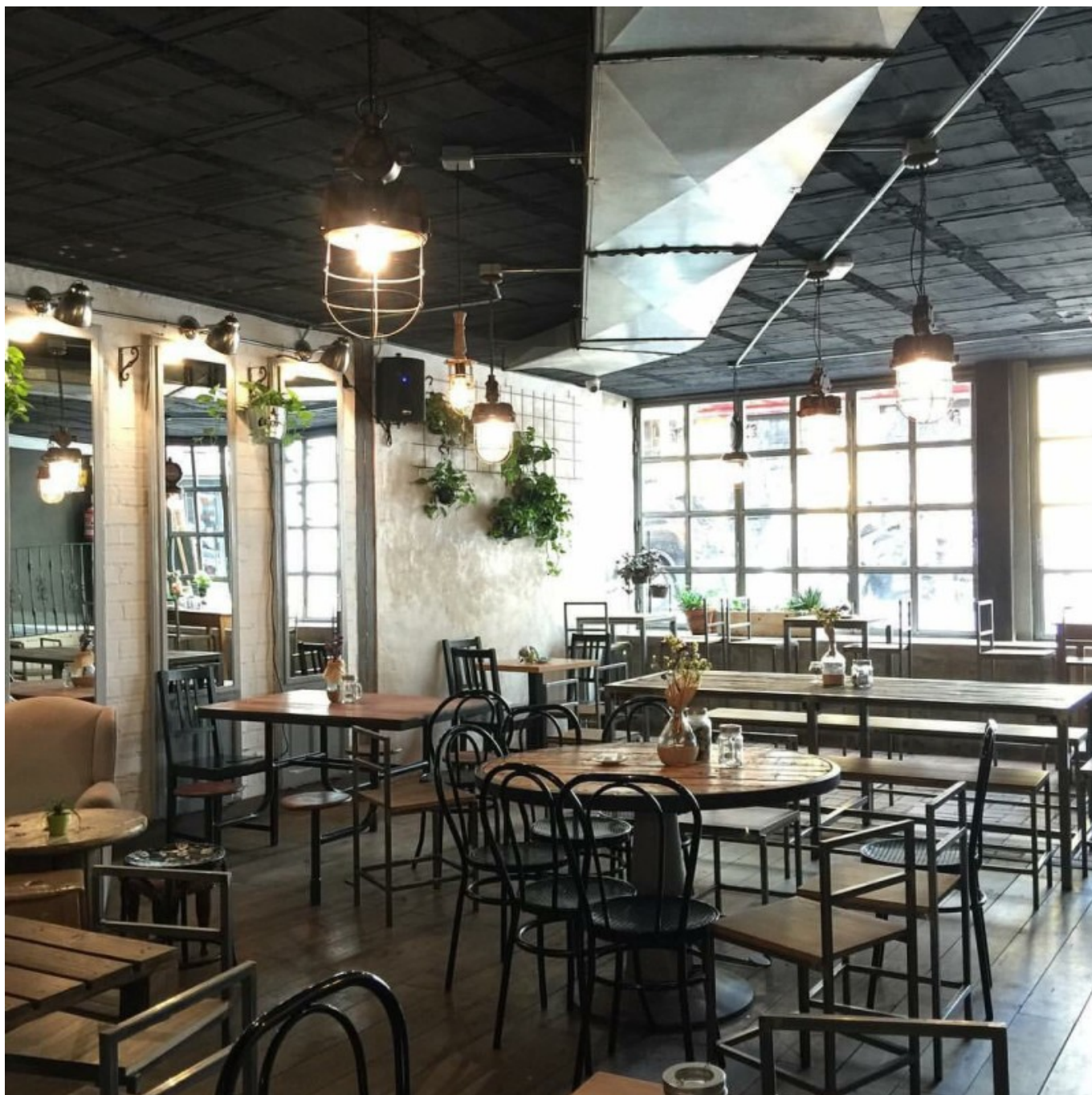


# Slow down at Slow Mex Madrid

Julie Andrews once sang about *these are a few of my favorite things* and if I were to pen some similar lyrics they would read along the lines of: *margaritas, tacos and anything with a bit of spice.*

In light of this, a long Saturday lunch spent at [Slow Mex](#) wasn't exactly a hardship. **A low key Mexican joint on Calle San Vicente Ferrer, that does a very nice sideline in craft beers** is the ideal place to bunker down for the afternoon now that coat season is well and truly upon us in Madrid.



