

Post



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Apr 11, 2025 · 6 min read

Moseying off to Melbourne - April 12, 2025

Updated: Apr 16, 2025

SUMMARY

Spent the day exploring the famous Salamanca Market, a collection of many booths selling jewelry, local products and food from all over the world. Flew to Melbourne, arriving late and tired so opted for dinner at the hotel. - Karen

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DETAIL

And just like that we're done with the island/state of Tasmania. Well, we will be when we fly out this afternoon/evening. It's Saturday and that can only be one thing in Hobart, the Salamanca market! It's a big deal and goes on for quite a while. It's for the locals but also for the tourists. There's produce, meat, cheese, eggs, etc. but also tons of arts and crafts. We're not in a big hurry. We take our time waking up, cleaning up and packing up. We say goodbye to our eclectic two story studio room and artsy hotel. It's been fun. We check out and leave our luggage for later.

Outside it's a perfect fall market day. Lots of blue sky and very crisp temperatures. There's already people out, headed to and from the market or just out for some exercise. Pets are being walked. It's a short, pleasant walk over to the Salamanca part of town. As we get closer we see people with bags of purchases and smell the tasty and unhealthy food being cooked. The first rows of stalls/trailers we encounter are many of the cooked treats: funnel cakes and whole potatoes spiraled the length of a wooden stick and deep fried. Visitors aren't shying away from those. We note the wallaby burritos and crepes for later. We buy coffee (flat whites) for now.

It's crowded and great people watching. We see lots of stalls selling craft hard liquor, offering samples. We demur but lots don't. Mixed drinks are being sold in decorative six packs. There's local wine being hawked. And there's tons of crafts: plaques, aprons, cutting boards, art, mounted bizarre insects, hats, scarves... if you can imagine it, it's here and we need none of it (mostly). We do buy some savory cheese wafers and some ANZAC biscuits. (So good, you should find a traditional recipe and make a batch).

We never do try the wallaby burrito (it comes highly recommended) but do split a cheese/spinach/mushroom crepe which is quite tasty. I again see the tee-shirts saying "I checked the pouch", a reference to encountering road kill and verifying that it's not a dead mother with vulnerable joey in her pouch. Two fun ladies are selling these to raise money and awareness for native animal conservation. One of the ladies is the actual sculptor of the small bronze statues we saw at the airport upon our arrival. She tells us how people get their picture taken with the largest Tasmanian Devil, putting their arm around it. The result is that the bronze gets very well polished on one side, making the animal look cross-eyed, much to her dismay.

We buy a few more things including an artistic pot, for Tricia, that she's having shipped back home to the states. It's fired in shades of grey, with the outline of one of the eucalyptus leaves that was touching the pot as it was being fired. We do the one last row of stalls, surprisingly very long... so many vendors, such fun! Eventually we cry "uncle!" and leave the vendors to their vending. What we need is beer, which is not hard to come by in these parts.

As we enjoy we watch something on the nearby telly in the sports bar. The subject is 'sleeve length', sleeveless or short sleeve. The topic? Is this rugby or AFL (the Australian rules Football League). You can tell what you're seeing on the TV based on the shirt sleeve length. Who knew? Good thing Don Chandler's here.

Back at the airport, after a quick Uber ride, we check our bags, go through security and settle in to wait for a flight. It's a couple of hours away, and that time extends as the flight is delayed. Travel is such fun. We occupy our time trying more local beers, you have to support the local economy, right?

Standing in line to board the plane, and emboldened by the beer, I inquire of the two Australian 20 somethings in front of us about the reported local name for redheads, which both of them obviously are. A red-head here is called bluey, presumably for its ironic connotations. Yes this is true, no they don't mind the label, but that was invented back in the late 1800s and is not used so much today. I guess that's better than the other term used, "ranga", as in orangutan. Yikes!

On the plane we sit in a row with a few extra inches of leg space. It was a good deal to purchase that which also included our baggage fee and we were informed it also included a \$10 credit for food or drink. Nice, but the offerings aren't terribly healthy. Beer? The plane is warm and the pilot apologizes that this old plane's "air con" cannot overcome the oppressive heat (it's 67° outside). It'll be better once we're airborne, he promises.

