

Singapore

Singapore (Chinese: 新加坡; Malay: *Singapura*; Tamil: சிங்கப்பூர்) is a city-state in [Southeast Asia](#). Modern Singapore was founded as a [British](#) trading colony in 1819, and since independence, it has become one of the world's most prosperous countries and boasts one of the world's busiest ports. Singaporean food is legendary, with bustling hawker centres and 24-hour coffee shops offering affordable food from all parts of [Asia](#). Combining the skyscrapers and subways of an affluent, futuristic and modern city with a medley of different Asian cultures such as the Chinese, Malay and Indian influences and a tropical climate, with tasty food, good shopping and a vibrant nightlife scene, this Garden City makes a great stopover or springboard into the region.

The country has a partly deserved reputation for its sterile predictability and neutrality. Nevertheless, the "Switzerland of Asia" is for many a welcome respite from the chaos, dirt and poverty of much of the neighbouring Southeast Asian mainland. If you scratch below the squeaky clean surface and get away from the tourist trail you'll soon find more than meets the eye in one of the few city-states in the world.

Districts

Sometimes referred to as the *Little Red Dot* (originally coined as a pejorative by the late former Indonesian president B. J. Habibie) or the *Lion City* (a literal translation of the original Sanskrit name), Singapore is a small country on a small island with close to six and a half million people. It is a fairly crowded city and in fact, it is second only to [Monaco](#) as the world's most densely populated country. Unlike many other densely populated countries, Singapore has over 50% of its area covered in greenery and with over 50 major parks and 4 nature reserves; it is an enchanting **city in a garden**. Large self-contained residential towns have mushroomed all over the island, around the clean and modern city centre. The centre of the city is in the south and consists roughly of the Orchard Road shopping area, the Riverside, the new Marina Bay area and also the skyscraper-filled Shenton Way financial district. All of this is known in acronym-loving Singapore as the **CBD** (Central Business District).

Singapore CBD

Riverside (Civic District)

Singapore's colonial core, with museums, statues and theatres, not to mention restaurants, bars and clubs, centred along the banks of the Singapore River at Boat Quay and Clarke Quay.

Orchard Road

Miles and miles of shopping malls in air-conditioned comfort. At the eastern end, the Bras Basah District is an arts and culture project in progress.

Marina Bay

Dominated by the Marina Bay Sands integrated resort (hotel, casino, shopping mall, convention centre and museum), the futuristic Gardens by the Bay, and the Marina Barrage. Along with the Singapore Flyer and the Esplanade Theatres, Marina Bay makes up the new iconic skyline of Singapore.

Bugis and Kampong Glam

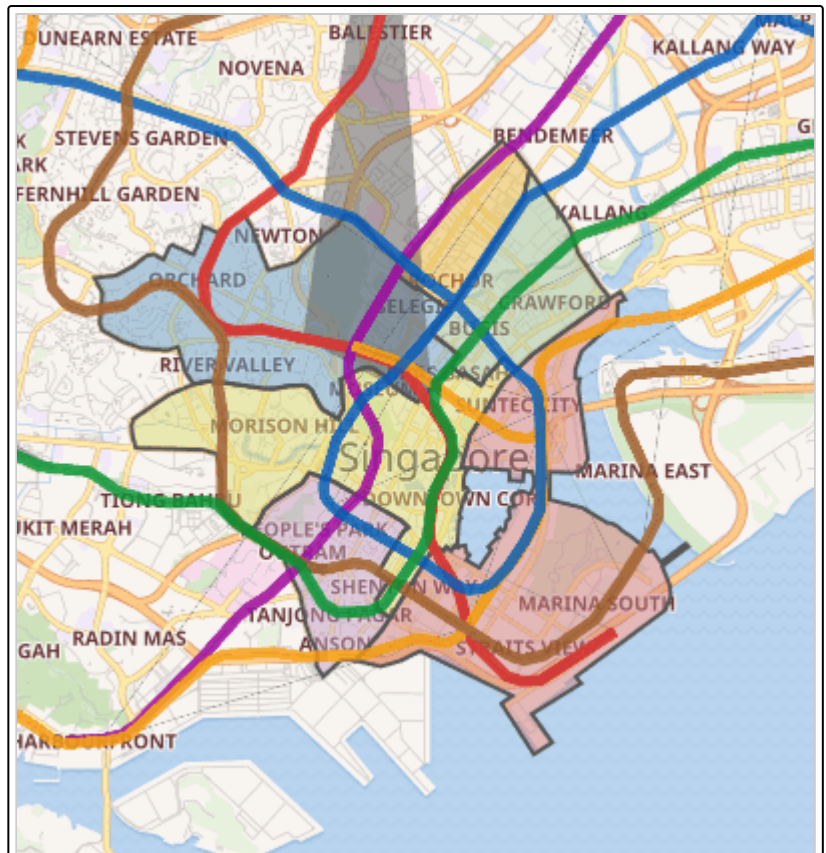
Bugis and Kampong Glam are Singapore's old Malay district, good for shopping in the day but especially coming to life at night.

Chinatown

The area was designated for Chinese settlement by Raffles, and is now a Chinese heritage area popular with tourists. Restored shophouses make for trendy hangouts for locals and expats alike.

Little India

A piece of India to the north of the city core.



Map of Singapore City Centre. [Static map](#)

Outer Singapore

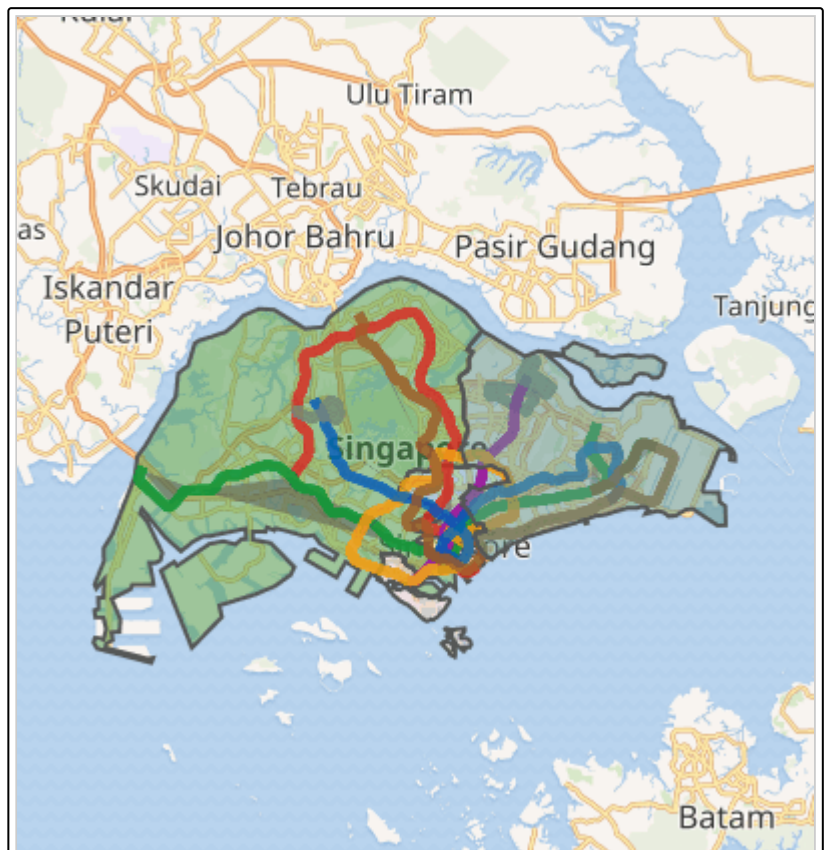
There's more to see outside the main city centre of Singapore, from the HDB (*Housing and Development Board*) heartlands where hawker food is king, to the Singapore Zoo. Or chill out in the parks and beaches of the East Coast and Sentosa.

Sentosa and Harbourfront

A separate island once a military fort that has been developed into a resort. Sentosa is the closest that Singapore gets to Disneyland, with a dash of gambling and the Universal Studios theme park thrown in. Across the water, there's Mount Faber and the Southern Ridges, an urban treetop walk with local monkeys.

East Coast

The largely residential eastern part of the island contains Changi Airport, miles and miles of beach and many famous eateries. Also covers Geylang Serai, the true home of Singapore's Malays, and Pulau Ubin, the



Map of Outer Singapore. [Static map](#)

last remnant of a rustic Singapore.

North and West

The northern and western parts of the island, known as Woodlands and Jurong respectively, form Singapore's residential and industrial hinterlands. By far the largest tourist attraction here is the Mandai complex, containing all four of Singapore's spectacular zoos.

Balestier, Newton, Novena and Toa Payoh

Budget accommodations and Burmese temples within striking distance of Central Singapore. Toa Payoh, one of Singapore's first planned neighbourhoods, is an easy way to wander around a local housing estate and experience the town centre design unique to Singapore.

Addresses

In the centre, Singapore's addressing system is fairly similar to other English-speaking countries (such as 17 Orchard Road), but the new housing developments on the outskirts may appear more intimidating: a typical address might be "Blk 505 Bedok Nth Ave 3 #19-315". Here, "Blk 505" is the housing block number (Blk = Block), "Bedok Nth Ave 3" is the street name/number, and "#19-315" means floor 19 apartment 315. The first digit of both housing block and street number is the neighbourhood's number (in this case 5), making it easier to narrow down the right location. There are also 6-digit postal codes, with the last three digits corresponding to exactly one building. For example, "Blk 181 Bedok North Rd" is "Singapore 460181". Finally, you will also encounter Malay terms in addresses: the most commonly used are **Jalan** (*Jln*) for "Road", **Lorong** (*Lor*) for "Lane", **Bukit** (*Bt*) for "Hill" and **Kampung** (*Kg*) for "Village".

Useful tools for hunting down addresses include **StreetDirectory.com** (<http://www.streetdirectory.com>), **GoThere.sg** (<http://gothere.sg>) and **OneMap.sg** (<http://www.onemap.sg>). The "Blk" and unit number can and should be omitted when entering addresses into these sites: "505 Bedok Nth Ave 3" will do.

Understand

Singapore is a microcosm of Asia, populated by Chinese, Malays, Indians and a large group of workers and expatriates from all around the globe, in a country that can be crossed in barely an hour. Having celebrated its 50th birthday in 2015, Singapore has more often than not chosen economic pragmatism over social concerns, encouraging constant reuse and redevelopment of land with huge projects like the Marina Bay Sands and Resorts World Sentosa integrated resorts as well as becoming a significant Asian financial hub, but there has also been a growing push-back to preserve local heritage in Balestier and elsewhere; just one of the many decisions to balance for the country's future.



The Singapore CBD skyline



History


The first mentions of Singapore in written historical records date back to the second and third centuries where a vague reference to its location was found in Greek and Chinese texts, under the names of Sabana and Pu Luo Chung respectively. According to legend, Srivijayan prince Sang Nila Utama landed on the island in the 13th century and, catching sight of a strange creature that he thought was a lion, decided to found a new city he called *Singapura*, Sanskrit for **Lion City**. Alas, there have never been any lions anywhere near Singapore or elsewhere on Malaya, so the mysterious beast was more probably a tiger or wild boar.

More historical records indicate that the island was settled at least two centuries earlier and was known as **Temasek**, Javanese for "Sea Town", and an important port for the Sumatran Srivijaya kingdom. However, Srivijaya fell around 1400 and Temasek, battered by the feuding kingdoms of Siam and the Javanese Majapahit, fell into obscurity. As Singapura, it then briefly regained importance as a trading centre for the Melaka Sultanate and later, the Johor Sultanate. However, Portuguese raiders then destroyed the settlement and Singapura faded into obscurity once more.

The story of Singapore as we know it today thus began in 1819, when **Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles** made a deal with a claimant to the throne of the Sultanate of Johor: the British would support his claim in exchange for the right to set up a trading post on the island. Though the Dutch initially protested, an Anglo-Dutch treaty was signed in 1824 separating the Malay world into British and Dutch spheres of influence (resulting in the current Malaysia-Indonesia and Singapore-Indonesia borders). This treaty ended the conflict. The Dutch renounced their claim to Singapore and ceded their colony in Malacca to the British, in exchange for the British ceding their colonies on Sumatra to the Dutch.

Well-placed at the entrance to the Straits of Malacca, straddling the trade routes between China, India, Europe, and Australia, Raffles' master stroke was to declare Singapore a **free port**, with no duties charged on trade. As traders flocked to escape onerous Dutch taxes, the trading post soon grew into one of Asia's busiest, drawing people from far and wide. Along with Penang and Malacca, Singapore became one of the **Straits Settlements** and a jewel in the British colonial crown. Its economic fortunes received a further boost when palm oil and rubber from other parts of Malaya were processed and shipped out via Singapore. In 1867, the Straits Settlements were split off from British India and made into a directly ruled Crown Colony.

When World War II broke out, **Fortress Singapore** was seen as a formidable British base, with massive naval fortifications guarding against assault by sea. However, not only did the fortress lack a fleet - as most ships were tied up defending Britain from the Germans - but the Japanese wisely chose to cross Malaya by bicycle instead. Despite hastily turning their artillery around, this was something the British had not prepared for, and on 15 February 1942, with supplies critically low after less than a week of fighting, Singapore ignominiously surrendered. The colony's erstwhile rulers were packed off to Changi Prison, and tens of thousands of Singaporeans perished in the subsequent brutal occupation. The British returned in 1945, but it was clear that their time was coming to an end.

	
Capital	Singapore
Currency	Singapore dollar (SGD)
Population	5.8 million (2021)
Electricity	230 volt / 50 hertz (BS 1363)
Country code	+65
Time zone	UTC+08:00, Singapore Standard Time, Asia/Singapore
Emergencies	995, 999
Driving side	left
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“ But if you are a troublemaker... it's our job to politically destroy you. ”

—Lee Kuan Yew, when commenting on his political rivalries.

Granted self-rule in 1955, Singapore briefly joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963 when the British left, but was expelled in the aftermath of two bloody racial riots in 1964, because the Chinese-majority city was seen as a threat to Malay dominance. Consequently, when the island became independent on 9 August 1965, Singapore became the only country in the history of the modern world to gain independence against its own will. The subsequent 25 years of iron-fisted rule by the late prime minister **Lee Kuan Yew** saw Singapore's economy boom, with the country rapidly becoming one of the wealthiest and most developed in Asia despite its lack of natural resources, earning it a place as one of the four **East Asian Tigers**. The ruling **People's Action Party** (PAP) continues to dominate the political scene with 83 out of 93 seats in Parliament in the 2020 general election. Societal restrictions have been loosened up though, with the government trying to shake off its staid image, and it remains to be seen how the delicate balancing act between political control and social freedom will play out.

In modern times, Singapore has tried to position itself as a neutral state balancing the interests of major world powers such as the United States and China. This has made Singapore a popular alternative to Switzerland for diplomatically sensitive talks between foreign leaders, such as the meeting between Chinese president Xi Jinping and Taiwanese president Ma Ying-jeou in 2015, and the meeting between American president Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in 2018.

People

Singapore prides itself on being a multi-racial country and has diverse cultures despite its small size. Singaporeans make up two-thirds of the population. The largest group are the Chinese (about 75%), in which the largest subgroups are the Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese speakers, with Mandarin acting as the *lingua franca* of the community. Other notable dialect groups among the Chinese include the Hakkas, Hainanese, Foochows and Henghuas. Malays, who are comprised of descendants of Singapore's original inhabitants as well as migrants from present day Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei, form about 14% of all Singaporeans. Indians, which in Singapore also includes people who trace their ancestry to modern-day Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, form about 9% of residents. Among the Indians, Tamils form the largest group by far, though there are also significant numbers of speakers of other Indian languages such as Malayalam, Punjabi, Gujarati, Sindhi and Hindi. The remainder are a mix of many other cultures, most notably the Eurasians who are of mixed European and Asian descent, and also the Peranakans or Straits Chinese, who are of mixed Chinese and Malay descent. Other smaller communities include the Parsis, Arabs, most of whom trace their ancestry to Hadhramaut in modern-day Yemen, and Jews, most of whom trace their ancestry to Baghdad in modern-day Iraq (though these days the Singaporean Jewish community is far outnumbered by expatriate Jews from Israel and Western countries).

Singapore has always been an open country and at least a third of its population has arrived from elsewhere. They range from Burmese to Japanese to Thais and many others. There's also a large number of Filipinos, many of them working in the service industry or as domestic helpers. Throngs of happily smiling and chattering Filipinas may be seen in public spaces, one of which is a shopping mall named *Lucky Plaza* situated along Orchard Road, on Sundays when they take their only day off. However, a marked increase in migration from China and India has led to some simmering discontent and larger pockets of Mandarin-only speakers.

Singapore is by some measures the most religiously diverse country in the world with no religious group forming a majority, and religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution. Buddhism is the largest religion with about one-third of the population declaring themselves Buddhist. Other religions which exist in significant numbers include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Taoism. In addition to the "big five", the other officially-recognised religions are Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, the Baha'i Faith and Jainism. About 17% of Singaporeans claim no religious affiliation (known in Singapore as "free thinkers").



The Marina Bay Sands and Singapore Flyer

Climate

As Singapore is 1°17' north of the Equator, its tropical weather is usually sunny with little in the way of distinct seasons. Rain falls almost daily throughout the year, usually in sudden, heavy showers that rarely last longer than an hour. However, most rainfall occurs during the northeast monsoon (November to January), occasionally featuring lengthy spells of continuous rain. Spectacular thunderstorms can occur throughout the year, any time during the day, so it's wise to carry an umbrella at all times, both as a shade from the sun and a cover from the rain.

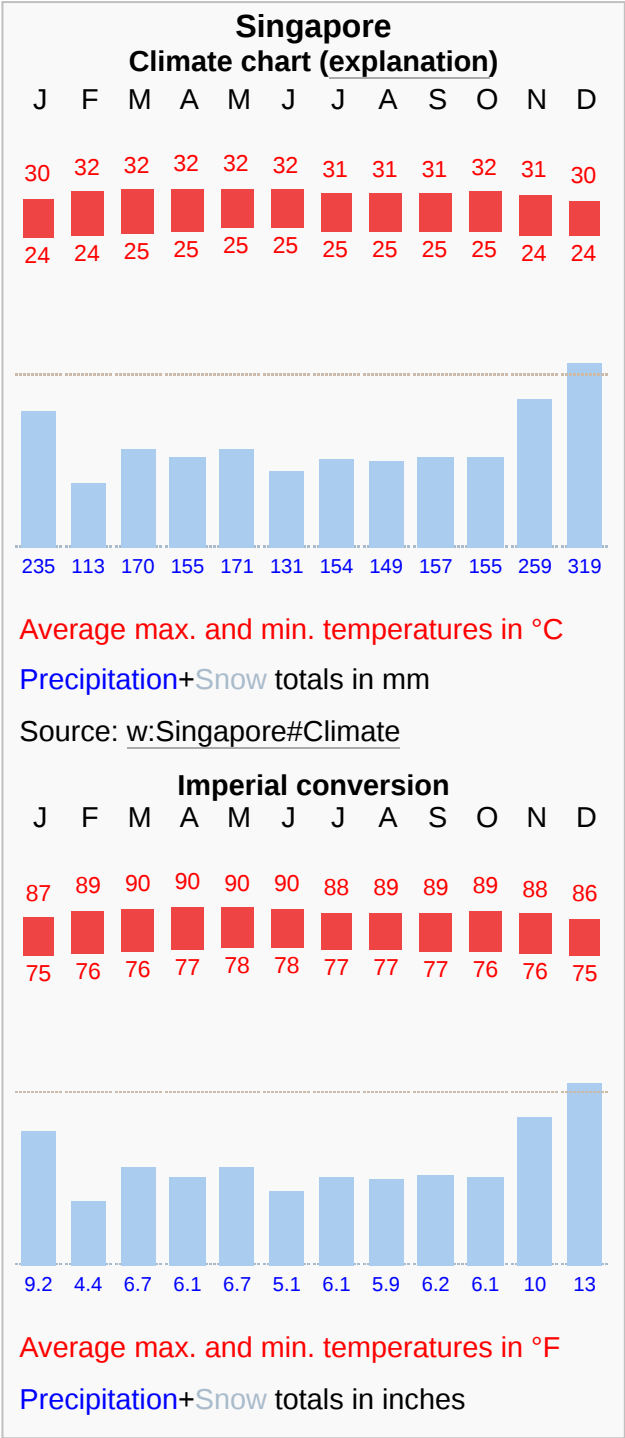
Between May and October, forest fires in neighbouring Sumatra can also cause dense haze, although this is unpredictable and comes and goes rapidly: check with the National Environment Agency (<http://www.haze.gov.sg>) for up-to-date conditions.

The temperature averages around:

- 30°C (86°F) daytime, 24°C (76°F) at night in December and January.
- 32°C (90°F) daytime, 25°C (81°F) at night for the rest of the year.

Singapore's lowest temperature ever was 19.4°C (66.9°F), recorded in 1934, with its highest temperature ever being 37.0°C (98.6°F), recorded in 2023.

The high temperature and humidity, combined with the lack of wind and the fact that temperatures stay high during the night, can take its toll on visitors from colder parts of the world. Bear in mind that



spending more than about an hour outdoors can be very exhausting, especially if combined with moderate exercise. Singaporeans themselves shun the heat, and for a good reason. Many live in air-conditioned flats, work in air-conditioned offices, take the air-conditioned metro to air-conditioned shopping malls connected to each other by underground tunnels where they shop, eat, and exercise in air-conditioned fitness clubs, only venturing out early in the morning and at night. Follow their example if you want to avoid discomfort in the searing heat and humidity of Singapore.

Units of measure

Singapore is for the most part fully metricated, but two holdovers from the British imperial system are the measure of property sizes, which are still advertised in square feet, and clothing sizes, which are still advertised in inches.

Politics

Singapore is a parliamentary republic modelled on the British Westminster system, though unlike the bicameral British parliament, Singapore's parliament is a unicameral legislature made up of 93 popularly-elected members, and a small number of appointed members with limited voting rights.

The president serves as Singapore's head of state and is popularly elected every six years, though the constitution requires that presidential candidates have served as a government minister, or as a CEO or chairman of the board of directors in a large company for a significant amount of time before being allowed to stand for election, effectively limiting the number of people who are qualified to be presidential candidates. The current president is Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who took office in September 2023 after a landslide victory in the presidential election. The president's role is largely ceremonial, with the prime minister wielding the most authority in government.

The prime minister is the head of government, and is typically the leader of the party with the most seats in parliament. The current prime minister is Lawrence Wong, leader of the People's Action Party (PAP), the only party that has governed since independence. Parliamentary elections are held every five years, depending on circumstances, and are regularly contested by opposition parties. Press control and restrictions on freedom of speech are a contributing factor against making any significant headway in unseating the ruling party. Nevertheless, Singapore's elections are generally free from corruption and electoral fraud. As of the 2020 general election, the only opposition party that has representation in parliament is the Workers' Party (WP).

Holidays

Singapore is a secular city state but due to its multicultural population, Singapore celebrates Chinese, Muslim, Hindu, and Christian holidays.

The year kicks off with a bang on 1 January and **New Year**, celebrated in Singapore just as in the West with a fireworks show and parties at every nightspot in town. Particularly famous are the wet and wild **foam parties** on the beaches of resort island Sentosa.

Due to the influence of the Chinese majority, the largest event by far is **Chinese New Year** (农历新年) or, more politically correctly, **Lunar New Year**, usually held in late January or early February. While this might seem to be an ideal time to visit, many smaller shops and eateries are closed for 2–3 days during

the period, though convenience stores like 7-Eleven, supermarkets, department stores, cinemas, fast-food restaurants and high end restaurants will remain open. The whole festival stretches out for a full 15 days, but the frenzied build-up to the peak occurs just before the night of the new moon, with exhortations of *gong xi fa cai* (恭喜发财 "congratulations and prosper"), red tinsel, mandarin oranges and the year's zodiac animal emblazoned everywhere and crowds of shoppers queuing in Chinatown, where there are also extensive street decorations to add spice to the festive mood. The two following days are spent with family, and then life returns to normal ... except for the final burst of **Chingay**, a colourful parade near the Singapore Flyer, held about ten days later.

On the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese calendar, the **Dragon Boat Festival** (端午节) is celebrated to commemorate a Chinese folk hero. As part of the celebrations, rice dumplings (肉粽 *bak chang*), which in Singapore are sometimes wrapped in fragrant *pandan* leaves instead of the original bamboo leaves, are usually eaten. In addition, dragon boat races are often held at the Singapore River on this day. The seventh month of the Chinese lunar calendar — usually August — starts off with a puff of smoke, as "hell money" is burned and food offerings are made to please the spirits of ancestors who are said to return to earth at this time. This is the **Hungry Ghost Festival** (中元节), when the living get together to stuff themselves and watch plays and Chinese opera performances. Following soon afterwards, the **Mid-Autumn Festival** (中秋节) on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month (Sep/Oct) is also a major event, with elaborate lantern decorations — particularly at Gardens by the Bay and Jurong's Chinese Garden — and **mooncakes** that are typically filled with lotus paste, nuts, and more consumed merrily.

The Hindu festival of lights, Diwali, known locally as **Deepavali**, is celebrated around October or November and Little India is brightly decorated for the occasion. In January or February is the celebration of **Thaipusam**, a Tamil Hindu festival in which male devotees carry a *kavadi*, an elaborate structure which pierces through various parts of their body, walking in procession from the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple in Little India to the Sri Thandayuthapani Temple in Tank Road. Female devotees usually join the procession carrying pots of milk instead. About one week before



New Year decorations in Chinatown

Gong xi fa cai Singapore style

There are a few twists to the Singapore way of celebrating Chinese New Year, particularly the **food**, which bears little resemblance to the steamy hotpots of frigid northern China. The top dish is *bak kwa* (肉干), sweet barbecued pork, followed closely by *yu sheng* (魚生), a salad of shredded vegetables and raw fish enthusiastically tossed into the air by all present. Favourite desserts are crumbly sweet pineapple tarts and gooey steamed *nian gao* (年糕) cakes. Red packets of money (红包 *ang pow*) are still handed out generously, but unlike in China, in Singapore you only need to start paying up once married.

Lunar New Year dates

The year of the *Dragon* began on 4 Feb 2024 at 16:25, and the Lunar New Year was on 10 Feb 2024

- The year of the *Snake* will begin on 3 Feb 2025 at 22:10, and the Lunar New Year will be on 29 January 2025
- The year of the *Horse* will begin on 4 Feb 2026 at 4:02,

Deepavali is **Thimithi**, the fire-walking festival where male devotees walk on burning coals at the Sri Mariamman Temple in Chinatown.

The Islamic fasting month of Ramadan with fast-breaking festival **Hari Raya Puasa** (Eid-ul-Fitr) is a major occasion in Malay parts of town, particularly Geylang Serai on the East Coast, which is lit up with extensive decorations during the period. Another festival celebrated by the Malays is Eid-ul-Adha, known locally as **Hari Raya Haji**, which is the period when Muslims make the trip to Mecca to perform in Hajj. In local mosques, lambs contributed by the faithful are sacrificed and their meat is used to feed the poor.

Christmas Day is also a major festive occasion in Singapore, and Orchard road is extensively lined with street decorations for the occasion. Christian families in Singapore usually celebrate the occasion with a variant of the traditional British Christmas dinner, with ham, turkey and a Yule log or a Christmas fruit cake. However, the Eurasian community has its own unique Christmas meal tradition, which incorporates numerous uniquely Eurasian dishes such as devil's curry. Since 2011, at the request of the local rabbi, a menorah has also been installed along Orchard Road alongside the Christmas decorations every December for Hanukkah.

The Buddhist **Vesak Day**, celebrating the birthday of the Buddha Sakyamuni, and **Good Friday** round out the list of holidays.

A more secular celebration occurs on 9 August, **National Day**, when fluttering flags fill Singapore and spectacular National Day parades are held to celebrate independence.

Events

Singapore holds numerous events each year. Some of its famous festivals and events include the **Singapore Food Festival**, the **Singapore Formula One Grand Prix**, the **Singapore Arts Festival**, the **Chingay Parade**, the **World Gourmet Summit** and **ZoukOut**.

Christmas is also widely celebrated in Singapore, a season where the city streets and shopping malls along its famous shopping belt, Orchard Road, are lit up and decorated in vibrant colours. In addition, the **Singapore Jewel Festival**

and the Lunar New Year will be on 17 Feb 2026

Contrary to popular belief, the change of the zodiac does not occur on the first day of the Lunar New Year, but instead occurs on Li Chun (立春 *lì chūn*), the traditional Chinese start of spring.

Ramadan

Ramadan is the 9th and holiest month in the Islamic calendar and lasts 29–30 days. Muslims fast every day for its duration and most restaurants will be closed until the fast breaks at dusk. Nothing (including water and cigarettes) is supposed to pass through the lips from dawn to sunset. Non-Muslims are exempt from this, but should still refrain from eating or drinking in public as this is considered very impolite. Working hours are decreased as well in the corporate world. Exact dates of Ramadan depend on local astronomical observations and may vary somewhat from country to country. Ramadan concludes with the festival of *Eid al-Fitr*, which may last several days, usually three in most countries.

