

# 48 hours in Melbourne

Set your sights on sports, art,  
coffee and culture in Australia's  
second-largest city, says  
**Clare Voight**

**k**nown as Australia's  
capital of cool,  
Melbourne has a  
reputation for arts and  
culture, excellent food

and drink, and a thriving sports scene,  
with the city hosting both Ashes cricket and  
Lions rugby matches this year alone.

Recent hotel openings include Vibe Hotel in 2024  
in the Docklands area, and 1 Hotel Melbourne, which  
opened in the Central Business District in June, overlooking  
the Yarra River. Emirates, Turkish Airlines and Malaysia Airlines  
have also been upping flight capacity on routes to the city over the  
past 12 months, making it that much easier to get to.





### FROM FAR LEFT:

Hosier Lane; Melbourne Cricket Ground; Reine & La Rue; Burra Brewing Korumburra; St Kilda Beach; Immigration Museum; tour with Locating

### OPPOSITE:

Yarra River and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

PICTURES: Ain Raadik; Michelle Couling Photography; Reine & La Rue/Visit Victoria/Petrina Tinsley; Tourism Australia/Justin Meneguzzi; Melbourne Convention Bureau/Rob Blackburn

### DAY ONE

**08.30:** Start the day in the CBD, exploring Melbourne's famous laneways – a network of cobbled, mostly pedestrianised alleyways covered end-to-end with murals in all colours of the rainbow. Both local and international street artists come here almost daily to add new works, so you never know what you'll find. Clients can start exploring from Hosier Lane by themselves or with the help of a local: Melbourne Street Art Tours (available through Viator) are led by working Melburnian street artists.

**10.30:** Melbourne is as diverse as cities come, which is evident in a plethora of Asian cuisine, a thriving Chinatown, a lively Greek Precinct with its souvlaki restaurants and

Hellenic Museum, and the annual Johnston Street Fiesta, dedicated to all things Latin America. For a celebration of just how much international communities have shaped Melbourne, spend an hour in the Immigration Museum, located at the Old Customs House Building, the city's former immigration administration hub. The exhibits highlight Australia's diversity, with stories about those who've brought their culture to Melbourne and Victoria.

**11.30:** Those multicultural influences go hand in hand with why Melbourne takes its food so seriously, with a particularly high number of restaurants and cafes per capita. Learn more with Foodie Trails, which starts its Melbourne Foodie Culture walking tour in the

Immigration Museum. The experience looks at some of the city's best eats through a multicultural lens: stops might include Italian deli Saluministi, famous for its panini; French patisserie Agathé in the Royal Arcade; and Mr Bao, a Chinatown favourite known for its Shanghai-style xiao long bao dumplings.

**14.30:** For an altogether different perspective on Melbourne – 300 metres above the Southbank – book clients a ticket to the Skydeck, which offers panoramic views of the city. Those seeking higher adrenaline activities can also step out onto the Edge, a glass cube that protrudes from the tower.

**15.30:** Take a 25-minute tram out to St Kilda to spend the rest of the afternoon hanging out at the sandy

beach, or ride the rails of a more than 100-year-old wooden rollercoaster at St Kilda's ultra-kitsch, heritage-listed Luna Park. At St Kilda Pier, keep an eye out for the resident colony of little penguins that usually head back to shore at sunset.

**19.00:** Return for a well-earned pit-stop or a drink on the rooftop at Lancemore Crossley St, a CBD hotel with rooms sporting typically trendy Melbourne decor (chic, urban and monochrome). Then, enjoy dinner with a buzzing atmosphere in a former rag-trade building at Cumulus Inc, a Melbourne foodie institution that serves seasonal dishes using local Victoria produce from some of the farms on the city's doorstep. Central Melbourne is filled with sleek cocktail bars for



**FROM FAR LEFT:**  
Couple walking through Federation Square; street art in Fitzroy; Auntie Peg's coffee shop; Farmer's Daughters; Asian restaurant Supernormal; Lune's croissant-like 'cruffins'

PICTURES: Visit Victoria/Greg Elms, Duy Dash; Josie Withers, Tourism Australia/Justin Meneguzzi; Trader House

a nightcap, but for something particularly special (and the option to add dessert), head to the exceedingly fancy Reine & La Rue, a restaurant and cocktail bar in Melbourne's opulent old stock exchange. Set in the neo-Gothic Cathedral Room, its striking ecclesiastical architecture includes vaulted ceilings and ornate art nouveau stained glass.

