

Ultimate Guide to Sydney Living



Abstract

Welcome to the Ultimate Guide to Sydney Living, your comprehensive resource for everything you need to know about living in one of the world's most iconic cities. From the vibrant, bustling CBD to the peaceful, leafy suburbs, Sydney offers a diverse range of lifestyles suited to different tastes and needs.

Whether you're considering moving to Sydney, exploring its neighborhoods, or simply curious about the local culture, this guide will provide you with insights on everything from housing options and cost of living to the best attractions, dining spots, and outdoor activities. With its rich history, stunning beaches, and thriving arts scene, Sydney is a city that combines modern living with natural beauty. Let's dive in and explore all that Sydney has to offer!

Getting Started

Starting your life in Sydney is an exciting adventure, but it's important to know the basics to make the transition smooth. First, choosing the right suburb is key. Sydney is a city of diverse neighborhoods, from the trendy, inner-city hubs like Surry Hills and Newtown, to the more family-friendly areas like Parramatta and Balmain. Researching local amenities, public transport, and proximity to work or school will help you find the best fit.

Next, consider the cost of living. Sydney is known for its high housing prices, so whether you're renting or buying, be prepared for significant costs. However, there are areas offering more affordable housing options, especially in the outer suburbs.

Getting around Sydney is easy, thanks to its efficient public transport system, including trains, buses, and ferries. Familiarizing yourself with the Opal card system will make commuting a breeze. With these basics covered, you're ready to enjoy everything Sydney has to offer!

1. Cost of Living in Sydney

Living in Sydney during a cost-of-living crisis is like shopping at David Jones on a budget and wondering why you aren't saving money. Sydney was this year dubbed the 10th most expensive city to live in the world, according to a report by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Finder has also reported that the most expensive place for housing in Australia is Sydney. To put in perspective, it is 48.1 per cent higher than the cost of Adelaide which is the most affordable capital city to live in. Sydney's also the most expensive major city for housing and utilities. It is 36 per cent more expensive than Melbourne and 52 per cent more expensive than Hobart.



It is unsurprising news when you consider some of the most iconic things in Sydney are so expensive. If you want to eat like a local and try the ricotta hot cakes at the popular Sydney cafe Bills, it will set you back \$26. If you want to look like a Sydneysider and buy a pair of leggings from the streetwear brand P.E. Nation, founded by eastern suburbs influencer Pip Edwards, it will cost you \$99. If you want to buy a coffee, most cafes sell them for at least \$4.50 and almond milk is usually an extra \$30 cents. These are luxury things, obviously, but that is the big problem with Sydney – plenty of locals are used to living a metropolitan lifestyle with all the frills.

Locals have been hit hard by the cost-of-living crisis but that doesn't mean they are prepared to change. When I asked Sydneysiders what they weren't prepared to give up – even with inflation rising at 7 per cent – their answers were very Sydney. "Shopping at Harris Farm, I'm never stopping – the produce is better and fresher," Shannon, 30, explained. "Good coffee," Troy, 36, shared. "Sweet treats from cute cafes when I need a little pick me up," Brooke, 30, revealed. "Sushi and cocktails that cost more than my meal," Romy, 30, admitted. "Spin classes and margaritas," Meg, 29, shared.

Financial adviser and managing director of privately-owned financial planning and accounting company Financial Spectrum Brenton Tong said: "It is insane here in Sydney. We just seem to have no idea. Spending is way up on traditional levels." "Covid really bugged things up – cheap mortgages, cheaper rent, lots of money, and spending less on commuting, travel etc," he explained. "So a lot of people just started spending. It becomes the norm and can be hard to cut back."

Mr Tong revealed that people in Sydney find it hard to make big changes to their spending because of the boujee lifestyles they are accustomed to. "I've noticed that people are cutting

back on things like restaurants, movies etc, but those smaller things like take away, Saturday breakfasts, weekends away – they're still going strong. They're not seen as luxuries for some anymore because they're just a normal part of life," he shared.

