all of the international food in Madrid, your options aren't limited to a traditional Spanish breakfast. Here's a list of my favourite places for breakfast in the capital.

1. Little Big Cafe



Tucked away in a side street off Calle Guzman El Bueno, Little Big Cafe is one of the best spots in Madrid for breakfast, brunch and sweet treats. If you're looking for a light breakfast, they have toast topped with everything from the traditional tomato and oil to more adventurous ricotta, cinnamon, nuts and honey. If you order toast, it comes with free tea or coffee, making a good value breakfast.

From the brunch menu, you can choose one sweet and one savoury dish, which come with fruit or scones and your choice of drinks. The brunch is big for one person! So, unless you want

to be stuffed for the rest of the day, I always prefer to share one between two. You can always order a slice of one of their delicious homemade cakes if you’re still hungry.

- Website, Facebook & IG: @thelittlebigcafe
- Address: c/ Fernández de los Ríos 61
- Metro: Moncloa, Quevedo or Islas Filipinas

2. The Toast Café



The Toast Café is a place for fellow bread lovers. As you would expect from the name, the toast here (whole grain rye or white sourdough) is pretty good. It's not far from Little Big Cafe and serves a similar breakfast and brunch menu. Like at Little Big Cafe, you can choose two dishes to make a substantial brunch. And you can add one of their brunch cocktails for an extra €4! This place gets much busier on weekends, so it's best to book a table for brunch.

- Website, Facebook & IG: @thetoastcafe
- Address: Calle Fernando el Católico 50
- Metro: Moncloa, Quevedo, Arguelles

3. Cafetería HD



Cafetería HD has kept its 60s decor and retro style, even after being taken over by La Musa group a few years ago. A neighbourhood favourite, it gets packed on weekends so get down early! The menu is inspired by American diners, but you'll still find some Spanish favourites.

The best thing about the breakfast here is you customise everything just how you like it. Choose from eggs, toast or "something sweet" then select how you want the eggs cooked, the type of bread, and add toppings. For brunch, they have an American, Swedish or veggie version. Unlike in some places, it's a good (filling) portion for one. So, there's no need to share if you don't want to!

- Website, Facebook & IG: @cafeteriahd
- Address: Calle Calle Guzman el Bueno, 67
- Metro: Moncloa, Islas Filipinas

4. La Infinito



With quirky but comfortable decor and mismatched furniture, La Infinito is a lovely spot to relax with friends or read a book. There's even a lending shelf, where you can swap books you've read for new ones. They serve light breakfasts and brunches, including vegan options, accompanied by excellent coffee and a good selection of teas. Everyone has their own personal preference as to how they like the classic *pan con tomate.* Still, La Infinito does my personal favourite: smooth but flavourful tomato pulp with lots of oil on artisan bread. On weekends, they also host live music and comedy brunches.

- Website, Facebook & IG: @lainfinito
- Address: C/ Tres Peces, 22
- Metro: Antón Martín or Lavapiés

5. La Colectiva Café



Whether you're vegan or not, you'll love the selection of cakes, pastries and light bites, all free from animal products, at La Colectiva Café. They also serve some of the best coffee in Madrid and don't charge extra for plant-based

milk. But don’t worry, you still have the option to order cow’s milk if you prefer.

My favourite breakfast here is toast with cashew nut butter and sugar-free fig jam. They also have lots of gluten-free options for coeliacs. If you want to bring your laptop, they have a workspace on the lower floor, although it can get a bit cramped on weekends.

- Website, Facebook & IG: @lacolectivacafe
- Address: Calle Francisco de Rojas 9
- Metro: Bilbao

6. Toma Café



If you’re more of a coffee and go person than a leisurely bruncher, Toma Café has you covered. Probably one of the best-

known coffee places in Madrid, the beans are good quality, roasted in house, and the coffee is never burnt. Their cold brew is perfect for the unbearably hot Madrid summers. As well as coffee, there are lots of different teas, juices and even spicy hot chocolate.

- Website, Facebook & IG: @tomacafe
- Address 1: Calle La Palma 49 (Metro: Noviciado, San Bernardo)
- Address 2: Santa Feliciana 5 (Metro: Iglesia, Quevedo)

7. Cafelito



Cafelito (little coffee in English) is a tiny cafe with a simple menu. Choose from their list of signature coffees, including unusual flavours like cardamom or lemon rind, and try one of their delicious homemade cakes. The staff are always friendly, and there's a trendy vibe without being

pretentious. Make sure you check out the weird collection of second-hand knick-knacks (including a typewriter) in the toilets!

- Facebook & IG: @cafelitomadrid
- Address: Calle Sombrerete 20
- Metro: Lavapiés

8. Restaurante Botillo

Like most Spanish bars, Botillo is open from the early morning all the way through to night time. When I worked in the area, it was always my favourite spot for a mid-morning *pincho de tortilla.* It's a very generous slice of runny *tortilla*, served with a hunk of bread to soak everything up.

- Website
- Address: Calle López de Hoyos, 10
- Metro: Gregorio Marañón

9. Federal



First things first, Federal definitely does not serve a traditional Spanish breakfast. The Australian-inspired cafe started in Barcelona and then opened up in Madrid a few years ago. With filled croissants, "morning" burgers, French toast, bruschetta and more… Federal has a hearty but (relatively) healthy breakfast menu. They serve fresh juices, smoothies and cocktails as well as the usual tea and coffee, including the iconic Australian flat white. Vegetarians and vegans will also find they have plenty of options.

- Website, Facebook & IG: @thefederalcafe
- Address 1: Plaza de las Comendadoras, 9 (Metro: Noviciado)
- Address 2: Plaza del Conde de Barajas, 3 (Metro: Tirso de Molina, Sol)

**All images are from each restaurant's respective social media*

accounts. Feature image belongs to The Toast Café.

By Ellen Fouweather *(IG: @efouwee)*

Also read Ellen's article: 10 great vintage and second-hand shops in Madrid

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10 of the best craft beer bars in Madrid

One of the things I miss most as an expat in Madrid is quality craft beer. While I'm grateful for Spain's cheaper beer prices, there's only so much Mahou and Estrella I can take. Coming from a city like Austin, Texas, which is full of microbreweries and tasty local beers, the light Spanish pilsners just don't really do it for me.

Luckily, craft beer is on the up and up in Madrid, with more brewpubs and bars devoted to *cerveza artesanal* popping up around the city. Some feature as many as 40 beers on tap, while others combine craft beverages with pizza, tortilla or specialty cheeses.

Whether you're looking to discover more local brews, drink from a wider selection on tap, or pair good beer with good food, you can't go wrong with these craft beer bars in Madrid.

1. The Stuyck



This cozy bar with a rustic feel features a rotating beer list focusing on Spanish and European beers. The staff is friendly and passionate about what they do—just scope out their craft beer blog which has information from how to properly taste beer to the history of IPAs. Part bar, part restaurant, their international menu features food that pairs well with beer like burgers, wings and sandwiches.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @thestuyckco*
- *Address: Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 33*
- *Metro: Tribunal*

2. Mikkeller



I stumbled upon this place on a magical weeknight to find it relatively empty. The inviting, open interior lured me in, and the friendly bartender who let me sample a few of the 21 beers on tap made me stay.

