

Fact Sheet



Canberra

The Australian Capital Territory packs national parks, wine and farming regions, a stunning national capital city, and more, into a very small space by Aussie standards. The ACT stretches 88km from north to south and only 30km from east to west. It is encircled by New South Wales.

Our nation's capital, Canberra is the centre of Australian Government and home to a vibrant diplomatic community. Canberra holds the treasures of the nation. Our modern culture, history and way of life are reflected in the many museums, galleries and activities that Canberra offers. The city provides an insight into the Australian character and democracy and marks our journey from an Aboriginal continent to a modern nation. Discover Australia's art, literature, science, sport, history, politics, achievements and contemporary lifestyle.

Attractions

Canberra is a complete destination with plenty to do and see. In the one city, you'll find national monuments and attractions, cosmopolitan nightlife, excellent accommodation, gourmet cuisine, all kinds of sports and entertainment, and a myriad events and festivals.

Most of the national attractions hug the shores of Lake Burley Griffin and the Parliamentary Triangle. Magnificent art, science and historical collections combine with intriguing exhibitions and interactive displays.

Australian War Memorial

The War Memorial commemorates those lost in war to learn about the Australian wartime experience. www.awm.gov.au

National Gallery of Australia

The National Gallery of Australia is the premier art institution in Australia, with a collection of more than 100,000 works of art across four main areas: Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Asian and International. The gallery has comprehensive exhibitions, a permanent display, and a travelling exhibitions program. www.nga.gov.au/

Parliament House

Australia's Parliament House -surmounted by a colossal stainless-steel flagpole and set in 23 hectares of gardens on Capital Hill- is the focal point of Canberra. You are welcome to visit from 9am-5pm on non-sitting days and from 9am to when the house rises on sitting days. www.aph.gov.au

National Library of Australia

More than five million books and magazines are housed at the National Library of Australia beside Lake Burley Griffin. It also holds more than 40,000 paintings, drawings and prints, more than 9,000 metres of manuscripts, 550,000 photographs, hundreds of thousands of maps, aerial photographs and music scores and more than 50,000 oral history recordings. www.nla.gov.au

Questacon – the National Science and Technology Centre

Engage your mind, body and emotion at the exhibitions and performances at Questacon, Australia's National Science and Technology Centre, www.questacon.edu.au

National Museum of Australia

Learn about our land, nation and people at the National Museum of Australia. There is a remarkable collection of indigenous art and culture from Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. www.nma.gov.au

Australian Reptile Centre

Come face to face with some of Australia's largest, deadliest and most colourful reptiles in the Australian Reptile Gallery. In the Prehistory Gallery, the Reptiles in Space and Time exhibition graphically portray the evolution of reptiles. Meet a friendly carpet python at the Snake Tales educational program. www.contact.com.au/reptile/

Cockington Green Gardens

You will feel like Gulliver at the world in miniature, Cockington Green. See miniature buildings representative of Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, England, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Slovenia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, and Venezuela. www.cockingtongreen.com.au

National Zoo & Aquarium

The National Zoo & Aquarium is the only place in Australia where native, exotic, freshwater and marine animals can be found and visited at one location. The zoo features large, naturalistic enclosures, waterways and open vistas. www.nationalzoo.com.au

Black Mountain Tower

From the tower, rising 195 metres above the summit of Black Mountain, you can see 360-degree views of Canberra and surrounds. This regional landmark has open and closed observation decks, two cafes and a revolving restaurant.

Canberra Glassworks

Meet artists, see glassmaking as it happens, take tours and have a hands-on experience working with glass at the Canberra Glassworks. This cultural centre is wholly dedicated to contemporary glass art. www.canberraglassworks.com

Old Parliament House

This beautiful icon of the 1920s was the home of the Australian Parliament for 61 years. On a guided tour you can see the cramped conditions of a press gallery journalist, the Cabinet and Party rooms, and visit the Australian Prime Ministers Centre. www.oph.gov.au

National Archives of Australia

As well as being the place we can research our family trees, the Archives house significant holdings of photographs, maps, films, playscripts, musical scores and sound recordings. Delve into original government records on immigration, transport, politics or Indigenous affairs, or explore one of the ever-changing exhibitions. www.naa.gov.au

National Film and Sound Archive

Housed in a beautiful art deco building, the archive holds over 100 years of Australian film, radio and television history. Wander through the exhibitions, watch early Australian television commercials and browse in the shop. Catch a classic film in the new Arc cinema. www.nfsa.afc.gov.au

Shopping

Canberra is a shopper's delight, with department stores and lots of specialty shops, galleries and antique dealers.

City Centre

Gathered around City Walk and Northbourne Avenue are several travel businesses and the main post office. Across the road in the City Markets, you'll find fresh-food stores, cafes, restaurants and specialty shops.

Canberra Centre

Located in the heart of Canberra's central business district on Bunda Street, this large shopping mall includes the major department stores David Jones and Myers, and fashion outlets.

Manuka

Up-market fashion labels, home wares and a street of alfresco cafes make this the epicentre of Canberra. Manuka Plaza is located on the Corner of Franklin Street and Flinders Way and has a 24-hour supermarket, specialty shops and food outlets.

Westfield Belconnen

Major department stores and more than 200 specialty stores are found at Westfield Belconnen.

Woden Plaza

Woden Plaza on Keltie Street in Philip is the most comprehensive shopping and leisure experience in Canberra. There is also a wide array of delicious dining options.

Entertainment & Dining

You'll also never be short of things to do in Canberra. Trendy, techno, retro or just a good place to have a drink, there are more than 300 restaurants and bars for you to choose from.

