Despite the image of Singapore being a ‘Fine City’, with strictly abided by rules and penalties for very small offences, it is so much more than that. The vibrant medley of Chinese, Indian, Malay and Western culture is deeply embedded in the city and it will pleasantly surprise you every step you take. The global city is a popular stop-over spot, with time usually being spent shopping on Orchard Road and in the busy bars of Clarke Quay. But equally, Singapore can keep you busy and entertained for a week and more. Apart from the rather sterile (yet beautiful at night!) central business district and lavish waterfront promenade, Singapore is made up of several colorful ethnic districts that still retain its specific cultural heritage: Little India, Arab Street, Chinatown, and Kampong Glam. These neighborhoods are best explored on foot, with enough time to really appreciate them. Walking around, eating at the street stalls or hawker centers and shopping in the peculiar shops are what make your experience of Singapore special and incomparable to other megacities.

Time Zone
SGT, UTC +8 hours. No DST is observed.

Contacts
Tourist Contacts
Tourism Information: +65 1800 7362 000

Emergency Contacts
- Police emergency number: 999
- Ambulance and fire emergency number: 995
- Singapore police: +65 1800 225 0000
- Traffic police hotline: +65 1800 547 1818
- On-call medical service: 1777

Money
Currency: Singapore dollar (SGD), S$1 = 100 cents.

In the touristy areas, money exchange shops are virtually at every corner and the deals are far better than in banks where a service fee is always charged. If possible, avoid exchanging money at hotels or at the airport as they usually have painfully high rates.

Major credit cards are widely accepted and you should not be charged any additional fee.

Tax Refunds
You are eligible for a tax refund if you purchase goods in retail shops participating in the Tourist Refund Scheme and spend more than $300. You must fill in the Premier Tax Free refund voucher in-store and present it together with the goods and receipts at the customs of Singapore Changi Airport. You can choose to have your refund in cash, credit card deposit or bank check.

Learn more about the tourist refunds at the Singapore Customs official website (www.customs.gov.sg)

Prices
When compared to the majority of Southeast Asia, Singapore is rather expensive. Still, the prices are manageable by Western European standards.

Admission fees to Singapore museums are usually half price for the students. Some museums have lower or free admission on Fridays.
- Meal, hawkers center – SGD 5
- Meal, inexpensive restaurant – SGD 8

Tipping
Generally, tipping is quite unusual in Singapore. It is common for restaurants and hotels to add a 10% service charge.
Electricity
Thanks to Singapore’s colonial heritage, the standard electricity supply is 230V/50Hz on the British three-pin rectangular socket. The adaptors can be purchased at the airport or are readily available for rent at hotels.

Languages
Singapore has four official languages: Tamil, Mandarin Chinese, English and Malay. English is the most widespread language and is spoken by practically everyone. Understanding it can be a little challenging sometimes though, as the language has developed into Singlish, incorporating Tamil and Malay words in a Chinese word order.

Mobile Phones
The international country code for Singapore is +65.

If coming from the US or Canada, you may encounter some difficulties with the Singapore telecommunication network (GSM 900/1800 band). Better check for compatibility in advance.

Phone booths can still be found in MRT stations.

Internet
Free Wi-Fi hotspots can be found all around the city. You only need to sign up for the Wireless@SG service and confirm your registration with your phone. Fast food outlets and international chains provide free Internet access as well.

Internet Resources
- Official Singapore Tourism Website (www.yoursingapore.com)
- Singapore Tourism Board (www.stb.gov.sg)
- Enter Singapore (www.entersingapore.info) – informative expatriate website

HOLIDAYS

1 January – New Year’s Day
1 May – Labour Day
9 August – National Day
25 December – Christmas Day
Chinese New Year – date varies according to the Chinese calendar.
Good Friday – Friday before Easter Sunday.
Vesak Day – 15th day of the 4th month, date varies according to the Chinese calendar.
Hari Raya Puasa – The end of Ramadan. Date varies according to the Islamic calendar.
Hari Raya Haji – Date varies according to the Islamic calendar.
Deepavali – Date varies according to the Hindu calendar.

Offices, banks and small shops are closed during these holidays.

Opening Hours
Banks are usually open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays and 9:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays; offices stay open longer. Official opening hours of shops and malls are from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., but some malls offer late night shopping until 11 p.m. Small shops usually close on Sunday.

Museums close on Mondays. Their opening hours are varied, usually from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with extended opening hours on Wednesdays.
Public Transportation

The Singapore public transportation is very dense, well-thought out and intuitive. The Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) are the most common means of transport as they extensively cover the city (including the main sights) and connect it to the Changi airport. The MRT stations are modern and clean, usually equipped with free restrooms and an array of vending machines.

