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**Basics**

**Time:** Local time is GMT +8.

**Electricity:** Electrical current is 230 volts, 50Hz. Three-pin, square-shaped plugs are in use.

**Money:** Singapore's currency is the Singapore Dollar (SGD), which is divided into 100 cents. The US and Australian Dollars, Yen and British Pound are also accepted in the larger shopping centres. Major credit cards are accepted in hotels, shops and restaurants. ATMs are widely distributed and banks advance cash against the major credit cards. Travellers cheques can be cashed at banks or licensed moneychangers and at selected hotels. Banks are open daily, but some do not do foreign exchange on Saturdays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>Exchange Rates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SGD1.00</td>
<td>SGD5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A$ 0.90</td>
<td>A$ 4.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>C$ 0.77</td>
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<td>R 27.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£ 0.43</td>
<td>£ 2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US$ 0.69</td>
<td>US$ 3.43</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: These rates are not updated daily and should be used as a guideline only.

**Language:** Singaporean English is widely spoken. It is the by-product of mixing English, Chinese and Malay syntax and idiom.

**Entry requirements for Americans:** United States passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for a stay of up to 30 days, provided they obtain a free Social Visit Pass on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Entry requirements for UK nationals:** British passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for
a stay of up to 30 days, providing a free Social Visit Pass is obtained on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Entry requirements for Canadians:** Canadian passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for a stay of up to 30 days, providing they obtain a Social Visit Pass on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Entry requirements for Australians:** Australian passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for a stay of up to 30 days, providing a Social Visit Pass is obtained on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Entry requirements for South Africans:** South African passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for a stay of up to 30 days, providing a Social Visit Pass is obtained on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Entry requirements for New Zealanders:** New Zealand passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for a stay of up to 30 days, providing they obtain a Social Visit Pass on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Entry requirements for Irish nationals:** Irish passport holders do not require a visa for travel to Singapore for a stay of up to 30 days, providing they obtain a Social Visit Pass on arrival. Extensions are possible for a fee of S$40.

**Passport/Visa Note:** Travellers should hold confirmed documents and tickets for onward or return travel and enough funds to cover their stay. Male travellers with long hair are advised to tie their hair back on arrival. Women who are six months pregnant or more may be refused entry. All nationals, regardless of visa requirements, may be issued with a Social Visitor's Pass on arrival allowing for a stay of 14 or 30 days provided their visit is for touristic or business purposes. Extensions are possible for S$40, but the initial Pass is free. Passports must be valid for at least six months from date of arrival.

**Health:** Travellers from countries where there is an incidence of yellow fever need to have immunization records on arrival in Singapore. There are excellent medical facilities in Singapore. There is a high risk of dengue fever. Visitors should avoid poorly cooked food, particularly seafood, and be cautious of certain types of fish that contain biotoxins even if cooked. Health care is excellent but also very expensive and medical insurance is advised.

**Tipping:** Tipping is not encouraged as most hotels and restaurants in Singapore already levy a 10% service charge on customers' bills. Tipping is not a way of life in Singapore, but is appreciated for excellent service.

**Climate:** Singapore's climate is mostly hot and humid with average temperatures ranging between 79°F (26°C) and 86°F (30°C) during the day with cooler temperatures at night. The wettest months are between November and January (the monsoon period); however rainfall occurs throughout the year. Rainstorms are usually short but heavy, so remember to take an umbrella.

**Safety:** Singapore is a very safe travel destination with crime limited to the odd theft. The Singapore Government has stepped up security measures following the terrorist attacks in Bali and is committed to maintaining Singapore's reputation as a safe destination.

