

SETTLING IN

YOUR GUIDE TO LIFE IN SINGAPORE



Welcome!

SETTLING IN is your guide to life in Singapore. Learn about this country, its people and how to get around. Find out more about living, working and studying in this cosmopolitan city.

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SINGAPORE TODAY

The people and places that make up this city-state.



<u>Total Population</u> Over 5.6 million	<u>Land Area</u> 719.2 km ²
<u>Resident Population</u> Over 3.9 million	<u>Climate</u> Tropical with abundant rainfall and high humidity all year round.
<u>Ethnic Groups</u> Chinese (74.3%), Malays (13.4%), Indians (9.1%), Others (3.2%)	<u>International country code</u> +65
<u>Languages</u> Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, English	<u>Gross Domestic Product (GDP)</u> S\$410.3 billion (2016)
<u>Religions</u> Buddhism (33.3%), Christianity (18.3%), Islam (14.7%), Taoism (10.9%), Hinduism (5.1%), Others (0.7%), None (17%)	<u>Major Industries (% of GDP)</u> Manufacturing (19.6%), Business Services (15.8%), Wholesale & Retail Trade (14.2%), Finance and Insurance (13.1%), Transportation and Storage (7.6%), Construction (5%)

WHERE WE LIVE

Over 80% of Singaporeans live in public housing estates developed by the Housing and Development Board (HDB). Some of HDB's earliest estates were built in Queenstown and Toa Payoh in the 1960s. Over the decades, HDB has transformed the living environment in Singapore through its public housing programme and created communities in modern self-sufficient towns such as Jurong, Woodlands, Tampines and more recently, Punggol. Most estates are near commercial hubs and regional centres that bring workplaces and retail facilities closer to the homes of people.

WHERE WE WORK

About 7 out of 10 employees in Singapore work in the services industry, with the rest serving the manufacturing and construction industries. The top three industries within services by employment are community, social and personal services; wholesale and retail trade; and professional services. The Central Area—which stretches from Orchard Road to the Singapore River, Rochor, Outram, Downtown Core and the Marina Bay area—is historically the country's main commercial district, but there are offices, business parks and specialised industrial clusters across the island. Prominent examples include the Jurong Island petrochemical hub, the research, technology and media cluster at one-north, the Seletar Aerospace Park and Tampines regional centre where many banks and insurance companies are located.

WHERE WE STUDY

Investing in people is vital for the success of this country with few natural resources. This is why Singapore introduced compulsory education for primary school to give children a strong foundation for further education and training and a common educational experience to build national identity, civic consciousness and social cohesion. The country's education system, spanning pre-school, primary, secondary schools and a range of post-secondary and higher education institutions, helps students discover their talents, realise their full potential and learn throughout life.

* Above data from Department of Statistics and accurate as at 2017.

THE SINGAPORE STORY

For over 700 years, Singapore has been a thriving port of the region, welcoming immigrants to work and live.



1299–1818: FROM TEMASEK TO SINGAPURA

According to the mythical tales of the *Sejarah Melayu* (The Malay Annals), the island of Temasek was renamed “Singapura” (“Lion City” in Sanskrit) by a Palembang prince after he spotted a lion upon landing. Archaeologists have unearthed porcelain wares and natural products from the 14th century that were traded in this thriving port, which was ruled at different times by the Srivijayan Empire and then, the Malacca and Johor Sultanates.



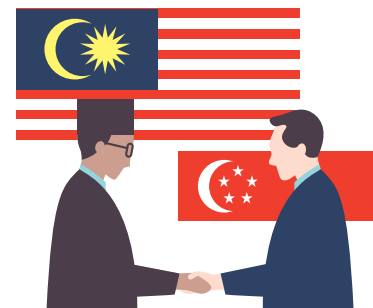
1819–1942: A BRITISH COLONY

Modern Singapore was founded when Sir Stamford Raffles landed and signed a treaty with Sultan Hussein of Johor and Temenggong Abdul Rahman to establish a British trading post. This transformed the island—which was inhabited primarily by the indigenous Orang Laut (“sea people” in Malay)—into a flourishing free port, attracting traders and workers from around the region and further afield.



