

Egeo, delicious Greek cuisine in Lavapiés

New bars and restaurants seem to open up constantly in the diverse neighborhood of Lavapiés. Among these additions is [Egeo](#), a Greek *souvlakeria* situated on the corner of C/ Ave Maria and C/ San Carlos. Here you'll find several Greek-style street food dishes, including pita sandwich options (€3-4), as well as salads and skewers (€5-7).



Egeo has quickly become my go-to place for take-away in the barrio, due to the quality of their ingredients. Zanas, the proprietor of the restaurant, is from Greece and is pleased that his establishment has been so well received by residents of the neighborhood.



The Greek salad is served with a very generous portion of feta cheese and warm slices of pita bread.



The souvlaki and skewers are hearty and filling. The one pictured here is the “hamburger” gyro – it has both veal and lamb meat, plus a fried egg! There are more traditional gyros on the menu as well, such as pork with tomato, onion and tzatziki. Also worth noting is their vegetarian option, a delicious pumpkin souvlaki.



Sometimes they introduce new menu items, like grilled Haloumi cheese (made from a mix of goat's and sheep's milk).



Most of the main dishes come with homemade fries and tzatziki. Otherwise you can order them as sides, as we did. Tip: order the potatoes with feta cheese on top. Amazing.



And what better way to end your Greek meal than with baklava? Plus you have the option of adding vanilla ice cream to it. Can't say no to that...



**This article was updated in February, 2019*

Info

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De María: Fabulous Argentinian Restaurant

I discovered this fabulous restaurant not too long ago, called [De María](#), as two people recommended it to me on separate occasions. Since then it has become one of my go-to spots in Madrid. [De María](#) is one of those restaurants that always leaves a good impression on everyone who dines there; the food is great, portions are generous and the price is fantastic.

[De María](#) is popular to say the least; photographs of famous patrons line the walls: athletes like Beckham and actors like Javier Bardem are just some of the familiar faces who have enjoyed this wonderful restaurant.



De María has several locations. So far I've tried three of them and none was disappointing.

The menu is varied and contains good-quality ingredients. You can choose from a variety of mouth-watering starters, such as "chorizo criollo", or vegetable dishes, pastas and salads and, of course, the traditional Argentine beef. The last time I dined here we weren't very hungry so we opted for a lighter menu. Something that stands out to me about **De María** is that

you always get tasty snacks to nibble on while you wait for your food to arrive.



The **chimichurri** and **pepper sauces** are a must, as is the **cream cheese spread**. During the summer they usually bring a glass of gazpacho or salmorejo. When it's cold out, they tend to bring you a creamy vegetable soup – in our case, we got a delicious pumpkin soup.

As a starter, we went for the **grilled Provolone cheese**. It was simply exquisite and even more when covered with one of their tasty sauces. "**Chorizo criollo**" is another must.



After the cheese plate, my friend and I ordered salads; she ordered a **mixed salad** and I had a **caprese salad** – light, fresh, and deliciously paired with a beer and a glass of white wine.



We decided to skip dessert because we weren't too hungry, but the waiter didn't seem to care: he brought us each a **glass of tangerine sorbet** and a **yogurt and mango sauce** (on the house!), along with their traditional shots.





De María's prices are very reasonable. We paid about €21 each. So if you want to enjoy Argentinian cuisine and a friendly atmosphere, this is your place. It also has the advantage of having several locations so finding a table will not be a problem.

The locations I've visited are:

- *De María: Calle Hortaleza, 81, 28004, Madrid*
- *De María: Calle Preciados 32, 28013, Madrid*
- *De María: Calle Correo 2, 28012, Madrid*

You can find all the locations listed on their [web](#)

If you want to enjoy more Argentinian restaurants in Madrid, then check out our article on [Casa Federica](#).

La Falda, a cheeky new wine bar and restaurant in Lavapiés

When a restaurant welcomes me with a wine list featuring labels like 'The Madman's Inn' and 'The Perfect Boyfriend', I'm intrigued. When they accompany it with a quality Thai-Spanish tapa and Motown, I'm hooked.



