nileGUIDE

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

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Top 5 Free Things To Do in Perth

Perth, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: Don't let being on a budget stop you from enjoying Perth. From Cottesloe Beach west of the centre of Perth, down south to a stroll in Fremantle, or back to the crown of Perth to the glorious Kings Park, Perth's outdoor attractions are numerous and nearly always free. You can also see local, Aboriginal and international artworks at the Art Gallery of Western Australia or take a day hike in John Forrest National Park.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Perth

DAY NOTE: Much of the best of Perth is outdoors - and the outdoors is free! There's no need to blow your budget to have a good time in Perth. Choose from botanic gardens, beaches, national parks and harbours for your stroll, or take it inside to the Art Gallery.

Kings Park & Botanic Gardens
Perth city views, parkland and natural bush

Cottesloe Beach
White sandy beaches

John Forrest National Park
Picnic in old forests

Art Gallery of Western Australia
Main collection of WA artworks

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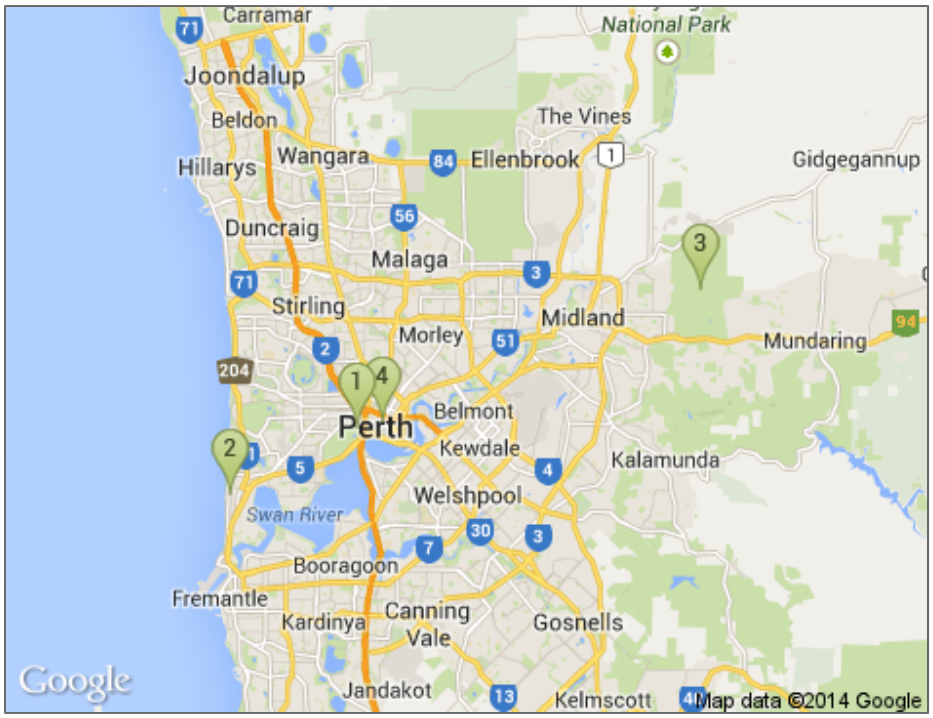
Day 1 - Perth



QUICK NOTE

DAY NOTE: Much of the best of Perth is outdoors - and the outdoors is free! There's no need to blow your budget to have a good time in Perth. Choose from botanic gardens, beaches, national parks and harbours for your stroll, or take it inside to the Art Gallery.

contact:
tel: +61 8 9480 3600
fax: +61 8 9322 5064
http://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au/kings-park

location:
Fraser Avenue
Perth WA 6005

1 Kings Park & Botanic Gardens

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:
Grab meat at a supermarket then use a free barbecue in Kings Park to cook up a storm

DESCRIPTION: Kings Park, Perth's answer to Central Park, is a short walk uphill from the city centre and has 400 hectares of parks and bush to enjoy. Views over the city of Perth and the Swan River abound from the front of the park, where you can walk the Federation Walkway and explore the Botanic Gardens with thousands of examples of native wildflowers, trees and birdlife. Stop for a meal at Fraser's Restaurant or grab a snack at the cafe; watch the kids play at the Synergy Parkland or if you're feeling fit, climb the DNA Tower.
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editor

