

Brisbane



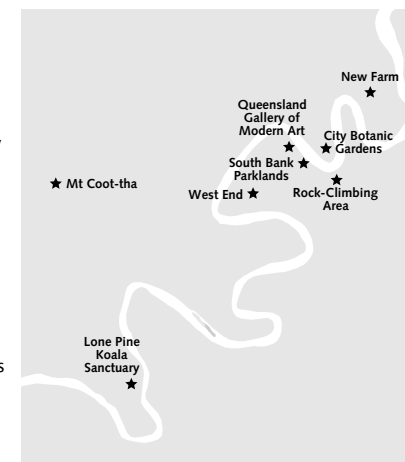
Vast subtropical gardens, a laid-back attitude, an outdoor lifestyle, cuisine from around the planet, iconic heritage buildings in which to slake a thirst and the jumping-off point for the Gold and Sunshine Coasts – and we haven't even mentioned the river yet...

Essentially a river city, Brisbane's heart and soul courses through its centre with more twists and turns than a corkscrew. Travelling its steely waters by ferry is sheer delight. It's a working river, busily ferrying passengers all over the city. Once you've crossed under the mighty Story Bridge you'll appreciate just how special it is to see a city from its river.

Brisbane is blessed with a temperate climate, making it easy to forget you're in Australia's third-largest city where the high-rises still compete with a verdant spread of trees. A smorgasbord of cultural offerings makes Brisbane Queensland's epicentre for the arts with world-class galleries, museums, theatres, art-house cinemas, live-music venues and events. Eating and drinking is all about open-air experiences and many places have massive windows opening onto leafy streets with tables and chairs spilling onto sidewalks. The multicultural vibe of the city is best represented by its many sizzling restaurants and classy cafes. And of course when it comes to pubs Brisbane really outdoes itself – no visit would be complete without a visit to the Breakfast Creek Hotel, a Brizzie institution.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Strolling the mangrove boardwalk through the tropical flora at the **City Botanic Gardens** (p78)
- Wandering the enormous floors of the brand-spanking new **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art** (p80)
- Heading into the sassy suburb of **New Farm** (p81) for a drink at an open-air bar
- Scrambling up Brisbane's pink cliffs under floodlight at the **rock-climbing area** (p84)
- Beating the heat at Streets Beach in the **South Bank Parklands** (p80)
- Going bush in the city: exploring wilderness at **Mt Coot-tha** (p81) and cuddling koalas at **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary** (p83)
- Lunching lazily in the **West End** (p100) with a side of jazz and bohemia
- Scooping up some bargains and atmosphere, **market hopping** (p105) on a sunny Sunday



HISTORY

The first settlement in the Brisbane area was established at Redcliffe on Moreton Bay in 1824 as a penal colony for Sydney's more recalcitrant convicts. After struggling with inadequate water supplies and hostile Aborigines, the colony was relocated to the banks of the Brisbane River, the site of the city centre today, but suffered at the hands of numerous crooked warders and was abandoned in 1839. The Moreton Bay area was thrown open to free settlers in 1842, marking the beginning of Brisbane's rise to prominence, and the start of trouble for the region's Aborigines.

By the time of Queensland's separation from New South Wales in 1859, Brisbane had a population of around 6000. Huge wealth flowed into the city from the new pastoral and gold-mining enterprises in the Darling Downs, and grandiose buildings were erected to reflect this new-found affluence. The frontier-town image was hard to shake off, however, and it wasn't until the 1982 Commonwealth Games and Expo '88 that Brisbane's reputation as a cultural centre became recognised. Brisbane has now cemented its place as Australia's third-largest city, with a population of almost two million.

ORIENTATION

Brisbane's **central business district** (CBD) is bound by a U-shaped loop of the Brisbane River, about 25km upstream from the river's mouth. The centre is small in size (just over 1 sq km) and laid out in a grid pattern. Most of the CBD's action buzzes around the pedestrianised Queen St Mall. At the southern end of Queen St is Victoria Bridge, which connects the centre to South Brisbane and the cultural development known as **South Bank**. Further south is the bohemian **West End**.

Fortitude Valley ('The Valley' in BrisVegas speak), a major entertainment precinct, lies northeast of the CBD as a continuation of Ann St. To the southeast of the Valley is the more upmarket **New Farm**, also with a lively bar and culinary scene. The Story Bridge (Brisbane's answer to the Sydney Harbour Bridge) connects Fortitude Valley with **Kangaroo Point**, a pleasant spot to stay and handy for access to the Gold Coast.

The Roma St Transit Centre, where you'll arrive if you're coming by bus, train or airport shuttle, is on Roma St, about 500m west of the city centre. Heading east, Roma St meets

the CBD at Ann St, near King George Square. Central Station is about 200m north of Queen St, at the corner of Ann and Edward Sts.

Brisbane Airport is about 15km northeast of the city. There are shuttles to and from the city (see p107).

Maps

You can pick up free Queensland Tourism maps with coverage of the CBD from one of the visitor centres. For more comprehensive detail, pick up a copy of *Brisbane Suburban Map* by UBD (\$7.95), *Brisbane and Region* by Hema Maps (\$6.50) or *Brisbane Compact Map*, also by Hema Maps (\$6.50).

The definitive guide to Brisbane's streets is UBD's *Brisbane Street Directory* (known locally as 'Refidex'; \$35), which includes maps of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts; or try Gregory's *Brisbane Street Directory* (\$29.95). Another alternative is the newly released UBD *Brisbane, Gold Coast & Sunshine Coast Mini Street Directory* (\$7.95). It's a booklet that doesn't have the detail of other maps but covers the city centres and is a really handy compact size.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Archives Fine Books (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 0491; 40 Charlotte St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 9pm Fri, to 5pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) You could get lost in here for hours: fantastic range of secondhand books, boasting one million titles.

Avid Reader (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 3422; www.avidreader.com.au; 193 Boundary St, West End; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon, Tue & Sat, to 8.30pm Wed-Fri, to 5pm Sun) Diverse range; great for pottering.

Borders Bookstore (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3210 1220; 162 Albert St; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Thu, to 9pm Fri, to 6pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Sizable branch of this reliable chain.

Folio Books (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 1368; www.foliobooks.com.au; 80 Albert St; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 9pm Fri, to 5.30pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) Small bookshop with eclectic offerings.

World Wide Maps & Guides (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 4330; Shop 30, Anzac Sq Arcade, 267 Edward St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, 8.30am-7pm Fri, 10am-3pm Sat) Comprehensive range of travel guides and maps.

Emergency

Ambulance (☎ 000, 1300 369 003)

Brisbane Rape & Incest Survivors Support Centre (☎ 3391 0004)

Fire (☎ 000, 3247 5539)

Hotline (☎ 13 11 14)

Police (☎ 000) City (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3224 4444; 67 Adelaide St); Headquarters (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3364 6464; 200 Roma St); Fortitude Valley (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3131 1200; Brunswick St Mall)

RACQ (☎ 13 19 05, breakdown 13 11 11) City (Map pp94-5; GPO Bldg, 261 Queen St); St Pauls Tce (Map pp94-5; 300 St Pauls Tce) Roadside service.

Internet Access

Wireless internet access is becoming more common around the city with many hotels and some cafés and fast-food places providing this service. To find your nearest wi-fi hotspot in Brisbane, check out www.jiwire.com.

Global Gossip City (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3229 4033; 290 Edward St; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun); Fortitude Valley (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3666 0900; 312 Brunswick St; ☎ 9am-11pm) \$4 per hour with membership; gets cheaper the more you use it. Plenty of terminals and cheap-call phone booths.

Internet City (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3003 1221; Level 4, 132 Albert St; per hr \$4; ☎ 24hr) Cheap broadband access.

IYSC (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3211 9095; 128 Adelaide St; 60c per 10min, \$3 per hr; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-8.30pm Sat & Sun)

State Library of Queensland (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3840 7666; South Bank; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri-Sun) Free, but advance bookings required. Quick 20-minute terminals or book a PC or use wi-fi.

Medical Services

Brisbane Sexual Health Clinic (Map pp74-5; Biala City Community Health Centre; ☎ 3837 5611; 270 Roma St)

Pharmacy on the Mall (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 4585; 141 Queen St; ☎ 7am-9pm Mon-Thu, to 9.30pm Fri, 8am-9pm Sat, 8.30am-6pm Sun)

Queensland Statewide Sexual Assault Helpline (☎ 1800 010 120)

Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3636 8111; cnr Butterfield St & Bowen Bridge Rd, Herston; ☎ 24hr casualty ward)

Travel Clinic (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1300 369 359, 3211 3611; 1st fl, 245 Albert St; ☎ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Thu, to 6pm Fri, 8.30am-5pm Sat, 9.30am-5pm Sun)

Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre (Map pp94-5; TMVC; ☎ 3815 6900; 75 Astor Tce, Spring Hill; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri, 8.30am-8pm Wed, 8am-1.30pm Sat)

Money

There are foreign-exchange bureaux at Brisbane Airport's domestic and international terminals, as well as ATMs that take most international credit cards. For after-hours

foreign exchange, the tellers in the Treasury Casino are there 24 hours a day. ATMs are prolific throughout Brisbane.

American Express (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1300 139 060; Shop 3, 156 Adelaide St)

Interforex Brisbane (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 3562; Shop 255, Wintergarden Centre, 171 Queen St)

Travelx (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3210 6325; Shop 149F, Myer Centre, Queen St Mall)

Post

Australia Post (☎ 13 13 18) GPO (Map pp94-5; 261 Queen St; ☎ 7am-6pm Mon-Fri); Wintergarden (Map pp94-5; 2nd fl, Wintergarden Centre, 171 Queen St, ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) The General Post Office (GPO) has poste restante.

Tourist Information

Brisbane Visitor Information Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3006 6290; Queen St Mall; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, to 4.30pm Sat, 9.30am-4pm Sun) Located between Edward and Albert streets. Great one-stop info counter for all things Brisbane.

Brisbane Visitors Accommodation Service (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3236 2020; 3rd fl, Roma St Transit Centre, Roma St; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 8am-6pm Sun) Privately run outfit specialising in backpacker travel, tours and accommodation in Brisbane and elsewhere in Queensland.

Naturally QLD (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1300 130 372; 160 Ann St; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri) The Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) runs this excellent information centre. You can get maps, brochures and books on national parks and state forests, as well as camping information and Fraser Island permits.

South Bank Visitors Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3867 2051; www.visitsouthbank.com.au; Stanley St Plaza, South Bank Parklands; ☎ 9am-5pm)

Travel Agencies

Flight Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 8900; 170 Adelaide St; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat)

STA Travel (☎ 134 782; www.statravel.com.au); Myer Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3229 6066; Shop 40, Myer Centre, Ground Level, Queen St Mall); City (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3229 2499; Shop G11, Queen Adelaide Bldg, 59 Adelaide St)

Trailfinders (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1300 780 212, 3229 0887; 101 Adelaide St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat)

YHA Membership & Travel office (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3236 1680; 450 George St; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Tours, YHA membership and YHA hostel bookings.

Travellers with Disabilities

The city centre is commendably wheelchair friendly and Brisbane City Council (BCC) produces the *Brisbane Mobility Map*. It's usually available from the **BCC Customer Services**

BRISBANE

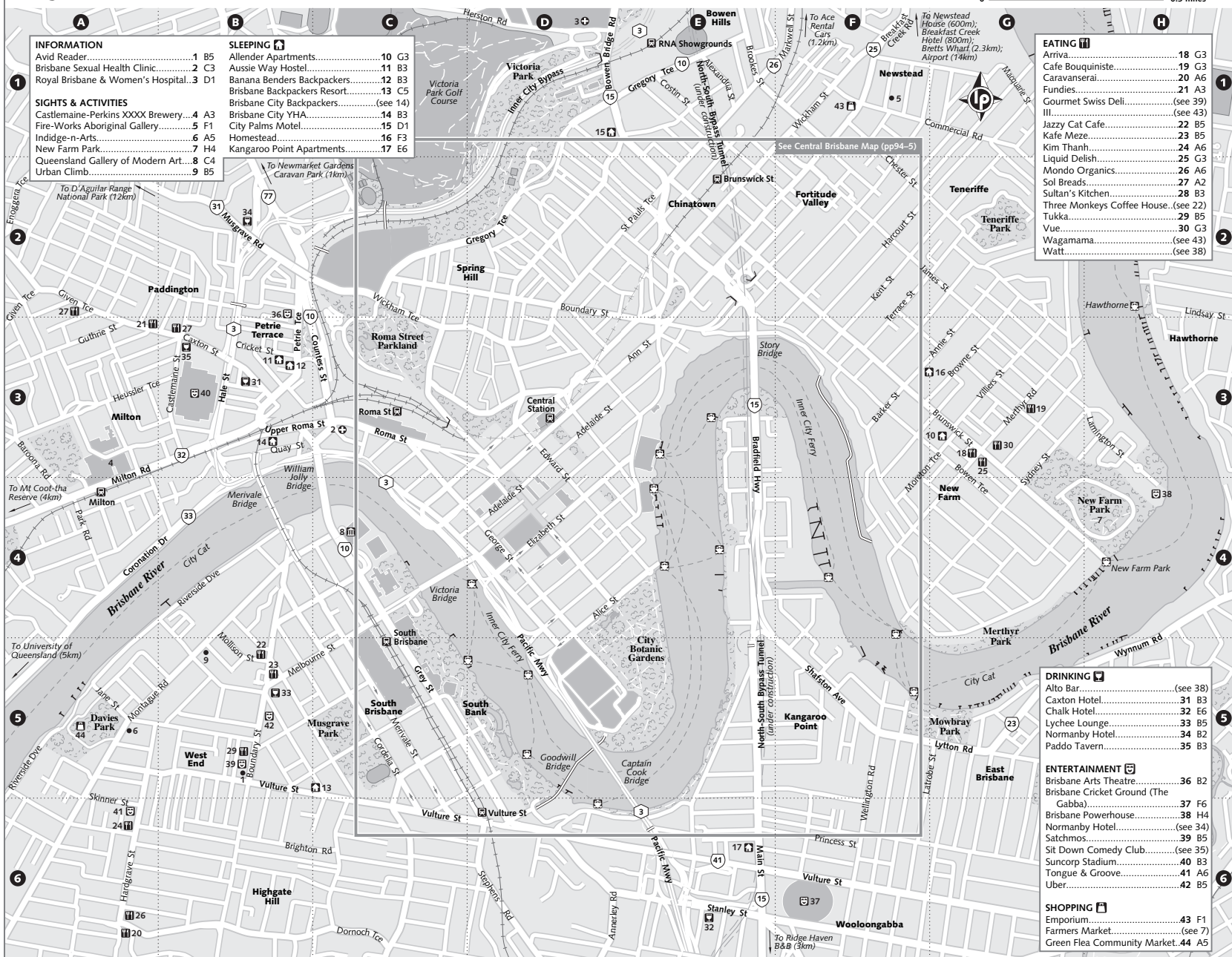


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BRISBANE IN...

Two Days

Start day one with a cruisey breakfast in Brisbane's **West End** (p100), savour a latte and the bohemian vibes and then saunter across to **South Bank Parklands** (p80). Get savvy with the culture at the **Queensland Cultural Centre** (p79), then head into one of the riverside eateries or grab a quick bite and bask in the city and river views. Cool your heels, and everything else, at **Streets Beach** (p80) and explore the parklands. If it's summer, you've hit the jackpot – stick around for an alfresco movie in the park. If you've had enough of the great outdoors though, jump on a ferry to the **Alto Bar** (p101) and **Watt** (p99) at the Brisbane Powerhouse in New Farm for a cold beer and a sublime dinner.

On day two head downtown and snake your way through the city's mix of old and new architecture. Explore Brisbane's history at **City Hall** (below) and contrast it with the redevelopment of **King George Square** (below); next gape at the beautiful old **Treasury Building** (opposite), then head south to the **City Botanic Gardens** (p78) and picnic under a massive Moreton Bay fig. Finish the day with a brew at the **Port Office Hotel** (p102) and a banquet in Fortitude Valley's **Chinatown** (p97).

Four Days

On day three check out the café culture in **New Farm** (p98). Fuel up and then delve into the trendy shops or linger in the numerous galleries in nearby Fortitude Valley. Spend the afternoon seeking out Brisbane's best view and head to the lookout at **Mt Coot-tha Reserve** (p81). Take in a short bushwalk through the reserve and visit the beautiful **Brisbane Botanic Gardens** (p81). Then head back to **Fortitude Valley** (p97) for fine dining, and work it all off in one of the clubs or late-night bars.

On day four you'll need to give the feet a rest, so take a cruise up the Brisbane River to **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary** (p83) and see what all the cuddly fuss is about. In transit watch the city unfold around you and take a closer look at Brisbane's leafy sprawl.

Recount the day's events over a beer at the **Breakfast Creek Hotel** (p101) and then gravitate to Paddington for a feast at **Sultan's Kitchen** (p100) before collapsing into bed.

Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3403 8888, TTY 3403 8422; www.brisbane.qld.gov.au; 266 George St; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

The **Disability Information Awareness Line** (DIAL; ☎ 1800 177 120, 3224 8444, TTY 3896 3471; www.disability.qld.gov.au) provides information on disability services and support throughout Queensland. Its phone lines are open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. DIAL also publishes the quarterly *Connect* magazine.

Information about disabled access on public transport can be obtained from **Trans-Info** (☎ 13 12 30; www.transinfo.qld.gov.au).

SIGHTS

Most of Brisbane's major sights are in the CBD or inner-city suburbs. A walk through the city will reveal Brisbane's colonial history and architecture, and a ferry ride across the river lands you in the glut of attractions and activities at South Bank. Chinatown and Brunswick St, both in Fortitude Valley, provide a healthy injection of culture, shopping and food.

The free *Brisbane's Living Heritage* brochure, available from the visitors centre and at www.brisbanelivingheritage.org, highlights many of the sights Brisbane has to offer.

