



Expat **Vicky Gray** braces herself for some rather chilly encounters on a visit to see her mother-in-law in Adelaide....



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We had visited Adelaide a few years earlier, so we were very familiar with my mother-in-law's modest 1845 cottage. Although compact, it had running water, some obscure type of cooking facilities and also a place where one could bathe. When we last visited it was just coming to the end of summer, so the temperature was glorious.

This time, however, we had arrived in early winter, which was a completely different story. Outside, it was sunny and maybe a little fresh first thing in the morning (but still wonderful compared to the harsh British winters). Unfortunately, the interior of the cottage was more a darkened pit of despair.

I can honestly say that aside from a New Year's Hogmanay in Dundee many years before, where I spent the evening wringing wet with fine drizzly rain-saturated clothing, then furthermore collapsing onto an equally soggy bed in some mouldy high rise flats and narrowly escaping pneumonia, I have never encountered such cold, damp, dismal conditions.

Now I don't want to appear ungrateful, as I am lucky enough to have a fantastic mother-in-law whom I dearly care for, but when the outside temperate exceeds the inside by enough to cause fingers to

Cold feet

become so numb that it feels as though they have been plunged into liquid nitrogen, it is time to ignite some heating in the house.

After some deliberation, the gas-fired heater was turned on and we could at last cautiously defrost our extremities, as long as we were within a two foot radius of it. Further away, it felt as if we were living in the chilled fruit and veg section of Sainsbury's.

My mother-in-law showed us a fantastic time, as ever, in Adelaide. We visited the world-famous wineries, such as the Barossa Valley, rummaging through unusual curios up in the hills in a little township called Harndorf, enjoying some of the sights of this fantastically well-designed city and coasting down long, vast, seemingly endless, country roads to areas such as Victor Harbour and on to Kangaroo island, occasionally stopping at wildlife parks for the children to pet and feed koalas and kangaroos... and of course meeting up with my husband's family and friends (my husband Max is also British but had spent many years growing up in South Australia).

Above Beware scary looking scaly lizards when you're in the wilds of South Australia!

We had decided to stay overnight on Kangaroo Island, and had picked a quaint little motel called Wisteria Lodge, which came with an outdoor pool and spa right next to the beach, so once we had checked in we went out to explore the island and its promised wildlife.

We spent endless hours driving around without getting even the whisk of a departing tail of anything that was still breathing. There were many corpses strewn across the roads.

There were some huge kangaroos whose bulk must have inflicted serious danger to the vehicle that hit them. I had to avert the children's eyes from open plan possums for fear of bloodcurdling screams and inevitable nightmares.

The one wildlife encounter we had was with an enormous lizard of sorts, that resembled a small scaly dinosaur. We stopped to get a closer look, to take a photo and maybe poke it a little, only to realise on inspection, that the reason why it hadn't scarppered at the sight of us was that its entire face was buried deep into an unrecognisable decapitated furry body... and the screaming began. 🇦🇺

■ This extract is taken from *Didgeridoos & Didgeridon'ts - A Brit's guide to moving your life Down Under* by Vicky Gray, priced £14.97 and available from Amazon.

