Pajarita: Having fun with your food while eating well

On Calle Apodaca, just around the corner from the Mercado Barceló, is a little restaurant called Bar Pajarita. And I'm so excited to be able to do the honor of writing about it for Naked Madrid. Why, do you ask? It's been on the go-to list for quite a while, and also on mine. One of my friends, who constantly raves about it, kept saying that I needed to go. This furthered my intrigue, but as time went by, the timing wasn't right for me to get my first Pajarita experience. And then, one hot, summer night (one of many in this never-ending Madrid heat wave), I FINALLY got to see what Pajarita is all about. I was in luck as she was my partner-in-crime for the evening, helping decide which dishes to try.

We split four items, which was a perfect amount for dinner. The chef plays with a lot of different flavor profiles; this you can get a vibe for right away when you see the black napkin folded in the shape of a bow-tie (and in Spanish *pajarita* does in fact mean bow-tie) on top of your place-setting. This fusion of traditional ingredients and unique preparations is what makes it so playful, and so good. And that's the point of the experience at Pajarita; they want you to have fun eating. You can eat with your standard fork and knife, or you can take the chopsticks at hold the napkin as a bow-tie when you walk in and eat that way too (or, as they say on their website if you dare).

We first started off with the **quekas**, which are quesadillas with mushrooms. The pico de gallo and the sunflower seed pesto were placed perfectly in the middle. While quesadillas often make for a challenge, these were perfect finger-food



Quekas

The next one, which was my hands-down favorite, were the ***huevos divorciados***. Now don’t let the name (divorced eggs)

fool you; the thing is that one one side that looks like potatoes is actually the egg white. As the name implies, the whites and the yolks are separated. And like a good Spaniard, you put the egg white as if it were a potato by dipping it in the yolk and mixing bites of seeds and lima beans.



Huevos divorciados- the “must-have” dish

We rounded out dinner with **bacalao (cod) on top of a sweet potato purée and little squirts of mayonnaise…**



Delicia de bacalao

…and one of my favorite meats, ***solomillo de buey*** on top of a pimientos de padrón mustard.



Coruñés 53

It definitely lived up to my friend’s hype, and I can’t wait to go back again and again. I also need to go back because we

didn’t have dessert. I’ll definitely work through as much of the menu as I can, but I will be (and still am) dreaming of the *huevos divorciados* going right into my mouth. On a quiet street in Malasaña, **Bar Pajarita** is a perfect place for dinner with great food and playful fun. It’s more fun if you have someone (or a few people) to have fun eating with.

Restaurante Pajarita

Web
Address: Calle Apodaca, 20
Tel.: +34 91 591 73 10
barpajarita@gmail.com
Hours: Monday-Wednesday 1-4:30 PM/8:30 PM-Midnight; Thursday 1-4:30 PM/8:30 PM-2 AM; Friday and Saturday 1-4:30 PM/8:30 PM-3 AM; Sunday 1:30-4
Metro: Tribunal (Lines 1 and 10)

Wanda Café Optimista

Now that I’m starting school at IE this fall, I need to have a full arsenal of lunch places in my Rolodex. For a few weeks I kept passing by Wanda thinking to myself, *I’ve got to come here*. So finally, as things start to wind down and I find myself full of optimism, Daphne and I got together to have lunch at **Wanda Café Optimista**.



The décor makes it a perfect place to have some coffee, get lost in conversation (as we did), AND for IE students (especially with those who will have classes in María de Molina, 4) there are big tables for group projects. As I perused **Wanda's website** to get the final research components to wrap up this article and make it ready for publication, the owners of the restaurant did have the oasis idea in mind. With primarily light, nautral woods, along with splashes of neon colors reminiscent of summery ikat prints, the hustle and bustle of the Castellana and the Plaza del Doctor Marañón seemed a world away.



At lunchtime, there are a number of deals. The *plato del día* the day we were there was salmon, basmati rice, and roasted tomatoes. This, along with a coffee and drink, was €9.



