



*Adelaide*

WHERE ON EARTH

# FRINGING IN ADELAIDE

*by* CATHERINE VAN BRUNSCHOT

# ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD  
Yabarra Spirit  
Trees; Art Gallery  
of South Australia.



PHOTO THIS SPREAD  
Lantern by Nu.

« *TO BE HONEST*, Adelaide wasn't on my "must-do" travel list. Its location in sparsely populated South Australia seemed always a little too off-the-beaten track from the country's well known attractions to warrant a detour. But following a tip from an Adeladian whom I met on previous travels, I've just made my first foray to the city in the middle of festival season.

Now I'm kicking myself for waiting so long to get here.



Every year from mid-February to mid-March, Adelaide hosts not one, not two, but three performing arts festivals, in a celebration of classical and contemporary theatre, comedy, music and dance found nowhere else in Australia. The biggest of these is Adelaide Fringe, whose 2019 festival brought 35,000 visitors to the city to watch more than 7,000 artists perform in 1326 events — making it the second largest annual arts festival in the world (after Edinburgh Festival Fringe).

For the uninitiated, here's a primer: fringe festivals offer a wide range of short (usually one hour or less) performances by independent artists in small venues at wallet-friendly prices. By nature, fringe festivals are unjuried (i.e. there is no selection»



AUSTRALIA

SERVES 4

## *Gaeng Kua Sapparod Goong* Prawn and Pineapple Curry

**Vegetable Oil** 2 Tbs**Red Curry Paste**  
5 Tbs**Coconut Cream**  
2 cups**King Prawns**  
300 g, shelled  
and deveined**Kaffir Lime Leaves**  
4 whole**Fresh Pineapple**  
120 g, cut into  
chunks**Long Red Chillies**  
30 g**Fish Sauce** 1 Tbs**Palm Sugar**  
½ tsp, shaved**Sea Salt** ½ tsp**Kaffir Lime Leaves**  
2, finely sliced for  
garnish

*HERE'S A RECIPE ADAPTED from Chef Nu Suandokmai's new 2019 cookbook, Fire and Flavour: Nu's Food. For a quick and easy weekday dish, make the red curry paste in advance, or use a store-bought paste.*

- 1 HEAT** the oil in a saucepan.
- 2 ADD** the curry paste, then sauté briefly until aromatic.
- 3 ADD** the coconut cream and simmer slowly, stirring to combine.
- 4 ADD** the king prawns and the whole kaffir lime leaves and pineapple.
- 5 WHEN** the prawns start to change colour, add the chilli, fish sauce, palm sugar and salt.
- 6 TO** serve, garnish with the sliced lime leaves.



MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

## Red Curry Paste

<b>Dried Chillies</b> 40 large	<b>Wild Ginger</b> (krachai) 60 g
<b>Bird's Eye Chillies</b> 10	<b>Roasted Shrimp Paste</b> ⅓ Tbs
<b>Fresh Galangal</b> 1 Tbs, finely chopped	<b>Shallots</b> 150 g
<b>Lemongrass</b> 150 g, inner part only, finely chopped	<b>Sea Salt</b> 1 tsp
<b>Garlic</b> 100 g	<b>Whole Black Peppercorns</b> ½ Tbs
<b>Kaffir Lime Zest</b> 50 g	

- 1 COMBINE** all curry paste ingredients using a mortar and pestle or, alternatively, blend to a thick paste in a food processor.
- 2 STORE** any leftover curry paste under a layer of vegetable oil in a jar in the fridge for up to five weeks.



«committee), with performers admitted on a first-come-first-served basis or by lottery. As such, the festivals are great places for discovering emerging artists delivering fresh, often unconventional, material. At Adelaide Fringe, performances go well beyond the theatre realm, to include comedy shows, music, magic, cabaret, circus, film and digital experiences, and children's entertainment.

After hours of perusing the Fringe offerings online, my husband and I have arrived in Adelaide with a fistful of ticket bookings, but — expecting a sudden jetlag takedown — we've none for our first night. Instead, we're prowling the city's core for one of the free visual arts exhibits that form part of the Fringe. Threading our way between the museums and university campuses of the cultural precinct, we emerge into an immersive dreamland along the banks of the River Torrens (also known by its indigenous name, Karrawirra

Parri). This is *Yabarra*, a collection of light and sound installations commissioned for the Fringe, celebrating insights from the Kurna First Nations. Here, inflatable sculptures and columns that glow and murmur with story are the first to draw us like moths to the light. But the ever-changing projections of images onto trees, ground, and water — including a dancer whose moves are suspended in a fountain — are what keep us mesmerized well into the night.

