La Hummuseria – a social kind of thing

Today I'm sharing a secret discovery. I considered keeping it to myself both out of selfishness and to preserve its charm, however I've decided that ***La Hummuseria*** deserves to be experienced by anyone who appreciates healthy, wholesome food and a familiar, friendly atmosphere; or indeed anyone with a penchant for hummus. Even if you don't, it's hard not to fall in love with it because it's so damn tasty and healthy.

La Hummuseria **is the dream child of newlyweds Lotem and Shai,** two young psychologists from Israel who visited Madrid on holiday and for all the obvious reasons fell in love with the city.

They pondered what the city was missing, namely: hummus and this being their passion Lotem and Shai dreamt up *La Hummeseria*. In February 2015 they moved to Madrid and in

October 2015 *La Hummuseria* was born. Simple.

Hummus is a traditional Middle Eastern dish made from garbanzos/chickpeas, Tahini and lemon. It is served warm with

a touch of olive oil, warm chickpeas and one of their special toppings.

Traditionally, hummus is eaten as a meal in itself so one portion could be enjoyed individually without anything other than fresh pitta. However, to keep the hummus company (Hummus is a social kind of thing, says Lotem) you will find freshly cut salads made from the best vegetables in the market, lemon and herbs.

The hero is obviously the hummus. **There are five varieties of hummus**; the base is freshly made every day using the Lotem and Shai's tradition and secret technique and toppings include mushrooms, lemon and almonds.

To accompany **El Ambiguo**: hummus with tahíni verde, we ordered the oven baked cauliflower with almonds. A crisp and simple tapas sized dish of oven lightly baked cauliflower seasoned with lemon, parsley and chives and coated in roasted almond shards.

The **Ensalada fresca-fresquísima** arrived as a generous mix of cucumber, tomato, chickpeas, carrot and a fresh herb, lemon and oil dressing.

We drank iced tea with fresh mint and felt so gloriously healthy that we almost declined Shai's insistence that we try the **Malabi for dessert**. I am more than glad that we conceded. Made from Middle East cream scented flowers, peanuts and coconut, this dessert is as fresh and wholesome as everything else and totally delicious.

Hidden off Fuencarral, *La Hummuseria* is the ideal spot for a lazy weekend lunch; reclining in comfortable art deco chairs on the mezzanine level or to grab a quick snack as a break from combing the Malasana shops.

The service is impeccable, you can see Lotem and Shai preparing their food from the open kitchen and they are more than happy to stop and talk to you while you are there. **After all, hummus is a social thing.**

Finally, in case you were wondering, yes they do offer take aways.

Info:

- Facebook
- **Address:** Calle Hernán Cortes 8
- **Metro:** Tribunal, Chueca

By Alice Josselyn

Also check out Falafeleria by the same owners!

A Year of Menus Del Día in Madrid

Tapas get all the fame in Spain. Drinking wine, nibbling chorizo, sharing little bites late into the night—the tapa is romantic. Never mind that the definition is slippery and the quality unpredictable, or that an evening of tapa-hopping can cost you more in the end than sitting down for a proper meal.

But I'd like to take a moment to celebrate a lesser-known

Spanish food tradition, one that's equally praiseworthy but seldom mentioned: the ***menu del día.*** These three magic words will get you a three-course meal, with bread and wine included, at an incredible fixed price.

Beginning as a government-mandated measure during the Franco years, this practical lunch tradition was designed to provide affordable meals to day laborers during the workweek. While no longer required by law, restaurants have carried the tradition full-force into the 21st Century, with even high-end establishments kneeling down to offer those of us on tighter budgets delicious lunches at bargain prices. **It's not as sexy or unique as the tapa, but the *menu del día* forms an integral part of the Spanish food culture and is perhaps one of Spain's best-kept secrets**.

The Club.

Over the last year some friends and I decided to take advantage of the *menus* around Madrid. I wouldn't call us a club (ignore that I just did) but rather a shifting group of buddies hanging out over a different meal every Friday. We would fluctuate between two and ten people, though it was always anchored by a couple die-hard members, myself included.

I recommend that anyone with the opportunity start their own tradition as well. It's a great way to try new food, see new corners of the city, and hang out with all the other no-goodnik three-day weekenders over something other than a bar stool.

We had only four rules. All menus had to be:

1. In one of the central barrios.
2. Less than 15 euros per person.
3. Good quality food.
4. Good quality people.

The Rankings.

This list is limited to our *menu del día* meet-ups over the past calendar year. I included both food and atmosphere in my decisions, though the process was by no means meticulous; I'm going off little more than my general impressions of each place. I also recognize this list skews toward trendy restaurants, which is partly because we liked to use the meet-up as an opportunity to get into otherwise busy spots (Friday lunch was normally little hassle), but also as a much-needed break from the every-day Spanish fare. It's worth noting that sometimes little Spanish joints in the outer barrios do the best *menus* of all!

1. Bacira (Chamberí, 14 euros)

It’s pretty astounding that a restaurant with a waitlist of more than a month offers a 14-euro fixed-price meal. If that’s not a testament to the spirit of the *menú del día*, I don’t know what is. Make a reservation, wait it out, and go here. The food is a fresh take on the Mediterranean-Asian fusion that’s the rage in Spain these days (thanks, David Muñoz) and the dining room is bright and welcoming with all the touchstones of modern aesthetics (dangling bulbs, faded wood, dark blues and whites) without feeling hackneyed. The food is fresh, creative and delicious. We felt like sexy young business people at English teacher prices.

2. Gabriel. (Conde Duque, 14 euros)

You know you've chosen your restaurant well when you find yourself eating next to Javier Bardem. The rich and famous have good taste, much better than Joe Nobodies like us, but this place stands on its own. The cuisine consists of modern takes on Spanish classics though there are the occasional Asian influences (again, all the rage), and the desserts are incredible. It also has the nicest bathroom in Madrid—shit's straight out of a William Sonoma catalog. Atmosphere is cozy, intimate, and occasionally Bardem-ridden.