- 11 March – 9 April 2024 (1445 AH)
- 1 March – 29 March 2025 (1446 AH)
- 18 February – 19 March 2026 (1447 AH)
- 8 February – 8 March 2027 (1448 AH)

If you're planning to travel to Singapore during Ramadan, consider reading Travelling

attracts numerous tourists every year, and is a display of precious gems, famous jewels and masterpieces from international jewellers and designers.

during Ramadan.

Visitor information

- visitsingapore.com (<https://www.visitsingapore.com/en/>)

Talk

See also: [Chinese phrasebook](#), [Malay phrasebook](#), [Tamil phrasebook](#), [English language varieties](#)

Malay is enshrined in the constitution as the "national language", but in practice, the most common language is English, spoken by almost every non-elderly Singaporean with varying degrees of fluency. However, the distinctive local patois, **Singlish**, may be hard to understand at times, as it incorporates slang words and phrases from other languages, including various Chinese dialects, Malay, and Tamil as well as English words whose pronunciation or meaning have been changed. Additionally, it has an odd way of structuring sentences, due to the original speakers being mostly Chinese, resulting in most Singlish sentences having Chinese grammar. Complex consonant clusters are simplified, articles and plurals disappear, verb tenses are replaced by adverbs, questions are altered to fit the Chinese syntax and non-English particles (especially the infamous "lah") appear:

Examples of Singlish sentences and respective English meanings

Singlish	English
<i>You wan beer or not? -- Dunwan lah, dring five bottle ored di.</i>	Do you want a beer? -- No, thanks; I've already had five bottles.
<i>Later wan go mall lepak abit? -- Ok, steady lah!</i>	Do you want to chill at the mall for a while later? -- Ok, good!
<i>He today taiko, kena tekan by his boss, so jialat.</i>	He was 'lucky' to be scolded by his boss today, seeming very much in trouble.

Thanks to nationwide language education campaigns, most younger Singaporeans are, however, capable of speaking what the government calls "good English" (British) when necessary. Moreover, it is common for Singaporeans from more affluent backgrounds to attend university in the United Kingdom or United States. To avoid unintentional offence,

Who are the people in your neighbourhood?

The Big 3 — Chinese, Malays and Indians — get all the press, but there are plenty of other communities with their own little neighbourhoods (or shopping malls) in Singapore:

Arabs: Arab St, of course

Burmese: Peninsula Plaza, on North Bridge Rd

Mainland Chinese: Geylang (Singapore's "new Chinatown")

Filipinos: Lucky Plaza, on Orchard Rd

French: Serangoon Gardens

Eurasians: Katong

Indonesians: City Plaza, near Paya Lebar MRT

Japanese: Robertson Quay, especially the Great World City shopping mall, plus Cuppage Plaza, opposite the Somerset MRT and Takashimaya along Orchard Rd

Koreans: Tanjong Pagar Rd

Peranakan Chinese: Katong

Thais: Aperia Mall, Lavender Street and City Gate, Beach Road

Vietnamese: Joo Chiat Rd

it's best to start off with standard English and shift to simplified pidgin only if it becomes evident that the other person cannot follow you. Try to resist the temptation to sprinkle your speech with unnecessary Singlish words. You'll get a laugh if you do it right, but it sounds patronising if you do it wrong.

Some 35% of Singaporeans speak English at home. Singapore's other official languages are Mandarin Chinese, Malay, and Tamil, mostly spoken by the Singaporean Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnic groups respectively. Governmental offices are required by law to provide all services in all four official languages. Like English, the Mandarin spoken in Singapore has also evolved into a distinctive creole and often incorporates words from other Chinese dialects, Malay, and English, though all Singaporean Chinese are taught standard Mandarin in school. Chinese proficiency among the Chinese community varies significantly — some might have troubles in speaking or understanding Mandarin on a conversational level. Various Chinese dialects (mostly Hokkien, though significant numbers also speak Teochew and Cantonese) are also spoken between older ethnic Chinese of the same dialect group, though their use has virtually died out among the younger generation; most people born after 1980 cannot speak them unless they were raised by their grandparents. Other Indian languages, such as Punjabi among the Sikhs, are also spoken.

The official Chinese script used in Singapore is the simplified script used in mainland China. As such, all official publications (including local newspapers) and signs are in simplified Chinese, and it is simplified Chinese that is taught in schools. Some of the older generation still prefer traditional script, and the popularity of Hong Kong and Taiwanese pop culture means that younger people may also be familiar with it.

Get in

Entry requirements

Citizens of Australia, the European Union, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland the United Kingdom and the United States do not need a visa for stays of 90 days or less.

Holders of a valid APEC Business Travel Card (ABTC) may visit Singapore for up to 60 days without a visa.

Citizens of **most other countries** can stay without a visa for 30 days or less, so that's the case if your country is not named here.

Citizens of the following countries who have to apply for a visa in advance, and can do so online (<https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/esvclandingpage/save>), through a local contact in Singapore or at a Singaporean embassy or consulate: Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Moldova, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.



A sign in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil

Citizens of several former Soviet countries (Georgia, Ukraine, and the Commonwealth of Independent States) are eligible for **visa-free transit** (<https://www.ica.gov.sg/enter-transit-depart/entering-singapore/visa-free-transit-facility>) for up to 96 hours if you have an onward plane ticket to a third country. You may enter Singapore by any mode of transport, but must depart by air. A similar scheme is available for citizens of India who have a valid visa or residence permit issued by Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom or the United States (Schengen visas issued by other countries do not count), and have an onward plane, ferry or cruise ticket to a third country. Indian citizens visiting Singapore under the scheme may enter Singapore by any mode of transport, but must depart by air or sea.

No visa is required for transit at Changi Airport as long as you don't leave the secure area and your connecting flight leaves within 24 hours.

All travellers entering Singapore, including Singapore citizens, are required to **complete a SG Arrival Card** (<https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/sgarrivalcard/>) **online** no *earlier* than 3 days before your arrival date. If you have not done this before you get off the aeroplane, you may complete this form using the computers near the immigration desks. Once completed, you will receive an e-mail containing a barcode that you can scan at the immigration counter or you can use a screenshot of the confirmation page.

All visitors to Singapore can use the automated clearance gates, with no pre-enrollment required. Manual counters are still available for families with children under 6. Singapore no longer stamps passports for visitors: you will receive your terms of entry at the email address you provided in the SG Arrival Card.

Citizens of African and South American countries, and travellers who have recently been to Africa or South America, require a **yellow fever vaccination certificate** for entry into Singapore.

Single women from poorer countries planning long stays for tourism may have trouble getting a visa, due to problems with "illegal activity" (presumably prostitution). Hippie types may expect a little extra attention from Customs, but getting a shave and a haircut is no longer a condition for entry.

Males who enter Singapore illegally or who overstay their permits by more than 14 days face a mandatory sentence of three strokes of the cane.

Customs requirements

Singapore has **very strict drug laws**, and **drug trafficking carries a mandatory death penalty**, which is also applied to foreigners. Even if you haven't entered Singapore and are merely transiting (i.e. changing flights without the need to clear immigration and customs) while in possession of drugs, you would still be subject to capital punishment. In Singapore, it is a crime to have any drug metabolites in your system, even if they were consumed outside Singapore, and Customs occasionally does spot urine tests at the airport. Also, do not attempt to bring in **poppy seeds**, as they contain morphine and are hence classified as a controlled substance.

Banned in Singapore

There's more to the list than just porn, firearms, and drugs, although not all of these restrictions are enforced in practice.

- Littering
- Smoking in non-smoking areas
- Non-medical chewing gum/ bubble gum (not usually enforced)
- Satellite dishes/ tampered radio receivers

Bringing in explosives or firearms without a permit is also a capital offense in Singapore. The importation of some types of weapons such as shuriken, nunchaku, switchblade knives, butterfly knives and chain whips is prohibited, and permits to import these will not be issued under any circumstances.

- Free standing billboards
- Handcuffs, even if pink and fuzzy
- Feeding pigeons or monkeys
- Displaying foreign flags
- Malaysian newspapers

Bring prescriptions for any prescribed medicines you may have with you. If you are bringing in more than 3 months' supply of any medication or if you are bringing in any sedatives (e.g. Valium/diazepam) or strong painkillers (e.g. codeine ingredients), you need to apply to the Singapore Health Sciences Authority (http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/Health_Products_Regulation/Consumer_Information/Personal_Import_Regulations/bringing_personal_medication_into_Singapore.html) for approval at least 10 working days before your expected arrival in Singapore.

Duty free allowances for alcohol are one litre each of wine, beer and spirits, though the 1 L of spirits may be replaced with 1 L of wine or beer. Travellers entering from Malaysia are not entitled to any duty free allowance. Alcohol may not be brought in by persons under the age of 18. There is *no* duty free allowance for **cigarettes**: all cigarettes legally sold in Singapore are stamped "SDPC", and smokers caught with unmarked cigarettes may be fined \$500 per pack. (In practice, though, bringing in one opened pack is usually tolerated.) If you declare your cigarettes or excess booze at customs, you can opt to pay the tax or let the customs officers keep the cigarettes until your departure. Importing non-medical **chewing gum** is illegal, but in practice customs officers would usually not bother with a few sticks for personal consumption. **E-cigarettes are illegal**, and you are required to declare and dispose of them at customs; failure to do so could potentially result in hefty fines and imprisonment.

There is no restriction on the amount of money that can be brought in or out of Singapore. However, Singapore customs requires you to declare if you are bringing in or out anything more than \$20,000 or its equivalent in foreign currency, and you'll be asked to complete some paperwork. Not declaring exposes you to arrest, heavy fines and possible imprisonment.

Pornography, pirated goods and publications by the **Jehovah's Witnesses** and the **Unification Church** may not be imported to Singapore, and all baggage is scanned at land and sea entry points. In theory, all entertainment media including movies and video games must be sent to the Board of Censors for approval before they can be brought into Singapore, but that is rarely if ever enforced for original (non-pirated) goods.

By plane

Singapore is one of Southeast Asia's largest aviation hubs, so unless you're coming from Peninsular Malaysia or Batam/Bintan in Indonesia, the easiest way to enter Singapore is by air. In addition to its flag-carrier, **Singapore Airlines** (<http://www.singaporeair.com>), which is widely regarded as one of the world's best airlines in terms of customer service, Singapore is also home to low-cost carriers **Jetstar Asia** (<http://www.jetstar.com>) and **Scoot** (<http://www.flyscoot.com>).

In addition to the locals, every carrier of any size in Asia offers flights to Singapore, with pan-Asian discount carrier **AirAsia** (<http://www.airasia.com>) operating a dense network from Singapore. There are also nonstop services to Europe, the Middle East, Australia, New Zealand, North America, and South

Africa. Singapore is particularly popular on the "Kangaroo Route" between Australia and Europe, with **Qantas** (<https://www.qantas.com>) and **British Airways** (<https://www.britishairways.com>) using Singapore as their refuelling stop between London and Sydney.

In addition to the local airports, travellers from Malaysia or Indonesia can consider flying into Johor Bahru (**JHB**^{IATA}), Batam (**BTH**^{IATA}) or Tanjung Pinang (**TNJ**^{IATA}) instead, as flights to those airports are usually cheaper than to Changi or Seletar. The downside is that you'll have to pass through customs and immigration twice, and there are no direct public transportation links between those airports and Singapore, meaning that you will have to arrange your own transportation. If you have a lot of time, flying to Kuala Lumpur (**KUL**^{IATA}), which is served by more destinations than the aforementioned three airports, can also save you some money. Buses from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore take about 5 hours.

Changi Airport

Main article: [Singapore Changi Airport](#)


1 Changi Airport (<http://www.changiairport.com>) (**SIN**^{IATA}) is the main airport and serves all commercial jet flights. It regularly shows up in "Best Airport" rankings and is big, pleasant, and well-organised, with remarkably fast immigration and baggage distribution. The airport is split into four main terminals (T1, T2, T3 and T4).



The Rain Vortex at Jewel Changi Airport

Taxis are the fastest way to the city, and will cost about \$20–30 including a \$5 airport surcharge (\$3 for off-peak hours). An additional 50% surcharge applies 1-6AM. You can refer to [this site](https://www.taxisingapore.com/taxi-fare/) (<https://www.taxisingapore.com/taxi-fare/>) for additional information on taxi rates and charges. On the MRT, it takes about 45 minutes to town with an easy transfer at Tanah Merah. A standard ticket to City Hall costs \$2.30 + \$0.10 non-refundable deposit, with trains running from 5:31AM to 11:18PM. See [Singapore Changi Airport](#) for the full scoop.

Seletar Airport

2 Seletar Airport (<http://www.seletarairport.com/>)  (**XSP**^{IATA}) serves all turboprop flights and general aviation. Completed in 1928 and first used for civil aviation in 1930, it was Singapore's first airport. The only commercial flights to Seletar are **Firefly** (<https://www.fireflyz.com.my/>)'s flights from Kuala Lumpur's Subang Airport (a smaller airport closer to the city centre, not the main international airport of Kuala Lumpur). Bus 102 runs from Hougang MRT (North-East Line) directly to the airport, but most travellers opt for a taxi instead. A \$3 surcharge applies for trips from the airport.

By road

Singapore is linked by two land crossings to Peninsular Malaysia:

The **3 Causeway** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johor%E2%80%93Singapore_Causeway) is a very popular and thus terminally congested entry point connecting Woodlands in the north of Singapore directly into the heart of Johor Bahru. By some measures **the busiest border crossing in the world**, with 350,000 travellers on an *average* day, the Causeway usually experiences severe congestion on **Friday**

evenings (towards Malaysia), **Sunday evenings** (towards Singapore) and **around extended holiday periods**. The Causeway can be crossed by buses, trains, cross-border taxis, privately owned cars or motorcycles. The only reliable way to avoid jams is the train, see [#By train](#) below for details, but the most flexible and most popular option is to take one of the many bus services, covered at [#By bus](#).



The Causeway, with [Johor Bahru](#) on the other side

A second crossing between Malaysia and Singapore, known as the **4 Second Link** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia%E2%80%93Singapore_Second_Link), was built between Tuas in western Singapore and Iskandar Puteri in the western part of Johor state. Much faster and (usually) less congested than the Causeway, it is primarily used by the express bus services heading to [Kuala Lumpur](#) and [Malacca](#). Bus services across are not as numerous as those that service the Causeway, and only Malaysian "limousine" taxis are allowed to cross it (and typically charge \$100+ for the privilege, see [#By taxi](#) below for details).

Driving into Singapore with a foreign-registered car is complicated and expensive, involving running a gauntlet of road taxes, insurance coverage, toll transponders and more. In both directions, rental car agencies prohibit their cars from crossing the border or charge extra, so it's advisable to ditch your car on the other side of the border and cross into Singapore by plane or public transport. If you have your own wheels and insist on using them, see the Land Transport Authority's [Entering & Exiting Singapore](http://onemotoring.lta.gov.sg/content/onemotoring/home/driving/entering_and_exiting_singapore.html) (http://onemotoring.lta.gov.sg/content/onemotoring/home/driving/entering_and_exiting_singapore.html) guide for the administrative details.

Cycling into Singapore is possible only through the Causeway. You can take the motorcycle lane and process your entry at the manual motorcycle counters. As the Second Link is served by expressways on both sides, bicycles are legally unable to travel further than the checkpoint.

On foot

Travellers may walk across the Causeway into Singapore from Johor Bahru, but be prepared for a very long walk as Malaysia's customs and immigration complex is now 2 km inland. Unlike the previous checkpoint, the current Malaysian immigration checkpoint was not set up for pedestrians, meaning that there are no pedestrian footpaths on the Malaysian side, and you will have to walk on the road alongside potentially dangerous and fast-moving vehicular traffic.

Pedestrians are not allowed on the Second Link; not that there would be anything within walking distance on either side anyway.

By bus

Direct from Malaysian destinations There are long-distance buses from [Kuala Lumpur](#) (KL) and many other destinations in Malaysia through the Woodlands Checkpoint and the Second Link at Tuas. It is also possible to take a direct coach all the way from [Hat Yai](#), [Thailand](#) to Singapore, taking about 13 hours. There is no central bus terminal and different companies leave from all over the city. Major operators include:

- **Aeroline** (<http://www.aeroline.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 6258 8800. Luxury buses with meal on-board, power sockets, lounge area etc, to Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. Departures from HarbourFront Centre. From \$47 one-way.
- **First Coach** (<http://www.firstcoach.com.my/>), ☎ +65 6822 2111. No frills, but the buses have good legroom and use the Second Link. Another selling point is convenient public transport: buses depart from Novena Square (Novena MRT) in Singapore and arrive right next to (KJ 16) Bangsar LRT in Kuala Lumpur. \$33/55 single/return.
- **NiCE** (<http://www.plusliner.com.my/>), ☎ +65 6256 5755. Over 20 daily departures from Kuala Lumpur's old railway station. Double-decker NiCE 2 buses (27 seats) RM80, luxury NiCE++ buses (18 seats) RM88. Departures from Copthorne Orchid Hotel on Dunearn Rd.
- **Transnasional** (<http://www.transnasional.com.my/>), ☎ +60 2 6294 7034 (Malaysia). Malaysia's largest bus operator, offers direct buses from Singapore through the peninsula. Departures from Lavender St. Executive/economy buses RM80/35.
- **Transtar** (<http://www.transtar.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 6299 9009. Transtar's sleeper-equipped Solitaire (\$63) and leather-seated First Class (\$49) coaches offer frills like massaging chairs, onboard attendants, video on demand and even Wi-Fi. More plebeian SuperVIP/Executive buses are \$25/39, direct service to Malacca and Genting also available. Departures from Golden Mile Complex, Beach Rd (near Lavender MRT).



A Singapore-Johore Express bus ☐

Within the Kuala Lumpur metropolitan area, numerous other bus operators also depart from the **5 Terminal Bersepadu Selatan (TBS) bus terminal** [w](#).

Most other operators have banded together in three shared booking portals.

- **redbus** (<http://www.redbus.sg/>), ☎ +65 3158 2888, support@redbus.sg (<mailto:support@redbus.sg>). redBus singapore includes many destinations bus tickets.
- **Easybook** (<http://www.easybook.com/>), ☎ +65 6444 0745. Six bus companies including major budget operator Konsortium.
- **Bus Online Ticket** (<http://www.busonlineticket.com/>). Another six companies, including major operator Fivestars Express, Hasry Express and AirAsia-affiliated StarMart.

In general, the more you pay, the faster and more comfortable your trip. More expensive buses leave on time, use the Second Link, and do not stop along the way; while the cheapest buses may not be punctual, use the perpetually congested Causeway and might make more intercity stops. Book early for popular departure times like Friday evenings (heading from Singapore to Malaysia) and Sunday evenings (heading from Malaysia to Singapore), Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Aidilfitri, etc., and factor in some extra time for the expected congestion at the border; congestion can be assessed from the traffic cameras on the OneMotoring website (https://onemotoring.lta.gov.sg/content/onemotoring/home/driving/traffic_information/traffic-cameras/woodlands.html#trafficCameras).

An alternative to taking a direct "international bus", would be making the short hop to Johor Bahru and board domestic Malaysian long-distance express buses to various Malaysian destinations from **6 Larkin Sentral Bus Terminal** [w](#) in Johor Bahru. Besides having more optionality, fares are also much lower as you will be paying for a domestic fare in Malaysian ringgit, instead of the identical nominal amount in

Singapore dollars. The downside is the time-consuming hassle (at least an additional hour of travelling time) of first getting to Johor Bahru and then getting to Larkin terminal on the outskirts of town. Another downside would also be the lack of domestic bus seats during festive seasons.

Besides long-distance buses, there also regular public buses that ply between Johor Bahru and Singapore. The available routes are listed in the tables below:

From Johor Bahru to Woodlands, via Johor–Singapore Causeway

Frequent Buses between Johor Bahru and Singapore

Line	Stops in Singapore	Stops in JB	Maximum fare (from JB to SG)	Maximum fare (from SG to JB)
Causeway Link CW-1 (https://www.facebook.com/causewaylink/photos/a.10150339533965727/10166616565900727/)	Kranji MRT only	Larkin via JB CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 2.60	SGD 2.60
Causeway Link CW-2 (https://www.facebook.com/causewaylink/photos/a.10150339533965727/10166616565900727/)	Queen St only (Bugis MRT)	Larkin via JB CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 4.80	SGD 4.80
Causeway Link CW-5 (https://www.facebook.com/causewaylink/photos/a.10150339533965727/10166616565900727/)	Newton Circus only (Newton MRT)	Larkin via JB CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 4.60	SGD 4.60
SBS Transit 170	Queen St via Bukit Panjang MRT (Downtown MRT line along Bukit Timah Road) and Kranji MRT	Larkin via JB CIQ Checkpoint	identical SGD fare	SGD 2.08 (card)
SBS Transit 170X	Kranji MRT only	JB CIQ Checkpoint only	identical SGD fare	SGD 1.05 (card)
SBS Transit 160	Jurong East MRT via Kranji MRT	JB CIQ Checkpoint only	identical SGD fare	SGD 1.88 (card)
SMRT 950	Woodlands MRT via Marsiling MRT	JB CIQ Checkpoint only	identical SGD fare	SGD 1.25 (card)
Singapore-Johor Express (SJE) (https://landtransportguru.net/singapore-johore-express/)	Queen St only (Bugis MRT)	Larkin via JB CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 3.40	SGD 3.30
Transtar TS1 (https://www.facebook.com/TranstarTravelSG/posts/pfbid0ArZ6dhkzdK5Z7n21Uc3XdJm8PikLwMPz8sSkcvaKQKaH8Z2yAod99qo6Ht9hnKMsl) (10x daily)	Changi Airport Terminals 3,1,4 via Expo MRT, Woodlands MRT, Marsiling MRT	JB CIQ Checkpoint only	MYR 13.00	SGD 11.00
Transtar TS8 (https://www.facebook.com/TranstarTravelSG/posts/pfbid0777jUC5iEzvFMb3BTQStguMc3gvxThnqTuxo6y9qmp13xu9ESMdfXNSX3cCfLmnfl) (13-14x daily)	Resorts World Sentosa via Outram Park MRT, Great World MRT, Orchard MRT, Stevens MRT	JB CIQ Checkpoint only	MYR 10.00	SGD 8.00
AC7 (https://landtransportguru.net/busac7/)	Yishun MRT via Sembawang MRT	JB CIQ Checkpoint only	MYR 6.00	SGD 2.50

From Iskandar Puteri to Tuas, via Malaysia–Singapore Second Link

Frequent Buses between Iskandar Puteri and Singapore

Line	Stops in Singapore	Stops in Iskandar Puteri	Maximum fare (from IP to SG)	Maximum fare (from SG to IP)
Causeway Link CW-3 (https://www.facebook.com/causewaylink/photos/pcb.10166700042355727/10166700029815727/)	Jurong East MRT	Perling Mall, Bukit Indah 1, Bukit Indah 2, Horizon Hills via 2nd Link CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 6.00	SGD 5.00
Causeway Link CW-3S (http://www.facebook.com/causewaylink/photos/pcb.10166700042355727/10166700029815727/)	None (connects with CW3 only at 2nd Link CIQ Checkpoint in Malaysia)	Taman Ungku Tun Aminah, Sutera Mall, Nusa Bestari, Bukit Indah 1, Bukit Indah 2 via 2nd Link CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 7.00	SGD 5.00
Causeway Link CW-7 (https://www.facebook.com/causewaylink/photos/a.10150339533965727/10166616565900727/)	Tuas Link MRT only	Gelang Patah Sentral via 2nd Link CIQ Checkpoint	MYR 4.50	SGD 4.50
Transtar TS6 (https://www.facebook.com/TranstarTravelSG/posts/pfbid02SSA7vbBCNA7TteJzLEqaehBXrTseMUaya8PQhSpXtVuP8rCZuZrXCsyPhtpdq37l) (6x daily)	The Star Vista (Buona Vista MRT) via One-North MRT, Tuas Link MRT	Gelang Patah Sentral only	MYR 8.00	SGD 6.00

The most common options to get from Johor Bahru and Iskandar Puteri are the buses listed in the table. There is a pattern of the bus routes: Singaporean-operated buses (SBS Transit, SMRT, SJE, Transtar) can only stop at one destination in Malaysia, while the Malaysian-operated Causeway Link (<http://causewaylink.com.my>) buses can only stop at one destination in Singapore. Terminals aside, all buses make two stops at Singapore immigration and at Malaysian immigration. At both immigration points, *you must disembark with all your luggage* and pass through passport control and customs, then board the next bus by showing your ticket. Expect a minimum of 30 minutes to clear both checkpoints during non-peak periods, with the expectation of an average clearing time of 1 hour during peak periods, 2 hours at the ends of extended holiday periods.

To maximise train travel between downtown Singapore and Johor Bahru, the simplest option would be to take the MRT train within the downtown city area and disembark at Woodlands MRT, and then changing to the SMRT 950 bus to proceed to the Johor Bahru Checkpoint. Alternatively, another option would be to disembark at Kranji MRT, and then changing to the SBS 170X bus to proceed to the Johor Bahru Checkpoint.

Another option to avoid congestion of the 170X and 950 bus routes during rush hour, would be to utilise other different SBS or SMRT buses that lead to the Woodlands Train Checkpoint bus stop, then walk 500m along the elevated footbridge to the Woodlands Checkpoint.

By train

Once the southern terminus of Malaysia's **Keretapi Tanah Melayu** (<http://www.ktmb.com.my>) (Malayan Railway or KTMB) network, the central Tanjong Pagar railway station has been decommissioned and KTMB trains now terminate at the JB Sentral railway station in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. A shuttle service connects the only remaining Singaporean station in Woodlands, right next to

the Causeway, with Johor Bahru Sentral. It is a 5-minute trip, but one-way tickets originating in Singapore will cost \$5 while the reverse will cost RM5. From Woodlands, immigration formalities for both countries are carried out before boarding. From Johor Bahru, Malaysian immigration checks are conducted at JB Sentral before boarding, and Singapore immigration checks upon arrival at Woodlands. Taking immigration clearance time into account, the journey from Johor Bahru to Woodlands takes 30-60 minutes, while the reverse direction takes about 30 minutes.

Shuttle trains will leave JB Sentral for Woodlands at 05:00, 05:25, 05:55, 06:20, 07:30, 08:40, 09:50, 11:20, 12:50, 14:20, 15:30, 16:40, 17:50, 19:00, 20:10, 21:20, 22:30 and leave Woodlands for JB Sentral at 07:20, 08:30, 09:40, 10:50, 12:20, 13:50, 15:20, 16:30, 17:40, 18:50, 20:00, 21:10, 22:20, 23:30. Gate opens 30 minutes before departure and closes 10 minutes before departure. On weekdays, the early morning departures from JB Sentral and evening departures from Woodlands cater to commuters working in Singapore, and sell out as soon as tickets are released for sale 30 days in advance. On weekends, morning departures from Woodlands and evening departures from JB Sentral are popular among day trippers to Johor Bahru, and sell out a few days before. If tickets are still available on the day of departure, they are sold up to 15 minutes before departure.

For JB Sentral-Woodlands, at JB Sentral there are turnstiles installed at the departure gate (Gate A); scan the barcode or QR code on your ticket (can be one stored on a mobile device) to activate the turnstile. For Woodlands-JB Sentral, tickets bought online must be exchanged at the KTMB ticket counter before departure.

For trains beyond Johor Bahru, see [Johor Bahru#By train](#) and [Malaysia#By train](#) for details.

In addition, Singapore is also the terminus for the **Eastern & Oriental Express** (<https://www.belmond.com/eastern-and-oriental-express/>), a luxury train that makes the trip from [Bangkok](#) in four days. It is very expensive, costing US\$6,358 one-way.

The Woodlands Train Checkpoint is unrelated to the Woodlands MRT station. From the Woodlands Train Checkpoint, you can take a bus to the Kranji, Marsiling or Woodlands MRT stations. Fortunately, the bus numbers to each MRT station are clearly signposted. To get to Woodlands Train Checkpoint from the MRT stations, however, you'll have to make sure the bus passes by "Woodlands Train Checkpoint", and not "Woodlands Checkpoint" which is the checkpoint facility for buses and other road vehicles without through access to the train checkpoint. Buses which serve Woodlands Train Checkpoint include 170 (from Kranji MRT station), 856 (from Woodlands and Marsiling MRT stations), 903 and 911 (from Woodlands MRT station). Although 912 (from Woodlands MRT station) also passes by the train checkpoint, it does so by a very long route and therefore not recommended. Note that while bus 170 is scheduled to serve "Woodlands Train Checkpoint" first before heading to "Woodlands Checkpoint", in the event of heavy traffic (i.e. during peak periods), buses can *skip* Woodlands Train Checkpoint and proceed directly to Woodlands Checkpoint - if unsure, inquire with the bus driver upon boarding to confirm the routing.

