

California vibes at Clima Cafecito

A little over a year before COVID hit, I bought a flat. A tiny space, but a space to call my own nonetheless. I remember flat hunting with my Mum and her telling me: 'Choose the flat, or the location—but you can't have both.' And to be fair, she was right.

So I opted for the location and plumped for a piso on Ponzano. It meant that what I sacrificed on space, I made up for through *ponzaning*—being out and about on my street felt like a permanent holiday.

However, fast forward to lockdown, I can't lie, I absolutely hated it. I questioned my choice of having purchased a bijou (read, small) flat daily. Cohabiting within 30 metres is no joke.

But as Madrid slowly starts to creep back to normality, Chamberí is well and truly back to being the barrio that I know and love. So much so, that new cafes, bars and terraces are opening up with as much regularity as Boris Johnson contradicts himself.

Discovering that [Clima Cafecito](#), a gorgeous new cafe, had appeared right around the corner, was as welcome as a caña on a hot summer's day.



Martin, the owner, hails from Argentina via California and Lisbon, and the diverse menu reflects these influences. A spot

for brunch or lunch, the menu made it nigh on impossible to decide, with everything sounding delicious.

After much deliberation, as 'indecisive' should be my middle name, I opted for the chicken parm 'comfort' sandwich, while my fella went for eggs sunny side up, with avocado and sourdough toast. Paired with a lemon cooler, great coffee and dulce de leche cookies.



We left with full tummies, but eager to come back and work our way through the remainder of the menu. Other tasty morsels on offer were ceviche, breakfast tacos (with the option to make them vegan) and a Cuban sandwich that also called my attention.

Aside from the food which couldn't be faulted, I loved the space. Not to dwell on my compact casa, but it's essentially the opposite of my abode. It's a spacious bright and light space that conjures up the feeling of being beach side in Santa Monica, or generally just somewhere by the sea.



They also boast a small terraza, which is likely to become a popular place for an afterwork beer, or a chilled glass of

wine as the temperatures creep up. Having chatted to Martin about future plans, there are also plans afoot for potential wine tastings which I've earmarked for my diary already.



Everyone loves to have places in their neighbourhood that feel like an extension of their home. The kind of place you can

rock up to solo with just a book for company, the kind of place you can swing by knowing that you'll always grab a cosy corner, and some kind of sweet treat.



I have a feeling that Clima Cafecito will become just that, a home from home for when my four walls start to feel a tad

claustrophobic. So that's where you'll find me from now on, cookie in hand, tanning on the terrace.

Clima Cafecito

- [Website](#) & IG: [@climacafecito](#)
 - Calle de Alonso Cano, 51
 - Metros: Alonso Cano or Ríos Rosas
-

Proper Sound Cafe: Toma Cafe's newest venue combines local DJs with natural wines

Are you familiar with Toma Cafe? It's a craft coffee shop that has made quite the buzz with locals and expats alike, and has been [featured in Naked Madrid](#) more than once for its quality coffee and hip vibes. But Santiago, the owner of Toma Cafe, has a new venture in Toma's very own *tostador*. The coffee shop has partnered up with local DJs to bring you [Proper Sound Cafe](#).

Proper Sound Cafe (also considered Toma Cafe 3) is quite new, opening its doors in July, though the idea—if the Instagram is an indication—was conceived pre-Covid days. Open only a few days a week as of now (get there Thursday-Saturday from 20-24), the *tostador* is small and intimate.



Photo from [Proper Sound Cafe's IG](#)

Wooden benches line the sides with extra stools in place for seating. In the back you can see the high-quality espresso machine used for making their infamous lattes, and of course the machines used to make their own beans. Then, there's the DJ booth, framed by rows of vinyls and bottles of their wine selection.

"I wanted to bring people together with good coffee, good wine, good cheeses, good music," Santiago said when asked about the conception of Proper Sound Cafe as he sipped from a glass of *tinto*.

And he's not wrong. Besides being able to enjoy live music again (a missed form of communion amid the pandemic), this is

complemented by their menu of artisanal beer and natural wines.

Natural wines are a traditional way of making wine, fermented, and with less additives. Having gone a few times now, I've tried all 3 of their offerings: white, red, and orange. And all three have surprised me with their depth of flavor and range. The waiters (or are they still considered baristas?) are knowledgeable about their wine menu. Just tell them if you want something *suave* or *fuerte* or what flavors you enjoy, and they'll point you in the right direction. It led me to one of my favorites, Gilda from the Tiago Teles winery in Lisbon, Portugal, that was a mix of three types of grapes. Don't forget to try their cheese board or their fresh hummus served with crackers.

