

# SHOPPING

## top picks

- Orchard Road (p112)
- Haji Lane (p112)
- Little India (p110)
- Holland Road Shopping Centre (p116)
- Dempsey Road (p116)
- VivoCity (p110)

# SHOPPING

Singapore's mania for shopping almost rivals its obsession with food, and barely a year goes by without some vast new retail monolith flinging open its doors to the slaving hordes.

Among visitors, the city's reputation as a bargain-hunters' paradise has lingered, though in price terms Singapore is no match for neighbouring Malaysia or Thailand. Though prices are closer to Western levels, Singapore does beat its neighbours for sheer convenience and familiarity. There's no urban chaos to negotiate, it's easy to get around, you don't need to haggle (though it's possible) or worry too much about rip-offs, and the choice and quality are generally excellent.

Electronics and computers are no longer the steal they once were, but they can be cheaper provided you do your homework and shop around. Clothes and CDs are cheaper than in most Western countries, and you can pick up reasonably priced Asian antiques provided you know what you're doing.

Once a year, for around six weeks between late May and early July, the city lays on the **Great Singapore Sale** ([www.greatsingaporesale.com.sg](http://www.greatsingaporesale.com.sg)), a showpiece retail event aimed at dragging in the tourists and keeping its 'shopping Mecca' image alive. Opinions on the sale vary, but it's true that most of the best bargains are grabbed in the first week or two.

## SHOPPING STRIPS

Everybody's heard of Orchard Rd, Singapore's shopping mecca, which used to be lined with plantations of the natural kind, and now seems to grow new malls every few years.

If you're after art or antiques, it pays to know your original piece from your cheap copy. While there are many dedicated art galleries and antique shops throughout Singapore, there is a fair degree of overlap between them and craft shops. For Asian antiques, the best places to head are Chinatown (p108), Dempsey Rd (p116) or Tanglin Shopping Centre (p112). There's also a decent collection of contemporary art galleries at the Ministry of Information, Culture and the Arts (MICA; p106) building next to Clarke Quay.

For fabrics and textiles, head to Little India and the Arab Quarter.

If you're buying electronics, computer equipment and peripherals, the latest hi-tech stuff can be found all over Singapore, much of it at very competitive prices. It pays to do a little research into makes and models before you arrive. When you buy, make sure your guarantees are worldwide, your receipts are properly dated and stamped, and your goods are compatible with electricity supplies and systems in your country of origin.

Lucky Plaza (p114), Sim Lim Square (p110) and the Mustafa Centre (p111) are all good places to scout for cheap electronics and computer equipment, but you have to shop around and be prepared to bargain. If you

just want a no-nonsense experience and more reliable quality, head for the Funan The IT Mall (Funan DigitalLife Mall; p106).

Otherwise, global chains like Best Denki (Map pp74-5) and Harvey Norman (Map pp52-3) can be found at malls all over the city – every major mall has at least one audiovisual store.

Fashion stores abound, and although clothes and shoes are not as cheap as other countries in the region, the range of styles and quality is hard to beat. The annual **Singapore Fashion Festival** ([www.fashion-festival.com](http://www.fashion-festival.com)) in March showcases international and local designers.

For clubbing fashions the best places to scope are the Heeren Mall (p114), Far East Plaza (p113) and Parco Bugis Junction (p111), all of which have sections packed with fun boutiques and stalls. For local boutique designers, head to Haji Lane (p112) or Stamford House (p107).

For books and CDs, you should head to Orchard Rd, which houses huge chain shops – like Borders (p112) and Kinokuniya (p112) for books and HMV (Map pp74-5) for music – as well as smaller but equally good CD shops like That CD Shop and Gramophone.

Most of Singapore's outlying and 'heartlands' areas now have their own malls, where you can often find the same shops selling the same items at lower prices than in the city centre (because the rents are lower). Try Causeway Point (Map pp46-7) next to Woodlands MRT station, Junction 8 next to Bishan MRT, or Novena Square (Map pp74-5) and sports specialist Velocity@Novena next to Novena MRT station.