

# Exploring Sydney Pt 1

[00:00:12] Sid

G'day, welcome to Western Sydney University. I'm Sid Sharma and I've got things every student should know. So you've got your student ID card. You've got your opal card. Now, it's time to get exploring. There's so much to see and do in Greater Sydney. There's the harbour, the beaches, the national parks. The easy part is getting around, that won't cost you much more than your opal card fare. The hard part is narrowing it down to just five places to see, that's why you're joined by an expert someone who's here to make sure that you tick off the best of the best. Georgia - tell me a little bit about yourself.

[00:00:45] Georgia

My name is Georgia. Georgia Ricard. I am a travel journalist and magazine editor and I am lucky enough to be able to call myself a specialist in Australian travel and there aren't a lot of journalists that actually do that because most Aussies think, you know, I want to go traveling overseas and write about overseas. Whereas no, I've made it my life's mission to tell people about how great Australia is.

[00:01:10] Sid

What about in Sydney? Have you spent I mean, have you lived here your whole life?

[00:01:16] Georgia

I have, I'm, I'm not ashamed to say it. Haha. Look, no I mean, of course, I've traveled extensively, but I'm very proud to call Sydney my home and it's an incredibly beautiful city and I think the more in fact you travel overseas or I travel overseas, the more I appreciate just how gorgeous this place is.

[00:01:38] Sid

Hmm and only in Sydney would you be say half an hour from the beach, half an hour from the suburbs, half an hour from the inner city, you know, it's like there's so much to do and explore here.

[00:01:47] Georgia

There is - I mean the beaches themselves. I think we've got over a hundred beaches in the city. That's nuts!

[00:01:54] Sid

Crazy, crazy. So, let's jump right in let's talk about some of your favorite things [00:02:00] to do and your favorite places to travel to in Sydney.

[00:02:07]

Number one. The Sydney Harbour Bridge.

[00:02:09] Georgia

Sydney Harbour, because it really is just a spectacular part of the city.

[00:02:15] Sid

Yep.

[00:02:16] Georgia

And you know, of course, the crowning glory Sydney Harbour Bridge, right there like in the middle of it all, it's such a famous icon. It's just so accessible to us everyday. You can't get better.

[00:02:31] Sid

And there are so many different ways to appreciate it, right? You can be under it. You can walk across it. You can walk the pylons, like tell me a little bit more about the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

[00:02:40] Georgia

Yeah. Okay. Alright, so I think look when most people think about the Harbour Bridge, you know, if they've done a little bit of research about coming to Sydney and usually what pops up on Google is the Harbour Bridge Climb, which is pretty famous and most people don't realise that you can get pretty specky views just by walking across it, which is something that a lot of Sydney-siders do every single day to and from work, walk. You know, it takes what 25 minutes to get from one side to the other and that in itself, I mean, it's completely free you have to do that at least once.

[00:03:16] Sid

I mean, it's 25 minutes if you're not stopping every, you know, 30 meters to take another picture of the absolutely fantastic views that you get from it.

[00:03:24] Georgia

It's true. So look definitely walking across is one thing but the the local hack that I really love about Sydney Harbour Bridge is that if you don't want to splash out for the bridge climb, you can actually climb one of the pylons which is you know, the columns on the side of the bridge. To climb the actual bridge to the very top costs like \$350.

[00:03:48] Sid

Super expensive.

[00:03:49] Georgia

Yeah, you know, it's like a week's rent. Yeah crazy, but you can actually climb the pylon for like 20 bucks, which is just, so like that's a bargain.

[00:03:58] Sid

Yeah, definitely and I mean, I guess you don't [00:04:00] need to book it far in advance or anything like that?

[00:04:02] Georgia

No, not at all. You can just show up. And in fact a lot of people, a lot of locals don't even know about it.

[00:04:09] Sid

I mean, I didn't until very recently basically so it's fantastic.

[00:04:13] Georgia

Yes, it's it one and you know, no queues. It's a really, it's an underrated gem. You heard it here first. You're welcome.

[00:04:20] Sid

And so Georgia, what if you've walked the bridge, you have climbed the pylons, but you still can't get enough. How else can you appreciate the Harbour Bridge?

[00:04:29] Georgia

Well, look, I think you know particularly when you first arrive in Sydney most people sort of tend to stick pretty close to the city. But on the other side of the Harbour Bridge, the northern side is this incredible little village called Kirribilli

[00:04:45] Sid

Beautiful.

