

Sydney



It's the first place most people see when they come to Australia and why not? Big, bold, brash and fun, Sydney is a great introduction to the continent. So what if others elsewhere in Oz quibble about this or that with regards to the top city. Ignore 'em; that's what Sydney does.

Sydney is a huge place but is surprisingly manageable for the average visitor. Basically, if it's north of the harbour, you can ignore it. Sure, a couple of million people up there might beg to differ, but trust them that it's a nice place to live and leave it at that. Rather, think of the big green patch of lawn at Hyde Park in the centre of town as your own ground zero. Within a half-hour walk of here in various directions, you can plunge into the edgy vibe of Newtown, travel to Asia in Chinatown, marvel at the iconic Opera House and harbour, get trashed beneath the bright lights of Kings Cross, have a balls out exploration of lifestyles in Darlinghurst and nosh with posh hipsters in Surry Hills. It's that kind of place.

You can mix and match your neighbourhoods and experiences by mood or whim. But the best part is you won't be bored. Ever. When you want to go a bit further, there's the pure pleasure of the ferry to Manly, the ocean plunge at Bondi Beach and the jaw-dropping spectacle of the Blue Mountains.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Strolling from the **Royal Botanic Gardens** (p190) to the **Sydney Opera House** (p184)
- Alternating shopping with cafés in **Paddington** (p213)
- Taking the iconic plunge at **Bondi Beach** (p194) or **Coogee** (p194)
- Catching the ferry to **Manly** (p197) and doing the Manly Scenic Walkway
- Letting Echo Point introduce you to the **Blue Mountains** (p216)
- Finding the perfect meal in **Surry Hills** (p206)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 02 ■ POPULATION: 4 MILLION ■ www.sydney.citysearch.com.au

HISTORY

The Sydney region is the ancestral home of the Eora people (the Kuring-gai, Birrabirragal and Cadi peoples) who possessed an intimate understanding of environmental sustainability, spoke three distinct languages, and maintained sophisticated sacred and artistic cultures. In 1788 Captain Arthur Phillip established Australia's first European settlement, and the Eora were soon stripped of the legal rights to their land, and systematically incarcerated, killed or driven away by force.

Early Sydney bumbled through near-starvation and rum-fuelled political turmoil, but boom didn't arrive until the 1850s gold rush, when Sydney's population doubled in a decade.

In the 20th century, post-WWII immigrants from the UK, Ireland and the Mediterranean brought spirit and prosperity to Sydney. These qualities have endured as the immigrant pool has expanded to include Asia (especially Vietnam and China), the Middle East and Africa. Hosting the 2000 Olympic Games thrust Sydney into the global limelight for celebratory reasons; its glitzy vibe keeps it there.

ORIENTATION

The harbour divides Sydney into north and south, with the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Harbour Tunnel joining the two shores. The city centre is roughly from Circular Quay to Central Station. To the west is Darling Harbour, while to the east lie Darlinghurst, Kings Cross and Paddington.

Three kilometres further southeast, along the coast, are the ocean-beach suburbs of Bondi and Coogee. Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport is 10km south of the city centre. West of the centre are the gentrified suburbs of Pyrmont, Glebe and Balmain. The inner west includes Newtown and Leichhardt. Suburbs stretch 20km north and south of the centre, their extent limited by national parks. The suburbs north of the bridge are known collectively as the North Shore. The western suburbs sprawl for 50km to reach the foothills of the Blue Mountains.

Maps

If you're driving around the city for any length of time, a *Sydney UBD* street directory (around \$35) is invaluable. Otherwise, you'll find free maps aplenty at the visitor centres. The free city-sponsored themed walking guides are excellent.

Map World (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9261 3601; www.mapworld.com.au; 280 Pitt St; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3.45pm Sat) Maps, atlases, GPS and travel guides.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Ariel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9332 4581; www.arielbooks.com.au; 42 Oxford St, Paddington; 🕒 9am-midnight) Art, film, fashion, design and travel guides.

Dymocks (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9235 0155; www.dymocks.com.au; 424-28 George St, Sydney; 🕒 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Mainstream titles, stationery and lots of guidebooks and maps.

Gleebooks (Map p196; ☎ 9660 2333; www.gleebooks.com.au; 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; 🕒 9am-9pm) Politics, arts and fiction... just about everything in a classic neighbourhood shop; others are nearby.

Kinokuniya (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9262 7996; www.kinokuniya.com; Level 2, TGV, 500 George St, Sydney; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun) Over 300,000 titles – Sydney's biggest bookshop.

Travel Bookshop (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9261 8200; www.travelbooks.com.au; 175 Liverpool St, Sydney; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) Travel books, and lots of them.

Emergency

In the event of an emergency, call ☎ 000 to contact the police, ambulance and fire authorities.

Lifeline (☎ 13 11 14; www.lifeline.com.au) Over-the-phone counselling services, including suicide prevention.

National Roads & Motorists Association (NRMA; Map pp186-7; ☎ 13 21 32; www.nrma.com.au; 74-6 King St, Sydney; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) Car insurance and roadside service.

Police Stations Include 132 George St, Sydney (Map pp186-7) and 1-15 Elizabeth Bay Rd, Kings Cross (Map p193).

Rape Crisis Centre (☎ 1800 424 017)

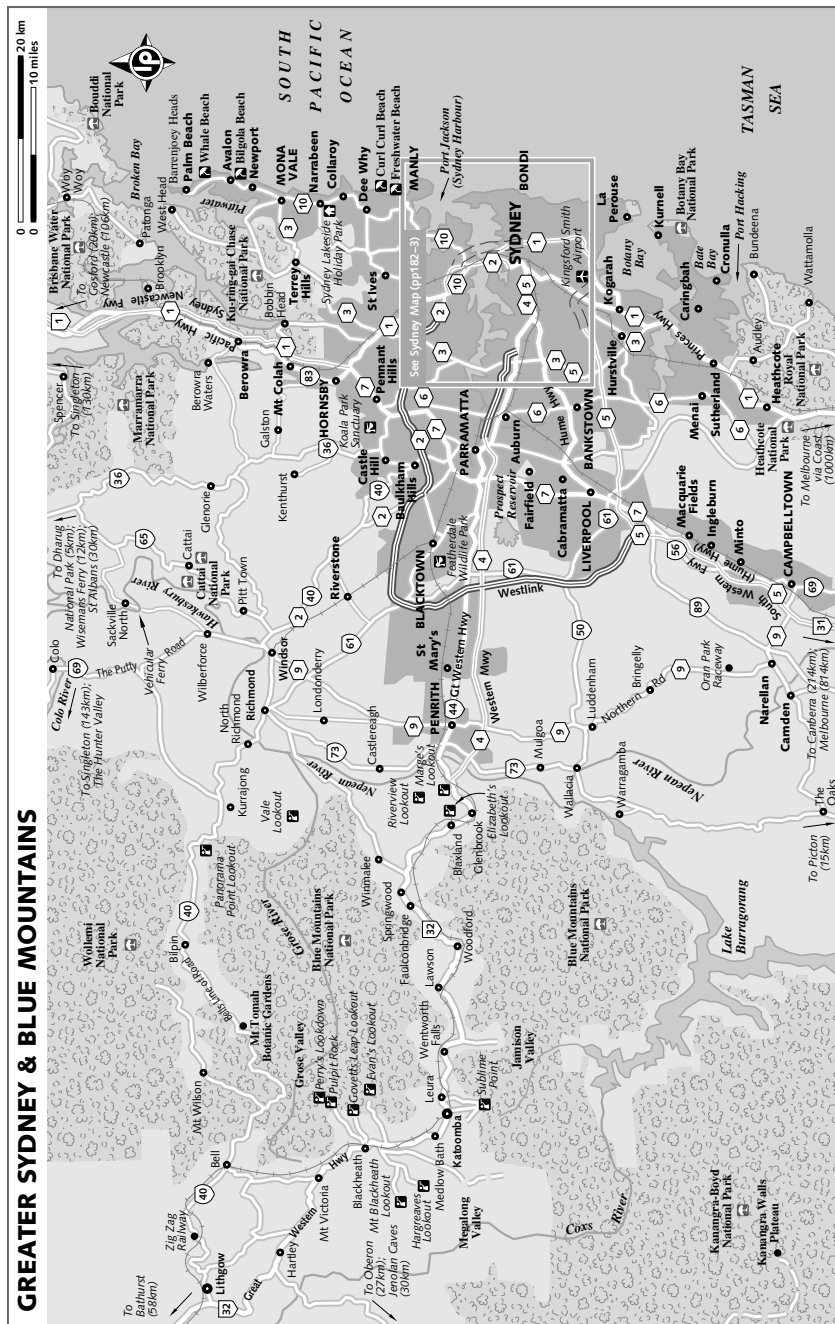
Internet Access

Internet cafés are common in Sydney, especially in Kings Cross, Chinatown and Bondi. Rates are around \$3 an hour. Plenty of hostels and hotels offer internet access to their guests.

Global Gossip Kings Cross (Map p193; ☎ 9326 9777; 61 Darlinghurst Rd; per hr \$2; 🕒 9am-midnight); Sydney (Map pp186-7; 790 George St); Sydney (Map pp186-7; 415 Pitt St); Bondi (Map p195; 37 Hall St) Traveller-friendly chain.

Internet Resources

For more information on Sydney, check out the following websites:



SYDNEY IN...

Two Days

Start your day in Sydney with the walking tour of the **centre** (see boxed text, p199) before scooting off to **Bondi** (p194) and enjoying a dip at Sydney's most famous beach. That night, catch a performance at the **Opera House** (p184), before or after dining at one of Sydney's many fabulous restaurants.

The next day, hop on a slow ferry to **Manly** (p197), where you can enjoy an open-air brunch, followed by a swim or long walk along the 9km Manly Scenic Walkway. If you have time, stop at the **Taronga Zoo** (p197). That night, head out to **Surry Hills** (p206) for dinner and drinks.

Four Days

By the third day, you'll be itching to see Sydney's diverse neighbourhoods. Energise yourself with yum cha in **Chinatown** (p206). In the afternoon, walk around edgy **Newtown** (p195) and **Glebe** (p195), and that night go genteel at a posh pub in **Darlinghurst** (p206) or **Paddington** (p207).

On the fourth day, get out of town by taking the train to the majestic **Blue Mountains** (p216), and join in the sighing as you gaze upon the **Three Sisters** (p218). Have lunch in **Katoomba** (p218) before heading back to Sydney or staying the night in one of the mountain villages.

One Week

Spend your final days filling in the gaps of your sightseeing. Get out on the water on a yacht (p198). Spend a day taking a tour of one of **Sydney Harbour National Park's** (p184) islands. Go nuts in the endless nightlife of **Kings Cross** and **Darlinghurst** (for both, see p211).

Shop till you drop on your last days in Sydney, loading up on fashion and kitsch at **Paddington Market** (p213) or at one of Sydney's many outdoor **crafts markets** (p213).

www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au Visitor information, disabled access, parking, history and downloadable walking tours.

www.eatability.com.au User-generated dining and bar reviews.

www.inthemix.com.au What's on in the dance music and club scene.

www.smh.com.au Good for upcoming events, restaurant and bar reviews, and to take the pulse of the city.

www.sydney.citysearch.com.au What's on listings.

www.visitnsw.com.au Neighbourhood by neighbourhood visitors' guide.

Medical Services

Kings Cross Travellers Clinic (Map p193; ☎ 9358 3066; www.travellersclinic.com.au; 13 Springfield Ave, Kings Cross; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-noon Sat) General medical, dive medicals and morning-after pill scripts; bookings advised.

Sydney Hospital (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9382 7111; www.sesahs.nsw.gov.au/sydhosp; 8 Macquarie St, Sydney; ☎ 24hr emergency)

Money

There are plenty of ATMs throughout Sydney; both **American Express** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 1300 139 060; 175 Liverpool St, Sydney; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) and

Travellex (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9231 2523; Queen Victoria Bldg, 455 George St, Sydney; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) have city branches. Seven-day exchange bureaux include:

Central Station (Map pp186-7; Coach Terminal; ☎ 9am-4pm)

Circular Quay (Map pp186-7; Wharf 6; ☎ 8am-9.30pm)

Kings Cross (Map p193; cnr Springfield Ave & Darlinghurst Rd; ☎ 8am-midnight)

Post

Stamps are sold at post offices, Australia Post retail outlets in most suburbs and most newsagents.

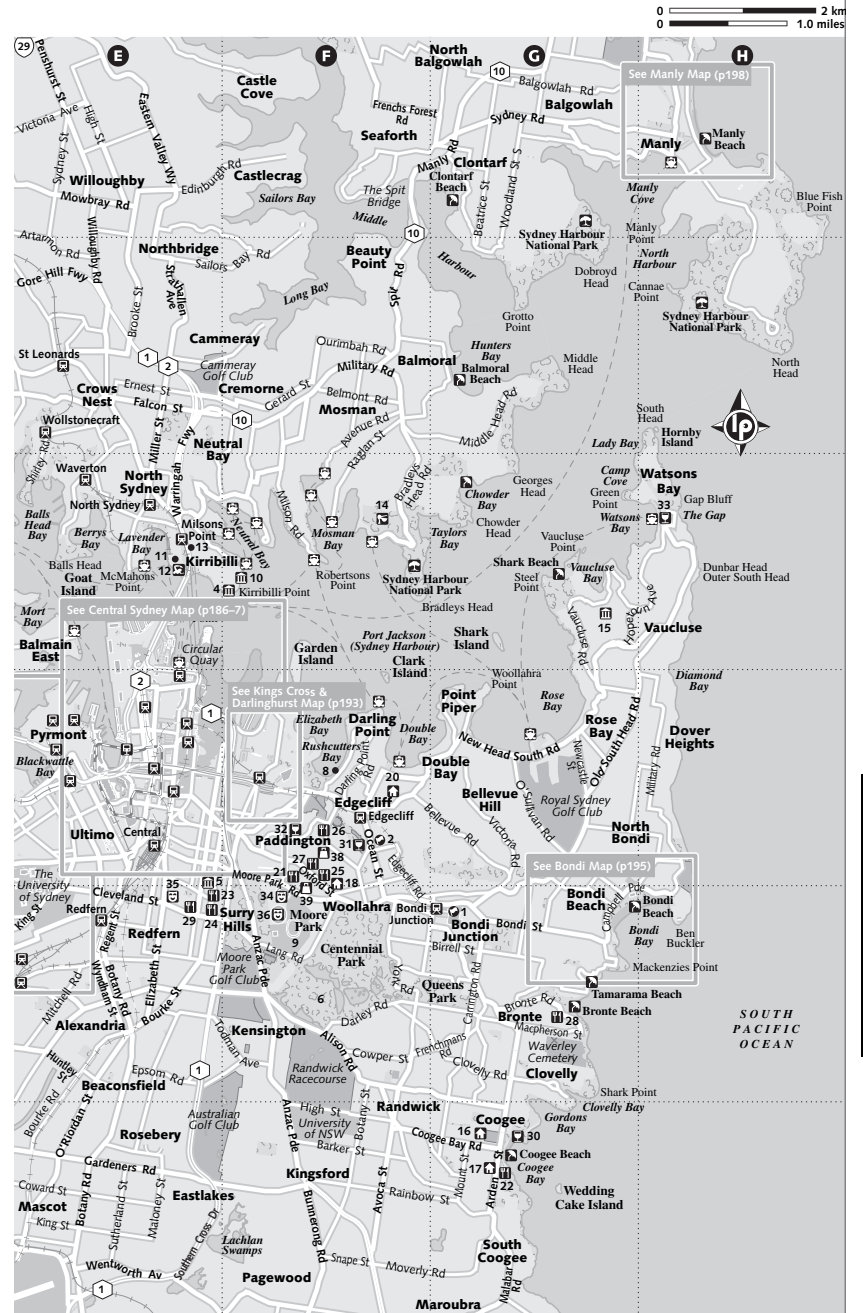
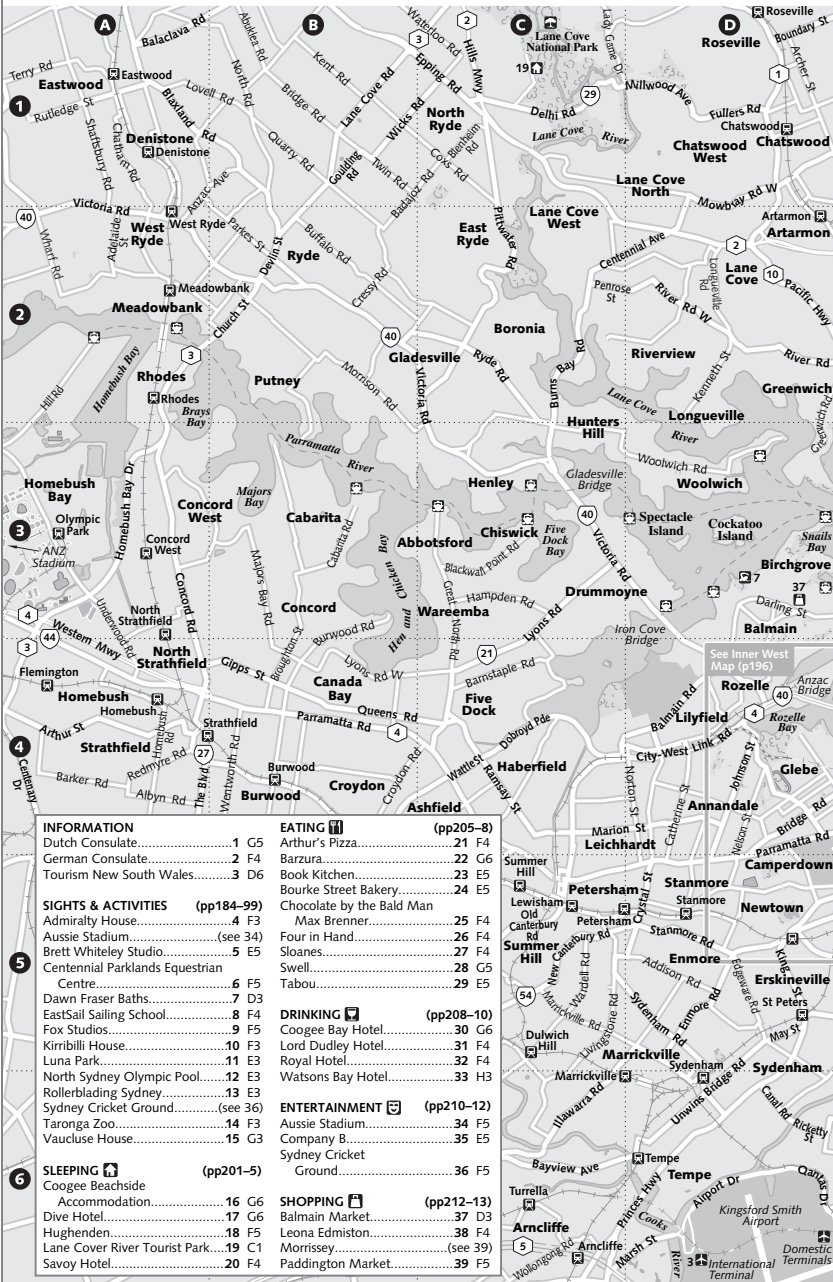
General Post Office (GPO; Map pp186-7; ☎ 13 13 18; www.auspost.com.au; 1 Martin Pl; ☎ 8.15am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat)

Tourist Information

Sydney Harbour National Parks Information Centre (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9247 5033; Cadmans Cottage, 110 George St, The Rocks; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4.30pm Sat & Sun) Has maps of walks in different parts of the park and information on tours of the harbour islands.

Sydney visitors centres The Rocks (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9240 8788; www.sydneyvisitorcentre.com; cnr Argyle & Playfair Sts; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm); Darling Harbour (Map

SYDNEY



pp186-7; ☎ 9240 8788; www.sydneyvisitorcentre.com; Palm Grove, behind Imax; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm) Comprehensive; also acts as an accommodation agency. The Rocks location is part gift shop.

Tourism New South Wales (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9667 6050; International Arrivals, Terminal 1, Kingsford Smith Airport; ☎ 5am-11pm) Accommodation and travel advice.

Travel Agencies

Travellers Contact Point (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9221 8744, 1800 647 640; www.travellers.com.au; Level 7, 428 George St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Backpacker agency that holds mail and has a good bulletin board.

YHA Membership & Travel Centre (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9261 1111; www.yha.com.au; 422 Kent St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Wed & Fri, to 6pm Thu, 10am-2pm Sat) Offers travel packages and YHA bookings worldwide.

SIGHTS

Sydney will keep you busy. Much of it doesn't cost a cent, but if you plan on seeing an exceptional number of museums, attractions and tours, check out the **Smartvisit card** (☎ 1300 661 711; www.seesydneycard.com).

