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MADRID TREASURE HUNT

A 12 bottle case of finest Castillian wine is to be found at the end of our hunt that explores the many secrets of Madrid's sometime dark and mysterious past. Every month we publish a clue or a challenge for those daring readers who wish to discover the hidden side of Ma-

May Challenge:

Madrid has been invaded by the Meninas this month. Before they leave find the one in the picture and take a selfie to show you were there and send it to the editor:

editor@madridmetropolitan.com

Brought to you by:

Madrid Adventures -teambuilding events with a Castilian twist.









elcome to this our 13th edition of the Madrid Metropolitan. Madrid's only English language paper available online and distributed free to over 120 points around the city. You can also download the paper in pdf from the website as well as sign up for articles and our newsletter delivered direct to your mailbox / just send a mail to info@madridmetropolitan.com for information on how to do that and our privacy and GDPR policy.

In this month's edition we feature a selection of fab things to do and see in Madrid as we enter the summer months. Also a focus on business and that underestimated matter of inheritance tax in Spain which for many is a complicated area to grabble with and which Chris Webb of Spectrum Finance explains. On a lighter note Barry Walker goes exploring though Madrid and our resident caterer Jemima Butler has a lovely early summer recipe for us to enjoy! We hope you do.

Thanks for supporting and we hope you enjoy reading.

The Madrid Metropolitan team

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Once again many thanks for all the mails. This month we will again be dealing with structures from two different levels. First, the slightly confusing difference between the verbs "recordar" and "acordarse", and then we will continue with our exploration of the eternally intriguing subjunctive.

¿Recordar o acordarse?

Dear AIL

My Spanish isn't bad but I find some verbs confusing. I never seem to get it right between recordar, and acordarse. Can you help?

Jan. Delft, Holland

Jesús, profesor de AIL Madrid Dear Jan

It's a very common confusion, but the difference is quite straightforward. I hope the section below helps. It's in Spanish, so you'll have to work a bit!

Aunque su significado es similar, una confusión habitual entre los estudiantes de español es cómo conjugar "recordar" y "acordarse". Fíjate muy bien en su estructura:

- 1. Recordar algo / a alguien
- Ej. Recuerdo la universidad con nostalgia. Recuerdo a mi abuela con cariño.
- 2. Acordarse de algo o de alguien
- EJ.: Me acuerdo de la universidad con nostalgia. Me acuerdo de mi abuela con cariño

Y ahora practica y encuentra los errores:

- A. Lucía no se recuerda de Miguel.
- B. ¿Recuerdas el novio de Ana? Se llama Leo.
- C. No acordamos de la dirección del museo.
- D. No se acuerdan el nombre del restaurante.

No nos acordamos de la dirección del museo. D. No se acuerdan del nombre del restaurante. SOLUCIONES. A. Lucia no se acuerda de Migud. B. ¿Recuerdas al novio de Ana? Se llama Leo. C.

Poner condiciones con el imperfecto del subjuntivo

Over the last few weeks we've received several mails asking us for more on the subjunctive, so this month we've focused on conditional sentences with the pretérito imperfecto. Good luck!

Jesús, profesor de AIL Madrid

Siguiendo con los usos del pretérito imperfecto de subjuntivo, tenemos el de poner condiciones improbables o imposibles en el presente o en el futuro con la palabra "Si". La estructura de la frase es esta:

SI + IMPERFECTO DE SUBJUNTIVO + CONDICIONAL SIMPLE

Ej. Si ganara el gordo, me compraría un chalé.

Y ahora practica y conjuga correctamente:

- A. Si.....(tener, yo) más dinero, estudiaría en los EEUU.
- B. Si aprobara, mi madre.....(ponerse, ella) muy contenta.
- C. Me casaría con Rubén si(estar, yo) enamorada de él.
- D. Aceptaríamos la oferta si.....(pagar, ellos) bien.

SOLUCIONES: A. Tuviera. B. Se pondría. C. Estuviera. D. Pagaran.

Featured Staff Member

ste es Martin de Sevenoaks, en Este es Marun de Schementalgico de nuestro Student Care Team. Puede ser que Martin parezca más británico que el Fish and Chips pero en realidad es medio argentino, lo cual le lleva a opinar que las empanadas argentinas son más sabrosas que sus equivalentes españolas.