A deliciously smooth glass of Delito Garnacha

[La Falda de Lavapiés](#) is just the kind of tongue-in-cheek tavern that the neighborhood needs, offering quirky bites and a one-of-a-kind wine list to the wide variety of patrons that Calle Miguel Servet attracts. I've stopped in for a bite a few

times since it opened in early October, and each time the menu, which only features about ten dishes, has been edited to include the week's freshest ingredients. Aside from the ever-evolving menu, they also feature a distinctive [menú del día](#) plus daily specials that range from ramen to *callos*, highlighting the kind of international versatility that is all too often hard to find in Madrid.

On my most recent visit, we were offered *secreto ibérico* in sweet and sour sauce as our free *aperitivo* as we browsed the menu. The Thai flavors and fantastic cut of Spanish pork paired nicely with the Delito Garnacha wine we had chosen, and by the time we waved down the waitress to order, our appetites were more than piqued.

We chose four small plates to share between the two of us, testing La Falda's version of the Spanish classics of jamón croquettes and cured beef, or *cecina*, and their ability to **fuse Castillian products with Asian flair** in their pork spring rolls and octopus sandwich.



Mouth-wateringly marbled cecina



Vietnamese pork spring rolls

The *cecina* was some of the best I've tried in Madrid, and I consider myself something of a cured beef expert, ordering it any time I spot it on a menu. While all of the flavors were impeccable, the winner had to be the octopus sandwich with its mixture of Thai herbs and Spanish paprika.



Thai-style octopus sandwich

We only stopped ooh-ing and ah-ing over each bite to sing along with the Motown greats that enveloped the room, and reluctantly put our forks down to watch in awe as the couple next to us jumped up to ballroom dance to James Brown's "It's a Man's World."

La Falda is the perfect example of what makes Lavapiés so special: it puts quality at the forefront and serves its food with a wink, but recognizes that in the end, it's only a space for the vibrant community to enjoy life, and does everything it can to facilitate that. Go for a drink or go for a date. Go, eat, watch the people and leave content in mind, body and

soul.

Info

- [Facebook](#)
 - **Address:** Calle Miguel Servet 4 (Metro Lavapies or Embajadores)
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Little Bites of Tapapies 2015

[Tapapies](#), the multicultural tapas route in barrio Lavapies, is my favorite Madrid festivity. The winding streets are even more lively than usual, filled with musical performances and happy crowds of people drinking and eating. **Local businesses within the barrio can thrive** by making themselves approachable to outsiders while simultaneously deconstructing the rampant **misconception that Lavapies is unsafe.**

From October 15th -25th the participating bars in Lavapies are serving a **botellin** of Estrella Damm and a unique tapa representing the cuisines of various countries & the regions of Spain. The abundance of tapa options in the pamphlet can be overwhelming, making it difficult to decide which locations to select. **Readers be warned, the portions are quite small and the bars can get incredibly crowded** so it is advised that you navigate this path strategically.

After two nights of field research, **I have compiled a list of noteworthy samples worthy for your barhopping endeavors.** This is an ongoing investigation and any leads from readers would be appreciated!

1. #37 La Amparito – C/ Amparo 88



The **Berenjena Ay! Amparo**, a tapa consisting of mozzarella cheese wrapped in thinly sliced aubergine with a pesto sauce. As the first tapa that I managed to sample, it set the expectations for the bars to follow very high. This cozy bar is one that I would return to under regular circumstances because I enjoyed their selection of swing music.

2. #44 La Fantastica de Lavapies C/Embajadores 42



Tartar con Helado de Wasabi is exactly what it translates to in English, an ambitious combination of little bits of smoked salmon and wasabi ice cream.

3. #91 Tribuexete – C/ Tribulete 23



I've written about Tribuexete in a [previous post](#), the location that served the winning tapa during last year's festivities. I applaud their gastronomic sponge-like tapa ***Maite*** this year for its presentation, texture and combination of flavors. The

origin of this tapa is Donostia, San Sebastian. I frequent this establishment and it fuels my longing to visit the Basque Country myself some day.

4. #74 Portomarin- C/Valencia 4 (Next to the Carrefour)



This location's tapa, *Vini-Cola*, was a sizeable portion of bull's tail with bordelaise sauce.

5. #12 Bierzo Alto-C/Sombrerereria, 6



A small cup of shrimp and crab chowder was served at this location.

Inside Mercado de San Fernando

The noteworthy samples below can be found at the unnumbered locations in [Mercado San Fernando](#), also written about in a [previous post](#). The Mercado is an excellent location to enjoy [Tapapies](#) due to the numerous stalls serving tapas within close proximity.

