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Maori mix is market's new taste

By Casey Neill

Mussel fritters are a well-known dish across New Zealand.

"We use New Zealand green lipped mussels for that recipe," NZ Street Food owner Jae Tuhi said.

"It's like a pancake mix with spring onion and the mussel and we just cook it on the frying pan or on the grill."

Jae is bringing this traditional dish and many others to the Dandenong Market, including fried bread.

"It's just a yeast dough mixed and we just deep fry it," he said.

"It's become a traditional dish to the New Zealand Maori.

"It was probably introduced years ago by the Europeans when they came to New Zealand.

"We get Europeans coming to buy it as well." It's one of NZ Street Food's best sellers, and the

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creamed pau - abalone - is another.

"Something that everyone comes for is our fried bread burgers," Jae said.

"We do slow-cooked pork with gravy and coleslaw."

He also serves up hangi, which features meat and veg.

"That's traditionally cooked underground, but due to the food safety laws we can't cook underground and sell it," Jae said.

"I designed a modified steamer that creates a similar taste.

"The secret to the perfect hangi is fresh ingredients."

Jae buys all his meat, vegetables, fish and bread from other traders at Dandenong Market.

"Dandenong Market is renowned for great produce at a good price so it's a great way to support other traders whilst offering fresh, seasonal ingredients to my customers," he said.

NZ Street Food started out as a van that first visited Dandenong Market in 2015 and became a permanent stall in May this year.

"There was no one doing our food on a commercial basis, making it available to our people and for other cultures to try," Jae said.

"Some of the people who have made their way to us have come as far as Werribee, Altona and Traralgon.

"Islanders love the seafood and fried bread so will travel far to get it."



Jae Tuhi with partner Haunui Te Arihi.