

Fish & Chips 2.0. – made in Spain with local, fresh ingredients

Building on its success in Barcelona, [The Fish & Chips Shop](#) has just opened its first restaurant in Madrid's Chueca neighborhood, and aren't we lucky! The Alam brothers, Mani and Majid, decided to open their first location in Barcelona in February 2015, after searching the city for a fish and chips antidote to a long night of partying, to no avail.

Since then, they've opened eight Fish & Chip Shops in Barcelona, and now their first in the capital.



Image by Cristina Góngora

Situated on Calle Campoamor 2, their Madrid location is a lovely, small eatery with an open kitchen, modern decor and international magazines dispersed throughout.



Image by Cristina Góngora

The menu features an updated version of the traditional British comfort food, made with top-quality, locally-sourced ingredients. It'll cure your hangover—as it should—but without leaving you regretting a single bite.

All the dishes here are made with prime ingredients from across Spain. For example, the potatoes and hake fish come straight from Galicia; the highly refined extra virgin olive oil that they fry with, [Olis Bargallo](#), comes from Barcelona; the bread comes from [Panic](#), an organic bread shop in Madrid's Conde Duque area; the probiotic drinks come from [Rudo](#), also based in the capital. Just to give you an idea.

What we ate and drank

I ordered a natural white wine, and James chose an IPA. The manager, Gonzalo, told us they'll soon be serving beer from [Oso Brew](#), a local brewery that we've written about on several occasions, with a bar in La Latina. Next time I want to try their kombuchas and homemade lemonade.



Accompanying our drinks were delicious edamame, cooked in extra virgin olive oil and topped with [maldon salt](#).

As for the food, Gonzalo recommended we order a few menu highlights. To start, we had the artichoke flowers coated and sauteed in extra virgin olive oil. They were so tender and flavorful.



We also had the “bravas de pulpo rebozadas” which I’d roughly translate as fried octopus balls! Gonzalo told us it’s made with battered octopus that’s fried in tempura with panko breadcrumbs, dressed with a spicy sauce of rocoto pepper, ají and chipotle; and topped with Kimchi, mint and citric mayonnaise. Plus perfectly cooked French fries with paprika. This dish was amazing.



Image by Cristina Góngora

For the main dishes, we went with the two stars: The Fish & Chips (the photo features a medium-sized portion) and The Lobster Roll.



Their version of fish and chips is made with fresh fish from Galicia, battered in tempura, with cereal to give a bit of

crunch. It comes with a side of French fries made with fish masala spices, plus a homemade tartar and mango chutney sauce. So satisfying.



Image by Cristina Góngora

The lobster roll is made with fresh lobster sautéed in smoked butter, drizzled with a lobster head, celery and mayonnaise sauce, heaped on a buttered brioche with lamb's lettuce. Served with a side of authentic coleslaw and addictive sweet potato fries. Heaven.



For dessert we had the chocolate ganache, typical of Cataluña. The portion was the perfect compliment to our meal.

All in all I'd say this was one of the tastiest meals I've had in a long time, and I'm happy that this restaurant is supporting local producers while giving a quality spin to the

UK's most traditional fast food dish, as well as many other menu items that I can't wait to try.

The Fish & Chips Shop Madrid

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [IG](#)
 - Address: Calle Campoamor 2
 - Metros: Alonso Martínez or Chueca
-

Sustainable holiday gift guide & benefit raffle with Madrid For Refugees

After a year like this one, supporting our local businesses, artists and community is more important than ever. That's why we've teamed up with [Madrid For Refugees](#) (MFR) to put together this gift guide to help you buy sustainable, ethical, eco-friendly and local products for yourself and your loved ones this holiday season.

To compile this list, we called on our audience to share their favorite small businesses and local artists with us. Thank you for participating!

You can also take part in our [holiday raffle](#) (€6) for the

chance to win one of the gifts featured on this list. All of the proceeds will go to Madrid For Refugees, a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to aiding refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Madrid since 2015 through numerous volunteer and community-led initiatives.

10 small businesses offering great holiday gifts in Madrid 2020:

These ten businesses are all independent, family-run, and committed to sustainability, community and local products. Don't hesitate to purchase a wonderful gift from them! They've also kindly agreed to donate one of their gifts to our raffle.

1. Yerbas Vivas



Yerbas Vivas is an honest brand offering handcrafted cosmetic products, which has been committed to caring for the environment and sustainability for more than 40 years. They produce certified organic soaps, solid sulfate-free shampoos,

creams, perfumes and much more, all made with natural and quality raw materials.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



1. Luna de Valencia (Valencian moon) massage oil
2. Jabón mar muerto (dead sea soap)
3. Jabón rosa mosqueta (pink mosqueta soap)
4. Champú sólido coco (solid coco shampoo)
5. Tónico facial naranja (orange facial tonic)

Contact info:

- Website: www.yervasvivas.es
- Instagram: [@yervas_vivas](https://www.instagram.com/yervas_vivas)
- Phone: 618 83 26 00

2. Vajillas By Nuria Blanco

VAJILLAS BY *nuria blanco*

Artist Nuria Blanco crafts unique, hand-painted dishes, made of porcelain, earthenware and other materials. Each set comes with an exclusive and personalized design, which aims to compose a pictorial picture on the table.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



A hand-painted white plate with a fish on it.

Contact info:

- Website: www.vajillasbynuriablanco.com
- Instagram: [@vajillasbynuriablanco](https://www.instagram.com/vajillasbynuriablanco)
- Facebook: [@vajillasbynuriablanco](https://www.facebook.com/vajillasbynuriablanco)
- Workshop address: Calle Fernán Caballero, 2 bis, 28019 Madrid
- Phone: 609 17 79 14

3. SAC Studio



SAC Studio makes hand-sewn, sustainable pieces of lingerie that celebrate the female body and mother earth collectively. The designs are made to be flattering for all women, irrespective of age or body shape. All of SAC's pieces are handmade by Sophie in her Barcelona studio. Since the pieces are made-to-order, there is practically no wasted fabric, no environmentally or ethically damaging production processes, just Sophie and her sewing machine. All fabrics are sourced within Europe from other small, independent businesses, or are deadstock fabrics from warehouses. All packaging is 100% recyclable and made locally using recycled materials.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



Handmade masks with three layers, including a filter layer in the middle. Each design is washable, reversible and made with deadstock fabric (shop cut-offs, old clothes, curtains etc). Check out their [whole mask collection](#).

