

Bar Tomate – modest minimalism at its best

Eight years ago I took the plunge and upped sticks to move to Madrid (or Madders as I now affectionately refer to it). The city was in the midst of a financial crisis so bleak, that people went out for a solitary caña rather than cañas – or so it seemed and so I was told.

Fast forward to 2017 and the city feels as though it's booming once again. Not a week passes by without a new opening, a Mercado of some sort throwing back its doors and the now oh-so-popular weekly After Brunch events.

So in such a crowded marketplace how do you stand out? Well, having the kudos of being part of the Grupo Tragaluz alumni doesn't hurt, which is why Bar Tomate has proven to be one of my fail-safe favourites over the years.



Located in the increasingly well-heeled and chic neighbourhood of Chamberí, which coincidentally is one of my favourite Madrid *barrios*, Bar Tomate ticks all the boxes offering breakfast, lunch, dinner *a rare find in a city where *siesta* culture can result in a complete shutdown during certain hours – never ideal if you're prone to getting hungry!

The vibe is rustic and Mediterranean with the emphasis on simple, fresh ingredients and classics cooked well.



I went along for dinner on a Friday night and chowed down like a Queen – decisive isn't my strong point so what was sampled read like an A-Z of deliciousness; ranging from breaded asparagus, chicken tacos, jalapeño spiced shrimp and a burrata the size of my head because, quite frankly, what meal isn't improved with the addition of cheese! This was naturally all chased down with an array of cocktails that made for an interesting walk home.

If simplicity is your thing I can't recommend Bar Tomate

enough. From the minimalist décor to the unfussiness and ease of the service, Bar Tomate's strongpoint comes in its lack of pretentiousness when in reality, it has everything to shout about.

Ditch the flats for an evening, as when the DJ appears (as he does on both a Friday and Saturday night) you're gonna want to get your groove on. Guys, I'll leave that up to you.

All photos from Bar Tomate

Bar Tomate

- [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Fernando El Santo, 26
- **Phone:** [+34 917 023 870](tel:+34917023870)
- **Metro:** Colon

Creamies: Malasaña's new ice cream & cookie sandwich bar

Sugar addict? Keep reading. Don't have a sweet tooth? This place is not for you. Opened just three weeks, [Creamies](#) is a tiny ice cream sandwich bar in the heart of Malasaña that lures guests in with its neon '80s-esque decor and customers leaving with their sugary mounds of perfection.



The process is simple and tailored to your tastes.

First, you pick the “bread” of the sandwich: a donut (regular or Oreo), a blueberry muffin top, or a cookie—classic chocolate chip, white chocolate, triple chocolate... Undecided? **You can mix & match** the top and bottom.



Next, choose the ice cream filling: “triki” monster (kind of like birthday cake flavor), donut cream, “La Movida Madrileña,” double chocolate brownie, Kinder, yogurt & berry...



Lastly, **you can choose a “topping”**—whichever you choose, they’ll roll the sandwich in it. There are sprinkles, Lacasitos, marshmallows, Froot Loops, cookie crumbs, chocolate sauce, and more.



Would ya just look at that happiness?!

It's cheap, it's delicious, and the service is friendly.
Corred!

Info

- [Facebook](#)
- Insta: [@creamiesmadrid](#)
- Address: C/ Corredera Alta de San Pablo, 30
- Metro: Tribunal

You may also like:

- [Madrid's best ice cream shops](#)

Volunteer Opportunities in Madrid for Everyone

If you're looking for ways to get involved in the Madrid community and help out – from donating clothes to teaching English in city jails – here are a few non-profit organizations recommended by international volunteers who live here. While some require long-term commitments and knowing Spanish, others can benefit from just a few hours of your time and have no language barriers.

So whether you're new to the city or have very little spare time, there are plenty of ways to give back – even the smallest gesture can make a difference.

[Casa Solidaria](#)

While Madrid operates government-run food banks for its residents in need, there are many people who can't take advantage of this service due to lack of paperwork. **Casa Solidaria** aims to fill this void, organizing volunteers who prepare food in their own homes and deliver to 150+ people in **Plaza de Tirso de Molina every weekday at 8:30pm**. Each person gets a hot meal, a sandwich and a piece of fruit.

One volunteer said: “For most of these people, this is their primary source of food for the day. Without this, they are at serious risk.” With no regular funding, the charity—which also operates in Barcelona and Lleida—is always always looking for [volunteers and donations](#).

- [Website](#)

Robin Hood Restaurant



Pablo Blazquez Dominguez/Getty Images

Another noble organization feeding the hungry of Madrid is the Robin Hood restaurant on Calle Eguilaz. During the day, Robin Hood is run like a typical Spanish café. But **by night, the chefs and waiting staff use the profits to feed Madrid's most in need residents.**

At this catholic charity-run eatery, the idea is to offer the homeless of Madrid not only their daily bread, but also the civility of dining at a restaurant. Father Ángel García Rodríguez told [NPR](#), "I want them to eat with the same dignity as any other customer. And the same quality, with glasses made of crystal, not plastic, and in an atmosphere of friendship and conversation." The restaurant is attracting the talents of celebrity chefs and staff from the city's top hotels.

Support Robin Hood by dropping in for a bite to eat—just be

sure to make a reservation first as it's booking up months in advance.

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

CONCAES (Confraternidad Carcelaria Española)

CONCAES is a Madrid-based NGO that works to provide support to people affected by crime, whether they're prisoners, victims or family members. One of their main initiatives is giving educational workshops for inmates, to provide or increase skills and help with rehabilitation. English classes are currently run in two different penitentiary centres and give inmates the opportunity to learn English, or improve their level with native teachers.

As a volunteer you are responsible for planning and leading the classes, while you are accompanied by other volunteers or coordinators. According to one volunteer, "It can be challenging at times but it is without a doubt the most rewarding thing that I've done since moving to Madrid. In my experience the students are very motivated and the classes have a great atmosphere. The English workshops take place on Friday mornings so it's easy to combine with work. It can take a while between signing up and getting permission to enter the centres so this is definitely one for people who are in Madrid for more than a few months."