I soon learned that it was one of Mikkeller’s coveted outposts. The popular Danish beer brand recently graced Spain with another location of its brewpub after opening one in Barcelona. The prices are a little high by Madrid standards, but at this place it’s quality over quantity.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @mikkellermadrid*
- *Address: Calle de la Luna, 22*
- *Metro: Noviciado, Santo Domingo*

3. Bee Beer Craft Beers and Cheeses



If you thought wine and cheese was the perfect pair, let Bee Bar Craft Beers and Cheeses prove you wrong. Like the name says, pair a nice craft beer with a meat and cheese board, which the staff will happily recommend for you.

Even though they have a smaller selection of beers on tap than other places on this list, more than half of them are Bee Beer's own unique brews, ranging from a Pineapple IPA, to a Wasabi Lager or an Orange Honey Ale. Or you can browse through their expansive selection of bottled international beers (just be sure to ask about prices first).

- *Facebook & Instagram: @beebeermadrid*

- *Address: Calle de Augusto Figueroa, 30*
- *Metro: Chueca*

4. Fábrica Maravillas



This tried and true Malasaña favorite was one of the OG craft beer bars in Madrid before the trend took off. On one of the neighborhood's quieter streets, this place is small but packs a punch. Unlike some of the other food-heavy bars on this list, this microbrewery focuses on beer and beer only, offering a small menu of bar snacks like olives and nuts. Beer counts as a meal, right?

- *Facebook & Instagram: @fabricamaravillas*
- *Address: Calle de Valverde, 29*
- *Metro: Chueca, Tribunal*

5. Taproom Madrid



Taproom Madrid has one of the largest beer selections in the city. With 40 beers on tap, it's great for experimental beer lovers as well as novices; both are bound to find a brew they like. What's more, you can pop by Tierra—arguably the best burrito place in Madrid—next door and bring food back with you.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @taproommadrid*
- *Address: Calle de Guzmán el Bueno, 52*
- *Metro: Moncloa*

6. El Callejón de La Virgen

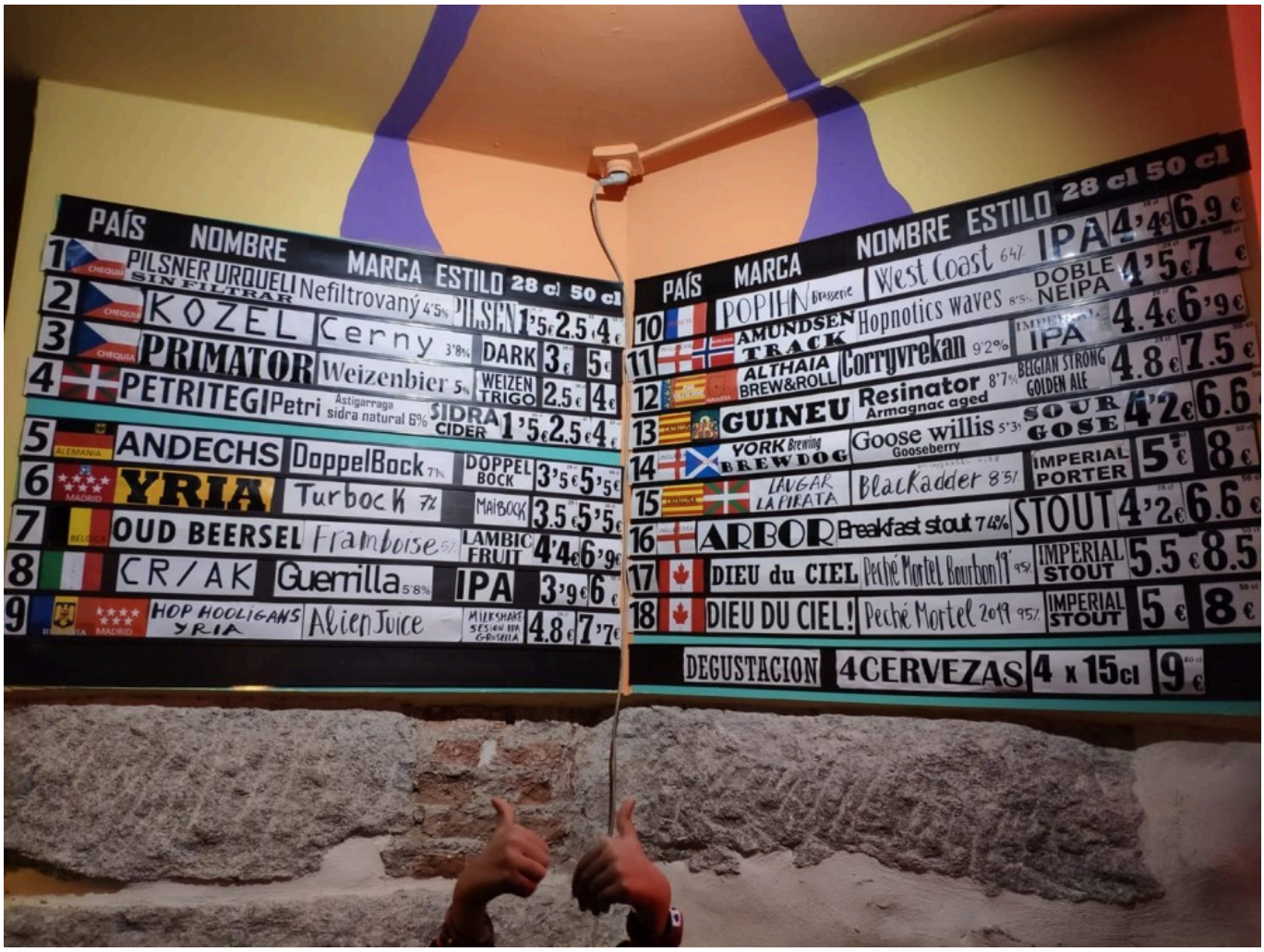


A couple of years ago local craft beer La Virgen was hard to come by, but now—much to my delight—their logo is popping up at more and more bars around the city. While the La Virgen brewery in Las Rozas is worth the trip, you can now enjoy a full selection of its brews in the center of Madrid.

El Callejón de La Virgen, one of the brewery's official pubs in the trendy Conde Duque neighborhood, features favorites like their Trigo Limpio (Hefeweizen), Jamonera (Amber Ale) and classic Madrid Lager. Pair that with a juicy burger and you've got a solid weeknight plan.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @cervezalavirgen*
- *Address: Calle Acuerdo, Nº3*
- *Metro: Noviciado*

7. Chinaski



This cozy and colorful beer bar in Lavapiés is the perfect spot for a lowkey night with friends.

