

# The Lobstar – bringing authentic New England comfort food to Madrid

We can now savor authentic lobster rolls in Madrid thanks to The Lobstar. Situated near Bilbao, this newly opened restaurant is bringing the best of New England comfort food to the city, with hearty dishes like clam chowder, lobster bisque and shrimp rolls.



The decor is inspired by restaurants you'll find along Maine's quaint coastal fishing towns. It mixes industrial touches with a casual vibe. Lots of light streams in through the tall storefront windows, and the brick and metal walls contrast

with the wooden floor.

There are just a few tables and booths, and an open kitchen where you can see the chefs preparing casual American seafood dishes following traditional recipes. As for the music, classic hits are played back to back, so you'll probably know all the lyrics. Feel free to sing (or hum) along.





In true “lobster bar” fashion, we first ordered beer – a trusted Sam Adams and an excellent pilsner from Marbella. As for the menu, our servers were very helpful and recommended we start with the buffalo shrimp tacos.



We also asked for a bowl of rich clam chowder, for nostalgia’s sake. Both were delicious and filling enough to be a complete meal on their own.



Next up, our main dishes. Of course we ordered the star of the show – “the lobster roll” – and it was the real deal. The lobsters arrive alive from Canada, boiled up and served on a toasted and buttered homemade brioche bun, with lots of flavorful mayonnaise. Absolutely perfect.





We also ordered the swordfish burger which was gigantic. It had several generous-sized pieces of grilled fish along with the works: lettuce, tomato, onion and mayo, also on a sweet bun. Both were served with a heaping portion of the best sweet potato fries I've tried in the city so far.



And the most surprising part for me? The side of coleslaw. It was real coleslaw! The kind you find at New York City delis. We also couldn't help but take a peek at the delicious-looking mac and cheese dishes that kept coming out of the kitchen. We'll definitely be going back for those next time.





We needed to take a short pause before we could even consider having dessert. After two slowly sipped cups of espresso (each served with a cute “Lobstar” marshmallow), we decided to go for it. The first items to catch our eyes were the cider donut and the butterscotch with honeycomb milkshake...



They sounded amazing, but given the meal of champions that we'd just devoured, we asked for a lighter option. The server recommended the key lime pie, one of my favorite desserts and the perfect finishing touch for an incredibly satisfying meal. Let's just say we walked all the way home, happy.

## The Lobstar

- **Website:** [www.thelobstar.es](http://www.thelobstar.es)
  - **Instagram:** @thelobstarbar
  - **Address:** Calle Carranza, 4 (Madrid)
  - **Metro:** Bilbao
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# Crumb, signature sandwiches that truly hit the spot

I've always loved sandwiches, particularly the kind that are made with several ingredients and creative combinations. When I was growing up, my family owned a sandwich shop where my siblings and I would get to experiment with all different types of breads, ingredients and spreads.

Needless to say, when I'm in the mood for a good sandwich, the typical "bocadillo" or "bocata" usually just doesn't cut it. That's why I was so happy to discover Crumb, a small restaurant in the charming Conde Duque area. Crumb serves signature, gourmet sandwiches and dishes, along with the bread they bake daily with organic flour and sourdough starter.



The menu is simple, and is divided into four parts: dishes without bread (starters and salads that are great for sharing); with bread (dishes that range from Fish&Chips to meatballs, with bread served on the side); on bread (open-faced sandwiches, similar to *tostas*); and between bread (the amazing sandwiches). You can order your sandwich with a side of fries or a salad. Crumb also serves tempting international specials, so make sure to ask.



We started out with two dishes *sin pan* (without bread): The first was gyozas made with chicken, garnished with pineapple and soy sauce. They were so delicious that we highly regretted ordering the half portion. We also tried the *patatas revolconas* (mashed potatoes) which was heaven in a bowl. It had a perfectly smooth texture and was topped with *torrezno* (bacon). Great comfort food for one of the coldest days of the year in Madrid.





Then we each ordered a sandwich (*entre pan*). The first had roasted chicken, guacamole, herbs, lettuce and *alioli*, on delicious toasted homemade bread. Now that's what I call a sandwich. Seemingly simple ingredients that make for an amazing combination. You can imagine why the paper wrapping came in handy.



And the second was the veggie sandwich, made with tahini pesto, dried tomatoes, grilled eggplant and zucchini, sweet potato and goat cheese. For me, pretty much anything that involves pesto and goat cheese is bound to be delicious. But if you add toasted bread and flavorful vegetables, let's just say it turns into the kind of sandwich that I could eat every day and never get tired of.

We finished off our meal with a luscious chocolate cake with walnuts and vanilla ice cream. Everything truly hit the spot and had us savoring the very last crumb...

## Crumb

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: @crumbmadrid
- **Address:** Calle Conde Duque 8
- **Metro:** Plaza de España or Ventura Rodríguez



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# Best Coworking Spaces in Madrid

Madrid is becoming increasingly friendly toward freelancers and startups, thanks to its great coworking spaces and work-friendly cafés. Here's a list of our favorites, located in different central neighborhoods of the city. Although each one has something unique to offer, they have the essentials in common: fast WiFi and plenty of coffee.

## Espíritu 23



Image from [Espíritu 23](#)

- [Website, Facebook & Instagram @espiritu\\_23](#)
- Address: Calle del Espíritu Santo 23
- Metro: Tribunal/Noviciado

Situated in the heart of Malasaña, this coworking space definitely reflects the nature of the neighborhood. There's also a friendly café open to the public. It has a young, artsy and urban vibe, with lots of personality. Of course the coworking space offers a fast internet connection, a kitchen, a meeting room, events, activities, workshops... the works. Best of all, the fees are great and the location couldn't be better.

## Plázida – Loom



Image from [Plázida](#)

- Plázida: [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & Instagram @plazidacowork
- Loom: [Website](#)



- **Address: Calle Vandergoten, 1 and Calle de la Princesa, 5**
- **Metro: Atocha and Plaza de España**

Plázida prides itself on being specifically designed for digital nomads. It collaborates with [LoomHouse](#) in two Madrid locations; one is near Atocha train station, occupying the former building of the Royal Tapestry Factory, with a beautiful outdoor garden area. The other is centrally located right by Plaza de España, complete with a rooftop hangout space. At both locations you'll find high ceilings, brick walls, bright light, ergonomic workstations, and more. There are several member options to choose from for both individuals and teams, ranging from half days to 24/7 access.

