

Favorite Kid-Friendly Activities in Sydney

Sydney, 7 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: Written by Michelle Duffy of Wandermom.com for Ciao Bambino.

Sydney is a truly enjoyable place to visit. From the sweeping views of the famous harbor with the iconic Opera House on show to the many great restaurants, a long list of fun family activities and—my favorite—varied and excellent beaches. There is something for everyone in your family.

Although Sydney may seem too far away, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to take a direct flight from Los Angeles or San Francisco. Flights leave late at night and, both times I've been to Australia, this meant that my children slept for most of the flight and didn't suffer too much with jet-lag.

Note: Be sure to read the Day Notes for the kid-friendly details on recommended attractions.

Ciao Bambino provides tips and advice around all things related to traveling with kids and is a guide to the best kid friendly hotels.



Day 1 - Sydney

DAY NOTE: The Powerhouse Museum

Our visit to the Powerhouse Museum, a hands-on science and technology museum, was one of the highlights of our recent trip to Sydney - and at AUD\$40 for our visit, it also ended up being the best value for money of all the attractions we visited. With two technology-hungry boys, I've been to enough science and technology museums to judge that the Powerhouse Museum really has a fantastic set of exhibits. The exhibit space is well organized, well labeled and with a good balance of interactive versus observational material.

We spent most of our time in just two exhibits: Cyberworlds and Experimentations. In Cyberworlds, the video of Ada Lovelace taking Charles Babbage forward through time to see the effects his Difference Engine had on the world was fun – if the acting was more than a little hokey. Following on to learn about Alan Turing and his work in deciphering the German Enigma codes during WWII was an easy transition. The rest of the Cyberworlds exhibit has interactive stations where visitors can play with digital photography – including adding sounds and image effects to a mini-movie – and large displays on the history and use of digital control systems, in traffic management for example.

The Experimentations area area is made up of multiple rooms of interactive exhibits covering light, radioactivity, magnetism + electricity, chemistry, taste, smell and chocolate (yum!). It seems to me that many science and technology museums present technical material in bright playful colors and short, punchy sentences – with little meaningful detail. Not so in this area of the Powerhouse Museum. There's plenty of detailed information on many of the exhibits especially in the section on radioactivity. (Watch out for Moto, the dancing robot!)



Powerhouse Museum

Science, technology and decorative arts

Day 2 - Sydney

DAY NOTE: Favorite Sydney Beaches

Bondi Beach

Our morning at Bondi Beach was the high point of the trip for my boys. Bondi can get very busy on the weekends, so we planned to have our surfing lessons with Let's Go Surfing on a weekday to avoid the crowds. Let's Go Surfing is based on a small street at the far north end of Bondi just across from the Biddigal Reserve park – a convenient and shaded area for a picnic lunch. I was impressed by the level of organization demonstrated by the

surfing school. There were at least three school groups and a couple of other private lessons in session while my boys took their lesson. We were offered right-sized equipment, gear storage and additional sun protection within 5 minutes of walking in the door of their admittedly tiny location. I can't speak to the instructor's skill but his encouragement and enthusiasm obviously hit home because for the rest of our vacation my children begged to take another surfing lesson.

Bronte Beach

Bronte Beach has lots to offer for families. The beach itself backs onto a park with play structures and bbq facilities. There are showers and changing rooms at each end of the beach, there are plenty of lifeguards on the beach and flags denoting safe areas for swimming and playing. Younger children might be nervous of the surf at Bronte since it's pretty rough but on our visit there were plenty of children in the three to five age group playing at the shore and having a whale of a time running away from the surf and back into the water between waves.

Manly Beach

The ferry to Manly Beach (from downtown Sydney, 30 minutes) is an experience in itself. The views of Sydney Harbor and the city itself are spectacular. When you're sitting on the beach at Manly, it's easy to feel as if you're at a resort away from all the stresses of everyday life. The Corso is an Italian-style promenade. On one side, there's a wide paved pedestrian path just next to the beach and on the other, there's a long street with cafes, restaurants, gelato shops and yes, souvenir shops.



