



# SINGAPORE GUIDE

YOUR FREE SINGAPORE GUIDE  
FROM THE ASIA TRAVEL SPECIALISTS



www.asiawebdirect.com

Singapore is a glittering cosmopolitan city with a history deeply rooted in trade and commerce; it's a cultivated playground for sophisticated world travellers and an island as culturally diverse as all the countries in Asia combined. Constantly evolving, Singapore refuses to yield to its neighbours as the place to be and to live out a dream holiday.

Journey back in time and relish the charms of yesteryear as you ramble through the historic neighbourhoods around Fort Canning Park or Chinatown's candy-coloured Peranakan shop-houses. Delve into the city's vibrant art scene, marvel at a host of architectural wonders along the picturesque Marina Bay, or get your daily dose of shopping along iconic Orchard Road. Come and discover all that is Singapore.

## WEATHER



Just 137km above the Equator, Singapore is hot and humid year-round. The average temperature is 31°C at daytime and 24°C at night. Walking around at midday can be a real challenge, particularly between April and May when relative humidity is higher than 80%.

Like the rest of Southeast Asia, Singapore's climate is largely influenced by two monsoon winds. The northeast monsoon (Nov-Mar) brings bursts of heavy rain and thunderstorms that sometimes last overnight. May and June are the hottest months, after which the southwest monsoon arrives, bringing with it a relatively dry climate. **Best time to go:** June to August (avg. 24-31° C).

<http://www.singapore.com/weather.htm>

## CURRENCY

Singapore Dollar (S\$). US\$1 = approximately S\$ 1.23  
You'll find the current conversion rate at the top of the [www.singapore.com](http://www.singapore.com) website.



## TIME ZONE

GMT+8 (the same as Hong Kong, Malaysia and Indonesia).



## ELECTRICITY

Voltage is 230 Volts, 50 cycles per second, with 3-pin flat blades (Type G plug as used in the UK).



## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS



- Police	999 (toll free)
- Police Hotline	6225 0000
- Emergencies/Ambulance/Fire	995
- Singapore General Hospital	6321 4103
- National University Hospital	6779 5555
- Mt. Elizabeth	6737 2666
- Tourism Information	1800 7362 000
- City Cab Taxi	6552 2222
- Premier Taxi	6363 6888
- Airport Flight Information	1800 542 4422
- Directory Assistance	6777 7777

## SIM CARDS AND DIALING PREFIXES



Pre-paid SIM cards (S\$10 to S\$50) are available at 7-Eleven stores, Cheers convenience stores and at the Singapore Post. The three mobile phone service providers are SingTel, MobileOne (M1) and Starhub. Singapore doesn't use area codes; to call a number within Singapore, simply dial the eight-digit number. To call Singapore from outside the city-state, dial +65, the country code, then the eight-digit number. To make an international call from Singapore, dial the access code 001 (Sing Tel), 002 (M1), or 008 (StarHub), followed by the country code, area code and the number.

## GETTING AROUND



The efficient and clean public transportation in Singapore makes getting around a breeze. Fast, affordable and convenient, the MRT trains (05:30-24:00) are your best bet when traveling across downtown and the outskirts. The four train routes cover the entire island. If you intend to travel a lot by MRT, get a stored value card (SG\$ 10 and SG\$ 50) which works on the public buses as well.

Taxis are more expensive and often require extra charges on top of the fare, e.g. for entering the CBD at peak hours, travelling after midnight or from the airport. Buses are cheap, easy to take and cover virtually every corner of Singapore. For sightseeing, or just for fun, take a harbour cruise or a bumboat cruise down the Singapore River, for a glimpse of what the harbour must have been like in the old days.

<http://www.singapore.com/transport.htm>

## AIRPORT TRANSFERS



Taxis, the quickest if most expensive way of getting to the city, are available at the pick-up points at the arrival levels. A trip from Changi to the city centre should cost about SG\$ 18-38, plus S\$3 surcharge. More economical but just as fast, the MRT Underground (Terminals 2 and 3) operates from 05:30 to 24:00 (last leaving at 23:18). The Airbus leaves every 20mins. (6:00 – 24:00) following three fixed routes to all the main hotels in the Central Business District, the Colonial District and Orchard Road and its environs.

The airport's Ground Transport Desk offers a shuttle bus and a limousine transfer service (up to seven seats), or book your ride in advance at [www.singapore.com/tours/transfer.htm](http://www.singapore.com/tours/transfer.htm).

<http://www.singapore.com/transport.htm>

## SINGAPORE AREA GUIDES



Even though Singapore is relatively small, it's jam-packed with areas waiting to be explored. Orchard Road is well known for its shopping, Marina Bay for its world-class glamour, Chinatown for its dining-out possibilities, Little India for its colourful energy, and Sentosa Island for its leisure and fun opportunities. The entire city-state is well-linked by public transport, enabling you to cover multiple areas in one day.

### 1. Orchard Road

When you stay in Orchard Road area, you will be conveniently located near the heart of the city on a lively and attractive street. The Bukit Timah area is a particularly attractive location with high land value. The best part of staying here in this area is that you are a stroll away from some of the choicest shopping in the world, on Orchard Road, Singapore's main shopping and entertainment hub. Whether you need Orchard Road or Bukit Timah hotels for a business trip, or for a holiday, you'll be happy with your decision to stay around here.



### 2. Marina Bay

Occupying the central up to southern part of the main island, Marina Bay is Singapore's scenic waterfront, home to the island's iconic high art and culture scene as well as the Singapore Flyer, F1 racing track, casino city and the country's largest shopping and entertainment complex Marina Bay Sands. The area is well-connected by MRT trains, and is a short stroll from the CBD. With a 3.5km-long promenade, designated lush-green spaces and the highest concentration of skyscrapers, Marina Bay defines the future of Singapore's skyline.