- [Website](#)

Madrid for Refugees



Madrid for Refugees is run by a group of international volunteers who work closely with refugee centers in the Comunidad de Madrid. Their main goal is to help refugees from all over the world to build a life for themselves here in the city, from finding housing to work. One way to support Madrid for Refugees is by attending a **Chefugee event – monthly dinners organized where the entire menu is prepared by a refugee** seeking work opportunities in Madrid's culinary scene. Other ways to get involved include donating clothes and doing language exchanges as well as running errands and being a chauffeur. You can also attend their fundraising events and concerts which are announced on the [MfR Facebook page](#), and all benefits go to helping refugees.

[Facebook](#) & [Website](#)

[Serve the City](#)

Serve the City is an international volunteer movement that

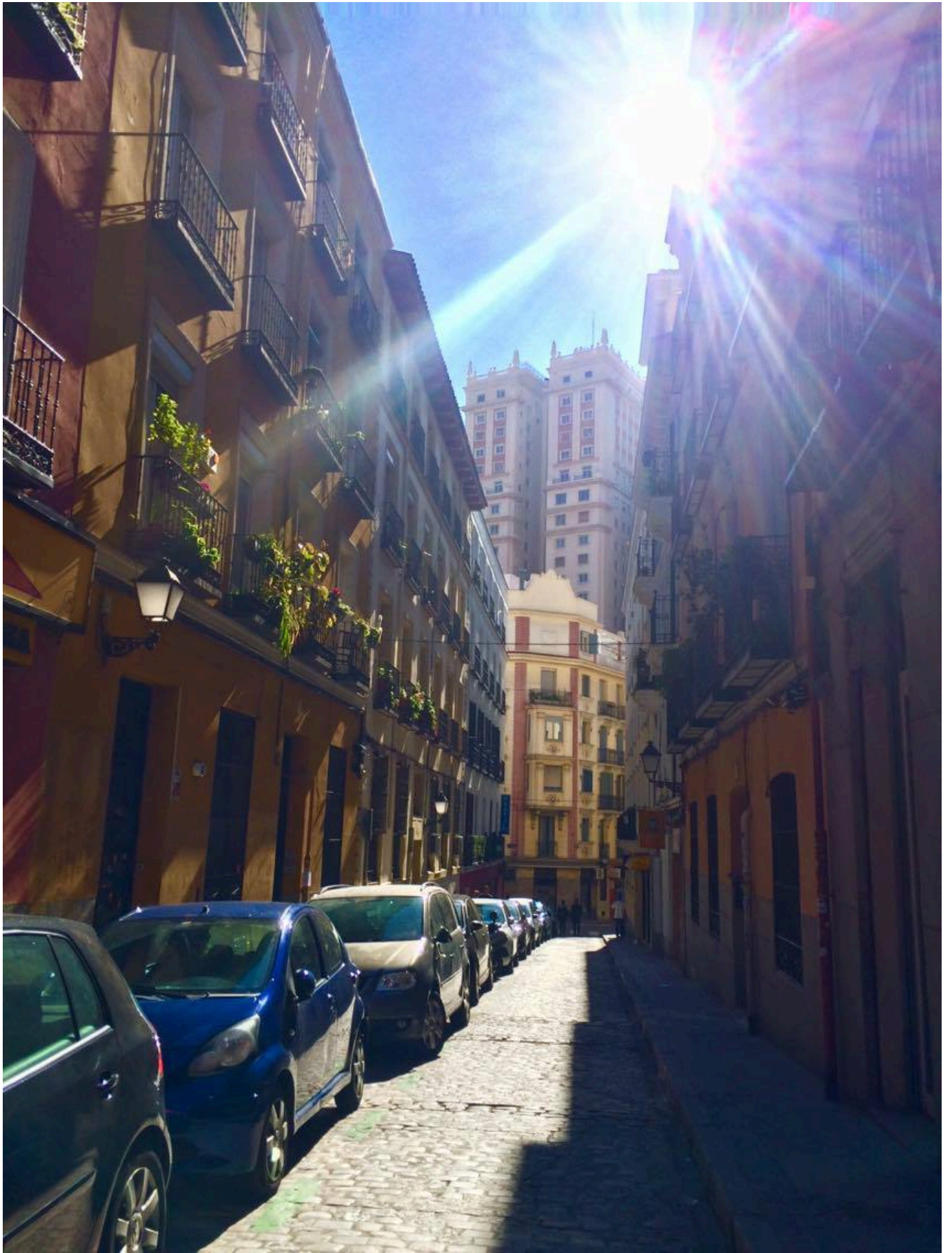
began in Brussels in 2005, and is now located in over 95 cities around the world. It aims to connect people with local opportunities and events in their cities, so they can show kindness in practical ways to people in need, including refugees, the homeless, orphans, victims of human trafficking, the disabled and the poor. Serve the City believes that even the smallest efforts can make a big difference, and we agree.