**Customs:** Singapore is a fairly diverse society and has been moulded by its immigrant population, primarily Malay, Chinese and Indian, along with the large ex-pat community. The city is incredibly efficient and the citizens very law-abiding - there are fines issued for just about any offence in Singapore, including S$500 for smoking in public places, S$50 for jaywalking, S$1,000 for littering and S$500 for eating, drinking or chewing gum on the MRT. There are even fines for not flushing public toilets so it goes without saying that getting involved in illegal drugs is not advisable; trafficking carries a maximum penalty of death. Chinese Singaporeans have three names, the first of which is their surname, or family name. As a result visitors should be prepared for hotels mistakenly reserving rooms under their first names. For clarity surnames may be underlined.

**Business:** Business in Singapore is conducted formally. The adherence to a dress code is strict, with suits the preferred business attire. Punctuality is essential in all business meetings, unlike social engagements where a 'fashionably-late' policy is observed. Appointments should be made at least two weeks in advance. The exchange of business cards is vital at introductions and the ceremony of it is important for creating good relations. Business cards are to be treated with respect and not folded, written upon or vandalised in any way. Shaking hands is the common form of greeting for both men and women and may last up to 10 seconds. The person is to be addressed by their respective title followed by their surname. It is a good idea to ask beforehand how the person is correctly addressed as this may vary depending on the different cultures within Singapore. Business hours are generally 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday with an hour taken over lunch.

**Communications:** The international access code for Singapore is +65. The outgoing code is either 001, 002, 008 or 018, depending on the service provider, followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 00144 for the United Kingdom). City or area codes are not used. Public phones are good for local and international calls; they take credit cards or phonecards, which can be bought at newspaper kiosks and Telecom shops. Calls made from hotels are free of any surcharges. Several local mobile phone operators use GSM 900/1800 networks. Email and Internet access is available at Internet cafes throughout the city.

**Duty Free:** Travellers to Singapore over 18 years do not have to pay duty on 1 litre of wine, spirits and beer. Chewing gum and tobacco products must be declared on arrival. Strictly prohibited is the trafficking in illegal drugs, which carries the death sentence. Prohibited items include meat and meat products, and firearms and explosives without a permit.
SINGAPORE

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Attractions

Raffles Hotel

The Raffles Hotel is a grand Victorian edifice rising from the pavements of the colonial district. Its elegant charm has enticed writers and entertainers such as Somerset Maugham, Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad and Charlie Chaplin. Singapore Slings have become the hallmark of the Long Bar. Here ceiling fans whirr above the heads of expatriates and tourists as they sip smart cocktails in superb comfort. The Tiffin Room is best known for its afternoon teas and sumptuous Saturday night buffets.

Gin and tonics alongside the odd game of snooker can be enjoyed at the Bar & Billiard. Other distractions include an upper-level museum containing vignettes and photographs on the lives of Charlie Chaplin, Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton and Noel Coward, as well as a Victorian-style playhouse and numerous specialty shops and restaurants.

Address: 1 Beach Road; Telephone: 6337 1886; Website: www.raffleshotel.com; Transport: The hotel is located on Beach Road and can be reached by MRT from City Hall Station

Chinatown

Chinatown is set against the backdrop of Singapore's modern infrastructure and the prosperous financial district. It is a crowded and colourful network of streets and alleyways contained by Upper Pickering Street, Cantonment Road, New Bridge and South Bridge Road. The area is a receptacle of traditional Chinese customs that were carried by the communities in Chinese Junks from the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian to Singapore in the early 19th century. Temples, terraces, markets and shops still provide a glimpse of the old ways but much of its original character has been lost in the redevelopment of the past 30 years. Yixing Xuan's Teahouse provides a fascinating insight into the ancient, ritualistic art of tea-making while a visit to the Thian Hock Keng Temple leaves one in awe of Chinese traditions of worship and symbolism. The streets of the district offer traditional healing practices. Here snake skins are blended with herbs and spices to produce powerful potions for various ailments. Brightly coloured exotic fruit interject the marketplace with lively displays of Rambutan, Durian and Mangosteen. The streets are a delight for bargain hunters looking to buy kimonos, jewellery, t-shirts, pottery and traditional crafts. Tanjong Pagar is the area best known for its traditional crafts such as painted masks, paper umbrellas, clogs and kites. Electronic goods, luggage, textiles and other more conventional products can be found in Chinatown's modern section located at the intersection of Cross, New Bridge Road and Eu Tong Street.

