

Soy Kitchen – a Fusion of Asian Flavors

Previously, I wrote about [StreetX0](#), a hip Asian fusion restaurant in Salamanca helmed by culinary wild child, David Muñoz. Though the food was intriguing more than delicious, I thought it was a decent and fun effort on Muñoz's part – I also thought I'd probably found the best Asian fusion in Madrid.

Then I went to [Soy Kitchen](#).



Located in a old area around Grand Via, in **Plaza de los Montenses**, Soy Kitchen looks unassumingly like a typical neighborhood bar. Inconspicuously sitting in a familiar list

of *cocktails*, *vinos*, and *vermut* sits ***tapas asiáticas***, the only indication that this place serves altogether different fare than most bars. The lower half of the establishment serves drinks and tapas, the upper portion is the restaurant. The decor is simple, but that's where the simplicity ends.



The popularity of Soy Kitchen rests solely on the machinations of proprietor and sole chef, **Julio**. Born in Shanghai and educated in Hong Kong, Julio's career in Spain began when he moved to Pamplona and won a prestigious tapas award. If you get a chance to speak to him, do. Julio is just like the dishes he serves: an eclectic mix of Asian flavors in a

thoroughly Spanish setting.



There is **no menu** (though they always check with the customer if they have any preferences/allergies), which means you are

left in the hands of the chef – and what incredibly capable hands they are. This is Asian fusion done by an Asian, and you can taste the difference.

The image above is a noodle dish that comes with a peanut sauce made with four different types of soy, a lovely mild spice, and many other little secrets that I wish I knew. The image below is a coconut filled with a medley of seafood, and the image below that is a whole garlic and soy lobster that was finger-sucking good.





Throughout the ten course meal (yes, Julio single-handedly cooks ten courses for each and every one of his tables), I was continuously surprised and impressed by the harmony of flavors. As I said earlier, I tend to be suspicious of fusions

because they often reflect an ignorance about the diversity in Asian cuisine.

Every bite was an explosion of so many different flavors from all over Asia I kept expecting them to clash or become too overwhelming, but they never did. Julio is a master chef and finds the perfect balance between spicy, sweet, sour, and savory in each of his dishes.



Julio serves up at least eight dishes, and if you're still hungry you can have an additional meat option of beef or fish. I had the beef. The chef himself came out to stir up the tender pieces in a hot pot and place the perfectly cooked meat on grilled rice cakes.

If you manage to get a reservation, my only suggestion is that you come hungry and stay for an after-dinner *vermut* downstairs – your palette will have gone around Asia and landed firmly back in Spain in a single night.

Info

[Facebook](#)

Address: Plaza Montenses, 4

Metro: Plaza de España

More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:

- [Ramen Kagura, Madrid's \(almost\) perfect ramen bar](#)
 - [Kintaro – Oy Vey](#)
 - [Sumo – This Japanese restaurant's name says it all](#)
 - [Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food](#)
 - [Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant](#)
 - [Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.](#)
 - [Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!](#)
 - [Krachai – A cozy and elegant Thai restaurant in Alonso Martínez](#)
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Running Events in Madrid: February

Put your running shoes on this February! From cross country routes, to half marathons and duathlons...whatever floats your boat!

As always, Madrid has come up trumps this month with a range of different runs to choose from. I have listed all the runs I could find, some in central Madrid, while others are further afield in **Torrejón de Ardos**, **San Sebastian de Los Reyes** and **Parla**, to name a few.

I'm getting nervous already for my second half marathon ([10a Media Maratón de La Latina](#)), as I've already signed up for it, no going back now...

So here is what February has in store for you:

1. Corre por una causa

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 1st February, 9:30 am

Where: Lago at Casa de Campo

[Website](#)

2. II Maratón Via Verde del Tajuna

Distance: 42 kilometres (21 k & 30 k also possible)

When: Sunday, 1st February, 8:50 am

Where: Madrid, Metro: Arganda del Rey

[Website](#)

3. I Carrera Popular villa de Brunete

Distance: 42 kilometres (21 k & 30 k also possible)

When: Sunday, 1st February, 11:00 am

Where: Madrid, Metro: Arganda del Rey

[Website](#)

4. XV Dos Leguas Fuente de La Chopera

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 1st February, 10:45 am

Where: Leganes, Madrid, Parque de la Chopera

[Website](#)

5. I Campeonato Duatlon Circuito del Jarama Gran Premio Fangio

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 1st February, 11:00 am

Where: San Sebastian de los Reyes, Madrid

[Website](#)

6. XIII Cross del Rector de La Universidad Camilo Jose Cela

Distance: 4 & 8 kilometres (cross country)

When: Saturday, 7th February, 12:00 am

Where: Villafranca del Castillo, Madrid

[Website](#)

7. IV Carrera Solidaria Manos Unidas

Distance: 5 kilometres

When: Saturday, 7th February, 12:00 am

Where: Torrejón de Ardoz, Parque del Ocio, Madrid

[Website](#)

8. II We Run 10k Ciudad de Parla

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 8th February, 10:00 am

Where: Parla, Los Prados

[Website](#)

9. Medio Maraton Distrito de Fuencarral

Distance: 21 kilometres

When: Sunday, 8th February, 9:00 am

Where: Madrid

[Website](#)

10. III Maratón de Cobena

Distance: 42 kilometres

When: Saturday, 14th February, 12:30 am

Where: Cobena, Madrid

11. Cross Universidad de Alcalá de Henares

Distance: 4 & 8 kilometres (cross country)

When: Saturday, 14th February, 12:00 am

Where: Alcalá de Henares, Madrid

12. Patones Xtrem 2015

Distance: 14 kilometres (mountain running)

When: Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am

Where: Frontón de Patones de Abajo

[Website](#)

13. 1a Carrera Popular Cerro Tablado

Distance: 10 kilometres (cross country)

When: Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am

Where: Granja Cerro Tablado

[Website](#)

14. Cross de Valdebebas

Distance: 10 kilometres (cross country)

When: Sunday, 15th February, 10:00 am

Where: Madrid

[Website](#)

15. V Raid Villa de Madrid

Distance: 20 kilometres

When: Saturday, 21st February, 08:30 am

Where: Jardines de Sabatina, Madrid

[Website](#)

16. XI Combi-Dos Torrejón

Distance: 25 kilometres

When: Sunday, 22nd February, 10:30 am

Where: Torrejón de Ardoz, Madrid

[Website](#)

17. 10a Media Maratón de La Latina

Distance: 21 kilometres

When: Sunday, 22nd February, 9:30 am

Where: Madrid, C/ Guareña, Metro: Aluche

[Website](#)

18. II Carrera Solidaria Medula para Mateo

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Saturday, 28th February, 10:00 am

Where: Parque Juan Carlos I, Madrid

[Website](#)

If you are interested in staying up to date on running events in Madrid, or reading my “running diary” please subscribe to [GoGuri](http://www.gogui.com) (www.gogui.com) my personal running blog.



