



Top Tips for Balloon Spotting

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If you follow me on Instagram you will have noticed we've got a bit of a thing for Balloon Spotting, we get up early with our thermos of hot chocolate and some toasted sandwiches and head off into the sleepy city to watch what is always an impressive sight.

It started this time last year when our little guy was a guest of the Royal Children's Hospital and we saw them taking off from the park nearby and since then we have watched about 25 balloon launches. "How do you know where they take off from?" People ask (generally followed by "and why on earth do you wake the kids well before sunrise to watch balloons?" But that's another post). It's hit and miss, but we are getting to know how best to spot them, here are our tips for spotters-to-be:

1. Check the weather the night before, if there is any chance of rain call it off because they probably have too. You'll also want to check the wind, if it is greater than 20km you risk them not being up either.



2. Wind direction and speed tell you roughly where the launch site will be, westerly winds means a western suburbs launch, South easterly winds a south eastern suburbs launch etc. wind speed tells you how far out they will take off from. 5km winds (which is very light) means it will be close to the city, 20km winds push the launch right out to the outer suburbs.



3. Grab a map (or Google map it, I guess we aren't all hipsters) and look at what parks and reserves are around in the area you have narrowed it down to. Some places we have seen launches from are: Royal Park, Kevin Bartlett Reserve, Yarra Bend, Albert Park and Westgate Park.



Example: light 9km southerly winds may put the launch around Albert Park in the south of Melbourne.

4. Balloons take off right on sunrise so you need to be there before then to catch the launch.

5. If you just want to see the balloons in the air and don't mind about the launch head into the CBD. They always take a path over the city and MCG so Princess Bridge (beside Flinders Station) and the

Shrine of Remembrance are good spots to watch from. The flight goes for exactly one hour from sunrise so that's your timetable.

6. Royal Park Nature Play (beside the Royal Children's Hospital) is a good spot to watch from as well as there is a big hill to sit on with a nice skyline view, the park behind is a fairly regular launch site (in low wind conditions) and even if the balloon spotting mission is a fail you happen to have one of Melbourne's best playgrounds all to yourself for a sunrise play. It's not an awful backup plan.

It really is worth the effort, and the early rise! See you out spotting :)



Watching the balloons from The Shrine.