

# Navare Bar – The Secret's Out

You always feel quite smug when you stumble across somewhere that feels yet to be discovered. I was mooching around Chamberi on my way to an appointment, when I mindlessly spotted [Navare Bar](#) – and it piqued my interest.



Inside there were groups of friends chatting animatedly, enjoying a late afternoon merienda. But upon closer look, there was also a downright delicious evening menu. I papped the name of the restaurant on my phone and made a mental note to return with a friend in tow.



Fast forward a week and I found myself to be one of the locals enjoying this new neighbourhood hotspot. [Navare Bar](#) is somewhat impossible to be shoehorned into any set category. You want your breakfast? They serve it. A leisurely lunch with colleagues? You've got it. Dinner with your nearest and dearest. They offer it. It's basically your one-stop shop for all your culinary needs.





Now to be all things to all people is no mean feat. However, after meeting (and chatting with the owner) it's clear that the vision for Navare Bar is to be a local place for local people; somewhere that no matter the time of day, you can grab a coffee or indeed a copa with friends.

I was a fan of this concept from the get go. Coming from the UK, I'm used to eating when I want – whether or not that ties in with siesta culture is of little importance. If I'm hungry I want options that will keep my renowned (within my social circle) 'hanger' at bay. It also didn't hurt that the décor was a delight and the plates satiated my fetish for all things chintzy when it came to crockery.





So the food. In a nutshell it was lip smackingly good. After a full-on week at work I was in need of all the treats. We split **prawn croquetas** (you get eight, I could've quite easily refused to share). This was swiftly followed by **grilled vegetables** that conjured up the feeling of summer barbecues (and made me feel slightly virtuous after the deep fried delight that was the first tapa).

But **the jewel in the crown was undoubtedly the solomillo** that came with crushed new potatoes and some kind of sauce that I could've quite happily guzzled as though it were a G&T. To surmise, the food is heavenly and I left eager to return for breakfast, lunch **AND** dinner.

I have no doubt that Navare bar will be a success. The passion of the owner coupled with the zest for life that the local peeps possess, makes it an inevitable recipe for success.

## Info

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# Let's Raise a Toast to The Toast Café

If you're lucky enough to live in Madrid, as I do, it often

feels like the city is your playground. There are exhibitions to see, bars to frequent, parks to embrace, [restaurants](#) to sample and of course, come the weekend, long, lazy [brunches](#) to be had. I always have the intention to be one of those people who whips up breakfast without breaking a sweat.



I buy the eggs, the avo, occasionally the chorizo, but when Saturday morning rolls around, frankly, my working week is done and the desire to cook (or clean) for that matter often falls by the wayside. I want to go out. To get dressed up and to head to a place where the mimosas are free flowing and the washing up is SEP (someone else's problem). So to kick start a week off from work, I headed to [The Toast Café](#) so that someone else could poach the perfect egg on my behalf.





A sister restaurant of [Roll Madrid](#) (a [recent review](#) of mine), it's clear to see that good breakfasts run in the family. There's a fixed brunch menu, which my friend and I plumped for. Needless to say, I don't think either of us needed feeding again until the evening had swung round as the portion sizes were far from stingy.

We both had coffees to start (natch), followed by croissants, eggs benedict and an omelette respectively. We chased this up with multiple mimosas and to conclude our breakfast of champions we split a cheesecake which was as good as any that I'd had in the States: I'm a fan of a buttery base and this one was so delish that I could've eaten it twice.



With Halloween on the approach and the city turning its attention to all things gruesome and ghoulish, [Toast](#) is getting in on the act by offering its own version of a fright night. Order yourself a beer and the bartenders will toss a coin – if it lands on pay, you pay. But... if it lands on freebie, you get to enjoy your tipple on the house. There's nothing scary about that. Well, apart from maybe the hangover that'll follow come November 1st.





It's worth mentioning that the aforementioned [Roll](#), will also be on the Halloween bandwagon and are offering the exact same deal – pretty tempting with Madrid enjoying a bank holiday the following day. I fully expect most of the city will be nursing sore heads.

Fast forward to November and **Toast is hosting its very own Thanksgiving celebration** – I'm spotting a pattern, this is a place that likes a party, we'll get along well. With a menu that will appeal to people from not just across the pond, it's well worth a look if you know you'll be pining for turkey and for time spent with friends.

