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Sydney

Sydney wasn't a planned city and its layout is further complicated by its hills and the numerous inlets of the harbour, its focal point. The centre of Sydney is on the south shore of the harbour, about 7km (4mi) inland from the harbour heads. Skyscrapers in the Central Business District (CBD) vie for dominance and harbour views, but the city's relentlessness is softened by shady Hyde Park and The Domain parkland to the east, Darling Harbour to the west and the main harbour to the north. The Sydney Harbour Bridge and the harbour tunnel link the city centre with the satellite CBD of North Sydney and the suburbs of the North Shore. Sydney Airport is about 10km (6mi) south of the city centre. Central station, Sydney's main train

station, is in the south of the city centre, and the main bus terminal is located outside it.

SIGHTS

Sydney Opera House

Gazing upon the Sydney Opera House with virgin eyes is a sure way to send a tingle down your spine. Gloriously white and brilliantly sharp, Australia's most recognisable icon sits dramatically at the tip of Bennelong Point. On a sunny day the Opera House is postcard-perfect; its startling curves and points a pinnacle of architectural genius. These most distinguishing features are seen in many ways – sails, shells and even nuns in a rugby scrum. It's not until you get close that you realise that the seemingly solid expanse of white is actually composed of 1,056,000 self-cleaning cream-coloured Swedish tiles. The interiors don't live up to the promise of the dazzling exterior, but if you're curious to see inside there's an

informative, hour-long tour; not all tours can visit all theatres because of rehearsals, but you're more likely to see everything if you go early. On Sunday there's a market near the front entrance selling Australian-made arts and crafts.

Bennelong Point, Circular Quay

tel: 9250 7111

box office: Mon-Sat 09:00 - 20:30, Sun open 2.5 hrs prior to performance (performance times vary)

Sydney Harbour Bridge

Sydney's second-most-famous icon, this massive steel bridge is visible from a surprising number of spots around the city. Nicknamed 'the coat hanger', it crosses the harbour at one of its narrowest points, linking the southern and northern shores. It's the largest and heaviest (but not longest) steel arch in the world. Sydneysiders hold it dear to their hearts – partly because of its sheer size, simplicity and symmetry, and partly because of its function in uniting the city. It's always the centrepiece of Sydney's frequent and spectacular harbour fireworks, and its 75th birthday in 2007 saw 250,000 people join the celebrations by walking across it. The two halves of the mighty arch were built out simultaneously from each shore. After nine years of work, when the ends of the arches were only centimetres apart and ready to be bolted together, gale force winds of over 100km/h (62mph) set them swaying. But the bridge survived and the arch was soon completed. It cost \$20 million, a bargain in today's money, taking until 1988 to pay off. Giving it a new coat of paint takes four years and 80,000 litres. Cars, trains, cyclists, joggers and pedestrians all use the bridge. The cycleway is on the western side, the pedestrian footpath on the eastern. The best way to experience the bridge is on foot.

The Rocks

pylon lookout: 10:00 - 17:00

Art Gallery of NSW

With its elegant Classical Greek frontage and modern rear end, the state's main gallery has an outstanding permanent display of Australian art (including a substantial Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection), a well-regarded Asian gallery, a

Western collection starting from the 16th century, and some inspired temporary exhibits (prices vary). The frequently controversial, much-debated Archibald Prize exhibition is held here every March, with portraits of the famous and not-so-famous bringing out the art critic in every Sydneysider. There are free guided tours leaving on the hour from 11am to 2pm (Tue-Sun). Look out for Lin Onus' Fruit Bats (1991), a cheeky bunch of critters painted in Aboriginal cross-hatching hanging from a clothes line.

Art Gallery Rd, The Domain

tel: 9225 1744

Wed closes 21:00



© Ross Barnett. Lonely Planet Images.

Taronga Zoo

Not even the Governor General has views as good as Taronga's residents. A definite Sydney highlight, this exceptional zoo boasts a spectacular location which over 3000 furry, scaly and feathered critters (including a substantial number of Australian natives) call home. The animals are well looked after, and there are more natural open enclosures than cages. A zoo fave is the nocturnal platypus habitat, in which day and night has been switched to give you an opportunity to see the little guys partying. The koala and giraffe displays



Sydney

offer great photo ops, and the seal and bird shows are also popular (so find a seat in advance).