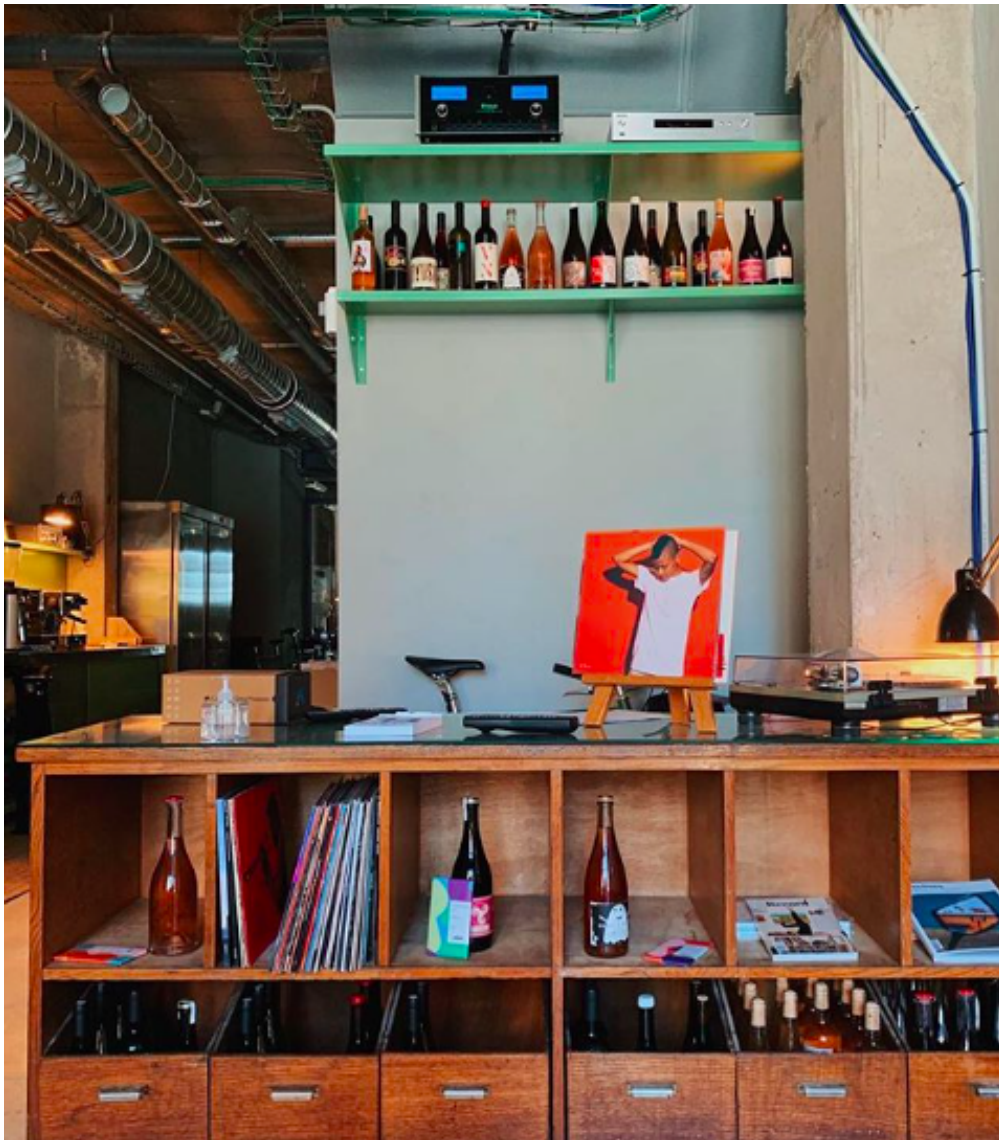


Photo from [Proper Sound Cafe's IG](#)

As for the music, Santiago goes with local DJs, some of them even close friends. The music ranges from classics to trip-hop to jazz (classic and future), and everything in between. The night that I went, [@Giansta](#) was playing. I sipped on my Gilda with my friend enjoying her wine choice as D'Angelo's 'Feel Like Makin' Love' and Billie Holiday's 'You Go to My Head' echoed from the overhead speakers.

The *discotecas* may be closed, but here at Proper Sound Cafe, I caught sight of a few people dancing when the music shifted towards disco and hip hop, with Beyonce's 'Drunk in Love' playing among the mix.

I spoke with Daniel, one of the baristas at Toma Cafe, on one of my first visits here, and asked him what their plans were. They hoped to expand towards daytime hours (which it seems they may be starting according to their Instagram), which is a great idea. I can only see this venue becoming more popular as time goes by and the cafe itself is quite intimate.

Check out their Instagram where they post updates on type of music to expect for the upcoming weekend, the names of the DJs, and any change in hours.

Proper Sound Cafe:

- Instagram: [@propersoundcafe](#)
- Address: Calle de Raimundo Lulio, 16, 28010, Madrid
- Metro: Line 2 (Iglesias)
- Schedule: Thurs–Sat: 8pm–12am

By Jessica Ramos

Jessica is an LA-native freelance writer and teacher currently based in Madrid, Spain. When she's not busy writing, she's taking photos, watching horror films, and searching for rock bars around the city. Visit Jessica's [website](#) and follow her on instagram: [@artistandthecity](#)

Bo Coffee: Wake up and smell the café in Chamberí

For the few of us left in Madrid, we've still gotta eat. Sniffing out a decent brunch is always high up on my to-do list because *and please don't hate me* I don't particularly rate a Spanish breakfast. I enjoy a good *tortilla de patata* as much as the next person, but my favourite breakfasts have always been devoured with gusto whilst on holidays in the US. Pancakes, waffles, eggs... that's what I'm after. And if that floats your boat, Bo Coffee is where you need to get yourself down to.



Located just off Calle Ponzano on the same street as new hipster fave [MO de Movimiento](#), Bo is a complete newbie in the

area – it had been open a mere four days when I stumbled across it. Hard to miss with its pocket-sized terrace, it's a gem in an area which lacks many places to get a great cup of Joe.



We ordered two savoury dishes followed by a a generous stack of pancakes. My boyfriend is a veggie, and he often struggles to find menus with plenty of options. But Bo had loads. He opted for shakshuka that was spicy, rich and came with a mound of feta which, in my opinion, makes everything better.



I had a Croque Monsieur which was nestled against brown butter – something that I'd never known I needed in my life. It tasted almost fudge like and was the perfect accompaniment against salty ham and melted cheese. However, we saved the best for last: a tower of light fluffy pancakes piled high with spiced apple, roasted pistachios, coconut crumble and rose petals. I'm salivating as I type, they were epic. To that end, they all but caused a fight between me and the fella as we rushed to inhale them.



Laura, the chef hailing from Venezuela (but having spent time working in both Chicago and Miami) knows good food. She explained that the food is locally sourced and that they've strived to come up with a crowd pleasing menu that will change seasonally. For instance, the pancake toppings will be mixed up and I am here for working my way through whatever's next.



Cute and cosy, warm and welcoming, I can't wait to make Bo my Saturday morning go-to post-bootcamp spot. It just means I savour every delicious morsel relatively guilt free.

Bo Coffee

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@bocoffeemadrid](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Espronceda, 16
- **Metro:** Ríos Rosas or Alonso Cano

By Cat Powell ([@littlemissmadrid](#))

Also check out Cat's other new favorite:

[M0 de Movimiento: the sustainable star of Madrid's restaurant scene](#)

M0 de Movimiento: the sustainable star of Madrid's restaurant scene

For those in the know, Madrid is not really a city to visit in July and August. To be frank, it all but becomes a ghost town. This is largely due to sweltering temperatures that have Madrileños bolting for the beach – 41 degrees and counting this week. However, 2020 is not your average year (slight understatement there). But with people not upping sticks for the summer as freely as before, for those of us that are sweating in the city, we can at least take advantage of getting reservations at hotspots more easily.

In spite of the city feeling quieter than a church mouse, there's one place that has still proven very tricky when it comes to getting a table – that place is M0 de Movimiento. Tucked away on a rather inconspicuous street, it is the place

to see and be seen. A claim that I'm sure will surpass just the summer season, and become a Chamberí cult classic.

The founders have put sustainability and social responsibility at the forefront of their business.



My organic aloe vera was served with a tonic hailing from Sevilla.

