Neon Nirvana at Kamikaze

They say a change is as good as a rest and that’s exactly what I discovered on my visit to the recently opened **Kamikaze**. Located where Dray Martina used to be found, it’s now a tribute to all things awesome and Asian. So if like me, you can’t get enough of gyoza, and edamame is your everything, this is the locale for you.

Like all my favourite Friday night dinners we kicked off proceedings with a cocktail. A mix of gin, mango syrup and rose-flavoured tonic, it was downright delicious and packed a punch thanks to the additional cayenne pepper kick.



Our aperitivo came complete with a flaming dragon (I was told that I needed to squeeze his tummy three times for good luck)

which I duly did even though I felt quite lucky at this point with my gluttonously gorgeous bowl of prawn crackers.

So onto the menu. Essentially there was nothing that I didn’t fancy, which meant that we ordered a lot – partly due to the excellent host that was Giuseppe who was able to tip us off regarding some of his faves.



We sampled spicy edamame (and these really did leave your tongue tingling), curried mussels, steak tartare on teeny, tiny tacos, gyoza (natch), chicken wings, spring rolls and just to really ensure that a loose-fitting dress has been a wise choice, a prawn Pad Thai. Everything was oooh and aaaah

inducing and incredibly more-ish.



I had high hopes for the food, given that Kamikaze comes from the tour de force that is Grupo Larrumba and as such, the decor is second to none (we sat next to a Japanese cherry blossom tree that frankly I’d have liked to take home for my patio). There’s plenty of neon (perfect for Insta) and plate porn if like me, crockery is your 30-something fetish.


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As we were wrapping up with our post-dinner coffees, a monkey appeared wielding a ghetto blaster with tunes blaring; leaving us in no doubt that Kamikaze is definitely a place to get your weekend party started.

Choc-a-bloc with pretty looking peeps, as equally easy on the eye as the food was, this was aesthetically pleasing Asian at its best. I recommend booking for a Friday or Saturday if you like your gyoza hot and your cocktails cold.

Kamikaze

- **Website**, **Facebook**
- **Instagram:** @kamikazemadrid
- **Address:** Calle Argensola 7
- **Metro:** Colon or Alonso Martínez
- **Phone:** 910810056

The Circle Food, tasty food for staying trim

When I lived in London it was soooo easy not to have to cook (if you didn't have the time, energy or inclination). First of all you had Mark's and Spencer's, purveyors of all things tasty and all available on the go – I take down all of their chicken and bacon sandwiches on brown upon my return to Blighty.

In addition to this, clean eating had really taken off and it required minimal effort to get something delivered (or picked up) that wasn't a heart attack on a plate.

I've always struggled with the concept of convenient food in

Spain, mainly because it seems to culturally evade them. Food isn't meant to be 'grabbed' – and if you want to eat quickly and healthily it's nigh on impossible.



This is why locales like The Circle Food are to be welcomed with a fanfare by people like me. Combining ease with eating well, it's showing the clean eating movement is slowly gathering pace in the city.



Now I love tortilla and the like as much as the next person, but from time to time (usually post gym when even the thought of showering feels insurmountable) I want to grab and go. Look no further.



Embracing the trend of organic bowls, The Circle Food is the ideal place to pick up something nutritious (and delicious) or indeed, a place to eat in with a friend. As I veer towards fussiness in the food stakes, I built my own bowl – you pick your base, I opted for quinoa and wild red rice.



Next up you select your toppings and salsa as you please. It’s always a nice feeling for me to chase up a spin class with something containing the colour green. But it isn’t all virtuous – it’s actually really tasty, with the added bonus that you’re doing your bod some good.



They have a fixed menu should you wish to streamline the decision making process and just trust in their food pairings. Aside from savory stuff, there’s also breakfast on offer and Illy coffee which is always enough to get me through the door.



The space is light, bright and airy. A place to eat and co-work. Having thrown an opening bash last weekend and setting their stall out as being something that little bit different, The Circle Food is garnering attention for all the right reasons.

I'll see you there, I'll be the one in the post gym leggings ordering extra falafel.

