

Greek and Shop in Malasaña

If you frequently find yourself in Malasaña, it will only be a matter of time before the *bocadillos* in the window of Greek and Shop seduce you into a Grecian gastronomical experience. They're displayed so darn nicely and no matter what time of day – or night – they never fail to look appetizing.

Located in the heart of hipsterville (i.e. the barrio of Malasaña), Greek and Shop offers an array of Greek specialities in a bright, metropolitan locale. Take your pick from the bevy of options scrawled on the chalkboard behind the register. Here you'll find the likes of moussaka, gyros, and *bocadillos* filled with foodstuffs of the Mediterranean.





Plump chunks of chicken spiced with curry make up the meat of the **Andros bocadillo** (no pun intended), pictured above. Warm cheese and spicy arugula make it complete, and juicy sun-dried tomatoes impart a delectable tanginess. The hearty seed bread gives the sandwich the overall impression of wholesomeness. Reasonably priced at **3.50€**, the bocadillo is filling, but nevertheless, you might not be ready for it to end.



Sit at one of the high stools in the store and find yourself surrounded by jars of olives and artichokes. A multitude of treats and sweets such as halvah and baklava are never uncomfortably out of reach. You'll find that the tables are stocked with reading material if you are so inclined. Alternatively, the mustachioed passersby on Corredera Alta de San Pablo provide live people-watching entertainment.



No matter the time of day – breakfast, lunch, or dinner – [Greek and Shop](#) is bound to have something to whet your appetite. They have late-night eats covered too. A convenient take-out window opens up on the side of the shop for the night owl crowd. This may be a particularly apt time to give the super creamy, slightly zippy Greek yogurt ice cream a try. Just a suggestion.

Greek and Shop

- [Facebook](#)
- *Where: Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 9*
- *Metro: Tribunal*

Also check out: [Egeo, our go-to Greek restaurant in Lavapiés](#)

The Table By: A new gastronomic concept to bring restaurants from across Spain (including chefs and utensils) to Madrid!

[The Table: a new gastronomic concept](#)

Over the next six months, six leading restaurants from across Spain will come to Madrid for one month at a time. Along with them, they'll be bringing their very own dishes, cuisine, local products and chefs to offer a truly unique gastronomic experience in the heart of the Spanish capital. [The Table](#) calls itself a pop-up restaurant, although it's much

more; it is a new gastronomic adventure that is taking the idea of “pop-up” to a whole new level.

THE TABLE

BY

ABASTOS 2.0



Image from: [The Table By](#)

The Team: [Better](#)

[Better](#) is the young and creative team behind [The Table](#). An unconventional agency that organizes pop up markets and events, Better's projects have one thing in common: they are unique, creative and innovative. On this occasion, Better is creating **The Table** in collaboration with Hotel Urso and Alejandra Anson, Director of Elite Gourmet. Together they have brought a new concept to Madrid.

The Place: [Hotel Urso](#)



Image from: [URSO Hotel & Spa Madrid](#)

Located in the center of Madrid, [Hotel Urso](#) opened its doors in August and its building dates from 1915. Urso was a fine choice to host such an event, as it is one of the most

beautiful hotels I have ever seen.

The Idea: Bring a whole restaurant to Madrid

The core idea behind **The Table** is essentially common – hotels invite star chefs to their kitchens all the time. However, Better has gone even further, as they thought: **Why only bring a chef when you can bring the whole restaurant?**

The Table invites restaurants to come to Madrid for a month to serve their dishes while using their own utensils and products, as well as promote their region's cuisine. What's more, the team at Better visits the original restaurant prior to the event to get inspiration from its surroundings and decorate the space at Hotel Urso accordingly. So it's as if you were transported to a restaurant in Galicia, Bilbao, Barcelona, Cantabria

What's on now: Abastos 2.0 from Galicia

For this first event, **The Table** is recreating Galicia. Until November 23rd, you can enjoy authentic dishes by two young Galician chefs, Marcos Cerqueiro and Iago Pazos, from [Abastos 2.0](#), a restaurant that has three locations: Taberna, Galphón and 0 Loxe.



The decor is also original, elegant and minimalist.