First things first, M0 de Movimiento is not your bog standard restaurant serving up standard fare. What makes it unique in a saturated market (because let's face it, Madrid is not short on trendy places to *tapear*) is that **everything is organic and sourced from within Spain. They also hire staff who are at risk of social exclusion, and sustainability is one of their pillars.**

In all instances, the team at M0 de Movimiento is working hard to find locally produced ingredients and not just paying lip service to the current trend to be hip, healthy and holistic. The menu has changed during the four visits that I've made (I told you it's become a real fave) and the always-adapting menu reflects which foods are available and in season.

Aside from the ethics of the restaurants being on point, it also helps that the food is downright delicious.

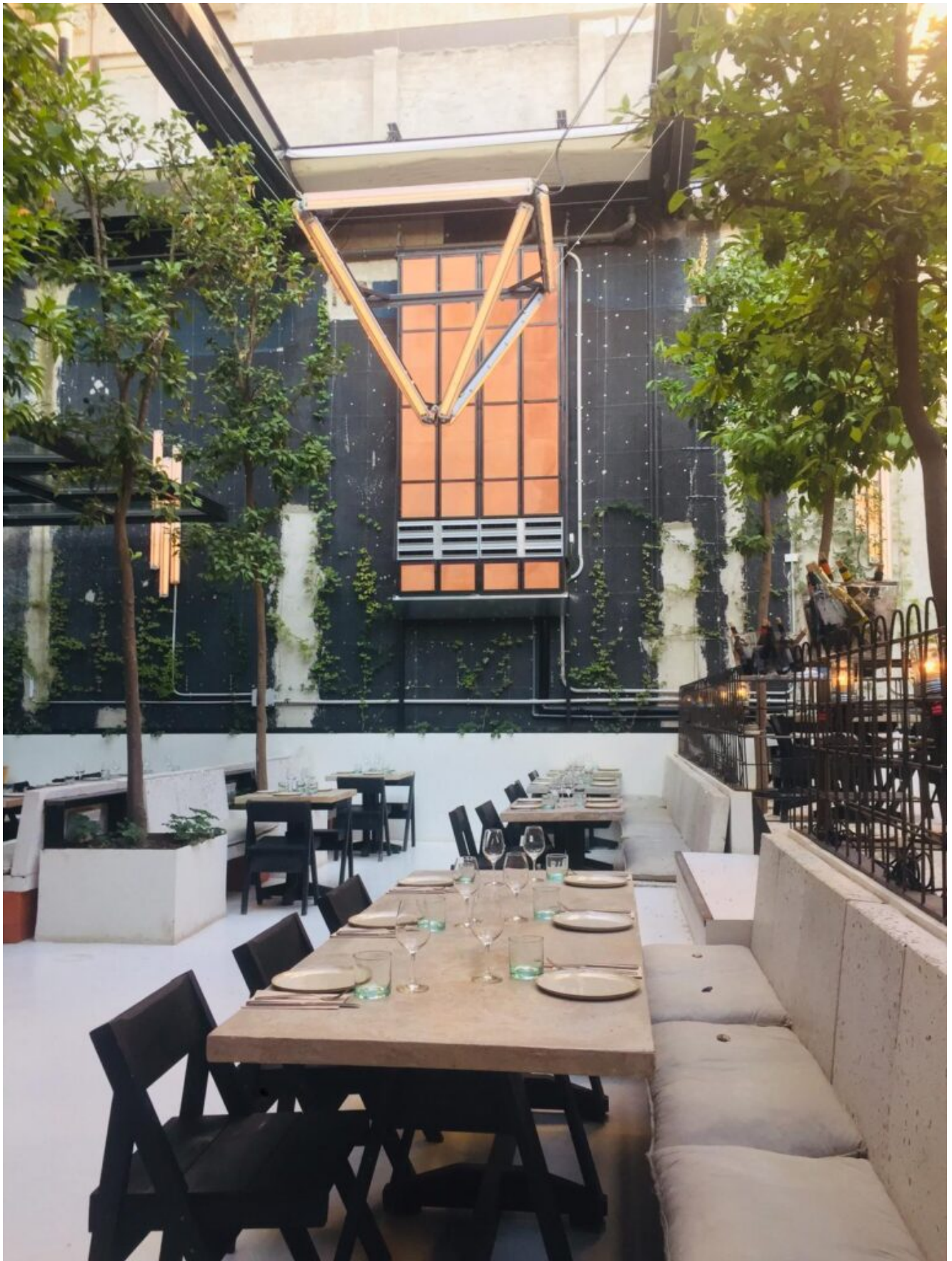


I'm slowly but surely working my way through all that's on offer. Current highlights include the sun-dried tomato and mozzarella ravioli which was wafer thin and melts in the mouth. As well as courgettes fritters which we had to order more of, to avoid a tussle at the table – they were that good.



However, on each visit I have tried a different pizza, and having just returned from Puglia in Italy the stakes were high. I can confirm that the pizzas were every bit as stunning as the decor (more of that later). Napoli-esque in style with soft doughy bases and a whole host of toppings (I plumped for asparagus and Serrano ham) my appetite happily satiated but still with room to sample their lip smackingly good tiramisu.

It's striking, like walking into a secret garden.



Now onto the decor. For someone who religiously pours over Architectural Digest, M0 de Movimiento is a masterclass in

chic and understated style. You can dine out under the stars at their huge terrace, which captures that perfect golden-hour light. There's also a smaller area of the restaurant overlooking the talented chefs inside.

It is literally the perfect place to while away the hours in the heart (and the heat) of the city.



As I said, it does feel somewhat of a secret, irrespective of the burgeoning waitlist, which makes me almost reluctant to share this locale (*it's a short five-minute stroll from my flat). And I do worry that when the cat's fully out of the bag, its rapidly growing popularity is going to go through the roof.

Post lockdown I couldn't wait to dine out. Eager to dress up and enjoy the thrill of perusing a menu (and the pleasure of not washing up), M0 de Movimiento didn't disappoint when it came to that inaugural dinner.

Set to become the darling of Madrid's dining scene, I suggest you make a booking before it's busier than the Bernabéu on match day *pre-lockdown life of course.

M0 de Movimiento

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@modemovimiento](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Espronceda 34
- **Metros:** Ríos Rosas, Gregorio Marañón or Alonso Cano

By Cat Powell (IG: [@littlemissmadrid](#))

These pics were taken by Cat and by her friend Paul ([@pkear](#))

Against all odds: How 4 new small businesses in Madrid are staying afloat

Small businesses in Madrid are more at risk than ever of having to shut their doors. And perhaps the most unlucky of all are the ones that opened up just a short time before the lockdown—some only a week before.

