# Federal Café Madrid – Hipster in a Very Good Way

Not too long ago, Madrid's breakfast scene was limited to traditional croissants, toast and churros. Now, however, it's rivalling cities like New York and London. How did this happen so quickly? Don't know. But boy are we loving it… One of the **best places for brunch in Madrid** is **Federal Café**, which may look like a stylish restaurant in Soho, but it's actually located in Malasaña, near **Conde Duque**.

Last Sunday, I went for brunch with three lovely ladies – **Cat**, Aifric and **Helen**.

We all started with fresh smoothies. Mine had pomegranate and organic apple juice – health in a glass.

To eat, I ordered toast with avocado, poppyseed and lemon.

Aifric got the same, although with poached eggs (smart choice).

Helen had a veggie burger with freshly squeezed orange juice.

Then there’s Cat, who wins first prize by a landslide with her full-on plate of poached eggs, bacon, potatoes, sausage and toast. Damn.

The first time I went to **Federal** was actually over a year ago

with my friend, Nina (who's sitting in the window looking at the little kid). We stumbled upon **Federal** while strolling around and were instantly lured in by the comfy window seats that allowed us to dangle our legs onto the sidewalk.

We started with a coffee.

That ended quickly. The menu featured such a wide variety of dishes that were chock full of local, organic and fresh ingredients – we just couldn't help but order something to eat. I got a sandwich with feta cheese, spinach and olive tapenade. Nina had a burger. Simple but so good!

So if you’re looking for a hip place with healthy food in the center of Madrid, I think you’ve found it!

## Info

***Web***
***Facebook***
***Address:*** *Pl. de las Comendadoras 9*
***Metro:*** *Noviciado*

## You may also like:

**Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid**

**Little Big Café – my little big pick-me-up**

**Toma Café – Fuel Up, Feel Hip**

**Mamá Campo – a Restaurant/Market of Organic Delights in Plaza Olavide**

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# 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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# The Quest for Bagels in Madrid: 5 Locations Offering the Elusive Comfort Food

Bagels were a staple of my life back home in the outskirts of New York City–**the inaccessible status of bagels was the only**

**demerit against Spain** in an earlier draft of my "Should I Move to Spain" pros & cons list. I've craved them badly during my time abroad, to the point where I have even asked my closest friend from home, Jake, to allow me to witness his consumption of authentic bagels via Skype. Bagels are a foreign concept here—whenever I'm describing them to Spanish folks, they can't visualize the distinction from a donut or *roscon de reyes.*

However, due to **Madrid's growing American expat population**, I held out hope that opportunist business owners would step up and fill the circular void. The ensuing investigation had me scouring the city, running down every lead and pressing on every underworld connection. These are my findings: I strongly advise purists to **manage their expectations** when sampling imitations of such an esteemed snack from the old country.

## So here, my friends, is a list of Madrid's bagel joints. In true form, I've saved the best bite for last…

## 1) Restaurante Olsen – Calle del Prado 15 (CLOSED DOWN)

The pursuit began with a rocky start for me and my friend Julie. Although the servers at Restaurante Olsen, a Scandanavian restaurant near the Prado, were kind enough to give us their leftover "bagels" for free, they weren't at all what we were hoping for—in fact I would go as far as to call these circular bread sticks **an abomination of nature.** This restaurant, which has since closed down, established the precedent low standard to which the ensuing specimens were held.

## 2) La Bicicleta Cafe – Plaza San Ildefonso, 9

This popular hipster cafe in Malasaña has a few bagel sandwiches under the display case by the bar. They're **a bit too dry** (and expensive) for my liking. Served with arugula and *jamon,* **this sandwich might as well be served on any other type of bread.**

## 3) La Libre – Calle de Argumosa, 39

This cafe/bookshop in Lavapies offers a broad variety of *tostadas*, one of which is called “El Larson.” The bagels are imported from England and kept frozen, served to diners with cream cheese and lox and little bits of avocado. Due to its status as the bagel most accessible to me within my *barrio*, this is my default when the craving overwhelms me. Although not as crisp as I would like, it does the job adequately. The **added sesame seeds** are indeed a pleasant touch.

