

Sydney Travel Guide



By Abbie and Ben
@a_to_b_travels

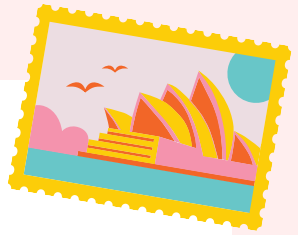


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Welcome



G'day!

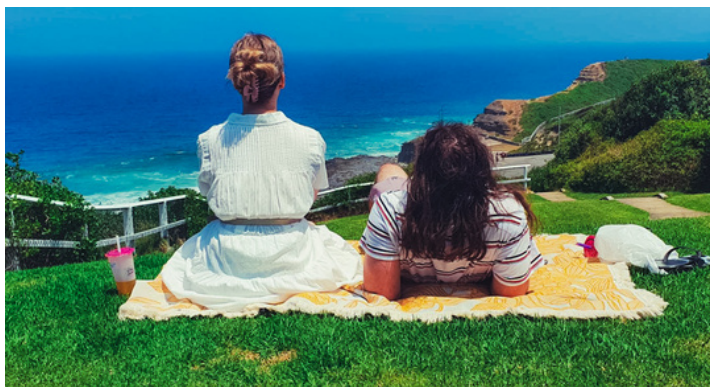
Thank you so much for downloading our guide to Sydney, Australia.

Allow us to introduce ourselves. Our names are Abbie and Ben, and we were born and raised right here in Aus. We absolutely love travelling the world but also know that our home has some wonderful things to offer for tourists coming over for a visit.

We have channeled all of our years of living in Australia into this guide, and hope that it will give you some great ideas and tips for your trip down under.

If you have any questions that were not answered in this book, please feel free to send us a message on Instagram @a_to_b_travels

Abbie and Ben 



Why Sydney?

An Overview

If you are travelling to Australia, Sydney is a must visit destination. Sydney is the capital of New South Wales, the most populated state in Australia.

There are so many things to see and do in Sydney, you could spend weeks here and still not see it all. Sydney is home to world famous landmarks such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House, and also has many cultural hubs worth visiting, such as art galleries and museums.

Many of Australia's most famous beaches are also located in Sydney, such as Bondi Beach and Manly Beach. These locations are fantastic to visit and will really immerse you in the true Aussie experience.

Food and shopping are also a plenty in Australia's largest city. Australia is renowned for being one of the most multicultural nations in the world, and this comes through in our cuisine.

If Sydney doesn't have enough for you, though we are sure it will, its location puts you in a prime position to visit some of the hidden gems that Australia has to offer. Great locations such as The Blue Mountains, The Hunter Valley, Newcastle and Port Stephens are all only a few hours from Sydney and all offer some amazing experiences which are sure to make it on your Aussie bucket list.

We hope this guide will point you in the right direction for your visit and give you some useful tips for while you are here!



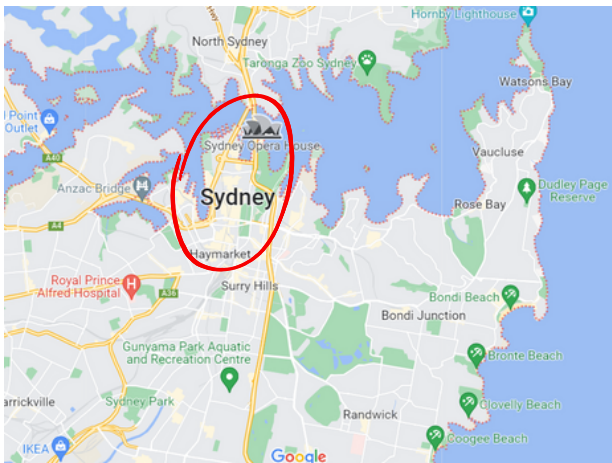
Where to Stay

Picking a spot to stay in Sydney can be tricky, and if you have already started looking for accommodation you will know that it is not cheap to stay in Sydney. So this being said you want to find a good combination that is going to give you more bang for your buck, but also allows you to maximise your time exploring the city rather than sitting on trains and buses.