City Centre

CITY HALL & KING GEORGE SQUARE

Brisbane City Hall (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3403 6586; 266 George St; admission free; ☎ lift & viewing tower 10am-3pm) is a gracious sandstone edifice overlooking King George Square. Built in 1930, its splendour is not only skin deep; when you enter be sure to draw your eyes from the marble staircase upwards to the kaleidoscopic roof and gothic Art Deco light fittings. There's an observation platform up in the bell tower, which affords brilliant views across the city. A delightful, old-fashioned elevator runs up to the top, but a word of warning – beware the bells. It's a terrifying, deafening experience if you are up here at noon when the bells start tolling.

On the ground floor is the **Museum of Brisbane** (Map pp94-5; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm), which is divided into two wings. One half follows the city's historical journey with interactive exhibits. The Memory Theatre here shows a continuous film featuring Brisbanites of various backgrounds, each giving their historical, creative and social spin on the city. The other half of the museum has a more creative bent, showcasing artworks, crafts and photography by local and international artists. There are free guided tours of the museum on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 11am.

King George Square, the city's premier public space, was getting a huge makeover when we passed through. It includes the terminus for the new Inner Northern Busway linking Queen St with Upper Roma St. The project incorporates a subtropical design intended to improve its aesthetics.

ROMA ST PARKLAND

This **park** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3006 4545; www.romastreetparkland.com; 1 Parkland Blvd; admission free; ☎ 24hr, free guided tours 10am & 2pm) is a veritable feast of flora inhabiting 16 hectares of the northern edge of the city. Apparently it's the biggest urban subtropical garden in the world. Broken into 16 precincts, the park offers visitors the opportunity to explore lily gardens, an Indian-inspired tea and coffee plantation, a rockery, native gardens and much more. There are also activities for mums and bubs, and plenty of public barbecues so you can do the very Australian picnic thing.

Southeast of the Parkland, on Wickham Tce, is the 1828 **Old Windmill & Observatory** (Map pp94-5), one of the oldest buildings in Brisbane. Due to a design flaw, the sails were too heavy for the wind to turn, and a convict-powered treadmill was briefly employed before the mill was abandoned. The building was converted to a signal post and later a meteorological observatory.

TREASURY CASINO TO QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

At the western end of the Queen St Mall, overlooking the river, is Brisbane's magnificent Italian Renaissance-style **Treasury Building** (Map pp94-5). It has a lavish façade, with commanding balconies and columns. The treasury now contains an entirely different kind of money spinner: Conrad's 24-hour casino.

In the block southeast of the casino, Conrad also occupies the equally gorgeous former **Land Administration Building** (Map pp74-5). Here, however, it's been converted to a classy five-star hotel, the Conrad Treasury (see p93).

Closer to the water is another of Brisbane's historic gems: the **Commissariat Stores Building** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 4198; 115 William St; adult/child \$4/2; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Fri). Built by convicts in 1829, it was used as a government store until 1962. Today it houses a museum that follows the development of the Moreton Bay settlement, which eventually became Brisbane. The ground floor delves into the history of the Moreton Bay penal colony, which incarcerated repeat offenders from all over the country during the 1820s.

Continuing south along George St, on the right immediately after the junction with Margaret St, is the **Mansions** (Map pp94-5), a beautiful and unusual three-storey terrace built in 1890. Look out for the cats on top of the parapet at each end of the building. Opposite is the imposing Greek-revival façade of the **Queensland Club** (Map pp94-5).

One block south of the Mansions, **Parliament House** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3406 7562; nr Alice & George Sts; admission free) occupies a suitably regal position overlooking the City Botanic Gardens (p78). Set against a tropical backdrop, its grand, sand-coloured façade is quite magnificent and arguably Brisbane's most stunning historical piece of architecture. The structure dates from 1868 and was built in French Renaissance style with a roof clad in Mt Isa copper. Free guided tours are available

BRISBANE'S TOP FIVE FOR A RAINY DAY

- **Hands on Art** (p86) Leave the kids here while you pop into the Queensland Maritime Museum (p80).
- **Queensland Cultural Centre** (p79) Dose up on art, culture, science and history.
- **Brewery tour** (p88) Take one and find out what the XXXX fuss is all about.
- **Cinemas** (p104) Catch an art-house flick at the Dendy or kid-pleasers at South Bank.
- **Indoor rock-climbing** (p84) Test your mettle!

ACCESSING INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN CULTURE IN BRISBANE

Experiencing indigenous culture is a highlight of any visit to Queensland, and Brisbane presents some fine opportunities to access, experience, participate in and admire the unbroken spiritual legacy of the first Australians.

Art

Fire-Works Aboriginal Gallery (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3216 1250; www.fireworksgallery.com.au; 11 Stratton St, Newstead; 🕒 11am-5pm Tue-Fri, to 3pm Sat) is a wonderful centre for contemporary and often quite political Aboriginal art. There is a number of striking pieces of artwork set in this warehouse gallery, some a staggering size given the hours of meticulous detail that goes into this wonderful art form. The wildlife depictions in particular are outstanding. There are also giant boomerangs and wire art.

Suzanne O'Connell Gallery (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 5811; www.suzanneoconnell.com; 93 James St; 🕒 11am-4pm Wed-Sat), tucked away in New Farm, has stunning works of art from celebrated indigenous artists such as Nancy Nungurrayi. Everything is for sale and prices start at around \$800. It's a lovely, compact gallery with good lighting and austere surrounds, which enhance the effect of the works. There are also regular exhibitions from various artists, and it's a good source for information.

Two of Brisbane's finest cultural institutions have space devoted to celebrating the state's indigenous people. The Dandiiri Maiwar Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures Centre at the **Queensland Museum** (opposite) is an excellent resource centre showcasing Queensland's Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders. Displays include depictions of the contribution of the state's indigenous people to contemporary Australia. The new **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art** (p80) has some outstanding pieces of indigenous Australian art. Observe the work that goes into a piece by Joseph Jurra Tjalpatjarri. A favourite though is Vincent Serico's series on Cooktown gold miners.

on demand between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday, and 10am to 2pm weekends, unless parliament is sitting, in which case you can hang out in the public gallery and watch the politicians strut their stuff. If you're lucky you may strike a hot topic; otherwise the bureaucratic banter can be as thrilling as watching grass grow.

Virtually next door, within the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) campus, is the **QUT Art Museum** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3864 2797; 2 George St; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue, Thu, Fri, to 8pm Wed, noon-4pm Sat & Sun). Modest in size but not in talent, this excellent gallery showcases contemporary art in all its mediums and 'isms'. There's a definite lean towards Australian works, but temporary exhibits by international artists are also displayed. Best of all are the frequent displays of work by students at the university, demonstrating future directions of art in Australia.

CITY BOTANIC GARDENS

These expansive **gardens** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3403 0666; Alice St; 🕒 24hr, free guided tours 11am & 1pm Mon-Sat) are a mass of green lawns, towering Moreton Bay figs, bunya pines, macadamia trees and other tropical flora, descending gently from the QUT

campus. A network of paths throughout enables strollers, joggers, picnickers, cyclists and in-line skaters to make their way to quiet spots for respite, or to nowhere in particular. The pretty **Mangrove Boardwalk**, a wooden walkway skirting the riverbank on the eastern rim, is lit until midnight. The glow provides good opportunities to spot tame possums in the trees.

RIVERFRONT

The former docks area northeast of the CBD is one of the most attractive and lively areas in the city. The striking, domed **Customs House** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3365 8999; www.customshouse.com.au; 399 Queen St; admission free; 🕒 10am-4pm) from 1886-89 is so aesthetically pleasing it's hard to imagine it was used as a functional building. As the name suggests, for almost a century this was where all ships heading into Brisbane's port were required to pay duties. On the lower level, a free gallery under excellent curatorship displays diverse, temporary exhibits ranging from classical landscapes to printed broadsheets packing a political wallop. Opening times vary as the gallery space is often used for functions by Queensland University – try your luck.

Further south are the **Riverside Centre** and **Eagle St Pier** complexes (Map pp94-5). Despite

Workshops

Tribal Galleries (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 806 225; www.indigenousgallery.com.au; 376 George St; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has a mix of Aboriginal art and tourist souvenirs, including a hefty range of didjeridus – if you're lucky someone in-store may demonstrate the didjeridu for you, or else grab a free lesson at 4pm on Monday, Wednesday or Friday. This place also runs the **Basement** around the corner where you can do a workshop to learn about Australian indigenous culture and craft techniques. Run by traditional Aboriginal artists, you can have a go at canvas painting or decorating your own raw boomerang (\$30).

Indidge-n-Arts (Map pp74-5; ☎ 1800 893 896; 270 Montague Rd, West End; 🕒 9am-5pm) also holds workshops including didjeridu making (\$120), bush-seed jewellery (\$25), basket weaving (\$35), as well as hand drumming (\$30) and didjeridu (\$30) lessons. These people like working with children so chances are yours would be very welcome.

Performances

Riverlife Adventure Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3891 5766; www.riverlife.com.au; Naval Stores, River Tce, Kangaroo Point; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 9pm Fri, to 4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun), which specialises in all kinds of activities around Brisbane, also gives you the chance to participate in traditional Aboriginal song and dance performances with descendants of the local Yuggera tribe on Thursday at noon (adults/children \$39/25) or Saturday nights (\$59). Bookings essential.

Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts (p81) is home to many of the state's leading contemporary-arts organisations, including the indigenous performing-arts company Kooemba Jdarra, which is dedicated to presenting stories about indigenous Australians through performance art.

some awful plastic kit architecture this is an attractive riverside site and home to some very fine restaurants. A good time to come here is on Sunday morning, when the area becomes a busy craft market. There are ferry terminals at both complexes.

Queensland Cultural Centre

On South Bank, just over Victoria Bridge from the CBD, the Queensland Cultural Centre is the epicentre of Brisbane's cultural confluence. It's a huge compound that includes a concert and theatre venue, an enormous conference and convention centre and a modern concrete edifice containing the city's main art gallery, museum and the Queensland State Library (a lot of culture to cram into one building!). Right next to this is the superb gallery of modern art.

At the back of the complex, the **Queensland Museum** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3840 7555; www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au; Grey St, South Brisbane; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-5pm) occupies imaginations with all manner of curiosities. Queensland's history is given a once-over with an interesting collection of exhibits, including a skeleton of the state's own dinosaur, *Muttaborrasaurus*, and the *Avian Cirrus*, the tiny plane in which Queensland's

Bert Hinkler made the first England-to-Australia solo flight in 1928. Upstairs there's an enlightening, if not distressing, display on Queensland's endangered species, as well as a reconstruction of the host of mammoth marsupials that roamed these shores more than 100,000 years ago. There are also good temporary exhibits on the likes of bug, beetle and butterfly parades, or dinosaur skeletons from around the globe.

Within the museum is the excellent **Science Centre** (Map pp94-5; admission adult/child/family \$10/8/29), a hands-on exhibit that has interactive displays, optical illusions, a perception tunnel and regular film shows.

Inside an austere chunk of concrete, the **Queensland Art Gallery** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3840 7303; www.qag.qld.gov.au; Melbourne St, South Brisbane; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun, free guided tours at 11am, 1pm & 2pm Mon-Fri, 11am, 12.30pm & 2pm Sat & Sun) houses a fine permanent collection, mostly of domestic and European artists. The gallery showcases Australian art from the 1840s through to the 1970s, and the first floor is devoted to celebrated Australian artists; you can view works by masters including Sir Sydney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, William Dobell, George Lambert, Margaret Preston and Brett

Whitely. There really is something to suit all tastes from very traditional to the very modern and in some cases very silly – note the Gillian Wearing shot of four T-shirt-bedecked women.

The new **Queensland Gallery of Modern Art** (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3840 7350; Stanley Place; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun, free guided tours same times as Queensland Art Gallery), in a simply enormous building flooded with natural light, which contrasts wood, concrete and brushed steel in its contemporary design, is mind-boggling in scope. The gallery depicts Australian art from the 1970s to modern times in a variety of changing exhibitions and media: painting, sculpture and photography sit alongside video, installation and film. On the second level is 'The Leisure Class', which includes multimedia displays depicting the contemporary packaging of leisure, consumption and lifestyle as social capital and markers of identity. It's quirky and telling. Enjoy the sublime river and city views from the River Lounge – it must be one of the best free views in the city.

South Bank Parklands

This beautiful swathe of green **park** (Map pp94-5; admission free; 🕒 dawn-dusk), skirting the western side of the Brisbane River, is home to cultural attractions, fine eateries, small rainforests, hidden lawns and gorgeous flora. Scattered throughout are barbecues and climbing gyms where youngsters swarm like bees to honey. A scenic esplanade offers spectacular views of the city and the whole area is laden with atmosphere and character.

The two stand-out attractions are **Stanley St Plaza** (Map pp94-5), a renovated section of historic Stanley St lined with cafés, shops and restaurants, and **Streets Beach** (Map pp94-5). On hot days people converge on this artificial swimming hole, which wraps around trees, bridges and rockeries before opening up to resemble a tropical lagoon. The beach even has its own lifeguards, but the lack of rips, undertows and sharks tends to keep the drama to a minimum.

On Friday evening and all day Saturday and Sunday, there's a large and popular **craft and clothing market** in the plaza.

The **Suncorp Piazza** (Map pp94-5) is an outdoor theatre that screens international sporting events regularly and movies during school holidays, both for free. It's also a venue for concerts and performances.

The Parklands are within easy walking distance of the CBD. You can also get there by CityCat or City Ferry (there are three jetties along the river bank) or by bus or train from the transit centre or Central Station.

Queensland Maritime Museum

This **museum** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3844 5361; Sidon St, South Brisbane; adult/child \$7/3.50; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm), at the western end of the South Bank promenade, has a wide range of displays on maritime adventures (and misadventures) along the state's coast. A daunting highlight is the sizable map showing the location of more than 1500 shipwrecks (mostly victims of the Reef) in Queensland's waters since 1791. You can indulge your naval-battle fantasies by clambering about the HMAS *Diamantina*, a restored 1945 navy frigate, and there's also a good display on the tragic sinking of the *Pandora*, the ship sent to retrieve the mutineers from Captain Cook's *Bounty*. A leisurely two-hour sightseeing cruise runs for \$24/15 per adult/child.

Inner North

For over a decade the alternative neighbourhoods of Fortitude Valley and nearby New Farm have been the hub of all things contemporary and cool, thanks to a confluence of artists, restaurateurs and various fringe types flooding the area.

During the day the action is concentrated on **Brunswick St Mall** (Map pp94-5), a pedestrianised arcade full of pavement cafés, bars and shops. The northeast section of Fortitude Valley and New Farm is more pleasant though – James and Brunswick Streets are good places to begin your exploration.

Alongside the funky restaurants and bars, Brisbane's very own **Chinatown** occupies only one street (Duncan St) but exhibits the same flamboyance and flavour of its counterparts in Sydney and Melbourne. The Ann St end is guarded by an exquisite Tang dynasty archway and oriental lions. Chinese landscaping throughout includes pagodas and a waterfall.

Just west of the Valley, **St John's Cathedral** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3835 2231; 373 Ann St; admission free; 🕒 9.30am-4.30pm, tours 10am & 2pm Mon-Sat, 2pm Sun) is a beautiful piece of 19th-century Gothic Revival architecture. Inside the church is a magnificent fusion of carved timber and stained glass. The building is a true labour of love – construction began in 1906 and is

still going! It's due for completion in March 2009 and is probably the last cathedral of its architectural style to be built.

New Farm, just east of the Valley along Brunswick St, is chock-a-block with bars and restaurants. New Farm has more style and class than Fortitude Valley with less of the puking-your-guts-all-over-the-pavement-at-8.30pm types. Fortunately it still contains enough of a mix of people to deflect the constant inflow of yuppies, and retain an edge. At the eastern end of Brunswick St, **New Farm Park** (Map pp74-5) is a large, open parkland with playgrounds, picnic areas and gas barbecues, jacaranda trees and beautiful rose gardens. Between November and February, the alfresco **Moonlight Cinemas** (☎ 1300 551 908; www.moonlight.com.au; adult/child \$13/9; 🕒 6pm Wed-Sun) screens movies in the gardens.

The inner north is renowned for its profusion of private galleries and exhibition spaces, mostly showing paintings and ceramic works for sale. The best and biggest is the **Institute of Modern Art** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3252 5750; www.ima.org.au; 🕒 11am-5pm Tue-Sat, until 8pm Thu), a non-commercial gallery with an industrial exhibition space and regular showings by local names. It's housed inside the **Judith Wright Centre for Contemporary Arts** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3872 9000; www.judithwrightcentre.com.au; 420 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley), which is another excellent venue for live performance of all genres.

Other galleries in the area:

Jan Murphy Gallery (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3254 1855; 486 Brunswick St; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sat)
Philip Bacon Galleries (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 3555; 2 Arthur St; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sat)

Newstead House

North of the centre, on the Brisbane River, is Brisbane's best-known heritage site, the lovely old **Newstead House** (Map p82; ☎ 3216 1846; Breakfast Creek Rd, Newstead; adult/child/family \$4/2/10; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 2-5pm Sun). The historic homestead dates from 1846 and is beautifully fitted out with Victorian furnishings, antiques, clothing and period displays. Surrounded by manicured gardens it sits on a breezy elevated position overlooking the river, giving superb water vistas. First Friday of each month is free admission.

Mt Coot-tha Reserve

About 7km west of the city centre, **Mt Coot-tha Reserve** (Map p82) is a 220-hectare bush

reserve that's teeming with wildlife (mostly of the possum and bush-turkey variety). Aside from the chunk of wilderness, the big attractions here are a massive planetarium and the spectacular lookout. The latter affords panoramic daytime views of Brisbane and a few bits beyond, and at night, a sea of twinkling lights blanketing the terrain for miles. The lookout is accessed via Samuel Griffith Dr and has wheelchair access.

