



Brisbane

Includes »

Sights	53
Activities	65
Courses	67
Quirky Brisbane	67
Tours	70
Festivals & Events	72
Sleeping	72
Eating	78
Drinking	84
Entertainment	87
Shopping	90

Best Places to Eat

- » E'cco (p79)
- » Ortega (p82)
- » Lark (p83)
- » Mondo Organics (p84)
- » Watt (p82)

Best Places to Stay

- » Treasury (p72)
- » Portal (p72)
- » Emporium (p75)
- » Limes (p75)
- » Il Mondo (p77)

Why Go?

One of Australia's most underrated destinations, Brisbane is an easy-going city with a vibrant arts scene, burgeoning nightlife and first-rate dining, with lush gardens, iconic sights and historic buildings woven into the landscape.

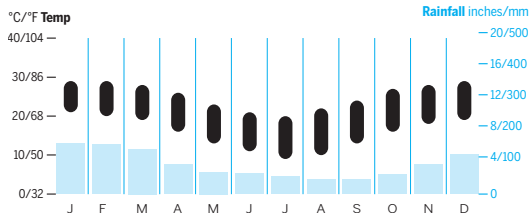
Brisbanites are an active bunch and make good use of the temperate climate and riverside setting. You can go jogging, cycling and kayaking, wander through outdoor markets or relax on palm-fringed artificial beaches just a short jaunt from the high-rises looming over the Brisbane River.

Brisbane's chefs cater to a global palate, and eating and drinking is all about the open-air experience. Many restaurants, bars and cafes have back gardens, riverside views, or sidewalk seating on tree-lined streets.

As an epicentre of the arts, Brisbane is no longer just 'a big country town' of decades past. Instead you'll find world-class museums, theatres, live-music venues, massive sporting events and heaps of unique fare – open-air cinema, outdoor concerts, colourful festivals and more.

When to Go

Brisbane



January With high heat and humidity Brisbane swelters during the summer; locals head for the coast.

May Cooler, milder temperatures arrive (you'll need a jacket at night), continuing till August.

September Springtime brings pleasant temperatures and a massive arts-and-music event.

History

The first settlement in the Brisbane area was established at Redcliffe on Moreton Bay in 1824 as a penal colony for Sydney's more recalcitrant convicts. After struggling with inadequate water supplies and hostile Aborigines, the colony was relocated to the banks of the Brisbane River, the site of the city centre today, but suffered at the hands of numerous crooked warders and was abandoned in 1839. The Moreton Bay area was thrown open to free settlers in 1842, marking the beginning of Brisbane's rise to prominence, and the start of trouble for the region's Aborigines.

By the time of Queensland's separation from New South Wales in 1859, Brisbane had a population of around 6000. Huge wealth flowed into the city from the new pastoral and gold-mining enterprises in the Darling Downs, and grandiose buildings were erected to reflect this new-found affluence. The frontier-town image was hard to shake off, however, and it wasn't until the 1982 Commonwealth Games and Expo '88 that Brisbane's reputation as a cultural centre became recognised. Brisbane has now cemented its place as Australia's third-largest city, with a population of around two million.

Sights

Most of Brisbane's major sights are in the CBD or inner-city suburbs. A walk through the city centre will reveal Brisbane's colonial history and architecture, while a ferry ride or bridge walk across the river lands you in South Bank, home to both stellar art museums and peaceful parkland (complete with attractive artificial swimming lagoons). Chinatown and Brunswick St, both in Fortitude Valley, provide healthy doses of dining, nightlife, shopping and gallery-hopping.

CITY CENTRE

City Botanic Gardens

PARK

(Map p56; Alice St; ☉24hr, free guided tours 11am & 1pm Mon-Sat) These expansive gardens are a mass of green lawns, towering Moreton Bay figs, bunya pines, macadamia trees and other tropical flora, descending gently from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) campus. A network of paths throughout enables strollers, joggers, picnickers, cyclists and in-line skaters to make their way to quiet spots for respite, or to nowhere in particular. The pretty **Mangrove Boardwalk**, a wooden walkway skirting the riverbank on the eastern rim, is lit until midnight. The

glow provides good opportunities to spot tame possums in the trees.

Riverfront

LANDMARK

The former docks area northeast of the CBD is one of the most attractive and lively areas in the city. The striking, domed **Customs House** (Map p56; www.customshouse.com.au; 399 Queen St; admission free; ☉10am-4pm) from 1886-89 is so aesthetically pleasing it's hard to imagine it was used as a functional building. As the name suggests, for almost a century this was where all ships heading into Brisbane's port were required to pay duties.

Further south are the **Riverside Centre** and **Eagle Street Pier** complexes (Map p56). Despite the rather dated-looking high-rises soaring above, this is an attractive riverside site and home to some noteworthy restaurants as well as casual cafes and bars where you can take in the view. A good time to come here is on Sunday morning, when the area becomes a busy craft market. There are ferry terminals at both complexes.

City Hall & King George Square

LANDMARK

Brisbane City Hall (Map p56; 266 George St; admission free; ☉lift & viewing tower 10am-3pm) is a gracious sandstone edifice overlooking **King George Square**. Built in 1930, its splendour is not only skin deep; when you enter be sure to draw your eyes from the marble staircase upwards to the kaleidoscopic roof and gothic art deco light fittings. There's an observation platform up in the bell tower, which affords brilliant views across the city. At research time, City Hall was undergoing extensive restoration and remained closed to visitors.

Museum of Brisbane

MUSEUM

(Map p56; 157 Ann St; admission free; ☉10am-5pm) Around the corner from City Hall, this museums illuminates the city from a variety of viewpoints, with interactive exhibits that explore both social history and the current cultural landscape. Expect a spread of craft-work, video art, sculpture, photography and installations by local and international artists.

Roma Street Parkland

PARK

(Map p56; www.romastreetparkland.com; 1 Parkland Blvd; admission free; ☉24hr, free guided tours 10am & 2pm) This park is a veritable feast of flora inhabiting 16 hectares of the northern edge of the city. Apparently it's the biggest urban subtropical garden in the world. Broken into 16 precincts, the park offers visitors the opportunity to explore lily gardens, an Indian-inspired tea and coffee plantation,