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!

Lambuzo, Authentic Andalusian Flavour in Madrid

Lambuzo is a family-run Andalusian restaurant with two locations in Madrid: Calle de las Conchas 9 (metro Opera) and Calle Ponzano 8 (metro Iglesia), as well as a stand in **Mercado de Chamberí.** Both restaurant locations have a special charm that transports you straight to Andalucía from the moment you step foot inside. The staff is also very friendly and makes you feel at home.

Lambuzo has already been featured on **Naked Madrid a number of times**; it was one of the blog's very first **articles** and has since been included in **Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid** and **An Insider's Guide to Sol**. Their Opera location has a downstairs wine cellar where they hold events such as wine tastings and micro theatre, which we alway feature on our **events page** – be sure to go next time they have one! So as you can see, Lambuzo is already one of Naked's favorite places and I, too, wanted to share my experience with you all.



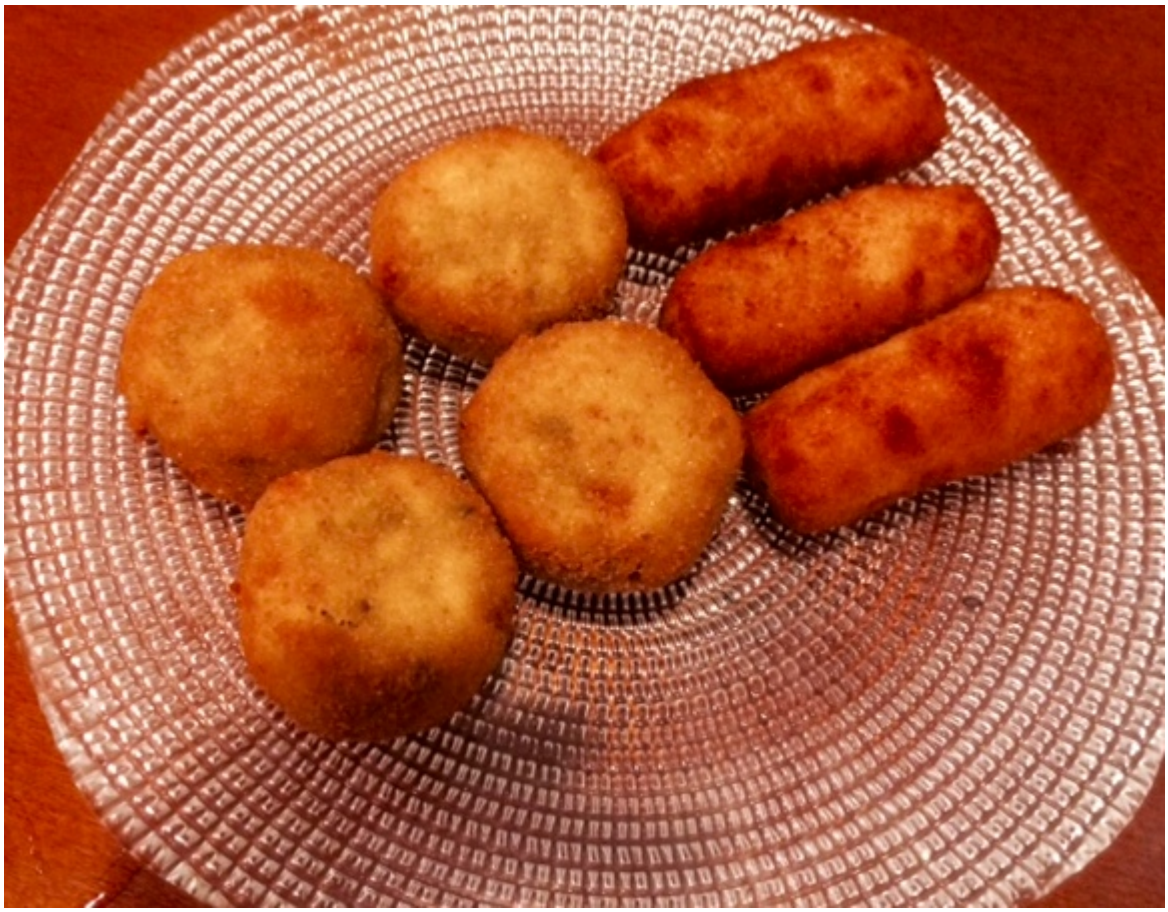
I recently went with three friends and we decided to get a bottle of wine to accompany our meal. The waiter helped us order **a special wine called *Señorío de Heliche***.



