La Pollería: Madrid’s phallic-shaped pop shop that’s on everyone’s mind (and lips)

If you’ve ever taken a stroll through Chueca, one of Madrid’s trendiest neighborhoods—and headquarters for the LGBTQ+ community—then you’ve most likely stumbled upon the buzzing street corner where Calle Gravina meets Calle Pelayo, seen a massive crowd of people, and wondered: *“What’s all the fuss about?*”



Nearing closer, and noticing the sweet, sugary scent wafting through the air, you'll see that people are waiting in line for a dessert shop. However, upon further inspection, you'll realize this isn't your typical confection spot, but rather one of Madrid's most iconic shops: La Pollería.

Passion for #pollofre

La Pollería—a combination of a slang word for penis mixed with *-ería*, a suffix used to indicate the name of a shop in Spanish—is very unique and popular. It's rare to walk past and not see a line of people happily waiting to get their hands on a #pollofre, their signature item: a penis-shaped waffle on a stick, with customizable flavors.

Since their opening in late 2019, they've gained massive popularity, not only because their penis-shaped gofres are both emblematic and delicious, but also because they've gone viral on social media, with an amassed following of nearly 100,000 on Instagram alone, thanks to their fans eagerly snapping pics of their pops before they even leave the shop.



Box captions read: “This box holds what you really deserve” (left) “How about you? How do you like to eat it?” (right)

Navigating ups and downs (but mostly ups)

Opening mere months before the pandemic turned the world upside down, La Pollería has had its share of uphill battles. With a growing popularity comes not only more fans, but also those eager to imitate their work. They’ve also had to deal with criticism from those who aren’t in favor of the concept of their product—even being turned away from renting out certain locations when it was revealed what they would be selling.

However, it’s clear there are far more lovers than haters of these phallic-shaped desserts, with no signs of their following slowing down anytime soon. And with an ever-increasing popularity comes room for more opportunities. Last summer, they saw the opening of their second shop in Chueca, La Coñería, dedicated to vagina-shaped waffles.



They’ve also opened up more stores across Spain and are planning to open in London and other cities. You can see all their locations here.

Breaking taboos

Before the birth of La Pollería and La Coñería, owner Pedro Buerbaum—originally from Tenerife and the CEO of Viral Projects, its parent company known for living up to its name and churning out viral businesses—also spearheaded another former Madrid sweets shop, Ice & Dreams. The unique ice cream spot in the heart of Malasaña was known for its dreamy Instagram-friendly decor and famous cotton candy ice cream creations.

While Ice & Dreams was far from your average run-of-the-mill ice cream spot, La Pollería and La Coñería are pushing the boundaries even further, aiming to sell a memorable, out-of-the-box (and delicious) product, while breaking taboos and further opening people's minds in the process.



*All of these images are from La Pollería's Instagram

La Pollería and La Coñería's info:

La Pollería

- Address: C. de Gravina, 3, 28004 Madrid
- Hours: 15:00-00:00
- Website
- Follow them: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter
- Metro: Chueca

La Coñería

- Address: Pl. de Chueca, 5, 28004 Madrid
- Hours: 15:00-22:00
- Follow them: Instagram, Facebook
- Metro: Chueca

See all of their locations here.

Also check out:

- Roll Me Up leads the pack in Madrid's cinnamon roll craze
- La Desayunería: American diner food wonderland in Madrid

Fish & Chips 2.0. – made in Spain with local, fresh

ingredients

Building on its success in Barcelona, The Fish & Chips Shop has just opened its first restaurant in Madrid's Chueca neighborhood, and aren't we lucky! The Alam brothers, Mani and Majid, decided to open their first location in Barcelona in February 2015, after searching the city for a fish and chips antidote to a long night of partying, to no avail.

Since then, they've opened eight Fish & Chip Shops in Barcelona, and now their first in the capital.



Image by Cristina Góngora

Situated on Calle Campoamor 2, their Madrid location is a lovely, small eatery with an open kitchen, modern decor and

international magazines dispersed throughout.



Image by Cristina Góngora

The menu features an updated version of the traditional British comfort food, made with top-quality, locally-sourced ingredients. It'll cure your hangover—as it should—but without leaving you regretting a single bite.

All the dishes here are made with prime ingredients from across Spain. For example, the potatoes and hake fish come straight from Galicia; the highly refined extra virgin olive oil that they fry with, *Olis Bargallo*, comes from Barcelona; the bread comes from Panic, an organic bread shop in Madrid's Conde Duque area; the probiotic drinks come from Rudo, also based in the capital. Just to give you an idea.

What we ate and drank

I ordered a natural white wine, and James chose an IPA. The manager, Gonzalo, told us they'll soon be serving beer from Oso Brew, a local brewery that we've written about on several occasions, with a bar in La Latina. Next time I want to try their kombuchas and homemade lemonade.



Accompanying our drinks were delicious edamame, cooked in extra virgin olive oil and topped with maldon salt.

As for the food, Gonzalo recommended we order a few menu highlights. To start, we had the artichoke flowers coated and sauteed in extra virgin olive oil. They were so tender and flavorful.



We also had the “bravas de pulpo rebozadas” which I’d roughly translate as fried octopus balls! Gonzalo told us it’s made with battered octopus that’s fried in tempura with panko breadcrumbs, dressed with a spicy sauce of rocoto pepper, ají and chipotle; and topped with Kimchi, mint and citric mayonnaise. Plus perfectly cooked French fries with paprika. This dish was amazing.



Image by Cristina Góngora

For the main dishes, we went with the two stars: The Fish & Chips (the photo features a medium-sized portion) and The Lobster Roll.



