

Lockdown diaries: Cris, freelance actress & teacher

Today on our [lockdown diaries series](#), we're hearing from Cris Vidal, who's a freelance actress and teacher. She's originally from Galicia (northern Spain) and has been living in Madrid for 16 years. All her work has been canceled until further notice, but she also sees this time as an opportunity for self-reflection, creative activity at home, and appreciating the people in your life.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

My life tends to be pretty hectic. I'm an actress, drama teacher, and English teacher. I'm also a registered freelancer and run my own business. Last week I was working in several different places that have all shut down. I was attending theatre lessons, rehearsing in a Centro Cultural because we were creating a new piece, and I was also hanging out with my friends.

Now I find myself at home, dealing with the "gestoría" (tax and finance agency) because I still don't know how to best approach our work situation (my workmates' and mine). I'm also in contact with my clients, thinking about how to reschedule pending lessons and gigs without really knowing when this is going to end...

What do the street looks like?

They look pretty empty, just people with dogs and loaves of bread, wearing masks and looking a bit confused.

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

Every time I go through a rough situation I'm marvelled at how many people have my back. From texts and calls to videoconferences and offers to help, it's really uplifting to know you have great friends and that we're there for each other.

How are you coping?

It's been a bit of a rollercoaster: worrying about my work, then for my family, feeling acceptance and calm, excitement about having time for myself, then worrying again... **I've found out that watching the news ONLY once a day helps.**

Tips: make a list with every indoor activity you've never had time to do and go for it! Call your friends and family often. Treat yourself... I might even create a new script for future shows. Also, use this extra time to think about your lifestyle – what things should remain when all of this ends, and what things are worth changing or simply letting go of.

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

Once it's safe I'll take a train to Galicia to see my family because I'm missing them dearly. I'll also hang out with my friends as much as I can. I'm an affectionate person and not being able to hug my friends or high-five my students is hard!



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

Please give simple and clear instructions. There's so much talk about the aid and assistance that the government is supposedly going to give us. Make that aid a reality, and for people to be able to actually access that aid without having to struggle through so much bureaucracy. Among all the sectors that are suffering in quarantine, please don't forget about

artists.

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Lockdown diaries: Eva, HR manager at VeraContent, a multilingual content agency

Eva nearly got trapped in Brussels in the midst of lockdowns and restrictions on air travel happening across Europe. Now, back in Madrid, she tells us what it's like to be living in Spain under lockdown, while working remotely and collaborating with freelancers from all over the world.

Originally from Galicia (northern Spain), Eva A. Movilla has been living in Madrid for four years. Before then she lived in Belgium and the UK. Now she's head of Human Resources at [VeraContent](#), a translation and localization agency, and a teacher at a Business School.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

