

Melbourne



Melbourne is a city you need to get to know. It might not immediately take your breath away and its many charms aren't always apparent on first meeting, but there's no doubt this city will get under your skin.

Few cities grew as fast and furiously as this one, as it launched itself onto the world stage with an arriviste swagger and a gold-tinted twinkle in its eye. With its Victorian streetscapes and genteel demeanour, Melbourne was considered the most British of Australian cities. These days, it possesses both an adopted European grace and a nonstop energy more akin to the urban hubs of Asia.

Melbourne's citizens look as diverse as they are. It's a city of immigrants whose backgrounds usually span multiple ethnicities. They're good-looking too, though that can be more about culture than nature. Melbournians are passionate about enjoying life: food, fashion, sport and socialising are cherished. Its many bars, cafés and restaurants draw on the best from Europe and Asia, whilst retaining an easy-going, quintessentially Australian feel.

Melbourne is brainy, industrious, imaginative and creative: prolific in architecture, performance, live music and the visual arts, but endlessly self-deprecating. It's one of the world's youngest cities yet also one of the longest-inhabited places on Earth. Melbourne is a city worth exploring: let it win you over.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the world-class **Melbourne Zoo** (p87) and **Royal Botanic Gardens** (p86)
- Sip a latte and watch the eclectic crowd on **Brunswick St** (p87)
- Head to seaside **St Kilda** (p88) for cafés, stylish nightlife, a soak in the **St Kilda Sea Baths** (p88) or a cake on Acland St
- Catch a movie at ACMI in **Federation Square** (p81) or check out the Australian art at the **Ian Potter Centre: National Galley of Victoria Australia** (p81)
- Get caught-up in the roar of the crowd at a footy match at the **Melbourne Cricket Ground** (p99)
- Immerse yourself in the **Queen Victoria Market** (p83)
- Get seriously fashionable in the city's **boutiques** (p99)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 03

■ POPULATION: 3.5 million

■ www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

MELBOURNE IN...

Two Days

Start at **Federation Square** (p81) and take our **walking tour** (p88) ending with lunch at **Journal Canteen** (p95). In the afternoon, visit the esteemed **Ian Potter Centre: National Galley of Victoria Australia** (p81) or catch a film at **ACMI** (p81). Take a stroll through **Chinatown** (p82) and chow-down on some Cantonese before an evening of **bar-hopping** (p97) around the city laneways.

On the second day visit the bustling **Queen Victoria Market** (p83) and wander around **Melbourne Museum** (p87) before heading to **Brunswick St** (p87) to drink proper coffee, have dinner at **Añada** (p96) and settle into an evening of rowdy music at the **Tote** (p98).

Four Days

Same first two days. On day three visit the **Royal Melbourne Zoo** (p87) or the **Royal Botanic Gardens** (p86). Have lunch in one of the city's arcades and follow it up with a **Melbourne River Cruise** (p90) and see the city from the Yarra. Catch a performance at the **Victorian Arts Centre** (p86) before or after dinner and drinks at **Cookie** (p95).

On your fourth day head to **St Kilda** (p88), Soak in the **St Kilda Sea Baths** (p88), savour a cake in **Acland St**, stroll along **St Kilda Pier**, have some fish and chips and then enjoy the tradition that is the **Espy** (p97).

One Week

A full week will allow you to squeeze in the **Immigration Museum** (p83), have a monster shop along **Chapel St** (p100) and visit the **Dandenongs** (p103).

ORIENTATION

Melbourne hugs the shores of Port Phillip, with the city centre on the north bank of the Yarra River, about 5km inland from the bay. Most of the attractions covered in this chapter are within the city and inner-suburban areas, accessible by public transport.

The inner suburbs that surround the city centre, which is known as the central business district (CBD), are like a ring of urban villages. Beside the Yarra River, on the corner of Swanston and Flinders Sts, is Flinders St station, the main station for suburban trains. The other major station, for country and interstate services, is Southern Cross station (formerly Spencer St station), at the western end of Bourke St.

Maps

You can pick up a free copy of the *Melbourne Visitors Map* at the Melbourne visitors centre (p81) at Federation Sq or at the Melbourne visitors booth (p81) in Bourke St Mall. Street directories are detailed and extremely handy if you're driving. They can be purchased from newsagents and bookshops for around \$50. Lonely Planet's *Melbourne City Map* provides excellent coverage.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Borders (Map p92; ☎ 9824 2299; www.borders.com.au; Jam Factory, 500 Chapel St, South Yarra; ☎ 10am-11pm) This bookstore chain has seven stores in Melbourne with huge selections and late opening hours.

Metropolis (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 2015; www.metropolisbookshop.com.au; Level 3, Curtin House, 252 Swanston St; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Thu & Sat, 10am-7pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sun) Lovely bookish eyrie with a particular focus on art, architecture, fashion and film.

Readings (www.readings.com.au) Carlton (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9347 6633; 309 Lygon St; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-11pm Sun); St Kilda (Map p92; ☎ 9525 3852; 112 Acland St; ☎ 10am-10pm) A potter around this defiantly prospering indie bookshop can occupy an entire afternoon if you're so inclined.

Emergency

In an emergency, dial ☎ 000 – a free call from any phone. Your call will be diverted to either the police, ambulance service or fire brigade.

Lifeline Counselling (☎ 13 11 14; www.lifeline.org.au; ☎ 24hr)

Police station (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9247 5347; www.police.vic.gov.au; 228-232 Flinders La; ☎ 24hr)

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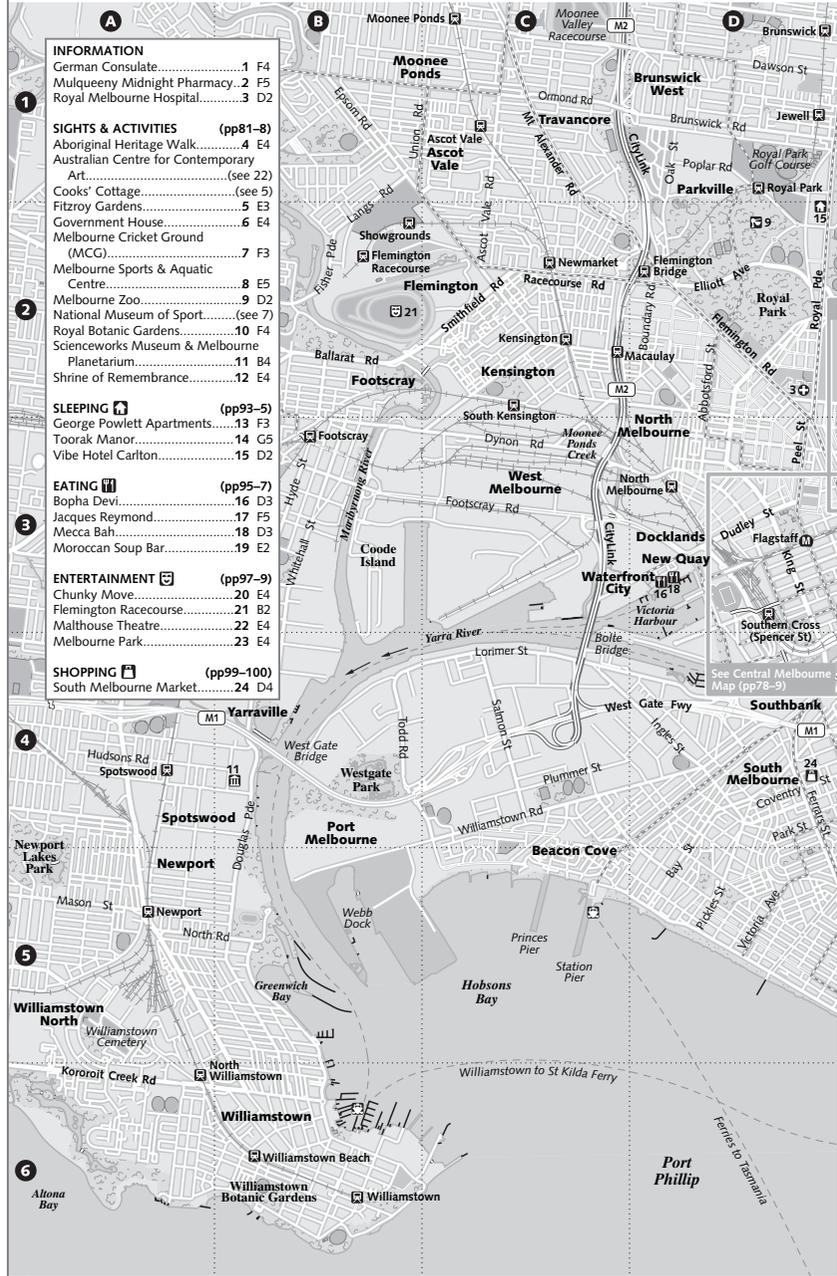
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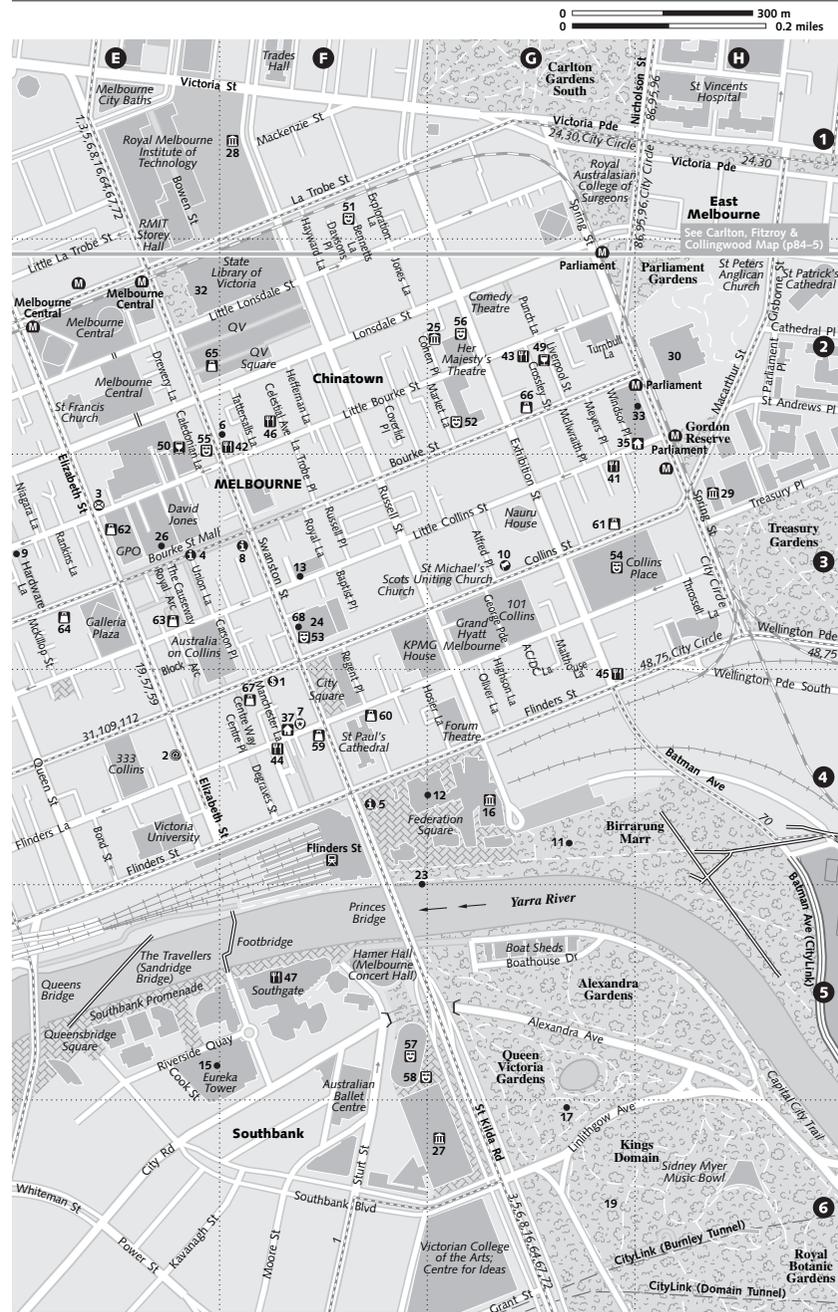
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RACV Emergency Roadside Service (☎ 13 11 11; www.racv.com.au; ☎ 24hr)

Royal Women's Hospital Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA House; Map pp84-5; ☎ 9344 2201; www.thewomens.org.au/sexualassault; Royal Women's Hospital, 132 Grattan St, Carlton; ☎ 24hr)

Internet access

Internet cafés are common in Melbourne, and wi-fi access is available in many public places as well as hotels. Melbourne Airport offers wi-fi for a pay-as-you-go fee. Hotel rates vary from complimentary to ludicrously expensive daily fees. Expect to pay around \$2 per hour at an internet café. Public libraries, including the State Library of Victoria, usually offer a free service but you'll probably need to book. A couple of good internet cafés:

E:iftyfive (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9620 3899; 55 Elizabeth St; ☎ 9am-1am Mon & Tue, to 2am Wed & Thu, to 3am Fri, noon-3am Sat, noon-11pm Sun) Coffee, beer and snacks available, and DJs playing nightly.

World Wide Wash (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9419 8214; 361 Brunswick St, Fitzroy; ☎ 9.30am-10pm) A laundrette and cybercafé in one.

Medical Services

Alfred Hospital (Map p92; ☎ 9276 2000; www.alfred.org.au; Commercial Rd, Prahran; ☎ 24hr accident & emergency)

Dental Emergency Service (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9341 1040; www.dhsv.org.au; Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne, 720 Swanston St, Carlton; ☎ 8.30am-9.15pm)

Mulqueeny Midnight Pharmacy (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9510 3977; cnr Williams Rd & High St, Prahran; ☎ 9am-midnight)

Royal Melbourne Hospital (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9342 7000; www.mh.org.au; Grattan St, Parkville; ☎ 24hr accident & emergency)

St Vincent's Hospital (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9288 2211; www.svhm.org.au; 41 Victoria Pde, Fitzroy; ☎ 24hr accident & emergency)

Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9602 5788; www.traveldoctor.com.au; Level 2, 393 Little Bourke St; ☎ 9am-8.30pm Mon & Thu, 9am-8pm Tue, 9am-5pm Wed & Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Dispenses excellent information on vaccination requirements for most countries.

