Bless Hotel rooftop bar – beautiful sunsets, bebidas and bowling!

One of the major perks of being a teacher (which is my day job), has undoubtedly got to be the holidays. Let’s be real… Yes, teaching is a vocation for most, but I defy anyone to shirk the idea of having two blissfully sun-soaked months off each summer. The benefit of being a part-time lady of leisure is that when I’ve not escaped to the coast (it’s no joke that Madrid is literally an inferno come July), but on the plus side, the city feels like a veritable playground for all those left sweltering in the city.



So with all this free time, I've found myself strolling round barrios that I tend to neglect in favour of my own and as a result, I stumbled upon the holy grail of hotels that is the BLESS hotel on Calle Velázquez. From the rooftop bar slash restaurant, to the clandestine bowling alley nestled below the lobby, the hotel offers a taste of luxe living – and in my case, all within walking distance. Who doesn't love to get their steps up before sinking a G&T guilt free?

.



So let’s talk terrace – Madrid has really upped its game when it comes to rooftop vistas of late and there’s plenty of competitors vying for your attention, and your hard-earned cash. However, in my humble opinion, BLESS has the edge as its pleasingly buzzy, not overwhelmingly busy, and has beautifully considered decor, rather than your bog standard minimalist modern vibe that currently prevails. Most recently, my friends and I managed to snag a beaut of a booth and it wouldn’t be out of place at a beach club in the south of France.



But the big draw is ultimately that the views are to die for – nab a spot for golden hour and watch the sky resemble Monet at

his best as it changes from azure blue, to blush pink, to burnt orange – all whilst sipping on a perfectly prepared cocktail of your choice. On this note, don't get me wrong, BLESS is not cheap – but what you splurge on the drinks you slightly claw back on the naughty but nice nibbles that accompany each tipple. And the service is faultless – I can attest to this given the patience and perseverance to get the perfect shot of me and my amigas for the 'gram.



So having been up top I returned to see what was down below and it didn’t disappoint. Tucked under the hotel is a

speakeasy-type bar that houses… a BOWLING ALLEY! Yes, limber up and get ready to strike. We booked a lane on a Saturday night and continually cursed our lack of bowling prowess but it still made such a welcome change from the usual dinner-then-drinks drill. I bowled in vertiginous heels assuming that (like my humble megabowl back home) they'd give you those Velcro shoes that make you feel about 5 years old – anyways, they do not.



Worth bearing in mind if you’re competitive and I still maintain that it was my stilettos and not my lack of technique

that hampered my score. Again, the bowling alley may be underground but bargain basement this ain't. Games cost €12 per person so whilst it's a bit of a treat, it was well worth it to be cocooned in what felt reminiscent of a prohibition-era speakeasy.



You might be getting the gist that I like the BLESS hotel and you'd be right. The vibe in Madrid is shifting, business is booming, tourists are appearing in their droves and whilst this is all economically excellent, I still like my social scene to come with a side of secrecy. BLESS is a gem in barrio Salamanca, just go wielding cash (and comfy shoes).

Bless Hotel Madrid

- **Website**, **Facebook** & IG: **@blesshotelmadrid**
- **Address:** Calle Velázquez, 62
- **Metro:** Velázquez

Follow @littlemissmadrid on Instagram for more gems in the city!

Urso Hotel & Spa, Take a holiday (from a 'holiday')

When you tell people that you live abroad the general response is usually something along the lines of **'Oh you must feel like you're on holiday all the time!**' or 'Think of all the sun and sangria!' to 'You must be perma-tanned!' Admittedly, whilst there is a lot of sun and I do feel like I'm on 'holiday' when I look up at all the pretty balconies in Malasaña, La Latina and the like, I'm most certainly not perma-tanned (without the help of something I purchased from Space NK) and life's mundane tasks have a way of finding you wherever you live *read/washing/ironing/cleaning/taking the bins out.

