



Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial, which are among the main attractions in Canberra, Australia. iStockphoto.com

Capital gains in Canberra, Australia

David Whitley

October 30, 2014 Updated: October 30, 2014 07:33 PM



Related



My Kind of Place: the Gold Coast, Australia

My Kind of Place: Byron Bay, Australia

Perth is Western Australia's unique young gun

Melbourne's outdoor attractions

Topics: [Australia](#), [My kind of place](#), [City guides](#)

Why Canberra?

An ultra-planned capital city of endless roundabouts and spacious suburbia, the unfairly maligned Canberra is generally seen as a handy way of keeping the politicians away from the rest of the Australian populace.

But it has two major strings to its bow – culture and nature. The museum collection is excellent, far surpassing that of any other Australian city, and Canberra is known as “the bush capital” for a good reason. The mountains and national parks are a short drive away; and kangaroos can be found bounding around leafier built-up areas. The artificially created Lake Burley Griffin, meanwhile, forms a spectacular recreational heart.

Canberra is also starting to get unexpectedly cool. In Braddon, old car yards have been turned into independent shops and cafes, while the NewActon precinct has hot restaurants, hotels and an art-house cinema.

The UAE is scheduled to play two of its Asian Cup football matches in Canberra in January.

A comfortable bed

The Hyatt (www.canberra.park.hyatt.com; 0061 2 6270 1234) is the most historic hotel in town – the original wing was built to house the workers constructing Canberra's original Parliament House. Rooms are spacious and marble-drenched, while you have a high chance of bumping into an ambassador at the gym next to the tennis court. Doubles from 315 Australian dollars (Dh1,018).

The QT (www.qtc Canberra.com.au; 0061 2 6247 6244) is lots of fun – deliberately playing on Canberra's political image with room numbers made to look like ballot boxes and mirrors surrounded by cut-outs of world leaders' faces. Doubles from 155 dollars (Dh500).

The most staggering property in town, though, is Hotel Hotel (www.hotel-hotel.com.au; 0061 2 6287 6287). It looks like a giant Jenga kit, is moodily lit and has engagingly edgy details such as the unexpectedly potty-mouthed fire-evacuation signs. Doubles from 248 dollars (Dh800).

Find your feet

Australia's Parliament House (www.aph.gov.au; 0061 2 6277 7111) is a remarkable building, not least for the amount of access the public has to it. It's possible to wander around pretty much where you like, including on the grass-topped roof. The free guided tours that leave three times per day are well worth taking to understand the thinking behind the architecture and decoration.

From there, stroll through the Parliamentary Quarter for a cluster of big museums. The National Library (www.nla.gov.au; 0061 2 6262 1111) is the big surprise. It contains important documents from Australia's history – including Captain Cook's log and what's thought to be the first letter written

KORANDOS | SUV MANUAL

FROM \$21,990
DRIVEAWAY

EDITOR'S PICKS

Jon Stewart
producer filming
documentary
about Egyptian
satirist Bassem
Youssef



GRL played
through the tears
at RedFest DXB to
make emotional
comeback after
bandmate's death



The Other Oscars:
our third annual
Alternative
Academy Awards



Lady Gaga
engaged to actor
boyfriend



Wallet protection for
your travel essentials...

Upgrade your zip lock bag...

bellroy

by an Australian Aborigine.

Cross Lake Burley Griffin over the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge, and head to the National Museum of Australia (www.nma.gov.au; 0061 2 6208 5000). It does a brilliant job of tackling the continent's history and geography.

Meet the locals

Much of the relatively minuscule Australian Capital Territory is taken up by the Namadgi National Park. It's covered in glorious sub-alpine bushland, with hiking trails to disappear down and vertiginous lookouts to trek up to. You'll not see many people – but there's a strong chance of encountering the local kangaroo population.

Book a table

A Baker (www.abaker.com.au; 0061 2 6287 6150) in NewActon is a combination of top-notch bakery and hip restaurant. A fire ripped through it in 2011 and they simply kept the burn marks on the walls for a hyper-industrial look. The heavily seasonal dishes have a diligent focus on local ingredients. The likes of Snowy River trout with yellow beets, brioche and kipfler potato will set you back 29 dollars (Dh94).

Meanwhile, Ottoman (www.ottomancuisine.com.au; 0061 2 6273 6111), offers exemplary Turkish cuisine in a gorgeous park-pavilion-style building. The 80-dollar (Dh258) degustation menu is the best way to work through the dishes.

