

# Abrásame, delicious Caribbean food in Malasaña

Situated just off Calle Pez, [Abrásame](#) is a fantastic restaurant specializing in traditional Caribbean and Latin American cuisine such as grilled chicken, arepas and tostones, at great prices.

I went with James on a Friday night and we were quickly greeted by Carmen, one of the owners, who guided us through the menu. Their specialty is **pollo a la brasa (charcoal-grilled chicken)**, made with love and marinated in a secret sauce (she did let out there's ginger in it).



We also couldn't resist ordering the ribs marinated in orange and honey, so we shared half portions of each. Both were

packed with flavor, incredibly tender and not too greasy at all, something I much appreciate.



Their **arepas** are also musts according to Carmen. I had the delicious **reina** with chicken and avocado, and James ordered the **carne mechada** which was truly unbelievable (€4.40 each). They came with two homemade sauces: **Abrásame Piri Piri** (spicy) and **Guasacaca** (mojo verde), a traditional Venezuelan sauce made with avocado and parsley that I loved and slathered over everything. I'll be dreaming about these till I go back for more.





To top it off, we heeded Carmen's advice once again and ordered the **quesillo**, which to my surprise has no cheese in it! It's similar to flan but oh so much better. It was seriously to die for – if you're going to share it, a battle will surely go down to get the last bite.



After wiping our plates clean and finishing off our beers, we got the chance to chat with both the owners, Carmen (from Extremadura) and Ronald (from Venezuela). Both have called Madrid home for over 15 years, having lived in Malasaña since they first arrived. They decided to open Abrásame six months ago because they noticed Madrid lacked authentic and well-made ***pollo a la brasa***.

At first they were going to open a take-away place but because preparing this dish requires a big grill with a large ventilation system, they ended up creating a full-on restaurant that seats around 35 people. The space is very welcoming and well-designed. They also have a comfy couch you can wait on if you decide to order to go. One of their main sources of business is takeaway and home delivery.

So, folks, with such delicious food at [prices](#) this good, I



wouldn't think twice about getting your home-cooked Caribbean-Latin American flavor fix here!

## Info

[Website](#) & [Facebook](#)

**Address:** Andrés Borrego, 16, Malasaña.

**Metro:** Noviciado

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## Urso Hotel & Spa, Take a holiday (from a 'holiday')

When you tell people that you live abroad the general response is usually something along the lines of **'Oh you must feel like you're on holiday all the time!'** or **'Think of all the sun and sangria!'** to **'You must be perma-tanned!'** Admittedly, whilst there is a lot of sun and I do feel like I'm on 'holiday' when I look up at all the pretty balconies in Malasaña, La Latina and the like, I'm most certainly not perma-tanned (without the help of something I purchased from Space NK) and life's mundane tasks have a way of finding you wherever you live \*read/washing/ironing/cleaning/taking the bins out.

So no matter whether you're fortunate enough to live in a sunny clime (in this case the marvelous Madders) there comes a time when you fancy a holiday within the city; if true indulgence floats your boat then look no further than the **exquisitely elegant and seriously stylish**, [Hotel Urso](#).



Nestled on Calle Mejia Lequerica, Hotel Urso is a relatively small but perfectly formed boutique hotel. Discovered through the [Mr and Mrs Smith website](#) (which I cannot recommend enough) it's the kind of hotel you'll never want to leave. Fluffy white robes adorn the bathroom door, there for the taking when the spa takes your fancy. Pillows so soft, that lifting your head up from one feels like a chore (or maybe that was partly due to too much gin the night before). But still, it felt like having a glimpse into how the other half live – all **freshly brewed coffee, sumptuous soft furnishings and complimentary**



welcome fizz at the hotel bar.



Service wise, Hotel Urso couldn't be faulted. In a country that often leaves a lot to be desired on that front (why do I have to beg for a bill?!) nothing was too much trouble. We forgot our toothbrushes – two new ones appeared by magic. My mum on arrival managed to fall up the stairs – turns out marble floors, heels and mimosas don't mix (but cue an ice pack appearing at lightning speed) – I can only stress here that apples don't fall far from the tree and that making an

entrance must run in the family!

