

HOME PAGE | MY TIMES | TODAY'S PAPER | VIDEO | MOST POPULAR | TIMES TOPICS

Get Home Delivery | Log In | Register Now

**The New York Times** **Travel** **Travel All NYT** **Ameriprise Financial**

WORLD | U.S. | N.Y. / REGION | BUSINESS | TECHNOLOGY | SCIENCE | HEALTH | SPORTS | OPINION | ARTS | STYLE | TRAVEL | JOBS | REAL ESTATE | AUTOS

**Search** **Plan Your Trip**

Go Select a Region or Country Select a Destination Go

AUSTRALIA AND PACIFIC > AUSTRALIA > MELBOURNE

# 36 Hours in Melbourne, Australia



Edwina Pickles for The New York Times

Gallery-approved graffiti in an alleyway.

By FINN-OLAF JONES  
Published: January 6, 2008

## Correction Appended

IT'S hard not to feel some sympathy for [Melbourne](#). Often overlooked by travelers as they sprint their way through [Australia's](#) Big Three tourist attractions — the dazzling metropolis of [Sydney](#), the startlingly beautiful Great Barrier Reef and the historic Aboriginal site of Uluru — this laid-back city is a place that takes some time to appreciate. But Melbourne slowly grows on you as you stroll around the immaculately preserved Victorian-era downtown or along the revitalized Yarra waterfront, or linger over a cup of “flat white” in one of trendy cafes on Chapel Street (where the very mention of the name Starbucks is greeted with horror). And in January, at least, it has something that Sydney and those other places don't: the Australian Open. This is a country that loves its tennis, and for two weeks, this city feels like a nonstop party, one in which the chances that a local hero may finally take the title are debated each night in the pubs and where even a doubles match played on an outside court and featuring unranked players from the former Eastern Bloc will draw a capacity crowd. Who needs the Opera House?

### Melbourne Travel Guide

- Where to Stay
- Where to Eat
- What to Do

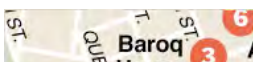
[Go to the Melbourne Travel Guide >](#)

### Multimedia



Slide Show

[Weekend in Melbourne, Australia](#)



### Friday

5 p.m.

#### 1) RIVERFRONT OZ

Say g'day to old and new Melbourne at the Docklands, a once-neglected shipping yard that has been transformed into a minimetropolis. For a sculptural blend of curvy office buildings, slick apartment towers, outdoor [art](#) and street theater, stroll the New Quay precinct, where the city's young professionals and artists gather in the evening to enjoy a beer or two on the lively promenade.

7:30 p.m.

#### 2) BEYOND THE BARBIE

New Quay has also bloomed with extraordinary restaurants, strung along the waterfront like an international food court. Especially popular is [Mecca Bah](#), (55A New Quay Promenade, 61-3-9642-1300; [www.meccabah.com](http://www.meccabah.com)) a casbah-chic

### Travel Deals e-mail newsletter

Sign up for travel deals and discounts on airfare, hotels, transportation and more!

See Sample | Privacy Policy

Sign Up

Ads by Google

what's this?

#### Get Passport Photos

Apply for passports, photos, travel money & mail holding at Post Office  
[www.auspost.com.au](http://www.auspost.com.au)

#### Australia Birth Records

Get any Birth Records Online Now! Unlimited Access to Australian data  
[Public.Australian-Records.com/Birth](http://Public.Australian-Records.com/Birth)

#### Cheap Flights

Compare & book cheap flights from Australian airlines at Webjet.  
[www.webjet.com.au](http://www.webjet.com.au)

### BOOK FLIGHTS



FLIGHT | HOTEL | PACKAGES  
CAR | CRUISE | ACTIVITIES

Leaving from:  Going to:

Departing:  11 AM Returning:  11 AM

Adults:  Seniors:  Children:

[Search for flights](#)