What's more, SAC has teamed up with [@baobabbooks](#) who have given recommendations of their favorite Black, female authors, and each mask is named after one of them. 10% of all revenue made on masks will go to BLM charity "[Trans Housing Coalition](#)," which is dedicated to helping get Black, trans women off the streets and into safe housing. [Read more about the charity here.](#)

Contact info:

- Website: www.sacstudio.es
- Instagram: [@sacstudio_](#)
- Email: hola@sacstudio.es

4. Nest Boutique



Nest is a cozy gift shop where you can find original items for family, friends or just something special for yourself. They have a wide selection of greeting cards, gift wrapping paper, home decor items, stationery and even a corner dedicated to the little ones. Now they also sell Christmas decorations.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



Christmas decorations, lavender-filled Christmas sachets, mini Christmas cards and a leopard snow globe. Everything comes wrapped inside a gift bag and the total value is €30.

Contact info:

- Website: www.nest-boutique.com
- Instagram: [@NestBoutiqueMadrid](https://www.instagram.com/NestBoutiqueMadrid)
- Facebook: [@NestBoutiqueMadrid](https://www.facebook.com/NestBoutiqueMadrid)
- Phone: 91 523 1061
- Address: Plaza San Ildefonso 3, 28004 Madrid

5. MAD Lola

MAD LOLA

Whether you're looking for a piece of jewelry for a special occasion, someone special, or to treat yourself, MAD Lola's silver- and gold-plated jewelry might just be the perfect gift. MAD Lola believes in women power and in accessories that inspire you to be yourself and love yourself madly.

Holiday gift raffle donation:





Two pairs of gold-plated earrings.

Contact info:

- Website: www.madlola.es
- Instagram: [@madlola.es](https://www.instagram.com/madlola.es)
- Facebook: [@MadLolaEs](https://www.facebook.com/MadLolaEs)
- Phone: 625013923
- Address: Madrid (no physical address)

6. Usar y Reusar online store



Founded four years ago in Barcelona, Usar y Reusar is a cooperative workspace and online store that aims to spread awareness about the Zero Waste movement across the globe. It provides sustainable, responsible and beautiful products for a zero waste life. You can find organic shampoos, cleaning products, reusable water bottles, an informative blog, and much more.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



A book entitled [Residuo Cero. Comienza a restar desde casa](#) (in English: “Zero Waste. Start reducing from home”) by Yve Ramírez, co-founder and author of the organization’s blog [La Ecocosmopolita](#).

“Start reducing from home” is the guiding mantra at Usar y Reusar. This simple, entertaining and very light book is written with honesty. It aims to empower you to lead a life free of garbage and waste. From the first page, the book reminds you of the value of small actions and why putting them into practice can make a difference. More than a book of magic solutions, it’s an invitation to reflect on the way we consume food, fashion, cosmetics, and more. It will help you start consuming in a more responsible, critical and transformative way, based on reducing waste.

Contact info:

- Website (online store): www.laecocosmopolita.com/usaryreusar/
- Instagram: [@usaryreusar](https://www.instagram.com/usaryreusar)
- Facebook: [@usaryreusar](https://www.facebook.com/usaryreusar)
- Email: info@laecocosmopolita.com
- Phone: 623 145 547
- Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-2pm

7. HOUSE OF BIBS



House of Bibs is a brand that was born in London and grew up in Madrid, offering a combination of British fashion and classic Spanish-style children's wear. Their contemporary designs are made of timeless and practical materials. All their products are handmade in Spain with quality fabrics, certified by OEKO-TEX and GOTTES.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



Reversible bandana bib in blue organic cotton.

Contact info:

- Website: www.houseofbibs.eu
- Instagram: [@houseofbibs](https://www.instagram.com/houseofbibs)
- Facebook: [@bibshouse](https://www.facebook.com/bibshouse)

8. Heppy Designs



Heppy Designs is a Madrid-based family business that aims to bring environmentally friendly cosmetics and cleaning products to your home.

Holiday gift raffle donation:

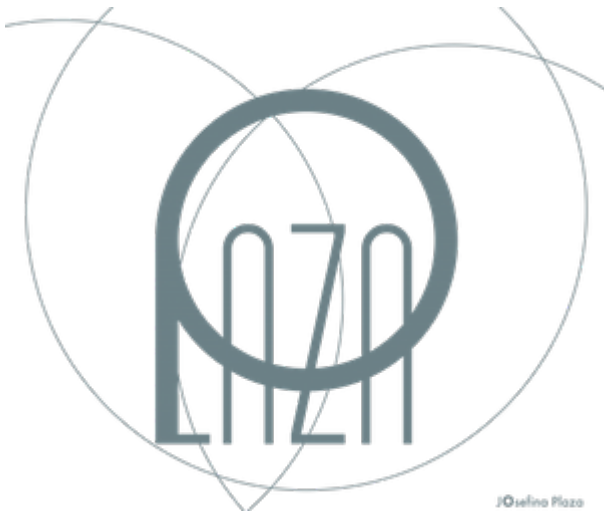


A basket with moisturizer, lip balm, shower bar, hand soap and shampoo bar.

Contact info:

- Website: www.heppydesigns.com
- Instagram [@Heppy_Designs](https://www.instagram.com/Heppy_Designs)
- Email: HeppyDesigns@gmail.com

- Phone: 622018935 (Rachel Hepburn)



9. Grabados Plaza

Grabados Plaza is a family project that allows artist and mother Josefina Plaza to make her art known to the world. The engravings and the work that you can find on this website are all made by Josefina who, with the help of her son, has created her online store.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



Original monotype print, 28×18. This unique print belongs to the Horizontes collection where geometric superposition and imperfection of shapes transport us to the intersection of two worlds.

Contact info:

- Website: www.grabadosplaza.es/
- Instagram: [@grabadosplaza](https://www.instagram.com/grabadosplaza)
- Email: info@grabadosplaza.es
- Phone: +34 678 863 665
- Address: Cea Bermudez 28, 1 Izqda, 28003 Madrid

10. Lambuza Tienda



Bar Lambuzo is a wonderful Andalusian eatery that's lovingly run by a family from Cádiz. They prepare authentic homemade dishes that have been passed on from generations. All the siblings work alongside their parents at their two Madrid restaurant locations, as well as their store in Mercado Chamberí.

At [Lambuza Tienda](#), you'll find a selection of home-cooked stews made by the family's mom (and with recipes from their grandmothers, from Villarmartín, in Cádiz). You'll also find many classic dishes from their restaurants and delicious sweets. Everything is made daily with fresh products from Mercado de Chamberí, and ingredients brought straight from the mountains of Cádiz. [They also offer delivery.](#)

Check out all of their different [holiday gift baskets](#) to choose from, which you can order online.

Holiday gift raffle donation:



A basket with products from Lambuzo's store (long-lasting

products from Cádiz, which expire in about a year and a half).

Organic olive oil (0.5 L. bottle with dispenser), Reserva Sherry Vinegar (390 ml glass bottle), mature goat cheese (1 kg.), can of red tuna loin in EV00 (320 gr.) and can of mackerel in EV00 (320 gr.)