There are picnic spots with tables and barbecues scattered throughout the park. One of the nicest is **Simpson Falls** (Map p82), set in a gentle valley and surrounded by scrub. In less of a bush enclave but with a thick carpet of lawn is **Hoop Pine** (Map p82). Bigger than both is **JC Slaughter Falls** (Map p82), where you can create an alfresco banquet amid oodles of trees and grass. The turn-off to JC Slaughter Falls is just north of Sir Samuel Griffith Dr.

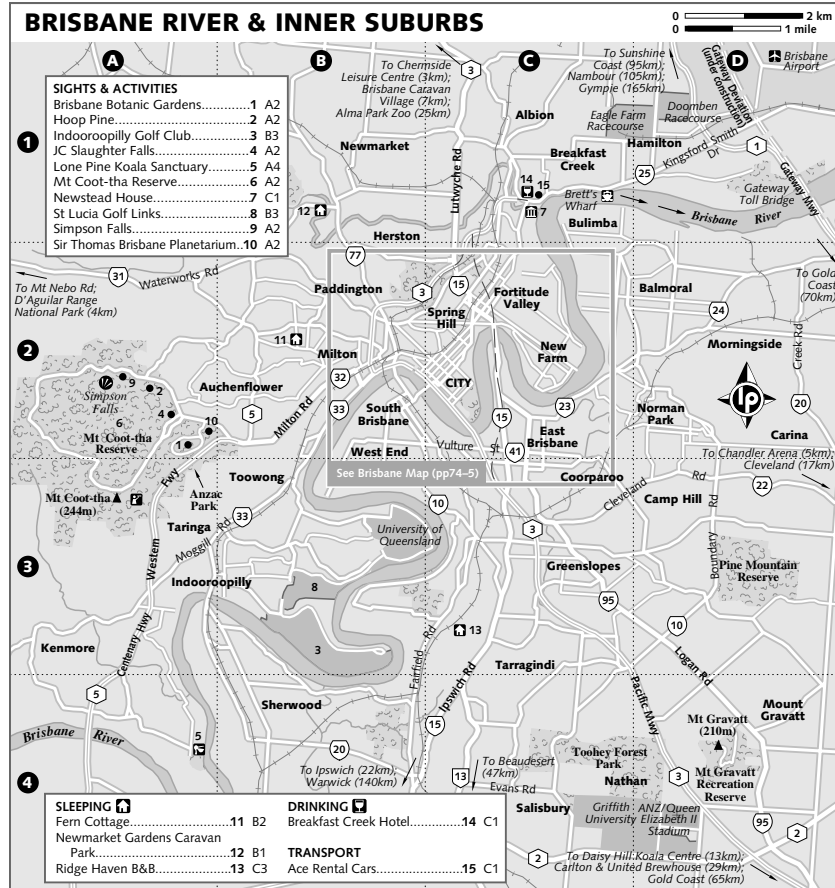
At the end of the road you can access the circuitous, 1.5km **Aboriginal Art Trail**, which takes you past eight art sites with work by local Aboriginal artists, including tree carvings, rock paintings and a ceremonial dance pit. Also here is the **JC Slaughter Falls Track** (3.4km return), which leads through the reserve to the lookout. It's quite steep in several sections; decent walking shoes are recommended.

The very beautiful **Brisbane Botanic Gardens** (Map p82; ☎ 3403 8888; admission free; 🕒 8am-5.30pm Sep-Mar, to 5pm Apr-Aug; free guided walks 11am & 1pm Mon-Sat) cover 0.5 sq km and include over 20,000 species of plants. The plethora of mini ecologies, which include cactus, Japanese and herb gardens, rainforests and arid zones, make you feel like you're traversing the globe's landscape in all its vegetated splendour. There is also a compact tropical dome in which exotic palms soar above you like science-fiction props. Don't miss the weeping fig in the exotic rainforest section and keep an eye out for geckos scuttling across your path as you wander through.

Also within the gardens, the **Sir Thomas Brisbane Planetarium** (Map p82; ☎ 3403 2578) is Australia's largest planetarium. There's a great observatory here and the shows inside the **Cosmic Skydome** (adult/child/family \$12.10/7.10/32.70) will make you feel like you've stepped on board the *Enterprise*. Note you must see a show to access the planetarium, as it is not otherwise open to the public.

To get here via public transport, take bus 471 from Adelaide St, opposite King George

BRISBANE RIVER & INNER SUBURBS



Sq (\$2.80, 30 minutes, hourly Monday to Friday, six services Saturday and Sunday). The bus drops you off in the lookout car park and stops outside the Brisbane Botanic Gardens en route.

D'Aguilar Range National Park

Brisbanites suffering from suburban malaise satiate their wilderness cravings at this 50,000-hectare park in the D'Aguilar Range, 10km north of the city centre. Comprising both Brisbane Forest Park and Mt Mee, it's a great area for bushwalking, cycling, horse riding, camping and scenic drives. At the park entrance the **Brisbane Forest Park information centre** (off Map p82); ☎ 1300 723 684, camping permits 13 13 04; www.epa.qld.gov.au; 60 Mt Nebo Rd; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) has

information about **camping** (per person \$4.50) and maps of the park. If you plan to camp, keep in mind that it is bush camping, without any facilities: campers need to obtain permits prior to arrival by telephone or online. Note, these are remote, walk-in camp sites, and you need to hike between one to 10 kilometres to reach them.

The bird life is a big lure here and it's a beautiful spot for a barbecue. There are **walking trails** ranging from a few hundred metres to 8km, including the 6km Morelia Track at Manarina day-use area and the 5km Greene's Falls Track at Mt Glorious.

Beside the visitors centre is **Walkabout Creek** (off Map p82; adult/child/family \$5.30/2.60/13.20; ☎ 9am-4.30pm), a wildlife centre where you can see a

TOP FIVE WILDERNESS DAY TRIPS AROUND BRISBANE

If Brisbane is becoming a bit hectic for you and you want to reacquire yourself with nature, consider these easy day trips out of the city:

- **Moreton Island** (p133) An idyllic sand island where forests meet the sea; almost deserted outside of the main resort.
- **Gold Cost hinterland** (p154) A vast sea of dense forest with wonderful walking makes a great antidote to urban grit.
- **Glass House Mountains** (p182) Volcanic crags sprout from humid green surrounds in these lovely mountains with hikes to their craggy peaks. Australia Zoo is also here.
- **D'Aguilar Range National Park** (opposite) Commune with nature barely outside the city limits; walking tracks take you into the heart of this well-managed park.
- **Main Range National Park** (p168) Walks through the rainforest in this rugged park in the western part of the Scenic Rim are a stone's throw from Brisbane.

resident platypus up close, as well as turtles, green tree frogs, lizards, pythons and gliders. There's also a small but wonderful walk-through aviary. It's an outstanding alternative to a zoo.

To get here catch bus 385 (\$3.60, 30 minutes), which departs from the corner of Albert and Adelaide Sts hourly from 8.50am to 3.55pm. The bus stops outside the visitors centre, and the last departure back to the city is at 4.55pm (3.55pm on weekends). There are two park walks available from the visitor centre; other walks are a fair distance away, so you'll need your own transport.

Greater Brisbane LONE PINE KOALA SANCTUARY

About 11km southwest of Brisbane's CBD, this **wildlife sanctuary** (Map p82; ☎ 3378 1366; Jesmond Rd, Fig Tree Pocket; adult/child/family \$20/15/52; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) is an easy half-day trip. It's the world's largest koala sanctuary and with more than 130 of the cute and cuddly bears you won't be lacking photo opportunities. A cuddle costs an extra, but irresistible, \$15, and you can hand feed the tame kangaroos for around \$1 per bag of pellets. Keeping the koalas and roos company are wombats, possums, dingoes, Tasmanian Devils and other native animals. The sanctuary is set in gorgeous parklands beside the river and there are plenty of barbecue facilities.

To get here catch express bus 430 (\$3.20, 35 minutes, hourly), which leaves from George Street between 8.45am and 3.45pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 4.30pm on weekends.

Alternatively, **Mirimar Cruises** (☎ 1300 729 742; incl park entry per adult/child/family \$48/27/135) cruises

to the sanctuary along the Brisbane River from North Quay, next to Victoria Bridge. It departs daily at 10am, returning from Lone Pine at 1.30pm.

ALMA PARK ZOO

You can bond with a multicultural mix of furred and feathered brethren at this **zoo** (off Map p82; ☎ 3204 6566; Alma Rd, Dakabin; adult/child/family \$28/19/75; ☎ 9am-5pm, last entry 4pm), 28km north of the city centre. Inhabiting 8 hectares of subtropical gardens is a large collection of native birds and mammals, including koalas, kangaroos, emus and dingoes. Among the impressive representation of beautiful exotics are Malaysian sun bears, tamarin and squirrel monkeys and leopards. You can touch many of the animals, and feeding times are all between 11am and 2.30pm.

To get here via public transport catch the Zoo Train (on the Caboolture line), which leaves from Roma St Transit Centre daily at 9am (\$4.60, 45 minutes) and connects with the free zoo bus at Dakabin station.

DAISY HILL KOALA CENTRE

Located about 25km southwest of the city, this **centre** (off Map p82; ☎ 3299 1032; Daisy Hill Rd, Daisy Hill Forest Reserve; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm) has informative displays and a number of fat and happy-looking koalas, but it's no zoo. The surrounding area is an important koala habitat and several bodies have banded together to establish the centre as a coordinated conservation zone, which is essentially an amalgamation of national-park bushland, state forests and reserves. The centre is designed to acquaint visitors with koalas on a much

more comprehensive level than just a cuddle and photo encounter. Once you've delved into their world you can head out into the reserve and spot them in the wild. There are also lovely picnic and bushwalking spots, plus plenty of opportunities to see bird life and other furry natives.

ACTIVITIES

Brisbane's climate and geography are perfect for outdoor activities and the city's relatively flat incline and numerous parks and gardens enable you to walk, cycle, skate, swim and scale walls to your heart's content.

Cycling

Brisbane has some 500km of cycleways, all of which are detailed in the *Brisbane Bicycle Experience Guide* booklet, available from visitors centres. The most scenic routes follow the Brisbane River and range from 5km to 20km. A good starter takes you from the City Botanic Gardens, across the Goodwill Bridge and out to the University of Queensland. It's about 7km one way and you can stop for a beer at the Regatta pub in Toowong.

Bicycles are allowed on Citytrains, except on weekdays during peak hours. You can also take bikes on CityCats and ferries for free, but cycling in malls is a no-no.

Brisbane bike rentals:

Riders (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3846 6200; Shop 9, Little Stanley St, South Bank; per hr/day \$12/30; 🕒 8am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun)

Valet Cycle Hire (☎ 0408 003 198; www.valetcyclehire.com; per half-day/day \$35/45). Bikes delivered to your door. Cheaper if you hire from their mobile outlet in the Botanic Gardens, Albert St entrance (one hour \$15, then \$5 per hour to a daily maximum of \$35; two days \$50). Discounts for kids. Baby seats available.

In-Line Skating

You can also traverse all those cycleways on two legs. **Skatebiz** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3220 0157; 101 Albert St; per 2/24hr \$13/20; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 9pm Fri, to 4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) rents out in-line skates and the necessary safety equipment. Some of the best skating areas are the South Bank Parklands, the City Botanic Gardens and the bike paths by the Brisbane River.

Rock Climbing

Rock climbing is a very popular pastime in Brisbane, and you can do the Spiderman dance in spectacular fashion at the **cliffs**

rock-climbing area (Map pp94-5), on the southern banks of the Brisbane River at Kangaroo Point. These pink volcanic cliffs are allegedly 200 million years old and, regardless of your level of expertise, joining the other scrambling figures is good (and exhilarating!) fun. The cliffs are floodlit until midnight or later. Several operators offer climbing and abseiling instruction here:

K2 Extreme (☎ 3257 3310; www.k2extreme.com.au; per person \$30) Sunday morning sessions including safety procedures and a climb.

Torre Mountain Craft (☎ 3891 5277; climbing \$25) This rock-climbing club meets on Wednesday night; just make your way to the base of the cliffs.

Worth Wild Rock Climbing (☎ 1800 68 9453; www.worthwild.com.au)

You can also climb indoors at **Urban Climb** (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 2544; www.urbanclimb.com.au; 2/220 Montague Rd, West End; 🕒 noon-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun), or **Rocksports** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3216 0462; 224 Barry Pde, Fortitude Valley; 🕒 10am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun). Casual climbs cost around \$18.

Swimming

Aside from the artificial lagoon at the South Bank Parklands (p80), Brisbane has plenty of more conventional pools. Choices include:

Centenary Aquatic Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 7665; 400 Gregory Tce, Spring Hill; adult/child \$4.60/3.60; 🕒 5.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 6am-6pm Sat & Sun) This is the best pool in town, with an Olympic-sized lap pool, a kids pool and a diving pool with a high tower.

Chermside Leisure Centre (off Map p82; ☎ 3359 6134; 375 Hamilton Rd, Chermside; adult/child/family \$10/8/28; 🕒 10am-5pm) Water park with slides and tube rides. Great for families. Indoor swimming pool also open daily.

Spring Hill Baths (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 7881; 14 Torrington St, Spring Hill; 🕒 6.30am-8pm Mon-Thu, to 7pm Fri, 8am-5pm Sat, 9am-5pm Sun, closed May-mid Aug) These old-fashioned baths are among the oldest in the southern hemisphere.

Skydiving & Ballooning

The **Brisbane Skydiving Centre** (☎ 5464 6111; www.brisbaneskydive.com.au) picks up from the CBD and offers tandem skydives over Brisbane, including a 30-minute scenic flight (from \$500). It also operates tandem jumps further away from the city (from \$300). **Ripcord Skydivers** (☎ 3399 3552; www.ripcord-skydivers.com.au) does the same.

Fly Me to the Moon (☎ 3423 0400; www.flymeto-themoon.com.au) offers ballooning trips over Brisbane costing \$300 per person on weekdays and \$350 on weekends.

Golf

The most central public course is the **Victoria Park Golf Course** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3252 9891; Herston Rd, Herston), immediately north of Spring Hill; 18 holes costs \$23 during the week and \$27.50 on weekends. Club hire is another \$28 for a full set or \$16 for a half set.

Other courses are the **St Lucia Golf Links** (Map p82; ☎ 3403 2556; cnr Carawa St & Indooroopilly Rd, St Lucia) and the **Indooroopilly Golf Club** (Map p82; ☎ 3721 2173; Meiers Rd, Indooroopilly), both about 8km south of the city centre.

WALKING TOUR

With its downtown parks, riverside cycle paths, historic buildings and gentle landscape, Brisbane is a great place to explore on foot. The city council produces the free *Experience Guide*, which suggests good itineraries. Alternatively, the following walk covers about 5km and takes anything from a couple of hours to a full day.

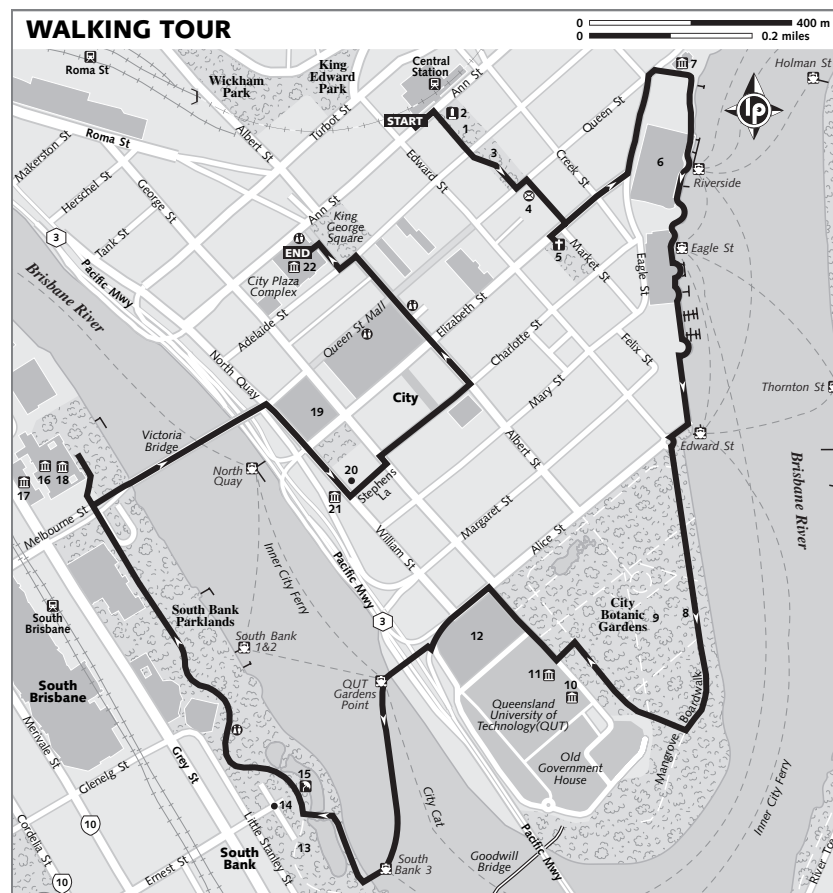
WALK FACTS

Start Central Station

Finish City Hall

Distance 5km

Time two hours to one day



Starting at Central Station, head due south, cross the road and descend the steps into **Anzac Sq (1)**, where locals, city workers and ibises mill about the grassy patches and shady trees. At the northwestern end of the park the **Shrine of Remembrance (2)** is a Greek Revivalist cenotaph where an eternal flame burns in remembrance of Australian soldiers who died in WWI.

Take the pedestrian bridge over the road at the southeastern corner of the square, which leads into **Post Office Sq (3)**. Heading in the same direction, cross Queen St to Brisbane's historic **GPO (4)**, which is still in use. Walk down the small alley that skirts the eastern side of the post office through to Elizabeth St. Cross the road and explore the beautiful **St Stephen's Cathedral (5)** and the adjoining St Stephen's Chapel. Built in 1850, the chapel is Brisbane's oldest church and was designed by English architect Augustus Pugin, who designed London's Houses of Parliament. The cathedral was built in 1874.