The restaurant’s dishes are great for sharing so I recommend ordering a bunch of different plates with friends and tasting as many as possible. It’s the best way to try new dishes! The first starter we chose was “***Ensaladilla con atún de Barbate***” because it is a house speciality. The flavour was very tasty and the texture of the ingredients was very smooth, ready for the palate!



We also ordered ***“Lambuceo de croquetas”*** which consist of different types of **croquetas,** such as ***al ajillo*** (with garlic) and ***camarones*** (shrimp), that tasted just like the ones our mothers make!



For me, ***“Cigarritos de langostinos con Albahaca”*** was the most amazing surprise on the menu. Their name translates into English as ***“Prawn cigars with basil”***. Their careful presentation and distinct flavor make me want to go back right now and order them again.



“*Chocos de Huelva*” is one of the most popular fried fish dishes in Andalucía, and of course we ordered them to complete our dinner. They are prepared in batter and normally come with a special homemade sauce to dip them in. Delicious!



To sum up, I highly recommend going to **Lambuzo** with friends and family – it's an opportunity to get to know a little more about Andalucía, right in the heart of Madrid!

Info

Website

Address: Calle de Ponzano, 8. Madrid

Phone: +34 915 13 80 59

Reservations advised.

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



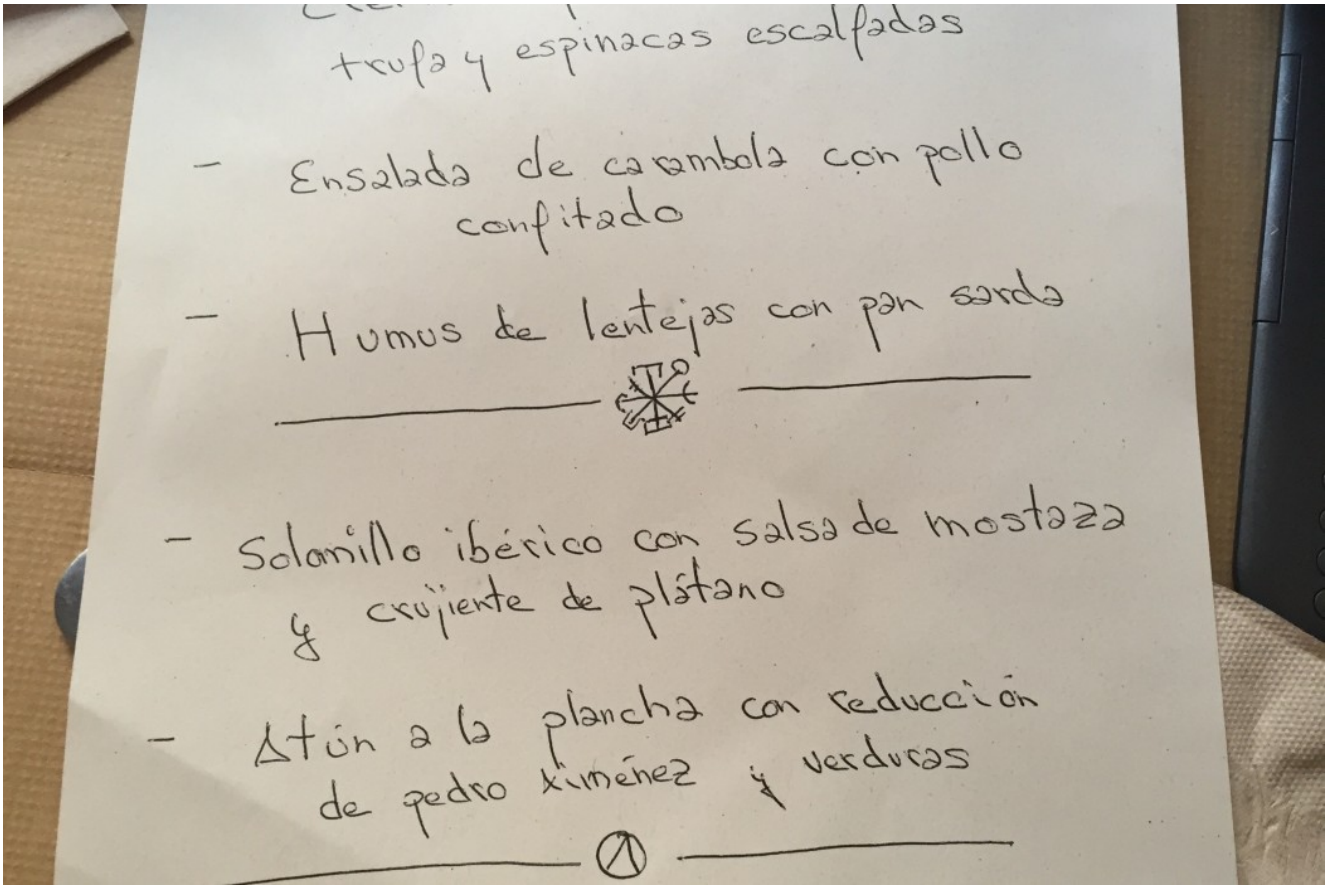
Gabriel



Gabriel crema



Gabriel Menú





Maricastaña



Gabriel dessert



Gabriel dessert



Maricastaña

Madrid’s Top Shopping Malls

Believe it or not, Madrid has some pretty fantastic shopping malls, with giant cinemas, mini-golf courses and even indoor ski slopes. And Ikea. If it’s raining out (or simply too hot to stay outside), don’t hesitate to check out one of our favourite shopping centres!

1. Centro Comercial Príncipe Pío



Principe Pio is one of my favorite malls in Madrid because it’s located right in the city center. I love it because you can spend the whole day here, shopping, eating and ending the day with a good movie. Among the many shops you can find here are Zara, Massimo Dutti, Mango, Oysho, Pull & Bear, Zara Home, etc. Restaurants: Vips, Burger King, MacDonald’s, Wok Wok, etc