Contact info:

- Website: www.barlambuzo.com/lambuza
- Instagram: [@barlambuzo](https://www.instagram.com/barlambuzo)
- Facebook & Twitter: [Lambuzo](https://www.facebook.com/Lambuzo)
- Address: [Mercado de Chamberí](#). Puesto 46. C/ Alonso Cano, 10 28010, Madrid.
- Phone: 810 52 08 18
- WhatsApp: 676 17 11 01



Sustainable
**Holiday
gift guide**
& benefit raffle

Shop local this
holiday season
& take part in our
holiday raffle to
raise funds for:

MadridforRefugees

In collaboration with:
NAKED MADRID
& **VeraContent**

**Participate in our holiday raffle
for the chance to win one of these
gifts and support Madrid For
Refugees!**

If you're on the lookout for unique gift items this year, and want to support sustainable, family-run and local businesses,

then we hope this guide comes in handy!

You can also directly support Madrid For Refugees by participating in [our holiday gift raffle](#). By taking part for just €6, you'll have the chance to win one of the items featured on this list, which have been donated from the businesses to MFR.

What's more, all the raffle's proceeds will go straight to MFR so they can continue to develop their efforts to support refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Madrid through ongoing education and training programs, donation drives and other community-led initiatives focused on employability and community integration.

Big thank you to all the businesses and artists that are participating, and to the volunteers from Madrid For Refugees, Naked Madrid and VeraContent for putting this together.

Happy holidays!

See also:

[Refusion Delivery restaurant: Where refugee chefs prepare family-style dishes from Syria, Sudan and Venezuela](#)

[VeraContent unveils shared office space & partnership with Madrid For Refugees](#)

Retrogusto Bar: My best-kept Madrid secret

I never thought I'd share this place with the world, but the time has come. Retrogusto is a little Italian bar and kitchen located near Plaza Mayor and Opera, right in the city center. Yet it doesn't feel that way. It feels more like you're in a small town, as it's situated in a quiet plaza with tables set out under a beautiful tree that provides warmth and shade.

I've been living in Madrid for over 12 years now, and this is by far one of my favorite spots in the city. One of the main reasons is that big tree! Another reason is because it's so simple and down to earth.



The restaurant has two terraces: one in the plaza; and the other under a residential building. The indoor area is small and cute, decorated with mis-matching vintage furniture and nicknacks.



You can sit anywhere and enjoy your time here. But that tree is something special; I've spent many wonderful evenings under its canopy...



James and I first stumbled upon Retrogusto when we were living near Sol a few years ago, and it quickly became our oasis. We'd always find a table under the tree on weeknights and order several glasses of wine or beer—each round would come with delicious olives, Italian cheese or a surprise *aperitivo* that was always good. For dinner, James would get the meatballs and I'd go for the piadina or eggplant parmesan.



But last time we went, the menu had changed so we tried something new. James got the pasta special with zucchini cream sauce that he's still dreaming about, no joke. I went for the Caprese salad—light and fresh.



We didn't get a spot under the tree last time either, because we went on the weekend for a change and it was full. Instead, we grabbed a seat in the other outdoor area, and now we know where all the owners' friends and regulars hang out!



Before leaving we asked the owner, Silvana, if she could tell us a bit about her story. She's originally from Sardinia, Italy, and came to Madrid 12 years ago, after living in Ireland and working in accounting. She wanted a change and decided that Spain was pretty similar to Italy, without it being Italy (if that makes sense).



Silvana started out working at a bar in La Latina. Her friends owned Retrogusto at the time, and she would come to hang out and help them. When they decided to leave Spain, she naturally took over and has been running it for seven years now. Her brother works in the kitchen and she's out front. "I don't cook," she says.

Our conversation went on for quite a while, covering the new laws restricting Madrid restaurants and business owners, to the lives of freelancers. I won't get into the details but I will say that she treated us to a round of shots by the end of our meal. Grazie!

Before leaving I asked Silvana what her favorite thing about the bar is: "Its simplicity. It's like being with your family

in a small town.”

I couldn't agree with her more. Although the secret's out, let's make sure it stays that way.

Retrogusto Bar:

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@retrogustobar](#)
- Address: Plaza del Biombo
- Metro: Opera or Sol

Note: Because of the restricted closing hours for bars and restaurants right now (11pm) she's opening a little earlier lately, around 7:30pm.

Refusion Delivery: Where refugee chefs prepare authentic flavors from Syria, Sudan and Venezuela

Refusion Delivery opened last year with a powerful mission: to help refugees find a new home and stable job in Madrid, while also giving them the opportunity to share their culinary

culture with their adopted city. All the restaurant's chefs are refugees who bring their family recipes to the menu—that's why you'll find Sudanese falafel, Syrian hummus and Venezuelan tequeños in the same place.

I first found out about Refusion Delivery through one of the five owners, Tina Samson, who also co-founded [Madrid for Refugees](#), a nonprofit organization that's played a big hand in creating this restaurant. But I finally went for the first time last Friday with a good friend of mine, and I'm so glad we went!



From left to right: me (US), Tina (US), Alex (Sudan), Danny (Venezuela), Hala (Syria) and Souhaib (Morocco)

Located in Madrid's Tetuan neighborhood, the restaurant has a welcoming and down-to-earth vibe. It's small and narrow, with just a few tables set up alongside the long metallic bar. The food is delicious, vegan friendly and great for sharing. Luckily, throughout our meal we had the chance to talk with Tina and the chefs who were preparing deliveries, serving tables, and chatting with customers non stop. It was great to see how busy they were.

Since opening in May 2019, Refusion Delivery has been featured in major publications. The first article to cause a lot of commotion was by [El Comidista](#), El País' food column. This led to a more [in-depth article and video](#) by El País in March—once it was published, Tina tells me that they couldn't even handle all the orders and crowds that started flooding in.

In this video interview by El País (in Spanish), the chefs at Refusion Delivery say they learned how to cook from their mothers and love being able to share their home recipes. Working here also allows them to have a stable job and future.

Although Refusion Delivery limited their hours and menu a bit due to the pandemic, they've been open for business for the past several months, offering in-person dining, takeout and delivery. Tina also says it's been amazing how much support they've received from the neighborhood.

Now, back to our night.

As soon as we walked in, Tina started telling us the whole story and introduced us to the chefs. First we met Alex from Sudan, who's been in Madrid for four years and likes to sing

while she cooks. Part of her family is from Egypt, so her dishes have a mix of Egyptian-Sudanese flavors. Then we met head chef Hala, who's originally from Damascus, Syria, and studied Fine Arts. She came to Madrid with her family in 2013 and together they owned a Syrian restaurant in Alcobendas for many years.

Lastly, we got to talk to Danny from Venezuela, who's been living in Madrid for one year and previously worked in several restaurants in Colombia. He also helped my friend Riju and I place a tack on the world map near the entrance, indicating where we're from (New Delhi and NYC, respectively). It's a fun way to show how international the eatery is.



When you go, make sure to place a tack on the world map to indicate where you're from!

