



# Enjoy a *city experience*

*Choose a city stay in Australia or New Zealand and not only can you dip your toes into city life but you can also dive into the awesome sights and scenery.*

It's a long way to the other side of the world – though a spectacular journey when done by ship. If you've decided to make the trip, either to Australia or New Zealand, you'll certainly want to see just what these magnificent countries have to offer.

Australia is vast, but a day or more in the world-class cities of Perth, Brisbane and Sydney (offering everything from sunny climes to fantastic shopping and restaurants) is a great introduction. With a little more time, however, you can also head further afield to experience the country's rich natural diversity, from mountainous national parks to vineyards, rainforests, sand dunes and pretty islands, as well as smaller towns and localities.

A three night city stay before or after your cruise gives you that additional time. From Sydney the Blue Mountains National Park (named after the blue haze that's released from its eucalyptus trees) is approximately 75 kilometres inland. Katoomba is the largest town here and, to the south, stands the stunning Three Sisters mountain range. A scenic skyway ride offers some impressive views.

An hour and a half's drive north from Sydney brings the gentle, green hills of the Hunter Valley and its vineyards. With picturesque scenery and 74 wineries to choose from, including Lindeman's and the Rothbury Estate, it's well worth a visit. Scenic Lake Macquarie and the relaxed city of Newcastle are also within reach.





Hunter Valley



Blue Mountains

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Choose a city stay in Brisbane, and you'll be able to explore the beautiful southern coast of Queensland. Extending 75 kilometres south of the city is the popular beach playground of the Gold Coast. Whilst north is the elegant Sunshine Coast. 30 kilometres from the city you can go bushwalking or picnic in the beautiful area surrounding the Glasshouse Mountains – a series of steep sided volcanic plugs.

North Stradbroke Island, only a 30 minute ferry ride away from Brisbane, offers fantastic coastal walks, street cafés and a museum housing local artefacts. And then there's Bridie Island (accessed from Moreton Bay) which is home to several small and charming settlements.

Perth, another city stay destination, allows you to explore some of Western Australia's wider attractions. Beyond the beautiful parks and gardens on the city's rim, tranquil Rottnest Island is an ideal day trip from here. It boasts a rugged coastline, including beaches, coves and reefs and is also home to Quokkas (a type of wallaby).

140 kilometres north of Perth is New Norcia, one of Western Australia's most important heritage sites, characterised by its small monastic community and Spanish colonial architecture. If you set off early enough, the three hour drive to see the curious limestone Pinnacles amidst the sand dunes of Nambung National Park is well worth the effort.

In New Zealand you can choose a city stay in Auckland. Though a fraction of the size of Australia, New Zealand is overflowing with sights and attractions. North Island offers a wealth of spectacular scenery from beautiful islands to rugged ranges, volcanic peaks and plateaus, lakes and white sand beaches.

Only minutes away from Auckland's harbour are the stunning Hauraki Gulf Islands, famed for their recreation and conservation. Two of the most accessible are Great Barrier Island, where popular activities include mountain biking, kayaking and fishing and Waiheke, enjoyed for its boutique wineries, restaurants and galleries.

The Waitekere Ranges Regional Park offers a vast area of native rainforest and coastline and is only about 45 kilometres from downtown Auckland. The giant Kauri trees, huge sand dunes and spectacular waterfalls of the Cascades are worth a visit.

235 kilometres south of Auckland is Rotorua, a fascinating area of geothermal activity (in the form of steaming geysers, bubbling mud and dazzling silica terraces) and Maori culture.

The mesmerising Waitomo Caves, a 28 mile network of underground limestone caves and grottoes lit by the indigenous *Arachnocampa luminosa* glow worms, is also a day trip away from Auckland.

There's so much on offer outside of these cities, but there's always the option, of course, to simply do as the name suggests and stay in the city. From really getting to know the historic Rocks area of Sydney to watching Brisbane go by from the river, relaxing in Perth's pretty gardens or dining alongside Auckland's vibrant harbour. City stay or city go (beyond!), these breaks 'down under' are certainly worth taking.