

From  
**\$2,727** USD

Single Room

\$3,366 USD

Twin Room

\$2,727 USD

Prices valid until  
30th December 2023

days

Duration

Victoria

Destination

Level 1 - Introductory to  
Moderate

Activity

## Small group tour of Melbourne

Apr 09 2023 to Apr 15 2023

### Small group tour of Melbourne city

MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE 1854 to 1891 – A STUDY TOUR

**Melbourne, 1880: ‘The richest city in the world.’**

From Odyssey Traveller this small group tour of Melbourne is offered to mature and senior travellers interested in spending a week on a Melbourne city tour with like minded people in a small group of up to 15 people. Based in Melbourne’s CBD we enjoy a day trip collection to explore Melbourne’s history with your tour guide and knowledgeable



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28-Mar-2023

local guide via the labyrinth of the laneway that are a collection of parallel streets to the main city thoroughfares and how these stories come to life on your Melbourne tour.

***This, like all Odyssey Traveller small group tours is limited to 15 people.***

When the British journalist George Augustus Sala visited Melbourne in 1885, he gave it a moniker that stuck: 'Marvellous Melbourne'. The city was in the midst of an almost four-decade long golden era. In the 1850s, Melbourne had seen phenomenal growth thanks to the Victorian gold rush. The boom continued with the land and property boom of the 1880s. At one point, Melbourne was the second biggest city in the British Empire, after London, and in 1880, Melbourne was proclaimed 'The richest city in the world'.

The remnants of Melbourne's golden age define the city today. Unlike the heritage areas of Sydney (such as the Rocks), which generally date back to the Georgian era, Victorian Melbourne defines the look and feel of the city today. Great buildings, arcades and residences of later Victorian solidity and grace can be seen everywhere within the great 'square mile' of Melbourne's city tram circuit. Walking through the ornate Block Arcade, or looking up at the grand Parliament House, it's easy to imagine yourself among the elegance and bustle of boom town Melbourne.

On this small group tour of Melbourne, you will enjoy five days of a mixture of presentations, discussions or a guest speaker each morning, to prepare us for a day of visiting important and iconic venues in the development of **Marvellous Melbourne**.

An Odyssey Traveller tour is a small group tour designed by the tour operator especially for seniors, for mature travellers who want an in-depth and authentic experience of their chosen destination when taking an Australia vacation. Since 1983, we have specialised in bringing Australian travellers to the world: now, our goal is to enable you to rediscover your own country on a full day guided tour of Melbourne 's CBD each day for a week to ensure all the sights are seen. You may

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choose to extend your holiday with visits from Melbourne to the Yarra valley and Bellarine wine tour or further on along on Great ocean road tour to Apollo Bay and Warrnambool.

### Historic tours of Melbourne:

Though a penal station had been established at Sullivan Bay (near the present-day beach suburb of Sorrento) in 1803, European settlement of Melbourne began in earnest in 1835, when John Batman, a grazier from Van Diemen's Land, claimed to have broken a contract with the local Kulin people, granting him hectares of land near the Yarra River. Rather suspiciously, Batman had been accompanied by a group of Aboriginal people from Sydney – who couldn't speak a word of the local language – and the contract appeared to have been signed several times by the same man, 'Jaga Jaga', possibly one of the Aboriginal people brought from Sydney. Despite its exploitative nature, Batman's contract was the only attempt in Australian history to engage Aboriginal people in a transaction or treaty, rather than claim land outright.

Two months afterwards, a party led by a publican from Launceston, John Pascoe Fawkner, settled on the banks of the Yarra River. Batman and Fawkner soon engaged in a ruthless bidding wars over the allotment of new land in the colony. Though Batman arrived first, Fawkner is widely regarded as the founder of Melbourne, as he lived to shape the city's early history as a hotel owner, newspaper man, and politician. Batman, in contrast, died of syphilis in financial disarray, at the age of 38 in 1839.

The new settlement was given the name 'Melbourne' to honour the then-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Lord Melbourne. Melbourne became a town in 1842 and a city in 1847. Though growth was (relatively) slow, this early period gave the city a feature that continues to define it today: the Hoddle Grid. Robert Hoddle, the Surveyor-General, was disturbed by the chaos he had encountered at the new settlement, and laid out a plan for what is now the Melbourne CBD, straight lines intersecting straight lines in a grid. One of the anchors for this grid is Swanston Street a major thoroughfare in the centre of Melbourne, Australia. It is one of the main streets of the Melbourne central business district and was laid out in 1837 as part of the original

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Hoddle Grid, that included Collins st, Flinders st, La trobe st and Spencer st that we explore as part of this Melbourne city tour.

