

first time visit



A romantic view of
the city at dusk

a smorgasbord called Melbourne

Proud native Chris Canty encapsulates Melbourne's manifold sights to see and things to do that keep enthralled visitors coming back year after year

Aclaimed as the cultural heartland of Australia, the riverside city of Melbourne receives almost 1.5 million international visitors each year, undoubtedly those searching for the vibrant pulse the city is known for.

Unlike the ritz and glitz of Sydney, Melbourne has an artistic and thoroughly liveable charm that can be seen and experienced from every angle. Between the beautifully detailed parks and gardens, the hidden laneways full of boutique surprises and the vibrant streets that embody a migrant history, the first-time visitor will be greeted by a city that creates an intoxicating breath of style, discovery and relaxation.

What is there to do and see in Melbourne? At first glance, it doesn't seem to have the bridges, beaches or giant pieces of plastic fruit interstate places rely on. But that's the beauty of it

– Melbourne doesn't have to rely on one drawcard because it has 1,001 of them. With fine food and wine, local and global shopping, an overflowing calendar of arts to dos, a collection of world-class sporting treats, and an incredible array of nightlife, events and festivals, your options in Melbourne are endless, any time of the year.

This is why Melbourne is considered Australia's home of sport, music, food, fashion and the arts. Here is a guide to help you choose just a few of the things to see and do in this fascinating city.

Sights to See

■ FEDERATION SQUARE

Relatively new on the scene, Federation Square (www.federationsquare.com.au) has become the unofficial centre of Melbourne. Built in 2002, it houses a diverse array of creativity including the

National Gallery of Victoria: with spaces such as the Ian Potter Gallery and its collection of drawings, photography, textiles and galleries dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander art.

It is also home to the Australian Centre for Moving Image (www.acmi.net.au), the first centre of its kind in the world, which focuses on film, digital art and games.

There are numerous restaurants and bars located amongst and around the galleries, some having excellent views of the Yarra River.

■ CROWN ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX

Easily Melbourne's most controversial attraction, there is more to the place than just the gambling. The real drawcard is their recent policy of attracting Australia's best chefs to build signature restaurants, such as Neil Perry's Rockpool.

first time visit



Summer at St Kilda Beach



Penguins on Phillip Island



The Twelve Apostles

Wind your way along the roads that hug the cliff, above the crashing waves

Together with the world's best fashion labels having stores located here, comfy drinking holes such as The Pub, and nightly cabaret type performances, days could be spent here without coming up for air (which seems to be their plan).

■ GREAT OCEAN ROAD (THE TWELVE APOSTLES)

No visit to Melbourne could be complete without visiting one of the most scenic coastlines on the planet. Wind your way along the roads that hug the cliff, above the crashing waves, making sure to stop for lunch at the Wye River Pub before viewing the famous Twelve Apostles that stand

Don't Mind The Weather

There's no smoke without fire: the old cliché "four seasons in one day" holds true in Melbourne. Temperatures fluctuate all over the place. Given the city's unique climate, it's always best to carry a hat, sunscreen and a bottle of water, as well as an umbrella and a warm coat. If a TV weather presenter holds a sign that says "sunny with rain", chances are, it's correct.

Melburnians don't complain, however. First flash of sunlight, and they will head running to the park or beer garden for as long as possible, and then as the rain begins, they'll run just as fast to a coffee shop to watch the rain trickle down the shopfront window.

There is a certain freedom knowing it could rain at any time, as it never stops them from going out and participating in what Melbourne has to offer... which is everything.

erect amid the churning whitewash. Many local tour groups such as Autopia Tours (www.autopiatours.com.au) and Go West (www.gowest.com.au) offer day trips starting at around AUD90 (SGD116).

■ PHILLIP ISLAND PENGUINS

Hundreds of onlookers come to Phillip Island every day just to see these cute little critters come in from the sea each night and slowly waddle their way up the beach. Apparently they have built up a tolerance to camera flashes and the sudden bursts of laughter that coincide with one falling over.

The Phillip Island Penguin Tours (www.penguinislandtour.com.au) offer tours in mini buses for AUD100 (SGD149). Or drive there yourself – tickets to the parade costs AUD17.40 (SGD22.90).

■ ST KILDA BEACH

Often you'll see people playing music on the sand, or perhaps some twilight beach soccer where spectators munch on fresh fish and chips.

