10 of the best craft beer bars in Madrid

One of the things I miss most as an expat in Madrid is quality craft beer. While I'm grateful for Spain's cheaper beer prices, there's only so much Mahou and Estrella I can take. Coming from a city like Austin, Texas, which is full of microbreweries and tasty local beers, the light Spanish pilsners just don't really do it for me.

Luckily, craft beer is on the up and up in Madrid, with more brewpubs and bars devoted to *cerveza artesanal* popping up around the city. Some feature as many as 40 beers on tap, while others combine craft beverages with pizza, tortilla or specialty cheeses.

Whether you're looking to discover more local brews, drink from a wider selection on tap, or pair good beer with good food, you can't go wrong with these craft beer bars in Madrid.

1. The Stuyck



This cozy bar with a rustic feel features a rotating beer list focusing on Spanish and European beers. The staff is friendly and passionate about what they do—just scope out their craft beer blog which has information from how to properly taste beer to the history of IPAs. Part bar, part restaurant, their international menu features food that pairs well with beer like burgers, wings and sandwiches.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @thestuyckco*
- *Address: Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 33*
- *Metro: Tribunal*

2. Mikkeller



I stumbled upon this place on a magical weeknight to find it relatively empty. The inviting, open interior lured me in, and the friendly bartender who let me sample a few of the 21 beers on tap made me stay.

I soon learned that it was one of Mikkeller’s coveted outposts. The popular Danish beer brand recently graced Spain with another location of its brewpub after opening one in Barcelona. The prices are a little high by Madrid standards, but at this place it’s quality over quantity.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @mikkellermadrid*
- *Address: Calle de la Luna, 22*
- *Metro: Noviciado, Santo Domingo*

3. Bee Beer Craft Beers and Cheeses



If you thought wine and cheese was the perfect pair, let Bee Bar Craft Beers and Cheeses prove you wrong. Like the name says, pair a nice craft beer with a meat and cheese board, which the staff will happily recommend for you.

Even though they have a smaller selection of beers on tap than other places on this list, more than half of them are Bee Beer's own unique brews, ranging from a Pineapple IPA, to a Wasabi Lager or an Orange Honey Ale. Or you can browse through their expansive selection of bottled international beers (just be sure to ask about prices first).

- *Facebook & Instagram: @beebeermadrid*

- *Address: Calle de Augusto Figueroa, 30*
- *Metro: Chueca*

4. Fábrica Maravillas



This tried and true Malasaña favorite was one of the OG craft beer bars in Madrid before the trend took off. On one of the neighborhood's quieter streets, this place is small but packs a punch. Unlike some of the other food-heavy bars on this list, this microbrewery focuses on beer and beer only, offering a small menu of bar snacks like olives and nuts. Beer counts as a meal, right?

- *Facebook & Instagram: @fabricamaravillas*
- *Address: Calle de Valverde, 29*
- *Metro: Chueca, Tribunal*

5. Taproom Madrid



Taproom Madrid has one of the largest beer selections in the city. With 40 beers on tap, it's great for experimental beer lovers as well as novices; both are bound to find a brew they like. What's more, you can pop by Tierra—arguably the best burrito place in Madrid—next door and bring food back with you.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @taproommadrid*
- *Address: Calle de Guzmán el Bueno, 52*
- *Metro: Moncloa*