So if boozy brunches are your bag and potential freebies float your boat there's really only one thing for it. Check out The Toast Café. Great food, great service, and a great excuse to dodge doing the dishes.



## Info

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- 

## Make plans to meet at Meat Madrid

A few years back, I was lucky enough to visit Chicago and let's just say that the food in the windy city is up there with its architecture; it's pretty memorable. It helped enormously that I was visiting a friend who is quite the foodie and had mapped out a dining odyssey that ensured that I needed two seats on the flight home, given the cal's I'd ingested in the space of one week.

One meal that stood out was a burger at the now-infamous hotspot, Au Cheval. My friend nonchalantly explained that given the reputation of the burgers there, we'd need to put our names down and head off for drinks before we'd actually get to chow on down. Obviously this seemed absurd as a visiting Brit, but I duly did as I was told. Fast forward a couple of hours and boy did I eat my words (and what remains to be THE most epic burger I've ever tasted).



It's hard to explain what made it so unforgettable, but it's certainly not just me that feels that way. Google the burger at Au Cheval and it's been hailed by almost every Tom, Dick and Harry as the best in the world. Since that fateful evening in Chi Town, I've been on the hunt for the next best thing and I think my search is over upon discovering [Meat](#).



[Meat](#) is tucked away down a street that offers plenty of eating options such as Boca Calle and Cripeka. But if you're in the business of beef, Meat is where it's at. The concept and menu are equally similar, **they do two burgers (along with with fries, onion rings and salad) and that's it. There's the perennially popular Cheeseburger and whatever happens to be the monthly special.**





We ordered the whole shebang and it was a treat for the old tastebuds. I'm known for being quite the carnivore so suffice to say, Meat may be my happy place. I don't need bells and whistles when it comes to a decent-tasting burger and **what makes Meat so good is that they focus on the basics and execute them to perfection.** A buttery brioche bun, paired with perfectly seasoned beef makes you happy to indulge even when your jeans are feeling slightly snug.



**MEAT**

It didn't go unnoticed to me that there's Aesop products in the bathroom and G'Vine gin on offer which elevates Meat in my opinion from some of its more humble carnivorous competitors. On a Tuesday evening it was mildly busy but not eardrum shatteringly so, making it the **ideal spot for a midweek bite** to eat which will leave you with change from a twenty.

*Make plans to meet at Meat.*

## Info:

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
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  - **Metro:** Alonso Martínez & Bilbao
- 

## Picsa, got a 'pizza' my heart

I don't know about you but when I hear the word 'Argentina', pizza isn't usually the first word that springs to mind AND I've been. I think of tango. I think of steak. I think of wine (more specifically I think of ruby red Malbec). I also think of the multiple jars of *dulce de leche* that I put away, for my sins.

So upon hearing that Argentinian pizza was able to rival a slither of wafer-thin New York pizza, I figured it was worth further investigation to see if the Argentinians didn't just talk a good fight.





Photos by @adam\_w\_potts

**Picsa is the Argentinian pizza mecca on Calle Ponzano.** Foodies in the know will already be well aware that this street boasts a plethora of options that are all first class. However, in order to stand out you'd better have a strong USP up your sleeve and Picsa definitely has that; I'm yet to find anywhere else in Madrid that offers such gourmet pizzas in such a clinically chic setting – if there's such a thing.



Picsa is almost sterile in terms of its appearance – it's all white tiles and bare bulbs, but this just allows the food to take centre stage. Obviously the **pizza is the big draw here**, but the range of sharing plates isn't to be dismissed. The **bellota ham** all but dissolved in your mouth and the **Armenian roasted peppers** were the perfect zingy compliment to the indulgence of the fat rippled *jamon*.

So after considering that a mere 'warm up', we plumped for a pizza to share and luckily (considering my topping tastes are relatively mainstream) **you can do half and half and keep everyone at the table as happy as a clam.**





On one side we split a **chorizo criollo with provolone** (a heart attack waiting to happen in all honesty but I was willing to take the risk). Whilst the other half was laden with **roast duck and figs**, like I said, Picsa isn't serving up your basic margarita here. At this point, barely able to move and already pining for the thought of an elasticated waist, we figured in for a penny, in for a pound and split a **chocolate cake with dulce de leche ice cream** to really round things off.

