



5 DAYS IN SYDNEY ITINERARY

Your Complete Guide to Sydney

Updated February 2026 By Paula Morgan, Sydney Expert

INTRODUCTION

This 5-day itinerary highlights the best of Sydney with a mix of must-see sights and local favourites. Each day stands alone, so if you have fewer days, choose the ones that suit you best.

All days include:

- Dining suggestions (Budget/Mid-range/Splurge)
- Public transport costs
- Walking directions

BEFORE YOU START

- This itinerary assumes you're staying in central Sydney.
- **Opal Transport Guide:** As of July 2025, adult daily caps are **\$19.30 (Mon-Thu)** and **\$9.65 (Fri-Sun)**. The **\$50 weekly cap** remains the same.
- **Currency Exchange:** Check *Crown*, or *Travel Money Oz* in the CBD.

4-DAY OPTION

Skip either **Day 3 (Blue Mountains)** or **Day 5 (Inner City Suburbs)** depending on your interests.



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DAY 1 – CIRCULAR QUAY AND THE ROCKS

Transport Cost: \$0

Transport Note: The new Sydney Metro (M1 Line) now connects Martin Place, Gadigal (Pitt St), and Barangaroo in under 3 minutes.

THE PLAN

Explore Circular Quay, Sydney Opera House, Royal Botanic Gardens, and The Rocks historic quarter. If you have energy left, walk onto the Harbour Bridge from the Cahill Walkway.

Start: Circular Quay

BREAKFAST

- Budget: [Ground Control Café](#) (6 am week days, 8 am weekends)
- Budget: [Bar Mammoni](#) (from 7am week days)
- Mid-Range: [La Renaissance Patisserie and Café](#) (7 am week days & 8 am weekends)

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Enter via Queen Elizabeth Gate by the Opera House. Head right to the upper level, following signs to Taipan Lawn Precinct or Bennelong Lawns for harbour views and photos.

Key Stops:

- Government House Gardens (open after 10am, free tours available)
- *Folly for Mrs Macquarie* sculpture by Fiona Hall
- The Calyx - largest green wall in southern hemisphere (gold coin donation)
- Topiary Koala near visitor centre
- Wollemi Pine (one of world's rarest trees)
- *Boy with a Thorn* sculpture
- Mrs Macquarie's Chair - [THE photography spot](#)

Follow the sea wall path back to the Opera House.

NEW ADDITION: SYDNEY MODERN After the Botanic Gardens, visit the stunning new wing of the Art Gallery of NSW. It's a 5-minute walk from the gardens and entry is free.

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



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UNESCO World Heritage Site opened in 1973. Walk around the building to see the tiles up close (two different shades). Enter under the middle to explore the foyers. [Learn more about the spaces here](#)

Tours: Available to see performance spaces and learn the building's history (approx. 1 hour). [Book a tour](#)

CAHILL LOOKOUT AND HARBOUR BRIDGE

Take the glass elevator up from Circular Quay station to the Cahill Walkway for views over The Rocks. Walk onto the Sydney Harbour Bridge for harbour views.

Optional: Sydney Pylon Lookout inside southern pylon (under \$20, 360-degree views).

LUNCH

- Mid-range: [Glenmore Hotel](#) rooftop dining area – pub food and tasty salads
- Mid-range: Australian Heritage Hotel to try the coat of arms pizza or crocodile spring rolls
- Mid-range: The MCA has two options The Cafe at Tallawoladah or the Rooftop restaurant Canvas are excellent options.

THE ROCKS SELF-GUIDED WALK

Explore Sydney's oldest streets with cobblestones and heritage buildings. Look for the city's oldest pubs. [Follow our self guided walking route here](#)

Alternative: Book a guided tour with [Local Sauce](#) (award-winning operator). Or splurge on a [Bridgeclimb](#).

DINNER

- Budget: [Gateway Circular Quay](#) – Head to level 1
- Mid-range: [Squires Landing](#) / [Tayim Middle Eastern](#)
- Splurge: [Café Sydney](#) or [Quay](#)
- *Note: Sydney restaurants often close early (9:30pm) Sunday-Wednesday. Check hours or make reservations.*



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DAY 2 – FROM THE HARBOUR TO THE SEA

Transport Cost: \$19.30 Opal Mon-Thu / \$9.65 Fri-Sun

Start: Barangaroo (train to Wynyard or take Sydney Metro to Barangaroo)

MAJOR 2026 UPDATE: THE NEW SYDNEY FISH MARKET

The world-class new Sydney Fish Market opened in January 2026 at Blackwattle Bay. It's an architectural icon. If you love seafood, take the Light Rail (L1) to Wentworth Park to see it before heading to Bondi. You can pop in and look around or [join a guided tour](#).

