



# Day Trips from Sydney

## The Blue Mountains p178

For more than a century, the Blue Mountains has lured Sydneysiders up from the sweltering plains with promises of cool-climate relief, naughty fireside weekends, astounding scenery and brilliant bushwalks.

## Royal National Park p180

A prime stretch of wilderness at the city's doorstep, encompassing secluded beaches, vertiginous cliffs, scrub, heath, rainforest, swamp wallabies, lyrebirds and raucous flocks of yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

## Northern Beaches p181

It requires a little effort to reach them (no trains run here and buses seem to take forever), but the Northern Beaches are some of Sydney's very best suburbs. Especially if you're a *Home & Away* fan.

# The Blue Mountains

## Explore

Climbing west from Sydney, the Blue Mountains (named after the purple haze of eucalyptus oils) is actually a vast sandstone plateau riddled with steep gullies and dark forests cloaked in mist.

Plenty of people make a day trip just to gawp at this classic Australian vista, but with the wondrous bushwalks (lasting from a few minutes to a few days), fine food and cosy lodgings it's a magical escape worth extra time.

Katoomba, with the dramatic Three Sisters rock formation, is the main port of call for day-trippers. But if you're staying overnight, romantic Leura and earthy Black-

heath are better choices. All are connected to Sydney's train network.

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Car** Head west on Parramatta Rd to Strathfield and take the tolled M4. West of Penrith, the motorway becomes the Great Western Hwy. Depending on traffic it's just under two hours to Katoomba. A less direct route is the pretty 90km Bells Line of Road.

➔ **Train** The Blue Mountains line departs hourly from Central station for Glenbrook, Faulconbridge, Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba (adult/child \$8.60/4.30, two hours). Roughly every second train continues on to Blackheath, Mt Victoria, Zig Zag and Lithgow.

➔ **Bus** The **Blue Mountains ExplorerLink** (☎13 15 00; [www.cityrail.info/tickets/which/explorerlink](http://www.cityrail.info/tickets/which/explorerlink); 1-day pass adult/child from \$55.20/24.90, 3-day pass adult/child from

## Blue Mountains