6. Exargia

Exargia



Bekri Meze, representing Greek cuisine, consisted of little bits of pork loin with rice, feta cheese and a white wine tomato sauce.

7. El Saja

El Saja



Agasaja – two small crackers with **homemade jams** & Picón Bejes-Tresviso, a blue cheese typical of Cantabria.

8. Washoku



Cerviche Nikkei – the Japanese stall in the Mercado served a Ceviche of salmon & whitefish.

Which Tapapiés tapa is your favorite?

Bollymadrid 2015 – 3-Day Bollywood Festival in Lavapiés!!

The whole neighborhood of Lavapiés is turning into a open-air **Bollywood and Indian cultural festival** from June 5 – 7. The main plaza gets filled with Indian food stalls selling Cobra beer, curry, lassis, mimosas... and just a two-minute walk

away, at Plaza Agustin Lara, there'll be non-stop Bollywood music, film and dance performances on stage!

Here's the whole schedule so you can take a look:

[BollyMadrid 2015 Schedule](#)

[Facebook](#)

Madrid Street Art Project in Lavapiés

From May 7th – 21st, the whole neighborhood of Lavapiés will be turned into a blank canvas. Over forty urban artists will be painting, spraying and setting up beer bottles on the streets, storefronts, traffic lights, you name it. This year's edition of [Madrid Street Art Project](#) is the perfect excuse to head on over to Lavapiés, support local artists and enjoy Madrid at its finest. Plus some of our favorite places, like [Swinton & Grant](#) (featured in the photo), will be getting a nice makeover. So get out, walk the streets and check it out!

Organizers: [C.A.L.L.E. Lavapiés](#) and the [Asociación Comerciantes de Lavapiés](#), an association dedicated to promoting local businesses.

Swinton & Grant: Art, Books, Coffee

We wandered Lavapiés on an overcast day, searching for our regular *dosis* of *cafeína*. As we crept to the door of [our usual haunt](#), my friends and I found a CLOSED sign awaiting us.

Spain's *siesta* schedule had tricked us yet again – even baristas need a break. The time had come to try a new café.