So no matter whether you're fortunate enough to live in a sunny clime (in this case the marvelous Madders) there comes a time when you fancy a holiday within the city; if true indulgence floats your boat then look no further than the **exquisitely elegant and seriously stylish**, Hotel Urso.



Nestled on Calle Mejia Lequerica, Hotel Urso is a relatively small but perfectly formed boutique hotel. Discovered through the Mr and Mrs Smith website (which I cannot recommend enough) it's the kind of hotel you'll never want to leave. Fluffy white robes adorn the bathroom door, there for the taking when the spa takes your fancy. Pillows so soft, that lifting your head up from one feels like a chore (or maybe that was partly due to too much gin the night before). But still, it felt like having a glimpse into how the other half live – all **freshly brewed coffee, sumptuous soft furnishings and complimentary**

welcome fizz at the hotel bar.



Service wise, Hotel Urso couldn’t be faulted. In a country that often leaves a lot to be desired on that front (why do I have to beg for a bill?!) nothing was too much trouble. We forgot our toothbrushes – two new ones appeared by magic. My mum on arrival managed to fall up the stairs – turns out marble floors, heels and mimosas don’t mix (but cue an ice pack appearing at lightning speed) – I can only stress here that apples don’t fall far from the tree and that making an

entrance must run in the family!

When check out time swung round (which wasn't until 12; a Mr and Mrs Smith perk might I add) neither of us wanted to leave – or part with the 400 thread count Egyptian cotton sheets.

It's worth noting that if splurging on a night away isn't an option – unless money starts growing on trees (as a deluxe room wasn't cheap) they have jazz nights every Thursday and the pop up restaurant 'The Table By' which are well worth a visit, with a different chef dominating in the kitchen each month.

I left Sunday morning plotting how many private classes I'd have to teach so that I can return, and soon. Should I be lucky enough to do so, my mum will be wearing flats.

Info

- Web & Facebook
- Address: Calle Mejia Lequerica 8
- Phone: +34 914 444 458
- E-mail: info@hotelurso.com

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars – Round 4

With temperatures reaching well over 100 ºF (38 ºC), there are only two places you should be in Madrid right now: either in a swimming pool (in the **city** or the **mountains**) or on a rooftop bar. If you're stuck with the latter, not to worry–Madrid has plenty of rooftop bars for you to escape to. To help you find them, Naked Madrid came out with a 3-part series on **Madrid's**

best rooftop bars last summer, and we've been meaning to come out with **part 4** ever since. And it's finally here! All the rooftop bars in this article are located in the center of Madrid, yet each one offers something completely different. Hope you enjoy them all!

Oh and you should also know that **part 5** is already on its way…. so stay tuned!

1) The Hat (Sol/Plaza Mayor)