3. Momo (Chueca, 11.50 euros)

Unlike other restaurants that include maybe two or three options for a first and second course, Momo offers the entire menu for the *menu del día*. The food is delicious and varied (again, some Mediterranean-Asian fusion going on—I'm spotting

a trend). The dishes can sometimes be a bit sauce-heavy (or maybe my tastes are becoming more Spanish) but choose wisely and you'll love your meal. This is one of my go-to *menus del día* when I have visitors because of the wide selection. They also have a menu de noche for a reasonable 18 euros (same as the day menu), but if you're going to be in the area for a reasonably-priced dinner, I'd suggest **Baco y Beto**.

4. Badila (Lavapiés, 13.50 euros)

This restaurant is intimate and classic (the chef himself sometimes takes the orders) with faded white wood walls and a chalkboard listing the daily specials. The food is classic Spanish with a touch of 'lo moderno,' and everything is fresh and seasonal. It's still the best *crema de verduras* I've had in Madrid (had seasonal squash with a couple slices of intense

chorizo), which says a lot in a city obsessed with creaming vegetables. Here’s a previous post on Badila.

5. La casa dei Pazzi (chueca, 11.50 euros)

Casa dei Pazza

Just to switch things up here, let's focus on quantity. Casa dei Pazzi offers a substantial salad as a starter and then a whole Italian-style pizza for your main course. There's also wine, bread and dessert. You'll wonder how you got away with paying only 11 euros, half-expecting to look over your shoulder as you leave and see an angry Italian chef charging after you with a pizza paddle.

6. Los Chuchis (Lavapies, 11 euros)

Maybe the most charming atmosphere in the list, it feels a bit like an old diner, with a few tables around a large bar and counter in the middle, the hustle and bustle of the waiters running around and the steady chatter of regulars. The food's great too. We showed up at 1:30 and it was fine, but it filled up quickly. Check out our previous post on Los Chuchis.

7. Bar Galleta (Malasaña, 11.50 euros)

This trendy restaurant in Malasaña has a similar feel to Maricastaña (see below), with both doing modern takes on classic spanish food, though Galleta's menu skews a bit more French. They're also on the same street, so if you don't like the look of one *menu,* try the other. I prefer the atmosphere here though—the warm gold lighting, the wide French doors to the street, the wood and brick interior with wild flowers in vases around the restaurant. When we went the food was classic Spanish but good (crema starter, *entrecot*, a fruit desert) but *the menu del día* seems to change frequently and dramatically, so you can probably catch it on a great day.

8. Maricastaña (Malasaña, 11.50 euros)

The food is classic *menu del día* —your typical *crema de*

verduras starter (or hummus or a salad) with a protein-focused second (*lomo, entrecot, meluza*)—but what they do, they do well. It has a bit of that same late-2000s trendy look to it—exposed brick, sanded wood shelves, dangling lightbulbs and fading white paint—but they manage to pull it off. Galleta wins by a hair, but they're both nice dining experiences.

9. La Candelita (Alonso Martinez, 12 euros)

We all enjoyed this place. They describe their cuisine as "Latin Criollo" (though it leaned more Spanish than Latin American) with a warm Latin-inspired atmosphere. They publish examples of their *menú del día* right on the website http://lacandelita.es/carta/menu-del-dia/ so you don't have to take my word for it!

10. TukTuk (Chamberí or Chueca, 10.50 euros)

TukTuk doesn’t even need mentioning on an English-language Madrid blog. They do a nice variety of Southeast Asian dishes and have great quantity and quality menu for the price, so it’s always a popular suggestion in the expat community. If you’ve lived here for over a year, you’ve definitely heard the typical “let’s all go TuckTak! Takatuk! TACKATACKATUKKA!” They’re pronouncing it wrong, though—it’s “tuktuk.” Read our full post on Tuk Tuk.

11. La Tragantúa (Huertas, 12 euros)

(photo credit Carlos Olmo Minube.com)

This place was consistently called the best menú del día in Madrid on TripAdvisor last year, and it might still have that reputation, but the second time I went, the quality and presentation seemed to have slipped. Who knows, it may have been an off day. I don't know how you would characterize their food—it's a bit of a Spanish-and-everything fusion. I would sum it up as "rich." Be careful to mix up the starter and second course, otherwise you'll be like "why'd I order fried cheese in blueberry sauce as an appetizer for pesto-smothered pork?"

12. My Veg (Malasaña, 15 euros)

I bumped My Veg down a couple notches because they didn't include a drink with the *menu del día,* which is an insult to the very tradition! The final cost was closer to 18 euros, making it the most expensive *menu* we had all year. In terms of quality, it would be closer to the top. All the food was market fresh (they pride themselves on "tomatoes that taste like tomatoes") and the presentation modern and meticulous. It's a much fancier place than the outside suggests. Just ignore the terrible name.

13. El Apartmento (Huertas, 12 euros)

I came here after a particularly intense bike ride and without showering, so my memory is one of me hunching over my plate apologetically avoiding eye contact with all the well-dressed businessmen eating around us. The food was delicious though, Spanish food with a modern twist. I managed to take this blurry photo before losing all control and smashing my face into my plate in a black-out feeding frenzy.

14. Siam (Conde Duque, 11.61 euros)

I'm a sucker for Thai food and this place does a decent job for the (oddly specific) price. They include tom yum soup or pad thai as a starter, then a stirfry or curry as a second. The atmosphere is a bit odd, it feels a bit like a theme restaurant. While we're on the topic of thai food, I actually prefer the menú del día at **Maiia Thai (Plaza de España),** though it doesn't rotate much, and sometimes the new **BambuBox (Chueca)** has Tom Kha as a starter, which is nice. I

haven’t included either of those on the list because they weren’t done as a menu with the group. Also: **Krachai (Alonso Martinez)** has very high quality food and some Michelin nods, though the menu is expensive, doesn’t include soup, and doesn’t rotate much.

15. Taberna DNorte (Sol, 10 euros)

So this place has a surprisingly nice interior and the food wasn’t bad (a decent-sized burger, a pisto starter for me, someone got a salad) but it’s located in an exceptionally ugly plaza between Sol and Gran Via and attached to a drab little hotel. It’s the kind of place you’d expect to see a man in a disheveled suit drinking a mid-morning cocktail and nervously waiting to meet his mistress.

16.Vietnam 24 (Chueca, 11 euros)

The menu food isn’t bad, but it’s not particularly noteworthy. We all had some type of chicken or beef stir-fry but they seemed to lack those bright fundamental vietnamese tastes (mint, lime, basil). I also would’ve liked to see pho as a menu option, but that’s wishful thinking. I prefer **La Petit Hanoi** in malasaña.

