

THINGS TO DO, SEE AND EAT IN NEWTOWN

Newtown plays host to a variety of styles, cultures and cuisines. It has a diverse and lively community made up of students, gays, families, urban professionals, dogs and a few of the remaining working class inhabitants.

Its main thoroughfare, King Street, stretches from the University of Sydney to the old brick works at St Peters and boasts a reputation of good and cheap cuisine, a thriving cafe scene, an arthouse cinema, numerous book stores, old wares and second hand clothes and bric a brac, and a range of specialty stores from grunge to groove.

Things to See

Newtown (or New Town as it was then known) is one of Sydney's oldest districts, founded in 1793-94, as a parcel of land granted to two military officers, and in 1806 the neighbouring Camperdown district was granted to Governor William Bligh (of *Mutiny of the Bounty* fame). For more on the history of Newtown go to **www.sydneyarchives.info**

We recommend a walk across Camperdown Memorial Rest Park to St Stephens Church, located on Church Street (you can see the church spire and sandstone cemetery walls from rooms one and two). St Stephens is a heritage listed church built by former convict later colonial architect Edmund Blackett.

Inside the Church is the Camperdown Cemetery, one of Sydney's oldest which houses a memorial to the wreck of the *Dunbar* in which 121 passengers perished near Sydney Heads in 1857 after a long arduous trip from England.

The cemetery also features the grave of Eliza Donnithorne who legend has it was the inspiration for the Miss Havisham in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. On her wedding day, when the table was laid and the guests were all met, she waited and waited, but the bridegroom did not arrive. Eventually the guests went home. The wedding breakfast

remained on the table until the day she died (in 1886).

Between Church, King (the main street of Newtown) and Missenden (where the Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital grounds begin) you will find many examples of old worker and artisan cottages and single storey terraces of the late nineteenth century.

From the corner of Missenden and Carillon, heading towards the city, is the large 72 hectare grounds of the University of Sydney, Australia's oldest university founded in 1850. It is a lovely and peaceful walk through landscaped grounds, ovals, and gorgeous faculty buildings of Victorian design. Nearby is Victoria Park and its swimming pool.

Where Missenden intersects with King street, veer left to Georgina and Fitzroy streets where you will find many lovely old Victorian manors including Cambridge Hall where Eliza Donnithorne lived. Cross Hollis Park down to Wilson street.

If you walk along Wilson (which is parallel to King) back in the direction of Australia street you'll eventually hit Erskineville road. Turn left and it is a short walk to nearby Erskineville village which is worth checking out for its cafes and shops and elegant Victorian terraces. The Australian film *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* was filmed at the Imperial Hotel.

Return to King street via Erskineville road, turn left and soon King street will split. Enmore road veers to the right and King street continues on the left down to St Peters. Called south King street there are shops selling buttons, beads, tiles, tribal gifts, gothic garments, second-hand furniture and much more.

South King street ceases at St Peter's railway station where it turns into Princes Highway. You will see two prominent chimney stacks which is the entrance to Sydney Park. A former quarry that supplied materials for local brickworks, it was converted into a park in 1988 and has become one of Sydney's most progressive and ecologically significant public spaces. It features a system of wetlands that supports native flora and fauna. The foothills provide a panoramic view back into the Sydney central business district. It's a nice place to walk or ride bikes.

Things to Do

Newtown is King street and King street is Newtown. A great place for retail therapy!

Here are some of our favourites for goods and services:

Culture and Entertainment. No shortage of cultural goodies, both new and second hand, in this neck of the woods. For music & DVDs we recommend Hum at 271 King street, Fish Records at 261 King for CDs and SO Music (183 King) for world, folk, jazz, country, blues and roots CDs. Egg Records at 3 Wilson street (off King street close to Newtown Railway Station) is good for second hand CDs.

Enmore Theatre (130 Enmore Road) is the place for live concerts and comedy performance (it is the host venue for Cracker: Sydney's Comedy Festival every March). Bookings can be made at the theatre or at Fish Records.

The other good place for live music is The Vanguard, an intimate venue for jazz, blues and roots. Golly, even Russell Crowe and his band has played there a few times! It is located at 42 King street close to Sydney University.

For an excellent and up to date site of what's on in arts, performance and music in Newtown go to **www.newtownprecinct.com.au** . The Metro supplement in the Sydney Morning Herald on Fridays is good for what's on in Sydney generally.

There are more second bookshops in Newtown than you can poke a stick at. A golden oldie is Goulds run by the Australia's last communist Bob Gould! It's located 32 King street (at the beginning of King street, near The Vanguard). It has about a million books and there is always some pearl that be found amongst the dross. Elizabeth's at 197 King street is smaller in terms of stock but better organized.