Their version of fish and chips is made with fresh fish from Galícia, battered in tempura, with cereal to give a bit of

crunch. It comes with a side of French fries made with fish masala spices, plus a homemade tartar and mango chutney sauce. So satisfying.



Image by Cristina Góngora

The lobster roll is made with fresh lobster sautéed in smoked butter, drizzled with a lobster head, celery and mayonnaise sauce, heaped on a buttered brioche with lamb’s lettuce. Served with a side of authentic coleslaw and addictive sweet potato fries. Heaven.



For dessert we had the chocolate ganache, typical of Cataluña. The portion was the perfect compliment to our meal.

All in all I’d say this was one of the tastiest meals I’ve had in a long time, and I’m happy that this restaurant is supporting local producers while giving a quality spin to the

UK’s most traditional fast food dish, as well as many other menu items that I can’t wait to try.

The Fish & Chips Shop Madrid

- Website, Facebook & IG
- Address: Calle Campoamor 2
- Metros: Alonso Martínez or Chueca

Lettera Trattoria Moderna: I love beige carbs and I cannot lie

There is most definitely a pattern emerging when it comes to my most recent blog posts. I love Italian food. I could wholeheartedly eat pasta day after day, and never get bored. Why don’t I then? I hear you ask… Well frankly, my waistline can’t take it. But I am a fully fledged member of the pizza and pasta fan club.

During these times when I’m unable to return back to the UK (my home country), Italy is the next best thing in terms of comfort food to me. In lieu of a pie, a roast or a fry-up, Italian food cooked with love and attention feels nurturing and the perfect pick-me-up as the temperatures start to drop.



So last Saturday (during yet another *puente* spent in the city), I enjoyed a leisurely lunch at [Lettera Trattoria]

Moderna – a restaurant that's sandwiched between Gran Via and Chueca, sporting some seriously scandi-chic decor. And I had the very best kind of carb coma.



As Madrileños can't currently travel outside of the city, the place was heaving with a lovely lunchtime buzz. We munched on some delicious focaccia whilst perusing the menu and sipped on a couple of glasses of red – a great recommendation from our super attentive waiter.



We shared the show-stopping spaghetti to start, which is made and served from a carved-out parmesan wheel – certainly not a

case of style over substance. It was delicious and, as a cheese lover, gluttonously good.



Fresh spaghetti with parmesan. Image from Lettera

Next came an artichoke pizza and a slow-cooked ragu. We both left empty plates, but ensured that we left room for a pud. We weren’t disappointed.



Pappardelle pasta with slow-cooked ragu. Image from Lettera

We shared the “Tarta de Agustina” – a cake served with ricotta and a crumble made of almonds. It was one of the most unusual, but tastiest desserts that I’ve had in a long time. We fought to munch every last mouthful.



Tarta de Agustina dessert. Image from Lettera

Lettera Trattoria really lives up to its namesake – moderna. It is home-cooking with a modern twist, served in stylish surroundings with knowledgeable staff. It’s a pairing as perfect as Dolce and Gabbana.



We left full, happy and ready for a nap. So while we may not make it to Italy anytime soon, you can enjoy La Dolce Vita a

little closer to home.

By Cat Powell @littlemissmadrid

Lettera Trattoria

- Website & IG: @lettera_trattoria_moderna
- Address: Calle de la Reina 20, Madrid
- Phone: 918 053 432
- Metros: Gran Vía, Sevilla & Banco de España

You may also like:

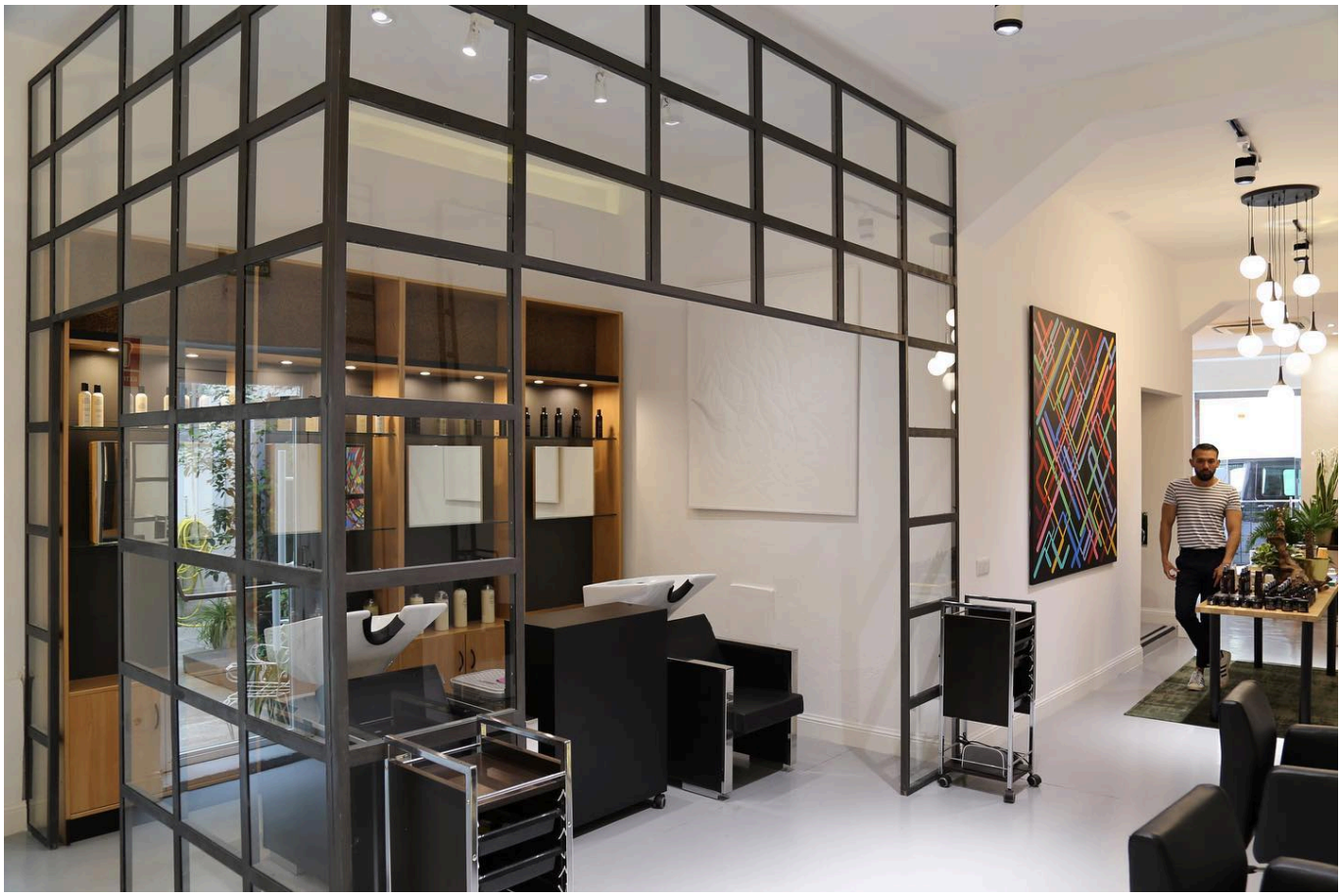
- Nina Pasta Bar: Don’t walk right past’a
- Retrogusto Bar: My best-kept Madrid secret
- Camoatí: An incredibly romantic Argentine bistro in La Latina

