

Multicultural barbie

IN GREEK culture, the pomegranate fruit symbolises fertility, success and happiness so to honour Australia Day, a traditional Greek family adds the fruit to its barbecue.



Greek flavours ... prawn souvlaki with ladolemono dressing. Photo: Kate Geraghty

"Australia Day is a non-Greek celebratory day but a very big day," says Maria Benardis, whose family hails from Kalamata, Greece. "So we use the pomegranate to celebrate." Every Australia Day, she invites family and friends to her home where she cooks dishes blending Australian and Greek cuisine. "After all, Australia opened its arms to allow the Greek people in this country," says Benardis, owner of Greekalicious cooking school. "It is also a very emotional day because they remember the day they arrived."

Early on January 26, Benardis cracks a pomegranate, removes the seeds and puts it in a bowl with fresh parsley, cumin, extra-virgin olive oil, lemon and crushed garlic and dips the mix over lamb after it's cooked on the barbecue.

Nidal Al Hihi, from Wentworthville, gives Australia Day a Lebanese flavour. On the day, she and her family gather to cook traditional kofta, kebab and chicken on the barbecue.

"The garlic goes with the chicken, the hummus goes with the kofta and the kebab," Al Hihi says.

Teresa Wozniak, who moved to Australia in 1992 from Poland, makes an array of her homeland's delights including zurek, a soup cooked with

pork sausages and marjoram and served with a sliced boiled egg. For the day, she also makes pierogi dumplings and fills them with meat or cabbage and wild mushrooms or spicy potato.

Sledzie, or herrings, marinated in oil and onions and served with sour cream and shaved apples are also on the menu. For dessert, she makes the traditional Polish poppy seed cake makowiec.

Sophia Giufre celebrates the Sicilian way with 30 family members. "My nonna wakes up very early on Australia Day," she says. "She will wake up like 6am, go to church and then she will come home and then it will take about three hours cooking the pasta sauce."

Gifure's nonna makes sugo, the tradi-

tional Italian sauce with tomatoes, meat, basil, garlic and herbs.

In Baulkham Hills, Lorraine Elliott and Michaela Aguilar meet with a group of friends to celebrate, each bringing something special from their country. Elliott, who comes from a Chinese background, cooks Japanese-themed wagyu burger and Chinese roast pork. Aguilar, who moved to Australia from Austria 15 years ago, makes sauerkraut and serves it with speck and a pork delhi. They also have a multicultural barbecue. "The cooking method is Australian but what we put on the barbie is probably Swiss or German," Aguilar says. Bahjah Hmoud, from Daceyville, meets with friends from the Sydney Multicultural Community Services and makes a traditional Iraqi rice with meat, nuts and sultanas. "If you live in Europe or in Guinea or in Greece, you never get access to those kinds of people," Aguilar says. "This is really something uniquely Australian."

Prawn souvlaki

Make a ladolemono dressing by combining 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, 6 tbsp fresh lemon juice, a pinch of dried oregano, salt and pepper. Shell and devein 16 raw prawns and skewer. Brush each with ladolemono and barbecue for about one minute on each side or until prawns turn pink. Brush with more dressing to serve and garnish with parsley or coriander.

Maria Benardis



Students trade Sydney, Melbourne for NT

International university students are leaving Sydney and Melbourne in search of better lifestyles and work options in the north of Australia.

While universities nationwide are recording a drop in foreign enrolment, Charles Darwin University (CDU) appears to be bucking the national trend, according to its manager of international marketing Fiona Richards.

"International student numbers are continuing to increase at CDU and are projected to rise by a further 20 per cent every year over the next four years," she said.

The media reported on Monday that foreign students had begun to pull out of Australia, with universities hit hard by the global credit crunch. They have also recorded an increase in deferrals, as students struggle to finance overseas education - an industry worth \$14.2 billion to Australia each year.