## Google Campus



- [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Moreno Nieto, 2
- Metro: La Latina or Puerta del Ángel (it's a bit of a walk from the metro)

Google campus isn't exactly a coworking space, but more like a giant café that anyone is welcome to work at, for free! There are several tables spread out across two floors, outlets everywhere and fast internet connection. Plus there are events held regularly and good food options at the café operated by Do Eat. The building also has offices for startups in the upper levels, and a huge conference room. All in all, it's a great environment for working, networking, having a lunch meeting, or setting up your own individual office.

## The Shed Coworking

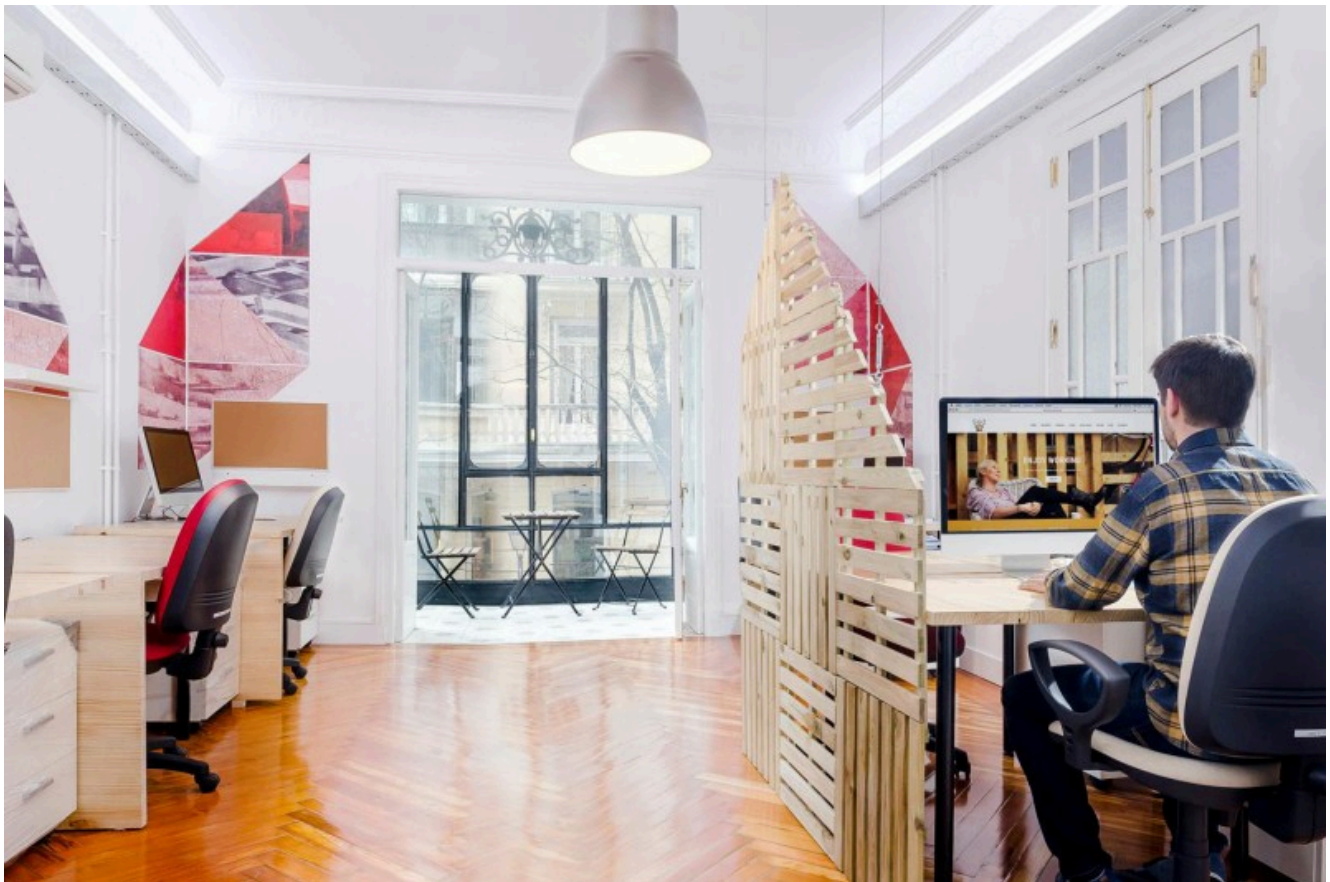


Image from [The Shed](#)



- [Website](#), [Facebook](#), and Instagram @theshedcoworking
- Address: 48, 1Dch Calle de Hermosilla, Madrid, Spain
- Metro: Velázquez

Located in Madrid's Salamanca district, The Shed is one of the city's top coworking spaces thanks to its positive work environment, community of creative professionals, and helpful staff. You'll find tons of natural light, plenty of workspace options, and an outdoor terrace. Members have lots of benefits, from access to the meeting rooms and kitchen to ergonomic chairs and free coffee. Workshops are also held periodically in the communal training room.

## La Piscine



Image from [La Piscine](#)

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Campoamor, 5

- Metros: Alonso Martínez/Chueca

La Piscine calls itself a “workplace for everybody.” It’s essentially a cute coffee shop where you pay by the hour to use the WiFi and get unlimited coffee, tea, and snacks. It also holds workshops and events. Located in the trendy and modern neighborhood of Chueca, it’s a great environment to work in. What’s most convenient is that you don’t have to commit to a month-long membership; you can just set up shop for a few hours and enjoy bottomless cups of coffee while you work away on your laptop. Packs of hours are available at discounted rates, if you become a regular.

## Impact Hub Madrid



Image from [Impact Hub Madrid](#)

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) and Instagram @impacthubmad
- Address: [5 locations](#) (original in Barrio de las Letras)



No article about Madrid's top coworking spaces would be complete without mentioning Impact Hub, which has been actively supporting the city's international innovators and entrepreneurs for years. Now with five giant locations around Madrid, it not only provides an ideal work space for freelancers and startups alike, but also a truly impressive calendar full of information sessions, workshops, initiatives, events, markets and more.