For this first occasion, the team bought bottles, buckets, plates, etc., and pasted them to the wall to reflect different cultural traits of the region.

Abastos is located in the wonderful city of **Santiago de Compostela**. Their kitchen is 100% Galician, and so is the wine. You'll notice that the products they use are not only fresh but also completely authentic. Here in Madrid, at Hotel Urso, you'll find yourself eating the same fish from the same fishmonger that the restaurant uses back home in Galicia, as they made sure to get it delivered to Madrid for The Table.



This is a “recogedor de migas de pan” (a crumb duster), the original one that the restaurant uses in their galician restaurant.

Galicia’s cuisine is known for its “materia prima” (raw material) which is why the tasting menu focuses on just a few star ingredients from the region, such as octopus (pulpo), pan gallego (Galician bread), and marisco (seafood). The restaurant has prepared two typically Galician tasting menus for the event. The first menu consists of **9 dishes (45€)** and the second, **12 dishes (60€)**. Wine is not included.

So, friends, if you want to enjoy a bit of different Spanish cuisine, do not miss out on **The Table**.

We will let you know about future restaurants, but we’ll give you a hint now: the next event is scheduled for December and will be Basque-inspired..

Details:

Make a reservation at [The Table](#)

[URSO Hotel & Spa](#)

Location: Mejía Lequerica, 8

Metro: Chueca or Tribunal

Dating in Madrid for Foodies, part 3

Covered some art, some nice trees and parks but really **you are a foodie deep down inside**. If your stomach is empty you are not going anywhere except for the next all-you-can-eat buffet. The route is a collection of little restaurants to enjoy the tapas culture that exists in Madrid. Not going to beat around the bush, **this is my preferred type of date**. I love food and talking about food. It is also nearly impossible to not talk about food, what food your mother always cooked or what local delicacies freaked out your foreign friends the first time you told them the recipe.

This route is also the most flexible and varied. I have named some of **my favourite restaurants** below, which I have visited frequently and allow for some bites to eat without having to order the coffee and dessert. Go for **3 relatively different restaurants**, not only makes it more exciting for your taste buds but it will give you a lot more to talk about. Now it might seem strange to invite someone to 3 different restaurants rather than just have the 3 courses at one.

However, we don't want this to be a regular run of the mill date; this has to be more memorable and make you change from place to place. Plus it makes splitting the bill so much less awkward as you can pay the first bill, your date then gets the next and dessert will be handled by the organiser. After all, if you make it to dessert you will want to leave a good impression.

ACT ONE. The Starter. Naïf.



Image from [Naïf's FB](#)

[Naïf in Calle San Joaquin 16](#) <m> Tribunal

This restaurant, just like your attitude to the first date, is understated and cool; not trying too hard to impress and it has a terrace. You will want to ask the waiter to put you on the waiting list if the terrace is full. For extra brownie points you will do this 10 minutes before you expect your date to arrive so you already have a table waiting for him/her. The starters I recommend would be the **mini hamburgers** (that arrive multicoloured) as well as **the hummus**. All the starters are very nice and not too large. One quick warning—please do not

order the white wine, as me and my friends have never had a positive experience. **Red wine** and **Tinto de Verano** (red wine mixed with lemonade) are both great alternatives.



Image from [Nanai's FB](#)

Alternative: [Nänai in Calle Barco 26](#) <m> Tribunal

No terrace but also has a very alternative, understated and cool interior to start your date. Have 7 dishes to share with the **tztaziki**, **cheese selection** and **hummus**, all ideal choices to start the dinner experience. This bar will be exhibiting different works of art in their restaurant during the month.

ACT TWO: The Main Course. Olé Lola or Mercado de San Anton

Honestly both options are just as great. It depends on what you want for your date, if you prefer some intimacy then choose **Olé Lola** if you prefer variety and greater stimulus of the senses choose the **Mercado** (which has a great rooftop bar).



