

# Mamá Campo: A restaurant-market of organic delights in Plaza de Olavide

Plaza de Olavide is one of Madrid's hidden gems. Situated in the heart of Chamberí between the Iglesia, Bilbao, and Quevedo Metro stops, it's a perfect place to sit on spring days or balmy summer nights. This leads me to [Mamá Campo](#), another one of those places I discovered thanks to an exquisite brunch photo on the Cup of couple Instagram account. Mamá Campo has an organic market as well as a restaurant and children's store/center.

The Mamá Campo restaurant serves all ecological products, epitomizing the eco trend all over the city. One Friday in between doctor's appointments, interviews, and private lessons, I took advantage of the first of many sunny Madrid spring days to FINALLY get a chance to eat lunch at [Mamá Campo](#).



The décor inside the restaurant is very cool. There's reusable wood and other products, making you feel one with nature. There are communal tables (where I sat as I was flying solo), very reminiscent of Le Pain Quotidien, as well as normal tables for groups of friends. The best part about sitting at the communal table was being perched high above on the stool (especially choice for taking pictures with my iPhone).





As for for choice of dish, I ordered a grilled sea bass filet with sorted vegetables. I was also given an aperitivo of salmorejo with some delicious whole-wheat bread. I was extremely satisfied with my choice and can't wait for my next visit.

But, like I said, the magic of Mamá Campo isn't just that it's a restaurant. The market, on the part of Calle Trafalgar more towards the Bilbao Metro stop just off of Olavide, has a great selection of products to enjoy at home.



As you walk in, the whole left wall is full of a whole range of produce. You can also buy a sample of organic breads that look absolutely amazing, as well as bio embutidos, sauces, rice milk, almond, coconut milk, and more.





The aesthetic is very similar to the restaurant, with minimalist painting on the walls, splashes of color, wooden cartons to store all of the produce (as you can see here), and classic woven baskets to store your wares. And it looks like that this could have been kale...



which for this New Yorker is definitely great news if kale can be found.

The next time you discover Olavide on a sunny day and are looking for some organic produce or a delicious, sustainable meal, then Mamá Campo is your go-to place in this little hidden rincón of Madrid.

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

*Restaurante Mamá Campo*

*Plaza de Olavide*

*28010 MADRID*

***Metro:*** *Iglesia, Bilbao, or Quevedo*

*Tel.: 91 447 41 38*

*Mamá Campo*

*Calle Trafalgar, 22*

*28010 MADRID*



# Salón des Fleurs – Flowers, Tea, and Vintage, Oh My!

Every day is Spring inside [Salón des Fleurs](#). Step inside this quaint store that doubles as a **florist and tea room**, with a side of vintage products, and breathe in the fresh smell of flowers that are carefully displayed throughout the space.



Twinkling lights adorn the large paneled windows, adding to the charm of this café, if you could even call it simply that. Bright pink, red, and orange flowers are displayed outside

next to small tables for those wanting to soak up the sun in good weather.



Sink into one of the comfy armchairs as you consider the all-encompassing tea list. There is nothing standard about the menu at *Salón des Fleurs*, descriptors such as “black tea,” and “green tea” are merely side notes offered to try to explain the flavoring of such teas as *Apple Pie*, *Cookie*, and *Champagne and Strawberries*. Coffee is offered too, but with such exotic tea flavors, why bother?





Served in beautiful painted mugs, the tea puts your morning Earl Grey to shame. If you're looking for a side treat to indulge in, [Salón des Fleurs](#) offers cakes and desserts also, including a two-layered fluffy carrot cake topped with rich cream cheese frosting.

Once you have savored your tea as long as possible, explore the rest of the store a bit. There is more than meets the eye, and you might find yourself discovering little quirks throughout the store, such as the multiple clocks in unusual places, all displaying a different time.





A spiral staircase leads to an upstairs vintage section, while the downstairs is more dedicated to the flowers, with a florist freshly cutting stems.

Like their alluring tea selection, [Salón des Fleurs](#) offers a variety of flowers, in bright colors, in pots, long stemmed; come here for any occasion and you won't regret it. Don't need flowers? Browse the vintage section or warm up with a mug of tea, any excuse to visit this charming spot will do.



