

Tapas Route around Pacífico – Try something new!

Head over to a different neighborhood this weekend, near metros Pacífico, Menéndez Pelayo and Conde de Casal, where you'll find old-school bars presenting their finest and most abundant tapas. And they'll cost you just 2€ with a caña or botellín. This is the first tapas route of the area and the perfect chance to try something new!

[#RutaDeTapasPacífico](#)

Toque de Sal Chamberí Restaurant: So chic and so good

Going out to eat or drink on Calle Ponzano, the street with the highest concentration of bars in Madrid, is such an art that it has its own verb, *ponzaning*. It's one of the best parts about living in Chamberí, with so many of the city's best new places all in one place. One of the newest to come on the scene is [Toque de Sal](#), which I learned about from the [Madrid Confidential](#) newsletter, naming it one of five new places to try this fall.



It had been on my bucket list all season, but then school got in my way. And finally, my friend and I were able to squeeze

in (on a Friday night without a reservation) to finally get to try it. When you go inside you feel as if you're in a chic restaurant in Paris, with beautiful tiled floors, dark wood, and a wonderfully lit bar. The front was absolutely full of people, which was to be expected because it's the weekend and this is Ponzano. The dining area in the back is small and intimate, but you have tables to sit for two and larger tables that are more elevated (perfect for a fun dinner with your *cuadrilla* of friends).



Toque de Sal - CHAMBERÍ -

ENTRANTES

Gazpacho	7,5 €
Crema del Día	8 €
Croquetas Caseras (4 uds.)	7 €
Jamón Ibérico de Bellota con Pan con Tomate	17 €
Mortadela Italiana con Aceite de Trufa y Grisines	8 €
Chupa Chups de Codorniz con Salsa Pekín	10 €
Mejillones a la Belga con Patatas Fritas	12 €
Poie Gras de Canard Mi-Cuit Casero	13 €
Tabla de Quesos al Corte	14 €
Huevos al Nido	9 €
Fetuccini Negro con Carabinero	16 €
Berenjenas a la Parmesana	8 €

ENSALADAS

Ensalada de Perdiz en Escabeche	14 €
Ensalada de Tomate, Quinoa y Ventresca	12 €
Ensalada de Espinacas y Queso de Cabra	9 €
Ensalada de Pollo Trufado	10 €

CARNES

Steak Tartar	13 €
Solomillo a la Mostaza o Plancha *	17 €
Hamburguesa Toque de Sal *	13 €
Rabo de Toro *	15 €
Albóndigas Riad Abracadabra *	14 €

PESCADOS

Cremoso de Salmón y Aguacate	13 €
Lubina a la Plancha con Verduritas	14 €
Ceviche de Corvina	14 €

POSTRES

Vaca Lechera	6 €
Mousse de Chocolate al Toque de Sal	6 €
Tarta del Día	6 €
Helados: Chocolate, Vainilla o Turrón	5 €
Tarta de Manzana	6 €
Fruta del Día	5 €

MAS SIDES *

Patatas Fritas, Verduritas, Puré de Patata, Chalotas Glaseadas, Ensalada Verde, Arroz Salteado	2,5 €
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10% IVA incl. - Pan y Cubierto 1 € - Visa, MasterCard, AMEX

Your place setting is equally elegant, with a menu in a gold leather cover:



...and personalized plates. The golden touches, from the silverware, the placemats, and the menu covers were analogous

to the gold standard service we received. Our waitress was incredibly warm and attentive, and it was fitting with how precious and inviting the space is inside.

And now, the food. Was absolutely to die for. My friend chose the **grilled sea bass** that came with vegetables:



...and I first had the *crema del día* (which was mushroom when we went), and then, I had something I hadn't had in a very long time: *rabo de toro*, or oxtail.



It was absolutely perfect: the meat fell right off the bone, and the sauce gave me the same warm feeling that I get when my father gets inspired to make *boeuf bourguignon* in his trusty crockpot. It was ideal for a cool fall night, and I'll definitely be back to have this again and again and again.



If that gem of an Instagram close-up didn't convince you enough, it's evident in this shot that I was ready to dig in, and believe me, I enjoyed every single minute of it.

A girl's night wouldn't be complete without dessert, and since I really shouldn't be eating sugar and I wanted to give myself a *capricho*, I decided to try the ***tarta de manzana***. There was more apple than crust, which for me was exactly what I wanted, and I couldn't get enough. For someone who doesn't like heavy

desserts I found something that would be worth doing an hour's worth of cardio the next day for.



As for my friend, she got the **chocolate coulant**, which is her personal favorite desert of all time.



If the picture doesn't convince you, take her word for it: it had a *muy buena pinta* and it was absolutely wonderful.

[Toque de Sal](#) definitely lived up to the hype, bringing a touch of chic to Ponzano, and I've found my new favorite neighborhood joint that I will inevitably now bring all of my friends to. It's also a perfect way to enjoy *ponzaning* while having a great sit-down dining experience, whether with friends, a birthday, or maybe a dinner date.