## 4) Mür – Plaza Cristino Martos, 2

A large and comfortable brunch spot, Mür offers an 8.50€ euro “American” breakfast entailing a toasted bagel sandwich with cream cheese & lox, steak fries, and a cup of coffee. This location earns points for its product’s toasty crispness and presentation but loses points for its small size. The first bite is accompanied by the **familiar crunch sound.**

## 5) J&Js Books and Coffee – Calle del Espíritu Santo, 47

This popular expat bar/English language bookstore swiftly cornered the market with their vast selection of homemade bagels. **The only known establishment that manufactures bagels from scratch,** it is apparent that they have a concise understanding of both the product and the expectations held by the consumer. Their offerings are flavorful, especially when served fresh during their weekend brunch. The pictures below document the process in which their bagels are produced.

Have I missed anything in my investigation? Feel free to share the details of any other Bagel providers in the comments section!

## Also check out our series on Madrid's best cafe-bookstores!

## Round 1

## Round 2

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# Gin O’Clock – Time to Enjoy Madrid’s Finest G&T’s

In my youth (to be said in granny-esque tones) I had many love affairs, with many different tipples. You name it; I’d tried it (and more than likely I would have had the hangover to show for it). Malibu and Pineapple, Archers and Lemonade, Amaretto and Coke followed by a brief dalliance with Vodka and Cranberry. They’d all been enjoyed (or endured) until I finally met my drink soulmate; **the G&T**.

Being a Brit, it’s fair to say that they’d had always been on my radar, but upon moving to Madrid my unabashed obsession with them reached fever pitch. Clearly encouraged by the sheer abundance of gin bars that positively litter the *calles* of pretty much every *barrio*. To this end I’m going to share my gin aficionado tips on **where to grab the best G’Vine in the city**.

## La Prudencia

Situated on one of my favourite streets in Madrid, this small but perfectly formed bar is ideal for a romantic rendezvous due to its gorgeous low lighting and shabby chic decor, as well as being the perfect place for a few pre-club copas. It was here where I first sampled a **Brockman's gin** (one of my current faves in case you're curious) but should you fancy a gin that's served exactly as it should be then put **La Prudencia** on your list. The bar is piled high with fruits, herbs and even rose petals which the expert bar staff use with flair. They explain why certain flavour combinations have been matched and don't make you feel like a numpty for asking. Most gins start at around **10 euros** which (given that they're the size of your head) is in my opinion, money well spent.

***Facebook***
***Where:*** *Calle del Espíritu Santo, 41*
***Phone:*** *915 22 30 97*
***Metro:*** *Noviciado or Tribunal*

# The Gin Room

Now here's a bar that is slightly out of my comfort zone (and by that I mean it's not in Malasaña) but if you're looking for reason to get out of your skinny jeans and into an LBD whilst sipping on a gin, this place is it. Extremely slick and stylish, **The Gin Room** has a gin list quite literally as long as my arm. Whilst the atmosphere there was slightly lacking on my last trip, the gins certainly packed a punch. By default I always tend to revert back to **G'Vine** (it's French and fabulous). Here it came served with grapes which complimented the delicate floral flavour of **G'Vine** perfectly. Before the night was through I'd managed to blitz about 70 euros on six gins (not all for me might I add) so this is definitely not the place to visit when there's too much month left at the end of your money. Saying that, as a payday treat it's a great place to enjoy a glamorous gin o'clock.

***Facebook***

***Where:*** *Calle de la Academia, 7*
***Phone:*** *699 75 59 88*
***Metro:*** *Atocha or Banco de España*

## Shuzo's

Shuzo, Shuzo, Shuzo, it almost pains me to share this hidden gem for fear that I'll never be able to perch on a bar stool there again. First things first, it is tiny (we're talking the size of a wardrobe) and secondly the array of gins that they stock is a gin lovers delight – I think I genuinely clapped and whooped on arrival, admittedly it doesn't take much! This bar has the old classics such as **Hendricks**, **Bombay** and the like as well, as some very quirky brands such as **Monkey 47**, an unusual (yet potent) gin hailing from the Black Forest in Germany. The atmosphere here is laid back but rest assured you definitely feel as though you are 'someone in the know' upon

entering into this wee Aladdin's cave.

