

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

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

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

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

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

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



How are you coping?

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

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

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

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

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

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Who are you in quarantine with? Any advice for

people in your similar situation?

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

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stay home, New York.

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

Check out all [Madrid lockdown diaries](#)

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

*Feature image by Raphael Hauser

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

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

Have you noticed any acts of kindness or uplifting

things recently?

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

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

How are you coping?

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

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

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

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

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

Go camping.

Have a listen to Jake's April Song

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

Check out all [Madrid lockdown diaries](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How are you coping?

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

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

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

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

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

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

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

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

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

138
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Condé Nast Traveler

Truth in Travel España



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

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

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

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

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

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

What goals are you hoping to achieve as our time

in lockdown continues?

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



How are you coping?

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

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Can we please go have a walk in the Retiro?

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

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



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

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

La Ración: Supplying Madrid with Spanish comfort foods

during the lockdown

Food is a source of pleasure for many right now. It's a privilege to be able to bring a little bit of joy into people's lives.

For those craving Spanish bar food like fresh *tortilla de patata*, *croquetas* and *empanadas* during the lockdown, look no further than [La Ración](#). The delivery-only restaurant was started by friends of mine, Iñigo Vega and Miguel Moreno, last year. While I don't usually order much take-out, the lockdown seemed like a good chance to give their food a try. And it was well worth it.

La Ración offers delivery of freshly-made Spanish specialties across central Madrid. While the menu is minimalistic with just a few items, I was impressed by the customizability of the *tortilla de patata* (Spanish omelette). I ordered mine "juicy" (*jugosa*) and with added onion. There was also the ability to add several other ingredients, such as red pepper, cheese, *chorizo* sausage, and Spanish ham.



I wasn't disappointed with the results, the *tortilla* arrived warm, and seemed fresh out of the pan, nothing to do with store-bought, pre-made *tortilla*. As you can see in the photos, the egg was "juicy" as requested! I also really enjoyed the ham *croquetas*, which had a great texture and fresh, homemade taste. I also tried the tiramisu, which was creamy and delicious, although very light – I ate it in a couple of bites!



“Tortilla de patata is going to be the new pizza”

The food sector has been one of the hardest hit by the state of alarm caused by COVID-19 that has put Madrid’s 3 million residents into lockdown. Strict hygienic protocols were put into effect overnight, meaning restaurant owners had to quickly adapt, or shut their doors.

Iñigo and Miguel’s business – which they launched just last year – had an advantage, since they were already focused on selling via online delivery platforms such as Deliveroo, as well as directly through their own website, laracion.menu.

I asked Iñigo about his experience adapting to the current environment, and he said that at first he wasn’t sure what the

impact of the lockdown would be.

“There was a lot of fear at first, and business dropped,” he said. At the same time, he had to invest in following all the protocols: getting masks, gloves and disinfecting gels to use daily in their kitchen.

However, about a week into the lockdown, orders started to increase.

“People have gotten tired of cooking and since they can’t go out they are turning to delivery,” he said. “There is a huge demand for traditional food like: *croquetas*, *tortilla de patata*, so we were in a really good position with our concept.”



Questions over whether it's safe to order delivery, have since been quelled through informative news articles. La Ración has gone above and beyond what's required by law, and they include a list of the measures they take on each delivery.

Now, they are seeing a trend of people buying food for others as a special surprise. "We see a lot of people making orders for their parents," Iñigo said. "Food is a source of pleasure for many right now. It's a privilege to be able to bring a little bit of joy into people's lives."

With the lockdown extended until at least April 26, these

trends seem likely to continue in the near term. And, with many people eating more take-out than ever these days, many could continue to order from their favorite restaurants, even in the longer term.

That's the hope of business owners like Iñigo who have made a strong bet on delivery. "*Tortilla de patata* is going to be the new pizza," he said.

Personally, I've ordered more take-out in the last few weeks than in the entire year prior. So, he might be onto something! Although, after this lockdown, one of the first things I'll do is head to my favorite neighborhood bar and enjoy Spanish bar food in its natural habitat.