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contact:
tel: +61 8 9285 5000
fax: +61 8 9285 5001
http://www.westernaustralia.com/en/Pages/Attraction.aspx

location:
109 Broome Street
Cottesloe WA 6011

2 Cottesloe Beach

bram souffreau

DESCRIPTION: One of the most popular beaches in Perth, Cottesloe is easily accessible by train and sports a great array of cafes, restaurants and pubs along Marine Parade, the main street nearby. Take a dip with the local early morning swimmers, have a picnic lunch on the sand or on the grass under the pine trees, and watch the sunset over the Indian Ocean in the evening. Regular patrols from the local Surf Lifesaving Club help make "Cott" a safe and fun place to swim. © NileGuide

contact:
tel: +61 8 9298 8344
fax: +61 8 9298 9426
http://www.dec.wa.gov.au/

location:
28 km east of Perth
Mundaring WA 6056

3 John Forrest National Park

wcities

DESCRIPTION: Visiting a forest while in Western Australian should be on the top of your list. John Forrest National Park is one of the oldest and most-loved picnic areas located in the Darling Ranges. The main tree species found in the area are Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo, home to an abundance of bird life. Take time to enjoy the extensive walking trails and visit the lookout for the fantastic views. Other features are the 100 year-old railway tunnel, the two waterfalls and rock pool. The park has a tavern and several picnic areas with barbecues. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: +61 8 9492 6600
fax: +61 8 9492 6648
http://www.artgallery.wa.gov.au

location:
James Street Mall
Perth WA 6000

4 Art Gallery of Western Australia

editor

DESCRIPTION: The Western Australian Art Gallery in Northbridge is visible from the central train station, so look up and see what current exhibitions are being advertised. Permanent exhibitions including an excellent collection of Aboriginal art are always free for all visitors, and guided tours are also available. You can relax in the art gallery's cafe afterwards or wander through the gift shop for some art-related souvenirs.
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Perth Snapshot

Local Info

The Western Australian capital of Perth is a destination for nature lovers, beachcombers, wine tasters, and anyone who wants to relax in a laid back city with a summer atmosphere. From swimming with dolphins to taking surfing lessons, getting to know the local vineyards or enjoying multicultural cuisine at an outdoor restaurant table, there are numerous reasons to visit the city of Perth.

Perth is famous for a few unique reasons: as the city in Australia which has the highest number of sunshine hours each year; as the City of Lights when astronaut John Glenn orbited above it during the night, and Perth people switched on all the lights for him; as the most isolated city in the world, with the nearest city over 1,300 miles away.

Its first inhabitants, the local Aboriginal Nyungar tribe, date back some 40,000 to 60,000 years, and have a rich history and culture that they are more than willing to share with visitors. White settlement began with the British establishing the Swan River Colony in 1829; convicts arrived from 1850 onwards and contributed much to the building of Perth. It was officially proclaimed a city in 1856 and Western Australia became part of the new nation of Australia in 1901.

Situated on the Swan River, Perth people themselves divide the city into north and south of the river. Most of the population live in close proximity to the coast, making Perth a long city stretching some 60 miles from north to south, with more suburbs in planning. The city also reaches towards the east, with the low hills of the Darling Scarp marking the boundary. The west coast of the city extends along the Indian Ocean and watching the sun set into the ocean is a perfect way to end a Perth day.

While the initial influence of the culture of the British settlers is still apparent, Perth has become a very multicultural city and there is evidence of this in the cafes, restaurants and shops of both Perth and its port of Fremantle. These days, the population is shaped by citizens of British, Italian, Chinese, Eastern European, South African and South-East Asian origin, along with significant groups from smaller countries or regions.

Most Perth visitors will start in thecity centre, perhaps with a visit to the Perth Mint or a shopping trip in the Murray Street Mall or the Hay Street Mall. From here it is a short stroll to the Swan River foreshore, with the Swan Bells ringing to guide the way. The Barrack Street Jetty houses restaurants and pubs as well as the ferry terminal for trips to South Perth, Fremantle and the Swan Valley. Looking up past the Convention Centre, the natural beauty of Kings Park looks down over the city, with native bushland, wildflowers and war memorials to explore.

Over the other side of the railway line, the cultural area ofNorthbridge includes the Art Gallery of Western Australia, the Western Australian Museum and the State Library all arranged around a central square. Northbridge is also the place to be for nightclubs, pubs, restaurants and cafes, and it buzzes with activity particularly on the weekends.

The port city ofFremantle is home to the Western Australian Maritime Museum and the Fremantle Markets, as well as the Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour where it is practically obligatory to enjoy a meal of fish and chips while sitting outside next to the water. Fremantle is also the most convenient place to catch a ferry toRottnest Island, a sanctuary just visible from the coast of Perth where you can relax in a vehicle-free environment, spending the day snorkelling at numerous small beach coves or cycling around the island.

In the eastern suburbs of Perth, theSwan Valley is the right destination for wine lovers and foodies, with numerous vineyards offering award-winning meals to complement their varied local wines; a dessert stop at the Margaret River Chocolate Factory is a great idea, too. The nearby Caversham Wildlife Park offers the best chance for visitors to see and interact with some of Australia's unique animals, like kangaroos, koalas and wombats, as well as to see how a typical Australian farm operates.