Here are a few suggestions we would give for areas to stay in in Sydney.

The Sightseer

If you are mainly in Sydney to visit some of the iconic sights such as wanting to visit places such as: The Sydney Harbour Bridge, Opera House, Darling Harbour, Taronga Zoo, Luna Park or the Royal Botanic Gardens, we recommend staying in this general area as most of these tourist destinations are located around here.

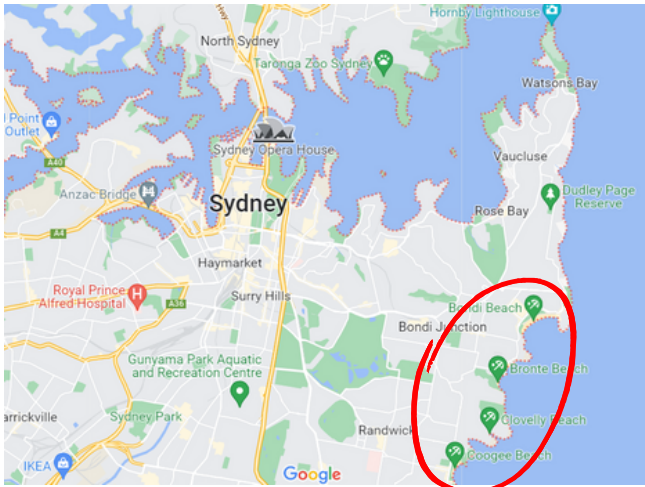


The price of hotels in this area may be more expensive at times; however, it can save you quite a bit of time on public transport if you can anchor yourself here. Unfortunately, Australia doesn't quite live up to the predictable and fast public transport systems that exist in other parts of the world. It can take hours to go what is a realistically short distance on public trains and buses in Sydney, so keep this in mind.

Some personal favourite areas that we have stayed in include Haymarket, Ultimo, World Square and Wynyard. They places are also really good areas to find fantastic food and do some shopping.

The Surfer

Now we know that one of the main reasons people come to Australia is to experience our beaches and the surfy culture. If this is the case, and you aren't really fussed with the more 'touristy' stuff, then staying in the CBD probably isn't going to fulfil your desires. You probably don't want to be travelling on public transport for an hour every time you want to go to the beach. So in your case, we would suggest trying to find some accommodation around here. This will give you access to a string of beaches along the coastline.



If budgets are tight you could move further away from these two main areas, as long as you are near a train line that around this main train circuit. This is the main train circuit that connects you to most of the things you are probably wanting to see and do while in Sydney. So as long as you are close enough to one of these stations, it won't take you too long to get around.



Accommodation

In terms of what accommodation to stay in while you are in Sydney that is another beast. As we said before, Sydney is quite expensive to stay in so finding a bargain can be hard.

Rather than suggesting specific hotels, we would suggest looking at companies that offer travel packages in Sydney. We have had success before booking accommodation in Sydney through Groupon, and also quite like our experiences with Luxury Escapes.

While the accommodation usually offered through these sights are a bit cheaper than normal, the real value is that they often come with inclusions that save you money on your trip. For example, we have booked packages which have included food and drinks credit, free parking, daily breakfasts etc. So looking for these types of deals can help you save money in a few areas.

If you are a solo traveler and don't mind bunking down in a dorm room in a hostel there are plenty of options available for you that won't break the bank. However, if you are traveling as a couple or with someone and you want a shared room, these private rooms at hostels often cost a very similar amount than just booking a normal hotel room, so make sure you shop around. We also use websites like Booking.com and Agoda when travelling around Australia as you can using find some discounted rates.