What was even more amazing was Daphne’s iced tea, with fresh strawberries and mint.



Now that I have received a temporary reunion with fruit, I am even more determined to go back and have it.

There are some other deals as well, including the salad buffet. For an absolute hardcore salad eater like myself, the setup is great. You have your salad (with you choosing the toppings and having it tossed like the tried and true salad establishments in my hometown of New York City that line every major area with office buildings) and a natural juice. So not only do I need to go back to Wanda to get myself a delicious strawberry iced tea, I also need to have some salad and juice.



If you don’t want to take advantage of any of the deals and want to have a more traditional restaurant experience, then there’s plenty of things to whet your appetite. While I add the ventresca (tuna belly), tomato, and onion salad, there were also plenty of other options. You can have something more traditional, like salmorejo, bacalao, cecina de León, or croquetas, but if you crave something more international, then there’s plenty for you too. You can find a selection of thin-crust pizzas, chicken tikka masala, eggs benedict, AND onion rings.

But if you thought Wanda was just for lunch, it’s also open until 2 AM. If you find yourself having a long night of work and studying, you’ll have yourself a great oasis.

Info

Wanda Café Optimista
Calle María de Molina, 1
Tel.: +34 91 737 53 64
Hours: Monday- Friday 8 AM-2 AM; Saturday and Holidays 10 AM-2

AM
Metro: Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10)
Web & **Facebook**

Monkee Koffee: Amazing coffee next to Canal Isabel II

Like any good native New Yorker, and like every *madrileño* for that matter, there's nothing like a great cup of coffee, and preferably it's not costing you an arm and a leg like that *relaxing cup of café con leche in Plaza Mayor*. I yet again found out about **Monkee Koffee** through **Cup of Couple**'s Instagram account, and was ecstatic to have it be within a 20-minute walk of my apartment.



On a Saturday afternoon I headed to **Monkee** to meet a friend, looking forward to having my mind blown by coffee. The first

thing that strikes you when you pull up is the sliding door (which is an absolute rarity, except for maybe Panaria).



When you walk up to the counter, you'll find a menu not only with different kinds of coffee, but also smoothies, AND food. Not only can you get standard baked goods (like cookies, cakes, and some tostadas), BUT there are a number of sandwiches or salads to really be able to get your munch on.

It's a great spot for cold-brewed iced coffee, which in Madrid can be a little bit of a challenge to find. The one caveat for me was that there was no skim milk, but I'd be willing to indulge in soy milk in my cold-brew. For those of you who were big Blue Bottle Coffee fans in San Francisco and New York, this is the closest you'll get to it in Chamberí.



There are a variety of seating arrangements, including a smaller table with big, comfy chairs, where my friend and I got lost in conversation. If you want to get work done, you can sit at the long, communal table in the middle à Le Pain Quotidien, or on another long table just along the brick wall where you can see the Monkee logo and a bright letter o. For groups of friends, there are also some other tables where you can pull up chairs and seat groups of three, four, or five comfortably. I can definitely see myself coming here to write, study, or get lost in a good book.



Monkee Koffee also has a choice location this time of year. It's located just around the corner from Parque de Santander and the Instalaciones Deportivas del Canal Isabel II, which is my swimming pool of choice on hot summer afternoons.

I'm glad to have found a place to get my cold-brewed iced coffee and food to-go before I relax by the pool, or stay in and get some fuel and some work done.