But it's not only the beach that is the attraction. Every Sunday, the nearby Esplanade is taken over by the arts and craft market, which sells an assortment of funky things that you never knew you wanted.

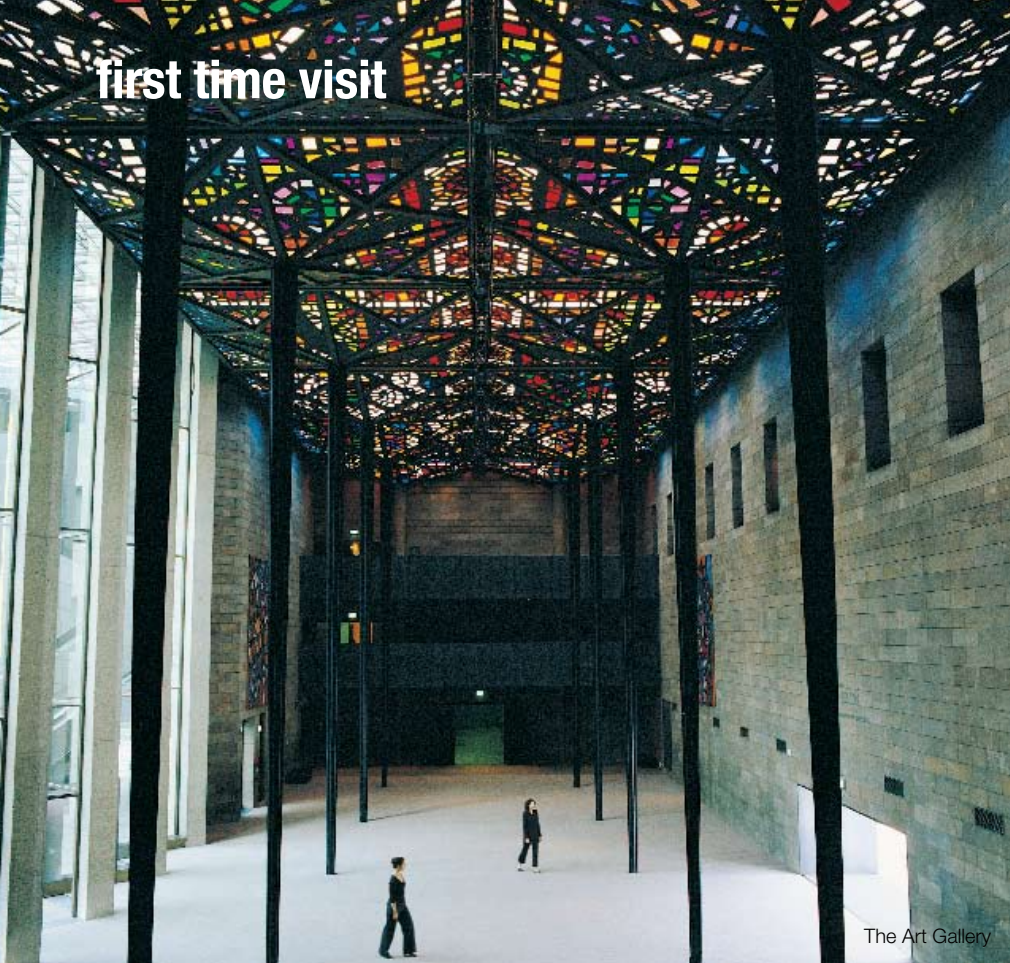
Things to Do

■ SPECTATOR SPORT

Melburnians love their sport. I mean, they really really love it. Some suggest that Australia's identity was formed on the sporting field, and Melbourne has always been the country's spot for sports.

