

lonely planet Hotels & Hostels

Want more Sleeping recommendations than we could ever pack into this little ol' book? Craving more detail – including extended reviews and photographs? Want to read reviews by other travellers and be able to post your own? Just make your way over to lonelyplanet.com/hotels and check out our thorough list of independent reviews, then reserve your room simply and securely.

SLEEPING

top picks

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SLEEPING

Sydney has a huge quantity and variety of accommodation – from backpackers' hostels to water-side palaces. If you've got limited time and an unlimited budget, the big-ticket hotels around Circular Quay may be the go. If you're hoping to squeeze some pleasure out of a business trip, pick from the numerous city hotels. For a taste of real Sydney life, choose one of the residential suburbs in the city fringes. If you want to fit a little sightseeing around some serious beaching, head for the eastern beaches or Manly. If budget's the driving factor, investigate the hostels around Potts Point/Kings Cross, the beaches or the inner west.

Accommodation listings in this chapter are ordered by neighbourhood, then in price order from most to least expensive based on the price of a standard double in high (but not peak) season. The average double room with bathroom costs about \$150, with seasonal variations (lowest in winter and highest around Christmas, New Year's Eve and Mardi Gras). Rooms are also more expensive from Monday to Friday, when business travel is at its peak (outside Sydney, though, weekend rates are often higher because Sydneysiders flee their homes for mini vacations). Generally, we've quoted rack rates for hotels, which tend to be higher than the specials and discounted packages that are often on offer. Always ask a hotel for its 'best rate'. If you're looking for last-minute discounts at higher-end hotels, try www.lastminute.com.au.

THE ROCKS & CIRCULAR QUAY

This neighbourhood ticks a number of boxes: the most attractive part of central Sydney; the most likely to have a harbour view; the most vibrant after dark; the closest to the most sights; the best base for exploring the city by ferry. It should come as no surprise then that this glamorous precinct is also the priciest.

This area is tourist central – you won't find much in the way of neighbourhood cafés, affordable restaurants or supermarkets. Yet there is a quiet residential pocket in the Millers Point part of The Rocks, sheltered enough from the hurly-burly of the Quay to be completely charming.

PARK HYATT Map p54 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9241 1234; www.sydney.park.hyatt.com;
7 Hickson Rd, The Rocks; d & tw \$500-850, ste \$1300-6550; 📍 Circular Quay; 🚗

Commanding the opposite tip of the horseshoe of Circular Quay to the Opera House, the Park Hyatt boasts the best location in Sydney. The graciously low-rise building matches the opulence of its position with sandstone, marble and contemporary design including a particularly groovy mother-of-pearl wall. Absolutely decadent views of the harbour. Around-the-clock butler service. Superluxurious. What more is there to say?

OBSERVATORY HOTEL Map p54 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9256 2222; www.observatoryhotel.com.au;
89-113 Kent St, The Rocks; d \$429-554, ste \$679-754; 📍 431-434; 🚗

When the owners' other properties include the Orient Express, you expect opulence. That said, the Observatory is remarkably restrained, eschewing excessive gilt in favour of an elegant antique ambience. The building is only 15 years old but in keeping with the surrounding terraced houses in this astoundingly quiet central city nook. The rooms are large with equally spacious marble bathrooms. Some have views and four-poster beds, and bowls of goldfish are available on request for children or lonely executives.

RUSSELL Map p54 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9241 3543; www.therussell.com.au; 143A George St, The Rocks; d \$145-285; 📍 Circular Quay
Located in The Rocks' main tourist drag, this charming 29-room hotel offers creaky floors, modest flowery rooms (the cheapest sharing bathrooms), pleasant lounge areas and a sunny roof garden. There's an intimate, rambling feel to the turreted 1887 building and plenty of narrow staircases (no elevator).

BED & BREAKFAST SYDNEY HARBOUR Map p54 B&B \$\$
☎ 9247 1130; www.bedandbreakfastsydney.com;
142 Cumberland St, The Rocks; s \$140-214, d \$155-260, all incl breakfast; 📍 Circular Quay

Surrounded by high-rise hotels, this small-scale B&B still manages to squeeze some Opera House views from its superb location on the upper slopes of The Rocks. Each of the nine rooms is charmingly unique, and all come with soft sheets and a hot breakfast, although some share bathrooms.

LORD NELSON BREWERY HOTEL Map p54 Pub \$\$
☎ 9251 4044; www.lordnelson.com.au; 19 Kent St, The Rocks; d & tw incl breakfast \$120-180, tr incl breakfast \$230; 📍 Circular Quay
Built in 1836 and housing Sydney's oldest continuously licensed pub, the Lord Nelson is well located in the quiet heights of The Rocks. Despite its historic status the friendly owners have resisted the urge to vomit flowers over the walls and drapes, opting instead to highlight the thick sandstone walls with simple, comfortable furnishings. Most of the nine rooms are spacious and have their own bathroom, or you can opt for a cheaper, smaller room with shared facilities.

PALISADE HOTEL Map p54 Pub \$\$
☎ 9247 2272; www.palisadehotel.com;
35 Bettington St, The Rocks; d \$123, tw & tr \$128; 📍 Circular Quay
Standing sentinel-like at peaceful Millers Point, the Palisade Hotel has nine basic rooms with well-kept shared bathrooms. The front rooms open on to a shared balcony with breathtaking views of the Harbour Bridge, while others have windows looking over Walsh Bay. It's a lovely old building with a decent neighbourhood pub downstairs that generally shuts at sleep-friendly hours.

