Yatai Market: Asian Street Food in the City Center

Move over San Miguel and San Antón—**there’s a new kind of market in town.**

Let the buzzing neon signs and colorful lights lure you in to the latest addition to Madrid’s foodie scene, the new mecca of an increasingly trendy culinary genre: Asian street food.

Located just off Plaza de Tirso de Molina, Cortezo Yatai Market unites several different vendors under one roof, letting diners sample all the greatest hits of East Asian *comida callejera*. It preserves the essence of the street food experience, with an atmosphere that’s both casual and chaotic, laidback and lively. Its creative concept combines the shareable dishes, miniature portions, and social atmosphere of Spanish tapas culture with the **flavorful flair of Asian fusion cuisine.**



Various vendors are arranged around the perimeter of a large room, with high top tables and stools in the center. There’s a bar in the back offering beer, wine, and cocktails—but if you want something a little more exotic, try a can of tamarind soda or coconut water.



Once you've got a drink in your hand, take a few minutes to wander around and explore your options (there are plenty). At HOTBAO you can take your pick from a variety of stuffed bao buns and several kinds of dimsum.



Right next door, Funky Chen offers pad Thai, noodles, and rice topped with everything from veggies to duck to soft-shell crab.

On the other side of the room, colorful curries tempt customers to the counter of Asia Cañi. Don’t forget to try one of their rolls, with creative fillings like *ceviche de chicharrones* and *cocido madrileño* (yes, you read that right).



To the right of Asia Cañi you'll find Le Japonais, offering sushi, nigiri, maki, and poke bowls. To the left, there's Ramen Suk, with steaming noodles that are a far cry from the powdered soup you might be picturing.

Before you make any decisions, don't forget to check out Smok Mok, tucked away in the market's smaller and quieter back room. It may be set apart from the main area, but with everything from vegan options to smoked Japanese BBQ meatballs—and the only dessert on offer at the market—you definitely don't want to miss it.



The best thing about Yatai Market? **It’s got something for everyone.** Whether you’re looking for a hearty bowl of curry to warm the soul or you want to sample several smaller dishes, you can design your dinner (or lunch) experience to match your mood.



Pad Thai from Funky Chen

Not to mention the fact that prices are more than reasonable: you can get a roll or dimsum for as little as €1 or a bao for €4. Larger dishes range from €6 to €14. Asia Cañi even offers combo meals that include 2 rolls, curry, rice, and a drink for just €9.



Veggie fried rice

If you’re in the mood for something different than the same old neighborhood bar or quiet café, this is the place for you. With the spirit of a classic Madrid market, the hipster vibes of a Malasaña pop-up, and the exotic flavors of a faraway continent, Yatai Market should be at the top of your list.

Info

- **Facebook** & **Instagram**
- **Address:** Calle Doctor Cortezo, 10
- **Metro:** Tirso de Molina and Sol

Keyaan’s: A Taste of the Dominican Republic in Madrid

When it comes to restaurant reviews, the word “authentic” gets thrown around a lot. It’s become a buzzword for people seeking out genuine food and unique eating experiences, but all too often it’s used as a catchall adjective that doesn’t really mean much, a vague and perhaps inaccurate way to lure in customers looking for “the real deal.”

This is not the case at Keyaan’s. If there were ever an establishment that deserved the label of authenticity, it would be this place. Specializing in Dominican empanadas, traditional sides, and homemade desserts, the colorful café brings a true taste of the D.R. to the streets of Chamberí. After opening its doors only two months ago, it’s already accumulated a loyal clientele—and it only takes one bite to understand why.



The story of Keyaan's began with a simple craving. Around two years ago, just after her son Ilias was born, Zakiya Ramirez had a powerful longing for a good empanada. Her husband Aderly, who hails from the Dominican Republic, called up his mom and asked for her recipe. After a bit of tweaking and improvisation, he cooked up his very first batch of empanadas using nothing but a hot plate. Zakiya was floored; it seemed her husband had a hidden natural talent that not even he was aware of.



