

Chinatown & the CBD

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Visiting the evocative **Chinatown Heritage Centre** (p69) and delving into the unspeakable hardships, destructive temptations and ultimate resilience of the immigrants who gave this part of town its name.
- 2 Meeting the stars of the show in the unusually

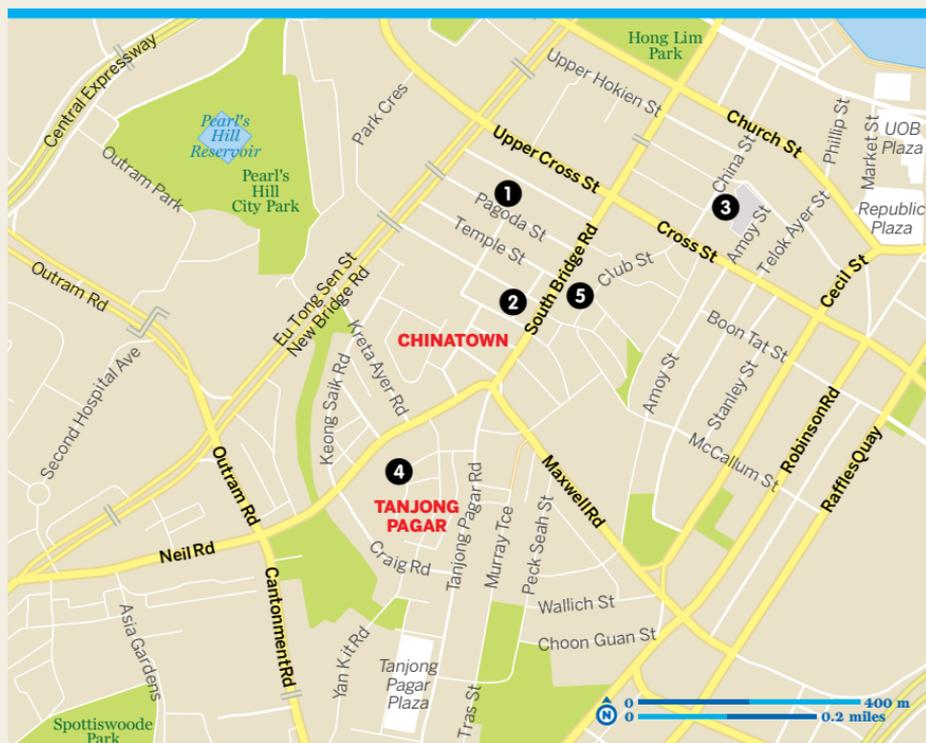
informal **Chinese Theatre Circle** (p77).

- 3 Skipping your hotel brekkie and heading to **Ya Kun Kaya Toast** (p72) for a traditional morning slap-up.

- 4 Giving the chopsticks a rest and tackling show-stopping Mexican at hot,

hot, hot **Lucha Loco** (p72).

- 5 Toasting, chatting and flirting the night away on hedonistic **Club St**, the city's bar-scene heartland.



For more detail of this area see Map p206 and p208. ➔

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

As with anywhere in Singapore, it's worth taking advantage of happy hours (usually until 8pm or 9pm) at the hotlist bars around Chinatown. If it's still too pricey for you, neck a few beers at a hawker centre instead.



Best Places to Eat

- Ding Dong (p74)
- Momma Kong's (p72)
- Lucha Loco (p72)
- Chinatown Complex (p73)

For reviews, see p72. ➡



Best Places to Drink

- Tippling Club (p74)
- Breeze (p75)
- Nylon Coffee Roasters (p76)
- The Good Beer Company (p75)

For reviews, see p74. ➡



Best for History & Culture

- Chinatown Heritage Centre (p69)
- Baba House (p72)
- Sri Mariamman Temple (p70)

For reviews, see p70. ➡

Explore Chinatown

With the possible exception of the Chinatown Heritage Centre, sights here are interesting rather than must-see, but that's a good thing. It leaves more time to focus on Chinatown's star attraction – food. Start early with a traditional Singaporean breakfast in a *kopitiam* (coffee-shop). For lunch, join the crowds at one of Chinatown's bustling hawker centres. Come evening, take your pick of Singapore's hotlist eateries, serving anything from real-deal Mexican to punchy Southeast Asian.

In between meals, poke your head into an antiques shop, gallery or a heady temple or two. Savour beautifully renovated shophouses and superlative lattes on the gentrified streets of the Duxton Hill area (south of Chinatown).

Once the sun's gone down, catch the breeze and the city skyline from a rooftop bar on Ann Siang Rd or Club St.

Local Life

➤ **Hawker Centres** It's a wonder any of Singapore's high-end restaurants stay in business given that hawker centre food is dirt cheap and so damn good. Chinatown is no exception. Eat at as many hawker centres as you can while you're here, but if you've only time for one, make it Maxwell Rd.

➤ **Coffee versus kopi** While hip, Third Wave cafes and roasteries are making big waves in the Duxton Hill area, don't miss the chance to slurp old-school *kopi* (pronounced 'koh-pee') at a traditional *kopitiam*. Try Ya Kun Kaya Toast (p72) but read our *kopi* primer before you go (p75).

➤ **Souvenirs** Skip the tourist tat in the lanes around Trengganu St and hunt down an antiques shop or a local art gallery for a souvenir with a story. Our favourites are Tong Mern Sern Antiques (p80) and Utterly Art (p79).

Getting There & Away

➤ **MRT** The heart of Chinatown is served by Chinatown MRT station, which spits you out onto Pagoda St. Telok Ayer station is handy for eateries and bars around Amoy St and Club St. Further south, Outram Park and Tanjong Pagar stations are best for Duxton Hill. Raffles Place station is best for the CBD.

➤ **Bus** From the Colonial District, hop on buses 61, 145 or 166, which take you from North Bridge Rd to South Bridge Rd. From Hill St, buses 2, 12 and 147 run down New Bridge Rd. It's easy to walk from the river and the CBD to Chinatown.