La Jefa Home Bar, a Chic Restaurant near Recoletos

Located near Paseo de Recoletos and Retiro, **La Jefa** is a restaurant that makes you feel at home. With a chic and Colonial-style décor, La Jefa serves Mediterranean and fusion cuisine, with a kitchen that opens all day long, offering breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner menus.

Photo from La Jefa FB page

On my most recent visit to **La Jefa**, my friend and I found it difficult to order from **all the delicious options** we had to choose from! For starters, we ordered "**Papitas canarias con ajo cristal**" (Canarian-style potatoes with garlic) "**huevos rotos la jefa**" (La Jefa-style eggs), and "**gambones wanton**" (wanton prawns).

For the main course, I chose “**Solomillo de ternera**” **(veal tenderloin)** and it tasted absolutely amazing! It had a mix of different flavors, enhanced with pepper and a special sauce; plus the meat was cooked to perfection.

My friend chose **“pez mantequilla con tabulé” (butter fish with tabbouleh)** with an extraordinary adobo spice, mixed with garlic quinoa tabbouleh. It was so soft that it melted in my mouth.

As far as I’m concerned, wine is absolutely essential for any dinner or lunch. At La Jefa, we decided to enjoy our meal with **a special wine label, named “Juan Gil”.** We made a great choice; it was the perfect compliment to our meal.

All in all, I highly recommend this restaurant for a wonderful meal at a good price, no less. The ambience, food and neighborhood make it a great choice for any occasion!

Info

- **Web** & **Facebook**
- Address: Calle de Recoletos 14. Madrid
- Phone: +34 916 217 674
- Reservations advised.

Banibanoo, an Iranian Market-style Restaurant in the Center of Madrid!

I have to admit that when I was first invited to try a new Persian food restaurant in Madrid, I had my doubts. Until then my knowledge of Persian food was very limited. But if there is something that I love it is trying new things. So of course, I accepted.

Banibanoo describes itself as a restaurant offering Persian market cuisine. It is owned by a young woman named Banafsheh who, after working six years in marketing, decided to pursue her dream of becoming a chef and restaurant owner. One day she left her job and went to London to study in Le Cordon Bleu School. Upon returning to Madrid, she discovered that Iranian food was little known in the Spanish capital. So she decided to open her very own restaurant where people could enjoy these wonderful dishes.

The name of the restaurant is also very personal: *Bani* is short for her full name Banafsheh and *Banoo* means Miss. So Banibanoo means *Miss Bani*.

Banibanoo’s owner Banafsheh

The restaurant is small and cozy, perfect for a fantastic meal with friends or with your partner. Apart from the food, what I love the most about Banibanoo is how bright it is and that the food is on display at the bar. That way, you can see all the food they serve before you order. It also has an intimate and familiar feeling, as if you were entering a market and wanted to eat something from a particular stand.

Banibanoo.

Fresh ingredients and beautiful homemade dishes are all the decorations you need

Banibanoo

According to Banafsheh, Iranian shares a lot in common with Mediterrean cuisine; the ingredients are all very similar. But

for me, each dish at Banibanoo tastes unique and exotic, for the mixture of flavors and variety of ingredients on each plate.

Food on display

Food on display

The food

Banibanoo offers a simple menu, consisting of traditional and original dishes, all made with fresh ingredients and a lot of love. If you're the kind of person who struggles when it comes to ordering, no problem. At Banibanoo you have the option of choosing a menu with three different dishes on one plate. Banafsheh likes to change up the menu every two weeks, offering different recipes along with the old ones. Banibanoo also offers wonderful breakfasts. On Saturday and Sunday, for example, she offers a very special breakfast that will be the highlight of your weekend: a "burnt" brioche bun with cream cheese and jam.

When I went for lunch with two friends, Banafsheh suggested we

try out different dishes so we could all share. I have to say that was a fantastic idea. The first three dishes we tried were: *broccoli with roasted cherry tomato in a yogurt sauce and tahini*; *beetroot hummus with feta cheese and hazelnuts*; and *gourmet purple potatoes with yogurt sauce, cherry tomatoes and cardamum*.

