Living in Melbourne

Find the suburb, lifestyle and connections that suit your move.

Melbourne offers laneway cafés, neighbourhood dining, arts and entertainment, with bayside outings and local markets adding variety to everyday life. The city's appeal extends well beyond its centre: different neighbourhoods give you different ways to settle in. [2]

For a relocation, start with your daily destinations. A furnished apartment near the city may suit one assignment, while a home near an eastern, northern or western workplace may make another move easier. Compare the full commute, household needs and accommodation inclusions before choosing a suburb.

Melbourne at a glance

Topic	What to know
Location	Capital of Victoria, in south-eastern Australia.
Time zone	Australian Eastern Standard Time, with seasonal daylight saving.
City layout	A broad metropolitan area; choose around your workplace rather than assuming every job is in the CBD.
Lifestyle	Cafés, markets, arts, live music, sport and bayside recreation. [2]
Housing choices	Apartments, terraces, townhouses and detached homes; furnished availability varies by area.
Getting around	Trains, trams and buses, with walking and cycling useful for some local journeys. [7]

People and demographics

The 2021 Census recorded 4,917,750 people in Greater Melbourne, a median age of 37 and an average household size of 2.6 people. These figures cover the metropolitan statistical area, rather than the smaller City of Melbourne council area. [1]

Greater Melbourne includes people from many cultural backgrounds. India, China and England were among the leading overseas birthplaces in the 2021 Census. Local food, community activities and services offer practical ways to explore that diversity when settling in. [1]

Demographic figures describe the 2021 Census, not a current population estimate. The suburb suggestions below are editorial starting points based on location and amenities; the right fit depends on your own routine and the specific property.

Central and inner Melbourne

City centre, Southbank and Docklands

Explore: Melbourne CBD, Southbank and Docklands. Explore a central base for dining, cultural activities and river or waterfront walks, with apartments a useful starting point for the property search. [2]

Consider this area for: a city-based work assignment or a central arrival base. Transport: compare nearby train and tram stops, and check whether each tram journey stays inside the Free Tram Zone [7,8].

Before choosing: confirm floor area, storage, lifts, building access, noise and parking; Southbank is not automatically inside the Free Tram Zone.

Carlton and the inner north

Explore: Carlton, Carlton North and Parkville. Carlton's Lygon Street dining and garden settings offer a neighbourhood focus close to the centre. [3]

Consider this area for: renters with nearby work or study commitments, or those wanting a café-and-park routine. Transport: check the tram or bus connection from the exact address to your destination [7].

Before choosing: compare station or stop walks, evening noise, stairs and access to everyday shopping.

Fitzroy and Collingwood

Explore: Fitzroy, Fitzroy North and Collingwood. These inner-north neighbourhoods offer cafés, bars, independent shops and late-night eateries. [2]

Consider this area for: people prioritising local dining and cultural activities. Transport: compare the nearest tram, train or bus route rather than relying on suburb proximity alone [7].

Before choosing: visit around your likely sleeping hours; check street activity, parking and the practicality of older properties.

Richmond and nearby neighbourhoods

Explore: Richmond, Cremorne and Abbotsford. Richmond's retail and dining streets, including Bridge Road, provide a local routine beyond the CBD. [4]

Consider this area for: renters comparing inner-eastern work destinations with access to city activities. Transport: test train, tram and walking options for the actual workplace [7].

Before choosing: inspect traffic and street noise; distinguish an attractive neighbourhood from a practical door-to-door journey.

Relo tip: Shortlist three addresses and compare one typical weekday for each. Include work, groceries, exercise and the journey home after an evening out.

Southern, bayside and eastern Melbourne

South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor

Explore: South Yarra, Prahran and Windsor. The Chapel Street precinct offers shopping, dining and evening activity. Different streets offer different balances of convenience and quiet. [5]

Consider this area for: renters who want a neighbourhood shopping and dining routine south-east of the centre. Transport: compare train and tram access from the property, including evening services [7].

Before choosing: check noise near busy strips, parking, storage and the route to daily services.