## Salón des Fleurs

[Web](#) & [Facebook](#)

**Where:** Guzman el Bueno, 106

**Phone:** 915 35 23 48

**Prices:** Tea, €2.6

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## Eating Our Way through Huertas with Devour Tours

On a recent chilly Saturday morning, James and I set out on one of the city's best ranked activities, Devour Tours. I had never been on a food-inspired tour before, let alone in a city whose food culture I'm quite familiar with. Yet the chance to meet local honey and jam specialists, indulge in chocolate-soaked figs and hop from butchers' shops to tapas bars while learning historical tidbits did indeed change the way I look at the city I've called home for the past seven years.







While [Devours Tours](#) offers a bunch of different gastronomic routes throughout the city, we went on the one I consider the most enticing – [Huertas Neighborhood Food & Market Tour](#). The home of the tour was Barrio de las Letras, a central neighborhood named after the famous Spanish writers who once resided, scribbled and drank together there in the 1600's, such as Cervantes, Lope de Vega and Quevedo.

Those of us who live here today know the neighborhood as Huertas, coined after the bar-filled street that runs through it. Unlike many areas surrounding Sol or Plaza Mayor, this barrio upholds a charming and unchanged spirit thanks to its thriving delicatessens, tapas bars and traditional markets. Offerings of old and new spins on local cuisine await you as you walk through its gorgeous cobble-stoned streets. And Devour Tours will let you in on all its secrets.



Our tour guide, James Blick, was not only an expert on Madrid's history and food scene, but also made each and every person on the tour – which consisted of a young Scandinavian couple, two parents from Alabama visiting their daughter on her semester abroad and a group of middle-aged women from Ireland – feel comfortable by asking personal questions, encouraging conversation and creating a wonderful vibe throughout the three-and-a-half-hour event.

I also want to note that my husband, also James, doesn't like cheese (weird, I know) and had told the guys at Devour Tours beforehand. His eyes lit up as he saw a plate of cured meat awaiting him at the cheese tasting, showing how they clearly make it a point to accommodate different tastes and dietary needs.





James (the tour guide) also engaged in friendly chit chat with all the local market vendors and shop owners – something quintessentially Spanish, I must add. Wherever we stopped for a story and a bite, James knew the locals by name and the stories behind their businesses; those close-knit relationships make the tour truly delightful and offer insight into the city's day-to-day life. This kind of rapport and insider know-how can only be attained with a great deal of time and care.



Overall it was clear how much attention was put into designing this tour; every detail was planned to perfection, from the food portions and variety to the timing and storytelling. We had more than enough tapas to fill us all up, yet paced and served up just right so we never felt too full to keep us from walking or having a few more bites at the next stop!





Since I don't want to give too much away, I'll have to wrap things up here. The last thing I'll note is that I had walked by absolutely every place we visited on the tour on many occasions. Most of these places I had never stopped to think about nor even enter.

Now I know that as I stroll along the streets I often frequent such as Calle Huertas and Calle Leon, I'll see a different side of my adopted city. I'll also enjoy a handful of new eateries that are now going straight to the top of my list.



Madrid's best Italian restaurant is not in the likeliest of places.





So whether you're coming through Madrid for a weekend or already live here, let Devour Tours show you around for a few hours, especially if you're a foodie like me! Buen provecho!

**To book a tour or read some of their tips on where to find the best food in the city, check out [Devour Tours website!](#)**

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# Tribuetxe, a Basque Pinchos Bar in Lavapies

I was recommended [Tribuetxe](#) by one of my former students, a stoic Basque Señora, who wanted me to try the cuisine of her region's chefs. I haven't yet explored Pais Vasco, but I have every intention to due to the hype surrounding their food culture. I sampled Tribuetxe's fried shrimp tapa during Tapapies, the competitive international food festival of the barrio—I was not surprised to learn later on that they had won.







A fairly new location, situated behind [Mercado San Fernando](#) on Calle Tribulete, [Tribuetxe](#) is always *petado*. I clearly understand why after consuming four of their excellent pinchos alongside glasses of vino tinto. One of my new years resolutions was to incorporate more **eggplant** into my diet after sampling their **berenjena pincho**. I followed this up with **duck**, a skewer of **shrimp** and **octopus** and a skewer of fried merluza. Each filling pincho costs between 3€ and 3.50€.