CITY CENTRE

Most hotels here cater to the business brigade – it's easy to splash the cash if the shareholders are picking up the tab. This is not a residential area, so don't expect to gain much insight into how locals live if you base yourself here. Once the hordes vacate the office towers for their commute to the suburbs, this part of the city can be a ghost town. However a train or taxi (hell, chuck that on the charge account as well) will get you to neighbouring suburbs in a jiffy.

SAVILLE 2 BOND ST Map pp62-3 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
☎ 1800 222 226; www.savillehotelgroup.com;
2 Bond St; studio apt \$414, 1-bedroom apt \$449-

PRICE GUIDE

\$\$\$	doubles over \$300
\$\$	doubles \$120-300
\$	doubles under \$120

483, 2-bedroom apt \$644, penthouse \$990-1550; 📍 Wynyard; 🚗
The elegant neutral tones may not quite make a home away from home (unless you live in a catalogue), but these spacious apartments sure are comfortable. Those on longer trips will appreciate the joy of having a full kitchen and laundry at your disposal.

WESTIN SYDNEY Map pp62-3 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 8223 1111; www.westin.com/sydney; 1 Martin Place; d \$585-665, ste \$1200; 📍 Martin Place; 🚗
Spreading half of its tentacles into the grand General Post Office building (p65) and the others into a contemporary tower, this is a slick and luxurious address. Choose between the high-ceilinged heritage rooms and the modern tower rooms; all have quality linen, comfy beds and sizable shower heads.

ESTABLISHMENT HOTEL Map pp62-3 Boutique Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9240 3100; www.establishmenthotel.com; 5 Bridge Lane; d \$350-415, ste \$970-1150; 📍 Wynyard
Hardcore glamour doesn't need to be flashy. In fact, it can lurk behind an inconspicuous entrance off a dark, dank alley – allowing secretive celebrities to slink in, peel back the black shades and head straight to the luxury of the split-level deluxe penthouse. One of Australia's best boutique hotels, Establishment offers 33 beautifully designed rooms sporting fine cotton linen and elegant bathrooms.

MERITON SERVICED APARTMENTS PITT ST Map pp62-3 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
☎ 8263 7400; www.meritonapartments.com.au; 329 Pitt St; studio/1-/2-/3-bedroom apt \$209/229/305/399; 📍 Town Hall; 🚗
Forget Wembley Stadium – Meriton is better known in Sydney as the builder of swanky but soulless apartment complexes. This huge tower (42 floors above ground) features Smeg appliances and truly awesome views.

BLACKET Map pp62–3 **Boutique Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 9279 3030; www.theblacket.com; 70 King St; d & tw \$190-260, ste \$260-360; 🏠 Martin Place
 You'll feel very *Sex & the City*, swishing home after cocktails to a loft suite in the heritage-listed Blacket, right at the very centre of Sydney's CBD. The sleek, modern studio rooms are spacious, as are the reasonably priced two-bedroom apartments, which come equipped with CD players and kitchenettes.

HYDE PARK INN
 Map pp62–3 **Serviced Apartments** \$\$
 ☎ 9264 6001; www.hydeparkinn.com.au;
 271 Elizabeth St; s \$165-182, d & tw \$182-198, tr \$198-215, ste \$292; 🏠 Museum

Right on the park, this friendly place offers studio apartments with kitchenettes as well as some two-bedroom suites. Renovations in progress at the time of research were modernising the décor and leaving flat-screen TVs and DVD players in their wake.

CASTLEREAGH Map pp62–3 **Boutique Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 9284 1000; www.thecastlereagh.net.au; 169 Castlereagh St; s \$165-210, d \$175-220, tw \$190-200, tr \$205-230, ste \$210-270; 🏠 Town Hall
 Tucked away in a delightful 1920s sandstone building, this Masonic club has plush interiors that recall a swankier time. While secret handshakes may have been replaced by poker machine finger jabs in the main bar, the grand dining room remains the epitome of a gentlemen's club. The comfortable rooms have silky bedspreads and fine linen, although some of the bathrooms are tiny. Breakfast and a daily tippie are complimentary.

CENTRAL PARK HOTEL Map pp62–3 **Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 9283 5000; www.centralpark.com.au;
 185 Castlereagh St; d & tw \$150-170, ste \$195-210; 🏠 Town Hall
 Blacket's little sister is just as pretty, even if she is cheap. 'Hip on a budget' is the motto, and little touches such as free fruit on reception make this a special place. While the standard rooms are good, it's worth paying the extra \$10 for a Park Studio – a much bigger room with a spa bath.

GRAND HOTEL Map pp62–3 **Pub** \$
 ☎ 9232 3755; www.merivale.com/thegrand;
 30 Hunter St; s/d/tw/tr/f with shared bathroom \$77/88/100/110/130; 🏠 Wynyard

Unusual for the heart of the CBD, this hotel offers 19 cosy, flowery rooms above an unpretentious pub. Some have a balcony.

WYNARD HOTEL Map pp62–3 **Pub** \$
 ☎ 9299 1330; www.wynardhotel.com.au;
 107 Clarence St; s/d/tw/f with shared bathroom & breakfast \$77/88/100/130; 🏠 Wynyard
 This modest 1873 three-storey, old-school pub perches on a corner of the CBD, wondering how the youngsters around it got so tall. The rooms are perfectly decent, the self-serve laundry is free and there's access to a kitchen, making this a great deal. In the summer you can enjoy the included light breakfast on the little rooftop terrace.

DARLING HARBOUR & CHINATOWN

This end of town is livelier and the prices cheaper, but it's not the most attractive place to stay – there's little in the way of views or green space. On the upside, this neighbourhood positively sparks with energy and there are plenty of midnight feast or binge options. The area around Central Station has turned into backpacker city.

