

Bite Me Café: Secretly Vegan, Obviously Delicious Donuts in Madrid

Let's be real, vegans are taking over. And us carnivores are left to use our survival tactics – shrewd sarcasm, vegan jokes and complete and utter avoidance. If you tell me you're taking me to a vegan restaurant, I will most likely find an excuse about my goldfish's birthday party and politely decline.

But when Bite Me opened in my neighborhood of Legazpi, my roommate and I decided that we had to try it as good neighbors should. We walked into the charming café and were instantly greeted by the owner, Joel and his warm, extremely hospitable Canadian-ness. He explained all of the flavors to us, passionately and meticulously as we ooh-ed and made the tough decision of picking a donut; much like giving the final rose on The Bachelor.

After I scarfed down my rich chocolate and red wine donut, I was broken the hard truth that Bite Me Café is indeed (gulp)... a vegan café. But the deliciousness of my donut negated every ounce of vegan distrust I had before.



I could have lived the rest of my life not knowing that it was a vegan donut – and that’s the point. The donuts boldly speak for themselves and the message is clear: they’re delicious. Period. Since then, Bite Me has become a neighborhood favorite of mine that I frequent often.

Joel (Canada) and Sandra (Spain), the donut-loving couple, opened Bite Me in October 2018 after a year and a half of making and donating donuts for events. Bite Me is a cute, quaint neighborhood café, full of exposed brick, tones of red, crooning of Freddie Mercury in the background and mix-match

chairs for a quirky charm. I was shyly greeted by their dog, Ferb, who spent most of his time sleeping in the corner. Yes, Bite Me is dog friendly.



The crafted flavors change weekly. The flavors of this week (just to name a few) are Wild Strawberry, Smoked Maple, Apple Pie, Chocolate and Hazelnut Cream and the limited-edition Torrija (a Spanish-style French Toast).

I greedily tried multiple, completely content with all of the flavors. The Apple Pie donut reminded me of everything

American – filled with fresh apple jam, cinnamon and a surge of flavor that I discovered was a hint of Jamaican all-spice.



The Chocolate Hazelnut Donut was way too good to be true, rich in flavor with a combination similar to Nutella on steroids.

My all-time favorite donut was a Valentine's Day Special of Strawberry Shortcake filled with handmade strawberry jam, decadently topped with whipped cream, strawberries and shortcake. And yes, this donut was my Valentine's Date.



But with Bite Me, there is one rule: You have to get there early as donuts sell out fast. I learned my lesson, so I now obsessively follow them on Instagram to ensure they are in stock and see the mouth-watering flavors of the week. Along with their amazing donuts, Bite Me sells coffee, a great selection of teas, La Virgen brews, and bagels on the weekends.

No matter how your eating habits define you, we can all agree of the simple truth that these donuts are damn good and made with pride from Joel and Sandra. Bite Me is an upcoming local

café where you will come for the donuts again and again.

By Rachel Thompson

To learn more about the author, check out her blog www.RachelInRoute.com or follow her on Instagram at @RachelInRoute

All images from [Bite Me's Facebook page](#)

Bite Me

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: @biteme_madrid
- [Spotify playlist](#)
- Address: Plaza de la Beata Maria Ana de Jesus, 2 (Metro: Legazpi)
- Hours: Mon: 10-1:30, 4-9pm; Tues & Wed: Closed; Thurs: 10-1:30, 4-9pm; Fri: 10-1:30, 4-9pm; Sat & Sun: 10-9pm. *Hours may change for Summer*

Also check out: [4 vegetarian and vegan-friendly restaurants in Madrid](#)

10 Best restaurants in Madrid, according to Little Miss Madrid

So, if you're a long-time Madrid dweller, you'll remember the harsh days of the financial crisis which are now (thankfully) a sort of blip on the landscape of Madrid's *movida*. Business is booming and as a result, the culinary scene in the city now packs more than just a punch. It positively sizzles with the

best of Spanish produce and rustic neighbourhood joints that can't be missed.

It's a tough one to call, but I'm not sure what I've done more of since having moved to the land of *jamón* – eat out, or treat myself at the Zara sale. Either way, I've had a lot of hot dinners and have whittled down my favourites for you to work your way through. A sort of foodie bucket list as it were.

If traditional cuisine is your thing, hopefully I've got you covered. However, as the city lets go of its slightly conservative culinary roots, the patrons of the plazas and the tourists on the *terrazas* now greedily gobble ramen, cervices and bao buns with as much gusto as the locals love their pinchos. Many to-do lists are a chore, make this one a pleasure.

Here's a round-up of the 10 best restaurants in Madrid. You'll also find my full restaurant review of each one if you click on the link in the titles!

1. [Lady Madonna](#) – take a day off the diet



If you're in the mood for a great bit of grub without breaking the bank (and aren't we all?) head to [Lady Madonna](#). Definitely the kind of place where you can dress up for dinner, it's just a stone's throw from Alonso Martínez and a little oasis in the heart of the city. Its charming little terrace is the perfect place to people watch, and the [Sunday brunch](#) is pretty damn delish.

