

El Brote: a brand-new mushroom restaurant in the heart of El Rastro

Mushrooms: they're an inspiring subject one can easily get carried away with, especially after paying a visit to El Brote. Years of academic mushroom knowledge and on-the-ground wisdom were literally delivered to us on a plate and I'm now a devout mushroom apostle on a mission to spread the message to the foodie people of Madrid.



El Brote's dining area

El Brote (the bud) is a small and cosy restaurant on [Calle de la Ruda](#) run by two mushroom enthusiasts, Eduardo and Alvaro.

Every corner of the place is mushroom-themed, even the floor. Its décor is earthy, humble and a little eccentric, and the original features of the building have been beautifully highlighted throughout the room.



Abstract mushroom artwork



Various gospels of the mushroom bible



The 0th floor of El Brote



A mushroomy display inside the floor

Both Eduardo and Alvaro were keen to explain each dish on their 10-item menu and made recommendations based on the season and their own personal preferences which, funnily enough, were different.

There's a specific order in which you must eat each ingredient.

... they explained as each dish was brought out. They suggested we start with the unseasoned mushrooms so that we could taste their pure flavour, then slowly begin combining the other ingredients together to get a feel for the dish as a whole. The flavours were subtle and delicious both separately and collectively – a sign that someone behind the scenes really knows what they're doing.



Trumpet mushrooms with a raw egg yolk and herbs



Red mushrooms with pak choy, gnocchi and pumpkin gratin



Black mushrooms with beans, squash and leek

Try their wine too, it's really good. We also noticed that every single table in the restaurant was sharing a bottle of red between them... such a beautiful sight.

TIP: El Brote have very few tables and they don't take evening reservations so aim to be the first to arrive as we were, because within 10 minutes of arriving, the place will be full!

INFO

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
 - Address: [Calle de la Ruda, 14](#)
 - Nearest metro: La Latina, line 5
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Manzana Mahou: Gourmet Art Experience

[Manzana Mahou](#) is the concept sponsored by Madrid's most iconic beer, Mahou. It's located in Malasaña (between metro stops Tribunal and Alonso Martinez) at Palacio de Santa Bárbara, a beautiful palace built in 1866. For the third consecutive year, the outdoor space has been turned into a popular terrace designed to provide an oasis during Madrid's warmest months.



The idea behind Manzana Mahou is to bring together art, gourmet food and beer, to create a unique experience. It is open until October 8th, after which it will be temporarily closed until next summer. This year, the stars of the show will be chefs María Marte from [Allard Experience](#), Javier Goya, Javier Mayor and David Alfonso, from [Triciclo](#) and Roberto Ruiz

from [Cascabel](#) by Punto MX.



These top chefs will be in charge of creating [exclusive dinners](#) inspired by the four resident artists at Manzana Mahou. In addition to this, two restaurants, La Cabra and Tandem will offer a more casual dining experience. [La Cabra](#) is a Michelin Star restaurant that will also offer brunch on Sundays from 12pm to 4pm for only 25€, led by renowned chef Javier Aranda, who at just 29 is one of the most acclaimed chefs in Spain. Tandem, on the other hand, is Triciclo's little brother which has also become a leader in Madrid's restaurant scene.



This year, the outdoor space has expanded, enhancing the experience. Four artists will be exhibiting, Julia Llerena, María Platero, Françoise Vanneraud and PLAYdramaturgia. The latter are a group of artists that create a mix between visual and performing arts, while the first three are focused mainly on visual arts.



Entrance on Calle Hortaleza

Open Monday to Sunday, from 11am to 1am, Manzana Mahou is a great opportunity to try some of Madrid's greatest restaurants at a more affordable price while enjoying art and a few beers.

Info

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

Address: Calle Hortaleza, 47

Metro: Alonso Martínez & Tribunal

New Cucos, a family-style restaurant in Arturo Soria

Sometimes when I go out to have lunch or dinner I can't help but think that an important part of customer service is missing. So when I had dinner at New Cucos with my friend, when we went outside afterwards, we could only say how well we were treated and what a wonderful dinner we had.