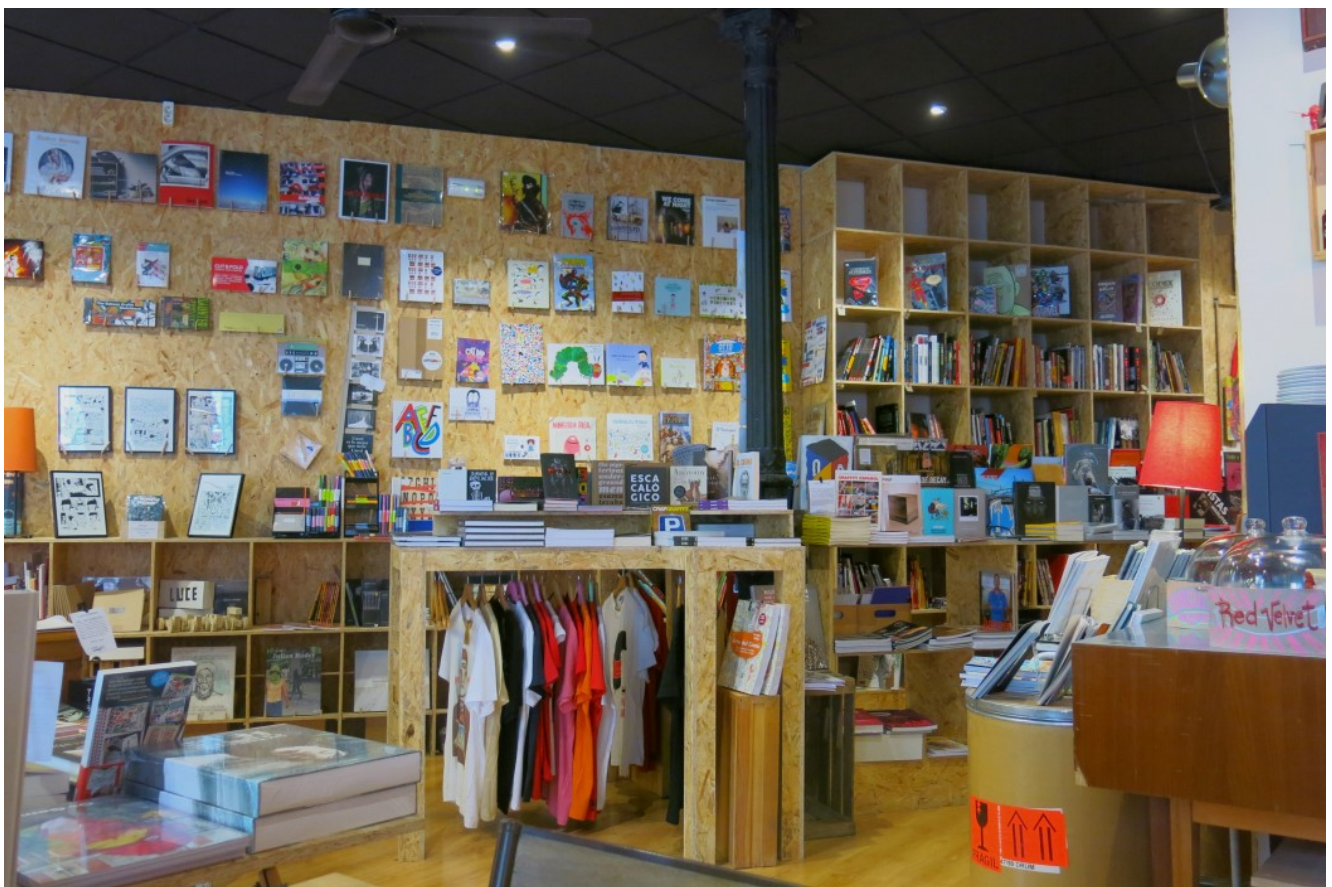
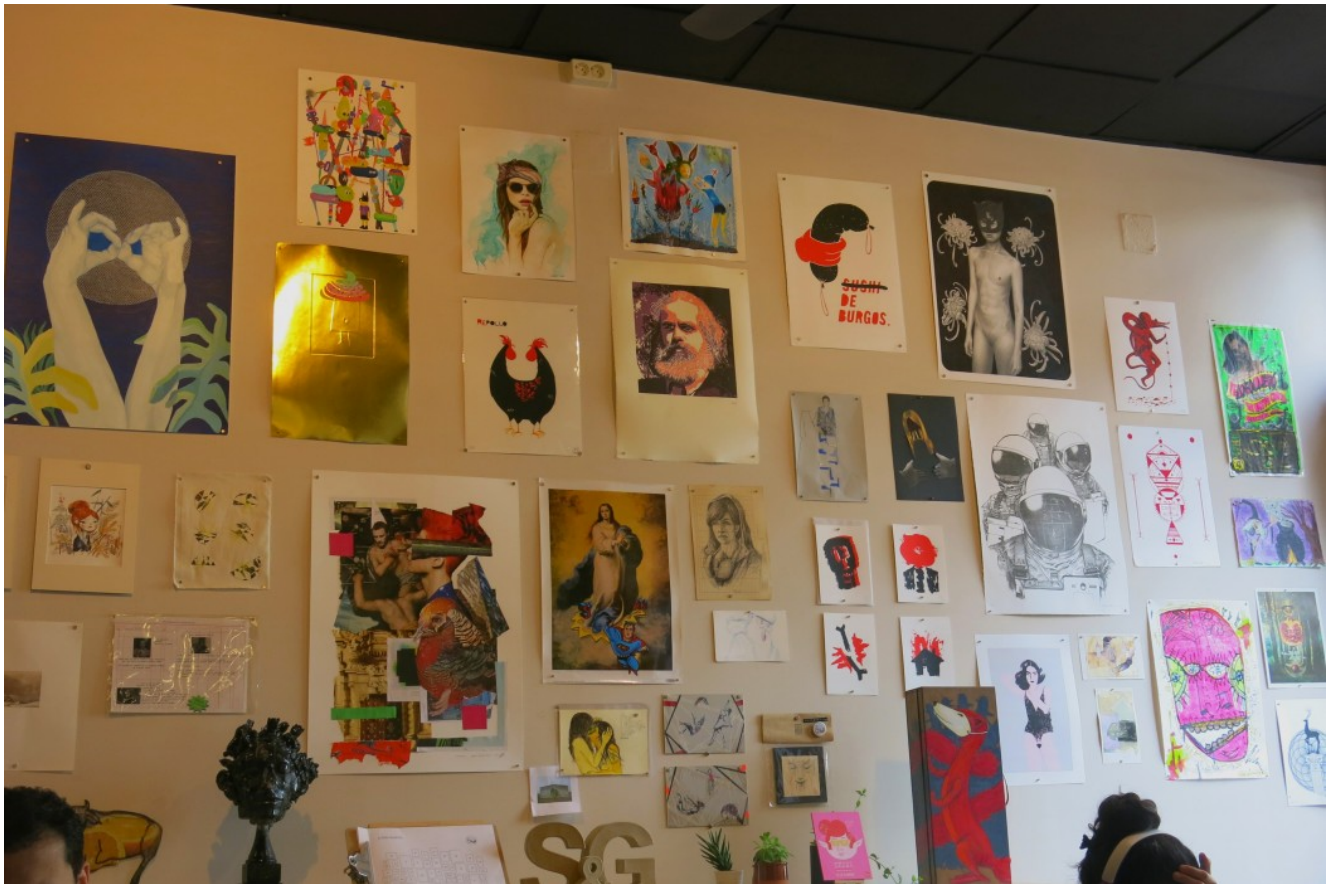
Open since last May, [Swinton & Grant](#) sits just off the Glorieta de Embajadores, amid North African falafel joints, street art, and cherry blossom trees. As you walk down **Calle Miguel Servet**, you'll first notice just how big the place is.