Info

Toque de Sal Chamberí

[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle de Ponzano, 46

Tel.: 914 26 64 65

Metro: Alonso Cano (Line 7)

Forasteros, a Madrid-based swing, gypsy-jazz and folk band

As a hub for artists and creative are types from all over the world, Madrid's local live-music scene is energetic and diverse. As always, your friends at Naked Madrid are here to provide you with the best options as how to maximize the potential of your nights out. **The first local musicians to be featured in this series are the swing, gypsy-jazz, folk group Forasteros.**



They have an interesting backstory because their members had all met by chance. The band was formed when its founder, lyricist and guitarist, **Tom Buzz Cox** from London, crossed paths with **Tara** during a Vaughan System teacher training course. Swing instructor **Julia Hampson**, also from London, was brought onboard as the violinist after an encounter busking the streets in Lavapies.

Tom recruited **Hinata Myojin**, a bassist from Japan, through another band in the community. Clarinetist **Ricardo Vasquez** from Texas/Mexico was discovered upon his response to an advertisement. They are unclear on how drummer **Fernando Iglesias** from Madrid entered the fold, strongly implying that he materialized out of thin air.



They write in Spanish, English, French and even Japanese. Ricardo and Julia have a classical background and are well-versed in swing and Jazz. Overall the group combines aspects of **gypsy-jazz, folk and swing** while also being open to anything that takes their fancy: twisted Latin rhythms, funk, DnB hints.

Their ambition is to make people laugh, dance and feel while also “talking about difficult shit.” says **Tara Lowe**, their singer and lyricist, who I have known for the greater part of the year as two of my close friends were her flatmates. Lowe, a long-term expat from Cardiff enjoys writing songs about everyday life that are “**cheeky, honest and indulgent.**”



Forasteros' songs have addressed some of the more **relatable aspects of living in Madrid** with their songs "Landlord from Hell, title self-explanatory, as well as "Banks of June" which focuses on lust and broken hearts. Their track "Springtime Shuffle" centers on opportune new beginnings while "Cuando" is just about dancing.

Forasteros performs a lot in Lavapiés in the venues of Gato Verde, Taberna Alabanda, La Tortuga, La Tabacalera and Centro de Creación y Investigación. Their First EP, "Hello you!" was recorded at The Treehouse Madrid Studios on the label of Vestizo Azul Records. [It is available free on Bandcamp.](#) Check out their video of "[Devil in the Trees](#)" from their new EP.

FORASTEROS

PRESENTACION PRIMER ^{MINI} DISCO

"HELLO YOU!"

JUEVES 12 de NOV. 21H

INVITADO ESPECIAL:
TAIACORE



FACEBOOK.COM/
FORASTEROS
MADRID

INTRUSO

AUGUSTO FIGUEROA 3

PUNTO DE
VENTA:
GIGLON.COM

Info

Follow them on [Facebook](#) & **their** [Bandcamp page](#) and be sure to see them perform live! Their EP *Hello You* launches [on the 12th November at Intruso Bar](#) – with supporting artist [Taiacore](#). Tickets can be purchased at [Giglon](#). The first 50 people to arrive will get a free EP and poster.

La Latina's 'seafood party' in Mercado de La Cebada: The place to see and be seen!

Mercados are the heart and soul of any Spanish city. If you want to get under the skin of the place you're visiting, make a beeline for the city's biggest food market. Wander around each section (meat, vegetables, fish, etc.) and you will instantly see what the region's all about. Then make your way to the *mercado's* busiest bar, order what everyone else is drinking and demand your rightful complimentary *tapa*. If it's something you've never clapped eyes on, even better.



La Latina's [Mercado de la Cebada](#) is no exception. The place encapsulates Spanish culture to almost cliché levels: the heart and soul of Madrid is right here.



Every weekday, [Mercado de la Cebada](#) will sell you fresh **produce from all over Spain**. There's also a good selection of local bars in the labyrinth of alleys both upstairs and downstairs, and even a few clothes stalls, toyshops and cobblers for some of the market's more devout punters.



But then, every Saturday at lunchtime, [Mercado de la Cebada](#) transforms into what I will describe as nothing less than a **seafood party**.



The atmosphere is electric; iced molluscs and pulpo are flowing, and groups of friends doing what they do best: sharing food and belly-laughing, plastic cup of valdepeñas in one hand, half-eaten shrimp in the other.





Grab a few friends and get there **no later than 2:30pm**. Find one of the aproned chaps hovering in front of his stall, affectionately touching everyone with his fishy hands, and place your order per *ración* or by weight.



Before you take your polystyrene plates to the nearest paper-covered stack of crates, don't forget to pick up your **complimentary bottle of wine or cans of beer. Yeah... COMPLIMENTARY!** Due to licensing rules, these shops can't sell drinks. I imagine there's a slight markup on the prices of seafood but, having said that, **the prices are some of the lowest I've seen in Madrid, and the quality is some of the best.**

There are cups, serviettes, toothpicks and mussel 'spives' (spoon-knives) strategically strewn around the stalls – a seafood spectacular with no frills, and all the better for it.

Info

[Web](#) – [Facebook](#)

Address: Plaza de la Cebada, La Latina, 28005

Metro: La Latina (right outside)

Opening hours: Mon – Fri 9am-2pm / 5-8:30pm; Sat 9am-3pm

Another soulful neighbourhood market, not too far away, is [Mercado de San Fernando in Lavapiés](#)

Ramen Kagura, Madrid's (almost) perfect ramen bar

Located on Calle de Las Fuentes, in between metro Opera and Plaza Mayor, lies a Japanese restaurant serving **unbelievably tasty ramen, with heaping portions at an affordable price**. I'm tempted to call [Ramen Kagura](#) perfect, yet the service could have been much better. To be fair, the food did come out in a split second after ordering.