When check out time swung round (which wasn't until 12; a Mr and Mrs Smith perk might I add) neither of us wanted to leave – or part with the 400 thread count Egyptian cotton sheets.

It's worth noting that if splurging on a night away isn't an option – unless money starts growing on trees (as a deluxe room wasn't cheap) they have jazz nights every Thursday and the pop up restaurant '[The Table By](#)' which are well worth a visit, with a different chef dominating in the kitchen each month.

I left Sunday morning plotting how many private classes I'd have to teach so that I can return, and soon. Should I be lucky enough to do so, my mum will be wearing flats.

## Info

- [Web](#) & [Facebook](#)
  - Address: Calle Mejia Lequerica 8
  - Phone: [+34 914 444 458](#)
  - E-mail: [info@hotelurso.com](mailto:info@hotelurso.com)
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## De María: Fabulous Argentinian Restaurant

I discovered this fabulous restaurant not too long ago, called [De María](#), as two people recommended it to me on separate occasions. Since then it has become one of my go-to spots in Madrid. [De María](#) is one of those restaurants that always leaves a good impression on everyone who dines there; the food is great, portions are generous and the price is fantastic.



[De María](#) is popular to say the least; photographs of famous patrons line the walls: athletes like Beckham and actors like Javier Bardem are just some of the familiar faces who have enjoyed this wonderful restaurant.



**De María** has several locations. So far I've tried three of them and none was disappointing.

The menu is varied and contains good-quality ingredients. You can choose from a variety of mouth-watering starters, such

as “chorizo criollo”, or vegetable dishes, pastas and salads and, of course, the traditional Argentine beef. The last time I dined here we weren’t very hungry so we opted for a lighter menu. Something that stands out to me about **De María** is that you always get tasty snacks to nibble on while you wait for your food to arrive.



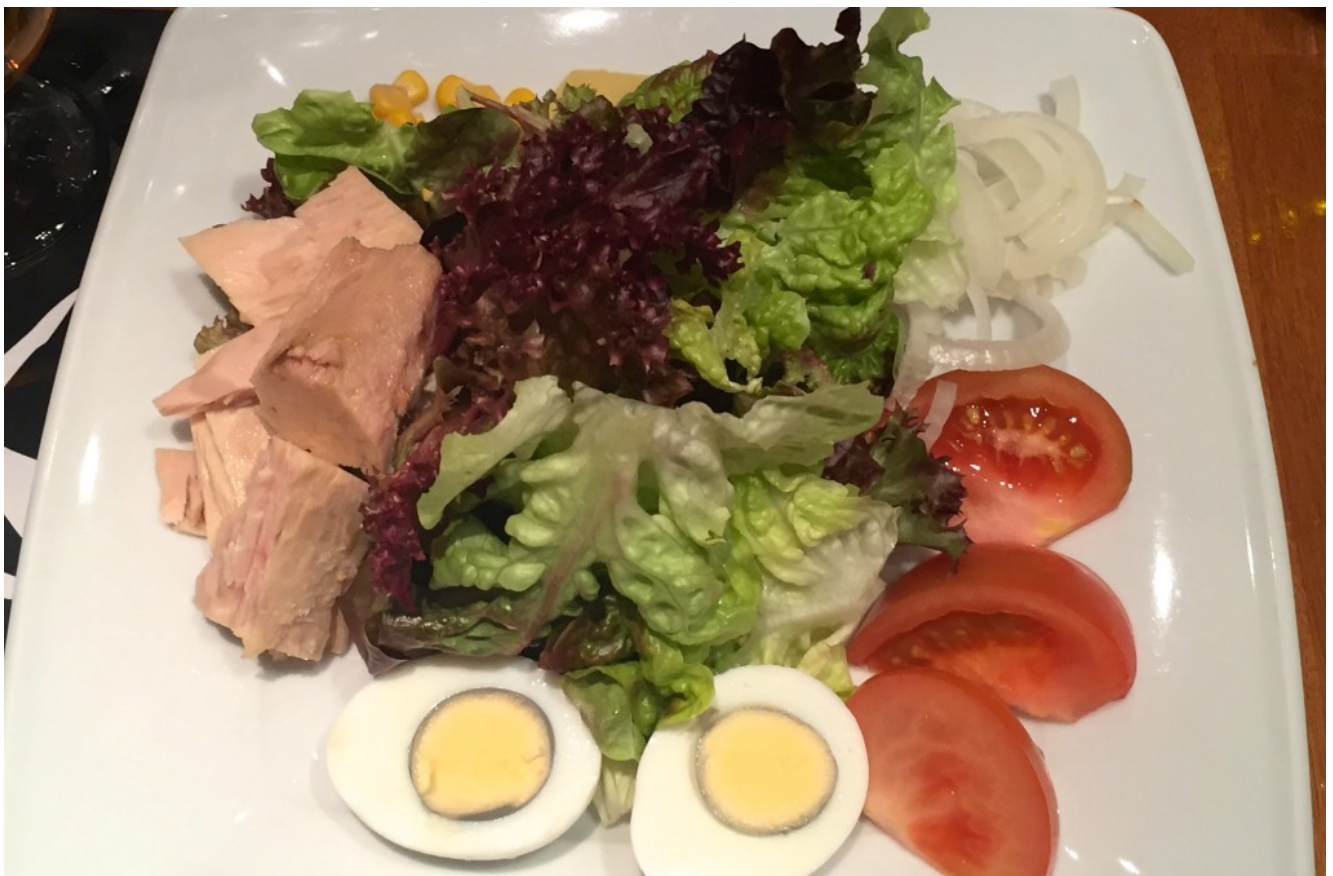
The **chimichurri** and **pepper sauces** are a must, as is the **cream cheese spread**. During the summer they usually bring a glass of gazpacho or salmorejo. When it’s cold out, they tend to bring you a creamy vegetable soup – in our case, we got a delicious pumpkin soup.

