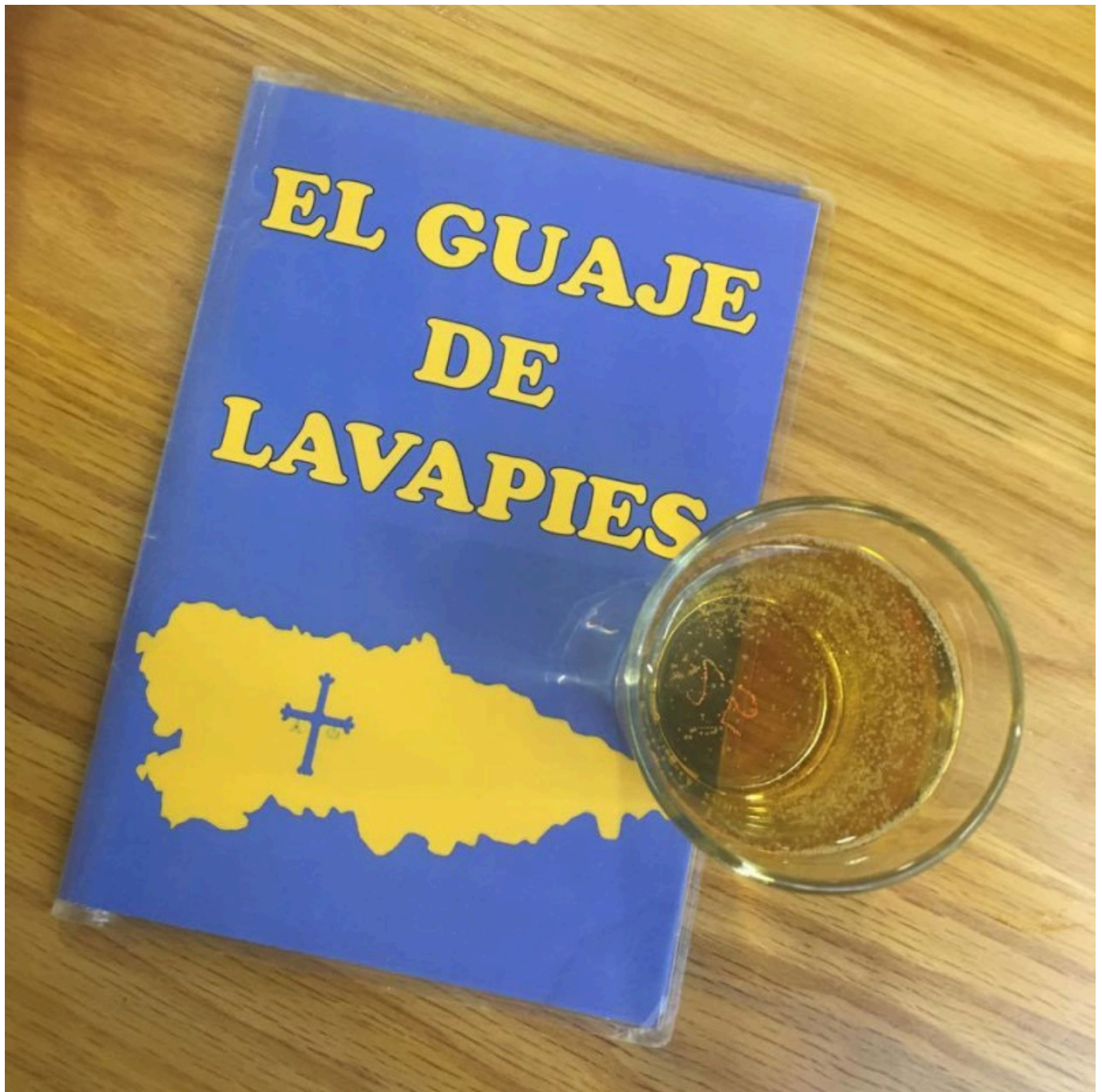


El Guaje de Lavapiés, an Authentic Asturian Oasis

Tucked into the [Mercado de San Fernando](#) is a tiny piece of Asturias. From the *queso gamoneu* to the blue-and-yellow flags marking their territory on every spare inch of the bar, you'll feel like you're really there.

[El Guaje de Lavapiés](#) is a *sidrería* that offers some of the most high-quality Asturian ciders, cheeses, and cured meats Madrid has to offer.



Rafael, the owner, is known around town as “[El Guaje](#),” a term used to refer to someone younger than you in Asturias. El Guaje opened up shop 10 months ago, and is happy with his success, although his dream is to open a full-size restaurant.



Is the space enormous? No. Does it have wifi? Also no. But what it does have it much better: delicious food, good prices, and no big chain of production and distribution—everything comes straight from our northern neighbors and is grown and made naturally.

Here you see El Guaje's *tosta con membrillo y cabrales*—toast with quince paste and blue cheese produced by rural dairy farmers and cured in natural caves (€3.50).