Money

You can change foreign currency and travellers cheques at most banks for a fee. There are foreign-exchange booths at Melbourne Airport that are open to meet all arriving

international flights. There are also numerous booths in central Melbourne's main streets and arcades. Large hotels will change currency or travellers cheques but at a poorer rate.

American Express (☎ 1300 139 060; www.americanexpress.com; 233 Collins St) Commission-free service if you're using its travellers cheques.

Post

Branches of Australia Post can be found everywhere.

Melbourne GPO (General Post Office; Map pp78-9; ☎ 13 13 18; www.auspost.com.au; cnr Little Bourke & Elizabeth Sts; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)

Tourist Information

Melbourne visitors booth (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) A small information booth in the Bourke St Mall with helpful staff.

Melbourne visitors centre (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9658 9658; Federation Sq; ☎ 9am-6pm) An excellent source of information about Melbourne events and attractions. Multilingual assistance is available for booking tours and accommodation. Also offers the Melbourne Greeter Service pairing visitors with volunteers for half-day city walking tours (book ahead).

Travellers' Aid Society of Victoria (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9654 2600; www.travellersaid.org.au; Level 2, 169 Swanston St; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun) Offers free assistance for stranded travellers, as well as information, advice, showers and wheelchair-accessible toilets. There are also support services for disabled and aged people.

SIGHTS

Central Melbourne (the CBD) is compact enough to cover on foot, and navigable by the trams that criss-cross the area (see p102). Other neighbourhoods that attract visitors include the riverfront precincts of Southbank and Docklands, while north of town you'll find Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood. South-of-the-city attractions can be found in South Yarra, Prahran and St Kilda.

Central Melbourne FEDERATION SQUARE

The ugly old Gas & Fuel Building and the railyards that once stretched along the Yarra River have now been replaced by a riotous explosion of steel, glass and abstract geometry known as **Federation Sq** (Map pp78-9; 9655 1900; www.fedsq.com.au), an ambitious move by city planners to create a focal point for Melbourne

and to connect the centre of the city with the Yarra River.

Federation Sq is centred on its **plaza**, a spacious, open courtyard that extends from Princes Bridge. Next along is the dramatic glass-and-steel **atrium** and the adjoining 450-seat **amphitheatre**. The atrium functions as an undercover walkway between Flinders St and the Yarra side of the complex, with a number of cafés and restaurants lining the promenade.

The city's cultural heart also contains the awkwardly named **Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria Australia** (NGVA; Map pp78-9; ☎ 8662 2222; www.ngv.vic.gov.au/ngvaustralia; Federation Sq; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Thu, to 9pm Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun), a dramatic building at the eastern end of Federation Sq. The centre houses the National Gallery of Victoria's impressive collection (over 25,000 pieces) of Australian art from must-see indigenous art to colonial and modern periods.

Also at Fed Square you'll find the innovative **Australian Centre for the Moving Image** (ACMI; Map pp78-9; ☎ 8663 2200; www.acmi.net.au; Federation Sq; ☎ 10am-6pm), a fascinating gallery and cinema space dedicated to film, TV and digital media. Riverside **Birrarung Marr** ('river of mists' in Wurundjeri) is the newest addition to Melbourne's parkland fringe, thoughtfully planned and planted entirely with indigenous flora.

SWANSTON STREET

Swanston St (Map pp78-9) is a semipeditarian mall by day (trams and taxis still move through here), but is open to general traffic after 7pm. Much of the lower stretch of the street is decidedly low-rent in tone.

Melbourne Town Hall (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9658 9779; www.melbournetownhall.com.au; cnr Swanston & Collins Sts; tours free; ☎ tours 11am & 1pm Mon-Fri), built between 1870 and 1880, is a fine civic building (don't miss the beautiful wood-panelled Council Chamber and the magnificent 10,000-pipe organ). Phone for guided tour bookings (also available on the first Saturday of each month at 11am, noon and 1pm).

The **State Library of Victoria** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 8664 7000; www.slv.vic.gov.au; 328 Swanston St; admission free; ☎ 10am-9pm Mon-Thu, to 6pm Fri-Sun), between Little Lonsdale and Latrobe Sts, was built in stages from 1854 and boasts a Classical Revival façade. The library collection includes a 4000-year-old Mesopotamian tablet and the

IT'S EASY BEING GREEN

Officially opened in August 2006, the design of **Council House 2** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9658 9658; 218-242 Little Collins St; tours free; ♿ tours 2pm Tue & Thu) is based on 'biomimicry', reflecting the complex ecosystem of the planet. The building utilises the sun, water and wind in combination with a slew of sustainable technologies. These include a basement water-mining plant, a lovely façade of solar-powered wooden louvres that track the sun, and air-circulation ducts that absorb heat or draw fresh air from the roof. The foyer includes a Janet Laurence installation evoking the hydrology at work beneath the floor. Bookings are required for tours.

records from the infamous Burke and Wills expedition. See the magnificent domed La Trobe Reading Room. The library has regular exhibitions. **Mr Tulk** (☎ 8660 5700; cnr La Trobe St & Swanston St; mains \$10-18; ♿ breakfast & lunch Mon-Sat) serves coffee, wine and excellent food.

COLLINS STREET

Collins St (Map pp78-9) is central Melbourne's most elegant streetscape. The western end (from Elizabeth to Spencer St) is home to bankers and stockbrokers; while the eastern end, the 'Paris end' as it's known, has five-star hotels and exclusive fashion boutiques.

Stunning **Block Arcade**, which runs between Collins and Elizabeth Sts, was built in 1891 and is a beautiful, 19th-century shopping arcade with intricate, mosaic-tiled floors, marble columns, Victorian window surrounds and magnificently detailed plasterwork on the upper walls.

On the 55th floor of the **Rialto Towers** is the **Melbourne Observation Deck** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9629 8222; www.melbournedeck.com.au; 525 Collins St; adult/child/family \$14.50/8/39.50; ♿ 10am-10pm), which offers spectacular 360-degree views of Melbourne's surrounds. You can get to the top by the stairs (more than 1250 of them) or take the ear-popping lift. For wheelchair access, use the Collins St entrance to the building.

BOURKE STREET

The area around central Bourke St (Map pp78-9) has the city's main department stores. The **Bourke St Mall** section between Swanston and Elizabeth Sts is closed to vehicular traffic,

and is shared between pedestrians, buskers and trams (beware of the latter!).

Royal Arcade (www.royalarcade.com.au), built between 1869 and 1870, is Melbourne's oldest arcade. Lined with shops, it retains the exquisite detail of the original upper walls and arched ceiling. The tall figures of **Gog** and **Magog** stand guard and have been striking the hour (with their hammers) on the clock since 1892.

SPRING STREET

At the eastern end of Collins St is Spring St (Map pp78-9) and the **Old Treasury Building** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9651 2233; www.oldtreasurymuseum.org.au; Spring St; adult/concession/family \$8.50/5/18; ♿ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), one of Australia's most elegant 19th-century buildings. Built in 1862, it has huge basement vaults built to store much of the \$200 million-worth of gold dug from the Victorian goldfields. It houses permanent exhibitions in the **Gold Treasury Museum**.

Between Bourke and Little Collins Sts is the marvellous 1883 **Windsor Hotel** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9633 6000; www.thewindsor.com.au; 103 Spring St; ♿ 24hr). Extensive refurbishments in the 1980s abundantly reaffirmed the Windsor's title of the city's grandest hotel.

Opposite the Windsor Hotel, the **Parliament House of Victoria** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9651 8568; www.parliament.vic.gov.au; Spring St; 30min tours free; ♿ tours 10am, 11am, noon, 2pm, 3pm & 3.45pm Mon-Fri) building was started in 1856, and is still the city's most impressive public building. Its beautiful classical lines and exuberant use of ornamental plasterwork, stencilling and gilt reflect gold-rush-era pride and optimism. Australia's first federal parliament sat here from 1901, before moving to Canberra in 1927. Tours run only when parliament isn't in session.

CHINATOWN

Centred on **Little Bourke St**, Melbourne's Chinatown (Map pp78-9) is the only area of continuous Chinese settlement in the country, and one of Melbourne's most intact 19th-century streetscapes. In the 1850s the Chinese set up their shops here, alongside brothels, opium dens and boarding houses. Today the area is dominated by restaurants and discount traders.

The interesting **Museum of Chinese Australian History** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9662 2888; www.chinesemuseum.com.au; 22 Cohen Pl; adult/concession \$7.50/5.50; ♿ 10am-5pm) documents the long history of Chinese

people in Australia. The entrance is guarded by the 218kg Millennium Dragon, which snakes its way through the city streets during Chinese New Year.

QUEEN VICTORIA MARKET

This fabulous **market** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9320 5822; www.qvm.com.au; 513 Elizabeth St; ♿ 6am-2pm Tue & Thu, 6am-6pm Fri, 6am-3pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) is the mother of all Melbourne markets. It was saved from demolition in the 1970s and has been around for more than 130 years. Many of the sheds and buildings are registered by the National Trust.

OLD MELBOURNE GAOL

A bleak bluestone monument to 19th-century (in)justice at Russell St's northern end, Melbourne's old gaol is now a **museum** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 7228; www.oldmelbournegaol.com.au; Russell St; adult/child/family \$18/9.50/44; ♿ 9.30am-5pm). It was built in 1841 and used until 1929. In all, 135 prisoners were hanged there. Spooky displays include Ned Kelly's iconic armour, death mask and the gallows from which he hanged. Take a **night tour** (☎ 13 28 49; http://premier.ticketek.com.au; adult/child \$30/22.50) by candlelight.

IMMIGRATION MUSEUM

Multimedia displays at this **museum** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9927 2700; www.museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum; 400 Flinders St; adult/concession & child \$6/free; ♿ 10am-5pm) give a moving account of Melbourne's immigrants from the early 19th century onwards. The museum is in the Old Customs House. Make sure you see the Long Room, an extraordinary example of Renaissance Revival architecture.

MELBOURNE AQUARIUM

On the river's edge, across from Crown Casino, is this **aquarium** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9620 0999; www.melbourneaquarium.com.au; cnr Queenswharf Rd & King St; adult/child/family \$25/15/70; ♿ 9.30am-6pm Feb-Dec, 9.30am-9pm Jan). Giant rays, gropers and sharks cruise around a 2.2-million-litre tank, watched closely by visitors inside a see-through tunnel which traverses the aquarium floor.

FITZROY GARDENS

These **gardens** (Map pp76-7; www.fitzroygardens.com; btwn Wellington Pde, Clarendon, Lansdowne & Albert Sts; ♿ 24hr) divide the city centre from East Melbourne and serve as a verdant re-

fresh treat from city life. James Sinclair, formerly Russian Tsar Nicholas I's gardener, created a rambling blend of elm and cedar avenues, fern gullies, flower beds, lawns and fountains (many dry due to water restrictions). **Cooks' Cottage** (☎ 9419 4677; www.cookscottage.com.au; adult/child/family \$4.50/2.20/12; ♿ 9am-5pm) was shipped here from Yorkshire in 1934. There's also a delightful early 20th-century floral **conservatory** (♿ 9am-5pm).

Southbank & Docklands

These riverside locales were once gritty industrial areas, but they've been transformed into playgrounds of leisure. Southbank (Map pp78-9) sits across the Yarra from Flinders St. **Southgate** (Map pp78-9, www.southgate-melbourne.com.au) is a large, airy shopping mall with fabulous views and an eclectic mix of shops, bars and restaurants. Behind here you'll find the city's major arts precinct; the NGV International, the Victorian Arts Centre and the Australian Ballet. Back down by the river, the promenade stretches to the Crown Casino & Entertainment Complex, where you can lose your shirt 24/7. To the city's west lies Docklands (Map pp78-9).

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

This contemporary **gallery** (ACCA; Map pp76-7; ☎ 9697 9999; www.accaonline.org.au; 111 Sturt St; admission free; ♿ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun) is one of Australia's most exciting, and exhibits some works specially commissioned for the space. The building's rusty metallic exterior and slick, soaring interior, designed to house often massive artworks, is fittingly sculptural.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA INTERNATIONAL

Beyond the water-wall at the front of this **gallery** (NGV; Map pp78-9; ☎ 8620 2222; www.ngv.vic.gov.au; 180 St Kilda Rd, Southbank; admission free; ♿ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon) you'll find international art, from the ancient to the contemporary. Key works include a Rembrandt, a Tiepolo and a Bonnard, and there are galleries featuring impressive collections from the Middle Ages to the present day. This is the place where big international blockbuster shows are hung. The building was designed by modernist Roy Grounds with a recent interior renovation overseen by Mario Bellini – don't miss the Great Hall ceiling.

CARLTON, FITZROY & COLLINGWOOD



EUREKA SKYDECK 88

A wild elevator ride – 88 floors in less than 40 seconds – takes you to the top of Skydeck 88 atop **Eureka Tower** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9693 8888; www.eurekaskydeck.com.au; Riverside Quay, Southbank; adult/child/family \$16.50/9/39, the Edge extra \$12/8/29; ☎ 10am-10pm), completed in 2006. This is (for now) the tallest residential building in the world. If you find the vertiginous views less than satisfying, there's the **Edge** – not a U2 guitarist, but a slightly sadistic, horizontal glass-cube elevator that dangles you out over the side of the building.

VICTORIAN ARTS CENTRE

Hamer Hall at this **arts complex** (Map pp78-9 ☎ 9281 8000; www.theartscentre.com.au; 100 St Kilda Rd, Southbank; tours adult/concession/family \$11/8/28; ☎ tours noon-2.30pm Mon-Sat), the circular building closest to the Yarra, features mostly symphonic concerts and opera. The Theatres Building (with the spire) houses the State Theatre, Playhouse and George Fairfax Studio. The famous Spiegel tent – a vintage Belgian mirror-tent – sets up in the forecourt for the Melbourne International Arts Festival (p91). Across in Kings Domain is the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

CROWN CASINO & ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX

A nonstop cavalcade of excess, this **casino** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9292 8888; www.crowncasino.com.au; Southbank; ☎ 24hr) was for a moment the world's largest. There's a luxury hotel here, plus nightclubs, cinemas, a 900-seat showroom, speciality and luxury stores, dozens of cafés and restaurants. Like every Melburnian, you'll either love it or hate it.

MELBOURNE MARITIME MUSEUM

The old iron-hulled, three-masted *Polly Woodside* is the centrepiece of this **museum** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9699 9760; www.pollywoodside.com.au; Lorimer St E, Southbank) which is undergoing redevelopment and is due to reopen in 2009. She was built in Belfast in 1885, and carried coal and nitrate between Europe and South America. She was bought by the National Trust in the 1970s and restored by volunteers. Call to check new prices and opening hours.