With 18 rotating taps from around the world and “meet the brewer” events, it’s a beer nerd’s paradise. If someone in your group isn’t a fan of beer, they also have a good selection of spirits from absinthe to bourbon.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @chinaskilavapies*
- *Address: Calle Salitre, 38*
- *Metro: Lavapiés*

8. Pez Tortilla



Pez Tortilla has everything you could ever want in a bar: tortilla, croquetas and craft beer. It’s simple enough, but what Pez does, it does well.

Try tortilla by the slice from truffle and brie to chicken curry. Mix and match croquetas ranging from classic ham to dessert croquetas like oreo—yes, you read that right. Order a flight to sample from their revolving list of craft beers, which often includes a decent selection of lesser-known Spanish beers.

You’ll often find the uber-popular tapas bar at standing-room only, but it just opened its third location in Sol (the other two are in Malasaña and Lavapiés). And with a motto like “el buen rollo,” it’s impossible not to have a good time there.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @peztortilla*
- *Address 1: Calle del Pez, 36 (metro: Noviciado)*

- *Address 2: Calle de la Cava Baja, 42 (metro: La Latina)*
- *Address 3: Calle de Espoz y Mina, 32 (metro: Sol, Antón Martín, Tirso de Molina)*

9. Brew Wild Pizza Bar



What's not to like about beer and pizza? Brew Wild Pizza Bar has perfected both, with mouthwatering pizzas made by a Sicilian *pizzaiolo* and more than 100 beers to choose from between bottle and tap. Sample from a mix of house, local and

international brews and prepare to make your Instagram followers very jealous.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @brewwildpizzabar*
- *Address: Calle de Echegaray, 23*
- *Metro: Sol, Antón Martín, Sevilla*

10. Beerhouse



Beerhouse is the perfect combination of a traditional Spanish bar and an Irish pub: a laidback, no frills sports bar. Grab a pint from a large selection of beers and pair with traditional bar food like nachos, burgers and hotdogs. As one Google reviewer so aptly put it: “Humorous sports bar-meets-craft-connoisseur clash but the resulting vibe is fun and very unpretentious.” Sounds like my kind of place.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @beerhousemadrid*
- *Address: Calle del Cardenal Cisneros, 16*
- *Metro: Bilbao*

**All images are from each bar's respective social media accounts.*

By Alex Vickery (IG: @alex_vickery, LinkedIn & Website)

A lifestyle writer and content creator who has left pieces of her heart around the world, from Austin to Rio de Janeiro. She's always on the hunt for good Tex-Mex outside of Texas (but has yet to find it).

Did we miss any other of the best craft beer bars in Madrid? Let us know!

Be there or be square: 8 of Spain's best plazas

Bullfights, sangria, paella… So many of the things that, to the uninitiated, epitomise Spain's culture are actually outdated, tourist traps, or limited to just one of the country's regions.

But there's one Spanish heavyweight that fully deserves to be celebrated alongside *tortilla de patatas*, *siestas*, and Rosalía on the list of the best things ever to emerge from the Iberian

Peninsula. A cultural icon with adoring fans all over the country, from the hills of Asturias to sunny southern seaside towns, and in every metropolis and pueblo in between. I'm talking, of course, about the Spanish *plaza*.

Some squares slip under the radar of anyone who doesn't know to seek them out. Some are the perfect place for a protest; some are best suited for locals and blow-ins alike to meet for a beer, a gossip, and a people-watching session. Others have become tourist attractions in their own right, be it thanks to their historical significance or just because they make for an awesome photo op.

Whatever you're after on your next day trip or weekend away, here's a list of eight of Spain's best plazas you should make sure not to miss.

1. Plaza Mayor, Almagro



Green and gorgeous, this recently-restored medieval plaza is one of the country's favourites – and provided a beautiful backdrop for post-class coffees or *cañas* back when I worked in a nearby school.

Thanks to its flowers and fountains, Almagro's Plaza Mayor regularly features on lists of Spain's top ten most beautiful squares, and I monitor its progress like a proud *manchego* mother, rejoicing when it moves up a spot and sulking when it's relegated.

Make sure to try the local delicacy of pickled *berenjenas* at any one of the tapas bars dotted around the plaza – they were slightly too green and bitter for my liking, but they're a regional favourite and *sobre gustos no hay nada escrito,* so you might enjoy them.

What's more, Almagro is home to the annual Festival

Internacional de Teatro Clásico, and tucked away next to the square’s shops and restaurants is the entrance to the *corral de comedias*, a 17th-century playhouse and hidden gem of a tourist attraction which is more than worth the €3 entrance fee.

2. Plaza Dos de Mayo, Madrid



It’s no surprise that Spain’s capital has a square for every taste – Plaza de España (gone but not forgotten), colourful Chueca, floral Plaza de la Villa, Santa Ana for the literature

lovers, and Plaza Mayor if you're a fan of Baroque architecture and, eh, multi-coloured goats.

But a particular stand-out is Dos de Mayo, just ten minutes' walk from Sol.

This plaza is a crucial one for history lovers: it marks a key date in the Comunidad de Madrid's calendar, when the people of Madrid rebelled against occupying French troops on 2nd May 1808.

Annual street parties marking the uprising liven up the already-bustling barrio of Malasaña, but this square is worth a visit at any time of the year – it boasts playparks for the *peques*, a weekly vintage and craft market, and plenty of places to stop for a snack or drink (Pizzería Maravillas is a stand-out).

3. Plaza Mayor, Ciudad Real



Source: Image by © Rob Cousins/robertharding/Corbis

The small city of Ciudad Real is often overshadowed by its province's more picturesque pueblos, but I maintain that my former hometown's central square is still worth a visit, if only for its *Reloj Carrillón* – a huge clock from which life-size figurines of Cervantes, Don Quijote and Sancho Panza emerge to the sound of bells chiming at regular intervals throughout the day and night.

This manchego capital isn't known for being the most Instagrammable of towns, but it has a plaza that pays artistic homage to the stars of its regions, friendly locals, and more tapas bars than you could shake a stick at. What more do you need, really?

4. Plaza del Taller, Santiago de Compostela



Source

Whether you've trekked part of the epic Camino de Santiago or are just up north on a pilgrimage for Galician *pulpo* (guilty), this isn't a square to be missed. Plaza del Taller – or, to use its *gallego* name, Praza do Obradoiro – is a spot in the rainy, atmospheric Galician capital.

Located to the west of Santiago's enchanting casco viejo, this square marks the end of the road for pilgrims who've walked St James' Way, and it provides peak people-watching opportunities – I'd challenge anyone to watch pilgrims rejoicing at the completion of their journey without getting emotional. For travellers holy or secular, the plaza's architecture, sheer size, and its magical (and traffic-free) atmosphere are definitely worth a trip next *puente*.

This square is also home to the beautiful, baroque Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, where hikers participate in the post-walk ritual of the *abrazo al Apóstol Santiago* – a tradition that was temporarily outlawed in 2009 after an influenza outbreak. Maybe stick to a quick high-five if you're a germaphobe.

