

TO / FROM THE AIRPORT

Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (SYD)

011-61-2/9667-9111, sydneyairport.com.au

Terminal 1: international flights. Terminal 2: domestic flights on Virgin Blue, Jetstar, and smaller regional airlines. Terminal 3: domestic Qantas flights. Shuttle or train transfers between terminals cost \$3. There's an information desk in Terminal 1, as well as gold-suited roaming ambassadors who answer questions. Some hotels have free airport pickup, so ask when booking. **Rail:** The Airport Link (011-61-2/8337-8417, airportlink.com.au) connects terminals with city train stations. Single fares to central Sydney cost \$6.30 and the ride takes 13 minutes, but the service isn't particularly useful unless you're staying near a station. **Bus:** The KST Airporter shuttle (011-61-2/9666-9988, kst.com.au) takes passengers to any one of about 240 hotels in the City, Kings Cross, and Darling Harbour. Maximum trip times are 45 minutes by bus or minivan. Reservations not required; bus stops are outside each terminal. Fares are \$7 one way, \$11 round trip. **Taxi:** The most convenient option, with stands outside each terminal. Expect to pay \$22–\$27 for the 30-minute ride to the city center.

GETTING AROUND

Public Transportation

13-1500 within Australia, 011-61-2/8202-2000, 131500.com.au

Rail: Use CityRail trains to get around Sydney or out to the north shore (from \$9.50). **Bus:** The Sydney Bus system covers more than 300 routes around the city (from \$1.25/ride, printable maps available online). **Ferry:** Old wooden ferries and speedy new catamarans ply the harbor from Watsons Bay and Manly in the east to Parramatta in the west (from \$3.60). Note: If you plan on combining modes of transport, buy a Daytripper ticket from your bus driver, CityRail stations, or ferry ticket offices for unlimited travel on trains, buses, and ferries (\$11.60). Three-, five-, and seven-day Sydney Passes are even more comprehensive, allowing travel on the Manly JetCat hydrofoil, harbor cruises, and the airport train, in addition to standard trains, buses, and ferries. From \$68.

Taxis

Taxis come in all shapes and colors, each with a distinctive roof bar that's lit when the car is available. Hailing cabs on the street is perfectly safe, but driver knowledge can be frustratingly limited. Avoid needing a cab at 3 P.M. and 3 A.M., when drivers change shifts. Silver Service Cabs (133-100 from within Australia only, silverservice.com.au) are a cut above but cost the same as other taxis. \$2.80 initial charge, then \$1.62 each kilometer; 20 percent surcharge from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M.

Water Taxis

011-61-2/9555-8888, watertaxis.com.au or 011-61-2/9299-0199, yellowwatertaxis.com.au

The glamorous alternative for those who want to arrive at their waterfront restaurant in style, or prefer a private harbor tour. Fares start at \$46 for four people (plus \$7.70 per extra passenger) for short trips.

WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND TOWN

The *Sydney Morning Herald* has a metro entertainment section on Fridays and a Weekend Planner on Saturdays. Free rags like *Brag* and *Drum* (available in music stores) are good for finding concerts. Useful websites include whatsoninsydney.com, sydney.citysearch.com.au, and you.com.au.

TOURS

Matilda Cruises

011-61-2/9264-7377, matilda.com.au

The most experienced tour operator on the harbor, with a fleet of catamarans both large and small. It offers everything from Manly jaunts (\$11–\$18, \$41/family of four) to two-hour dinner cruises (from \$75 per person). Departs from Circular Quay and King Street Wharf.

“Where the hell is Australia anyway?”

—Britney Spears

Gourmet Safaris

011-61-2/9960-5675, gourmetsafaris.com.au

Local food expert and TV personality Maeve O'Meara designs each of these high-energy tours. They depart from various points (typically Central Station) and delve into diverse ethnic enclaves in search of authentic food and fun. Regular outings include visits to the Vietnamese neighborhood of Cabramatta, Little Italy in Haberfield, Little Greece in Marrickville, and World in a Day bus trips to sample everything from Iraqi to Cypriot cuisine. Tours tend to last six to eight hours. From \$63, including food.

Sydney Explorer / Bondi Explorer

011-61-2/9207-3101, sydneypass.info

Hop-on, hop-off sightseeing buses that take in key landmarks of the inner city (Opera House, Darling Harbour) and eastern beaches (Coogee, Bondi). Buses depart regularly from Circular Quay, but you can get on or off at any of the stops en route. Buy tickets onboard. \$28 for one-day pass.

NUMBERS TO KNOW

Directory assistance 12-455 or 1223

Emergencies Police, fire, ambulance 000

International operator 1225

Transportation info 13-1500

Theater and sports tickets Ticketek, 13-2849, ticketek.com; Ticketmaster, 13-6100, ticketmaster.com.au

International access code From U.S., 011

Country code 61 **City code** 02

Operator assisted prefix 12 **Local rate prefix** 13 or 1300

Note: When dialing from abroad, dial 011-61-2 and then the number. Within Sydney, dial 02 and then the number.