Image from Olé Lola on [google](#)

[Olé Lola in Calle de San Mateo 28](#) <m> Tribunal & Alonso
Martínez

This restaurant/bar is a very popular place on weekends so try to arrive a little earlier than 21h. The brilliant reason to go to this restaurant is how the chefs are fusing the traditional Spanish kitchen with more contemporary elements, my favourite being the **duck breast served with a puree of pear and pistachio**. The dishes range between €6 – 14 and are not too large in size to miss out on dessert. Adding the good selection of wines on offer, this restaurant boasts many advantages. Yet this still isn't the best reason to visit. The interior of **Olé Lola** makes it very easy for couples to have a little privacy. Small tables all situated one after another means you don't have someone left or right listening in on your conversation.



[Mercado de San Anton in Calle de Augusto Figueroa 24](#) <m>
Chueca

Here you have the hustle and bustle of a market with everyone looking for the right tapas to suit their appetite. The choice of food is enormous and if you are unsure of your date's culinary likes and dislikes, then this is the safer choice. Plus it is exciting; you can start with some sushi, move onto a **burrata** (mozzarella), head to a **salmon sandwich** and finish with **jamón**. The different stalls on the 2nd floor offer a great variety and it also induces some energy, as you have to get up off the table.

FINAL ACT. Dessert.



Image from [La Cocina de mi Vecina's FB](#)

[La cocina de mi vecina in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo](#)
[15](#) <m> Tribunal

Our final destination is specifically geared towards delicious cakes, brownies and cookies. The **carrot cake** is one of the best that I have had in Madrid and all cakes are homemade. The service is friendly and helpful to make a recommendation if you can't choose.



Image from [Greek&Shop's FB](#)

Alternative: [Greek&Shop in Calle Corredera alta de San Pablo 9](#) <m> Tribunal

This Greek delicacy shop offers a brilliant Greek nut tart or *kataifi*, also a Greek dessert made of nuts and cream. The shop is a mix between a take away and a sit-down shop, so sitting inside is an experience in itself.

If you've missed them, here's "Madrid Best Date Ideas", the series, [part 1](#) and [part 2](#)

Sumo, this Japanese

restaurant's name says it all

Eighteen packed punches of flavor... three rounds... **This Japanese restaurant near metro Bilbao** will have you scrambling to the finish line and gasping for air, making you and your friends feel like sumo wrestlers. Dining at Sumo is an experience.



oooh.... the lamb chops

If you've ever been to [Kintaro](#), an all-you-can-eat Japanese/Chinese buffet we wrote about in a previous post, you'll find that [Sumo](#) has a similar vibe, leaving you with the same overly-full feeling without taking too big a bite out of your wallet. However, at Sumo, all this comes with better

quality food, friendlier service and a nicer atmosphere.



If you pass the sushi bar, you'll find an enormous dining room providing space for plenty of hungry eaters

One of the reasons why [Sumo](#) is so unique is that you can have a 3-course meal consisting of 18 dishes. Yes, you heard correctly. That's 18 dishes. Plus it's inexpensive and you have tons of options, ranging from sushi and soups to salad and rice dishes. All this will cost you **13,50€** (lunch, Mon-Friday) and **15€** (dinner, Mon-Thurs) and **17,95€** (Fri night-Sun). Although Sumo's dishes are delicious, we dare you to eat 18 of them, as portions are not skimpy.



My favorite are the tuna and avocado rolls. Anything with avocado actually.

You should know that Sumo's ordering process can be a little complicated. Your table gets one sheet of paper with three columns and a list of numbers for each dish on the menu that you tick to order. Everyone orders three times (6 dishes per round) using the same sheet of paper.

This seemingly hectic procedure will become a piece of cake (or a piece of sushi) in time. We've developed a system in which one person is appointed scribe (make sure he or she is up to the challenge) and then each person can start out by calling out his or her smallest number, then if someone else hears the same number, the repeated dish can be jotted down. Final check is also done to ensure the number of dishes is correct before turning it into the waiter.



Steamed dumplings... a must



So many choices of sushi! Good thing you have 18 chances to find your favorite...

By the third round (that is, if we make it to the third round), we usually can't order all six dishes. Our friend, Edison, has a great technique to make it all the way—during the last round he orders salads and small, light dishes such as *navajas* (razor clams) and *mejillones* (mussels). I, on the other hand, start off with salad and make sure to include at least three light dishes in every round.



