



Melbourne

POP 4,000,000

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Best Places to Eat

- » Vue de Monde (p95)
- » Cutler & Co (p99)
- » Attica (p102)
- » HuTong Dumpling Bar (p95)
- » Cumulus Inc (p96)

Best Places to Stay

- » Punhill Apartments South Yarra (p93)
- » Medina Executive Flinders St (p86)
- » Melbourne Central YHA (p86)
- » Brooklyn Arts Hotel (p91)
- » Art Series (The Cullen) (p93)

Why Go?

Melbourne's a vivid city full of colour and contrast. Despite a long-term north-south divide (glitzy, glam St Kilda versus arty, grungy Fitzroy), there's a certain coolness, about its bars, cafes, restaurants and people, that transcends the borders.

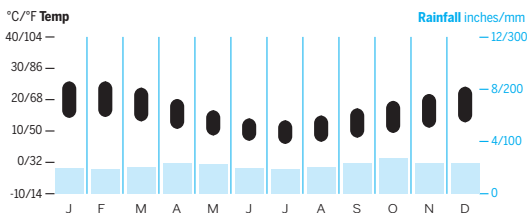
The CBD itself sits grid-like on the north side of the river. Here you'll find laneway eateries, street graffiti and fun bars tucked into former industrial buildings. Across the river, Southbank is filled to the brim with glitzy celeb-chef restaurants, and an ever-expanding casino.

Despite the city's attractions, Melbourne's character relies just as much upon its collection of inner-city villages. These slices of Melbourne life have distinct and diverse personalities; don't miss discovering bar-enhanced Northcote, hip Prahran and Windsor or culturally diverse Richmond and Footscray.

It's hard to miss another aspect of Melbourne: sport. In Melbourne, sport knows no boundaries, and Melburnians are intoxicatingly loud-voiced about AFL football (footy), horse racing and cricket.

When to Go

Melbourne



Mid Jan-early Feb Midsumma celebrates queer culture around the city.

Sept-Nov The hats are on and the horses are cantering during spring carnival.

Mar-Sep Rug up and catch a game of footy during the AFL season.

1 Sights

CENTRAL MELBOURNE

Melbourne's wide main streets and legion of laneways pop and fizz day and night, seven days a week. The city's little streets have attracted residents and businesses from as far back as the 1850s, a decade in which Melbourne's population quadrupled thanks to the gold rush. CBD living went out of favour but has boomed in the past decade, with some 90,000 claiming CBD abodes as their own. Museums and art galleries are dotted throughout. There are two big ends of town; skyscrapers cluster on the east and west ends of the grid and this is where the city does business. Southern Cross Station sits to the west, with Docklands Stadium and Docklands beyond. Opposite the central Flinders Street Station, Federation Square, known to one and all as Fed Square, squats beside the Yarra, and has become Melbournians' favourite gathering place.

Federation Square LANDMARK

(Fed Sq; Map p58; www.federationsquare.com.au; cnr Flinders & Swanston Sts) Striking Federation Square has become the place to celebrate, protest or party. Occupying a prominent city block, the 'square' is far from square. Its undulating forecourt of Kimberley stone echoes the town squares of Europe.

The surrounding buildings sport a reptilian skin that takes its cue from the endlessly dissecting lines of the city's grid; within are cultural heavyweights such as the Ian Potter Centre and the Australian Centre for the

Moving Image (ACMI). It also houses restaurants and bars. At the square's street junction is the subterranean Melbourne **Visitor Centre** (%9928 0096; h 9am-6pm; tours per adult \$12). Bookings are essential for Fed Sq **tours** that depart from here daily, except Sunday, at 2pm.

Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria Australia ART GALLERY

(NGV Australia; Map p58; www.ngv.vic.gov.au; h 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) This gallery was designed as a showcase of the NGV's extensive collection of Australian paintings, decorative arts, photography, prints, drawings, sculpture, fashion, textiles and jewellery.

The gallery's indigenous collection dominates the ground floor and seeks to challenge ideas of the 'authentic'. There are some particularly fine examples of Papunya painting, such as the epic *Napperby Death Spirit Dreaming* (1980) by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri and Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri.

Upstairs there are permanent displays of colonial paintings and drawings by 19th-century Aboriginal artists. There's also the work of the Heidelberg School impressionists and an extensive collection of the work of the modernist 'Angry Penguins', including Sir Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Joy Hester and Albert Tucker. The permanent collection also has some fabulous examples of the work of local artists such as Jenny Watson, Bill Henson, Howard Arkley, Tony Clark and Gordon Bennett.

There's a great museum shop located here.

MELBOURNE IN...

Two Days

Join a walking tour to see Melbourne's street art, then enjoy lunch at **Cumulus Inc.** Chill out at a rooftop bar until it's time to join an evening kayaking tour of the Yarra River. Day two, shop your way to the **Queen Vic market** and find a spot at **Flagstaff Gardens** to eat your quarry. Catch a tram to **St Kilda**, take sunset photos and stroll along the beach. Prop up a bar in lively **Acland St** for the evening.

One Week

Check out **NGV Australia** and **ACMI** before heading **Fitzroy** and **Collingwood** way. Shop along **Gertrude St** and feast at **Cutler & Co.** You're close to **Melbourne Museum**, so spend a couple of hours here then revive with a **Lygon St** coffee. Back in the CBD, dine on dumplings at **HuTong** in **Chinatown**, or at **Flower Drum** across the lane. Spend the next day shopping and people-watching in busy **Prahran**, **Windsor** and **South Yarra**. In winter, catch a footy game at the **MCG** before going low-fi at one of the city's laneway bars. Pop into **Movida Next Door** for some tapas before heading out to the **Northcote Social Club** in Northcote or the **Corner Hotel** in Richmond for live music.