[Mercado San Fernando](#) is one of my favorite hubs of community within the barrio. If you are exploring that area on a pleasant weekend afternoon, I strongly advise you to venture to Tribuete for your daytime drinking and snack endeavors.

[Facebook](#)

*Address: Calle de Tribuete 23*

*Metro: Lavapiés*

Here's a full article on El Mercado de San Fernando, entitled: ['Lavapiés and its market: the real food emporium!'](#)

Another Basque pincho bar in Lavapiés and La Latina that we love is: [Lamiak](#)



If you're looking for wonderful wine bars in La Latina, check out: ['The cosiest wine bars in La Latina \(with gluten free options!\).'](#)

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## **'The Hovse' pop-up market revives a vacant three-story mansion in Chamberí with 80 designers and vermouth**

Madrid's pop-up culture can overwhelm a normal bar goer like myself. Every weekend there's a pop-up market, a pop-up restaurant or a pop-up this or that. If you can't go to all of them, go to this one – **The Hovse** has eighty designers and food stalls taking over a beautiful three-story mansion on Calle General Arrando, 40, from 12pm-9pm every day until December 24th. Do not miss it.



There's something whimsical about this old house that makes it the perfect place to create a [Christmas time pop-up market](#). I found it wonderfully entertaining to walk up each flight of stairs to discover what was in store, all the while wondering what the house might have looked like when it was once occupied by tenants. Now, on the first and second floor you'll find stands selling clothing, jewellery, furniture, Christmas decorations and other nicknacks. But my favorite part is by far the third floor (where you'll find the drinks) and of course, the rooftop!





The ones responsible for all this are called [Better](#), a young Madrid-based agency that throws pop-up events to promote

different brands and venues. They're currently holding another event called [The Table By](#) at Hotel Urso, where 6 leading restaurants from across Spain are invited to Madrid for one month at a time. As you can see, Better's approach to marketing and event planning is to take over unexpected spaces and give them a new light.

And that's exactly what they've done with **The Hovse**.









After browsing, climb up to the third floor. Get yourself a glass of vermouth, wine or limonada, or a cup of coffee. Then grab a seat on the couch or pop up to the roof.

