

EXPAT GUIDE: **AUSTRALIA**

INCLUDES SYDNEY CITY GUIDE

This expat guide offers information and advice if you are moving to Australia. Click on the different tabs to find out about anything from tax rules and banking to business culture and culture shock.



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Bupa International is the specialist international division of Bupa, and we have operations in UK, Denmark, USA, Spain, France, Hong Kong, Egypt, UAE and Australia.

We care for the lives in our hands, and are dedicated to providing all the insurance services, help and advice you need to keep yourself and your family in the best of health. Our dedicated team respects everyone's individuality, culture, privacy and dignity, and aims to provide a personal service you can rely on throughout your Bupa International membership.



Moving to Australia

Australia would certainly be a competitive choice for the title of ideal expatriate location. People moving to Australia can expect a multicultural society and a lifestyle driven by outdoor pursuits.

Family and friends are important to Australians, and the nation's strong spirit of egalitarianism has drawn a steady stream of immigrants from the UK, Europe and Asia to its ideal climate and naturally beautiful environment.

The government places a high premium on skills and enforces equally stringent measures to keep Australian immigration levels under control. So while Australia is a popular expat destination the immigration numbers are moderate due to a strict screening process which picks out those professionals with the skills desired to keep the economy in good health and the Australian quality of life high.

The popular Australian "barbie" is as much about meat on a barbecue as it is an excuse to have a social occasion.

Shipping and removals

Shipping costs are dependent on the volume of goods, as well as length of time involved in shipping. Some companies also offer storage services and insurance on goods.

Expatriates must be aware that all household goods and personal effects will be subject to customs inspection and clearance. Items you have owned for 12 months or less will be under more intense scrutiny.

A customs form – (B534) issue 6/00 Unaccompanied Baggage Statement – must be signed and completed in order to clear the shipment when it arrives in Australia. Photocopies of passport pages, including Australian entry stamp together with a full descriptive inventory in English, are also required.

Bringing pets to Australia

Shipping pets to Australia can be a complex process. The relevant bio-security regulations relating to your country of origin must be met and a microchip must be implanted on the animal for identification purposes. Owners will also need to pay for quarantine, an import permit, and air transport.

You will be required to complete official documentation with information on the content of consignment as well as copies of your passport and visas.

Links

- Customs information before you move: www.alliedpickfords.com.au
- Useful information on shipping to Australia: www.overs.co.uk
- Shipping company: www.shipping2australia.com
- Quarantine regulations: www.shipit.co.uk
- Removals to Australia: www.overseasremovers.co.uk
- Useful customs information: www.evl.co.uk

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Working in Australia

Below you will find information about:

- [Visas and work permits](#)
- [Business culture](#)
- [Banking, money and taxes](#)
- [Salaries](#)
- [Public holidays](#)

Australia has a highly developed infrastructure. It is considered a sophisticated financial centre and plays host to many of the world's biggest companies. The economy had, until very recently, been growing continuously for 17 consecutive years with figures indicating an average increase in GDP of 3.3% per year. Therefore Australia ranks highly within the Asia-Pacific region for labour, agricultural and industrial productivity.

There are many job opportunities for those with specialised IT skills, although the social sector and the mining and healthcare industries also have many jobs on offer.

Visa and work permits

There are four categories for immigration and visa applications in Australia.

These are:

- Skilled Independent Migration
- Employer Nomination Scheme
- Business Migration
- Holiday Working Visa

The Skilled Independent Migration visa is for people with good English language skills and with qualifications relevant to occupations needed in Australia. Sponsorship is not necessary to apply for this visa. *The Employer Nomination Scheme* (ENS) allows an Australian employer to fill "highly skilled positions" with non-Australian citizens or residents. *The Business Migration* point system now places greater emphasis on the skills of the potential business migrants, and the *Holiday Working Visa* is only available to individuals between 18 and 30, and only applies to casual employment.

Each application is assessed and given a corresponding individual score that determines whether or not a visa is granted. Another way to get your working visa is via the 457 Long-stay business visa.

For more information use the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Visa Wizard:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/visawizard/>

Banking, money and taxes

Australia has built one of the strongest economies in the world on the back of three decades of dedicated structural and policy reform. While the nation has not been immune to the recent economic crisis, Australia remains a major regional financial hub with a sophisticated banking system.