Bondi Beach

Sydney's most famous beach



Bronte Beach

Better than Bondi



Manly Beach

Great surfing beach

Day 3 - Sydney

DAY NOTE: Sydney Aquarium

At AU\$85 (US\$77) for a family ticket, I think the Sydney Aquarium is expensive. That said, the Dugongs and the oceanarium easily make the visit worthwhile. The exhibits are organized into Southern Rivers, Northern Rivers, Southern Oceans and Northern Oceans – not that this really matters when you're chasing kids around a dimly-lit room with sharks swimming



overhead. My boys were fascinated by the platypus and we got to see the dugongs happily chomping on monster heads of lettuce. This is a large Aquarium, so allow plenty of time for your visit. You'll learn about many aquatic and pelagic species, some of which are only found in Australian waters.



Sydney Aquarium

Sharks, dugongs and 650 other marine species in one aquatic theme park

Day 5 - Sydney

DAY NOTE: Taronga Zoo

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As you enter the zoo (at the main entrance), the path splits, with Australian animals to your left and Asian and African animals to your right. The paths merge at the bottom of the hill at the Southern Oceans exhibit (the seals and penguins). Within the Australian animals section you'll find Kangaroos, koalas, wombats and plenty of exotic birds. The Backyard to Bush exhibit is hands-down the best integrated presentation I've ever seen on how humans and animals co-exist, educating about animals which live in and around our homes – from insects to domestic pets – and highlighting simple ways in which we can all be more environmentally friendly. The garden has a pit toilet, a recycling station and a kitchen garden with information on how co-planting helps plants and animals. This real home in the zoo then leads into a petting zoo with a playground for younger children.

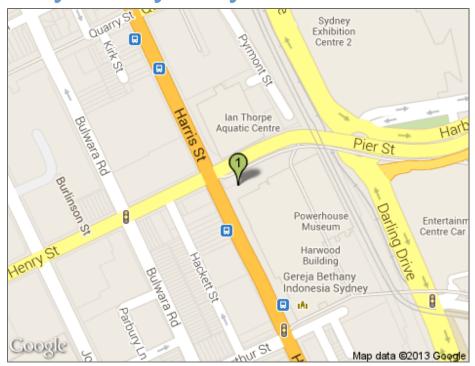


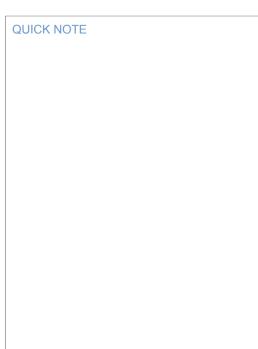
Taronga Zoo

Best view and zoo in the world



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contact:

tel: +61 (0)2 9217 0111 http://www.powerhousemuse um.com

location:

500 Harris St Sydney NSW 2007

hours:

Daily 9:30a-5p



Powerhouse Museum

DESCRIPTION: The Powerhouse Museum, a nineteenth century institution which has reinvented itself, offers something to satisfy every possible visitor. Its immense collection ranges from decorative arts to crafts, social history, science and technology. Apart from old favorites like the Strasburg Clock, the museum provides an innovative, high technology approach to displays including touch-screens, audio phones and a variety of other hands-on experiences. There is also a shop, restaurant and outdoor cafe. © wcities.com

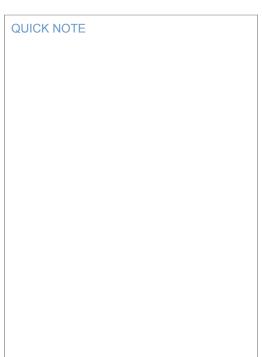


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Day 2 - Sydney





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contact:

tel: +61 (0)2 9130 5311 http://www.sydney.com.au/bo ndi-beach.htm

location:

Bondi Beach Sydney NSW



Bondi Beach

DESCRIPTION: You simply must visit Bondi Beach at some point during your stay. Hee you will find the archetype for Australian Beach - a beautiful long quarter moon of sand wedged between two rocky headlands, covered with the beautiful people, tourists, locals, kids and leathery old men many of whom have probably spent their whole lives within cooee of the place.