BREAKFAST AT BARANGAROO

- Budget: Grab a take away coffee and pastry at [Bourke Street Bakery](#) (7 am each day)
- Mid-range: full breakfast at [Wild Sage](#) (open from 6.30am weekdays and 7.30am weekends) or [Devon Café](#)
- Splurge: [The Butchers Block](#) is perfect for a special treat.

FERRY TO WATSON'S BAY

Take the ferry from Barangaroo Wharf to Circular Quay, then join Watson's Bay ferry. Total journey: 58 minutes. The Barangaroo to Circular Quay leg takes you under the Harbour Bridge.

WATSONS BAY

Take our [Watsons Bay self-guided walk](#)

Follow Wharf Beach to steps (Marine Parade), up to Cove Street. Turn right, then first left to reach Camp Cove Beach and Kiosk. From Camp Cove, follow the South Heritage Trail around South Head to Hornby Lighthouse. Return via Cliff Street to Robertson Park. Cross to Gap Park for clifftop lookout. Take 380 bus to North Bondi Beach (sit on the right side).

BONDI BEACH

Australia's most famous beach. Jump off at North Bondi.

LUNCH WITH A VIEW

- Budget: Cross Campbell Parade and grab some supplies from Woolworths for a beach picnic or fish and chips from along the strip
- Mid-range: [North Bondi RSL](#) / [Don Pedros](#)
Splurge: [Icebergs](#) or [Sean's](#)

BONDI TO COOGEE WALK (OPTIONAL)



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[6km coastal walk](#). Even if not doing the full walk, go to the top of the first hill for views over Bondi. Buses return to city from Bondi or any beach along the route.

DINNER

- **Budget:** Return to Chinatown for cheap eats
- Mid-range: [Coogee Pavilion](#)
- Splurge: Make your way to Chippendale or Surry Hills and try [Ester](#) or one of the many [restaurants on Kensington Street](#) for some delicious Sydney eats, or Rick Stein at Coogee Beach. The famous chef opened his flagship Sydney restaurant in late 2025—perfect if you finish your walk in Coogee.



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DAY 3 – BLUE MOUNTAINS

Transport Cost: \$19.30 daily cap Mon-Thu / \$9.65 Fri-Sun

Travel Tip: Friday is now considered a "weekend" for Opal fares—the cheapest weekday to visit!

THE PLAN

Day trip to Blue Mountains, 2 hours west. You can easily explore the area on a day trip from Sydney using public transport or [take a guided tour](#) or the [Blue Mountains Explorer](#) HOHO and let the experts help you uncover the best spots.

Choose between guided tour, train + local buses/HOHO bus, or rental car.

- **Train Option:** Cheaper than tours, same time as driving. At Katoomba, use local buses or Blue Mountains Explorer HOHO bus (kids ride free).
- **Car Rental:** Best for flexibility and longer walks.

Whether you decide on a tour, [the train](#), or to [rent a car](#) is personal preference; there are pros and cons to each option.

DINING IN THE MOUNTAINS

- Leura: Have a traditional high tea at the [Bygone Beauties Teapot Museum](#)
- Katoomba: Head to the [Bowery Kitchen and Bar](#) for food and service that won't disappoint or Black Cockatoo Bakery in the main street for some of the best pastries in the mountains.
- Medlow Bath: [The Boiler House Restaurant](#) & Pavilion Cafe at Hydro Majestic
- Blackheath: Altitude Cafe does great sandwiches



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DAY 4 – FLORA AND FAUNA

Transport Cost: \$19.30 Mon-Thu / \$9.65 Fri-Sun

OPTION A: TARONGA ZOO

"The Zoo with a view." [Book your tickets](#) in advance to save time - queues can be long.

Highlights: Australian Walkabout area, Koala encounters, Sun Bears, and Sumatran Tiger cubs.

Dining tip: Pack a picnic. Zoo food is expensive.

OPTION B: HARBOUR WALKS

Walk 1: Cremorne to Mosman Walk (Cremorne Point Wharf to Sirrus Cove).

This [scenic walk](#) takes you past the manicured gardens and numerous harbourside homes that will have you heading to buy a lottery ticket on the way home. From the wharf at Cremorne Point around to Sirrus Cove, once an artists colony, to Taronga Wharf, where you can take a ferry back to the city or begin your visit to the zoo.

Walk 2: Taronga Wharf to Balmoral Beach Walk (6km track to Middle Head). Tree-lined trails with water dragons and kookaburras.

