



Singapore

65 / POP 5.3 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best for Regional Specialities

- ➔ Gluttons Bay (p631)
- ➔ Singapore Food Trail (p631)
- ➔ Ya Kun Kaya Toast (p631)

Best Places for Cultural Connections

- ➔ Peranakan Museum (p615)
- ➔ Asian Civilisations Museum (p615)
- ➔ Little India (p621)

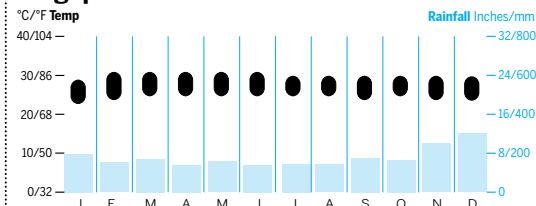
Why Go?

One of Asia's success stories is tiny little Singapore, whose 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 air-conditioned retail mayhem of Orchard Rd. There's something for everyone here.

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



Jan–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.

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 30 days
- ➔ **Mobile phones** SIM cards usually S\$18

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Area** 694 sq km
- ➔ **Emergency** ☎ 999

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	S\$1.15
Euro Zone	€1	S\$1.75
Indonesia	10,000 Rp	S\$1.10
Malaysia	RM10	S\$3.85
UK	UK£1	S\$2.15
USA	US\$1	S\$1.25

Set Your Budget

- ➔ **Dorm bed** US\$16-40
- ➔ **Hawker meal** US\$4
- ➔ **Bottle of Tiger** US\$5

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\$25-35 approx, S\$3-5 surcharge applies
- ➔ **Airport Shuttle** S\$9, every 15-30min, 24 hours

Don't Miss

The Colonial District and Marina Bay are the heart of Singapore and the former seat of British power. Today the cityscape here is evidence of Singapore's ambitions, with gleaming architecture sitting cheek by jowl with preserved heritage buildings and a retro-futuristic conservatory garden. Get to a rooftop bar or up on the Singapore Flyer (an observation wheel) for a bird's-eye view of the entire area.

Of course, Singapore is famous for its cuisine. Find a hawk-er 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 area's museums are perfect for dodging the searing humidity while taking in some culture. Visit the impressive Gardens by the Bay before dining at Gluttons Bay. Cap the day off with drinks and dancing at Clarke Quay.

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* (water pipes) 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.
- ➔ **Nasi padang** Steamed white rice served with your choice of meats and vegetables; just choose and point. Lots of curries available.
- ➔ **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.