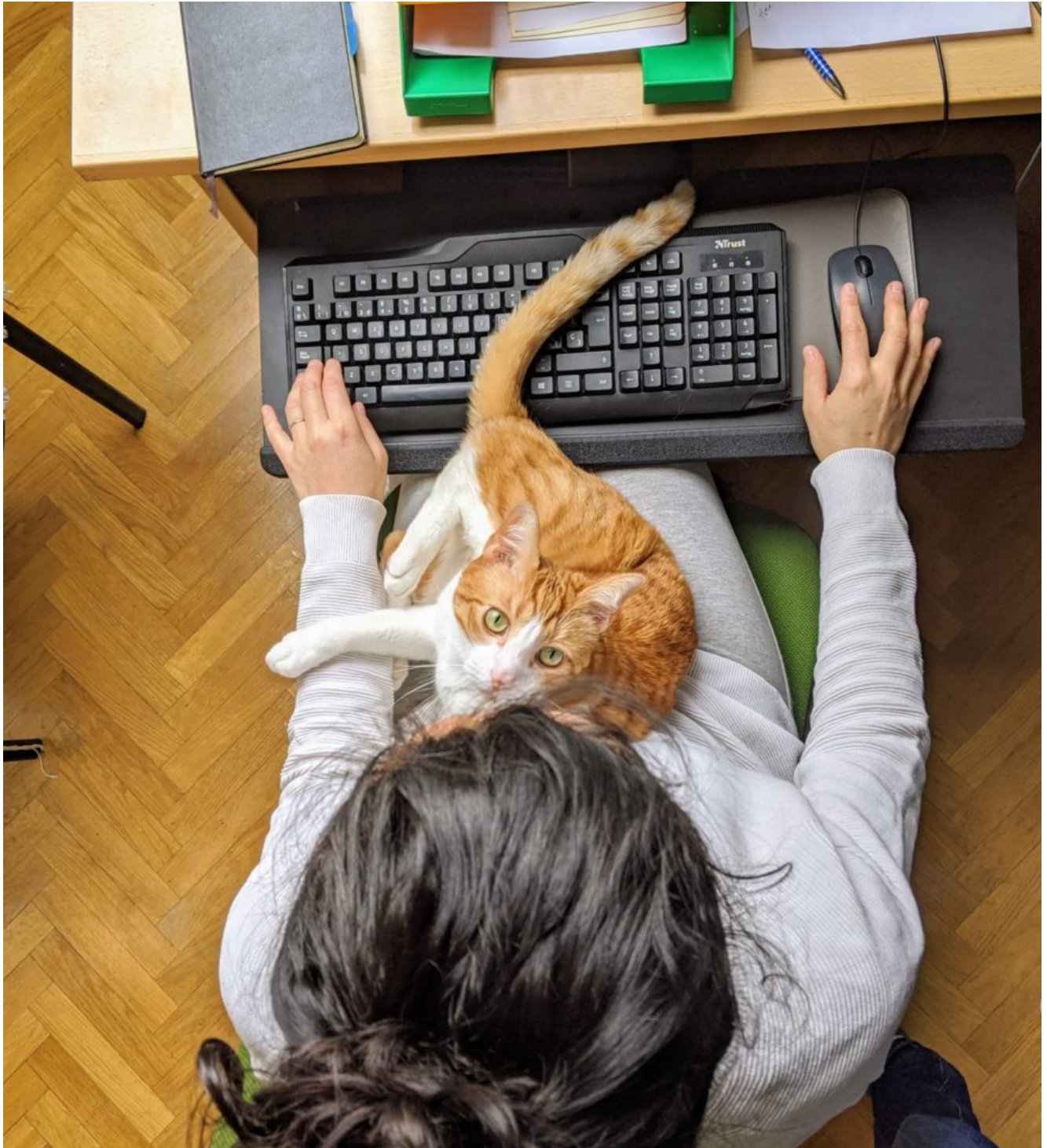
One week ago I was getting on a plane to Brussels. My husband is from there and I lived in the country for 6 years some time ago, so I like to organize a trip every now and then to meet up with family and friends from the old days.

It's incredible how everything changed so quickly. All our plans got cancelled as Belgium is undergoing quite a lockdown itself, we couldn't meet with anyone (not even close family), so we decided to move our tickets to this Sunday. When we landed, believe me, it was a completely different image from the one just 5 days before. The plane was half empty, the airport looked like a ghost town, and the few people we encountered were heavily protected with masks, gloves, and some even with sunglasses and caps!

At the company where I work, [VeraContent](#), we're masters of remote work, so in that sense it hasn't changed that much. I do miss the personal connection we have on office days – Tuesdays and Thursdays – and how we always have a good laugh over lunch or having drinks after work. But in the strictly professional aspect I don't really think we have undergone any major disruption due to coronavirus restrictions. I have noticed that freelancers and applicants are more responsive now, probably because they're all at home, glued to their phones and laptops at the moment.

Besides working as the head of HR at VeraContent, I also teach a class on teamwork & collaboration for a Business School and it has to be taught remotely now. Of course, it's not easy to

keep students engaged over a hangouts call, but I enjoy the challenge! Funnily enough last week's class was on how to collaborate remotely with teams located all over the world.



What does the street look like?

