

OCEANIA · BEACHES · WILDLIFE · DIVING · ROAD TRIPS · HIKING · CITY BREAKS



Australia

Australia is a continent-sized country where the Great Barrier Reef, the red heart around Uluru and the cities of Sydney and Melbourne sit thousands of kilometres apart, so most trips focus on one or two regions. Expect extraordinary wildlife, long empty beaches and a relaxed outdoor culture, with seasons running opposite to Britain's.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Australia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 19 March 2026.

 CAPITAL Canberra	 CURRENCY Australian dollar (AUD) £1 ≈ A\$1.91	 LANGUAGE English	 BEST TIME Mar–May, Sep–Nov
 DAILY BUDGET £60–£300 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type I 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 23h via Singapore, Dubai or Doha ~£900–£1,800 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+10, UTC+9:30... standard time

Australia's scale shapes every itinerary: Sydney to Perth is a flight of about five hours, and Uluru is three hours by air from Sydney. First trips usually pair Sydney with one or two other regions — the reef and rainforest around Cairns, Uluru and Kings Canyon in the Red Centre, or Melbourne and the Great Ocean Road. Given longer, the Top End's Kakadu, Tasmania's wilderness and Western Australia's near-empty coast repay the extra flights. What sets the country apart is wildlife found nowhere else, from kangaroos and koalas to platypus and cassowaries, and more than 60,000 years of Aboriginal culture written into the land.

Travel here is easy but expensive. Cities run on contactless cards, English is universal, and roads and campsites are well maintained, though distances between fuel stops in the outback demand planning. Accommodation and eating out cost roughly what they do in a big British city, so many visitors save with hostels, campervans and the free electric barbecues in public parks. The December–January school holidays fill coastal towns and push prices up. People are often surprised by how strong the sun is, how quickly the tropical north turns humid and stormy from November, and how empty the country feels: a long drive can pass more kangaroos than cars.

Top 5 highlights

1 WILDLIFE Great Barrier Reef The world's largest coral reef system stretches about 2,300km along Queensland's coast. Day boats from Cairns and Port Douglas reach the outer reef for snorkelling and diving among turtles, reef sharks and giant clams; the Whitsundays add sailing and Whitehaven Beach.	2 NATURE Uluru The sandstone monolith sacred to the Anangu people glows red at sunrise and sunset. Climbing has been banned since 2019; instead walk the 10km base path, join a ranger-led talk and explore the domes of nearby Kata Tjuta.
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ARCHITECTURE

Sydney Opera House

Jørn Utzon's sail-roofed opera house, opened in 1973, is best appreciated from a ferry or the Harbour Bridge walkway. Take a backstage tour or book a performance, then walk round to the Royal Botanic Garden.

4

NATURE

Great Ocean Road

One of the world's great coastal drives runs about 240km from Torquay, south-west of Melbourne, past surf beaches, koala-filled eucalyptus forest at Kennett River and the Twelve Apostles' limestone stacks. Allow two or three days rather than a rushed day trip.

5

NATURE

Kakadu National Park

This vast World Heritage park in the Top End spans wetlands, sandstone escarpments and waterfalls. Watch sunset from Ubirr's rock-art site, see paintings made over thousands of years, and cruise Yellow Water for crocodiles and birdlife; visit in the dry season.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Sydney

≈ 5.6 million people

Australia's oldest and largest city wraps around a deep, many-armed harbour: ride the Manly ferry, walk the Bondi to Coogee cliff-top path, and see the Opera House from the water.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Melbourne

≈ 5.4 million people

Sydney's cultured rival is built for eating, coffee and sport: lose a day in the laneways and Queen Victoria Market, then catch footy at the MCG or tennis at the Australian Open.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Brisbane

≈ 2.8 million people

Subtropical, laid-back Brisbane is the gateway to Queensland's coast; walk the riverside South Bank, ride a CityCat ferry, then head for the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast or K'gari (Fraser Island).