New Cucos is a family-style restaurant in the neighborhood of Arturo Soria. This closeness and warmth can be seen in the way Juan (the owner) treats everyone who works there, as well as all the customers who are having dinner or lunch.

The restaurant is located on the quiet street of Arturo Soria. It is a large space with a perfect covered terrace for more intimate dinners or larger celebrations. The terrace provides a very cozy place where you can talk quietly without being bothered by the next table, and then there's also a smaller and equally cozy interior. The first day we decided to sit in inside, as Real Madrid was playing and we wanted to see the match. The second day we sat in the covered terrace, great decision.

The Food

New Cucos has a simple and traditional menu with very good quality ingredients. **The portions are generous, in fact, the most popular dishes on the menu are large sharing platters;** these can be great among a group of friends, or even just for two.

First we went for the warm burrata salad with cherry tomatoes. It was simply delicious. Great quality, never tried the burrata and I have to say I totally loved it.



Burrata Salad

Then we decided to try the spring rolls with vegetables and prawns – a highly recommended and delicious dish as well.



Spring rolls

By the time we had to eat our third dish, we were already full, but how can you say no to a plate of ravioli? These were filled with pumpkin and cheese sauce – simply spectacular and very rich. In fact the second time we went we couldn't help but order them again.



Ravioli

The second day we also ordered a delicious mixed salad. For me, nothing beats a well-prepared mixed salad.



Salad

As for the rest of the menu, in addition to the dishes to share, they have a small selection of fish and meat dishes. I have to say the South African ostrich burger looks delicious.

Prices are very reasonable. The first day we had three dishes, three glasses of wine and two beers for 47 euros. The second day our bill came out to 33 euros.

I'd also like to highlight once again that we received fantastic service both times we went; the staff was attentive, asking if everything was fine, and very importantly, without putting any pressure on us to leave. That sort of thing is very noticeable and makes your dinner even better.

Nothing else to add, **New Cucos** points out on Twitter: *"eat and drink in an oasis"* And I couldn't agree more.

So, *"Mucha mierda"* (or "break a leg") to Juan and the rest of his family. I'm sure we'll see each other again soon!

Info

- *Where: Calle Arturo Soria 84*
 - *Metro: Arturo Soria*
 - *Tf: 913774039*
 - [Twitter](#)
 - *Monday to Saturday 11 to 1.*
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De María: Fabulous Argentinian Restaurant

I discovered this fabulous restaurant not too long ago, called [De María](#), as two people recommended it to me on separate occasions. Since then it has become one of my go-to spots in Madrid. [De María](#) is one of those restaurants that always leaves a good impression on everyone who dines there; the food is great, portions are generous and the price is fantastic.

[De María](#) is popular to say the least; photographs of famous patrons line the walls: athletes like Beckham and actors like Javier Bardem are just some of the familiar faces who have enjoyed this wonderful restaurant.



De María has several locations. So far I've tried three of them and none was disappointing.

The menu is varied and contains good-quality ingredients. You can choose from a variety of mouth-watering starters, such as "chorizo criollo", or vegetable dishes, pastas and salads and, of course, the traditional Argentine beef. The last time I dined here we weren't very hungry so we opted for a lighter menu. Something that stands out to me about **De María** is that

you always get tasty snacks to nibble on while you wait for your food to arrive.



The **chimichurri** and **pepper sauces** are a must, as is the **cream cheese spread**. During the summer they usually bring a glass of gazpacho or salmorejo. When it's cold out, they tend to bring you a creamy vegetable soup – in our case, we got a delicious pumpkin soup.

As a starter, we went for the **grilled Provolone cheese**. It was simply exquisite and even more when covered with one of their tasty sauces. "**Chorizo criollo**" is another must.



After the cheese plate, my friend and I ordered salads; she ordered a **mixed salad** and I had a **caprese salad** – light, fresh, and deliciously paired with a beer and a glass of white wine.



