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A Guide to Celebrating With Friends, Spanish Style

In Spain, life is bookmarked by celebrations with loved ones—and the best way to celebrate is around the table.

Spanish culture is known for many things—flamenco music, bustling open-air markets, incredible food, and of course, the propensity to celebrate. Whether it be for birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, religious festivals, or even just the victory of a favorite soccer team, the Spanish love a good celebration. Spaniards have a reputation for being warm and outgoing, so it makes sense that life in Spain is one full of joy and social time. There's no reason to rush and there's always a reason to celebrate. Naturally, it wouldn't be a celebration without a table full of food.

While celebrations in America tend to be formal occasions where the family will gather to commemorate a specific milestone or holiday, celebrations are more of a lifestyle in Spain—one that is often shared amongst chosen family; friends. Circles of friends are sustained by frequent get-togethers, both formal and informal, and always revolving around good food and wine. Spanish culinary culture and celebration culture go hand in hand, as they're both inherently social times meant to prioritize savoring life's sweeter, slower moments.

We love Spain's celebratory mindset because daily life calls for more celebrations. If you want to celebrate like a Spaniard—that is frequently, with friends and good food, here is our official guide to bringing more moments to celebrate into your life.

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Gather the Group

A Spanish-style celebration starts with the company you keep. After all, it wouldn't be a party without the people you love. The first step to a proper Spanish celebration, then, is finding a place with enough space for your group.

Tatel, a Spanish restaurant in Beverly Hills, is the perfect place for those more formal celebrations. Initially based in Madrid and Ibiza, the Los Angeles location of Tatel represents a quintessential dining experience one would find in Spain, where fresh cuisine, live music, and delicious cocktails come together for a lively experience. The decor is inspired by *"Paseo a orillas del mar"* or *"Women Walking on the Beach,"* a painting by Valencia-born artist Joaquin Sorolla. The private dining room is well suited for those large group celebrations, whether it be a birthday dinner or an engagement party.

Taberna del Alabardero**,** an elegant Spanish restaurant in Washington DC, is another wonderful option for gathering loved ones for a celebration. One of the oldest and most storied Spanish restaurants in the US, it opened its doors in 1989 just steps away from the White House. The rotating seasonal menu, created by Spanish chef Carlos Gómez, is focused on classic Spanish gastronomy—tapas, luscious paellas, refreshing sangrias, and delicious desserts. The elegant decor creates an opulent ambiance that extends to the private dining room, where larger groups can be accommodated with a bit more privacy.

Raise a Glass

If a table full of food is the first requisite to any Spanish-style celebration, then raising a glass is the second. Drinking culture in Spain is just as much a part of daily life as culinary culture, and long meals are always enjoyed with a glass of wine or beer. When it comes to a celebration, it is customary to deliver a brief, heartfelt toast that sums up the reason for your get-together. Spanish white, red and sparkling wines are perfect for these moments.

In New York, Basque Tapas Bar invites guests into a cozy, relaxed environment that makes you feel right at home. An intimate place to celebrate with a smaller group of friends, the bar offers a diverse variety of tapas from the northern region of Spain accompanied by an extensive wine and sangria list. Meat is Angus certified, seafood is wild and never farm-raised, and specialty items are imported straight from Spain—like Iberico ham and north Atlantic octopus.

Sharing is Caring

No matter where you are in the world, sharing experiences is one of the foundations of friendship, and friendship is an integral part of any celebration. In Spain, sharing food is more than just a meal; it is a representation of shared trust and the road traveled together. That is why dining in Spain is so naturally communal, from large tables full of laughter and conversation to many small shared plates being passed around. Traditional Spanish cuisine has many dishes that are made for sharing, from croquettes and meatballs to rice dishes and plates of jamón ibérico, or cured Spanish ham. To properly celebrate Spanish style, shared dishes are essential.

Tomiño, a New York restaurant specializing in Galician cuisine, offers diners the typical Spanish experience of ordering several dishes that can be shared with the entire table. The Galician empanada, tortilla de patata, or a Spanish potato omelet, and fried peppers are all traditional items that should be shared with a group to emulate a Spanish-style celebration.

With locations all around the US, Jaleo by José Andrés is a true embodiment of the communal, celebratory spirit of Spanish dining. Jaleo's menu showcases the rich, regional diversity of Spanish cuisine in a relaxed, yet lively environment. You'll often find groups of friends and family gathering over shared dishes and bottles of wine for hours at Jaleo, which is just about as close to a typical Spanish mealtime experience as you can get in the US.

Celebrating is a must for mental health; a way to counter the hectic pace of modern life and the monotony of daily routines. Celebrations don't have to be big, formal occasions, they can simply mean taking a break from it all to get together with friends over a good meal and good wine. For Spaniards, celebrating is a key to a happy life—and we think they're onto something.

If you want to celebrate in true Spanish style, discover the list of restaurants with the "Restaurants from Spain" label.

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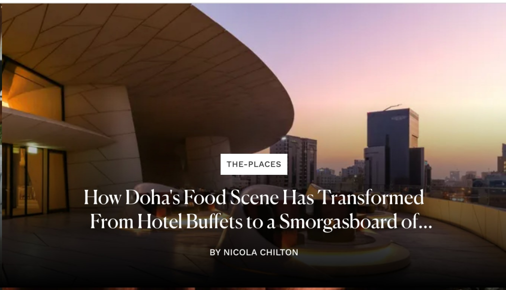

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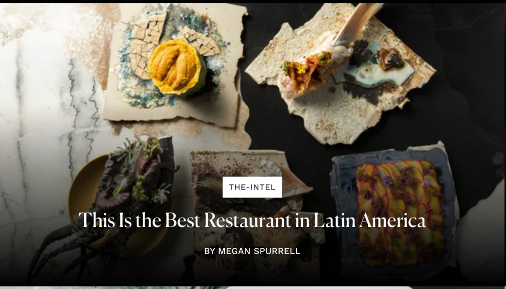

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