Opening hours

- *Monday to Saturday: From 10 to 22:00*
- *Sunday: 11 to 22:00*

How to get there

- *Metro lines: 6, 10 or “ramal” (from Opera), Línea 6 – Circular*
- *Cercanías lines: C1, C7, C10*
- *Bus lines: 25, 39, 41, 46, 75, 138, Circular 1, Circular*

2. La Gavia



La Gavia is one of the greatest shopping centres in Spain and even in Europe, where you can find everything you want under the sun. Some of the most popular stores are IKEA, Primark, Zara, Massimo Duti, FNAC, etc.

How to get there?

- ***Bus lines:*** *142 and 145*
- ***Metro line***: *Las suertes*

OPENING HOURS

- SHOPS: *Monday to Sunday from 10:00 to 22:00 hours * On Sundays and holidays from February to November the center opens at 11:00
- RESTAURANTS: Sunday through Thursday from 10:00 to 01:00 hours. Fridays, Saturdays and on public holidays from

10:00 to 03:00

- IKEA: Monday to Sunday from 10:00 to 22:00 hours. The restaurant is open from 09:30 to 21:30

3. La Vaguada



La Vaguada is a large shopping mall located in Barrio del Pilar. It's big enough to offer several shops and restaurants, but small enough so you won't get lost and you can spend a quiet afternoon.

How to get there?

- ***Bus lines:*** 42 , 49 , 67,83 , 124, 126 , 127, 128 , 132, 133 , 134, 135, 137 , 147 , N18 , N19
- ***Metro lines***: 9 (Barrio del Pilar Herrera Oria) & 7 (Peñagrande)

OPENING HOURS

- *Shopping area:* Monday through Saturday: 10:00 h to 22:00h; Sundays and holidays: 11:00 h to 21:00 h
- *Dining and entertainment area:* Monday through Thursday:

10:00 h to 01:00 h; Friday and Saturday: 10:00 to 02:00 h Sunday: 10:00 h to 01:00 h

4. Madrid Xanadú



Xanadu is one of the best malls I have ever visited. They have everything you want, **even a ski slope**. In addition to clothing stores and restaurants, here you'll find tons of fun activities like bowling, mini golf, a ski slope, and much more!

OPENING HOURS

- Shops: Monday through Sunday from 10 to 22h
- *Entertainment and dining area*: From Sunday to Thursday from 10 to 01h Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 03h

How to get there?

- Bus: From Príncipe Pío:528, 534, 539, 541, 545, 546, 547 y 548

5. Centro Comercial Plaza Norte 2



Another huge mall located outside the center, Plaza Norte has tons of shops, restaurants, cinemas, you name it.