VALENTINE ON GEORGE
 Map p72 **Boutique Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 9288 9888; www.valentineongorge.com;
 767 George St, Haymarket; d \$165-170, ste \$290-888; 🏠 Central

If valentines are supposed to be secret, this one's playing by the rules. It's a pleasant surprise to find such an upmarket boutique hotel hidden behind a nondescript doorway in this bustling part of town. The rooms are beautifully designed, with king-size beds, Bose stereos, DVD players, marble bathrooms with tiny Italian tiles and glitzy fixtures. There are some two-bedroom suites available, including one with a courtyard.

MEDINA GRAND HARBOURSIDE
 Map p72 **Serviced Apartments** \$\$
 ☎ 9249 7000; 55 Shelley St, King St Wharf; www.medina.com.au; studio apt \$222-240, 1-bedroom apt \$248-274, 2-bedroom apt \$470-514; 🏠 Wynyard; 🏠

Heaven is a swish, spacious apartment where people clean up after you. Even more so if there are harbour views, as there are in the slightly pricier rooms in this new

low-rise development just off **King Street Wharf** (p74). All have full kitchen and laundry facilities and balconies.

VIBE HOTEL SYDNEY Map p72 **Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 8272 3300; www.vibehotels.com.au; 111 Goulburn St, city; d & tw \$185; 🏠 Museum; 🏠
 The Medina crew have got the vibe right with these smart and funky midrange hotels. Expect clean, sparkling rooms, bright colours and not a shred of stuffiness.

SYDNEY CENTRAL YHA
 Map p72 **Hostel** \$
 ☎ 9218 9000; www.yha.com.au; 11 Rawson Pl, Haymarket; dm \$34-39, d & tw \$95-107; 🏠 Central; 🏠
 Huge and fancy, Sydney Central YHA houses up to 556 flashpackers in a heritage-listed building near Central Station. It has all you'd expect in a hostel and then some: dorms, private rooms with or without ensuites, lockers, games and movie rooms, large kitchens, laundry facilities, a travel agency, bar, café, shop and even a rooftop swimming pool and sauna.

WAKE UP! Map p72 **Hostel** \$
 ☎ 9288 7888; www.wakeup.com.au; 509 Pitt St, Haymarket; dm \$26-34, d & tw \$88-98
 Another huge flashpacker hostel near Central Station, Wake Up! is a slightly cheaper version of Sydney Central YHA without the pool or sauna. The rooms are brightly painted and the double glazing is remarkably effective in keeping out the traffic noise in this busy corner site.

RAILWAY SQUARE YHA
 Map p72 **Hostel** \$
 ☎ 9281 9666; www.yha.com.au; 8 Lee St, Haymarket; dm \$34-39, d \$88-98; 🏠 Central; 🏠
 This hostel's not just central, it's actually in **Central Station** (p75). It occupies a former parcel shed with its own platform; you can even sleep in comfortable four-bed dorms in converted train carriages, with passenger trains pulling up on tracks just over the fence. The kids will love it, but bring earplugs. Private ensuite rooms are available.

DARLINGHURST TO POTTS POINT

This first belt of eastern suburbs should suit nightclub junkies, gay guys and boozed-up

backpackers just fine. The leafy backstreets hide a smattering of boutique hotels and the buzziest backpacker strip in the city (Victoria St). Excellent public transport makes for quick access to the city sights and Bondi.

DARLINGHURST MEDUSA

Map p78 **Boutique Hotel** \$\$\$
 ☎ 9331 1000; www.medusa.com.au; 267 Darlinghurst Rd; d \$270-385; 🏠 Kings Cross
 This sultry 18-room boutique hotel is pure Sydney – glamorous, flashy, sexy, decadent and gay-friendly. Lose yourself in the curvaceous furniture, and enjoy the chocolates on your pillow, soft linens on your bed and Aveda toiletries in your bathroom.

L'OTEL Map p78 **Boutique Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 9360 6868; www.lotel.com.au; 114 Darlinghurst Rd; d \$150-275; 🏠 Kings Cross
 The sheer blinding whiteness of L'otel is a bold style statement but it might have you thinking you've woken up on an operating slab. The rooms are comfortable and reasonably priced, ranging from smallish 'juniors' to spacious 'executives' with huge terraces. The design effort doesn't extend to the bathrooms which are ordinary.

CHELSEA Map p78 **B&B** \$\$
 ☎ 9380 5994; www.chelsea.citysearch.com.au;
 49 Womerah Ave; s with shared bathroom \$94, d \$143-154, ste \$165-195; 🏠 Kings Cross
 Sydney's Victorian terraces are nearly as iconic as that oversized coat hanger and scrum of nuns down by the harbour. Joining two such beauties together, the friendly Chelsea offers 13 unique, chic rooms in a peaceful street. Some are graced with a balcony; all have luxe cotton sheets and fittings.

WATTLE HOTEL
 Map p78 **Hotel** \$\$
 ☎ 9332 4118; www.thewattle.com; 108 Oxford St; d \$100-160, tw & f \$160; 🏠 Museum

There's no handier place to stay if your Sydney itinerary is largely nocturnal and gay. Consequently the weekend-only rates shoot up by \$30-40 per room, while at Mardi Gras be prepared to book a decade in advance and sacrifice your first-born for one of the corner terraces overlooking the parade route.

HOTEL ALTAMONT

Map p78 Boutique Hotel \$\$
☎ 9360 6000; www.altamont.com.au; 207 Darlinghurst Rd; d incl breakfast \$119-135; ☑ Kings Cross
This converted 1830s manor house adopted the name Altamont after several close encounters on the premises with members of the Rolling Stones. It now offers wonderful reasonably priced rooms – some huge and opening on to an internal courtyard. Add to the mix funky modern décor, friendly staff and a free light breakfast and you're sure to get some satisfaction.