6. El Callejón de La Virgen

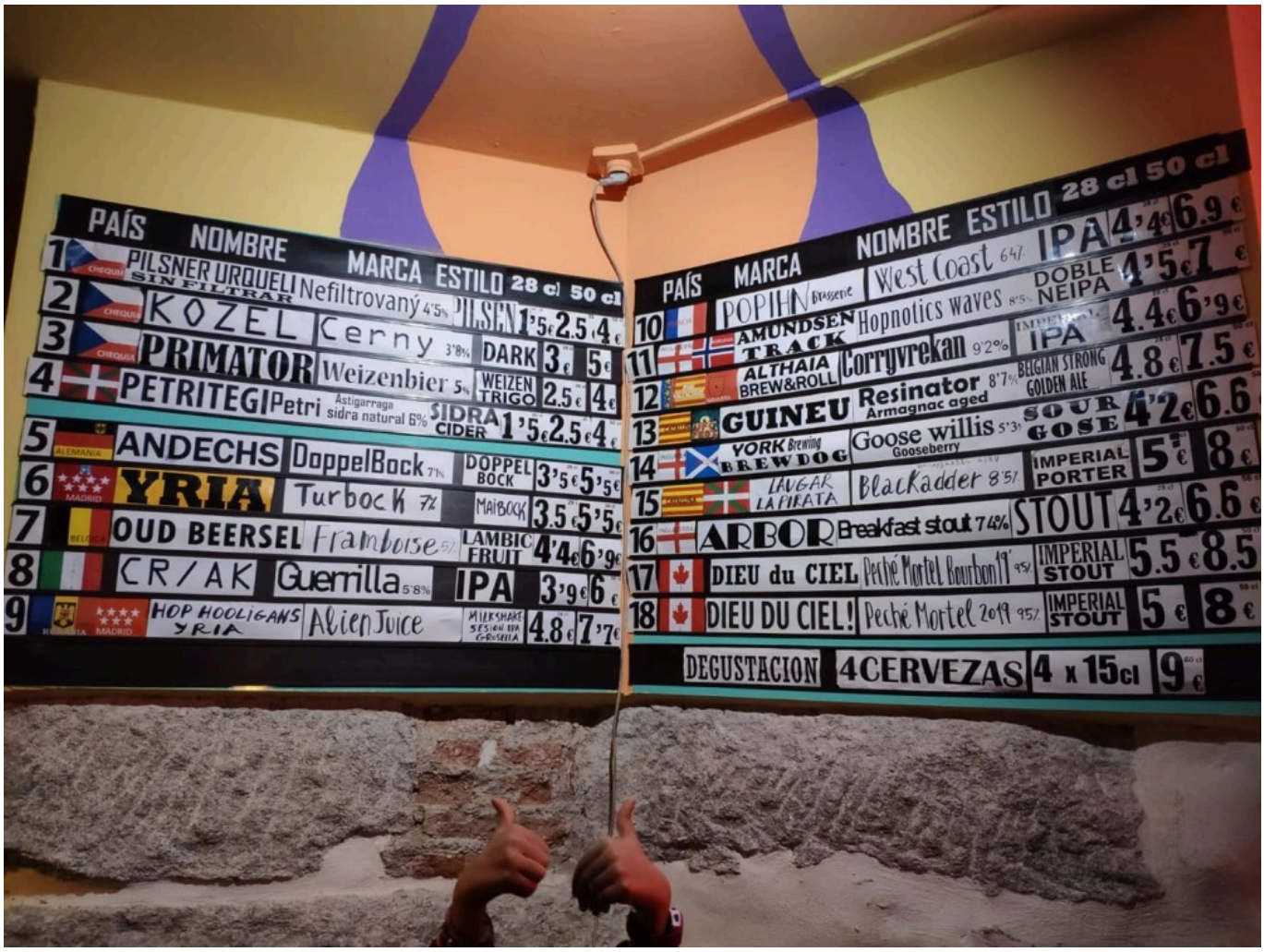


A couple of years ago local craft beer La Virgen was hard to come by, but now—much to my delight—their logo is popping up at more and more bars around the city. While the La Virgen brewery in Las Rozas is worth the trip, you can now enjoy a full selection of its brews in the center of Madrid.

El Callejón de La Virgen, one of the brewery's official pubs in the trendy Conde Duque neighborhood, features favorites like their Trigo Limpio (Hefeweizen), Jamonera (Amber Ale) and classic Madrid Lager. Pair that with a juicy burger and you've got a solid weeknight plan.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @cervezalavirgen*
- *Address: Calle Acuerdo, Nº3*
- *Metro: Noviciado*

7. Chinaski



This cozy and colorful beer bar in Lavapiés is the perfect spot for a lowkey night with friends.

With 18 rotating taps from around the world and “meet the brewer” events, it’s a beer nerd’s paradise. If someone in your group isn’t a fan of beer, they also have a good selection of spirits from absinthe to bourbon.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @chinaskilavapies*
- *Address: Calle Salitre, 38*
- *Metro: Lavapiés*

8. Pez Tortilla



Pez Tortilla has everything you could ever want in a bar: tortilla, croquetas and craft beer. It’s simple enough, but what Pez does, it does well.

Try tortilla by the slice from truffle and brie to chicken curry. Mix and match croquetas ranging from classic ham to dessert croquetas like oreo—yes, you read that right. Order a flight to sample from their revolving list of craft beers, which often includes a decent selection of lesser-known Spanish beers.

You’ll often find the uber-popular tapas bar at standing-room only, but it just opened its third location in Sol (the other two are in Malasaña and Lavapiés). And with a motto like “el buen rollo,” it’s impossible not to have a good time there.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @peztortilla*
- *Address 1: Calle del Pez, 36 (metro: Noviciado)*

- *Address 2: Calle de la Cava Baja, 42 (metro: La Latina)*
- *Address 3: Calle de Espoz y Mina, 32 (metro: Sol, Antón Martín, Tirso de Molina)*

9. Brew Wild Pizza Bar



What's not to like about beer and pizza? Brew Wild Pizza Bar has perfected both, with mouthwatering pizzas made by a Sicilian *pizzaiolo* and more than 100 beers to choose from between bottle and tap. Sample from a mix of house, local and

international brews and prepare to make your Instagram followers very jealous.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @brewwildpizzabar*
- *Address: Calle de Echegaray, 23*
- *Metro: Sol, Antón Martín, Sevilla*

10. Beerhouse



Beerhouse is the perfect combination of a traditional Spanish bar and an Irish pub: a laidback, no frills sports bar. Grab a pint from a large selection of beers and pair with traditional bar food like nachos, burgers and hotdogs. As one Google reviewer so aptly put it: “Humorous sports bar-meets-craft-connoisseur clash but the resulting vibe is fun and very unpretentious.” Sounds like my kind of place.

- *Facebook & Instagram: @beerhousemadrid*
- *Address: Calle del Cardenal Cisneros, 16*
- *Metro: Bilbao*

**All images are from each bar's respective social media accounts.*

By Alex Vickery (IG: @alex_vickery, LinkedIn & Website)

A lifestyle writer and content creator who has left pieces of her heart around the world, from Austin to Rio de Janeiro. She's always on the hunt for good Tex-Mex outside of Texas (but has yet to find it).

Did we miss any other of the best craft beer bars in Madrid? Let us know!

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 Despiecie**, **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 Slamanca: 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:

- **StreetXO**, a casual version of the world-famous **DiverXO** 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**.