As a starter, we went for the **grilled Provolone cheese**. It was simply exquisite and even more when covered with one of their tasty sauces. “**Chorizo criollo**” is another must.





After the cheese plate, my friend and I ordered salads; she ordered a **mixed salad** and I had a **caprese salad** – light, fresh, and deliciously paired with a beer and a glass of white wine.





We decided to skip dessert because we weren't too hungry, but the waiter didn't seem to care: he brought us each a **glass of tangerine sorbet** and a **yogurt and mango sauce** (on the house!), along with their traditional shots.





**De María's prices are very reasonable.** We paid about €21 each. So if you want to enjoy Argentinian cuisine and a friendly atmosphere, this is your place. It also has the advantage of having several locations so finding a table will not be a problem.

The locations I've visited are:

- *De María: Calle Hortaleza, 81, 28004, Madrid*
- *De María: Calle Preciados 32, 28013, Madrid*
- *De María: Calle Correo 2, 28012, Madrid*

You can find all the locations listed on their [web](#)

If you want to enjoy more Argentinian restaurants in Madrid, then check out our article on [Casa Federica](#).



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# 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!](#)

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# 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 Pazzi

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! TACKATACTUKKA!" 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 Apartamento (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 Vía 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 Pazzi



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



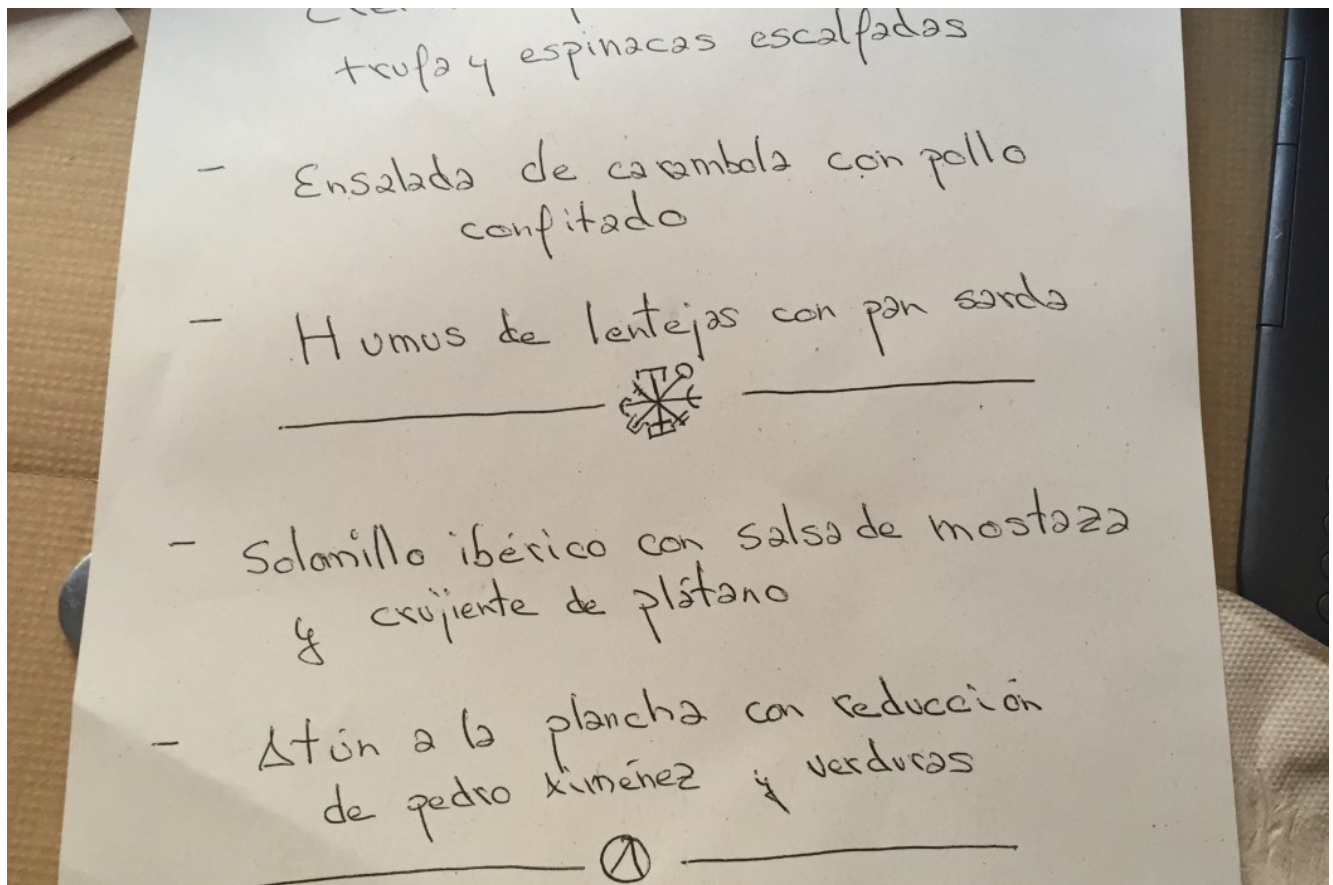


Gabriel crema



Gabriel Menú





Maricastaña





Gabriel dessert



Gabriel dessert





Maricastaña

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## Got Milk? If not, get some at Cántaro Blanco Lechería

*Got Milk?* Every single American child of the 90's remembers the commercials and print ads of our favorite celebrities with their milk moustaches aimed at increasing our dairy consumption. Flash forward 15-20 years and in Malasaña, America's Dairy Farmers can find a place where Madrid-based expats can make up for what they didn't consume in their early days. One random afternoon, I found myself cutting through Calle de Manuela Malasaña when I stumbled upon a lechería, **Cántaro Blanco**. While I've found my fair share of *carnicerías*, *fruterías*, *charcuterías*, and *pescaderías*, I had yet to come across a *lechería*. As *El Comidista*, *El País's* gastronomy [blog](#)

confirms, the lechería is now up-and-coming.

