

Panda Patisserie, delight in Japanese desserts and drinks near Gran Vía

Mochis, matcha ice cream, bubble tea, dorayaki... If you want to enjoy a selection of Japanese sweets and drinks, then head over to Panda Patisserie, the city's one and only Japanese bakery, located right off Gran Vía at the popular Hattori Hanzo restaurant.



Although I'd been to Hattori for dinner before and even wrote an [article about it back in 2014](#), I never had the chance to get to Panda Patisserie, which opens on weekday afternoons and

for weekend brunch. The hours are from 4:30-8:30pm Monday through Friday, and from 11am-1pm on Saturday and Sunday (book ahead on the weekends).



As you walk into the restaurant, make your way to the back area where you get to sit comfortably in the floor, surrounded by fun decor and a welcoming ambience. Now onto the food: Although there are savory options on Panda's menu, like the unbeatable baos, our eyes went straight for the desserts, as I'm sure yours will too. With the help of the nice server, here's what we ordered:



We started out with two cold brew iced teas, one with strawberry and lime, and the other with grapefruit and yuzu.

They were sweet, citrusy and refreshing. We also tried a few different homemade mochis, which are small rice-flour balls that have a gooey texture and are filled with flavors ranging from chocolate to green tea matcha.



Then we had the *Sakura dorayaki*, which are essentially two pancakes filled with fresh strawberry and white chocolate. So good.



And of course, we couldn't leave without trying the newest item, *fluffy pancakes* served with fresh fruit and syrup that you get to pour on yourself. All the desserts were simply delicious.



Surprisingly, after all that, we felt satisfied but not heavy at all. Everything is light and tasty, and you'll leave wanting to come back for more. There are so many other options on the menu that we wanted to try, from the matcha ice cream to the bubble teas!

If you haven't already tasted Japanese sweets, then I highly recommend ordering an assortment of different flavors and textures to get the full experience. And if you're already a fan, well, then welcome to your go-to Japanese sweetshop in Madrid!

Panda Patisserie

- [Facebook](#) & IG: [@pandapatisserie](#)
- **Address:** Calle Desengaño 11
- **Metro:** Callao

Be there or be square: 8 of Spain's best plazas

Bullfights, sangria, paella... So many of the things that, to the uninitiated, epitomise Spain's culture are actually outdated, tourist traps, or limited to just one of the country's regions.

But there's one Spanish heavyweight that fully deserves to be celebrated alongside *tortilla de patatas*, *siestas*, and Rosalía on the list of the best things ever to emerge from the Iberian Peninsula. A cultural icon with adoring fans all over the country, from the hills of Asturias to sunny southern seaside towns, and in every metropolis and pueblo in between. I'm talking, of course, about the Spanish *plaza*.

Some squares slip under the radar of anyone who doesn't know to seek them out. Some are the perfect place for a protest; some are best suited for locals and blow-ins alike to meet for a beer, a gossip, and a people-watching session. Others have become tourist attractions in their own right, be it thanks to their historical significance or just because they make for an awesome photo op.

Whatever you're after on your next day trip or weekend away, here's a list of eight of Spain's best plazas you should make sure not to miss.

1. Plaza Mayor, Almagro



Green and gorgeous, this recently-restored medieval plaza is one of the country's favourites – and provided a beautiful backdrop for post-class coffees or *cañas* back when I worked in a nearby school.

Thanks to its flowers and fountains, Almagro's Plaza Mayor regularly features on lists of Spain's top ten most beautiful squares, and I monitor its progress like a proud *manchego* mother, rejoicing when it moves up a spot and sulking when it's relegated.

Make sure to try the local delicacy of pickled *berenjenas* at any one of the tapas bars dotted around the plaza – they were slightly too green and bitter for my liking, but they're a regional favourite and *sobre gustos no hay nada escrito*, so

you might enjoy them.

What's more, Almagro is home to the annual Festival Internacional de Teatro Clásico, and tucked away next to the square's shops and restaurants is the entrance to the *corral de comedias*, a 17th-century playhouse and hidden gem of a tourist attraction which is more than worth the €3 entrance fee.

2. Plaza Dos de Mayo, Madrid



It's no surprise that Spain's capital has a square for every taste – Plaza de España (gone but not forgotten), colourful Chueca, floral Plaza de la Villa, Santa Ana for the literature

lovers, and Plaza Mayor if you're a fan of Baroque architecture and, eh, multi-coloured goats.

But a particular stand-out is Dos de Mayo, just ten minutes' walk from Sol.

This plaza is a crucial one for history lovers: it marks a key date in the Comunidad de Madrid's calendar, when the people of Madrid rebelled against occupying French troops on 2nd May 1808.

Annual street parties marking the uprising liven up the already-bustling barrio of Malasaña, but this square is worth a visit at any time of the year – it boasts playparks for the *peques*, a weekly vintage and craft market, and plenty of places to stop for a snack or drink (Pizzería Maravillas is a stand-out).

3. Plaza Mayor, Ciudad Real



[Source](#): Image by © Rob Cousins/robertharding/Corbis

The small city of Ciudad Real is often overshadowed by its province's more picturesque pueblos, but I maintain that my former hometown's central square is still worth a visit, if only for its *Reloj Carrillón* – a huge clock from which life-size figurines of Cervantes, Don Quijote and Sancho Panza emerge to the sound of bells chiming at regular intervals throughout the day and night.

This manchego capital isn't known for being the most Instagrammable of towns, but it has a plaza that pays artistic homage to the stars of its regions, friendly locals, and more tapas bars than you could shake a stick at. What more do you need, really?

4. Plaza del Taller, Santiago de Compostela



[Source](#)

Whether you've trekked part of the epic Camino de Santiago or are just up north on a pilgrimage for Galician *pulpo* (guilty), this isn't a square to be missed. Plaza del Taller – or, to use its *gallego* name, Praza do Obradoiro – is a spot in the rainy, atmospheric Galician capital.

Located to the west of Santiago's enchanting casco viejo, this square marks the end of the road for pilgrims who've walked St James' Way, and it provides peak people-watching opportunities – I'd challenge anyone to watch pilgrims rejoicing at the completion of their journey without getting emotional. For travellers holy or secular, the plaza's architecture, sheer size, and its magical (and traffic-free) atmosphere are definitely worth a trip next *punteo*.

This square is also home to the beautiful, baroque Catedral de Santiago de Compostela, where hikers participate in the post-walk ritual of the *abrazo al Apóstol Santiago* – a tradition that was temporarily outlawed in 2009 after an influenza outbreak. Maybe stick to a quick high-five if you're a germaphobe.

5. Plaza de Cervantes, Alcalá de Henares



Cons of Alcalá's most famous public space: the storks (if, like me, you're a wimp who's scared of birds). Pros: literally everything else.

This square pays homage Alcalá's most famous son: the writer Miguel de Cervantes, who was born in the university city in 1547. The city's central plaza hosts regular literary and cultural events in his honour, such as the annual Mercado Cervantino.

