

MUTA Smoking Club...Barbecue a lo Ponzano

Calle Ponzano has been getting a lot of love not only on Naked Madrid, but in other Spanish press as well. I have the fortune of being a Chamberí resident, with Ponzano literally around the corner from my apartment, so a quick *tomar algo* is always another excuse to go *ponzaning*. I have been to [Bar Lambuzo](#), La Contraseña, and of course, my all-time favorite [Sala de Despiece](#), (other restaurants on calle Ponzano featured in Naked include [Taberna Alipio Ramos](#), [Casa Picsa](#) and [Toque de Sal](#)) but I had always passed by MUTA Smoking Club without ever trying to get in. Then there was Blanca Suárez's blog post for Vogue that mentioned [MUTA](#); the headline said *si queréis flipar*. I casually added it to my list of neighborhood joints to try and was waiting for an excuse to go. It was much to my surprise that on a Saturday night at 9 PM I was able to get in before going to a party in Embajadores.

MUTA, the brainchild of Javier Bonet (who owns Sala de Despiece and the Academia del Despiece), changes its concept every few months. That's where the name comes from. There was one point where it served food from Baleares, but now, as a smoking club, everything is barbecue, aka smoked meat. Walking in takes you away from Madrid and instead transports you to a barbecue joint somewhere in America, at the very least like those barbecue places they always show on *Man vs. Food*, the fire episode of Michael Pollan's *Cooked* on Netflix, or the season of *American Top Chef* when they were in Texas.





The menu is varied, with appetizers, a variety of meats you can order to share, and more. We first decided to share a take on croquetas with cornbread and potato that had tzatziki sauce on top. The greens that came on top were also top-notch. They were definitely worth the extra amount of exercise I needed to do the next day to make up for it.



Next up was the meat and the green salad. The green salad was fantastic; the dressing was light enough to make sure the

flavor reached all of the greens, but the dressing doesn't overpower the palate-cleansing attributes you look for in a salad. To go with the salad, we couldn't go to a barbecue place without consuming some meat.



Like the carnivore's paradise that is its sister restaurant, MUTA Smoking Club is the perfect place for carnivores (like me). There are different types of meats you can choose from in trays to share: there's beef tongue, brisket, salmon, or even hamburgers. There is also a mixed tray that you can get to share with different kinds of meat to try (this is ideal for larger groups looking for a true *picoteo*). Since we weren't that hungry, we stuck with one meat, and I decided to go with pulled pork. I am not the biggest pork fan if it's not in the form of *jamón* or *fuet* because cooked pork tends to be very dry (too dry for my taste), but when I took that first bite of pulled pork into my mouth, I was sold.



It comes with classic potato rolls reminiscent of summertime family cookouts and mustard, so you can either make your own sandwich or just dip the meat into the mustard and eat it. I decided to go with some by itself, some as a sandwich, and then have the rest along with the salad.

While we didn't take the next step and get dessert, the tray they passed around looked absolutely to die for. Fortunately, when you live around the corner from there, there's always a reason to go back (and also to try the mixed meat tray because that looked absolutely incredible) and have some more barbecue

a lo Ponzano.

Info

Where: Calle de Ponzano, 10

Phone: +34 912 50 98 97

[Website](#) & [Facebook](#)

Metro: Alonso Cano (Line 7) or Iglesia (Line 1)

More gems on Calle Ponzano:

- [Bar Lambuzo, a family-run Andalucían tavern](#)
 - [Casa Picsa, great Argentine pizza on Calle Ponzano](#)
 - [Toque de Sal restaurant, so chic and so good](#)
 - [Taberna Alipio Ramos, old school bar on Calle Ponzano](#)
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Casa Picsa, another gem on Calle Ponzano

Calle Ponzano is one of the city's most treasured local hangout spots. Situated in Chamberí, it belongs to a handful of Madrid streets that are lined with great bars and restaurants, together with **La Cava Baja**, **Corredera Bajo de San Pablo** and **La Calle Pez**, just to name a few. In addition to the old-school bars *de toda la vida*, it seems as though a new eatery opens up on **Calle Ponzano** every week, and I'm slowly making my way through all of them! So far I've been to [Sala la Despiece](#), [Bar Lambuzo](#) and [Taberna Alipio Ramos](#). Plus Naked contributor, Kate, has also just written about restaurant [Toque de Sal](#).



Now here comes Naked's fifth discovery along Ponzano: [Casa Picca](#), an Argentine restaurant specializing in pizzas made in a wood-fired oven with local and seasonal ingredients. I went with my friends Vanessa (who writes [Las mesas de Vanessa](#), another foodie blog you've got to follow), Juan and James.

In true Ponzano form, [Casa Picca](#) has a down-to-earth and comfortable ambience. I'd say it's on the pricier side, but they serve some of the best pizzas I've had in Madrid, with high quality ingredients and great service, too. The décor is modern and simple, with a spacious bar and a small seating area.



To start, Casa Picsa offers small appetizers to share: *mezzos from around the world with a Porteño touch*, as stated on their menu. They're only meant to whet your appetite, as the real deal is the pizza. As we were a party of four, the waiters recommended we order just a few mezzos and save room for the main attraction. So we went with their homemade **Paté Picsa** and **Porotos en vinagre** (organic beans in a vinaigrette). Both were delicious.