We've chosen our spacious accommodations at the Majestic Roof Garden Hotel for their optimal location just off Rundle Street (Adelaide's shopping and restaurant district), within easy striking distance of many Fringe venues. Tucked behind the hotel, we discover Ayla's: an airy, family-owned cafe serving fresh vegetarian and vegan fare with a generous side of friendliness, which extends as quickly to us as to the regulars who stream to the counter. I



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT A Fringe Festival venue; Street performers at the Central Market; Main course at the Faulty Towers Dining Experience; Henschke family photos.

swoon over the house muesli bowl, loaded with seasonal fruit and honey-drizzled yogurt. The hearty egg dishes satisfy even my doggedly carnivorous partner, and the smooth flat-white coffee seals the deal that brings us back every morning of our stay.

With most Fringe shows scheduled for the evening, the days are wide-open for exploration. We head first to the Adelaide Central Market, a 150-year-old institution stocked with a spectacular array of local produce, meats, cheese, breads, pastries, flowers and multicultural fare at over seventy stalls and cafes. We top-up with caffeine at popular Zuma Caffe; take a turn around adjacent Chinatown and Victoria Square; then we're off on Adelaide's free tram system to scope out the location of our Fringe shows tonight.

Our first venue is a heritage building in the Botanical Gardens, whose location affords an opportunity to shortcut through the

National Wine Centre of Australia. Built in 2001 as an event hub and a national showcase for Australian wines, the Wine Centre impresses with its soaring barrel stave ceilings and an 18,000-bottle wine cellar. Our intent to take the self-guided Wine Discovery Tour on the second floor is waylaid by the aromas emanating from the lobby cafe, and the bank of Enomatic dispensers offering self-serve tastings of 120-plus wines with the swipe of a preloaded cash card. On this quiet weekday afternoon, the food service proves surprisingly chaotic, but the pastrami sandwich arrives loaded with sauerkraut between slices of toothsome dark rye, and the cod amandine — fresh-caught from South Australia's Murray River — is perfectly cooked and nestled on celeriac puree.

Our late lunch is strategic, in fact, as our triple-header Fringe schedule tonight affords no opportunity for food between shows.»



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD FROM LEFT Pig sculpture in Rundle St pedestrian mall; Rajasthani-spiced chicken burger at New.Local.Eatery; Rockford Wines cellar door.



Visit  
to

**Adelaide Fringe**  
[www.adelaidefringe.com.au](http://www.adelaidefringe.com.au)

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[www.roofgardenhotel.com.au](http://www.roofgardenhotel.com.au)

**Ayla's Cafe**  
[www.facebook.com/Aylascafe](https://www.facebook.com/Aylascafe)

**Adelaide Central Market**  
[www.adelaidecentralmarket.com.au](http://www.adelaidecentralmarket.com.au)

**Zuma Caffè**  
[www.facebook.com/ZumaCaffeOnGouger](https://www.facebook.com/ZumaCaffeOnGouger)

**National Wine Centre of Australia**  
[www.wineaustralia.com.au](http://www.wineaustralia.com.au)

**South Australian Museum**  
[www.samuseum.sa.gov.au](http://www.samuseum.sa.gov.au)

**Art Gallery of South Australia**  
[www.agsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.agsa.sa.gov.au)

**New.Local.Eatery**  
[www.newlocaleatery.com.au](http://www.newlocaleatery.com.au)

**Cellar Door Tours**  
[www.cellardoorwinetours.com.au](http://www.cellardoorwinetours.com.au)

**Barossa Valley Cheese Company**  
[www.barossacheese.com.au](http://www.barossacheese.com.au)

**Lantern by Nu**  
[www.lanternbynu.com.au](http://www.lanternbynu.com.au)

« After a rest and a freshen-up, we return to the Botanical Gardens in time to secure a frosty wheat ale from a sleek vintage travel-trailer before heading into the first performance. It's a reimagining of *Gulliver's Travels*, with a woman playing the titular role against a cast of hilarious characters portrayed by a single male actor (and the occasional puppet). Then we're off to Ayer's House, a historic mansion on nearby North Terrace, where we sip a local Alicante Bouschet at the impressive bar, ahead of the "Atten-Borrow" show: a politics-laden spoof of a David Attenborough nature lecture.

For our final performance, we venture into The Garden of Unearthly Delights, a temporary carnival-like affair erected on a stretch of parkland, which seems to serve as Fringe Central. Here, at the foot of a Ferris wheel, dozens of shows rotate in a continuous cycle through circus tents scattered among food booths and beverage gardens (think beer and wine and Pimm's). The buzzy atmosphere is apropos for "Abandoman," a frenetic improvisational rap show that we learn is a perennial Adelaide favourite. Afterwards, we can finally refuel, settling on a little arancini and vino beneath the Ferris wheel's colour-changing glow.

Subsequent days fall into a similar pattern: daytime exploration of Adelaide's attractions, followed by an evening of Fringe performances. One day finds us at the South Australian Museum: five floors of free cultural and natural history exhibits, and the world's largest collection of Australian Aboriginal artefacts. Next door is the Art Gallery of South Australia — also free — hosting the biggest names in Australian art and 20 bronze Rodin sculptures.