Zakiya, Aderly, and Ilias Keyaan Ramirez

In the years since, Aderly’s recipe gradually evolved and improved until the couple decided it was time to share his skills with the world. They opened Keyaan’s in November, christening it with their son’s middle name, and it’s already gained a considerable—and well-deserved—reputation.

I recently dropped by to sample some of their signature offerings, with my friend and trusty taste-tester Sophia by my side. We were presented with dish after dish of Dominican delicacies, hitting as many of the menu’s high spots as possible before falling into a full-on food coma.



First up: the empanadas. Aderly’s specialty is front and center at Keyaan’s, making up the bulk of the menu. You can choose from several fillings (beef, chicken, cheese, vegetables, tuna, and even pepperoni, in a variety of combinations) and two sizes (just one of the big ones will fill you up, but the mini empanadas are too cute to resist). Unlike some versions, these are chock full of the good stuff, meaning you won’t be biting into a pocket of air. The dough is made fresh each day, and every single empanada is hand-formed and fried to order. The result is crispy on the outside, soft on the inside, and juicy without being greasy; a difficult balance to strike.



As tempting as it may be to gorge yourself on nothing but empanadas, it would be a crime to leave without sampling the sides. The *fritos* (flattened and fried plantains, similar to *tostones*) and *bollitos de yuca* (fried balls of yucca stuffed with melty gouda cheese) also achieve an ideal equilibrium, indulgent and rich without being too heavy.




KEYLAN'S

Not to mention the *quipes*—fried balls of bulgur wheat dough stuffed with chicken, beef, or cheese—a classic dish that arrived in the Dominican Republic by way of the Arab world (you might have tried its Middle-Eastern cousin, *kibbeh*).



Upon biting into one, Sophia's first words were "I just wanna dive into it." In fact, she named it her favorite of all the dishes she tried, which is certainly saying something. According to Zakiya, it's a customer favorite as well; almost every Dominican who comes to Keyaan's orders empanadas with a side of *quipes*, and they're far from disappointed. One regular swore that their empanadas are even better than those of the most famous restaurant in Santo Domingo. Needless to say, authentic is an understatement.



If you've managed to make it through the savory stuff without getting too full, you won't be disappointed by dessert. There's a wide selection of *batidos* in flavors ranging from the classics to irresistibly creative inventions. The fruitier options (strawberry, papaya, coconut, and mango) are made the Dominican way, with evaporated milk, while the richer varieties (chocolate, vanilla, Oreo, Kinder Bueno, Ferrero Rocher, *galleta Biscoff*, and *magdalena*) are made with ice cream for a more American-style milkshake. They're served in enormous glasses and topped with whipped cream, ideal for sharing (or not). Not too sweet, perfectly rich, and deliciously creamy. You might be surprised at how fast you can finish one.



G*alleta Biscoff batido*: “Like drinking a cookie”

Still hungry? Try one of the sweet empanadas, dreamed up as a way to combine Aderly’s talents with Zakiya’s passion for baking. The same perfectly fried dough, stuffed with apple pie, *dulce de leche*, nutella cheesecake, Oreo, white chocolate, strawberries, or pineapple… it’s clearly a match made in heaven.

All of the desserts are made entirely from scratch, and rumor has it that Zakiya’s cheesecake is the best in all of Spain. If you want to taste it in all its glory, you can order it by the slice as well as in empanada form. For something a bit more traditional, try the *majarete* or *habichuelas con dulce*, classic Dominican desserts made from corn and beans,

respectively.