Info

Web
Twitter
Facebook
Address: *Calle Vallehermoso, 112*
Tel.: *+34 915 45 66 09*
Metro: *Canal (Lines 2 and 7)*

Here’s a list of more of our favorite cafés in Madrid:

- **Little Big Café: my big little pick-me-up**
- **4 Coziest Cafés in Chamberí**
- **Cafelito: for coffee lovers in Lavapiés**
- **Toma Café: Fuel up, Feel hip**
- **Pepe Botella: a coffee place where you can think**
- **La Paca: the perfect café in Malasaña**

Pancomido: A French bakery where your bread will most certainly be eaten all up

When I used to live right near the **Museo Sorolla** and took the Number 16 bus every morning to work, I had to be out the door in time for my first coffee run before the bus would take me over the Castellana to Chamartín. Like clockwork, I would be out of my apartment around 7:55 so that I could be one of the first in line at 8 AM sharp when the doors of the **Pancomido Café** would open. I would walk in, order my coffee with skim milk and sweetener in a to-go cup, and as I had the amount it cost memorized, have the change ready to give out at a moment’s notice so I could merrily sip my coffee as I fell asleep on the bus to the *colegio*.

Sometimes, on Saturday mornings, I would drink that coffee

more slowly (and albeit in a much more madrileño manner than a New York one) while one of my friends would order a **croissant with raspberry jam and butter**, but I stuck with my coffee. But the robin egg blue (or better Tiffany blue) inside and out with the menu items offered on a blackboard allured me.



One of the biggest disappointments of having to move after the holidays was not being able to stop there on my daily commute.

After my move, I decided to have a breakfast adventure to celebrate being able to actually order something other than coffee.

Besides coffee with skim milk (and having skim milk is a vital component of my coffee consumption), **Pancomido** has a whole variety of breads and pastries.



