

Australia



Key Facts

Location

Indian/Pacific Oceans.

Time

Australia spans three time zones:

GMT + 10 (GMT + 11 from October to March, except Queensland; starts a month earlier in Tasmania).

GMT + 9.5 (GMT + 10.5 from October to March, except Northern Territory).

GMT + 8 (GMT + 9 from October to March, three-year trial in Western Australia until 2009 followed by referendum).

Some states operate daylight saving time during the Australian summer.

Area

7,686,850 sq km (2,967,909 sq miles).

Population

21.2 million (official estimate 2007).

Electricity

220/240 volts AC, 50Hz. Three-pin plugs are in use, however sockets are different from those found in most countries and an adaptor socket may be needed. Outlets for 110 volts for small appliances are found in most hotels.

Currency

Australian Dollar (AUD; symbol A\$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of A\$100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of A\$2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10 and 5 cents.

Public Holidays

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2008-December 2009 period.

Climate

Australia is in the southern hemisphere and the seasons are opposite to those in Europe and North America. There are two climatic zones: the tropical zone (in the north above the Tropic of Capricorn) and the temperate zone. The tropical zone (consisting of 40% of Australia) has two seasons, summer ('wet') and winter ('dry'), while the temperate zone has all four seasons.

Spring to summer: Warm or hot everywhere, tropical in the north, and warm to hot with mild nights in the south.

Autumn to winter: Northern and central Australia have clear warm days, cool nights; the south has cool days with occasional rain but still plenty of sun. Snow is totally confined to mountainous regions of the southeast.

Drought is becoming more widespread with southeast Queensland, Victoria and South Australia all badly affected.

For further details, including climate statistics, see under individual state entries.

Public Holidays

2008

1 Jan: New Year's Day.

26 Jan: Australia Day.

21-24 Mar: Easter.

25 Apr: ANZAC Day.

25 Dec: Christmas Day.

26 Dec: Boxing Day.

2009

1 Jan: New Year's Day.

26 Jan: Australia Day.

10-13 Apr: Easter.

25 Apr: ANZAC Day.

25 Dec: Christmas Day.

26 Dec: Boxing Day.