Menu 1

For the second place, we ordered: *sweet potato with red onions, yogurt sauce, almonds and pomegranate seeds*; *couscous with cheese, mint sauce, cilantro and parsley*; and *Kuku Kadoo: zucchini 'frittata' with mint and cheese*.

Menu 2

Our last plate included: *roasted beets with cherry tomatoes, feta cheese and a pomegranate and Sumac sauce*; *Shirin Polo, Persian rice, saffron, orange zest, carrot and pistachio* (this was one my favorite, amazing!); and *Kuku Sabzi: similar to a 'frittata' with herbs, walnuts and cockles*.

Menu 3

For dessert we had an incredible carrot cake (really, please try it!) and a brownie-like chocolate cake. Also delicious.

Carrot cake

Guinness Chocolate cake

All this feast of food could only be accompanied by a typical ***Iranian drink, infused with cucumber, flowers and other refreshing ingredients.*** How can you describe something that tastes so good? They now have two different drinks based on this one: One is call ***Tejebin:*** The same drink but with tea and ***Cafejebin***: The same but with coffee.

Banibanoo drink

What can I say? If you want to enjoy healthy and traditional food with an exotic taste, this is your place! Fantastic Recommendation – thank you Jose and María for taking me to this wonderful place.

INFO

Address: Calle Martires Concepcionistas 19, Madrid

Price: €12.95, *3-dish menu plus coffee and drink during the week;* **€13.95** *During the weekend, without drinks; Breakfast goes from €2.50 with coffee or tea to €5.50.*

Facebook

Instagram ***(@banibanoomadrid)***

Wanda Café Optimista

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

The décor makes it a perfect place to have some coffee, get lost in conversation (as we did), AND for IE students (especially with those who will have classes in María de

Molina, 4) there are big tables for group projects. As I perused **Wanda's website** to get the final research components to wrap up this article and make it ready for publication, the owners of the restaurant did have the oasis idea in mind. With primarily light, nautral woods, along with splashes of neon colors reminiscent of summery ikat prints, the hustle and bustle of the Castellana and the Plaza del Doctor Marañón seemed a world away.

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

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

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

There are some other deals as well, including the salad

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

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

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

Info

Wanda Café Optimista
Calle María de Molina, 1
Tel.: +34 91 737 53 64
Hours: Monday- Friday 8 AM-2 AM; Saturday and Holidays 10 AM-2 AM
Metro: Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10)
Web & Facebook

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

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

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

with the menu items offered on a blackboard allured me.

One of the biggest disappointments of having to move after the holidays was not being able to stop there on my daily commute. After my move, I decided to have a breakfast adventure to celebrate being able to actually order something other than coffee.

