

AUSTRALIA



Official Name: Commonwealth of Australia

Population: 25,259,900 (2019 est.)

Capital:

» **Canberra:** 399,000

Largest Cities (2018):

» **Sydney:** 5.48 million

» **Melbourne:** 5 million

» **Brisbane:** 2.48 million

» **Perth:** 2.28 million

At a Glance

Political System	Federal Parliamentary Democracy and a Commonwealth Realm.
Currency	Australian Dollar
Main industries & exports	Minerals, Coal, Natural Gas, Wheat, Sheep
Climate	Generally arid to semiarid; temperate in south and east; tropical in north
Area (km²)	7,682,300 km ²
Area (km²)	25,760 km ²
Climate	<p>The climate in Australia is extremely varied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Northern Australia deals with periodic drought, and seasonal tropical low-pressure system that produces cyclones. » South-west Australia has a Mediterranean climate. » Southeast Australia ranges from oceanic to humid subtropical, with the highland featuring alpine and subpolar oceanic climates.
Natural Hazards	Cyclones along the coast; severe droughts; forest fires
Religions	Protestant 28.8% (Anglican 17.1%, Uniting Church 5.0%, Presbyterian and Reformed 2.8%, Baptist, 1.6%, Lutheran 1.2%, Pentecostal 1.1%), Catholic 25.3%, Eastern Orthodox 2.6%, other Christian 4.5%, Buddhist 2.5%, Muslim 2.2%, Hindu 1.3%, other 8.5%, unspecified 2.2%, none 22.3%
Ethnic Background	British, Irish, European 92%, Asian 7%, aboriginal and other 1%
Literacy Rate	99%
Life expectancy at birth (2018 est.)	The overall life expectancy is 82.4 years. For males it averages at 79.9 years and for females at 85 years.
Mobile Phones (2017 est.)	There is a total of 27.553 million mobile phone subscriptions in Australia. This results in an average of 119 subscriptions per 100 people.

What is like?

Australia has an ancient history stretching back to what the Indigenous people call the Dreamtime. Evidence exists that shows that the Aborigines were living in Australia 60,000 years ago. This makes their culture the oldest continuous one in the world. Today aborigines only make up a small part of the population. European settlement after 1776 led to an influx of people mainly from England and Ireland. Then again, after World War II many more people arrived.



Skinner Prout. - Edwin Carton Booth (1876). "Queensland", in Australia [...] In Two Volumes, volume II, London: Virtue and Company, Limited, OCLC 903574116, plate facing page 164.

Australians generally enjoy the outdoors and beaches.

They value their democratic lifestyle for its multicultural variety and tolerance. The vast inland area is mostly hot and dry. Hardly anyone lives there. Most people live in cities along the east/south east coast and have a sense of the inland areas as beautiful but forbidding. Australia is a modern country that employs the latest technology and provides a high standard of living.

Key moments in history

68,000-48,000 BC	<p>We don't know when exactly humans settled in Australia, it could be anywhere from 50,000-70,000 years ago:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » These ancestors of the modern day Aborigines have been thought to have migrated here by land bridges and short sea-crossing from what is now Southeast Asia.
42,000 BC	<p>Aboriginal engravings are found in South Australia dating back to this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » 20000 year old rock painting of a lizard like creature.
1606 AD	<p>The first European sighting and landfall on the Australian continent was by the Dutch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The fleet that first made contact with the Aborigines was the Duyfken captained by Willem Janszoon. » He sighted the coast of Cape York Peninsula in early 1606.
1688 and 1699	<p>William Dampier, English explorer, arrives on the west coast of Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » At that time it was named New Holland by the Dutch, but no attempts at settlements had been made. » In 1703 Dampier publishes a book on Australian plant life called A Voyage to New Holland.
1770	<p>Captain James Cook lands on the more hospitable east coast of Australia and claims it for Britain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Captain James Cook charts the east coast in his ship HM Endeavour. » Cook claims it as a British possession and names eastern Australia "New South Wales".
1783	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The British Government sent a fleet of ships, the "First Fleet", to establish a new penal colony in New South Wales.
1788	<p>A camp was set up and the flag raised at Sydney Cove, Port Jackson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » This is the day now known as Australia day.
1850	<p>A gold rush began in the early 1850's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The Eureka Rebellion in 1854 was the first expression of civil disobedience. » The Eureka Rebellion was started by gold miners, who revolted against the colonial authority of the UK.