We decided to skip dessert because we weren't too hungry, but the waiter didn't seem to care: he brought us each a **glass of tangerine sorbet** and a **yogurt and mango sauce** (on the house!), along with their traditional shots.





De María's prices are very reasonable. We paid about €21 each. So if you want to enjoy Argentinian cuisine and a friendly atmosphere, this is your place. It also has the advantage of having several locations so finding a table will not be a problem.

The locations I've visited are:

- *De María: Calle Hortaleza, 81, 28004, Madrid*
- *De María: Calle Preciados 32, 28013, Madrid*
- *De María: Calle Correo 2, 28012, Madrid*

You can find all the locations listed on their [web](#)

If you want to enjoy more Argentinian restaurants in Madrid, then check out our article on [Casa Federica](#).

Ostras! Spanish food phrases for aspiring natives

Want to sound like a true *madrileño/a*? Then you'd better learn about food. When foreigners first arrive in Madrid, eavesdropping can confuse. Why is everyone talking about milk? What do politicians have to do with cured sausages? Why do my students shout "oysters!"?

The answers lie somewhere in Madrid's food culture.

All things Madrid revolve around food. Work, school, family, and free time all have their feet firmly planted in gastronomy. Veteran Auxiliares not-so-fondly remember that first day home from school. Bewildered that Spaniards go 8 hours between *desayuno* and *comida*, you greedily shove muesli, bread, and ham into your starving jaws—a cruel introduction into how Spaniards think of food.



Other mealtime nuances scream “welcome to Madrid!” No, you can’t find a good lunch before 1PM, or any food except cold *tapas* and coffee between the hours of 4PM and 7PM. Half of the reason for eating *cocido* is for the next day’s *ropa vieja*—always made best by someone’s *abuelita*, who fusses over you and asks why you don’t want another glass of wine at 3PM during your *sobremesa*. Sharing *churros con chocolate* with your friends at dawn after a night of *discotecas* is a rite of passage into *la vida castiza*.

Madrileños have always loved food, and their language is no

exception. Madrid's people garnish, pepper, and marinate their speech with **food phrases**. From idioms to exclamations, residents of Madrid use food and food words to discuss politics, time, emotion, death, and much more.

So, here's my guide for the aspiring hispanophone to some of Madrid's best food phrases.

You'll see the usual (I'm convinced that oblong vegetables in any language are *always* sexual) and the not-so-usual (playground bullies "give you milk" while they take your milk money). And all will help you spout the foodie Spanish of a proper Madrid resident.

We'll stick to a typical Madrid diet: a mountain of bread, a hunk of meat and seafood, good eggs, milk & dairy, a glug of booze, and a small side of greenery and citrus.

Bread

Al pan, pan, y al vino, vino



Quick-marts have plenty of idioms for the curious linguist.

Let's start with two of Madrid's favorites: bread and wine.

For these two cornerstones of Spanish food, *madrileños* would appreciate you to be direct—the meaning of this particular phrase. “Al pan, pan, y al vino, vino” (“To bread, bread, and to wine, wine”) is a request to be direct. Using this phrase means you want someone else to call it like it is. Don’t beat around the bush and talk in circles—call your bread “bread!”

Hostia

Speaking of bread and wine, Madrid’s food phrase dictionary deserves an entire page to Communion bread (*la hostia*). The supposed body of Christ can mean anything from a grave insult to a killer descriptor. Simply shouting “hostia!” (if you’re surprised, or you just smashed your toe on a sofa, or Sunday’s *El Clásico* is not going your way) is kosher between friends or younger people, but many *madrileños* may take offense. To describe something as great or large, try *de la hostia*. After a night of a few too many, you may hear “***Hostia! Tengo un melocotón de la hostia!***” (see “Fruit & Vegetables” to know why).

Con las manos en la masa

Even the beginnings of bread are not sacred from Spanish turns of phrase. To see someone “con las manos en la masa” (“with their hands in the dough”) is to catch them red-handed. Did you just see Jesús cheating on his exam for the hundredth time? His hands were in the dough!