THE CITY The Australian: A Heritage Hotel

100 Cumberland St., The Rocks, 011-61-2/9247-2229, australianheritagehotel.com

A heritage B&B-style hotel built early last century, with antique furnishings, a guest parlor, and shared bathrooms, in the heart of The Rocks. The popular rooftop garden has views of the Harbour Bridge, and the food is Australian casual—try an emu pizza if you dare. Doubles from \$96, including continental buffet breakfast.

THE CITY Medina Executive Sydney Central

2 Lee St., Haymarket, 011-61-2/8396-9800, medinaapartments.com.au

This Australia-wide chain provides dependable apartment-style accommodations. Each unit has a full kitchen and a washer/dryer, and there's a heated lap pool, gym, spa, and sauna. The Haymarket location occupies the handsome former Parcels Post Office building, on a busy intersection close to Chinatown and Sydney University. Doubles from \$142 when booked online.

COOGEE Dive Hotel

243 Arden St., 011-61-2/9665-5538, divehotel.com.au

Set right above Coogee Beach. It has big, bright rooms and stainless steel fixtures and ocean-blue tiles in the bathrooms. Rooms 1 and 2 have the only views. The hotel's three-bedroom annex, a small house that sleeps up to seven, is nearby on Alexandria St., and two blocks from the beach. Doubles from \$125, including breakfast. Annex from \$265.

DARLINGHURST The Chelsea

49 Womerah Ave., 011-61-2/9380-5994, chelsea.citysearch.com.au

A row of stately Victorian terrace houses lovingly converted into a boutique hotel. Rooms are either French provincial (tapestries and Louis XV chairs) or contemporary (blond oak and Starck-like bathrooms). There's a charming garden with patio. Doubles from \$108, including breakfast.

DARLINGHURST L'otel

114 Darlinghurst Rd., 011-61-2/9360-6868, lotel.com.au

Set in the center of the buzzing, café-filled Darlinghurst. Popular with a young crowd, the 16 suites were designed by Burley Katon Halliday, one of Australia's best-known architecture firms. Each is individually decorated in a minimalist style and some have balconies. Within walking distance of downtown, Kings Cross, and the harbor. Doubles from \$115.

TIP **Gratuities** Tips aren't expected in bars and hotels, but feel free to slip your bartender or bellhop something if you feel the service warrants it. Do add 10 percent to restaurant checks when you've enjoyed the experience, though it's certainly not required. Also, it's customary to round up on cab fares.

PADDINGTON Hughenden Boutique Hotel

14 Queen St., Woollahra, 011-61-2/9363-4863, hughendenhotel.com.au

In the heart of Paddington, a short walk from Oxford St. fashion and food, Queen St. antiques, and the lovely Centennial Park. It's packed with 19th-century charm, from marble fireplaces to a grand piano, and it has an artist-in-residence program and an on-site café. Doubles from \$112, including breakfast.

RUSHCUTTERS BAY Vibe Hotel

100 Bayswater Rd., 011-61-2/8353-8988, vibehotels.com

Despite the name, the atmosphere inside Vibe is kind of flat—rooms are comfortable but not sensational. The real draw is the outdoor heated rooftop pool that overlooks pretty Rushcutters Bay and the marina beyond. There's also a gym, steam room, and deck for sunbathing. Near the scenery cafés of Potts Point and Darlinghurst. Doubles from \$120.

“I despair of being able to convey to any reader my own idea of the beauty of Sydney Harbour.”

—Anthony Trollope

§ SPLURGE Regents Court

18 Springfield Ave., Potts Point, 011-61-2/9358-1533, regentscourt.com.au

Discreet and centrally located in Potts Point, and a favorite of visiting media and creative types. The 30 studio apartments are stylish and comfortable—all dark woods and natural fibers—though they can get a little noisy on weekends, when neighboring Kings Cross is in full party mode. Note: There's a flourishing rooftop garden, where guests can barbecue. Doubles from \$170.

§ SPLURGE Establishment Hotel

5 Bridge Ln., 011-61-2/9240-3100, establishmenthotel.com

Great central location in the CBD (central business district) and lots of glitz. Each of the 33 rooms features one of two designs: “urban” (sleek and industrial, with polished black floorboards and high, warehouse-style ceilings) or “luce” (paler coffee tones, with thick carpeting and soft lighting). There are two restaurants, five bars, and a popular nightclub in the building. Doubles from \$237.

Budget Travel Sydney / The City

SNAP GUIDE

Also known as the CBD (central business district), this downtown area is Sydney's commercial and historic heart. It's the home to the harbor and opera house, and is lined with ritzy restaurants.