Seaweed salad, also a great lighter dish to order at Sumo

A few more things you should know about Sumo—there's a **2€ penalty for any plate left uneaten** (it can be half finished, don't worry). While you may find this annoying (as did our friend, Kyle, who was really ticked off about that), it does make sense. You shouldn't order all 18 dishes if you know you can't finish them, as it really is a waste of food. So, if by the third round, you've already had 12 dishes and your stomach tells you that you can only have two more, then just order two more. You will still feel like you got what you're paying for, trust me.

Lastly, if the 18-dish menu is too daunting, you can order individual dishes off the menu, which cost from 3-8€ each. But if you do that, the whole table has to follow suit. You can't have one person at the table ordering the 18-dish menu, and others not (no sharing nor taking away allowed). It's all or nothing. Again, Kyle found this to be very irritating, but I get it. It wouldn't be very economical for the restaurant, nor would you feel like a sumo wrestler...

Up until now, I've had the pleasure of going to Sumo twice, although Edison goes so often with friends that he's on a first-name basis with the owner. It's a great place to take people with **gigantic appetites** and those who enjoy new gastronomic experiences. It's hands down one of our favorite restaurants in Madrid.

Info

[Web](#) – [Facebook](#) – [Twitter](#)

Address: c/ Fuencarral 116

Phone: 910864497

[Reserve online](#)

Restaurant Hours: Sun-Thurs 13:00-00:30, Fri/Sat/Holidays
13:00-01:00

Sushi Bar Hours: 16:30-19:30

More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:

- [Ramen Kagura, Madrid's \(almost\) perfect ramen bar](#)
- [Kintaro – Oy Vey](#)
- [Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food](#)
- [Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant](#)
- [Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.](#)
- [Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!](#)
- [Soy Kitchen – a fusion of Asian flavors](#)
- [Karachai – A cozy and elegant Thai restaurant in Alonso Martínez](#)

Best Cafe-bookshops in Madrid, Round 1!

Coffee shops selling books? Bookshops selling coffee? However you call them, here are five wonderful café-bookshops in Madrid where you can enjoy a cup of coffee or a glass of wine while surrounded by good reads. (See [round two](#) for more!)

1. [Ocho y Medio Libros de Cine](#)



This charming bookshop (featured in the cover photo) specializes in cinema, and boasts a cozy café and outdoor

seating area. I love going here for a drink and a *tosta* right before [seeing a film](#) at one of the independent movie theaters just across the street. All screenings are in original version with Spanish subtitles. A tip: this makes for a great date night!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Martín de los Heros, 11
- **Metro:** Plaza de España

Also read: [Where to enjoy good film in Madrid](#)

2. [La Libre](#)



This is my mom's favorite cafe in Madrid. Why? Because a few years ago while she was visiting me in the dead of winter, we went in to warm up after a visit to the [Reina Sofia Museum](#) around the corner. When she ordered a coffee, the server said, **"No ma'am, I think you need a whisky."** He couldn't have been more right! They also have nice teas and snacks to nibble on, from breakfast pastries to empanadas.

- [Facebook](#)

- **Address:** c/ Argumosa, 39
- **Metro:** Atocha

3. La Infinito



This little café-bookshop lies on a corner in Lavapiés and serves up coffee, books and art on a daily basis. Not only does it have a welcoming ambience and lots of light streaming in through its tall glass windows, but it also throws great events, from **micro-theater performances** (one of which took place in the café's bathroom!) to popular weekend brunches.

- *image from La Infinito*
- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ Tres Peces, 22
- **Metro:** Antón Martín & Lavapiés

4. La Fugitiva



Books are the centrepiece at this cafe, and I love how its window seats and tiny bar are nestled between towering bookshelves and overflowing tables displaying bestsellers and rare reads. La Fugitiva has all you need from a café (coffee

and sweets) and all you could ask of a bookstore – readings, talks, workshops, and of course, that distinct smell of books.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** c/ de Santa Isabel, 7
- **Metro:** Antón Martín

5. Tipos Infames. Libros y Vinos





Wine and books? Quite a killer combination in my opinion. Located right off the popular Calle Fuencarral, this trendy bookshop, café and wine bar is a favorite of many in Malasaña. Tipos Infames offers a much appreciated rest from the bustling shops and streets in the area. It has a lot of seating area, a full bar and high ceilings, making it feel open, friendly and comfortable. It's a great place to go with friends for a quieter conversation in the afternoon. Plus they throw fun events, so make sure to follow them on social media.

