

Art lover's guide to Madrid: 7 resources to keep you up to date

Happy 2020! Perhaps you're one of the many people who have made various resolutions to start the year afresh and become a better version of yourself. Is one of your resolutions to increase your cultural knowledge and take full advantage of the art offered by this great city? Even if you're not the resolution type and you're just looking for some guidance in terms of where to find out more about art in Madrid, never fear! We're here to guide you to the relevant information.

1. [EsMadrid](#)



Now let's say you don't speak Spanish. In that case, your best choice to find information about art in English in Madrid is from the Art and Culture section of Madrid's official tourism website, [EsMadrid](#). In addition to English and Spanish, this site is available in 7 other languages, including Japanese and Russian. Now one of its great pluses is that it breaks down the various tourist passes available like the Paseo del Arte Pass which grants the holder one visit to the permanent collection of each of the city's main museums, the Prado, The Reina Sofia and the Thyssen-Bornemisza. This pass is great for

visitors who are just in the city for a short while and who only want to dive into the big ticket sites but there are other passes which give you access to more museums for periods such as ten to fifteen days for the consummate art lover.

EsMadrid's great strength is the breadth of its scope – it covers cultural centres to exhibition halls to house museums and contains the most pertinent information at a glance, including the location, price, opening hours and best transport options. And if you want a great overview of Madrid's art offerings, be sure to take a gander at the Art in Madrid Guide PDF which is an unbeatable introduction to both the leading museums and their holdings as well as some of the lesser known but just as formative art centres like the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, just off of Sol.

2. [Time Out Madrid](#)



Now if you're looking for information that is a bit more curated, don't miss [Time Out Madrid](#). While the English version of their website is not quite as comprehensive as the Spanish one, there are still a number of articles, which are constantly updated, highlighting the most popular, current exhibitions, free art, street art and graffiti as well as the

city's most celebrated paintings and museums.

Time Out is an incredibly well-known and versatile publication with branches all over the world and it has even recently launched a print magazine here in Madrid which releases monthly. You can often find the print magazine being given out for free at major metro stations just after release, or later, in trendy cafes, independent bookshops and some libraries. I would highly recommend grabbing a copy if you can because it goes into even more detail of certain expositions and features some recommendations and interviews which are exclusive to the magazine.

3. [Madrid Diferente](#)



Continuing on to Spanish-language recommendations, another favourite is [Madrid Diferente](#). Similar to Time Out Madrid, Madrid Diferente publishes a [weekly agenda](#) of things to do over the entire upcoming week, not just the weekend. Their picks are often eclectic and a little bit off the beaten path. I almost always discover some activity or event that I've never heard of before and that is only happening for just this weekend and that's why I try to check every Thursday because you don't want to miss out!

Madrid has so much to offer it can be overwhelming but here you have a streamlined list of options. Now, if you check their "Es Capital" section, you will be exposed to a host of activities and spaces that are intimate and rewarding like Madrid's smallest photo gallery or a self-guided tour of Madrid's most unusual, outdoor sculptures. And if you want to kill two birds with one stone, Madrid Diferente's writers have

recently begun including suggestions for recommended restaurants or cafes near to the gallery or museum they're currently highlighting. A win win, in my book!

4. [Madrid Free](#)



Perhaps your number one New Year's resolution is to sort out your finances and you're afraid that this is all sounding very expensive. Well, did you know that there's a website dedicated solely to free cultural activities in Madrid? It's called [Madrid Free](#) and it has a [dedicated section for Expositions](#) which is updated frequently. It also covers exhibitions from contemporary art galleries as well as the ones from museums and cultural centres like CentroCentro Cibeles and the Matadero. If you want even more up to the minute information on free activities, be sure to also follow them on Facebook if you have it because they update it often.

5. [Arte Informado](#)



So if you want the absolute, most comprehensive list of temporary art offerings in the city, look no further than [Arte Informado](#). This is basically a holy grail for art lovers as this website aims to serve almost every country in the Iberian-American space and includes a magazine, art courses and art prizes. However, even if you just want to know about art expositions, they compile those too with an incredible search engine that allows you to narrow down your choices by

date, city or country and even specify the type of art.

At this very moment, if you search for exhibitions in Madrid, narrowing it down no further, it shows 19,787 exhibitions available. You can't deny – that's a lot of art. If that sounds like a bit much, Arte Informado also has a weekly newsletter which you can sign up for that delivers some of the most prominent exhibits right into your mailbox.

6. [Museo del Prado's Instagram account](#)



If you want your Instagram experience to be more positive and enlightening, follow the [Museo del Prado's official account](#): @museoprado. Every weekday morning, they do an Instagram Live video highlighting either an art work or a room of the museum, which is then left up for the rest of the day so you can check it out when you can. Additionally, in their posts, they often share videos showing the mounting of exhibits as well as other day-to-day aspects of working and running a major museum. It's a fantastic, accessible way to flesh out your art history knowledge.

7. [Madrid Art and Culture Facebook](#)

group

*Art enriches our lives, it connects us
Art renews and replenishes us
Across time and place, cultures and civilisations,
Art endures and unites
Art - humanity's beating heart*

Finally if you'd like to get more of my insight into Madrid's cultural goings-on, feel free to join my Facebook group, [Madrid Art and Culture](#), which is meant to showcase the many different sides of this city, although it is quite heavy on art and film. I created it about a year and a half ago and the group now has just over 1400 members with frequent posts about film festivals, art exhibits, plays and much more. Furthermore, as it's a Facebook group, all members are able to post about activities and events that interest them or that they are taking part in.

I hope I've given you the tools to hit the ground running this year when it comes to art. To a culturally enriching 2020!

By Kristen Wiltshire (IG: @makidocious)

When she's not at a museum or the movies, Kristen can usually be found trying to make headway in her giant pile of books or her miles long Netflix queue. She also runs [Madrid Art and Culture](#), a Facebook group dedicated to Madrid's myriad cultural offerings.

Madrid Artist Showcase: Local Composer and Violinist Santiago Vokram

Madrid's vibrant music scene is full of gems and untold stories. Despite winter taking hold, there are many upcoming gigs with emerging artists and performers. For each of these, there is an untold story waiting to be showcased. [Santiago Vokram](#) is a local performing artist who wields a violin to serenade his audiences. I have had the good fortune to witness him in action and interview him about his life and creative journey.

My first impression of him was that his attire and unique sense of style reflected that **he is a person who breathes in creative energy**. He can take the sound to areas I didn't think violins were capable.

So without further ado, here's his story and upcoming dates so you, too, can experience his music.

