

# CIUDAD VIEJA

THE OLD CITY OF MONTEVIDEO



AN INSIDER'S GUIDE CURATED BY  
ALMA HISTÓRICA BOUTIQUE HOTEL

# Welcome to Alma Histórica Boutique Hotel

*Our charming boutique hotel is a homage to 19th-century Uruguayan art and culture. Converted from a century-old elegant townhouse, each of our 15 hotel rooms is dedicated to a prominent Uruguayan figure including artists, writers, politicians, poets, and musicians. Here, you will find our shortlist of experiences, tastes, places, and people that will make your stay in Montevideo more memorable. Enjoy it!*



# Unique Experiences

## 1 TUNE IN THE CARNAVAL SPIRIT

African-Uruguayan community's candombe drum calls (*llamadas*) are a characteristic of the local culture. Catch them in Ciudad Vieja streets every weekend —besides the Sur, Palermo and Cordón districts.

## 2 JOIN A MILONGA AT THE PARK

Although Argentinians embrace tango more intensely, Montevideo is proud of its role in the birth of this musical genre. Besides bar performances, you can join dancers on Plaza del Entrevero and Plaza Fabini.

## 3 SEARCH FOR STREET ART

Montevideo is one such city where street artists do not have to get permission from the authorities to paint the city's walls. That explains why the country hosts so many talented street artists. To find their work, check the local Instagram account [@streetartuy](#)

## SHOP LOCAL FASHION

To meet an Uruguayan designer with international impact, visit Ana Livni's atelier & showroom located just a few steps from Alma Histórica Boutique Hotel. Her artistic designs celebrate local materials and slow fashion.

4

5

## HUNT FOR TREASURES

The Sunday Market on Tristan Narvaja street is a popular pastime for locals. Here you could find interesting second-hand items, several bookstores and a few nice bars.

## VISIT AN EXTRAORDINARY CHRISTIAN TEMPLE

Crypts are not common in Latin America as in Europe. Here, at Cripta del Cristo de la Paciencia, you would find the "Christ of Patience" statue —one of few examples around the world.

6


PLAZA ZABALA, WHERE THE FIRST SPANISH SETTLEMENT OF THE CITY WAS FOUNDED




**FEEL THE “RIO PLATENSE” MELANCHOLY**  
La Rambla, a 20 km-long boulevard running along the River Plate, is the favorite spot of Uruguayans for swimming, walking and running, as well as chatting or contemplating over glasses of yerba maté, gazing at the open seas on the horizon. Do not miss the view of Ciudad Vieja and the port area from the rooftop terrace of Alma Histórica Boutique Hotel.

### **EXPLORE AMAZING BOOKSHOPS**

Chat with Gerardo, the owner of small and artsy Moebius Libros on Pérez Castellano; enjoy the elegant historic decor and rare books at Linardi y Risso, and Librería Más Puro Verso; have a coffee or lunch break at the lovely backyard of Escaramuza.



### **SAVOR LOCAL WINES**



As Chile's Carmenere and Argentina's Malbec, Uruguay has put the Tannat grape of French origin at the center of its wine production. To savor Tannat and more, book a wine tasting in one of the bodegas (wineries) near Montevideo. Bodega Los Nadies and Bodega Bouza —both family businesses—are among our favorites.

**NIGHT PANORAMA  
OF MONTEVIDEO  
AND LA RAMBLA**

# A Taste of Montevideo



## *Tranqui (relax)!*

Luckily, Montevideo has a very Latin American rhythm, although it is a capital city. Do not expect your coffee to be served fast here. Enjoy the process by immersing yourself in a novel, tourist guide, or magazine, and let life roll at its own pace... Below, you will find our tried-and-tested list of local cafes, bars and restaurants to enjoy in **Ciudad Vieja** (Old City) and beyond, in alphabetical order. Montevideo might be famous for its surprisingly monumental urban features like **Palacio Salvo**, or **La Rambla** —the city's more than 20-km-long popular coastal promenade but “small” and “independent” should be the keywords in your search for the city's culinary delights.

