

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