The Circle Food

- **Website**, **Facebook**
- **Address**: Calle de Santa Engracia, 76
- **Metro**: Iglesia or Alonso Cano
- **Phone**: 910 01 04 12

You may also like: Honest Greens, feel-good food that tastes good too

Peruvian Classics with a British Twist at Lascar

It’s a warm Sunday afternoon and like all other Madrileños, I make my way to my favorite brunch spot for a few drinks, laughs with friends and some of the best ceviche I’ve ever had the pleasure of eating. I’ve been hoarding this brunch spot for months but this place is too good to not share.

Lascar, which means buddy or mate in French, opened in Conde Duque seven months ago. The restaurant first began in Barcelona when the owners, Rob and Peter, wanted to find a way to stay in Spain. At the time, opening a cold food restaurant was cheaper and easier than hot plates. So they settled on a cevicheria.

After a successful run up north, the Scot and Englishman set their sites on Madrid. Rob’s father is Malaysian, so the food has a bit of Southeast Asian influence, with of course a Spanish influence.



I suggest starting with their scallops that are baked in parmesan and are a heavenly bite of slightly crunchy cheese and a juicy bite of seafood.

If you fancy some British grub, their fish and chips are baked in a light and fluffy batter, giving the cod a buttery accent with a dash of cilantro cream dressing.



Of course their stable (and my favorite) is the range of ceviche dishes. The specialties vary by the week, from a classic lemony bowl of fresh fish to a spicier, tomato based ceviche.



As for the bar, you can’t go wrong with one of their pisco sours or specialty Peruvian cocktails.

With summer around the corner, Lascar is the perfect weekend

brunch spot, with fresh seafood, cool bites and a sweet, tangy pisco.

By Moriah Costa

Lascar

- **Facebook** & **Instagram** @LASCARMAD
- **Address:** Calle de la Palma 69
- **Metro:** San Bernardo or Noviciado

Also check out:

- **Best brunch on a budget in Madrid**
- **Brunch at Roll – Gotta roll with it**
- **Lady Madonna, because Sundays are made for brunching**
- **Plenti, a great new café and brunch spot in Las Letras**

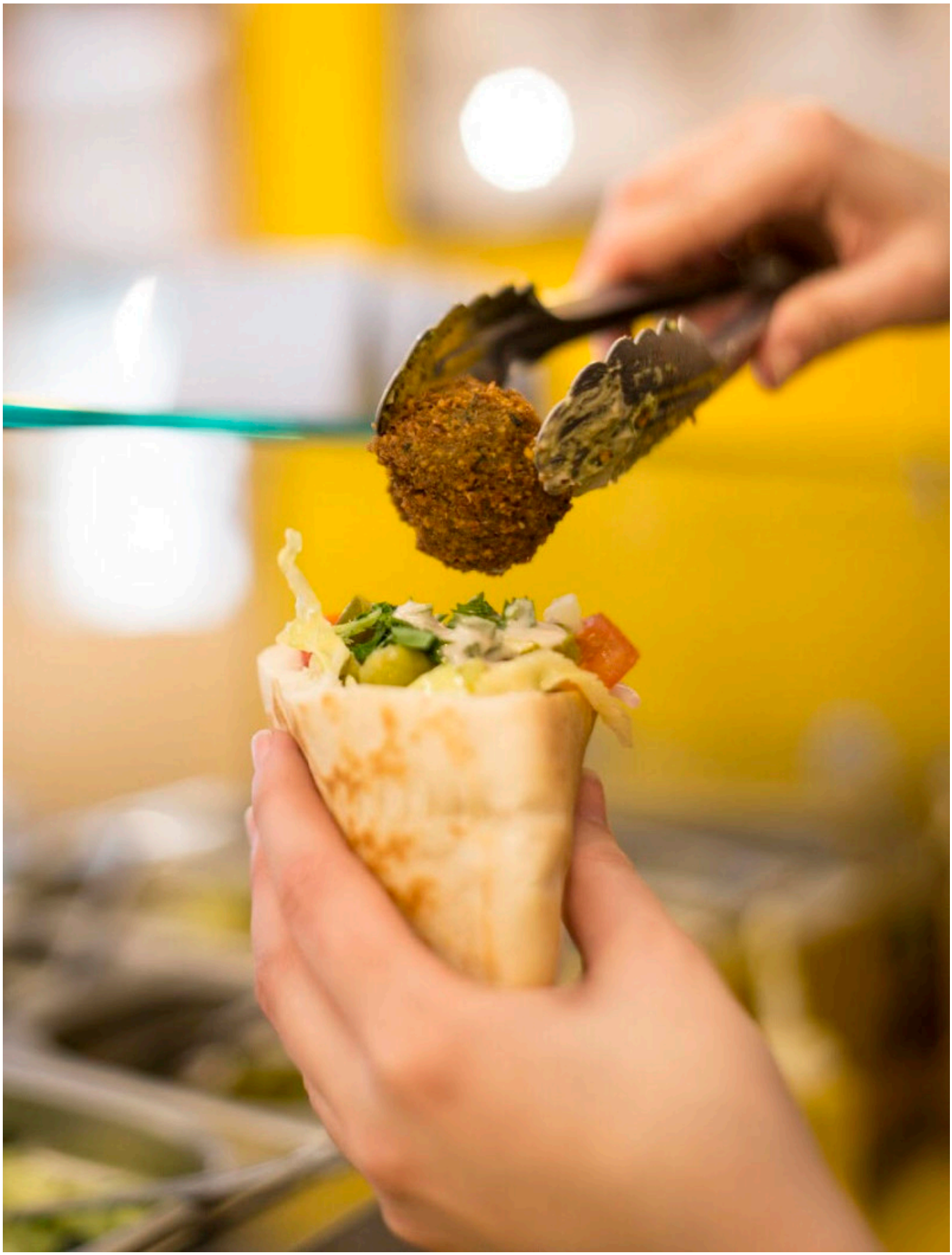
Falafeleria – authors of La Hummuseria's second success story