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Banking in Australia: Expats wanting to open a bank account in Australia should investigate all available options, particularly as interest rates vary between banks. Australia's major banks are: the Commonwealth Bank of Australia; ANZ Bank; Westpac; and National Australia Bank.

Opening a bank account in Australia is a fairly straightforward procedure requiring a certified passport copy, proof of residential address and bank statement, from the previous three months.

Taxes in Australia: Tax rates are high in Australia; annual income above \$60,000 is taxed at a rate of 47 percent. Residents are taxed on their worldwide income, including salary and dividends, although there are special rules applicable to expats. Rates in the country are also notorious for fluctuation, thus it is strongly advised to consult with an Australian accountant or tax lawyer.

The Australian tax year ends on 30 June, and tax returns should be lodged by 31 October. Expats earning an Australian income for more than 183 days in any tax year will be considered a formal resident of Australia for tax purposes – with the exception of those holding working holiday visas.

No one can be registered as a taxpayer without a Tax File Number (TFN), which is the unique number issued by the Australian Taxation Office.

The Australian Taxation Office: <http://www.ato.gov.au/>

Business culture

Business in Australia is conducted in a relaxed and informal manner. In contrast to common practice in Asian, Middle Eastern and Latin American countries, Australians do not place as much emphasis on building the relationships before negotiations. Informality is preferred, and Australians will tend to get down to business straight away. Communication via phone or email is also perfectly acceptable.

Businessmen should wear a suit and tie and women are expected to wear a skirt suit. Addressing Australians by their first name is accepted and common practice in every day communication and business relationships and a firm handshake is the acceptable way of greeting one another.

Working hours in Australia depend on your industry and employer, but generally office hours are from 8.30 or 9.30am until 4.30 or 5.30pm, with an hour's break for lunch.

Salaries

Graduates can expect to start on annual packages of around \$36,000 with managing directors living in Sydney earning anything from \$350,000 to \$600,000. Salaries for managing directors in Melbourne will be between \$200,000 to \$400,000 and less than that in Perth. For more information check out <http://www.fairwork.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Public holidays

	2011	2012
New Years Day	1 Jan	1-2 Jan
Australia Day	26 Jan	26 Jan
Good Friday	22 Apr	06 Apr
Easter Saturday	23 Apr	07 Apr
Easter Monday	25 Apr	09 Apr
Anzac Day	26 Apr	25 Apr
Queen's birthday	13 Jun	11 Jun
Labour Day	3 Oct	1 Oct
Christmas Day	25-26 Dec	25 Dec
Boxing (Proclamation) Day	27 Dec	26 Dec

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Living and culture

Below you will find information about:

- [Climate](#)
- [Cost of living](#)
- [Driver's license](#)

For information about Bupa International healthcare [click here](#).

Australians are known to be open, friendly and informal in their relationships. Most people use first names in personal and business relations.

Some expatriates find the tall poppy syndrome is still alive and well in the country. This term refers to the social phenomenon of criticising people for their talents and achievements, particularly if there is a perception that they regard themselves as superior to their peers.

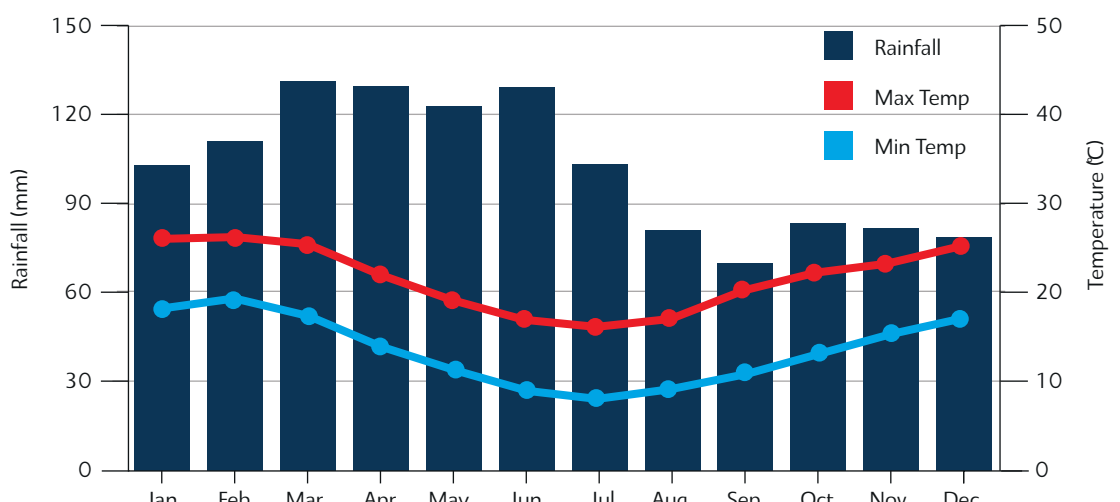
Climate

In such a vast geographical area you will find significant fluctuations in temperatures. Generally, the northern parts of the country are warm to hot most of the year. The coastal areas around Sydney experience mild winters and are hot in the summer months.

