

Strolling Down Melbourne's Lanes



When it comes to character, Melbourne has a lot to offer, with old trams chugging through the city center, a vibrant food scene, an awe-inspiring public library, and plenty of historic architecture, including churches and cathedrals amongst the urban landscape. It is a metropolitan place that is always buzzing with activity. One of the most iconic areas in this modern Australian city is the Melbourne laneways.

The colorful little lanes are famous for bright murals and creative street art that cover a dizzying maze of streets. The little lanes are free of vehicles, so you can lose yourself in admiring the artwork without watching out for cars. There is plenty of pedestrian traffic, though, with many people heading to the boutique shops, local restaurants, and fancy cafes along the way. Fashionably dressed teens heading to school, business people in suits, families shopping and tourists documenting their travels all move through the popular central business district (CBD) that is instantly recognizable as Melbs as the locals affectionately call it.

The laneways are a part of Melbourne culture, and if you visit someone who lives there, they will surely suggest a walk to see the eye-catching creations while pointing out the street art isn't graffiti. You will see famous Australian life depicted on the walls with work by local artists covering Aussie life, politics, pop culture, fashion, music, beauty, and love. Almost every theme you could imagine has been explored with a story or message being told using art on the walls of

the lanes. Perhaps that is why they mean so much to Melbourne's population who can relate to the work and appreciate the bold beauty it beholds.

The history of the lanes goes back to the Victorian era, when horses and carts would clatter along the narrow paths. In the 1990s, the area transformed into a trendy spot for shopping, dining and drinking and street art slowly emerged. Soon the bright surroundings became more popular on a local and international level. The intimate lanes offered a haven for people to enjoy coffee, meet friends and escape, even for a short time, from the bustling city just outside the coziness of the lanes. A lot of the old architecture is well-preserved, adding to the charm of the lanes.

Meyers Place (formerly Nicholas Lane) is one of the oldest laneways in the city, so a must-visit for true street art fans. You can find funky eateries and bars if you want to linger for a while. Lane's Edge Cafe and Bar is the perfect place to relax with outdoor dining with a laidback vibe. Refuel with dishes paired with local Aussie beer and wine before you dive back into the adventures of lane hopping in search of the best mural of the day.

Hardware and Goldie lane features 20th-century warehouses and Degraives Street, named after Hobart merchants Charles and William Degraives, has alfresco dining options for patrons to enjoy the views of the art deco architecture. Hozier Lane near Flinders Street station is another popular urban art spot, or you might like to rock out at ACDC Lane. There are so many lanes, and you can rely on your instincts to take you on a journey of artistic thrills. There is no wrong way to go, and there's no predicting what you might discover.

Melbourne has a strong coffee culture that goes hand-in-hand with the art scene. So do find a hip cafe and take in the art while enjoying a latte for a true Melbourne experience. Forget about Google maps and get lost in the streets for an inspiring walk that you could probably not make the following day if you tried. You could walk around the lanes hundreds of times and notice different details of the artwork adorning the laneway walls. It's an uplifting place to explore and is free as long as you aren't tempted into a chic boutique filled with designer garments that are another form of beautiful creative expression.

Enjoy the backstreets decorated with street art by obviously talented artists. You might even be lucky enough to see a work in progress. Go early to avoid the crowds, especially if you want to take photos without too many people.

Melbourne's lanes are a major tourist attraction that is constantly evolving, with new murals appearing all the time. You are walking through a colorful moment in history that might never be the same again.