Sydney Harbour

Stretching 20km inland to the mouth of the Parramatta River, Sydney Harbour (aka **Port Jackson**) is Sydney's shimmering soul, its beaches, coves, bays, islands and waterside parks providing crucial relief from the ordeals of urban life.

Forming the gateway to the harbour are **North Head** (Map pp182-3) and **South Head** (Map pp182-3). **Watsons Bay** (Map pp182-3) nestles on South Head's harbourside, fostering a salty cottage atmosphere. The harbour beaches are generally sheltered, calm coves with little of the frenzied foam of the ocean beaches. On the south shore is **Camp Cove** (Map pp182-3), a photogenic swimming beach where Arthur Phillip first landed, and the shark-netted **Shark Bay** (Map pp182-3). On the North Shore try **Manly Cove**, **Reef Beach**, **Clontarf Beach**, **Chinamans Beach** and **Balmoral Beach** (all Map pp182-3). Exploring this vast area by ferry (p214) is one of Sydney's great joys.

SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL PARK

This national park (Map pp182-3) protects scattered pockets of harbourside bushland with magical walking tracks, lookouts, Aboriginal engravings and historic sites. Its southern side incorporates South Head and **Nielsen Park**; on

the North Shore it includes **North Head**, **Dobroyd Head**, **Middle Head** and **Ashton Park**.

Five harbour islands are also part of the park: **Clark Island** off Darling Point, **Shark Island** off Rose Bay, **Rodd Island** in Iron Cove, **Goat Island** (Map pp186-7), once a hellish convict gulag, and the small fortified **Fort Denison** (Map pp182-3) off Mrs Macquaries Point.

Except for Goat Island, which is currently off limits, the harbour islands are open to visitors. The NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) runs 2½-hour Fort Denison **tours** (adult/concession \$27/24; ☎ 12.15 & 2.30pm, also 10.45am Wed-Sun) – book at the Sydney Harbour National Park Information Centre (p181). You can catch a water taxi (p214) to Rodd and Clark Islands; they incur a \$5 landing fee, also payable at Cadman's Cottage.

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE

The **opera house** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9250 7111; www.sydneyoperahouse.com; Bennelong Pt, Circular Quay E), designed by Danish architect Jørn Utzon, is Australia's most recognisable icon and essential sight. It's said to have drawn inspiration from orange segments, snails, palm fronds and Maya temples, and has been poetically likened to a 'nun's scrum' and the sexual congress of turtles. It's arresting from any angle (the 67m-high roof features 27,230 tonnes of Swedish tiles – 1,056,000 of them), but the ferry view approaching Circular Quay is hard to beat.

There are four main auditoriums for dance, concerts, opera and theatre events, plus the left-of-centre Studio for emerging artists. The acoustics are superb, the internal aesthetics like the belly of a whale. Two thousand four hundred annual events cost over \$40 million to run and keep the Concert Hall organ's 10,500 pipes humming.

Opera house **tours** (☎ 9250 7250; adult/concession \$35/24, discounts online; ☎ 1hr tours 9am-5pm) take you from 'front of house' to backstage, excluding theatres in rehearsal use. Let them know in advance if you require wheelchair access.

SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE

Whether they're driving over it, climbing up it, rollerblading across it or sailing under it, Sydneysiders adore their bridge (Map pp186-7). The 1932 bridge links the CBD with the North Sydney business district, spanning the harbour at one of its narrowest points.

The best way to experience the bridge is on foot – don't expect much of a view crossing by

car or train. Staircases climb up to the bridge from both shores, leading to a footpath running the length of the eastern side. A cycle way wheels along the western side. You can climb the southeastern pylon to the **Pylon Lookout** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9240 1100; www.pylonlookout.com.au; adult/child/concession \$9.50/4/6.50; ☎ 10am-5pm), or ascend the great arc on a **bridge climb** (see p201).

The Rocks

The Rocks – the site of Sydney's first European settlement – has evolved unrecognisably from its squalid, overcrowded origins. Residents once sloshed through open sewers and alleyways festering with disease, prostitution and drunken lawlessness. Sailors, whalers and rapsallions boozed and brawled shamelessly in countless harbourside pubs.

The Rocks remained a commercial and maritime hub until shipping services left Circular Quay in the late 1800s. A bubonic plague outbreak in 1900 continued the decline. Construction of the Harbour Bridge in the 1920s brought further demolition, entire streets disappearing under the bridge's southern approach.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the Rocks' cultural and architectural heritage was recognised. The ensuing redevelopment saved a lot of old buildings but has turned the area east of the bridge highway into a tourist trap. Kitsch cafés and shops hocking stuffed koalas and bare bum postcards now prevail.

Cadman's Cottage (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9247 5033; www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au; 110 George St; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4.30pm Sat & Sun), built on a buried beach, is Sydney's oldest house (1816). Its namesake, John Cadman, was Government Coxswain. Water police detained criminals here in the 1840s; it was later converted into a home for retired sea captains. Further along George St is the schlock-laden weekend **Rocks Market** (see p213).

The excellent **Rocks Discovery Museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 1800 067 676; www.rocksdiscoverymuseum.com; 2-8 Kendall Lane, The Rocks; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) digs deep into artefact-laden Rocks history and provides insight into the lives of the Cadi people, the Rocks' original inhabitants.

Beyond the **Argyle Cut** (Map pp186-7), an impressive tunnel excavated by convicts, is **Millers Point**, a charming district of early colonial homes; stroll here to enjoy everything the Rocks is not. **Argyle Place** (Map pp186-7) is an English-style village green on which any

Australian has the legal right to graze livestock. Overlooking it is **Garrison Church** (Map pp186-7), Australia's oldest church (1848).

The 1850s, copper-dominated, Italianate **Sydney Observatory** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9217 0485; www.sydneyobservatory.com.au; Watson Rd; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) sits atop Observatory Park. You can look around or enjoy a celestial show in the theatre.

In the old military hospital building nearby, the **SH Ervin Gallery** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9258 0173; www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/ervin.html; Watson Rd; adult/child \$6/4; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun) exhibits Australian art, including the annual Salon des Refusés collection of alternative Archibald Prize entries.

The wharves around Dawes Point are rapidly emerging from prolonged decay. Walsh Bay's Pier 4 houses the renowned **Sydney Theatre Company** (p212) and several other performance troupes. The impressive **Sydney Theatre** (p212) is across the road.

CIRCULAR QUAY

Built around Sydney Cove, Circular Quay is Sydney's public-transport hub, with ferry quays, bus stops, a train station and the **Overseas Passenger Terminal** (Map pp186-7), where cruise ships disgorge their mobs. European settlement grew around the Tank Stream, which now trickles underground into the harbour near Wharf 6. For many years Circular Quay was also Sydney's port, but these days it's more of a recreational space, with harbour walkways, grassy verges, cafés and buskers of varying talent.

The cavernous 1885 **Customs House** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9242 8555; www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/library; 31 Alfred St; admission free; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat, noon-5pm Sun, library 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun) has been recently renovated and houses the Customs House Library. Under the glass floor of the foyer is a way-cool 1:500 model of Sydney.

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Always ready with something to love or hate, the **MCA** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9245 2400; www.mca.com.au; 140 George St; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) fronts Circular Quay West in a stately Art Deco building. Its constantly changing exhibitions from Australia and overseas range from hip to explicit to disturbing.

Central Sydney

Central Sydney stretches from Circular Quay in the north to Central Station in the south. The rather dull (especially on weekends!) business



CENTRAL SYDNEY (p186-7)

INFORMATION	Museum of Sydney.....	50 D3	One Alfred Street.....	106 C3
American Express.....	Oxford St.....	51 D7	Spice 1 Am.....	107 C7
Ariel.....	Parliament House.....	52 D4	Xic Lo.....	108 C7
Bicycle NSW.....	Police & Justice Museum.....	53 D3	Zaaffran.....	109 B5
British Consulate.....	Powerhouse Museum.....	54 B7		
Canadian Consulate.....	Pylon Lookout.....	55 C1	DRINKING ☞☞ (pp208-10)	
Central Station Exchange	Pyrmont Bridge.....	56 B5	Bambini Wine Room.....	110 D5
Bureau.....	Queen Victoria Building.....	(see 137)	Cricketers Arms Hotel.....	111 E8
Circular Quay Exchange	Rocks Discovery Museum.....	57 C2	Dolphin.....	112 D8
Bureau.....	Royal Botanic Gardens.....	58 E3	Establishment.....	(see 83)
Dymocks.....	St Andrew's Cathedral.....	59 C6	Harbour View Hotel.....	113 C2
French Consulate.....	St James Church.....	60 D5	Hero of Waterloo.....	114 C2
General Post Office.....	St Mary's Cathedral.....	61 D5	Lord Nelson Brewery	
Global Gossip.....	SH Ervin Gallery.....	62 C3	Hotel.....	115 B2
Global Gossip.....	Speakers' Corner.....	63 E4		
Irish Consulate.....	Star City Casino.....	64 A4	ENTERTAINMENT ☞ (pp210-12)	
Japanese Consulate.....	State Library of NSW.....	65 D4	Academy Twin Cinema.....	116 E7
Kinokuniya.....	Strand Arcade.....	(see 143)	ARQ.....	117 E7
Map World.....	Sydney Aquarium.....	66 B5	Arthouse Hotel.....	118 C5
New Zealand High	Sydney by Sail.....	67 B5	Basement.....	119 C3
Commission.....	Sydney Conservatorium of		Dendy Opera Quays.....	120 D2
NRMA.....	Music.....	68 D3	Gaelic Club.....	121 C8
Police Station.....	Sydney Ferries.....	69 D3	Home.....	122 B5
Sydney Harbour National Park	Sydney Harbour Bridge.....	70 C1	Hopetoun Hotel.....	123 E8
Information Centre.....	Sydney Observatory.....	71 C2	Metro.....	124 C6
Sydney Hospital.....	Sydney Opera House.....	72 D2	Midnight Shift.....	125 D7
Sydney Visitors Centre	Sydney Tower.....	73 C5	Open Air Cinema.....	126 F2
(Darling Harbour).....	Sydney Wildlife World.....	74 B5	Oxford Hotel.....	127 E7
Sydney Visitors Centre	Taylor Square.....	75 E7	Sydney Opera House.....	(see 72)
(The Rocks).....	Town Hall.....	76 C5	Sydney Theatre.....	128 C2
Travel Bookshop.....			Sydney Theatre Company.....	129 C1
Travelx.....	SLEEPING ☞ (pp201-5)		Ticketek.....	130 D5
Travellers Contact Point.....	B&B Sydney Harbour.....	77 C2	Wine Banq.....	131 D4
Travellers' Information	Big Hostel.....	78 C7		
Service.....	Blacket.....	79 C4	SHOPPING ☞ (pp212-13)	
US Consulate.....	Cambridge Park Inn.....	80 D7	C's Flashback.....	132 D7
YHA Membership & Travel	Capitol Square Hotel.....	81 C7	David Jones.....	133 D5
Centre.....	City Crown Motel.....	82 D7	David Jones.....	134 C5
	Establishment Hotel.....	83 C3	Gavala.....	135 B5
	Grand Hotel.....	84 C4	Paddy's Markets.....	136 B7
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp184-99)	Lord Nelson Brewery		Queen Victoria Building.....	137 C5
Andrew 'Boy' Charlton	Hotel.....	(see 115)	Quick Brown Fox.....	138 F8
Pool.....	Macquarie Boutique Hotel.....	85 D7	RM Williams.....	139 C5
Anzac Memorial.....	Manor House.....	86 E8	Rocks Market.....	140 C2
Argyle Cut.....	Mercantile Hotel.....	87 C2	Sass & Bide.....	141 F8
Argyle Place.....	Metro Hotel Sydney		Scanlan & Theodore.....	142 F8
Art Gallery of NSW.....	Central.....	88 C7	Strand Arcade.....	143 C5
Australian Museum.....	Palisade Hotel.....	89 B2	Strand Hatters.....	(see 143)
Australian National Maritime	Park Hyatt.....	90 C1	Tool Shed.....	144 D7
Museum.....	Pensione Hotel.....	91 C7		
BridgeClimb.....	Railway Square YHA.....	92 C8	TRANSPORT (pp213-16)	
Cadmans Cottage.....	Russell.....	93 C2	Bus TransitShop	
Captain Cook Cruises.....	Sullivans Hotel.....	94 E8	(Circular Quay).....	145 D3
Chinese Garden of	Sydney Central YHA.....	95 C7	Bus TransitShop	
Friendship.....	Vibe Hotel.....	96 C7	(Queen Victoria Building).....	146 C5
Cockle Bay Wharf.....	Wake Up!.....	97 C8	Bus TransitShop	
Customs House.....	Wattle Hotel.....	98 E7	(Railway Square).....	147 B8
Domain.....	Woodduck Harbour City		Bus TransitShop	
Garrison Church.....	Backpackers.....	99 E5	(Wynyard Station).....	148 C4
Government House.....	Y Hotel.....	100 D6	CityRail Information	
Great Synagogue.....			Booth.....	149 C3
Hyde Park.....	EATING ☞☞ (pp205-8)		CountryLink Travel Centre.....	150 C8
Hyde Park Barracks	Bar Quattro.....	101 D5	Ferry Information Office.....	151 D3
Museum.....	Bodhi.....	102 D5	Overseas Passenger	
King St Wharf.....	Emperor's Garden BBQ &		Terminal.....	152 D2
Macquarie Place.....	Noodles.....	103 C7	Sydney Coach Terminal.....	153 C8
Mint.....	La Renaissance.....	104 C2	Watertours.....	154 B5
Museum of Contemporary	Marigold Restaurant.....	105 C7	Yellow Water Taxis.....	155 B4
Art.....				

INDIGENOUS SYDNEY

Sydney, with its own rich Aboriginal heritage, is a good place to start to explore Aboriginal culture and life both locally and across Australia.

For information on Aboriginal rock carvings around Sydney Harbour – they date back thousands of years – check with the Sydney Harbour National Parks Information Centre (p181). You can also find rock carvings close to Bondi (p194).

A cluster of major cultural institutions, the **Australian Museum** (p190), the **Art Gallery of NSW** (p190) and the **Royal Botanic Gardens** (p190), all have extensive exhibits and programs relating to Aboriginal life and culture.

Many tour companies offer themed itineraries. **Sydney Aboriginal Discoveries** (p201) offers well-regarded walks.

Many shops sell Aboriginal goods, although it's easy to find fake junk that's made in China. Among the places well-regarded for their authentic art and goods are:

Artery (Map p193; ☎ 9380 8234; Shop 2, 221 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst) Artery deliberately steers away from the glitzy Sydney gallery scene, sourcing its contemporary, original selections from up-and-coming Central Australian artists. Prices are realistic and affordable: modern indigenous jewellery, hand-woven baskets and gorgeous canvases start at \$25.

Gavala (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9212 7232; Shop 131, 1st fl, Harbourside Shopping Centre, Darling Harbour) Gavala is 100% Aboriginal-owned, stirring up an outdoor vibe with a mind-boggling collation of paintings, boomerangs, didjeridus, artefacts, books, clothing and CDs.

hub is towards the northern end, but the southern end is being redeveloped, gradually shifting the city's focus. For a lofty city view, take a trip up **Sydney Tower** (Map pp186-7; 100 Market St).

Sydney lacks a true civic centre, but **Martin Place** (Map pp186-7) comes close. This grand pedestrian mall extends from Macquarie St to George St, and is lined with monumental financial buildings and the Victorian colonnaded General Post Office. There's a cenotaph commemorating Australia's war dead, an amphitheatre for lunchtime entertainment and plenty of places to sit and watch the weekday crowds.

Sydney's 1874 **Town Hall** (Map pp186-7) is a few blocks south of here on the corner of George and Druitt Sts. The elaborate chamber room and concert hall inside match the fabulously ornate exterior. Next door, the Anglican **St Andrew's Cathedral** (Map pp186-7), built around the same time, is Australia's oldest cathedral. Next to St Andrew's, taking up an entire city block, the **Queen Victoria Building** (p212) is Sydney's most sumptuous shopping complex and a real highlight. Running a close second is the elegant **Strand Arcade** (p212) between Pitt St Mall and George St.

Breathing life into the CBD's lacklustre southwestern zone are Sydney's teensy **Spanish Quarter** (Map pp186-7) and thriving **Chinatown** (Map pp186-7), a tight nest of restaurants, shops and aroma-filled alleyways around Dixon St. Chinatown goes berserk

during Chinese New Year in late January/early February – streets throng with sideshows, digitally accompanied musicians and stalls selling everything from good-luck tokens to black-sesame ice-cream burgers (seeing jaunty, fire-breathing paper dragons after eating these is not a hallucinogenic effect).

On the eastern edge of the city centre is the formal **Hyde Park** (Map pp186-7), which has a grand avenue of trees and delightful fountains. Wander into the dignified **Anzac Memorial** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9267 7668; www.rslns.wa.com.au; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) here, with an interior dome studded with one star for each of the 120,000 NSW citizens who served in WWI. The pines near the entrance grow from seeds gathered at Gallipoli. **St Mary's Cathedral** (Map pp186-7), with its new copper spires, overlooks the park from the east, while the 1878 **Great Synagogue** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9267 2477; www.greatsynagogue.org.au; 187a Elizabeth St; adult/child \$5/\$3; ☎ tours noon Tue & Thu) stands to the west.

Macquarie Place & Around

Narrow lanes lead south from Circular Quay towards the city centre. At the corner of Loftus and Bridge Sts is **Macquarie Place** (Map pp186-7), a leafy public square proudly displaying a cannon and an anchor from the First Fleet flagship, HMS *Strius*, and an 1818 obelisk etched with road distances to various points in the nascent colony.

Inside the old Water Police Station (1858) nearby, the **Justice & Police Museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9252 1144; www.hht.net.au; cnr Albert & Phillip Sts; adult/child/family \$8/4/17; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat & Sun, daily Jan) celebrates, as it were, disreputable activities. Does anyone not look guilty in a mugshot?

MUSEUM OF SYDNEY

This thoroughly engaging **museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9251 5988; www.hht.net.au; cnr Bridge & Phillip Sts; adult/child/family \$10/5/20; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) is east of Macquarie Place, on the site of Sydney's first (and infamously pungent) Government House (1788). The city's early history (including pre-1788) comes to life here through whispers, arguments, gossip, artefacts and state-of-the-art installations.

MACQUARIE STREET

A crop of early public buildings grace this street, defining the city's edge from Hyde Park to the Opera House. Many of these buildings were commissioned by Lachlan Macquarie, the first NSW governor with a vision of Sydney beyond its convict origins. He enlisted convict architect Francis Greenway to help realise his plans.

Two Greenway gems front onto Queens Sq at Hyde Park's northern end: **St James Church** (Map pp186-7), Sydney's oldest church, having been built in 1819, and the **Hyde Park Barracks Museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 8239 2311; www.hht.net.au; adult/child/family \$10/5/20; ☎ 9.30am-5pm), also built in 1819. The barracks functioned as quarters for Anglo-Irish convicts (aka Oz pioneers) from 1819 to 1848, an immigrant depot (1848-86) and government courts (1887-1979) before its current incarnation – a window into everyday convict life.

Further down Macquarie St are the deep verandas, formal colonnades and ochre tones of the twin 1816 **Mint** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 8239 2288; www.hht.net.au; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) and **Parliament House** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9230 2111; www.parliament.nsw.gov.au; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) buildings, originally wings of the infamous Rum Hospital, which was built by two Sydney merchants in 1816 in return for a monopoly on the rum trade.

Next to Parliament House, the **State Library of NSW** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9273 1414; www.sl.nsw.gov.au; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) holds over five million tomes, the smallest being a tablet-sized Lord's Prayer, and hosts innovative exhibitions in its **galleries** (☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri-Sun).

At the top of Bridge St, the **Sydney Conservatorium of Music** (☎ 9351 1222; www.usyd.edu.au/conmusic; Macquarie St) was the Greenway-designed stables and servants' quarters for Macquarie's planned Government House. Macquarie was usurped as governor before the house could be finished, partly because of the project's extravagance.

Built between 1837 and 1845, the Gothic Revival **Government House** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9931 5222; www.hht.net.au; admission free; ☎ 10.30am-3pm Fri-Sun, grounds 10am-4pm daily) is just off Macquarie St in the Royal Botanic Gardens. You can only see the overstuffed furnishings on a tour.

The **Domain** (Map pp186-7) is a pleasant grassy area east of Macquarie St that was set aside by Governor Phillip for public recreation. The unfailingly eccentric **Speakers' Corner** (Map pp186-7; ☎ noon-4pm Sun) convenes in front of the Art Gallery – religious zealots, nutters, political extremists, homophobes, hippies and guide-book writers express their earnest opinions.

AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

Not far from Macquarie St, this **natural history museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9320 6000; www.aronline.net.au; 6-8 College St; adult/child/family \$10/5/25; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) stuffed its first animal just 40 years after the First Fleet dropped anchor. There are Aboriginal, native-wildlife and kid-friendly exhibitions, self-guided tours and indigenous performances on Sunday (call for times).

ART GALLERY OF NSW

Highlights at this **gallery** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9225 1744; www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au; Art Gallery Rd, The Domain; admission free, varied costs for touring exhibitions; ☎ 10am-5pm Thu-Tue, to 9pm Wed, free guided tours 1pm) include 19th- and 20th-century Australian art and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. The European and Asian art is best for those not leaving Oz anytime soon. The controversial, much-discussed Archibald Prize (www.thearchibaldprize.com.au) exhibits here annually, with portraits of the famous and not-so-famous bringing out the art critic in everyone. There are numerous screenings and special programs.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

The **gardens** (RBG; Map pp186-7; ☎ 9231 8111; www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au; Mrs Macquaries Rd; admission free; ☎ 7am-sunset) were established in 1816 as the colony's vegetable patch. The attitude here is relaxed – signs say, 'Please walk on the grass. We also

invite you to smell the roses, hug the trees, talk to the birds and picnic on the lawns'. Take a **free guided walk** (☎ 10.30am daily), or an **Aboriginal Heritage Tour** (☎ 9231 8134; per person \$25; ☎ 2pm Fri), both departing from the Gardens Shop.

Highlights include the rose garden, the South Pacific plant collection, the prickly arid garden, the glass pyramid at the **Tropical Centre** (adult/child \$4.20/2.20; ☎ 10am-4pm) and a herb garden. Management periodically tries to oust the colonies of bats (aka flying foxes) as they destroy things and poop on everything but they just keep hanging around. Amid the hubbub of central Sydney, you may well want to hang around the gardens yourself. The walk from Mrs Macquaries Point to the Opera House is one of Sydney's best.

Darling Harbour

This rambling, purpose-built, waterfront tourist development (www.darlingharbour.com) lining Cockle Bay on the city's western edge was once industrial docklands with factories, warehouses and shipyards. These days it is very commercial and something of a theme park, without a real theme except money.

Hemmed in by an architectural spoil of grotesque flyovers, chain hotels, sculptures and playgrounds are various museums and sights, a plethora of harbour-cruise outlets and the overrated Harbourside Shopping Centre. The flashy **Cockle Bay Wharf** (Map pp186-7) and **King St Wharf** (Map pp186-7) precincts contain cafés, bars and restaurants aimed at the day-tripping masses.

An actual highlight is a stroll across the restored **Pymont Bridge** (Map pp186-7), which cuts over this mess with a timeless dignity. It leads to **Pymont** (Map p196), home of the Sydney Fish Market (see right) and the **Star City Casino** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9657 8694; www.starcity.com.au; 80 Pymont St, Pymont; ☎ 24hr), where fish of a different type are filleted.

Darling Harbour and Pymont are serviced by ferry, monorail, Metro Light Rail (MLR) and the Sydney Explorer bus.

SYDNEY AQUARIUM

Visitors wander about fish-eyed at the ever-popular **aquarium** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 8251 7800; www.sydneyaquarium.com.au; Aquarium Pier; adult/child/family \$30/15/70; ☎ 9am-10pm, last admission 9pm), celebrating the richness of Australian marine life. Three 'oceanariums' are moored in the harbour: sharks, rays and humungous fish in

one; Sydney Harbour marine life and seals in the other two. Don't miss the kaleidoscopic colours of the Great Barrier Reef exhibit, platypuses and crocodiles at the Southern and Northern Rivers exhibits, and the cute penguins in the Southern Oceans section.

SYDNEY WILDLIFE WORLD

Next to the aquarium, this indoor **wildlife zoo** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9333 9288; www.sydneywildlife.world.com.au; Aquarium Pier; adult/child/family \$30/15/70; ☎ 9am-10pm, last admission 9pm) is the place to poke a koala or mount a wallaby (OK, you just get to look at them unless you buy the stuffed versions in the vast gift shop). Unexpectedly intriguing are the displays of ants and other industrious bugs.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

Beneath an Utzonlike roof, the thematic **maritime museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9298 3777; www.anmm.gov.au; 2 Murray St; admission free, special exhibits adult/child/family from \$10/6/20; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) examines Australia's inextricable relationship with the sea. Exhibitions range from Aboriginal canoes to surf culture and the Navy. If you can avoid a trip to the poop deck on the extra-cost ships moored outside, this museum is great value.

POWERHOUSE MUSEUM

Many get a charge out of this eclectic **museum** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9217 0100; www.powerhousemuseum.com; 500 Harris St, Ultimo; adult/child/family \$10/5/25, additional costs for special exhibits; ☎ 10am-5pm) inside the former power station for Sydney's defunct tram network. It's a fascinating place with hands-on exhibits on everything from science to how people used to live in Sydney (note the women's work area titled '...never done').

CHINESE GARDEN OF FRIENDSHIP

Built according to the balanced principles of Yin and Yang, these **gardens** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 6863; www.chinesegarden.com.au; adult/child/family \$6/3/15; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) is an oasis of tranquillity in the otherwise hectic Darling Harbour.

SYDNEY FISH MARKET

With over 15 million kilograms of seafood shipped through here annually, the cavernous **fish market** (Map p196; ☎ 9004 1122; www.sydneyfishmarket.com.au; cnr Pymont Bridge Rd & Bank St, Pymont; ☎ 7am-4pm) is the place to introduce yourself to a bewildering array of mud crabs, Balmain

bugs, lobsters, oysters, mullet, rainbow trout, fat slabs of salmon and more. There are plenty of fishy restaurants, a deli, a wine centre, a sushi bar and an oyster bar. You can picnic on the water. Arrive early to check out the early morning auctions or take a behind-the-scenes **auction tour** (per person \$20; ☎ 6.50-8.30am Thu) – reservations aren't required, but wear closed-toe shoes. You can also book yourself in for regular seafood cooking classes here at the **Sydney Seafood School** (Map p196; ☎ 9004 1111; classes from \$75). It's west of Darling Harbour on Blackwattle Bay; the MLR stops outside.

Kings Cross

Riding high above the CBD under the big **Coca-Cola sign** (Map p193) – as much a Sydney icon as LA's Hollywood sign – 'the Cross' is a bizarre, densely populated dichotomy of good and evil. Strip joints, tacky tourist shops and backpacker hostels bang heads with trendy restaurants, funky bars and sybaritic guesthouses. The Cross retains a sleazy, cannibalistic aura, but the vague sense of menace is more imaginary than real. Sometimes the razzle-dazzle has a sideshow appeal; sometimes walking up Darlinghurst Rd promotes pity. Either way, it's never boring.

The gracious tree-lined streets of neighbouring **Potts Point** (Map p193) and **Elizabeth Bay** (Map p193) feature well-preserved Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco houses and flats.

Possibly the only word in the world with eight 'o's, **Woolloomooloo** (Map p193), down **McElhone Stairs** (Map p193) from the Cross, was once a slum full of drunks and sailors, and drunk sailors. Things are begrudgingly less pugilistic these days – the pubs are relaxed and **Woolloomooloo Wharf** (Map p193) contains scads of restaurants. The infamously lowbrow and exceedingly popular **Harry's Café de Wheels** (see p206) remains. Gulp down a late-night pie and mash.

It's a 15-minute walk to the Cross from the city, or you could hop on a train. Buses 323-7, 324-5 and 333 from the city also pass through here.

Inner East

The pulsing backbone of the Inner East is **Oxford Street** (Map pp182-3), a long string of shops, cafés, bars and clubs that exudes a flamboyance largely attributable to Sydney's gay community. The **Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras** (see p200) gyrates through here every

February. **Taylor Square** (Map pp186-7) is gay Sydney's decadent nucleus.

Oxford St runs all the way from Hyde Park to Centennial Park, continuing to Bondi Junction. Confusingly, street numbers recommence east of South Dowling St, the Darlinghurst-Paddington border. Bus 378 from Railway Sq and buses 380, 389 and L82 from Circular Quay run the length of Oxford St.

Wedge between Oxford and William Sts, Darlinghurst is home to the **Sydney Jewish Museum** (Map p193; ☎ 9360 7999; www.sydneyjewishmuseum.com.au; 148 Darlinghurst Rd; adult/child/family \$10/6/22; ☎ 10am-4pm Sun-Thu, to 2pm Fri, closed Jewish holidays), with evocative, powerful exhibits on Australian Jewish history and the Holocaust.

South of Darlinghurst is **Surry Hills**, a very walkable area where scenesters prowl the pavements and every corner seems to have some perfect little pub or café. It was once the undisputed centre of Sydney's rag trade and print media, and many of its warehouses have been converted to slick apartments. Preserved as a temple to rock and roll artistry, the **Brett Whiteley Studio** (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9225 1881; www.brettwhiteley.org; 2 Raper St; adult/concession \$7/5; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) exhibits some of Whiteley's most raucous paintings. Surry Hills is a short walk east of Central Station or south from Oxford St. Catch buses 301, 302 or 303 from Circular Quay.

Next door to Surry Hills, **Paddington** (Map pp182-3), aka 'Paddo', is an elegant suburb of restored terrace houses on steep leafy streets. Paddington was built for aspiring Victorian artisans, but the lemminglike rush to the outer suburbs after WWII turned it into Australia's worst slum. Renewed passion for Victorian-era architecture (and the realisation that the outer suburbs were unappealingly boring) fuelled Paddington's 1960s resurgence. By the 1990s, real estate was out of reach and the Victorians terraces (with their iron 'lace' detailing) had never looked better.

The best time to explore Paddington's streets and hibiscus-lined laneways is on Saturday when the **Paddington Market** (p213) is pumping. Join the meandering throngs for a foot massage, a tarot reading or a funky shirt to wear clubbing that night. Many a weekend has been whiled away strolling Oxford St.

Just southeast of Paddington is Sydney's biggest park, the 220-hectare **Centennial Park** (Map pp182-3), which has running, cycling, skating and horse-riding tracks, duck ponds, barbecue sites and sports pitches.

KINGS CROSS & DARLINGHURST

SLEEPING (pp201-5)

Cheffy Potts Point	10	B4
Eva's Backpackers	11	C3
Hotel 59	12	C5
Hotel Altamont	13	B5
Kirketon	14	B5
Mariners Court	15	B3
Medusa	16	B5
O'Malley's Hotel	17	B4
Original Backpackers	18	B3
Simpsons of Potts Point	19	C2
Victoria Court Hotel	20	B3

EATING (pp205-8)

Bar Coluzzi	21	B5
Dov/Delectica	22	B3
Fish Face	23	B6
Harry's Café de Wheels	24	B6
La Buvette	24	C2

DRINKING (pp208-10)

Green Park Hotel	25	B6
Tilbury Hotel	26	A2
Victoria Room	27	B6
World Bar	28	C4

ENTERTAINMENT (pp210-12)

El Rocco Jazz Cellar	29	B4
Lady Lux	30	C4
Yu	31	B3

SHOPPING (pp212-13)

Artery	32	B5
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TRANSPORT (pp213-16)

Kings Cross Car Market	33	D3
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INFORMATION

Global Gossip	1	B4
Kings Cross Exchange Bureau	2	C4
Kings Cross Travellers Clinic	3	C3
Police Station	4	C3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp184-99)

Coca-Cola Sign	5	B4
Harry's Café de Wheels	6	B2
McElhone Stairs	7	B2
Sydney Jewish Museum	8	A6
Woolloomooloo Wharf	9	B1

Near Moore Park, much of the former Sydney Showgrounds has been converted into the private **Fox Studios** (Map pp182–3). Nearby are the Aussie Stadium and Sydney Cricket Ground (both Map pp182–3).

Eastern Suburbs

Handsome **Rushcutters Bay** (Map pp182–3) is a five-minute walk east of Kings Cross; its harbourside park is a great spot for cooped-up travellers to stretch their legs. The eastern suburbs extend out from here – a shimmering, conservative conglomeration of Range Rovers, skinny models and mortgage madness. The harbour-hugging New South Head Rd passes through **Double Bay** (Map pp182–3) and **Rose Bay** (Map pp182–3), and then climbs east into **Vauluse** (Map pp182–3) and genteel **Parsly Bay** (Map pp182–3), where a platypus is sometimes spotted.

An imposing, turreted specimen of Gothic Australiana, **Vauluse House** (Map pp182–3; ☎ 9388 7922; www.hht.net.au; Wentworth Rd, Vauluse; adult/child/family \$8/4/17; ☎ 9.30am–4pm Fri–Sun) is Sydney's last 19th-century harbourside estate. Explorer and political sabre-rattler William Charles Wentworth lived here from 1828 to 1862. The Bondi Explorer bus (see p200) stops outside.

At the entrance to the harbour is **Watsons Bay** (Map pp182–3), a snug community with restored fisherman's cottages, a palm-lined

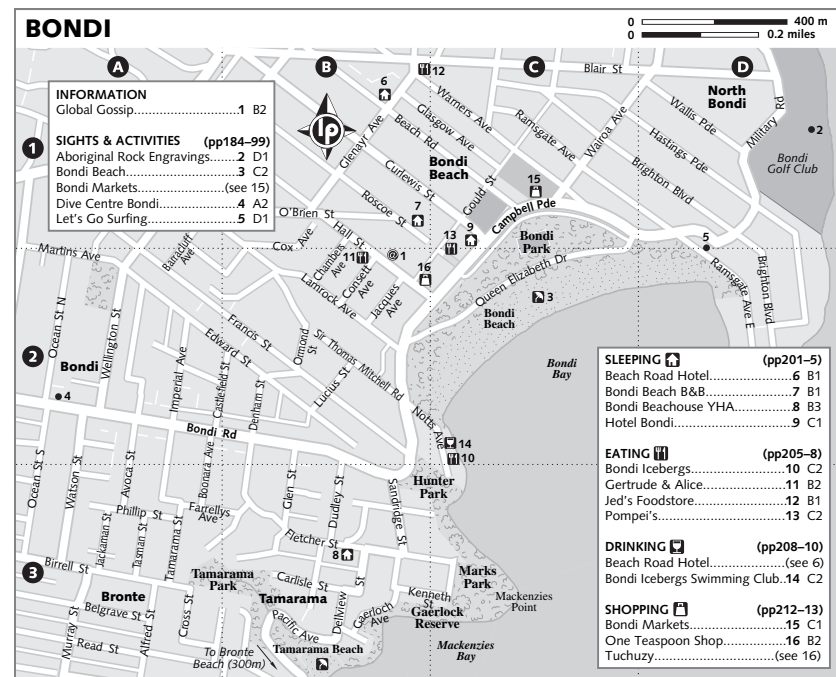
park and a couple of nautical churches. Nearby **Camp Cove** (Map pp182–3) is one of Sydney's best harbour beaches, and there's a nude beach (mostly male) near South Head at **Lady Bay. South Head** (Map pp182–3) has great views across the harbour entrance to North Head and Middle Head. The **Gap** (Map pp182–3) is an epic cliff-top lookout where sunrises, sunsets, canoodling and suicide leaps transpire with similar frequency.

Bus 324 and 325 from Circular Quay service the eastern suburbs via Kings Cross. Grab a seat on the left heading east to snare the best views.

Eastern Beaches

Bondi (Map p195) lords it over every other beach in the city, despite not being the best one for a swim, a surf or, damn it, a place to park your bum on a summer weekend. Despite the rather ugly commercial strip, there's an indefinable buzz here which, when combined with the flashy cafés and rugged rocks flanking the sand, gives this place a perceptible aura. The suburb itself has a unique atmosphere due to its mix of old Jewish and other European communities, dyed-in-the-wool Aussies, tourists who never went home, working travellers and budgie-smugglers.

The beautiful, 5km **Bondi to Coogee Clifftop Trail** leads south from Bondi Beach along the



cliff tops to Coogee via Tamarama, Bronte and Clovelly Beaches, interweaving panoramic views, swimming spots and foodie delights.

Most of the pubs, bars and restaurants are set back from the beach along daggie Campbell Pde and more-hip Hall St. Nearby are Sunday's **Bondi Markets** (Map p195), and some Eora **Aboriginal rock engravings** (Map p195) north of the beach uphill near the cliffs at the Bondi Golf Club. Look for the fenced areas about 20m southeast of the enormous chimney.

Catch bus 380, 389 or L82 from the city or bus 381 from Bondi Junction to get to the beach.

Inner West

West of the centre is the higgledy-piggledy peninsula suburb of **Balmain** (Map pp182–3). It was once a notoriously rough neighbourhood of dockyard workers but has been transformed into an artsy, middle-class area of restored Victoriana flush with pubs, cafés and trendy shops. Don't miss the Saturday market (see p213). Catch a ferry from Circular Quay, or buses 432/4 from Railway Sq or 441/2 from the QVB.

Cosy, bohemian **Glebe** (Map p196) lies just southwest of the centre, and boasts a large student population, streets lined with BMWs, a tranquil Buddhist temple, yuppies galore and Glebe Point Rd, a wonderful, leafy ramble of shops and cafés amid gentrified workers cottages. Saturday's **Glebe markets** (Map p196) overrun Glebe Public School. Glebe is a 10-minute walk from Central Station along side streets – avoid smoggy Broadway. Buses 431/4 from Millers Point run via George St along Glebe Point Rd. The MLR also services Glebe.

South of Sydney University is **Newtown** (Map p196), a melting pot of social and sexual subcultures, students and edgy boutiques. King St, its relentlessly urban main drag, is full of funky clothes stores, bookshops and cafés. Slowly moving upmarket, Newtown retains an irrepressible dose of grunge and a rockin' live-music scene. Take the train, or bus 422/3, 426 or 428 from Circular Quay to King St.

Southwest of Glebe is predominantly Italian **Leichhardt** (Map pp182–3), increasingly popular with students and yuppies. Norton St is the place for pizza, pasta and slick

BONDI RESCUE

Tom Bunting is a lifeguard at Bondi Beach. As if that job wasn't iconic enough, he's also highly visible on *Bondi Rescue*, the hugely popular reality TV show on Australia's Ten network, which, in typical TV-fashion, has dubbed him 'the smartest lifeguard'. We talked to Tom while he scanned Bondi Beach and the surf from the lifeguard tower smack in the middle of the sand.

How has being on a number-one-rated show changed your life? We're all a lot more popular! Seriously, though, none of us are here for that – we just want to be good at our job.

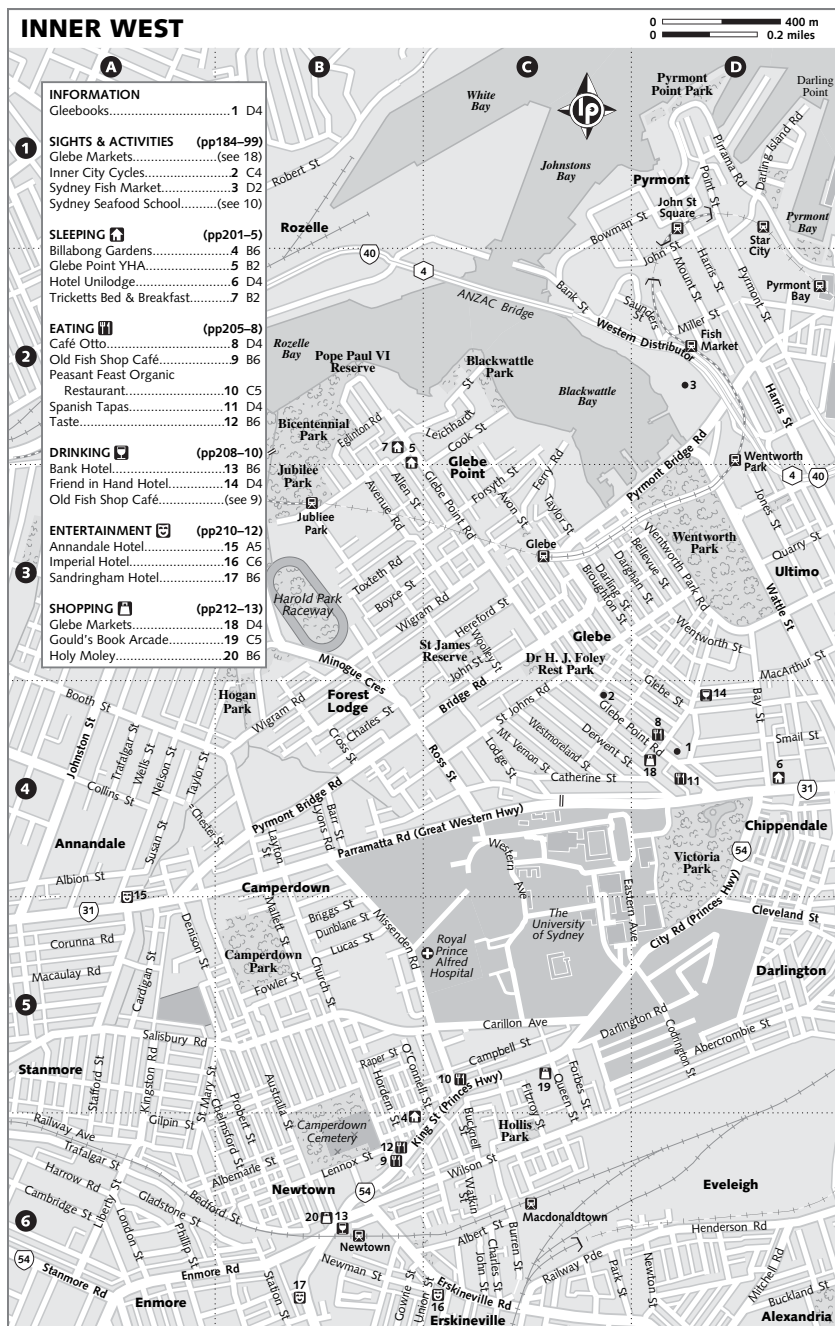
What are the first clues that someone is likely to need your help? We know before they do – we know where the rips and currents are in relation to where they are swimming, we watch the way they are swimming, their stroke, and not to be racist about it, their nationality, as some nationalities are not used to the water.

