



Photos: age fotostock / Look/Turespaña

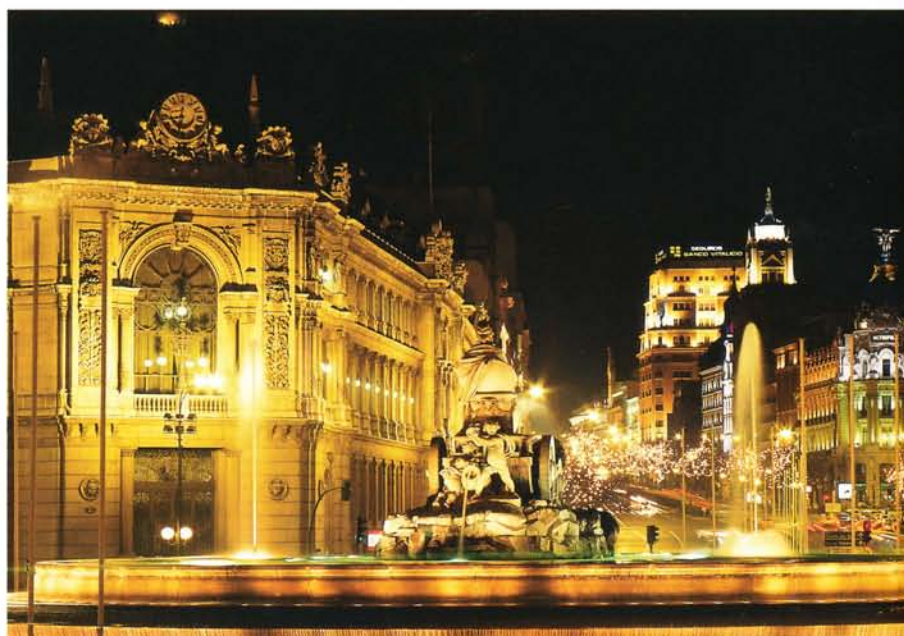
today is a Spanish rather than a regional cuisine. After breakfast with white coffee and buttered toast a popular treat around noon is a pincho de tortilla y una caña (a slice of potato omelette and a small draught beer). Those fond of the tapeo, the custom of enjoying small, tasty appetisers, will soon notice that, despite its central location in the country's interior, Madrid has a soft spot for fish and seafood. Typical dishes are those with the adjective madrileño: stews such as the cocido madrileño with chickpeas and the callos madrileños, belly meat with blood sausage, bacon and chickpeas, but also the garlic soup sopa de ajo. Veal and lamb are the meat varieties that are very popular with the Madrileños. The regional wines may not have the quality of those from other DOC regions, but they are fine companions for the meals – young, light and fruity.

At the latest since low-cost airline Ryanair has also been flying to Madrid, the bubbly Spanish capital has become a popular destination for short trips, but also the more established airlines such as Lufthansa and Iberia often have affordable and convenient offers.

The state-of-the-art underground railways system ensures a fast ride from Barajas Airport to Madrid historic centre. Reasonably priced rooms are available on the weekends upward of 50 euros per night, for example, in the cosy two-star hotel with an informal atmosphere "Oriente Hostel" near the Opera House, a stone's throw away from the Royal Palace or the plain, recently renovated and very clean

Madridfusión Weekend with Art and Pleasure

Every year, the crème de la crème of the top cuisiniers get together in the Spanish capital for a tête-à-tête at the "Madridfusión", the gathering of the most innovative chefs de cuisine in the world. These culinary trailblazers attach great importance to the identity of the regional cuisine – contrary to all globalisation trends. Such an event, of course, also has an impact Madrid itself, even though one can only speak with some reservations there of a regional cuisine. When Philip II. made Madrid the country's capital in 1561, the city's number of inhabitants soared, and the immigrants from all regions of Spain brought their respective cuisines along with them. Consequently, the correct term





Nightlife or art. In Madrid no-one has to choose between the two.

small “Jerez Hostel” on the 6th floor close to the entertainment district on the Gran Vía. Although there is no breakfast at the Jerez, there are numerous breakfast cafés in the vicinity. Those willing to spend a little more will find a pleasant place to stay for longer if they wish in the AC hotels. The small five-star hotel AC Palacio de Retiro is ideally located for a visit to the museums in the “Golden Museum Triangle” of Thyssen, Prado and Reina Sofia. The modern hotel Urban, with its excellent blend of avant-garde architecture and old works of art from overseas, is a good point of departure for a stroll through the old part of the city. For architecture fans, the Hotel Puerta America is an absolute must. Norman Foster, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid and other star architects have created twelve differently de-

signed floors here in the heart of Madrid. The British designer Ron Arad even discarded classic spatial geometry with the sculptural landscapes of “his” floor.