### 3. Chinatown

Chinatown, with its colourful Peranakan shop-houses and handful of historical attractions, makes for a pleasant stroll. It is divided into four main districts, namely Kreta Ayer, Telok Ayer, Tanjong Pagar and Bukit Pasoh, but the centre of activities revolves around Smith and Pagoda Streets. Chinatown offers a lot more than just the restored shops and ethnic places of worship, such as the old Hokkien temple Thian Hock Keng, Sri Mariamman Hindu Temple and James Mosque, it's a haven for hawker food lovers. There's also a good mix of hotels here, from heritage shop-house hotels to five-star luxury boutique accommodation. The Chinatown MRT Station brings you to the doorstep of Pagoda Street.



### 4. Clarke Quay and Riverside

Singapore's throbbing nightlife scene is concentrated around the scenic Singapore River. Lining the two riverbanks just upstream from the administrative and financial districts, old colonial shop-houses and moored Chinese junks of Clarke Quay and Boat Quay have been converted into chic pubs, restaurants and nightclubs. Robertson Quay, slightly west of Clarke Quay, has more of the same but is generally more relaxed and tranquil. Make your way down to the mouth of the river and delight in the splendid architecture and monuments of colonial Singapore.



### 5. Little India

Little India isn't hard to find: follow the aroma of exotic spices combined with the scent from burning incense. A vibrant commercial centre for the Indian community spreading out along Serangoon Rd, Little India is one of Singapore's most colourful districts. Populated by the descendants of the Indians who arrived in Singapore in the mid 1800s, the colour, smiles and smells are all authentically sub continental and warm. Most hotels in this area are in the modest two-three star range and offer good value for money.

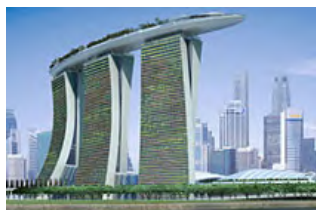


### 6. Sentosa Island

Sentosa Island is a man-made themed park-like recreation island just south of the Singapore city centre. The 12-minute cable car ride from Vivo City to the resort of beaches and rainforest is not only convenient, but has the added bonus of providing astounding panoramic views. The many attractions including the Resorts World, Universal Studio, Carlsberg Sky Tower, Butterfly Park, Insect Kingdom, and Underwater World, continue to draw repeat visitors from all over Asia.



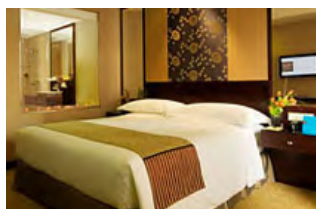
## BEST LUXURY HOTELS



### 1. Marina Bay Sands, City Centre ★★★★★

A stunning addition to the Marina Bay skyline, Marina Bay Sands' three luxury hotel towers stand unrivalled by any other constructions and are crowned by the gravity-defying cantilever Sands SkyPark housing a 150-metre-long infinity pool and the 360-degree viewpoint. The choice of entertainment, shopping and dining is virtually limitless, whether it's the city-state's first large-scale luxury shopping mall, a casino city, museum, theatre and a host of gourmet dining venues for leisure and food connoisseurs alike.

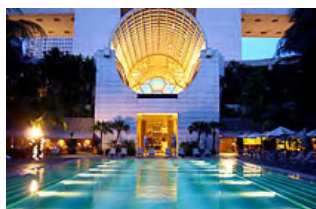
<http://www.singapore.com/marina-bay-sands/>



### 2. Royal Plaza on Scotts, Orchard-Bukit Timah ★★★★★

Located a mere three-minute walk from Orchard MRT station and surrounded by plush and glistening shopping malls such as ION Orchard, Takashimaya and DFS Galleria, Royal Plaza on Scotts features a free mini-bar and free internet in all 511 rooms. Chic, well designed and exclusive, Royal Plaza's Carousel restaurant is celebrated for its Mediterranean and Asian cuisine while the spacious and elegant Royal Club Lounge delivers daily free breakfast surrounded by a panoramic cityscape view along with a sunset view of Orchard Road.

<http://www.singapore.com/royalplaza/>



### 3. The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore, City Centre ★★★★★

Set in the midst of all the excitement Marina Bay has to offer, The Ritz overlooks one of the most stunning panoramas of Singapore's waterfront and iconic skyline. The hotel's sumptuous grounds, designed by award-winning architect Kevin Roche, comprise a seven-acre garden oasis, offering a mix of commercial, retail, entertainment and recreational facilities. Occupying 32 floors the guestrooms range from 51sqm Deluxe Rooms to 218sqm Ritz-Carlton Suites on the top floor, all decked out in an opulent, old-school-style splendour.

<http://www.singapore.com/ritz-carlton-millenia/>

## BEST BUSINESS HOTELS



### 1. The Fullerton Bay Hotel, CBD ★★★★★

The Fullerton Bay Hotel Singapore is a well-placed landmark on the scenic Marina Bay waterfront. Designed to cater for the tastes of sophisticated world travellers, the hotel's interiors fuse the aesthetic elements of classic European and Oriental styles. Understated details, such as polished rosewood and latticed screens, as well as deep, subdued colour tones, underscore the guestrooms' contemporary ambience. The stunning rooftop bar and pool area overlooks a sweeping vista of Marina Bay and the iconic Marina Bay Sands.

<http://www.singapore.com/the-fullerton-bay-hotel-singapore/>



### 2. M Hotel Singapore, CBD ★★★★★

Located in the heart of the Financial District, M Hotel is regularly awarded 'Best Deluxe Hotel' by Hospitality Asia Magazine as well as collecting many other accolades and it's not hard to see why. With state-of-the-art amenities, a modern and clean design, great service and lots of entertainment choices, M Hotel cleverly presents a combination of home and office in its 413 Guestrooms and 'Office Suites'. This is one of the best business hotels around and M Hotel accordingly offers a wide choice of meeting and convention facilities.

