

Crackers for Caramba

Is it just me or does the run up to Christmas turn into a complete whirlwind of eating, drinking and being very, very merry – and that's all before the main event has even started. By the time December 25th rolls round you're often fit to collapse thanks to the endless festive functions that have filled your diary from the get go of the month.

However, where's the fun in being all 'bah humbug' about the excuse to crack open the bubbles and swerve the gym? There's none. So in the spirit of embracing the delirium of December, I booked a dinner at [Caramba](#) with a visiting friend and headed out to celebrate the most manic of months.



[Caramba](#) hails from the well known Grupo Larumba; which means that a stylish setting is a guarantee. Close to Puerta de Alcalá, it's perfectly placed for locals and tourists alike. Should you have spent the day pounding the pavements in an attempt to soak up the city you can easily grab a tasty treat at the end of your day.



Alternatively, it's an ideal place to enjoy a leisurely lunch before mooching around the nearby stores on Gran Vía. The menu is a mix of Spanish traditional, modern classics and an Asian twist. For instance, we indulged in *croquetas de jamón* (a nod to Spain's finest), but we also had some delectable Japanese style prawns that remained on the plate for all of about 13 seconds.

Next up came a tuna tartare that made us feel slightly more virtuous on the old health front (having polished off some golden, crispy chicken fingers beforehand that were almost wholly responsible for me now reaching for the old spanx). We concluded the sumptuous savoury side of things with a beef tenderloin that was as tasty as any steak that I've sampled in Argentina.



However, what got my pulse racing was the quirky list of cocktails; of which my personal favourite was the rather

novelty named 'De Madrid Al Cielo' – a magical mix of violet flavoured gin, lime juice and egg white – it was as pleasing on the palate as it was on the eye. Speaking of all things aesthetically pleasing, the decor was as lovely as the almond cake that we concluded the evening with.

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If Madrid has something special, it's the spectacular sky it has, and we'll bring it put it on your lips.

Violet and Ginger Gin *

Lime juice

Peppers and Jasmine Orgeat *

Egg white

In a country where sadly the service often leaves a nasty taste in the mouth (anyone else feel like they have to beg for

a bill?!), our server, Cata, deserves a special shout out. Attentive but not overbearing, he asked my friend what her tipple of choice was (gin, I mean she's a Brit, it's in our DNA) and with no questions asked he whipped her up her own personalised cocktail. A nice touch, I'm sure you'll agree.

Caramba, much like other hotspots in the Larumba group, is certainly not a case of style over substance. The food was delish. The cocktails a delight. And the service – the jewel in Caramba's crown.

Caramba Madrid

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