ROYAL SOVEREIGN HOTEL

Map p78 Pub \$
☎ 9331 3672; www.darlobar.com; 306 Liverpool St; d with shared bathroom \$77-88; ☑ Kings Cross
With one of Darlinghurst's favourite drinking dens downstairs, these 19 nifty cheapsies are an appealing proposition. They're smartly painted, well-maintained and come with crisp clean white linen.

KINGS CROSS REGENTS COURT

Map p78 Boutique Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9358 1533; www.regentscourt.com.au; 18 Springfield Ave; d \$250-295; ☑ Kings Cross
In the surprisingly quiet backstreets of Kings Cross, friendly Regents offers stylish apartments fitted with kitchens, dining tables and DVD players. The highlight is the lush and lovely rooftop garden with a city skyline view and harbour glimpses.

SEVENTEEN ELIZABETH BAY ROAD

Map p78 Serviced Apartments \$
☎ 9358 8999; www.seventeenapartments.citysearch.com.au; 17 Elizabeth Bay Rd; studio/1-/2-bedroom apt \$79/180/230; ☑ Kings Cross
This lovely old deco block offers reasonably priced, self-contained apartments close enough to Kings Cross to be handy but distant enough to escape the din. The studio apartments are small but clean and funky, while some of the one- and two-bedroom apartments have lovely views over Rushcutters Bay.

HOTEL 59

Map p78 B&B \$\$
☎ 9360 5900; www.hotel59.com.au; 59 Bayswater Rd; s \$88, d \$110-121, f \$132, all with breakfast; ☑ Kings Cross

This small, friendly hotel may be a short skip from the dubious delights of Darlinghurst Rd, but don't expect to bring the party back to yours. Noisy boozers are frowned upon in this quiet family-run place and, besides, the rooms aren't overly big. The café downstairs whips up the great cooked breakfasts.

O'MALLEY'S HOTEL

Map p78 Pub \$
☎ 9357 2211; www.omalleyshotel.com.au; 228 William St; d \$79-113, tr \$99; ☑ Kings Cross
This friendly Irish pub comes attached to 15 traditionally decorated, well-furnished rooms with private bathrooms, although not all are ensuite. Two have good harbour views and one has a fully equipped kitchen. It's supercentral, but the traffic on William St doesn't let up, night or day.

EVA'S BACKPACKERS

Map p78 Hostel \$
☎ 9358 2185; www.evasbackpackers.com.au; 6-8 Orwell St; dm \$28, d & tw \$80, tr \$90; ☑ Kings Cross
Eva's is a class act. This cheerful, brightly painted corner block on a quiet backstreet is kept perfectly spick and span. There's a big sociable kitchen/dining area downstairs and a great rooftop garden. Breakfast and internet access (broadband or wi-fi) are free, as are non-backpackery extras such as shampoo, body wash and laundry powder.

ASYLUM

Map p78 Hostel \$
☎ 9368 1822; www.asylumssydney.com; 201-203 Brougham St; dm \$25, s & d \$60-100; ☑ Kings Cross
The friendly nutters at Asylum offer dorm beds or private rooms ranging from prison cells (at the cheaper end) to a harbour view pad with a kitchenette. The craziness continues with free wi-fi, free light breakfasts and free meal vouchers for the nearby Old Fitzroy pub. It's all kept clean and tidy.

POTTS POINT

VICTORIA COURT HOTEL

Map p78 B&B \$\$
☎ 9357 3200; www.victoriacourt.com.au; 122 Victoria St; d \$99-231; ☑ Kings Cross
Lovely, chintzy Victoria Court serves up more than a dash of Victoriana. Marble fireplaces and four-poster beds add to the ambience in many of the rooms, although strict Victorian observances have given way to sensible ensuites. Budgeteers should enquire about the cheaper room with an unattached but private bathroom.

MAISONETTE HOTEL

Map p78 Hotel \$\$
☎ 9357 3878; maisonettehotel@bigpond.com; 31 Challis Ave; s/d & tw/tr/f \$65/120/150/165; ☑ 311
Wake up and smell the coffee on Potts Point's hippest, most caffeinated strip. The rooms range from bright small doubles with ensuites to tiny dark singles with shared bathrooms, but the price is good and gets better the longer you stay.

ORIGINAL BACKPACKERS LODGE

Map p78 Hostel \$
☎ 9356 3232; www.originalbackpackers.com.au; 160-162 Victoria St; dm/s/d & tw/tr \$28/65/75/95; ☑ Kings Cross
This long-running hostel meanders through two wonderful historic mansions, offering 176 beds, friendly staff, two kitchens and great outdoor spaces. Rooms have high ceilings, fridges and shared bathrooms, although there is one double with an ensuite (\$90). Call from the airport for a free shuttle.

GREAT AUSSIE BACKPACKERS

Map p78 Hostel \$
☎ 9356 4551; www.greataussiebackpackers.com.au; 174 Victoria St; dm \$22, d & tw \$60-70; ☑ Kings Cross
One of numerous Victoria St hostels, this one has a large central courtyard and an active social programme including pub tours five nights a week, free Friday BBQ and Sunday pancakes. All rooms have TVs and fridges, and the pricier ones have ensuites.

TRAVELLERS REST

Map p78 Hostel \$
☎ 9380 2044; www.travellersrest.com.au; 156 Victoria St; dm \$20, tw \$50, d \$60-70; ☑ Kings Cross
Another old-style hostel on the main backpacker strip; the prices don't come lower than this for your basic bunk bed in a clean four-person dorm. Bathrooms are shared except for in the pricier doubles. You can email Mum from a free internet terminal.