Despite having the odds against them, these four newly-opened businesses are putting on a brave face and determined to keep their shops open and their dreams alive. Here are their stories on how they've managed to stay afloat throughout the lockdown and how they're continuing to fight the good fight. They also offer sage advice for other businesses on how to survive a global pandemic.

1. Naji Specialty Coffee



After working in the hospitality industry for 20 years—mainly in cafes as a barista—Naji Alasil dreamed of one day owning his own coffee shop. After spending months searching for the perfect place and doing extensive renovations, his dream came true when he opened Naji Specialty Coffee in the charming central neighborhood of Chamberí in January 2020.

Naji quickly grew popular with people flocking to the beautifully adorned shop to sip on delicious coffee and unique concoctions, such as lime espresso and Naji's famous pistachio latte.

Naji was only open for 40 days when Madrid went into lockdown. Obviously, this was a devastating blow after all of the time, money, and effort Naji spent to open up his dream cafe. However, he didn't lose hope.

"Of course I was sad that we went into lockdown straight away after I had opened. Nevertheless I was very happy that I

managed to open the cafe prior to the lockdown—at least I saw my dream realised. And I knew once the lockdown [was] lifted, my customers would come back. I just kept a very positive outlook altogether.”

As soon as businesses could start operating again, Naji jumped into full swing, serving takeaway coffee from 9am-9pm most days. He was one of the first coffee shops to reopen on a full-time schedule because he wanted to make up for time lost during the lockdown. Slowly but surely he’s rebuilding the momentum he had before the lockdown began.

Undoubtedly, his positive attitude and hustle were his biggest tools for getting through the lockdown and helping see Naji Specialty Coffee through to the new world.

His advice for small businesses?

Prioritize your customers and their safety, be patient, take each day as it comes, and never give up no matter the obstacle at hand (even a global pandemic!)

- [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle del Cardenal Cisneros, 39
- Metro: Bilbao

2. Tidbit



Canadian business partners Shawn and Arthur had successfully been running a North American-style coffee and dessert shop in Alicante for five years when they decided to pack up and head for the big city. They moved to Madrid, rebranded their business from Canada Cupcake Café to Tidbit, and opened shop in Fall 2019.

They began acquiring a loyal customer base who would come to enjoy their array of delicious treats—largely vegan—including cookies, cakes, ice cream, brownies, and cinnamon rolls as well as specialty coffee and teas. Their reputation for being one of Madrid's best suppliers of treats (vegan and regular) was swiftly growing, and then COVID-19 brought momentum to a halt.

Arthur and Shawn were greatly concerned about their business and the economy in general, but tried to focus on moving forward instead of on fear. They shifted their focus to the takeaway part of the business and polished their online ordering system to accommodate the lack of walk-ins due to the lockdown. They also offered their products through popular takeaway services such as UberEats and Deliveroo, and in the later quarantine phases began to start up takeaway service.

Now that Madrid is no longer under lockdown, businesses are slowly coming back to life and Tidbit has once again opened its doors for customers to pop in for a treat in their tiny but cozy interior or call ahead for pick-up or an eco-friendly bike delivery.

Shawn and Arthur hope the love and support for small businesses only gets stronger, especially now when these shops that make our cities so special need it more than ever.

Their advice to other businesses during these trying times?

“Plan ahead, be aware of the time needed to recover, focus on the offer and demand in your area. This is the ‘chair swap’ game, when all businesses close, relocate or rebrand.”

- [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle del Dr. Fourquet, 37
- Metro: Lavapiés

3. EatMyTrip



After finding success opening her first restaurant in Barcelona two years ago, Evgeniya Sukhacheva decided to branch out and open the second location of her trendy brunch spot, EatMyTrip, in Madrid. Evgeniya announced the opening of the second location in the beginning of March 2020—days before coronavirus sent Madrid and Barcelona into an indefinite lockdown.

Like many people, Evgeniya initially thought that the media was blowing the situation out of proportion and that normal life would soon resume. However, when it became apparent that the situation was serious and that the city would be locked down for a while, Evgeniya and her husband started to think of creative ways they could keep their business afloat.

The first idea they came up with was to start an online shop with delivery options for their Barcelona location which already had a following. Then they shifted to takeaway options before being allowed to reopen with limited capacity, a smaller menu, and a two-person staff (just them). Now, EatMyTrip's employees who were under *ERTE* (furlough) are slowly being incorporated back into the Barcelona business while Evgeniya is trying to figure out how they'll be able to open Madrid location and get it off the ground, (while also focusing on paying the rent, bills, and the loans for both locations).

Although the Madrid location remains closed indefinitely, Evgeniya hopes to be able to open it one day soon. In the meantime, the Barcelona location (C. del Consell de Cent, 378) is back to 70% capacity with more customers returning everyday.

Despite all of the adversities, Evgeniya remains positive and offers wisdom for other businesses in similar situations:

“Nothing lasts forever. We can plan something, but life can change everything. It’s [best to] take everything as it is, and try to smile at it, otherwise you will go mad. If you already created a successful business you’ll be able to do it again in the future. Just don’t lose yourself, and don’t forget about your health—it’s the most important thing.”

- [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle de la Moreria, 11
- Metro: La Latina

4. Mazál



Tamara Cohen—originally from Philadelphia, USA—moved to Madrid in 2015 to teach English. She soon settled into a side gig baking hard-to-find American treats such as pumpkin pies and bagels and selling them to fellow expatriates before opening up an online shop to the public. Her small shop, Bruja's Bakery, quickly became the go-to place for American treats—especially bagels, which are hard to find abroad (and of good quality).

After making the spontaneous leap from English teacher to expert at-home bagel maker, she finally turned her side hustle into a full-time business with the opening of Mazál Bagels & Café in the central neighborhood of Chamberí in January 2020.

The opening of Mazál was highly anticipated and instantly a hit. The cozy brick-interior eatery would fill up fast with people eager to dive into a bagel brunch complete with mimosas

and coffee, as well as delicious challah, cookies, and cakes. However, when lockdown fell over Madrid in early March, Mazál was forced to shut its doors and think of a plan B.

Like many people, Tamara initially didn't think the situation was that serious or would last long. But as the situation quickly became grave, she became worried about her ability to pay the bills and stay above water.

Mazál was closed for a few days before they jumped into action and hired a delivery driver and started taking orders over social media, which became their saving grace. Their delivery driver, Juan Pablo, was with them for over three months, and proved integral to Mazál's survival in lockdown, covering over 3300 km doing deliveries during the three months.

