



CITY GUIDE

SYDNEY

Cosmopolitan and buzzing, with a brilliant coastal location, spectacular scenery and parks, the Australian metropolis makes the ideal base for a stay-and-cruise holiday, says **Liz Jarvis**

Located on Australia's east coast, the Sydney area has been inhabited for more than 30,000 years by indigenous Australians, but was settled by the British in 1788. Most ships dock either in Sydney Harbour, the largest natural harbour in the world, or White Bay Cruise Terminal, close to the

iconic Anzac Bridge (which means you get to sail right underneath magnificent Sydney Harbour Bridge, an experience not to be missed). The bridge was built in 1932, and the Opera House wasn't actually constructed until 1973, but of course is still considered to be one of the world's most distinctive buildings.



Must-sees

Any visit to Sydney should start off with Circular Quay, Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. You can climb Sydney Harbour Bridge if you have a head for heights (at 134m high it's definitely not for the faint-hearted).

Sydney Tower is also one of the city's most famous landmarks (and also its tallest building at 309m), with fantastic 360-degree views.

Although Sydney has lots of art galleries and museums, if the weather is good you'll definitely want to make the most of the laid-back outdoor lifestyle. The Royal Botanic Garden has some spectacular native trees and plants and is a great place to stop for some shade or lunch.

Pitt Street Mall and the Queen Victoria Building is where you'll find prestigious international shops and exclusive boutiques.

In Barangaroo, which is similar to Canary Wharf in London, there are more cool restaurants and shops.

Clockwise, from top left: Circular Quay looks out to Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House; Bondi Beach is a hotspot for surfers; go shopping in the Queen Victoria Building; the Royal Botanic Gardens; Sydney Tower is the city's tallest structure

Must-tries

An absolute highlight of any visit to Sydney has to be the Opera House. Even if you decide not to go in, it's worth taking a walk around (although the best photo opportunities are from the water).

No visit to the city would be complete without a trip on the iconic green-and-cream Manly Ferry; it's only a 20-minute trip to this quaint seaside town with its perfect golden beach, which is great for surfing. And if you fancy a day trip out of the city or even an overnight stay, the spectacular Blue Mountains are just a two-hour train ride away, and offer some brilliant hiking or more gentle walking opportunities; look out for intriguing rock formations including the Three Sisters. If you want to stay the night, try Lilianfels (lilianfels.com.au), a luxurious country-style retreat.

What to eat

There are so many fabulous restaurants offering every conceivable

kind of cuisine in Sydney; you'll be spoiled for choice. Particularly good, though, are Bel and Brio in Barangaroo, which offers dishes inspired by traditional European cooking styles, with an Antipodean twist (belandbrio.com.au). Dining at stunning Bennelong at the Opera House is an experience in itself, and Executive Chef Peter Gilmore has created an extraordinary menu showcasing the very best in Australian produce – plus delectable cocktails (bennelong.com.au). Chiswick at the Gallery (chiswickrestaurant.com.au), located in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, is set in the Royal Botanic Garden and is definitely worth trying, and you can also explore the impressive art collection before or afterwards. For a quick, simple and inexpensive lunch, head for Piccolo's, the little café outside the Royal Botanic Garden, where you can sit and enjoy light snacks and iced milkshakes in the company of free-roaming black-and-white ibis birds. ➔



ESSENTIALS



Where to stay

With a secluded entrance on Market Street, close to one of the main shopping districts of Sydney, the deluxe five-star Swissôtel Sydney offers glamorous, contemporary accommodation with outstanding views of the city skyline. Rooms are elegant and stylish, with sumptuous Sealy beds, spacious bathrooms, Nespresso machines, a pillow menu and Swiss-made Purovel amenities. The hotel's facilities include the Crossroads Bar, a fantastic light-filled space perfect for relaxing after a day's sightseeing with an indulgent afternoon tea or an exquisite cocktail made by the superb mixologist. The breakfast buffet at JPB is also excellent, with an impressive variety of international cuisine. Stay in an Executive Club room and you'll have access to the lounge, a peaceful retreat offering breakfast in the mornings and complimentary canapés and drinks in the evening. There's also an inviting spa and outdoor swimming pool, perfect for a dip



after exploring, making this hotel a real oasis in the heart of the city (rooms from £162 a night, swissotel.com/sydney).



Getting there

Cathay Pacific offers return flights from London to Sydney via Hong Kong from £600.57pp (cathaypacific.com).

Cruise lines that call at Sydney include Princess Cruises, Holland America Line, P&O Cruises and Seabourn. For more information on visiting Sydney, go to sydney.com.

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