17. El b_US (Sol, 10 euros)

Everyone else loved this place (including TripAdvisor, where it has some pretty outstanding rankings). It has a unique design concept I guess, but I was not blown away by the food. I also have no idea how we're supposed to pronounce it. "El bus?" "El beh- OOS?" I end up saying it like I'm hesitant to recommend it, which I guess I am: "El b'us."

18. Vivares (chueca, 9.90 euro / 12 euros veg option)

This restaurant is popular for lunch in Chueca, but I can’t figure out why, exactly. We experienced so-so food in a chaotic environment, nothing extraordinary, and the menu felt a bit too long for them to focus on any type of seasonal speciality. My strongest memory is that it was too loud. “Alright, gramps” you’re probably thinking, but the sensation was like being in an adult Chuck-E-Cheese without any of the cool robot puppets.

19. La Mucca (Malasaña, 10 euros)

I enjoy La Mucca for dinner. They have a good boletus pizza and some quality appetizers, and it’s lively and fun in the evening. For lunch, this place disappointed. It was the first *menu del día* where someone had to set aside a dish—a greasy open-faced sandwich with an odd flavor. We were also sitting on the slanting terraza with the harsh mid-afternoon February sunlight blinding our eyes and giving the greasy *Tosta* an even more washed-out, dreary look. The highlight was this salad, but even that can be made easily at home for much cheaper. We sat there dreaming of all the better places on this list, knowing that next week was a fresh start.

Final Thoughts:

You might have noticed almost none of these get awful reviews, but that's simply because none of these places were awful. Maybe it's a testament to our rigorous selection process, or maybe we just enjoyed ourselves everywhere. If a place were awful, I would have said so.

I think of Homer the food critic: "I'm giving this my worst review ever: seven thumbs up."

I have more recommendations for *menús* around Madrid that were not included in this list because we did not go there in our Friday group. I had to set a limit for the list somewhere. **Please add your suggestions below or on Facebook and we can compile another post.**

Gallery

(all photos were snapped on scene with an iPhone, unless otherwise indicated)

Asian-fusion ceviche at Bacira

Duck confit at Gabriel

Bacira dessert

Stew as the main course at Bacira

Bacira appetizer

Vivares Salad

Vietnam 24

Del Norte

Casa dei Pazza

Badila

Badila crema de calabacín

TukTuk

El Apartamento

La Candelita

Bar Galleta

Bar Galleta

Bar Galleta crema

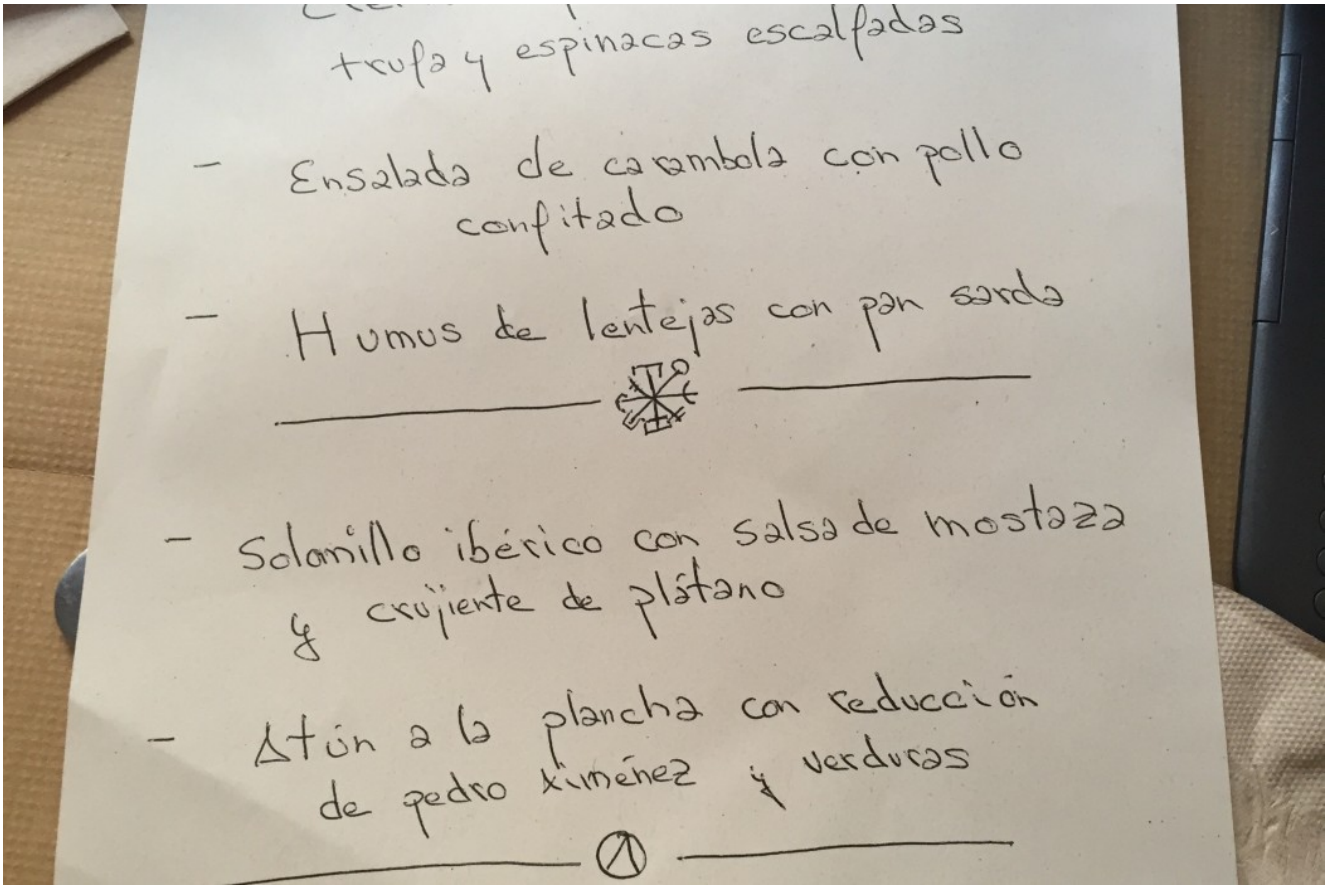
Bar Galleta

Greek salad starter at La Mucca, Malasaña

Gabriel

Gabriel crema

Gabriel Menú



Maricastaña

Gabriel dessert

Gabriel dessert

Maricastaña

La Barraca, an upscale Valencian restaurant in downtown Madrid

It is easy to be skeptical about the quality of the seafood in Madrid due to its severe lack of an ocean; I would write off most locations that serve paella as tourist traps while advising visitors to seek out their paella in Valencia or elsewhere. However, after sampling the ***arroz negre*** at **La Barraca** I am more optimistic about the state of paella affairs in Madrid and strongly recommend this stellar location.