> ***Facebook***
> ***Where:*** *Calle de Jorge Juan, 52*
> ***Phone:*** *914 35 91 71*
> ***Metro:*** *Príncipe de Vergara*

So folks, there's three to get you started and remember – it's always gin o'clock somewhere in the world…so bottoms up!

## Looking for more on Madrid's best cocktail bars? Check out:

> **1862 Dry Bar – perfection served in a glass!**
>
> **Madrid's best cocktail bars – Martinis, Cosmopolitans and more…**

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# Mastropiero, Indulgent Gourmet Pizzas in Malasaña

A few evenings ago I was trading notes with an enthusiastic foodie friend who pointed me in the direction of Mastopiero, **a gourmet pizzeria in Malasaña operated by Argentines**. As you might already know, the Porteño accent just slays me. I was not led astray when I followed up and checked out the establishment for myself. A cozy and intimate space, Mastopiero is dimly lit and smells absolutely delicious.

Their *carta* offer a broad range of gourmet pizza variety. I like to consider myself to be an imaginative person yet **I never would have previously fathomed that *pulpo gallego* on a pizza could be a thing**. Of course when I saw that as an option I ordered a pizza that was half octopus. I asked the staff to surprise me with the other half and their creation entailed **spicy peppers, chorizo, olives, and caramelized onions**.

The literal icing on the cake of this experience is that diners are given a **free slice of chocolate fudge cake** accompanied by creamy *dulce de leche* to top off their experience. If it were possible I would totally have an IV drip of their dulce de leche installed into my body. The service in this establishment was absolutely stellar and I am confident that I will return soon to sample their other pies.

***Facebook***
***Address:*** *Calle San Vicente Ferrer, 36*
***Metro:*** *Tribunal/Noviciado*

## Looking for other nice spots in Malasaña? Check out:

**Aiò, a piece of Sardinia in Malasaña**

**Toma Café, Fuel up, Feel Hip**

**La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café**

**Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think**

[Naif, the king of burgers in Malasaña]

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# 1862 Dry Bar – Perfection Served in a Glass

Looking for a perfectly crafted cocktail? Do you prefer the classics, or something a little more adventurous? No matter your taste, there is a spot for you at **1862 Dry Bar**, located in the heart of Malasaña.

If you need structure, snag a table on the street level, with tables peppering the perimeter of the room,  and the bar as the center of attention. For those looking to lounge and drop into a comfortable sofa, head to the dimly lit basement, and find yourself losing all concept of time.

The cocktail menu is comprehensive – running the gamut from Old Fashioned to Cosmopolitan; you name it, they serve it. Don’t miss out on the house specials on the backside of the menu, with intricate mixes that you didn’t know you wanted until you saw it on the menu.

If you are indecisive like I tend to be, simply ask for a recommendation-the service is friendly and can help you craft your drink based on your likes and dislikes without a second thought. Each careful creation is fairly priced at **8€**.

The basement displays quite literally a cage of alcohol, decoratively illuminated in case you still aren’t sure what you’re in the mood for.

If you are able to climb out of your comfortable seat on the couch, look beyond the curved archway in the basement that gives way to a smaller bar counter, with old fashioned photos, exposed brick walls, and hanging stemware.

**1862 Dry Bar** has all you could ask for-aesthetic appeal in a comfortable setting, affable, knowledgeable employees, and expertly crafted cocktails. But don’t take my word for it-start tasting your way through the menu and decide for yourself if you’re more of the traditional type, or if you can handle something a little different.