SEE BridgeClimb

5 Cumberland St., 011-61-2/8274-7777, bridgeclimb.com

Guided climbs to the top of the Harbour Bridge, eight times daily from 8 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Twilight tours are the most spectacular, as the sun sets and city lights come on. Allow three hours for the hike, including an information session and breath test. (Alcohol readings over 0.05 will exclude you from the climb.) It's a surprisingly gentle walk, and perfectly safe, but don't even think about it if you don't have a head for heights. From \$125, from \$75 kids 12–16.

SEE Fort Denison

Sydney Harbour National Park, 011-61-2/9247-5033, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au

A guided visit to this tiny, fortified island includes a tour of the 1862 Martello Tower (fab views) followed by brunch or an optional lunch at the Blue Rock Cafe, Sydney's only island restaurant. Book ahead: Tours are popular and numbers limited. They depart from Cadman's Cottage (110 George St., The Rocks) and last two to three hours. Lunchtime tour Wed.–Sun. at 11:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M., \$17 (bring a picnic, or buy food at the café); weekend brunch tour at 9 A.M. \$36, including meal.

SEE Government House

Macquarie St., 011-61-2/9931-5222, hht.net.au/museums

A Gothic Revival mansion on the headland above the opera house, converted into a museum devoted to colonial history. Many of the guides are former staff members for the New South Wales governors who once lived here. Fri.–Sun. Free.

SEE Queen Victoria Building

George and Market Sts., 011-61-2/9264-9209, qvb.com.au

An ornate, 19th-century pile built to honor England's (and Australia's) queen at the time, it's now the grandest mall in town. You don't have to shop to appreciate the architecture. Daily guided tours at 11:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M., \$7.50.

SEE Sydney Opera House

Bennelong Point, 011-61-2/9250-7777, sydneyoperahouse.com

Ambling around the spiny exterior is free, but getting inside costs \$18 for a basic tour. The two-hour backstage visit takes you to typically off-limits areas, like the orchestra pit, dressing rooms, and the stage, and includes breakfast (\$108). Tickets to performances start at about \$40 and are rarely discounted; performance packages (tour, dinner, tickets) start at \$180. If you're desperate to see a sold-out show, hang around the box office that night and pester the attendants for any returned tickets.

TIP **Waterfront Dining** If you're planning a romantic splurge at Wildfire Restaurant (011-61-2/8273-1222, wildfiresydney.com), or any of the other new restaurants inside the Overseas Passenger Terminal, bear in mind that the terminal is also home to visiting cruise liners. Check to see if any of the big ships are in port by consulting Sydney Ports (011-61-2-9296-4800, sydneyports.com.au), taking a harbor stroll, or inquiring with the restaurant when making a reservation. You don't want to miss a picture-perfect view.

EAT Bambini Trust Café

St. James Trust Bldg., 185 Elizabeth St., 011-61-2/9283-7098, bambinitrust.com.au

For a completely different taste of Sydney, immerse yourself in the pure European charm of this café's dark-wood-and-tile interior. The old-school Italian menu includes pastas and risottos, asparagus and prosciutto, wonderful wines, and strong coffee.

EAT Café Sydney

Customs House, 31 Alfred St., 011-61-2/9251-8683, cafesydney.com.au

Savor some of the finest Sydney rock oysters, plus varieties from the Pacific coast, paired with waterfront views from the roof of the former colonial tax collector's headquarters. Look up through the glass roof of the bar for awesome views of the city's skyscrapers. Lunch only on Sun., live jazz on Fri. nights.

§ SPLURGE Flying Fish

19–21 Pirrama Rd., 011-61-2/9518-6677, flyingfish.com.au

The city's hottest waterfront restaurant. Stunning interiors feature a surreal "Reef Spawn" resin light sculpture and a towering wall studded with wine bottles. The decor and chef Peter Kuruvita's deft hand ensure it's always hopping, so book way in advance. Dinner only on Sun., closed Mon.

DRINK ECQ Bar

Quay Grand Suites, 61 Macquarie St., 011-61-2/9256-4000, mirvachotels.com.au

Settle in beside the glass walls—which open accordion-style in the summer—and breathe in the views of Circular Quay's ferry terminal. Beyond the ferries are the art deco Museum of Contemporary Arts, the Overseas Passenger Terminal, and the Harbour Bridge.

DRINK The Loft

3 Lime St., King St. Wharf, 011-61-2/9299-4770, theloftsydney.com

On weekends it's tough getting past bouncers, but the exotic, Moroccan-influenced decor and beautiful crowd make it worth the effort. Go early and watch the sun set over Cockle Bay.

DRINK Zeta Bar

Hilton Sydney, 488 George St., 011-61-2/9266-2000, hilton.com

The courtyard is the highlight of the Hilton's \$151 million renovation. Sip cocktails while gazing on the spotlight cupolas and statuary of the Queen Victoria Building across the road.