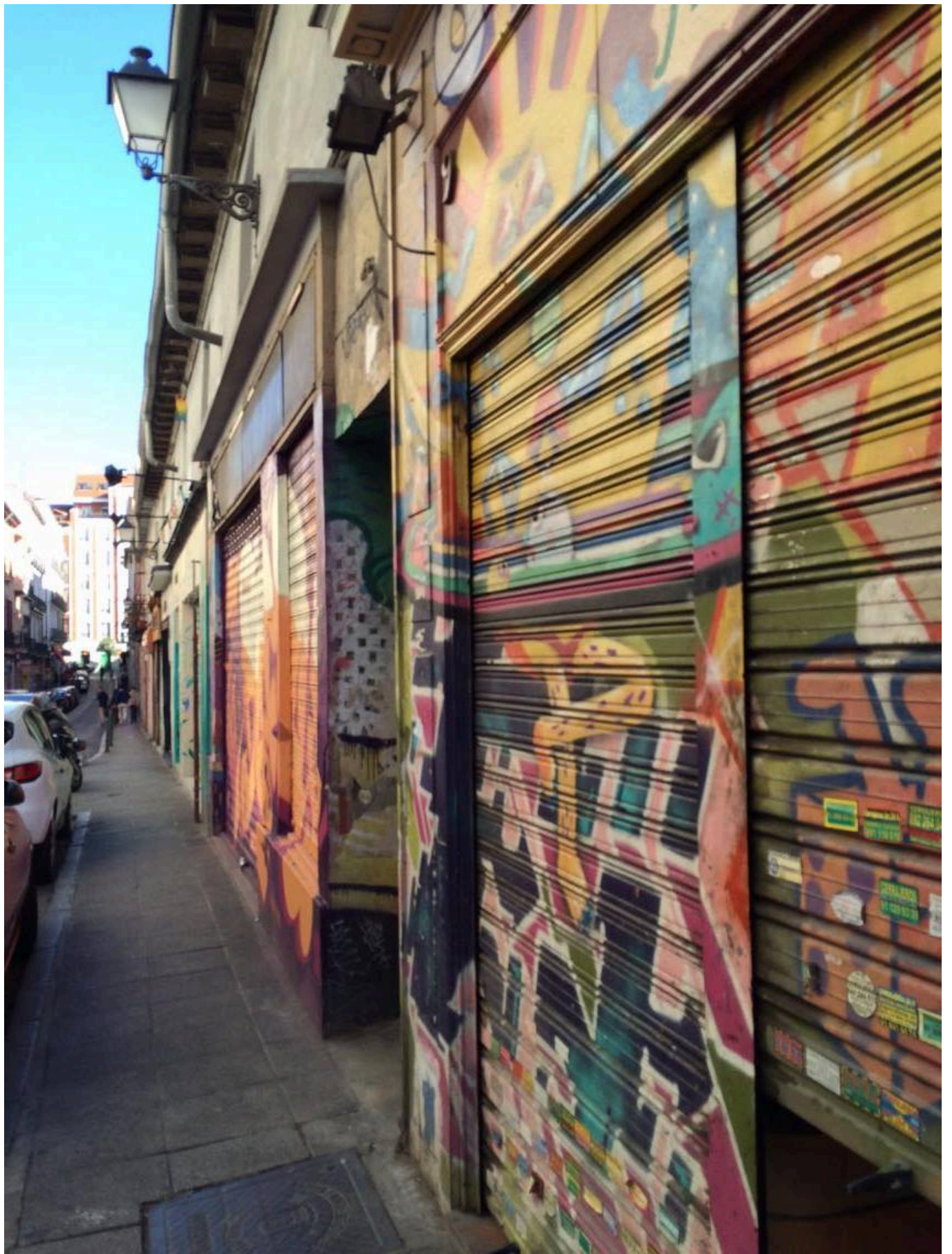
[Website](#) & [Facebook](#)

Know of any other organizations to add to this list? Let us know!

A Mini Guide: how to make the most of rainy Madrid

When the sun shines on the big city... Madrid is spectacular, especially in the sun. The authentic Spanish architecture on every building looks picturesque against a backdrop of blue skies, and even the areas coated in graffiti look artistic and vibrant in a summery light. You can walk pretty much anywhere; take a stroll in El Parque Retiro; sip sangría in Plaza Mayor; visit a rooftop in almost any barrio.







But with some Autumnal showers it can be difficult to experience Madrid to the full, so here are a few ideas to keep

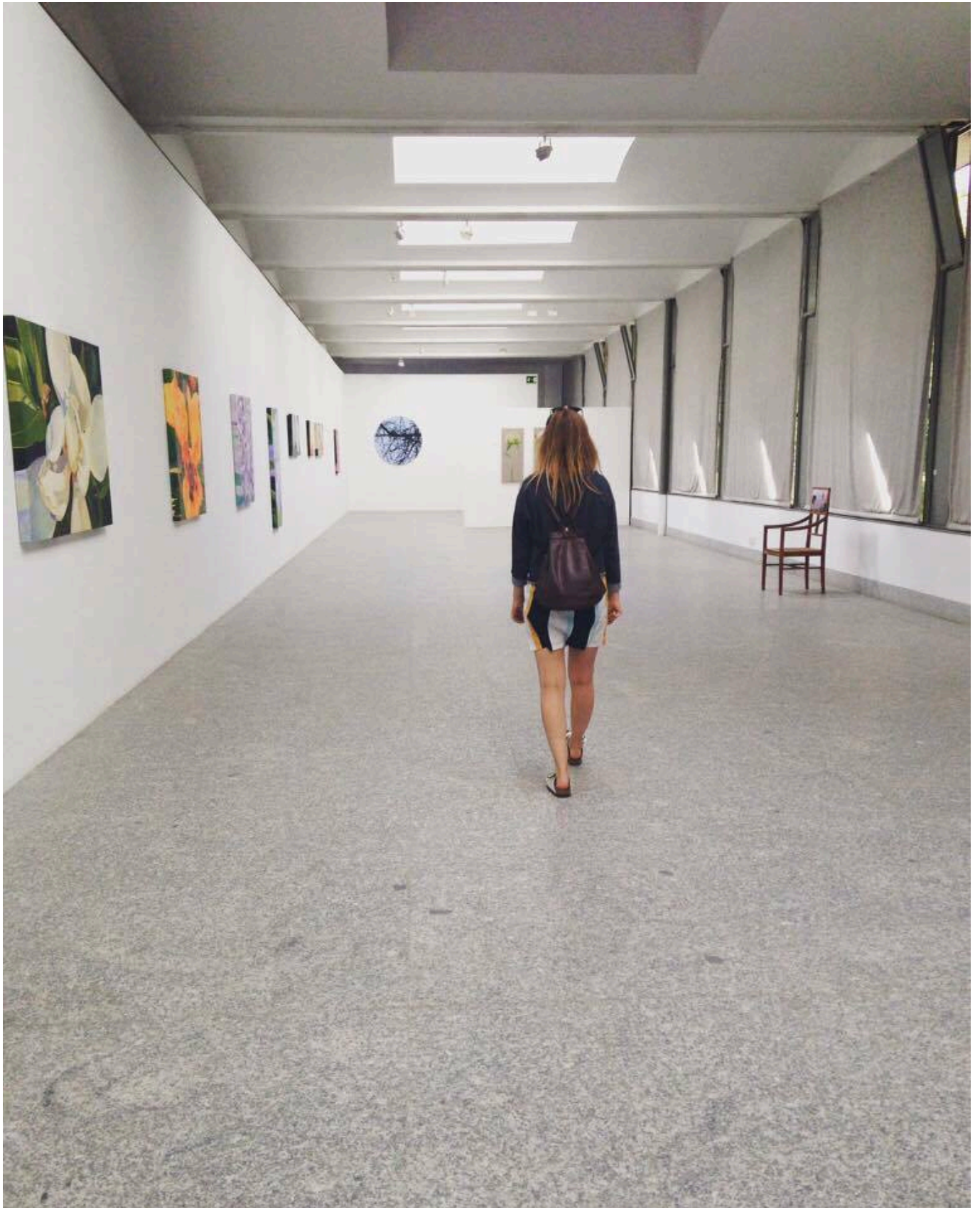
you busy come rain or shine...