[00:04:45] Georgia

It is so beautiful! It's just these cute little collection of all these gorgeous little restaurants and shops and there's markets there on Saturday mornings, and it's It's really affordable. I mean it, you know again not like the city where you've got all these big really expensive and flashy restaurants. You can cross, you can walk over the Harbour Bridge and then when you get to the other side where Kirribilli is, you can walk into one of the restaurants there, there's a you know, quite a few Thai restaurants, which is very Australian. Australian, yeah, yeah, we love our Thai food and you can you can order it, you know a cheap dish, you can grab a takeaway bottle of wine from one of the bottle shops right there. You can get the food take away and go and sit on the grass or you can sit in the restaurant and literally you're right there in front of this global icon. Like the Harbour Bridge is right in front of you on the water and you're paying like \$15 for dinner. It's just it's crazy!

[00:05:38] Sid

There are so many different spots there as well, right? Like because I love that area. I think it's one of my favorite areas in Sydney and not many people know to be able to go there and just hang out but like you can go and hang out at the little Wharf the Jerry Street Wharf that's that's there.

[00:05:52] Georgia

It's so beautiful.

[00:05:53] Sid

And dangle your feet off the wharf and the harbour's you know, right in front of you and you know, there's no one around either and then on the other side, [00:06:00] you've got Wendy's Secret Garden and you've got you know, Luna Park and there's so many places to go and appreciate the view there as well.

[00:06:05] Georgia

Absolutely. And I think actually Wendy's Secret Garden we should just do a quick shout-out too, because that is such an underrated secret and special part of Sydney and I don't know if you know the backstory to it.

[00:06:16] Sid

No, I don't.

[00:06:17] Georgia

So Wendy Whiteley was Brett Whiteley's wife and he's obviously a very, you know, very well known Australian artist, but Wendy's actually also an incredible artist and you know she sacrificed a lot of her career to put Brett forward, but when he passed away how she actually coped with her grief was to create this amazing garden that's like literally it just on the water's edge you can walk there and it's you know, all these levels and it's filled with trailing vines and lilies and it's just this little paradise and again in view of the Harbour Bridge just right there.

[00:06:50] Sid

There's a really nice cafe that's on the other side. I forget what it's called, but it's right. It's like on the jetty.

[00:06:55] Georgia

I know what you're talking about - that is one of Sydney's most hotly instagrammed spots at this moment. Celsius cafe.

[00:07:02] Sid

Celsius. Yeah, there it is. Yeah.

[00:07:05] Georgia

And it's divine because it's this little kind of square wooden box that's actually out on the jetty and when you're in it, it almost feels like you're on a boat because you're sort of you know, you're looking out through the window and you're eating your gorgeous, you know your avocado on toast, very Australian.

[00:07:22] Sid

So Sydney!

[00:07:23] Georgia

But then, you know, all you can really see is the water and then these ferries that are just you know, bobbing past or showing up and then having people get on and get off. It's, it's really it's quite spectacular.

[00:07:33] Sid

It is really special. Like I always go and sit there at the I guess there's a bar that you know is by a window and as you look out the window, there's just water and rocks and that's it, right. It is very much like being on a ferry or being on a boat. It's so beautiful.

[00:07:47] Georgia

You have to go. I mean even the food is very Instagrammable all, there's all these edible flowers and it's all very cutesy and pretty and I think the other thing about it is, you're almost like right next door to the Prime Minister's residence.

[00:08:01] Sid

Right! Right.

[00:08:03] Georgia

So you're really getting like very much one of the best views in the whole of the country and all for like the price of a coffee. I mean, that's pretty cool. So, yes hot tip Kirribilli. Definitely take some time to wander around there.

[00:08:18] Sid

Let's move on to number two. Number two - the Opera House.

[00:08:26] Georgia

Ooh, and this was tough because these could of so easily been number one, but they go hand-in-hand. It's the Sydney Opera House.

[00:08:36] Sid

Oh, yeah. Definitely.

[00:08:37] Georgia

I mean do you love it?

[00:08:39] Sid

I absolutely love it. I'm still in awe of how beautiful and how you know, how spectacular that view is, every single time I walk past it.