PLAY Royal Botanic Gardens and the Domain

Mrs. Macquaries Rd., 011-61-2/9231-8111, rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

The green heart of the city. The gardens' 45,000-plus species will keep you occupied for hours. The adjacent parkland, the Domain, is the entry point for the Art Gallery of New South Wales (artgallery.nsw.gov.au; free), a museum with an impressive collection of Australian, European, and Asian art.

Budget Travel Sydney / Surry Hills & Waterloo

SNAP GUIDE

Up-and-coming neighborhoods crammed with art galleries, restaurants, and boutiques stocking designer homewares and fashions. Night owls flock to Oxford Street for the city's hottest bars.

SEE Belvoir St. Theatre

Surry Hills, 011-61-2/9699-3444, belvoir.com.au
The center of Sydney's theater scene. Founded in 1984 and now owned by high-profile investors, including Mel Gibson, Peter Carey, Sam Neill, and opera diva Dame Joan Sutherland. Performances are relocated to the nearby Seymour Centre (at the corner of City Rd. and Cleveland St., Chippendale) until renovations are completed in Aug. 2006. Tickets from \$22.

EAT Billy Kwong

355 Crown St., Shop 3, Surry Hills, 011-61-2/9332-3300
One of the most coveted tables in town. Never mind that it's tiny and dimly lit, and that you'll perch on a plastic stool rather than a proper chair. Celebrity chef Kylie Kwong's funky Cantonese fare—crispy duck in blood-plum sauce—packs folks in nightly. Be prepared to wait: There are no reservations accepted. B.Y.O. wine only, \$7 corkage fee per bottle.

EAT Cleveland Street

Between South Dowling St. and Crown St.
Sydney's cheapest and most authentic array of Indian restaurants. For the best curries, kebabs, and *thalis* (selection of little dishes), head to Holy Cow (No. 456, 011-61-2/9698-9220), Mehrey da Dhaba (No. 466, 011-61-2/9319-6260), and Maya Masala (No. 470, 011-61-2/9699-8663).

“Great food, great music, really nice people. It must be a lot like L.A. was many years ago.”

—Mary-Kate Olsen

EAT Tabou

527 Crown St., Surry Hills, 011-61-2/9319-5682
Traditional bistro fare—steak *frites*, Gruyère soufflés—and a terrific wine list. White tablecloths, Gallic prints, and vintage posters on the walls. Daily specials are written on gilded mirrors. Dinner only Sat. and Sun, B.Y.O. wine only, Sun.–Thurs., \$7.50 corkage fee.

§ SPLURGE Longrain

85 Commonwealth St., Surry Hills, 011-61-2/9280-2888, longrain.com.au
Excellent Thai fusion served at long, communal tables in another stylishly converted warehouse. If you can't get a seat, at least stop by the bar for one of its famous “stick drinks” (lethal concoctions of liquor and fruit mashed with a huge pestle). Lunch served weekdays, dinner Mon.–Sat. Closed Sun.

DRINK White Horse

381–385 Crown St., Surry Hills, 011-61-2/8333-9900
The dingy old White Horse Hotel was overhauled and has recently reopened as a chic, two-level designer bar and brasserie. Bright Young Things like to be seen lounging on the roof terraces or chilling by the fireplace.

SHOP Fratelli Fresh

7 Danks St., Waterloo, 011-61-2/9699-3174
Local chefs shop for gorgeous fruits and veggies at this grocer-wholesaler before 10 A.M. Then, the public descends on the converted warehouse to snap up what's left of the fresh produce, as well as olive oils, roasted peppers, pastas, cheeses, and other Italian delicacies. A café, *Sopra*, recently opened upstairs.

SHOP Orson and Blake

483 Riley St., Surry Hills, 011-61-2/8399-2525, orsonandblake.com.au
The stylish set heads to O&B for hot housewares, brunch in the café, or cutting-edge fashion in the basement.

SHOP 2 Danks Street

1–2 Danks St., Waterloo, 2danksstreet.com.au
A collection of 10 contemporary art galleries under one roof, showcasing the work of rising Australian and international stars. Photography is particularly strong—Narelle Autio's glorious underwater images are highly collectible and Sarah Smuts Kennedy's ghostly works sell for around \$3,000 each.

PLAY Oxford Street

Sydney's premier party strip bustles with action, most of it gay. For a taste of the local nightlife, visitors of any orientation can check out the Colombian (corner of Crown and Oxford sts., 011-61-2/9360-2152) and Gilligan's, a cocktail bar on the first floor of the Oxford Hotel (No. 134, 011-61-2/9331-3467).

ESCAPE

Blue Mountains

Out to the west, the Blue Mountains are a spectacular backdrop to the city (1300-653-408 from within Australia only, bluemts.com.au, free). You can visit on a day trip; the Blue Mountains Line train from Central Station takes two hours to reach Katoomba (cityrail.nsw.gov.au, \$17 round trip). From there, hop-on, hop-off bus tours will take you to the breathtaking Three Sisters lookout, the picturesque town of Leura (eat at Solitary, above the Leura Falls; solitary.com.au), and more than 27 area attractions (fantastic-aussie-tours.com.au, \$22, or trolleytours.com.au, \$9). Make sure you “rug up”—that's Australian for dress in layers—as the mountains are famous for their chilly climate.