## DAY TWO

**09.00:** Take the tram to the street-art-covered suburb of Fitzroy (Melbourne's oldest, on the edge of the CBD) to begin the day with what is perhaps the most quintessentially Melbourne breakfast: a croissant at Lune. The bakery specialises in French croissants that are slow-prepped over three days, and clients can see pastry chefs hard at work in the glass-walled

kitchen, putting creative spins on tradition – they might find anything from Persian-inspired croissants with pistachio and rosewater buttercream or sugar-doused lemon curd 'cruffins', a croissant-muffin hybrid. Sample some of the coffee capital's best at Auntie Peg's, less than 20 minutes' stroll away in nearby Collingwood. Pitching itself as a 'cellar door for coffee', this tasting bar showcases beans from around the world and its baristas will happily give visitors a tour of the working roastery, plus a lesson in how best to brew and drink their cup of joe.

**11.00:** Stroll back over to Brunswick Street in the middle of Fitzroy for a better look at the once-industrial, now much more bohemian, suburb. Vintage stores, boutiques and galleries line this thoroughfare, sitting in between some of the city's

## ASK THE expert



**Andrew Boxall, UK regional general manager, Tourism Australia**

"Melbourne is often referred to as Australia's coffee and sporting capital and the city definitely has a strong case to claim both. It is host to many sporting events and this year was part of the Lions rugby tour and the forthcoming Ashes cricket series, so for sports fans from the UK, it's the perfect time to book that trip to Australia and cheer on your team.

"Like all Australian cities, Melbourne is a foodie paradise with world-class offerings drawing on culinary influences from around the world and locally, with innovative uses of native Australian ingredients. Coffee culture is very strong and taken very seriously – many baristas will even measure the exact weight of the coffee grounds as they prepare a cup.

"From Melbourne, it's an easy journey southeast to the Mornington Peninsula, a perfect region for wine lovers, or to head southwest and experience the iconic Great Ocean Road."

oldest pubs. Former warehouses in Fitzroy and Collingwood now house gin distilleries, while many of the area's buildings show off Australia's gold-rush-era architecture. Book your clients on a bespoke walking tour of the neighbourhood with Localing (sold through Audley Travel) for an insider's perspective on the best it has to offer, from clothing boutiques and ice-cream shops to street art murals, including the larger-than-life community art project depicting local refugees, to highlight their stories on public housing blocks.

**12.30:** Take a tram back to the CBD where you can enjoy lunch at upscale Asian fusion restaurant Supernormal, which blends Japanese, Chinese and Korean flavours with Aussie produce and wines. Think marinated Gippsland striploin with roasted kimchi, Szechuan chicken and Fremantle octopus with nori and shishito.

**14.00:** Pick from world-class art museums in the Federation Square area, whether clients want exhibitions dedicated to fashion, architecture or heavyweight local and international contemporary artists at the National Gallery of Victoria (Australia's oldest gallery) or Aboriginal arts and culture at the Koorie Heritage Trust. Movie buffs can immerse themselves in all things cinema at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI).

**15.30:** For a deeper look at Melbourne sporting culture, head to the Australian Sports Museum at Melbourne Cricket Ground to celebrate everything from Australian football to camel racing. Cultural Attractions of Australia recently introduced a commissionable Keepers' Collection Tour, which lets small groups look into the museum's archives to see sporting equipment, trophies and more that members of the public don't often get to enjoy.

**19.00:** Restaurant Farmer's Daughters shines a light on some of the best seasonal ingredients from Gippsland, an area situated to Victoria's southeast, cooked over wood and coal in an open kitchen. Expect dishes such as alpine trout and caviar, lobster raviolo or venison with beetroot and plum,

depending on the time of year. It's the ideal place to explore how Melbourne's chefs make the most of all the plentiful produce right on their doorstep. For a real end-of-trip blowout, pair with local wines then say yes to an expertly mixed, seasonal after-dinner cocktail at The Rooftop bar. **TW**

### BOOK IT

**Audley Travel** can arrange a 21-day, tailor-made Southeast Discovered trip with three nights in Melbourne from £5,950 per person, based on two sharing and travelling between April and September. The itinerary also visits Adelaide, the Barossa Valley, Grampians National Park, Port Fairy, Apollo Bay, Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Includes international flights with Emirates, internal flights, transfers, rental car and excursions. [audleytravel.com](https://audleytravel.com)

**Gold Medal** has a 13-day trip with three nights each in Melbourne and Sydney, along with the Mornington Peninsula and Phillip Island, from £4,489, departing September 2, 2026. The price includes flights with Emirates and Qantas, car hire, private transfers and tours of Melbourne's laneways, cricket ground, penguin viewing and a Sydney Opera House tour. [goldmedal.co.uk](https://goldmedal.co.uk)

**Emirates** offers London to Melbourne return flights from £1,129. [emirates.com](https://emirates.com)



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