If it were a bestseller then authors of **La Hummuseria** have written another success story: **Falafeleria**. Simplicity and *sabor* are the keys and if, like me, you suffer from indecision and are overwhelmed by the sight of a long menu, then this is your place.



There are three options to choose from. Each one is to be the contents of a delicious, home-baked pita. However, the main character of this tale has to be the falafel. I would love to

tell you the ingredients but when I asked, I was told they were a highly guarded secret recipe, as with the hummus. Whatever it is, they’ve done it right.



This is no resemblance to my own flaky, dry chickpea ball attempts. There’s texture, body and a finish of herbs. This

falafel could well be eaten on its own. But in addition you get the garnish, the tahini dressing and of course the hummus.

Built on a street food-style joint in central Malasaña, you can eat in or take out. But this is no fast food pop up. It’s healthy and fulfilling and on top of it all, they encourage you to recycle.



Oh and I almost forgot, they have a genius wrap holder for the table. All embarrassment spared if this is a first date destination. I’m heading back to try options two and three.

Photos courtesy of Lotem Gaziel, co-founder of La Hummuseria & Falafeleria

By Alice Josselyn

Falafeleria

- **Facebook**
- **Address:** Calle Santa Barbera 4
- **Metro:** Tribunal or Chueca
- **Open:** Tuesday – Saturday 13h-23h30; Sunday 13h-18h

Also check out La Hummuseria!

Grosso Napoletano – I 'adoughed' you.

Being a full time teacher means that I'm lucky enough to get some pretty major teacher perks, aka, a lot of holiday days – which let's be real, is something that money can't buy. So this week I found myself with a blissful 9 days off and aside from the on-going trauma that is '*buying a house*' in Spain (that's a whole other blog post that trust me no one wants to read) I basically found myself at a loose end.

The upside of this being that I had time to become a lady who lunches – so having managed to persuade a friend to extend her lunch break, I sought out somewhere tasty looking near her office that wouldn't break the bank – my pennies are now being directed towards furniture sadly, and not food.



Fast forward to Grosso Napoletano, a lovely little Italian spot serving up some of the best pizzas in the city. Located on C/Santa Engracia, it's neighbours with a whole host of hip and happening foodie outposts that are emerging weekly in Chamberi.



The beauty of Grosso Napoletano in my opinion was the simplicity of the menu – a few salads are on offer to share (we plumped for chicken and avo to get the tastebuds going) followed by diavola and a quattro formaggi pizzas respectively.



The cavernous wood burning oven cooked them to absolute perfection – the base was light but not doughy, the toppings charred but not burnt. I ate every last crumb and my friend took her leftovers back to work – much to the envy of her colleagues.



As the nervous energy that comes with the quest to becoming a homeowner appears to be burning some of my calorie intake, I plumped by a matcha tea tiramisu to round things off nicely. It was a quirky twist on an Italian classic and every bite as delicious as the pizza.