Kings Domain

Kings Domain (Map pp78-9) is an area of parkland across from the Melbourne arts precinct that contains the wonderful Royal

Botanic Gardens, as well as the Shrine of Remembrance, Governor La Trobe's Cottage and the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

Government House (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9656 9800; Government House Dr; tours adult/child \$15/10/30; ☎ tours 10.30am Mon, Wed & Fri) is the home of the Victorian Governor. It's a copy of Queen Victoria's palace on England's Isle of Wight. Built in 1872, it's one of the country's best examples of Italianate style. Entry is by guided tour; bookings are essential. The tour price includes entry to La Trobe's Cottage.

Beside St Kilda Rd stands the massive **Shrine of Remembrance** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9654 8415; www.shrine.org.au; St Kilda Rd; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm), built as a memorial to Victorians killed in WWI.

Certainly the finest gardens in Australia and among the world's best, the **Royal Botanic Gardens** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9252 2300; www.rbg.vic.gov.au; Birdwood Ave; admission free; ☎ 7.30am-8.30pm Nov-Mar, to 5.30pm Apr-Oct) are a must-see. With a prime riverside location, the beautifully laid-out gardens feature lakes, wildlife and plants from around the world. The **visitors centre** (☎ 9252 2429; Observatory Gate, Birdwood Ave; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat & Sun) stocks self-guided tour leaflets (also available at garden entrances), which change with the seasons. Also here is the **Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden** (see p90).

East Melbourne & Richmond

East Melbourne (Map pp76-7) features sedate streets lined with double-fronted Victorian terraces, Italianate mansions and Art Deco apartment blocks. Locals here walk to the city across the Fitzroy Gardens, and to the Melbourne Cricket Ground for a footy or cricket match. Richmond (Map pp76-7), once a raggle-taggle collection of worker's cottages, is now also rather genteel, although it retains many old pubs and has a thriving Vietnamese community along **Victoria St**. Shoppers swarm to the **Bridge Rd** and **Swan St** outlet stores seven days a week, and **Church St** is where fashionable Melbourne comes to buy bathroom fittings.

The 100,000-capacity **Melbourne Cricket Ground** (MCG; Map pp76-7; ☎ 9657 8888; www.mcg.org.au; Brunton Ave) is the temple in which sports-mad Melburnians worship their heroes. It's one of the world's great sporting arenas, full of tradition and atmosphere. The first game of football was played here at 'the G' in 1858, and in 1877 the first test cricket match between Australia and England. The roar at the opening bounce of a sold-out football game makes

your hair stand on end! If you want to make a pilgrimage, **tours** (☎ 9657 8879; adult/concession/family \$15/11/45; ☎ every 30min 10am-3pm nonmatch days) take you through the stands, coaches' areas, the MCC (Melbourne Cricket Club) museum, and out onto the ground. Tickets for AFL games can be purchased through Ticketmaster7 (p97). Carn Carlton!

The new **National Museum of Sport** (Map pp77-8; ☎ 9657 8856; www.mcg.org.au; Olympic Stand, Gate 3, MCG, Brunton Ave; general admission adult/concession/family \$15/11/45, with MCG tour \$22/15/50; ☎ 10am-5pm) features five permanent exhibitions. Choice objects on display include hand-written notes outlining the AFL's first rules from 1859, Bradman's baggy green cap, olive branches awarded to Australia's first Olympian in 1886, and our Cathy's famous Sydney Olympics swift suit.

Carlton, Fitzroy & Collingwood

Carlton (Map pp84-5) and adjacent **Parkville** (Map pp76-7) are divided by the tree-lined Royal Pde. A huge chunk of Parkville is devoted to the enormous 188-hectare **Royal Park**. Carlton is Melbourne's Italian quarter. Many Italian migrants who came to Melbourne after WWII settled here and **Lygon St** became the focal point of their community. Day and night it is filled with people promenading, dining, drinking coffee and shopping. In October, Lygon St hosts the lively four-day **Lygon St Festa**.

Melbourne's first suburbs – Fitzroy (Map pp84-5) and Collingwood (Map pp84-5) – have a rough-around-the-edges feel despite rapid gentrification in the '80s. **Brunswick St** sports a straggle of interesting cafés, restaurants and shops, and its backstreet pubs have managed to stay out of the developers' clutches. Although most of the artists have moved on in search of cheap studio space, you'll still find a number of galleries and arts-trude shops here. The rise and rise of **Gertrude St** continues apace, and Collingwood's **Smith St** has a *jolie-laide* charm.

ROYAL MELBOURNE ZOO

Set in spacious landscaped gardens, Melbourne's **zoo** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9285 9300; www.zoo.org.au; Elliot Ave, Parkville; adult/child/family \$21/11.50/53; ☎ 9am-5pm) aims to simulate natural habitats. Walkways pass through the enclosures; you can stroll through the bird aviary, cross a bridge over the lions' park or enter a tropical butterfly hothouse. There's also a large collection of native animals in bush settings.

In summer the zoo hosts **twilight concerts** (www.zoo.org.au/melbourne/twilight.htm). Established in 1861, this is the oldest zoo in Australia and the third-oldest in the world.

CARLTON GARDENS

These **gardens** are home to the historic **Royal Exhibition Building** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9270 5000; www.museum.vic.gov.au/reb; Nicholson St). Built for the International Exhibition in 1880, and winning Unesco World Heritage status in 2004, this beautiful Victorian edifice symbolises the glory days of the industrial revolution, empire and 19th-century Melbourne's economic supremacy. Australia's first parliament was held here in 1901; a hundred-plus years later everything from trade fairs to dance parties take place. **Tours** (☎ 1300 130 152; adult/child \$4/2; ☎ 2pm) happen daily – phone for bookings.

MELBOURNE MUSEUM

This postmodern **museum** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 13 11 02; www.melbourne.museum.vic.gov.au; 11 Nicholson St, Carlton; adult/concession & child \$6/free; ☎ 10am-5pm) mixes old-style object displays with themed interactive display areas, providing a grand sweep of Victoria's natural and cultural histories. **Bunjilaka** presents indigenous stories and history told through objects and Aboriginal voices. There's a hands-on children's area and an **Imax Cinema** (☎ 9663 5454; www.imaxmelbourne.com.au).

South Melbourne, Port Melbourne & Albert Park

The main thoroughfare in South Melbourne (Map pp76-7) is **Clarendon St**, which is dissected by laid-back shopping strips on **Coventry St** and **Park St**. In Albert Park (Map pp76-7) there's **Victoria Ave**, lined with cafés, restaurants and shops. The regeneration of Port Melbourne (Map pp76-7) has come more slowly, but now **Bay St** rivals Victoria Ave for style. The common thread is **Canterbury Rd**, which is rebadged as **Ferras St** at Albert Park. The **beachfront** footpath is always full of joggers, dog walkers, rollerbladers and cyclists taking in the sea air.

Elegant black swans give their bottoms-up salute at man-made **Albert Park Lake**, whose perimeter road hosts the **Australian Formula One Grand Prix** (p91).

South Yarra, Prahran & St Kilda

The **Chapel St** strip in South Yarra (Map p92) still parades itself as a must-do fashion

destination, but has seen better days; it's been taken over by chain stores and tacky bars. Over Commercial Rd, Prahran (Map p92) and **Windsor** (Map p92) are much more interesting. **Hawkburn** (Map pp76-7) up the hill and High St **Armada** (Map pp76-7) make for stylish shopping sorties. Cute **Greville St** runs off Chapel and has good nightlife, eating and shopping. **Commercial Rd** is Melbourne's pink zone and home to the excellent Prahran Market.

Bayside St Kilda (Map p92) is one of Melbourne's most cosmopolitan areas, and was Melbourne's favourite 19th-century playground. It's gone in and out of fashion since then. The '80s-era druggies and transvestites have been shoed away from **Fitzroy St**, which has been reborn with stylish bars, restaurants and cafés. Further south, **Acland St** between Carlisle and Barkly Sts, famed for its continental cake shops and delicatessens, is another favourite restaurant strip. St Kilda's halcyon days live on via the grand **George Hotel** (125 Fitzroy St) and the gorgeous **Palais Theatre** (☎ 9525 3240, www.palais theatre.net.au; Lower Esplanade) where you can see ballet or a touring rock band.

St Kilda Pier and breakwater is a favourite spot for strollers. On the foreshore south of the pier, the **St Kilda Sea Baths** (right) is a Moorish-inspired bathing pavilion.

Luna Park (Map p92; ☎ 9525 5033; www.lunapark.com.au; Lower Esplanade; adult/child 1-ride ticket \$7/5.50, unlimited-ride ticket \$36/26; ☎ 11am-6pm Sat & Sun) opened in 1912 and retains the feel of an old-style amusement park. There's a heritage-listed scenic railway and a beautifully rococo carousel with hand-painted horses, swans and chariots. See the website for extended hours in summer and school holidays.

ACTIVITIES

Cycling

Many Melburnians take advantage of the city's extensive network of bike paths and scant hills. There's a dynamic club scene (see www.bicycles.com.au) with weekend rides followed by lycra-clad café breakfasts.

Many of Melbourne's cycling paths are constructed in the green belts along rivers and are marked in the *Melway Greater Melbourne Street Directory*. There are also many on-road bike lanes. You can get maps from the visitors centre at Federation Sq (p81) or from the website of **VicRoads** (www.vicroads.vic.gov.au). **Bicycle Victoria** (☎ 8636 8888; www.bv.com.au) is a self-funded community organisation and

the state's peak cycling body. Its website lists bike-hire operators.

Swimming

Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9926 1555; www.msac.com.au; Albert Rd, Albert Park; adult/child \$6/4.50; ☎ 6am-10pm) has a fantastic 10-lane, 75m indoor pool, several smaller pools, water slides, a spa/sauna/steam room and spacious common areas.

Melbourne City Baths (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9663 5888; www.melbournecitybaths.com.au; cnr Swanston & Victoria Sts; adult/child/family \$5/2.50/11; ☎ 6am-10pm Mon-Thu, 6am-8.30pm Fri, 8am-6pm Sat & Sun) is a stately 1903 heritage-listed swimming hall with a 30m indoor pool plus spas, saunas and gym.

St Kilda Sea Baths (Map p92; ☎ 9525 4888; www.southpacific.com.au; 10-18 Jacka Blvd, St Kilda; adult/child \$12/6) isn't the cheapest swimming option in town, but it's brilliant, with a 25m indoor sea-water pool, a hydrotherapy pool and a steamroom that can work miracles.

WALKING TOUR

Arcades, Laneways & Street Art

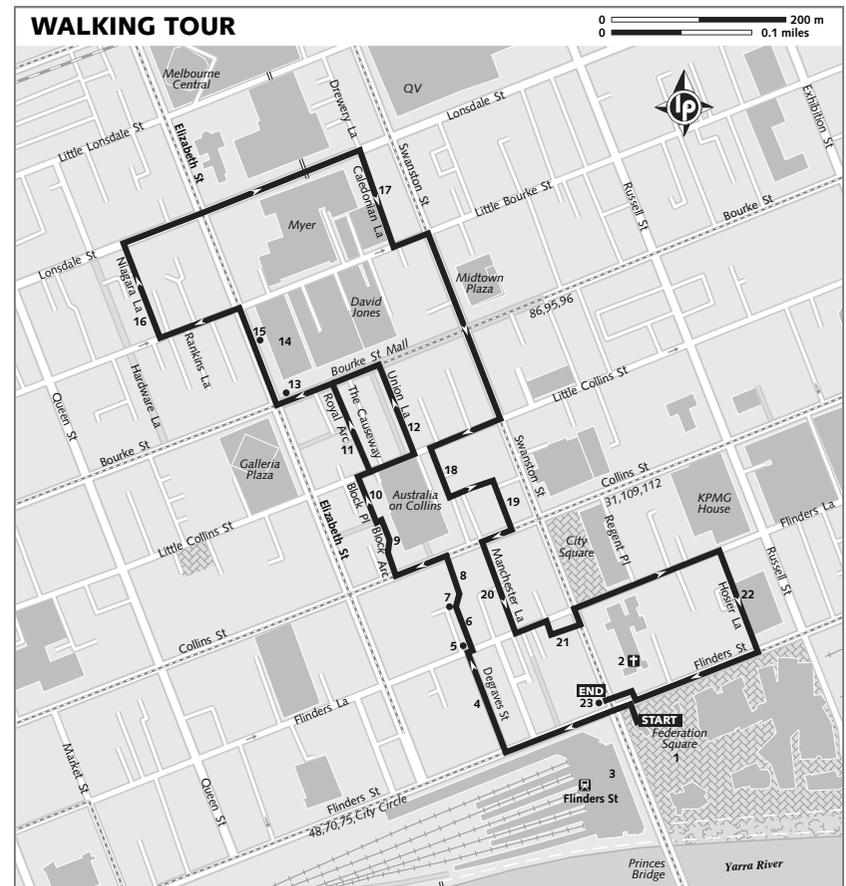
Start at **Federation Sq** (1; p81) at the corner of Swanston and Flinders Sts and admire the vista towards circa-1891 **St Paul's Cathedral** (2) across the street. Cross over Swanston St and head west along Flinders St noting the magnificent **Flinders St station** (3), one of the few Edwardian baroque buildings in Melbourne. Turn right into skinny **Degraves St** (4), named after entrepreneur William Degraves who built a steam-powered flourmill on this site in 1851. This is one of Melbourne's favourite café strips, known for its tiny hole-in-the-wall coffeshops. At the end of Degraves St on the other side of Flinders La is the beautiful 1920s Spanish-inspired **Majorca Building** (5). Cross over Flinders La and go into the even-skinnier **Centre Pl** (6). Just before the steps on your left is a small alcove where lightboxes illuminate the ephemeral and ever-changing **graffiti and stencil artwork** (7) of local and international artists. Atop the stairs is the **Centre Way** (8) arcade in one of the city's earliest steel-

frame buildings (1913), lined with boutiques and specialty stores.

Centre Way empties onto fashionable Collins St. Cross the road, turn left and walk down to **Block Arcade** (9), with exquisite mosaic-tiled floors, marble columns and plasterwork. It winds its way around to **Block Pl** (10) – more cafés and casual eateries. Block Pl brings you to Little Collins St and a dilemma: turn right and either go down the superb, Victorian-era **Royal Arcade** (11) with its celebrated Gog and Magog statues watching over the passers-by; or continue east along Little Collins St until you come to **Union La** (12), another of the city's council-designated street-art sites (you could do a loop and take in both).