**StreetX0 – An Eclectic Fusion
of High and Low, East and**

West

If you're a foodie living in Madrid, then you've probably heard of [DiverX0](#), the Michelin three star gourmet restaurant born from the wild mind of Mohawk-totting creator and chef **David Muñoz**. If you haven't, watch [this video](#) first.

Muñoz has been omnipresent in gossip media ever since TV personality **Cristina Pedroche** recently confirmed rumors about their relationship on Twitter. Though, young, punkish, and charming, Muñoz is a celebrity in his own right – he even stars in his own [Mercedes ad](#), playing cheeky about his Michelin accolades.

A quick look at DiverX0's reservations online shows there are no openings till June; however, luckily for those of us who don't have reservations or who can't wait to sample Muñoz's creations, there's **StreetX0**. Originally opened in 2012, StreetX0 is Muñoz's more casual and affordable restaurant.



Recently relocated at **El Corte Ingles's Gourmet Experience** on Serrano 52, the restaurant boasts exciting decor, delicious cocktails, and intriguing food. It's no surprise that Muñoz serves up Asian-inspired dishes seeing as he cut his teeth at Nobu and Hakkasaan in London. His fare, though, is a little grittier, as the name of his new restaurant implies – the decor and the food are supposed to conjure up a wet market in Hong Kong or a food alley in Singapore (minus the cockroaches). Upturned crates serve as bar stools and neon signs line the walls.





First things first, as soon as you sit down, somebody comes and gets your cocktail order – doesn't matter if you're coming

for lunch or dinner. The cocktails are beautiful, perfumed concoctions that put you in the right mood for the feast to come.



An open kitchen sits at the heart of the restaurant breathing hot and loud as chefs wearing straight-jacket-like coats call

out the orders and stoke the coals. Definitely try to get a bar seat, you'll get dinner and a show.





When you hear '**sandwich**' called out every few minutes you know that's one thing on the menu you *have* to order. The *Sandwich Club* sounds inconspicuous and unexciting compared

to the rest of the menu, but that is where your assumptions would be wrong.



Now, does that look like any club sandwich you've ever had? I thought not. The fried egg tops a Chinese *bao* filled with succulent, melt-in-your-mouth pork. Bizarre, unlikely, and strangely good. Then there's the Korean inspired wonton lasagna dish and the Mexican mole dish with obligatory chips drizzled over tender quail.





The mole is served on a thick, waxy paper, no plate. When you're done, they just crumple the paper-plate up and take it away. If you're craving desert after, you'll have to take yourself to the frozen yogurt stand on the same floor, as StreetX0 doesn't serve sweets. But hey, who needs sweets when you have cocktails?



With the music pulsing in the background and a delicious, albeit expensive, cocktail list, it's easy to see why this spot is so hot – no matter the time of day, there's always a line. Atmosphere and energy trump food here, but the food is worth it, too, just be sure to get there very early (at least half-an-hour before opening) or very late (past nine-thirty) if you don't want to have to wait in line.

Address: Serrano, 52

Times: Sun 11:00 am – 12:00 am. Mon – Sat 10:00 am – 12:00 am.

There's also a happening [Gourmet Experience at the Corte](#)

[Inglés at Callao](#) with an outdoor rooftop terrace. Check out our previous article on it [here](#).

Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid

It's noon on a Sunday, you have just peeled off the covers and opened the blinds, and it's decision time: breakfast or lunch? Who says you have to choose? Brunch, combining the best of both meals, is a concept quickly growing in Madrid, and with multiple affordable options, you don't have to break the bank to enjoy a delicious meal!

1. 0jalá (featured in the cover photo and rightly so)



Located on one of Malasaña's narrow streets, you might walk right past Ojalá without realizing the hidden treasure that lies inside. At first glance, this café appears to be another one of Malasaña's trendy locales, with groovy colored light bulbs dispersed around the café, and bleacher-like seating across from the kitchen, with a clear window allowing a look inside as mouth-watering food is being prepared. Head downstairs for more seating, and you will find yourself being transported quite literally to a sandbar, with sand serving in place of carpet or wood flooring. Get comfy on the lounge

chairs and tables low to the ground, feeling warmed immediately by the heat lamps for added effect. A tikki bar completes the look at one end of the “beach.”



The extensive brunch menu offers a little something for everyone, and is all-encompassing, including a coffee or tea (taking care of caffeination needs), and the choice of juice, soda, beer or wine. No detail is overlooked, with fresh juice accompanied by a paper crafted straw served in a tasteful glass bottle.

As for the food, options include something for those looking for something on the sweeter side, with offerings of pastries and fresh fruits, or savory platters, including “World Mix”: organic cornbread with hummus, guacamole, poached egg, and a side of fruit salad and arugula lightly dressed, artfully served on a wooden plank.

It’s hard to leave the oasis that is Ojalá, but it provides the ultimate refuge for a weekend afternoon no matter the season, with outdoor seating when the weather permits.

Facebook

Price for brunch menu: €8-12€

Where: Calle de San Andres, 1

Metro: Noviciado/Tribunal

2. Little Big Café



With less than 10 tables inside, the Little Big Café is a cozy spot situated in Chamberí, with chalkboards inside advertising the expansive menu offerings. You are drawn in immediately by the cakes, pies, brownies, and other assorted bakery items displayed on the counter before you have even glanced at the brunch menu. (Don't worry, the sweets are on that menu too).



This café, with the tagline “A little café with a big heart,” is just that, with friendly staff willing to spend time explaining the menu to you. Wooden benches and tables add to the neighborhood feel of the café, along with the bulletin board with Polaroid’s of the “Club VIP” of Little Big.



The brunch menu allows diners the “Menu Cerrado,” a hearty offering that includes both a savory and sweet dish, choice of beverage, a dessert (head to the counter to survey which pastries suit your fancy), and a coffee or tea. Alternatively, diners can pick and choose from sandwiches, French toast or pancakes with your choice of toppings, or the brunch classic Eggs Benedict. The Eggs Benedict don’t disappoint, with an accompanying delicate side salad, and the pancake topping selection is overwhelming, served alongside the thin “tortitas” that won’t last long on your plate.

But the real star of the show is the previously mentioned dessert. Options vary, but the carrot cake is perfection, while the chocolate frosted chocolate cake will delight chocoholics. The best thing about the vast selection of desserts: you'll have an excuse to return and try them all.