Natural light streaks through black velvet curtains, revealing two main areas: on the first floor, **Ciudadano Grant**, a café-bookstore. In the basement, the **Swinton Gallery**, a large space for local artist exhibitions.



Swinton & Grant, Embajadores





Hip folks feel at home here. Bare bulbs and LEDs light customers' way to the pressboard bookshelves lined with English and Spanish biographies, comics, and children's

picture books. Jars of LEGOs and framed pictures of Leonard Nemo draw your eye to bottles of Arizona Tea, Jones Soda, and fresh cakes and cookies. Bon Iver, Jorge Gonzalez, and Fleet Foxes tickle the ears while you waltz through the space.

The menu, with its own abstract artwork, impresses. **Coffees** come cheap (around €1.40). For a small charge, you can enjoy the flavor palates of **special bean blends** from Costa Rica, Kenya, Colombia, and other countries. **Teas** come in all sizes, colors, and temperatures.



The café offers a **desayuno special** before 1PM every day.

While you appreciate the art that is half-Banksy, half-neoclassical, you can try the classic *pan con tomate*, a ham and cheese sandwich, or a slice of cake with your choice of beverage – all for **€2-4**. If you're still hungry, go for a full-size *bocadillo* or a giant cookie.





After your *sobremesa*, take a look downstairs, where artists hang their work in **rotating exhibits**. Next on the program are characteristic contemporary pieces from [Luis Pérez Calvo](#),

[Victor Solana](#), and [Antonyo Marest](#). If you're feeling fancy, feel free to buy the art, with prices ranging from a few euros to a few hundred.





Since my first fateful detoured day into Swinton & Grant's doors, it's quickly become one of my favorite Madrid spaces. These days, when I'm in the mood for comfort, cake, and

caffeine, I invariably make my way to Embajadores.

Info:

[Web](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

Address: Calle Miguel Servet 21

Metro: Embajadores

Some photos courtesy of Keith Lema

You may also like:

[Best Cafe-bookshops round 1](#)

[Best Cafe-bookshops round 2](#)

[El Cafelito – for coffee lovers in Lavapiés](#)

[Desperate Literature – Santorini, Brookly and now, Madrid!](#)

La Chispa, Live Storytelling in English and Spanish in Lavapiés

Misunderstanding—now there's a theme to which everyone can relate. The fourth incarnation of [La Chispa](#), a live storytelling event held on March 1, offered storytellers a platform to share tales of malentendidos with an audience gathered at [Atelier Café de la Llana](#) in Lavapies. La Chispa

takes its inspiration from [The Moth](#), an organization that hosts storytelling events across the globe and radio and podcast editions as well. La Chispa's coordinator, Natasha Yaworsky, gave birth to the idea of hosting a Moth-like event in Madrid after listening to many of the organization's programs. "The stories are always good," she explained when asked why The Moth had become an auditory staple in her life, "no matter what," she added.