Le encanta la fotografía y recomienda las vistas desde el Parque del Cerro del Tío Pío en Vallecas. También es muy futbolero, pero tristemente es uno de estos irritantes fans sureños del Man Utd, aunque él dice que simplemente le encanta el deporte en general. Su recomendación secreta en Madrid es el Bar de La Rosa en Atocha, por sus fabulosas tapas de tortilla.



Meet Martin, the nerve centre of our fine Student Care Team, from Sevenoaks in Kent. Martin might appear more British than fish and chips but he's actually half Argentinian leading him to make the bold claim that empanadas argentinas are actually tastier than their Spanish equivalents.

He loves photography and recommends the views from the Parque del Cerro del Tio Pio in Vallecas. He's also a keen footballer, but sadly is one of those dodgy southern Man Utd fans, though he claims to just love the game in general. His secret Madrid recommendation is to get down to the Bar La Rosa in Atocha for their unbeatable tortilla tapas.

Spanish course of the month-**Business Spanish**

We have a wide range of students at AIL Madrid from all kinds of backgrounds, with all kinds of objectives. However, in an ever more globalized business environment we are seeing more and more requests for business Spanish programmes.

Business Spanish is a complex world! There are of course certain basic areas of vocabulary that any business person needs to know, but beyond that the student's specific requirements vary according to the sector they work in, and the situations where they will need Spanish. We've organised programmes focused on industries as varied as Tourism, Banking, Manufacturing, and of

course the world of Diplomacy. And within these contexts we've worked with students on Spanish for presentations, meetings, negotiations, and video conferences

This is why all AIL Business programmes are personalised to ensure that we cover each student's individual objectives. Our business students often do their courses here at AIL, but we also deliver programmes to individuals and companies on their premises. For a free needs analysis, and a price quotation please contact us and we'll be happy to help you become a confident user of Spanish in the workplace!







The Madrid Metropolitan's selection of the best that can be enjoyed in the capital this summer.

Meninas Madrid Gallery



escribed as "Velázquez's supreme achievement, a highly self-conscious, calculated demonstration of what painting could achieve". The "Maids of Honor" have invaded

Madrid in the form of sculptures sprinkled around the city at iconic locations with each expressing the vision of the city though the eyes of their creators drawn from the world of art, film and sport.

https://meninasmadridgallery.com/

Rubens Exhibition: Prado Museum June 6th - Aug. 5th



Rubens, considered one of the most important and influential painters of European art is being featured by the Prado Museum in an exhibition of a collection of old sketches which have been compiled from trawling the world's leading institutions.

https://www.museodelprado.es/actualidad/exposicion/rubenspintor-de-bocetos/608ff3ed-0823-40a4-bc5a-9a5cb634d8bo

"They shall not pass" Exhibition: Casa de la Panaderia - Until July 1st



ot all of Spain succumbed to the Nationalists insurrection of 1936 – indeed in Madrid they were thwarted by the forces loyal to the Republic. The exhibition in the Sala de Bóvedas at the Casa de la Panadería in the Plaza Mayor tells the stirring story as those dramatic events unfolded in November 1936.

https://plazamayormadrid4c.es/event/no-pasaran-16-dias-madrid-1936-exposicion-la-lucha-madrid-fascismodel-3-abril-al-1-julio-2018/

Revolutionary Artists – Gaviria Palace Until July 15th



he Gaviria Palace is hosting an exhibition featuring some of the world's most revolutionary twentieth century artists including

http://revolucionariosmadrid.com/

lsabel Muñoz, Anthropology of Feelings - Tabacalera Promoción del Arte, Calle Embajadores, 51 Until June 17th



This Isabel Muñoz (National Photography Award in 2016) exhibition shows a selection of photographs of her current work exploring the human body, human spirituality and sexuality.

https://www.promociondelarte.com/tabacalera/expo-331-isabelmunoz-la-antropologia-de-los-sentimientos

David Bisbal: WiZink Center - June 14th



Since appearing on the original Operación Triunfo in 2001 David Bisbal has become a global star with a world-

wide following in the millions. Madrid fans will get the chance to see their King of Latin Pop.

http://www.davidbisbal.com/

Illustrate: Contemporary Illustration in Children's Literature: Until September 9th

his eight prize winners from the Bologna Fair's International Illustration Prize come together for this exhibition of illustrations of children's literature.