For new books we recommend Better Read Than Dead at 265 King (next to Café Cinque and Dendy Cinema). Stupid name but excellent book shop which hosts literary launches and events. Also Pentimento just a few stores up at 249 King –a

specialist book and gift shop. Great for cook, designer and art books, both Australian and international.

Sport/Leisure. For hot summer days we suggest a short bus ride along King street or a walk through the grounds of Sydney University to Victoria Park swimming pool.

There are two gyms on King street. Newtown Gym is level 1, 294 King and Ultimate Gym is next to Newtown Station at Level 2, 328-336 King. We are not gym bunnies so can't vouch for either, but our friend tells us that there are less poseurs at Ultimate!

Tennis and (outdoor) basketball courts and lawn bowls are all located at the Camperdown Oval off Australia street heading towards Parramatta road. To book a tennis court ring 9557 2131. We can lend you tennis equipment and basketballs. No lawn bowls, sorry!

Lifestyle. There are two yoga venues within spitting distance of our guest house. Yoga Synergy is located up the road opposite Australia Street Infants School (see notice board for times). Samadi Yoga is the pink building corner of Lennox and Mary streets (bordering Camperdown Memorial Park). We have a yoga mat you can borrow.

Newtownians enjoy a good pamper. For facials, tanning and waxing try Manic Cure, corner Salisbury and Gibbons streets (turn right into Australia street to traffic lights and right again). Tell Nerida that Annie sent you. Tel 9557 0517. Also check out Glow Girl, corner of Australia and Lennox streets, just past Australia Street Infants School.

For chilling out and relaxing you can try reflexology/foot massage by Rose Stockwell. She will visit our Guest House. Call Rose on 0437 402 567. For a wide range of massage techniques there is the Buddha Bar Healing Clinic at 434 King street (appointments 9517 9725) opposite Newtown Performing Arts school.

Antiques & Collectables. Much of the furnishings that are in your guest room come from the following face antique and old wares shops in south King street: Newtown Old Wares, 529

King (from deco to disco!), Nest, 541 King (chinoiserie), Towers Antiques, 539 King and St Vinnies on King street.

Pubs Newtown likes a drink! In 1892 there were 29 hotels, all but 8 strategically placed along either King or Australia streets. The closest to our premises, and one of the oldest, is the Court House Hotel on the corner of Australia and Lennox streets (walking towards King). Its very Newtown in character – grungy and unpretentious, but good cheap pub food in the beer garden and a friendly atmosphere. Also the location for the ABC TV series *Love is a Four Letter Word*

Others to check out are the Zanzibar at 323 King. The rooftop bar is a nice oasis from noisy King street and they have a Moroccan food/ tapas menu.

The Bank Hotel, 324 King next to Newtown station, has been recently refurbished and has a good cocktail bar at the back. The Bank is very glam and trendy now with blue satin drapes, velvet banquettes and a bar back lit with slabs of onyx- die hard Newtownians are outraged! And it also features the al fresco Thai restaurant Sumalee.

Madame Fling Flongs is a groovy, retro lounge upstairs at Soni's of Newtown (169 King street). Features a diverse range of wine and beer and a mezze and cheese plates.

Finally, if you saw the film *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* then pay a visit to the Imperial Hotel on Erskineville road. It's famous for its late night drag shows

Fashion. No shortage of new and second hand clothes shops along King street. We recommend Quick Brown Fox (312 King), Munky Bizness (313 King), Scraggs House of Fashion (551 King – 2nd hand/retro –if owner Jane Scerry is there tell her Anne and Ian sent you), Platypus (275 King – footwear- Converse, Puma, Birkenstock, Diesel etc), Tree of Life (320 King – hippy/Eastern), Dragstar (535a King – young/chic), Leo Monk (417 King – funky handbags), Maple (256 King –stylish streetwear for men and women) and Yoshi Jones (134 King – Japanese fashion and homewear)

Speciality Shopping. From the arcane to the ridiculous here are some of our favourites: All Buttons Great and Small (419 A

King), Faster Pussycat (431A King- crime and trash paraphernalia), O'lele (1/502 King- French inspired gift and babywears), Etelage (430 King –beads and more beads), Afghan Interiors (451 King), Eastern Flair (319-312 King – Asian homewares and jewelry), and Octopus Design (260 King – kitsch and camp giftware).

Things to Eat

Newtown has a large range of restaurants and cafes varying from good food to good value to plain ordinary! According to one source there are 157 eating places offering 25 different cuisines.

Firstly a local's lament. Newtown is sometimes referred to as Eat Street. Yes, there are a large range of cuisines from Thai (every second shop in King street appears to be a Thai restaurant) to African to modern Australian to Lebanese, and often they are good value in terms of price, but in the main it lacks the class and distinctiveness of restaurants in, say, the Surry Hills district.