Visitors with time to spare to explore other parts of Western Australia close to Perth can travel to the south-west of the state to see ancient forests, great surfing beaches and the large Margaret River wine region. To the east, the key attraction is Wave Rock and to the north, the natural stone sculpture of the Pinnacles desert calls.
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History

Perth beginnings: Long before white settlers came to Perth, the local Aboriginal Nyungar tribe lived all over the south-west of Western Australia, including where Perth now stands, for between 40,000 and 60,000 years. It's much more recently that explorers started sailing past Perth: various groups of people came down the Western Australian coast, including the Dutch in the 1600s, the Flemish at the turn of the 17th century and the French in the early 1800s. History tells us that none of these visitors had a favourable opinion of setting up a colony in Perth and it wasn't until the British started looking that the city of Perth really began to be a reality.
British settlement: Captain James Stirling and his ship explored the Perth area in 1827 and he came back to declare the formation of the Swan River Colony in 1829, the year generally accepted as the foundation of Perth. Unfortunately, the plan to establish agriculture in the area of Perth didn't go as well as hoped, and the British then decided to start sending convicts to Perth from 1850, using the prisoners to help build and grow the small city. Queen Victoria offically named Perth a city in 1856; the name is derived from the Scottish city of the same name.
Goldrush: When gold was discovered in outback Western Australia in the 1878s, activity in the state really started to take off, which meant that as the capital city, Perth finally began to grow and prosper. In the 1890s, the population of Perth tripled and city-style infrastructure including railways began to be built. This was also the decade that saw the opening of Fremantle Harbour, the Perth Zoo and the Perth Mint.

Twentieth century Perth: In the early 1900s, Perth continued to grow as a city, adding such landmarks as the University of Western Australia, the Perth to Kalgoorlie pipeline, starting at Mundaring Weir, and the all-important telephone line to Adelaide, helping the world's most isolated city become a little less cut off from the rest of Australia. As the mining industry in the north of the state expanded rapidly with

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large discoveries of iron ore, natural gas, diamonds and various other minerals, Perth grew as it housed the infrastructure and head offices to support these mines. Mining and agriculture were by far the dominant industries of the century for Western Australia, and Perth was the place where these were all controlled.

Tourism takes off: It seems surprising that one relatively minor sports event could change a city so much, but in 1983, a yacht run by Perth businessman Alan Bond won the America's Cup yacht race. This meant that the next cup was to be held in Perth, and it led to a massive makeover of the port city of Fremantle, and a huge boost to the Perth tourist market. The opening of the Burswood Casino complex in 1985 also encouraged large numbers of tourists to visit from Asia, and additional hotels and other tourist infrastructure were created. From the turn of the twenty-first century when budget airlines such as Virgin Blue began to enter the Australian domestic market, it suddenly became much cheaper to fly to Perth and increases in tourism continued.
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Hotel Insights

Perth is a well-known tourist destination and the city's accommodation reflects the interesting and varied mix of today's visitors. Up-market hotels, smaller motels, bed and breakfast establishments, and budget accommodation is found, in the city, by the sea and on the fringes of the hills. The main concentration of accommodation is in the city centre, and its neighboring suburbs of Scarborough and Fremantle.

City Center

The central Perth area is home to the standard range of high quality hotels, and a few treats for those looking for something special. Adelaide Terrace is just two streets back from the spectacular Swan River, and is the city's primary hotel district. It is home to the Sheraton Perth Hotel and the Novotel Langley. The extremely luxurious Hyatt Regency, and the new Duxton Hotel are also nearby.

Just east of the central business district, there are a number of high quality hotels, including the recently opened Park Inn. The luxurious Perth Parkroyal Hotel and the new and exciting Chifley on The Terrace, Perth offer luxury for a price. The comfortable Rydges Perth Hotel and the almost hidden Mercure Hotel are more affordable nearby venues. Whilst the reasonably priced King's Perth Hotel and the cosy Sebel of Perth make up an excellent choice of accommodation in the area.

The north is home to the shopping malls of Hay and Murray Streets, as well as a number of very comfortable, interesting and guest-friendly hotels, including the Holiday Inn, and Hotel Ibis. For something historical, try the Victorian comfort and charm of The Melbourne, and for those who want more than a hotel room, the West End Quest Apartments are the best choice.

Just two kilometers east of the central business district is the spectacularly luxurious Burswood International Resort Casino, complete with casino, restaurants, golf course, theatre and entertainment centre.

On the eastern edge of the central city, adjacent to scenic Kings Park, is the wonderfully situated River View on Mount Street, which has genuine views of the Swan River. The new Mounts Bay Water Apartments and Hotel, also offers apartment-style accommodation.

Just a five-minute ferry ride across the Swan River is South Perth, which is also home to a number of interesting apartment-hotels. The up-market Arlington Quest Apartments and Metro Inn South Perth offer high quality, executive-style accommodation. This area is also home to the imaginative Drake's Apartments with Cars, which offers hire cars with rooms, and the good-value South Perth Apartments.