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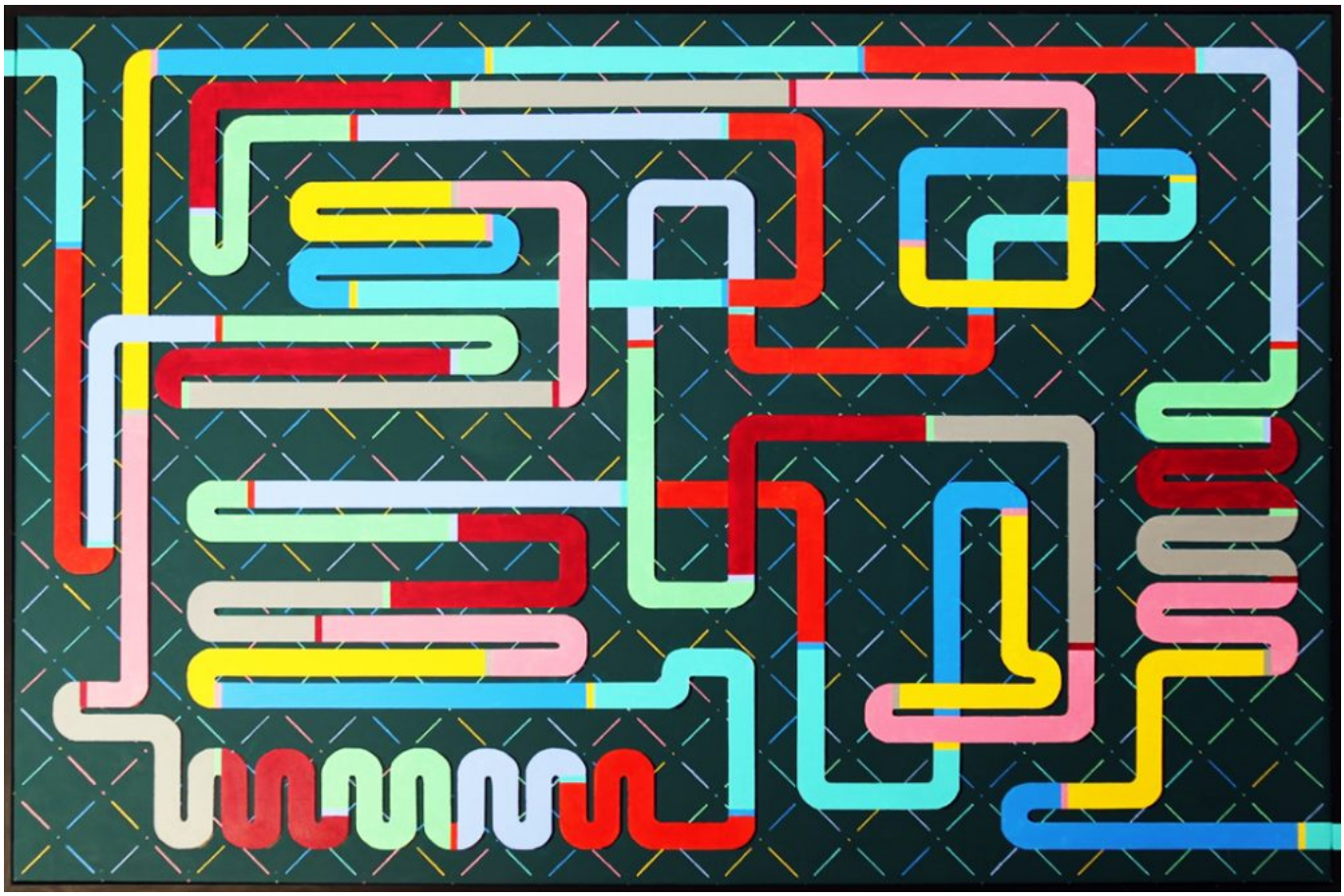
Ara Crinis – indulge in an artful hair salon experience

Soft lights. Greens. Pastels and contemporary art. Not something you expect of a hair and styling salon! Thus you’re greeted by a surprise which then transforms into an

inexplicable comfort – a place as delightful and friendly as its kind and charismatic owners.



