

An aerial photograph of Sydney, Australia, showing the city skyline with numerous skyscrapers, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and the Sydney Opera House. The water is a deep blue, and the city extends to the horizon under a clear sky.

CITY REPORTER

ONE PARTICULAR HARBOUR

New South Wales' capital is filled with gorgeous sites, lip-smacking food, and extraordinary experiences

words MARIA VISCONTI

The spectacular Sydney Harbour is the main centre of activities for first time visitors. From the iconic Opera House to a Bridge Climb – to get an aerial view of tucked away inlets and colourful ferries plying the waters – the harbour represents old and new Sydney. The First Fleet landed here in 1788 marking the area we call today The Rocks, its hub. Old buildings restored to perfection house today 5-star accommodation, eateries,

pubs and open-air markets. But Sydney has an unexpected 'backyard' only 90 minutes drive west: the Blue Mountains, one of Australia's best-kept secrets. Once thought to be impassable by the first convicts (with China lying on the other side) it is now a listed UNESCO World Heritage Area. The highest point is just above 1,000m with ridges covered in eucalyptus forests and sheltered gorges containing pockets of rainforest.



EAT

Sydney is blessed with talented chefs of international repute and if you were to try and define what's modern Australian fare, it would be safe to say that it is heavily influenced by the flavours of Asia. Aside from the award winning fine dining restaurants there are hundreds of smaller places with great food to enjoy.



room you see Sydneysiders very much at home on the beach, walking their dogs on the esplanade and enjoying the evening breeze. Balmoral Beach is a true local enclave ideal for getting under Sydney's skin. Getting there is easy: a 10 minute ferry ride from Circular Quay (the Taronga Zoo Ferry) then 10 minutes on the 238 bus to Raglan St and a 95 metres walk to the Esplanade. The Café, operating on the other side of the Pavilion is open all day and serves Mediterranean fare.

4 The Esplanade, Balmoral Beach, Mosman.
Tel: +61 2 9969 6050; www.batherspavilion.com.au

SPICE TEMPLE Neil Perry travelled extensively in China sourcing regional recipes mainly from Sichuan, Yunnan, Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangxi and Xingjiang. This restaurant is hip, has subdued lighting and delivers a fiery punch with style.

10 Bligh Street, Tel: +61 2 8078 1888
www.rockpool.com/sydney/spice-temple

ARIA Matt Moran is all about fine dining offering modern Australian fare in a stylish locale overlooking the Harbour and the Opera House. Great to combine with an Opera House event.

1 Macquarie Street, East Circular Quay
Tel: +61 2 9252 2555; www.ariarestaurant.com

BATHERS PAVILION Serge Danserau operates out of a restored 1900's Bath Pavillion on Balmoral Beach. His fine dining restaurant's menu is based on modern Australian fare. From the dining

1. Bathers Pavilion overlooks Balmoral Beach

2 - 3. Spice Temple serves up some delectable Chinese fare

4. The handsome Bathers Pavilion seen from the esplanade



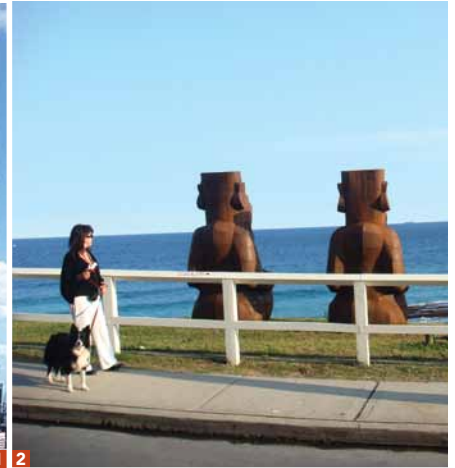
CAFÉ MADELEINE Café Madeleine serves a Fair Trade certified chocolate-focused menu of desserts, brownies, waffles and hot chocolates, alongside gourmet breakfast, lunch and High Tea menus. Café Madeleine is Josophan's sister site run by champion chocolatier Jodie Van Der Velden.

187a Leura Mall Blue Mountains.
www.josophans.com.au

EVERGLADES This treasure from the 1930s sits in twelve and a half acres of European-style gardens and native Australian bush. Lunch, high teas and a program of seasonal events (such as theatre productions in the open air) are worth checking out. A pleasant 20-minute walk from Leura Station or the Explorer Bus will get you there.

37 Everglades Avenue, Leura, Blue Mountains.
Tel: +61 2 4784 1938; www.everglades.org.au

AUSTRALIA



ATTRACTIONS

It is often said that the best things in life are free, so go to Bondi Beach, which is not just for swimming.