<http://www.singapore.com/m-hotel/>



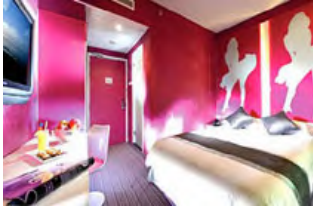
### 3. Amara Hotel, CBD ★★★★★

Close to the Tanjong Pagar MRT Station, this delightful hotel is a short hop to Chinatown, Orchard Road, The Esplanade and the vibrant shopping and dining scene at Marina Bay. The hotel features a minimalist design and a touch of Balinese style in the outdoor landscaped pool area. All Club Floor guests enjoy complimentary access to the Club Lounge and personalised butler service. Dining is a multicultural experience; enjoy a range of cuisine from Singaporean to Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Korean and Japanese.

<http://www.singapore.com/amara/>

More at <http://www.singapore.com/top10-singapore-hotels.htm>

## BEST BUDGET HOTELS



### 1. Hotel Re!, Chinatown-Riverside ★★★★★

Longing for a flashback to the past? Try the funky Hotel Re!, where a 60s vibe oozes from every corner. Colourful swirls, twisted shapes and patterns on the walls, splashes of bright orange, fuchsia, purple and green spice up the interiors. Rooms are compact but not lacking in terms of mod-cons and city views. The alfresco bar Re!Wine is ideal for enjoying a chilled out evening while overlooking the city lights and night sky. Complete your wind-down experience and try a massage or hydrobath at the wellness centre Re!Fresh.

<http://www.singapore.com/hotel-re/>



### 2. V Hotel Lavender, City Centre ★★★

Set right above the Lavender MRT Station, this high-rise hotel east of the city centre offers all the elements of a restful stay. The guestrooms come in five categories, from Superior Twin to Triple Rooms, all outfitted with modern amenities, including 32" LCD screens and high-speed Wi-Fi internet access (not free). For recreation, enjoy a swim in the hotel's large outdoor pool, work out at the gym, or swing by the Sky Terrace and chill out with an ice-cold drink.

<http://www.singapore.com/v-hotel-lavender/>



### 3. Moon Hotel, Little India ★★★★★

Style is an important element at this lovely four-star hotel just a short stroll from the Little India MRT Station and Mustafa Shopping Centre. All 83 guestrooms are compact but cosy and tastefully decked out in a sophisticated palette of purple, dark brown and ivory. The top-floor suites boast a large terrace with a lap pool and comfortable daybed while in-room amenities, include complimentary Wi-Fi internet, 32" LCD screens, iPod/phone compatible stereos and mini-bar, not to mention the complimentary cocktail every evening.

<http://www.singapore.com/moon-hotel/>

## BEST SERVICED APARTMENTS



### 1. Ascott Raffles Place, CBD ★★★★★

Ascott Raffles Place's art deco-style façade makes a grand architectural statement when set against the waterfront's futuristic cityscape. This heritage building has been restored to its 1950s splendour and boasts elegant interiors inspired by turn-of-the-last-century art. Rooms are spacious and fitted out with high-tech amenities and luxurious details. Apart from the splendid rooftop infinity pool, Jacuzzis and recreational area, the hotel provides full business support, including courier, concierge and secretarial services as well as meeting rooms with video conferencing facilities. Steps away from The Raffles Place MRT Station.

<http://www.singapore.com/ascott-singapore-raffles-place/>



### 2. Orchard Parksuites, Orchard-Bukit Timah ★★★★★

Just across the street from Wisma Atria, and a short stroll from Takashimaya, ION Orchard, Paragon and the Orchard MRT Station, Orchard Parksuites is an ideal choice if you place shopping and a central location high on your priority list. Housed inside the art deco-style building, the 222 luxurious apartments range from one- to Three-Bedroom Suites and Penthouse, all overlooking picturesque city views. A range of facilities such as the classy outdoor pool area, sauna, steam rooms, tennis courts, barbecue pits or gym, completes the top-notch experience.

<http://www.singapore.com/orchard-parksuites/>



### 3. Pan Pacific Serviced Suites, Orchard-Bukit Timah ★★★★★

Combining a fantastic location, cutting-edge luxury and service excellence, Pan Pacific Serviced Suites proves again that it is among the top choices for a long-term stay in the city-state. Set right next to the Somerset MRT Station, the hotel is at the doorstep of Orchard Road's glittering shopping and entertainment complexes. Understated elegance is the common theme among the 126 tastefully fitted out Rooms, Suites and Penthouses, all well-equipped for business on the go and leisure. Everything is first-class here, whether the in-room Bose stereo system, 20-metre mineral water pool, hydro-therapeutic spa, or sweeping views of the city skyline.

<http://www.singapore.com/pan-pacific-serviced-suites/>

More at <http://www.bangkok.com/top10-hotels.htm>

## WHAT TO SEE IN SINGAPORE



The Singapore skyline is ever-shifting as exciting new developments spring up across the city centre and waterfront area, such as the impressive Singapore flyer, The Esplanade and Marina Bay Sands SkyPark. Singapore is fast accelerating into the future, and it does so without leaving its rich cultural heritage behind.

### 1. Singapore Flyer, Marina Bay

The Singapore Flyer is the world's largest observation wheel. Reaching as high as 42 stories into the sky, it is some 30 metres taller than the famous London Eye. Once you get off the ground, you will see as far as the Singapore River, Raffles Place, Marina Bay, Empress Place and the Padang. **Open:** 08:30 - 22:30 (last admission 22:15) **Location:** Southern tip of the Marina Centre **MRT:** Promenade Station (Exit A) and walk five minutes



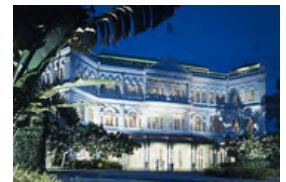
### 2. Marina Bay Sands SkyPark, Marina Bay

One of Singapore's must-see landmarks, the 200-metre-high boat-shaped SkyPark sits atop three 55-storey towers offering 360-degree views of the city and beyond. The 150-metre-long infinity pool, an observation deck and an extensive lineup of chic restaurants, bars, spas, gardens and even a jogging path are all the more impressive. Admission is at the lobby of Tower 3. **Open:** 10:00 - 22:00 (Mon-Thur), 10:00 - 23:00 (Fri-Sun) **Location:** Marina Bay Sands Resorts & Casino **MRT:** Marina Bay or Promenade Stations, then take public buses SBS 133, SBS 97/97e or walk about 10min.



