

El Riojano Pastry Shop was founded in 1855 by Queen Maria Cristina's personal pastry chef, Dámaso Maza, a native of La Rioja, hence the nickname by which he was known and which gives the establishment its name.



The founder had no offspring, so the business passed into the hands of his two master pastry chefs, who, in turn, married their children to ensure the perpetuity of their personal and professional union. The business continued in this way for seven generations until the current owners, like Dámaso Maza, took it over from their employers due to lack of offspring.

Over its more than 150 years, its four walls have seen the passing of numerous illustrious figures, from Queen Maria Cristina herself, who loved to visit and taste the sweets there, to great writers such as Jacinto Benavente, who is said to have said, "People who don't like sweets can't be trusted." Internationally recognized, El Riojano has been honored with several prestigious awards, such as the Aragonese Exhibition in 1868, the Promotion of the Arts Award in 1871, and several current awards granted by the Community of Madrid and the City Council. Of the latter, the commemorative plaque for centenary establishments, designed by the prestigious artist Mingote, and the Commendation of the Order of Dos de Mayo in 2013 are particularly noteworthy.



Although small in size, great treasures are created and preserved inside. What first catches the visitor's attention, without a doubt, are the narrow display cases, filled with succulent sweets.

Once this ordeal is over, those who enter the bakery can continue to delight in a wide variety of sweets. But it is then that they begin to see other treasures, such as the stucco decoration on the ceiling, the Elizabethan lamps and sconces, and, above all, the shop's magnificent counters and display cases, built by palace cabinetmakers with mahogany brought from Cuba, donated by Queen Maria Cristina, rich bronzes, and Carrara marble. It is also known that they were built inside so that they could not be removed from the shop without being broken, as a means to prevent the looting so common at that time.

Its interior decoration has barely changed in the last century and a half, except for the addition of a few more modern display cases and the replacement of the parquet floor with high-quality marble in the 1950s. The original wood-burning oven, now unused, is still preserved, as are the old cash register and scales. These last two are awaiting a second home in the new tearoom, though this time to be admired rather than given more work than they've already done.

Among El Riojano's specialties, the most notable are the Soletilla sponge cakes, a gift that was once given to women in labor; the tocinos de cielo (soy bean curds); the bartolillos (bacon cakes); the meringues, still recommended by doctors today to cure throat ailments; the sugar cubes, essential at street parties, which, dissolved in water and accompanied by a small glass of brandy, served as a refreshment for the people of Madrid; the famous Consejo pastries (cakes of the Council), invented by this house for the attendance at the sessions of the Council of State of the then child King Alfonso XIII, which kept him distracted and prevented him from falling asleep during the tedious meetings; Typical saint's day sweets, from San Antón rolls, San Blás necklaces, carnival pastries, torrijas, San Isidro doughnuts, wind fritters, saint's bones, marzipan, nougat, polvorones, bocadientes, milindres, and countless Christmas sweets, right up to the sublime Roscón de Reyes; finally, it's worth highlighting the sweets that delight regular customers and passersby every day, such as traditional pastries, Swiss pastries, or pincas, which are now so scarce in the windows of Madrid's pastry shops.