### MOST POPULAR - TRAVEL

E-MAILED | BLOGGED

- [Weekend in New York | Martinis: Places That Put the Proper Prefix on the -tini](#)
- [Choice Tables | Montreal: These Chefs Believe in Sticking Close to Home](#)
- [Frugal Traveler | Miami Beach: Babylon on a Budget: A Weekend Challenge](#)
- [Spring Break | Barcelona Day Trip: Catalonia's 'Champagne' Country](#)
- [Practical Traveler | Tibet: Suddenly, the Roof of the World Is Closed](#)
- [36 Hours in Dubai](#)
- [Cultured Traveler | Frank Lloyd Wright Homes: Overnight With Frank Lloyd Wright](#)
- [Argentine Nights](#)
- [Where Greek Ideals Meet New England Charm](#)
- [Arizona Backroads at the Border](#)

[Go to Complete List >](#)

### TRAVEL MARKETPLACE

Hapag Lloyd  
12- Day Newfoundland luxury expedition cruises from \$3,800



DAILY FLIGHTS TO JAPAN FROM SIX US CITIES!  
COME FLY ANA!





Map  
Melbourne, Australia

restaurant in a glassy waterfront pavilion where Melbourne's glamazons nibble on Middle Eastern fusion dishes like pizza with roast pumpkin, feta and pomegranate jam (16.30 Australian dollars, or about \$14.25, at 1.17 Australian dollars to the [United States](#) dollar) and swordfish kebab (20 Australian dollars), while waiting for the dusk to light up the sparkling skyline across the river.

9 p.m.

3) DON'T CALL IT GRAFFITI

Lose yourself in Melbourne's laneways, the mind-boggling network of narrow alleys where mainstream culture takes a back seat to art installation light boxes, fake windows and gallery-sanctioned graffiti. Then there are the laneway bars. Hidden along dark side streets, often behind unmarked doors, many of these bars are so outrageously decorated that they could pass for conceptual art, were it not for the great drinks. Among the funkier places are the Baroq House, a neo-dix-huitième-siècle salon (9-13 Drewery Lane, 61-3-8080-5680; [www.baroqhouse.com.au](http://www.baroqhouse.com.au)); Sister Bella, which looks like a 1970's country store (Sniders Lane); and Section 8, which is furnished with shipping crates (27-29 Tattersalls Lane, 61-4-3029-1588).

Saturday

10 a.m.

4) ABORIGINAL ART

Regain your bearings in Melbourne's new gathering point, [Federation Square](#) ([www.fedsq.com](http://www.fedsq.com)), which looks like a giant theater set lined with glass and zinc. After grabbing a "tall blonde" — Australian for latte — check out the [Ian Potter Centre at the National Gallery of Victoria](#) (61-3-8620-2222; [www.ngv.vic.gov.au](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au)), which features one of Australia's best collections of Aboriginal folk art. And if the weather cooperates, which it often does, hop over to the Golden Mile, so called for the wealth of Victorian manors and offices built during Melbourne's gold rush in the mid-1800s.

12:30 p.m.

5) PUB GRUB

Thirsty? Make a stop at [Mitre Tavern](#) (5 Bank Place, 61-3-9670-5644; [www.mitretavern.com.au](http://www.mitretavern.com.au)), a storied watering hole where you can rub shoulders with Melbourne's young professionals over a pint or two of local ale (3.40 Australian dollars), along with some outstanding bar food. Try the lamb salad (18 Australian dollars) or flathead fish and chips (18.90 Australian dollars).

2 p.m.

6) PRISON BREAK

The [Old Melbourne Gaol](#) (the Australian spelling for jail) was built in the 19th century out of volcanic rock and is so austere that it could have come out of a [Charles Dickens](#) novel. It closed as a jail in 1929 and is now a grimly fascinating museum (Russell Street, 61-3-8663-7228; [www.oldmelbournegaol.com.au](http://www.oldmelbournegaol.com.au)) depicting Australia's early history. The gallows in the main cellblock is where Ned Kelly, the free-spirited bushranger who became a folk hero in the nation's emerging identity, was hanged in 1880.

3:30 p.m.

