

La Pecera, Affordable Fine Dining at Círculo de Bellas Artes

Fancy a decadent meal in a regal setting that doesn't burn a hole in your wallet? We found it! El Círculo de Bellas Artes is one of Madrid's most emblematic buildings and its street-level restaurant, [La Pecera](#), serves a top-quality *menú del día* every day of the week for just €15 (€17 on the terrace). It includes a starter, main course, drink and coffee or dessert, with a variety of dishes and vegetarian options to choose from. And to top it all off, you'll be enjoying your delicious meal in a stunning dining room with beautifully painted ceilings, elegant chandeliers and excellent service.







James and I went on a Monday for the [menú del día](#) and we're still amazed that you can get such a fine dining experience for only €15 a person. I kept thinking I wished I'd [brought my parents](#) here each time they'd come to visit. Like myself, I'm sure a lot of people walk by [La Pecera](#) with its outdoor terrace and fans in the summertime, and assume it is too exclusive to go in. Wrong! Prices are similar to what you'll find at almost all nice restaurants in Madrid. But you just can't beat this magnificent setting...

Now on to the food. For starters, I had the **arroz caldoso (rice in broth) with clams and shrimp**, and James had the **pasta with sautéed vegetables and cuttlefish**. Other starters that caught my eye were the homemade salmorejo, ham croquettes, lentils and duck magret salad... good thing I just went with the waiter's recommendation or else it would've taken me ages to order.





The **arroz caldoso** is prepared in an individual pot and with a deliciously flavored seafood sauce. The portion was generous, so I was happy my main course was also fish. James' cuttlefish pasta had a surprising Asian flavor, something he loved but didn't expect given the more traditional setting.

For the main course I had the smoked salmon with vegetables in a coconut sauce, another unexpected mix of flavors.



But I must admit that James' main course took the cake: the **Carrillada Ibérica** (Iberian beef cheeks) with apple quince jelly. The meat was so tender it melted in his mouth and the sauce was so flavorful that all James could say was, "Oh, wow."



All the desserts are homemade and included in the menú del día. James had the apple pie and I had a semi-cold yogurt with a reduced Pedro Ximénez sauce. So good.





As we were leaving, I asked the waiter if there's anything else we should try. He told us we had to come back for the **breakfast menu**, which features a range of options, from the standard toast and freshly-squeezed orange juice to a full-on British-style breakfast and [American-style brunch](#).

At night, the restaurant holds live jazz concerts and its **bar offers an impressive selection of over 400 bottles of liquor**; all to please local and foreign palates at a reasonable price, within a gorgeous space that'll make any day feel like a special occasion.



So before or after your next visit to a [museum along Paseo del Prado](#), or shopping in the center or whatever brings you and yours to Madrid, you're in for a treat!





Lastly, I can't end this article without reminding you that El Círculo de Bellas Artes has one of the [city's best rooftop bars](#), called [Tartan Roof](#). Make sure to pop up to take in the view, visit its restaurant (just book ahead of time) or enjoy a cocktail.

Info

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Alcalá 42
- **Metro:** Banco de España or Sevilla
- **Phone:** 677458448 / 913 605 400

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- [Where to take your mom in Madrid](#)

- [A year of Menús del Día in Madrid](#)
 - [Madrid's best rooftop bars](#)
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Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars, Round 1

Madrid has **magnificent rooftop bars**, and you'll find them perched atop unexpected places. Here's round one of my favorites. What's more, all of these places are within **walking distance** from one another, so you could turn this list into a **rooftop bar crawl** if you had the whole day to spend atop buildings, watching the sky change colors. Here's a list of Madrid's best rooftop bar.



Image from Gau&Café's Facebook page

Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars

1. Gau&Café: on top of a university

Considered one of [8 Hidden Gems in Madrid](#) by the Guardian newspaper, this rooftop bar truly deserves **first place** on my list. Tucked away on a side street in **Lavapiés**, Gau&Cafe rests atop one of UNED University's historic campus buildings. As you enter the university and walk up four flights of stairs, you'd never imagine that [Gau&Café](#) would be so chic, inviting and beautiful—you'd never even know it was there. The space is divided into two sections: one for drinks, and one for dinner. In the drink section, you can order a delicious **8€ hamburger**. If you're looking for a sit-down dinner, do [make a reservation](#) (the [menu](#) features lots of local, seasonal products, namely *zucchini*, *cous cous*, *eggplant* and *hummus dishes*).

[Address](#): *c/ Tribulete 14, 4th floor*

[Metro](#): *Lavapiés*

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)



2. Casa de Granada: on top of a residential building

At home in the sky, this rooftop bar holds a special place in my heart as it will always be the first rooftop I ever went to in Madrid. **Casa de Granada** is essentially a regular **Spanish restaurant**, situated on a roof that has outdoor seating and an enclosed area. Nibble on traditional **Spanish dishes** as you look out on Madrid's short-story buildings, plazas, and terracotta-tiled roofs. You may also catch women hanging clothes out to dry and maybe even listen in on the neighbour's telephone conversation. Although **Casa de Granada** has recently renovated, it's maintained its nonchalant style which is what makes it fun. When it comes to food, you should stick to the **Spanish staples**—*croquetas*, *huevos rotos*, *pimientos de padrón*, *calamares*, you name it.

Address: c/ del Doctor Cortezo, 17, 6th floor

Metro: Tirso de Molina or Sol

[Facebook](#)

[Web](#)



3. Mercado de San Antón: on top of a gourmet market

This **gourmet market** is the hipper version of its uber-upscale pedestrian competitor, *Mercado de San Miguel*. In other words, **Mercado de San Antón** is infinitely cooler and more enjoyable. First of all, it's in Chueca (enough said). Secondly, it has three floors and therefore much more seating area. And then there's a stunning **rooftop bar**, perfect for people-watching! What's more, the rooftop bar's prices are reasonable; a glass of wine costs the same as at any other bar on street level. So why not pop up to the roof and have your

drink there? Sometimes they have free live music too.

Address: C/ Augusto Figueroa 24, 3rd floor

Metro: Chueca

[Facebook](#)



4. Tartan Roof: on top of **Círculo de Bellas Artes** (Fine Arts Building)

The sky is the canvas atop this fine arts institution. Overlooking the *Castellana* and *Plaza de Cibeles*, and perched on top of the exquisite *Circulo de Bellas Artes* building, it's no wonder why [Tartan Roof](#) has the most breathtaking views out of all on this list. For 3€, anyone can go up to the roof to have a look. The fee is waved if you have **dinner reservations** (an absolute must). My friend's earlier post says it all [here](#). This is also a really popular place for cocktails, though slightly expensive, you're paying for the view, not the drink itself. The first time I went to this roof was on ***Día de la Música*** (Music Day). The **Azotea** (rooftop) was participating by holding a free swing and tap dance performance. It was incredible to be up there looking out on Madrid's skyline.

Address: *c/ Alcalá 42*

Metro: *Banco de España or Sevilla*

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If you're looking for more, here's [Madrid's best rooftops, Round 2](#) and [Round 3](#)!

And feel free to let us know about your

favorite Madrid rooftop bars!