BEACHES The Bondi to Bronte cliff walk is an inspiring walk following a stunning path in full view of the ocean below. Sculpture by the Sea is a free exhibition of modern art displayed annually along the walk during October/November (www.sculpturebythesea.com). Cafes abound and are frequented early in the morning by good-looking surfies. You can also take a dip in the tidal rock pools of Bondi, Bronte or Coogee. They are safe, cool and free. Coogee has a ladies-only pool as well.

SYDNEY FERRIES Catch a ferry from Circular Quay and go for a joy ride. It is not exactly free but for a few dollars you get to explore the intricate shoreline of this huge harbour and see how the locals live. The Sydney to Manly ferry ride is spectacular. www.transport.nsw.gov.au

1. Attempt the bridge climb and be rewarded with this spectacular view

2-3. See some out-of-this-world sculptures on Bondi Beach

4. Catch a ferry from Circular Quay



BRIDGE CLIMB The Harbour Bridge was finished in 1932 after eight years of work that used 52,800 tonnes of steel. Six million rivets were used and a single coat of paint requires 30,000 litres. It carries not only cars but rail, pedestrian and bicycle traffic on its generous 49 m width. Climbing it is not for those with a fear of heights (you climb the arch proper) but if you dare, do it! You'll go in a small group with an expert guide and will be provided with safety equipment. www.bridgeclimb.com

WILD LIFE For a superb wild encounter with Australia's best-loved (or feared) fauna, go to the Wild Life Sydney Zoo on Darling Harbour. In two hours or less you can come very close to hundreds of species in a beautiful and highly educational setting. www.wildlifesydney.com.au



QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA This is a classy, leafy enclave for pricey antique shops, together with great eating places. Great for escaping the city centre buzz and for watching locals shop from exclusive providores and eat in outdoor or rooftop cafes.

CHIC IN THE CITY SHOPPING TOURS

If you feel overwhelmed by the choices, why not let somebody savvy guide you? Chic in the City offers a walking shopping tour of refined Paddington and Woollahra, with champagne stops of course...and a chauffeured shopping experience with a pick up from your hotel.

www.chicinthecitytours.com.au

PADDINGTON MARKETS The Paddington Markets is a venue in the grounds of the heritage-listed sandstone Paddington Uniting Church amidst the Victorian terraces and modern art galleries of Paddington. Australian emerging design, art and fashion students compete for an opportunity to launch their creative talents. Every Saturday, the market's 250 stalls deal in collectibles and retro, the latest fashion styles, contemporary designed jewellery, home wares and original art.

www.paddingtonmarkets.com.au

THE ROCKS MARKET The Rocks has 150 stalls under a white canopy allowing the breeze of the harbour to flow through. Open on weekends, the market is great for browsing, hanging out, eating or just soaking up the atmosphere.

www.therocks.com

SHOPPING

Shop in wonderfully preserved Victorian buildings or pick up something unique from Sydney's markets.



QUEEN VICTORIA BUILDING (QVB)

This fine Victorian building (1898) is a marvel of architecture. Make sure you look up from the street below to catch the Byzantine copper domes and columns. Inside, aside from the great 200 specialty shops, take note of the wrought iron balconies, original tile floors, stained glass and more. There is a 45-minute tour departing from the concierge desk on the ground floor.

455 George Street, Tel: +61 2 9264 9209
www.qvb.com.au

THE STRAND ARCADE The Strand is the only surviving original shopping arcade built in 1892. It surely rivals the QVB with its three floors of designer boutiques and old world coffee and tea places. Enter the arcade from Pitt Street Mall or 412 George Street.

Mall or 412 George Street.
Tel: +61 2 9232 4199; www.strandarcade.com.au

1,2. Shop in style in the gorgeous QVB

3. Grab some locally made handicraft at the markets



AUSTRALIA



HOTELS & NIGHT LIFE

Sydneysiders like to party and let their hair down after work. The CBD has a plethora of historical bars and pubs. For hotels, Sydney has some of the most unique accommodations you will come across.



NIGHT LIFE

THE SLIP INN & CHINESE LAUNDRY

The Slip Inn is a friendly, lively spot, especially in summer when patrons like to spill onto the backyard and have a drink and a meal alfresco. One of its most famous claims to fame is that Tasmanian born Princess Mary of Denmark met her Prince here. Chinese Laundry is located underneath The Slip Inn so you can check them both at the same time. This venue is underground and more of a nightclub but being in the same building as The Slip Inn you can check them both at the same time.

The Slip Inn Hotel, 111 Sussex Street.
Tel: +61 2 8295 9999; merivale.com.au

ZETA BAR HILTON Zeta Bar is a multi-award winner retreat with views of the iconic Queen Victoria Building façade, a classic example of Victorian architecture. Zeta's cocktails are imaginative, daring and pretty much works of art. Private booths or open air rooftop terrace this is the place to see and be seen. International celebrities usually come to party here too.

