

# Taberna Alipio Ramos

I'm not so much a picky eater as extremely finicky about when my food arrives. There is a specific window between having ordered and the food actually arriving that is crucial to my enjoyment of a restaurant meal. If I ever find myself thinking that, really, my order should have arrived by now, the meal starts to go downhill from that moment on – regardless of the dish that eventually arrives.

You could place the finest cuisine in the world in front of me but if the wait has been just *slightly* too long, you've lost me. The best restaurants in my book deliver the meal moments before the "where's our food?" thought has had a chance to cross anyone's mind.

**In regard to The Taberna Alipio Ramos, it wasn't only their timing that was perfect.**

An old friend and I had decided to take a long weekend break in Madrid. We wanted to say our farewells to another old friend who had died the Christmas before and to spend some time with his wife and two grown-up children. Our Galician hostess, Lines, had laid on a delicious buffet lunch for us and this was to be my introduction to Iberico ham – and what a wonderful experience that was. I have never tasted cooked meat quite like it and, together with French (Spanish?) bread, great company and a delicious salad, we were welcomed to Madrid.

We'd made no plans for our last day in the city but Chris had come armed with the addresses of two or three Galician restaurants which had been recommended by a friend in the United States. The only information on the scruffy piece of paper advised that the Taberna Alipio Ramos: "*...did a good seafood special*". We had no idea where Ponzano was except somewhere in the North of the city and a taxi dumped us in an

unremarkable one-way street just off the main drag. None of the restaurants appeared open and had I been on my own, might well have gone round the corner to a Macdonalds instead.

**But it was 1pm and that's the time us Brits need to eat. So eat we must.**

The Spanish dine late and we quite surprised the young girl behind the bar when we walked in. Entering a restaurant which appears unprepared for guests is a bad sign in my book.

***"Yes, we're open...but we weren't expecting customers!"***

Certainly in England, the sudden presence of people who want to eat in an otherwise empty restaurant seems to immediately engender resentment by staff at the intrusion and not least from an invisible chef heard taking it out on the pots and pans in the kitchen. Had this been an English establishment in an English town we'd probably have walked straight out, avoiding a sub-standard meal and surly service.

The waitress was business-like and showed us to a small area towards the back of the restaurant. There was only a Spanish menu (I don't remember one in English) but somehow we successfully ordered drinks and the seafood special. Both arrived almost seconds later.

At this point in the review I am supposed to start listing the types of seafood contained in the special, the sauces, side salads and the dressings. But I can't. I'm afraid you are just going to have to go there and experience it for yourselves. All I can remember are the Razor clams. Mmmm...mmm.

There must have been fish, prawns, yet more clams, possibly lobster, crab, (yes, I'm sure there was crab) but my only true recollection is that the dish the Alipio Ramos served up that lunchtime— and at lightning speed — was perfect in every way. Stunning fresh ingredients and simple sauces thrown into a pan

and served up way before my stomach had even the slightest chance to grumble.

And at the end of the delicious meal, while toasting our dear friend, Paul – the reason for us being in Madrid in the first place – we couldn't help but wonder if perhaps he just might have had a hand in guiding us to this place, filling our glasses, and preparing the food.

And I have one niggling thought that keeps running through my head when I think back to that lunch. Perhaps, just perhaps, the Taberna Alipio Ramos is not alone and that we could have eaten almost as well in a hundred Madrid restaurants and enjoyed similar fabulous cooking. So, even if I've reviewed completely the wrong restaurant (the card lists three names) I have absolutely no doubt you will eat well.

But for Chris and I it was the spontaneity and unexpectedness of such a great meal that made lunch at the Taberna Alipio Ramos so perfect. And isn't that what life is all about?

**By Hugh Trethowan.**

**[Taberna Alipio Ramos](#)**

**Address:** Calle Ponzano, 30

**Metro:** Ríos Rosas or Alonso Cano

**Tel:** 91 441 49 61

**For more on our favorite *tabernas* in Madrid, check out:**

- [Bodegas Rosell](#)
- [Bar Lambuzo](#)

- [Taberna Lamiak](#)
  - [Casa Mingo](#)
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## Kintaro. Oy vey.

Craving to nibble on some fine Asian dishes? Go dine at Kintaro, where you'll find infinitely scrumptious Japanese and Chinese food, and horrendous service.

*"This place is like heaven." "Oh my God." "This is the most amazing place I've ever been to in my entire life." "It's like paradise."*

That's what we were all saying the first time we went to **Kintaro**, an all-you-can-eat **buffet** of delicious **Japanese and Chinese** food costing **15.80€ per person (9€ for lunch** during weekdays). In fact, this article is the fruit of a collaboration between **four friends** (Edison, Kyle, James and Daphne) who regularly dine at **Kintaro** together.



**Kintaro** has its own peculiar charm. You sit beside a conveyor belt that sends out different types of Asian delights, from **spicy tuna rolls to roasted duck**, all night long. And there's no waiting; the food just keeps coming. It's like diving into a grown-up carousel, where sweet and savoury exotic treats circle round and round you all within arm's reach.





