Madrid’s Top Shopping Malls

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

1. Centro Comercial Príncipe Pío



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

Opening hours

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

How to get there

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

2. La Gavia



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

How to get there?

- ***Bus lines:*** *142 and 145*

- ***Metro line***: *Las suertes*

OPENING HOURS

- SHOPS: *Monday to Sunday from 10:00 to 22:00 hours * On Sundays and holidays from February to November the center opens at 11:00
- RESTAURANTS: Sunday through Thursday from 10:00 to 01:00 hours. Fridays, Saturdays and on public holidays from 10:00 to 03:00
- IKEA: Monday to Sunday from 10:00 to 22:00 hours. The restaurant is open from 09:30 to 21:30

3. La Vaguada



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

How to get there?

- ***Bus lines:*** 42 , 49 , 67,83 , 124, 126 , 127, 128 , 132,

133 , 134, 135, 137 , 147 , N18 , N19

- ***Metro lines***: 9 (Barrio del Pilar Herrera Oria) & 7 (Peñagrande)

OPENING HOURS

- *Shopping area:* Monday through Saturday: 10:00 h to 22:00h; Sundays and holidays: 11:00 h to 21:00 h
- *Dining and entertainment area:* Monday through Thursday: 10:00 h to 01:00 h; Friday and Saturday: 10:00 to 02:00 h Sunday: 10:00 h to 01:00 h

4. Madrid Xanadú



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

activities like bowling, mini golf, a ski slope, and much more!

OPENING HOURS

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

How to get there?

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

5. Centro Comercial Plaza Norte 2



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

Opening hours

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

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

How to get there

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

6. Centro Comercial Plenilúnio



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

Opening hours

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

How to get there

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

7. Centro Comercial Parquesur



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

OPENING HOURS

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

How to get there?

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

8. Islazul

OPENING HOURS

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

How to get there:

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

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

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The Rogues Gallery part 1: 4 Recurring creepers you may encounter in Madrid

The **Auxiliares de Conversacion en Madrid** group on facebook is a hub where the 10,000+ (of past, present and future) members of the expatriate community congregate online to share advice, refer clients to one another, or collaborate on creative projects. It's not uncommon to see the occasional rant about the failings of Spanish bureaucracy, nor is it uncommon to read a thread of comments stemming from ruckus caused by provocative trolls. Community members can recommend establishments that they hold dear, or warn each other about the programs, academies and individuals that they've deemed

exploitative an untrustworthy. Group members have shared their experiences with some of Madrid's more noticeably **curious characters.**

Below is information that I have gathered about these usual Madrid suspects.

1) The Birthday Boy

The modus operandi of the Birthday Boy is neither creative nor is it subtle. This **shadowy figure** prowls tusclasesparticulares.com in search of English and Italian lessons. Upon contacting female teachers he insists on having the class at night and on his birthday after confiding in them that he is a new arrival to Madrid and is responsible for taking care of his sick father. The **Birthday Boy** claims to be lonely as he has no friends to celebrate his birthday with. He calls the women he preys on at unseemly hours, fixated on arranging the class at the rendezvous point of the *Estatua del Oso y Madroño* in Sol. **Countless women have come forward on the Auxiliares group to warn our community about his unnerving behavior.** What remains baffling to me is that the Birthday Boy continues to use the same story and schtick despite it being what makes him immediately recognizable. One can only speculate about his motivations and backstory. Perhaps he truly is cripplingly lonely, has a sick father, and was magically frozen in time to believe that each day is the anniversary of his birth.

2) Marta the blotchy-faced bandit



Marta, a **parasitic criminal** who can be identified by a blotchy mark on her face, responds to apartment listings on idealista in order to subtly **steal** whatever she can upon the viewing. She has been active for years and clearly makes a living this way. **This woman has been reported to the police** countless times and is apparently well known to them as a career criminal. Upon hearing her description I initially theorized that the blotch pattern that is the defining feature of her face was applied with stage make-up, in order to make it harder for the authorities to identify her. I gave her too much credit, my theory was disproven when one of her victims encountered her in the street months after the crime, and unless she was coming directly from a job, her face is indeed her face. Whether the pattern is a birthmark or battle scar is yet to be revealed. It appalls me that she continues to elude capture despite being both easily recognizable and a known

threat. A member of our community, who is the real MVP, managed to take her picture when she entered his home upon realizing who she was. If she attempts to enter your home under the guise of a flat-viewing my advice is to slam the door in her face and tell her “ya sé quien eres.”