In the evening, the Madrileños like to meet before supper for a few tapas. The word originates from the custom of covering the glass with a lid, on which the landlord would then place little appetisers to eat. Today, guests in some bars will still be given a little bowl with crisps, olives or salami along with their beer, but it has now become more increasingly customary to offer tapas on request (and no longer free of charge). Seafood such as calamares, small squid (chipirones), sardines and tuna, is also popular here, but also tortilla, patatas ali oli (potatoes with garlic sauce), ham and cheese. As the portions are small, a stroll through the streets is worthwhile.



Food & Drink:

Tips from Margarita Lozano, publisher of the wine magazine Allwines in Madrid:

La Chata

Calle Cava Baja, 24
Tel. +34 91 366 1458

Old Madrid tapas bar, which is decorated with a collection of bullfighting posters well worth seeing. The jabugo ham is excellent. Visit the wine cellar, which the owner calls the "wine sanatorium".

Fast Good

Calle Juan Bravo, 3
Tel. +34 91 577 4151

www.fast-good.com

A new cooking concept of the NH hotels with Spain's star chef Ferrán Adrià. Fast Good is the exact opposite of Fast Food, a clever, fascinating cuisine, with something for everyone.

Privée Bar

Calle Bárbara de Braganza, 8
Tel. +34 91 310 5235

www.barprivee.com

Luxurious and very exclusive, with a large selection of champagnes, which are served in glass portions. Along with the finest meals; a look at the choice of caviars is a must.



Here are a few tips: the "Museo del Jamón" with its ham masses dangling from the ceiling has a variety of branches in the city centre, in which the tasty Serrano and pata negra hams can be sampled, but where whole joints can also be bought. The "Juana la Loca" with canapés piled up on the counter is a popular meeting point after "el rastro", the flea market, which is open every Sunday in the old part of the city and which should not be missed. In the "Corazón Loco" one may well encounter the stars of the films of Almodóvar or Saura, and the atmosphere in the "Taberna Tempranillo" or in the traditional "Stop Madrid".

Opera with tapas

For anyone who has already seen the Spanish national museum "Prado" and the works of El Greco, the "Centro de Arte Reina Sofía" with Picasso's moving Guernica and Thyssen's grandson's impressive private collection, Madrid always has plenty of other interesting sights: the Bullfighting Museum in the impressive "Las Ventas" arena, for example, informs about this archaically Spanish tradition and the collection at the Royal Tapestry Factory not only displays the change of taste over the course of the centuries, but enables visitors to watch weavers working with traditional methods.

Visitors pushed for time can combine cultural and culinary pleasures. Opera fans will relish a visit to the restaurant "La Favorita". In this location close to the Opera House, trained singers give the ears a treat with their powerful-voiced renditions of operatic tidbits between the aisles and as accompaniment to the wine. Soccer



aficionados will be familiar with the "Royals" of Real Madrid. As it is difficult to get hold of one of the 80,000 tickets for a home game, the myth of Bernabéu can be sensed during a tour of the "Hall of Fame" or a table booked at the "Realcafé Bernabéu" – even when there is no soccer match there, this is a great place for an excellent meal with a view of the hallowed turf. The days when fortunes were gambled away in the classical-style Casino de Madrid have long since passed. Today, the magnificent building is an exclusive club and, thanks to the cooking skills of Paco Roncero, who ranks as the model pupil of Spanish master chef Ferrán Adrià, it is a top address for molecular culinary creations. And those who cannot decide where to go among all the attractions should simply find the time for a second trip to Madrid. □

Michael Ritter



Information

Getting there

Several direct scheduled flights daily from various European cities to Madrid Barajas. Depending on the traffic and destination, taxi rides to the centre cost 15 to 25 euros. The underground railway is often just as fast and only costs 1 euro

Hotels

Oriente Hostal
Arenal, 23
28013 Madrid
Tel. +34-915 480 314
Double room from 62 euros

Jerez Hostal
Montera, 47
28013 Madrid
Tel. +34-915 327 565
Room from 45 euros

NH Paseo del Prado
Plaza Cánovas del Castillo, 4
28014 Madrid
Tel. +34 913302400
Room from 195 euros
www.nh-hotels.com

Hotel Urban
Carrera de San Jerónimo, 34
28014 Madrid
Tel. +34-917 877 770
Room from 240 euros
www.derbyhotels.com

Hotel Silken Puerta America
Avenida de América, 41
28002 Madrid - Ciudad Lineal
Tel. +34-917 445 400
Room from 200 euros
www.hoteles-silken.com

Hotel Liabeny
Calle Salud, 3
28013 Madrid
Tel. +34-915 319 000
Single room from 110 euros
www.liabeny.es