We live in a residential area of Alcorcón (a neighborhood in the outskirts of Madrid), always packed with families and children. The streets are pretty quiet and all the parks have been closed. You see some people wearing masks while running errands. Police cars are often patrolling asking people to go home through the loudspeaker. It does look quite apocalyptic, to be honest!

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

It was a super emotional moment when people came out on their balconies and started clapping and shouting to pay homage to all health employees. It lasted for quite a while and you could really feel all that human energy. It was truly moving.

How are you coping?

I'm very much used to working from home so it doesn't really have a huge impact so far. Of course it's only been a few days... let's talk in a week.

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

Go for a veggie miso at Ramen Kagura and have a vermouth on a *terraza* in the sun!

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

I would urge the government and all political parties to put politics aside and focus on the common good.

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Lockdown diaries: Monica, meeting her neighbors from her balcony in Lavapiés

Monica is a Madrileña who lives in Lavapiés. She's enjoying meeting all the neighbors as they're greeting each other from their balconies and windows. And she hopes that once this is all over, they'll say hi to each other on the street, too.

Monica Rojo specializes in the worlds of fashion, digital marketing and social media. She's also a personal shopper, stylist and dance enthusiast.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

Exactly a week ago I was celebrating my birthday, so I had asked for the afternoon off. While I was out for dinner and having some wine with my boyfriend, we heard the schools were going to be closed and it was advised that we should all “work remotely.” It had been coming for some time, as we had seen the examples of China and Italy. That’s why the lockdown didn’t catch me by surprise.

Right now I’m taking advantage of this time to rest, take care of myself and do new things. In three or four days I’ll probably be pulling my hair out, but I’ve decided to look on the bright side.

What does the street look like?

Although I live in the heart of Lavapiés, my street is quite quiet and doesn’t have a lot of traffic, so in that sense I haven’t noticed a big difference. It’s been nice to get to know most of my neighbors since, especially on days when the weather’s nice, we’re all out on our balconies and terraces, taking in a bit of fresh air, and we end up talking to each other. I hope that after this is all over, we’ll greet each other when we see each other on the street, too.

Have you noticed any random acts of

kindness or uplifting things recently?

The applause dedicated to the healthcare professionals and other workers is really moving. I admit that some days I've started to tear up. Also, it's wonderful that so many free online activities are appearing: concerts, museums, theaters, dance, classes, etc.... There's so much that you barely have enough time to enjoy it all!

How are you coping?

I'm taking advantage of this time to cross many things off my to-do list and take time for myself. I'm a very social person, so right now I'm trying to do the things I had been putting on the back burner and come out stronger from this situation in the end.

I'm spending a lot of time on my terrace and exercise at home every day. I also have the company of my partner who is very supportive. The other day we had a meet-up with all our friends on Skype, so we could share our experiences over a beer. It was delightful, even if it's through a screen.

I also call my brother and my mother every day to see how they are. And I think I'll continue doing that, even once this all is over. But first I'll go and give them a huge hug.

What's the first thing you'll do once

this lockdown is over?

I'm already imagining the scene... The first thing I'll do, in this order, is: take a long walk, go back to dance class and dance like there's no tomorrow, then meet up with friends. We'll all give each other hugs and kisses like crazy, and then we'll have a few beers and glasses of wine which we all love so much... If it's sunny out, even better.

As soon as I can, I'll leave Madrid to see my mother (in Ávila) and my brother to tell them all that I love them. And depending on the economy and if we can afford it (because we don't know how we'll recover from this), I'll travel with my partner as much as possible. I may even get stressed trying to make up for lost time!

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

I think they've taken too long to adopt measures. And I'm very angry seeing how certain sectors or companies force their employees to go to work when they aren't dealing with essential services. I have many friends who are forced to work in person when it isn't necessary and they have no choice but to take public transport. On many occasions, they have to work with their colleagues hand in hand, creating very dangerous points of exposure for themselves and for the rest of society. They should put stricter measures in place to avoid this. It's absurd that half of the population is isolated at home, and then they allow things like this to happen which prevent the situation from being controlled.