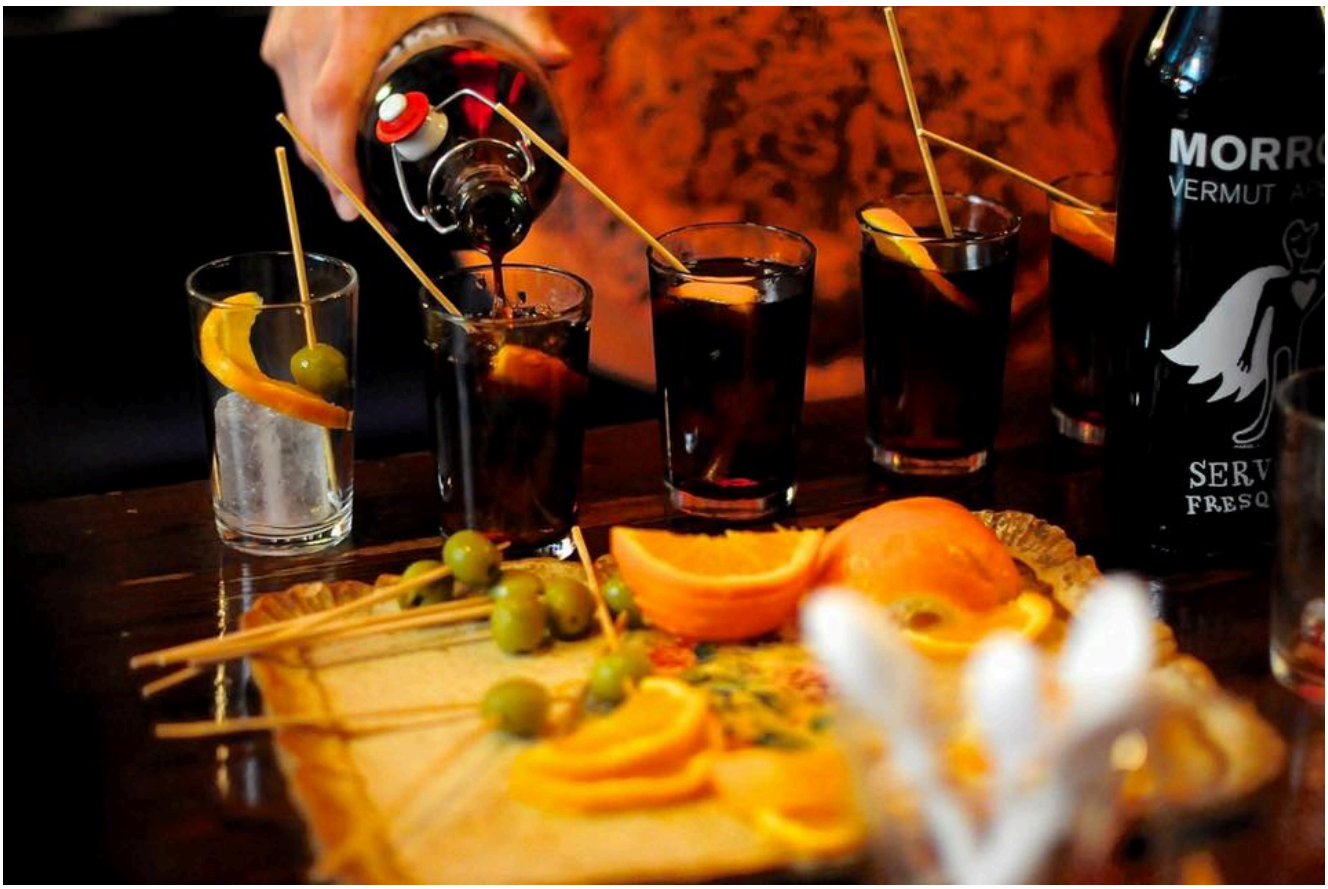
Sip on sherry at La Venencia: Please don’t leave the city without visiting this truly unique bar in Barrio de las Letras. Entering La Venencia means traveling to another time period. They only offer sherry (four types).

- 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 Ardosa], 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.

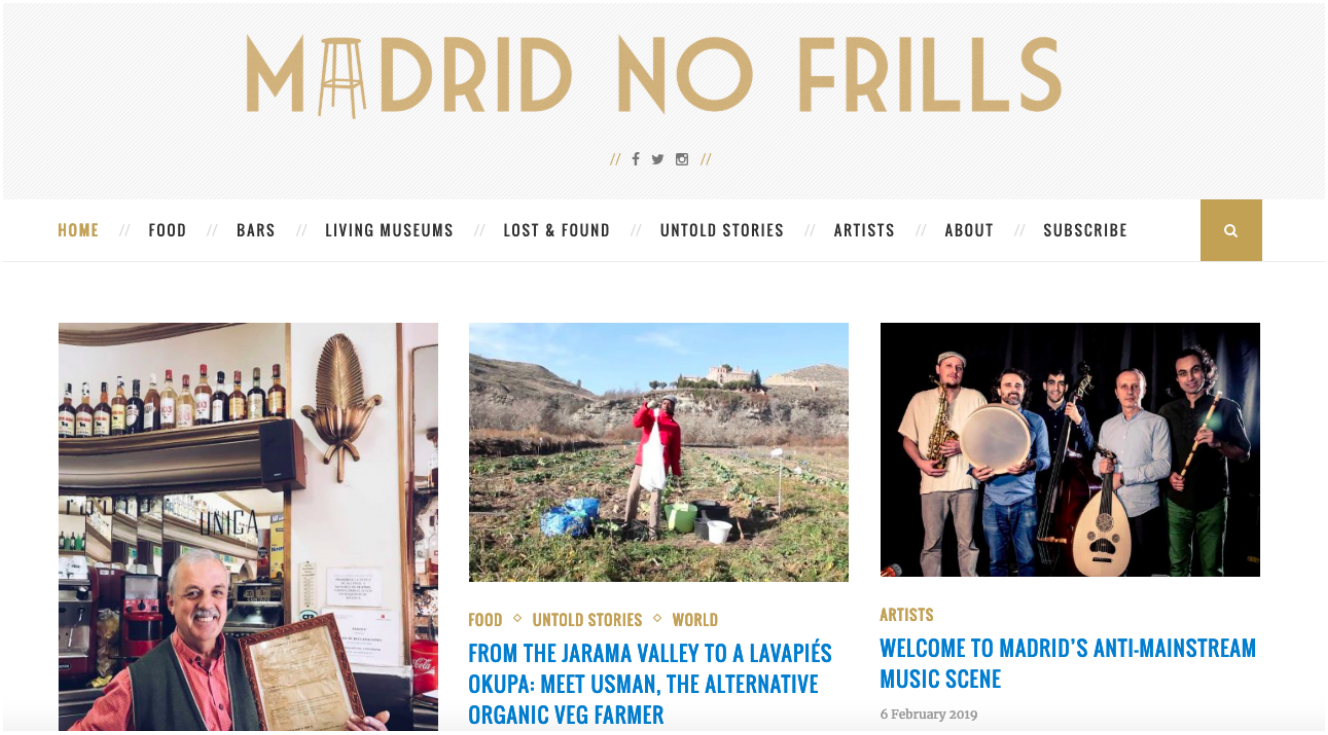
- If you're looking for theater in English, check out the interactive shows put on by **Mad Improv**. Lots of fun!