You're now at Bourke St Mall. Turn left and walk down to Elizabeth St past Simon Perry's **Public Purse sculpture** (13) in front of the grand 1859-1919 **GPO** (14; p100), now refitted as a shopping mall, and turn right into Elizabeth St. The **underground public toilets** (15) here are heritage-listed. The men's dates from 1910; women had to wait until 1927 to piss in... er... under, the street. Turn left into Little Bourke St and walk west past two laneways on your right until you arrive at **Niagara La** (16). Here you can see the historic 1887 red-brick warehouses with their American barrel-hoists.

Niagara La empties onto Lonsdale St. Here you turn right and walk a block-and-a-half east to **Caledonian La** (17), which features yet



WALK FACTS

Start Federation Sq
Finish Flinders St
Distance 5km
Duration two hours

more of Melbourne's famed graffiti and stencil art (and St Jerome's, Melbourne's coolest bar; see p97). Turn left into Little Bourke St, right into Swanston St and walk over Bourke St, turning right into Little Collins St. A little way down on your left is broad, L-shaped **Howey Pl (18)**, which has a dim, left-hand extension. This enters the glorious, marble-lined, Art Deco **Manchester Unity Arcade (19)** in the sumptuous 1932 Manchester Unity Building. Though not very large, this arcade is superb (see the timberwork and domed lights in the elevators).

Walk down Collins St, through **Manchester La (20)** and left along Flinders La (once the rag-trade centre of Melbourne) until you come to the steps leading up to the ornate, stained-glass arches of the **Cathedral Arcade (21)** in the Nicholas Building. This arcade empties onto Swanston St. Head east back up Flinders La for nearly a block until you come to **Hosier La (22)**, another street-art site (look for the parachuting rats by famous British guerrilla artist Banksy).

After all that you'll need a rest – head back down Flinders St to **Young & Jackson's (23)**; ☎ 9650 3884; www.youngandjackson.com.au; cnr Swanston & Flinders Sts) for a beer and to admire Chloe's curves.

MELBOURNE FOR CHILDREN

Ian Potter Foundation Children's Garden (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9252 2300; ☺ 10am-4pm Wed-Sun, daily during school holidays) invites kids and parents to explore and imagine. The minienvironments here are directed by the seasons, and many plants have been included for their intrinsic weirdness or strong colours. Children can dig, climb, crawl through tunnels and play with worm farms. The garden closes for two months for maintenance following the July school holidays.

ArtPlay (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9664 7900; www.artplay.com.au), housed in old railway buildings at Birrarung Marr, offers creative weekend/holiday workshops for children aged five to 12 years.

Around Christmas time don't miss the **Myer Christmas Windows** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9661 1111; Myer, Bourke St Mall). Each year there's a different theme as artists transform the Myer department store shopfront windows into magical, animated worlds.

Other options include **Luna Park** (p88) and the **Melbourne Museum** (p87). **Scienceworks Museum & Melbourne Planetarium** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9392 4800; www.scienceworks.museum.vic.gov

.au; 2 Booker St, Spotswood; adult/concession \$6/free, incl Planetarium show \$12.50/5; ☺ 10am-4.30pm) is popular with kids with its many hands-on exhibits.

TOURS

There's a huge array of tours on offer in and around Melbourne. The free monthly *Melbourne Events* guide, available at visitors centres and hotels, has an extensive tours section.

Aboriginal Heritage Walk (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9252 2300; www.rbg.vic.gov.au; Royal Botanic Gardens; adult/child/family \$18/9/50; ☺ 11am Thu & Fri, 10.30am every 2nd Sun) The Royal Botanic Gardens are on the ancestral lands of the Boonwurrung and Woiowurung people. This tour takes you through their story for 90 fascinating minutes.

Chinatown Heritage Walk (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9662 2888; www.chinesemuseum.com.au/whatson_heritage_tours.html; 22 Cohen Pl; adult/concession from \$15/12) Be guided through historic Chinatown, with its atmospheric alleys and bustling vibe.

City Circle Trams (Map pp78-9; ☎ 1800 800 166; www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au/route/view/1112; rides free; ☺ every 12min 10am-6pm) These trams offers free services (clockwise and counterclockwise) around the city centre, along Flinders, Spring and Nicholson Sts to Victoria Pde, and along Latrobe St and Harbour Esplanade in the Docklands.

Melbourne River Cruises (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9681 3284; www.melbcruiases.com.au; Vault 11, Banana Alley, Docklands; adult/child/family from \$22/11/50) One-hour Yarra cruise upstream or downstream, or a 2½-hour combined upstream/downstream cruise.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Melbourne isn't fussy about when it gets festive. Winter chills or summer's swelter are no excuse, with Melbournians joining like-minded types at outdoor festivals, in cinemas, performance spaces or sporting venues year-round. Sporting events draw huge crowds, and the party often spills out into the city. Cultural festivals also have enthusiastic audiences, both for the main events and the after-parties. Summer is celebrated with festivals with an outdoor emphasis. Check www.thatsmelbourne.com.au for comprehensive event listings.

January

Australian Open (www.australianopen.com; National Tennis Centre, Melbourne Park) The world's top tennis players and huge, merry-making crowds descend for Australia's Grand Slam tennis championship. Ground passes make for a grand day out if you're not desperate to see a top seed.

Midsumma Festival (www.midsumma.org.au) Melbourne's annual gay-and-lesbian arts festival features over 100 events from mid-January to mid-February, with a Pride March finale. Expect everything from film screenings to a high-camp rowing regatta, history walks and dance parties.

Big Day Out (www.bigdayout.com) The national rock-fest comes to town at the end of January. Big names are guaranteed, but the local Lily Pad lads often steal the show.

Chinese New Year (www.melbournechinatown.com.au; Little Bourke St, Chinatown) Melbourne has celebrated the Chinese lunar new year since Little Bourke St became Chinatown in the 1860s. Time to touch the dragon falls sometime towards the end of January or early February.

February

St Kilda Festival (www.stkildafestival.com.au; Acland & Fitzroy Sts, St Kilda) This week-long festival ends in a suburb-wide street party on the final Sunday. The crowds are large and laidback, if not as uniformly bohemian as they once were.

St Jerome's Laneway Festival (www.lanewayfestival.com.au) Indie kids delight in their natural laneway habitat, with a line-up of international and local acts loving the intimate atmosphere. Held at the end of February.

Melbourne Fashion Festival (www.mff.com.au) This week-long style-fest from the end of February into March features salon shows and parades showcasing established designers' ranges. Join the airkiss set or get down with the up-and-comings at one of the many off-shoot happenings. **Melbourne Food & Wine Festival** (www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au) Market tours, wine tastings, cooking classes and presentations by celeb chefs take place at venues across the city in February and/or March. Chew the gastronomic fat or just eat your fill.

March

Moomba Waterfest (www.thatsmelbourne.com.au; Alexandra Gardens, Birrarung Marr & Waterfront City Piazza, Docklands) Moomba's had something of a new millennium makeover, with the action focussed around the Yarra and Victoria Harbour. The old favourite is the wacky Birdman Rally, where competitors launch themselves into the drink in homemade flying-machines.

Australian Formula One Grand Prix (www.grandprix.com.au; Albert Park) The 5.3km street circuit around normally tranquil Albert Park Lake is known for its smooth, fast surface. The buzz, both on the streets and in your ears, takes over Melbourne for four days of rev-head action.

April

Anzac Day Parade (www.shrine.org.au; Shrine of Remembrance, St Kilda Rd, Kings Domain) On 25 April Australians remember the WWI Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzac) defeat at Gallipoli, and honour all those who have served in war. Melbourne has a dawn

service at the Shrine of Remembrance and a veterans parade along St Kilda Rd.

International Comedy Festival (www.comedyfestival.com.au) An enormous range of local and international comic talent hits town with 3½ weeks of stand-up comedy, cabaret, theatre, street performance, film, TV, radio and visual arts.

May

Melbourne Jazz (www.melbournejazz.com) International jazz cats head to town and join locals for gigs at Hamer Hall, The Regent Theatre and the Palms at Crown Casino.

July

Melbourne International Film Festival (www.melbournefilmfestival.com.au) Midwinter movie love-in brings out black-skivvy-wearing cinephiles in droves. It's held over two weeks at various cinemas across the city in July and August. The music doco programme is a particular treat.

August

Melbourne Writers' Festival (www.mwf.com.au) Beginning in the last week of August, the writers' festival features 10 days of forums and events at various venues, celebrating reading, writing, books and ideas.

September

AFL Grand Final (www.afl.com.au; MCG) It's easier to kick a goal from the boundary line than to pick up random tickets to the Grand Final, but it's not hard to get your share of finals fever anywhere in Melbourne. Pubs put on big screens and BBQs (often accompanied by a spot of street kick-to-kick at half-time). For the truly devoted, there's also the Grand Final Parade on the preceding Friday. **Melbourne Fringe Festival** (www.melbournefringe.com.au) The Fringe takes place in September and October and showcases experimental theatre, music and visual arts.

October

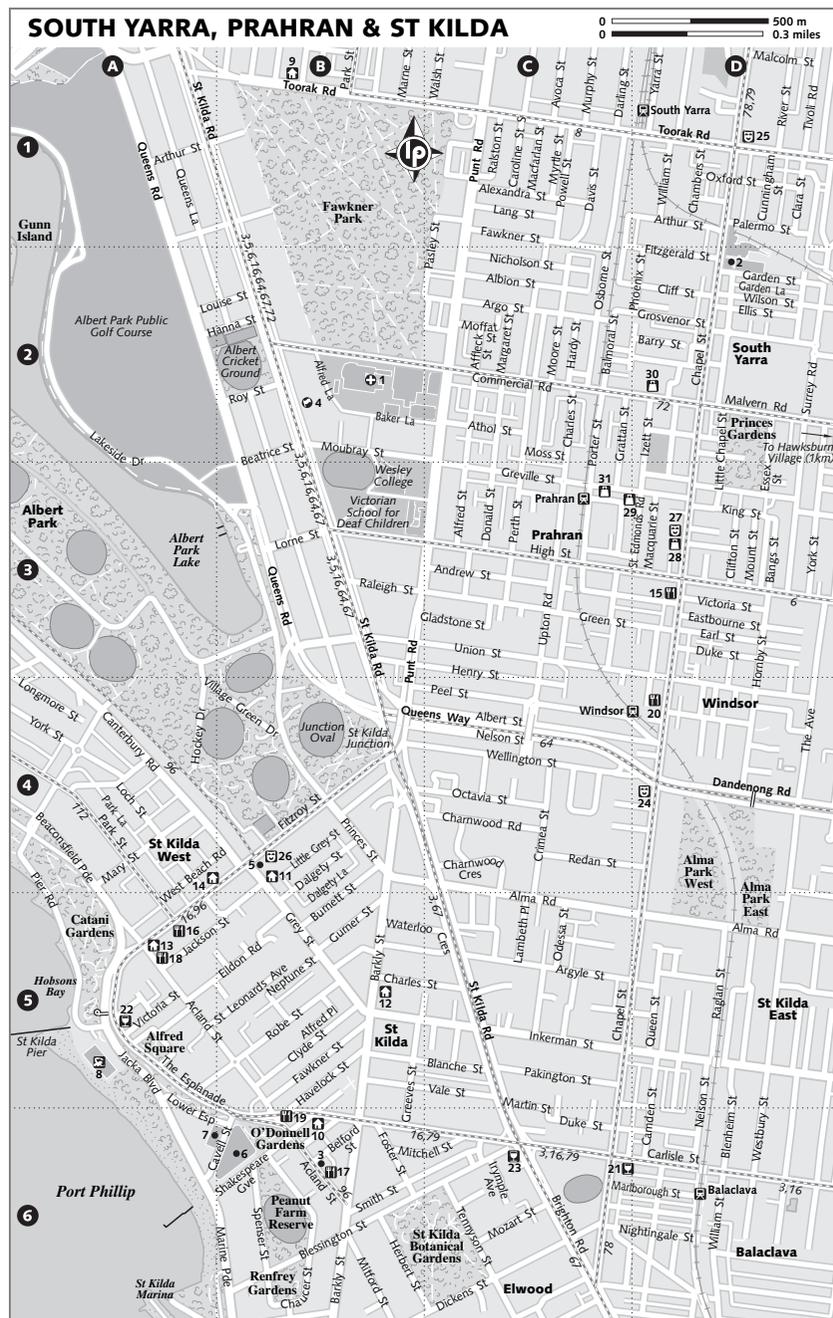
Melbourne International Arts Festival (www.melbournefestival.com.au) Held at various venues around the city, this festival features a thought-provoking programme of Australian and international theatre, opera, dance, visual art and music.

November

Melbourne Cup (www.springracingcarnival.com.au) Culminating in the prestigious Melbourne Cup, the Spring Racing Carnival is as much a social event as a sporting one. The Cup, held on the first Tuesday in November, is a public holiday in Melbourne.

December

Boxing Day Test (www.mcg.org.au; MCG) Boxing Day is day one of Melbourne's annually scheduled international



SOUTH YARRA, PRAHRAN & ST KILDA (p92)

INFORMATION

Alfred Hospital.....	1 B2	Olembia Guesthouse.....	12 B5	Girl Bar.....	(see 13)
Borders.....	2 D2	Prince.....	13 A5	Greyhound Hotel.....	23 C6
Readings.....	3 B6	Tolarno Hotel.....	14 A4		
US Consulate.....	4 B2				

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp81-8)

George Hotel.....	5 B4	Tears.....	15 D3	Astor.....	24 D4
Luna Park.....	6 B6	Cafe di Stasio.....	16 A5	Palace Como.....	25 D1
Palais Theatre.....	7 A6	Ciccolina.....	17 B6	Palace George.....	26 B4
St Kilda Sea Baths.....	8 A5	Palais Theatre.....	18 A5	Prince	
		Galleon.....	19 B6	Bandroom.....	(see 13)
		Mama Ganoush.....	20 D4	Revolver.....	27 D3

SLEEPING (pp93-5)

Albany.....	9 B1	DRINKING (p97)		Chapel St Bazaar.....	28 D3
Base.....	10 B6	Carlisle Wine Bar.....	21 C6	Greville Records.....	29 D3
Coffee Palace.....	11 B4	Esplanade Hotel.....	22 A5	Prahran Market.....	30 D2
				Provider.....	31 C3

text cricket match, drawing out the cricket fans. Expect some shenanigans from Bay 13.

