

El Riojano, Madrid's best pastry shop is right in the centre and it has a hidden tea room!

For all of you who are like me and have a major sweet tooth, I present [El Riojano](#)—an old-work pastry shop in the city centre and the perfect place to start off this series on **Madrid's sweetest eats!**

Who said that *Roscón de Reyes* is only eaten at Christmas? At **El Riojano** in Sol, you can order it all year round or taste it in their very own tea room.



For many years, all I knew about **El Riojano** was that it was a pastry shop in the centre of Madrid, tiny and with extraordinary quality. But today, I know it a bit more. For example, it was founded in 1855 by Damaso de la Maza, baker of the Royal Family. As Maza died without heirs, the pastry shop is now owned by its fifth family. While it has changed hands throughout history, its spirit remains intact.

For many it is considered one of the **best secrets of Madrid**, where you can enjoy not only the typical sweets of religious holidays, but all of Spain's best sweet and savoury treats,

from *pastas* (finger cookies) to *hojaldres* (puff pastries filled with all types of goodness).





My little love affair with this place emerged a few months ago, when I asked a friend of mine, also a *Madrileña*, if she knew a nice place for tea in the centre. I wanted to try something new.

She replied without hesitation: **El Riojano.**

I was a bit surprised so I replied, "Are you sure? El Riojano has no tea room." She insisted I go find out for myself.

Well, when I entered I still thought my friend was totally mistaken.



But then I discovered the wonderful tea room hidden through the back. It turned out my friend was right. I was simply blown away!



While admiring the room, I took a seat and looked at the menu. The menu is very simple, dominated by savoury pastries such as *hojaldres* and *empanadas*, and, of course, a long list of irresistible sweets.



I opted for a riskier pastry, made with **dates and bacon**. Delightful!

My friend who came with me decided to order an *empanada de pollo* (chicken pie), which she said tasted wonderful.

We also decided to share some *saladitos*. These are mini pastries filled with different flavours such as cheese and sausage. **La ración** (a full portion) comes with **6 saladitos**.

For dessert, we decided to try some delicious *Torrijas*, Spain's version of French toast—to die for!

The lounge has an old, spacious and clean air to it, making you feel as though **you've gone back in time**. Although it's not always full (which is great), do **go early if there is a holiday** or you will have to wait.

Price-wise, **El Riojano** is very reasonable. The pastries cost around €2-3 each, and for €3.50, you get 6 *hojaldritos*. The average price person is around €11, which will get you a few *raciones* of savoury pastries and sweets, plus a drink.

Since I discovered **El Riojano**, it has become one of my **essential places** in the centre for a quick snack or breakfast. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do!

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