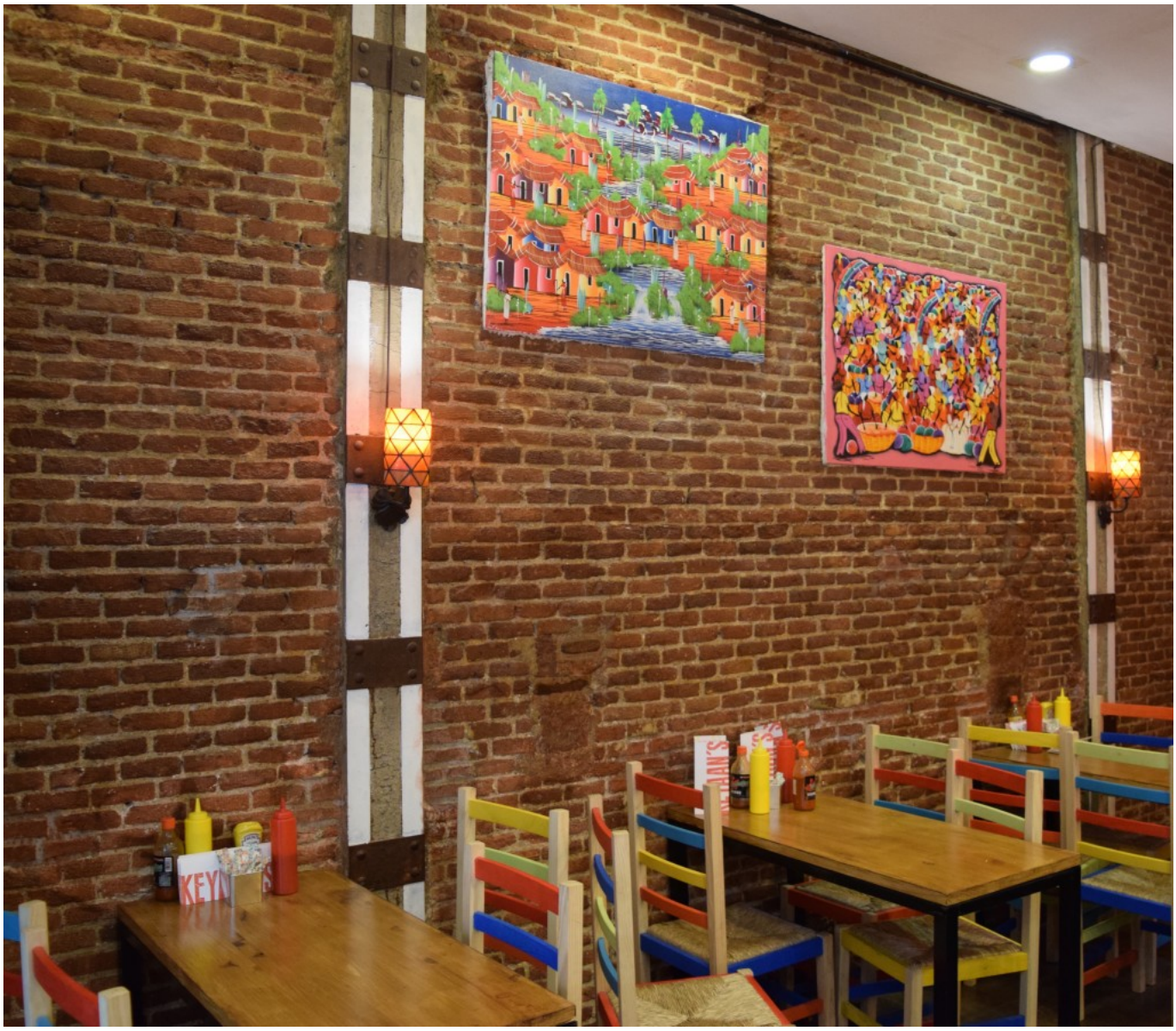


White chocolate caramel cheesecake

To wash it all down, you can choose from a variety of espresso drinks made with Dominican Café Santo Domingo (“Even the coffee is amazing,” according to Sophia), including bulletproof coffee and *affogato*. Or give into temptation and go for Zakiya’s signature Nutella hot chocolate, or the Dominican specialty *morir soñando* (orange or passion fruit juice mixed with evaporated milk). If you want something a bit lighter, there are also several kinds of natural juices.