Estar empanado/a



This one is a great image. To describe the time when someone's brain isn't operating at full capacity, a *madrileño* will say "estoy empanado" ("I am breaded"). Whether that person needs a coffee, is distracted, or simply doesn't want to focus, their brain is battered.

Un churro



While these [fried chunks of bread and sugar are usually excellent](#), using “churro” to describe something else means that it lacks quality. For example, you may hear one of your students complaining “he hecho un churro en ese examen” (“I made a churro on that exam”), meaning he or she utterly failed.

Esto es pan comido

Is something incredibly easy? Then you may hear a Madrid resident exclaim “esto es pan comido” (“this is eaten bread”). English speakers aren’t too far off from their [“piece of cake”](#) or “easy as pie” with this one. Practice these phrases enough, and they’ll be like eaten bread.

Meat



Beautiful people and corrupt politicians.

Estirar la pata

Are there things you want to do before you go into the great beyond? Is someone going to croak? Kicking the bucket? Well, in Madrid, death is like a slaughtered animal—they lie you down, do the job, and then you “estirar la pata” (“stretch out the hoof”).

Jamón

Madrid and pork go together, and so do Madrid Spanish and pork products. After seeing someone attractive across the room, you may hear them described as “el/ella está jamon” (“he/she is ham”). If you refuse to do something, shout “Y un jamón con chorreras” (“Ham with frills!”) to show your disgust.

Chorizo

Pork sausage gets a special mention. While usually a spicy, smoky treat, the word *chorizo* also means “thief.” A *carterista* (“pickpocket”) may be described with “qué chorizo!” (“what a sausage!”). Sausage also extends to politics—protestors love the phrase “no hay pan para tanto chorizo” (“there isn’t bread for all this sausage”) to describe corrupt politicians.

Poner toda la carne en el asador

If you’re taking a huge risk, then you’re putting all your meat on the grill (“poner toda la carne en el asador”). Best used at gambling halls, or literally when at a barbeque.

Seafood



Sure it's on sale, but who's cutting it?

Ostras!

The quintessential exclamation of Madrid, outside of *joder*! My guess is that “oysters!” (“ostras!”) is a tamed-down version of “hostia.” Akin to the English “darn” and “damn,” just more nautical.

¿Quién corta el bacalao?

A phrase asked of mafia bosses is “who cuts the cod?” (“¿quién corta el bacalao?”). While seemingly random, the phrase has its origins in industrial traditions; in the *comidas* of old Madrid, guild masters and supervisors were the ones who served fish to their underlings. Whoever was at the head of the table carving the filet was the big boss.

Me siento como un pulpo en un garaje

Feeling out of place? Like a fish out of water? Then say that you “feel like an octopus in a garage” (“te sientes como un

pulpo en un garaje”) for the authentic Madrid vibe.

Eggs



You're worth a lot!

Tener huevos

Aside from the obvious connection between eggs and rounded male genitalia, *madrileños* will also shout “la cosa tiene huevos” (“the thing has eggs”) if something doesn’t work properly. Did your blender just start to spark and smoke? It has eggs.

Pisando huevos

Like any big city, Madrid’s day-to-day life can be pretty fast-paced. And, like any big city, you’ll come across people on the sidewalk who are simply walking too slow. While you dodge tourists to get around them, you can mutter that they’re “pisando huevos” (walking [on] eggs).

Te quiero un huevo

Are you crazy about your significant other? Then you “love them an egg” (“querer un huevo”). It’s because “un huevo” can mean “a lot.” Don’t ask. Just say it.

Hasta luego, cara huevo

If you want to sound cutesy, try the Spanish version of “see you later, alligator”: “until later, egg face” (“hasta luego, cara huevo”). It makes about as much sense.

Milk and Cheese



Bags have this stuff printed on them.

Ser la leche

If “hostia” deserves its own page in Madrid’s food dictionary, milk merits its own chapter. As an opaque white liquid, milk has its sexual euphemisms. But, if something “is the milk,” it’s quite awesome. If everything’s going your way, try “hoy ha sido la leche” (“today has been the milk”).