Get even more culture in you

It goes without saying that rainy days are perfect museum days. Stay warm and dry inside beautiful exhibition rooms, and feel like you have really experienced at least a snippet of the art and culture that Madrid has to offer, even on a miserable day.

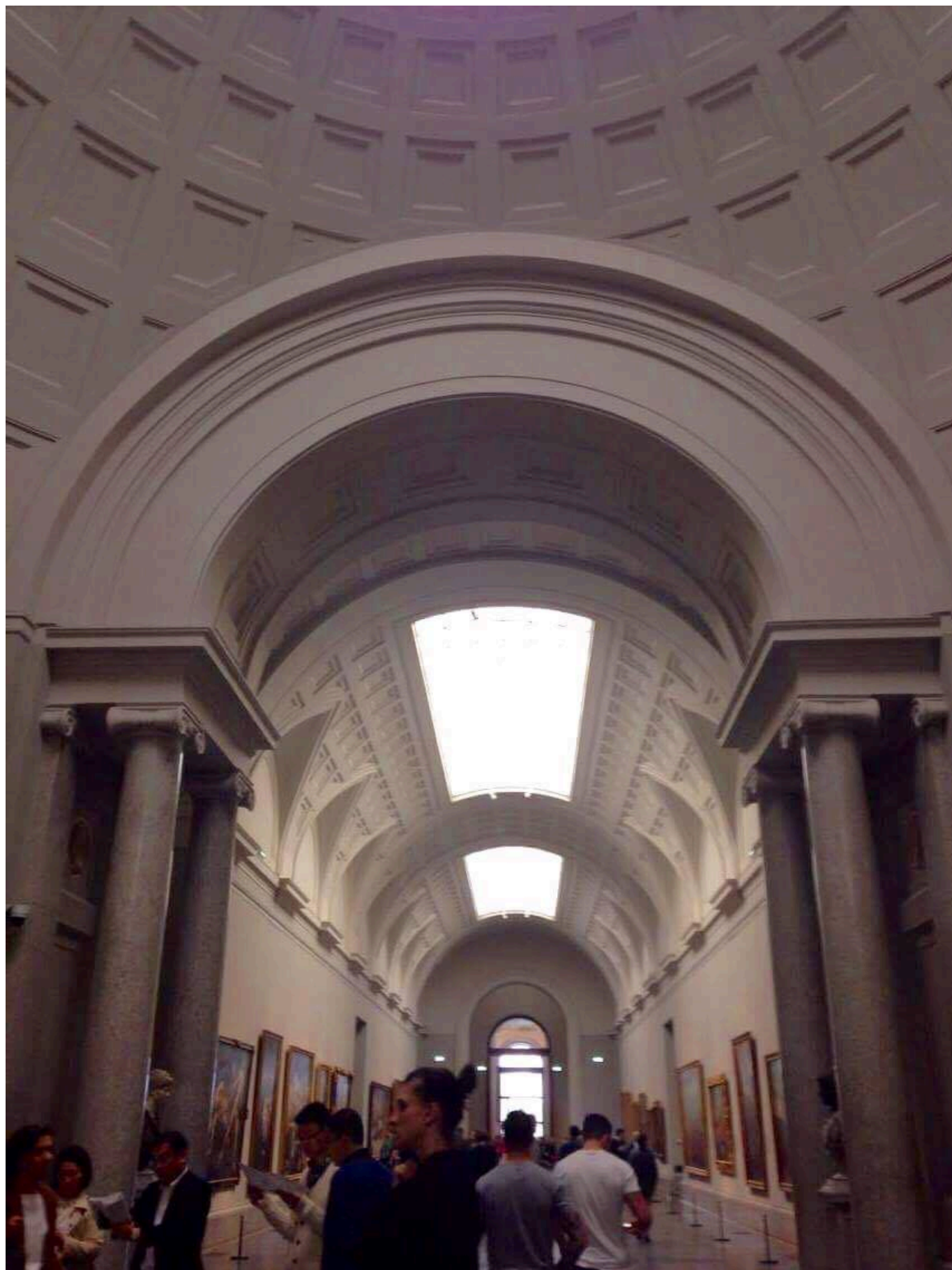
This can also be a free way to enjoy Madrid! Just as though you were wandering through tourist sites in the sun, like the grounds of Palacio Real or within Plaza Mayor, many art exhibitions in Madrid are free to the public.

To get started with art in Madrid, a true tourist or cultured expat must visit the [city's main art museums](#). **El Museo del Prado** houses Spain's finest works ever produced, and is free from 6 to 8pm every day. **La Reina Sofia** boasts the breathtaking *Guernica* (*Pablo Picasso*) and four floors of thought-provoking artwork; it is free on Sunday mornings and afternoons. To get even more authentic, **El Museo Taurino** is Spain's bullfighting history museum, and is free to the public every day of the week.



For [less well-known exhibitions](#), keep checking websites to find the best ones, as lots are exhibited for limited time periods. Photography exhibitions seem to populate the Embajadores area: [La Tabacalera](#) is home to many temporary

shows for renowned Spanish photographers and artists.



When you think of Spanish culture, you think of Flamenco. A quintessentially Spanish dance art that is both vibrant and dynamic. [La Villa Rosa Flamenco](#) is the oldest flamenco bar in the *world*. It opened in 1911, and has since promoted the Flamenco art with regular shows. Enjoy a class of vino in this relaxed, lively atmosphere.



PRIMERAS FOTOS
1977-1982

Foooooooooood: cake, churros and tapas with a twist

When it's rainy, chilly, or just a bleak day, we often entertain ourselves with food. I mean, eating is great at any time, but there seems to be something about a miserable day that makes you feel peckish for a tasty gastronomic experience. Luckily, any street in the centre of Madrid is largely populated by tapas bars and restaurants. But these can too often feel very same-same.

When it comes to eating tapas and savouring every single taste because you have never tasted anything quite like it before, think: [LA MUSA](#). It's what foodie dreams are made of. Forget your standard croquette, and think *Croqueta 2.0*. Forget your standard patatas bravas, and think of *La Patata Bomba* filled with meat and served on bread crumbs and a magical pea puree. If you are lucky enough to go to [La Musa](#) you will enjoy the fusion of Asian and Spanish cuisines in one, revolutionary tapas menu. Find La Musa in both La Latina and Malasaña.