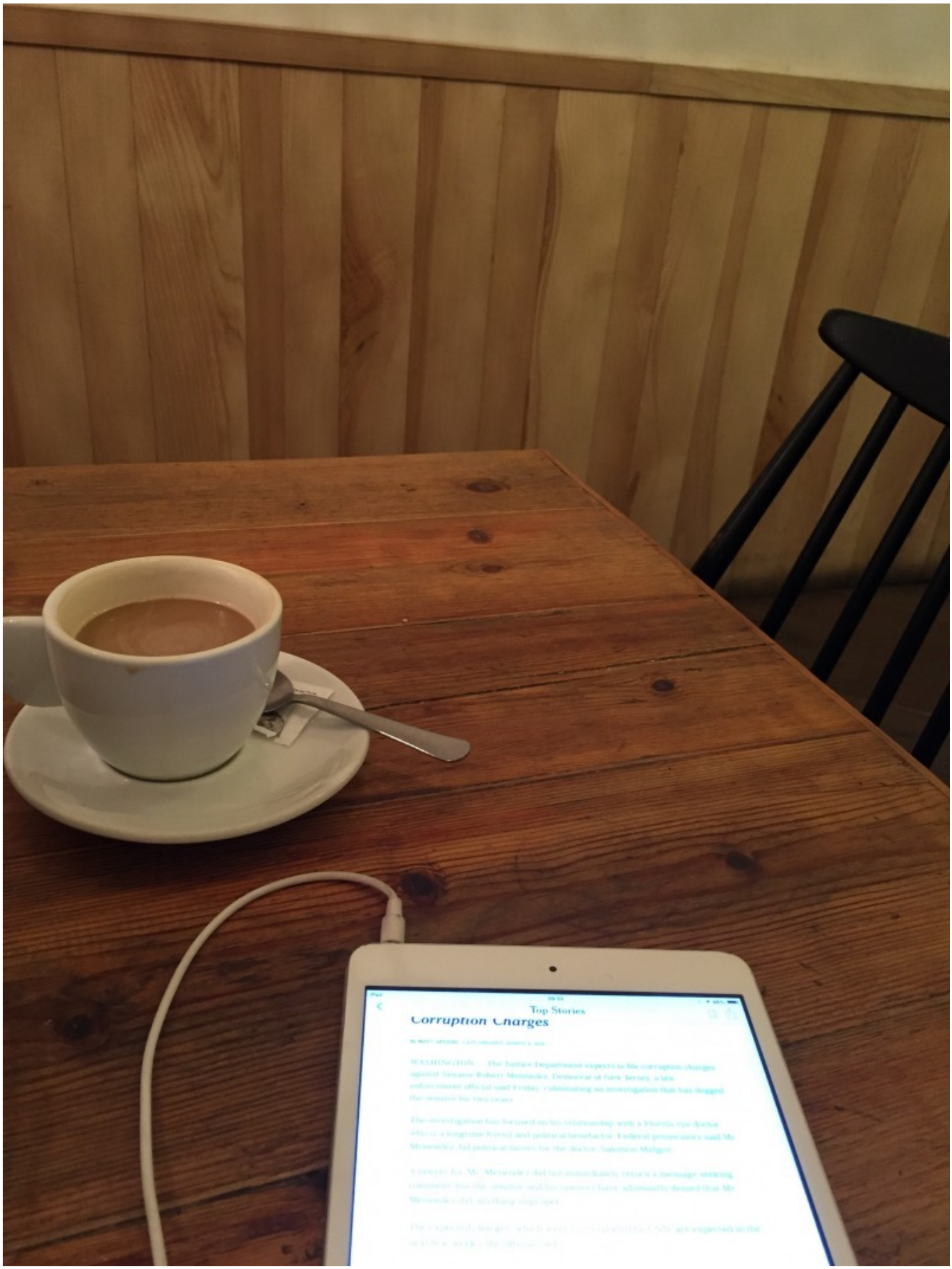
Besides coffee with skim milk (and having skim milk is a vital component of my coffee consumption), **Pancomido** has a whole variety of breads and pastries.

As you can tell…

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

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

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



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

School and the US Embassy.

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

> ***Pancomido Café (Chamberí)***
> ***Where:*** *Calle Zurbano, 50*
> ***Tel.****:+34 913 08 25 06*
> ***Metro****: Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10), Rubén Darío (Line 5), or Iglesia (Line 1)*
>
> ***Pancomido Café (Salamanca)***
> ***Where:*** *Calle del General Oráa, 22*
> ***Tel.****: +34 617 54 03 19*
> ***Metro:*** *Núñez de Balboa (Lines 5 and 9)*

Best place to get your mop chopped in Madrid, the minefield of avoiding a mullet

I remember it well: My first hairdressing experience in Madrid. There were tears. There was a tantrum. There was most certainly no danger of me leaving a tip.

The scene of the **hairdressing crime** was a little place near to Sol. In hindsight this was probably my first error, **guiri central** and clearly not the kind of place that a *madrileño* would frequent. My dirty blonde locks were left with a definite tinge of ginge and it took months (and a great deal

of expense) to restore my battered tresses to their former ‘glory’.

Enter Aveda. The holy grail of hairdressers and one of my favourite spots to head to when TLC is needed. Situated on **Calle de Jose Ortega y Gasset**, it’s smack bang in the middle of what is the essentially the swishest of barrios, so if you’re judging a book by its cover, you can rest assured that you’re in good hands. *I always leave feeling like a blissed out little Buddha!