5. Plaza de Cervantes, Alcalá de Henares



Cons of Alcalá's most famous public space: the storks (if, like me, you're a wimp who's scared of birds). Pros: literally everything else.

This square pays homage Alcalá's most famous son: the writer Miguel de Cervantes, who was born in the university city in 1547. The city's central plaza hosts regular literary and cultural events in his honour, such as the annual Mercado Cervantino.

Plaza de Cervantes also bridges two of the city's most significant streets: the newly pedestrianized Calle de Libreros, and the Calle Mayor. On the latter street, which is the former hub of the medieval Jewish Quarter, you can find the Museo Casa Natal de Cervantes and the city's most photogenic bench, featuring bronze statues of Cervantes' most famous characters.

Have a stroll through the surrounding area – don't think about leaving without taking in the university's impressive façade – and you'll understand exactly why Alcalá has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

> *Also read: 7 Reasons why Alcalá de Henares is worth more than a day trip from Madrid*

6. Plaza de España, Sevilla



Oh, this one's *gorgeous*. Constructed in 1929, the Andalusian capital's Plaza de España is practically a newborn compared with some of the old-timers on this list, but in terms of impact and beauty, it can definitely give the classics a run for their money.

This plaza's most famous feature is the breath-taking range of multicoloured tiled alcoves, which depict almost every province in Spain. Photos can't do them justice, but even the briefest of trawls through Google Images will show you exactly why the good people of TripAdvisor voted it the world's *segundo lugar más spectacular del mundo*.

Film buffs (not me) might recognise this square from movies like Lawrence of Arabia and the Star Wars franchise, while Instagram lovers will be more familiar with its pretty canals, where you can row your boat for just €6. The Plaza de España is also located in the Parque de María Luisa – a beautiful spot to seek out the shade during the infamously hot Sevillian summers.

7. Plaza Mayor, Salamanca



Golden hour enthusiasts, this one's for you. Salamanca is known far and wide as one of the most gorgeous places in Spain, and its main plaza is no exception. Built between 1729 and 1755, the sandstone square still shines – and if you ever want to hear several hundred people simultaneously say 'Ahhhhh!', make sure you're standing in the centre when its buildings get illuminated at dusk.

The plaza is adorned with medallions bearing big names from Spain’s history. In fact, until it was removed in 2017 under the Historical Memory Law, you could even spot Franco’s defaced, paint-splattered face lurking beneath a plastic bag in the corner.

Salamanca’s Plaza Mayor also has plenty of bars and restaurants where you can sample the city’s distinctly un-spicy, but delicious, take on patatas bravas after you’ve finished frogspotting at the nearby Universidad de Salamanca.

Speaking of which, try to time your trip for December, when the legendary Nochevieja Universitaria sees the Plaza Mayor packed with thousands of students downing their drink and midnight grapes before heading home to their pueblos for Christmas. Or, if you prefer hot drinks to alcoholic ones, walk south from the plaza for ten minutes to the café of the Casa Lis art deco museum, where you’ll find the world’s tastiest cup of hot chocolate and the only glass ceiling that’s not for smashing.

8. Esta Es Una Plaza, Madrid



This urban oasis is a bit different – and for that reason, it might be my favourite plaza ever. **Esta Es Una Plaza** is a neighbourhood initiative designed to tackle the lack of green space available in the busy Madrid barrio of Lavapiés, and has gone from strength to strength since its creation in 2008, thanks to the group of dedicated volunteers who work hard on maintenance and upkeep.

According to its website, the community-run public space focuses heavily on community building and promoting cohesion between social groups, regardless of nationality or religion, and over time the plaza has transformed into a cultural hub which promotes ecology, self-sufficiency, literacy, culture and sports.

It mightn't represent the same flashy, tourist fodder as some of the more high-profile squares on our list, and it's unlikely you'll see it be flogged on a postcard any time soon.

But if plazas are meant to promote harmony, facilitate socializing, and provide an insight into the beating heart of its local community, then Esta Es Una Plaza is definitely a dark horse.

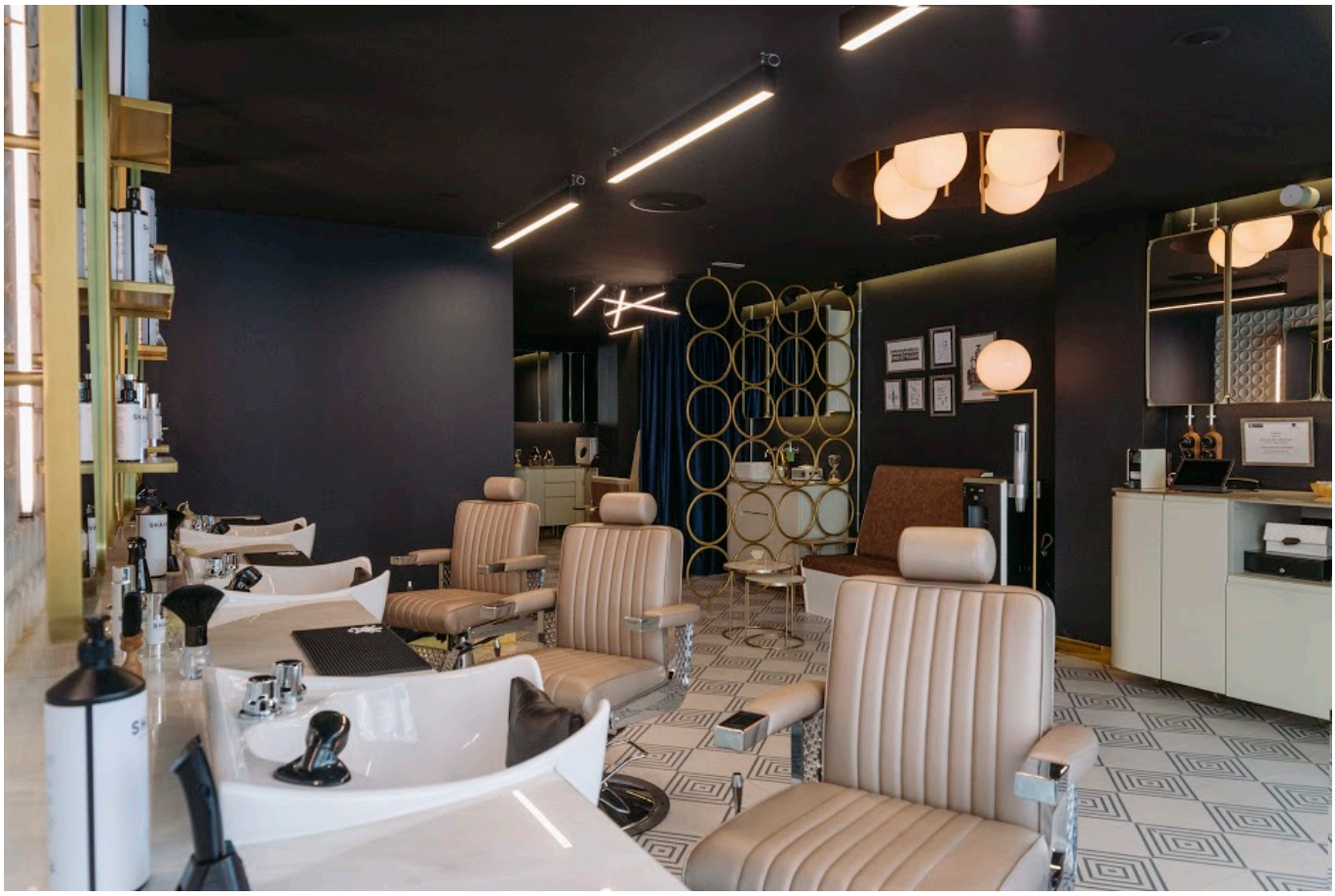
By Emer O'Toole (IG: @_emerotoole)

Would you add any other of Spain's best plazas to this list? Let us know!