As well as typical Spanish bars, Madrid boasts a plethora of cool artisan cafes to choose from. Cosy up on a Central Perk

style sofa with a caramel macchiato and a slice of red velvet cake. There is always a buzz running through such places, whether that be from the coffee grinder or the many chatty customers: they really seem to be a hub for expats and travellers sheltering themselves from the drizzle. Some personal favourites in Malasaña include:



La Bicicleta: an industrial-chic, modern and artistic café with homemade cake and great coffee. It has a work station for those with laptops, and slowly transforms throughout the day from a bustling café to lively and casual bar by night. Here, I would recommend their **Chai Vanilla Latte** (not many places do it Madrid!) and a slice of **fluffy carrot cake**. Be careful not to head there in peak hours (2-5pm) as you will struggle for a table.



HanSo Café: a hidden gem. By hidden I mean there is literally no sign on its exterior. Inside it is pretty minimal too, with

concrete walls, floor and bar area. The grey tones are contrasted with the warm low-hanging lighting, and the soft sound of music and subtle smell of sourdough toast adds some atmosphere.

Fresh cakes are constantly brought out by HanSo's friendly owners, with some *postres* looking colourful and fruity with an Asian twist. There is a large central table for social hipsters and a few window seats for more private coffee dates. They have a never-ending list of frappes – so you will be spoilt for choice.

When you think of Madrid in cold or rainy weather, you will warmly dream of **chocolate con churros**. In fact, you can kill two birds with one stone. You get your daily dose of 'culture' by trying typical Spanish delicacies, whilst also satisfying your chocolate cravings...



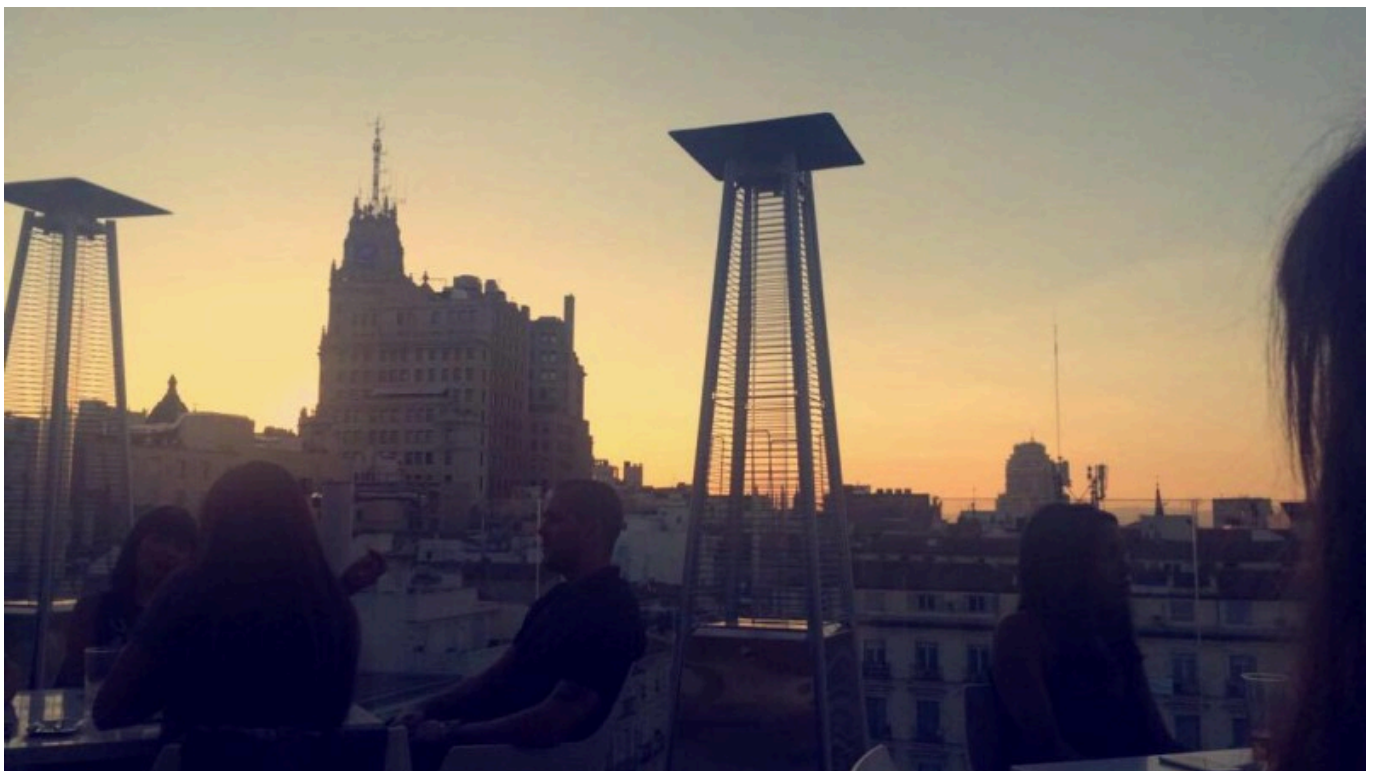
Artesanos 1902: 'La mejor churreria' – this churros joint stands wide and proud on Calle San Martín (between Sol and

Opera), complete with twinkly fairy lights that make it all the more inviting. What better way to spend your day eating churros than in a place that has made them their speciality for over 100 years?

They serve their rich chocolate accompaniment in either dark or milk flavours, and also have waffle and crêpe options just in case their mouth-watering churros don't tickle your fancy.

Still up high: panoramic views without getting soaked

One of Madrid's main attractions is the ability to take in the majestic skyline at sunset from one of its [many rooftop terraces](#). In the rain however, this is still possible! Just find somewhere *indoors* that is still high up with panoramic views of the city.



To many, **El Corte Ingles** is just a large department store with everything you may want from furniture to fashion. But it can also be on your list of 'things to see and do' in Madrid. The

9th floor in Sol is a foodie hub, with many street food stands and joints offering all types of world cuisines.

Called [Gourmet Experience](#), El Corte Ingles' 9th floor has cafes and restaurants with window tables that provide customers with an almost birds-eye view of the city. It provides a warm and dry haven to enjoy while feeling on top of the world.