- [Facebook](#)
- Address: c/ San Joaquín, 3
- Metro: Tribunal

Keep reading Round 2 of Madrid's Best Cafe-bookshops

And if you're looking for a few of our favorite cafe in Madrid *without* books:

- [Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think](#)
- [Toma Café, fuel up, feel hip](#)

- [Acid Café, seasonal, minimalist and just good coffee](#)
-

San Ildefonso Market, Malasaña's new food palace

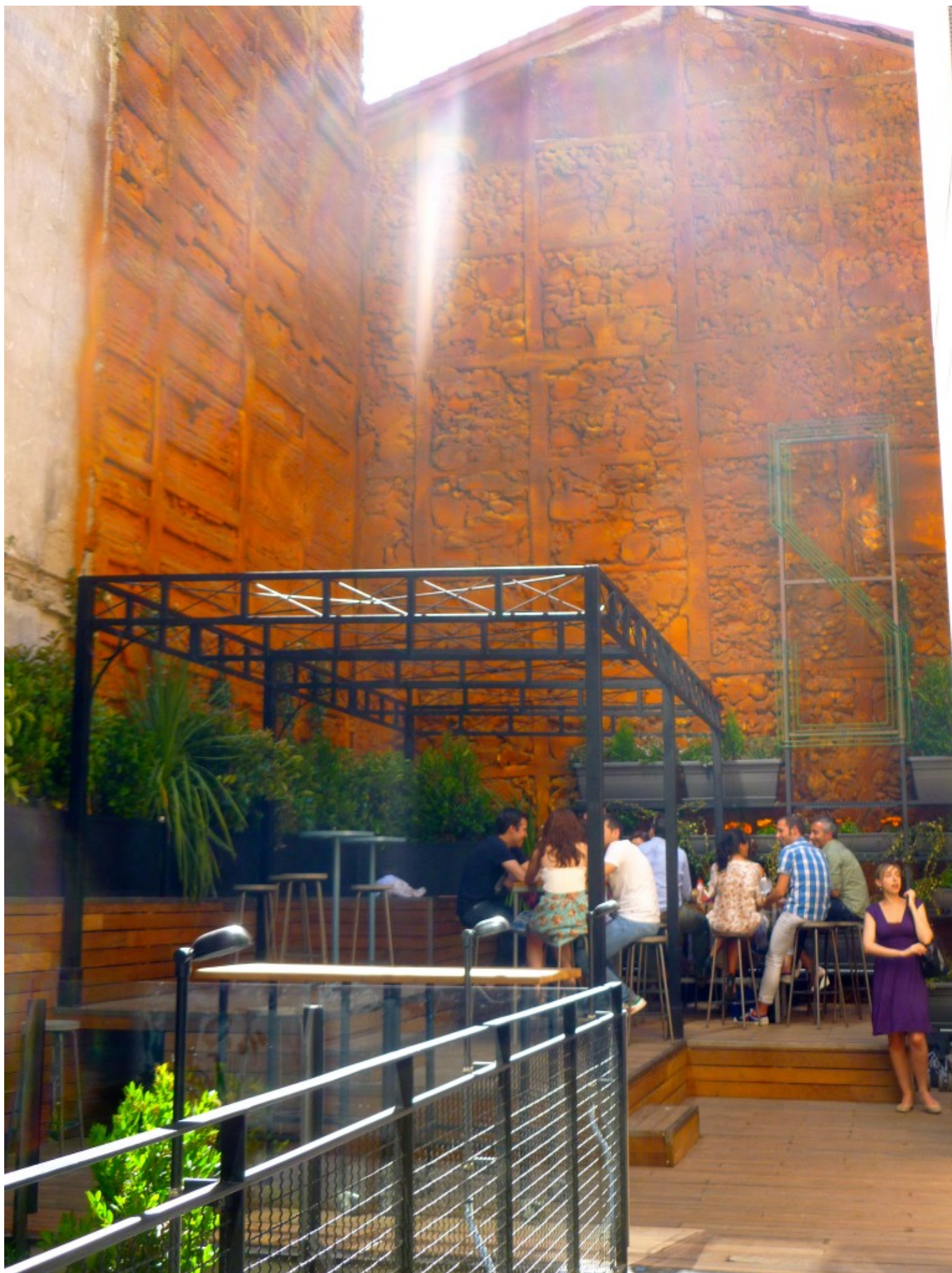
[Mercado del San Ildefonso](#), a three-story food emporium, has just opened on calle Fuencarral, 57, in Madrid's trendy area of **Malasaña**. Its open architecture and urban design are so cool that I think this market is already looking as good, if not better than Madrid's other amazing food markets—Mercado de San Antón and Mercado de San Miguel. Here's a look!