***Facebook***
***Web***
***Where:*** *Calle del Pez, 27*
***Metro:*** *Noviciado*

**Looking for more on Madrid's bar scene? Check out:**

- **Madrid's Best Cocktail Bars**
- **Madrid's Best Craft Beer Bars**
- **Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars**

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# Naïf: King of Burgers

In a city so jam-packed with restaurants that one could eat out in a different place every meal and never repeat, it's saying a lot to return to a place more than once, and then too many times to count. Such is the case with **Naif**, **a cozy/grunge burger spot nestled into Plaza de San Idelfonso serving burgers, with a side of sass**. Ask for a glass of water and one of the snarky waiters will return saying they've run out of water, but they do have gin. Alternatively, copas of beer and wine are available for cheap and are a must for washing down the grub.

The jocular banter with the waiters, the hype that comes with having to (almost) yell over the music in order to be heard across the table, the flickering candles of the dining room, all contribute to making repeat **Naif** visits, **but the real reason to return is for the burgers. Never a disappointment, never**.

**Here, the king of burgers, is, undoubtedly, the Hamburguesa de Trufa: hamburger gold.** The rich flavor of truffles oozes out of the burger with every bite. La Ibérica also pleases with its hefty slices of jamón and manchego respectively. **Naif has the Goldy Locks principle working to its advantage: the burgers are not too big, not to small**– they're just right. Nevertheless, they can be a challenge to eat; baskets of napkins are placed on the tables for this very reason. Don't mind about minding manners.

A large chalkboard wall boasts nachos among the house specialities. What comes to the table is a **casserole dish of chips bathing in a tangy bath of cheese, plus some avocados and peppers for a spicy punch**. These are not skating rink nachos. They can be a meal in itself or something to share—cheesy fingers for all.

And beyond burgers, dessert awaits on the horizon. There is **carrot cake**, of course, as well as **cheesecake** and **American Pie**. It’s not your mom’s recipe, but it’s pie! Inexplicably,

it lacks the bottom layer of crust, but there's a top. Let's not be too picky, now. The **carrot cake benefits from the addition of nutella and walnuts**.

Eating at **Naif** is addicting. You want to be there, wrapped up in this rough and rugged metropolitan environment, until closing time. **Naif** can serve as the backdrop for any social situation: **friends, dates, and parental visits alike**. The soundtrack somehow always fits the occasion and the dim lighting makes everything seem cooler than it probably is.

***Web***
***Facebook***
***Where:*** *Calle San Joaquín, 16*
***Phone:*** *910 07 20 71*

*Photos courtesy of Pablo Arias*

## Looking for other cool spots in Malasaña? Check out:

**La Paca, the perfect Malasaña café and bar**

**Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think**

**Toma Café, Fuel up, Feel hip**

[Best Café-Bookshops in Madrid]

[Best First Date Ideas in Madrid for foodies]

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# Best Brunch on a Budget in Madrid

It’s noon on a Sunday, you have just peeled off the covers and opened the blinds, and it’s decision time: breakfast or lunch? Who says you have to choose? Brunch, combining the best of both meals, is a concept quickly growing in Madrid, and with multiple affordable options, you don’t have to break the bank to enjoy a delicious meal!

## 1. Ojalá (featured in the cover photo and rightly so)

Located on one of Malasaña’s narrow streets, you might walk right past Ojalá without realizing the hidden treasure that lies inside. At first glance, this café appears to be another one of Malasaña’s trendy locales, with groovy colored light bulbs dispersed around the café, and bleacher-like seating across from the kitchen, with a clear window allowing a look inside as mouth-watering food is being prepared. Head downstairs for more seating, and you will find yourself being transported quite literally to a sandbar, with sand serving in place of carpet or wood flooring. Get comfy on the lounge

chairs and tables low to the ground, feeling warmed immediately by the heat lamps for added effect. A tikki bar completes the look at one end of the “beach.”

The extensive brunch menu offers a little something for everyone, and is all-encompassing, including a coffee or tea (taking care of caffeination needs), and the choice of juice, soda, beer or wine. No detail is overlooked, with fresh juice accompanied by a paper crafted straw served in a tasteful glass bottle.