Fremantle

Accommodation, like everything else in Fremantle, has boomed since it became the first non-American home of the America's Cup. The pre-eminent venue in Fremantle, which has been around for over a century, is the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle. However if you are after a unique colonial experience, Fremantle Colonial Accommodation offers accommodation inside the grounds of the Fremantle Prison. The numerous apartment developments in Fremantle offer good accommodation options, with the South Beach Apartment Hotel being one of the prime choices. The idyllic boat harbors of Fremantle are home to some prime quayside apartment hotels, most notably the Harbour Village Quest Apartments on the Indian Ocean and Pier 21 Resort, located on the Swan River.

Scarborough

About 15 kilometers north of Fremantle is Scarborough, home to some of the city's best swimming and surf beaches. Accommodation has been expanding rapidly here since the construction of the landmark Rendezvous Observation City Hotel in the 1980s. Many apartment-hotels line the beach, including the excellent All Seasons Observation Rise Apartments Perth, the comfortable Seashells Resort Apartments and Sandcastles on Scarborough. The affordable Scarborough Palms Apartments is also popular. However despite the recent developments, the well established Indian Ocean Hotel still remains a popular landmark. Just north of Scarborough Beach is the new harbor development of Sorrento Beach—Hillarys Harbour. This is home to numerous restaurants, cafes, boutique shops, and two excellent apartment hotels, the All Seasons Sorrento Beach Resort, and Hillarys Harbour Resort.

On the northern edge of Perth is Yanchep. This is the spot for lovers of golf, fishing, and walking in the nearby Yanchep National Park. The Yanchep Holiday Village provides ideal accommodation close to all the nearby outdoor activities.

Other Ideas

Although not geographically part of the city of Perth, Rottnest Island is just a short ferry ride away. The weather here is mild, the beaches excellent, the fauna friendly, and the Rottnest Lodge provides the island's most renowned lodgings.

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On the eastern edge of the metropolitan area, discover the beautiful Perth Hills. This region is home to some pleasant bed and breakfast options. Checkout the Asparagus Patch Bed and Breakfast, where you can pick asparagus in season, or the Bungendore Hill Bed and Breakfast, with its views over the city. The pleasant Kalamunda B&B: Whistlepipe Cottage, and the rustic charm of the Catton Hall Country Homestead also offer competitive packages.

Perth also has a range of options for golfers, with numerous public golf courses and private clubs. The luxurious Novotel Vines Resort, located in the lush Swan Valley, is a golf-aficionado's dream, whilst the more affordable Joondalup Resort located in Perth's northern suburbs still offers excellent golf and accommodation.

No city in Australia would be complete without accommodation for backpackers. Perth has some well-located and comfortable accommodation for those on a tight budget. The Grand Central Backpackers, near the Perth Train Station, is very convenient. The Beatty Lodge and Redbackpackers in the Northbridge and West Perth areas, respectively, are within walking access to the central city. Fremantle is home to a number of backpacker lodges, with the YHA Hostel Fremantle being the best. Scarborough Beach offers the Indigo Lodge, giving access to the surf beaches of Perth's western suburbs.
©

Restaurants Insights

Food gurus and wine buffs can tantalize their taste buds in Perth and be sure of an unforgettable experience. Surrounded by vineyards, orchards and market gardens, the city has delicious produce at its doorstep. Add to that the location —on the edge of the Indian Ocean and straddling the sparkling Swan River—the city offers a supply of succulent seafood as well as superb waterside venues. Then there is the dynamic cultural diversity and vivacious ambience. Dining and drinking in and around the city will not leave you disappointed.

City Center

If you are staying in the city centre there is a long list of eateries within walking distance. Head down to Barrack Street Jetty to dine outdoors at Moorings Café, or enjoy river views from Shun Fung on the River.

In the heart of the city, Hay Street and Murray Street Malls are dotted with food favourites, particularly for lunchtime diners. If you are in a hurry grab a delicious croissant. For those who like to indulge in a pancake, take a detour down Carillon Arcade, or if you are in the mood for sushi Jaws Kaiten Sushi should not be missed. Another heartland favorite is the Empire Cafe. For more up-market locations, Joe's Oriental Diner serves a choice selection of Southeast Asian cuisine, or meander through some fusion fare at Globe's Wine Bar and Restaurant.

Strolling along Murray Street you will find the stylish Cockatoo Island Cafe open until mid-evening most nights. For juice fanatics chasing a shot of wheat-grass, there is Java Juice. Next door to His Majesty's Theatre, the delightful CBD is the perfect spot for a pre- or post-theatre meal.