The discovery of gold near Ballarat in August 1851, followed by discoveries near Castlemaine (September 1851) and Bendigo (October 1851) transformed Victoria. In an increasingly interconnected world, news of the find spread around the globe, and immigrants descended on Victoria from Ireland, China, Germany, the United States and Great Britain, looking to make rich on the goldfields.

Thanks to its central position in Victoria and port facilities, Melbourne city was able to capture the increased trade stimulated by the Gold Rush. The city's population reached 80,000 in 1854 and 140,000 by 1861. Wealth from the goldfields and rapid population growth spurred a boom in building, with the Treasury Building, the State Library, Melbourne Town Hall, and key parts of the University of Melbourne all built during the 1850s and 1860s. Such was the phenomenal growth and impact of the period, that it took only 10 months in 1856 for the parliament to be planned and built, a three-storey bluestone structure of monumental proportions.

The Gold Rushes transformed Australia. Between 1851 and 1871, the colony's population quadrupled, rising from 430,000 people to 1.7 million. Migrants from around the world brought new democratic ideas to Australia, which culminated in the Eureka Stockade of 1854. Soon afterwards, public opinion brought about a number of social experiments, including universal (male) suffrage, the secret ballot, and the eight hour day. From a remote penal colony, Australia became a prosperous society, with a standard of living that was the envy of the world.

Victoria's wealth shaped the history of Australia more broadly. The state was able to fund the expedition of Burke and Wills , who were the first to cross Australia from north to south, over land. While Burke and Wills's Australian outback expedition was a tragic failure, the rescue missions that followed out of Melbourne city in their wake opened much

of interior Australia to European settlement.

Melbourne's CBD would reach the pinnacle of its wealth and prestige in the 1880s. It had overtaken Sydney as Australia's most populous city in 1865; in the 1880s, with a population of 445,000, it was the second largest city in the British Empire, and bigger than most of Europe's capitals.

In 1880, Melbourne projected its civic pride as the host of the Melbourne International Exhibition. Beginning with the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, for which the famous Crystal Palace was built, international exhibitions allowed host nations to display their technological advances and inventions. Attracting vast numbers of visitors to their exhibits, they epitomised the rapid industrial growth and optimism of the Victorian Era. Melbourne's exhibition – following a smaller agricultural show in Sydney in the previous year – was the first internationally recognised exhibition hosted in the Southern Hemisphere, attracting over 1.3 million visitors. The Exhibition Building (now the Royal Exhibition Building) was built in Carlton Gardens for the event, a grand structure in the style of the European exhibition halls, drawing inspiration from German, French, and Florentine styles.

The Exhibition Building would host the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition in 1888, celebrating the founding of European settlement in Sydney in 1788. One of the few remaining Victorian exhibition halls, the Royal Exhibition Building and surrounding Carlton Gardens received UNESCO World Heritage Status in 2004, the first building in Australia to do so.

In the 1880s, the long boom culminated in a frenzy of property investment known as the 'land boom'. The price of land in Melbourne accelerated – reaching in 1889, the same value as areas in central London. In Melbourne's CBD, huge sums of money were poured into opulent office buildings – many for the building societies, banks, and mortgage companies that were driving the boom. Many buildings reached 12 stories high, unseen outside of London, New York and Chicago. New buildings were covered in cast iron lace – at the time derided by architecture critics such as John Ruskin – with 'iron

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petticoats' on virtually every balcony and veranda in the city.

New buildings built in this period reflect the luxurious consumer society that the land boom enabled, coffee palaces, shopping arcades, and theatres. Highlights include St Paul's Cathedral (1880-1891), the Block Arcade (1891), the Hotel Windsor (1883), Her Majesty's Theatre (1886), and the Princess Theatre (rebuilt 1886). Much like today, Melbourne was considered the fashion capital of Australia. Though Melbourne women were too fond of bright colour, complained one observer, 'it can never be complained against them that they are dowdy – a fault common to their Sydney, Adelaide, and English sisters.' 'Doing the Block' – promenading on the area of Collins Street around the Block Arcade – was an opportunity for Melbourne's well-to-do, men and women, to show off their finery.