Key moments in history (cont)

1873	(Uluru) Ayers Rock is first sighted by Europeans: » William Grosse first sighted Ayers rock.
1901	Federation of the colonies was achieved: » This established the Commonwealth of Australia as a dominion of the British Empire.
1914-1918	Australian troops fight in World War I: » Australia commits hundreds of thousands of troops to the British war effort. Their participation - alongside New Zealanders - in the Gallipoli campaign in Turkey in 1915 leads to heavy casualties.
1922	Vegemite is first produced: » Vegemite is a popular dark brown Australian food paste made from leftover brewers' yeast extract with various vegetable and spice additives
1939-1945	Australian troops fight in World War II: » Cities in the north of Australia are bombed and a submarine gets into Sydney Harbour
1962	First commitment to the Vietnam war, sending 30 military advisors: » Approximately 61,000 Australia soldiers fought in the Vietnam War.
1973	Sydney Opera House opens: » Sydney Opera House is a masterpiece of late modern architecture.
2000	The Sydney Olympics held: » This was the second time that Australia hosted the Olympic Games. » The first was in 1956 in Melbourne.
2001	Australian troops deployed in Afghanistan, followed by Iraq: » Afghanistan, Operation Slipper (2001–2014) and Operation Highroad (from 2105) and Iraq (2003–2009).
2010-2013	Julia Gillard becomes first female Prime Minister: » Julia Gillard went on to a second term but was then defeated in a leadership ballot within the Labour Party.
2017	» Same-sex marriage became legal on December 9, 2017.

People

Australians mainly live in cities. There are high rise apartment buildings close to the city centres but most people live in sprawling suburbs. Homes are usually set in their own gardens and have all the modern conveniences expected in a wealthy country. Most families have at least one car. Many women work and the government help pay for high quality childcare.

Country people live in small towns or on large farms. Big cattle properties in Australia are the size of small countries. Anna Creek Station in the Northern territory is over 34,000 square kilometres and is bigger than Israel or Belgium. Although there is a variety in people's income and style of living, there is a saying in Australia that "No child need live in poverty". The government provides support to families to ensure people all have access to the basics in life; food, shelter, clothing, clean water, sanitation and education. People who can't find work, are elderly or disabled receive a pension and medical care is free.

Customs & Traditions

People in Australia like to go on holidays to the beach or overseas. Sport plays a big part in Australian life. Most children participate in sports such as bike riding, tennis, swimming, skateboarding and football. Adults generally either play sport competitively, attend a gym, walk or watch sport on TV.

People attend sporting events in large numbers and there are many traditions that go with that e.g. wearing the colours of your team, singing team songs and eating certain foods.

The festivals and parades in Australia are often on a large scale but are not usually connected to religious events. They are more likely to celebrate Multiculturalism, food and wine, or local history. At Christmas it is hot and the people generally have 2-3 weeks holiday. On Christmas Day extended families get together to eat, drink and exchange gifts. There is often a barbeque (outdoor cooked meat and salads) followed by a cricket match.



Music

The didgeridoo is an instrument developed by Indigenous Australia. A modern version of the didgeridoo often cylindrical or conical, and can be anywhere from 1 to 3 meters long.

The instrument is played by using a special breathing



Sports

Sports of all kinds are played in Australia. Football (AFL variety played with an oval ball), Soccer, Rugby, Basketball, baseball, golf, water sports, car racing, horse riding and bike riding are just some of the popular sports in Australia.



Food

Australia is a multicultural country and you can easily get dishes from just about everywhere. There are restaurants representing cuisine from all over the world. Even a small shopping centre or small town would have a variety of food from other cultures.

People like barbeques. This usually involves inviting friends around and cooking outdoors. Various meats, fish and vegetables are cooked and served with cold salads. This also would normally involve drinking beer or wine for the adults and soft drinks (lemonade, coco cola or cordial) for the children.



Do(s) & Don't(s)

DO

Do Slip, slop, slap. This means wear a sun hat, cover up in the sun and wear 15+ sunscreen when going outdoors especially in Summer

Do be sure to put on a seat belt when you get into a car

Do be friendly. Australians like to smile and say hello to strangers

Do treat everyone equally, regardless of wealth, position, disability or race.

Do say 'Please' and 'Thank You'. If you don't it is assumed that you aren't grateful for the gift or service.

DON'T

Don't swim outside the yellow and red flags. They designate safe areas at the beach.

Don't swim in the ocean at unsupervised beach until you have checked out whether it is safe

Don't ignore signs about crocodiles. People are killed by crocs every yea.

Don't worry about using titles. Most people use first names unless it is a very formal occasion.

Interesting Facts

- » It has the highest rate of gambling in the world with over 80 percent of Australian adults engaging in gambling of some kind and 20 percent of the pokie machines in the world are found in Australia.
- » Kangaroo meat can be purchased from the supermarket, butcher and available on restaurant menus as a leaner and healthier alternative to beef or lamb with a 1-2 percent fat content.
- » Surprisingly Australia is the fifth, most obese country in the world as of 2012 with a 26 percent obesity rate despite being a sport loving nation.
- » Australians refer to English people as Pome, which is actually the acronym for Prisoners of Mother England.
- » Australia has a very diverse climate, from hot tropical rainforest, to Cold temperate Forests, from deserts to jungle, from fertile plains to ski fields in the mountains. Australia has it all.
- » Aborigines from South Eastern Australia are often called Kooris There are many distinct Aboriginal communities. A bit like the countries in Europe, they share many things but have their own language, beliefs and behaviours. They all believe in a close connection to the land.