Shopper's paradise

On Sundays, the Old Bus Depot Markets (www.obdm.com.au; 0061 2 6295 3331) in the newly developed Kingston Foreshore area are great for gift shopping. The traders offer everything from sheepskin slippers to handmade glass trinkets.

The city's emerging hip side is best found at Lonsdale Street Traders (27 Lonsdale Street) in Braddon, where a grouping of tiny shops has taken over a former tyre warehouse. Contemporary jewellery, bohemian fashion and skateboard gear rub shoulders.

What to avoid

If driving from Sydney, don't let the boring Hume Highway lull you into going too fast. Speed cameras and radar gun-wielding police are commonly sighted on the way, eager to generate fines for anyone going above 110kph.

Don't miss

Get lost for hours in the Australian War Memorial (www.awm.gov.au; 0061 2 6243 4211). It emphasises the two World Wars, with an Australian slant.

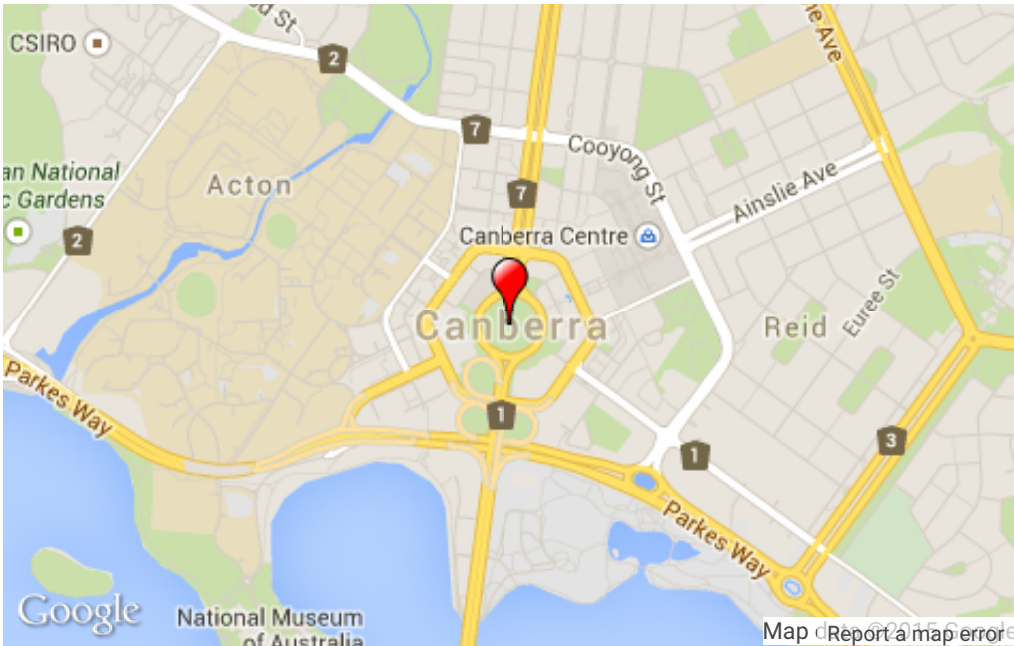
Getting there

Etihad (www.etihad.com; 02 599 0000) flies from Abu Dhabi to Canberra via Melbourne or Sydney, code-sharing on the internal Australian leg with Virgin Australia. Returns cost from Dh7,450.

weekend@thenational.ae

Follow us [@TravelNational](#)

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for discussions, entertainment, reviews, wellness and news.



FOLLOW US

Like us Like 128k

Tweets

Follow



LifeNationalUAE

@LifeNationalUAE

8h

Abu Dhabi Food Festival welcomes first ever Street Feast to the Corniche this weekend: news.ae/1vh3rVG pic.twitter.com/vKrlcGVE0j



Expand



LifeNationalUAE

@LifeNationalUAE

8h

Arab Idol winners concert w/ [@CarmenSoliman](#), [@MohammedAssaf89](#) and [@hazemshareef0](#) will take place at Global Village: news.ae/1vWh8dt

Show Summary



LifeNationalUAE

@LifeNationalUAE

9h

Holly to Bollywood: Modern Family films episode on iPhones; Emirati pupils invited to NY film school; and more: news.ae/1vWft7x

Show Summary

Tweet to @LifeNationalUAE

SPOTLIGHT



Where Abu Dhabi rents have risen and fallen, Q4 2014 — in pictures

The Other Oscars: our third annual Alternative Academy Awards