[Monica's website](#)

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Lockdown diaries: Camille, dancer, choreographer & environmental activist (US)

In the fourth story of [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#), we're hearing from Camille Hanson, a dancer, choreographer and environmental activist. She's originally from Minnesota (U.S.) and has been living in Madrid for 15 years. Camille offers a unique perspective on what it's like for artists in Spain right now during lockdown, as well as how quickly we can make change happen that affects the entire planet.

What was your life was like a week ago vs. today?

I'm a dancer, choreographer, and teaching artist. A week ago my studio classes were full and flowing with physical rigor.

Now seven days later, I'm thankful just to be able to go outside for a 20-minute walk with my dog on a short leash held by a plastic glove while breathing through a face mask.

What do the street looks like?

One can sense the tension. The streets are a reminder that we're living through a plague. The mood is "Lynch" like – empty, strange, and unpredictable. Yet this empty space offers me a break from the fast pace. I welcome that. It brings with it a return to hearing birds sing and leaves ripple – the needed absence of speeding engines driving by.

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

Have you heard the applauding that happens every night at 10pm from the housebound balconies and windows of Madrid in honor of the Spanish medics? The sense of togetherness it creates is thrilling. However, the most encouraging experience for me has been discovering that we are capable of making change happen over night. In Spain, air, sea and land transportation have been reduced by 50 percent. China's pollution has dropped by a quarter. People are buying local and consuming less. Are these not the same behaviors we need to have happen for the environmental crisis?

A month ago, we were struggling to discuss the changes needed to stay under two degrees of global warming. Today we are witnessing just how quickly agreements can be made.

My work as a choreographer has been inspired by the environment for many years, so I am well aware that we cannot separate the state of the health of our planet from that of the health of our bodies and our lives.

How are you coping?

I believe this global health crisis is a reminder that we need to ask and offer support whether that support be emotional, physical, virtual or financial.

Over the past 72 hours I have had an unspeakable amount of performances and workshops completely suspended due to the coronavirus. Although, I am deeply sensitive to the emergency of the Covid-19, and what is happening for everyone, there will be no aid for me as an artist. There will be no compensation for the loss of these cancelled shows and contracts. In response to this loss, I have put together a fundraiser to help raise support – to keep my life and work afloat. In just 24 hours I've raised almost 50% of my goal. That's amazing. Support is life giving. I hope the darkness of the coronavirus cracks open light and opportunity for many of us. Maybe nourish the qualities of listening and connectedness to each other and the wider community of life.

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

Dance. And then I am going to get radical and completely stop supporting the animal agriculture industry. Their "business"

is at the core of our environmental crisis which is at the core of our health crisis, in the sense of the link between humans' poor treatment of wild animals and the coronavirus. It is a dot to dot scenario. The challenge is obvious. It's time to cure the core.



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

I would remind Sanchez and Iglesias* that the destiny of our lives cannot be separated from the destiny of earth.

**Pedro Sánchez is the current Prime Minister of Spain, and Pablo Iglesias is Second Deputy Prime Minister*

Here is [Camille Hanson's website](#)

See all stories of [Madrid Lockdown Series](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Lockdown diaries: Kristen, using this time for self-development and having proper phone calls with loved ones

Welcome to episode three of our series of stories from Madrid residents going through the current lockdown in Spain. Here we'll hear from Kristen Wiltshire, an English teacher and art enthusiast from Trinidad and Tobago who has been living in Madrid for 4-and-a-half years.

Kristen also runs the [Madrid Art and Culture](#) Facebook group where she shares tons of news related to the city's art scene. In light of the lockdown, she's recently been sharing several online resources to help keep us entertained these days, from free virtual tours of the world's beautiful museums to classes at prestigious universities. So check it out.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

Well Mondays are my long days at school. My first class starts at 9am but I work in a suburb so I wake up pretty early to get the direct bus at 7am to my school and then I'm going non-stop once school starts until 5pm. Last week I was a bit worried about catching the virus so I tried to sit away from other people and I washed my hands after each class if possible and used lots of hand sanitizer. I knew there was a chance they might close schools, as I had been monitoring the updates on the virus and I saw the numbers ticking upwards. But I didn't think there would be anything like a full shutdown.