Here's what we had:

First we tried Alex's amazing **falafels** inspired by Egyptian and Sudanese recipes. They're made with garbanzo, parsley and onion, and come with the sauce of your choice—Riju had the spicy peanut sauce from Sudan and I went for the cooler yogurt and garlic sauce from Venezuela.



Egyptian-Sudanese falafels (vegan)

We also had the **Fatush salad** that came with fried Arabic bread on top; the crunchiness gave a wonderful contrast to the fresh veggies. Both of these starters are vegan and perfect for sharing!



Fatoush salad topped with fried Arabic bread (vegan)

Onto the main dishes: **Hurak bi isbau** was my favorite dish of the night, and also one that Tina raved about. It's a traditional Syrian stew made of lentils and homemade wheat dough—with a rich, hearty and sweet flavor. For me, it's the epitome of comfort food. For Hala, it's much more than that.

Hala told us (in fluent English) that back in Damascus, this was a typical dish that women would make for each other—they'd start cooking it in the morning and then once it was room temperature in the evening, they'd sit around in a circle and gossip while eating bowls of stew. Sounds like a fun evening!



Hurak bi isbau: comforting lentil stew (vegan)

We also ordered **Shish**, a Syrian skewer with chicken and fresh vegetables. It's covered in a flavorful sauce that you get to sop up with Arabic bread and freshly made rice—the plate was sparkly clean by the time we were done with it.



Shish: chicken skewer with rice and vegetables

To top it all off, Tina surprised us with **baklava**. My dad's from Greece so I've had my share of baklava growing up, and I can tell you this was totally different! Hala makes it with her own syrup mix instead of honey, so it's very vegan friendly, sweet and tasty.



Baklava with a honey substitute (vegan)

The quality of the food is fantastic and prices are very reasonable. Not only that, but by coming here or ordering delivery, you're supporting a sustainable mission while getting a wonderful taste of family-style dishes and stories from around the world.



All in all, I felt uplifted by going to this restaurant. It gave me hope that there are good things being done—that there

are places that are helping people find new, safe homes, so they can build a life for themselves where they can be themselves.

I'll definitely be going back (specifically to try the hummus and tequeños) and if I ever throw a big event in the future, I'll contact them for catering. I hope that by sharing this article, you'll want to come here too and enjoy Refusion Delivery as much as I do.

Refusion Delivery

Read more about the restaurant in English in [Global Shakers'](#) article.

Meet the [team behind Refusion Delivery here](#).

See the full [menu and order here](#).

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@refusiondelivery](#)
- Address: Calle Capitán Blanco Argibay 65
- Metro: Valdeacederas (line 1)
- Phone: 669 581 992
- Hours: Wed-Fri 7:30-11pm | Sat 1-4pm & 7:30-11pm

You may also like:

[5 best places to order vegan and vegetarian takeout in Madrid](#)

[Eat Out Madrid's top 5 places for takeaway and delivery right now](#)

[Food4heroes: Madrid's restaurants come together to provide hospital workers with free meals](#)

Lockdown diaries: Rosie, recently engaged and managing two international language schools in Madrid

If you've been brave enough to live abroad, learn a new language and launch a career in a new country, then you're set to survive some bumps and changes along the way!

Rosie was planning her wedding, managing two international language schools, and enjoying *sidra* in San Sebastián with friends just before the lockdown hit. When she got back to work the next day in Madrid, everything changed..

Originally from Liverpool, [Rosie Hegarty](#) has lived in Madrid for seven years. She's the Marketing Director for [LAE Madrid](#) and [LAE Kids](#) (the boutique Spanish Academy) and [TtMadrid](#) (TEFL school), and has spent many years working in international marketing in both the UK and Spain.

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?

My fiancée and I work full time and we were so independent and active. We had just got engaged in February and were preparing budgets and viewings for venues to get married in 2021. We spend a lot of time traveling and visiting family in Madrid, Liverpool and Zamora and had three trips booked for March, April and May that we've obviously had to cancel.

When the lockdown happened it was such a shock and everything happened so fast. We spent the weekend before in San Sebastián at a cider house with friends. We were laughing and joking about having to use hand sanitiser whenever we took a drink and we took the scenic route back to Madrid, driving down the coast and dipping our feet in the sea when we stopped for fresh fish. When I went to work the next day, it hit me that things were really serious.

It's been a bit of a bump into reality from that weekend of fresh air and eating out in the north of Spain. We live near Plaza Castilla in a little apartment – we're lucky to have our space separated into different rooms (and with lots of light) but it's definitely been a challenge now that we're together and confined 24/7.

Our days are split between work and trying to keep active: baking things that never look as good as the photo in the book, fitness videos of people who have more than 5m² to work with, and taking our little dog just far enough that he'll perform before coming back. Our wedding is probably going to be on hold (and a lot smaller than what we were planning!) and

we had to cancel our engagement parties too.



How did the lockdown affect your work life?

I work at TtMadrid (a TEFL course provider) and LAE Madrid (a

boutique Spanish school), managing the day-to-day of the school and international marketing, under the guidance of owner and founder, [Natasha Mason](#). She started the company 15 years ago and we've been a necessary hub for our students ever since. We offer them somewhere to come to print, access materials, give them general help with legal paperwork, translate calls or emails in Spanish, etc. or just offer them somewhere to escape from their housemates.

When you work with students from all over the world, it sounds really corny I know, but you don't just give them a language or training course, you help them adapt to their new life in Spain and support them through some really difficult and uncertain moments.

With so much information coming from the government and so many changes on what seemed like an hourly basis, we were inundated with current and past students emailing, phoning and popping in to see if we could give them information. We spent the next couple of days helping students organise return travel plans and generally making lots of cups of tea – reassuring parents or students themselves that everything was going to be ok.

The whole thing was a massive shock for them AND us. We decided to take all of our classes online the day that public schools shut down. We weren't legally obliged to close and knew it would be a huge financial hit for us but we just knew deep down that the safety of our students and staff was the most important thing, especially with rising anxiety about public transport and moving around the city.

By the time the lockdown was announced on Friday, we had

cleared everything out of the school, made sure staff had everything they needed to work from home and were set to start online classes the following Monday. I don't know how we managed to get it all done but the adrenaline of the situation seemed to help us through and on Saturday morning my desk was set up at my dining table.

Now, six weeks later, how are your language schools adapting to the new reality?

In the space of six weeks, we've gone from a small business that is ticking along well and employing around 30 local and international people, to seeing practically no income whatsoever. We offer Spanish immersion courses for kids and adults in Madrid and a TEFL course that's super practical and a great way for people from all over the world to start their career as an English teacher here. But both rely on international travel, so neither will grow or flourish without tourism over the next 12 months.