La Ración

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@laracion.menu](#)
- Delivery only

Check out our [Lockdown Diary](#) series for more tips

Lockdown diaries: James, co-founder of Devour Tours, on leadership and innovation in the food & tourism industry

There's nothing quite like being boxed into a corner to force yourself to become creative

James was launching food tours in cities across Europe just before the lockdown hit, so he and his team have had to drastically change course. Now they're innovating ways to keep sharing their passion for food and local culture with the world, and working together to get through this.

James Blick is the co-founder of [Devour Tours](#) and creator of hit Youtube channel [Spain Revealed](#), where he shares authentic culinary and cultural insights. In the days prior to the lockdown measures taking effect, I myself had the pleasure of taking the San Sebastian Pintxos and Wine tour led by Devour and visited Petritegi, James' go-to sidrería. It was truly a unique experience and provided an enriching window into the culinary offerings of the Basque Country.

As we wait for the tourism sector to bounce back, the team at Devour has been creating [online experiences](#) such as [live cooking classes](#) (yesterday James taught us how to cook a *tortilla* out of his own kitchen) and a digital cookbook: "[Recipes from the Devours Tours Kitchen](#)" with 52 recipes from cities across Europe, straight from local guides and chefs.

Here's James' lockdown diary.

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

In Devour, we were in full swing expanding our business by launching new tours in Paris, Rome, Lisbon, and London, and hiring new team members to help us to grow in these new destinations.

In my personal life, my wife and I had just bought an apartment in Madrid, and we were starting renovations. A week before we went into lockdown we were picking tiles and toilets. So, like for everyone, this virus caught us right in the middle of making plans for the future.

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

Massively. Tourism and hospitality were the first to feel this crisis. About 6 weeks ago we started to realise that this was a serious situation. But every day we made a plan (cut costs 20%, for example), those plans were out of date and not drastic enough by the same time the next day. The majority of our guests are Americans and when Trump announced the travel ban we decided to suspend tours until 1 May (and clearly we'll have to suspend them longer).

At the time it felt like a forward-thinking decision, but

within 48 hours of making the call, we'd gone into lockdown. It's been incredible how fast this thing has moved. Sadly, we've had to lay off most of our team. Ideally, this is a temporary measure, but with zero tours and massive amounts of refunds being processed, the company would have gone under in a few months if we hadn't taken drastic steps. For those on our team who didn't have access to unemployment benefits, they're working part-time during the lockdown so they can pay their rent and get by – and together we're working to create a foundation for the future.

As I mentioned, this week we've launched our [Recipes from the Devour Tours Kitchen](#) digital cookbook that the entire team worked on together. It's been a true team effort and labour of love – and it's packed with 50+ incredible local recipes from across our cities in Europe. All the recipes are from staff members, guides and vendors, including lots of dishes we try on our tours. Perfect for lockdown cooking! Sales of it will really help Devour have a better shot at getting through. If anyone is curious or would like to buy it, you can [check it out here](#).



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

I wish I had a better answer for that. A simple walk with my wife alongside Madrid's river would be lovely.

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

There is a videographer team we work with who creates YouTube videos for Devour. In the early days of lockdown, they sent us an unsolicited video they'd made that compiled footage of previous shoots with messages about all the things that we love and that bind us as a company. It was an inspiring video

and something perfect to share on social media with our guests (who we call Devourers).

More importantly, it was a striking act of generosity from them. They had work dry up so used the extra time to create something for free for their clients. It reminded me that this is an important time to slow down and think of the people around you who might need help and to reach out to them.

How are you coping?

I would love to have a day or two of the infamous Coronavirus lockdown boredom! I'm coping by getting on, but also there is no other choice given I work in tourism. Each day is filled with work to chart Devour's course through this and also I'm trying to pivot my [YouTube channel](#) (where I usually feature videos of me eating in bars) to more 'at home' content. I think a key lesson for me is that those who take advantage of this time to experiment and try new things will find those experiments pay off on the other side of this – there's nothing quite like being boxed into a corner to force yourself to become creative.