Transport: To reach China Town by MRT, the nearest station is Outram Park (EW16) or Chinatown (NE4)

Little India
The first Indian settlers arrived with Sir Stamford Raffles in the early 19th century, bringing with them colourful silks, aromatic spices, incense and other accoutrements of Indian culture. They worked on the roads and helped build the infrastructure of the city, settling within the ethnic enclave that has become known as Little India. The area is delineated by the north-south Serangoon Road, which runs parallel to Race Course Road. Its eastern end stretches to Jalan Besar. Temples, fortune-tellers, busy restaurants, stirring curry spices, jasmine garlands and the exotic hues of silk saris fill the vibrant streets to create a colourful ensemble. Little India is at its best during the Hindu Festival of Lights when the area is festooned with decorative lighting displays.

**Website:** [www.littleindia.com.sg](http://www.littleindia.com.sg); **Transport:** Little India is a 15-minute walk from the Colonial District, Bencoolen Street or Beach Road. From Orchard Road, bus 65 or 111 to Serangoon Road. By MRT travel to Dhoby Ghaut, and from there on foot or Bus 65 or 111

### Kampong Gelam and Arab Street

Kampong Gelam is said to have taken its name from the Gelam tribe of sea gypsies who lived in the original Malay village southwest of the Rochor River. Sir Stamford Raffles allotted the area as an ethnic enclave to the Muslim population and it became the focal point for Arab trade and traditional Malay culture. Baghdad, Muscat Street and Haji Lane resonate with tradition as cane, straw, rattan and pandan leaf goods spill out onto the streets. The spectrum of fabrics flowing onto the pavements of Arab Street comprise chiffon, silk, cotton georgette and include the batiks of Indonesia and Malaysia. Located between Kandahar and Aliwal streets is the Istana Kampong Gelam. It was built as the royal palace of Sultan Ali Iskandar Shah, the son of Sultan Hussein who negotiated the handover of Singapore to Britain. The government recently took possession of the building with plans to transform it into a Malay heritage museum. Another significant building in the area is the Sultan Mosque (open daily 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm). The glistening necks of the domes are decorated with the bases of thousands of glass bottles.

**Transport:** The Arab Quarter is a 10-minute walk from Bencoolen Street. Take bus 7 from Orchard Road to Victoria Street, if commuting by MRT, stop at Bugis

### Singapore Zoological Gardens

The Singapore Zoo has been thoughtfully created to simulate the natural habitats of its resident animals. Eight zones recreate the geographic regions of the animals indigenous to it and include the South East Asian rainforest, African savannah, Nepalese river valley, Burmese jungle and South American pampas. These vistas can also be explored after daytime during the famous Night Safari, billed as the first of its kind. The zoo can be explored along its meandering walking trails or from the comfort of a tram that winds its way along a circular route. It is home to more than 2,000 animals representing over 240 species, the highlights of which include the Komodo dragons, polar bears and primate kingdom. Animal shows are held daily, and children can enjoy camel rides or share food with an orang-utan in the zoo's Children's World section. A Guide to the Zoo is available on arrival with details of feeding times and other activities. It includes a map and suggested itineraries incorporating the major shows and attractions.

