

Colonial District, Marina Bay & the Quays

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Admiring regal jewels, temple carvings and ancient pottery at the world-class **Asian Civilisations Museum** (p50), home to Southeast Asia's finest collection of pan-Asian artefacts.

2 Leaping into a sci-fi future at **Gardens by the Bay** (p52), Singapore's

spectacular new botanic garden.

3 Pondering Singaporean ambition from the top of one of the world's greatest engineering feats, **Marina Bay Sands** (p54).

4 Time travelling through Singapore's history at the engrossing **National**

Museum of Singapore (p55).

5 Exploring the colour-saturated culture of the Peranakans at the **Peranakan Museum** (p53).



For more detail of this area see Map p202 and p205. ➔

Explore Colonial District, Marina Bay & the Quays

This is the heart of Singapore: grand colonial buildings, modern architectural marvels, superlative museums and parks, and pulsating riverside restaurants, bars and clubs.

The City Hall MRT station bolts the neighbourhood together and is a perfect starting point. Wander north-west along Stamford Rd towards the museums. Head in the opposite direction for booming Marina Bay, home of Marina Bay Sands, Gardens by the Bay and Esplanade – Theatres by the Bay. Around City Hall MRT itself are the iconic edifices of colonialism, among them Raffles Hotel and St Andrew's Cathedral.

Further south are the three riverside quays, best saved for night time. You'll find a few quality drinking dens among the touristy bars at Boat Quay, no shortage of party people at raucous Clarke Quay, and a more grown-up crowd at Roberston Quay. Rising behind Clarke Quay is idyllic Fort Canning Park.

Local Life

- ➔ **Foreign enclaves** Eat, drink and shop Yangon-style at Peninsula Plaza, Singapore's unofficial Little Burma and hub frequented by the city-state's influx of migrant workers.
- ➔ **Artists' Market** Trawl the stalls at the bi-monthly Sunday Artists Market, a showcase for Singapore's oft-underestimated pool of creative talent.
- ➔ **Marina Barrage** The 'green roof' of Marina Barrage is a popular hangout for Singaporean families, love-struck couples and kite enthusiasts. The curvaceous strip of lawn offers breathtaking views of the city skyline and the Strait of Singapore. For the full effect, head here just before sunset.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **MRT** The efficient subway service is centred on City Hall, an interchange station which is also connected via underground malls towards the Esplanade, from where you can cut across to Marina Bay. Raffles Place (East–West Line) is the next stop for the Quays. The Bayfront MRT station (Downtown Line) serves Marina Bay Sands and Gardens by the Bay.
- ➔ **Bus** The area is well connected by bus to other parts of the island. Key stops are just outside the Raffles Hotel and outside St Andrew's Cathedral along North Bridge Rd. Bus 2 takes you down Victoria St and Hill St. Buses 51, 61, 63 and 80 go along North Bridge Rd. For Beach Rd, hop on buses 100, 107 or 961. Along Bras Basah Rd, get on buses 12, 14, 16, 77 or 111.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The Singapore Art Museum offers free entry from 6pm to 9pm every Friday, and some museums offer combined tickets that save you a few bucks. Most bars in the area have 'happy hour' specials from 5pm to 8pm or 9pm. During these hours, drinks are either one-for-one or heavily discounted. Several bars and clubs run weekly Ladies' Nights – usually on Wednesday – where women enjoy free entry and, sometimes, free booze (sorry boys).

Best Sight

- ➔ Asian Civilisations Museum (p50)
- ➔ Gardens by the Bay (p52)
- ➔ National Museum of Singapore (p55)

For reviews, see p50. ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Kilo (p60)
- ➔ Jaan (p60)
- ➔ Gluttons Bay (p58)
- ➔ Song Fa Bak Kut Teh (p58)
- ➔ Jumbo Seafood (p60)

For reviews, see p58. ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Bitters & Love (p61)
- ➔ Lantern (p61)
- ➔ 28 HongKong Street (p61)
- ➔ Kinki (p61)

For reviews, see p60. ➔