Buses may be a bit more difficult to use due to the complicated fare system. The easiest way is to pay with the EZ-link card. Don’t forget to tap the card when alighting, otherwise you will be charged the maximum fare.

The night service is outstanding. NightRider services run on Fridays, Saturdays and eves of Public Holidays from 11.30PM to 4.35AM and cover all the popular nightlife areas.

Depending on the route, single tickets cost between SGD 0.66 and SGD 3.04 with SGD 1 as deposit on a refundable card. You can check fares on the official website. (www.smrt.com.sg)

If you are going to stay in Singapore for a prolonged period of time or plan to return, consider purchasing an EZ-link card. The concept is the same as with the legendary Oyster card used in London. You top up the contactless card and use it on the trains and buses for reduced fares. The purchasing cost when bought in Passenger Service Centers is SGD 12, out of which SGD 7 is stored value for use. The cards cards for sale in 7-Eleven shops cost SGD 10 with SGD 5 as stored value for use. The card can be also used as a means of payment in taxis, various shops and vending machines.

You might also consider purchasing the Singapore Tourist Pass: for one (SGD 10), two (SGD 16) or three consecutive days (SGD 20). With it, you can use public transport for the fixed price, with no limits. Don’t forget to return the card within five days to get your deposit of SGD 10 back.

Trishaws

Recently, there have been a series of attempts to revitalize these ‘pedal rickshaws’. The service is aimed at tourists and the fares are therefore high. However, the trishaw drivers are generally more honest than in surrounding countries.

Taxis

Singapore taxis are a part of the public transport network. The official cabs use meters and can be paid with EZ-link. It is always better to book your taxi in advance because there’s quite a shortage of them. You can use the hotline 6555 8888 or SMS booking service:

For immediate booking, simply send the following to 75588:

Book<space>Postal code<space>#Pickup Point

For advanced booking, simply send the following to 75588:

AdvBook<space>Postal code<space>&nbsp;#Pickup point<space>#Pickup time (24 hour format)&nbsp;#spPickupdate

Calculating the taxi fare in advance can be complicated. The numerous surcharges vary according to time (peak hours, night), place (CBD, airport) or booking. These extras should be shown on the meter.

Due to the shortage of taxis, illegal services are often offered at the busy night stops. These taxis are quite expensive but usually safe.

It is always handy to have a good knowledge of where you are going (or have a map with you) as the taxi drivers can have surprisingly poor knowledge of some parts of the city.

Phone numbers:
- +65 6342 5222 – Dial-A-Cab
- +65 6552 1111 – Comfort Taxi
- +65 6555 3333 – TransCab

Driving

It is not usual for tourists to rent a car in Singapore and is hardly necessary as the public transport system is very elaborate and convenient.

Traffic drives on the left and the roads are in flawless condition. Drivers are much disciplined in obeying traffic laws. Apart from during peak hours, it is quite easy to find a parking place. If your driving license is not in English, you need to accompany it with an official English translation. You also need to take into account that Singapore roads use an electronic toll collection system called ERP. The car rental company should arrange a stored-value CashCard for you.

Speed limits – roads: 50 km/h (31 mph), expressways: 80-90 km/h (49-55 mph)

Blood alcohol limit – 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood.

Wearing seatbelts is mandatory even in the backseat.

Head lights must be turned on between 7PM and 7AM.

It is forbidden to use cell phones while driving.

Walkability

Due to its vastness and unmistakably mega-urban planning, Singapore belongs to the list of not very walkable cities. Unfortunately, the infrastructure is designed to lead people to the nearest public transport stations. Still, walking along the Clarke Quay or exploring Little India on foot is a must.
**Specialties** The cuisine reflects the ethnic diversity of Singapore. Be adventurous and try eating out in the hawker centers – the food is authentic and usually delicious, for very low prices. Not to mention the unique atmosphere. Make sure to taste durian – the infamous fruit with distinctive odor so strong that it is forbidden to take into MRT. It has such a peculiar taste so that you will either love or hate it.