Opening hours

- Shopping area: Monday through Sunday from 10 to 22h
- Entertainment and dining area: Sunday through Thursday from 10 to 01:30h; Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 03h

How to get there

- Buses: 171 and 156 (from Plaza de Castilla)
- Nearest metro: Reyes Católicos (Line 10)

6. Centro Comercial Plenilúnio



Plenilúnio is also situated in the outskirts, it has more than 180 shops, in addition to numerous restaurants, as many cinemas.

Opening hours

- Shops: Monday to Saturday, from 10 to 22h; on Sundays and public holidays from 12 to 21h
- Restaurants: Sunday to Thursday from 10 to 01 h; on Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 03h

How to get there

- Bus: From Avenida de America: 221, 222, 223, 224, 224A, 226, 227, 228, 229, 281, 282, 283 and 284 from Ciudad Lineal: EMT no. 77

7. Centro Comercial Parquesur



In addition to the usual, here you'll find an **Apple store outside the city centre.**

OPENING HOURS

- Monday to sunday From 10 to 22:00h
- Restaurants: Friday and Saturday From 10 to 2. Sunday from 10 to 1.

How to get there?

- By bus: 432,481,483,485,488,497
- Nearest metro: Line 12. El Carrascal

8. Islazul

OPENING HOURS

- Commercial area: Monday through Sunday from 10 to 22h

- Entertainment and dining area: Sunday to Thursday from 10 to 01h; Fridays and Saturdays from 12 to 03h

How to get there:

- By Bus: 35 and 118. 5 minuts from the shopping center: 108, 155, 480, 484 and 485
- Nearest metro: Line 11: La peseta, San Francisco and Carabanchel Alto Stations.

Pictures: Hola, Un Buen día, El país, flickr, AbsoluteMadrid, Dolce City, Urbanity

---

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!)]

Gluten free pastelerías in Madrid: Part 2 – La Oriental

[La Oriental] is a teeny tiny traditional *pastelería* that offers a whole array of gluten free goodies. Founded in 1950 and currently run by the fourth generation of bakers, here you'll find locally inspired *pasteles*, elaborated using traditional Madrileño methods and the best local ingredients. This is the place to go to step into the world of **traditional artisan pastries** and try some local specialities. Luckily for gluten free foodies, it is central to the city and just a short stroll from the Argüelles metro stop!

When you step into the bakery you are immediately surrounded at all heights by stacks of galletas, trays of mini pasteles, counters brimming with all sorts of chocolates, beautifully decorated tartas, light pink *meregues* and boxes of assorted **chocolate-dipped shortbreads**.

-


Madrid
Sin
Gluten
LA ORIENTAL
MERENGUITOS FRANCESES
INGREDIENTES: AZUCAR, CLARA DE HUEVO Y
PIÑONES. NO CONTIENE GLUTEN.
8,40€





It is not hard to find the gluten free goodies as the shop is covered in **‘sin gluten’ symbols** to help you find your way around.

You’ll find delicacies in every counter, including the tall fridge in front of the window, which is jam-packed with tartas, cheesecakes and birthday cakes (see the raspberry cheesecake above, yum!). There is also a counter with an entire selection of **rocas**, which are chocolates filled with caramelised nuts, in dark chocolate, milk chocolate, white chocolate… well, in every kind of chocolate that you could imagine.





Also sitting on nonchalantly on top of the counters, as if

they have no idea of the effect they'll have on you, are **boxes of assorted biscuits**, which are, indeed, gluten free too.

There are Viennese-style biscuits covered in jam and chopped nuts, star-shaped shortbreads, vanilla cookies topped in dark chocolate and sprinkles, and many more options. In addition to the boxes on the counters, there are also boxes behind the shop front, which the shop assistants will no sooner whisk out for you than you can say 'sin gluten'.



As well as the shop's excellent 'gluten free' signing, the best part of visiting the shop is being greeted by the shop's incredibly smiley fourth generation owner, or one of her friendly assistants. As soon as you mention that you are 'celiaca' or 'celiaco', a whole range of extra delights will be whisked out from the back and you'll wonder why you never came here before.

The pastel of choice on this visit was one of the 'bandejas' of mini pasteles, which I can say are without a doubt the most

delicious little morsels I have tried in my natural gluten-free, and non-gluten free, life.





