BUDGET

MAMA SHELTER, Hackney

A stay at Mama Shelter is, true to its name, rather like coming home to your mum – especially if Mum is a collector of all things kitsch and your home a flamboyant ode to the 1970s. In fact, maximalism abounds the moment you walk through its doors – think open fires, sumptuous sofas and trinkets galore, patterned plates and hanging plants. Founded in Paris 10 years ago, this boutique hotel chain has grown exponentially, with Mama Shelters popping up across the world – all offering a similar feel-good energy and playful design, but with the personality of each unique location very much apparent.

The bedrooms feel familiar, with echoes of childhood woven effortlessly into the decor – with mirrors with lipstick-style messages scribbled on them and a pine seating area. The beds boast comfy, five-star bedding and the bathrooms a full-on power shower that’s a real treat when making the most of Mama’s own organic skin range.

Downstairs is where you’ll probably want to spend most of your time though, in the bustling,
cushy, cluttered-but-chic living and dining room. Eighties cartoons play silently on TV screens and the room glows with fabulous, fringed lampshades. As for the food, think top-notch and home-cooked, with starters ranging from salt-baked autumn vegetables with cumin spiced hummus and crispy chickpeas, to burrata with beetroot tartare and roasted hazelnut dressing. All are served artistically in the ambient, lively cosiness of Mama’s living and dining room.

Mains are more homely, ranging from comfort food classics such as beef burger with pickles, fish ‘n’ chips and an East London favourite – pie, mash and liquor (braised lamb shoulder with smoked eel sauce no less). But if posh takeaway is more to your taste, opt for one of their kebabs – such as chicken za'atar with heritage tomatoes, pickled cucumber and harissa yogurt – or a pizza, like the truffle ricotta with mushrooms and Amalfi lemons. Just be sure to order a side of mac ‘n’ cheese and a Mama-lade cocktail – a delightful concoction of East London Liquor Company gin and spiced marmalade.

Once you’re well fed, ease into the evening – be it with a game of giant twister or a karaoke session downstairs in one of the Japanese-style interactive games rooms, complete with pinball machines and retro video games. Nostalgia has never been so much fun – and readily available – in the heart of East London. Rooms from £79 a night.

Mama Shelter, 419-437 Hackney Road, E2 8PP
mamas shelter.com