Things to Do

1. See the Sydney Harbour Bridge



The Sydney Harbour Bridge is undoubtedly one of the most iconic Australian landmarks. The best part is, it is free to enjoy! The best viewing spot is actually right near the Sydney Opera House which makes it easy to tick these two icons off from your Aussie bucket list. If you aren't completely satisfied with just looking, you can climb the bridge to get one of the best viewpoints of Sydney, though this does come at a cost Find more information here:

<https://www.bridgeclimb.com/>

2. See the Sydney Opera House

Right next door to the Sydney Harbour Bridge is the Sydney Opera House. This building is among the most famous architectural designs in the world. The atmosphere around the Opera House is always lively so we highly recommend having a wander around and snapping some holiday pictures here. If you have time, it is also worth trying to see a show.

Find more information here:

<https://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/>



FUN FACT

If you have seen the famous Australian movie 'Crocodile Dundee' then you might be interested to know that the actor, Paul Hogan, who plays the main character actually helped to construct the Sydney Harbour Bridge!



3. Explore the Royal Botanic Gardens

The Royal Botanic Gardens is one of the best free places to visit in Sydney. Just a hop, skip and a jump from the Opera House, the gardens offer beautiful scenery along Harbour, great nature walks and some of the best picnic spots here in Aus. The Royal Botanic Gardens also offer a variety of events and tours depending on what time you plan to travel. It is also a great spot to learn more about Australia's First Nations people and culture.



Find more information here:

<https://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/>

4. Learn Some History at Hyde Park Barracks

Hyde Park Barracks is one of the lesser known historical sites in Sydney, despite being a UNESCO World Heritage listed site. This living museum offers a unique step back in time to the days of the convicts.

Find more information here:

<https://hydeparkbarracks.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/>



5. Have a Swim at the Iconic Bondi Beach

Bondi Beach is arguably Australia's most famous beach. This beach offers an amazing opportunity to soak up the Australian sun and classic Aussie lifestyle. Bondi Beach is known best for its swimming and surfing, but it is also home to other activities such as morning yoga, whale watching and some of the best coastal walks you will ever get to experience. This area is also home to some great cafes and overall a very laid back beachy community.



6. Be an Art Critic for the Day



If you are creatively inclined than look no further than the Art Gallery of New South Wales. This gallery celebrated its 150th Birthday in 2021 and is one of the most significant sites to Australian art. This gallery is also home to many works of art by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, making it a must see. Great news, it is also free to visit!

Find more information here:
<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/>

7. See some Wildlife at Taronga Zoo

Across the Harbour is **Taronga Zoo**. This zoo is located on prime real-estate and offers amazing views of Sydney. It is also home to many different species of animals and is known as a great day out for the family. Taronga Zoo in Sydney isn't our personal favourite zoo here in Australia, but if you can't get to Melbourne Zoo, Australia Zoo or the Taronga Western Plains Zoo, this one would still be worth a visit.

Find out more information:
<https://www.taronga.org.au/sydney-zoo>



FUN FACT



The traditional custodians of Sydney are the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

The 'Eora people' was the name given to the Aboriginal people around the Sydney area. 'Eora' means 'here' or 'from this place.'

8. Visit the Powerhouse Museum



The Sydney Powerhouse Museum is another great activity to do while you are here in Sydney. It is home of a variety of exhibitions, including some Aboriginal art, old car displays and exhibits about science, There are various interactive activities that you can do while you are here, making it a great experience for both small and big kids. There is even a fragment of the moon here!

For more information:

<https://www.maas.museum/>

9. Hit the Waves at Manly Beach

Manly Beach is another iconic beach here in Australia which is worth a visit. Unlike Bondi Beach, Manly Beach is located in the north of Sydney. Although it may not be as well known as Bondi Beach, it is no less spectacular. The worlds first surfing competition was actually held here back in 1964, and for good reason. If you feel like emerging yourself in the full surfer experience, you can book a surfing lesson right here at Manly.

For more information:

<https://manlysurfschool.com/>



10. Roam Darling Harbour



Darling Harbour is a fantastic spot to explore in Sydney. It has several noteworthy attractions such as an Aquarium, Madame Tussades, Imax Theatre, Maritime Museum and a Ferris Wheel. There are also some fantastic cafes and restaurants around this area which are worth exploring.



