

Aiό: Sardinia, pizza, and bike haven in Malasaña

[Aiό](#) in Sardinian means “let’s go” (or “venga vamos” in Spanish). Most likely, Andrea and Marcelo were thinking of this very expression when they decided to open a restaurant in Madrid three years ago. These two friends have brought their hometown of **Sardinia** with them to **Malasaña**, where they’ve created a magnificent combination of **Italian food** and **true *madrileño* ambiance**. It is basically an extraordinary place.



It was love at first sight when I came here with my friend, Nina, from Austria. We had a **menú del día** for **9,50€** (11.50€ on weekends and holidays) that includes two dishes, a drink and dessert. They also have a **pizza menu** that comes with a salad, large pizza, drink and coffee for **10,50€**; and a Sardinian menu with different regional dishes for **14€**. On the weekends, it's better to make a reservation.

We ordered fresh pasta with fresh tomato and basil; a salad and a burger with caramelized onions and homemade fries. Only if the pictures could tell you how good they tasted.



When I travel outside Spain, I always like to look for local spots, and the best indication of that is always by seeing locals themselves. Similarly, when I'm in Madrid and I go to an Italian restaurant, I like to see Italian patrons—to me that's a sign of authenticity. At **Aiό** , you'll find people from all over the world, yet the clientele's dominant nationality is Italian, by far.



You'll also find a large **biking community** here. Users and lovers can find bikes hanging on the walls. Although they're nice decoration, the real reason they're on display is because they're **for sale**. However, if you're already happy with the bike you own, you can also park it here, as **Aío's downstairs area** is a **free bike drop-off point**.



Malasaña is my favorite neighbourhood to get a drink at after work. Thanks to Aío, the neighbourhood has just gotten even better. On Thursdays at 9pm (officially at 8:30pm), they offer **an all-you-can-eat Italian buffet**, called **Aperaió**. It only costs **4.50€**, including the drink of your choice. Last night, I went with my wife, Daphne, to check out the buffet. The first thing we noticed was that almost everyone was drinking the **Aperol Spritz**, the popular Italian aperitif that combines seltzer, champagne, Aperol, a slice of orange and plenty of ice. The drink is strong and stringent, but a feel-good hit for **summer**.

For this modest price, I thought the food wasn't going to blow my socks off. But I couldn't have been more wrong. We were lucky enough to grab a seat right by the counter. As the waiters brought out dish after dish of mouth-watering Italian

goodness, the patrons swarmed around the food and served themselves heaps of rice, pasta, salad and pizza. Although it was all good, the **pasta** was the star dish; it was creamy mushroom mini-shell pasta that the crowd just couldn't get enough of.



The salad was far from your average *ensalada mixta*, as it came with all types of greens, onions, green bell peppers,

cucumbers, apples, raisins and topped with a deliciously sweet vinaigrette dressing. This is officially the best deal you can find in Madrid on food and drinks.



We barely missed the pizza because it flew off the counter in a matter of seconds (that's why there's no picture, so you'll have to go see for yourself!).



[Facebook](#)

Address: [Calle Corredera Baja de San Pablo 25](#)

Tlfn: 910 09 64 69

Hours: M-F 9.00-1.30 /S-S 10.00-2.00

Breakfast: M-F 9.00-13.00 /S-S 10.00-13.00

Lunch: M-F 13.00-16.00

Aperaió (buffet): Thursdays at 20:30

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](#)

Taberna Bulgara, takes you right to Bulgaria



For lunch on Saturday, I went to a **Bulgarian restaurant in Madrid** that a friend had highly recommended to me. By coincidence, it was Mother's Day in Bulgaria, and International Women's Day. So we had much to celebrate.

One of my friends who was with us, Kaloyan, is originally from Bulgaria and said **"Guys, I seriously feel like I'm in Bulgaria right now."** The décor, the music (albeit outdated), the company and the food were such vivid replicas of a typical Bulgarian tavern, that all of us forgot we were in Madrid throughout the entire lunch. In fact, a group of Bulgarian women dining next to us started dancing in circles after they ate. I felt like I had joined in on a Bulgarian wedding.



As it was a gorgeous and sunny day, we ordered **Bulgarian beer**, Kamenitza, which came casually in cans, and **Shopksa salad**, which reminded me of Greek salad; it had freshly diced tomatoes, cucumbers, green bell peppers, onions, parsley and heaps of fetta cheese. My friend Edison ordered a brothy and delicious **lamb soup**, and for the table we ordered **Bulgarian bread**, one sprinkled with fetta cheese and one without. The bread was really incredible.



I must admit, I didn't even take a look at the menu. Since my friend is from Bulgaria, and the waiter too, their recommendations were more than trustworthy for me. So if you don't know what to order, go ahead and do as we did.

For the main course, we each got our own, intimidatingly huge **Parrilla Mixta** (grilled meat platter). It came with different

types of Bulgarian sausage, shish kebab (skewered meat), hamburger patty, white and red bean salad, and fresh cabbage salad. It was also served with a delicious red bell pepper sauce. This may be obvious, but we had to take some home.



Now, here comes the best part. Dessert! Yes, we still had room for dessert, and we ordered three different kinds to share: **Bulgarian Tarta** (*heaven*), **Baklava** (*homemade puff pastry filled with nuts and honey*) and **Tikvenik** (*homemade puff pastry filled with pumpkin*). I only have photos of the latter two because my friends devoured the Bulgarian Tarta before I had the chance to snap a photo. All of the desserts were incredible, especially the Tarta and the Baklava.



To top it all off, our kind waiter gave us shots on the house!

[Taberna Bulgara](#) is a bit of a journey from the center of Madrid, but well worth it. Take metro line 1 to Puente de Vallecas (a 15-min ride from Sol), and walk up Avenida Peña Prieta for a good ten minutes and you'll see it. And with all

the food we ate, we paid **20E** each.

[Web](#)

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Address: Avd. Peña Prieta, 82

Telephone: 91 551 56 00