Tamara says that before all of this, Mazál was primarily focused on growing as fast as possible, which meant doing as much as they could at once. However, priorities have since shifted—Mazál has now drastically simplified what they do which has helped them to stay organized and reach more people.

Although these circumstances have been anything but ideal for a new business, Tamara has remained positive, upbeat, and grateful:

“This is a strange time for everyone. At times, it's hard not to think that things might be 'weird' like this for a very, very long time. But if we have learned anything, it's to remember that things are weird for *everyone* and to take it one day at a time. You're doing great, we are all doing great, and we will get through it together. And thank you to [everyone]

from the bottom of our hearts for [the support].”

A positive attitude, gratitude, and resilience are undoubtedly a recipe for success.

- [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle de Alonso Cano, 30
- Metro: Alonso Cano

By Mary Kresge ([LinkedIn](#) & IG: [@marelixb](#))

You may also like:

- [5 Best places to order vegan and vegetarian takeout during lockdown](#)
- [Maintaining the momentum: Supporting Madrid's Black-owned businesses](#)
- [Eat Out Madrid's top 5 places for takeaway and delivery](#)
- [Visiting Madrid's museums in times of corona](#)

Eat Out Madrid's top 5 places

for takeaway and delivery right now

It's been over 60 days since we've been able to go out and enjoy sitting and eating in our favourite places in Madrid. We've all gone through (or maybe you're still going through) the phase of cooking up a storm in the kitchen. I don't know about you... but I'm at a point where I've lost all the motivation, plus I'm so messy in the kitchen.

I'm Valentina, Founder of [Eat Out Madrid](#), an online community of over 6,700 food lovers on the search to find the best places to eat and drink in the capital. I started building the community back in August 2016 when I moved to Madrid. After feeling overwhelmed by all the choices around me, I thought – who better to ask than the expat community who are already here?

Almost four years later, we've grown immensely with people from all nationalities, some not even based in Madrid but may have plans in the future to visit or even those who used to live here wanting to stay connected with the incredible food and drink scene it has to offer.

Now of course, under lockdown and with the current restrictions, we haven't been able to support those restaurants we know and love by visiting them in person. But there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Many places have implemented delivery or continued to do so either through one of the many delivery apps or with their own service, and this has literally saved me, especially on the tough days.

[Eat Out Madrid](#) has always been fueled by its members sharing their recommendations and favourite places and now this couldn't be more important. We've even been [compiling a document to share the best delivery places](#), as well as how they deliver and their delivery areas to support each other.

I, of course, have my favourites too, so here are five of my go-to places for takeaway and delivery in Madrid right now:

1. Mazál Bagels



If you're craving some New York-style bagels, hand rolled and baked fresh each day, you have to try Mazál. They have so many different types to choose from (I love the everything bagels) and you can even order bagel sandwiches – cutting out any time

in the kitchen. If you want a cheeky treat after, be sure to order some of their chocolate chip cookies. They even sell a selection of America food products, too.

Note: you need to [order them in advance](#) to be picked up (you can't just walk in and take them on the spot).

Find out more about [Mazál Bagels' story in our previous Naked Madrid article](#)

- Instagram: [@mazalbagels](#)
- Delivery: Own delivery service. [Place orders through their website](#)
- Takeaway available
- Address: Calle Alonso Cano, 30
- Phone: 910 54 95 66

2. Asian Army



In the mood for a taste of Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore or Malaysia? Then Asian Army has you covered with an array of Southeast Asian dishes to keep that hunger at bay. They're currently operating out of a location in Legázpi (not their restaurant in Mercado Anton Martín) and even have a special "Hari Raya Eid" hamper for those celebrating at home this month.

You can also listen to my recent interview with the owner of Asian Army on [the new Eat Out Madrid podcast](#).

▪ Instagram: [@asianarmymadrid](#)

- Delivery: Uber Eats (3km from Legázpi)
- Address: Calle de Santa Isabel, 5 inside Mercado Anton Martin, Planta Baja, puesto 7-11
- Phone: 680 54 39 42

3. Pizzeria La Especial



Hot, fresh, tasty pizza... This is our local pizzeria and it's been our go-to Friday/Saturday night #cbf dinner. It's a stand-alone place with 3 or 4 employees and the co-owner delivers most of their pizzas. If you order through their website, you can get 15% off your first order.

- [Facebook](#)
- Delivery: Own delivery, [call or place orders through their website](#)
- Takeaway available
- Address: Avenida de la Gran Vía de Hortaleza, 68
- Phone: 680 54 39 42

4. Bite Me: Halo Artisans



Situated near Legázpi, this small café specializes in vegan donuts or “halos” as they call them. And they add two new flavours each week. You can even purchase their donut holes covered in cinnamon (they might even throw a few in with your order if you’re lucky). If you’re a super fan like me,

purchase their merchandise too to support them even more.

Find out more about [Bite Me: Halo Artisans' story in our previous Naked Madrid article](#)

- Instagram: [@biteme_madrid](#)
- Delivery: Own delivery, [order online through their website](#)
- Takeaway available
- Address: Plaza Beata María Ana de Jesús, 22
- Phone: 910 54 02 09

5. A'Fenestella



From fresh pasta to their wood-oven pizzas, if you're looking for the authentic taste of Italy, this is your place. My favourite is the Tagliatelle Bolognese – I've tried replicating this at home and nothing comes close!

- Delivery: [Deliveroo](#)
- Takeaway available
- Address: Calle de Torquemada, 25
- Phone: [913 82 56 80](#)

By Valentina Ruffoni ([LinkedIn](#)), founder of Eat

Out Madrid

- Join Valentina's online communities [Eat Out Madrid](#) & [Eat In Madrid](#), to take part in the conversation about the city's best food and drink options, and support local businesses while at it!
- [Check out this ongoing list of the best local spots that are open for takeout and delivery in Madrid](#)
- Also read [Valentina's lockdown diary](#) on Naked Madrid and her article our sister publication The Content Mix on how she [grew multiple online communities](#)

Check out more Naked Madrid articles on great delivery and takeaway places in Madrid:

- [5 best places to order vegan and vegetarian takeout during lockdown in Madrid](#)
- [Order pizza from Lab 84 and take the sting out of lockdown](#)
- [La Ración: Supplying Madrid with Spanish comfort foods during the lockdown](#)

Want to recommend any other delivery and takeout options in Madrid? [Get in touch with us!](#)

Mazál Bagels – authentic New York bagels in Madrid, finally

Whenever I would visit my home to New York my primary mission would be to devour as many real bagels as possible with a strong sense of urgency knowing that I would not be able to find them in my regular day-to-day life in Madrid. That has been the case until now.