As you enter you find food stalls and a few stools. And then...





As you walk up to the second floor, you'll find a cozy outdoor seating area sandwiched between the market's neighbouring buildings.




On this floor you can delight in little food stalls serving up simple dishes, such as croquettes, meat skewers, seafood and

more. At the tables you can look up to see beams, lights and windows.

Va de Gamba

Le Croquetier

myVeg 

GRANJA
DP1
TAITE







On the top floor there's a full bar which also gives you views to the floors down below. You've just gotta go!



Here's the facade, since it's not as pretty on the outside, we've saved this photo for last...



[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Fuencarral, 57

Metro: Gran Vía and Tribunal

If you are into food, markets and eating outdoors, here are some other posts you might like:

- [Lavapiés and its market, the real food emporium](#)
- [Mercado de Motors, Madrid's coolest monthly market](#)
- [Madrid's best rooftop bars](#)
- [Beer state of mind in Madrid \(best craft beer\)](#)
- [Top 4 swimming pools](#)

Best Gifts from Madrid

Buying gifts for friends and family in Madrid can be a difficult task. Pretty much everything can be found everywhere nowadays. I often see the same Spanish brand names and products when I walk around my neighborhood in New York. So I think to myself, why did I even bother lugging that bottle of *Marqués de Riscal* all across the ocean? If you find yourself faced with this same problem (and not inclined to buy your mom a keychain or a magnet), here's a list of well thought-out **gift ideas from Madrid**. Hope it helps!

First let's quickly name some of the **more obvious gift ideas**, which are also good but run the risk of being found in your hometown (scroll down if you're all too familiar with these):

Handheld fans, flamenco shawls, ceramic tiles and dishes, paella pans, recipe books, aprons with a flamenco dancer or the flag of Spain, **football/soccer jersey, wine, cured ham and sweets** with long shelf-lives such as *mazapán*, *turron* and *polvorones* (can be bought at [El Riojano](#) or [Casa Mira](#), two very traditional pastry shops in the city center) or a **swiss army/pocket knife** (best from Toledo but also sold in Plaza Mayor). While it's always best to buy these items from independent sellers (which you will find below), if you're pressed for time you can find absolutely everything at **El Corte Inglés**, the country's major department store with locations all around.

Now let's move on to the **more original gift ideas**:

1. Anything from La Violeta



La Violeta is a candy shop located in the center of Madrid. It must be included in this list because it is a typical place **where Madrileños buy gifts for other Madrileños**. *Las violetas* are purple-colored sucking candies wrapped in pretty little boxes and ribbon. You can buy them plain or *escarchadas*, meaning sugar-coated. You can also find *cajas de bombones* (boxes of chocolates) and many other sweet treats. Prices range from **€5** to **€15**.

[Web](#)

Address: Plaza de Canalejas, 6

Metro: Sol and Sevilla

2. Saffron or a pack of mixed Spanish spices for anyone who likes to cook

My sister, Amanda, actually gave me this idea. Her boyfriend's family is originally from the Basque Country. Her father-in-law loves little trinkets from Spain and also makes **paella** every year for the whole family. So she had the bright idea of buying him a pack of **azafrán** (saffron). **Yes, saffron!** It costs

peanuts in comparison to what it costs in the States. She bought it at **Corte Inglés** and he was over the moon when he received it. For non-purists, you can also buy **sachets**, which is a bag of mixed Spanish spices, also used **for making paella**. Anyone who likes to cook will enjoy this gift!