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.



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 Reína 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 Pattem, 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!

Varsovia Bar – Cocktail o' clock in the run-up to Christmas

It's safe to say that bars in Malasaña are pretty much ten a penny. There's possibly more bars than beards, and that's saying something. What's not so common though, is to find a bar that looks super appealing from the street, yet for one reason or another you're yet to make it inside.

This had been the case with **Varsovia** for literally, months. I'd strolled past it almost daily either on the way to work or the gym, however, I'd never actually been. So feeling high on hump day vibes last Wednesday, I decided to suggest it to a friend for a long overdue catch up, and to see if what was on the inside was as engaging as the exterior.



It was rammed. This might be partly due to Madrileños being on a countdown to Christmas and therefore not really needing to have their arm twisted when it comes to a post work *copa*. But even at 8pm (a slightly weird time to be boozing here) – not quite after work, definitely not post dinner – but the atmosphere was buzzing.

We quickly discovered that it was one of the waitresses' birthdays so a chorus of *Cumpleaños Feliz* rang out as we entered, and a cake appeared from nowhere – which the lovely Virginia even offered to share. First impressions count and the immediate feeling was one of friendliness and very much that it was a local bar, for local people.

The cocktail list is extensive but we thought we'd pace ourselves and start with a gin. Virginia kindly recommended that we sample a Nordes (one of my faves hailing from the North West of Spain) which even came with a little tapa of manchego cheese.



I'm always beyond thrilled when you're offered a food freebie in Madrid, as whilst it remains commonplace in the south of Spain, it's a lot less common in the capital unless you're offered some bog standard olives. Manchego cheese has become a cheese of choice for me and for this reason alone I was delighted.

Gins slurped, we thought we'd then sample some of the hard stuff. A gin cocktail that was nameless (we explained that it was our spirt soulmate) and we were promptly presented with a concoction that was gin based but laced with juicy apple flavours.

Cocktails in hand, we were able to chat whilst appreciating the background tunes which weren't offensively loud , as can

so often be the case. I was told that come weekends, DJs frequently take to the decks and kick-out doesn't happen until 3am – leaving you plenty of time to get the party started.



Varsovia seemed to offer something for everyone. Cocktails for those looking for some for weekday (or weekend) glamour. As well as vermouth for those who like their tipples to be a little more traditional.

Don't make my mistake of walking on by. Stick your head in and give it a try (apologies for the terrible rhyme, clearly there's a frustrated poet in me itching to get out).

Varsovia Info

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** Calle San Andrés 33
- **Metro:** Bilbao

Take a Peek Inside 5 Historical Madrid Bars

Madrid is full of amazing bars that have played a role in Spanish history. Whether it's art, literature, or the Spanish Civil War, these bars hold some sort of significance to Spain's past and are definitely worth the visit.

Here's a sneak peek into the stories behind our favorite historical Madrid bars.

Fatigas del Querer



Located in Sol is a restaurant with an exterior as beautiful as its interior dating back to the 1920s. This restaurant will grab your attention with its beautiful Andalusian tiles dedicated to Spanish painter Julio Romero de Torres. Even one of his paintings is depicted on these beautifully detailed tiles.



Typical free Spanish tapa

Not only is this bar related to historical Spanish art, but it also has an impressively large menu of Spanish dishes such as ***setas empanadas con alioli.*** These fried mushrooms with alioli sauce would go great with one of the many ***vermuts*** that **Fatigas del Querer** has to offer.

- **Address:** Calle de la Cruz, 17
- **Metro:** Sol
- **Phone:** +34 915 23 21 31