I learned of [Mazál Bagels](#) via word of mouth, this new establishment opened in Mid-January. I jumped at the opportunity to interview its founder, Tamara Cohen from Philadelphia, to showcase her inspiring pivot from English Teaching to baking and entrepreneurship.



Tamara originally arrived in Madrid as many of us do, to teach English via the *Auxiliar de Conversacion* program back in 2015.

Upon realizing that Madrid was lacking in the area of authentic pumpkin pies at Thanksgiving, Tamara filled this niche by selling homemade pumpkin pies and other baked goods to the international community, taking orders at first via social media and later a website devoted to her craft called Bruja's Bakery.



After the Thanksgiving influx of demand came to an end, Tamara contemplated other products that she could bake that would appeal to her audience year-round. With her creative spark ignited, she became a self-taught bagel baker, selling bagels made at home three at a time in the toaster of her tiny Madrid apartment. Tamara thrived in the digital space, releasing bagel-themed content to social media to garner visibility. Demand for her bagels skyrocketed and her small-scale operation quickly became a full-time job. This permitted Tamara to step away from the teaching sector to focus on her passion for gastronomy.



As an American Jew of Sephardic origins, Tamara was eligible for and proceeded to obtain Spanish nationality via the Law of Return after a complex three-year legal process. Now a citizen of her adopted country, Tamara set forth to expand her baking operations by opening Mazál Bagels in Madrid's Chamberí neighborhood. Her storefront is equipped with a proper commercial kitchen, enabling the production of bagels in larger batches to satiate the masses with comfort food.



The origin of the name Mazál is that Tamara wanted her business to have a name that was easy to pronounce in both languages while holding cultural significance. “Mazel” is the Hebrew word for “luck” and mazál (spelled with the accent) is the Sephardic pronunciation of the word.

Tamara wants to make it very clear that true bagels have a long fermentation period and are then boiled and baked. “Bread with a hole in it is not a bagel.” As an ambassador of Jewish gastronomy, Tamara’s bagels are crafted with love, and the sandwiches she prepares are built with precision, with their presentation in mind.



I sampled an everything bagel, served with lox, capers, onions, and plain cream cheese. This bagel's texture and flavor lived up to my expectations, outshining any competitors whose works that I've sampled here in Madrid or during my time in Paris.



Mazál offers the following cream cheeses: Herbal with dill and parsley, salmon, chive, and honey cinnamon nut. Her bagel selection includes sesame, poppy seed, plain, everything, and cinnamon raisin with daily special bagels such as jalapeño cheddar, onion, garlic, pumpkin, gingerbread, and blueberry.

There's a learning curve as Spanish people have heard of this product, but are yet to try it themselves and don't know how to properly eat it. Recently I had a customer come in and for a pan con tomate on a bagel. I wasn't offering this but it sounded like a good idea. I would like to find creative ways to blend the bagel with Spanish gastronomy.

As I sat in the freshly opened shop, many joyous anglophones entered, thrilled to savor Tamara's culinary gems and Spanish people passing by would peer in to see what all of the commotions were about. Tamara would charismatically explain to curious locals what this niche foreign product is, in a flawless Spanish accent, which can be attributed to her

Madrileño partner who played an instrumental role in navigating the red-tape of opening a business.

What became clear was that at Mazál Bagels, Americans, local Spaniards, and the international community can gather in an environment where they can feel at home.



Mazál Bagels

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#), IG: [@mazalbagels](#)
 - **Address:** Calle Alonso Cano, 30
 - **Metro:** Alonso Cano / Ríos Rosas
-

La Espumosa – a little bit of what you fancy (does you good)

Does anyone else find the run-up to Christmas just one big guilt-laden box of chocs? Surely it can't just be me? As soon as December 1st swings around, I struggle not to be reaching for the party favours and my booze intake sky rockets – well it 'tis the season. So in an attempt to not become 50% mulled wine, 50% *turrón*, I headed to La Espumosa, the new Chamberí hotspot which combines healthy grub and bubbles, of the champagne variety.



Myself and my vegetarian date (who is dragging a self-confused carnivore kicking and screaming into healthier habits) headed

out last Tuesday and found ourselves salivating over La Espumosa's menu. Juliette, the owner who coincidentally quit her day job to follow her dream of opening La Espumosa, has curated a menu that sits perfectly within the era of clean eating. These days millennials (much like myself) enjoy a tippie but then again, we also love an avo – everything in moderation is my mantra.

So to this end, the menu sounded delicious, but not dangerously calorific. We split the following offerings; sautéed veggies which provided an instant shot of virtuousness, a burrata with pesto, halloumi fingers (I could've eaten a bucketload of these) and La Espumosa's take on 'patas bravas' that was baked sweet potatoes with a vegan mayonnaise, which were less of the naughty, and a lot more of the nice.



In addition to the nutritious nosh, the cocktails were to die for (I wasn't polishing my halo the entire time, we definitely embraced the notion of 'a little bit of what you fancy does you good'). The waiter whipped us up a gin-based cocktail using my all-time favourite gin, G'vine and a yuzu-based bitter hailing from Japan which was dangerously more-ish. However, as it was a Tuesday evening and not a thirsty Thursday, we exercised a bit of self restraint. Come the

weekend though, La Espumosa is the perfect place to enjoy a hard-earned glass of champers to toast farewell to the working week.





One of the other somewhat unique aspects of La Espumosa in a city with more restaurants than you can shake a stick at, is

that the owner Juliette really wants the restaurant to become a social hub. There are already live music nights, fashion brunches and a whole host of events in the pipeline, even one of my own @littlemissmadrid mixers is pencilled in – so watch this space. And when Madrid edges its way out of its recent cold snap and people can feel their toes once again, I predict that the terraza will become quite the hotspot for Sunday morning brunches and post work cañas too.



La Espumosa looks set to to become my local, and not just for fizzy Fridays. It's hard to walk on by when a venue boasts a

menu that's going to leave you feeling great, rather than guilty. The decor, the food and indeed the concept got my corks popping *couldn't resist a champagne pun. And to this end, we all know there's only one thing better than a glass of champagne, a bottle.



2020 update: monthly brunches!