3. Berets; can be bought at a charming century-old hat shop right in Plaza Mayor



Founded in 1894, Madrid's oldest hat shop—[La Favorita C.B.](#)—is now in the hands of its family's fourth generation. It remains in its original location in Plaza Mayor and sells all types of traditional Spanish hats that make for fun and useful gifts. Amanda gave me this idea too. She bought a **black beret** for her stylish sister-in-law which cost €19. Although the black beret is traditionally worn in the Basque Country, where it's called

a **Boina**, it very well looked like it could have been bought at Top Shop. I'm sure anyone could rock this look in any city around the world, and they'd have a nice story to tell when someone asked them where they bought it.



[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: Plaza Mayor, 25

Metro: Sol or Opera

4. Chocolate for dipping churros; can be bought at the famous Chocolatería San Gines (near Sol)

In Spanish, this is simply called **chocolate a la taza** or **chocolate *caliente***. However, for English-speakers this can be quite confusing—this is not just hot chocolate. It refers to the thick chocolate that you **dip churros** into. When my husband's relatives from California were visiting, they bought bags and bags of this chocolate as a present for all their friends back home. It was a hit! And it's not exclusive for dipping *churros*, you can also use it for dipping

strawberries, bananas—anything you like! You can buy it in bags by the kilo at Madrid's most famous churros shop, **Chocolatería San Ginés**, open 24/7 and just a stone's throw from Sol.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: Pasadizo de San Gines, 5

Metro: Sol

5. Peseta; for millions of small gift ideas made in Madrid, using fabrics from around the world (in Malasaña)



Named after Spain's former currency—**las pesetas**—this charming store was founded by Laura Martínez del Pozo around ten years ago. She collects fabrics from all over the world and uses them to make unique, creative and very handy items, from **tablet** and **laptop cases** to **handbags** and **wallets**. They even sell beautiful shoes, also typical from Spain—**espadrilles** and **alpargatas**—though with a nice twist as the fabric is a hundred

percent unique. Seeing as these everyday items are useful for everyone, you're sure to find great gifts here.



You can also find Peseta's products sold at an awesome book store and cafe near Callao called [La Central](#), which will talk more about below.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Noviciado, 9

Metro: Noviciado

6. Summer shoes; can be found in stores everywhere (also in Peseta)



alpargatas at the top and mallorquinas at the bottom

Esparto (espadrilles), **alpargatas** and **mallorquinas** are the **three most popular summer shoe styles** originating from Spain. All can be found in any colour and in any standard shoe store (the center is littered with typical shoe stores, especially around **Plaza Mayor** and **Calle Carmen** which is right off of Sol). The latter two styles are unisex, so you're bound to find something for both your male and female friends and family. Since Spain is well-known for its amazing shoes, why not wow them with some Spanish summer footwear they can strut around their own city in style? Plus you don't have to limit yourself to the traditional ones. You can find snazzier versions too. You can also check out our post on "[3 Places to Find Espadrilles in Madrid](#)" for more recommendations.



This photo is from a new store called [Alpargatus](#) which is located just off of Plaza Mayor on Calle Postas. They have all types of *alpargatas*, *espadrilles* and *mallorquinas*, plus other souvenirs. It's really convenient.

[Facebook](#)

Address: *C/ Postas, 20 (just a few steps away from Plaza Mayor)*

Metro: *Sol or Opera*

Or check out another post of ours dedicated solely to espadrilles: "[3 Places to Find Espadrilles in Madrid](#)"

8. Traditional gloves with silk lining from 100-year-old glove shop in Sol

Just a note—I couldn't get a photo because the owner closed the shop for the whole weekend to go to Lisbon and watch the football match...