Keyaan’s offers weekly specials and events that draw a crowd of expats and locals alike. If you want to sample as many empanada flavors as possible, you’ll appreciate Lunes de Locura, when mini empanadas are available for just €1 each (and larger ones for €2.50). There are also monthly language exchanges, giveaways, and much more on the horizon. Zakiya has big dreams for Keyaan’s, hoping to one day turn it into an international chain with locations in London, Santo Domingo, and the United States. Her customers are already begging her to expand, so they can feed their newly formed empanada addictions no matter where in the world they may be.



For now, though, we'll have to be satisfied with this cozy café and its incredible power to transport us from the center of Madrid to the middle of the Caribbean. Keyaan's is unquestionably authentic, but it's so much more than that: it's a place where real homemade food takes center stage, giving us a taste not only of Dominican culture but also of the genuine tradition, dedication, and love that's folded into each and every empanada. No wonder we keep coming back for more.



Professional taste-tester Sophia enjoying Keyaan’s specialties

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Blasco de Garay, 10
- **Metro:** Argüelles and San Bernardo
- **Phone:** 915 99 38 76

Oysteronomy: Think Outside the Shell

The world is your oyster!

That’s the very appropriate slogan of Oysteronomy, a project dreamed up by a diverse team of culinary innovators who are dedicated to making dinner more than just another meal. The concept is both uniquely complex and deceptively simple. At its heart, it’s an effort to bring the very best marine delicacies (caviar, king crab, sea urchins, and—of course—oysters) from the sea to your table.

More specifically, it’s a Spanish brand that operates in various forms, adapting to the needs of restaurants, events, and individuals seeking a one-of-a-kind dining opportunity. It’s a collaboration between various entities, including **Pop Secret** (a brand specializing in creative culinary and artistic events) and **Pol García**, the celebrated Basque chef who’s worked everywhere from London to Shanghai. But it’s so much more than that.

Oysteronomy is a gastronomic experiment in combining preparation, presentation, and consumption to create a multisensory culinary experience.

So what exactly does that look like?

A few weeks ago I got to find out. I was lucky enough to attend the event that officially marked Oysteronomy’s arrival in Madrid, a sold-out dinner held at the Cambridge Soho Club in Plaza de España. At the designated hour, twenty-four lucky guests were led beyond the elegant bar area to a private room decked out in marine decor and deep blue lighting, where the magic was set to take place.

The night began with wine and mingling, allowing the guests to get to know one another as they snacked on hors d’oeuvres. An expert team of bartenders and servers attended to the guests

and made sure that no one’s glass was ever empty.



In an interesting twist, the first oysters of the night were paired with top-quality sakes from the gourmet importer Salvioni&Alomar. Expert Pablo Alomar explained the elaboration and advantages of sake, an underappreciated but up-and-coming beverage in the Spanish gastronomic scene, and invited the guests to sample a few choice varieties.





Not long after, Chef García emerged with the second round of oysters. These were accompanied by a swirling fog of liquid nitrogen and several gourmet toppings—eggplant, caviar, and *leche de tigre*, to name a few—some of which were injected directly into the oysters with a plastic syringe. Quite a spectacle, indeed.





