

Melbourne

Melbourne is a must see for those wanting to experience a truly unique and vigorous Australian city lifestyle. It has endless options to cater for all tastes, whether you are interested in fashion, sport, theatre, art, history or music. The state capital of Victoria is Australia's dynamic 'sporting and cultural capital' and features a wide variety of sporting events, annual cultural events, performing arts and impressive architecture.

Located around spectacular Port Phillip Bay in Australia's south-east, Melbourne's suburbs stretch along the banks of the Yarra River and across the plains to the west and east and out to the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, home to a diverse and multicultural population of approximately 3.8 million people.

Most international tourists arrive via Melbourne's Tullamarine airport 22 kilometres northwest of the city centre. With few ways of getting into the city from the airport a taxi or the 24-hour Skybus are the most convenient and cost effective modes. A second airport, Avalon Airport is southwest of the city; the Sunbus service meets all flights that arrive there.

In Melbourne there is a huge choice of accommodation from hotels and motels to the more budget backpacker style hostels. Stay in the heart of this cosmopolitan sports/arts/fashion mad city or take a step out into the heart of the suburbs and get a taste of a local neighborhood lifestyle.

Sights & Attractions

Considered one of the greatest cities of the Victorian Age, grand old nineteenth century buildings sit amongst more contemporary styles of architecture and a multitude of magnificent Victorian gardens and parks. Some of Melbourne's most important historical buildings include the Royal Exhibition Building, the Melbourne Town Hall and Parliament House. Some of Melbourne's more modern buildings are also exciting attractions in themselves. Federation Square is home to many concerts and shows and houses the bizarre looking Victorian Arts Centre building. Melbourne is easy to explore whether via cruise, cycling, walking, taking a tram, bus, or by hopping onto one of the many day tours to see all of the main city attractions!

Not far from the urban centre of Melbourne are some wonderful national parks including the Mornington Peninsula National Park, Port Phillip Heads Marine National Park and Point Nepean National Park in the south east, Organ Pipes National Park to the north and Dandenong Ranges National Park to the east. Just outside of Melbourne you can also find a number of other spectacular state parks.

Art/Culture/Festivals

A vibrant live music scene that produces some of Australia's most successful international artists has made Melbourne the perfect

destination for night owls. With a fantastic waterfront atmosphere, the city's famous nightlife and culinary culture is always buzzing with action, from clubs, pubs, bistros, bars and cafes.

Comedy shows, Broadway spectaculars, film festivals, art exhibitions, and street art provide quality entertainment all year round in Melbourne. The Australian Ballet, Melbourne Theatre Company, Circus Oz and Victorian Opera regularly stage wonderful shows that wow Melbourne audiences. The Comedy Club is great for a laugh, while people who are passionate about contemporary art will love the Art House programs shown at the Meat Market and North Melbourne Town Hall.

Favourite festivals include the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Melbourne Fashion Festival, Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, Moomba Waterfest, Melbourne International Arts Festival, and the Melbourne Spring Fashion Week.

Sports Fans

For sports fans, Melbourne's sporting calendar is crammed full of exciting events all year round. International sporting events held annually in Melbourne include the Australian Open tennis, Melbourne Cup and the Australian Grand Prix.

Melbourne hosts 'the race that stops a nation', the glamorous Melbourne Cup Carnival, when the eyes of the nation turn to the exciting horse races held at Flemington over one week in spring. For this one week the racing carnival becomes the hub of Melbourne's social activity and style.

Melbourne is also home to the two most popular sports in Australia- Australian cricket and Australian Rules football. The Australian Football League (AFL) has its headquarters at Telstra Dome and a massive ten of its teams are based within the Melbourne metropolitan area. Each football game averages over 35,000 fiercely loyal and proud team spectators; the game is considered an icon of Australian culture and lifestyle. At the first kick off each season friendly battle lines are drawn across the city between people supporting opposing teams, with much good natured rivalry and banter, culminating in the AFL Grand Final in September which determines the top team.

In 1877 the first ever official cricket Test match in Australia was played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Continuing its dominance as a popular

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Australian sport, one of Melbourne's most notable cricket traditions is the annual Boxing Day Test Match.

The sports on offer do not stop with just cricket and AFL, Melbourne is also has teams representing Rugby League, Soccer, Netball and Basketball. The Australian National Sports Museum is located at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in the Great Northern Stand, and is a popular destination for those interested in going behind the scenes of Australian sports history and culture.

History

About 38 Aboriginal tribal groups resided both in and around Victoria until the year 1803 which heralded the beginnings of white settlement in Victoria. From an estimated Aboriginal population of between 60,000 and 100,000 prior to white settlement of the land these figures dropped rapidly and by the 1880s there were just over 800 Aborigines left in the state.

The city of Melbourne was officially founded by free settlers in 1835, 47 years after the first European settlement of Australia, and was soon to be known as 'Marvelous Melbourne'. The Victorian gold rush in the 1850's saw a massive influx of immigrants chasing their fortune in a new land. The wealth that the gold rush created within the city saw the rapid growth of Melbourne from its humble beginnings as a small pastoral settlement around the Yarra River to becoming the largest and most important city in Australia by 1865. Melbourne would retain this title until the early 20th century when it was overtaken by Sydney as the most prestigious Australian city.

Climate

Notorious for daily changeable weather conditions despite boasting a moderate oceanic climate has made the phrase "four seasons in one day" instantly recognizable to Melbourne's visitors. In just one day the weather can change from very hot to very cold, wet and windy, or warm and sunny.

In winter the average temperature ranges between 6°C (Degrees Celsius) and 13°C, the temperature rises above 35°C only a few times each year in summer, when Melbourne can experience oppressive heat waves. The average maximum temperature all year round is 19.8 °C dropping to an average minimum temperature of 10.2 °C. Rainfall is highest in the winter months, so if you're visiting then, bring your umbrella and some warm clothes!