With its white façade and clean interior, it gives you immediate association with milk. As the owners, Nacho and Adrián aim, it's like getting the fresh *leche del pueblo* (milk from the village). For those of us who've never had said experience (especially when your pueblo just happens to be one of the largest cities in the world), Cántaro Blanco gives you that fresh milk and much more.





Cántaro Blanco stocks fresh milks, cheeses, yogurts, and milk-based desserts. Its main supplier, according to the *El*

*Páis* article, is Los Combos, a farm in nearby Móstoles. The fact that the milk is super locally-sourced makes it so so fresh (the owners had actually planned on bringing it from the North, but keeping the suppliers as local as possible gives you the truly fresh taste). Other than from Los Combos, two brands you'll most likely be familiar with are Xanceda from Galicia and Pastoret (a dairy from Lleida, Catalunya that makes the non-fat yogurt I mix with berries for breakfast each morning). Pastoret's yogurt is perfectly smooth and creamy, even in its nonfat form.

They don't just stop at the stuff you can take home: they have some homemade products to satisfy your need for Vitamin D. First is the fresh frozen yogurt with your choice of toppings. My personal pick is the *batido* (or milkshake), which can be made with whatever type of milk you want in a variety of flavors. Since I can only drink skim milk, I was elated and enjoyed one with strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries.





Strawberry and frutos rojos; ñam ñam indeed

There's also ecological horchata (that tiger-nut drink from Valencia that tastes like almond milk with a touch of

cinnamon), both to have on the spot or to take home.

Get yourself into Cántaro Blanco. Then you'll be answering the question "Got Milk" with a resounding "¡Síííííí!"

## Cántaro Blanco Lechería

**Address:** Calle de Manuela Malasaña, 29

**Tel.:** +34 91 029 66 39

**Metro:** San Bernardo (Lines 2 and 4), Bilbao (Lines 1 and 4), and Tribunal (Lines 1 and 10)

[Facebook](#)

[Website](#)

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## L0L0      Polos      Artesanos: Popsicles for grown-ups (and so much healthier)

Madrid has no shortage of [amazing ice cream parlors](#), and considering the oppressive heat waves we've been under lately, it's no wonder that people are craving frozen treats. But what about ice cream's neglected cousin, the popsicle? The snack that every American child (at the very least in the New York Tri-State area) craved at the end of a long day at day camp? It's been revived, and majorly upgraded in Malasaña, becoming the new *it spot* of the summer.

Truth be told I should have written about this a long time ago, but it took me a little while to actually get myself there to try them. When I, currently prohibited from eating ice cream because I can only consume non-fat dairy products,



found out about [Lolo](#), I jumped for joy as I knew that at last I could have popsicles and not have to only eat Bimanan ice cream that you can buy at a pharmacy.



When you walk inside [Lolo](#), you get a playful décor that reminds you of a little *chiringuito* on a beach somewhere in Cádiz or on the Mediterranean or your childhood. You can also get coffee, tea, and other drinks to go with your popsicles, but let's face it, what most people come here for are in fact the frozen fruit on a stick.



Every day, [Lolo](#) posts its menu outside of ten different flavors. But we're not talking about your standard cherry, grape, and Sunny Delight-tasting orange. You do have some flavors that are indeed more classic, like chocolate..



...but many of the flavors play with sweet and savory.



Such as Orange and Lemon


While some of the flavors may be creamier, like strawberry-banana with yogurt, others are just straight-on refreshing and are the ingredients themselves and water. You'll find some that have truly off-the-beaten-path flavor components, such as lemongrass. There's even an avocado-flavored popsicle (which I have yet to try, but have on my pre-August-in-New-York checklist). This is reminiscent of the new savory gelato trend

happening in Rome.

So now that I've covered the "popsicles for grown-ups" part of the title due to the major gourmet flavor upgrade (perfect for the foodie in all of us), it's time that we move on to the healthier part. All of Lolo's popsicles are 100% natural. This means, that unlike the popsicles of our childhood there's no extra funny stuff like chemicals or 100 times more sugar than necessary. For those who have to be really strict about eating (like me), LOL0 lets me in on the summer frozen treat fun.

