Maria's: Sensational Sweets on Calle Zurbano

I heard from a few friends that a recent New York Times article had rated **Calle Zurbano** one of the writers' "favorite streets in Europe." I remembered Zurbano; I had stayed in a hotel on the north side as my introduction to both Madrid and my teaching program. While the people I met and the things I learned on Zurbano were of the highest quality, the street itself did not surprise or amaze me eight months ago. Nevertheless, my friend and I committed to revisiting Zurbano and seeing if anything inspired us. We stumbled upon inspiration. Hidden in the article's recommendations sits a tiny bakery hiding between ritzy hotels, bustling banks, and mainstream restaurants: **María's Bakery**.

Maria´s Bakery
The New York Times
MARIA'S BAKERY
Favorite Streets in 12 European Cities
Desayunos

María's looks like it crashed onto **Calle Zurbano** straight out of your Pinterest news feed. The place oozes chic hipness—grey wood panels lead to off-white walls, chalkboard paint menus, reclaimed benches with homemade cusions, and wooden card tables covered in doilies and faux-70s tablecloths. Like your Staten Island grandmother got a hold of a Paula Dean magazine.

The bakery's eponymous María is apparently famous around these parts. **Locals pop into her ten square meters of space just to say hi**, read her newspapers, drink her coffee, and grab a baguette or a pastry to-go. Even the other staff know visitors by name, asking about babies or job lay-offs or who won the Real-Juventus match.

And, of course, there's the food. María and company arise before the sun to proof, knead, and bake the day's glutinous goods. *Pistolas, artisanas,* croissants, cookies – all things line María's stuffed shelves. **The cake selection includes dozens of decadent decisions**: "Muerte por chocolate," "mousse

de Bailley's," "tarta de queso con salsa de mora," even the oft-elusive "red velvet."

Maria's Bakery in Zurbano

As you get a high from the smell of bubbling yeast and caramelizing sugars, take a look at **María's eclectic selection of international sweets**, like *bonbones, alfajores,* tarts, *pasteles de Belén*, *dulces de leche*, macarons, and much more.

However, a proper critic has to judge any bakery by the Spanish classic: *pan con aceite,* with a coffee. Luckily, María's does not disappoint, masterfully toasting its 8-cereal brown bread, complimenting its nutty savoriness with peppery Andalusia olive oil and ground rock salt. Washed dow with frothy milk and brewed beans, it makes for a **great breakfast deal around €2**.

Stick around long enough and you'll get to try some of María'snewest experiments. While we crunched and munched our *pan*, we also were brought small plates of other samples, new treats that the bakery's working on right now. This season, María's is toying with **nut and oat hard crackers**, thin biscotti to market as "light" for snacking clients. To go with the recent holiday, we also tried María's ***rosquillas de San Isidro***, the *listas* covered in orange and lemon glaze, the *tontas* smacking of anis and cloves.

Tiramisu
Oreo
Naranja
Fresa
Limon
Red Velvet
Pastas
Bizcochos
Bolleria Argentina
Bolleria Francesa Artesanal
Cafes Helados
Zumos Naturales
Sandwiches
Comidas
Catering
Montaje de Bodegones
Debido a la frescura de los productos, se reserva Enzmas Parvio !!!

As we got *napolitanas* and *medias lunas* filled with *dulce de leche* to go, Erika told us from behind the cash register that we weren't the fist Americans to visit; the **New York Time's** "favorite streets in Europe" gave the bakery a steady drop of international attention. Since then, Anglos amble around Zurbano, waltzing into María's and placing their orders with a combination of gestures, grunts, and broken English. While we laughed, I taught the staff how to say "home made," hoping it would help guide our more linguistically ignorant compatriots. If you're walking down Zurbano and trying to see what all the fuss is about, give María's a try. It's small, it's strange, it's out of place – and it's adorable.

Info

Web
Facebook
Address: *Calle Zurbano, 15*
Metro*: Alonso Martínez*
Phone*: 91 702 63 02*

Also check out:

Mama Campo – a restaurant/market of organic delights in Plaza Olavide

Harina – for something sweet or savoury

Pan Comido – a French bakery where our bread will most certainly be eaten all up

4 Coziest Cafes in Chamberí