## La Industrial

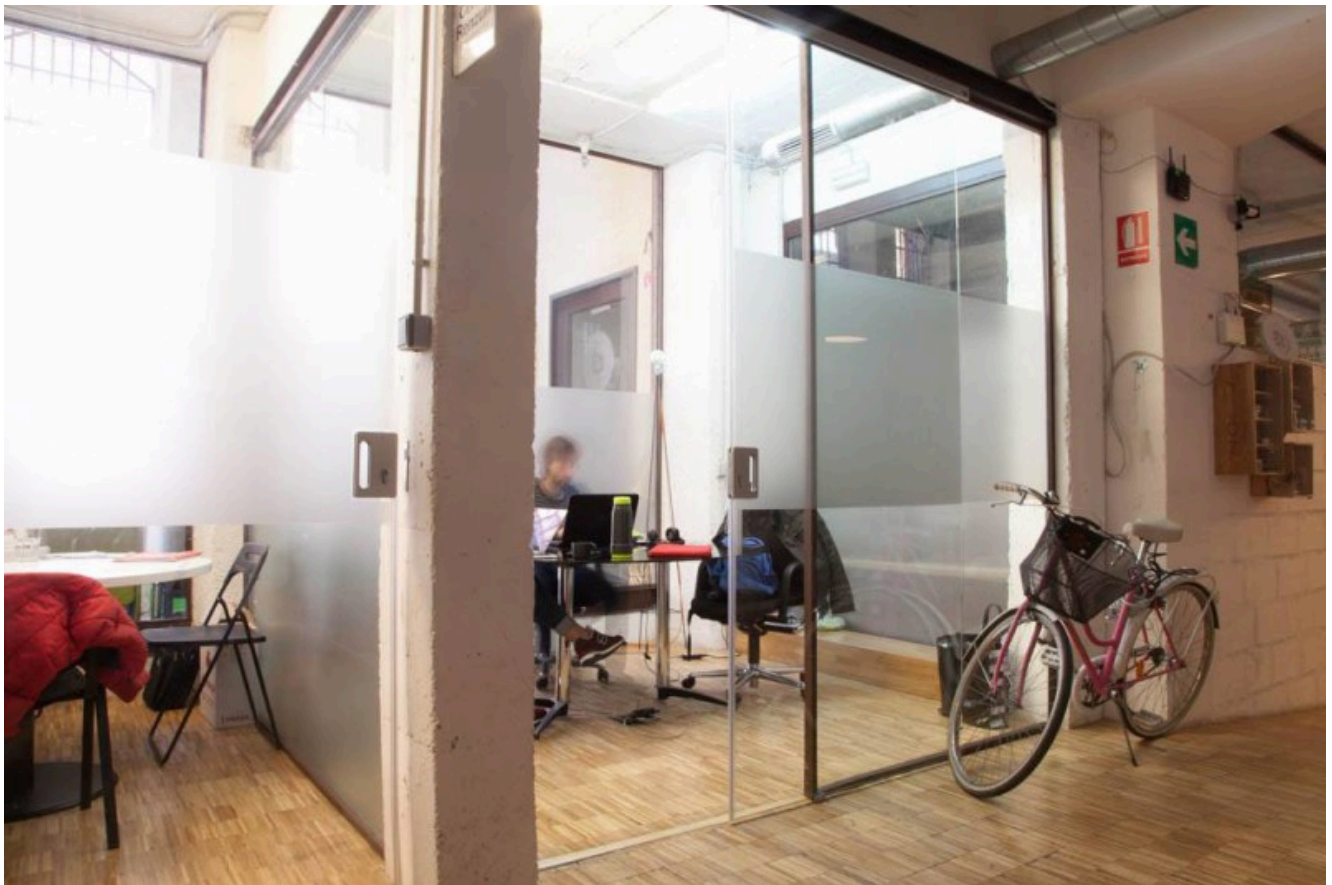


Image from [La Industrial](#)

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Address: Calle San Andrés 8
- Metro: Tribunal

This 400-square-meter space is located in the heart of Malasaña. It's open to all types of professionals and offers a

number of affordable member options, from daily to monthly passes (you can try out a day for free). You can rent out a spot at the open area, private workstations, meeting rooms and different spaces for workshops, events, markets, you name it. They have an additional 250-square-meter events space on Calle San Ferrer 33. Plus it's pet-friendly!

## Utopic\_US



▪ [Website](#), [Facebook](#) and Instagram @utopic\_us



- Address: [5 locations](#), original on Calle Colegiata and Duque de Rivas (across the street)

Utopic\_US has the benefit of being one of the city's most established coworking spaces. Although it now has a number of locations, the most famous ones are on Calle Colegiata and Duque de Rivas, just across the street from each other, between Tirso de Molina and La Latina. Utopic\_US offers private offices, meeting rooms, and open works areas for small businesses, startups, and freelancers. Members have access to a wide range of networking events and workshops, yoga and mindfulness classes... There's also a full café and restaurant that's open to the public.

## Bee Lab



Image from [Bee Lab](#)

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) and Instagram @beelabcoworking
- Address: Calle Asunción Castell, 5
- Metro: Estrecho

This bright and friendly coworking space is fully equipped with everything a small business owner, startup, or freelancer could possibly ask for: both private and shared work areas, meeting rooms, a kitchen, a fast internet connection, a chill-out room, an outdoor terrace, and even a mini golf course. And it's pet friendly too! You'll be sharing your work space with people from around the world and there are a number of networking opportunities, such as Friday breakfasts.

**Did we miss any? Let us know!**

**Also check out these [5 work-friendly cafés with reliable WiFi in the center of Madrid](#)**

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## **7 Reasons Alcalá de Henares is worth more than a day trip from Madrid**

I recently organized a weekend [getaway for WABAS, a writers' group](#) that I form a part of, and we decided to hold it in the beautiful city of Alcalá de Henares. As a Madrid resident, I've met a lot of people from Alcalá over the years, and even gone there for the day on more than one occasion. However, it wasn't until staying there for a full two nights that I truly got to know the city.