Probably the most important coping mechanism for me is an hour of yoga every morning. I use an app called [Yoga Studio](#), which costs about €2 a month, and there are a variety of classes I do. Also, I'm conscious not to eat crap or drink too much (or too early) – apparently beer sales in Spain are up over 70%!

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

Work-wise, my key goal is to navigate Devour through this. I'm sure the products and ideas that we create during this time will outlast the virus and the lockdown. We've just come out with a digital recipe book this week featuring recipes from all the team, and also kicking off a series of daily live online workshops and cook-a-longs on our [Facebook page](#) – everything from how to prepare a Madrid aperitif, to everything you needed to know about coffee, to me cooking a *tortilla de patatas* live.



Once we're giving tours again, I think there will be [online experiences](#) that we continue to sell. Also, I'm loving cooking (isn't everyone?) – I've been making cooking videos for my

YouTube channel, and I'm also looking forward to getting out the paella kit on the terrace once the weather warms up and figuring out how to make a damn good paella once and for all!

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

If your industry isn't financially impacted, or if it's financially benefiting from this, then certainly supporting small businesses who need help by buying their online products. When a business is struggling and needs cash, anything helps and all sales uplift spirits. Help doesn't need to be financial. In our building, people are offering to do shopping for elderly residents who don't want to risk going out.

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

With my wife, Yoly. We get on really well, so I don't feel like I have much advice to give. I guess keep a structure. If you used to have a date night once a week, find time to do that. It's easy to get lazy and wind up just eating dinner in front of Netflix each night. Set the table, eat a meal, talk to each other. And also, just because you're locked in together, doesn't mean you have to do everything together at all times. Don't feel guilty about needing "me time" – a good way to do this is to listen to a podcast and cook something, while your partner is in the lounge.

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

Provide some specific relief for tourism companies – debt relief or more flexible options for protecting your employees while also protecting cash flow. The measures introduced so far seem designed under the presumption that once the lockdown ends, all businesses will be able to open their doors at 100%. I'm sure they know that's not the case, so I just wish they would give support that reflects that reality. But international tourism is going to take 9-18 months to recover, or longer.

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

Auckland (New Zealand) has COVID-19 cases but a lot fewer, and its physical distance will help it control the virus more I would think. NZ's physical isolation was part of the reason I left, but it also has many benefits. I have no message to send – I just hope that people treat this seriously, and take precautions early, rather than only really taking notice when the death rates began shooting up (as happened to us here in Spain).

- Follow James on IG: [@jamesblickspain](#) and his YouTube channel [Spain Revealed](#)
- Also follow [Devour Tours](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay up to date on their [online experiences](#) and upcoming tour dates
- Check out the [Recipes from the Devour Tours Kitchen](#)

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Lockdown diaries: Ryan, juggling restaurants, university teaching, two books and a baby

It feels like Groundhog's Day

Ryan's goals are to write as much poetry as possible, become a confident video lecturer because lord knows when we'll be back in the physical classroom, and teach his son the names of the colors in English. Also, as someone in the restaurant industry, he explains that for a lot of small businesses, staying closed two months will be like giving up 5 years of profit.

Timothy Ryan Day (Ryan for friends) has been living in Madrid for 14 years. He teaches early modern literature and ecocriticism at Saint Louis University. He is a founding partner of [Grupo Bang Bang](#), a popular restaurant group run by his wife Claudia, comprising The Toast Café, Roll, Slow Mex, and The Village Tap Room. He has books forthcoming with Routledge and Adelaide Books, and you can find his poetry collection at [Lemon Street Press](#).

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

Before the lockdown I dropped off my son at daycare each morning on my way to teach at St. Louis University. I would usually write for a couple hours in the morning as I am trying to meet deadlines for two books. In the afternoon after I picked him up we would go to see his mom at one of our restaurants. She does all the hard work keeping the businesses going! Then the three of us would go to the park together for a little while. In the evenings I would grade, edit, make dinner, and put him to bed. Somewhere in there I try to squeeze some exercise, some meditation, some reading...