Plaza de Cervantes also bridges two of the city's most significant streets: the newly pedestrianized Calle de Libreros, and the Calle Mayor. On the latter street, which is the former hub of the medieval Jewish Quarter, you can find the Museo Casa Natal de Cervantes and the city's most photogenic bench, featuring bronze statues of Cervantes' most famous characters.

Have a stroll through the surrounding area – don't think about leaving without taking in the university's impressive façade – and you'll understand exactly why Alcalá has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Also read: [7 Reasons why Alcalá de Henares is worth more than a day trip from Madrid](#)

6. Plaza de España, Sevilla



Oh, this one's *gorgeous*. Constructed in 1929, the Andalusian capital's Plaza de España is practically a newborn compared with some of the old-timers on this list, but in terms of impact and beauty, it can definitely give the classics a run for their money.

This plaza's most famous feature is the breath-taking range of multicoloured tiled alcoves, which depict almost every province in Spain. Photos can't do them justice, but even the briefest of trawls through Google Images will show you exactly why the good people of TripAdvisor voted it the world's *segundo lugar más espectacular del mundo*.

Film buffs (not me) might recognise this square from movies like Lawrence of Arabia and the Star Wars franchise, while Instagram lovers will be more familiar with its pretty canals, where you can row your boat for just €6. The Plaza de España is also located in the Parque de María Luisa – a beautiful spot to seek out the shade during the infamously hot Sevillian summers.

7. Plaza Mayor, Salamanca



Golden hour enthusiasts, this one's for you. Salamanca is known far and wide as one of the most gorgeous places in Spain, and its main plaza is no exception. Built between 1729 and 1755, the sandstone square still shines – and if you ever want to hear several hundred people simultaneously say 'Ahhhhh!', make sure you're standing in the centre when its buildings get illuminated at dusk.

The plaza is adorned with medallions bearing big names from Spain's history. In fact, until it was removed in 2017 under the Historical Memory Law, you could even spot Franco's defaced, paint-splattered face lurking beneath a plastic bag in the corner.

Salamanca's Plaza Mayor also has plenty of bars and restaurants where you can sample the city's distinctly un-spicy, but delicious, take on patatas bravas after you've finished frogspotting at the nearby Universidad de Salamanca.

Speaking of which, try to time your trip for December, when the legendary Nochevieja Universitaria sees the Plaza Mayor packed with thousands of students downing their drink and midnight grapes before heading home to their pueblos for Christmas. Or, if you prefer hot drinks to alcoholic ones, walk south from the plaza for ten minutes to the café of the Casa Lis art deco museum, where you'll find the world's tastiest cup of hot chocolate and the only glass ceiling that's not for smashing.

8. Esta Es Una Plaza, Madrid



This urban oasis is a bit different – and for that reason, it might be my favourite plaza ever. [Esta Es Una Plaza](#) is a neighbourhood initiative designed to tackle the lack of green space available in the busy Madrid barrio of Lavapiés, and has gone from strength to strength since its creation in 2008, thanks to the group of dedicated volunteers who work hard on maintenance and upkeep.

According to its website, the community-run public space focuses heavily on community building and promoting cohesion between social groups, regardless of nationality or religion, and over time the plaza has transformed into a cultural hub which promotes ecology, self-sufficiency, literacy, culture and sports.

It mightn't represent the same flashy, tourist fodder as some of the more high-profile squares on our list, and it's unlikely you'll see it be flogged on a postcard any time soon.

But if plazas are meant to promote harmony, facilitate socializing, and provide an insight into the beating heart of its local community, then Esta Es Una Plaza is definitely a dark horse.

By Emer O'Toole (IG: [@_emerotoole](#))

Would you add any other of Spain's best plazas to this list? Let us know!

Bless Hotel rooftop bar – beautiful sunsets, bebidas and bowling!

One of the major perks of being a teacher (which is my day job), has undoubtedly got to be the holidays. Let's be real... Yes, teaching is a vocation for most, but I defy anyone to shirk the idea of having two blissfully sun-soaked months off each summer. The benefit of being a part-time lady of leisure is that when I've not escaped to the coast (it's no joke that Madrid is literally an inferno come July), but on the plus side, the city feels like a veritable playground for all those left sweltering in the city.



So with all this free time, I've found myself strolling round barrios that I tend to neglect in favour of my own and as a result, I stumbled upon the holy grail of hotels that is the BLESS hotel on Calle Velázquez. From the rooftop bar slash restaurant, to the clandestine bowling alley nestled below the lobby, the hotel offers a taste of luxe living – and in my case, all within walking distance. Who doesn't love to get their steps up before sinking a G&T guilt free?

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So let's talk terrace – Madrid has really upped its game when it comes to rooftop vistas of late and there's plenty of competitors vying for your attention, and your hard-earned cash. However, in my humble opinion, BLESS has the edge as its pleasingly buzzy, not overwhelmingly busy, and has beautifully considered decor, rather than your bog standard minimalist modern vibe that currently prevails. Most recently, my friends and I managed to snag a beaut of a booth and it wouldn't be out of place at a beach club in the south of France.



But the big draw is ultimately that the views are to die for – nab a spot for golden hour and watch the sky resemble Monet at

his best as it changes from azure blue, to blush pink, to burnt orange – all whilst sipping on a perfectly prepared cocktail of your choice. On this note, don't get me wrong, BLESS is not cheap – but what you splurge on the drinks you slightly claw back on the naughty but nice nibbles that accompany each tipple. And the service is faultless – I can attest to this given the patience and perseverance to get the perfect shot of me and my amigas for the 'gram.



So having been up top I returned to see what was down below and it didn't disappoint. Tucked under the hotel is a

speakeasy-type bar that houses... a BOWLING ALLEY! Yes, limber up and get ready to strike. We booked a lane on a Saturday night and continually cursed our lack of bowling prowess but it still made such a welcome change from the usual dinner-then-drinks drill. I bowled in vertiginous heels assuming that (like my humble megabowl back home) they'd give you those Velcro shoes that make you feel about 5 years old – anyways, they do not.



Worth bearing in mind if you're competitive and I still maintain that it was my stilettos and not my lack of technique

that hampered my score. Again, the bowling alley may be underground but bargain basement this ain't. Games cost €12 per person so whilst it's a bit of a treat, it was well worth it to be cocooned in what felt reminiscent of a prohibition-era speakeasy.



You might be getting the gist that I like the BLESS hotel and you'd be right. The vibe in Madrid is shifting, business is booming, tourists are appearing in their droves and whilst this is all economically excellent, I still like my social scene to come with a side of secrecy. BLESS is a gem in barrio Salamanca, just go wielding cash (and comfy shoes).

Bless Hotel Madrid

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@blesshotelmadrid](#)
- **Address:** Calle Velázquez, 62
- **Metro:** Velázquez

Follow @littlemissmadrid on Instagram for more gems in the city!

