



Singapore

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Best Regional Specialities

- » Hawker food at Gluttons Bay (p632)
- » Hawker food at Singapore Food Trail (p631)
- » Kaya (coconut jam) toast and sweetened coffee at Ya Kun Kaya Toast (p632)

Best Places for Cultural Connections

- » Straits Chinese culture at Peranakan Museum (p618)
- » Learn all about Asia at the Asian Civilisations Museum (p618)
- » Soaking up the buzz in Little India (p619)

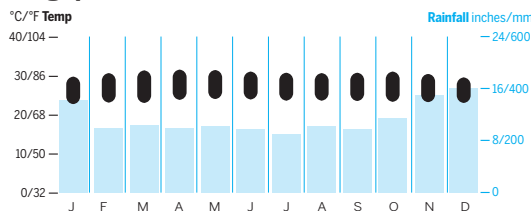
Why Go?

One of Asia's success stories, tiny little Singapore's GDP consistently ranks it as one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Along with that wealth comes a rich culture borne of a multiracial population. Get lost in the mad swirl of skyscrapers in the central business district (CBD), be transfixed by the Bolly beats in the streets of ramshackle Little India, hike a dense patch of rainforest in Bukit Timah or just give yourself up to the retail mayhem of Orchard Rd.

It's affluent, high tech and occasionally a little snobbish, but Singapore's great leveller is the hawker centre, the ubiquitous and raucous food markets where everyone mucks in together to indulge the local mania for cheap eating and drinking. In short, Singapore makes for a perfect pit stop to recover from the rough-and-tumble of the rest of Southeast Asia.

When to Go

Singapore



Feb Chinese New Year and Chingay are the events to catch.

Apr–May Lots of events and just before the local school holidays start.

Dec The north-east monsoons bring lashing rains, but they also cool Singapore down.

Don't Miss

The **Colonial District**. This is the heart of Singapore and the former seat of British power. It also connects up the modern, fast-changing Singapore. You can't avoid the Marina Bay and CBD cityscape. Get to a rooftop bar or up on the Singapore Flyer for a bird's eye view of the entire area.

Of course, Singapore is famous for its **cuisine**. Find a hawker centre or food court (there's one in every mall) and follow your nose or join the longest queues for gastronomic delights.

ITINERARIES

Day One

Start in the Colonial District. Take in the architectural glory and wander along the Singapore River through the Quays towards Marina Bay. The museums here are perfect for dodging the searing humidity while taking in some culture. Go for dinner at Gluttons Bay before hitting Clark Quay to drink and party.

Day Two

Start the morning with a stroll in the Botanic Gardens before indulging in retail therapy along Orchard Rd. If malls aren't your thing, get to Little India for a slice of grubby, authentic Singapore. Finish the night with food, drinks and *sheesha* (waterpipe) in Kampong Glam.

Day Three

Spend the day either checking out the zoo and night safari or out on an island. Pick Sentosa for beaches and kitschy theme parks or Pulau Ubin for a rustic getaway. If you have energy left, head to any neighbourhood in Eastern Singapore for dinner and Tiger beer.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Char kway teow** Flat rice noodles wok-fried with bean sprouts, cockles, prawns and Chinese sausage in dark soy sauce and chilli sauce.
- » **Chilli crab** Fresh crab cooked in thick, piquant tomato and egg-based chilli gravy.
- » **Nasi padang** Steamed white rice served with your choice of meats and vegetables. Lots of curries available. Just choose and point.
- » **Murtabak** Pan-fried pancake stuffed with spiced mince meat (chicken, beef or mutton), garlic, egg and onion.
- » **Hainanese chicken rice** Tender poached chicken served on a bed of fragrant rice (cooked in chicken stock) with accompanying garlic chilli sauce.
- » **Tiger beer** While not the national drink, Singapore's local brew is a pale lager that goes down a treat.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Singapore dollar (S\$)
- » **Language** English (primary), Mandarin, Bahasa Malay, Tamil
- » **Money** ATMs widely available. Credit cards accepted most places.
- » **Visas** On arrival. Generally not needed for stays up to 90 days.

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 694 sq km
- » **Population** 4.98 million
- » **Country code** 65
- » **Emergency** 999

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-----------|-------|---------|
| Australia | A\$1 | S\$1.30 |
| Canada | C\$1 | S\$1.25 |
| Euro zone | €1 | S\$1.65 |
| Japan | ¥100 | S\$1.50 |
| Malaysia | RM10 | S\$4.10 |
| UK | UK£1 | S\$2.00 |
| USA | US\$1 | S\$1.25 |

Set Your Budget

- » **Dorm Bed** US\$14–21
- » **Hawker meal** US\$3.50
- » **Bottle of Tiger** US\$4.25

Getting into Town

- » **Public Bus** 36; S\$2, every 10min, 6am-midnight
- » **MRT (Metro)** S\$2.70, every 7min, 6am-11.45pm change at Tanah Merah
- » **Taxi** S\$20 approx; S\$3-5 surcharge applies, 50% extra from midnight-6am
- » **Airport Shuttle** S\$9, every 15-30min, 6am-midnight