Back on Elizabeth St, head northeast onto Eagle St. Pass the **Riverside Centre (6)**; p78) and enter the gracious **Customs House (7)**; p78). From the back of the building you can access a riverfront boardwalk. Head south again and take in the city views to your right and the river views to your left.

When you get to Edward St Pier take the **Mangrove Boardwalk (8)**; p78), which cuts southwest into the **City Botanic Gardens (9)**; p78). Follow the Mangrove Boardwalk along the riverbank and then take the signposted walking track through the gardens to the campus of Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Check out the columned foyer of **Old Government House (10)**, built in 1860 and currently undergoing renovation, and pop into the **QUT Art Museum (11)**; p78).

By now you will be heading northwest. Continue past the museum and pause to take in the splendour of Queensland's regal, copper-topped **Parliament House (12)**; p77). Turn left at Parliament House and head down to the QUT Gardens Point ferry terminal. Catch a southbound ferry to South Bank 3 terminal.

Meander north through the pleasant and pretty **South Bank Parklands (13)**; p80), past **Stanley St Plaza (14)**; p80) and **Streets Beach (15)**; p80). Continue past the **Queensland Cultural Centre (16)**; p79) and be sure to pop in to the **Queensland Museum (17)**; p79) and the **Queensland Art Gallery (18)**; p79).

Once you've thoroughly explored these sights, head back towards the CBD on the Victoria Bridge, which will take you to the unmistakable Italian Renaissance **Treasury Building (19)**; p77). Turn right onto William St and you'll pass another spectacular Italian Renaissance building, the **Land Administration Building (20)**; p77). Cross William St and delve into Brisbane's history at the **Commissariat Stores Building (21)**; p77).

Just south of the stores a small alley (Stephens Lane) cuts through to George St. Turn left on George St and then immediately right onto Charlotte St. Continue along Charlotte St and then turn left onto Albert St to explore Brisbane's modern CBD.

At the top of Albert St, cross Adelaide St into King George Sq. On your left is **City Hall (22)**; p76). Wrap up your tour here by taking the lift up to the top of the bell tower and soaking up the views over the CBD.

BRISBANE FOR CHILDREN

One of the best attractions for children is the **Queensland Cultural Centre** (p79). Here the Queensland Museum runs some fantastic, hands-on programmes for little tackers during school holidays. The incorporated Sciencentre is made for inquisitive young minds and will keep them inventing, creating and discovering for hours. The Queensland Art Gallery has a Children's Art Centre in which it runs regular programmes throughout the year

Hands On Art (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3844 4589; www.handsonart.org.au; South Bank; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Fri, to 5pm Mon-Fri during school holidays) is an art workshop where kids get to unleash their inner Picasso with clay moulding, printing, painting, dancing, puppet-making and more. Bookings are essential for this one. Budding thespians can unfurl some creative vigour of another genre at dance and theatre workshops at the Brisbane Powerhouse (p104).

The **South Bank Parklands** (p80) has the safe and child-friendly Streets Beach and a scattering of jungle-gym playgrounds with rubber surfaces. There are more imaginative playgrounds in the **Roma St Parkland** (p77).

The river is a big plus. Many children will enjoy a river-boat trip, especially if it's to **Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary** (p83) where they can cuddle up to one of the lovable creatures. Similarly, a trip to **Alma Park Zoo** (p83) or the **Daisy Hill Koala Centre** (p83) will keep them engaged with local and foreign wildlife.

The **Brisbane City Council** (www.brisbane.qld.gov.au) runs Chill Out, a programme of activities for 10- to 17-year-olds during the school holidays, and **Visible Ink** (www.visible-ink.org), an ongoing programme with activities and events designed for 12- to 16-year-olds.

The free monthly booklet *Brisbane's Child* (www.brisbaneschild.com.au) has information about Brisbane for parents. Click onto the Bub Hub website (www.bubhub.com.au) for comprehensive information for new parents, including everything from clinic contacts and locations, prenatal care and activities for newborns to toddlers.

Daycare or babysitting options include **Dial an Angel** (☎ 1300 721 111; www.dialanangel.com) and **Care4Kidz** (www.careforkidz.com.au/brisbane/babysitting.htm). For more childcare listings click onto <http://directory.ourbrisbane.com/directory/categories/63.html>.

QUIRKY BRISBANE

Brisbane has many a cultural festival event on its annual calendar, but perhaps none quite as close to Australians' hearts as the **National Festival of Beers** (www.nfb.com.au; Story Bridge Hotel; per person \$25) held over three days in mid-September. Beer lovers gather to pay homage to the golden honey and are indulged with brews from around 45 Australian breweries – both macro and micro. There's also a fairly impressive entertainment line-up to enhance the mood, and the University of Beer, where you can receive invaluable tuition from the top brewers.

Many Australians mistakenly believe the Melbourne Cup is the 'race that stops a nation', but any self-respecting Brisbanite can tell you this tag really belongs to the annual **Australia Day Cockroach Races** (www.cockroachraces.com.au) held at the Story Bridge Hotel every 26 January. The heart-stopping line-up includes no fewer than 14 races plus additional competitions such as Miss Cocky and the Cocky Day Costume Competition.

If races do keep you on the edge of your seat, then you'll also be in the front row for the annual **Great Brisbane Duck Race**. No, the locals have not figured out a way to train waddling water birds to become elite athletes. This is a *rubber* duckie race, an annual event on the Brisbane Riverfestival calendar (see the boxed text, p89). You get to 'adopt a duck' for \$5 and spur it down the river (strictly a vocal affair), willing it to defeat its competitors and become

the first to cross the line. The competition is fierce – an estimated 20,000 ducks fight for the winner's crown each year. If you happen to be the lucky caretaker of the victor, you'll be rewarded for your efforts with a new car! If your duck performed at a substandard level, you get to go home knowing you helped raise invaluable funds for the Princess Alexandra Hospital Foundation, which benefits from all the proceeds.

Every Wednesday night, the **Brisbane Go Club** (<http://brisbane.go.org.au>) meets at the romanesque revival-style **Pancake Manor** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 6433; 18 Charlotte St) for several hours of tuition and competition of the Chinese board game... plus pancakes. You can go along to watch the masters in action (\$1) or even participate and give some of them a run for their money.

TOURS

There are all sorts of organised tours of Brisbane and the surrounding areas on offer – ask at any of the visitor centres for brochures and details. Most of the tour-bus companies have offices in the Roma St Transit Centre.

City Tours

The **City Sights tour** (day tickets per adult/child \$25/20) is a hop-on-hop-off shuttle bus taking in 19 of Brisbane's major landmarks. Tours depart every 45 minutes between 9am and 3.45pm from Post Office Sq on Queen St (Map pp94-5). The same ticket covers you for unlimited use of CityCat ferry services.

Ghost Tours (☎ 3344 7265; www.ghost-tours.com.au; tickets \$35-55) offers something a little different: guided tours of Brisbane's haunted heritage, murder scenes, cemeteries, haunted tunnels and the infamous Boggo Rd Gaol. Most tours are on Saturday nights and bookings are essential.

Tours and Detours (☎ 1300 363 436; www.toursanddetours.com.au; adult/child \$90/55) runs a Brisbane highlights tour, which takes in many of the city's historical buildings, sights and gardens, as well as a river cruise. The tour lasts three hours and includes hotel pick-up.

Brisbane Lights Tours (☎ 3822 6028; www.brisbanelights.com; adult/child from \$45/25) zips you around the city and beyond to Mt Coot-tha to admire Brisbane in all its glittering night-time glory. The tour covers a lot of ground including buzzing Paddington, South Bank, Fortitude Valley, various lookouts and even a river cruise past the illuminated cliffs of Kangaroo Point.

Story Bridge Adventure Climb (☎ 1300 254 627; www.storybridgeadventureclimb.com.au) gives bridge climbers 2.5 hours of exhilarating (or terrifying, depending on your vertigo quotient) views over Brisbane and beyond, to the Glass House Mountains in the north and Gold Coast hinterland to the south, from the upper reaches of the city's premier bridge.

Brewery Tours

If you're a fan of the golden nectar, you'll enjoy touring the **Castlemaine-Perkins XXXX Brewery** (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3361 7597; www.xxxx.com.au; cnr Black & Paten Sts; adult/child \$18/10; 🕒 hourly 10am-4pm Mon-Fri & 6pm Wed). Adult entry includes four ales to quench your thirst at the end of the tour, so leave the car at home. The brewery is a 20-minute walk west from the transit centre, or you can take the Citytrain to Milton station. Wear enclosed shoes.

You can also tour the **Carlton & United Brewhouse** (off Map p82; ☎ 3826 5858; cnr Mulles Rd & Pacific Hwy, Yatala; entry with/without transfer bus \$35/20; 🕒 10am, noon & 2pm Mon-Fri). Apparently this is one of the most technologically advanced breweries in the world, pumping out three million bottles of the good stuff a day. Just to see this much liquid gold in one spot is awesome enough – Homer Simpson eat your heart out – but this tour also includes free beer at the end.

River Cruises

Coasting up and down the Brisbane River is a great way to see the pretty peaks and troughs of the city. **Kookaburra River Queens** (☎ 3221 1300; www.kookaburrariverqueens.com; 2-hr lunch cruises per person \$48, 2½-hr dinner cruises per person from \$65) chug up and down the river in restored wooden paddle steamers. Note that the company is under new management, which means renovations, and possibly more upmarket (read pricier) river cruises in the future.

If you just want the sights without the fancy fuss, **River City Cruises** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 0428-278 473; www.rivercitycruises.com.au; South Bank Parklands Jetty A; adult/child/family \$25/15/60) has 1½-hour cruises with commentary, departing South Bank at 10.30am and 12.30pm (plus 2.30pm during summer).

Hinterland Tours

Moreton Bay Escapes (☎ 1300 559 355; www.moretonbayescapes.com.au; per person \$109) This company offers several walking day trips out of Brisbane and into surrounding rainforest. The Rainforest

Discovery Bushwalk includes the awesome Natural Arch, the waterfalls of Springbrook National Park and the intriguing pin-prick glow worms; Lamington Day Hike includes the ancient forests of Lamington National Park, a World Heritage-listed rainforest. There is also the option for a two-day tour spending a night in the rainforest. See also p134.

Araucaria Ecotours (☎ 5544 1283; www.learnaboutwildlife.com), 18km east of Rathdowney in the Gold Coast hinterland, offers three-day naturalist-led wilderness tours in the Mt Barney National Park area. The tour picks up in Brisbane every Wednesday morning and calls in at the Daisy Hill Koala Centre on the way down to the rainforests of the Border Ranges. The cost is \$418 per person for camping accommodation, or \$528 in a two-bed cabin. This company also operates day tours including Bushwalking in Brisbane (\$110) and Coochiemudlo Island (\$110), which both include lunch.

For information on more hinterland tours see p202 and p155.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Information on festivals and events in Brisbane can be found at visitors centres or at www.ourbrisbane.com/whatson.

Brisbane International Film Festival (www.biff.com.au) Ten days of quality films in August.

Brisbane Pride Festival (www.pridebrisbane.org.au) Brisbane's fabulously flamboyant gay and lesbian celebration, held in June.

Brisbane Riverfestival (www.riverfestival.com.au) Brisbane's major festival of the arts, with buskers, performances, music and concerts held in September. See the boxed text on opposite for more information.

Chinese New Year Always a popular event in the Valley in January/February.

'Ekka' Royal National Agricultural (RNA) Show (www.ekka.com.au) The country comes to town in early August with competitions, wood chopping and rides.

Paniyiri Festival (paniyiri@thegreekclub.com.au) Greek cultural festival with dancing, food and music. Held in late May at Musgrave Park in West End.

Queensland Music Festival (www.queenslandmusicfestival.com.au) Outstanding celebration of the world of music, held over 17 days in July in odd-numbered years.

Queensland Winter Racing Carnival (www.queenslandracing.com.au) From late April to late June there are major horse-race meetings each weekend at both Doomben and Eagle Farm Racecourses, including the Brisbane Cup in mid-May.

REVELLING IN THE RIVERFESTIVAL

Brisbane's streets become a hurly-burly of colour, flair, flavour and fireworks during the city's biggest arts event of the year – the Riverfestival. Running over 10 days, from late August to early September, the festival celebrates Brisbane's relationship with its river, highlighting the city's diverse and eclectic communities and showcasing the best it has to offer. The common thread between the performances, artistic displays, mini food festivals and cultural celebrations is that they are as intrinsic to Brisbane as its undulating river: continuously shaping and adding to the city's evolving character.

Several events are constants and highlights. The festival is opened each year with a bang – literally. Staged over the Brisbane River, with vantage points from South Bank, the city and West End, Riverfire is a massive fireworks show with dazzling visual choreography, air-force jets and a synchronised soundtrack. Also a staple is the Riversymposium, an international conference on best practice for river management, with more than 400 delegates attending to develop new approaches and methods to preserve the world's waterways. Over its 10-year lifespan it has attracted some of the world's leading scientists and experts on the topic, and been the confluence of invaluable innovation.

Other events combine indigenous culture with contemporary performance to pay homage to the river and celebrate cultural collaboration. Leading restaurants come together to engage in outstanding culinary events, such as the Seafood Festival, where you can chow down on your favourite dish from the deep, or try your hand at prawn-peeling and oyster-opening contests.

Music plays the role of a constant backdrop throughout the festival, either as an accompaniment to a main event, or an event on its own. The Riverconcert, held in the City Botanic Gardens, features live acts performing everything from jazz to hip-hop to electronic soundscapes. The city's live-music venues also fill their play list on a nightly basis.

Among the other events are live debates, dance and dramatic performances, and fun runs. Most of the events are free and family-friendly, and there's a smorgasbord of activities for the kids.

For more information click onto www.riverfestival.com.au.

Tropfest (www.tropfest.com) Nationwide short-film festival telecast live at South Bank in mid-February.

Valley Fiesta (www.valleyfiesta.com.au) Food and music festival held in Chinatown and Brunswick St Mall in mid-September.

SLEEPING

Brisbane has an excellent selection of accommodation options that will suit any budget. Most are outside the CBD, but more often than not they're within walking distance or have good public-transport connections.

The inner suburbs have their own distinct flavours. Spring Hill, just north of the CBD, is quiet and within easy striking distance of downtown and Fortitude Valley. Petrie Tce and Paddington, just west of the city centre, combine trendy restaurants and rowdy bars. Staying in the alternative neighbourhoods of Fortitude Valley and nearby New Farm places you next door to Chinatown and in the city's most concentrated nightlife scene. West End, south of the river, has a decidedly chilled-out, slightly bohemian atmosphere and some great cafés and restaurants.

North Kangaroo Point is a pretty good place to nab a motel. Although the Story Bridge and its associated highway soar above the streets, it's quiet and leafy and there are frequent ferries across to the city centre.

Budget B&B

Annie's Inn (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 8684; www.babs.com.au/annies; 405 Upper Edward St; s/d \$60/70, d with bathroom \$80; Ⓟ) In a central location within walking distance of the CBD, this modest B&B is awash with clutter, lace and frills and feels a little like a large doll's house. The owners are helpful and friendly and the whole place is spick and span.

Acacia Inner-City Inn (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3832 1663; www.acaciainn.com; 413 Upper Edward St; s/d incl breakfast \$65/75, with bathroom \$95; Ⓟ) This well-maintained B&B has small, motel-style rooms in a functional environment. The singles are fairly snug, but the doubles have more space and there's not a speck of dirt to be found. All rooms come with TVs and bar fridges. It's a great setup for the price and location.

HOSTELS

Brisbane's hostels are generally of a high standard – keep in mind that many do not accept Australian guests (see p449).

Brisbane City Backpackers (Map pp74-5; ☎ 1800 062 572; www.citybackpackers.com; 380 Upper Roma St; dm \$19-29, s \$65, d \$69-92; P ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) This place is luxury hostel-living, especially if you like your outdoor spaces – the rooftop has sun lounges and sublime river views. There's a range of different rooms and dorms that are very well kept – dorms stretch from four- to 40-bed and most people will find a space that suits them. Fiddlers Elbow is a bar on-site that has something going on most nights including live music on weekends. The barbecue is a constant and when the place is full it has a real party vibe. Free internet access (including wi-fi).

our pick Homestead (Map pp74-5; ☎ 1800 658 344, 3358 3538; 57 Annie St, New Farm; dm \$22-26, d \$69; ☑) A great old house in a top New Farm location, Homestead has four-, six- and eight-bed dorms and mixed and female-only dorms. There's a large, regularly cleaned kitchen and a cool lounge room with leather couches. Dorm 12 is a six-bed dorm with slightly newer bunks, while Room 6 is the best double with heaps of space. This backpackers would suit those looking for a quieter stay away from the more institutional options. Has wheelchair access. Courtesy bus into the city and Fortitude Valley on weekends.

Brisbane Backpackers Resort (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 9956; www.brisbanebackpackers.com.au; 110 Culture St, West End; dm \$24-28, d \$73; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) 'Resort' is not in the title of this backpackers by accident – it's a class act. Perks include TVs, en suites and private balconies in the dorms, and a tiled outdoor area around the bar, which is spacious and has a nice tropical feel. The hostel covers most bases, providing a courtesy bus, tours and meals. It's a very professionally run outfit and is close to cafes and bars in the funky West End, as well as to South Bank. The only drawback is the pokey TV room.

Tinbilly (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 446 646, 3238 5888; www.tinbilly.com; 462 George St; 13-/7-/4-bed dm \$26/28/29, tw & d \$100; ☎ ☑ ☒) This sleek hostel flaunts its youth with a modern interior, excellent facilities and clinical cleanliness. Each room has air-con, a bathroom and individual lockers, and it's wheelchair-accessible. Downstairs a happy, helpful buzz swims around the job centre, travel agency and the very popular

bar, which is one big party place – there are live bands, DJs and even an open-mic night. 24-hour access.