Being only 35 kilometers from Madrid – and a quick 40-minute local train ride away – many of those who live in the area take for granted that we have this jewel in our backyard. Alcalá is often thought of as a commuter city more than a tourist destination.

It's home to nearly 200,000 inhabitants (making it about the same size as Granada!), many of whom commute into Madrid every day on the many trains and buses that go into the big city. However, Alcalá is certainly an important city in its own right – one with a LOT to see and do and that's on par with other historical cities in central Spain.

**I thought I'd share some of the reasons I think it's totally worth staying in Alcalá de Henares for a night or two.**

## **1. Breathe in the history**



From the hotel, to the meeting rooms, to the streets and restaurants – every place I stepped into during my weekend in Alcalá was filled with historic charm. I stayed at the [Evenia Alcalá Boutique](#), a three-star hotel housed in a 16th-century building with a charming courtyard located near the city's Cathedral.

The pedestrian **Calle Mayor** is a main street of shops and restaurants that connects the Cathedral to the city's main **Plaza de Cervantes**. Its cobble stones and wood-framed buildings take you back in time. It is on this street that **the birth house of Miguel de Cervantes** can be found, right next to the medieval hospital where his father used to work.





And of course, you have the **Archiepiscopal Palace of Alcalá de Henares**, which is famed for being the place where Christopher Columbus first met with Monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella. For our writers' meeting, the city of Alcalá was gracious enough to loan us a meeting room in the Casa de la Entrevista, which is a medieval monastery that has been converted into an exhibition space. I could feel the history literally everywhere we went.



It makes sense for a city that was completely rebuilt and planned as a university city in the 15th century. Many of the buildings from that era are still in use today. While Alcalá's University of Complutense was moved to Madrid in 1836, today it is a university town once again. The [University of Alcalá](#) opened there in 1977 and brought many of the original university's buildings back to academic use. The original university was named after the Roman city of Complutum that was the original city built on the site in the 1st century BC.

To learn more about the region's ancient history, be sure to visit the [Archeological Museum of the Madrid Region](#), also located in Alcalá.

## **2. Enjoy free tapas with your drinks**





The tradition of receiving a **complimentary tapa** (small plate) with your drink order may have died out in much of Spain – but not in Alcalá! Several places in Alcalá still take part in this fabulous tradition. [Indalo](#) is by far the most famous place in town to go for a tapa. You order a drink and then you can choose a generous tapa from the menu, all for 2.50 euros, if my memory serves me right.

We also visited [La Posada Magistral](#) which gives you a surprise tapa with each drink (they also have a very economical set menu, even on weekends, that they serve in their upstairs dining room). Other bars, such as [La Taberna de Rusty](#), charge separately for the tapas, but at very modest prices.

### **3. Party all night long**



By staying overnight in Alcalá I was able to discover how bustling the place is after dark! I didn't expect for there to be so much happening at night; but I guess thanks to its large population – which includes students of the University of Alcalá – there are a ton of options.

The most emblematic of Alcalá's night spots is [The Green Irish Pub](#). But, don't be fooled, this isn't your typical Irish bar – it's a proper nightclub. There's a little something for everyone at The Green Tavern and it attracts a diverse crowd. The first floor features rock music and a pub-like atmosphere, but with a massive dance floor, and the second floor is more of a traditional club scene with latin pop and dance music.

In case you get late-night munchies, you don't even have to leave the party complex: in between the two different zones there is a stand selling hot dogs and other snacks.



Meanwhile, the youngsters flock to [Bar TDK](#). Here you'll find cheap mixed drinks at 4 euros (and even a bit cheaper if you show a valid student ID!), as well as pool tables, dart boards and foosball, that will keep you entertained all night long.

If you're looking for a more upscale evening, you can check out the [Hanoi House](#). Here you'll find a more mature crowd, and a bit pricier cocktails in a large club fitted with Vietnamese-themed decor. It's definitely worth visiting in summer for its fantastic outdoor bar and terrace that offer nice views.

Like many cities in Spain, on any weekend night you can find lots of party people traversing the streets. You can make lots of new friends without even entering a club! I only went out one night in Alcalá so I didn't get to try everywhere, but other places that looked interesting were [La Champa 2.0 Karaoke Bar](#) and [Mi Niña Lola](#). I'll have to stay another night soon to try them out!

## **4. Experience fine dining without breaking the bank**



While researching different possibilities for lunch and dinner in Alcalá, I came across several excellent options, it was difficult to choose. We ended up having lunch at [El Hemisferio Loft](#) and it was an amazing choice. The service and the quality of the food were excellent. But make sure to book ahead – the place gets packed!

On the weekend, you're able to choose from different set menus for lunch or for dinner, which are an excellent value. Our group chose el "Menu de temporada" which included an amuse bouche, a starter, a main dish, a dessert and a coffee for 25 euros. I ordered a seafood rice dish as the starter, and sea bass with mashed potatoes as the main and both were excellent. On weekdays a similar set menu goes for only 15 euros.

We also enjoyed dining at [El Tempranillo](#), which was right by our hotel and has a fantastic wine selection. We had a light



dinner of croquetas, as well as a plate of meats and cheeses. They also had a nice selection of entrees, for a more formal sit-down dinner. The owner, Inma, is very friendly and an excellent sommelier, who makes you feel at home in a cute and cozy atmosphere.

Other restaurants that came highly recommended were [Lucrecia](#) and [Martilota](#). I definitely plan to check them out the next time I'm in town.

## 5. Take part in Alcalá's many cultural events



When I was trying to choose which weekend to go to Alcalá, I was hard-pressed to find a weekend where there wasn't some kind of special event happening. I chose the only weekend of the season that was relatively calm (sandwiched between the

**Alcalá Film Festival**, and the **Don Juan performance**, when hotel prices were higher). Even so, we still caught celebrations for the **20th Anniversary of Alcalá being named a UNESCO World Heritage site** (which took place on December 2, 1998), as well as a pre-Christmas parade.