Each tray is slightly different, with six rows of beautifully presented mini pasteles, each little pastel like a mini work of art. You can tell that at La Oriental they take their baking seriously. In this particular '*bandeja*', there were **six types of mini pasteles**: a custard-cream topped sponge; a light pastry sandwiched with chocolate cream; dark chocolate cups with vanilla custard filling and chocolate sprinkles; a profiterole-style pastry filled with dark chocolate cream; an orange cream square and, last but not least, dark chocolate cups filled with whipped cream and topped with a raspberry.





The mini selections of pastries like this *bandeja* are wrapped

up in a sweet little La Oriental box with reflective gold lining and tied up with string, making them the perfect treat to buy for a friend, gluten free or not gluten-free, or maybe, let’s be honest, just for yourself.



In addition to this, the tartas in the tall fridge counter in front of the window can also be ordered for special occasions like birthdays, or just selected from the shop on the day (they all look delicious!).

Extra notes

There are also sugar-free and lactose free options. Just ask the owner.
Extra tip: some of the boxes of biscuits already have prices on, but the rest are priced according to weight, so make sure you check with the owner before you select your box.

Info

Calle Ferraz, 47
Website
Tel: 91 559 70 45

Word of the post

I hope that you liked this post on La Oriental. Today's special word, in homage to the delicious nature of the post's content, is:

natillas– a creamy custard, yum.

You'll also like:

- **Gluten free pastelerías in Madrid: Part 1, Confeterías Marqués**
- **El Riojano, Madrid's best pastry shop in the centre with a hidden tea room!**
- **María's – sensational sweets on Calle Zurbano**

Banibanoo, an Iranian Market-style Restaurant in the

Center of Madrid!

I have to admit that when I was first invited to try a new Persian food restaurant in Madrid, I had my doubts. Until then my knowledge of Persian food was very limited. But if there is something that I love it is trying new things. So of course, I accepted.

Banibanoo describes itself as a restaurant offering Persian market cuisine. It is owned by a young woman named Banafsheh who, after working six years in marketing, decided to pursue her dream of becoming a chef and restaurant owner. One day she left her job and went to London to study in Le Cordon Bleu School. Upon returning to Madrid, she discovered that Iranian food was little known in the Spanish capital. So she decided to open her very own restaurant where people could enjoy these wonderful dishes.

The name of the restaurant is also very personal: *Bani* is short for her full name Banafsheh and *Banoo* means Miss. So Banibanoo means *Miss Bani*.



Banibanoo’s owner Banafsheh



The restaurant is small and cozy, perfect for a fantastic meal with friends or with your partner. Apart from the food, what I love the most about Banibanoo is how bright it is and that the food is on display at the bar. That way, you can see all the food they serve before you order. It also has an intimate and familiar feeling, as if you were entering a market and wanted to eat something from a particular stand.



Banibanoo.



Fresh ingredients and beautiful homemade dishes are all the decorations you need



Banibanoo

According to Banafsheh, Iranian shares a lot in common with Mediterrean cuisine; the ingredients are all very similar. But

for me, each dish at Banibanoo tastes unique and exotic, for the mixture of flavors and variety of ingredients on each plate.



Food on display



Food on display

The food

Banibanoo offers a simple menu, consisting of traditional and original dishes, all made with fresh ingredients and a lot of love. If you're the kind of person who struggles when it comes to ordering, no problem. At Banibanoo you have the option of choosing a menu with three different dishes on one plate. Banafsheh likes to change up the menu every two weeks, offering different recipes along with the old ones. Banibanoo also offers wonderful breakfasts. On Saturday and Sunday, for example, she offers a very special breakfast that will be the highlight of your weekend: a "burnt" brioche bun with cream cheese and jam.

When I went for lunch with two friends, Banafsheh suggested we

try out different dishes so we could all share. I have to say that was a fantastic idea. The first three dishes we tried were: *broccoli with roasted cherry tomato in a yogurt sauce and tahini*; *beetroot hummus with feta cheese and hazelnuts*; and *gourmet purple potatoes with yogurt sauce, cherry tomatoes and cardamum*.



Menu 1

For the second place, we ordered: *sweet potato with red onions, yogurt sauce, almonds and pomegranate seeds*; *couscous with cheese, mint sauce, cilantro and parsley*; and *Kuku Kadoo: zucchini 'frittata' with mint and cheese*.



