

MELBOURNE



Travel Guide

By Gareth Pye

Introduction

Thank you for coming to GP Melbourne. Melbourne is a great place to visit with lots of great food and plenty of things to do right next to the city.

Currency

Australia uses its dollar for currency. All of our coins and notes are to the right of this paragraph. Our notes are plastic, and those of us who are geeky enough to know are proud of them because we now produce the notes for several other countries. They are bright and boldly coloured.

Coins come in 5, 10, 20 and 50¢ with those silver coins getting bigger, where the golden \$1 and \$2 coins get smaller.

Electricity

Australia uses the reasonably common 240V at 50Hz, but uses a plug that isn't very common so anyone travelling from further away than New Zealand will need a physical adapter.

Travellers from 110V countries (Japan, USA and Canada mainly) will need to be careful that the devices they plug in can handle our higher voltage. The most likely device you care about, your phone charger, is quite likely to work, but be safe and check!

Visas

As an Australian I really have little knowledge of how hard Australian Visa's are to obtain. Please check our government's website to determine if you need to have prearranged a visa or if you can just obtain one at immigration after you arrive.

<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visi/Visi>

Tipping

Australia is not a tipping culture. Most of the people you interact with will graciously accept a tip, but they aren't relying on it to get a reasonable wage. Australians typically only tip when service is exceptional at a restaurant. If you are a 15% tipper back at home you should probably just subtract 15% from what feels right to you, remember that the meal was rather expensive to start with (except that our dollar is pretty weak at the moment).

Personally the most common reason I tip is that I don't want to worry about coins for change from a taxi driver.



Public Transport

Public transport in Melbourne comes in three forms: Train, Tram and Bus. Conveniently they all use the same ticketing system and if you are going to use them to get to and from where you are going it is then free to use it as much as you want for the rest of the day. Inconveniently you must purchase a RFID card and put money on the card to use any of them. These can only be purchased from train stations (at least all the city ones, some suburban ones don't sell them) and from many convenience stores. They can not be purchased or recharged on buses or trams.



Also handy is the free tram zone (pictured above in green). In this zone you don't need to touch on or off (tap your RFID card to the sensor). Inconveniently this zone doesn't cover the event venue (the bottom right corner of the image), but you might decide to be thrifty and stay somewhere in the free zone and then catch the tram for free to the closest point to the venue then walk from there.

Touching on and off at the start and end of your trip is important, and it must be done every time you catch a new piece of PT, so it must be done on every bus and tram you catch, but if you aren't leaving the train station between trains then you don't need to do it.

Accommodation

With the venue for the GP being just on the outskirts of the Central Business District visitors are spoilt for choice on accommodation.

There are many reasonably cheap hostels in the CBD and all of them are within easy walking distance of a tram which will get you to the venue easily enough.

The same is true of all the CBD hotels.

If you are trying to avoid using the trams then try and get accommodation on the South Eastern corner of the CBD or in Richmond. The Southern edge of East Melbourne is also a short walk from the venue through the car park of the MCG.

Judge Hotel

Quest Jolimont Apartments is the judge hotel for this event. There is a good chance that you'll find some judges in the foyer if you are having trouble finding something to do in this busy city

http://www.questapartments.com.au/Accommodation/61/Australia/Melbourne_CBD_Fringe/Quest_Jolimont/Welcome.aspx

Venue

The venue for GP Melbourne is once again the function room at Melbourne Olympic Park. Within the sprawling grounds of MOP you'll want to head towards the Melbourne Park Function Centre.

Tram 70

Get off at stop Rod Laver Arena (Stop 7B) and proceed to the entry gates that are at the eastern end of the tram stop. Once inside the first set of gates you'll see a ramp to your left, go up that ramp and the Function Centre is at the top.

Entry from Olympic Boulevard (Main Taxi Drop Off)

When entering from this entrance you'll see a huge covered stadium in front of you and a nearly as large covered stadium to your right (and the larger than both of them MCG with it's massive light towers further behind both of them). Go up the large steps in front of the stadium right in front of you and you'll find the Function Centre on that concourse level by walking around the stadium on it's right side.