As you walk in, you have the beautiful exhibit of contemporary artist Tomas Gracia. This particular one has been designed around the concept of chaos seeking its own natural order.



The more you reflect on it, the more lost you seem. Lines and hues seem to be in search of their own destinies. Maybe that’s the exact point of the exhibit – to have your internal chaos muse over the edgy lines and vibrant tones of Tomas’ artwork.



The exhibits are temporary and will include all categories of art and literature in the future, they tell me. The open patio will also house many interesting events.



The area of the salon is beautifully decorated with lively greens and flowery tones, immediately transporting you into a spring-like feeling. The collection of books on display and the smell of freshly-brewed coffee add to the urbanism of the ambience.



The serene patio at the end, of course, completes the place beautifully.



As distinct as its name, *Ara Crinis* (which literally translates from Latin into ‘a beautiful lock of hair’) is the delightful service and experience you receive here. The salon works with the concept of aromatherapy and organics around every service they offer. The cherry on top are the very artful Neo and Carlo, who are the heart of the place.



Hop on over either for a walk around their artful decor, a pleasant cup of coffee with the owners, an exhibit of the next talented artist of the month or an indulgent hair experience – this little spot in Chueca is unlikely to disappoint.

By Arabdha Sudhir

Photos by Carlo Calzolari

Ara Crinis

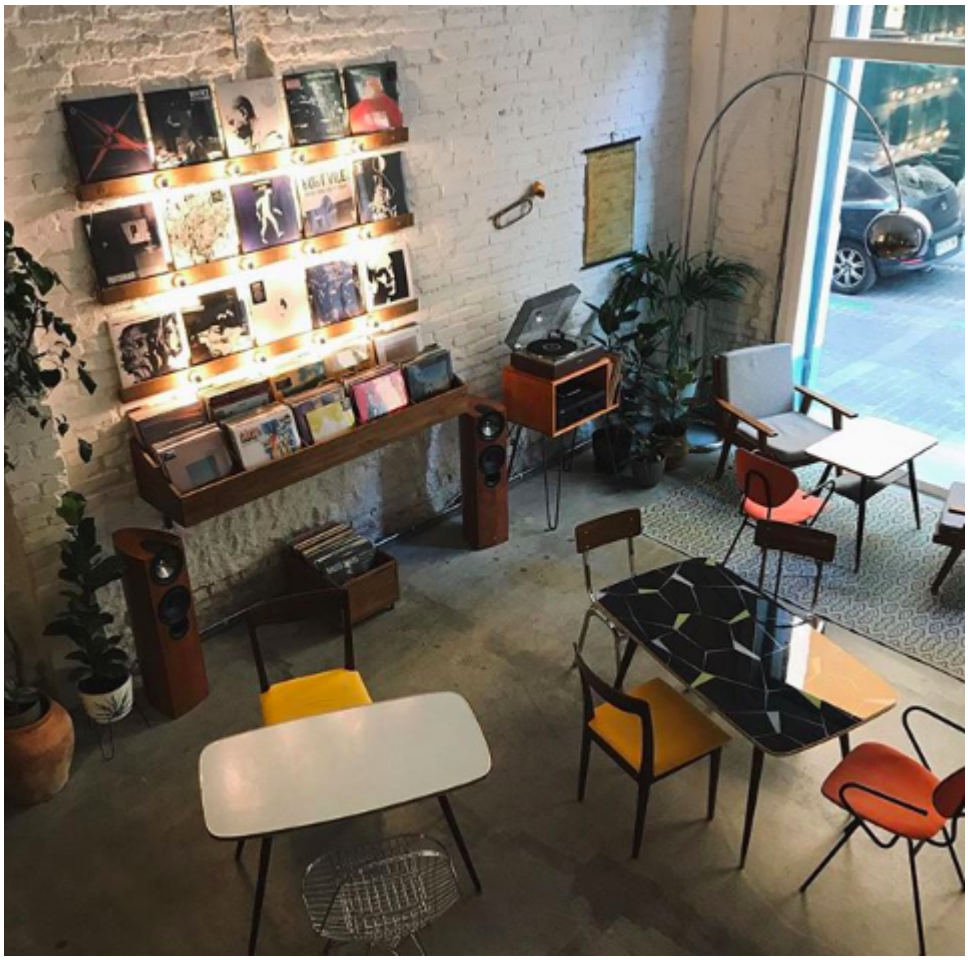
- **Website** **Facebook** **& Instagram:** **@ara.crinis**
- **Address:** Calle San Lorenzo, 5
- **Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez

Have a fine old time at Faraday

So for once I'm going to keep this short and sweet. Possibly as short as my time spent at the lovely Faraday, my current top pick when it comes to a cracking cup of coffee, in a spot as cosy as cashmere.



Nestled on Calle San Marcos in the perennially popular Chueca, I first suggested it to a pal for a quick post-work drink a few Friday's ago. Quick disclaimer – they do not bear booze. So if you're after *vino*, *cañas* and the like, just walk on by. But if you're after coffee with a kick, served in surroundings that make you forget that you were craving a G&T, then this may well be the place for you.



It’s worth me noting that it’s hipster heaven. There’s luxe leather chairs aplenty and vinyls (to be purchased) galore. Faraday’s USP in a city heaving with coffee competitors is that it’s a coffee shop slash mini-concept store. Aside from the vinyls there were other vignettes to be snapped up post flat white.



