



Love every second Winter in Sydney: Food and wine

Sydney's winter feast

Sydney's dining scene is a fusion of flavours, cultures, local ingredients and innovative talent. With excellent fresh produce available all year round, eating out is always a delicious adventure in the cooler months. And as Sydney's vibrant bar and pub scene continues to flourish, there are endless exciting new meeting places to discover – many of them tucked away in the city's cosiest corners.

Vibrant and vegie

Following the visit of celebrity vegans Ellen de Generes and Portia Rossi, the city has been having a love affair with vegan, vegetarian and healthier dining options.

Nourishing Quarter in Redfern has a cult following that's growing daily. Foodies love owner Lam Dinh's delicious, vegan, Asian-fusion dishes as well as his belief that food should heal as well as delight. Tasty vegetarian fare combines brilliantly with NSW craft beers, so **Yulli's** in Surry Hills gives you both - try artichoke and goats' curd arancini washed down with a Viking IPA from Mt. Kuringai.

Govinda's restaurant in Darlinghurst offers a vegetarian buffet of Indian delights with an in-house movie room. Kofta balls in creamy tomato sauce and veggie samosas are the perfect accompaniment to a movie watched while reclined on a cushion, harem style. Located among the fresh market fruit and veg on sale at Fratelli Fresh,

Cafe Sopra is a no-brainer for beautiful vegie dishes, offering salads so lush they could convert any carnivore. And to prove conclusively that vegetarian cuisine can encompass decadent fine dining, many of Sydney's hatted, foodie temples offer substantial vegan and vegie options.

Otto at Woolloomooloo has an entire separate vegan menu; at **Est.**, Peter Doyle's vegetarian menu is mouth-watering, with an entire degustation banquet on offer as well as a la carte; Sean Moran's obsession with fresh local produce makes for abundant fruit and vegetable dishes on his menu at **Sean's Panorama** in Bondi; and at **Bentley Restaurant and Bar**, chef Brent Savage has crafted a superb vegetarian tasting menu matched with wines by sommelier Nick Hildebrandt.





Chef Michael Moore's 'Blood Sugar' healthy eating philosophy colours his menu at 47th floor **O Bar and Dining**, where a large portion of the menu is either vegetarian or vegan, but still tastes as hedonistic as traditional fine dining.

And Sydney's convoy of cool food trucks includes **The Veggie Patch** van, devoted to providing high quality vegetarian food using seasonal produce sourced from local growers.

Even that most indulgent of treats, high tea, can be enjoyed guilt-free. **Radisson Blu hotel** in the CBD has introduced a **Gluten Free High Tea**. Executive Chef Oswin Ribeiro's menu includes delicacies such as chocolate and lemon curd tarts, French coconut macaroons, Australian walnut slice and petite pavlovas with delicate cups of passionfruit jelly.

Upstairs, downstairs – the fun of finding Sydney's small bars

The small bar scene continues to evolve, with an ever-growing selection of themes, inspirations and locations. Often, the hippest new nooks are hidden away underfoot or overhead, and winter is the perfect time to delve beneath the city's surface (or high above it!) to discover these secret hotspots.

Latest in the new wave of hidden basement bars is **The Lobo Plantation** on Clarence Street in the emerging CBD small bar precinct which already houses the acclaimed **Baxter Inn**. The Lobo Plantation, named after a Cuban sugar trader from the early 20th century, is a decadent Caribbean oasis in the heart of the city, with a strong rum focus. Its basement hiding place is accessed via a small foyer and down a spiralled staircase adorned with Caribbean-themed live plants. Rich leather Chesterfields, cane chairs, premium and rare rums all add up to good-time, golden era Cuban glamour.

Rum is also the perfect winter warmer in another rum-themed new bar: **Rum Fire**, in the Entertainment Quarter in Moore Park. At the helm is flair bartending specialist Leeroy Peterson, known for his pyrotechnic displays.

