

A LOCAL'S GUIDE TO SYDNEY

SRS 2026



Welcome to Sydney!

We're delighted to welcome you to Australia for the Scoliosis Research Society Annual Meeting. Whether this is your first visit or you've been here before, we hope you'll have the opportunity to experience a little of what makes Sydney such a special place.

I have put together this guide to help you experience the city. I've included some of my favourite cafés, restaurants, walks and experiences, along with practical tips to help you make the most of your time here.

I hope you enjoy your stay – we're pleased to have you here.

Andrew Cree

LOCAL TIPS

- Cards are accepted almost everywhere – it's unusual to need cash.
- Australians generally don't tip, although it's appreciated for exceptional service.
- Coffee culture is serious—independent cafés are usually excellent (avoid the chains!)
- Most cafés open early and many kitchens close by mid-afternoon.
- October is spring, so mornings can be cool and afternoons warm. Dress in layers.
- Bring swimmers—you'll probably end up wanting a swim!
- Wear sunscreen—even on cloudy days, the UV can be surprisingly high.
- Ferry rides are one of the best ways to experience Sydney Harbour.

GETTING AROUND

Taxis and Ubers are widely available

Public transport

- Sydney's public transport network includes trains, ferries, light rail, buses and metro.
- Ferries are one of the best sightseeing experiences in Sydney.
- Google Maps is very accurate for public transport.
- You can tap on/off with your contactless Visa, Mastercard or American Express card (including apple/google pay) to pay for your fare, or purchase a preloaded Opal card from train stations and many convenience stores.
- Google Maps is very accurate for public transport timetables.

Walking – Sydney CBD is best explored on foot

- A great idea is to walk from Darling Harbour through Barangaroo, around the harbour and beneath the harbour bridge to Circular Quay and the Opera House – it's one of the city's most scenic walks. Enjoy a drink at the Opera Bar before returning by light rail, train or ferry to Darling Harbour.

EATING & DRINKING

Sydney has a vibrant and diverse dining scene, and it is definitely worth booking ahead. Some of my top picks are:

- There are a range of restaurants along the waterfront at Barangaroo (more casual) and in the Crown hotel (fine dining) which are great options within walking distance from the convention centre
- The restaurants in Darling square offer a more casual dining experience
- Grana – Italian (Circular Quay)
- Nour – Modern middle eastern (Surry Hills)
- Shaffa – lively Middle Eastern (Surry Hills)
- 10 William Street – intimate bistro (Paddington)
- Saint Peters – one of Australia’s best seafood restaurants (Paddington) – if I had to pick one place to dine it would be this
- Spice Alley – casual and affordable dining, recreates the atmosphere of Southeast Asian street food markets (Chippendale)
- Apollo – Greek (Potts Point)
- Olympus – Greek (Redfern), one of the newest and most talked-about restaurants
- Cho Cho San – Japanese (Potts point)
- China Doll – harbourside modern Asian, menu designed for sharing (Wollomoolloo wharf)
- Mr Wong – cantonese (CBD)

Bars

- Cirq – panoramic views across Sydney (Crown hotel)
- 29/30 the W Hotel
- Barangaroo house
- Opera Bar – one of the most iconic waterfront bars with uninterrupted views of the Harbour Bridge
- There are plenty of pubs and bars in The Rocks and Surry Hills including Luna Lu, Old Mate’s place, The Doss House and Lil Darlin

THINGS TO SEE & DO

- Taronga zoo – catch the ferry from Circular Quay to enjoy the animals against the harbour backdrop
- Fish markets – one of the newest and largest seafood markets in the southern hemisphere with casual eateries to enjoy fresh seafood
 - 20-minute walk or a short light rail ride from the convention centre
 - Visit at lunch time or on a weekday to avoid crowds
- Art gallery of NSW
 - Major exhibition in October – Sidney Nolan (exhibition of infamous Australian series of paintings on bushranger Ned Kelly)

DARLING HARBOUR & BARANGAROO



This is the area directly around the convention centre.

Barangaroo is Sydney's newest waterfront precinct, transforming a working container port, into a vibrant neighbourhood filled with restaurants, cafés, public spaces and beautiful harbour walks.

Where to eat:

- Darling square – one of Sydney's best casual dining precincts
- Skip the places along the boardwalk at Darling Harbour and continue to the restaurants in Barangaroo including Lotus, Muum Maam, a'Mare and the restaurants in the Crown hotel

What to do:

- Walk along the foreshore through Barangaroo reserve and towards the city - Along the way you'll pass public artworks, cafés, ferry wharves and plenty of places to sit and enjoy the view

- For a short cut, walk across Pyrmont bridge
- Have a drink at Barangaroo house

CIRCULAR QUAY



What to do:

- Walk around the Opera House
- Enjoy a drink at the Opera bar (particularly at sunset)
- Walk through the Royal Botanic Gardens – 30 hectares of beautiful gardens overlooking the harbour
- Lady Macquarie's Chair – walk through the botanic gardens to this viewpoint
- Visit the Rocks – oldest part of the city with boutique shops, galleries, cafes and restaurants
- Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) and the rooftop restaurant
- Walk across the harbour bridge – 20-30mins each way to Kirribilli, where you can appreciate one of the best views back towards the Opera House and CBD