Transport

The easiest way to get around Sydney is definitely by using the train/metro and bus systems. Driving around Sydney is not the easiest endeavor and parking costs can quickly add up. Some hotels charge more than \$80 per night just for car parking! So if you are planning on renting a car while in Australia, it is best to do this on your way out of Sydney.



Here in Sydney, Opal cards are king. Opal cards allow you to tap on and tap off trains, trams and buses in Sydney. You can load money onto the cards using the Opal App or at reload stations which are in most train stations. If you are planning on being in Sydney for a while, it may be worth looking into getting an opal card for your travels. You can get an adult Opal Card from retailers around Sydney, which can be found here: <https://transportnsw.info/tickets-opal/opal/get-opal-card>

However, one of the great things about Sydney trains and metro is that you can tap on directly using your debit card. So if you don't want to get an Opal card, that's okay! You will still be able to travel for the same rates using your debit card.

PRO-TIP

Opal travel offers daily, weekly and weekend caps. Meaning that you won't spend more than \$16.80 per weekday, \$8.40 per weekend day, and \$50 per week using this mode of transport.



Budgeting Tips

It is no secret that Australia can be an expensive place to travel to. However, there are several things you can do while down under to reduce your travel costs. We have found several companies that we use regularly to help us save money in our everyday life and also when travelling around Australia. We have not been paid or given anything to promote these companies, we just genuinely use them and know it can help you save money.

Tip #1: Entertainment Book

The Entertainment Book is one of the best kept budget secrets for Australia. We have subscribed to this discount service for several years now and it does not take long to make your money back.

Essentially, you are able to buy a subscription to the Entertainment Book which in return provides you with hundreds of discounts for attractions, restaurants, shopping etc.

You can choose to purchase a single city pass or a multi-city pass. So if you are just visiting Sydney a single city pass would work perfectly fine; however, if you are planning on visiting Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, it is probably worth getting the multi-city pass.

You can also select between a 3 month, 12 month and 24 month membership which is great because then you only have to pay for the time you are going to use it. All of the vouchers you are provided with are conveniently held on an app, making it a very accessible resource. You can open up the map on the app and using your location, it will tell you all of the deals nearby which is really handy.

You can also use the Entertainment book to purchase shopping vouchers at a slightly discounted rate. If you are going to be in Sydney or Australia for a while, this can add up over time.

We definitely recommend checking this out if you are going to be in Australia for more than a few weeks. The single city 3-month pass only costs \$30 AUD, which you would make back very easily by using the discounts.

For more information: <https://www.entertainment.com.au/>



 **Entertainment**



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Tip #2: Groupon Australia

Another company worth checking out to save a pretty penny is Groupon. The Groupon website offers a variety of discounts for the major cities in Australia, including Sydney.

Groupon includes several categories in which you can save money on particular goods and services, including food and drink, travel, things to do, and beauty and spas.

Unlike the Entertainment Book, you do not have to subscribe or pay a fee to use this service. You can simply browse all of the deals which are currently offered in Sydney, and purchase any that you are interested in. We have personally used Groupon on several occasions to book hotels, restaurants and a sneaky massage (or two)!

For more information: <https://www.groupon.com.au/>



Tip #3: Luxury Escapes

Luxury Escapes is another company that has saved us money while travelling here in Australia. Luxury Escapes consistently features beautiful accommodation in Australia for a discounted price. It is also a really nice way to experience a bit of luxury travelling without having to foot the entire bill. We have had lovely holidays and stayed at places using Luxury Escapes that we would have never stayed at before because of the price.

Additionally, these deals often include free extras, such as buffet breakfasts or food credit, which definitely adds up in savings. Sydney hotels are often featured on this site so we would definitely recommend checking this site out before you book your accommodation.

For more information: <https://luxuryescapes.com/au>

If you do book a trip using Luxury Escapes, you can use our referral link to get \$50 off your first booking:

https://luxuryescapes.com/refer/INVITEL4S8N1?utm_campaign=default-referral-campaign&utm_source=luxuryescapes&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=referrer%3A1d02f16a-07cd-4e63-861b-d4b0acd61228



LUXURY ESCAPES

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Tip #4: Reduce Eating Out

Some countries have fantastic street food that costs next to nothing. In these places, most people eat out for every meal because it is so cheap it just makes sense.