By taxi

While normal Singaporean taxis are not allowed to cross into Malaysia and vice versa, specially licensed Singaporean taxis permitted to go to Larkin bus terminal (only) can be booked from Johor Taxi Service ☎ +65 6296 7054, \$80 one way), while Malaysian taxis, which can go anywhere in Malaysia, can be taken from the taxi terminal at Ban San St (\$60 to charter, or \$15/person if you share with others). In the

reverse direction, towards Singapore, you can take Singaporean taxis from Larkin to any point in central Singapore (\$60), while Malaysian taxis can only bring you to Ban San St (RM120). The main advantage here is that you do not need to lug your stuff (or yourself) through Customs at both ends; you can just sit in the car.

Private "limousine" transport services offer point-to-point services from anywhere in Singapore to anywhere in Malaysia, but these exist in a legal grey zone. The standard fare is \$100 for Singapore to Johor Bahru for a 4-passenger Toyota Innova.



Johor-Singapore cross border taxi

By boat

Ferries link Singapore with the neighbouring Indonesian province of Riau Islands, and the Malaysian state of Johor. Singapore has four ferry terminals which handle international ferries: 7 **HarbourFront** ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HarbourFront_\(Singapore\)\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HarbourFront_(Singapore))) (formerly World Trade Centre) near Sentosa, 8 **Marina Bay Cruise Centre** (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marina_Bay_Cruise_Centre_Singapore) in Marina Bay, 9 **Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal** on the East Coast, as well as 10 **Changi Point Ferry Terminal**, at the eastern extremity of the island.

Ferry terminal transit:

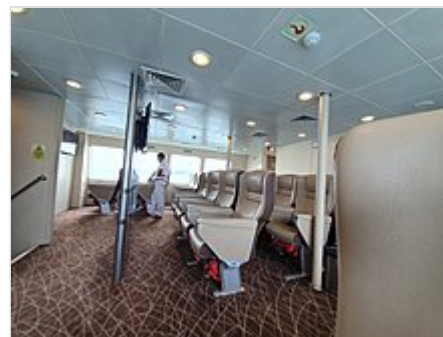
- HarbourFront FT: Inside HarbourFront Centre shopping mall (alight at HarbourFront MRT station).
- Marina Bay Cruise Centre: Alight at Marina South Pier MRT station and follow the signs to walk to the ferry terminal. Alternatively, take bus No. 400 from Tanjong Pagar MRT station, Exit C.
- Tanah Merah FT: Alight at Tanah Merah MRT station and proceed to Exit B. From there, take bus 35/35M to the ferry terminal. Alternatively, alight at Bedok MRT station and proceed to the adjacent Bedok Bus Interchange, where the two bus services originate from. If arriving at Tanah Merah FT, getting a taxi can be very difficult due to the remote location and 200 other people hailing them simultaneously; it's often faster to take bus 35 a few stops to the nearest MRT station and try your luck there. A shuttle service also connects Tanah Merah FT with Changi Airport, costing \$4 each way.
- Changi Point FT: Take bus 2, 29, 59 or 109 to Changi Village Bus Terminal and walk to the ferry terminal located nearby.

From Indonesia

Ferries to Indonesia are operated by an ever-changing cast of operators with constantly changing schedules, and as of 2022, remain greatly reduced compared to pre-COVID times. The Singapore Cruise Centre maintains a real-time schedule service (<https://singaporecruise.com.sg/schedule/ferries/>) showing current services that can be helpful for ferreting out what's actually operating.

From Batam: Ferries from Batu Ampar (Harbour Bay Ferry terminal) (<http://batamferryterminal.com>), Sekupang and Waterfront City (Teluk Senimba) use **HarbourFront** FT, while ferries from Nongsapura use **Tanah Merah** FT. Ferries from Batam Centre use both ferry terminals. Operators at Harbourfront include:

- **Indo Falcon** (<http://www.indofalcon.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 6278 3167. Hourly ferries to **Batam Centre**, fewer to **Waterfront City**. This company does not operate from Sekupang. Similar fares.
- **Horizon Fast Ferry** (<http://horizonfastferry.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 6276 6711. Operates 16 trips from Harbour Bay Ferry Terminal and Batu Ampar. Fares are similar to the other companies. S\$32/48 one-way/round-trip, including terminal fees. (updated Nov 2019)
- **Dino/Batam Fast** (<http://www.batamfast.com/>), ☎ +65 6270 0311 (in Harbourfront), +62 778 467793 (in Batam Centre), +62 778 470344 (in Batam Centre), +62 778 325085 (in Sekupang), +62 778 3250856 (in Sekupang), +62 778 381150 (in Waterfront City). Also hourly ferries from **Harbour Bay Ferry terminal**, fewer ferries from **Sekupang** and **Waterfront City**. S\$19-25 one-way, S\$39-50 round-trip including fees (lower prices for late night departures, higher prices for peak times).
- **Majestic Fast Ferry** (<https://www.majesticfastferry.com.sg/>). S\$49 two-way including fees (depending on departure time). (updated May 2019)
- **Sindo Ferry** (<https://www.sindoferry.com.sg/>), ☎ +62 778 465 55, btc@sindoferry.com.sg (<mailto:btc@sindoferry.com.sg>). (updated May 2019)



Batam Ferry

At Tanah Merah:

- **Batam Fast** (<http://www.batamfast.com/>), ☎ +65 6270 0311 (Singapore), +62 778 761071 (in Nongsa). Ferries to multiple locations on Batam S\$19-25 one-way, S\$39-50 round-trip including fees (lower prices for late night departures, higher prices for peak times). (updated May 2019)
- **Majestic Fast Ferry** (<https://www.majesticfastferry.com.sg/>). S\$19-25 one-way including fees (higher mid-day, lower mornings and evenings). (updated May 2019)
- **Sindo Ferry** (<https://www.sindoferry.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 6331 4122, tmft@sindoferry.com.sg (<mailto:tmft@sindoferry.com.sg>). (updated May 2019)

From Bintan: All ferries from Bintan use Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal. For Tanjung Pinang, there are four or five departures per day from each of the two companies operating the route. About S\$30 one-way including taxes and surcharges.

- **Majestic Fast Ferry** (<https://www.majesticfastferry.com.sg/>). S\$31 one-way including fees. (updated May 2019)
- **Sindo Ferry** (<https://www.sindoferry.com.sg/>), tmft@sindoferry.com.sg (<mailto:tmft@sindoferry.com.sg>). S\$27-29 one way including fees (promo and normal fares). (updated May 2019)

For Bintan Resorts (Bandar Bentan Telani)

- **Bintan Resort Ferries** (<http://www.brf.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 6542 4369. operates five ferries from Tanah Merah FT on weekdays, increasing to 7 during weekends. \$34.60/50.20 one-way/return peak period, \$26.60/39.20 one-way/return off-peak including taxes and fuel surcharge.. (updated May 2019)

From Karimun: Tanjung Balai is served by Sindo Ferry from Harbourfront, with 1 daily service *on even days only* at \$50/95 one-way/return.

From Malaysia

Ferry services to neighboring Malaysia are surprisingly limited. In particular, there are no services at all to Borneo.

- **Batam Fast** (<http://www.batamfast.com/>). Daily ferry service from Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal to Desaru Coast Ferry Terminal in Johor. (updated Jun 2022)
- **Changi Point Ferry Terminal** (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Changi-Point-Ferry-Terminal/176729579009815>), Changi Village, 51 Lorong Bekukong, ☎ +65 6545 2305, +65 6545 1616. Bumboats shuttle between Changi Point Ferry Terminal at and Pengerang, a village at the southeastern tip of Johor. Boats (\$10 per person, \$2 per bicycle one-way) operate 7AM-7PM and leave when they reach the 12-passenger quota. *As of 2022, this service remains suspended due to COVID.*

Cruises

Singapore is a popular stop for round-the-world and major regional cruises. Many of those cruises embark/disembark passengers here during all-day or over-night port visits, while others stop for perhaps just a day. Check with cruise companies and sellers for details. Ships use the same two terminals noted above for ferries.

Get around

Getting around Singapore is easy: the public transport network is extremely easy to use, affordable, and covers populated areas extensively. Furthermore, taxis/rideshares are reasonably priced and easy to hail via apps. CityMapper Singapore (<https://citymapper.com/singapore?lang=en>), Google Maps, and Apple Maps are all capable of figuring out the fastest route by rail and bus and even estimating taxi fares between any two points.

Fares

The public transport network follows a single, distance-based fare scheme. This means the fare is calculated based on your origin and final destination. You can visit gothere.sg or download the gothere app to estimate your fare.



Geographic map of MRT lines in the city centre

The easiest way to pay for all public transport (including the Sentosa Express) is to use **any contactless Visa or Mastercard**, which you can use to tap in to and out of any train or bus. **Mobile phones** with Apple Pay or Google Pay NFC payments work as well. Foreign-issued cards are charged an additional \$0.60/day handling fee, but for short stays (i.e. up to eight days over a five-year period) this still works out cheaper than buying single tickets or forking out a non-refundable \$5 for an EZ-link or Nets prepaid card. All trips can be viewed and statements can be downloaded by creating a TransitLink SimplyGo (<http://simplygo.transitlink.com.sg/FAQs>) account.

Alternatively (especially if you see yourself visiting Singapore for more than eight days over the next five years), pick up an **EZ-link** (<http://www.ezlink.com.sg>) or **NETS Prepaid** (<https://www.nets.com.sg/personal/retail-payments/nets-prepaid-card/>) contactless RFID farecard at any train station or 7-Eleven store. The EZ-link card costs \$12 (\$5 for the card itself and \$7 stored value) whilst the NETS Prepaid card costs \$10 (\$5 for the card itself and \$5 stored value). The cards can be "topped up" in increments of \$2 or more. The cards are valid for five years. The cards can be topped up using cash or Singapore-issued credit or debit cards at ticketing machines located in train stations, or by cash at convenience stores. If you are leaving Singapore and you have some money on your card, you can go to any TransitLink ticket office for a refund, minus a \$5 processing fee.

You may see advertisements for **the Singapore Tourist Pass** (<https://thesingaporetouristpass.com.sg/type-of-passes/>) (STP), which gives you unlimited rides for \$10/16/20 for 1/2/3 days respectively, plus some discounts for attractions. However, given that most trips only cost \$1.00-2.50, you would need to use the public transport system often during your stay for the STP to be worthwhile. Beyond the period of your STP, it will work like a regular EZ-link card.

Single tickets are no longer available for the MRT. They are still available on buses, but cost more, are a hassle to buy because the driver has to compute fare stages, don't allow transfers and you get no change. Just tap a card; it's so much easier.

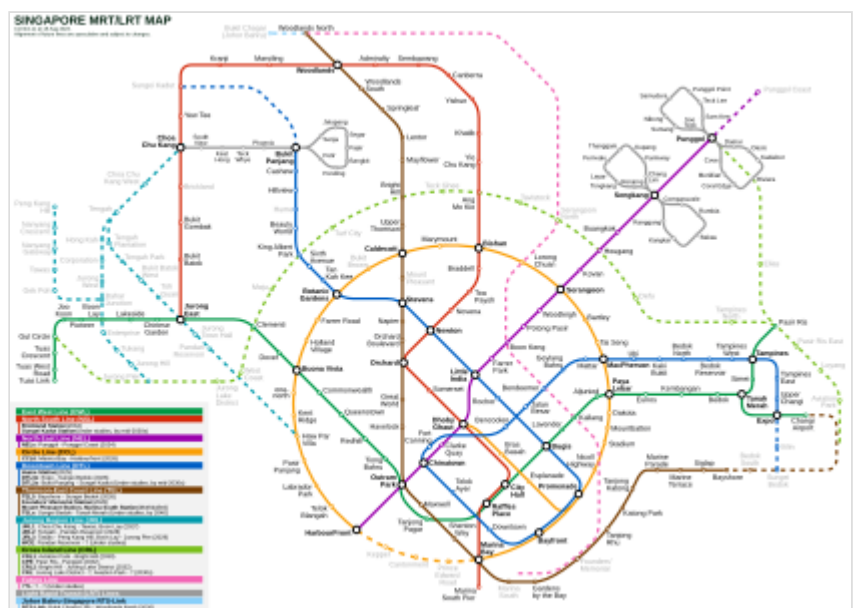
Children under seven years old travel for free. Tickets are not needed, but you can pick up a free **Child Concession Card** (<https://www.transitlink.com.sg/child-concession-card/>) at any ticket office as proof of age, the card can be tapped to open fare gates etc. Children above 7 need to pay the full adult fare, since student fares are only available to students with Singaporean school ID.

By rail

The **MRT** (Mass Rapid Transit) and **LRT** (Light Rail Transit) are trains that are the main trunk of Singapore's transit system. They are a cheap, fast and reliable mode of transportation, and the network covers most points of interest for the visitor.

Pay with a contactless credit card, EZ-Link or NETS Prepaid card. Single tickets are no longer available for the MRT.

Using any card is easy, just tap the reader at the ticket gate when entering and exiting paid areas of stations. All lines are seamlessly integrated, even if the lines are operated by different transport companies, so you do not need to buy a new ticket or go through multiple gates to transfer between different operators' lines.



MRT and LRT system map. (Dotted lines are under construction.)

The stations are clean and equipped with free toilets. All stations have platform screen doors, so there is no risk of falling onto the tracks. The North-East Line, Circle Line, Downtown Line and all upcoming lines run underground and are operated automatically without a driver. It is worth walking up to the front of the train to check out the view of the tunnel ahead.

Eating and drinking (even water) is strictly **prohibited** in the stations and trains, with offenders being liable for a \$500 fine.

When using escalators, **stand on the left** to allow those in a hurry to pass on the right.

By bus

Buses connect various corners of Singapore, but are slower and harder to use than the MRT. On a long-distance bus, frequent stops and slow speeds may mean your journey could take two to three times as long as the same trip via MRT. Their main advantage is you get to see the sights rather than a dark underground tunnel, partly if you can snag a front seat on a double-decker, which make up a relatively huge percentage of buses in Singapore. Moreover, since there are a lot more bus stops than MRT stations, buses can often get you closer to your destination, which makes a big difference in the equatorial heat and humidity.



Singapore bus

There are four bus operators in Singapore: SBS Transit, SMRT

Buses, Tower Transit and Go-Ahead, all of which use the same fare system. You can pay cash (coins) in buses, but the fare stage system is quite complex (it's easiest to ask the driver for the price to your destination), you are charged substantially more and there is no provision for getting change. Payment with a contactless credit card, EZ-Link or NETS Prepaid card is therefore the easiest method: tap your card against the reader at the front entrance of the bus when boarding, and a maximum fare is deducted from the card. When you alight, tap your card again at the exit, and the difference is refunded. Make sure you tap out, or you'll end up paying the maximum fare. Inspectors occasionally prowl buses to check that everybody has paid or tapped, so those who are on tourist day passes should tap before sitting down. Dishonest bus commuters risk getting fined \$20 for not paying or underpaying fares (by premature tapping-out) and \$50 for improper use of concession cards.

As buses can come at irregular frequencies due to traffic conditions, it is advisable to use Bus Arrival Timing applications in order to know when the next bus arrives and plan your journey. The most popular apps include **MyTransportSG** (<https://www.lta.gov.sg/content/dam/ltagov/Home/PDF/MTM.pdf>) and **Singabus** (<https://singabus-singapore-bus-timing-mrt-app-sg.en.softonic.com/android?ex=DINS-635.1>). Most trunk bus services have a frequency of between 10 and 15 minutes, while express bus services which have 3 digits and starts with 5 (e.g. 502) normally have a frequency of 20 minutes. Feeder bus services normally arrive every 5 to 15 minutes.

By ride-hailing

Ride hailing apps have largely supplanted taxis in Singapore. The two biggest players are **Grab** (<https://www.grab.com/sg/>), which acquired Uber's Southeast Asian assets and operations (including that of Singapore's) in 2018, and **Gojek** (<https://www.gojek.com/sg>). Rides are generally reasonably priced,

with most off-peak rides in the city centre clocking in around \$10-20, although during busy periods (Friday nights, when it rains, etc.) surge fares can be much higher. Most international credit/debit cards are accepted on their apps, and cash payments are also accepted. Other ride sharing apps include **Ryde** (<https://www.rydesharing.com/>) and **Tada** (<https://tada.global/>).

By taxi

Taxicabs use meters and are reasonably priced and honest. Outside weekday peak hours, trips within the city centre should not cost you more than \$10 and even a trip right across the island from Changi to Jurong will not break the \$35 mark. If you are in a group of 3 or 4, it's sometimes cheaper and faster to take a taxi than the MRT. ComfortDelgro, the largest operator, has a **CDG Zig** booking app (<https://www.cdgtaxi.com.sg/>) that lets you order and pay for your taxi rides ridehail-style, including the option of a "ComfortRide" fixed price instead of running the meter, or you can call the unified booking system at ☎ [+65 6-DIAL-CAB \(3425-222\)](tel:+656-DIAL-CAB). Hailing a taxi on the street or at a taxi stand lets you avoid the \$2.30-3.30 booking fee though.



Taxicabs in different colours

Taxi pricing is largely identical across all companies at \$4.40-\$5.00 as a flag down rate (depending on the type of vehicle used), which lasts 1 km before increments of \$0.26 per 400 m (for the first 10 km) or \$0.26 per 350 m (after the first 10 km). Watch out for surprises though: on weekdays, trips before 9:30am or after 5pm incur a 25-50% tariff, and on weekdays a 25% tariff is applicable between 10am and 4pm. Extra fees (\$3-8) may be added for trips starting at airports, popular attractions, and ferry terminals. Electronic Road Pricing surcharges or City Area fees may also apply at peak hours, which may add a substantial amount to your taxi fare. All such charges are shown on the bottom right-hand corner of the meter, recorded in the printed receipt and explained in tedious detail in a sticker on the window; if you suspect the cabbie is trying to pull a fast one, call the company and ask for an explanation. There is no surcharge for trips to the airport, only from. While all taxis are equipped to handle (and are required to accept) credit cards, in practice many cabbies do not accept electronic payment. Always ask before getting in. Paying by credit card will incur an additional surcharge of 10%, or \$0.30 using other cards or app-based payments. As usual in Singapore, tips are not expected.

In the Central Business District, taxis may pick up passengers only at taxi stands (found outside any shopping mall) or buildings with their own driveways (including virtually all hotels). Outside the centre, you're free to hail taxis on the street or call one to your doorstep.

Virtually all Singapore taxis are equipped with navigation systems that will get you where you want to go. Some cabbies may ask you which route you want to take; most are satisfied with "whichever way is faster".

By boat

Tourist-oriented **bumboats** cruise the Singapore River, offering point-to-point rides starting from \$3 and cruises with nice views of the CBD skyscraper skyline starting from \$13.

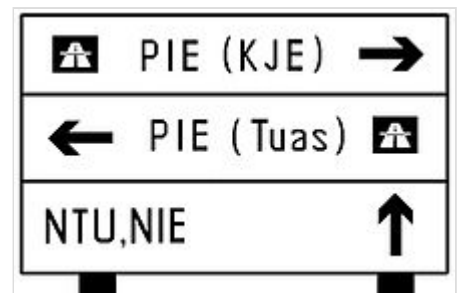
Bumboats also shuttle passengers from **Changi Point Ferry Terminal** to Pulau Ubin (\$4 one-way), a small island off Singapore's northeast coast which is about as close as Singapore gets to unhurried rural living. Ferries to the southern islands of Kusu Island and St John's Island depart from **Marina South Pier**, next to the MRT station of the same name. Sister's Islands and Pulau Hantu are also open to the public, though there are no scheduled ferries there; you will need to charter a boat from Marina South Pier and West Coast Pier respectively.



Bumboat

By car

Car rental is not a popular option for visitors to Singapore, as public transport covers virtually the entire island and it's generally cheaper to take taxis all day than to rent. You will usually be looking at upwards from \$100 per day for the smallest vehicle from the major rental companies, although local ones can be cheaper and there are sometimes good weekend prices available. This does not include petrol at around \$3/litre or electronic road pricing (ERP) fees, and rentals often charge extra or outright prohibit driving to Malaysia. If you plan on touring Malaysia by car, it makes much more sense to head across the border to Johor Bahru, where both rentals and petrol are half price, and you have the option of dropping your car off elsewhere in the country. This also avoids the unwelcome extra attention that Singapore number plates tend to get from thieves and greedy cops.



Going to Kranji Expressway via the Pan Island Expressway? Turn right for "PIE (KJE)". Visiting the Nanyang Technological University or National Institute of Education? Go straight ahead.

Foreign licences in English or from other ASEAN member countries are valid in Singapore for up to a year from your date of entry, after which you will have to convert your foreign licence to a Singapore version. Other foreign licences must be accompanied by an International Driving Permit (IDP) or an official English translation (usually available from your embassy) to be valid.

Singaporeans drive on the left (like their Indonesian, Malaysian & Thai neighbours) and the legal driving age is 18. Roads in Singapore are in excellent condition and driving habits are generally good compared to other countries in the region, with most people following the traffic rules due to stringent enforcement, although road courtesy tends to be sorely lacking and occasionally haphazard driving may be encountered. The speed limit is 90 km/h (56 mph) on major expressways (with the exception of the Kallang-Paya Lebar Expressway (KPE) being 80 km/h (50 mph)) and typically 50 km/h (31 mph) on most medium-sized roads. While signs are usually good, expressways are almost universally referred to *only* by acronym, so the Pan Island Expressway is "PIE", the East Coast Parkway is "ECP", etc. Parking is tolerably easy to find but very rarely free, with rates varying depending on time, day of week, and location, from around \$3/hour at private CBD car parks to \$1/hour at public car parks, usually payable with the CashCard.

ERP payments require a stored-value CashCard, which is usually arranged by the rental agency, but it's your responsibility to ensure it has enough value. ERP gantries are activated at different times, usually in the expected direction of most cars. As a rule of thumb, gantries found in roads leading to the CBD are

activated during the morning rush hour while gantries found in roads exiting the CBD are activated during the evening rush hour. Passing through an active ERP gantry with insufficient value will mean that an alert is sent to your registered address. You will need to pay an administrative fee in addition to the difference between the remaining amount and the actual charge. You have a limited time to settle this, or the penalty becomes harsher.

Although Singapore is highly urbanised, it is still possible to encounter wild animals on the road in forested areas, particularly from dusk to dawn. In the event of an animal collision, you are required by law to stop and contact the authorities immediately; failure to do so could result in a fine of up to \$3,000 (or \$5,000 for repeat offenders). If the animal might still be alive, call the NParks Animal Response Centre at ☎ +65-1800-476-1600 or the Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) Wildlife Rescue Hotline at ☎ +65-9783-7782. If you are sure that the animal is dead, you will need to call the National Environmental Agency (NEA) to dispose of the carcass at ☎ +65-1800-2255-632.



It's a *fine* city, after all

All passengers must wear seat belts and using a phone while driving is banned. Drink-driving is not tolerated: the maximum blood alcohol content is 0.08%, with roadblocks set up at night to catch offenders, who are heavily fined and possibly jailed. Even if your blood alcohol level does not exceed the legal limit, you can still be charged with drink-driving if the police are convinced that your ability to control the vehicle has been compromised by the presence of alcohol (e.g., if you are involved in a collision). The police conduct periodic roadblocks and speed cameras are omnipresent. Fines will be sent by mail to you or your rental agency, who will then pass on the cost with a surcharge. If stopped for a traffic offence, don't even *think* about trying to bribe your way out; corruption is a serious offence in Singapore.

By bicycle

Singapore is mostly flat and there're only a few locations to climb. Commuting on bicycle is challenging in Singapore. You may cycle on the road, cycling paths, dedicated and shared with pedestrians, and pedestrians walkways, with each having its own challenges.

On the roads, dedicated bicycle-only lanes are scarce and located at Tanah Merah Coastal Road and West Camp Road. You have to take the left-most lane, which is the bus lanes on most roads, most of the time. You will have to contend with vehicles stopping at the side of the roads picking up or dropping off passengers. While there is no need to be licensed to cycle on the roads, you are expected to be aware of the traffic rules and obey them anyway. In the event of accidents or conflicts with other motorists, you will likely be treated as a motorist by the authorities and judiciary. Certain roads such as expressways, tunnels, slips roads to and interchanges between expressways are out of bounds to cyclists. Bicycles may cross the causeway, on motorbike lanes, to Malaysia. Wearing helmet while riding on the road is a must, and front white, rear red lights are necessary between sunset to sunrise. There is no speed limit for cyclists on the roads.

By thumb

Hitchhiking is virtually unheard of in Singapore, and given the small size of the country and its cheap, ubiquitous public transport, it's hardly necessary.

The off-road cycling network consists of off-road cycling paths as well as the Park Connector Network, which consists of enlarged five-foot ways connecting the various parks that dot the island. They are marked either with a bicycle symbol or with "PCN" (Park Connector Network). The maximum speed limit for bicycles in cycling paths is 25 km/h; however, in several sections the cycling paths merge with pedestrian paths, reducing the max. speed to 10 km/h, which is also the maximum speed for bikes in pedestrian-only paths. It's also common to have pedestrians using cycleways, so in practice it is often needed to reduce speed even at dedicated cycling paths. An up-to-date map of cycling paths and other important bicycle route information such as road crossing points can be found in this Google Map (https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=13PRb7OmKXskuiAm_a5bujIIDO3NK4Gn9). Bicycle parking lots, like cycleways, can easily be found in suburban areas, such as near MRT stations, public housing estates, large shopping malls and town centres, but aren't that common in the city centre.

However, bicycle is seen as a last mile connection for some commuters. Shared bicycles can be rented with bike-sharing mobile apps, such as HelloRide.SG, Anywheel, or **SG Bike** (<https://www.sgbike.com.sg/>), at the closest designated bicycle parking area from the transport node, i.e. train station and be parked at designated bicycle parking area closest to the destination. Foldable bicycles not exceeding 120cm by 70cm by 40cm when folded can be brought onto trains and buses at any time of the day.

By e-scooter

Known locally as Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs), e-scooters are legal in Singapore, but they are **prohibited on roads** and scooters with handlebars are also prohibited on pedestrian-only paths. In practice, this means they're only usable in the suburbs and not a practical option for tourists.

On foot

Singapore is very pedestrian-friendly. In the main business district and on main roadways, pavements and pedestrian crossings are in good shape and plentiful, and by Asian standards drivers are generally careful and willing to give way at marked crossings. Jaywalking is illegal and punished with fines of \$25 and up to three months in jail, however is quite common and rarely enforced unless done in front of law enforcement.

An unavoidable downside, though, is the tropical **heat and humidity**, which leaves many visitors sweaty and exhausted, so do as the locals do and bring along a little towel, a bottle of water and even an umbrella to protect against the searing heat. Also, afternoon thunderstorms are fairly common during the monsoon season. It's best to get an early start, pop into air-conditioned shops, cafes and museums to cool off or take shelter from rain, and plan on heading back to the shopping mall or hotel pool before noon. Alternatively, after sundown, evenings can also be comparatively cool. On the upside, the fact that the sun is often covered in clouds and shaded by trees and greenery along roads means that you won't get as easily sunburnt as otherwise at these latitudes. Nevertheless, it is advisable to wear linen or polyester-made clothing which wick away sweat faster, as cotton-made clothing is usually soaked with high amounts of sweat that were a result from the high heat and humidity.

A useful tip to combat the tropical weather is to look out for air-conditioned underground pedestrian crossings. These climate-controlled walkways are plentiful and often between shopping malls and high-rise office buildings. In addition, look out for the pedestrian walkways connecting to underground MRT

stations. Some stations can have up to 25 different walkways connecting to different entrances/exits in the area, creating an extensive network of walkways around the downtown core that gives one the impression of a city underneath the city.

Classic walks in Singapore include walking down the river from the Merlion through the Boat and Clarke Quays, walking around the entire perimeter of Marina Bay, trekking along the Southern Ridges Walk or just strolling around Chinatown, Little India, Bugis or Orchard.

See

Sights in Singapore are covered in more detail under the various districts. Broadly speaking:

- *Beaches and tourist resorts*: Head to one of the three beaches on Sentosa or its southern islands. Other beaches can be found on the East Coast.
- *Culture and cuisine*: See Chinatown for Chinese treats, Little India for Indian flavours, Geylang Serai for a Malay experience or the East Coast for Eurasian and Peranakan culture and delicious seafood, including the famous chilli and black pepper crab.
- *History and museums*: The Bras Basah area east of Orchard and north of the Singapore River is Singapore's colonial core, with historical buildings and museums.
- *Nature and wildlife*: Popular tourist attractions **Singapore Zoo**, **Night Safari**, **Jurong Bird Park** and the **Botanic Gardens** are all in the North and West. For something closer to the city, visit the futuristic **Gardens by the Bay** in the Marina district, behind the Marina Bay Sands. Finding "real" nature is a little harder, but the **Bukit Timah Nature Reserve** (in the same district as the zoo) has more plant species than in the whole of North America, and is also home to a thriving population of wild monkeys. **Pulau Ubin**, an island off the Changi Village in the east, is a flashback to the rural Singapore of yesteryear. City parks full of locals jogging or doing tai chi can be found everywhere. See Botanical tourism in Singapore for details on where to see trees and plants.
- *Skyscrapers and shopping*: The heaviest shopping mall concentration is in Orchard Road, while skyscrapers are clustered around the Singapore River, but also check out Bugis and Marina Bay to see where Singaporeans shop.
- *Places of worship*: Don't miss this aspect of Singapore, where Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism all exist in sizeable numbers. Religious sites can be easily visited and welcome non-followers outside of service times. Particularly worth visiting include: the vast **Kong Meng San Phor Kark See Monastery** near Ang Mo

Otterly cute!