Slow Mex has a big open space that feels slightly reminiscent to a pub back in Blighty (again, this could be thanks to the array of beers on tap). It feels like an unpretentious neighbour who invites you over and makes you feel instantly at home.

As it's essentially a mecca for all things Mexican, all the standard offerings are present on the menu. **Tacos, nachos, burritos** – they're all there. However, the homemade grub does offer a couple of **fun twists** on the to-be-expected tortilla based treats.



We tried a fairly unusual starter. It was sort of similar to a kind of chowder but with a kick and studded with spicy prawns; it brought me back to life after a particularly boozy evening the night before. We rounded off the leisurely lunch with a brownie.

Again, it was a slightly pimped up version of an old favorite as this pud offered up sugar and spice – as it had just touch of chilli in it. It was downright delicious and had us reaching for one last margarita for the road.



**Special mention has to go to the Maitre D, Mark.** He towed the line between clearly knowing his stuff (and wanting to share it with us) and being attentive enough without us feeling like we had a third person dining with us, which can sometimes be the case. He also pointed out that they have a happy hour. Am I the only one who views winter as the perfect excuse for day drinking? Surely not.

Either way, **we left Slow Mex giggling and gloriously full.** Thanks to the crispy duck tacos that I'm still thinking about, the diet can always wait until tomorrow. I'm just thinking of my winter insulation and working on my extra layer in the meantime.

**by @littlemissmadrid**

## Slow Mex Madrid

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle de San Vicente Ferrer 33
  - **Metro:** Tribunal or Noviciado
  - **Phone:** 915 326 791
- 

## **El Brote: a brand-new mushroom restaurant in the heart of El Rastro**

Mushrooms: they're an inspiring subject one can easily get carried away with, especially after paying a visit to El Brote. Years of academic mushroom knowledge and on-the-ground wisdom were literally delivered to us on a plate and I'm now a devout mushroom apostle on a mission to spread the message to the foodie people of Madrid.



El Brote's dining area

El Brote (the bud) is a small and cosy restaurant on [Calle de la Ruda](#) run by two mushroom enthusiasts, Eduardo and Alvaro. Every corner of the place is mushroom-themed, even the floor. Its décor is earthy, humble and a little eccentric, and the original features of the building have been beautifully highlighted throughout the room.



Abstract mushroom artwork



Various gospels of the mushroom bible





The 0th floor of El Brote



A mushroomy display inside the floor

Both Eduardo and Alvaro were keen to explain each dish on their 10-item menu and made recommendations based on the season and their own personal preferences which, funnily enough, were different.

*There's a specific order in which you must eat each ingredient.*

... they explained as each dish was brought out. They suggested we start with the unseasoned mushrooms so that we could taste their pure flavour, then slowly begin combining the other ingredients together to get a feel for the dish as a whole. The flavours were subtle and delicious both separately and collectively – a sign that someone behind the scenes really knows what they're doing.



Trumpet mushrooms with a raw egg yolk and herbs



Red mushrooms with pak choy, gnocci and pumpkin gratin



Black mushrooms with beans, squash and leek

Try their wine too, it's really good. We also noticed that every single table in the restaurant was sharing a bottle of red between them... such a beautiful sight.

**TIP:** El Brote have very few tables and they don't take evening reservations so aim to be the first to arrive as we were, because within 10 minutes of arriving, the place will be full!

## INFO

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** [Calle de la Ruda, 14](#)
  - **Nearest metro:** La Latina, line 5
-

# Loveliness at Lateral

When I first moved to Madrid I walked that well trodden path like so many ex-pats had done before me; the month long TEFL course. I rocked up with my Spanish phrase book, some SPF 20 and the overwhelming desire to live abroad. With no set plan (well, with no actual plan at all having quit my job in PR back in London) I quickly got into the groove of my new TEFL timetable; which essentially meant a 3pm finish. As soon as my 'working' day was done, I would wile away afternoons in Plaza Santa Ana.



