

The Circle Food, tasty food for staying trim

When I lived in London it was soooo easy not to have to cook (if you didn't have the time, energy or inclination). First of all you had Mark's and Spencer's, purveyors of all things tasty and all available on the go – I take down all of their chicken and bacon sandwiches on brown upon my return to Blighty.

In addition to this, clean eating had really taken off and it required minimal effort to get something delivered (or picked up) that wasn't a heart attack on a plate.

I've always struggled with the concept of convenient food in Spain, mainly because it seems to culturally evade them. Food isn't meant to be 'grabbed' – and if you want to eat quickly and healthily it's nigh on impossible.



This is why locales like [The Circle Food](#) are to be welcomed with a fanfare by people like me. Combining ease with eating well, it's showing the clean eating movement is slowly gathering pace in the city.



Now I love tortilla and the like as much as the next person, but from time to time (usually post gym when even the thought of showering feels insurmountable) I want to grab and go. Look no further.



Embracing the trend of organic bowls, [The Circle Food](#) is the ideal place to pick up something nutritious (and delicious) or indeed, a place to eat in with a friend. As I veer towards fussiness in the food stakes, I built my own bowl – you pick your base, I opted for quinoa and wild red rice.



Next up you select your toppings and salsa as you please. It's always a nice feeling for me to chase up a spin class with something containing the colour green. But it isn't all virtuous – it's actually really tasty, with the added bonus that you're doing your bod some good.



They have a fixed menu should you wish to streamline the decision making process and just trust in their food pairings. Aside from savory stuff, there's also breakfast on offer and Illy coffee which is always enough to get me through the door.



The space is light, bright and airy. A place to eat and co-work. Having thrown an opening bash last weekend and setting their stall out as being something that little bit different, The Circle Food is garnering attention for all the right reasons.

I'll see you there, I'll be the one in the post gym leggings ordering extra falafel.

The Circle Food

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Peruvian Classics with a British Twist at Lascar

It's a warm Sunday afternoon and like all other Madrileños, I make my way to my favorite brunch spot for a few drinks, laughs with friends and some of the best ceviche I've ever had the pleasure of eating. I've been hoarding this brunch spot for months but this place is too good to not share.

[Lascar](#), which means buddy or mate in French, opened in Conde Duque seven months ago. The restaurant first began in Barcelona when the owners, Rob and Peter, wanted to find a way to stay in Spain. At the time, opening a cold food restaurant was cheaper and easier than hot plates. So they settled on a cevicheria.

After a successful run up north, the Scot and Englishman set their sites on Madrid. Rob's father is Malaysian, so the food has a bit of Southeast Asian influence, with of course a Spanish influence.



I suggest starting with their scallops that are baked in parmesan and are a heavenly bite of slightly crunchy cheese and a juicy bite of seafood.

If you fancy some British grub, their fish and chips are baked in a light and fluffy batter, giving the cod a buttery accent with a dash of cilantro cream dressing.



Of course their stable (and my favorite) is the range of ceviche dishes. The specialties vary by the week, from a classic lemony bowl of fresh fish to a spicier, tomato based ceviche.



As for the bar, you can't go wrong with one of their pisco sours or specialty Peruvian cocktails.

With summer around the corner, Lascar is the perfect weekend

brunch spot, with fresh seafood, cool bites and a sweet, tangy pisco.

By Moriah Costa

Lascar

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 - [Lady Madonna, because Sundays are made for brunching](#)
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Grosso Napoletano – I ‘adoughed’ you.

Being a full time teacher means that I’m lucky enough to get some pretty major teacher perks, aka, a lot of holiday days – which let’s be real, is something that money can’t buy. So this week I found myself with a blissful 9 days off and aside from the on-going trauma that is ‘*buying a house*’ in Spain (that’s a whole other blog post that trust me no one wants to read) I basically found myself at a loose end.

The upside of this being that I had time to become a lady who lunches – so having managed to persuade a friend to extend her lunch break, I sought out somewhere tasty looking near her office that wouldn’t break the bank – my pennies are now being

directed towards furniture sadly, and not food.



Fast forward to [Grosso Napoletano](#), a lovely little Italian spot serving up some of the best pizzas in the city. Located on C/Santa Engracia, it's neighbours with a whole host of hip and happening foodie outposts that are emerging weekly in

Chamberi.



The beauty of [Grosso Napoletano](#) in my opinion was the simplicity of the menu – a few salads are on offer to share (we plumped for chicken and avo to get the tastebuds going) followed by diavola and a quattro formaggi pizzas

respectively.



The cavernous wood burning oven cooked them to absolute perfection – the base was light but not doughy, the toppings charred but not burnt. I ate every last crumb and my friend took her leftovers back to work – much to the envy of her colleagues.



As the nervous energy that comes with the quest to becoming a homeowner appears to be burning some of my calorie intake, I plumped by a matcha tea tiramisu to round things off nicely. It was a quirky twist on an Italian classic and every bite as delicious as the pizza.