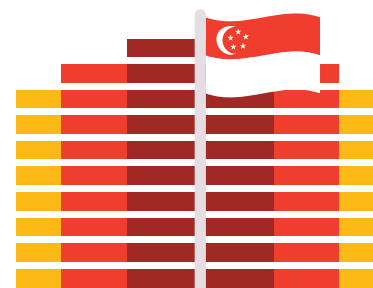
1942–1945: JAPANESE OCCUPATION

On 15 February 1942, Singapore fell to the Japanese during World War II and was renamed “Syonan-to” (“Light of the South” in Japanese). The occupation lasted for over three years before the Japanese surrendered to the returning British troops on 12 September 1945.



1945–1965: TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF MALAYSIA

Post-war Singapore saw the immigrant population press the British for independence. Internal self-rule was granted in 1959 and the newly self-governing state held a general election to form its first fully-elected legislative assembly. Lee Kuan Yew became Singapore's first prime minister and Yusof bin Ishak was appointed the first local Yang di-Pertuan Negara (head of state). On 16 September 1963, over a century of British rule ended when Singapore merged with the Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak to form Malaysia.



1965–1970s: BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

Singapore separated from Malaysia on 9 August 1965 to become a sovereign state. An intense period of nation-building and urbanisation followed as the rural population was re-housed in high-rise public flats and foreign investors were wooed to power industrialisation and create jobs. National Service was also introduced to build up a credible defence force. To integrate the multi-ethnic immigration population, English became Singapore's official working and learning language.



1980s–1990s: AN ASIAN ECONOMIC MIRACLE

Our young nation progressed from Third to First World by shifting from a labour-intensive economy towards a high-skilled, technology-driven one. This was also in response to Singapore experiencing its first post-independence recession in 1985. To seek new directions of growth, the government expanded the economy beyond manufacturing as Singapore became a hub for services such as finance and information technology. It also began growing a “second wing” as a regional exporter of services and talent.



2000s–TODAY: GLOBAL CITY OF THE FUTURE

Singapore is rated highly for its stable business environment, admired as a City in a Garden and increasingly recognised for its vibrant creative scene. The forward-looking metropolis continues to invest in the future, with major commitments in building a knowledge and innovation economy, and harnessing technology to develop itself into a Smart Nation.

KNOW THE COUNTRY

Experience Singapore by meeting people from its many communities and going around town to enjoy the sights and food.



OUR COMMUNITIES

Singapore is home to many races, cultures and faiths. The three major ethnic groups are Chinese, Malays and Indians, but there are also others such as the Eurasians, Peranakans, Armenians, Jews and Arabs. This diverse society is maintained by showing tolerance and respect for one another's customs. We also celebrate each other's major festivals—many of which are also public holidays.



SINGAPOREAN CHINESE

Most Singaporean Chinese originated from the southern Chinese provinces such as Fujian and Guangdong. They have contributed much to the country's politics, education and social development. Well-known Singaporean Chinese include the first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew; businessman and founder of The Chinese High School, Tan Kah Kee; and philanthropist Tan Tock Seng, who donated money to build a hospital for "the sick poor of all nations".

Religion

A variety including Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity.

Language

English, Mandarin and some also speak their dialect, such as Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka and Hainanese.



Major Festivals

Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is a time to honour deities and ancestors with prayers and food offerings. Homes are decorated with festive decorations such as red scrolls and kumquat as families gather for reunion dinners and lo hei, the tossing of colourful raw fish salad that signifies prosperity and luck. The Chinese also visit the homes of relatives and friends, when it is customary to exchange two mandarin oranges with the hosts for good luck. Those who are married give their juniors red packets containing cash as a form of blessings.

Dragon Boat Festival commemorates an incorruptible ancient Chinese minister Qu Yuan. In Singapore, it is marked by dragon boat races and the eating of rice dumplings.

Qingming Festival, also known as Tomb-sweeping day, is marked by families visiting the columbaria and graves of ancestors to remember and honour them.

Hungry Ghost Festival is observed by Taoists and Buddhists who make offerings to ancestors and wandering souls that roam the living world. During this festival on the seventh lunar month, people pay respect by burning offerings and putting up wayang (street opera) and getai (stage performances) in the public.