*Bradleys Head Rd, Mosman
tel: 9969 2777
09:00 - 17:00*

Bondi Beach

Sydney's (indeed, Australia's) most famous beach, Bondi lures people from around the world with its promise of sun, sand, surf and exposed skin, and all just 8km from the CBD. The average water temperature is a pleasant 21°C. If you don't like it rough, there are saltwater swimming pools at either end - great for the kids. The two surf clubs - Bondi and North Bondi - patrol the beach between sets of flags. These are positioned to avoid the worst rips and holes; don't be an idiot, swim between them. Try not to be one of the thousands of tourists and locals that have to be rescued annually. Surfers ride breaks at either end of the beach and it's a good place for learners. If posing in your budge smugglers (Speedos) isn't having enough impact, there's an outdoor workout area near the North Bondi Surf Club. Coincidentally this is the part of the beach where the gay guys tend to hang out. Bondi Pavilion has changing rooms and lockers, along with a gelato shop. Ice-cream vendors also strut the sand in summer. At the north end there's a lovely grassy spot with coin-operated barbecues.

Campbell Pde, Bondi

DINING

Pier

Jutting out over pretty Rose Bay, Pier has a well-deserved reputation for delicately cooked, incredibly fresh seafood that is unsurpassed in Sydney and quite possibly the whole country. A recently added tasting room offers bite-sized versions of the grown-up portions next door.

*594 New South Head Rd, Rose Bay
tel: 9327 6561
lunch & dinner*

Zaaffran

Indian food doesn't come fancier than this, with Chef Vikrant Kapoor (of Singapore's Raffles fame) whipping up an unfaultable assortment of both traditional dishes and his own creations. Case in point is the tempting dessert menu featuring Indian twists on European favourites. The Darling Harbour views spice things up even further.

*Lvl 2, 345 Harbourside Shopping Centre, Darling Harbour
tel: 9211 8900*



© Ada Chan

Billy Kwong

There's something wonderfully egalitarian about top restaurants where queuing's required - perfect for travellers who don't have the luxury of booking weeks ahead. Chef Kylie Kwong serves up a tempting seasonal menu made from the best organic, sustainable, fair trade ingredients available.

*355 Crown St, Surry Hills
tel: 9332 3300*

Guillaume at Bennelong

Located under the smallest of the Opera House's iconic sails, a meal at Guillaume won't fail to be a treasured Sydney memory. Award-winning chef Guillaume

Brahimi's masterful style is evident in every divine dish. Just thinking about the rib-eye of Wagyu beef cooked on the bone is enough to induce palpitations.

*Sydney Opera House, Circular Quay
tel: 9241 1999*

Spice I Am

In Sydney parlance this is definitely 'a thing right now'. Once the preserve of local Thais wanting an authentic taste of home, it now has queues out the door. No wonder, as everything we've tried from the over 70 reasonably priced dishes on the menu is wonderful - fragrant and spicy. Expect to be hurried out as soon as you're finished.

*90 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills
tel: 9280 0928
lunch & dinner Tue-Sun*

ENTERTAINMENT

Doyles Palace Hotel

One of the great pleasures in life is languishing in the rowdy beer garden of the Doyles Palace Hotel with mates over a jug of sangria after a day at the beach. Stay to watch the sun go down over the city and grab some seafood if you're hungry - fish and chips or a fiddly platter complete with crabs and cray.

*1 Military Rd, Watsons Bay
tel: 9337 5444
10:00 - 23:00*

Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel

There are pubs in older buildings but the Lord Nelson is Sydney's oldest continually licensed pub. Since 1841 it's been pouring pints and by now it's pretty good at it. Try one of the natural ales brewed in the stainless steel vats at the back.

*19 Kent St, Millers Point
tel: 9251 4044
11:00 - 23:00 Mon-Sat, 12:00 - 22:00 Sun*

Arthouse Hotel

The art-meets-alcohol theme carries throughout this sumptuous multistorey heritage site. Friday nights see live jazz in the Dome Lounge, while on Saturdays the whole downstairs area becomes Kink, one of Sydney's hottest club nights.