Pizza places are essentially ten a penny, but decent ones are not. Grosso serves up authentic Italian eats at prices that, let's face it, are far more purse friendly than a return flight to Rome to sample the same.

So if you fancy living La Dolce Vita but the budget won't stretch quite as far as Sardinia, Grosso Napoletano is no poor substitute. Both the service and the décor were spot on and if a simple lunch spot is what you're after, then that's what you'll get. With two locations in the city (the other one on C/Hermosilla) it's easy to grab a 'pizza' the action.

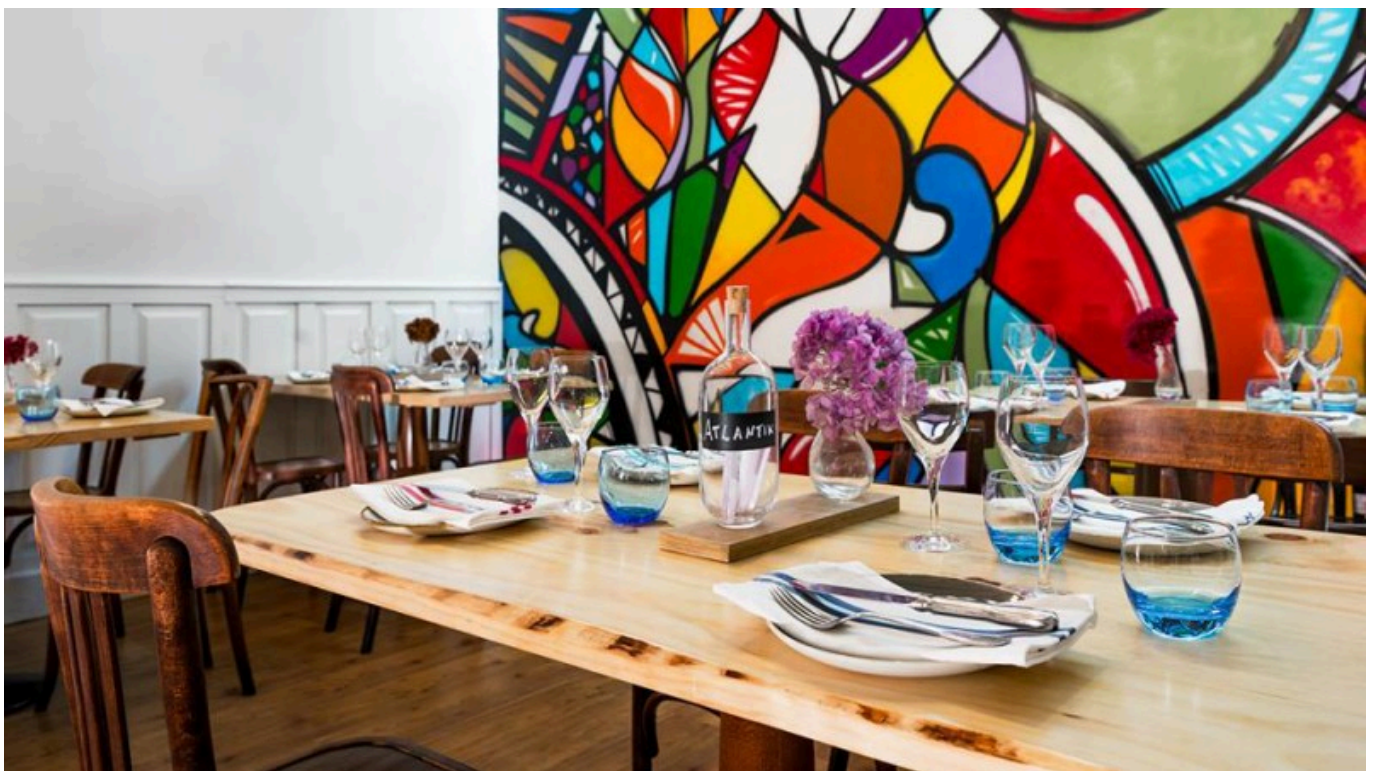
Photos from instagram @grosso_napoletano

Grosso Napoletano

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Currently they have [8 locations](#)
- **Phone:** 911 70 46 53

I'd Cross an Ocean for Atlantik Corner

Sometimes you walk into a restaurant and you can just sense that somebody has put their heart and soul into it. That's exactly how I felt last Tuesday evening when visiting [Atlantik Corner](#) for the first time. From the little details, to the big concept that envelops their entire menu, no aspect of the dining experience had been overlooked; no aspect deemed too trivial.



[Atlantik Corner](#) is a Portuguese restaurant, but with a twist. There's no clichéd chicken peri peri on offer here. This is fusion cooking at its best. Unbeknown to me, Portugal has strong historical links with Brazil (*that part I knew*) but I wasn't aware of their ties with Africa and India. So with flavours from these foreign lands having been thrown into the

mix, the result is a menu that can only be described as a masterclass in uniqueness.