Given the healthy nature of La Espumosa, the Chamberí locale is now offering what is currently planned to be a HIIT workout followed by a healthy brunch. As La Espumosa does a great line in champagne, the combination of burpees and bubbles is sure to be an appealing one! One Sunday per month, you can workout for 30 minutes at the venue with a fully qualified UK personal trainer and then enjoy a delicious (and nutritious brunch) – ensuring that there's zero guilt about the calories. The brunch includes a healthy detox juice including green apple, cucumber, ginger and pineapple. A coffee of your choice meaning you get an endorphin and a caffeine hit. Followed by either scrambled eggs or avocado on toast. So don your leggings, grab a friend and put your Sunday to good use. Stay tuned to Naked Madrid for the date of the next one and kickstart your 2020 fitness goals.





La Espumosa

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@laespumosa.es](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia 60
- **Metro:** Iglesia

Beautiful blooms at Botanyco – a haven for flower fans in Madrid

Much to the dismay of my bank manager, it's a given that I spend pretty much all my cash on fashion and food. (Sorry if you're reading this folks, I promise the odd tenner gets bunged into savings). My monthly bank statement often reads like a roll call of where to shop and where to eat, but having bought a pad last year, there's definitely been a shift in my spends – from fashion to furniture and more noteworthy, given the theme of this post, now to flowers.



Over the past year I have gone hard on nesting. There's no such thing as too many cushions or candles in my book, and

blooms have become a weekly indulgence that I now pick up with the same level of regularity as I do milk, almond of course. This has largely been encouraged by the fabulous florist that's now within walking distance of my casa, Botanyco.





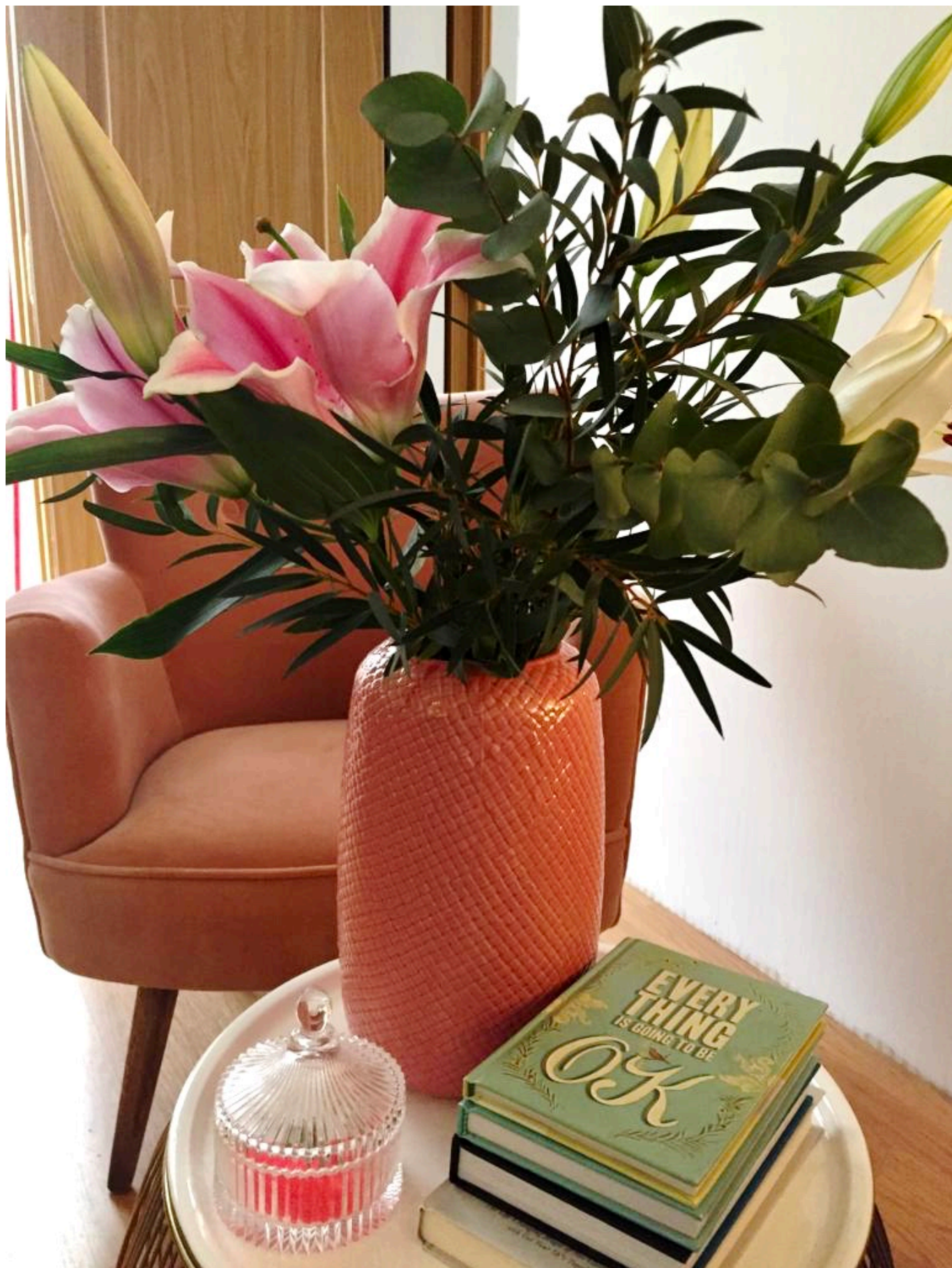
In a city which is often lacking in much other than fairly insipid-looking florals, Botanyco is a haven for flower fans

and has real pavement appeal. For a start, the shop itself is stunning. You almost feel like you're entering into someone's gorgeous garden thanks to the patio area at the back that's cutely concealed from street view.



Now if you like your flowers, this is your one-stop shop. They whip up bouquets, stock insta-friendly blooms such as peonies

(it can't just be my 'gram feed that's littered with them come May time) and there's a collection of cacti that wouldn't be out of place in the desert.



I've often nipped in to pick up a last-minute gift that always surpasses the price tag. Don't get me wrong, the flowers

aren't cheap, but this is a swish little spot where you can sit and enjoy a coffee post shop on the house.



I'm often berated by friends and fam for what on the surface might appear to be a rather frivolous and costly habit, my response – stop and smell the flowers, quite literally. Who doesn't love walking into their *piso* to find a pretty little posey and of all the things that I splash the cash on (of which there are a few), a bunch of blooms that spark joy is not what's going to break the bank.





In addition to being your neighborhood florist, Botanyco supplies flowers for events – weddings and the like. And if you fancy yourself as a frustrated florist in the making, they even do classes on weekday evenings where they'll teach you the tricks of the trade. It's a blooming lovely spot (sorry, couldn't resist the pun) and I urge you to not leaf it out on your to-do list.