Plaza Santa Ana

Now I don't spend too much time around that neck of the woods these days, but back then I was literally intoxicated by that square. The beautiful balconies, the long sunny days (I

arrived in August) and I even found charm in the guys who play the accordion and then hustle for your change. The large majority of those afternoons were spent on the terraza of [restaurante Lateral](#).

Seriously, the limited savings that I arrived with dwindled at lightning speed thanks to my newfound obsession with their ***croquetas de jamón*** and ***tinto de verano***. It became a spot that I still think of fondly, as it kind of represents those heady first months when everything was an adventure and my sole preoccupation was how many hours could I spend tanning that day and where was I going out that night.



So [Lateral](#) and I have enjoyed an enduring partnership and now that I live on the other side of Gran Via I thought I'd mix



things up and visit one of their other outposts on Calle Fuencarral. I'd heard on the grape vine that it had undergone a recent renovation (and I can't just rely on Pinterest for interiors inspo) so it seemed like a win win.



So onto the décor, it is in a nutshell delightful. But obviously we're talking about a restaurant here, so I can't not mention the food. Lateral is all about the tapas – so you can literally try a little bit of everything in perfectly bite sized portions.

In addition, if you have [visiting guests](#) or you're just a first timer to the city, you'll love that Lateral puts a modern spin on Spanish classics. You can find all the well-known favourites such as **tortilla de patata** and **albondigas** (meatballs); alongside more inventive small plates such as delicious **duck ravioli** and a melt-in-the-mouth **carpaccio**.



Food wise [Lateral](#) is what I would describe as a safe bet. Yes it might not be the most inventive cuisine, but what they offer up always hits the spot. It also doesn't hurt that it's super reasonably priced for a city centre find, and **they serve food all day.**

My friend and I were also pleased as punch to discover that they boast a **happy hour on drinks** – ideal if you enjoy a lunch that's more liquid than most and I can attest that the service is always friendly and fast. Whilst the terraza isn't quite as pleasing on the eye as the Plaza Santa Ana locale, the phrase "it's what's on the inside that counts" that rings true here.



**Inside it's an oasis within the city,** filled with plenty of plants and enough greenery to make you feel like you're embracing nature, in spite of being mere moments from the hustle and bustle of one of Madrid's main shopping streets. If spontaneity is your thing (let's face it, we're not talking about a country when peeps really plan ahead), restaurante Lateral is the kind of place that you can pitch up at, eat well and feel as though you've sampled a little bit of Spain's finest.

## Restaurante Lateral:

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle Fuencarral, 43
  - **Phone:** 915316877
- 

## Navare Bar – The Secret's Out

You always feel quite smug when you stumble across somewhere that feels yet to be discovered. I was mooching around Chamberi on my way to an appointment, when I mindlessly spotted [Navare Bar](#) – and it piqued my interest.



Inside there were groups of friends chatting animatedly, enjoying a late afternoon merienda. But upon closer look, there was also a downright delicious evening menu. I papped the name of the restaurant on my phone and made a mental note to return with a friend in tow.



Fast forward a week and I found myself to be one of the locals enjoying this new neighbourhood hotspot. [Navare Bar](#) is somewhat impossible to be shoehorned into any set category. You want your breakfast? They serve it. A leisurely lunch with colleagues? You've got it. Dinner with your nearest and dearest. They offer it. It's basically your one-stop shop for all your culinary needs.



Now to be all things to all people is no mean feat. However, after meeting (and chatting with the owner) it's clear that the vision for Navare Bar is to be a local place for local people; somewhere that no matter the time of day, you can grab a coffee or indeed a copa with friends.

I was a fan of this concept from the get go. Coming from the UK, I'm used to eating when I want – whether or not that ties in with siesta culture is of little importance. If I'm hungry I want options that will keep my renowned (within my social circle) 'hanger' at bay. It also didn't hurt that the décor was a delight and the plates satiated my fetish for all things chintzy when it came to crockery.