Santiago Vokram's musical story and style

Hailing from Mexico City, Santiago began his career as a musician there in Rock-Celtic fusion band *La Agonia de Leonara* at 13. He devoted himself fully to practicing the violin, and growing as a performer, citing it as an escape from the empty spaces of life. He would go on to study music at Mexico's elite *Escuela Nacional de Musica*.

Santi reminisced on how in his youth he was inspired by the Spanish band *Mago de Oz* and when he learned that the group had split, he relocated to Madrid to join José Andrëa & *Uróoboros*, the next project of original *Mago de Oz* members.

Santi remained modest when describing his ascension to **dreaming of meeting his heroes and then having the opportunity to create alongside them** in his newly adopted country. He became deeply embedded in Madrid's thriving creative scene and began performing alongside other revered local artists such as [Ataca Paca](#), and on the international circuit with renowned Gypsy musician [Robby Lakatos](#).

Where he is now



Santi's current band, which reflects his personal expression, is *La Sonrisa de Cibeleles*. This trio seeks to create something unprecedented as a cross-over fusion of world-classical and pop music. Its members are **Santi on Violin, Benja Bravo on Double Bass and Germán Nuñez on Guitar**. Their goal is to help a younger audience expand their perception of "classical" music and to disrupt the local music scene by introducing sounds with less precedent.

Santi's style as a performer ranges from classical to

unconventional. The violin is an essential part of traditional mariachi groups and can be weaved into classical jazz, rock, folk and other improvisational contexts. In addition to his solo-acts and collaboration with other artists, Santi performs at upscale events and in luxury hotels seeking to provide a stylized ambiance. Notably, **Netflix has utilized Santiago as a creative asset** in the mariachi ensemble featured in *Narcos Mexico*.

Our connection

What Santiago and I share is that both of us have collaborated on creative projects with the versatile public relations strategist, programmer, event planner, and art instructor Vesta Rounsaville. Vesta manages Santi's social media presence and coordinates his routine concerts in Madrid's venues. With her help, he has managed to expand his circle of collaborators to Madrid's international community of musicians, comedians, and actors. Additionally, his concerts have raised funds for [Madrid for Refugees](#), a prominent volunteer group.

Santi confided in me that as his visibility increased, he became exposed to uglier elements of the music scene noting that "adoration can become insanity or envy." He went on to say that **"If you have a vision, you need to improve it little by little."**

Despite a lack of a conventional road map to follow, coupled with at times a lack of financial security, **Santi never wavered in his pursuits** despite sometimes deeply missing his parents in Mexico, or his loved ones whenever he'd tour for prolonged periods.

Upcoming shows

You can be captivated by Santiago's stage personality and violin prowess at Teatro-Bar Hipócritas (La Latina) this

Saturday the 23rd at 22:00 where La Sonrisa de Cibeles will enchant their audience.

You can also catch them at [Microteatro Por Dinero](#)'s mini-concert festival Microsound in December (Malasaña/Gran Vía). Tickets for the concert in Teatro-Bar Hipócritas can be purchased via [Entradium](#).

Santiago Vokram

y
La Sonrisa de
Cibeles

POP jazz fusión Latina clásica

3 + 10 + 17 diciembre



microteatro

Contact

If you would like for Santiago Vokram to perform at an event, or to utilize his work for branded content, contact [Vesta Rounsaville](#).

If you know of any other Madrid-based artists that you'd like to showcase on Naked Madrid, don't hesitate to [get in touch with us to submit a post](#).

Things to do in Madrid: Naked's ultimate guide 2019

Whether it's your first time in the city or you've been living here for years, this guide provides a little something for everyone. You'll find a mix of touristy and non-touristy things to do in Madrid, along with hidden gems and quirky tidbits scattered throughout.

We plan on updating this guide regularly with our own discoveries and friendly suggestions. So feel free to comment!

Wining & dining

As you walk through the streets of Madrid it can feel like there are more bars and restaurants than people. Choosing where to eat and drink among all the options is tricky at times, so here's a list to start off with:

Food markets

Many of Madrid's neighborhood markets have been revamped while preserving their traditional spirit. They're one of the best ways to experience Madrid's food culture. Here's a list of the most popular *mercados*:

[Mercado de San Miguel](#): The city's prettiest and most famous food market, situated right off Plaza Mayor. The quality here is excellent, although you'll usually find hordes of visitors.

[Mercado de San Fernando](#): My favorite food market in the city, situated in Lavapiés. Here you'll find a great, casual atmosphere, visited by locals and foreigners alike. There's a wonderful mix of food stalls, from the Asturian [El Guaje de Lavapiés](#) to the Portuguese [Mercadillo Lisboa](#).



[Mercado de San Antón](#): If you're in Chueca and not sure where to go, head over to this multi-level food market and grab a drink on the rooftop bar, open year round!

[Mercado de Antón Martín](#): This popular market offers several classic food stalls and international eateries, including one of the city's best Italian restaurants, **[Fiaschetteria La Saletta](#)**.

- Tip: just one flight up you'll find the most important flamenco dance studio in Madrid, **[Amor de Dios](#)**! Pop up to feel the vibe.

[Mercado de la Cebada](#): Located in La Latina, this market especially comes alive on Saturdays. You'll find visitors eating and drinking amid the labyrinth of stalls. Join them!

- Also read: **[La Latina's seafood party in Mercado de la Cebada](#)**





[Mercado de Vallehermoso](#): Located near Arguelles, this one's a little less central than the others, but no less active. You'll find the traditional market stalls situated alongside modern options like the popular [Kitchen 154](#), specializing in spicy Asian street food dishes.

Restaurants, bars and cafés:

[Bodegas Rosell](#): If you're looking for an authentic Spanish meal, it's best to go to one of the old-school *tabernas* that have stood the test of time, like Bodegas Rosell, situated by Atocha.



Three more Spanish eateries we love:

- [Juana la Loca](#): A family-run Spanish restaurant in La Latina offering a wonderful ambience and a menu featuring traditional and international dishes, and *pintxos* with a creative twist. Always a great choice.
- [Casa Mingo](#): A one-of-a-kind and very no-frills restaurant specializing in roasted chicken and *sidra* (cider) – so you get to learn how to pour it in the Asturian way (*escanciar*).
- [Bar Lambuzo](#): One of the first restaurants we ever wrote about on Naked Madrid, [back in 2014](#). Lovingly run by a family from Cádiz, this welcoming *taberna* serves authentic dishes from Andalucía. Bar Lambuzo now has three locations: Sol, Mercado de Chamberí, and Retiro.



Typical tapas at Bar Lambuzo

Tapas bar hopping in La Latina: At least one night in Madrid should be dedicated to tapas bar hopping, and one of the best streets to do this on is Cava Baja, along with its surrounding *calles* and *plazas*. Here you'll find bar after bar.. after bar.