Bar Toboggan – best new terrace in Madrid's Arganzuela district

Bar Toboggan is one of the best new additions to the area of Arganzuela, located just around the corner from El Matadero. This lovely little restaurant is nestled between a courtyard and playground, so it's away from the cars and you feel like you've left the city – almost as if you were at the beach!





The outdoor seating area is spacious, and family- and pet-friendly. The restaurant itself is also very open, with high windows, and modern, colorful decor. The servers are young and friendly. As for the [menu](#), you'll find a great selection of options from small dishes to mains.



The last time we went, our drinks arrived with an extremely fresh and gooey *tortilla de patata* – a nice change from the potato chips and industrial olives that we're so used to these days.



We decided to order an array of small dishes to share: *patatas bravas* Toboggan, *croquetas de jamón*, *salmorejo*, and a *pepito palentino* – a filet of meat, a slice of brie cheese and sautéed green bell pepper on a baguette.





We were completely full by the end of the meal. In total, we had ordered four small dishes along with two drinks each, and our bill came out to less than 30€. A bargain in this city nowadays!



The first time we went, we ordered the Toboggan-style burger with brie, caramelized onions, bacon and mustard; and the tuna tartar with shrimp and avocado. But we didn't take pictures that day. Sorry! I definitely recommend them though.

Food aside, what stands out most about Bar Toboggan is the welcoming atmosphere and unbeatable terrace. Seriously, it might just be my favorite *terraza* in Madrid.

Bar Toboggan

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@bar_toboggan](#)
- **Address:** Plaza Rutilio Gacis, 2
- **Metro:** Legazpi

El Camoatí – an incredibly romantic Argentinian bistro bar in La Latina

As soon as I walked into Camoatí for the first time a few years ago, it was love at first sight. My friend was holding her birthday party there and I couldn't believe I'd never heard about it before. This charming Argentinean bistro is located on a side street off of La Latina's most popular plaza, Plaza de la Paja. The facade is unassuming so you're likely to walk right past it. But don't!



As you step in, you'll find the cozy bar area, and instantly feel the warm vibe that I'll try to express in this article. But you'll really have to experience it for yourself.



Both the decor and ambience at Camoatí are truly special. You'll find funky furniture, quirky trinkets and mismatched table settings all around. It's fun to just let your eyes wander and imagine where all the items came from – whoever decorated this place definitely had a unique sense of style.



The main dining area has two separate levels, plus a few tables squeezed into cute little nooks for extra romantic dining. At the tables you'll also find paper and crayons for colorful drawing, like in the good-old days of going to restaurants as kids (they've also got board games).



Dining at Camoatí is always a treat and the food is simply outstanding – the [menu](#) features a wonderful selection of

dishes inspired by Argentinian, French and Italian cuisine. You'll find hearty meat dishes, fresh fish, homemade pasta, tasty desserts, cocktails, wine, coffee, and more. Not to mention the service is very much up to par.

Also note that Camoatí is a great place to go even if you're just in the mood for a drink or a coffee with friends.



So without further ado, here's what we ordered the last time we went to Camoatí:

We started out with a glass of Malbec and an Albariño, both recommended by the server.



As an appetizer we ordered the tuna tartar, served with avocado and dressed with soy sauce, ginger and sesame oil. It was incredibly fresh and delicious. I order this almost every time I go.



And for the mains, James got the traditional *milanesa napolitana* – a generous-sized filet of veal that's breaded and covered in tomato sauce and melted mozzarella cheese. It's served with a heaping portion of homemade fries and salad. The photo says it all.



And I went with a lighter option: the salmon that's grilled in teriyaki sauce and served over sautéed vegetables. So good.



To top it all off we went with one of the homemade desserts, recommended by the server: *volcán de dulce de leche con helado*. Amazing.



On other occasions I've also tried their homemade empanadas, the (wonderful) plate of grilled vegetables topped with goat cheese, and other meat dishes that are to die for. But I'm still working my way through the menu.

So whether you're looking for a romantic date night, an afternoon with friends, or simply a delicious meal in a charming setting, I promise you that Camoatí will not disappoint. You'll want to come here again and again.

Camoatí

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#), & Instagram: [@camoati](#)
- Address: Alfonso VI 3
- Metro: La Latina

Beautiful blooms at Botanyco – a haven for flower fans in Madrid

Much to the dismay of my bank manager, it's a given that I spend pretty much all my cash on fashion and food. (Sorry if you're reading this folks, I promise the odd tenner gets bunged into savings). My monthly bank statement often reads like a roll call of where to shop and where to eat, but having bought a pad last year, there's definitely been a shift in my spends – from fashion to furniture and more noteworthy, given the theme of this post, now to flowers.



Over the past year I have gone hard on nesting. There's no such thing as too many cushions or candles in my book, and

blooms have become a weekly indulgence that I now pick up with the same level of regularity as I do milk, almond of course. This has largely been encouraged by the fabulous florist that's now within walking distance of my casa, Botanyco.





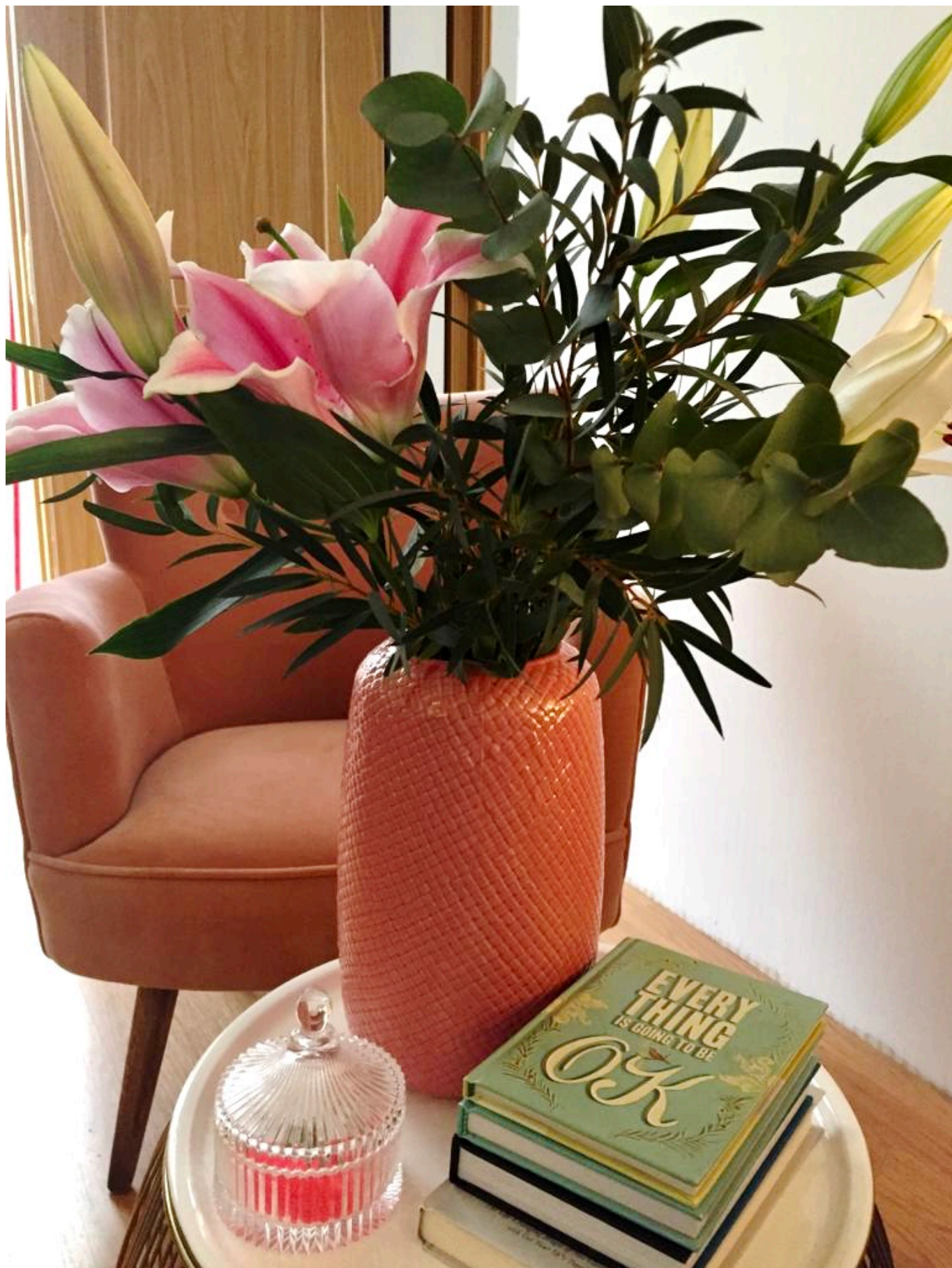
In a city which is often lacking in much other than fairly insipid-looking florals, Botanyco is a haven for flower fans