Unfortunately, Australia is not one of these places. We have some great food down under, but it usually comes at a cost. Therefore, eating out several times a day can really add up here.

We would suggest being selective about when and where you eat out to reduce on costs. Going and getting some key staples from Australia's main grocery shops, Coles, Woolworths and Aldi, can add up to significant savings on your Australia trip, particularly if you are planning on staying for a while.



coles



Tip #5: Daily Food Deals

When you do choose to eat out, one of the best budget tips is to find restaurants that have daily food deals. Many places will have their most popular dishes for a significantly cheaper price during lunch time rather than dinner.

Additionally, many places, particularly Pubs, often have a 'meal of the day.' For example, Monday's might be '\$12 Schnitzel Night' and Tuesdays might be '\$10 Pizza Night.' These meals are often nearly half the price of their usual cost on these days and by following this system, you can save a lot of money.

Restaurants and Pubs will usually have these deals advertised on their websites or social media, and will also usually have them advertised on the outside of the place itself.

TIP: See below for information on helpful apps which can save you money!



Best Events

There are always events and things happening in Sydney. However, there are a very key ones that if you can time your visit to coincide with them, we would highly recommend!



The Sydney Royal Easter Show is one of the most famous festivals in Australia. Every year people flock to Sydney to experience the rides, exhibits and competitions that are involved in this event.

For more information:

<https://www.eastershow.com.au/>

Vivid Sydney is an annual festival that is aimed as celebrating creativity and technology. Famous Sydney landmarks are used to display spectacular light displays all around the city. In 2022, they also include a light drone display around the Harbour! The festival also attracts street performers, food vans and other entertainment which stretches all along Circular Quay to Darling Harbour.



For more information:

<https://www.vividsydney.com/info/about-vivid-sydney>



Mardi Gras is another festival which attracts huge crowds here in Australia. This festival includes events such as parades, music performances, concerts and so much more.

For more information:

<https://www.mardigras.org.au/>

Hidden Gems Near Sydney

The Blue Mountains

The Blue Mountains are located to the West of Sydney and are famous for their breathtaking views. This area is fantastic for bushwalking and camping, and has many wonderful lookouts at which you can take in the view. However, there are a few notable things you should do, should you choose to visit the Blue Mountains.



The **Jenolan Caves** are one of nature's greatest wonders here in Australia. The caves boast incredible stalactite-lined chasms which have been naturally formed over thousands of years by running water. It is definitely a must see in the Blue Mountains.

For more information:

<https://www.jenolancaves.org.au/>

The **Wollemi Glow Worm Tunnel** is another wonder which is worth a visit while you are down under. Located in the Wollemi National Park, this glow worm spectacular is located in an old railway tunnel that was cleared out in the 1940's. The photos definitely don't do this one justice.

For more information:

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/walking-tracks/glow-worm-tunnel-walking-track>



FUN FACT

Even though Australia is known for having venomous animals, not a single death from a spider has occurred since 1979. In comparison, 7 people each year die from spiders in the USA.





The Three Sisters rock formation located in the Blue Mountains. Aboriginal Dreaming stories say that these rocks represent three sisters who were turned to stone. These sisters stand over 3000 meters above sea level! This wonder is located at **Echo Point Katoomba**.