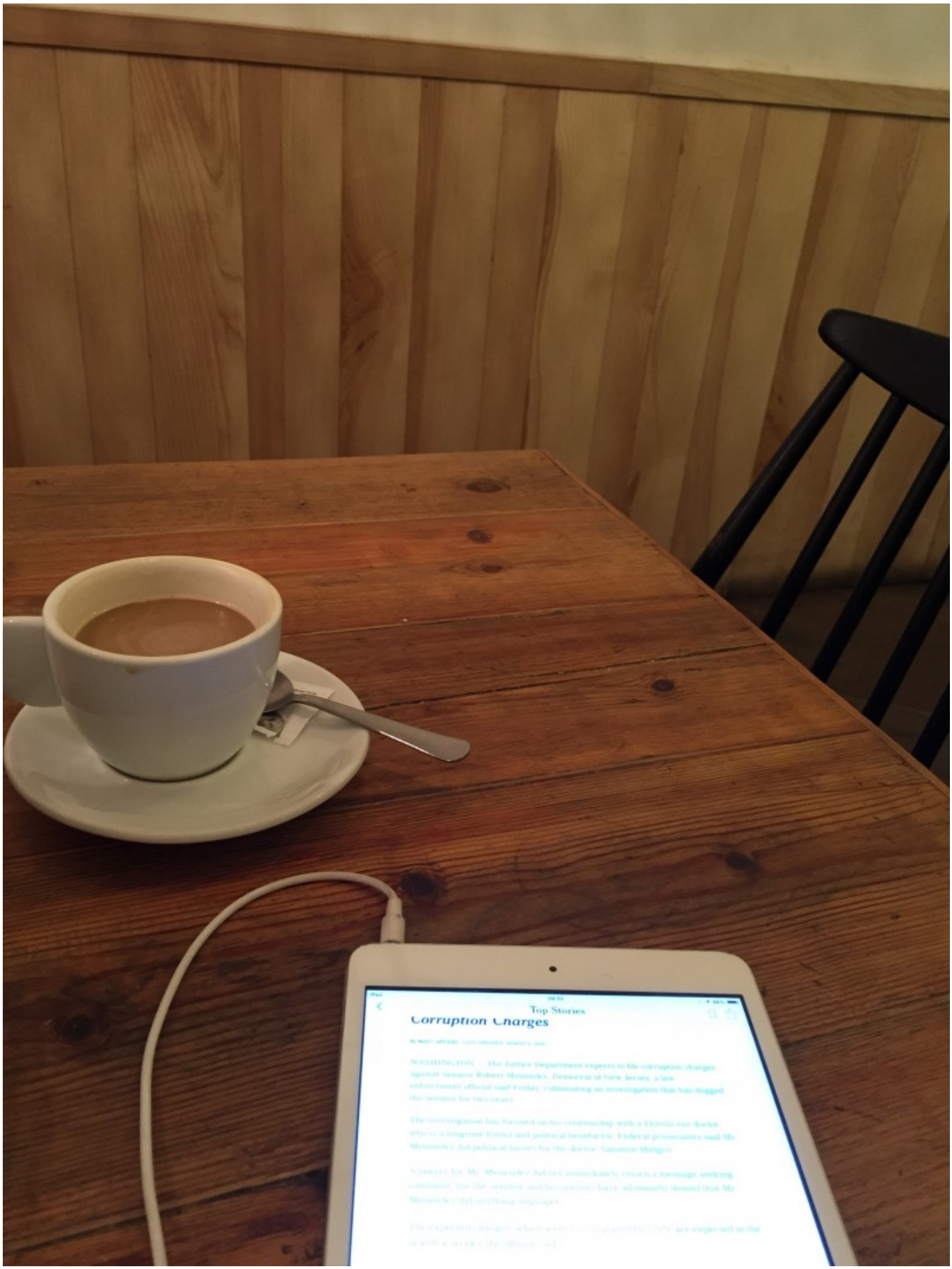
As you can tell…



The **French-style pastries** look absolutely exquisite (even though I can't have any), and you can take my friend's glowing recommendation for croissants as proof.

If you happen to be in the vicinity for lunch, there are also a number of salads and sandwiches as well as soups that look like an excellent little *menú*.

The **Zurbano** location has plenty of seating space in the back which I have taken full advantage of reading *The New York Times* on my iPad on one of those weekend mornings after a long, hard workout at the gym.



If you’re on the other side of the Castellana in **Barrio de Salamanca**, there’s another **Pancomido** very close to IE Business

School and the US Embassy.

Your bread will most certainly be eaten up, as the name *pan comido* implies, and your little breakfasts wil have an extra spring in your step.

Pancomido Café (Chamberí)
Where: *Calle Zurbano, 50*
Tel.*:+34 913 08 25 06*
Metro*: Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10), Rubén Darío (Line 5), or Iglesia (Line 1)*

Pancomido Café (Salamanca)
Where: *Calle del General Oráa, 22*
Tel.*: +34 617 54 03 19*
Metro: *Núñez de Balboa (Lines 5 and 9)*

Mamá Campo: A restaurant-market of organic delights in Plaza de Olavide

Plaza de Olavide is one of Madrid's hidden gems. Situated in the heart of Chamberí between the Iglesia, Bilbao, and Quevedo Metro stops, it's a perfect place to sit on spring days or balmy summer nights. This leads me to Mamá Campo, another one of those places I discovered thanks to an exquisite brunch photo on the Cup of couple Instagram account. Mamá Campo has an organic market as well as a restaurant and children's store/center.

The Mamá Campo restaurant serves all ecological products, epitomizing the eco trend all over the city. One Friday in

between doctor's appointments, interviews, and private lessons, I took advantage of the first of many sunny Madrid spring days to FINALLY get a chance to eat lunch at Mamá Campo.



The décor inside the restaurant is very cool. There's reusable wood and other products, making you feel one with nature. There are communal tables (where I sat as I was flying solo), very reminiscent of Le Pain Quotidien, as well as normal tables for groups of friends. The best part about sitting at the communal table was being perched high above on the stool

(especially choice for taking pictures with my iPhone).



As for for choice of dish, I ordered a grilled sea bass filet with sorted vegetables. I was also given an aperitivo of salmorejo with some delicious whole-wheat bread. I was extremely satisfied with my choice and can’t wait for my next visit.

But, like I said, the magic of Mamá Campo isn’t just that it’s a restaurant. The market, on the part of Calle Trafalgar more towards the Bilbao Metro stop just off of Olavide, has a great

selection of products to enjoy at home.