Estar de mala leche

Milk is good, but all milk will go bad. In this case, Madrid speakers say someone “está de mala leche” (“is of bad milk”) when they’re grumpy. Chronic/permanent sufferers of bad milk “tienen mala leche” (“have bad milk”) in their systems.

Me cago en la leche

By itself, “I crap in the milk” (“me cago en la leche”) can be a general exclamation of disappointment or anger. But, in conversation, it can hold all the hatred and disgust that a bowl of milky waste can possess. Save this one for when you mean it: “me cago en la leche de la puta que te date la luz/la puta madre que te parió” (“I crap in the milk of the whore mother that birthed you”).

Ir a toda leche

When someone is “going full milk” (“ir a toda leche”), they’re running full out. Full milk’s opposite would be “pisando huevos” (see “Eggs”).

Dar una leche

When someone smacks or hits you, they “give you milk” (“te da una leche”).

Que no me lo des con queso

A bit of gastronomy trivia: very high-quality wine is enjoyed by itself. For the snobby, consuming cheese with wine ruins the experience of both. The fats from the cheese coat the

inside of your mouth, limiting how much you can taste the wine.

As such, *madrileños* shrewdly ask “que no me lo des con queso” (“don’t give it to me with cheese”) to tell someone to stop ripping them off. It’s to help avoid life’s various glasses of *tintorro* (see “Alcohol”).

Blanco y en botella? Leche

Do you want to say that something’s obvious? As obvious as something that’s white and in a bottle (“blanco y en botella”)? Then try this phrase. Duh.

Alcohol



Botellón

Stay in Madrid for more than an afternoon with the younger crowd, and you’ll have learned *botellón*. Part hang-out, part

pre-game, part illegal, Madrid's party crowd gather in public spaces to drink "a big bottle" ("botellón"), usually of *tinto de verano* (red wine and fruit soda), *calimocha* (red wine and Coca-Cola), beer, or something harder. Controversial yet characteristic.

Garrafón

Some people swear that some bars will "give it to you with cheese" by filling their empty bottles of fancy liquor with trashy, bottom-shelf spirits. These liquors, the ones that melt your brain and lead to the worst *resacas* you've ever had, are called "gas cans" ("garrafones").

Tintorro

There is [the good stuff](#), and then the not-so-good stuff. The wine equivalent of a *garrafón*. Usually used to make *calimocha* during a *botellón*.

Fruits & Vegetables



Ajo y Agua

The Hispanic world likes optimistic phrases. Some choose “no pasa nada” (“nothing happens”). Others choose “resolver” (“determine”). Some *madrileños* go for the vulgar: “garlic and water” (“ajo y agua”), a shortening of *ajoderse* (“to f*ck yourself”) and *aguantarse* (to suck it up). A nice message wrapped in a bitter casing.

Campo de nabos

What did I say about oblong vegetables? A “turnip field” (“campo de nabos”) is a “sausage fest”—a party with only men. You understand the image.

Melocotón

If you “have a peach” (“tienes un melocotón”), you have a hangover. An alternative is *cebollón* (“big onion”), meaning

the same thing. Who knew having produce meant you had one too many last night?

De uvas a peras

There's someone you get along with really well, but you only see him/her once a year or so. What we'd call "once in a blue moon" in English changes to "from grapes to pears" ("de uvas a peras") in Madrid Spanish. The expression comes from the agriculture—vintners harvest grapes in September, and farmers pick their pear orchards in August. If counting from grapes to pears, there's nearly a full year before you'll see that person again.

Also check out Madrid Food Tour's post – [5 Spanish Food Idioms and How to Use Them!](#)

Croquette Festival in TriBall neighborhood – Madrid's new Soho

You have until Saturday 14th of March to enjoy the first edition of the [Jornada Gastronómica de la Croqueta](#) in TriBall. What's [TriBall](#), might you ask? Created by an association of central businesses, TriBall is the new name for a couple of streets located in Malasaña and Chueca – quickly becoming the city's coolest place to be – like Calle Ballesta, Corredora Baja de San Pablo and Valverde.

