

Ten reasons to get to the National Arts Festival

The National Arts Festival is taking place in Grahamstown from Thursday, 29 June 2017 - Sunday, 9 July 2017 and here's ten reasons why you need to come experience it...

1. Over 700 productions to see

The Festival is a riot of creative expression. There is no way you can see it all, so pick a few Main Programme 'sure things' to book before you go, then talk to people and follow the Festival's social feeds for some hot tips on all the must-sees and sleeper hits. Look out for great 2-for-1 and half price specials too.



2. Best of SA meets the world

The National Arts Festival is a homecoming for many South African artists working abroad. This year Abel Selaocoe and Vincent Mantsoe are among those returning to the Motherland. International performers, such as comedian Stephen K Amos (UK) and the cast of Neons and Vacuum (Switzerland) will be performing at the Festival and many South African jazz artists will be pairing up with international talents for once-off performances that will only be seen at the Festival.

3. Kid-friendly culture

The National Arts Festival falls over the winter school holidays so it's a great opportunity to get the whole family to a culture-fix. The fully supervised Children's Art Festival is an inspiring experience for 4-13 year olds, parents can see shows while their kids are happily entertained. The eco-impressive Nelm (National English Literary Museum) in Grahamstown is also playing host to plenty of family-friendly events, performances and readings this year.



4. Lots to talk about

The annual Think!Fest offers a host of talks that reflect on contentious current affairs issues and looks more deeply into the content of some of the shows. A fascinating mini-festival of its own, make it part of your programme planning.

5. 43 years of freedom

2017 marks the 43rd year of the Festival in a long tradition of freedom of expression and creative innovation. The National Arts Festival has been integral to the careers of hundreds of artists through the years and it continues to connect artists with audiences, agents and the world.

6. Young talent

The work of the Standard Bank Young Artists is always eagerly anticipated at the National Arts Festival. These award-winning creatives present brand-new work to Festival audiences and become part of a notable legacy of South African artists who have held the title. Look out for this year's theatre winner, Monageng 'Vice' Motshabi, music winner, Abel Selaocoe, dance winner, Thandazile Radebe, winner for jazz, Benjamin Jephta, visual art, Beth Diane Armstrong and performance art, Dineo Seshee Bopape.



7. Firm Favourites

Experienced festivalgoers will know that there are some performances that sell out year after year. The Festival Gala Concert is a must, and you'll need to move fast to get tickets to The Very Big Comedy Show, hosted by Rob van Vuuren. Shows by featured artist, Neo Muyanga, are also sure to sell out. Visit the Monument each day at 17:00 for a free SAfm Sundowner Concert and enjoy the Annual Street Parade that takes place on the last Saturday of the Festival.

8. Cosy dinners

Grahamstown is known for its cold nights but there are plenty of spots to soak up some body heat and a wholesome dinner. The Long Table Restaurant is an annual pop-up restaurant that is frequented by artists and festivalgoers late into the night. The Rat & Parrot has fabulous pizza and Saint's is ideal for a bistro dining experience. There are many other options and it's a good idea to try them all.

9. Fabulous Fingo

The Fingo Festival is a lively, entertaining Festival that happens in the Fingo Village at the same time as the National Arts Festival. Make your way over to see some great local artists and soak up the spirit and hospitality of Fingo.

10. Eastern Cape Adventures

The beautiful Eastern Cape surrounds Grahamstown and offers sea, rivers, interesting small towns and the vast Addo Park. Stay on beyond the Festival to enjoy some time in the area. For more, click [here](#).

To plan your National Arts Festival, click [here](#) and follow on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).