



GENERAL INFORMATION

World Shakuhachi Festival 2008

Sydney - Australia

July 2008

ID SOUTH PACIFIC

(incorporating ID MEETINGS & EVENTS)

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DESTINATION

AUSTRALIA

Australia is a place like no other! It is the world's only island continent with vast land of open space, mysterious red outback, lush green rainforest and bustling cities of culture, history and style.

Australia is a country renowned for unique wildlife, stunning natural surrounds such as the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru (Ayers Rock) and iconic buildings such as the Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Australia offers a wide experience for visitors and is a diverse land full of memories for the making.

The Australian environment is unique. From unspoilt beaches, tropical rainforest, rugged mountain ranges and vast tracts of desert, Australia is a country of contrast. Home to an amazing 14 World Heritage listed wilderness areas; Australia's diversity is yours to enjoy.



With the reverse seasons of the northern hemisphere, Australia enjoys a largely temperate climate. Most of Australia receives more than 3,000 hours of sunshine a year, or an amazing 70 per cent of the total possible hours. Grab a hat and sunscreen and enjoy our delightful climate!

Some interesting facts about Australia:

- Australia is the sixth largest country in the world. It's about the same size as the 48 mainland states of the USA and 50 per cent larger than Europe, but has the lowest population density in the world - only two people per square kilometre.
- Australia boasts over 7,000 beaches - more than any other nation.
- Australia produces 95 per cent of the world's precious opals and 99 per cent of black opals.
- The kangaroo is unique to Australia and one of our most easily recognized mammals. There are more kangaroos in Australia now than when Australia was first settled. Estimates suggest around 40 million.
- The world's longest continuous fence known as the 'dingo fence' runs through central Queensland for 5,531 kilometres. It is 1.8 meters high and is designed to keep sheep safe from Australia's native dog, the dingo.

Sydney



Welcome to Sydney! Sydney is Australia's biggest city and is located on one of the most picturesque harbours in the world. The billowing sails of the Sydney Opera House and the magnificent arch of the Sydney Harbour Bridge add to the beauty of this stunning setting.

Founded in 1788 as a convict settlement by the British, Sydney has since developed into Australia's largest and most cosmopolitan city. It is a place that contrasts the old with the new, boasting many attractions including the beautiful Sydney Harbour. The city is bounded to the north and south by National parks and to the west by the beauty of the Blue Mountains. Sydney offers a unique experience to visitors with its vibrant culture, spectacular harbour and beaches, beautiful botanical gardens and parks, museums, cinemas and theatres. The multicultural nature of Australian society is magnified in Sydney, home to nearly four million people from all corners of the globe and a wide variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Monthly Average Maximum Temperature		
Month	Max Temp (F)	Max Temp (C)
January	78	26
February	78	26
March	77	25
April	72	22
May	66	19
June	63	17
July	61	16
August	64	18
September	68	20
October	72	22
November	75	24
December	77	25

GENERAL INFORMATION

Airport and Transport

The central business district is 10km north of the International Airport and takes approximately 20 minutes to reach by car.

Bus: A regular airport to city bus service operates from approximately 0600 to 2100 hours (not recommended for those with large amounts of luggage). Any queries please see the Travellers Information Desk at the Airport.

Taxis: A taxi costs approximately A\$35.00 from the Airport to the City. Taxis in Sydney operate under two pricing structures. From 0600 - 2200 hours the standard fare applies. On the left hand side of the taxi meter, above the word 'rate' you should see the number 1. From 2200 - 0600 hours, a 20% night tariff applies, at these times the meter should be set on rate 2. Please check the meter is set correctly when you begin your journey.

Trains: There is a train station located at both the Domestic and International Terminals at Sydney Airport. Trains run on average every 10 minutes during the day on a weekday and every 15 minutes on weekends. From the Domestic Terminal, it takes 10 minutes to reach Central Station and 15 minutes to Circular Quay. From the International Terminal it takes a few minutes longer. Lifts are available at both the International and Domestic Terminals for the easy transfer of luggage. Fares from the Domestic Terminal to the City start at A\$11.00 per adult for a single journey. For further information on the service that the Airport Link provides, please see the following website: www.airportlink.com.au.