Nuno de Noronha Goucha, the owner of Atlantik Corner, was a fountain of knowledge when it came to wine, decor and all things delicious from Spain's next-door neighbour. Hailing from Portugal himself, the restaurant is clearly a labour of love and he explained that the concept behind the menu was to encapsulate all things 'Atlantic' – rather than the Mediterranean food that's often held in such high esteem when you mention the south of Europe.

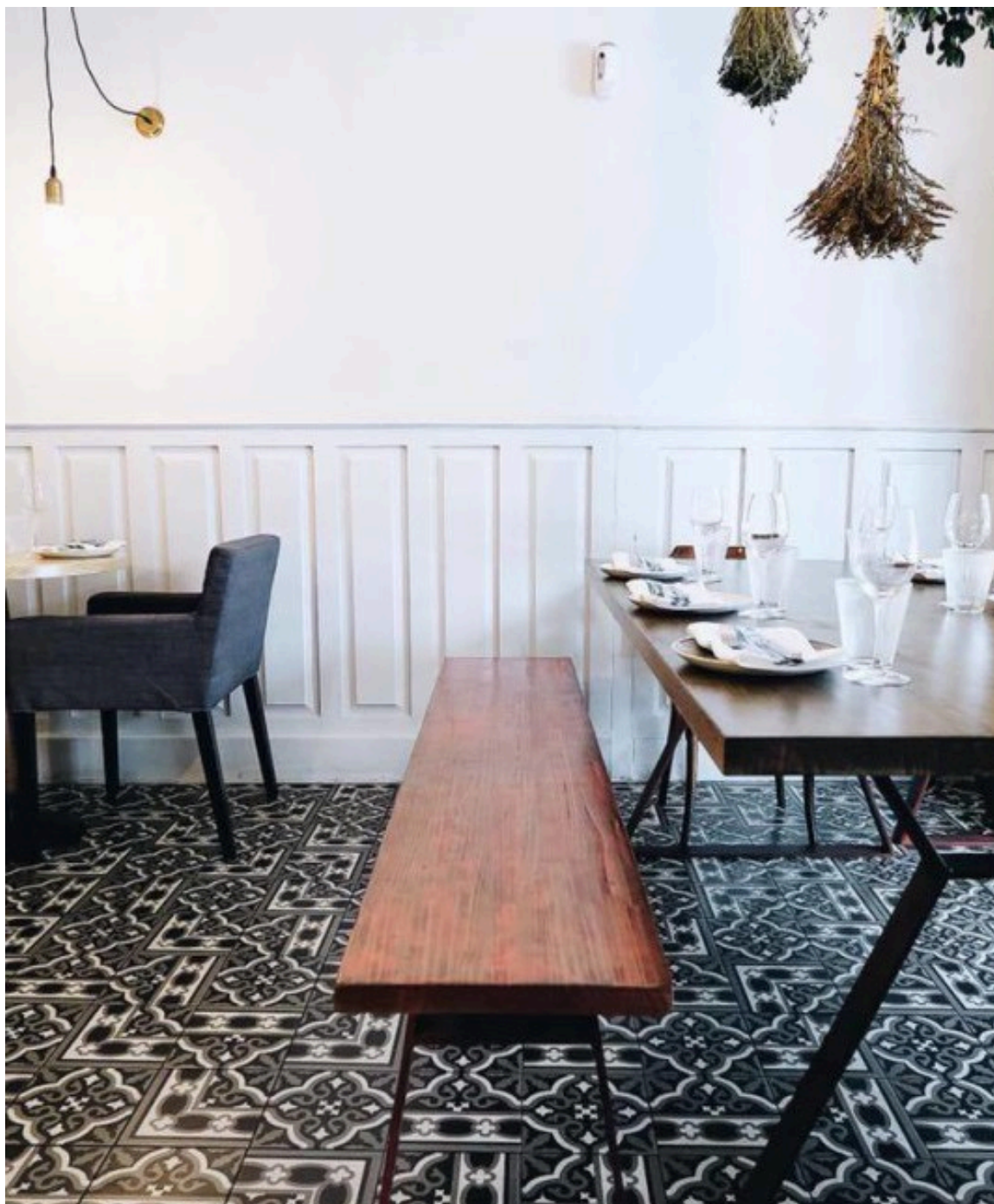


Kicking things off (and naturally, with a story behind it) was

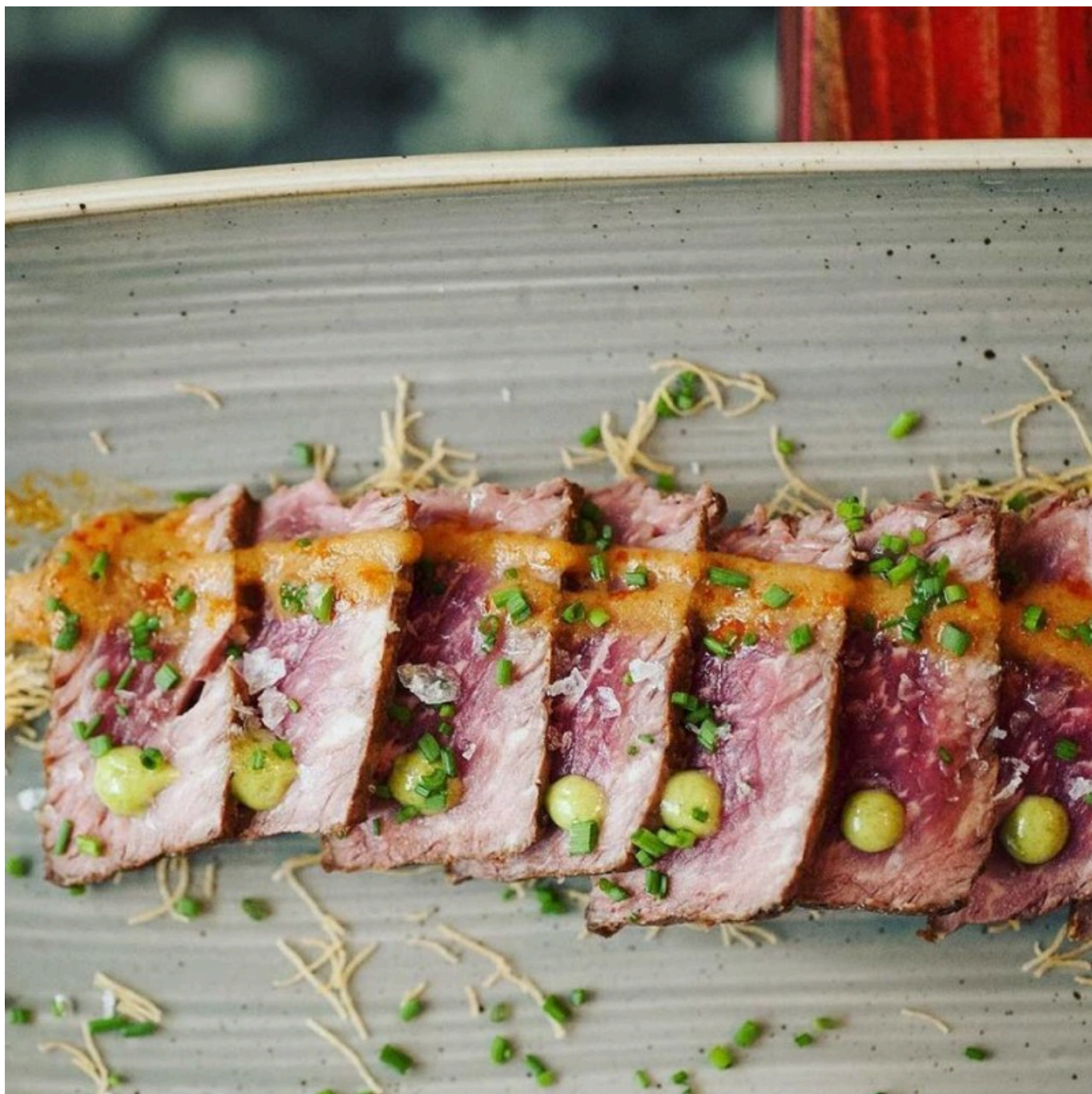
a delectable duck pate served with oaty biscuits that Galician sailors used to take on their voyages (for when their bread went bad). Well, I can only attest that they were some lucky lads because the *marinheiras* were so good that I could've snaffled the entire bowl and tipped them into my handbag, you know, to keep my hunger pangs at bay.



This was teamed with an ice cold Alvarinho wine that was perfectly chilled and was able to convert even the most diehard Crianza drinker. Then to really ramp up the *ooh's* and *aaah's*, a selection of homemade bread appeared, served effortlessly in a tiny cloth bag bestowed to the restaurant by none other than Nuno's own Mother – a nice touch, I'm sure you'll agree.



I feel it's worth a mention at this point that given it being a Portugese restuarant, the tile porn was off the scale. Gorgeous floors partnered the equally gorgeous food – ensuring that all senses were assaulted with loveliness. After the surprise appetiser, we plumped for three dishes, all designed to be shared and all incorporating an electric mix of ingredients.



We tried a *ravioli de gambon* – the pasta was wafer-thin (my favourite) and the prawns were pink, plump and perfect. This was followed by *suprema de vaca*, teamed with two spicy sauces, *mojo picon* and Thai green curry – I told you it was unique. And then came the final showstopper – a *carabinero al carbon*.



Now until fairly recently, I'm not ashamed to say that I was pretty squeemish when it came to all things 'under the sea'. I watched the waiter somewhat apprehensively as he squeezed the head of the *carabinero* with force, resulting in lots of gooey goodness, which laced the cous cous with an almost syrupy flourish. I tried not to think too intently about what it was exactly, but what was undeniable was the taste – I could've licked the plate.