and has real pavement appeal. For a start, the shop itself is stunning. You almost feel like you're entering into someone's gorgeous garden thanks to the patio area at the back that's cutely concealed from street view.



Now if you like your flowers, this is your one-stop shop. They whip up bouquets, stock insta-friendly blooms such as peonies

(it can't just be my 'gram feed that's littered with them come May time) and there's a collection of cacti that wouldn't be out of place in the desert.



I've often nipped in to pick up a last-minute gift that always surpasses the price tag. Don't get me wrong, the flowers

aren't cheap, but this is a swish little spot where you can sit and enjoy a coffee post shop on the house.



I'm often berated by friends and fam for what on the surface might appear to be a rather frivolous and costly habit, my response – stop and smell the flowers, quite literally. Who doesn't love walking into their *piso* to find a pretty little posey and of all the things that I splash the cash on (of which there are a few), a bunch of blooms that spark joy is not what's going to break the bank.





In addition to being your neighborhood florist, Botanyco supplies flowers for events – weddings and the like. And if you fancy yourself as a frustrated florist in the making, they even do classes on weekday evenings where they'll teach you the tricks of the trade. It's a blooming lovely spot (sorry, couldn't resist the pun) and I urge you to not leaf it out on your to-do list.

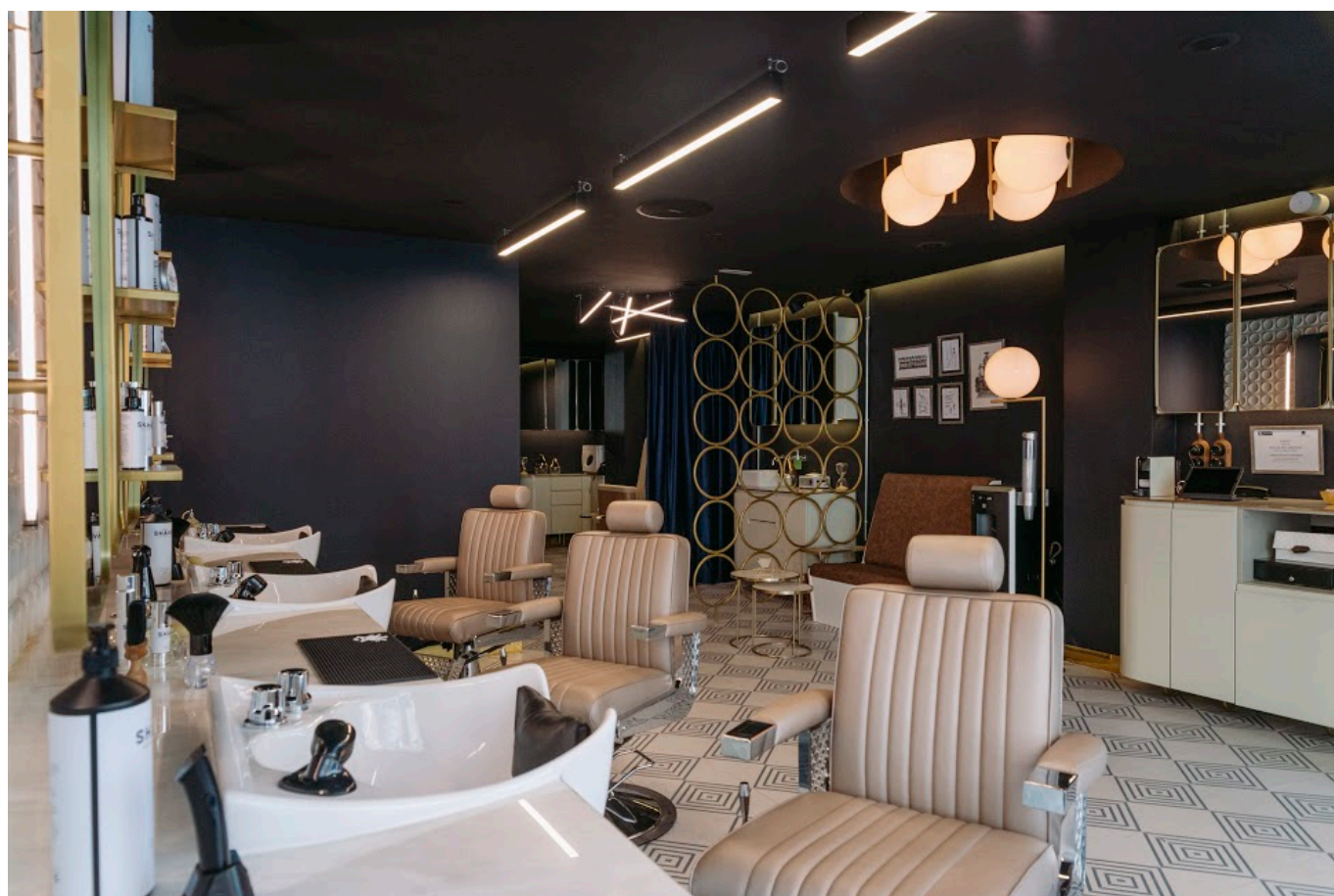
Botanyco

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@botanyco_](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia, 59
- **Metro:** Iglesias

Treat yourself from the inside out at The Shave Club

The Shave Club can be described in three words: quality, expertise and rejuvenation.