I went to [Ramen Kagura](#) for the first time on Saturday with a big group of friends, three of whom are Japanese (also the ones who recommended we go here). Almost everyone at our table of seven had also dined at Madrid's most celebrated ramen bar, [Chuka](#), where you basically have to fight to get a table. Naturally, a conversation comparing the two ramen bars did come up. We concluded that [Chuka](#) has better-quality ingredients and a chic décor. But when it comes down to it, [Ramen Kagura's](#) **noodles simply hit the spot**; plus it wins in terms of convenience (getting a table is easy) and **bang for your buck** (for under €10 you get a delicious and very filling meal).



You can order from several different types of ramen bowls, mostly made with pork-based broth, vegetables, and your choice of shoyu or miso sauce. Broth-less, cold and vegetarian versions are also available, as well as rice dishes and sushi (which we didn't try). **Each bowl comes with your choice of 100, 200 or 400 grams of ramen noodles**, prices ranging accordingly from around **€8-11**. I ordered the 200-gram bowl and it was gigantic. James and Edison ordered the 400-gram bowls. Needless to say, they were very happy campers. We devoured everything and there were no complaints regarding portions, taste or price.



I'll let the poor service slide. Perhaps we just went on an off day. Since the food was oh so good, we'll be going back again and again and again...

Info

[Web](#) & [Facebook](#)

Address: Calle de las Fuentes, 1

Metros: Opera or Sol

Hours: Monday through Sunday: 1pm-4:15pm / 8:30pm-11:45pm

More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:

- [Kintaro – Oy Vey](#)
 - [Sumo – This Japanese restaurant's name says it all](#)
 - [Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food](#)
 - [Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant](#)
 - [Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.](#)
 - [Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!](#)
 - [Soy Kitchen – a fusion of Asian flavors](#)
 - [Karachai – A cozy and elegant Thai restaurant in Alonso Martínez](#)
-

Madrid Jazz Festival 2015 – live concerts all over the city!

Madrid is celebrating its annual jazz festival from November 5th – 27th with live concerts around the city (many of which are free). Check out the [program here](#) and make sure to take part in it!

La Hummuseria – a social kind

of thing

Today I'm sharing a secret discovery. I considered keeping it to myself both out of selfishness and to preserve its charm, however I've decided that [La Hummuseria](#) deserves to be experienced by anyone who appreciates healthy, wholesome food and a familiar, friendly atmosphere; or indeed anyone with a penchant for hummus. Even if you don't, it's hard not to fall in love with it because it's so damn tasty and healthy.



[La Hummuseria](#) is the dream child of newlyweds Lotem and Shai, two young psychologists from Israel who visited Madrid on holiday and for all the obvious reasons fell in love with the city.

They pondered what the city was missing, namely: hummus and this being their passion Lotem and Shai dreamt up *La Hummeseria*. In February 2015 they moved to Madrid and in October 2015 *La Hummuseria* was born. Simple.



Hummus is a traditional Middle Eastern dish made from garbanzos/chickpeas, Tahini and lemon. It is served warm with a touch of olive oil, warm chickpeas and one of their special toppings.

Traditionally, hummus is eaten as a meal in itself so one portion could be enjoyed individually without anything other than fresh pitta. However, to keep the hummus company (Hummus is a social kind of thing, says Lotem) you will find freshly cut salads made from the best vegetables in the market, lemon and herbs.

The hero is obviously the hummus. **There are five varieties of hummus**; the base is freshly made every day using the Lotem and Shai's tradition and secret technique and toppings include mushrooms, lemon and almonds.

To accompany **El Ambiguo**: hummus with tahíni verde, we ordered the oven baked cauliflower with almonds. A crisp and simple tapas sized dish of oven lightly baked cauliflower seasoned with lemon, parsley and chives and coated in roasted almond shards.

The **Ensalada fresca-fresquísima** arrived as a generous mix of cucumber, tomato, chickpeas, carrot and a fresh herb, lemon and oil dressing.



We drank iced tea with fresh mint and felt so gloriously healthy that we almost declined Shai's insistence that we try the **Malabi for dessert**. I am more than glad that we conceded.

Made from Middle East cream scented flowers, peanuts and coconut, this dessert is as fresh and wholesome as everything else and totally delicious.

Hidden off Fuencarral, *La Hummuseria* is the ideal spot for a lazy weekend lunch; reclining in comfortable art deco chairs on the mezzanine level or to grab a quick snack as a break from combing the Malasana shops.

The service is impeccable, you can see Lotem and Shai preparing their food from the open kitchen and they are more than happy to stop and talk to you while you are there. **After all, hummus is a social thing.**

Finally, in case you were wondering, yes they do offer take aways.

Info:

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Hernán Cortes 8
- **Metro:** Tribunal, Chueca

By Alice Josselyn

Also check out [Falafeleria by the same owners!](#)

The Orange Dogs of Halloween – Party at Desperate Literature

Want to do something different this **halloween in Madrid**? Then head over to [Desperate Literature](#), a charming little bookstore near Opera, and wear your best costume. Marian Womack, editor of Ediciones Nevsky, translator and sci-fi legend, will be ushering in the halloween festivities with a reading of her

most recent work, 'Orange Dogs'. There be all the usual tricks and treats, meaning **booze**.