Of course, you can also buy these products in bulk to take home and enjoy later.



But if you're like me, and nothing hits the spot like a good craft beer, El Guaje's got you covered, with a selection from Caleyá of pale ales, IPAs, ambers, etc., as well as your trusty Estrella and Mahou.



If you're lucky, you'll arrive in time for the show—there's an open space at the center of the market, which happens to be right in front of this bar, where they put on dancing shows, plays, and other cultural events.

iPuxa Asturias!

Information

- [Facebook](#)
- Address: C/ Embajadores, 41 inside [Mercado de San Fernando](#)
- Hours: Vary by the day, but typical market hours. Most business on weekends!

PS: Right in front of El Guaje is another one of our favorite stands, [Mercado de Lisboa](#). Check it out!

Marisquería las Chalanas, Asturian Cider and Seafood in Plaza España

Despite its absence of an ocean, delicious and affordable seafood can be found in Madrid for those who seek it. My friend Jacqui brought the existence of [Marisquería las Chalanas](#) to my attention, praising it for its attentive staff and the quality of the portions. With my interest piqued, Jacqui brought myself and our companion Nanor to this location on a **Saturday night in order to nibble on sea critters and drink Asturian cider.**

We arrived early and perched ourselves at a table in the bar area and later received lingering glances from standing patrons keen to usurp it from us. For this reason **it's pivotal to arrive before the crowd**; deshelling shrimp and crabs without an adequate surface to rest the plate is an uphill battle.

The bar area offers specials where **generous *raciones* of seafood cost 5€ with 6 glasses of cider included.** We ordered two of these, the first being **1/4 kilo of cold shrimp** and the second being a dignified **king crab**, to share between the three of us.





Our alert server kept our cider glasses full and was empathetic to Jacqui's needs as a **celiac**; he was proactive and double-checked with the chef that none of our plates were exposed to gluten. In addition to these portions we also ordered **garlic prawns** and **Mussels a la marinara** off of the restaurant menu.





By the end of our meal we were indulgently full and content, all of the food pictured here cost 34€ in total. As we adjusted our coats and scarves to leave, the vultures pounced to claim our little table as their own. I recommend this establishment for celebratory occasions, [parent visits](#) or for [private rendezvous](#) for those entangled illicit trysts because the likelihood of crossing paths with anyone you know here is low.

Info

- [Facebook](#)
 - [Website](#)
 - **Metro:** Plaza de España
 - **Address:** C/San Leonardo 12
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Casa Mingo, the real cider house



An **Asturian cider house** serving traditional, simple and exquisite rotisserie chicken since 1888, **Casa Mingo** is the real deal—no frills, no fuss, just the good stuff. The high walls are lined with bottles and barrels, making you feel as though you've been immersed in a sea of cider. And although the wooden floors are holding up, the wear and tear are

evident. Be sure there's no intention of refurbishing this wooden tavern. Its notable use and warm simplicity is what makes it so special.



image from casamingo.es

Even the menu is simple: **roasted chicken**, croquettes, chorizo, *chistorra* (similar to chorizo but thinner and spicier), cheese (*manchego* which is cured, or *de cabrales* which is very, very blue, a.k.a. it's just mold), roasted red peppers with tuna, and empanadas. They have two types of **cider: sweet and natural**, and you order them by the bottle. Although there are a few more items on the menu, that's pretty much everything. And no matter how much you order, your bill is likely to come out to less than **15E per person**.

The first time I went to **Casa Mingo** I had already been living in Madrid for a few years, though I'd never seen anything like it. It was love at first sight (an American who had been living in Madrid for twenty years let me in on the secret). Since then, **Casa Mingo** has become my spot whenever I want to show off Madrid to family and friends.

I've even brought my "foodie" friends with the harder-to-please palates, some who are chefs and some who have even opened up their own Spanish restaurants outside Spain. **Casa Mingo** has never failed to delight them.

My favorite dishes are the **roasted chicken** and the **roasted red peppers with tuna**. And for dessert, try the *tarta de sidra* or *tarta de santiago*.



rotisserie chicken and endless cider at Casa Mingo



a whole roast chicken at Casa Mingo



No reservations, but the place is enormous so the wait won't be long. In addition to the main dining room, they have outdoor seating and a rooftop as well. The last time I sat outside there, it was Spring and our table was showered with little flowers falling off trees all around us. It was lovely.



my friend Ryan's attempt to pour cider the Austurian way

And if you're feeling up for the challenge, get a table outside and try **pouring the sidra from above your head** (spilling is completely accepted, but ask for a nozzle to help). The correct word for this is **escanciar**, and it's the traditional way to pour cider in Asturias.

Here's a photo I took of a professional pouring cider at a Spanish gourmet food fair. Feel free to ask any of the waiters

at **Casa Mingo** to show you how it's done.



a professional showing how to pour cider the right

way, a.k.a. “escanciar”

[Web](#)

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