An otter family after a swim

After the Singapore River and its tributaries were cleaned up in the 1990s, **smooth-coated otters** have made their way back to Singapore and into the hearts of its residents. Most active at dawn and dusk, they can most frequently be spotted around the Kallang River (including the Gardens by the Bay) and Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park, catching fish and squeakily trooping across pathways. Just don't get too close: they have viciously sharp teeth and are protective of their young. OtterWatch (<https://www.facebook.com/OtterWatch>) on Facebook is a good place to keep up to date on otter sightings.

Kio/Bishan, the colourful Hindu **Sri Mariamman Temple** in Chinatown, the psychedelic **Burmese Buddhist Temple** in Balestier and the stately Masjid Sultan in Arab Street.

Itineraries

- Three days in Singapore — A three-day sampler set of food, culture and shopping in Singapore, easily divisible into bite-size chunks.
- Southern Ridges Walk — An easy scenic 9 km stroll through the hills and jungles of southern Singapore. Highlights of the trail include a 36 m high Henderson Waves pedestrian bridge providing a stunning view of the sea beyond the jungle.

Do

While you *can* find a place to practice nearly any sport in Singapore — golfing, surfing, scuba diving, even ice skating and snow skiing — due to the country's small size your options are rather limited and prices are relatively high. For watersports in particular, the busy shipping lanes and sheer population pressure mean that the sea around Singapore is murky, and most locals head up to Pulau Tioman, Sibu Island (Malaysia) or Bintan (Indonesia) instead. On the upside, there is an abundance of dive shops in Singapore, and they often arrange weekend trips to good dive sites off the East Coast of Malaysia, so they are a good option for accessing some of Malaysia's not-so touristy dive sites.



Henderson Waves



Culture

On the cultural side of things, Singapore has been trying to shake off its boring, buttoned-down reputation and attract more artists and performances. The star in Singapore's cultural sky is the **Esplanade** theatre in Marina Bay, a world-class facility for performing arts and a frequent stage for the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Pop culture options are rapidly growing and Singapore's home-grown arts scene is undergoing a second renaissance, with local English-language acts like The Sam Willows and Gentle Bones joining local Chinese pop starlets Stefanie Sun and JJ Lin on the scene. Any bands and DJs touring Asia are also pretty much guaranteed to perform in Singapore.



Esplanade Theatres by the Bay



Going to the **movies** is a popular Singaporean pastime, but look for "M18" (age 18 and above only) or "R21" ratings (age 21 and above only) if you like your movies with fewer cuts. The big four theatre chains are **Cathay** (<http://www.cathay.com.sg>), **Carnival Cinemas** (<https://carnivalcinemas.sg/>), **Golden Village** (<http://www.gv.com.sg/>) and **Shaw Brothers** (<https://shaw.sg/>). For a taste of Singapore through film, Jack Neo's popular comedies showcase the foibles of Singaporean life, while directors like K. Rajagopal, Boo Jun Feng, and Tan Pin Pin are ushering in a new wave of contemporary film art in Singapore.

For classical music, Singapore is home to the **Singapore Symphony Orchestra** (<http://www.sso.org.sg/>), which is mainly based in the Esplanade concert hall, though it does hold free concerts in the Singapore Botanic Gardens every year. The **T'ang Quartet** (<http://www.tangquartet.com/>) is a highly acclaimed professional string quartet based in Singapore, and regularly puts on performances of chamber music. For traditional Chinese music, there is the **Singapore Chinese Orchestra** (<http://www.sco.com.sg/>).

As for more contemporary music, Singapore has both attracted international events to expand here, as well as cultivated its own festivals. **Ultra Singapore** (<https://ultrasingapore.com/>) is the local edition of the renowned Ultra Music Festival since 2016, bringing in internationally renowned electronic music acts. **Laneway Singapore** is the local edition of the St Jerome's Laneway Festival (<https://lanewayfestival.com/>) running since 2011, though there has been a hiatus in 2019. **Baybeats** is a free annual music festival at the Esplanade since 2002, usually spanning over a weekend and focused on indie musicians, mostly from Singapore and nearby Asian countries. The **Garden Beats Festival** (<https://www.gardenbeats.com/>) is a ticketed event touted as an "electronic picnic festival" in Fort Canning Park, bringing in international acts while promoting eco-friendly ideas as "the first carbon-neutral music festival in Singapore".

Jazz music lovers may also be interested in the **Singapore International Jazz Festival** (usually abbreviated as **Sing Jazz**), which so far has taken place roughly March–April of the year, and has featured jazz headliners alongside jazz-adjacent musicians.

In May or June, don't miss the yearly **Singapore International Festival of Arts** (<http://www.sifa.sg/>) (formerly the **Singapore Arts Festival**), featuring a programme of art exhibitions/performances and artist conversations over several weeks. Following up from that, in August you can catch the annual **Singapore Night Festival** (<https://www.nightfestival.sg/>) all along the Bras Basah. Bugis district, where numerous artistic/musical events - many of them free - take place at night over two weeks (but concentrated on weekends). A recurring headline event is the projection mapping light show, whereby animation is mapped and projected on the facade of the Singapore National Museum, creating a unique display.

Advance tickets for almost any cultural event can be purchased from **SISTIC** (<http://www.sistic.com.sg/>), either on-line or from any of their numerous ticketing outlets, including the Singapore Visitor Centre on Orchard Rd.

Wayang is a Chinese street opera, performed in open-air theaters by troupes. It combines a wide variety of traditional art forms with singing, mime, dancing, acrobatics and martial arts.

Gambling

Singapore has two massive casinos, always referred to with the euphemism "integrated resort", which pull in nearly as much revenue as the entirety of Las Vegas. **Marina Bay Sands** at Marina Bay is the larger and swankier of the two, while **Resorts World Sentosa** at Sentosa aims for a more family-friendly experience. While locals (citizens and permanent residents) have to pay \$100/day to get in, foreign visitors can enter for free after presenting their passport.

Besides the casino, there are other forms of legalised betting which are more accessible to the locals. This includes horse racing, which is run by the **Singapore Turf Club** (<http://www.turfclub.com.sg>) on weekends, as well as football (soccer) betting and several lotteries run by the **Singapore Pools** (<http://w>

www.singaporepools.com.sg). Horse racing will be terminated on 5 October 2024 with the racecourse is to be demolished and redeveloped.

Mahjong is also a popular pastime in Singapore. The version played in Singapore is similar to the Cantonese version, but it also has extra "animal tiles" not present in the original Cantonese version, as well as several scoring differences. However, this remains pretty much a family and friends affair, and there are no (legal) mahjong parlours as the operation of gambling dens is illegal.

Gambling in public (e.g. playing poker or blackjack at a park) is illegal and punishable with fine and imprisonment under Singaporean law.


Golf

Despite its small size, Singapore has a surprisingly large number of golf courses, but most of the best ones are run by private clubs and open to members and their guests only. The main exceptions being the **Sentosa Golf Club** (<http://www.sentosagolf.com/>), the **Sembawang Country Club** (<https://sembawanggolf.org.sg/>) and the Sime Course of **Keppel Club** (<https://www.keppelclub.com.sg/>), though they charge much higher fees than for members. See the Singapore Golf Association (<http://www.sga.org.sg/>) for the full list; alternatively, head to the nearby Indonesian islands of Batam or Bintan or across the Second Link to Iskandar Puteri, Malaysia.

Races

- **Singapore Grand Prix** is an on-street Formula One motor-race held in the streets of Marina Bay in Sept / Oct.
- **Singapore Turf Club** (<http://www.turfclub.com.sg/>) in Kranji hosts horse races most Fridays, including a number of international cups, and is popular with local gamblers.
- **Singapore Polo Club** (<http://www.singaporepoloclub.org/>) near Balestier is also open to the public on competition days.



The Singapore Grand Prix takes place at the Marina Bay Street Circuit. 

Spas

Singapore has experienced a 'spa boom', and there is now plenty of choice for everything from holistic Ayurveda to green tea hydrotherapy. However, prices aren't as rock-bottom as in neighbours Indonesia and Thailand, and you'll generally be looking at upwards of \$50 even for a plain one-hour massage. Premium spas can be found in most 5 star hotels and on Orchard, and Sentosa's Spa Botanica also has a good reputation. There are also numerous shops offering traditional Chinese massage, which are mostly legitimate, although some sketchier "health centres" do remain. Traditional Asian-style public baths are non-existent.

When looking for beauty salons on Orchard Road, try out the ones on the fourth floor of Lucky Plaza. They offer most salon services like manicures, pedicures, facials, waxing and hair services. A favourite of flight crews and repeat tourists due to the lower costs as compared to the sky high prices of other salons along the shopping belt. Shop around for prices, some of the better looking ones actually charge less.

Swimming

Forget your tiny hotel pool if you are into competitive or recreational swimming: Singapore is paradise for swimmers with arguably the highest density of public pools in the world. They are all open-air 50 m pools (some facilities even feature up to three 50 m pools), accessible for an entrance fee of \$1–1.50. Some of the visitors don't swim at all. They just come from nearby housing complexes for a few hours to chill out, read and relax in the sun. Most are open daily 8AM-9PM and all feature a small cafe. Just imagine swimming your lanes in the tropical night with lit up palm trees surrounding the pool.

The Singapore Sports Council maintains [a list of pools \(http://www.myactivesg.com/facilities/swimming-pools\)](http://www.myactivesg.com/facilities/swimming-pools), most of which are part of a larger sports complex with a gym, running track, tennis courts etc., and are near the MRT station they're named after. Perhaps the best is in Katong (111 Wilkinson Road, on the East Coast): after the swim, stroll through the villa neighbourhood directly in front of the pool entrance and have a look at the luxurious, original architecture of the houses that really rich Singaporeans live in. If you get bored with regular swimming pools, head to the **Jurong East Swimming Complex** where you get the wave pool, water slides and Jacuzzi at an insanely affordable entrance fee of \$1.50 on weekdays and \$2 on weekends. For those who feel richer, visit the **Wild Wild Wet (<http://www.wildwildwet.com>)** water theme park or the **Adventure Cove Waterpark** and get yourself wet with various exciting water slides and tidal wave pools.

For those who don't like pools, head out to the beaches. The **East Coast Park** has a scenic coastline that stretches over 15 km. It's a popular getaway spot for Singaporeans to swim, cycle, barbeque and engage in various other sports and recreational activities. **Sentosa island** also has three white, sandy beaches - Siloso Beach, Palawan Beach and Tanjong Beach - each with its own distinct characteristics, and also very popular with locals.

Water sports

Canoeing and dragon-boating are popular water-sports in Singapore, and there are many beautiful reservoirs and rivers where one can partake in such physical activity. Check out the MacRitchie Reservoir, Kallang River and Marina Bay for reasonably priced options. Besides these more regular water sports, Singapore also offers water sports fans trendy activities such as cable-Skiing and wave surfing in specially created environments.

Snow sports

Being just one degree north of the equator, it is obviously not the best place on earth for skiing, but sunny Singapore still has a permanent indoor snow centre. **Snow City (<https://www.snowcity.com.sg/>)** offers visitors a chance to experience winter. Visitors can escape from the hot and humid tropical weather to play in snow or even learn to ski and snowboard with certified professional instructors.

Ice skating is also possible in Singapore, in **Kallang Ice World** at Leisure Park Kallang (<https://leisurepark.com.sg/>).

Buy

Money

The Singaporean currency is the **Singapore dollar**, denoted by the symbol **S\$** or **\$** (ISO code: **SGD**). It is divided into 100 cents, denoted **¢**. There are coins of 5¢ (bronze or gold), 10¢ (silver), 20¢ (silver), 50¢ (silver) and \$1 (2nd series: gold; 3rd series: silver with gold rim). Notes are in denominations of \$2 (purple), \$5 (green), \$10 (red), \$50 (blue), \$100 (orange), \$1,000 (purple) and \$10,000 (gold). The lower three denominations are issued entirely in polymer, the rest of the denominations are issued in paper. The latter two denominations are no longer issued, very rarely seen and useless outside of luxury boutiques, the casino, and department stores — travellers would be wise to avoid them.

Unless it includes other initials (e.g., US\$ to stand for U.S. dollars), the "\$" sign used in the island-nation (and in this guide) refers to Singapore dollars.

The Brunei dollar is pegged at par with the Singapore dollar and is legally "customary tender" that can be used interchangeably. In practice, it's very rare to see Brunei notes in Singapore, and if you try to use one, many smaller merchants, being unaware of the peg, will reject it initially.

To avoid additional hassle, show the official website about the peg (<https://www.mas.gov.sg/currency/brunei-singapore-currency-interchangeability-agreement>) to the merchant, or consider changing your Brunei dollars to Singapore dollars before use. All banks are legally required to exchange Brunei notes for free.

Currency exchange booths can be found in every shopping mall and usually offer better rates, better opening hours, and much faster service than banks. Mustafa in Little India accepts almost any major currency at very good rates and many obscure currencies as well, as do the fiercely competitive small shops at or surrounding the aptly named Change Alley (next to Raffles Place MRT), Lucky Plaza (along the Orchard Road shopping belt), People's Park Complex (at the heart of Chinatown) or Parkway Parade (in Marine Parade on the East Coast). For large amounts, ask for a quote, as it will often get you a better rate than displayed on the board. Rates at the airport and international ferry terminals are not as favourable as in the city so exchange only enough to pay for transport from the airport or ferry terminal (alternatively many forms of transport from the airport and ferry terminals are payable by VISA or Mastercard so you can put exchanging money until later in the trip, see *Get in* and *Get around* sections). While many department stores accept major foreign currencies, their rates are usually terrible. Major hotels also offer currency exchange services, but at terrible rates.

Exchange rates for Singapore dollars

As of January 2024:

- US\$1 ≈ S\$1.32
- €1 ≈ S\$1.45
- UK£1 ≈ S\$1.68
- AU\$1 ≈ S\$0.90
- NZ\$1 ≈ S\$0.83
- Japanese ¥100 ≈ S\$0.93
- Chinese ¥1 ≈ S\$0.19
- Indian ₹100 ≈ S\$1.59
- HK\$1 ≈ S\$0.17
- Malaysian RM1 ≈ S\$0.29
- Indonesian Rp10,000 ≈ S\$0.85

Exchange rates fluctuate. Current rates for these and other currencies are available from XE.com (<https://www.xe.com/currency/sgd-singapore-dollar>)

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Most retailers and service providers in Singapore are required to levy a 9% GST. Sellers are generally required to publish the GST-inclusive prices (i.e. you don't need to do further maths) except for hotel and restaurant (eat-in) prices whereby GST (and service charge) are added right before payment (see *Tipping* and *Sleep* sections).

Payments

Singapore has adopted cashless payments in a big way and it's entirely possible to never even see paper money for days on end. Even hawker centres and food courts have started to accept mobile app payments.

Credit cards are widely accepted in stores, restaurants, hotels, etc. Chip-and-signature is standard (you are unlikely to be asked for a PIN unless configured as such by your card issuer) and contactless terminals (including those for Apple Pay and Google Pay) are common, just ask for "contactless". The most widely accepted credit cards in Singapore are Visa and MasterCard, and many shops also accept American Express. Discover, JCB and China UnionPay cards are also accepted in some shops that primarily cater to tourists. You can also pay bus and MRT fares with contactless VISA and Mastercards (including cards powered by Apple Pay and Google Pay). Although credit card surcharges are not usually allowed in Singapore (with one notable official exception made for taxi companies), many small merchants often disregard this rule and might either impose a minimum transaction amount for cards or offer discounts over the listed price if you pay in cash.

Singapore is one of the largest financial centres in the region, so there are numerous banks to choose from. The main local banks are DBS (<http://www.dbs.com>), UOB (<http://www.uob.com.sg>) and OCBC (<http://www.ocbc.com>), whose **ATMs** can be found in every shopping mall or MRT station, and all of which let you withdraw money via the Plus/Cirrus networks. Partly due to strong banking secrecy laws and the fact that interest paid on bank deposits is not taxable in Singapore, Singaporean banks are increasingly seen as an alternative to Swiss banks for the world's richest people to stash their assets. However, for foreigners, opening a bank account in Singapore is *not possible* unless you have a long-term residence pass (work, student, etc.).

There is a plethora of **mobile payments** applications. GrabPay is the easiest for tourists to sign up, with only a phone number and no personal details needed, you can top up via Visa or MasterCard. Regional players FavePay and Chinese players (Alipay, WeChat Pay) are also common. EZ-Link transport cards and NETS Prepaid cards are accepted for payment in some convenience stores and fast food chains.

Travellers cheques are generally *not* accepted by retailers, but can be cashed at certain limited number of exchange booths or banks.

Tipping

Tipping is generally *not* practised in Singapore. However, it is common for hotels and restaurants to levy a 10% service charge before GST, the local Goods and Services Tax. Restaurants and hotel room rates often display prices like \$19.99++, which means that service charge (10%) and sales tax (8%) are not included and will be added to your bill. "Nett" prices already include all taxes and service charges.

Bellhops and hotel porters still expect \$2 or so per bag. Tipping is not expected in taxis, who usually return your change to the last 10 cents, or round the fare down by that amount in your favour, if they can't be bothered to dig for change; congestion or Electronic Road Pricing charges are often already included

in the final fare. All taxis must advertise a hotline to call if the customer feels dissatisfied. Tipping is prohibited at the airport.

Do *not* under any circumstances offer a tip to any government employee, especially police officers, as this is regarded as bribery, and would most likely get you arrested and pressed with criminal charges relating to corruption.

Costs

Singapore is expensive by Southeast Asian standards, but cheap compared to Western countries: \$50 is a perfectly serviceable daily backpacker budget if you are willing to cut some corners, though you would probably wish to double that for comfort. Food in particular is a steal, with excellent hawker food available for under \$5 per meal for a generous serving. Accommodation is a little pricier, but a bed in a hostel can cost less than \$30 and a cheap hotel room can go for under \$150, while branded business hotels would be in the \$200-500 range. At the top end of the market you're probably looking at over \$500 a night, with places like Raffles and Capella often pushing \$1000.

As rough rules of thumb, prices in Singapore are about twice as high as in Malaysia and Thailand and 3-5 times as high as in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Shopping

Shopping is second only to eating as a national pastime, which means that Singapore has an **abundance** of shopping malls, and low taxes and tariffs on imports coupled with huge volume mean that prices are usually very competitive. While you won't find any bazaars with dirt-cheap local handicrafts (in fact, virtually everything sold in Singapore is made elsewhere), goods are generally of reasonably good quality and shopkeepers are generally quite honest due to strong consumer protection laws. Most stores are open daily 10AM-10PM, although smaller operations (particularly those outside shopping malls) close earlier — 7PM is common — and perhaps on Sundays as well. Mustafa in Little India is open until 2 AM every day, 365 days a year.

Cheated?

Ripped off by a shop? Call the Singapore Tourism Board's free hotline at ☎ 1800-736-2000 (domestic). The Small Claims Tribunal at 1 Havelock Sq also has a special expedited process for tourists that can solve simple cases within 24 hours.

- **Antiques:** The second floor of the Tanglin Shopping Centre on Orchard and the shops on South Bridge Rd in Chinatown are good options if looking for the real thing (or high-quality reproductions).
- **Books:** Kinokuniya's main branch at Ngee Ann City in Orchard is Singapore's largest bookstore, with a smaller branch at Bugis Junction (Bugis MRT station). Many second-hand book stores are in Far East Plaza and Bras Basah Complex, where you may attempt to bargain if you are buying a lot. For university textbooks, the bookshops at the National University of Singapore have the best prices on the island, up to 80% off compared to prices in the West.
- **Cameras:** Peninsula Plaza near City Hall has Singapore's widest selection of camera shops. However, there are no great bargains to be had, and many camera stores in Singapore (particularly those in Lucky Plaza and Sim Lim Square) have a reputation for fleecing even the most careful tourists. The best way is to know *exactly* what you are looking

for and then when you arrive, drop by the shops at the airport's transit area and take a look at the price and check with them whether they have any promotions. Then go to the downtown shops and compare prices/packages to see which shop will give you value for money. To be safe, *always* check prices and packages for everything you're interested in at large retailers like Courts, Harvey Norman and Best Denki first. Be very careful when shop staff attempt to promote brands or models other than the one you have in mind; a few stores at Sim Lim Square, Lucky Plaza, and elsewhere are known to use this tactic and sell products at two to four times their actual list prices. Also watch for the bait-and-switches. Inspect the model number and condition of the item, then do not let it out of your sight when you pay. (In Lucky Plaza, the most common scam is doubling the charge without your agreement.)



Sim Lim Square, Singapore's computing and electronics mecca

- **Clothes, high-street:** The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands as well as Ion Orchard, Ngee Ann City (Takashimaya) and Paragon on Orchard have the heaviest concentration of branded boutiques.
- **Clothes, tailored:** Virtually all hotels have a tailor shop attached, and touting tailors are a bit of a nuisance in Chinatown. As elsewhere, you'll get what you pay for and will get poor quality if you don't have the time for multiple fittings or the skill to check what you're getting. Prices vary widely: a local shop using cheap fabrics can do a shirt for \$40, while Lee Kuan Yew's favourite tailors CYC the Custom Shop (<http://www.cyccustomshop.com>) will charge at least \$120.
- **Clothes, youth:** Most of Bugis is dedicated to the young, hip and cost-conscious. Bugis St (opposite Bugis MRT) is the most popular in the Bugis area, consisting of 3 levels of shops. Some spots of Orchard, notably Far East Plaza (not to be confused with Far East Shopping Centre) and the top floor of the Heeren, also target the same market but prices are generally higher.
- **Computers:** Sim Lim Square (near Little India) is great for the hardcore geek who really knows what he's after - parts price lists are available on HardwareZone.com and are given out in Sim Lim itself, making price comparison easy. Lesser mortals (namely, those who have failed to do their price-checking homework) stand a risk of getting ripped off when purchasing, but this is generally not a problem with the price lists offered by most shops. Some Singaporeans purchase their electronic gadgets during the quarterly "IT shows" usually held at Suntec City Convention Centre or at the Expo, at which prices on gadgets are sometimes slashed (but often only to Sim Lim levels). Do not be attracted by side gifts/sweeteners of thumbdrives, mice and so on; these only tend to hide inflated prices. If you just need a cable or new mouse in a hurry, Challenger (<https://www.challenger.sg/>) stores can be found in most shopping malls.
- **Consumer electronics:** Singapore used to be known for good prices, but nowadays electronics here are generally more expensive than from US and international online vendors. Funan (Riverside) and Mustafa (Little India) are good choices. *Avoid* the tourist-oriented shops on Orchard Road, particularly the notorious Lucky Plaza, or risk getting ripped off. Also take great care to **be wary of shops on the 1st and 2nd levels of Sim Lim Square**, some of which tend to rip off tourists and locals alike by overcharging by 100% or more, adding on ludicrous charges beyond what was agreed on, swapping items for used ones, leaving out cases and batteries, and a host of other practices that should be (or are) criminal. Please do your research before buying electronics from *any* store in Singapore; online research and multi-shop price comparison (and bargaining, occasionally) are essential. Mustafa has fixed, fair prices and is a good option, and so are Challenger and

other large fixed-price retailers. For any purchases, remember that Singapore uses 230 V voltage at 50 Hz with a British-style, three-pin plug.

- **Electronic components:** For do-it-yourself people and engineers, a wide variety of electronic components and associated tools can be found at Sim Lim Tower (opposite Sim Lim Square), near Little India. You can find most common electronic components (such as breadboards, transistors, various ICs, etc.) and bargain prices for larger quantities as well.
- **Ethnic knick-knacks:** Chinatown has Singapore's heaviest concentration of glow-in-the-dark Merlion soap dispensers and ethnic souvenirs, mostly but not entirely Chinese and nearly all imported from somewhere else. For Malay and Indian stuff, the best places to shop are Geylang Serai and Little India respectively.
- **Fabrics:** Arab Street and Little India have a good selection of imported and local fabrics like *batik*. Chinatown does sell rather reasonable and cheap fabrics, bargaining is allowed so do know your stuff on what fabric to buy. Fabrics in Singapore may not be as cheap as overseas, for most fabrics are imported to Singapore.
- **Fakes:** Unlike most Southeast Asian countries, pirated goods are not openly on sale and importing them to the city-state carries heavy fines due to its strong stance on intellectual property (IP) protection. Fake goods are nevertheless not difficult to find in Little India or Bugis.
- **Food:** Local supermarkets Cold Storage, Prime Mart, Shop 'n' Save and NTUC Fairprice are ubiquitous, but for specialities, Jason's Marketplace in the basement of Raffles City and Tanglin Market Place at Tanglin Mall (both on Orchard) are some of Singapore's best-stocked gourmet supermarkets, with a vast array of imported products. Takashimaya's basement (Orchard) has lots of small quirky shops and makes for a more interesting browse, while the Little Farms (<https://littlefarms.com/>) chain is all-organic and priced to match. For a more Singaporean (and much cheaper) shopping experience, seek out any neighbourhood wet market, like Little India's Tekka Market.
- **Games:** Video and PC games are widely available in Singapore, but prices may not be cheaper than in the West. Games sold for the local market are generally in English, though some games imported from Hong Kong or Taiwan will be in Chinese. Singapore's region code is NTSC-J (together with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, etc.), which means that games sold may not be compatible with consoles in mainland China, North America, Europe or Australia. During the four times in a year IT Shows, PC, Xbox, Wii, PlayStation games prices may drop at such IT shows, if not the games will be bundled with others (example: buy 2 at \$49.90). Search for reputable shops online and avoid Sim Lim Square's first two floors, as always.
- **Hi-fi stereos:** The Adelphi (Riverside) has Singapore's best selection of audiophile shops.
- **Marine sports:** Many of the shophouses opposite The Concourse on Beach Rd in Bugis sell fishing and scuba diving gear.
- **Mobile phones:** Very competitively priced in Singapore due to high consumer volume, available throughout the country both used and new. Phones are never SIM locked, so they can be used anywhere, and many shops will allow you to "trade in" an older phone to offset the cost of a new one. Do not purchase phones at Lucky Plaza, because there's a significant risk you'll be almost literally robbed, if tourist reports are anything to go by.
- **Peranakan goods:** The *Peranakan*, or Malay-Chinese, may be fading but their colourful clothing and artwork, especially the distinctive pastel-coloured ceramics, are still widely available. Antiques are expensive, but modern replicas are quite affordable. The largest selection and best prices can be found in Katong on the East Coast.
- **Sporting goods:** Queensway Shopping Centre, off Alexandra Rd and rather off the beaten track (take a taxi), seems to consist of nothing but sporting goods shops. You can also find foreigner-sized sporty clothing and shoes here. Do bargain! Expect to get 40-50% off the price from the shops in Orchard for the same items, as the items here are parallel-imported. Velocity in Novena is also devoted to sports goods, but is rather more upmarket. Martial arts

equipment is surprisingly hard to find, although most of the clothing shops around Pagoda Street in Chinatown sell basic silk taiji/wushu uniforms. If you plan to buy weapons such as swords, you have to apply for a permit from the police (around \$10) to get your weaponry out of the country.

- **Tea:** Chinatown's Yue Hwa (2nd floor) is unbeatable for both price and variety, but Time for Tea in Lucky Plaza (Orchard) is also a good option. Local brand TWG (<http://www.twgtea.com/>) has glittery gold-bedecked branches throughout the island aimed squarely at the luxury gift and souvenir market.
- **Watches:** High-end watches are very competitively priced. Ngee Ann City (Orchard) has dedicated stores from the likes of Piaget and Cartier, while Millenia Walk (Marina Bay) features the Cortina Watch Espace retailing 30 brands from Audemars Piguet to Patek Philippe, as well as several other standalone shops.



Pretty in pink - Peranakan tea set with dragon-phoenix motif

For purchases of over \$100 per day per participating shop, you may be able to get a refund of your 9% GST if departing by air, but the process is a bit of a bureaucratic hassle. At the shop you need to ask for a tax refund cheque. Before checking in at the airport, present this cheque together with the items purchased and your passport at the GST customs counter. Get the receipt stamped there. Then proceed with check-in and go through security. After clearing departure immigration, bring the stamped cheque to the refund counter to cash it in or get the GST back on your credit card. See Singapore Customs (<https://www.customs.gov.sg/individuals/going-through-customs/departure/tourist-refund-scheme>) for the full scoop. No GST refund is available if you depart by land or sea.