If you're planning a trip to Alcalá, make sure to check [the city's cultural calendar](#) and find out what may be going on at that time. Among the most well-known events is the city's [Mercado Cervantino](#), or **Medieval fair**, where the Calle Mayor is filled with old-fashioned stands and people dressed in period attire. Definitely worth checking out if your timing lines up.

## **6. See (and hear) storks!**



Ok, so you can see them whether or not you stay the night in Alcalá, but **I can't write an article about Alcalá without mentioning the storks**. Alcalá de Henares is said to be home to



around 90 pairs of migrating white storks – although each year they are said to stay longer. The best time to see them is between mid-October and the beginning of August, when you'll hear them snapping their beaks like castanets throughout the city. They love this place, thanks to the many steeples that are perfect for building their nests.

You can spot the large birds circling over the city and perched atop buildings. The city's tourism office has even created a special [“Storks Route” touristic itinerary](#) that features the birds' most notable nesting spots atop already impressive historical buildings and around the beautiful Plaza de Cervantes.

## 7. Indulge in sweet treats



If you like Spanish sweets, [Alcalá is one of the best places](#)

[to try them](#)! A must-visit is the **Convent of the Clarisas of San Diego** where the cloistered nuns sell candied almonds from behind a small door without showing their faces. In addition to candied nuts, convents across the city sell homemade marzipan, similar to nearby Toledo.

Another typical sweet from Alcalá is a flaky puff pastry called **costrada**. It has a sweet cream filling and is covered in soft meringue that is finally topped with crushed sugared almonds. *Costrada* is said to have originated from the famous **Pastelería Salinas** in La Plaza de Cervantes. You can find it in their window display, as well as those in several other bakeries across town – where it's usually just as delicious!

And, you can't leave Alcalá without trying a **Rosquilla de Alcalá**, a round puff pastry glazed in sugary egg yolk. Try one at **Pastelería Lupe**. It's a level up from a glazed doughnut, that is sure to leave you in a sugar coma.

## How to get to Alcalá de Henares from Madrid

Alcalá de Henares is super easy to get to. Here are the different options:

### ▪ By train

Take a Cercanías commuter train (Line 2 or Line 7) from Atocha Station to the Alcalá de Henares train station. During rush hour, trains depart every 5-10 minutes, and the journey lasts about 40 minutes.

### ▪ By bus

There is also a bus that leaves from Avenida de America bus station. It is line 223 run by Continental Auto, Line 223, and tickets are sold near the bus stop. The bus ride takes about one hour.



### ▪ From the airport

If you are coming from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, I recommend going by taxi. While it's more expensive, it's worth the time savings. It's only about a 25-minute drive from Barajas to Alcalá. There is no direct public transportation line from the airport to Alcalá. You'd have to first go into the city of Madrid, and then take the aforementioned bus or train, which would take over an hour and a half.

### ▪ By car

Of course, if you have access to a car, Alcalá is just a short drive away.

As you can see, Alcalá is no sleepy commuter town. While it's an easy day trip; there's also enough to see and do to make it worth spending a night or two. I hope my experience helps you get the most out of your time in Alcalá de Henares.

**Looking for more places to visit near Madrid? Check out our list of [Madrid's 10 beautiful surrounding towns](#).**

*Thank you Russ Pearce from [anythingbutpaella.com](http://anythingbutpaella.com) for many of these lovely photos!*

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## **5 Work-friendly Cafes with Great Wi-Fi in Madrid**

While setting up a home office in a café is typically not part of Madrid's culture, there is a large population of international people and students living here who enjoy

finding places where they can spend hours on end with their laptops.

As there is an abundance of quaint, work-friendly cafés in the city, the struggle primarily lies in finding one with strong Wi-Fi. So here's a list of lovely cafes with great Wi-Fi in Madrid. They all boast a comfortable working space and delicious coffee beverages to help you get your work done!

## [Lolina Vintage Café](#)





As its name suggests, this cozy café will instantly make you feel as though you've stepped back in time. Its vintage décor, comfortable sofas, and lamps create a comfortable, cozy atmosphere that invites all to sit and do work. There is an upstairs and downstairs area, both with plenty of space and tables. The Wi-Fi is provided upon placing your order and is quite strong, almost never fading out. Depending on how crowded the café is, the Wi-Fi may be slightly weaker downstairs. Nevertheless, **Lolina Vintage Café's Wi-Fi is definitely dependable for those who need to work online.**

This café offers a variety of dishes and coffee beverages, including vegan milk for individuals of all dietary restrictions to enjoy. Once you've finished your work, the signature cocktails may be just the post-work treat that you and your friends are looking for.

- *Photo from* [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle del Espíritu Santo, 9
- **Metro:** Tribunal

## [HanSo Café](#)



If you prefer to work more so in the “hustle and bustle” of the city, you’ll love the trendy HanSo Café. Located on Calle del Pez, this café is famous for its picture-worthy coffee beverages that taste just as good as they look. While this



café has good Wi-Fi, you may find that it is better suitable for light work assignments, where peace and quiet are not a necessity. With the visually appealing coffee beverages that attracts the crowds, HanSo Café is definitely not a substitute for a library. Nevertheless, if you're looking to switch up your work place, this is a fabulous café to explore both alone and with friends.

- *Photo from* [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle del Pez, 20
- **Metro:** Noviciado

## [La Bicicleta](#)



Perhaps you prefer natural light or people watching while you work. If so, you'll love the bar window seating at La Bicicleta that looks over the charming Madrid street and square. If the window seats are taken when you arrive, there are plenty of large tables in the café to spread out and do your work.

You'll find many people working from their laptops in this café, taking advantage of the strong Wi-Fi and top quality 100% Arabic coffee that is offered. If you're in need of a quick pick-me-up meal while working, you may treat yourself to one of La Bicicleta's delicious tapas dishes. Also read our



[previous article about La Bicicleta.](#)

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Plaza de San Ildefonso, 9
- **Metro:** Tribunal

## [Café de la Luz](#)



If you're in need of a cozy place that feels as though you're in your own home living room, Café de la Luz may become your new work place of choice. Located on Calle de la Puebla, this charming café offers a couple of tables along the windows, bar seating, comfortable sofas, and a wood-burning stove fireplace. The warm, comfortable atmosphere that this café boasts will surely eliminate any work-related stress you may have. The reliable Wi-Fi connection will also make working a breeze, where you won't have to worry about losing connection at any moment while feeling productive.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle de la Puebla, 8
- **Metro:** Chueca / Gran Vía

## [La Colectiva Café](#)





University students will love La Colectiva Café, which offers the same working atmosphere as a campus study center does. Upon entering the café, it may not seem like much, with only a few bench seats and tables. However, if you go downstairs, you will find plenty of space with large tables and comfortable sofas.