Treat yourself from the inside out at The Shave Club

The Shave Club can be described in three words: quality, expertise and rejuvenation.

This gentlemen's club aims to provide the modern and fashionable men residing in Madrid with an upscale and personalized experience. With three locations in the Spanish capital (Chueca, Moncloa and Salamanca), each and every barbershop offers top-of-the-line services and treatments—you're guaranteed to leave looking fresh on the outside and refreshed on the inside.



The Shave Club’s mission is to create a warm and welcoming place where customers can relax and feel rejuvenated… and they undoubtedly have done this. Specializing in shaving and haircuts, this barbershop goes above and beyond by also offering spa treatments, which include facials and massages, as well as body-cleansing and anti-aging treatments. Their English and Spanish-speaking staff is nothing but friendly, ready to treat your every need and give you an experience like no other.

Aligned with its dedication to quality and excellence, the barbershop also has its own e-store, where customers can purchase the products used during their treatments, shaves and haircuts. These products are one-of-a-kind, as they are made with all natural products and ingredients in a laboratory in the U.K. Not only do they make you look and feel better, but your body will thank you for using all natural, paraben- and sulfate-free products. Your animal friends will thank you too, as these products are cruelty free.



I was fortunate enough to visit The Shave Club location in Chueca, right on Calle Libertad. The quaint space is sleek, with welcoming decor and an even more welcoming staff. I also was shocked by the smell of cleanliness that made its way throughout the shop, only to be later informed that the air is specially treated implementing the same chemicals used to clean towels as well as equipment.

Alejandro, the barber who provided me with my experience, was not only professional, but he also used his expertise to provide me with the best haircut for my hair type and head shape. Apart from some small talk and a few laughs, it was a relaxing experience, which ended with the use of The Shave Club’s own coconut-infused hair wax.



Looking ahead, The Shave Club has big plans. They hope to continue opening locations in Madrid, throughout Spain and beyond. Their goal: to establish a network of men's social clubs where customers can go to relax and enjoy different treatments, reflecting the traditional gentlemen's clubs of yesteryear.

If you're looking to get a fresh cut and to take a step back from reality and forget the stresses of work and life in general, then you need to check out The Shave Club, which definitely ranks in my top-5 barber experiences here in Madrid.



It may not seem like a top priority to treat yourself with high-quality spa, hair and facial treatments; however, it’s more than simply making sure you look good. It’s feeling good from the inside out, knowing you took the time to step away from your everyday schedule to spend time on yourself—and there’s no better place to do this than at The Shave Club.

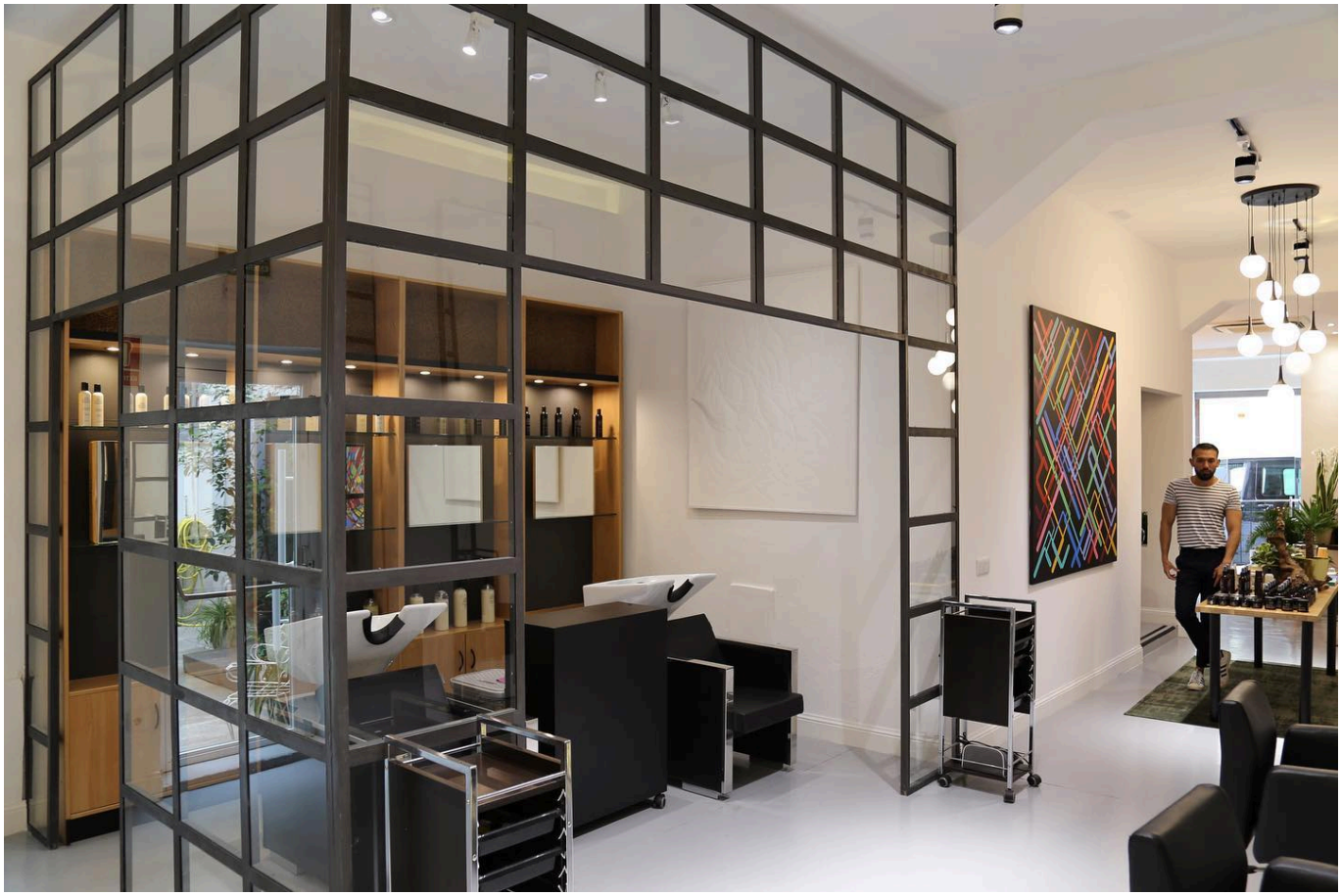
The Shave Club

Follow the Shave Club on Facebook and on Instagram (@shavemadrid). You can also check out their online store and book your next appointment on their website.