### 3. Raffles Hotel, City Centre

This luxurious colonial-style hotel with a long history dating back to 1887 has welcomed some of the world's most famous personalities as guests. Apart from the 103 suites and 18 distinctive restaurants and bars, the hotel boasts an arcade with over 40 boutiques and stores (think Louis Vuitton and Tiffany & Co.) Many come for the Raffles Bar experience and you can be sure to enjoy the best Singapore Sling in town. **Open:** 08:30 - 21:00 (shops) **Location:** 1 Beach Road (opposite Raffles City Convention Centre) **MRT:** Esplanade, City Hall



### 4. Universal Studios, Sentosa

Universal Studios Singapore, the first of its kind to open in Southeast Asia, features more than 20 themed attractions and rides, including the Lost World, Ancient Egypt, New York, Hollywood, Madagascar and Far Far Away (remember Shrek?). Thrill seekers will delight in the two water-themed rides and five roller coasters, two of which are currently the world's tallest 'dueling' roller coasters. **Open:** 09:00 - 18:00 **Location:** Sentosa Island **How to get there:** take the Sentosa Express from Vivocity Shopping Mall and get off at Waterfront Station



### 5. Chinatown

Singapore Chinatown is a historic area known for its beautifully restored Peranakan shop-houses. It's also a one-stop destination for sightseeing and dining. Start at the Chinatown Heritage Centre on Pagoda Street to learn more about its history, or explore a range of monuments and heritage buildings along Telok Ayer Street and Pagoda Street. The four-storey Buddha Tooth Relic Temple is a highlight. **Location:** between South Bridge and New Bridge Roads **MRT:** Chinatown Station **Best time to go:** 10:00-22:00



### 6. Science Centre Singapore, Jurong East

The Singapore Science Centre is a great experience for the entire family. Here, you'll find over 1,000 interactive exhibits, such as the Aviation Gallery, which demonstrates the principles of flight and gives you an account of how man first explored the skies. Don't miss the latest offering at the OmniMax Theatre, which offers 3-D IMAX movies on topics which have ranged from the Great Pyramids to great amusement park rides to life on the moon. **Open:** 10:00 - 18:00 **Location:** 510 Upper Jurong Road **MRT:** Jurong East Station



### 7. Singapore Night Safari, Central Catchment Area

Run by award-winning Singapore Zoo, the night safari offers a glimpse into the nocturnal animal kingdom, with over 59 exhibits and 1,200 animals from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. The 20-min Creatures of the Night Show introduces you to the animals housed inside the park, followed by a tram ride to visit the animal habitats, from the Himalayan Foothills to the Indian Subcontinent, Africa to Asian Reverine Forest. **Open:** 19:30 - 24:00 (last admission at 23:00) **Location:** 80 Mandai Lake Road **How to get there:** take the Singapore Attractions Express from the city centre



### 8. Singapore Botanic Gardens, Bukit Timah

The Singapore Botanic Gardens is a national landmark and features a small tropical rainforest, a ginger garden and an orchid garden with over 3,000 species and hybrids. One of the few pieces of original jungle left on the island, the tropical rainforest is reported to have more than 300 species of flora - the tallest trees stand about 40 metres in height. This picturesque spot is also perfect for bird watching. **Open:** 05:00 - 24:00, 08:30 - 19:00 (orchid garden) **Location:** East Coast Park, Bukit Timah **How to get there:** taxi



## WHAT TO DO IN SINGAPORE



Singapore is multiracial, and diversity is its middle name. So take advantage of this fascinating cultural mélange by exploring it – through package tours. The Singapore Flyer is a definite must-do while Singapore Night Safari and Universal Studios are a real treat for the whole family. Sentosa Island – an entire island devoted to pleasure and fun – is a barrelful of excitement and laughter. To see more, explore and tour Singapore.

### 1. Singapore Flyer

**Marina Bay – Tour Duration: 30 mins**

See Singapore as never before! Fly high and peep over the skyline at all the sights that the city-state has to offer. At a stunning 165 metres high, the Singapore Flyer is the world's largest observation wheel and thrills are the order of the day when you gracefully swing into the skies to take in the breathtaking vistas stretching out below you. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 2. Universal Studios Singapore

**Sentosa – Tour Duration: flexible**

Based on the magical island of Sentosa, Universal Studios is quite simply a movie-lover's dream come true. Ride the roller coasters, meet your favourite movie characters, choose from six exciting hotels and dine out in super fun restaurants. Talking donkeys, death-defying stunts, fascinating shows and the most colourful, fun place – all this is Universal Studios on Sentosa Island. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 3. Sentosa Island Tour

**Sentosa – Tour Duration: 4 hrs.**

Make it easy – see fabulous Sentosa Island at leisure. Asia's favourite playground is all yours to explore, from the impressive Merlion to any number of attractions and displays, underwater marvels, two top-class golf courses, Dolphin Lagoon – where you get to meet these intelligent and loveable creatures – and take in 360 degree views of the city and Singapore harbour. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 4. Night Safari Tour