Northbridge

The other direction to head from the mall area is over the railway tracks to Northbridge, a bubbly hive of activity popular with hip suits and in-the-know locals. This area is pumping with trendy clubs, pubs, and cafes. Vultures is a great spot for kerbside viewing, and the brasserie balcony at the Brass Monkey is another place with a streetscape view. For an upbeat contemporary edge head to the Universal Bar, where the partying goes on until the early hours of the morning.

Fremantle

For the best coffee in the state, try Fremantle. The main thoroughfare is known as the"Cappuccino Strip". It is an outdoor haven, that promises a relaxing yet stimulating cafe experience. Both Gino's and Old Papas's are an institution, with delicious Italian dishes and mouth watering cakes. Just a few minutes from the strip you will stumble across an absolute gem for food, beer and music—Clancy's.

While exploring the sights stop for Tea at the Round House or treat yourself to ice cream at the fishing boat harbour. The harbour offers a challenge when deciding what to eat. You cannot go wrong choosing a fish and chip venue, as they all serve fresh fish and offer fast service. Other choices include, the exquisite Chunagon for Japanese cuisine, the Sicilian for a casual ambience and impressive menu, and Sails, with spectacular views across the Indian Ocean.

The Swan River

The Swan River offers a superb scenic backdrop for a number of venues. E Shed market at Victoria Quay has a food hall with entertainment on the weekends. For those with a passion for Sunday brunch The Red Herring has a wonderful location. While the nearby Left Bank is a favorite haunt for members of the Freo Dockers,(a national Australian Football League club), and is generally a very popular watering hole.

Beyond the City

Sitting at the edge of the ocean, alongside the river, in quaint suburbs and picturesque hills, there are many delightful venues worth seeking out. Indulge in a sunset view from the decks of the Blue Duck or take afternoon tea at the fabulous Indiana Tea House overlooking Cottesloe Beach. Enjoy a twilight stroll along Scarborough Beach before an evening meal at Savannahs. Spend a day at Hillarys Boat Harbour and stop for lunch at Jetty's Restaurant.

For exclusive service, excellent food and an exquisite setting, book a table at Meads in Mosman. If you prefer something a little more casual on the water, try JoJo's. South Perth is a haven for delightful restaurants like Plantation Estate and Holy Guacamole. For spectacular city views and stylish dining visit Frasers Restaurant at Kings Park. Whether it be vegetarian or a wood fired pizza, Mt Lawley has a lot to offer for the gastronome. Subiaco also has a fantastic

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selection of high quality eateries like the award winning Witches Cauldron Cafe.

The Swan Valley

The Swan Valley's tourist drive offers a selection of vineyards and attractions along the way. Pop in for lunch at Lamonts, then finish the day at Isadora's in Guildford, or grab a scrumptious burger on the way back to the city. Head to the hills for lunch at Araluen, or enjoy the live music and family atmosphere at the Mundaring Weir Hotel.

Special Tastes

For something a little different, look for marron(freshwater crayfish), kangaroo and emu, all of which appear on menus throughout the city. For wine connoisseurs, there is an excellent choice of vineyards--watch for wines from the Margaret River region, Baldivis and the Swan Valley. If you prefer a nice cold beer, Western Australia has two favorite brews, Redback and Matilda Bay, plus a number of boutique breweries such as Inchant Brewery and Duckstein Brewery. Also worth a visit is the Sail and Anchor in Fremantle--you can tour the in-house brewery and taste a refreshing chilled beer.
©

Nightlife Insights

A thriving cosmopolitan metropolis, Perth has a vibrant spirit, inspiring a unique cultural landscape, and exciting entertainment scene. Perth's nightlife reflects the city's cultural diversity, while the emergence of a dynamic arts scene in the early 1990s has attracted rave reviews and lured international acts to the many events held throughout the year.

To find out what is on in Perth, checkout theWest Australian newspaper for the best daily guide to theatre, cinema and concert programs. For information on the live music and club scene,Hype andX-Press are free street press. With everything on offer, you are sure to find something to suit your tastes and budget.

Pubs and bars There is no particular style to pubs and bars throughout the city, rather a cross-section of contemporary and Australian themes. A bonus is the outdoor life-style and Mediterranean climate, so you will find most drinking establishments have a garden bar. Northbridge, Subiaco and Fremantle tend to be the trendiest drinking hotspots. The Brass Monkey's down-to-earth style makes it a popular pub with a maze of bars to enjoy. The Universal Bar has a more designer feel and attracts trend-setting locals, out to let their hair down and boogie the night away.

If you are chasing some music, then Spirit Sound Bar is for you, and the All New City Hotel provides a low-key drinking haunt.

Since the late 1990s, there has been a revival of Irish pubs. Try Durty Nelly's in the city, Rosie O'Grady's in Fremantle or The Bog in Northbridge. There are also some excellent old-style pubs worth visiting in the outer areas, including the historical Rose and Crown in Guildford, the Kalamunda Hotel and the Mundaring Weir Hotel in the hills.