What do people usually say when you get them ashore? Anything ever surprising? Usually very little. They are usually embarrassed. About one person in 10 actually thanks us. [There is a pinboard in the tower covered with thank you letters and cards.]

Does it get you dates? Are there lots of fake Bondi lifeguards in the pubs? I'm in a very happy relationship, and about 90% of the lifeguards are in stable relationships too. I've never seen or heard of any fakes, and the council is very strict about our uniform – we are not allowed to give any of our shirts etc to friends.

What would you quit this job to do? I'm about to become a paramedic, but I'll continue to do this part-time.

As related to Ryan Ver Berkmoes



Mediterranean style. Bus 413 from Wynyard, and buses 435/8 and 440 from Circular Quay service Leichhardt.

North Shore

On the northern side of the Harbour Bridge is **North Sydney** (Map pp182-3), a high-rise office centre with little to tempt the traveller. **McMahons Point** is a low-key, forgotten suburb below the western side of the bridge. There's a row of cheery alfresco cafés on Blues Point Rd, running down to Blues Point Reserve on Lavender Bay.

At the end of Kirribilli Point, just east of the bridge, are **Admiralty House** (Map pp182-3) and **Kirribilli House** (Map pp182-3), the Sydney residences of the Governor General and Prime Minister respectively.

On the eastern shore of Lavender Bay is **Luna Park** (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9922 6644; www.lunapark.com.au; 1 Olympic Pl, Milsons Point; admission free, multiride passes from \$20; ☎ 10am-10pm Sun-Thu, to midnight Fri & Sat), with its sinister chip-toothed clown entry. It's a classic, retro carnival with a Ferris Wheel, Rotor, Flying Saucer, Tumble Bug and other rides guaranteed to shake loose lunch.

East of here are the upmarket suburbs of **Neutral Bay**, **Cremorne** and **Mosman**, all with coves and harbourside parks perfect for picnics. Ferries from Circular Quay service these suburbs. On the northern side of Mosman is improbably pretty **Balmoral**, facing Manly across Middle Harbour.

In a superb harbourside setting, **Taronga Zoo** (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9969 2777; www.zoo.nsw.gov.au; Bradleys Head Rd, Mosman; adult/child/family \$37/18/93; ☎ 9am-5pm) has some 4000 critters (from seals to tigers, koalas to giraffes, echidnas to platypuses), all in hillside habitats. Twilight concerts take place in the zoo during February and March. Zoo ferries depart Circular Quay's Wharf 2 at a quarter past and quarter to the hour.

The zoo is really steep, so if you arrive by ferry, consider taking the **Sky Safari cable car** (included in admission) or bus 238 to the top entrance and work your way downhill. A **ZooPass** (adult/child \$44/22), sold at Circular Quay and elsewhere, includes return ferry rides and zoo admission.

Manly

Laid-back Manly clings to a narrow isthmus between ocean and harbour beaches near North Head. **North Steyne Beach** was named

Sydney's best in 2008 for its beauty and friendliness; and overall, dare we say it, you'll have a beachier experience here than at Bondi.

The **Manly visitors centre** (Map p198; ☎ 9977 1430; www.manlytourism.com; Manly Wharf; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), just outside the ferry wharf, has information on the 9km **Manly Scenic Walkway**, which tracks west from Manly around North and Middle Harbours, past waterside mansions and harbour viewpoints and through rugged Sydney Harbour National Park. At times you'll feel completely isolated in bushland – it's easy to forget you're right in the middle of Sydney.

The **Corso** connects Manly's ocean and harbour beaches – surf shops, burger joints, juice bars and so-so cafés proliferate. A footpath follows the ocean shoreline around a small headland to tiny **Fairy Bower Beach** and the picturesque **Shelly Beach**. On the harbourside, the refurbished **Manly Wharf** offers cafés, pubs and restaurants. West of here is **Oceanworld** (Map p198; ☎ 8251 7879; www.oceanworld.com.au; W Esplanade; adult/child/family \$18/10/44; ☎ 10am-5.30pm), a tired 1980s aquarium with underwater transparent tubes where you can see 3m sharks. Next door, the whimsical **Manly Art Gallery & Museum** (Map p198; ☎ 9949 1776; www.manly.nsw.gov.au; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) focuses on Manly's relationship with the beach.

North Head Scenic Dr (Map pp182-3) provides stunning ocean, harbour and city views. At road's end, the 1km **Fairfax Walk** connects three lookouts over the churning waters of the harbour entrance. The bushland scenery isn't half bad, either.

To get to Manly, you could take a bus but the only real way to go is by ferry or JetCat. The ride is one of Sydney's musts.

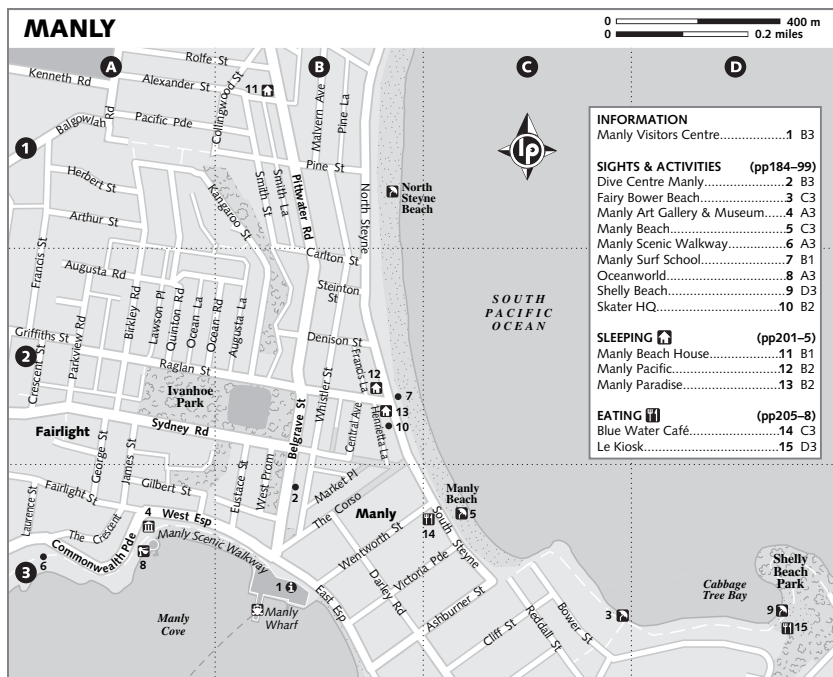
ACTIVITIES

Canoeing & Kayaking

Natural Wanders (☎ 9899 1001; www.kayaksydney.com; per person from \$90; ☎ 9am-1pm) Has exhilarating half-day bridge and island-paddling tours.
New South Wales Canoeing Association (☎ 8116 9730; www.nswcanoeing.org.au) For information on canoeing.

Cycling

For information, **Bicycle NSW** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 4099; www.bicyclensw.org.au; level 5, 822 George St) publishes *Cycling Around Sydney*, which details city routes and paths.
Inner City Cycles (Map p196; ☎ 9660 6605; 151 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; per day/week \$33/88; ☎ 9.30am-6pm



Mon-Wed & Fri, 9.30am-7pm Thu, 9am-4pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun; ☎ 431-434 Convenient access to the city and to Central Station.

Diving

Sydney's best shore dives are at Gordons Bay, north of Coogee (Map pp182-3); Shark Point, Clovelly (Map pp182-3); and Ship Rock, Cronulla (Map p180). Popular boat-diving sites are Wedding Cake Island off Coogee (Map pp182-3), Sydney Heads (Map pp182-3), and off Royal National Park (Map p180).

Dive Centre Bondi (Map p195; ☎ 9369 3855; www.divebondi.com.au; 198 Bondi Rd, Bondi; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, from 7.30am Sat & Sun) Four-day PADI course from \$425; shore and boat dives, and rentals.

Dive Centre Manly (Map p198; ☎ 9977 4355; www.divesydney.com.au; 10 Belgrave St, Manly; ☎ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, from 7.45am Sat & Sun) Similar rates and offerings as its sister office in Bondi.

Horse Riding

The **Centennial Parklands Equestrian Centre** (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9332 2809; www.cp.nsw.gov.au; Lang Rd, Paddington; per hr incl equipment \$70; ☎ 9am-5pm) conducts one-hour, 3.6km horse rides around

tree-lined Centennial Park, Sydney's favourite urban green space. Several stables at the centre conduct rides; equine familiarity is not required.

In-Line Skating

The beach promenades at Bondi and Manly and the paths of Centennial Park are the favoured spots for skating.

Rollerblading Sydney (Map pp182-3; ☎ 0411-872 022; www.rollerbladingsydney.com.au; Milsons Point Station; lessons per hr \$55; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat & Sun) Rentals, quality skates and protective gear.

Skater HQ (Map p198; ☎ 9976 3833; www.skaterhq.com.au; 2/49 North Steyne, Manly; hire per hr from \$15; ☎ 9am-6pm) Excellent blades and gear.

Sailing

Sydney has dozens of yacht clubs and sailing schools. In fact life on the water is an essential part of the Sydney's zeitgeist.

EastSail Sailing School (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9327 1166; www.eastsail.com.au; d'Albora Marina, New Beach Rd, Rushcutters Bay; cruises per person from \$100; ☎ 9am-6pm) A sociable outfit offering cruises, and introductory 'Yachtmaster' courses from \$500.

Sydney by Sail (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9280 1110; www.sydneybysail.com.au; Festival Pontoon, National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour; courses \$425; ☎ 9am-5pm) Daily harbour sailing tours (three hours, \$150) and introductory weekend sailing courses.

Surfing

On the South Shore, get tubed at Bondi, Tamarama, Coogee, Maroubra and Cronulla. The North Shore is home to a dozen gnarly surf beaches between Manly and Palm Beach, including Curl Curl, Dee Why, Narrabeen, Mona Vale and Newport.

Let's Go Surfing (Map p195; ☎ 9365 1800; www.letsgosurfing.com.au; 128 Ramsgate Ave, Bondi; 2hr lesson with gear adult/child from \$75/39; ☎ 9am-7pm) Board and wetsuit hire is \$30 for two hours.

Manly Surf School (Map p198; ☎ 9977 6977; www.manlysurfschool.com; North Steyne Surf Club, Manly; lessons per hr incl board & wetsuit adult/child \$55/45; ☎ 9am-6pm) Small-group surf lessons.

Swimming

There are 100-plus public swimming pools in Sydney, and many beaches have protected rock pools. Harbour beaches offer sheltered and shark-netted (but sometimes soupy) swimming, but nothing beats (or cures a hangover faster than) Pacific Ocean waves. Always swim within the flagged lifeguard-patrolled areas, and never underestimate the surf.

Outdoor city pools include:

Andrew 'Boy' Charlton Pool (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9358 6686; www.abcpool.org; 1C Mrs Macquaries Rd, The Domain; adult/child \$5.50/3.80; ☎ 6am-8pm Sep-Apr) A 50m outdoor saltwater pool and harbour-view café.

Dawn Fraser Baths (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9555 1903; Elkington Park, Glassop St, Balmain; adult/child \$4/2; ☎ 7.15am-6.15pm Oct-Nov & Mar-Apr, 6.45am-7pm Dec-Feb) These magnificently restored late-Victorian baths (1884) protect swimmers from underwater undesirables.

North Sydney Olympic Pool (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9955 2309; www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au; Alfred St South, Milsons Point; adult/child \$5.50/3; ☎ 5.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, 7am-7pm Sat & Sun) Next to Luna Park, right on the harbour. A place of legends – many world records have been set here.

WALKING TOUR

This walk combines four star sights for a highly concentrated start on the city.

Start in Hyde Park at the **Anzac Memorial** (1; p189). Walking north, on your right you'll see the **Australian Museum** (2; p190) and, a bit further on, the impressive **St Mary's Cathedral** (3; p189).

Keep going north to reach **Macquarie Street** (4; p190), with its collection of early colonial buildings. If you love gardens, head east through the **Royal Botanic Gardens** (5; p190). Follow the waterfront path to the spectacular **Sydney Opera House** (6; p184) and **Circular Quay** (7; p185). On the west side of Circular Quay, behind the **Museum of Contemporary Art** (8; p185), is the **Rocks** (9; p185) – very much worth exploring.

WALK FACTS

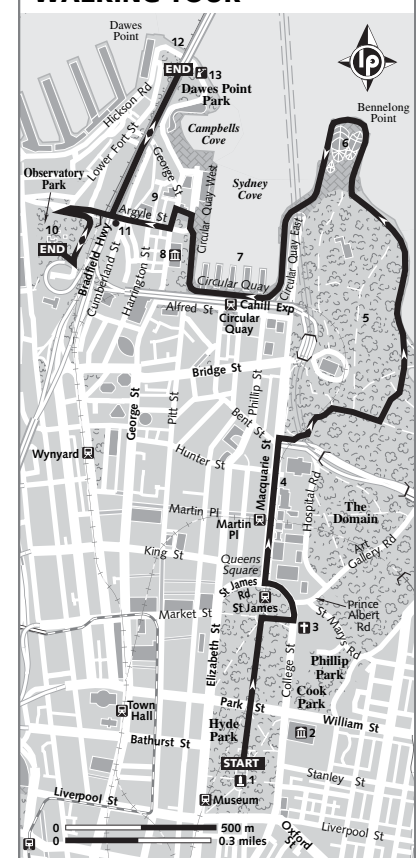
Start Anzac Memorial

Finish Pylon Lookout

Distance 5km

Duration two to three hours

WALKING TOUR



Work your way up to the **Sydney Observatory** (10; p185). If you want to cross the **Harbour Bridge** (12; p184), find the **Argyle Cut** (11; p185), near Cumberland St, and head up; the views from the bridge are worth every step, especially from the **Pylon Lookout** (13; p185). Head back to the Rocks for a refreshing drink (see p208).

SYDNEY FOR CHILDREN

Organised kids' activities ramp up during school holidays (December/January, April, July and September) – check www.sydneyforkids.com.au and the free *Sydney's Child* and *Kid Friendly* magazines for listings. Otherwise, in Darling Harbour, **Sydney Aquarium** (p191), **Sydney Wildlife World** (p191) and the **Powerhouse Museum** (p191) are huge kid favourites.

Elsewhere, **Taronga Zoo** (p197) and **Luna Park** (p197) are sure-fire entertainers. If all else fails, take them to the beach!

Nannies & Helpers (☎ 9363 4221; www.nanniesandhelpers.com.au; booking fee \$20-33, babysitting per hr \$15-20) will send a babysitter to wherever you're staying for a minimum of three hours. Some of the bigger hotels offer their own services.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Sydney has plenty of festivals and special goings-on year-round. Visitors centres will be able to advise you what's on when you're in town.

January

Sydney Festival (www.sydneyfestival.org.au) This massive event floods the city with art, including free outdoor concerts in the Domain.

Big Day Out (www.bigdayout.com) Open-air concert featuring many local and international performers and bands.

February

Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras (www.mardigras.org.au) Late February. The highlight of this world-famous festival is the over-the-top, sequined Oxford St parade, culminating in a bacchanalian party at the Entertainment Quarter.

Tropfest (www.tropfest.com) The world's largest short-film festival.

March/April

Royal Easter Show (www.eastershow.com.au) Twelve-day agricultural show and funfair at Homebush Bay.

May

Australian Fashion Week (www.mafw.org.au) Early May. At Circular Quay.

June

Sydney Film Festival (www.sydneyfilmfestival.org) A 14-day orgy of cinema held at the State Theatre and other cinemas.

September

Royal Botanic Gardens Spring Festival (www.rbg Syd.gov.au) Spring into spring, with concerts, colourful flower displays and plenty of pollen.

Rugby League Grand Final (www.nrl.com) The two best teams left standing in the National Rugby League (NRL) meet to decide who's best.

October

Manly Jazz Festival (www.manly.nsw.gov.au/manlyjazz) Labour Day long weekend. The jazz is mostly free.

December

Sydney to Hobart Boat Race (www.rolexsydneyhobart.com) On 26 December Sydney Harbour is a sight to behold as hundreds of boats crowd its waters to farewell the yachts competing in this gruelling race.

TOURS

There are countless tours available in Sydney. You can book most of them at the visitors centres (p181).

City Bus Tours

Bondi Explorer (☎ 13 15 00; www.sydneypass.info; adult/child \$39/19; ☎ 8.45am-4.15pm) Two-hour, hop-on, hop-off, 19-stop loop from Circular Quay to Kings Cross, Double Bay, Rose Bay, Vaucluse, Watsons Bay, the Gap, Bondi Beach and Coogee, returning to the city along Oxford St. Buses depart every 30 minutes; buy your ticket on board or at STA offices.

Sydney Explorer (☎ 13 15 00; www.sydneypass.info; adult/child \$39/19; ☎ 8.40am-5.20pm) The red STA Sydney Explorer bus follows a two-hour, 26-stop hop-on, hop-off loop from Circular Quay through Kings Cross, Chinatown, Darling Harbour and the Rocks, with pithy on-board commentary and discounted entry to attractions. Buses depart every 20 minutes.

Harbour Cruises

Captain Cook Cruises (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9206 1111; www.captaincook.com.au; Wharf 6, Circular Quay; adult/child/family from \$25/12/55) Also at Aquarium Wharf, Darling Harbour.

Sydney Ferries (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9246 8300, 131 500; www.sydneyferries.nsw.gov.au; Circular Quay) Has a huge

amount of info online and at the info booth that shows you how to tour the harbour by ferry and walk along the shore.

Walking Tours

BridgeClimb (Map pp186-7; ☎ 8274 7777; www.bridgeclimb.com; 5 Cumberland St, The Rocks; adult \$179-295, child \$109-195; ☎ 3½hr tours around the clock) Don a headset, an umbilical cord and a naff grey jumpsuit and up you go. Book well in advance.

Sydney Aboriginal Discoveries (☎ 9680 3098, 0405-289 016; www.sydneyaustour.com.au/Abordiscover.html; per person \$65-180; ☎ 2-4hr tours daily) Tours focusing on Aboriginal culture and history, landmarks, sacred sites, a tasty feast of native Australian foods, and a Dreamtime cruise.

SLEEPING

Sydney's well of accommodation seems to never run dry, with everything from budget hostels to cosy B&Bs, comfortable motels, authentic Aussie pubs and deluxe harbour-view hotels. Between November and February, you should expect prices (especially at beach-side hotels) to jump by as much as 40%. Conversely, winter can mean bargains.

Read up on Sydney's neighbourhoods before you decide where to stay: partiers should head for Kings Cross, Darlinghurst, Paddington or Bondi; highlight hunters should shoot for the Rocks, the CBD, Darling Harbour or Chinatown. If you want to feel like a local, try Glebe, Potts Point, Surry Hills or Manly.

In this chapter, a budget room is classified as under \$100 per night. Midrange doubles cost between \$100 and \$180; top-end doubles start at \$180 a night. Serviced apartments usually sleep more than two people – good value for groups and families.

Budget

Sydney is a budget traveller's dream. Cheap accommodation can be found across the city.

CITY CENTRE

Wake Up! (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9288 7888; www.wakeup.com.au; 509 Pitt St; dm from \$28, r from \$98; ☎ ; wi-fi) Backpackers sleep soundly in this converted 1900 department store on top of Sydney's busiest intersection. It's a convivial, colourful, professionally run hostel with a tour desk, 24-hour check-in, a sunny café, a bar and more. Dorms have four to 10 beds.