**Central Catchment Area – Tour Duration: 4 hrs.**

Singapore's celebrated Night Safari is home to over 1,200 animals – most of which are nocturnal – affording you the opportunity to observe them in a natural setting. You'll be able to see over 110 exotic species in the safari's 40 hectares of secondary jungle with the Seletar Reservoir providing a beautiful backdrop. This is a perfect family activity; it's safe and makes for great holiday memories. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 5. City Tour

**Tour Duration: 3.5 hrs.**

Come and discover multilingual, multiracial and multicultural Singapore on the Singapore City Tour. Explore the city-state's colourful and impressive history and witness the city's vibrant and energetic daily life. Take in the financial district, the famous Botanical Gardens and the oldest Hindu Temple in Singapore, the magnificent Sri Mariamman Temple and much, much more. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 6. Singapore Zoo Tour

**Central Catchment Area – Tour Duration: 3.5 hrs.**

Captivating, refreshing and delightfully entertaining, what more could you ask for? A great family destination, the award-winning Singapore Zoo houses more than 2,000 animals from all over the world in habitats virtually similar to their own, whether an Asian rainforest, the Australian Outback peppered with kangaroos and wallabies, The Great Rift Valley of Ethiopia, home to Hamadryas baboons and Nubian ibexes – desert-dwelling goat-antelopes – and more. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 7. Singapore Night Tour

**Tour Duration: 3.5 hrs.**

Nighttime is when Singapore comes to life with mesmeric colours and sights. Retrace the historic route with this 3.5-hr night tour, starting at the Raffles Landing site at the mouth of the Singapore River, then climb aboard a traditional bum boat for a picturesque ride up the river to Clarke Quay. Visit the settlement of the original seafarers to the island at Bugis Village, before arriving at the Raffles Hotel for an encounter with one of colonial Singapore's magnificent landmarks. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



### 8. Dinner Cruise

**Tour Duration: 2.5 hrs.**

One of the best ways to get to know Singapore is from the outside looking in; that's to say a cruise. Leisurely, relaxing and memorable, cruising in the harbour is the ideal way to view the city-state. Catch a glimpse of the Singapore Flyer, the picturesque waterfront and the fireworks show as you approach Sentosa Island. The dinner cruise combines the cityscape and a sumptuous dinner buffet with a backdrop of the sunset over the picturesque harbour. [Book now](#), call +66 (0)76 335 200



## WHAT TO EAT



Singapore cuisine is as ethnically diverse as its peoples, a blend of Malay, Chinese, Indonesian, Indian and Western influences. A visit to one of the hawker centres or shopping mall food courts will be as eye-opening as gastronomically gratifying.

### 1. Chili Crab

Hard-shell crabs cooked in semi-thick gravy with a tomato chili base. The steamed crabs are partially cracked, then lightly stir-fried in a paste comprising of chili sauce, ketchup and eggs. Despite its name, chili crab is not all that spicy. Bread is normally ordered to soak up the gravy, so dig in with both hands!



### 2. Hainanese Chicken Rice

Steamed chicken served with rice cooked in chicken stock. This all-time favourite dish makes for a quick, fulfilling lunch. The quality of chicken stock is crucial to this dish, and you can tell by the steamed rice oozing with flavour and a fragrant aroma. Pour some dipping sauce over the chicken and give it a go.



### 3. Bak Kut Teh

Pork rib soup infused with Chinese herbs and spices, seasoned with light and dark soy sauce then simmered for hours. Usually accompanied by steamed rice and eaten as breakfast, bak kut teh comes in all kinds of variety, including the less-fatty version made with chicken and Halal version for Muslims.



### 4. Laksa

Rice noodles in spicy coconut curry soup with shrimp, fish cakes, egg and chicken meat – a cross between Chinese and Malay cuisine. Laksa also has many variants, but the one in Singapore is katong laksa, with cut-up noodles. Cockles and tofu puffs are sometimes added.



### 5. Barbecued Stingray

Originating in the streets, barbecued stingray has become a popular seafood dish served at hawker stalls. The classic version features stingray meat slated in thick sambal sauce – a spicy condiment with diced tomatoes, chilies and shrimp paste as base ingredients – then wrapped in banana leaf to be cooked slowly on a grill.



### 6. Hokkien Prawn Mee

Stir-fried Hokkien noodles with prawns, slices of chicken or pork, squid and fish cake, seasoned with soy sauce, vinegar and chili. Each serving comes with sambal sauce and a lime wedge, to tone down the oily taste. The Singapore version uses thick, flat egg noodles.



### 7. Fish Head Curry

A huge fish head and vegetables cooked in a curry and served with rice or bread. Usually accompanied by a glass of 'calamansi' or local lime juice. Its origins are in South Indian, with Chinese and Malay influences. In some versions, tamarind juice is added to give a sweet-sour taste.



### 8. Satay

Skewered grilled meat served with rice cake (ketupat), peanut sauce and cucumber-chili relish. This popular side dish makes an excellent starter or party platter. It has a strong turmeric scent and flavour, as this spice is the key marinade ingredient. Choose from pork, chicken, beef or mutton.



## BEST RESTAURANTS

Singapore's fine-dining scene is a magnet for some of the world's most talented chefs and sophisticated diners. Progressive, innovative and culturally diverse, it's no wonder many restaurants find themselves on the world's best restaurants lists. These eight restaurants below are among the city-state's finest; but don't just believe us, try them out when in Singapore.