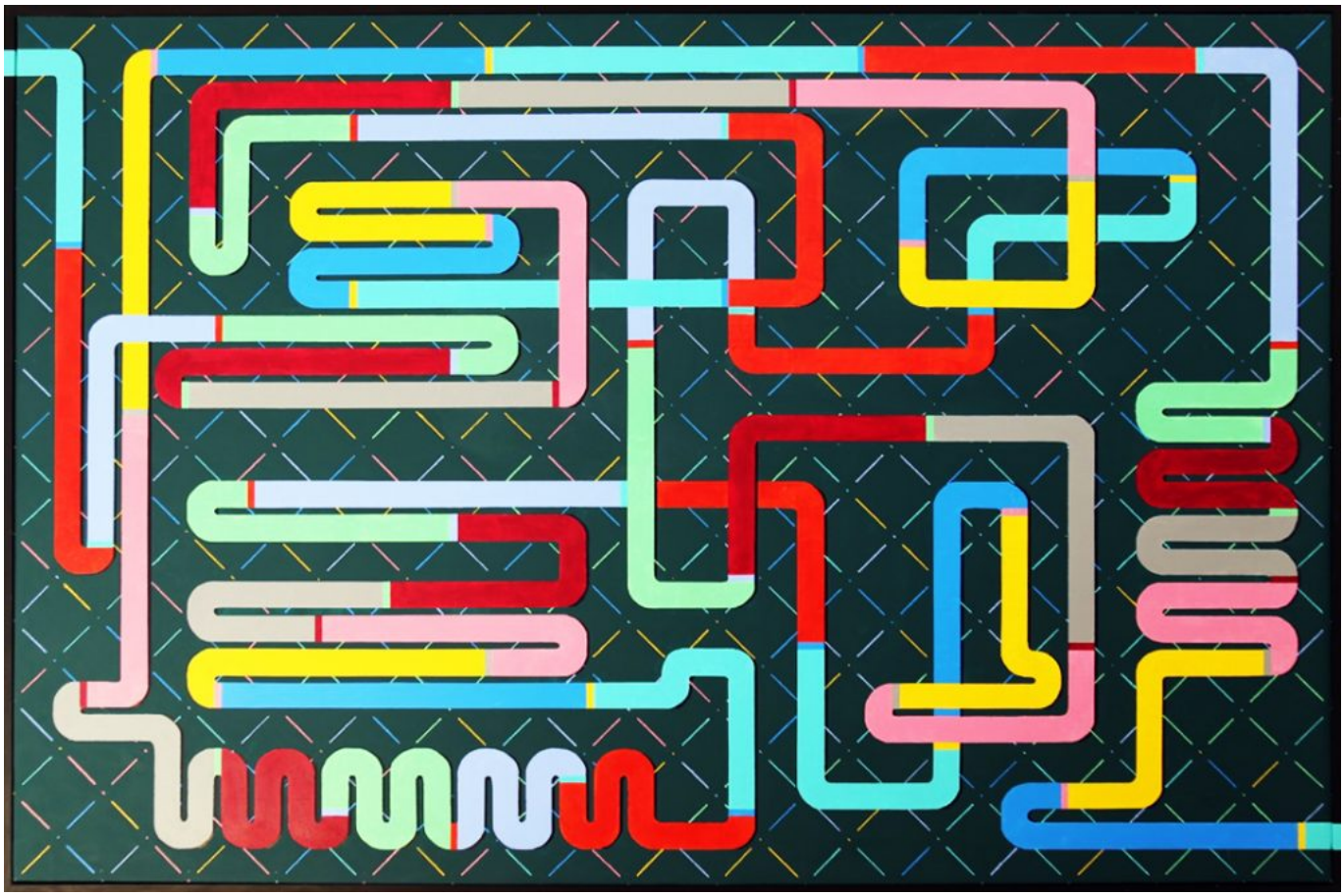
By Kyler Canastra (IG: @k_canastra)

Ara Crinis – indulge in an artful hair salon experience

Soft lights. Greens. Pastels and contemporary art. Not something you expect of a hair and styling salon! Thus you're greeted by a surprise which then transforms into an inexplicable comfort – a place as delightful and friendly as its kind and charismatic owners.



As you walk in, you have the beautiful exhibit of contemporary artist Tomas Gracia. This particular one has been designed around the concept of chaos seeking its own natural order.



The more you reflect on it, the more lost you seem. Lines and hues seem to be in search of their own destinies. Maybe that’s the exact point of the exhibit – to have your internal chaos muse over the edgy lines and vibrant tones of Tomas’ artwork.



The exhibits are temporary and will include all categories of art and literature in the future, they tell me. The open patio will also house many interesting events.



The area of the salon is beautifully decorated with lively greens and flowery tones, immediately transporting you into a spring-like feeling. The collection of books on display and the smell of freshly-brewed coffee add to the urbanism of the ambience.



The serene patio at the end, of course, completes the place beautifully.



As distinct as its name, *Ara Crinis* (which literally translates from Latin into ‘a beautiful lock of hair’) is the delightful service and experience you receive here. The salon works with the concept of aromatherapy and organics around every service they offer. The cherry on top are the very artful Neo and Carlo, who are the heart of the place.



Hop on over either for a walk around their artful decor, a pleasant cup of coffee with the owners, an exhibit of the next talented artist of the month or an indulgent hair experience – this little spot in Chueca is unlikely to disappoint.

By Arabdha Sudhir

Photos by Carlo Calzolari

Ara Crinis

- **Website** **Facebook** **& Instagram:** **@ara.crinis**
- **Address:** Calle San Lorenzo, 5
- **Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez

Mercado de Vallehermoso – Madrid's perfect neighbourhood food market

One of the first things I fell in love with about Spain was the abundance of fresh produce and local independent shops. Although the big supermarket chains have undoubtedly made their mark, food markets all over Madrid are still thriving. This is partly because they are so much more than just somewhere to pick up the weekly shop. You can enjoy a quick *caña*, stop for tapas, or stay for a whole meal.

Each *barrio* has its own market with something different to offer. Here's what I love about my local, Mercado de Vallehermoso.



Photo from [Mercado de Vallehermoso]

Built in the 1930s, until relatively recently the market had been largely abandoned and forgotten, with two thirds of its stalls shut in 2015. After being rescued from disrepair by a change in management and support from the *Ayuntamiento*, it's now bustling, with all 62 stalls occupied.

At Mercado de Vallehermoso you'll find everything from the traditional baker's, butcher's and fishmonger's stalls to restaurants, wine bars, craft beer, and S**pain's only permanent farmer's market**. As well as Spanish food, you can eat Mexican, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and more. In the Mercado de Productores (farmers market) all the producers are from Madrid, or less than 120 km away, and many of the products are handmade.