Bunk Backpackers (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 682 865; www.bunkbrissbane.com.au; cnr Ann & Gipps St, Fortitude Valley; dm \$26-29, s \$70, d & tw \$90; P ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) More like a snazzy hotel than a backpackers, this excellent hostel has generous dorms with bathrooms, luscious mattresses, gleaming kitchens and funky décor. It's extremely secure and the faaaabulous bar and swimming pool belong on a CD cover. It's also wheelchair friendly.

Brisbane City YHA (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3236 1004; brisbane.city@yhaql.org; 392 Upper Roma St, Petrie Tce; dm \$29, tw & d \$67-85; P ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) You can't miss the Legoland exterior of this hostel, but inside it's spacious and comfortable. The modern front exterior belies the ageing facilities in the rear; common areas are a bit hit and miss and looking a little ragged – however, refurbishments were taking place as we went to press. There are clean three- to 10-bed dorms and key-card security. There's also a great café here as well as a tour desk and provisions for travellers with disabilities. It's very popular, attracting all ages and groups.

Also recommended:

Aussie Way Hostel (Map pp74-5; ☎ /fax 3369 0711; 34 Cricket St, Petrie Tce; dm/s/d \$25/45/60; ☎ ☑ ☒) Small hostel housed in a picturesque, two-storey timber Queenslander. Feels more like a guesthouse than a hostel. Great outdoors area.

Banana Benders Backpackers (Map pp74-5; ☎ 1800 241 157, 3367 1157; www.bananabenders.com; 118 Petrie Tce, Petrie Tce; dm \$25, tw & d \$60; ☑) Friendly, down-to-earth backpackers. Great decking is the real pull of this place, with top city views. The friendly owners can also help you find work.

Palace Backpackers (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 676 340, 3211 2433; www.palacebackpackers.com.au; cnr Ann & Edward Sts; dm/s/d \$25/40/65; ☎ ☑ ☒) Colossal backpacker institution in an ageing, multistorey labyrinth.

Palace Embassy (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3002 5777; cnr Elizabeth & Edward Sts) Another city branch of the Palace Backpackers, Palace Embassy has cable TV and a large screen for films, a sun deck and city views.

CAMPING

Most of the camping options are a long way from the centre, so any money you save on accommodation may quickly be eaten up by public transport. All rates are for two people.

Newmarket Gardens Caravan Park (Map p82; ☎ 3356 1458; www.newmarketgardens.com.au; 199 Ashgrove Ave, Ashgrove; powered/unpowered sites \$30/27,

caravans \$47, cabins \$80-100; P ☎ ☑ ☒) This clean site is just 4km north of the city centre, and is connected to town by several bus routes and the Citytrain (Newmarket station). There aren't too many trees, but the bathrooms are spotless and there are good laundries and barbecues on site. The best tent-camping sites are around site 193 and 194, where there are shady spots in the bottom corner of the park. Book in advance for cabins.

Other recommendations:

Brisbane Caravan Village (off Map p82; ☎ 1800 060797, 3263 4040; www.caravanvillage.com.au; 763 Zillmere Rd, Aspley; sites \$25-50, cabins \$95-110; P ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) A tidy park with excellent facilities.

Midrange

Most midrange hotels cater predominantly to corporate clients and usually have lots of empty beds on weekends (when they offer good deals).

HOTELS & MOTELS

Spring Hill Terraces (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3854 1048; www.springhillterraces.com; 260 Water St, Spring Hill; budget/std r \$75/100, studio/terrace unit \$120/145; ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓) Good old-fashioned service and a range of accommodation is provided at this place, just tucked away off busy Brunswick Street. It offers motel-style rooms and units, all set in a collage of greenery and a tropical atrium garden very close to the Valley. The terrace units (miniature townhouses) are divine, featuring balconies and leafy courtyards.

Queensland Motel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3391 1061; 777 Main St, Kangaroo Point; r \$80-100; ☎ ☑ ☒) A lot better than the shabby areas near reception would suggest, rooms here are large, brightly coloured, and immaculately kept. Try to get a room on the top floor where you'll be greeted by rustling palm trees as you enjoy a coffee on your balcony in the morning.

Paramount Motel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3393 1444; www.paramountmotel.com.au; 649 Main St, Kangaroo Point; s/d/f \$80/95/115; P ☎ ☑ ☒) This clean and comfy complex has terrifically cheerful and impeccably clean rooms. Mod cons and extras include TVs and fully equipped kitchens, which make them terrific value. There's also a barbecue by the pool and the staff are friendly and helpful. Ignore the 'No Vacancy' sign out the front and check availability with reception.

City Palms Motel (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3252 1338; www.citypalmsmotel.com; 55 Brunswick St; standard/deluxe r \$90/100; ☎) Fringed by palm trees on busy Brunswick

Street, this little motel is excellent value with cool, dark rooms that include kitchenettes. It's a great location if you want to be close to the Valley. Deluxe rooms are bigger and have queen-size beds. When booking, request a room towards the back of the motel – these get less traffic noise. If you book over the internet you'll likely get a discount on rates above.

our pick Allender Apartments (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3358 5832; www.allenderapartments.com.au; 3 Moreton St, New Farm; r \$100-155; ☎) The yellow-brick façade may not grab you, but Allender's studios and one- and two-bedroom apartments are tasteful and immaculate. The cool, shaded interiors of the heritage and deluxe apartments are a fusion of funky décor and homely amenities, and there's plenty of room to spread out. Allender also owns more contemporary apartments, which exhibit a minimalist, spacious bent and carry a touch of class, on nearby Villiers St.

Kangaroo Point Apartments (Map pp74-5; ☎ 1800 676 855, 3391 6855; www.kangarooapartments.com.au; 819 Main St, Kangaroo Point; apt per night/week from \$100/600; P ☎ ☑ ☒) These contemporary serviced apartments have very obvious pluses and minuses. On the plus side you are a stone's throw from the Gabba for cricket and footy games; there are two swimming pools; and flats are kitted out with modern décor and furniture. On the down side it's a very busy part of town located on a major arterial route, and it's a large complex – forget about a sense of intimacy or tranquillity. Indulge in a sleek 4½-star apartment with larger balconies, and more space generally – they are well worth the extra dollars. Good disabled access.

Explorers Inn (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 623 288, 3211 3488; stay@explorers.com.au; 63 Turbot St; r from \$110, superior or family \$150; P ☎ ☑ ☒) A modern hotel with very friendly management and a supreme city centre location, prices do vary and it's much more expensive if booked at the last minute. (A superior room can be \$250). Standard rooms are pretty boxy and the best room in the house is number 316 – a superior which has heaps more space, a giant bathroom and views out the front.

Il Mondo (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3392 0111; www.ilmondo.com.au; 25 Rotherham St, Kangaroo Point; r \$115-150, apt \$150-350; P ☎ ☑ ☒) This postmodern boutique hotel has contemporary three- and four-star rooms that are reminiscent of an Ikea showroom. There's plenty of block colours, minimalist design and space, and the bathrooms

are quite blissful. The cheaper options are standard hotel rooms while the more expensive are self-contained apartments. Towering over the Story Bridge, the location is excellent and a quick ferry ride will get you over to the Eagle St Pier or Edward St in the CBD.

Dahlr Court Apartments (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3830 3400; www.dahlrcourt.com.au; 45 Phillips St, Spring Hill; r per night/week \$125/805, townhouses per night/week \$140/910; (P) (2) (3)) Tucked into a quiet, leafy pocket of Spring Hill, this boutique complex offers outstanding value. The sizable apartments are fully self-contained with stylish bathrooms (including baths), kitchens and heritage aesthetics throughout (two with balconies – popular with smokers). The commodious townhouses are a step up in style. They come with courtyards or numerous balconies and one or two bedrooms. All are cheaper if booked over the internet.

Royal on the Park (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 773 337, 3221 3411; www.royalonthepark.com.au; cnr Alice & Albert Sts; r \$130-300; (P) (2) (3)) With wonderful views of the City Botanic Gardens, this hotel has attractive rooms with stylish furnishings, a spa, a gym and two restaurants. It's very popular with business travellers due to the excellent facilities and accommodating staff, so the cheaper rates are for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

Inchcolm Hotel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3226 8888; www.inchcolhotel.com.au; 73 Wickham Tce; r \$160-250; (P) (2) (3)) This small and personable hotel is inside a converted block of medical offices. Much of the heritage structure and charm of its former life remains, but the rooms have been renovated extensively. Those in the newer wing tend to have more space and more light courtesy of huge windows, while the rooms in the older wing have more character. The best deluxe room is 112 and the best executive rooms are 101 and 102. All come with kitchenettes and cable TV. Check the website for deals.

Abbey Apartments (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3236 0600; www.abbeyhotel.com.au; 160 Roma St; 1-bed apt nightly/weekly \$200/140; (P) (2) (3) (4)) Consisting of older, self-catering apartments that have been tastefully and extensively refurbished to give them a very contemporary feel, these are great value in the CBD. One-bed apartments come with hotplates (no stove), spacious bedrooms, washing machines and dryers and comfy, sink-in-and-smile lounge suites. Note that they'll probably do a deal on last-minute

bookings. Opposite the transit centre, so very handy for coming and going.

Also recommended:

Astor Metropool (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3144 4000; www.astorhotel.com.au; 193 Wickham Tce; r \$90-170; (P) (2) (3)) Good range of rooms – check into a Tower room for great views and 4½-star facilities.

Metropolitan Motor Inn (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 6000; www.metropolitanmotorinn.com; 106 Leichhardt St, Spring Hill; r \$110-170; (P) (2) (3)) Business hotel dressed in soft and friendly '80s décor. Roomy balconies the best feature. Check internet for specials.

Soho Motel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 7722; www.sohobrisbane.com.au; 333 Wickham Tce; r \$112-136, with breakfast \$130-154; (P) (2) (3)) Smart, boxy, compact rooms; nice little balconies.

B&B'S & GUESTHOUSES

Fern Cottage (Map p82; ☎ 3511 6685; www.fern.cottage.net; 89 Fernberg Rd, Paddington; s/d \$115/140; (2) (3)) Fern Cottage is a beautifully renovated Queenslander with a splash of Mediterranean ambience. The rooms are utterly cushy and there's a lush garden retreat out the back with a shady balcony. Rooms have a cottage appeal and the burgundy room is the pick of the bunch: it's upstairs, spacious and has a great balcony. Nothing is too much trouble for the friendly hosts, who also have self-catering apartments available close by.

our pick One Thornbury House (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3839 5334; www.onehornbury.com; 1 Thornbury St, Spring Hill; d \$140-170) Behind a trellised frontage lies this beautifully maintained, two-storey Queenslander, built in 1886. Effortlessly dashing and with a hint of debonair, this is a classy guesthouse. There are four rooms, three of which are en suite. All are beautifully furnished in warm contemporary decor, which contrasts vividly against rendered-brick and weatherboard walls. Pick of the rooms is room 1, with a king-size bed, which is more like a boutique hotel room, and the bathroom is all opulence: a speck of dirt would feel lonely in here. Other bonuses include the lovely back courtyard designed for hours of quiet contemplation.

Also recommended:

Ridge Haven B&B (Map p82; ☎ 3391 7702; http://uqconnect.net/ridgehaven; 374 Annerley Rd, Annerley; s \$120-140, d \$130-150; (P) (2)) Historic Victorian home with atmospheric rooms.

Willahra House (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3254 3485; willahrahouse@mhp.com.au; 268 Harcourt St, New Farm; s \$110-120, d \$125-140; (P) (2)) Beautiful homestead-style house with plush rooms.

Top End

Quay West Suites Brisbane (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 672 726, 3853 6000; reservations@qwsb.mirvac.com.au; 132 Alice St; 1-2-bedroom ste \$200/450; (P) (2) (3)) This sophisticated hotel has opulent self-contained units with modern kitchens, fully equipped laundries, numerous TVs and stereos, and spectacular views. The refined interiors are worth the price tag and the staff are utterly gracious. Note that renovations were ongoing at the time of research.

our pick Conrad Treasury (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3306 8888; www.conradtreasury.com.au; 130 William St; r from \$215; (P) (2) (3)) Brisbane's classiest hotel is in the beautifully preserved former Land Administration Building. Every room is unique and awash with heritage features, polished wood, elegant furnishings and marble. It has a refined, relaxed ambience with helpful, laid-back but attentive staff. If you go for a standard room, nab one on the 4th floor – they're slightly smaller but have brilliant balconies overlooking the city and river. Room 405 is probably the best. A deluxe room costs about \$55 more and gives more space, with some having terrific river-facing balconies. Package deals are available such as the Romantic Interlude, which includes limo transfer, a bottle of bubbly and late checkout.

Stamford Plaza Brisbane (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 1999; sales@spb.stamford.com.au; cnr Edward & Margaret Sts; r from \$220; (P) (2) (3) (4)) At the southern end of the city, the Stamford has a historic façade in front of a modern tower. The indulgent rooms have antique touches, large beds and plenty of atmosphere. On site is a gym, an art gallery, a hair-and-beauty salon, a bar and several restaurants. There are often good package-deals up for grabs.

EATING

Brisbane's CBD has a number of fine eating options, but there is also an extensive array of culinary offerings outside the city centre.

In the Valley you'll find inexpensive cafés and a smorgasbord of Asian flavours on offer, thanks to Chinatown. Nearby, stylish New Farm is becoming *the* place to eat out in Brisbane with a large selection of multicultural eateries, including some very fine restaurants. West End is a distinctly cosmopolitan corner, with trendy cafés and eclectic cuisine. In every pocket of town, eateries take advantage of Brisbane's perfect winter climate with open-air courtyards or tables out on the street.

City Centre

RESTAURANTS

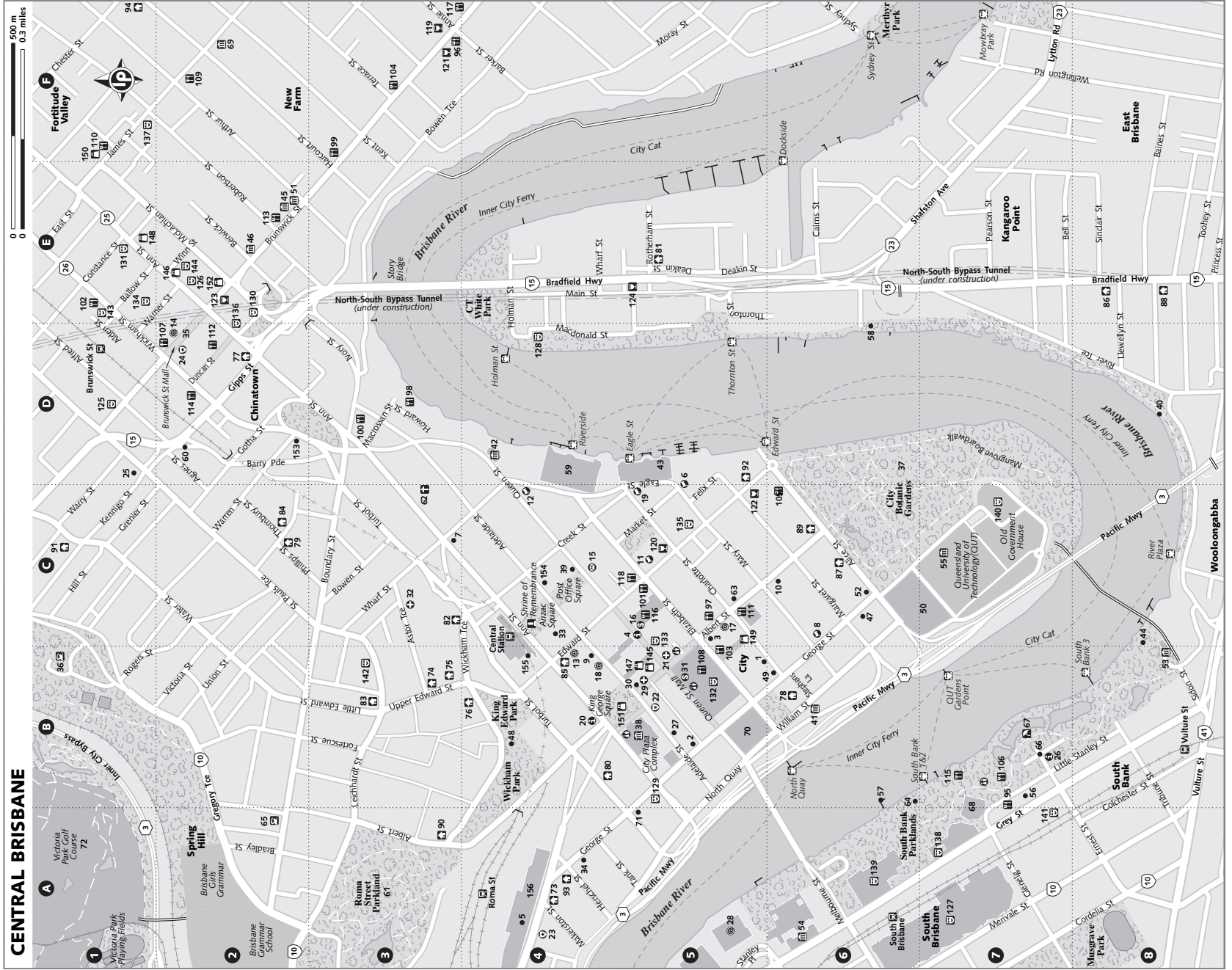
Govinda's (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3210 0255; Upstairs, 99 Elizabeth St; Sun feast \$7.50; (2) 11am-3pm & 4.30-7pm Mon-Thu, 11am-8.30pm Fri, 11am-2.30pm Sat) This Hare Krishna eatery is perfect if you like a little enlightenment with your lentils. You can still enjoy the vegetarian curries, snacks, salads, quiches and lasagnes (all you can eat \$10) without the philosophy though, and the divine smells and tranquil interior are inviting to all.

