

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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Casa Mira – Best Turrón in Madrid

Today I want to talk about one of the capital's gems, [Casa Mira](#). It is probably one of the oldest establishments in Madrid and has become a meeting place for gourmands. What's their secret? Homemade recipes and premium products. Not to mention great customer service.



Casa Mira was founded in 1855 by Don Luis Mira, a master craftsman of *turrón* (traditional Spanish pastry similar to nougat). *Turrón* is probably the most commonly eaten dessert around Christmas time in Spain. It's most likely of Moorish origin and by the 15th century, it was one of the most famous desserts in the Spanish court.



Don Luis' story is a mix between legend and truth. One day he decided to leave his native town of Jijona – with only one cart, two donkeys and his turrón – to find good luck in the capital. Legend has it that he had to restart the trip several times since he sold the entire supply before reaching his first stop.



Today, Casa Mira's turrón continues to be just as irresistible. It is 100% handmade, making it probably the best in the country. Don Luis started his business with a little shop in Plaza Mayor; now it is one of the most famous pastry shops in the capital, not to mention one of the most beloved among Madrileños.



Entering Casa Mira is like traveling back in time. The decor is elegant and vintage. The feeling is magical, making you feel as if it were still the year 1900.



Casa Mira is not only famous for their turrón; they have all kinds of traditional handmade sweets. Marron Glacés, Glorias de Jijona (pastries made of marzipan and egg yolk, wrapped in sugar and rolled by hand), Yemas de Nuez (pastries made with egg yolk and nuts) and of course, *Fruta Escarchada* (candied/frosted fruit).



They also serve typical sweets according to other holiday seasons, such as Roscón de Reyes.



But my favorite has to be Spanish breakfast pastry, **panquemado** ('burnt bread'), which is similar to a brioche or sweet bread roll, and costs just €2.50 each. The best way to eat them is to cut them in half and toast both slices, then add butter and jam... pure heaven.



The prices are overall very reasonable. Although the turrón is not the cheapest you can find in Madrid, considering it is handmade with a century-old recipe, it is worth every penny. A bar of turrón costs around 16 euros and makes for the absolute [perfect gift at Christmas time](#), whether for someone in Madrid or a loved one back home.

Info

- [Web](#)
- *Address: Carrera de San Jerónimo nº30, 28014, Madrid*
- Tf: 914296796 and 914298895

For more Madrid gift ideas, check out:

[Best Gift Ideas from Madrid](#)

[El Riojano, Madrid's best pastry shop is right in the centre and it has a hidden tea room](#)

Wanda Café Optimista

Now that I'm starting school at IE this fall, I need to have a full arsenal of lunch places in my Rolodex. For a few weeks I kept passing by Wanda thinking to myself, *I've got to come here*. So finally, as things start to wind down and I find myself full of optimism, Daphne and I got together to have lunch at [Wanda Café Optimista](#).



The décor makes it a perfect place to have some coffee, get lost in conversation (as we did), AND for IE students (especially with those who will have classes in María de Molina, 4) there are big tables for group projects. As I

perused [Wanda's website](#) to get the final research components to wrap up this article and make it ready for publication, the owners of the restaurant did have the oasis idea in mind. With primarily light, neutral woods, along with splashes of neon colors reminiscent of summery ikat prints, the hustle and bustle of the Castellana and the Plaza del Doctor Marañón seemed a world away.



At lunchtime, there are a number of deals. The *plato del día* the day we were there was salmon, basmati rice, and roasted tomatoes. This, along with a coffee and drink, was €9.



What was even more amazing was Daphne's iced tea, with fresh strawberries and mint.



Now that I have received a temporary reunion with fruit, I am even more determined to go back and have it.

There are some other deals as well, including the salad

buffet. For an absolute hardcore salad eater like myself, the setup is great. You have your salad (with you choosing the toppings and having it tossed like the tried and true salad establishments in my hometown of New York City that line every major area with office buildings) and a natural juice. So not only do I need to go back to Wanda to get myself a delicious strawberry iced tea, I also need to have some salad and juice.



If you don't want to take advantage of any of the deals and want to have a more traditional restaurant experience, then there's plenty of things to whet your appetite. While I add the ventresca (tuna belly), tomato, and onion salad, there were also plenty of other options. You can have something more traditional, like salmorejo, bacalao, cecina de León, or croquetas, but if you crave something more international, then there's plenty for you too. You can find a selection of thin-crust pizzas, chicken tikka masala, eggs benedict, AND onion rings.

But if you thought Wanda was just for lunch, it's also open until 2 AM. If you find yourself having a long night of work and studying, you'll have yourself a great oasis.

Info

Wanda Café Optimista

Calle María de Molina, 1

Tel.: +34 91 737 53 64

Hours: Monday- Friday 8 AM-2 AM; Saturday and Holidays 10 AM-2 AM

Metro: Gregorio Marañón (Lines 7 and 10)

[Web](#) & [Facebook](#)

Pasta Mito, an Italian Eatery in Mercado de Chamartín – a gem!

In [Mercado Chamartin](#), in the central aisle on the lower floor, you'll find a brand new, chic little Italian eatery called [Pasta Mito](#). All food is freshly prepared in the on-site kitchen, and the owners definitely know what they're doing. Also, the brilliant thing about eateries in neighborhood markets is that the ingredients they cook with tend to come directly from the market's food stalls, so at the same time as being **top-quality stuff**, eating there is great for local businesses too.



My fella and I sat in the cosy 3-tabled dining area and, based on enthusiastic recommendations by the owner, we had... (ima write a list):

- *Glass of the house white each*
- *Complimentary and HUGE antipasto appetiser*
- *Burrata Caprese with fine green pesto*
- *Truffle ravioli with only butter sauce and fresh parmesan sprinkled on top*
- *Tiramisu in a cup*
- *All accompanied by a fresh basket of focaccia*



The food was absolutely incredible and plenty between us – we're glad we shared! The bill came to **€26** exactly, which felt

very reasonable for the quality of food and wine and friendly service.

Whilst we were sat there, we saw lots of people ordering to take away. Great idea too, but the dining experience was way more fun.



The owners are a husband and wife duo. She's Italian, he's Spanish and speaks fluent English. We got chatting and he told us that he spent 4 years cooking under Heston Blumental, then worked in one of the UK's top restaurants for a few more years before coming back to Madrid.

I asked him about future plans and he said that next month, they're expanding into the veg stall just opposite, which will mean **an extra 6 or so tables**. Having only opened in September

'14, they'll be staying put in [Mercado Chamartin](#) for now as the business is going well and they seem to love what they have.

[Pasta Mito](#) is by far the best Italian food we've had in Madrid yet – **it's really quite a gem.**

By Leah Pattem

Info

Mercado de Chamartín: [Facebook](#) & [Web](#) (*calle Bolivia 9 <m> Chamartín*)

Pasta Mito: [Facebook](#) (*inside the Mercado de Chamartín, central aisle, lower floor*)

Another market we recommend:

[**Mercado de San Fernando in Lavapiés – the real food emporium!**](#)