Chocolates are nice (but this first date is better) Part 2



So you don’t like Da Vinci or Michelangelo and don’t see what the fuss is about with graffiti artists like Banksy. I love that shit but not every girl is interested in it either. Again we want to take our date to **3 different places**, it keeps momentum flowing and builds new experiences between you two in a short time. This will not turn all pumpkin dates into shining diamond-studded carriages of awesomeness but it is harder to get bored when you are going to new places.

For **part 2** we will be exploring the **scenic route of Madrid**. Madrileños are crazy about their terrazas, so we will explore the skies and sights of this beautiful capital. The great thing about this is that you let the views do the talking rather than you. Any anecdote about the buildings you see always helps. One is that **Palacio de Cibeles** with its fountain of the Greek goddess Cybele is the unofficial party spot of Real Madrid. Any cup win will see thousands of supporters descend onto the roundabout. As with all routes you will be able to walk from one to the other. This route is one for the summer, which in Madrid you have plenty of. The views however do have their price and you pay something like a terraza tax.

It is a price gladly paid.

Act One: Retiro park



Palacio de Cristal

It is an easy pick but a great place to start with because you get away from the noise and hectic life of the city. You invite your date for an aperitivo to the café (on paseo Venezuela) next to the pond in the centre of the park. However you shouldn’t linger too long with the drinks. After the first copa you should take your date to **Palacio de Cristal** in Retiro or show them the now abandoned zoo that used to be in Retiro. For both do a little research and make sure how to get there because you can get easily lost. My personal favourite is the rose garden located towards the side of Av. De Menendez Pelayo. It is incredibly impressive when you walk along and are met by a resident peacock. It will also take you to the restaurant. If the sun is setting though take the route to **Palacio de Cristal**.

What time: 19h-20/21h
Alternative: no just take him/her to the park.

Act Two: La Castela in Calle del Doctor Castelo, 22



This is a truly excellent restaurant. You have two options when you decide to have dinner here. You can eat at the front of the bar and join in with the crowd. Definitely my recommended option to get the adrenaline pumping after the quiet walk. Even with a minimal Spanish you will get by and be able to order the local delicacies. You can also book a table for two and will be seated at the back, which is much more quiet and intimate. The last time I went a boyfriend gave his girlfriend a necklace for their anniversary (I took the picture if you were wondering).

What time: 21-23h
Metro: Take a walk / Ibiza
Alternative: Platero & Co. A very stylish bar that is located right next to La Castela. The restaurant was designed the

Catalan interior designer Inma Rull. Very nicely done.

Act Three: Azotea on top of **Circulo de Bellas Artes** in Calle de Alcalá, 42



Yes it is crowded with tourists, Spanish and everyone looking for a view but it still is an incredible view. On a first date confirmation is just as important as impressing. Further, walking by foot will give you an excuse to pass by la **Plaza de Independencia** at night down to **Palacio Cibeles** and up **Calle de Alcalá**, which is one of the most beautiful walks in Madrid once it's gone dark. Once you arrive step ahead and pay for both entry tickets (3 euros each). It is a small token of chivalry, especially if you just split the bill 50/50. Once at the top you really have two main choices depending on your comfort level. On the right going down the stairs is an area where you can sit/lie and it is easier to get closer to one another. On the left are high seats with small tables. Daring wins the game in my eyes and I choose the right. It makes your intentions clear in a subtle way.

What time: 23h to 02h
Alternative: Room Mate Óscar in Plaza Vázquez de Mella 12



The terrace at the top of this hotel has just been renovated. Good thing too because the white plastic surface has been replaced with wooden planks. The special thing about this terrace is that it has a pool but if you fancy a dip you will need to reserve. The terrace has a nice feel due to the artificial grass spread across the ground. Also not a cheaper option as a gin tonic will cost 12 euros and a glass of wine 5 euros.

Metro: Gran Via / Banco de España

Read on…

- For more **first date ideas in Madrid**, check out **part 1** of this article, **Flowers are nice (but the first date is better)**
- For more on **rooftop terraces in Madrid**, check out our series on **Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars**

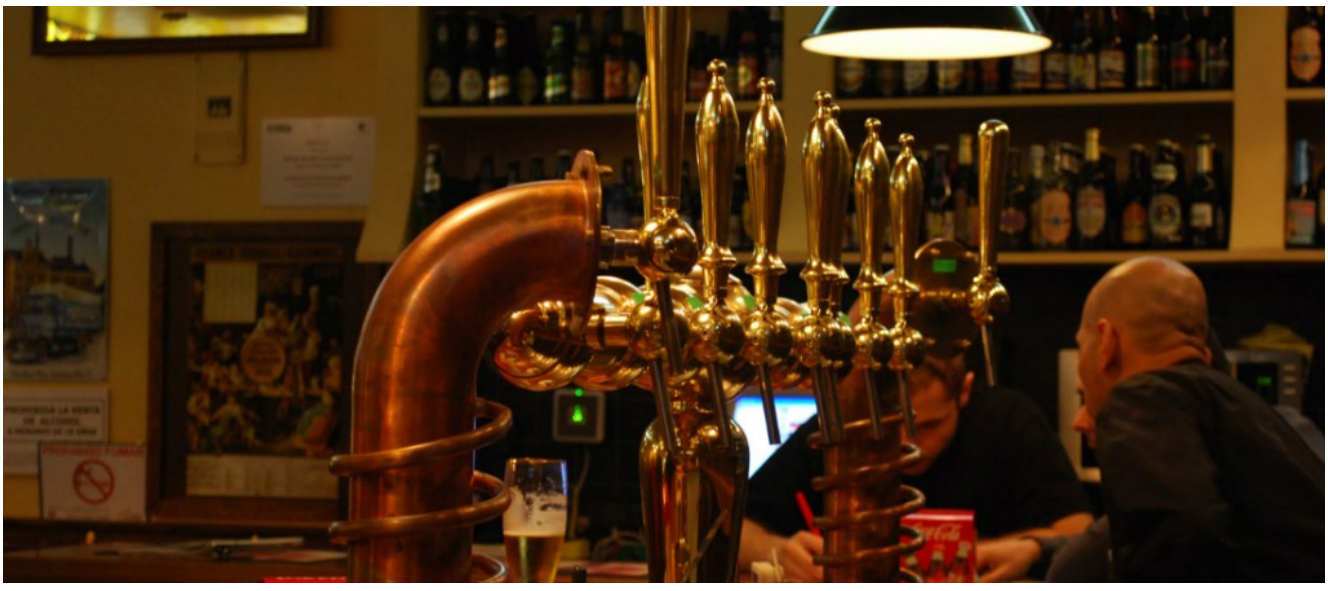
A Heightened Beer State of Mind in Madrid

Beer lovers this is for you again! You can read my **first article on craft beer bars in Madrid** to explore/discover more. The main idea is to go try and find your favourites'.