WOOLLOOMOOLOO

Map p78 Hotel \$\$\$
☎ 9331 9000; www.tajhotels.com/sydney; 6 Cowper Wharf Rdwy; d \$280-380, ste \$360-900; ☑ 311; ☑
Fancy being Russell Crowe's neighbour, nearly? Blue occupies the first section of

the wonderfully refurbished Woolloomooloo finger wharf, capped by Mr Thighs' penthouse. You're not going to miss out on a water view from either the standard rooms or the ultrachic loft suites. Attention to luxurious detail includes Aveda toiletries, 250 thread-count sheets and goose-down duvets.

WOODDUCK HARBOUR CITY BACKPACKERS

Map p78 Hostel \$
☎ 9380 2922; www.harbourcityhotel.com.au; 50 Sir John Young Cres; dm \$23-25, d & tw \$70; ☑ St James
There's a definite old-school party-hostel vibe to this large, character-filled place, situated on a busy approach road to the harbour tunnel. All of the rooms (except some dorms) have shared bathrooms. Best of all is the large rooftop terrace offering stunning views over the city. If the buzz of the communal areas gets too much, you can easily escape to the Domain, literally across the road.

PADDINGTON TO DOUBLE BAY

Halfway between Bondi and the city, the locale's lovely but accommodation's limited. There's no train service (except for out-of-the-way Edgecliff station) but bus access to the city and beaches is excellent.

PADDINGTON & WOOLLAHRA

Map pp84-5 Hostel \$\$
☎ 9363 4863; www.hughendehotel.com.au; 14 Queen St, Woollahra; d \$148-268, tw \$228; ☑ 380
Given its venerable age, considerable size and posh location, you would expect this attractive manor to be luxurious and overpriced. However, the rambling, cluttered Hughenden seems more the preserve of an eccentric Victorian artist than a fusty black-suited gentleman; plenty of charm without much style. The 36 rooms are all different, ranging from tiny to spacious.

KATHRYN'S ON QUEEN

Map pp84-5 B&B \$\$
☎ 9327 4535; www.kathryns.com.au; 20 Queen St, Woollahra; d \$165-209; ☑ 380
There are only three rooms available in this gorgeous grand Victorian terrace, deftly

run by a charming hostess. Tastefully decorated in cream and white, with comfortable antique furniture; chose between the attic room with an ensuite or the two first-floor rooms which share a bathroom.

SULLIVANS HOTEL Map pp84–5 Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9361 0211; www.sullivans.com.au; 21 Oxford St, Paddington; d & tw \$165-180, tr & f \$180; ☎ 380; 🚗

A popular Mardi Gras stop given its location, friendly Sullivans offers 64 good simple rooms wrapped around a leafy poolside courtyard. The pricier ones face inwards and have a balcony. Family rooms come with bunks for the under eights, or there are interconnecting rooms available (\$235). Free extras include internet access, bicycles, in-house movies and a fitness room.

HART'S HOMESTAY Map pp84–5 B&B \$\$
 ☎ 9380 5516; addington91@bigpond.com; 91 Stewart St, Paddington; s \$85, d \$130-150; ☎ 380

Big on charm *and* style, the Hart family's posh Paddington pad could be described as homeliness personified. There's a small, sunny garden dripping in flowers, while the walls support a staggering number of framed nature portraits (there's a whole room devoted to ducks). One huge bedroom has an ensuite, while the upstairs rooms share a nearby bathroom. The sheets are pure cotton, the duvets unadulterated down, the toiletries French, the bathrobes fluffy and the breakfasts substantial and fruity.

DOUBLE BAY STAMFORD PLAZA DOUBLE BAY

Map pp84–5 Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9362 4455; www.stamford.com.au; 33 Cross St, Double Bay; d \$180-600; ☎ 323-326; 🚗

Chances are if you're a Double Bay–fancier you'll want to stay at the super-swish Stamford Plaza. It's very old-school grand, with gilt-framed portraits of stuffy Victorian gentlemen, lavish chandeliers and much marble. The smallish rooftop pool has seriously glamorous views, as do the pricier rooms. While its website boasts of playing host to American presidents, it will forever be remembered as the site of INXS star Michael Hutchence's undignified end.

SAVOY HOTEL Map pp84–5 Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9326 1411; www.savoyhotel.com.au; 41 Knox St, Double Bay; d & tw \$119-149, ste \$189-260; ☎ 323-326

Unlike the rest of 'Double Pay', the friendly Savoy doesn't seem to have increased its prices in years. The only thing with a whiff of pretension about it is the name. The rooms are pleasant and tidy.

SURRY HILLS TO ALEXANDRIA

If you've got a taste for fine food and designer bars, Surry Hills is a great spot to rest your head, if you can find a pillow. Unfortunately choices are limited.

HOTEL STELLAR
 Map pp90–1 Boutique Hotel \$\$\$
 ☎ 9264 9754; www.hotelstellar.com; 4 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills; studio \$265-295, 2-/3-bedroom apt \$380/495; 🚗 Museum

This Victorian office has been done out apartment-style, with kitchenettes, flat-screen TVs and access to free movies. The result is a series of hip, modern pads you'll wish you lived in – located on the noisy city edge of Surry Hills (earplugs are a good idea). If you're travelling with a posse, the three-bedroom apartment works out to be good value.

MEDINA ON CROWN
 Map pp90–1 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
 ☎ 8302 1000; www.medina.com.au; 359 Crown St, Surry Hills; 1-bedroom apt \$253-284, 2-bedroom apt \$326-356; ☎ 301-303; 🚗

As one of the main pastimes in Surry Hills is eating out, you may find the well-stocked kitchenette of your slick, modern apartment doesn't get a lot of use – the Medina building alone is home to three exalted eateries. The leafy poolside, gym and sauna are plenty popular over Mardi Gras.