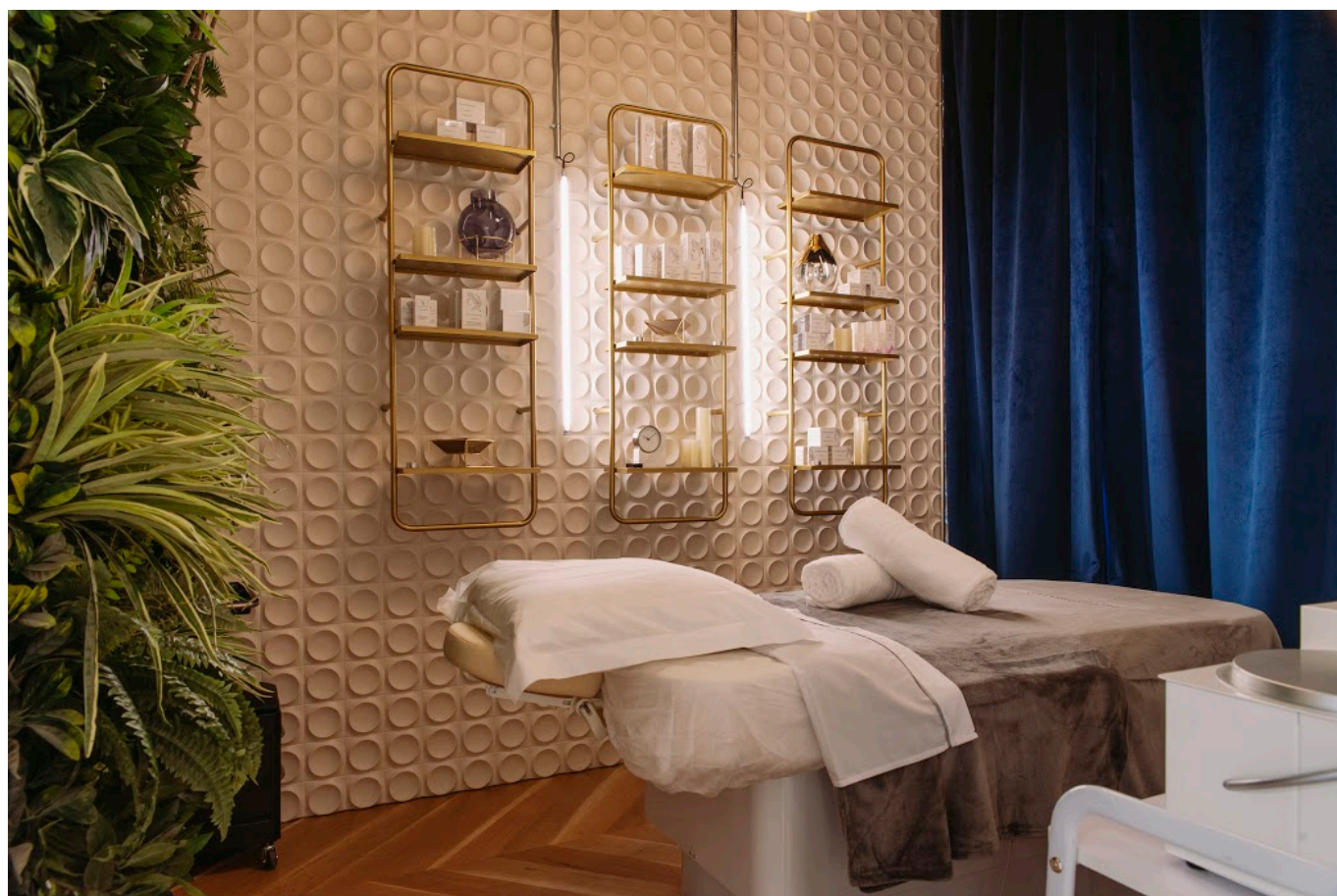
This gentlemen's club aims to provide the modern and fashionable men residing in Madrid with an upscale and personalized experience. With three locations in the Spanish capital (Chueca, Moncloa and Salamanca), each and every barbershop offers top-of-the-line services and treatments—you're guaranteed to leave looking fresh on the outside and refreshed on the inside.



The Shave Club's mission is to create a warm and welcoming

place where customers can relax and feel rejuvenated... and they undoubtedly have done this. Specializing in shaving and haircuts, this barbershop goes above and beyond by also offering spa treatments, which include facials and massages, as well as body-cleansing and anti-aging treatments. Their English and Spanish-speaking staff is nothing but friendly, ready to treat your every need and give you an experience like no other.

Aligned with its dedication to quality and excellence, the barbershop also has its own e-store, where customers can purchase the products used during their treatments, shaves and haircuts. These products are one-of-a-kind, as they are made with all natural products and ingredients in a laboratory in the U.K. Not only do they make you look and feel better, but your body will thank you for using all natural, paraben- and sulfate-free products. Your animal friends will thank you too, as these products are cruelty free.



I was fortunate enough to visit The Shave Club location in Chueca, right on Calle Libertad. The quaint space is sleek, with welcoming decor and an even more welcoming staff. I also was shocked by the smell of cleanliness that made its way throughout the shop, only to be later informed that the air is specially treated implementing the same chemicals used to clean towels as well as equipment.

Alejandro, the barber who provided me with my experience, was not only professional, but he also used his expertise to provide me with the best haircut for my hair type and head shape. Apart from some small talk and a few laughs, it was a relaxing experience, which ended with the use of The Shave Club's own coconut-infused hair wax.



Looking ahead, The Shave Club has big plans. They hope to continue opening locations in Madrid, throughout Spain and beyond. Their goal: to establish a network of men's social clubs where customers can go to relax and enjoy different

treatments, reflecting the traditional gentlemen's clubs of yesteryear.

If you're looking to get a fresh cut and to take a step back from reality and forget the stresses of work and life in general, then you need to check out The Shave Club, which definitely ranks in my top-5 barber experiences here in Madrid.



It may not seem like a top priority to treat yourself with high-quality spa, hair and facial treatments; however, it's more than simply making sure you look good. It's feeling good from the inside out, knowing you took the time to step away from your everyday schedule to spend time on yourself—and there's no better place to do this than at The Shave Club.

The Shave Club

Follow the Shave Club on [Facebook](#) and on Instagram ([@shavemadrid](#)). You can also check out their online store and

book your next appointment on their [website](#).

By Kyler Canastra (IG: @k_canastra)

Try the banh mi sandwiches from a hole-in-the-wall Vietnamese shop in Madrid

When people ask me what it is that I miss the most about living in Paris, my surprising answer is always this: its Vietnamese food. The banh mi sandwich was the base of my diet when I was a broke student and NGO intern, due to its budget-friendly and savory nature.