Pizza places are essentially ten a penny, but decent ones are not. Grosso serves up authentic Italian eats at prices that, let's face it, are far more purse friendly than a return flight to Rome to sample the same.

So if you fancy living La Dolce Vita but the budget won't stretch quite as far as Sardinia, Grosso Napoletano is no poor substitute. Both the service and the décor were spot on and if a simple lunch spot is what you're after, then that's what you'll get. With two locations in the city (the other one on C/Hermosilla) it's easy to grab a 'pizza' the action.

Photos from instagram @grosso_napoletano

Grosso Napoletano

- **Website**, **Facebook**, **Instagram**
- **Address:** Currently they have 8 locations
- **Phone:** 911 70 46 53

Acid Cafe – seasonal, minimalist, and just good coffee

Minimalist, sleek and edgy. That’s the feeling I got when I first walked into Acid Cafe, a new coffee shop that opened its doors in Barrio de Las Letras just over a month ago.

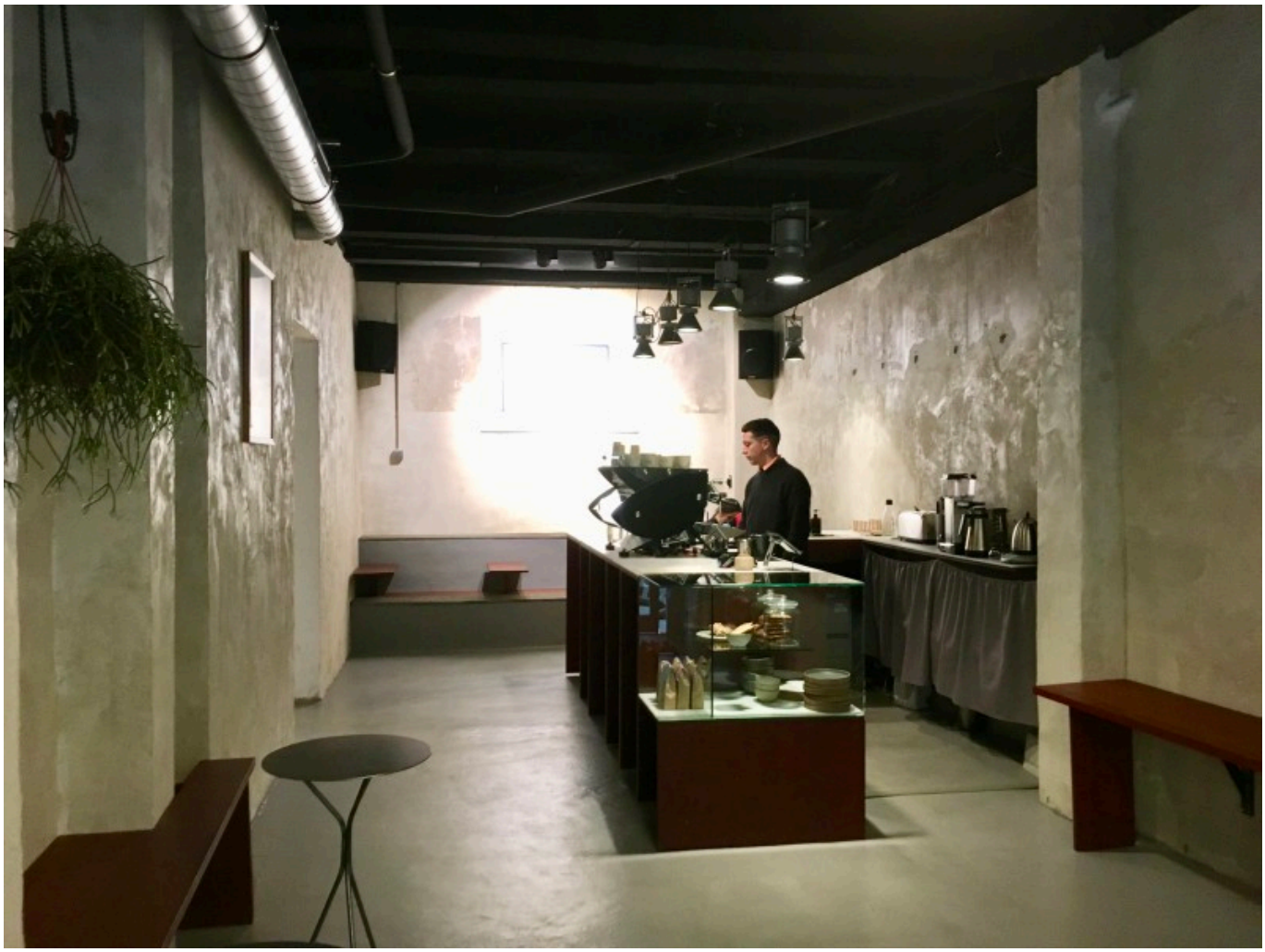
A short walk away from the Reina Sofia, Acid Cafe is secluded, hidden down one of Madrid’s many cobblestoned roads. The only thing that signals it’s a coffee shop (besides the name) is the large coffee machine that can be viewed through its glass doors and walls.