We've tried to keep as many staff on as possible and we're working hard to make sure that our community stays together to continue to offer courses for many years to come. We've launched online Spanish courses – both group and individual classes – for anyone who wants to get working on their Spanish. We've also put the finishing touches to a project we've been working on for a while: a Virtual TEFL, to continue to train ESL teachers as it's a solid market to work in during uncertain times and now anyone can take our course, wherever they are.

We've had to put on hold our wonderful Spanish Summer Camp for kids and we probably won't be able to go ahead with it but we're trying to offer online classes for kids to make sure they still have contact with Spanish. Needless to say, we're latecomers to giving online classes and courses so it's difficult to make a long-term plan right now and even harder to imagine how we'll get back up and running until international travel is running fluidly again.

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

Any kindness during these very difficult moments is something that we should be very grateful for. Managing a business and being a part of someone's life's work means that any setbacks are very difficult to overcome. The owner, Natasha, has spent 15 years working to build up this small business that brings together an international community of people that are passionate about travel, languages and teaching. This is devastating for anyone working with tourists or relying on international travel; and we're no different.

We've been very lucky to have built a special connection with thousands of students in the last 15 years and I've had messages from students and old co-workers from all over the world wishing us luck and offering words of support that came at just the right time. It's been a gradual realisation for us and a lot of our community that the world we all took for granted is going to be very different, for a while at least, so we'd best make the most of what we have and be grateful for it.

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for people in your similar situation?

My fiance and I, along with our little dog. I made sure I had a solid schedule every day. We get up before 9am, shower (very, very important when cohabiting) and start work or do chores, have lunch and dinner around the same time and make sure we do an activity each day. We also go to bed at the pre-lockdown time mid-week, get a good night's sleep and make sure weekends are different to weekdays so it breaks the week up.

There've been moments when we've been so bored. I mean, bored to the point of us both standing in the hallway trying to think of some way to kill the next couple of hours before dinner. I suppose we've managed to find new things to try and we've made an effort to be kind to each other and do as much as we can to make life easier for the other person.

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

One of my favourite moments of the day that always makes me laugh is when we go outside to clap at 8pm. There's an elderly lady who lives across from our building who comes out everyday. As there are lots of us in our building all facing onto her terrace she's the only person we can really see properly that's close. When we started going out during the first couple of days, we all waved and asked how she was and we sort of just carried on doing it every day.

After doing this every day for the last six weeks she now gives us all a very regal wave individually. There must be like 20 of my neighbours saying hi to her so she's the closest thing to a celebrity we've got from our window, and I imagine it's just as much a highlight of her day as it is mine.

How are you coping?

I'm quite resilient in general and I think that if you've been brave enough to live abroad, learn a new language and launch a career in a new country then you're set to survive some bumps and changes along the way!

I feel it's important to remember how lucky I am and why we're having to stay inside in the first place. People are grieving loved ones and having to cope with not being able to be with them in their final moments. My problems don't seem so important when you think about everything that's happening right now.

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time in lockdown continues?

Try and get through it as best as I can. I started out writing this huge list of things to do over the weeks in confinement but it's a challenging and uncertain time for us all. I feel like the best I can hope for is to finish lockdown and get back to work, travel, see friends and family and get married. I'm not sure I need anything else right now.

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

If England is still in lockdown and I can't buy a ticket and get on the first plane there, we'll go to Zamora to see my fiancée's family. We're both very family-centric so not being able to see either side of the family for so long has been really tough.

Do you have any tips for how we can help those in need?

If you're in a position to continue to support local and small businesses, then do. It may not seem like much but it will make a massive difference to the team of people behind it.

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

Keep going and keep listening to experts.

What's going on in your hometown and would you like to send them a message?

The people from Liverpool in England are the kindest and most selfless people, so I know that everyone will be doing their bit to help their neighbours and friends to get through this.

- Connect with [Rosie on LinkedIn](#)
- Follow her language schools: [LAE Madrid](#) & [LAE Kids](#) (Spanish Academy) and [TtMadrid](#) (TEFL school)

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

Lockdown diaries: Lauren, co-founder of Devour Tours, on leading her business forward while raising twins

My main goals are to keep my kids happy and healthy and then to lead my business forward in spite of having the odds stacked against us.

Lauren Aloise, co-founder of [Devour Tours](#) and author of [Spanish Sabores](#), was just getting back to work full-time after maternity leave and adjusting to being away from her twins for the first time. She was also in the midst of expanding her food tours to cities across Europe. Then the world shut down... Now she's fighting the good fight, continuing to share her love for local gastronomy and culture, and advocating for small businesses, like her own, more than ever.

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?



At the start of February I had just gone back to work after nearly six months of maternity leave. I was adjusting to the commute, figuring out how to pump at the office, and going through the emotions of being away from my newborn twins for the first time. I was also really excited to dive back into my job – I'd lived and breathed my work for over eight years before becoming a mom and maternity leave was quite lonely. My company, [Devour Tours](#), was in the middle of expanding our food tours to London and Florence, so it was a very exciting time. I was just about to take my first work trip away from the babies to a conference in Berlin when the world started shutting down. The conference was postponed, and my [business partner](#) and I jumped into crisis mode.

Today my days blend together as they are extremely repetitive. In some ways I feel like I'm back on maternity leave, with the added pressure of work. I wake up around 6am when the babies do, and take care of them for the next couple of hours along with my husband. We take turns while the other cooks breakfast or takes a shower.

My mother-in-law is living with us through the lockdown which I am extremely grateful for. She had originally come to help out when I was supposed to go to the conference – little did she know! She gets up around 9am and my husband takes a work shift. A couple hours later it's my turn. I work for three solid hours then take care of the babies again until their bedtime around 6pm. If we're lucky they're down by 7pm – but often they'll be up and down fussing until nearly midnight.

I try to take advantage of little moments of downtime throughout the day to keep working, and lately I've been in charge of cooking dinner at 8pm. Cooking allows me to disconnect for an hour and is truly therapeutic.

I've found balancing work and childcare (even with three people) totally overwhelming. I really feel for all parents out there who are in this situation – it is not easy.

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?



The tours and activities industry has been impacted like never before. From one day to the next we went to zero revenue and thousands of refund requests. Like many operators, we've had to let go of a lot of staff, a heartbreaking process to go through. Many small businesses like ours will not be able to make it through this time, but we're going to fight the good fight. And instead of focusing on survival alone, we're looking at new ways to grow and thrive in this new environment. We've released an [e-cookbook of our favorite recipes](#) to keep bringing the food from our tours into peoples' kitchens around the world, we've launched [an online shop](#), and we've been offering [daily cooking classes and food and wine seminars online.](#)

How are you coping?

There are ups and downs. I definitely have FOMO when I see my

social media feeds filled with people who are bored – practicing their bread making skills, doing yoga, and reading books. I'm honestly very tired and often anxious about the future. But I'm also extremely grateful for my health at the moment, and I try to keep that gratitude front and center.