You might find it strange that we don't suggest **Mercado del Puerto** as a culinary stop in this mini-guide. Although it is an important landmark that played a crucial role in Montevideo's development as a port, its touristy setting and “meat only” restaurants with giant *parillas* (grills) make it less attractive for us, foodwise. In our opinion, the only place authentic enough to visit in the old marketplace is **Empanadas Carolina**. This tiny buffet with an L-shaped long bar has been specialized in empanadas for three generations. Pick your *sabor* (taste) and it would come to you *al horno* (baked), or *frito* (fried in rice oil, as it is thought to be healthier). Welcome to Uruguay!



## *Weekdays in Ciudad Vieja*

### **ALVAREZ**

Wood-fired cooking, sourdough pizzas, amazing empanadas filled in with lamb meat and weekend surprises prepared outside the usual menu make this place ideal for an informal dinner on a summer night. *Tue to Sun, 11:00-00:00*  
*Pérez Castellano 1404*

### **DALBERTT**

Dalbertt is the brand behind the French-style pastries served at Boutique Hotel Alma Histórica —all deliciously gluten-free! You can also reserve customized lunch and dinner menus served in the hotel. *Mon to Sun, 13:00-23:00; Solis 1433*

### **ES MERCAT**

This family-owned restaurant's biggest bet is the fresh fish coming directly from Uruguay's coastline, in a city whose diet is based primarily on meat. Make sure that the chef-owner Facundo Connio knows you are an Alma Histórica friend! Suggested for dinner, if you don't mind a short walk on the rough side of the neighborhood. *Wed to Sat, 12:00-15:30 and 20:00-23:30; Sun, 12:00-16:00; Colón 1550*

## EL OTRO

Es Mercat's "sister" is serving a flexible Galician-inspired tapas menu and a carefully selected wine list in a more informal setting along the pedestrianized Pérez Castellano. Their cold-brew coffee is also worth trying. Chef Roberto Connio (Facundo's father) and his Swiss partner Lili Zech are behind the counter most of the week. Suggested for lunch. *Tue to Sun, 10:00-18:00; Pérez Castellano 1526*

## ESTRECHO

As the brainchild of an Uruguayan chef couple, this extraordinary restaurant is only open for lunch during the weekdays. Here, the bureaucrats and bank executives of Ciudad Vieja rub shoulders with gourmands on a long bar. Ask for the fish of the day before making your choice from their seasonal menu with occasional Asian touches, and do not leave without trying a dessert. *Mon to Fri, 12:00-16:00; Sarandi 460*

## JACINTO

The Argentinian-born chef Lucía Soria was the first visionary to open a fine-dining restaurant in Ciudad Vieja back in 2012. Being a famous TV personality taking stage in several gastronomy programs, she continues to present a seasonal menu based on Italian and Spanish cuisines. Suggested for lunch. *Mon to Tue, 11:00-16:00; Wed to Sat, 11:00-23:00; Sarandi 349*





## MONTEVIDEO WINE EXPERIENCE

A stylish bar offering wine and “much more”, including a highly satisfying cocktail and tapas menu, as well as occasional vinyl nights during the high season. Sit at the bar to chat with the owner Nico, a wine connoisseur himself, to make informed choices from the wine list and to get into engaging conversations with the local clientele about Uruguayan culture and politics. Suggested for aperitif or dinner.

*Mon to Sat, 13:00-21:00; Sun 13:00-19:00; Piedras 300*



## PRIMUSEUM

Montevideo is proud of its tango heritage, and this is one of the best places to have a dinner accompanied by a tango show in a 19th-century museum house, where the Mazzoni family displays their vast collection of kerosene lamps and stoves by the Swiss brand Primus. If you are into the story of tango in Uruguay, **Museo del Tango – La Cumparsita** inside Palacio Salvo is another must-see place.

*Thurs to Sun, 20:30-00:00*

*Pérez Castellano 1389*

## *Sundays in Ciudad Vieja*

### **SOMETIMES SUNDAY**

This little hole in the wall along the pedestrianized Pérez Castellano is where you would like to mix in a stylish local clientele for a Sunday brunch. The Colombian owners roast their own coffee and offer a neat menu inspired by recipes from all around the world. They were the ones who introduced French toast and brisket to Uruguay.