A Summer Story Music Festival - Ciudad del Rock in Arganda del Rey Carretera Autovía A3, km 33

June 22 - 23rd



rganda del Rey becomes the capital of electronic music as the kings of the genre come to town for the two day festival.

http://asummerstory.com/

Festival de Fado Madrid: Teatro Nuevo Apolo y Filmoteca Española, June 22 - 24th



adrid once more hosts this international Fado Festival featuring some of the best performers and voices of the genre that has become increasingly popular and found a wider audience from its humble roots from the shores of Portugal.

https://festivalfadomadrid.com/



Black is back Music Festival: Matadero

June 22 - 23rd



different music festival is celebrated at the Matadero as the "Black is Back" Weekend returns another year bringing together the best of soul, jazz and blues for a weekend of dance and harmonious joy.

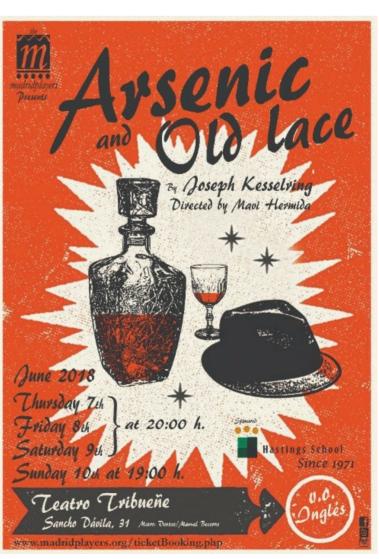
http://www.blackisback.es/

Madrid Book Fair - Retiro Park until June 10th



Bigger and better than ever the 77th Madrid Book Fair returns with booksellers, publishers and distributors displaying their wares which this year features Romania as guest country.

http://www.ferialibromadrid.com/



SOROLLA AND THE WORLD OF FASHION

here is a crucial link between Sorolla and the world of fashion.

This is apparent from the portraits he executed between 1890 and 1920 when women played a key role and he depicted them in all their chic finery.

The Thyssen Museum in conjunction with Museo Sorolla (his residence-cum-studio) are show-casing portraits, attire and accessories from the above epoch.

Paris and Modern Life depicts his frequent visits to the city where he keenly observed the elite at the sidewalk cafes and folks ambling on the boulevards and parks. And particularly the trend-setting fashion

Society Portrays focuses on important personalities of the Ameri-

can Society as Sorolla was commissioned to paint them at frequent intervals. It was a source of pride and he presented American artists John Singer Sargent and William Merritt Chase two of his works as gifts.

In the segment titled In Private the viewers it is apparent that Family ties were essential to the artist and this is mirrored in several pictures of his children (Maria, Joaquin and Elena) and mainly in the striking portraits of Cotilde, his spouse.

On the advice of their physicians the well-heeled headed to the eastern-part of the country and also to such popular destinations as San Sebastian and Santander in the north. This is reflected in Elegant summers. Sorolla´s family followed suit and they strode out into



the shore - parasol and elegance under the sunny bluish skies were beautifully captured on canvas.

THYSSEN MUSEUM AND AT MUSEO SOROLLA THROUGH SUNDAY MAY 27th .

www.museosorolla.es

KRIS SINCLAIR CHRISTIAN



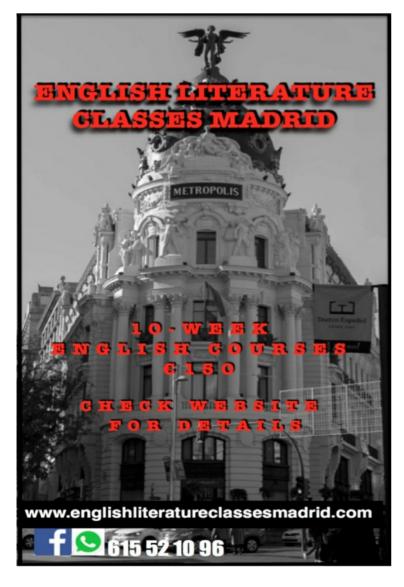




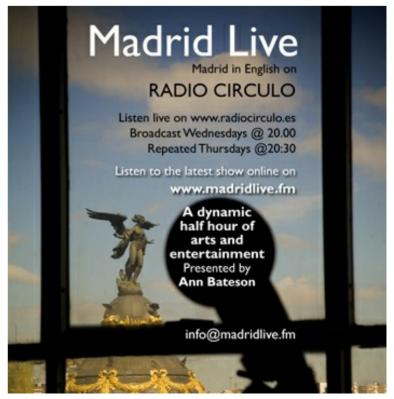
What To Look Out For In The Coming Months