Big Hostel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 6030; www.bighostel.com; 212 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills; dm \$28-32, r

\$75-100; ☎ ; wi-fi) Upmarket and stylish, Big has attractive communal areas, including a cute rooftop terrace. All rooms have TVs and video players. Rates include a light breakfast. Although this bit of Elizabeth St isn't Sydney's most salubrious locale, Central Station's just across the road for a quick escape.

Railway Square YHA (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 9666; www.yha.com.au; 8 Lee St; dm \$30-40, d \$85-100; ☎ ;) Adjoining Central Station, this hostel's main building is a historic 1904 train shed – some of the dorms are inside old train carriages. Facilities lean to the functional side of fancy but there's really not a bad bed among the 280 here. The more expensive doubles have bathrooms.

Sydney Central YHA (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9218 9000; www.yha.com.au; 11 Rawson Pl; dm from \$30, d from \$90; ☎ ;) Near Central Station this 1913 heritage-listed 556-bed monolith has been massively renovated and now has its own supermarket, cinema and more. Rooms are brightly painted and the kitchens are great, but the highlight is sitting in the rooftop pool feeling at ease with the world.

our pick Y Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9264 2451; www.yhotel.com.au; 5-11 Wentworth Ave; dm \$35, r from \$80; ☎ ; wi-fi) A budget place with hotel services, the Y is perfectly located for walking everywhere and easy airport train access. Rooms are in a modern high-rise and span the gamut from small dorms to large rooms with en suites and kitchenettes.

Grand Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9232 3755; www.merivale.com; 30 Hunter St; r from \$80; ☎) One of Sydney's oldest hotels, the Grand is a busy multilevel pub. Up top, though, it has clean rooms with shared bathrooms; some have balconies. Stash a fruity blush wine in the fridge to accompany the fruity décor.

KINGS CROSS

Woodduck Harbour City Backpackers (Map pp186-7; ☎ 1800 882 922; www.harbourcitybackpackers.com.au; 50 Sir John Young Cres, Woolloomooloo; dm \$25, r from \$75; ☎) Friendly and funky, this Woolloomooloo hostel is beloved for its roof terrace with Cinerama city skyline views. It's a huge place with 250 beds, but the ceilings are high and rooms airy.

Eva's Backpackers (Map p193; ☎ 9358 2185; www.evasbackpackers.com.au; 6-8 Orwell St, Potts Point; dm \$30, r from \$80; ☎ ; wi-fi) Eva's is a perennial backpackers' favourite, probably because it's far enough out of the Kings Cross fray to maintain

some composure and dignity. Some rooms in this solid old building that looks like a country mercantile have air-con.

Original Backpackers (Map p193; ☎ 9356 3232; www.originalbackpackers.com.au; 160-162 Victoria St, Kings Cross; dm \$30, r from \$80; 📶) A hostel for almost three decades, there's something new at the Original: a wing of spiffy doubles with private bathrooms. The true original is a rambling 176-bed affair in two character-filled Victorian houses. The front veranda is a fine place for soaking the always genial pleasures here.

O'Malley's Hotel (Map p193; ☎ 9357 2211; www.omalleyshotel.com.au; 228 William St, Kings Cross; r from \$80; 📶) This jovial Irish pub has 15 traditionally decorated, well-furnished rooms with private heritage-tiled bathrooms. It's surprisingly quiet, given the location. Harbour-view rooms are winners; breakfast is included.

BONDI

Bondi Beachouse YHA (Map p195; ☎ 9365 2088; www.bondibeachouse.com.au; 63 Fletcher St; dm from \$25, r from \$55; 📶) A short stroll from the beach, the Art Deco, 94-bed Bondi Beachouse has a pool table, TV rooms, a barbecue, free play stuff (surfboards, snorkels etc) and Tamarama Beach views from the rooftop spa. It's the sort of place where you keep telling the staff 'another night please'. Bus 380 from Circular Quay stops nearby.

Beach Road Hotel (Map p195; ☎ 9130 7247; brh.bondi@bigpond.com; 71 Beach Rd; r from \$75; 📶) This chipper hotel with the huge Coopers sign is part of a big, boxy pub two blocks back from the beach. Nautical décor surfs through the bars, eateries and nightclub to the rooms, which are clean and bright with decent bathrooms. Stay here only if you plan to partake of the pleasures below.

COOGEE

Coogee Beachside Accommodation (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9315 8511; www.sydneybeachside.com.au; 178 Coogee Bay Rd; d & tw \$75) Beachside offers simple, clean doubles and twins with tidy shared bathrooms in a huge converted house. If you're in Sydney for a while, there are also one-, two- and three-bed apartments for longer stays. Common areas are spartan but clean.

GLEBE & NEWTOWN

Billabong Gardens (Map p196; ☎ 9550 3236; www.billabonggardens.com.au; 5-11 Egan St, Newtown; dm from \$25, r \$50-100; 📶) This enduring motel/hostel of-

fers a richer experience than most backpacker joints, with travellers, touring rock bands and anonymous others mixing by the jellybean of a pool. Rooms come with or without bathrooms; dorms have up to six beds.

Glebe Point YHA (Map p196; ☎ 692 8418; www.yha.com.au; 262-264 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; dm \$25-40, r \$70-120; 📶; wi-fi) This 151-bed hostel features colourful, basic rooms and shared bathrooms. The main lure is the rooftop with its barbecue nights and a plethora of party high jinks. Kitchens and bathrooms are solid.

MANLY

Manly Beach House (Map p198; ☎ 9977 7050; www.manlybeachhouse.com.au; 179 Pittwater Rd; r from \$60; 📶; wi-fi) Readers recommend this rambling, cheery, good-value option, a four-minute walk from the beach. Polite management prides itself on making *sure* you're comfortable (clean too: washing machines are free). Shared facilities are clean.

Midrange

THE ROCKS & CITY CENTRE

Mercantile Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9247 3570; www.mercantilehotel.citysearch.com.au; 25 George St, The Rocks; r from \$110) The Mercantile's green-tiled exterior hints at the shamrock sympathies emanating from the bar. Upstairs the comfy, pub-style rooms avoid orange and green conflict with neutral colours, shared bathrooms and little fireplaces. Four suites have spas (\$140).

Palisade Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9247 2272; www.palisadehotel.com; 35 Bettington St, The Rocks; r from \$125) Standing sentinel-like at peaceful Millers Point, the Palisade Hotel has nine basic rooms with tidy shared bathrooms. The front rooms open onto shared balconies with iconic views of the Harbour Bridge, while others have windows looking over Walsh Bay. The neighbourhood pub downstairs usually shuts at sleep-friendly hours.

our pick **Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9251 4044; www.lordnelson.com.au; 19 Kent St, The Rocks; d \$130-180; 📶) Built in 1841, this boutique sandstone pub has its own brewery (try a pint of 'Nelson's Blood') and is just far enough from the Rocks' tourist mobs. The rooms have a graceful elegance and many have walls of the original exposed stone. Bathrooms are regal – even those that are shared.

Russell (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9241 3543; www.therussell.com.au; 143a George St, The Rocks; r from \$135; 📶) Traditionally decorated rooms (think lace and

frills), lounge areas with fireplaces, library and a rooftop garden just minutes from Circular Quay make the architecturally chaotic old Russell a popular choice. A generous continental breakfast is included.

B&B Sydney Harbour (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9247 1130; www.bedandbreakfastsydney.com; 142 Cumberland St, The Rocks; r \$140-230; 📶) This century-old guesthouse is close to ferries and the Rocks, should you suddenly feel the need for a souvenir. Rooms (some with private bathroom) have lovely Empire-era furniture you might wish you had at home. Breakfasts are lavish.

Vibe Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9282 0987; www.vibehotels.com.au; 111 Goulburn St; d from \$190; 📶) This refurbished old dowager has a pale palette of shades accented by a fruit basket of bright colours, kind of like the walls at a day-care centre. The 190-room boutique chain hotel is the kind of place where the alluring rooftop pool is described as a 'lifestyle' rather than an amenity.

CHINATOWN & DARLING HARBOUR

Pensione Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9265 8888; www.pensione.com.au; 631-635 George St; r from \$100; 📶) This tastefully reworked post office features 68 smart, neutrally shaded rooms with fridges. Mark Rothko prints and a wooden staircase warm the simple, restrained surrounds. Aim for a rear room away from traffic noise.

Capitol Square Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9211 8633; www.rydges.com/capitol-square; cnr George & Campbell Sts; r \$120-200; 📶) Near both Chinatown and Darling Harbour, with double-glazed windows to keep out the noise, this heritage hotel is part of the Rydges chain. The rather plain rooms can be tight, although you can escape to the world via high-speed internet access.

Metro Hotel Sydney Central (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9283 8088; www.metrohospitalitygroup.com; 431 Pitt St; r from \$150; 📶; wi-fi) Centrally located, the high-rise Metro has a brassy lobby, a business centre and 220 comfortable rooms. (Deluxe rooms have designers prints; basic ones have country scenes suitable for jigsaw puzzles.) The rooftop pool puts you above it all.

KINGS CROSS

Hotel 59 (Map p193; ☎ 9360 5900; www.hotel59.com.au; 59 Bayswater Rd, Kings Cross; r from \$90; 📶) Hotel 59 provides good bang for your buck on the quiet part of Bayswater Rd, with nine nouveau-Med rooms that have fridges. Guests get a free run of the tasty café downstairs at breakfast.

Mariners Court (Map p193; ☎ 9358 3888; www.marinerscourt.com.au; 44-50 McElhone St, Woolloomooloo; r \$100-160; 📶) A tucked-away treasure, this ship-shape old place goes for the hat trick of location, price and roominess. All rooms have courtyards or balconies, some with leafy outlooks. There's even a billiards room.

Chiefly Potts Point (Map p193; ☎ 9358 2755; www.cresthotel.com.au; 111 Darlinghurst Rd, Kings Cross; r \$145-200; 📶; wi-fi) With the definitive Kings Cross location, the high-rise Chiefly is the rebadged old Crest. The 227 rooms are business standard with a certain anonymity that dirty weekenders and execs on the lam appreciate. Splurge for a harbour view.

Victoria Court Hotel (Map p193; ☎ 9357 3200; www.victoriacourt.com.au; 122 Victoria St, Potts Point; r from \$160; 📶) The Victoria is a 22-room high-end guesthouse filling a pair of three-storey 1881 brick terrace houses. Rooms have private bathrooms and a museum's worth of frills. Some have balconies; all have access to the covered courtyard where breakfast is served.

Simpsons of Potts Point (Map p193; ☎ 9356 2199; www.simpsonspottspoint.com.au; 8 Challis Ave, Potts Point; r from \$175; 📶; wi-fi) An 1892 red-brick politician's palace, Simpsons has an entrance flanked by palm trees and is on a street of chic cafés. The 14 rooms are restrained but quite elegant and you can get in the mood with a glass of port at check-in. Most rooms have showers although there are a few tubs lurking about.

DARLINGHURST & SURRY HILLS

Macquarie Boutique Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 8262 8844; www.macquariehotel.com; 40-44 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills; r \$90-120; 📶) This pub represents a good deal on a number of fronts – a supercentral location, decent prices, plenty of character and its own microbrewery. The rooms have had a spiffing up of late and now boast high-speed internet. For those who equate pubs with sticky carpets, the polished wood floors will be a nice surprise.

Wattle Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9332 4118; www.thewattle.com; 108 Oxford St, Darlinghurst; r \$100-160; 📶) There's no handier place to stay if your Sydney itinerary is largely nocturnal and gay. At Mardi Gras be prepared to book a decade in advance and sacrifice your straight sibling's first-born for one of the corner terraces overlooking the parade route. There's a rooftop terrace good for gazing year-round.

City Crown Motel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 2433; www.citycrownmotel.com.au; 289 Crown St, Surry Hills; d from \$115;

☞ ☑) In an unbeatable Surry Hills location, this nondescript three-storey motel has basic rooms with alarmingly striped bed covers. Escape to the balconies and plan your next fun foray.

Hotel Altamont (Map p193; ☎ 9360 6000; www.altamont.com.au; 207 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst; r from \$130; ☞ ☑ ☒) The Rolling Stones have stayed in this Georgian pile that's had a postmodern make-over, thus the name Altamont (given the legendary concert turned into a brawl, maybe the Stones skipped paying here). Rooms are sleek and just the thing for a club-heavy visit to Sydney.

Cambridge Park Inn (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9212 1111; www.cambridgeinn.com.au; 212 Riley St, Surry Hills; r \$150-180; ☞ ☑ ☒) The embodiment of what architect Robin Boyd called the 'Great Australian Ugliness', this hotel is best seen from the inside looking out. Many of the 170 rooms have balconies and are sleekly decorated. You can't beat the location.

Manor House (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9380 6633; www.manorhouse.com.au; 86 Flinders St, Darlinghurst; r from \$170; ☞ ☑ ☒) Step off busy Flinders St and step back in time to 1850 as you enter this grand mansion, complete with extravagant chandeliers, moulded ceilings, Victorian tiling and enough brocade for a queen. It's popular at Mardi Gras time, being right on the parade route and staggering distance from the party.

PADDINGTON & WOOLLAHRA

Hughenden (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9363 4863; www.hughendenhotel.com.au; 14 Queen St, Woollahra; r from \$150; ☞ ☑ ☒) A quirky 1870s Italianate guesthouse, the Hughenden is a short walk to legions of genteel pubs. Rooms feature antique bric-a-brac flourishes; some have balconies, all have fridges and access to a reading room and sundeck. Breakfast is included.

Sullivans Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9361 0211; www.sullivans.com.au; 21 Oxford St, Paddington; r \$165-180; ☞ ☑ ☒) Popular with gay travellers, this well-run 64-room motel in 'Paddinghurst' has tidy rooms in an anonymous package (think plain grey wrapper). Still, the location's great, and the brick-paved central courtyard has a solar-heated pool.

EASTERN SUBURBS

Savoy Hotel (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9326 1411; www.savoyhotel.com.au; 41 Knox St, Double Bay; r \$125-200; ☞ ☑ ☒) Sitting pretty among the gentrified charms of Double Bay's café strip, the Savoy offers an

upscale retreat near the harbour. Catch a ferry to the city. Rooms are motel-standard but do have fridges for chilling the fizz. Try to avoid atrium-view rooms.

BONDI

Hotel Bondi (Map p195; ☎ 9130 3271; www.hotelbondi.com.au; 178 Campbell Pde; r \$50-135; ☞ ☑ ☒) Let it all hang out at the landmark 'Pink Palace' on Bondi Beach. The 50 rooms seem to come in that many variations: small and cheap singles are just that, and moving up the price scale gets you steadily more room and better views until the entire sweep of the beach is yours (and you have a balcony and air-con).

Bondi Beach B&B (Map p195; ☎ 9365 6522; www.bondibeach-bnb.com.au; 110 Roscoe St; r \$95-200) Owners Nadia and Michael go all-out to make this place feel like your own home (only cleaner, and with colours out of a tropical fish tank). Rooms vary greatly, some have cute little terraces with tiny tables outside.

COOGEE

Dive Hotel (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9665 5538; www.divehotel.com.au; 234 Arden St; r \$140-220; ☞ ☑ ☒) Here's your chance to live the cheap-chic Ikea lifestyle without having to screw your furniture together. The smart and simple rooms have kitchenettes and blue-tile bathrooms; some have balconies with beach views. Enjoy the included continental breakfast on the courtyard until 1pm.

GLEBE

Hotel Unilodge (Map p196; ☎ 9338 5000; www.unilodgehotel.com.au; cnr Broadway & Bay St; r from \$150; ☞ ☑ ☒) The rooms inside this former Grace Bros department store would never have passed muster with a window-designer back in the day – they're very bland in a Best Western-sort-of-way. Still, they are huge, good-value and have kitchenettes and high-speed internet.

Tricketts Bed & Breakfast (Map p196; ☎ 9552 1141; www.tricketts.com.au; 270 Glebe Point Rd; r from \$175; ☞ ☑ ☒) Inside this carefully restored 1880s merchant's mansion, seven large rooms with private bathrooms are decked out with antiques and Persian rugs. The garden is a verdant wonderland, overlooked by a sumptuous veranda.

MANLY

Manly Paradise (Map p198; ☎ 9977 5799; www.manlyparadise.com.au; 54 North Steyne; motel r \$155-210, apt

from \$280; ☞ ☑ ☒) Spacious *Miami Vice*-era apartments sleep five; some have balconies overlooking Manly's ocean beach. There's a heated, 5th-floor rooftop pool, a spa, a sauna, half-court tennis and more. Motel rooms lack the room for a beach bash.

Top End

THE ROCKS

Park Hyatt (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9241 1234; www.sydney.park.hyatt.com; 7 Hickson Rd, The Rocks; r from \$500; ☞ ☑ ☒) ; wi-fi) Commanding the opposite tip of the horseshoe of Circular Quay to the Opera House, the Park Hyatt boasts the best location in Sydney. The graciously low-rise building matches the opulence of its position with sandstone, marble and slick contemporary design. The views are mesmerising, but be sure to not cheap out and get a room *without* a balcony.

CITY CENTRE

Blacket (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9279 3030; www.theblacket.com; 70 King St; r from \$230; ☞ ☑ ☒) ; wi-fi) Blacket's 68 stark, dark and stylish rooms blend urban escape with lashings of contemporary cool. Loft suites – all white, caramel and grey – sleep four and have spa, separate lounge, kitchenette and let you share the sounds of your bed experience with those below.

Establishment Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9240 3100; www.establishmenthotel.com; 5 Bridge Lane; r from \$290; ☞ ☑ ☒) Through this door pass discreet celebrities, stylish foreigners, corporate raiders and execs hoping for a nooner with their assistant. The hotel of Sydney's power bar has artful and large rooms that come in two themes that roughly translate as posh and zen. All have high-speed internet.

DARLINGHURST & SURRY HILLS

Kirketon (Map p193; ☎ 9332 2011; www.kirketon.com.au; 229 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst; r from \$220; ☞ ☑ ☒) The Kirketon's 40 designer rooms are as impeccably turned out as its brash young clientele (and hot staff). Stylishly sparse suites are jazzed up with passion-fruit scented toiletries, bright wall colours, retro furnishings, Swiss chocolates, mohair throw rugs and a vague sense of entitlement.

Medusa (Map p193; ☎ 9331 1000; www.medusa.com.au; 267 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst; r from \$270; ☞ ☑ ☒) ; wi-fi) Medusa the seducer's shocking-pink exterior hints at the vibrant, playful décor inside. Eighteen small, vivid suites with enor-

mous beds, mod-con bathrooms and regal furnishings open onto a tranquil courtyard and reflection pool. Just being in the rooms will make you upgrade your underwear.

MANLY

Manly Pacific (Map p198; ☎ 9977 7666; www.accorhotels.com.au; 55 North Steyne; r from \$190; ☞ ☑ ☒) Right on Manly's ocean beach, this dapper midrise hotel is managed by resort-brand, Novotel. Its 214 rooms may be a quick ferry ride from the CBD but they are closer in holiday spirit to Coffs Harbour or even the Gold Coast. Lounge by the rooftop pool or just hang on your balcony.

Camping

Sydney's caravan parks, most of which also have sites for tents, are a fair way out of town. The following are up to 26km from the city centre. Note that peak seasons (such as Christmas) see rate hikes.

Lane Cove River Tourist Park (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9888 9133; www.lcrtp.com.au; Plassey Rd, North Ryde; unpowered/power sites \$34/36, cabins from \$145; ☞ ☑ ☒) This cheery place in the national park lies 14km north of the city and has good facilities (including over 150 caravan sites, plus cabins). By bus the CBD is a 40-minute trip.

Sydney Lakeside Holiday Park (☎ 9913 7845; www.sydneylakeside.com.au; Lake Park Rd, Narrabeen; unpowered/power sites from \$35/45, cabins from \$140; ☞ ☑ ☒) Located 26km north of Sydney, this nifty place occupies prime real estate around the northern beaches.

EATING

Eating out is a pure delight in Sydney. Abundant fresh produce, innovative and highly competitive chefs, and a multicultural melange all combine to make it the number one sport of locals and visitors alike.

City Centre, the Rocks & Circular Quay

The mix of dining options in Sydney's urban core ranges from frenetic lunchtime cafés to some fine establishments. In the centre, weekday surprising lunchtime pleasures abound in mall and arcade food courts along George St.

La Renaissance (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9241 4878; 47 Argyle St; meals \$6-14; ☞ ☑ ☒) breakfast & lunch) Hidden in a maze of inner courtyards within the heart of the Rocks, this authentic French bakery has lovely baguette sandwiches and many other treats, including Orangina. A real find amid the tourist squalor, and the coffee is *très bon*.