Banh mi sandwiches are a product of French colonialism introducing the Vietnamese people to the baguette, who then proceeded to stuff it with **julienned daikon radish and carrots, cucumber, pate, cilantro, mayonnaise, sriracha, and, of course, chicken or pork belly** with the latter option being the most traditional version.



Hand model: James Stiles

These gems are served at hole-in-the-wall establishments that I noticed would **often go unnamed and without any branding**. For the longest time, the monopoly over my beloved sandwich in Madrid was controlled by a sleek and modern hipster eatery in Malasaña called the Big Banh, which has since closed its doors. The Big Banh prioritized the presentation of its product to justify it being costly. After they shut down operations, there was a baguette-shaped void in my heart until one day when walking to La Latina from Lavapies I walked by what looked like a normal Asian-owned *alimentación* and *panadería* that caught my attention for a sticker on its windows that said: **"Traditional Banh Mi Here."**



Juan assembling banh mi for hungry consumers

I investigated the next day with high hopes and was not disappointed. The owner and sandwich artist is a long-term resident of Madrid who has adopted the name Juan during his 40 years of living here. Juan hails from **Hoi-Ann, Vietnam** and opened this shop in July 2019 and is excited to introduce Madrid to Vietnam's flavorful *bocadillo*.

He offers the chicken and pork belly varieties of the **sandwich for €3**. I sampled the pork belly sandwich and a **€1 shrimp spring roll** and was full and incredibly content with this discovery and decided to share it with my community in order to empower this new business. **It is important to note that this shop is cash-only.**



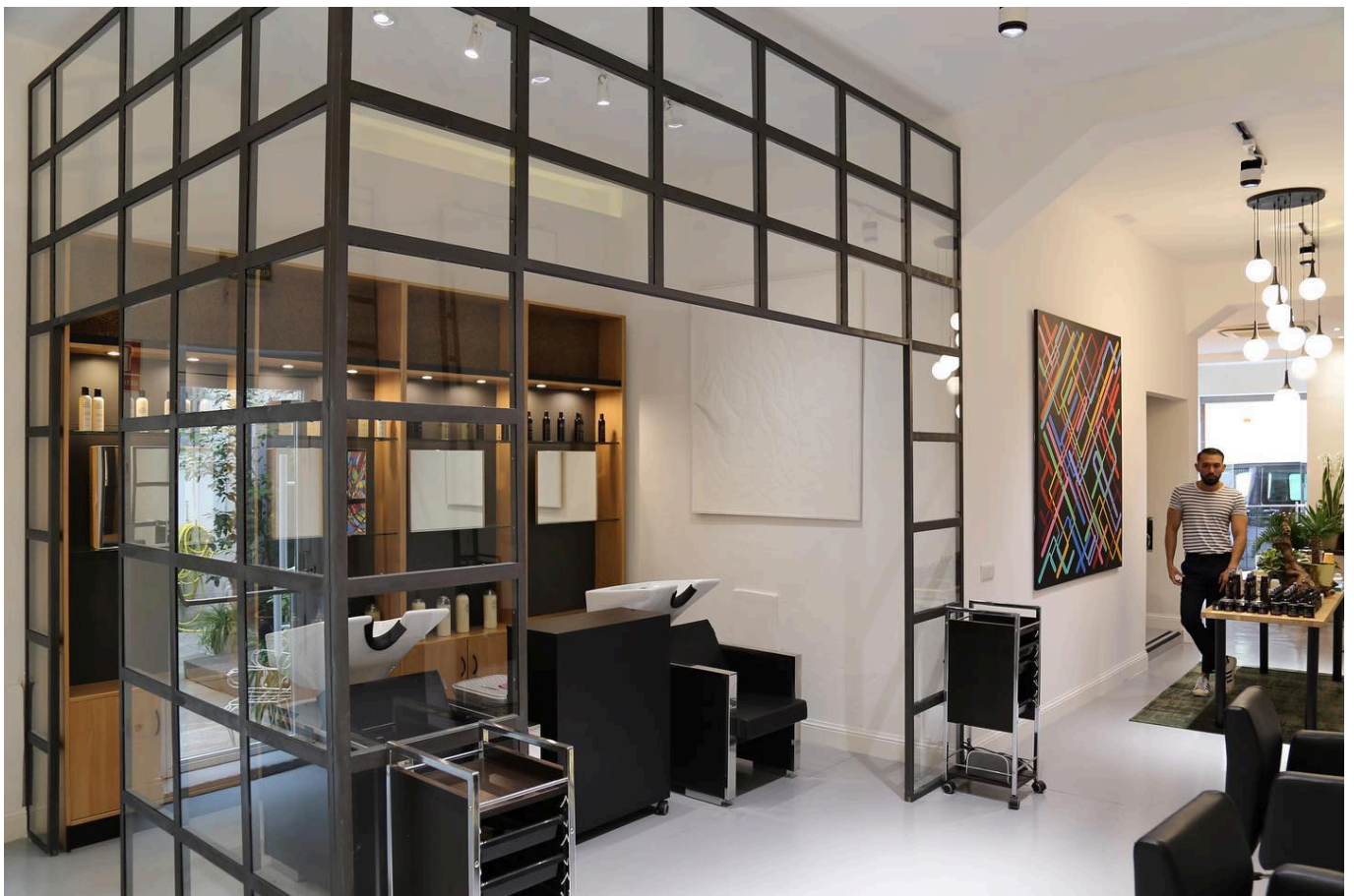
Noteworthy for its absence of branding, this unassuming bakery situated at **Calle San Milan 6**, near La Latina metro station, should not be overlooked! I want to see this business thrive and stay open, and I can see it appealing to Madrid's community of English teachers who search for cheap and filling eats in the summer.