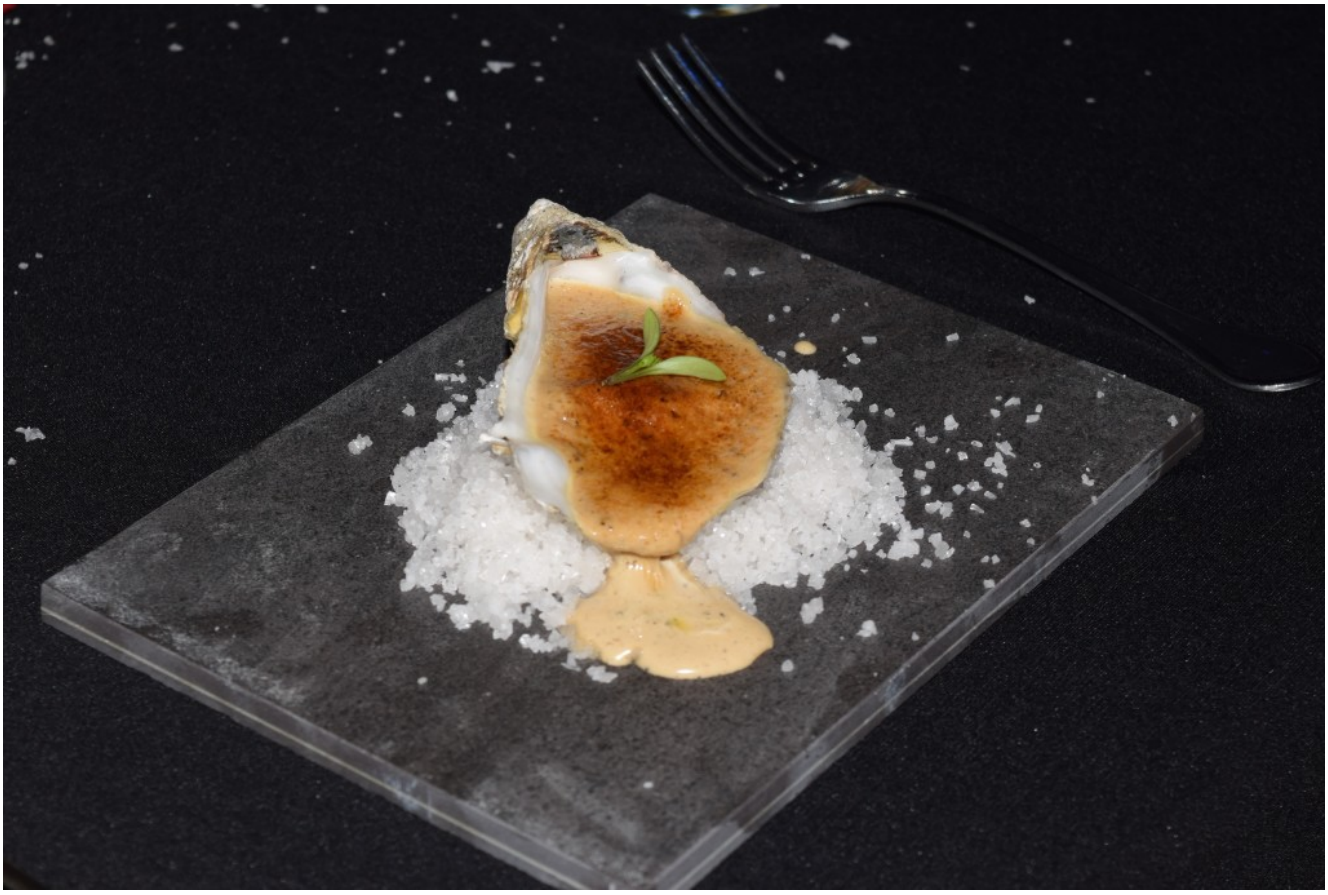
The guests were then seated around tables set with seashells and sprinkled with salt, primed and ready for the main event.



The first course of the night consisted of—you guessed it—an oyster, this time still hidden inside its shell. The diners were instructed to tap it with their forks, allowing them to lift the lid and discover the flavors of cucumber and spicy mustard with which it had been infused.



Next came the final oyster of the night, served on a bed of salt and swimming in a creamy and indulgent sauce. This was followed by a salad of caviar and crab, served in miniscule glass jars with tiny spoons to match.





Each course was accompanied by a detailed explanation of its

composition, origin, and flavor profile, delivered to the diners by the chef along with Emma Hidalgo and Julieta Arévalo, the organizers of the event. A DJ provided mood music, varying the soundtrack as each new dish was served. The wine, of course, continued to flow.