As you walk in, the whole left wall is full of a whole range of produce. You can also buy a sample of organic breads that look absolutely amazing, as well as bio embutidos, sauces, rice milk, almond, coconut milk, and more.



The aesthetic is very similar to the restaurant, with minimalist painting on the walls, splashes of color, wooden cartons to store all of the produce (as you can see here), and classic woven baskets to store your wares. And it looks like that this could have been kale…



which for this New Yorker is definitely great news if kale can be found.

The next time you discover Olavide on a sunny day and are looking for some organic produce or a delicious, sustainable meal, then Mamá Campo is your go-to place in this little hidden rincón of Madrid.

Web
Facebook

Restaurante Mamá Campo
Plaza de Olavide
28010 MADRID
Metro: *Iglesia, Bilbao, or Quevedo*
Tel.: 91 447 41 38

Mamá Campo
Calle Trafalgar, 22
28010 MADRID

Metro: *Bilbao*

The Little Big Café: My little big pick-me-up

I think it was first on Instagram when I saw something from Cup of Couple. It was a fantastic breakfast setup with an exquisite-looking cup of coffee. Then Lovely Pepa posted another. Ever-curious, I clicked on top of the pin and found the address. What luck! It was only five minutes from my apartment. So one Sunday afternoon, I entered **The Little Big Café** for the first time. It's now one of my favorite spots to write, read *The New York Times*, or to just clear my head. In fact, it was here where I wrote my **Helena Rohner article**.

Opened last year by Max and Cris (both with experience living and working abroad), the area of **Chamberí** between Moncloa and Argüelles now has a perfect oasis.


menú, a una pizarra, pegador, fibero
deliciosos elaborados con ingredientes naturales...
Desayunos (hasta las 13h.)
a elegir entre café o té
tostada con aceite y tomate 2€
tostada con mantequilla o crema de queso y mermeladas 2€
tostada con miel y canela 2€
tostada con aguacate 3€
bocatín de jamón 3'
bocatín de pavo 3'
porción de bizcocho 2'
media porción de tarta 3'
copos de avena con frutos secos 3'
yogurt con frutas 3'
yogurt con muesli
complementos 1€ extra
zumo de naranja natural
pequeño bol de frutas
Snacks
selección de hummus casero con pan 3€
crema de aguacate con nachos 3€
Snacks brunch
bizcocho con cerezas 3€
pizzetas 3€
panes naturales elaborados con masa madre
leche fresca "Frágola"
THE Little Big CAFE
Menú Brunch
1. escoge un plato de punto
2. escoge un plato de punto
3. escoge un
-refresco
-zumo natural
-cerveza
4. escoge
-café
-té
y una pequeña porción de tarta
17'00 €



Now, you've already heard about **Little Big** as a place for **the best brunch on a budget in Madrid**, and let me tell you, it is absolutely heavenly (my go-to is the *tosta de huevos a la plancha al estilo árabe* on whole-wheat bread). But this cozy café great for more than brunch. Open from 9 am to 8 pm during the week, you can go to **Little Big** at almost any hour.

And with that there are several *menú* options (and let's face it, a ***menú del día*** is one of Spain's greatest little pleasures). In the morning until 1 pm, you can enjoy the breakfast menu (***menú de desayuno***). This includes one breakfast plate (I love the **bocatín de jamón** on whole-wheat…) and a coffee or tea. To round out my special breakfast, I always get one of the make-your-own smoothies. While you can put in yogurt or milk, I prefer to get mine with water so it's more like a juice.