For the more culturally minded, take in a blockbuster exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia or National Museum of Australia. See a live show or rock concert at the Canberra Theatre. Festivals, galleries, embassies, gardens, shopping and sport – there's plenty to keep you happily entertained.

City and West Row

Canberra's "eat street" is West Row, and Akuna and Alinga streets. A diverse range of restaurants, bars, pubs and nightclubs can be found throughout the city centre. Mediterranean, Mexican and Italian food are just some of the cuisines on offer.

Kingston and Manuka

If hip urban cafes appeal to you then jump in the car and drive a few minutes south to Canberra Avenue, Kingston and Manuka where stylish bars and restaurants are ready to please.

Dickson

With an array of Asian restaurants and shops, the suburb of Dickson, about five minutes north of the city, is known locally as Canberra's Chinatown. It also has a distinct multicultural feel, with cuisines on offer from many countries.

Yarralumla and O'Connor

Yarralumla, one Canberra's first suburbs, is home to the Governor-General. Close to where many of our politicians live, Yarralumla has a selection of up-market cafes and restaurants. O'Connor and the neighbouring suburb of Lyneham in the city's north-west attract a more bohemian and colourful clientele. It has some great cafes and a popular live-music scene.

Lakeside dining

Lake Burley Griffin has some excellent dining options located around this picturesque stretch of water that separates Parliament House from the city.

Sport

The annual Prime Minister's XI International is one of Australia's premier international cricket matches. Up-and-coming Aussie cricketers play against an international touring test team.

Canberra Stadium is the place to catch a game of Rugby League or Union. The stadium is home to the Canberra Raiders and the Brumbies.

The Brindabella Challenge, Australia's largest variety cycling event takes participants throughout Canberra into the shadow of the beautiful Brindabella Ranges, along the extensive bike path network and on some of Australia's finest mountain bike tracks.

Ride the mountain bike track at Stromlo Forest Park. This track will host the 2008 UCI World Cup Mountain Bike Championship round in August 2008, and the UCI Mountain Bike and Trials World Championships in 2009. www.stromloforestpark.com.au

Getting Around In Canberra

Getting around Canberra is easy. Roads are good, parking is hassle free and attractions are well signposted. You can self-drive, relax in a bus or take one of many organised tours. Travelling time by car from Canberra International Airport to Canberra City takes about 10 minutes. In Canberra, the roads are excellent and traffic delays are almost non-existent, so you'll find that moving around (and getting there) is easy.

Action Buses provides public transport to all areas of Canberra. Connections are available between all main centres and suburbs. Tel 13 17 10 or 61 2 6207 7611, www.action.act.gov.au

Climate

Canberra is located at latitude 35 degrees south, roughly the same distance from the equator as San Francisco or Tokyo. It is about 150 kilometres inland from the coast and 571 metres above the Pacific Ocean.

The region has four distinct seasons: spring (September-November), which is colourful; summer (December-February), which can be warm to hot; autumn (March-May), which is possibly the best time of year to visit, with the changing leaves and balmy temperatures; and winter (June-August), which is cool and crisp.

Beyond Canberra

There is plenty to do only a short drive from the city. Take a leisurely drive through the Canberra wine district, or spend a day travelling to the coast or to the fabulous Snowy Mountains. You can be as relaxed, or as spontaneous, as you like.

Canberra Wine District

Canberra's cool-climate wineries are set in picturesque rural countryside close to the city. Along the Barton Highway, you'll drive about 20 minutes to reach a cluster of wineries at Hall, home to the respected Brindabella Hills, Pankhurst and Surveyor's Hill labels. A few minutes away on Nanima Road, is the Poacher's Pantry Smokehouse Cafe – where there is a winery, farm shop and restaurant specialising in gourmet smoked meats.

Just up the Barton Highway is another cluster of wineries. Here you can try award-winning labels Clonakilla, Helm Wines and Jeir Creek, just to name a few. Crisp's Lane Cafe offers country hospitality overlooking the vines.

There is more wine to taste along the Federal Highway. The Lake George vigneron produce fabulous wines, ranging from Lark Hill's multi-award-winning pinot noir to the acclaimed rieslings of Gidgee Estate.

Canberra to the Coast

For beach lovers, 'Canberra to the Coast' is a must. A pleasant 20-minute drive takes you to Bungendore, a historic village full of art and craft shops, woodwork galleries, leatherworks and several friendly restaurants, cafes and bakeries.

Braidwood

Next stop is the quaint town of Braidwood bursting with authentic character and charm. It is halfway between Canberra and the coast and well worth the trip to explore craft shops, and colourful, country festivals that are held each season.

Batemans Bay

Continue toward the coast and you'll arrive at Batemans Bay, where you can wander our beautiful beaches, eat the freshest fish and chips, visit art galleries and explore other seaside towns.

Mount Kosciuszko

The easy drive to Mt Kosciuszko passes through the high country with its friendly country towns, sweeping plains, peaks covered in wildflowers and deep, blue lakes full of trout. Visit the historic village of Monaro, the National Trust-listed streets of Cooma and the lakeside town of Jindabyne. Don't miss the chairlift and stunning walk to Mount Kosciuszko.

Country Drives

If you have a few days, take the Capital and Country touring route from Sydney to Melbourne via Canberra. The route goes through some of the most scenic and historic areas of south-eastern Australia including Albury Wodonga, the rich Murray River country and Bendigo.

Useful Links

www.australia.com

www.visitcanberra.com.au