### 1. Raffles Grill, CBD

The setting and history behind the Raffles Hotel render this dining experience a must. But do not be misled by the elegant neoclassical interiors, the menu leans towards contemporary French, where classic dishes evolve into extraordinary art on a plate. The multi-course degustation menu is worth a splurge. **Open:** lunch 12:00-14:00 (Mon-Fri), dinner 19:00-22:00 (Mon-Sat) **Tel:** +65 6412 1816 **Location:** Raffles Hotel, 1 Beach Road **MRT:** Esplanade, City Hall



### 2. Les Amis, Orchard

Since opening its doors in 1994, this classy French restaurant has reached institution status. The interiors evoke an air of old-school elegance, with mahogany-coloured wood, crystal chandeliers and leather chairs setting the tone for a refined evening, while the menu showcases a contemporary take on French cuisine. Choose from either the table d'hôte or degustation menu, with optional wine pairing. The cellar stocks some 2,000 labels, mostly from the Old World. **Open:** Mon-Sat 12:00-14:00 (lunch), 19:00-21:30 (dinner) **Tel:** +65 6733 2225 **Location:** 1 Scotts Road **MRT:** Orchard



### 3. Iggy's, Orchard

Named The Miele Guide Asia's Number One Restaurant (2010/2011) and number 27 on the San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants list, Iggy's is well known for its exceptional food using the best seasonal ingredients. Expect to pay \$85++ for the lunch tasting menu or \$250++ for dinner, and a meal incorporating tastes from Europe, Asia and Australia. **Open:** Lunch 12:00-13:30 (Mon-Fri), Dinner 19:00-21:30 (Mon-Sun) **Tel:** +65 6732 2234 **Location:** 581 Orchard Road, Hilton Hotel Singapore, Level 3 **MRT:** Orchard



### 4. Indochine, Riverside

Tastefully furnished with Buddhist and Chinese objets d'art, Indochine Waterfront Restaurant at the Asian Civilisations Museum offers gorgeous views of the river and the Boat Quay shop-houses in a fine-dining setting. Its menu smacks of specialties from Thailand, Cambodia and Laos such as Vietnamese seafood sour soup, lemongrass king prawns and roast duck with lychee and pineapple. **Open:** Lunch 12:00 – 15:00 (Mon-Fri), Dinner 18:30 – 23:30 **Tel:** +65 6339 1720 **Location:** 1 Empress Place, Asian Civilisations Museum **MRT:** Raffles Place, City Hall



### 5. My Humble House, Esplanade

Contemporary dining could mean different things, but at this award-winning establishment it means poetry. The menu itself is a poetic inspiration, with dishes such as 'Dance of the Wind' (seafood consommé in coconut), 'Savouring Paradise' (shark's fin in abalone jus) and 'Sauntering among the Golden Leaves' (crispy spiced Kurobuta pork ribs) gracing every page. In short, My Humble House is an experience any food connoisseur would find rewarding. **Open:** 11:45-15:00, 18:30-22:30 **Tel:** +65 6423 1881 **Location:** Esplanade Mall **MRT:** Esplanade



### 6. Jaan, Marina Bay

Jaan's unabashed appeal lies in being perched on the top floor of the tallest hotel in Singapore, The Swissotel the Stamford, commanding panoramic views of the skyline. On a clear day, the views stretch as far as the Indonesian and Malaysian islands, depending on where one is seated. Just as visually appealing are the gastronomic treats churned out by its highly talented Chef de Cuisine. **Open:** Mon-Sat 12:00-14:30 (lunch), 19:00-22:00 (dinner) **Tel:** +65 6837 3322 **Location:** 70th Floor, 2 Stamford Road, Swissotel the Stamford **MRT:** City Hall



### 7. Peony-Jade, Clarke Quay

Set inside a converted heritage shop-house, overlooking the picturesque riverfront, Peony-Jade envelops you in its sophisticated air. The interiors blend the old and the new, with red carpets, high exposed ceilings and oriental art. The menu highlights all the classics of Szechuan and Cantonese cuisine, and the presentation is elegant – a welcome departure from typical vegetable carving decoration on a plate style. **Open:** lunch 11:00-15:00, dinner 18:00-23:00 **Tel:** +65 6338 0305 **Location:** Blk 3A Clarke Quay #02-02 **MRT:** Clarke Quay



### 8. Restaurant André, Chinatown

Listed on the San Pellegrino World's 100 Best Restaurants, this humble establishment seats 30 diners and is the epitome of a personalised fine-dining experience. As exclusive as it gets, there's only one menu, created by Chef André and his team: the eight-course degustation menu, prepared from market-fresh and imported ingredients that the chef hand-picks each morning. Each creation has a Mediterranean essence, but the presentation is French-inspired. **Open:** Tue-Sun 12:00-14:00 (lunch), 19:00-23:00 (dinner) **Tel:** +65 6534 8880 **Location:** 41 Bukit Pasoh Road **MRT:** Outram Park



## WHERE TO GO FOR NIGHTLIFE



Pubbing and clubbing in Singapore is a must if you want to feel the night-pulse of the city; experience Singapore only by day and you get just half of the picture. After hours, Singapore practically transforms itself into a buzzing network of bars and nightclubs. Clarke Quay is the long-established epicentre, others are equally exhilarating.

### 1. Clarke Quay, Boat Quay and Riverside

Glittering lights, beautiful people and buzzing nightclubs – these are some of the things that imprint themselves on your mind the first time you visit Clarke Quay, Boat Quay and a kaleidoscope of concept bars and pubs along the Singapore River. A mind-boggling selection of themes and attractions round out your choice of after-sunset indulgence. Try Bar Cocoon or Bamboo Bar at The Forbidden City, Lunar Asian Fusion Bar for great shows, or Bar Opiume at the Empress Place by the riverside.