- **Peranakan cuisine**: Chilli crab, black pepper crab, Kaya (sweet spread made of egg and coconut, often accompanied by kopi – strong and sweet coffee), laksa (noodles in coconut milk-based curry broth), mee siam (rice noodles in sweet & sour soup).
- **Malay cuisine**: Satay (barbecued meat, served with peanut dip and cucumbers), Mee soto (chicken soup), Otah (fish cake), Chendol (dessert – green pea noodles, kidney beans, coconut milk), Kachang (shaved ice with red beans, grass jelly and palm sugar).
- **Chinese cuisine**: Bak kut teh (pork ribs soup), Char kway teow (noodles in thick, brown sauce with fishcake, sausage and shrimp), Chwee kway (breakfast – rice cake with salted fermented turnip), Hokkien mee (fried noodles with thick sauce and seafood), Hot pot (cook vegetables, meats and seafood yourself in a broth).
- **Indian cuisine**: Nasi biryani (saffron rice and meat), Roti Prata (pancake stuffed with minced chicken, mutton and sardines).

**Legal Age**
The drinking age is 18, but is rarely enforced. Some clubs have their own (higher) limits.

Singapore-style partying usually includes visits to karaoke boxes. The main concentration of nightlife spots is along the Boat, Clarke and Robertson Quays. There are also numerous clubs on Orchard Road and Mohammed Sultan Road.

**January & February**
- Chinese New Year
- Pongal Festival – a Hindu celebration of a good harvest transforms the temples and streets of Little India into a busy full of celebrations and decorations.
- Thaipusam – a colorful and loud Hindu procession from the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple to the Sri Thendayuthapani Temple on Tank Road.

**March & April**
- Fashion Steps Out @ Orchard – 6 weeks of fashion shows, workshops and events.
- Mosaic Music Festival (www.mosaicmusicfestival.com) – 10 days of concerts held at the Esplanade with a wide variety of genres from world-music to jazz and soul.

**May & July**
- Vesak Day – the most important Buddhist event, visit the temples for a deep experience.
- Great Singapore Sale – huge sales at the main shopping belts, a true celebration of a contemporary urban lifestyle.
- Singapore Food Festival (singaporefoodfestival.com.sg)

**June**
- Dragon Boat Festival – traditional spectacle held in many countries with a Chinese minority.

**August & September**
- Hungry Ghost Festival – many neighborhoods are lit up with incense sticks and offerings all around.
- Mid-Autumn Festival – the whole city is decorated with large-scale, colorful lampions and various celebrations take place.

**October**
- Deepavali (Festival of Lights) – Little India gets lavishly decorated and people celebrate in the street.

**Events During the Year**

- **Singapore Sun Festival (singaporesunfestival.com)** – multi-genre event enlivens the public spaces with workshops, theatre plays, performances and exhibitions.
- **December**
  - Zouked Out (www.zoukout.com) – the largest outdoor beach party in Asia.
THINGS TO DO

Free Things To Do

- Singapore Botanic Garden – peaceful oasis with several lakes and a beautiful orchid garden.
- Singapore City Gallery – learn more about the urban issues related to Singapore at this Gallery.
- National Museum of Singapore, Singapore Art Museum, Peranakan Museum, Singapore Philatelic Museum – free on Friday night, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
- Esplanade – hosts various outdoor concerts.
- Walk along the waterfront at night and marvel at the lit-up skyscrapers.

Shopping

Shopping is one of the most popular Singaporean pastimes and it shows; there are countless malls and shopping streets to choose from. Souvenirs with Merlion, the symbol of the state, can be bought at for the best prices in Chinatown. Various ethnic goods can be purchased at Geylang Serai, Bugis Village and Little India.

The most typical souvenirs are: ‘Singapore is a Fine City’ T-Shirt, Singapore shawls, Bah kwa (dried pork) or pressed orchid bookmarks.

DOS AND DO NOTS

- DO remove your shoes before entering a Mosque or Hindi Temple.
- DO eat in the hawker centers – an authentic experience.
- DO wander around the Quays and Esplanade at night – the views are stunning.
- DO shop in Singapore – the electronics is quite cheap and the malls are among the biggest in Asia.
- DO NOT litter.
- DO NOT cross the street unless at a crosswalk.
- DO NOT stick your chopsticks vertically into your dish. It is done only during rituals when devoting the food to ancestors.

Safety

According to the statistics, Singapore is one of the safest cities in the world, secured by rigid rules. Breaching even the most trivial ones, such as littering, can be heavily fined.

For this reason, Singapore is often nicknamed ‘fine city’ or ‘nanny state’. Make sure you pay attention to the restriction signs and note that littering, chewing, spitting, urinating and smoking in public is forbidden. Carrying chewing gum across the border is against the law, too. And though law banning homosexual acts is generally not enforced, keep it in mind if applicable.