When you tire of the surf and the sand, hit the strip behind. The streets are crammed full of cute cafes, bookshops, resturants, and clothes shops. And check out the local 'Bondi hippies' (translation: overtly laid-back and beautiful creative professionals). © NileGuide



contact:

tel: +61 (0)2 9255 1788 fax: +61 2 9265 9222(Tourist Information)

location:

Bronte Marive Drive Sydney NSW 2024

hours:

24 hrs (except during dangerous conditions)



Bronte Beach

DESCRIPTION: Popular with all age groups, Bronte Beach is close to the inner city and has managed to retain a great deal of its original charm. Choose between a superb body surfing beach and a twenty-five meter ocean pool. The large adjoining park offers picnic and barbecue facilities as well as shade and is patronized by an extraordinary, multi-cultural mix of families at weekends. Three inspectors patrol the beach daily (9am-7pm) between October and May; volunteer lifesavers are also on duty at the weekend and public holidays (Summer only). Parking very limited. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: +61 2 9976 1430(Tourist Information)

fax: +61 2 9977 2950

lax. +61 2 9977 2950

http://www.manlyweb.com.au/

location:

East Esplanade Sydney NSW 1655



Manly Beach

DESCRIPTION: Manly is all about the laid back life. And tourists. And sun. And surf.

Plenty of people base themselves hereabouts during their stay in Sydney, and there are worse places to base yourself if you're mostly interested in the water. There are a couple of choices of beach - the main beach, Manly, justifiably famous - occasionally kicking up a good ocean swell (there are plenty of board hiring places). If you're a little more mild-mannered (or just can't surf), then there's cute Shelly Beach, which is protected from the Pacific's moods. Manly is, in some ways, the home of Australian surfing: Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku rode a plank of shaped wood here back in 1915, and this surf crazed nation has never looked back.

Come out on the famous Manly Ferry, which chugs its way over - as it has for upteem years - from Peir 3 at Circular Quay. It's a cheap Harbour Cruise - you'll pass almost touching distance from the Opera House - and a great way to see Sydney's finest asset.



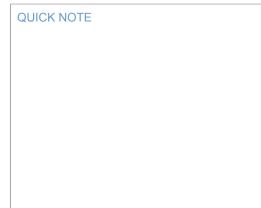


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Day 3 - Sydney





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contact:

tel: +61 (0)2 8251 7800 fax: +61 (0)2 9262 2385 http://sydneyaquarium.myfun. com.au/

location:

Wheat Road Sydney NSW 2000

hours:

Daily 9am-10pm. Seal Sanctuary closes at 7pm in summer



Sydney Aquarium

DESCRIPTION: Let's face it; most people come for the sharks. And there are eight different 'jaws' experiences spread throughout the 60 tanks and 3 ocean pools on the city's western edge in Darling Harbor.

Sure there are platypus and Murray Cod; and creatures from the big reef up north and sea dragons and penguins from icy waters down south. Two big dugongs – Pig and Wuru – occupy their own purpose-built habitat; Mermaid Lagoon.

All up, about 12,000 marine animals from 650 different species make up the Aquarium's inventory. But it's the Shark HQ (only opened in mid 2010) that attracts the most interest. And it's easy to see why. The exhibit welcomes you with an animatronic Great White replica suspended from the ceiling, just to set the mood. A hatchery with baby sharks also has live eggs on display too. A path eventually leads to two glass tunnels that take you beneath the glass enclosures where you can view these majestic man-eating machines from underneath



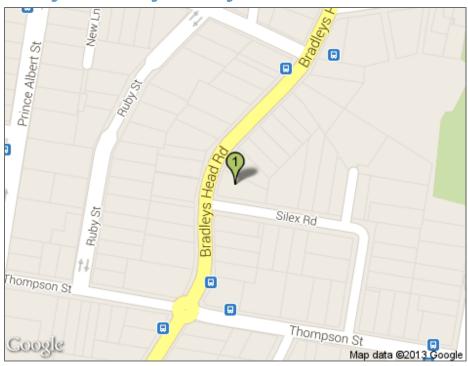
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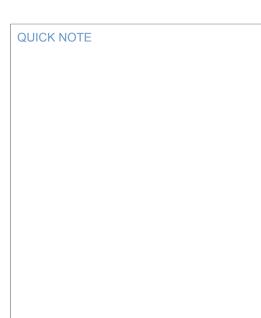


as they prowl and slither about. Time your visit for the mid morning feeding, or better still, feed them yourself from a glass-bottomed boat. © NileGuide



Day 5 - Sydney





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contact:

tel: +61 (0)2 9969 2777 http://www.zoo.nsw.gov.au

location:

Bradley's Head Road Sydney NSW 2088

hours:

Daily 9am-5pm (until 9pm Jan)



Taronga Zoo

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Come early, particularly in Summer, if you want to get close to the animals at all. And make sure you see the gorillas!

DESCRIPTION: Catching the ferry over from Circular Quay for a day at the Zoo is one of the delights of living in Sydney. For surely there is no urban zoo with quite as spectacular a setting as this one, sited on a headland that juts out into the harbor.