There truly is a very special place just North of Metro Bilbao that I like to call the **triangle of craft beer**. It involves 3 craft beer bars that are within throwing distance of each other. It really is the perfect place to have your heart's desire of good beer satisfied without feeling trapped in the same bar the entire night. **The 3 bars are named ANIMAL, Oldenburg and Cervercería L'Europe.** What they all have in common is their huge offer of various beers from across the world. This selection of bars promises a night out where you know your next destination and be sure to arrive as well.

ANIMAL I wrote about in my **previous article** and you can follow the link to take a look. It is a bar that consistently offers excellent beers from all parts. Tivo, the owner, also speaks good English.

1) **Oldenburg**, in Calle HARTZENBUSCH, 12



Famous for standing in the Guinness book of world records as the establishment that offers the greatest variety of beers per square meter. Opened some 25 years ago, this bar lets you choose among **200 varieties**. One of the very first craft beer bars in Madrid, it inspired the opening of Fabricas Maravillas and is loved by the owner of **La Buena Cerveza**. However beware there are 2 Oldenburgs and this is the younger bar. More of an institution than an ordinary bar, the brilliant thing here is that you can order **Alt bier**. This beer is brewed according to the German "**Reinheitsgebot**" (shouting it makes the pronunciation easier) and originates from Düsseldorf. It is a dark beer that is incredibly hard to find unlike the Cologne cousin Kölsch beer. If you are familiar with the LENT beers, **Thor** is brewed after the same recipe.

Alt bier is the beer of my home city and I will always be biased to this incredible bar for stocking it. The Belgians, apart for being famous for having no one famous (name 10 famous Belgians, footballers excluded) and no government, make incredible beer. Oldenburg offers the most varieties of **Belgian beer in Madrid**. Every beer brand in Belgium has its own beer glass to drink from. The glass is designed to increase the flavour of the beer.

Metro: Bilbao
Facebook

2) **Cervercería L'Europe** in Calle Cardenal Cisneros 19



You enter and believe you have been transported to the German Alps to celebrate a round of après ski fun. It looks like a drinking hall with kitsch decorated around the bar so skiers are reminded there is a home away from home. Terrible decoration aside, this place does offer excellent beers on tap and even more in bottles. In fact, it claims to have the largest offer of beers on tap and in bottle, check out the website, with nearly 100. The whole menu is online. The food here is **typical German beer food on offer**. Lots of sausages, potato dishes and sandwiches to soak up the beer.

Those that like an after work delight will be happy to know that between 18 and 20h all beers on offer are half price.

Metro: Bilbao
Facebook

3) **Irreale** in Calle Manuela Malasaña 20



The other bar not included in the triangle of greatness. However this bar does feature in the same street as **La Tape**. You just have to love this city. Irreale only recently changed location to their new home a few months ago. Recently having relocated from Calle de la Ballesta 15, this place is a gem. Having taken over the space from Ave Phoenix, the bar offers 12 different beers on tap. Similar principal to **ANIMAL**, these beers will also change once the keg is empty, meaning a lot of variety. The only two beers they always serve are **La Virgen** and **Schneider Weisse**. The latter being easily one of the best wheat beers in Europe.

The real advantage with **Irreale** is that it offers you the pub feel whilst also offering food. Most, however, stick with the beer and if you prefer the smell of hops and alcohol to chorizo and tortilla I recommend you take a visit. However let’s think bigger better more exciting! Media pinta beats caña, pinta beats media pinta, but the king will always be the keg. You need a place for a birthday party or a friend’s leaving due, **Irreale** will let you rent the **cellar of the bar**

for free. All you need are thirsty friends and yourself if you order one keg (20 litres) and the room is yours free of charge. They will also give you a 10% discount on the keg you order. Price will range with beer type so just go in and have a quick chat. English fluency is minimal here.

Metro: San Bernardo / Bilbao
Facebook

For more articles related to Madrid's drinking culture, check out:

- **A Beer State of Mind in Madrid, on the city's best craft beer bars**
- **Martinis, Margaritas & More, on Madrid's best cocktails**
- **La Buena Cerveza, an international beer shop offering a huge variety plus tastings and more**

Madrid's best rooftop bars, round 3

Welcome to **round 3** of **Madrid's best rooftop bars!** We hope that by now you've already visited and enjoyed some of the ones we've mentioned in **round 1** and **round 2**. This third list includes **5 magnificent rooftop bars—**all but one of which are located right smack in the center of Madrid. Thus if you find yourself strolling along the Gran Vía or the Royal Palace, please know that there is a rooftop terrace with champagne and

wine awaiting you!

