

Singapore

History/Background (3 facts)

1. Some say: founded by a prince from Sumatra who landed on the island and saw a lion (Singapura- lion city)
2. Modern Singapore was founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles (1781-1826). Raffles became a clerk for the British East India Company in 1795.
3. When the Suez Canal was built in 1869 Singapore became even more important as a 'gateway' between Europe and eastern Asia.

Language (2 facts)

Four official languages: English, Malay, Tamil, Mandarin Chinese
Singapore has a bilingual language policy

Malay was also once Singapore's National language as a reflection of its indigenous culture before the arrival of the British in 1819.
Singapore's national anthem 'Majulah Singapura', or Onward Singapore, is sung entirely in Malay.

Food (3 facts)

1. Chili crab is the national dish of Singapore. This dish is said to have been invented from a [pushcart in 1956](#), by a husband who asked his wife to experiment with other methods of cooking crab other than steaming. After adding chili to stir-fried crab in tomato sauce, their crabs became wildly popular.
2. Hainanese chicken is a rice dish with juicy steamed white chicken cut into thin pieces. The chicken is served over fragrant rice with light soy sauce. This traditional food in Singapore comes from Chinese immigrants from the province of Hainan in Southern China.
3. The verdant, cushiony [pandan](#) chiffon cake is said to be of Indonesian or Malaysian origin with Dutch influences. Its striking green hue comes from the juice of pandan leaves, a popular ingredient in Asian desserts. It is known as the Singapore National Dessert.

Traditions (4 facts)

1. [The](#) state is home to ten major religions, including Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity.
2. [The](#) different communities do not regard themselves as sharing a culture; instead, they consider themselves parts of a whole. This

is illustrated by reference to a popular local dish, *Rojak*, a salad in which the various ingredients are covered by the same peanut sauce, forming a distinct whole with each ingredient clearly discernible. The peanut sauce is Singaporeanness; the other ingredients are the different cultural traditions.

3. Polygamy is allowed among Muslim Malays, but otherwise, monogamy is the rule. Interethnic marriages are not common.

Other interesting... (5 facts)

1. Singapore is known for its hawker centers which are an open-air cooked food market
2. [Singapore](#) served as a trading port for British ships on their way to India and was prone to many foreign influences. The country remained a British colony until 1942.
3. In order to keep Singapore a “fine” city, the government set very limited civil freedoms in prohibiting chewing gum and spitting among others.
4. [The](#) Chinese constitute about 78 percent, the Malays 14 percent, the Indians 7 percent, and others 1 percent of the population.
5. The flag is divided into equal red and white horizontal sections symbolizing unity and purity. A white crescent moon and five stars in a circle symbolize a growing nation and the ideals of democracy, peace, progress, justice, and equality.
6. Singaporeans jokingly refer to their desire for the "five C's": car, condominium, credit card, club membership, and career. These are important symbols of wealth and status regardless of ethnicity.

Famous people (2 facts)

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