

## Travel

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# 5 reasons to love SYDNEY HARBOUR

*When a tippie, some treats and a sticky beak are on offer, I'll gladly stretch my legs!*

**Y**es, it's a bustling city of four million people, but much of Sydney's beautiful foreshore is national park, making a blissful escape for a waterside walk closer than you think.

### 1 Bondi to Tamarama

One of my favourite Sydney walks is Bondi to Coogee – an hour-long stroll each way and right next to the stunning Pacific Ocean. Take in hills and headlands, a handful of surf clubs, a cemetery and many golden sand beaches, and don't forget to look at the houses with their multimillion-dollar views. But if you're here in October/November, it's the Bondi to Tamarama leg that attracts much attention thanks to the annual Sculpture by the Sea event. Get there early – it becomes a human motorway later in the day and at weekends, but we hit it at 7.30am, and took our own breakfast. More like an hour return. And stunning.

### 2 Taronga Zoo to Balmoral

Catch the zoo ferry from Circular Quay and keep going when everyone else heads in to see the animals. Your legs are going to carry you around the coast, through native bush, delivering you to, among other

things, Georges Head Battery, a heritage-listed military fortification where you can see both Sydney's north and south heads. The whole walk is stunning and there's hardly anybody else doing it. Drop down into popular Balmoral Beach at the end and head straight to the Boathouse Café for a well-earned waterside wetting of your whistle.

### 3 Hermitage Foreshore

In the eastern suburbs, have a little sourdough-something from Sonoma bakery at Rose Bay or a coffee as you watch the activity from nearby Sydney Seaplanes, then head up the hill towards Vaucluse, diving left down to the coast to start this lovely walk. Secret sandy bays abound, looked down on by some of Sydney's most exclusive homes. It's total real-estate eye-candy. Walk to popular Nielsen Park and stop for lunch or keep going for a swim at the gorgeous Parsley Beach Bay. Then, if you're keen, keep going till you get to Watsons Bay. You'll be after a rosé by then, which is what the local pub is for. Easy to get a bus or ferry back to town from here too.

### 4 South Head Heritage Trail

Or you can start at Watsons Bay and walk to South Head.

This is a nice short one, so you could even do it after your rosé. Start at Camp Cove, just along from the hotel, strolling along an 1870s cobblestone road past Lady Bay Beach, before reaching the historic Hornby Lighthouse. You can look back to the harbour, to Georges Head Battery, to North Head and out to the Pacific Ocean. Then, if you're thirsty ... well, you know where the pub is.

### 5 The whole shebang

OK, this is not hiking, but if you want to see much of the above and a few other secret seaside sights besides, I recommend [sydneyharbourboattours.com](http://sydneyharbourboattours.com). This small, family-run company offers two options: A very affordable scheduled tour for up to 16 people that takes you to hard-to-reach harbourside beaches, plus gives you the lowdown on who lives where and for how much along the way. Or a tailor-made trip in a smart 10-seater where you can be delivered on to the sand for a romantic picnic or a swim, or just to feel the sand between your toes in a place no-one can get to any other way. Hear the history of Sydney Harbour as you discover its gems, then lie on the comfy loungers up front and soak up the sun as you are delivered back to dry land.



Find the answer to life while gazing out to sea like Buddha and his thinner mates (main pic).



Boat tour skipper Elodie knows all the secret bays to while away an afternoon.



Put down anchor at Balmoral's Boathouse Café when the going gets too hard.