2. Top Attractions and Hidden Gems

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the amount of things to see and do in Sydney—especially if it's your first time visiting. It's not exactly easy to get to Australia so it only makes sense to want to squeeze in as many “must-see” spots as possible during your trip.

The following addresses offer a great first glimpse of Sydney and include a handful of the biggest tourist attractions that span from museums and galleries to the Eiffel Tower of the Sydney Harbour:

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Located in The Domain, the Art Gallery of New South Wales is the most important public gallery in Sydney—and one of the largest in Australia. Dating all the way back to 1874, when the gallery's first public exhibition opened, here's where to go for classic and contemporary Australian art.

Australian Museum

For a more holistic look at the country, head to the Australian Museum at 1 William Street in the CBD district. The oldest museum in all of Australia, this establishment boasts an international reputation in the fields of natural history and anthropology, with permanent exhibits like minerals, animals and fossils, photographic archives that date back to the 1800s, and First Nations cultural materials and artifacts.

Sydney Opera House

Yes, it's a tourist hot spot—but for good reason. The Sydney Opera House is a cultural landmark and performing arts centre right in the middle of the Sydney Harbour. It's one of the most famous and distinctive buildings of the 20th century thanks to its iconic peaks and expressionist design is well worth a visit, even if you aren't planning on attending a show. Head to the opera bar, grab a beer, and watch the sunset over the harbour.



BridgeClimb Sydney

Not for the faint of heart, BridgeClimb Sydney takes guests on a literal climb over the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Guests will hike up and over the bridge to the summit, which touts some of the absolute best views in Sydney.

Bondi Beach

Whether or not you're a beach person, it's your moral imperative to spend an afternoon loafing in the sun at Bondi. Likely Australia's most iconic beach, the white sands and crystal clear water draw surfers, swimmers, and beach bums year round—and for good reason. The turquoise waters are temperate, with lots of room for splashing around without bumping into a neighboring swimmer or surfer.

3. Dining and Nightlife in Sydney

Dining and Nightlife in Sydney. Locating a cheeky late-night bite can prove challenging. Fortunately, with venues stretching their closing hours well into the evening, Sydney/Eora has flourished into a vibrant, late-night dining hub. Disagreeing with Ted Mosby's sentiment, the Urban List team believes that the real magic happens after 2 am. Whether it's a takeaway joint serving up quick eats, an underground bar offering savoury snacks, or a restaurant ready to

cater to cravings, even after the clock strikes nine, we're here for it. These are the best spots in Sydney for late-night food and dining.

Indian Home Diner

To call Indian Home Diner a late-night cult favourite would be an understatement. The Oxford Street eatery is the obvious choice if you're in or around Paddington and need a late-night Friday or Saturday feed.

Look for the orange sign and a line out the door and go straight for the crowd-favourite Indian kebab with your choice of curry sauce, a chicken tikka, and aloo chop or onion bhaji, all beautifully wrapped up in a garlic naan.

Big Poppa's

Since opening back in 2016, Big Poppas established itself as one of the best joints in the city for outstanding cocktails and a proper late-night feed. In fact, don't be surprised if you find a packed restaurant at 2am on a weeknight. There's no late-night menu here; you can order from the whole thing right up until 2.30am. That means hand-cut pasta, endless cheeses, cured meats, gelato, Italian vino, and hip-hop playlists into the wee hours of the morning.

Be welcomed into Big Poppas with champagne on arrival when you book a table for four or more for Big Poppa's Bad Bitch Energy Thursdays, and stick around after 8pm for Big Poppa's lineup of female hip-hop DJs playing until 3am.

Nakano Darling

14 Steam Mill Lane, Haymarket

In the sprawling Darling Square foodie precinct, Nakano Darling is serving up the late-night food of Japan's izakayas in a warm, timber-clad setting plucked straight out of Shinjuku's back streets. Fried chicken, gyoza and specialty highballs are the go, making it a late-night haven of fried eats (and a nightcap or two).