*275 Pitt St
tel: 9284 1200*

Sydney Theatre Company

Established in 1978, the STC is Sydney's top company and has been an important step in the careers of many famous Australian actors, including Mel Gibson, Judy Davis, Hugo Weaving, Miranda Otto, Geoffrey Rush, Toni Collette and Cate Blanchett. Expect meticulously crafted works that appeal to mainstream sensibilities while still managing to push a few buttons.

*Lvl 2, Pier 4, Hickson Rd, Dawes Point
tel: 9250 1777*

Gazebo Wine Garden

A hip wine bar in skanky old Fitzroy Gardens? Who would have believed it 10 years ago? This place is awesome - super-groovy decor, interesting mixed clientele and a high-tech storage system that shoots gas into open bottles, meaning 55 sometimes obscure wines are available by the glass to join the 300 by the bottle.

*2 Elizabeth Bay Rd, Elizabeth Bay
tel: 9357 5333
15:00 - 24:00 Mon-Fri, 12:00 - 24:00 Sat & Sun*



© Ada Chan



Sydney

HOTELS

Valentine on George

If valentines are supposed to be secret then this one's playing by the rules. It comes as a pleasant surprise to find such an upmarket boutique hotel hidden behind a nondescript doorway in this bustling part of town. The rooms are beautifully designed, with king-size beds, Bose stereos, DVD players, marble bathrooms with tiny Italian tiles, and glitzy fixtures. There are some two-bedroom suites available, including one with a courtyard.

767 George St, Haymarket
tel: 9288 9888

Establishment Hotel

Hardcore glamour doesn't need to be flashy. In fact, it can lurk behind an inconspicuous entrance off a dark, dank alley – allowing secretive celebrities to slink in, peel back the black shades and head straight to the luxury of the split-level deluxe penthouse. One of Australia's best boutique hotels, Establishment offers 33 beautifully designed rooms sporting fine cotton linen and elegant bathrooms.

5 Bridge La, Circular Quay
tel: 9240 3100



© Paul Beinssen. Lonely Planet Images.

Dive Hotel

Plenty of hotels don't live up to their name (the most flagrantly misused epithets being grand, palace and central) and thankfully neither does this one. The 14 modern rooms at this delightful boutique hotel are wonderfully luxurious and come with a kitchenette and small groovy bathroom. There's a separate family-friendly three-room apartment in a nearby street. You can enjoy the complementary breakfast buffet in the elegant kitchen or Asian-flavoured back patio.

234 Arden St, Coogee
tel: 9665 5538

Medina Grand Harbourside

Heaven is a swish, spacious apartment where people clean up after you. Even more so if there are harbour views, as there are in the slightly pricier rooms in this new low-rise development just off King Street Wharf. All have full kitchen and laundry facilities and balconies.

55 Shelley St, King St Wharf, Darling Harbour
tel: 9249 7000

Park Hyatt

Commanding the opposite tip of the horseshoe of Circular Quay to the Opera House, the Park Hyatt boasts the best location in Sydney. The graciously low-rise building matches the opulence of its position with sandstone, marble and contemporary design including a particularly groovy mother-of-pearl wall. Absolutely decadent views of the harbour. Around-the-clock butler service, superluxurious, what more is there to say?

7 Hickson Rd, The Rocks
tel: 9241 1234

FAST FACTS

Population

4400000

Language

English

Currency

Australian dollar
AUD

Money & cost

Australia is relatively affordable; travel will be your biggest expense. Credit cards are widely accepted, and ATMs all over the country accept credit and Cirrus cards. Tipping is common..

When to go

Blessed with a temperate climate, Sydney is pleasant to visit during any season, with autumn being especially delightful. By and large, Sydneysiders enjoy well over 300 sunny days a year.

Electricity

220-240V
50Hz

Phone

country dialling code: 61
mobile network: GSM, CDMA

Local Cathay Pacific contact information

Reservation numbers: 131747
Check-in counters: Sydney International Airport,
International Terminal, Island A, Counters 1-9



Sydney

LUXE CITY GUIDES RECOMMEND

The following suggestions are selected exclusively for Cathay Pacific by LUXE City Guides, the consummately stylish pocket travel guide, packed with astute, opinionated information for the busy and sophisticated visitor.