We've developed a special technique when it comes to eating at **Kintaro**: first, pack in as many **sushi rolls**, **plates of beef** and **dumplings** as possible; then, move on to dessert – ice cream and fruit; and then there's round two of the same process, followed by round three if we're really in the zone.



Prior to this recent expedition to **Kintaro**, Edison and James had just helped Kyle move out of his apartment (carrying boxes up- and downstairs for hours definitely builds up an appetite) and they were famished. Thus, an all-night buffet was a godsend.



But for anyone with an appetite, **Kintaro** is close to heaven indeed. When we were university students in **Madrid**, the habitually philosophizing, dreadlock-sporting and hacky sack-playing crowd called this place home – it was the hotspot when the typical gluttonous cravings could no longer be quenched by junkfood. Just imagine.



Now, the only reason you should ever go there is if you love eating **good quality Japanese and Chinese food**, for hours upon hours, because that's all Kintaro has to offer. Although the food options are tantalizing and the atmosphere sufficiently refined, **the service is appalling**. If you're not a champion eater, you're either going to feel guilty about not knowing how to pace yourself, or because you went to a place where the waiters tried to push you out as fast as possible.

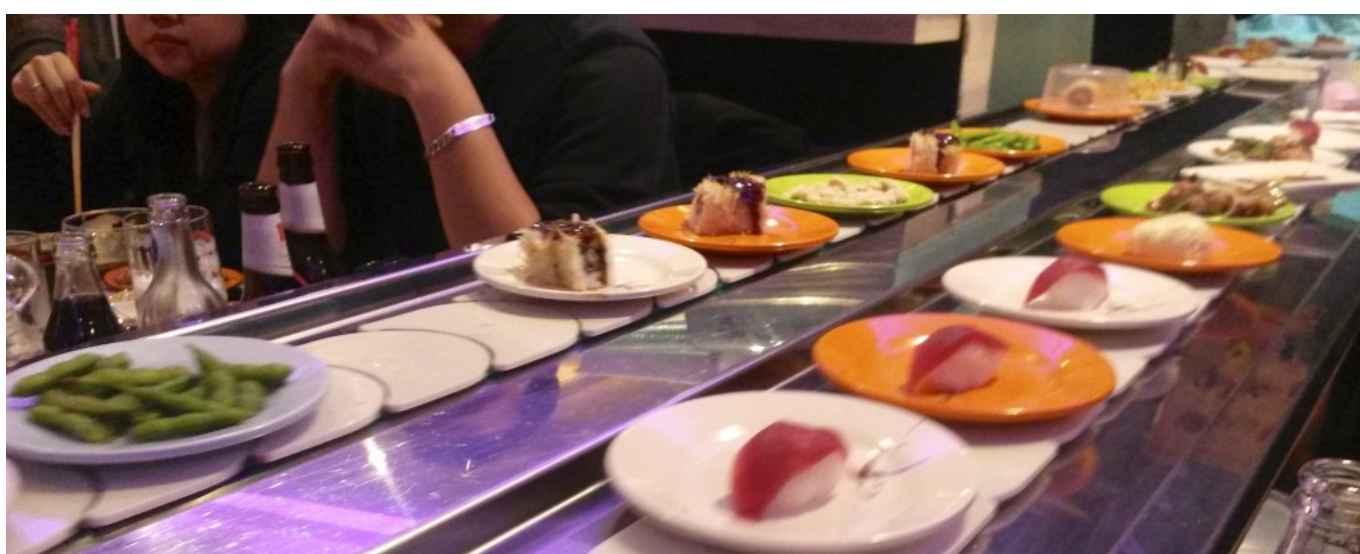




During this last visit to **Kintaro**, the service got particularly ugly, as three different waiters decided to take turns asking us if we were done, every minute. Given this is a **buffet**, the waiters' asking us if we were finished a million times was virtually our only contact with them, and it was exasperating. By the end, we felt like a screeching broken record saying "no, we're not done yet," over and over again. To say nothing of one of our fellow diners who at one point wanted to punch a certain waiter that had just gotten asked his fifth consecutive "Are you done?" We'd like to add that this attitude displayed by the waiters is nothing new, though usually they are not as obnoxiously insistent.



Another friend told us a similar story. One time, while she and her friends were evidently still stuffing themselves, the waiter came up to them out of nowhere and planted the bill on the table, catching them completely off guard. The restaurant wasn't closing, so it felt like they were being kicked out. To make matters worse, the waiters came every other minute to see if they'd paid.



After reading this, you may be wondering, why on earth would someone go here if the service is so bad? Precisely because

the food is so exquisite and abundant. So, if you can put up with the bad service and are craving for an unlimited amount of **Asian cuisine**, go check it out!