If you're working on your beach bod I strongly advise swerving Picsa unless you're able to show any kind of restraint – of which I'm not. Picsa is not your average pizza joint and in light of this it was packed to the rafters on a Saturday night with patrons all looking for a 'pizza the action' – sorry, couldn't resist one last pizza pun. Be sure to book, maybe skip lunch in preparation and stretchy pants are well advised.



# Picsa

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & Instagram: [@picsa.madrid](#)
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- **Phone:** 915 34 10 09
- **Metro:** Ríos Rosas or Cuatro Caminos

Read a previous [Naked Madrid review on Picsa here!](#)

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## Take a Peek Inside 5 Historical Madrid Bars

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

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

### [Fatigas del Querer](#)



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



Typical free Spanish tapa

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

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

## [La Casa del Abuelo](#)





Just by the name alone, it's clear that this bar has stood the test of time and still remains a [Madrid classic](#).

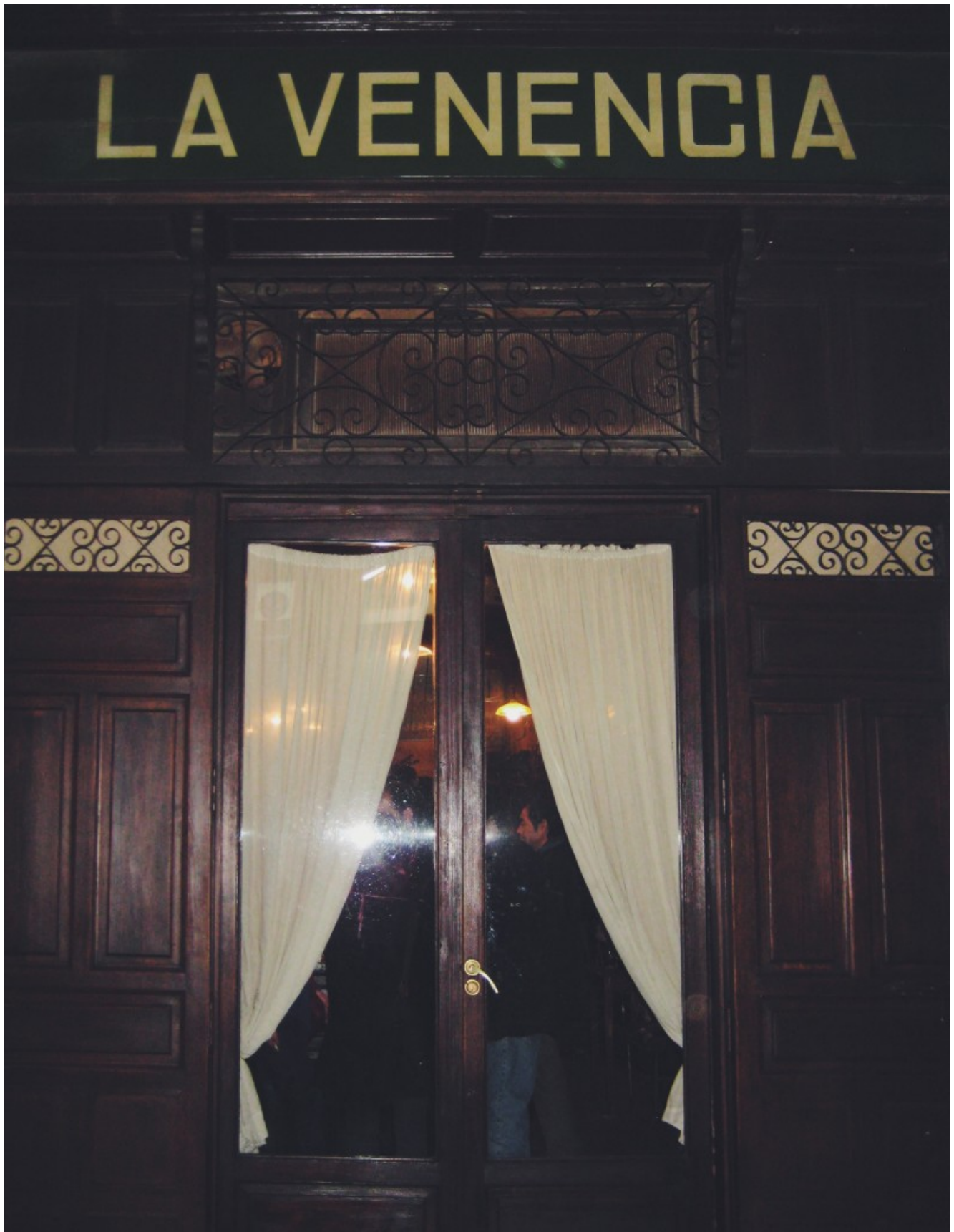


Established in 1906, [La Casa del Abuelo](#) has seen Spain at the best of times and the worst of times, including the Spanish Civil War. During this time, La Casa del Abuelo only served garlic or grilled shrimp paired with a Spanish sweet wine due to the food shortage. Since then, this bar's ***gambas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

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

## [La Venencia](#)





[Source](#)

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



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

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

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

## [1912 Museo Bar](#)



Westin Palace Hotel

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



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

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

## [San Ginés](#)





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



Original image by: @carlas.abreu via Instagram

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

- [Web](#) & [Facebook](#)
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- **Metro:** Sol

▪ Phone: +34 913 65 65 46

You might also like: [5 authentic Madrid bars loved by locals](#)

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## 5 Authentic Madrid Bars Loved by Locals

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

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

### 1) El Madroño





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

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



*Delicias de bacalao con mermelada de madroño*

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

## 2) Bar la Campana





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





*Bocadillos de calamares con patatas bravas y patatas alioli*

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

### 3) Casa Toni





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



*Sepia con vino Madrileño*

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