Upon arrival you’re greeted with Vogue, an array of coffee options and a head massage. I’d pay **40 euros** for that alone after a tough day at work. What comes next is a masterclass in keeping the customer sweet. They talk through your hair type, your style, (how early you’re willing to get up in the morning to tame your natural curls in my case) and only then will they help you to decide on a cut (or colour) that’s going to work. More often than not **this chat happens in English** – so if your pigeon Spanish won’t cut it you need not worry as it’s unlikely that they mistake the term ‘highlights’ for a ‘buzzcut’.

I admit that I am pretty picky when it comes to hairdressers and never really quite understand why I don’t leave a salon looking like Giselle (despite the fact that I’ve taken in a picture to show the stylist and everything!) but I have genuinely never left **Aveda** feeling anything less than chuffed. Word of warning: I am rarely able to leave without purchasing some of their gorgeous products or taking a cheeky dip into the nearby Lavinia for a post haircut tipple. (More of that in a future post).

Steer clear of any pretenders, Aveda is top of the chops.

Web
Where: *Aveda Calle de José Ortega y Gasset, 26, 28006 Madrid*

Phone: *914 32 22 46*
Metro: *Núñez de Balboa or Velázquez*

Another option:

Leo is a great hairdresser in Madrid, bilingual in English and Spanish. His haircuts cost around **20€** (including blowdrying and styling). He also does hair coloring and makeup. Contact him through his page on **Facebook**.

Also check out:

Beauty Series for the Ladies – Madrid's Best Nail Salons

La Maruca, a Swanky Cantabrian Restaurant in Barrio Salamanca

My Dad comes to Spain frequently in order to see myself and his close friends, Rafael, Catherine, Alfredo & Ruth. It has been hugely comforting to have such trusted and accessible "real adults" during my time abroad. In addition to being warm, generous, and offering of exceptional council, my Dad's friends are in the know in regards to **Madrid's ritzier restaurants**. I was fortunate to have been invited to tag along to their **dinner at La Maruca**, an establishment in **barrio Salamanca** that I certainly would not have discovered under different circumstances.

LA MARUCA

A large space with a stylish staff and a cozy fireplace by the bar, the location radiates class. Catherine took the initiative to order several appetizers—***croquetas de carne cocido*, a tartar of smoked salmon & avocado** as well as a plate of delicious anchovies with red bell peppers. We drank wine and had a pleasant conversation with a lot of swift code-changing between Spanish & English.

For my main course I ordered pluma de cerdo, a delicious dish of perfectly cooked pork. Rafael ordered *pulpo a la plancha,* which was presented quite aesthetically. Enrique, my Dad, consumed the *albondigas*, which he enjoyed greatly. Catherine's dish was the *tajada de merluza*. Ruth ordered *canelones rellenos de poularda con salsa de foie*, another incredibly photogenic plate.

Initially I believed that this restaurant would be well above my pay grade, but that was not the case—each plate cost between **10-14€**. This isn't the first time that the "real adults" have introduced me to a seemingly unapproachable establishment that ultimately turned out to be reasonably priced. I can imagine tactfully utilizing this location in the future in order to put up a front of fanciness while on a date.

Contact info

[Facebook]
[Website]

Where to find La Maruca

Address: Calle de Velázquez 54
Metro: Velasquez
Phone :917 81 49 69

You may also check out series on best first date ideas in Madrid:

[Flowers are nice, but this first date is better (part 1)]

[Chocolates are nice, but this first date is better (part 2)]

[Dating in Madrid for Foodies (part 3)]

StreetXO – An Eclectic Fusion of High and Low, East and West

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Address: Serrano, 52
Times: Sun 11:00 am – 12:00 am. Mon – Sat 10:00 am – 12:00 am.

There’s also a happening [Gourmet Experience at the Corte

Inglés at Callao with an outdoor rooftop terrace. Check out our previous article on it here.