**all photos are from each place's official webpage, unless noted otherwise*

8. Apartosuites Jardines de Sabatini

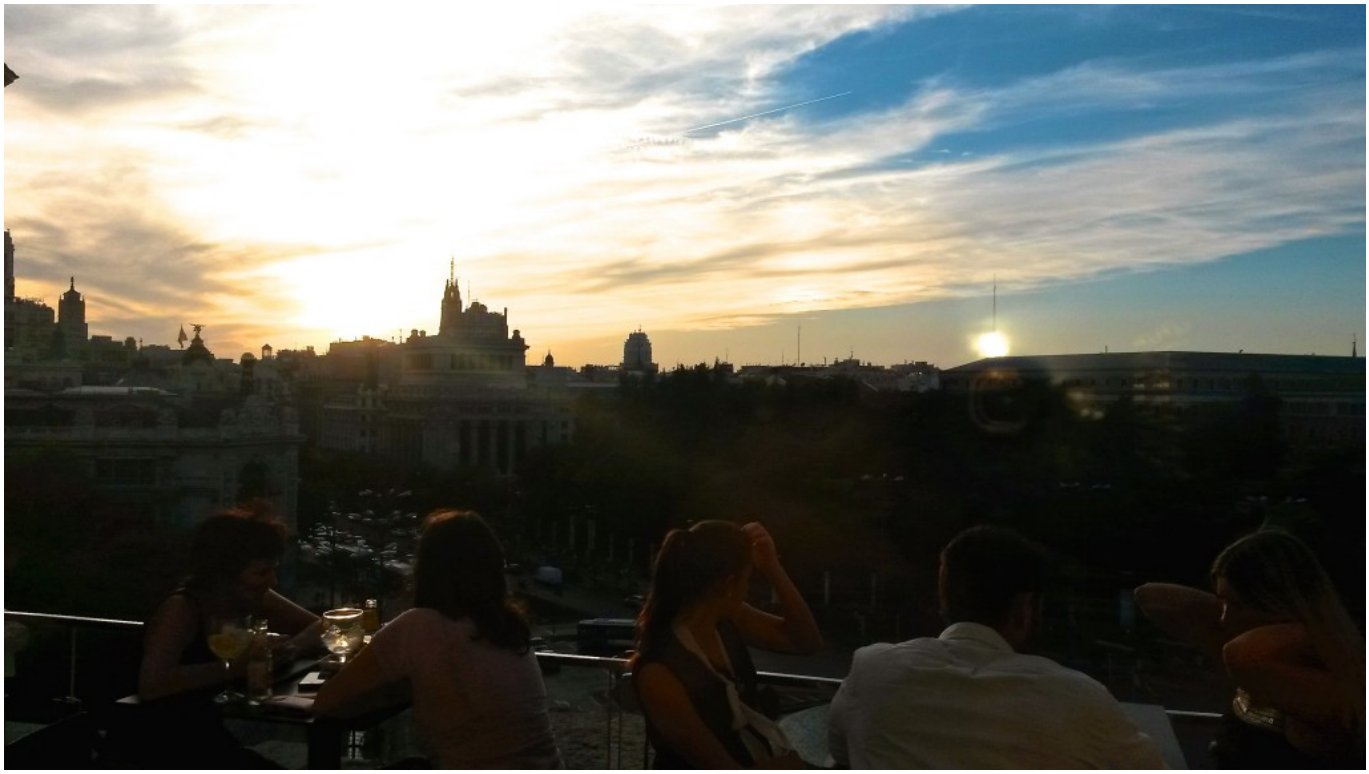
Address: Cuesta San Vicente, 16
Metro: Principe Pio and Plaza de España



Named after the **Gardens of the Royal Palace (Jardines de Sabitini),** this hotel has a very nice advantage, as it overlooks both the beautiful ***Jardines*** and stunning ***Palacio Real***. What's more, during the summer, the royal garden plays host to a series of traditional theater, music and dance performances, from flamenco to *Zarzuela*. This hotel rooftop gets a private concert as it's a stone's throw from the stage!

9. Bar Terraza Palacio De Cibeles

Address: Plaza de Cibeles, 1 (Palacio de Cibeles 6ª Planta)
Metro: Banco de España



Overlooking **Plaza de Cibeles**, **Paseo del Prado** and **Madrid's breathtaking skyline**, this iconic and postcard-perfect building used to be the city's main post office, although it has just recently been refurbished and turned into a museum and cultural center with free entry. The building's interior is beautiful; the first few floors are dedicated to art exhibits, while the 6th floor is now known as **Terraza Cibeles**, a fancy restaurant & cocktail bar overlooking the city with stunning views. Prices on drinks are high, as you can imagine, but the whole experience is a real treat. What's more, every 30 minutes there are **scheduled visits to the *mirador*** (lookout point) for just €**2** and **€0,50** for under-12-year-olds. Opened to the public for the first time, the visit takes you to the highest point of the building, situated at the very top of the tower on the 8th floor.

10. The Roof at ME Madrid Reina Victoria Hotel

Address: Plaza de Santa Ana, 14
Metro: Sol, Sevilla



I've never been here, mainly because it's way too fancy and exclusive for my taste, but The Roof is one of Madrid's most famous rooftop bars, located atop the high-end Meliá Hotel in Plaza de Santa Ana, one of Madrid's most famous squares full of bars and restaurants. Take the elevator up to the top floor and you'll find beautiful views, purple lighting contrasted against the building's white tower, expensive cocktails, fine cuisine and lounge chairs. It must make for a truly glamorous experience.

11. Hotel Urban

Address: Carrera de San Jerónimo, 34
Metro: Sevilla



As its name entails, **Hotel Urban** is extremely fashionable and modern. The hotel also prides itself on having an art deco look and contemporary-style interior design. Its high-end restaurant is named **Europa Decó**, its oyster bar is named **The Glass Bar**, and its spectacular rooftop is named **La Terraza del Urban**. If you like sipping on cocktails in chic bars with exquisite views, you will absolutely love this place…

12. Hotel Silken Puerta América Madrid

Address: Avenida de America, 41
Metro: Cartagena



image from societeperrier.com

This is the first rooftop terrace we've mentioned that is not within walking distance from Sol! **Hotel Silken** stands out along Madrid's major highway for its multicolored facade and unconventional shape. Making it even more unique, **each of the hotel's 12 floors was designed by an internationally acclaimed architect,** including Arata Isozaki from Japan, Zaha Hadid from Iran and Norman Foster from the UK. Highly modern to say the least, this hotel is situated near **Avenida de America**, a transport and business hub that draws in all kinds of crowds. The **hotel's rooftop terrace** is absolutely incredible in summer; it is an open-air nightclub that offers a much appreciated breeze, plus a significant drop in temperature as it's so high up!

If you're looking for more of Madrid's best rooftop bars, check out round 1 and round 2 of this series.

And of course, if we've missed any, let us know!

Also check out a few of our other "best of" Madrid

lists:

- **Madrid’s best cocktails**
- **Madrid’s best bars for craft beer**
- **Madrid’s best first date ideas**
- **Madrid’s best gift ideas**

El Riojano, Madrid’s best pastry shop is right in the centre and it has a hidden tea room!

For all of you who are like me and have a major sweet tooth, I present **El Riojano**—an old-work pastry shop in the city centre and the perfect place to start off this series on **Madrid’s sweetest eats**!

Who said that ***Roscón de Reyes*** is only eaten at Christmas? At **El Riojano** in Sol, you can order it all year round or taste it in their very own tea room.



For many years, all I knew about **El Riojano** was that it was a pastry shop in the centre of Madrid, tiny and with extraordinary quality. But today, I know it a bit more. For example, it was founded in 1855 by Damaso de la Maza, baker of the Royal Family. As Maza died without heirs, the pastry shop is now owned by its fifth family. While it has changed hands throughout history, its spirit remains intact.

For many it is considered one of the **best secrets of Madrid**, where you can enjoy not only the typical sweets of religious holidays, but all of Spain’s best sweet and savoury treats,

from ***pastas*** (finger cookies) to ***hojaldres*** (puff pastries filled with all types of goodness).







My little love affair with this place emerged a few months ago, when I asked a friend of mine, also a *Madrileña*, if she knew a nice place for tea in the centre. I wanted to try something new.

