

Is Mamma Mia! The Party really worth £235?

Dressed in my blue-and-white striped jumpsuit, wearing a lit-up flower crown I bought outside the venue, I was ready to go.

Anyone who knows me knows I'm obsessed with ABBA. So, when my mum surprised me with tickets to Mamma Mia! The Party for my birthday, I couldn't have been happier. Greek food, ABBA and immersive theatre? It sounded like my perfect evening.

It feels like you are stepping onto the Greek island from the movie: blue-and-white colours, flowers everywhere, fairy lights and, my personal favourite, a huge fountain in the middle of the room.

When the first song, Angel Eyes, started, I couldn't stop smiling. From then on, it was hit after hit, and I found myself wondering why we ever listen to anything other than ABBA.

It's all sharing tables which I was a bit reluctant given we didn't know who was going to sit next to us. I was even more hesitant when we were seated next to a Brazilian family, including a 15-year-old boy who looked like he'd rather have been anywhere else. But within minutes we were chatting. They were on their way to Germany for their son's exchange year, an unexpected coincidence, since my group is German too. We probably never would've known, had we not been sharing a table.

The 15-year-old also refused to eat any vegetables, including potatoes, which meant I basically got to eat for two. Turns out, I quite like sharing tables.

The performance

The music was everything I'd hoped for, and I loved that they covered all the biggest hits and incorporated the restaurant into the story - including some of the guests - well mainly Ian (Yes, I remember his name - that's how much he was a part of the story). I probably would've wanted even more of that interaction because it was where the show was funniest.

I have to say, I wasn't hooked on the story. It seemed very promising at the beginning: an old school Greek father, who forbade his daughter from dating an Englishman. But it quickly became predictable. It was an enjoyable story, but I wasn't invested and frankly couldn't care less about the happiness of the two main characters and that's coming from someone who immediately googles whether every reality TV couple is still together.

There were other stories going on within this, but they just seemed randomly stacked together without a clear storyline. Maybe the focus was on the music and not the acting. For £235 though, I would've liked the story to do a bit more.

The food

For an experience built around a Greek taverna, I expected the food to be one of the highlights. It was good but I wouldn't say memorable.

I try to eat as little meat as possible. But I know that the veggie option is usually an afterthought, so for the main, me and my mum opted for one veggie and one 'normal' meat option – and no surprise, the veggie option was bland and quite unpleasant.

There was a thick vegan cheese layer on top of the potato and aubergine moussaka. I do like cheese, but I definitely don't like yellow looking vegan cheese. So, if you're a vegetarian, I strongly advise you to be a flexitarian that night.

The meat option was a lot better. It could have had a bit more seasoning but overall, very tasty.

For a Greek restaurant, I did expect at least a bit of tzatziki or halloumi. Why was there hummus?

Overall, plenty of food so that felt like good value for money. But did I mention that, after the small welcome drink, you have to buy your own drinks?

The atmosphere

I do have to say, the atmosphere was amazing. How can it not be with ABBA music? Everyone looked like they had a great time. I loved to see so many generations, yes mainly women, come together. There were mothers and daughters, grandmothers and granddaughters and so many hen parties. A few men were also there – they seemed happy that their partner was happy.

We had great seats on the first floor and could see everything clearly but the ones on the ground floor were even better. Annoyingly, you can't choose your seat, so we paid for Tier A, the most expensive ticket, but didn't have the best seats. In fairness, every seat seemed to offer a good view, but for £235 I'd expect a little more control over where I ended up.

Final verdict. Would I go again? Definitely. Would I pay £235 of my own money? Probably not.

If you love ABBA, you will have a good time. But don't expect the food and show to match the music.