Banh Mi sandwiches with no name

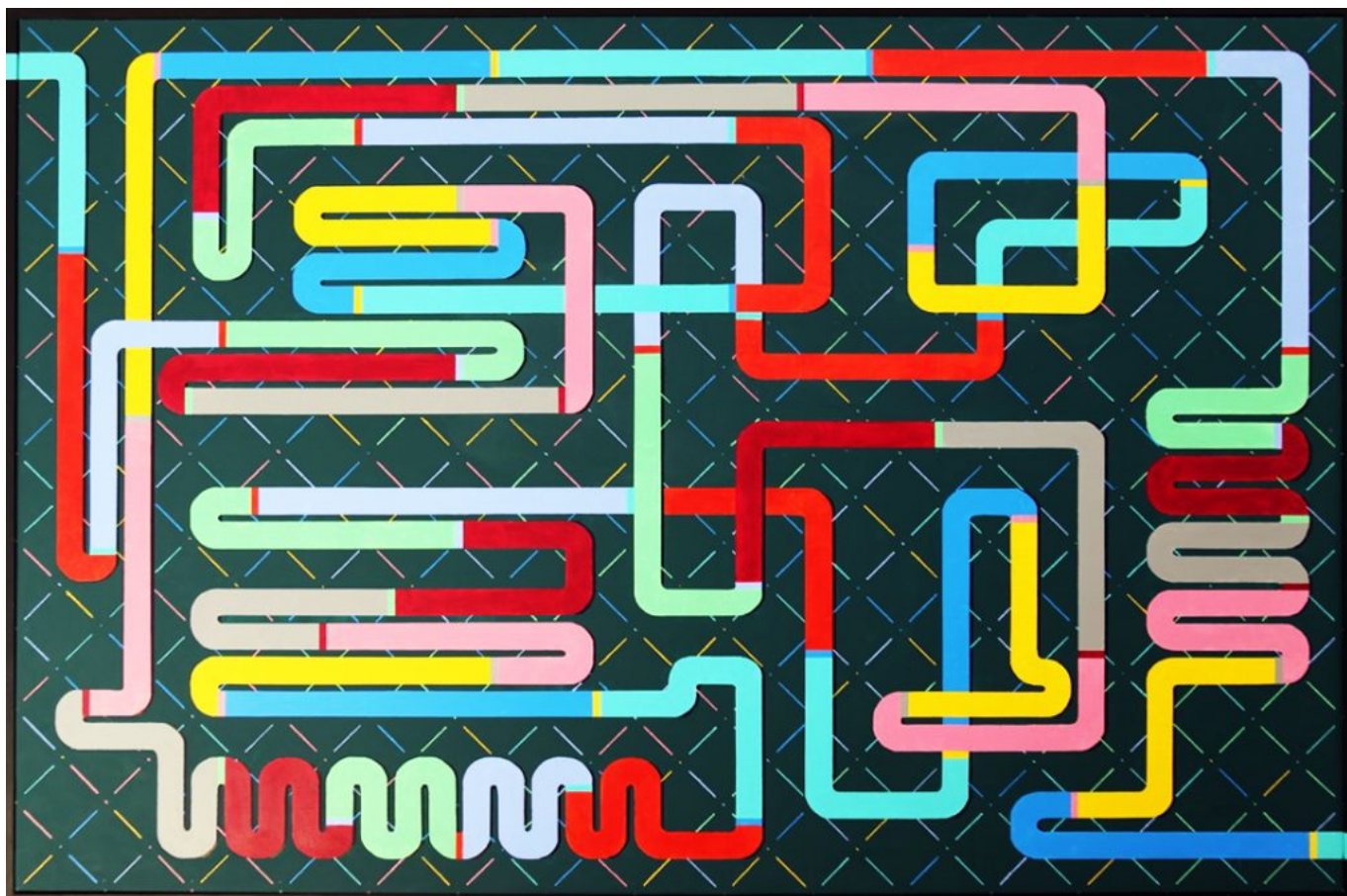
- **Location:** Calle San Milan 6
 - **Metro:** La Latina
 - **Cash only**
-

Ara Crinis – indulge in an artful hair salon experience

Soft lights. Greens. Pastels and contemporary art. Not something you expect of a hair and styling salon! Thus you're greeted by a surprise which then transforms into an inexplicable comfort – a place as delightful and friendly as its kind and charismatic owners.



As you walk in, you have the beautiful exhibit of contemporary artist Tomas Gracia. This particular one has been designed around the concept of chaos seeking its own natural order.



The more you reflect on it, the more lost you seem. Lines and hues seem to be in search of their own destinies. Maybe that's the exact point of the exhibit – to have your internal chaos muse over the edgy lines and vibrant tones of Tomas' artwork.



The exhibits are temporary and will include all categories of art and literature in the future, they tell me. The open patio will also house many interesting events.



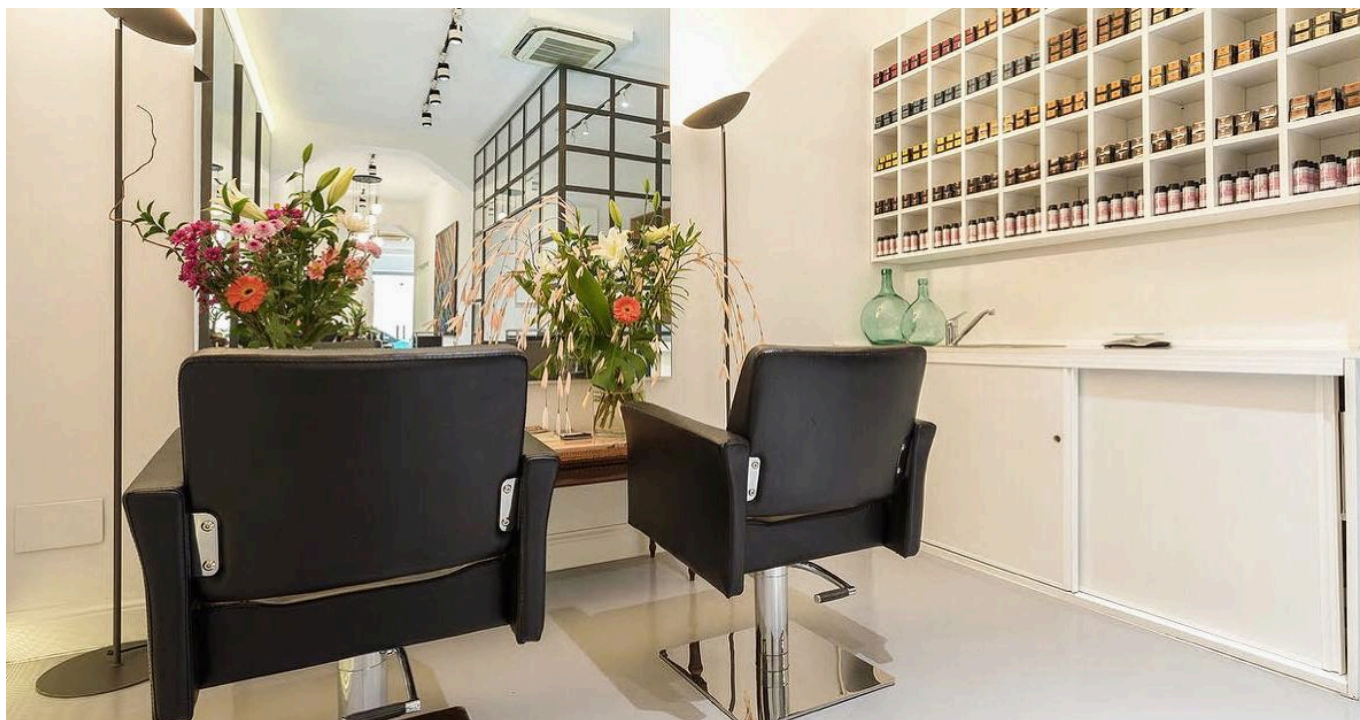
The area of the salon is beautifully decorated with lively greens and flowery tones, immediately transporting you into a spring-like feeling. The collection of books on display and the smell of freshly-brewed coffee add to the urbanism of the ambience.



The serene patio at the end, of course, completes the place beautifully.