### Kintaro

**Address:** Calle de Fernández de la Hoz 70

**Metro:** Gregorio Marañón

**Price:** 15.80€ for an all-you-can-eat Japanese/Chinese dinner buffet, and 9€ for lunch (the slightly over-priced drinks aren't included in either case)

## **More Asian restaurants featured on Naked Madrid:**

- [Ramen Kagura – Madrid's \(almost\) perfect ramen bar](#)
- [Sumo – This Japanese restaurant's name says it all](#)
- [Tuk Tuk – Asian-inspired street food](#)
- [Chuka Ramen Bar – Madrid's hottest ramen restaurant](#)
- [Hattori Hanzo – Japanese food, straight up. No sushi.](#)
- [Nippon 2 – top quality yet affordable sushi, finally!](#)
- [Soy Kitchen – a fusion of Asian flavors](#)
- [Karachai – A cozy and elegant Thai restaurant in Alonso Martínez](#)

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**Bar Lambuzo, a family-run Andalusian restaurant offering a mix of activities**

# in their wine cellar

Tucked away in the side streets of Sol, [Bar Lambuzo](#) is an Andalusian oasis in the center of Madrid, lovingly run by a family from **Cádiz** with a history in the food business that goes back to their great grandfather. This family has brought all their favorite recipes and passion from their home to the capital. In fact, the bar makes it a point to sell products from Southern regions such as Cádiz, Seville and Huelva, calling itself an **Abacería**, meaning a bar that sells local products.



the entrance invites you in with thousands of wine bottles decorating the walls

Opened a little over a year ago, **Bar Lambuzo** has already become a beloved neighborhood spot for its authentic cuisine, warm ambience and family-style service; it is a haven for Andalusians living away from home, and for anyone seeking

a true taste of the South in the center of Madrid.



with friends in Bar Lambuzo's underground cellar, tasting wines from Bodegas Barbadillo

What's more, **Lambuzo** offers **fun activities in the downstairs wine cellar**, from football forums to **wine-tastings** and **olive-oil-tastings**. I've been to the tastings and highly recommend them! At the last wine tasting I went to, we had a presentation from [Bodegas Barbadillo](#), a winery from Cádiz that is actually the house wine at Bar Lambuzo. As usual, we tried three different types—rosé, white and red—the red was really spectacular.

In between each generously poured glass, we were served an assortment of homemade tapas: ***ensaladilla rusa*** (potato salad), croquettes ***de ortiguilla*** (translated into English as "sea anemone", so let's keep it in Spanish), and ***ragu de ternera con arroz*** (veal stew on rice). The tapas were wonderful as always, and the wine portions are best described as **plentiful**. The bottles were left open on the tables, and we were welcome to serve ourselves as much as we liked. Meager portions are

unheard of here.



Owner and father Pepe serving at a wine tasting in the cellar

On Thursdays, Lambuzo also holds **Microteatro**: they showcase 30-minute theater performances, from 9pm-11pm. Each session costs **4€**, plus you're more than welcome to grab a drink at the bar and bring it down to the cellar as you enjoy the show, and then go right back upstairs for more when it's over.

As far as the menu goes, father **Pepe** will gladly tell you about the daily specials, and you can't go wrong with anything on the set menu. Their star dishes are from their selection of **fried fish**, a staple in Andalusian cuisine. And you can count on it being good—the first time I went, a guy from the South of Spain popped out of his seat and called up a friend to say: "You won't believe it. I'm in Madrid eating real *pescaito frito*".



assorted pescadito frito



boquerones fritos con limón (fried white anchovies with a squeeze of lemon) and white wine from Bodegas Barbadillo

My husband, James, and I have been going to **Bar Lambuzo** practically since it opened. What keeps us going back so often is the warm service and delicious food and wine (not to mention, really affordable!). Our favorite dishes are their varied **croquetas** (croquettes), **salmorejo** (a cold, tomato and bread-based soup), **arroz con atun rojo y pisto** (*rice with tuna and ratatouille*), and **solomillo al whiskey** (*whiskey pork loin, served on delicious handcut fries*). For dessert, try the



**tocino del cielo** (similar to creme brûlée without the crunchy top), made by Ignacia.



Croquetas



Salmorejo, a cold soup or dip originating from Cordoba,

made with tomato, bread and olive oil, topped with tuna and then drizzled with some more, olive oil



solomillo al whisky (pork tenderloin with roasted garlic, served on top of handcut french fries)



tocino de cielo, made by daughter Ignacia (similar to creme brûlée without the crunchy top layer)

Lambuzo's tapas range in price from 3€-5€, and main dishes average at 11€. For lunch. They offer a menu del día (set lunch menu) for 10€ with a starter, main dish, drink, plus coffee or dessert. And they have an express lunch menu for 8€, including one dish.

If you decide to go to Lambuzo for dinner, I recommend making a reservation—the secret's out and the place gets packed!

## **Info:**

[Facebook page](#)

[Web](#)

**Hours:** Tuesday – Thursday: 13:00 – 16:30, 20:00 – 0:00

Friday – Saturday: 13:00 – 17:30, 20:00 – 1:00

Sunday: 13:00 – 17:30

*Closed on Mondays*

**Price range:** 10-20€ per person

## There are currently two locations:

1. The first **Lambuzo** is the one with the downstairs cellar:

**Address:** Calle de las Conchas, 9

**Metros:** Sol, Callao, Santo Domingo or Opera

2. **Lambuzo** has just opened a second location in [Chamberí](#) which is smaller but still has the same charm and family feel:

**Address:** Calle Ponzano, 8

**Metros:** Iglesia & Alonso Cano