



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### Made it down to Melbourne

by Amaru & Suzanne, December 16th 2005

I've been here in Australia for about 7 months now and haven't really ventured that far outside of Sydney yet.

We decided to change that so Suz and I booked a long weekend down to Melbourne as an early X-mas present to ourselves. The flight there took around one hour or so. We flew with Virgin Blue where the flight personnel were joking around a bit with all the passengers....very different to other airlines I've flown with, and it's good to see that they don't take themselves too seriously.

We arrived and were picked up at the airport by Suz's friend Kate. She took us into the city and to the hotel where we were going to stay and then had to run off to work, we decided to meet up later in the city for drinks though.

After checking in, dropping our bags in the room and making sure that the free bottle of champagne was in our room (which it wasn't so we had to tell them about it) we headed out to explore the town.



Suz and I  
On the flight to Melbourne



Melbourne  
...and some X-mas decorations

We walked around for quite a while with no real goal, just exploring a new city for me. The weather was sunny and nice, but unfortunately quite cold (it was still early morning). I almost ended up buying an extra sweater, but instead we sneaked into a cafe and sat there having some hot drinks for a little while.

As the day progressed the weather became warmer (not hot as in Sydney, but nice) and we weren't cold any more.

We walked through the main shopping street, Bourke St, and Chinatown before we headed down towards Flinders Street Train Station and Federation Square, a very weird and funky looking building that hosts among other things a National Gallery and a big cinema complex.

After this we jumped onto one of the cities trams and headed towards St Kilda, Melbourne's seaside area. Here Suz took me to a place called "Falafel Kitchen", her favorite falafel place. The way it works is that you pay and get an empty pita bread, then you just walk along the table and pick anything you want to fill your pita with, falafel, hummous, tabouili etc. We made sure to add a few extra falafel balls at the end of the bag we were given....lots of yummy falafels.....Mmmmm!!

We took our food with us and walked down to the beach where we found a great place to sit under a palm tree. After we finished eating we realized that we had forgotten to use the sunscreen we had purchased. Unfortunately sitting on the sand doesn't help. Applying the sunscreen mixed with the sand felt a bit like having a facial....ah well, protection against the sun and a nice smooth face at the same time =)



Flinders Street  
Train station



**Just an old church**  
In front of Federation Square

That afternoon we met up with Suz's friend Kate over a few drinks just behind Federation Square and watched the sunset while the girls caught up on old times. We moved on and crossed the Yarra River to the Southbank area. The views of the city from the bridge is just awesome!

That night the three of us had dinner at "Blue Train Cafe" and the food was really good which in a way was a bit of shame...on our way out we saw the dessert tray, and the Banoffee pie (banana and toffee) looked great! We just couldn't fit another thing in, so we decided to come back the next day just for the pie.

The next morning we walked to the *Queen Victoria Market*, Melbourne's favorite market! This is a HUGE market where you can buy everything from fresh meat and seafood, nice cheeses and all the other crap that comes with a market. We walked around for a while, found a nice place and stopped for brekkie. Besides from that the only thing we paid for was one pair of sunglasses each for around \$20 per pair (why pay more than that?).

On our way back into the city we saw a whole bunch on Santas walking on the other side of the street.....different!

We also saw one of the funniest and strangest traffic signs that I've ever seen, the so called *hook turn*. Because of the trams, a right turn across the tracks is dangerous. So therefore to make a right turn you have to stay in the left lane. Confused? So was I...

We caught another tram, this time the free *City Circle Tram* and went along for the ride. We got off at the Docklands which is a relatively new area in the city. On our way there from the tram station we passed enormous *Telstra Dome*, a sports and entertainment venue. As we were walking past it we were seeing lots of people with black dyed hair, shorts, black shirt and red ties....we were a bit baffled at first but then we remembered that Green Day was to perform there that very night, no wonder...



**Federation Square**  
Hosts a very weird building



**Suz and I**  
Aboard the tram

We got back on the free tram and headed back towards the city where we got off at the *State Parliament*. Just as we were getting off I heard someone shout out "Amaru?!?", and it really caught me off guard, I don't know anyone here in Melbourne and I've just been here for two days. As I turned around I saw that it was the little sister of an old friend of mine from Sweden. She was travelling the world and had just arrived in Melbourne just the day before..... what are the odds!

We chatted for a while about this and that and that, wished her all the luck and went about on our own. It was now time for some afternoon coffee and dessert....so we headed back to the "Blue Train Cafe" where we had some of their Banoffee pie, and let me tell you, it was just delicious!

We went back to the hotel to relax for a while before dinner. Kate, her boyfriend Adam, her twin sister Louise and their friend Nick came to the hotel and then we walked towards Melbourne's Italian quarter, Carlton! Melbourne is very famous for its restaurant scene, and Lygon street is the main Italian restaurant street in Carlton.