Beauty Series for the Ladies: Madrid's Best Nail Salons

Getting ready for a dinner party or just need a relaxing moment to yourself? In that case, nothing's better than a **wonderful manicure and pedicure…**

In Madrid, you can have a mani-pedi in practically all hair salons and beauty centers. However, many of these places are often not the best, as they are either too fast or don't use the appropriate tools, plus hygiene can be really questionable. At **Naked**, we bring you **our list of great places for manicures and pedicures**.

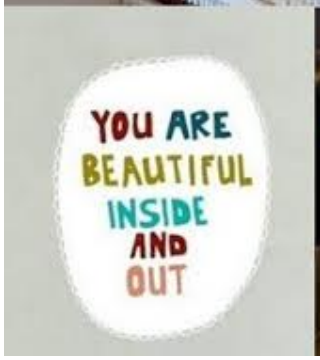
Apart from offering an enjoyable experience and stylish setting, these are my requirements for **mani-pedis**: cleanliness, value, quality products and professionalism. The first three places on this list are nail institutions here in Madrid—they throw nail parties and events, great for hen/bachelorette parties. **Happy mani-pedis girls!!**

(*all photos from each salon's Facebook)*

1. Mi Calle de Nueva York

MCNY

Mi Calle de Nueva York



My experience at **Mi Calle de Nueva York** has been **wonderful**. It reminds me of a loft in Soho. The brands they work with are the best on the market and the quality of their treatments is fabulous. It's a real luxury for your hands and feet.

Not to mention they also do **waxing, threading, and have just introduced a new "Eyebrow Shaping" service.** If you, like me, have no idea what that means, it's getting your eyebrows professionally done – waxed and tweezed and all – according to the shape of your face. They literally take out a ruler and start measuring.

- Manicura Express: 16€
- Manicura Normal: 28€
- Pedicura Express: 18€
- Pedicura Normal: 39€

Web
Where: Calle Barquillo 39
Hours: Tues-Fri, 12-21h. Sat-Sun: 12-20h. Closed on Mondays &

holidays.
Metro: Chueca

2. My Little Momó

MLM is located in the Salamanca district. Among the many things we love about this place is its **Parisian style**. If you wish to have a fabulous manicure or pedicure in an **elegant and sophisticated** place, this is your best choice.

- Basic Manicure: 18€ (20 mins)
- Price Brazilian Manicure: 28€ (30 mins)
- Express Pedicure: 20€ (20 mins)
- Brazilian Pedicure: 38€ (45 mins)

To see the rest of their treatments, visit their web.

Web
Where: c/ Villanueva, 21
Phone: 34 914 354 378
Email: info@mylittlemomo.es
Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:00-20:00. Saturdays, 9:00-19:00
Metro: Retiro

3. Nails Secret

If there's a place in Madrid that really **reminds me of NYC**, its **Nails Secret**. Once you enter, it's as if you were transported to a scene from **Sex & the City**. It's safe to say that Nails Secret meets our main requirements for a manicure.

- Express Manicure: 14€
- Manicure Basic: 19€
- Full Manicure: 29€
- Express Pedicure: 24€
- Complete Pedicure: 45€

Check out their web for for other services.

Web
Where: 2 locations: 1. Calle de García de Paredes, 78 & 2. Calle Hernani 68 (semiesq.c/Orense)
Phone: 1. 917 02 40 38 & 2. 91 533 67 43
Metro: 1. Gregorio Marañón & 2. Cuatro Caminos

4. Opium

In the Salamanca district, this place works with quality brands and has fantastic prices.

- Manicura express: 15€
- Manicura completa: 20€
- Pedicura express 30€
- Pedicura completa: 40€

Facebook
Where: Donde Duque de Sesto, 50
Hours: Monday to Friday de 11:00 a 20:00 / Saturday de 11:00 a 14:00
Metros: Goya & O'Donnell

5. Handmade Beauty

What a wonderful place!!! I only have great things to say about Handmade Beauty, which can be found in two locations, both in great neighborhoods when it comes to fashion and style—Salamanca & Chueca.