Mid-Autumn Festival traditionally celebrates the time of harvest, but is today an occasion for families to get together over mooncakes and for children to play with lanterns.

Customs

Weddings: A tea ceremony is usually held before a banquet. During the ceremony, the bride and groom serve tea to their parents, grandparents and close relatives to show

their respect as a married couple. The elders will in turn present gifts in the form of red packets or jewellery during the ceremony.

Baby showers: Families give out cakes and boiled eggs to celebrate their baby's first month. Relatives and friends typically return the favour with gifts or red packets for the baby.

Visiting a Chinese's Home

- Leave your shoes at the door.
- Greet your hosts with a handshake or hello.
- Greet the elders "Auntie" or "Uncle" as a form of respect.
- Avoid gifting knives or clocks as these items are believed to bring bad luck.
- Food gifts are well appreciated.
- Avoid wearing black during the Chinese New Year as it is an unlucky colour.



Living Heritage

Chinatown (www.chinatown.sg) is a historic Chinese settlement southwest of the Singapore River. During major festivals such as Chinese New Year, thousands visit to buy goods and see the annual light-up. Nearby is also the newly established Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre (www.singaporeccc.org.sg).

SINGAPOREAN MALAYS

Even before Singapore became a British colony, the Singaporean Malays and their ancestors migrated from many parts of the Malay and Indonesian archipelagos to settle on this island. The community has contributed to Singapore's national and cultural heritage. Prominent Singaporean Malays include the first President, Yusof bin Ishak; musician and composer of the National Anthem, Zubir Said; and renowned potter and Cultural Medallion recipient, Iskandar Jalil.

Religion

Islam

Language

English and Bahasa Melayu



Major Festivals

Hari Raya Aidilfitri marks the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. This is when younger members of Muslim families seek forgiveness from their elders for any wrongdoings committed during the year. Many families don new clothes in the same hue: men in shirts and sarongs worn over trousers known as baju Melayu and women in baju kurung, a set of long blouse and skirt. A Hari Raya meal at home comprises traditional dishes such as ketupat (boiled rice dumpling), beef rendang (beef stew) and sayur lodeh (vegetables in coconut milk gravy).

Hari Raya Haji commemorates the end of the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, as well as Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son as an act of faith in God's command. During this day, a ritual to slaughter sheep, lambs, goats and cows is performed. The meat is then distributed to the needy, the worshippers who paid for these animals and their families and friends.

Customs

Weddings: A ceremony is held with a feast and musical performances. The bride and groom sit on "thrones" called the pelamin and preside over the wedding as raja sehari (royalty for a day). Guests offer fertility blessing by sprinkling yellow rice and flower petals on the couple and they also present a gift of money.

Visiting a Malay's Home

- Leave your shoes at the door.
- Smile or nod when greeting hosts of the opposite sex. It is improper for men and women not of the same family to make physical contact.
- Don't bring food or drinks that are not permissible by Islamic law. They include alcohol, pork and meat of other animals that have not been slaughtered according to Islamic rites. Suitable foods are those certified Halal.
- Avoid gifting food during the fasting month.



Living Heritage

Geylang Serai is one of Singapore's older Malay settlements and is where a night bazaar is organised daily in the weeks leading up to Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Also important to the Malays is Kampong Glam, once the seat of Malay royalty and disembarkation point for many diasporic Malay communities. Today, it is home to the landmark Sultan Mosque and the Malay Heritage Centre, which is located in the historic Istana Kampong Glam (www.malayheritage.org.sg).

SINGAPOREAN INDIANS

Predominantly Tamils from Southern India, Singaporean Indians have played an active role in the nation's commerce, arts and politics. Well-known Singaporean Indians include the sixth President, S R Nathan; film director K Rajagopal; as well as the country's first foreign minister, S Rajaratnam, who also penned the national pledge.

Religion

Many are Hindus, others also practise Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism and Jainism.

Language

English and Tamil, but also other languages such as Malayalam and Hindi.