Hilton Hotel, 4/488 George Street .
Tel: +61 2 9265 6070; www.zetabar.com.au

1. The award-winning Mountain Whispers
2. The hip and cosy Zeta Bar
3. Living room of The Sydney Harbour YHA
4. A deluxe room in Sebel Pier One



HOTEL

HARBOUR ROCKS HOTEL Historical, newly refurbished and at the heart of old Sydney occupying the site of what was the first hospital in the colony. Understated luxury is its trademark spanning a few buildings artfully linked to each other. The staff will be delighted to tell you about its colonial past.

34 Harrington Street, The Rocks.
Tel +61 2 82209998; www.harbourrocks.com.au

SEBEL PIER ONE Sebel Pier One is built in a unique Federation-style, on and over the water. Its private pontoon is an ideal launching pad to explore all of Sydney attractions. Accommodation blends the heritage of a genuine old working Pier with contemporary chic design and furnishings.

11 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay.
Tel +61 2 8298 9999; www.sebelpierone.com.au

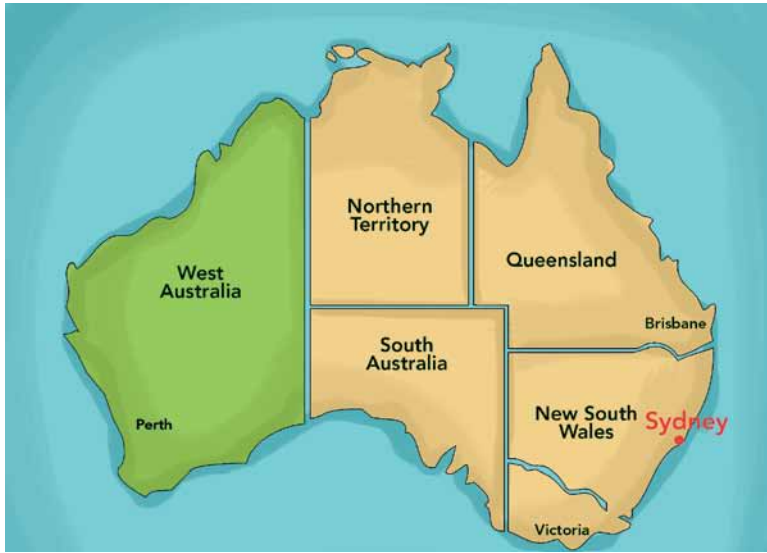
THE SYDNEY HARBOUR YHA

Yes, there is such a thing as budget accommodation with killer views. This hostel has won 24 Awards including a UNESCO World Heritage award. All rooms have private bathrooms and suits 'flashpackers' and families.

110 Cumberland Street, The Rocks.
Tel +61 2 8272 0900; www3.yha.com.au

MOUNTAIN WHISPERS Have a date to celebrate? Looking for a romantic retreat? Travelling with friends or family? Mountain Whispers has a portfolio of four period properties (two bedrooms, two bathrooms) painstakingly restored to be found in leafy nooks of the picture-perfect Leura and Katoomba in the Blue Mountains winner of the Bronze Award for 5-star accommodation bestowed by Tourism NSW.

www.mountainwhispers.com.au ★



☛ If someone at the beach asks to borrow your thongs, he is referring to your flip-flops!

GETTING THERE

British Airways, Qantas, Scoot and Singapore Airlines fly direct from Singapore Changi Airport to Sydney Airport. From Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia Airlines and AirAsia X fly direct to Sydney.

GETTING AROUND

Sydney's public transport system is quick and efficient, especially around the metropolitan area. If you wish to get out of the city however, you will probably want to rent a car. Hertz cars can be rented either from Sydney Airport or downtown Sydney.

Temperature

26°	26°	25°	22°	19°	17°	16°	18°	20°	22°	23°	25°	Highest
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
19°	19°	18°	15°	12°	9°	8°	9°	11°	13°	16°	18°	Lowest

CLIMATE

Sydney enjoys a cool temperate climate with mild winters.



Blue Mountains

The Blue Mountains might be a mere hour's drive from Sydney but is a completely different world. Take a day trip here or if you wish to take your time in this beautiful mountainous district, stay for the night. Some of the attractions here include the Jenolan Limestone Caves, the glass bottom Scenic Skyway cable car and of course, the world famous Three Sisters rock formation.

CURRENCY

A\$1 = S\$1.29/RM3.21

TIME ZONE

GMT +10 hours.

CALLING CODE

The country code for Australia is 61 and the area code for Sydney is 2.

LANGUAGE

English is widely spoken and understood in Sydney.



VISA

Singapore and Malaysia passport holders are required to apply for an ETA (Electronic Travel Authority) Visa to enter Australia. Each eVisa is valid for 12 months from the date of issue and allows the applicant to stay in Australia for up to three months per visit.