My first time visiting Madrid was in August of 2008. This excursion with my grandmother, “Safta” Lucy, was a present for my acceptance to college. At that time I never would have fathomed that shortly after finishing my undergraduate degree I would go on to call Madrid my home. Back then I was not nearly as adventurous of an eater as I am now – I have ***verguenza*** that I had an aversion to seafood when Safta Lucy originally brought me to **La Barraca, an upscale location in Madrid devoted to seafood and rice dishes.**

In the present day, 7 years later, Safta Lucy and her friend Semita were passing through Madrid together as a stop on their journey between Mexico and Israel. Lucy made a reservation for us once again at **La Barraca**, which my stomach now had the refined maturity to appreciate. The walls of this establishment are decorated with **tasteful ceramic art** as well as photos of the **famous clientele**.

Our starters consisted of ***gambas al ajillo, gallos a la madrileña,*** **and** ***mejillones relleñadas.*** **Garlic prawns** are my favorite ***marisco*** and I jump at any opportunity to eat them during visits to coastal cities. The **gallos** were hearty and filling while the **mussels** were both meaty and delicate in texture.

For the main course we shared ***arroz negre,*** a paella dish served with squids with the rice blackened by their ink. The ink is a delicacy that contributes positively to the flavor and texture of the rice.

And of course dessert, a **cheesecake** to end on a sweet note.

Info

Website

Address: Calle de la Reina

Phone: 915 32 71 54
Reservations advised.

You'll also like:

- **La Maruca, a swanky Cantabrian restaurant in Barrio Salamanca**

Lambuzo, a family-run Andalusian restaurant in the heart of Madrid

- Cozy wine bars in La Latina (with gluten free options!)

Dime que me quieres: Personalized jewelry to show how much you love someone (or yourself)

This may be the déjà vu (and if you've read some of my previous work on Naked Madrid, you already know this). But I once again have found a spot on Instagram. Lovely Pepa, a Madrid-based fashion blogger had a beautiful gold-plated bangle and, curious, about where she got it, I clicked on the pin which had the designer tagged.

¡Fenomenal! I said to myself, it's right on my way home from Plaza de Castilla (on my way back from one of my July gigs in Alcobendas). Looking for relief from the oppressive heat, I headed down the hill as Plaza de Santa Bárbara merges with Hortaleza and Fernando VI off to the little storefront on the Travesía de San Mateo (which I, considering myself to have an excellent handle of my Madrid geography, had just found out

existed) where you’ll find **Dimequemequieres**.

Run by Eva Verdeal, who divulges on the **blog** that she studied fashion design in Madrid and London, and until having kids, worked in the fashion industry. One day, she came up with the name “Dime que me quieres” from the idea that there are an infinite amount of ways for us to say “I love you.” And by personalizing bracelets and necklaces we can manifest however we want to say *te quiero* (or I love you) to the people around us.

When I walked into the store, I was in love with everything and began trying lots of things on. The biggest conundrum was that my desired message was too long for what Eva considered to be her preferred piece. After a little bit of debate, she proposed abbreviating my desired phrase, and I agreed.

After waiting for a few minutes while she engraved the bracelet down in the basement workshop (and browsing through the sale section), my brand-new bracelet was proudly on my wrist

Front

and back

There are plenty of other non-personalized pieces such as statement necklaces, earrings, and rings (all in my exact taste!)

While I’m a gold-plated kind of girl, you can also get pieces in silver or rose-plated as well. I’m already creating a

mental wishlist.

Her pieces are stocked in some El Corte Inglés locations (I have seen a display case in the one on Preciados), but it's well worth going to the store/workshop to have yours engraved in the moment (and as an added bonus, if you're a tea lover. you can take samples from a tea shop in the vicinity.

Dite que te quieres (Tell yourself that you love yourself) or whoever you love how much with something from Dimequemequieres

Dime que me quieres

Address: *Travesía de San Mateo, 7-9*
Tel.: *+34 914 38 40 98*
Email: *info@dimequemequieres.net*
Hours: *Monday-Saturday 11 AM-8:30 PM*
Metro: *Alonso Martínez (Lines 4, 5, and 10)*
Web
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram

You'll also like:

Helena Rohner, handmade jewellery in the heart of La Latina

Tuk Tuk – An Asian-Inspired Street Food Restaurant in

Madrid

Opened by two British men, Alan and Rick, **Tuk Tuk** is a low-key restaurant with two locations near Bilbao and Chueca. All their dishes are based on Asian street food recipes, particularly from Bangkok, Hong Kong and Saigon. With an international wait staff (many of whom are native English speakers) and a range of flavor-packed dishes (plentiful and affordable to boot), it's no wonder why **Tuk Tuk** has become so popular among the city's expat community and Madrileños alike.

Tuk Tuk's menu features noodles, rice bowls, soups, curries and barbecued meat platters. Chock full of different types of vegetables and spices, your tastebuds get a mix of tangy, spicy, coconuty and sweet ingredients in every bite. Tuk Tuk can please any palate. And it's vegetarian friendly, too.

You'll find my favorite dish in the photo below: **Babi Panggang** (barbecued pork with a caramel-like glaze and thick soy sauce). It came on the **Pat Pong Party Platter (€30)**, a great starter for a big group. Just look at the **four dishes**

it includes:

I also like the mango and cucumber salad as an appetizer to share. As for main dishes, so far I've tried a soup, rice bowl and Thai curry. Although I don't remember their names, I'd happily eat all of them again. **My advice:** just go in, run your finger down the menu and choose whatever you land on. You can't go wrong!

