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Meet Me In Spain: Join Vanika Choudhary and Yasmina Hilal as they wander through the best spots in Madrid and Málaga

Follow the captivating Lebanese artist and visionary Indian chef as they discover the best food, art and culture that these Spanish destinations have to offer



Join Vanika Choudhary and Yasmina Hilal on a journey to Madrid and Málaga...



In *Meet Me In Spain*, a *Condé Nast Traveller* and Spanish Tourism series, we bring together creatives from different parts of the world to connect through travel.

Vanika Choudhary is a chef hailing from India, best known for the way she connects Kashmiri culinary traditions with modern tendencies of fine dining. Choudhary forages for native ingredients and specialises in fermentation, often also partnering with indigenous women who she describes as “custodians of food and culture.” With a similar ethos in mind, Lebanese artist **Yasmina Hilal** takes photos that “explore the power of the female gaze.” Her mixed media work transforms family stories and personal experiences into bold visuals reflecting her DIY aesthetics.



To explore the unexpected spots of Madrid and Málaga together, Choudhary and Hilal met complete with the open-minded approach to travel that connects all creative minds. First coming together in Madrid's district of Salamanca, as they picked up locally-sourced fruit and vegetables at the **Kiva Tienda Ecológica** organic shop before heading out for an artsy picnic in **Matadero Madrid**. Once a cattle market, today this multi-purpose complex houses several galleries as well as a theatre, cinema and multiple green spaces ideal for taking in the glorious weather. While nibbling on croquetas and ripe tomatoes from Andalucía, they talked about their first impressions of Spain. "Indulgence," noted Choudhary with a smile on her face – and it was only the beginning. While in Madrid, the duo also visited some classic tourist spots including the historic square and gardens of **Plaza de Oriente**. And for some thoughtful literary souvenirs, they headed to **Cuesta de Moyano** – an outdoor book market on a pedestrian street with stalls selling a vast array of vintage volumes. It's a great opportunity to stock up on a Spanish dictionary or a local cookbook.

Continuing their journey to the south of the Iberian peninsula, the duo jumped on a speedy train and in two and a half hours they emerged onto the sun-kissed streets of

Málaga. This tourist hotspot might be known for its stellar sand beaches, but the city is filled with unexpected stories on every corner. For example – did you know that it was the birthplace of artist Pablo Picasso? As an artist herself, Hilal had a field day of soaking up inspiration at **Museo Picasso Málaga**, a 16th century palace that hosts an extensive collection of the Cubist artist’s famous works as well as temporary exhibitions of international and Spanish artists who share their sensibilities with Picasso. Surrounded by a labyrinth of winding streets, the museum is just one of the many cultural hubs in the city’s town centre. Visit the imposing **Cathedral of Santa María de la Encarnación** or follow in the footsteps of our protagonists’ steps and hike up the steps of **Alcazaba**, an 11th century palace. Its impressively preserved architecture is framed by **the Roman Theatre**. And for contemporary art buffs out there, the Málaga outpost of the famed **Centre Pompidou** gallery offers a unique curation from global artists with the bustling port as the backdrop.



Embracing thoughtful travel, our protagonists stayed at **Parador de Málaga Gibralfaro**, a hotel that transforms historic buildings into unique accommodation. Built of stone, it offers stunning views of the Mediterranean coast, always guaranteeing a spectacular sunset.

What's a trip to **Málaga** without indulging in Andalusian seafood? A local fisherman took Choudhary and Hilal out at **El Dedo beach** to discuss the fishing season. Fortunately, they didn't have to wait long to taste their catch, as the area is filled with *chiringuitos*—beach bars serving grilled dishes, often cooked on repurposed boat grills. **Espigones** is one of the finest examples of these beachside eateries, making it our duo's perfect final destination. As they savoured **fritura malagueña** - small fried fish enjoyed whole by the tail - and **espetos** - skewered sardines grilled over an open fire - they reflected on their journey.



“It was so much more than I could ever expect. I can’t wait to tell all my friends to come here,” said Choudhary, noting how Andalucia offers much more than just a beach holiday. “For me, it’s all the incredible views we’ve seen while here. They will stay with me forever,” added Hilal, as they both agreed to meet here again sometime soon. Such is the power of the meaningful connections we make while looking beyond our travel expectations. And with the richness of experiences both Málaga and Madrid have to offer, Spain is the perfect backdrop for your next adventure.

Discover a new side to Spain’s best travel destinations. *Click [here](#) to know more.*

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