Dress code: cosmic horror.

Lambuzo, Authentic Andalusian Flavour in Madrid

[Lambuzo](#) is a family-run Andalusian restaurant with two locations in Madrid: Calle de las Conchas 9 (metro Opera) and Calle Ponzano 8 (metro Iglesia), as well as a stand in [Mercado de Chamberí](#). Both restaurant locations have a special charm that transports you straight to Andalucía from the moment you step foot inside. The staff is also very friendly and makes you feel at home.

[Lambuzo](#) has already been featured on **Naked Madrid** a number of times; it was one of the blog's very first [articles](#) and has since been included in [Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid](#) and [An Insider's Guide to Sol](#). Their Opera location has a downstairs wine cellar where they hold events such as wine tastings and micro theatre, which we always feature on our [events page](#) – be sure to go next time they have one! So as you can see, Lambuzo is already one of Naked's favorite places and I, too, wanted to share my experience with you all.



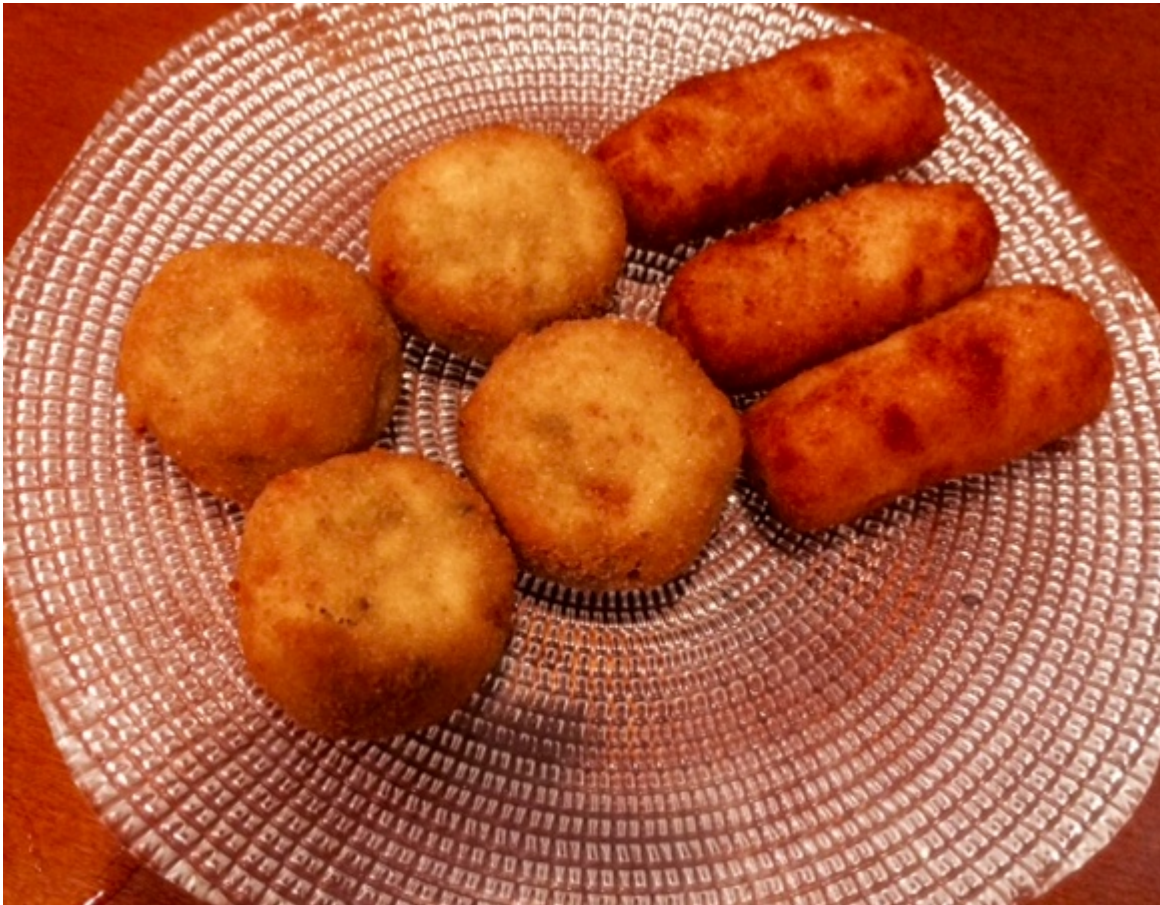
I recently went with three friends and we decided to get a bottle of wine to accompany our meal. The waiter helped us order a special wine called *Señorío de Heliche*.



The restaurant's dishes are great for sharing so I recommend ordering a bunch of different plates with friends and tasting as many as possible. It's the best way to try new dishes! The first starter we chose was "***Ensaladilla con atún de Barbate***" because it is a house speciality. The flavour was very tasty and the texture of the ingredients was very smooth, ready for the palate!



We also ordered "**Lambuceo de croquetas**" which consist of different types of **croquetas**, such as **al ajillo** (with garlic) and **camarones** (shrimp), that tasted just like the ones our mothers make!