St Kilda and nearby bayside streets

Explore: St Kilda, St Kilda East and Elwood. St Kilda combines a beachside setting with cafés, restaurants and entertainment. The immediate surroundings of each home matter as much as the suburb name. [6]

Consider this area for: people who place bayside recreation high on their wish list. Transport: compare tram and bus connections and the complete journey to work [7].

Before choosing: test the weekday commute; inspect evening activity and the distance to shops and transport.

Bayside and the south-east coast

Explore: Brighton, Hampton, Sandringham and Mentone. Use these areas as starting points when comparing a coastal routine with access to southern Melbourne. A home near the water may be some distance from a station or shopping strip.

Consider this area for: renters wanting to investigate a bayside base. Transport: check the live rail and bus network for the exact destination and any transfers [7].

Before choosing: balance beach access with commuting time; check heating, cooling and exposure to wind.

Established eastern suburbs

Explore: Hawthorn, Camberwell, Box Hill and Glen Waverley. Compare these distinct centres when your work, school or daily services are on the eastern side of Melbourne. Each search area needs its own commute and property shortlist.

Consider this area for: renters whose routine is based east of the CBD. Transport: compare local train, tram and bus options, including onward travel [7].

Before choosing: check the exact school zone, shopping access and whether your daily journeys require a car.

Choosing with family needs in mind

Research accommodation and education together. Victoria's Find my School website is the official source of government school zones. Check the exact home address and the intended enrolment year, then contact the school about enrolment and documentation. [9]

Before choosing a furnished home, confirm bedroom arrangements, laundry, storage, a dining area and space for homework or working from home. Investigate childcare availability and the journey to school, shops and activities.

Northern, western and outer Melbourne

Brunswick and the northern suburbs

Explore: Brunswick, Coburg and Preston. Start here if you want to investigate a base north of the city. Compare local shopping streets, community facilities and nearby open space around each listing.

Consider this area for: renters whose workplaces or everyday destinations are north of the centre. Transport: check train and tram corridors and any onward bus connection [7].

Before choosing: do not confuse Brunswick Street in Fitzroy with the suburb of Brunswick; test the commute from the actual address.

Footscray and the inner west

Explore: Footscray, Seddon and Yarraville. Melbourne's west offers further neighbourhoods to explore beyond the centre, including Footscray. Compare each local shopping and dining area before choosing. [10]

Consider this area for: renters investigating an inner-west base or nearby work commitments. Transport: check train access and onward travel to your destination [7].

Before choosing: inspect nearby roads, construction, street activity and the availability of parking.

Williamstown and the western bayside

Explore: Williamstown, Newport and Altona. Williamstown offers a waterside setting with maritime history and heritage buildings. Nearby suburbs provide additional options for a western-side property search. [10]

Consider this area for: renters comparing bayside recreation with western work destinations. Transport: check rail and bus journeys; do not rely on a leisure ferry as your default commute [7].

Before choosing: compare the practical route to work, weekend activity and the distance to everyday services.

Outer employment and residential centres

Explore: Werribee, Point Cook, Sunshine, Dandenong and Frankston. These are separate search areas across different parts of Melbourne. Select the centre that matches your actual job site rather than treating outer suburbs as interchangeable.

Consider this area for: renters with western or south-eastern work commitments. Transport: compare train access with the final bus, walk or drive to the workplace [7].

Before choosing: investigate shift-time services and total travel costs; a cheaper property can involve a longer daily journey.

Choose the area around your routine

Your priority	Starting points to compare
City-based assignment	CBD, Southbank or Docklands, matched to the office.
Inner neighbourhood dining	Carlton, Fitzroy, Richmond or South Yarra.
Bayside recreation	St Kilda, Elwood, Brighton or Williamstown, subject to the commute.
Eastern work or study	The nearest suitable eastern centre to your destination.
Western or northern work	An address on the right side of the city with a practical final connection.

Transport, climate and everyday life

Getting around Melbourne

Use Transport Victoria's journey planner and current maps to compare trains, trams and buses. Include the walk from the property, transfers and the final journey to the workplace. Check weekday, weekend and shift-time services separately. [7]

Tickets and the Free Tram Zone

myki is used on Melbourne's trains, trams and buses. Payment options are evolving, so check current contactless availability and concession eligibility for every mode you plan to use. Follow the published tapping instructions for the service and ticket type. [7,8]

Tram travel entirely within the Free Tram Zone is free and does not require tapping on. If the tram journey extends beyond that zone, normal ticketing applies. The zone is a defined central area, not all inner suburbs; it does not make train or bus journeys free. [8]

Do you need a car?