Budget Travel Sydney / Paddington & Darlinghurst

SNAP GUIDE

Former working-class enclaves reborn as a yuppie and gay paradise. Paddington's Oxford Street is the shopping mecca; Darlinghurst's Victoria Street is the center of Sydney's café culture.

SEE Paddington Markets

Grounds of the Uniting Church, 395 Oxford St., Paddington, 011-61-2/9331-2923, paddingtonmarkets.com.au

Sydney's oldest community market, founded in 1973. Browse at more than 250 stalls laden with jewelry, crafts, and an occasional tarot-card reader. Many of Australia's biggest fashion labels got their start here, including Third Millennium, Lisa Ho, Bracewell, and Paablo Nevada. Open Sat., 10 A.M.–5 P.M.

EAT Bills Café

433 Liverpool St., Darlinghurst, 011-61-2/9360-9631

Casual, cheery spot famous for Bill Granger's heavenly breakfasts of scrambled eggs and ricotta hotcakes with honeycomb butter. Patrons sit at communal tables and flip through dailies and stacks of magazines.

EAT Bistro Lulu

257 Oxford St., Paddington, 011-61-2/9380-6888,

bistolulu.com.au

Lively and romantic spot for beautifully cooked French dishes. Don't miss the chicken-liver parfait and poached pork fillets. Dinner daily, lunch weekdays. Licensed for wine except Sun. and Mon., when you can bring your own (\$10 corkage fee).

EAT Fish Face

132 Darlinghurst Rd., Darlinghurst, 011-61-2/9332-4803

Sydney's best fish, all line-caught (no nets) and simply prepared. Arrive early to score one of only six tables. Reservations are accepted for seatings between 6:30 P.M.–7 P.M. After that, it's a free-for-all. B.Y.O. beer only.

EAT Tropicana Caffè

227 Victoria St., Darlinghurst, 011-61-2/9360-9809

Huge salads, filling pastas, and first-rate coffee. Best known as the birthplace of Tropfest, one of the world's largest short-film festivals (tropfest.com): Judges whittle down 600 entries to 16 finalists, and on one Sunday each February the chosen films are screened outdoors for free (check website for schedule).

TIP **Real Men Play Rugby** In sports-crazed Sydney (and throughout much of New South Wales and Queensland), nothing stirs up passions like rugby, a no-holds-barred form of American football with working-class origins, fiercely loyal followings, and no time-outs, substitutions, or helmets. Teams in the National Rugby League, unlike those in the Australian Football League, are broken down by region—the Sydney Roosters, the Parramatta Eels, and the St. George Illawarra Dragons are among the local squads. Matches run March through October and occasionally feature teams from New Zealand or northern England. Seats sell out fast, but stopping by a sports bar could be at least as fun. See nrl.com.au for details on tickets and schedules.

\$ SPLURGE Buon Ricordo

108 Boundary St., Paddington, 011-61-2/9360-6729

Top chefs from across the city make a beeline to this 18-year-old Sydney institution for a taste. Chef Armando Percuoco's signature dish is fettuccine *al tartufo*, or truffled egg pasta. It's prepared at the table, with nothing but cream, Parmesan, pepper, eggs, and truffles. Spectacular service and an extensive wine list don't hurt either. Closed Sun. and Mon.

DRINK Middle Bar

383–387 Bourke St., Darlinghurst, 011-61-2/9331-3100,

kinselas.com.au

The slick, first-floor bar overlooking perennially busy Taylor Square used to be a funeral parlor. DJs spinning wicked tunes attract a mixed straight and gay crowd.

“God made the harbor, but the devil made Sydney.”

—Mark Twain

DRINK The Victoria Room

235 Victoria St. Level 1, Darlinghurst, 011-61-2/9357-4488

The decor is bo-co (bohemian-colonial, with brocade sofas, velvet chaise lounges, lazy ceiling fans, and flourishing palm trees) and the crowd a little pretentious. The innovative cocktails—the ginger and lemongrass martini, for one—steal the show. Afternoon tea served Sat., 4 P.M.–6 P.M., and Sun., 2 P.M.–4 P.M. From \$20.

SHOP Sass & Bide

4/132 Oxford St., Paddington, 011-61-2/9360-3900,

sassandbide.com

The flagship store of this well-known Australian label has all the deconstructed couture women crave, from tiny ra-ra skirts to ruffled mock-Edwardian fancies.

SHOP Tsubi

16 Glenmore Rd., Paddington, 011-61-2/9361-6291

The menswear answer to Sass & Bide: distinctive clothing that's part surfer, part rocker, part dandy.