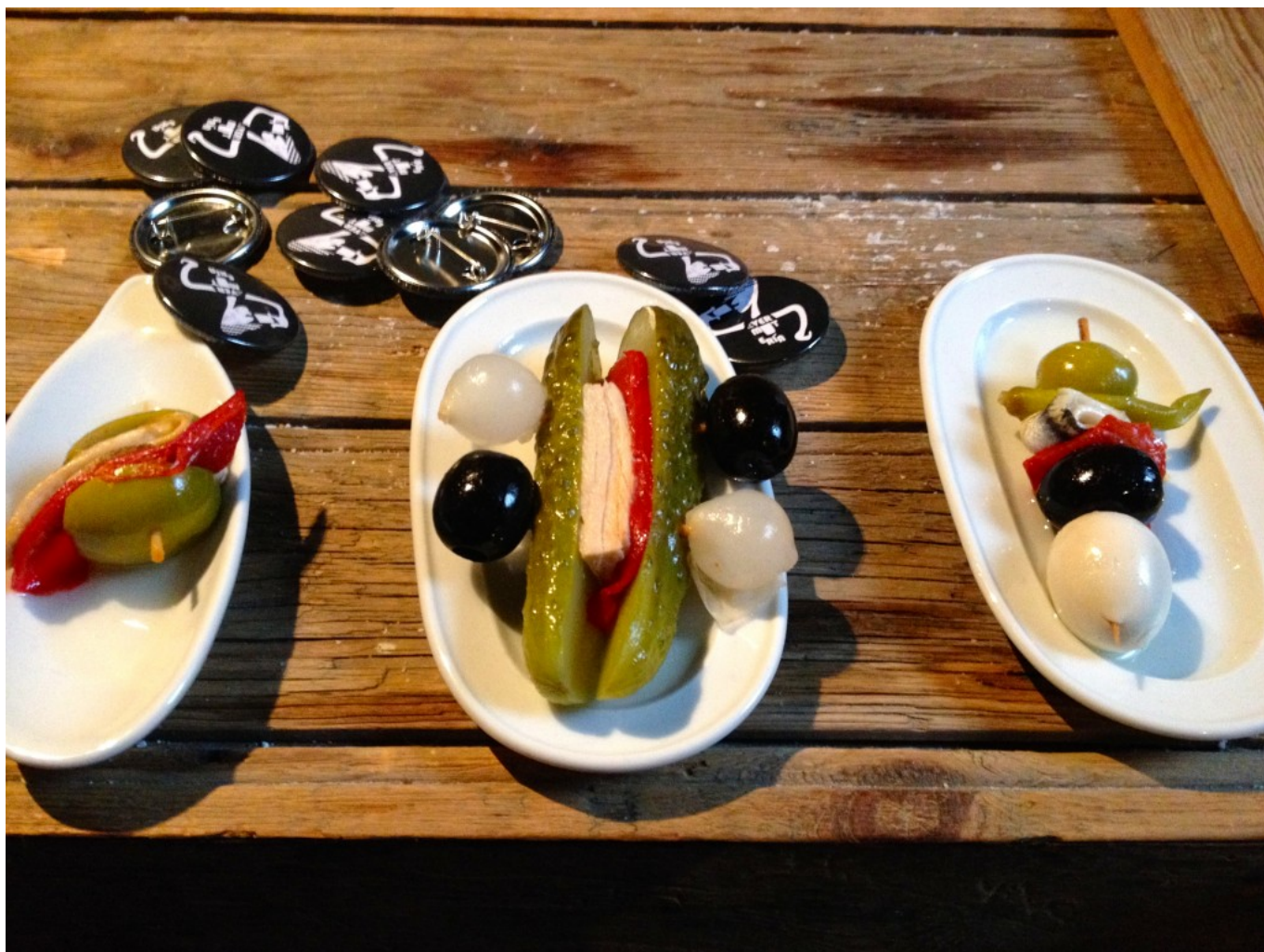




One of the main providers of drinks at The Hovse is [La Vermutería](#). a pop-up bar that travels around the city like a nomad, taking over different venues and throwing vermouth-inspired events where DJs, good ambience and up and coming vermouth brands are all at play. At The Hovse, you can get a glass of ridiculously good vermouth for 2€ and choose from a selection of tapas. Other food stalls such as [Ma Petite Creperie](#) and [El Huerto de Lucas](#) are also serving up sweet and savoury treats.







Where do you sit back and relax? In the living room... of course.



Or on the rooftop terrace!





## Info:

The Hovse by [Better](#)

Address: Calle General Arrando 40

Metro: Alonso Martínez, Rubén Darío, Iglesia

When: 12pm-9pm until December 24th

**Check out our [events calendar](#) to find out about other pop-up markets in Madrid**

You may also like our post on “[Best Christmas Markets in Madrid 2014](#)”

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## Madrid's Best Christmas Markets 2014!

Madrid's *navideño* spirit is as bright and festive as in any other European capital. Rows of lights down Paseo de la Castellana, *chocolate con churros* on New Year's Day, the Three Kings' parade... But before all that, there are the Christmas markets setting up all over the city and stocking their stalls with handcrafted wares, jewelry, gourmet delicacies and [unique gift ideas](#) from independent designers. Here are some of the **best Christmas markets** to mark in your calendars and flock to when you start your holiday shopping:

### [The Hovse:](#)





image from [el club express](#)



image from [La Vermutería](#)

For the curious and nosy ones out there, an excuse to peek into a beautiful Madrileño home seems too good to be true. After the success of last year's pop-up market, 'The

Apartment', this year brings '[The Hovse](#)' – one house, three floors, and 80 designers selling one-of-a-kind creations. There's also a bar on the top floor run by pop-up [La Vermuteria](#) – a great excuse for those who aren't into shopping but want to tag along anyway. Now open until 24 December.

*Calle General Arrando 40*

*Check out our [events page](#) for more details.*

## **Mercado de Motores:**







Hosted in the old train museum, 'Museo de Ferrocarril', this market takes place in between old tracks and steam engines. Vintage clothing, a live band, artisanal products and trendy crowds are all to be found. The next and last running weekend for this market is the 20-21 December.

*Paseo de las Delicias 61*

*Also check out our full post on [Mercado de Motores](#)*

**Nomada Market:**









There is something of a recent trend in transforming train stations into markets. [Nomada](#) is a great place to find original creations and craftsmanship from emerging designers, alongside DIY workshops; all below the glass ceiling of Madrid's Chamartin train station. Pull out the sweater Grandma gave you last year and join in on National Ugly Christmas Sweater day for the market's funniest [Christmas edition](#), which only lasts for a few days. 12-14 December.