So the food. In a nutshell it was lip smackingly good. After a full-on week at work I was in need of all the treats. We split **prawn croquetas** (you get eight, I could've quite easily refused to share). This was swiftly followed by **grilled vegetables** that conjured up the feeling of summer barbecues (and made me feel slightly virtuous after the deep fried delight that was the first tapa).

But **the jewel in the crown was undoubtedly the solomillo** that came with crushed new potatoes and some kind of sauce that I could've quite happily guzzled as though it were a G&T. To surmise, the food is heavenly and I left eager to return for breakfast, lunch **AND** dinner.

I have no doubt that Navare bar will be a success. The passion of the owner coupled with the zest for life that the local peeps possess, makes it an inevitable recipe for success.

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle de Rafael Calvo, 29
- **Metro:** Iglesia & Rubén Darío
- **Phone:** 910 26 87 57

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# Let's Raise a Toast to The Toast Café

If you're lucky enough to live in Madrid, as I do, it often

feels like the city is your playground. There are exhibitions to see, bars to frequent, parks to embrace, [restaurants](#) to sample and of course, come the weekend, long, lazy [brunches](#) to be had. I always have the intention to be one of those people who whips up breakfast without breaking a sweat.



I buy the eggs, the avo, occasionally the chorizo, but when Saturday morning rolls around, frankly, my working week is done and the desire to cook (or clean) for that matter often falls by the wayside. I want to go out. To get dressed up and to head to a place where the mimosas are free flowing and the washing up is SEP (someone else's problem). So to kick start a week off from work, I headed to [The Toast Café](#) so that someone else could poach the perfect egg on my behalf.



A sister restaurant of [Roll Madrid](#) (a [recent review](#) of mine), it's clear to see that good breakfasts run in the family. There's a fixed brunch menu, which my friend and I plumped for. Needless to say, I don't think either of us needed feeding again until the evening had swung round as the portion sizes were far from stingy.

We both had coffees to start (natch), followed by croissants, eggs benedict and an omelette respectively. We chased this up with multiple mimosas and to conclude our breakfast of champions we split a cheesecake which was as good as any that I'd had in the States: I'm a fan of a buttery base and this one was so delish that I could've eaten it twice.



With Halloween on the approach and the city turning its attention to all things gruesome and ghoulish, [Toast](#) is getting in on the act by offering its own version of a fright night. Order yourself a beer and the bartenders will toss a coin – if it lands on pay, you pay. But... if it lands on freebie, you get to enjoy your tipple on the house. There's nothing scary about that. Well, apart from maybe the hangover that'll follow come November 1st.



It's worth mentioning that the aforementioned [Roll](#), will also be on the Halloween bandwagon and are offering the exact same deal – pretty tempting with Madrid enjoying a bank holiday the following day. I fully expect most of the city will be nursing sore heads.

Fast forward to November and **Toast is hosting its very own Thanksgiving celebration** – I'm spotting a pattern, this is a place that likes a party, we'll get along well. With a menu that will appeal to people from not just across the pond, it's well worth a look if you know you'll be pining for turkey and for time spent with friends.

So if boozy brunches are your bag and potential freebies float your boat there's really only one thing for it. Check out The Toast Café. Great food, great service, and a great excuse to dodge doing the dishes.

## Info

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** C/ Fernando el Católico 50
  - **Metro:** Moncloa, Arguelles, Quevedo
  - **Phone:** 915493802
- 

# Tapapiés: a guide to everyone's favorite food and culture festival in Lavapiés

It's that time of year again. The air is turning chilly, the leaves are starting to change, and the millennial obsession with all things autumn is taking over social media. But here in Madrid, there's a whole different reason to be excited. With October comes [Tapapiés](#), the annual festival that inundates the streets of the [Lavapiés neighborhood](#) with delicious food, cheap drinks, and live music.

For 11 days at the end of October (this year's 7th edition lasts from October 19–29), dozens of restaurants and bars in Lavapiés offer a very special deal. Each one develops their own **signature tapa**, and offers it to the public for just **€1.50**. For an extra euro, you can also get a *botellín* (a 250 ml bottle of beer) to wash it down. The [event](#) is sponsored by Barcelona's Estrella Damm, and at most places you can choose between a regular beer or Damm Lemon (beer and lemon soda).