### 2. Marina Bay Sands Casino

Place your bet, and hope you're lucky. The 15,000sqm casino at the iconic Marina Bay Sands features nearly 500 gaming tables, 1,600 slot machines (or 'jackpot machines') and more than 30 private gaming rooms. Lost the lucky streak? Then head up to the Sands Skypark for jaw-dropping city panoramas and a fun-filled night at the many rooftop clubs (check out the uber-chic KU DÉ TA). Even if you're out of luck, you'll never run out of entertainment. **Open:** 24 hours **Dress Code:** smart casual (no shorts, sleeveless shirts, flip-flops) **Note:** you must be at least 21 to enter the casino



### 3. Geylang Red Light District

Of the six designated red light districts in Singapore, Geylang is the main one. So head straight here if naughty nightlife is what you are after. A host of 'massage' parlours, karaoke clubs, hostess bars line the streets to the south of Geylang Road, from Lorong 2 to Lorong 30 (you can tell by the large, red numbered signs out front). The general rule of thumb: don't go for girls touting on the streets – they are probably illegal sex workers 'guarded' by the underworld. **Open:** mid-afternoon to 03:00 **Location:** Between Sims Ave. and Guillemard Rd. **MRT:** Aljunied



### 4. Esplanade

Esplanade, dubbed 'The Durian' by Singaporeans, overlooks the picturesque bay and is itself an icon along the dazzling riverfront. The theatres and concert halls host frequent performances by local and world's artistic talents, while the adjacent Esplanade Mall features a range of rooftop bars and classy restaurants with killer riverfront views, among them the award-winning My Humble House. Slightly south, across the bridge, One Fullerton houses an alternative club, Butter Factory, a favourite haunt among Singapore's hip-hop crowd. **MRT:** Esplanade



### 5. Chijmes Singapore

Don't mistake this restored 19th Century gothic chapel for, well, a place of worship. Chijmes, pronounced 'chimes', is in fact a multi-purpose hall with a fabulous array of shopping boutiques, art galleries as well as specialty restaurants, bars and club lounges with live music. The atmosphere is distinctively European, with an open courtyard garden for hosting music recitals and theatrical performances. The favourite haunts include Cuscaden, Harry's Bar and Insomnia. **Open:** 11:00 till late **Location:** 30 Victoria Street **MRT:** City Hall



### 6. Singapore Grand Prix Night Race

The only Formula One race held at night, the Singapore Grand Prix presents a mixture of top music performances and enhanced on-track action, with the top international names in motorsports descending on the Marina Bay Street Circuit every year. Measuring 5.1km long with 23 turns, its harbourside picturesque location has been compared to the likes of Monaco's and Valencia's circuits. All in all, the Singapore Grand Prix is an unforgettable occasion that is so much more than just another racing event.



### 7. Orchard Road

This famous shopping belt is also home to a pulsating nightlife scene. Emerald Hill, a tucked-away strip flanked by elegant Peranakan row houses, is where to go for atmospheric pubs and bars with chilled-out alfresco lounges and strong, tasty cocktails. Up the road, Orchard Towers has four floors full of girlie bars and clubs with live music and dance shows – imagine an entire red-light zone housed in one building. For a touch of sophistication, try Brix at the luxurious Grand Hyatt, Marriott's Bar None, Irish pub Muddy Murphy's at the basement of Orchard Hotel or Indochine at Wisma Atria.



### 8. Zouk

Slightly outside the city centre nightlife hotspots, Zouk is an institution and up with some of the best in the global clubbing scene. This hugely popular establishment comprises four clubs with distinct personalities: Zouk Room, with its Gaudi-inspired décor and heavy techno music; Velvet Underground, a futuristic club where jazz, soul, Brazilian, Afro-funk rule the evenings; Phuture, for urban, hip-hop and R&B; and Wine Bar, a chilled-out zone with indoor and alfresco areas. **Open:** Wed, Fri, Sat 21:00 till late **Location:** 17 Jiak Kim St. **How to get there:** taxi



## WHERE TO SHOP

Alongside dining, shopping is considered the national pastime on the island. Ranging from hi-tech wares to designer wear, there is something for everyone. Browsing around local markets and shop-houses in the ethnic enclaves to the glitzy portals of Orchard Road, the experiences are wide, varied and intriguing, to say the least.

### 1. Orchard Road

Similar to London's Oxford Street or Hong Kong's Tsimshatsui, this bustling boulevard attracts enthusiastic shoppers from the world over. Lined on both sides by gigantic shopping malls, boutiques, offices, spas, luxury hotels and the island's most sophisticated restaurants, bars and cafés, the changing skyline on Orchard never fails to amaze. You could spend a whole day trawling the stretch, hitting all the giants like ION Orchard, Wisma Astria, Paragon, Takashimaya and many more. Shop hours: 10:00 - 22:00 (some open until 23:00 on Saturday nights) MRT: Orchard, Somerset



### 2. Marina Bay

Flourishing with greenery all year round, Marina Bay enjoys a reputation for its pulsating waterfront 'Garden City by the Bay' for working, living and entertaining. Its breezy promenade strolls, entertainment venues, wide open spaces and lofty hotels, shopping and offices all add up to make this area a significant visit. It is also where the annual F1 night race takes place. With its picturesque skyline and bustling activities, you will be kept occupied with an endless gamut of retail offerings. Shop hours: 10:00-22:00 MRT: Esplanade, Promenade



### 3. Chinatown

A vivid and energetic gazetted conservation precinct bounded by Eu Tong Sen St, New Bridge Road and South Bridge Road, Chinatown is peppered with modern buildings, charming pre-war shop-houses, temples, markets, Chinese medicine halls and tea houses. Streets are filled with stalls touting their wares – foodstuffs, clothes, pottery, books and souvenirs. The best time to visit Chinatown is during the Lunar New Year (January or February). Another brilliant burst of colours and lights occurs during the Mid-Autumn Festival held in September. MRT: Chinatown, Outram Park



### 4. Clarke Quay

Clarke Quay has beautifully transformed its warehouses into a lively lifestyle and entertainment centre of restaurants, wine bars and retail shops. Immerse yourself in the bustling market atmosphere of the old days as you saunter through quaint shop-houses, pushcarts and merchants. Stop by the Royal Selangor Pewter Store for the latest pewter designs, or wander around the pushcarts selling unique pottery, jewelry, woodcraft and other knick-knacks. Clarke Quay is worth a visit for its festive atmosphere. MRT: Clarke Quay