These days, I wake up, make breakfast, take the dog out, record a video lecture or answer posts on blackboard, make lunch, put my son down for a nap, watch the news, watch youtube videos of children's songs, do some exercise, make some bread, cook dinner, play guitar, write for a bit if it is at all possible, talk to a friend or family member on zoom, take the dog out again, watch the news, drink some wine... There is not a lot of variety in that order of events... It feels like

Groundhog's Day...

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

Well, this is a two-part answer for me. First, the University has closed, so we're teaching online. I think both students and professors have been really flexible and things have progressed in as productive a manner as possible. We've moved things online, and I personally have learned a lot about the technology of online teaching. I think this experience will make me a better teacher.

Second, the restaurants. It's been devastating. Restaurants are low-margin businesses in the best of times. I'm talking 3 or 4% profits if things are going well. The only way for most small businesses to get through this is going to be to take on a lot of government backed debt. So, for a lot of restaurants, staying closed two months will be like giving up 5 years of profit. And they probably already have debt! So, my guess is that a lot of places don't open again...

How are you coping?

How does one know that one is coping? Hah! We'll see when this all comes to an end. In the beginning, for the most part, I just relied on the kinetic energy of a routine. After the first two weeks I began to realize this may be a sort of pathological behavior that I had dragged along with me into quarantine. I think mindless motion keeps a lot of us moving through life, covering up anxieties and staving off

vulnerability.

This has been an opportunity to stop, breathe, realize that it is okay to just feel frustrated and even a bit sad, and look at whatever piece of the sky you can see from your window, bask a bit in the existential crisis, and pray that we come out of this as a wiser species that can keep this planet in livable condition...

Have there been any comical moments in this unprecedented time?

With a baby and a dog there's lots of comedy. The dog is being very patient with a child who has just discovered he can be used as a small horse. There's a fly outside the window that's been keeping the dog occupied. That's been a source of comedy. The politics would be funny too, if they weren't so tragic...

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

I want to finish my two books, build a better (less passive) relationship to food, teach my son the names of the colors in English, write as much poetry as possible, and become a confident video lecturer since lord only knows when we'll be back in a physical classroom...

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

Wife and child. Love them. Talk. Cook. Be vulnerable. We all need a little extra right now...

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

Bring my son to the park. He's starved for the outdoors.

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

The clapping is about the only daily interaction I have outside the house! So, I'll rely on that as my vision of kindness... I have also noticed a generally kinder tenor to Twitter! But, that may have more to do with the fact that I primarily follow Shakespeare scholars, ecocritics, and bakers... Maybe also just the glances from the balconies and windows across the road. Everyone smiles. Everyone's grateful for just a little eye contact. That is nice.

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

Just be supportive of local businesses! I see the lines outside of Carrefour and Mercadona... Bring that business to your local fruit and veg market. Buy bread at local independent bakeries. Go to the wine shop instead of the supermarket. And buy some local books. Most little presses sell online.

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

Putting businesses in debt right now is going to aggravate the problem when we get back to a weakened economy. Provide support to PYMES and autonomos. They aren't the enemy. They want to help. Also, please learn from this... We always hear that we can't do anything about global warming without massive damage to the economy. And, that's true, but we are also seeing that we can indeed shut things down and make painful transitions when it's in our collective interest. The system is just a story we tell ourselves, and we can tell a different version of it.

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

Big shoulders, Chicago! You'll be fine.

- You can find Ryan's restaurant group's info at [Grupo Bang Bang](#)
- You can read Ryan's poetry work at [Lemon Street Press](#), a local publishing house which is also holding submissions

for a new charitable project. More info just below.

Call for submissions!

If you're a writer, photographer, poet or artist currently living under lockdown in Madrid, we encourage you to submit your work to the Madrid Quarantine Anthology which will be printed by Lemon Street Press. All proceeds will go to charitable organizations in Madrid. Submission deadline is April 30th!

