

EATING

top picks

- **Restaurante Sobrino de Botín** (p160)
The world's oldest restaurant – simple as that.
- **Casa Revuelta** (p161)
Outstanding tapas of cod in a very Madrid atmosphere.
- **Santceloni** (p180)
Michelin-starred dining for a special occasion.
- **Almendra 13** (p165)
Perhaps our favourite Madrid tapas bar.
- **Corazon Loco** (p165)
Creative tapas in the heart of La Latina.
- **Bazaar** (p175)
Clean lines and celebrity diners in Chueca's hottest restaurant.
- **Sula Madrid** (p169)
Designer food in designer surrounds.
- **La Musa** (p172)
Malasaña cool with surprising food combinations.
- **Nina** (p171)
Sophisticated Malasaña restaurant with a touch of class.

What's your recommendation? www.lonelyplanet.com/madrid

After holding fast to its rather unexciting local cuisine for centuries (aided, it must be said, by loyal locals who never saw the need for anything else), Madrid has finally become one of Europe's culinary capitals.

There's everything to be found here, not least the rich variety of regional Spanish specialities from across the country. This is a city that grew and became great because of the immigrants from all over Spain who made Madrid their home. On their journey to the capital, these immigrants carried with them recipes and ingredients from their villages, thereby bequeathing to the city an astonishing variety of regional flavours that you just don't find anywhere else. Travel from one Spanish village to the next and you'll quickly learn that each has its own speciality. Travel to Madrid and you'll find them all. Throw in some outstanding restaurants serving international cuisine and the choice of where to eat well is almost endless.

There's not a barrio where you can't find a great meal. Restaurants in Malasaña, Chueca and Huertas range from glorious old *tabernas* (taverns) to boutique eateries across all price ranges. For more classically elegant surrounds, Paseo del Prado, El Retiro, Salamanca and Northern Madrid are generally pricey but of the highest standard and ideal for a special occasion or for spotting royalty and celebrities. In the central barrios of Los Austrias, Sol and Centro, as is their wont, there's a little bit of everything. Splendid tapas bars abound everywhere, but La Latina is the undoubted king.

Almost more than the myriad tastes on offer, however, is the buzz that accompanies eating that defines the city as a gastronomic experience. In Madrid eating is not a functional pastime to be squeezed in between other more important tasks; instead it is one of life's great pleasures, a social event always taken seriously enough to allocate hours for the purpose and to be savoured like all good things in life.

In January Spain's most prestigious chefs arrive in town to showcase the latest innovations in Spain's world-famous cuisine at the [Madrid Fusion](http://www.madridfusion.net) (www.madridfusion.net) gastronomy summit.

HISTORY

Medieval Madrid was a simple place. On the bleak *meseta* (plateau) of inland Spain, food was a necessity, good food a luxury, and the dishes that developed were functional and well suited to a climate dominated by interminable, bitterly cold winters. Most madrileños scraped by on a limited diet, the staple of which was cereals (often barley). Bread was a rarity, as was meat. Fruit and vegetables, typically grown along the Manzanares, were by no means available to all. Olive oil was an expensive luxury.

With little to contribute of its own, Madrid became dependent on emerging cuisines from elsewhere in Spain and from its colonies in Latin America. Slowly but surely, dishes from across Spain – paella from Valencia, *marisco* (seafood) and *pescado* (fish) from Galicia and Andalucía, the many and varied uses of *bacalao* (cod), *solomillo* (steak) and *pimientos* (peppers) to name a few – made their way to the capital. As Madrid grew in wealth, meat was added to the diet, especially *cordero asado* (roast lamb), *cochinillo* (suckling pig), *jamón* (ham), chorizo (seasoned pork sausage), *lomo* (loin, usually pork) and *salchichón* (salami-like sausage).

WOULD YOU LIKE SMOKE WITH THAT, SIR?

If you're from a country where smoking is banned in restaurants, you're in for a rude shock in Madrid.

Since 1 January 2006 all Spanish bars, restaurants, offices and other enclosed public places have, in theory, become subject to strict antismoking legislation. Smoking is now banned in all workplaces, schools (like they had to ban this?), sports and cultural centres, and on public transport. The law also extends to bars and restaurants, although these have an opt-out clause, and therein lies the key. Those establishments over 100 sq metres must have designated smoking areas, while smaller bars must make a choice – ban smoking or make the bar off-limits to children. In practice, and despite polls showing that a majority of Spaniards supports the law, many restaurants and most bars remain dominated by *zonas de fumadores* (smoking sections).

THE ORIGIN OF TAPAS

Medieval Spain was a land of isolated settlements and people on the move – traders, pilgrims, emigrants and journeymen – who had to cross the lonely high plateau of Spain en route elsewhere. All along the route, travellers holed up in isolated inns where innkeepers, concerned about drunken men on horseback setting out from their village, developed a tradition of putting a *tapa* (lid) of food atop a glass of wine or beer. Their purpose was partly to keep the bugs out, but primarily to encourage people not to drink on an empty stomach.

In this sense, little has changed and the *tapa* continues to serve the dual purposes of lid and sustenance to enable you to develop new levels of stamina during long Spanish nights.

Over time Madrid has become one of the biggest fish- and seafood-consuming cities in the world; it's often said that Madrid is the best 'port' in Spain. In the early days this meant *bacalao* was carried by horse-drawn cart from the coast. Nowadays, tonnes of fish and seafood are trucked in daily from Mediterranean and Atlantic ports to satisfy the madrileño taste for the sea.

ETIQUETTE

Spanish waiters – love them or hate them, they're unlikely to leave you indifferent. In smarter establishments waiters are often young, attentive and switched on to the needs of patrons. In more traditional places waiting is a career, often a poorly paid one, which is the preserve of old men (sometimes one old man, sometimes one grumpy old man) in white jackets and bow ties and for whom service with a smile is not part of the job description. In such places, they shuffle amid the tables, the weight of the world upon their shoulders, struggling with what seems a Sisyphean task. Getting their attention can be a challenge. On the other hand, they know their food and, if you speak Spanish, can help tailor your order in the best possible way.

If you're just eating tapas, in many bars you can either take a small plate and help yourself or point to the morsel you want. If you do this, it's customary to keep track of what you eat (by holding on to the toothpicks for example) and then tell the barman when it comes time to pay. Otherwise you can order a *media ración* (half ration) or a full *ración* from the menu. In some bars you'll also get a small (free) *tapa* when you buy a drink.

In simpler restaurants you may keep the same knife and fork throughout the meal. As each course is finished you set the cutlery aside and the waiter whisks away the plates.

Don't jump out of your seats if people passing your table address you with a hearty '*buen provecho!*' They're just saying 'Enjoy your meal!'

And if you're in a bar, don't be surprised to see people throwing their serviettes and olive stones on the floor – you might as well join them because a waiter will come around from time to time to sweep them all up.

SPECIALITIES

Madrileños love their food. When the weather turns chilly, that means *legumbres* (legumes), such as *garbanzos* (chickpeas), *judías* (beans) and *lentejas* (lentils). Hearty stews are the order of the day and there are none more hearty than *cocido a la madrileña*; it's a kind of hotpot or stew that starts with a noodle broth and is followed by, or combined with – there are as many ways of eating *cocido* as there are madrileños – carrots, chickpeas, chicken, *morcilla* (blood sausage) beef, lard and possibly other sausage meats, too. *Repollo* (cabbage) sometimes makes an appearance. Madrileños love *cocido*. They dream of it while they're away from home and they wonder why it hasn't caught on elsewhere. There was even a hit song written about it in the 1950s. However, we'll put this as gently as we can: you

top picks

MADRID SPECIALITIES & WHERE TO FIND THEM

- *Cocido a la madrileña* (Madrid stew) – *Taberna La Bola* (p160), *Malacatín* (p164), *Lhardy* (p166) or *La Tasca Suprema* (p175)
- *Callos a la madrileña* (tripe casserole with chorizo and chillies) – *Oliveros* (p164) or *Casa Revuelta* (p161)
- *Sopa de ajo* or *sopa castellana* (garlic broth with floating egg and bread) – *Posada de la Villa* (see the boxed text, p163)
- *Chocolate con churros* (deep-fried doughnut strips dipped in hot chocolate) – *El Brillante* (p168) or *Chocolatería de San Ginés* (p186)
- *Bocadillo de calamares* (a roll stuffed with calamari) – *Cervecería Compañero* (p162)

have to be a madrileño to understand what all the fuss is about because it may be filling but it's not Spain's most exciting dish.

Other popular staples in Madrid include *cordero asado* (roast lamb), *patatas con huevos fritos* (baked potatoes with eggs), *tortilla de patatas* (a thick potato omelette) and endless variations on *bacalao*.

VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Pure vegetarianism remains something of an alien concept in most Spanish kitchens; cooked vegetable dishes, for example, often contain ham. That said, Madrid has a growing cast of vegetarian restaurants. Even in those restaurants that serve meat or fish dishes, salads are a Spanish staple and, in some places, can be a meal in themselves. You'll also come across the odd vegetarian paella, as well as dishes such as *verduras a la plancha* (grilled vegetables), *garbanzos con espinacas* (chickpeas and spinach) and numerous potato dishes, such as *patatas bravas* (potato chunks bathed in spicy tomato sauce) and the *tortilla de patatas* (potato and onion omelette). The prevalence of legumes ensures that *lentejas* and *judías* are also easy to track down, while *pan* (bread), *quesos* (cheeses), *alcachofas* (artichokes) and *aceitunas* (olives) are always easy to find. If vegetarianism is rare among Spaniards, vegans will feel as if they've come from another planet. However, some of the established vegetarian restaurants may have certain vegan dishes; otherwise, an option is self-catering (see [opposite](#)).

COOKING COURSES

There are plenty of places to learn Spanish cooking. In most cases, you'll need at least passable Spanish, but some run special classes for English speakers.

top picks

FOR VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

- La Isla del Tesoro (p171)
- El Estragón (p164)
- La Gallette (p170)
- Restaurante Integral Artemisa (p167)
- Viva La Vida (p165)
- La Biotika (p168)

OPENING HOURS

In this chapter, 'lunch' means a venue is open 1pm to 4pm, and 'dinner' means 8.30pm to midnight; exceptions are noted in reviews.

Alambique (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 547 42 20; www.alambique.com; Plaza de la Encarnación 2; 🚗 Ópera or Santo Domingo) Cooking classes start at around €50, with English-speaking courses from €70.

Cooking Club (Map p123; ☎ 91 323 29 58; www.club-cooking.com, in Spanish; Calle de Veza 33; 🚗 Valdeacederas) The regular, respected programme of classes encompasses a range of cooking styles.

La Maison (Map pp110–11; ☎ cooking 620 566 676, wine 649 803 283; www.lamaison.es, in Spanish; 3rd fl, Calle de San Mateo 26; 🚗 by appointment; 🚗 Alonso Martínez or Tribunal) Try creative cooking and wine classes (around €25 per class) as part of this fascinating designer/decoration/artist space.

Gaudeamus Café (p188) International and occasionally local cooking courses.

PRACTICALITIES

Most visitors complain not about the quality of Spanish food but about its timing. *Comida/almuerzo* (lunch) rarely begins before 2pm (restaurant kitchens usually open from 1pm until 4pm), and for *cena* (dinner) few madrileños would dream of turning up before 9.30pm, although restaurants open 8.30pm to midnight, later on weekends. On weekends some restaurants take reservations for two sittings, one starting at 9pm, the other at 11pm! Stay in Madrid long enough and you'll soon get used to it.

In the intervening hours, many bars serve tapas and *raciones* throughout the day. *Bocadillos* (filled rolls, usually without butter) are another option. Cafés tend to open from 8am or 9am through to at least 9pm, and often to midnight or beyond if they double as bars. Most restaurants are shut on Christmas Eve and many on New Year's Eve (or Christmas Day and New Year's Day), while some have a night off on Sunday and many don't open at all on Monday. Some close over Easter and a good many shut for at least part of August as well.

Desayuno (breakfast) is generally a non-nonsense affair taken at a bar on the way to work. A *café con leche* (half coffee and half warm milk) with a *bollo* (pastry) is the

MENÚ DEL DÍA

One great way to cap prices at lunchtime Monday to Friday is to order the *menú del día*, a full set meal (usually with several options), water, bread and wine. These meals start from around €8.50, although €10 and up is increasingly the norm. You'll be given a menu with five or six entrées, the same number of mains and a handful of desserts – choose one from each category and don't even think of mixing and matching.

The philosophy behind the *menú del día* is that, during the working week, few madrileños have time to go home to have their lunch. Taking a packed lunch is just not the done thing, so the majority of people end up eating in restaurants, and all-inclusive three-course meals are as close as they can get to eating home-style food without breaking the bank.

typical breakfast. Croissants or a cream-filled pastry are also common. Some people prefer a savoury start – try a *sandwich mixto*, a toasted ham and cheese; a Spanish *tostada* is simply buttered toast. Others, especially party animals heading home at dawn after a night out, go for an all-Spanish favourite, *chocolate con churros*, a deep-fried stick of plain pastry immersed in thick hot chocolate.

A full meal generally comprises an *entrante* (entrée), *plato principal* (main course) and *postre* (dessert). Bread is routinely served with meals, but you pay extra for it (usually around €1.20). If you can't face a full menu, a simpler option is the *plato combinado*, basically a meat-and-three-veg dish that will hardly excite taste buds but will have little fiscal impact.