She replied without hesitation: **El Riojano.**

I was a bit surprised so I replied, “Are you sure? El Riojano has no tea room.” She insisted I go find out for myself.

Well, when I entered I still thought my friend was totally mistaken.



But then I discovered the wonderful tea room hidden through the back. It turned out my friend was right. I was simply blown away!



While admiring the room, I took a seat and looked at the menu. The menu is very simple, dominated by savoury pastries such as ***hojaldres*** and ***empanadas,*** and, of course, a long list of **irresistible sweets**.



I opted for a riskier pastry, made with **dates and bacon**. Delightful!

My friend who came with me decided to order an ***empanada de pollo*** (chicken pie), which she said tasted wonderful.

We also decided to share some ***saladitos***. These are mini pastries filled with different flavours such as cheese and sausage. **La ración** (a full portion) comes with **6 *saladitos***.

For dessert, we decided to try some delicious ***Torrijas,*** Spain's version of French toast—to die for!

The lounge has an old, spacious and clean air to it, making you feel as though **you've gone back in time**. Although it's not always full (which is great), do **go early if there is a holiday** or you will have to wait.

Price-wise, **El Riojano** is very reasonable. The pastries cost around €2-3 each, and for €3.50, you get 6 *hojaldritos.* The average price person is around €11, which will get you a few ***raciones*** of savoury pastries and sweets, plus a drink.

Since I discovered **El Riojano**, it has become one of my **essential place**s in the centre for a quick snack or breakfast. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

Facebook
Address: C/ Mayor, 10
Telephone: 913 66 44 82

Flowers are nice (but this First Date is better) Part 1



The moment: Check your phone or ditch all together

I get nervous and will probably continue to get nervous when planning a first date. It’s not easy. It can even be daunting. You might have just met the girl/boy on a drunken Saturday night and you find yourself trying to come up with a way to entertain, show off, and come across as interesting and intelligent all at once. So I’m back to getting nervous and with little idea of what might or might now work.

Topics of interest can be hard to find but I believe that the location of the date should tie into the conversation. So rather than the usual routine of restaurant then drinks, this is a bit more dynamic and Madrileño (known for going to lots of places on one night).

The idea behind my method is to take your date to at least 3 different places on a given night. Each place will compliment each other and yet offer a very different component of the night. I have included a route order to help. All the places will be in walking distance from each other.

Part 1 is taking the arts and culture route. Not the Prado and its thousands of archangels, but more modern and contemporary offerings. Something more quirky to get the conversation flowing.

This in no way will guarantee you get laid on the first night. Too many factors depend on that result. However, it should reduce those awkward silent moments because you're grasping for a common topic. Quick tip for the awkward moment, just kiss him/her. There is no perfect moment. Only the courage to move your head forward 5 inches.

Act One: Fundacion Telefonica in Calle Fuencarral 3



Fundación Telefonica

We start in the Fundacion Telefonica on Fuencarral. This gallery is always free and almost always open, except Mondays. It regularly changes the collections and usually has photography showing. I am no art student but when you are confronted with space geese and watching a video of their training to fly to the moon, it makes you smile and realise we live in a great place (Moon Goose Analogue, 2011-1012, Agnes Meyer-Brandis). So quickly check out the website and see

what's on, the stranger the better as you don't need to be knowledgeable. Only a sense of humour is required.

Best time: 18-20h

Metro: Gran Via

Act Two: Aiò in Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 25 (mentioned in a **previous article**)



Now that we have started down the cultural road, we cannot go too formal with the restaurant. It needs to fit the setting but shouldn't cost too much. Aio is an Italian restaurant that offers aperitivo for dinner. Aperitivo means you just buy

drinks at a slightly higher price and are able to eat from the buffet at your heart's content. The food is typical Italian with pizza, pasta and salads on offer. Aperitivo is incredibly popular in Italy since the crisis hit, as a way to entice consumers to leave their homes. You cannot reserve a table but there's always a positive atmosphere.

Best time: 20-22h

Alternative: la Mucca is an excellent restaurant. You can make reservations and also sit outside on the terrace. It is the more high quality and expensive option.

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao

Facebook

Act Three: **Microteatro** por dinero in Calle de Loreto Prado y Enrique Chicote, 9



What surprise will await?

You then continue the night by going to Micro Teatro, a bar where you can watch a small theatrical performance for only €4. You can enjoy drinks upstairs and then when your number is

called out, you will descend the stairs into the basement and go into the designated room. All groups are at most 15 people and you come face to face with the actors in the small room. Each little play lasts around 15 minutes, which is good because not all are great. It never fails to create another conversation and even if you only understand 50%, it will still be entertaining.

Best time: 22-24h

Alternative: **Bar Lambuzo**: an Andalusian tavern offering Micro Teatro every Thursday night from 9pm-11pm in their downstairs wine cellar (21h-23h if you will J!), with sessions every half hour for 4€ (more information in a **previous article**)

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao

The Final Act: El Perro de la parte de atras del coche (or just el Perro) in Calle de La Puebla, 15,



Once you still have energy and need a club, I recommend El

Perro, which is around the corner. This club is free entry before 24h, otherwise entry is €10. The music varies a lot. Not a huge dancing room means even if it is not packed will have you feeling like enough people are present.

Best time: after 24h

Alternative: Wind down with a cocktail instead of some dance moves at 1862 Dry Bar in Calle Pez 27, which is open to 1.30am and until 2am on weekends. The martini like many of their cocktails is thoroughly worth it.

Metro: Tribunal/Gran Via/Callao



For other great date ideas in Madrid, check out these off-the-beaten-path cultural centres, restaurants and bars!

- **El Matadero**, *a slaughterhouse turned cultural hub*
- **Bar Lambuzo**, *a family-run Andalusian tavern in the centre of Madrid offering activities in their wine cellar, from wine tastings to microteatro!*
- **La Paca**, *the perfect Malasaña bar & café offering movie nights, art, markets, music and Chema!*
- **Mercado de Motores**, *Madrid's coolest vintage & food market that takes over the city's old train museum once a month!*
- **La Buena Cerveza**, *an international and imported beer shop in Madrid offering beer tastings, workshops and more…*
- **Beer State of Mind**, *go on a route to discover Madrid's best craft beer bars, you'll love them all*
- **Martinis, Margaritas and More**, *where to get the best cocktails in Madrid…*

Casa Federica, a cozy Argentine restaurant on calle manzana

Casa Federica is one of those places that very few people know about, one of those Madrid treasures worth discovering. I actually had a hard time writing about this restaurant, because I wanted it to remain a unique and special place, which only a few had access to. Though I've decided it's time I spread the word.