Compare that to today, I'm home, of course and have been since Thursday last week. I had to go into work last Wednesday and even then wasn't taking this all that seriously – I even went to a movie on Wednesday afternoon (fortunately there were only two other people in the theatre) – but as the measures started getting rolled out, it became quite obvious just how real this was getting, not only for me but also on a global scale. I went out on Saturday to pick up groceries and stop off at the pharmacy but other than that, I haven't left my house. It feels a bit like when you're off sick because I'm waking up late on a Monday with no alarm except that it's eerily quiet in my neighbourhood. Even in my apartment as my roommate is a little under the weather.

What does the street look like?

I popped my head out of my living room window just now and it was very quiet. No one on any balconies or in the windows,

unlike yesterday when the weather was better and there were a lot more people out. I saw about 4 people on the street, either going for groceries or walking a dog. They all gave each other a wide berth. I did see quite a few cars passing by though on the main road.

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

Well I was really heartened by the applause for the health workers, pharmacists and shopkeepers that's been happening every night. And yesterday afternoon there were people playing music on their balconies and other people sitting out or leaning out their windows and enjoying it. It was the first time I've ever seen some of these people. In a way, it feels like this quarantine is forcing us to connect with our neighbours more which is a nice side effect.

How are you coping?

I'm an introvert so having to stay indoors isn't really difficult for me. I have a ton of books and podcasts and the like and I'm trying to think of this as a time to do all the things I always say I don't have enough time for. Almost as though we're frozen in time. I'm exercising more too which is good.

My tip would be to take this time to start on any projects you've been meaning to or to work on your Spanish or start an online course. Use this time for self development or to reach out to your friends and family and have a proper chat on the

phone or by Skype. And if you're worried about your loved ones who are elderly or immunocompromised, try to talk to them as much as you can. I've been trying to talk to my grandmother every day and I pray for her and all the more vulnerable people out there every morning. There isn't much more I can do to protect them but that gives me some peace.

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

Once the shut down is over, I'm probably going to go for a long walk in the sun. It will be nice to breathe some fresh air and stretch my legs.

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

For the government I would say, please don't forget the homeless. They are especially vulnerable as they have less access to the types of facilities that most of us do.

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Lockdown diaries: Dan, CV writer & proofreader, stranded up north in the Basque Country

Here's the second story of our new series on what it's like to be in Spain right now during the lockdown. Daniel Catalan is a professional CV builder and writer specializing in career services. He's been living and working in Madrid on and off for almost a decade, and is currently on lockdown in País Vasco, as he was away on holiday there when the state of emergency was declared.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

A week ago I was at home in Madrid, attending to a surplus of several clients back-to-back in anticipation of a trip that I embarked on Wednesday morning to San Sebastian. The purpose of this trip was to become immersed in the local gastronomy, to take long walks on the beach and in the nature of the surrounding villages. I succeeded in these objectives during the first two days of the trip before embracing the gravity of the situation. Prompted to prolong the trip, I've been quarantining myself in a comfortable apartment here that I obtained via the online community of *Auxiliares en Pais Vasco*.

What does the street look like?

My window looks out to a nearby store of local Basque products where I'm able to stock up on essentials. The apartment is situated in the Old Town, which I was able to see in its regular lively state on Wednesday and Thursday before the country shut down. I took one of the last Pintxos and wine walking tours of this neighborhood with Devour Tours before they put a pause on all operations and I had a very positive experience. The contrast between then and now is like night and day.

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

When shopping for essentials at the nearby store, unfortunately, they had no coffee to sell. The store is owned and managed by the staff of a popular pintxos bar called Gandarias which is situated next door. The shopkeeper and I made small talk at a safe distance, and he told me to wait outside for a moment after I paid for my purchases. He alerted the bar owner, who opened the shuttered establishment and emerged with a cup full of coffee grounds, and two bottles of wine which he gave to me for free.