Botanyco

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@botanyco_](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia, 59
- **Metro:** Iglesias

Mercado de Vallehermoso – Madrid's perfect neighbourhood food market

One of the first things I fell in love with about Spain was the abundance of fresh produce and local independent shops. Although the big supermarket chains have undoubtedly made their mark, food markets all over Madrid are still thriving. This is partly because they are so much more than just somewhere to pick up the weekly shop. You can enjoy a quick *caña*, stop for tapas, or stay for a whole meal.

Each *barrio* has its own market with something different to offer. Here's what I love about my local, Mercado de Vallehermoso.



Photo from [Mercado de Vallehermoso](#)

Built in the 1930s, until relatively recently the market had been largely abandoned and forgotten, with two thirds of its stalls shut in 2015. After being rescued from disrepair by a change in management and support from the *Ayuntamiento*, it's now bustling, with all 62 stalls occupied.

At Mercado de Vallehermoso you'll find everything from the traditional baker's, butcher's and fishmonger's stalls to restaurants, wine bars, craft beer, and **Spain's only permanent farmer's market**. As well as Spanish food, you can eat Mexican, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and more. In the Mercado de Productores (farmers market) all the producers are from Madrid, or less than 120 km away, and many of the products are handmade.

Restaurants at Mercado de

Vallehermoso

Washoku Sushi



Washoku Sushi, photo from [Mercado de Vallehermoso](#)

For fast, fresh Japanese food at a very reasonable price, Washoku is perfect. They buy their fish from one of their neighbours at the market, Hermanos Abad, so it's always good quality. Choose from sushi and sashimi selections, Japanese curries and rice, or udon noodle dishes. They also have delicious appetizers, including my favourite *Takoyaki* (similar to a fried dumpling, filled with octopus).

Craft 19



Photo from [Craft 19 Madrid](#)

Hands down the most delicious sandwiches in Madrid! The pastrami sandwich is famous, and rightly so, but the pulled pork and grilled cheese are equally indulgent. You can wash down your mega sandwich (be warned, in true American style, the portions are enormous) with a cool craft beer. There is a good selection of beers on tap, which change continuously, giving you the chance to sample beers from different international breweries.

Sandwiches and beer, what more could one want in life?

Drakkar



Photo from [Drakkar Cervecería](#)

If you're still thirsty for craft beers, Drakkar has a great selection. Unlike some of the craft beer bars and breweries that have opened recently in Madrid, it's great value. Grab a seat at the bar and chat to the friendly staff, who are always happy to give you a recommendation if you feel intimidated when there's more choice than Mahou or Estrella Galicia.

La Virgen



Photo from [Cervezas La Virgen](#)

Continuing the beer route through the market, Madrid brewers La Virgen also have a stall. With a [brewery in Las Rozas](#) and bars across the capital, it's probably the most well-known independent brewery in Madrid. Their spot in Mercado de Vallehermoso is a relaxed place to try some of their beers, to accompany some tasty treats from the market.

[Di Buono](#)



Photo from [Mercado de Vallehermoso](#)

Famous for its *porchetta*, Di Buono is a great deli serving the most delicious products imported from Italy. Sip on an Aperol spritz and try the delicious selection of Italian cheeses and charcuterie. They serve a great selection of wines from small producers in different regions all over Italy.

[Kitchen 154](#)



Photo from [Kitchen 154](#)

If you try one dish at Kitchen 125, make it **the Korean BBQ ribs**. Specialising in Asian fusion dishes with a kick, the

stall is always busy, and everything is cooked as you order. They have a small menu, but everything is cooked perfectly, from curries, to dumplings to crispy chicken wings.

*[Kitchen 154](#) also has a restaurant location on Calle Ruiz 20 in Malasaña.

[Güey Cocina Chingona](#)



Photo from [Güey](#)

Ever wondered what ants or grasshoppers taste like? Güey have

some seriously adventurous dishes on their menu, plus daily specials. Not feeling quite so intrepid when I ate there, I can only tell you that the *tacos al pastor* and guacamole were good (a very vanilla order, I know).

Mercado de Productores

Most of the food stalls on the upper floor have their own tables, where you can only eat food from that establishment, apart from Güey and Washoku, which have a few shared tables. However, if you come in a group and everyone wants to order from different places, you can find a shared seating area on the lower level of the market in the *mercado de productores*. Here you can eat anything from the restaurants on the upper level or the stalls in the farmer's market.

[EGGO](#)



Photo from [EGGO](#)

This is the only place I know of in Madrid you can buy a scotch egg! And if you don't know what a scotch egg is, all the more reason to go to EGG0 because you have been missing out on one of the most delicious snacks. As you can probably guess from the name, EGG0 sells fresh eggs and a few egg dishes (including delicious tortilla), all from free-range chickens from their farm in Ávila.

[La Cabezuela](#)



Photo from [Quesería La Cabezuela](#)

La Cabezuela make award-winning handmade cheeses in El Escorial. They offer a range of weird and wonderful flavours, including la *Cervezuela*, made with beer from *La Virgen* brewery. Order a *tabla de quesos* (cheese plate) for 7 euros

and you can try all the ones that catch your eye.

[Randall Coffee Roasters](#)



image by [Randall Coffee](#)

Fed up of the burnt, bitter brews at your local Spanish bar? At Randall Coffee Roasters you can get a delicious cup of coffee or buy beans to brew at home. More like a coffee shop you would see in New York or London, **they roast speciality beans on site. They also serve iced lattes and cold brew,** perfect for the hot summer months. If you fancy a sweet treat

with your coffee, try one of the chocolate, pistachio and sea salt cookies!

Mercado de Vallehermoso has the perfect mix



One of the unique things about Madrid as a capital city has been its ability to embrace and enjoy new influences, while preserving its traditions and “Spanishness.” Mercado de Vallehermoso, like all of Madrid’s many markets, is a great example of this, where you’ll find the perfect mix of traditional and modern; Spanish and international; young and old.

There are so many different stalls in the market, you couldn’t fit everything in one article. These are just a few of the one’s I’ve tried and loved. So, go ahead and explore them all, and let me know what you think!

Mercado de Vallehermoso info

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@mercadovallehermoso](#)
- **Address:** C/ Vallehermoso 36
- **Metro:** Quevedo

By **Ellen** **Fouweather**
(*Instagram:* [@efouwee](#))

Also read Ellen's article on: [Madrid's 10 best vintage and second-hand shops](#)