Nightlife If you like to dance, there is no shortage of clubs from alternative to house and rave. Goth hangouts include the Dominion and the Loft, which has a positive reputation as an alternative gem. For gay friendly clubs, Northbridge is the place to go. Connections has DJs, Club West is an excellent revue club, and the FRISBEE has pumping dance music. Other hip dance venues are the Rise and Zanzibar in Fremantle.

The live music scene has flourished in recent years. You will find pubs with a variety of concerts, including most Irish pubs. The Queens Tavern, and the Newport in Fremantle have great live music. Another well established band venue is the Metropolis, with a combination of DJ and live music. Kulcha is a vibrant venue featuring a fantastic selection of alternative and jazz groups, as well as performance artists. The Fly By Night is an excellent alternative live gig spot in Fremantle, and Clancy's is another favorite with musicians.

Those in the mood for a symphonic experience, check the program at the Perth Concert Hall. For the ultimate outdoor musical experience, the Leeuwin Estate Concert Series concerts are the most sought after tickets on the music calendar.

Festivals offer another option, most introducing local and visiting musicians. The Perth Festival and Festival Fremantle are the two most well known. However, look out for South Perth's summer concerts, Totally Huge, the Pride Festival and Spring in the Valley. Kings Park has a summer music series, as does Araluen, both superb settings to enjoy a bottle of wine, a picnic and soulful sounds. Fremantle Arts Centre also has a wonderful Sunday afternoon courtyard music series.

Events Perth comes alive with events throughout the year that will keep you entertained. The Burswood Dome hosts a string of expos and international entertainers, while the Entertainment Centre is the prime venue for blockbuster shows. For a more intimate setting, The Playhouse, Subiaco Arts Centre and Deckchair present theatrical performances. His Majesty's Theatre is the home of opera, ballet and musicals and the Quarry Amphitheatre is a delightful outdoor venue.

For a fun family day out head to the hills for the Mundaring Festival and the Zig Zag fair. Closer to the city, on the shores of the Swan River, the Claisebrook Carnival is another option. The two biggest crowd-pleasers are the Lotto Skyworks and the Christmas Pageant. If you like a good laugh head to Hillarys Boat Harbour for the annual milk carton regatta. Other districts that host festivals include Rottnest, Joondalup, Mandurah and South Perth. The Buskers Festival in Fremantle is a wonderful street affair. For youth-based performance arts checkout Awesome and Artrage.

Cinema Cinema lovers will not be disappointed, particularly in the summer months. There is a feast of spectacular outdoor cinema venues. Sommerville and Luna in the Park feature alternative movies while Kings Park, Kookaburra Cinema in Mundaring and Araluen present old and contemporary classics.

Sport Sports buffs will find plenty to do in Perth as well. Rally Australia is one of the main events, but there are numerous national league sports clubs. For Australian Rules Football, the West Coast Eagles and the Dockers are the teams to follow. For soccer, always cheer for the Perth Glory, whilst for cricket the Western Warriors are the local favourites. The Wildcats basketball team also have a huge local following. Car fanatics will discover heaven at Barbagello Raceway, while horseracing fans can get their fix at Ascot or Gloucester Park. For those who enjoy a bet, Burswood Casino has more than 140 gaming tables.

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Most hotel receptions will assist with information and bookings, as will tourist information centres. For show, theatre and sports reservations book direct, or phone ticket agent BOCS on+61(0)8 9484 1133 or REDS tickets on+61(0)8 9494 1222.
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Things to Do Insights

To the east are the picturesque Darling Ranges. To the west the sublime Indian Ocean. The meandering Swan River runs through it, whilst in the south, find the ancient Karri and Jarrah forests. North it is golden sands and red-dirt dreamlands. Surrounded by an abundance of natural beauty, a visit to Perth guarantees an awe-inspiring range of tour opportunities.

Getting to Know the City When you arrive in Perth, it is a good idea to orient yourself by jumping on one of the local buses. The Central Area Transit(CAT) system is a free service that loops central Perth. The blue CAT does the north-south round stopping at spots like London Court. The red CAT runs from east to west, including drops at the renowned WACA sports-ground and His Majesty's Theatre.

If you prefer a guided tour, then the City Explorer Tram is an excellent way to travel. It takes in the main sights including Kings Park& Botanic Garden, where you will enjoy a superb vista of the city and Swan River.

Once you have covered the central city follow the river on a ferry from Barrack Street Jetty to Fremantle. On arrival, you will find a similar service to the Perth system called the Fremantle CAT Service. Alternatively, climb on board one of the Fremantle trams, which leave from Kings Square at regular intervals.

The More Exotic If you want something a little different, or indulge in a luxury-chauffeured tour. Perhaps a horseback ride along the Perth foreshore. Or, why not hire a bike from Barrack Street Jetty and soak up the riverside ambience. For a particularly unusual experience, join a ghost walk through some of Fremantle's haunted buildings.