As event organizer Dan Catalan (featured in the photo above) put it, a "passionate and clever little team" started La Chispa and has been keeping it running since September of this year. Animation student Diego Salas joins Yaworsky and Catalan to round out the co-founding group. The three started working on the idea for the event and from there, according to Salas, "our support network, friends, everyone stepped up to help." After wandering around Lavapies, it was decided that [Atelier Café de la Llana](#) was the most qualified space, and owner Enrique de la Llana was willing to offer the setting as a background for the event.



Natasha Yaworsky

At the most recent event, the theme of malentendidos produced narratives that produced laughs. Catalan explained, "there is always a theme to the events, but it is purposely vague so that storytellers have freedom to take it and run with it." What better theme than malentendidos for a gathering with an audience heavily comprised of expats for whom life is a landmine of misunderstandings when daily interactions must be carried out in a foreign language? Not only are the themes meant to be broad, they are also meant to be widely relatable. One story, dealt with a series of business interactions riddled with misunderstanding due to language difference. There was a moving account focusing on the themes of identity and acceptance all through an account of being misunderstood as a famous Asian prostitute while at a dance club in Tel Aviv. Another wove an elaborate saga about a misunderstanding that happened years ago in a summer camp bathroom. The stories ran the gamut, each with their own flair and intrigue.



Diego Salas

Storytellers participating in La Chispa are asked to keep their tales between 8 and 10 minutes. To mark the time, harmonica player extraordinaire, Diana Dwyer, alerted the speakers when their spot is about to end. If the harmonica sounds (pun-intended) kitschy, it did not seem at all out of place at the event. It was just another piece of the patchwork.

