

Understanding Filipino Culture

A monthly series



A New Voice in Coolamon

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Coolamon

Coolamon is changing in quiet but meaningful ways. Over the past few years, more Filipinos have come to live and work in the area, whether at Allawah Lodge, Coolamon Steel or through small personal journeys like my own. I have been in Australia for over 30 years and now call Coolamon home. With this growing presence comes an opportunity – not just to live alongside one another but to better understand who we are as a people, through the stories, traditions and values we bring with us.

Through this series, I hope to share different aspects of Filipino culture in a way that is simple, honest and grounded in everyday life. Food will be one way in, but it is only part of a much bigger story. Family, community, hospitality and the spirit of bayanihan all shape Filipino identity. My aim is not to explain everything, but to offer a window into the values and traditions that continue to guide us, both in the Philippines and here in Australia.

I moved to Coolamon in January 2024 and now live on Bruce Street, where I have named my home 'Bayanihan'. It is my own slice of paradise, a place where I have worked on my garden and created a space that reflects who I am. Before that, I worked for many years in hospitality and education across Australia after first arriving here in 1995. I became an Australian citizen in May 2012, a moment of great pride for me. I am a proud Filipino-Australian and I see this series as a way of sharing that combined perspective with the community I now call home.

In the months ahead, each article will explore a different aspect of Filipino culture through stories, traditions and lived experience. Food will be one of the starting points, but it will also open the door to conversations about history, identity and the way we relate to one another. Philippine history, which is a personal passion of mine, will help provide context and depth to these reflections.

You may notice that some Filipinos in town appear quiet or keep to themselves at first. This is often a sign of respect rather than distance. While many of us speak English, there can be a hesitation, a desire to say things properly and not get them wrong. A simple nod, a smile or a friendly hello can go a long way. It breaks the ice and opens the door to conversation, and from there, connection. I look forward to sharing more of my experiences with you in the months ahead and to giving you a deeper understanding of my Filipino heritage.