In the following pages a 'meal' is understood to mean an entrée, main course and dessert, including a little modestly priced wine. Prices have risen pretty steadily in Madrid over the past few years, but eating out here is still cheaper than in most other major European cities.

At many of the midrange restaurants and simpler taverns with *comedores* (dining rooms) you can generally turn up and find a spot without booking ahead. You should reserve a table at sit-down restaurants, especially on Friday or Saturday night.

PRICE GUIDE

Throughout this chapter, restaurants are listed according to the barrio (area of Madrid), then by price range from most expensive to least expensive, then in alphabetical order. Each place is accompanied by one of the following symbols:

€€€	more than €50 a meal per person
€€	€20–50 a meal per person
€	less than €20 a meal per person

Tipping

A service charge is generally calculated into most bills in Madrid, so any further tipping is a matter of personal choice. Spaniards themselves are pretty stingy when it comes to tipping and often leave no more than €1 per person or nothing more than small change. If you're particularly happy, 5% on top would be fine.

Self-Catering

Some of the better food markets in town:

Mercado de la Cebada (Map pp76–7; Plaza de la Cebada; 🕒 9am–2pm & 5–8pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2.30pm Sat; 🚗 La Latina) Slated for major renovations.

Mercado de la Paz (Map pp102–3; off Calle de Alcalá; 🕒 9am–8pm Mon–Sat; 🚗 Serrano)

Mercado de San Miguel (Map pp64–5; Plaza de San Miguel; 🕒 9am–2.30pm & 5.15–8.15pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2.30pm Sat; 🚗 Sol) Currently under renovation.

Other specialist food stores include Maison Blanche (p152) and Mantequería Bravo (p140). For Spanish and other European cheeses, **Poncelet** (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 308 02 21; www.poncelet.es, in Spanish; Calle de Argensola 27; 🕒 10.30am–8.30pm Mon–Sat; 🚗 Alonso Martínez) should be your first stop.

For more international flavours, try:

Cavatappi (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 446 98 85; Calle de Gonzalo de Córdoba 6; 🕒 11am–3pm & 5–9pm Mon–Fri, 11am–3pm Sat; 🚗 Quevedo) Freshly made pasta and other Italian delicacies.

Plaisir Gourmet (p152) Products from all over the world.

Taste of America (Map p123; ☎ 91 562 16 32; Calle de Serrano 149; 🕒 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, 10am–9pm Sat; 🚗 República Argentina)

Things You Miss (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 447 07 85; www.thingsyoumiss.com; Calle de Juan de Austria 11; 🕒 9.30am–2.30pm & 5–8.30pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2.30pm Sat Sep–Jul; 🚗 Iglesia or Bilbao) For all things British.

LOS AUSTRIAS, SOL & CENTRO

From the world's oldest restaurant to down-tempo fusion places, from regional tapas to Asian flavours, from old Spanish bars where the ambience owes everything to impromptu theatre to brightly painted vegetarian restaurants, downtown Madrid has a little bit of everything. This is the part of the capital where you're most likely to find English menus (which we welcome), as well as loads of places with brightly photographed paellas out the front (of which we're always suspicious). Around here, you'll also find waiters roaming outside spruiking for business – we haven't listed such places here because if they're good, they'll be filled with locals anyway.

TABERNA DEL ALABARDERO

Map pp64–5 Tapas €€
☎ 91 547 25 77; Calle de Felipe V 6; meals €40-45; M Ópera

This fine old Madrid *taberna* is famous for its *montaditos de jamón* or *bonito* (small rolls of cured ham or tuna) in the bar, while out the back the more classic cuisine includes fine *croquetas* (croquettes), *morcilla* (blood sausage) and *rabo de toro* (bull's tail, usually in a stew). Prices aren't cheap, but Madrid's notoriously fussy diners generally accept that it's worth it.

RESTAURANTE SOBRINO DE BOTÍN

Map pp64–5 Spanish €€
☎ 91 366 42 17; www.botin.es; Calle de los Cuchilleros 17; set menu €37, meals €35-45; M La Latina or Sol

It's not every day that you can eat in the oldest restaurant in the world (the *Guinness Book of Records* has recognised it as the oldest – established in 1725) that has also appeared in many novels about Madrid,

most notably Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. The secret of its staying power is fine *cochinillo* (€21.10) and *cerdo asado* (€21.10) cooked in wood-fired ovens. Eating in the vaulted cellar is a treat. Yes, it's filled with tourists. And yes, staff are keen to keep things ticking over and there's little chance to linger. But the novelty value is high and the food excellent.

LA VIUDA BLANCA Map pp64–5 Fusion €€

☎ 91 548 75 29; www.laviudablanca.com; Calle de Campomanes 6; menú del día €13.50, meals €35-40; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Mon; M Ópera Calle de Campomanes is fast becoming one of central Madrid's coolest streets, and La Viuda Blanca is an essential part of its charm. The dining room is flooded with sunshine through the glass roof by day, the crowd is young and trendy, and the cooking of madrileño chef César Augusto is filled with flavour; try, for example, the rice with mushrooms from Madrid's Sierra de Guadarrama and tiger prawns or duck with caramelised apple and raspberries in pastry.

TABERNA LA BOLA Map pp64–5 Madrileño €€

☎ 91 547 69 30; www.labola.es; Calle de la Bola 5; meals €30-35; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; M Santo Domingo

In any poll of food-loving locals seeking the best and most traditional Madrid cuisine, Taberna La Bola (going strong since 1880) always features near the top. We're inclined to agree and if you're going to try *cocido a la madrileña* (€20) at some stage while you're in Madrid, this is a good place to do so (although we'd only recommend it in winter). It's busy and noisy and very Madrid. It serves other Madrid specialities, such as *callos* (tripe, but which the website translates as callouses...) and *sopa de ajo*.

LA GLORIA DE MONTERA

Map pp64–5 Spanish €€
☎ 91 523 44 07; Calle del Caballero de Grcia 10; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; M Gran Vía La Gloria de Montera combines classy décor with eminently reasonable prices. It's not that the food is especially creative, but rather the tastes are fresh and the surroundings sophisticated, and you'll get a good initiation into Spanish cooking without paying over the odds. It doesn't take reservations, so turn up early or be prepared to wait.

PINK SUSHIMAN Map pp64–5 Japanese €€

☎ 91 360 56 08; www.pinksushiman.com; Calle de Caballero de Gracia 8; meals €15-25; ☎ 1.30pm-midnight daily; M Gran Vía The revolving sushi bar has finally arrived in Madrid. Other Japanese restaurants may have this, but they're restaurants first and foremost, whereas Pink Sushiman is more like a fast and cheerful tapas bar with modern décor. Colour-coded sushi plates cost €1.50 to €4.50, although the weekday lunchtime choice of any five for €9.90 is a steal. It also cooks noodle dishes to order.

YERBABUENA Map pp64–5 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 548 08 11; www.yerbabuena.ws, in Spanish; Calle de Bordadores 3; set menu €12, meals €15-25; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; M Sol or Ópera Cheerful bright colours, a full range of vegetarian staples (vegetable sausages, soya-bean hamburgers, biological rice and home-made yogurt) and plenty of creatively conceived salads add up to one of central Madrid's best restaurants for vegetarians. The *alubias de Tolosa* (white Navarran beans) cooked Mexican style is a good choice.

BANGKOK CAFÉ Map pp64–5 Thai €

☎ 91 559 16 96; 1st fl, Calle de Bordadores 15; meals €15-20; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; M Sol or Ópera Great Thai food, reasonable prices, good service and a Thai-style dining area make for a terrific meal in the heart of town. If you're lucky, you'll get one of the tables overlooking the busy pedestrian thoroughfare of Calle del Arenal. Unusually for Madrid, it's a wholly nonsmoking restaurant.

CASA LABRA Map pp64–5 Tapas €

☎ 91 531 00 81; www.casalabra.es; Calle de Tetuán 11; meals €15-20; ☎ 11am-3.30pm & 6-11pm; M Sol Casa Labra has been going strong since 1860, an era that the décor strongly evokes. Locals love their *bacalao* and ordering it here (either as deep-fried tapas or croquetas) is a Madrid rite of initiation. This is also a bar with history – it was here that the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE; Spanish Socialist Party) was formed on 2 May 1879. It was a favourite of Lorca, the poet, as well as appearing in Pío Baroja's novel *La Busca*. It's the sort of place that fathers bring their sons as their fathers did before them in what has become a rite of madrileño passage.

CASA REVUELTA Map pp64–5 Tapas €

☎ 91 366 33 32; Calle de Latoneros 3; meals €15-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; M Sol or La Latina Casa Revuelta puts out Madrid's finest tapas of *bacalao* bar none. While aficionados of Casa Labra may disagree, the fact that the octogenarian owner, Señor Revuelta, painstakingly extracts every fish bone in the morning and serves as a waiter in the afternoon wins the argument for us. Early on a Sunday afternoon, as the Rastro crowd gathers here, it's filled to the rafters, although old locals who've been coming here for decades always manage to find room. It's also famous for its *callos*, *torreznos* (bacon bits) and *albóndigas* (meatballs).

MUSEO DEL JAMÓN Map pp64–5 Spanish €

☎ 91 531 45 50; www.museodeljamon.com, in Spanish; Calle Mayor 7; meals €10-20; ☎ 8am-midnight; M Sol Famous for having appeared in Pedro Almodóvar's 1997 film *Carne Trémula* (Live Flesh), and equally beloved by first-time visitors to Spain for the sight of hundreds of hams hanging from the ceiling, Museo del Jamón is definitely a local landmark. Prices range from €2.50 up to €15.50, depending on the quality, for a plate of *jamón*.

FAST GOOD Map pp64–5 Healthy Fast Food €

www.fast-good.com, in Spanish; Calle de Tetuán 2; meals €10; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; M Sol When Ferran Adrià, the star Catalan chef, became concerned about Spaniards' growing obsession with fast food, he decided to do something about it. Fast Good is a wonderfully simple concept (food that's fast but healthy) and it's a terrific place to get a freshly prepared hamburger using Spanish ground beef with olive tapenade, roast chicken, sandwiches with Spanish ham, paninis, or French fries cooked in fresh olive oil. We also love the curvy white and lime-green décor. There's another *Fast Good* (Map pp102–3; Calle de Juan Bravo 3; ☎ noon-5pm & 8pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 12.30-5.30pm & 8pm-midnight Sat & Sun; M Núñez de Balboa) in Salamanca.

CERVECERÍA 100 MONTADITOS

Map pp64–5 Bocadillos €
☎ 902 197 494; www.cerveceria100montaditos.com; Calle Mayor 22; meals €5-10; M Sol

top picks

EAT STREETS

- Calle de la Cava Baja (see the boxed text, p163)
- Calle de Manuela Malasaña (see the boxed text, p171)
- Calle de la Libertad (see the boxed text, p177)

CULINARY TOURS OF MADRID

If you'd like an insider's take on Madrid's (often lesser-known) tapas restaurants, **Adventurous Appetites** (☎ 639 331 073; www.adventurousappetites.com; 4hr tour incl 1st drink €50, food extra; 🍷 8pm-midnight Mon-Sat) runs English-language tours through central Madrid from the bear statue in Puerta del Sol.

Another good choice is **Letango Tours** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 91 369 47 52; www.letango.com; 3hr tour incl light tapas Mon-Fri €95, Sat & Sun €135).

This bar with outlets all across the city serves up no fewer than 100 different varieties of mini-*bocadillos* (filled rolls, without butter) that span the full range of Spanish staples, such as chorizo, *jamón*, *tortilla*, a variety of cheeses and seafood, in more combinations than you could imagine; there are even four possibilities with chocolate. Each one costs a princely €1.20 and four will satisfy most stomachs. You fill out your order, take it up to the counter and your name is called in no time. Menus in English are available.

CERVECERÍA COMPANO

Map pp64-5 Bocadillos €
Calle de Botaneros; bocadillos €2.30; 🍷 lunch & dinner until late; 🇲🇸 Sol

Spanish bars don't come any more basic than this, but it's the purveyor of an enduring and wildly popular Madrid tradition – a *bocadillo de calamares* at any hour of the day or night. If it's closed, which is rare, Bar La Ideal next door is the same deal.

LA LATINA & LAVAPIÉS

Although facing stiff competition elsewhere, La Latina is simply the best barrio in Madrid for tapas. If you're only planning one tapas crawl while in town, do it here. It also ranks with Malasaña and Chueca for stylish dining and innovative cooking; take your pick of any of the restaurants around Calle de la Cava Baja and you won't leave disappointed.

Lavapiés is more eclectic and multicultural and, generally speaking, the further down the hill you go, the better it gets, especially along Calle de Arguosa.

EL ALBOROQUE Map pp76-7 Spanish Fusion €€€
☎ 91 389 65 70 or 902 203 025; www.alboroque.es in Spanish; Calle de Atocha 34; meals €55-80;

🍷 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat; 🇲🇸 Antón Martín or Tirso de Molina

The new home kitchen of Madrid's hottest home-grown chef, Andrés Madrigal, is all that you'd expect from a temple of gastronomy, with experiments in flavours and textures that never miss a beat. Dishes like cherry gazpacho, smoked crayfish with cardamom and pear, and rocket and parmesan ice cream are the star turns, but everything's a revelation. The evening set menu for €55 gives you a range of the chef's latest experiments. Fine wines and a refined setting in a mid-19th-century palace make it one of Madrid's best new restaurants.

