





STAY

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EAT

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DRINK

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SEE & DO

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SPAS

From the eclectic northeast and thriving central business district to the riverside parks and chic bayside south, Melbourne hums with variety, sporting covert boutiques and bars, mind-blowing cuisine, unrestrained architecture and an all-around, great attitude. **DOUG WALLACE** reports.

Artwork in the lobby of the Adelphi Hotel.



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The exterior of the Notel; an executive king room at the QT hotel; the artistic bathroom at the Adelphi Hotel.



Plan Ahead



BEST TIME TO GO

Melbourne is a year-round destination. The climate is temperate. Plus, travellers coming from the Northern Hemisphere can escape their own winter for an Australian summer, and vice versa.



TRANSPORTATION

The city's tram system is the biggest in the world, so no car is needed here. You will require a myki card (used on all trams, trains—including regional ones—and buses). Purchase a myki Visitor Value Pack to get started. For those not venturing out of the Central Business District, there's a free tram zone enabling easy access from one end of town to the other.



WEATHER

January is the hottest month with average temperatures of 21°C; June and July are the coolest months at 10°C. November and December are the wettest.

STAY

Melbourne has no shortage of sophisticated hotels. Here, four we love

THE QT

With sophisticated, high-design, gel-topped beds and a beautiful rooftop lounge, this chain is one of the most popular high-end hotels trending at the moment. From \$330. qthotelsandresorts.com/melbourne

NOTEL

Six luxury airstream campers imported from the US sit atop a car park on Flinders Lane – futuristic and fun, but also beautifully designed, quiet and comfortable. Find gourmet chocolate, private decks and free mini bars. From \$400. notelmelbourne.com.au

THE ADELPHI HOTEL

Renowned for its cantilevered rooftop pool (about to undergo a reno), this arty, 34-room boutique spot looks like a box of licorice allsorts. Om Nom Kitchen & Dessert Bar and the basement-level Ezard restaurant both hit the spot. From \$375. adelphi.com.au

THE CULLEN

Inspired by and dedicated to Australian contemporary artists, each property within the Art Series hotel group features the work of a particular artist, with Adam Cullen being the focus of this one. Two restaurants, hip neighbourhood, you're all set. From \$210. artserieshotels.com.au/cullen



EAT

for foodies (or the see-and-be-seen set)

The hottest table in town

EMBLA

Casual but dramatic, this Russell Street wine bar highlights unique wines to wash down inventive wood-fired oven dishes. Capital C cool. embla.com.au

SAN TELMO

Old-world char-grilled goodness on Meyers Place parades the very essence of Argentine culture and cuisine. Warm and welcoming. santelmo.com.au

MARION

Gertrude Street nightspot blends small plates with small-batch wines in a rustic setting. One of top chef Andrew McConnell's nine Melbourne restaurants. marionwine.com.au

BECCO

Hallowed, 20-year-old Crossley Street staple does authentic Italian up perfectly, right down to the terrazzo floors and starched whites. Simple and superb. becco.com.au

DEGRAVES STREET AND CENTRE PLACE

Drop into either of these tiny, busy laneways in the city's pedestrian precinct for breakfast or lunch. Street art and art deco architecture set a bohemian scene for enjoying delicious dumplings, soup-to-go, Spanish tapas, gourmet doughnuts, French crêpes and more.



DRINK

Three places to go after dark

HEARTBREAKER

Dark and sexy, L.A.-like Russell Street juke joint shakes the meanest cocktails under a neon glow. Pick up a gift box of their bottled bestsellers to-go. heartbreaker.com.

MELBOURNE SUPPER CLUB

Up-market, late-night wine bar features an incredible cellar, sumptuous leather couches – and it's open til 6am. theeuropean.com.au

EAU DE VIE MELBOURNE

Noted cocktail bar off Flinders Lane is sexy and fun, with a 16-page whiskey list and a private whiskey room to peruse it in. eaudevie.com.au/melbourne





SEE & DO

Six places worth the detour

WANDER THE LANEWAYS

The secret passageways that wind through Melbourne's central district are full of surprises. Many connect two major streets while others hit a dead-end. What looks like a nothing alleyway can yield a cool bar, top restaurant or fab hair salon. Many of them began life as market lanes, with stalls congregated near pedestrian thoroughfares. Today, they're home to gift shops, food pit stops, arts and crafts, vintage goodies and more. Five lanes earmarked for graffiti artists make for great photo ops. Top fashion laneways include Howey Place and Scott Alley.

TAKE A WINE TOUR

Plan ahead to get out of town to the Yarra Valley to devour some of the region's best wines. Add in the rolling countryside, terrific views and kangaroo-spotting, and you've got a brag-worthy day trip. The Australian Wine Tour Company is the pick of the pack for getting you there and back with maximum winery coverage. austwinetourco.com.au



SOAK UP THE ART

The National Gallery of Victoria has not one but two locations: one for international exhibits, opposite Queen Victoria Gardens, and one focusing on Australian art, a.k.a. the Ian Potter Centre at Federation Square. Both are free. ngv.vic.gov.au



GO FOR A WALK

There are 50 walking tours in the city, but the one you want is Walk Melbourne, a culinary romp through the Melbourne side streets. Monique Bayer and her team can take you on one of eight different tours built around dumplings, coffee shops, rooftop bars or a combination thereof (The Melbourne Experience). Entertaining and educational, this is the real inside scoop. walkmelbourne.com.au

GO TO JAIL

Unlock the past with a day or nighttime tour of the Old Melbourne Gaol, so old they spell it with a "g." Discover what life behind bars was like in the 19th century via dramatic performances, trials-in-action and hangman's tales of the criminal world's dastardly deeds. oldmelbournegaol.com.au

TROLL THE ARCADES

Get lost in the three square blocks of shopping malls clustered around the Bourke Street Mall at Bourke and Elizabeth streets. Mega retailers sit side-by-side with the beautifully preserved Block Arcade and Royal Arcade, which exude Victorian glamour.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Block Arcade; graffiti in the laneways; the National Gallery of Victoria; frolicking kangaroos in Yarra Valley; hot air ballooning over the Yarra Valley Vineyards.



SPAS

When it comes to a relaxing massage, Melbourne definitely has your back. A little pampering here can often go a very long way

MISS FOX MELBOURNE (pictured here)

Across-the-board day spa treatments, medspa skin services, and full salon hair and aesthetics. Champagne by the bottle only! missfox.com.au

ONSEN MA JAPANESE BATHHOUSE

Traditional public or private bathing and sauna, plus massage packages soothe body and soul. onsenma.com.au

AURORA SPA RETREAT

With 22 treatment rooms, the flagship of this spa chain in the Prince Hotel highlights water and steam therapies. auroraspa.com.au

BODY FREEDOM DAY SPA

Enjoy massage, customized body treatments and a range of facials in a four-storey heritage building. bodyfreedomdayspa.com.au