I cope by making my days as routine based as possible – this isn't easy but when we pull it off it really helps me feel more at peace. I make a healthy breakfast each morning (usually some sort of eggs and a good quality piece of toast). I enjoy a cup of tea and a snack mid-morning while working, it keeps my energy up and there's something calming for me about a hot cup of tea.

I have one hour to myself each night that I use to cook dinner (my personal therapy!). Every now and then I bake – last night [my mother's homemade apple crisp recipe](#) did the trick! I also take “walks” with the babies on our terrace. I know not everyone has access to the outdoors but any time spent outside helps my mood enormously.

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for people in your similar situation?



I'm with my seven-month-old babies, my husband, and my mother-in-law. My advice for other parents in lockdown is to remember that this will pass (soon I hope!) so when it gets rough just try to ground yourself with peaceful thoughts.

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time in lockdown continues?

My main goals are to keep my kids happy and healthy and then to lead my business forward in spite of having the odds stacked against us.

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

I love that people are taking the time to offer their services for free or at deep discounts to help others. Whether it's an exercise class to help people stay fit in quarantine or some free printable resources for entertaining kids, these actions inspired us to also offer [a schedule of free online events](#) to keep people entertained and educated in the world of food and wine!

Do you have any tips for how we can help those in need?

Shop small. It's harder than it sounds with the convenience of Amazon and your local supermarket. But our support for small business is more important than ever right now and without it our post-lockdown world will be missing a lot of the special small businesses that made it so special. Let's not let that happen!

If you are Madrid based, some places I have been supporting:

- [Moega](#) (homemade Galician bread and empanadas)
- [Queseria Cultivo](#) (artisanal cheeses – they shop throughout Spain!)
- [Mercado 47](#) (a website where you can order from the local Madrid markets)
- [Madrid & Darracott](#) (Luke & team will advise you on all your quarantine wine needs)

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

Take a long walk with the babies! I love being outside and exercise and fresh air fuel my creativity and energy. Not being outside has been one of the most difficult things about confinement.

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

More help for small businesses please. We were unable to take advantage of any government aide which is really disappointing. For example, one of the requirements of the ERTE (temporary layoffs) was hiring people back on for at least six months. For a tourism business where revenue will be greatly affected for the next year or even longer, this is not a realistic requirement.

- Follow Lauren on IG [@spanishsabores](#) and [her website](#)
- Check out [Devour Tours' website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date on their [online experiences](#)
- Check out the [Recipes from the Devour Tours Kitchen](#) digital cookbook
- Lauren's business partner at Devour, James, also did a lockdown diary recently. You can read [James Blick's diary here!](#)

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

Lockdown diaries: Daphne, editor of Naked Madrid, on sharing people's stories to stay grounded

Just days after Madrid went under lockdown, I launched a series of articles called "Lockdown Diaries" and began sharing people's personal stories about what it's like to be living here during these very strange times... And now, one month later, this series is still going and it's keeping me grounded. Thank you everyone for following along and taking part.

Daphne Binioris is a native New Yorker who has been living in Madrid for over a decade. She's the co-founder of multilingual content agency [VeraContent](#) and editor of online publications [Naked Madrid](#) and [The Content Mix](#). She's also a professional dancer.

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?

I was busy getting ready for upcoming dance performances, rehearsing every day, and going to castings. I was really nervous about nailing the iconic Dirty Dancing lift, which I was going to perform for a 3,000-person audience at an event in April. I was also training with the theater group [Mad](#)

[Improv](#) and had just landed an (amateur) acting gig.

Now, I'm home. All of my art-related jobs have been canceled and the dance studios I train at are of course closed. I'm trying to keep in shape at home and stretch outside on my little balcony when the sun's out. I'm also extremely grateful to be able to work remotely, and I've been pouring my creative energy into VeraContent and Naked Madrid.



How are you coping?

Sharing people's stories has helped me stay grounded. When the

lockdown first hit here (a full month ago!?), it was such a strange and unsettling time for all of us, and it was really difficult to describe how it felt to people outside Madrid. So I decided to launch a series called the “Lockdown Diaries” on Naked Madrid. I just asked a few of my contacts to fill out a simple Q&A. As soon as I published the [first diary by Cat Powell](#) on March 16, new submissions came flooding in, and the series took off!

Shortly after “Lockdown Diaries” launched, writer [Daniel Catalan](#) came on board and started helping me capture compelling stories from people of all walks of life, from [local artists](#) to [small business owners](#). Dan even reached out to a [doctor treating COVID patients](#) and interviewed a guy named [Travis who was quarantined with his ex!](#)

With all the ups and downs we’ve experienced this past month (Dan has been stranded alone in the Basque Country this whole time), working on this ongoing series has helped keep us sane. It gives us a sense of purpose, keeps us connected to people, and reminds us that we’re not alone in this.

I’m also coping by binge-watching Netflix series (I highly recommend *Sex Education*, *Pose*, and the mini-series *Unorthodox*), making large pots of ginger tea, dancing every day, and sharing a bottle of wine or La Virgen beer with my partner every night.

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

The dance world has completely shut down, and it’s devastating. Most artists are in a tragic situation right now...

That being said, it's pretty incredible how dancers around the world are coming together to help each other through this, by live-streaming classes and performances for free. I hope we take this sense of comradery with us after this is all over.

On the other hand, the content and marketing industry – where my company comes into play – is doing just fine. Our team works remotely year round and collaborates with freelancers all over the world, so it was just a matter of sending a WhatsApp message to let everyone know to stop coming to the office.

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

Of course, tons. What journalist [Leah Pattem](#) is doing on her website [Madrid No Frills](#) is extraordinary. She's advocating for people like migrants and the homeless who are in dire situations and receiving almost no help. Please check out her channels and support her if you can.

And so many people are trying to find ways to support small businesses by buying gift certificates, ordering online, and giving them shout-outs on the internet. This hits close to home for me because my family owns a coffee shop in New York City which, of course, is currently closed. Small businesses have been severely impacted and those love letters on social media and kind gestures do help.

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for

people in your similar situation?

I'm in quarantine with my two cats and my partner. My advice is to give each other a lot of space. And my best tip: take your phones off the table (and out of sight) when you're having dinner or sharing a bottle of wine. Also, cats are the best quarantine companions. Now I know what their life is like year round!

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

Watching my cats do ninja tricks around the house is pretty hilarious. And getting my whole family on Zoom has been quite entertaining, from the screen freezing constantly to everybody talking at the same time...

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time in lockdown continues?

Life is funny sometimes. Just a month ago I was getting ready to dance on stage but right now I want to focus on my company and continue compiling stories and insights from people I respect. I'm even launching a new series on another online publication I manage, [The Content Mix](#), which will focus on the takeaways that businesses can carry with them after the crisis has passed. We've all had to overcome major obstacles lately, and I think we should make the most of the lessons learned moving forward.