*Attic of Estacion de Chamartin, Calle Agustín de Foxa*

*Check out our [events page](#) for more details.*

**La Industrial:**



A tiny market in comparison to the rest, but a great place to hunt for gifts you won't find anywhere else. From hand-made bags printed with the map of the world to note books bound in Japanese origami paper, this Malasaña market is not one to miss when shopping for that quirky, special friend. Throughout December.



*Calle San Andres 8*

## **Ciento y Pico:**



image from [Ciento y Pico](#)

Now in its fifth year, Ciento y Pico unites over 30 small, local brands under one roof to sell their handmade crafts, original jewelry, vintage goods, or home decor worthy of any hipster's haven. 18 – 21 December

*Calle Velarde 14*

## **Madrid Diferente:**



One of Madrid's most established city-guide blogs is branching out into retail and hosting its own **Christmas pop-up**. With the name 'Diferente Market' we can only imagine that it will be stocked full of curious knick-knacks and unusual gift items. It will run over two weekends: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

*Calle San Vicente Ferrer 33*



## 1001 Atmosphaera:

# Le marché de Noël

VENTA ESPECIAL DISEÑADORES Y CREADORES  
CAMPAÑA DE NAVIDAD

27, 28, 29 Y 30 NOVIEMBRE  
C/ General Pardiñas, 50  
Madrid

Jueves de 17:00h a 21:00h  
Viernes y sábado de 11:00h a 21:00h  
Domingo de 11:00h a 15:00h



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✧ EL RINCÓN DEL PIRINEO ✧ MA PETITE CREPERIE ✧

 fashion

COLUMNA  
ZERO

it-girl by Maria Carrido

 maniriki

LUSSTRA



The pop-up gallery, [1001 Atmosphaera](#), is holding three high-end Christmas Market editions. The first **Le Marché de Noël** will be held this weekend 27-30 November in honor of Black Friday! Among over 90 participating vendors, you'll find designer handbags, shoes, accessories and more from brands such as Eme-Ele, Letter&U and Molé Molé, as well as gourmet food stalls from the likes of [Ma Petite Creperie](#), BorchCakes and El Rincón del Pirineo. Don't worry if you can't make it out this weekend, because the market will return for two weekends in December: 11-14 December and 18-21 December.

*Calle General Pardiñas, 50*

## Plaza Mayor:



Image from [Blog Es Madrid](#)

One of the oldest and most well-known Christmas markets in the Spanish capital, we couldn't forgo mentioning it. Wooden huts take over Madrid's most prominent square for a month to sell Christmas decorations, live trees, costumes and the elaborate Spanish nativity scenes. Worth a stroll through the crowds,

even if it's just for a bit of contagious holiday buzz. 28 November – 31 December

*Plaza Mayor*

## **Plaza Jacinto Benavente:**

Also known as the “Christmas Card Market” this mercadillo is best known for, what else, its elaborate Christmas cards, among other handicrafts. Traditional “casetas” are set up throughout the square to mimic a medieval town and there's also a bar serving not-so-traditional, crowd-pleasing mojitos. 28 November – 6 January

*Plaza Jacinto Benavente*

## **Navidad en Oriente:**

This “Feria Dulces de Navidad” sets up shop in front of the Royal Opera House and sells sweet Spanish delicacies. Turrón lovers rejoice! Right next to it is also an ice rink, which opens every holiday season with a view of the Royal Palace. 28 November – 6 January

*Plaza de Oriente*

by Ardena González from [a wanderer's path](#) blog

**If you're looking for unique gift ideas from Madrid, make sure to check out our post, Best Gifts from Madrid, and our Naked Madrid Events Page to find out**



about other markets and fun things going on in the city!

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**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.







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

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## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](#)**

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# Desperate Literature, for



# book lovers in Brooklyn, Santorini and now Madrid

Madrid has a new second-hand bookstore thanks to three men – Michael, Corey and Craig – whose unique concept to provide insatiable readers with good books and a literary haven has already won a loyal following in Santorini, Greece, and Brooklyn, New York. Just opened in May, [Desperate Literature](#) comes to Madrid as a new-found treasure for tourists, expats and Madrileños alike.