- **MANICURE**
- Re-polish (15 mins): 11€
- Slow & Go (25 mins): 15€
- Manicura a la carta (45 mins): 28€
- **PEDICURE**
- Re-polish (15 mins): 11€
- Slow & Go (35 mins)18€
- Pedicura a la carta (45 mins): 38€

Web

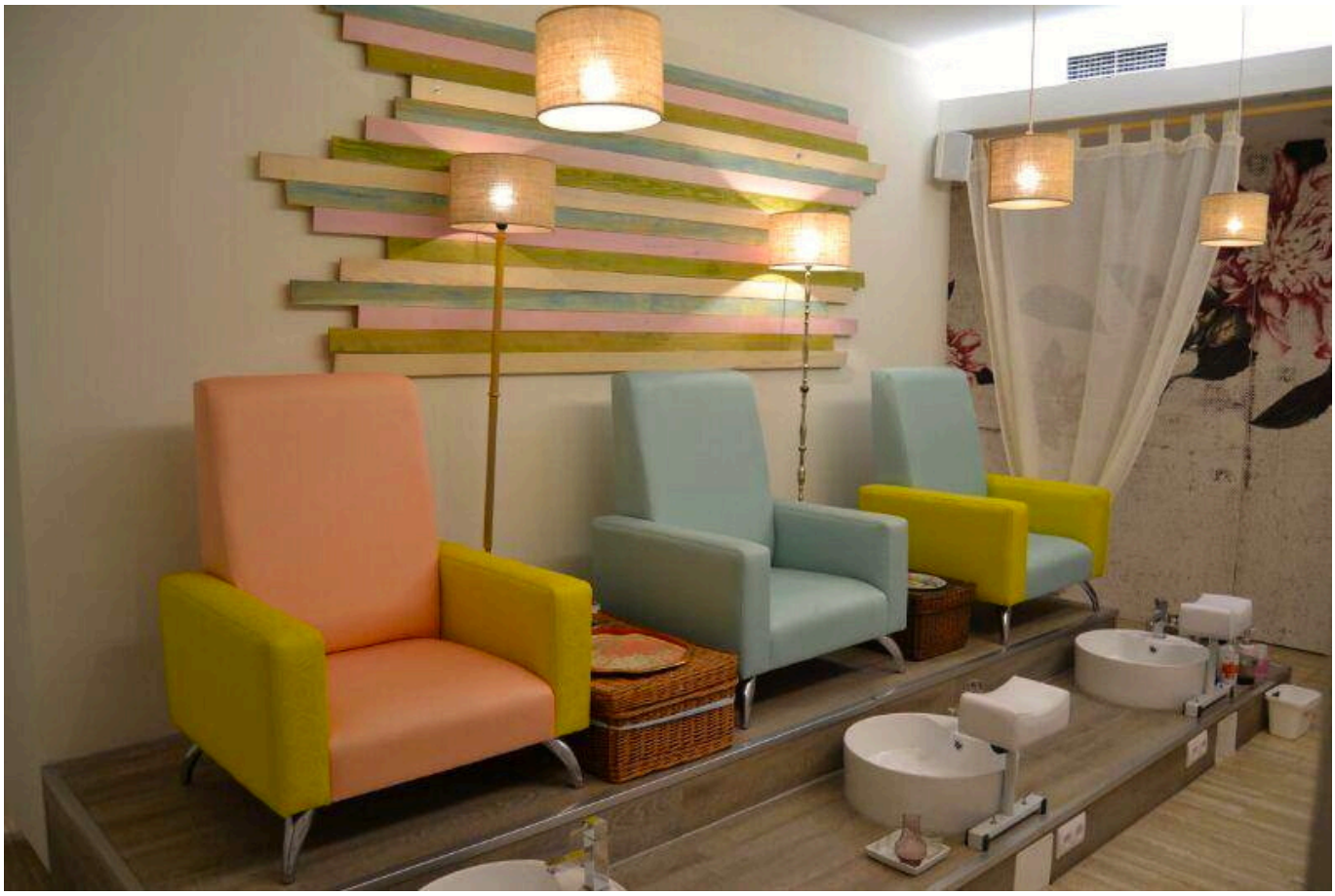
Where: 2 locations: 1. c/Lagasca, 58 & 2. c/ Conde de Xiquena, 17