Fede Graciano, the founder and main barista, greets you when you get in and will show you the selection of coffee they have available, letting you smell the aroma. Passionate about coffee, he describes coffee beans by citrus, fruit flavors or smoother, bodied textures.

The name itself comes from a coffee description – good coffee

is often described by its acidity and sweetness. As a filtered coffee lover myself, it’s a name I can appreciate.



The cafe’s selection of food is seasonal and is meant to pair with its rotating selection of coffee from La Cabra, a roaster based in Aarhus, Denmark. Acid Cafe is the only shop in Madrid that offers the Nordic roaster and the quality of the filtered coffee is excellent.



The coffee menu isn’t extensive and offers an Americano, flat white, batch coffee and filtered coffee. If you don’t want coffee, they also have chai tea and kombucha.



Graciano said he wanted to create a place in Madrid that didn’t just sell good coffee with your typical hipster menu of

avocado and toast or a croissant. The cafe’s winter menu includes a creative selection of winter veggies, such as the pumpkin with beans and paprika or the Labneh (a type of yogurt cheese) with roasted tomato and cauliflower.



Their pastries are also made in house, and I particularly enjoy their vegan cookies, although I’m far from being a vegan.



They also occasionally have live DJs on Sunday afternoons, which Graciano is hoping to make a weekly occurrence.

Stepping into Acid Cafe on a Sunday reminds me of my days in London, when I would go to the local café to get out of the rain. While there may be an excuse as often to escape from the rain, Acid Cafe offers an excellent option to refuel before heading back into the arid sun.

By Moriah Costa

Info

- **Facebook**, **Instagram**
- **Address:** Calle de la Verónica 9
- **Metro:** Antón Martín or Atocha

I'd Cross an Ocean for Atlantik Corner

Sometimes you walk into a restaurant and you can just sense that somebody has put their heart and soul into it. That's exactly how I felt last Tuesday evening when visiting Atlantik Corner for the first time. From the little details, to the big concept that envelops their entire menu, no aspect of the dining experience had been overlooked; no aspect deemed too trivial.



Atlantik Corner **is a Portuguese restaurant**, but with a twist. There's no cliched chicken peri peri on offer here. This is fusion cooking at its best. Unbeknown to me, Portugal has strong historical links with Brazil *(that part I knew)* but I wasn't aware of their ties with Africa and India. So with flavours from these foreign lands having been thrown into the mix, the result is a menu that can only be described as a masterclass in uniqueness.



Nuno de Noronha Goucha, the owner of Atlantik Corner, was a fountain of knowledge when it came to wine, decor and all things delicious from Spain's next-door neighbour. Hailing from Portugal himself, the restaurant is clearly a labour of love and he explained that the concept behind the menu was to encapsulate all things 'Atlantic' – rather than the Mediterranean food that's often held in such high esteem when you mention the south of Europe.