La Casa del Abuelo



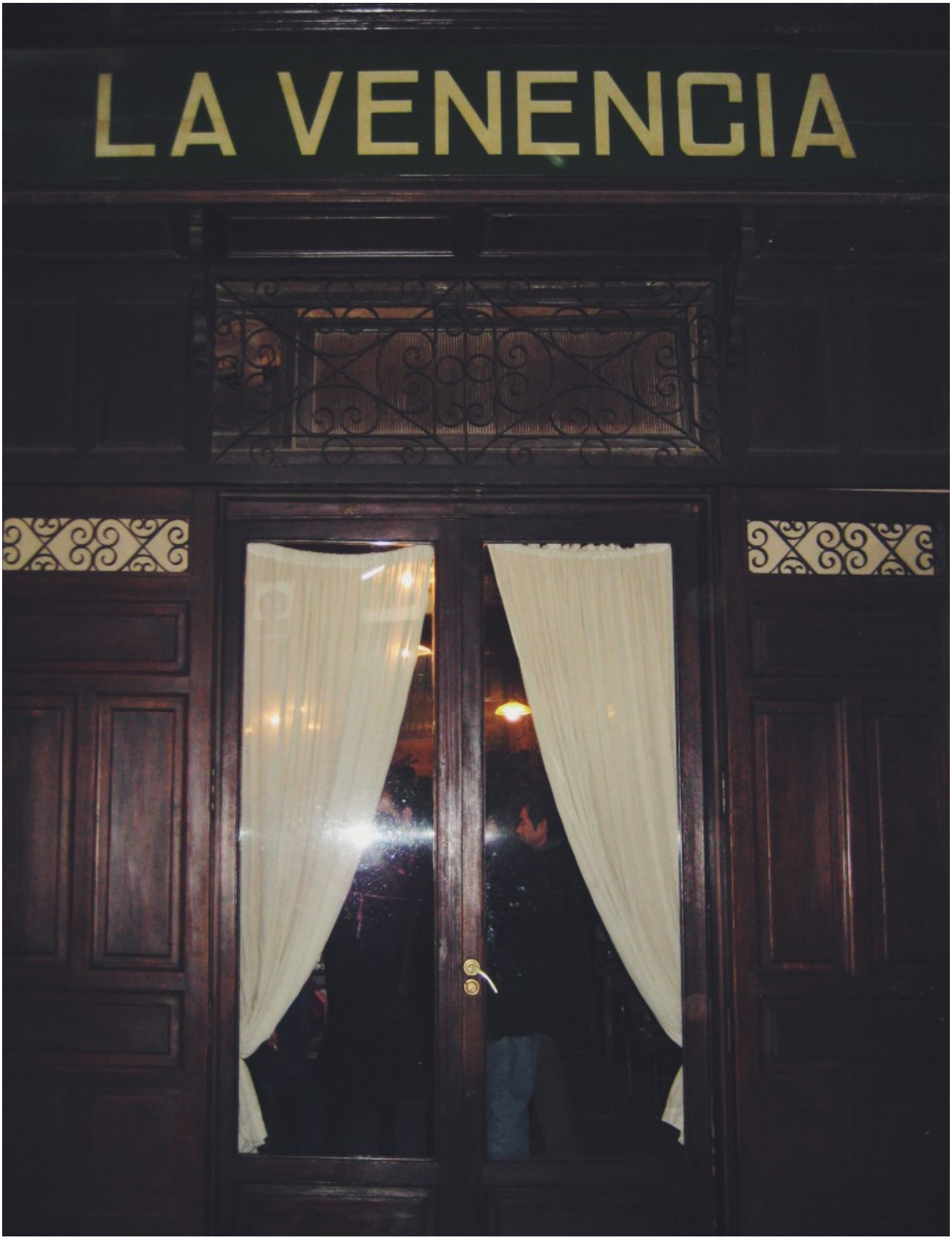
Just by the name alone, it’s clear that this bar has stood the test of time and still remains a Madrid classic.



Established in 1906, [La Casa del Abuelo] has seen Spain at the best of times and the worst of times, including the Spanish Civil War. During this time, La Casa del Abuelo only served garlic or grilled shrimp paired with a Spanish sweet wine due to the food shortage. Since then, this bar's ***gambas al ajillo*** and ***gambas a la plancha*** have become a delicious specialty.

- **Web & Facebook**
- **Address:** Calle de la Victoria, 12
- **Metro:** Sol
- **Phone:** +34 910 00 01 33

La Venencia



Source

During the height of the Spanish Civil War, this bar was one of the few spots where Republican soldiers and other anti-

fascists, such as Ernest Hemingway would go. Taking photos has been prohibited since the 1930’s just in case there were any fascist spies around.

Nevertheless, this bar is incredibly beautiful with its antique bottles and large barrels of wine that haven’t changed since this historical time period. And if you’re a sherry lover, known as *Jerez* in Spanish, this bar has an amazing variety to choose from.

- ***Cash only***
- **Address:** Calle Echegaray, 7
- **Metro:** Sol, Sevilla
- **Phone:** +34 914 29 73 13

1912 Museo Bar



Westin Palace Hotel

Located inside the Westin Palace Hotel is the perfect bar if you're in the mood for an elegant night out. Rumor has it that this high-end bar has had a fair number of influential guests such as Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, and Ernest Hemingway.



Established in 1912, this bar still maintains a museum-like appearance with old photographs of the history of the hotel and life in Spain. The bar itself has some of the most high-end alcohols that you can find here in Madrid. Although this place is a little bit on the pricey side, you won’t be disappointed by the service or the selection.

- **Address:** Plaza de las Cortes, 7
- **Metro:** Banco de España, Sevilla, Antón Martín
- **Phone:** +34 913 60 80 00

San Ginés



And if you're looking for a break from all the alcohol and tapas, this chocolatería is the perfect place to switch it up. San Ginés has been a Madrid classic since 1894 and is easy to miss while walking through the crowded center of the city. It had even been named "La escondida", or "the hidden one" by some during the Second Republic of Spain. Regardless, this café has gained a lot of fame over the years and has even been mentioned in great works of literature, such as Ramón del Valle-Inclán's Bohemian Lights.



Original image by: @carlas.abreu via Instagram

San Ginés has by far the best ***chocolate con churros*** in Madrid. The menu also consists of ***porras***, known as giant churros, a variety of coffees, and even chocolate liqueur. So if you haven't already, head on over to San Ginés and get your sugar fix.

- **Web & Facebook**
- **Address:** Pasadizo de San Gines, 5
- **Metro:** Sol

- **Phone:** +34 913 65 65 46

You might also like: 5 authentic Madrid bars loved by locals

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5 Authentic Madrid Bars Loved by Locals

If you came to Madrid for some homemade *croquetas* or high quality *jamón ibérico*, you want to make sure that you're going to the best places. In Madrid, like any other major European city, it can be difficult to distinguish the local favorites from the tourist traps. But this doesn't necessarily mean that you have to venture off the beaten path to find traditional Spanish delicacies.

To save you the trouble, here's a list of some of the most authentic bars that can easily be found in the center of the city. So get ready to discover Madrid, one *tapa* at a time.

1) El Madroño



This restaurant screams authenticity with its interior and exterior tile decorations that depict Madrid’s history and culture. When walking in, the first thing that will catch your eye is the homemade pastries and cakes that you’ll be anticipating throughout your meal. Once seated, it’s no surprise if a free *tapa* is brought to your table before even ordering.