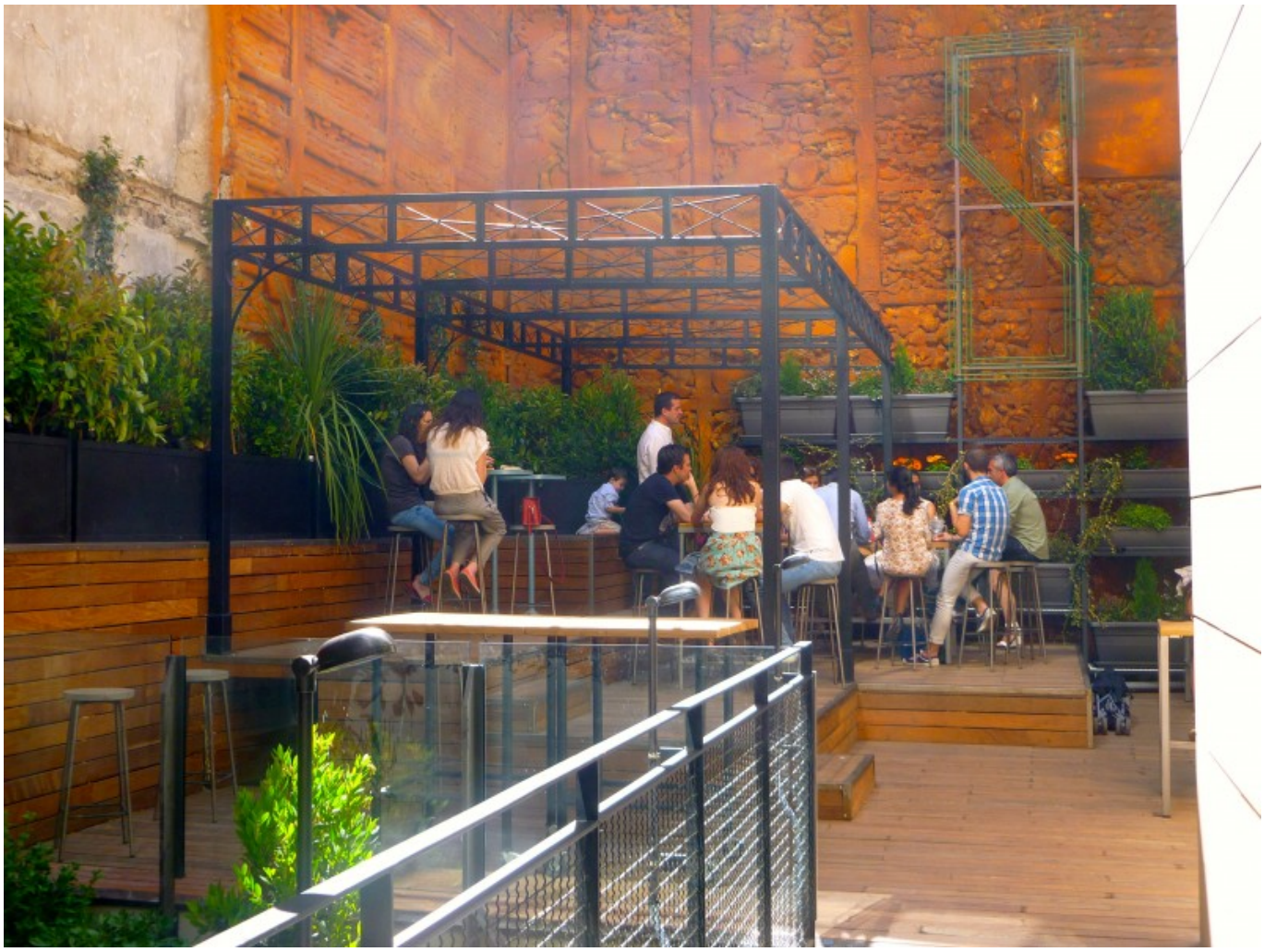


You've never seen a hostel like this before; the word 'hipster' does not even begin to describe it. High ceilings, art-scrawled walls and an international crowd are what you'll find here. The Hat's rooftop bar is open all year round, serving up cocktails and delicious *tostas* (my favorite is with goat cheese and caramelized onions, and comes with a shot of

salmorejo and potato chips), quiche, and some pretty damn *good tortilla de patata.* **Here's a full post on The Hat for more info.**

Web
Address: *Calle Imperial 9*
Metro: *La Latina, Sol, Opera*
Phone: *917 72 85 72*

2) Mercado del San Ildefonso (Malasaña)





We all know Madrid's market culture is off the hook. We've got **Mercado de San Miguel** in Sol for the tourist crowd; **Mercado de San Antón** (whose rooftop bar we also love and **mentioned in Round 1**) in **Chueca** for the cooler and more urban crowd; and **Mercado de San Fernando** in **Lavapiés** for the more authentic and cultural crowd, just to name a few. And now we have **Mercado de San Ildefonso,** which takes the cake for its architecture and impressive use of space. Once an average neighborhood market, San Ildefonso now boasts three stories of gourmet food stalls and two outdoor patios sandwiched between its adjacent buildings. **Here's a full article on Mercado del San Ildefonso.**