Facebook

Price of brunch menu: €16.50

When: offered Saturdays and Sundays-11am-4:30pm

Where: Calle Fernández de los Ríos, 61

Metro: Moncloa/Islas Filipinas/Quevedo

3. Martínez Bar

For those who have given up on finding any resemblance of a bagel in Madrid, wander over to Martinez on Sundays for a gourmet Bagel Brunch at a reasonable price. Soft jazz greets you as you enter Martinez, followed by mouth-watering smells you'll find yourself hoping are coming to your table. The aesthetically simple design of Martinez has an antiquated feel reminiscent of times past, and the small tables lining the restaurant make it an ideal destination for smaller groups.



Start off with a fresh orange or grapefruit juice, and then dive into the bagel selection. Bagels are served with a variety of accompaniments, including the salmon and cream cheese, hummus, or goat cheese and marmalade. The warm, freshly toasted bagel is presented on round wooden boards, with the option of a supplemental Bloody Mary or Mimosa to complement your meal. The bagel toppings are not overpowering, and allow diners to enjoy the simplicity of the bagel below at the same time.



The brunch concludes with a coffee or tea, and one of Martinez's fresh desserts. The cheesecake, topped with a berry jam and a perfectly thick graham cracker crust is a guilty pleasure to be enjoyed slowly. Other dessert options include a brownie, carrot cake, or apple tart.



The simplicity of Martinez's Bagel Brunch is what makes it so enjoyable-minimal ingredients allow diners to enjoy fresh flavors without any unnecessary additions.

[Facebook](#)

Price of bagel brunch: €9.90

When: Sundays 1pm-4:30pm

Where: Calle Barco, 4

Metro: Gran Vía

4. Carmencita Bar

Located on an unassuming street in Malasaña, Carmencita is

anything but ordinary. Reservations are a must here, and you might even find yourself out of luck if you dare call past Thursday for the coming weekend. A popular expatriate hangout, you will hear a fair amount of English spoken here, and the restaurant offers a language exchange on Tuesday evenings starting at 9pm.



You can't mention Carmencita without talking about the 1€ mimosa. Little hair of the dog never hurt anyone! You can treat yourself to one (or two, who's counting?) without putting a dent in your wallet.



The brunch plates include Huevos Rancheros, Eggs Benedict, French Toast, and the “American Plate” complete with fried egg, sausage, bacon and hash browns. The fixed price brunch menu is generous: Eggs Benedict with your choice of salmon, avocado, or bacon, your preferred side (hash browns, potatoes, or salad), dessert of the day, coffee and mimosa.

The hollandaise sauce can be a bit excessive, but by the time you get to the hash browns you will have forgotten; these crispy potatoes are beyond compare, and a rare find in Madrid at that.



If you find yourself still having room left for a bit of dessert, you can't go wrong with the dessert of the day. The fluffy cakes are featured on the counter of this small restaurant, so you will be tempted throughout your meal. Finishing the last sips of your mimosa you might find yourself already planning your next trip to Carmencita.

Facebook

Price for complete brunch menu: €14.

*When: brunch served Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays
12pm-4:30pm.*

Where: Calle San Vincente Ferrer, 51

Metro: Noviciado

[La Gringa](#) (Carmencita Bar's sister restaurant a few doors down)

Carmencita Bar has a sister location right down the street called [La Gringa](#) that serves the same delicious brunch. When it's not holding brunch, it's a fun Mexican restaurant that organizes language exchanges and offers great deals on Mexican beers, cocktails, *tacos*, *burritos* and *Micheladas*. Here's a sneak peak of their brunch menu, filled with a variety of burgers, egg dishes and of course, mimosas and bloody marys.



[Facebook](#)

Where: San Vicente Ferrer 57

When: Saturday & Sunday 12pm-4:30pm. Best to make a reservation: 679 183 399

Metro: Noviciado

5. The Toast Café

From the hanging light bulbs encased in mason jars to the freshly squeezed orange juice served in champagne flutes, The Toast is an Instagrammer's paradise, and will satisfy your grumbling stomach too. Just one street over from the Little Big Café, The Toast is nearly always full of content diners lingering over the tasty two course brunch (coffee or tea and juice included) offered on weekends.



Start off with a generous Bloody Mary as you consult the

comprehensive brunch menu. The first plate options include pancakes, tostada, salad with light vinaigrette, or a croissant.



The fluffy pancakes don't disappoint, while the mixed greens salad is artfully topped with fresh vegetables.

The first course is just a warm-up for the second plate options: the obligatory Eggs Benedict, Huevos Rancheros, Breakfast Burrito, omelet, or salmon bagel.

The breakfast burrito is complemented with guacamole, pico de

gallo, while the filling inside surprises with potatoes.

The Toast is a popular weekend destination, so make sure to reserve a table ahead of time, so that the toughest decision will be whether to top your Eggs Benedict with salmon, avocado, or bacon!

Facebook

Price for brunch: €14

*When: brunch served Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays
11am-5pm*

Where: Calle Fernando El Católico, 50

Metro: Arguelles/Moncloa/Quevedo/Islas Filipinas

By Meredith Parmalee

Get fit and festive this month!

So here it is, Merry Christmas... and this month's installation of the best running events in Madrid! As usual Madrid has come up trumps in terms of scheduling a great run almost every weekend.

Why not truly get in the festive spirit this month and sign up for the **Papá Noel race**, you will receive your very own Santa Claus costume (obvious bonus) and you have the opportunity to help Madrid break the record for the largest number of people dressed as Santa running at the same time. How can you resist? Alternatively, get yourself pumped and end the year with a bang at the **San Silvestre race** on New Year's Eve!



The support at these events is always so encouraging. This band cheered us on at the **4a Carrera Popular, Corre por el Niño.**

So here is what December in Madrid has in store for you:

1. VIII Carrera Solidaria:

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 7th December, 9:00 am

Where: Paseo de Castellana

[Website](#)

2. 4º Trofeo Club Iberia Virgen de Loreto:

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Monday, 8th December, 11:30 am

Where: Parque Juan Carlos I

3. III Carrera Popular de Papá Noel El Corte Inglés 2014:

Distance: 5.5 kilometres

When: Saturday, 13th December, 10:30 am

Where: Paseo de la Castellana Avenue Concha Espina corner, metro: Santiago Bernabeo Stadium

Info: Sign up online for €12.60 to receive your **Santa Claus costume!** You have until **Tuesday 9th** to sign up. Collect your costume from participating El Corte Ingles department stores.

