

Spanish Film Recommendations

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Preparing to pass the Movie Meme, here's a rehashed, repost of my rather lengthy comments to the [3rd House Party Movie Meme](#) blog entry....

This reads almost exactly like a list of my own DVD collection. I'll buy anything directed by [Pedro Almodovar](#) or [Alejandro Amenábar](#), or starring [Gael García Bernal](#) or [Javier Bardem](#). Concord isn't all that far from Grafton, so maybe we can swap sometime :)

[Gael García Bernal](#) is really emerging as one of the best Mexican actors, with credits including [The Motorcycle Diaries](#), [El Crimen de Padre Amaro](#), [Amores Perros](#), and [Y Tu Mama Tambien](#).

Back in the early 90's where my goal was to learn more about Spain, the very first Spanish import I ever watched was [Jamon Jamon](#), [Penelope Cruz](#)'s first movie where she appears seminude at age 16. Can you believe sleepy little Concord even allows it on the shelves? Continuing in my living room cultural journey, I went on to rent all the Almodovar movies before [my first trip to Spain](#) in 1998. You can imagine how a weekend locked up with [Kika](#), [Atame](#), and [Mujeres/Nerviosa](#) distorted my perception of the world.

[My wife](#) is from [Barcelona](#), and we continue watching more Spanish favorites including the very emotional, thought provoking, and moving [El Mar al Dentro](#) (The Sea Inside), as well as other favorites including [Habla Ella](#) (Talk to Her), and [Todo Sobre Mi Madre](#) (All About My Mother), yet again with Penelope Cruz.

I love getting the "inside scoop" from her such as locations and inuendos that aren't obvious unless you know Spain or the Spanish culture. For example, the Hospital in All About My Mother is right on the beach in Barceloneta, and the cemetery from the same film is on the west side of [Mont Juic](#).

Another huge favorite is [L'Auberge Espagnole](#) (The Spanish Apartment) about a young French student who finds himself studying abroad in Barcelona and winds up sharing an apartment with 5 other international students. Again, Europe's sense of decency is quite different from prudish New England, so consider yourself warned! I identify with this movie on so many levels since I've always found myself hanging out with the international crowd back in college. L'Auberge Espagnole even has a small part by [Audrey Tautou](#), but she's French not Spanish and don't even get me started on how much I love watching all of her movies too.

A few Argentinian movies have crept into our collection recently. I'd like to recommend anything with [Ricardo Dar n](#) such as super mystery/suspense [Nueve Reinas](#) (Nine Queens) or the warm [El Hijo de la Novia](#) (Son of the Bride). The sister character in Nine Queens is also in a kind of family mystery called [En la Ciudad Sin Limites](#) (The

City of No Limits). Its not a horror, but it will keep you on the edge of your seat.

A warm, charming, nostalgic film is **Butterfly**, with **Fernando Fern n Gomez**, about a pre-Franco Spain. He appears in many of my favorites where he usually plays some kind of fatherly or grandfatherly figure, such as in **The City Without Limits**, and also including the somewhat erotic film **Belle Epoque**, again with Penelope Cruz and the even hotter **Maribel Verdu**, known also from **Y Tu Mama Tambien**.

Moving more into the erotic mystery arena there's **Luc a y el Sexo** (Sex and Lucia) with **Paz Vega**. Ok, for the sexually repressed out there, just pretend you never heard about this one ;-)

Moving into the completely twisted and whacko jacko territory, there's **Vacas**, which seems harmless and maybe even family oriented at first, but it just has bizzare cutaways and unnecessary scenes that make your head spin.

The first and only movie I've ever seen in a movie theater in Madrid, on the **Gran Via**, was Alejandro Amen bar's **Abre Los Ojos**, also with Penelope Cruz. The context switching in the movie's timeline will again make your head spin, but in the end you'll be completely startled!

For a complete sense of reality, check out the Columbian presentation on drug mules in **Maria Full of Grace**.

Wow, by now I could have written my own Movie Meme blog entry... I guess I'll just have to do that.