Download [here](#) the plan and the restaurants' addresses!

StreetX0 – An Eclectic Fusion of High and Low, East and West

If you're a foodie living in Madrid, then you've probably heard of [DiverX0](#), the Michelin three star gourmet restaurant born from the wild mind of Mohawk-totting creator and chef **David Muñoz**. If you haven't, watch [this video](#) first.

Muñoz has been omnipresent in gossip media ever since TV personality **Cristina Pedroche** recently confirmed rumors about their relationship on Twitter. Though, young, punkish, and charming, Muñoz is a celebrity in his own right – he even stars in his own [Mercedes ad](#), playing cheeky about his Michelin accolades.

A quick look at DiverX0's reservations online shows there are no openings till June; however, luckily for those of us who don't have reservations or who can't wait to sample Muñoz's creations, there's **StreetX0**. Originally opened in 2012, StreetX0 is Muñoz's more casual and affordable restaurant.



Recently relocated at **El Corte Ingles's Gourmet Experience** on Serrano 52, the restaurant boasts exciting decor, delicious cocktails, and intriguing food. It's no surprise that Muñoz serves up Asian-inspired dishes seeing as he cut his teeth at Nobu and Hakkasaan in London. His fare, though, is a little grittier, as the name of his new restaurant implies – the decor and the food are supposed to conjure up a wet market in Hong Kong or a food alley in Singapore (minus the cockroaches). Upturned crates serve as bar stools and neon signs line the walls.





First things first, as soon as you sit down, somebody comes and gets your cocktail order – doesn't matter if you're coming

for lunch or dinner. The cocktails are beautiful, perfumed concoctions that put you in the right mood for the feast to come.



An open kitchen sits at the heart of the restaurant breathing hot and loud as chefs wearing straight-jacket-like coats call

out the orders and stoke the coals. Definitely try to get a bar seat, you'll get dinner and a show.





When you hear '**sandwich**' called out every few minutes you know that's one thing on the menu you *have* to order. The *Sandwich Club* sounds inconspicuous and unexciting compared

to the rest of the menu, but that is where your assumptions would be wrong.



Now, does that look like any club sandwich you've ever had? I thought not. The fried egg tops a Chinese *bao* filled with succulent, melt-in-your-mouth pork. Bizarre, unlikely, and strangely good. Then there's the Korean inspired wonton lasagna dish and the Mexican mole dish with obligatory chips drizzled over tender quail.





The mole is served on a thick, waxy paper, no plate. When you're done, they just crumple the paper-plate up and take it away. If you're craving desert after, you'll have to take yourself to the frozen yogurt stand on the same floor, as StreetX0 doesn't serve sweets. But hey, who needs sweets when you have cocktails?



With the music pulsing in the background and a delicious, albeit expensive, cocktail list, it's easy to see why this spot is so hot – no matter the time of day, there's always a line. Atmosphere and energy trump food here, but the food is worth it, too, just be sure to get there very early (at least half-an-hour before opening) or very late (past nine-thirty) if you don't want to have to wait in line.

Address: Serrano, 52

Times: Sun 11:00 am – 12:00 am. Mon – Sat 10:00 am – 12:00 am.

There's also a happening [Gourmet Experience at the Corte](#)

[Inglés at Callao](#) with an outdoor rooftop terrace. Check out our previous article on it [here](#).

Cervantes Festival in Alcalá de Henares: Mercado Cervantino 2014

El Mercado Cervantino is an annual medieval fair in [Alcalá de Henares](#), the home of Cervantes himself. Ever year, this small city dresses up in medieval decorations and garments, and the streets are filled with markets, street performances, artisan workshops and much more! Festival activities run from 11am to 2am, and take place in and around Calle Mayor. Only a half hour from the center of Madrid by [Cercanías](#), here's a link on [how to get to Alcalá](#).

Also check out this post by [Gee, Cassandra](#): "[A Medieval Fair to Make Cervantes Proud](#)"

Enjoy!