Info

Facebook

Web

Menu if you feel you need to prepare beforehand

Average price per person: €15-20

Tuk Tuk has two locations now, one near Bilbao and the other, Chueca:

<M> Bilbao: Calle del Cardenal Cisneros 6 | **Reservations: 914 45 91 80**

<M> Chueca: Calle del Barquillo 26 | **Reservations: 915 23 25 56**

More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:

- Ramen Kagura, Madrid's (almost) perfect ramen bar
- Kintaro – Oy Vey
- Sumo – This Japanese restaurant's name says it all
- Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant
- Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.
- Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!
- Soy Kitchen – a fusion of Asian flavors
- Karachai – A cozy and elegant Thai restaurant in Alonso Martínez

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Bocadillo de Jamón y Champán- Sandwiches with Substance

If I have learned anything during my time living in Madrid, I know the importance of ***jamón***. It is a staple in the diet here, and the variety of forms, cuts, and quality can be overwhelming. Luckily, Bocadillo de Jamón y Champán recognizes

the significance of this and offers a **simplified menu of assorted ham sandwiches and an impressive champagne selection.**

Located a short walk away from **Alonso Martínez**, the hanging mini-lights adorning the exterior of the restaurant tastefully illuminate hanging ham legs and bottles of champagne behind the bar.

Settle in at one of the tall tables inside, and consider yourself lucky if you don’t have to wait to take a seat! Space is coveted at **this cozy restaurant**, making it a destination more suited to small groups, or for those who don’t mind posting up at the countertops opposite the bar.

Each ham sandwich is given a name and comes in different sizes; ideal for trying more than one! The **Telmo** is filled with a creamy cheese, caramelized onions, and peppers, along with finely cut ham of course, while the **Antonito** is accompanied by Manchego.

Nothing is left to chance, with crispy fresh bread toasted to perfection to top it all off. For those preferring the straightforwardness of ham without the accoutrements, Bocadillo offers servings of different ham cuts as well without the fuss of bread.

The sandwiches are all reasonably priced, varying from **€3.5** for a half sandwich, to **€7.5** for the whole enchilada, or bocadillo so to speak, and glasses of champagne start at **€2.5** but you could spend up to **€9**.

Although other beverages are on the menu at **Bocadillo de Jamón y Champán**, the champagne is the obvious choice, served in long-stemmed glasses. Available options, either by the glass or bottle, are advertised on a chalkboard, allowing you to choose based on the occasion.

There is nothing snobby about **Bocadillo de Jamón y Champán**. It is the perfect spot to indulge in the quality hams Spain is so known for, without needing the background of a connoisseur, or a study guide of the history of jamón-you can simply enjoy the delicious sandwich put in front of **you feeling like a true**

Madrileño.

> ***Facebook***
> ***Address:*** *Calle Fernando VI, 21, 28004 Madrid*
> ***Metro:*** *Chueca & Alonso Martínez*

Looking for other nice spots in Madrid? Check out:

> **Cozy Wine Bars in La Latina (with gluten free options!)**
>
> **Toma Café: Fuel up, Feel hip**
>
> **Best Date Ideas for Foodies in Madrid**
>
> **Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid**

The Table By: A new gastronomic concept to bring restaurants from across Spain (including chefs and

utensils) to Madrid!

The Table: a new gastronomic concept

Over the next six months, six leading restaurants from across Spain will come to Madrid for one month at a time. Along with them, they'll be bringing their very own dishes, cuisine, local products and chefs to offer a truly unique gastronomic experience in the heart of the Spanish capital. **The Table** calls itself a pop-up restaurant, although it's much more; it is a new gastronomic adventure that is taking the idea of "pop-up" to a whole new level.

THE TABLE
BY
ABASTOS 2.0

Image from: The Table By

The Team: Better

Better is the young and creative team behind **The Table**. An unconventional agency that organizes pop up markets and events, Better's projects have one thing in common: they are unique, creative and innovative. On this occasion, Better is creating **The Table** in collaboration with Hotel Urso and Alejandra Anson, Director of Elite Gourmet. Together they have brought a new concept to Madrid.

The Place: Hotel Urso

Image from: URSO Hotel & Spa Madrid

Located in the center of Madrid, **Hotel Urso** opened its doors in August and its building dates from 1915. Urso was a fine choice to host such an event, as it is one of the most

beautiful hotels I have ever seen.

The Idea: Bring a whole restaurant to Madrid

The core idea behind **The Table** is essentially common – hotels invite star chefs to their kitchens all the time. However, Better has gone even further, as they thought: **Why only bring a chef when you can bring the whole restaurant?**

The Table invites restaurants to come to Madrid for a month to serve their dishes while using their own utensils and products, as well as promote their region's cuisine. What's more, the team at Better visits the original restaurant prior to the event to get inspiration from its surroundings and decorate the space at Hotel Urso accordingly. So it's as if you were transported to a restaurant in Galicia, Bilbao, Barcelona, Cantabria ….

What's on now: Abastos 2.0 from Galicia

For this first event, **The Table** is recreating Galicia. Until November 23rd, you can enjoy authentic dishes by two young Galician chefs, Marcos Cerqueiro and Iago Pazos, from **Abastos 2.0**, a restaurant that has three locations: Taberna, Galphón and O Loxe.

The decor is also original, elegant and minimalist.

For this first occasion, the team bought bottles, buckets, plates, etc., and pasted them to the wall to reflect different cultural traits of the region.

Abastos is located in the wonderful city of **Santiago de Compostela**. Their kitchen is 100% Galician, and so is the wine. You'll notice that the products they use are not only fresh but also completely authentic. Here in Madrid, at Hotel Urso, you'll find yourself eating the same fish from the same fishmonger that the restaurant uses back home in Galicia, as they made sure to get it delivered to Madrid for The Table.

This is a “recogedor de migas de pan” (a crumb duster), the original one that the restaurant uses in their galician restaurant.

Galicia’s cuisine is known for its “materia prima” (raw material) which is why the tasting menu focuses on just a few star ingredients from the region, such as octopus (pulpo), pan gallego (Galician bread), and marisco (seafood). The restaurant has prepared two typically Galician tasting menus for the event. The first menu consists of **9 dishes (45€)** and the second, **12 dishes (60€)**. Wine is not included.