MANOR HOUSE Map pp90–1 Boutique Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9380 6633; www.manorhouse.com.au; 86 Flinders St, Darlinghurst; d \$170-220, ste \$280; ☎ Central; 🚗

Step off busy Flinders St and step back in time as you enter this grand 1850s mansion, complete with extravagant chandeliers, moulded ceilings, Victorian tiling and fountains tinkling in the garden. One might say

it's a house fit for a queen, and it's certainly popular with the gay community around Mardi Gras time, being right on the parade route and staggering distance from the party.

MACQUARIE BOUTIQUE HOTEL
 Map pp90–1 Pub \$\$\$
 ☎ 8262 8844; www.macquariehotel.com; 40-44 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills; s \$88, d \$110-125, tr \$175; ☎ Central

This pub represents a good deal on a number of fronts – a supercentral location, low prices, plenty of character and its own microbrewery on the premises! The rooms themselves are in decent shape and have ensuite bathrooms. By the time this book is published, the old girl will have had some work – we're promised double-glazing along with the makeover. The prices may also upgrade.

CITY CROWN MOTEL
 Map pp90–1 Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9331 2433; www.citycrownmotel.com.au; 289 Crown St, Surry Hills; d & tw \$140-155, tr \$155-165; ☎ 301-3

The location's the clincher for this otherwise run-of-the-mill motel offering simple rooms, some with a balcony or patio. DVD players are a surprising extra. Rates skyrocket for Mardi Gras but drop substantially in the off season.

BIG HOSTEL
 Map pp90–1 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9281 6030; www.bighostel.com; 212 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills; dm \$27-31, s/tw/d/tr/ff \$75/89/93/102/125; ☎ Central

If it weren't for the bunk beds, shared facilities and the strangers sleeping in the same room, you might forget you're in a hostel. Upmarket and stylish, Mr Big has attractive communal areas, including a cute rooftop terrace. All rooms have TVs and video players and wi-fi access is free, as is a light breakfast. Although the dark hollow of Elizabeth St isn't Sydney's most salubrious locale, Central Station's just across the road for a quick escape.

BONDI TO COOGEE

If you'd like some sightseeing with your beach holiday (and not the other way around), plunge into the eastern beaches. Bondi's the most interesting and closest to the city, but you'll find

better bang for your buck in Coogee. Buses are frequent but a trip to the city can eat the best part of an hour at busy times.

**BONDI
SWISS GRAND** Map pp94–5 Hotel \$\$\$
 ☎ 9365 4422; www.swissgrand.com.au; cnr Campbell Pde & Beach Rd; d & tw \$225-300, ste \$400-900; ☎ 380; 🚗

The Swiss Grand is the giant wedding cake at the centre of the Bondi strip; an eyesore or the ultimate in Bondi kitsch depending on your point of view. The rooms are all very pleasant with their own balcony and, of course, the ocean views are superb.

RAVESI'S Map pp94–5 Boutique Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9365 4422; www.ravesi.com.au; 118 Campbell Pde; d \$125-295, ste \$275-450; ☎ 380

The 16 contemporary rooms and two-level suites at this posh place with hobbitish curved windows are gorgeous and sleek. Decked out in gun-metal grey or rich chocolate hues, the interiors look good enough to eat. The best rooms have large and luxurious balconies offering five-star peeps at the ocean. Wi-fi access is free.

HOTEL BONDI Map pp94–5 Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9130 3271; www.hotelbondi.com.au; 178 Campbell Pde; s \$60-90, tw \$130, d \$130-175, ste \$200-330; ☎ 380

Continuing the Bondi confectionary analogies, Hotel Bondi is the peach-coloured layer-cake right on the beachfront. It offers small, tidy rooms with only the cheapest singles sharing bathrooms. Note that the hotel is home to three bars and a nightclub – if you want to avoid merry revellers, stay elsewhere. Still, if you have a view of the beach and don't have to get up early, you'll be laughing just as loudly.

**COOGEE & RANDWICK
COOGEE SANDS**
 Map pp94–5 Serviced Apartments \$\$\$
 ☎ 9665 8588; www.coogesands.com.au; 161 Dolphin St, Coogee; studio \$175-460, 1-bedroom apt \$190-500; ☎ 372-374

The sands of Coogee are only a few metres from the front door, making this apartment-style hotel an extremely attractive proposition. Some units have large terraces and impressive views, but if you miss out they

all have access to a fabulous rooftop BBQ area. The rooms are pleasant without attempting to be stylish and come with kitchenettes.

DIVE HOTEL Map pp94–5 Boutique Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9665 5538; www.divehotel.com.au; 234 Arden St, Coogee; d \$165-280, 3-bedroom apt \$350; ☎ 372-374

plenty of hotels don't live up to their name (the most flagrantly misused epithets being grand, palace and central) and thankfully neither does this one. The 14 modern rooms at this delightful boutique hotel are wonderfully luxurious and come with a kitchenette and small groovy bathroom. There's a separate family-friendly three-room apartment in a nearby street. You can enjoy the complimentary breakfast buffet in the elegant kitchen or on the Asian-flavoured back patio.

AVONMORE ON THE PARK Map pp94–5 Boutique Hotel \$\$
 ☎ 9399 9388; www.avonmoreonthepark.com.au; 34 The Avenue, Randwick; d & tw \$145-225; ☎ 374

This elaborate three-storey grand Victorian terrace house is the biggest of its kind in Sydney. The breathtaking entrance has beautiful tiles and a lavish carved wooden staircase that will have you itching to make a movie-star-style descent. The 24 rooms (all with a kitchenette) are divided between the old servants' wing and the spacious heritage rooms – with polished wooden floors, acres of floral fabric and marble fireplaces.