But even in these circumstances, using common sense about your safety is strongly advised. Don’t leave your personal belongings unattended and always keep an eye on your bags, as pickpockets are omnipresent and well-organized. Also it is best to avoid unlit and abandoned streets at night, despite the fact that even lone female travelers rarely encounter any problems.
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**Labrador Nature Reserve**

This reserve is flocked for its amazing cliffs and WWII bunkers and tunnels. Makes for a nice trip with family.

GPS: N1.26780, E103.80019

**Opening hours:**
Daily: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
(Last entry for hourly guided tour at 6 p.m.)

**Admission:**
Free admission.
Guided tour of tunnels:
Adult: SGD 8
Child: SGD 5

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**National Orchid Garden**

More than 1000 orchid species are simply a spectacular sight. Very carefully laid-out, and thus providing an amazing aesthetical experience.

1 Tyersall Rd, Singapore 257683
GPS: N1.31288, E103.81328

**Phone:**
+65 6471 7138

**Opening hours:**
Daily: 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m.

**Admission:**
Adult: SGD 5
Student, Senior: SGD 1
Children (under 12): free
**Underwater World Singapore and Dolphin Lagoon**
This is by no means your typical aquarium – this is way better! Huge tanks with lots of animals and an opportunity to interact with dolphins!

80 Siloso Road, Singapore  
GPS: N1.25852, E103.81113  
Phone: +65 6275 0030  
Opening hours: Daily: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.  
Admission: Adult: SGD 29.90  
Child: SGD 20.60

**Singapore Cable Car**
This cable car going from Mt. Faber to Sentosa is one of the much-loved tourist attractions. The views are amazing!

1 Mt Faber Rd, Singapore  
GPS: N1.27138, E103.81943  
Phone: +65 6270 8855  
Opening hours: Daily: 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.  
Admission: Adult: SGD 26  
Child (3-12): SGD 15

**Vivocity**
The largest shopping centre in Singapore. The mall encompasses retail shops as well as cinemas and entertainment venues.

1 HarbourFront Walk, Singapore 098585  
GPS: N1.26550, E103.82154  
Phone: +65 6278 4236  
Opening hours: Daily: 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

**Sentosa**
This island is one big entertainment centre. Theme parks, lookout tower, botanical gardens, clubs and beaches – what more to wish for?

GPS: N1.25133, E103.82486  
Phone: +65 6736 8672

**Universal Studios Singapore**
Huge entertainment park with several themed lands ranging from Ancient Egypt to Hollywood and Madagascar. So much to do!

8 Sentosa Gateway, Singapore 099053  
GPS: N1.25423, E103.82262  
Phone: +65 6577 8888  
Opening hours: Mostly 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. but the opening times are subject to change – check out the website before going.  
Admission: One day pass:  
Adult: SGD 74  
Child between 4-12 years: SGD 54  
Senior: SGD 36

**The Line**
Rather upscale buffet restaurant serving contemporary blend of international cuisine. Definitely book in advance.

22 Orange Grove Rd, Singapore 258350  
GPS: N1.31080, E103.82680  
Phone: +65 6213 4275  
Opening hours: Daily: 5 a.m. – 1 a.m.
ION Orchard
Futuristic and all spaceship-like, this monster mall spans eight retail floors and 48 more residential floors. There are over 333 stores with high fashion brands and gourmet dining venues.

GPS: N1.30458, E103.83187
Phone: +65 6238 8228
Opening hours:
Daily: 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.

Tanjong Beach
Tranquil sandy beach popular especially during the night: what a romantic getaway!

GPS: N1.24161, E103.82924

Orchard Road
This is where all shopping lovers head first. Long street lined with huge shopping malls and big brands.

GPS: N1.30166, E103.83816
Opening hours:
Opening hours of the shops differ, usually from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Istana
This stately mansion built by the British colonial government now serves as the official residence of the President of Singapore.

91 Cavenagh Rd, Singapore 229629
GPS: N1.30706, E103.84271
Opening hours:
The house can be visited on these holidays only, usually from 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.:
Chinese New Year (2nd Day)
Labour Day (Actual Day)
National Day & Hari Raya Puasa
Deepavali
Admission:
General admission: SGD 1
Tour of function rooms: SGD 2

Chinatown
The Chinatown is rather gentrified yet still worth your time and attention. Lots of food spots and shops ideal for souvenir hunting.

GPS: N1.28347, E103.84323

Clarke Quay
Riverside development with abundance of restaurants, nightclubs and bars. Popular night-time destination.

