Sydney’s Great Coastal Walks

New South Wales – Sydney

**Barrenjoey – Royal National Park**

Traverse Sydney’s entire, spectacular coastline – from Barrenjoey in the north to Cronulla in the south – on this unique week-long adventure. You can walk in either direction and hop on and off the trail as you wish. Do day walks, short scenic sections or any of the many walks looping off the main trail. Break up the walking with public transport or hike the entire journey end-to-end. The walk features dramatic headlands, sandstone cliffs, golden beaches, secluded coves, lush lagoons and dense native bushland, fringed by Sydney’s beachside suburbs. It’s also a trail through Sydney’s history, dotted with monuments to our Aboriginal and colonial past. There are ferry links to Bouddi and Brisbane Water National Parks in the north and Royal National Park in the south.

**Day One**

**Barrenjoey to Avalon**

Starting from Barrenjoey Beach, this 13km (8 miles) walk winds past craggy headlands and sweeping, sheltered beaches. Climb the Barrenjoey Headland to the 1881 lighthouse, stopping to take in breathtaking views over Pittwater and the Pacific Ocean. Behind you lies Broken Bay and the dense green forest of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, while Sydney’s northern beaches sparkle ahead. Head to Palm Beach, favoured retreat for Sydneysiders. Drop in at the ‘Summer Bay Surf Club’ made famous by the hit TV series ‘Home and Away’, where the bronzed young things aren’t actors but lifesavers for North Palm Beach. Take a dip in the rock pool, then walk over the headland, through the bushland of McKay Reserve, to Whale Beach. Continue past Bangalley Head, the highest point on Sydney’s northern coast, to Avalon Beach. Spend the night here in a B&B, luxury apartment or beach cabin or jump on an express bus to the city.

**AT A GLANCE**

- Barrenjoey – Avalon 13km (8 miles)
- Avalon – Narrabeen Lakes 13km (8 mile)
- Narrabeen Lakes – Manly 12km (7.5 mile)
- Manly and North Head 11km (6.8 mile)
- Circular Quay – South Head 17km (10.6 mile)
- South Head – Clovelly 8km (5 mile)
- Clovelly – La Perouse 17km (10.6 mile)
- Kurnell – Cronulla 13km (8 mile)
DAYS TWO TO FOUR

AVALON TO NARRABEEN LAKES
This 13km (8 mile) section features near-secret, secluded beaches and dramatic ocean panoramas. Start from Avalon Beach Surf Lifesaving Club and walk over Bilgola Head to small Bilgola Beach, where you may be the only person! The breaks are great for swimming and body surfing and you can surf at the beach’s northern end. Walk around the southern headland to Newport Beach, where the medieval-style Bungan Castle towers over the ocean. It’s only really locals who know about Bungan Beach, which is sheltered by a steep hillside and only accessible by walking track. Wander over Mona Vale Headland, another breathtaking vantage spot, and past Bongin Bongin, Mona Vale and Warriewood beaches. From Turimetta Head you can see all the way to the Central Coast. The track winds over Narrabeen Head and alongside the Narrabeen lagoon to Narrabeen’s centre, where you’ll find restaurants, transport and accommodation.

NARRABEEN LAKES TO MANLY
This 12km (7.5 mile) hike trails over headlands, past seemingly endless beaches and four lagoons. Wind north past Narrabeen and Collaroy beaches, which together form the longest stretch of sand on this side of the harbour. From Long Reef headland, take the coastal route alongside Long Reef and Dee Why beaches or travel through the dunes near Dee Why Lagoon. On uncrowded Dee Why Beach, you can linger with local surfers or swim in the Olympic-sized saltwater pool. Follow the spectacular cliff-top walk along Dee Why Head, before dropping down to Curl Curl and Freshwater Beaches. The walk leads over the headland to North Steyne and Manly. From here you can hop on a ferry to Circular Quay or stay and enjoy the beach holiday atmosphere. Additional walks wind around the foreshore of Narrabeen Lakes, Curl Curl and Manly Lagoons and through the scenic bushland of Manly Dam Reserve.