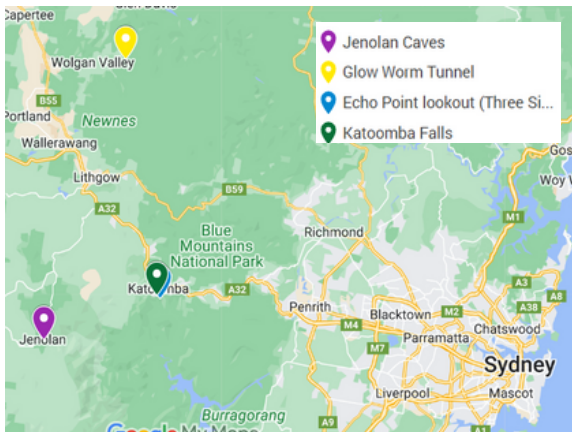
For more information:

<https://www.bluemts.com.au/info/thingsto-do/threesisters/>

Located nearby, is **Katoomba Falls**. This beautiful waterfall has several associated walking tracks which allow visitors to view the falls from various positions. If you are walked out by this point, you can view these sites at Katoomba from the Scenic Skyway which offers a magnificent view.

For more information:

<https://scenicworld.com.au/experience/scenic-skyway>



Newcastle

Okay we may be a little bias because this is where we call home, but Newcastle really does have some great things to offer so close to Sydney. Newcastle is easily (and cheaply!) accessible by train from Sydney and would also be a great stop if you are planning on travelling the East Coast of Australia.



Dudley Beach is one of the best kept secrets in Newcastle. Newcastle is home to some lovely beaches, such as Newcastle Beach, Bar Beach, Mereweather, and Nobby's. However, Dudley Beach takes the cake, so much so that it was named the 11th best beach in all of Australia in 2022. Despite this grandiose title, it probably attracts the smallest crowd of all of the Newcastle beaches. We hope the locals don't get mad for us letting you in on this secret gem!

The **Newcastle ANZAC Walk** is a must do if you are in town. This walk is situated at the top of Bar Beach and hosts beautiful views over the city and the ocean. If you decide to do this walk, we recommend timing it to either catch the sunrise or sunset as the sky usually illuminates in magnificent colours at these times.



Changing pace to the wild side, **Blackbutt Reserve** is another must do while you are in Newcastle. This reserve is home to many famous Australian species, including wombats, koalas and wallabies. The reserve also has picnic facilities so you can pack a nice lunch and enjoy a day out among the wildlife. The best part? It's free! The perfect solution if you are on a tight budget but want to get close to these cuddly critters.





The Glenrock Walking Track is a great walk to go on while you are in Newcastle. The walk takes you through a gorgeous coastal rainforest, taking you past waterfalls as you go. Then, the walk opens up and takes you down to the Glenrock Lagoon and Beach where you can set up a picnic or just soak up the views.

The Fernleigh Track is another great walking and cycling track in Newy. This track is built on an old railway track, and you can still see old railway relics and stations along the walk. It is more flat than the Glenrock walk so if you are looking for something which is a bit of a slower pace, this is your best bet.



Visiting a brewery or drinking some beer should definitely be on your Australian bucket list. We really love **Foghorn Brewery and The Grain Store** in Newcastle. Foghorn provides you with the opportunity to try different types of beer brewed right here in Newcastle, and the Grain Store stocks around 40 beers from around Australia that change regularly. These places are located right in the middle of the city which makes it very convenient to visit on your trip.

FUN FACT

Aussies drink 1.7 billion litres of beer per year! That is roughly 680 bottles of beer for each adult

PRO-TIP

You can fly directly from Newcastle airport to other popular destinations such as Melbourne, the Gold Coast and Brisbane. Flying to these places is usually the cheapest option if you can get a good deal, making it a great spot to visit!



The Hunter Valley

Newcastle is actually a city within the Hunter Valley region. The Hunter Valley is an area located to the north of Sydney which is famously one of Australia's best wine region. This region has a variety of activities on offer.



The Hunter Valley Gardens is my favourite thing to do in this area. These gardens span over 14 hectares and there are 10 individually themed gardens, including the story book garden, the rose garden and the Chinese garden. If you are lucky enough to be visiting around Christmas time, they cover all of the gardens in Christmas lights.

For more information:

<https://www.hunternvalleygardens.com.au/attractions/gardens/>

The Hunter Valley is one of Australia's best wine regions. Therefore, if you are around this area are you are a fan of adult grape juice, it would be unjust to not go on a **wine tour**. There are a variety of tours that you can choose from, all of which you will find yourself enjoy various beverages and a great view over the vineyards.