Sights To See

MCG

A massive open air stadium that is just a short walk across a bridge from the tournament venue. It has 7 massive light towers that are reasonably impressive to anyone unfamiliar with sports stadiums suitable for seating 100,000 people. Unfortunately there doesn't appear to be any games being held at the ground until 3 weeks after the GP. The GP is between the cricket and AFL football seasons.



The only sports games in town that are likely to be attractive is a national league soccer match which is having the two Melbourne teams play on Saturday night (which should be sold out far enough in advance that you wont be buying tickets after going 0-3 drop in the main event) and a Rugby League match on the following Monday night. <http://www.aamipark.com.au/events/storm->

Melbourne Zoo



A must see for those with a tight schedule who must see a kangaroo and koala (both very cute). It is a first rate modern zoo with many large enclosures where the animals are comfortable and in natural surroundings. It is a short tram ride away and a great days entertainment.

If you have more time and want to see more of the native wild life than

just the primary suspects then a day trip with a hired car gives you access to Healesville Sanctuary. Probably my biggest suggestion for someone with one whole day to use.

<http://www.zoo.org.au/melbourne>

<http://www.zoo.org.au/healesville>

St Kilda Beach

A short tram ride from the CBD, St Kilda is a beach front suburb with a good, but frequently busy, beach. Bikes can be hired to ride along the path along the beach. Many good places to eat right on the beach or a block away on the long strip of shops. A good place to visit with significant others as they may enjoy the fashionable shops.



Great Ocean Road



This is one of the best scenic ocean roads in the world. This is only for those willing to hire a car, or find a local willing to play tour guide. Ideally spending a night in one of the towns will let you get the best of the trip, but if you are willing to make a long day of it a single day trip is possible (8.5 hours driving for the round trip).

<http://www.visitvictoria.com/Regions/Great-Ocean-Road.aspx>

Magic Stores

Melbourne's CBD is host to 3 stores that I can think of off the top of my head: Dungeon of Magic, Good Games Melbourne and Games Laboratory, in order of age. Dungeon of Magic is the store you remember from the 90's, tucked away in the basement of Royal Arcade right in the heart of the CBD. Around a block from that is Good Games Melbourne which can be slightly hard to find but is on the second floor above a Korean supermarket. Games Laboratory sprawls across three floors with a bar in the basement and the whole third floor dedicated to large tournaments. The middle floor is the main counter and always busy. Last GP Melbourne Games Laboratory was a hive of late night events, if you can't get enough magic check out what they have planned this year – I haven't heard anything but it is no longer my local.

There are over a dozen other stores spread around the suburbs of Melbourne, try and see how many you can find.

<http://www.dungeonofmagic.com.au/>

<http://www.goodgames.com.au/stores/vic/melbourne.html>

<http://gameslaboratory.com.au/>

Places To Eat

Near the venue

The venue is in a large sports district, this means that there aren't too many off site places to quickly grab food. If you want to go off site for food you'll need to be playing very quickly and walk fast. Going out onto Olympic Boulevard and turn left towards Richmond is the quickest option after the on site café.

The on site café is pretty good with many options ranging from trashy to reasonably healthy. They have been known to under estimate how much food they need during a GP so trying to eat early or bringing some food to sneakily eat (unsure how hostile the venue is to outside food) is wise, but that is advice I give to all players even when food is easy to get.

Inner City Districts

Other than the area near the courts (Flagstaff Train Station even closes during the weekend) a range of food options isn't too far away anywhere in the CBD.

There are extensive food courts in Crown Casino (South Bank, the southern side of the river that borders the CBD) and Melbourne Central.

Melbourne is known for it's alleyways, there are many interesting and awesome places to eat hidden in all the random little corners you can stumble on. My favourite of this style is slightly expensive (budget \$40pp), but Sezar has amazing food: <http://sezar.com.au/> . Do try and book though as they are usually booked out on weekends.

Word on the street is that 8bit Burger is the best burger place in Melbourne. As they have a computer gaming theme I expect that most of the people reading this may enjoy a visit. They are in the centre of the CBD so most will find them reasonably easily. <http://www.eat8bit.com.au/>

For cheap good Indian try the Curry Café on Flinders Street next to Port Phillip Arcade, opposite the train station. I'd link you to them if they had anything of a web presence, but some places still don't do web.

China town is on Little Burke Street and has good options for all budgets. From very cheap dumpling houses to expensive fine dining Chinese you will find something tasty and wholesome.