<http://lemonstreetpress.com/quarantine-anthology/>

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

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Mercado Acre, shop small to keep dreams big

An Aladdin's cave of goodies that will perk up any Madrileño during lockdown

If you're like me, one of the things you're likely to love about Madrid is the lack of chains. Don't get me wrong, they're creeping in. Brands such as 'Five Guys' appearing on Plaza Santa Ana do prompt an eye roll, but in comparison to countries such as the UK and the US, Madrid exists comparatively chain free.

As we're in full-on lockdown, I'm missing one of my favourite pastimes, which is to simply stroll around various barrios to see what small business gems I can find. I always buy my weekly flowers at [Botanyco](#) without fail. I buy my bread at the local bakery, and it's a given that all fruit and veg is purchased from the grocers next door to my flat. So I was pretty thrilled when I discovered via the 'gram that Mercado Acre was still open and offering free home deliveries.

Mercado Acre is an Aladdin's cave of goodies that will perk up any Madrileño during lockdown. It's an organic store selling homemade bread, nuts, fruit, every type of grain/flour/rice/pastas that you can imagine, and frankly, whilst in the midst of a global pandemic, I don't think there's ever been a better time to invest your money in eating well and eating healthily.

But what really made my Sunday (when in all honesty I was struggling after our lockdown being extended) was that they sell plants. With a new green friend purchased and now fully ensconced in my *piso*, it felt great to bring something living into the flat and being able to support a small, local business.



If you don't live nearby and can't walk there yourself, the beauty is that you can order online. The store itself is

gorgeous, but you can console yourself by making your home more lovely (it can't just be me that's in nesting overload). They stock vases, plant pots and dried flowers, so if you've Marie Kondo'd your place, I'm sure you can find something online that would definitely help to spark joy.

There's a well-known British supermarket whose slogan is 'every little helps' – and in this instance it's true. Support small business if and when you can and before long, hopefully we'll all be back out discovering them for ourselves, en route to the nearest sun-drenched plaza.

Article by Cat Powell, aka [@littlemissmadrid](#) / Feature image by [@the_interiorshopkeepers](#)

Mercado Acre

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@mercadoacre](#)
- **Address:** Calle Noviciado, 18, Madrid
- **Metro:** Noviciado

Read Cat's previous articles:

- [Order pizza from Lab 84 and take the sting out of lockdown](#)
- [Madrid lockdown diaries: Cat, primary school teacher & blogger \(UK\)](#)

Check out all [Madrid lockdown stories](#)

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Lockdown diaries: Valentina, bringing communities of people together online and keeping spirits high

Continue supporting each other and your community members and we will come out of this strong and ready for what is to come next.

Originally from London, Valentina Ruffoni is a community consultant and events manager who's has been living in Madrid for over three years. She's also a food lover and the founder of the nearly 7,000-member Facebook group [Eat Out Madrid](#). Due to the lockdown, her sister group [Eat In Madrid](#) has become the place to be for community members to share all the recipes they're cooking up at home these days. Check it out.