7) SOHO DOWN UNDER

With its converted warehouses, scrappy galleries and cool shops, Flinders Lane is often compared with SoHo in New York. Craft Victoria (No. 31, 61-3-9650-7775, [www.craftvic.asn.au](http://www.craftvic.asn.au)) sells designer housewares and jewelry by local artisans, including a plastic basket that looks like delicate woven grass (320 Australian dollars). And for mod Australian fashions, check out [Christine](#) (No. 181, 61-3-9654-2011). Popular items include clunky rings made of Baroda pearls (4,000 Australian dollars) and cashmere-soft sweaters made from fine New South Wales wool (550 Australian dollars).

8 p.m.

8) EAST MEETS SOUTH

For a taste of Melbourne's multicultural splendor, weave through the narrow blocks of

Fast Forward Your Travel  
With Delta



The New York Times POLITICS  
nytimes.com/politics

A closer look at who's running

Also in Politics:

- Where the candidates stand on the issues
- Election results to date
- Continuous coverage of the 2008 election

ADVERTISEMENTS



LAST MINUTE MELBOURNE HOTEL DEALS Expedia.com

<a href="#">Travelodge Southbank Melbourne</a>	\$129
<a href="#">The Hotel Charsfield</a>	\$167
<a href="#">Pensione Hotel Melbourne</a>	\$102
<a href="#">Marriott Melbourne</a>	\$255
<a href="#">Cosmopolitan Hotel</a>	\$112
<a href="#">Best Western Atlantis Hotel</a>	\$122

Ads by Google what's this?

**NetApp® Go Further**  
Go Further, Faster. Helping Your Business Discover New Ideas  
[www.NetApp.com/AU](http://www.NetApp.com/AU)

Chinatown and prepare to be wowed by the [Flower Drum Restaurant](#) (17 Market Lane, 61-3-9662-3655), widely considered one of Australia's finest restaurants. Settle into the elegantly minimalist interior and explore rarefied Cantonese dishes like fried giant deep-sea oysters and braised green lip abalone. The tasting menu is 150 Australian dollars. If you're on a budget, you can't go wrong with the no-frills [Supper Inn](#) (15 Celestial Avenue, 61-3-9663-4759), a dank, wood-paneled diner that serves cheap and delicious fare like pork giblets (15 Australian dollars), live clams (18 Australian dollars) and crispy pigeon (14 Australian dollars).

**11 p.m.**

#### **9) NIGHTCLUBS, UNITE!**

Not sure if you want to hang with fashionistas or art-house poseurs? Head to the Curtin House (252 Swanston Street), a former Communist Party headquarters that is now home to three night-life zones. On level one, you'll find stylish young professionals at [Cookie](#) (61-3-9663-2015 [www.cookie.net.au](http://www.cookie.net.au)), a Thai restaurant and giant bar covered with antique books. One floor up is the [Toff in the Town](#) (61-3-9639-8770; [www.thetoffintown.com](http://www.thetoffintown.com)), a set of private compartments and a [music](#) hall that feels like a swank opium den. The indie bands run the spectrum from electronic Gypsy accordion music to ambient heavy metal. The top floor is home to the Rooftop Cinema (61-3-9663-3596; [www.rooftopcinema.com.au](http://www.rooftopcinema.com.au)), where you can catch movies as classic as the bar's cocktails and admire the towering skyline from plastic lawn chairs.

**Sunday**

**10 a.m.**

#### **10) BEACHSIDE WALK**

Jump on the No. 96 tram for the half-hour ride to St. Kilda Beach, a worn-at-the-edges seaside haven that suggests [Coney Island](#). If you have kids in tow, take them to rusty Luna Park (61-3 9525- 5033; [www.lunapark.com.au](http://www.lunapark.com.au)), an old-fashioned amusement park with a big Ferris wheel. Or just wind down on the calm, sandy beach on Port Phillip Bay. But before you put down your towel, swing by the beloved [Monarch Cake Shop](#) (103 Acland Street, 61-3-9534-2972), famous for its plum and Polish cheese cakes and chocolate kugelhof. It's a Sunday tradition.