Another option is a scenic flight with Kookabura Air. For those who like to shop, then Let's Go Shopping Tours will escort you to a variety of outlets. Other city tours options include the Perth and Swan River by Night tour, the Aboriginal Heritage Tour and the Perth and Fremantle Morning Sights tour.

Several tourist attractions also offer their own tours. Checkout tours held by the Perth Mint, Fremantle Prison, Kings Park, the Old Observatory and the Perth Zoo.

Beyond the Central Sights While Perth and Fremantle have more than enough to keep you busy, visiting the surrounding areas is a must. Head north to the Sunset Coast, Yanchep National Park and the Pinnacles. Eco Activity Tours does a day trip to these attractions, or if you want to go further afield Bush Ecotours offers a variety of packages, including a tour of the beautiful wildflowers when in season. Another option is the Water, Wildlife and Winery Tour, which follows the coast north, to one of Western Australia's premier attractions, The Aquarium of WA, before heading inland to vineyard territory.

Swan Valley is renowned for its wines, arts and local produce. If you are in town in autumn you might catch the annual local event, Tastes of the Valley, or, later in the year, Spring in the Valley. If not, enjoy the sights on a wagon trail, where you will get the chance to test wines, visit historic sites and view local art.

Boat Torque Cruises combines a peaceful river cruise with a vineyard tour and delicious lunch at Mulberry Farm. Caversham Wildlife Park is situated in West Swan and an interesting way to visit here is on an After Dark at a Wildlife Park tour.

A little further south you will enter the magical hills area. Planet Perth Tours offers an excellent bush tour on horseback that includes a barbecue lunch. You could hire a car and drive the Cala Munnda Heritage Trail. For those chasing an adrenaline rush, try some rock climbing or abseiling with Adventure Out. For the more subdued, treat yourself to a Llama Leisure picnic. Another fun option is a camel trek. The Hills Forest Activity Centre has guided flora and fauna walks, and you can tour the Kanyana Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre to see injured and endangered native animals. For those with a passion for the stars, Perth Observatory has star gazing tours.

Taking to the water Water plays an important part in the local lifestyle. If you have time, a visit to Rottnest Island is not to be missed. Rottnest Express has a day tour to the island and offers whale-watching tours from September until December. Regular ferries run to the island from Barrack Street Jetty, Victoria Quay in Fremantle and Hilarys Boat Harbour. There is plenty to do. The Visitor Centre organises free walking tours from 11.30am-2pm daily. You can hire a bike, and there is excellent snorkeling and diving. Diversity Diving Australia has a selection of dive tours that include Rottnest Island and other spectacular dive sites along the coast. Another great dive site is Penguin Island. Or you can swim with the dolphins in the Cockburn Sound.

If you would like more rigorous exercise while on holiday then checkout the kayak tours and Leeuwin Ocean Adventures. For a more leisurely water experience go sailing, try some beach fishing, maybe a bit of offshore fishing or surfing.

Beyond the City This may be the city and its surrounds taken care of, but do not forget that further north there is the incredible Ningaloo Reef, one of the only places in the world where you can swim with whale sharks. Broome is another incredible town, with its amazing tides and sunsets. Then there is the southwest corner, and the major tourist drawcard—the spectacular Margaret River region.

For a fine tour and a unique experience check out Worldwide Shopping Tours(http://www.worldwideshoppingtours.com.au). They offer an insiders guide to some of the best products in the region. Email them at:sales@worldwideshoppingtours.com.au.
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Travel Tips

Getting There:

By Air:

Perth Airport(+61 8 9478 8888/http://www.perthairport.com) is Australia's fourth-largest airport and the international and regional gateway to Western Australia. The airport is located 12 km from the city and provides direct service and connections to domestic and international destinations from airlines including:

Air Mauritius(+61 2 8 9442 6044/http://www.airmauritius.com)

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Air New Zealand(+1 800 262 1234(only U.S.); 13 2476(only Australia)/http://www.airnz.co.nz)

Air Paradise(+61 8 9211 6966/http://www.airparadise.com.au)

British Airways(+61 8 9425 7711/http://www.britishairways.com)

Cathay Pacific Airways(+61 8 9477 1244/http://www.cathaypacific.com)

Emirates(+61 8 9322 6786/http://www.emiratesairline.com)

Garuda Indonesia(+61 8 9481 0963/http://www.garuda-indonesia.com)

Malaysia Airlines(+61 8 9263 7007/http://www.malaysiaairlines.com.my)

Qantas Airways(+61 2 9691 3636/http://www.qantas.com.au)

Royal Brunei Airlines(+61 8 9321 8757/http://www.bruneiair.com)

Singapore Airlines(+61 8 9477 1020/http://www.singaporeair.com)

Skywest(+61 8 9478 9999/http://www.skywest.com.au)

South African Airways(+61 8 9216 2200/http://ww3.flysaa.com/)

Thai Airways International(+61 8 9322 4799/http://www.thaiair.com)

United(+61 131 777/http://www.ual.com)

Virgin Blue(+61 7 3295 2296/http://www.virginblue.com.au)

Transperth(+61 8 9428 1900/http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au) runs route 37 between the Domestic airport and St. Georges Terrace in Perth's city centre. Buses depart the airport every 30 minutes during the day and hourly after 6p and on Sundays.