Bars:

Museo de Jamón
Interesting because of the tremendous ham offerings, try the jamón de bellota Gran Vía, 72
Tel. +34-915 412 023;
Calle Alcalá, 155
Tel. +34-914 317 296
www.museodeljamon.es

Juana la Loca
Good bar for some of the best tapas in the city – not that cheap. Our tip: the potato tortilla with caramelised onions is a treat Plaza Puerta de Moros, 4 La Latina
Tel. +34-913 640 525

Stop Madrid
Opened in 1929, used to be a food store and still has the old furnishings with a marble counter, great place for a freshly drawn beer and a portion of serrano ham Calle de Hortaleza, 11
Tel. +34-915 218 887
www.stopmadrid.es



Corazón Loco
Interesting guests, marvellous canapés and good value for money Calle del Almendro 22, La Latina
Tel. +34-913 665 783
<http://corazonloco.com>

Taberna Tempranillo
Bar with atmosphere, tasty mushroom and goat's cheese canapés, excellent selection of wines Calle Cava Baja, 38 La Latina
Tel. +34-913 641 532

Cafés and restaurants:

Café Gijón
The artists' café par excellence has seen many an artist and writer in it more than 100-year history and is an institution in Madrid. Delicious seafood and fish meals such as arroz de bogavante Paseo de Recoletos, 21
Tel. +34-915 215 425
www.cafegijon.com

La Favorita
With a small garden in the summer the evening meal plus opera singers costs 45 euros. For this price, guests can order a mixed grill with fresh vegetables, stockfish "ajoarriero" with Roncal puree and, as a finale, a white chocolate mousse Calle de Covarrubias, 25
Tel. +34-914 483 810
www.restaurante-lafavorita.com

Realcafé Bernabéu
With a magnificent view of Real Madrid's hal- lowed turf, Angel Garcia cooks creative meals on a traditional basis, such as the Madrider stew in the style of the Realcafé Bernebeu Avenida Concha Espina, 1
Tel. +34-914 583 667
www.realmadrid.com

Restaurant Botin
Opened in 1725 and, according to the Guinness Guide, the "oldest restaurant in the world". Specialities are suckling pig and roast lamb in Castilian style Calle Cuchilleros, 17-19
Tel. +34-913 664 217
www.botin.es

Casino de Madrid
Paco Roncero is Ferran Adrià's model pupil in Madrid and has been chef de cuisine in the noble casino for years. A must-try: the mole- cular tapas dishes Calle de Alcalá, 15
Tel. +34-915 218 700
www.casinodemadrid.es

Sights worth seeing:

Flea market el Rastro
In the heart of the old part of the city, not far from the Puerta del Sol, the statue of the soldier Eloy Gonzales, a Spanish hero who fought in Cuba, marks the beginning of the Rastro. From here, visitors can walk down to the Ronda de Toledo. Every Sunday

Madrid Snow Zone
Sports enthusiasts can ski all year round in Europe's biggest and Spain's only indoor artificial snow facility. Autovía A-5, km 23,5 28939 Arroyomolinos (Madrid)
Tel. +34-902 263 026
Sundays to Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to midnight
www.madridsnowzone.com

Parque Warner Madrid
Huge theme park, not only for movie fans, with five areas from Hollywood Boulevard to the Old West Territory. San Martin del la Vega
Tel. +34-902 024 100
www.warnerbrosparque.com

Parque de Atracciones de Madrid
Pleasure grounds for all generations and all tastes. The themes run from technology and nature to pure relaxation. Casa de Campo
Tel. +34-914 632900
www.parquedeatracciones.es

Museo Nacional del Prado
Current special exhibition: "Goya in Times of War" celebrating the bicentenary of Spain's War of Independence, until 13 July, 2008 Paseo del Prado
Tuesdays to Sundays 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
www.museodelprado.es

El Centro de Arte Reina Sofia
Special exhibition: Edward Streichen: A Photographic Epoch" 24 June to 22 September, 2008 Santa Isabel, 52, Plaza del Emperador Carlos V
Mondays to Saturdays 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sundays 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
www.museoreinasofia.es

Museo de Arte Thyssen-Bornemisza
Special exhibition "Miró: Earth" 17 June to 14 September, 2008 Paseo del Prado 8
Tuesdays to Sundays 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
www.museothyssen.org

Museo Taurino de la Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas, Stierkampfmuseum C/ Alcalá, 237 Plaza de Toros de las Ventas
Tuesdays to Fridays 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
www.las-ventas.com

Royal Tapestry Factory
Calle Fuenterrabía, 2 Montag bis Freitag 10 bis 14 Uhr
www.realfabricadetapices.com