Freelance Workers and the 'Gig Economy'

In a Gig economy, companies make more use of free-lancers and less of full-time employees, which has big implications for society. In all probability it will be a growing trend everywhere. In Spain, as elsewhere, the rules don't always favour it.

ife's not easy for Spanish free-lancers. Imagine you are starting out as a translator, for example. Before you invoice your first customer, you need to register as an autonomous worker and pay social security contributions. That means €275 a month for those that don't qualify for rebates (new workers pay a flat rate of €50 for the first year). Even if you only manage a few days paid work in a month, you still have to contribute for the full month.

Over the last couple of years several start-ups have sprung up to make life a little easier. Set up as cooperatives, free-lancers join as members. The cooperative invoices customers on your behalf and signs you on and off the Social Security register just for the days that each job lasts (companies aren't subject to the one-month minimum and can pay contributions for the days worked).

The largest of these, Valencia based Factoo, makes no secret of what it offers: "Invoice your customers without registering as self-employed" said the adverts plastered all over bus stops in Madrid a few months ago.

That raised alarm bells in the Government, which wants freelancers registered and paying up. If the Ministry of Employment has its way, the game may be over. It claims that Factoo and similar organisations are not real cooperatives and that their members should be signed up as autonomous workers. The work Inspectors are claiming the Social Security contributions they say are due. If Factoo loses its appeal, the decision will effectively mean its dissolution

The role of freelancers in general is being put under the spotlight. Food delivery company Deliveroo faced a strike of their 'riders', and a union challenge on unfair working conditions. The Spanish work inspectorate agreed by ruling that the delivery force were 'false freelancers', hiding a real employer/employee relationship.

But big companies basing their business model on the use of free-lancers is not new. German manufacturer Vorwerk has been doing it for years, selling their up-market Thermomix food-mixer exclusively through an army of freelance 'presenters'. The association of autonomous workers UTAE claim that the company's 7,800 salespeople in Spain – mostly women – are really employees, since they receive training, attend sales meetings, are given sales targets and are organized into teams.

So are these companies guilty of playing the system to pay less tax while depriving workers of their legitimate rights, or are they offering an attractive alternative opportunity to earn money which fits the new economy model?

It depends, is probably the answer. Clearly many Thermomix sellers are happy with the arrangements. Were Vorwerk required to put all the salesforce on the payroll, the thousands they have on the streets now would probably be reduced to no more than a couple of hundred full time jobs.



Source: https://freoview.wordpress.com/tag/street-photography/

Deliveroo riders can choose when they work, which might suit many - students for example, who need to work around their classes and are after pocket money. But dropping off food to people's homes is not a job which will allow workers to dream of buying their own apartment or raising a family.

Many current jobs will disappear because of technology. Flexible working arrangements involving free-lancers are certain to be part of the future economy, which isn't all bad. Companies using freelancers can often deliver better and cheaper services to consumers. The Gig economy can offer workers an attractive lifestyle—they can often work from home, choose what they do and don't have to put up with annoying bosses. Not all will be badly paid.

It's not easy for Governments to keep up with a fast-changing society. Spain's politicians show little sign of being even aware of the wider debate. The question is how to allow the flexibility that suits some workers while avoiding an economy with hordes of low-paid workers.

While Spain's Government is more worried about plugging gaps in its tax revenues than encouraging companies to take on employees - by reducing the costs of employment, for example – Spain is unlikely to be at the forefront of adapting to the new economy.

By Roger Pike

WH Advisers – Market Entry into Spain.

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Spanish Succession Tax (Inheritance tax)- Advice from The Spectrum IFA Group

If you are a resident of Spain it is important to understand that there will be liabilities due to the Spanish government in the event of a death. Whether it's you that is inheriting part of an estate or it's your estate being distributed the taxman is going to want his share.

any British nationals don't realise that depending on the asset and its location there may also be a claim from the UK taxman. Just because you are a non UK resident it does not eliminate the requirement to settle taxes in both the UK and Spain. Spanish succession tax will be due either when the assets being inherited are located in Spain, such as a property, even if the recipient of the asset lives outside of Spain OR if the assets are based outside of Spain but the recipient lives in Spain.