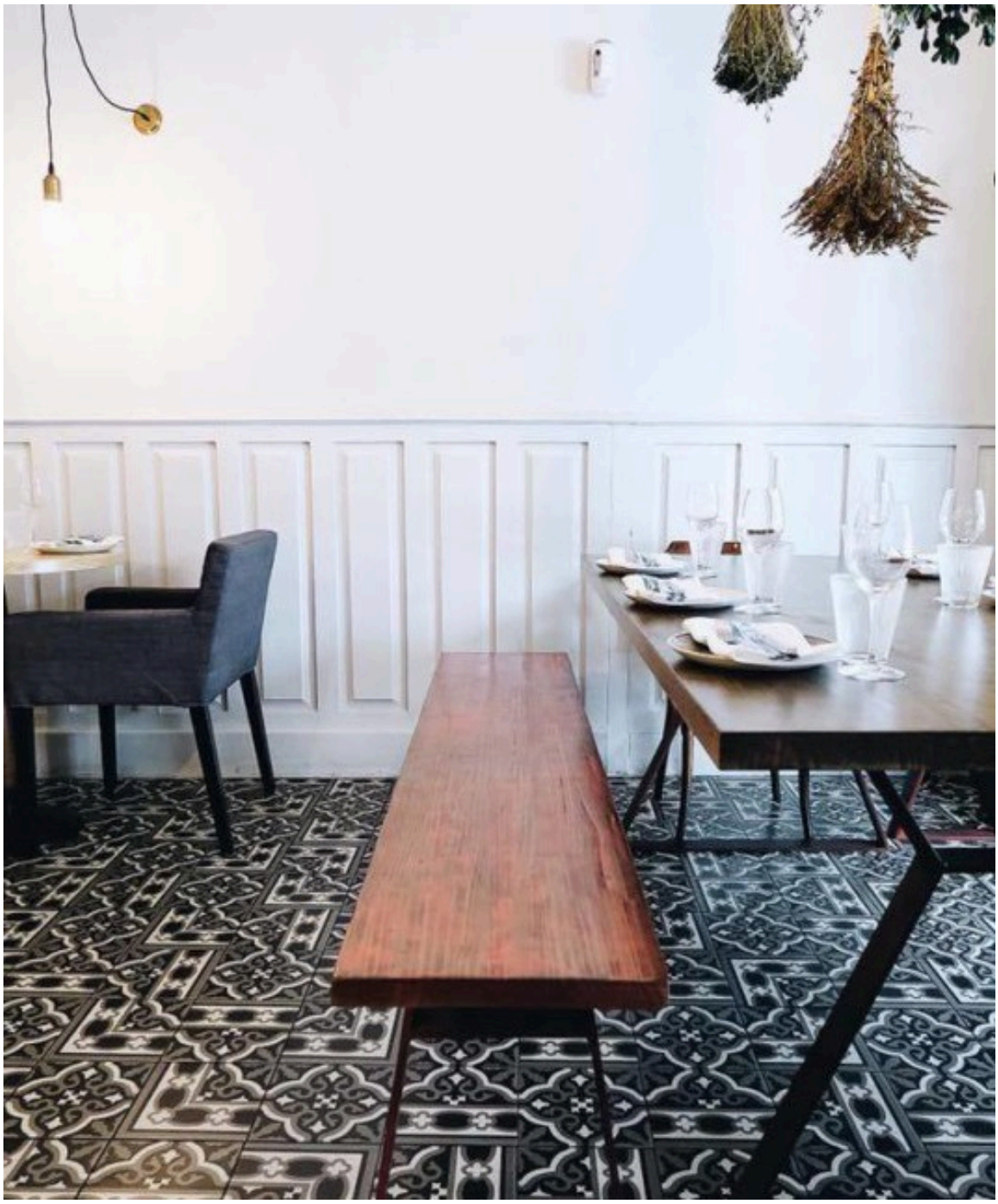


Kicking things off (and naturally, with a story behind it) was

a delectable duck pate served with oaty biscuits that Galician sailors used to take on their voyages (for when their bread went bad). Well, I can only attest that they were some lucky lads because the *marinheiras* were so good that I could've snaffled the entire bowl and tipped them into my handbag, you know, to keep my hunger pangs at bay.



This was teamed with an ice cold Alvarinho wine that was perfectly chilled and was able to covert even the most diehard Crianza drinker. Then to really ramp up the *ooh's* and *aaah's*, a selection of homemade bread appeared, served effortlessly in a tiny cloth bag bestowed to the restaurant by none other than Nuno's own Mother – a nice touch, I'm sure you'll agree.



I feel it’s worth a mention at this point that given it being a Portugese restuarant, the tile porn was off the scale. Gorgeous floors partnered the equally gorgeous food – ensuring that all senses were assaulted with loveliness. After the surprise appetiser, we plumped for three dishes, all designed to be shared and all incorporating an electric mix of ingredients.