**Many people choose to work at La Colectiva Café because it is very quiet downstairs, making it quite easy to focus.** The strong Wi-Fi allows you to do anything from searching online to enjoying a Netflix study break. While the menu may be

slightly more on the pricey side compared to other cafes, it may be well worth it if you're searching for a work-friendly, comfortable space to complete your tasks.

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Francisco de Rojas, 9
- **Metro:** Bilbao

While there are numerous cafes and quaint locations in Madrid to work at, these five destinations will surely inspire you to get quality work done without the hassle of having to seek out strong Wi-Fi. With this list of cafes, you'll no longer have to worry about arriving to the café, ordering your drink, and setting up your computer, only to discover that the Wi-Fi isn't strong.

Thanks to these work-friendly cafés with great WiFi in Madrid, you can enjoy feeling part of the vibrant city while accomplishing your daily online tasks and treating yourself to delicious coffee beverages!

**By Haley Grant**

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## **Lúa Vermutería, a charming new bar with an old spirit in Lavapiés**

Serendipity. It's a funny thing. My friends and I used to go to a bar several nights a week where the head server, Alberto, treated us like royalty. It was our hangout spot.

Fast-forward a few years, and I was wandering around Lavapiés



with a friend on a Saturday night and we stumbled upon Lúa Vermutería on the (very cool) Calle Doctor Fourquet. We were in the mood to try something new and this place immediately lured us in. After squeezing through the crowd and making our way to the bar, to our surprise, there was Alberto!



At 56 years old, Alberto is now the owner of this new venture which he named after his daughter, Lúa (meaning “moon” in Galicia, where he’s from). And he took the head chef, Rosa, from the former bar along with him.

Although they completely gutted and refurbished an old night club, today Lúa Vermutería looks like a traditional *taberna* that underwent a high-quality facelift. It has an old-fashioned feel to it, with high tables and stools set out in

the front, and just a handful of sit-down tables in the back.



Lúa Vermutería is located on a street that's full of new art galleries and trendy shops in the ever-changing neighborhood of Lavapiés. That's why it stands out for its charming and classic vibe. It's already becoming a favorite in the barrio, with visits from the likes of celebrities including Almodóvar. The music ranges from soul to blues, and they've started showcasing exhibits from local artists.





As for the drinks, you'll find Zecchini vermouth on tap and a list of Spanish wines and beers. Of course, each round comes with a complementary tapa. The menu features homemade Spanish dishes, along with a number of modern and vegetarian options. For lunch, you can also order the daily special: a €5 *plato de cuchara* (usually a hearty stew), such as lentils, *cocido*, or *la olla gitana* (pictured below).



So far we've ordered the *entraña* (steak), *tacos de bonito* (tuna slices over black pasta with cuttlefish and alioli), and the *pisto manchego* on toast.





Everything was absolutely delicious. The steak was cooked perfectly and came with *patatas bravas*, one of the house specialties. Alberto also treated us to a side of caramelized onions prepared with vermouth – it was so sweet and so good.



The Italian-inspired pasta mixed with alioli and tuna was a burst of different textures and flavors. It's one of Lúa's star dishes that came highly recommended by Alberto.





And my favorite was the *pisto* – a slice of toast topped with a heaping portion of freshly cooked vegetables that tasted even better once the yolk from the fried egg spilled all over it.

It was wonderful to see Alberto there after so many years. We'll definitely be back again and again.

## Lúa Vermutería

- [Facebook](#)
- **Instagram:** @lua\_vermutteria
- **Address:** Doctor Fourquet, 28
- **Metro:** Embajadores or Lavapiés
- **Phone:** 637 65 27 51

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# Picalagartos, dine sky high on a stunning rooftop overlooking Gran Vía

This year myself and one of my best friends have been on pretty different trajectories. Whilst she's been globe trotting galore having taken a sabbatical, I've never felt more aware of putting down "roots" – having finally become a home owner, cue quite the case of FOMO.

After 11 months of not being able to enjoy so much as a glass of fizz together in person, last weekend we were finally reunited for the *puente* in my adopted city of Madrid. This called for a special venue for a special lunch.





Now I love a rooftop. I'm not sure if it's something to do with being a city dweller who's constantly on the search for cleaner air, but I feel it's probably more to do with the "grammable" views that are pretty much guaranteed when you

head sky high.

Having done my research, [Picalagartos](#) was booked, the restaurant perched atop the NH Hotel on Gran Vía, boasts 360 views of the city. Not too shabby, eh? Now most hotel restaurants have a bad rep, often found to be overpriced and underwhelming, but not the case here. The standard of food matched the view, to be summed up in a word, it was stunning.





Feeling the kind of giddy high that I can only imagine toddlers feel at soft play, we started with a cocktail to



toast our reunion. This was the start of a true Spanish *sobremesa*, with neither of us keen to leave until the sun had well and truly set over Gran Vía.

My friend's a veggie (no I don't know how we dine out together either, being a self-confessed carnivore Queen) but it was pleasing to find that this wasn't an issue – the menu offering a variety of veggie options, all of which were more tempting than the standard offering of *tortilla*.



We split a mille feuille of patatas bravas that is in the running for being the best carb that's ever passed my lips. Layers of buttery potatoes formed into giant "chips" were served with a piquant *bravas* sauce and a mouth-wateringly good aioli. They were so downright divine, case in point, we ordered a second portion and not one part of me regrets having to work them off the following Monday at spin.





I plumped for a steak (cooked perfectly), while my *amiga* sampled the delights of a vegetable garden – which looked so temptingly tasty that it could almost have lured me away from my meaty marvel, but not quite.