My personal picks? I've tried the *sandia y pepino* (watermelon and cucumber) and the *frambuesa y agua de jamaica* (raspberry and Hibiscus tea).



A close-up photograph of a large, thick, red popsicle. The popsicle has a textured, slightly grainy surface. A hand is visible at the bottom, holding the white, crinkled paper wrapper of the popsicle. The background is a dark, out-of-focus surface.

But first, popsicles from Lolo

A logo for 'Madrid Spain'. It features a white silhouette of a building with a central dome and two side towers, set against a dark background. Below the silhouette, the word 'MADRID' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Underneath 'MADRID', the word 'SPAIN' is written in smaller, white capital letters, with the 'S' and 'N' being larger than the 'P', 'A', and 'I' in the middle.

**MADRID**  
SPAIN

Watermelon and cucumber. Please forgive the use of a Snapchat photo.

I prefer the raspberry one, but I'm still wanting to try avocado. And I'll celebrate publishing this article with two LOLOs, one being avocado!

Now, one last thing. LOL0 has its own hashtag, #LOL0Selfie, for all of the selfies you may just happen to post with your popsicles. Like I added later on to this one (I took my friend visiting from Barcelona to LOL0. He was very impressed).





My frambuesa y agua de jamaica #LOLOSelfie with my friend visiting from Barcelona

Now go to Malasaña and get your very own LOL0!

## LOLO Polos Artesanos

**Address:** Calle del Espíritu Santo, 16

**Hours:** Every day from 12:00 pm – 1 am

**Metro:** Tribunal (Lines 1 and 10)

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

## You'll also like:

[Madrid's Best Icecream Shops](#)

[María's: Sensational Sweets on Calle Zurbano](#)

[Madrid's Best Gluten-free Bakeries](#)

[Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars](#)

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## Pajarita: Having fun with your food while eating well

On Calle Apodaca, just around the corner from the Mercado Barceló, is a little restaurant called [Bar Pajarita](#). And I'm so excited to be able to do the honor of writing about it for Naked Madrid. Why, do you ask? It's been on the go-to list for

quite a while, and also on mine. One of my friends, who constantly raves about it, kept saying that I needed to go. This furthered my intrigue, but as time went by, the timing wasn't right for me to get my first [Pajarita](#) experience. And then, one hot, summer night (one of many in this never-ending Madrid heat wave), I FINALLY got to see what Pajarita is all about. I was in luck as she was my partner-in-crime for the evening, helping decide which dishes to try.

We split four items, which was a perfect amount for dinner. The chef plays with a lot of different flavor profiles; this you can get a vibe for right away when you see the black napkin folded in the shape of a bow-tie (and in Spanish *pajarita* does in fact mean bow-tie) on top of your place-setting. This fusion of traditional ingredients and unique preparations is what makes it so playful, and so good. And that's the point of the experience at Pajarita; they want you to have fun eating. You can eat with your standard fork and knife, or you can take the chopsticks at hold the napkin as a bow-tie when you walk in and eat that way too (or, as they say on their website [if you dare](#)).

We first started off with the **quekas**, which are quesadillas with mushrooms. The pico de gallo and the sunflower seed pesto were placed perfectly in the middle. While quesadillas often make for a challenge, these were perfect finger-food





Quekas

The next one, which was my hands-down favorite, were the ***huevos divorciados***. Now don't let the name (divorced eggs)

fool you; the thing is that one one side that looks like potatoes is actually the egg white. As the name implies, the whites and the yolks are separated. And like a good Spaniard, you put the egg white as if it were a potato by dipping it in the yolk and mixing bites of seeds and lima beans.



Huevos divorciados- the “must-have” dish

We rounded out dinner with **bacalao (cod) on top of a sweet potato purée and little squirts of mayonnaise..**





Delicia de bacalao

...and one of my favorite meats, ***solomillo de buey*** on top of a pimientos de padrón mustard.