Embassy Hotel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 7616; 188 Edward St; mains \$13-17; (2) lunch & dinner) With suave red tones, cubed seating and polished wood, this groovy hotel dishes out some excellent pub nosh (light meals are \$12) and is popular with city folk and travellers alike. Flash-fried calamari comes with a lime and chilli dipping sauce, or tuck into a char-grilled lamb rump with seasonal vegies and drizzled balsamic jus.

Brewhouse (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3003 0098; 142 Albert St; dinner mains \$20-30; (2) lunch & dinner) Set in a cavernous old warehouse upstairs off the street, the Brewhouse is a microbrewery specialising in quality German beers. The giant room is softened by all the wood and mood lighting, although it's a pity this is interrupted by the TV screens – it also promotes itself as a sports bar. Nevertheless, wood-hewn benches, leather couches, large booths and stools around kegs make it an atmospheric place for a pint and some pub grub. There are German offerings such as a gut-busting bratwurst hotdog and good-value platters. Lunch mains are \$16.

our pick Cha Cha Char (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3211 9944; Shop 5, Eagle St Pier; mains \$30-40; (2) lunch Mon-Fri, dinner daily) Wallowing in awards, many consider this Brisbane's best restaurant. And although you can tuck into fish, veal or duck dishes, this is primarily a steak restaurant – and a supremely good one at that. The elegant semi-circular dining room is aesthetically pleasing and tables are intelligently positioned to take advantage of the floor-to-ceiling windows. It's very classy without being pretentious, as demonstrated by the diverse clientele.

E'cco (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 8344; 100 Boundary St; mains \$38; (2) lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) One of the finest restaurants in the state, award-winning E'cco is a must for any culinary aficionado. Masterpieces on the menu include Margaret River lamb rump, with zucchini, eggplant, crisp sage and chickpeas. The interior is suitably



CENTRAL BRISBANE

INFORMATION	Travel Clinic.....30 B5	Queensland Museum.....54 A6
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Archives Fine Books.....1 B5	Travellers' Medical & Vaccination	Riders.....56 B7
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BCC Customer Services Centre.....2 B5	World Wide Maps & Guides.....33 C4	Riverlife Adventure Centre.....58 D6
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Citizenship.....7 C3	City Hall.....38 B5	Spring Hill Baths.....65 A2
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STA Travel.....27 B5	Queensland Maritime	Palace Embassy.....(see 101)
State Library of Queensland.....28 A5	Museum.....53 B8	Paramount Motel.....86 E8
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swish and you'll need to book well in advance. Starters cost \$22.

Il (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3210 0600; cnr Edward & Alice Sts; mains \$40-45; 🍴 lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) This classy restaurant is agreeable without making too much of a statement – that mission is saved for the food. Dishes including fillet of Black Angus beef, bubble and squeak, king brown mushrooms and red-wine jus, or seared ocean trout with Vietnamese grilled eggplant, steamed bok choy and ginger lime sauce attract business crowds and refined foodies.

CAFÉS

our pick Java Coast Cafe (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3211 3040; 340 George St; mains \$6-10; 🍴 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) Fancy recapturing your zen while lunching under a canopy of trees in the middle of the CBD? Then have we got the place for you! Tables in the rear courtyard feel a mile away from the busy streets outside at this special city nook, and the tranquillity is accompanied by some quality tucker. Goodies include giant muffins,

bagels, *paninis* and quiche. There are also 20 different varieties of tea and they know how to brew a decent coffee.

Bubbles and Beans (Map pp94-5; ☎ 332 0322; Admiralty Towers, 35 Howard St; mains \$16-23; 🍴 10am-3pm Tue-Thu, 5.30-9pm Wed-Thu, 10am-10pm Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 9am-4pm Sun) Ignore the fact that it's beneath a high-rise – river views of the Story Bridge make this café special. Shielded by the glass tower above it, Bubbles and Beans sits in a sheltered pocket right on the Brisbane River. There's plenty of variety on the menu including Thai chilli prawns served on a bed of Asian greens with jasmine rice.

Verve Cafe & Bar (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 5691; 109 Edward St; mains \$17; 🍴 lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) This groovy subterranean venue is a bar-café-restaurant fusion with muted tunes and tones, and excellent service with a real buzz during the day. The menu includes a spread of imaginative café fare with plenty of good salads and pastas, but the portions are restaurant size. Try the smoked salmon and asparagus risotto with lemon and fresh thyme. The crowd is arty and relaxed.

Quay West Suites Brisbane.....87 C6	Wang Dynasty.....115 B7	South Bank Cinema.....141 A7
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Ahmet's.....95 B7	Anise.....96 F3	Brewhouse.....97 C5	Bubbles and Beans.....98 D3	BurgerUrge.....99 F3	Cafe San Marco.....(see 115)	Cha Cha Char.....(see 43)	Chang Thai Restaurant.....(see 104)	E'cco.....100 D3	Embassy Hotel.....101 C5	Garuva Hidden Tranquillity Restaurant & Bar.....102 E1	Govinda's.....103 B5	Himalayan Cafe.....104 F3	Il.....105 C6	James St Market.....(see 150)	Java Coast Cafe.....(see 129)	Kapsali.....106 B7	McWhirter's Marketplace.....107 D2	Myer Centre Food Court.....108 B5	Purple Olive.....109 F2	Spoon Deli & Cafe.....110 F1	Spoon Espresso Deli.....111 C5	Thai Wi-Rat.....112 D2	Tibetan Kitchen.....113 E2	Verve Cafe & Bar.....(see 135)	Vietnamese Restaurant.....114 D2	Wang Dynasty.....115 B7	Wintergarden Centre Food Court.....116 C5	Wok On Inn.....117 F3	Woolworths.....118 C5
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ENTERTAINMENT

Arena.....125 D1	Beat MegaClub.....126 E2	Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.....127 A7	Brisbane Jazz Club.....128 D4	Dendy Cinema.....129 B5	Family.....130 E2	Fringe Bar.....131 E1	Greater Union.....132 B5	Hoyts Regent Theatre.....133 C5	Mass.....134 E1	Metro Arts Centre.....135 C5	Monastery.....136 D2	Planet Centre.....137 F1	Planet.....(see 134)	Queensland Conservatorium.....138 A7	Queensland Performing Arts Centre.....139 A6	QUT Gardens Theatre.....140 C7	Contemporary Craft & Art Market.....151 B5	Maiocchi.....152 E2	RM Williams.....(see 116)	South Bank Lifestyle Markets.....(see 26)
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QUICK EATS

Spoon Espresso Deli (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3012 7322; cnr Albert & Charlotte Sts; breakfast \$4-7, lunch \$8; 🍴 7am-5pm Mon & Tue, to 6pm Wed-Fri, 8am-3pm Sat, 8am-2pm Sun) This wee nook has all sorts of daytime yummys including Moroccan couscous salad and gourmet variations on the humble sandwich, such as the delightful BLAT – a BLT with avocado. There's a mighty vegetarian lasagne, salmon fishcakes and freshly squeezed juices too. Seating spills out of full-length windows and onto the pavement outside.

There are food courts in the major shopping malls offering multicultural quick eats. The best are between Queen and Elizabeth Sts on the ground floor of the Wintergarden Centre (Map pp94-5) and on Level E (the ground floor) of the Myer Centre (Map pp94-5). Both places have hugely popular sushi bars and kiosks selling noodles, curries and kebabs, as well as more familiar Aussie standards such as fish and chips, roast meats and gourmet sandwiches. You can eat well for less than \$12 in any of these places and the malls are open seven days.

Fortitude Valley

The Valley is the traditional entertainment area of Brisbane, however consider venturing further afield than Brunswick St mall, which can hold an air of seediness in the evening (especially on weekends), and its cuisine of choice is run-of-the-mill pizza and pasta dishes. Far better is nearby Chinatown with its fusion of flavours and exotic spices.

RESTAURANTS

Vietnamese Restaurant (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3252 4112; 194 Wickham St; mains \$12-15; 🍴 lunch & dinner) This authentic Vietnamese restaurant serves exquisite food in no-nonsense surrounds. Dishes come in every carnivorous, seafood and vegetarian version imaginable, but the real delights are to be found on the 'Authentic Menu'. The shredded beef in spinach rolls are divine, as is any dish containing the word 'sizzling'.

Garuva Hidden Tranquillity Restaurant & Bar (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3216 0124; 324 Wickham St; mains \$19; 🍴 dinner) This is no restaurant, it's a dining experience! Garuva's rainforested foyer leads

to tables with cushioned seating concealed by walls of fluttering white silk. The menu shows diverse influences including Asian and southern European. All dishes are entree size so it's like eating tapas, and there's a great vegetarian selection including Garuva legumes and tempura vegetables. There's a very Arabian Nights feel to dining, along with dim lighting, smooth soundtracks and lulled voices, which create a debauched air. Fantastic! Hunt out the very cool cocktail bar lurking in the dark recesses.

Purple Olive (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3254 0097; 79 James St; mains \$20-30; ☎ lunch Fri-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun) With a Mediterranean feel and a diverse continental menu this place fuses the best of southern European cooking with local produce. Dishes such as char-grilled baby octopus in sweet Hungarian smoked paprika or Moreton Bay bug fettuccine work a treat. The service is excellent – if they were any friendlier you'd take them home.

III (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3852 3133; Emporium Centre, Wickham Street; mains \$32; ☎ dinner) One of the Valley's best – a classy, modern Australian bistro that produces exceptional food. The carnivore menu has steaks ruling the roost, however a fish of the day and dishes like lambs brains add variety, not to mention a little weirdness, to the menu. The dining room is functional and looks like something out of a Meccano set, but floor-to-ceiling French windows give a light and airy dining experience.

Also recommended:

Tibetan Kitchen (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 5906; 454 Brunswick St; dishes \$9-18; ☎ dinner) Tasty Tibetan fare in appropriate surrounds.

Thai Wi-Rat (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3257 0884; Beirne Bldg, Chinatown Mall; dishes \$10-14; ☎ 10am-9pm) This hole-in-the-wall joint cooks up good Thai and Laotian takeaway, including *Pla Dook Yang* (grilled whole catfish).

Wagamama (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3257 3855; Emporium Centre, 1000 Ann St; mains \$14-18; ☎ lunch & dinner) Classy noodle restaurant with communal tables that is perpetually busy for its quality, well-priced food.

CAFÉS

Our pick Spoon Deli & Café (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3257 1750; 22 James St; breakfast \$10-15, mains \$14-21; ☎ 5.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun) Inside James St market, this upmarket deli serves deliciously rich pasta, salads, soup and colossal *paninis* and focaccias. The fresh juices are a liquid meal unto themselves. Diners munch their goodies amid the deli produce at oversized square

BRISBANE'S TOP FIVE BREKKIE SPOTS

- **Three Monkeys Coffee House** (p100) The food is almost as good as the décor and they have a great range of tea: if you can't relax here we'd suggest therapy.
- **Sol Breads** (p100) Eggs any way you want 'em. Vegetarians will love this place and the sourdough bread is made on site.
- **Liquid Delish** (opposite) Fresh juices, steaming mugs of coffee and a Mediterranean feel.
- **Java Coast Cafe** (p96) Munch on a giant muffin under a canopy of trees in the city centre. Brews a great cup of coffee.
- **Bubbles and Beans** (p96) Oh for views like this all the time. Don't forget to eat!

tables or low benches skirting the windows, which flood the place with sunlight. You'll feel hungry as soon as you walk in.

New Farm

New Farm is one of the best areas to eat in the city and has seen an explosion of new eateries in recent years. It has a certain self-inflated feel to it, but genuine, creative, good-value options can still be found, and it has a much nicer atmosphere than parts of the Valley.

RESTAURANTS

Himalayan Cafe (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 4015; 640 Brunswick St; dishes \$10-16; ☎ dinner Tue-Sat) Amid the quality-dining summits of New Farm and set in a sea of prayer flags and colourful cushions, this unfussy restaurant serves authentic Tibetan and Nepali fare such as Sherpa chicken, momos and filling dahls. It gets rave reviews and kids are welcome.

Chang Thai Restaurant (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3254 4342; cnr Brunswick & Terrace Sts; mains \$11-15; ☎ dinner) With a large open courtyard out the front leading into an airy dining room, you almost feel like you're dining under the stars here. Importantly the Thai food is an excellent standard and the Pad Thai is particularly good, with large chunky vegetables. All the classic Thai dishes are covered and it does some mouth-watering seafood specialities.

Vue (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3358 6511; 1/83 Merthyr Rd; mains \$12-16; ☎ 7am-10pm Tue-Sat, to 6pm Sun & Mon) The outside dining curls around into the mall at this trendy New Farm eatery, where large open windows give it an airy feel. Its best feature is the reasonably priced food, which is even more reasonable from 4pm to 6pm Wednesday to Friday and 4pm to 9.30pm Tuesday and Saturday, when all pizza and pasta dishes are \$12. Try the marinated-lamb pizza with caramelised onion, olives, capsicum, rocket and spiced yoghurt. Bands on Friday night turn it into Merthyr Rd's premium entertainment venue.

Anise (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 1558; 697 Brunswick St; tapas \$15-20; ☎ 5pm-1am Mon-Wed, noon-1pm Thu-Sat) Anise is a fashionable wine bar catering for the area's upwardly mobile. It's a small place with a big rep. The menu is a work of French art, with dishes (mains \$33) such as roasted double duck with garlic potato gratin and roasted mission figs. See p101 for more information.

Our pick Arriva (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3254 1599; 84 Methyr Rd; mains \$17-22; ☎ dinner Tue-Sun) Cheap it ain't, genuine it is. Diners are always packed into this Italian place even on weeknights for the authentic articles that come from the efficient kitchen. This is pizza like Papa used to make and pasta that even Mama would approve of.

Watt (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3358 5464; Brisbane Powerhouse; mains \$34; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sun) On the lower level of the Powerhouse Arts precinct, this is riverside dining at its best. The minimalist setup along the river creates a unique dining ambience. The modern Australian food with Asian and Middle Eastern influences is delightfully presented and the fusion of flavours is a master class in cooking. Try the local barramundi with beetroot and citrus risotto, steamed asparagus and vanilla-bean butter sauce.

CAFÉS

Cafe Bouquiniste (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3254 1226; 121 Merthyr Rd; coffee \$3; ☎ breakfast, lunch Mon-Fri) Calling all caffeine-loving parents with little bubs. The front section of this little Queenslander is the place for you, with good ledges for perching on, a French flavour, books for young and old, games, and a 'your kids are welcome in here' attitude. Importantly the coffee's good too! Ideal spot for cosying up, it's more of a huge bookshelf with tables.

Our pick Liquid Delish (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3254 4900; 4/893 Brunswick St; Turkish sandwich \$7.50; ☎ 6am-3.45pm

Mon-Thu, to 3pm Fri & Sat, 7am-1pm Sun) Hunt out this star performer in New Farm. It specialises in delicious juices (\$6; a meal unto themselves), especially the frappés, Turkish-bread sandwiches (fillings are creative and fresh) and salads, all with a Mediterranean feel. You can sit out the front on benches with comfy cushions or relish the small air-conditioned dining room inside.

QUICK EATS

BurgerUrge (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3254 1655; 542 Brunswick St; dishes \$9-12; ☎ lunch Fri-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun) These have to be the city's best burgers, and even though the menu is one-dimensional, the shapes, flavours and sizes include spicy Moroccan chicken with pineapple, aubergine, zucchini, coconut cream, chutney and bean sprouts – as well as the standard beef sort. Good veggie options.

Wok on Inn (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3254 2546; 728 Brunswick St; mains \$10-12; ☎ lunch & dinner) With a lovely shaded front courtyard this industrious and popular noodle bar is the New Farm spot for some fast noodles. Choose your noodle, your cooking style (incl Mongolian) and your meat/veg combo. Regular \$7 lunch special.

South Bank

If all the cultural offerings at South Bank have given you an appetite, there are some good dining choices in the parklands.

RESTAURANTS

Cafe San Marco (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3846 4334; South Bank Parklands; mains \$16-28; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) Swimming in a blithe, balmy atmosphere, this waterfront bistro is the perfect spot for a relaxed feed in photogenic surrounds. The subdued menu offers char-grilled steaks, Asian curries, salads and tapas dishes: just the ticket for picky palates and the patter of little feet. Good for families.

Ahmet's (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3846 6699; 164 Grey St; mains \$20-24; ☎ lunch & dinner) For those looking for a bit of spice with their Turkish food, this large restaurant opposite South Bank attracts the punters who come to gawk at the seductive moves of the belly dancing. The pide here is sublime – try the Karidesli: Turkish pide stuffed with fresh prawns, rocket, garlic, basil, tomato, chilli and lemon butter glaze.

Also recommended:

Wang Dynasty (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3844 8318; South Bank Parklands; mains \$18-24; ☎ lunch & dinner) Chinese,

Thai and Vietnamese cuisine and excellent views. Entrées from \$6 to \$11.

Kapsali (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3846 1803; South Bank Parklands; mains \$20-23; ☎ lunch & dinner) Bustling taverna serving Mediterranean food. Behind Streets Beach; elevated, airy dining. Lunch specials from \$12.50.

Petrie Terrace & Paddington

RESTAURANTS

Fundies (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3368 1855; 219 Given Tce; mains \$8.50-10.50; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Sat, 8am-3pm Sun) Tired of wondering what's in your food? Want pesticide free? Combining an organic food store and café, this is the place to get your organic brekky or lunch and then stock up on your groceries. Try the curry lentil burger or organic rice balls with tomato relish.

Sultan's Kitchen (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3368 2194; 163 Given Tce, Paddington; dishes \$12-17; ☎ lunch Fri, dinner) If Indian food is your weakness, then this award winner will make you wobble. The service is impeccable and flavours from all corners of the subcontinent are represented on the menu. The nine types of naan are a meal unto themselves, and you can grab your vino from the Paddo Tavern's bottle shop down the road.