The seasons are the opposite of those in Europe and North America. Australia enjoys summer from December to February and winter from June to August. Australia's mild climate is one of its biggest attractions, so you won't find the cold extremes you notice in Europe. The winter months from June to August are mild and average temperatures hover around 56°F (13°C) for the country and rainfall is common in the south.

Read about climate related safety issues under [Useful information](#).

SYDNEY



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Cost of living

In 2009 the cost of living experienced a significant plunge due to the depreciation of the Australian dollar. However, the cost of living is almost back to the level it was before the depreciation with its two most cosmopolitan cities among the top 50 most expensive cities to live in, according to a 2010 Mercer survey.

Sydney is still the most expensive city in the country and is 24th on the global expat destination list, with Melbourne closely behind in 33rd place.

Some expats complain that living in Australia comes at a premium considering the fairly substantial income tax, ranging from 17% to 47%, due to the government's strong emphasis on social welfare.

Driver's license

Australian driving licences are administered at state/territory level with varying regulations for each. You will normally need to get a state licence within three months of taking up residence in the state. You are allowed to use your licence from your country of residence in the interim. Australians drive on the left hand side of the road.

For more information visit the Australian Automobile Association: www.aaa.asn.au

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Education and schools in Australia

Below you will find information about:

- [Education and schools in Adelaide](#)
- [Links: Adelaide](#)
- [Education and schools in Melbourne](#)
- [What to know about going to school in Melbourne](#)
- [Tuition fees: Melbourne](#)
- [Links: Melbourne](#)
- [Education and schools in Perth](#)
- [Links: Perth](#)
- [Education and schools in Sydney](#)
- [Links: Sydney](#)

The standard of education in Australia is world-renowned, and many expats even migrate to Australia's sunny shores specifically to become students. The national government places a strong emphasis on diversity and quality and is committed to excellence in research, teaching and student support.

Parents moving with children of any age will find plenty of options for school in Australia, and will need to choose between public, faith-based or private (and international) institutions. Each have pros and cons, and factors influencing decision tend to revolve around curriculum and cost.

School attendance is compulsory for kids younger than 15 and older than five, but the government also actively encourages parents to enrol their children in one year of early education (pre-school) prior to primary school.

Primary school in Australia lasts from Kindergarten to Year 6 (5 to 12 years old), and high school runs from Year 7 to 12 (12 to 18 years old). Primary schools tend to be co-educational, but high schools are often same-sex.

- The official teaching language of schools in Australia is English
- School uniforms are mandatory and hats are worn in summer
- The school year runs from January to December and includes short holidays in between the four terms

Education and schools in Adelaide

Adelaide is an educational hub with public schools of a high quality, scores of private schools as well as many options for adults wishing to further their studies or take a new degree.

Students attend public schools within their designated school zone, which is determined by residential address. It can be difficult to change the public school a student goes to without moving to a new address.

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Public schools in South Australia differ slightly from the rest of the country. Prior to primary school children who turn five begin reception, akin to preschool, followed by year one and two. They only enrol in primary school in year three.

Private schools in Adelaide appeal to those interested in religious instruction, alternative teaching learning styles and to international students who are not permanent residents of Australia.

Children between the ages of six and fifteen are legally required to attend school.

Links: Adelaide

- Adelaide elementary school: www.fwps.org/info/schools/web/
- Association of Independent Schools of South Australia: www.ais.sa.edu.au

Education and schools in Melbourne

Schools in Melbourne regularly make up nearly half of the top 20 rated institutions in all of Australia – Melbourne even boasts of having educated the 2009 Nobel Prize for Medicine winner, Elizabeth Blackburn, in one of the seven state universities in Melbourne.

In addition to providing students with the foundations for excelling academically and professionally, Melbourne schools have a wide variety of athletic and artistic activities on offer.

