

Colonial District, Marina Bay & the Quays

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Asian Civilisations Museum** (p48) Admiring Southeast Asia's finest collection of pan-Asian treasures while discovering the historical connections among the cultures of Asia.
- 2 Gardens by the Bay** (p51) Leaping into a sci-fi future at Singapore's spectacular botanic garden.
- 3 Marina Bay Sands** (p53) Pondering Singaporean ambition from the top of one of the world's greatest engineering feats.
- 4 National Museum of Singapore** (p52) Time travelling through Singapore's history at this engrossing museum.
- 5 Peranakan Museum** (p53) Exploring the colour-saturated culture of the Peranakans.



For more detail of this area see Map p202 and p204 ➔

Explore: Colonial District, Marina Bay & the Quays

This is the heart of Singapore: a showcase of 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 on 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 (p66), Singapore's unofficial Little Burma and hub frequented by the city-state's influx of migrant workers.
- ➔ **Get moving** Strap on your running shoes and join locals for an early morning walk or jog through Marina Bay. The loop around the bay area is about 3.5km long; you can extend your walk by heading into the Quays.
- ➔ **Marina Barrage** The 'green roof' of Marina Barrage (p55) is a popular hang-out 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 MRT is centred on City Hall, an interchange station that's 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 (Downtown Line) serves Marina Bay Sands, Gardens by the Bay and Fort Canning.
- ➔ **Bus** The area is well connected by bus. Key stops are outside Raffles Hotel and outside St Andrew's Cathedral along North Bridge Rd. Bus 2 takes you down Victoria and Hill Sts. Buses 51, 61, 63 and 80 go along North Bridge Rd. For Beach Rd, take buses 100, 107 or 961. Along Bras Basah Rd, take buses 14, 16, 77 or 111.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Many of Singapore's museums offer free tours, which run on a first-come-first-served basis, and some also sell combined tickets that will 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 buy-one-get-one-free 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 Sights

- ➔ National Gallery Singapore (p50)
- ➔ Gardens by the Bay (p51)
- ➔ National Museum of Singapore (p52)
- ➔ Asian Civilisations Museum (p48)

For reviews, see p53. ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ National Kitchen by Violet Oon (p58)
- ➔ Odette (p59)
- ➔ Artichoke (p58)
- ➔ Gluttons Bay (p58)

For reviews, see p58. ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Smoke and Mirrors (p61)
- ➔ Lantern (p62)
- ➔ 28 HongKong St (p61)
- ➔ Ronin (p62)

For reviews, see p61. ➔