Another downstairs newbie with a strong dash of originality is **The Old Growler** on William Street, Darlinghurst, selling local ales by the pint and half-pint, English style. The Old Growler also has a groundbreaking approach to sustainability. The trio of owners will be recycling all by-products possible; hops and wort from the brewery will be used in the cocktails and food, and they carbonate their own mineral water using Soda Stream. Yeast from the brewery is used to make the daily bread or sent to feed cattle that will ultimately return to the kitchen. It's paddock to plate, and plate to paddock!





Another new small bar making excellent use of basement space is **Mojo Record Bar**, tucked in downstairs behind musos' favourite Mojo Record Store. It's a dimly lit little den with a great back catalogue of tunes, expertly crafted cocktails and local craft beers. You can even shop for vinyl at the store with your drink in hand. Interestingly, the old Mojo Records site, just along York Street, is now occupied by another cool, small basement bar called **Spooning Goats**, a little gem with 1970s décor and a quirky spoon collection.

Frankie's Pizza is really two downstairs spaces: a purposefully cheesy pizza joint, and, through a swing door, a big, dark rock n' roll hangout with pinball machines and a party that pumps until 4am. From the team behind Shady Pines, it's proved a huge hit with locals keen for simple, cheap good times.

If you like these subterranean spots, you'll also love fellow CBD basement haunts **Palmer and Co**, a speakeasy laneway cocktail haven; **Stitch**, **Baxter Inn**, and Surry Hills' **Button Bar**.

Sometimes you have to look up for a cool new bar, and the newest is **Bulletin Place**, on the second floor of a Circular Quay heritage building, on the street of that name. Up a narrow staircase, above hot new cafe Cabrito Coffee Traders, rockstar bartender Tim Philips and an expert team mix cocktails handcrafted from the freshest of fresh produce. Everyone's talking about this bar – and with good reason.

If you like heading heavenwards for a great bar, you'll also enjoy **The Rook**, The CBD's latest rooftop bar, accessible via an old elevator in an office building, and **Sweethearts**, a backyard BBQ-style rooftop addition to Kings Cross' Sugar Mill.

Tucked away behind a plain green door in Surry Hills, the new **Wild Rover** is a jolly mix of Irish folk and New York Chic - stripped back with splashes of extravagance and rustic warmth. It's from the boys who brought us quirky little **Grandma's Bar** in the CBD, and their expertise, as well as plenty of Irish whiskey, humour and playful touches, make this one well worth tracking down.

Old pubs are new again

Sydney is home to some glorious heritage pubs dating back to the city's earliest days, some well over 100 years old. A new wave of loving renovations is injecting fresh life into these veterans and attracting a youthful, fun-loving new following. Lovely old corner pub The London in Paddington has had a top-to-toe refresh including a brand new upstairs wine bar, called London Fields, offering beautiful wines and cocktails and rustic dishes designed to be shared.





The 150-year-old **Marlborough Hotel** in Newtown has a brand new Garden Bar, filled with lush greenery, candy colours and a whimsical love seat among grungy exposed bricks and pops of lipstick pink. A little romantic, a little edgy and industrial, mixed with green and organic – it's a quintessentially Newtown mishmash. Warmed by heaters in the cooler months, this urban oasis adds something very new to the pub scene.

Chippendale's heritage pub, the former Shannon Hotel, is reborn as **The Lybrary**, with a hip new look and great pub bistro menu. With a colourful mural from Sydney street artists across all four walls of the courtyard, Tuesday night comedy sessions held in a red velvet-curtained room downstairs and a second-hand book library, it's a firm favourite with students and creatives.

The iconic 91-year-old three-storey heritage hotel **The Glenmore Hotel** in The Rocks reopened late last year after nine months of renovations, including a retractable rooftop guaranteeing the stunning Sydney Harbour views can be enjoyed all year round. And up in the east, the 125-year-old **Watsons Bay Hotel** is reborn as Watsons Bay Beach Club. It's a light-hearted destination with a relaxed vibe and outlook onto one of the world's most stunning views, tongue in cheek decor and seaside inspired touches, with staff clad in designer uniforms from Australian label Bassike. For winter fun, the Beach Club has a boutique hotel with 32 luxurious suites which enjoy spectacular views from behind a floor-to-ceiling window.