New Year's Eve (www.thatsmelbourne.com.au) Fireworks light up the Yarra at 9pm and midnight.

SLEEPING

The city centre is convenient and close to theatres, museums, transport and nightlife, while suburbs such as St Kilda, East Melbourne, South Yarra, Carlton and Fitzroy are good alternatives.

Budget

There are backpacker hostels in the city centre and inner suburbs. Larger hostels often have courtesy buses that pick up from the bus and train terminals, and most offer discounts for longer stays.

CENTRAL MELBOURNE

Melbourne Connection Travellers Hostel (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9642 4464; www.melbourneconnection.com; 205 King St; dm \$22-28, d \$67-80; ☑) This little 79-bed charmer follows the small-is-better principle. It offers simple, clean and uncluttered budget accommodation with modern facilities, basement lounge area and well-organised staff.

Hotel Discovery (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9642 4464; www.hoteldiscovery.com.au; 167 Franklin St; dm \$25-28, d from \$85; ☑) Housed in a grand old building, the Discovery offers standard hostel rooms with extras such as a rooftop garden and 'cinema' near Victoria Market. There are also lounge areas, pool tables, a bar and a café, which makes for a very social atmosphere. Family rooms and en suite doubles also available.

Greenhouse Backpacker (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9639 6400; www.friendlygroup.com.au; 6/228 Flinders La; dm/s/d incl breakfast \$30/65/80; ☑) Well-run Greenhouse has a low-key, relaxed vibe. Freebies include

daily half-hour internet access, pancakes on Sunday, rooftop BBQs, luggage storage and activities. There are spic-and-span facilities and double-bed bunks for couples in the mixed dorms.

CARLTON, FITZROY & COLLINGWOOD

Ourpick Nunnery (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9419 8637; www.nunnery.com.au; 116 Nicholson St, Fitzroy; incl breakfast dm \$28-32, s \$70-80, d \$95-115) The Nunnery oozes atmosphere, with sweeping staircases and many original features. The walls are dappled with religious artworks and ornate stained-glass windows. Give thanks for comfortable lounges and communal areas. Apart from the main building there's also the Nunnery Guesthouse, which has larger rooms in a private setting.

SOUTH YARRA, PRAHRAN & ST KILDA

Coffee Palace (Map p92; ☎ 9534 5283; www.coffeealacebackpackers.com.au; 24 Grey St, St Kilda; dm from \$20, d from \$60; ☑) This rambling, old-school backpackers has lots of rooms, lots of activities and lots of years behind it. It has a travel desk, communal kitchen, bar, pool tables, lounge and TV room, plus a rooftop terrace with bay views. Dorms (some women-only) sleep from four to 10. There are also private rooms with shared bathrooms.

Ourpick Base (Map p92; ☎ 9536 6109; www.basebackpackers.com; 17 Carlisle St, St Kilda; dm/r from \$30/99; ☑) St Kilda's flashiest hostel fronts Carlisle St with a bold, red feature wall, and has streamlined dorms (each with en suite) or slick doubles. There's also a 'sanctuary' floor for female travellers, a bar and a full range of leisure options (including a pool table) to complete the package. A good-time party atmosphere prevails.

Olembia Guesthouse (Map p92; ☎ 9537 1412; www.olembia.com.au; 96 Barkly St, St Kilda; dm/s/d \$30/80/100) Olembia offers impeccably presented (if slightly fusty) rooms at backpacker prices. The small, elegant old house also has a cosy lounge and a spacious, leafy courtyard out front. Bookings are advised, especially for the upstairs family room.

Midrange

CENTRAL MELBOURNE

Pensione Hotel (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9621 3333; www.pensione.com.au; 16 Spencer St; r from \$90; ☎ ☑) The Pensione isn't being cute christening some rooms 'petit double'. What you don't get in size is made up for in style, room extras and rates. This recent refurb and rebranding is a welcome jolt to the Melbourne hotel scene.

City Centre Hotel (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9654 5401; www.citycentrebudgethotel.com.au; 22 Little Collins St; r from \$90; ☎ ☑) Intimate, independent and inconspicuous, this 38-room hotel is a find. It's located at the city's prettier end in an unassuming building. All rooms share bathroom facilities, but the accommodation is light-filled (with working windows), there's free wi-fi and a laundry. On the roof there are swing-seats and banana lounges. The service is genuine and genial, and everyone is accommodated, from solo travellers to families.

Alto Hotel on Bourke (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9606 0585; www.altohotel.com.au; 636 Bourke St; r/ap from \$135/160; ☎ ☑) This is an award-winning, purpose-built 'green' hotel that's fitted with water-savings showers, energy-efficient light globes and double-glazed windows that open. In-room recycling is promoted. Rooms are well-equipped, light and neutrally decorated. Apartments (from one bed and up) have kitchens, LCD TVs and some have spas.

EAST MELBOURNE & RICHMOND

George Powlett Apartments (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9419 9488; www.georgepowlett.com.au; cnr George & Powlett Sts, East Melbourne; studio apt from \$95; ☎ ☑) These older-style rooms have kitchenettes and are a 10-minute walk from town through the fabulous Fitzroy Gardens. The low-rise complex, located in the shadows of the MCG light towers, has 45 compact rooms, some with balconies.

CARLTON, FITZROY & COLLINGWOOD

Vibe Hotel Carlton (pp76-7; ☎ 9380 9222; www.vibehotels.com.au; 441 Royal Pde, Parkville; r from \$150; ☎ ☑)

This 1960s motel was once noted for its glamorous, high-Californian style. Vibe hasn't made the most of it, but some period charm shines through. Rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows and clean lines. Its Parkville location is pretty (and close to the zoo), the city is a short tram-ride away, and the Brunswick or Carlton North cafés aren't too far by foot.

SOUTH YARRA, PRAHRAN & ST KILDA

Albany (Map p92; ☎ 9866 4485; www.thealbany.com.au; cnr Toorak Rd & Millswyn St, South Yarra; r from \$125; ☎ ☑) Out the front of this eccentric hotel is an 1890s mansion with high-ceilinged rooms and a penthouse that recalls late-'60s swinging London. Out the back is a motel-style wing.

Tolarno Hotel (Map p92; ☎ 9537 0200; www.hotel.tolarno.com.au; 42 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; r from \$145; ☎ ☑) Tolarno was once the site of Georges Mora's seminal gallery Tolarno. The fine-dining restaurant downstairs now bears the name of his artist wife Mirka, as well as her original paintings. Rooms upstairs aren't quite so chic, but are brightly coloured with good beds and crisp white linen. Those at the front might be noisy but have balconies.

Toorak Manor (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9827 2689; www.toorakmanor.net; 220 Williams Rd, Toorak; r from \$155; ☎) This graceful old mansion sports frills and flowing chiffon in its 18 period-style rooms. Some of the décor is looking a bit tired but you're in a top spot near happening Hawksburn Village, and its only about 10 minutes into the city from the quaint train station.

Top End

SOUTHBANK & DOCKLANDS

Crown Promenade Hotel (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9292 6688; www.crownpromenade.com.au; 8 Whiteman St, Southbank; r from \$245; ☎ ☑) Crown's 'other' hotel is linked to the mothership by an air bridge. It is much more laidback than Crown Towers and offers large, modern and gently masculine rooms with luxurious bathrooms, big windows, flat screens and Sony Playstations. Views vary but many are as breathtaking as the Towers.

SOUTH YARRA, PRAHRAN & ST KILDA

Prince (Map p92; ☎ 9536 1111; www.theprince.com.au; 2 Adand St, St Kilda; r from \$260; ☎ ☑) The Prince is Melbourne's best-known 'design' hotel. The small lobby is suitably dramatic and the rooms are an interesting mix of the original pub's proportions, natural materials and pared-back aesthetic. Larger rooms and suites

feature some key pieces of vintage modernist furniture. Onsite 'facilities' are some of the city's best: Circa restaurant, the Aurora day spa, bars, band rooms and a fabulous wine shop downstairs. Be prepared for weekend nightclub-noise seepage.

EATING

Melbourne has a fine foodie culture thanks to its self-assured bohemianism and rich ethnic melting pot. There are fine-dining menus that follow a contemporary French direction, but you're more likely to encounter thoughtful pan-Mediterranean cuisine and a constantly reinvented grab-bag of styles we call Mod Oz. Italian is done well, as is Eastern Mediterranean food. Along with the Queen Victoria Market and its suburban counterparts in South Melbourne and Prahran, there's a weekly rota of **farmers markets** (www.mfm.com.au), which bring fresh produce to town.

The Age newspaper publishes a Tuesday food-and-wine supplement, the annual *Good Food Guide* and its companion *Cheap Eats*.

Central Melbourne

Ourpick Bar Lourinhã (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 7890; 37 Little Collins St; tapas \$8-20; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Matt McConnell's wonderful northern-Spanish/Portuguese specialties have the swagger and honesty of an Iberian shepherd, but with a cluey, metropolitan touch. There's an intriguing wine list sourced from the region too. Come Friday night, the sardines are not just on the plate; but a lone spoonful of the house *crema* (espresso foam) is worth the squeeze.

Journal Canteen (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9650 4399; 253 Flinders La; mains \$15-25; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri) Journal Canteen, tucked away up an obscure flight of stairs off the CAE building foyer, is no secret. It's packed to the rafters each lunchtime with diners lapping up Rosa Mitchell's sensational Sicilian-style antipasto plates, pastas, roasts and ragouts. Be spared the agony of choice: Rosa bases her few offerings on what is fresh and seasonal the day.

Supper Inn (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 4759; 15 Celestial Ave; mains \$15-30; ☎ dinner) If you like to find out where the chefs eat when they finish a shift, then look no further. Open till very late (2.30am), it serves some of the best late-night congee, noodles, dumplings and other yum-mies to a mixed crowd.

Cookie (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 7660; 1st fl, 252 Swanston St; mains \$17-30; ☎ lunch & dinner) The Thai menu

at this crowd-pleasing beer hall is a pleasant surprise. Grab a spritzer to go with your snapper curry or prawn-and-lemongrass coconut custard, then head up to the Rooftop Bar for Melbourne's best view.

Press Club (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9677 9677; 72 Flinders St; mains \$26-35; ☎ lunch Sun-Fri, dinner daily) Melbourne's mod-Greek scene is thriving, and George Columbaris' grand city space gives it the glamour it richly deserves. There's no fusion fussing, just a respect for the basics and a very 'now' sensibility. Think dolmades stuffed with roast quail; salmon cooked slowly in tzatziki and served with almond *skordalia*; or the 'Santorini breakfast' dessert (honey sorbet, yoghurt jelly and walnut biscuit).

Ginger Boy (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9662 4200; 27-29 Crossley St; mains \$28-33; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Brave the aggressively trendy surrounds and weekend party scene for talented Teague Ezard's flash hawk cooking. Flavours pop in dishes such as scallops with green chilli jam, or coconut kingfish with peanut and tamarind dressing. There are two dinner sittings; bookings required.

Ourpick Vue De Monde (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9691 3888; 430 Little Collins St; 5-course degustation menu \$150; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Fri, dinner Sat) Melbourne's favoured spot for occasion dining isn't stuffy; though set in a 19th-century barrister's chamber, the space is starkly luxe. This is degustation dining with a capital D: you choose how much gastronomic immersion you're up for and courses will be tailored accordingly. Book ahead.

Southbank & Docklands

Bopha Devi (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9600 1887; 27 Rakaia Way, Docklands; mains \$16-24; ☎ lunch & dinner) The modern Cambodian food here is a delightful mix of novel and familiar Southeast Asian flavours and textures. Herb-strewn salads, noodles and soups manage to be both fresh and filling.

Ourpick Mecca Bah (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9642 1300; 55a New Quay Promenade, Docklands; mains \$17-21; ☎ lunch & dinner) This opulent, hexagon-shaped restaurant serves Turkish pizza and a selection of *meze* (bite-size delights) all day. Their mains – mostly *tagines* (Middle Eastern stews) and grills – are hearty and spicy, most welcome when the wind is whipping up the bay outside.

Tutto Bene (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9696 3334; Mid-level Southgate, Southbank; mains \$17-36; ☎ lunch & dinner) There are other *primi piatti*, but the main

event here is risotto. Choices range from a simple Venetian *risi e bisi* (rice and peas) to some fabulously luxe options involving truffles, roast quail or aged balsamic. Fine house-made gelato is the requisite desert; you can drop in just for a *coppa* (cup) scooped from the outside servery.

Carlton, Fitzroy & Collingwood

Anada (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9415 6101; 197 Gertrude St, Fitzroy; tapas \$4-16 ☹️ dinner) Dishes such as mackerel with orange-blossom and pistachio are alive with hearty Spanish and Muslim Mediterranean flavours. There are big and little plates and a good selection of Iberian wines.

our pick Moroccan Soup Bar (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9482 4240; 183 St Georges Rd, Fitzroy North; mains \$10-15; ☹️ dinner Tue-Sun) Nab a table and prick up your ears: the chatelaine of this fabulous, down-to-earth restaurant hardly draws breath as she rattles off a list of soups, starters and heavenly North African *tagines* before telling you what you're getting. The food is divine and authentically Moroccan.

Brunetti (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9347 2801; 198 Faraday St, Carlton; café dishes \$3-7, restaurant mains \$12-23; ☹️ breakfast, lunch & dinner) A stalwart of Italian culinary obsessions, Brunetti is a haven for those who want excellent coffee, exquisite *dolci* (sweets), and mouth-watering Roman-influenced dishes.

our pick DOC Pizza & Mozzarella (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9347 2998; 295 Drummond St, Carlton; mains \$14-23; ☹️ dinner daily, lunch & dinner Sun) DOC has jumped on the Milanese-led mozzarella-bar trend and serves up the milky white balls – your choice of local or imported buffalo – as entrees, in salads or atop fabulous pizzas. Other pizza toppings include creamy broccoli puree and prosciutto, bitter-sweet *cicoria* (chicory) and lemon, and the litmus-test margarita. The buffalo milk gelato is a delight.

Abla's (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9347 0006; 109 Elgin St, Carlton; mains \$14-25; ☹️ lunch Thu & Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Abla Amad is the motherly matriarch of Melbourne's best Lebanese restaurant. She's been cooking here for 30 years and has inspired a whole generation of Lebanese chefs. Bring a bottle of your favourite plonk and settle in for the compulsory side-splitting banquet on Friday and Saturday nights.