BEACHHOUSE Map pp94–5 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9665 1162; fax 9665 0365; 171 Arden St, Coogee; dm/s/d & tw/tr \$30/60/80/100; ☎ 372-374
 This friendly, comfortable hostel offers four-person dorms and basic private rooms, all with shared bathrooms. The welcoming hosts maintain scrupulous standards and offer a complimentary light breakfast and an outdoor BBQ for guests' use.

INNER WEST

It's a pleasure to wake up in the inner west, but only Glebe is well served by accommodation options. Transport connections to the city are excellent, but accessing the beaches requires a bit more effort.

TRICKETS B&B Map pp100–1 B&B \$\$
 ☎ 9552 1141; www.tricketts.com.au; 270 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; s \$150, d \$176-198, all incl breakfast; ☎ 431

Seven lovely rooms and spacious, antique-filled common areas will make you feel right at home – if your home is a gorgeous 19th-century restored mansion. There's a deck out the back and a beautiful marbled patio overlooking the front garden's fountain.

ALISHAN INTERNATIONAL GUEST HOUSE Map pp100–1 Guesthouse \$
 ☎ 9566 4048; www.alishan.com.au; 100 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; dm \$27-33, s \$55-99, d & tw \$70-115; ☎ 431-434

Rooms in this lovely old house range from small basic cheapies with shared bathrooms, to larger self-contained ones. All are kept shipshape, as are the common kitchen, lounge, laundry, and garden BBQ area.

BILLABONG GARDENS Map pp100–1 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9550 3236; www.billabonggardens.com.au; 5-11 Egan St, Newtown; dm \$23-25, s \$50, d & tw \$69-89, tr \$90-110; ☎ 422-423; ☎

It you're more impressed by Che Guevara than Paris Hilton, Newtown's your place and this cosy brick-and-tile hostel should be your first choice. Excellent communal facilities open on to a lush central courtyard with a solar-heated pool. Internet access is free and friendly staff can sort out little extras such as snorkelling equipment if asked. The cheaper rooms have shared bathrooms.

GLEBE POINT YHA Map pp100–1 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9692 8418; www.yha.com.au; 262 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; dm \$28-33, d & tw \$74; ☎ 431

Well run and pleasant, this friendly, brightly painted hostel has good facilities, lots of activities and simple, clean rooms with sinks. The covered rooftop with picnic tables, hammocks, a BBQ and views is a highlight.

GLEBE VILLAGE Map pp100–1 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9660 8878; www.glebevillage.com; 256 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; dm \$25-27, s/d \$60/70; ☎ 431
 Sprawled over Victorian houses (capacity 150), Glebe Village resembles nothing more than a collection of grungy student flats. Frank-the-Tank types, less hung up on comfort than good times, should find themselves quite at home. There's a mix of shared bathrooms and ensuite, good communal areas and sunny tables.

NORTH SHORE

Despite the position on the 'other side' of the harbour, staying on the lower North Shore can often mean a quicker commute into town than one from the inner west or eastern suburbs. And the views can be ridiculously sublime. Manly's a relaxing half-hour ferry ride away from the city centre, offering all the beach benefits and a chance to maximise your harbour exposure whenever you hanker to see the sights. With a gentle harbour beach and ocean surf beach only minutes apart, it is a great place for families.

LOWER NORTH SHORE

VIBE HOTEL NORTH SYDNEY Map p108 Hotel \$\$\$
 ☎ 9955 1111; www.vibehotels.com.au; 88 Alfred St S, Milsons Point; tw \$200, d \$200-224, ste \$274-300; ☎ Milsons Point; ☎

Spunky and bright, this slick hotel sports 165 very stylish, contemporary rooms and 30 suites. Aqua Vibe rooms offer a choice of Lavender Bay or Kirribilli views, while the rooftop pool gives you both. Due to its location it pulls the business crowd – prices fall by around \$50 on the weekends.

GLENFERRIE LODGE Map p108 Guesthouse \$
 ☎ 9955 1685; www.glenferrielodge.com; 12a Carabella St, Kirribilli; dm \$40, s \$65-79, tw \$99, d \$99-159, all incl breakfast; ☎ Kirribilli

This large old house sits on a quiet residential street and has a wonderfully grassy back garden. With a ridiculous statue out front, it's hard to miss. Basic rooms come with a fridge and TV and the shared bathrooms are clean. Cheap dinners are available, but there's no kitchen access. Arriving by ferry is a glamorous option, but hauling your luggage up the stairs from the wharf may be less so.

MANLY
MANLY WATERSIDE Map p110 Serviced Apartments \$\$
 ☎ 9977 4459; www.manlyholidays.com.au; Short St; apt studio \$150-170, 1-bedroom apt \$190-220, 2-bedroom apt \$350-395; ☎ Manly; ☎

This place has around 30 apartments available in blocks scattered around the vicinity. All have kitchen and laundry facilities and some have pools and spas. There's quite a range available and prices vary throughout

the year, so check the website for more information. Concorde is the newest block, while the Grant is older but has killer views.

PERIWINKLE Map p110 B&B \$\$
 ☎ 9977 4668; www.periwinkle.citysearch.com.au; 18 East Esplanade; s \$110-160, d \$135-190, all incl light breakfast; ☎ Manly

Occupying a blissfully quiet harbourside spot, this large Federation house offers 18 pleasant, well-appointed rooms, some with ensuites and stunning water views. There's a family atmosphere, a shady courtyard and a communal kitchen.