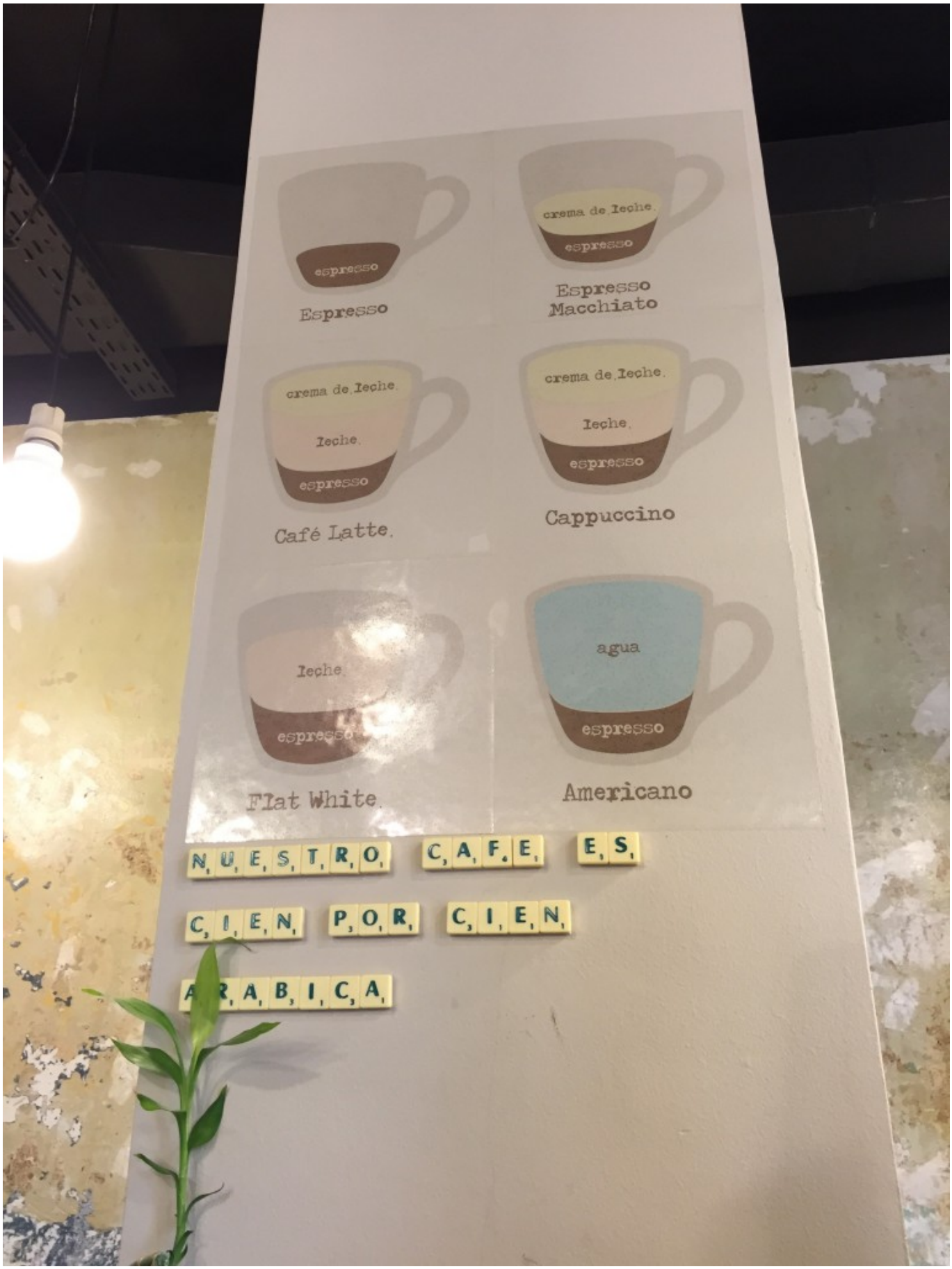
There are two lunch-time menus, the TLBC (which has a sandwich, salad, and drink for €11), or the ***menú del día*** (with two courses, a side dish, drink, and dessert for €10.50). And then on the weekends, the brunch menu is also an amazing meal (you're way full afterwards).