A couple of chocolate soufflés later, gin and tonics sunk – our vows of friendship reaffirmed, there was nothing left to do but harass the waiter to take (multiple) pics of us with Madrid in all her dusky delight in the background – luckily he obliged, I have a feeling we weren't the only ones bowled over by the *vista*.





Picalagartos is the kind of “oooh and aaah” inducing spot that will have you falling in love with Madrid all over again (in case your affections have ever waned). The food, and in my case, the friendship, were faultless and it was the perfect place to spend a free Friday afternoon that combined both gorgeous grub and plenty of glamour.

## Picalagartos

▪ [Facebook](#), [Website](#), & Instagram: [@picalagartosmad](#)



- **Address:** C/ Gran Vía 21
  - **Metro:** Gran Vía
- 

## **Espacio Cerveceros, Mini Mahou Brewery in Madrid**

Mentally bookmarked for more than a couple months, we finally stepped into Espacio Cerveceros Mahou in Alonso Martínez and were not let down. Having no expectations allowed us to be surprised at every turn in this small but compact venue. **It's a little bit brewery and tasting space, a little bit restaurant, a bit gift shop and a bit urban art showroom.**

It's perfect if you've got family or friends visiting or no plans on any given evening. You'll certainly be surprised by this unusual center of Madrid find. **Did you know Mahou is a family-run business? Or that they made a Stout? And an APA (American Pale Ale)?**



At [Espacio Cervecero](#) each is served on an individually descriptive coaster for each beer but your “beersommelier” will tell you all about it anyway. These little details are what makes this place unique. It feels small in square meters but packs a lot.



There are few beers on tap but this allows for more information to be revealed regarding each one. Before you leave, you'll be asked to evaluate what you've tried on one of a few iPads set opposite the bar.





If you go through the graffiti and mirror covered hallway, you'll reach the restaurant. Like myself, you may be distracted by the exposed industrial decor but don't forget to grab a board game to play at your table on your way in if you like.



You'll find that the menu is limited but gourmet and ideal for tasting a few different plates. Our waitress suggested we try the *ensaladilla rusa* (potato salad) which we did and she was right; it was definitely an elevated take on the typical bar food.



**There are events at the bar which you can join like a guided “micro brewery” tour, a beer tasting for newbies and one for more seasoned beer drinkers – an international workshop in which beers are brought in from Belgium, Central Europe and Great Britain for tasting and learning.**

And though there isn't much information on it, there also appears to be a cooking class using, you guessed it, Mahou! However, it isn't clear whether you watch or actually cook.

**In the end, we saw Mahou's classier side and we'd definitely go back.**



## By Caitlin English

### Espacio Cervecerero

- [Website](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Génova, 5
- **Metro:** Alonso Martinez, Colon
- **Hours:** Open everyday from 12pm-midnight (closed on Sundays)

### You may also like:

- [La Virgen Brewery, worth the trip out to Las Rozas](#)
- 

## Not much not to love at NuBel – The Reina Sofia's stunning restaurant

We really are spoilt in Spain. From the glorious blue skies to the culture of napping not being frowned upon, we really do enjoy the good life. So when it rains, I have to admit that I've become one of those people who hunkers down and reaches for the remote and Netflix.

However, this last Saturday, in spite of the torrential rain and the fact that my hair was starting to look more and more like Rod Stewart's (I'll thank the humidity for that) I donned my gladrags and kept my dinner date at [NuBel](#) – the quite frankly stunning setting that's part of the Reina Sofia museum on the south side of the city.



So before a mere morsel had passed my lips, the first thing that floored me on arrival was the space. Lofty and chic, yet deceptively cosy, [NuBel](#) is kind of like entering a club, albeit, one without the sticky carpets and two for one drinks that littered my youth. There was a DJ playing dance classics that I remembered from the days where I didn't turn into a pumpkin if I stayed out past midnight; and the whole 'vibe' was one of people ready to party (just not on an empty stomach).

So having taken our seats for dinner (pretty pink velvet ones



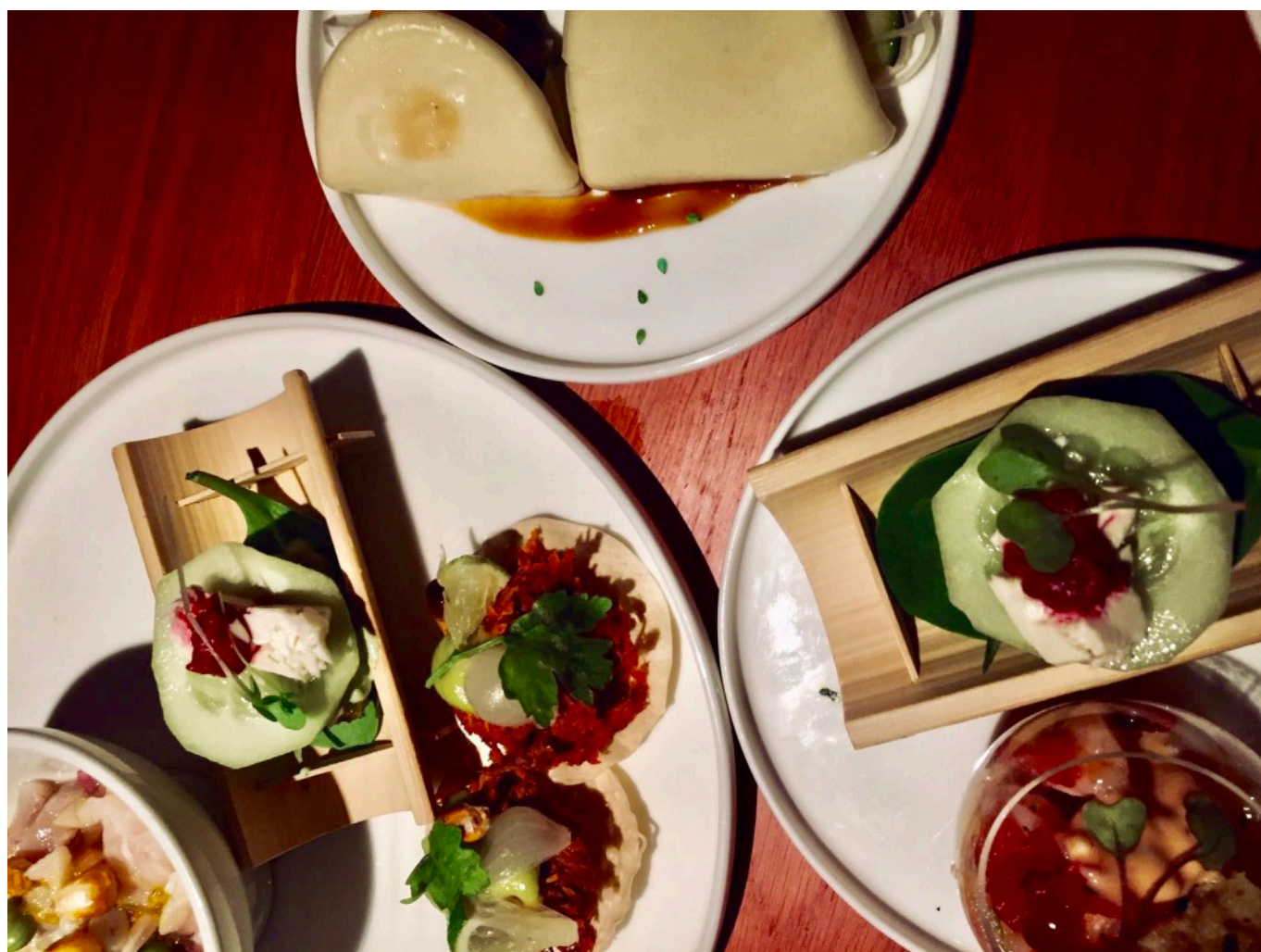
in case you're interested) we plumped for some cocktails, a pisco sour for me and a 'hard drink' for my pal – I can attest, it was indeed strong, absinthe will do that I guess.