Celebrate our unique identity and culture at an Australia Day event



NSW will play host to a jam-packed Australia Day when Sydney and the regions come alive with celebrations across the state to mark the country's biggest annual event. Each year on 26 January, hundreds of thousands of people gather around NSW to reflect on our unique identity and culture and celebrate what's great about being Australian.

With this year marking the first of a three-year umbrella program called Australian Identity and Culture, 1 NSW residents will be able to participate in 5,000 events planned across NSW and celebrate in their own unique Australian style.

Another big reason to celebrate this Australia Day is the 20th anniversary of the development of the Australia Day Ambassador Program which started in 1989. And since 1990, the program has been uniting communities across the nation through the presence of over 800 inspirational Australian participants.

This year, over 165 of Australia's high achievers will visit over 200 Australia Day community celebrations throughout NSW - so come along and meet an Ambassador!

Check out www.australiaday.com.au to plan your Australia Day or make your own event guide. Some of the highlight events on January 26 2009 include:

ON THE HARBOUR

- The Ferrython will once again let loose those four sassy and spirited old gals, the much cherished little green and yellow catamarans, to race up and down Sydney Harbour for line honours.

- The Australia Day Tall Ships Race is a crowd favourite. Be there to cheer on Svanen, Bark Endeavour and James Craig as they race from Bradley's

Head, finishing for line honours under the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

- Audiences both on and off shore will be able to chill out to the sublime sounds of the Sydney Ports Jazz on the Water Concert, with multi award winning songstress Katie Noonan headlining the concert.

IN THE CITY

- Each year, Australia Day begins with the Wogganma-gule Ceremony in the Royal Botanic Gardens, overlooking Farm Cove, sacred land of the indigenous Gadigal people. The ceremony honours the past and celebrates our future.

Wogganma-gule Ceremony is proudly presented by Macquarie Group with the support of the Royal Botanic Gardens Trust.

- 1 ADCNSW three-year program 'Australian Identity and Culture' is a program to encourage debate and discussion about our unique identity and culture
- Sydney's Biggest Backyard in Hyde Park will play host to a huge range of celebrations this Australia Day including the Great Aussie BBQ.

- ABC in the Park offers fantastic fun for the whole family where budding radio broadcasters and TV stars can perform in a mini ABC TV and ABC Radio studio or sit back and sing along with your favourite ABC Kids characters.

- Be at Darling Harbour from 7.00pm to watch the harbour vessel parade on Cockle Bay to mark the arrival of the Governor at the Twilight Ceremony. From 8.45pm the Australia Day Spectacular will culminate in a massive fireworks extravaganza over Cockle Bay.

- Experience a free live music festival, Rocksong in The Rocks - it will be unlike anything you've ever heard

before. Rocksong brings together singers and songwriters from all corners of Australia and all genres of music.

There are a number of satellite Australia Day events that will be taking place in the Parramatta, Wollongong, Penrith and Blacktown regions that are expected to draw thousands of people to their community celebrations. In greater NSW, a number of unique and quirky events will be taking place, including:

BROKEN HILL COUNCIL

- At 4.00pm, the new 50m pool will be officially opened followed by dance music from local DJ Brian Williams, an evening movie and a laser light show at about 10pm.

BURWOOD COUNCIL

- Fun activities such as a mobile rock climbing wall; mechanical surfboard; slam dunk bungee and a jumping castle.

CANTERBURY COUNCIL

- Miniature ponies and camel rides, and games such as tug of war, giant earth ball, juggling sticks, sack racing and fireman's toss mat to name a few.

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

- Gunnedah is well known for the Pet Parade which is held at Wolseley Park at 10am, bring along your cutest, oldest, most unique pet to be in the running for a prize.

NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL

- Family fun day including watermelon eating, boxer short relay, reel-in-a-horse race, karaoke finals.

GOULBURN MULWAREE COUNCIL

- Highlights will be the mobile snake and reptile shows with regular demonstrations throughout the day and an Aboriginal dance and smoking ceremony.