For me, "***Cigarritos de langostinos con Albahaca***" was the most amazing surprise on the menu. Their name translates into English as "***Prawn cigars with basil***". Their careful presentation and distinct flavor make me want to go back right now and order them again.



“Chocos de Huelva” is one of the most popular fried fish dishes in Andalucía, and of course we ordered them to complete our dinner. They are prepared in batter and normally come with a special homemade sauce to dip them in. Delicious!



To sum up, I highly recommend going to [Lambuzo](#) with friends and family – it's an opportunity to get to know a little more about Andalucía, right in the heart of Madrid!

Info

[Website](#)

Address: Calle de Ponzano, 8. Madrid

Phone: +34 915 13 80 59

Reservations advised.

A Year of Menus Del Día in Madrid

Tapas get all the fame in Spain. Drinking wine, nibbling chorizo, sharing little bites late into the night—the tapa is romantic. Never mind that the definition is slippery and the quality unpredictable, or that an evening of tapa-hopping can cost you more in the end than sitting down for a proper meal.

But I'd like to take a moment to celebrate a lesser-known Spanish food tradition, one that's equally praiseworthy but seldom mentioned: the *menu del día*. These three magic words will get you a three-course meal, with bread and wine included, at an incredible fixed price.

Beginning as a government-mandated measure during the Franco years, this practical lunch tradition was designed to provide affordable meals to day laborers during the workweek. While no longer required by law, restaurants have carried the tradition full-force into the 21st Century, with even high-end establishments kneeling down to offer those of us on tighter budgets delicious lunches at bargain prices. **It's not as sexy or unique as the tapa, but the *menu del día* forms an integral part of the Spanish food culture and is perhaps one of Spain's best-kept secrets.**



The Club.

Over the last year some friends and I decided to take advantage of the *menus* around Madrid. I wouldn't call us a club (ignore that I just did) but rather a shifting group of buddies hanging out over a different meal every Friday. We would fluctuate between two and ten people, though it was always anchored by a couple die-hard members, myself included.

I recommend that anyone with the opportunity start their own tradition as well. It's a great way to try new food, see new corners of the city, and hang out with all the other no-goodnik three-day weekenders over something other than a bar stool.

We had only four rules. All menus had to be:

1. In one of the central barrios.
2. Less than 15 euros per person.
3. Good quality food.
4. Good quality people.

The Rankings.

This list is limited to our *menu del día* meet-ups over the past calendar year. I included both food and atmosphere in my decisions, though the process was by no means meticulous; I'm going off little more than my general impressions of each place. I also recognize this list skews toward trendy restaurants, which is partly because we liked to use the meet-up as an opportunity to get into otherwise busy spots (Friday lunch was normally little hassle), but also as a much-needed break from the every-day Spanish fare. It's worth noting that sometimes little Spanish joints in the outer barrios do the best *menus* of all!

1. Bacira (Chamberí, 14 euros)



It's pretty astounding that a restaurant with a waitlist of more than a month offers a 14-euro fixed-price meal. If that's not a testament to the spirit of the *menú del día*, I don't know what is. Make a reservation, wait it out, and go here. The food is a fresh take on the Mediterranean-Asian fusion that's the rage in Spain these days (thanks, David Muñoz) and the dining room is bright and welcoming with all the touchstones of modern aesthetics (dangling bulbs, faded wood, dark blues and whites) without feeling hackneyed. The food is fresh, creative and delicious. We felt like sexy young business people at English teacher prices.

2. Gabriel. (Conde Duque, 14 euros)



You know you've chosen your restaurant well when you find

yourself eating next to Javier Bardem. The rich and famous have good taste, much better than Joe Nobodies like us, but this place stands on its own. The cuisine consists of modern takes on Spanish classics though there are the occasional Asian influences (again, all the rage), and the desserts are incredible. It also has the nicest bathroom in Madrid—shit's straight out of a William Sonoma catalog. Atmosphere is cozy, intimate, and occasionally Bardem-ridden.

3. [Momo](#) (Chueca, 11.50 euros)

Unlike other restaurants that include maybe two or three options for a first and second course, Momo offers the entire menu for the *menu del día*. The food is delicious and varied (again, some Mediterranean-Asian fusion going on—I'm spotting a trend). The dishes can sometimes be a bit sauce-heavy (or maybe my tastes are becoming more Spanish) but choose wisely and you'll love your meal. This is one of my go-to *menus del día* when I have visitors because of the wide selection. They also have a menu de noche for a reasonable 18 euros (same as the day menu), but if you're going to be in the area for a reasonably-priced dinner, I'd suggest **Baco y Beto**.

4. [Badila](#) (Lavapiés, 13.50 euros)



This restaurant is intimate and classic (the chef himself sometimes takes the orders) with faded white wood walls and a chalkboard listing the daily specials. The food is classic Spanish with a touch of 'lo moderno,' and everything is fresh and seasonal. It's still the best *crema de verduras* I've had in Madrid (had seasonal squash with a couple slices of intense chorizo), which says a lot in a city obsessed with creaming vegetables. Here's a [previous post on Badila](#).