For example: if you leave your Spanish property to your children who are now UK residents they will be liable to pay succession tax to the Spanish government. On the flip side if you receive an inheritance from the UK and you are a Spanish resident then again you have to pay tax in Spain.

As mentioned above, if you are a British national and are resident in Spain you could be liable to UK inheritance tax as well as Spanish succession tax. In the UK they require all worldwide assets to be when it comes to inheritance, however if tax has been paid in the UK the amount is usually deductible against the Spanish liability.

To complicate matters further, Spain have a standard set of "State Rules" which lay down the rates and allowances for succession tax as well as individu-"Autonomous rules' which means things are different from one community to another. Detailed below are these state rules:

The tax rates differ depending on the value of the amount inherited. These range from 7.65% on the first €7,933, up to 34% on €797,555 and over.

Beneficiaries are graded into four different groups and the more remote the beneficiary's relationship is to the deceased the lower the tax allowance and the higher the tax rates. These four groups are:

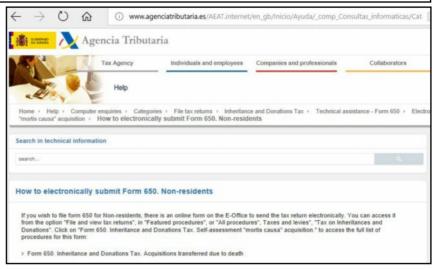
- Natural and adopted children under 21
- Natural and adopted children aged 21 and over, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, spouses
- In-laws and their ascendants/descendants, stepchildren, cousins, nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts
- All others including unmarried

declared, as you will be considered "UK domiciled" by the government. It is almost impossible to be considered as anything other than UK domiciled, even if you haven't lived in the UK for some time.

There is no double tax treaty signed between the UK and Spain partners

Allowances are available between husband and wife or direct line ascendants/descendants, but this is set at just short of €16.000. If an inheritor is also a direct line descendant under the age of 21, there is an additional allowance of

The Spectrum IFA Group International Financial Advisers ose the classroom. Use the boardroom **English Training for Spanish Professionals** Corporate Communication



€3,990 for each year they are under 21. The total of this additional allowance is restricted to €47,858 per child or grandchild.

For more distant relatives (e.g. cousins) the exemption is set at €7,933. There is no exemption for beneficiaries who are not related.

A main home in Spain may be virtually exempt from Spanish succession tax provided the beneficiaries are either your spouse, parents or children and they continue to own the property for ten vears from the date of death.

The exemption can also apply where the beneficiary is a more distant relative over the age of 65 and they have lived with you for at least two years before death. If these conditions are met, the value of the house can be reduced by 95% in calculating the tax base liable, subject to a maximum reduction in value per inheritor of €122,606. It is important to note that this is only applies principal private residence and is owned by a Spanish resident.

Some examples of where the Autonomous rules differ from the state rules:

In Valenciana, spouses and children receive an allowance of €100,000 each. They can also benefit from a 75% reduction in the amount of succession tax payable.

In Murcia, the taxable inheritance for children under 21 is reduced by 99%, while older children and spouses get a 50% reduction.

In Andalucía, spouses and children can benefit from a 100% exemption for inheritances up to €175,000, provided they are not worth more than €402,268.

Cataluña offers a 99% allowance for spouses. Other Group I and II relatives receive a relief depending on the amount of their inheritance. Personal reductions are €100,000 for spouses and children (more for those under 21), €50,000 for other descendants, €30,000 for ascendants and €8.000 for other relatives. The 95% main home relief is to a property value of €500,000, with the amount prorated among the beneficiaries (minimum €180,000 limit each). The property need only be kept five years rather than the 10 year state rule.



Why 'DOS DE MAYO'?

Why is the second of May (dos de mayo) a holiday in the Community of Madrid, what does it celebrate, why is there a Plaza de Dos de Mayo and why is the Malasagna area of Madrid so named?

o understand we need to go back over two centuries and to an epoch-making moment in the annals of Spanish history.

Spain was once an ally of France, her naval fleet had combined with the French at the battle of Trafalgar in October of 1805, which resulted in a resounding defeat by the British under Lord Admiral Nelson.

Napoleon recognized the power of the British navy which he knew he could never defeat but if he could deny them access to the ports of Portugal on the Atlantic and the ports of Spain on the Mediterranean their powers would be considerable reduced.