Facebook
Web
Address: *C/ Fuencarral, 57*
Metro: *Tribunal*

3. El Jardín Secreto (on Calle Montera, Gran Via)



Jardín Secreto feels like a tiny rooftop garden in somebody's private home. You wouldn't expect that it's actually situated on top of an accessories store – Salvador Bachiller – and on Calle Montera, no less. Smack in the center of the city, in between metros Gran Vía and Sol, you can enter this normal-looking store, pop up to the top floor and take in the *fresher* air with a drink and a bite to eat. It might not have any views, but it sure has a unique ambience and surprise factor that's worth experiencing. **Here's a full article on Jardín Secreto for more info.**

Facebook
Address: *Calle Montera 37*
Phone: *915 31 02 60*

Metro: *Gran Vía or Sol*

4. Innside Madrid Suecia (near Alcalá/Plaza de Cibeles)





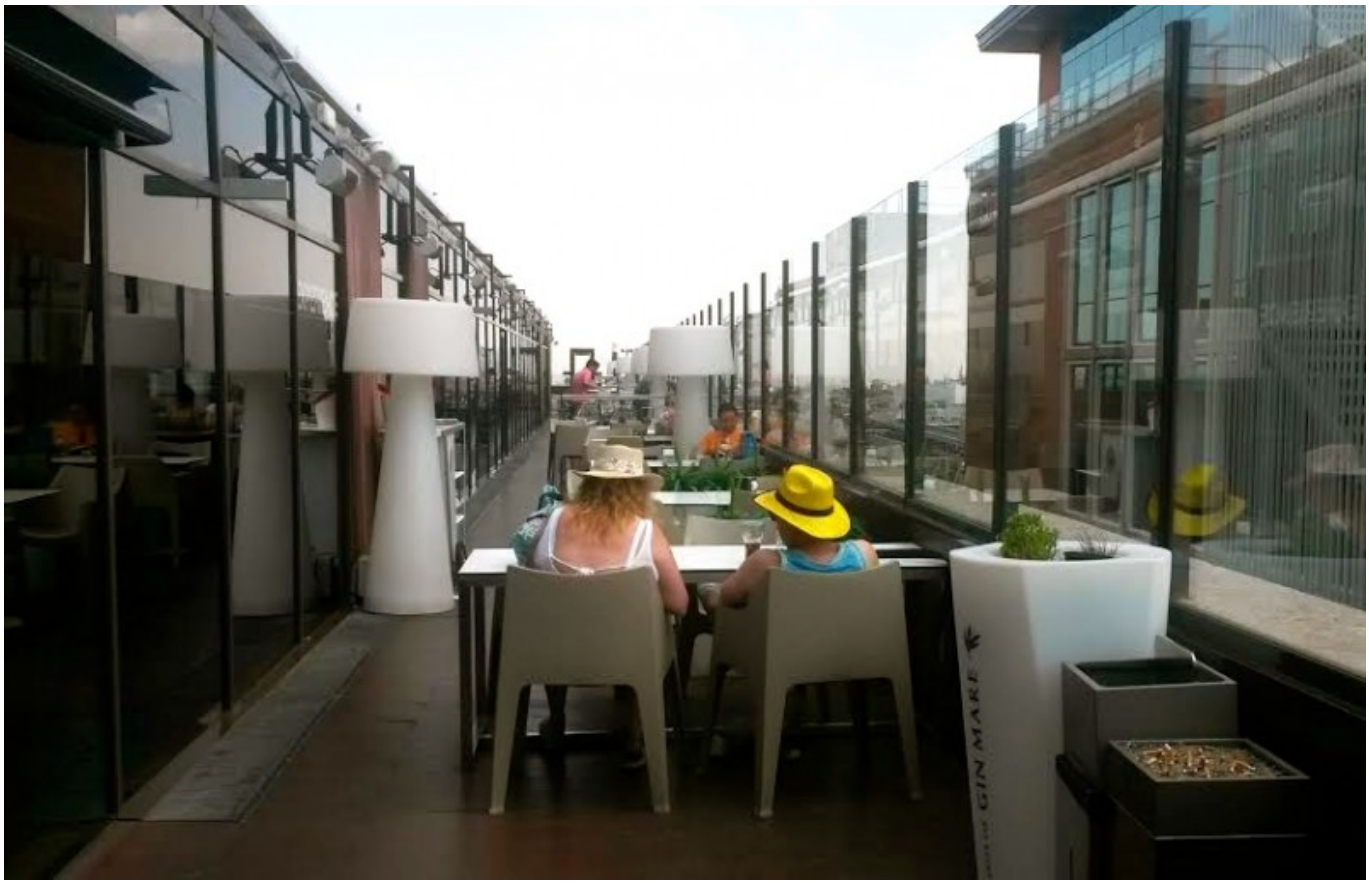
I haven't actually been here yet but many of my friends have raved about it. Judging by its location, the new rooftop bar at **Innside Madrid Suecia Hotel** looks a bit more upscale than the others on this list – probably best for a night out of