Now some peeps after that little lot would be full, but I like to think that when it comes to appetites, I'm not most people. Not a huge dessert fan, once again I took advice from Nuno and went for a *torrija de brioche*. There are no words to describe how good that pud was so I won't even attempt it – however, what I will say is that I'd go back for that alone. Not that it's the only thing that will ensure a repeat performance – the *menu del día* (priced at a bargainous €14.50 for three courses) should have people flocking in droves.



So with dinner concluding and me being somewhat in awe of the tile/prawn combo, I wondered what was left to conquer in terms of the excitement stakes – well how's this for beyond cute? You could leave an actual message in a bottle. No I'm not just quoting Sting for fun – the team behind Atlantik Corner urge you to write a wish before you leave, and leave it safely ensconced in a bottle and they'll do the rest – aka, throw it into the Atlantic Ocean for you.

Wanna know what I wished for? That they could come up with a calorie-free version of the *torrija*, so that I could tuck in morning, noon and night.

By @littlemissmadrid!

Info

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Gracias Padre, a new Mexican restaurant you'll be very thankful for

They say that practicing an attitude of gratitude is the key to a calm and content life. I'm never quite sure who "they" are when I make reference to them in this sort of context. I guess what I'm trying to say is that gratitude continues to be a buzz word for 2018, along with self care and *lagom*. Trust me, look 'em up.

Anyways, I digress. What I'm attempting to explain is that gratitude simply means pausing and appreciating what you have and giving thanks. To this end, there's no place easier to feel grateful for than [Gracias Padre](#); an almost box-fresh Mexican restaurant that just graced Calle Ortega y Gasset with its presence a mere month ago.



It's impossible to miss. A riot of colour that wouldn't be out of place on a Holi run, the decor packs a similar punch to the frozen margaritas that are on offer. I dined on a Friday night and it was heaving. So much so that word of mouth is clearly taking hold for GP quicker than you can say "tequila, it makes me happy."



Now I love Mexican food. Like, full blown love it. I love Indian food, I love Italian food, heck, I'm even genuinely starting to like Japanese food (I can't drop the L word just yet, it's still early days). But my full-blown love affair with decent Mexican food started in Tulum three years ago and upon my return, I've spent time, money and energy on dinners where I've wound up bitterly disappointed when I've been served up a plate of a beige-looking stodge.



There's no such issue at [Gracias Padre](#) where the food was light, clean and fresh, not your typical description of Mexican fare, yet everything I ate was delicious and not overtly calorific. **Slight disclaimer, I did try a corn on the cob that was dipped in butter (and mayo) then rolled in parmesan.*

Every sublime mouthful was well worth the need for my Saturday spin class. The fish tacos had the perfect amount of crunch and flaky softness, while the *tinga de pollo* melted in your mouth.



Mexican food isn't hard to find in Madrid, with chains popping up everywhere, you can't miss an opportunity for a burrito, much like it's hard to miss a bearded bloke in Malasaña. What deserves praise however, is authentic Mexican food, cooked with love. The type of tacos that take you back to that beach in Tulum and remind you why you'd give your right arm for a

decent marg after a tough working week.



Much like online dating, finding a true gem of a place to eat is often a numbers game. You've gotta rack up the dates and sift through the duds. Fret not, no need for you to conduct your own research. In this instance I've done the hard work for you. [Gracias Padre](#) is hands down the best Mexican food I've had on this side of the pond – and I've tried a lot of tacos.

Gracias Padre

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@gracias.padre](#)
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- **Metro:** Lista

Salivate at Sargo

The run-up to Christmas is undoubtedly (if you're anything like me) a social whirlwind. I'm not quite sure where the need came from to see literally *everyone that you know* before Santa arrives; it's almost as though we feel like the world might implode come December 25th.

In light of this, I often wind up feeling as though I'm over stretched having over committed. And therefore – rather than be filled with “Christmas cheer” – this quickly turns to “Christmas fear” as I realise I've spent too much time partying and not enough time purchasing (other people's gifts that is).



However, there are some dates in the old diary that are no hardship to keep. In this case, it was dinner at the recently