- [Facebook & Instagram: @ladymadonna_restaurante](#)
- **Address:** Calle Orellana, 6
- **Metro:** Alonso Martínez
- **Phone:** 915 02 41 82

2. [Bosco de Lobos](#) – a casual-chic restaurant in Chueca



Oh how I love this place. Let me count the ways... It's a favourite in the same way as a beloved leather jacket is. [Bosco de Lobos](#) is the perfect place for a casual yet chic dining experience. The menu covers every foodie fad but is complete with classics such as *arroz* and steak tartare. The desserts are to die for, as are the interior vibes – all dim lighting and shelves groaning with books. A must visit.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@boscodelobosmadrid](#)
- [Address](#): COAM, Calle de Hortaleza, 63, 28004 Madrid
- [Metro](#): Alonso Martínez, Chueca & Tribunal
- [Phone](#): 915 24 94 64

3. [Ana la Santa](#) – baby it's cold outside



Situated on one of the most beautiful plazas in the city, [Ana La Santa](#) is housed in the ground floor of the Hotel Me. Beyond cosy in the winter and perennially popular, Ana La Santa always delivers on excellent service and an awesome ambiance.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@analasantamadrid](#)
- [Address](#): Plaza Sta. Ana, 14
- [Metro](#): Sol/Sevilla
- [Phone](#): [917 01 60 13](#)

4. [Bar Tomate](#) – modern minimalism at its best



Somewhat off the typical tourist trail, this is a great neighborhood spot. Chamberí is somewhat of a foodie mecca and [Bar Tomate](#) combines minimalist decor at its best and delicious cuisine. The vibe is rustic and the food is fresh. A winning combo if I ever saw one.

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Fernando El Santo, 26
- **Phone:** [+34 917 023 870](#)
- **Metro:** Colón

5. [Luzi Bombon](#) – get ready to luck out



Situated on the swish and swanky Paseo de la Castella, [Luzi Bombon](#) is a stylish restaurant offering flawless service and utterly divine food. It's part of [Grupo Tragaluz](#), meaning you're in safe hands when it comes to enjoying some marvelous munchies.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@luzibombon](#)
- **Address:** Paseo de la Castellana 35
- **Phone:** 917 02 27 36
- **Metro:** Rubén Darío

6. [Somos Restaurant](#) – the jewel in Barceló Torres's crown



Located in what's become the iconic Torre de Barcelona, [Somos Restaurant and Garra Bar](#) have become the type of places to splash your hard earned cash. In an undeniably stunning setting overlooking Gran Vía, the outstanding cuisine is not too be missed and neither is the sunset as the sunshine bids the city goodnight.

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@somosgarra](#)
- [Located in: Barceló Torre de Madrid](#)
- [Address:](#) Plaza de España, 18

7. [Picsa](#) – got a ‘pizza’ my heart



On one of the hippest streets in Madrid (ok I'm biased, I live here) [Picsa](#) serves up delicious Argentinian pizzas that rival any that BA has to offer. The flavour combos are to die for – I never resist the lure of the chorizo criollo with provolone and hey Heber should you.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@picsa.madrid](#)
- **Address:** Calle Ponzano 76
- **Phone:** 915 34 10 09
- **Metro:** Ríos Rosas or Cuatro Caminos

8. [Gracias Padre](#) – you'll be thankful for this Mexican restaurant



In the barrio of Salamanca, [Gracias Padre](#) is hands down one of Madrid's best Mexican restaurants. Here'll you'll find treats as tasty as tacos hailing from Tulum. Their frozen margs always hit the spot and the rainbow-esque surroundings are a riot of crayola colour.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@gracias.padre](#)
- **Address:** Calle de José Ortega y Gasset, 55
- **Phone:** 910 66 00 85
- **Metro:** Lista

9. [Nubel](#) – the Reina Sofia Museum's stunning restaurant



Nubel is the beautiful restaurant housed in the world-famous Reina Sofía museum. It's a hybrid that feels like part restaurant/part nightclub as there's often a DJ playing a delectable mix of club classics that adds to the buzzy energy that envelops you on arrival.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@nubelmadrid](#)
- **Address:** Museo Reina Sofía, Calle de Argumosa, 43
- **Metro:** Atocha
- **Phone:** 915 30 17 61

10. [Picalagartos](#) – dine sky high on a gorgeous rooftop bar overlooking Gran Vía



Picalagartos is quite literally (in the words of the song) up on the roof. Towering above Gran Vía, it's perched atop the NH hotel. It boasts 360-degree views of our beloved city and combines great cocktails with great cuisine.

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#), & Instagram: [@picalagartosmad](#)
- **Address:** C/ Gran Vía 21
- **Metro:** Gran Vía

All photos from each restaurant's respective social media accounts

By Cat Powell, aka @littlemissmadrid

Have any favourites that we should include in a second “best restaurants in Madrid” list? Let us know in the comments!

Guide to all things Persian in Madrid, from restaurants to cultural happenings

One of the things I love about living in Madrid is that it's a bustling international city, and when it comes to food you can find just about any kind of cuisine your heart desires. As an Iranian American living in Madrid for over five years and founder of the [Madrid Persian Food Lovers Facebook group](#), I thought it was about time that I shared this guide to all things Persian in Madrid.

Here's all of the knowledge I've gained about Persian restaurants and cultural happenings across the city:

FOOD

Banibanoo



Photo from [Banibanoo](#) – also in the feature image

For something totally different, check out this modern and casual restaurant, whose name translates to “Miss Bani” in reference to its young owner, Banefsheh. What’s unique about this restaurant is that it serves up dishes usually only found in Persian homes.

The menu changes regularly, but some things you might typically find are sweet rice with chicken (*shirin polo*), egg frittata with a mix of herbs (*kuku sabsi*), or eggplant dip with walnuts and strained yogurt (*kashke bademjan*), each with the chef’s own creative spin.