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Australia

Best time: **Mar–May, Sep–Nov.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

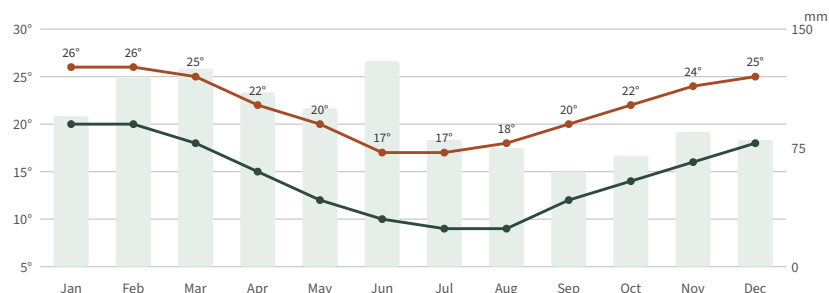
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Sydney

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb–Mar	Adelaide Fringe The southern hemisphere's biggest arts festival fills Adelaide with comedy, cabaret and street performance for around a month from mid-February, with many shows cheap or free.
May–Jun	Vivid Sydney For about three weeks from late May, light projections and installations transform the Opera House sails, Circular Quay and Darling Harbour, with music and talks alongside.
Dec	Sydney New Year's Eve Fireworks launched from the Harbour Bridge and barges light up the harbour at 9pm and midnight; claim a foreshore vantage point early, as some require tickets.

How much does Australia cost?

SHOESTRING £60 per person / day ≈ A\$115 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £140 per person / day ≈ A\$267 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £300 per person / day ≈ A\$573 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Meat pie A hand-sized pastry case of minced beef and gravy, eaten with tomato sauce at football grounds, bakeries and service stations nationwide.	Barramundi This meaty white fish from northern rivers and estuaries is grilled or pan-fried; order it in Darwin or Cairns, ideally wild-caught.	Lamington Squares of sponge cake dipped in chocolate and rolled in desiccated coconut, sometimes split with jam and cream — a staple of bakeries and cake stalls.
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Getting around

Distances make domestic flights essential for covering more than one region; Qantas, Virgin Australia and Jetstar link all the main cities. Hiring a car or campervan suits the Great Ocean Road, Tasmania and the Queensland coast, while Greyhound coaches serve the east coast. The Ghan and Indian Pacific trains are scenic journeys rather than practical transport. Cities have good trains, trams and ferries, and Uber and DiDi operate widely.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  I 230V — bring a UK-to-I adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 000 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +61	TIME ZONES UTC+10, UTC+9:30, UTC+8 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Not expected, as wages are relatively high. Rounding up or leaving around 10% for good table service in restaurants is appreciated but optional.

ETIQUETTE

Australians are informal and use first names quickly. In a group at the pub, take your turn buying a round (a 'shout'). Ask before photographing Aboriginal people or sites, and respect signs closing sacred places.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (SYD), Sydney; Melbourne Airport (MEL), Melbourne; Perth Airport (PER), Perth

Visas & entry for Australia

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

You must have a visa to visit Australia.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B

Japanese encephalitis

Polio

Bat Lyssavirus

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Australia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 25 Dec 2026

Christmas Day

Sat 26 Dec 2026

Boxing Day

Fri 1 Jan 2027

New Year's Day

Tue 26 Jan 2027	Australia Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sun 25 Apr 2027	ANZAC Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

Seasons run opposite to Britain's: December to February is summer and peak school-holiday season, so book Christmas flights, campervans and coastal stays months ahead.

UV levels regularly hit 'extreme' in summer. Wear SPF50+, a hat and sunglasses, and swim between the red-and-yellow flags patrolled by lifeguards.

In tropical Queensland and the Top End, box jellyfish are a risk roughly from October to May; wear a stinger suit and use netted swimming enclosures. Never swim where crocodile warning signs are posted.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.