**2 p.m.**

#### **11) ENTER THE THUNDERDOME**

Australian rules football isn't for the faint-hearted. Players can't be ejected, so everything from the fouls to the brawls is more blood-curdling. Top clubs are from surrounding towns, so fans of both sides often display a home team fervor. If you're visiting between March and August, head for the Melbourne [Cricket](#) Ground (Jolimont Terrace, 61-3-9657-8888, [www.mcg.org.au](http://www.mcg.org.au)) where the big games are played. And if you miss the season, drop by the Australian Football League Shop (292 Swanston Street, 61-3-8660-5555) for your piece of this sports-mad city.

#### **THE BASICS**

Flights between New York and [Melbourne](#) require a plane change, usually in [Los Angeles](#) (American Airlines and Qantas) or [Hong Kong](#) (Cathay Pacific). A recent Web search found fares on an American flight (a Qantas codeshare) from Kennedy Airport starting at about \$3,300 for travel in late January.

From Melbourne Airport, take the Skybus ([www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au](http://www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au)), which leaves for central Melbourne every 10 minutes during peak hours and costs 15 Australian dollars, or \$13 at 1.16 Australian dollars to the American dollar. Otherwise a cab into town starts at about 40 Australian dollars.

The [Adelphi Hotel](#) (187 Flinders Lane, 61-3-8080-8888; [www.adelphi.com.au](http://www.adelphi.com.au)), in a former warehouse, has a translucent rooftop pool that extends over the artsy sidewalk. The modern, colorful doubles start at 240 Australian dollars.

**Victoria Hotel** (215 Little Collins Street, 61-3-9669-0000), once one of Melbourne's grandest hotels, is now a cheap and cheerful spot popular with tour groups. Doubles start at 120 Australian dollars.

[The Prince](#) (2 Acland Street, St. Kilda, 61-3-9536-1111; [www.theprince.com.au](http://www.theprince.com.au)) is a stylized hotel near St. Kilda's beachfront with minimalist décor and a [spa](#). Doubles start at 250

Australian dollars.

**Correction: January 20, 2008**

*The 36 Hours column on Jan. 6 about Melbourne, Australia, misstated the price for the Skybus shuttle from Melbourne Airport to the city. A one-way ticket costs 15 Australian dollars, or \$13 at 1.16 Australian dollars to the American dollar. It is not 3.30 Australian dollars.*

[More Articles in Travel »](#)

Need to know more? 50% off home delivery of The Times.

**Past Coverage**

- [36 Hours in Melbourne, Australia](#) (January 6, 2008)
- [THE PLACE; Top-Secret Tippling](#) (September 23, 2007)
- [THE PLACE; Totally Aussie](#) (September 23, 2007)
- [DATEBOOK](#) (September 11, 2005)

**Related Searches**

- [Travel and Vacations](#)
- [Melbourne \(Australia\)](#)
- [Australian Open \(Tennis\)](#)

**Mentioned in This Article**

- [Los Angeles](#) | [Charles Dickens](#) | [Cricket](#) | [Melbourne](#) | [United States](#) | [Hong Kong](#) | [Sydney](#) | [Australia](#)

INSIDE NYTIMES.COM



TECHNOLOGY »



[Vying Hard to Claim Tiny Crown](#)

FASHION & STYLE »



[When Is a Fashion Ad Not a Fashion Ad?](#)

OPINION »

### Hillary's Sexism

A Bloggingheads video with a debate on whether Hillary Clinton uses her gender or is abused for it.

WORLD »



[Out of Office and Into a Fishbowl in South Korea](#)

OPINION »



[Timothy Egan: The Ghosts of Casa Grande](#)

TELEVISION »



[New Executive for HBO's Entertainment Division](#)

[Home](#) | [World](#) | [U.S.](#) | [N.Y. / Region](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Science](#) | [Health](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Arts](#) | [Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Automobiles](#) | [Back to Top](#)

Copyright 2008 The New York Times Company | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)