Major Festivals

Deepavali celebrates the triumph of good over evil as oil lamps are lit to symbolise light over darkness. Most families also draw beautiful kolam (also known as rangoli), decorations made with flour and rice, at their doorstep. On this day, Hindus take oil baths as it is believed to have equal merit to bathing in the sacred Ganges River. They also visit the temples, as well as families and friends.

Thaipusam is when worshippers who have asked for favours from the Hindu deity, Lord Murugan, undergo a ritual test of endurance. They carry the kavadi, which pierces their flesh with hook-like needles, as part of an annual procession that takes place from Serangoon Road to Tank Road. Others also visit the temples to offer prayers and seek spiritual solace.

Pongal is a traditional harvest festival to give thanks to the Sun God, or Suya. In Singapore, celebrations begin with the worship of Lord Indra, the Ruler of Clouds and Giver of Rains, followed by the Sun God, who is honoured with a pot of rice with milk to symbolise prosperity and abundance. This pot is then served to family members and visitors to the house. Celebrators also light oil lamps, don new clothes and seek blessings from senior family members.

Customs

Weddings: For Hindus, a ceremony is usually held in a temple that involves the bride and groom walking around a fire three times and scattering grains into it. This symbolises their commitment to keeping the flame of love burning. Guests send their blessings with garlands and by showering saffron rice on the couple.

Visiting an Indian's Home

- Leave your shoes at the door.
- Greet older family members by placing hands together (palms facing each other) and kneel down to receive blessings from them.
- Avoid offering beef or beef products as the cow is sacred to Hindus.
- Avoid offering pork or pork products to Indian Muslims.
- Check about buying food gifts as some households are vegetarians.



Living Heritage

Along Serangoon Road is Little India (www.littleindia.com.sg), one of the early areas of settlement for Singapore's Indian community. Today, it also houses the Indian Heritage Centre (www.indianheritage.org.sg).

OTHERS

Singapore's fourth ethnic group consists of diverse communities. They are small but influential and have made significant contributions to the country.

Eurasians

An ethnic community with mixed Asian and European ancestries. Prominent Eurasians include Singapore's second President, Dr. Benjamin Henry Sheares and Olympic gold medallist Joseph Schooling. Many in the community are Roman Catholics or Protestants and speak English. Some also speak Kristang, a mix of Portugese with local languages. The Eurasians are known for dishes such as devil's curry, a spicy meat and vegetable dish. Learn about the community at the Eurasian Heritage Centre inside the Eurasian Association (www.eurasians.org.sg) along Ceylon Road.

Peranakans

Also known as the Straits Chinese, they are people of mixed Chinese and Malay heritage. Well-known Peranakans include Singapore's first Queen's Scholar, Lim Boon Keng; local musician Dick Lee and the fourth President, Wee Kim Wee. The Peranakans speak English and baba Malay, a mix of Malay language and Hokkien. They practise various religions, including Taoism, Buddhism and Christianity. This colourful community has its own Peranakan Museum (peranakanmuseum.org.sg) along Armenian Street and is associated with the neighbourhoods of Joo Chiat and Katong.



FESTIVALS

Singaporeans celebrate together during the major festivals of Singapore's ethnic groups and many are designated as public holidays. Join in the festivities and learn about the nation's rich tapestry of communities by visiting the National Heritage Board's (www.nhb.gov.sg) museums and institutions.

Public Holidays	Dates	Greetings
New Year's Day	1 January	Happy New Year
Chinese New Year	January/February, varies with the Chinese calendar	恭喜发财 Gong Xi Fa Cai (May you have a prosperous new year)
Good Friday	April/March	Happy Easter
Labour Day	1 May	Happy Labour Day
Vesak Day	May, varies with the Buddhist calendar	Happy Vesak Day
Hari Raya Aidilfitri	Varies with the Islamic calendar	Selamat Hari Raya (Have a joyous celebration)
National Day	9 August	Happy Birthday Singapore
Hari Raya Haji	Varies with the Islamic calendar	Selamat Hari Raya (Have a joyous celebration)
Deepavali	October/November, varies with the Hindu calendar	தீபாவளி நல்வாழ்த்துக்கள் (Happy Deepavali)
Christmas	25 December	Merry Christmas

Find out the dates of public holidays via the Ministry of Manpower (www.mom.gov.sg)