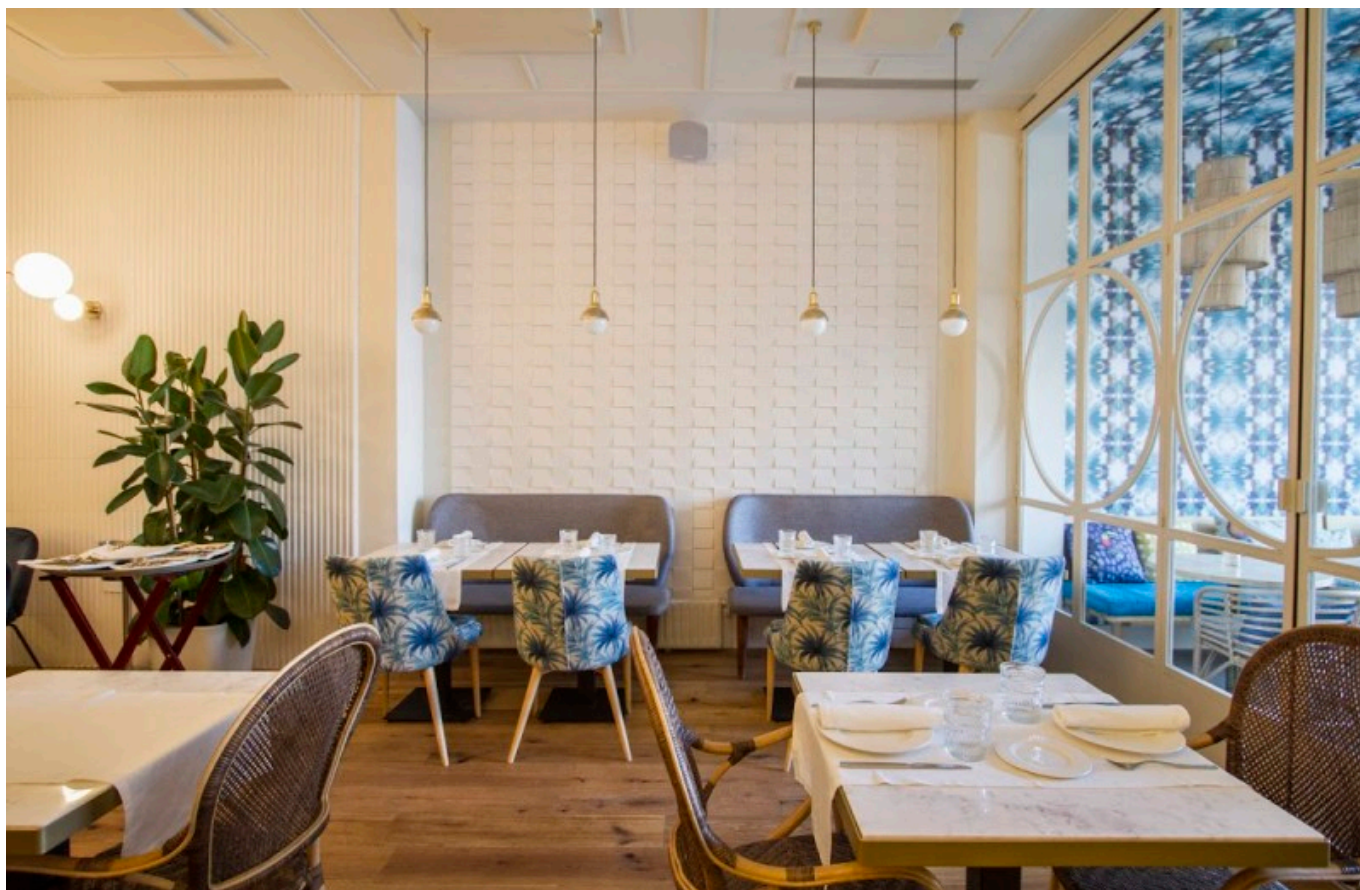
opened [Sargo](#). Located in Barrio Salamanca – not my usual stomping ground, but in an area that I do aspire to spend more time in and around – Sargo felt like the sophisticated older sister to many of the [restaurants that I tend to frequent](#).



I met my friend at the bar for a sparkly start (some gin-based fizz) and began to peruse the menu. It quickly transpired that whilst there were definite crowd pleasers to be found, innovation was the buzz word at Sargo with plenty of inventive options, of which I'll elaborate on later.



For me, I'm all about the "three S's" when I go out for dinner, so let me explain. Style, service and (lip) smackingly good food. It wasn't wasted on me that the decor at [Sargo](#) was Pinterest worthy in terms of its prettiness and if I'm going to be sat still for hours, then I want something nice to look at.



On that note, next comes the service. It didn't go unnoticed on myself or my dining companion that our waiter was incredibly attentive and essentially, he could've been plucked from the beaches of Rio. Pau was everything you'd want in a server, knowledgeable but not pushy. Friendly but not overbearing. Gorgeous but not so distractingly so that our food would go cold.



So onto the food, it passed the “S” test and then some. As I went with a veggie friend (we cover all food group bases) and tried A LOT of different things – what can I tell you, we were warming up for Christmas.



The standout dish for me was the *sashimi de atún rojo*, which was a work of art – quite literally, it was served upon a *pintoresco*. The concept of the menu is undoubtedly unique though – split into easy-to-read groups such as “*de machete*” – perfect for meat lovers and “*de cuchara*” which is ideal for those seeking comfort – which to be honest in these tiresome temps, who isn’t?





We bid the team at [Sargo](#) farewell having tackled the menu as a tag team and safe in the knowledge that we'd given their marvellously Mediterranean menu a good old bash.

If you're looking for a spot that definitely isn't style over substance, give Sargo more than just a glance. Set to become a darling of the Salamanca scene, set up camp now before the hordes arrive.

