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Top 10

OF OUR BEST FOOD AND WINE FESTIVALS

Food is now one of the biggest motivating factors behind people's travel decisions. According to research by Tourism Australia, a good gourmet experience rates third behind nature and lifestyle as the top three drivers of tourism.

Wherever you roam in Australia, increasingly you'll find restaurants and cafes serving the best fresh local produce. Our rich multi-cultural heritage means there's also wonderful diversity of flavours and styles – in fact only France rates higher than Australia when it comes to tourist satisfaction ratings for good food and wine experiences.

SO HITCH UP THE CARAVAN AND PLAN A YEAR AHEAD OF FINE EATING. HERE'S OUR PICK OF THE TOP 10 IN 2017.



FESTIVALE LAUNCESTON TAS FEBRUARY 10-12



What started as a multi-cultural street party in the 1980s is now staged amidst the historic elm trees of Launceston City Park. The ambient outdoor space an idyllic backdrop for an iconic Tasmanian event that attracts around 35,000 people each year. Featuring the best of the clean, green state's world-class produce, cool climate wines and crafted beers, the two and a half-day summer event also celebrates local arts and entertainment.

Recommended food stop: Stillwater, Launceston, set in a beautifully restored 1830s flour mill beside the Tamar River; also known for its award-winning regional wine list.

02

ORANGE F.O.O.D. WEEK ORANGE NSW MARCH 31 TO APRIL 9

F.O.O.D (Food Of Orange District) Week, now in its 26th year, features only locally produced meats, fresh produce and other foods. It dishes up ten days of exciting events. Breakfast in lush vineyards or on the F.O.O.D Train, lunch on farms, and dine at the 100 Mile Dinner. Join Forage for a 4.1 kilometre walking degustation through vineyards and picturesque paddocks, stock up at the Producers' Market and eat some more at the Night Market.

Recommended food stop: The Agrestic Grocer, Orange, an eclectic cafe and retail store focussed on real, local food.



03

MINDIL BEACH SUNSET MARKET DARWIN NT THURSDAYS (5-10PM) & SUNDAYS (4-9PM) FROM END OF APRIL TO END OF OCTOBER

While technically not a festival, this market's diverse food and ever-festive atmosphere gets onto our Top Ten list. Held since 1987 during the dry season, it captures the essence of Darwin's food, arts and crafts and laid-back lifestyle. While excellent Asian-inspired food abounds, there's multi-cultural cuisine from the world over. Laksa, satay and local mangoes are particularly popular. Pick your favourite, prop under palm tree and watch a world-famous sunset over a sparkling Arafura Sea.

Recommended food stop: Rendezvous Cafe (Darwin) for laksa or Frying Nemo (Stuart Park) for local barramundi.



04

TASTE TAMWORTH FESTIVAL

TAMWORTH NSW
APRIL 28 TO MAY 7



Think Tamworth, think country music, right? Think again. Taste Tamworth is building the NSW north west regional capital's reputation as a food destination. Taste your way around the city and beyond, meeting producers on their turf. Explore Taste in the Park, join the street party at Flavours on Fitzroy, lap up an al fresco, five-course long lunch, or visit pop-up bars for unforgettable nights of canapés, local beer and wine and, of course, cool tunes.

Recommended food stop: The Pig & Tinder Box, a heritage-listed pub dishing up the region's best produce in share plates, traditional wood-fired pizzas and reinvented pub classics.



05

GRAMPIANS GRAPE ESCAPE

HALLS GAP VIC
MAY 6 + 7

GGE, with a surrounding skyline defined by the rugged peaks and escarpments of the Grampians National Park, concludes a month-long celebration of Victoria's Western district's food and wine. Held after the grape harvest, and with no major food festivals on the Victorian landscape for months, it has many making the 260-kilometre pilgrimage from Melbourne each year. Between some of Australia's best shiraz, olives and oils, there are temptations from more than 100 gastronomic producers and winemakers. Thankfully, there's some exhilarating hiking opportunities to burn off the calories.

Recommended food stop: The Royal Mail Hotel, Dunkeld, a well-known destination restaurant with a pronounced local flavour and two chefs hats.



06

NOOSA INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL

NOOSA QLD
MAY 18 TO 21

Equally popular with both gourmet travellers and beach lovers, Noosa is home to possibly one of the most hedonistic food festivals on the culinary calendar. Attracting chefs from throughout Australia and often beyond, the festival has guest chefs hosting various events in and around Noosa, whether cooking classes, gala dinners or exciting food trails through the hinterland (you might also catch them in their bikinis or boardies). It's a huge regional event featuring the best produce, including great seafood from the Sunshine Coast and Southeast Queensland regions.

Recommended food stop: Thomas Corner Eatery, the menu featuring anything from Noosa spanner crabs to hinterland herbs.



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07

BAROSSA GOURMET WEEKEND BAROSSA SA SEPTEMBER 1 TO 3



This 32-year-old festival brings together the area's growers, chefs, makers, artisans and craftspeople. With around 50 different events across three days, it pays to be organised before you arrive. Enjoy anything from markets, cooking classes and winery parties to intimate dinners and extravagant degustation dinners. Also home to well known chef and TV personality Maggie Beer, the Barossa Valley is not only a world-renowned wine-producing region, the colours and vine-covered landscape make springtime the best time to visit.

Recommended food stop: Harvest Kitchen, Tanunda, a mid-range restaurant with a wonderful "Feed me like a Barossan" menu.

08



TASTE RIVERINA RIVERINA NSW OCTOBER 1 TO 31

A month long festival taking in towns in an area bigger in size than many European countries. There's much to choose from and again careful planning is required to get around and make the most of it. Not to be missed is Griffith, it's rich Italian heritage making it one of Australia's top regional food and wine destinations.

Recommended food stop: Zecca, two clever young Griffith locals returned to town to open a modern eatery making the most of the local Italian-style faire. See our Griffith food feature on page 70.

> continued on page 29



09

MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE

MARGARET RIVER WA NOVEMBER 17 TO 19



The region's mediterranean climate and fertile soils produce 20 per cent of Australia's premium wine, not to mention excellent olive oils, venison and other meats, cheese, yoghurt and more. It's a huge drawcard for the 60,000-plus food lovers who descend on the region annually, so too is the diversity of its landscape. Indulge in extraordinary food events with some of the world's most influential chefs in spectacular surrounds, including pristine beaches, rolling vineyards and beautiful forests. This is a sensory extravaganza.

Recommended food stop: Leeuwin Estate Winery, Margaret River (also the festival hub), combining award-winning food and wine, art and music all year-round.

10

HARVEST FESTIVAL

MCLAREN VALE SA MID JANUARY 2018

Held on the weekend before the Fleurieu leg of the famous Tour Down Under cycling event, the one-day Harvest Festival is of course set in yet another of Australia's best wine-making regions. Masterclasses with well-known chefs allow visitors to make their own culinary masterpieces, enjoyed together afterwards with a glass of local vino.

Recommended food stop: The award-winning Kitchen Door at Penny's Hill Vineyard, McLaren Vale, featuring local, seasonal modern Australian dishes and grazing boards. Bon appétit! 🍷

