

Singapore: The City of Extremes

Brimming with unbridled energy, the Southeast Asian city of Singapore embodies the finest of both the East and West.

At first glance, Singapore appears shockingly modern, but this is an undeniably Asian city with Chinese, Malay and Indian traditions from feng shui to ancestor worship - creating the essence of the city's everyday landscape. It's these contrasts that bring the city to life.

Singapore is a must visit destination on your Asian travel itinerary. The city is a surprising and eye-catching mélange of cultures, eras and environments. Today, the financial and technological hub of South East Asia, Singapore was once a sleepy Malay fishing village, which came into its own as a British trading colony in the 1800's. The population is a blend of Malays, Chinese and Indians with a unique touch of other ethnic nationalities. There are four official languages in Singapore - Mandarin, Tamil, Malay and English.

Sights of Singapore

Orchard Road

Designated as the cities' most popular hot spot with classy shopping centers, night-spots, restaurants, bars and lounges, Orchard Road is a showcase for the material delights of capitalism and culturalism.

Arab Street

The Muslim center of Singapore is a traditional textile district, full of batiks from Indonesia, silks, sarongs and shirts at bargain prices. The grand Sultan Mosque is the biggest and liveliest mosque in Singapore. Arab Street is also a great retreat for authentic Indian Muslim food.

Chinatown

Chinatown is Singapore's cultural heart and still provides glimpses of the old ways with its numerous temples, decorated terraces, merchant shops and activity. Delight yourself with an array of traditional and modern merchandise ranging from street opera masks to handmade ornaments, traditional clothing to unique fashion accessories. For those looking back to kick back and relax, there are also traditional and modern dance performances to entertain you in the evenings.

Raffles Hotel

One of the most famous hotels in the world, this Grand Old Lady of the East is fully restored to her former glory after an extensive \$160 million restoration. Down the

years, royalty, film stars, world leaders and famous authors have stayed at Raffles — one of the last great 19th century hotels.

Little India

This modest but colorful area of wall-to-wall shops, Indian architecture and décor, and Hindi film music is a relief from the prim modernity of many parts of the city. Centered around the southern end of Serangoon Road, this is the place to come to pick up a framed print of a Hindu god you've always wanted, get a henna tattoo and watch street side cooks fry local delicacies.



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- 1/ Visit the Merlion, Singapore's tourism trademark.
- 2/ Pick up tickets for a performance at the highly acclaimed Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay.
- 3/ Great bargains along the streets of Little India.
- 4/ The many beautiful mosques of Little Arab.



7 *The Merlion*

Designed in 1964, the statue of Merlion has a lion head and a fish body resting on a crest of waves. The lion head symbolizes the legend of the discovery of Singapura, as recorded in the "Malay Annals". The fish tail symbolizes the ancient city of Temasek and represents Singapore's humble beginnings as a fishing village. On 20 July 1966, the Merlion was registered as the trademark of the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board.

When to Visit

Go anytime. Climate is not a major consideration, as Singapore gets fairly steady annual rainfall. Its best to coordinate your visit with one of the many festivals and events: Thaipusam is a spectacular festival, happening around February. If shopping and eating are major highlights of your travel, April brings the Singapore Food Festival and the Great Singapore Sale is held in June. No matter what time of year, the city offers sights and sounds for satisfy every hungry traveler.

■ *By Suzy Guttler*



- 5/ See the sights and sounds of Orchard Street.
- 6/ Get a personalized henna tattoo in Little India.
- 7/ Take the subway to Singapore's cultural Chinatown.
- 8/ The grand Raffles hotel.
- 9/ Temples of Little India.

A visit to Singapore is incomplete without a taste of Singapore's famous cocktail, the Singapore sling. The first of the bright pink beverages was concocted in 1915 by master mixer Ngiam Tong Boon, bartender at the famed Raffles Hotel.

Ingredients:

- half-measure of gin
 - quarter-measure of cherry brandy
 - quarter-measure of mixed fruit juices (orange, lime or lemon and pineapple) a few drops of Cointreau & Benedictine, a dash of Angostura Bitters
- Mix all of the above, pour into a long glass and top with a cherry and a slice of pineapple.
And now your visit is complete!