Editor's note: in 2018 we published a new article – [Desperate Literature: so much more than just a bookshop](#)

## What's in stock?

[Desperate Literature](#) has a wide selection of **used books in English, Spanish and French**, and vinyls too. They get most of their books from library sales in New York and then ship them over, which is why half of their floor is currently usurped by boxes. The shelves are stocked with novels ranging from fiction and crime to philosophy and even *erotica*. Although they're not against best-sellers (you'll find ***50 Shades of Grey*** and ***Game of Thrones***), the space is small, so they do turn down books, aiming for quality rather than quantity. When I walked in, the first three books I spotted were by **Franz Kafka**, **James Joyce** and **George Orwell**, to give you an idea.



on Calle Campomanes 13, near metros Opera, Callao and Santo Domingo

## Why Desperate Literature?

As quoted by Joaquín Font on their [web](#), there are books for all occasions—for when you're bored, sad, or calm. Whatever mood you're in, if you're passing through Madrid or live here and find yourself desperate for a good read, you can either swap the book you've just finished or buy a new one for 3-9€. You can also say hi to Michael, the California-raised and Brooklyn-adopted owner; and Jamie, who works there and is also from Brooklyn. Plus they play good music and host events where they experiment with cocktails—one of the ways they're getting to know Madrid is by making homemade vermouth!



## What's the story behind Desperate Literature?

All three partners are avid readers and part of the so-called *international booklovers connection*. Corey had sold books on the streets of New York for many years, where he met Michael, who joined in to open used bookshops in Brooklyn. Ten years ago, Craig started [Atlantis Books](#) in Santorini, Greece. **Atlantis** is an international bookshop that, despite being tiny and hidden away on the island of Santorini, is quite well-known. My mother bought her favorite book there—*East of Eden* by John Steinbeck. My sister, Amanda, actually lived and worked there for a month, as did my sister-in-law, Erin. Every Summer, **Atlantis** showcases a film festival on their roof, where the projector is set up against a backdrop of red sunsets and the Aegean Sea.

Of course there's more to the story, but the philosophy at **Atlantis Books** goes: if you're a book-loving traveller, you can work there and in turn, live and get taken care of for free. It's kind of like *WOOFING* for books instead of farms. It's also a place for travellers to meet, hang out and hold book readings and concerts. Under the same joint venture, these three young partners own two locations in Brooklyn, New York: [Book Thug Nation](#) and [Human Relations](#); and just opened [Desperate Literature](#) in Madrid in May.



## Who came up with the whole idea?

It started with **Atlantis Books** in Santorini, opened by Craig and a bunch of friends (if you check out their [web](#), Atlantis' opening involved a lot of luck and a bit of whisky). Michael says the idea is based off [Shakespeare and Company](#), Paris' famous book store and writers' institution. Opened in 1919 by American expat, Sylvia Beach, **Shakespeare and Company** was frequented by the likes of Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway, and became **a gathering place for literary culture**, selling high-quality English-language books, some of which were banned, such as Joyce's *Ulysses* and D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Although it was closed during WWII, it was reopened in 1956 by American expat, George Whitman, who had amassed a huge collection of English books and wanted to return the generosity he had experienced while travelling the world as a young *vagabond*, by creating a **friendly place for English-speaking expats and bohemian culture**, allowing writers to stay there if they helped out. Today, **Shakespeare & Company** is run by Whitman's daughter who continues the tradition.



## Why did they open Desperate Literature in Madrid, and not... Amsterdam?

Michael says 'it was kind of happenstance.' He and Corey have an affinity for the Spanish language, and both knew people in Madrid. The location was perfect as it was an already-established international bookstore, Petras; and is situated a stone's throw from the Royal Palace.

At the moment, only Michael is living at **Desperate Literature** and hopefully Corey will take his place in November. Michael says that when he visits a city, even for a day, he always checks out the local book stores. He expects that visitors to Madrid will do the same and that **Desperate Literature** will be their literary home away from home.

They're here, so come and say hello!