Order the combo meal, and choose three items from the colorful variety of items on display behind the counter. Stay for dessert and typical drinks, such as Persian lemonade or cucumber and rose water. [Also check out our previous review of Banibanoo.](#)

- [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@banibanoomadrid](#)
- **Address:** Calle de las Mártires Concepcionistas, 19
- **Nearest metro:** Manuel Becerra

Mesón Persa Mr. Kabab



Photo from [Mr. Kabab](#)

Don't be confused by its name. The kebab served at this traditional Persian sit-down restaurant has little to do with its fast-food cousin, the Turkish doner kebab. In Iran, the term kebab, or kabab, is used to refer to meat skewers cooked over an open flame. Mr. Kabab is a favorite of the Iranian community in Madrid, and in addition to delicious kebabs made of tender beef, lamb, seasoned ground beef (*kubideh*), and chicken marinated in Persian spices, you can also find traditional Persian stews and appetizers. The owner, Mustafah, also runs the Persian store next door where you can find a selection of Iranian dry and canned goods to make your own creations at home.

- [Website](#)
- **Address:** Calle de los Artistas
- **Nearest metro:** Cuatro Caminos

La Palmera del Retiro

I was so excited to learn that Mina Rashidi, the former owner and chef at my absolute favorite Persian restaurant in Madrid, has a new project. Her previous venture, the very traditional Tehran restaurant in Salamanca, sadly shut its doors in 2012 during the recession.

Her new Spanish-Persian tapas bar concept offers a limited menu, but everything as delicious as you'd expect from Mina. Among the Persian tapas she typically serves are an eggplant dip known as *kashke bademjan*, as well as stuffed grape leaves, or *dolmeh*. It's a great place to stop for a caña and a tasty snack after a stroll in nearby Retiro.

- [Website](#)
- **Address:** Av. de Menéndez Pelayo, 53
- **Nearest metro:** Ibiza

Sabor Azafrán



Photo from [Sabor Azafrán](#)

This restaurant is another great place to try typical Persian cuisine. It's a bit off the beaten path, in Madrid's Ciudad Lineal neighborhood, however it's well worth the visit. Try one of the delicious stews (*khores*h), such as one made with meat, potato and split peas (*khores*h *gaimeh*), or another with a mix of herbs, meat and red beans (*khores*h *gorme*h *sabsi*).

Of course, as any good traditional Persian restaurant, this one also has all the variety of kebab you would expect, served up with steamed saffron rice and roasted tomatoes. This place

is great for large groups, as it has a very large dining room, and long tables.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@sabor.azafran](#)
- **Address:** Calle del General Aranzaz, 65
- **Nearest metro:** Ciudad Lineal

Stop Pizza



Photo from Mohammad Riahi

You wouldn't know it from the outside, but this unsuspecting pizza and doner kebab take-away stand is a landmark for Madrid's Persian community. Call ahead and the owner, Mehdi, will prepare you some traditional Persian *barberi* bread in his pizza oven. Or stop in any time for a pizza served on crust that has a texture suspiciously similar to *barberi*, giving the pizza its own unique taste. You can also find typical Persian

stuffed grape leaves (*dolmeh*). Finish it all off with a strong black tea served from a traditional Persian tea pot. Note: there's nothing Persian about the rest of the menu.

- [Website](#)
- **Address:** Calle del Dr. Santero, 6
- **Nearest metro:** Cuatro Caminos

Restaurante Esfahan



Photo from [Restaurante Persa Esfahan](#)

The most central of Madrid's traditional Persian restaurants, this one is located right around the corner from Plaza España. Its menu contains some Middle Eastern fusion, with dishes like hummus and pita bread and salmon with orange sauce. However, they also feature many of Iran's most typical dishes, and even some you can't find in other Iranian restaurants in Madrid.

Standout dishes are the herbed rice with roasted lamb (*bagali polo*) and barley soup (*soupe jo*), which is a common staple in any Persian home. The restaurant's walls are covered with traditional Persian paintings and handicrafts, including woven carpets that cover the lower part of the walls. That, along with the traditional music played in the background, will make you feel like you've been transported to Iran.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle de San Bernardino, 1
- **Nearest metro:** Plaza de España or Noviciado

CULTURE

Tried the food, and hungry to learn more about Persian culture? Check out these cultural institutions:

Centro Persepolis



Photos from [Centro Persepolis](#)

A Persian cultural center that hosts cultural events, a bazaar where they sell Persian handicrafts, and organizes trips to Iran. They also host talks on Iranian art and literature, including poem recitation sessions in Spanish and Farsi.



Each year they organize a few concerts in Madrid, both by Iranian bands or those made to connect Iranian and non-Iranian music. These events have included some outstanding Iranian musicians, such as Shahram Nazeri, Hossein Alizadeh and Alireza Ghorbani to name a few.

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Sta. María, 20
- **Nearest metro:** Anton Martin

Casa Persa



Photo from [Casa Persa](#)

The Casa Persa is an association dedicated to the diffusion and teaching of Persian mysticism, poetry and music. Every Saturday it hosts an improvised performance of Sufí music and dancing. The regular performers, Majid Javadi, Antonio Fernández and Carmen Sánchez, are often joined by other musicians from the community. It's recommended to reserve by phone ahead of time, as space is limited. There is an entry fee of 15 euros, and includes wine.

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Silva nº5, 5ª planta
- **Nearest metro:** Santo Domingo or Callao

MORE

When it comes to finding Persian products, whatever you can't find at the **Mr. Kebab** shop in Cuatro Caminos mentioned above, you might also look for at one of the many **Arabic shops**

surrounding the [Islamic Cultural Center of Madrid](#). Many of these shops carry Iranian products, including the coveted sweet, black dates from the region of Bam.



Photo from esmadrid.com

Interested in hearing an innovative blend of traditional Iranian and Flamenco music? Then check out the band [Baramu](#), made up of Babak Kamgar, Pedro Pedrosa and Manuel Espinosa, collectively representing Iran, Extremadura and Andalucía. Based in Madrid, they regularly play events around the city. The trio mix traditional instruments from Iran and Spain to create a sound you'd be hard-pressed to find anywhere else in the world.