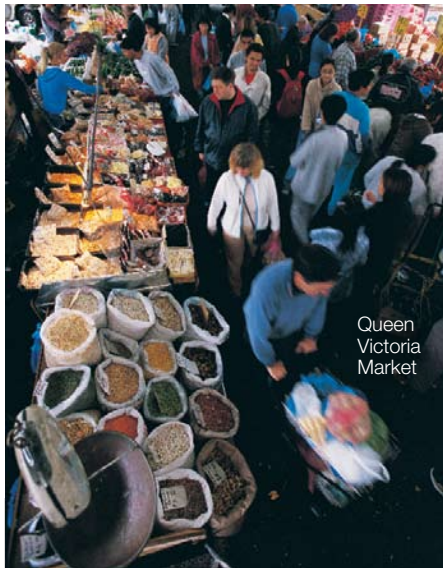
There's an activity for every season, and visitors to Melbourne can get deep into that obsession by joining in any of the many sporting highlights, including AFL Football (season runs from March to September), cricket (summer months), Australian Tennis Open (January),

first time visit



The Art Gallery

Princess Theatre



Queen Victoria Market

Australian Grand Prix (March), Spring Carnival Horse Racing (October-November), Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix (October), soccer (August to February), rugby (March to September) and basketball (September to March). Tickets to events can be booked at www.ticketmaster.com.au or www.ticketek.com.au.

■ CATCH A THEATRE SHOW

Grand old theatres built in the late 1800s with gold rush money such as Princess Theatre (1886), Regent Theatre (1929), the Athenaeum Theatre (1886) and the Her Majesty's Theatre (1886) dot the CBD, showcasing musicals, opera and plays.

Shows performing between August and October include *The Phantom of the Opera* and

Hollywood Goes To Melbourne...

...and vice versa! Some of the most famous faces on the big screen today hail from – or reside in – Melbourne:

■ Cate Blanchett

(born 14 May 1969) – Oscar winner best known for her roles in *Elizabeth* and *Lord of the Rings*.

■ Hugh Jackman

– A-lister best known as Wolverine aka Every Woman's Favourite Man (bar George Clooney) is married to actress Debra Furness and they live in Melbourne with their two children.

■ Eric Bana (born 9 August 1968) –

The voice of Anchor in *Finding Nemo* (co-shark with Bruce) is most famous for being Ang Lee's *The Hulk*.

■ Rachel Griffiths (born 20 Feb 1968) – First grabbed public attention in *Muriel's Wedding*, she was nominated for an Oscar for *Hilary And Jackie*, and is well-loved as Brenda in the surreal HBO series *Six Feet Under*.

■ Portia de Rossi (born 31 Jan 1973)

– Won a Screen Actors Guild award for her role in *Ally McBeal*, swept accolades for her performances in TV series *Arrested Development*, and has become, um, very close to Ellen DeGeneres.

■ Geoffrey Rush – Won an Oscar for *Shine*, and widely recognised as the evil Captain Barbossa in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series. Calls Melbourne home.

Fancy living on the same hallowed ground as Hugh Jackman? Melbourne welcomes you! Visit www.LiveInVictoria.vic.gov.au



Cate Blanchett



Hugh Jackman

Orphee et Eurydice. Visit www.ticketmaster.com.au or www.ticketek.com.au for more information.

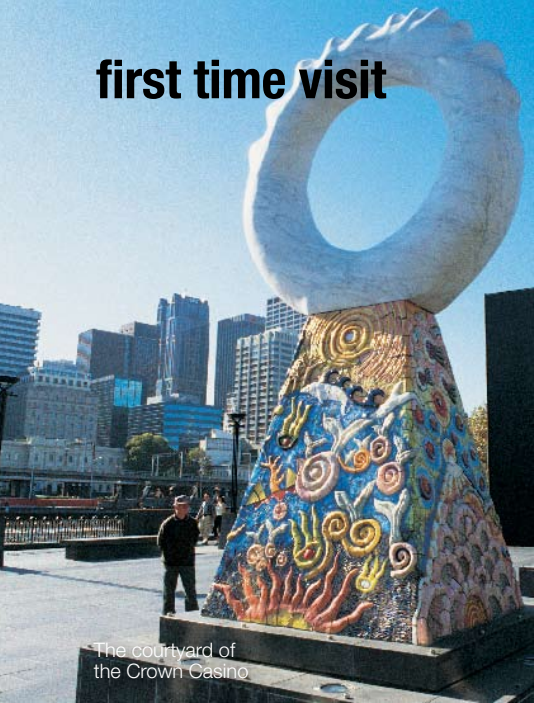
■ LISTEN TO THE MUSIC

Melbourne has some of the best live music on the planet. From the grand old venues such as the Forum and Myer Music Bowl that house world renowned acts, to the old smoky pubs of Fitzroy, Collingwood and St Kilda such as The Tote and The Esplanade that showcase the heartland of inner city life, Melbourne gently sways to a myriad of music styles every night. Pick up the free street newspaper *Beat0* or *Impress* every Wednesday from music venues and music shops for details.

