

La Bicicleta – Ultramodern Cycling Café and Workshop in Malasaña

It was love at first sight for me with La Bicicleta. [La Bicicleta 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 Bicicleta 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

Pepe Botella, a coffee place where you can think

Growing up at my father's coffee shop in New York – [the Hungarian Pastry Shop](#) – I remember there was a poster on the wall that featured *50 coffee shops around the world where you can think*.

Since I arrived in Madrid seven years ago, I've always thought that [Pepe Botella](#) should be on that poster, photographed alongside the other perfect cafés from Tel Aviv to Reykjavik.



Peer through the bay window at passersby in Plaza de Dos de Mayo in Malasaña

In my mind, cafés aren't about who has the prettiest foam;

cafés should make you feel at home. I first fell in love with **Pepe Botella** when I was a student. I used to bring my laptop there on Saturdays and Sundays during lunchtime when it was empty, and let the afternoon go by. Ever since, **Pepe Botella** has been the café I most enjoy going to with friends, family, or alone.

It just fits, whether I want to peer through the window with a coffee or a glass of wine, or disappear onto the red velvet benches in the back with a conversation or the newspaper. It's the kind of place that invites you to stay for hours. And whenever my sister, Amanda, visits me, this is our spot. She likes to linger there as much as I do.



Pepe Botella is situated in the infamous Plaza del Dos de Mayo, named in honor of the Madrileños who rose against Napoleon on May 2nd in 1802, as well as home to Madrid's

breaking experimental movement in the eighties called *La Movida Madrileña*.



The café is named after Napoleon's brother, **José I Bonaparte**, who was dubbed **Pepe Botella** in Spain for his exorbitant drinking habits (Pepe is the Spanish nickname for Jose).

And **Plaza del Dos de Mayo** is nestled between the streets of **Malasaña**, Madrid's trendiest neighborhood that boasts endless cafés and bars. But for me, **Pepe** is the best.



Also, their coffees come with delicious cookies (called *pastas*). Every time I ask the waiters for the chocolate ones, they give me two! And their wine comes with blue chips.

I've never had cocktails there, but I can say that the tables around me usually move on to the **gin & tonics** by 7pm.



Café Pepe Botella

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** c/ San Andrés, 12
- **Metro:** Tribunal, Noviciado, Bilbao