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

I'll go straight to my dance studio, [Escuela Mayor de Danza](#). Then I'll get a plane ticket and go visit my family in NYC and have a coffee at my family's cafe, [The Hungarian Pastry Shop](#).

Do you have any tips for how you can help those in need?

If you can help others in any way, that's wonderful. But my sister told me something recently that I totally agree with: "Just take care of yourself right now and be a voice of reason." Staying safe and sound during this time is enough. You don't have to be a hero. You can help later on if you're not in a position to at the moment.

What's going on in your hometown and would you like to send them a message?

Stay home, New York.

- You can connect with Daphne on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Follow Naked Madrid on [Facebook](#), [IG](#) and [LinkedIn](#)
- Check out [The Content Mix](#) for our new series "Lockdown Lessons"

Check out all [Madrid lockdown diaries](#)

*This article was just picked up by [The Local newspaper!](#)

*Feature image by Raphael Hauser

Lockdown diaries: Jake, musician usually on tour & performing concerts across Europe

It's these small acts of kindness that help me survive as an artist, since my income evaporated due to the breakdown of the gig economy.

Jake was on tour in Germany and had just finished up his second of 50 concerts lined up across Europe. Now that's all been canceled and he can't book any new shows, not even for the winter months, because venues don't know if they'll ever open up again. The music industry and artists in general are suffering greatly, but there are a few (little) things we can do to help.

Jake Shane is a professional singer-songwriter and guitarist who makes his living performing concerts in Europe. He's been living in Madrid for most of the last 7 years. You can check out Jake's music on [Bandcamp](#), [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), and follow him on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Songs, videos and social media [links here](#).

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?

Much of my daily life is occupied by four main activities: writing songs, rehearsing them, booking concerts, and touring. I was on tour in Germany when I received news that Spain was going to shut down, having just finished the second of 50 shows I had planned for the first half of this year.

My remaining concerts for that and several subsequent tours were canceled. On top of that, I'm now finding that venues simply are not booking new concerts even for the winter months at the moment, because they don't know if their business will ever open again. Fortunately, in Madrid I can still rehearse (sorry neighbors!) and write, at least now that I've adopted measures to help me make the most of this time at home (more on that below).



How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

The music industry is suffering greatly, and artists are struggling to figure out how to monetize their music during this time when all touring is prohibited and most people already prefer Spotify to purchasing albums. In addition to streaming concerts online and giving lessons, artists are asking people to purchase our music digitally and setting up Patreon pages. Especially now, social media is king, and sharing artists' music with your friends is an easy and free way to help.

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting

things recently?

I've had friends reach out to me and ask if they can help in any way which has been amazing. I've also made my online concerts donation-based with a link to a virtual tip jar and people from different parts of the world have been kind enough to contribute.

It's these small acts of kindness that help me survive as an artist, since my income evaporated due to the breakdown of the gig economy. I hope touring will be permitted at some point this year but I'm very grateful for the support I've received during this tough time.

How are you coping?

I started not using the internet until 4pm! This one change sharpens my focus on writing, composing and reading, as well as reduces my stress levels and improves my mood dramatically. Usually I abide by a version of this rule, but found myself faltering during the first week and a half of the lockdown. I was glued to the screen, constantly checking for updates.

Waiting for the U.S. to suffer the same fate was like watching a ship sailing straight for Shipwreck Island and refusing to alter its course. I couldn't concentrate on my work at all. So I returned to my tested method of limiting internet usage. I turn my phone and computer on airplane mode at night, which helps avoid taking a peek at messages in the morning.

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time in lockdown continues?

I'm working on new songs, deepening my knowledge of music theory, and figuring out how to make money with music from home. I've started giving songwriting and guitar lessons on Skype, and am trying to complete a certain number of instrumental songs before the lockdown is over.

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

Go camping.

Have a listen to Jake's April Song

- Check out Jake Shane's music on [Bandcamp](#), [YouTube](#), [Spotify](#), and follow him on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Songs, videos and social media [links here](#)

Check out all [Madrid lockdown diaries](#)

Lockdown diaries: David, owner of Oso Brew Co & La Osita craft beer bar in La Latina

Just take each day as it comes – thinking about the days and weeks to come makes it a hundred times worse!

David spent most days either at his own bar, La Osita, or going to other people's bars. Now he's at home with his poodle and fiancé, cooking more than ever, and drinking beer out on his terrace. He's compiled a list of ways we can help our favorite local spots survive and just set up his own initiative, [Craft Contra Covid](#), in which 50% of sales of certain beers will be donated to a charity helping young people out of this crisis.

David Ross has been living in Madrid (this time!) for a year and a half or so. Together with his business partner Patrick, they've set up Oso Brew Co, a brewery focused on brewing refreshing craft beers, and La Osita, a pub in La Latina. You can read all about it in this [Naked Madrid article](#).

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?

Before lockdown I spent most days either working at our bar or

out and about at other bars, brewing or in other beer-related activities... all of which is now basically off limits! So, this is by far the longest I've not been behind – or sitting at – a bar for a very long time, so it's safe to say my life has completely and utterly changed.

How are you coping?

I spend a lot more time cooking than I used to. It's something I've always enjoyed – and done a lot of – but there are some things, such as marinating overnight, making cakes and using more weird and wonderful ingredients that I usually can't be bothered to do. Not a problem now! I'd recommend pushing your culinary boundaries, some recipe suggestions include [Guinness Cake](#) (substituting the black stuff for our Porter!), anything from [Sabrina Ghayour](#), Dave Chang's [Bo Ssam](#), as well as just ordering pre-cooked stuff from the guys at [Kitchen 154](#) to heat up at home!

Also, support local shops – butchers, bakers, greengrocers – they need you; the big supermarkets are going to come out the other side of this, many small shops won't.

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time in lockdown continues?

Given we're now looking at another month in quarantine, setting some goals is becoming pretty crucial! Not something I'm usually good at, but I think I've got three key aims: firstly, to make sure the bar & brewery comes out of this stronger; secondly, to read all the books I can as I usually

don't get round to it; and thirdly, to learn a new skill that I would never usually have the time and inclination to do (skill TBC).

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?



Bars, cafes, restaurants and the wider world of food and drink is one of the industries most affected by the lockdown. The current crisis is going to have a huge impact both in the short and long term with hundreds of venues closing the shutters permanently, and many others stuck with very significant legacy financial issues.

If you want to help your favourite local spots survive, there

are some great websites where you can buy now to enjoy later – for example [Cuando Volvamos](#) and [Salvemos Nuestros Restaurantes](#). Takeaway and delivery are of course also a way in which you can keep some money flowing into the coffers of hard-stretched *hostelería* – as a shameless plug we've (literally) just launched a [web shop](#) for our beers and merchandise. We're also trying to keep the pub atmosphere alive (virtually) and are running a pub quiz every Friday night via Instagram Live ([@laositamadrid](#))!