## Desperate Literature

- [Facebook](#) & [Web](#)

**Hours:** Mon-Sat 12pm-9pm

**Address:** Calle Campomanes, 13

**Metro:** Santo Domingo, Opera and Callao

Please also read our 2018 article – [Desperate Literature: so much more than a bookshop](#)

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## El Campo de Cebada, a mix of

# live music, politics & drinking

I've been in Madrid for 5 months now and I want to share somewhere with you. There's nowhere as special to me as [El Campo de Cebada](#) for a place to relax. It's quite unique in what it has to offer. It's a **free space** where you can lie in the sun, the shade, drink beer and listen to **live music** or play **sports**. It's even a place where green and reform-minded political groups go to spread their word. Oh, and they have a theatre. How awesome is that?

Any lover of sun, sociality and really cheap booze, should come to [El Campo de Cebada](#).



from [plataformaarquitectura.cl](#)

It's not just some commercialized private space. After the collapse of a sports complex in the same area, an association of neighborhoods bought the plot with a grant from the **City of Madrid**. From here, people in the surrounding area had a stake in how to invest the money.

The idea was to create an inclusive temporary space where the



**community** could get involved and where they could create value. Instead of an empty disused space, the creation of **El Campo de Cebada** allows people to do **sport, socialize and pursue other projects**. But, yes you read correctly – temporary. Cebada is there to fill in the vacuum and it will leave when the community gets the funding for a new sports complex.

And this is one more reason for why it's special. It's not going to be there forever.



I promise you're yet to find anything like it. From your first encounter, by **La Latina Metro** you'll probably be surprised to see passers-by cramming around spy-holes in its graffitied walls and people flowing endlessly in and out of its gate. The hum of enjoyment comes from somewhere.

What could be so interesting?

If you go over for a peek...

First you hear the noise. Like a school when it breaks and you can hear the happy roar of children playing.

You see lots of people. **Football, basketball, socializing, Botellón** (people casually drinking outside) and of course, smoking. There's art all up the walls. There are people sat in wooden stands and others on benches. **All walks of life** can be found, from musicians, entrepreneurs, students, workers, the old and the young; from the sophisticated, to the -let's say-drunk.



I can't help but feel welcome. Everyone is sharing one place. They're all happy. The sun makes everything look good.

Plus, I get the pirate vibe from the makeshift **DIY atmosphere!** And that's hard to find, I assure you.

**My advice:** grab some **beer** or cold **drinks** and a friend. Take a **ball, Frisbee, guitar** or **book** (if your alone!) and go. Go and **relax**. Soak it in.

If there was ever a day made for this, that day is Sunday. Starting early, like 10am, you can walk around El Rastro and see all the goods and wares they have to offer in what is Madrid's massive open market. I managed to get a guitar for only €50! And then head for **Cebada**.



At around 1pm, **live music** begins. It's often similar faces keeping the spirit alive, with the odd newcomer in between. But it has always been exciting. I've seen an amazing barbershop quartet, a comedian guitarist, a charming folk singing couple, improvisation, blues and some Spanish classics.



from [plataformaarquitectura.cl](http://plataformaarquitectura.cl)

Here until 3am is the perfect place to grab a Mahou and relax in the sun. You're welcome to stay all day and I like to make an afternoon of it.

On some weeks you can also find the same space (with the music!) turned into a **political hive-mind**. People from all parts of the (Leftist) political spectrum set up stalls to give you information. From memory there were anarchist stalls, socialist stalls, ones on green issues, democratic reform and women's rights (hot topic right now). I've even gone there and found a local ecological food market mixed with talks on green consumerism and responsible business models. If politics is your cup of tea – this place is too. You can also sharpen up on your Spanish.

There are always things going on at El Campo de Cebada. Check out their [website](#) from time to time. Up and coming is a

festival from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> and a [TEDx Madrid Salon](#) talk on July 14th (here's [TEDxMadrid's official site](#))

You know you've found somewhere special when you stumble across a space for bringing a community together for fun and for raising awareness about important issues affecting everyone. If there is one voice here, for me it says '**we are a community and we can act**'.

**Sports and music, beer and politics, speaking Spanish.** I really can say no more.

So, if you want to be somewhere and not feel like an anonymous person at a bar or club, go there. You want to chat in the sun with friends, beer and music? Go there. I've had some amazing experiences and I think you'd be missing out. **So, go, go, go!**

**El Campo de Cebada**

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

**Address:** Plaza de la Cebada, 4