Panama Dining Room (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9417 7663; Level 3, 231 Smith St, Fitzroy; mains \$15-22; ☹️ dinner Wed-Sun) The Franco-Fitzroy pub-grub on offer here is great value, and just right over

a bottle or two while gawping at the ersatz Manhattan views. The large space also does double-duty as a bar, so come early or be prepared for some happy hubbub with your frites and rillettes.

Commoner (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9415 6876; 122 Johnston St, Fitzroy; dinner mains \$17-33; ☹️ breakfast & lunch Sat & Sun, dinner Wed-Sun) If you need to be convinced of this off-strip restaurant's serious intent, the house-roasted goat offered up for Sunday lunch should do it. There's a nice, neat wine list and posh beer to compliment the Eastern-Med-inflected dishes.

South Yarra, Prahran & St Kilda

Galleon (Map p92; ☎ 9534 8934; 9 Carlisle St, St Kilda; meals \$7-16; ☹️ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Just off Acland St, Galleon has fuelled the creative juices of St Kilda's arts community for years with simple and inexpensive café-style food and fantastic hot breakfasts. We love it!

Mama Ganoush (Map p92; ☎ 9521 4141; 56 Chapel St, Windsor; mains \$17-32; ☹️ dinner Mon-Sat) Middle Eastern food that remains true to its roots whilst being modern and new. The space is full of delicate arabesque screens; the *kibbes* (Middle Eastern ground-lamb dishes), *tagines* and puddings are full of thought, passion and flavour.

Borsch, Vodka & Tears (Map p92; ☎ 9530 2694; 173 Chapel St, Windsor; mains \$19-23; ☹️ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Come here for spruced-up Polish food and an impressive variety of everyone's favourite white spirit, vodka. *Przekazki* (Polish-style tapas) spreads let you sample; the dumplings, herrings and blintzes are top-notch.

our pick Ciciolina (Map p92; ☎ 9525 3333; 130 Acland St, St Kilda; mains \$22-32; ☹️ lunch & dinner) This is where Renée Zellweger eats when she comes to Melbourne (we sat at the next table). This St Kilda institution is one of the city's great casual restaurants – a warm room of dark wood and subdued lighting. The menu is smart and generous; the service affable. It doesn't take bookings, so eat early or while away your wait in the moody little back bar.

Cafe di Stasio (Map p92; ☎ 9525 3999; 31 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; mains \$29-42; ☹️ lunch & dinner) Capricious, white-jacketed waiters, a tenebrous Bill Henson photograph and a jazz soundtrack set the mood. The Italian menu has the appropriate drama and grace. Weekly fixed-price lunch menus (two courses and a glass of wine) are great value. The best Italian restaurant in Melbourne. Sublime.

Circa (Map p92; ☎ 9536 1122; 2 Acland St, St Kilda; mains \$38-48; ☹️ breakfast & dinner daily, lunch Sun-Fri) This dining room has a persistent, pervading glamour and produces some of the city's finest food. Exec chef Andrew McConnell no longer mans the stoves nightly (at the time of writing he was busy relocating his famed Carlton restaurant 312 to Gertrude St, Fitzroy), but his stamp is all over the menu with its precise, intense tastes and eclectic influences. Bookings required.

Jacques Reymond (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9525 2178; 78 Williams Rd, Prahran; 7-course degustation menu \$150; ☹️ lunch Thu & Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) Housed in a Victorian terrace mansion, Reymond was a local pioneer of degustation dining and still encourages you to eat this way (there's a much-lauded vegetarian version). Expect a French-influenced, Asian-accented menu with lovely details such as house-churned butter. Mod Oz at its best.

DRINKING

When liquor-licensing laws were liberalised in the late 1980s, bars began to spring up everywhere and there are now blurry boundaries between what constitutes a restaurant, bar or café. Bars reviews can be found on the *Age* website and at www.threethousand.com.au.

New Gold Mountain (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9650 8859; www.newgoldmountain.org; 1st fl, 21 Liverpool St) Unsignposted, New Gold Mountain has an intense Chinoiserie interior, which comes as a shock. Two upstairs floors are filled with tiny screen-shielded corners, with decoration so delightfully relentless you feel as if you're trapped in an art-house dream sequence. Sours are the thing here, though they do a great vodka *sharlotka* (vodka and apple juice) too. Harbin heaven.

St Jerome's (Map pp78-9; no phone; 7 Caledonian La) Tiny St Jerome's does great coffee and toasties all day for the students that flock here. Come sundown, its time for longnecks and beats in the cloistered back alley. It's also time for *Shit Town*, its twisted next-door sister, to open the door (actually a hole in the wall). Here the '80s crackhouse aesthetic is fully realised and the music's loud and leftfield.

Gertrude St Enoteca (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9415 8262; 229 Gertrude St, Fitzroy) The Fitzroyalty regulars don't mind sharing the banquet space, or there are tables out the back among the wine. The wine list at this svelte wine bar-bottle shop favours European grapes, with erudite

advice on same. Bar snacks are sourced from Victoria's top suppliers; you can easily make a meal of them.

our pick Esplanade Hotel (Map p92; ☎ 9534 0211; 11 The Esplanade, St Kilda) Rock-pigs rejoice! 'The Espy' remains gloriously shabby and welcoming to all. Bands play most nights and there's a spruced-up kitchen out the back. And for the price of a pot you get front-row sunset seats.

Carlisle Wine Bar (Map p92; ☎ 9531 3222; www.carlislewinebar.com.au; 137 Carlisle St, Baladava) Locals love this often rowdy, wine-worshipping former butcher's shop. The staff will treat you like a regular and find you a glass of something special, or effortlessly throw together a cocktail amidst the weekend rush. The rustic Euro food is good too.

ENTERTAINMENT

Melbourne has a thriving nightlife, a lively cultural scene and great nightclubs – see the lift-out *EG Entertainment Guide*, published in the *Age* on Friday. Visit www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/events and www.melbourne.citysearch.com.au for listings and reviews. Pick up free street-press mags *Beat* and *Inpress* from cafés, pubs and bars. The main ticketing agencies are:

Half Tix (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9650 9420; www.halftixmelbourne.com; Melbourne Town Hall, cnr Swanston & Collins Sts; ☹️ 10am-2pm Mon & Sat, 11am-6pm Tue-Thu, 11am-6.30pm Fri) Sells half-price tickets on the day of the performance.

Ticketek (Map pp78-9; ☎ 13 28 49; www.ticketek.com.au; 225 Exhibition St; ☹️ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat)

Ticketmaster7 (Map pp78-9; ☎ 1300 136 166; www.ticketmaster7.com; Theatres Bldg, Victorian Arts Centre, 100 St Kilda Rd, Southbank; ☹️ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat)

Live Music

Melbourne is Australia's rock-music capital, where bands such as AC/DC, Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds and Jet took their first tentative steps. There are also a few great jazz joints. Expect to pay between zilch and \$35 for a cover charge, but generally you'll get away with about \$10 to \$15 for a local act.

Bennetts Lane (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 2856; www.bennettslane.com; 25 Bennetts La) Hidden down a narrow lane off Little Lonsdale St (between Exhibition and Russell Sts), this quintessentially dim jazz venue is well worth searching out. It's *the* jazz joint in Melbourne – most big acts that come to town perform here.

Ding Dong Lounge (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9662 1020; www.dingdonglounge.com.au; 18 Market La) Raucous, grotty and everything a classic rock-and-roll bar should be (but no longer smoky!). Local and international bands play here.

Tote (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9419 5320; www.thetotetohel.com; 71 Johnston St, Collingwood) The Tote's carpet is not so much sticky as overlaid with a hardened tar of blackened beer-filth. This tiny '80s-punk-scene relic is legendary, and playing here confers more grunge-cred on a muso than any other gig in Melbourne. Both local and international acts feature; live music is on every night except Monday.

Prince Bandroom (Map p92; ☎ 9536 1111; www.princebandroom.com.au; 29 Fitzroy St, St Kilda) The Art Deco Prince has been a fixture of the St Kilda scene for years. The downstairs bar is good for shooting pool; the band room upstairs plays host to local and international acts and popular DJ events.

Nightclubs

Melbourne's ever-changing club scene is a mixed bag, with clubs ranging from barn-sized discos to small, exclusive places. Cover charges range from \$5 to \$20 and most places have dress codes. Avoid the King St clubs in the CBD, full of yobbos.

Lounge (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 2916; 243 Swanston St; ☎ Wed-Sat) Café by day, relaxed, down-beat club by night – this is a good place for a night out in central Melbourne. The crowd is an interesting all-comers mix and music crosses the genres from retro to electro and hip-hop. The balcony is great on hot summer nights.

Revolver (Map p92; ☎ 9521 5985; www.revolverupstairs.com.au; 229 Chapel St, Prahran; ☎ Mon-Sun) Revolver is a popular venue with Prahran's mixed-age bohemian crowd. With art and stencil-covered surfaces and a packed program featuring DJs, bands, film nights and spoken word, there's a lot to like.

Gay & Lesbian Venues

Melbourne's gay and lesbian scene is more understated than raucously out-and-proud Sydney's, but it thrives regardless. While there are pink neighbourhoods, demarcation isn't a big thing and most inner-city venues are mixed and completely nondiscriminatory. Commercial Rd in South Yarra is most gay visitors' first port o' call. For up-to-date listings pick up the free *Melbourne Star* (www.bnews.net.au) and *MCV* (www.mcve-p.net.au) from cafés and clubs.

Girl Bar (Map p92; ☎ 9536 1177; www.princebandroom.com.au; 29 Fitzroy St, St Kilda; cover charge \$15) The Prince Bandroom (left) hosts this monthly dyke night. Below, in the Prince of Wales proper, the saloon bar has a queer-friendly jukebox, with lip-syncing comps and half-price beer on Mondays.

Greyhound Hotel (Map p92; ☎ 9534 4189; www.thegreyhoundhotel.webs.com; 1-3 Brighton Rd, St Kilda) The Greyhound has weekend drag nights and caters to a very eclectic mix of bikers, transvestites and grungesters.

Peel Hotel (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9419 4762; www.thepeel.com.au; cnr Peel & Wellington Sts, Collingwood) Perennial gay-boy favourite.

Cinema

Cinemas are spread throughout Melbourne city and the suburbs and usually belong either to the **Hoyts** (http://hoyts.ninemsn.com.au), **Dendy** (www.dendy.com.au), **Village** (www.villagecinemas.com.au) or the **Greater Union** (www.greaterunion.com.au) chains; see their websites for details. Our favourite cinemas for art-house releases include:

Astor (Map p92; ☎ 9510 1414; www.astor-theatre.com; cnr Chapel St & Dandenong Rd, St Kilda)

Kino (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9650 2100; www.dendy.com.au; 45 Collins St)

Nova (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9347 5331; www.cinemanova.com.au; 380 Lygon St, Carlton)

Palace Como (Map p92; ☎ 9827 7533; www.palacecinemas.com.au; cnr Toorak Rd & Chapel St, South Yarra)

Palace George (Map p92; ☎ 9534 6922; www.palacecinemas.com.au; 135 Fitzroy St, St Kilda)

Theatre & Dance

Victorian Arts Centre (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9281 8000; www.vicartscentre.com.au; 100 St Kilda Rd, Southbank) This is Melbourne's major venue for the performing arts (see p86).

Malthouse Theatre (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9685 5100; www.malthousetheatre.com.au; 113 Sturt St, South Melbourne) The Malthouse Theatre Company is dedicated

NEW THEATRES

At time of going to press the construction gangs were hard at work on the corner of Sturt St and Southbank Blvd in Southbank. This will be the site of the new 1000-seat Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Melbourne Recital Hall for chamber music, and the 500-seat permanent home for the Melbourne Theatre Company. Both are slated to open in 2009.

to developing and promoting contemporary Australian works, so it's worth checking out for some local content. It's housed in an atmospheric old factory (yes, a malt-house), and shares a courtyard with the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (p83).

Chunky Move (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9645 5188; www.chunkymove.com; 111 Sturt St, Southbank) The state's acclaimed contemporary dance company performs diverse, poppy pieces at its sexy venue behind the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

Sport

Underneath the cultured chat and designer threads of your typical Melbournian, you'll find a heart that truly belongs to one thing: sport. You can book tickets for sporting events through Ticketek (p97) or Ticketmaster7 (see p97).

Understanding the basics of **Australian Rules Football** (AFL or 'footy'; www.afl.com.au) is definitely a way to get a local engaged in conversation, especially during the winter season. Melbourne is the spiritual home of Australian Rules Football and the Melbourne Cricket Ground (see p86) is its holiest temple.

The popularity of **soccer** is on the rise; Melbourne Victory plays **A-League** (www.a-league.com.au) games at **Telstra Dome** (Map pp78-9) in Docklands. The Melbourne Storm **rugby league** team won the 2007 **National Rugby League** (www.nrl.com.au) trophy.

Melbourne's summer love is **cricket** (www.cricket.com.au) and the Boxing Day Test (p91) is bigger than Christmas.

Horse racing is held at the Flemington, Caulfield, Moonee Valley and Sandown Racecourses. The two-mile (3.2km) Melbourne Cup (p91), one of the world's greatest horse races, is the Melbourne's Spring Racing Carnival feature event; it's held at **Flemington Racecourse** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 1300 727 575; www.vrc.net.au; 400 Epsom Rd, Flemington) on the first Tuesday in November and brings Australia to a standstill for three minutes.

Melbourne hosts the **Australian Formula One Grand Prix** (p91) around Albert Park Lake in March, and the Australian round of the **World 500cc Motorcycle Grand Prix** (www.grandprix.com.au/bikes) on nearby Phillip Island (see p106) in October.

SHOPPING

Melbourne offers the best shopping in Australia; the widest array of shops is in the CBD. The suburbs are home to a growing legion of factory outlets (try Bridge Rd and Swan St in Richmond) and shopping malls, plus some off-beat boutiques and specialist stores.