The 1880s also saw Melbourne become host to the first telephone exchange in Australia, and saw the beginnings of the iconic tramway network. The first tram track operated along Flinders Street to Richmond in 1885. Within five years, over 65 kilometres of tram tracks were linking Melbourne's CBD and the inner suburbs, with driving power for underground cables coming from engine-houses along each route. By 1916, the trams carried more than a hundred million passengers each year. Unlike most cities world wide (including the other Australian capitals) Melbourne did not dismantle its tram system in the post-World War II era, and the historic trams remain an important way of getting around the city.

Culturally, 'Marvellous Melbourne' was far more active and sophisticated than its rival, Sydney. European musicians visited the city regularly, many drawn for the 1880 and 1888 exhibitions. In the 1880s, Melbourne was the home of Australia's impressionist movement, the Heidelberg School, who drew inspiration from city life and the coast and countryside surrounding Melbourne – easily accessible through the suburban rail network – to develop a uniquely Australian form of art.

Sadly, the Golden Age could not last forever. In 1891, the property bubble crashed, and Melbourne was plunged into its worst depression yet. The depression transformed the city. Though statistics are

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unreliable, unemployment was likely around 20%, and one in ten families had their property foreclosed upon. Melbourne's population remained stagnant, and by 1905, Sydney had once again overtaken it as Australia's biggest city.

### **Tour Melbourne with Odyssey Traveller:**

On Odyssey Traveller's new small group Melbourne tour, you can see how the years 1854-1891 continue to define the city. Bluestone here, concrete there, brick and neon, ornate exteriors then sheer glass in the canyons that are Melbourne's streets and lanes.

This course takes you there and beyond in special ways. We stay in the renowned Hotel Windsor (1883), the grandest hotel in Marvellous Melbourne, allowing you to immerse yourself in the elegant world of the late 19th century. From our hotel you can almost reach out and touch Parliament House (1856). Across the road stands the opulent Princess Theatre (1857), a haunting reminiscence of the Paris Opera and an early home of the Old Vic Theatre Company. The Old Treasury Building (1858-62), where they kept the gold, is less than one block away.

And this is just the beginning.

We can walk to the nearest attractions so close and hop on and off the historic Circle Tram to take us around and through the many points of interest.

### **Articles about Melbourne and Victoria published by Odyssey Traveller:**

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- [Burke & Wills](#)
- [Victorian Architecture of Central Melbourne](#)
- [Ballarat and Gold](#)

For all the articles Odyssey Traveller has published for mature aged and senior travellers to support its Australia tour program from Perth to the Flinders ranges and outback Australia including Uluru (Ayers rock) in the the Northern Territory and this seniors small group tour of Melbourne, click through [on this link](#) .

## External articles to assist you on your visit to Melbourne:

- [Marvellous Melbourne](#)
- [Galleries: Marvellous Melbourne](#)
- [Culture Victoria: Built Environment](#)
- [The history of housing bubbles](#)
- [Australian Impressionism: Insights](#)
- [Melbourne exhibitions 1854-1889](#)
- [The Royal Exhibition building of 'Marvellous Melbourne': a history of cities in 50 buildings, day 10](#)

## Highlights

1. Following in the footsteps of Golden Era Melbournians who 'did the Block' on Collins Street and the Block Arcade
2. Staying among the Marvellous Melbourne splendour of the Windsor Hotel
3. Learning about Melbourne's history and architecture at morning sessions with our guide and guest speakers

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4. Seeing the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Royal Exhibition Building
5. Visiting Parliament House and the Old Treasury building and learning how the Gold Rush transformed Victoria

## Itinerary

### Day One

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

Check IN at the Hotel Windsor, Melbourne.

The Windsor is only steps away from Melbourne's luxury boutiques, theatres and the Fitzroy and Carlton Gardens are just a short walk away. Your accommodation is an essential feature of '**Marvellous Melbourne**'. Look around or enjoy the renowned afternoon tea.

In the evening, meet with your program leader (tour guide) for a briefing then join the group for your Odyssey Welcome Dinner.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Windsor

### Day Two

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

After breakfast, we convene for an introduction and a session presenting and discussing aspects of the history that gave rise to **Marvellous Melbourne**. We break for Morning Tea before completing the introductory session.