5. La casa dei Pazzi (chueca, 11.50 euros)



Casa dei Pazza

Just to switch things up here, let's focus on quantity. Casa dei Pazzi offers a substantial salad as a starter and then a whole Italian-style pizza for your main course. There's also wine, bread and dessert. You'll wonder how you got away with paying only 11 euros, half-expecting to look over your shoulder as you leave and see an angry Italian chef charging

after you with a pizza paddle.

6. Los Chuchis (Lavapies, 11 euros)



Maybe the most charming atmosphere in the list, it feels a bit like an old diner, with a few tables around a large bar and counter in the middle, the hustle and bustle of the waiters running around and the steady chatter of regulars. The food's great too. We showed up at 1:30 and it was fine, but it filled up quickly. Check out our [previous post on Los Chuchis](#).

7. Bar Galleta (Malasaña, 11.50 euros)



This trendy restaurant in Malasaña has a similar feel to Maricastaña (see below), with both doing modern takes on classic spanish food, though Galleta's menu skews a bit more French. They're also on the same street, so if you don't like the look of one *menu*, try the other. I prefer the atmosphere here though—the warm gold lighting, the wide French doors to the street, the wood and brick interior with wild flowers in vases around the restaurant. When we went the food was classic Spanish but good (crema starter, *entrecot*, a fruit desert) but *the menu del día* seems to change frequently and dramatically, so you can probably catch it on a great day.

8. Maricastaña (Malasaña, 11.50 euros)



The food is classic *menu del día* –your typical *crema de*

verduras starter (or hummus or a salad) with a protein-focused second (*lomo, entrecot, meluza*)—but what they do, they do well. It has a bit of that same late-2000s trendy look to it—exposed brick, sanded wood shelves, dangling lightbulbs and fading white paint—but they manage to pull it off. Galleta wins by a hair, but they’re both nice dining experiences.

9. La Candelita (Alonso Martinez, 12 euros)



We all enjoyed this place. They describe their cuisine as “Latin Criollo” (though it leaned more Spanish than Latin American) with a warm Latin-inspired atmosphere. They publish examples of their *menú del día* right on the website <http://lacandelita.es/carta/menu-del-dia/> so you don’t have to take my word for it!

10. TukTuk (Chamberí or Chueca, 10.50 euros)



TukTuk doesn't even need mentioning on an English-language Madrid blog. They do a nice variety of Southeast Asian dishes and have great quantity and quality menu for the price, so it's always a popular suggestion in the expat community. If you've lived here for over a year, you've definitely heard the typical "let's all go TuckTak! Takatuk! TACKATACKATUKKA!" They're pronouncing it wrong, though—it's "tuktuk." Read our [full post on Tuk Tuk](#).

11. La Tragantúa (Huertas, 12 euros)



(photo credit Carlos Olmo Minube.com)

This place was consistently called the best menú del día in Madrid on TripAdvisor last year, and it might still have that reputation, but the second time I went, the quality and presentation seemed to have slipped. Who knows, it may have been an off day. I don't know how you would characterize their food—it's a bit of a Spanish-and-everything fusion. I would sum it up as "rich." Be careful to mix up the starter and second course, otherwise you'll be like "why'd I order fried cheese in blueberry sauce as an appetizer for pesto-smothered pork?"

12. My Veg (Malasaña, 15 euros)



I bumped My Veg down a couple notches because they didn't include a drink with the *menu del día*, which is an insult to the very tradition! The final cost was closer to 18 euros, making it the most expensive *menu* we had all year. In terms of quality, it would be closer to the top. All the food was market fresh (they pride themselves on "tomatoes that taste like tomatoes") and the presentation modern and meticulous. It's a much fancier place than the outside suggests. Just ignore the terrible name.

13. El Apartamento (Huertas, 12 euros)



I came here after a particularly intense bike ride and without showering, so my memory is one of me hunching over my plate apologetically avoiding eye contact with all the well-dressed businessmen eating around us. The food was delicious though, Spanish food with a modern twist. I managed to take this blurry photo before losing all control and smashing my face into my plate in a black-out feeding frenzy.

14. Siam (Conde Duque, 11.61 euros)

I'm a sucker for Thai food and this place does a decent job for the (oddly specific) price. They include tom yum soup or pad thai as a starter, then a stirfry or curry as a second. The atmosphere is a bit odd, it feels a bit like a theme restaurant. While we're on the topic of thai food, I actually prefer the menú del día at **Maiia Thai (Plaza de España)**, though it doesn't rotate much, and sometimes the new **BambuBox (Chueca)** has Tom Kha as a starter, which is nice. I

haven't included either of those on the list because they weren't done as a menu with the group. Also: **Krachai (Alonso Martinez)** has very high quality food and some Michelin nods, though the menu is expensive, doesn't include soup, and doesn't rotate much.

15. Taberna DNorte (Sol, 10 euros)



So this place has a surprisingly nice interior and the food wasn't bad (a decent-sized burger, a pisto starter for me, someone got a salad) but it's located in an exceptionally ugly plaza between Sol and Gran Vía and attached to a drab little hotel. It's the kind of place you'd expect to see a man in a disheveled suit drinking a mid-morning cocktail and nervously waiting to meet his mistress.