Whilst I was there to chew the fat with my mate, there was no shortage of folk taping away on their Macs, making it a desirable locale for a digital nomad. The eclectic tunes being pumped out also made it fiesta friendly but not deafeningly so.



Although I eventually left to sink my well-earned G&T at a neighbouring waterhole on the nearby Calle Belen, Faraday proves that sometime's there's some fun to be had in abstaining.

All photos from Faraday's instagram account

Faraday

- Instagram @faradaymadrid
- Address: Calle San Lucas, 9
- Metro: Chueca

Also check out:

- **Gin O'clock – time to enjoy Madrid's finest G&T's**
- **5 Work-friendly cafés in Malasaña with great WiFi**

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

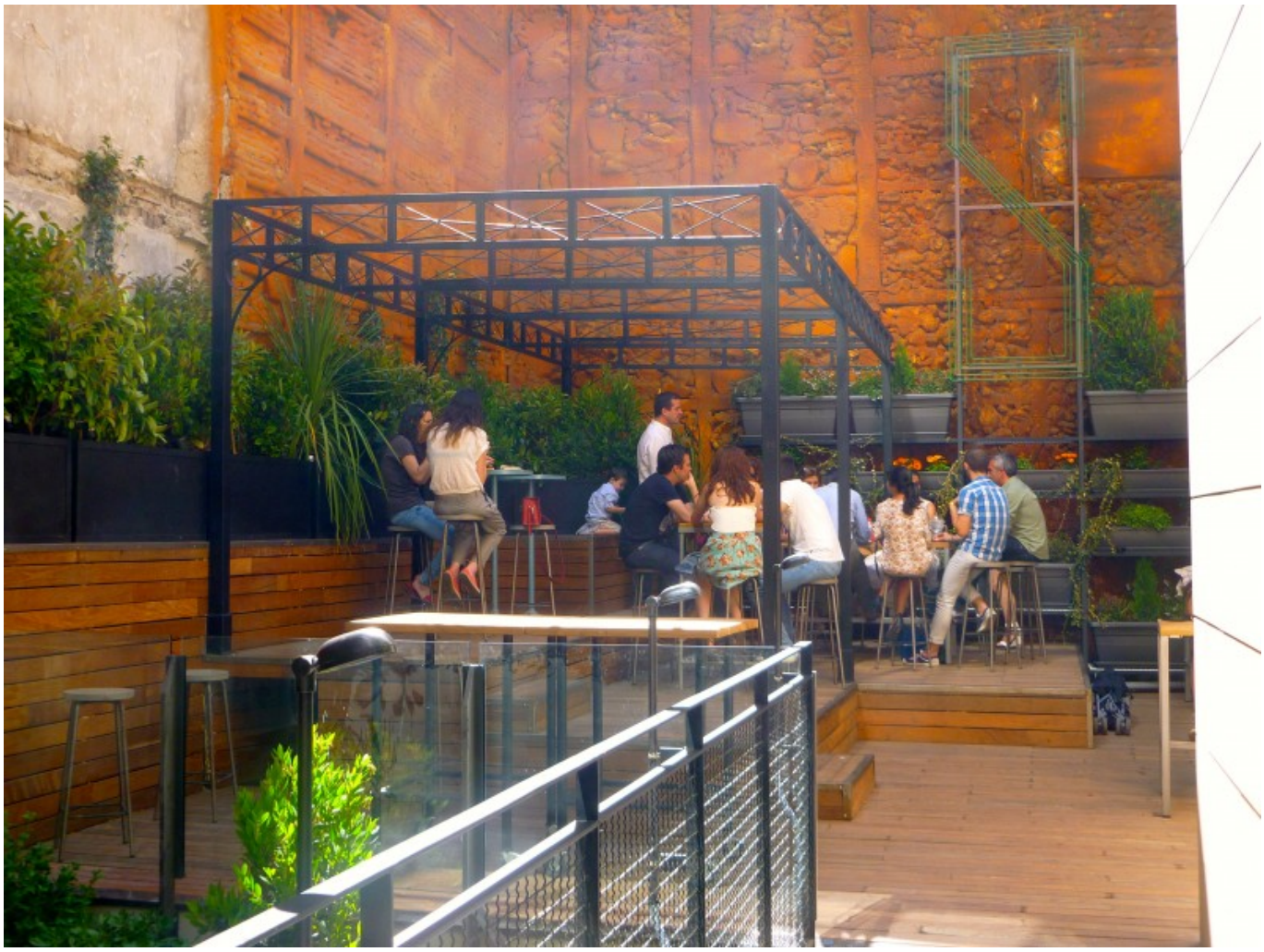
7. Jardín Secreto



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!

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10 Great Second-hand and Vintage Shops in Madrid

Fed up of queues in Primark, everyone having the same dress from Zara, and the unsustainable waste produced by fast fashion? Ditch the high-street chains and get ready to rummage! From cheap and cheerful thrift shops to high-end boutiques, there’s something for everyone when it comes to second-hand and vintage shops in Madrid.

1. Vintalogy



- Instagram, Facebook, Website
- Address: Calle de Atocha, 10
- Opening Hours: 11am-10pm every day

A good place to start is Vintalogy, Europe's largest vintage store, set up by the team behind the **Mercado de Motores**. Forget delving into bargain bins; think of Vintalogy as a vintage department store. They make the most of the huge floor space and high ceilings with great merchandising, making it easy to find what you're looking for. The clothes are divided neatly into sections, and sizes are easy to find. If you fancy a splurge, there is also a separate room for luxury and designer clothing, all in mint condition and, like the rest of the store, beautifully presented.