[Mercado San Anton, Chueca](#): here you will find 4 floors of foodie market heaven, topped with a rooftop restaurant and bar. Fear not, 70% of this floor is covered to keep you dry from the rain, and you still feel as though you are high up in the city air with the ability to take in the views.



Faro de Moncloa: a viewpoint standing tall in the heart of Madrid's university district, Moncloa. Visitors have access to two panoramic lifts that will take them up to the 92-metres-high, glass viewing room. Although yes, a view so high of Madrid would probably look better on a sunnier day, it's still a tourist activity that grants a breathtaking view sheltered from rain or wind.

By night: secret gardens and sandy beaches

A problem with rain is that you can't access a sandy beach or an enchanted forest without getting soaked. That's where Madrid's bohemian and artistic student area, Malasaña comes in handy.



El Jardín Secreto: a bar disguised by indoor plants, trees, fairy-lights, unicorn heads, bird cages and swinging princess-style chairs. For a simple cocktail with friends, you can enter this enchanted world *and* keep dry from the rain. It's most definitely Instagram worthy: you won't be able to keep your eyes from gazing around the room at all the Midsummer-Night's-Dream-style décor.



Ojalá: a tastefully decorated cocktail bar and eatery upstairs, and a sandy beach downstairs. I don't know who came up with the idea to create an indoor beach bar, but it's genius. Relax on their floor level seating whilst running your hand through the sand and enjoying a nice copa, cocktail or milkshake. Who says Madrid doesn't have any beaches?!

So here you have it: just my personal selection of the endless activities available in this amazing city, during rainier weather. Other indoor pursuits include Madrid's many cinemas

and theatres, but the list could go on forever.

It is often way too easy to opt for a day in bed watching Netflix when the weather gets miserable, but that's no fun is it? You may be able to take advantage of Madrid's frequently fine weather and stunning outdoor spaces most of the time, but rainy Madrid weather brings with it the chance to discover quirky bars and cafes, taste amazing food and appreciate Spanish art in all its glory. Enjoy!

By Rosie Dowsing

You might also like:

- [Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid](#)
- [Madrid's Best Rooftop Bars](#)
- [Madrid's Obvious and Not-so-obvious Art Institutions](#)

Where to Dance Bachata and Salsa in Madrid

Always wanted to learn how to dance bachata but didn't want to pay high costs for private lessons? Well, look no further!

It is *muy de moda*, or very popular to dance bachata right now in Spain. Each year there seems to be more meet-up groups and more bars offering *noches de bachata* or *noches latinas*.

Located right by Templo de Debod, [The Host](#) offers three bachata classes followed by social dancing every Wednesday night.

For 8 euros you'll have entrance to the bar, access to three classes over the course of two hours and a drink (alcoholic or not) of your choice. You can choose to take all three classes or just one. If you're more of a "people watcher" there are plenty of seats at the bar and around the perimeter of the dance floor. Don't show up too early though because the first class starts when the bar opens at 9PM.



For new dancers, the first question often asked is "Do I need to bring a partner?" **You do not need to bring a partner but you can if you'd like!** The classes tend to begin with the basics, which everyone dances individually. Then, when you do partner up, the pairs rotate so often that by the end of the class you'll have danced with nearly everyone, you might even remember a few names or have made a new friend by the end of

the lesson. On this particular Wednesday, the classes were: modern bachata, Dominican bachata and lastly, sensual bachata.



After the classes end and the students watch or record as the dance instructors model all the steps learned, the social dancing starts! You get the chance to practice what you learned with friends from the class or meet others who are just arriving for the social dancing. The fun doesn't end until 3AM! **If you're more interested in salsa, you should join The Host on Thursdays for class (see below).** You'll also hear a little bit of salsa and kizomba throughout the night but Wednesdays are specifically for bachata at The Host!



Info

- Address: Calle Ferraz 38
- Metro: Argüelles / Ventura Rodriguez / Plaza España
- [Facebook](#)

Other classes at The Host:

Tuesday: Kizomba (classes 21:00-23:00 and social dancing until 3)

Wednesday: Bachata (classes 21:00- 23:00 and social dancing until 3)

Thursday: Salsa (classes 21:00-23:00 and social dancing until 3)

Friday: Bachata (classes 22:00-@24:00 and social dancing

until 5:30)

Facebook pages and groups on Madrid's salsa and bachata scene:

1. [Salsa Madrid](#) (page)
2. [Salsa Madrid](#) (group)

Here are some more salsa places to check out:

[Azucar:](#)

For 8 euro you can enjoy classes and a drink at Azucar near Metro Atocha. It is a smaller nightclub but brings in dancers of many levels.

[Tropical House:](#)

Near Metro Plaza de España is the best place to start dancing salsa or bachata as a beginner. Tropical also offers kizomba lessons on Fridays and Saturdays.

[Cats:](#)

On Sundays at Cats (now called Sala Mitty) you can dance salsa and bachata. The crowd is great and there's plenty of room to dance as it doesn't get completely packed.

[El Son:](#)

A close walk from Puerta del Sol, El Son offers classes from Monday through Thursday at 6 euro a class.

[La Negra Tomasa:](#)

In Sol but doesn't feel like it. Live Cuban music every night and although there isn't a lot of space to dance, if you love salsa music, La Negra Tomasa is a must.

You may also like: [Where to get fit in Madrid](#)

Go Crazy for Cannibal.

New restaurant openings (or in fact any kind of opening) within Madrid are pretty much ten a penny. When strolling round any of the barrios, you'd be hard pressed to not spy an exposed brick or a jam jar cocktail vying for your attention, in what's becoming an increasingly crammed marketplace.

However, there are some new spots that feel no need for fanfare and know full well that the masses are going to flock in their droves. [Cannibal](#) holds this covetable spot. The restaurant equivalent of someone tall, dark and handsome – Cannibal is poised to become the darling of the Madrid restaurant scene and you won't just need to take my word for it; you could ask anyone who was there last Saturday (when it was packed to the rafters).



Madrid non-newbies will remember that the site of Cannibal once housed the infamous brunch spot 'Cafe Oliver' and when it closed its doors, many mourned the loss. So imagine my excitement whilst on my daily walk to work when I spied renovations.