## 4) Casa González





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



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

## 5) Bodegas Ricla





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





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

Also check out: [What to see in Barrio de las Letras](#)

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# Veggie Nirvana at VivaBurger

# in La Latina

In the foodie hotspot Plaza de la Paja, in *barrio* La Latina, lies a vegetarian oasis with an oddly beachy vibe, complete with pale teal walls, distressed white wood, and beaded curtains.



You can sit inside or at one of their lovely terrace tables in this little nook of La Latina. While there's almost always a full house (and for good reason), the staff works like a well-oiled machine, and the owner treats everyone like family.



Everything on the menu is vegan or vegetarian—and seriously delicious. Being shamefully addicted to cheese, I was admittedly nervous to try their vegan burger of the day. But it exceeded my expectations in every way: **filling, creamy, and flavorful, it left me more than satisfied.** It comes with a salad or soup, fresh fries, and a drink (can be wine or beer too).











If you're not feeling a veggie burger, the eatery offers an **alternative *menú del día***: they celebrate a different country every day with a rotating international menu. Indian curry garam masala, Greek salad and musaka, Peruvian avocado ceviche, Moroccan couscous, Argentinian vegetable *parrillada* and empanadas... and about 20 others.











For dessert, I had a fresh mint green tea smoothie. Having a huge sweet tooth, it wasn't what I was expecting, but it was flavorful and refreshing, especially on such a hot day. If you order dessert a la carte, instead of with the lunch special, you have lots of other options like their scrumptious carrot cake or vegan ice cream.





Amazingly, the burger for the menú is apparently a more “basic” veggie burger. If that’s basic, I can only imagine the

full menu is mind-blowing. I'll for sure be back for more.

## Info

- [Facebook](#)
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  - **Instagram:** @viva\_burger
  - **Address:** Costanilla de San Andrés 16
  - **Phone:** 91 366 33 49
- 

## Peyote San, Mexican fusion at its most fabulous

I love Mexican food. I mean, I properly **LOVE** it. A holiday spent in Tulum with tequila on tap was possibly as close to utopia as I'll ever get on the food front. Tacos, guac, and burritos – I love them all equally and don't get me started on margaritas – second to gin (and possibly water due to pure necessity) it definitely edges its way into my three most supped liquids. So imagine my intrigue when I'd heard about the menu at [Peyote San](#) – **a place that's managed to fuse Mexican munchies with sushi**. Definitely worth a gander I mused and suffice to say it was.

Located near Colon (or as I affectionately refer to the area with the 'giant flag') [Peyote San](#) restaurant is en route to where the good shops are. From the outside looking in it could easily be missed, but the interior is anything but shy and retiring. **It's instantly instagramable** (yes, that's now a word along with with TMI and FML) largely due to the bold graffiti-type images that adorn most of the walls.