What to know about going to school in Melbourne

- Children at state primary and secondary schools are not given a hot meal at lunchtime. Parents either send the children off with a packed lunch or provide money to buy sandwiches and snacks at the canteen. Some schools are stricter than others about providing healthy options.
- Children at primary school when playing outside in the summer are required to wear hats to protect them from the Australian sun.
- School students have to wear uniforms.

Tuition fees: Melbourne

Parents are advised to contact the education provider directly regarding fees. Schooling at government sponsored schools is free for permanent residents, although, extra expenses like uniforms, school trips and certain equipment must be paid for. If a child is classified as an international student (where full fees are payable) it will say so in the passport. Annual fees for the private schools are around AUD 20,000.

Links: Melbourne

- [Australian schools directory](#)
- [Eduweb schools directory](#)
- [Australian universities directory](#)
- [Vocational and tertiary education courses: TAFE](#)

Education and schools in Perth

A good portion of the private schools in the city are Catholic, with the rest being affiliated to other parts of the Christian church. Private schooling costs range between USD 5,000 and USD 10,000.

Links: Perth

- The Department of Education and Training: www.eddept.wa.edu.au
- [Detailed list of Perth schools](#)
- Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia: www.ais.wa.edu.au

Education and schools in Sydney

Sydney's private and public schools, as well its tertiary institutions, uphold a high standard. School hours are generally between 9am and 3.30pm.

Links: Sydney

- Information on primary and high schools: www.studyinaustralia.gov.au

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Useful information

Currency: The Australian dollar (AUD, \$/A\$) is the official currency of Australia. It is divided into 100 cents. You can check the latest exchange rates [here](#).

Time: Expats should note that Australia is divided into three time zones. Eastern is GMT +10, Central is GMT +9.5, and Western is GMT +8. All states observe daylight saving time during the summer months, except the Northern Territory and Queensland.

Electricity: The electrical current in Australia is 240/250 volts, 50Hz and three-pin flat blade plugs are used. But these are different to those used in other countries and expats should bring an adaptor.

Safety: Australia's crime rate is low, but expats should still exercise the same amount of caution in the big cities as they would anywhere else in the world.

Between the months of November and April tropical cyclones can occur in Western Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory. During the summer months the risk of runaway bushfires is high and a 'no open flames policy' is in place in most cities, especially in Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales and ACT. Summer months (October to May) also see the waters off Queensland become infested with marine stingers, or box jellyfish, whose sting can be fatal.

Communications: Expats living in Australia should note that the outgoing code is 0011 followed by the relevant country code (eg 001144 for the United Kingdom), the international access code for Australia is +61, and area/city codes are in use. Local calls cost a standard rate and international and long-distance calls are charged according to the length of the call. Australia uses GSM and CDMA networks for mobile phone operators and mobile phones are easily available for rental. High speed broadband ADSL internet is available through a number of providers.

Embassy contact details

Australia Embassies:

- Embassy of Australia, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 797 3000
- Australian High Commission, London, United Kingdom: +44 (0)20 7379 4334
- Australian High Commission, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 236 0841
- Australian High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 423 6000
- Australian Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 (0)1 664 5300
- Australian High Commission, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 (0)4 473 6411

Foreign Embassies in Australia:

- Embassy of the United States, Canberra: +61 (0)2 6214 5600
- British High Commission, Canberra: +61 (0)2 6270 6666
- Canadian High Commission, Canberra: +61 (0)2 6270 4000
- South African High Commission, Canberra: +61 (0)2 6273 2424-7
- Embassy of Ireland, Canberra: +61 (0)2 6273 3022
- New Zealand High Commission, Canberra: +61 (0)2 6270 4211

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EXPAT GUIDE: **SYDNEY**

This expat guide offers information and advice if you are moving to Sydney. Click on the different tabs to find out about anything from tax rules and banking to education and cultural highlights.

You can also read our expat guide to Australia.



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Moving to Sydney

Sydney is popular expat destination due to its natural beauty, picturesque residential suburbs, good public transport systems and the equally high standard of education, both at school and tertiary level.

Besides the pleasures associated with a warm climate and great outdoor pursuits, Sydney also boasts a thriving arts and culture scene.

Sydney is also a major financial hub, employing one third of Australia's financial sector workforce. The Australian Stock Exchange and Reserve Bank are based in Sydney, as are other big businesses in property, retail and information technology.

Shipping and removals

Full liability cover is essential, and it is advised to use a company that will complete a thorough survey of your home and contents to provide a realistic estimate of shipping costs.