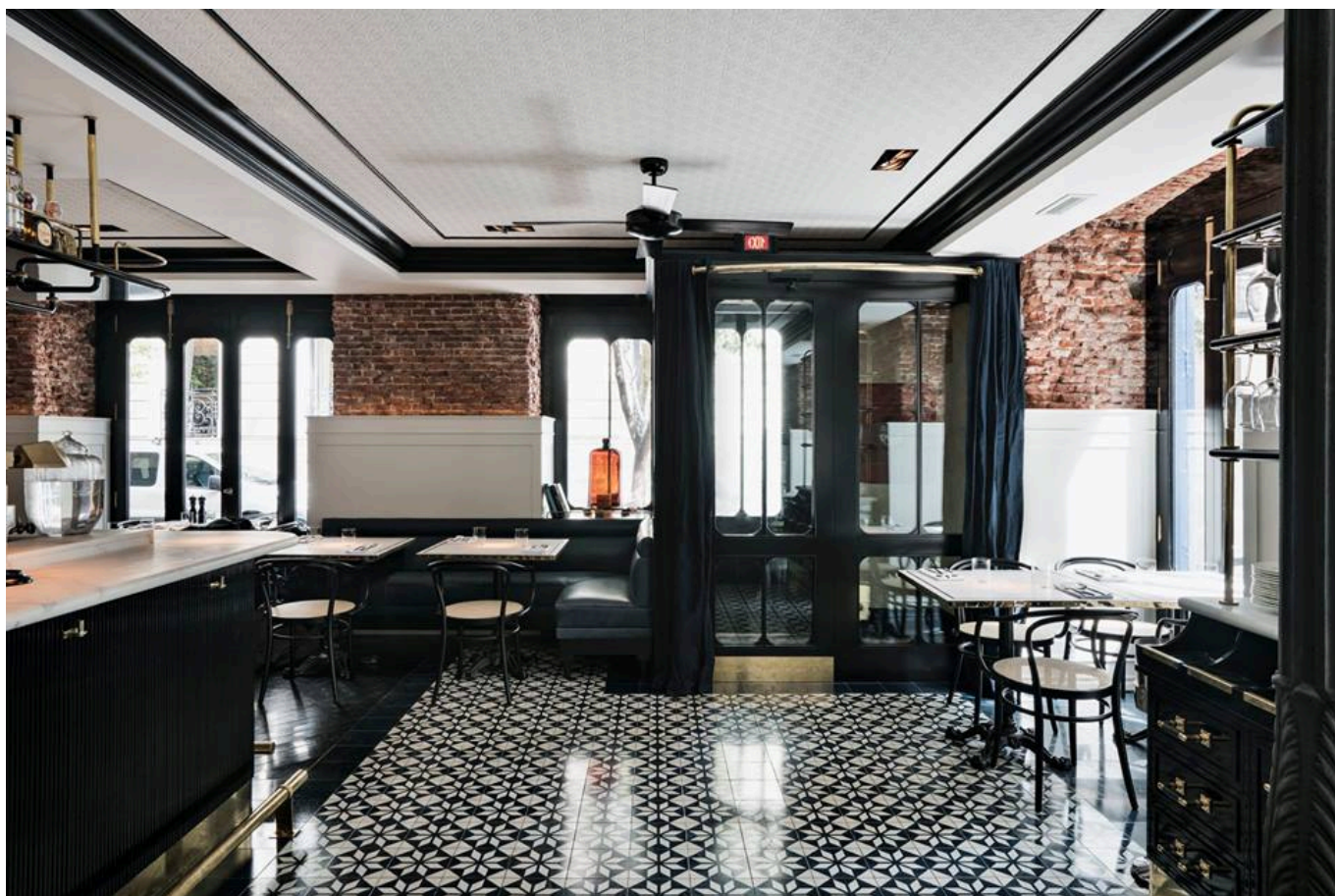
Now painted in an inky blue hue, the newly opened Cannibal is hard to miss. The name alludes to what's on offer dinner wise. The raw stuff. Tartare. Ceviche. Carpaccio. But don't despair if you're not a fan of the cold stuff, the menu offers a mean hamburger and THE most delish Peruvian Pork dish that was inhaled within mere minutes.



Now I could wax lyrical about just how good the food was – because it truly was. We're talking last meal type claims (if like me burrata and steak carpaccio is your idea of food heaven). But it wasn't just the food that had my company and

me swooning; it was the service.

In a country where asking for the bill is usually met with a grunt, the team at Cannibal couldn't have been more charming or attentive – much to the glee of my dinner companions. They happily talked through the menu with genuine interest, they were knowledgeable about ingredients and at no point were our glasses empty. I know this kind of vibe is to be expected in a country like the states, but in the land of jamon this is rare.



It goes without saying that the decor satiated my interiors porn thirst and it didn't hurt to have a window seat on a balmy evening, where you would people watch over your dulce de leche pud.



Like all restaurants reviews, I'm always torn between spreading the word and keeping schtum for fear of a place becoming busier than the Bernabeu on a match day, but the secret's out.



Embrace your inner cannibal and happy feasting. Who cares if it's bikini season with food that good? That's what kaftan's are for.

*All photos are from [Cannibal Raw Bar Madrid's FB page & Instagram](#)

Info

- [Facebook](#) & [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
 - **Address:** Calle Almirante., 12, 28004 Madrid
 - **Phone:** 910 26 87 94
 - **Metro:** Chueca, Colón, Banco de España
-

New Cucos, a family-style restaurant in Arturo Soria

Sometimes when I go out to have lunch or dinner I can't help but think that an important part of customer service is missing. So when I had dinner at New Cucos with my friend, when we went outside afterwards, we could only say how well we were treated and what a wonderful dinner we had.

New Cucos is a family-style restaurant in the neighborhood of Arturo Soria. This closeness and warmth can be seen in the way Juan (the owner) treats everyone who works there, as well as all the customers who are having dinner or lunch.

The restaurant is located on the quiet street of Arturo Soria. It is a large space with a perfect covered terrace for more intimate dinners or larger celebrations. The terrace provides a very cozy place where you can talk quietly without being bothered by the next table, and then there's also a smaller and equally cozy interior. The first day we decided to sit in inside, as Real Madrid was playing and we wanted to see the match. The second day we sat in the covered terrace, great decision.

The Food

New Cucos has a simple and traditional menu with very good quality ingredients. **The portions are generous, in fact, the most popular dishes on the menu are large sharing platters;** these can be great among a group of friends, or even just for two.

First we went for the warm burrata salad with cherry tomatoes. It was simply delicious. Great quality, never tried the burrata and I have to say I totally loved it.