During the annual **Great Singapore Sale** (<https://gss.sra.org.sg/>) (GSS), which is usually scheduled from late June to July, many shops reduce prices 50-80% or more. This means that locals go crazy as most of them save up for a whole year just for the sale, and so almost all shopping centres, especially those in the vicinity of Orchard Road, become very crowded on weekends. If you prefer not to shop in crowded malls, it is advisable to take advantage of the sales on weekdays when most locals are at work.

Souvenirs

Even with her young age, Singapore has a wide range of souvenirs available for tourists due to the rich multi-cultural history. While you can find Merlion Keychains, Chocolates, T-shirts & Postcards around Chinatown & Little India, there are plenty of unique souvenirs that are homegrown labels & represent Singapore.

Fashion label **Charles & Keith** (<http://www.charleskeith.com/sg/>) (started out as Shoe Heaven), has got you covered if you're looking for a pair of perfect shoes & has evolved into handbags & accessories. Grab the mini Singapore sling cocktail set at **Raffles Hotel** (<http://singaporesling.com.sg/sling-products/>) and **Changi Airport** (<http://www.changiairport.com/en/airport-experience/attractions-and-services/wines-and-spirits-duplex-store.html>) for the true heritage flavour. With their luxurious gold plating technology, **RISIS** (<http://www.risis.com/>) provides beautiful gifts like gold-plated Orchids and brooches.

One of the popular snack souvenirs - Bak Kwa from **Bee Cheng Hiang** (<http://www.beechenghiang.com.sg/>) (Smoked Barbecue Pork) is a well-loved snack by Chinese tourists, though most locals prefer the version from **Lim Chee Guan** (<http://www.limcheeguan.com.sg/>), which has extremely long queues lasting several hours over the Chinese New Year period. Kaya is a savoury coconut milk, eggs, and sugar,

usually spread on toast where locals consume for their breakfast. Depending on the brand, it can taste rich & sweet to having a light pandan flavour. [Ya Kun Kaya](http://yakun.com/) (<http://yakun.com/>) is readily available in their nationwide outlets and [Changi Airport](#).

A must-get, Chilli crab & Laksa sauce kits from **Prima Taste** (<http://www.primataste.com.sg/>) are also saliva-inducing souvenirs available to purchase at supermarkets. These are Halal.

Bak Kut Teh (literally translated as Meat Bone Tea) Spices are also a fine choice to bring back a taste of Singapore, and one can choose from ranges like **A1 Bak Kut Teh** to celebrity-favourite **Outram Park Ya Hua Bak Kut Teh** (<http://yahuabakkutteh.com/>). Speaking about Tea, Singapore also has her own luxury tea collection from **TWG** (<https://www.twgtea.com/>) which offers an impressive selection of over 800 teas, specially harvested from all around the world.

Local Designers like **SUPERMAMA** (<https://supermamastore.com/>) have also came up with Singaporean omiyage (contemporary giftware) ranging from porcelain tableware to quirky socks. Most of these souvenirs can be found in their own store outlets, Changi Airport or Singapore Souvenir curator - **SG Style** (<https://www.sgstyle.sg>), who does same-day delivery to your hotel.

Cat Socrates (<https://cat-socrates.myshopify.com/>) is a quirky bookstore that sells Singaporean literature as well as postcards, stationery and trinkets with Singaporean motifs made by local artists.

Eat

Main article: [Cuisine of Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei](#)

Singapore is a melting pot of cuisines from around the world, and many Singaporeans are obsessive gourmards who love to *makan* ("eat" in Malay). You will find quality Chinese, Malay, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Italian, French, British, American and other food in this city-state.

Eating habits run the gamut, but most foods are eaten by **fork and spoon**: push and cut with the fork in the left hand, and eat with the spoon in the right. Noodles and Chinese dishes typically come with chopsticks, while Malay and Indian food can be eaten by hand, but nobody will blink an eye if you ask for a fork and spoon instead. If eating by hand, only **use your right hand** to handle your food, as Malays and Indians traditionally use their left hand to handle dirty things. Take note of the usual traditional Chinese etiquette when using chopsticks, and most importantly, *do not* stick your chopsticks vertically into a bowl of rice. If eating in a group, serving dishes are always shared, but you'll get your own bowl of rice and soup. It's common to use your own chopsticks to pick up food from communal plates, but serving spoons can be provided on request. When eating at Western restaurants, traditional European dining etiquette generally applies.

This page uses the following price ranges for a typical meal *for one*, including soft drink:

Budget	Under \$10
Mid-range	\$10-30
Splurge	Over \$30

Keep an eye out for the **Singapore Food Festival** (<http://www.singaporefoodfestival.com/>), held every year in July.

Local delicacies

Singapore is justly famous for its food, a unique mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Western elements. The following is only a brief sampler of the most popular dishes.



A plate of chilli crab



Laksa, with chilli paste and chopped laksa leaf in a spoon



Satay with peanut sauce, onions and cucumber



An "ice cream burger", durian ice cream wrapped in bread

Peranakan/Nonya cuisine

The most identifiable cuisine in the region is **Peranakan** or **Nonya** cuisine, born from the mixed Malay and Chinese communities of what were once the British colonies of the Straits Settlements (modern-day Singapore, Penang and Malacca).

- **Chilli crab** is a whole crab ladled with oodles of sticky, tangy chilli sauce. It's spicy at first, but the more you eat, the better it gets. Notoriously difficult to eat, so don't wear a white shirt: just dig in with your hands and ignore the mess. The seafood restaurants of the East Coast are famous for this. For a less messy but equally tasty alternative, ask for **black pepper crab**.
- **Kaya** is a jam-like spread made from egg and coconut, an odd-sounding but tasty combination. Served on toast for breakfast, canonically accompanied by runny eggs and strong, sweet coffee (*kopi*). Exists in two distinctive styles; the greenish Nonya version, coloured with pandan leaf, and the brownish Hainanese version.
- **Laksa**, in particular the **Katong laksa** or **laksa lemak** style, is probably the best-known

Culinary borrowings

Many regional terms and the odd euphemism tend to crop up in notionally English menus. A few of the more common ones:

assam

tamarind (Malay)

bee hoon

thin rice noodles (Hokkien 米粉)

garoupa

grouper, a type of fish (Portuguese)

gonggong

a type of conch (Chinese)

hor fun

very wide, flat rice noodles (Cantonese 河粉)

kangkung

water spinach, an aquatic vegetable (Malay)

kway teow

Singaporean dish: slippery rice noodles in a creamy, immensely rich coconut-based curry broth, topped with cockles or shrimp. The common style found in hawker centres is very spicy, although you can ask for less/no chilli to dial down the heat. The Katong style is much less spicy and is generally found only in Katong itself (see the **East Coast page**). Despite sharing the same name, the dish bears almost no resemblance to the varieties found in neighbouring Malaysia.

- **Mee siam** is rice flour noodles served in a sweet-sour soup (made from tamarind, dried shrimp and fermented beans), bean curd cubes, and hard boiled eggs. Though the Chinese, Malays and Indians all have their own versions, it is the Peranakan version that is most popular with Singaporeans. You will largely find this at Malay stalls.
- **Rojak** means a mixture of everything in Malay, and there are two very different types. **Chinese rojak** is a salad of pineapple, white turnip, cucumber, *tau pok* (fried bean curd) with thin tiny slices of *bunga kantan* (torch ginger flower buds), tossed in shrimp paste sauce and sugar, then sprinkled with crushed peanuts. **Indian rojak** consists of mainly fried fritters made from flour and various pulses with cucumber and tofu, dipped into sweet & spicy sauces.
- **Ice cream** is just as it is in Western countries. However, in Singapore, there are various local flavours such as durian and red bean which are not available outside the region and are certainly worth a try. To impress the locals, try asking for ice cream in *roti* (bread).

Besides these dishes, the Peranakans are also known for their *kueh* or snacks, which are somewhat different from the Malay versions due to stronger Chinese influences.

Malay cuisine

The Malays were Singapore's original inhabitants and despite now being outnumbered by the Chinese, their distinctive cuisine is popular to this day. Characterised by heavy use of spices, most Malay dishes are curries, stews or dips of one kind or another and **nasi padang** restaurants, offering a wide variety of these to ladle onto your rice, are very popular.

- **Mee rebus** is a dish of egg noodles with spicy, slightly sweet gravy, a slice of hard boiled egg and lime.
- **Mee soto** is Malay-style chicken soup, with a clear broth, shredded chicken breast and egg noodles.
- **Nasi lemak** is the definitive Malay breakfast, consisting at its simplest of rice cooked in light coconut milk, some *ikan bilis* (anchovies), peanuts, a slice of cucumber and a dab of chilli on the side. A larger *ikan kuning* (fried fish) or chicken wing are common accompaniments. More often than not, also combined with a variety of curries and/or *sambal*
- **Otah/Otak** is a type of fish cake made of minced fish (usually mackerel), coconut milk, chilli and various other spices, and grilled in a banana or coconut leaf, usually served to

flat rice noodles
(Hokkien/Teochew 粿条)

lengkuas

blue ginger (Malay)

mee

thick egg noodles
(Hokkien/Teochew 面)

see hum

blood cockles (Cantonese 蜆蚶)

serai

lemon grass (Malay)

sotong

squid/cuttlefish (Malay)

spare parts

animal internal organs, such as liver, heart, gizzard

tang hoon

thin, transparent starch noodles (Hokkien 冬粉)



Nasi lemak with *otah* (spiced fish paste), fried chicken wing, cucumber and fiery *sambal* chilli sauce

accompany other dishes like nasi lemak.

- **Rendang**, originally from Padang in Indonesia, but considered a traditional Malay dish in Singapore, and occasionally dubbed "dry curry", is meat stewed for hours on end in a spicy (but rarely fiery) coconut-based curry paste until almost all water is absorbed. Beef *rendang* is the most common, although chicken and mutton are spotted sometimes.
- **Sambal**, originally from Javanese cuisine, is the generic term for chilli sauces of many kinds. **Sambal belacan** is a common condiment made by mixing chilli with the shrimp paste *belacan*, while the popular dish **sambal sotong** consists of squid (*sotong*) cooked in red chilli sauce.
- **Sambal stingray** is prepared by barbecuing stingray with a fiery *sambal* spice paste spread on top. Stingray flesh is surprisingly meaty, closer to chicken than fish, and often a hit even with visitors who are not huge seafood fans.
- **Satay**, originally from Javanese cuisine, are barbecued skewers of meat, typically chicken, mutton or beef. What separates satay from your ordinary kebab are the spices used to season the meat and the slightly spicy peanut-based dipping sauce. The *Satay Club* at Lau Pa Sat near Raffles Place is one popular location for this delicacy. There is also a local Hainanese version of the dish, which unlike the Malay original often uses non-halal meats such as pork, and adds a pineapple puree to the dipping sauce.
- **Curry puffs** are the Singapore take on samosas, pastries usually stuffed with mild chicken curry and potatoes, although there are countless variants. Portable, filling and delicious.

Malay desserts, especially the sweet pastries and jellies (*kuih* or *kueh*) made largely from coconut and palm sugar (*gula melaka*), bear a distinct resemblance to those of Thailand. But in the sweltering tropical heat, try one of many concoctions made with ice instead:



Curry puffs, pastries stuffed with chicken curry

- **Bubur cha-cha** consists of cubed yam, sweet potato and sago added into coconut milk soup. This can be served warm or cold.
- **Chendol** is made with green pea noodles, kidney beans, palm sugar and coconut milk.
- **Durian** is not exactly a dish, but a local fruit with a distinctive odor you can smell a mile away and a sharp thorny husk. Both smell and taste defy description, but eating garlic ice cream next to an open sewer comes to mind. If you are game enough you should try it, but be warned beforehand — you will either love it or hate it. The rich creamy yellow flesh is often sold in places like Geylang and Bugis and elsewhere conveniently in pre-packaged packs from around \$10. This 'king of fruits' is also made into ice cream, cakes, sweets, puddings and other decadent desserts. You're not allowed to carry durians on the MRT and buses and they're banned from many hotels, so some stalls have seating so you can devour it then and there.
- **Ice kacang** literally means "ice bean" in Malay, a good clue to the two major ingredients: shaved ice and sweet red beans. However, more often than not you'll also get *gula melaka* (palm sugar), grass jelly, sweet corn, attap palm seeds and anything else on hand thrown in, and the whole thing is then drizzled with canned evaporated milk or coconut cream and coloured syrups. The end result tastes very interesting — and refreshing.
- **Kuih** (or *kueh*) refer to a plethora of steamed or baked "cakes", mostly made with coconut milk, grated coconut flesh, glutinous rice or tapioca. They are often very colourful and cut into fanciful shapes, but despite their wildly varying appearance tend to taste rather similar. **Ondeh-ondoh**, little green balls dipped in coconut shavings and filled with cane syrup that bursts in your mouth, are worth keeping an eye out for.
- **Pisang goreng** is a batter-dipped and deep-fried banana.

Chinese cuisine



Bak kut teh with rice and *you tiao* fritters



Hainanese chicken rice



Fried Hokkien mee



Prawn *mee* and pork rib soup

Chinese food as eaten in Singapore commonly originates from southern China, particularly Fujian, Guangdong and Hainan. While "authentic" fare is certainly available, especially in fancier restaurants, the daily fare served in hawker centres has absorbed a number of tropical touches, most notably the fairly heavy use of **chilli** and the Malay fermented shrimp paste **belacan** as condiments. Noodles can also be served not just in soup (湯 *tang*), but also "dry" (干 *gan*), meaning that your noodles will be served tossed with chilli and spices in one bowl, and the soup will come in a separate bowl.

- **Bak chor mee** (肉脞面) is essentially noodles with minced pork, tossed in a chilli-based sauce with lard, *ikan bilis* (fried anchovies), vegetables and mushrooms. Black vinegar may also be added.
- **Bak kut teh** (肉骨茶), lit. "pork bone tea", is a simple-sounding soup of pork ribs simmered for hours in broth until they're ready to fall off the bone. Singaporeans prefer the light and peppery Teochew style ("white"), but a few shops offer the original dark and aromatic Fujian kind ("black"). *Bak kut teh* is typically eaten with white rice, *mui choy* (pickled vegetables) and a pot of strong Chinese tea, hence the name — the broth itself doesn't contain any tea. To impress the locals, order some *you tiao* fritters from a nearby stall and cut them up into bite-sized chunks to dip into your soup.
- **Char kway teow** (炒粿条) is the quintessential Singapore-style fried noodle dish, consisting of several types of noodles in thick brown sauce with strips of fishcake, Chinese sausage, a token veggie or two and either cockles and shrimp. It's cheap (\$2–3/serve), filling and has nothing to do with the dish known as "Singapore fried noodles" elsewhere. (And which actually doesn't exist in Singapore.) It is fried with a type of caramelised soy sauce, thus making it somewhat sweeter than the Penang version.
- **Chee cheong fun** (豬腸粉) is a favourite breakfast consisting of lasagna-type rice noodles rolled up and various types of fried meats including fishballs and fried tofu. The dish is usually topped with a generous amount of sauce.

- **Chwee kway** (水粿) is a breakfast dish consisting of rice cakes topped with *chai po* (salted fermented turnips), usually served with some chilli sauce.
- **Fishball noodles** (魚丸面) come in many forms, but the noodle variety most often seen is *mee pok*, which are flat egg noodles. The noodles are tossed in chilli sauce and accompanied by a side bowl of fishballs in soup.
- **Hainanese chicken rice** (海南鸡饭) is steamed ("white") or roasted ("red") chicken flavoured with soy sauce and sesame oil served on a bed of fragrant rice that has been cooked in chicken broth and flavoured with ginger and garlic. Accompanied by chilli sauce made from crushed fresh chillis, ginger, garlic and thick dark soy sauce as well as some cucumber and a small bowl of chicken broth. Despite its name, only the method of preparing the chicken originated in Hainan, while the method of cooking the rice was actually invented by the Hainanese immigrants in what is today Singapore and Malaysia.
- **Hokkien mee** (福建面) is a style of soupy fried noodles in light, fragrant stock with prawns and other seafood. Oddly, it bears little resemblance to the Kuala Lumpur dish of the same name, which uses thick noodles in dark soy, or the Penang version, which is served in very spicy prawn soup.
- **Kway chap** (粿汁) is essentially sheets made of rice flour served in a brown stock, accompanied by a plate of braised pork and pig organs (tongue, ear and intestines).
- **Mala xiangguo** (麻辣香锅), originally from Sichuan but hugely popular in Singapore, is a stir-fry of your choice of ingredients with a powerfully spicy and numbing sauce made from chillies and Sichuan peppercorns. Start with "little spicy" (小辣 *xiao la*) and work your way up if you dare!
- **Mooncakes** (月饼) are traditionally eaten for the Mid-Autumn festival, with the Cantonese style, made with a lotus seed paste filling and salted egg yolk being the clear favourite among Singaporeans. Some traditional bakeries and restaurants may also sell the traditional styles of the other Chinese dialect groups, and the modern Hong Kong-style snow skin mooncakes are also popular in Singapore, though though one with a uniquely Southeast Asian filling is the snow skin durian mooncake.
- **Popiah** (薄饼), or spring rolls, come fresh or fried. They consist of a filling of boiled turnip, fried tofu, pork, shrimp with a slew of condiments, wrapped in a thin crepe smeared with sweet dark soy sauce and eaten like a fajita. They are related to the *lumpia* and *runbing* of other Chinese communities in Asia.
- **Prawn noodles** (虾面, *hae mee* in Hokkien) is a dark-brown prawn broth served with egg noodles and a giant tiger prawn or two on top. Some stalls serve it with boiled pork ribs as well. The best versions are highly addictive and will leave you slurping up the last MSG-laden (probably from the shrimp heads) drops.
- **Rice dumplings** (粽子) are traditionally eaten during the Dragon Boat Festival; by far the two most popular versions in Singapore are the Hokkien-style *bak chang* (肉粽) and the Peranakan-style *nyonya chang* (娘惹粽), the latter of which consists of pork marinated in a slightly sweet seasoning and is wrapped in fragrant pandan leaves instead of the more traditional Chinese coconut leaves. Some restaurants and bakeries also sell the traditional styles of the other Chinese dialect groups, and there is also a sweet type of rice dumpling eaten as a dessert known as *kee chang* (碱粽), which is made using alkaline water and dipped in sugar.
- **Satay bee hoon** is rice vermicelli (*bee hoon*) served with the same peanut and chilli sauce used for *satay*, hence the name. Usually cockles, dried squid and pork slices are added.
- **Steamboat** (火锅), also known as **hot pot**, is do-it-yourself soup Chinese style. You get a pot of broth bubbling on a tabletop burner, pick meat, fish and veggies to your liking from a

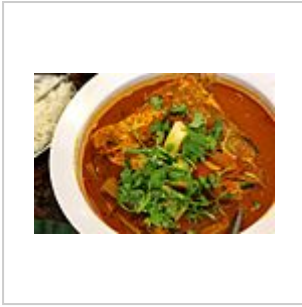
menu or buffet table, then cook it to your liking. When finished, add in noodles or ask for rice to fill you up. This usually requires a minimum of two people, and the more the merrier.

- **Tau huay** (豆花), also known as **beancurd**, is probably the most common traditional Chinese dessert, a bowl of tofu curds in syrup, served either hot or cold. An innovation that has swept the island is a delicious custard-like version ("soft tau huay") which includes no syrup and is extremely soft despite being solid.
- **Wonton mee** (云吞面) is thin noodles topped with *wantan* dumplings of seasoned minced pork. Unlike the soupy Hong Kong version, it is usually served 'dry' in soy sauce and chilli.
- **Yong tau foo** (酿豆腐) literally means "stuffed tofu", but it's more exciting than it sounds. The diner selects their favourites from a vast assortment of tofu, fish paste, assorted seafood and vegetables, and they are then sliced into bite-size pieces, cooked briefly in boiling water and then served either in broth as soup or "dry" with the broth in a separate bowl. The dish can be eaten by itself or with any choice of noodles. Essential accompaniments are spicy chili sauce and sweet sauce for dipping.

Indian cuisine

The smallest of Singapore's big three ethnic groups, Indians have had proportionally the smallest impact on the local culinary scene, but there is no shortage of Indian food even at many hawker centres and most neighborhoods have at least a couple of **mamak** (Indian Muslim) shops, often open 24 hours. Delicious and authentic Indian food can be had at Little India, including south Indian typical meals such as *dosa* (*thosai*) crepes, *idli* lentil-rice cakes and *sambar* soup, as well as north Indian meals including various curries, *naan* bread, *chapati*, tandoori chicken and more. In addition, however, a number of Indian dishes have been "Singaporeanised" and adopted by the entire population, including:

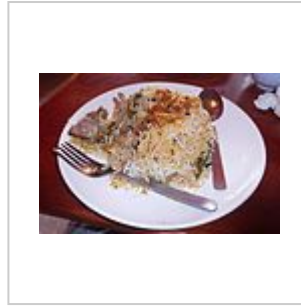
- **Fish head curry** is, true to the name, a gigantic curried fish head cooked whole until it's ready to fall apart. Singapore's Little India is the place to sample this. There are two styles: the fiery Indian and the milder Chinese kind.
- **Nasi briyani** is rice cooked in turmeric, which gives the rice an orange colour. Unlike the fiery Hyderabad original, it's usually rather mild, although specialist shops do turn out more flavourful versions. It is usually served with curry chicken and some Indian crackers.
- **Roti prata** is the local version of South Indian *parotta*, flat bread repeatedly flipped against a flat surface to thin it out, then folded onto itself, rapidly pan-fried, and eaten dipped in curry. Modern-day variations can incorporate unorthodox ingredients like cheese, chocolate and even ice cream, but some canonical versions include *roti kosong* (plain), *roti telur* (with egg) and *murtabak* (stuffed with chicken, mutton, beef or fish). Vegans beware: unlike Indian *roti*, *roti prata* batter is usually made with eggs.
- **Putu mayam** is a sweet dessert composed of vermicelli-like noodles topped with shredded coconut and orange sugar.



Fish Head Curry



Roti kosong (left) and *roti telur* (centre) with a side order of chicken curry



Nasi biryani

Hawker centres

The cheapest and most popular places to eat in Singapore are **hawker centres**, essentially former pushcart vendors directed into giant complexes by government fiat. Prices are low (\$3–5 for most dishes), hygiene standards are high (every stall is required to prominently display a hygiene certificate grading it from A to D) and the food can be excellent. Ambience tends to be a little lacking though and there is no air-conditioning either, but a visit to a hawker centre is a must when in Singapore, if you wish to experience authentic local food culture in the heartlands themselves. However, be leery of overzealous pushers-cum-salesmen, especially at the Satay Club in Lau Pa Sat and Newton Food Centre at Newton Circus: the tastiest stalls don't need high-pressure tactics to find customers. Touting for business is illegal, and occasionally a reminder of this can result in people backing off a bit.

Hawker centres are built for volume and ordering from a popular hawker speaking in rapid-fire Singlish can be confusing. First stake out your territory by *choping* (reserve) a space by parking a friend at the table, or do what the locals do: place a packet of tissue paper on the table. If ordering from a stall *not* marked "self-service", note down the table number so they can deliver. The best places always have queues, so line up, and once asked place your order by stating the dish and portion size you want: "Fishball noodles, four dollars." Expect to get some or all of the following questions:

- *"Have here or take away?"* Reply "have here" to eat in, or any of "take away", "packet" or *ta pao* (打包) to take away.
- *"Container?"* If doing takeaway, some stalls will offer a choice between a free plastic bag (impractical unless you have a bowl/plate to eat out of) or a styrofoam box (around 20 cents extra). Disposable utensils are always included.

Social welfare Singapore style

One thing notably absent from Singaporean cheap eateries is any form of napkins or tissues. The solution to the mystery is in Singapore's lack of government welfare: instead, every hawker centre has a resident invalid or two, who make a living by selling tissues (\$1 for a few packets).



A typical hawker centre



- "Soup or dry?" Many noodle dishes are available either "dry" (干 *kan*), with broth on the side, or "soup" (汤 *tang*), mixed with broth.
- "What noodle?" Any self-respecting noodle stall has at least four types on offer, ranging from yellow *mee* (thick wheat noodles) to *bee hoon* (thin rice vermicelli). Point and choose from the glass cabinet.
- "Chilli?" If you say yes, the often fiery *sambal* paste will be mixed in, so it may be safer to opt out and add your chillies by yourself from the sauce on the counter.

Cash only

Hawkers and coffeeshops are among the few places you may visit where **credit cards are not accepted**. Ask before you order, and be prepared to pay cash or do without.

Once you are finished, drop your tray off in the tray return rack; this being Singapore, you may be fined up to \$300 if you don't.

Every district in Singapore has its own hawker centres and prices decrease as you move out into the boonies. For tourists, centrally located **Newton Circus** near (Newton MRT Exit B), **Gluttons Bay** (near Esplanade MRT Exit D) and **Lau Pa Sat** (near Raffles Place MRT Exit I, the River), are the most popular options — but this does not make them the cheapest or the tastiest, and the demanding gourmand would do well to head to Chinatown or the heartlands instead. A dizzying array of food stalls with a large South Indian representation can be found in the bustling **Tekka Centre** at the edge of Little India. Many of the best food stalls are in residential districts off the tourist trail and do not advertise in the media, so the best way to find them is to ask locals for their recommendations. Good examples closer to the city centre include **Old Airport Road Food Centre** (near Dakota MRT Exit B) and **Tiong Bahru Market** (near Tiong Bahru MRT), both of which are sprawling and home to a number of much-loved stalls.

Coffeeshops and bubble tea

Despite the name, coffeeshops or *kopitiam* sell much more than coffee — they are effectively mini-hawker centres with perhaps only half a dozen stalls (one of which will, however, sell coffee and other drinks). The Singaporean equivalent of pubs, this is where folks come for the canonical Singaporean breakfast of *kopi* (strong, sugary coffee), some *kaya* (egg-coconut jam) toast and runny eggs, and this is also where they come to down a beer or two and chat away in the evenings. English proficiency can sometimes be limited, but most stall owners know enough to communicate the basics, and even if they don't, nearby locals will usually help you out if you ask. Many coffee shops offer *zi char/cze cha* (煮炒) for dinner, meaning a menu of local dishes, mostly Chinese-style seafood, served at your table at mid-range prices.

The usual Starbucks and other local cafe chains such as Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf can be found in any shopping mall but an iced coffee or tea can set you back \$5 or more, whereas a *teh tarik* ("pulled" milky tea) or *kopi* coffee runs closer to \$1 at any hawker centre or coffeeshop. While

Coffee, see and tea, oh!

Coffee and tea in hawker centres and *kopitiam* goes for around a dollar a cup, a steep discount on Starbucks prices, but you'll need to learn the lingo to get what you want. If you order just *kopi* (the Malay word for "coffee") or *teh* (Hokkien for "tea") in Singapore, it will definitely be served with a heaped spoonful of sugar, and more often than not with a squirt of sweet condensed milk. *Kopi-C* or *teh-C* substitutes unsweetened evaporated milk, while *kopi-O* or *teh-O* makes sure it's served with no milk. To get rid of the sugar, you need to ask for it

exploring, you're also likely to come across a good number of independent cafes offering gourmet coffee, pastries and cakes, which have mushroomed across the city centre over the last decade.

Last but not least, the Taiwanese invention of **bubble tea** (aka boba tea, pearl tea) has taken Singapore by storm and every self-respecting shopping mall has numerous outlets hawking variants of sugary, milky tea with chewy tapioca pearls, jazzed up with increasingly inventive ingredients ranging from cream cheese foam to smoky, intense black sugar syrup. Liho (<https://royaltgroup.com/our-brands/liho.html>) and Koi (<https://www.koithe.com/en>) are the largest chains.

kosong ("plain"), but if you want a plain black cup of coffee, you need to ask for *kopi-O kosong*. If you want your drink cold, just add a *peng* to the end of the drink name, eg. *kopi-O-peng*, *teh-peng*, *teh-C-peng*, *Milo-peng* etc. and it will be served with ice.

Food courts

Found in the basement or top floor of nearly every shopping mall, food courts are the air-conditioned version of hawker centres. The variety of food on offer is almost identical, but a dish that would be \$3-5 at a hawker centre or coffeeshop will be \$5-10 at a food court. Locals will also grumble that the dish also tastes worse, because food court stalls are mostly franchised operations instead of mom & pop shops pouring their heart and soul into the food.