Phone: 1. 91 435 94 18 & 2. 91 319 66 10

Hours: Mon-Fri, 10:30-20:30h. Sat, 11-18:30h

Metro: 1. Serrano and Velázquez & 2. Chueca

6. Beautyque Nail Bar



Fantastic mani-pedis! Located in Chueca, Madrid's trendiest area, this nail salon is very bohemian and the perfect place for a stylish manicure.

- Oferta Manicura & Pedicura: 45€
- Manicura Express 12€
- Pedicura Express: 16€
- Manicura Tradicional: 19€
- Pedicura Tradicional: 28€

Web
Where: c/ Pelayo 76
Phone:910 816 655
Metro: Chueca & Alonso Martínez

7. Ghetto Nailz

For the **non-traditional** ones who are **not afraid of experimenting** with their nails. If you are looking for a specific nail design, this is your place.

- Basic Manicure + color: 15€
- Basic Manicure + Nailart: 30€
- Basic Manicure + semi-permanent polish: 30€

Web
Where: Calle Barco 45
Phone: 630161187 & 666100880
Metro: Tribunal, Chueca or Gran Vía

Check out Round 2 of our recommendations for great mani-pedis in Madrid!

Know of any more? Let us know!

Tandoori Station, a raved about Indian restaurant

Having heard wonderful things about **Tandoori Station** from so many people, I finally went there the other night with a group of friends, one of whom had previously written about the restaurant in her own food blog, **Las Mesas de Vanessa**.

Tandoori Station is located in **Barrio Salamanca**. Now I must admit that I was reluctant to eat Indian food that far

from **calle Lavapiés** (if you don't know this street, it's lined with cheap and fun Indian restaurants that I like to call *curry row*). But **Tandoori Station** is different. One, it's higher-end and thus pricier, which is well worth it for its **generous portions** and **outstanding quality.** And two, **the service is very good**—you will be asked how everything is and given recommendations. If you go often enough, your name will be remembered and after-dinner shots will be on the house. And lastly, it's the kind of **comfortable place** where you can linger over drinks and dessert as long as you wish. So needless to say, **it lived up to my expectations indeed!!**

Just one last note before I talk about the food—**the décor** includes features of a train station (as its name implies) and they have a **spacious outdoor seating area** which was very alluring even though we decided to sit inside.

from Tandoori Station’s web

So here’s what we ordered:

To start, they give you the typical crispy bread with three sauces to choose from. To drink, we ordered Indian beer called **Crown** and Vanessa ordered her favorite, **salted lassi**. We then ordered two appetizers—**Samosas** (filled with potato, peas and cilantro seeds) and **Aloo Tikkia** (mini potato hamburgers with paneer cheese). The ingredients tasted fresh and delicious, plus the sauces added a great kick to each bite.

When it came to the main course, I was planning on ordering **lamb curry**, because my friend Alondra told me it was out of this world. But as I looked at the menu I instantly fell in love with **Murghi Ki Balti** (curried chicken with yogurt sauce, tomato, cilantro, anis and other spices). It was really nice, but I still want to go back for the lamb!

Murghi Ki Balti chicken curry

We shared several other dishes too. Our table was full of colours and smells, and it took some creativity as to what sauce and rice to mix with what chicken or vegetable. We had **Murgh Ka Tikka** (marinated tandoori chicken) which I liked even more than the **Murghi Ki Balti.**

Murgh Ka Tikka (marinated tandoori chicken)

curried spinach

We also ordered **Kashmir Ka Pulau** (rice dish with raisins, nuts, and saffron)**, curried spinach, aubergines** and **Madras Wali Machli** (swordfish curry, mildly spicy with a touch of coconut milk), and some **naan bread** too, of course. What can I say? It was all delicious! I don’t think you can go wrong with anything here.