Restaurants at Mercado de

Vallehermoso

Washoku Sushi



Washoku Sushi, photo from Mercado de Vallehermoso

For fast, fresh Japanese food at a very reasonable price, Washoku is perfect. They buy their fish from one of their neighbours at the market, Hermanos Abad, so it's always good quality. Choose from sushi and sashimi selections, Japanese curries and rice, or udon noodle dishes. They also have delicious appetizers, including my favourite *Takoyaki* (similar to a fried dumpling, filled with octopus).

Craft 19



Photo from [Craft 19 Madrid]

Hands down the most delicious sandwiches in Madrid! The pastrami sandwich is famous, and rightly so, but the pulled pork and grilled cheese are equally indulgent. You can wash down your mega sandwich (be warned, in true American style, the portions are enormous) with a cool craft beer. There is a good selection of beers on tap, which change continuously, giving you the chance to sample beers from different international breweries.

Sandwiches and beer, what more could one want in life?

Drakkar



Photo from Drakkar Cervecería

If you're still thirsty for craft beers, Drakkar has a great selection. Unlike some of the craft beer bars and breweries that have opened recently in Madrid, it's great value. Grab a seat at the bar and chat to the friendly staff, who are always happy to give you a recommendation if you feel intimidated when there's more choice than Mahou or Estrella Galicia.

La Virgen



Photo from Cervezas La Virgen

Continuing the beer route through the market, Madrid brewers La Virgen also have a stall. With a **brewery in Las Rozas** and bars across the capital, it's probably the most well-known independent brewery in Madrid. Their spot in Mercado de Vallehermoso is a relaxed place to try some of their beers, to accompany some tasty treats from the market.

Di Buono



Photo from Mercado de Vallehermoso

Famous for its *porchetta,* Di Buono is a great deli serving the most delicious products imported from Italy. Sip on an Aperol spritz and try the delicious selection of Italian cheeses and charcuterie. They serve a great selection of wines from small producers in different regions all over Italy.

Kitchen 154



Photo from Kitchen 154

If you try one dish at Kitchen 125, make it **the Korean BBQ ribs**. Specialising in Asian fusion dishes with a kick, the

stall is always busy, and everything is cooked as you order. They have a small menu, but everything is cooked perfectly, from curries, to dumplings to crispy chicken wings.

*Kitchen 154 also has a restaurant location on Calle Ruiz 20 in Malasaña.

Güey Cocina Chingona



Photo from Güey

Ever wondered what ants or grasshoppers taste like? Güey have

some seriously adventurous dishes on their menu, plus daily specials. Not feeling quite so intrepid when I ate there, I can only tell you that the *tacos al pastor* and guacamole were good (a very vanilla order, I know).

Mercado de Productores

Most of the food stalls on the upper floor have their own tables, where you can only eat food from that establishment, apart from Güey and Washoku, which have a few shared tables. However, if you come in a group and everyone wants to order from different places, you can find a shared seating area on the lower level of the market in the *mercado de productores*. Here you can eat anything from the restaurants on the upper level or the stalls in the farmer's market.

EGG0



Photo from EGGO

This is the only place I know of in Madrid you can buy a scotch egg! And if you don't know what a scotch egg is, all the more reason to go to EGG0 because you have been missing out on one of the most delicious snacks. As you can probably guess from the name, EGG0 sells fresh eggs and a few egg dishes (including delicious tortilla), all from free-range chickens from their farm in Ávila.

La Cabezuela



Photo from Quesería La Cabezuela

La Cabezuela make award-winning handmade cheeses in El Escorial. They offer a range of weird and wonderful flavours, including la *Cervezuela*, made with beer from *La Virgen* brewery. Order a *tabla de quesos* (cheese plate) for 7 euros

and you can try all the ones that catch your eye.

Randall Coffee Roasters



image by Randall Coffee

Fed up of the burnt, bitter brews at your local Spanish bar? At Randall Coffee Roasters you can get a delicious cup of coffee or buy beans to brew at home. More like a coffee shop you would see in New York or London, **they roast speciality beans on site. They also serve iced lattes and cold brew**, perfect for the hot summer months. If you fancy a sweet treat

with your coffee, try one of the chocolate, pistachio and sea salt cookies!

Mercado de Vallehermoso has the perfect mix



One of the unique things about Madrid as a capital city has been its ability to embrace and enjoy new influences, while preserving its traditions and "Spanishness." Mercado de Vallehermoso, like all of Madrid's many markets, is a great example of this, where you'll find the perfect mix of traditional and modern; Spanish and international; young and old.

There are so many different stalls in the market, you couldn't fit everything in one article. These are just a few of the one's I've tried and loved. So, go ahead and explore them all, and let me know what you think!

Mercado de Vallehermoso info

- **Website**, **Facebook** & Instagram: **@mercadovallehermoso**
- **Address:** C/ Vallehermoso 36
- **Metro:** Quevedo

By Ellen Fouweather *(Instagram: @efouwee)*

Also read Ellen's article on: Madrid's 10 best vintage and second-hand shops

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Top 5 specialty coffee shops in Madrid

The rich and earthy flavor of coffee in the air, La Marzocco espresso machine sitting on the counter, the obligatory map of Africa on the wall, cartons of Oatly milk stored in the fridge, at least one man bun… these and more are the characteristics of specialty coffee shops in Madrid. So, if you find a specialty café to be quirky and even eccentric, it means you're in the right place, and someone is about to brew the heck out of your cup of coffee.

Specialty coffee shops have a distinct and unique way of doing things that communicates in no subtle way, their high regard for good quality coffee. The coffee beans sourced directly from farms in Puerto Rico, Colombia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Brazil, or Guatemala, etc. have premium flavor profiles curated perfectly through every step from planting, to production and roasting. Besides the obvious benefits this has on the brew quality, it's also quite sustainable. If you can trace a

coffee to its source, then it’s more likely from a sustainable source.

Specialty coffee is relatively new in Madrid, but it has risen in popularity in the last two to three years with new cafés opening up all over the city. So if you’re in Madrid and you’re craving a cup of coffee with a distinct flavor profile, below are the top specialty coffee shops in Madrid you can check out!

Toma Café



Toma Café is located in the Malasaña neighborhood which boasts lots of the arts, cultural scenery in Madrid. Put succinctly, Malasaña is the hipster capital of Madrid so it’s no surprise you can find specialty coffee there.

Toma Café is easily one of the best places to find good coffee in Madrid. Each cup of coffee is brewed expertly by experienced baristas. The atmosphere is relaxed, comfortable, and friendly. Toma Café has something that a lot of specialty coffee shops in Madrid don’t have – **a really good breakfast and brunch menu**.

They have a working kitchen, and the menu has delicious offerings like avocado toast, yogurt and fruit bowl, and a bunch of pastry offerings made fresh daily. Their lattes and flat whites are specifically delicious with a distinct taste that can be traced back to the careful and patient brewing process of the baristas, and the filtered water.