### 5. Little India

One of the most colourful and vibrant ethnic enclaves in Singapore, Little India is a hive of activity from dawn to midnight every day. The main thoroughfare, Serangoon Road is easily connected by side lanes, which makes shopping and walking around a breeze. Your senses will be pleasantly assaulted by the heady mix of colours, sounds and captivating scents of shops teeming with spices, rich sari fabrics, flower garlands, jewellery, brassware, silverware, traditional snacks and more. MRT: Little India



### 6. Kampong Glam and Arab Street

Kampong Glam, named after a tree, is the Malay-Muslim enclave established centuries ago and today has grown into a rich cultural and flourishing hub. Browse around quaint, restored shop-houses on streets named after exotic Middle Eastern cities. By day, the streets teem with shops selling Islamic books, textiles, batiks, sarongs, oil-based scents, indigenous art and craft. By night, out come the carpets, cushions, kebabs, and shisha or hookah (water pipes filled with aromatic tobacco) and one gets the feeling of being transported to a Middle Eastern bazaar. MRT: Bugis



### 7. North Bridge and Stamford Roads

Positioned north of the Singapore River, the North Bridge-Stamford Road intersection is home to some of Singapore's most prominent landmarks and architecturally arresting buildings restored from the turn of the last century. Many department stores, such as The Capitol Building, Stamford House and Raffles Shopping Arcade, are set inside elegant Victorian buildings and are attractions in themselves. Slightly north, at the corner of Rochor Canal Rd. and Bencoolen St., Sim Lim Square has six floors dedicated to IT gadgets. Shop hours: generally 10:30-22:00 MRT: City Hall



### 8. Harbour Front

Originally a ferry port facing Sentosa Island, the Harbour Front has been developed into a retail and entertainment centre. It is home to the Singapore Cruise Centre, a converted clubbing hub at St. James Power Station, Vivo City – a mega shopping complex with more than 350 retail, food & beverage and entertainment outlets – and the HarbourFront Centre, where you can hop on a cable car and cross over to Sentosa for a day. All in all, the Harbour Front is a breezy waterfront shopping experience. Shop hours: 10:00-22:00 MRT: Harbour Front



TIPS AND GOOD TO KNOW 

### Tax-free Shopping

When out on a shopping spree, look for shops with the 'Tax Refund' logo and take advantage of the 7% tax refunds on goods and services. The tax levy is imposed on local Singaporeans, so as visitors you can claim your money back upon departure. To qualify, though, you must spend SGD 100 or more at that particular shop and leave Singapore by air.

### Tipping

Eating out is much less complicated when you don't have to worry about how much to tip. In fact, tipping is discouraged at hotels and restaurants, where a 10% service charge is already included in the bill (but if it doesn't come included, feel free to leave a tip). Tipping is prohibited at the airport.

### No Smoking (please)

The smoking ban in Singapore basically says that smoking is not allowed anywhere except in allocated smoking areas that are clearly marked with bright yellow paint (and, perhaps, your friend's home). Specifically, smoking is not allowed in air-conditioned areas, such as shopping centres, restaurants, entertainment outlets, MRT trains, public buses, taxis, lifts, public eateries and within a five-metre radius from most building entrances. So, butt out.

### Around the Island with One Card

Save yourself from the hassle of carrying too many coins around and buy an EZ Link Card upon arrival in Singapore. This stored-value card works on the MRT trains, public buses and taxis (TransCab and Premier taxis only). It costs SGD 15, which comes with SGD 7 stored value and SGD 3 refundable value (the SGD 5 left is non-refundable). You can buy the card and top up the value at most MRT stations.

### Taxi Surcharges

In Singapore, where and when you take a taxi can affect your fare rate. Surcharges are added on top of the fare when you take a taxi during the rush hours (07:30-09:30 and 17:00-20:00, except Sundays, SGD 1 surcharge), from the airport (add SGD 3), and again after midnight (50% surcharge). Better alternatives are the MRT trains, buses and, ahem, your two feet.

MAJOR FESTIVALS 

The rich mixture of cultures in Singapore means that there's always a cultural event to celebrate, all throughout the year. These festivals are open to everyone, but remember to dress appropriately for the occasion and leave your shoes at the entrance of mosques and temples.

#### 1. Thaipusam

This famous Hindu festival features a three-kilometre long parade from Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple to Sri Thandayuthapani Temple, during which male Hindu devotees pierce their bodies with spikes and skewers in a gesture of penance and seeking forgiveness from the gods. Not for the faint-hearted. **When:** January **Where:** Little India



#### 2. Chinese New Year

Also known as the Lunar New Year this festive period lasts for 15 days and centres on Chinatown. Colourful stalls line the streets, selling everything from red and gold greeting cards to love-letters cookies to pussy willow (a symbol of longevity). You'll smell incense and see little altars everywhere, as the Chinese make offerings to their gods. **When:** January/February **Where:** Chinatown



#### 3. Mid-Autumn Festival

Also known as the Lantern Festival or Moon Cake Festival, the event takes place when the moon is at its fullest and brightest. Several legends surround this festival, but for visitors the most exciting part is the savoury treat called moon cakes and a parade of brightly-coloured lanterns the night before. **When:** September **Where:** Jurong Chinese Garden (for the lantern display)



#### 4. Deepavali

The most important date of the Hindu calendar, Deepavali is the Festival of Lights and all round the world, Hindus celebrate this day as the triumph of light over darkness, and of good over evil. It marks the New Year for Hindu devotees, and during this time, Little India throbs with evening roadside stalls, booming music and strings of colourful lights. **When:** October **Where:** Little India



#### 5. New Year's Eve

Don't miss the biggest party night in town! Celebrate the New Year at the iconic Marina Bay, for the amazing light and sound show, or the enormous Fountain of Wealth at Suntec City, where live music and street dancing will keep you dancing until dawn. If you prefer a beach atmosphere, head for Sentosa Island, where the mood is easy and the margaritas flow easy. **When:** December 31st

