

# 48 HOURS

## PERTH

Now you can fly direct, what's worth seeing in Western Australia's boom town? Ben Lerwill finds out

**T**his is Perth's moment in the sun - if that's not too strange a thing to say about a city that sees more sunshine than any other in Australia.

Traditionally overshadowed by Sydney, Melbourne and the charms of the east coast, Perth has spent the past 10 years quietly metamorphosing into somewhere with real big-city clout.

And with the launch of Qantas's new non-stop service from Heathrow last month - a 16-hour, 45-minute flight using a

787-9 Dreamliner - it's about to become simpler to reach.

The mining boom that gripped Western Australia in the middle of the last decade saw money and investment poured into the state capital, and while the boom itself has tailed off, the city has kept up the momentum.

Arts spaces share the map with parklands, funky new hotels continue to be unveiled, and the food and drink scene - as you'd expect from a major Aussie metropolis - has become genuinely world-class.

You'll find a small handful of must-see sights, but much of the appeal lies in soaking up the bright, confident feel of a city that's found its feet. And with big draws like the Margaret River region relatively close at hand, it's a fine gateway to the wider state too.

**DAY ONE**  
09.00: Start the day in the manner of all right-thinking

locals - that is, with a proper cup of coffee. The Mary Street Bakery on St George's Terrace performs the dual function of being centrally located and serving a good flat white. It also has some seriously inventive breakfast dishes, from coconut chia pudding



09.30: London Court



14.30: Kings Park

→ with blackberry gel to fried chicken on buttermilk pancakes. [marystreetbakery.com.au](http://marystreetbakery.com.au)

**9.30:** Wander the shopping avenues and street-art-splashed laneways of the central business district – Wolf Lane in particular is almost a de facto art gallery. Look out too for London Court, a bizarre mock-Tudor street built in the 1930s to appease homesick poms. Then walk the short distance to Yagan Square, a major new public space, which opened last month. Its design was inspired by the region's indigenous heritage.

[mra.wa.gov.au](http://mra.wa.gov.au)

**10.30:** On the other side of Yagan Square lies Northbridge, one of the city's hippest and most diverse districts. It's well-lined with bars, boutiques and restaurants, and is also home to the Perth Cultural Centre – a pedestrianised complex with an urban orchard (you can pick free strawberries if you're lucky), the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and the even better Art Gallery of Western Australia.

[artgallery.wa.gov.au](http://artgallery.wa.gov.au)

**12.30:** Have lunch at Northbridge favourite Bivouac, which uses local produce to create a lively menu of light bites and more substantial dishes.



**The beach itself is a stunner: more than half a mile of pale sands backed by dunes and pine trees**

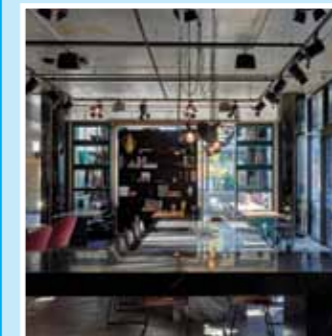
Soft-shell crab tacos, goat chops and octopus all feature.

[bivouac.com.au](http://bivouac.com.au)

**14.30:** If there's one Perth attraction you don't want to miss, it's Kings Park. A handsome swathe of green set on a high shoulder of land, it grants superb views out across both the Swan River and the steel and glass towers of the skyline. You'll also find a number of walking trails leading through its botanic gardens. Allow yourself a couple of hours to enjoy it all at leisure.

**17.00:** Back in the centre, use the city's fairly priced rail system (or grab an Uber) to make the 20-minute journey to Cottesloe Beach, Perth's most popular coastal hang-out. The beach itself is a stunner: more than half a mile of pale sands backed by dunes and pine trees. Have a late afternoon dip or just walk the beach and enjoy the sunset. →

## Where to stay: Perth



### SAVE

Tribe Perth is a new 126-room property in West Perth, close to Kings Park. It markets itself as "affordable boutique luxury", and guests can expect a youthful, on-trend vibe and a communal dining area. Rooms are stylish but functional. Doubles from £87, room-only.