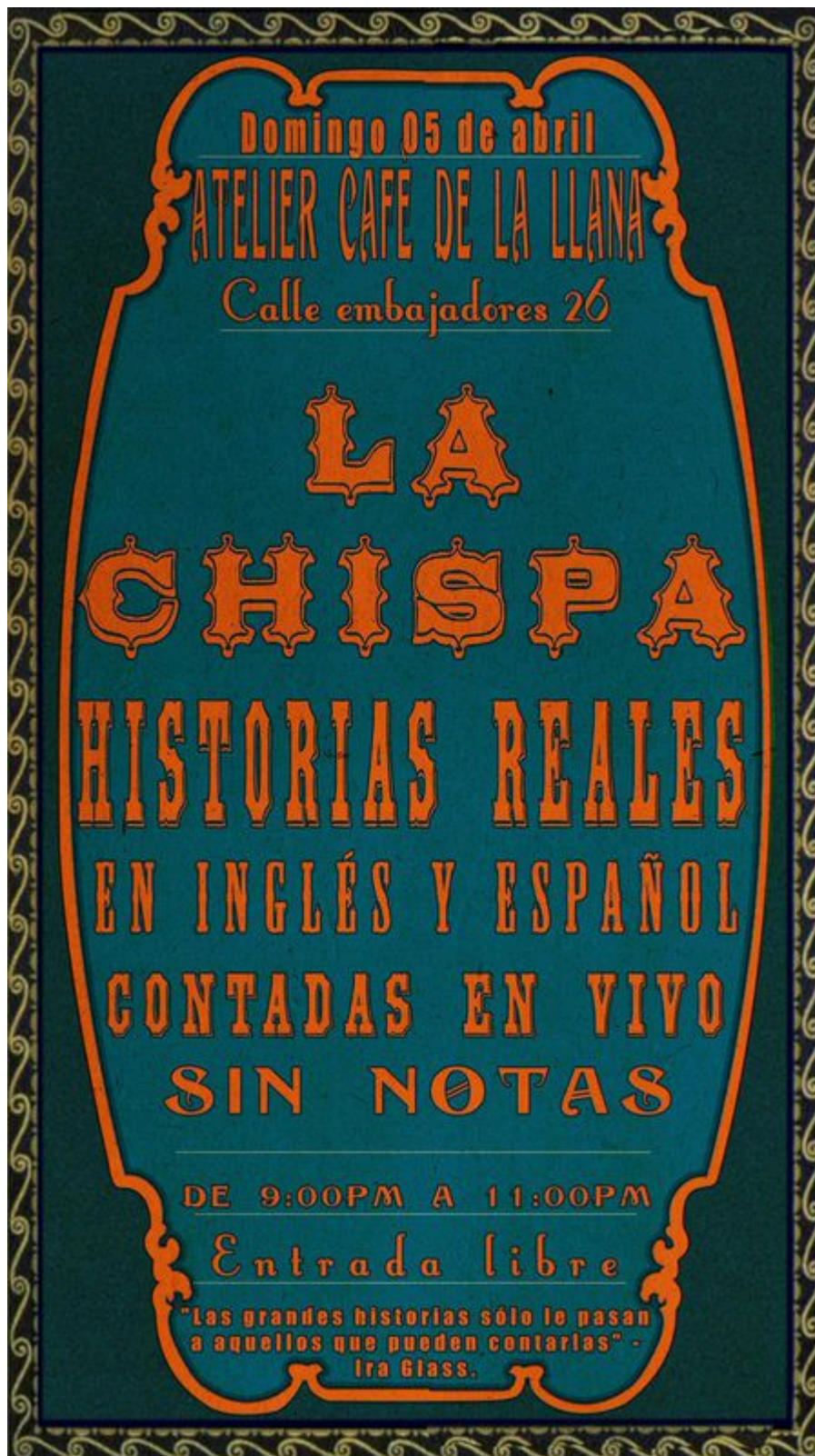


Inside the space, chairs were so crammed into the small cafe space that when one person would get up, another person would sit down in their chair, which also added to the collective ambience of the event. The pre-show period became a bit like a game of musical chairs, but what better way to circulate and share some of your own stories except not in front of a mic?



At La Chispa: Malentendidos, expats comprised most of the crowd, but according to various event-goers, the audience makeup has been different with each go-around. Yaworsky remarked that she liked the idea of hosting the event in Madrid because of its potential to **“offer a middle ground to English and Spanish speakers.”** Storytellers may tell their accounts in either English or Spanish (as long as they tell them without notes) and the pre-selected themes guarantee that speakers of either language will relate. The organizers expressed a desire for more Spanish storytellers to come forward and have their voices heard.

Another hope for future events is for the event to showcase stories from a broader range of perspectives, specifically and to have participants from a wider range of ages. Yaworsky’s ultimate goal for the project is to have The Moth come to Madrid and host an official event.



In the meantime, the event coordinators want to encourage storytellers—**seasoned and burgeoning alike**—to share their stories at upcoming events. The organizers were quick to acknowledge that the general public may think that they cannot tell a story, but were even quicker to offer assurances that story tellers will receive ample assistance in preparing for

the event.

Once the story tellers have committed, **the event organizers host workshops to rehearse the stories**, hash out details, and give performers the chance to work out how exactly they want to spin their tales. At the workshops, storytellers hear feedback on how to crystalize the three main parts of the story: the beginning, conflict, and end as well as receive tips on how to “pretzel” or tie it all together. The theme for the next scheduled La Chispa has been set for ‘Las desgracias nunca vienen solas’ or ‘When it rains, it pours.’”



The [event](#) will be held on **Sunday, April 5 at 9 pm**. Both storytellers and story-listeners are welcome. Yet another event is planned for Sunday, May 3. Keep an eye out for posters designed by Salas advertising the event. In the words of the event’s mastermind Nastasha Yaworksy: The more you

listen, the more you realize that you have a story to tell. The photographic services company, Imagimedia, was on site to video record the event and the stories will be available for viewing on YouTube and [Facebook](#).

To find out about upcoming La Chispa events, check out:

[La Chispa's Facebook group](#)

[Naked Madrid's event page](#)

[Atelier Café de la Llana \(event venue\)](#)

The Quest for Bagels in Madrid: 5 Locations Offering the Elusive Comfort Food

Bagels were a staple of my life back home in the outskirts of New York City—the **inaccessible status of bagels was the only demerit against Spain** in an earlier draft of my “Should I Move to Spain” pros & cons list. I’ve craved them badly during my time abroad, to the point where I have even asked my closest friend from home, Jake, to allow me to witness his consumption of authentic bagels via Skype. Bagels are a foreign concept here—whenever I’m describing them to Spanish folks, they can’t visualize the distinction from a donut or *roscon de reyes*.