PLAY Centennial Parklands

Corner of Oxford and Lang rds., Paddington, cp.nsw.gov.au

The 480 acres are filled with joggers, cyclists, skaters, picnickers, and horseback riders every day of the week. In the summer months, the outdoor Moonlight Cinema screens classics and the latest releases (moonlight.com.au, tickets \$11).

Budget Travel Sydney / Kings Cross & Potts Point

SNAP GUIDE

High life and low life coexist in this happening peninsula east of the city. Glam homes, bars, and restaurants brush up against Sydney's sleazy side.

SEE Elizabeth Bay House

7 Onslow Ave., 011-61-2/9356-3022, hht.net.au/museums
Once described as "the finest house in the colony," this small museum—originally built between 1835 and 1839 as a home for colonial secretary Alexander Macleay—offers intriguing insights into the early days of English settlement in Sydney. Furnishings are from the period 1839–1845. Closed Mon. \$5.30.

EAT Fratelli Paradiso

12–16 Challis Ave., 011-61-2/9357-1744
A busy neighborhood trattoria that does the best fried calamari in town—simply battered, golden, and meltingly tender. The no-reservations policy translates to perpetual lines, but the quick turnover keeps waits under half an hour.

**“Those who lose
dreaming are lost.”**
—*Aboriginal proverb*

EAT Simone Logue

21 Elizabeth Bay Rd., 011-61-2/9358-2600, simmonelogue.com
On the ground floor of a smart city apartment block, this is the place to be for "Sunday roast"—a traditional Australian meal of lamb, chicken, beef, or pork (or whatever the chef decides that day), served with crispy potatoes, peas, pumpkin, and carrots, and plenty of rich, thick gravy, as well as pudding and wine. B.Y.O. wine only, \$10 corkage fee per bottle.

EAT Spring Espresso Bar

65 Macleay St., Shop 1, 011-61-2/9331-0190
So cramped it's almost uncomfortable, but people flock here anyway for a weekend brunch of scrambled eggs and smoked salmon. The outside tables are less claustrophobic.

TIP Aboriginal Art One of the world's oldest peoples, Aborigines arrived in Australia nearly 50,000 years ago from southeast Asia and fanned out, developing more than 250 regional languages as well as rich, spiritually infused artistic traditions. Today, Sydney's indigenous population numbers over 30,000, and many continue their time-honored crafts. Perennial souvenir favorites include the boomerang—originally used for hunting and fire-making—and the didgeridoo, a wind instrument created from a log hollowed out by termites. Carved and painted emu eggs, bark paintings and dot paintings of animals and plants, woven baskets, and sculptures of creator-beings are also popular. Be aware that opportunistic dealers in fake and illegally appropriated art run rampant. Stick to community arts-and-crafts centers and to galleries owned, operated, or supported by Aborigines, and do some research before you buy (mq.edu.au/house_of_aboriginality).

§ SPLURGE Otto

6 Cowper Wharf Rd., 011-61-2/9368-7488, otto.net.au
Fine Italian dining by the waterfront, with wines and service to match. The city's elite come to dine in sun-drenched splendor on exquisite pastas and memorable desserts, such as shortbread with mascarpone, strawberries, and Ligurian honey. First-class people-watching, too. (Russell Crowe lives at the end of the wharf.)

DRINK Barons

5 Roslyn St., 011-61-2/9358-6131
Seedy old Kings Cross may be gentrifying, but this bar hasn't changed a lick. Tacky decor, cheap drinks, open all night.

DRINK Lotus

22 Challis Ave., 011-61-2/9326-0488, merivale.com/lotus
A small but perfectly formed bistro that's part of the burgeoning Hemmes family empire (CBD Hotel, Establishment, Slip Inn, et al.). Its tiny, shiny bar with snakeskin-padded walls serves fine cocktails, including a Rat Pack of martinis (like the Frank and the Dino).

DRINK Water Bar

W Hotel, 6 Cowper Wharf Rd., 011-61-2/9331-9000, starwoodhotels.com
Consistently voted Sydney's best watering hole. It has a unique old-meets-new ambience. The hotel is housed in a former dockside warehouse, with soaring wooden ceilings; glass elevators ferry guests to the rooms, and drinkers recline on sleek divans.

SHOP Il Papiro

87A Macleay St., 011-61-2/9361-6252, ilpapirofirenze.it
The antipodean outpost of an upscale Florentine stationer known for divine marbled diaries and notepaper with signature feather designs.

PLAY Andrew (Boy) Charlton Pool

1C Mrs. Macquaries Rd., The Domain Sydney 2000, 011-61-2/9358-6686, abcpool.org
Named after a swimming legend from the 1920s. Its location—above Woolloomooloo Bay—ensures it's constantly packed. Open 6 A.M.–8 P.M., Oct. 1–Apr. 30. \$3.90.