Enough moaning. Here are some recommendations:

Cafes

Barmuda 283 Australia Street. A café (breakfast and lunch only). Nice relaxed feel and friendly service. Entrees \$8- 10, Mains \$17-20. Very close for Australia Street guests (opposite the courthouse).

Cinque 261 King. Busy café sandwiched between the Dendy cinema, Fish Records, and Better Read Than Dead bookshop. Like most Newtown cafes nothing out of the ordinary but good location.

Scrambled 205 Enmore. A bit of a walk but great if you want a large egg –induced breakfast.

Old Fish Café. 239A King. On the corner of King and Church. Good for people watching. Limited menu but good coffee.

Satellite Espresso. Corner of Brown & Wilson. Cool and retro furnishings, laid back atmosphere. Good coffee. Plays LPs.

Bitton Gourmet 37A Copeland street (walk along Erskineville road, cross over railway bridge and walk to Erskineville Oval). One of our favourites run by a very friendly Frenchman David Bitton. Slightly cramped interiors but the one pan bacon & eggs with Bitton tomato salsa is worth the long hike to get there.

Gelatomassi 262 King. Run by the uber friendly Sicilian brothers Ciccio and Salvatore, this is the best gelato in Sydney

Medium to Pricey (over \$20 for a main)

Oscillate Wildly 275 Australia street (opp Fire Station) An impressive mod oz bistro. For the foodies OW is arguably the most sophisticated restaurant in Newtown. Often need to book a week in advance. Call 9517 4700.

Sumalee 324 King Street. A Thai restaurant that is situated in the beer garden of the Bank Hotel just near Newtown railway station. Its just re-opened after renovations to the pub and we have heard some mixed reviews. The food is fresh and the serves are often huge(enough to share an entre and main course between two). Dishes include red curry of barramundi fillets, fresh black mussels with lime, chilli, garlic and herbs or stir-fried blue swimmer crabs. Can be expensive for Thai – but if it is a warm night it can be magical.

Medium (\$15 to \$20 a main)

Twelve 218 King. The wide glass frontage gives it a bit of a fish bowl feel but the modern Australian and Italian menu is generally good value and the waiters are friendly. Usually prompt service which is good if you want to eat before a film at the Dendy.

Wedgetail 1a Bedford Street. Gourmet woodfire pizza joint run by a former member of cult 80s rock band The Sunnyboys. Our favourite is a Number Nine: ricotta, caramelised onions and ham. Also good is the prawns and basil number. Easy going atmosphere with good selection of music. Large pizza is

about \$15-20. Located next to Newtown Town Hall which is in the "square" between Australia street and King street.

Emma's on Liberty 59 Liberty Street, Enmore (about a 10 minute walk- walk along Abermarle to the end and turn right into Bedford which borders the railway line, turn left into Liberty under the rail overpass and you are at Emma's). Noisy but atmospheric modern Lebanese restaurant. Best to ring beforehand tel 9550 3458.

Steki Taverna 2 O'Connell Street, just off King Street. Has been awhile since we have visited there but it is a popular family restaurant in the Greek taverna style. Licensed.

Hikaru 134 King. Friendly Japanese eatery –food is good, tacky décor less so.

Cheap

Guzman y Gomez Taqueria 175 King street. Very authentic Mexican food – especially for Sydney - tacos, burritos and quesadillas. More a eat and run place.

Pho 236 236 King. Cheap and cheerful Vietnamese- good for noodle soups, sizzling Mongolian lamb, salt and spices squid etc

The Italian Bowl 255 King. An Italian hole in the wall. Pasta, risotto, veal Milanese, salads. Good value

Sushi Train. Corner Wilson and King (near Bank Hotel). Fresh and a diverse rang of sushi plates.

Courthouse Hotel (cnr of Australian and Lennox street). The pub food is great value – generally seafood and burgers, and the outdoor beer garden is simple décor but generally has a buzz to it.

Tamana's North Indian Diner. 196 King. The first thing you'll notice is the Indian fresco's on the wall. Is bay marie Indian diner but busy turnover means food is fresh...and spicy.

Outside Newtown

We have the Good Food Guide which highlights the best restaurants in Sydney.

The area we recommend is Surry Hills. Particular faves are: along Bourke street- **Bistrode** (French) and **Il Baretto** (Italian);

along Devonshire- **Bourke Street Bakery** , **Vini** (Italian enoteca), **Mohr Fish** (seafood) **Mohr and Mohr** (French) and the **Book Kitchen**;

along Crown street - **Bills 2** (mod Oz), **Billy Kwong** (mod Chinese), **Tabou** (French), and **Bird Cow Fish** (mod Oz);

and along or near Commonwealth street – **Longrain** (Thai), **Lo Studio** (Italian) and **Uchi Lounge** (mod Japanese)