Last Saturday, I was getting ready to spend the night in the company of good friends and wanted to take them here. We called to reserve a table, and were kindly informed that there were no free tables until 11pm. **My first tip: go very early to grab a table** (the restaurant opens at 8pm).



When you arrive, you realize how special and original this restaurant is. The exterior decoration itself is unique—the menu is placed on a stand with funny flippers on top. Then there's a rather oddly-placed sculpture a few inches away, not to mention the bird cages. These details make this place **one-of-a-kind**.

Upon entering you figure out why it's so difficult to get a table; **the restaurant is very small and cozy**. You can count the tables with the fingers of your hands. The atmosphere is friendly and lively. You see people enjoying themselves, and hear them laughing. Plus the food looks great.

When we sat down, the waiter brought us the menu featuring home cooked Argentine dishes, from empanadas to pizzas, and my favorite, the desserts.

We opted to order several things to share. First, an assortment of **empanadas**—cheese, *calabaza* (squash) and meat. They are all so good, but wow, the ***empanada de calabaza*** was truly a winner—who would have known that a s**quash empanada** could be so incredible?



We also ordered ***pollo a la milanesa*** (breaded and covered in melted cheese and tomato sauce), understandably one of the restaurant’s most popular dishes. Although the chicken was recommended by the waiter, the next time I went we ordered the ***ternera a la milanesa*** (bread veal instead of chicken), and I simply love them both. For its generous portion and simple presentation, this dish really makes you feel like you’re eating at your own home.



Then the waitress kindly suggested we go for a riskier dish, which apparently is another star house dish—***buñuelos de espinaca*** (the spinach fritters). Well, there are no words!!! Unbelievable!



For dessert we decided on a brownie that absolutely hit the spot.

Casa Federica's prices are very reasonable. We ended up paying less than 12 euros per person.

All in all, it was a great night. If you like good food, special places, and good prices, this is definitely your place.

Facebook
Address: c/ Manzana 19
Telephone: 915 42 96 75

For other homey and family-style restaurants, check out:

Lambuzo, a family-run restaurant in the heart of Madrid, offering a taste of the South with a mix of fun activities in their wine cellar—wine tastings, olive oil tastings, micro theatre and more!

Taberna Bulgara, an off-the-beaten path restaurant that takes you right to Bulgaria

Aió, a wonderful Italian restaurant in Malasaña serving home cooked Sardinian food and providing a haven for Madrid's bikers!

Martinis, Margaritas and more

Gin tonic, rum with coke and whiskey and ginger ale. All great drinks but very repetitive. What about an Old Fashioned,

Vesper Martini or just on the rocks? Sounds much sexier. **Cocktails** are becoming a bigger trend and the quality is improving, as are the **bartenders** standing behind the bar.

So if you want to impress a date or your friends with some classy glasses and just plain **cool-looking cocktail bars**, I present you a list of some very fine venues. These venues have some **excellent bartenders** and the service is guaranteed to be great.

So stop deciding which gin you will pair with what tonic and enter the world of James Bond and Don Draper.

1. **Le Cabrera** in Bárbara de Braganza, 2



This is one of the best looking and coolest cocktail bars in Madrid. Unofficially also known as the **best cocktail bar in Madrid**. Opened by Diego Cabrera who hails from Quilmes, Argentina, every detail has been tended to. Although Diego has recently left the bar to open a new venue, the bar has still retained all its quality. The idea behind the bar came when Sergi Arola offered Diego, who was looking to have his own place, to be part of his project to turn the lower half of Le Cabrera into a bar.

This cocktail bar, even for all its beauty, would be worth

very little without the men and women standing behind all the bottles and fruit. The **bartenders regularly take part in WORLD CLASS**, a competition of the best bartenders in the world, going through to the finals for Spain.

To get to the **cocktail bar**, you have to go down the stairs when you arrive inside. Upstairs they have a restaurant in which I have never eaten. **All cocktails cost 11€** and are well worth it.

Recommended Cocktail: Old Fashioned Bourbon.

The trick with the **Old Fashioned** is to stir the ice for long enough (approx. 5 minutes) in the glass. The Bulleit Bourbon is a truly excellent one and has recently been launched in Spain.

Facebook
Metro: Chueca / Colon

2. **Costello** in Caballero de Gracia 10



Great cocktails and live music! I just love this combination. On the ground level you will find an excellent bar with house bartender regularly offering you to challenge him by making up a **cocktail on the spot**. All you have to do is to tell him if you prefer it sweet, sour, etc., and if you want to have a specific ingredient. Then this wizard will create it.

Downstairs is a **basement with a stage and a further bar** (no cocktails). Regularly offering live music of **Spanish bands**, this is what makes Costello unique. One of the **best concerts** I went to in Madrid was with the front man playing the saxophone.

Very easy to find as you start to walk to the massive McDonald's on Gran Via and from there, the **bar is located in a side street**. On weekends, you will want to arrive before 22h or will have to wait a little outside.



Recommended Cocktail: Make your own! Or choose the Missionary's Downfall (picture above)

Facebook
Metro: Gran Via / Sol

3. **Only You** – Barquillo 21



Opened less than 6 months ago, this **hotel is very chic and modern**. The reception area shows a wall of white suitcases for starters, and they have a blue room where a cup of tea or a **Martini** would not be out of place.

What also impresses is the **friendly customer service** and bright back bar lights. You can clearly see the different type of spirits on offer and nothing is hidden away or obscured.

On Thursdays, they offer an **AfterWork** with a different concept and music each week. **The cocktails cost 11€**. The menu offers a large selection of different drinks. I would recommend trying one of their 5 own creations. The menu card will also explain to you what type of flavour the different gins have.

Recommended Cocktail: Barquillo Boyz

Facebook
Metro: Chueca

4. **Bon Vivant** in Calle San Gregorio, 8



Another **Gastrobar** that recently opened in Madrid. It does concentrate more on being a restaurant but the cocktails have a great flair about them. If you order the **Piña Colada** it will be presented to you in a pineapple—a very real, very big and delicious pineapple.

The **cocktail bar** is located at the back with bright back bar lights. Take a seat at the bar and watch the **bartender create the cocktail** in front of your eyes. There is **a lot of action**; the crushed ice is made by hacking a large block of ice with a pick to pieces. Goggles are not included in the experience.