ESCAPE

Royal National Park

011-61-2/9542-0648, nationalparks.nsw.gov.au
The world's second-oldest national park after Yellowstone. The terrain—crisscrossed by myriad trails—varies from bushland to rain forest, craggy coastlines to tranquil riverbanks. And it's easy to reach: Take a train to Cronulla (cityrail.nsw.gov.au, about \$6.60 round trip), then catch the National Parks Service's ferry to Bundeena (011-61-2/9523-2990, \$7.30 round trip). \$7.50 day pass for car, free otherwise.

Budget Travel Sydney / Bondi to Coogee

SNAP GUIDE

These eastern beaches are connected by the scenic Cliff Walk. Sweeping ocean views make unforgettable dining experiences, while surfing, swimming, and finely tuned Aussie bodies have their own appeal.

SEE Clifftop Walk from Bondi to Coogee

Enter from Notts Ave., at Bondi

A five-mile trek connects the two crescent-shaped beaches, passing glitzy Tamarama, Bronte, and Clovelly beaches along the way. Million-dollar homes teeter above the sea, and fitness freaks pound the walk on weekends, despite the crowds.

EAT Barzura

62 Carr St., 011-61-2/9665-5546, barzura.com.au

The promise of sun-filled lunches on the terrace of this busy diner attracts swimmers and family groups to the best eating spot in Coogee. Plunk yourself down and enjoy a burger with beet relish—even if you're in a swimsuit.

“This is a wonderful colony: Ancient Rome, in her Imperial grandeur, would not have been ashamed of such an offspring.”

—Charles Darwin

EAT Sean's Panaroma

270 Campbell Parade, 011-61-2/9365-4924

Great for lazy weekend lunches and end-of-week (Wed.–Sat.) dinners among moneyed Bondi types and foodies. In the humble setting—12 tables, no-frills decor—chef Sean Moran turns out treats such as guinea fowl stuffed with chestnuts and white-chocolate-and-rosemary nougat.

\$ SPLURGE Icebergs Dining Room and Bar

1 Notts Ave., 011-61-2/9365-9000, idrb.com

A phenomenal dining experience at the southernmost point of Bondi Beach. Sweeping ocean vistas through floor-to-ceiling windows, and an equally impressive Mediterranean menu, with standouts like Livorno fish stew and salt-crusting rib-eye steak. About \$115 per person for a three-course dinner with wine.

DRINK Beach Road Hotel

71 Beach Rd., Bondi, 011-61-2/9130-7247

A surfer hangout just blocks from the beach. Pool tables, big-screen TVs, and a sports betting agency keep everyone happy.

DRINK Ravesi's

118 Campbell Parade, 011-61-2/9365-4422, ravesis.com.au

The glass walls of this trendy hotel bar provide a view of the showy promenade, creating an ideal spot to see and be seen.

SHOP Tuchuzy

90 Gould St., 011-61-2/9365-5371, tuchuzy.com

Pronounced “too choozy,” the boutique stocks relaxed, beach-babe outfits, from flirty skirts to bikinis (Hallican Boodie's '70s-era versions). Visiting stars such as Claire Danes and Lara Flynn Boyle have shopped here; Vin Diesel dropped by its menswear store next door.

PLAY Clovelly Beach

Take a 339 bus from the city, on Castlereagh St. near Martin Place, or walk south from Bondi, about three miles

A snorkeling and diving heaven. In the summer months (Dec.–Mar.) tropical currents meet temperate water, providing an atypical mix of diverse species of marine life. Look for giant blue groper, wobbegong sharks, angelfish, and whales. Deep 6 Diving organizes expeditions with dive gear, snorkels, and fins (351-355 Clovelly Rd., 011-61-2/9665-7427, deep6diving.com.au, \$250 for one-day open water training and certification).

PLAY Coogee's Rock Pools

These swimming holes were carved out of sandstone, with a little human help. The women-only McIvers Baths is run by the Randwick-Coogee Ladies Swimming Club (15¢, free swimming lessons on Sat.); Wylie's Baths has lap lanes, \$3.

PLAY Let's Go Surfing

011-61-2/9365-1800, letsgosurfing.com.au

Runs beginner classes at Bondi for groups of six or fewer. Learn surf safety and basic skills before being let loose. A two-hour lesson costs \$49.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

In “strine,” Australia's colorful slang, words are shortened and phrases smushed together. For more, especially of the naughty sort, try koalanet.com.au/australian-slang.html.

Ankle biter small child

Barbie barbecue

Brekky breakfast

Cozzie bathing suit

Crack a mental lose one's temper

Docket bill, receipt

Furphy rumor

Give it a burl give it a try

Gobsmacked surprised, astounded

Owygoin? how are you?

Oz Australia

Piker someone who doesn't fit in socially

Piss beer

Budget Travel Sydney / Manly & North

SNAP GUIDE

Manly's apt motto is "Seven miles from Sydney, a million miles from care." The north shore has beautiful beaches and casual eating. It's also home to Sydney's zoo and a patch of eucalyptus forests.