cocktails mixed with a killer view. It's owned by the Meliá Hotel chain, which also owns the famous **"The Roof" in Plaza Santa Ana, previously mentioned in Round 3**), and situated on a street behind Calle Alcalá and El Círculo de Bellas Artes (with yet another stunning rooftop, **"Tartan Roof", mentioned in Round 1**). For now, I've taken these photos off of the Hotel's **web**, yet I plan on replacing them as soon as I get the chance to treat myself to such an experience.

> ***Web***
> ***Address:*** *Calle del Marqués de Casa Riera 4*
> ***Metro:*** *Banco de España and Sevilla*

5) Gourmet Experience at El Corte Inglés (Callao)





Madrid's number one department store, **El Corte Inglés**, finally decided to give itself a much needed facelift and revamp the 9th floor of its location in Callao, turning it into 'Gourmet Experience'; and it truly is an experience. With an outdoor rooftop and dozens of food stalls, one of which is **StreetXO,** an affordable version of Madrid's famous young Michelin-starred chef, David Muñóz's DiversoXO, you'll also find stalls serving Mexican, Italian, Spanish and Japanese food, as well as cocktails, ice-cream and much more. **Here's full article on Gourmet Experience at Callao.**

Web
Address: *Plaza Callao 2, inside El Corté Inglés, 9th floor*
Metro: *Callao*

We're already working on Round 5 of

Madrid’s top rooftop bars. Any suggestions?

In case you haven’t seen rounds 1-3, here you are:

- Madrid’s Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1
- Madrid’s Best Rooftop Bars, Round 2
- Madrid’s Best Rooftop Bars, Round 3

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3 Best Hotel & Restaurants in Madrid: Barrio de las Letras (Huertas)

Somewhere in the U.S., in a place whose name I do not care to remember, I found myself sleeping in a motel surrounded by gangs, in a room where the sheets hadn’t been washed in a while and you could imagine picking up any sort of illness from the bathroom. A few years later, the story happened again, but this time back in Europe. Since then, every time I travel, I like to check out the best hotels on Trip Advisor and read the comments thoroughly before booking a room.

Here in Madrid, you've got plenty of fantastic and affordable hotels to choose from, which is why we're breaking this list down by **neighborhood**. So, what do we look for in the perfect hotel? One, its location. Two, extra fun; those that boast **rooftop bars**, great restaurants or free walking tours. And three, if we'd personally want to stay here and recommend it to our friends and family.

3 Best Places to Stay in Madrid's Barrio de las Letras (Huertas)

We're starting this series in **Barrio de las Letras**, a central neighborhood named after the many famous Spanish writers who once lived here. This vibrant neighborhood offers tons of fun bars and restaurants, and is located close to the city's main attractions such as Puerta del Sol, Plaza Mayor and Paseo del Prado, along which you'll find the **city's finest museums**. It's also very accessible by metro, near the city's main train station, Atocha, and the **airport shuttle bus**.