Recommended Cocktail: Pisco Sour

Facebook
Web
Metro: Chueca

If you're more of a **beer** person than a cocktail person, check out our posts on **Madrid's rising beer scene**:

- A Beer State of Mind in Madrid, *the best places to get craft beers in the city*
- La Buena Cerveza, *a shop in Chueca where you can find all types of imported and craft beers, as well as do tastings and workshops*

Or check out our **favorite Madrid rooftops** where you can have both!

- Madrid's Best Rooftops, round 1
- Madrid's Best Rooftops, round 2

Madrid's best rooftop bars, round 2

If you've just read round one of **Madrid's best rooftop bars**, hope you're ready for round two! This list includes **4 rooftop bars** from different central neighbourhoods of Madrid. Some more upscale than others, these spectacular roofs are perfect havens during the city's hot months to come.



4. Gymage; on top of a gym

Gymage looks like it's in Ibiza, yet it's located atop a normal-looking gym. As you sink into white couches, order from a long list of colorful **cocktails** and feel as though you're on a sandy Mediterranean beach. The first time I went here it was actually pouring rain outside, though the ambience was still fresh and lively. It was quite cozy to be under the glass-covered area while sipping on *mojitos* and *cosmopolitans*, watching the raindrops trickling down the glass.

> ***Address**: c/ Corredera Baja de San Pablo, 2, 2ª*
> ***Metro**: Callao*
> ***Facebook***
> ***Web***



5. El Hotel de Las Letras; on top of a hotel

Situated right on the *Gran Vía*, **El Hotel de las Letras**' rooftop overlooks all of Madrid's emblematic buildings and provides a much needed escape from the city's busy streets. The hotel is in a beautifully restored building with high ceilings and smart design, and it was one of the first hotels to open its *azotea* to the public, thereby helping start Madrid's rooftop craze. Although prices on drinks are rather high, the views are spectacular, a live DJ spins at night, and the location is simply unbeatable. After a long day of shopping in the city-center, there's nothing better than getting yourself up and away from the hustle and bustle, and having yourself a drink in the sky.

Address: *Calle Gran Vía, 11,*
Metro*: Gran Vía or Sevilla*
Web
Facebook



image from elviajeromadrid.com

6. El Viajero; on top of a restaurant & bar

For me, **El Viajero**'s quaint rooftop garden stands out for its host neighborhood—**La Latina**—my favorite place to be on Sundays, or any day of the week for that matter. La Latina is

one of **Madrid's oldest neighborhoods** and home to some of the city's most traditional architecture. The nightlife here is always upbeat thanks to an abundance of small bars stacked against each other on famous streets such as *La Cava Baja,* and packed into cute plazas such as *Plaza de la Paja*. Situated on a street corner, **El Viajero** is one of La Latina's most popular restaurant bars, and its rooftop is well-loved. With plants hanging from every corner and views of old balconies and churches, I wouldn't think twice about going here if you find yourself in the area.

Address: *Plaza Cebada, 11*
Metro: *La Latina*
Web
Facebook



image from: http://www.room-matehotels.com

7. Hotel Oscar; on top of a hotel & nightclub

In the heart of Chueca, **Hotel Oscar** has hands down the most **modern, fashionable** and **upscale rooftop bar** on the list. Breathtaking views, white chaise lounges and luxurious swimming pools make Hotel Oscar's rooftop a **top hit** among Madrid's in crowd, and a hallmark of Madrid's urban nightlife. The **Oscar Hotel** describes itself with adjectives such as cosmopolitan, friendly, nocturnal and modern, and boasts a contemporary style that's reminiscent of the Bauhaus movement. In other words, it's the hottest place to be when the sun goes down.

**the roof opens at the end of April*

> ***Address:*** *Plaza Vázquez de Mella, 12*
> ***Metro:*** *Chueca or Gran Vía*
> ***Web***
> ***Facebook***

Check out Madrid's best rooftop bars, round 3!

Also feel free to let us know about your favorite Madrid rooftop bar if we've missed any

El Matadero, a slaughterhouse turned phenomenal cultural hub

If you're looking for something as impressive as the Prado or the Reina Sofia, but off-the-beaten-path, it's **El Matadero.** The perfect place to spend a leisurely afternoon alone or with friends in Madrid, here you can calmly diddle daddle through a maze of **art exhibits** and **designer market stands.** Then, enjoy a *café con leche* or a cold Madrid brew outside. **El Matadero** has it all—from Spain's national dance company performances to international innovation conferences.

What is it?

Just a 10-minute subway ride from Sol**,** **El Matadero** is a culture/innovation hub and architectural treasure. The **former slaughterhouse** (hence, the name) is now a public-private entity offering book-readings, theater and music performances, photography exhibits and independent cinema on a nightly basis, most of which are **free.**