So, friends, if you want to enjoy a bit of different Spanish cuisine, do not miss out on **The Table**.

We will let you know about future restaurants, but we’ll give you a hint now: the next event is scheduled for December and will be Basque-inspired…

Details:

Make a reservation at [The Table]

[URSO Hotel & Spa]

Location: Mejía Lequerica, 8

Metro: Chueca or Tribunal

Dating in Madrid for Foodies, part 3

Covered some art, some nice trees and parks but really **you are a foodie deep down inside.** If your stomach is empty you are not going anywhere except for the next all-you-can-eat buffet. The route is a collection of little restaurants to enjoy the tapas culture that exists in Madrid. Not going to beat around the bush, **this is my preferred type of date**. I love food and talking about food. It is also nearly impossible to not talk about food, what food your mother always cooked or what local delicacies freaked out your foreign friends the first time you told them the recipe.

This route is also the most flexible and varied. I have named some of **my favourite restaurants** below, which I have visited frequently and allow for some bites to eat without having to order the coffee and dessert. Go for **3 relatively different restaurants**, not only makes it more exciting for your taste buds but it will give you a lot more to talk about. Now it might seem strange to invite someone to 3 different restaurants rather than just have the 3 courses at one.

However, we don’t want this to be a regular run of the mill date; this has to be more memorable and make you change from place to place. Plus it makes splitting the bill so much less awkward as you can pay the first bill, your date then gets the next and dessert will be handled by the organiser. After all, if you make it to dessert you will want to leave a good impression.

ACT ONE. The Starter. Naïf.

Image from Naif’s FB

Naïf in Calle San Joaquin 16 <m> Tribunal

This restaurant, just like your attitude to the first date, is understated and cool; not trying too hard to impress and it has a terrace. You will want to ask the waiter to put you on the waiting list if the terrace is full. For extra brownie points you will do this 10 minutes before you expect your date to arrive so you already have a table waiting for him/her. The starters I recommend would be the **mini hamburgers** (that arrive multicoloured) as well as **the hummus**. All the starters are very nice and not too large. One quick warning—please do not

order the white wine, as me and my friends have never had a positive experience. **Red wine** and ***Tinto de Verano*** (red wine mixed with lemonade) are both great alternatives.

Image from Nanai's FB

Alternative: **Nänai in Calle Barco 26 <m> Tribunal**

No terrace but also has a very alternative, understated and cool interior to start your date. Have 7 dishes to share with the **tztaziki**, **cheese selection** and **hummus**, all ideal choices to start the dinner experience. This bar will be exhibiting different works of art in their restaurant during the month.

ACT TWO: The Main Course. Olé Lola or Mercado de San Anton

Honestly both options are just as great. It depends on what you want for your date, if you prefer some intimacy then choose **Olé Lola** if you prefer variety and greater stimulus of the senses choose the **Mercado** (which has a great rooftop bar).

Image from Olé Lola on google

Olé Lola in Calle de San Mateo 28 <m> Tribunal & Alonso Martínez

This restaurant/bar is a very popular place on weekends so try to arrive a little earlier than 21h. The brilliant reason to go to this restaurant is how the chefs are fusing the traditional Spanish kitchen with more contemporary elements, my favourite being the **duck breast served with a puree of pear and pistachio**. The dishes range between €6 – 14 and are not too large in size to miss out on dessert. Adding the good selection of wines on offer, this restaurant boasts many advantages. Yet this still isn't the best reason to visit. The interior of **Ole Lola** makes it very easy for couples to have a little privacy. Small tables all situated one after another means you don't have someone left or right listening in on your conversation.

Mercado de San Anton in Calle de Augusto Figueroa 24 <m>
Chueca

Here you have the hustle and bustle of a market with everyone looking for the right tapas to suit their appetite. The choice of food is enormous and if you are unsure of your date's culinary likes and dislikes, then this is the safer choice. Plus it is exciting; you can start with some sushi, move onto a **burrata** (mozzarella), head to a **salmon sandwich** and finish with **jamón**. The different stalls on the 2nd floor offer a great variety and it also induces some energy, as you have to get up off the table.

FINAL ACT. Dessert.

Image from La Cocina de mi Vecina’s FB

La cocina de mi vecina in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo 15 <m> Tribunal

Our final destination is specifically geared towards delicious cakes, brownies and cookies. The **carrot cake** is one of the best that I have had in Madrid and all cakes are homemade. The service is friendly and helpful to make a recommendation if you can’t choose.

Image from Greek&Shop's FB

Alternative: **Greek&Shop in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo 9 <m> Tribunal**

This Greek delicacy shop offers a brilliant Greek nut tart or *kataifi*, also a Greek dessert made of nuts and cream. The shop is a mix between a take away and a sit-down shop, so sitting inside is an experience in itself.

If you've missed them, here's "Madrid Best Date Ideas", the series, part 1 and part 2

Madrid's Best Ice Cream

Shops!

Summer, sun, heat, walks… When I think of all these things, only one thing comes to mind—ice cream! Madrileños love ice cream. In the same way that in winter we never say no to a good hot chocolate with churros, during the summer, it's all about ice cream. *Granizados* and *horchata* are also big winners.

Virtually all cafes and bakeries in Madrid offer a wide range of ice cream flavors and other refreshing treats. But finding the highest quality homemade ice cream isn't so easy. That's why we've brought you this list of our favorite ice cream shops, which are conveniently located in different neighborhoods across the city so you'll have easy access whenever you get a craving!

Here a few key words when ordering ice cream in Spanish:

Ice cream: *helado*
Flavor: *sabor*
Scoop: *bola*
Cone: *cucurucho*
Cup: *tarrina*

Now, here's the inside scoop on our favorite ice cream shops in Madrid:

1. Mistura

Owned by young entrepreneurs who were inspired by a different way of making ice cream in India, Mistura serves up handcrafted ice cream in the heart of Madrid with a smile, using local and healthy ingredients. The first time I went there I was smitten. The guys who work there are really nice and they personalize your ice cream. Right in front of you, they mix the different flavors and toppings of your choice on a cold slab of granite (apparently to enhance its texture). I ordered *maracuyá*. Not to mention they've expanded their coffee and breakfast list.