Food Republic retro theme food court

Fast food

International fast food chains like McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, MOS Burger, Subway etc. are commonly found in various shopping malls. Prices range from \$5 for a basic burger to upwards of \$15 for a set meal. All restaurants are self-service and clearing your table after your meal is strongly encouraged. In addition to the usual suspects, look out for these uniquely Singaporean brands:

- **Bengawan Solo** (<http://bengawansolo.com.sg/>). Malay and Peranakan-style *kueh* cakes and Chinese-style cookies, sold both fresh by the piece and in large packs for gifting. Their pineapple tarts (\$25) are famous, keep well and make a great souvenir; the *kueh lapis* layer cake is also excellent, but has to be kept refrigerated. Every shopping mall has an outlet and they have branches at Changi Airport as well.
- **BreadTalk** (<http://www.breadtalk.com.sg>). This self-proclaimed "designer bread" chain has taken not just Singapore but much of South-East Asia by storm. Everything is jazzily shaped, funkily named (e.g. *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Bacon*) and baked on premises. To the Western palate, almost everything is rather sweet.
- **Jollibean** (<http://www.jollibean.com>). Fresh soy drinks, beancurd and tasty *mee chiang kueh* Chinese pancakes.
- **Killiney Kopitiam** (<http://www.killiney-kopitiam.com>). Serves kaya toast, kopi and ginger tea (with ice or without); waiters at the original Somerset location shout your order towards the back with gusto.
- **Mr Bean** (<http://www.mrbean.com.sg>). Offers a variety of soya bean drinks, ice-creams and pastries snacks.

- **Old Chang Kee** (<http://www.oldchangkee.com>). Famous for their curry puffs, but their range now covers anything and everything deep-fried. Take-away only.
- **Ya Kun Kaya Toast** (<http://www.yakun.com>). Serves the classic Singaporean breakfast all day long: kaya toast, runny eggs and strong, sweet coffee (plus some other drinks). Arguably one of the more successful chains with branches as far away as South Korea and Japan. The main branch at Far East Square generally gets better reviews than the other branches.

Restaurants

Singapore offers a wide variety of full-service restaurants as well, catering to every taste and budget.

As the majority of Singapore's population is ethnic Chinese, there is an abundance of Chinese restaurants in Singapore, mainly serving southern Chinese (mostly Hokkien, Teochew, or Cantonese) cuisines, though with the large number of expatriates and foreign workers from China these days, cuisine originating from Shanghai and further north is also not hard to find. True local Chinese restaurants generally serve dishes little seen in Chinese restaurants internationally and in China, due to the combination of their southern Chinese roots and local influences.

Depending on where you go and what you order, prices can vary greatly. In ordinary restaurants, prices usually range from \$15 ~ \$35 per person, while in top-end restaurants in luxury hotels, meals can cost \$300 per person when they involve delicacies such as abalone, suckling pig and lobster. As with Chinese restaurants anywhere, food is eaten with chopsticks and served with Chinese tea.

Being a maritime city, one common speciality is **seafood restaurants**, offering Chinese-influenced Singaporean classics like **chilli crabs**. These are much more fun to visit in a group, but be careful about what you order: gourmet items like Sri Lankan giant crab can easily push your bill up to hundreds of dollars. Menus typically say "market price", and if you ask they'll quote you the price per 100g, but a big crab can easily top 2kg. The best-known seafood spots are clustered on the East Coast, but for ambience, the riverside restaurants at Boat Quay and Clarke Quay can't be beat. Again, always enquire about the prices when they aren't stated in full, and be wary of touts.

Singapore also has its share of good Western restaurants, with British- and American-influenced food being a clear favourite among locals. Most of the more affordable chains can be found in various shopping centres throughout the island, and prices for main courses range from \$14 ~ 22. A uniquely Singaporean variant is **Hainanese Western food**, which traces its origins to the Hainanese migrants who worked as cooks for European employers during the colonial period, and most hawker centres will have a Western stall or two selling dishes like "chicken cutlet" (deep-fried breaded chicken) with baked beans, coleslaw and chips, usually for under \$10. French, Italian, Japanese and Korean food is also readily available, though prices tend to be on the expensive side, while Thai and Indonesian restaurants tend to be more affordable.

Kee-ping up with the Lims

Ever wonder why every other Chinese hawker stall and restaurant in Singapore has a name that ends in *Kee*? The answer is simple: the character *kee* (记) is Chinese for "brand" or "mark", and is used much like the trademark symbol in the West. A name like *Yan Kee* thus means "run by the Yan family", and should not be taken as a political statement.

One British import much loved by Singaporeans is **high tea**. In the classical form, as served up by finer hotels across the island, this is a light afternoon meal consisting of tea and a wide array of British-style savoury snacks and sweet pastries like finger sandwiches and scones. However, the term is increasingly used for afternoon buffets of any kind, and Chinese *dim sum* and various Singaporean dishes are common additions. Prices vary, but you'll usually be looking at \$35–80 per head, not including alcohol.

Singaporeans are big on **buffets**, especially international buffets offering a wide variety of dishes including Western, Chinese and Japanese as well as some local dishes at a fixed price. Popular chains include **Sakura** and **Vienna** (<http://www.viennabuffet.com/>).

Most hotels also offer lunch and dinner buffets. **Champagne brunches** on Sundays are particularly popular, but you can expect to pay over \$150 per head and popular spots, like Mezza9 at the Hyatt on Orchard, will require reservations.

Some restaurants put small side dishes (usually braised peanuts or prawn crackers) and wet paper towels on the table without asking. You will be charged a dollar or two for them unless you ask to take them away.

Fine dining


Singapore has no fewer than 44 Michelin (<https://guide.michelin.com/sg/en/>)-starred restaurants, ranging from French degustations at 3-star Odette in the National Gallery to the eponymous \$5 bowl at Tai Hwa Pork Noodle. The opening of the two casinos in Marina Bay and Sentosa has led to several of the world's top chefs opening local branches of their restaurants, including Santi, Waku Ghin and Guy Savoy. Prices are generally what you would expect for eating at a fine dining restaurant in the West, with \$400+ per person not unheard of for a tasting menu with drinks.

Dietary restrictions

Singapore is an easy place to eat for almost everybody. Many Indians and small groups of Chinese Buddhists are **vegetarian**, so Indian stalls usually have a number of veggie options and some hawker centres will have a Chinese vegetarian stall or two, often serving up amazing meat imitations made from gluten. Larger Buddhist temples will sometimes have a vegetarian restaurant on site, while others will sell vegetarian food on Buddhist festivals to raise money for charity, and these are a good option too. The **Singapore Buddhist Lodge** (<http://www.sbl.org.sg/chn/index.aspx>) provides three free vegetarian meals to the public every day, and people of all faiths are welcome, but donations are certainly appreciated if you can afford to do so. Chinese vegetarian food traditionally does not use dairy products and is thus typically

vegan, though be careful as some Chinese vegetarian hawker stalls do serve eggs. Indian vegetarian food, however, often employs cheese and other milk products. Be on your guard in ordinary Chinese restaurants though, as even dishes that appear vegetarian on the menu may contain seafood products like oyster sauce or salted fish — check with the waiter if in doubt. Some restaurants can be found that use "no garlic, no onions".



A vegan *thali* platter in Little India 

Muslims should look out for **halal** certificates issued by MUIS, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore. This is found at practically every Malay stall and many Indian Muslim operations too, but more rarely on outlets run by the Chinese, few of whom are Muslims. However, there are a few halal food courts around, which are an excellent choice for safely sampling halal Chinese food. Many Western fast-food chains in Singapore use halal meat: look for a certificate around the ordering area, or ask a manager if in doubt. A few restaurants skimp on the formal certification and simply put up "no pork, no lard" signs; it's your call if this is good enough for you.

Kosher-observant Jews, on the other hand, will have a harder time as **kosher** food is nearly unknown in Singapore. There is a kosher grocery store on the grounds of the **Maghain Aboth Synagogue** on Waterloo Street, as well as a kosher branch of Coffee Bean nearby; check with the Jewish Welfare Board (<http://www.singaporejews.com/>) for details. There are two kosher restaurants in Singapore: Awafi (<http://singaporejews.com/awafi-restaurant/>) a casual restaurant on the grounds of the Maghain Aboth Synagogue, and Aniba (<https://aniba.com.sg/>), an Israeli fine dining restaurant.

Awareness of **allergies** is generally limited. Severe **shellfish allergy** is particularly problematic for local food, since shrimp paste (*belacan/hae bi*) is very commonly used in both local Chinese and Malay cooking and many soup stocks are flavored with prawns. When in doubt, ask. **Soy allergy** is also severely limiting, since tofu & soy sauce are so common. For both, Indian cuisine is worth exploring, since the South Indian style that is common in Singapore rarely uses either ingredient.

Coeliac disease is relatively unheard of in Singapore, so don't expect to find information on menus about whether dishes contain gluten or not. Gluten awareness is spreading in Singapore as well, and many upmarket restaurants will have internationally trained chefs who can cater to your needs. Gluten-free products are available in most **Cold Storage** (<http://www.coldstorage.com.sg/>) and Marketplace supermarkets. You can also treat yourself to many naturally gluten-free regional specialties, such as Hainanese chicken rice (be sure to ask for chicken without sauce) and Indian *masala dosa* rice/lentil crepes.

Drink

Singapore's nightlife isn't quite a match for Patpong, but it's no slouch either: some clubs have 24 hr licences and few places close before 3AM. Singapore's nightlife is largely concentrated along the **three Quays** — Boat, Clarke and Robertson — of the Riverside, with the clubs of Sentosa giving party animals even more reason to dance the night away and the casino on Marina Bay also entering the fray. Any artists touring Asia are pretty much guaranteed to stop in Singapore, with superclub **Zouk** (Clarke Quay) in particular regularly clocking high on lists of the world's best nightclubs and **Marquee** at Marina Bay Sands drawing big names.



Clarke Quay by night



Fancy cocktail bars cluster near the aptly named **Club St** near the CBD and **Keong Saik** in Chinatown, which is also where you'll find Singapore's gay bars. The legal drinking age is 18, and while this is surprisingly loosely enforced, some clubs have higher age limits. If you are asked for identification, the only acceptable forms of identification are a Singapore-issued identity card or a passport.

Friday is generally the biggest night of the week for going out, with Saturday a close second. Sunday is gay night in many bars and clubs, while Wednesday or Thursday is ladies' night, often meaning not just free entrance but free drinks for women. Most clubs are closed on Monday and Tuesday, while bars generally stay open but tend to be very quiet.

For a night out Singapore style, gather a group of friends and head for the nearest **karaoke box**. Major chains include **Party World** (<http://www.partyworldktv.com.sg/>) and the family-friendly "no alcohol, no surprises, no frills" **Teo Heng** (<https://ktvteoheng.com.sg/>). Room rental ranges from \$30/hour and up, drinks and snacks extra.

At the other end of the karaoke spectrum are various non-chain, glitzy (or dodgy) looking, neon-covered **KTV lounges**, which may charge much higher rates. Perhaps unique to Singapore is the **Thai disco** (*siam diu*), where patrons compete for the affections of entertainers — who, despite the name, can be from anywhere in the region as well as Singapore itself — by purchasing expensive drinks and "flowers" (garlands or sashes) for anywhere from \$50 to \$10,000 or more. Unlike some neighboring countries, there's no nudity or sex involved: your money buys the chance to chat with them, nothing more, and there's enough non-obvious social etiquette involved that these places are best visited with a Singaporean guide or not at all.

Alcohol

Alcohol is widely available but expensive due to Singapore's heavy sin taxes. You can bring in up to one litre of liquor and two litres of wine and beer if you arrive from countries other than Malaysia. Careful shopping at major supermarkets will also throw up common basic Australian wine labels for around \$20.

Public drunkenness is socially frowned upon in Singapore, and misbehaving under the influence of alcohol will certainly not gain you any respect from Singaporean friends. Do not allow any confrontations to escalate into fights, as the police will be called in, and you may face prison and possibly caning. Many Singaporeans, including most but by no means all Muslims, abstain from alcohol entirely.

Public drinking is prohibited outside licensed venues between 10:30PM and 7AM, with additional restrictions in Little India and Geylang that prohibit public drinking during weekends and public holidays. While most bars, nightclubs and restaurants are licensed, supermarkets and liquor stores are not allowed to sell alcohol late at night.

Prices when drinking out vary. You can enjoy a large bottle of beer of your choice at a coffee shop or hawker centre for around \$7 (and the local colour comes thrown in for free). On the other hand, drinks in any bar, club or fancy restaurant remain pricey, with a basic drink clocking in at \$10–15 while fancy cocktails would usually be in the \$15–25 range. On the upside, happy hours and two-for-one promotions



The original
Singapore Sling at
the Raffles Hotel

are common, and the entry price for clubs usually includes several drink tickets. Almost all restaurants in Singapore allow **bringing your own** (BYO) wine and cheaper restaurants without a wine menu usually don't even charge corkage, although in these places you'll need to bring your own bottle opener and glasses. Fancier places charge \$20–50, although many offer free corkage days on Monday or Tuesday.

Tourists flock to the Long Bar in the Raffles Hotel to sample the original **Singapore Sling**, a sickly sweet pink mix of pineapple juice, gin and more, but locals (almost) never touch the stuff. The tippie of choice in Singapore is the local beer, **Tiger**, a refreshing if unexciting lager, but a microbrewery boom has led to outlets such as **Brewerkz** (Riverside Point), **Paulaner Brauhaus** (Millenia Walk) and **Pump Room** (Clarke Quay) offering interesting alternatives.

Tobacco

Tobacco is heavily taxed and there is **no duty free allowance**, although in practice a single opened pack (not carton!) is often ignored. **Vaping is illegal** and you will be fined and any e-cigarettes or liquids confiscated if caught. Both rules are particularly strictly enforced on the land borders with Malaysia, where all baggage is regularly X-rayed.

The legal smoking age is 21, and shops selling cigarettes may ask for identification before selling you some. Most public places including hawker centres have restrictions on smoking, and it is prohibited in public transport as well. There is a total ban on smoking in all air-conditioned places (including pubs and discos), and strict limitations on where you can smoke outside as well (e.g., within 5 metres of bus stops and building entrances, parks, covered walkways and shelters, playgrounds are off limits). The designated zone should be marked with a yellow outline, and may have a green garbage can with an ashtray and/or have a sign reading "smoking zone". The list of places where smoking is prohibited and the (much shorter) list of where it is allowed is published on a government website (<https://www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/smoking-prohibition/overview>). **Shisha (hookah) is illegal**, so do not expect to find any bars providing it.



Smoking is allowed only in designated areas

Prostitution

Prostitution is tolerated in six designated districts, most notably Geylang, which — not coincidentally — also offers some of the cheapest lodging and best food in the city. While the age of consent in Singapore is 16, a higher minimum age of 18 applies to prostitutes. The industry maintains a low profile (no go-go bars here) and is not a tourist attraction by any stretch of the word. Legally practising commercial sex workers are required to register with the authorities and attend special clinics for regular sexually transmitted disease screening. However, please be prudent and practice safe sex—although most legally practising sex workers will insist on it anyway.

Orchard Towers, long an island of vice in squeaky clean Orchard Road, had every single one of its nightclubs closed in a 2023 crackdown.

Sleep

Individual listings can be found in Singapore's [district](#) articles



Note: Short-term home or room rentals (of 6 months or less) such as provided by platforms such as Airbnb are **illegal** in Singapore. Curiously, advertising rooms or houses on such platforms is not illegal, and therefore don't be surprised to find a handful of Singapore listings on Airbnb. Although enforcement of the law has been lenient so far, immediate action will be taken if there is any complaint by the neighbours. In case this happens, the guests will not face any adverse consequences other than having to find another place to stay at relatively short notice, but the host may be subject to legal action.

Accommodation in Singapore is expensive by South-East Asian standards. Particularly in the higher price brackets, demand outstrips supply and during big events like the F1 race or some of the larger conventions it's not uncommon for pretty much everything to sell out. Lower-end hotels and hostels, though, remain affordable and available throughout the year.

This guide uses the following price ranges for a standard *double* room:

Budget	Under \$100
Mid-range	\$100-300
Splurge	Over \$300

Unless you're a shopping maven intent on maximizing time in [Orchard Road](#)'s shopping malls, the [Riverside](#) is probably the best place to stay in Singapore.

GST and Service charge are generally not included in the advertised rates. Therefore, when considering how much to allocate for accommodation, don't forget to add 18.8% to the advertised price (10% for the service charge then add 8% GST of the amount including the service charge).

Budget

[Backpackers' hostels](#) can be found primarily in [Little India](#), [Bugis](#), [Clarke Quay](#) and the [East Coast](#). Backpacker hostels cost from \$20–40 for a dorm bed. There seems to be a bedbug epidemic among many of the very cheapest hostels — read the reviews carefully before booking.

Cheap hotels are clustered in the [Geylang](#), [Balestier](#) and [Little India](#) districts, where they service mostly the type of customer who rents rooms by the hour. Rooms are generally small and not fancy, but are still clean and provide basic facilities such as a bathroom and television. Prices start as low as \$30 for "day use" of a few hours and \$60 for a full night's stay. The three major chains, with hotels throughout the island, are:

- **Hotel 81** (<http://www.hotel81.com.sg>), ☎ +65 6767 8181. Singapore's largest budget hotel chain, with over 20 functional hotels with rates starting at \$69 for two.
- **Ibis Budget** (<https://ibis.accor.com/gb/city/hotels-singapore-v5579.shtml>). French chain Accor operates no less than 14 Ibis Budgets in Singapore, many of them rebadged Fragrances.
- **Fragrance Hotel** (<http://www.fragrancehotel.com>), ☎ +65 6345 6116. Chain of 8 hotels. Rooms from \$80, discounts on weekends and for ISIC holders.

Camping is only allowed at designated campsites, and you must apply for a camping permit a least 14 days in advance. Depending on who owns the campsite, you can obtain the permit from either the National Parks Board (<https://www.nparks.gov.sg/activities/fun-and-recreation/camping>) or the [Singapore](#)

Land Authority (<https://www.sla.gov.sg/properties/management-of-state-land-and-property/visiting-the-sla-managed-islands>). The permit is free, but you will need someone with a Singapore ID to apply on your behalf.

Mid-range

Much of Singapore's mid-range accommodation is in rather featureless but functional older hotels, with a notable cluster near the western end of the Singapore River. There has, however, been a surge of "boutique" hotels in renovated shophouses here and in Chinatown, these can be pretty good value, with rates starting from \$200/night.

Splurge

Singapore has an extensive selection of luxury accommodation, including the famed **Raffles Hotel** and all the usual multinational brands. You will generally be looking at upwards of \$600 per night for a room in a five-star hotel. Hotel rates fluctuate quite a bit: a large conference can double prices, while on weekends in the off-peak season heavy discounts are often available. The largest hotel clusters can be found at Marina Bay (good for sightseeing) and around Orchard Road (good for shopping), but if you're looking for a tropical beach resort feel, check out Sentosa.



Raffles Hotel



Long-term

Housing in Singapore is expensive, as the high population density and sheer scarcity of land drives real estate prices through the roof. As a result, you would generally be looking at rentals on par with the likes of New York and London.

Apartment hotels in Singapore include **Ascott** (<http://www.the-ascott.com>), which also operates under the **Somerset** and **Citadines** brands, and the many tentacles of **Far East Hospitality** (<https://www.fareasthospitality.com/>), which has both regular hotels and serviced apartments. Prices are competitive with hotels but quite expensive compared to apartments. It is illegal to offer short-term rentals (under 3 months) in Singapore without a hotel license.

Renting an apartment in Singapore will generally require a working visa. While over 80% of Singaporeans live in government-subsidised **Housing Development Board** (HDB) flats, their availability to foreigners is very limited. Most expats thus turn to private housing blocks known as **condos**, where an average three-bedroom apartment will cost you anything from \$4,000 per month for an older apartment in the suburbs to \$20,000 for a top-of-the-line deluxe one on Orchard Road. Most condos have facilities like pools, gyms, tennis court, car park and 24 hr security. As the supply of studio and one-bedroom apartments is very limited, most people on a budget share an apartment with friends or colleagues, or just sublet a single room. Landed houses, known as **bungalows**, are incredibly expensive near the city centre (rents are commonly tens of thousands) but can drop if you're willing to settle outside the city centre — and remember that you can drive across the country in 30 minutes.

One or two-month security deposits are standard practice and you usually need to pay the agent a commission of 2 weeks per year of lease. Leases are usually for two years, with a "diplomatic clause" that allows you to terminate after 1 year. [Singapore Expats](http://www.singaporeexpats.com/) (<http://www.singaporeexpats.com/>) is the largest real estate agency geared for expats and their free classifieds are a popular choice for hunting for rooms or apartment-mates.

Learn

Singapore's universities are generally well-regarded and draw exchange students from near and far.

- **National University of Singapore (NUS)** (<http://www.nus.edu.sg/>). Singapore's oldest university, strong in law, medicine, computing and science. One of the premier universities in Asia.
- **Nanyang Technological University (NTU)** (<http://www.ntu.edu.sg/>). The second university in this island state, more geared towards engineering, media and business studies. Host for the Youth Olympics 2010
- **Singapore Management University (SMU)** (<http://www.smu.edu.sg/>). The third, and the only publicly-funded private university in Singapore. Geared towards finance and business.
- **Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)** (<http://www.sutd.edu.sg/>). The fourth autonomous university in Singapore, established in collaboration with MIT. Teaches engineering and architecture with a special focus on design.
- **Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)** (<http://www.unisim.edu.sg/>). Previously known as Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) Singapore's private university with a number of international degree courses. The school offers a wide range of first degrees, from the arts to business to technology studies. As of 17 March 2017, SUSS is restructuring to become Singapore's newest autonomous university. (updated Apr 2017)

A number of foreign universities, business schools and specialised institutes have also set up their Asian campuses in Singapore.

- **SP Jain School of Global Management (SPJ)** (<http://www.spjain.org/>). International campus of the business school in [Mumbai](#).
- **INSEAD** (<http://campuses.insead.edu/asia/facilities/directions.cfm>). The Asian campus of European business school, INSEAD.
- **University of Chicago Booth School of Business** (<http://www.chicagobooth.edu/visit/singapore/index.aspx>). The Asian campus of the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business, offering one of the most expensive MBAs in the world.
- **DigiPen Institute of Technology** (<http://www.digipen.edu/>). The Asian campus of the DigiPen Institute of Technology, [Redmond](#), [Seattle](#), [Washington](#).
- **ESSEC** (<http://www.essec.edu/en/essec-asia-pacific-en/>). International campus of the business school in [Paris](#).

Cooking

- **at-Sunrice** (<https://www.at-sunrice.com/news-and-events/spiceodyssey/>), Fort Canning Park, ☎ +65 6336 3307. A professional cooking academy that also does day classes for the public. The crowd-pleaser is the "Spice Garden Walk" (\$40) at Fort Canning, where a chef introduces you to local herbs and spices and their uses in cuisine and medicine, and then guides you in the fine art of making your own curry paste. Reservations essential.
- **Cookery Magic** (<http://www.cookerymagic.com/>), 179 Haig Rd, ☎ +65 6348 9667, info@cookerymagic.com (<mailto:info@cookerymagic.com>). Cooking classes in an old

colonial black-and-white home, with themes varying by day and cuisines from all over the continent. 8 students maximum. From \$65.

- **Palate Sensations** (<http://www.palatesensations.com/>), 1 Westbourne Road #03-05, ☎ +65 6479 9025, info@palatesensations.com (<mailto:info@palatesensations.com>). Hands-on cooking classes in both European and Asian styles, held in a colonial black and white bungalow in rural western Singapore. 12 students maximum. From \$100.
- **D'Open Kitchen** (<https://www.dopenkitchen.com.sg/>), 6A Shenton Way, #B1-07, Singapore 068815, ☎ +65 82286217, info@dopenkitchen.com (<mailto:info@dopenkitchen.com>). Cooking team building classes. Market tours, virtual cooking and baking classes. From \$80.
(updated Jan 2021)

Work

As one of the most vibrant economies in South-east Asia, supported by a highly educated population of locals and expats from every corner of the world and some of the lowest personal and corporate income tax rates in the world, Singapore is a natural choice for multinational companies who wish to have a presence in the region and has many employment opportunities for skilled workers. However, you must have a **work permit** (WP) or an **employment pass** (EP) to work in Singapore. These require that you have a firm job offer and the sponsoring company applies on your behalf. There is also a **Working Holiday Programme** (<http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-holiday-programme>) for recent university graduates who want to live in Singapore for up to 6 months.



Banks in Marina Bay

Work permits are mostly intended for menial, low-skilled labourers. To be eligible for an **employment pass**, you will generally need to have a minimum salary of at least \$4,500 per month and hold at least a bachelor's degree from a reasonably reputable university. There is also an intermediate known as the **S pass**, which is usually granted to mid-skilled workers who have been promoted to positions of junior leadership such as a work site supervisor, and would require you to have a minimum salary of at least \$2,500 per month as well as your employer's recommendation. **Employment pass** and **S pass** holders with a monthly salary of at least \$6,000 are allowed to bring in their family members on a dependent pass.

If your employment is terminated, you will get a social visit pass (a visitors visa with no employment rights) which allows you to stay for 30 days. You can look for another job during this time, but don't overstay your visa, and do not think about working without the right papers; this will result in a short stay in the local prison, with added fines, possibly caning, certain deportation and being banned from re-entering. In addition, your employer will also face hefty fines and imprisonment. For more information, contact the **Ministry of Manpower** (<http://www.mom.gov.sg/>).

Once you have been legally working in Singapore for a few years on an EP/S-Pass, applying for **permanent residence** (PR) is fairly straightforward, although these are no longer handed out like candy. If granted — and the rule of thumb is, the higher your salary, the more likely you are to get it — you can stay in Singapore indefinitely (as long as you can show some income every 5 years) and can change jobs freely. Work permit holders are generally not eligible to apply for permanent residency.

Those gaining permanent residency through the Professionals/Technical Personnel and Skilled Workers Scheme or Investor Scheme are not required to report for the national service (conscription), but male second-generation PRs are required to register and report for enlistment once they attained the specified ages.

The government is also highly supportive of entrepreneurship in the country, offering a 3-year tax exemption on profit for new companies (for the first S\$100,000) and having one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the world at 17% a year. Even the company incorporation process is done entirely online these days and can be completed as quickly as within one day. In addition, there are various governmental schemes which allow foreigners to obtain entrepreneur visas or even permanent residency by investing large sums of money in local businesses.

Stay safe



Note: Singapore treats **drug offences** *extremely* severely. The **death penalty is mandatory** for those convicted of trafficking, manufacturing, importing or exporting more than 15 g of heroin, 30 g of morphine, 30 g of cocaine, 500 g of cannabis, 200 g of cannabis resin and 1.2 kg of opium, and possession of these quantities is all that is needed for you to be convicted. Unauthorised consumption can result in up to 10 years in prison, a fine of \$20,000, or both.

You can be charged for unauthorised consumption as long as traces of illicit drugs are found in your system, even if you can prove that they were consumed outside the country, and you can be charged for trafficking as long as drugs are found in bags that are in your possession or in your room, even if they aren't yours and regardless of whether you're aware of them.

In case you are arrested for drug trafficking, try your best to cooperate with law enforcement, as the prosecution may advise the court not to impose the death penalty if defendants have substantively assisted law enforcement to disrupt drug trafficking. That said, mandatory life imprisonment and caning is still expected even one is spared from death.

If you must bring potentially forbidden medicines, check with the Singapore Health Sciences Authority (<https://www.hsa.gov.sg/>) to find out, and (as needed and allowed) **obtain written permission to bring them**. This can be done fairly quickly by e-mail, perhaps a few weeks by regular postal mail.

Singapore is one of the safest major cities in the world by virtually any measure. Most people, including female travellers, will not face any problems walking along the streets alone at night. But as the local police say, "low crime does not mean no crime" — beware of pickpockets in crowded areas and don't forget your common sense entirely.

The **Singapore Police Force** (<http://www.police.gov.sg/>) is responsible for law enforcement throughout the country, and you can recognise police officers by their distinctive dark blue uniforms. Most visitors will find the majority of Singaporean police officers to be professional and helpful, and you should report any crimes that you encounter to them as soon as possible: timely police reports often result in the apprehension of criminals within *hours*.

Singaporean police have broader powers than their equivalents in Western countries. In particular, while you are entitled to have a lawyer represent you at trial, the police have the right to restrict your access to a lawyer during your interrogation if they believe it could interfere with their investigation. In practice, the police won't allow lawyer presence for the 48-hour police detention. In addition, while you have the right against self-incrimination, you do not have the right to silence and are required to answer the police's questions truthfully unless it contravenes the former. You should always make all statements in your defence during your interrogation, as failure to do so could result in the judge not believing you should you raise them for the first time at your trial. By law, body searches of women may only be performed by female officers.



Forbidden items in the MRT trains and stations

Singapore's squeaky cleanliness is achieved in part by strict rules against activities that are tolerated in other countries. For example, jay-walking, spitting, littering and drinking and eating on public transport are prohibited. Locals joke about Singapore being a *fine city* because heavy fines are levied if you're caught committing an offence. Look around for sign boards detailing the "Don'ts" and the fines associated with these offences and heed them. Repeated *littering* offenders are not only subject to fines, but also to a "Corrective Work Order" where they are made to wear a bright yellow jacket and pick up rubbish in public places. Enforcement is however, sporadic at best and it's not uncommon to see people openly litter, spit, smoke in non-smoking zones, etc. **Chewing gum**, famously long banned, is now available at pharmacies for medical purposes (e.g., nicotine gum) if you ask for it directly, show your ID and sign the register. While importing gum is still officially an offence, you can usually bring in a few packs for personal consumption without any problem.