So began the seeds off what became known as the Peninsula wars fought throughout the period 1807 to 1814.

The war started when French and Spanish armies invaded and occupied Portugal in 1807. Spain at this time was a ripe but rotten fruit ready to be picked, Napoleon seized his chance to expand his empire and in 1808 France turned on its ally.

The city had been under the occupation of Napoleon's army since 23 March of the same year. King Charles IV had been forced by the French emperor to abdicate in favour of his son Ferdinand VII, and at the time of the uprising both were in the French city of Bayonne at the insistence of Napoleon. An attempt by the French general Joachim Murat to move the daughter and her children along with the youngest son of Charles IV to Bayonne sparked a rebellion.

What followed on the 2nd of May was when the people of Madrid rebelled and rose up against the occupation of the city with street fighting in different areas of Madrid as the poorly armed population confronted the French troops. Murat had quickly moved the majority of his troops into the city and there was heavy fighting around the Puerta del Sol and the Puerta de Toledo. Marshal Murat imposed martial law in the city and little by little the French regained control of the city, many hundreds of people died in the fighting.



Several paintings by the Spanish artist Goya portray the street fighting that took place and can be seen in the Prado Museum.

There were Spanish troops stationed in the city, but they remained confined to barracks. The only Spanish troops to disobey orders were from the artillery

units at the barracks of Monteleón who joined the uprising. Two officers of these troops, Luis Daoíz de Torres and Pedro Velarde y Santillán are still commemorated as heroes of the rebellion. Both died during the French assault of the barracks, as the rebels were



reduced by vastly superior numbers.

The repression following the crushing of the initial rebellion was harsh. and death sentences were issued to all of those captured who were bearing weapons of any kind. Hundreds of prisoners were executed the following day, a scene captured in a famous painting by Goya, The Third of May 1808.

From the nearby town of Mostoles a declaration of war was issued calling all the Spaniards against the invaders. The name of this declaration was 'Bando de los alcaldes de Móstoles' or 'bando de la Independencia' which translates to 'Declaration of Independence'.

The uprising in Madrid, together with the subsequent placing of Napoleon's brother Joseph (Pepe Botella) as King of Spain, provoked resistance across the whole of Spain to French rule and triggered the Peninsula war.

The 2 May is now a public holiday in the Community of Madrid. The place where the artillery barracks of Monteleón was located is now a square called the Plaza Dos de Mayo, and the district surrounding the square is known as Malasaña in memory of one of the heroines of the revolt, the teenager Manuela Malasaña, who was executed by French troops in the aftermath of the revolt.

In the district there are streets named after the two officers from the barracks of Monteleòn and Manuela Malasaña.

Several memorials to the heroes of 2 May are located over the city, including the Monumento a los Héroes del Dos de Mayo located in the Plaza de la Lealtad, (next to the Ritz Hotel), the spot where General Murat order the execution of many Spaniards.

IRISH TAVERN - PUB

THE

CAVERN

C/ Santiago, 1 - MADRID - @IrishCavern

By Barry Haslam-Walker FRICS

ALTERNATIVE VOICE

What's in a flag?

The universe is a complex place. Infinitely complex, some might say. Take ants, for example. Amazingly industrious insects, which have evolved so that each individual has a clearly defined role within a sophisticated matriarchal society, in which the workers and drones exist at the service of the Queen, a state of affairs many of the quirkier members of the British Conservative party would no doubt like to see brought into being in the UK. The British left, however, would probably see ants as inherently patriarchal, with the Queen as a passive submissive lifeform, disempowered by millions of years of misogynist evolution, and possessed of no sense of agency beyond ensuring the survival of the male dominated colony. Rival bands of ants even sauirt acid at one another in $an\ uncanny\ parallel\ with\ sections$ of London's feral working class

However, I digress. My point is that the universe is a complicated place. And there may even be an infinite number of them. In another vortex of time, perhaps a parallel Madrid exists, one devoid of franchises, hipsters, and hideous pollution, where courteous drivers compete to help one another graciously on their way, and where the police do not exist primarily to finance the state by imposing ludicrous fines upon its citizens. Sadly, such mysteries are beyond us. Yet, even leaving aside the mind numbing possibilities of the likely existence of an infinite number of alien civilisations, and even of infinite versions of ourselves, we undeniably exist in a world of unfathomable mystery.