We walked down the street and had a look at quite a few different restaurants, we read a few menus and were offered different kinds of incentives to enter just their restaurant. The people at the door try to get you inside by offering different types of free food and drinks. At every place we walked past we got better and better deals and we ended up at a place that was offering us some free garlic and herb bread plus three bottles of red wine....not bad huh! After we feasted on Pasta, Veal, Steaks, nice bread and some decent wine we all headed out for some drinks and to see what Melbourne had to offer.

The next morning Suz, Kate, Adam and I went for a drive south of Melbourne. We drove up the hill to Arthurs Seat where we had some great views over the bay. We ended later on in Portsea, where we sat next to the beach while having lunch at the Portsea Hotel.



**The beach**  
At St Kilda



**Suz enjoying some falafel**  
From the Falafel Kitchen

On our way back home to Melbourne I received a message telling me that I was to become an uncle! My first thought was actually that one of my brothers would be a father but I was wrong, it was my sister who was expecting in September! Me, an uncle...

Well, back in the city after having a nice BBQ for dinner, Suz and I just went for a walk and ended up at the *Crown Entertainment Complex*, the home of Melbourne's casino. And yes, it's all very tackorama in there. We strolled around the area for a while, it also contains loads of fancy schmancy stores, but at least we didn't gamble. That night, which also was our last night in Melbourne, we spent at Kate and Adam's place.

On our last day we started by heading out to Brunswick Street in the Fitzroy area. This is a "Bohemian" area lined with Cafes, Restaurants and lots of weird retro stores selling all kind of stuff. We found ourselves a nice cafe, sat outside having brunch and got right down to one of our favorite hobbies, people watching.....and there were quite a few weirdos there to see...

The rest of the day we spent by reaching the 55th floor of the The Rialto Towers, the tallest building in Melbourne, where we got an awesome 360 degree view over the city. For lunch we stopped at the *Lord of the Fries*, Suz's new favorite place in Melbourne. Here you can order fries, fries and more fries.....and a different array of sauces to go with them. She was in heaven!

That afternoon we ended up in Richmond, on Bridge road, shop after shop offering the latest mainstream fashion at budget prices. The idea was for Suz to buy some clothes but I was the one that ended up with a few new shirts!!

We finished up our day at Kate and Adams place where we had dinner together and then left for the airport where we caught the flight back to Sydney.



**Melbourne city in the background**  
and us in front at the St Kilda Pier

Melbourne is a great city, I loved everything about it, the ambiance, the people and its restaurants.....I can't wait to go back!!



**Palais Theatre**  
...just next to Luna Park



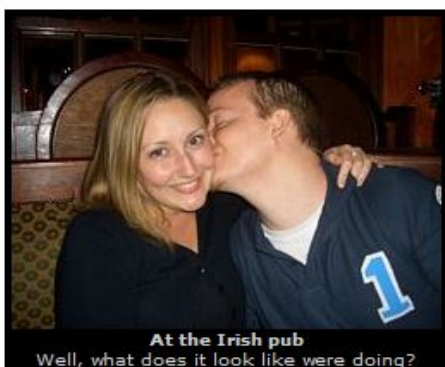
**Leaving St Kilda**  
by tram



**Suz and Kate**  
...going for some drinks



**The sun is setting**  
over Melbourne





**Queen Victoria Markets**  
HUGE....and filled with crap!



**We saw Santa...**  
The one on the left must be Mrs Santa!



**Right Turn**  
from left....odd!



**At the Docklands**  
With Telstra Dome in the background



**Italian for dinner**  
at Carlton, the Italian district



**Could that steak**  
get any bigger?!?



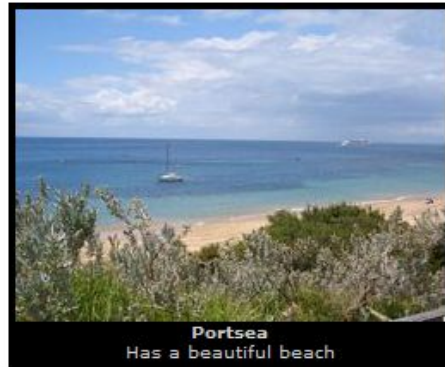
**Enjoying the food and the**  
free bottles of wine that were served



**Yup, that's me**  
Suz got the camera away from me



**Suz, Kate and her twin sister Louise**  
They don't look like twins....



**Portsea**  
Has a beautiful beach



**Having lunch**  
at the Portsea Hotel



**Gelato**  
Mmmmm!!



**Hey!**  
What's happening ey!



**Shag...**  
Me =)



**Melbourne as seen from**  
The Rialto Towers Observation Deck



**Melbourne as seen from**  
The Rialto Towers Observation Deck



Melbourne as seen from  
The Rialto Towers Observation Deck



Suz looking over  
Melbourne

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