CAFÉS

Sol Breads (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3876 4800; 20 Latrobe Tce; breakfast \$8.50; ☎ 7am-4pm Mon-Sat, 7am-3pm Sun) Vegetarians will love this joint which is part of a small chain that is all about fresh, healthy eating. It even makes its own sourdough bread onsite. Breakfast can be bircher muesli, fruit salad or baked eggs with avocado, garden salad and sourdough. The whole place has some quirky spaces to perch yourself and a calming wooden interior. The small balcony out the back is perfect for settling restless bubs. Only downside is that waitstaff can be a little harried.

West End

RESTAURANTS

Our pick Jazzy Cat Cafe (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 2544; 56 Mollison St; mains \$12-23; ☎ 10am-late Wed-Fri, 8am-late Sat, 8am-3pm Sun) Set in a beautifully restored Queensland, this restaurant-cum-café is a wee warren of dining nooks, bohemian vibes and friendly staff. The menu is imaginative (all-day veggie breakfasts are popular) with lots of picky entrees such as Tiger prawns on Turkish bread with tomato salsa and garlic oil.

Kafe Meze (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 1720; cnr Boundary & Browning Sts; mains \$27; ☎ lunch & dinner) Perched between a triangle of streets in the heart of the West End, this Greek restaurant delivers fresh flavours and tastes of the Mediterranean. This is where Greek people in Brisbane go to dine out. Tapas-style is a good way to go, try ordering a mix of starters (\$9) such as grilled haloumi, marinated octopus, and mushrooms.

Mondo Organics (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 1132; 166 Hardgrave Rd; mains \$28-35; ☎ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) Blow your tastebuds, not your arteries, at this exquisite organic restaurant. In urban timber surrounds diners savour dishes such as lamb backstrap with pumpkin and olive cannelloni, pea puree and roasted garlic. Dining is a refined experience and the outstanding food will leave your stomach thanking you for weeks. Leave room for the mouth-watering cheeses.

Tukka (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 6333; 145 Boundary St; mains \$30-35; ☎ dinner daily, lunch Sun) The menu at this restaurant reads like a who's who of Australian game: Tasmanian confit possum, paperbark-roasted Cairns crocodile and seared emu fillets to name a few. It's amazing what Aussie tucker you can eat in this country and you'll find plentiful samples of it in creative combinations at Tukka. There are also veggie dishes for the timid.

Also recommended:

Kim Thanh (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 4954; 93 Hardgrave Rd; mains \$10-15; ☎ lunch & dinner) Serves excellent Chinese and Vietnamese food. Plenty of sizzling, braised and barbecue dishes.

Caravanserai (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3217 2617; 1-3 Dornoch Tce; mains \$20-25; ☎ lunch Thu-Sun, dinner Tue-Sun) With a great feel inside and out this place does delicious and slightly extravagant things with Turkish cuisine.

CAFÉS

Gourmet Swiss Deli (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 2937; 181 Boundary St; mains \$4-7; ☎ 7.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-3pm Sat) This friendly daytime spot makes a great pit stop around the West End. Fresh is the name of the game in their selection of pies, salads, sandwiches and savoury crepes. It's a good place to stock up on a picnic too with a fine selection of cold meats and cheeses.

Our pick Three Monkeys Coffee House (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3844 6045; 58 Mollison St; dishes \$7-16; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) A far departure from the profusion of minimalist cafés, this laid-back alternative is steeped in pseudo-Moroccan décor and ambience. Low lighting and an ambient back

courtyard feels like a set from Arabian Nights. The place to hunker down in the West End on a rainy afternoon. Munch away on pizzas, focaccias, *paninis* and Turkish-bread delights. The cake display will leave you drooling.

Self-Catering

There's a Coles Express on Queen St, just west of the mall, and a Woolworths (Map pp94-5) on Edward St in the city. In Fortitude Valley there's a great produce market inside **McWhirters Marketplace** (Map pp94-5; cnr Brunswick & Wickham Sts). The Asian supermarkets in Chinatown mall also have an excellent range of fresh vegies, Asian groceries and exotic fruit.

Not a potato, asparagus, pear or Lisbon lemon sits out of place at the upmarket **James St Market** (Map pp94-5; James St, Fortitude Valley). It's pricey, but the quality is excellent and there's a good seafood shop here.

DRINKING

The drinking establishments of Brisbane are generally situated around the CBD, Fortitude Valley, New Farm and West End.

Our pick Alto Bar (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3358 1063; Brisbane Powerhouse, New Farm) Bench seating on an enormous balcony overlooking the river at the back of the Brisbane Powerhouse makes Alto Brisbane's premier bar for water views and a cooling breeze on a hot night – perfect for cradling a cold beer or sipping a chilled glass of wine. This place is worth seeking out regardless of whether or not you're here for a show.

Breakfast Creek Hotel (Map p82; ☎ 3262 5988; 2 Kingsford Smith Dr; steaks \$16-34; ☎ lunch & dinner) In a great rambling building dating from 1889, this historic pub is a Brisbane institution. Built in French Renaissance-style, the best part remains the spacious, Art Deco front bar – it's nothing fancy but it reeks of authenticity. The hotel has grown to become a small precinct and also includes the inviting ultramodern post-industrial Substation No 41 bar, which delivers boutique beers and all manner of cocktails.

Story Bridge Hotel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3391 2266; 200 Main St, Kangaroo Point) This beautiful old pub beneath the bridge at Kangaroo Point is the perfect place for a pint after a long day spent sightseeing. You can mingle with the fashionable in the back bar with its floor-to-ceiling glass or hunker down in the casual beer garden. Winner of the 2007 Australian Liquor Industry Hotel of the Year award.

Lychee Lounge (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 0544; 2/94 Boundary St, West End) Sink into the lush furniture and stare up at the macabre dolls'-head chandeliers at this exotic oriental lounge-bar. Mellow beats, mood lighting and an open frontage to Boundary Street create an ideal trifecta. Specialises in cocktails.

Normanby Hotel (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3831 3353; 1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill) Opposite the train station of the same name, this rambling hotel is pure Queensland. Without doubt its best feature is the colossal, modern beer garden. It can get a real party atmosphere on weekends when the beer garden is overflowing with cold drinks and punters. The huge bar upstairs is a mish-mash of brick, Art Deco, sawdust floor and modernist bar design. Bands in the beer garden on Sunday. DJs Wednesday to Saturday.

Paddo Tavern (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3369 0044; 186 Given Tce, Paddington) The clientele is local but the décor in this huge pub is kitschy Wild West saloon bar. An odd marriage, sure, but the punters lap it up along with icy beers, footy telecasts and pool tables. Great outside area with industrial décor feel, open plan and rockin' Sunday sessions.

Cru Bar (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3252 2400; 2 James St, Fortitude Valley) On the corner of James St market, this buzzing little Valley hub has more of an up-market New Farm feel. Favoured by young and older professionals alike, its allure is in both its cracking wine list (with cellar next door) and its large, airy, open-plan design. Sit at the bar or recline on comfy seats along the open windows. It's a popular place to meet friends and start a night before more serious misadventures deeper in the Valley.

Press Club (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 4000; 339 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley; ☎ from 7pm) This stylecat cleans its whiskers, arches its back and starts purring in the evening. It serves melodic beats and a bit of class to the bar/club scene around this rather skanky end of Fortitude Valley. The underworld setting is a mixture of candlelight, stylish Goth décor, comfy couches and plenty of dark corners. DJs most nights.

Anise (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 1558; 697 Brunswick St, New Farm; ☎ closed Sun) Bring your fancy threads and palates to this trendy wine bar and restaurant (see p99) in the heart of New Farm. Patrons plant themselves on high-backed chairs along the long, narrow bar and nibble on tapas, while plunging into the extensive, excellent range of wines.

Chalk Hotel (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3896 6565; www.chalkhotel.com.au; 735 Stanley St, Woolloongabba) This South

GAY & LESBIAN BRISBANE

While Brisbane can't compete with the prolific gay and lesbian scenes in Sydney and Melbourne, what you'll find here is quality rather than quantity.

Most action, centred in Fortitude Valley, is covered by the fortnightly *Q News* (www.qnews.com.au). Queensland Pride, another gay publication, takes in the whole of the state. **Queer Radio** (www.queerradio.org), a radio show on Wednesday from 8.30pm to 10pm on FM102.1, is another source of information on the city.

Major events on the year's calendar include the Queer Film Festival held in late March, which showcases gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender films and videos, and the Brisbane Pride Festival in June (see p88). Pride attracts up to 25,000 people every year, and peaks during the parade held midfestival.

Brisbane's most popular gay and lesbian venue is the **Wickham Hotel** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 1301; cnr Wickham & Alden Sts, Fortitude Valley), a classic old Victorian pub with good dance music, drag shows and dancers. The Wickham celebrates the Sydney Mardi Gras and the Pride Festival in style and grandeur.

Other good options:

Beat MegaClub (opposite) Gay friendly.

Family (opposite) Brisbane's best nightclub.

Sportsman's Hotel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3831 2892; 130 Leichhardt St, Spring Hill) Another fantastically popular gay venue, with a different theme or show for each night of the week.

The **Gay & Lesbian Welfare Association** (GLWA; ☎ 1800 184 527; www.glwa.org.au) of Brisbane can offer information on groups and venues and also provides counselling.

Brisbane hotspot is close to the Gabba and is one of *the* places the younger crowd like to party their collective arses off on weekends. It's an impressive pub with a good setup inside over three levels, including an airy beer garden. Whether you're a sophisticated wine buff or preferential to the rough and tumble of a friendly, traditional pub, you'll probably find it in here. If you're a Brisbane Lions fan, you're on home turf.

Port Office Hotel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 0072; cnr Edward & Margaret Sts) The industrial edge of this renovated city pub is spruced up with swathes of dark wood and jungle prints. Pull up a stool or find a bench early and settle in for the evening, when a mixed crowd usually descends. In the afternoon a table by the open windows is the perfect place to watch city life tick by.

Caxton Hotel (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3369 5544; 38 Caxton St, Petrie Ice) This unpretentious but stylish pub is hugely popular on Friday and Saturday nights, when the buzz of the heaving crowd wafts out the wide-open bay windows onto the street. Mambo meets Picasso in the wall prints, and you'll need to adhere to the dress code to enjoy the fun. Expect mainstream music in the background and sports on the telly.

Two New Farm hotspots on opposing street corners are the **Alibi Room** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358

6133; 720 Brunswick St; ☎ closed Mon) and **Gertie's Bar & Lounge** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3358 5088; 699 Brunswick St; ☎ closed Mon). The Alibi Room is a quirky bar, a bit eccentric and proud of it. It bucks the fine dining and dining trend in this part of town, calling itself 'a cultural splinter in the tail end of Brisbane'. It's pretty happening most nights of the week, especially Tuesday when cheap Mexican food and sangria is on offer. Gertie's on the opposite corner is a more sophisticated affair with a clientele to match. Comfy seating, cool lighting, cocktails and, on the weekends, acoustic guitar create a relaxed and refined atmosphere. At both venues, the window seating open to the streets outside is a real attraction on warm evenings.

Also recommended:

Brewhouse (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3003 0098; 142 Albert St) The Brewhouse is a microbrewery specialising in quality German beers; see p93.

Exchange Hotel (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3229 3522; 131 Edward St) Spacious city pub popular with a big cross-section of drinking socialisers. Has received a spiffy makeover.

ENTERTAINMENT

Brisbane pulls almost of the international bands heading to Oz and the city's clubs have become nationally renowned. There's also plenty of theatre. Pick up copies of the

free entertainment papers *Time Off* (www.timeoff.com.au), *Rave* (www.ravemag.com.au) and *Scene* (www.scene magazine.com.au) from any café in the Valley.

The *Courier-Mail* also has daily arts and entertainment listings, and a comprehensive 'What's On In Town' section each Thursday.

Ticketek (☎ 13 28 49; http://premier.ticketek.com.au) is an agency that handles phone bookings for many major events, sports and performances.

To ensure you can get into Brisbane's nightspots, carry proof of age and (especially if you're male) avoid wearing tank-tops, shorts or thongs (flip-flops).

See the boxed text, p78, for more information on experiencing indigenous culture in Brisbane.

Nightclubs

Brisbane is proud of its nightclub scene – most clubs are open Thursday to Sunday nights, are adamant about ID and charge between \$7 and \$25 cover. The alternative scene is centred on the Valley, and attracts a mixed straight and gay crowd.

Family (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 5000; 8 McLachlan St, Fortitude Valley) One of Brisbane's best nightclubs, the music scene here is phenomenal. Family exhilarates dance junkies every weekend on four levels with two dance floors, four bars, four funky themed booths and a top-notch sound system. Elite DJs from home and away frequently grace the decks, including the Stafford Brothers with their predominantly 'hands in the air' house mixes, and Baby Gee, who hangs out on the fringes of the club circuit and has won many accolades for his intelligent mix of genres.

Monastery (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3257 7081; 621 Ann St, Fortitude Valley) After a sensible refurbishment giving easier access to the bar and more grooving space, Monastery really does look like a monastery inside (apart from the heaving, sweaty hordes churning up the dance floor) with its iconic, plush design and gothic lighting. Lucid soundscapes, especially electro-house from classy resident and international DJs, keep the fans coming back.

Fringe Bar (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3252 9833; cnr Ann & Constance Sts, Fortitude Valley) A wildly groovy place, the '70s décor slapped up with style lends itself to swaying punters at this Brisbane institution. Thursday night is gaining popularity amongst the younger set determined to thump

their nose at a conventional weeknight out: from 8pm to 10pm you can catch some of the city's upcoming live bands, then DJs play funky house and electro into the wee hours. If you prefer a dose of retro or top of the pops, try weekend nights.

Uber (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 6680; 100 Boundary St, West End) Brisbane's latest club, Uber is cool indeed, with a stylish décor and patrons to match. It's a bit decadent like an old-style boutique hotel, with its brushed steel and polished dark wood. The music varies but weekends are dedicated to pure main-room house. The best thing about the plush cocktail-lounge bar is the balcony perched in prime viewing position over the comings and goings in the heart of the West End.

Beat MegaClub (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 2661; 677 Ann St, Fortitude Valley) Five dance floors, six bars and hardcore techno equals the perfect place for dance junkies who like their beats hard. It's popular with the gay and lesbian crowd with regular drag performances, but Beat is welcoming to all and we've received good traveller feedback about this place.

Two places next door to each other on Warner Street, popular with the younger set, and in the heart of the Valley are: **Mass** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 3373; 25 Warner St), which is set in an old cathedral and pulls some impressive DJs spinning house and electro; and **Planet** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 2575; 27 Warner St), which has been newly renovated and has a great light and sound set up. Look for the mirror ball and red carpet out the front. It takes the music (and itself) a bit more seriously than its neighbour.

Live Music

Brisbane's love affair with live music began long before three lanky lads sang harmonic ditties and called themselves the Bee Gees. In recent years successful acts, including Katie Noonan, Kate Miller-Heidke and Pete Murray have illustrated Brisbane's musical diversity and evolution. You can get in early to see history in the making at any number of venues. Cover charges start at around \$5.

Zoo (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3854 1381; 711 Ann St, Fortitude Valley; ☎ Wed-Sat) Since 1992, Zoo has been delivering a quality alternative venue for Brisbane's music connoisseurs. The long queues here start early for a good reason: whether you're into hard rock or electronic soundscapes, Zoo has a gig for you. It's one of your best chances to hear some raw local talent.

Brisbane Jazz Club (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3391 2006; 1 Ann St, Kangaroo Point) A Brizzie institution for addicts of the swinging and soulful, this club lures jazz purists aplenty from Thursday to Sunday nights. There's usually a cover charge of \$15, and anyone who's anyone in the jazz scene plays here when they're in town.

Tongue & Groove (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 0334; 63 Hardgrave Rd, West End; ☹ closed Mon) Almost hidden in a mini shopping strip, this funky little venue in the West End hosts everything from jazz, blues, reggae and funk to dance beats from Wednesday to Sunday. All nightlife takes place in the subterranean bar. See tng.net.au to check out their upcoming gigs.

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3308 3000; Glenelg St, South Bank) When the big guns are in town they do their thang at this multifunctional entertainment complex. It's more about size and capacity than atmosphere, but you'll catch anyone from Sinead O'Connor to the Wiggles!

Arena (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3252 5690; 210 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley) Another huge industrial venue, Arena attracts lots of local and international rock acts but more for the under 30s (or for those with the same tastes). It's a big supporter of hip hop.

More live music venues:

Normanby Hotel (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3831 3353; 1 Musgrave Rd, Red Hill) Great venue for live music – Sunday goes off. Bands play Tuesday to Thursday night and Sunday night.

Satchmos (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3846 7746; 185 Boundary St, West End) Acoustic jazz, folk and rock on the weekends.

Cinemas

There are open-air movies screened over summer in the South Bank Parklands (p80) and New Farm Park (p81).

The **Dendy Cinema** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3211 3244; 346 George St) shows good art-house films.

In the Valley, **Palace Centro** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 4488; 39 James St, Fortitude Valley) also screens good art-house films and has a Greek film festival at the end of November.

South Bank Cinema (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3846 5188; cnr Grey & Ernest Sts, South Bank) is the cheapest cinema for mainstream flicks; tickets cost about a third less than at other places.

Cinemas on Queen St Mall:

Greater Union (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3027 9999; Level A, Myer Centre) Mainstream blockbusters.

Hoyts Regent Theatre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3027 9999; 107 Queen St Mall) A lovely old cinema worth visiting for the building alone.

Theatre

Brisbane is well stocked with theatre venues, most of them located at South Bank. The Queensland Cultural Centre has a dedicated **phone line** (☎ 13 62 46) that handles bookings for all the South Bank theatres. Also keep an eye out for *Centre Stage*, the events diary for the complex, available from tourist offices.

Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC; Map pp94-5; ☎ 3840 7444; www.qpac.com.au; Queensland Cultural Centre, Stanley St, South Bank) This centre consists of three venues and features concerts, plays, dance and performances of all genres. Catch anything from flamenco to *Phantom of the Opera*.