BONDI

Australia's most famous beach

Getting there

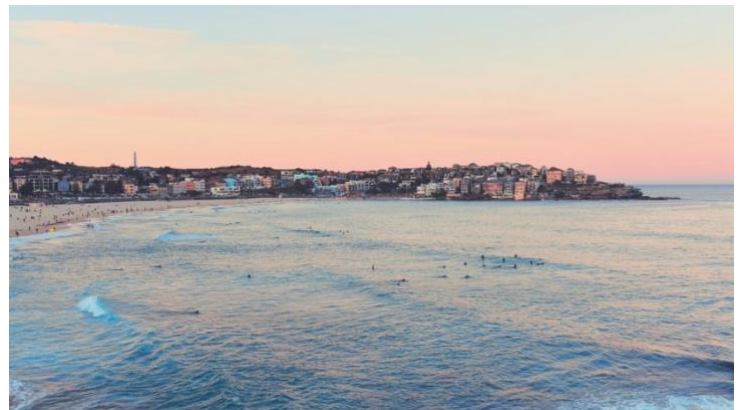
- Train from Town Hall or Central station to Bondi Junction (10 mins) —> 333 or 380 bus to Bondi Beach (15mins)

Bondi to Coogee Coastal Walk

- Approximately 6km along sandstone cliffs, beaches and ocean pools (but you can turn around at any point for a shorter walk)
- Well maintained path, mostly paved and suitable for most fitness levels
- Start early in the morning to enjoy cooler temperatures and quieter paths
- Can be busy so visit on a weekday if possible
- Best spots to swim along the way – Bronte ocean pool, Clovelly beach, Gordon's Bay
- Can walk back, or catch the bus back to Bondi/the CBD from Coogee

Local tip – The northern end of Bondi tends to have better cafes and a more relaxed atmosphere than the southern end

If you do visit on a weekend, visit the Bondi markets (Sat/Sun) at Bondi Beach public school for a range of boutique goods/designers/art/food



MANLY

Famous surf beach with more relaxed atmosphere than Bondi. Plenty of restaurants, cafes and shops to explore as well as walks around North Head.

Getting there: Catch the ferry across the harbour from Circular Quay to Manly



What to do:

- Walk along/swim at Manly Beach
- Swim at Shelly Beach – 15min walk from Manly beach, a more protected spot for a swim. Visit The Boathouse café while you are there
- North head lookout – great views over Sydney Harbour and the Pacific Ocean (particularly at sunrise). October is whale migration season so look out for whales!

The Spit to Manly walk

- 10km walk following the harbour through bushland, secluded beaches and sandstone lookouts before finishing in Manly
- Much quieter and more natural than the Bondi to Coogee walk
- Bring swimmers – there are plenty of spots to stop for a swim

Where to eat/drink

- Banco
- Hugo's
- Sunset Sabi
- The Herring Room
- Glasshouse – rooftop bar overlooking Manly beach

WATSONS BAY

Charming seaside suburb

Getting there: Catch the ferry from Circular Quay

What to do:

- Camp Cove Beach – few minutes walk from Watson's Bay, one of the most beautiful swimming beaches

Rose Bay to Watsons Bay Coastal Walk

- Quieter alternative to Bondi, this harbour walk is a hidden gem

- 7km along a series of boardwalks, beaches and waterfront paths

Where to eat/drink:

- Doyle's on the wharf – oldest seafood restaurant in Australia
- Watson's Bay Boutique Hotel

OTHER DAY TRIPS

Blue Mountains – world heritage listed national park 90min drive from Sydney

- Getting there – train from Central to Katoomba, drive or take a guided tour
- Enjoy the hundreds of walking trails, lookouts and waterfalls
- Visit Scenic world and ride the Scenic Railway (world's steepest passenger railway)
- Make sure you visit Leura – picturesque mountain village with cafes, bakeries, bookstores and boutique gift shops (perfect place to stop for lunch)

Palm Beach – beachside suburb at the northern tip of Sydney

- Known for its glamorous lifestyle, beautiful beaches and as the filming location of Home and Away
- Take the short hike to Barrenjoey Lighthouse (a little steep, but you will be rewarded with panoramic views after about 20-30 minutes)
- Enjoy lunch at The Boathouse

SHOPPING

In the CBD visit:

- The Queen Victoria Building (QVB) – flagship stores, independent Australian designers, jewellers, and artisan businesses. Even if you're not planning to shop, it's well worth wandering through this elegant building
- Pitt Street Mall – international brands, Australian fashion and department stores
- Strand Arcade – restored Victorian shopping arcade



If you're looking for a more boutique shopping experiences, visit one of Sydney's creative neighbourhoods to find Australian designers, independent fashion, art galleries and unique gifts.

- Surry Hills (Crown Street)
- Paddington (Oxford St, William St and The Intersection)

Markets

- The Rocks markets – every Saturday/Sunday
- Kirribilli markets (outside Milsons point train station) – Sunday 4th and 11th October
 - Popular with the locals – lots of food and goods
 - Catch the train/ferry to Milsons point or walk across the harbour bridge

Some Australian gift ideas

- Indigenous Australian artwork
- Gourmet Australian honey
- Macadamia nuts
- Australian botanical skincare
- Merino wool scarves or knitwear