CASA LUCIO Map pp76-7 Spanish €€

☎ 91 365 32 52; www.casalucio.es, in Spanish; Calle de la Cava Baja 35; meals €40-50; 🍷 lunch & dinner Sun-Fri, dinner Sat Sep-Jul; 🇲🇸 La Latina Lucio has been wowing madrileños with his light touch, quality ingredients and home-style local cooking for ages – think seafood, roasted meats and, a Lucio speciality, eggs in abundance. There's also *rabo de toro* during the Fiestas de San Isidro Labrador and plenty of rioja to wash away the mere thought of it. Casa Lucio draws an august, always well-dressed crowd, which has included the King of Spain, former US president Bill Clinton and Penélope Cruz.

ENE RESTAURANTE

Map pp76-7 Tapas & Fusion €€
☎ 91 366 25 91; www.enerestaurante.com; Calle del Nuncio 19; meals €30-35, brunch €20; 🇲🇸 La Latina Just across from Iglesia de San Pedro El Viejo, one of Madrid's oldest churches, Ene

top picks

TAPAS

- Sagarretxe (p179)
- Biotza (p170)
- Taberna Txacoli (p165)
- Almendro 13 (p165)
- Taberna Matritum (p164)
- Juanalaloca (opposite)
- Txirimiri (p164)
- Casa Lucas (p164)
- Baco y Beto (p176)
- Bocoito (p176)

EAT STREETS – CALLE DE LA CAVA BAJA

Calle de la Cava Baja (Map pp76-7; 🇲🇸 La Latina) is jam-packed with great tapas bars and sit-down restaurants. For tapas, there is none finer than **Taberna Txacoli** (p165), **La Chata** (below) and **Casa Lucas** (p164). Other outstanding choices include **La Camarilla** (☎ 91 354 02 07; www.lacamarillarestaurante.com, in Spanish; Calle de la Cava Baja 21; meals €25-30, tapas tasting menu €17.90; 🍷 lunch & dinner Mon, Tue & Thu-Sat, lunch Sun; 🇲🇸 La Latina) and the Galician cuisine of **Orixe** (☎ 91 354 04 11; www.orixerestaurante.com, in Spanish; Calle de la Cava Baja 17; meals €25-30; 🍷 dinner Mon-Fri, lunch & dinner Sat, lunch Sun; 🇲🇸 La Latina).

For a sit-down meal, it's difficult to beat **Casa Lucio** (opposite), but other bastions of tradition worth splashing out for include the Madrid-through-and-through **Posada de la Villa** (☎ 91 366 18 60; Calle de la Cava Baja 9; meals €35-40; 🍷 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun Sep-Jul; 🇲🇸 La Latina), in a restored 17th-century inn, and the refined Navarran cooking of **Restaurante Julián de Tolosa** (☎ 91 365 82 10; Calle de la Cava Baja 8; meals €45-50; 🍷 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; 🇲🇸 La Latina). For something a little more varied, try just around the corner at **El Malandrín** (☎ 91 354 00 82; Calle de Almendro 9; meals €25-30; 🍷 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Mon & Sun; 🇲🇸 La Latina), which cooks Indian-Spanish food, has saints' effigies of Raquel Welch and Steve McQueen, and does a Sunday *Menú del Rastro* (€12).

is anything but old world. The design is cutting edge and awash with reds and purples, while the young and friendly waiters circulate to the tune of lounge music. The food is Spanish-Asian fusion and there are also plenty of *pintxos* (Basque tapas) to choose from. The chill-out beds downstairs are great for an after-dinner cocktail or even a meal, although they're always reserved well in advance. The brunch (12.30pm to 4.30pm Saturday and Sunday) includes fine pastries and a Bloody Mary.

JUANALALOCA Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 364 05 25; Plaza de la Puerta de Moros 4; meals €30-35; 🍷 lunch & dinner Tue-Sun, dinner Mon; 🇲🇸 La Latina

You can't miss 'Juana the Crazy One' with its bright purple façade and nor would you want to. We're still convinced that the wife of one Lonely Planet author cooks the best *tortilla de patatas* in Madrid, but we have to confess that Juanalaloca gives her a run for her money – it's a far cry from your average bar tortilla and the secret lies in the caramelised onions. With more than 70, mostly Basque-influenced tapas to choose from, there are so many possibilities and fine wines, but quality here doesn't come cheap. There's another branch, **Juanalaloca.zip** (Calle del Nuncio 17; 🍷 dinner Tue-Fri, 1pm-1am Sat & Sun), just down the hill.

NUNC EST BIBENDUM Map pp76-7 Spanish €€

☎ 91 366 52 10; Calle de la Cava Alta 13; meals €30-35; 🍷 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; 🇲🇸 La Latina

Calle de la Cava Alta doesn't have the sex appeal (or the crowds) of its neighbour, Calle de la Cava Baja, but it has some wonderful little bar-restaurants. **Nunc est Bibendum** combines a classy, clean-lined look with a varied menu that defies categorisation – sometimes it's a Basque base; other flavours come from the south or from France – but it's always good, with plenty of meat and fish dishes, and crêpes, foie gras and rice dishes built in. The wine list is also thoughtfully chosen, with some lesser-known Spanish wines.

LA BUGA DEL LOBO Map pp76-7 Spanish €€

☎ 91 467 61 51; www.labocadellobo.com; Calle de Arguosa 11; meals €25-30, menú del día €10-11; 🍷 11am-2am Wed-Mon; 🇲🇸 Lavapiés

La Buga del Lobo has been one of the 'in' places in cool and gritty Lavapiés for years now and it's still hard to get a table. The atmosphere is bohemian and inclusive with funky, swirling murals, contemporary art exhibitions and jazz or lounge music. The food's good and traditional with meat and fish dishes for mains and *croquetas*, cheeses or salads for entrées, but it's best known for its groovy vibe at any time of day or night.

LA CHATA Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 366 14 58; Calle de la Cava Baja 24; meals €25-30; 🍷 lunch & dinner Thu-Mon, dinner Wed; 🇲🇸 La Latina

Behind the lavishly tiled façade, La Chata looks for all the world like a neglected outpost of the past. The décor may be rundown and the bullfighting

memorabilia not to everyone's taste, but this is an essential stop on a tapas tour of La Latina. The dishes are mainstays of the local diet (tripe and plenty of seafood), but don't come here without ordering a *cazuela* (stew cooked and served in a ceramic pot).

LA MUSA LATINA Map pp76-7 Fusion €€

☎ 91 354 02 55; www.lamusalatina.com; Costanilla de San Andrés 1; meals €25-30, menú del día €11; 🍴 lunch & dinner daily; 🚶 La Latina
La Musa Latina is back and better than ever with an ever-popular dining area and food that's designed to bring a smile to your face. It's the same deal as at its other restaurant in Malasaña (p172) and the downstairs bar in the former wine cellar is ideal for an after-dinner drink.

MALACATÍN Map pp76-7 Madrileño €€

☎ 91 365 52 41; www.malacatin.com, in Spanish; Calle de Ruda 5; meals €25-30; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, lunch Sat; 🚶 La Latina
If you want to see madrileños enjoying their favourite local food, this is arguably the best place to do so. The clamour of conversation – an essential part of the local eating experience – bounces off the tiled walls of the cramped dining area adorned with bullfighting memorabilia. The speciality is as much *cocido* (stew) as you can eat (€18). The *degustación de cocido* (taste of *cocido*; €5) at the bar is a great way to try Madrid's favourite dish without going all the way, although locals would argue that doing that is like smoking without inhaling.

NAÏA RESTAURANTE Map pp76-7 Fusion €€

☎ 91 366 27 83; www.naiarestaurante.com, in Spanish; Plaza de la Paja 3; meals €25-30; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; 🚶 La Latina
On the lovely Plaza de la Paja, Naïa has a real buzz about it, with a cooking laboratory overseen by Carlos López Reyes, delightful modern Spanish cuisine and a chill-out lounge downstairs. The emphasis throughout is on natural ingredients, healthy food and exciting tastes. The Iberian meats cooked with vanilla and smoked potato mash is intense and surprising, while the fish dishes are equally fresh.

OLIVEROS Map pp76-7 Madrileño €€

☎ 91 354 62 52; Calle de San Milán 4; meals €25-30; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, noon-6pm Sun mid-Sep–mid-Aug; 🚶 La Latina

This famous old *taberna* has been in the Oliveros family since 1921 and nothing seems to have changed much since it opened. It's a tiny, warm, bottle-lined den that doesn't disappoint with its local dishes of *cocido a la madrileña* or *callos de la Abuela* (grandma's tripe).

TXIRIMIRI Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 364 11 96; Calle del Humilladero 6; meals €25-30; 🍴 noon-midnight Tue-Sun; 🚶 La Latina
This Basque *pintxo* bar is a great little discovery just down from the main La Latina tapas circuit. Wonderful wines, gorgeous *pintxos* (tapas; the *tortilla de patatas* is superb) and more substantial dishes with a nod to Italian influences, such as duck lasagne and fine risottos, add up to a pretty special combination. It's always full and the atmosphere is sophisticated and casual.

TABERNA MATRITUM Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 365 82 37; Calle de la Cava Alta 17; meals €20-30; 🍴 lunch Mon-Fri, lunch & dinner Sat & Sun; 🚶 La Latina
This little gem is reason enough to detour from the more popular Calle de la Cava Baja next door. Terrific *tostas* (toasts, especially those with foie gras, caramelised onion and baked apple) and tapas, such as Spanish ham with cream of truffle, are complemented by a good wine list and a cosy ambience. An outstanding choice.

CASA LUCAS Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 365 08 04; Calle de la Cava Baja 30; meals €20-25; 🍴 lunch & dinner Thu-Tue, dinner Wed; 🚶 La Latina
It's always a close-run thing between Casa Lucas and *Almendro 13* (opposite) for the best tapas bar in La Latina, if not all Madrid. It's a small place where there's hardly room to bend your elbow, but persist you should because this bar has been doing creative tapas long before they became fashionable. The grilled chicken with sesame, soy sauce and corn mousse is typical. We only ever hear praise about this place.

EL ESTRAGÓN Map pp76-7 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 365 89 82; Plaza de la Paja 10; meals €20-25, menú del día €9.99; 🍴 lunch & dinner daily; 🚶 La Latina
A delightful spot for crepes, veggie burgers and other vegetarian specialities, El Estragón is undoubtedly one of Madrid's best vegetar-

ian restaurants, although attentive vegans won't appreciate the use of butter. Apart from that, we're yet to hear a bad word about El Estragón. It's also on one of old Madrid's quieter and more delightful squares.

LA BURBUJA QUE RÍE Map pp76-7 Asturian €€

☎ 91 366 51 67; Calle del Ángel 16; meals €20; 🍴 lunch & dinner daily; 🚶 La Latina
'The Laughing Bubble' is an excellent Asturian tavern that serves up nourishing and hearty dishes with cider; the *patatas con cabrales* (potato with blue cheese) is a fine order. It's all very noisy and casual, like a genuine Asturian *taberna*, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a more popular restaurant dedicated to this fine regional cuisine.

ALMENDRO 13 Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 365 42 52; Calle del Almendro 13; meals €15-25; 🍴 lunch & dinner daily; 🚶 La Latina
Regularly voted among the top 10 tapas bars in Madrid, Almendro 13 is a charming, wildly popular *taberna* where you come for traditional Spanish tapas with an emphasis on quality rather than frilly elaborations. Cured meats, cheeses, tortillas, *huevos rotos* (literally, 'broken eggs') and many variations on the themes dominate the menu; it serves both *raciones* and half-sized plates. The only problem is that the wait for a table (low, with wooden stools) requires the patience of a saint, so order a fine wine or manzanilla (dry sherry) and soak up the buzz. Unusually, it opens at 7.30pm (8pm on weekends), when your chances of finding a perch are higher.

CORAZON LOCO Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 366 57 83; Calle del Almendro 22; meals €15-25; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sun; 🚶 La Latina
In a barrio replete with tapas options, it takes something pretty special to catch our eye. Corazon Loco is just such a place, a splendid little tapas bar blending subtle tastes (the canapés, for €3.90, include *solo-millo* with brie or salmon with Roquefort). It also has a special dish each day, which can range from couscous to *cocido*. Wine by the glass never costs more than €2.50 and the service is friendly. Every time we pass by here it's full and deservedly so.

TABERNA TXACOLI Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 366 48 77; Calle de la Cava Baja 26; meals €15-20; 🍴 Tue & Thu-Sat lunch & dinner, lunch Sun, dinner Wed; 🚶 La Latina

Taberna Txacoli calls its *pintxos* 'high cuisine in miniature' – the first part is true, but these are some of the biggest *pintxos* (€2.80 to €5) you'll find and some are a meal in themselves. If ordering tapas makes you nervous because you don't speak Spanish or you're not quite sure how it works, it couldn't be easier here – they're lined up on the bar, Basque style, in all their glory and you can simply point. Whatever you order, wash it down with a *txacoli*, a sharp Basque white.