There are many customs regulations that have to be followed when shipping or freighting your possessions to Australia. Before you ship any goods, the Australian custom authorities will require a detailed inventory from you with a list of the item values, as well as copies of your passport and visa. Beware that there are stringent prohibitions on firearms, pornographic material, drugs and narcotics. If you are bringing a motor vehicle into Australia, you will need to have a purchase invoice, car title and certification that the vehicle is in good working order.

Duty-free entry is permitted on household goods provided that they have been owned and used for 12 months prior to the owner's departure for Australia.

All goods may be cleared through customs before you arrive in the country, provided that you enter the country within six months. All shipments received at Australian Ports must have a consignee's contract details.

Links

- Directory of international movers: [1 DIM](#)
- Find your international mover: [http://www.intlmovers.com/...](http://www.intlmovers.com/)

Moving companies:

- [Allied Pickfords](#)
- [Atlantis Overseas Removals](#)
- [Worldwide shipping and airfreight Over's International](#)
- [Over's International](#)
- [King and Wilson](#)

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Working in Sydney

Sydney's large trading and finance sectors account for one third of the employment in Australia. Besides the finance and trading sectors, the most common occupations in the city for professionals are in property, retail, health, IT and community service fields. The Australian workplace practises many family-friendly policies, making it easier for expats with children to enjoy flexible working hours and work-from-home schemes.

Expats with professional skills who are relocating to Sydney through an overseas posting will be eligible to apply for a visa under the Employer Sponsored Workers Section. The most common type of visa is the Temporary Business (Long Stay) Visa. This visa allows foreigners to live in Australia for up to four years. However, only certain employers and businesses qualify to sponsor foreigners to work in their Australia based business.

As an expat, you will need to get a tax file number (TFN) before starting work. This documentation can be obtained from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Employers and employees also have to contribute to a pension fund known as a superannuation scheme.

For more information about visa, banking, taxes and more view the "Working" section in the Australia guide.

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Living and culture

Below you will find information about:

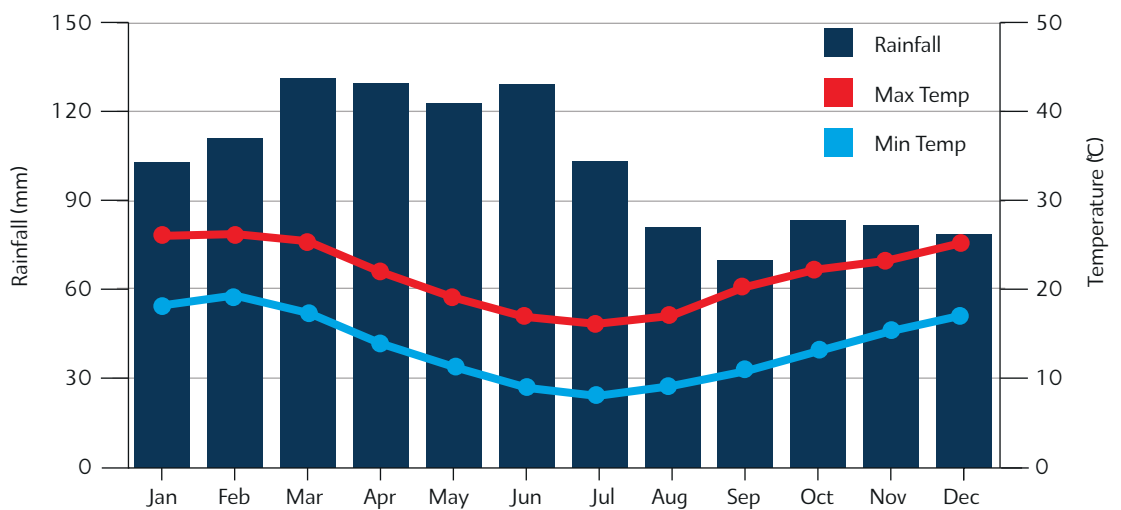
- [Climate](#)
- [Accommodation](#)
- [Cost of living](#)
- [Is Sydney a densely populated city?](#)

For information about Bupa International healthcare [click here](#).

Climate

Sydney can see daytime temperatures during the summer months reaching as high as 35°C. Beware of the potential for bushfires in the city's surroundings during the summer month. Sydney's climate is very tolerable but winters can be wet and cold.

