

Sydney's sunshine



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From the iconic image of the Opera House and Harbour Bridge to the many beaches and a relaxed population, there are many things that make Sydney special. **GILLIAN EVANS** finds out more.

There is something in the air that makes everyone love Sydney!" exclaims Nejka Pintaric, Marketing Coordinator for Monash Professional Internships. "The mixture and diversity of cultures, friendliness of the people, South Pacific climate and the ocean make it one of the greatest cities in the world."

Sydney is an iconic city, home to the Opera House (1), Harbour Bridge (2), The Rocks (historic part of Sydney) (3), amazing

beaches, great restaurants and plenty of choice of nightlife to name just a small selection of its attractions.

And, although Sydney is certainly a dynamic business centre, it embraces a relaxed lifestyle of which surf and beach culture is an inseparable part. Amanda McKenzie at Global Village Sydney (Universal English College) asserts that Sydney "incorporates nature's beauty within a corporate bustling city". She elaborates, "Among our towering buildings there are special relaxation spots such as Hyde Park (4) and the Botanic Gardens (5)." The city also has, according to Pintaric, over 38 beaches to discover. From lively surf beaches to secluded beaches on which to relax, Wayne Parry, Marketing Manager at Access Language Centre, claims, "There's a beach to suit everyone's tastes."

No wonder then that outdoor living is big in Sydney – everything from beach barbecues and parties to an almost endless range of adventure activities are a part of life for most "Sydneyiders". Indeed, David Yoo, Principal Executive Officer at Australian Pacific College, goes as far as to say that when it comes to adventure, "there is no other place that offers so much".

Lynette Said at OISE/Regent Sydney, highlights "canoeing or boating down rivers; taking coastal bushwalks or mountain bike rides

Sydney beaches

Bondi Beach attracts thousands of tourists each and every year, but those after something a little quieter would do well to visit one of Bondi's neighbouring beaches, namely Tamarama or Clovelly



with the possibility of seeing migratory whales or dolphins; abseiling or rock climbing; or relaxing on an uncrowded beach" as some of the best-loved Sydney activities.

And when the sun sets over the ocean, many of Sydney's famous beaches light up, hosting some of the city's famous nightlife.

Popular night haunts include Kings Cross (6), Oxford Street (7), the Rocks and Darling Harbour (8). But there are lots of other options for night owls, too. "Although the eastern suburbs have traditionally been the favourite places for clubbing and parties, the Inner West – the suburbs immediately west of the city and east of Strathfield – are real gems when looking for the latest trends in Sydney's party scene," states Parry.

Whatever type of night entertainment students are looking for they are sure to find it in Sydney, as Phuong Phan at the University of Western Sydney College, points out. "There are hundreds of pubs around the city where students can hang out, play pool, have a drink, dance, play trivia and listen to live music. The live music scene ranges from well known international bands performing at the entertainment centre to easily accessible local bands at the local pub. For those who like to dance, there are also many great clubs offering a wide range of music styles."

Shopping is another great pastime in Sydney. "The shopping in Sydney is world class," asserts Parry, "and the most popular choice for visitors would be the Queen Victoria Building, although suburbs such as Bondi Junction claim to offer more variety." There is also a whole host of colourful markets, such as Paddington, Kirribilli and Bondi, which sell everything from art and crafts, and fashion to food.

The people of Sydney are just as eclectic as their city, which is a wonderful multicultural melting pot. "Most students

are surprised by the multicultural nature of Sydney: more than 120 nationalities live permanently in Sydney and it is this diversity which many students have not expected at all before they arrive here," says Amanda Henry at International House Sydney, adding, "With this diversity, of course, comes a fantastic choice of cuisine!"

There is, says McKenzie, "food from all corners of the world". Restaurants serve up Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Lebanese, Spanish and Italian specialties to name just a few of the choices, and October is Good Food Month with a night noodle market held in Hyde Park. For some traditional Aussie cuisine, McKenzie suggests fish and chips at the Sydney Fish Markets at Pyrmont or a meat pie at Harry's Café de Wheels, "an Australian icon which is literally a café on wheels located at Woolloomooloo" (9).

But Sydney does have one drawback for international students: the high cost of living. Parry advises, "Sydney is more expensive than other Australian cities – undoubtedly. Therefore, students should be financially prepared." He advocates consulting with the school about accommodation, and finding living options within walking distance to the school to cut down on travel costs. On the upside, Parry points out; "As Sydney is larger than other Australian cities, it's also easier to find work." What's more, many schools help students to find paid employment, usually in tourism, hospitality and retail. And the benefits of working in Sydney are more than just financial, states Pintaric. "[Students] are surrounded by Sydneysiders which is an even better way to experience the real Sydney with all the extras and insider tips."



Agent viewpoint

"Sydney is a big city, modern and vibrant, but depending on where you are, it still resembles a small city. Clients are afraid of going to smaller cities and being bored. Sydney is a perfect location because it offers a lot of entertainment and excitement, but also has a lot of natural beauty and wonderful beaches. There is always something to do in Sydney, but if you want a quiet and relaxing weekend, this is also possible. The climate is also very similar to Brazil and this makes Brazilians feel at home. Brazilians like to party a lot, so they enjoy Sydney's nightlife, but they also enjoy the beaches and natural scenery that the city offers. It is extremely safe, clean and very organised. Its people are very friendly and helpful, and this helps them to feel at home quicker."

Adriana Betim, Global Village Intercâmbio, Brazil

"Our clients generally choose to study in Sydney because they've heard about it from friends or relatives or they are looking for a large city with lots to offer. I recommend [Sydney] to students who are looking for a cosmopolitan and sophisticated city. I don't recommend it to students who would feel uncomfortable in such a large city. Sydney is more famous than the other [Australian] cities thanks to

the Opera House, Harbour Bridge and also since the Olympic Games. Often when people think of Australia they think of Sydney because of these icons. Students are most surprised by the contrast between skyscrapers and suburbs, between the vibrant big city and the relaxed atmosphere on the beaches. They find the people relaxed, easy-going and friendly. They love the food, the variety of restaurants and types of food, especially Asian. Eating out is also cheaper than in Switzerland."

Françoise Mantel, Agence Babel, Switzerland

"Sydney is known by everybody. Students know they will find everything they look for when they go to Australia: a big city, beaches, sports facilities, job opportunities, cultural events. Students enjoy travelling around. They always find good deals to travel and see the surrounding area. There is always something to do [in Sydney]: going out, surfing, attending a festival. Even though Sydney is a big city students find their way around it very easily. The public transport is well organised and very useful so that they can travel as they want. They enjoy the parks and the different areas: Manly, Bondi. They are surprised that the city is

so widespread and there are so many parks. They like the safety of the city. No matter if they are girls or boys, teenagers or elder students, they feel safe in Sydney. Students think Aussies in Sydney are very friendly. They think that the food is not really expensive. They can go out at night and find something to eat anytime. Students enjoy Chinese restaurants as they are cheap and Chinese food is popular in France."

Caroline Ripoll, Languages & Travel – IDP Education France, France

"The reason students choose to go to Australia for their internship is because they see this as a once in a lifetime opportunity, which you should experience when you get the chance. They often combine their internship with travelling around, and it simply is an adventurous country with [i]d-back] people. Most of the male students enjoy the possibilities for surfing. Everyone loves the diversity, beautiful beaches/nature, the buildings/architecture (Opera House, Harbour Bridge), the Blue Mountains, Taronga Zoo, Hunter Valley, great nightlife, etc. You simply cannot get bored!"

Tamara Goeting, Wereldstage!, Netherlands