El Madroño is the perfect place to order a glass of *vermut* paired with the *delicias de bacalao con mermelada de madroño*. These cod bites are fried to golden perfection and served with a side of madroño jam, the fruit from Madrid.



Delicias de bacalao con mermelada de madroño

- **Address:** Calle Latoneros, 3
- **Metro:** La Latina
- **Phone:** +34 913 64 56 29

2) Bar la Campana



If you're looking for the perfect *bocadillo de calamares*, look no further because La Campana is hands down the best place. Right next to Plaza Mayor, this bar is always crowded with locals, no matter what time of day it is. My personal favorite is a calamari sandwich paired with *una cerveza con limón*, otherwise known as beer with a splash of lemon. And if you're feeling extra hungry, you can't go wrong with an order of *patatas bravas* or *patatas alioli*.



Bocadillos de calamares con patatas bravas y patatas alioli

- **Address:** Calle Botoneras, 6
- **Metro:** Sol
- **Phone:** +34 913 64 29 84

3) Casa Toni



Found on Calle de la Cruz, this small restaurant definitely stands out against the others, with its worn out awning and window where you can see the chef hard at work. The first thing that you'll notice while walking into Casa Toni is the chef grilling up portions of *pimientos* and *oreja* to a charred perfection. In my opinion, this place has the best *sepia* ever. This grilled cuttlefish topped with fresh herbs and served with a side of mayo should be enjoyed with a Madrid white wine.



Sepia con vino Madrileño

- **Address:** Calle de la Cruz, 14
- **Metro:** Sol
- **Phone:** +34 915 32 25 80

4) Casa González



This half-bar half-artisan store located off of Calle Huertas is the perfect place to enjoy a light round of tapas, and maybe take a few of the goods home with you. Casa González is a cheese lover's dream with its delicious *raclette tosta* and variety of other European cheeses to choose from. My personal favorite take-home item is the *queso de arzúa*, which is a fresh cheese from the north of Spain. After enjoying a nice glass of wine and a tapa or two, don't be afraid to bring home a bag full of artisan goodies with you.



- [Web]
- **Address:** Calle del León, 12
- **Metro:** Antón Martín, Sol
- **Phone:** +34 914 29 56 18

5) Bodegas Ricla



About a 5-minute walk from Plaza Mayor is where you can find an old-fashioned bar decorated with bottles of wine that definitely gives a classic tavern feel. You can even take one of those bottles home with you! Just ask anyone behind the counter and they will be happy to help. Besides the amazing Spanish wines, Bodegas Ricla has a pretty good *vermut de grifo* (vermouth on tap) that goes perfectly with a side of *albóndigas,* otherwise known as meatballs.



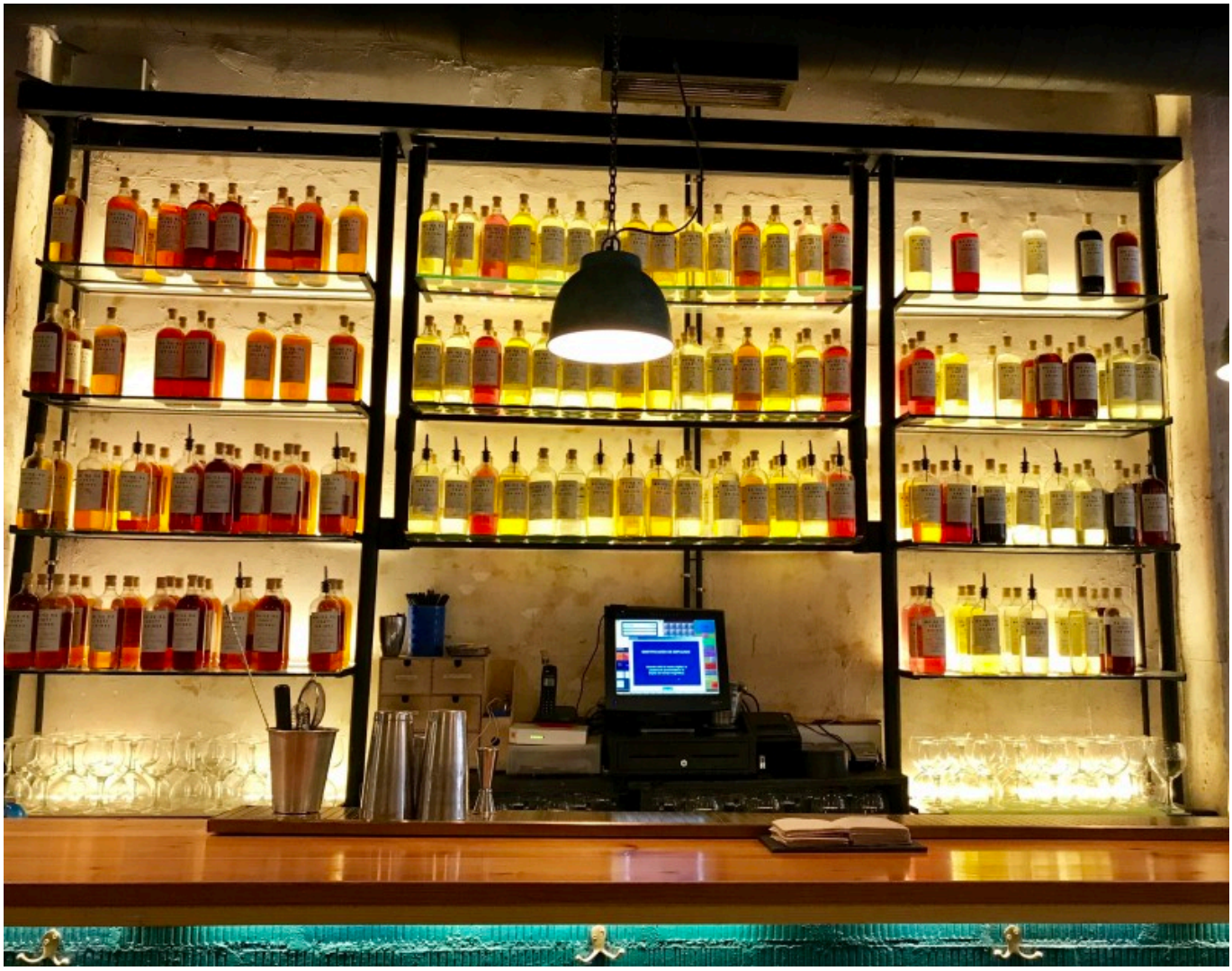
- **Address:** Calle Cuchilleros, 6
- **Metro:** La Latina, Tirso de Molina
- **Phone:** +34 913 65 20 69