VIVA LA VIDA Map pp76-7 Tapas €€

☎ 91 366 33 49; www.vivalavida.vg; Costanilla de San Andrés 16; veg buffet per 100g €1.80; 🍴 11am-midnight; 🚶 La Latina
This organic food shop has as its centrepiece an enticing vegetarian buffet with hot and cold food that's always filled with flavour. With a laid-back vibe and being on the cusp of Plaza de la Paja, it's a great place at any time of the day, especially outside normal Spanish eating hours when your stomach's rumbling. It has another branch (Map pp84-5; ☎ 91 369 72 54; Calle de las Huertas 57; 🚶 Antón Martín) in Huertas, although it's more takeaway with only a handful of stools.

BAR MELO'S Map pp76-7 Tapas & Bocadillos €€

☎ 91 527 50 54; Calle del Ave María; meals €10-15; 🍴 9pm-2am Tue-Sat; 🚶 Lavapiés
One of those Spanish bars that you'd normally walk past without a second glance, Bar Melo's is famous across the city for its *zapatillas* (great, spanking *bocadillos* of *lacón* – cured shoulder of pork – and cheese). They're big, they're greasy and they're damn good; the place is packed on a Friday or Saturday night when a *zapatilla* is the perfect accompaniment to a night of drinking. The *croquetas* are also famously good.

HUERTAS & ATOCHA

The noise surrounding Huertas nightlife can obscure the fact that the barrio is a terrific place to eat out. Its culinary appeal lies in a hotchpotch of styles rather than any overarching personality. It's a state of affairs perhaps best summed up by the presence of restaurants Arola Madrid, one of the home kitchens of master chef Sergi Arola, and down-and-dirty tapas bars selling *oreja* (pig's ear). In between,

there's Basque, Galician, Andalucian, Scandinavian and Italian from which to choose.

LHARDY Map pp84-5 Madrieno €€€

☎ 91 522 22 07; www.lhardy.com; Carrera de San Jerónimo 8; meals €50-60; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Sol or Sevilla

This Madrid landmark (since 1839) is an elegant treasure-trove of takeaway gourmet tapas. Upstairs is the upscale preserve of house specialities, such as *callos*, *cocido*, pheasant in grape juice and lemon soufflé. It's expensive, but the quality and service are unimpeachable, and the great and good of Madrid have all eaten here at some stage.

AROLA MADRID Map pp84-5 Nouvelle Cuisine €€

☎ 91 467 02 02; www.arola-madrid.com, in Spanish; Calle de Argumosa 43; meals €50; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon & Wed-Sat, to 5pm Sun; ☎ Atocha

What do you get if you cross one of Spain's most celebrated young chefs and a designer, blood-red space in one of Europe's most innovative galleries? A terrific place to eat, drink or simply hang out and feel stylish in one of the great art cities of the world. The food is nouvelle cuisine with an emphasis on presentation and variations on a traditional Spanish base.

A TASCA DO BACALHAU

PORTUGUÊS Map pp84-5 Portuguese €€

☎ 91 429 56 75; Calle de Lope de Vega 14; meals €30-40, menú del día €21.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Mon; ☎ Antón Martín

One of the few authentically Portuguese restaurants in Madrid, A Tasca do Bacalhau doesn't have a particularly extensive menu, but it's dominated by excellent *bacalhau* (cod) and rice dishes. It's pricey, but if you're not familiar with Portuguese cooking, this is a good place to have your first taste.

ØLSEN Map pp84-5 Scandinavian €€

☎ 91 429 36 59; www.olsenmadrid.com; Calle del Prado 15; meals €30-40, menú del día €10-15; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; ☎ Antón Martín

With everything you'd expect from a Scandinavian restaurant – minimalist décor, an extensive vodka menu and creatively conceived tastes from the north – Ølsen confirms that Huertas has more than its share of classy establishments. The service is casual but attentive, the food (eg reindeer) delicious and the crowd young and well heeled. Service can, however, be a little slow.

SIDRERÍA VASCA ZERAIN

Map pp84-5 Basque €€

☎ 91 429 79 09; Calle de Quevedo 3; meals €30-40; ☎ Mon-Sat; ☎ Antón Martín

In the heart of the Barrio de las Letras, this sophisticated Basque restaurant is one of the best places in town to sample Basque cuisine. The essential staples include cider, *bacalao* and wonderful steaks, while there are also a few splashes of creativity thrown in (the secret's in the sauce).

LA VACA VERÓNICA

Map pp84-5 Italian/Argentine €€

☎ 91 429 78 27; www.lavacaveronica.es, in Spanish; Calle de Moratín 38; meals €25-30, menú del día €15; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, dinner Sun; ☎ Antón Martín

Plenty of red meat, pastas and salads are the staples of this long-standing local favourite in the Paseo del Prado hinterland. There's an agreeable buzz about this place most nights and the service is excellent. If there's two of you, try the *bandeja de la vaca* (€35), a meat platter that groans under the weight of steak, chorizo, *morcilla*, *mollejas* (sweetbreads), potatoes... It's proud of its smokers-allowed policy, boasting that Humphrey Bogart would feel comfortable here.

AL NATURAL Map pp84-5 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 369 47 09; www.alnatural.biz; Calle de Zorrilla 11; meals €20-30; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; ☎ Sevilla or Banco de España

Tucked behind the Spanish parliament, Al Natural has an intimate ambience and terrific vegetarian food. There are the usual suspects, such as salads and pastas, but some welcome creative touches, including grilled provolone cheeses, make this a good choice.

CASA ALBERTO Map pp84-5 Traditional Spanish €€

☎ 91 429 93 56; www.casaalberto.es, in Spanish; Calle de las Huertas 18; meals €20-25; ☎ noon-1.30am Tue-Sat, to 4pm Sun; ☎ Antón Martín

One of the most atmospheric old *tabernas* of Madrid, Casa Alberto has been around since 1827. The secret to its staying power is vermouth on tap (see p191), excellent tapas and fine sit-down meals; *rabo de toro* is a good order. As the antique wood-pannelled decoration will suggest straight away, the *raciones* have none of the frilly innovations that have come to characterise Spanish tapas, and *jamón*, Manchego cheese and anchovies are recurring themes.

LA FINCA DE SUSANA

Map pp84-5 Mediterranean €€

☎ 91 369 35 57; www.lafinca-restaurant.com; Calle de Arlabán 4; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; ☎ Sevilla

Just because you're paying relatively low prices for your meal doesn't mean you have to dine in *cutre* (rough-and-ready) surroundings. The softly lit dining area is bathed in greenery and the sometimes innovative, sometimes traditional food draws a hip young crowd. The *ensalada de aguacate con cinturón de bacalao* (avocado salad with a cod 'belt') is a fine choice. It doesn't take reservations.

LA TRUCHA Map pp84-5 Tapas €€

☎ 91 532 08 82; Calle de Núñez de Arce 6; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat; ☎ Sol

'The Trout' is an outpost of Andalucía in central Madrid and is one of Madrid's longest-standing and most popular tapas bars. The counter is loaded with enticing choices, but seafood is why most people come here and the bar staff will have their own idea about what's good to try. The menu lists a staggering 95 possibilities. If it's too crowded, try the other **branch** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 91 429 58 33; Calle de Manuel Fernández y González 3) nearby.

LOS GATOS Map pp84-5 Tapas €€

☎ 91 429 30 67; Calle de Jesús 2; meals €20-25; ☎ noon-1am Sun-Thu, to 2am Fri & Sat; ☎ Antón Martín

Tapas you can point to without deciphering the menu and eclectic old-world décor (from bullfighting memorabilia to a fresco of skeletons at the bar) make this a popular choice down the bottom end of Huertas. The most popular order is the *tostas* (tapas on toast), which, we have to say, is rather delicious.

MACEIRAS Map pp84-5 Galician €€

☎ 91 429 15 84; Calle de las Huertas 66; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; meals €20-25; ☎ Antón Martín

Galician tapas (think octopus, green peppers etc) never tasted so good as in this agreeably rustic bar down the bottom of the Huertas hill, especially when washed down with a crisp white Ribeiro. The simple wooden tables, loyal customers and handy location make this a fine place to rest after (or en route to) the museums along the Paseo del Prado. Galician music

also plays in the background. There's another **branch** (Map pp84-5; Calle de Jesús 7; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun, dinner Mon) around the corner.

VINOS GONZÁLEZ Map pp84-5 Deli Café €€

☎ 91 429 56 18; Calle de León 12; meals €20-25; ☎ 9am-midnight Tue-Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat; ☎ Antón Martín

Ever dreamed of a deli where you could choose a tasty morsel and sit down and eat it right there? Well, here you can. On offer is a tempting array of cheeses, cured meats and other typically Spanish delicacies. The tables are informal, café style and it also does takeaway, but we recommend eating here if you can find a table.

LA CASA DEL ABUELO Map pp84-5 Tapas €€

☎ 91 521 23 19; Calle de la Victoria 12; meals €15-25; ☎ 11.30am-3.30pm & 6.30-11.30pm; ☎ Sol

The 'House of the Grandfather' is an ageless, popular place where the traditional order is a *chato* (small glass) of the heavy, sweet El Abuelo red wine (made in Toledo province) and the heavenly *gambas a la plancha* (grilled prawns) or *gambas al ajillo* (prawns sizzling in garlic on little ceramic plates).

RESTAURANTE INTEGRAL ARTEMISA

Map pp84-5 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 429 50 92; Calle de Ventura de la Vega 4; meals €15-25; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; ☎ Sevilla

With a couple of options for meat eaters, this mostly vegetarian restaurant does a brisk trade with its salads, moussaka and rice dishes. The décor is simple, the service is no-nonsense and there are more than 50 dishes to choose from. The salads are what marks this place out as worthy of a visit.

LA NEGRA TOMASA Map pp84-5 Cuban €

☎ 91 523 58 30; Calle de Cádiz 9; meals €15-20; ☎ noon-3.30am Sun & Mon, to 5.30am Tue-Sat; ☎ Sol

Bar, restaurant and magnet for all things Cuban, La Negra Tomasa is a boisterous meeting place for the Havana set with waitresses dressed in traditional Cuban outfits (definitely pre-Castro), decent food such as *cojimar* (shrimps in a tomato sauce with rice and slices of banana fritter) and typical drinks of the Caribbean.

LATE BITES & DAWN DINING

Way past midnight and your stomach's growling? If you know where to look, meals are available in Madrid up to 2am, and sometimes later. In Huertas try **La Negra Tomasa** (p167) or **Malaspina** (p191). Around Plaza Mayor **Cervecería Compañero** (p162) serves *bocadillos de calamares* (rolls stuffed with calamari) until the wee hours, while the kitchen might still be open at **Delic** (p188) down on Plaza de la Paja. In Lavapiés the *bocadillos* of **Bar Melo's** (p165) are a Madrid institution, while **La Buga del Lobo** (p163) is another possibility. In Malasaña **Casa Do Compañero** (p172) stays open till 2am, as does **Giangrossi** (p174) on Friday and Saturday for ice creams. For a *chocolate con churros* (Spanish donuts with chocolate) at any time of night, **Chocolatería de San Ginés** (see the boxed text, p173) rarely closes. Chinese vendors often set up snack stalls at all hours along Gran Vía on weekends.

There's often live Cuban music in the evening.

LA PIOLA Map pp84–5 Italian Café €

Calle de León 9; meals €15–20; ☎ 10am–2am Mon–Sat; ☎ Antón Martín

This charming Italian place is part café and part bar. The small range of pasta on offer is well priced and filled with subtle flavours. In addition to the simple tables and bar stools, there's a sofa that has to be the best seat in the house. You're likely to find it full most nights of the week, which has as much to do with the atmosphere as the food.

LAS BRAVAS Map pp84–5 Tapas €

☎ 91 532 26 20; Callejón de Álvarez Gato 3; meals €15; ☎ 10am–11.30pm; ☎ Sol

Las Bravas has long been the place for a *caña* (small glass of beer) and the best *patatas bravas* (fried potatoes with a spicy tomato sauce) in town; other good orders include *pulpo a la gallega*, (octopus Galician style), *calamares* (calamari) and *oreja a la plancha* (grilled pig's ear). The antics of the bar staff are enough to merit a stop, and the distorting mirrors are a minor Madrid landmark. Elbow your way to the bar and be snappy about your orders. There are three other branches dotted around Huertas, including one on the corner of Calle de Espoz y Mina and Callejón Álvarez Gato (Map pp84–5).

LA BIOTIKA Map pp84–5 Vegetarian €

☎ 91 429 07 80; Calle del Amor de Dios 3; meals €10–15; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; ☎ Antón Martín

The macrobiotic, café-style La Biotika, out the back of a health-food shop, takes its vegetarianism seriously with an emphasis on simplicity and healthy eating with not too many creative twists: *seitan* (wheat meat), tofu-based dishes and generous

salads. If you're a vegetarian, you'll love it. If you're not, you might want to go elsewhere as the variety is limited.

PASEO DEL PRADO & EL RETIRO

In the discreet residential enclave between the Parque del Buen Retiro and the Paseo del Prado you'll find a handful of exclusive restaurants where eating is taken seriously, elegant, classic charm is the pervasive atmosphere, and limousines wait outside to ferry the well-heeled back home.