[Website](#)

4. Carrera de la Solidaridad

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Saturday, 13th December, 10:00 am (10 k) 10:25 am (5 k)

Where: Casa de Campo

[Website](#)

5. XXXIV Trofeo Akiles:

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Sunday, 14th December, 9:30 am (5 k) 10:00 am (10 k)

Where: Campo de Fútbol, metro: Lago Casa de Campo

[Website](#)

6. New Year's Eve – San Silvestre Vallecana 2014:

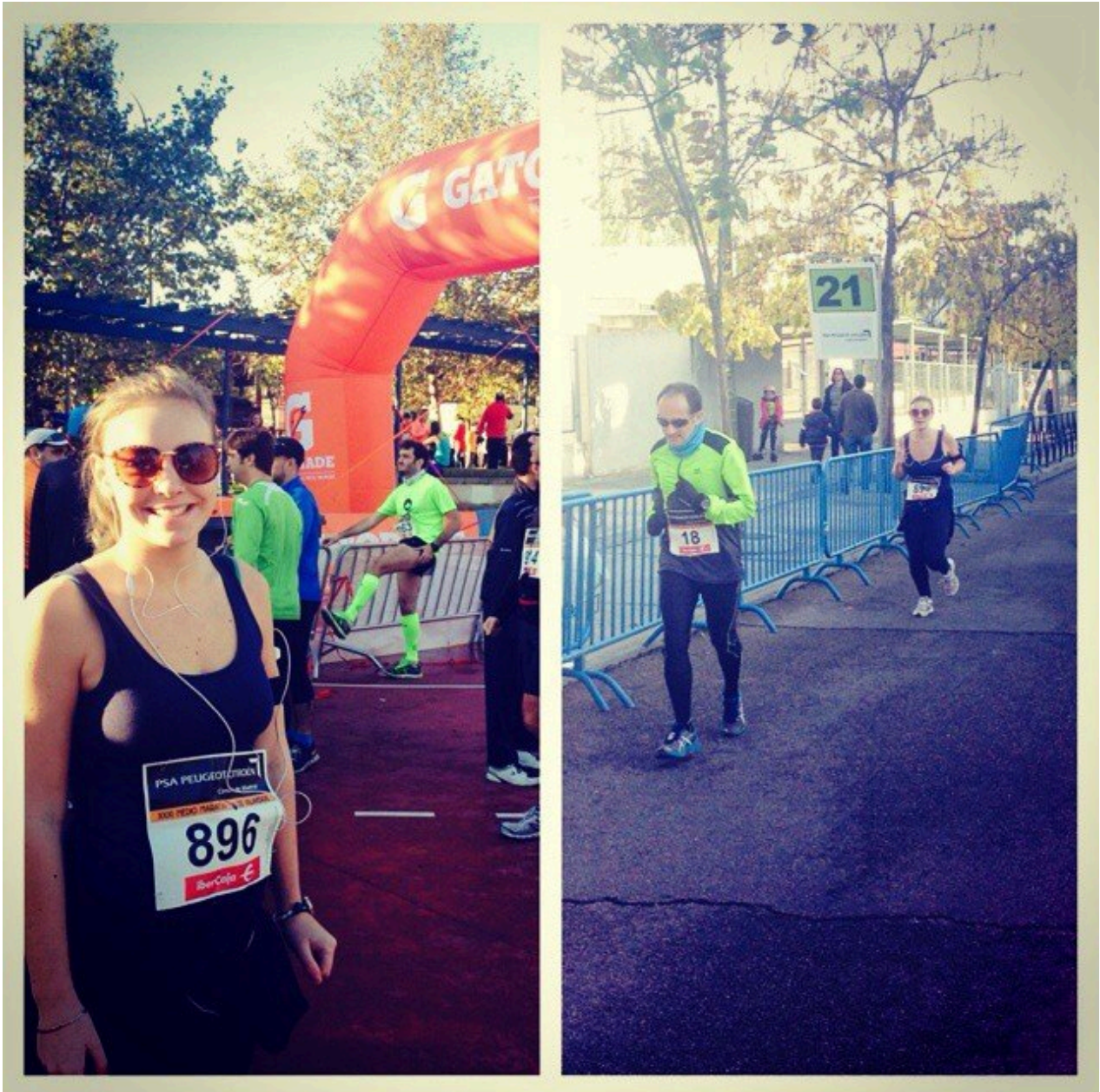
Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Wednesday, 31st December, 17:30 – 18:00 depending on which category you fall into.

Where: metro: Santiago Bernabeu

[Website](#)

Just a little update from my end – Last month I completed my first half marathon! All 21 kilometres in 2 hours and 8 minutes. Although by the end of it, to say I was running slower than snail's pace is an understatement.



Photography by **Lauren Haynes**, my personal cheerleader, at the half marathon.

If you are really into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

Happy running everyone!

Taberna Alipio Ramos

I'm not so much a picky eater as extremely finicky about when my food arrives. There is a specific window between having ordered and the food actually arriving that is crucial to my enjoyment of a restaurant meal. If I ever find myself thinking that, really, my order should have arrived by now, the meal starts to go downhill from that moment on – regardless of the dish that eventually arrives.

You could place the finest cuisine in the world in front of me but if the wait has been just *slightly* too long, you've lost me. The best restaurants in my book deliver the meal moments before the "where's our food?" thought has had a chance to cross anyone's mind.

In regard to The Taberna Alipio Ramos, it wasn't only their timing that was perfect.

An old friend and I had decided to take a long weekend break in Madrid. We wanted to say our farewells to another old friend who had died the Christmas before and to spend some time with his wife and two grown-up children. Our Galician hostess, Lines, had laid on a delicious buffet lunch for us and this was to be my introduction to Iberico ham – and what a

wonderful experience that was. I have never tasted cooked meat quite like it and, together with French (Spanish?) bread, great company and a delicious salad, we were welcomed to Madrid.

We'd made no plans for our last day in the city but Chris had come armed with the addresses of two or three Galician restaurants which had been recommended by a friend in the United States. The only information on the scruffy piece of paper advised that the Taberna Alipio Ramos: "*...did a good seafood special*". We had no idea where Ponzano was except somewhere in the North of the city and a taxi dumped us in an unremarkable one-way street just off the main drag. None of the restaurants appeared open and had I been on my own, might well have gone round the corner to a Macdonalds instead.

But it was 1pm and that's the time us Brits need to eat. So eat we must.

The Spanish dine late and we quite surprised the young girl behind the bar when we walked in. Entering a restaurant which appears unprepared for guests is a bad sign in my book.

"Yes, we're open...but we weren't expecting customers!"

Certainly in England, the sudden presence of people who want to eat in an otherwise empty restaurant seems to immediately engender resentment by staff at the intrusion and not least from an invisible chef heard taking it out on the pots and pans in the kitchen. Had this been an English establishment in an English town we'd probably have walked straight out, avoiding a sub-standard meal and surly service.