Central Melbourne

Alice Euphemia (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9650 4300; www.aliceeuphemia.com; Shop 6/37, cnr Swanston St & Flinders La) At the more experimental end of Melbourne fashion, with inventive fabrics, cuts and fin-

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

Melbourne's world-famous markets allow you to experience the city in all its multicultural glory, as locals shop, socialise and converse in an array of tongues. Following are some of Melbourne's best markets:

- **Camberwell Market** (off Map pp76-7; Station St, Camberwell; ☎ 6am-2.30pm Sun) One of the most popular trash-and-treasure markets, this has hundreds of stalls piled with everything – get there early to fight the fashionistas for the best retro gear.
- **Prahran Market** (Map p92; www.prahranmarket.com.au; 163-185 Commercial Rd, Prahran; ☎ dawn-5pm Tue & Sat, dawn-6pm Thu & Fri, 10am-3pm Sun) This may be the best food market in the city, with several organic-produce stores, a fresh-pasta store, great delis and a wing devoted to fresh fish and meat.
- **Queen Victoria Market** (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9320 5822; www.qvm.com.au; cnr Victoria & Elizabeth Sts; ☎ 6am-2pm Tue & Thu, to 6pm Fri, to 3pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) There are more than 500 stalls here, selling everything under the sun, including fruit and vegetables (organic produce can be found), meat, fish, jeans, furniture, budgies and sheepskin products.
- **South Melbourne Market** (Map pp76-7; ☎ 9209 6295; cnr Cecil & Coventry Sts, South Melbourne; ☎ 8am-4pm Wed, Sat & Sun, 8am-6pm Fri) This general market covers most bases, with delis, foodstuffs and a legendary dim-sim stall that attracts a permanent queue.

ishes that aim to make you look more interesting than you might actually be. There's a great range of rings, brooches and earrings on display, too.

Calibre (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 8001; www.calibreclothing.com.au; 45 Collins St, Melbourne) Specialises in high-end men's fashion and classic-contemporary suits, shirts and accessories.

GPO (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 0066; www.melbournesgpo.com; 350 Bourke St) A 2001 postfire restoration and reinvention of Melbourne's General Post Office has given the town a whole new post-box of reasons to wander in. The top floor houses fashion heavyweights Akira Isogawa and Belinda. Local screenprint star Spacecraft is also here, and the wonderfully individual jewellery and collectables dealer Gallery Freya. On the mid- and ground levels are a smattering of Melbourne's most fascinating outlets: Gorman, Fat and Metallicas.

Anna Schwartz Gallery (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9654 6131; www.annaschwartzgallery.com; 185 Flinders La) Leader of the pack when it comes to high-profile modern-art exhibitions in a blindingly white, sometimes chilly space.

Marais (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9639 0314; www.marais.com.au; 1st fl, Royal Arcade, 314 Little Collins St) On a stealthily signposted upper floor of the workaday Royal Arcade, this shop evokes its Parisian namesake with raven-stained parquetry and glossy, white-panelled walls. International mens and womenswear labels include fashion darlings Preen and Lavin. Local talent is represented by Sri Lankan born, Melbourne-bred, London-trained Dhini.

Self Preservation (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9650 0523; www.selfpreservation.com.au; 70 Bourke St) Iron cases hold a range of jewels from local artisans and from long ago, and there's a small gallery space out back. Not only can you shop for a gold and silver, you can sit down for a coffee or a glass of wine while you decide. Multitasking never was nicer.

Shag (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9663 8166; Shop 20, Centre Way) Super stylist-ordained vintage pieces, including shoes, furs and bags, plus a great, well-priced collection of fashion-forward Asian-sourced dresses, jackets and tops.

QV (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9658 0100; cnr Swanston & Lonsdale Sts) Features all sorts of populist commercial outlets and a few cool international options.

Missing Link (Map pp78-9; ☎ 9670 8208; www.missinglink.net.au; Basement, 405 Bourke St) Indie music's most famous Melbourne record store and a haven for grungsters, gods and experi-

mentalists. CDs, vinyl and DVDs from Anus Tumor to Z-Gun.

Carlton, Fitzroy & Collingwood

Crumpler (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9417 5338; www.crumpler.com.au; cnr Gertrude & Smith Sts, Fitzroy) For the ultimate Melbourne souvenir, visit Crumpler. This local company started out making tough-as-nails bags for bicycle couriers – now a must-have fashion accessory.

Alphaville (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9416 4296; www.alpha60.com.au; 179 Brunswick St, Fitzroy) Alphaville keeps the cool kids of both genders happy with Alpha '60s sharp clothes. Look out for tilts to Jean-Luc Godard and other filmic favourites (we loved the body-bagged Laura Palmer pillow slips).

Somebuddy Loves You (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9415 7066; 193 Smith St, Fitzroy) Announced by the sneaker-draped power lines on neighbouring Charles St, Somebuddy does local variations on the global hipster theme: ironic T-shirts, cult-brand jeans, scenster-in-training babywear and kidult toys.

Polyester (Map pp84-5; ☎ 9419 5137; 387 Brunswick St, Fitzroy) Polyester is a fave indie record store for discerning north-of-the-river listeners.

South Yarra, Prahran & St Kilda

Chapel St Bazaar (Map p92; ☎ 9529 1727; 217-223 Chapel St, Prahran) Calling this a 'permanent undercover collection of market stalls' won't give you any clue to what's tucked away here. This old arcade is a retro-obsessive riot. It doesn't matter if Italian art-glass or Noddy eggcups are your thing, you'll find it here.

Provider (Map p92; ☎ 9529 2629; www.provider.com.au; 114 Greville St, Prahran) If the term 'Air Max' flips your burger, you'll love this trainer temple that stocks Nike to New Balance and what's known as street apparel.

Greville Records (Map p92; ☎ 9510 3012; www.grevillerecords.com; 152 Greville St, Prahran) Our favourite Melbourne record store with a select stock of CDs, vinyl and DVDs – everything from classic Miles Davis, Can, Buffalo Springfield and Sonic Youth to Deerhoof and Aussie darlings the Drones.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

International and interstate flights operate out of **Melbourne International Airport** (Map p103; ☎ 9297 1600; www.melair.com.au) at Tullamarine and some interstate flights operate from **Avalon Airport** (Map p103; ☎ 1800 282 566; www.avalonairport.com.au).

Bus

Long-distance bus services for **VLine** (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) and **Firefly** (☎ 1300 730 740; www.fireflyexpress.com.au) coaches operate from the **Southern Cross coach terminal** (Map pp78-9) on Spencer St. **Greyhound** (☎ 1300 473 946; www.greyhound.com.au) services operate from the **Melbourne Transit Centre** (Map pp84-5; 58 Franklin St). Basic one-way adult fares from Melbourne to Sydney cost between \$65 and \$76 (12 hours); and to Brisbane from \$196 (24 hours). Carriers offer backpacker, student and pensioner fares and other discounts on these prices. There are at least six departures per day to these cities.

Car & Motorcycle

The quickest and easiest way in and out of Melbourne heading for the East Coast is via CityLink – follow the blue signs. If you want to avoid the tolls, jump on at Toorak Rd. CityLink becomes the Princes Hwy, the road you need to be on!

Train

Long-distance trains depart from **Southern Cross station** (Map pp78-9) on Spencer St. **V/Line** (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) has daily services from Melbourne to many destinations including Bairnsdale (\$25, 3½ hours, three daily) stopping at all major towns along the Princes Hwy in west Gippsland.

Countrylink (☎ 13 22 32; www.countrylink.info) runs XPT (express) trains between Melbourne and Sydney (one-way economy/1st class/1st-class sleeper \$130/183/271, 11 hours), with one morning and one evening departure daily in each direction (note that sleeper cabins cannot be booked over the internet). There are discounts of about 30% for bookings made seven or 14 days in advance for travel outside peak times (eg school holidays).

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Melbourne Airport is at Tullamarine, 22km northwest of the city centre. If you're driving, take the Tullamarine Fwy from the airport to the CityLink (right) toll road, which will take you into town. A 24-hour Tullapass costs \$4.10.

A taxi between the airport and the city centre costs around \$40 (including the cost of the tollway). **Skybus** (☎ 9335 2811; www.skybus.com.au) operates a 24-hour shuttle-bus service (one way \$16, 20 minutes) between the air-

port and the city every 30 minutes between 6am and midnight (hourly otherwise) in both directions. Buses to Avalon airport are run by **Sunbus** (☎ 9689 6888; www.sunbusaustralia.com.au), which operates from Southern Cross bus terminal. **Frankston & Peninsula Airport Shuttle** (☎ 9783 1199; www.fapas.com.au) runs a dozen buses daily (fewer on weekends) to the airport from Rosebud on the Mornington Peninsula through the southeastern bayside suburbs (adult one-way from St Kilda \$18).

Car & Motorcycle

If you're lucky enough to find city street parking you'll pay from \$2 an hour. Check parking signs for restrictions and times, and watch for clearway zones that operate during peak hour. There are more than 70 commercial car parks in the city. Drivers should treat trams with caution – you must *always* stop behind a tram when it drops off or collects passengers. Melbourne's notorious **hook turn** is designed to allow trams through city intersections without being blocked by turning cars. To turn right at hook-turn city intersections, you pull over to the left, wait until the light of the street you're turning into changes from red to green, then complete your turn ahead of the traffic coming from your left. These intersections are identified by black-and-white hook signs that read 'Right Turn from Left Only.'

All the big car-rental firms are represented in Melbourne and have desks at the airport. For disabled travellers, **Avis** (☎ 13 63 33; www.avis.com.au) rents hand-controlled vehicles. The **Yellow Pages** (www.yellowpages.com.au) lists lots of other firms, including some cheaper operators.

TOLL ROADS

CityLink (☎ 13 26 29; www.citylink.com.au) consists of two main sections: the Western Link, which runs from the Calder Hwy intersection of the Tullamarine Fwy down the western side of the city to join with the Westgate Fwy; and the Southern Link, which runs from Kings Way on the southern edge of the CBD, through the Domain and Burnley tunnels to the Malvern section of the Monash Fwy. Both are tollways.

A CityLink account is a prepaid account where tolls are debited electronically as overhead toll-points read transponders (e-Tags) mounted within a vehicle. If you want to use CityLink without an e-Tag, purchase a day pass (valid for 24 hours from your first

trip) or a weekend pass (valid from noon Friday to midnight Sunday). Either pass costs \$11.55. If you want to go from the airport to Flemington Rd, buy a Tullapass for \$4.10. Motorcycles use CityLink for free. If you've inadvertently found your way onto the CityLink toll roads without an e-Tag or appropriate pass you have until midnight the following day to call CityLink and arrange payment. If you do not make reparations you'll incur a \$100 fine.

Public Transport

The Met incorporates buses, trains and Melbourne's famous trams. The 750 trams operate up to 20km from the centre. Buses ply routes that trams don't. Trains radiate from the city to the outer suburbs, and cease around midnight. On Friday and Saturday night (ie Saturday and Sunday morning), hourly NightRider buses depart from **City Square** (Map pp78–9) on Swanston St from 12.30am to 4.30am for suburban destinations. Metcard tickets are valid for NightRider buses.

For information contact the **Metlink Information Centre** (☎ 13 16 38; www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au) or visit the **MetShop** (Map pp78–9; ☎ 13 16 38; Town Hall, cnr Swanston & Collins Sts; ☎ 8.30am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm Sat), which also sells tickets.

TICKETING

Metcards allow you travel on any Melbourne bus, train or tram service, and transfer from one type to another. They're available from Metcard vending machines, train stations, on trams (coins only), from retailers displaying the Metlink flag, and the MetShop. You can purchase tickets directly from the driver on bus services.

The metropolitan area is divided into two zones. Zone 1 covers both the city and inner-suburban areas. Adult fares are as follows:

Zones	Two hours	All day	Weekly
1	\$3.50	\$6.50	\$28
2	\$2.70	\$4.60	\$19.20
1 & 2	\$5.50	\$10.10	\$47.40

BUS

Melbourne's bus network generally links train and tram networks. Buses also go to places not reached by other services, such as hospitals, universities, suburban shopping centres and the outer suburbs.

TRAIN

Trains cover the Melbourne metropolitan area. **Flinders St station** (Map pp78–9), the main city terminal, has a separate platform for each suburban line. The famous row of clocks above the entrance on the corner of Swanston and Flinders Sts indicates the next departing train on each line. On weekdays, trains start at 5am, finish around midnight and run about every 10 minutes during peak hour, every 15 to 20 minutes at most other times, and every 30 minutes after 7pm. On Saturday they run every half-hour from 5am to midnight, and Sunday every 40 minutes from 7am to 11.30pm. The city includes a handy underground service called the **City Loop**, including Parliament, Melbourne Central, Flagstaff, Southern Cross and Flinders St stations.

Bicycles can be carried for free on all trains inside the last door of the last carriage.

TRAM

Melbourne's trams cover the city and inner suburbs. Trams run along most routes every six to eight minutes during peak hour, and every 12 minutes at other times. They share the roads with cars and trucks, so can be delayed by traffic. Services are less frequent on weekends and late at night.

Be extremely careful when getting on and off a tram; by law, cars are supposed to stop when a tram stops to pick up and drop off passengers, but that doesn't always happen.

See p90 for details on the free City Circle tram service.

Taxi

All Melbourne taxis are yellow. The main CBD ranks are outside major hotels and Flinders St and Southern Cross train stations. Finding an empty taxi in the city on Friday or Saturday night can be difficult.

Flagfall is \$3.10, and the rate is \$1.465 per kilometre thereafter. The tariff is 20% higher between midnight and 5am. Telephone bookings incur a \$1.30 surcharge. CityLink tolls (\$3.50 for Southern and Western Lines, \$5.60 for both) are added to the fare.