CLUB 31 Map pp92–3 Spanish €€€

☎ 91 532 00 92; Calle de Alcalá 58; meals €50–60; ☎ lunch & dinner daily Sep–Jul; ☎ Retiro

An old Madrid classic, Club 31 has a vaguely contemporary design with long black seats, leaning wall mirrors and bright white designer lamps hanging from the ceiling, but the cuisine is classic. The accent is on fish and game, with the occasional modern touch. You could set your watch by the old-style, professional service. Last time we were here, royalty were at the next table.

EL BRILLANTE Map pp92–3 Bocadillos €

☎ 91 528 69 66; Calle del Doctor Drumén 7; bocadillos €4–6; ☎ 6.30am–12.30am; ☎ Atocha

Just by the Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, this breezy, no-frills bar-eater is a Madrid institution for its *bocadillos* (the *bocadillo de calamares* is an old favourite) and other snacks (*raciones* cost €7.50 to €12). It's also famous for *chocolate con churros* or *porras* (deep-fried doughnut strips) in the wee hours after a hard night on the tiles. There's another branch (Map pp116–17; ☎ 91 448 19 88; Calle de Eloy Gonzalo 14; ☎ Quevedo) in Chamberí.

SALAMANCA

Eating out in Salamanca is traditionally as exclusive as the shops that fill the barrio, the sorts of places where the keys to Jags and BMWs are left for valet parking, only the impeccably dressed are allowed through the doors, and prices and quality are high. But Salamanca is also home to some of Madrid's best-kept eating secrets, from *pintxos* (Basque tapas) to fusion restaurants and intimate dens of creative home cooking – all very handy options for refuelling after a big day shopping in the barrio.

EL AMPARO Map pp102–3 Basque & Creative €€€

☎ 91 431 64 56; Calle de Puigcerdà 8; meals €80–100; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat; ☎ Serrano

Hidden away down a charming alley in the heart of Salamanca, El Amparo is one of the more exclusive restaurants in town. The cuisine has been variously described as Basque and *nueva cocina madrileña* (nouvelle Madrid cuisine); try the *cigala salteadas con raviolis de queso, miel y romero* (sautéed crayfish with cheese, honey and rosemary ravioli). The service is impeccable, the wine list admirable and the food is generally excellent. Some of the home-made desserts are simply divine.

SULA MADRID Map pp102–3 Fusion €€€

☎ 91 781 61 97; www.sula.es; Calle de Jorge Juan 33; meals €70–80; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Sat; ☎ Velázquez

If you want to catch Salamanca's happening vibe, head for Sula, a gourmet food store, super-stylish tapas bar and clean-lined restaurant where gastronomic wunderkind Quique Dacosta (voted Spain's best chef in 2005) serves up a range of Mediterranean dishes that you won't find anywhere else. Design touches added by Amaya Arzuaga help to make this one of Madrid's coolest, black-clad spaces. Rumour has it that David Beckham had one of his farewell parties here.

RAMSES LIFE & FOOD

Map pp102–3 Fusion & Spanish €€

☎ 91 435 16 66; www.ramseslife.com; Plaza de la Independencia 4; meals €35–60; ☎ noon–11.30pm; ☎ Retiro

Opened in December 2007 and designed by Philippe Starck, Ramses Life & Food is all the rage among Madrid's trendy, well-

to-do set. The decoration is baroque and upmarket kitsch (the reproduction of an El Greco on the ceiling sets the standard), while there are two spaces, the more informal El Petit and the seriously formal bistro. The food gets mixed reviews (far more than it should for these prices), but the al-bergine croquettes and curry mussels are well worth trying. You won't get past the doorman unless you're well dressed (the first thing he does is look at your shoes), but it's worth experiencing this place at least once. It also does brunch and is a great choice for a late-night *copa* after the kitchen closes.

CITRA Map pp102–3 Mediterranean €€

☎ 91 575 28 66; Calle de Castelló 18; meals €35–40; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Sat; ☎ Príncipe de Vergara or Velázquez

When the *New York Times* declared Citra the best new restaurant in Madrid a couple of years ago, it must have been thinking of the cod taco or any other of the unusual Mediterranean dishes on offer. The dining area is cosy, colourful and consciously cool, and you can order tapas if you just want to catch the vibe.

TEATRIZ Map pp102–3 Fusion €€

☎ 91 577 53 79; Calle de Hermsilla 15; meals €35–40; ☎ 11.30am–12.30pm; ☎ Serrano

Also designed by Philippe Starck, the former Teatro Beatriz has an eerily lit bar right on the stage and it's the kind of place where you'll need to look like George Clooney to feel like you fit in. The food follows the fashion, ranging from 'Made in Spain' to 'Fusion'. While you're there, check out the loos, where you leave luminous footprints!

MUMBAI MASSALA Map pp102–3 Indian €€

☎ 91 435 71 94; www.mumbaimassala.com; Calle de los Recoletos 14; meals €35; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; ☎ Retiro

Enter through the heavy red curtain and into a brightly coloured Indian world where the food and service are good and the ambience is very laid-back. Servings aren't enormous, but they're superbly done with dishes spanning the subcontinent from southern India (think hot and spicy) to Pakistan. If you can't decide, it has a range of set menus (€14 to €30) to choose from.

AL-MOUNIA Map pp102–3 Moroccan €€

☎ 91 435 08 28; www.almounia.es, in Spanish; Calle de los Recoletos 5; meals €30-35; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat Sep-Jul; 📄 Recoletos One of the longest-standing Moroccan restaurants in town, Al-Mounia has a loyal following. The best couscous in Madrid (it bears little relation to the couscous you buy in a packet) is a menu highlight, as are the subtly spiced lamb tagines (stew cooked in a ceramic pot) and the *asado berebere* (Berber roast; €24.50). The hand-crafted traditional décor is breathtaking and greatly complements the cuisine.

LA GALETTE

Map pp102–3 Vegetarian & European €€

☎ 91 576 06 41; Calle del Conde de Aranda 11; meals €30-35; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; 📄 Retiro

This lovely little restaurant combines an intimate dining area with checked tablecloths and cuisine that the owner describes as 'baroque vegetarian'. The food is a revelation, blending creative flavours with a strong base in traditional home cooking. The *croquetas de manzana* (apple croquettes) are a house speciality, but the truth is everything on the extensive menu is good. The only problem is that the tables are so close together you get the feeling that diners need to breathe in at the same time for everyone to fit.

LE CAFÉ Map pp102–3 Spanish €€

☎ 91 781 15 86; Calle de los Recoletos 13; meals €25-30; 🍴 lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; 📄 Retiro

It can be almost impossible to get a table here at lunchtime on a weekday when locals stream in from surrounding offices for the buzzy atmosphere and orange décor. The food is largely traditional Spanish fare (rice dishes are a recurring theme) and they're done well, but dishes such as smoked reindeer carpaccio with mushrooms and a lime vinaigrette (€14.50) show more than a touch of flair.

BIOTZA Map pp102–3 Basque Tapas €€

☎ 91 781 03 13; Calle de Claudio Coello 27; meals €25; 🍴 9am-midnight Mon-Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat; 📄 Serrano

This breezy Basque tapas bar is one of the best places in Madrid to sample the creativity of bite-sized *pintxos* as only the Basques can make them. It's the perfect combina-

tion of San Sebastián bars laden with food and Madrid style in the pale-green, red-black decoration and unusual angular benches. The *pintxos* cost from €2.40 to €3.70 apiece, but we suggest one of the *degustación de pintxos* (tasting menus; €17 to €21) where you get a selection. The prices quickly add up, but it's highly recommended nonetheless.

RESTAURANTE ESTAY Map pp102–3 Tapas €€

☎ 91 578 04 70; www.estayrestaurant.com; Calle de Hermosilla 46; meals €20-30; 🍴 8am-12.30am Mon-Sat; 📄 Velázquez

Restaurante Estay is partly a standard Spanish bar where besuited waiters serve *café con leche* (it does breakfasts) and partly a cool tapas bar known for its range of *pintxos* (mostly €2 to €4), international wines and contemporary art on the walls. It may seem rather an odd mix, but somehow it works.

LA COLONIAL DE GOYA Map pp102–3 Tapas €€

☎ 91 575 63 06; Calle de Jorge Juan 34; meals €20; 🍴 8am-midnight Mon-Fri, to 1am Sat; 📄 Velázquez

This engaging little tapas bar all dressed in white serves 68 varieties of *pinchos* (€2.40 to €4.30), as well as more hearty *raciones*, internationally flavoured salads and carefully chosen wines. We especially liked the prawns with guacamole and the goats-cheese croquettes with quince jam and pine nuts. The chill-out music on the sound system and the dull roar of popularity only add to the charm.

MALASAÑA & CHUECA

Cool barrios. Cool places to eat. Chueca and Malasaña may be radically different, one newly modern, the other rooted firmly in the past, but their restaurants are remarkably similar. Blending old *tabernas* with laid-back temples to nouvelle Spanish cuisine, eating here revolves around an agreeable buzz, innovative cooking and casual but stylish surrounds. Some streets stand out, especially Calle de Manuela Malasaña (see the boxed text, *opposite*) in Malasaña and Calle de la Libertad (see the boxed text, p177) in Chueca. For cheap but decent international cuisine (eg Asian, Indian, Thai, Persian), head down to Calle de San Bernardino (Map pp110–11) at the lower end of Calle del Conde Duque.

MALASAÑA**LA ISLA DEL TESORO**

Map pp110–11 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 593 14 40; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 3; meals €30-35, menú del día €10; 🍴 lunch & dinner daily; 📄 Bilbao

Unlike some vegetarian restaurants that seem to work on the philosophy that a basic décor signifies healthy food, La Isla del Tesoro is loaded with quirky charm; the dining area is like someone's fantasy of a secret garden come to life. The cooking here is assured and wide ranging in its influences; the jungle burger is typical in a menu that's full of surprises. The weekday, lunchtime *menú del día* is more varied than most in Madrid, with Indonesian, Lebanese, Moroccan, French and Mexican among others all getting a run. Our only complaint? The otherwise friendly waiters are often too keen to free up your table for the next punters on weekends.

LAYDOWN REST CLUB Map pp110–11 Fusion €€

☎ 91 548 79 37; www.laydown.es, in Spanish; Plaza Mostenses 9; meals €30-35, menú del día €11; 🍴 2-4pm & 9.30pm-2.30am Tue-Fri, 9.30pm-2.30am Sat & Sun, 2-4pm Mon; 📄 Plaza de España or Noviciado The name says it all. Part of the ongoing craze in concept dining, Laydown Rest Club is whiter than white and completely devoid of tables – you eat Roman style while reclining on beds where you're served by toga-clad waiters with huge feather fans. Incredible. The menu changes daily, but it never strays too far from its variations on

top picks**INTERNATIONAL CUISINE**

- Al-Mounia (*opposite*) Moroccan
- Arabia (p177) Middle Eastern
- Nagoya (p179) Japanese
- Mumbai Massala (p169) Indian
- Kim Bu Mbu (p176) African
- Ølsen (p166) Scandinavian
- A Tasca do Bacalhau Português (p166) Portuguese
- La Negra Tomasa (p167) Cuban
- Bangkok Café (p161) Thai
- La Mordida (p176) Mexican
- Il Casone (p179) Italian

a Mediterranean theme. It can be difficult to find – from Plaza Mostenses, head east along Calle del General Mitre then take the first lane on the right.

NINA Map pp110–11 Mediterranean Fusion €€

☎ 91 591 00 46; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 10; meals €30-35, menú del día €12.20; 🍴 lunch & dinner daily; 📄 Bilbao

Sophisticated, intimate and wildly popular, Nina has an extensive menu (available in English) of nouvelle Mediterranean cuisine that doesn't miss a trick; the deboned pig's trotters filled with boletus, foie gras and truffles with fried prawns is as weird and wonderful as it sounds. We like the décor, all exposed brick and subtle lighting, we love just about everything on the menu, but

EAT STREETS – CALLE DE MANUELA MALASAÑA

Calle de Manuela Malasaña (Map pp110–11; 📄 Bilbao) has long been one of Madrid's best streets for eating out, its appeal founded on creative approaches to Mediterranean cuisine and designer décor. While the buzz has revolved around three flagship restaurants – *Nina* (*above*), *La Musa* (p172) and *La Isla del Tesoro* (*above*) – others have been drawn here to transform the street into one of Madrid's most varied eating experiences.

Starting from the east, *El Sitio de Malasaña* (☎ 91 446 68 76; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 7; meals €20-25, menú del día €10.50; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; 📄 Bilbao) has a cosy, modern charm and innovative dishes, such as turkey and truffle ravioli in a mushroom sauce (€10). Almost next door, *Este o Este* (☎ 91 445 33 57; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 9; meals €15-25, menú del día €9.50; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun & Mon; 📄 Bilbao) balances a largely Spanish menu with Moroccan touches, such as the Sunday couscous special (€15). Alongside is *El Txoko* (☎ 620 639 142; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 9; meals €30-35; 🍴 lunch & dinner Fri & Sat, lunch Mon-Thu; 📄 Bilbao), which does classic Basque staples such as bacalao (cod) and solomillo (steaks). *Albur* (☎ 91 594 27 33; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 15; meals €20-30, menú del día €11; 📄 Bilbao), is known for terrific rice dishes and tapas, and has a well-chosen wine list. Further west, *Allora Qui* (☎ 91 593 93 86; www.alloraqui.com, in Spanish; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 33; meals €20-25, menú del día €9.50; 📄 San Bernardo) is a swish trattoria with a lounge-dub ambience and good Italian food.

we adore the *foie fresco a la plancha* (grilled foie gras). What we're not so keen on is the policy of two sittings (at 9.15pm and 11.30pm), which inevitably means that staff can start to hover when your time's nearly up. The weekend brunch (€19.90, noon to 6pm Saturday and Sunday) is wide ranging but, in our view, a touch overpriced.