GETTING AROUND

Singapore is well connected by an integrated public transport system of trains, buses and taxis. There are also ride hailing options, an island-wide network of park connectors and shared paths for bicycles, personal mobility devices and pedestrians. Find out more at www.mytransport.sg



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses, Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and Light Rapid Transit (LRT)

Operating hours: Generally between 5.30am and midnight daily, depending on service. Night buses and extended hours on trains during Fridays, weekends and eve of public holidays

Peak periods: Weekdays, 6.30am to 9am and 5pm to 7.30pm

Frequencies: 5-30 minutes (Buses) / 2-7 minutes (MRT and LRT)

Fares: Distance-based

Payment: Stored value smartcards (EZ-link/NETS FlashPay)
Tap the card on the reader when boarding and alighting. Purchase cards at TransitLink Ticket Offices. Find out more: www.transitlink.com.sg



Dos and Don'ts

For Buses:

- Flag early.
- Queue to board.

On Train Platforms:

- Stand behind the queue markings to give way to alighting passengers before boarding.



On Board:

- Move in for other passengers to board.
- Avoid taking up seats reserved for the elderly, pregnant women or other passengers who need it more.
- Respect personal space. Do not push, jostle or stand too close to other passengers.
- Keep your volume down. Do not talk loudly or play music or videos on phone speakers.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke.

Alighting:

- Queue to exit.
- Keep left on escalators so that others in a hurry can walk through on the right.

Taxis

Getting a taxi

- Book via the taxi company's hotline or mobile app.
- Flag along the road or at taxi stands.

Travelling

- State destination and preferred route.

Fares

- A flag-down fee plus distance travelled.
- Surcharges apply in certain hours and at some locations.

Taxi Signs

TAXI	Available.
CHANGE SHIFT	Going off shift but may take passengers if on the way. Flag taxi and check.
HIRED	Already has a passenger.
ON CALL	On its way to pick up a passenger.

Dos and Don'ts

- Board and alight at designated taxi stands.
- Do not board or alight along bus lanes or at bus stops.
- Avoid smoking, eating or drinking inside the taxi.

Ride-Hailing

There are several ride-hailing services, which can be booked via the respective companies' apps. The fares are typically based on distance, demand and ride options.



TRAVEL LIKE A SINGAPOREAN

Some common terms used on the road.

COE (Certificate of Entitlement)	A licence to own a vehicle.
ERP (Electronic Road Pricing)	Pay-as-you-go electronic toll collection system to manage road congestions during peak hours.
Expressways:	These 10 urban motorways are usually known by their acronyms.
AYE	Ayer Rajah Expressway
BKE	Bukit Timah Expressway
CTE	Central Expressway
ECP	East Coast Parkway
KPE	Kallang-Paya Lebar Expressway
KJE	Kranji Expressway
MCE	Marina Coastal Expressway
PIE	Pan-Island Expressway
SLE	Seletar Expressway
TPE	Tampines Expressway

BICYCLES, PERSONAL MOBILITY DEVICES (PMDs) AND PEDESTRIANS

Cycle, ride or walk. Plan a scenic or cross-country route via the city's expanding Park Connector Network (PCN) (www.nparks.gov.sg) and travel safely on the roads.

Where to Travel

- On footpaths, cycling and shared paths.
- Bicycles may also travel on the roads, but not PMDs.
- Do not ride on expressways or in tunnels.
- Avoid jaywalking. Cross roads only at designated pedestrian crossings, zebra crossings and overhead bridges.

Where to Park

- Use bicycle parking racks at housing estates, MRT stations and parks.
- Do not park by trees or at lamp posts.

Speed Limits

- Footpaths: 15 km/h
- Cycling and shared paths: 25 km/h
- Roads: Road speed limit



Ride Safely

- Install front white lights and rear red lights for riding at night.
- Wear bright-coloured clothing to increase visibility to others.
- Wear a helmet to prevent serious head injuries.
- Ring bell to alert others when overtaking.
- Keep a safe distance from other path users.
- Give way to pedestrians.
- Slow down or dismount when moving through crowded areas.
 - Observe traffic rules when on the road: Keep left and a safe distance behind moving vehicles.
 - Use hand signals to alert motorists when turning, slowing down, or stopping.