How are you coping?

I have had a good fortune that my work is not interrupted and I can continue to attend to my clients remotely. I cherish the calls with them as they are meaningful interactions that give me a sense of purpose. If I'm being honest, I only feel completely distracted and at peace when immersed in my work. Many educators and tourism professionals have lost their jobs due to these volatile circumstances and have turned to my service for support as they seek to land on their feet. My mission is to provide the support that I wish I myself had received when I was abruptly sacked from a job in the past. Now that we're all in quarantine, this time can be used productively to reflect on aspirations and the finite nature of the human experience.

My days are filled with video calls with my loved ones in their various global corners. I have caught myself being more forgiving and even nostalgic when reflecting on persons from my past who I've consciously or mutually severed contact with over recent years. I have continued to see my therapist remotely, as that was how we would meet prior to this debacle. Rather than simply sharing memes, I've been consciously creating them myself.

My crucial tip to anyone reading this, and I cannot emphasize this enough, is to seize this opportunity to watch HBO's *The Wire*, a masterpiece of a series that had an enriching impact on my life and shaped my worldview when I first watched it in 2010.

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

Breathe clean air in the nature of any of the gorgeous villages that surround San Sebastian.

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

To the Spanish government, my counsel would be to place an indefinite pause on the **autonomo* tax to give all freelancers room to breathe. All creative professionals are suffering greatly due to the indefinite pause in their income stream and I think it is unjust to give them an additional strain. Here's a [petition that we're signing](#) to hopefully make this happen.

**for all registered freelancers in Spain, you must pay a monthly fee of €280/month, regardless of income*

- Dan is also one of the most active writers on Naked Madrid, and has helped write several Madrid lockdown diaries. [Check out all his articles.](#)

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Lockdown diaries: Cat, primary school teacher & Naked Madrid contributor

Madrid is on its third day of lockdown. For 15 days we aren't allowed to go outside unless it's to the supermarket, to walk our dog, or to the pharmacy (or for urgent matters, i.e. going to the hospital). And we must go alone if possible. This has all happened very abruptly and it seems as though the rules keep changing every day. It's hard to explain what it feels like to be here right now, which is why I'd like to share personal stories of Madrid residents who are currently living through this.

First up is Cat Powell, a primary school teacher who works at a British school in Madrid. Originally from the UK, Cat has been living in Madrid for nearly a decade and she's also a key contributor to Naked Madrid.

What was your life like a week ago vs. today?

So this time last week looked a whole lot different to today. I'd never really spent time thinking about my freedom; only now do I realise how much I took it for granted. My workdays always start by grabbing a coffee on my morning commute, followed by a post-weekend catchup with colleagues and then

being cheered by the faces of the children in my class. My evenings would more than likely be spent at a spin class or having a *caña* with my partner at our local. As of today, none of that is an option. We're on lockdown in Madrid and now it's painfully clear to me how much of my daily life (and the seemingly mundane activities that it's made up of) are actually a true source of pleasure.

What does the street look like?

I live on Calle Ponzano, a street that even has its own hashtag #ponzaning. You usually can't move for revellers enjoying post-work drinks, tapas with friends and hives of *madrileños* sitting on benches watching the world gone by. It's now a ghost town, eerily quiet. I'm already longing for the days when we can all be fighting for a spot in the sunshine. Madrid without people on its *terrazas* truly feels like a city without its soul.

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

I'm a primary school teacher so I'm receiving daily acts of kindness from my students who are sending in their work with sweet little notes and well wishes. As a natural extrovert and someone who loves to socialise, not having human contact is tough, but being able to give students praise (even from afar) is now raising my spirits as the first weekend of lockdown was tough. I'm not really a homebird and more than a few hours at home does not come naturally to me. In addition, the applause for healthcare workers at 10pm on Saturday was also incredibly uplifting and it really helped to create a feeling of unity

within the city that I call home.