16. Vietnam 24 (Chueca, 11 euros)



The menu food isn't bad, but it's not particularly noteworthy. We all had some type of chicken or beef stir-fry but they seemed to lack those bright fundamental vietnamese tastes (mint, lime, basil). I also would've liked to see pho as a menu option, but that's wishful thinking. I prefer **La Petit Hanoi** in malasaña.

17. El b_US (Sol, 10 euros)



Everyone else loved this place (including TripAdvisor, where it has some pretty outstanding rankings). It has a unique design concept I guess, but I was not blown away by the food. I also have no idea how we're supposed to pronounce it. "El bus?" "El beh- OOS?" I end up saying it like I'm hesitant to recommend it, which I guess I am: "El b'us."

18. Vivares (chueca, 9.90 euro / 12 euros veg option)



This restaurant is popular for lunch in Chueca, but I can't figure out why, exactly. We experienced so-so food in a chaotic environment, nothing extraordinary, and the menu felt a bit too long for them to focus on any type of seasonal speciality. My strongest memory is that it was too loud. "Alright, gramps" you're probably thinking, but the sensation was like being in an adult Chuck-E-Cheese without any of the cool robot puppets.

19. La Mucca (Malasaña, 10 euros)



I enjoy La Mucca for dinner. They have a good boletus pizza and some quality appetizers, and it's lively and fun in the evening. For lunch, this place disappointed. It was the first *menu del día* where someone had to set aside a dish—a greasy open-faced sandwich with an odd flavor. We were also sitting on the slanting terraza with the harsh mid-afternoon February sunlight blinding our eyes and giving the greasy *Tosta* an even more washed-out, dreary look. The highlight was this salad, but even that can be made easily at home for much cheaper. We sat there dreaming of all the better places on this list, knowing that next week was a fresh start.

Final Thoughts:

You might have noticed almost none of these get awful reviews, but that's simply because none of these places were awful. Maybe it's a testament to our rigorous selection process, or maybe we just enjoyed ourselves everywhere. If a place were awful, I would have said so.

I think of Homer the food critic: "I'm giving this my worst review ever: seven thumbs up."

I have more recommendations for *menús* around Madrid that were not included in this list because we did not go there in our Friday group. I had to set a limit for the list somewhere. **Please add your suggestions below or on Facebook and we can compile another post.**

Gallery

(all photos were snapped on scene with an iPhone, unless otherwise indicated)