Find out more via the Land Transport Authority (LTA): www.lta.gov.sg

Take Note

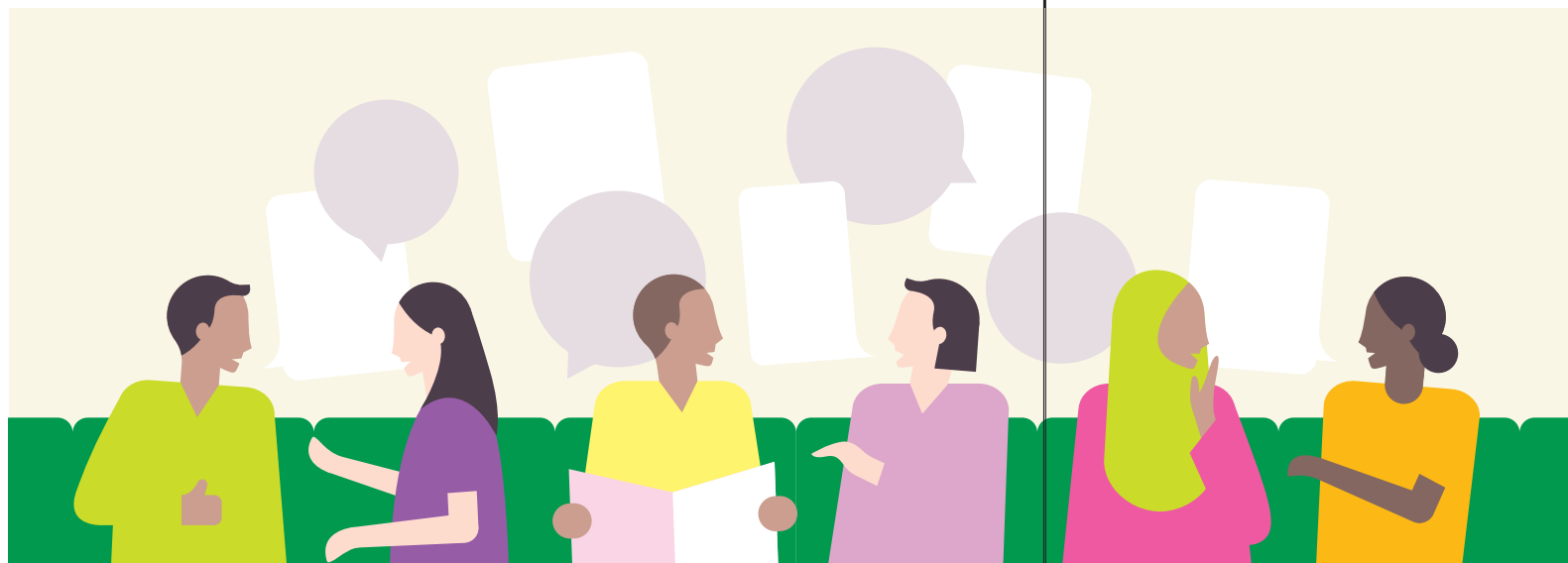
Bike-sharing is available via various private mobile apps. As these bicycles do not have fixed docking stations, park them at bicycle parking zones for the convenience of other users and the public.

Power-assisted bicycles are regulated. Their maximum power must not exceed 250 W, which must cut off at 25 km/h. They also have to be registered and affixed with a seal of approval from LTA.

Foldable bicycles and PMDs are allowed on public transport as long as they fit the size criteria and do not inconvenience other commuters.

SHARING SPACES

Maintaining harmony in a densely populated country of different races, religions and backgrounds requires participation in one another's cultures and respecting common rules.



LET'S TALK

Speaking and learning the languages of this country brings everyone closer together. Singaporeans speak a variety of languages and the city-state's four official languages are Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English. For historical reasons, the national language is Malay—the National Anthem, *Majulah Singapura*, is in this language—but English is the language of administration. It is used in schools, offices, government agencies and also amongst the different ethnic communities.

Improve Your English

- Sign up for English classes at the People's Association (www.onepa.sg) or at private schools.
- Get tips from the Speak Good English Movement (goodenglish.org.sg).
- Borrow English books from the 26 public libraries (www.nlb.gov.sg).