However, due to **Madrid's growing American expat population**, I held out hope that opportunist business owners would step up and fill the circular void. The ensuing investigation had me scouring the city, running down every lead and pressing on

every underworld connection. These are my findings: I strongly advise purists to **manage their expectations** when sampling imitations of such an esteemed snack from the old country.

So here, my friends, is a list of Madrid's bagel joints. In true form, I've saved the best bite for last...

1) Restaurante Olsen – Calle del Prado 15 (CLOSED DOWN)

The pursuit began with a rocky start for me and my friend Julie. Although the servers at Restaurante Olsen, a Scandanavian restaurant near the Prado, were kind enough to give us their leftover “bagels” for free, they weren't at all what we were hoping for—in fact I would go as far as to call these circular bread sticks **an abomination of nature**. This restaurant, which has since closed down, established the precedent low standard to which the ensuing specimens were held.



2) La Bicicleta Cafe – Plaza San Ildefonso, 9

This popular hipster cafe in Malasaña has a few bagel sandwiches under the display case by the bar. They're **a bit too dry** (and expensive) for my liking. Served with arugula and *jamon*, **this sandwich might as well be served on any other type of bread.**



3) La Libre – Calle de Argumosa, 39

This [cafe/bookshop](#) in Lavapiés offers a broad variety of *tostadas*, one of which is called “El Larson.” The bagels are imported from England and kept frozen, served to diners with cream cheese and lox and little bits of avocado. Due to its status as the bagel most accessible to me within my *barrio*, this is my default when the craving overwhelms me. Although not as crisp as I would like, it does the job adequately. The **added sesame seeds** are indeed a pleasant touch.



4) Mür – Plaza Cristino Martos, 2

A large and comfortable brunch spot, Mür offers an 8.50€ euro “American” breakfast entailing a toasted bagel sandwich with cream cheese & lox, steak fries, and a cup of coffee. This location earns points for its product’s toasty crispness and presentation but loses points for its small size. The first bite is accompanied by the **familiar crunch sound**.



5) J&Js Books and Coffee – Calle del Espíritu Santo, 47

This popular expat [bar/English language bookstore](#) swiftly cornered the market with their vast selection of homemade bagels. **The only known establishment that manufactures bagels from scratch**, it is apparent that they have a concise understanding of both the product and the expectations held by the consumer. Their offerings are flavorful, especially when served fresh during their weekend brunch. The pictures below document the process in which their bagels are produced.







Have I missed anything in my investigation? Feel free to share the details of any other Bagel providers in the comments section!

Also check out our series on Madrid's best cafe-bookstores!

Round 1

Round 2

Los Porfiados, an inviting Argentine bistro in Lavapies

I routinely walk by [Los Porfiados](#) and have always been intrigued by what I could glimpse from the outside. I was thrilled when I finally had the opportunity to enter and scratch it off of my shortlist. An Argentine bistro situated on **Calle Buenavista**, this establishment radiates elegance and class. The decor and lighting are cozy and inspire diners with a sense of comfort. **Reservations are necessary in order to be seated due to its popularity.** I saw many people enter and then be turned away due to this spot being so trendy.



The staff all hail from Buenos Aires, sans one who is from Barcelona. I was told that the location is only a year and a half old, swiftly ascending to local fame. Upon being seated, the attentive waiter relayed to me my options from their **vast menu**. It was difficult to choose from their selection—they offer **Argentine empanadas** and **gourmet pizzas**, fillets of meat and a many **fresh salads**. To start I had a smooth **cream of broccoli soup**, accompanied by a glass of *vino tinto*.





The main course was a ***solomillo de cerdo*** with **sweet potato chips**. Absolutely excellent, the meat was savory and cooked to perfection. After using *eenie meanie minie mo* to make a decision of which of their assortment of desserts to consume, I was presented with a delicious chocolate cake. The check was slightly steeper than most of the other locations I've written about, coming out to **19€**. Keep in mind that this is a cash only business. I recommend this location to anyone who wants to be classy for a night, whether to impress a date or to celebrate a personal achievement, or to merely hone the skill of pretending to be classy.



Info

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle Buenavista 18

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Other restaurants we love in Lavapiés:

[Los Chuchis Bar, downright good food in Lavapiés](#)

[Tribuetxe, a Basque Pintxo bar in Lavapiés](#)

[Restaurante Badila – you need this restaurant in your life](#)