As for the food, options include something for those looking for something on the sweeter side, with offerings of pastries and fresh fruits, or savory platters, including “World Mix”: organic cornbread with hummus, guacamole, poached egg, and a side of fruit salad and arugula lightly dressed, artfully served on a wooden plank.

It’s hard to leave the oasis that is Ojalá, but it provides the ultimate refuge for a weekend afternoon no matter the season, with outdoor seating when the weather permits.

***Facebook***
*Price for brunch menu: €8-12€*
*Where: Calle de San Andres, 1*
*Metro: Noviciado/Tribunal*

## 2. Little Big Café

With less than 10 tables inside, the Little Big Café is a cozy spot situated in Chamberí, with chalkboards inside advertising the expansive menu offerings. You are drawn in immediately by the cakes, pies, brownies, and other assorted bakery items displayed on the counter before you have even glanced at the brunch menu. (Don’t worry, the sweets are on that menu too).

This café, with the tagline “A little café with a big heart,” is just that, with friendly staff willing to spend time explaining the menu to you. Wooden benches and tables add to the neighborhood feel of the café, along with the bulletin board with Polaroid’s of the “Club VIP” of Little Big.

The brunch menu allows diners the “Menu Cerrado,” a hearty offering that includes both a savory and sweet dish, choice of beverage, a dessert (head to the counter to survey which pastries suit your fancy), and a coffee or tea. Alternatively, diners can pick and choose from sandwiches, French toast or pancakes with your choice of toppings, or the brunch classic Eggs Benedict. The Eggs Benedict don’t disappoint, with an accompanying delicate side salad, and the pancake topping selection is overwhelming, served alongside the thin “tortitas” that won’t last long on your plate.

But the real star of the show is the previously mentioned dessert. Options vary, but the carrot cake is perfection, while the chocolate frosted chocolate cake will delight chocoholics. The best thing about the vast selection of desserts: you'll have an excuse to return and try them all.

***Facebook***
*Price of brunch menu: €16.50*
*When: offered Saturdays and Sundays-11am-4:30pm*
*Where: Calle Fernández de los Ríos, 61*
*Metro: Moncloa/Islas Filipinas/Quevedo*

## 3. Martínez Bar

For those who have given up on finding any resemblance of a bagel in Madrid, wander over to Martinez on Sundays for a gourmet Bagel Brunch at a reasonable price. Soft jazz greets you as you enter Martinez, followed by mouth-watering smells you'll find yourself hoping are coming to your table. The aesthetically simple design of Martinez has an antiquated feel reminiscent of times past, and the small tables lining the restaurant make it an ideal destination for smaller groups.

Start off with a fresh orange or grapefruit juice, and then dive into the bagel selection. Bagels are served with a variety of accompaniments, including the salmon and cream cheese, hummus, or goat cheese and marmalade. The warm, freshly toasted bagel is presented on round wooden boards, with the option of a supplemental Bloody Mary or Mimosa to complement your meal. The bagel toppings are not overpowering, and allow diners to enjoy the simplicity of the bagel below at the same time.

The brunch concludes with a coffee of tea, and one of Martinez’s fresh desserts. The cheesecake, topped with a berry jam and a perfectly thick graham cracker crust is a guilty pleasure to be enjoyed slowly. Other dessert options include a brownie, carrot cake, or apple tart.

The simplicity of Martinez's Bagel Brunch is what makes it so enjoyable-minimal ingredients allow diners to enjoy fresh flavors without any unnecessary additions.

***Facebook***
*Price of bagel brunch: €9.90*
*When: Sundays 1pm-4:30pm*
*Where: Calle Barco, 4*
*Metro: Gran Vía*

## 4. Carmencita Bar

Located on an unassuming street in Malasaña, Carmencita is

anything but ordinary. Reservations are a must here, and you might even find yourself out of luck if you dare call past Thursday for the coming weekend. A popular expatriate hangout, you will hear a fair amount of English spoken here, and the restaurant offers a language exchange on Tuesday evenings starting at 9pm.