Burrata Salad

Then we decided to try the spring rolls with vegetables and prawns – a highly recommended and delicious dish as well.



Spring rolls

By the time we had to eat our third dish, we were already full, but how can you say no to a plate of ravioli? These were filled with pumpkin and cheese sauce – simply spectacular and very rich. In fact the second time we went we couldn't help but order them again.



Ravioli

The second day we also ordered a delicious mixed salad. For me, nothing beats a well-prepared mixed salad.



Salad

As for the rest of the menu, in addition to the dishes to share, they have a small selection of fish and meat dishes. I have to say the South African ostrich burger looks delicious.

Prices are very reasonable. The first day we had three dishes, three glasses of wine and two beers for 47 euros. The second day our bill came out to 33 euros.

I'd also like to highlight once again that we received fantastic service both times we went; the staff was attentive, asking if everything was fine, and very importantly, without putting any pressure on us to leave. That sort of thing is very noticeable and makes your dinner even better.

Nothing else to add, **New Cucos** points out on Twitter: *"eat and drink in an oasis"* And I couldn't agree more.

So, *"Mucha mierda"* (or "break a leg") to Juan and the rest of his family. I'm sure we'll see each other again soon!

Info

- *Where: Calle Arturo Soria 84*
 - *Metro: Arturo Soria*
 - *Tf: 913774039*
 - [Twitter](#)
 - *Monday to Saturday 11 to 1.*
-

Superhero Exhibit at Museo ABC

Get a chance to see the history of Spanish drawings (almost 200 original works by 47 Spanish artists) of the biggest superheroes such as Superman, Batman, and Spiderman in the upcoming superhero exhibit at [Museo ABC](#). Explore how the figures were brought to life in the Spanish depictions of the American classics.

Breaking it to your parents that you're not going home (yet)

This is the time of year when many of us are forced to ask ourselves daunting questions such as: *Who am I? Where am I going? What am I doing with my life? Should I stay or should I go? Can I be this happy anywhere else? Am I happy now? Should*

I continue my education? Should I start my career? Should I be closer to my family?

More often than not, we opt to *mañana mañana* these questions until this time next year by renewing our contracts as teaching assistants, switching Auxiliar programs, or continuing to hustle however we hustle and upholding the status quo of tapas, terrazas, low rent, and budget-friendly hedonism.



It is often difficult to break the news of your decision to stay abroad to your parents, especially if they believe with conviction that the *American Dream* is not only feasible, but that the pursuit of it is the only respectable way to live.

What your parents might expect of you:

While success is subjective across generations and cultures, for many American parents the epitome of success for their offspring can entail any of the following:

- Acquiring a fancy masters degree and/or PhD
- Commitment to an uphill career path, working 65-80 hours per week
- Marriage to another real adult with ambition and drive so that you can be a power couple
- Owning a house and a fondue set for entertaining guests
- Being able to do your own taxes and paperwork
- Assorted antiquated concepts of normalcy that you are critical of after growing accustomed to a simpler life that is lived on your own terms.



Some families want to have, or feel that they deserve, a say in the decision-making process of their progeny to steer them away from a life of permanent squalor. Understandably their patience for the *mañana mañana* mindset will inevitably run thin. With each additional year that their beloved child

spends teaching abroad, earning a wage that would be considered below poverty-level in the United States, parents will inevitably go through the stages of grief for their child's futures as they were once envisioned.

Disclaimer: I'm well aware that there is no one-size-fits-all relationship between parents and kin. Just as there are parents who do not attempt to sway their offspring in any direction, there are kin who do not care whether or not their parents approve of their lifestyle.

What your parents might say and how to respond:

Below are some predicted comments from your parents that will indicate what stage of grief they are in, accompanied by an advisable response to help them manage their expectations.

Denial: "This is just a phase, you'll outgrow it."

- With Hemingway-esque detail, explain in depth your passion for your adopted city
- Perhaps Madrid stimulates you creatively in a way that is unmatched anywhere else
- Maybe your heart was stolen by a person, or the cuisine
- Teaching English is fulfilling (or at least more tolerable than any alternative)
- Once you leave, the neighboring European countries will never again be this accessible

Anger: "You're out of touch with reality. TEFLing is not a Real Job™."

- You are constantly learning via exposure to other languages, cultures and ways of life

- You have either achieved bilingual status or are making progress towards it
- Your overworked friends back home often send you envious messages
- You are still nurturing valuable resume skills in your teaching jobs:
 - the ability to speak publicly, projecting your voice without fear
 - generating clients and operating your own brand with *clases particulares*
 - often adapting to changing circumstances
- Ask them to elaborate on what a real job entails and why having one is so important, seeing as it is common for elderly folks on their deathbeds to voice regretting the amount of time that they spent at the office
- Side effects of chasing the American dream include delusion, anxiety, and alienation



Bargaining: “You can live at home with us

while you get back on your feet, use the car and eat our food. We'll keep the kitchen stocked with bagels."

- Express gratitude but don't waver in the face of temptation



Depression: "We had such high hopes for you."

- When faced with their disappointment, remind them that you have your own hopes and dreams, albeit unconventional ones.
- Reiterate that you love and appreciate them despite not seeing eye-to-eye on these matters
- Stress that while their approval is important to you, it would be a necessary sacrifice if weighed against the life abroad that you have created

Acceptance: "Ok, make your own choices."

We trust your judgment.”

- At this stage thank them for their council throughout your decision-making process.

Although I'm certain that we collectively do not want Donald Trump to rise to the presidency, it would at least make a non-issue of the *Should I stay or Should I go* debate. Please feel free to share your own experiences breaking the news to your parents in the comment section!

You may also like:

- [Where to take your mom in Madrid](#)
 - [The quest for good bagels in Madrid](#)
 - [A window into the life of a Senegalese migrant in Lavapiés](#)
 - [Jewish culture in Madrid](#)
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The Orange Dogs of Halloween – Party at Desperate Literature

Want to do something different this **halloween in Madrid**? Then head over to [Desperate Literature](#), a charming little bookstore near Opera, and wear your best costume. Marian Womack, editor of Ediciones Nevsky, translator and sci-fi legend, will be ushering in the halloween festivities with a reading of her most recent work, 'Orange Dogs'. There be all the usual tricks and treats, meaning **booze**.

Dress code: cosmic horror.