SEE Manly Beach

Manly Visitor Information Centre, 011-61-2/9976-1430.

Take a JetCat or ferry to Manly from Circular Quay; the beach is an easy walk from the ferry terminal. A mile-long strip of seashore where gorgeous surfers while away the days. You can rent surfboards (try Dripping Wet Surf Company, 93-95 North Steyne, Shop 2, 011-61-2/9977-3549, drippingwetsurf.com; \$34 per day) or join an impromptu game of beach volleyball. The three surf clubs along the beach have showers and bathrooms. The 1.5-mile walk from Queenscliff at the north end of Manly to southern Shelley Beach is lovely.

SEE Taronga Zoo

Bradleys Head Rd., 011-61-2/9969-2777, zoo.nsw.gov.au

No other zoo in the world has a backdrop like Sydney Harbour. Look for native fauna—koalas, kangaroos, and platypuses. \$23, \$12 kids, ages 4 and under free.

“Leaving Australia
was the hardest thing
I’ve ever done.”

—Barry Gibb

\$ SPLURGE Seaplane Safaris

011-61-2/9371-3577, seaplanesafaris.com.au

Fly from Rose Bay to national park-fringed Cottage Point Inn for a decadent lunch of, say, panfried wild kingfish followed by a raspberry soufflé with white chocolate ice cream. The four-hour tour includes the 15-minute flight each way and lunch, plus the rush of landing on water. At \$308 per person (minimum two people), it's no cheap thrill; a 10-minute sight-seeing flight (about \$85) is more wallet-friendly.

EAT Bathers Pavilion Café

4 The Esplanade, Balmoral Beach, 011-61-2/9969-5050, batherspavilion.com.au

The essential Sydney view of a picturesque beach and a sea of sails on Middle Harbour is best soaked up during weekend brunch or lunch at this light-filled café. Louvered windows face the beach, and the salt air stirs up a hunger for French-Canadian chef Serge Dansereau's cooking. Try the oven-baked beans with ham hock (his dad's recipe) for breakfast, or lentil-and-taleggio ravioli for lunch.

EAT Manly Wharf Hotel

East Esplanade, Manly Wharf, 011-61-2/9977-1266, manlywharfhotel.com.au

Upmarket pub food—such as blue swimmer crab risotto and overflowing seafood platters—by the water's edge. The Jetty Bar, on the original wharf and overlooking the harbor, is the pick of the hotel's three watering holes.

EAT Whitewater

35 South Steyne, 011-61-2/9977-0322

Flying Fish designer (see CBD listings on p. 3) Michael McCann did the beach house-style interior of this newcomer to Manly's dining scene. The menu is a mix of modern Australian and Asian dishes; steamer baskets of Cantonese-style duck in wheat pancakes are all the rage. There are comfy padded white seats, fruity cocktails, and a gas fireplace in the bar.

DRINK Newport Arms Hotel

Corner of Beaconsfield and Kalinya Sts., 011-61-2/9997-4900, newportarms.com.au

The social hub of the northern beaches and Australia's largest beer garden. Everything is big about this place, from the three children's playgrounds to its beer selection—there are some 18 on tap. Set above the idyllic Pittwater estuary.

DRINK Steyne Hotel

75 The Corso, Manly, 011-61-2/9977-4977, steynehotel.com.au

Seagulls, sunshine, fish and chips, and cold beer. There are nine bars in all, spread over two levels. Head to Stage One upstairs for simple steak-and-salad-style meals overlooking the beach, or visit on Tuesdays and Thursday nights for \$9 pizzas. You can stay here, too: Comfortable ocean-view rooms cost \$99 double, including breakfast.

PLAY Bradleys Head Walk

From Taronga Zoo wharf (take ferry from Circular Quay) to Chowder Head

An easy-to-negotiate 1.3-mile walk through eucalyptus forests and past the old cannons that once defended Sydney. Just follow the shoreline from the ferry wharf and pack a picnic to enjoy at Bradleys Head, which looks back toward the city.

PLAY North Sydney Olympic Pool

4 Alfred St. South, Milsons Point, 011-61-2/9955-2309, northsydney.nsw.gov.au

An unforgettable swim on the harbor's edge, flanked by the bridge and the kaleidoscopic colors of Luna Park (Sydney's version of Coney Island). The massive pool complex also has a sauna, spa, and gym, and has been the training ground for many an Olympic champ. \$3.70.

ESCAPE

Shark Island

In the middle of Sydney Harbour, Shark Island is an under-appreciated gem that's perfect for an afternoon picnic. Hop a ferry to the island (matilda.com.au, click on Ferry Services, \$12 round trip), and within 20 minutes you'll feel miles away from the city—even though the Harbour Bridge and Sydney Opera House are just visible in the distance. There are picnic shelters and restrooms on the island, and a little beach for swimming. Free.