You can’t mention Carmencita without talking about the 1€ mimosa. Little hair of the dog never hurt anyone! You can treat yourself to one (or two, who’s counting?) without putting a dent in your wallet.

The brunch plates include Huevos Rancheros, Eggs Benedict, French Toast, and the “American Plate” complete with fried egg, sausage, bacon and hash browns. The fixed price brunch menu is generous: Eggs Benedict with your choice of salmon, avocado, or bacon, your preferred side (hash browns, potatoes, or salad), dessert of the day, coffee and mimosa.

The hollandaise sauce can be a bit excessive, but by the time you get to the hash browns you will have forgotten; these crispy potatoes are beyond compare, and a rare find in Madrid at that.

If you find yourself still having room left for a bit of dessert, you can’t go wrong with the dessert of the day. The fluffy cakes are featured on the counter of this small restaurant, so you will be tempted throughout your meal. Finishing the last sips of your mimosa you might find yourself already planning your next trip to Carmencita.

***Facebook***
*Price for complete brunch menu: €14.*
*When: brunch served Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays 12pm-4:30pm.*

*Where: Calle San Vincente Ferrer, 51*
*Metro: Noviciado*

## La Gringa (Carmencita Bar's sister restaurant a few doors down)

**Carmencita Bar** has a sister location right down the street called **La Gringa** that serves the same delicious brunch. When it's not holding brunch, it's a fun Mexican restaurant that organizes language exchanges and offers great deals on Mexican beers, cocktails, *tacos, burritos* and *micheladas*. Here's a sneak peak of their brunch menu, filled with a variety of burgers, egg dishes and of course, mimosas and bloody marys.

***Facebook***
*Where: San Vicente Ferrer 57*
*When: Saturday & Sunday 12pm-4:30pm. Best to make a reservation: 679 183 399*
*Metro: Noviciado*

## 5. The Toast Café

From the hanging light bulbs encased in mason jars to the freshly squeezed orange juice served in champagne flutes, The Toast is an Instagrammer's paradise, and will satisfy your grumbling stomach too. Just one street over from the Little Big Café, The Toast is nearly always full of content diners lingering over the tasty two course brunch (coffee or tea and juice included) offered on weekends.

Start off with a generous Bloody Mary as you consult the

comprehensive brunch menu. The first plate options include pancakes, tostada, salad with light vinaigrette, or a croissant.

The fluffy pancakes don’t disappoint, while the mixed greens salad is artfully topped with fresh vegetables.

The first course is just a warm-up for the second plate options: the obligatory Eggs Benedict, Huevos Rancheros, Breakfast Burrito, omelet, or salmon bagel.

The breakfast burrito is complemented with guacamole, pico de

gallo, while the filling inside surprises with potatoes.

The Toast is a popular weekend destination, so make sure to reserve a table ahead of time, so that the toughest decision will be whether to top your Eggs Benedict with salmon, avocado, or bacon!

> ***Facebook***
> *Price for brunch: €14*
> *When: brunch served Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays 11am-5pm*
> *Where: Calle Fernando El Católico, 50*
> *Metro: Arguelles/Moncloa/Quevedo/Islas Filipinas*