We tried a *ravioli de gambon* – the pasta was wafer-thin (my favourite) and the prawns were pink, plump and perfect. This was followed by *suprema de vaca*, teamed with two spicy sauces, *mojo picon* and Thai green curry – I told you it was unique. And then came the final showstopper – *a carabinero al carbon.*



Now until fairly recently, I’m not ashamed to say that I was pretty squeemish when it came to all things ‘under the sea’. I watched the waiter somewhat apprehensively as he squeezed the head of the *carabinero* with force, resulting in lots of gooey goodness, which laced the cous cous with an almost syrupy flourish. I tried not to think too intently about what it was exactly, but what was undeniable was the taste – I could’ve licked the plate.



Now some peeps after that little lot would be full, but I like to think that when it comes to appetites, I'm not most people. Not a huge dessert fan, once again I took advice from Nuno and went for a *torrija de brioche*. There are no words to describe how good that pud was so I won't even attempt it – however, what I will say is that I'd go back for that alone. Not that it's the only thing that will ensure a repeat performance – the *menu del día* (priced at a bargainous €14.50 for three courses) should have people flocking in droves.



So with dinner concluding and me being somewhat in awe of the tile/prawn combo, I wondered what was left to conquer in terms of the excitement stakes – well how's this for beyond cute? You could leave an actual message in a bottle. No I'm not just quoting Sting for fun – the team behind Atlantik Corner urge you to write a wish before you leave, and leave it safely ensconced in a bottle and they'll do the rest – aka, throw it into the Atlantic Ocean for you.

Wanna know what I wished for? That they could come up with a calorie-free version of the *torrija*, so that I could tuck in morning, noon and night.

By @littlemissmadrid!

Info

- **Facebook**, **Website**, **Instagram**
- **Address:** Calle Ventura de la Vega, 11 y 13

- **Metro:** Sevilla or Antón Martín
- **Phone:** 910 71 72 45

Living Room Concerts – Weekend “Planazo” in Madrid

In Madrid there are hundreds, if not thousands of things to do on any given weekend. Doing a quick Google search for live music, for example, will show you multiple Top Ten lists of the most well-known spots. However, you won’t find a live music venue more intimate than that of **Living Room Concerts**. It’s just like it sounds: concerts held in people’s living rooms and you’re invited.



Born in, yes, a living room, it was Nichole Hastings' idea to bring emerging and little known artists and their original music into the spotlight. In nomadic spirit, **LRC** moves around Madrid to different pre-approved flats in all barrios spreading new independent music around the city to as many guests as the particular living room (and guest list) can hold.



LRC has even put down roots in one fixed location in Malasaña, a cultural community center called **el Salón del Artista**. On arrival, be prepared to be ushered in with a warm welcome from the owner of the flat and then find a seat so you can comfortably listen to the original music and stories behind the songs from, often bilingual, artists.



Once inside, it’s easy to see that the diverse crowd has arrived expecting to meet new people and listen to original music that they couldn’t hear anywhere else.



During any given concert you could hear independent Spanish artists singing in English or a multicultural group singing in some combination of languages. Because of this, the concerts feel inclusive and not limited to any particular group or musical taste.



If you're in Madrid alone or with friends, LRC will sit you within feet of an independent artist and among members of the Living Room Concerts' community in Madrid.

Info

- **Follow** LRC on **Facebook** & **Instagram**
- **To attend,** the reservations work on the honor system but you do have to sign up through their **Facebook** page or their **MeetUp.com** page.
- **Price:** The event has a very reasonable cover which can

be turned into a “cover + open bar” for 3 euros more. Towards the end of the concert you can make a donation which goes right to the artists you’ve just met.

- **Links to artists** who’ve recently performed: **Taiacore**, **BeMyFiasco**, **David Roma**

By Caitlin Mackenzie

Gracias Padre, a new Mexican restaurant you’ll be very thankful for

They say that practicing an attitude of gratitude is the key to a calm and content life. I’m never quite sure who “they” are when I make reference to them in this sort of context. I guess what I’m trying to say is that gratitude continues to be a buzz word for 2018, along with self care and *lagom*. Trust me, look ‘em up.