And then, just when it seemed like the night might be winding down, the real show began. A tray of king crab legs was placed atop a podium at the front of the room. As a hush fell over the diners, Chef García produced a pan of flaming liquid, which he then poured directly onto the crab, touching it up with a small handheld torch as needed. You heard it here first: flambéed crab legs just might be the newest—and hottest—definition of dinner and a show.




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The final savory course was a surprise departure from the marine theme of the event: *carne de vaca brava de lidia,* served juicy and rare (in more ways than one). This unique variety of beef comes from free-range bulls raised for the increasingly controversial tradition of *toreo* (bullfighting). What could be more quintessentially Spanish than that?



Photo courtesy of Oysteronomy

Just in case anyone had yet to be impressed, the meal was wrapped up with a dessert that looked more like modern art than your average ice cream; an abstract spread of frozen sugary creations atop an edible tablecloth, accompanied by smoky tendrils of liquid nitrogen.



Photo courtesy of Oysteronomy



A round of masterfully prepared cocktails closed out the evening, giving the guests time to sit back, relax, and reflect on a night that was full of surprises.

From the first glass of wine to the last grain of salt, Oysteronomy's first event in Madrid was masterfully executed, beautifully designed, and altogether unique. I have little doubt that everyone in attendance will be talking about it for weeks to come. The team behind Oysteronomy has announced their presence in the capital city—and they've certainly made a splash.

Who knew oysters could be so photogenic?



Info

For more information and upcoming events, check out Oysteronomy's Facebook page and the Pop Secret website.

MOEGA: A Galician Bakery That'll Put Your Abuela to Shame

Madrid is a city that loves its bread. On nearly every block you're likely to encounter the mouth-watering aroma of freshly baked *barras*, baguettes, and pastries wafting out of one of the city's many *panaderías*. But if you're looking for something beyond the standard selection, you'll be happy to know that there's a new trend sweeping the streets of the capital: artisanal bakeries.



At the forefront of this fad is MOEGA, an authentic Galician bakery opened just over a year ago by Manoel Cabana and Jon Padrón. Its storefront in Barrio de Las Letras is minimalist and unassuming, perhaps reflecting the simplicity of its concept: to bring traditional Galician baking methods to Madrid. According to one customer, MOEGA's bread tastes just like something her grandmother might make—a hearty, flavorful, handmade staple made from nothing more than flour, salt, water, and a lot of love.

During a rare respite from the constant flow of customers, I was lucky enough to have the chance to talk with Manoel. He explained that in Galicia bread is often still made in the traditional way, without the artificial leavening agents found in mass-produced products. Instead, the loaves are made with *masa madre* and left to ferment naturally due to the lactic

acid bacteria present in the dough. The result is moist, flavorful, and slightly sour—perfect for toast, sandwiches, or just devouring straight from the bag.



MOEGA offers several different varieties of bread, from simple *bollos* to *centeno* (rye) to *maíz con pasas* (cornbread with raisins) and even the occasional *preñao* (a mini loaf stuffed with chorizo).



But what truly makes this place stand out from the rest is their other specialty: Galician empanadas, double-crusted delicacies that bear more resemblance to large savory pies than the bite-size empanadas you might be used to.



Here you can stick to classic flavors or sample something more creative; filling options include beef, tuna, veggies,

octopus, scallops, sardines, and cod with raisins. If you've never tried *empanadas gallegas*, this is definitely the place to do it.



Prices range from €0.60 for a *bollito* to €3.60 for a massive loaf, and the empanadas are priced by the whole unit from €16 to €23. It's a small price to pay for a truly authentic taste of Galicia. And if you don't have your own Galician granny to bake for you, MOEGA is certainly the second best thing.

Info

- **Facebook** & **Instagram**
- **Address:** Calle León, 26
- **Phone:** 633 13 30 25
- **Metro:** Antón Martín
- **Hours:** Monday to Friday 10:00-15:00 & 18:00-21:00, Saturday 10:00-15:00, closed Sunday