How are you coping?

If you ask my boyfriend, he'd probably say not very well! We've gone through a few moments of panic and wanting to go home (to the UK) but I think we're now in a place of knowing that this situation is for the greater good. We've slowed down and we're going to try to find the simple pleasure of having more time, as really that's all we now have. I never had a breakfast that isn't rushed, so today we've just enjoyed pancakes. My skincare routine has ramped up as I've really no excuse now not to luxuriate in doing a face mask. I love reading, but it rarely happens with any regularity unless it's during the summer and on a sun lounger. I plan to read lots now and try to limit my screen time. Aside from that, I think my flat will never have been cleaner, I'll enjoy these days of 8 hours sleep and I'm thinking about signing up for an interior design course – let's see how much of Netflix I can work my way through first though!

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

The first thing I'll do when lockdown is over is get to the beach. It's my birthday this coming Saturday and I was due to spend it in Valencia. I'm craving time with sea and sand, so my plan is to book a trip to Tarifa (my happy place) and throw caution to the wind – meaning treating myself to the fanciest hotel I can afford after being cooped up. Bring on room service and a glass of fizz on a rooftop.

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

If I could tell the government to do one thing, it would be please allow the elderly or high-risk members of society to go to the supermarkets for one hour each day before the general public. I cannot imagine how overwhelming it must be to be swept up in this state of unknown and panic as an 80-something-year-old. I think that having that time period before others can go out would help to lessen the feeling of potential chaos in the few public places that are open.

- Cat Powell is also a key contributor to Naked Madrid. [Check out all her articles!](#)

See all [Madrid Lockdown Diaries](#) here

If you'd like to submit your story, please send an email to daphne@veracontent.com

Panda Patisserie, delight in Japanese desserts and drinks near Gran Vía

Mochis, matcha ice cream, bubble tea, dorayaki... If you want to enjoy a selection of Japanese sweets and drinks, then head

over to Panda Patisserie, the city's one and only Japanese bakery, located right off Gran Vía at the popular Hattori Hanzo restaurant.



Although I'd been to Hattori for dinner before and even wrote an [article about it back in 2014](#), I never had the chance to get to Panda Patisserie, which opens on weekday afternoons and for weekend brunch. The hours are from 4:30-8:30pm Monday through Friday, and from 11am-1pm on Saturday and Sunday (book ahead on the weekends).



As you walk into the restaurant, make your way to the back area where you get to sit comfortably in the floor, surrounded by fun decor and a welcoming ambience. Now onto the food: Although there are savory options on Panda's menu, like the unbeatable baos, our eyes went straight for the desserts, as I'm sure yours will too. With the help of the nice server, here's what we ordered:



We started out with two cold brew iced teas, one with strawberry and lime, and the other with grapefruit and yuzu.

They were sweet, citrusy and refreshing. We also tried a few different homemade mochis, which are small rice-flour balls that have a gooey texture and are filled with flavors ranging from chocolate to green tea matcha.



Then we had the *Sakura dorayaki*, which are essentially two pancakes filled with fresh strawberry and white chocolate. So good.



And of course, we couldn't leave without trying the newest item, *fluffy pancakes* served with fresh fruit and syrup that you get to pour on yourself. All the desserts were simply delicious.



Surprisingly, after all that, we felt satisfied but not heavy at all. Everything is light and tasty, and you'll leave wanting to come back for more. There are so many other options on the menu that we wanted to try, from the matcha ice cream to the bubble teas!

If you haven't already tasted Japanese sweets, then I highly recommend ordering an assortment of different flavors and textures to get the full experience. And if you're already a fan, well, then welcome to your go-to Japanese sweetshop in Madrid!

Panda Patisserie

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@pandapatisserie](#)
- **Address:** Calle Desengaño 11
- **Metro:** Callao

Bar Toboggan – best new terrace in Madrid's Arganzuela district

Bar Toboggan is one of the best new additions to the area of Arganzuela, located just around the corner from El Matadero. This lovely little restaurant is nestled between a courtyard and playground, so it's away from the cars and you feel like you've left the city – almost as if you were at the beach!





