

Sydney Time



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Going to the Opera



No visit to Sydney would be complete without seeing the Sydney Opera House. We decided that it would be more fun to see an actual production since opera season had just started for the year. Only being in Sydney for a couple of days our choice of shows was down to one, Mozart's *Così fan tutte*.

The building itself is quite spectacular and when you get up close you can really see all the detail that went into it. It sits out on a point in the Sydney Harbor right next to the central park in a section of the city called Circle Quay. As night falls you will see hundreds of giant fruit bats make their way from trees inside the park to

other parts of the city to feed. The locals seem to ignore the 3 foot wingspan vermin's flying over their head but it was a haunting sight for us.

We started the evening by going to a local French bistro and had dinner then off to see the show. When traveling for a month and a half you cannot bring a lot of choice in clothing so we did our best to get dressed up for the event. I must say the girls looked most spectacular this evening all dressed up.

The opera house has been designed on multiple levels so when you arrive it can be a little confusing to find your seats. This night we were towards the

back since we did not pony up the big bucks for the front or balconies. The orchestra was situated right down in front of the stage and the harmonics of the building worked like a giant boom box for the concerto bellowing Mozart throughout the room.

The *Così fan tutte* production was not your Mixed Martial Arts fight or NFL playoff game but it did have its own appeal and brought quite a few laughs. It was very amazing how the operetta singing traveled through the structure with no microphones or speakers and even sitting up in the back it sounded as if we were right in front.



I Want to Adopt



Lisa going gaga over the baby wombat.

In Australia they have an animal called a Wombat that looks like half Koala Bear and Half Pig. They are a family member of the Koala's but they live and forage on the ground instead of the trees.

We visited a small animal park about 200 miles south of Sydney and they were rescuing and raising injured Wombats. One of our favorite ones was a baby named Trixie that had been saved when her mom got hit by a car. The wombats are not real fast so they have trouble making it across the highway with fast moving vehicles.

Weighing about 10 pounds Trixie immediately went into Lisa's arms and stayed there until pried away. Trixie would run around like a hyper little kid but once she was held she would not move being

right at home in your arms.

Along with the baby wombat the park also had quite a few koalas. We didn't get a chance to hold one but we did get to see a 7 month old baby with its mom, and it was actually awake which for a koala that's a pretty rare occurrence since they're only awake 4 hours a day!!!

They had three types of Kangaroos including the big red ones. The nice thing was you could hand feed all of the roos which will do about anything to get a treat. Maddie had the time of her life feeding all of them and Lisa had to be pried away. For such a strange animal they really are soft and gentle when you spend the time to get to know them up close.



Super Slide

The public parks in Australia are very cool



with all kinds of crazy equipment that we cannot have in California because of liability issues and sue happy parents.

We found the best park in southern Victory where they had a slide about 100 feet long using the hillside as a support. The slide contoured up and down the entire length making quite a ride.

But it did not stop there with the park having a 100 meter long zip line that you would use at your own risk.

I personally would not ride the slide and left it to Maddie to do and I rode the zip line but started halfway up the first time to be safe as it looked like a good way to get hurt.

Welcome to the Jungle



Arriving in Sydney from New Zealand we had no real plans set in stone except that we wanted to see some different parts of the country. In New Zealand we had seen a lot of small motor homes for rent so we decided we would get one for a week.

Our journey started in Sydney and would end in Melbourne an over 1,000 kilometer drive through New South Whales and Victoria. About half way and two days into the trip we found a remote campground in Ben Boyd National Park called Salt Creek. The camp was at the end of a 20 mile single track dirt road through eucalyptus forests. On our way in it had just rained so I was getting worried as there were no places to turn around and if we were to pass another car we would be in trouble

pulling off the road. Luckily we passed no one on the way end but I was concerned about how remote we were especially if we had any trouble.

Once we arrived we found a perfect campsite right next to the beach and there was a nice family camped next door. What we did not know yet was that the campground had a lot of critters roaming around looking to cause trouble.



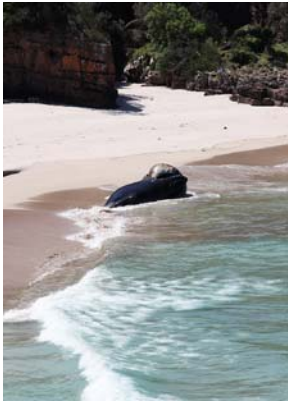
The first band of marauders was a group of kangaroos looking for a feed. They were very friendly and would let you pet them as long as you were bribing with food. The second wave hit later that night when the sun went down. We were by the campfire at the neighbors camp and a group of possums came in for the attack. Once again as long as you supplied food they were cute and cuddly but the problem is a possum can get into about anything and anyplace.

But it was not over as the next morning a third wave hit of giant Guannas which are Australia monitor lizards and they were looking for blood. They would come right into the camp if they smelt food and a 150 pound lizard with T-rex style claws can be very intimidating.



"Maddie with Grace and Msrlin after playing a game of cricket."

Free - Willy



“Whale rotting on the beach with its bladder ready to explode.”

While we were camping at a state park on the New South Wales – Victoria border we heard stories about a dead whale on the beach about a miles hike up the coast. So the last day we were there I decided to make the hike and see what a dead whale really looks like.

About half way on the hike I could see the whale and I also started to smell it. I do not know much about whales but this appeared to be about a 25 foot humpback whale that was washed up onto the beach. As I got close I could see that every time a wave would crash up against the giant a red tide would wash back out to sea. I could also start to see a large bloated sack

protruding out of the mouth of the whale, probably its air bladder.

The stench of the rotting carcass was starting to overwhelm me and was the strongest, foulest odor I have ever had the privilege to smell. The

whale was so foul that there were no animals, birds or bugs eating it and no matter how bad something is decaying you will usually always find a group of happy vultures to dig in but not today as Willy is a little too ripe.



Ferries

Sydney being located on a large harbor with rivers flowing into it is made up of a lot of towns around the bay. Subways and

trains are not a practical way to go back and forth across the water so most people ride the many ferries to get across the

harbor.

The main terminal had 6 ferry docks with a ferry leaving each dock every 15 minutes so that gave you over 20 ferries an hour to choose from.

On the day we rode the ferry the sky was clear and the sun was out so it made for a beautiful time on the water and was one of the best ways to see the harbor.



“Sydney Ferry cruising through the harbor.”