If you like these reborn old pubs, make sure you also try **The Norfolk**, **The Carrington** and **The Excelsior Hotel**, all in Surry Hills.

Big on flavour, easy on your wallet

While Sydney loves fine dining, there's a growing enthusiasm for great value eating in simple surroundings. The cooler months suit this earthier style of dining – rugged up, rather than dressed up.

Frankie's Pizza, with its \$16 (or \$5 a slice) top quality pizzas and cheerful, old-school atmosphere is a great example of the cheap n' cheerful trend, while Sydney's convoy of cool **food trucks** are all about fantastic local fare at great prices. Look out for: the **Veggie Patch Van**; **Agape** for organic pizzas; **Eat Art Truck**, the popular art/street food combo on wheels from former Tetsuya's and Quay chefs, as well as the newest addition, **Tsuru**, with delicious small bites of Asian street food. You'll find them all on Twitter or

www.sydneystreetfoodtrucks.com.au





Asian eats in Sydney are nearly always great value. Try **Johnny Wong's Dumpling Bar** in Surry Hills (under cool bar LoFi), where delicious, fresh dumplings are \$8.50 for six and \$1 each on 'Wong Tang Tuesdays.' Meanwhile **Mamak** is Chinatown's most popular Malaysian for a reason: there's nothing over \$10 at this roti specialist, and it's all delicious.

Or there's a new wave of 'dude food' little joints such as the new **Mr Crackles Carryout** in Darlinghurst - a roast meat sandwich specialist run by two ex-fine dining chefs, where you can get a hot dog for \$5 and the most expensive menu item is a giant \$15 'manwich'. Along similar lines, **The Dip**, next to cool nightclub Goodgod, has fun creations such as 'confuse di mouth,' a cheeseburger flavoured hotdog for \$12. There's nothing over \$15.

Pub grub plays a big part in the inner city pub revivals sweeping Sydney. The born-again pubs often come with a new, cool, value food offering. Try Surry Hill's Excelsior Hotel's **El Loco** - a bright and lively Mexican canteen from Mr Wong super-chef Dan Hong, which has also "popped-up" in the city at The Slip Inn.

Here some of our top picks for Sydney's iconic neighbourhood pubs which each have their own individual identity and the perfect for winter warmers:

- Best pub for gourmet food: Four in Hand, Paddington
- Best pub to head to after the game: Paddington Inn (for Allianz Stadium) and The Brewery (for ANZ Stadium)
- Best pub with a roof terrace: The Glenmore
- Best pub for a cider: The Steyne, Manly
- Best pub for Sunday roast: The Taphouse, Paddington
- Best pub for a beer brewed on site: The Lord Nelson
- Best beer garden: Newport Arms
- Best for live music: The Beresford, Surry Hills
- Best to play a game of basketball: Vic on the Park
- Best for Dude Food: The Norfolk.

Sydney loves Stateside

When it comes to food and drink, Sydney is embracing all things American – especially from the southern states. Flavoursome and unapologetically filling, it's perfect fare for cooler months.

Chef Dan McGuirt found that the New Orleans-inspired fare at his **Jazz City Diner** in Darlinghurst was so popular, he's just opened **Jazz City Milk Bar** round the corner under





Republic building. It serves up corn dogs, Cajun meatloaf and big, thick peanut butter shakes as well as waffles, pancakes and grits for breakfast.

Meanwhile, the recently opened and totally revamped **The Bourbon** in Kings Cross features James Metcalfe's contemporary take on classic New Orleans cuisine.

