Try the banh mi sandwiches from a hole-in-the-wall Vietnamese shop in Madrid

When people ask me what it is that I miss the most about living in Paris, my surprising answer is always this: its Vietnamese food. The banh mi sandwich was the base of my diet when I was a broke student and NGO intern, due to its budget-friendly and savory nature.

Banh mi sandwiches are a product of French colonialism introducing the Vietnamese people to the baguette, who then proceeded to stuff it with **julienned daikon radish and carrots, cucumber, pate, cilantro, mayonnaise, sriracha, and, of course, chicken or pork belly** with the latter option being the most traditional version.

Hand model: James Stiles

These gems are served at hole-in-the-wall establishments that I noticed would **often go unnamed and without any branding**. For the longest time, the monopoly over my beloved sandwich in Madrid was controlled by a sleek and modern hipster eatery in Malasaña called the Big Banh, which has since closed its doors. The Big Banh prioritized the presentation of its product to justify it being costly. After they shut down operations, there was a baguette-shaped void in my heart until one day when walking to La Latina from Lavapies I walked by what looked like a normal Asian-owned *alimentación* and *panadería* that caught my attention for a sticker on its windows that said: “**Traditional Banh Mi Here.**”

Juan assembling banh mi for hungry consumers

I investigated the next day with high hopes and was not disappointed. The owner and sandwich artist is a long-term resident of Madrid who has adopted the name Juan during his 40 years of living here. Juan hails from **Hoi-Ann, Vietnam** and opened this shop in July 2019 and is excited to introduce Madrid to Vietnam's flavorful *bocadillo.*

He offers the chicken and pork belly varieties of the **sandwich for €3.** I sampled the pork belly sandwich and a **€1 shrimp spring roll** and was full and incredibly content with this discovery and decided to share it with my community in order to empower this new business. **It is important to note that this shop is cash-only.**

Noteworthy for its absence of branding, this unassuming bakery situated at **Calle San Milan 6**, near La Latina metro station, should not be overlooked! I want to see this business thrive and stay open, and I can see it appealing to Madrid's community of English teachers who search for cheap and filling eats in the summer.

Banh Mi sandwiches with no name

- **Location:** Calle San Milan 6
- **Metro:** La Latina
- **Cash only**