LA MUSA Map pp110–11 Fusion €€
☎ 91 448 75 58; www.lamusa.com.es; Calle de Manuela Malasaña 18; meals €25-30, menú del día €11; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; (M) Bilbao or San Bernardo

Snug yet loud, a favourite of Madrid's hip young crowd yet utterly unpretentious, La Musa is all about designer décor, lounge music on the sound system and food that will live long in the memory. The fried green tomatoes with strawberry jam and great meat dishes are fun and filled with flavour. It doesn't take reservations, so sidle up to the bar, add your name to the waiting list and soak up the ambient buzz of Malasaña at its best. If you don't fancy waiting, try the sister restaurant nearby, **Ojalá Awareness Club** (p195).

CON DOS FOGONES Map pp110–11 Spanish & International €€
☎ 91 559 63 26; www.condosfogones.com; Calle de San Bernardino 9; meals €25-30, day/night menú €9.50/16.90; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; (M) Plaza de España

A welcome addition to the Madrid culinary scene, Con Dos Fogones is cool and classy with bright colours softly lit by designer lamps. The food is everything from salads and quality hamburgers to great slabs of fine Argentine beef with plenty of unexpected twists like brie tempura or cod paté.

A DOS VELAS Map pp110–11 Spanish & International €€
☎ 91 446 18 63; www.adosvelas.net, in Spanish; Calle de San Vicente Ferrer 16; meals €20-25, menú del día €9.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; (M) Tribunal We're fans of this place and Madrid's discerning restaurant public clearly agrees. The food is always creative with Mediterranean cooking fused with occasional Indian or even Argentine flavours, a lovely dining area with soft lighting and exposed brick, and service that's attentive without being intrusive. The lime-marinated swordfish with avocado salad is among our many favourites.

CASA DO COMPAÑEIRO Map pp110–11 Galician Tapas €€
☎ 91 521 57 02; Calle de San Vicente Ferrer 44; meals €20-25, menú del día €9; ☎ 1.30pm-2am; (M) Tribunal

Tucked away in the streets just up from Plaza del Dos de Mayo, this atmospheric old Madrid *taberna* is like Spanish bars used to be made, with a wonderful tiled and wood façade, basic wooden stools and marble-topped tables. It's renowned for its *pulpo a la gallega* (Galician-style octopus), *pimientos de padrón* (grilled little green peppers) and *lacón* (cured shoulder of pork).

EL PLACER DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO Map pp110–11 Spanish & International €€
☎ 91 360 45 16; www.elplacerdelespiritusanto.com in Spanish; Calle del Espíritu Santo 3; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sat, lunch Tue & Sun; (M) Tribunal

Surrounded by retro clothing shops, El Placer del Espíritu Santo is a sanctuary in the heart of hard-living Malasaña with food 'for body and soul' and a clean-lined dining area in which to enjoy it. The rice dishes stand out, as does the *carpaccio de pulpo* (octopus carpaccio; €10.50).

RIBEIRA DO MIÑO Map pp110–11 Seafood €€
☎ 91 521 98 54; Calle de la Santa Brígida 1; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat; (M) Tribunal This riotously popular seafood bar and restaurant is where madrileños with a love for seafood indulge their fantasy. The *mariscada de la casa* (€30 for two) is a platter of seafood so large that even the hungriest of visitors will be satisfied. Leave your name with the waiter and be prepared to wait up to an hour for a table.

COMOMELOCOMO Map pp110–11 Spanish & International €€
☎ 91 523 13 23; www.comome locomo.com, in Spanish; Calle de Andrés Borrego 16; meals €15-25, menú del día €9.50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat; (M) Noviciado Traditional Spanish dishes given the odd international twist to suit 21st-century palates and excellent value for money are the hallmarks of this trendy place down Malasaña's lower end. Elsewhere, beautifully presented meals and agreeable surrounds too often mean meagre portions, but not here. The friendly service is another winner, as is the three-course evening menu for €16.90.

MADRID FOR THE SWEET TOOTH

Tapas may be a Spanish institution, but what madrileños really love are their pastries, especially at breakfast, although any excuse will do. These are our favourite classic Madrid pastry shops, which we were forced to visit (purely for research purposes, you understand).

Chocolatería de San Ginés (p186) Perhaps the best known of Madrid's *chocolate con churros* vendors. Its main market is clubbers with the munchies, pouring out of the city's nearby dance palaces.

Horno de San Onofre (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 532 90 60; Calle de San Onofre 3; ☎ 8am-9pm; (M) Gran Vía) and **Horno de Santiguera** (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 559 62 14; Calle Mayor 73; ☎ 8am-9pm; (M) Ópera) These are owned by the same family and everything's a speciality, from cakes and pastries to bite-sized sweets and Christmas *turrón* (a nougat-like sweet).

La Duquesita (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 308 02 31; Calle de Fernando VI 2; ☎ 9.30am-2.30pm & 5-9pm Tue-Sun; (M) Alonso Martínez) Another lavish step back in time with wonderful traditional pastries.

La Mallorquina (Map pp64–5; ☎ 91 521 12 01; Plaza de la Puerta del Sol 8; ☎ 9am-9.15pm; (M) Sol) A classic pastry shop that's packed to the rafters by madrileños who just couldn't pass by without stopping. Treat yourself to a takeaway *ensaimada* (a light pastry dusted with icing sugar) from Mallorca.

Niza (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 308 13 21; Calle de Argensola 24; ☎ 10am-2.30pm & 5.30-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2.30pm Sun Sep-Jul; (M) Alonso Martínez) Astonishing, old-Madrid interior decoration; it's worth a visit here just to admire the stunning ceiling and other fittings. But buy you should, especially the *rusos* (cream-filled pastries) and delicious *tarta de milhojas* (layered cake with custard cream).

CONACHE Map pp110–11 Spanish €
☎ 91 522 95 00; Plaza de San Ildefonso; meals €15-25, menú del día €9; ☎ 9.30am-1.30am Mon-Thu, to 2.30am Fri & Sat; (M) Tribunal With Asian and African decoration, creative Mediterranean cooking and a noisy Spanish clientele, Conache is a hub of barrio life and is as good for breakfast as for dinner. The food is outstanding; the *salmorejo* (cold tomato soup made with bread, oil, garlic and vinegar) is among the best we've tasted this far from Córdoba. Follow it up with the tuna fillet with ginger marmalade.

EL LATERAL Map pp110–11 Tapas €
☎ 91 531; www.cadenalateral.es; Calle de Fuen-carral 43; meals €15-25; ☎ 1pm-1am; (M) Tribunal Although it has an excellent à la carte menu (salads, *raciones*), we love El Lateral for its pinchos, which make a perfect accompaniment to the fine wines on offer. At €3 per pincho, you could easily pass an evening here savouring every bite. Personally, we'd consider starting with stuffed pepper or chickpeas with *chistorra* (similar to chorizo, but cooked in a ceramic pot), but if you can't decide, try the *degustación de pinchos* (€14). Service is restaurant standard, rather than your average tapas bar brusqueness.

CRÊPERIE MA BRETAGNE Map pp110–11 Crêpes €
☎ 91 531 77 74; Calle de San Vicente Ferrer; meals €20; ☎ dinner Thu-Sun; (M) Tribunal

What a wonderful little place this is – dark, candlelit and all about delicious crêpes. After eating a main meal of crêpes from the rustic wooden tables, there are more crêpes, this time sweet, for dessert. You'll never want to see a crêpe again after over-indulging here, but it's a great way to go out.

BODEGA DE LA ARDOSA Map pp110–11 Tapas €
☎ 91 521 49 79; Calle de Colón 13; meals €15-20; ☎ 8am-1.30am Sun-Thu, to 2.30am Fri & Sat; (M) Tribunal Going strong since 1892, the charming, wood-panelled bar of Bodega de la Ardosá could equally be recommended as a favourite Malasaña drinking hole. Then again, to come here and not try the *salmorejo*, *croquetas*, *patatas bravas* or *tortilla de patatas* would be a crime. On weekend nights there's scarcely room to move.

EL REY DE TALLARINES Map pp110–11 Asian €
☎ 91 542 68 97; Calle de San Bernardino 5; meals €15-20, menú del día €8.90-11.50; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; (M) Plaza de España This is one of Madrid's longest-standing and best-loved Asian restaurants; it's been here so long its décor has come to resemble a generic Spanish bar. The secret of its longevity is its dedication to the dying art of La Mian (pulled noodles), which it makes here on the spot. Add Chinese and Thai sauces and reasonable prices and we expect it'll be around for a while yet.

HOME BURGER BAR

Map pp110–11 Hamburgers €

☎ 91 522 97 28; www.homeburgerbar.com;
Calle del Espíritu Santo 12; meals €15-20;
☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun; 📍 Tribunal

There are times when you just need a burger. Home Burger Bar is terrific, with an interesting mix of vegetarian, gourmet and classic hamburgers served by friendly waiters in an American diner-style setting. The meat is 'ecologically sound' and, in the Spanish style, medium-rare (the chef will cook it more if you ask).

LA TABERNA DE SAN BERNARDO

Map pp110–11 Tapas €

☎ 91 445 41 70; Calle de San Bernardo 85; meals
€15-20; ☺ 2.30-4.30pm & 8.30pm-2.30am;
📍 San Bernardo

Stick your head in the door and there's not a lot to catch your attention in this agreeable brick-lined bar, but pause long enough to read the menu and you'll be hooked. The *raciones* (€6.50 to €9) include plenty of Spanish staples (eg *chistorra*, *bacalao*, *pisto* etc) with a few surprising twists – the *berenjenas con miel de caña* (deep-fried aubergine with honey) is brilliant.

GIANGROSSI Map pp110–11 Ice Cream €

☎ 900 555 009; www.giangrossi.es, in Spanish;
Calle de Alberto Aguilera 1; meals €10; ☺ 9am-1am
Mon-Thu, to 2am Fri & Sat, noon-1am Sun;
📍 San Bernardo

Designer chill-out lounge meets ice-cream parlour at Giangrossi and it's a fine combination. It serves natural flavours blended in creative ways, great coffee, delicious cakes and a range of other tasty sweets, as well as a small range in breakfasts and sandwiches, all against a backdrop of high ceilings and laid-back music. Sink into the super-comfy chairs and you may never want to leave.

LA VITA É BELLA

Map pp110–11 Italian Takeaway €

☎ 91 521 41 08; Plaza de San Ildefonso 5;
meals €5-10; ☺ 2pm-1am; 📍 Tribunal
With tasty, authentic Italian dishes that would put many sit-down restaurants to shame, the Italian-run La Vita é Bella does a roaring trade in pizza, pasta, calzone, salad and tiramisú. Take the plate of your choice down to Plaza del Dos de Mayo (Map pp110–11) and watch the barrio life.

CHUECA

SUA Map pp110–11 Nouvelle Spanish Cuisine €€

☎ 91 523 20 04; www.sua.es, in Spanish; Calle del
Marqués de Valdeiglesias 3; meals €40-45; ☺ lunch
& dinner daily; 📍 Banco de España

Sua is the height of softly lit sophistication and cooking that provides a new slant on nouvelle cuisine. Dishes are organised around four temperatures – 25°C, 50°C, 75°C and -2°C (desserts) – and it draws its inspiration from the Basque Country, Spain's hothouse for culinary innovation. The service is faultless and adept at helping you negotiate your way through the menu, but we suggest the €36 *menú de degustación* (tasting menu), which gradually increases the temperature.

BOGA BAR Map pp110–11 Seafood €€

☎ 91 532 18 50; Calle del Almirante 11; meals
€35-40; ☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun;
📍 Chueca

Boga Bar identifies its target market as 'lovers of lobster' and there's plenty of that in this fine restaurant that's right at home in this exclusive corner of Madrid. The round arches, fire-red walls and deep-green fronds make for one of the barrio's most agreeable dining atmospheres, and the seafood is high quality.

CASA HORTENSIA Map pp110–11 Asturian €€

☎ 91 539 00 90; 2nd fl, Calle de la Farmacia 2;
meals €30-40; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue & Thu-Sat,
lunch Sun & Wed; 📍 Tribunal or Gran Vía

With all the innovations happening elsewhere in Madrid, it's good to know that some things don't change. Casa Hortensia doesn't bother much with decoration, allowing you to concentrate on the Asturian specialities, such as *fabada asturiana* (white-bean stew with pork and blood sausage; €12.50). *Sidra* (cider) is, of course, obligatory.

EL ORIGINAL Map pp110–11 Traditional Spanish €€

☎ 91 522 90 69; www.eloriginal.es, in Spanish;
Calle de las Infantas 44; meals €25-30; ☺ lunch &
dinner Mon-Sat; 📍 Chueca or Banco de España

With the best products and signature dishes from each of the regions of Spain, you might expect El Original to be a bastion of traditionalism. Indeed, it describes its cooking as classic Spanish. Then you step into the dining area and find trees

growing in the sleek dining room. Prices are reasonable, another reason why this relatively new place seems to be lasting the distance.