Highlights include jambalaya, clam and corn chowder, and succotash (corn, peas and spices). Not far away, there's the recently opened **Bayswater Diner**, an ode to American food from the team behind Fei Jai and Barrio Chino. Here you can build your own sundae after you've inhaled a big double-deck cheeseburger. Just round the corner is **Santa Barbara**, a gloriously kitschy mish-mash of style and food from all the US states with a strong dash of Amer-asian; Ocki Dogs, Char Sui ribs, Mahalo Popcorn, Koreatown Pizza, Jerk Wings and Coke Can Chicken. And to wash it all down, Santa Coladas, Frozen Margaritas and Mekong Iced Teas.

And if it's more of a dancing American experience you're after, head to the brand new **Soda Factory** in Surry Hills for a Grease-style vibe, Motown sounds, cocktails served in soda glasses and hotdogs – all hidden away behind a little fake hot dog stall shopfront.

All about produce

From land and sea, Sydney is blessed with an abundance of local produce, and the dining scene is driven by what's fresh and in season. Enjoy amazing ingredients on the spot, in Sydney's wave of produce-driven cafe/providores.

At new **Youeni Food Store** in Surry Hills, ex pastry chef Chris Starke and team churn their own butter, bake bread and blend their own coffee while cooking up super-fresh meals all day, and talking you through the fresh ingredients on the shelves. North Sydney has **Delicado**, a fine wine store, Spanish providore, casual restaurant and busy wine bar, from sommelier and wine journalist Ben Moehtar. And in Mosman, Quattro Formaggi Deli offers Italian-style grazing plates and produce to match. Also in Mosman the **Fourth Village Providore** is a lovely family-owned food market and restaurant selling hand grown, handmade goods mainly produced at the owners' Hunter Valley farm – including their excellent virgin olive oil. This really is 'paddock to plate.'

Sydney's leading providore, **Fratelli Fresh**, has expanded its signature blend of Cafe Sopra and market fresh produce to Walsh Bay and the CBD as well as Waterloo and Potts Point. The Fratelli team have also recently opened **Café Nice** in Circular Quay, making a great place to drop in for a French bistro lunch or dinner during Vivid Sydney (24 May to 10 June).





The Grounds in Alexandria takes the inner city restaurant/garden/providore a step further still. It's an innovative, sustainable speciality coffee outfit and cafe in a heritage-listed warehouse transformed into a micro-farm with olive trees, vegetable patches and roaming poultry, plus a bakery and resident horticulturalist. All of their produce on sale the first Saturday of every month at **The Grounds Markets**.

If you want to complement your local goodies with exotic delicacies from afar, there's now a place to find even the rarest: the brand new **Gourmet Life** store in Edgecliff. More than 1,000 unique products include Rome's oldest coffee, world's finest black caviar, truffles and wild mushrooms, the world's only sustainable caviar - Mottra of Latvia, and rare wild French asparagus from the Pyrenees Mountains.

Golden nectar: Sydney's love of craft beers

A love of super-local produce extends to Sydney's taste in beer. The city is home to a growing number of excellent craft brewers, making pure brews to sell in bars close to home – keeping the carbon footprint low. At many, you can visit the cellar door and take away your favourite brew in a returnable container. The newest are **Newtown's Young Henry's**, Parramatta's **Riverside Brewing Company**, and the multi-award-winning **Australian Brewery**, based in Sydney's northwest.

They join stalwarts such as **Rocks Brewing Company**, based at **Harts Pub** in The Rocks, **The Lord Nelson** microbrewery in the lovely old Rocks pub, **Red Oak Beer Cafe**, the **Tank Stream Brewing Company at The Pumphouse** at Darling Harbour, the **Schwartz Brewery Hotel** in Surry Hills, **St Peters Brewery in Newtown** and **4Pines Brewing Company** in Manly.

Several Sydney bars and pubs specialise in craft beers, too. Try the monthly Tap Takeover at Surry Hills' **The Royal Albert Hotel**, where one brewery takes over the pubs taps with its full range for one evening. The Albert serves only Australian craft beers and will soon also offer an exciting range of Australian craft spirits.

With several more breweries planned this year, the flow of excellent, local Sydney beer is sure to continue.

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