*Thu to Sun, 09:00-16:00*

*Pérez Castellano 1518*



The Montevideo Metropolitan Cathedral at Plaza Matriz





## FEDERACIÓN

This independent bakery-restaurant also stages young local artists in rooms around a small backyard. Get lost in their mouth-watering display of croissants and desserts, or choose from their list of healthy open sandwiches, focaccias, burgers and bowls. All are served with excellent coffee! *Mon to Sat, 09:30-19:00; Sun, 09:30-18:00*  
Pérez Castellano 1370



## CAPICUA

This artisanal gin house was born out of the friendship of two Brazilian entrepreneurs, who decided to call Uruguay their new home. At a cool and cozy distillery located on the historic pedestrian street of Pérez Castellano, they serve handcrafted cocktails and delicious tapas. *Sat to Sun, lunch 12:00-16:00 Wed to Sat, drinks 19:00-02:00*  
Pérez Castellano 1518



## *Sundays & Mondays Beyond Ciudad Vieja*

In Montevideo, you would not see many locals going out on Sundays and Mondays. Sundays are reserved for the family and Mondays for recovering from the first working day of the week. Therefore, we suggest you get out of the invisible walls of Ciudad Vieja on those nights.



### **TOLEDO**

This former Ciudad Vieja favorite has moved out to a larger venue with sleek interiors and a light-filled patio in the Palermo neighborhood. The tapas-based menu includes classics like *tortilla de papas*, *gazpacho*, and rabbit *paella* as well as more extraordinary plates like *ceviche* and bluefin tuna *tataki*. Suggested for a Monday night, together with its neighbors **MISSION**, **COMEDOR** and **ORIUNDO** (notable with its plant-based menu).

*Mon to Sun, 12:00-16:00; Mon to Sat, 20:00-00:00; Pablo de Maria 1018*

## *Sundays & Mondays Beyond Ciudad Vieja*



### **BACO VINO Y BISTRO**

Wine is the bottom line at the Punta Carretas branch of this successful French – Chilean bistro, where one could savor about 150 boutique Latin American labels. Owners Sophie Le Baux and Matías Fasolo are both Alma Histórica friends, so say hello to them! Their pedigree as internationally-trained hoteliers ensures impeccable service beyond Montevideo standards. Do not leave without trying the best *tarte tatin* in the city! Suggested for a Sunday night. *Mon to Sun, 12:00-00:00*  
*José Luis Zorrilla de San Martín 93*



### **CULTURAL ALFABETA**

Why not have a cafe, restaurant, book store and cinema under the same roof? The idea became so popular among locals that there is always a nice vibe here at this elegant cultural space. *Tue to Sun, 09:00-23:00;*  
*Miguel Barreiro 3231*

### **EL TÍO BISTRÓ**

This cute spot is not a usual restaurant, but the home of Fernando and Cristina, where they serve scrumptious dishes and a good wine list to a limited number of guests with great care and love. *Thurs to Sat, 19:00-01:00;*  
*Rizal 3764; with reservation only*

# Coffee Renaissance



## LA FARMACIA

In an old pharmacy that is restored to its former glory, you can enjoy good coffee accompanied by brownies and healthy plates. *Mon to Fri, 08:00-19:00; Sat, 09:00-19:00; Cerrito 550*

## CHE.CO.FFEE

Tomas and Ladislav, the owners of this small but cool cafe might be the only Czech citizens living in Uruguay! Tomas used to prepare Alma Historica's breakfast buffet before. The duo now matches good coffee with typical Czech desserts like *trdelnik*, a sugary cinnamon pastry filled in with cream, chocolate or *dulce de leche*. *Mon to Fri, 09:00-18:00 Sat, 10:00-18:00; Zabala 1341*