## By Meredith Parmalee

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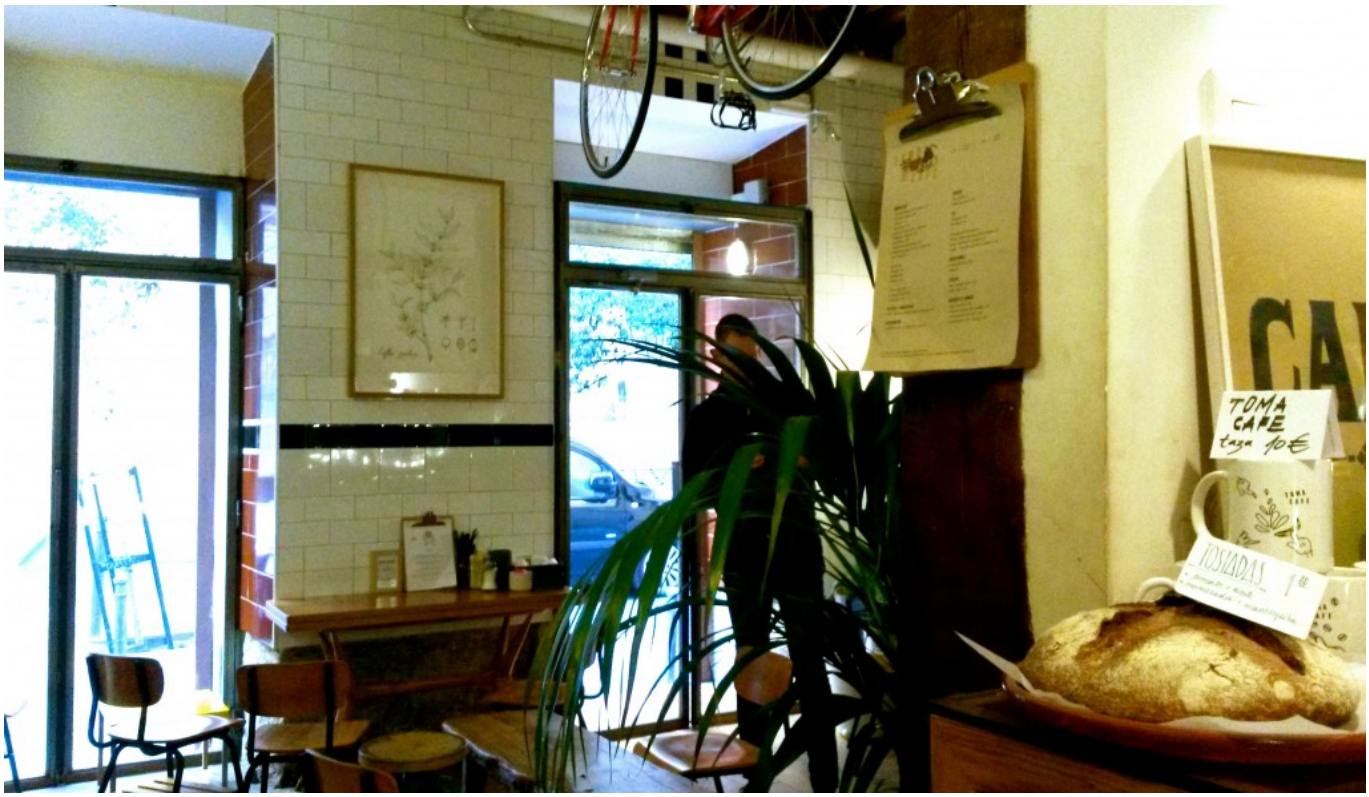
# Toma Café: fuel up, feel hip

**Toma Cafe** could very well be a coffee shop in a hipster mecca like San Fransisco or Brooklyn. Upon wandering into the sparse space with narrow benches lining the walls and a bicycle dangling from the ceiling, one might wonder: “Have I wandered onto the set of Portlandia?”




People peck at their laptops while seated at teensy tables. The baristas take their posts at the helm of the espresso machine seriously. More seats can be found in the back, but space is rather cramped. One’s daily dose of **espresso** can be consumed in various different forms. Options extend beyond the

confines of *café con leche*.

A gem on the beverage menu: ***chocolate picante***. In this concoction, bitter chocolate and prickly heat make ordinary chocolate seem lame.

A limited **breakfast** list exists offering a few variations on toast (tomato and olive oil, butter and jam, not much more). Alternatively, as Marie Antoinette famously did not say, *let them eat cake*. **The chocolate cake is made with Madrid's own Cerveza La Virgen**—what could be better for breakfast?