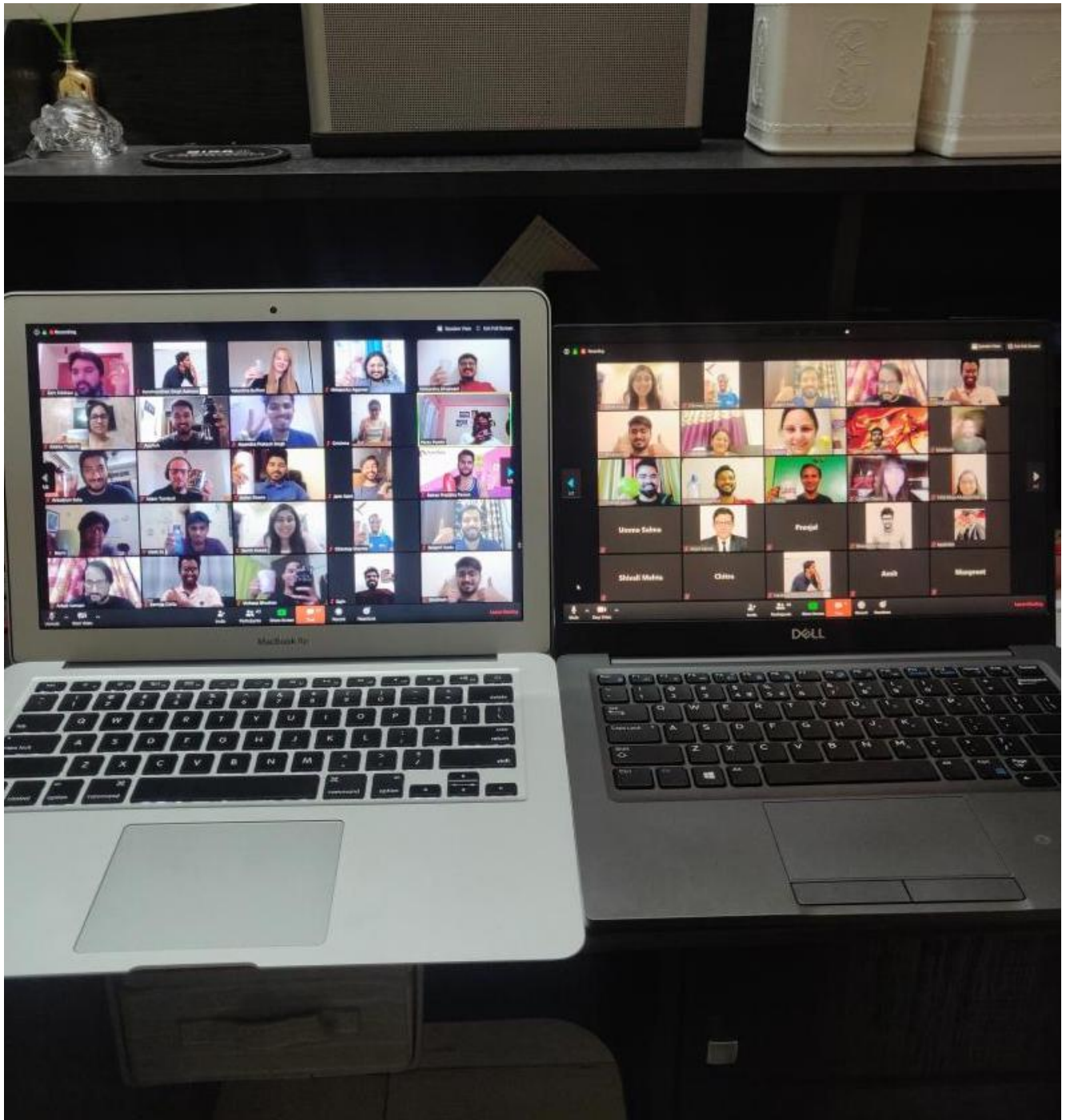
What was your life like just before the lockdown vs. today?

Before the lockdown I spent most of my time organizing and hosting in-person events and speaking in front of large audiences moving all around the city. Now the closest person I have been in contact with is my husband, so for a very extroverted and social person this has been challenging.

I'm cooking more than ever (before this we used to eat out a lot) and working from home. I'm also hosting several events online and being very active in my online communities, as there's a clear need for social interaction on the internet right now. Providing a place online for people to come together and share their recipes, dishes and favorite eateries to order from seems to be helping a lot.

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

Unfortunately, the main industry I work in, the events industry, has been severely affected, forcing us to explore ways of doing things online. However, this has been a great time to adapt and come up with creative ways to bring the in-person experience digitally.



“How to care for a community in crisis” online event with [Community Folks](#)

The community industry has also seen a huge increase in interaction and support which has taught me so much about my members and what they want and need. It is during this time that we must remember the importance of ourselves as community managers, how we manage our time and interact with our communities, to keep spirits high.

People are craving the in-person connection more than ever and unfortunately with most of us inside we rely on online platforms to communicate. Continue supporting each other and your members and we will come out of this strong and ready for what is to come next.

And teaching has seen a rise in students taking classes online and has acted as my safety net when I'm not able to make an income through organizing events.