A bar advertises its participation in Tapapiés with the festival's official poster.

**Lavapiés is known for its incredible cultural diversity**, with large immigrant populations from all over Africa, South America, the Middle East, and Central Asia. As a result, it's full of [international eateries](#) offering everything from [Senegalese thieboudienne](#) to Syrian sweets. A good number of these establishments participate in [Tapapiés](#), which means that in one night you can practically eat your way around the world, just by exploring the neighborhood's sloping streets.



The delicious “Crepioca” tapa from Saboor Tapioca

In other words, **this [festival](#) is every adventurous foodie’s dream come true.** There are various strategies for tackling the overwhelming amount of options (**122 tapas in total**) and chaotic crowds. You can simply wander around, dropping into whatever bars you come across and trying your luck. Each one usually advertises a photograph of their tapa with a huge poster out front, so you’ll know more or less what to expect. Don’t forget to stop by **[Mercado de San Fernando](#)** and Mercado Antón Martín, where several vendors also participate.





A tray of tapas at Toscanaccio Italian bakery: marinated eggplant, walnuts, goat cheese, and sun-dried tomato pesto on spelt bread

If you're (A) a picky/allergy-prone eater or (B) determined to try as many different tapas as possible, you might want to consider a more organized strategy. Ask for a brochure at any of the participating places—you'll get a **pocket-sized booklet that contains a list of every single tapa being offered**, as well as a color photograph and a detailed ingredients list for each. They're all plotted on a numbered map, so you can plan out your ideal route. Be warned, though: it's hard to stick to a set plan when there are so many tempting options around every corner.



Dishing out the special tapa at Maloka Bar Brasileiro: yuca in a coconut milk sauce with peanut pesto

My advice? Grab a group of friends who aren't afraid to elbow their way through some crowds and try as many new things as possible. This is not an activity for those who would rather settle in at a cozy restaurant for a relaxed dinner.

Expect to eat standing up while balancing a beer in one hand a a tapa in the other, and shouting at each other just to be heard. **It's messy, it's crazy, it's loud—and it's totally worth it.** The frenetic and colorful spirit of the neighborhood is never more alive than on a night of [Tapapiés](#).



“Carrillada melosa” from Maldito Querer: braised beef cheeks in a sauce of caramelized onion, garlic, herbs, and Pedro Ximénez reduction

To complete the experience, it’s essential to attend one of the [various outdoor performances](#) by local musicians, dancers, and entertainers that take place throughout the event. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons and evenings, you can catch live music and shows at nine different designated spots (a full schedule is included in the brochure). There’s also the simultaneous **Chollopíés** festival, which **spotlights the neighborhood’s local businesses** by offering [special discounts](#) on certain products.



Maybe you live in Lavapiés and want to get to know your *barrio* better. Maybe you've never been and want to see what all the hype is about. Or maybe you're just hungry, thirsty, and low on cash. Whatever the case, [Tapapiés](#) is bound to become one of your favorite events in Madrid. If you go into it with **the right mindset, a healthy appetite, and a handful of coins**, I guarantee that come next October, there'll only be one thing on your mind. Who needs pumpkin spice lattes, anyway?

## Info

- [Facebook](#)
- [Website](#)
- [Instagram](#)

Check out our roundup of [Tapapiés' offerings last year!](#)

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## Make plans to meet at Meat Madrid

A few years back, I was lucky enough to visit Chicago and let's just say that the food in the windy city is up there with its architecture; it's pretty memorable. It helped enormously that I was visiting a friend who is quite the foodie and had mapped out a dining odyssey that ensured that I needed two seats on the flight home, given the cal's I'd ingested in the space of one week.

One meal that stood out was a burger at the now-infamous hotspot, Au Cheval. My friend nonchalantly explained that given the reputation of the burgers there, we'd need to put our names down and head off for drinks before we'd actually get to chow on down. Obviously this seemed absurd as a visiting Brit, but I duly did as I was told. Fast forward a couple of hours and boy did I eat my words (and what remains to be THE most epic burger I've ever tasted).