If you've travelled to the Big Apple it certainly feels reminiscent of somewhere swish that you'd find on the Upper West Side – choc-a-bloc with beautiful people sipping elaborately prepared cocktails. However, fear not, it wasn't a case of style over substance as **every last morsel was utterly delicious and well worth the late school night in my case.**

I've yet to visit Japan (although it's on my bucket list) and the cuisine at Peyote San was the next best thing. I worked my way through A LOT of food to make this review as authentic as poss so drumroll please – I can vouch that the **tatiki tuna,**



chicken gyoza, black cod and the Japanese curry with bonito were all delectable as were the pretty potent Asian Malgalita's – a Peyote San take on a classic Marg and unquestionably are to be enjoyed with an air of YOLO – and not the worry of reaching for ibuprofen the following day.



Given the uniqueness of the food, it was also a really nice touch that the chef came over to talk us through the menu and his knowledge and evident passion for the food made the evening all the more gratifying. Peyote San definitely isn't the type of locale to visit if you've got too much month left

and not enough money. **It's definitely more of a date night treat or a birthday splurge.**



Having said that, come Saturday nights, tables are shuffled to the sidelines so that patrons can get their groove on. Having lived in Madrid long enough now to know that Madrileños would favour spending their last fiver on a night out (than something sensible), Peyote San shouldn't remain on your wish list, **pop it in on your hit list now.**

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Marques de la Ensenada 16
- **Metro:** Colon
- **Phone:** 91 088 22 12

## You'll also like:

- [Sahuaro, Mexican magic in Plaza Cascorro](#)
- [El Sombrero Azul, pupusas, yuca, enchiladas and more](#)



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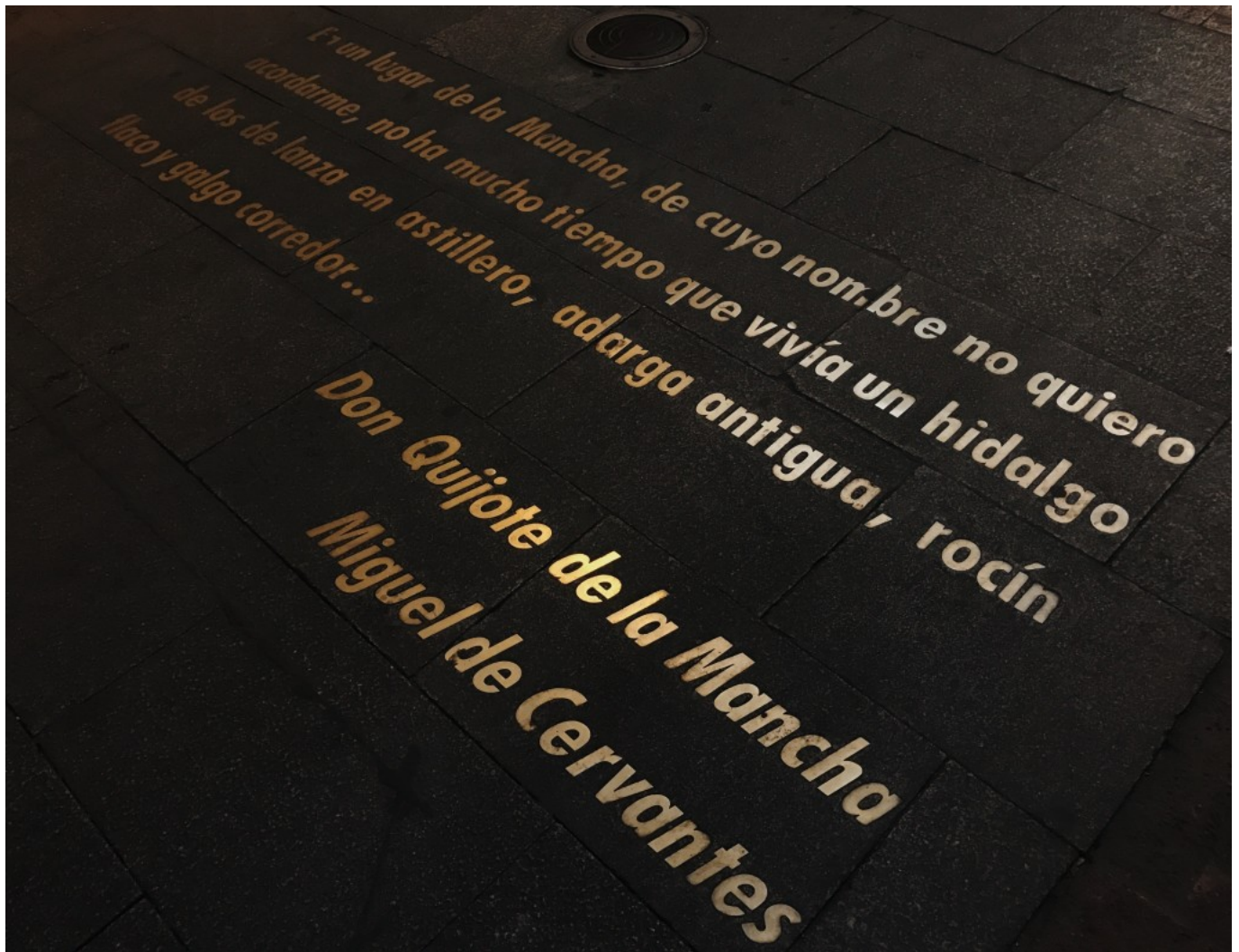
# What to See in Barrio de Las Letras