Believe it or not, Spain still has entire shops dedicated solely to **gloves**! One of Madrid's most well-known and oldest glove shops is called [Guañtes Luque](#), nestled between the streets of Sol and Sevilla. Entering the shop is an experience in and of itself. These elegant gloves take you back to

another era, when items were not mass produced and were meant to last a lifetime. Understandably on the **expensive** side, these traditional **Spanish gloves** are not only beautiful, but have silk lining which is a godsend in winter.

No web, but they're on [Yelp](#)

Address: c/ Espoz y Mina, 3

Metro: Sol, Gran Vía or Sevilla

7. Gift Basket – 3 simple and delicious ingredients



image from gastronosfera.com

When I asked around for good gift ideas, one expat said that he always brings home a basket of 3 items: **pimientos de piquillo** (roasted red peppers), **aceitunas campo reales** (olives) and a really fancy **aceite de oliva** (olive oil). After speaking with many foreigners living in Spain, it became clear that **campo real olives** are a major hit among the gift-giving crowd. Though if you don't like olives, you can always replace them with a bottle of wine (my favorite red is **Ribera** and my favorite white is **Albariño**), a box of **marzipan** from Toledo or

sweets from **La Violeta** (mentioned #1).

Where to buy: while you can buy these items all over the city and of course at **El Corte Inglés**, we recommend you go to [Mercado de Antón Martín](#) or [Mercado de San Fernando](#). These markets are very traditional, unlike many of the others that have become over-priced and over-touristy. You can also go to Qué Rico Tó, mentioned #2 on this list.

Mercado de Antón Martín

[Facebook](#)

Address: C/ Santa Isabel, 5

Metro: Antón Martín

Mercado de San Fernando

[Facebook](#)

Address: C/ Embajadores, 41

Metro: Lavapiés or Embajadores

8. Spanish Comic Books



For your alternative or comic-book loving friends, a **Spanish comic** could be a really cool gift. It's always fun to read comics in other languages, especially because the drawings and images help you figure out the story. But of course this gift isn't for everyone. The above photo is of [El Coleccionista](#), a well-known **comic shop in Lavapiés** with a wide collection. My sister, Amanda (also in the photo), bought a few rare books for her friends here. When I asked Amanda if I could include her photo in this article, she said of course—she'd be happy to support any type of independent shop like this one which make up the backbone of a city's personality and charm. I've also just found out that one of the world's best comic stores is located in Madrid too, it's called [Akira Comics](#) and is located a bit further out in the city.

[El Coleccionista](#)

Address: C/ Tribulete, 5

9. Second-hand books with personality from Desperate Literature



At [Desperate Literature](#), a new international bookstore located in the center of Madrid (close to the Royal Palace), you can find good quality used books in English, Spanish and French, many of which are related to Spain and can make for a great, personalized gift. Also, this bookstore has a nice story behind it, as its three young owners—Michael, Corey and Craig—have opened used international bookstores in Santorini,

Greece and in Brooklyn, New York. With the recent opening of Desperate Literature in Madrid, they aim to provide a literary haven for travellers, expats and Madrileños alike. [Here's a long article on Desperate Literature.](#)

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

Address: c/ Campomanes, 13

Metro: Santo Domingo and Opera

10. New books and much more from a La Central, an ultra hip bookstore/cafe near Callao



While my first suggestion would be to go to Desperate Literature, if you're looking for all kinds of new books in

Spanish (i.e. children's, novels, poetry, you name it) or other gift ideas such as **board games, notebooks and fun nicknacks**, then this is the store you should be going to.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: Postigo de San Martín 8

Metro: Callao

11. Trinkets from a Funky Madrid Gift Shop called Curiosity

As far as gift shops go, this one is quite original. At [Curiosity](#), you can get maps of Malasaña and Chueca for €12, which look great framed, as well as tons of other fun little *tchotchkes*. This gift is recommended for someone who has lived or spent a good amount of time in Madrid.

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)

Address: c/ Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 28

Metro: Tribunal

Any other gift ideas? Please share! We'll be happy to add more to this list ☐

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

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 **squash empanada** could be so incredible?



We also ordered ***pollo a la milanese*** (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 milanese*** (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

[Aiό](#), a wonderful Italian restaurant in Malasaña serving home cooked Sardinian food and providing a haven for Madrid's bikers!