Banking/Currency

Decimal currency is used in Australia with the dollar as the basic unit (100 cents = \$1). Notes come in \$100, \$50, \$20, \$10, and \$5. Coins come in 5c, 10c, 20c, 50c, \$1 and \$2 denominations.

Currency exchange facilities are available in most banks, hotels and airports and operate normal business hours. Credit cards are accepted at most restaurants and shops, the most widely used being Mastercard, Visa, American Express and Diners Club.

Business Hours

Banks generally open from 0930 - 1600 hours Monday - Friday. General office hours are 0900 - 1700 Monday - Friday. Post Offices operate these hours, however stamps are often available from hotels.

Eating Out

Bistros, restaurants, cafes and coffee shops offer varied menus, prices and decor. Local specialties such as seafood and Australian wines are worth trying. At some restaurants you can keep the liquor bill down by taking your own wine or beer. These are called "BYO" restaurants, an abbreviation for "bring your own".

Electricity

Electrical current is 240/250V, AC 50Hz. The Australian three-pin power outlet is different from that in many countries, so you will need an adaptor. If your appliances are 110V, check if there is a 110/240V switch. If not, you will need a voltage converter. Universal outlets for 240V or 110V shavers are usually found in leading hotels.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) / Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS)

Since 1 July 2000, Australia has adopted a new taxation system incorporating the Goods & Services Tax (GST). All prices quoted in this brochure are inclusive of GST, unless otherwise specified.

As part of this new taxation system, the Australian Government introduced the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS). The scheme is administered by the Australian Customs Department and took effect on 1 July 2000. The TRS enables travellers departing Australia to claim a refund of the Goods and Services Tax

(GST) and Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) paid on goods bought in Australia. The refund applies to goods over the value of A\$300 when items are purchased in the same shop within 30 days prior to your departure from Australia. Should an item be too large to take onto the aircraft as hand luggage you will need to visit the TRS clearing office at the international airport with the item and receipt. The receipt will be stamped TRS sighted and at that point you can check the large item in with your luggage. Once you have cleared customs you can collect your refund from the TRS desk by showing your receipt on items purchased. It does not apply to services or goods consumed or partly consumed in Australia, however the goods can be used before departing Australia.

Host City and Venue

Sydney, with a population of almost four million, is a robust, colourful, diverse city with over 150 ethnic groups. Its magnificent harbour, Opera House, Harbour Bridge, mixture of old sandstone and modern buildings, as well as its spectacular beaches and numerous parks, make it a great city to visit.

Insurance

It is strongly recommended that at the time you book your travel you take out an insurance policy of your choice. The policy should include through cancellation of the loss of international/domestic air fares through cancellation for any reason, loss of tour monies through cancellation for any reason including airline or related services strikes within Australia, failure to utilise tours or pre booked arrangements due to airline delay, Force Majeure or any other reason, medical expenses (including sickness and accident cover), loss or damage to personal property, additional expenses and repatriation should travel arrangements have to be altered. This insurance is to be purchased in your country of origin.

Passport and Visa Important Information

All travellers to Australia, other than New Zealand, require a valid entry VISA prior to travel to Australia. For many nationalities (29 in total) an Electronic Visa or Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) can be obtained from your travel agent or airline when making your travel arrangements. Please see your travel agent or airline for further details.

Further information on passport and visa requirements can be obtained from www.immi.gov.au.

Quarantine

Australia is free from many plant and animal diseases prevalent in other countries. Very strict quarantine rules apply to the import of animals and plants, which cannot be brought into the country without prior application. Animal and plant products are also restricted.

For more information see the 'Information for International Travellers' on the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) website, which you can access by visiting <http://www.affa.gov.au>.

Shopping

Shops in Sydney open from 0900 to 1730 during the week with late night shopping on Thursday. On Saturday, most shops open from 0900 to 1600. On Sunday Darling Harbour shops are open from 1000 to 1800 and major department stores in the centre of the city are open from 1000 to 1600.

Time

Sydney is 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time.

Tipping

Tipping is not as widespread or regulated in Australia as it is in other parts of the world. Tipping is your prerogative, a reward for service. It is customary to tip hotel porters and a gratuity of about 10 per cent is usual in restaurants if good service is received. Tips for taxis are regarded as optional.

Vaccinations

A current valid international certificate of inoculation against yellow fever is required if passengers come from, or travel through, infected areas. Check this carefully with your airline or travel agent.