Info

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Crackers for Caramba

Is it just me or does the run up to Christmas turn into a complete whirlwind of eating, drinking and being very, very merry – and that's all before the main event has even started. By the time December 25th rolls round you're often fit to collapse thanks to the endless festive functions that have filled your diary from the get go of the month.

However, where's the fun in being all 'bah humbug' about the excuse to crack open the bubbles and swerve the gym? There's none. So in the spirit of embracing the delirium of December, I booked a dinner at [Caramba](#) with a visiting friend and headed out to celebrate the most manic of months.



[Caramba](#) hails from the well known Grupo Larumba; which means that a stylish setting is a guarantee. Close to Puerta de Alcalá, it's perfectly placed for locals and tourists alike. Should you have spent the day pounding the pavements in an attempt to soak up the city you can easily grab a tasty treat at the end of your day.



Alternatively, it's an ideal place to enjoy a leisurely lunch before mooching around the nearby stores on Gran Vía. The menu is a mix of Spanish traditional, modern classics and an Asian twist. For instance, we indulged in *croquetas de jamón* (a nod to Spain's finest), but we also had some delectable Japanese style prawns that remained on the plate for all of about 13 seconds.

Next up came a tuna tartare that made us feel slightly more virtuous on the old health front (having polished off some golden, crispy chicken fingers beforehand that were almost wholly responsible for me now reaching for the old spanx). We concluded the sumptuous savoury side of things with a beef tenderloin that was as tasty as any steak that I've sampled in Argentina.



However, what got my pulse racing was the quirky list of cocktails; of which my personal favourite was the rather

novelty named 'De Madrid Al Cielo' – a magical mix of violet flavoured gin, lime juice and egg white – it was as pleasing on the palate as it was on the eye. Speaking of all things aesthetically pleasing, the decor was as lovely as the almond cake that we concluded the evening with.

FROM MADRID TO THE SKY 8,90

If Madrid has something special, it's the spectacular sky it has, and we'll bring it put it on your lips.

Violet and Ginger Gin *

Lime juice

Peppers and Jasmine Orgeat *

Egg white

In a country where sadly the service often leaves a nasty taste in the mouth (anyone else feel like they have to beg for

a bill?!), our server, Cata, deserves a special shout out. Attentive but not overbearing, he asked my friend what her tipple of choice was (gin, I mean she's a Brit, it's in our DNA) and with no questions asked he whipped her up her own personalised cocktail. A nice touch, I'm sure you'll agree.

Caramba, much like other hotspots in the Larumba group, is certainly not a case of style over substance. The food was delish. The cocktails a delight. And the service – the jewel in Caramba's crown.

Caramba Madrid

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-

Satisfaction Guaranteed at Santo Pecado

Among my friends it's no secret that in the summer you can't keep me in. I'm more than happy to play the part of being a social butterfly and my flat is rarely where you'll find me between the months of May to September. But as the temps start to drop and the dark nights draw in, it becomes harder and harder to prise me off the sofa and to step away from the cocoon of scented candles, red wine and of course, Netflix.

But you know, a girl's gotta eat. So when I heard about a new burger place that was literally a mere hop, skip and a jump from where I reside, I switched my pyjamas for a playsuit and headed out on the town.



The place in question was [Santo Pecado](#). At first glance it could easily be dismissed as just another place to grab a burger, but appearances can be deceptive and [Santo Pecado](#) is not your average burger joint. First things first, the owners are serious about the good stuff, aka – the meat. The beef hails from a farm in Toledo and there is nothing remotely McDonalds-esque here about what's between the buns.



All organic and responsibly sourced, the taste of the meat (having been cooked over carbon) was most definitely worth leaving the toasty confines of my casa. Next came the burger toppings. If you're indecisive (quite possibly one of my worst afflictions), trying to decide what was going to delicately rest upon my beaut of a burger was not an easy choice. Along with all your standard options, cheese, bacon and the like – there was foie gras on offer – meaning that you could quite literally pimp your dins so to speak.



Aside from the Toledo hailing beef, Santo Pecado boasts having Wagyu beef on the menu – see, I told you this was pretty far removed from Maccies. My friend assured me that the Wagyu option melted in the mouth and was essentially accountable for us not having room for dessert (although that could also be partly due to us indulging in both nachos and chicken fingers to start – both of which were equally delicious).



The restaurant loving folks of Madrid can be a tough crowd. In these post crisis days (of which we're all grateful for), you really need to have something that little bit special to cut it in an increasingly crowded market place. There are literally more restaurants popping up on a weekly basis in Madders, than Elizabeth Taylor had diamonds. So if you don't have that USP nailed – you'll struggle to survive. The fact that Santo Pecado has taken the humble hamburger and elevated it to gourmet status, suggests to me that they have what it takes.

Again, located in the ever increasingly popular barrio of Chamberí, there's no shortage of nearby bars, making it the ideal place to line your tum before a night of drinking, dancing and debauchery. If good meat equals good times in your language, halt that Netflix binge momentarily and binge on a burger instead.