For some crimes, most notably **illegal entry** and **overstaying your visa for over 30 or 90 days**, Singapore imposes **caning** as a punishment for male offenders. Other offences which have caning as a punishment include vandalism, robbery, molestation and rape. Having sex with a girl under the age of 16 is considered to be rape under Singapore law even if the girl consents to it. Strokes from the thick rattan cane are excruciatingly painful, take weeks to heal and scar for life. Crimes such as murder, kidnapping, unauthorised possession of firearms and drug trafficking are punished with death.



Police officers in Singapore

Long criminalized under a colonial-era statute, male homosexual contact was legalized in January 2023, while female homosexuality has always been legal. However, attitudes towards gays and lesbians from locals often leave much to be desired, especially among the Muslim and Christian communities. Nevertheless, unprovoked violence against homosexuals is almost unheard of, and you are unlikely to get anything beyond drawing stares and whispers. Transgender people may also be subject to some degree of derision from locals, though unprovoked violent incidents are almost unheard of. Under Singapore law, transgender people may change their legal gender and use public toilets of their choice only *after* undergoing sex reassignment surgery. Pink Dot (<https://pinkdot.sg>) is Singapore's LGBTQ organisation; they hold an annual pride event every June in Hong Lim Park, though foreigners are not allowed to participate.

Begging is illegal in Singapore, but you'll occasionally see beggars on the streets. Most are not Singaporean — even the "monks" dressed in robes, who occasionally pester tourists for donations, are usually bogus.

While jaywalking is illegal, it is still a common thing and occurs quite often around the city. Beware though that if a police officer catches you, you might end up with a small fine. Put simply, the roads are designated for cars and the footpaths are for people.



Singapore's constitution pledges "freedom of expression", but in practice this right is severely curtailed, as a glance at the neutered domestic press will show. Police will not arrest you for expressing anti-government opinions in casual conversation with your friends, but foreigners in Singapore are not allowed to engage in any sort of political activity, including attending rallies or protests, regardless of the subject. The **offence of scandalizing the court** is broadly defined, with any act or statement that could bring a court or judge into disrepute being liable for prosecution. There have been cases in which foreign journalists and jurists were convicted, so you should also avoid making comments regarding the judiciary.

It is **illegal to display the flags or emblems of foreign countries in public** unless you are a diplomat representing that country, or have otherwise received special permission from the government in advance. There are also restrictions on displaying the Singapore flag; in general, you can only fly it between July and September for National Day celebrations. In addition, the public display of **communist symbols** is restricted, and one can be arrested if authorities believe your display could result in breach of the peace or undermine Singapore's national interests.

Singapore is virtually immune to **natural disasters**: there are no fault lines nearby, although slight tremors from Indonesia's earthquakes can sometimes be felt from the upper storeys of buildings. Other landmasses shield it from tsunamis, and the local conditions are not conducive to the formation of typhoons and tornadoes. Flooding in the November–January monsoon season and flash-flooding from heavy rainfall is an occasional hazard, especially in low-lying parts of the East Coast, but any water usually drains off within a day and life continues as normal.

Bribery

Singapore is generally considered to be relatively free from corruption in both public and private life. Bribery is a very serious offence penalised with long jail terms together with fines. **Do not, under any circumstances**, offer a bribe to a police officer or any other government employee since this will most likely result in your immediate arrest.

- **Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau** (<https://www.cpib.gov.sg/e-services/e-complaint-f-or-corrupt-conduct>) (贪污调查局), 2 Lengkok Bahru/247 Whitley Road, ☎ +65-1800-376-0000, report@cpib.gov.sg (<mailto:report@cpib.gov.sg>). The main corruption investigation agency for Singapore which effectively eradicated corruption after its establishment, and has been emulated by other jurisdictions.   (updated Nov 2020)

Racial and religious discrimination

Singapore has made great efforts to ensure a peaceful integrated society; making disparaging remarks against **any** ethnicity or religion is a crime that carries a prison term. Bloggers have been arrested and sentenced to imprisonment for making racist remarks on their blogs, and religious leaders have also

gotten into trouble with the law for insulting other religions in their sermons.

The Jehovah's Witnesses is banned for locals in Singapore (due to their avoidance of military service) but this generally does not affect tourists so long as they do not proselytise.

Firearms

Singapore has very strict firearms laws, and unauthorised possession of firearms is punishable by long jail terms at best, and at worst could even result in the **death penalty** for presumed arms trafficking. **Air-soft guns** are also prohibited, and possession of them without a licence will land you in jail for **up to 3 years**.

Licences to purchase and own firearms are generally only granted for sporting purposes (i.e. for target shooting), and would generally require you to be a member of a registered shooting club. Firearms must be stored securely at a shooting range, and bringing one out of the shooting range is generally illegal unless you have received special permission in advance.

Visitors who wish to bring firearms in are required to apply for a permit in advance, though in practice these permits are only granted for official shooting competitions. You will also be required to travel under police escort from the port of entry to the shooting range, where you will have to securely store your firearm until you leave the country.

Emergency numbers

- **Police** (*main number for Emergency Services*), ☎ 999.
 - **Police** (*emergency SMS*), ☎ 71999 (local rate).
- **Ambulance / Fire Services**, ☎ 995.
 - **Ambulance / Fire Services** (*emergency SMS for deaf people*), ☎ 70995 (local rate).
- **Non-emergency ambulance**, ☎ 1777.
- **Singapore General Hospital**, ☎ +65 6222 3322.
- **Drug & Poison Information Centre**, ☎ +65 6423 9119.

Stay healthy

Tap water is safe for drinking with very high sanitation standards. The hot and humid climate means that drinking plenty of water is advisable.

Malaria is not an issue, but dengue fever is endemic to the region, and Singapore experienced a Zika virus outbreak. Singapore maintains strict mosquito control (leaving standing water around will get you fined), but the government's reach does not extend into the island's nature reserves, so if you're planning on hiking bring along mosquito repellent.

Medical care

The standard of medical care in Singapore is **uniformly excellent** and Singapore is a popular destination for medical tourism and medical evacuations in the region. Despite the lower prices, standards are usually as good as those in the West at both public and private clinics and hospitals, making this a good place to

get your jabs and tabs if heading off into the jungle elsewhere. You'll still want to make sure your insurance is in order before a prolonged hospitalisation and/or major surgery.

For minor ailments, head down to the nearest suburban shopping mall or HDB shopping district and look for a **general practitioner** (GP), or do a search in SingHealth's comprehensive [Find-a-GP](https://www.singhealth.com.sg/rhs/Pages/Find-a-GP.aspx) (<https://www.singhealth.com.sg/rhs/Pages/Find-a-GP.aspx>) directory. They usually receive patients without appointment and can prescribe drugs on the spot or refer you to specialists, and the total cost of a consultation, medicine included, rarely exceeds \$30. Public polyclinics, while cheaper for locals, are usually more expensive at unsubsidised rates (\$50+) and generally have longer waits. All clinics, private or public, are generally only open during business hours Monday-Friday and Saturday mornings.

- **RESCU** (<https://www.rescu.sg/>), ☎ +65 8779 9441. If it can't wait until Monday, RESCU offers 24/7 telemedicine consultations and house calls, including basic medications like antibiotics dispensed on the spot. Home visit \$68-108 depending on time of day.

For urgent problems, head to a hospital emergency department or call **995** for an ambulance. The ambulance is free in the event of a genuine medical emergency, but you will be charged a \$274 callout fee and refused transport otherwise. Public hospitals are heavily subsidised by the government for Singapore citizens and permanent residents, but will charge the full rate for visitors. They are legally required to provide emergency medical care regardless of your ability to pay, but you will be billed at a later date.

- **Raffles Hospital** (<https://www.rafflesmedicalgroup.com/services/hospital/>), **Raffles Medical Group** (<https://www.rafflesmedicalgroup.com>) (near bugis MRT station). +65 6311 1111 (Tel: ++65+6311+1111). 585 North Bridge Road, Singapore 188770. Singapore's largest homegrown private healthcare provider. Raffles Medical Group is the only private medical provider in Singapore that owns and operates a fully integrated healthcare organization comprising of a tertiary hospital, a network of family medicine and dental clinics (<https://www.rafflesmedicalgroup.com/services/dental/>), insurance services, Japanese and traditional Chinese medicine clinics (<https://www.rafflesmedicalgroup.com/services/chinese-medicine/>), and a consumer healthcare division. **Raffles Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department** (<https://www.rafflesmedicalgroup.com/services/accident-emergency/>) is fully equipped and staffed to manage high-risk injuries and critical medical conditions.
- **KK Women's and Children's Hospital** (<https://www.kkh.com.sg/>), 100 Bukit Timah Road (near Novena MRT station). A&E operates 24/7. Singapore's oldest dedicated women and children's hospital, well over 1 million Singaporeans were born here. Has a well-regarded but often busy 24/7 children's emergency department.
- **Mount Elizabeth Hospital** (<http://www.mountelizabeth.com.sg>), Mount Elizabeth (near Orchard MRT station), ☎ +65 6737 2666. A&E operates 24/7. Singapore's largest private hospital and a popular destination for medical tourists. Also features a special suite that was built for the Sultan of Brunei, but is now available to anybody with the means to pay when not in use by the Brunei royal family, with prices starting from an eye-watering \$5,043 per night. Consultations with specialists start from \$100. (updated Sep 2020)
- **Singapore General Hospital** (<http://www.sgh.com.sg>), College Rd, 1st-3rd Hospital Ave (next to Outram Park MRT station). Singapore's oldest and largest public hospital.
- **Tan Tock Seng Hospital** (<http://www.ttsh.com.sg>), 11 Jalan Tan Tock Seng (next to Novena MRT station), ☎ +65 6256 6011. M-F 8AM-1PM & 2-5PM; Sa 8AM-noon, no appointment needed. One of Singapore's largest public hospitals, fully equipped to handle most anything. Specialist departments here include a one-stop **Travellers' Health & Vaccination Centre** for immunizations, malaria prophylaxis, pre-trip and post-trip evaluations and general advice. \$80 fee for doctor's consultation, vaccines for \$10 plus cost (consultation unnecessary).

- **National University Hospital** (<https://www.nuh.com.sg/>), 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road,, ☎ +65 6779 5555. Main teaching hospital for the National University of Singapore medical school, with a good number of specialist clinics.

Alternatively, practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) are widespread in Singapore. **Eu Yan Sang** (<http://www.euyansang.com/>) runs a chain of over 20 clinics, while the **Singapore Chinese Physicians' Association** (<http://www.singaporetcm.edu.sg>) offers a directory of TCM physicians.

Toilets

Nearly all shopping centres, hotels, MRT stations, bus interchanges and hawker centres are likely to have clean public toilet facilities available. Some public toilets may charge 10 or 20 cents per entry. If there's no toilet paper in the stall, take a look around, as it's sometimes provided on a shared giant roll outside. Most toilets have bowls, but there is usually one squatting cubicle in every public toilet. Being free, McDonald's toilets are popular and the staff do not make a fuss.

Respect

Singaporeans care little about formal politeness. What would be decent behaviour at home, wherever home might be, is unlikely to offend anyone in Singapore. In Singapore, unlike much of southeast Asia, women wearing revealing clothing or men wearing shorts and slippers are perfectly acceptable and only the fanciest bars and restaurants, government institutions (e.g. parliament and the courts), and some private clubs, try to enforce dress codes.

That said, Singaporeans tend to be more socially conservative than Westerners, meaning that public display of affection is still frowned upon: holding hands is fine, but making out in public is considered to be impolite. Toplessness for women is not acceptable anywhere, even on the beach. Most Buddhist and Hindu temples, as well as mosques, require women to be conservatively dressed - no bare shoulders, and no skirts above the knee-cap. The major touristy temples will have shawls and sarongs so visitors can cover up before entering. Many places of worship also require you to remove your shoes before you enter.

The local dialect with its heavy Chinese influences may appear brusque or even rude, but saying "You want beer or not?" is in fact *more* polite in Chinese than asking if you want beer; after all, the person asking you the question is offering you a choice, not making a demand.

Take dietary restrictions into account when inviting Singaporean friends for a meal. Many Indians and some Chinese are vegetarian. Most Malays, being Muslims, eat

What's in a name?

Chinese place their family name first, so *Phua Chu Kang* is Mr. Phua for business and Chu Kang (or just CK) to his friends. Many have Western names, so he may also be known as *Terry Phua*.

Malay names are given name + *bin* or *binti* (son/daughter) + father's name. *Mohammed bin Abdullah* would usually be called Mr. Mohammed. Sometimes, the person's given name appears after the Mohammed or Abdul (example: *Mohammed Faizal bin Abdul Nasser*) so, in such a case, he would usually be addressed as Mr. Faizal.

Indian names are complex, but the south Indian (Tamil) names usually found in Singapore have two patterns: either given name + *s/o* or *d/o* (son of/daughter of) + father's name, or father's initial + given name. Given names are often long and may be abbreviated,

only *halal* food, while most Hindus (and a few Chinese) abstain from beef. If unsure, ask beforehand.

When visiting Chinese temples, do not point at the statues of deities with your index finger, as this is considered to be very rude. Use your thumb or an up-facing open palm instead.

Swastikas are commonly seen in Buddhist and Hindu temples and altars. This is an ancient religious symbol that has nothing to do with Nazism.

so Ramanathan s/o Sellapan may use the name S.R. Nathan and would be addressed as Mr. Nathan. The foolproof method is to ask how the person wants to be addressed.

Sensitive topics

Sensitive issues in Singapore include immigration, politics, race, religion and LGBT rights. In a country where only 60% of the population are citizens, **immigration** is particularly sensitive, and while few Singaporeans are explicitly xenophobic, many resent the influx of "foreign talents" (once the government's term, now heavily loaded with sarcasm) competing for jobs while not integrating into society or having to fulfill obligations like military service.

Singapore is not China, and despite being a majority of the population, most ethnic Chinese identify themselves as Singaporeans instead of Chinese nationals, who are commonly referred to as "PRCs" or "Ah Tiong". That said, Sinophobia is generally less prevalent than in Hong Kong or Taiwan. There is similar tension between Singaporeans of Indian descent and recent Indian immigrants, dubbed "CECA" after an unpopular free trade agreement.

Like in many other Asian countries, **saving face** is very important in Singaporean culture. You should generally not point out other people's mistakes in order not to cause major embarrassment, and it is considered poor taste to flaunt your wealth in front of your less well-to-do peers. Bragging about your achievements will also in general not be well received.

The **Israeli-Palestinian conflict** is a deeply divisive issue, with most Jews and Christians supporting Israel, and most Muslims supporting the Palestinians. Tread carefully when discussing it with locals. Due to this sensitivity, all protests concerning this issue have been banned. While police will not arrest you for expressing your views on social media or in casual conversation with your friends, be careful not to run afoul of Singapore's notoriously strict anti-hate speech laws.

Singaporeans have a tense relationship with their cultural identity. On the one hand, Singapore's first prime minister Lee Kuan Yew was reportedly proud of being called "the best bloody Englishman east of Suez"; on the other, there is an understandable desire to display a pride for genuinely Singaporean cultural aspects including food. One area in which this tension manifests is the use of Singlish, which is officially discouraged by the government through its "Speak Good English Campaign", but is often employed deliberately by all strata of society as a means to display "Singaporean-ness". Tread lightly in these fields and be respectful.

Visiting homes

If invited to somebody's house, always remove your shoes before you enter as most Singaporeans do not wear their shoes at home. Socks are perfectly acceptable though. Some households may provide slippers in the bathroom, but these are generally not meant to be worn anywhere else.

Beware of taboos if bringing gifts. Any products (food or otherwise) involving animals may cause offence and are best avoided, as are white flowers (usually reserved for funerals). Knives and clocks are also symbols of cutting ties and death, respectively, and some Chinese are superstitious about the number four. Many Singaporean Muslims and some Hindus abstain from alcohol. Nicely packaged cookies or cakes are a safe bet, as is a bouquet from a local florist.

In Singapore, it is considered rude to open a gift in front of the person who gave it to you. Instead, wait until the person has left and open it in private.

Business

Singaporeans are punctual, so show up on time. The standard greeting is a firm handshake. However, conservative Muslims avoid touching the opposite sex, so a man meeting a Malay woman should let her offer her hand first and a woman meeting a Malay man should wait for him to offer his hand. If they opt to place their hand on the heart and bow slightly instead, just follow suit. Singaporeans generally do not hug, especially if it is someone they have just met, and doing so would probably make your host feel awkward, though the other person will probably be too polite to say anything as saving face is a major Asian value.



Singapore skyline



For men, standard business attire is a long-sleeved shirt and a tie, although the tie is often omitted, the shirt's collar button opened instead. Jackets are rarely worn because of the hot weather all year round. Women usually wear Western business attire, but a few prefer Malay-style *kebaya* and *sarong*, Chinese-style *cheongsam*, or Indian-style *sari*.

Business cards are often exchanged when people meet for business for the first time: hold yours with *both hands* by the top corners, so the text faces the recipient, while simultaneously receiving theirs. (This sounds more complicated than it is.) Never give out or receive a business card with only one hand, as it is considered to be very disrespectful. Study the cards you receive and feel free to ask questions; when you are finished, place them on the table in front of you, *not* in a shirt pocket or wallet, and do not write on them (some may find it disrespectful).

Business gifts are generally frowned on as they may equate to bribery, and government employees are strictly forbidden from accepting gifts. Small talk and bringing up the subject indirectly are neither necessary nor expected. Most meetings get straight down to business.

Connect

By phone

The international telephone country code for Singapore is **65**. Phone numbers in Singapore have the format +65 XXXX XXXX where "65" is the country code for Singapore. Due to the small area of Singapore, there are no area codes. Any number starting with 8 or 9 is a mobile phone, while numbers starting with 3 or 6 are fixed lines (businesses and residential). Toll free numbers start with 800 or 1800, followed by 7 digits, and usually cannot be dialed from outside the country. With the advent and ubiquity of **mobile phones**, the presence of public payphones has been reduced but nonetheless they can still be found at train stations, bus interchanges, shopping centres, and residential areas.

Singapore has four mobile telecommunication providers with their own networks: **Singtel** (<http://www.singtel.com/>), **Simba** (<https://simba.sg/home>), **StarHub** (<http://www.starhub.com/>) and **MobileOne (M1)** (<http://www.m1.com.sg/>). They have generally excellent coverage throughout the island. These networks are a mix of 3G, 4G, and 5G, with 4G being the most common band. There are many minor virtual operators operating off these networks but are generally unavailable to short-term travellers. Travellers can obtain prepaid SIM cards from 7-Eleven convenience stores, telecommunication shops, currency exchange counters, and at Changi International Airport. An international passport or Singapore ID is required to register for the SIM card. Basic plans including 1 GB of data start from only \$4 for 30 days. If you're planning to continue to nearby countries, every carrier has their own options for international roaming, some more affordable than others. Singtel has [hi!DataRoam](https://www.singtel.com/personal/products-services/mobile/prepaid-plans/hi-dataroam-packs) (<https://www.singtel.com/personal/products-services/mobile/prepaid-plans/hi-dataroam-packs>) at a relatively high \$5/100MB for Malaysia and Australia, and either \$10 or \$20 per GB in select other countries. M1 pricing starts at \$5 for 1 GB for 3 days in Malaysia. Starhub is the roaming-friendliest; their [Happy Roam](https://www.starhub.com/personal/mobile/mobile-phones-plans/prepaid-cards/happy-roam.html) (<https://www.starhub.com/personal/mobile/mobile-phones-plans/prepaid-cards/happy-roam.html>) policy means that domestic data plans can be used in any of their Happy Roam destinations at no extra cost. Additionally, all of these carriers now have starter packs that include a small allowance of roaming data in Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as certain countries beyond (check with the carrier you're purchasing from).

In northern parts of Singapore near Malaysia (e.g. Woodlands, Sungei Buloh, Pulau Ubin), your phone may automatically switch to a Malaysian network, incurring international roaming charges even though you haven't physically left Singapore. Check the operating network (or switch to manual network selection) before you call or browse, disable roaming on your device, or pay a little extra at the beginning for a SIM that includes some roaming allowances.

By net

Free Wi-Fi is standard at paid accommodations, and public Wi-Fi is common but not everywhere. Many, but not all, free public Wi-Fi networks require you to register your phone number and receive a verification text message (SMS) - they do not require a Singapore number, so if your phone has roaming service from another country this might still work. Some networks ask for your phone number or email but do not require you to verify it. For free public Wi-Fi without a complicated sign-in, try local shopping centres (though not all have it) and the Gardens by the Bay.

Singapore has a nationwide free **Wireless@SG** system, with hotspots at many public locations like MRT stations. The network can be used even without a SIM card, but it does require signing up and downloading the official [Wireless@SGx](https://www.imda.gov.sg/programme-listing/Wireless-At-SG/Wireless-at-SG-for-Consumers) app (<https://www.imda.gov.sg/programme-listing/Wireless-At-SG/Wireless-at-SG-for-Consumers>).

Internet cafes charging around \$2/hr are sparse and slowly dying off since almost all residents have broadband Internet access at home, work, and/or school. Head to Chinatown or Little India if you need to get on-line, or check out the top floors of many suburban malls, which feature Internet cafes doubling as on-line gaming parlours. Alternatively, all public libraries (<http://www.nlb.gov.sg/>) offer cheap Internet access (\$0.03/min or \$1.80/hr), but you need to jump through registration hoops to get access.

Internet censorship is generally restricted to pornography, gambling and copyright violating websites. In addition, Singapore has laws that ban online contents deemed as fake news and foreign interference by authority. From time to time, you may see mandatory corrective notices placed on social media posts or articles deemed as containing falsehoods by authorities if accessed from within Singapore. Operators that repeatedly refuse to place corrective notices may be blocked from within Singapore.

By mail

SingPost (<https://www.singpost.com/>) has offices throughout the island, generally open M-F 8:30AM-5PM, 08:30-13:00 Sa 8:30AM-5PM, closed Sundays. The Changi Airport T2 (transit side) Post Office is open daily 6AM-midnight, while the 1 Killeney Rd branch is open M-F until 9PM and Su 9AM-4PM. Service is fast and reliable. A postcard to anywhere in the world costs 50 cents, and postage labels can also be purchased from the self-service SAM machines found in many MRT stations.

Small packets up to 2 kg cost \$3.50/100 g for airmail, or \$1/100 g for surface mail. For larger packages, DHL (<http://www.dhl.com.sg/>) may offer competitive rates.

Cope

Electricity

Singapore uses the British BS 1363 three-pin rectangular socket (230 V/50 Hz). Plug adaptors are available at any hardware store.

Embassies and High Commissions

Singapore is a good place to obtain regional visas. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.mfa.gov.sg>) maintains a complete searchable database of diplomatic institutions. Countries further afield usually serve Singapore through their embassies in Bangkok, Beijing, Delhi, Jakarta or Tokyo.






Diplomatic missions	list
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪  Argentina (https://esing.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/), 7 Temasek Boulevard, #15-03 Suntec Tower One, ☎ +65 6887 9808, fax: +65 6887 9809, esing@mrecic.gov.ar (mailto:esing@mrecic.gov.ar). ▪  Australia (https://singapore.embassy.gov.au/), 25 Napier Rd, ☎ +65 6836 4100, fax: +65 6737 5481, enquiries.singapore@dfat.gov.au (mailto:enquiries.singapore@dfat.gov.au). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Australia visa application, immigration.singapore@dfat.gov.au (mailto:immigration.singapore@dfat.gov.au). ▪  Austria (https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/austrian-embassy-singapore), 600 N Bridge Rd #24-06/07 Parkview Sq, ☎ +65 6229 0190, singapur-ob@bmeia.gv.at (mailto:singapur-ob@bmeia.gv.at). ▪  Bangladesh (https://singapore.mofa.gov.bd/), 19 Keppel Road, #04-00 & #10-00 Jit Poh Building, ☎ +65 6255 0075, fax: +65 6255 1824, mission.singapore@mofa.gov.bd (mailto:mission.singapore@mofa.gov.bd). ▪  Belgium (https://singapore.diplomatie.belgium.be/en), 79 Robinson Road, #25-01, ☎ +65 6220 7677, singapore@diplobel.fed.be (mailto:singapore@diplobel.fed.be). ▪  Brazil (https://www.gov.br/mre/pt-br/embaixada-singapura/english), 101 Thomson Road, #29-01/03 United Square Office Tower, ☎ +65 6603 9365 (ambassador's office), +65 6603 9361 (consular), +65 6603 9363 (consular), brasemb.singapura@itamaraty.gov.br (mailto:brasemb.singapura@itamaraty.gov.br). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brazil consular services, consular.singapura@itamaraty.gov.br (mailto:consular.singapura@itamaraty.gov.br). ▪ Brazil visa services, visas.singapore@itamaraty.gov.br (mailto:visas.singapore@itamaraty.gov.br). ▪ Brazil trade and economic section, secom.singapura@itamaraty.gov.br (mailto:secom.singapura@itamaraty.gov.br). ▪  Brunei (https://www.mfa.gov.bn/singapore/The me/Home2.aspx), 325 Tanglin Rd, ☎ +65 6733 9055, fax: +65 6737 5275, +65 6733 7082, +65 6737 4928, singapore@mfa.gov.bn (mailto:singapore@mfa.gov.bn). ▪  Cambodia (https://www.camemb-sg.com/), 400 Orchard Rd, #10-03/04 Orchard Towers, ☎ +65 6341 9785, fax: +65 6341 9201, recamsingapore@gmail.com (mailto:recamsingapore@gmail.com). ▪  Canada (https://www.international.gc.ca/count ry-pays/singapore-singapour/singapore-singapour.aspx?lang=eng), One George St, #11-01, ☎ +65 6854 5900, fax: +65 6854 5930, spore@international.gc.ca (mailto:spore@international.gc.ca). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪  Malaysia (http://www.kln.gov.my/web/sgp_singapore/home), 301 Jervois Rd, ☎ +65 6887 6256 (passport and visa), +65 6887 6243 (passport and visa), +65 6887 6231 (other consular matters), +65 6887 6230 (other consular matters), +65 6235 0111 (general enquiries), fax: +65 6733 6135, singapore@imi.gov.my (mailto:singapore@imi.gov.my) (passport and visa). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malaysia passport and visa (alternate), singapore.imi@mhc.org.sg (mailto:singapore.imi@mhc.org.sg). ▪ Malaysia consular services, consular@mhc.org.sg (mailto:consular@mhc.org.sg). ▪ Malaysia general inquiries, mwsingapore@kln.gov.my (mailto:mwsingapore@kln.gov.my). ▪  Maldives (https://maldivesmission.sg/), 101 Thomson Rd, #30-01A United Square, ☎ +65 6720 9012, fax: +65 6720 9015, info@maldivesmission.sg (mailto:info@maldivesmission.sg). ▪  Mexico (https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/singapore/), 152 Beach Rd, #03-01/03 The Gateway East, ☎ +65 6298 2678, fax: +65 6293 3484, embsingapur@sre.gob.mx (mailto:embsingapur@sre.gob.mx). ▪  Mongolia (https://singaporetest.embassy.mn/en/), 600 North Bridge Rd, #24-08 Parkview Sq, ☎ +65 6348 0745, singapore@mfa.gov.mn (mailto:singapore@mfa.gov.mn). ▪  Myanmar (http://www.myanmarembassy.sg/), 15 St Martin's Dr, ☎ +65 6735 0209. ▪  Netherlands (https://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl/contact/embassies-consulates-general/singapore/embassy-singapore), 541 Orchard Rd, #13-01 Liat Towers, ☎ +65 6737 1155, sin@minbuza.nl (mailto:sin@minbuza.nl). ▪  New Zealand (https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/asia/singapore/new-zealand-high-commission-singapore/), One George Street, #21-04, ☎ +65 6235 9966 (general enquiries), +65 3105 1587 (visa applications), fax: +65 6536 8180, nzhc.sin@mfat.govt.nz (mailto:nzhc.sin@mfat.govt.nz). ▪  Nigeria (https://singapore.foreignaffairs.gov.ng/), 70 Shenton Way, #08-01 EON Shenton, ☎ +65 6732 1743, nigeria.singapore@foreignaffairs.gov.ng (mailto:nigeria.singapore@foreignaffairs.gov.ng). ▪  North Korea, 1 North Bridge Road, #15-01 High Street Centre, ☎ +65 6265 9766, fax: +65 6348 2026, embdprk@singnet.com.sg (mailto:embdprk@singnet.com.sg). ▪  Norway (https://www.norway.no/en/singapore/), 16 Raffles Quay, #44-01 Hong Leong Bldg, ☎ +65 6818 2000, emb.singapore@mfa.no (mailto:emb.singapore@mfa.no) (chancery). Visa applications are handled by the Danish embassy.