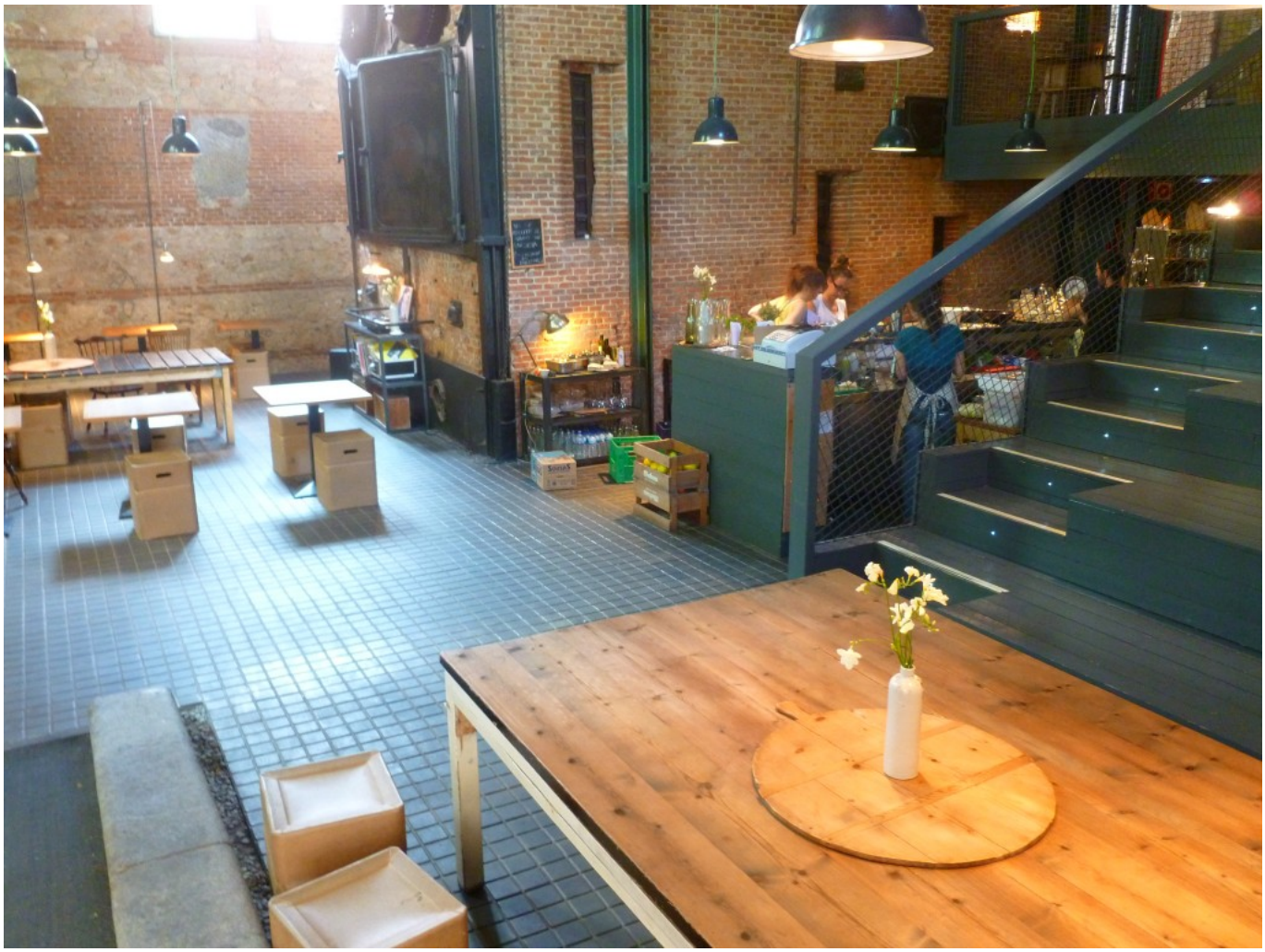


on día internacional de la danza, image from Matadero's Facebook page

Not to be compared with any other space in the city, **El Matadero** is an ambitious project and the fruit of a most innovative and modern Madrid. **This cultural center** also provides ongoing activities for families as well as a space for local innovators to develop their projects, all of which you can see while wandering through its enormous labyrinth of warehouses (naves) and open work spaces.



There are six ***naves***, each used for a different purpose. For example, the **Nave Español** holds theater and dance performances. The **Cineteca** showcases international and independent film festivals. The **Música Nave** holds concerts and recording studios.



The **old oven** has now been usurped by the café, **La Cantina**, that sells locally produced food and wines, and has the kind of atmosphere that makes you want to stay forever. Plus, it has one of the **best *terrazas*** *(*outdoor seating areas) in all of Madrid, in my opinion at least.



When the weather’s nice, my husband and I like to go there by bike; it’s a breezy 30-minute ride from *Principe Pio* along Madrid’s river (*Madrid Río*), which the city has done an amazing job of revamping. The river is now lined with bike and pedestrian paths, unique bridges, playgrounds (for grown-ups too!), street workout equipment, sprawling green zones and sprinkler areas. Plus it’s a straight shot to **El Matadero.**


Brabander
B

Last summer I took my sister, Amanda, from New York, to **El Matadero** for the whole afternoon. We first slipped into what used to be the slaughterhouse's fridge area, where an odd fire exhibit was being showcased. When we stepped out onto the courtyard, a group of flamenco dancers were *zapateando* (stomping) and smoking in a circle, getting ready to go on stage in the **Nave Español.** Then we parked ourselves at **La Cantina** for a glass of wine and a plate of delicious vegetable dishes made from **Madrid's local gardens**.

Amanda was amazed how all of this was so open to the public, and that it wasn't even packed. She said that if this were to be opened in Brooklyn, lines would be stretching to Queens.

History

El Matadero was built in the 1920s as a pig slaughterhouse, and was turned into a cultural center in 2006. When they renovated the slaughterhouse, the goal was to keep the original columns, the beams, the ovens and exterior structure in tact. For example, the first room you see on the left of the entrance used to be the freezer. Now it's an exhibition space. The dark, sinister feel makes you ponder what really went on in there. The interior was designed to be versatile and sustainable – most of the walls can be rolled away or folded up to make way for projects and events of all scale.

What to do?

Even if you're in Madrid for a few days, don't be intimidated by the amount of things going on. I highly recommend checking out their **activities list** (which is in English) or just stopping by to see the architecture and the vibe. As you stroll through the different spaces, you'll stumble upon anything from an indoor garden to a conference on new technology. Activities are open to the public in the afternoon, and you're free to walk around the plaza, find a nook to study in or have a drink at the café anytime.

What's new?

Since October 2013, El Matadero has its own independent market—**El Mercado Central de Diseño**.



El Matadero's monthly market—**El Mercado Central de Diseño**—is one of Madrid's first design markets for entrepreneurs in the worlds of fashion, design and arts & crafts. During the two-day market, various free **music concerts** and **events** are put on as well, making it a **hot spot** to go with friends on the weekend!



Information:

El Matadero
Facebook
Where: Paseo de la Chopera 14 Metro: Legazpi (line 3, yellow)
Hours: Tuesday to Friday from 4pm to 10pm Saturday to Sunday from 11am to 10pm
Telephone: 915 17 73 09

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1

Madrid has **magnificent rooftop bars**, and you'll find them perched atop unexpected places. Here's round one of my favorites. What's more, all of these places are within **walking distance** from one another, so you could turn this list into a **rooftop bar crawl** if you had the whole day to spend atop

buildings, watching the sky change colors. Here's a list of Madrid's best rooftop bar.



Image from Gau&Café's Facebook page

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars

1. Gau&Café: on top of a university

Considered one of **8 Hidden Gems in Madrid** by **the Guardian newspaper**, this rooftop bar truly deserves **first place** on my list. Tucked away on a side street in **Lavapiés**, Gau&Cafe rests atop one of UNED University's historic campus buildings. As you enter the university and walk up four flights of stairs, you'd never imagine that **Gau&Café** would be so chic, inviting and beautiful—you'd never even know it was there. The space is divided into two sections: one for drinks, and one for dinner. In the drink section, you can order a delicious **8€ hamburger**.

If you're looking for a sit-down dinner, do make a reservation (the menu features lots of local, seasonal products, namely *zucchini, cous cous, eggplant* and *hummus dishes*).