SPEAK LIKE A SINGAPOREAN

In daily conversations, Singaporeans have come to speak an informal, colloquial form of English known as Singlish. This reflects the city-state's multi-ethnic community as Singlish is a mixture of English with vernacular languages.

Common Singlish Phrases

- Abuden*: "What else did you expect?"
Agak-Agak: To guess or estimate.
Alamak!: An expression of dismay or incredulity.
Kiasu: To describe a selfish or highly competitive attitude.
Lah: Used at the end of a sentence to emphasise a point, e.g. "Please *lah*!"
Shiok: Cool, great, delicious or superb.
So how?: "So what do we do now?"
Wah: Used at the beginning of a sentence to express admiration or surprise.

Find out more from *A Dictionary of Singlish and Singapore English*:
www.singlishdictionary.com

EATING TOGETHER

Singaporeans eat out frequently, often at hawker centres, coffee shops and food courts found across the island. These shared spaces offer a range of local cuisines and people of all cultures and eating habits enjoy their meals together by following some common behaviours.



Buying Food

- Queue for food.
- Do not bargain. Prices stated on menus and signboards are fixed. If they are based on season, check with the stallholder before ordering.
- Self-collect food at the stall, although stallholders may serve if they are not busy.

Tucking In

- Do not use cutlery from Halal stalls for non-Halal food. Singapore is home to Muslims who have to consume Halal food that is prepared to their dietary needs.
- Keep eating spaces clean. Do not spit bones on the table or on the floor.
- During peak periods, try to vacate your table after eating so that other diners can have a seat.



Before Leaving

- Return food trays to the designated points after finishing your meal.
- Keep the toilets clean. Some food centres charge a small entry fee for their upkeep too.

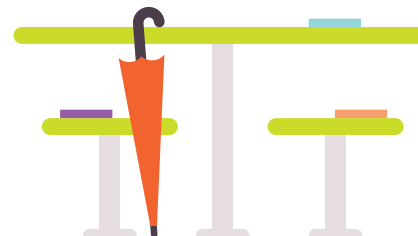
HAWKER CULTURE

Singaporeans have some commonly accepted behaviours when eating out.

Sharing a table is common, especially when it is crowded.

Ask to share a table and be considerate to other diners.

Reserving a seat with a tissue packet, umbrella or even lanyard is a common sight at crowded food spaces. But some find such behaviour inconsiderate.



Halal food for Muslims is usually available in hawker stalls, coffee shops and food courts. Look out for the Singapore Halal

Certification logo issued by the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS). Find out more: www.halal.sg

Drinks served in plastic bags is common when buying hot drinks to go.

EAT LIKE A SINGAPOREAN

Some common terms used while dining out.

Chope	To reserve a seat or table.
Da Bao	To take away food or have it to go.
Makan	Malay for “eat”.
Sedap	Malay for “delicious”.

Ordering Coffee or Tea

In Singapore, “kopi” and “teh” are Malay words commonly used to order “coffee” and “tea” respectively. They are paired with words from other languages to customise drinks to your preferences.

Kopi:	Coffee with condensed milk
Kopi O:	Coffee with no milk; with sugar
Kopi O Kosong:	Coffee with no milk nor sugar
Kopi C:	Coffee with evaporated milk
Kopi Peng:	Iced coffee with condensed milk
Kopi Siew Dai:	Coffee with less condensed milk
Kopi Ga Dai:	Coffee with more condensed milk

Substitute “kopi” with “teh” for the tea equivalent.

KNOW THE RULES

The rule of law ensures the stability of Singapore's multicultural society, as well as the safety of the general public.



Enjoying Public Spaces

Be gracious to one another to create a pleasant environment for everyone.

- Take care of public and private property, they should not be vandalised.
- Dress appropriately as public nudity is not allowed.
- Fighting, using vulgarities or making obscene gestures at others are offences punishable by law.
- Holding public talks, assemblies or processions to support a cause or mark any event requires a permit from the Singapore Police Force. Find out more: www.spf.gov.sg
- Post flyers on advertising notice boards but not bus stops or pillars of covered walkways.