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Catching that ferry can be one of the delights of visiting Sydney, too. For a starter, the collection of Australian animals here is great: all the critters you'd expect - kangaroos and koalas and so forth. And that's just to start, because the zoo also homes all the excellent international beasts a soul could hope for : the elephants and the zebras and the lions and the hippos and turtles and snakes and the weird legless lizards and lemurs and gorillas (they're SO big)...

It's simply a splendid place to bring kids. Or adults. © NileGuide



Sydney Snapshot

Local Info

What's the definition of envy? Sydney Come to think of it, a few other deadly sins might equally apply. Is it sinful to be greedy? Not here. If you lust after one of the most desirable environments or fancy consuming fine wine and diverse foods, this is your town. After such gluttonous, ravenous and lustful behavior, does lazing on a beach, a boat, a bench or a hotel balcony equate to sloth? Never. Sydneysiders call that'balance'. And the only wrath you'll likely experience is that of family and friends jealous as hell for not having joined you living it up in Sydney.

Is it any wonder Sydney is often referred to as'Sin City'? So come prepared. It's such a physical place too. From craggy sandstone cliffs and golden surf beaches, to hidden harbor bay, verdant green gardens and wild national parkland hugging the foreshore, few cities demand as much active, outdoor immersion.

Take a dip in North Sydney pool in the shadows of the Harbor Bridge, watch whales frolic in a secluded inlet, hop on a ferry to Manly, then finish with a surf in the Pacific just in time for lunch. Iconic landmarks- that levitating bridge, that beach, that Opera House with its wings spread like a giant white swan taking flightmake you feel like you've arrived in the most exciting city on earth.

But it's hard to escape that harbor. Why would you want to? Even many of the museums and art galleries have water views. As one of the deepest, largest urban expanses of water in the world, the interlocking fingers of land and sea are

the cultural, historical and spiritual heart of the city. This slinky, sinuous, yacht-flecked waterway somehow never seems far away."It's beautiful, of course it's beautiful-the harbor," said Mark Twain."But that isn't all of it, only half of it. Sydney[the physical city] is the other half, and it takes both of them together to ring the supremacy bell. God made the harbor, and that's all right, but Satan made Sydney."

Elsewhere, Sydney looks and feels like an open air museum: the city's complex multicultural history, whether indigenous, colonial or migrant, is evident everywhere: in the sandstone alleyways of The Rocks or facades of stately Victorian buildings, in the Aboriginal rock carvings near Bondi and Manly, in the Vietnamese or Italian restaurants not far from Lakemba mosque.

The wild summer storms that come thundering in from the south generate only some of the city's spark and verve. The fireworks extravaganza of New Year's Eve is hard to equal- anywhere. There is a flourishing arts scene. Hot on the fiery heels of New Year's Eve is the Sydney Festival, a month long cultural feast culminating on Australia Day, 26th January. There are music festivals, short and feature film festivals, the biggest Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in the world, plus a writers' festival. And it's not yet the end of May. With winter comes an avalanche of football codes and other sports. But Sydney doesn't really'do' winter, at least not in the northern hemisphere sense. July, the coldest month, averages 55-60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Before long, spring blooms, daylight saving looms, bodies begin to tan, the water warms, light brightens and that brash

Sydney persona is back. Call it pretentious, call it brazen, some call it vain; that air of confidence the city exudes. Call it what you like; locals might call it pride. Spend a bit of time here and you'll understand why. What was that definition of envy, again?

© NileGuide

Fun Facts

Sydney State: New South Wales

Country: Australia

Sydney By The Numbers:

Population: 164,547(city);

4,085,578(metropolitan area) Average Summer Temperature: 22 °C/ 72 °F Average Winter Temperature: 12 °C/ 53 °F Most Precipitation: 1130 mm/ 44.5 in

Elevation: 6 m/ 20 ft

Quick Facts:

Electricity: 240 volts, 50Hz, angled two or three-pronged plugs Time Zone: GMT/UTC +10 Country Dialing Code: 61 Area Code: 02

Did You Know?

Sydney was first settled by the British in 1788 when 400 settlers and 750 convicts arrived on the First Fleet. The convicts were sentenced to Australia for crimes as small as stealing food.

The name of the Aboriginal people that inhabited Sydney, prior to European settlement, were the Cadigal, who in turn are part of the Darug Nation or language group.

(C)