Which makes it all the more galling, that so many of us choose to engage with this wondrously fleeting existence by displaying allegiance to rectangular pieces of coloured cloth. I am referring of course to flags. Recent visitors to Madrid may be surprised to see rashes of red and yellow cloth, as the Spanish flag has steadily begun to litter the balconies and window frames of our once fair city, especially in the more patriotic (wealthy) areas of the city. In working class areas like Vallecas, you may instead see the Republican flag, and occasionally you see both hanging from the same building, displayed no doubt by neighbours who despise each other, as most neighbours in Madrid come to despise each other sooner or later, a corollary of the quintessentially Spanish version of reality, whereby only other people behave anti-socially, a view of the world that is distinctively postmodernist in its embrace of subjective truth. Local right wing councils in many of the dormitory towns that surround Madrid have even started displaying flags so enormous that



they can actually be seen from space.

The virulent outbreak of patriotic red and yellow is of course a reaction to the situation in Catalonia which has been afflicted by decades of moronic flag hanging, a practice which, like a particularly unpleasant strain of herpes, lies dormant, ready to explode whenever the political situation demands a fresh outbreak of coloured cloth. The Catalans have become so accustomed to interpreting the universe through pieces of cloth, that flag hanging has reached a level of sophistication beyond their Spanish neighbours to the south and to the west where apparently the shadow of Franco, not a tall man, still looms large, because of course there were no Catalan fascists, and Catalonia is not just economically, morally, and politically superior, to its neighbours but is different. As the flags clearly show.

So in Catalonia you can reduce your view of the universe to three basic types of cloth. First we have the senyera, the traditional red and yellow striped Catalan flag which simply means you are proud to be Catalan but probably don't want independence, or any problems with the neighbours. Then we have the esteleda, a blue star on a red and yellow background which means you want independence, and pretty much this is all you want, because therein lie the answers to the great issues of the day, and there is no greater issue than which bunch of useless bastards are going to manage global neoliberalism on your behalf, and whether they should they shit on you from Barcelona or Madrid, even though of course they will actually be doing the defecating from places like Brussels, New York and Shanghai. Finally, we have the same flag, but with a red star which means you want independence but in a leftist way. So not exactly workers of the world unite, but definitely a better deal for workers in your own particular anthill, or not. The main thing is to use the medium of the coloured cloth to declare yourself a leftwing nationalist, or an oxymoron.

If you don't want to go to the expense of buying a flag you can always just wear a wrist band which does the same job of reducing your world view to some stripy colours, but also has the virtue of allowing you to strut around as you do so. Or you could hang something similar inside your car, as long as you don't try and park it in the wrong city. Weirdly although you can be a left wing, or a right wing Catalan nationalist (both are happy to fly the estelada), in Madrid only right-wingers ever brandish the Spanish flag, unless Spain have just won the World Cup, an event which mercifully only occurs rarely. Once in fact. Left wing Spaniards despise nationalism, unless it's Catalan or Basque nationalism, whereupon enthusiastic solidarity becomes the order of the day. I suspect that this actually might just be down to solidarity with terrible haircuts, and crap clothes, a cultural meme that seems to be universal to the left.

Of course Spain didn't invent this infantile obsession with flags as symbols of inane simplicity. In the USA the stars and stripes has become for many of its citizens an almost sacred object. In the UK, the Scottish and Welsh flags are largely considered to be charming manifestations of cultural pride, whereas the English flag is viewed as a sinister symbol of exploitation at the service of racist imperialists. This is of course because the English are historic oppressors and the British Empire had nothing to do with the Scots, or the Welsh, who far from invading India and much of Africa, had instead remained at home composing rousing hymns, and honing their skills at being nicer, better people than the English.

However, in Spain the flag fest has reached absurd levels. People bang on about how beautiful Barcelona is, but as far as I can see large swathes of the city are currently invisible, hidden beneath multiple layers of coloured cloth dangling from wherever it is possible to dangle something. Fortunately, Madrid's response has been characteristically half-hearted. Most of the people of Madrid love their city, and quite rightly so, but at the same time they don't really give a shit about it. Perhaps this is because anyone can be a madrileño, one of the great joys of this wonderful metropolis. Madrid doesn't puff its chest out because it doesn't need to, and anyway, everyone is too busy squabbling with one another.