SYDNEY



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Accommodation

The search for accommodation in Sydney is a fairly straightforward process with many good residential areas in and around the city centre to choose from.

Most people choose to live south or west of the City Bowl District (CBD) where housing in the low to middle price range can be found. The western suburbs tend to be popular with families because larger properties can be secured at good prices. The eastern suburbs around Double Bay and the foreshore of the harbour are the most exclusive in the country. Manly, lying across the harbour to the north-east, is a popular and picturesque suburb, where local residents working in the city will enjoy a daily ferry commute to the CBD.

Expats can expect to pay A\$400 to A\$500 per month for a one-bedroom luxury apartment, or you can find a three-bedroom unit with a waterfront address for A\$1,300 per month.

You can enlist the help of an estate agent in the search for accommodation in Sydney, but it is certainly not a necessity.

Expats who have permanent residence and intend to purchase property in Sydney will need to familiarise themselves with the difference between freehold and leasehold purchases and note that a 4% stamp duty is payable to the government when a property purchase is made.

Further information on property in Sydney: <http://www.realestate.com.au/...>

Cost of living

The cost of living in Sydney has climbed over the years and expenses such as accommodation, entertainment, transport and eating out are more expensive than other parts of Australia. However, it still compares favourably to other big cities such as New York, London and Paris and arguably offers a better quality of life if you consider that beaches and national parks are only a stone's throw away from the CBD.

Is Sydney a densely populated city?

There are 22,000 people living in central Sydney and 4m in the greater Sydney area – the CBD is smaller than those of many other cosmopolitan cities. However, the city's working population is around 10 times its residential population.

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See and do

Below you will find about:

- [Recommended sightseeing in Sydney](#)
- [Restaurants](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Annual events](#)
- [Attractions for kids](#)

With everything from rock and jazz spots to trendy clubs and bars, Sydney has got it all when it comes to nightlife. Head to Darling Harbour, Oxford Street or The Rocks for the most vibrant entertainment venues in the city. Number One Wine Bar at Circular Quay is a popular hangout, while the club Home is one of Sydney's best.

Visit the streets of The Rocks to see Australia's first European settlement and to catch a glimpse of the country's history. Adventure-seekers will love a climb to the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge for the best views of the Sydney Opera House and beyond, and animal lovers can discover Australia's indigenous wildlife at Sydney Wildlife World. More relaxed expats can enjoy lounging on one of the many surrounding beaches and soaking up the sun.

Recommended sightseeing in Sydney

Sydney Aquarium: The Sydney Aquarium is one of the most popular attractions at Darling harbour. The man-made marine world boasts more than 5,000 Australian fish as well as sharks, eels and ocean species found off the island's coast. www.sydneyaquarium.com.au / Tel: (0)2 8251 7800

Harbour Bridge: One of Sydney's most famous landmarks, Harbour Bridge stretches across the gap that divides the north and south shores of the city. There's no better way to view your new home than to climb to the top of the bridge and look out over the harbour and across to the famous Sydney Opera House. www.bridgeclimb.com / Tel: Bridge Climb: (0)2 8274 7777

Sydney Wildlife World: Come and meet Australia's wildlife through the walkways and exhibits at the Sydney Wildlife World. Learn about the koala bears, kangaroos and wallabies, as well as 6,000 other species that make the zoo their home. www.sydneywildlifeworld.com.au / Tel: (0)2 9333 9288

Beaches: Bordered by the Pacific Ocean, Sydney's beaches are one of the main attractions. Expats will be able to while away the hours soaking up the sun and trying out water sports.

Sydney Opera House: The world-renowned Sydney Opera House is one of city's architectural masterpieces. The complex consists of a concert hall which seats 2,500 people and boasts the finest acoustics in the world, a smaller opera theatre, a drama theatre, playhouse and a boardwalk dance and music venue. www.sydneyoperahouse.com / Tel: (0)2 9250 7111

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Royal Botanic Gardens: This 75-acre (30 hectare) green lung in the heart of Sydney contains more than 7,500 species of plants, and features paths that criss-cross their way around the gardens, ponds, sculptures and horticultural areas.
www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au / Tel: (0)2 9231 8111

The Rocks: The Rocks is Australia's oldest European settlement located near the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The restored 19th-century village features cobbled streets, gas lamps, small restaurants and craft shops. The Rocks is considered to be the birthplace of Australia.
www.therocks.com / Tel: (0)2 9240 8500