Plan a full week before deciding: work, shopping, school, evening activities and weekend outings. Some well-connected addresses can support daily life without a car; other workplaces need additional connections. Compare parking, tolls and fuel with public transport costs and travel time.

If you intend to drive, familiarise yourself with Victorian road rules and the requirements at intersections and around trams. Check parking restrictions at both the home and workplace. Use official guidance when planning an unfamiliar route. [7]

Weather and the home you choose

Melbourne has a clear seasonal contrast, with warmer summers and cooler winters. Bureau of Meteorology observations at Olympic Park provide a central-city climate reference; conditions differ across the metropolitan area and from day to day. [11]

Check effective heating as carefully as cooling. Ask about draughts, window coverings, ventilation and the amount of direct sun. A furnished home should remain comfortable across your stay, especially if you will spend substantial time working indoors.

Lifestyle beyond work

Explore local cafés, markets, arts venues and neighbourhood dining as you settle in. A central address can put city activities close at hand, while other suburbs offer their own everyday rhythm. Build time into the first weeks to explore before committing to a longer-term area. [2]

Libraries, council recreation centres and community groups can help you establish a routine. Check nearby activities, opening hours and accessibility directly.

Budget for the whole stay

Compare the complete quoted cost: accommodation, utilities, internet, parking, cleaning and other disclosed charges. Confirm inclusions, usage limits, payment dates and the written terms. Furnished availability and prices vary by property, location and stay length.

Settling in with Relo Rentals

Your accommodation checklist

- Set your move-in date, expected stay, household size and total budget.
- Shortlist addresses around work, school and daily services.
- Test journeys at your real start and finish times.
- Confirm beds, linen, kitchen equipment, laundry, internet and workspace.
- Check parking, stairs or lifts, accessibility and any pet arrangements.
- Request the full inclusions, payment schedule and extension or cancellation terms.
- Keep a record of the agreed details and arrival arrangements.

Frequently asked questions

Which Melbourne suburb is best for a relocation?

Start with work, household needs and budget. Central areas may suit city assignments, while northern, western or eastern homes can work better for other destinations. Compare the actual property and its complete daily journeys.

Is all tram travel in Melbourne free?

No. Free travel applies to tram journeys entirely within the designated Free Tram Zone. Check the official map and ticketing guidance before travelling beyond it. [8]

Should I choose a bayside home or live near work?

Compare the time and cost of commuting with how often you expect to use the waterfront. A bayside home may be a good fit, but test the weekday journey first. Another option is a practical weekday base with coastal outings on days off.

How do I check schools before booking a home?

Enter the exact address into Find my School for the intended enrolment year and contact the school directly. Research childcare separately, including availability, hours and the route from home. [9]

What should a furnished rental include?

Check each listing and written agreement individually. Ask about furniture, bedding, kitchen items, appliances, laundry, internet, utilities and parking. Confirm the items your household needs rather than assuming all furnished homes offer the same setup.

Ready to make Melbourne your next home?

Explore furnished accommodation for your move and find a base that fits the way you want to live. Whether you are relocating for work, moving with family or coordinating an employee assignment, start with the location, space and stay length you need.

Sources

Information reviewed: 13 October 2026. Demographic reference period: 2021 Census. Check current transport arrangements and property information when planning your move.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics — Greater Melbourne, 2021 Census QuickStats
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3. Visit Victoria — Carlton
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4. Visit Victoria — Richmond
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5. Visit Victoria — Chapel Street
https://www.visitmelbourne.com/regions/melbourne/destinations/prahran/chapel-street

6. Visit Victoria — St Kilda
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7. Transport Victoria — Visitors to Victoria
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8. Transport Victoria — Tap on and off with myki
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https://www.visitmelbourne.com/regions/melbourne/destinations/melbournes-west

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https://www.bom.gov.au/climate/averages/tables/cw_086338.shtml