GPS: N1.28931, E103.84515
Phone: +65 6337 3292
Sri Mariamman Temple
The oldest and most important Hindu temple in Singapore. The humble entrance fee is definitely worth exploring its numerous halls.
244 S Bridge Rd, Singapore 058793
GPS: N1.28264, E103.84539
Phone: +65 6296 3469
Opening hours: Daily: 7 a.m. – midnight

Little India / Tekka
Lively and charming Tamil neighbourhood with lots of small spice and textile shops, fortune-telling stalls and way more. A must see!
GPS: N1.30546, E103.85289

National Museum of Singapore
This museum showcases the history of Singapore through multimedia exhibitions and artefacts displays. Impressive in its size.
93 Stamford Rd, Singapore 178897
GPS: N1.29672, E103.84851
Phone: +65 6332 3659
Opening hours:
Singapore History Gallery: Daily: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Singapore Living Galleries: Daily: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Admission:
Admission to the Museum building is free.
Fees are applicable to the galleries and exhibitions.
Adult: SGD 10
Student: SGD 5
Family: SGD 30

Merlion Park
This park holds the iconic landmark of Singapore: a mythical half-lion, half-fish creature. A must see!
GPS: N1.28672, E103.85447
Opening hours: Open 24/7.
Admission: Free admission.

Sakya Muni Buddha Gaya Temple
Built in a distinctive Thai style, this temple belongs to the most prominent Buddhist ones in the city. Holds rare depictions of Sakyamuni.
366 Race Course Rd, Singapore 218638
GPS: N1.31477, E103.85687
Phone: +65 6294 0714
Opening hours: Daily: 8 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
Admission: Free admission.

Arab Street
Explore this colourful district to its fullest by browsing through its charming houses, textile shops and small cafés.
GPS: N1.30327, E103.85730
Fountain of Wealth
The world’s largest fountain unsurprisingly dominates a huge shopping mall. Built according to the principles of feng shui.
8 Temasek Blvd, Singapore 038988
GPS: N1.29474, E103.85889
Phone: +65 6295 2888
Opening hours:
Daily: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Marina Bay Sands SkyPark
Rather on the expensive side, yet totally worth it: the best view of Singapore you can possibly have. Brand new landmark of the city!
10 Bayfront Ave, Singapore 018956
GPS: N1.28145, E103.85831
Opening hours:
Mon–Thu: 9:30 a.m. –10 p.m.
Fri, Sat, Sun: 9:30 a.m. –11 p.m.
Admission:
2014:
Adult: SGD 23
Child between 2-12 years: SGD 17
Senior: SGD 20
2013:
Adult: SGD 20
Child between 2-12 years: SGD 14
Senior: SGD 17
Free guided tours for ticket holders: 10 a.m., 2 p.m., and 9 p.m.
You need to register for this tour at Box Office located at B1 Tower 3, registration starts at 9:30 a.m. on the day of your visit. The tour takes around 15 minutes.

Singapore Flyer
Huge Ferris wheel from which you can overlook vast portion of the city. An unforgettable experience!
31 Raffles Ave, Singapore 039804
GPS: N1.28950, E103.86300
Phone: +65 6333 3311
Opening hours:
Daily: 8:30 a.m. –10:30 p.m.
Admission:
The prices vary according to the date and type of the ticket. Expect around SGD 29.70 (adult) and SGD 18.90 (child) when booked online in advance.

Marina Bay Golf Course
This golf club boasts totally impressive location and challenging layout. Moreover, it is open to public.
80 Rhu Cross, Singapore 437437
GPS: N1.29304, E103.87247
Phone: +65 6342 5730
Opening hours:
Mon & Tue: noon – 2 p.m.
Wed: 7 a.m. – 9 a.m., 12:20 p.m. – 3:24 p.m.
Thu, Fri: 7 a.m. – 3:24 p.m.
Sat, Sun: 7 a.m. – 2:36 p.m.
Evening golf:
Wed – Fri: 3:32 p.m. – 4:28 p.m.
Night golf:
Wed – Fri: 4:36 p.m. – 5:56 p.m.
Admission:
18-hole Weekdays: SGD 130
18-hole Weekends: SGD 225
9-hole Weekdays: SGD 82.50
9-hole Weekends: SGD 120
Geylang
An open air market during day time, a famous red district area during the night. The eateries here offer some of the best food on the island.
GPS: N1.32061, E103.88693

Katong District
A hidden gem off the beaten path. Rich mix of cultures is demonstrated in the variety of restaurants. A nice place just to walk around.
GPS: N1.30927, E103.90471