■ BE FESTIVE

Locals insist that on any given week, a festival is taking place somewhere in Melbourne – and it's probably true. In a city which has an array of fantastic venues and a people who can be

first time visit



The courtyard of the Crown Casino

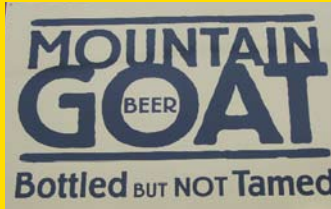


Chill out at one of Chapel St's many cafés



The Australian Grand Prix

Melbourne's Four Best-kept Secrets

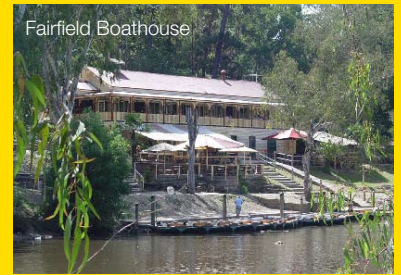


- **Mountain Goat Brewery, Corner of North and Clark Street, Richmond, tel +61 (0)3 9428-1180 www.goatbeer.com.au**
Every Friday night, a converted factory in Richmond buzzes with the murmur of people, enjoying one of Melbourne's most secret nightspots. Mountain Goat beer is beloved in Melbourne. Sitting at the bar, sampling all of their four beers (get the 10-dollar sampler) under the shadows of the giant vats is the quintessential inner suburban experience.
- **Howey Place, CBD**
This tiny buzzing alleyway is Melbourne's home to the designers. The highlight is its diversity of styles and labels, where well-known and well-

loved designers such as Alannah Hill (shop no 17) share the lane with newer designers such as Jason Grech (no 12).
■ **Inner City Penguins www.penguinwaters.com.au**

Many have heard of the famous Phillip Island, but few know about the penguins that live just a few minutes boat ride from the city. In 1993 Noel Butcher, who was part of an environmental study, gained permission to offer cruises for those who wanted to witness the daily routine of penguins returning home near nightfall. They had been there since 1956, but have remained secret for almost 40 years. To this day, most locals have no idea as the exact location isn't publicised. Tours leave from the St Kilda Pier every night around dusk. Prices are around AUD40 (SGD51).

■ **Fairfield Boathouse, Fairfield Park Drive, tel +61 (0)3 9486-1501, www.fairfieldboathouse.com**
Opened in 1908, the "boathouse" is a flashback escape to the past, and popular with new couples, intent on being taken to the romanticism of another era. While you can sit on the verandah and have a Devonshire tea, most come to slowly drift down the Yarra River in the 19th century replica boats, which are based on Thames River pleasure rafts. Or spend hours walking or riding around the tracks that hug the river. Prices start at AUD15 (SGD19) an hour.



Fairfield Boathouse

Hit the stores for a funky piece of Melbourne



described as a ready-made audience, it's no wonder Melbourne is considered one of the premier festival cities in the world.

Highlights include the Melbourne International Film Festival (July to August), The Age Melbourne Writers Festival (August to September), the Melbourne Fringe Festival (September to October), Melbourne Spring Fashion Week (September) and the Melbourne International Arts Festival (September).

SHOP AROUND

As Australia's fashion capital, there are thousands of options for those in search of global trends or great bargains. From boutique designer shops like Alannah Hill, Wayne Cooper and Third Millenium in Chapel St, South Yarra, and Howey Place in the CBD, to the wholesale warehouses (Nike, anyone?) that hide in the backstreets of Richmond and Collingwood, you're guaranteed to find something irresistible – whether it's for yourself or a friend.

A great way to find them is to take a guided tour with companies such as Shopping Spree Tours (www.shoppingspree.com.au) to suss out the bargains or Melbourne Fashion Experience (www.melbournefe.com.au) for delightful and divine high-end temptations.

TIGER AIRWAYS FLIES BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND MELBOURNE???? A WEEK. BOOK YOUR FLIGHT AT WWW.TIGERAIRWAYS.COM. FOR WHAT TO SEE, PLAY AND EAT IN MELBOURNE, SEE PAGE 89.