18 Tapas a la Roteña

The center of the Villa of Rota has established itself to be of gastronomic interest. There is a concentration of a large number of interesting local establishments around the Plazas of Las Canteras and Jesus Nazareno with very different Tapas styles.

The center of Rota has become a "center of gastronomic attraction." Around two newly renovated squares, Las Canteras and Jesus Nazareno, there are more than thirty eating establishments. This sudden rise is due to many things. On one hand, the growth of establishments with innovative cuisine in this area is well thought out, and complements the establishments that already existed in the area. This has made the offer attractive to everyone. There are play areas for children and even restaurants specializing in fried fish, taverns and tapas bars or locales with more original offerings are not lacking. Now there are even more restaurants, most specializing in meat. All of this complements the pizzerias and other characteristically traditional businesses of Rota, that continue as before, as one of the central attractions of the area. All hoteliers polled agree that the center is booming. "This is going growing wonderfully", graphically exclaimed the managers of one of the establishments. In addition to the excellence of the gastronomic offerings, it also attracts the foreign audience, and many of those involved also agree that the arrival of more Americans to the city and City Council sponsored renovations, like making the square a pedestrian walking area, are also factors that have contributed to the phenomenon. There is only one fear among the entrepreneurs, the remodeling of the terraces proposed by the municipal party could harm the profitability of establishments.

We visited the most emblematic local eateries in town and highlight their specialties.

1. **Badulaque,** the first who dared

The businessman Jose Antonio Liano was the first who dared to innovate cuisine in the area. Beautiful views of the beach and now he wants to add an outdoor terrace. The menu changes often, but their Beef Wellington (Sirloin) and Ensaladilla are enduring. He also serves Interesting grilled cuisine and desserts. Plaza Jesus Nazareno No. 5.

 2**. Plaza Nueva**, varied tapas

They opened in July 2015. Open atmosphere, ample light styled around a brewery. Large terrace in the remodeled Plaza de Jesus Nazareno. Their culinary selection triumphs with Pulpo a la Gallega and meatballs in Tintilla wine. They also host wine tasting/tapas pairing (Catas) in the winter. Plaza Jesus Nazareno number 2.

 3. **Taberna La Pepa**, a bit of everything

Another recently opened spot, 2014. Range of varied Tapas. From fried pork belly/crackling made locally to cured Tuna (Mojama) from Barbate. Sometimes they offer urta a la roteña. Tastefully decorated, in a style of taverns and terraces. They are on Avenue Sevilla, #15.

 4. **Utopia**, the most daring option

Also established in 2014. They are located at the back of the Plaza de Las Canteras. Indoor and outdoor seating. Carefully chosen Tapa selection with options like Salmorejo that has a cheese ice cream topping, made by the local ice cream shop Margarita La Fresca, sushi, a tuna combined with locally grown Rota pumpkin, specialty balo bread, and a Japanese muffin, stuffed with meat and oriental touches. Avenida de San Fernando number 2.

5. **El tronío**, tapas with art

They define themselves with their name, artful tapas. Small tavern with pronounced airs of flamenco. Colorfully decorated terrace. Their cuisine ranges from their version of arranque roteño, a kind of thick tomato salmorejo spread or dip typical of Rota, to innovative tapas like special toast with fried crackling pork with cheese and pear compote. They are on Avenida San Fernando No. 8.

 6. **La Parada**, paradise of langoustines

Small bar located in an alley next to the Plaza de Las Canteras. It has become famous for the quality of their products, especially the Norwegian lobsters (langoustines) brought fresh from Galicia and cooked spectacularly. To accompany, locally fried fish platters. Pasaje del Carnaval, no number.

 7. **El Barrio**, Fish Fry wrapped to go or eat in

El Barrio is one of the pioneers in the area. They opened in 1998. Brewery of the like that has been around for years, with great seasoned snacks. On weekends, count on the adjoined fryer to serve fresh fried fish wrapped/served in a paper cone. It has a large terrace. Avenida de San Fernando No. 6.

