

SHOPPING

top picks

- Crown Street, Surry Hills (p134)
- Queen Victoria Building (p128)
- King Street, Newtown (p137)
- Sydney's weekend markets (p136)
- Oxford Street, Paddington (p131)
- Strand Arcade (p129)
- Bondi (p135)
- David Jones (p128)
- Alexandria factory shops (p135)
- Queen Street, Woollahra (p133)

SHOPPING

Brash, hedonistic Sydney has elevated shopping to a panacea. Feeling good? Let's go shopping. Feeling bad? Let's go shopping. Credit-card bills getting you down? Let's go shopping... Most locals treat shopping as a recreational activity rather than a necessity, evidenced by the teeming cash-flapping masses at the city's weekend markets. You might even encounter Sydneysiders in well-paid jobs supplementing their income by scouring the markets for 'rich bitch cast-offs' to sell on eBay.

Shop service in Sydney is generally reasonable, although travellers from the USA might find it a bit laid-back at times. Sycophancy isn't the Australian way, but neither is snobbiness. You shouldn't face condescension if you rock into a boutique in your thongs and a singlet, but neither will you be treated like a princess just because you've splashed \$5000 on daddy's credit card.

SHOPPING AREAS

Sydney's city centre is brimming over with department, chain and international fashion stores and arcades – shopping here is about as fast and furious as Australia gets. Paddington is the place for art and fashion, while new and secondhand boutiques around Newtown and Surry Hills cater to a hipper, more alternative crowd. Double Bay, Mosman and Balmain are a bit more 'mother of the bride', and if you're chasing bargains, head to Chinatown or the Alexandria factory outlets.

Newtown and Glebe have the lion's share of book and record stores. For surf gear, head to Bondi or Manly. Woollahra, Newtown (around St Peters station) and Surry Hills are good for antiques. For souvenirs – from exquisite opals to tacky T-shirts – try The Rocks, Circular Quay and Darling Harbour.

OPENING HOURS

Most stores are open from 9.30am to 6pm Monday to Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and until 9pm Thursday. Sunday trading is common but expect shorter hours (usually noon to 4pm or 5pm).

BARGAINING

Haggling isn't really part of Australia's commercial culture, though you could try your luck at some of the grungier markets around the city, or if you're buying in bulk. Big-store sales usually happen in early January and July.

WARRANTIES & GUARANTEES

Under local law, all purchases (including secondhand items) have an implied warranty

that the goods are of merchantable quality (unless the customer is informed otherwise), are fit for the purpose supplied, and match the sample or description provided. If this is not the case you are legally entitled to a refund, which is all very well if you're still in the country...

Many suppliers (particularly of electrical goods) will offer written warranties (guarantees) for fixed terms. Check that they're applicable worldwide and include service in your home country.

SHIPPING GOODS

If a shopping frenzy has overfilled your bags, shipping goods home is a viable option. Firstly, check with your airline regarding excess baggage rates – it may be cheaper than shipping a parcel. For standard parcel-post rates, enquire at any post office or see Australia Post's website (www.auspost.com.au).

TAXES & REFUNDS

Apart from the 10% goods and services tax (GST) the only other sales duties payable (also included in the price) are on naughty things such as alcohol and tobacco, which are best bought at duty-free shops, such as those at the airport. The GST tourist refund scheme (see [p246](#)) has pretty much replaced traditional duty-free shopping.

Many stores have formal refund and exchange policies – check them before you purchase. If no policy exists you shouldn't presume that a refund will be allowed, except in the situation described above under Warranties & Guarantees. That said, if you're not happy with a purchase some stores will consider exchanges, particularly if you have a receipt and haven't messed with the packaging.