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

As the founder of [Eat Out Madrid](#) and [Eat In Madrid](#) I'm a big advocate of supporting the food and drink industry especially during this time. Many businesses are still open offering delivery of their products or even gift certificates for future visits, so I always encourage people to reach out to their favorite places and help where they can. Other ways you can help is by simply leaving a review within the community or on their dedicated sites which helps attract future customers and when this is all over, we can go and enjoy their amazing offerings once again.

How are you coping?

Mondays seem to be the worst day, I'm not sure why because half the time I have no idea what day it is. I'm a big food lover, but surprisingly not a fan of breakfast, however I've learnt how important it is to get into a routine and start the day off right with good wholesome food and continue throughout

the day. It has definitely helped me curb my temptation for snacks throughout the day.

One other thing I would highly suggest is getting dressed. It is so easy to sit in your pyjamas all day, but I've found myself become way more productive by doing this. Plus you never know when you may need to jump on a video call with friends, family, clients or anymore for that matter. #alwaysbeprepared

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



The 8pm daily routine of clapping for the medical staff that others have mentioned has been especially uplifting. One of our neighbors has a speaker and disco lights and plays *Resistiré* by Duo Dinámico followed by *I will survive* by Gloria Gaynor, it is a great way for the community to come together even though we may have never met each other before. I hope that when we can come out and socialize in person again we can celebrate that we made it through the situation and our residential community can continue to support each other.

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

We moved into a new apartment in February and I'm determined to finish unpacking my stuff out of boxes. I keep looking at them and saying tomorrow... I really have no excuse. I have also started a little herb garden so I hope that soon I'll be able to enjoy some fresh oregano, coriander, parsley and basil on my food. I just hope the rain holds off so they don't drown outside.

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

I think the first thing would be to take a long walk, I am very fortunate to have a large Carrefour literally 2 minutes from my door but that means the walk isn't so long. I miss the change of scenery and seeing people and cars around going about their day.

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

I am in quarantine with my husband. This situation has come at a somewhat good time for us as he works away a lot and we often don't get to spend much time together. We're enjoying being able to live together, cook and support each other during these uncertain times.

Something we've been doing is trying to avoid listening in and watching the daily news constantly as we can easily be overpowered by information which can only lead to panic. For others quarantined in couples, take this moment to enjoy each other's company and take each day as it comes together.

- You can connect with Valentina on [LinkedIn](#)
- Join Valentina's Facebook online communities [Eat Out Madrid](#) & [Eat In Madrid](#), as well as [CMX Connect Madrid](#)
- Also read Valentina's article on our sister publication The Content Mix: "[How I grew multiple online communities and became a thought leader in my niche](#)"

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Lockdown diaries: Amy, unethically evicted by her landlord during quarantine

Be gracious with others. People are very anxious for numerous reasons right now... what we are living through is clearly not normal.

Amy's landlord made the decision to terminate their rental agreement at the end of February, giving Amy a month to find a new abode. When the state of emergency was declared and attending apartment viewings was rendered unfeasible, Amy's landlord aggressively insisted that these unprecedented circumstances changed nothing and that she had to leave by April 1. Luckily Amy's co-worker, who's staying with friends, has offered Amy her flat to live in during quarantine, for as long as she needs.

Amy is a California native who has been living in Madrid for 3.5 years as a teaching assistant and also sings in a Gospel Choir in her spare time. Here's her lockdown diary.

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

I was running through life “a cien” as they say. Apart from work, private classes, and some other activities I’m involved in, my landlady had just given me 30 days notice that my rental contract was ending on April 1, so I was looking online and visiting rooms all over Madrid. My anxiety level was really high but I don’t think I even realized how elevated it was. Today, after 2 weeks of being forced to stay at home, sit still and live less hectic of a life, I’m so grateful because I couldn’t have continued at that rate much longer.