As distinct as its name, *Ara Crinis* (which literally translates from Latin into 'a beautiful lock of hair') is the delightful service and experience you receive here. The salon works with the concept of aromatherapy and organics around every service they offer. The cherry on top are the very artful Neo and Carlo, who are the heart of the place.



Hop on over either for a walk around their artful decor, a pleasant cup of coffee with the owners, an exhibit of the next talented artist of the month or an indulgent hair experience – this little spot in Chueca is unlikely to disappoint.

By Arabdha Sudhir

Photos by Carlo Calzolari

Ara Crinis

- [Website](#) [Facebook](#) & Instagram: [@ara.crinis](#)
 - **Address:** Calle San Lorenzo, 5
 - **Metro:** Tribunal or Alonso Martínez
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La Osita, great craft beer (and big plans) in La Latina

La Osita is a newly opened bar in the heart of La Latina, created by two beer lovers from the UK, David and Patrick, who are also the founders of the Madrid-based [Oso Brew Co](#). Come pay them a visit, enjoy some refreshing beers and stay tuned, as they've got some very cool beer-related plans in the works!

How it all started



The story of La Osita started over ten years ago when David and Patrick met during Erasmus in Madrid (at an Irish pub), and they've been dreaming of coming back ever since. With David's experience in the food and beverage industry, and Patrick's experience working at one of London's leading craft breweries, [Anspach & Hobday](#), they make the perfect duo.

When they returned to Madrid a year ago, they founded Oso Brew Co. and started selling their beers at popups in [Mercado de Vallehermoso](#), a great neighborhood food market. It was the perfect place to test their brews with the locals, as patrons could pair them with foods from a myriad of stalls. And they got particularly interesting feedback from the elderly Spaniards, who had been content with their Mahous yet ventured to try something new and liked it!

Just this March, they founded their own bar, La Osita, right on one of Madrid's most beloved bar-hopping streets, Calle Cava Baja.



When you walk in you'll see their daily beer selection listed on the chalkboard. The first two options are their homemade brews – citrus cream ale and *cerveza de mesa* (table beer) – which they make at a local brewery in Alcobendas, [Cervecería Península](#).

	Cervecería	Cerveza	Estilo	Origen	ABV	34cl	50cl	1L
1	OSO BREW CO.	CERVEZA DE MESA	TABLE BEER	MADRID	3.8%	€3	€4.5	€8.5
2	OSO BREW CO.	CITRUS CREAM ALE	CREAM ALE	MADRID	4.4%	€3	€4.5	€8.5
3	A + H	THE EEE IPA	IPA	U.K	6.2%	€4	€6	€11
4	A + H	THE THREE THREADS	TRAD. PORTER	U.K	6.0%	€4	€6	€11
5	PENINSULA	HAZY VIBES CITRA+MOSAIC	DDH PALE	MADRID	4.5%	€4	€6	€11
6	PENINSULA	HAZY VIBES AFRICAN QUEEN	DDH IPA	MADRID	6%	€4	€6	€11
7	AUGUSTINER	HELLES	LAGER	ALEMANIA	5.2%	€3.5	€5	€9
8	PENINSULA	GALACTIC SUNRISE	DDH IPA	MADRID	7%	€4	€6	€11

Here's what was listed on the chalkboard the day we went!

The day we went, they were also serving beer from A&H (UK) and Augustiner (Munich), as well as several types of Peninsula beers on tap – supporting and working with industry neighbors is important to them. They also offer a hand-picked selection of whiskeys, gins and wine. We didn't get to try any of them, since we were busy sampling all the great beers, so we'll have to go back!

What we had



When we went to La Osita on a Saturday afternoon, we grabbed a seat at the bar so Patrick and David could tell us about Oso Brew's story and all the beers they have on offer, as well as the exciting plans for the near future. As we were there, parties of Spaniards and foreigners alike were trickling in off La Cava Baja.

We sampled several different types of beers they had on tap that night. We started off with their home brews. My favorite was the citrus one – it was light and really refreshing, and had the perfect touch of citrus. And James' favorite was the table beer, because it was clean, balanced and "so easy to drink."



We also tried the [Galactic Sunrise](#) from Peninsula, which had an intense burst of flavor that came from “double dry hopping” (you can ask the guys what that means!). And we finished off with a delicious dark beer, [Three Threads Porter](#) from Anspach & Hobday. It had chocolate and coffee flavors that derive primarily from the malts used and how they’re roasted. Fun fact: apparently, this is a favorite among the elderly Spanish women.



The front area is small enough that you'll likely strike up a conversation with the party next to you. And that's perfectly fine. There are also a few tables in the back where you can sit down with your friends. David said it can be used for birthday parties and the like (just call ahead to book).



LA OSITA



LOS

LOS €25/12.5
€4/18

LOS €25/12.5
€4/18

	Cerveceo	Cerveza	Estilo	Origen	ABV	150	150
1	A+H	THE WATSONS	HELOWINE	U.K	4.1%	€3.5	€1.5
2	A+H	THE DAY HOPPED	BLONDE ALE	U.K	5.2%	€4	€1.1
3	A+H	THE EEE IPA	IPA	U.K	6.2%	€4	€1.1
4	A+H	THE THREE THREATS	TROOP PORTER	U.K	6.0%	€4	€1.1
5	PENINSULA	HAZY VIBES EXTRA MASHING	DDH PALE	MADRID	4.5%	€4	€1.1
6	PENINSULA	HAZY VIBES MARIAN QUEEN	DDH IPA	MADRID	6%	€4	€1.1
7	PENINSULA	HAZY VIBES DUMPS MARIAN	DDH IPA	MADRID	7%	€4	€1.1
8	PENINSULA	GALACTIC SUNRISE	DDH IPA	MADRID	7%	€4	€1.1

DESTILADOS

GENEAS (Cognac)
- GORDON'S
- NATHAN'S
- BACARDI
- JAMES WATSON
- HAZY VIBES
- MARIAN QUEEN
- DUMPS MARIAN
- GALACTIC SUNRISE
- HAZY VIBES
- MARIAN QUEEN
- DUMPS MARIAN
- GALACTIC SUNRISE



Although they don't currently offer a menu, they make it a point to maintain the (wonderful) tradition of offering complementary tapas with every round of drinks. And not just potato chips, but good chorizo and cheese.

What's in store: a restaurant and brew pub!



They have a kitchen downstairs where they're planning on inviting up-and-coming chefs to work for three to four months at a time. They're also planning on opening a "brew pub" in the near future (a hybrid between a brewery and a pub). There's no set location yet but they want it to be within the "M-30."

So for now, come check out La Osita on Cava Baja and grab yourself a drink (or two, or three). If you're not sure what kind of beer to order, Patrick and David will be happy to tell

you all about the different options and even let you taste them before you make your final decision. And if you're not in the mood for beer, they'll fix you a G&T, a glass of whiskey, or a *copa de vino*. Cheers!

Photography by Matthew Curtis
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La Osita

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