Bodhi (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9360 2523; Cook & Phillip Parks, 2-4 College St; yum cha \$5-8, mains \$6-18; 🍴 lunch daily, dinner Tue-Sun) Bodhi scores high for its cool design and leafy disposition. Quick-fire waiters rebound off the minimalist interior and slat-wood tables outside. Yum cha is a daily constant.

Spice I Am (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9280 0928; 90 Wentworth Ave; mains \$8-26; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) Join legions of local Thais (and Thai cuisine aficionados) wanting an authentic taste of Southeast Asia. Service is speedy, which is good as people queue for a chance to eat the bargain-priced fragrant and spicy dishes.

Bar Quattro (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9267 0299; St James Station; mains \$12-25; 🍴 7am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun) Chatting, drinking coffee and choosing items off a traditional Italian menu are the order of the day at this limestone heritage building that was once a public toilet. It's a lovely spot right on Hyde Park.

One Alfred Street (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9241 4636; 1 Alfred St; mains \$16-20; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Look past the fast food neon for this island of fine fare. Australian cuisine gets star treatment morning noon and night. Even the fish and chips are a few cuts above. The menu features many NSW prize foodstuffs, especially cheeses.

Chinatown & Darling Harbour

Chinatown is flush with spicy nooks dishing up fantastic plastic décor and cheap and scrumptious fare, especially around Dixon St. Darling Harbour's developments place an emphasis on views.

Xic Lo (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9280 1678; 215A Thomas St, Haymarket; mains \$8-14; 🍴 11am-10.30pm) Serving up authentic favourites such as *pho bo* (beef rice-noodle soup) and rice paper rolls, this slick diner is a Vietnamese temple to budget eating.

Emperor's Garden BBQ & Noodles (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 9899; 213 Thomas St, Haymarket; dishes \$8-26; 🍴 9.30am-11pm) Barbecued ducks dangling in the window catch your eye, *gow gee* (dumplings) and the delicious softshell crab catch your palette at this barebones Chinatown special.

Marigold Restaurant (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 3388; Level 5, 683 George St, Haymarket; 4-5 serves yum cha \$15-25; 🍴 10am-3pm & 5.30pm-midnight) So popular it has an extra floor (4th) just for Sunday. This vast yum cha palace is a constant whirl of trolley dollies in silk dresses and waiters in bow ties bustling around the 800 seats.

Zaaffran (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9211 8900; Level 2, 345 Harbourside, Darling Harbour; mains \$17-38; 🍴 lunch & dinner) For once a Darling Harbour restaurant where the food will divert you from the view. Highly creative and upscale takes on Indian cuisine are a true pleasure. Veggies will beam at the selection.

Kings Cross, Potts Point & Darlinghurst

The Cross has a good mixture of tiny cafés, swanky eateries and fast-food joints with greasy fare to soak up beer, or gargantuan hangover breakfasts if you're a little too late.

Harry's Café de Wheels (Map p193; ☎ 9357 3074; Cowper Wharf Rdwy, Woolloomooloo; mains \$5-10; 🍴 8.30am-2.30am Mon-Wed, to 3am Thu, to 4am Fri & Sat, to 1am Sun) For decades, cab drivers, sailors and boozed-up nocturnals have sought relief with pea-and-pie floaters across Harry's famous counter. Sit on a milk crate overlooking the hulking Woolloomooloo warships and commence eating.

Bar Coluzzi (Map p193; ☎ 9380 5420; 322 Victoria St, Darlinghurst; meals \$5-10; 🍴 5am-7pm) Legendary Coluzzi has been infusing Darlinghurst with caffeine for over 50 years. It's as simple as a perfect tall black; enjoy people-watching from a stool out front.

La Buvette (Map p193; ☎ 9358 5113; 35 Challis Ave, Potts Point; mains \$11-17; 🍴 6am-9pm Sun-Thu, 6am-5.30pm Fri & Sat) Teeny La Buvette is crammed with the beautiful, the famous and the unknown-but-glam. The menu features salads, sandwiches, crepes and excellent coffee. There are a couple other scenester places nearby.

Dov@Delectica (Map p193; ☎ 9368 0600; 130 Victoria St, Potts Point; mains \$17-24; 🍴 7.30am-3pm Sun-Tue, 7.30am-10pm Wed-Sat) Opening onto the nicest part of leafy Victoria St, Dov has a vibe that will tempt you to linger all morning. The menu varies throughout the day, starting with reasonably priced brekkie (\$5 to \$14) and lunch before the evening's serious fare listed on an ever-changing blackboard menu.

Fish Face (Map p193; ☎ 9332 4803; 132 Darlinghurst Rd, Darlinghurst; mains \$22-30; 🍴 dinner) Sardine-sized Fish Face is in your face with simple, make-no-compromises seafood. From the constant drama of the open kitchen emerges plate after plate of exquisite preparations from sushi to amazing fish and chips to whatever else is fresh.

Surry Hills

Sydney's trendiest neighbourhood rewards culinary explorations. Restaurants and cafés

line Crown St north of Cleveland to Oxford St with many more on parallel Bourke St.

Bourke Street Bakery (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9669 1011; 633 Bourke St, Surry Hills; mains \$3-7; 🍴 7am-4pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat) The fresh baking in this corner spot is impeccable, particularly the sourdough bread. Grab a seat (or a milk crate outside) and an excellent coffee and pick from the alluring array of pizza slices, pies and pastries.

Book Kitchen (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9310 1003; 255 Devonshire St; mains \$12-25; 🍴 breakfast & lunch Wed-Mon, dinner Wed-Sat) Inspiration? You need inspiration? There's plenty in this stylish former garage that's now a used cookbook shop and bistro. Top NSW produce goes into an array of brekkie specials, salads and sandwiches by day. At night, the fare is fusion.

Tabou (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9319 5682; 527 Crown St; mains \$14-25; 🍴 lunch Mon-Fri, dinner daily) Settle into a little bentwood chair at this *belle époque* gem of a French restaurant. Classic French such as *pot au feu* (a herby, meaty stew) are presented in a perfect manner that's just so. The steak *frites* always rewards. There are several more places nearby.

Paddington

Paddington and Woolhara just east are dotted with casual places for an excellent meal. This is upscale and precious Sydney and the locals don't settle for the mundane.

Chocolate By The Bald Man Max Brenner (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9357 5055; 437 Oxford St, Paddington; sweets \$3.50-5; 🍴 9am-11pm Mon-Thu, 9am-midnight Fri & Sat, 10am-10.30pm Sun) Shiny copper pipes lead to big vats of liquid heaven, while shelves bulge with all sorts of tempting treats to take away. Shudders of delight accompany the hot chocolate on a brisk day.

Sloanes (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9331 6717; 312 Oxford St, Paddington; mains \$10-15; 🍴 breakfast & lunch) Skip the tiny interior, for the sweet courtyard surrounded by mature trees. The breakfast and coffee are great, and the lunch blackboard is always crammed with fancy pies, salads, wraps and soups. The BLT (bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich) is a thing of beauty.

Arthur's Pizza (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9332 2220; 260 Oxford St, Paddington; mains \$10-25; 🍴 lunch Sat & Sun, dinner daily) Pizzas continue to continue to draw the masses for their crispy cheesy goodness. Try the 'Zorro' (olives, ricotta, red onion, spinach and semidried tomato).

Four in Hand (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9362 1999; 105 Sutherland St, Paddington; mains \$18-25; 🍴 lunch &

dinner) You can't go far in Paddington and Woollahra without tripping over some beautiful old pub with amazing food. In this case just don't trip over the dog on the way in. French bistro fare is given a Sydney makeover: look for fresh local seafood served superbly.

Bondi

Rub elbows with models, model-wannabes, model surfers and former model prisoners in lively Bondi. Gould and Hall Sts have more choices than a hunky lifeguard in a singles bar.

Jed's Foodstore (Map p195; ☎ 9365 0022; 60 Warners Ave; mains \$5-14; 🍴 breakfast & lunch) This sunny corner café is the epitome of slacker cool. It's just out of the Bondi hubbub so you can lounge away with spunky flavoured meals that include baked goods with colour and sambos with flair.

Gertrude & Alice (Map p195; ☎ 9130 5155; 40 Hall St; mains \$10-15; breakfast & lunch) You're never at a loss for something to read in this shambling used bookshop-cum-café. The counter up front serves delightful baked goods such as Smartie cookies and a range of Med treats.

Pompei's (Map p195; ☎ 9365 1233; 126 Roscoe St; mains \$17-22; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) The pizza packs 'em in although the real secret is the northern Italian dishes whipped up by expat George Pompei. The house-made sorbets and gelati go down well at the pavement tables.

Bondi Icebergs (Map p195; ☎ 9365 9000; 1 Notts Ave; mains \$38-50; 🍴 lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) Poised above the famous swimming pool, iconic Icebergs' equally iconic views sweep across Bondi Beach and the sea. Steak and seafood are prepared with Italian flair and served with old-world finesse. Book early.

Coogee & Bronte

Swell (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9386 5001; 465 Bronte Rd, Bronte; mains \$11-28; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Pull up a bench for seaside Swell's alluring day-turns-to-night Mod Oz menu. This is the perfect reward/draw for the lovely walk from Bondi.

Barzura (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9665 5546; 64 Carr St, Coogee; mains \$17-27; 🍴 breakfast, lunch & dinner) Frequenting by sunglasses-clad people with no visible daytime obligations, Barzura has to have the best views of any café in Sydney. The classic café fare includes uncomplicated salads, pasta dishes and generous breakfasts.

Glebe & Newtown

The inner west is one of Sydney's most condensed melting pots, and global ethnic treats beckon from the main strips. Glebe touts a laid-back, unpretentious atmosphere and good-value food. Funky cafés and multicultural restaurants catering to student budgets line Newtown's King St.

Old Fish Shop Café (Map p196; ☎ 9519 4295; 239a King St; snacks \$3; ☎ 6am-7pm) This almost wall-free corner spot is Newtown's tattooed, dreadlocked hub. Friendly pierced staff will fix you a double shot as you put your feet up on the cushions in the window and watch the Newtown freak show pass onwards to oblivion.

Taste (Map p196; ☎ 9519 7944; 235 King St; meals \$5-8; ☎ lunch & dinner) Middle Eastern food so fresh it almost crackles. Nab one of the eight seats or get a picnic to go. Choose from an array of enticing salads and hot meals displayed like luxury goods behind glass.

Café Otto (Map p196; ☎ 9552 1519; 79 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; mains \$15-20; ☎ lunch & dinner) A shady respite off the bustling strip, you can dine under trees or inside the airy, woodsy main room. There's good beer on tap, which will ease the process of ploughing through the long menu of burgers, pizza, pasta and salads.

Spanish Tapas (Map p196; ☎ 9571 9005; 26 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; tapas \$10-14, mains \$20-23; ☎ lunch Thu-Sat, dinner daily) This is a good-time restaurant: shared tapas plates, spirited music, raucous diners and waiters who say, 'Yezz, we jave a table forl yo!' Cheap jugs of sangria dissolve party resistance and fire you up for flamenco-dancing displays.

Peasant Feast Organic Restaurant (Map p196; ☎ 9516 5998; 121a King St; mains \$20-30; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat) French and Med fuse here over food that really would please a plutocrat. The menu includes classics such as cassoulet as well as veggie and vegan options such as gluten-free timbale. Cane-bottomed chairs and black-board menus add charm (although they may not be organic).

Manly

The ferry terminal has some surprisingly nice little stands with fresh fare you can nab coming or going.

Blue Water Café (Map p198; ☎ 9976 2051; 28 South Steyne; mains \$15-30; ☎ 7.30am-10pm) This bustling beach café adorned with surfboards has plenty of company on the Manly shore.

Choose between pasta, burgers, wraps, salads and more.

Le Kiosk (Map p198; ☎ 9977 4122; 1 Marine Pde, Shelly Beach; mains \$29-37; ☎ lunch daily, dinner Fri-Sun) 'Le Kiosk' sounds ugly but defines romance – a little sandstone cottage, subtle lighting, an open fireplace and the lull of lapping waves. The food proves a worthy paramour; swoon over snapper fillet with sautéed calamari, bacon, chilli and cauliflower. Vegetarians get a look in, too.

DRINKING

Pubs are a crucial part of the Sydney social scene, and you can part that sweet gold nectar at elaborate 19th-century affairs, cavernous Art Deco joints, modern and minimalist recesses, and everything in-between. Bars are generally more stylish and urbane, often with a dress code.

THE ROCKS

The Rocks is littered with rambling old pubs aimed at mobs. You can have your own pub crawl among three of Sydney's most evocative pubs on the almost-tourist-free north side of the bridge highway.

Harbour View Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9252 4111; 18 Lower Fort St; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-10pm Sun) Built in the 1920s, the Harbour View was the main boozier for the Harbour Bridge builders. There's good beer on tap and an exterior as beautiful as the porcelain on your granny's mantle.

Hero of Waterloo (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9252 4553; 81 Lower Fort St; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Enter into the roughly hewn stone interior, meet some of the boisterous locals and enjoy the nightly music (piano, folk, jazz or Irish tunes) of this historic, old-time bar.

Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9251 4044; www.lordnelson.com.au; 19 Kent St; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Built in 1841, the 'Nello' claims to be Sydney's oldest pub (or is it the Hero of Waterloo down the road?) The on-site brewery produces some of Sydney's best ales; take some to bed... (see p202).

CITY CENTRE

Bambini Wine Room (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9283 7098; 185-187 Elizabeth St; ☎ noon-10pm Mon, noon-11pm Tue-Fri, 5-11pm Sat) This tiny darkwood-panelled room with a huge chandelier is the sort of place where you might expect to see Oscar Wilde holding court in a corner. There's an exten-

sive wine list (including rarely seen sparkling shiraz) and free almonds and breadsticks.

Establishment (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9240 3000; 252 George St; ☎ 11am-late Mon-Fri, 6pm-late Sat) Establishment's well-healed crush proves the art of swilling cocktails after a hard, city day is not lost. Sit at the majestic marble bar, in the swish courtyard or be absorbed by the leather lounge.

WOOLLOOMOOLOO

Tilbury Hotel (Map p193; ☎ 9368 1955; 18 Nicholson St; ☎ 9am-midnight) Yuppies, yachties, suits, gays and straights populate the light, bright interiors, packing the bistro and 1st-floor terrace at weekends. *The place on Sunday afternoons.*

KINGS CROSS & DARLINGHURST

Twenty-four-hour party people head for Darlinghurst and Kings Cross – denizens of its trashy main drag, Darlinghurst Rd, are more concerned with bar opening times as opposed to closing times.

Victoria Room (Map p193; ☎ 9357 4488; Level 1, 235 Victoria St, Darlinghurst; ☎ 6pm-midnight Tue-Thu, to 2am Fri & Sat, 2pm-midnight Sun) Plush chesterfields, Art Nouveau wallpaper, dark-wood panelling and bamboo screens – this joint is 1920s Bombay gin palace meets Hong Kong opium den.

Green Park Hotel (Map p193; ☎ 9380 5311; 360 Victoria St, Darlinghurst; ☎ 10am-2am Mon-Fri, noon-2am Sat & Sun) Slightly glammed-up old corner boozier where retro chic black linoleum replaces the sticky carpet. Always heaving, watch the passing parade from the pavement tables or hunker down in the beer garden.

World Bar (Map p193; ☎ 9357 7700; 24 Bayswater Rd, Kings Cross; ☎ 1pm-1am Mon, 1pm-4am Tue & Thu, 1pm-3am Wed, 1pm-6am Fri, 1pm-7am Sat, 1pm-3am Sun) Three floors of cool spaces attract the backpacking crowd (especially on Tuesday's Krapp Karaoke night). There's a vast tropical terrace out front, different genre DJs nightly and live local bands on Friday.

SURRY HILLS

Surry is scenester, hipster and yupster central. Wander the streets for a fine variety of pubs.

Cricketers Arms Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 3301; 106 Fitzroy St; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Sat, to 10pm Sun) The polysexual Cricketers is a favourite haunt of arts students, metrosexuals and turntable boffins. There's tapas on tap and open fires because even people in black sometimes get cold.

Dolphin (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 4800; 412 Crown St; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) This large refurbished pub is as slick as its refurbished locale. The pretty things head upstairs to the is-that-actually-someone's-lounge-room addition, while nonidiot sports fans gravitate to the big screens downstairs.

PADDINGTON & WOOLLAHRA

The little streets between Oxford St and the Harbour shelter a fine range of neighbourhood pubs.

Royal Hotel (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9331 2604; 237 Glenmore Rd, Five Ways, Paddington; ☎ 11am-midnight) One of the points on the five-pointed junction star, the Royal not only is a star but it attracts them as well. This is a fine pub spread over three floors. At the top, the Elephant Bar has views over the harbour. Several good cafés adjoin.

Lord Dudley Hotel (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9327 5399; 236 Jersey Rd, Woollahra; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Wed, to midnight Thu-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Millionaires and tradesfolk rub elbows, leaving one soiled and the other itchy. It's as close as Sydney gets to a ivy-covered English pub, right down to the quality beers by the pint.

WATSONS BAY

Watsons Bay Hotel (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9337 4299; 10 Marine Pde, Watsons Bay; ☎ 10am-midnight) Surrounded by two pricey seafood restaurants (both called Doyles) and a boutique hotel (also called Doyles), this simple boozier with a big terrace has the same views but isn't called Doyles. Avoid weekends.

BONDI & COOGEE

Coogee Bay Hotel (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9665 0000; cnr Coogee Bay Rd & Arden St, Coogee; ☎ 9am-5am Thu-Sat, to midnight Sun, to 3am Mon-Wed) The rambling, rowdy Coogee Bay complex has live music, a beer garden and views across the water. It is vacation time.

Beach Road Hotel (Map p195; ☎ 9130 7247; 71 Beach Rd, Bondi; ☎ 10am-2.30am Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30am Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) Weekends at this big, boxy pub see Bondi types (bronzed, buff and brooding) and woozy out-of-towners playing pool, drinking beer, and digging live bands and DJs. Sleep off your hangover upstairs (p202).

Bondi Icebergs Swimming Club (Map p195; ☎ 9130 3120; 1 Notts Ave, Bondi; ☎ 10am-11pm Sun-Thu, 10am-midnight Fri & Sat) Located just below Bondi Icebergs (p207), this is a more affordable and laid-back place with practically the same views.

GAY & LESBIAN SYDNEY

Gay and lesbian culture forms a vocal, vital part of the Sydney's social fabric. **Taylor Square** (Map pp186-7) on Oxford St is the centre of arguably the second-largest gay community in the world; Newtown is home to Sydney's lesbian scene.

Sydney's famous **Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras** (www.mardigras.org.au) draws over 700,000 spectators.

Free gay media includes *SX*. Online resources include www.ssonet.com.au (Sydney's main gay newspaper) and www.lott.com (Sydney's monthly lesbian magazine).

Most accommodation in and around Oxford St is very gay-friendly. For frolicking, go for a wander along the city end of Oxford Street, or try the following popular faves on for size.

ARQ (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9380 8700; www.arqsydney.com.au; 16 Flinders St, Darlinghurst; Thu/Fri/Sat/Sun free/\$10/20/5; ☎ 9pm-7am Thu, 9pm-9am Fri-Sun) This flash megaclub has a cocktail bar, a recovery room and two dance floors with high-energy house music, drag shows and a hyperactive smoke machine.

Imperial Hotel (Map p196; ☎ 9519 9899; www.theimperialhotel.com.au; 35 Erskineville Rd, Erskineville; admission free; ☎ 3-11.30pm Mon, 3pm-midnight Tue & Wed, 3pm-4am Thu, 3pm-6am Fri & Sat, 1pm-midnight Sun) The Art Deco Imperial's drag shows inspired *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (the opening scene was filmed here). Any drag queen worth her sheen has played the Cabaret Room.

Midnight Shift (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9360 4319; www.themidnightshift.com; 85 Oxford St, Darlinghurst; video bar free, club \$10-20; ☎ noon-4am Mon-Wed, noon-6am Thu & Fri, 2pm-6am Sat & Sun) Sydney's perennial good-time boy palace packs in everyone from beefcakes to drags. The grog is cheap, the patrons messy and Kylie rules.

Oxford Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 3467; 134 Oxford St, Taylor Sq, Darlinghurst; admission free; ☎ 24hr) Big and crimson, the ever-lovin' Oxford is a Taylor Sq beacon. Downstairs it's beer-swilling and mannish, things get more precious as you climb.

Finally, if you simply must bring home a gift, the **Tool Shed** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9360 1100; 191 Oxford St; ☎ 24hr) has sex toys that will both fascinate and horrify airport screeners.