Web
Address: c/ Augusto Figueroa, 5
Metro: Chueca

2. Sani Sapori

Run by very friendly and chatty Italians, Sani Sapori is by far one of our favoite shops in the city for its high quality ice cream (would you expect anything less from Italians?) and host neighborhood, Lavapiés! Situated on Calle Lavapiés 31, right in front of a million Indian food restaurants, you'll find this little cozy shop a godsend after a big dinner or during a nighttime summer stroll. Last time I went, we had to have two rounds each… They didn't have vanilla which was odd to me, but they made up for it with their mix of classic and innovative flavors. My favorite was the chocolate (simple I know, but truly divine). They also have a few tables set up outside which makes it a perfect experience all around.

Web & Facebook
Price range: €2.50-3.50, check out the full price list here
Address: Calle Lavapiés 31
Metro: Lavapiés or Tirso de Molina

3. Los Alpes

photograph: 11870.com

Founded in 1950 by Pedro Marchi and Marcelina Ladero, Los Alpes is a real institution in Madrid. Located in the Moncloa area, the variety of flavors is infinite, from the most traditional to the most innovative. As a Madrileña I have to say, it makes me very happy that places like Los Alpes are still here after all these years.

Web
Price Range: *€1.50 – €7.80 (giant)*
Address: *Calle del Arcipreste de Hita, 6*
Metro: *Moncloa or Arguelles*

4. Labonata

LabOnata
the best since 2009
LabOnata
HELADOS Y BATIDOS
Refrescos
A partir
€ 1,20
gaylippo
ZE
OPT

Without a doubt, if we talk about Chueca we're talking about good restaurants, shops, cafés and, of course, ice cream is no exception. Located in Plaza de Chueca, this is a wonderful place for anyone who enjoys trying out new flavors, as this shop offers all the traditional kinds as well as more innovative options such as *violet, marzipan* and *watermelon.* I chose *lemon pie*… and it was pure pleasure.

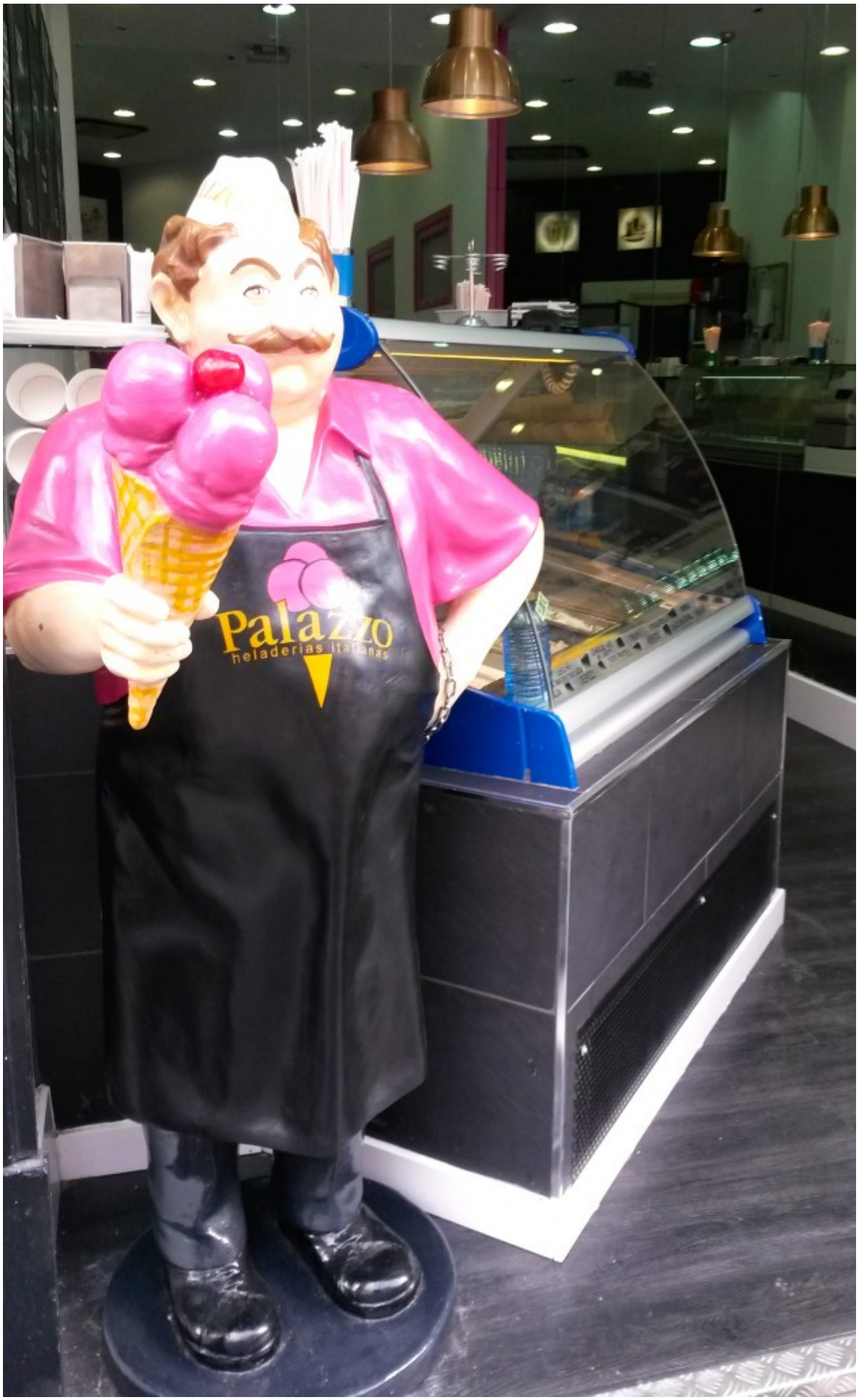
Web
Facebook
Price Range: *€2.90 – €4.50*
Address: *Plaza de Chueca, 8*
Metro: *Chueca*

5. Kalúa Helado Artesanal

We couldn’t leave **Kalúa** out of this list. This ice cream shop has been around for ages, or as they say in Spanish, “¡*de toda la vida!*” Located on Calle Fuencarral, in between metros Bilbao and Quevedo, Kalúa has been a staple among locals for many years and hasn’t lost its popularity despite the appearance of more stylish ice cream parlours like Mistura. The key to this place’s success is its **100% handcrafted ice creams**, affordable prices and delicious flavors, like **dulce de leche, kinder bueno** and **red velvet.** Kalúa is definitely a must when it comes to summertime treats in Madrid.