Hotel

Blue. Spruce. lofty and lovely marina darling. Airy rooms face the city skyline or naval base (hello, sailor). Add Spa Chakra, Water Bar, mwah Italian Otto and exotic China Doll and you've got it made.

6 Cowper Wharf / Woolloomooloo / +61 2 9331 9000 / tajhotels.com

Restaurants

Universal. Liquorice allsorts colour burst courtyard, where Spice Queen Christine Manfield fuses unique world flaves with contemporary Oz cuisine in tasting plates that zing and desserts that sing.

Republic 2 Courtyard / Palmer St / Darlinghurst / +61 2 9331 0709 / lunch Fri, dinner Mon-Sat / universalrestaurant.com

Icebergs. Wham, bam, stagger-glam vibe and crowd. Dressed in plate glass, whites, aquas and teals, this gorgeous dolly sits high above the surf at Bondi Beach. Breezy Mediterranean fare and excellent lounge.

1 Notts Ave / Bondi Beach / +61 2 9365 9000 / closed Mon / idrb.com

Sopra. Fab, hugely popular, market fresh veg-Italian diner within a grocer with two locales, get there early or get in line.

81 Macleay St / Potts Point / +61 2 9368 6666 / lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, lunch Sat-Sun / and 7 Danks St / Waterloo / +61 2 9699 3174 / b'fast & lunch Tue-Sat / no reservations / fratellifresh.com.au

Bars

Ivy. Suit-sy in the city, Palm Springs meets New Regency drink n' dine pleasuredome with a touch of the Wearstlers. Bar and Terrace for garden party gaiety, swank Lounge and Den upstairs for lush cocktails and Lawn for grassy frolics.

330 George St / Sydney / +61 2 9240 3000 / 11am-late Mon-Sat / merivale.com

Mille Vini. Cool inner city types ram this exposed brick and stone bi-level Italian hunk of a wine bar after work and for supper, as it's equally good for a beverage or a bite.

397 Crown St / Surry Hills / +61 2 9357 3366 / from 6pm Tue-Thu, from noon Fri-Sun / no reservations

Spa

Body Inc. Former Korean bathhouse now a fully fledged spa with his n' hers wet areas, steam, sauna, couples' rooms and beauty salon. Get flayed then soak in the hot ginseng bath, or stick to trad Shiatsu or Swedish rubs. Ahh-ouch! Level 1 / 224 Victoria St / Kings Cross / +61 2 9356 3477 / from 8am daily / bathing-only entry permitted / bodyinc.com.au

Activities

Sail Sydney Harbour. Sydney's glorious harbour is so accessible and so much fun, hire a boat with or without crew (Sydney Harbour Escapes / The Pier / 594 New South Head Rd / Rose Bay / +61 2 9328 4748 / sydneyharbourescapes.com.au), and get out there. You can arrive almost anywhere by water. Here are some corkers, just add picnic and champagne... Farm Cove at the Botanic Gardens, Clark or Shark Islands bang in Sydney Harbour (you or your boat hire company will need to book in advance for an island spot through the (National Parks and Wildlife Service for a small fee / 9247 5033 / environment.nsw.gov.au), or head up to Middle Harbour and drop anchor at serene Bantry Bay, surrounded by picturesque National Park.

Gourmet Safaris. Skip breakfast, whack on your elasticized slacks and follow the leader on tasting and food shopping tours to discover little-known ethnic gastro enclaves that make Sydney the delicious melting pot that it is. Gourmet Safaris / +61 2 9960 5675 / gourmetsafaris.com.au

Shopping

Check out the best of modern Aussie furniture and décor at this talented trio. Object: smart local crafts and design showcase (St. Margaret's / 417 Bourke St / Surry Hills / +61 2 9361 4555 / Tue-Sat / object.com.au). Planet Commonwealth: super stylish timber furny, textiles and ceramics (114 Commonwealth St / Surry Hills / +61 2 9211 5959 / Tue-Sat / planetfurniture.com.au). Koskela: Oz design champ with eco cred (Level 1 / 91 Campbell St / Surry Hills / +61 2 9280 0999 / koskela.com.au)

