

So, you're visiting Melbourne?

Great!

The following is a list of places I'd recommend you go in each neighbourhood I'm familiar with. Some of these areas will almost certainly already be on your list, and some of them will probably be a little off the beaten track.

- So, you're visiting Melbourne?
 - South of the Yarra
 - Fitzroy/Collingwood
 - The Old Bar 🍷
 - The Tote 🍷
 - The Black Pearl 🍷
 - Slowbeer Fitzroy 🍷
 - Beermash 🍷
 - Smith and Daughters [?] 🍷
 - Smith and Deli [?] 🍷
 - Wabi Sabi Salon [?][?][?] 🍷
 - Napier Hotel [?] 🍷
 - The Standard Hotel [?] 🍷
 - Industry Beans 🍷
 - Proud Mary 🍷
 - Vegie Bar [?] 🍷
 - The Fox Hotel [?] 🍷
 - Fitzroy North
 - Edinburgh Gardens 🍷
 - The Pinnacle 🍷
 - Blackheart and Sparrows 🍷
 - Dench Bakery [?] 🍷
 - Danny's Burgers 🍷
 - Horn Please [?][?][?] 🍷
 - Footscray
 - Pho Hung Vuong Saigon [?][?] -
 - To's Bakery [?] 🍷
 - Footscray Market 🍷
 - T. Cavallaro & Sons [?][?] -
 - Ras Dashen [?][?][?] 🍷
 - Konjo Café [?][?][?][?][?] 🍷
 - Rudimentary 🍷
 - The Reverence 🍷
 - Bar Josephine 🍷
 - Mr West 🍷

- Northcote/Thornbury
 - Carwyn Cellars 🍷
- The City
 - Whiskey and Alement 🍷
 - Hells Kitchen 🍷
 - Ponyfish Island 🍷
 - National Gallery Victoria 🍷
- North Melbourne
 - Queen Vic Market 🍷
 - Beatrix 🍷

South of the Yarra

I can't really help you. There are two types of people in Melbourne—those north of the river (typically insufferable left-leaning voters), and those south of the river (typically insufferable right-leaning voters).

If you've met me, I hope you know which side I'm on.

Fitzroy/Collingwood

This is an area with a history similar to Shoreditch¹—edgy and hip back in its day, but now the domain of expensive shops, expensive restaurants, and overpaid web developers.

Having said that, it's still the heart of the hipster inner north and has lots of what makes Melbourne so Melbourne-y.

The Old Bar 🍷

Back in the day, you were guaranteed to find me here every Friday night after work, regardless of where I was working. It's a dive bar with some kind of music every night. The beer garden definitely has more emphasis on beer than garden and should probably be avoided if you're not comfortable with cigarette smoke, but I love it out there.

The Tote 🍷

Punk rock mecca.

The Black Pearl 🍷

Great for cocktails. Go upstairs.

Slowbeer Fitzroy 🍷

This place was formerly named Two Row, and I haven't visited since it was relaunched. I can only assume it's still a small, well-curated craft beer bar. Melbourne's craft beer scene is pretty dang friendly.

Beermash

Pretty nice craft beer shop/bar just down the road from Slow Beer.

Smith and Daughters

Great vegan restaurant. I've got their cookbook and it's pretty great.

Smith and Deli

Take-away spinoff from Smith and Daughters.

Wabi Sabi Salon

There's a nice little strip of Japanese restaurants down the bottom of Smith Street, and this is probably my favourite.

Napier Hotel

Home of the Bogan Burger, a meaty behemoth of a burger.

The Standard Hotel

Great, but very popular beer garden and pretty good pub food.

Industry Beans

If I had to recommend one place to go for Melbourne's over-the-top coffee culture, this would be the one. Please have at least one espresso here.

Proud Mary

Another very, very popular cafe. Expect to need to queue if you're going here on the weekend. This is where Zoe and I had our first date.

Vegie Bar

Cheap (for the area) and cheerful vegetarian food.