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

Once the state of alarm was declared in Spain, it became nearly impossible to go out and look for flats. In spite of this, my landlady became increasingly insistent that my stay there would not be extended, which meant staying in my flat was turning into an emotionally exhausting and anxious experience. When sharing this with friends and family both here in Madrid and other parts of the world, I was flooded with words of support, anger on my behalf, offers to solicit legal advice, advice on how to act going forward, and plenty of sympathies.

However, the greatest act of kindness I’ve received during this time of need has been a co-worker of mine who, as she is staying with friends during the quarantine and in recognizing that it was essential that I get out of my flat, offered me her house to stay in as long as I need, a much needed and invaluable respite.

How are you coping?

I've been talking with friends and family both locally and abroad who I wouldn't normally have time to in my "pre-lockdown" life. In particular, a friend of mine created a group on the video chat app Marco Polo which helps me to fill the time and feel connected with people who are on the other side of the world.

Apart from that, I've been doing virtual dance and workout classes, limiting the amount of TV I watch and stretching to pass the time. Another thing that has been so critical in coping has been taking time to say or list the things I am grateful for – a grateful heart is a satisfied one.

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

Now that I've successfully moved out of my previous flat and am in more of a mentally safe space, I'd like to take time to process this whole experience – think about it, cry about it, be angry about it, accept it, or whatever.

I'm lucky because I haven't lost my job and am in a safe place to pass the quarantine so I want to take advantage of this time to care for myself and my mental health. I'm also wanting to get back to studying C1 level Spanish and who knows, perhaps even be able to do the splits!

How has the lockdown impacted your industry?

This pandemic has come in a moment when few schools are ready and properly equipped to teach online. Many aren't which means some language assistants churning out videos, online resources, games, projects, and activities for their students while there are others like me whose schools are still fighting an uphill battle in figuring out this whole online learning thing, much less communicating on how to incorporate their eager language assistants into it. Then, of course, there are people who have gone home and unexpectedly lost their jobs here.

This is an unprecedented time in education and we are on just as steep of a learning curve as our students.

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

That day still seems somewhat far off. I'll probably go for a walk or maybe even a run in the park, hopefully with friends! Just before the lockdown, I was getting really into running as a way to manage anxiety but when this finishes, the thing that I might be most yearning for is to see people in the flesh. Maybe we'll skip the run and just have a good-old picnic to catch up and enjoy being in each other's physical presence.

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

Be gracious with others. People are very anxious for numerous reasons right now – they don't know how they'll make ends meet. Or they or someone they love is in a high-risk group. We don't know the lives and hearts of the people we interact with at the pharmacy, grocery store, or even those we share a house with; but, we can be gracious and willing to retract justifiable blame, anger or frustration under normal circumstances given that what we are living through is clearly not normal.

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

I was in quarantine with my landlady's daughter and her boyfriend (who I was never really consulted on about him joining us during confinement). They stuck to a pretty set teleworking and work-out schedule. My roommate's boyfriend was silent on all of what was going on regarding my pending eviction but my roommate was notably concerned that I wasn't looking (or rather, couldn't look) for places and would be unable to move out by April 1.

Now, however, I'm alone in my friend's apartment. It is the first time in my life that I've lived alone so I'm interested to see how it goes.

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

I would probably thank them for not cutting my job and those of the many language assistants who chose to stay in a foreign country amidst a global pandemic because their prospects here are better than what would have been if they went home. In that vein, I'd tell them to consider the lives of people whose studies and practicums have been interrupted through all of this and make reasonable and doable provisions for them to be able to complete what they need to.

I'd ask the government to be creative, to listen to what educators and students need when making decisions about how to proceed, and be open to new and formerly unconventional ways of getting things done.

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

From what I've heard and seen, my hometown is about a week behind Madrid in terms of ordering people to shelter in place and mandating that businesses shut down. My message to them would be to stick with it. Now is not the time to bury your head in the sand or invent conspiracy theories as excuses for not complying.

- If you or someone you know is being evicted in Madrid right now, you can contact the [Sindicato de Inquilinos](#) (Madrid tenants' union)

- Also read this article by Madrid No Frills which explains more: [Madrid's anti-eviction warriors](#)

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