The pizza menu is separated into two sections: “old school” and “new school.” They cost €20-25 each and are meant to be shared between two people; and trust me, they’re big enough. Each pie has eight slices, or “servings of happiness,” overflowing with succulent ingredients. Plus you can order two kinds per pie; that way you get to try two in one! **You can also order gluten-free pizzas made with a chickpea based dough.*

We followed our waiter’s advice and ordered two pies and four different kinds of pizza. We had the **Papada de cerdo ibérico y alcachofas** (Iberian ham and artichokes); **Pato e higos** (duck and fig); **Butifarra negra** (Catalan black sausage) and **Chorizo criollo y grills** (Creole chorizo with turnip greens). My favorite was the ham and artichoke one; the rest of the table said the winner went to the butifarra. They were all delicious, though. And as we walked out of the restaurant and looked at the mouthwatering pies on other patrons’ tables, we

knew we'd have to go back to try the rest!





After our main course, we were contentedly stuffed and more than happy to end our night sans sweets. But the waiter managed to convince us to get dessert and we gave in to the **Chocolate cake with dulce de leche ice cream**. How could you possibly resist that? It was insanely good (sorry we forgot to take a photo of it!)

Casa Picsa

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & IG: [@picsa](#)
- **Address:** Calle Ponzano, 76
- **Metro:** Rios Rosas
- **Price:** €20-25 per person

Toque de Sal Chamberí Restaurant: So chic and so good

Going out to eat or drink on Calle Ponzano, the street with the highest concentration of bars in Madrid, is such an art that it has its own verb, *ponzaning*. It's one of the best parts about living in Chamberí, with so many of the city's best new places all in one place. One of the newest to come on the scene is [Toque de Sal](#), which I learned about from the [Madrid Confidential](#) newsletter, naming it one of five new places to try this fall.



It had been on my bucket list all season, but then school got in my way. And finally, my friend and I were able to squeeze

in (on a Friday night without a reservation) to finally get to try it. When you go inside you feel as if you're in a chic restaurant in Paris, with beautiful tiled floors, dark wood, and a wonderfully lit bar. The front was absolutely full of people, which was to be expected because it's the weekend and this is Ponzano. The dining area in the back is small and intimate, but you have tables to sit for two and larger tables that are more elevated (perfect for a fun dinner with your *cuadrilla* of friends).



Toque de Sal - CHAMBERÍ -

ENTRANTES

Gazpacho	7,5 €
Crema del Día	8 €
Croquetas Caseras (4 uds.)	7 €
Jamón Ibérico de Bellota con Pan con Tomate	17 €
Mortadela Italiana con Aceite de Trufa y Grisines	8 €
Chupa Chups de Codorniz con Salsa Pekín	10 €
Mejillones a la Belga con Patatas Fritas	12 €
Poie Gras de Canard Mi-Cuit Casero	13 €
Tabla de Quesos al Corte	14 €
Huevos al Nido	9 €
Fetuccini Negro con Carabinero	16 €
Berenjenas a la Parmesana	8 €

ENSALADAS

Ensalada de Perdiz en Escabeche	14 €
Ensalada de Tomate, Quinoa y Ventresca	12 €
Ensalada de Espinacas y Queso de Cabra	9 €
Ensalada de Pollo Trufado	10 €

CARNES

Steak Tartar	13 €
Solomillo a la Mostaza o Plancha *	17 €
Hamburguesa Toque de Sal *	13 €
Rabo de Toro *	15 €
Albóndigas Riad Abracadabra *	14 €

PESCADOS

Cremoso de Salmón y Aguacate	13 €
Lubina a la Plancha con Verduritas	14 €
Ceviche de Corvina	14 €

POSTRES

Vaca Lechera	6 €
Mousse de Chocolate al Toque de Sal	6 €
Tarta del Día	6 €
Helados: Chocolate, Vainilla o Turrón	5 €
Tarta de Manzana	6 €
Fruta del Día	5 €

MAS SIDES *

Patatas Fritas, Verduritas, Puré de Patata, Chalotas Glaseadas, Ensalada Verde, Arroz Salteado	2,5 €
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10% IVA incl. - Pan y Cubierto 1 € - Visa, MasterCard, AMEX

Your place setting is equally elegant, with a menu in a gold leather cover:



...and personalized plates. The golden touches, from the silverware, the placemats, and the menu covers were analogous

to the gold standard service we received. Our waitress was incredibly warm and attentive, and it was fitting with how precious and inviting the space is inside.

And now, the food. Was absolutely to die for. My friend chose the **grilled sea bass** that came with vegetables:



...and I first had the *crema del día* (which was mushroom when we went), and then, I had something I hadn't had in a very long time: *rabo de toro*, or oxtail.



It was absolutely perfect: the meat fell right off the bone, and the sauce gave me the same warm feeling that I get when my father gets inspired to make *boeuf bourguignon* in his trusty crockpot. It was ideal for a cool fall night, and I'll definitely be back to have this again and again and again.



If that gem of an Instagram close-up didn't convince you enough, it's evident in this shot that I was ready to dig in, and believe me, I enjoyed every single minute of it.

A girl's night wouldn't be complete without dessert, and since I really shouldn't be eating sugar and I wanted to give myself a *capricho*, I decided to try the ***tarta de manzana***. There was more apple than crust, which for me was exactly what I wanted, and I couldn't get enough. For someone who doesn't like heavy

desserts I found something that would be worth doing an hour's worth of cardio the next day for.



As for my friend, she got the **chocolate coulant**, which is her personal favorite desert of all time.



If the picture doesn't convince you, take her word for it: it had a *muy buena pinta* and it was absolutely wonderful.

[Toque de Sal](#) definitely lived up to the hype, bringing a touch of chic to Ponzano, and I've found my new favorite neighborhood joint that I will inevitably now bring all of my friends to. It's also a perfect way to enjoy *ponzaning* while having a great sit-down dining experience, whether with friends, a birthday, or maybe a dinner date.

Info

Toque de Sal Chamberí

[Facebook](#)

Address: Calle de Ponzano, 46

Tel.: 914 26 64 65

Metro: Alonso Cano (Line 7)