The omnipresent **carrot cake** also beckons from the pastry case. Here, the crowd-pleaser takes on a spicy character and the cream cheese frosting makes an already good cake better.

Luckily for those in search of a caffeinated workspace, **Toma Cafe** opens for breakfast at early hours. Come here to fuel up and to fill hip.

***Facebook***
***Web***
***Address:*** *calle La Palma 49*
***Metro:*** *San Bernardo or Noviciado*
***Hours:*** *M-F 8am-8pm. Sat & Sun 10am-8pm*

## Here are some more of our favorite cafes in Madrid:

> **Pepe Botella, a Coffee Place Where You Can Think**
>
> **La Paca, the Perfect Cafe in Malasaña**
>
> **Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1 & Round 2**

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# Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 2!

Welcome to round two of the **best cafe-bookshops in Madrid**! As you may have noticed in **round one**, Madrid's central neighborhoods boast quite a lot of quaint coffee shops and bars that encourage drinking and reading under one roof.

There's something about drinking coffee or wine amidst a sea of books that makes me feel right at home. Whether you're looking for the perfect place to enjoy a quiet conversation or a good read, here are five more wonderful cafe-bookshops in Madrid that you're bound to fall in love with.

## 1. La Central de Callao

La Central (featured in the cover photo) is a trendy bookshop near Callao and hands down the most modern of all on this list. It boasts three floors, a happening café with a full menu and a selection of much more than books on offer. At La Central, you can also find funky mugs, quirky bags, useful calendars, board games, wrapping paper, you name it. It's a great place to get **gifts in Madrid**.

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** C/ Postigo de San Martín, 8
- **Metro:** Callao

# 2. J&J Books and Coffee

A long-time staple among Madrid's expat community, this corner bar has a downstairs bookstore selling a large selection of primarily used English-language books, including ESL resources. Up at the bar, you can get craft beer, wine, coffee, bagels and other things to munch on. Also check out J&J's free events, including language exchanges and pub quizzes (trivia nights). Lots of fun!

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** c/ Espíritu Santo, 47
- **Metro:** Noviciado

## 3. italiana_madrid

This Italian café and bookshop is located on one of Madrid's most vibrant streets – Corredera Baja de San Pablo – which is lined with great bars, cafes and restaurants, such as **Aió Pizzería**, **Elemental Bistro** and **Gymage** with its rooftop terrace. At **italiana_madrid**, you can get a strong espresso or Aperol Spritz, plus browse through a wide selection of Italian reads ranging from cookbooks to children's books. It's also across the street from one of the city's favorite theaters, Teatro Lara.

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 10
- **Metro:** Gran Vía

## 4. La Ciudad Invisible

A travel bookshop selling food and drinks, this two-level cafe boasts huge windows, high ceilings, and plenty of large tables, couches and comfortable armchairs to choose from, making it a great place for getting work done and meeting friends. Plus it sells a killer **Rebujito for 2€** (a really refreshing yet deceptive drink from the South containing sherry, white wine and soda water). It's also across the street from one of my favorite restaurants in Madrid, **Bar Lambuzo**.

- ***Facebook***

- ***Address:*** *c/ Costanilla de los Ángeles, 7*
- ***Metro:*** *Opera & Santo Domingo*

## 5. María Pandora

María Pandora is one of my favorite spots in the city. Perched atop a hill overlooking Parque las Vistillas, behind the Royal Palace, here you'll find the perfect place to watch the sunset while enjoying a glass of champagne (the house specialty) or your drink of choice. Although María Pandora is more of a bar than a coffeeshop, it still deserves a spot on this list of literary cafés. It also holds events such as poetry nights, microtheater, and book readings. **Check out our full article on María Pandora here**.

- **Website & Facebook**
- **Phone:** +34 910 42 82 13

- **Address:** Plaza de Gabriel Miró, 1
- **Metro:** La Latina or Ópera

## Make sure to read: “Best Cafe-Bookshops in Madrid, Round 1”

## Also check out our favorite bookshop in the city, Desperate Literature