Yellow Cabs and Silver Top Taxis have cars with wheelchair access, or phone ☎ 1300 364 050. To book a taxi, phone any of the following companies:

Embassy Taxis (☎ 13 17 55)

Silver Top Taxis (☎ 13 10 08)

Yellow Cabs (☎ 13 19 24)

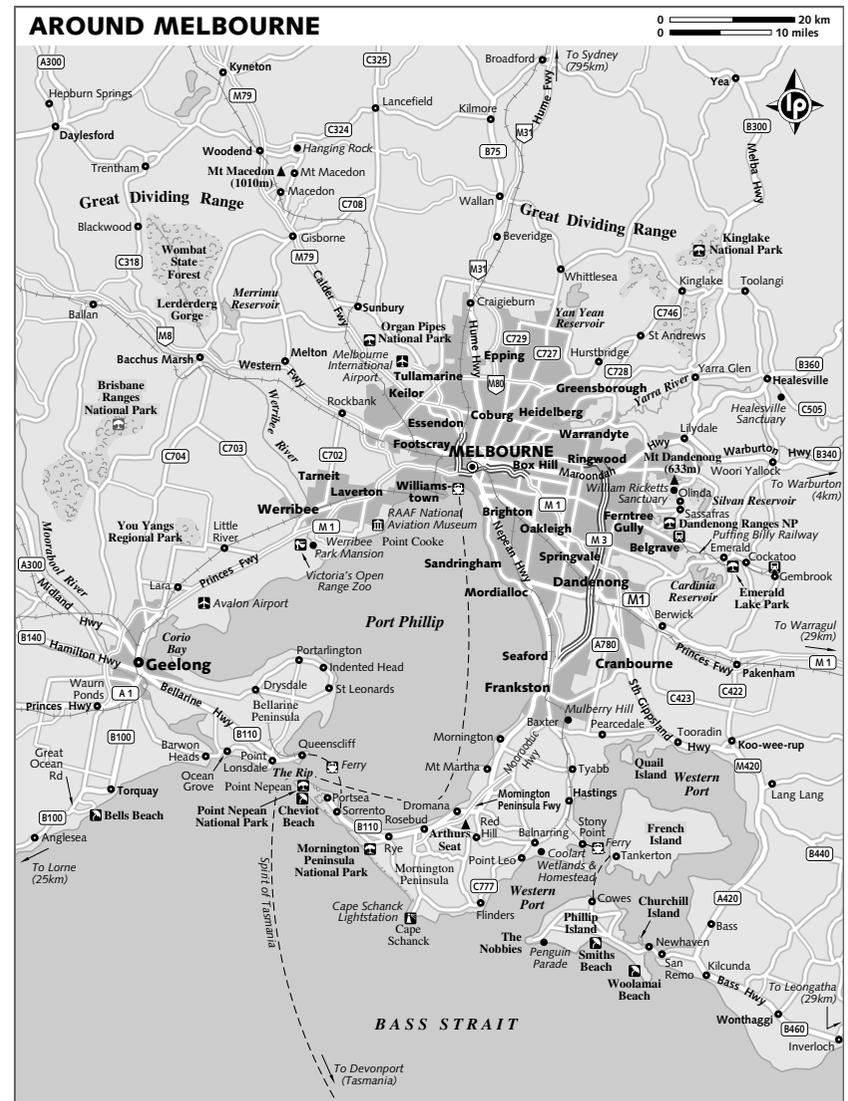
AROUND MELBOURNE

There are some lovely day trips out of Melbourne accessible by public transport, but they're much better when you have a vehicle. The Dandenong Ranges and Mornington Peninsula can be reached in a

little over an hour from Melbourne; Phillip Island takes a little more getting-to.

THE DANDENONGS

On a clear day, you can see the **Dandenong Ranges** from Melbourne. The 633m summit of Mt Dandenong is the highest peak – watch the sun set over the city from the lookout. The



lush hills are about 35km (an hour's drive) east of the city. The **Dandenong Ranges & Knox visitors centre** (☎ 9758 7522; www.dandenongranges tourism.com.au; 1211 Burwood Hwy, Upper Ferntree Gully; ☹ 9am-5pm) is outside the Upper Ferntree Gully train station.

A restored steam train, **Puffing Billy** (☎ 9754 6800; www.puffingbilly.com.au; Old Monbulk Rd, Belgrave; Belgrave-Gembrook return adult/child/family \$49/25/99) toots its way through the Dandenongs, with six departures during holidays, and three or four on other days. The Puffing Billy station is short a stroll from Belgrave train station.

Dandenong Ranges National Park has many great walking tracks. The **Ferntree Gully Area** has the popular **1000 Steps Track** up to One Tree Hill picnic ground (two hours return).

Sherbrooke Forest has a towering cover of mountain ash trees and is home to kookaburras, currawongs and honeyeaters. The start of the 10km **Eastern Loop Walk** (three hours), is about 1km from Belgrave station, accessed by walking to the end of Old Monbulk Rd past the Puffing Billy station.

William Ricketts Sanctuary (☎ 13 1963; www.park web.vic.gov.au; Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd, Mt Dandenong; adult/child/family \$7/3/16.50; ☹ 10am-4.30pm) features Ricketts' sculptures, inspired by years spent living with Aboriginal people.

Ranges at Olinda (☎ 9751 2133; 5 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda; lunch mains \$14-22, dinner mains \$22-29; ☹ breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Tue-Sat) is a stylish place featuring Mod Oz food. Pasta and risotto dishes, and pita wraps filled with tandoori chicken or Mexican beef are among the lunchtime offerings.

Stop at **Pie in the Sky** (☎ 9751 2128; 43 Olinda-Monbulk Rd, Olinda; pies \$4-6, lunch \$8-12; ☹ 9.30am-5pm) for traditional pie favourites and more adventurous combos such as tomato-and-basil, korma chicken, and spinach, rice and feta.

Getting There & Around

From Melbourne, drive along Canterbury Rd to Montrose, or go via the Burwood Hwy to Upper Ferntree Gully – the Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd runs between these two roads and through the ranges. The Met's suburban trains (p102) run on the Belgrave line to the foothills of the Dandenongs (Zones 1 & 2 Met ticket required). From Upper Ferntree Gully train station it's a 10-minute walk to the start of the Ferntree Gully section of the national park.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

The Mornington Peninsula has been a favourite summer destination since the 1870s, when paddle steamers carried holidaying Melburnians to Sorrento.

The calm 'front beaches' are on the Port Phillip and Western Port sides. The rugged ocean 'back beaches' face Bass Strait – there are stunning walks along this coastal strip, which is protected as part of Mornington Peninsula National Park.

The **Peninsula visitors centre** (☎ 1800 804 009, 5987 3078; www.visitmorningtonpeninsula.org; Nepean Hwy, Dromana; ☹ 9am-5pm) has a free accommodation-booking service.

Sorrento pop 1500

Sorrento has the best range of accommodation, cafés and restaurants on the peninsula. Grand **19th-century buildings** include the Sorrento Hotel (1871), the Continental Hotel (1875) and Koonya (1878).

There are plenty of **swimming** and **walking** opportunities along Sorrento's wide, sandy beaches and bluffs. At low tide, the **rock pool** at the back beach is a safe spot for adults and children to swim and **snorkel**.

Stringer's (☎ 5984 2010; 2 Ocean Beach Rd; sandwiches & snacks \$4-8; ☹ breakfast & lunch) is a Sorrento institution, serving house-made meals and with Mornington wines for sale in the attached grocery shop.

Formerly the sea baths, **Baths** (☎ 5984 1500; 3278 Point Nepean Rd; mains \$17-30; ☹ breakfast, lunch & dinner) does excellent breakfast cook-ups served on its fantastic waterfront decking. Lunch and dinner get more sophisticated.

Continental Cafe (☎ 5984 2201; 1 Ocean Beach Rd; mains \$17-26; ☹ breakfast, lunch & dinner) does gourmet fish and chips and stylish Mod Oz grub. Eat outside at weathered picnic tables overlooking the bay, or in the funky and cosy café. Tuesday is pizza-and-pasta night; Thursday is 300g steak night – both \$15.

Mornington Peninsula National Park

The **Point Nepean visitors centre** (☎ 5984 4276; Point Nepean; walk or bicycle admission adult/child/family \$7/4/19.50, incl return transport \$16/9.50/41.50, bike hire per 3hr \$17; ☹ 9am-6pm Jan, to 5pm Feb-Apr & Oct-Dec, 10am-5pm May-Sep) has stacks of information. You can walk or cycle to the point (12km return), or take the Point Explorer shuttle. **Observatory Point** is a sheltered picnic spot with wheelchair

DETOUR: GREAT OCEAN ROAD

The **Great Ocean Rd** (B100), which runs between Anglesea and Warrnambool, is Australia's most spectacular coastal road. The most famous section cuts through Port Campbell National Park, with its amazing natural rock sculptures – the Twelve Apostles, London Bridge and Loch Ard Gorge – carved out of the limestone headlands by fierce ocean waves.

There are visitors centres in Torquay, Lorne, Apollo Bay, Port Campbell, Warrnambool, Port Fairy and Portland.

Several companies offer organised tours of the Great Ocean Rd, including the following:

- **Autopia Tours** (☎ 1800 000 507; www.autopiatours.com.au)
- **Go West Tours** (☎ 1300 736 551; www.gowest.com.au)
- **Goin South** (☎ 1800 009 858; www.goinsouth.com.au)
- **Otway Discovery** (☎ 9654 5432; www.otwaydiscovery.com.au)
- **Wayward Bus** (☎ 1300 653 510; www.waywardbus.com.au)

Accommodation here is heavily booked during school holidays. There are camping grounds right along the coast. For accommodation check out www.greatoceanroad.stays.com.au.

Trains from Melbourne's Southern Cross station travel to Geelong (\$9, one hour, frequently). **V/Line** (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) buses cruise from Geelong along the Great Ocean Rd to Apollo Bay (\$13, 2¼ hours) via Torquay (\$2.50, 30 minutes) and Lorne (\$8.50, 1¼ hours) several times daily. There are daily V/line trains that continue from Geelong to Warrnambool (\$18, 2¼ hours). On Monday, Wednesday and Friday there are V/Line bus services from Geelong to Port Campbell (\$23, 5¼ hours) via Apollo Bay (\$13, 2¼ hours).

McHarry's Bus Lines (☎ 5223 2111; www.mcharrys.com.au) has services from Geelong towards Lorne (\$8.50, 1¼ hours).

access from Gunners car park – en route, take a look at the **graves** of shipwreck victims and Victoria's first settlers.

Cheviot Beach is where prime minister Harold Holt disappeared in 1967. **Fort Nepean** played an important Australian-defence role from the 1880s to 1945. There are two historic **gun barrels** here, which fired the first Allied shots in WWI and WWII.

There are beautiful and rugged **ocean beaches** at Portsea, Sorrento, Rye, Gunnamatta and Cape Schanck. Swimming is dangerous at these beaches: currents are severe and drownings occur – only swim between the flags at the lifeguard-patrolled areas at Gunnamatta and Portsea.

Built in 1859, **Cape Schanck Lightstation** (☎ 0500 527 891, 5988 6184; museum only adult/child/family \$10/8/30, museum & lighthouse \$14/11/38, parking \$4; ☹ 10.30am-4pm) is an operational lighthouse, with a kiosk, museum and visitors centre. From the lightstation, descend the boardwalk steps towards the craggy cape with its outstanding views. Longer **walks** include tracks to **Bushrangers Bay**, which can be approached from Cape Schanck or the Bushrangers Bay

car park on Boneo Rd – about 40 minutes each way.

Getting There & Around

The Moorooduc Fwy becomes the Mornington Peninsula Fwy, which is the main entry point to the peninsula. The Point Nepean Hwy joins the Mornington Peninsula Fwy.

Met trains (buy a Zones 1 & 2 ticket) run from Flinders St station to Frankston station. From there, **Portsea Passenger Service** (☎ 5986 5666; www.grenda.com.au) bus 788 runs to/from Portsea (\$5; 90 minutes; half-hourly Monday to Saturday, two-hourly Sunday), via Mornington, Dromana and Sorrento.

Queenscliff-Sorrento Car & Passenger Ferries (☎ 5258 3244; www.searoad.com.au; one-way foot passenger adult/child \$9/7, 2 adults & car standard/peak \$58/64) runs hourly services every day between Sorrento and Queenscliff on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Inter Island Ferries (☎ 9585 5730; www.interisland ferries.com.au; return adult/child/bike \$20/10/8; ☹ every 30min 8.30am-5pm, plus 7pm Fri) runs daily between Stony Point and Cowes (on Phillip Island) via French Island.

PHILLIP ISLAND & THE PENGUIN PARADE

pop 7500

Phillip Island is home to the world-famous Penguin Parade. Excellent surf beaches bring day-tripping boardriders from Melbourne, while there are calmer kid-friendly beaches on the island's north side. The **Phillip Island visitors centre** (☎ 1300 366 422, 5956 7447; www.philipisland.net.au; Phillip Island Rd, Newhaven; ☎ 9am-5pm) sells the Three Parks Pass (adult/child/family \$34/17/85), granting admission to the Penguin Parade, Koala Conservation Centre and Churchill Island.

The **Penguin Parade** (☎ 5951 2800; www.penguins.org.au; Summerland Beach; adult/child/family \$20/10/50; ☎ 10am-last penguin show) attracts more than 500,000 visitors a year. Amphitheatres hold up to 3800 people who coo over the penguins as they emerge from the sea after sunset.

From the elevated treetop boardwalks at the **Koala Conservation Centre** (☎ 5952 1307; Phillip Island Rd; adult/child/family \$10/5/25; ☎ 10am-5pm) you can watch koalas chewing eucalyptus leaves.

Small **Churchill Island** (☎ 5956 7214; off Phillip Island Rd; adult/child/family \$10/5/25; ☎ 10am-4.30pm), connected by a bridge to Phillip Island, is an historic working farm.

The **Nobbies** are a rock formation on the island's southwest tip. Beyond them are **Seal Rocks**, inhabited by Australia's largest fur-seal colony.

The **Nobbies Centre** (☎ 5951 2816; admission free; tours adult/child \$10/5; ☎ 10am-8pm Dec-Feb, 10am-5pm Mar-May, 10am-4pm Jun-Aug; 10am-6pm Sep-Nov) offers great views. You can peer through boardwalk binoculars or the centre's underwater cameras.

The island's south-side ocean beaches include **Woolamai**, which has rips and currents and is only suitable for experienced surfers. Beginners and families can go to **Smiths Beach**, which is often teeming with surf-school groups. Both beaches are patrolled in summer. Around the Nobbies, **Cat Bay** and **Flynns Reef** will often work when the wind is blowing onshore at the Woolamai and Smiths areas. **Island Surfboards** (☎ 5952 3443; www.islandsurfboards.com.au; 65 Smiths Beach & 147 Thompson Ave, Cowes; lessons \$50) runs surfing lessons and hires gear.

White Salt (☎ 5956 6336; 7 Vista Pl, Woolamai; ☎ lunch & dinner Thu-Mon) serves gourmet fish and chips. The bench seats are usually packed, but you can make off for the beach with a parcel under your arm.

Madcows (☎ 5952 2560; 17 The Esplanade, Cowes; mains \$6-15; ☎ breakfast & lunch) is a stylish café-foodstore.

Getting There & Around

Travelling by car from Melbourne, take the Monash Fwy (M1) and get off at the Phillip Island exit onto the South Gippsland Hwy (M420).

VLine (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) runs a direct Melbourne-Cowes bus (\$10, 3¼ hours, five weekly) departing Melbourne's Southern Cross station at 3.50pm Monday to Friday.

Inter Island Ferries (☎ 9585 5730; www.interislandferries.com.au; return adult/child/bike \$20/10/8; ☎ every 30min 8.30am-5pm, plus 7pm Fri) runs daily between Stony Point and Cowes (on Phillip Island) via French Island.