Karaage and gyoza come in multiple serving sizes, as well as classic drinking snacks like lotus root chips, octopus karaage, corn butter cheese and fried udon with pork slices.

Old Town Hong Kong Cuisine

10 Dixon Street, Sydney CBD

Spread over two levels in the heart of Chinatown, Old Town Hong Kong Cuisine should be on the list for any late-night Chinese food hankerings. The Haymarket eatery's pages-long menu doesn't muck around, with dumplings, bao, Hong Kong-style street food, noodles, fried rice, omelettes, and a must-share roast duck to chow down on until late.



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Jimmy's Falafel

Merivale's casual Middle Eastern joint is perfect for soaking up the booze on a night out. Conveniently located on George Street, Jimmy's Falafel serves up mighty fine falafel, as well as pita, mezze plates, and charcoal-grilled meats and fish. There's a main menu available until 11pm, and a late-night menu of snacks and pitas that kicks in after then—both have baklava for dessert.

4. Your Guide to Staying Fit and Healthy in Sydney

When we are mentally and physically healthy we can fully enjoy and appreciate our day-to-day life, environment and relationships, as well as deal with life's challenges. Here you can find a range of information and resources to help you keep yourself healthy while at university. From

common mental health issues and support contacts, to mindfulness and general health tips, these pages are designed to help you support yourself and others.

The Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment Guideline (GL2018_003) presents the current best evidence for conducting a Youth Health and Wellbeing Assessment. Its purpose is to inform practice for healthcare providers to achieve the best possible care in NSW. This guideline is for clinicians caring for young people (12-24 years old) in a paediatric, adolescent or adult healthcare setting. This guideline supports NSW Health's commitment to implement appropriate psychosocial assessment tools, such as HEEADSSS, to assess and respond to the holistic health and wellbeing needs of young people outlined in the NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-2024 (PD2017_019).

Healthcare Excellence

Sydney's healthcare system is among the best in the world, with a combination of public and private facilities. Renowned hospitals like Royal Prince Alfred and St Vincent's Hospital provide cutting-edge medical services. General practitioners and specialist clinics are easily accessible across the city, ensuring comprehensive healthcare for residents and visitors alike. Pharmacies are also abundant, offering professional advice and over-the-counter solutions for everyday health needs.

For those seeking alternative therapies, Sydney has a thriving network of practitioners offering acupuncture, naturopathy, chiropractic care, and other holistic treatments. These services cater to people looking for natural or integrative approaches to health.

Fitness and Physical Activities

Fitness is deeply woven into Sydney's culture, evident in the countless gyms, yoga studios, and fitness classes scattered across the city. Whether you prefer weightlifting at a state-of-the-art gym, joining a dynamic Pilates class, or practicing yoga by the water, Sydney has options to suit every fitness level. Popular chains like F45 and Fitness First provide group training and personalized programs, while boutique studios offer unique experiences such as aerial yoga and barre.

Outdoor fitness is another highlight of the city. Sydney's natural beauty makes exercising outside irresistible. The Bondi to Coogee Coastal Walk is a favorite for joggers and walkers, offering stunning ocean views. Parks like Centennial Park and The Royal Botanic Garden host boot camps, running clubs, and personal training sessions. For water lovers, swimming in ocean pools like Bondi Icebergs or kayaking in Sydney Harbour adds a refreshing twist to workouts.

Mental Health and Wellness

Mental well-being is equally important, and Sydney offers ample resources to help individuals maintain a positive mindset. Meditation centers and mindfulness workshops are widely available, with organizations like Headspace hosting community events. Wellness retreats on

Sydney's outskirts, such as in the Blue Mountains or Central Coast, provide serene environments for relaxation and rejuvenation.



For everyday stress relief, many Sydneysiders turn to practices like tai chi or join wellness classes in community centers. Counseling services and mental health hotlines are also readily accessible, reflecting the city's commitment to holistic health.

Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Sydney's food scene is a haven for health-conscious individuals. Farmers' markets, like the one at Carriageworks, feature organic produce, fresh meats, and artisan foods.

Health-focused cafes and restaurants offer plant-based menus, nutrient-dense dishes, and cold-pressed juices. For those cooking at home, supermarkets and specialty stores carry a wide range of organic and gluten-free products.

5. Sydney's History and Heritage

Sydney today can be defined as many things – a bit player in a global economy, a society within a larger nation, a particular culture. Its story has been shaped by the things that shape all cities, and also by things that are particular to it alone.

Initial plans to establish Sydney as a dumping ground for criminals went hand-in-hand with other geo-political and economic interests of the British government. Securing trade routes, providing a victualling and ship refitting outpost, and exploiting the fisheries of the southern seas all combined to make the establishment of Sydney a reality.

The foundations of Sydney society were laid through a vast social experiment – an attempt to create a whole society using forced labour. Convicts had long been transported to places distant from home, but Sydney was not yet a settlement. There were Aborigines who fished the waters of its harbour and hunted in the surrounding groves and hills, but few Europeans were capable of imagining these people as constituting society.

Culture clash

The violent clash of cultures and of economies that inevitably occurred resulted in deep and widespread suffering for these people, unprotected from the Europeans' diseases, and unable to comprehend their acquisitive land practices. Inevitably, however, some cultural accommodations were made. While local Aboriginal people died from smallpox and other miseries in the initial contact period, other Aboriginal people have always been present in Sydney, as they constantly moved into the area from the surrounding hinterland. The history of the place is a shared history, with a continuous Aboriginal presence.

For worse – or for better?

The brutality of life in the late eighteenth century has generated much debate about the nature of early Sydney society. The story includes acts of great barbarity and petty nastiness as well as of generosity and plain common decency. As a social experiment, Sydneysiders like to think it has been a success.

The early core of the city

Many chose to settle in areas that today constitutes the City of Sydney local government area. Some of the first humble, privately built cottages were located immediately to the west of the official encampment, in the area that became known as The Rocks (Talla-wo-la-dah). The earliest buildings behind Sydney Cove (War-ran), recreated as Circular Quay by the 1840s, were augmented with development west towards Darling Harbour (Go-mo-ra). Here boatbuilding

and wharfage attracted small-scale industry and workshops, and jumbled among all this were houses where an emerging working class lived and laboured.



A civic place

They had become citizens with the creation of the City of Sydney in 1842. It would be a fine thing to record that the establishment of municipal government was motivated by an upsurge of civic pride, but it would be closer to reality to argue that it was generated through a concern on the part of the colonial government that Sydney was growing large beyond all expectations, and that there was a need to tax its residents to fund the infrastructure required to keep it functioning and in good health.

The City of Sydney was bounded by the harbour to the north, West's Creek which discharged into Rushcutters Bay to the east, Cleveland Street to the south, and the line of Cooks River Road (now City Road) continuing onto Blackwattle Bay, in the west. While the central area between Darling Harbour and Hyde Park has always been known simply as Sydney, the City of Sydney also took in areas with the local names of The Rocks, Millers Point, Pyrmont, Ultimo, Chippendale, Surry Hills, and Woolloomooloo. Later Darlinghurst, East Sydney, Potts Point,

Elizabeth Bay and Haymarket became recognised places as well, and over time other place names have been appended to smaller sections of the city.

From early vision to complex metropolis

The early decades of settlement have bequeathed to Sydney a haphazard street layout and a number of fine buildings in the City of Sydney, and at other places where early administrative processes were concentrated, particularly in Parramatta but also at Liverpool. Many of them are associated with the period of the governorship of Macquarie, who, with his wife Elizabeth, stands out among Sydney's early rulers for having some vision of the possibilities of a future city. If awards were to be given for the most outstanding piece of urban design from these early decades, it would surely go to the Macquaries for their visionary creation of the Botanic Gardens on land reserved by Phillip as the governor's domain. Located on ground that spills down to the harbour at Farm Cove (Wuganmagali), it is not only a precious place in the heart of central Sydney, but symbolises the inescapable truth that what makes Sydney beautiful is not the handiwork of human intervention so much as the ongoing interplay between its natural and built forms.