**Address:** 80 Mandai Lake Road; **Telephone:** 6269 3411; **Website:** [www.zoo.com.sg](http://www.zoo.com.sg); **Transport:** Bus 171 from the city to Mandai Road and transfer to 927 at the first bus stop. Or take MRT to Ang Mo Kio to connect with bus 138; **Opening time:** The zoo is open daily from 8.30am to 6pm; **Admission:** S$15 (adults), S$7.50 (children). Zoo and Night Safari: S$30 (adults), S$15 (children)

### Jurong Birdpark

The park is contained within a 20-hectare (49-acre) stretch of land in the Jurong Lake area. It is one of the world’s most extensive bird collections and the largest in South East Asia. Eight thousand birds comprising 600 different species inhabit the park and range from Antarctic penguins to New Zealand kiwis. Walking trails cut through the tropical landscape. Incredible sights to look out for include the Waterfall Aviary, which at 98ft (30m) it is the world’s highest manmade waterfall. The Penguin Parade has a large pool set against a landscape of rocks, cliffs, nesting alcoves and burrows; it has a viewing gallery where visitors can see penguins 'flying' underwater through a 98ft (30m) wide window. The South East Asian Bird Aviary is a breathtaking spectacle that includes the experience of a simulated thunderstorm. Other bird shows feature flamingos, macaws, hornbills and cockatoos. The park also includes facilities for young children to enjoy including the new Splash 'n Slide Station.

**Telephone:** 6265 0022; **Website:** [www.birdpark.com.sg](http://www.birdpark.com.sg); **Transport:** Take the MRT to Boon Lay Station and take SBS bus 194 or 251; **Opening time:** Daily 9am to 6pm; **Admission:** S$16 for adults, S$8 for children. Concessions and packages available

### Singapore Art Museum

The beautifully restored building (formerly St Joseph's School for boys) rests serenely on Bras Basah Road. The museum has 14 galleries that showcase the national art collection and plays host to a range of special exhibitions and outreach programmes. More than 7,000 permanent artworks represent the largest collection of 20th century Southeast Asian art. Tours are available in English, Japanese and Mandarin.
Singapore Botanical Gardens

The Botanical Gardens sweep across an area of 52 hectares (128 acres) constituted by primary forest and specialty gardens in close proximity to the city centre. The National Orchid Garden is the world's largest orchid garden featuring more than 20,000 varieties set amongst water features and an exotic bromeliad collection from South and Central America. The park also contains many rare plant specimens in addition to the specialty gardens decorated with frangipanis, roses, ferns and desert plants. Outdoor concerts in the gardens can be enjoyed on the Symphony Lake or French cuisine can be savoured at the Au Jardin restaurant.

**Address**: 1 Chinese Garden Road; **Telephone**: 6261 3632; **Website**: www.sbg.org.sg; **Transport**: SBS bus 170, or TIBs 67, 75, 171, 173, 184, 852 and 961; **Opening time**: Daily 6am to 11pm; **Admission**: Free, but there is a $5 charge for the Bonsai Garden

Chinese and Japanese Gardens

Chinese and Japanese landscape designs are embodied in these neighbouring gardens. The Imperial Sung Dynasty style is clipped to perfection within the 13-hectare (33-acre) Chinese Garden. It boasts the world's largest Suzhou-style Bonsai garden outside of China, containing over 1,000 plants. The symmetry and simplicity of Zen aesthetics is the motif of the Japanese Gardens with its peaceful rock gardens and summerhouses.

**Address**: 1 Cluny Road; **Telephone**: 6471 7361; **Website**: www.nparks.gov.sg; **Transport**: SBS bus 7, 105, 123 and 174 or SMRT 75, 77 and 106 from Holland Road; SBS bus 66, 151, 153 and 154, or SMRT 67 and 171 from Bukit Timah Road; **Opening time**: Daily 5am to 12pm; **Orchard Garden**: 8.30am to 7pm; **Admission**: Free

Sentosa Island

The theme-park island is a popular weekend spot and one of the most visited attractions in Singapore. A day's excursion could turn into an overnight stay in any one of the hotels or camping sites. The island is enveloped by a high-speed monorail and linked to downtown Singapore by a 1,640ft (500m) causeway and cable car system. Entertainment ranges from soaking up the sun on the imported-sand beaches to visiting a variety of entertainment areas. From a moving walkway one can experience the sea life of The Underwater World and Dolphin Lagoon. The Images of Singapore Exhibition explores Singapore's history in life-size dioramas. On the furthest western point of the island lies Fort Siloso from which Singapore guarded its territory against invading Japanese forces. Other attractions include the Merlion, the Musical Fountain and the Sentosa Luge. A distinctive landmark is the Carlsberg Sky Tower, Asia's tallest free-standing observation tower, which affords the best views of Singapore as well as breathtaking vistas across Sentosa and the Southern Islands, and even Malaysia and Indonesia on clear days.