It's hard to explain what made it so unforgettable, but it's certainly not just me that feels that way. Google the burger at Au Cheval and it's been hailed by almost every Tom, Dick and Harry as the best in the world. Since that fateful evening in Chi Town, I've been on the hunt for the next best thing and I think my search is over upon discovering [Meat](#).



[Meat](#) is tucked away down a street that offers plenty of eating options such as Boca Calle and Cripeka. But if you're in the business of beef, Meat is where it's at. The concept and menu are equally similar, **they do two burgers (along with with fries, onion rings and salad) and that's it. There's the perennially popular Cheeseburger and whatever happens to be the monthly special.**



We ordered the whole shebang and it was a treat for the old tastebuds. I'm known for being quite the carnivore so suffice to say, Meat may be my happy place. I don't need bells and whistles when it comes to a decent-tasting burger and **what makes Meat so good is that they focus on the basics and execute them to perfection.** A buttery brioche bun, paired with perfectly seasoned beef makes you happy to indulge even when your jeans are feeling slightly snug.





It didn't go unnoticed to me that there's Aesop products in the bathroom and G'Vine gin on offer which elevates Meat in my opinion from some of its more humble carnivorous competitors. On a Tuesday evening it was mildly busy but not eardrum shatteringly so, making it the **ideal spot for a midweek bite** to eat which will leave you with change from a twenty.

*Make plans to meet at Meat.*

## Info:

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#)
  - **Phone:** 910 29 60 41
  - **Address:** [Calle Santa Teresa 4](#)
  - **Metro:** Alonso Martínez & Bilbao
- 

## Brunch at Roll Madrid – Gotta Roll With It

We've all had those Sunday (or indeed Saturday mornings) when you wake up, well, how should I phrase this – praying for death? Your mouth's dryer than the Sahara, there's nothing in the fridge to quell your sickness and it feels as though someone's taken a teeny, tiny jackhammer to your head. In situations such as the aforementioned (which happen far more frequently than I'd care to admit), **the only solution for me is a boozy brunch.**



When you just can't face waves of nausea coupled with beer fear, there's nothing for it in my view except for hair of the dog. If this sounds familiar, **let me introduce to to the perfect spot to cure your hangover; or perhaps indeed to just top up – [Roll](#)**. My friend and I pitched up a few Sundays ago, starved and in need of **Bloody Mary's**.



Luckily due to the ongoing Indian Summer, we were able to take advantage of the cute little terrace outside and enjoy some fresh air along with with our food. **Roll takes the business of brunch seriously.** The menu is akin to many that I've seen Stateside with plenty of choices that made deciding what to opt for quite the quandary.



In the end we plumped for **fried green tomatoes** (they were un-believable and I'm a girl who rarely gets her 5 a day), **southern fried chicken** (with mac 'n cheese) and a **cheeseburger teamed with sweet potato fries** – I think you could've spotted our hangovers from 50 paces but the combo of carbs and cava sorted us right out.



I'm not saying that [Roll](#) is just a remedy for when you're feeling rough. Far from it. They do a roaring trade on the **craft beer** front and plenty of **tasty tacos** to boot.





Meaning that there really is something for everything menu wise. The staff were happy to make suggestions given our slightly fragile state but recommendations or not, I have no doubt that everything would've been lip-smackingly good.

If you're an American in the city I anticipate Roll alleviating some of your homesickness. However, yank or not, if you like good food and find yourself enjoying one too many canãs at the weekend, when you've enjoyed the rock side of things, head to Roll.

*For more Madrid tidbits check out [@littlemissmadrid](#) on Instagram.*

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Website](#)
- Address: Calle Amainel, 23
- Metro: San Bernardo / Noviciado



- Phone: 918 057 930

## You might also like:

- [Lady Madonna, because Sundays are made for brunching](#)
  - [Plenti, a great new coffee & brunch spot in Barrio de las Letras](#)
  - [Best brunch on a budget in Madrid](#)
  - [Federal Café Madrid – hipster in a very good way](#)
- 

# Veggie Nirvana at VivaBurger in La Latina

In the foodie hotspot Plaza de la Paja, in *barrio* La Latina, lies a vegetarian oasis with an oddly beachy vibe, complete with pale teal walls, distressed white wood, and beaded curtains.