[00:08:46] Georgia

It is so spectacular to look at, but I think the other thing that makes it so special for Sydney-siders is that the Sydney Opera House isn't just a place that you go to for really special occasions or to listen to Opera right? I mean, you know for locals like it's a place where you can go and, and there's so many there's actually quite a few a lot of people don't know there's, there's quite a few different performance areas and venues and stages within the Opera House. So you can go and watch a play, you know, there's panel discussions. There's ballet, the TedX has been held there. I mean all sorts of stuff goes on and there are actually a couple of restaurants there including one of Australia's most classic bar experiences and this isn't actually within the Opera House. It's just next door, but it is of course Opera bar.

[00:09:40] Sid

Oh, yeah Opera Bar is so beautiful.

[00:09:43] Georgia

It's so cool as well. Like have you ever you've been there on a you know a Thursday afternoon at five o'clock?

[00:09:48] Sid

Oh, yeah. I've been there on like a Tuesday morning. This is one of those places that you can just rock up to and be guaranteed a good experience, you know.

[00:09:56] Georgia

Yes, it's just you know, I feel like it there's always [00:10:00] a good vibe there. It's right on the water's edge, to your right you've got the Opera House and then right in front of you in kind of panoramic Imax status.

[00:10:12] Sid

Also, it's such a cool like versatile space, right? Like you can go there with friends for you know, like a celebratory brunch or you can go there on a date, or you can take family members if they're visiting. Yeah, like you can just you can go there and any different environment or circumstance.

[00:10:26] Georgia

You know like the Opera House, Opera Bar is kind of, it's a regular hangout spot for Sydney-siders. The other really cool thing about the Opera House and again for local status you need to know about this is Benny the seal.

[00:10:42] Sid

He's back?!

[00:10:42] Georgia

He's back!

[00:10:44] Sid

No!

[00:10:45] Georgia

So if you haven't, I'll give you a bit of context, for all of those listening who don't know who Benny the seal is. In I think it was 2014 one day this casual male seal just started appearing, like sunbaking on the steps around the corner from the Sydney Opera house. He was nicknamed Benny after the point, Bennalong Point and Benny the seal has since gained a social following, he's got quite a fan base and he reappears every year and basically he's become such a legend that now, if you actually go on the Sydney Opera House Facebook page, you can chat to Benny but they've made a Benny the seal bot so you can actually like say hey find out what's up. I haven't actually done it myself. But yeah, and, and that's a, his return to that site over and over again is quite common for Australian fur seals. It's a term called site fidelity and basically now he comes back every year.

[00:11:45] Sid

He's an integral part of that kind of the of that part of Sydney now, isn't he?

[00:11:48] Georgia

He is!

[00:11:49] Sid

You can't go to the Opera House without seeing Benny the seal in the right month I think.

[00:11:53] Georgia

That's it. Yes. So yeah, you definitely have to get a selfie of your time with Benny and the other cool thing about that is that when you see Benny, [00:12:00] Benny is actually he's part of the walk around the Botanic Gardens, which is you know, stunning! Right in the middle of the city this ridiculous like super extravagant garden that's got all this native Australian Flora just there for the for the taking, well not for the taking but to go and wander through and admire and totally free.

[00:12:23] Sid

I've lived here my whole life and I still as a local, have not seen all of the of the Botanic Gardens, right? It's just so big and there's always different, you know nooks and crannies to explore. There's always different places that you know, you can hang out and just, you know have a picnic or yeah.

[00:12:37] Georgia

Yes, the - I actually recently discovered that they have a cactus, a cactus garden.

[00:12:42] Sid

A cactus garden!

[00:12:43] Georgia

Which is cool. And there's you know, there's always there's new festivals happening in there now and there's a couple of different cafes. So you go and grab your coffee and then you go for your wander

[00:12:54] Sid

And it's not that far from public transport either, right? All you need to do is get a train to Circular Quay station and it's like a five or ten minute walk.

[00:13:00] Georgia

Yeah. Yeah, five, five minutes. I mean and again right in view of Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge.

[00:13:09] Sid

So look, you've only heard two things in this episode, and that's because there is so much more to see and do. If you want to hear Georgia's next picks on what to do in Sydney, check out part 2 of this episode where you can leave the CBD behind and head to the beaches and the Blue Mountains. If you have any more questions head to [wetsernsydney.edu.au](http://wetsernsydney.edu.au). I'm Sid Sharma. See you soon.