Photo from [Baramú](#)

[La Tasca](#) is a Spanish bar near Príncipe Pio run by a Persian family. There's no Persian food on the menu, but it's great for a beer and a tapa, and if you mention you love Iranian culture, you may get invited to some tea on the house.

If you make your way out to Alcobendas, a suburb northeast of Madrid, then you might check out [Nuevo Espacio](#). It's a Persian restaurant founded by a former cook from Mr. Kebab that was so successful he opened a second location, also in Alcobendas. It's also worth noting that Alcobendas is home to a substantial Persian community, and hosts Persian New Year celebrations, among other cultural events throughout the year.

Know of anything else that should be included in this guide to all things Persian in Madrid? Let us know in the comments!

9 Low-key rooftop bars in Madrid to enjoy year round

This city may be landlocked, but the sky's the limit when it comes to rooftop bars in Madrid. From fancy restaurant-hotels like [Picalagartos](#) and [Hotel Óscar](#), to emblematic buildings like [Palacio de Cibeles](#) and the picture-perfect [Tartan Roof](#) at Círculo de Bellas Artes, the options seem endless. And if you're in the mood for something a little more casual, we've got you covered.

Here are our top picks for rooftop bars in Madrid that are low key and winter friendly.

1. The Hat



Photo from [The Hat Madrid](#)

This popular rooftop bar is located atop one of the city's coolest hostels, right off Plaza Mayor. It provides a great escape from Madrid's crowded center. Pop up for a few drinks with friends or a full meal, whatever you fancy.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Imperial 9
- **Metros:** Sol and Tirso de Molina

Check out our full post on [The Hat Madrid](#)

2. Mercado de San Antón



Photo from [Mercado de San Antón](#)

This is a perfect place to start your evening with friends. As you enter Chueca's beloved food market, Mercado de San Antón, first you'll walk through various food stalls and tapas stands. Then make your way up to the fourth floor for a drink any time of day, any time of year.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Augusto Figueroa, 24
- **Metro:** Chueca

3. El Viajero





This plant-laden rooftop bar has been a staple in La Latina for years. Situated atop El Viajero restaurant, it offers a laidback atmosphere, plus a full bar and food options. It's a great place to spend a winter evening with friends.

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: Plaza de la Cebada 11
- Metro: La Latina

4. Gymage



Photo from [Gymage](#)

Gymage is a multi-level recreation center located in Plaza de la Luna, just off Gran Vía. Inside you'll find everything from a full-on gym to a health food store. But the best part is the two-level rooftop lounge with a bar, restaurant, and pool! Although you don't get to take a dip in winter, you still get to take in that chill Ibiza vibe and enjoy those gorgeous Madrid sunsets.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle de la Luna, 2
- Metro: Callao

5. Forus Barceló



This spacious rooftop restaurant is a green oasis in the middle of Chueca and Malasaña. Situated atop the Barceló food market, here you can enjoy creative and healthy cuisine, in a friendly urban garden environment. It's also open every day of the week.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: @azoteaforus
- **Address:** Calle Barceló 6
- **Metro:** Tribunal and Alonso Martínez

6. Doña Luz



This is one of the newest rooftop bars in Madrid, situated right in the heart of Sol, on Calle Montera. The street-level entrance is tiny, so it's easy to miss. But once you enter the Doña Luz Hotel, squeeze through the door and take the elevator to the top floor. There you'll find plenty of room to enjoy a nice break on the roof. There's an indoor and outdoor area, plus a full restaurant and bar.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle Montera 10-12
- Metro: Sol

