



SEE SYDNEY'S HIDDEN SIDE

The Harbour City is in fact a cosmos of mini cities that will entertain and delight you on an action-packed visit, writes **Emma Gardiner**

Desperate to travel the world but can't afford to get away? Take heart; there are little pockets of Tokyo, New York City, Shanghai and Dublin to explore in Sydney. You just need to know where to look.

FRIDAY NIGHT IN TOKYO

Check into your rock star suite at The Darling, the hotel attached to the Star City Casino, and head down to Sokyo Lounge to knock back a few sake-based cocktails. Next door, Sokyo's Japanese dining experience offers contemporary and fresh seafood-driven fare. Think scallop sashimi with delicate gold leaf, kingfish sashimi served with citrus yuzu and a fresh violet garnish, as well as highly detailed desserts that are served in triplets. After dinner, head back to your room and survey the glittering metropolis through the floor-to-ceiling windows, wade into the huge oval bathtub that is big enough for four people or kick back in the lounge area and make yourself a martini with the supplied equipment.

Not quite ready for bed? Head to Mizuya on George St in the city, an underground Japanese restaurant-cum-karaoke bar, and book yourself in for a therapeutic singing and drinking session using the touchpad ordering system.

SATURDAY IN NEW YORK

Jump on the bus and head into the city for a stroll through the Botanic Gardens, ending up at the cafe for a leisurely brunch.

To make the experience truly New

York, order mimosas (champagne and orange juice cocktails) and bagels with smoked salmon. After that, score some last-minute tickets at the State or Capitol Theatre to see a matinee or spend the afternoon shopping at the Westfield and Pitt Street Mall.

As the sun hits the horizon, duck for cover at Frankie's on Hunter St for a dose of Brooklyn-style cool. This bar serves frozen margaritas in plastic cups, pizza by the slice and a range of craft beers on tap. The gloomy interior harks back to '80s-era rock 'n' roll clubs with gig posters papering the walls and a house band that plays covers late into the night.

Feel like something a little more sophisticated? Take yourself over to Baxter Inn in a laneway off Clarence St (thebaxterinn.com), a hidden bar that serves hundreds of whiskies from its brick and mahogany depths.

New York-style dinner options abound in the CBD if you're willing to take your chances. Most of the super popular restaurants don't take bookings – the best you can do is rock up, put your name down and hope for the best. The latest addition to the Fratelli Fresh empire is located at 11 Bridge St in the Circular Quay neighbourhood. Tucked in a laneway away from the main roads, it's an insider secret that serves up whatever's looking good at the markets that day in an appetisingly Italian way.

In a more mainstream part of the city, the Ivy complex has a diverse range of cuisines. From the kitsch sushi train Sushi Choo to the Ash Street Cellar for tapas and cheese platters. The one stand-out feature of all of the restaurants within the complex is the wine list. Collated by one of

Australia's few Master Sommeliers, Franck Moreau, the variety and quality of what is on offer – at very reason-



able prices – is staggering. When it's finally time to crash, stay in Sydney's hippest hotel, QT Sydney. Located next door to The State Theatre in the former Gowings department store, QT Sydney offers a rare level of cool from its Mod interior design right down to its theatrically styled door lady (she wears a red wig and sexy bellhop uniform).

SUNDAY IN SHANGHAI

A short stroll through the redeveloped Carlton United Brewery site on Sunday morning will bring you to White Rabbit Gallery in Chippendale. This privately owned gallery is open to the public and features an impressive and ever-changing collection of contemporary Chinese art. The tea-house on the ground floor serves a selection of dumplings, alongside traditional Chinese and Taiwanese teas and sweets.

Further towards the harbour on George St, you are faced with a choice between the old and the new worlds of China. If you decide to go old school, immerse yourself in Chinatown's red and gold hustle or visit one of Sydney's oft-ignored gems; the Chinese Friendship Gardens at Darling Harbour. Feeling more contemporary? Go up-market with a trip to China Republic, a new restaurant in World Square that dishes up Peking duck served 12 ways.

SUNDAY NIGHT IN DUBLIN

Have you ever been to a psychic dinner? Mulligans Irish Pub offers this unusual service as part of a set menu dining option. You will need to book because the dinners are immensely popular. Throughout the evening, members of your party will be summonsed upstairs after making a small payment for a 15-minute reading. There are usually five or six psychics working so it doesn't take long before you have a full belly and a head full of future possibilities.

HIGH LIFE: A room at SQT Sydney Hotel (above); and (left from top) a room at the The Darling Hotel; the lobby of The Darling; The Baxter Inn and chicken robata at Soky.

TRAVEL MATE

STAYING THERE

The Darling: The boutique hotel at Star City Casino offers some of the

best views of the city from rock star suites.

thedarling.com.au

QT Sydney: One of the city's newest boutique hotels, this is as close to New York cool you can get without a plane ticket.

qtsydney.com.au

EATING THERE

Sokyo: The Tokyo-style bar and restaurant on the ground floor of The Darling will make you believe you have been transported to a Friday night in Japan's coolest city.

star.com.au

Frankie's Pizza: This artfully dingy bar is one of the most colourful places wedged into the financial district of the city.

frankiespizzabytheslice.com

Fratelli Fresh: Hugely popular with locals, Fratelli Fresh restaurants are popping up in all the cool neighbourhoods.

fratellifresh.com.au

DOING THERE

White Rabbit Gallery: weird, wonderful and contemporary, this is a gallery like no other.

whiterabbitcollection.org

Mulligans: With a decidedly wintry menu, you will sleep peacefully on a carbohydrate and clairvoyant high.

mulligans.com.au





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