**Telephone**: 1800 736 8672; **Website**: www.sentosa.com.sg; **Transport**: The orange Sentosa bus leaves from the HarbourFront Bus interchange; **Admission**: $2. Additional fees are charged for individual attractions

Changi Museum

It was here, during WW II, that Allied POW soldiers were subjected to harsh treatment at the hands of their Japanese captors. Changi Prison is still in use as a correctional facility and it is the place of execution for convicted drug offenders. Half a mile (1km) from the old site, next to the prison, is the new Changi Chapel and Museum. The display of photographs, letters and drawings in the museum are a moving tribute to the legacy of the Japanese occupation. During this period that spanned three and a half years more than 50,000 civilians and soldiers were captured and imprisoned. Visitors have access to a variety of videos and literature relating to the war years.

**Address**: 1000 Upper Changi Road North; **Telephone**: 6214 2451; **Website**: www.changimuseum.com; **Transport**: SBS bus 2 from Tanah Merah MRT Station or SBS bus 29 from Tampines MRT Station; **Opening time**: Daily 9.30am to 5pm (final admission 4.30pm); **Admission**: Free

Pulau Ubin

Pulau Ubin

Daily 9.30am to 5pm (final admission 4.30pm); **Transport**: Take the MRT to Dhoby Ghaut (N1) or City Hall Station (C2). SBS bus 7, 14, 16, 36, 97, 131 or 162; **Opening time**: Monday to Sunday 10am to 7pm. Extended hours on Friday until 9pm; **Admission**: Regular shows: $3 (adults), concessions $1.50. Blockbuster shows: $5 (adults), concessions $2.50. Free entry after 6pm on Fridays
The island of Ubin provides a peaceful interlude to the city's bustle and can be reached by boat from Changi Point. The boat docks at Ubin village, a Malay settlement where houses perch quietly on stilts above the beach sand and mangrove. Beyond this point one can explore the island by mountain bike and enjoy its pristine beaches fringed with coconut palms, its variety of seafood restaurants and restful Buddhist temples scattered here and there.

**Transport**: To get there, bumboats transport passengers from Changi Point for about S$2 one way throughout the day.

**Haw Par Villa**

Located along Pasir Panjang Road, Haw Par Villa was previously known as Tiger Balm Gardens and subsequently renamed after its original owners. The Aw brothers, Boon Haw and Boon Par (who made their fortune from the well-known Tiger Balm ointment) opened the park in 1937. It is inspired by Chinese legend and mythology as represented by the display of grotesque and gaudy statues, the coup de grâce of which are depicted in The Ten Courts of Hell.

**Address**: 262 Pasir Panjang Road; **Telephone**: 6872 2780; **Transport**: To get there take by MRT to the Buona Vista stop (W7); by bus SBS No.10, 30 or 188 from the World Trade Centre, No. 143 from Orchard Road or No. 51 from Chinatown; **Opening time**: Daily 9am to 7pm; **Admission**: Free

**red dot design museum**

On the fringe of the Arts Belt and close to several art museums, the 2nd red dot design museum was established in Singapore in November 2005. It is the host of the red dot design awards, where products and brands communicate their design distinction. The museum intrigues, inspires and entices visitors with interactive installations and remarkable exhibitions. It is the heart of design and creative activities including conferences, exhibitions and parties. The museum is the venue for the annual red dot design award celebrations, the most significant event in the design calendar. The red dot design museum supports MAAD, a market for original creative works in fashion, art, craft and design.