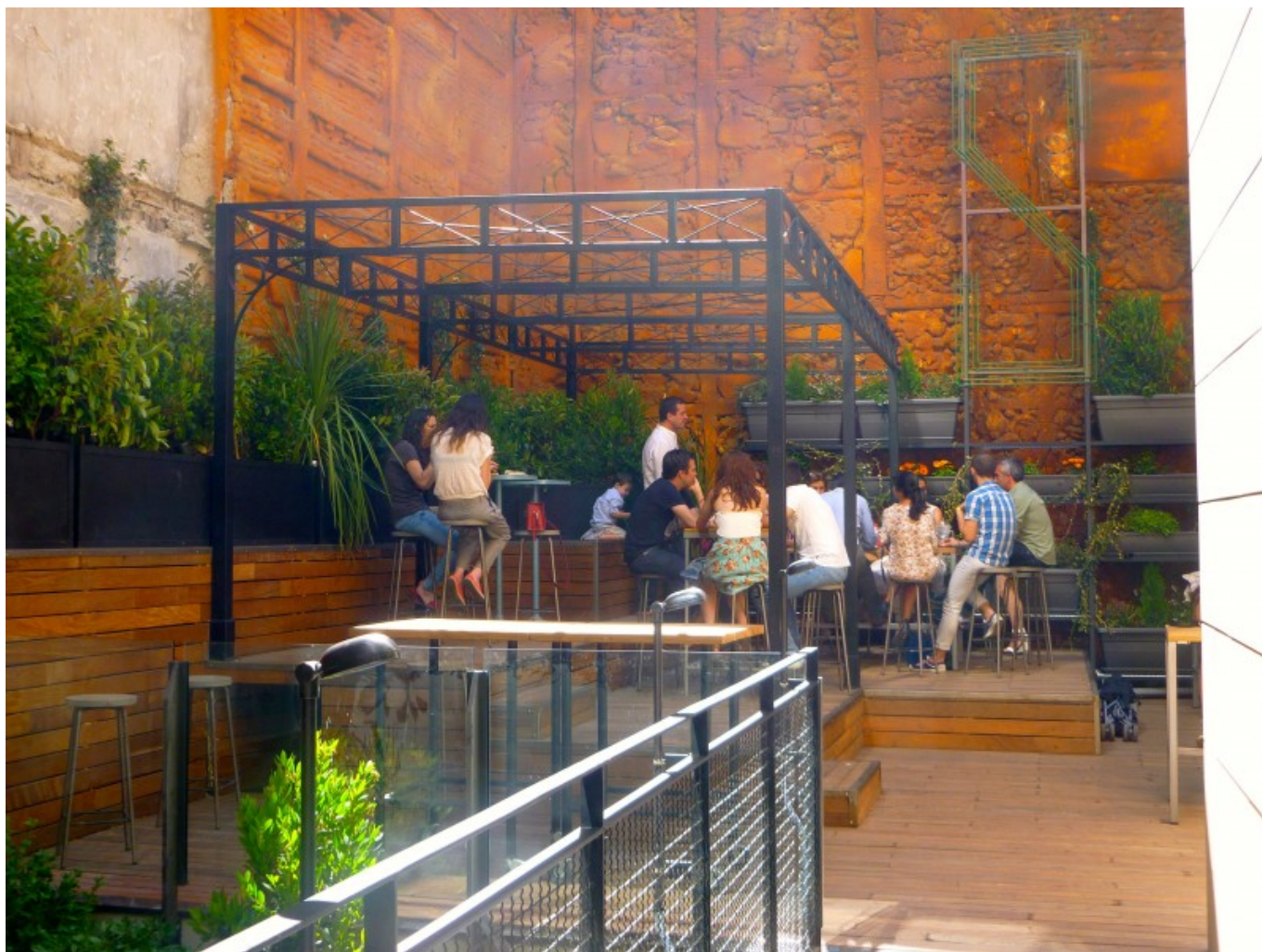
7. Jardín Secreto



This rooftop is also situated on Calle Montera, and it's called Jardín Secreto (although it's not that much of a secret anymore). Step inside the accessories store, Salvador Bachiller, and take the elevator up to the top floor to discover a small yet charming rooftop absolutely covered in plants and flowers. Although you won't find much of a view, you will discover a nice change of scenery from the busy city center.

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle Montera 37
- Metro: Gran Vía or Sol

8. Mercado de San Ildefonso



This isn't exactly a rooftop bar, but it still deserves a spot on our list. This outdoor terrace is located inside an ultra modern food market in Malasaña, [Mercado de San Ildefonso](#), right on Calle Fuencarral. So once you grab a drink and a bite to eat from the array of food stalls, find a seat in this fun patio area.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- Address: C/ Fuencarral, 57
- Metros: Tribunal

9. Casa de Granada



In Tirso de Molina, you'll find Casa Granada situated on the top floor of an unassuming residential building. This rather old-school restaurant has been around for ages and is definitely the least "chic" option on the list. The menu features traditional Spanish dishes, from *croquetas* to *patatas bravas*. It's well insulated during the chillier months of the year and when the awnings are up, you get great views of the heart of the city.

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle del Doctor Cortezo, 17
- Metro: Tirso de Molina

Did we miss any other low-key rooftop bars in Madrid open year round? Let us

know and we'll add them to the list!

The Lobstar – bringing authentic New England comfort food to Madrid

We can now savor authentic lobster rolls in Madrid thanks to The Lobstar. Situated near Bilbao, this newly opened restaurant is bringing the best of New England comfort food to the city, with hearty dishes like clam chowder, lobster bisque and shrimp rolls.



The decor is inspired by restaurants you'll find along Maine's quaint coastal fishing towns. It mixes industrial touches with a casual vibe. Lots of light streams in through the tall storefront windows, and the brick and metal walls contrast with the wooden floor.

There are just a few tables and booths, and an open kitchen where you can see the chefs preparing casual American seafood dishes following traditional recipes. As for the music, classic hits are played back to back, so you'll probably know all the lyrics. Feel free to sing (or hum) along.



In true “lobster bar” fashion, we first ordered beer – a trusted Sam Adams and an excellent pilsner from Marbella. As for the menu, our servers were very helpful and recommended we start with the buffalo shrimp tacos.



We also asked for a bowl of rich clam chowder, for nostalgia's sake. Both were delicious and filling enough to be a complete meal on their own.



Next up, our main dishes. Of course we ordered the star of the show – “the lobster roll” – and it was the real deal. The lobsters arrive alive from Canada, boiled up and served on a toasted and buttered homemade brioche bun, with lots of flavorful mayonnaise. Absolutely perfect.



We also ordered the swordfish burger which was gigantic. It had several generous-sized pieces of grilled fish along with the works: lettuce, tomato, onion and mayo, also on a sweet bun. Both were served with a heaping portion of the best sweet potato fries I've tried in the city so far.



And the most surprising part for me? The side of coleslaw. It was real coleslaw! The kind you find at New York City delis. We also couldn't help but take a peek at the delicious-looking mac and cheese dishes that kept coming out of the kitchen. We'll definitely be going back for those next time.



We needed to take a short pause before we could even consider having dessert. After two slowly sipped cups of espresso (each served with a cute “Lobstar” marshmallow), we decided to go for it. The first items to catch our eyes were the cider donut and the butterscotch with honeycomb milkshake...



They sounded amazing, but given the meal of champions that we'd just devoured, we asked for a lighter option. The server recommended the key lime pie, one of my favorite desserts and the perfect finishing touch for an incredibly satisfying meal. Let's just say we walked all the way home, happy.