The Fox Hotel

Fitzroy North

I lived in a one bedroom flat by Edinburgh Gardens for just over two years in the early 2010s. It's a very well-to-do area, populated primarily by champagne socialists.

Edinburgh Gardens 🍷

The biggest and most popular park in the inner north. On a sunny day on the weekend, the north side of the park will be overrun with 20- or 30-somethings with beer, cider, and picnic foods picked up from Piedmontes and Blackhearts and Sparrows.

The Pinnacle 🍷

Pretty nice local boozer. Good range of craft beers and reasonable food.

Blackheart and Sparrows 🍷

High-end bottle shop; a great place to grab a few cold beers to drink in Edinburgh Gardens.

Dench Bakery 🍷🍷

Pretty good bakery/cafe. Worth visiting for either brunch or grabbing some bread and cakes.

Danny's Burgers 🍷

One of the places in Melbourne for an Australian style burger. It's massive, sloppy, and has egg and beetroot. Some people will say that the beetroot should be swapped for a pineapple ring, but they're wrong.

Order one with the lot. You're wasting your time otherwise.

Horn Please 🍷🍷🍷🍷

Good for Indian. They had a buffet night on Sunday. And craft beer!

Footscray

After getting a big fed up with the trappings of the hipster inner north, I moved back in the direction of my birthplace and rented a flat in Footscray with Zoe in the mid-2010s, where we lived until I left Australia.

Footscray has a reputation of being rough, but it's not really warranted these days. There are some social issues in the area, and recently some media beat-ups about "african gangs", but nothing which should scare you away.

Pho Hung Vuong Saigon 🍷🍷🍷

One of the most popular reasons to visit Footscray is the good, cheap Vietnamese food, and this is probably the best place to go. Pho is breakfast food in Vietnam, so this place is open early if you want something other than avocado on toast with a poached egg. For the price, the service is what you'd expect—not rude, but not exactly welcoming and friendly either.

To's Bakery

My favourite for Bahn Mi.

Footscray Market

Not the place for artisanal organic produce, but *the* place for cheap food and hubbub.

T. Cavallaro & Sons

Footscray's been a home to immigrant communities for many decades. Before the wave of Vietnamese immigration, it was known as an Italian and Greek area. One place which is still around from those days is T. Cavallaro, where you can get *amazing* cannoli.

Ras Dashen

After the wave of Vietnamese immigration, the next group to immigrate into the area were people from Africa, especially from Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea. A small neighbourhood has developed where they've opened their own businesses which has become known as "little Africa". My favourite of these is Ras Dashen.

Konjo Café

Ethiopian-French fusion place. Another good option for breakfast if you're looking for something different. Lots of vegan options here too.

Rudimentary

Of course, eventually the hipsters and yuppies are always going to descend on any interesting neighbourhood, and Footscray is no different. Rudimentary is probably the best representation of that, but it is a pretty good cafe. Minimalist decor set up inside a shipping container surrounded by herb gardens. It's peak Melbourne.

The Reverence

A favourite of Melbourne's hardcore scene. Vegan food and punk rock music. Good on Sunday afternoon if you want some heartfelt straightedge.

Bar Josephine

Turns out that I'm not the only person moving from the hipster belt to the west, and it seems we're starting to bring our favourite things with us as well. This is a craft beer bar which opened soon after I left Melbourne but I spent a fair bit of time there when I returned to Footscray for a week. A large number of taps rotating through an interesting selection of craft beers. A great spot to pull up a bar stool and have a chat with some locals.

Mr West

Another newly opened craft beer joint in Footscray. Again, it wasn't around when I lived in the neighbourhood, but it seems pretty nice. They were working on opening a bottle shop downstairs when I was there last.

Northcote/Thornbury

Carwyn Cellars

The City

Whiskey and Alement

Hells Kitchen

Ponyfish Island

National Gallery Victoria

North Melbourne

Queen Vic Market

Lots of fancy shit to take home. If cooking, I can recommend some stalls for roo meat.

Beatrix

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1. To be fair, Shoreditch is probably a reasonable prediction of what Fitzroy will be like in five years. ↩