



# Sydney & New South Wales

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## Best Places to Eat

- Icebergs Dining Room & Bar (p113)
- Stunned Mullet (p165)
- Jaaning Tree (p170)
- Seagrass Brasserie (p247)
- Chiswick Restaurant (p112)

## Best Places to Stay

- Crystal Creek Rainforest Retreat (p197)
- Byron at Byron (p189)
- Thistle Hill (p147)
- Sydney Harbour YHA (p103)
- Yamba YHA (p181)

## Why Go?

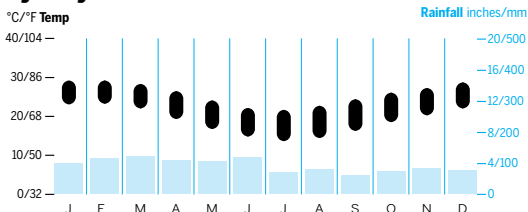
The birthplace of the modern nation, New South Wales (NSW) is rich in history, landscapes and contrasts. It's also home to sophisticated Sydney, the nation's capital in all but name.

Here, diversity reigns supreme. South of the harbour, languid 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 lifestyle. In almost every corner you'll find incredible national parks to explore.

Travellers making their way here can be certain of three things: scenery will be spectacular, roads – even those off the beaten track – will be relatively easy and local welcomes will be warm.

## 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.

## Wildlife Watching

Having a close encounter of the furry kind is a holiday highlight for many visitors to NSW. In Sydney, **Taronga Zoo**, **SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium**, **WILD LIFE Sydney Zoo** and the **Mainly SEA LIFE Sanctuary** offer the chance to see, pet and even dive with native species. Heading into the countryside, the state's coastal bush, state forests and 800+ national parks and reserves are home to kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, platypus, wombats and many other cute critters. See p169 for a guide to wildlife viewing opportunities across the state.

### 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 (p211), and at Easter the opal town of Lightning Ridge stages its annual **Great Goat Race** (p203).

In October, the town of Deniliquin holds its famous Ute Muster (p231), 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 (p179), in which 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 (p199) 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 TIP

MyMulti passes, the Family Funday Sunday pass and Pensioner Excursion travel passes can save you a bit of money when travelling on public transport. Off-peak daily return train tickets also offer good value.

## Fast Facts

- ➔ Population: 6.9 million
- ➔ Area: 800,642 sq km
- ➔ Telephone area code: 02 (Broken Hill 08)
- ➔ Number of patrolled surf beaches: 176

## Advance Planning

- ➔ Book your accommodation well in advance, particularly for the summer months.
- ➔ Work out how many national parks will be on your itinerary – if there are more than six, buy an annual multi-parks pass (\$65).
- ➔ Make weekend fine-dining reservations well in advance.

## Top Five Beaches

- ➔ **Tallow Beach, Byron Bay** (p185) An idyllic 7km stretch of sand stretching from Cape Byron to Broken Head.
- ➔ **Bondi Beach, Sydney** (p92) One of the world's most famous urban surf scenes – see and be seen!
- ➔ **Crowdy Head** (p160) Deserted beach and extraordinary views.
- ➔ **Jervis Bay** (p246) White sandy beaches, bushland, forest and a protected marine park.
- ➔ **Tomaree Peninsula** (p154) Near-deserted beaches, national parks and an extraordinary sand-dune system.

## Resources

- ➔ **City of Sydney** (02) 9265 9333; [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)
- ➔ **New South Wales** ([www.visitnsw.com.au](http://www.visitnsw.com.au))
- ➔ **NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service** (NPWS; [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au))