6. Exploring the Diversity of Sydney's Suburbs

Surry Hills

Surry Hills, located just 2 kilometers from the Sydney CBD, is one of the city's most dynamic and vibrant inner-city suburbs. Known for its creative energy, this area is a hub for art, fashion, and gastronomy.

Surry Hills is renowned for its trendy cafes, boutique shops, and galleries. Streets like Crown Street and Bourke Street are lined with coffee spots, restaurants, and independent retailers, making it a hotspot for foodies and shoppers. The suburb is also home to Brett Whiteley Studio, a must-visit for art enthusiasts.

Mosman

Mosman, situated on Sydney's lower north shore, is a prestigious suburb known for its natural beauty and luxurious lifestyle. Mosman is home to some of Sydney's best beaches, including Balmoral Beach, known for its calm waters and family-friendly vibe. The suburb also hosts the world-renowned Taronga Zoo, offering stunning views of Sydney Harbour alongside its wildlife attractions. Boutique shopping and fine dining are plentiful along Military Road, enhancing the area's upscale reputation.



Cronulla

Cronulla, located in Sydney's southern suburbs, is a stunning beachside area known for its laid-back coastal lifestyle. Famous for Cronulla Beach, this suburb is a haven for surfers, swimmers, and sun-seekers. Coastal walks, such as the Esplanade Walk, offer breathtaking ocean views. The suburb is also a gateway to the Royal National Park, ideal for hiking, picnics, and exploring natural landscapes.

Annandale

Annandale is one of Sydney's most picturesque and sought-after inner-west suburbs, celebrated for its rich history, vibrant community, and convenient location. Situated just 5 kilometers from the Sydney CBD, it offers a peaceful, village-like atmosphere with all the benefits of city living.

History and Heritage of Annandale

Annandale's history dates back to the 19th century, and its heritage is reflected in the beautiful Victorian and Federation-style homes that line its streets. The suburb is perhaps best known for the iconic "Witches' Houses" on Johnston Street, grand mansions with steep gables and intricate architectural details. Heritage trails, such as the Annandale Heritage Walk, showcase these historic landmarks and tell the story of the suburb's development over time.

Community and Lifestyle

Annandale is a family-friendly neighborhood with a strong sense of community. Its tree-lined streets are dotted with charming cafes, independent shops, and local businesses, creating a welcoming and lively environment. Booth Street, the heart of the suburb, is home to trendy cafes, bakeries, and specialty stores, making it a popular spot for locals.

7. Reasons to Live in Sydney

If you're thinking of studying and living in Sydney, you probably have a lot of questions. Why move to Sydney? Is Sydney a good place to live? Is Sydney safe to live in? Well, wonder no more because we have the answers! Beautiful beaches, incredible nature scenes, a thriving nightlife – there are countless amazing reasons to live and study in Sydney. Keep reading to discover our top 10.

Sydney is home to some of the world's leading education providers

Sydney houses some of the best educational institutions on the planet. Here you'll find some of the world's top universities, which regularly rank in the top 200 in the QS World University Rankings and the Times Higher Education World Rankings. But that's not at all – Sydney is also home to several TAFEs, VET training providers and pathway providers like the Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT).

That means you won't have to search for long to find the right course or degree to suit your learning needs.

Sydney's landmarks are rich in history

You're likely familiar with two of Sydney's most world-famous landmarks: the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. But there's even more to discover!

You can take historical tours (and ghost tours!) around The Rocks, get 'shipwrecked' at old Convict-era shipping yard Cockatoo Island, or take part in the Sydney City Museum Crawl to learn about Australia's history. The tour takes you to the Australian Museum, the National Maritime Museum, the Art Gallery of NSW, and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Best of all? It's not just for tourists – the crawl is popular all year round with Australian locals!