Santo Pecado

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-

That's Amore at Aió

Following numerous debates, with numerous friends, I've come to the conclusion that Tuesdays are officially THE worst day of the week. Mondays, well, I can just about grin and bear them – especially if you're still all warm and fuzzy from weekend based fun.

But by Tuesday, the forthcoming weekend just feels way out of reach and if you're like me, it's the day when you decide to haul yourself back to the gym – usually after a couple of days of complete over indulgence.

In light of this newly held belief, a good friend of mine suggested that we should always have dinner together on a Tuesday; purely to take the sting out of its tail. **So last Tuesday we found ourselves happily ensconced at [Aió](#), my local Italian in Malasaña that could give any spaghetti serving spot in Sardinia a run for its money.**



To kick off proceedings we both opted for a Negroni to transport us to sunnier days spent in Italy, rather than a somewhat chilly and crisp November evening in Madrid. The spritz alone raised a smile and that was before the eating part of the evening had commenced, of which there was a lot.

Where Italian food is concerned, I can exercise next to no self restraint – suffice to say, we feasted. With such a tempting menu on offer, boasting all the well loved (and well known) classics, it would have been hard not to.



Like many other semi foodies, I've found myself arguing with pretty much every Spaniard on Earth regarding the fiercely coveted title of 'the best cuisine in the world' – because of course, it comes as no surprise that Spaniards (in general) feel that they deserve the crown.



But I beg of you (and please don't kill me for saying so) that in my humble opinion, Italian food is where it's at. Nobody does comfort food better and on a Winters evening, a big bowl of pasta feels like being enveloped in a hearty hug; and I'm all for a cuddle when it's cold.



We split a **burrata** and a **carpaccio** because quite frankly, any good Italian joint worth its salt should be able to deliver deliciousness on both. Aió didn't disappoint, both were inhaled without a second thought in all their luscious, lovely glory.



The starters were followed up with a glorious **gorgonzola based pasta dish that was peppered with prawns and a quattro formaggi pizza** (half of which came home with me in a doggy bag) as my eyes had clearly been bigger than my belly at this point.



Saying that though, is anyone capable of saying no to a cheeky

pud? I'm evidently not, as we rounded off the previously nicknamed 'Bluesday Tuesday' with a **tiramisu** and a **gin tonic** for the road. We left with vows of friendship having being reaffirmed, appetites having been satiated and the edge having been well and truly taken off a potentially terrible Tuesday.

Aiό's charm is found in the home cooked feel of the food and the fizz in their Aperol spritz.

Info

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Also check out a previous [Naked Madrid post on Aiό](#)

Trikki, homemade New Orleans cuisine with family recipes

Trikki restaurant was opened in Chamberí about a year ago by owners Yuliet McQuitty (New Orleans) and Rodolfo Rodriguez (Venezuela), and together they've brought the spirit of New Orleans to the neighborhood. As soon as you walk in, you'll feel a refreshingly down-to-earth ambience and lots of jazz-inspired decor, from drum-shaped lamp shades to drawings of musicians and trumpets on the walls.



Yuliet will graciously greet you and walk you through the whole menu; while each dish will be prepared from scratch by Rodolfo, a.k.a. "the kitchen commander." Everything at Trikki is made from traditional home recipes and select ingredients to bring the authentic flavors of New Orleans to your table.



The menu features all the city's classics: **fried green tomatoes, gumbo, jambalaya, po' boys and the famous bananas foster dessert.** You'll also find a few Venezuelan items sprinkled in there. Since it was our first time trying New Orleans cuisine, Yuliet suggested we order their signature

dishes – all packed with flavor and spices.

Here's how it went down:



We started with a **half-portion of fried green tomatoes**, a delicious introduction to what followed.



Next up was the **gumbo, a hearty New Orleans stew** filled with rice, chicken, sausage, langoustine and so many other delicious ingredients. What stood out to me the most was the okra – I don't think I've ever had okra in Madrid.



Then we had the ultimate **jambalaya**. This rice dish is on the spicy side, so Yuliet recommends people try it on their second visit to Trikki, unless you like a little kick to your meal. It turned out to be James' favorite dish of the night.



Yuliet also said a true New Orleans experience wouldn't be complete without trying one of the Po' boys, which are essentially gigantic sandwiches. We ordered the one with soft-shell crab, lettuce, tomato and a special sauce. So good.



Needless to say, we had a full-on feast! So when we got to the homemade dessert section, we ordered what seemed like the lightest option: *quesillo*, a typical Venezuelan dessert that's similar to flan with a hint of lime.

On our next visit we'll save room for the New Orleans's classic: bananas foster, served on a dish that they flambé right in front of you. We did get the chance to watch the pyrotechnics at the table next to us, however, and it looked amazing!

Here's a pic of the bananas foster from Trikki's [instagram](#) so you get the idea.



So when it comes down to it, Trikki's concept is rather simple: home recipes, traditional ingredients and Southern hospitality, which makes for a great combination. Just make sure to go with a good appetite and friends who like to try new dishes and flavors.

Trikki

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