If you're just craving something sweet for your afternoon snack, then the baked goods at the counter and window are calling your name. The banana bizcocho is gluten and sugar-free, but everything else, in spite of the fact that I can't eat them, looks fabulous. One of my roommates had the cake

made with beer and loved it.



Then, of course, let’s not forget what first my caught my eye in the first place on Instagram: the coffee. With a plethora of variations…



you'll see why their slogan is: "a little café with a big heart." With to-go cups and a VIP program where you can put

your Polaroid on the wall, this is also a place that coffee lovers can love. With the VIP program, you can make The Little Big Café part of your heart the way the owners have seemed to have conceptualize it.



As evidenced by my presence on the wall, the little café with a big heart has become an extension of my home and my little

big pick-me-up.



Info:

***Where**: Calle Fernández de los Ríos, 61*
***Metro:** Moncloa (also easily accessible from Argüelles)*
Twitter
Facebook
Instagram
Website

You may also like:

Coziest Cafés in Chamberí

Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid

Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1

Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 2

Toma Café – Fuel up, Feel hip

Helena Rohner, handmade jewelry in the heart of La Latina

When you think of **La Latina**, you generally think of tapas, vermouth, the tortilla de patata with caramelized onions at **Juana La Loca**, and of course, El Rastro. You wouldn't normally think of handmade jewelry, but on **Calle del Almendro**, just off of Cava Baja (by way of Grafal), you'll find the **Helena Rohner showroom**.



Originally from the Canary Islands, Rohner bases her designs on the simplicity of shapes and pure lines. She mixes silver (there are gold-plated pieces as well) with a variety of materials (some of her pieces use porcelain, wood, and stones) to create simply beautiful designs. In addition to jewelry, Rohner has designed a variety of other products for companies such as Bodum and Georg Jensen. She’s also the **2014 winner of the Medalla de Oro en Bellas Artes.**





Over the holidays, I stumbled upon her jewelry at **The Hovse**, an amazing pop-up shop a short walk from my then-apartment. I'm always on the lookout for something different, especially things made in Spain. And this is where it all began. I'm a sucker for jewelry since it's normally something you can't outgrow, well at least in theory. I was looking for little

presents to bring to my parents and sister in New York and I love bringing things that they can’t get there.



What captivated me when I stumbled upon her station that very fateful day? Bracelets with simple silver or gold-plated pieces on colored cord. I began trying everything on, and I was sold. I also found a **gold-plated ring** that was a band in the form of a fishtail braid; it was just my style and fit on the exact finger I was looking a ring for. After picking up some items for my parents, sister, and one of my best friends from home, I snagged most of my made-in-Spain **Chrismukkah loot**.