A coach service(+61 8 9479 4131) offers transportation for all incoming flights from the airport to major hotels in Perth. Fares start at AUD11 from the International airport and AUD8.80 from the Domestic airport.

Taxis are available at both the International and Domestic airports and the fare to Perth's city centre is around AUD25.

Rental car companies include:

Avis(+61 8 9477 1302/http://www.avis.com)

Budget(+61 8 9277 9277/http://www.budget.com.au)

Europcar(+61 8 9226 5033/http://www.deltaeuropcar.com.au)

Hertz(+61 8 9479 4788/http://www.hertz.com)

Thrifty(+61 8 131 286/http://www.thrifty.com)

By Train:

The famous Indian Pacific rail service operated by Great Southern Rail(+61 8 8213 4592/http://www.railaustralia.com.au), operates across the entire continent of Australia. The three-day trip from Sydney to Perth covers 4352 kilometers.

By Bus:

Greyhound Pioneer Australia(+61 7 4690 9950/ http://www.greyhound.com.au) offers routes throughout Australia and stops at the Western Australian Government Railways terminal in East Perth. However, be aware that most major Australian cities are far from Perth, about 48 hours to Melbourne and 60 hours to Sydney.

By Car:

The Eyre Highway crosses Australia from Port Augusta in South Australia to Norseman in Western Australia. Take Coolgardie-Esperance Highway north to Coolgardie and then the Great Eastern Highway to Perth.

Getting Around:

Transperth(+61 8 9428 1900/http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au) offers public transportation throughout Perth and its suburbs via bus, train and ferry. Buses run daily from 6a-11:30p. The ferries operate daily from 6:45a-7:15p between Barrack Street Jetty, Mends Street Jetty, with limited services to Coode St Jetty.

Free bus or train travel is offered within the Perth city centre's Free Transit Zone. The Central Area Transit(CAT) is the free bus service that operates around central Perth via the Blue, Yellow and Red routes.

Taxis, all metered, can be located throughout the Perth central business district and typically charge AUD1.17 per km. Some of the major taxi companies servicing Perth include:

Black& White Taxis(+61 8 9333 3322)

Independent Taxis(+61 8 9375 7777)

Swan Taxis(13 13 30(Australia only))

Yellow Cabs(13 19 24(Australia only))

Complete Cab Services(+61 8 9242 4923)

Rental car companies servicing Perth include:

Bayswater Hire Car(+61 8 9370 3888/http://www.bayswatercarrental.com.au)

Burton Hire Cars(+61 8 9244 5757)

Budget(+61 8 9277 9277/http://www.budget.com.au)

Europcar(+61 8 9361 4616/http://www.europcar.com.au)

M2000 Car Rentals(+61 8 9227 0709/http://www.m2000car.com.au)

Myaree Car Hire(+61 8 9330 8848/http://www.mchire.com.au)

Sorrento Quay Car Hire(+61 8 9243 1550/http://www.sportscarhire.com.au)
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Fun Facts

1. Interesting fact: Perth is the most isolated capital city in the world- it's over 1,300 miles to the next large city.

2. With an average of 8 hours of sunshine per day all year round, Perth is said to be the sunniest capital city in the world.

3. The annual Perth International Art Festival is the oldest international arts festival in the entire southern hemisphere.

4. Fun fact: Perth is closer to Bali than Sydney. And it's often cheaper to fly to Bali than to Sydney(plus the cocktails are cheaper there!).

5. Perth became known as the"City of Light" when astronaut John Glenn orbited above back in 1962 and could spot Perth because everyone turned on all their lights.

6. Random fact: About five thousand years ago, you could walk from Perth to Rottnest Island. Now you have to take a ferry.

7. Interesting fact: Thanks to the mining industry, Perth has the highest per capita

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number of self-made millionaires of any city in the world.

8. Speaking of money, the Perth Mint is the oldest mint in the world which still operates out of its original premises.

9. Useful fact: You can travel around the centre of Perth for free by staying in the Free Transit Zone or using the free CAT buses.

10. Perth was nearly the capital city of a country: Western Australians voted in 1933 to become separate from the rest of Australia, but the process was stopped.

11. Weird fact: The longest name for a place in or near Perth is Ngangaguringguring Hill.

12. Perth is the capital of Western Australia, a state which takes up a massive one third of the area of Australia.

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