You can sit inside or at one of their lovely terrace tables in this little nook of La Latina. While there's almost always a

full house (and for good reason), the staff works like a well-oiled machine, and the owner treats everyone like family.



Everything on the menu is vegan or vegetarian—and seriously delicious. Being shamefully addicted to cheese, I was admittedly nervous to try their vegan burger of the day. But it exceeded my expectations in every way: **filling, creamy, and flavorful, it left me more than satisfied.** It comes with a salad or soup, fresh fries, and a drink (can be wine or beer too).







If you're not feeling a veggie burger, the eatery offers an **alternative *menú del día***: they celebrate a different country every day with a rotating international menu. Indian curry garam masala, Greek salad and musaka, Peruvian avocado ceviche, Moroccan couscous, Argentinian vegetable *parrillada* and empanadas... and about 20 others.







For dessert, I had a fresh mint green tea smoothie. Having a huge sweet tooth, it wasn't what I was expecting, but it was flavorful and refreshing, especially on such a hot day. If you order dessert a la carte, instead of with the lunch special, you have lots of other options like their scrumptious carrot cake or vegan ice cream.





Amazingly, the burger for the menú is apparently a more “basic” veggie burger. If that’s basic, I can only imagine the

full menu is mind-blowing. I'll for sure be back for more.

## Info

- [Facebook](#)
  - **Website:** vivaburger.es
  - **Instagram:** @viva\_burger
  - **Address:** Costanilla de San Andrés 16
  - **Phone:** 91 366 33 49
- 

## Peyote San, Mexican fusion at its most fabulous

I love Mexican food. I mean, I properly **LOVE** it. A holiday spent in Tulum with tequila on tap was possibly as close to utopia as I'll ever get on the food front. Tacos, guac, and burritos – I love them all equally and don't get me started on margaritas – second to gin (and possibly water due to pure necessity) it definitely edges its way into my three most supped liquids. So imagine my intrigue when I'd heard about the menu at [Peyote San](#) – **a place that's managed to fuse Mexican munchies with sushi**. Definitely worth a gander I mused and suffice to say it was.

Located near Colon (or as I affectionately refer to the area with the 'giant flag') [Peyote San](#) restaurant is en route to where the good shops are. From the outside looking in it could easily be missed, but the interior is anything but shy and retiring. **It's instantly instagramable** (yes, that's now a word along with with TMI and FML) largely due to the bold graffiti-type images that adorn most of the walls.



If you've travelled to the Big Apple it certainly feels reminiscent of somewhere swish that you'd find on the Upper West Side – choc-a-bloc with beautiful people sipping elaborately prepared cocktails. However, fear not, it wasn't a case of style over substance as **every last morsel was utterly delicious and well worth the late school night in my case.**

I've yet to visit Japan (although it's on my bucket list) and the cuisine at Peyote San was the next best thing. I worked my way through A LOT of food to make this review as authentic as poss so drumroll please – I can vouch that the **tatiki tuna,**

chicken gyoza, black cod and the Japanese curry with bonito were all delectable as were the pretty potent Asian Malgalita's – a Peyote San take on a classic Marg and unquestionably are to be enjoyed with an air of YOLO – and not the worry of reaching for ibuprofen the following day.



Given the uniqueness of the food, it was also a really nice touch that the chef came over to talk us through the menu and his knowledge and evident passion for the food made the evening all the more gratifying. Peyote San definitely isn't the type of locale to visit if you've got too much month left

and not enough money. **It's definitely more of a date night treat or a birthday splurge.**



Having said that, come Saturday nights, tables are shuffled to the sidelines so that patrons can get their groove on. Having lived in Madrid long enough now to know that Madrileños would favour spending their last fiver on a night out (than something sensible), Peyote San shouldn't remain on your wish list, **pop it in on your hit list now.**

## Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Marques de la Ensenada 16
- **Metro:** Colon
- **Phone:** 91 088 22 12

## You'll also like:

- [Sahuaro, Mexican magic in Plaza Cascorro](#)
- [El Sombrero Azul, pupusas, yuca, enchiladas and more](#)