It is however, a free country, unless you try and drive or attempt to park in it, or worse still, take the piss out of the monarchy. So, if Dear Reader, you do feel the need to sublimate the eternal complexities of political thought behind a piece of coloured cloth, then by all means go ahead. There will almost certainly be a Chinese shop nearby, fully stocked with the patriotic symbol of your choice. And if hanging a flag outside your window doesn't change the world, then I don't know what will.



Fresh Flavours of Spring and Early Summer - By Jemima Butler



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Spring is upon us. I love to celebrate this time of year with the new seasons vegetables, it could almost make me want to turn vegetarian!

hese vegetables include tiny broad beans which are a delicacy on their own or with some golden olive oil or teamed up with sone finely chopped jamon.

The new season's very small artichokes which sliced very thinly

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can be eaten raw in a lightly dressed salad with lemon juice instead of vinegar and the very young leeks which are so delicate one can only eat them lightly steamed or boiled.

These are wonderful fresh flavours of Spring and Early Summer with a tingling vinaigrette and the crunch and aromatic of the herbs...Artichokes, Asparagus and Baby Leeks with Mustard and Fresh Herb Vinaigrette.

Recipe: Artichokes, Asparagus and Baby Leeks with Mustard and Fresh Herb Vinaigrette

Per Person

- 1 Artichoke
- 4 Asparagus Spears
- 2 Baby leeks

Vinaigrette

- 3 tbls of dijon mustard
- 1 tbls of red wine vinegar
- 5 tablespoons of sunflower seed oil
- Fresh herbs; pasley, chives and chervil finely chopped

Method

Clean the vegetables well – open up some of the outside leaves of the artichokes and leeks to get rid of any grid or dirt.

Find a nice large bowl to make the sauce in – put the mustard in the bowl and add the vinegar. Mix well. Slowly pour in the oil in a thin stream into the thick mixture and meanwhile keep stirring as if making mayonnaise. Once the mixture is well homogenised add the chopped fresh herbs.

Serve this sauce with the boiled or steamed fresh young vegetables.

I sometimes just make this



with a pile of fresh seasonal asparagus, of course don't forget some crusty fresh bread to dip into the vinagrette too.

Another amazing starter to make with artichokes is Fried Artichokes.

This is a perfect light 'aperitivo' or starter. If you slice the artichokes very thinly they will be like chips, to be enjoyed with a drink before lunch or dinner. If you slice them thickly they can be a starter or an accompaniment to a main course. It is a delicious way of eating artichokes, crispy on the outside and tender on the inside, I am sure you'll love them. This process may seem a lot of bother

but really worth it in the end.



PREPARATION

First, you must wash them thoroughly. Pull off the exterior leaves until you reach the lighter tender inner leaves. Next, peel the stalk and pear it down.

Cut them in half, and with a small pairing knife or spoon scoop out the hairy middle bit. Once prepared and cut in half place in a bowl with cold water and some fresh parsley so that they don't go brown. This trick works as well as some lemon squeezed into the water to stop the vegetable oxidizing, which is what happens when the phenols in the artichokes meets the air.

FIRSTLY - BOIL

We need to cook the artichokes before we fry them. Put a large pan of water on to boil add salt and a squeeze of lemon. When the water is boiling add the artichokes and leave to boil 30 minutes, keep an eye on them though as you don't want them too soft.

Drain the artichokes on kitchen paper and let them dry as much as possible. Once this process is done, there is an infinite array of possibilities of how to prepare them in different dishes; either in salads, stews or fried as we are going to do now. With a sharp knife, slice the artichokes thinly.

SECONDLY - FRY

In a small saucepan or frying pan heat plenty of olive oil. When hot fry the artichokes immediately. As soon as they look lightly toasted use a slotted spoon to take them out and dry on kitchen paper. Make sure the oil doesn't get too hot or burn otherwise it will burn the artichokes.

Once fried sprinkle with Maldon sea salt, you really don't need anything else apart from maybe a cold glass of Godello from Galicia which would pair very well.

As I write, rain pours from the skies and the feeling of staying at home to cook and bake sets in... the feeling of Spring momentarily leaves us and the terraces in Madrid are empty. Soon we will enjoying light clothing and sunhats but until then we will have to enjoy the last days of Spring showers, wellies and warmer soul nourishing food.

Until next time - Keep on cooking!!



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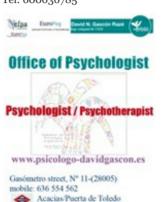
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