For more information:

<https://www.hunternvalleywinetastingtours.com.au/>



If you are wanting to splurge , the Hunter Valley also offers some amazing **hot air ballooning experiences**. Most of the tours offer the hot air balloon ride, breakfast, a wine tasting and more. There are a few companies that offer this services so I would suggest having a google and seeing which package best suits your interests.

Port Stephens

Port Stephens is roughly two and a half hours drive north of Sydney. Port Stephens is definitely one of our top hidden gems in all of Australia. We absolutely love visiting the bay and would strongly recommended having a stop here if you have space on your itinerary.



Shoal Bay is Abbie's favourite beach spot in Australia. Not only does it offer pristine scenery, it is a very calm beach with no waves. Perfect if you are not the most confident swimmer or you are worried about ending up on an episode of Bondi Rescue.

Mt Tomaree Summit Walk is a beautiful additional to your schedule here in Port Stephens. The walk up the mountain isn't for the faint hearted, though it is definitely manageable. However, the views that you gain at the top are completely worth all of the puffing and sweating it took to get to the lookout. It is one of, if not, the best lookout we have been to in Australia.



Oakvale Wildlife Park is another great opportunity to interact with wildlife while you are here in Australia. This park is located on the way to Port Stephens from Sydney so it is very easy to drop in on your way. They have many animals such as quokkas, wallaby's, goats, cows and koalas. At this wildlife park, you actually have the opportunity to feed many of the animals and interact up close. We even milked a cow last time we were there! A great outing every time.



Other Useful Apps

#1 NSW National Parks App



The NSW National Parks App is a great additional to have on your phone while in NSW. It not only allows you to explore what National Parks are around, it also gives you tips on things to do in these parks. However, most useful of all, it allows you to download information for the National Parks for you to access while offline!

#2 Opal Travel

Opal Travel is another great app to have while here in Sydney. The main perk of this app, is that it allows you to plan your trip. You can input your current location and your destination, and it will tell you the quickest way to get there using public transport and how much it will cost.



#3 Eat Club



Another great app to have for Sydney is called EatClub. This app enables users to capitalise on last minute restaurant deals. This app will show you restaurants in Sydney which are offering discounts on dining, with some savings of up to 50%! It is a great way to cut down on the cost of dining out in Australia, which can definitely add up to be a main expense.



#4 Wiki Camps Australia

WikiCamps Australia is a great app that contains a database full of campsites, caravan parks, backpacker hostels, information centers, points of interests and more. One of the great features of this app is that it allows you to filter your searches, meaning that if you are on a budget you can search exclusively for free or donation based accommodation.



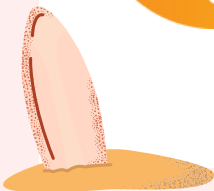
#5 Beachsafe

Beachsafe is an app that was released by Surf Life Saving Australia. This app allows you to search for beaches and see whether or not they are patrolled, what the swell and wind forecast is for that location, and also save your favourite beaches. This is a really good app to have if you are not a confident beach goer, but would like to experience the beautiful beaches we have here in Australia in a safe way.



#6 The Happiest Hour

As you probably know, Aussies love us a pub feed and a beer. This makes The Happiest Hour app a great addition for your holiday here. This app allows you to search for nearby food and drinks specials, including the glorious happy hour specials. Luckily for you, one of the biggest areas which is covered by this app is Sydney, though it does host information about many hospitality establishments.



Other Useful Websites

Visit NSW

<https://www.visitnsw.com/>

Sydney Official Tourism Website

<https://www.sydney.com/>

Visit Sydney

<https://visitsydney.com/>

Transport NSW

<https://transportnsw.info/>

Guide to Sydney

<https://www.australia.com/en/places/sydney-and-surrounds/guide-to-sydney.html>

NSW National Parks

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/>

History of Sydney

<https://www.sydney.com/things-to-do/arts-and-culture/history-of-sydney>

Sydney Living Museums

<https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/houses-museums>