The Lobstar

- **Website:** www.thelobstar.es
 - **Instagram:** @thelobstarbar
 - **Address:** Calle Carranza, 4 (Madrid)
 - **Metro:** Bilbao
-

Crumb, signature sandwiches that truly hit the spot

I've always loved sandwiches, particularly the kind that are made with several ingredients and creative combinations. When I was growing up, my family owned a sandwich shop where my siblings and I would get to experiment with all different types of breads, ingredients and spreads.

Needless to say, when I'm in the mood for a good sandwich, the typical "bocadillo" or "bocata" usually just doesn't cut it. That's why I was so happy to discover Crumb, a small restaurant in the charming Conde Duque area. Crumb serves signature, gourmet sandwiches and dishes, along with the bread they bake daily with organic flour and sourdough starter.



The menu is simple, and is divided into four parts: dishes without bread (starters and salads that are great for sharing); with bread (dishes that range from Fish&Chips to meatballs, with bread served on the side); on bread (open-faced sandwiches, similar to *tostas*); and between bread (the amazing sandwiches). You can order your sandwich with a side of fries or a salad. Crumb also serves tempting international specials, so make sure to ask.



We started out with two dishes *sin pan* (without bread): The first was gyozas made with chicken, garnished with pineapple and soy sauce. They were so delicious that we highly regretted ordering the half portion. We also tried the *patatas revolconas* (mashed potatoes) which was heaven in a bowl. It had a perfectly smooth texture and was topped with *torrezno* (bacon). Great comfort food for one of the coldest days of the year in Madrid.



Then we each ordered a sandwich (*entre pan*). The first had roasted chicken, guacamole, herbs, lettuce and *alioli*, on delicious toasted homemade bread. Now that's what I call a sandwich. Seemingly simple ingredients that make for an amazing combination. You can imagine why the paper wrapping came in handy.



And the second was the veggie sandwich, made with tahini pesto, dried tomatoes, grilled eggplant and zucchini, sweet potato and goat cheese. For me, pretty much anything that involves pesto and goat cheese is bound to be delicious. But if you add toasted bread and flavorful vegetables, let's just say it turns into the kind of sandwich that I could eat every day and never get tired of.

We finished off our meal with a luscious chocolate cake with walnuts and vanilla ice cream. Everything truly hit the spot and had us savoring the very last crumb...

Crumb

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: @crumbmadrid
- **Address:** Calle Conde Duque 8
- **Metro:** Plaza de España or Ventura Rodríguez

Toscanaccio, gourmet Italian takeaway in Lavapiés

Toscanaccio is a cute little Italian bakery and pizzeria situated on a side street in Lavapiés, opened a year and a half ago by Guillermo (Madrid) and Federico (Siena). Out of their small kitchen and sole oven comes authentic homemade bites from Tuscany, all lovingly crafted on site, from scratch and with prime ingredients.



While you'd think the creators of [Toscanaccio](#) hailed from a long line of Italian bakers, their story is rather unexpected. Guillermo and Federico met over a decade ago while studying in

London, and have since travelled and lived around the world, always picking up new skills and game for new adventures along the way.



Neither of them had planned on opening an Italian bakery. That is, until a few years ago when they decided to set out on a new venture in Madrid: a Tuscan-inspired takeaway joint in Lavapiés.

Before opening, they spent months training with a *señor* who's been hand-crafting authentic Italian baked goods for over 40 years. After learning from the best, they found a place and refurbished it practically by hand. And here they are!



Toscanaccio fits perfectly into the already diverse and eclectic neighborhood of Lavapiés, full of charming gems and

surprises scattered throughout its sloping, winding streets.



When you step into Toscanaccio, you'll immediately see a tempting display of prepared foods. Options range from savory bites like pizza, *focaccia*, *calzoni*, and *ciaccino ripieno* (sandwiches typical of Tuscany) to a wide selection of traditional cookies, cakes and pastries like *crostatines*, *tarta de la nonna*, and *panello de uva*. Depending on the day, you may even find brownies and carrot cake.



The *ciaccino* filled with brie, arugula and pesto is my new favorite go-to snack.



There's also an assortment of homemade breads, with an additional daily special. Today's was *pan de calabaza* (pumpkin bread). All the dough is made with different types of organic wheat, rye and spelt flour, made right here in the kitchen, in plain sight.



The space is quite tiny, but it's all you need. If you want to sit, there are only two stools and a bench outside. Otherwise, it's best to order to go. Luckily their hours are quite accommodating: they open from 11am-11:30pm every day, and until 3:30am on Fridays and Saturdays. Tuesday is their day off.

So thanks to these two guys, we've now got the perfect place to grab a delicious Italian bite on the go, almost any day of the week.

Toscanaccio

- [Facebook](#)
- **Instagram:** @toscanaccio_
- **Address:** Calle de la Fe 16
- **Metro:** Lavapiés