NEWTOWN & GLEBE

The inner west is a great spot for a low-key schooner – Glebe and Newtown have plenty of decent pubs.

our pick **Friend in Hand Hotel** (Map p196; ☎ 9660 2326; 58 Cowper St, Glebe; ☎ 10am-late) Drink all the beer you want here, but don't be surprised when the eating competitions, water-pistol fights, crab racing and cheesy piano men distract you from your boozing. That's OK, you can always stroke the cockatoo.

Bank Hotel (Map p196; ☎ 8568 1900; www.bankhotel.com.au; 324 King St, Newtown; ☎ 10am-midnight Sun-Tue, 10am-2am Wed & Thu, 10am-4am Fri & Sat) Your drinking HQ in Newtown is as multifaceted as the streets below – or the crowd around you. Enjoy views from the rooftop terrace or the shade of the beer garden.

ENTERTAINMENT

Sydney has an eclectic and innovative arts, entertainment and music scene. Outdoor cinemas and sports stadiums cater to families, the city's jazz and blues circuit is healthy and dynamic, and live music is everywhere.

Pick up the 'Metro' section in Friday's *Sydney Morning Herald* for comprehensive entertainment details. Free weekly street magazines specialise in gig and club information. Tickets for most shows can be purchased directly from venues or the following distributors:

Moshtix (☎ 9209 4614; www.moshtix.com.au) Servicing alternative music venues.

Ticketek (Map pp186-7; ☎ 132 849; www.ticketek.com.au; 195 Elizabeth St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Wed, to 7pm Thu & Fri, to 4pm Sat) Main booking agency.

Cinemas

First-run cinemas abound; tickets generally cost \$15 to \$18 for an adult, and \$10 to \$12 for a child. Most cinemas have a cheap night when tickets are discounted by around a third. Sydney also has a huge following of indie and foreign films.

Academy Twin Cinema (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 3457; www.palacecinemas.com.au; 3a Oxford St, Paddington) Art-house enthusiasts roll up for Academy's broad selection of independent Australian and international releases and annual Italian,

Mardi Gras, French and Spanish film festivals (held in February, March, April and May respectively).

Dendy Opera Quays (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9247 3800; www.dendy.com.au; Shop 9, 2 Circular Quay E) A plush cinema, screening first-run, independent world films.

Open Air Cinema (Map pp186-7; ☎ 1300 366 649; www.stgeorgeopenair.com.au; Mrs Macquaries Point, Royal Botanic Gardens; adult/concession \$25/23; ☎ box office 6.30pm, screenings 8.30pm Jan & Feb) Right on the harbour and outside, the three-storey screen here comes with surround sound, sunsets, skyline and swanky food and wine.

Clubs

Arthouse Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9284 1200; www.thearthousehotel.com.au; 275 Pitt St; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon & Tue, 11am-1am Wed & Thu, 11am-3am Fri, 5pm-6am Sat) The art-meets-alcohol theme carries throughout this historic multistorey site. Friday nights see live jazz in the Dome Lounge, while on Saturday the whole downstairs becomes Kink (admission \$25), one of Sydney's hottest club nights.

Home (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9266 0600; Cockle Bay Wharf, Darling Harbour; admission \$25; ☎ 11pm-6am Fri, 9pm-6am Sat) Welcome to the pleasure dome: a three-level, 2000-capacity timber-and-glass extravaganza, home to a huge dance floor, countless bars, outdoor balconies and an amazing DJ booth. Top-name international DJs spin house; live bands amp it up.

Lady Lux (Map p193; ☎ 9361 5000; www.myspace.com/ladyluxnightclub; 2 Roslyn St; admission \$10; ☎ 10pm-5am Fri-Sun) There's a sophisticated cosiness to this smallish club with its funky floral metallic wallpaper and cushioned couches. Friday nights are for underground house 'from deep to minimal tech', with loads of international DJs. Sundays are huge; there are other clubs nearby.

Yu (Map p193; ☎ 9358 6511; 171 Victoria St, Potts Point; admission \$10-20; ☎ 10pm-6am Thu-Sun) Sydney's best house DJs spin hip-hop, nu-skool, vocal and funky house in three rooms divided by sliding video screens.

Live Music CLASSICAL

Sydney Opera House (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9250 7111; www.sydneypoperahouse.com; Bennelong Point) Yes, it's more than a landmark. As well as theatre and dance, the Opera House (p184) regularly hosts a number of local classical groups, including:

Opera Australia (☎ 9699 1099; www.opera-australia.org.au)

Sydney Symphony (☎ 8251 4600; www.sydney-symphony.com)

JAZZ & BLUES

Basement (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9251 2797; www.thebasement.com.au; 29 Reiby Pl, Circular Quay; admission \$15-50; ☎ noon-1.30am Mon-Thu, noon-2.30am Fri, 7.30pm-3am Sat, 7pm-1am Sun) Sydney's premier jazz venue presents big touring acts (Taj Mahal) and big local talent (Vince Jones, Mia Dyson). A broad musical mandate also sees funk, blues and soul bands performing, plus the odd spoken-word gig. Book a table by the stage.

El Rocco Jazz Cellar (Map p193; ☎ 9368 0894; 154 Brougham St; admission free-\$35; ☎ 5pm-1am Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am Sat & Sun) Sydney's first jazz club, this was the city's premier bohemian haunt, hosting performances by Frank Sinatra and Sarah Vaughan. Live jazz has now returned to this legendary rock-hewn basement.

Wine Banq (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9222 1919; www.winebanq.com.au; 53 Martin Pl; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am Sat) Sydney's sexiest jazz room adds a brilliant wine list to performers along the lines of Wynton Marsalis, James Morrison and Harry Connick Jr.

ROCK

Tickets to see rock bands can range from free to \$50 or more depending on venues and whether you've ever actually heard the band before. Sydney's rock scene produces a lot of home-grown talent you'll hear playing in pubs all over town on weekends.

Annandale Hotel (Map p196; ☎ 9550 1078; www.annandalehotel.com; 17 Parramatta Rd, Annandale; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 4-10pm Sun) The Yeah Yeah Yeahs and the Dandy Warhols are some of the bigger names to have fired up the stage at this alternative venue that hosts live music from Tuesday to Sunday (tickets \$11 to \$30). Cult movies screen on Monday nights.

Metro (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9287 2000; www.metrotheatre.com.au; 624 George St; tickets \$25-65; ☎ box office 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, noon-7pm Sat) Big-name indie acts grace the Metro's stage, eg the Eels and well-chosen local rockers such as the Butterfly Effect. It has theatre-style tiers, air-con, and super sound and visibility.

Gaelic Club (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9211 1687; www.gaelicclub.com.au; 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills; tickets \$10-30; ☎ varies with shows) Get your earwax blasted out at the Gaelic courtesy of iconic internationals

of the likes of the Darkness and the Strokes, or home-grown sonic assailants Wolfmother and silverchair. It's a midsize, split-level, mosh-crazy affair.

Hopetoun Hotel (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9361 5257; 416 Bourke St, Surry Hills; admission free-\$12; ☎ 3pm-midnight) Once the uncontested crucible for new Sydney rock bands, the diminutive 'Hoey' is still a launching pad for garage bands with plans. Plus there's Coopers on tap.

Sandringham Hotel (Map p196; ☎ 9557 1254; 387 King St, Newtown; admission free-\$10; ☎ 9.30am-midnight Mon-Wed, 9.30am-2am Thu & Fri, 10am-2am Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) You can get rocked from Tuesday to Sunday at the Sando for not much money. There's a beer garden and happy hour (4pm to 7pm).

Spectator Sports

On any given Sydney weekend there'll be all manner of balls being hurled, kicked and batted around. Sydneysiders are excruciatingly passionate about the **National Rugby League** (NRL; www.nrl.com.au; tickets \$20-40), the season transpiring at suburban stadia and **Aussie Stadium** (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9360 6601; www.aussiestadium.com; Driver Ave, Moore Park), with September finals.

From March right through to September, 2005's premiership winning Sydney Swans play in the **Australian Football League** (AFL; www.afl.com.au; tickets \$20-40) at the **Sydney Cricket Ground** (SCG; Map pp182-3; ☎ 9360 6601; www.sydneycricketground.com.au; Driver Ave, Moore Park) and **ANZ Stadium** (Map pp182-3; ☎ 8765 2000; www.anzstadium.com.au; Olympic Blvd, Homebush Bay).

The **cricket** (www.cricinfo.com) season runs from October to March, the SCG hosting interstate Pura Cup matches and sell-out international test and World Series Cup matches.

Theatre

Sydney gets its share of big productions. Check entertainment listings for what's on.

Company B (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9699 3444; www.belvoir.com.au; 25 Belvoir St, Surry Hills; tickets \$32-52) Artistic director Neil Armfield is a bright light of the Sydney theatre world. Stars such as Geoffrey Rush clamour to perform his adventurous interpretations in the Belvoir Street Theatre.

Sydney Theatre (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9250 1999; www.sydneytheatre.org.au; 22 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay; tickets \$65-75) The resplendent Sydney Theatre at the base of Observatory Hill puts 850 bums on seats for specialist drama and dance.

Sydney Theatre Company (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9250 1777; www.sydneytheatre.com.au; level 2, Pier 4, Hickson Rd,

Walsh Bay; tickets \$73) STC is Sydney's premier theatre company. Major Australian actors perform works by Alan Bennett, David Williamson and Shakespeare. Ask about \$20 'Student Rush' tickets. Cate Blanchett and hubby Andrew Upton are the artistic directors.

SHOPPING

Shopping in Sydney is just plain amazing. If you want it, you'll find it. More important are all the things you didn't know you wanted until you make their discovery.

Most stores are open from 9.30am to 6pm Monday to Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and until 9pm Thursday. Sunday trading is common but expect shorter hours, such as noon to 4pm or 5pm.

Shopping Areas

What follows are a few of the most interesting places to shop in Sydney and what you might find there.

CITY CENTRE

Sydneysiders head cityward if they've got something special to buy or when serious retail therapy is required. The central city's diverse range of mainly upmarket stores – centred on Pitt St Mall, Market St and George St – offers plenty of choice for gifts and treats.

David Jones (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9266 5544; cnr Market & Castlereagh Sts, Sydney) In two enormous city buildings, DJs is Sydney's premier department store. The Market St store has menswear, electrical and a highbrow food court; Castlereagh St has women's and children's wear and a friendly concierge to point you in the right direction. The food halls in the basement are a foodie fantasy.

Queen Victoria Building (QVB; Map pp186-7; ☎ 9265 6869; 455 George St, Sydney) This high-Victorian masterpiece occupies an entire city block, and though there are some inspiring retail offerings, they run a distant second to the magnificent wrought-iron balconies, stained-glass shopfronts and mosaic floors.

RM Williams (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9262 2228; 389 George St, Sydney) Urban cowboys and country folk can't get enough of this hard-wearing outback gear. Favourites include oilskin jackets, Akubra hats, moleskin jeans and leather work boots.

Strand Arcade (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9232 4199; 412 George St & 193-5 Pitt St Mall, Sydney) Constructed in 1891 in a squeezey space between George and Pitt Sts, the Strand Arcade rivals the QVB in the

ornateness stakes. Three floors of designer fashions, Australiana and old-world coffee shops will make your short cut through here considerably longer.

Strand Hatters (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9231 6884; Shop 8, Strand Arcade, 412 George St, Sydney) Strand Hatters can top your noggin with a classically Australian Akubra bush hat. Staff block and steam hats to customers' cranial requirements.

PADDINGTON

Oxford St in Paddington is Sydney's premier strip for fashion. Among the choices:

Leona Edmiston (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9331 7033; 88 William St) Exuberantly feminine, flirtatious and fun designs.

Morrissey (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9380 4722; 372 Oxford St) Sexy, high-heeled, high-priced style.

Quick Brown Fox (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 3211; 100 Oxford St) Funky vintage fashions, catchy patterns and very hip boots and bags.

Sass & Bide (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9360 3900; www.sassandbide.com; 132 Oxford St) Sassy super-low-cut women's jeans, body-hugging jackets and minidresses.

Scanlan & Theodore (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9380 9388; 122 Oxford St) Beautifully made women's outfits for the evening or the office.

BONDI

As Bondi Beach has gentrified it has attracted its own big-name local designers, mainly based around Gould St.

One Teaspoon Shop (Map p195; ☎ 9365 1290; 86 Gould St) Rising star Jamie Blakey shows off cleavage-revealing dresses, as well as bikinis, belts and shoes.

Tuchuzy (Map p195; ☎ 9365 5371; 90 Gould St) Stocks an edgy collection of local and imported labels for budding male or female rock stars.

SURRY HILLS

The bottom end of Crown St has some great vintage stores.

C's Flashback (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9331 7833; 316 Crown St) Camp secondhand store sells both men's and women's threads.

NEWTOWN

The Inner West is the place to look for anything punky, alternative or in shades of black. King St has an interesting collection of boutiques, secondhand stores and the city's best used bookstores.

Gold's Book Arcade (Map p196; ☎ 9519 8947; 32 King St) Floor-to-ceiling racks and stacks.

Holy Moley (Map p196; ☎ 9550 4033; 325 King St) Very-Newtown murals (Robert De Niro in *Taxi Driver*, a skeleton

with a mohawk) are right outside the station. Inside it's punky T-shirts, baby-doll dresses, sexy lingerie and more.

Markets

Balmain Market (Map pp182-3; ☎ 0418-765 736; cnr Darling St & Curtis Rd, Balmain; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Sat) Set in the shady grounds of St Andrews Congregational, stalls sell arts, crafts, books, clothing, jewellery, plants, and fruit and veg. One of the best locally.

Bondi Markets (Map p195; ☎ 9315 8988; Bondi Beach Public School, cnr Campbell Pde & Warners Ave, Bondi; ☎ 9am-4pm Sun) The kids are at the beach on Sunday while their school fills up with Bondi characters rummaging through tie-dyed secondhand clothes and books, beads and earrings, aromatherapy oils, candles, old records, and more.

Glebe Markets (Map p196; ☎ 4237 7499; Glebe Public School, cnr Glebe Point Rd & Derby Pl, Glebe; ☎ 9am-4pm Sat) The best of the west; Sydney's dreadlocked, shoeless, inner-city contingent beats an aimless course to this crowded market.

Paddington Market (Map pp182-3; ☎ 9331 2923; St John's Church, 395 Oxford St, Paddington; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat) Sydney's most-attended weekend market dishes up vintage clothes and hip fashions, jewellery, books, massage and palmistry. Just as your spirits flag, you'll find something special under a little awning.

Paddy's Markets (Map pp186-7; ☎ 1300 361 589; cnr Hay & Thomas Sts, Haymarket; ☎ 9am-5pm Thu-Sun) This rollicking carnival of a market has over 1000 stalls specialising (mostly) in stuff that tomorrow will be junk (and at a secondhand market).

Rocks Market (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9240 8717; George St, The Rocks; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) Under a long, white canopy near Sydney Harbour Bridge, the 150 stalls here target tourists with an enormous amount of crap.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport (code: SYD; Map pp182-3; ☎ 9667 9111; www.sydneyairport.com.au) is Australia's busiest, so don't be surprised if there are delays. It's only 10km south of the city centre, making access relatively easy. The T1 (international) and T2 and T3 (domestic) terminals are a 4km, \$5 bus or train ride apart (the airport is privately run so transferring terminals – a service that's free in most of the world – is seen as a profit centre).

You can fly into Sydney from all the usual international points and from within Australia.

Qantas (☎ 13 13 13; www.qantas.com.au), **Jetstar** (☎ 13 15 38; www.jetstar.com.au) and **Virgin Blue** (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au) have frequent flights to other major cities. Smaller Qantas-affiliated airlines fly to smaller Oz destinations.

For further details on air travel within Australia, see p497. For air travel to/from Australia, see p494.

Bus

All private interstate and regional bus travellers arrive at **Sydney Coach Terminal** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9281 9366; Central Station, Eddy Ave; ☎ 6am-10.30pm). Sample destinations include Brisbane (\$120, 16 hours), Byron Bay (\$110, 13 hours) and Melbourne (\$80, 13 hours). There are lots of discounted fares.

The government's CountryLink rail network is also complemented by coaches. Most buses stop in the suburbs on the way in and out of Sydney. If you hold a VIP or YHA discount card, shop around the major bus companies with offices here:

Firefly (☎ 1300 730 740; www.fireflyexpress.com.au)

Greyhound (☎ 13 14 99; www.greyhound.com.au)

Premier (☎ 13 34 10; www.premierms.com.au)

Train

Sydney's main rail terminus for CountryLink interstate and regional services is the huge **Central Station** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 13 22 32; www.countrylink.info; Eddy Ave; ☎ staffed ticket booths 6am-10pm, ticket machines 24hr). It has a small bookshop that's a train-spotter's dream. CountryLink discounts often nudge 40% on economy fares – sometimes cheaper than buses.

Sample train fares (without discount) include Brisbane (\$90, 14 hours) and Melbourne (\$90, 11 hours).

GETTING AROUND

Your transport options may be many in Sydney but your journey may not be easy. Spend more than a day in town and you won't be able to miss stories about the dire state of the overpatronised, underfunded system. Just figuring it out is a challenge: there are over 100 different fares types. That the various modes are Balkanised is another problem. Buses, ferries and many trains are operated by the same agency but each seems to operate in blissful ignorance of the others. A trip to the various info booths at Circular Quay will confirm this. (And as an added bone-us, the tram and monorail are not part of the system at all.)

For information on government buses, ferries and trains try the **Transport Infoline** (☎ 13 15 00; www.131500.com.au).

To/From the Airport

One of the easiest ways to get to and from the airport is with a shuttle company such as **Kingsford Smith Transport** (KST; ☎ 9666 9988; www.kst.com.au; one way/return from \$12/20; ☎ 5am-11pm), which services central Sydney hotels, and **Manly Airport Bus** (☎ 0500 505 800; one way/return \$35/68; ☎ 5am-11pm), from Manly. Bookings are essential for both.

Airport Link (☎ 13 15 00; www.airportlink.com.au; one way/return Central Station to domestic terminal \$13/20, to international terminal \$14/21; ☎ 5am-midnight) is a strange service: it's a normal commuter line (with dirty cars) but you pay through the nose to use the airport stations (punters going to Wolli Creek, the next stop *beyond* the airport pay \$3).

Taxi fares from the airport are approximately \$25 to \$35 to Circular Quay, \$40 to \$50 to North Sydney and Bondi, and \$60 to Manly.

Boat

FERRY

Sydney transport's most civilised option (and an attraction in themselves) – the harbour ferries, JetCats (to Manly) and RiverCats (to Parramatta) – depart from Circular Quay. Most ferries operate between 6am and midnight; those servicing tourist attractions operate shorter hours. The **Ferry Information Office** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9207 3170; www.sydneyferries.info; ☎ 7am-5.45pm Mon-Sat, 8am-5.45pm Sun) at Circular Quay has details. Some have connecting bus services.

A one-way inner-harbour ride on a regular ferry costs \$5.20/3 adult/concession. A one-way ride to Manly on the JetCat costs \$8 (no concession, 15 minutes, half-hourly). A one-way RiverCat ride to Parramatta costs \$8/4 adult/concession (50 minutes, hourly).

WATER TAXI

Water taxis ply dedicated shuttle routes; rides to/from other harbour venues can be booked.

Watertours (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9211 7730; www.watertours.com.au; ☎ 9.30am-11pm) Opera House to Darling Harbour \$15/10 adult/child; one-hour Harbour and Nightlights Tours \$30/20 adult/child.

Yellow Water Taxis (Map pp186-7; ☎ 9555 9778; www.yellowwatertaxis.com.au; ☎ 7am-midnight) Circular Quay to Darling Harbour \$15/10 adult/child; 45-minute Harbour Tours \$25/20 adult/concession.

Bus

Sydney buses run to most places but not frequently. Bondi, Coogee and parts of the North Shore are serviced only by bus. Nightrider buses operate skeletally after regular services cease around midnight.

The main city bus stops are Circular Quay, Wynyard Park (York St) and Railway Sq. Buy tickets from newsagents, Bus TransitShops and on buses. Pay the driver as you enter, or dunk prepaid tickets in ticket machines by the door. Fares start at \$1.80; most trips are under \$3.50. There's a **Bus TransitShop** (Map pp186-7; www.sydneybuses.info; cnr Alfred & Loftus Sts; ☎ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-5pm Sat & Sun) at Circular Quay, and there are others at the Queen Victoria Building (Map pp186-7), Railway Sq (Map pp186-7) and Wynyard Station (Map pp186-7).

Bus routes starting with an X indicate limited-stop express routes; those with an L have limited stops. Most buses depart the city on George or Castlereagh Sts, ploughing down George or Elizabeth Sts on the way back in. Many bus stops lack basic route and schedule information.

