



Melbourne & Coastal Victoria

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Why Go?

From windswept beaches to cosmopolitan seaside towns and legendary surfing spots, Victoria's coastline has stunning vistas, cool-climate wineries and the culture-packed city of Melbourne. It's a diverse coast; fairy penguins march up and down beaches in the popular tourist destination of Phillip Island, while Victoria's west coast faces on to Bass Strait and attracts surfers and those searching for the iconic Twelve Apostles.

Heading up the southeast coast from the hiking paradise of Wilsons Promontory is a long, cruisy expanse of beach that meets up with a popular, activity-filled lakes system around Lakes Entrance (Australia's largest inland waterway system). There are more stunning national parks on the approach to the Victoria–New South Wales border.

Best Places to Eat

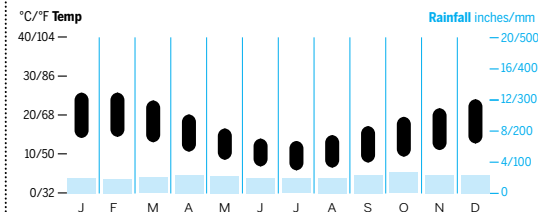
- ➔ Metung Galley (p271)
- ➔ Merrijig Kitchen (p256)
- ➔ MoVida (p226)
- ➔ Brae (p249)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Wilderness Retreat (p267)
- ➔ Adobe Mudbrick Flats (p277)
- ➔ Ovolo (p223)
- ➔ Beacon Point Ocean View Villas (p251)

When to Go

Melbourne



Feb School-holiday crowds have packed up and there's good weather for swimming and hiking.

Jul Rug up and head down the Great Ocean Rd for a wintery whale-watching escape.

Sept It's getting warmer and hiking trails are in full colour after spring.

MELBOURNE

POP 5.5 MILLION

Stylish, arty Melbourne is a city that's proud of its place as Australia's cultural capital. Coffee, food, art and fashion are taken seriously, but that doesn't mean they're only for those in the know; all you need to eat well, go bar-hopping and/or shopping is a bit of cash and a deft ability to find hidden stairways and explore graffiti-covered laneways.

In many ways, it's the indie scene that sets Melbourne's tone – it can be spotted mainly in the CBD, St Kilda, Fitzroy, Collingwood, Brunswick and Northcote, but ekes out a living in most nooks and crannies in the city's inner suburbs.



Splitting the northern suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Carlton from its southern sisters including Prahran and South Yarra is the very brown Yarra River. There's a slight cultural divide, too, though sport knows no boundaries and Melburnians are intoxicatingly loud-voiced about AFL football (footy), horse racing or cricket, depending on the season.

Sights

Central Melbourne





★ Federation Square

LANDMARK

(Map p214; www.fedsquare.com.au; cnr Flinders & Swanston Sts;  1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 16, 64, 67, 72,  Flinders St) While it's taken some time, Melburnians have finally come to embrace Federation Sq, accepting it as the congregation place it was meant to be – somewhere to celebrate, protest, watch major sporting events or hang out on its deckchairs. Occupying a prominent city block, 'Fed Square' is far from square: its undulating and patterned forecourt is paved with 460,000 hand-laid cobblestones from the Kimberley region, with sight-lines to Melbourne's iconic landmarks; its buildings are clad in a fractal-patterned reptilian skin.

★ Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia





GALLERY

(Map p214;  03-8620 2222; www.ngv.vic.gov.au; Federation Sq; exhibition costs vary;  10am-5pm Tue-Sun;  1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 16, 64, 67, 72,  Flinders St) **FREE** Hidden away in the basement of Federation Sq, the Ian Potter Centre is the other half of the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), set up to showcase its impressive collection of Australian works. Set over three

levels, it's a mix of permanent (free) and temporary (ticketed) exhibitions, comprising paintings, decorative arts, photography, prints, sculpture and fashion. There's also a great museum gift shop. Free tours are conducted daily at 11am, noon, 1pm and 2pm.



Australian Centre for the Moving Image

MUSEUM

(ACMI; Map p214;  03-8663 2200; www.acmi.net.au; Federation Sq;  10am-6pm;  1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 16, 64, 67, 72,  Flinders St) **FREE** Managing to educate, enthrall and entertain in equal parts, ACMI is a visual feast that pays homage to Australian cinema and TV, offering an insight into the modern-day Australian psyche perhaps like no other museum can. Its floating screens don't discriminate against age, with TV shows, games and movies on-call – making it a great place to waste a day watching TV and not feel guilty about it. Free tours are conducted daily at 11am and 2.30pm.


★ Birrarung Marr

PARK

(Map p214; btwn Federation Sq & the Yarra River;  1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 16, 64, 67, 72,  Flinders St) The three-terraced Birrarung Marr is a welcome addition to Melbourne's patchwork of parks and gardens, featuring grassy knolls, river promenades, a thoughtful planting of indigenous flora and great viewpoints of the city and the river. There's also a scenic route to the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG; p213) via the 'talking' William Barak Bridge – listen out for songs, words and sounds representing Melbourne's cultural diversity as you walk.

★ Hosier Lane

STREET

(Map p214; Hosier Lane;  75, 70) Melbourne's most celebrated laneway for street art, Hosier Lane's cobbled length draws camera-wielding crowds snapping edgy graffiti, stencils and art installations. Subject matter runs to the mostly political and counter-culture, spiced with irreverent humour; pieces change almost daily (not even a Banksy is safe here). Be sure to see Rutledge Lane (which horseshoes around Hosier), too.

Flinders Street Station

HISTORIC BUILDING

(Map p214; cnr Flinders & Swanston Sts) If ever there was a true symbol of the city, Flinders Street Station would have to be it. Built in 1854, it was Melbourne's first railway station, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a Melburnian who hasn't uttered the phrase 'Meet me under the clocks' at one time or another (the popular rendezvous spot is