We land in Melbourne and deplane, again there's no jet bridge. We reclaim our bags and catch an Uber to our hotel, The Hotel Victoria. It's a grand dame of a hotel and our room, while large, is very dated. Lucille Ball and Ricky Ricardo, in the 1960s, would have been thrilled. Though not expensive, our room has a big foyer, bathroom, living room and bedroom. It has few accessible outlets but it does have one large, noisy, stand-alone A/C on the floor in each of the two big rooms. Our windows look out over the street behind our hotel and over a rooftop bar across the street. Maybe we'll be happy for the noise of the A/Cs. The clock hasn't been adjusted for the switch to DST and we don't bother.

The hotel was undoubtedly a most impressive one when it opened in 1884. On trip advisor more visitors give it a "good" rating than "excellent" though they do laud its location. It's particularly good if you have business in the impressive parliament building, half a block away.

Wikipedia notes that it “pre-dates other notable grand hotels including The Waldorf Astoria in New York, the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, the Ritz in Paris and the Savoy in London”. A panel next to the elevators list forty plus of the ‘better known’ hotel guests over the years. These include Lauren Bacall, Gregory Peck, Harry Houdini, HRH Edward (Prince of Wales), and Meryl Streep.

After all that beer and snacks en route I'm still full and opt out for dinner while Tricia, Don and Karen head down to the Hotel's Cricket Bar for a light dinner. Then off to bed, tomorrow's another tour.

Photos



Karen up and doing wordle in the upstairs sleeping area of our funky hipster studio hotel room



Out into the sunshine, it's another beautiful, crisp fall day. Mount Wellington in the distance.



The four of us off to the famous Salamanca Market with about a zillion others.



The poor young wallabies are reportedly slow-cooked. Maybe that's less painful. We don't partake.



Quite a few people did partake of the spiral cut whole potatoes, deep fried for your dining pleasure.



How much flat white goes in every cup?
As much as is physically possible. Every
time.



Yes Australia has one of the largest
assortments of man-killing spiders,
snakes, reptiles, etc. etc. but they also
have some bizzare looking insects. Yours
to buy at the Salamanca Market.



This bloke wondered how long it'd take (and how many rides it would take) to hitchhike from Hobart (I think) back to London. It's a long way and quite a tale to tell. He'd love for you to buy his book and read all about it.



Lots fo mirrors at Salamanca for those trying on scarves, aprons, hats, and "jumpers", whatever those are.

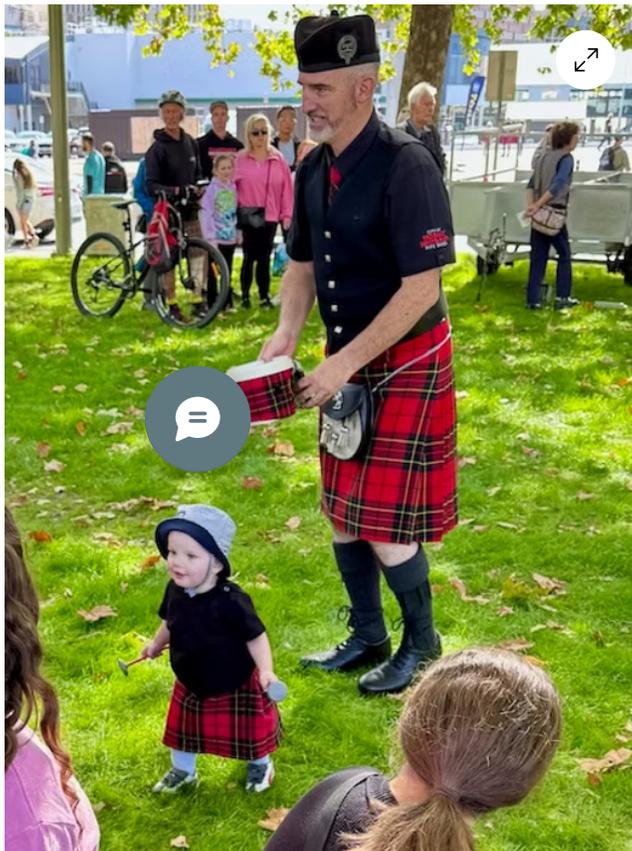


Time for us to eat. Crepes, yum. We had ours with ham, cheese, and mushrooms.



FARNSNIENTE





Time to ask for donations after the bag pipe concert. So many bag pipes. This guys breaks out his secret donation soliciting weapon.



Finally back at the Hobart Airport, bags surrendered. Time for a beer and waiting, lots of waiting.



Finally it's time to traipse across the tarmac out to the rolling ramp that leads up to our plane. Tricia saying a fond goodbye to Hobart.

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