MANLY AND NORTH HEAD
This spectacular 11km (6.8 mile) walk travels past Manly’s beaches to North Head at the dramatic sandstone entrance to Sydney Harbour. Stroll down the Corso to Manly beach, Fairy Bower and Shelley Beach then head upwards through Sydney Harbour National Park. Pass North Head Sanctuary, which once housed the School of Artillery, and the heritage-listed former Quarantine Station. Further along is the North Fort Artillery Museum, which displays two centuries of firepower and offers tours of the underground tunnels. The track leads on to North Head, the pristine peninsula once occupied by the Gayamaygal Aboriginal people. Search for their middens and engravings and take in stunning views over the harbour and northern beaches. Drop down to Manly Cove and walk past Collins Beach to Manly Wharf, where ferries leave for Circular Quay. If you’re still feeling energetic, the bush-fringed track winds another 10km past Clontarf beach and Fisher Bay to the Spit Bridge.
**CIRCULAR QUAY TO SOUTH HEAD**

See some of Sydney’s most iconic attractions on this magnificent 17km (10.6 mile) loop around the harbour’s south-east shoreline. Walk from Circular Quay, site of the first colony in 1788, to the famous Sydney Opera House. Loop around the water’s edge, through the lush Botanic Gardens to Mrs Macquarie Point and Woolloomooloo. Or detour via Macquarie Street’s historic sites and the Domain. Pass Garden Island naval base and walk upwards into Potts Point, the post-war hub for Sydney bohemia. Visit Elizabeth Bay house, spot mega-yachts in Rushcutters Bay and wander past Darling Point’s harbourside mansions. Travel through Double Bay and Rose Bay and up into Vaucluse with its stunning harbour views. Picnic and swim in Nielsen Park or Parsley Bay, grab fish and chips in Watsons Bay and wander along Camp Cove, renowned as the landing point for the First Fleet, to South Head. You can shorten this walk by detouring to Dover Heights or Bondi. From Rushcutters Bay, a route also cuts through Centennial Park to Clovelly.

**SOUTH HEAD TO CLOVELLY**

Navigate towering, sea-lashed sandstone cliffs, historic naval buildings and Sydney’s popular eastern bays and beaches on this 8km (5 mile) section. Start at South Head and wind south past the HMAS Watson military reserve and the notoriously rocky Gap Bluff. The views stretch all the way down Sydney’s jagged southern cliff-line. Spot ships coasting out of the harbour and migrating whales between May and October. Pass weatherboard fisherman’s cottages, peer through the obsolete canons dotted along the headland and take the timber walkway through dramatic Diamond Bay. The path leaves the coast at Dover Heights and reconnects in North Bondi. Stroll along the promenade of iconic Bondi Beach, then take the popular cliff track to Tamarama and family-friendly Bronte. Weave alongside the ocean next to Waverley Cemetery, where poets Henry Lawson and Dorothea Mackellar and aviator Lawrence Hargrave are buried. The path ends in the tranquil inlet of Clovelly. Snorkel or dive here or next door in relaxed, rocky Gordons Bay.

**CLOVELLY TO LA PERouse**

You can do this 17km (10.6 mile) hike in six or seven hours but for more time to savour the sights, link shorter sections with public transport. From Clovelly head into calm Coogee, a seaside haven for both families and backpackers. Saunter past the secluded seafront pocket of Lurline Bay to Mistral Point, a good spot for winter whale-watching or just enjoying the brilliant blue ocean vistas. Wind past Maroubra Beach, where the surf is always up, and stop for a picnic lunch in Cromwell Park, overlooking Malabar Beach. Check out the wreck of the SS Malabar, before walking through Little Bay and Fort Banks, a World War II defence base. Head past Henry Head to La Perouse, which is layered with the stories of Aboriginal inhabitants as well as French and English settlers. Learn more in the local museum or explore the historic fort of Bare Island. You’ll need to take a taxi from here to Kurnell to begin the walk’s next section.

**KURNELL TO CRONULLA**

Walk back through Sydney’s history – from Captain Cook’s arrival to Aboriginal occupation – on this stunning 13km (8 mile) walk. Start at Cook’s Landing Place, the birthplace of colonial Australia, and travel through Botany Bay National Park, which is dotted with more than 30 Aboriginal sites. See the rock engravings, burial sites and axe grinding grooves left by the Gweagal and Goorawal people alone or on a specific Aboriginal tour. The parks’ Discovery Centre re-creates the first contact between Aboriginal tribes and Captain Cook’s crew. Follow some of the different walking loops around Inscription Point or continue around the majestic Kurnell Peninsula to Cape Bailey Lighthouse, a scenic lunch stop. Walk over wild sand dunes, perched lagoons and regenerated bushland to the golden sweep of Cronulla Beach. From here the track winds on to Gunnamatta Bay Wharf, where you can connect with the coastal track through the Royal National Park and the Federation Track to Melbourne.