Anyways, I digress. What I’m attempting to explain is that gratitude simply means pausing and appreciating what you have and giving thanks. To this end, there’s no place easier to feel grateful for than **Gracias Padre**; an almost box-fresh Mexican restaurant that just graced Calle Ortega y Gasset with its presence a mere month ago.



It’s impossible to miss. A riot of colour that wouldn’t be out of place on a Holi run, the decor packs a similar punch to the frozen margaritas that are on offer. I dined on a Friday night and it was heaving. So much so that word of mouth is clearly taking hold for GP quicker than you can say “tequila, it makes me happy.”



Now I love Mexican food. Like, full blown love it. I love Indian food, I love Italian food, heck, I’m even genuinely starting to like Japanese food (I can’t drop the L word just yet, it’s still early days). But my full-blown love affair with decent Mexican food started in Tulum three years ago and upon my return, I’ve spent time, money and energy on dinners where I’ve wound up bitterly disappointed when I’ve been served up a plate of a beige-looking stodge.



There’s no such issue at **Gracias Padre** where the food was light, clean and fresh, not your typical description of Mexican fare, yet everything I ate was delicious and not overtly calorific. **Slight disclaimer, I did try a corn on the cob that was dipped in butter (and mayo) then rolled in parmesan.*

Every sublime mouthful was well worth the need for my Saturday spin class. The fish tacos had the perfect amount of crunch and flaky softness, while the *tinga de pollo* melted in your mouth.



Mexican food isn't hard to find in Madrid, with chains popping up everywhere, you can't miss an opportunity for a burrito, much like it's hard to miss a bearded bloke in Malasaña. What deserves praise however, is authentic Mexican food, cooked with love. The type of tacos that take you back to that beach in Tulum and remind you why you'd give your right arm for a

decent marg after a tough working week.



Much like online dating, finding a true gem of a place to eat is often a numbers game. You've gotta rack up the dates and sift through the duds. Fret not, no need for you to conduct your own research. In this instance I've done the hard work for you. **Gracias Padre** is hands down the best Mexican food I've had on this side of the pond – and I've tried a lot of tacos.

Gracias Padre

- **Facebook**, **Website** & **Instagram**: **@gracias.padre**
- **Address:** Calle de José Ortega y Gasset, 55
- **Phone:** 910 66 00 85
- **Metro:** Lista

La Porcinería, get your pork on

Welcome to Madrid’s first pork bistro! Situated on a quiet street on Calle Lagasca, the newly opened **La Porcinería** is a creative tribute to *cerdo* in all its culinary glory.



The decor is light and casual, with pig cartoons and quotes sprinkled all around. You’re welcomed into the street-level entrance with a few high tables and an open bar. Downstairs you’ll find a cozy dining room where we had dinner on a Tuesday night.



All dishes on the menu contain pork, as you can imagine, with only one exception (that we didn't try). There's a nice range of items to choose from – some Asian inspired, others more traditional, and a few surprises in the mix. Our server, Alex, recommended we start off with a bottle of red and had us sample their signature starters and mains.



First up was the Thai-style pork *bombón,* so satisfying to cut into and find tender strips of pork inside with a mix of flavors and textures.



Then came a real treat for both the eyes and tastebuds – fried artichokes with fine strips of pancetta. First Alex topped it with freshly shaved foie and then proceeded to flambé it at the table.



We also had a *lagarto ibérico* (a special cut of Iberian pork) served on top of a rich, velvety layer of yuca purée with white truffle. If you’re into truffle, this is your dish.



We rounded off the savory part of our meal with the Sicilian-style Iberian burger that was topped with provolone cheese and grilled onions, and came with a side of homemade fries.

Feeling completely satisfied and not overly stuffed, we couldn’t have asked for a better pork-filled experience! That is, until dessert came.



The chocolate *salami* cake with ice cream was the perfect finish – don't worry, the only nod to pork in this dish was the fun presentation. After devouring every bite, we slowly finished off the delicious bottle of red. I don't remember what type of wine it was, but it came recommended by Alex as a house special that night. So just make sure to ask your server for a suggestion!

So pork fans, La Porcinería should definitely be on your list.

Info

- **Instagram**, **Website**, **Facebook**
- **Address:** C/ Lagasca 103, Madrid
- **Metro:** Núñez de Balboa
- **Phone:** 910 33 38 74