



Melbourne

POP 4,250,000

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Vue de Monde (p92)
- ➔ MoVida (p90)
- ➔ Attica (p101)
- ➔ Mamasita (p90)
- ➔ Cumulus Inc (p90)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Art Series (Cullen) (p87)
- ➔ Ovolo (p84)
- ➔ Nunnery (p85)
- ➔ Space Hotel (p81)
- ➔ Majorca Apartment 401 (p84)

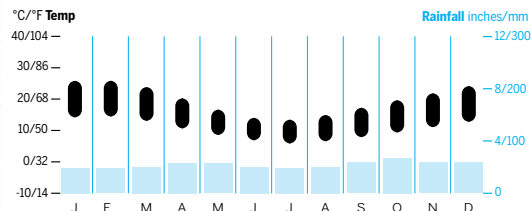
Why Go?

Stylish, arty Melbourne is a city that's both dynamic and cosmopolitan, and proud of its place as Australia's cultural capital. Its stately gold-rush-era architecture and a multi-cultural make-up reflect the city's recent history, while edgy street art, top museums and sticky-carpeted band venues point to its present-day personality.

Melbourne is best experienced as a local would, with its character largely reliant upon its collection of inner-city neighbourhoods. Despite a long-standing north-south divide (flashy St Kilda versus hipster Fitzroy), there's a coolness about its bars, cafes, restaurants, festivals and people that transcends the borders. The city centre has meanwhile reinvented itself with chic laneway eateries and rooftop bars opening in former industrial buildings.

Sport is also crucial to the fabric of the town, taking on something of a religious nature here. Melburnians are passionate about AFL football ('footy'), cricket and horse racing, and also love their Grand Slam tennis and Formula One car racing.

When to Go Melbourne



Mid-Dec–Mar
Balmy nights, Grand Slam tennis and music festivals.

Apr–Sep Escape the cold with gallery-hopping, boutique shopping and warm, inviting pubs.

Sep–Nov Footy finals fever hits before the horses start cantering during Spring Racing Carnival.

Sights

Central Melbourne

Melbourne's wide main streets and legion of laneways pop and fizz day and night, seven days a week. Museums and art galleries are dotted throughout. The city's 'Little' streets (Little Bourke, etc) have attracted residents and businesses since the 1850s, a decade in which Melbourne's population quadrupled, thanks to the gold rush. City-centre living went out of favour but has since boomed in the past decade, with some 100,000 claiming CBD abodes as their own.

There are two 'big ends' of town. Skyscrapers cluster on the east and west ends of the grid – these areas are 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 (better known as Fed Square) squats beside the Yarra River, and has become a favourite Melbourne gathering place. To the east is the 'top end' of the city, with its monumental gold-rush-era buildings such as Parliament House and the Treasury Building.

Federation Square





LANDMARK

(Map p50; 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 Square, 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.

Within are cultural heavyweights such as the Ian Potter Centre and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), as well as restaurants and bars. At the square's street junction is the subterranean Melbourne Visitor Centre (p126). Highly recommended free tours of Fed Square depart Monday to Saturday at 11am; spaces are limited, so get here 10 to 15 minutes early. The square has free wi-fi, and there are always free public events going on here, particularly on weekends – as well as free daily tai chi from 7.30am, and meditation at 12.30pm on Tuesday.

Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

GALLERY

(Map p50;  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 Square, 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.

The Aboriginal permanent exhibition on the ground floor is stunning, and seeks to challenge ideas of the 'authentic'. There are some particularly fine examples of Papunya painting, and interesting use of mediums from bark, plus didgeridoos, contemporary sculpture and dot paintings on canvas.

Upstairs are permanent displays of paintings by artists such as Arthur Streeton and Tom Roberts, including Roberts' famous *Shearing the Rams*. There's also the work of the Heidelberg School impressionists and a fabulous collection of the work of the modernist 'Angry Penguins', including Sir Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Joy Hester and Albert Tucker. Other prominent artists on display include Fred Williams, John Brack and Howard Arkley.

Australian Centre for the Moving Image

MUSEUM

(ACMI; Map p50;  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, enthral 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.

Screenworld is the main focus here, an interactive exhibition that celebrates the work of Australian cinema and TV; its exhibitions, games lab and zoetrope will interest anyone, whether they're clued in about Dexter from *Perfect Match* or not. Upstairs, you'll find the **Australian Mediatheque**, a venue set aside for the viewing of programs from the National Film and Sound Archive