Calle Ponzano, the city's top foodie street. Madrid has chosen Calle Ponzano to become its gourmet golden mile, lined with great restaurants to choose from, including [Sala Despicie](#), [Alipio Ramos](#) and [Toque de Sal](#).

- Here's a longer list of [places to eat on Calle Ponzano](#).

Corredera Bajo de San Pablo in Malasaña. This is another street that's full of fun bars and restaurants, including [Amargo Place to Be](#) (with live music), [Elemental Bistro](#) (French-Spanish cuisine) and [Aió](#) (Sardinian restaurant with a bike storage downstairs). There's also the famous Teatro Lara, and...

- **Secret bar at Kikekeller:** This design studio turns into a clandestine bar at night on the weekends, when art and mixology come together.

Lavapiés has it all: Malasaña and Chueca have become so popular that it's a bit overwhelming at times. The multicultural neighborhood of Lavapiés offers a more casual vibe, yet there's no shortage of food options.

- Some of our favorite places in Lavapiés include: [Los Chuchis](#), [Badila](#), [La Berenjena](#), [Los Porfiados](#), and [Barbieri](#), just to name a few.
- Also see: [10 eateries from around the world in Lavapiés and Embajadores](#)



[Egeo](#), a popular Greek place in Lavapiés

Barrio Salamanca: This is the city's higher-end area. It's very pretty and has some of the best eateries in the city, from Michelin-starred restaurants to friendly neighborhood bars. We'd love to explore Salamanca's hidden gems more. Here are some of the places we've previously featured:

- [StreetX0](#), a casual version of the world-famous [DiverX0](#) by rockstar chef Dabiz Muñoz
- [Arugula](#), a restaurant by Retiro Park serving great salads and healthy dishes
- [Tandoori Station](#), one of the city's top Indian restaurants
- [Banibanoo](#), a wonderful market-style Iranian restaurant



Delicious and seasonal Iranian dishes at [Banibanoo](#)

Go on a hunt for the best *tortilla*: This Spanish comfort food always hits the spot and you can order a “pincho” (slice) at just about every bar in the city. Try these spots (and many others) and see which one you like best: [Where to find the best tortilla in Madrid](#).



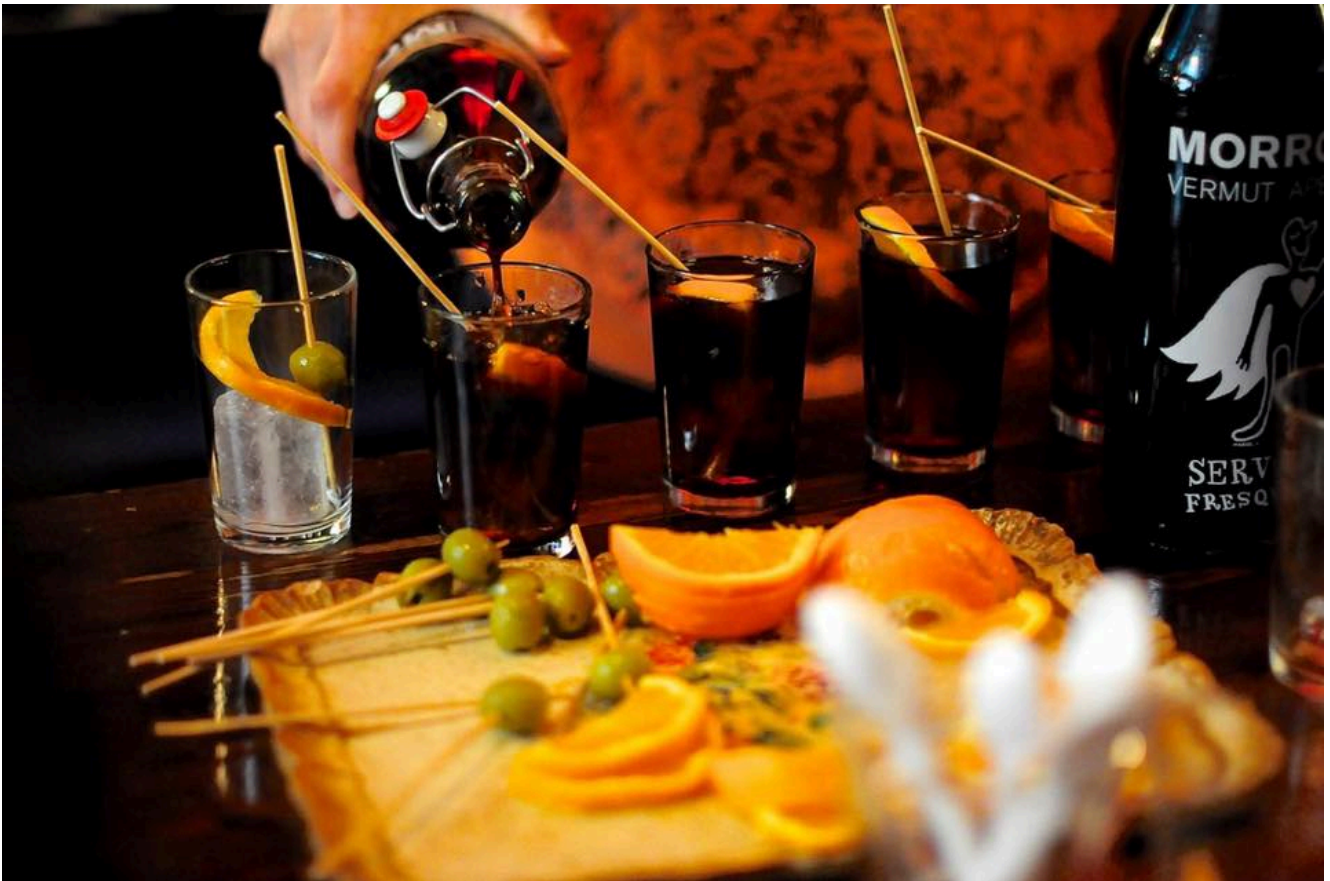
Sip on sherry at [La Venencia](#): Please don't leave the city without visiting this truly unique bar in Barrio de las Letras. Entering La Venencia means traveling to another time period. They only offer sherry (four types).

- Also check out: [What to see in Barrio de las Letras](#)
- And: [Take a peek inside 5 historical Madrid bars](#)

La hora del vermut: The city is reviving an old ritual, which entails drinking vermouth along with an *aperitivo* before lunchtime, especially on Sundays. Experience this tradition at [these timeless bars](#), or at [the newer vermuterías](#) to join in on the vermouth craze.



[Bodegas de la Ardosia](#), one of the most iconic bars in Madrid



Pic by [La Vermutería](#), a popup bar throwing great vermouth-inspired events

[Cocktails at The Cock](#): Madrid has some great cocktail bars. If you're looking for the kind that hasn't changed in... forever, then The Cock's your safest bet. Right down the street is [Del Diego](#), another good option.

