

Circular Quay & the Rocks

CIRCULAR QUAY | THE ROCKS | DAWES POINT | MILLERS POINT

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Coming face to face with the number-one visual symbol of the city, the **Sydney Opera House** (p54). On a sunny day it's postcard perfect, its curves and points a pinnacle of architectural expression.
- 2 Strolling the idyllic grounds of the **Royal Botanic Garden** (p56), with the harbour sparkling below.
- 3 Finding artistic inspiration at the **Museum of Contemporary Art** (p60).
- 4 Gazing on the harbour from amid the heavy metal of the **Sydney Harbour Bridge** (p55).
- 5 Letting the food and view seduce you at **Quay** (p64), or any of the other top harbourside restaurants.



For more detail of this area, see Map p240 ➔

Explore Circular Quay & the Rocks

At some stage you'll almost certainly end up in this neck of the woods – you haven't really been to Sydney if you don't. Set aside the best part of a day to see the sights of this very touristy neighbourhood. Return at night to clink glasses at an upmarket restaurant, to down a beverage in a historic pub or to catch a show.

Nowadays Sydney Cove carries the weight of Sydney iconography, with the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House abutting each point of its horseshoe. Sensing photo opportunities, some of Sydney's swankiest hotels and restaurants are also here.

Circular Quay's promenade serves as a backdrop for buskers of mixed merit and locals disgorging from harbour ferries. The Rocks is unrecognisable from the squalid place it once was and it now serves as an 'olde worlde' tourist trap. Over the ridge is Millers Point, a low-key colonial district that makes a calming diversion from the harbourside tourist fray, and Dawes Point, a redeveloped maritime precinct.

Local Life

- **Performing arts** Sydneysiders put aside their aversion to this most touristy part of town to attend performances at the Sydney Opera House (p66) and the Walsh Bay theatres (p66).
- **Special occasion restaurants** For proposals, zero-ending birthdays or that one extravagant night out per year, restaurants such as Quay (p64) and Aria (p64) are never-fail options.
- **Parks** You're liable to see locals taking romantic strolls, letting the kids off the leash or shaking out a picnic blanket in the Royal Botanic Garden (p56) or Observatory Hill (p62).

Getting There & Away

- **Train** Circular Quay is one of the City Circle stations.
- **Ferry** Circular Quay is Sydney's ferry hub and has services to Double Bay, Watsons Bay, Manly, Taronga Zoo, Kirribilli, North Sydney, Milsons Point, Darling Harbour, Cockatoo Island, Balmain, Sydney Olympic Park and Parramatta, among others.
- **Bus** Circular Quay is the major terminus for routes including: 301–303 (Surry Hills); 324 and 325 (Kings Cross–Double Bay–Vaucluse–Watsons Bay); 333 and 389 (Darlinghurst–North Bondi); 373 and 374 (Coogee); 380 (Darlinghurst–Paddington–Bondi–Watsons Bay); 422, 423, 426 and 428 (Newtown); and 470 (Glebe).

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The best way to avoid the city traffic is to travel here by train or ferry. If you really feel that you must bring the car, come on the weekend, as the Wilson parking building beneath the Opera House charges a set fee of \$15 between 6am and 5pm (it's \$55 during the week).

Best Places to Eat

- Quay (p64)
- Saké (p65)
- Aria (p64)
- Sailors Thai Canteen (p64)
- Cafe Sopra (p65)

For reviews, see p64 ➡

Best Places to Drink

- Lord Nelson Brewery Hotel (p65)
- Opera Bar (p65)
- Hero of Waterloo (p65)
- Glenmore at the Rocks (p65)
- Argyle (p65)

For reviews, see p65 ➡

Best Heritage Sights

- Rocks Discovery Museum (p60)
- Susannah Place Museum (p61)
- Government House (p56)
- Sydney Observatory (p62)
- The Big Dig (p61)

For reviews, see p56 ➡