Exercise opportunities in Madrid

This Saturday, I went to my first zumba class in Madrid. I was excited about my first taste of zumba in Madrid, but going the morning after Halloween was a bit of a blunder. For those who haven’t heard of it before, zumba is basically a mix of latino style dancing, which is especially great for those who lack much coordination and/or rhythm like me because the moves are repeated and straight-forward (and you can get away with the moves which you should never really show in public).

So with my back-combed hair, splodges of face paint, fake blood and “bruises” from my “Freaky Doll” costume from the night still partially visible, I put on my sunglasses and dragged my sorry hungover self to my first zumba class.

This is what I looked like *after* the zumba class… ;)

When we arrived at the mercado on Calle de Santa Isabelle by San Antón metro we discovered that the building was covered in scaffolding, and looked fairly desolate. We were on the verge of giving up when we eventually followed some people into the building (so those who wish to try out the first zumba class on the list, persevere my friends, you will find the door eventually!)

To my relief it appeared that the entire class was suffering from the "Halloween Hangover", even the instructor, which really helped the group to bond as we discussed where we had gone the night before. The class started promptly with some warm-up routines, followed by routines of varying intensities. A special mention to the "sunshine dance" which really makes you smile (until you catch a glimpse of yourself in the

mirror!) There was a great mix of music from the likes of Enrique Iglesius, prompting salsa style movement and more hip hop and Bollywood music influences. You literally can't wipe the smile off your face at times as you see yourself with arms and legs flailing all over the place, (well in my case at least!) The incredibly smiley instructor had so much energy and lead the class well, with lots of encouragement and occasional "whooping"! By the end of the class, everyone was sweaty but smiley and we paid our 5 euros (which is great value I think!) and left, promising that we would come again next week. I had almost forgotten about my Halloween hangover, until that is I gorged myself on some delicious Mexican food, after which point I decided it was about time I went home and had a nap.

After my zumba experience, which my friend Mita stumbled across on Lingo Bongo, I decided to investigate further and discovered a wealth of exercise opportunities, especially on lingobongo and Meet ups Madrid. Cheap zumba classes like this are among Madrid's best kept secrets, especially for those who don't wish to fork out their well-earned wages on gym fees. To save you some time, I've compiled a list of some of these weekly classes, activities and clubs to join, (but bear in mind there are a wealth of options available). It is a great way to meet people and even practice some Spanish, for those who are getting tired of doing intercambios over a beer and fancy trying something new.

If you are into running and you want to stay up-to-date with the latest running events in Madrid and beyond, please check out my blog: www.goguiri.com where you can also read my running diary.

Exercise opportunities: Zumba &

Yoga

Zumba classes

What: Cheap zumba classes in the centre of Madrid with a very smiley English instructor.

When: Every week on Saturday 1pm and Wednesday 9pm,

Where: metro Anton Martín. Calle de Santa Isabelle (the big market building) don't be deceived it is open, keep trying all the doors. Upstairs Sala 4 of Amor de Dios Flamenco School

Price: €5

Bootcamp España

What: A group which was formed in 2009, which combine a variety of outdoor exercises inspired by US marine an effective way to get into shape.

When: Madrid Rio (Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 8pm – 9pm) and Retiro (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday various times & Saturday 10:30 am –12 pm)

Where: Madrid Rio and Retiro Park

Price: First session for free (sign up online), then €52 for a month.

Check it out: Boot Camp España

Weekend yoga retreats

What: Regular weekend retreats organised by Yogamente including healthy food (all vegetarian and homemade), yoga sessions all in English. No need for previous yoga experience.

When: Weekend retreats, check Facebook for regular updates.

Where: In the beautiful countryside around Madrid.

Price: Depends on retreat, but average 190 euros (includes accommodation, homemade food and all activities)

Check it out: email info@yogamente.com for availability. Follow on Facebook for regular updates of new retreats: Yogamente Facebook

Hatha Yoga and Zumba classes

What: Two instructors from Colorado who have started up zumba and yoga classes. They offer affordable classes for all levels (seasoned and beginners).

When: Usually Saturday afternoons – check out Facebook for regular updates. Next zumba class: Date: Saturday, November 8th, 2.30 pm. Next yoga class: Novemberr 8th, 3.30 pm.

Where: El Horno C/ Esgrima, 11. It's in studio 9 which is up the stairs when you first walk in, then enter the main doors and make a right and another right, go down towards the end of the hall and you are there!

Price: only 5€ (because everyone should be able to afford fitness, and it's for an hour and a half!)

Check it out: Z & Y Fitness Madrid

Hiking

Intercambio hiking group

What: Group called Hiking Madrid that organises weekly hiking events for mountain lovers who wish to meet new people of all nationalities who have a mutual interest in hiking.

When: weekly events

Where: mountains in Madrid. Each event will give you information about where to meet and catch the bus from.

Price: Depends on the expedition, it is often simply the cost of transport.

Check it out: Website Hiking Madrid or email hikingmadrid@hikingmadrid.com and you can sign up for regular newsletters. Follow on Facebook for regular updates and upcoming events: Facebook Hiking Madrid

nised by Hiking Madrid. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

Spanish hiking group

What: Regular hikes organised by "*senderismo entre semana*" on meet up website. This group has great reviews and it is a good opportunity to meet more Spaniards.

When: Weekly hikes.

Where: Mountains around Madrid.

Price: Transport to mountains, dependent on hike.

Check it out: Senderismo entre semana

Join a sports team: Basketball and Football

Babelsket Madrid (beginner's basketball)

What: Free basketball for beginners. *Babelsket* Madrid is a motley bunch of not very skilled basketball players who heartily welcome all those who want to join their nice-and-friendly games in a fun, relaxed atmosphere.

When: On Sundays at 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Where: The court is in Calle Puerto Rico 54 (metro Colombia)

Price: It's free!

Check it out: Add your name to the list at: Babelsket

More competitive basketball (and practice your Spanish too!)

What: Competitive basketball team in Madrid for those who have played before and would consider themselves good players. Join a friendly Spanish team that play in the Majadahonda league.

When: Training once a week on a Wednesday.

Where: Majadahonda (you may need to catch the cercanias).

Price: Not specified.

Check it out: email: ivanalvarez74@hotmail.com and double check price and location.

Competitive Football teams

1. What: *Fútbol Club Británico* 1st team is looking to welcome new players to the club for this new season. You can train with a UEFA licensed coach and play against other teams. Home and away games so lots of opportunities to travel and see more of Spain too.

When: Get in touch for more details.

Where: Get in touch for more details.

Price: Get in touch for more details.

Check it out: website FCI Britanico or email regional.manager@fcbritanico.com or whatsapp 609754169. Follow on twitter: @BritanicoFC or on Facebook: Facebook Fútbol Club Británico

The Fútbol Club Británico team after 2-2 draw against visiting side Brent FC. Photo taken from their Facebook page.

2. What: *International 5-a-side Football League* has been connecting foreigners and locals in Madrid since 1988. So get in touch and sign up!

When: Get in touch for more details.

Where: Get in touch for more details.

Price: Get in touch for more details.

Check it out: website: IFL Madrid and Facebook: IFL Madrid

If you know of any more clubs, societies or groups that I forgot to mention, or if you are starting up your own classes or your team needs new members

– please leave a comment!

Also, check out our post: Best Places to Break a Sweat in Madrid for more ideas!