The shop building is emblematic. Vintalogy replaced the historic cloth shop Sobrino de J. Martí Prats and the original signage has been preserved, in keeping with the philosophy of repurposing, reusing, and rediscovering gems from past eras.

As you might have guessed from the late opening hours, **they often host events and DJs**.

2. La Mona Checa Vintage Market and Art



- Instagram, Facebook, Website
- Address: Calle Velarde, 2
- Opening Hours: 11:30am-9pm Mon-Sat; 11:30am-3pm/4pm-9pm Sun

La Mona Checa is a cute boutique (with an equally cute name) on Calle Velarde, a mecca for vintage shoppers in Madrid. Thanks to its bright sign and distinctive monkey logo, you can't miss it walking past. Once inside, you could be at the circus, thanks to the quirky red-and-white, striped, fabric that decorates the ceiling, like the inside of a tent. They have a great selection of brightly-patterned shirts for men

and women, some great party dresses, and sunglasses of all shapes and sizes (I even managed to find a pair to fit my tiny head).

3. Malasaña Vintage Outlet

- Address: Calle San Vicente Ferrer, 39
- Opening Hours: 12pm-3pm/5pm-8pm Mon-Sat

If you're looking for a bargain, this is your place. This outlet stocks clothes from La Mona Checa and Biba Vintage, all at up to 70% off. It's a true, no-frills, thrift shop experience, with no changing rooms and clothes racks full of stock. But it's not hard to find something you'll like. I walked out with two shirts and a skirt for under €10.

4. Magpie



- Instagram, Facebook, Website
- Address: Calle Velarde, 3 and Calle Manuela Malasaña, 19
- Opening Hours: 11:30am-9pm Mon-Sat; 12pm-9pm Sun

With a cavernous space on Calle Velarde and a small, newly-opened shop on Calle Manuela de Malasaña, Magpie Vintage has all the clothes you could wish for. There is an extensive range of both men's and women's clothing, everything from jeans and sportswear to sequinned mini-dresses and floor-length evening gowns. I also love the range of accessories and jewellery. The prices are more than reasonable, with most items a bit less than they would be in your average high-street shop.

5. Heritage and Rare

- Instagram, Facebook, Website
- Address: Calle del Pez, 36
- Opening Hours: 11am-3pm/5pm-9pm Mon-Sat; 12pm-2pm Sun

One for the vintage purists, Heritage and Rare stands out for its beautiful, authentic, and well-cared-for vintage pieces. All items carry a label specifying the country and decade they were made in. From delicate Italian lingerie to heavy wool coats, everything is in perfect condition and shows no signs of use. A lot of the stock has never been used, having been rescued after shop closures. The shop is small but manages to squeeze in a good selection of men's and women's clothes, including shoes and bags.

6. Alphaville



- Instagram, Facebook
- Address: Calle Velarde, 7 y 16 and Calle del León, 29
- Opening Hours: 11am-9pm every day

Alphaville has several locations, with two shops on Calle Velarde and another on Calle del Leon. On Calle Velarde, one shop is dedicated solely to vintage sportswear and the other has a bit of everything. Good for winter coats and shoes, my favourite of the three is the shop on Calle del Leon. With its cosy atmosphere and retro furniture, I sometimes feel like I'm shopping in someone's living room.

7. Humana, Malasaña

- Website
- Address: Calle de la Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 23
- Opening Hours: 10am-pm every day

Bear with me on this one… With shops across the country, Humana is the biggest second-hand chain in Spain, but it doesn't have a reputation for being the most stylish. Think Humana and you're more likely to be picturing frumpy

throwaways than quirky vintage finds.

However, the Malasaña branch, on Calle de la Corredera Baja de San Pablo, has a carefully selected collection. There is a mix of good-quality, on-trend, high-street items, and vintage stock. It’s well worth a browse, whether you want to pick up some of last season’s fashion at a fraction of the price or a more individual vintage piece. They get new stock regularly, as **the best items from the other branches are brought here**. The last time I went, there was even a vintage wedding dress!

8. El Rincón de Tia Jo





- Instagram, Facebook, Website
- Address: Calle Velarde, 4
- Opening Hours: 12pm-3pm/4pm-9pm Mon-Thurs; 12pm-9pm Fri-Sat; 1pm-9pm Sun

El Rincón de Tia Jo is my favourite second-hand shop on Calle Velarde. It seems like a little, narrow shop but is much bigger once you get inside. With a distinctly less hipster vibe than the other shops on this street, the best vintage stock tends to be in the room right at the back. In another small room, they have vintage furniture and knick-knacks. The selection of coats is great; I bought my beloved, black, fake-fur jacket here. Most importantly, the staff are friendly, helpful, and always give good advice about what suits you.

9. The Loop



- Facebook, Website
- Address: Calle Velarde, 1
- Opening Hours: 11:30am-9pm Mon-Sat; 11:30am-3pm/4pm-8:30 Sun

Banish thoughts of rifling through musty cast-offs. The Loop's tagline is "Fresh Vintage for Fresh People." Though "Fresh Vintage" is a bit of an oxymoron, I think they mean that all their vintage clothes are on trend, in good condition, and clean. The stock is well selected, with well-known brands like Moschino, Armani, Valentino, Calvin Klein, and Levi's. The shop is bright, modern, and feels more like a quirky designer boutique than a thrift store.