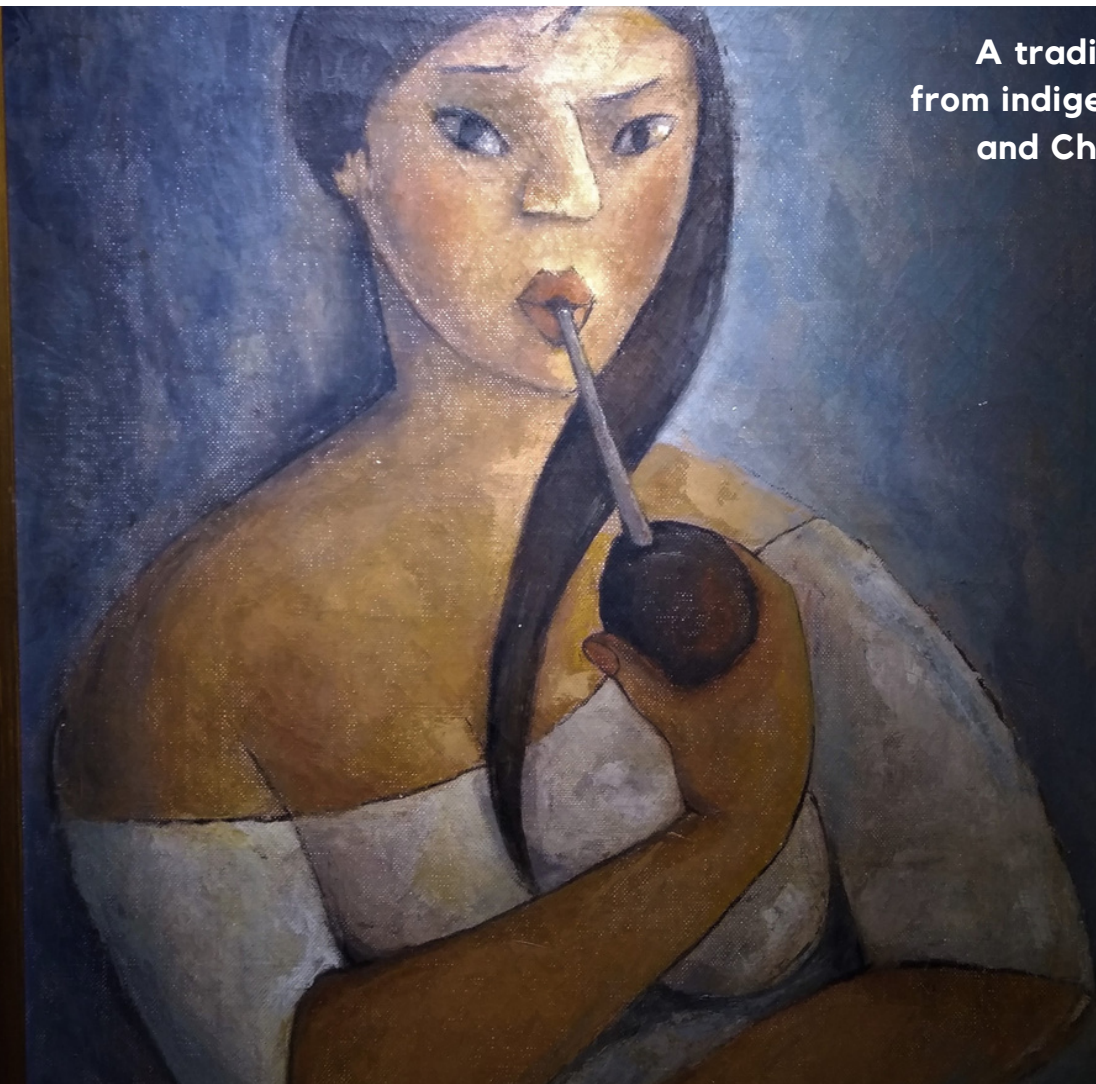
## CULTO

Culto's Ciudad Vieja branch has a modern vibe enveloped in an Art Nouveau building. It is the ideal spot to grab your coffee & cake to work on a computer without being rushed by anyone, watching the constant flow of people along the historic Sarandí Boulevard. *Mon to Fri, 08:00-19:00; Sat, 10:00-18:00; Sarandí 499*



# Mate Obsession

A tradition inherited from indigenous Guaraní and Charrúa people.



You may have heard about the health benefits of mate after World Cup stars made it globally famous. Still, the Uruguayan people's love affair with this herbal infusion is at a whole different level. You can spot locals with a gourd and thermos any time of the day, anywhere —at work, on the beach, at a street market, on the bus, and even while driving, although it is not allowed due to the danger of boiled water. Mate contains "mateine" which is very similar to caffeine and makes the user more alert and less hungry, with fewer side effects like anxiety. There are many versions on the market from energizing to relaxing. Every Uruguayan has a mate buddy and mate-drinking is predominantly a social act, where the same gourd is refilled and circulated clockwise among friends, sometimes for hours.