[Pepe Botella](#): If you're looking for a place to get a coffee or a glass of wine in Malasaña, I personally recommend this bar in Plaza Dos de Mayo. Grab the window seat if you can. After a couple of rounds, you'll be in the perfect state of mind to explore the neighborhood.

Also see: [Work-friendly cafés in Malasaña with great Wi-Fi](#)



[María Pandora](#): Have champagne at this funky arts bar in La Latina. You'll also get to watch the sunset over Parque de las Vistillas. The hours are a little odd so check online if they're open.

Also see: [Discover Madrid's passionate poetry scene](#)



Have a sweet treat at an old-world pastry shop: The city's most famous is [La Mallorquina](#), located right in Sol. You'll usually find a line out the door for take-away, but there's a spacious tea room upstairs.

- Right down the street is another traditional pastry shop, [El Riojano](#), also with a tea room.
- Also see: [7 best pastry shops in Madrid](#) and the [city's best churros spots](#).

Cultural activities

[El Matadero](#): This former slaughterhouse is now one of the city's most active cultural hubs, complete with a cinema, theater, café, an outdoor area used for markets and more!



Two great markets held at Matadero are the [Mercado de Diseño](#) (design market) and [Mercado de Productores](#) (farmer's market, pictured above)



There's an incredible greenhouse next door to Matadero, [Invernadero del Palacio de Cristal de Arganzuela](#)

Conde Duque: An enormous cultural center holding free exhibits including large-scale art projects and exhibits. It also hosts concerts, performances, book archives and even [outdoor cinema](#) which runs during summer.

- **Plaza de Guardia de Corps:** it's located in a cute little plaza, surrounded by bars, restaurants and shops.



This mini-house was set up for [Madrid Design Festival](#)

[Cine Doré/La Filmoteca](#): A funky old cinema screening classic films from around the world in original version and at an unbeatable price of €2.50. It's one of the city's most popular movie houses, located right by Mercado de Antón Martín.

- Also check out: [Where to enjoy good film in Madrid](#)



Sala Equis: One of the city's trendiest hotspots, a former XXX theater transformed into an eatery and cinema, located in Tirso de Molina.

Desperate Literature: An international bookstore selling the best selection of English-language books in the city. They also throw great events, from readings to concerts.

- Also check out: **[The city's best café-bookshops](#)**



[Microteatro por Dinero](#): “Micro-theater” performances are all the rage in Madrid, and one of the best places to see these 15-minute shows are at **[Microteatro por Dinero](#)** in Malasaña. Get your €4 ticket, grab a drink and enjoy the show! It makes for a really fun night, although you do need a good level of Spanish to appreciate it.

- If you’re looking for theater in English, check out the interactive shows put on by **[Mad Improv](#)**. Lots of fun!

[Mercado de Motores](#): The city’s trendiest monthly market, held in a train museum. You’ll find a variety of stalls set up along the tracks, and food trucks outside. Get there early before the crowds swarm in.



Image from [Mercado de Motores](#)

Check out [Madridnofrills.com](#): This website offers incredibly insightful information on a side of Madrid that tourists (and locals) almost never experience, from the city's [anti-mainstream music scene](#) to a [photo series of 100 of Madrid's no-frills bars](#) (that's recently gone viral!). Do have a look.

MADRID NO FRILLS

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ARTISTS
WELCOME TO MADRID'S ANTI-MAINSTREAM
MUSIC SCENE
6 February 2019

madridnofrills.com, the city's most insightful blog

Museums

Madrid boasts several world-renowned arts institutions as well as lesser-known museums and “casa museos” (former private mansions). Here are some top picks, although you can also check out our [guide to the city's museums \(and how to get in for free\) here](#).

The Golden Triangle of Art: Madrid's three world-famous museums are located on Paseo del Prado, and need no introduction:

- [The Prado Museum](#)
- [Thyssen](#)
- [Reina Sofía Museum](#)



Within walking distance are three other museums I'd highly recommend:

- **[Museo Naval](#)**: Located beside the Prado is the Maritime Museum, which houses an impressive collection that's a surprise to many, even Madrileños.
- **[La Casa Encendida](#)**: Situated near Reina Sofía, this dynamic cultural center holds contemporary art exhibits and activities, both inside as well as on its rooftop terrace. Free entrance.
- **[CaixaForum](#)**: Also located on Paseo del Prado is a contemporary arts center with great exhibits and an urban garden wall.



Three “Casa Museos” that are incredibly charming and take you back in time:

- [Museo de Cerralbo](#): My personal favorite. This small museum is a portal to another era. It was a former private mansion and is located next to the stunning Templo de Debod (more on that below).
- [Sorolla Museum](#): The former house of famous Spanish painter Joaquín Sorolla. Step inside his private living quarters to see his studio and personal collection. It's well worth a visit.
- [Museo del Romanticismo](#): Walk through the beautiful rooms of this museum in Chueca that have been kept in tact from the Romanticism Era. **Make sure to have a tea in the lovely garden afterwards.**



[La Neomudéjar](#): This is the most avant-garde museum on the list, occupying a former industrial railway building near Atocha train station.



Art shows and festivals: Madrid has a thriving arts scene, with events held year round, such as the world-famous [Madrid Art Week](#) that's going on right now. [Time Out Madrid](#) is the best place to find out about the city's events in English.

Plazas & streets

After seeing the mandatory Plaza Mayor and Puerta del Sol, here are a few other must-see places:

[Plaza de la Villa](#), the city's original town hall is absolutely beautiful, especially at nighttime. The little surrounding streets, like Calle del Codo, are also charming.

- Tip: just a few steps away from the plaza lies a sweet shop run by nuns: El Jardín del Convento, on Calle del Cordón 1.



Plaza de Oriente: Here you'll see the Royal Palace, Royal Opera House, the Sabatini gardens and the Almudena Cathedral. There's also a lesser-known crypt below the cathedral that boasts hundreds of columns, each one unique.

Plaza de Dos de Mayo: This happening plaza is nestled between the streets of Malasaña, one of Madrid's trendiest neighborhood. My favorite café in this plaza is [Pepe Botella](#) (mentioned above).

Plaza Olavide: A charming plaza in Chamberí, loved by locals. Come here to sit out on a terrace and soak up the sun.

Plaza de la Paja: A very popular plaza in La Latina, full of bars and restaurants. When the weather's nice you'll find spacious *terrazas* set up everywhere – you'll have to be quick to find a table!

- [Palacio del Príncipe Anglona Garden](#): This charming little garden is located right inside the plaza.