- **Facebook** & Instagram: **@tomacafe** & **@tomacafewarriors**
- **Address 1:** Calle de la Palma, 49 (metro: Noviciado or Tribunal)
- **Address 2:** Calle Santa Feliciana 5 (metro: Iglesia or Quevedo)

Hola Coffee



Hola coffee is located in Lavapiés, which is known for being the cultural hub of different types of ethnic restaurants, bars, and tapa places in Madrid. Hola coffee has a very light and airy vibe and atmosphere.

Picture this: it’s Saturday morning and you’re sitting on one of their benches, sunlight is sipping in through the windows and bouncing off their white walls. You can hear the machine brewing coffee, James Blake is playing softly in the background, you’ve been served a freshly brewed drip, and you can feel the different flavor profiles in each sip while you enjoy a good read or talk about your love for Madrid’s art scene with a friend. It’s a good day.

- **Facebook** & Instagram: **@holacoffee**
- **Address:** Calle del Dr. Fourquet, 33
- **Metro:** Embajadores or Lavapiés

Acid Café



Prepare to be out-hipstered at Acid Café. Concrete walls and floors, minimalist decor, metal tables, wooden stools, strategically placed plants, toasted scones, metal straws (because the planet), gluten-free vegan cookies and yes, delicious and high-quality coffee brewed intricately with all the hipster love they can muster.

The minimalist decor is perfect to put you at ease. The vibe is toned down and usually quiet, making it ideal for spending an afternoon reading a book and sipping on some good coffee. It’s also quite big so there’s more than enough sitting for

groups.

- **Facebook** & Instagram: **@acid.cafe**
- **Address:** Calle de la Verónica, 9
- **Metro:** Antón Martín

Ruda Café



Ruda Café is located in the neighborhood of La Latina, known for having a wide variety of cocktail bars and tapa spots.

Ruda Café has a quaint and rustic vibe with exposed brick walls and wall-mounted shelves stacked with tons of coffee and coffee paraphernalia.

It’s quite small and embodies more of a coffee tasting room vibe with just enough sitting to host those who truly appreciate their finely brewed coffee. Also if you’re looking to get a bag to go for your French press at home, Ruda has some of the finest beans.

- **Facebook** & Instagram **@rudacafe**
- **Address:** Calle de la Ruda, 11
- **Metro:** La Latina

Boconó Coffee



Bocono Coffee is located in La Latina/Embajadores neighborhood. It’s a good-sized café that can take large

groups. They also have a delicious brunch menu that's very affordable, and a fine collection of cakes baked in house. The scenery and atmosphere are very welcoming and great for an afternoon coffee date! While you're there, check out their impressive gallery wall which is perfect for the gram.

- **Facebook** & Instagram: **@bocono.coffee.roaster**
- **Address:** Calle de Embajadores, 3
- **Metro:** Tirso de Molina or La Latina

Specialty coffee shops in Madrid are on the rise

There are more specialty coffee shops in Madrid with new ones opening up every day. I recommend these five places because they come up on top. I've also spent a considerable amount of time and money in each, so I make these recommendations with certainty. If you're a coffee nerd, feel free to chat up the baristas at any of these places and learn more about where they source their beans and their brewing process.

By Jiji Majiri Ugboma (IG: @Jiji129)

Jiji is the Creative Director of Clever-ish Magazine (IG: @cleverishmag)

All images are from each cafés respective social media accounts

Bite Me Café: Secretly Vegan, Obviously Delicious Donuts in Madrid

Let’s be real, vegans are taking over. And us carnivores are left to use our survival tactics – shrewd sarcasm, vegan jokes and complete and utter avoidance. If you tell me you’re taking me to a vegan restaurant, I will most likely find an excuse about my goldfish’s birthday party and politely decline.

But when Bite Me opened in my neighborhood of Legazpi, my roommate and I decided that we had to try it as good neighbors should. We walked into the charming café and were instantly greeted by the owner, Joel and his warm, extremely hospitable Canadian-ness. He explained all of the flavors to us, passionately and meticulously as we ooh-ed and made the tough decision of picking a donut; much like giving the final rose on The Bachelor.

After I scarfed down my rich chocolate and red wine donut, I was broken the hard truth that Bite Me Café is indeed (gulp)… a vegan café. But the deliciousness of my donut negated every ounce of vegan distrust I had before.



I could have lived the rest of my life not knowing that it was a vegan donut – and that's the point. The donuts boldly speak for themselves and the message is clear: they're delicious. Period. Since then, Bite Me has become a neighborhood favorite of mine that I frequent often.

Joel (Canada) and Sandra (Spain), the donut-loving couple, opened Bite Me in October 2018 after a year and a half of making and donating donuts for events. Bite Me is a cute, quaint neighborhood café, full of exposed brick, tones of red, crooning of Freddie Mercury in the background and mix-match

chairs for a quirky charm. I was shyly greeted by their dog, Ferb, who spent most of his time sleeping in the corner. Yes, Bite Me is dog friendly.



The crafted flavors change weekly. The flavors of this week (just to name a few) are Wild Strawberry, Smoked Maple, Apple Pie, Chocolate and Hazelnut Cream and the limited-edition Torrija (a Spanish-style French Toast).

I greedily tried multiple, completely content with all of the flavors. The Apple Pie donut reminded me of everything

American – filled with fresh apple jam, cinnamon and a surge of flavor that I discovered was a hint of Jamaican all-spice.



The Chocolate Hazelnut Donut was way too good to be true, rich in flavor with a combination similar to Nutella on steroids.

My all-time favorite donut was a Valentine’s Day Special of Strawberry Shortcake filled with handmade strawberry jam, decadently topped with whipped cream, strawberries and shortcake. And yes, this donut was my Valentine’s Date.



But with Bite Me, there is one rule: You have to get there early as donuts sell out fast. I learned my lesson, so I now obsessively follow them on Instagram to ensure they are in stock and see the mouth-watering flavors of the week. Along with their amazing donuts, Bite Me sells coffee, a great selection of teas, La Virgen brews, and bagels on the weekends.

No matter how your eating habits define you, we can all agree of the simple truth that these donuts are damn good and made with pride from Joel and Sandra. Bite Me is an upcoming local

café where you will come for the donuts again and again.

By Rachel Thompson

To learn more about the author, check out her blog www.RachelInRoute.com or follow her on Instagram at @RachelInRoute

All images from Bite Me's Facebook page

Bite Me

- Facebook & Instagram: @biteme_madrid
- Spotify playlist
- Address: Plaza de la Beata Maria Ana de Jesus, 2 (Metro: Legazpi)
- Hours: Mon: 10-1:30, 4-9pm; Tues & Wed: Closed; Thurs: 10-1:30, 4-9pm; Fri: 10-1:30, 4-9pm; Sat & Sun: 10-9pm. *Hours may change for Summer*

Also check out: 4 vegetarian and vegan-friendly restaurants in Madrid