The outdoor seating area is spacious, and family- and pet-friendly. The restaurant itself is also very open, with high windows, and modern, colorful decor. The servers are young and friendly. As for the [menu](#), you'll find a great selection of options from small dishes to mains.



The last time we went, our drinks arrived with an extremely fresh and gooey *tortilla de patata* – a nice change from the potato chips and industrial olives that we're so used to these days.



We decided to order an array of small dishes to share: *patatas bravas* Toboggan, *croquetas de jamón*, *salmorejo*, and a *pepito palentino* – a filet of meat, a slice of brie cheese and sautéed green bell pepper on a baguette.





We were completely full by the end of the meal. In total, we had ordered four small dishes along with two drinks each, and our bill came out to less than 30€. A bargain in this city nowadays!



The first time we went, we ordered the Toboggan-style burger with brie, caramelized onions, bacon and mustard; and the tuna tartar with shrimp and avocado. But we didn't take pictures that day. Sorry! I definitely recommend them though.

Food aside, what stands out most about Bar Toboggan is the welcoming atmosphere and unbeatable terrace. Seriously, it might just be my favorite *terraza* in Madrid.

Bar Toboggan

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@bar_toboggan](#)
- **Address:** Plaza Rutilio Gacis, 2
- **Metro:** Legazpi

El Camoatí – an incredibly romantic Argentinian bistro bar in La Latina

As soon as I walked into Camoatí for the first time a few years ago, it was love at first sight. My friend was holding her birthday party there and I couldn't believe I'd never heard about it before. This charming Argentinean bistro is located on a side street off of La Latina's most popular plaza, Plaza de la Paja. The facade is unassuming so you're likely to walk right past it. But don't!



As you step in, you'll find the cozy bar area, and instantly feel the warm vibe that I'll try to express in this article. But you'll really have to experience it for yourself.



Both the decor and ambience at Camoatí are truly special. You'll find funky furniture, quirky trinkets and mismatched table settings all around. It's fun to just let your eyes wander and imagine where all the items came from – whoever decorated this place definitely had a unique sense of style.



The main dining area has two separate levels, plus a few tables squeezed into cute little nooks for extra romantic dining. At the tables you'll also find paper and crayons for colorful drawing, like in the good-old days of going to restaurants as kids (they've also got board games).



Dining at Camoatí is always a treat and the food is simply outstanding – the [menu](#) features a wonderful selection of

dishes inspired by Argentinian, French and Italian cuisine. You'll find hearty meat dishes, fresh fish, homemade pasta, tasty desserts, cocktails, wine, coffee, and more. Not to mention the service is very much up to par.

Also note that Camoatí is a great place to go even if you're just in the mood for a drink or a coffee with friends.



So without further ado, here's what we ordered the last time we went to Camoatí:

We started out with a glass of Malbec and an Albariño, both recommended by the server.



As an appetizer we ordered the tuna tartar, served with avocado and dressed with soy sauce, ginger and sesame oil. It was incredibly fresh and delicious. I order this almost every time I go.



And for the mains, James got the traditional *milanesa napolitana* – a generous-sized filet of veal that's breaded and covered in tomato sauce and melted mozzarella cheese. It's served with a heaping portion of homemade fries and salad. The photo says it all.



And I went with a lighter option: the salmon that's grilled in teriyaki sauce and served over sautéed vegetables. So good.



To top it all off we went with one of the homemade desserts, recommended by the server: *volcán de dulce de leche con helado*. Amazing.



On other occasions I've also tried their homemade empanadas, the (wonderful) plate of grilled vegetables topped with goat cheese, and other meat dishes that are to die for. But I'm still working my way through the menu.

So whether you're looking for a romantic date night, an afternoon with friends, or simply a delicious meal in a charming setting, I promise you that Camoatí will not disappoint. You'll want to come here again and again.

Camoatí

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