[Jardín del Príncipe de Anglona](#)

Staircase streets of La Latina

La Latina is one of the city's oldest and most beautiful neighborhoods. Take a stroll through the area's windy, narrow streets. You'll find several streets that have stairs, like Calle del Rollo and Travesía del Nuncio (pictured below). Just wander around a little.



This unbeatable terrace belongs to [Café Angélica](#), a sweet café and restaurant

Streets of Lavapiés: Explore this vibrant, multicultural

neighborhood. You'll find a lot of street art on **Calle Embajadores**, **Miguel de Servet**, and **Doctor Fourquet** (where you'll also find many micro-galleries).



Calle Embajadores, pic by @jessiesusanna



Calle Miguel de Servet, lined with street art, restaurants and cherry blossom trees in full bloom

Parks

Retiro: The city's most popular park, situated in the center. There are several spots worth visiting, such as the lake, the rose garden and of course, the stunning glass palace.



Glass Palace at Retiro Park, pic by @os_car_a

Templo de Debod: Madrid houses a beautiful Egyptian temple surrounded by greenery. Come here to watch the sunset! Then take a walk through Parque del Oeste (next point).



Sunset at Templo de Debod, pic by @meagamind

Parque del Oeste. This spacious park is located in the western part of Madrid, near Moncloa and Templo de Debod. It provides a much-needed breath of fresh air, plus there are outdoor concerts held during the warmer months of the year.

- **Rose garden:** There's a beautiful rose garden you shouldn't miss in spring, [Rosaleda de Madrid](#).



Parque del Oeste, pic by @os_car_a

Casa de Campo: The largest park in Madrid. It really makes you feel like you've left the city. You'll find lots of hills, trails, bike paths, bars with outdoor terraces and a lake. It's also connected to Parque del Oeste and Madrid Río (mentioned below). You can [rent a bike for the day](#) and explore the park on wheels. Here you'll also find:

- A [theme park](#)
- The [zoo and aquarium](#)
- [Piscina Lago](#): one of the city's most popular public

swimming pools, open in summer.

- According to [Madrid No Frills](#), there's an old Spanish Civil War map that you can follow...

Madrid Río Park: Madrid's Manzanares river has been turned into a public recreation space for children and adults alike. You'll see people having picnics, rollerblading, running, cycling, playing sports and having a drink on the terraces. Madrid Río has sprinklers open during summer, playgrounds year round and the famous "spiral" bridge.

- I like going to El Matadero first, and then taking a walk along Madrid Río afterwards, as they're connected.
- At the other end of Madrid Río is Casa de Campo, so you can [bike through both on the same route](#).



Rooftops

One of the best things to do in Madrid is enjoy its rooftop craze. The city has tons of *azoteas*, and many are open year round:

[Azotea del Círculo de Bellas Artes](#): Pretty much all the city's best postcards feature views from this famous rooftop. Whether you're in the mood to stay awhile and have a drink, or just pop up to take in the view, make sure to include it on your list.



View from Círculo de Bellas Artes, pic by @os_car_a

CentroCentro Cibeles: This is the city's most famous building, hands down. It used to be a public post office but is now a free-entrance arts and cultural center. There's also a rooftop bar where you can see panoramic views of the city, as well as a lookout point at the very top.



Low-key rooftop bars: If you're in the mood for a casual rooftop setting, one of our favorites is **The Hat Madrid**, a hostel located near Plaza Mayor.

- Also check out our full list of **low-key rooftop bars open year round**.



Shopping

Rastro Flea Market: Spend a Sunday rummaging through Madrid's largest open-air flea market, open from 9am-3pm. Start off in Plaza de Cascorro and walk down Ribera de Curtidores. Make sure to explore the surrounding *calles* and *plazas* as well. You'll find an endless number of shops and stalls selling trinkets and antiques from around the world.

- Best of all, it's tradition to spend the rest of the day having tapas in La Latina. Just follow the crowds and do as the locals do!



One of the many stores in El Rastro, pic by @madridnofrills

Gran Vía and Calle Fuencarral: You can get all your shopping done on these two popular streets, which are connected. Gran Vía has all the big-name brands like Zara and Mango, while Calle Fuencarral is also lined with smaller shops. Once you're on Fuencarral, explore the whole neighborhood of Malasaña on foot, and Chueca too while you're at it. They're next-door neighbors.

Barrio Salamanca: This is the city's most upscale neighborhood and it's much less touristy than Gran Vía and Malasaña. It's full of designer shops and independent brands.

Vintage and thrift shops: A few years ago it was hard to come by good thrift stores in the city, but now you can find a bunch to choose from. Check out our list of [10 great secondhand and vintage stores in Madrid](#).

Tour

Take a tour with [Devour Madrid](#): This is the tour I'd most recommend going on. The folks at [Devour Madrid food tour](#) truly know what they're taking about. This is one of the best things to do in Madrid if you're just visiting: eating your way through the city as you learn about its history, culture and language.



Exploring Mercado de Antón Martín on a tour with Devour Madrid

[Stunning local olive grove tour – in English](#): The founder of Madrid No Frills, Leah Patten, suggests an olive oil tour in the outskirts of Madrid, called Proyecto los Aires. It's a family-run olive grove with an innovative mission: to connect the local countryside with the city of Madrid and make farming a sustainable way of life once again.

Travel

[Take a day-trip to a nearby town](#): There are several trips you can take from Madrid, which are very easy to get to by public transport. Here are a few recommendations:

- **Toledo**: If you're short on time, I would highly recommend the breathtakingly beautiful city of Toledo.
- **Segovia** would be next on the list, especially for its Roman aqueduct.
- [Alcalá de Henares](#), the hometown of Cervantes, is another great option and very nearby.
- Check out our list of the [10 most beautiful surrounding towns](#).



Alcalá de Henares, pic by Russ Pearce from anythingbutpaella.com

Know of any other things to do in Madrid that should be included on this list? Let us know in the comments and we'll add them in!

Live In Theater's "The Lombardi Case" comes to Madrid from NYC!