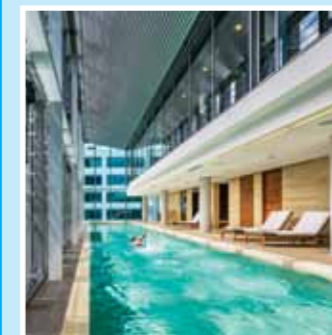
[tribehotels.com.au](http://tribehotels.com.au)



### SPEND

Similarly new is the smart InterContinental City Centre Perth, which has an excellent location in the heart of the CBD. Its 240 rooms are set across 16 storeys. There's a focus on showcasing Western Australian artworks, and an emphasis on local produce in the bars and restaurants. Doubles from £180 room-only.

[ihg.com](http://ihg.com)



### SPLURGE

Named one of the best hotels in the world by *Condé Nast Traveler*, Como The Treasury is one for high-flying clients. It's a gloriously elegant affair, bringing splashes of modernity to what were once state buildings, and has top-class restaurants and an award-winning spa. Doubles from around £298, B&B.

[comohotels.com/thetreasury](http://comohotels.com/thetreasury)



19.00: Il Lido Italian Canteen



10.00: Fremantle Tours



13.00: Quokka, Rottnest Island



12.00: Fremantle Markets

➔ **19.00:** See out the day with a meal at Il Lido Italian Canteen, a hugely popular restaurant just off the beach. Choose a private area or join the locals on a communal dining table, then take your pick from a seafood-heavy Italian menu and an enjoyably wide range of cocktails and wines. [illido.com.au](http://illido.com.au)

## DAY TWO

**08.30** Make the most of the local rail network by taking the half-hour train journey along the coast to the suburb of Fremantle, technically a separate city but these days very much part of the Perth visitor experience. 'Freo' is all charm, with streets of 19th-century facades and a sunny, go-slow atmosphere. Try breakfast at Moore & Moore Cafe, which doubles as a modern art gallery. [mooreandmoorecafe.com](http://mooreandmoorecafe.com)

**10.00:** Join one of the walking or cycling tours offered by fresh-faced new outfit Fremantle Tours. Enthusiastic local guides will fill you in on Fremantle's heritage, which covers everything from convict-era prisons to one of the country's most

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successful microbreweries, Little Creatures. Priced from £14 for a two-hour walk, or £30 for a three-hour bike ride. [fremantletours.com.au](http://fremantletours.com.au)

**12.00:** If you're here on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday, go to the Victorian market hall, which has hosted Fremantle's covered food market since 1897. It's a colourful affair, with bakeries, juice bars, fruit stalls and street food vendors creating a heady concoction of smells. Fill up on sausage at The Bratwurst Bar then head to Original Fremantle Fudge for dessert. [fremantlemarkets.com.au](http://fremantlemarkets.com.au)

**13.00:** Catch the 25-minute ferry from Fremantle Docks to Rottnest

Island. The one-time island prison has been reinvented as an offshore pleasure spot, and makes for a dreamy place to snorkel, stroll or cycle (snorkel gear and bikes are available to hire). Measuring about seven miles by three, its pretty shoreline is scalloped by clear-water bays. It's also well known for its very visible population of quokkas: tiny, cute marsupials. Give yourself a full afternoon here if you can, or even a full day. You'll find a tourist office plus a few stores and cafes close to the ferry terminal. [rotnnestisland.com](http://rotnnestisland.com)

**18.00:** Back in Fremantle, indulge in a popular evening pastime by heading down to the fishing harbour for ocean-fresh fish and chips from Cicerello's. [cicerellos.com.au](http://cicerellos.com.au)

**19.30:** Hop back on the train to central Perth for a night on the town, taking in drinking spots such as The Standard - which has a great outdoor terrace - and Varnish on King, where the whisky list includes close to 150 varieties. [thestandardperth.com.au](http://thestandardperth.com.au) [varnishonking.com](http://varnishonking.com) 

## Where next?

**Margaret River:** Located three hours south of Perth, this highly enjoyable region offers wineries, craft breweries, surf beaches, farm shops, galleries and more.

**Swan Valley:** This slow-paced wine region is even closer to the city. There are various options for river cruises and coach tours from Perth itself.

**Geraldton:** A relaxed coastal city 250 miles north of Perth. Continuing northwards, you'll reach WA highlights such as dolphin magnet Monkey Mia and whale shark hotspot Ningaloo Reef.



PICTURES: MARK BOSKELL; RUSSELL ORD; WALK INTO LUXURY