Menu 2

Our last plate included: *roasted beets with cherry tomatoes, feta cheese and a pomegranate and Sumac sauce*; *Shirin Polo, Persian rice, saffron, orange zest, carrot and pistachio* (this was one my favorite, amazing!); and *Kuku Sabzi: similar to a 'frittata' with herbs, walnuts and cockles*.



Menu 3

For dessert we had an incredible carrot cake (really, please try it!) and a brownie-like chocolate cake. Also delicious.



Carrot cake



Guinness Chocolate cake

All this feast of food could only be accompanied by a typical ***Iranian drink, infused with cucumber, flowers and other refreshing ingredients.*** How can you describe something that tastes so good? They now have two different drinks based on this one: One is call ***Tejebin:*** The same drink but with tea and ***Cafejebin***: The same but with coffee.



Banibanoo drink

What can I say? If you want to enjoy healthy and traditional food with an exotic taste, this is your place! Fantastic Recommendation – thank you Jose and María for taking me to this wonderful place.

INFO

Address: Calle Martires Concepcionistas 19, Madrid

Price: €12.95, *3-dish menu plus coffee and drink during the week;* **€13.95** *During the weekend, without drinks; Breakfast goes from €2.50 with coffee or tea to €5.50.*

Facebook

***Instagram* (@banibanoomadrid)**

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*
> *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)*

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars – Round 4

With temperatures reaching well over 100 ºF (38 ºC), 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)