Queensland Conservatorium (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3875 6375; 16 Russell St, South Bank) South of the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, the Conservatorium showcases the talents of attending students.

Brisbane Powerhouse (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3358 8622; box office 3358 8600; www.brisbanepowerhouse.org; 119 Lamington St, New Farm) A magnificent conversion from an old powerhouse into a leading place for contemporary culture at a picturesque spot on the Brisbane River. This one-stop venue in the inner north presents an evolving schedule of theatre, dance, music and workshops.

Metro Arts Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3221 1527; www.metroarts.com.au; 109 Edward St) This progressive venue hosts community theatre, local dramatic pieces, dance and art shows. It's a good spot to head for a taste of Brisbane's creative performance talent.

QUT Gardens Theatre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3138 4455; www.gardenstheatre.qut.com; QUT, 2 George St) This university theatre plays host to touring national and international productions as well as performances from the university's dramatic, musical and dance companies.

Brisbane Arts Theatre (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3369 2344; 210 Petrie Tce, Petrie Tce) Amateur theatre performances along the lines of Shakespeare and Dickens are held here.

Sit Down Comedy Club (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3369 4466; Paddo Tavern, Given Tce, Paddington) There are a few comedy venues, the most prominent being this well-established one at the Paddo Tavern.

Sport

Like other Australians, Brisbanites are sports-mad. You can see interstate cricket matches and international test cricket at the **Gabba** (Brisbane Cricket Ground; Map pp74-5; ☎ 3008 6166; www.thegabba.org.au) in Woolloongabba, south of

Kangaroo Point. If you're new to the game, try and get along to a 20/20 match, which is cricket in its most explosive form. The cricket season runs from October to March.

During the other half of the year, rugby league is the big spectator sport. The Brisbane Broncos play home games at **Suncorp Stadium** (Map pp74-5; ☎ 3331 5000; Castlemaine St, Milton).

Once dominated by Victorian teams, the Australian Football League (AFL) has been challenged by the Brisbane Lions, who have tasted success in recent years. You can watch them kick the ball and some southern butt at a home game at the Gabba between March and September.

Australia's National Basketball League (NBL) is based on American pro basketball, and the fast-paced NBL games draw large crowds. Brisbane's team, the Brisbane Bullets, is based at the **Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3308 3000; www.bcec.com.au; cnr Merivale & Glenelg Sts, South Brisbane).

SHOPPING

As a capital city, Brisbane is well stocked with shops and boutiques selling everything from designer fashions to 'I Love Australia' fridge magnets. Around the intersection of Ann and Brunswick Sts in Fortitude Valley there are numerous trendy fashion boutiques, where budding designers sell their handmade wares. See p78 for places to purchase indigenous crafts.

Australiana

The Australian tourism marketing machine goes into overdrive in Queensland, and there are numerous emporiums in the city centre selling such treats as kangaroo and merino skins, boomerangs, 'Kangaroo Crossing' road signs, Akubra hats, 'G'day' T-shirts and machine-made didgeridus.

Australia the Gift (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3210 6198; 150 Queen St Mall) This is the biggest vendor of this kind of souvenir in the city. It carries extensive stocks of mass-produced Australiana.

Australian Geographic Queens Plaza (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3018 3513; Queen St Mall); Myer Centre (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3220 0341; Queen St Mall) Stocks everything from books and calendars on Australian flora and fauna to glow-in-the-dark dinosaurs.

Clothing

RM Williams (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3229 7724; Level 2, Wintergarden Centre, Queen St Mall) One of the best-known makers of Aussie gear, this store stocks

an excellent (and expensive) range of Akubras, boots, oilskins, moleskins, belts, jumpers and flannelite shirts.

Dogstar (<http://dogstar.com.au>) City (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 2555; Shop 13/99 Elizabeth St); Fortitude Valley (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 2555; 713 Ann St, Fortitude Valley) The Japanese-born designer of the beautiful pieces in this shop has infused more than a touch of her land of birth into their designs. Beautiful fabrics are used to make pants, skirts and ensembles that will be envied anywhere.

Blonde Venus (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3216 1735; 707 Ann St, Fortitude Valley; ☹ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun) Head here to pick up a splash of Zimmerman, Akira or Morrissey. This shop also sells cutting-edge designers on the verge of being discovered.

Maiocchi (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3852 3353; 370 Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley; ☹ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun) This is a great little store for individual pieces without the price tag of its glamorous neighbours.

For something a bit more à la mode, there are numerous Australian and international fashion boutiques in the upmarket Elizabeth Arcade (Map pp94-5), between Elizabeth and Charlotte Sts, and in the even plusher, split-level Brisbane Arcade (Map pp94-5), between the Queen St Mall and Adelaide St.

Markets

South Bank Lifestyle markets (Map pp94-5; Stanley St Plaza, South Bank; ☹ 5pm-10pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, 9am-5pm Sun) These popular markets have a great range of clothing, craft, art, handmade goods and interesting souvenirs. Over 80 stalls are set up in rows of colourful tents.

Green Flea Community Market (Map pp74-5; Davies Park, cnr Montague Rd & Jane St; ☹ 6am-2pm Sat) This cosmopolitan flea market has loads of fresh produce, herbs, flowers, organic foodstuffs, clothing and bric-a-brac. It's an apt representation of the diverse West End and a good place for breakfast, with international cuisine on offer.

Brunswick St Markets (Map pp94-5; Brunswick St, Fortitude Valley; ☹ 8am-4pm Sat & Sun) These colourful markets fill the mall in Fortitude Valley with a diverse collection of crafts, clothes, work by budding designers and, unfortunately, lots of junk.

James St Market (Map pp94-5; James St, New Farm; ☹ 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat & Sun) These up-market stalls sell fruit, veg and gourmet deli produce. The fresh seafood is worth hunting

out and this is a good place to pick up some local 'bugs'.

King George Square Contemporary Craft & Art Market (Map pp94-5; King George Sq; ☎ 8am-4pm Sun) These markets transform a pocket of the city centre into a bustling arts and crafts fair on the weekends. This is a nice spot to bring the kids.

Farmers Market (Map pp74-5; Brisbane Powerhouse, 119 Lamington St, New Farm; ☎ 7am-noon every 2nd & 4th Sat of the month) More than 100 stalls sell fresh produce, much of it organic, at this excellent and deservedly popular farmers market. Here you can buy everything from flowers to yabbies.

Every Sunday the carnival-style Riverside Centre and Eagle St Pier markets have more than 150 stalls, including glassware, weaving, leatherwork and children's activities.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Roma St Transit Centre (Map pp94-5), 500m northwest of the city centre, is the main terminus and booking point for all long-distance buses and trains, as well as Citytrain services. Airport buses and trains leave from here. During research for this guide, the Transit Centre was undergoing extensive construction work in preparation for a new busway link to George Sq.

Air

Brisbane's main airport is about 16km north-east of the city centre at Eagle Farm, and has separate international and domestic terminals almost 3km apart, linked by the **Airtrain** (☎ 3215 5000; www.airtrain.com.au; tickets \$4), which runs every 15 to 30 minutes. It's a busy international arrival and departure point with frequent flights to Asia, Europe, Pacific islands, North America, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. See p463 for details of international airlines that fly into Brisbane.

Several airlines link Brisbane to the rest of the country. **Qantas** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 13 13 13; www.qantas.com.au; 247 Adelaide St), has an extensive network, connecting Brisbane with Sydney (1½ hours), Melbourne (2½ hours), Adelaide (2½ hours), Canberra (two hours), Hobart (four hours), Perth (five hours) and Darwin (four hours).

Virgin Blue (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au) also flies between Brisbane and Australian capital cities.

Jetstar (☎ 13 15 38; www.jetstar.com.au) connects Brisbane with the same cities as Virgin Blue (except Perth) as well as Cairns.

The new kid on the block, **Tiger Airways** (☎ 9335 3033; www.tigerairways.com.au), is a Singapore-based budget carrier that will hopefully shake up the airline market in Australia and bring about better budget fares for travellers. It currently flies from Melbourne to the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast but may well have started a Brisbane service by the time you read this.

Qantas, Virgin Blue and Jetstar all fly to towns and cities within Queensland, especially the more popular coastal destinations and the Whitsunday Islands. For flight details to and from Brisbane see individual destination Getting There & Away sections throughout this book.

Macair (☎ 1300 622 247; www.macair.com.au) flies to many destinations in the Queensland outback, including Mt Isa (four hours).

See p463 for more details on flying to and from Brisbane and around Queensland.

Bus

Bus companies have booking desks on the 3rd level of the Roma St Transit Centre. **Greyhound Australia** (☎ 13 14 99; www.greyhound.com.au) is the main company on the Sydney-Brisbane run; you can go via the New England Hwy (17 hours) or the Pacific Hwy (16 hours) for \$125. **Premier Motor Service** (☎ 13 34 10; www.premierms.com.au) operates the same routes, often with slightly cheaper deals.

You can also travel between Brisbane and Melbourne (\$230, 24 to 28 hours) or Adelaide (\$300, 40 hours), although competitive airfares may enable you to fly for the same price or less.

North to Cairns, Premier Motor Service runs one direct service daily and Greyhound runs four. The approximate fares and journey times to places along the coast are as follows:

Destination	Duration	One-way fare
Cairns	29hr	\$255
Hervey Bay	5½hr	\$65
Noosa Heads	2½hr	\$30
Mackay	16½hr	\$165
Rockhampton	11½hr	\$115
Townsville	23hr	\$215

There are also daily services to the Northern Territory: it's a 48-hour trip to Darwin (\$540) via Longreach (\$140, 17 hours) and Mt Isa (\$190, 27 hours).

AIRPORT TO THE GOLD COAST & BEYOND Coachtrans (☎ 3358 9700; www.coachtrans.com.au) operates the Airporter direct services from Brisbane Airport to the Gold Coast (\$40). Services meet every major flight and will drop you anywhere on the Gold Coast.

AIRPORT TO THE SUNSHINE COAST

Sun-Air Bus Service (☎ 07-5477 0888; www.sunair.com.au) is one of several operators with direct services from Brisbane Airport to the Sunshine Coast (see p181).

Car & Motorcycle

There are five major routes, numbered from M1 to M5, into and out of the Brisbane metropolitan area. The major north-south route, the M1, connects the Pacific Hwy to the south with the Bruce Hwy to the north, but things get a bit confusing as you enter the city.

Coming from the Gold Coast, the Pacific Hwy splits into two at Eight Mile Plains. From here, the South East Freeway (M3) runs right into the centre, skirting along the riverfront on the western side of the CBD before emerging on the far side as Gympie Arterial Rd.

If you're just passing through, take the Gateway Motorway (M1) at Eight Mile Plains, which bypasses the city centre to the east and crosses the Brisbane River at the Gateway Bridge (\$3 toll). From either direction, the Eagle Farm exit on the northern side of the bridge provides a quick route to the Valley and CBD. Just north is the turn-off to Brisbane Airport. The Gateway Motorway and Gympie Arterial Rd meet in Bald Hills, just south of the Pine River, and merge to form the Bruce Hwy.

Heading inland, the Ipswich Motorway (M2) branches off the M1 south of the centre and crosses the M3 before snaking off southwest to Ipswich and the Darling Downs. For a quick route from the city, pick up Milton Rd at the northwestern tip of the CBD and follow it out to the M5, which runs south to meet the Ipswich Motorway at Wacol (Milton Rd is also the way to get to Mt Coot-tha).

HIRE

All of the major companies – **Hertz** (☎ 13 30 39), **Avis** (☎ 13 63 33), **Budget** (☎ 13 27 27), **Europcar** (☎ 13 13 90) and **Thrifty** (☎ 1300 367 227) – have offices at the Brisbane Airport terminals and throughout the city.

There are also several smaller companies in Brisbane that advertise slightly cheaper deals:

Abel Rent A Car (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 131 429, 3236 1225; www.abel.com.au; cnr Wickham & Warren Sts, Fortitude Valley)

Ace Rental Cars (Map p82; ☎ 1800 620 408, 3862 2158; www.acerentals.com.au; 35 Sandgate Rd, Albion)

East Coast Car Rentals (Map pp94-5; ☎ 1800 028 881, 3839 9111; www.eastcoastcarrentals.com.au; 76 Wickham St, Fortitude Valley)

Hawk Rent A Car (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3236 0788; www.hawkrentacar.com.au; 3rd fl, Roma St Transit Centre, Roma St)

Train

Brisbane's main station for long-distance trains is the Roma St Transit Centre. For reservations and information visit the **Queensland Rail Travel Centre** (☎ 131 617; www.qr.com.au) Central Station (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3235 1323; Ground fl, Central Station, 305 Edward St; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri); Roma St (Map pp94-5; ☎ 3235 1331; Roma St Transit Centre, Roma St; ☎ 6am-5pm Mon-Fri). You can also make reservations online or over the phone.

For details of intrastate train services to and from Brisbane, see p475.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

The easiest way to get to and from the airport is the **Airtrain** (☎ 3215 5000; www.airtrain.com.au; per adult/child \$13/6.50; ☎ 6am-7.30pm), which runs every 15 to 30 minutes between the airport and the Roma St Transit Centre and Central Station. There are also half-hourly services to the airport from Gold Coast Citytrain stops.

Coachtrans (☎ 3358 9700; www.coachtrans.com.au) runs the half-hourly Skytrans shuttle bus between the Roma St Transit Centre and the airport between 5.45am and 10pm. It costs \$12 per adult and \$8 per child for the trip from the airport to the city. A taxi into the centre from the airport will cost around \$35.

Bicycle

See p84 for information on cycling in and around Brisbane.

Car & Motorcycle

There is free two-hour parking on many streets in the CBD and in the inner suburbs, but the major thoroughfares become clearways (ie parking is prohibited) during the morning and afternoon rush hours. If you do park in the street, pay close attention to the times on the parking signs, as Brisbane's parking inspectors take no prisoners. Parking is free in the CBD during the evening.

Less risky but more expensive are the big commercial car parks dotted around the centre, which charge about \$8 per hour or \$25 per day. Weekend rates are often around \$8 per day.

Queensland's motoring association is the RACQ (p73), which provides insurance, maps and a breakdown service.

See p107 for information about car-hire companies.

Public Transport

Brisbane boasts a world-class public transport network, and information on bus, train and ferry routes and connections can be obtained from the **Trans-Info Service** (☎ 13 12 30; www.transinfo.qld.gov.au).

Bus and ferry information is also available at the Brisbane Visitor Information Centre (p73), the **bus station information centre** (Map pp94-5; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm Mon-Thu, to 8pm Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-4pm Sun) under the Queen St Mall, and the Queensland Rail Travel Centre (p107).

Fares on buses, trains and ferries operate on a zone system. There are 23 zones in total, but the city centre and most of the inner-city suburbs fall within Zone 1, which means most fares will be \$2.30/1.20 per adult/child.

If you're going to be using public transport more than once on any single day, it's worth getting a daily ticket (adult/child Zone 1 \$4.60/2.30, Zone 2 \$5.40/2.70, Zone 3 \$6.40/3.20). These allow you unlimited transport on all buses, trains and ferries and are priced according to the number of zones you'll be travelling in. You can also buy off-peak daily tickets (Zone 1 \$3.50/1.80, Zone 2 \$4.10/2.10, Zone 3 \$4.80/2.40), which allow you to do the same thing between 9am and 3.30pm, and after 7pm from Monday to Friday and all weekend. A 10-trip saver (Zone 1 \$18.40/9.20, Zone 2 \$21.60/10.80, Zone 3 \$25.60/12.80) gives you 10 trips for the price of eight.

BOAT

The blue CityCat catamarans run every 20 to 30 minutes between 5.45am and 11pm from the University of Queensland in the west to Bretts Wharf in the east, and back. Stops along the way include North Quay (for Queen St Mall), South Bank, Riverside (for the CBD) and New Farm Park. CityCats are wheelchair accessible at all stops except for West End, QUT Gardens Point, Riverside, Bulimba and Brett's Wharf.

Also useful are the Inner City Ferries, which zigzag back and forth across the river

between North Quay, near the Victoria Bridge, and Mowbray Park. Services start at about 6am from Monday to Sunday, and run until about 11pm. There are also several cross-river ferries; most useful is the Eagle St Pier to Thornton St (Kangaroo Point) service.

Like all public transport, fares are based on zones. Most stops you'll need will be city-based and therefore in Zone 1.

BUS

The Loop, a free bus that circles the city area and stops at QUT, the Queen St Mall, City Hall, Central Station and Riverside, runs every 10 minutes on weekdays between 7am and 6pm.

The main stop for local buses is in the basement of the Myer Centre. You can also pick up most of the useful buses from the colour-coded stops along Adelaide St, between George and Edward Sts.

Useful buses from the city centre include buses 195, 196, 197 and 199 to Fortitude Valley and New Farm, which leave from Adelaide St between King George Sq and Edward St.

TRAIN

The fast Citytrain network has seven lines, which run as far as Nambour, Cooroy and Gympie in the north (for the Sunshine Coast), and Nerang and Robina in the south (for the Gold Coast). Other useful routes include Rosewood (for Ipswich) and Cleveland (for the North Stradbroke Island ferry). The lines to Pinkenba, Shorncliffe and Ferny Grove are mainly for suburban commuters.

The Airtrain service (see p107) integrates with the Citytrain network in the CBD and along the Gold Coast line. All trains go through the Roma St Transit Centre and Central Station in the city, and Brunswick St Station in Fortitude Valley.

Trains run from around 4.30am, with the last train on each line leaving Central Station between 11.30pm and midnight. On Sunday the last trains run at around 10pm.

Taxi

There are usually plenty of taxis around the city centre, and there are taxi ranks at the Roma St Transit Centre and at the top end of Edward St, by the junction with Adelaide St.

You can book a taxi by telephone (\$1 booking fee). Try **Black & White** (☎ 13 10 08) or **Yellow Cab Co** (☎ 13 19 24). Most cabs have Eftpos facilities.

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