Learn more about the neighborhood in our quick guide: Madrid barrio overview

**All rates are approximate, please check their webs to confirm*

1. Room007 & Restaurant Saporem



Room007 is a wonderful hostel with a hidden restaurant in a perfect location; a two-minute walk separates this whimsical and inexpensive hostel from *Plaza Santa Ana* or *Sol,* both must-see sites in Madrid. On top of that, it won't take you longer than 10 minutes to walk to the **airport bus**.

Whether you're traveling with your backpack or with a family member, at **Room007**, you will find a good range of rooms from double rooms to a single bed in a 8-bed shared room. Moreover, the different kinds of people passing through will catch your attention.

As an added bonus, you'll get the chance to hang out on the **rooftop**! You will never want to leave. Also, let Adrian, the hostess, know that you want to enjoy some of the great activities that the place has to offer: **Free walking tours, bike tours, parties** (3 bars + 1 club), **drinking games, tapas experiences, affordable flamenco tablaos** and much more!

Hostel rates:

- Bed in shared room from 18€
- Double from 50€

**See special deals on their website.*

Contact info:

- **Address:** Ventura de la Vega, 5 & Hortaleza, 74
- **Metro**: Sol or Sevilla (Ventura) Chueca (Chueca)
- **Facebook**
- **Web site**
- **Email:** reservas@room007.com





1. Saporem Restaurant

If that wasn’t enough, **Room007** also has an **outstanding restaurant** downstairs, which you will have discounts on during your stay. Here you can find all kinds of food including burgers, vegetable platters and homemade pizza and pasta dishes. The average price is **around 20€/each** without the discount.




Libre


nike



Menu

- Pasta & Pizza ……**9€-11€**
- Fish & meat……**8€-12€**
- Bottle of wine ……..**13€**

2. Hostal Persal & Ginger Restaurant



Hostal Persal is another really good option located just a stone's throw away from **Puerta del Sol.** This hostel is also close to **La Latina** neighborhood, one of the most famous areas in Madrid, well known for its charming streets and gorgeous **pintxo bars** like **Lamiak**.

Hostel rates:

- Single room from 40€
- Double from 50€

*Best price guaranteed on their website.

Hostal Persal Contact info:

- **Address:** Plaza del Ángel, 12
- **Metro:** Sol or Sevilla
- **Facebook**
- **Web site**
- **Email:** info@hostalpersal.com