Madrid's [Barrio de las Letras](#) is a timeless neighborhood that stays true to its Spanish roots, while still giving a modern feel that leaves visitors coming back for more. With its amazing food, culture, and ambience, you can't go wrong when it comes to exploring this classic barrio.

Here are a few insights into its history, [hotspots](#) and 3 restaurant recommendations!

## History with a Modern Twist

Barrio de las Letras, also known as Huertas, is less than a 10-minute walk from Sol and was once home to some of the greatest Spanish writers. The streets are paved with recognizable quotes from writers such as, Miguel Cervantes and José Echegaray.



There are even plazas and streets dedicated to writers such as Plaza Jacinto Benavente and Calle Lope de Vega. The houses of some of these writers still stand today and are open to the public, such as [Casa Museo Lope de Vega](#) which offers free guided tours.





Plaza Jacinto Benavente



Calle Lope de Vega

Nowadays, this historic neighborhood has become a trendy spot for people to get together and have a drink paired with a few tapas. Calle de las Huertas is the main street where you can easily find great shops, cafes, and some of Madrid's finest eateries.







While exploring the side streets that branch off the main road, keep an eye out for the various boutiques, art galleries, bookstores, and antique shops that make this neighborhood so authentic.







## Must-Sees in Barrio de las Letras

**Plaza Santa Ana** is a well-known hangout spot in this neighborhood. Here you can find a number of restaurants with outdoor seating areas that are perfect for enjoying the ambience with a nice wine or beer.







**Plaza Santa Ana** is also where you can find monuments of Calderón de la Barca, Federico García Lorca, and the Teatro Español, making it a popular spot for tourists.





Monument Calderon de La Barca



Monument Federico Garcia Lorca





Teatro Español—Madrid's oldest theater

### 3 Restaurants in Barrio de las Letras

This neighborhood is a hot spot for some of Madrid's oldest taverns and restaurants that serve typical Spanish dishes and tapas. Here are some of the best ones.

[Cervecería Cervantes](#) is a favorite among the locals. It's decorated with beautiful tiles that give a traditional Spanish feel. Every time I walk past this bar, it's always packed with people enjoying tapas and beer. This *cervecería* is known for its seafood that can be ordered in small portions. So stop in and try them all!



Another go-to place is [El Lacón](#) on Calle de Manuel Fernández y González. This place has been around since the 60s and has been considered a classic ever since. It's known for its drink and tapa deal, meaning that with each beer you order, the waiter will bring a small plate of tapas to your table. Not only is this restaurant famous for its incredible deal, but it's also known for its full plates such as, *cocido Madrileño* and the meat or fish *tablas* that can easily feed 3 people or more.





And if you're looking for a place that has it all, [Casa Alberto](#) is the place for you. This restaurant is hard to miss with its red exterior, antique writing, and open door which allows people to take a peek inside.