The waitress was business-like and showed us to a small area towards the back of the restaurant. There was only a Spanish menu (I don't remember one in English) but somehow we successfully ordered drinks and the seafood special. Both arrived almost seconds later.

At this point in the review I am supposed to start listing the types of seafood contained in the special, the sauces, side salads and the dressings. But I can't. I'm afraid you are just going to have to go there and experience it for yourselves. All I can remember are the Razor clams. Mmmm...mmm.

There must have been fish, prawns, yet more clams, possibly lobster, crab, (yes, I'm sure there was crab) but my only true recollection is that the dish the Alipio Ramos served up that lunchtime— and at lightning speed — was perfect in every way. Stunning fresh ingredients and simple sauces thrown into a pan and served up way before my stomach had even the slightest chance to grumble.

And at the end of the delicious meal, while toasting our dear friend, Paul — the reason for us being in Madrid in the first place — we couldn't help but wonder if perhaps he just might have had a hand in guiding us to this place, filling our glasses, and preparing the food.

And I have one niggling thought that keeps running through my head when I think back to that lunch. Perhaps, just perhaps, the Taberna Alipio Ramos is not alone and that we could have eaten almost as well in a hundred Madrid restaurants and enjoyed similar fabulous cooking. So, even if I've reviewed completely the wrong restaurant (the card lists three names) I have absolutely no doubt you will eat well.

But for Chris and I it was the spontaneity and unexpectedness of such a great meal that made lunch at the Taberna Alipio Ramos so perfect. And isn't that what life is all about?

By Hugh Trethowan.

[Taberna Alipio Ramos](#)

Address: Calle Ponzano, 30

Metro: Ríos Rosas or Alonso Cano

Tel: 91 441 49 61

For more on our favorite *tabernas* in Madrid, check out:

- [Bodegas Rosell](#)
 - [Bar Lambuzo](#)
 - [Taberna Lamiak](#)
 - [Casa Mingo](#)
-

Madrid's Best Christmas Markets 2014!

Madrid's *navideño* spirit is as bright and festive as in any other European capital. Rows of lights down Paseo de la Castellana, *chocolate con churros* on New Year's Day, the Three Kings' parade... But before all that, there are the Christmas markets setting up all over the city and stocking their stalls with handcrafted wares, jewelry, gourmet delicacies and [unique gift ideas](#) from independent designers. Here are some of the **best Christmas markets** to mark in your calendars and flock to when you start your holiday shopping:

The Hovse:



image from [el club express](#)



image from [La Vermutería](#)

For the curious and nosy ones out there, an excuse to peek into a beautiful Madrileño home seems too good to be true. After the success of last year's pop-up market, 'The

Apartment', this year brings '[The Hovse](#)' – one house, three floors, and 80 designers selling one-of-a-kind creations. There's also a bar on the top floor run by pop-up [La Vermuteria](#) – a great excuse for those who aren't into shopping but want to tag along anyway. Now open until 24 December.

Calle General Arrando 40

Check out our [events page](#) for more details.

Mercado de Motores:





Hosted in the old train museum, 'Museo de Ferrocarril', this market takes place in between old tracks and steam engines. Vintage clothing, a live band, artisanal products and trendy crowds are all to be found. The next and last running weekend for this market is the 20-21 December.

Paseo de las Delicias 61

Also check out our full post on [Mercado de Motores](#)

Nomada Market:





There is something of a recent trend in transforming train stations into markets. [Nomada](#) is a great place to find original creations and craftsmanship from emerging designers, alongside DIY workshops; all below the glass ceiling of Madrid's Chamartin train station. Pull out the sweater Grandma gave you last year and join in on National Ugly Christmas Sweater day for the market's funniest [Christmas edition](#), which only lasts for a few days. 12-14 December.

Attic of Estacion de Chamartin, Calle Agustín de Foxa

Check out our [events page](#) for more details.

La Industrial:



A tiny market in comparison to the rest, but a great place to hunt for gifts you won't find anywhere else. From hand-made bags printed with the map of the world to note books bound in Japanese origami paper, this Malasaña market is not one to miss when shopping for that quirky, special friend. Throughout December.

Calle San Andres 8

Ciento y Pico:



image from [Ciento y Pico](#)

Now in its fifth year, Ciento y Pico unites over 30 small, local brands under one roof to sell their handmade crafts, original jewelry, vintage goods, or home decor worthy of any hipster's haven. 18 – 21 December

Calle Velarde 14

Madrid Diferente:



One of Madrid's most established city-guide blogs is branching out into retail and hosting its own **Christmas pop-up**. With the name 'Diferente Market' we can only imagine that it will be stocked full of curious knick-knacks and unusual gift items. It will run over two weekends: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

Calle San Vicente Ferrer 33

1001 Atmosphaera:

Le marché de Noël

VENTA ESPECIAL DISEÑADORES Y CREADORES
CAMPAÑA DE NAVIDAD

27, 28, 29 Y 30 NOVIEMBRE
C/ General Pardiñas, 50
Madrid

Jueves de 17:00h a 21:00h
Viernes y sábado de 11:00h a 21:00h
Domingo de 11:00h a 15:00h



www.1001atmosfera.com

✧ B.G. DECORACIÓN ✧ COOL CORNER ✧ DI MORE ✧ EME-ELE ✧
✧ GALERIA CREATIVA ✧ GROW PIN ✧ LAS PULSERAS DE MARIA ✧ LETTER&U ✧
✧ LIFE BYP ✧ LUSSTRA ✧ MASAYA ✧ MAU LOA ✧ MG BAGS ✧
✧ MOLÉ MOLÉ ✧ NAÏVE ✧ NINAS VINTAGE ✧ ÔH MY COLLECTION ✧
✧ PEPPERONI BAND ✧ PETITSUI ✧ POSTCARD ✧ SAYAN ✧ SIETE PECAS ✧
✧ TABATA GLAM ✧ THE MUST HAVE ✧ TIENDAS BY GIFT ✧
✧ TRES SIETE ✧ VINTAGE ✧ VOLVORETA CLOSET ✧

✧ EL RINCÓN DEL PIRINEO ✧ MA PETITE CREPERIE ✧

 fashion

COLUMNA
ZERO

it-girl by Maria Cuervo

 manirid

LUSSTRA

The pop-up gallery, [1001 Atmosphaera](#), is holding three high-end Christmas Market editions. The first **Le Marché de Noël** will be held this weekend 27-30 November in honor of Black Friday! Among over 90 participating vendors, you'll find designer handbags, shoes, accessories and more from brands such as Eme-Ele, Letter&U and Molé Molé, as well as gourmet food stalls from the likes of [Ma Petite Creperie](#), BorchCakes and El Rincón del Pirineo. Don't worry if you can't make it out this weekend, because the market will return for two weekends in December: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