10. Johnny and Velvet



- Instagram, Facebook
- Address: Calle Embajadores, 42
- Opening Hours: 11am-2pm/5:30pm-9pm Tues-Sat; 11am-4pm Sun

Johnny and Velvet, named after the owner's two greyhounds, is perfect if you want to pick up some €20 Levi's jeans. It's a bit away from the main hub of vintage shops in Madrid, located south of the centre on Calle Embajadores, making it a good choice if you don't feel like facing the bustle of Malasaña. The clothes are quirky, original, and reasonably priced.

By Ellen Fouweather *(Instagram: @efouwee)*

Know any other great second-hand and vintage shops in Madrid? If so, let us know!

Massa Pizza, perfect pizza made with pride in Chueca

The barrio of Chueca is known for many things, perhaps most famously though as the epicenter for the world-renowned Madrid gay pride festival – which is ultimately when the barrio becomes a riot of all things rainbow coloured and the always lively neighborhood really ramps things up a notch.

But over recent years I've noticed a shift from Chueca being all about bars. More foodie spots have sprung up encouraging you to part with your hard-earned cash. Just last week I accidentally sampled yet another insta-worthy poke bowl place which continues to be all the rage across the city. But what I'm getting to with this review (and I will get there eventually) was **the most perfect pizza place that I stumbled across a few weeks back.**



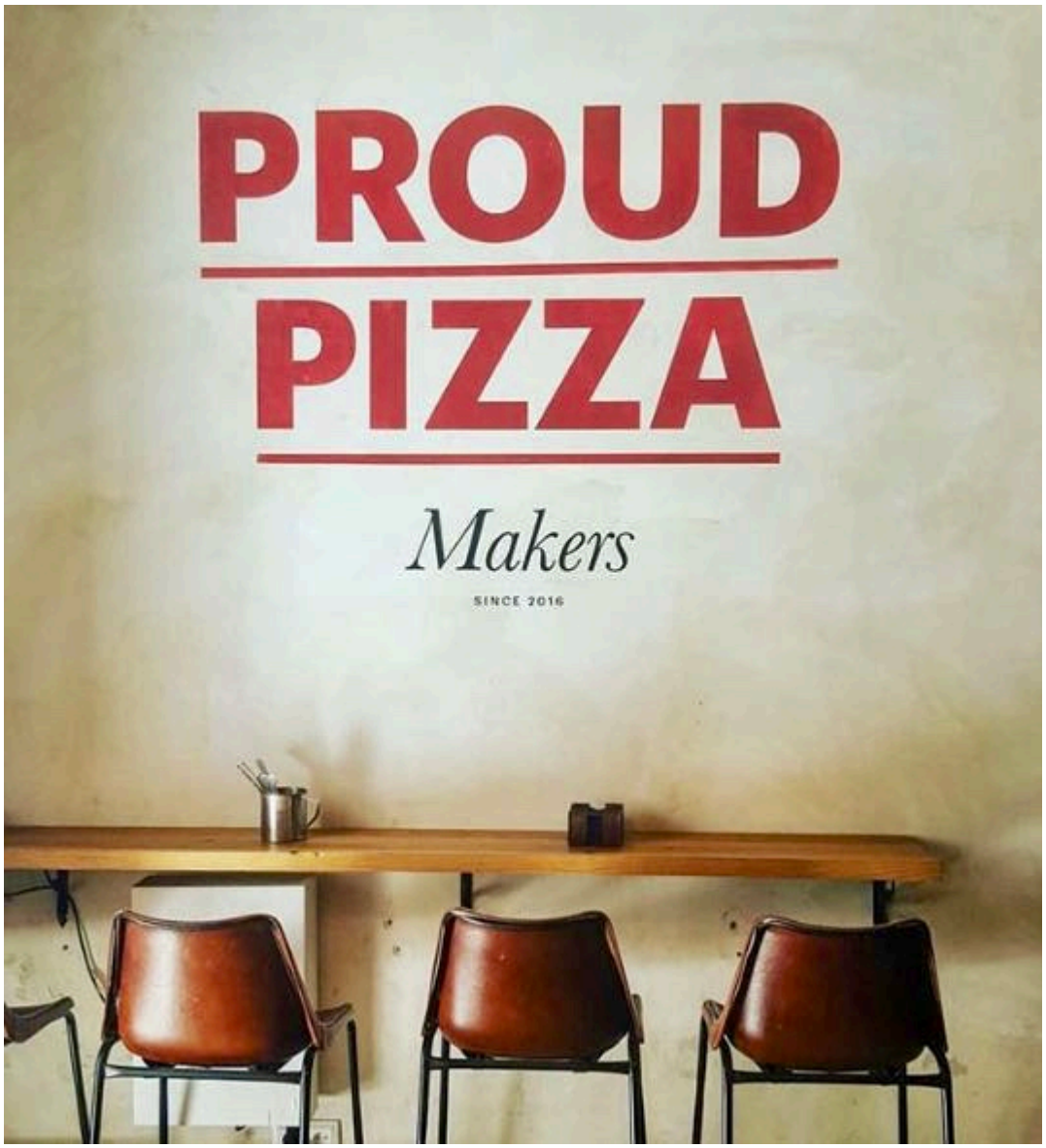
Massa Pizza is a stone's throw from the perennially popular **Mercado de San Anton** and could certainly be described as warm and inviting upon entering. A couple of gin fizzes in, myself and my dinner date selected some starters and neither one disapointed. Beef carpaccio (which is always up there as one of my death row dinners) and roast chicken croquetas which were bites of utter joy – now I realize it might sound strange for croquetas to have made their way into an Italian menu but I'm all for fusion food that's filling and fun.



We both then opted for individual pizzas (I’m grateful that the concept of a doggy bag is becoming increasingly popular in Madrid) – eyes bigger than Nelly much? Both pizzas were lush, doughy but not soggy, crisp on the edges but not burnt and the perfect cheese/tomato ratio in my humble opinion.