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

As much as Madrid is a great city to live in, it's pretty urban and lacking in greenery (particularly with the parks closed!) so the first thing I'll be doing is getting out of Madrid into the mountains. Then I'll be straight down to a/our bar to have a drink and see someone other than my fiancé and dog (no offence to them)...

Do you have any tips for how we can help those in need?

As much as we're all going to find the coming weeks and months challenging, it's going to have a much more significant impact on the most vulnerable in our society. People already living day-to-day or month-to-month will be struggling even more than usual to buy food and to scrape by. Websites such as [Goteo](#) and [MiGranoDeArena](#) offer great ways to help specific projects, and there are plenty of charities that you can support directly.

We've just started our own campaign – [Craft Contra Covid](#) – which means we'll be donating 50% from the sales of certain beers to a charity that will help support young people to come out of the other side of this crisis – we've got bigger plans for the coming weeks as well with this campaign so watch this space.

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for people in your similar situation?



I'm quarantined with my fiancé Sarah and our 1-year old poodle

puppy Freya, so I'm pretty lucky to have great company and non-stop puppy entertainment. My tip in general terms would be just to take each day as it comes – thinking about the days and weeks to come makes it a hundred times worse!

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

Of course, the Government is rightly focused right now on giving every support possible to the health service to try and address the spread of this awful disease and the terrible impact it's having on people all over the country. But I think they also need to act as quickly as possible to provide more direct support to combat the devastating economic impact of the crisis – for people and for businesses. Loans, delayed tax payments and complicated support schemes are window dressing that will just paper over the cracks – they will not save many individuals and businesses from ruin.

A temporary universal basic income and a direct grant to every PYME affected would be a good start and would protect livelihoods and support families in a very direct and impactful way. Tying everyone up in reams of bureaucracy is not going to help anyone but the *gestores*!

What's going on in your hometown and would you like to send them a message?

London is pretty much is the same boat as Madrid, so just keep on keeping on.

- Follow La Osita on IG: [@laositamadrid](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Check out their [website](#) where you'll also find a link to their new initiative: [Craft Contra Covid](#)

Check out our article about La Osita when it had just opened:

[La Osita, great craft beer \(and big plans\) in La Latina](#)

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

Lockdown diaries: Paula, Condé Nast Traveler editor, Vermutería Pop-up founder & new mom

People will want to travel more than ever once they're able to safely leave their homes.

Although the travel industry is on hold right now, it looks like everything will bounce back once this is all over, says

Paula Móvil, a journalist and food expert who's originally from Guatemala and has been living in Madrid for the past 17 years. Paula is currently working as the lifestyle editor for Condé Nast Traveler Spain and is also the co-founder of [La Vermutería Pop-up](#), a traveling bar that supports local vermouth brands by throwing *aperitivo* events around the city. Follow them because they've got big plans in store...

What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?

For me, things have gotten even more weird with the lockdown. I was about to finish my maternity leave after 5 months of staying home with my baby. So I was very excited about going back to work and getting my "normal life" back. Lockdown has made me stay home for an extra month, although now I'm *teletrabajando*. The good thing is that Lorca, my son, sees me 24/7, instead of the 3-4 hours he would have been awake with me once I got back from work.

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

I work for the Condé Nast Traveler magazine. So with all of the hotels, airports and restaurants being closed, we're rewiring all of our content to focus on ways to travel without actually traveling. Things are very much on hold now in our industry but it all points to the fact that, once this is all over, everything will get back on track and with very much strength. After all, people will want to travel (more than ever) once they're able to safely leave their homes.

Also, our April issue is available for a free download in [our](#)

[webpage](#), something we had never done before. This is something Condé Nast Spain came up with to support the lockdown and bring the magazine directly to our readers' homes. Kiosks will not be harmed by this, though. CN has offered to pay the same amount as in the sales of our March issue to show them our appreciation for the support they give the company month after month.

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Condé Nast Traveler

Truth in Travel

España



Los caminos de Miguel Delibes
CARRETERAS SECUNDARIAS
Un viaje rural por España y Portugal

Check out the whole [April issue](#) for free

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting things recently?

I've noticed that little by little we're all worrying much more about others. We're all much more aware of the people around us and thinking of ways we can help – be it supporting our favorite restaurants or stores by purchasing their products online, or even just buying bread from our local bakery instead of the supermarket. People whom I hardly hear of have also written to check on me and today I even got a surprise food delivery from a very dear friend.

What are your top 5 bars you can't wait to go back to?

- [Casa Camacho](#): one of those Madrid staples that should not disappear. Having a vermouth with gin here is a must once this is all over.
- [Viva Madrid](#): Punt e Mes vermouth with an olive skewer from Bombas, Cohetes y Lagartos de Vallecas. Couldn't ask for anything more.
- [Bodegas Rosell](#): haven't been here in ages... and I miss it.
- [Tipos Infames](#): not quite a vermouth bar, but they sell some great brands by the bottle (Casa Mariol). Plus, I have a list of books that I need to get my hands on once this is over.
- [La Gloria](#): can't wait to indulge in Sol's *flamenquines* and a cold vermouth.

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time

in lockdown continues?

Try to keep myself in a good mood and don't stress about being overly "productive." Just be able to do everything I need to one step at a time, one day at a time.



How are you coping?

The baby leaves me no time whatsoever to read, cook or watch TV shows, which is kind of tough, because I think all these things would help me take my mind off the whole situation. But I cope by thinking that lockdown does have an end date. I think of this as something that will end soon and that we just have to make the most out of each day by enjoying work, enjoying our kids and enjoying the fact that we are OK.

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

I've had to come up with new and funnier ways of entertaining my son at home, so yes, sometimes I just find myself laughing and screaming or making weird faces/jokes at home so he gets to laugh and enjoy the day. Oh, and seeing myself in my sweatpants and with weird hairstyles is actually very comical!

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for people in your similar situation?

With my husband and 6-month-old son. In the case of children, try to think of new activities for them to do at home but don't sweat it if they get bored at some point. Also, don't try to make every activity educational, it's fine and more than OK to just have fun. In the case of my husband and I, we try to avoid conversations about COVID. There is so much we can hear on the news about it that we allow ourselves to avoid overthinking about it or sharing "data" we've read about it that day. It helps a lot to keep us sane.

What's the first thing you'll do once this lockdown is over?

Go to my downstairs bar and drink a cold *caña*!

Do you have any tips for how we can help those in need?

Yes, post a note in your apartment building and let your neighbors (those with a higher risk of infection) know that you can gladly help them with their groceries or pharmacy shopping.

If you could tell the government one thing right now, what would it be?

Can we please go have a walk in the Retiro?

What's going on in your hometown and would you like to send them a message?

Guatemala still has very few cases but everyone has, little by little, started to stay at home.



Stay tuned for [La Vermutería Popup](#)'s upcoming events because they plan to make it BIG

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)