**Address**: 28 Maxwell Road; **Telephone**: +65 6327 8027; **Website**: www.red-dot.org; **Transport**: The nearest MRT station is 0.15km away. Take the East West Line (Green) and stop at "Tanjong Pagar" (EW15).; **Opening time**: Monday, Tuesday and Friday 11am to 6pm (closed on Wednesday and Thursday); Saturday and Sunday 11am to 8pm.; **Admission**: Adults: SGD 8.00, Children (under 12): SGD 4.00. Free admission during MAAD.

**Airports**

**Singapore Changi Airport (SIN)**

**Location**: The airport is located 14 miles (23km) from the city.

**Time**: GMT +8.

**Contacts**: Tel: +65 6542 1122.

**Transfer between terminals**: A free Skytrain runs between the three terminals.

**Getting to the city**: The MRT train departs from Changi Airport MRT Station, located under Terminals 2 and 3. Trains depart from 5.30am to midnight, cost S$2.70 and take around 27 minutes. A public bus service to the city has regular departures from 6am to midnight, and can be found in the lower levels of each terminal. The 1 hour journey costs S$2. In addition there is an airport shuttle service between the airport and the city centre and most hotels in Singapore; the buses leave when all six seats have been filled or every 15 to 30 minutes. The cost is S$9 per adult, S$6 per child.

**Car rental**: Avis, Budget and Hertz are all represented at the airport, however for visitors staying in the city it’s best to take taxis or the excellent public transport system.

**Airport Taxis**: Taxis to Singapore central are available from outside the arrivals hall of both terminals; the fare to the city centre is about S$25 with a travel time of around 25 minutes. Bookings can be made at the airport shuttle counters; the MaxiCab driver is paid directly. The taxi stand can be found outside the Arrival Hall on Level 1 in Terminal 1 and at the end of the Arrival Hall on Level 1 in Terminal 2 (South Wing). For comprehensive taxi information, click here.

**Facilities**: Changi Airport has a wide range of facilities, including ATMs, bureaux de change, business services, airline lounges/travel clubs, duty-free shops, child facilities and multimedia payphones for Internet and e-mails. Facilities for disabled passengers include a 24-hour wheelchair rental service. Other facilities include a mini-supermarket, snack bars and restaurants, a putting green, gym, rooftop pool, hairdresser, laundry service, karaoke lounge, Science Discovery Centre, smoking room, prayer room and a post office. The new terminal 3 is a 'green' terminal with natural skylighting, a butterfly garden, koi ponds and over 200 species of foliage, including a five-level high wall of hanging plants.

**Parking**: Short- and long-term parking is available.

**Departure Tax**: None.

**Website**: www.changiairport.com.sg
Singapore Climate and Weather

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Singapore experiences a tropical climate with hot, humid weather all year round. Temperatures remain high with daytime averages of 86°F (30°C). Humidity is usually above 75%. Singapore has two distinct monsoon seasons, the North Eastern season being from December to March and the South Western season from June to September. November to December is the rainy season. June to August is the best time to travel to Singapore, although it is still rainy and humid and travellers should pack accordingly.

Tourism
Singapore Tourism Board: +65 6736 6622 or www.visitsingapore.com

Singapore Embassies
Singapore Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 537 3100.
Singapore High Commission, London, United Kingdom (also responsible for Ireland): +44 (0)20 7235 8315.
Singapore Consulate, Vancouver, Canada: +1 604 669 5115.
Singapore High Commission, Canberra, Australia: +61 (0)2 6271 2000.
Singapore High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 (0)12 430 6035.
Singapore High Commission, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 (0)4 470 0850.

Foreign Embassies in Singapore
British High Commission, Singapore: +65 6424 4200.
Canadian High Commission, Singapore: +65 6854 5900.
Australian High Commission, Singapore: +65 6836 4100.
Irish Embassy, Singapore: +65 6238 7616.
New Zealand High Commission, Singapore: +65 6235 9966.

Singapore Emergency Numbers
Emergencies: 999 (Police); 995 (Ambulance).

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