JANATOMO Map pp110–11 Japanese €€

☎ 91 521 55 66; Calle de la Reina 27; meals €25-30; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun; 📍 Gran Vía
Restaurateur Eiko Ikenaga arrived in Spain in the 1950s and has watched Spaniards slowly become accustomed to foreign cuisines. Her patience has paid off and now her restaurant, Janatomo, has undergone a style overhaul, adding a Zen ambience to its splendid Japanese cooking. The sight of tour groups from the home country piling in is all the confirmation we need.

LA PAELLA DE LA REINA Map pp110–11 Paella €€

☎ 91 531 18 85; www.lapaelladelareina.com; Calle
de la Reina 39; meals €25-30; ☺ lunch & dinner
daily; 📍 Banco de España

Madrid is not renowned for its paella (Valencia is king in that regard), but Valencians who can't make it home are known to frequent La Paella de la Reina. Like any decent paella restaurant, you need two people to make an order but, that requirement satisfied, you've plenty of choice. The typical Valencia paella is cooked with beans and chicken, but there are also plenty of seafood varieties on offer, including *arroz negro* (black rice whose colour derives from squid ink).

LA TASCA SUPREMA

Map pp110–11 Traditional Madrileño €€

☎ 91 308 03 47; Calle de Argensola 7; meals €20-25;
☺ lunch Mon-Sat; 📍 Alonso Martínez or Chueca

Going strong since the 19th century, La Tasca Suprema is one of the most traditional restaurants north of Gran Vía. It's famous for its *cocido a la madrileña* (see p157); if you're wondering why it only opens for lunch, the answer is that no self-respecting madrileño would eat a heavy *cocido* in the evening. It also does *callos*, *fabada* (white-bean stew), *chipirones* (baby squid) and home-made desserts.

SALVADOR Map pp110–11 Spanish €€

☎ 91 521 45 24; Calle de Barbieri 12; meals €25-30;
☺ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun, closed Aug;
📍 Chueca

This old Hemingway favourite is typical of many Madrid classics – walking past, you

top picks

ICE CREAM

- Giangrossi (opposite)
- Bajo Cero (p180)
- Palazzo (Map pp110–11); ☎ 91 532 26 42; Gran Vía 32; ☺ 11am-10pm; 📍 Gran Vía) The best vanilla ice cream with a hint of lemon.
- Los Caprichos de Martina (Map pp64–5); ☎ 91 365 04 19; Calle de Toledo 4; ☺ 11am-2am; 📍 Sol) Just down the steps from Plaza Mayor and good for home-made ice cream.

wouldn't give it a second look. Since 1941, locals have been coming to the 'Saviour' for lashings of hearty Madrid cooking, and among them are plenty of bullfighting aficionados and *toreros* (bullfighters, or matadors), especially during the Fiestas de San Isidro Labrador. Ordering a plate of *rabo de toro* is a way to win friends, while the remainder is simple, no-nonsense fare.

TEPIC Map pp110–11 Mexican €€

☎ 91 522 08 50; www.tepic.es, in Spanish; Calle
de Pelayo 4; meals €25-30; ☺ lunch & dinner daily;
📍 Chueca

Chueca's young professional crowd loves these sorts of places – chic dining rooms, gay-friendly service and international flavours that come with a label, in this case 'Urban Mexican Food'. Tepic's signature dish is the Acapulco Tropical, a cheese taco with meat and pineapple, but it's all good and leaves you with none of that heavy after-dinner feel that spoils the aftermath of so many Mexican meals.

BAZAAR Map pp110–11 Nouvelle Spanish Cuisine €€

☎ 91 523 39 05; www.restaurantbazaar.com;
Calle de la Libertad 21; meals €25; ☺ lunch &
dinner daily; 📍 Chueca

Bazaar's popularity among the well-heeled and often famous shows no sign of abating. Its pristine white interior design with theatre lighting may draw a crowd that looks like it stepped out of the pages of *Hola!* magazine, but the food is extremely well priced and innovative. The *carpaccio de gambas con vinagreta de setas* (prawn carpaccio with mushroom vinaigrette; €6.98) is typical of the dishes that caught our eye.

With the energy of Chueca swirling outside the wall-length windows, Bazaar has none of the stuffiness that you might expect to find. It doesn't take reservations, so get here early or be prepared to wait, regardless of whether you're famous or not.

BACO Y BETO Map pp110–11 Tapas €€

☎ 91 522 84 81; www.bacoybeto.com, in Spanish; Calle de Pelayo 24; meals €20–25; ☎ lunch & dinner Sat, dinner Mon–Fri; 🚗 Chueca

Friends of ours in Madrid begged us not to include this place in the guide and we must admit that we were tempted to keep this secret all to ourselves. Some of the tastiest tapas in Madrid are what you find here, either ordered as a *tapa* (eg quail's eggs with *salmorejo*) or *raciones* (eg aubergine with parmesan). The clientele is predominantly gay, but they, like our friends, can't have it all to themselves.

BOCAITO Map pp110–11 Tapas €€

☎ 91 532 12 19; Calle de la Libertad 4–6; meals €20–25; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat; 🚗 Chueca or Banco de España

Film-maker Pedro Almodóvar finds this bar and restaurant in the traditional Madrid style 'the best antidepressant'. Forget about the sit-down restaurant and jam into the bar shoulder to shoulder with the casual crowd, order a few Andalusian *raciones* off the menu, slosh them down with some gritty red or a *caña* and enjoy the theatre in which these busy barmen excel. Specialities include the smoked fish salad, scrambled eggs with garlic and *jamón*.

KIM BU MBU Map pp110–11 African €€

☎ 91 521 26 81; www.kimbumbu.com, in Spanish; Calle de Colmenares 7; meals €20–25; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; 🚗 Chueca or Banco de España

Stepping inside this fine African restaurant, with stunning African décor and a tranquil air, is like entering another world. The *menú de degustación* (€21) is a good way to get acquainted with Senegalese and other predominantly West African tastes. Then again, the *gambas con mango y batata dulce* (prawns with mango and sweet potato) are pretty self-explanatory and very tasty.

LA MORDIDA Map pp110–11 Mexican €€

☎ 91 308 20 89; www.lamordida.com, in Spanish; Calle de Belén 13; meals €20–25; ☎ lunch & dinner Sun–Fri, 1.30pm–1am Sat; 🚗 Chueca

If your idea of Mexican food was born in Taco Bell, La Mordida will show you a whole new world. This is home-style Mexican cooking, the sort of place where most of the names on the menu will need explanation from the waiters. With Mexican cantina-style décor, Coronitas for just €3.15 and hearty servings, this could just be our favourite Mexican restaurant in a city overflowing with them.

RESTAURANTE VEGA VIANA

Map pp110–11 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 308 03 81; www.accua.com/vegaviana, in Spanish; Calle de Pelayo 35; meals €20–25; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Sat; 🚗 Chueca

Chueca is surprisingly lacking in vegetarian restaurants and even this one does a small sideline in chicken dishes (albeit of the free-range variety); not surprisingly, vegans need not apply. Dishes like zucchini burritos with Manchego cheese and carrot croquettes with sultanas and yoghurt cream should nonetheless keep most vegetarians happy. It has an English-language menu. Smoking is not permitted.

MAISON BLANCHE Map pp110–11 Gourmet Café €€

☎ 91 522 82 17; Calle de Piamonte 10; meals €20; ☎ 10am–midnight Mon–Sat, noon–6pm Sun; 🚗 Chueca

If you've a friend from Barcelona who's too cool for Madrid, bring them here and they might just change their mind. A gourmet-food store and designer café, this has become one of the most fashionable places in town for A-list celebrities; one newspaper called it 'paradise for sybarites'. The food ranges far and wide, but quiche Lorraine and duck are among the most popular choices. It also serves up live jazz (€5) from 2.30pm to 4.30pm on Sunday. This is the new Madrid and it's very cool.

RESTAURANTE MOMO Map pp110–11 Spanish €€

☎ 91 532 73 48; Calle de la Libertad 8; meals €20; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Sat; 🚗 Chueca

Momo is a Chueca beacon of reasonably priced home cooking for a casual crowd. It has an artsy vibe and is ideal for those who want a hearty meal without too much elaboration; the trout with soy and lemon sauce is recommended. The three-course dinner *menú* (€12.80) is one of Madrid's best bargains and the famous chocolate

EAT STREETS – CALLE DE LA LIBERTAD & AROUND

You can eat well in most corners of Chueca, but one street and its immediate vicinity stand out for variety and value for money. Central to Calle de la Libertad's appeal are **Bazaar** (p175), **Bocaito** (opposite) and **Restaurante Momo** (opposite), and one of Chueca's most popular cafés, **Diurno** (p193).

Circus (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 522 52 15; Calle de la Libertad 13; 🚗 Chueca or Plaza de España) serves fast and abundant Asian noodle dishes with plenty of coconut milk and lime juice; its motto is 'Very Fashion Fast Food'. **Restaurante Extremadura** (Map pp110–11; ☎ 91 531 88 82; Calle de la Libertad 13; meals €35–40; 🚗 Chueca) is a complete change of pace, with hearty, meat-dominated cooking from the Spanish interior; *jamón* is a key fixture (some of the best *jamón* comes from Extremadura). Just down the road, **El Original** (p174) lives up to its name, while **4 de Tapas** (below) is one of the barrio's best tapas bars.

moco (chocolate 'snot', but really home-made chocolate pudding) is the tastiest of dessert dishes despite the worrying name. It's a mostly gay crowd, but everyone's welcome.

ARABIA Map pp110–11 Middle Eastern €€

☎ 91 532 53 21; Calle de Piamonte 12; meals €20; ☎ lunch & dinner Sat & Sun, dinner Mon–Fri; 🚗 Chueca

Fine Middle Eastern cuisine, reasonable prices and the aesthetics of an Arab diwan with cushions strewn around some of the softly lit, low-lying tables make for a fine change to your Spanish diet. We especially enjoyed the *cordero con miel y piñones* (lamb with honey and pine nuts; €9.40) and the *cuscus de pollo con pasas y cebolla* (couscous with raisins and onion; €8.80).

4 DE TAPAS Map pp110–11 Tapas €€

☎ 91 532 94 64; Calle de Barbieri 4; meals €20; ☎ 9am–5pm & 8pm–2.30am Mon–Sat; 🚗 Chueca or Gran Vía

Tapas is not just about Andalusian-themed, tiled bars and shouting waiters. 4 de Tapas has a lounge-bar atmosphere and young and friendly waiters, quite apart from terrific tapas. The specialities are *tostas* (around €3 to €4) and *cazuelas* (from €7). For the former, brie with raspberry jam just has to be ordered, while the *cazuelas* range from Roquefort croquettes to the more traditional scrambled eggs with ham. The kitchen closes around midnight, an hour later on weekends.

GASTROMAQUIA Map pp110–11 Tapas €

☎ 91 522 64 13; Calle de Pelayo 8; meals €15; ☎ dinner Mon–Sat; 🚗 Chueca

The exciting reimagining of tapas that would have Hemingway turning in his

grave long ago swept through Madrid, but few places have recognised the possibilities of bringing world cuisines (eg couscous) into the mix. The philosophy behind Gastromaquia (the brainchild of renowned chef Ivan Sánchez) is to encourage Spaniards to relearn the art of eating tapas, taking them on a journey into what he calls 'universal tapas'. To do so, Gastromaquia maintains a base in Spanish cooking (helped by its location in an old Chueca *taberna*), but the tastes are always fresh and surprising, not to mention very good. There are plans to open for lunch, and the menu changes as often as new ideas emerge from the kitchen.

CACAO SAMPAKA

Map pp110–11 Snacks & Light Meals €

☎ 91 521 56 55; www.cacaosampaka.com; Calle de Orellana 4; meals €15; ☎ 10am–9pm; 🚗 Alonso Martínez

Although better known as a gourmet chocolate shop (p151), Cacao Sampaka also has a lovely little café where it serves snacks and light meals (sandwiches, pastries, cakes and the like). It's a good choice if you haven't become accustomed to the Spanish habit of full meals at lunchtime.

FRESC CO Map pp110–11 Buffet €

☎ 91 521 60 52; Calle de Sagasta 30; meals €8.50–9.95; ☎ 12.30pm–1am; 🚗 Alonso Martínez

If you just can't face deciphering another Spanish menu or are in dire need of a do-it-yourself salad, Fresc Co is a fresh, well-priced and all-you-can-eat antidote. OK, so the atmosphere is cafeteria and none too exciting, but the extensive choice of self-service salads, soups, pasta and pizza more than make up for it; the price includes a drink. Queues often go out the door at lunchtime.

CHAMBERÍ & ARGÜELLES

At first glance Chamberí and Argüelles seem more residential than great places to go out. With so many young and upwardly mobile madrileños clamouring to live here, however, there are some fine choices if you know where to look. Another advantage is that there's rarely another tourist in sight and you'll feel much more a part of the barrio than in the town centre.