Calle General Pardiñas, 50

Plaza Mayor:



Image from [Blog Es Madrid](#)

One of the oldest and most well-known Christmas markets in the Spanish capital, we couldn't forgo mentioning it. Wooden huts take over Madrid's most prominent square for a month to sell Christmas decorations, live trees, costumes and the elaborate Spanish nativity scenes. Worth a stroll through the crowds,

even if it's just for a bit of contagious holiday buzz. 28 November – 31 December

Plaza Mayor

Plaza Jacinto Benavente:

Also known as the “Christmas Card Market” this mercadillo is best known for, what else, its elaborate Christmas cards, among other handicrafts. Traditional “casetas” are set up throughout the square to mimic a medieval town and there's also a bar serving not-so-traditional, crowd-pleasing mojitos. 28 November – 6 January

Plaza Jacinto Benavente

Navidad en Oriente:

This “Feria Dulces de Navidad” sets up shop in front of the Royal Opera House and sells sweet Spanish delicacies. Turrón lovers rejoice! Right next to it is also an ice rink, which opens every holiday season with a view of the Royal Palace. 28 November – 6 January

Plaza de Oriente

by Ardena González from [a wanderer's path](#) blog

If you're looking for unique gift ideas from Madrid, make sure to check out our post, [Best Gifts from Madrid](#), and our [Naked Madrid Events Page](#) to find out

about other markets and fun things going on in the city!

Exercise opportunities in Madrid

This Saturday, I went to my first zumba class in Madrid. I was excited about my first taste of zumba in Madrid, but going the morning after Halloween was a bit of a blunder. For those who haven't heard of it before, zumba is basically a mix of latino style dancing, which is especially great for those who lack much coordination and/or rhythm like me because the moves are repeated and straight-forward (and you can get away with the moves which you should never really show in public).

So with my back-combed hair, splodges of face paint, fake blood and "bruises" from my "Freaky Doll" costume from the night still partially visible, I put on my sunglasses and dragged my sorry hungover self to my first zumba class.



This is what I looked like *after* the zumba class... ;)

When we arrived at the mercado on Calle de Santa Isabelle by San Antón metro we discovered that the building was covered in scaffolding, and looked fairly desolate. We were on the verge of giving up when we eventually followed some people into the building (so those who wish to try out the first zumba class on the list, persevere my friends, you will find the door eventually!)

To my relief it appeared that the entire class was suffering from the “Halloween Hangover”, even the instructor, which really helped the group to bond as we discussed where we had gone the night before. The class started promptly with some warm-up routines, followed by routines of varying intensities. A special mention to the “sunshine dance” which really makes you smile (until you catch a glimpse of yourself in the

mirror!) There was a great mix of music from the likes of Enrique Iglesias, prompting salsa style movement and more hip hop and Bollywood music influences. You literally can't wipe the smile off your face at times as you see yourself with arms and legs flailing all over the place, (well in my case at least!) The incredibly smiley instructor had so much energy and lead the class well, with lots of encouragement and occasional "whooping"! By the end of the class, everyone was sweaty but smiley and we paid our 5 euros (which is great value I think!) and left, promising that we would come again next week. I had almost forgotten about my Halloween hangover, until that is I gorged myself on some delicious Mexican food, after which point I decided it was about time I went home and had a nap.

After my zumba experience, which my friend Mita stumbled across on [Lingo Bongo](#), I decided to investigate further and discovered a wealth of exercise opportunities, especially on lingobongo and [Meet ups Madrid](#). Cheap zumba classes like this are among Madrid's best kept secrets, especially for those who don't wish to fork out their well-earned wages on gym fees. To save you some time, I've compiled a list of some of these weekly classes, activities and clubs to join, (but bear in mind there are a wealth of options available). It is a great way to meet people and even practice some Spanish, for those who are getting tired of doing intercambios over a beer and fancy trying something new.

If you are into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

Exercise opportunities: Zumba &

Yoga

Zumba classes

What: Cheap zumba classes in the centre of Madrid with a very smiley English instructor.

When: Every week on Saturday 1pm and Wednesday 9pm,

Where: metro Anton Martín. Calle de Santa Isabelle (the big market building) don't be deceived it is open, keep trying all the doors. Upstairs Sala 4 of Amor de Dios Flamenco School

Price: €5

Bootcamp España

What: A group which was formed in 2009, which combine a variety of outdoor exercises inspired by US marine an effective way to get into shape.

When: Madrid Rio (Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8pm – 9pm) and Retiro (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday various times & Saturday 10:30 am –12 pm)

Where: Madrid Rio and Retiro Park

Price: First session for free (sign up online), then €52 for a month.

Check it out: [Boot Camp España](#)

Weekend yoga retreats

What: Regular weekend retreats organised by Yogamente including healthy food (all vegetarian and homemade), yoga sessions all in English. No need for previous yoga experience.

When: Weekend retreats, check Facebook for regular updates.

Where: In the beautiful countryside around Madrid.

Price: Depends on retreat, but average 190 euros (includes accommodation, homemade food and all activities)

Check it out: email info@yogamente.com for availability. Follow on Facebook for regular updates of new retreats: [Yogamente Facebook](#)

Hatha Yoga and Zumba classes

What: Two instructors from Colorado who have started up zumba and yoga classes. They offer affordable classes for all levels (seasoned and beginners).

When: Usually Saturday afternoons – check out Facebook for regular updates. Next zumba class: Date: Saturday, November 8th, 2.30 pm. Next yoga class: November 8th, 3.30 pm.

Where: El Horno C/ Esgrima, 11. It's in studio 9 which is up the stairs when you first walk in, then enter the main doors and make a right and another right, go down towards the end of the hall and you are there!

Price: only 5€ (because everyone should be able to afford fitness, and it's for an hour and a half!)

Check it out: [Z & Y Fitness Madrid](#)

Hiking

Intercambio hiking group

What: Group called Hiking Madrid that organises weekly hiking events for mountain lovers who wish to meet new people of all nationalities who have a mutual interest in hiking.

When: weekly events

Where: mountains in Madrid. Each event will give you information about where to meet and catch the bus from.

Price: Depends on the expedition, it is often simply the cost of transport.

Check it out: Website [Hiking Madrid](http://Hiking_Madrid) or email hikingmadrid@hikingmadrid.com and you can sign up for regular newsletters. Follow on Facebook for regular updates and upcoming events: [Facebook Hiking Madrid](https://www.facebook.com/HikingMadrid)



Organised by Hiking Madrid. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

Spanish hiking group

What: Regular hikes organised by “*senderismo entre semana*” on meet up website. This group has great reviews and it is a good opportunity to meet more Spaniards.