Also check out: What to see in Barrio de las Letras

Macera TallerBar, a modern

twist on an old tradition

There are handmade cocktails and then there are *handmade cocktails*. **Macera TallerBar** is a pioneer in the latter. One look inside this hip bar and you may be confused—there aren't any familiar spirits lining the simple glass shelves.



Don't worry, though. What you'll find is much better. Because instead of the well-known brands of gin, vodka, or rum, there's only Macera's own hand written labels.



The idea behind Macera's name is also what makes its bar shelves so unique. Founder Narciso Bermejo took inspiration from *paxtaran*, a Basque liqueur made by soaking crushed sloe fruits (a blackish berry) in liquor. This traditional technique, called maceration, infuses the host liquor with the color and flavor of whatever ingredient is added.



Wanting to put a modern twist on a piece of Spanish heritage, Bermejo began experimenting with liquors and their complimentary flavors. The result is the many unique spirits that make up Macera’s menu today. Think rum infused with cinnamon and orange, gin with rosemary and thyme or red fruit, and whiskey with cherries.

The cocktail menu starts with a list of classics, which are then personalized with your choice of flavor infusion. Turn the page to find the spirits categorized by type with a list of all the different varieties of macerated flavor. If you prefer, you can simply pick one of these and a mixer of choice. No matter which combination you choose, all drinks are accessibly priced at 7€.



Macera’s interior is modern and clean with an industrial vibe. In front, a handful of wrought iron tables face glass doors that slide open on nice days. The openness makes you feel like there’s always room for one more, a good thing since this

place gets packed in the evenings. When you visit make sure to take a look towards the back, where lit shelves showcase the spirits on deck, all full of spices, herbs, and fruits working their magic.



If it’s too early for a tipple, Macera is also an excellent workspace. To keep you going, there are green juices, natural sodas, and coffee, as well as a small selection of toasted sandwiches and homemade desserts. It goes without saying that all of these are made with the same care as their cocktails.

Info

- **Website & Facebook**
- **Address:** Calle San Mateo, 21

- **Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez
- **Phone:** 910 11 58 10

By Danielle Owens

A former Oregonian, Californian, and Bogotana, Danielle is (for now!) settled in Madrid. Since 2014, she's chronicled her experiences living abroad on her blog, **No Longer Native** (**Website** & **Facebook**)

María Pandora, a dark and artistic champagne bar in La Latina

If you've ever spent an evening watching the sunset with a liter of Mahou in Parque Las Vistillas (and if you haven't, get on that ASAP), you may have spotted this beautiful, borderline-creepy cocktail bar, María Pandora.


Pandora



Cryptic, dripping golden letters read MARÍA PANDORA, and the sound of a dramatic poetry reading demand the curiosity of

passersby not yet in the know.



Once inside, you’ll already be hooked: every inch of the walls is covered with sinister sketches, the tables are adorned with misshapen melted candles, and vintage furniture adds the finishing touch to make you feel like you’re in a haunted mansion.



But despite the ghoulish vibe, the servers here are cheery and chatty. When we ordered champagne and white wine, our server plopped a frozen raspberry in our glass, assuring it would add a little somethin'-somethin'.

Oh, and the tapas here are my kind of food: mounds of candy and fruit.





But the best it yet to come. A meeting point for lovers of art, the bar also functions as a stage for poetry readings,

microteatro, and literary chats several nights of the week. The wall of antique books are for sale (but the century-old portraits of the owner's family are not).



Sign up for an event, order a glass of bubbly, and if you get there early enough, grab a window seat. María Pandora does not disappoint.

**Just note that their opening hours can be a little funky – they tend to open at 7pm except on Mondays, although sometimes they throw private events. So it's best to call ahead to make sure they're open!*

Info

- **Website** & **Facebook**
- **Phone:** +34 910 42 82 13

- **Address:** Plaza de Gabriel Miró, 1
- **Metro:** La Latina or Ópera

I went loco for Le Coco.

Picture the scene. Lashing rain. Lightning illuminating the dirty teabag coloured sky. Rumblings of thunder so fierce that part of my apartment window collapsed (true story, that's not just for dramatic effect). Oh and have I mentioned that this is July in Madrid, not November in Blighty? So you can only imagine my level of *ganas* when it came to venturing out into a monsoon on a bleak and downright bloody freezing Thursday evening.



The reason for rallying was that my Mum was in town and I

didn’t fancy having to try (and realistically fail) to produce dinner from the slim pickings in my fridge. So off we waded to **Le Coco**; a short stroll over to the neighbouring barrio of Chueca with our brollies in tow. From the outside Le Coco is dinky and unassuming, well, that’s what I could make out from my rain soaked fringe at least. But upon entering, not only was it a haven of dryness, it was a cosy one at that.





As soon as we were seated (which was immediate) we were handed a drinks menu. We happily plumped for pisco sours, which brightened both of our moods – shame the same couldn't be said for the colour of clouds that loomed ominously. Anyways, enough of my weather related whining, let's get cracking on the food because boy we did we eat our bodyweight. In our defence, as it felt like winter outside we definitely packed in enough dishes to help us with insulation.