 8. **Romero**, in three versions

La Bodeguita Romero has up to 3 premises in the Plaza de Las Canteras. They are owned by the Portobello group, a business group dedicated to the hospitality industry in Rota. In 2012 they opened the first locale, a bodeguita with classic tapas. In 2013, just opposite them, they put in a fryer and seafood cooker which even includes fresh fried "Feria" potato chips served in paper cone cups. The latest addition in 2015 was the sacristy with tapas focused rather more on stews and hot dishes. All three premises have a large terrace. Plaza de Las Canteras.

9. **El Alambique**: fish, meat ... and 80 types of gin

They started as a brewery with tapas. They have evolved into a restaurant and soon will expand their space to double its capacity. They have non-pasteurized craft beer, especially light. To accompany, local fish varieties, served out on the terrace, and many different types of meat, all grilled. A highlight is also their grilled octopus. But after eating, you can count on 80 different types of gin. They are in the Higuereta street number 60.

10. **Taberna El Gato**: They have Rota's Tintilla Wine

The El Gato wineries have a busy tavern, a lively bar. You can drink sherry wines from Jerez and naturally the Tintilla, the characteristic sherry wine of Rota. To accompany classics like the sandwiches typically called montaditos or serranitos, a specific type of montadito.

 11. **Slice**, New York style pizza

Launched by an American and an Irishman, they specialize in New York style pizzas, thin and crispy in the center with slightly thicker edges. They are very successful. They are also accept to go orders. Don't miss the chicken wings. Avenida de San Fernando No. 12.

12. **El Perejil**, the most meaty option

It is a steak place. They have retinto beef, ox beef and Galician veal they prepare on the grill. You can also enjoy tapas with montadito sandwiches or half portions of fried fish. Their terrace faces the Jesus Nazareno plaza. Higuereta street without number.

 13. **Pizzería Rofe**, the American side

A classic and pioneer of when there first was a need for American-style food. They have pizzas, sandwiches, burgers and fried rice, a version of Spain's Arroz Tres Delicias, that has become almost a typical fried rice dish of the city. Higuereta street number 64.

14. **El Gallego**, everything big

The second king of the world of pizzas on Higuereta Street. It has two large locales. The food follows the same theme, large servings. His specialty, and what made him famous are the pizzas, but they also have grilled meats. Higuereta street number 55.

15. **Brixton**, New Orleans style

They have just opened only a few months ago. Large locale, accommodating more than 150 people with a very American atmosphere. They prepare cocktails, have an area to play pool and foosball and the culinary offers revolve around New Orleans, an American city where the chef and owner, Joseff Kasey originates. Not to miss are their nachos, burgers, bruschetas (kind of like pizzas but built on bread), original sandwiches or a specialty of New Orleans which is fried chicken and waffles. And up to 8 different types of draft beer. Higuereta street number 57.

16. **Capicúa**, the newest and most original

Launched by the same entrepreneurs of Utopia, it opened in July (2016). It is defined as a "Grill Garden" and it draws attention to its terrace, decorated in a very original way and recreating a garden. The specialty is grilled meat and there is a kind of provocative mixture of the American kitchen but with constant and entertaining local touches. They are in the Plaza de Las Canteras.

17. The Ice Cream Parlor**, La Fresca Margarita**...Soft Ice Cream

Tapas tasting at noon or at night cannot end without dessert. The most appealing option is Margarita La Fresca, a maker of artisan ice cream that opened in 2015. Their name is not the only original thing, but also the decoration of the establishment and their specialties. They also work with restaurants to pair ice cream dishes to accompany the restaurant's savory dishes. They are in the Higuereta street number 52.

18. **Coctelería Dardo** ... A little drink

Legendary locale in Rota. It is also known by the nickname of its owner, Chicho. It opened in 1976 and since then have prepared a range of very original cocktails, many of them created by Chicho himself. Avenida de San Fernando number 2.

Translated by: G. Ferguson; 10/9/16