101 ADDISON ROAD Map p110 B&B \$\$
 ☎ 9977 6216; www.bb-manly.com; 101 Addison Rd; s/d \$130/150; ☎ Manly

At risk of sounding like a Victorian matron, the only word to describe this 1880 cottage set on a quiet street is 'delightful'. Two rooms are available but the charming hostess accepts only one booking at a time (from one to four people) – meaning you'll have free reign of the main part of the antique-strewn house, including a private

AIRPORT ACCOMMODATION

HOTEL IBIS SYDNEY AIRPORT Map pp50–1 Hotel \$\$\$
 ☎ 8339 8500; www.ibishotels.com.au; 205 O'Riordan St, Mascot; d & tw \$139; ☎ Mascot
 Nobody stays in these could-be-anywhere airport hotels for kicks – they do so because they have an early flight or they missed it altogether. This one fits the bill perfectly, offering clean, comfortable rooms at reasonable rates, as well as regular airport shuttles (free from the airport, \$5 back).

OLD RECTORY Map pp50–1 Guesthouse \$
 ☎ 9559 7841; <http://oldrectory.idx.com.au>; 2 Samuel St, Tempe; s \$55-70, d \$70-80; ☎ Sydenham

A little more character is provided at this small guesthouse on the Pacific Hwy. The cheaper rooms don't have ensuites, but there is a communal kitchen and grassy lawn. Traffic noise is intrusive, coming from both the air and ground. Breakfast and airport pickups are offered free; drop-offs are \$12.

lounge with a grand piano. This is a rare treat and worth booking well in advance.

WINDERMERE COTTAGE

Map p110 B&B \$\$
 ☎ 9977 7363; eland@bigpond.net.au; 31 Cliff St; d \$140; 🏠 Manly

If you miss out on a room at 101 Addison Road, this pleasant place nearby offers a very similar setup (two bedrooms, but only one booking accepted at a time). While it doesn't have quite the same sumptuous historic charm, it's still a good proposition.

BUNKHOUSE

Map p110 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9976 0472; www.bunkhouse.com.au; 35 Pine St; dm \$30, d & tw \$80; 🏠 Manly

Surf central, this is the place for advice on all the northside breaks. Set on a quiet street in a two-storey house with a big backyard, it's a 300m walk to the beach and double that to the Corso. Each room comes with its own TV, kitchenette and bathroom, but if you're not the reclusive type there's also a common kitchen, dining area and TV lounge.

UPPER NORTH SHORE

BARRENJOEY HOUSE

Map p113 Guesthouse \$\$
 ☎ 9974 4001; www.barrenjoeyhouse.com.au; 1108 Barrenjoey Rd, Palm Beach; d \$180-220; 🚗 L90

This lovely 1923 guesthouse might not be on the 'beach' side of Palm Beach (it faces tranquil Pittwater instead), but it still ranks as one of the best escapes on the Northern Beaches. The house is a testament to all things shabby chic, with an easy-going feel, Mod-Oz restaurant, wooden floorboards, white linen, old coffee tables and cushions galore. Rooms are pretty and feminine, some with ensuites, king-sized beds and views.

PITTWATER YHA

Map p113 Hostel \$
 ☎ 9999 5748; www.yha.com.au; Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park via Church Point; dm \$25-28, d & tw \$63-70; 🚗 E86 from Central to Church Point, then 🏠 Hall Wharf

Wake up to marvellous views over Morning Bay at this hostel, one of the best budget sleeps in Sydney. A converted 1920s guesthouse, it is set about 15 minutes' uphill from the wharf (this is a blissfully car-free

zone). The surrounding bushland is dominated by magnificent purple-grey eucalypti, which harbour a welter of cockatoos and wallabies. Book ahead and bring food; demand for this idyllic retreat is high.

OTHER NEIGHBOURHOODS

If staying in the heart of Sydney fails to excite you, the city's outskirts offer a change of pace and often a cheaper deal.

DOYLES PALACE HOTEL

Map pp50-1 Pub \$\$
 ☎ 9337 5444; www.doyles.com.au; 1 Military Rd, Watsons Bay; d \$145-260, tw \$200, ste \$230-420; 🏠 Watsons Bay

With a ferry jetty at its doorstep, this is an idyllic spot from which to explore the city or to retreat and relax. More boutique hotel than pub accommodation, the impressive Doyles Palace offers smartly renovated rooms with comfy beds, crisp white linen, attractive ensuites and some amazing views. Noise from the ever-popular bar doesn't seem to penetrate.

CRONULLA BEACHOUSE YHA

Hostel \$
 ☎ 9527 7772; www.cronullabeachyha.com; Level 1, 40 Kingsway, Cronulla; dm \$25-26, d & tw \$75, tr \$100; 🚗 Cronulla

Given that 90% of the clientele are hot surfer dudes who rarely bother to wear shirts (hey, it's something less to wash), no-one's going to get too hung up if the showers aren't totally clean or the rooms are a little shabby. This is a great party hostel that is what it is – and has a free pool table. The private rooms are marginally less noisy than the dorms and have ensuites. Electronic safety boxes are provided.

SHIRALEE CARAVAN PARK

Map pp50-1 Camping \$
 ☎ 9567 7161; fax 9798 7059; 88 Bryant St, Rockdale; site unpowered/powered \$25/30; 🚗 Rockdale

If you're looking for a place to pitch a tent or park a campervan reasonably handy to the city, Shiralee offers a quiet spot in walking distance of Rockdale station and Brighton-Le-Sands beach, and handy to the airport. It's nothing flash but there is a kitchen, laundry, TV room and BBQ. Many of the guests are permanent stayers.

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