- **Canadian citizen services**,
sporeconsular@international.gc.ca (mailto:sporeconsular@international.gc.ca).
- **Canadian citizen visa applications**,
singapore-im-enquiry@international.gc.ca (mailto:singapore-im-enquiry@international.gc.ca).
-  **Chile** (<https://www.chile.gob.cl/en/republica-de-singapur>), 8 Temasek Boulevard, #24-01 Suntec Tower Three, ☎ +65 6223 8577, fax: +65 6225 0677, consulate@embassyofchile.org.sg (mailto:consulate@embassyofchile.org.sg).
-  **China** (<http://sg.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/>), 150 Tanglin Rd, ☎ +65 6418 0135 (administrative), +65 6471 2117 (consular), fax: +65 6418 0250 (administrative), +65 6479 5345 (consular), chinaemb_sg@mfa.gov.cn (mailto:chinaemb_sg@mfa.gov.cn). Visa applications are handled by the separate Chinese Visa Application Service Center (see below).
 - **Chinese Visa Application Service Center** (https://www.visaforchina.org/SGP_EN/), 80 Robinson Road, #16-01/02/02A, ☎ +65 6713 9380, fax: +65 6226 0852, singaporecentre@visaforchina.org (mailto:singaporecentre@visaforchina.org). Also handles Hong Kong and Macau visas. Only issues visas to citizens and legal residents of Singapore.
 - **Chinese citizen consular services**, singapore@csm.mfa.gov.cn (mailto:singapore@csm.mfa.gov.cn).
-  **Colombia** (<https://singapur.embajada.gov.co/>), 152 Beach Road, #03-04 Gateway East, ☎ +65 6341 7155, +65 6341 7156, csingapur@cancilleria.gov.co (mailto:csingapur@cancilleria.gov.co).
-  **Costa Rica** (<http://www.embassycrsg.com/>), 138 Robinson Road #07-01 Oxley Tower 1, ☎ +65 6467 1355.
-  **Cuba**, 390 Havelock Road, #08-04 King's Centre, ☎ +65 6635 8172, +65 6635 8173, embajada@sg.embacuba.cu (mailto:embajada@sg.embacuba.cu).
-  **Czech Republic** (<https://www.mzv.cz/singapore/en/index.html>), 47 Scotts Road, #11-02/03 Goldbell Towers, ☎ +65 6797 1050, +65 6797 1069, singapore@embassy.mzv.cz (mailto:singapore@embassy.mzv.cz).
 - **Czech consular services**, consulate_singapore@mzv.cz (mailto:consulate_singapore@mzv.cz).
 - **Czech business enquiries**, commerce_singapore@mzv.cz (mailto:commerce_singapore@mzv.cz).
-  **Denmark** (<https://singapore.um.dk/en>), 101 Thomson Rd, #13-01/02 United Sq, ☎ +65 6355 5010, fax: +65 6253 3764, sinamb@um.dk (mailto:sinamb@um.dk). Visa applications are handled by VFS Global (see below).
 - **VFS Global** (<https://visa.vfsglobal.com/sgp/en/dnk/>), 79 Anson Road, #15-02, ☎ +65 3105
- **Norway consular services**, consular.singapore@mfa.no (mailto:consular.singapore@mfa.no).
-  **Pakistan** (<https://phcsingapore.org/>), 1 Scotts Rd, #24-02/04 Shaw Centre, ☎ +65 6737 6988, +65 6737 6203, consularsingapore@pakhicom.org.sg (mailto:consularsingapore@pakhicom.org.sg).
-  **Panama** (<http://www.panamaemb.org.sg/>), 16 Raffles Quay, #41-06 Hong Leong Bldg, ☎ +65 6221 8677, general@panamaemb.org.sg (mailto:general@panamaemb.org.sg).
-  **Papua New Guinea**, 1 Marine Parade Central, #08-05 Parkway Centre, ☎ +65 6222 9177, fax: +65 6222 9179, Kundusgp@pngghcom.org.sg (mailto:Kundusgp@pngghcom.org.sg).
-  **Peru** (<https://www.gob.pe/en/embajada-del-pe>), 390 Orchard Rd, #12-03 Palais Renaissance, ☎ +65 6738 8595, peru@embassyperu.org.sg (mailto:peru@embassyperu.org.sg) (chancery).
 - **Peru consular services**, consular@embassyperu.org.sg (mailto:consular@embassyperu.org.sg).
-  **Philippines** (<http://www.philippine-embassy.org.sg/>), 111 Somerset Road, Level 16 (Lobby B), #12A, 13-14, Devonshire Wing, TripleOne Somerset Building, ☎ +65 6737 3977, +65 6506 0540 (consular), singapore.pe@dfa.gov.ph (mailto:singapore.pe@dfa.gov.ph).
-  **Poland** (<https://www.gov.pl/web/singapore>), 435 Orchard Rd #17-02/03, Wisma Atria, ☎ +65 6235 9478.
-  **Portugal** (<https://singapura.embaixadaportugal.mne.gov.pt/en/>), 3 Killiney Road, #05-08 Winsland House 1, ☎ +65 6224 2256, singapura@mne.pt (mailto:singapura@mne.pt) (chancery).
 - **Portugal consular services**, sconsular.singapura@mne.pt (mailto:sconsular.singapura@mne.pt).
-  **Qatar** (<https://singapore.embassy.qa/en>), 7 Temasek Boulevard, #44-01/02 Suntec Tower One, ☎ +65 6593 9900, fax: +65 6836 5731, singapore@mofa.gov.qa (mailto:singapore@mofa.gov.qa).
-  **Romania** (<http://singapore.mae.ro/en>), 390 Havelock Road, #03-04/05 King's Centre, ☎ +65 6735 5023, fax: +65 6735 5021, singapore@mae.ro (mailto:singapore@mae.ro) (chancery). (updated Oct 2023)
 - **Romania consular services**, singapore.consul@mae.ro (mailto:singapore.consul@mae.ro).
-  **Russia** (<http://www.singapore.mid.ru/>), 51 Nassim Rd, ☎ +65 6235 1832 (chancery), +65 6235 1834 (chancery), +65 6737 0048 (consular), fax: +65 6733 4780 (chancery), +65 6836 4921 (consular), singapore@mid.ru (mailto:singapore@mid.ru) (chancery).

1548, info.dnsin@vfshelpline.com (<mailto:info.dnsin@vfshelpline.com>). Also handles visa applications for Norway, Finland and Iceland

-  **East Timor** (<http://timor-leste.gov.tl/?p=142&lang=en#sg>), 3 Killiney Road, #04-09 Winsland House, ☎ +65 6235 6318, fax: +65 6235 9218, timorleste.singapore2010@gmail.com (<mailto:timorleste.singapore2010@gmail.com>).
-  **Egypt**, 8 Eu Tong Sen Street, The Central, Level 25, Units 82-85, ☎ +65 6225 5503, admin@egyptemb-sin.org (<mailto:admin@egyptemb-sin.org>).
-  **El Salvador**, 10 Anson Road, #18-12 International Plaza Building, embajadasingapur@rree.gob.sv (<mailto:embajadasingapur@rree.gob.sv>).
-  **Estonia** (<https://singapore.mfa.ee/>), 18 Robinson Rd, #21-01, ☎ +65 6229 6740, embassy.singapore@mfa.ee (<mailto:embassy.singapore@mfa.ee>).
-  **Finland** (<https://finlandabroad.fi/web/sgp/frontpage>), 101 Thomson Rd, #21-03 United Sq, ☎ +65 6254 4042, sanomat.SIN@formin.fi (<mailto:sanomat.SIN@formin.fi>). Visa applications are handled by the Danish embassy.
-  **France** (<http://www.ambafrance-sg.org>), 101-103 Cluny Park Rd, ☎ +65 6880 7800.
-  **Germany** (<http://www.singapur.diplo.de/>), 50 Raffles Pl, #12-00 Singapore Land Tower, ☎ +65 9817 0414.
-  **Greece** (<https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/singapore.html>), 47 Scotts Rd, #06-03/04 Goldbell Towers,, ☎ +65 6732 3011, fax: +65 6732 3012, gremb.sg@mfa.gr (<mailto:gremb.sg@mfa.gr>).
-  **Hungary** (<https://szingapur.mfa.gov.hu/eng>), 250 N Bridge Rd, #29-01 Raffles City Tower, ☎ +65 6883 0882.
-  **India** (<http://www.hcisingapore.gov.in/>), 31 Grange Rd, ☎ +65 6737 6777. Warning: Only issues visas to residents of Singapore. All visa applications are handled by BLS International (see below).
 - **BLS International Services S Pte Ltd — CBD Area** (<https://www.blsindia.sg/>), 10 Anson Road, #30-08 International Plaza, ☎ +65 3163 5611, +65 3163 2615, info@blsindia.sg (<mailto:info@blsindia.sg>).
 - **BLS International Services S Pte Ltd — Little India** (<https://www.blsindia.sg/>), 10 Jalan Besar, #14-02/04/05 Sim Lim Tower, ☎ +65 3163 5611, +65 3163 2615, info@blsindia.sg (<mailto:info@blsindia.sg>).
-  **Indonesia** (<https://kemlu.go.id/singapore/en>), 7 Chatsworth Rd, ☎ +65 6737 7422, fax: +65 6737 5037, +65 6235 5783, singapura.kbri@kemlu.go.id (<mailto:singapura.kbri@kemlu.go.id>).
-  **Ireland** (<http://www.embassyofireland.sg>), 541 Orchard Rd, #08-00 Liat Towers, ☎ +65 6732 3430.

- **Russia general consular enquiries**, consulsg@mid.ru (<mailto:consulsg@mid.ru>).
- **Russia visa enquiries**, info.rusg@russia-visacentre.com (<mailto:info.rusg@russia-visacentre.com>).
-  **Rwanda** (<https://www.rwandainsingapore.gov.rw/>), 8 Temasek Boulevard, #14-03 Suntec Tower 3, ☎ +65 6884 4621, infosingapore@embassy.gov.rw (<mailto:infosingapore@embassy.gov.rw>). (updated Oct 2023)
-  **Saudi Arabia** (<https://embassies.mofa.gov.sa/sites/singapore/EN/Pages/default.aspx>), 163 Penang Road, #03-01/02/03 Winsland House II, ☎ +65 6734 5876, fax: +65 6738 5291, sgemb@mofa.gov.sa (<mailto:sgemb@mofa.gov.sa>).
-  **South Africa** (<https://dirco1.azurewebsites.net/singapore/>), 331 North Bridge Rd, 15F Odeon Towers, ☎ +65 6339 3319, Singapore.political@dirco.gov.za (<mailto:Singapore.political@dirco.gov.za>) (chancery).
 - **South Africa consular services**, Singapore.consular@dirco.gov.za (<mailto:Singapore.consular@dirco.gov.za>).
-  **South Korea** (<https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/sg-en/index.do>), 47 Scotts Rd, #08-00 Goldbell Towers (chancery), #16-03/04 Goldbell Towers (consular), ☎ +65 6256 1188, fax: +65 6258 3191 (chancery), +65 6258 3302 (consular), korembsg@mofa.go.kr (<mailto:korembsg@mofa.go.kr>) (chancery).
 - **South Korea consular services**, consg@mofa.go.kr (<mailto:consg@mofa.go.kr>).
-  **Spain** (<https://www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/singapur/en/Paginas/index.aspx>), 7 Temasek Blvd, #39-00 Suntec Tower 1, ☎ +65 6725 9217, +65 6725 9215, fax: +65 6333 3025, emb.singapur@maec.es (<mailto:emb.singapur@maec.es>) (chancery).
 - **Spain consular services**, emb.singapur.sc@maec.es (<mailto:emb.singapur.sc@maec.es>).
-  **Sri Lanka** (<http://www.lanka.com.sg/>), 51 Newton Rd, #13-07/12 Goldhill Plaza, ☎ +65 6254 4595, +65 6254 4596, +65 6254 4597, slhcs@lanka.com.sg (<mailto:slhcs@lanka.com.sg>).
-  **Sweden** (<https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/singapore-singapore/>), 1 Temasek Avenue, #14-03 Millenia Tower, ☎ +65 6415 9720, fax: +65 6415 9747, ambassaden.singapore@gov.se (<mailto:ambassaden.singapore@gov.se>) (visa applications are outsourced to VFS Global).
- **VFS Global** (<https://visa.vfsglobal.com/sgp/en/swe/>), 79 Anson Road, #15-02, ☎ +65 3105 1830, info.swedensg@vfshelpline.com (<mailto:info.swedensg@vfshelpline.com>).

-  **Israel** (<http://singapore.mfa.gov.il>), 24 Stevens Close, ☎ +65 6834 9200, +65 68349212 (24 hr).
-  **Italy** (<http://www.ambsingapore.esteri.it>), 101 Thomson Rd, #27-02/03 United Square, ☎ +65 6250 6022, +65 6253 8429 (/4340 consular), +65 90629004 (Emergency).
-  **Japan** (https://www.sg.emb-japan.go.jp/itprtop_en/index.html), 16 Nassim Rd, ☎ +65 6235 8855, fax: +65 6733 1039 (chancery), +65 6733 5612 (consular), ryoji@sn.mofa.go.jp (mailto:ryoji@sn.mofa.go.jp) (Japanese citizen services).
 - **Japan visa applications**, japan-visa@sn.mofa.go.jp (mailto:japan-visa@sn.mofa.go.jp).
-  **Jordan** (<https://joembassy.sg/>), 9 Temasek Boulevard, #15-01 Suntec Tower 2, ☎ +65 6921 7590, fax: +65 6909 0994, info@joembassy.sg (mailto:info@joembassy.sg) (general enquiries).
 - **Jordan consular services**, consular@joembassy.sg (mailto:consular@joembassy.sg).
-  **Kazakhstan** (<https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-singapore?lang=en>), 1 Kim Seng Promenade, 09-04/05 Great World City, East Office Tower, ☎ +65 6235 1482 (general enquiries), +65 6536 6100 (consular), fax: +65 6438 8990, singapore@mfa.kz (mailto:singapore@mfa.kz) (chancery).
 - **Kazakhstan consular services**, info.singapore@mfa.kz (mailto:info.singapore@mfa.kz).
-  **Kuwait**, 170 Bukit Timah Rd, ☎ +65 6804 9550, fax: +65 6316 9074, kuwaitembassy.singapore@gmail.com (mailto:kuwaitembassy.singapore@gmail.com).
-  **Laos**, 51 Goldhill Plaza, #13-04/05, ☎ +65 6250 6044, fax: +65 6250 6014, laoembsg@singnet.com.sg (mailto:laoembsg@singnet.com.sg).
 - **Laos alternate email address**, laoembsg@gmail.com (mailto:laoembsg@gmail.com).
-  **Lithuania** (<https://sg.mfa.lt/>), 18 Robinson Rd, #10-01, ☎ +65 6232 3772 (chancery), +65 6232 3773 (consular), amb.sg@mfa.lt (mailto:amb.sg@mfa.lt) (chancery).
 - **Lithuania consular services**, consul.sg@mfa.lt (mailto:consul.sg@mfa.lt).
-  **Switzerland** (<http://www.eda.admin.ch/singapore>), 1 Swiss Club Link, ☎ +65 6468 5788, fax: +65 6466 8245, singapore@eda.admin.ch (mailto:singapore@eda.admin.ch), singapore.consular@eda.admin.ch (mailto:singapore.consular@eda.admin.ch) (consular), singapore.visa@eda.admin.ch (mailto:singapore.visa@eda.admin.ch) (visa enquiries).
-  **Taiwan** (https://www.roc-taiwan.org/sg_en/index.html) (*Taipei Representative Office in Singapore*), 460 Alexandra Rd, #23-00 mTower, ☎ +65 6500 0100, sgp@mofa.gov.tw (mailto:sgp@mofa.gov.tw).
-  **Thailand** (<https://singapore.thaiembassy.org/en/index>), 370 Orchard Rd, ☎ +65 6737 2475 (main), +65 6737 2476 (main), +65 6737 2158 (Thai citizen services), +65 6736 2644 (visa applications), fax: +65 6732 0778, thaiembassy.sin@mfa.go.th (mailto:thaiembassy.sin@mfa.go.th) (chancery).
 - **Thailand consular services**, consular.sin@mfa.go.th (mailto:consular.sin@mfa.go.th).
-  **Turkey** (<https://singapur-be.mfa.gov.tr/>), 2 Shenton Way, # 10-03 SGX Centre Tower 1, ☎ +65 6422 7322, +65 6533 3390, fax: +65 6533 3360, embassy.singapore@mfa.gov.tr (mailto:embassy.singapore@mfa.gov.tr).
-  **Ukraine** (<https://singapore.mfa.gov.ua/en>), 50 Raffles Pl, #16-05 Singapore Land Tower, ☎ +65 6535 6550, fax: +65 6535 2116, emb_sg@mfa.gov.ua (mailto:emb_sg@mfa.gov.ua) (chancery).
 - **Ukraine consular services**, consul_sg@mfa.gov.ua (mailto:consul_sg@mfa.gov.ua).
-  **United Arab Emirates** (<https://www.mofa.gov.ae/en/missions/singapore>), 3 Temasek Avenue, #19-01/02 Centennial Tower, ☎ +65 6238 8206, fax: +65 6238 0081, SingaporeEmb@mofaic.gov.ae (mailto:SingaporeEmb@mofaic.gov.ae).
-  **United Kingdom** (<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-singapore>), 100 Tanglin Rd, ☎ +65 6424 4200, enquiries.singapore@fcdo.gov.uk (mailto:enquiries.singapore@fcdo.gov.uk).
-  **United States of America** (<http://sg.usembassy.gov>), 27 Napier Rd, ☎ +65 6476 9100 (general enquiries), +65 3158 5400 (visa applications), fax: +65 6476 9232, singaporeacs@state.gov (mailto:singaporeacs@state.gov) (general enquiries).
 - **United States visa applications**, support-singapore@ustraveldocs.com (mailto:support-singapore@ustraveldocs.com).
-  **Uzbekistan** (<http://singapore.mfa.uz/>), 20 Kramat Ln, #04-01/02 United House, ☎ +65 6734 3942, +65 6734 3943, fax: +65 6734-5849, sg.uzembassy@mfa.uz (mailto:sg.uzembassy@mfa.uz).

- **Uzbekistan additional email address**, office@uzembassy.sg (mailto:office@uzembassy.sg).
-  **Vatican City**, 55 Waterloo St, #09-01 & 09-02 Catholic Centre, ☎ +65 6337 2466, apostolic@nunciature.sg (mailto:apostolic@nunciature.sg).
-  **Venezuela** (<https://singapur.embajada.gob.v>), 163 Penang Road, #02-01 Winsland House II, ☎ +65 6491 1172.
-  **Vietnam** (<https://vnembassy-singapore.mofa.gov.vn/en-us/Pages/default.aspx>), 10 Leedon Park, ☎ +65 6462 5938 (general enquiries), +65 6462 5994 (consular), fax: +65 6468 9863 (general enquiries), +65 6462 5936 (consular), vnemb.sg@mofa.gov.vn (mailto:vnemb.sg@mofa.gov.vn).

Hair cuts

Singaporeans are particular about their hair and there is no shortage of fancy hair salons charging from \$20 up for the latest Chinese popstar look. If you are willing to splurge, there is Passion Hair Salon at Palais Renaissance with celebrity hairstylist David Gan (hairstylist of Zhang Ziyi and other famous celebrities) doing the haircut. Le Salon at Ngee Ann City offers haircuts up to \$2,000. The middle range hair salons in town or in the heartlands, offer haircuts with hair wash as well as other frills. Chains include Reds Hairdressing, Supercuts, Toni & Guy salons that are all over Singapore. For a more backpacker-friendly price, almost every shopping mall in Singapore has a branch of **EC House** (<http://www.ec-house.com.sg/>) or one of its many imitators, offering fuss-free 10 min haircuts for \$15, although the hairdressers are mostly happy to spend as long as necessary on your hair, within reasonable limits. Most HDB estates have barbershops which charge \$5 to \$10 for adults and less for students and children.

Laundry

Hotels often provide a one-day laundry service (at a price), whereas hostels often have communal self-service washing machines. Full-service laundry and dry cleaning shops can be found in every shopping mall; unfortunately turnaround times are usually upwards of three days unless you opt for express service. There are also self-service laundromat chains and franchises with various outlets located within the business district and around the country:

- **Wonder Wash Self-service Laundromat** (<http://www.wonderwash.com.sg/>), ☎ +65 9786 2038. 24 hrs. Totally self-service laundromat with no attendants, Various sizes of machines from 8 kg to 20 kg. Price starts from \$4 per 8 kg, modern and clean.
- **DIY Laundry** (<http://diylaundry.com.sg/>). 24 hrs. Coin-operated, self-serviced laundromat. Various sizes of machines from 11kg to 20kg, \$5-\$20. (updated Sep 2022)

Photo processing

Practically every shopping mall has a photo shop that will print digital pictures and take passport photos. Many pharmacies and supermarkets also have self-service kiosks which print digital photos from CD, SD-card, USB drive, etc.

Sports

The **Singapore Sports Council** (<https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/>) runs a chain of affordable sports facilities, often featuring fantastic outdoor 50 m pools (see [Swimming](#) for a list). Facilities are somewhat sparse but the prices are unbeatable, with e.g. swimming pools charging \$1 for entry and access to ClubFITT gyms only \$2.50. The main downside is the inconvenient location of most facilities out in the suburbs, although most are close to an MRT station and can be reached within 10-20 min from downtown. The gyms also have a total ban on bringing in any reading material (aimed at students but enforced blindly).

Major private gym chains include **Anytime Fitness** (<https://www.anytimefitness.sg/>), **Fitness First** (<http://www.fitnessfirst.com.sg/>), **Gold's Gym** (<http://www.goldsgym.com.sg/>) and **True Fitness** (<http://www.truefitness.com.sg/>). Facilities are better and locations more central, but the prices are also much higher as non-members have to fork out steep day pass fees (around \$40). If you are a member of Anytime Fitness in your home country, you may be able to access any of the franchise's gyms in Singapore.

Some of the **parks** (<http://www.nparks.gov.sg/>) offer rental of bicycles and inline skates (\$3–6/hr, open until 8PM). You can either rent skates, attend a skate class or send the children off to a skate camp at major parks like West Coast and East Coast Park. Especially rewarding for skaters and cyclists is the 10 km long stretch along [East Coast Park](#) with a paved track and lots of rental shops, bars and cafes around the McDonald's. There are toilets and showers along the track. Furthermore, every park has a couple of fitness stations.

Television

Free-to-air digital terrestrial televisions (DTT) are readily available at all sides of Singapore, though most houses and hotels have cable or internet protocol TV that enable them to get more channels. The four official languages of Singapore each gets at least one TV station, and the main news at night for each language is always subtitled to the respective languages. All free-to-air TV channels are owned by the state-owned Mediacorp, as such news contents, especially from Singapore, generally do not differ much between channels. Satellite TV is illegal in Singapore.

Due to its proximity to Indonesia and Malaysia, antennas can also receive channels from both countries. Foreign news channels such as the BBC, CNN and CNBC are available with a pay TV subscription. The main pay TV operators in Singapore are [Starhub TV](https://www.starhub.com/personal/tvplus/passes.html) (<https://www.starhub.com/personal/tvplus/passes.html>) and [Singtel TV](https://www.singtel.com/personal/products-services/tv#Ways%20to%20watch%20TV2) (<https://www.singtel.com/personal/products-services/tv#Ways%20to%20watch%20TV2>).

DTT channels include:

- **CNA** (<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/international>) (formerly Channel NewsAsia), round-the-clock English news channel focusing on stories from Singapore and Asia.

- **Channel 5**, general entertainment in English, with a combination of local programmes and American series. News broadcasts at 9PM daily. Kids entertainment in the 6AM-noon and 3PM-6PM block.
- **Channel 8**, Mandarin general entertainment channel broadcasting locally produced dramas & documentaries, and news at 1PM on weekdays, 6:30PM and 10PM daily.
- **Channel U**, Mandarin channel with more famous Asian dramas.
- **Vasantham**, Tamil general entertainment channel, locally produced dramas and Bollywood or Kollywood movies. News broadcasts at 8:30PM daily.
- **Suria**, Malay general entertainment channel from local productions, Malaysia, and Indonesia. News broadcasts at daily at 8PM.

Newspapers

Singapore regularly scrapes the bottom of press freedom rankings, and all local newspapers in Singapore are published by the state-owned Singapore Press Holdings. That being said, they generally do provide reasonably balanced coverage of hard news. The main English-language newspaper is **The Straits Times** (<https://www.straitstimes.com>), which is published every Monday to Saturday, with **The Sunday Times** filling in on Sunday. **Business Times** (<http://www.businesstimes.com.sg>) focuses on business and financial news. Papers are also available in Singapore's three other official languages, with **Lianhe Zaobao** (<http://www.zaobao.com.sg>) (联合早报) being the main Chinese newspaper, **Berita Harian** (<http://www.beritaharian.sg>) (or **Berita Minggu** on Sunday) being the main Malay newspaper, and **Tamil Murasu** (<http://www.tamilmurasu.com.sg>) (தமிழ் முரசு) being the main Tamil newspaper.

Weather

If you are travelling to Singapore, be sure to carry the following:

- **Sunglasses** - Singapore is usually bright and sunny.
- **Umbrella** - Be sure to carry an umbrella in your luggage, as there is some precipitation throughout the year. However, the rain usually does not last long.
- **Sun block/sun screen** - If you plan to go out during the day, it is advisable to apply sun block as it is mostly sunny throughout the year. The ultraviolet index (UVI) is usually very high in the afternoon when it is sunny. Please see [NEA's website on ultraviolet index](http://www.nea.gov.sg/weather/ultraviolet-index) (<http://www.nea.gov.sg/weather/ultraviolet-index>) for more information.
- **Shorts/Half Pants** - Singapore can get real warm. Although air-conditioning is available in all public transports and almost all internal areas, it is advisable to carry some light clothing. Some places of worship may require visitors to dress conservatively.
- **Cotton or dri-fit shirts** - Wear comfortable shirts that can let the air flow through.
- **Slippers** - Singaporeans love to wear slippers (called "flip-flops" in the United States, "thongs" in Australia or "jandals" in New Zealand). Be sure to carry a pair, just to blend in. Try sandals if you're not used to flip flops, but beware that in some formal establishments (e.g. the theatre, concert hall, and recital studio at the Esplanade), no flip flops, sandals, or shorts are allowed.
- **Sweater** - In cinemas, shopping malls, and museums, air conditioning can be relatively colder than expected, though this is likely to be a welcome relief from the heat.

Go next

Singapore makes a good base for exploring South-East Asia, with nearly all of the region's countries and their main tourist destinations — including Bangkok, Phuket, Angkor Wat, Ho Chi Minh City and Bali — under 2 hr away by plane. Thanks to budget carriers, Singapore is an excellent place for catching cheap flights to China and India. Singapore also has direct flights to many of the smaller cities in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, which can be convenient points of entry if you wish to skip the ever-present queues and touts at their main airports.

For day or weekend trips from Singapore, the following are popular:

- Batam — The nearest Indonesian island to Singapore, just a short ferry trip away. Mainly industrial and infamous for its vice trade, but has some resorts.
- Bintan — Indonesian island just 55 min away by ferry, offering both high-end resorts and the "real Indonesia" experience.
- Johor Bahru — Malaysian city just across the Causeway. Just 20 min by bus 950 from Woodlands Bus Interchange. Not much to look at, but popular for cheap eating, shopping and Legoland Malaysia.
- Kuala Lumpur — Malaysia's vibrant capital. 45 min by plane, 4–5 hr by bus or 10 hr by train.
- Malacca — Once one of the three Straits Settlements, now a sleepy colonial town. 3–4 hr by bus, although it might take a little longer due to border security.
- Pulau Tioman — The nearest of Malaysia's East Coast paradise islands, reachable by bus & ferry.

For those who can afford more time to travel, here are several destinations that are popular long weekend (i.e. when a weekend coincides with a public holiday) trips for Singaporeans:

- Bali — One of Indonesia's biggest tourist draws with its nice beaches and good food. About 2.5 hr away by plane.
- Bangkok — Thailand's capital and considered a food, shopping, and clubbing paradise by many Singaporeans. It is less than 2 hr flight away, or 2 nights by train, assuming you don't stop off in Kuala Lumpur or Butterworth (for Penang).
- Phuket — One of the largest islands in Thailand, is another popular destination for Singaporeans. It offers a great weekend getaway and is less than 2 hr flight away. Relatively cheaper than Singapore, it is a great destination to hang around.
- Ipoh — The capital of the Malaysian state of Perak, it is famous among Singaporeans for its food. 7–8 hr away by coach, or 1 hr by turboprop flight.
- Langkawi — An island in the Malaysian state of Kedah, just south of the Thai border, famed for endless beaches. Just over an hour by plane.
- Penang — One of the Straits Settlements, with a rich history and fabulous food. About 12 hr away by coach, or 1 hr if you choose to fly. Also popular for its medical tourism.
- Hong Kong — A Special Administrative Region of China, often regarded as a rival of Singapore. About 3 1/2 hours away by flight, and a popular shopping and dining destination for Singaporeans.

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