



nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



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Pokolbin Wineries

Sydney, 2 Days

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Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: The Hunter Valley - a couple of hour's drive North of Sydney - is, due to climactic fortune and perfect soils, one of Australia's winery centres. The region of Pokolbin (there's no real town, more a collection of wineries scattered around the Cessnock area) is filled with marvellous wineries, most of whom offer tastings. There are also heaps of accomodation offerings for all but the most budget conscious, and combined with the lovely scenery, it all makes for a rather fabulous weekend!

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Sydney

DAY NOTE: Your first step is to make sure that you have hired a car (though there are also many guided tours, leaving from Sydney, which are an option if you're into that kind of thing). Certainly, the public transport links are particularly primitive in this neck of the woods. Spend the morning wending your way towards Pokolbin - take your time, and if you feel tempted to stop somewhere, then do. Much of the coast along this way is lovely, and if it's summer, you might feel tempted to take a dip. Keep a particular lookout for the estuary of the Hawkesbury River, which is particularly nice. There are dozens and dozens of wineries amongst the rolling hills of the Pokolbin area. A nice thing to do is head towards the Garden Terrace at the Hunter Valley Gardens - a particularly pleasant place to grab a quick spot of lunch in leafy surrounds, while you catch your breath, stretch your legs, and plan your next move. Later, visit a few wineries. A couple of options here - you can check into your hotel (see below) and then catch the Hunter Valley Shuttle bus, which will ferry you from winery to winery, or you can drive - but do be aware that Australia's police force strictly enforces a .05 blood alcohol limit, and so it's probably best that your driver does not imbibe. The Pokolbin wineries come in all shapes and sizes. Some of Australia's biggest and best known have a presence - Lindemans, for instance, is a transglobal brand nowadays. Nonetheless, they keep a presence in the Hunter, where they were founded. Their cellar door is certainly no boutique operation, but it is very well done and makes for a fun visit. McGuigans Wines is a well run and professional mid-sized operation, while Binbadgen is a smaller winery with a hot reputation and a friendly cellar door. There comes a time when it's time to move on - to your hotel if you didn't check in earlier, or to a restaurant if you did. There are a wide range of B&Bs in the area, and some classier options, too. Amongst these the Tuscany Wine Estate is hideously expensive, but luxurious. A little further down the slippery pole (it costs about 1/5 as much) is the lovely rural establishment The Bluebush Estate which makes for a good base, handy to most things. Amongst restaurants, The Star Anise, does Asian fusion (Australia's national food) while Chez Pok also does a modern Australian fusion. Finally, should you have the energy and desire after your day drinking in the sun, you might want to visit Harrigans Irish Pub, which is a fun place with a good ambience (and which also does accomodation upstairs).

probably best to allow yourself a little time and space: a nice spot of breakfast and the local papers at your hotel perhaps. And then back to the wineries! Our recommendations? Lake's Folly make excellent wine that sells out quicker than they can make it. Tyrell's is another high profile, high quantity maker, while Pepper Tree Wines is a more boutique maker. Later in the evening, it is time to wend your way back to Sydney. Try to avoid the worst of rush hour, when the highway can become extremely congested, if you can.



The Garden Terrace @ Hunter Valley Gardens

Garden Tea Time

Day 2

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location:
PMB 20
Metford Delivery Center NSW
2323

The Garden Terrace @ Hunter Valley Gardens

DESCRIPTION: The Garden Terrace Restaurant offers the opportunity for a pleasant morning or afternoon tea amidst 60 acres of internationally themed gardens. Options include scones, muffins, and lunch options for the whole family. © NileGuide

Day 2

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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 flight- make 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 sleek, 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?

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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.

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