Car & Motorcycle

Cars are good for day trips out of town, but driving one in the city is like having an anchor around your neck. Heavy traffic, elusive and very expensive parking (even at hotels, expect \$30 per day) and the extra costs just aren't worth the stress.

BUYING OR SELLING A CAR

The secondhand car industry is a minefield of mistrust and dodgy wheelers and dealers, but with a bit of research you can still land yourself a decent deal. Parramatta Rd is lined with used-car lots, and the **Trading Post** (www.tradingpost.com.au), a weekly rag available at newsagents, lists secondhand vehicles. For more information on buying or selling a vehicle, see p500.

The **Kings Cross Car Market** (Map p193; ☎ 1800 808 188; www.carmarket.com.au; car park Level 2, cnr Ward Ave & Elizabeth Bay Rd, Kings Cross; ☎ 9am-5pm Sun-Thu, to 4pm Fri & Sat) is a good spot to buy and sell a car. It's potentially hit and miss, but always busy.

RENTAL

Major rental agencies with offices in Sydney:

Avis (☎ 13 63 33; www.avis.com.au)

Budget (☎ 13 27 27; www.budget.com.au)

Europcar (☎ 1300 131 390; www.europcar.com.au)

Hertz (☎ 13 30 39; www.hertz.com.au)

Thrifty (☎ 1300 367 227; www.thrifty.com.au)

The **Yellow Pages** (www.yellowpages.com.au) lists many other car-hire companies, some specialising in renting clapped-out wrecks at rock-bottom prices – read the fine print!

ROAD TOLLS

There's a \$3 southbound toll on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Tunnel. If you're heading from the North Shore to the eastern suburbs, it's easier to take the tunnel. There's a \$4 northbound toll on the Eastern Distributor; the infamous Cross City Tunnel costs \$3.50 one way. Sydney's main motorways (M1, M2, M4, M5 and M7) are also tolled (\$2.50 to \$7). There are a few cash booths at toll gates, but the whole system is electronic, meaning that it's up to you to pay your toll through a phone call or website. Watch for signs with phone numbers and websites as you drive so you know who to pay (and they will find your credit card through your car rental agency if you don't). For info, try www.sydneymotorways.com.

Fare Deals

The **SydneyPass** (www.sydneypass.info) offers three, five or seven days' unlimited travel over seven days on STA buses, ferries and the rail network's Red TravelPass zone (inner suburbs). Passes include the Airport Express, Sydney and Bondi Explorer buses, JetCats, RiverCats and three STA-operated harbour cruises. They cost \$110/55/275 adult/child/family (three days), \$145/70/360 (five days) and \$165/80/410 (seven days). Buy passes from STA offices, train stations, Bus TransitShops, the Sydney visitors centre at the Rocks (p181) and from Airport Express and Explorer bus drivers.

TravelPasses offer unlimited rail, bus and ferry rides at cheap weekly rates and can be a far better deal than the SydneyPass. There are various colour-coded grades offering combinations of distance and service. A weekly Red TravelPass (inner suburbs), available at train stations, STA offices, Bus TransitShops and newsagents, costs \$35/17.50 adult/concession.

If you're just catching buses or trains or ferries, various TravelTen tickets offer 10 discounted rides but are only good on one mode of transport.

Several good-value transport-plus-entry tickets are available from the Circular Quay Ferry Information Office (p214).

Monorail & Metro Light Rail (MLR)

The privately operated **Metro Monorail** (☎ 9285 5600; www.metro-monorail.com.au; single circuit \$5; 🕒 every 4min, 7am-10pm Mon-Thu, to midnight Fri & Sat, 8am-10pm Sun) claims to offer good sightseeing as it circles Darling Harbour and the city but many of the windows are obscured with advertising.

Run by the same outfit, the **Metro Light Rail (MLR)**; (☎ 9285 5600; www.metrolightrail.com.au; Zone 1 adult/concession \$3/2, Zone 1 & 2 adult/concession \$4/3, day pass adult/concession \$9/7; 🕒 24hr, every 15min 6am-midnight, every 30min midnight-6am) is a tram between Central Station and Pyrmont via Chinatown and Darling Harbour. The Zone 2 service beyond Pyrmont to Lilyfield stops at 11pm Sunday to Thursday, midnight Friday and Saturday. The service should be integrated into the rest of the system but isn't. Ticketing is separate; most transit passes aren't valid on the monorail or the MLR and conductors take delight in collecting the fare.

Taxi

Taxis and cab ranks proliferate in Sydney. Flag fall is \$3, then it's \$1.79 per kilometre (plus 20% from 10pm to 6am). The waiting charge is \$0.77 per minute. Passengers must pay bridge, tunnel and road tolls (even if you don't incur them 'outbound', the returning driver will incur them 'inbound').

The four major taxi companies offering phone bookings (\$1.60 fee) are:

Arrow Taxis (☎ 13 22 11)

Legion (☎ 13 14 51)

Premier Cabs (☎ 13 10 17)

Taxis Combined (☎ 13 33 00)

Train

Sydney's suburban rail network can be a good way to get around (except to places such as Bondi...) Lines radiate from the underground City Circle (seven city-centre stations) but don't service the northern and southern beaches, Balmain or Glebe. All suburban trains stop at Central Station, and usually one or more of the other City Circle stations too.

Trains run from around 5am to midnight. At weekends and after 9am on weekdays you can buy an off-peak return ticket, valid until 4am the next day, for little more than a standard one-way fare.

Twenty-four-hour ticket machines occupy most stations, but humans are usually available if you need help with the fares. If you have to change trains, buy a ticket to your ultimate destination, but don't exit the transfer station en route or your ticket will be invalid.

For train information, visit the **CityRail Information Booth** (Map pp186-7; ☎ 13 15 00; www.131500.com.au; Circular Quay; 🕒 9.05am-4.50pm).

AROUND SYDNEY

You'll find blasts of fresh ocean air at coastal national parks close to Sydney. Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park (p222) to the north and Royal National Park (p177) to the south are good examples. The Hunter Valley (p231) draws wine lovers north and there are many day trips from Sydney, but it's a fair haul and the long time in a bus may drive you to drink. It's better included as part of your itinerary going north.

BLUE MOUNTAINS

Ooh! That's the constant chorus you hear at the Echo Point Lookout in Katoomba in the heart of the Blue Mountains. This jaw-dropping spectacle of canyons and green hills is Unesco-recognised and it'll make you wonder if anyone even needed to apply. And it's but one of the many wondrous sights in the Blue Mountains (Map p180), a region of astounding scenery, fabulous bushwalks and more gorges, gum trees and gourmet restaurants than seem viable. The slate-coloured haze that gives the mountains their name comes from a fine mist of oil exuded by eucalyptus trees.

The foothills begin 65km inland from Sydney, rising to an 1100m-high sandstone plateau riddled with valleys eroded into the stone over thousands of years. In 1813 Wentworth, Blaxland and Lawson were the first Europeans to traverse the mountains.

There are several national parks in the area. The **Blue Mountains National Park** has some truly fantastic scenery, excellent bushwalks, Aboriginal engravings and all the canyons and cliffs you could ask for. It's the most popular and accessible of the three national parks in the area. Great lookouts include Evan's Lookout and Govett's Leap Lookout near Blackheath – both even more spectacular than Echo Point in Katoomba.

Wollemi National Park, north of the Bells Line of Road, is NSW's largest forested wilderness area and stretches all the way to Denman in the Hunter Valley.

For more information on these parks (including camping) contact the **NPWS visitors centre** (☎ 4787 8877; www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au; Govetts Leap Rd, Blackheath; 🕒 9am-4.30pm), about 2.5km off the Great Western Hwy and 10km north of Katoomba. After the beaches of Bondi you may find the hills surprisingly cool. Bring a wrap.

Activities

BUSHWALKING

The roads across the mountains offer tantalising glimpses of the majesty of the area, but the only way to really experience the Blue Mountains is on foot. There are walks lasting from a few minutes to several days. The two most popular areas are Jamison Valley, south of Katoomba, and Grose Valley, northeast of Katoomba and east of Blackheath. The area south of Glenbrook is also good.

The NPWS centre can help you pick a hike or, for shorter walks, ask at the Katoomba Echo Point visitors centre (p218).

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES & TOURS

Most operators have offices in Katoomba – competition is steep, so shop around for the best deal. If you have a YHA card, ask if you're eligible for a discount.

Australian School of Mountaineering (ASM); (Map p219; ☎ 4782 2014; www.asmguides.com; 166 Katoomba St, Katoomba) Rock climbing from \$165, abseiling from \$145 and canyoning from \$165.

Blue Mountains Adventure Company (Map p219; ☎ 4782 1271; www.bmac.com.au; 84A Bathurst Rd, Katoomba) A bit more expensive than ASM; also has bushwalking (from \$135) and mountain biking (from \$125).

Blue Mountains Walkabout (☎ 0408 443 822; www.bluemountainwalkabout.com) Eight-hour, at times strenuous, bushwalks with Aboriginal themes and spirituality (\$95 cash only; 25% donated to Aboriginal causes). Meets at Faulconbridge train station.

Tread Lightly Eco Tours (☎ 4788 1229; www.treadlightly.com.au) Has a wide range of walks that emphasise the ecology of the region.

Getting There & Away

To reach the Blue Mountains by road, leave Sydney via Parramatta Rd. At Strathfield de-tour onto the Western Motorway tollway (M4;

\$2.50), which becomes the Great Western Hwy west of Penrith. This is the main road and passes right through Katoomba, some 100km west of Sydney.

The Bells Line of Rd is north of the Great Western Hwy. It twists and turns through the mountains and can be combined with the Great Western Hwy for a circle route. To reach it, head out on Parramatta Rd, and from Parramatta drive northwest on Windsor Rd to Windsor. The Richmond Rd from Windsor becomes the Bells Line of Rd west of Richmond.

CityRail trains regularly service Leura and Katoomba; see p220 for details.

WENTWORTH FALLS TO LEURA

As you head into **Wentworth Falls**, you'll get your first real taste of Blue Mountains scenery: views to the south open out across the majestic Jamison Valley. Wentworth Falls themselves launch a plume of fraying droplets over a 300m drop – check them out from Falls Reserve. This is also the starting point for a network of walking tracks, which delve into the sublime Valley of the Waters, with waterfalls, gorges, woodlands and rainforests.

Leura is a gracious, affluent town, fashioned around undulating streets, unparalleled gardens, Art Deco houses and sweeping Victorian verandas. The **Mall** is the genteel tree-lined main street with boutiques, galleries and cafés. It is only 2km east of Katoomba.

KATOOMBA

☎ 02 / pop 18,000

The Blue Mountains' crowning urban glory manages to be bohemian and bourgeois all at once. Its steep streets are lined with Art Deco buildings and bathed in often bracing swirling mists. Amid more humdrum shops, you'll find some splendid, notable cafés. And despite its burgeoning tourist industry, it retains a friendly, country town sort of ambience. Katoomba is an ideal day trip from Sydney. The train makes access easy and there's enough to keep you busy for at least a day. If you spend the night, you'll have time to enjoy some walks or other activities in the Blue Mountains.

Information

There are numerous banks and ATMs on Katoomba St.

Echo Point visitors centre (☎ 4782 9865, 1300 653 408; www.australiablue-mountains.com.au) Covers the region.

Katoomba Book Exchange (☎ 4782 9997; 32 Katoomba St; internet access per 30min/1hr \$4/7; ☎ 10am-6pm; 📖) One of several secondhand book stores.

Sights

Katoomba's big-ticket drawcard is **Echo Point**, where a series of sensational viewing platforms transport your gaze over the Jamison Valley. The impressive **Three Sisters** rock formation towers over a scene of green-clad peaks and orange rocks. Misty ranges stretch into the distance, each a paler shade of blue.

Echo Point attracts profuse serenity-spoiling tourists and idling buses. However, like so many places that draw mobs, a short walk along one of several walkways will rapidly leave 90% of the day-trippers in the dust. Go far enough and you can hear the birds calling from below. When walking here from the town centre, Lurline St is the least dull.

To the west of town is **Scenic World** (☎ 4782 2699; www.scenicworld.com.au; cnr Cliff Dr & Violet St; cable car return adult/child \$19/10; ☎ 9am-5pm), with a megaplex vibe and an 1880s railway descending the 52-degree incline to the valley floor. It also has a glass-floored **Scenic Skyway** cable car floating out across the valley.

Sleeping BUDGET

Katoomba Falls Caravan Park (☎ 4782 1835; www.bmc.nsw.gov.au; Katoomba Falls Rd; unpowered/powered sites \$25/32, cabins from \$75) This council-run park lacks atmosphere and gets mixed reviews, but it's Katoomba's only camping option.

No 14 (☎ 4782 7104; www.blueemts.com.au/no14; 14 Lovel St; dm \$22, d with/without bathroom \$69/59) This colourful hostel feels like a cheery share house. The airy veranda is the perfect spot to relax and polished floorboards make a pleasant change from daggie carpets. Dorms have three beds; attic-style doubles are comfy and private.

Blue Mountains YHA (☎ 4782 1416; www.yha.com.au; 207 Katoomba St; dm/d/ff from \$24/73/116; 📖) The austere Art Deco exterior of this popular 200-bed hostel belies its cavernous, sparkling innards. Dorms and family rooms are spotlessly bright. Highlights include a pinball machine, pool tables, open fires, a giant chess set, central heating, barbecues and curry nights. Good place to organise activities.

Katoomba Mountain Lodge (☎ 4782 3933; www.katoombamountainlodge.com.au; 31 Lurline St; s/d from \$42/58; 📖; wi-fi) Nonhip retro décor is the price you'll pay for the best-value rooms in town. It's a cheerily run, 90-year-old house right in the middle of town, with astounding views from some of the top-floor rooms.

MIDRANGE

Cecil Guesthouse (☎ 4782 1411; www.ourguest.com.au/cecil.html; 108 Katoomba St; s with/without bathroom \$80/75, d \$106/84) Generations of Sydneysiders have sought refuge in cool Katoomba and the Cecil bears witness to many of them. Creaky floorboards, unrenovated walls and kooky lounge rooms – put character before glitz. Lawn tennis anyone?

3 Explorers Motel (☎ 4782 1733; www.3explorers.com.au; 197 Lurline St; s/d from \$79/90; 📖; 📖) There's nothing exceptional about this two-storey motel but the 15 rooms are good value and there is easy access to Echo Point, so you can ponder the changing colours at any hour.

Clarendon Guesthouse (☎ 4782 1322; www.clarendonguesthouse.com.au; 68 Lurline St; r from \$120; 📖; 📖) The rambling old Clarendon is light on ceremony and heavy on character. Original rooms (with shared bathrooms) are charmingly old school (and cheap: \$90); the newer motel extension has an elusive '50s retro character. We'd pick the 1920s in the main building.

TOP END

Carrington Hotel (☎ 4782 1111; www.thecarrington.com.au; 15-47 Katoomba St; r \$145-400) Katoomba's social and architectural high-water mark, the Carrington has been accommodating road-weary travellers since 1880. Every inch has been refurbished, but its historical character remains intact. Throwback amenities include a library, a billiards room and stately gardens.

Eating

Katoomba St has an amazingly tasty selection of places to eat.

Blue Mountains Food Co-op (☎ 4782 5890; Hapenny Lane; ☎ 8am-6pm) The perfect stop for hard-core self-caterers. Organic, vegan and gluten-free are just some of the labels on the mostly local foods and produce. The place to get an odd-ball soda you'll wish they sold at home.

Hominy Bakery (☎ 4782 9816; 185 Katoomba St; snacks from \$3; ☎ 6am-5:30pm) Yet another reason you can't help but eat well locally. This organic

KATOOMBA

INFORMATION

- Echo Point Visitors Centre.....1 C5
- Katoomba Book Exchange.....2 B2

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Australian School of Mountaineering.....3 B2
- Blue Mountains Adventure.....4 B1
- Company.....5 B1
- Fantastic Aussie Tours.....5 B1
- High'n'Wild Mountain Adventures.....(see 4)
- Scenic Skyway.....6 A5
- Scenic World.....7 A5

SLEEPING

- 3 Explorers Motel.....8 B4
- Blue Mountains YHA.....9 B2
- Carrington Hotel.....10 B2
- Cecil Guesthouse.....11 B2
- Clarendon Guesthouse.....12 C2
- Echo Point Motor Inn.....13 C5
- Katoomba Falls Caravan Park.....14 A4
- Katoomba Mountain Lodge.....15 C2
- No14.....16 C2

EATING

- Blue Mountains Chocolate Co.....17 B4
- Blue Mountains Food Co-op.....18 B2
- Fresh.....19 B2
- Gallery.....20 C3
- Hominy Bakery.....21 B2
- Niche Nosh.....22 B1
- Paragon Café.....23 B2

ENTERTAINMENT

- Clarendon Band Room.....(see 12)
- Edge Cinema.....25 C1
- TrisElies.....26 B1

DRINKING

- Carrington Bar.....(see 10)
- Hotel Gearin.....24 B1

TRANSPORT

- Blue Mountains Explorer Bus.....(see 5)
- Trolley Tours.....(see 5)
- Velo Nova.....27 B2

bakery has a daily selection of sourdough breads and exquisite cakes and pastries.

Blue Mountains Chocolate Co (☎ 4782 7071; 176 Lurline St; snacks from \$3; ☎ 10am-6pm) Not a place where you'll exclaim 'oh fudge!' but a real candy company that makes exquisite high-end chocolates (the white passion fruit: 'Oh God! Oh God!'). Enjoy a few on the veranda with a coffee drink and you might forget you were headed to Echo Point.

our pick **Fresh** (☎ 4782 3602; 181 Katoomba St; meals \$7-14; ☎ breakfast & lunch) Quite possibly the best breakfast you'll have in Oz. Simply beautiful eggs prepared many ways; all served with wholemeal sourdough toast. Lunch includes great sandwiches on the same bread and interesting salads. There's a full coffee bar, luscious smoothies and tables in and out.

Niche Nosh (☎ 4782 1622; 10 Katoomba St; meals \$8-15; ☎ lunch & dinner) A shambling old place that sprawls from one room to the next and out to the footpath. Pick up on the local alternative vibe while enjoying veggie specials made with local produce. Go on, be a poser and join the zillions who love the veggie burger.

Paragon Café (☎ 4782 2928; 65 Katoomba St; mains \$10-20; ☎ breakfast & lunch) The heritage-listed 1916 Paragon proclaims its 'Art Deco magnificence'. Sampling coffee and chocolates in the cluttered surrounds is a compulsory Blue Mountains experience. The front window boasts a hodge-podge of junk; the menu leans to standards such as spag bol.

Gallery (☎ 4782 1220; 98 Lurline St; mains \$29-32; ☎ dinner Thu-Sun) Chef Barry Sullivan not only knows his chops, he has chops in the kitchen. As the name suggests, there's art aplenty at this quiet spot midway to Echo Point both on the walls and on the plates. The changing menu is global fusion where you might pair

a starter of local roast quail with a main of Moroccan lamb with lentils.

Drinking

The Clarendon Guesthouse (p218) has many good regional bands on weekends.

Hotel Gearin (☎ 4782 4395; www.gearinhotel.com; 273 Great Western Hwy; ☎ 7am-2am Mon-Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat, 10am-10pm Sun) The stylish place for a cold one or a game of pool.

Carrington Bar (☎ 4782 1111; www.thecarrington.com.au; 10-16 Katoomba St; admission free; ☎ 9.30am-1.30am Mon-Thu, to 4.30am Fri & Sat, to 11pm Sun) The ceramic-tiled outpost of the upper-crust hotel looks like a tube stop outside. Settle in for a schooner and shoot some pool. There's a nightclub upstairs on Saturday night (admission \$5).

Getting There & Around

CityRail (☎ 131 500; www.cityrail.com.au) runs to Katoomba from Sydney's Central Station (one way adult/child \$12.20/6.10, two hours, hourly).

Blue Mountains Explorer Bus (☎ 4782 4807; www.explorerbus.com.au; 283 Main St; adult/child \$32/16; ☎ 9.45am-5.15pm) offers hop-on hop-off service on an hourly Katoomba/Leura loop, stopping at 30 attractions.

Trolley Tours (☎ 4782 7999, 1800 801 577; www.trolleytours.com.au; 285 Main St; adult/child \$15/12; ☎ 9.15am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.45am-3.45pm Sat & Sun) runs a bus barely disguised as a trolley, with piped commentary.

Velo Nova (☎ 4782 2800; www.velonova.com.au; 182 Katoomba St; half-/full-day \$28/50; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) rents out hi-tech, 24-speed, all-terrain mountain bikes. Saturday morning group rides run along Cliff Dr, finishing up with a café coffee.

Katoomba-Leura-Wentworth Falls Taxis (☎ 4783 1311) service its monikers.