When: Weekly hikes.

Where: Mountains around Madrid.

Price: Transport to mountains, dependent on hike.

Check it out: [Senderismo entre semana](#)

Join a sports team: Basketball and Football

Babelsket Madrid (beginner's basketball)

What: Free basketball for beginners. *Babelsket* Madrid is a motley bunch of not very skilled basketball players who heartily welcome all those who want to join their nice-and-friendly games in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

When: On Sundays at 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Where: The court is in Calle Puerto Rico 54 (metro Colombia)

Price: It's free!

Check it out: Add your name to the list at: [Babelsket](#)

More competitive basketball (and practice your Spanish too!)

What: Competitive basketball team in Madrid for those who have played before and would consider themselves good players. Join a friendly Spanish team that play in the Majadahonda league.

When: Training once a week on a Wednesday.

Where: Majadahonda (you may need to catch the cercanias).

Price: Not specified.

Check it out: email: ivanalvarez74@hotmail.com and double check price and location.

Competitive Football teams

1. What: Fútbol Club Británico 1st team is looking to welcome new players to the club for this new season. You can train with a UEFA licensed coach and play against other teams. Home and away games so lots of opportunities to travel and see more of Spain too.

When: Get in touch for more details.

Where: Get in touch for more details.

Price: Get in touch for more details.

Check it out: website [FCI Britanico](http://FCI_Britanico) or email regional.manager@fcbritanico.com or whatsapp 609754169. Follow on twitter: @BritanicoFC or on Facebook: [Facebook Fútbol Club Británico](https://www.facebook.com/FutbolClubBritanico)



The Fútbol Club Británico team after 2-2 draw against visiting side Brent FC. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

2. What: *International 5-a-side Football League* has been connecting foreigners and locals in Madrid since 1988. So get in touch and sign up!

When: Get in touch for more details.

Where: Get in touch for more details.

Price: Get in touch for more details.

Check it out: website: [IFL Madrid](#) and Facebook: [IFL Madrid](#)

If you know of any more clubs, societies or groups that I forgot to mention, or if you are starting up your own classes or your team needs new members

– please leave a comment!

Also, check out our post: [Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid](#) for more ideas!

Running in Madrid: November 2014

If the word ‘running’ ‘exercise’ or the idea of general movement makes you want to crawl under a rock, it’s probably best you look away now. But before you do... I want to make it clear that I am no running expert, I was always picked last for sport’s teams (sob), so why not hear me out.. ☐



Beautiful photography taken by Lauren Haynes on her run along Madrid Rio.

I have recently discovered the world of running (scorn all you like) but I can honestly say, without shame, that I am hooked. I always used to convince myself that I wasn't a runner, and that I did my daily exercise running up and down the metro every day, barging and weaving my way past the incessantly slow Spaniards who did a great job of ignoring my tomato face.

One day, however, my perspective changed. I was walking past *Lots of Colours* (a great shop by the way on Calle Fuencarral

that is actually affordable) and I saw some running shoes on offer in the window for 29 euros (this explains why they absolutely destroyed my feet, but that's another story). They were taunting me, testing me. I had to buy them to make them shut up!

So anyway, I bought the shoes. Next step: use them. It's harder than it seems, trust me. On a whim one day, I went out for my first clumsy run, feeling silly and self-conscious, but after at least 15 minutes I found myself running alongside Templo de Debod, near Plaza de España (for those of you who have yet to visit it, at night time it is lit up in a particularly majestic way), and suddenly I almost forgot that I was doing exercise and was simply enjoying the view. Madrid is a great place to run, once you have managed to escape the main streets, and there is the added benefit that you are unlikely to bump into anyone you know.

If I still have your attention so far, you might want to consider some of the great running opportunities there are in Madrid, because believe it or not there are races almost every weekend! The atmosphere is always alive and buzzing, even at 9.30 on a Sunday morning, and if you sign up you get a free t shirt and some food at the end the race (there I knew I could convince you).



Getting ready to start, check out the lycra ;)



Taken at X Carrera Popular Distrito de Retiro, 26th October.

So here is what November in Madrid has in store for you:

1. **4a Carrera Popular, Corre por el Niño:**

Distance: 4 and 10 kilometres (A little bizarre, but a great one to get started!)

When: Sunday 9th November, 9:30 am

Where: Retiro Park

Cost: 10€ (which goes to El Hospital Infantil Universitario Niño Jesús)

[Website](#)

2. **XXXI Medio Maratón de Villaverde:**

Distance: 21.097 kilometres (a half marathon)

When: Sunday 16th November, 9:30 am

Where: Metro Ciudad de Los Ángeles, line 3.

Exit: C/Unanimidad (Auditorio El Espinillo)

Cost: 12.60€

[Website](#)

3. **Derbi de Las Africiones:**

Distance: 10 kilometres

When: Sunday 16th November, 9:00 am

Where: Santiago Bernabéu Stadium, line 10

Cost: 12€

[Website](#)

4. IV Carrera de los Emprendedores:

Distance: 5 & 10 kilometres

When: Sunday 23rd November, 9:00 am

Where: Retiro Park

Cost: 8€ (possibility of discount if you sign up before 26th October)

[Website](#)

5. XXXV Trofeo Jose Cano:

Distance: It varies from 2-10 kilometres

When: Sunday 23rd November, 9:00 am

Where: The nearest metro stops are: Las Musas, San Blas or Alsacia

Cost: free for the first 300 who sign up otherwise 16€

[Website](#)

So I wanted to give a little summary of how I got into running, just to prove to readers that I am no athlete, and it can be a great way to keep fit (and for free!) If you know of any more running activities please feel free to share them!



After the X Carrera Popular Distrito de Retiro, 10 kilometre – happy running!

If you are really into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

El Campo de Cebada, a mix of live music, politics & drinking

I've been in Madrid for 5 months now and I want to share somewhere with you. There's nowhere as special to me as [El Campo de Cebada](#) for a place to relax. It's quite unique in what it has to offer. It's a **free space** where you can lie in the sun, the shade, drink beer and listen to **live music** or play **sports**. It's even a place where green and reform-minded political groups go to spread their word. Oh, and they have a theatre. How awesome is that?

Any lover of sun, sociality and really cheap booze, should come to [El Campo de Cebada](#).