SERGI AROLA GASTRO

Map pp116-17 Nouvelle Cuisine €€€
☎ 91 308 72 40; www.sergirola.es; Calle de Zurbano 31; meals €100-200; **M** Alonso Martínez
Sergi Arola, a young Catalan acolyte of the world-renowned chef Ferran Adrià, has abandoned La Broche and opened his second, personalised temple to all that's innovative in Spanish gastronomy. You pay for the privilege of eating here – the standard Menú Gastro costs €140 without wine and taxes – and you may leave hungry as this is the sort of place where presentation and taste are elevated above the need to fill hungry stomachs. But oh, what tastes...

JOCKEY

Map pp116-17 Spanish €€€
☎ 91 319 24 35; www.restaurantejockey.es, in Spanish; Calle de Amador de los Ríos 6; meals €70-100; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat Sep-Jul; **M** Colón
Fine Spanish cooking, with the occasional nod to international sophistication, and celebrities and royalty dotted around the dining room (Prince Felipe, heir to the Spanish throne, and Letizia Ortiz chose the Jockey chefs for their wedding banquet in May 2004) make for a top-quality dining experience. The menu is more traditionally European than most in this price range, although there are some innovative flourishes. Otherwise, it's along the lines of Persian caviar, snails and soufflés. If we could choose one dish, it would probably be lobster ragout with truffles and fresh pasta. Men must wear a tie and a jacket.

LA FAVORITA

Map pp116-17 Navarran €€
☎ 91 448 38 10; www.restaurante-lafavorita.com, in Spanish; Calle de Covarrubias 25; menú del día €15, meals €40-50; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat; **M** Alonso Martínez

top picks

REGIONAL SPANISH SPECIALITIES

- Casa Hortensia (p174) Asturias
- La Burbuja Que Rie (p165) Asturias
- Restaurante Julián de Tolosa (see the boxed text, p163) Navarra
- Sidrería Vasca Zerain (p166) Basque Country
- Sagarretxe (opposite) Basque Country
- Restaurante Extremadura (see the boxed text, p177) Extremadura
- Maceiras (p167) Galicia
- Restaurante La Giralda (opposite) Andalucía
- La Trucha (p167) Andalucía
- La Paella de la Reina (p175) Valencia

Set in a delightful old mansion and famous for its opera arias throughout the night sung by professional opera singers, La Favorita has an ambience all of its own. The outdoor garden courtyard is delightful on a summer's evening, while the music and food are top drawer. Our only complaint is that the tables are too close together.

MOMA 56

Map pp116-17 Fusion €€
☎ 91 399 09 00; www.moma56.com, in Spanish; Calle de José Abascal 56; meals €30-50; ☎ 8am-1am Mon-Wed, to 2am Thu & Fri, 10am-2am Sat, noon-2am Sun; **M** Gregorio Marañón
Still one of the places to be seen, Moma 56 is two diverging options in one. Momabar is to the left, where you can perch on slippery metallic bar stools or take a table for Basque *pintxos*. To the right is the minimalist white Moma Gold (open for lunch and dinner Monday to Friday, dinner on Saturday), where Mediterranean flavours predominate. The buzz about Moma is considerable and it's always packed, although food critics with whom we spoke felt that it's not quite worth the rave. It also has a popular *nightclub* (p202).

CASA RICARDO

Map pp116-17 Spanish €€
☎ 91 447 61 19; www.cas Ricardo.net; Calle de Fernando el Católico 31; meals €30-40; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; **M** Argüelles or Quevedo
This brilliant little 1930s-era *taberna* is tucked away in residential Argüelles, but it's well worth venturing out for. The spe-

cialities are *callos* (€13.35) and *rabo de toro* (€16.25), but there's plenty more to choose from, including the outstanding *calamares en su propia tinta* (calamari in its own ink). Like any old Spanish bar worth its salt, it's cramped, tiled, adorned with bullfighting photos and aimed at aficionados rather than tourists.

EL PEDRUSCO

Map pp116-17 Spanish €€
☎ 91 446 88 33; www.elpedruscodealdealcorvo.com, in Spanish; Calle de Juan de Austria 27; meals €30-35; ☎ lunch Mon-Thu, lunch & dinner Fri & Sat; **M** Iglesia
If you haven't time to visit one of the *asadores* (restaurants specialising in roasted food, particularly meat) of Segovia (p248), head to this fine restaurant where the roasted meats are as good as any in Madrid. The *cochinillo asado* (€60 for two or three people) and $\frac{1}{4}$ *lechazo* (quarter roast lamb; €38 for two) are succulent. It's the sort of place where a salad is a must and you'll be delighted to see a vegetable.

LAS TORTILLAS DE GABINO

Map pp116-17 Spanish €€
☎ 91 319 75 05; www.lastortillasdegabino.com, in Spanish; Calle de Rafael Calvo 20; meals €30-35; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat; **M** Iglesia
It's a brave Spanish chef that fiddles with the iconic *tortilla de patatas*, but the results here are delicious – tortilla with cockles, with octopus, with all manner of surprising combinations. This place also gets rave reviews for its *croquetas*. The service is excellent and the bright yet classy dining area adds to the sense of a most agreeable eating experience. Reservations are highly recommended.

RESTAURANTE COLLAGE

Map pp116-17 Swedish €€
☎ 91 448 45 62; www.restaurantecollage.com, in Spanish; Calle de Olid 6; menú del día €8.90, meals €25-35; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, lunch Mon, dinner only Sat; **M** Quevedo or Bilbao
One of our favourite restaurants in the barrio, Restaurante Collage serves wonderful food; the *rollitos de alce* (elk spring rolls; €9.25) are a spectacular entrée and the *solomillo de reno* (reindeer sirloin; €22.45) is tender and utterly delicious. The *menú de noche* (evening set menu; €21.95) is excellent and Swedish in orientation, while the daytime *menú del día* is supercheap

by barrio standards, more basic and caters to hungry local workers in search of home cooking. The whole atmosphere is casual but sleek in a Swedish kind of way.

NAGOYA

Map pp116-17 Japanese €€
☎ 91 448 69 07; www.nagoya.es, in Spanish; Calle de Trafalgar 7; menú del día from €8.55, meals €25-30; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; **M** Bilbao
Madrid has its fair share of Japanese restaurants, but you won't find any better than this one. The service is friendly and fast, and the food is outstanding – from the tempura and sushi to the *kami yaki soba* (duck with noodles and teriyaki sauce). Ask for your *maki* with *sesamo por fuera* (sesame on the outside) and you'll be in heaven.

IL CASONE

Map pp116-17 Italian €€
☎ 91 591 62 66; Calle de Trafalgar 25; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; **M** Quevedo, Iglesia or Bilbao
With its outdoor tables on the lovely Plaza de Olavide in summer, reasonable prices, and fresh and inventive Italian cooking, Il Casone is excellent. We always order the *tagliatelle scampi* (€8.95), which is perfect, but there are flashes of creativity, such as fagottini with black truffles and cream of foie gras and mushroom. The carpaccios or grilled provolone are great entrées.

RESTAURANTE LA GIRALDA

Map pp116-17 Andalucian €€
☎ 91 445 17 43; www.restauranteslagiralda.com, in Spanish; Calle de Hartzembusch 12 & 15; meals €20-25; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Sun; **M** Bilbao
For just about every kind of fried or fresh Mediterranean seafood you can imagine (and many you can't), Restaurante La Giralda feels like you've landed in Sevilla or Cádiz. The quality is high so it's hugely popular, but the downstairs dining area is surprisingly large.

SAGARRETXE

Map pp116-17 Basque Tapas €€
☎ 91 446 25 88; Calle de Eloy Gonzalo 26; meals €15-25; ☎ noon-5pm & 7pm-1am; **M** Iglesia
One of the best Basque *pintxos* bars in Madrid, Sagarretxe takes the stress out of eating tapas. Simply point and any of the wonderful selection will be plated up for you. Better still, order the *surtido de 8/12 pintxos* (your own selection of 8/12 tapas)

for €15/24. There's a more expensive but equally good restaurant downstairs.

LOCANDITA Map pp116–17 Tapas €€

☎ 91 444 11 97; Calle de Fuencarral 148; menú del día €10.50, meals €15–25; ☎ 7am–10.30pm Mon–Thu, 9am–10.30pm Fri & Sat; **M** Quevedo

Good for a breakfast pastry, lunch or a drink at any hour of the day, this friendly little brasserie is a bright place to rest during your Chamberí explorations. We especially like the thought that goes into the *menú del día*, where the kitchen accompanies your main choices to make sure you get a healthy balance of all the food groups.

CASA MINGO Map pp126–7 Asturian €€

☎ 91 547 79 18; Paseo de la Florida 34; meals €15–20; ☎ 11am–midnight; **M** Príncipe Pío

Built in 1916 to feed workers building the Príncipe Pío train station, Casa Mingo is a large Asturian cider house known by just about every madrileño. It's kept simple here, focusing primarily on the signature dish of *pollo asado* (roast chicken) accompanied by a bottle of cider. There are also a few Asturian specialties, such as *chorizo a la sidra* (chorizo in cider) and *queso de cabrales* (aged blue cheese).

BODEGA DE LA ARDOSA

Map pp116–17 Tapas €

☎ 91 446 58 94; Calle de Santa Engracia 70; meals €10–15; ☎ 9am–3pm & 6–11.30pm Thu–Tue; **M** Iglesia

Tucked away in a fairly upscale and modern corner of Chamberí, this fine old relic has an extravagantly tiled façade. Locals have been coming here for their morning tippie for decades and for some of the best traditional Spanish *patatas bravas* (fried potatoes with a spicy tomato sauce) in town. It also has vermouth on tap.

CACHABACHA Map pp116–17 Bocadillos €

☎ 690 265 556; Calle de Gonzalo de Córdoba; meals €5–10; ☎ 9am–11pm Mon–Fri, 1–4pm & 8–11pm Sat; **M** Quevedo

Wandering around Chamberí and you can't face a three-course Spanish meal? Cachabacha has a bar ambience with brick arches, and an excellent meal of soup, *bocadillo* and drink for €8.90. The service is relaxed and friendly, and the value is excellent.

BAJO CERO Map pp116–17 Ice Cream €

☎ 902 113 377; www.bajocero.es, in Spanish; Glorieta de Quevedo 6; snacks €5–10; ☎ 8am–midnight Mon–Thu, to 1am Fri, 9am–1am Sat, 9am–midnight Sun; **M** Quevedo

You can tell that a barrio is going upmarket when even its ice creameries have a super-cool style. Curvaceous chairs, bright colours, friendly service and a sophisticated vibe (not to mention brilliant ice creams, milkshakes and cakes) are what it's all about.

NORTHERN MADRID

The business and well-to-do clientele who eat in the restaurants of northern Madrid know their food and they're happy to pay for it. Often it's a fair metro or taxi ride north of the centre, but well worth it for a touch of class.

SANTCELONI Map p123 Catalan €€€

☎ 91 210 88 40; www.restaurantesantceloni.com; Paseo de la Castellana 57; set menus €125–155, meals from €100; **M** Gregorio Marañón

The Michelin-starred Santceloni is one of Madrid's best restaurants, with luxury décor that's the work of star interior designer Pascual Ortega, and nouvelle cuisine from the kitchen of master Catalan chef Santi Santamaría. Each dish is an exquisite work of art – try for example the lobster with vegetables and an oil-mint emulsion. But we'd recommend one of the set menus to really sample the breadth of exquisite tastes on offer.

ZALACAÍN Map p123 Basque & Navarran €€€

☎ 91 561 48 40; www.restaurantezalacain.com; Calle de Álvarez de Baena 4; meals €90–100; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat Sep–Jul; **M** Gregorio Marañón

Where most other fine-dining experiences centre on innovation, Zalacaín is a bastion of tradition with a refined air and a loyal following among Spain's great and good. Everyone who's anyone in Madrid, from the king down, has eaten here since the doors opened in 1973. The pig's trotters filled with mushrooms and lamb is a house speciality, as is the lobster salad. The wine list is purported to be one of the best in the city (it stocks an estimated 35,000 bottles). You should certainly dress to impress (men will need a tie and a jacket).

top picks

FINE DINING

- Santceloni (opposite)
- Sergi Arola Gastro (p178)
- Arola Madrid (p166)
- El Amparo (p169)
- Sula Madrid (p169)
- Sua (p174)
- Jockey (p178)
- Zalacaín (opposite)
- El Alborque (p162)

PUERTA 57 Map p123 Spanish €€€

☎ 91 457 33 61; www.puerta57.com, in Spanish; gate 57, Estadio Santiago Bernabéu, Calle de Padre Damián; meals €75–80; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon–Sat, lunch Sun; **M** Santiago Bernabéu

There are many reasons to recommend this place, but the greatest novelty lies in its location – inside the home stadium of Real Madrid; its Salón Madrid (one of a number of dining rooms) looks out over the playing field. Needless to say, you'll need to book a long time in advance for a meal during a game. The cuisine is traditional Spanish with an emphasis on seafood and it gets rave reviews.

ECOCENTRO Map p123 Vegetarian €€

☎ 91 553 55 02; www.ecocentro.es, in Spanish; Calle de Esquilache 2–12; menú del día €10.50, meals €25–35; ☎ lunch & dinner daily; **M** Canal or Ríos Rosas

Ecocentro is a vegetarian's paradise. Depending on which door you enter, there's an extensive organic food shop, a cheap cafeteria-style eatery or a basement restaurant that serves wonderful veggie food. The *menú del día* changes daily and has plenty of choice.

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