- **Phone:** 912974729

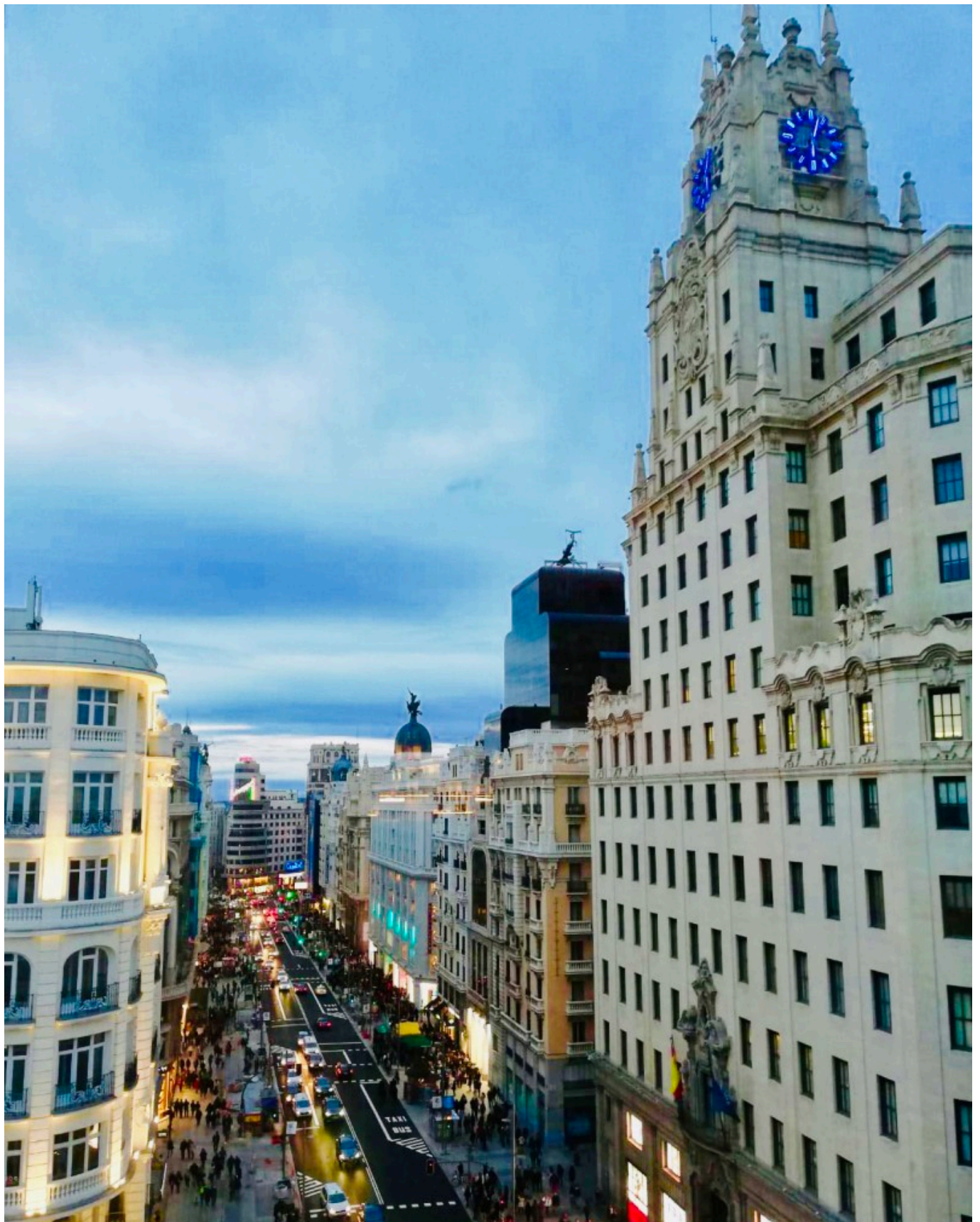
- **Hours:**

- Monday through Thursday 11:00 AM – 11:30 PM
 - Fridays and Saturdays open till 3:30 AM
 - Closed on Tuesdays
-

Picalagartos, dine sky high on a stunning rooftop overlooking Gran Vía

This year myself and one of my best friends have been on pretty different trajectories. Whilst she's been globe trotting galore having taken a sabbatical, I've never felt more aware of putting down "roots" – having finally become a home owner, cue quite the case of FOMO.

After 11 months of not being able to enjoy so much as a glass of fizz together in person, last weekend we were finally reunited for the *puente* in my adopted city of Madrid. This called for a special venue for a special lunch.



Now I love a rooftop. I'm not sure if it's something to do with being a city dweller who's constantly on the search for cleaner air, but I feel it's probably more to do with the "grammable" views that are pretty much guaranteed when you

head sky high.

Having done my research, [Picalagartos](#) was booked, the restaurant perched atop the NH Hotel on Gran Vía, boasts 360 views of the city. Not too shabby, eh? Now most hotel restaurants have a bad rep, often found to be overpriced and underwhelming, but not the case here. The standard of food matched the view, to be summed up in a word, it was stunning.



Feeling the kind of giddy high that I can only imagine toddlers feel at soft play, we started with a cocktail to

toast our reunion. This was the start of a true Spanish *sobremesa*, with neither of us keen to leave until the sun had well and truly set over Gran Vía.

My friend's a veggie (no I don't know how we dine out together either, being a self-confessed carnivore Queen) but it was pleasing to find that this wasn't an issue – the menu offering a variety of veggie options, all of which were more tempting than the standard offering of *tortilla*.



We split a mille feuille of patatas bravas that is in the running for being the best carb that's ever passed my lips. Layers of buttery potatoes formed into giant "chips" were served with a piquant *bravas* sauce and a mouth-wateringly good aioli. They were so downright divine, case in point, we ordered a second portion and not one part of me regrets having to work them off the following Monday at spin.



I plumped for a steak (cooked perfectly), while my *amiga* sampled the delights of a vegetable garden – which looked so temptingly tasty that it could almost have lured me away from my meaty marvel, but not quite.



A couple of chocolate soufflés later, gin and tonics sunk – our vows of friendship reaffirmed, there was nothing left to do but harass the waiter to take (multiple) pics of us with Madrid in all her dusky delight in the background – luckily he obliged, I have a feeling we weren't the only ones bowled over by the *vista*.