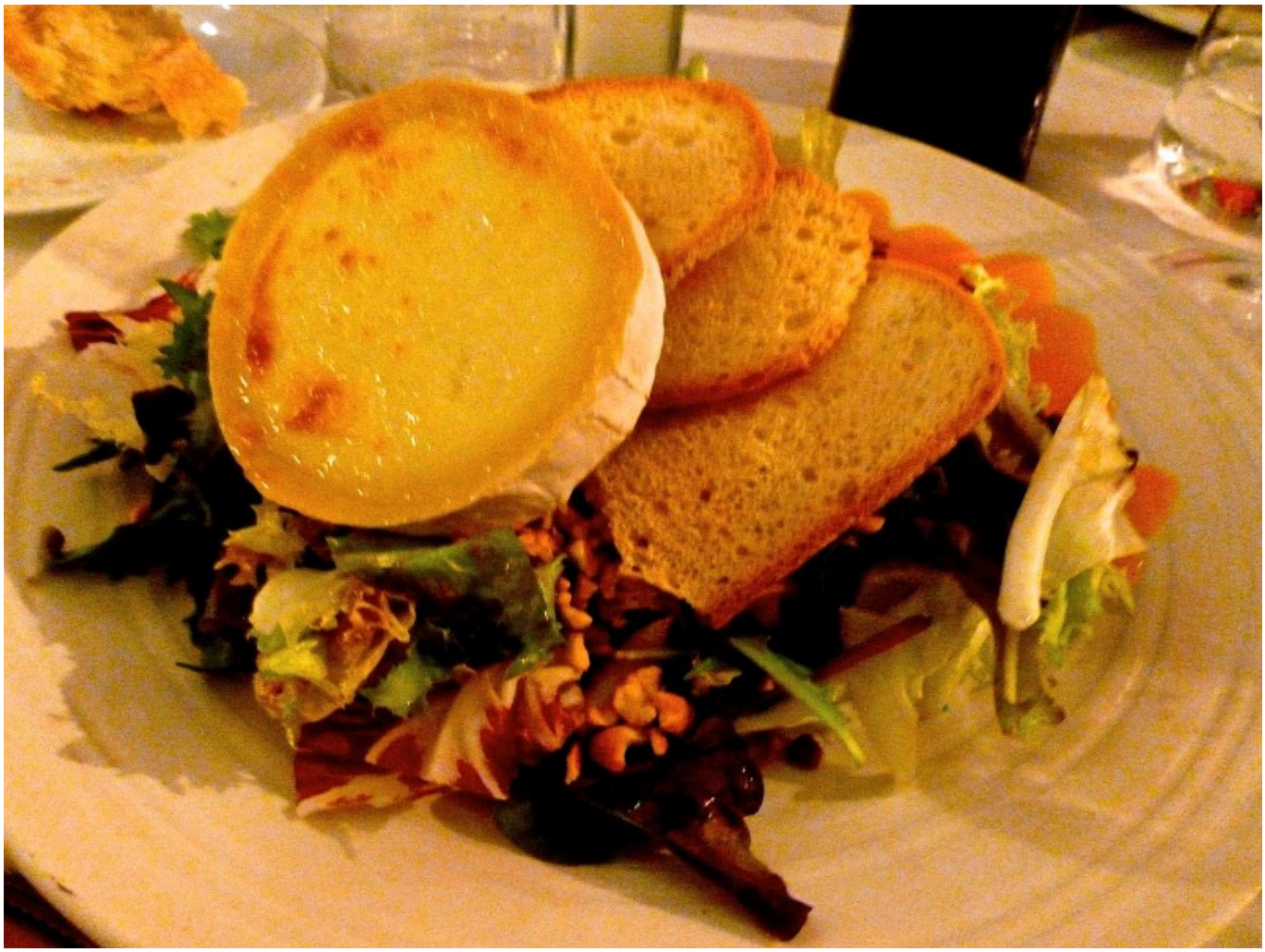




2. Ginger Restaurant

Although it may look like an expensive place, Ginger offers great quality food at an affordable price. Ginger is owned by a restaurant group founded in Barcelona that now has **6 restaurants** in Madrid, all of which deserve a try. These restaurants run a chef apprenticeship program and share the same concept: nice ambiance, top quality and inexpensive food. On top of that, the group's foundation, **Andilana**, is a large NGO that invests money into helping people reintegrate into society.





Ginger Restaurant Contact info:

- **Address:** Plaza del Ángel, 12
- **Metro:** Sol or Sevilla
- **Facebook**
- **Website**
- **Email:** ginger@grupandilana.com
- **Tel. +34 91 369 10 59**

3. One Shot 23 & Ateneo Restaurant



One Shot 23 is a modern hotel which boasts a healthy mix of luxury, convenience and affordability. The hotel has another location in **Barrio de Salamanca** and is set to open more in Spanish cities such as Valencia, Seville and Barcelona. One of the advantages of staying at **One Shot 23** is its location – it is very close to the Prado and Thyssen Museum. Although Madrid is a very noisy city, the hotel is situated in a quiet area.

Hotel Rates:

- Single room from 68€
- Double from 72€

Contact Info

- **Address:** Calle Prado, 23 | One Shot 04 (Barrio Salamanca)
- **Metro:** Banco de España & Sevilla
- **Facebook**

- **Website**
- **Email:** prado23@oneshothotels.com





3. Ateneo Restaurant

Ateneo is much more than a restaurant. Since its founding, this institution has been a private cultural center. Today it is situated on Calle Prado, where you will be transported a century back in time. If Ateneo’s walls could talk, they’d surely tell fascinating stories of the history of Spain.





Enjoy your stay!