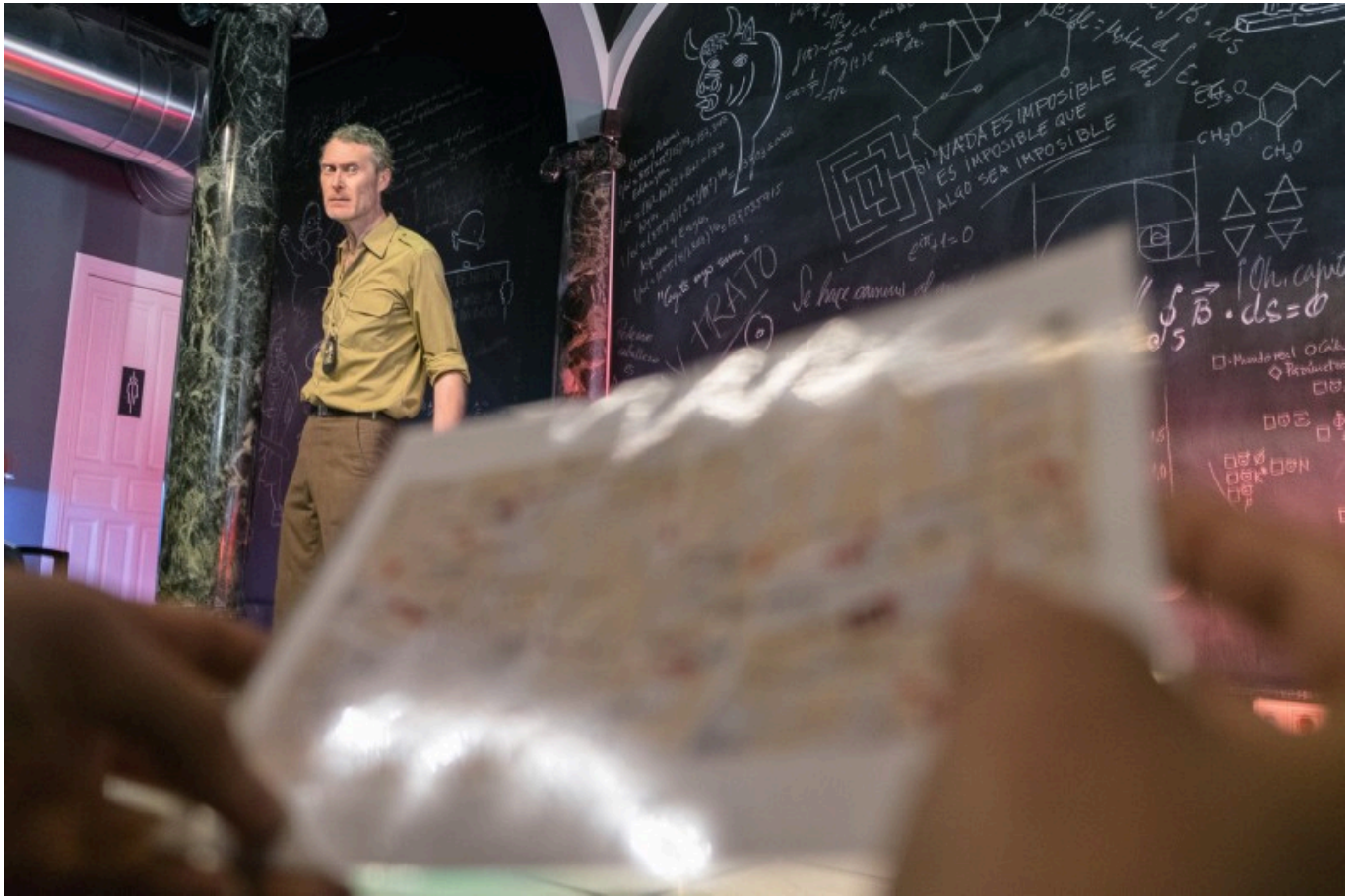
It's not everyday that you get to help solve a murder case, interview a drag queen, or be transported to another era. But that's what you're in for with the interactive show *The Lombardi Case*, brought to us by the NY-based **Live in Theater** group. I had the chance to go the premiere in May and here's what it was like.



When I stepped into the theater, I was first greeted by a cop with a Brooklyn accent, played by a Scotsman; and then grabbed a seat among the 60-person international audience. We got split into small teams and an officer presented us with the case details in effortless Spanglish.



It's suddenly the early 1980's and we're in the midst of Madrid's sex- and drug-ridden *La Movida* movement. The daughter of the US ambassador has just been murdered. And it's on us to find out who did it.



Readily equipped with clues, a map and a list of suspects – from a doorman to a junky – we headed out onto the streets to conduct our interviews at nearby locations like a jazz bar, public plaza and street corner; and then came back and tried to solve the case with our findings.



The 7-member bilingual cast relied heavily on improv to communicate with us as we interrogated them, and they impressively stayed in character the whole time.



Although none of us ended up solving the tricky case, it was a really fun and unique experience, with lots of laughter and participation between the actors and audience. I loved being able to play an active role in the show, get out there on the street, interact with new team members and in Spanglish, no less. All in all, it's a guaranteed great time and as a benefit you'll get to learn about the history of Madrid.



Since the debut, **Live in Theater** has put on two more productions of the *The Lombardi Case* in the heart of Malasaña at [La Industrial](#). While the format is identical to the NYC show, the storyline has been adapted to Madrid's history. For example, the original takes place in 1975 which works in a time of drugs, disco and gentrification in NYC, while the Madrid show takes place in the early '80s during the time of *La Movida*, the experimental movement that broke out after the fall of the Franco regime. This is especially pertinent as audience members get to actually interview suspects in the neighborhood that was the epicenter of the movement, Malasaña. Another key difference is that here, the show is put on in Spanish and English.

LOMBARDI CASE

ASESINATO EN LA MOVIDA



**LIVE
IN
THEATER**

INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES
NYC

24 y 29 de Junio - 19:00h

La industrial - C/ San Vicente Ferrer 33

Tickets: Oficinas de La Industrial c/ San Andrés 8 Local

Tickets Online: www.liveintheater.com/madrid

CAN YOU SOLVE THE CASE?
AN INTERACTIVE MURDER MYSTERY

SPANISH & ENGLISH

The Lombardi Case has been brought to Madrid by three partners: [Carlo D'Amore](#), the founder (and guru) of the NYC-based theater group, **Live in Theater**; [Leslie Freschet](#), who's been living in Madrid for 25 years; and [Benjamin Nathan-Serio](#), who's been an active member of Barcelona and Madrid's English-speaking theater circuit for nearly a decade. He's also one of the Madrid organizers and co-founders of [Mad Improv](#).

A few weeks ago I had the chance to sit down with Ben and talk about the *Lombardi Case* and what makes interactive theater so special. He said:

The show offers a truly unique experience for the audience because interactive is empowering. It's a real niche for actual human, genuine interaction. There's something magical about this show. It's not just conversation in a bar or speed dating, or meet-ups; it's super empowering because you become a cop. You have a mission. You become a detective. There's a murder, and you need to solve it! And there's a time limit... urgency.

See a show!

Stay tuned for upcoming productions by following their [Facebook page](#) or put in a request by emailing them at liveintheaterproduction@gmail.com.

You can also book them for private events such as company team-building exercises. The show has a very versatile format – you can hire them to go into your apartment as long as it has 2 rooms, with 3 actors playing 6 characters; and it can also be presented to up to 200 people.