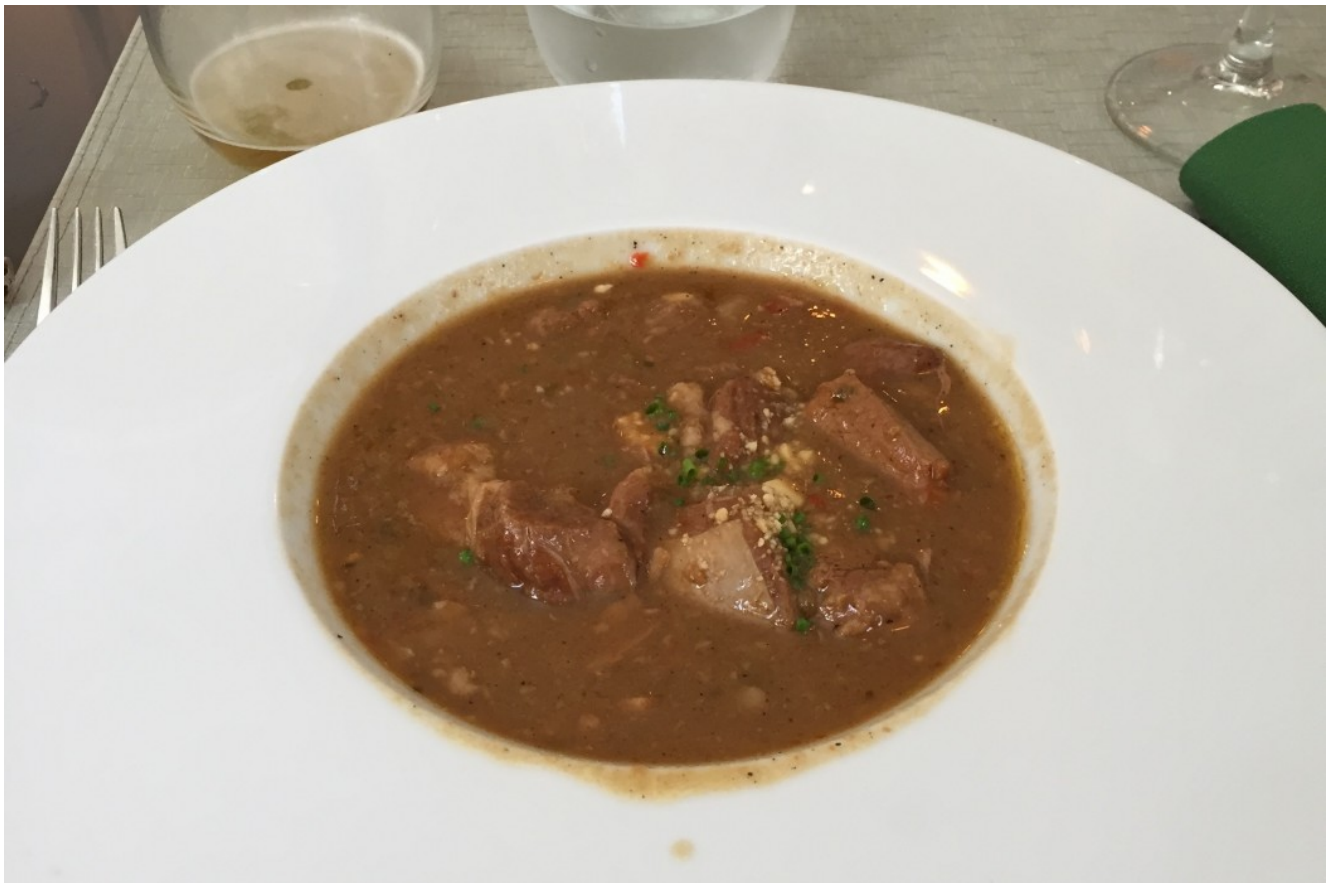
Asian-fusion ceviche at Bacira



Duck confit at Gabriel



Bacira dessert



Stew as the main course at Bacira



Bacira appetizer



Vivares Salad



Vietnam 24



Del Norte



Casa dei Pazzi



Badila



Badila crema de calabacín



TukTuk



El Apartamento



La Candelita



Bar Galleta



Bar Galleta



Bar Galleta crema



Bar Galleta



Greek salad starter at La Mucca, Malasaña



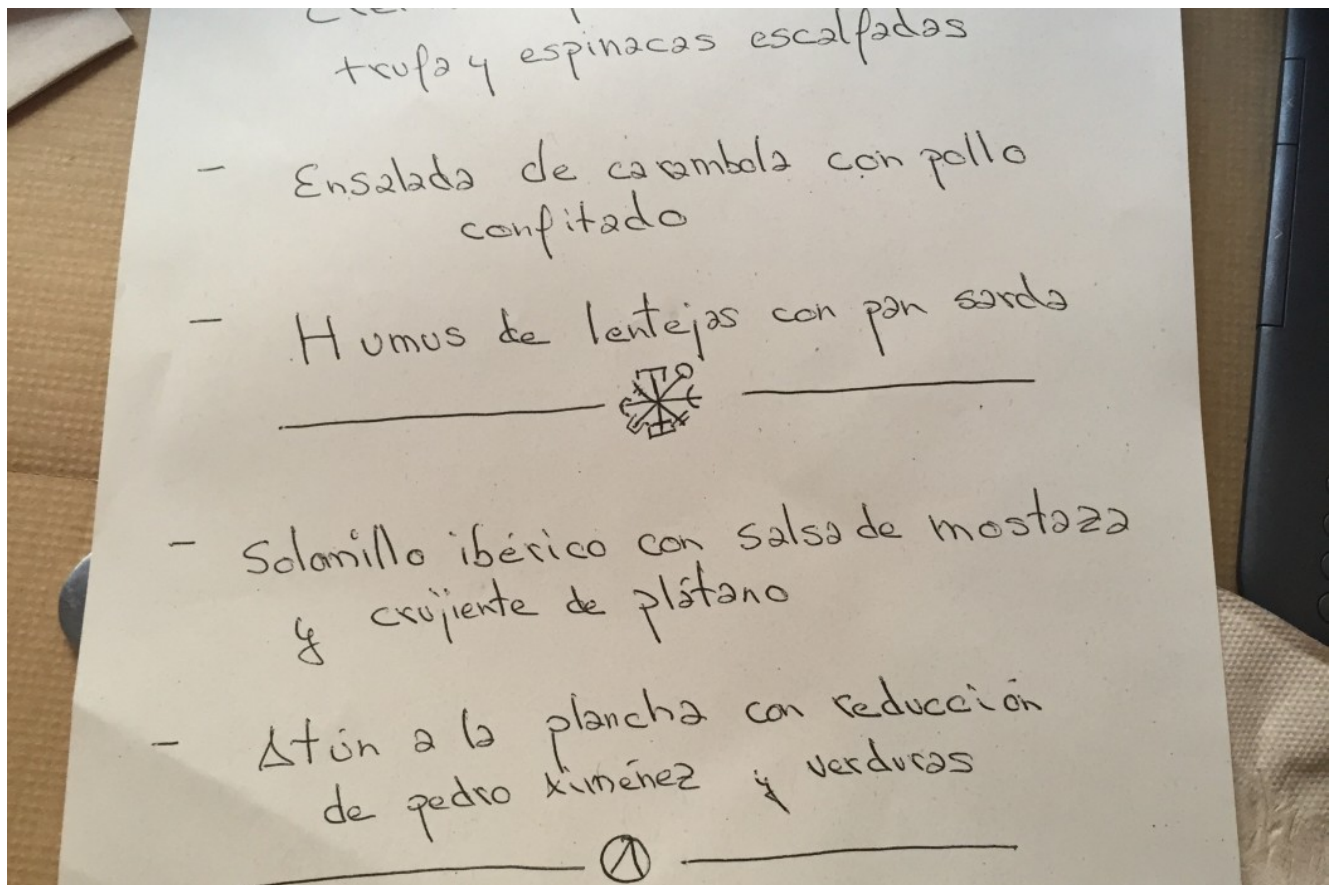
Gabriel



Gabriel crema



Gabriel Menú



Maricastaña



Gabriel dessert



Gabriel dessert



Maricastaña