Madras Wali Machli swordfish

Kashmir Ka Pulau rice

Although I've only been here once, my friends have been back many times and say they've always enjoyed it thoroughly. So if you're looking for **great quality Indian food in Madrid**, I would definitely recommend **Tandoori Station**. It's especially **good for groups** (I noticed that many of the tables around us were either large groups of families or friends, and there was plenty of space). **Do make a reservation!**

Web
Facebook
Address: c/ José Ortega y Gasset 89-91
Phone: 914 01 22 28
Price Range: (20-30€)

Lateral, my go-to restaurant

Whenever my husband and I are in the mood to go out for **a good dinner for a good price**, **Lateral** is our spot. It's also proven to be the most successful restaurant when it comes to taking out friends and family visiting us in Madrid, which we do quite often.

Before I go on, I must admit that **Lateral** is a restaurant chain (**a chain!**), with a handful of locations. But it's definitely the good kind that makes you rethink what that means. **Spanish cuisine** can be very heavy, especially if you're not used to it. Somehow, however, **Lateral** has taken what I think are **the best parts of Spanish food** and tweaked them to make them pleasant for absolutely **all tastebuds**. That's why this is my go-to restaurant.

In addition, all their locations have spacious *terrazas* (**outdoor seating areas**) with heaters in the winter and fans in the summer, making it hard to resist at any time

of year.

You are looking at the best tosta ever… with grilled pork tenderloin and melted brie

My favorite thing to order here is the ***tosta de solomillo con queso brie*** (pork tenderloin with melted brie on toast). My husband, James, always orders the same, but with ***cebolla caremilzada*** *(*caramelized onions). One time, James had his extended family from California visiting; two teenage girls and their parents with several food preferences to take into consideration. Out of all the restaurants we took them to, **Lateral** was by far their favorite. They especially loved the ***gazpacho*** because they were given the platter of freshly diced vegetables so they could garnish it themselves. And of course, they too fell in love with the ***tostas.***

For something light, you should try the ***gazpacho, tartar de aguacate con salmon*** (fresh avocado topped with salmon, tomato and chives) and the ***tosta de salmon con queso brie*** (smoked salmon and brie cheese on a slice of toasted bread).

tosta de salmon con brie

tartar de aguacate con salmon

Although the Spanish passion for **croquettes** is not always understood by foreigners, **las croquetas de jamón** are a must here too, as are the ***albóndigas*** (meatballs). Since I always order them both, last week I decided to venture out a bit and went for the **mini-hamburgers** instead, and wow, that was a good choice. They're served with a reduced **Pedro Ximenez** (sherry) sauce which you can sop up with bread.

mini hamburguesas con reducción de Pedro Ximenez (sherry reduction)

One of our latest and most surprising discoveries was the **tortilla de patata** (Spanish potato and egg omelette). This Spanish staple is so common that it had never occurred to us to order it at **Lateral**. But don't be fooled, please do try their **tortilla de patata** right away. It's really one of the best I've had in Madrid.

the tortilla de patata, a surprisingly delicious Spanish staple: potato and egg omelette

And when it comes to dessert, I recommend the **tiramisu,** the **torrijas** (a very traditional Spanish version of bread pudding; a slice of bread soaked in milk and honey, then fried and topped with whipped cream and ice cream) and you should also try the **apple crumble**. Again, this was a surprise. Never would I have thought that apple crumble could be so good (I’ve had it many times and it’s usually just not my cup of tea. Here, though, it truly was).

Apple and cranberry crumble topped with vanilla ice cream, to die for

To drink, I usually order ***tinto de verano*** (a great spin on sangría) which is a cold mix of red wine and a sweet Spanish seltzer called ***casera.*** During the winter, I almost always share a bottle of wine with friends. Last time the waiter recommended the **Finca Vieja Reserva from La Mancha** for 12E, which was very much worth it.

Price range: 10-20E per person
Web
They have various locations in Madrid, but the two I go to are:

C/ Fuencarral, 43
Tel: 91 531 68 77

Plaza de Santa Ana, 12
Tel: 91 420 15 82