And if you feel like getting more involved in Madrid's interactive theater scene, definitely check out [Mad Improv](#) which holds free improv workshops on Sundays and monthly performances.

Museo Cerralbo, an art lover's dream house

If you're looking to explore [Madrid's museum scene](#) beyond the famous Prado and Reina Sofia, I recommend starting with [Los Cinco Museos](#), five former mansions that are all perfectly restored and house outstanding art collections: Cerralbo, Lázaro Galdiano, Artes Decorativas, Sorolla and Romanticismo.

These five museums take you on a journey to a different era, allowing you to see and feel what life might have been like when they were occupied. While each one is worth visiting, [Museo Cerralbo](#) is my personal favorite. I've been here twice – first on my own and then on a [guided tour](#) – and both times I was blown away by the museum's special charm.



Tucked away on a side street near Plaza de España and Templo de Debod, this museum is one of the former residences of the

Marquis of Cerralbo, who lived here with his family in the 19th century. Today, everything remains exactly in tact, from the furniture and art pieces to the wall colors and lighting.



As you walk through its many rooms and corridors, let your imagination run wild, picturing what life was like when this

house was actually a home.



The Marquis was a well known archeologist and passionate art lover. He amassed a collection of art, furniture and objects from Spain and around the world that you can see in every nook and cranny. You'll see beautiful paintings, mirrors, chandeliers and clocks dispersed throughout, and so much more.



The house has two floors. The first floor was where the family actually lived their normal lives, while the second floor is

where you'll find the extravagant ballroom and dining room, for example, that were meant to be shown off to guests.



Each particular room had a different purpose and decor, acting as a unique exhibition space. Here are a few examples.

The armor collection

After going up the gorgeous stairway (the house was actually designed to accommodate for a unique wooden banister), guests would step into the hallway displaying the Marquis's armor collection. This is my favorite exhibit.

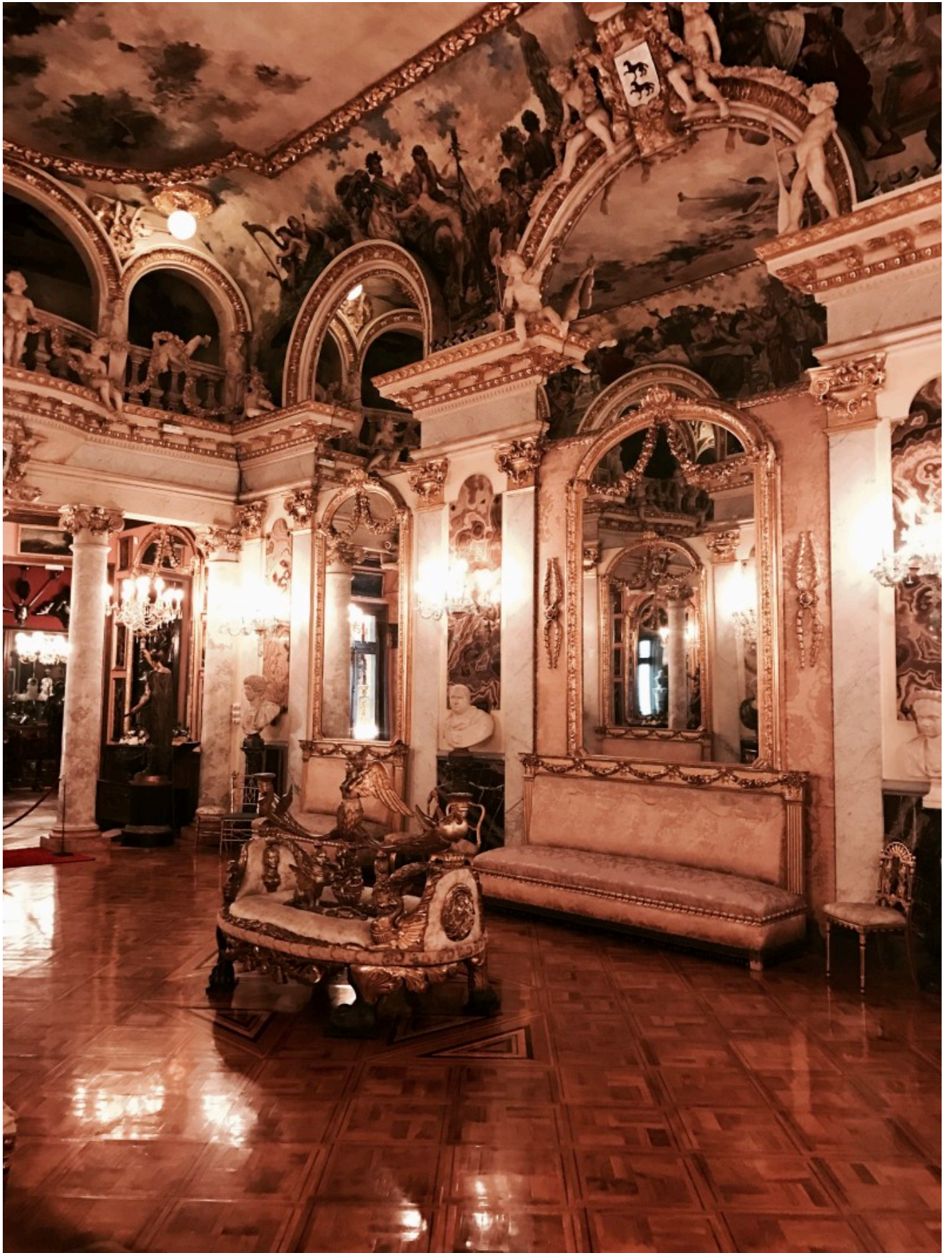






The ballroom

To the right of the armor collection you'll find the stunning ballroom. I would certainly like to dance here one day...



As you can see, the Marquis was particularly fond of playing with lighting and mirrors to add as much depth to each room as

possible. And not an inch of the house was left unadorned.



