



# Sydney & New South Wales

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Icebergs Dining Room & Bar (p111)
- » Margan (p138)
- » Racine at La Colline Winery (p198)
- » Seagrass Brasserie (p214)
- » Solitary (p132)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Bondi Beach House (p105)
- » Byron at Byron (p178)
- » Petersons Guesthouse (p193)
- » Sydney Harbour YHA (p102)
- » Tower Lodge (p137)

## Why Go?

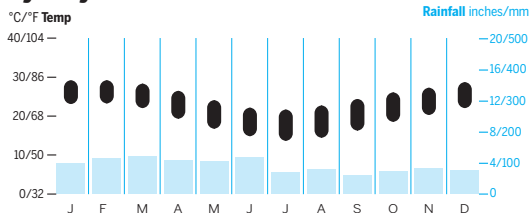
The country's most populous state and the birthplace of the modern nation, New South Wales (NSW) is rich in history, landscapes and contrasts. It's also home to stunning Sydney, the nation's capital in all but name.

Diversity reigns supreme here. South of the harbour, languid coastal towns hug the rugged coastline and there's a profusion of beautiful beaches, many of which are idyllically deserted. Settlements founded by gold miners and graziers pepper the heart of the state, and to the far west the arid lunar landscape of the outback beckons and beguiles. In the north, classic Aussie surf culture dominates, tempered by the occasional outbreak of alternative hinterland lifestyle. In almost every corner you'll find incredible national parks to explore.

Wherever you choose to travel you can be certain of three things: the scenery will be spectacular; the road will be easy and the welcome will be warm – and it's hard to beat that.

## When to Go

### Sydney



**Feb** Sydney's summer party season culminates with the Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras.

**Jul** Enjoy wood fires and fine wine in the Blue Mountains, Central West and Hunter Valley.

**Oct** Creamy Sydney rock oysters come into season and are fresh and plentiful until March.

## Farmers Markets

The state's growing reputation as an international culinary hot spot owes much to the stellar quality of the local produce, and a visit to a farmers market is becoming an increasingly popular activity for locals and visitors alike. Most of these markets feature organic, locally grown products; some also offer live music, buskers and special events such as cooking demonstrations. For a handy list, go to [www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets](http://www.farmersmarkets.org.au/markets) and [www.organicfoodmarkets.com.au](http://www.organicfoodmarkets.com.au).

In Sydney, a visit to the Sydney Fish Market (p78) and Eveleigh Market (p120) is highly recommended.

In country NSW, there are growers markets at Blackheath (p132), Newcastle (p144), Camden (p124), Bangalow (p186), Lismore (p187), Bellingen (p214), Byron Bay (p183), Nimbin (p187), Orange (p200) and Jervis Bay (p214).

### DON'T MISS

Rural NSW offers a treasure trove of eccentric festivals. In January, the town of Parkes in the central west is inundated by hundreds of middle-aged, jumpsuit-clad men during the **Elvis Festival** (p203), and at Easter the opal town of Lightning Ridge stages its annual **Great Goat Race** (p196).

October sees the town of Deniliquin holding its famous **Ute Muster** (p237), where blokes and sheilas compete for titles such as 'Chick's Ute' and 'Feral Ute'. Also in October is Woolli's **Australian National Goanna Pulling Championships** (p171), in which grown men and women, squatting on all fours, attach leather harnesses to their heads and engage in a cranial tug of war. Go figure.

The biggest rural festival of all is a serious music event, but has pronounced eccentric characteristics. Tamworth's **Country Music Festival** (p191) stages more than 800 events every January including its exuberant 'Longest Line Dance', the world record for which was set in 2009 when 3392 bootscooters participated.

## Top Five Beaches

- » Main Beach, Byron Bay (p178) Chilled Byron vibe, with great fish-and-chip options.
- » Northern Beaches, Sydney (p87) A 20km stretch of amazing urban surf.
- » One Mile Beach, Anna Bay (p146) Secluded location, soft sand and great surf.
- » Pebble Beach, Murramarang National Park (p214) Kangaroos outnumber people on this idyllic beach.
- » Pippi's Beach, Yamba (p173) Great surf with dolphins.

## TOP TIP

MyMulti Public Transport Passes ([www.myzone.nsw.gov.au](http://www.myzone.nsw.gov.au)) can save you lots of money. These give unlimited travel on government buses and ferries, as well as on trains across much of the state.

## Fast Facts

- » Population: 6.5 million
- » Area: 800,642 sq km
- » Telephone area code: 02 (Broken Hill 08)
- » Number of patrolled surf beaches: 175

## Planning Your Trip

- » Visit the regions when they hold their annual festivals.
- » Book your accommodation well in advance, particularly for the summer months.
- » Make weekend fine-dining reservations well in advance and, in regional areas, call ahead to check opening hours.

## Resources

- » New South Wales ([www.visitnsw.com.au](http://www.visitnsw.com.au)) Covers Sydney and NSW.
- » Environment & Heritage ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks)) Info about NSW national parks.
- » Outback Beds ([www.outbackbeds.com.au](http://www.outbackbeds.com.au)) Outback accommodation guide.
- » NSW Government ([www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au)) Check the 'Culture, Sport & Recreation' section.