Melbourne’s little laneways began life as rear access to properties facing big streets. Many were later roofed as ‘arcades’ to provide refuge from the weather and crowds and to provide more space for shops. Today, some lanes have been reborn and hum to the rhythm of daily city life. Others are still waiting to be discovered.

Begin your walk by crossing from Federation Square (1) to a traditional meeting place ‘Under the Clocks’ (2) at Flinders Street Station (3). Cross Flinders Street, turn left and continue on. Turn right into Degraves Street where William Degraves’ steam flourmill pumped away in the 1850s. Nowadays, it’s espresso.

Degraves Street (4) is a mecca for Melbourne’s café society. Check out the healthy delights at the organic shop, juice bar. Order a coffee at Degraves Espresso Bar, where the seats are recycled cinema seats and benches from a former magistrates court.

At the end of Degraves Street, on the other side of Flinders Lane, is the Majorca Building (5) – still as stylish as in its 1920s heyday. The building’s terracotta has Spanish or Moorish influences, reflecting the exotic destinations that captured imaginations at that time.

Centre Place (6) is a breeding ground for cafes – some so small you can barely stretch to stir your coffee. Ask for the delicious soup of the day at pocket sized Jungle Juice Bar, squat on the box seats and enjoy noodles at Yen or retreat upstairs to dimly lit Hell’s Kitchen and look down on the passing throng. This area is also a must see for those interested in street art.

Step up to Centre Way (7) (1913) – an early steel-framed building with a post-modern makeover – then cross Collins Street and turn left before entering the exquisite 19th Century Block Arcade (8). The arcade was named after the fashionable Collins Street block between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets where nineteenth century Melburnians liked to promenade or ‘do the block’. Today, it is still a hive of activity, with its mosaic floors and fascinating shops to explore.

Pick up a table at Block Place (9) and grab a bite to eat before you cross over Little Collins Street to the elegant Royal Arcade (10) (1869) – the oldest shopping arcade in Australia. Don’t forget to look back up to Gog and Magog (11), the two legendary giants of the ancient Britons who have struck on the hour since 1892.
At 63-73 Hardware Lane, look up through the cafe umbrellas to check the date of Dyon's Building, a set of four (originally five) warehouses designed by William Pitt, the celebrated architect of Princess Theatre and some of the finest gothic revival buildings in Collins Street. Named after Hardware House in the 1920s, Hardware Lane was built on land formerly occupied by Kirk's Horse Bazaar.

Stroll back down Bourke Street cross over and take a short cut through Gallery Plaza then turn left onto Little Collins Street where the serious fashion begins. Pass a dozen lanes and arcades before reaching the delightful Howey Place. Between the 1890s and 1920s, the western side of Howey Place was part of Cole's Book Arcade, which stretched from Collins to Bourke Streets and was probably the 'biggest bookshop in the world' with over two million books.

Continue on through Capitol Arcade to Capitol House, opened in 1924 and designed by Walter Burley Griffin (architect of Canberra) and Marion Mahony Griffin. Upstairs, the Capitol Theatre is an extraordinary 'picture palace' with tours available the third Friday each month. During term-time, you may see students from RMIT University attending lectures in the impressive auditorium.

Walk through historic Manchester Unity Arcade and then cross Collins Street to Manchester Lane and Flinders Lane. Once the centre of the city's rag trade, Flinders Lane is now a unique shopping destination for the hip and happening, as well as home to some of the best galleries and bars in the city.

As you head back to Federation Square, stroll down Scott Alley and pass through Port Phillip Arcade and turn left at Flinders Street. Your final stop is Young & Jackson's, where the beer has flowed for over a century. Upstairs is the nude portrait of Chloe that shocked conservative Melbourne and made the hotel famous. Enjoy one last drink here as you take in the grand view of Federation Square.

Reaching Melbourne's shopping heart at Bourke Street Mall, turn left and cross the Bourke St Mall, pass the sculpture the Public Purse then continue along Elizabeth Street. The Underground Public Toilets are historic: the men's were built in 1910, while the ladies waited longer, until 1927.

Go left up Little Bourke Street and cross two laneways before we discover a superb group of 1880s warehouses at 23-31 Niagara Lane. Look for the picturesque barrel hoists. The lane was named in the 1860s after the Niagara Hotel in lane was named in the 1860s after the Look for the picturesque barrel hoists. The a superb group of 1880s warehouses at cross two laneways before we discover the Bourke St Mall, pass the sculpture the Public Purse then continue along Elizabeth Street. The Underground Public Toilets are historic: the men's were built in 1910, while the ladies waited longer, until 1927.

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Arts and Culture

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Bookings essential, Tel: 9664 7900

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Mon-Wed 7.30am-10.30pm

Thurs 7.30am-midnight

Fri-Sun 7.30am-1am

Bokchoy Tang

Mon-Sun 11.30am-late

Café Chinotto

Mon-Sun 8am-late

Chocolate Buddha

Mon-Sun Noon-late

Feddish

Mon-Sun Noon-late

Jolimont Espresso

Mon-Fri 7.30am-5.30pm

Sat & Sun 9am-5.30pm

Riverland Barr and Café

Mon-Sun 7am-late

Time Out Café

Mon-Fri 7am-late

Sat-Sun 8am-late

Transport

Mon-Sun noon-late

Taxi Restaurant

Mon-Sun noon-late

Tianabi

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Transit Lounge

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Kirra Gallery

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Sat-Sun 10am-6pm

7-Eleven

Mon-Sun Early-late

National Design Centre Shop

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun noon-9pm (closed public holidays)

Federation Square

Tourist Information

Melbourne Visitor Centre at Federation Square

Open 7 days 9am-6pm

Melbourne Visitor Booth in the Bourke Street Mall

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City Ambassadors

Keep an eye out for our roving City Ambassadors in their distinctive red outfits roaming the City.

Melbourne Greeter Service

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For further information, visit www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/touristinformation

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There are a number of self-guided walks in this series. These walks were developed by Federation Square and the City of Melbourne. For more information, call the City of Melbourne Hotline 9658 9658, visit www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/melbournebrochures or go to the Melbourne Visitor Centre at Federation Square