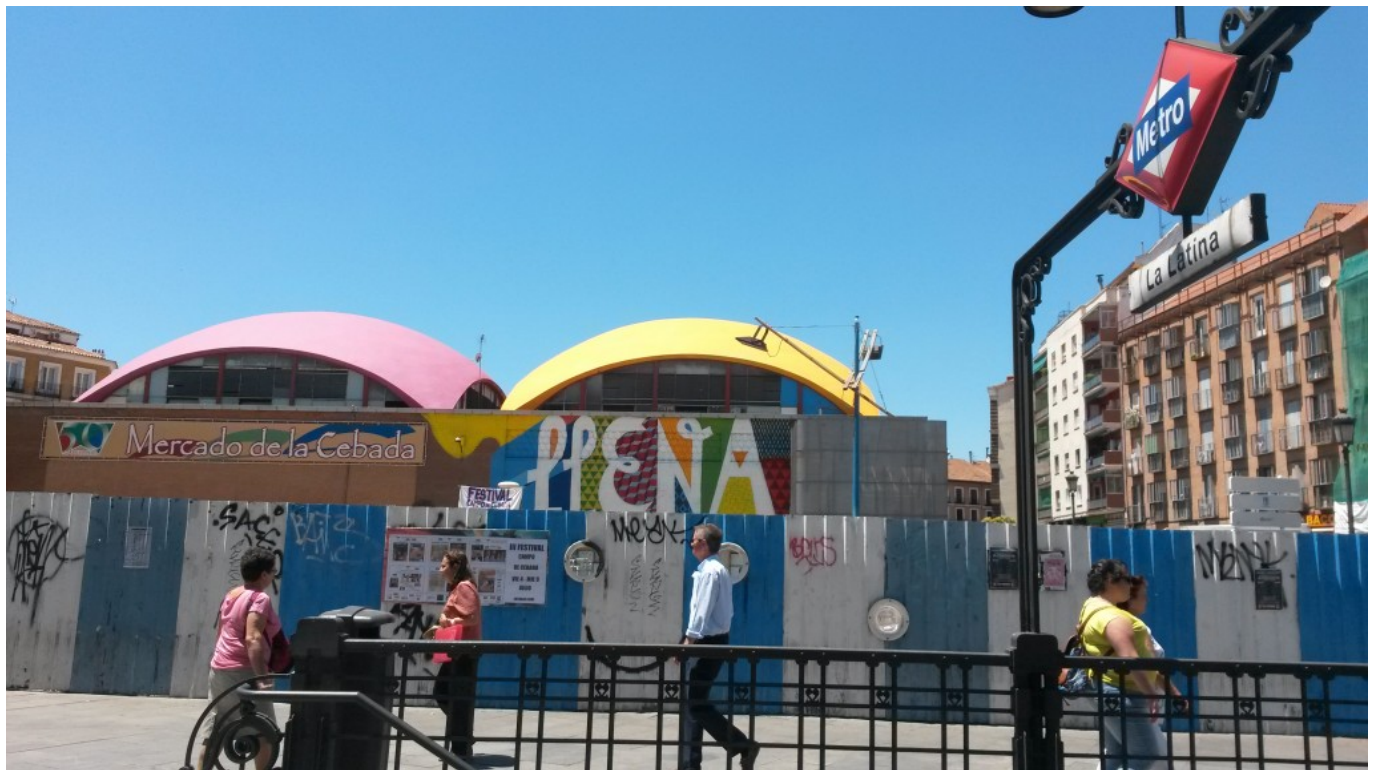


from plataformaarquitectura.cl

It's not just some commercialized private space. After the collapse of a sports complex in the same area, an association of neighborhoods bought the plot with a grant from the **City of Madrid**. From here, people in the surrounding area had a stake in how to invest the money.

The idea was to create an inclusive temporary space where the **community** could get involved and where they could create value. Instead of an empty disused space, the creation of **El Campo de Cebada** allows people to do **sport, socialize and pursue other projects**. But, yes you read correctly – temporary. Cebada is there to fill in the vacuum and it will leave when the community gets the funding for a new sports complex.

And this is one more reason for why it's special. It's not going to be there forever.



I promise you're yet to find anything like it. From your first encounter, by **La Latina Metro** you'll probably be surprised to see passers-by cramming around spy-holes in its graffitied walls and people flowing endlessly in and out of its gate. The hum of enjoyment comes from somewhere.

What could be so interesting?

If you go over for a peek...

First you hear the noise. Like a school when it breaks and you can hear the happy roar of children playing.

You see lots of people. **Football, basketball, socializing, Botellón** (people casually drinking outside) and of course, smoking. There's art all up the walls. There are people sat in wooden stands and others on benches. **All walks of life** can be found, from musicians, entrepreneurs, students, workers, the old and the young; from the sophisticated, to the -let's say- drunk.



I can't help but feel welcome. Everyone is sharing one place. They're all happy. The sun makes everything look good.

Plus, I get the pirate vibe from the makeshift **DIY atmosphere!** And that's hard to find, I assure you.

My advice: grab some **beer** or cold **drinks** and a friend. Take a **ball, Frisbee, guitar** or **book** (if your alone!) and go. Go and **relax**. Soak it in.

If there was ever a day made for this, that day is Sunday. Starting early, like 10am, you can walk around El Rastro and see all the goods and wares they have to offer in what is Madrid's massive open market. I managed to get a guitar for only €50! And then head for **Cebada**.

At around 1pm, **live music** begins. It's often similar faces keeping the spirit alive, with the odd newcomer in between. But it has always been exciting. I've seen an amazing barbershop quartet, a comedian guitarist, a charming folk singing couple, improvisation, blues and some Spanish classics.



from plataformaarquitectura.cl

Here until 3am is the perfect place to grab a Mahou and relax in the sun. You're welcome to stay all day and I like to make an afternoon of it.

On some weeks you can also find the same space (with the music!) turned into a **political hive-mind**. People from all parts of the (Leftist) political spectrum set up stalls to give you information. From memory there were anarchist stalls, socialist stalls, ones on green issues, democratic reform and women's rights (hot topic right now). I've even gone there and found a local ecological food market mixed with talks on green consumerism and responsible business models. If politics is your cup of tea – this place is too. You can also sharpen up on your Spanish.

There are always things going on at El Campo de Cebada. Check out their [website](#) from time to time. Up and coming is a festival from the 4th to the 9th and a [TEDx Madrid Salon](#) talk on July 14th (here's [TEDxMadrid's official site](#))

You know you've found somewhere special when you stumble across a space for bringing a community together for fun and for raising awareness about important issues affecting everyone. If there is one voice here, for me it says '**we are a community and we can act**'.

Sports and music, beer and politics, speaking Spanish. I really can say no more.

So, if you want to be somewhere and not feel like an anonymous person at a bar or club, go there. You want to chat in the sun with friends, beer and music? Go there. I've had some amazing experiences and I think you'd be missing out. **So, go, go, go!**

El Campo de Cebada

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

Address: Plaza de la Cebada, 4