Coruñés 53

It definitely lived up to my friend's hype, and I can't wait to go back again and again. I also need to go back because we



didn't have dessert. I'll definitely work through as much of the menu as I can, but I will be (and still am) dreaming of the *huevos divorciados* going right into my mouth. On a quiet street in Malasaña, **Bar Pajarita** is a perfect place for dinner with great food and playful fun. It's more fun if you have someone (or a few people) to have fun eating with.

## Restaurante Pajarita

[Web](#)

*Address: Calle Apodaca, 20*

*Tel.: +34 91 591 73 10*

[barpajarita@gmail.com](mailto:barpajarita@gmail.com)

*Hours: Monday-Wednesday 1-4:30 PM/8:30 PM-Midnight; Thursday 1-4:30 PM/8:30 PM-2 AM; Friday and Saturday 1-4:30 PM/8:30 PM-3 AM; Sunday 1:30-4*

*Metro: Tribunal (Lines 1 and 10)*

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## Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars – Round 4

With temperatures reaching well over 100 °F (38 °C), there are only two places you should be in Madrid right now: either in a swimming pool (in the [city](#) or the [mountains](#)) or on a rooftop bar. If you're stuck with the latter, not to worry—Madrid has plenty of rooftop bars for you to escape to. To help you find them, Naked Madrid came out with a 3-part series on [Madrid's best rooftop bars](#) last summer, and we've been meaning to come out with **part 4** ever since. And it's finally here! All the rooftop bars in this article are located in the center of Madrid, yet each one offers something completely different. Hope you enjoy them all!

Oh and you should also know that **part 5** is already on its

way.... so stay tuned!

## 1) The Hat (Sol/Plaza Mayor)



You've never seen a hostel like this before; the word 'hipster' does not even begin to describe it. High ceilings, art-scrawled walls and an international crowd are what you'll find here. The Hat's rooftop bar is open all year round, serving up cocktails and delicious *tostas* (my favorite is with goat cheese and caramelized onions, and comes with a shot of salmorejo and potato chips), quiche, and some pretty damn good *tortilla de patata*. [Here's a full post on The Hat for more info.](#)

### Web

**Address:** Calle Imperial 9

**Metro:** La Latina, Sol, Opera



**Phone:** 917 72 85 72

## **2) Mercado del San Ildefonso** **(Malasaña)**





We all know Madrid's market culture is off the hook. We've got **Mercado de San Miguel** in Sol for the tourist crowd; **Mercado de San Antón** (whose rooftop bar we also love and [mentioned in Round 1](#)) in Chueca for the cooler and more urban crowd; and **Mercado de San Fernando** in Lavapiés for the more authentic and cultural crowd, just to name a few. And now we have **Mercado de San Ildefonso**, which takes the cake for its architecture and impressive use of space. Once an average neighborhood market, San Ildefonso now boasts three stories of gourmet food stalls and two outdoor patios sandwiched between its adjacent buildings. [Here's a full article on Mercado del San Ildefonso.](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

**Address:** C/ Fuencarral, 57

**Metro:** Tribunal



### 3. [El Jardín Secreto](#) (on Calle Montera, Gran Vía)



Jardín Secreto feels like a tiny rooftop garden in somebody's private home. You wouldn't expect that it's actually situated on top of an accessories store – Salvador Bachiller – and on Calle Montera, no less. Smack in the center of the city, in between metros Gran Vía and Sol, you can enter this normal-looking store, pop up to the top floor and take in the *fresher* air with a drink and a bite to eat. It might not have any views, but it sure has a unique ambience and surprise factor that's worth experiencing. [Here's a full article on Jardín Secreto for more info.](#)

[Facebook](#)

**Address:** Calle Montera 37

**Phone:** 915 31 02 60

*Metro: Gran Vía or Sol*

#### 4. Innside Madrid Suecia (near Alcalá/Plaza de Cibeles)



I haven't actually been here yet but many of my friends have raved about it. Judging by its location, the new rooftop bar at **Innside Madrid Suecia Hotel** looks a bit more upscale than the others on this list – probably best for a night out of



cocktails mixed with a killer view. It's owned by the Meliá Hotel chain, which also owns the famous "[The Roof in Plaza Santa Ana, previously mentioned in Round 3](#)", and situated on a street behind Calle Alcalá and El Círculo de Bellas Artes (with yet another stunning rooftop, "[Tartan Roof](#)", [mentioned in Round 1](#)). For now, I've taken these photos off of the Hotel's [web](#), yet I plan on replacing them as soon as I get the chance to treat myself to such an experience.