3) The Note Man



The Note Man is a **quirky** absurdity. He operates out of **Malasaña**, but has been sighted in all parts of the city. He can be recognized by his Dumbledoresque beard and tattered clothing. He is known to approach people and present them with hand-written notes. Although I have never engaged him myself I have observed him perform his gimmick from a distance in **Plaza dos de Mayo** and have taken a picture of him in action. My friends Diana and Sean once wandered into the Note Man’s path and he shadily handed them a menacing note that said **“DON’T RUN”.** His origins and motivations are an enigma. It is unknown if he simply prefers nonverbal communication or if he is incapable of speech. **Approach with caution.**

4) La Cabra de Plaza Mayor



The “goat” of Plaza Mayor startled me when I first visited Madrid as a tourist in 2008. I was not surprised to see that it remained active when I returned in 2012. I can’t imagine **Plaza Mayor** without this shiny-bodied, wooden-faced, goat creature. The cabra is a **parasite** that envelopes a human host. It screeches to attract attention to itself in the hopes that passersby will give it their loose change . What does this goat-human creature spend its money on? What becomes of its host? Does it produce shiny cheese? How does it reproduce? These valid questions to be answered upon further research.

Any other people to beware of in Madrid?

Gluten free pastelerías in Madrid: Part 2 – La Oriental

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

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







It is not hard to find the gluten free goodies as the shop is

covered in **‘sin gluten’ symbols** to help you find your way around.

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





Also sitting on nonchalantly on top of the counters, as if they have no idea of the effect they'll have on you, are **boxes of assorted biscuits**, which are, indeed, gluten free too.

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



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

The pastel of choice on this visit was one of the 'bandejas' of mini pasteles, which I can say are without a doubt the most delicious little morsels I have tried in my natural gluten-free, and non-gluten free, life.





Each tray is slightly different, with six rows of beautifully

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





The mini selections of pastries like this *bandeja* are wrapped up in a sweet little La Oriental box with reflective gold lining and tied up with string, making them the perfect treat to buy for a friend, gluten free or not gluten-free, or maybe, let’s be honest, just for yourself.



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

Extra notes

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

Info

Calle Ferraz, 47
Website
Tel: 91 559 70 45

Word of the post

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

natillas– a creamy custard, yum.

You'll also like:

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

La Bicicleta – Ultramodern Cycling Café and Workshop in Malasaña

It was love at first sight for me with La Bicicleta. **La Bicileta Café** fills a void in a city filled to the brim with bars serving coffee, but sparsely populated with the type of homey workplaces that I hold dear to my heart. There is something comforting about spending hours holed up in a cafe, calmed by the stop and go of an espresso machine. I like to search out spots where I can stake out territory and sit while

minutes tick into hours, my fingers hammering at a keyboard or eyes scanning over pages of a book. La Bicileta is one such spot where this is possible and encouraged and might I say, all the rage. It fosters productivity and sociality and the consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages: what could be better?



La Bicileta bustles at pretty much any given hour of the day. While the sun is still out, it functions more or less just as it bills itself: a cycling workplace and café. You will see people perched in the windowsills with their laptop and coffee within equal reach. Cyclists come and go with their bikes. They barge through the front door and head downstairs to where they store or repair their rides. All of this while waiters bustle about with salads and tostas, cañas and coffees. Once the sun goes down, it becomes progressively unlikely to find anyone doing work. The place metamorphosizes into a social hub with so much traffic that the entryway is hardly ever free of spillover customers.





Coffee drinks come in all shapes and sizes. The standards are

available, but innocent intentions of ordering a cortado may be redirected upon a glance at the spunkier options on the menu like the oreo frappuccino, for example. As can happen at the Bicicleta, one may feel torn between alcohol and caffeine. Options abound on both listings. The food landscape includes sandwiches, salads, tostas, a [pricey] brunch menu on the weekends, and a display case stocked with baked goods: cookies, cakes, and the like.





As Yogi Berra once said: “Nobody goes there anymore. It’s too crowded.” Well, not quite. There are still plenty of people at La Bicileta; but Yogi was right, it’s definitely crowded. Real estate is hard to come by despite the plethora of sofas, elongated work tables, and quaint table and chair setups available to patrons. While it attracts a determinedly international crowd who may not (probably are not) natives to Madrid, it feels like that good ol’ neighborhood joint on the corner.

Info

Facebook
Web
Where: *Plaza de San Ildefonso 9 (also known as Plaza del Grial o Plaza de la Niña)*
Metro: *Tribunal, Gran Vía, Noviciado*

Just around the corner, you'll find these amazing spots:

- **Mercado de San Ildefonso – Malasaña's new food palace**
- **Naif: King of Burgers**
- **Greek & Shop in Malasaña**
- **La Paca – the perfect Malasaña café**
- **Aiò – Sardinia, pizza and bike haven in Malasaña**