

it's about the

Experience



3 Days in Canberra

Avida Daydreams > Australian Capital Territory

DURATION: 3 Days

TRAVEL: N/A

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CANBERRA MAKES FOR A PERFECTLY ROUNDED SHORT BREAK FULL OF FOOD, CULTURE, HISTORY AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITY.

Canberra is more than a city centred on politics or an Australian history lesson brought to life. Indeed, this modern and well-planned capital may be small, but it also boasts a thriving creative culture, a sophisticated dining scene, and some of the best museums and galleries in the country.

Add to that its location – between the Great Dividing Range and Australian Alps – which provides not only an aesthetically pleasing backdrop but also a playground for outdoor adventure.

Here's how to spend a long weekend in the increasingly cool city of Canberra.

STAGE 1: LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN AND NEWACTON

A great way to get oriented with the city is by cycling the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, the city's centrepiece. Make your way to the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre at Regatta Point to hire a bike and choose from three cycling tracks, depending on the sites you'd like to see on your journey. The Central Loop (five kilometres/three miles) and Eastern Loop (nine kilometres/six miles) are both mostly flat, while the Western Loop is a 16-kilometre (10-mile) journey with some hills.

In the afternoon, head to NewActon, an edgy district that is known for its excellent food scene, just a five-minute drive from the visitor centre. Dominated by the striking and modern Japanese-inspired Nishi Building (containing a gallery, cinema and the funky Ovolo Nishi hotel), the area is also home to some of the city's oldest buildings.

For lunch, stop by the ever-popular Mocan and Green Grout, which has a menu that focuses on local produce and locally roasted fair-trade coffee. Alternatively, Rebel Rebel is an eatery inspired by David Bowie that's both striking in design and its produce-driven menu offering. Afterwards, spend time at the Nishi Gallery, a cultural space that features works by local and international artists.

If you're in NewActon on a Saturday afternoon, be sure to check out Cellar Door in the Nishi Building's Grand Stair. This boutique wine market has a collection of stalls where you can sample some of the region's best drops.



WHERE TO STAY?

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STAGE 2: CAPITAL ICONS

If you want to see the nation's cogs in motion, make Parliament House top of your list. Explore on a private tour (bookings required), wander the public areas at leisure, such as the Marble Foyer and Great Hall, or watch the House of Representatives and Senate from the galleries. If you have more of a penchant for the arts, the nearby National Portrait Gallery is home to an incredible collection of portraits of individuals who have helped to shape the story of Australia.

If you have kids or science and technology enthusiasts in tow, Questacon is an absolute must. At this fun educational centre there are more than 200 hands-on exhibitions that cover the principles of sound, human biology, light, force, mechanics, mathematics, computer science, the Earth and more.

History buffs should join one of the free tours at the Australian War Memorial, which run every half-hour from 10 am to 3 pm. The Memorial has several exhibitions including permanent galleries that cover Australia's involvement in all major conflicts, and a number of temporary displays, with relics, personal and public records, photographs, sculptures, aircraft, the Roll of Honour and more.

Tonight, enjoy dinner at one of the city's many sophisticated eateries such as Aubergine or Pilot. Afterwards, take a nightcap at brooding speakeasy Molly or happening lakeside bar and bistro Walt & Burley.



STAGE 3: NATIONAL ARBORETUM AND BRADDON

For your last day, spend the morning at the National Arboretum Canberra, about 10 minutes from the city centre. Featuring 250 hectares of rare, endangered and significant trees from across the globe, you can explore the grounds yourself or join a guided walk; there's also an awesome kids' outdoor playground.

Head to Braddon afterwards, a hip neighbourhood that has become popular for its 'eat street' Lonsdale Street and boutique shopping. Stop by Lazy Su for a casual pan-Asian lunch of Japanese and Korean flavours with a kitsch '80s vibe, or Grease Monkey for a juicy burger and beer. Coffee connoisseurs should head to Lonsdale Street Roasters for their fix.

For retail therapy, check out bisonhome for locally designed ceramics or Timber and Tailor for a range of homewares and lifestyle products made by Australian designers and makers. Next, the Ori Building is home to a collection of boutique stores including the whimsical florist Moxom + Whitney and premium gift store Hive.

End your shopping jaunt and your long weekend in the capital with a locally made beverage at craft brewery Bentspoke Brewing Co., where you can sample some 18 beers and ciders on tap.

This article was written in conjunction with Tourism Australia.

For more information about road trips in Canberra, go to visitcanberra.com.