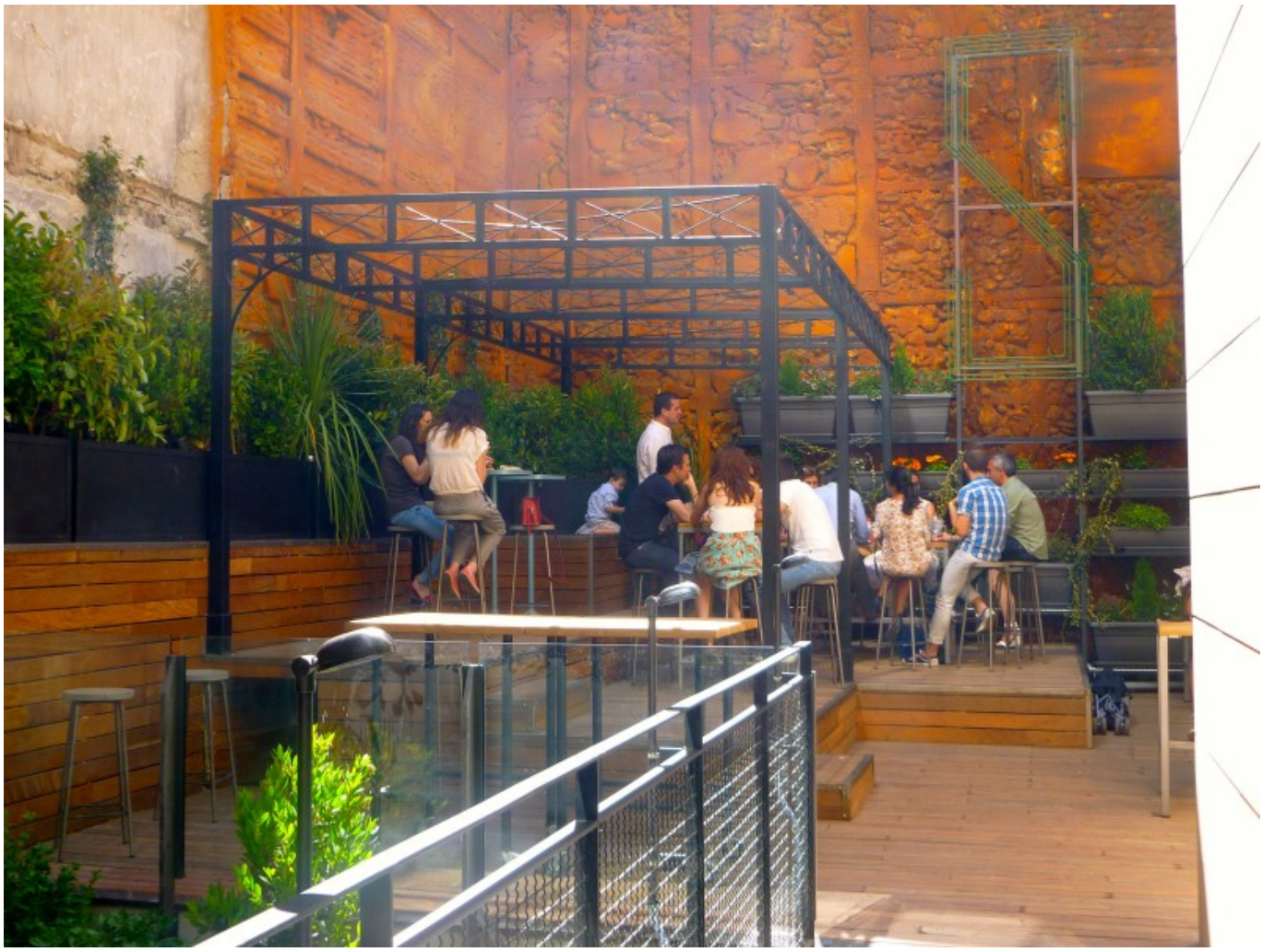


You've never seen a hostel like this before; the word 'hipster' does not even begin to describe it. High ceilings, art-scrawled walls and an international crowd are what you'll find here. The Hat's rooftop bar is open all year round, serving up cocktails and delicious *tostas* (my favorite is with goat 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 Via)



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)





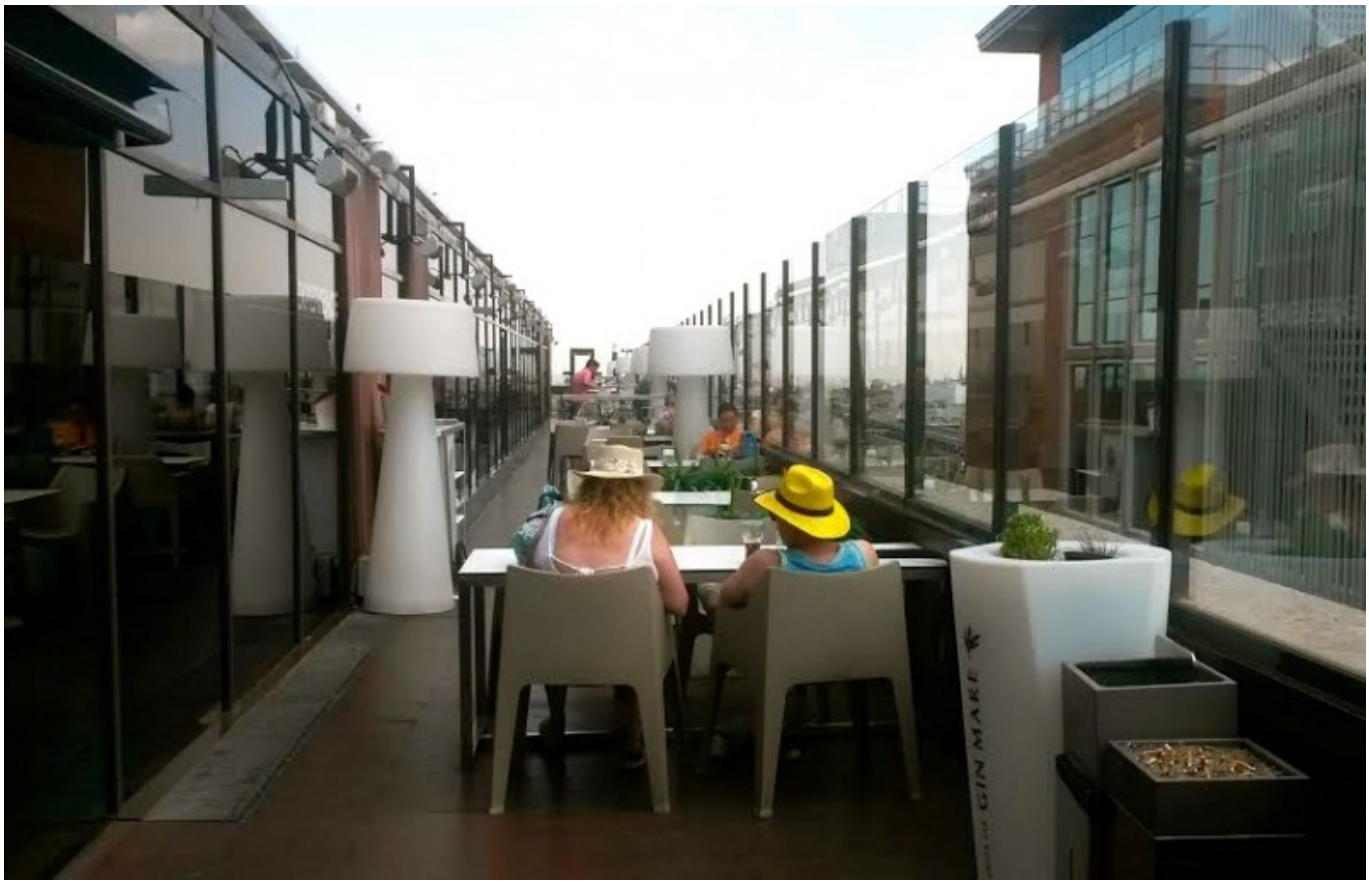
I haven't actually been here yet but many of my friends have raved about it. Judging by its location, the new rooftop bar at **Innside Madrid Suecia Hotel** looks a bit more upscale than the others on this list – probably best for a night out of

