

Game, Set... Snacks!: How to smash your AO experience



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15.01.25

Every January, Melbourne transforms into tennis' biggest showground, attracting more than 1.1 million fans across three weeks. Yes, the world's best players are smashing aces and sweating through five-set marathons, but tennis balls aren't the only thing being served at the Australian Open.

Between the blistering Melbourne heat, the roar of the crowd, and the unmistakable buzz of blue courts under bright skies, the AO is part fashion week, part food festival, and part emotional meltdown in 40-degree heat. But above all, the AO is where sport meets theatre — and everyone's playing to win, on or off the court.

So, if you're heading to Melbourne Park, here's what to do to guarantee your AO experience is a total winner.

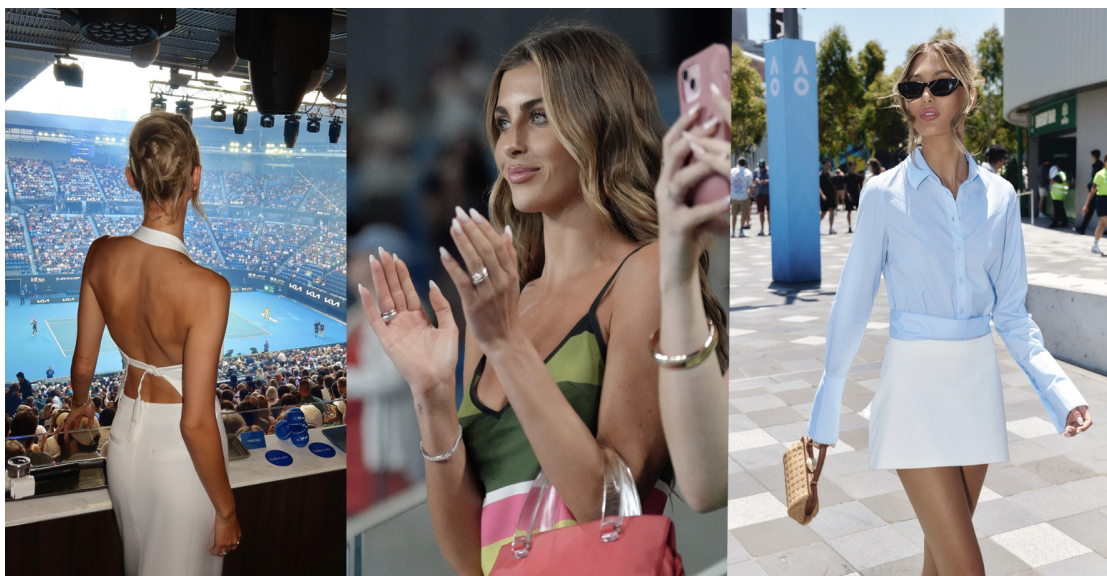
1. Chase the ‘Ground Pass Magic’

Didn’t manage to get your hands on centre court tickets? Who cares! The ground pass is where the real action is. You’ll get up close to rising stars on the outside courts, watch practice sessions, and still feel the Grand Slam buzz.



2. Fashion Served Courtside

The AO is as much a style showcase as it is a tennis tournament. Expect linen shirts, bucket hats, and enough retro tennis whites to make Björn Borg proud. Don’t worry — activewear also counts as *“tennis chic.”*



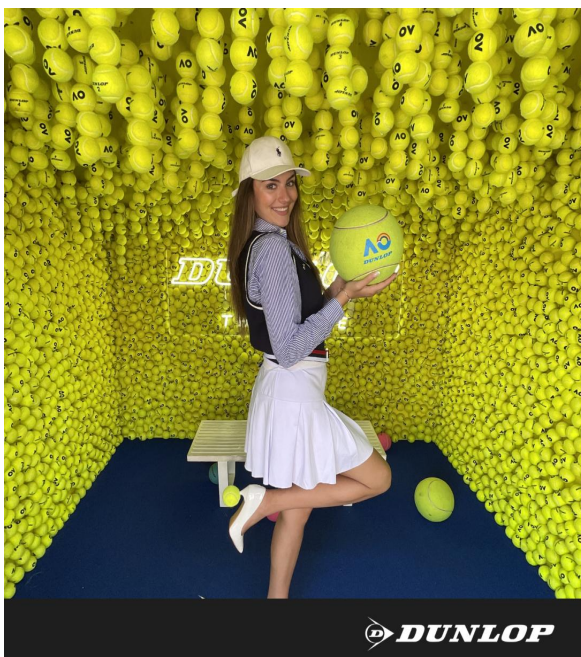
3. Communal zones and Big Screens

Need a break from the action? Find a beanbag, crack open a cold drink at your favourite vendor, and watch the big screens under the summer sky. It's like a big backyard barbecue with 20,000 new mates.



4. The 'AO post'

From giant tennis balls to murals of Ash Barty and Novak Djokovic, Melbourne Park is selfie paradise. *Pro tip:* Carry a Sharpie—players often stop for autographs after practice, walk around, take photos, and walk away with the AO's ultimate souvenir.



5. Ralph Lauren

Between matches and photos, I found myself in the cool sanctuary of Ralph Lauren's on-site boutique, where linen met luxury and the air smelled faintly of victory (and very expensive cologne) — but be warned, the real match point might just happen at the checkout counter.



6. The Crown visit

Now, this may go against the idea of staying within the bounds of the AO, but a trip to Crown Towers and the Dorsett is an absolute must during the tournament.