Sydney Tower: The Sydney Tower is the tallest free standing building in the city and the second tallest in the country. Its observation deck stands 820 feet (250m) above the city and features an enclosed viewing platform.
www.sydneytower.com.au / Tel: (0)2 9333 9222

Olympic Park: The site of the 2002 Olympic Games has become a favourite attraction and residents are still able to make use of the Stadium Australia for rugby and football matches.
www.sydneyolympicpark.com.au / Tel: (02) 9714 7888

Restaurants

Diversity is the name of the game when it comes to eating in Sydney. The choice of fine dining restaurants is limited only by the imagination, with the world's top chefs delivering unique menus for every palette. The fact that there's such a range of styles and influences is directly related to the presence of a large immigrant population (particularly from Asia) and the availability of Australian produce. A city specialty is the "Mod Oz" cuisine, which combines European and Asian styles, and is well-known for its tantalising hold on taste buds. Certain areas of Sydney are dedicated to one particular type of cuisine, while others offer a huge variety where everything from Russian and German to Thai and Cantonese can be found. The main dining areas in the centre of Sydney are The Rocks, Circular Quay, Darling Harbour and Chinatown.

There are no mandatory gratuities in restaurants, but tipping for good service is always appreciated.

Shopping

In addition to the many department stores and shopping centres, there are some wonderful markets where you can buy anything from clothes to furniture and fresh produce. Visit Glebe market on Saturdays and Bondi market on Sundays for a good selection of clothing, arts and crafts, and second-hand goods.

Borders in Skygarden centre is the biggest bookstore, and also stocks a great selection of CDs, DVDs and magazines. Head to the Queen Victoria Building for a great variety of speciality shops, or to Strand Arcade to find Australia's hottest local designer labels, boutiques, jewellery stores and beauty salons.

Shops are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 4pm on Saturdays.

Annual events

Sydney's Big Day Out (January): Australia's touring festival visits each of the country's major cities in a celebration of live music and features a great selection of local and international bands.

Sydney Festival (January): One of the largest and most prestigious events, the Sydney festival presents the finest international artists and most acclaimed local talent in the performing and visual arts disciplines in Australia.

Carols in the Domain (December): One of Australia's most loved Christmas celebrations and a great place to bring the family to get into the Christmas spirit. The Domain, in the heart of Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden, comes to life when thousands of people join together to sing along to their favourite Christmas carols.

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Attractions for kids

The Sydney Aquarium and the Featherdale Wildlife World are home to some of the world's most unique animals and are great excursions for children. Giant crocodiles can be found at the Australia Reptile Park or take a trip to Fairfield City Farm to meet the local farm animals.

The Australian Museum will captivate and educate young minds while there is always the option of Sydney's surrounding beaches for a day of building sandcastles.

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Education and schools

Sydney caters to a broad range of educational needs and the quality of Sydney's private and public schools, as well as the city's tertiary institutions, are known to be of a high standard.

Expat children can attend public, faith-based, co-educational, private, or independent schools in Sydney. Expats who do not have permanent residence can enrol their children in public schools but will have to pay tuition fees - public schools are only free to permanent residents. High school graduates can choose from several universities, including the University of New South Wales, University of Sydney, and University of Notre Dame.

The school year runs from January to December and is divided into four academic terms with short holidays between. The longest holiday is during the December-January period, which is also the Australian summer holiday season.

School hours vary from school to school but generally are between 9am and 3.30pm.

Types of schools

In Sydney it is common for children to attend preschool before starting primary school. Some primary schools have linked preschools, and most day care centres have a separate preschool class. Day care and preschool places in the most popular suburbs get filled up quickly. It's common to have children on the waiting list years ahead of their required start date, so expat parents should attempt to enrol their kids well before their eventual move to Australia.

The first school year is called Kindergarten, and children start at the end of January (the beginning of the academic year), if they are five or going to turn five before the 31st of July.

Students attend primary school from Kindergarten to Year 6. After this, children start high school (ages 12 to 13), where they move through Years 7 to 12. While primary schools are typically co-educational, it's common for students to attend single-sex high schools.

The culmination of school education in NSW are the HSC (High School Certificate) exams, which are taken in October/November of Year 12. Children are usually aged 17 or 18 when they graduate from high school.

Links

- Government run website with statistics about the different schools: <http://www.myschool.edu.au/>
- Information on primary and high schools: www.studyinaustralia.gov.au
- Information on primary and high schools: www.study-in-australia.org

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