***Address**: c/ Tribulete 14, 4th floor*
***Metro:** Lavapiés*
Web
Facebook



2. Casa de Granada: on top of a residential building

At home in the sky, this **rooftop bar** holds a special place in my heart as it will always be the first rooftop I ever went to in Madrid. **Casa de Granada** is essentially a regular **Spanish restaurant**, situated on a roof that has outdoor seating and an

enclosed area. Nibble on traditional **Spanish dishes** as you look out on Madrid's short-story buildings, plazas, and terracotta-tiled roofs. You may also catch women hanging clothes out to dry and maybe even listen in on the neighbour's telephone conversation. Although **Casa de Granada** has recently renovated, it's maintained its nonchalant style which is what makes it fun. When it comes to food, you should stick to the **Spanish staples**—*croquetas*, *huevos rotos*, *pimientos de padrón*, *calamares,* you name it.

***Address**: c/ del Doctor Cortezo, 17, 6th floor*
***Metro**: Tirso de Molina or Sol*
Facebook
Web



3. Mercado de San Antón: on top of a gourmet market

This **gourmet market** is the hipper version of its uber-upscale pedestrian competitor, *Mercado de San Miguel.* In other words, **Mercado de San Antón** is infinitely cooler and more enjoyable. First of all, it's in Chueca (enough said). Secondly, it has three floors and therefore much more seating area. And then there's a stunning **rooftop bar**, perfect for people-watching! What's more, the rooftop bar's prices are reasonable; a glass of wine costs the same as at any other bar on street level. So why not pop up to the roof and have your drink there? Sometimes they have free live music too.

Address: *C/ Augusto Figueroa 24, 3rd floor*
Metro: *Chueca*
Facebook

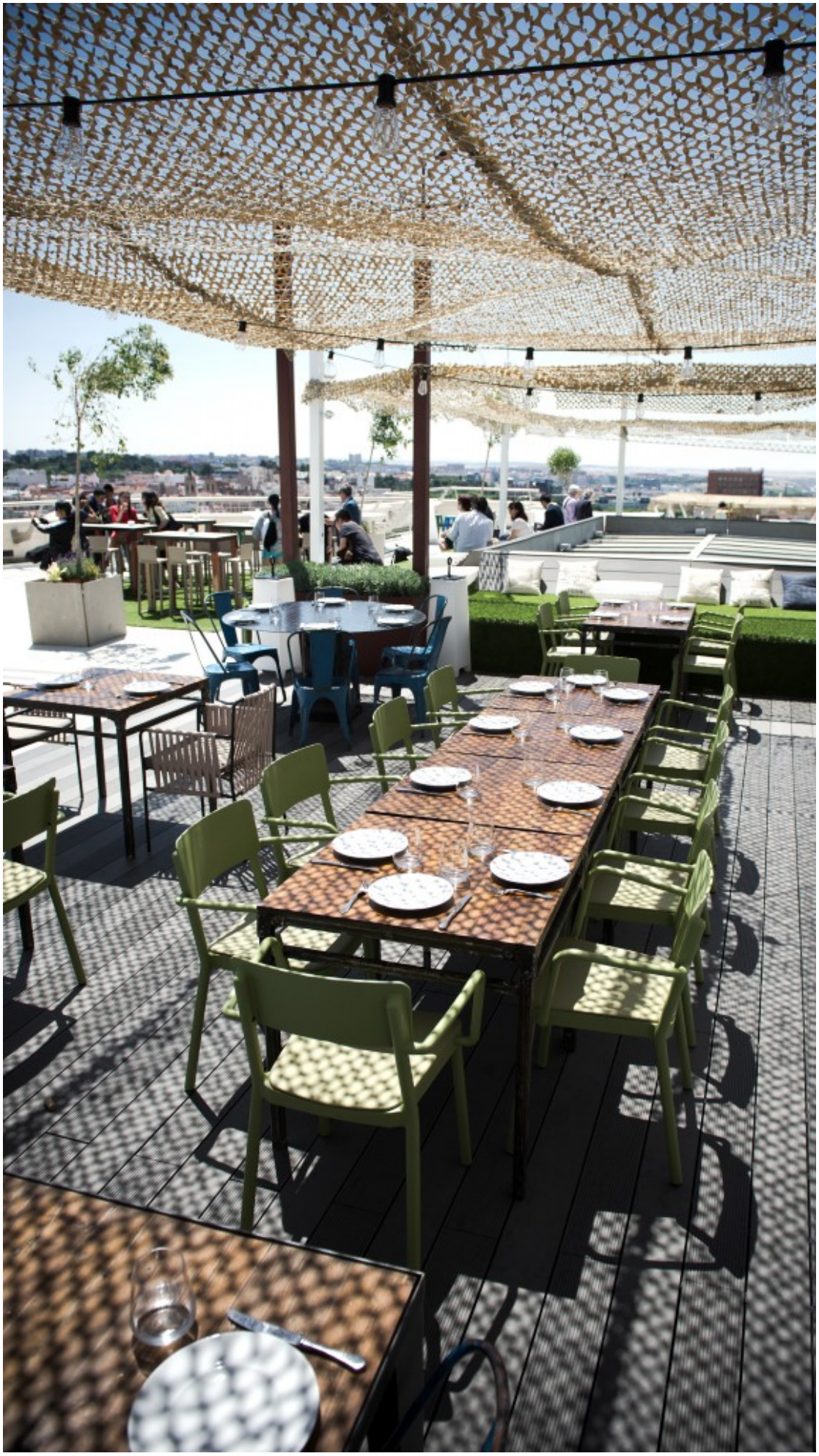


image from www.azoteadelcirculo.com

4. Tartan Roof: on top of Círculo de Bellas Artes (Fine Arts Building)

The sky is the canvas atop this fine arts institution. Overlooking the *Castellana* and *Plaza de Cibeles*, and perched on top of the exquisite *Circulo de Bellas Artes* building, it's no wonder why **Tartan Roof** has the most breathtaking views out of all on this list. For 3€, anyone can go up to the roof to have a look. The fee is waved if you have **dinner reservations** (an absolute must). My friend's earlier post says it all here. This is also a really popular place for cocktails, though slightly expensive, you're paying for the view, not the drink itself. The first time I went to this roof was on ***Día de la Música*** (Music Day). The **Azotea** (rooftop) was participating by holding a free swing and tap dance performance. It was incredible to be up there looking out on Madrid's skyline.

> ***Address****: c/ Alcalá 42*
> ***Metro****: Banco de España or Sevilla*
> ***Web***
> ***Facebook***

If you're looking for more, here's Madrid's best rooftops, Round 2 and Round 3!

And feel free to let us know about your

favorite Madrid rooftop bars!