Many of these landmarks are within walking distance from several education providers in the CBD, such as SIBT. In other words, when you choose to study here, you'll have an incredible backdrop to enjoy.

The culture is vibrant and exciting

When you choose to live and study in Sydney, you'll be spoiled for choice of fun things to do. Take a wander around the thriving city parks, bars, cafes and entertainment precincts. Each month, you'll be sure to stumble across a wide variety of exciting cultural events such as markets, dance events, art exhibitions or fireworks displays. Plus, most events are completely free!

Prominent festivals throughout the year include The Sydney Festival, Vivid Sydney Festival, Sydney WorldPride, the Royal Easter Show and Sculpture by the Sea.

Plus, education providers typically host on-campus activities and events throughout the year to bring students together. For example, SIBT regularly hosts movie nights, noodle and doodle activities, pool competitions and so much more. You can stay up to date on SIBT's calendar of events [here](#).



Sydney has breathtaking natural wonders

If you study in Sydney at one of the local universities, chances are there's a beautiful patch of green grass close by – perfect for picnics and outdoor study sessions.

Settle down at the Royal Botanic Gardens for a chilled study session with some breathtaking waterfront views. Alternatively, relax amongst sculptures and flowering lilies at Wendy's Secret Garden, or the tranquil surrounds of the Chinese Garden of Friendship, right by Sydney's Chinatown. Centennial Parklands is also a beautiful study space.

A stone's throw from the SIBT campus, you'll find Hyde Park, Sydney's oldest park (and one of its most stunning). The 16-hectare park is directly next to SIBT, meaning you can be there in less than a minute's walk. Here you'll find historical attractions (such as the Anzac Memorial and Archibald Fountain), shaded areas to relax and plenty of lush greenery.

The beaches are just brilliant

If you opt to study in Sydney, it goes without saying that not all your time will be spent in the classroom. In your spare time, there's no better place to be than one of Sydney's gorgeous beaches.

Sydney beaches are famous all around the world thanks to their beauty and great surfing and swimming opportunities (and that's not to mention the amazing Sydney weather!). Head to the Eastern Suburbs and tackle the scenic Coogee to Bondi Beach Walk, stopping for a scuba-dive at Clovelly Beach, 'local secret' Gordons Bay, or the popular Bondi Beach. Otherwise, catch a ferry from Circular Quay to Manly Beach for a leisurely stroll around its beachside cafes.

Sydney is super safe

Moving to a new country can be intimidating. So, it's perfectly normal to want the reassurance that your new home is safe. When you study in Sydney, you'll enjoy the peace of mind that you're in one of the safest places in Australia. In fact, Sydney was ranked the fourth safest city in the world in 2021!

Education providers also take significant measures to ensure the safety of their students. SIBT features 24-hour security, including video surveillance and an onsite security team to assist you with safety around campus, lost property, theft and medical emergencies.

Plus, as we mentioned, Sydney is very multicultural. With such a diverse population, there is widespread acceptance and tolerance for people of all backgrounds. Ask any local, "Is Sydney safe to live in?" and we're sure they'll answer with an enthusiastic yes!

Conclusion:

Living in Sydney offers a unique and exciting experience, blending cosmopolitan urban life with natural beauty and a relaxed coastal lifestyle. From its world-famous beaches and vibrant neighborhoods to its rich cultural scene and diverse food offerings, Sydney truly has something for everyone. Whether you're a young professional seeking a bustling inner-city environment, a family looking for suburban peace, or an adventurer eager to explore the outdoors, Sydney can provide it all. While the cost of living may be higher compared to other cities, the opportunities

and lifestyle it offers make it an incredibly rewarding place to live. By understanding the local amenities, transport systems, and housing markets, you can make the most of your Sydney experience and enjoy all that this dynamic city has to offer.

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