#### [Web](#)

**Address:** *Calle del Marqués de Casa Riera 4*

**Metro:** *Banco de España and Sevilla*

## 5) Gourmet Experience at El Corte Inglés (Callao)





Madrid's number one department store, **El Corte Inglés**, finally decided to give itself a much needed facelift and revamp the 9th floor of its location in Callao, turning it into 'Gourmet Experience'; and it truly is an experience. With an outdoor rooftop and dozens of food stalls, one of which is [StreetX0](#), an affordable version of Madrid's famous young Michelin-starred chef, David Muñoz's DiversoX0, you'll also find stalls serving Mexican, Italian, Spanish and Japanese food, as well as cocktails, ice-cream and much more. [Here's full article on Gourmet Experience at Callao.](#)

**[Web](#)**

**Address:** Plaza Callao 2, inside El Corté Inglés, 9th floor

**Metro:** Callao

**We're already working on Round 5 of**



**Madrid's top rooftop bars. Any suggestions?**

**In case you haven't seen rounds 1-3, here you are:**

- [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1](#)
  - [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 2](#)
  - [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 3](#)
- 

## **La Bicicleta – Ultramodern Cycling Café and Workshop in Malasaña**

It was love at first sight for me with La Bicicleta. [La Bicicleta Café](#) fills a void in a city filled to the brim with bars serving coffee, but sparsely populated with the type of homey workplaces that I hold dear to my heart. There is something comforting about spending hours holed up in a cafe, calmed by the stop and go of an espresso machine. I like to search out spots where I can stake out territory and sit while minutes tick into hours, my fingers hammering at a keyboard or eyes scanning over pages of a book. La Bicicleta is one such spot where this is possible and encouraged and might I say,

all the rage. It fosters productivity and sociality and the consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages: what could be better?



[La Bicicleta](#) bustles at pretty much any given hour of the day. While the sun is still out, it functions more or less just as it bills itself: a cycling workplace and café. You will see people perched in the windowsills with their laptop and coffee within equal reach. Cyclists come and go with their bikes. They barge through the front door and head downstairs to where they store or repair their rides. All of this while waiters bustle about with salads and tostas, cañas and coffees. Once the sun goes down, it becomes progressively unlikely to find anyone doing work. The place metamorphosizes into a social hub with so much traffic that the entryway is hardly ever free of spillover customers.





available, but innocent intentions of ordering a cortado may be redirected upon a glance at the spunkier options on the menu like the oreo frappuccino, for example. As can happen at the Bicicleta, one may feel torn between alcohol and caffeine. Options abound on both listings. The food landscape includes sandwiches, salads, tostas, a [pricey] brunch menu on the weekends, and a display case stocked with baked goods: cookies, cakes, and the like.







As Yogi Berra once said: “Nobody goes there anymore. It’s too crowded.” Well, not quite. There are still plenty of people at La Bicicleta; but Yogi was right, it’s definitely crowded. Real estate is hard to come by despite the plethora of sofas, elongated work tables, and quaint table and chair setups available to patrons. While it attracts a determinedly international crowd who may not (probably are not) natives to Madrid, it feels like that good ol’ neighborhood joint on the corner.

## Info

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

**Where:** Plaza de San Ildefonso 9 (also known as Plaza del Grial o Plaza de la Niña)

**Metro:** Tribunal, Gran Vía, Noviciado

**Just around the corner, you'll find these amazing spots:**

**Mercado de San Ildefonso – Malasaña's new food palace**

**Naif: King of Burgers**

**Greek & Shop in Malasaña**

**La Paca – the perfect Malasaña café**

**Aiò – Sardinia, pizza and bike haven in Malasaña**