In the late morning our Melbourne tour begins. We set off on a walking tour for the Old Treasury, The Parliament and the Princess Theatre. We lunch as we please at a local restaurant such as The Society Restaurant (1900).

We ride the Historic City Circle Tram around Melbourne to Flinders Street Station (1909) and stand 'under the clocks' taking in the features,

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stories and attractions of this historic meeting place.

With a promise to return, you are free to enjoy the attractions of the immediate vicinity such as the [Yarra Bank](#).

Dinner at a local restaurant by private or group arrangements.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Windsor

**Day Three**

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

Following the morning History presentations and discussion, we head to the Royal Exhibition Buildings, the Melbourne Museum and its Melbourne Story Exhibit a short walk or tram ride away.

We lunch as we please at a local restaurant such as Pelligrinis.

In the afternoon we immerse ourselves deep into Melbourne's history with a visit and guided tour of the Old Melbourne Gaol where Ned Kelly was hanged (1880). This is followed by a visit to the State Library with its magnificent Domed Reading Room.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Windsor

**Day Four**

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

Following the morning presentations and discussion, we then have a day trip to visit the oldest Anglican Church in Melbourne on its original site – St Peter's Eastern Hill (1846) and it is 'just over the fence' from Parliament.

Directly opposite is the Roman Catholic Cathedral, St Patrick's (1858), an inspiring gothic revival from the tip of its soaring spires to the

intricate tessellation of its paved floors.

We lunch as we please at a local restaurant such as The European.

You are FREE in afternoon to relax. Maybe you see the National Gallery, the Melbourne cricket ground Sports Museum and Tour, the Shrine of Remembrance or take a Melbourne River Cruise or take the tram to St Kilda and Port Phillip Bay, or head over to Toorak and then Eureka skydeck to absorb the spectacular sights of Melbourne city.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Windsor

**Day Five**

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

Following the morning presentations and discussion, we take a leisurely stroll down the Paris end of Collins Street to the heart of Melbourne's CBD and tour its arcades, the laneway and hidden secrets tour of where old meets new, often in the form of street art. We follow in the footsteps of Melbournians in the golden era who "Did the Block" from Elizabeth to Swanston Streets.

We lunch as we please at a local restaurant along Collins Street.

Our city tour returns to the familiar Flinders St intersection to visit St Paul's Anglican Cathedral (1891) and/or enjoy afternoon tea with "Chloe" at Young and Jacksons (1861).

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Windsor

**Day Six**

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

We meet in the foyer after an early breakfast for a briefing before tramming it to the Queen Victoria Market (1878). The Queen Victoria Market has seen many transformations but still maintains the charm and bustle that cries out Marvellous Melbourne and as an attraction

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holds a significant place in Australian history as our nation's most iconic fresh produce market.

An historic landmark spread over two city blocks, it is a vibrant inner-city market where you can shop at over 600 small businesses for everything from Australian fruit and vegetables, local and imported gourmet foods, clothing and souvenirs. We have a talk from a local guide who shares Melbourne's history of this market.

Lunch as you go.

In the afternoon we visit the Melbourne Immigration Museum.

The Immigration Museum is located on Flinders Street in the Old Customs House displaying Australia's immigration history and helps us trace Marvellous Melbourne through the influx of arrivals seeking a new life, commerce, gold and settlement especially in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The building in fact occupies the site of one of the first buildings in the city, Fawkner's Hotel, built in 1835 by John Pascoe Fawkner, one of the founders of Melbourne.

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Windsor

**Day Seven**

**Locations:** Melbourne

**Overview:**

After Breakfast we say farewell to **Marvellous Melbourne** and each other as the Study Tour ends.

## Inclusions / Exclusions

**What's included in the tour.**

- 6 nights accommodation.
- 6 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 dinners.
- Transport by modern and comfortable coach.

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- Entrances and sightseeing as specified.
- Services of Tour Leader for the duration of tour
- Detailed Preparatory Information

#### **What's not included in our Tour**

- Return Domestic airfares.
- Airport/Hotel transfers.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry

#### **Level 1 - Introductory to Moderate**

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, moderate walking on uneven surfaces for 3 - 5 kilometres per day. Suitable for most fitness levels.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.