Now some people at this point might have needed to be rolled home. Not us. We saved space for the extremely cute (and Instagram worthy) dessert tray/box which was heaving with bite-sized little puds for you to select from. The cheesecake and tiramisu were to to die for but alas, all good things must come to an end.



Massa Pizza makes for the perfect low-key date night (as it did for us) and it's ideally located smack back in the centre of the city. What do you get when you combine pizza and pride? A combo that's as appealing as gin coupled with tonic.

Massa Pizza

- Facebook, Website
- **Address:** Augusto Figueroa 21
- **Metro:** Chueca

Oh happy day at Ohanasana

I’m a relatively late bloomer when it comes to all things health and fitness wise. I’d love to wax lyrical that the only time a dirty Maccies passes my lips is at the end of a night when only greasy carbs will do, but frankly, I’d be lying. However, there’s something about hitting your thirties (and I really hope that this isn’t just the case for me) that wakes you up to the fact that your body isn’t quite what it once was, and that a helping hand from the old spin class and eating some greens aside from the mint in your mojito is no bad thing.

So Ohanasana was blessing in disguise for something who’s dare I say it, challenged in the clean eating stakes. Ticking all my necessary boxes on the decor front – floral chairs, some fluro neon and an exposed brick, all that was left to approve of was the grub. And boy it did not disappoint.



Now before I extol the virtues of fat free, vegan type fun, let me be clear, I love all things calorific so for me to rave about something without there being a chip in sight it has to be good. I started with a juice called “young, wild and free” – I like to think they named it after me! *my tongue is firmly in cheek here. It was a mix of pineapple, mint, cucumber and

coconut water. With every sip I felt like I was radiating the kind of glow that Gisele Bündchen seems to naturally exude. Whilst I may not be Gisele, it was delish and did serve its desired purpose which was to counteract the gins consumed the previous evening.

Next up was a little amuse bouche of gazpacho, it had a a slight chilli kick to it which I loved – having grown up near Birmingham (the balti capital of Blighty) I love all things spicy and appreciated the twist on a Spanish summer classic. Next came the build-your-own bowl section (which a fussy faffer like me loves as it avoids any awkward "can I switch the cucumber for more deliciousness that is an avocado).



I plumped for a quinoa-base laden with gorgeous raw tuna, avo and edamame – topped off with some salty soy while my friend had the "happy" chicken bowl which did exactly what it said on the tin, left her feeling cheery and safe in the knowledge that her lunch was devoid of anything that could hamper

“operación bikini.”



But this is me and I’ll never be completely angelic. With the merest mention of a dessert menu I was all over it like a rat up a drainpipe. The best part this time was that the chocolate pot that we shared wasn’t packed with nasties and the mouse was even made of butternut squash – what’s not to love about getting one of your five a day when it’s masquerading as a cocoa fix.



Aside from the food, the service was faultless. Our lovely waiter was the right side of helpful, aka he knew what he was talking about but didn’t enforce menu choices upon you and instead gently suggested that we should order the chocolate pot and for that, I was grateful.

Ohana Sana isn’t just a luxury for peeps in the barrio either,

available on Glovo, Deliveroo and Uber Eats there's no need to exert any energy if you don't quite fancy going out to sample their wares. Convenient and clean eating, that's a combo that works for me.

Ohanasana

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- Metro: Chueca
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Don't walk right 'pasta' Propaganda 12

I really and truly love Italy. So much so that if my finances ever return to 'normal' after the battering they've taken from buying a flat, it's where I hope to spend a week over the summer getting some much longed for Vitamin sea.

I love everything from the sing-songy nature of their language, to the style and panache of their locals. And of course, there's the food. To me, there is literally nothing better than a plate of pasta. Like a hug when you're feeling blue, it has restorative powers.

Propaganda 12 is so much more than pasta though. It’s like bypassing passport control and finding yourself in the land of limoncello, despite not having left the cocoon of barrio Chueca.



As mentioned, I bought a flat – a process in Spain that felt akin to a root canal, but I survived. And after you've

survived something there’s only really one rightful thing to do and that’s – celebrate. So off I went (with my Dad in tow) to toast my freshly signed mortgage.

No sooner did we arrive, out hostess (who couldn’t be faulted the entire evening) offered us two glasses of champers – I liked the place already and the fizz combined with the decor (my current obsession is all things paint and plate related) made an excellent first impression. The tiles in the bathroom along with the wallpaper are sure to be papped and all over the ‘gram.



Again, we completely trusted our wonder of a waitress when it came to wine and she gave us a back story with each bottle.

So on to the food. We shared anti pasta to start. Now so far, you may well think so predictable, but the roast pork that we plumped for was literally so a-ma-zing, that we ordered a second portion.



Now I enjoy pork as much as the next person but this was something else. Tasting of rosemary and served with freshly baked bread, I honestly think I could eat it day in, day out. Whilst I’m becoming increasingly open minded with food, my

Dad’s a tough crowd and even he couldn’t find enough superlatives to pile on the praise.



We both then had a beef red curry which was spiced to perfection – not bland, not blow your head off hot and two delicious puds, tiramisu and a red fruits cheesecake respectively. Everything was heavenly and as good as anything that I’ve eaten in Puglia. All the while, the setting is chic yet cosy, the staff friendly but not overbearing.

I also spotted that come weekends, they do a champagne brunch

for the non too pricey sum of 25 euros. Good food, good booze, good times.

An ideal place to brunch, lunch or dinner, pop propaganda 12 on your to-do list right about – now!

All photos from Propaganda 12

Propaganda 12

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