Web
Address: *Calle Fuencarral, 131*
Metros: *Bilbao & Quevedo*

6. Palazzo


Palazzo
heladerias italianas

Here’s another institution: Palazzo, an ice cream chain that has a place in every Madrileño’s childhood. If you don’t believe me, try this: ask any Madrileño about the best ice cream in the centre and their answer will probably be the same “Palazzo”. Few places have endured the passing of time as well as Palazzo. Its range of flavors is classic: chocolate, lemon, pistachio, mint…etc. All of them are famous for being entirely artisanal. My favorite flavors are the pistachio and *Turron* (a very traditional Spanish sweet eaten at Christmas time, similar to nougat).

> ***Facebook***
> ***Address****: among their various locations, we have: Plaza de la Puerta del Sol, 11 and Calle Goya, 49*
> ***Metro:*** *Sol or Goya*

7. Giuseppe Ricci

Located in Huertas, also known as Barrio de las Letras, this is a wonderful place if you're looking for great handcrafted ice cream. They have a wide variety of flavours.

Web
Price range: *€2.20 – €3.20*
Address: *Calle de Las Huertas, 9, 28012 Madrid*
Metro: *Sol, Sevilla or Tirso de Molina*

After posting this article, many people have recommended Heladerías La Romana on Paseo de la Habana, 27 (metros: Cuzco, Colombia, Pío XII)

Feel free to recommend us any other places – we'll add them to the list!

Enjoy!!

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

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

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

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

(all photos from each salon's Facebook)

1. Mi Calle de Nueva York

MCNY
Mi Calle de Nueva York
YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL INSIDE AND OUT
HELLO GORGEOUS!
MCNY

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

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

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

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

holidays.
Metro: Chueca

2. My Little Momó

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

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

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

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

3. Nails Secret

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

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

Check out their web for for other services.

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

4. Opium

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

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

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

5. Handmade Beauty

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

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

Web

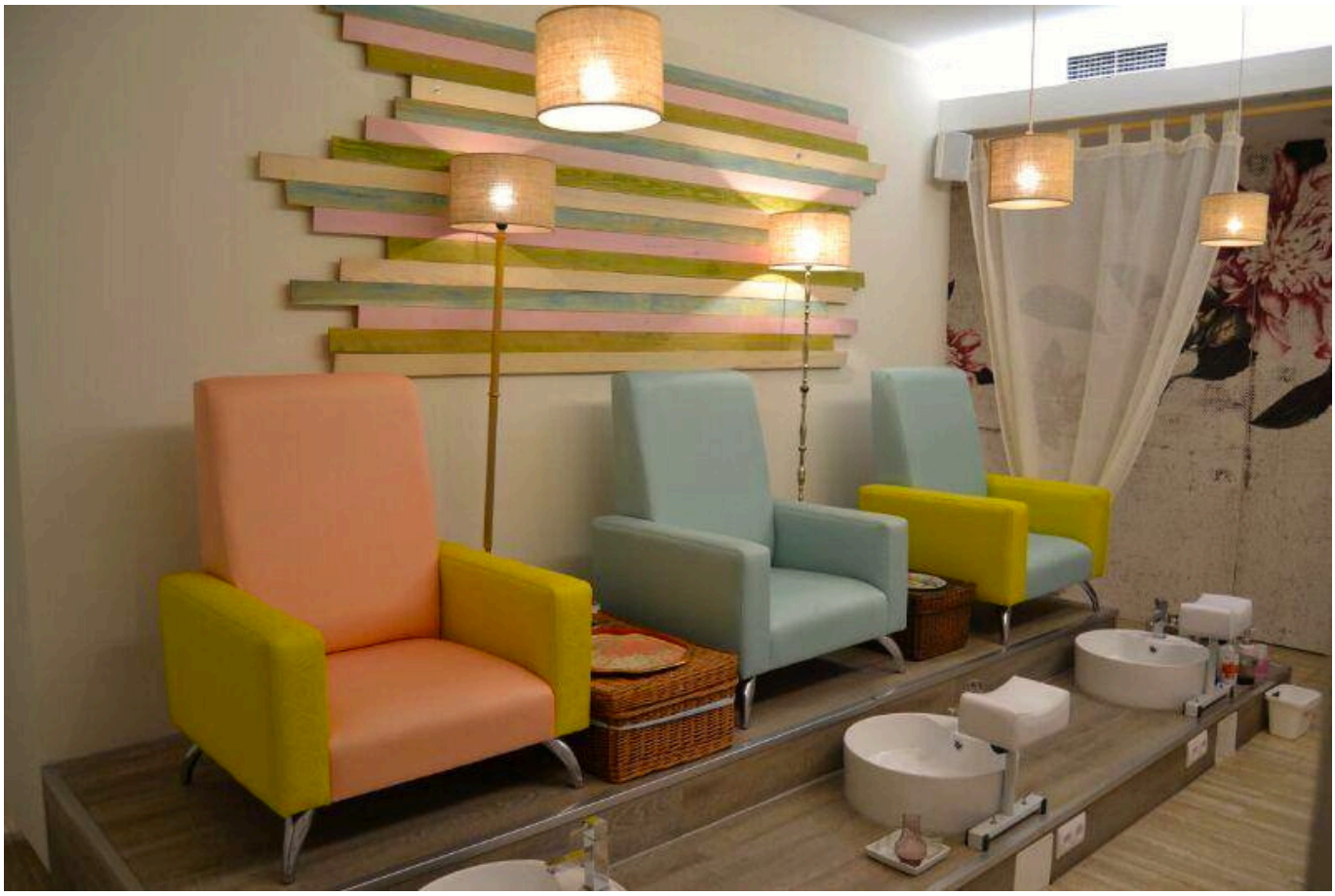
Where: 2 locations: 1. c/Lagasca, 58 & 2. c/ Conde de Xiquena, 17

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

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

Metro: 1. Serrano and Velázquez & 2. Chueca

6. Beautyque Nail Bar



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

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

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

7. Ghetto Nailz

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

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

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

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

Know of any more? Let us know!