So first there were prawn dumplings, plump, juicy and incredibly moor-ish. I ate 6 without breaking a sweat – although sweat I did, when I dragged myself to a 9am pilates class the following day to work them off. Next came tempura langoustine that rendered me speechless. Friends will confirm that this only usually happens when I'm asleep, so for a dish of something shrimpy to shut me up, well, we're talking about the unfathomable here. They were amazing. Genuinely. **Le Coco** is worth a visit for this reason alone.



Now some peeps might have been full after those couple of helpings, not us. Remember the rain, well it had started up again by this point, which gave us the perfect excuse to plump for tacos, a burrata the size of my fist, before ending with the crème de la creme of pasta dishes – and I've been to Puglia, I think I know my stuff. It heaved with lobster, crab and cream. I don't know what they did with these three ingredients but it was downright orgasmic. Hell, if that dish were a man, maybe I'd date it – frankly it was infinitely more delicious than the bulk of Tinder's offerings. I jest, but really, for a place that looked on first glance similar in style to many, many places in the area, the food was anything but predictable.



We wrapped the evening up with a couple of celebratory cavas for making it out of the house to battle the elements. And I left having forgotten that my red suede shoes (or my Dorothy/Wizard of Oz shoes as I liked to affectionately refer to them) are basically now akin to soggy road kill. Sometimes things don't look that pretty from the outside, Le Coco goes to prove that it's what's on the inside that counts.



Info

- **Website** & **Facebook**
- **Address:** Calle de Barbieri, 15
- **Metro:** Chueca
- **Phone:** 91 521 99 55

La Musa Malasaña, the restaurant equivalent of a little black dress

According to Yves Saint Laurent, “Fashions fade, style is eternal.” And in my humble opinion he’s absolutely spot on. Trends come and go, new restaurants pop up more often than I get my roots done (you heard it here first, no I’m not a natural blonde) and seemingly zeitgeist bars can often sink without trace.



However, some places become perennial favourites that barely need an introduction. Part of the fabric of the city, they become the kind of places so comfortable to visit, that they really are the foodie equivalent of popping on your favourite little black dress, you know, the one that makes you look hot

to trot but requires minimal effort.



When struggling for dinner inspiration or in times of when you simply can't be bothered to cook (it happens, let's be honest) I head to **La Musa** – partly out of sheer convenience (it's about a 3 and half minute stroll from my flat, yes that's a personal best in stilettos) but trust me when I say it's nigh on impossible to ever spend more 20 euros on dinner AND drinks. Wine ordered, check. An abundance of tapas that's never swimming in grease and is both pleasing to the eye and not just the tum, double check.



Having recently gone an understated renovation, **La Musa Malasaña** is looking lovelier than ever – you know a bit like a friend having gone through a recent break up and has hit the gym, hard. My friend and I ordered a few small plates including one of their most infamous dishes called a 'bomba' – I still don't quite understand what it is, but I will divulge that it's carby (yes that's a word) meaty and downright delish, so be sure to opt for one, if not two.



I always come away from La Musa with my appetite satiated and my purse (although feeling lighter) not depressingly so. They don’t take reservations so I suggest you pop on your LBD, get in line with your twenty euro note in tow and enjoy.

Info

- **Facebook** & **Instagram**
- **Address:** Calle de Manuela Malasaña, 18
- **Phone:** 914 48 75 58
- **Metro:** San Bernardo / Bilbao

Salmon Guru, seriously fun spirits near Plaza Santa Ana

The terms *craft cocktails* and *celebrity mixologist* can make eyeballs roll faster than you can say Vesper Martini. Because with all the clapping of mint leaves and fancy garnishes, it's easy for a place to take itself too seriously.

And while the folks behind **Salmon Guru** do have some serious credentials (proprietor is mixology mastermind Diego Cabrera), you won't find any stern-faced barmen shaming your request for vodka here. The only thing serious at this spot is the bartenders' love for well-made drinks.



The dark, unassuming exterior on Calle Echegaray does little to reveal the neon lights and quirky decor inside. The front

room is all 50s-era bungalow, with a bar and palm-print swivel chairs to one side and low seating against dark wood paneling on the other.

But don’t stop there. Follow the neon glow toward the back room and you’ll find yourself in the middle of a pop-art light extravaganza, with neon lightning bolts on the ceiling and familiar comic book faces on the walls.



As soon as you sit down you'll have a menu and glass of water plunked in front of you. If you've lived in Madrid for any

length of time, you know how rare it is to find a spot who’ll bring you a free glass (let alone keep it filled).

Just like the decor, the menu is an eclectic mix. You’ll find perfectly executed classics listed alongside their in-house inventions. If you’re not sure where to start, don’t be shy!

The bartenders are more than happy to recommend a drink based on what you like. Even better is to simply ask about their favorites, which I how I found myself sipping a Laphroaig-infused old-fashioned that isn’t on the menu.



Pasión, a blend of rum, coconut milk and passion fruit



Vesper Martini & classic Manhattan

Need one more reason to check out Salmon Guru? **The place is a must for whiskey lovers.** If you don’t see your favorite amongst the extensive selection of American bourbon and rye on the shelves, ask to see their secret whiskey menu.

All in all, if you’re looking sip impeccably made drinks somewhere that’s hip while being unpretentious, definitely check out Salmon Guru.

Info

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** Calle Echegaray, 21
- **Metro:** Sevilla or Anton Martin
- **Phone:** 91 000 61 85

By Danielle Owens, Website & Facebook

*A former Oregonian, Californian and Bogotana, Danielle is (for now!) settled in Madrid. Since 2014, she’s chronicled her experiences living abroad on her blog, **No Longer Native**.*