Picalagartos is the kind of “oooh and aaah” inducing spot that will have you falling in love with Madrid all over again (in case your affections have ever waned). The food, and in my case, the friendship, were faultless and it was the perfect place to spend a free Friday afternoon that combined both gorgeous grub and plenty of glamour.

Picalagartos

▪ [Facebook](#), [Website](#), & Instagram: [@picalagartosmad](#)

- **Address:** C/ Gran Vía 21
 - **Metro:** Gran Vía
-

Espacio Cerveceros, Mini Mahou Brewery in Madrid

Mentally bookmarked for more than a couple months, we finally stepped into Espacio Cerveceros Mahou in Alonso Martínez and were not let down. Having no expectations allowed us to be surprised at every turn in this small but compact venue. **It's a little bit brewery and tasting space, a little bit restaurant, a bit gift shop and a bit urban art showroom.**

It's perfect if you've got family or friends visiting or no plans on any given evening. You'll certainly be surprised by this unusual center of Madrid find. **Did you know Mahou is a family-run business? Or that they made a Stout? And an APA (American Pale Ale)?**



At [Espacio Cervecero](#) each is served on an individually descriptive coaster for each beer but your “beersommelier” will tell you all about it anyway. These little details are what makes this place unique. It feels small in square meters but packs a lot.



There are few beers on tap but this allows for more information to be revealed regarding each one. Before you leave, you'll be asked to evaluate what you've tried on one of a few iPads set opposite the bar.



If you go through the graffiti and mirror covered hallway, you'll reach the restaurant. Like myself, you may be distracted by the exposed industrial decor but don't forget to grab a board game to play at your table on your way in if you like.



You'll find that the menu is limited but gourmet and ideal for tasting a few different plates. Our waitress suggested we try the *ensaladilla rusa* (potato salad) which we did and she was right; it was definitely an elevated take on the typical bar food.



There are events at the bar which you can join like a guided “micro brewery” tour, a beer tasting for newbies and one for more seasoned beer drinkers – an international workshop in which beers are brought in from Belgium, Central Europe and Great Britain for tasting and learning.

And though there isn't much information on it, there also appears to be a cooking class using, you guessed it, Mahou! However, it isn't clear whether you watch or actually cook.

In the end, we saw Mahou's classier side and we'd definitely go back.

By Caitlin English

Espacio Cervecerero

- [Website](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Génova, 5
- **Metro:** Alonso Martinez, Colon
- **Hours:** Open everyday from 12pm-midnight (closed on Sundays)

You may also like:

- [La Virgen Brewery, worth the trip out to Las Rozas](#)

4 Vegetarian and vegan-friendly eateries in Madrid

In the land where *jamón* and *queso manchego* prosper, it may at first seem difficult to survive as a vegan or vegetarian in Madrid. But fear not! Although it is true that Spanish food is typically meat and dairy-based, the city's restaurant scene has changed a lot over recent years. Today, Madrid's world-class vegetarian and vegan-friendly eateries will have individuals with all diets falling in love with Spanish food.

Here are a few Madrid restaurants that all offer delicious vegetarian and vegan-friendly dishes with a Spanish twist!

[Vega](#)



Located on Calle de la Luna, this restaurant prides itself in creating all organic, vegan, homemade dishes for guests to enjoy. Restaurant-goers will love the smoked aubergine tapas or the beetroot and strawberries Gazpacho for appetizers, both

vegan-friendly Spanish favorites. Visitors can enjoy [Vega](#)'s delicious salads, black rice with "squid", "chili con carne", or "Burrata" tapas. What is so special about Vega is their vegan twist on foods and dishes that are commonly enjoyed in Spain by the locals.

- **Image from** [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Luna 9
- **Metro:** Santo Domingo, Noviciado, Callao

[B13](#)



Enjoy typical Spanish tapas at [B13](#), on Calle de la Ballesta, with their mouthwatering *patatas bravas* (a local favorite), their "calamari", as well as their variety of vegetarian hamburgers. Whether you're in the mood for a Spanish tapas-style meal or want to feast on a delicious hamburger or

sandwich, B13 has what you're craving for your next vegetarian meal.

- Image from [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle de la Ballesta 13
- Metro: Callao, Gran Vía

[Freedom Cakes](#)



[Freedom Cakes](#), also on Calle de la Luna, is known as the first vegan pastry shop in Madrid. It is truly a wonderful spot to enjoy a quality cup of coffee with any vegan milk that you prefer. Whether it be an iced soy latte during hot summer months or an almond milk cappuccino to warm you up on chilly autumn mornings, you'll love their delicious coffee options. Better yet, pair your coffee with one of their renowned vegan pastries, ranging from freshly baked cakes, cupcakes, muffins,

and cookies, all 100% vegetable-based!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Luna 14
- **Metro:** Noviciado, Callao

[Sanissimo](#)



Last, but certainly not least, Sanissimo is a wonderful restaurant with a few locations in Madrid, that is pleased to offer an array of vegan and vegetarian dishes. Start your day off on the right foot with one of their juices and smoothies, or perhaps one of their popular bagels. Between their

refreshing fruit bowls, sweet bagel options, and rich pastries, you'll always enjoy starting your day at Sanissimo.

- **Image from** [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle San Vicente Ferrer 28 / Calle Campomanes, 5
- **Metro:** Tribunal, Noviciado / Opera, Santo Domingo

Whether your diet be vegan, vegetarian, meat-based, or fish-based, you'll never have to fear missing out on the spectacular Spanish cuisine that the city of Madrid boasts. Enjoy mouthwatering vegan and vegetarian dishes, but with the same Spanish influence as what the locals are enjoying.

By Haley Grant

You may also like: [Veggie Nirvana at VivaBurger in La Latina](#)