We perused the menu and our waiter, Angel, suggested that we try a range of the mini plates so that we could salivate over



a spectrum of flavours. I think we ordered ten in total and each little bite was as delicious as the last. I loved the mange tout falafel with feta, while my *amiga* lapped to the snow crab cocktail. The mains were every bit as delectable as the desserts. I don't have the sweetest tooth but my deconstructed lemon meringue pie was so good that I was not one for sharing.



However, food aside, what I really loved about [NuBel](#) was the atmosphere. So often these days I go for dinner and feel ready to be rolled home, the lure of my pyjamas too great to resist. [NuBel](#) manages to straddle the line of being a restaurant/club perfectly – the music will have your toe tapping away and ready to ditch the dessert in favour of the dance floor.



For art aficionados, the proximity to renowned works from the likes of Picasso, adds that little extra pizzazz that a regular restaurant would find hard to rival.

*All photos from NuBel*

## NuBel

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@nubelmadrid](#)
  - **Address:** Museo Reina Sofía, Calle de Argumosa, 43
  - **Metro:** Atocha
  - **Phone:** 915 30 17 61
-

## 4 Vegetarian and vegan-friendly eateries in Madrid

In the land where *jamón* and *queso manchego* prosper, it may at first seem difficult to survive as a vegan or vegetarian in Madrid. But fear not! Although it is true that Spanish food is typically meat and dairy-based, the city's restaurant scene has changed a lot over recent years. Today, Madrid's world-class vegetarian and vegan-friendly eateries will have individuals with all diets falling in love with Spanish food.

**Here are a few Madrid restaurants that all offer delicious vegetarian and vegan-friendly dishes with a Spanish twist!**

[Vega](#)









Located on Calle de la Luna, this restaurant prides itself in creating all organic, vegan, homemade dishes for guests to enjoy. Restaurant-goers will love the smoked aubergine tapas or the beetroot and strawberries Gazpacho for appetizers, both



vegan-friendly Spanish favorites. Visitors can enjoy [Vega](#)'s delicious salads, black rice with "squid", "chili con carne", or "Burrata" tapas. What is so special about Vega is their vegan twist on foods and dishes that are commonly enjoyed in Spain by the locals.

- **Image from** [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Luna 9
- **Metro:** Santo Domingo, Noviciado, Callao

## [B13](#)



Enjoy typical Spanish tapas at [B13](#), on Calle de la Ballesta, with their mouthwatering *patatas bravas* (a local favorite), their "calamari", as well as their variety of vegetarian hamburgers. Whether you're in the mood for a Spanish tapas-style meal or want to feast on a delicious hamburger or

sandwich, B13 has what you're craving for your next vegetarian meal.

- Image from [Facebook](#)
- Address: Calle de la Ballesta 13
- Metro: Callao, Gran Vía

## [Freedom Cakes](#)



[Freedom Cakes](#), also on Calle de la Luna, is known as the first vegan pastry shop in Madrid. It is truly a wonderful spot to enjoy a quality cup of coffee with any vegan milk that you prefer. Whether it be an iced soy latte during hot summer months or an almond milk cappuccino to warm you up on chilly autumn mornings, you'll love their delicious coffee options. Better yet, pair your coffee with one of their renowned vegan pastries, ranging from freshly baked cakes, cupcakes, muffins,



and cookies, all 100% vegetable-based!

- [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle Luna 14
- **Metro:** Noviciado, Callao

## [Sanissimo](#)



Last, but certainly not least, Sanissimo is a wonderful restaurant with a few locations in Madrid, that is pleased to offer an array of vegan and vegetarian dishes. Start your day off on the right foot with one of their juices and smoothies, or perhaps one of their popular bagels. Between their



refreshing fruit bowls, sweet bagel options, and rich pastries, you'll always enjoy starting your day at Sanissimo.

- **Image from** [Facebook](#)
- **Address:** Calle San Vicente Ferrer 28 / Calle Campomanes, 5
- **Metro:** Tribunal, Noviciado / Opera, Santo Domingo

Whether your diet be vegan, vegetarian, meat-based, or fish-based, you'll never have to fear missing out on the spectacular Spanish cuisine that the city of Madrid boasts. Enjoy mouthwatering vegan and vegetarian dishes, but with the same Spanish influence as what the locals are enjoying.

**By Haley Grant**

You may also like: [Veggie Nirvana at VivaBurger in La Latina](#)