When first entering **Casa Alberto**, it's hard to get past the crowd of people drinking and ordering tapas at the bar. But once you're in the dining room, you are guaranteed a great sit-down meal. For starters, the *croquetas de jamón* are an amazing way to start your meal. Another great starter is the *gazpacho de melon* with a prawn tartar. This gazpacho gives a modern twist on the classic Spanish plate by creating a sweet but savory infusion.

Not only are their appetizers high quality, but so are their main dishes. Casa Alberto makes an incredibly flavorful and hearty *callos a la Madrileña* that's perfect for a mid-day feast. As a U.S. Midwestern girl who loves red meat, I had to second guess myself after trying the *ventresca de bonito*. This fish plate was grilled to perfection topped with quality olive oil, fresh garlic, and a side of potatoes.



Make sure to leave room for dessert because **Casa Alberto** won't disappoint. Their cream-filled crepes topped with homemade blueberry and cheese ice cream are the perfect go-to dessert. But if you're looking for something with a bit of an alcoholic twist, the apple and cider sorbet is highly recommended.



Check out [all the spots in Barrio de Las Letras](#) featured on Naked Madrid!

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# Elemental Bistro, a local labour of love

Without doubt, we are a generation who want it all and we want it now. So if we're pretty much always used to getting our own way, particularly when it comes not only to dining out but also to dining in (Hello Deliveroo you absolute game changer), then **what is it these days that truly elevates a dining experience from mediocre to marvellous? Well in my humble opinion, it's the service.** The extra *Je Ne Sais Quoi* that turns a 'meh it wasn't bad', to a 'sign me up I want a loyalty card' kind of vibe.

Good food will always be good food, but **the story and the service at [Elemental Bistro](#) is the stuff that money can rarely buy.** Not many 20-somethings these days know what they want to do when they 'grow up.' Us millennials have risen up through the ranks being told that we don't have to stay loyal to a company and await retirement. We can chase our dreams and fulfil no end of goals. The issue being, where do you start?





Someone who faced that quandary head on and has lived to tell the tale is **Sergio**, the **25-year-old owner of the newly opened [Elemental Bistro](#)** who spent years living in Paris and has brought some undeniable Gallic charm to the streets of **Malasaña**. 25 years old, I hear you gasp. Yes. I couldn't quite believe it (but pardon the French related pun) I expect him to become quite the *tour de force* when it comes to gastronomy on this side of Gran Via.

Located on **Calle Corredera Baja de San Pablo**, Elemental is in prime position to capitalise on the hoards of hipsters that

descend on this street daily. However, Elemental is far from being the only option for a foodie in that neck of the woods. So Sergio's menu (which is of a **French-Spanish fusion** disposition) is instantaneously eye catching in an area where menus are becoming more than a little generic in style.



It's not just the menu that is set to carve out a niche either. The décor is stripped back yet charming in equal measure. The walls are simplistic and white, with little nods to Parisian style through the flowers adorning the tables, to the antique typewriter that was perched atop a nearby table.

The owner Sergio who, might I add, won me over within minutes (largely due to his outfit and the soft sounds of the *La La Land* soundtrack playing in the background – a surefire winner for me) couldn't be more hands on in his approach as a restaurateur. His knowledge about wine was second to none.





It's worth noting at this point that the wine menu (along with all other drinks) were housed in old camera roll 'holders' for want of a better word. And as I've dined out about as many times as the late Hugh Hefner bagged himself a blonde, I can attest that I've never seen such a quirky and imaginative way to liven up a wine list.

The food was as downright tasty as anything I've sampled in Spain or fancied in France. The **goat cheese and pumpkin croquetas** were dangerously moreish. The duck salad had even a self-confessed carnivore eating her greens and the **Galician**

short rib, well that really requires no explanation.



Let it be told that I am very much in the camp of 'I'm a starter person' rather than being partial to a pud, but **Elemental may have just won the award for the best desert ever** – I may drop round a certificate and everything. It consisted of a chocolate fondant, violet ice cream and decorated with crystalized parma violet type sweets. It was almost too pretty to eat and the plate that it was served on was very nearly swiped by this vintage loving lady.



There's no shortage of fabulous places to eat in Madrid. Having said that, there's far fewer that I don't as much *suggest* that you should visit, but I positively implore you to frequent. Kudos to Sergio for marrying not just two nations (but two cuisines) and as a result, he brings the panache of Paris to the people of Madrid.

## Info

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