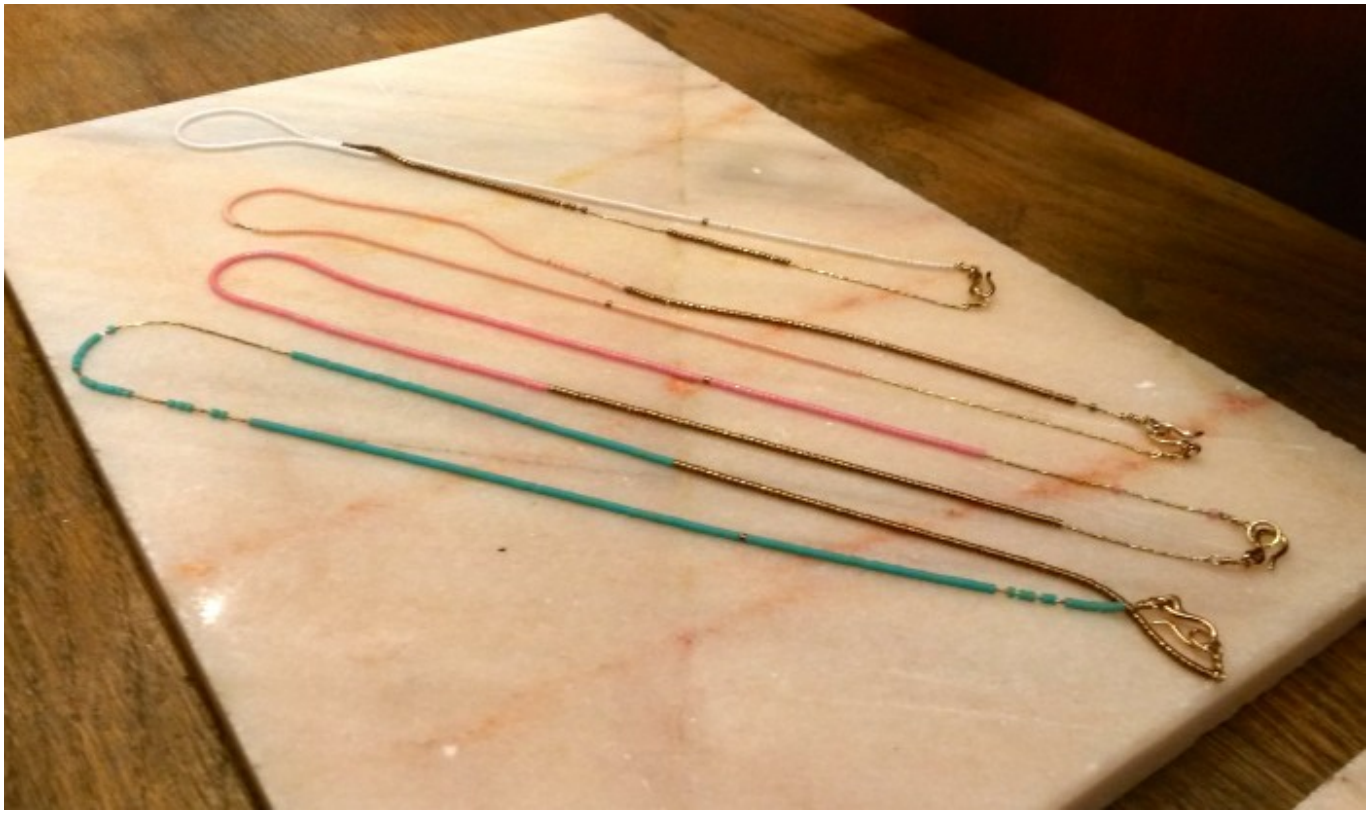


Once I got back, I knew that I wanted more and decided to take a trip to the studio and store. As you enter, you can see the center displays with all of the different styles with the workspace on the left and offices on the right.



On my first visit, I was first drawn to the selection of

bracelets that I had seen at The Hovse in various colors with simple shapes. There was a bright blue that I'm absolutely in love with (I have several pieces in that color), but the saleswoman guided me towards the ***granada* cord** (it's a very pretty pink that contrast well, in Spanish, granada means pomegranate).



The bracelets on the colored cords are okay to wear in the shower and one of the saleswoman proudly reported that the silver pieces **can be worn while swimming** in the summer and can hold up well. In addition to those bracelets, I then got a bangle with a noted etching to fill a void left by one of my presents that broke. On subsequent visits, I got more bracelets like this, including a gold-plated circle on red cord. I also got a pair of small studs in the form of a knot (most earrings are sold individually). Other pieces I've snagged are a necklace with a knot pendant and another that can be worn as a headband (something I've definitely done to dress up my late-day ponytail on occasion.



When you go to Helena Rohner, you'll come out with more than you planned on getting, but trust me, you'll never want to take them off.

Info

Website
Facebook
Calle del Almendro, 4
Metro: La Latina
Hours: Monday-Friday 9 AM-8:30 PM; Saturday 12:00-2:30 PM and 3:30-8 PM; Sunday 12-3 PM

You'll also like:

Dime que me quieres: Personalized jewelry to show how much you love someone (or yourself)