Our Fringe repertoire includes a sampler show of some of the week's featured stand-up comics; a breathtaking, award-winning one-woman dramedy from England, entitled "Build a Rocket;" and a Scottish improv troupe called "Men With Coconuts," whose act ends with a 15-minute musical theatre extravaganza improvised from audience suggestions.


Beyond the end of the tramline near the Adelaide Entertainment Centre, we stumble upon New.Local.Eatery, a casual and intimate bistro run by a personable husband-wife team. Its tiny kitchen produces an ever-changing menu that riffs creatively off

international flavours — like my Crispy-fried Rajasthani-spiced Chicken Burger on brioche, and my husband's equally stellar Slow-Roasted Garlic Lamb with Greek Salad and Pita.

The Adelaide Fringe includes a few of its own culinary experiences, too: from food, wine and brew tastings with a side of cabaret or music, to a full-participation karaoke event at an Asian food hall. Our pick is "Faulty Towers — the Dining Experience," a tribute to the iconic BBC comedy, with actors reprising the roles of Basil, Sybil and Manuel as they serve a three-course dinner to guests. The host Stamford Plaza Hotel comes through with refined, beautifully plated dishes and the comedy plays true to the original.

Even the most ardent Fringer requires a break, and with three well known wine-growing districts surrounding Adelaide (McLaren Vale, the Barossa Valley and the Adelaide Hills), our choice for a Fringe-free activity is a no-brainer. As fans of big, bold reds, we head for the Barossa Valley with Cellar Door Tours, a full-day foray rich with local wine-producing history and intimate interactions with mostly boutique wine producers. I score a fruity Black Shiraz at Murray Street Vineyards, a roasty Mataro from Greenock Creek, and a spicy Frugal Farmer blend from Rockford Wines. At Henschke's winery, I fall hard for the Tappa Pass Shiraz, but can't quite summon up the \$100-plus to take a bottle home. A quick dive into the Barossa Valley Cheese Shop while our lunch bill gets settled yields an unexpected bonus: a creamy, aged buffalo milk cheese that I can't wait to share.

We close out our Adelaide experience with the friend who lured us here, at a venue with a minimal street presence that makes it feel like a best kept secret. It's Lantern by Nu, the latest venture of Chef Nu Suandokmai, whose decision to leave his native Thailand in 1988 to follow his Australian girlfriend (now wife) to Adelaide launched a culinary career that saw his steady rise through the local food scene, stints at prominent restaurants in Malaysia, Hong Kong, Bali and Jakarta, the launch of his own restaurant in Sydney, before eventually making his return to Adelaide. Lantern's mishmash of interesting spaces under strings of Edison lights provides a lively setting for authentic Thai street food featuring Australia's seafood bounty. From our prawn betel leaf starter, through dish-after-dish of bright complex flavours, to our closing chat with the affable Chef Nu in his open kitchen, the night is a feast of the fresh and the unexpected that's decidedly worth tracking down.

Fresh. Unexpected. Worth tracking down. Much like festival-charged Adelaide itself. 

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AUSTRALIA

SERVES 6

## Rainbow Chard, Fennel and Lemon Risotto with Chilli

*THIS VEGETARIAN RECIPE FROM Adelaide Central Market calls for colourful rainbow chard — but regular Swiss chard will do, as will other greens like kale or spinach.*

**Olive Oil** 1 Tbs

**Leek** 1 large, finely chopped, white part only

**Garlic** 1 clove, chopped

**Long Red Chilli Pepper** 1, sliced into thin rounds

**Fennel** 1 bulb, finely chopped

**Arborio Rice** 2 cups

**Vermouth** ½ cup

**Hot Vegetable Stock** 1 ½ litres

**Fresh Lemon Thyme** 2 tsp

**Preserved Lemon** 2 tsp, finely chopped

**Rainbow Chard** 300 g, chopped

**Parmesan** ⅓ cup, finely grated

**Sea Salt** to taste

**Freshly Ground Black Pepper** to taste

**Pine Nuts** ¼ cup, toasted

**Capers** 1 Tbs, fried until crisp

**Parmesan** ¼ cup, finely grated

- 1 PLACE** the olive oil in a large saucepan over low heat. Add the leek, garlic, chilli and fennel. Cover and cook for 10 minutes, or until the leek and fennel are soft, but not brown.
- 2 INCREASE** the heat to medium-high. Add the rice, stirring until well coated and beginning to crackle. Quickly add the vermouth, stirring until absorbed.
- 3 ADD** ladlefuls of hot stock, one at a time, stirring continuously until each is absorbed. Repeat the process until all but one ladle of stock has been added.
- 4 STIR** in the thyme, preserved lemon and chard, followed by final ladleful of stock. Once the stock has been absorbed, remove from the heat, cover and let stand for 10 minutes.
- 5 FINISH** with parmesan, salt and pepper, stirring until well combined.
- 6 TO** serve, sprinkle with toasted pine nuts, fried capers and extra parmesan.