The library

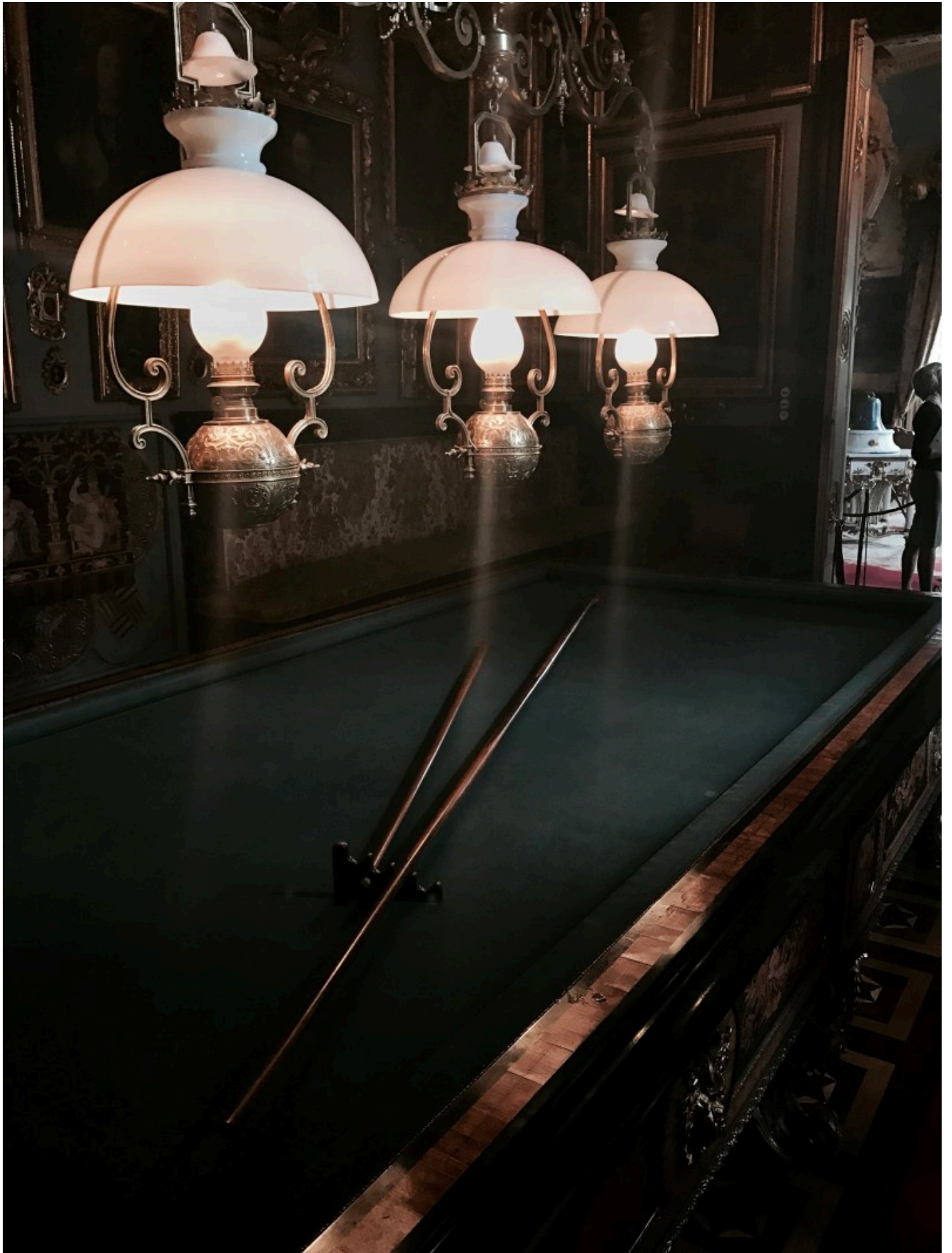
The library features British-style decor and houses an impressive collection of books in several different languages, some dating back as far as the 15th century. Here you'll also find one of the largest coin collections in Spain.





The billiard room

Right off the dining room you'll find the billiard room. In that time, women weren't expected to join in on the game, so there was a seating area designed just for them to watch as the men played.



Snapshots of more rooms and objects

There are so many little rooms and corridors to check out, each one providing a window into another era and giving your eyes plenty to marvel at. I don't want to give away too much, so here are just a few more images to give you a glimpse of the Cerralbo Museum's collection. But please don't pass up the chance to see it in person!









Photography by Jose Luis Magaña from @asecond.art

Info

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- I highly recommend [booking a guided tour](#) in English, Spanish or French
- **Address:** Calle Ventura Rodríguez, 17
- **Hours:** Tues–Sat 9:30am-3pm; Thursday also from 5-8pm; Sundays and holidays from 10am-3pm
- **Metro:** Plaza de España
- **Los Cinco Museos** pass: if you want to visit all five of these former mansions turned museums, you can purchase a €12 pass called [Los Cinco Museos](#) at any of their ticket offices. The pass gives you unlimited access to all five museums for 10 days, and after that you can enter on Saturdays with a plus one for the rest of the year.

You may also like:

- [Madrid's obvious and not-so-obvious museums \(and how to get in for free!\)](#)

Amargo, the city's best veggie burger (and much more)

The title says it all.

On a cozy corner in Malasaña, [Amargo Place To Be](#) lures you in with its fairytale facade, enveloped with ivy and illuminated by twinkle lights.

Inside, the vibe is both industrial and homey. Friendly faces will greet you (not always a given in the city) and you'll be overwhelmed by a menu **so international** you'll forget where you

are.

Nigiris, Mexican nachos, giant *croquetas*, dim sum, lasagna with wonton pasta and pine nuts, duck magret over hummus and a raspberry coulis....

But as we're all biased—especially when it comes to food—what I wanna sell you on is their veggie burger.

I can't even bring myself to try anything else from the impressively diverse and delicious menu, because when I come to Amargo, I only have one thing on my mind: that thick and savory soy burger piled high with zucchini in tempura, a fried egg, a thick slab of goat cheese, green shoots, caramelized onion, crispy onion crunch, and the special house sauce.



Go starving—just half of this monstrous burger fills me up.

They're open for breakfast, lunch and dinner (from 9am-2am every day!), have a fantastic *menú del día* (€11.90 M-F and €13.50 on weekends and holidays), and boast a lengthy drink list that includes signature cocktails and organic wine (!!!).

But wait, there's more.

If you venture downstairs (follow the 19th-century painting in which a stoic aristocrat dons some fly ass Nikes), you'll find the seating area where diners become audience members.



Since last year, **Amargo** has hosted **concerts** throughout the week. If you're dining in (make sure to make a reservation—it fills up!), it's just €2 to enjoy anything from flamenco to soul to acoustic while you eat. When I went, I was treated to [Chisara Agor](#)'s achingly soulful voice.

Check out this month's programming on Amargo's [website](#).



The mindblowingly talented Chisara Agor and the amazing Christian García-Fonseca Secher on cajón.

If you're somehow not yet experiencing sensory overload, the lower level also functions as a revolving art gallery. The current artwork is by local visual and urban artist [Misterpiro](#).



Just some pals having a very candid laugh.

In a hurry? Amargo also does **speedy-quick orders to go.**

You have no excuse.

Info

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
- Instagram: @amargoplacetobe
- Address: Calle Pez, 2
- Phone: 910 84 79 90
- Metro: Callao, Noviciado, Tribunal