Another of my favourite walks, the 6km track to Middle Head and ultimately Balmoral Beach, follows the harbour's curves along pretty tree-lined trails. You are likely to see some eastern water dragons and kookaburras along the way. I have written a [detailed photo guide](#) to help you find your way, but it is very straightforward.



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DAY 5 – EXPLORE INNER CITY SUBURBS

Transport Cost: \$19.30 Mon-Thu / \$9.65 Fri-Sun

OPTION A: REDFERN AND CHIPPENDALE

Walk from working-class Aboriginal heritage of Redfern to reborn Chippendale.

An excellent walk for art and [architecture lovers](#) will take you from the working class and Aboriginal heritage of Redfern through to a reborn Chippendale that has, over recent years, become a hub for galleries and design firms.

I like to begin at Redfern Station and stroll to Chippendale; it takes less than 20 mins, but there is much to see along the way with interesting architecture and plenty of worthy cafes. Stop by Wunderlich Lane, the brand-new dining precinct on the border of Redfern and Surry Hills that's become the "it" spot of 2026. Visit 'Olympus' for Greek food or 'S'wich' for the city's best deli sandwiches.

OPTION B: POTTS POINT AND ELIZABETH BAY

Art deco architecture and historic homes.

Highlights: Meudon building and Elizabeth Bay House. Finish at Harry's Cafe de Wheels for a pie.

One of my favourite areas in the city, in part because of the incredible amount of [art déco architecture here](#). Add some historic homes, fabulous harbour views, a popular weekend market and lots of good food, and you have more than enough reason to spend a couple of hours here.

There are so many impressive buildings in these streets you will think you have stepped back a few decades. In contrast, the heritage-listed Colonial Regency Elizabeth Bay House will give you a glimpse of life in 1820s Sydney.

Finish up by walking back to the city via Woolloomooloo and grabbing a pie and pea floater at Harry's Cafe de Wheels.

OPTION C: NEWTOWN & ENMORE

Street art, craft brews, and independent shops. Best visited mid-afternoon.

Must-stops: Young Henry's brewery, the newly reopened Enmore Theatre bars, and Black Star Pastry (watermelon cake).



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From street art to craft brews, independent shops and watermelon cake. Newtown is best visited mid-afternoon or evening. Early mornings are a little quiet, and it's worth noting some shops, particularly at the southern end, don't open on Mondays.

While you don't need much of a plan, I like to take the train to St Peters, which lies at the southern end of the suburb and stroll the full length of the main street, King Street, weaving in and out of the back streets when I spy a mural or charming house.

Make sure you save some time to visit one of the pubs or take a short stroll down Enmore road to Young Henry's and try their "Newtowner."

If you are not in the mood for beer, stop by Black Star Pastry on King Street and try the watermelon cake.

We have a [short self-guided walk in Newtown](#) or a longer [Inner West street art walk](#) for mural fans.

This street art and small bar tour covers similar ground to our self guided options but let's you totally relax and put the map away!

OPTION D: MANLY AND NORTHERN BEACHES

30-minute ferry ride. Walk the Corso to Shelly Beach.

Activities: North Head Sanctuary walk or Q Station ghost tour.

Surf, snorkelling, craft beer and fish and chips make for a top day out. After your 30-minute ferry ride, wander down the Corso to Manly Beach and on to Shelly Beach.

You can get picnic supplies at the Coles supermarket a short walk from the wharf when you arrive and enjoy a beach picnic or dine at one of the waterfront restaurants at either the waterfront or the beach. There are plenty of options to choose from.

Check out our full list of [things to do in Manly](#) for more ideas.

If you are not one to sit still too long, you might like to take a walk up to the North Head Sanctuary for fantastic views and some war memorials and walking trails or visit [Q Station](#), the old quarantine centre for a ghost or history tour.

Day Five total transport costs: Potts Point – \$6.60, Newtown \$9.10, Manly \$18.40. The daily cap will kick in at \$19.30 Monday to Thursday. On Fridays and weekends a flat rate of \$9.65 applies*



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LAST EVENING IN SYDNEY

- **Shopping:** QVB (boutique), Pitt Street Mall (brands), Paddy's Market (souvenirs).
- **Drinks with a View:** Zephyr Bar at Hyatt Regency or Henry Deane bar at Barangaroo.

TRANSPORT SUMMARY (2026 RATES)

- **Mon–Thu:** \$19.30 Daily Cap
- **Fri–Sun:** \$9.65 Daily Cap
- **Weekly Limit:** \$50.00 (Everything after \$50 is free)

Visit SydneyExpert.com for [full details and maps](#).