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 **StreetXO,** an affordable version of Madrid's famous young Michelin-starred chef, David Muñóz's DiversoXO, 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

Gluten free pastelerías in Madrid: Part 1- Confitería Marqués

Sugar dusted pastries, chocolate dipped palmeras and fruit filled tarts: gluten free friends, the search is over. If you're a foodie who just happens to be of the gluten free inclination, finding delicious confectionary in the city can be a little, shall we say, challenging.

We all know that there are the international coffee shops that serve the same chocolate brownie and the supermarket aisles that sell the same two or three packaged cookies, but where do you go when your **traveller, foodie heart** wants to spring out

into the city and explore its **homemade artisan treats**?

This series is dedicated to **Madrid's best hidden corners for delicious homemade cakes and cookies, gluten free style**. You can even take your non-gluten free friends, and I promise you that they will not be able to tell the difference; they may even find their new favourite spot!

Confitería Marqués

Tucked away on Fernando el Católico, Confitería Marqués is the little Madrid bakery where it feels like everything has been made especially for you. With its tea party bunting and dainty glass cake stands, it has an element of the Alice and Wonderland to it, with everything in miniature.

There are **fruit tarts, mini croissants, individual loaf cakes, savoury empanadas, palmeritas, apple slices, jam tarts, and more**.

The sheer selection that they offer is fantastic for any gluten free Madrid foodie, as well as any foreigner in Madrid that wants to try some local pasteles with a reminder of home. Everything is made in the pasteleria and tastes as homemade as it sounds.





As well as all of the above, another reason why Confitería

Marqués is so unique is that it also makes savoury food such as **empanadas**, filled with cheese, vegetables, fish and meat. These crispy, buttery little pastry puffs make for a delectable little lunch.



Then there are the pastries, tarts, palmeritas, fruit slices and loaf cakes. Each are exactly as they should be, and some are even better.

The **apple loaf cakes** have a base of sweet apple pieces and raisins, are soft on the inside and scented with vanilla. The **palmeritas** are crispy and flaky and come traditionally plain, or coated in dark chocolate. Plus, the **chocolate orange tart** is rich and decadent, filled with dark chocolate cream, and hints of citrusy orange.



The owner of the shop is extremely friendly and can help you pick out something from the counter, or choose something from the incredible handmade confectionary that they have to the left of the counter and throughout the rest of the shop, including **small boxes of cookies** and **beautifully presented chocolates**. These would be perfect as a thoughtful little gift or -why not- a special treat for yourself.

You can even buy **a homemade birthday cake, chilled desserts or a traditional Christmas Roscón de Reyes** from the tall stand to the right of the counter; any would make a great surprise for a gluten free friend on a special occasion or a delicious traditional dessert to share after a meal at home with friends.

Another little tip is that they can make **gluten free bread** in house to order; just ask the lady at the counter when you would like it for.

Info

Web: www.confiteriamarques.com
Address: Calle Fernando Católico, 76
Metro: Argüelles

Extra notes

Don’t forget to ask about the delicious foods available for **lactose and nut allergies**. You can go with all of your friends!

You’ll also like:

- **Cosy Wine Bars in La Latina – with gluten-free options!**
- **Rayen Vegano – a vegan “gem” of a restaurant in Huertas**