Environment Matters

Singapore takes care of its air, water and parks. Help keep this city clean:

- Spitting or urinating in public is an unhygienic and socially irresponsible act. Offenders can be fined.
- Bin your rubbish. Littering offenders can be fined and may be imposed a Correct Work Order (CWO) to clean public places.
- Smoke at designated smoking areas and dispose of cigarette butts into ashtrays of litter bins provided. Smoking is not allowed in locations such as malls, offices, hospitals, schools, parks, bus-stops and common areas of residential buildings.

Find out more from the Public Hygiene Council: www.publichygienecouncil.sg

RESPECTING RACE AND RELIGION

Singapore's Constitution protects the freedom of religion and people of different races and religions live, work and play in shared spaces across the country. For example, public housing void decks often play host to both Malay weddings and Chinese funerals.

The communal riots of 1964 are a constant reminder that all communities living here should be considerate and tolerant of the culture and customs of others. There are also laws such as the Sedition Act and the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act that make inciting ill-will, division or hatred among different ethnic and religious communities a punishable offence.

Show respect to others in words and actions, as well as in public and private spaces.

Be open to practices of different races and religions existing in the same public spaces.

Discuss and mediate to resolve disputes.

Do not direct insults at others.

Do not defame ethnic or religious practices of other groups.

Online

Being respectful extends to cyberspace too. Posting on social media, discussion forums or blogs should be no different from speaking with others face to face. Find out more from the Media Literacy Council: www.medialiteracycouncil.sg

Avoid offending others when expressing personal thoughts online.

Do not post insensitive racial or religious messages. It is punishable by law.

Think before posting. You might not be able to delete your online comments if someone has made a screen-capture of it.



Racial Harmony Day is commemorated on 21 July every year so that Singaporeans remember the communal riots of 1964, the year when two separate series of riots involving clashes between Malays and Chinese occurred. On this day, schools teach students the importance of maintaining harmony in a multicultural and multi-ethnic nation. The day is also celebrated by grassroots organisations such as the People's Association, Community Development Councils and OnePeople.sg to strengthen race relations among Singaporeans.

LIFE IN SINGAPORE

A multicultural society that is cohesive and fair is what makes this country rewarding to live, work and learn in.



LIVING

Singapore is home to people of different religions and cultures who live all across the country. Many live in high-rise residences that are densely populated and a little thoughtfulness goes a long way in creating a friendly living estate for all.

Be Neighbourly

Greet those living around you and make friends.

Talk to neighbours and get to know them.

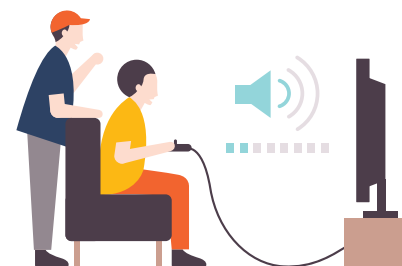
Lend a helping hand.

Participate in community activities.

Invite neighbours over for gatherings.

Be Considerate

Living with others especially in densely populated areas requires considerate behaviour while at home and around the neighbourhood.



At Home

- Keep your volume low, especially during the quiet hours between 10.30pm and 7am.
- Do not place plants or other objects on window sills and air-con ledges if staying in a high-rise block. These objects may endanger lives and/or injure

others should they be knocked over.

- Throwing objects from a window is a serious offence. There is a jail term and fine for offenders and for rental flats, the Housing and Development Board (HDB) may compulsorily acquire the flat or terminate the tenancy.
- Dry laundry using appropriate tools (e.g. bamboo pole holders) and ensure that your wet clothes do not drip onto your neighbours' laundry. Do not dry laundry in common areas such as the stairs, corridors or playgrounds.
- Keep your home dengue-free by preventing mosquitoes from breeding. Dengue may lead to loss of income, expensive medical fees and even death. Find out about the National Environment Agency's (NEA) 5-step Mozzie Wipeout: www.nea.gov.sg
- Reduce waste and recycle by separating your trash. Deposit recyclables into the blue commingled recycling bin or centralised recycling chute in public housing and landed estates. For private apartments and condominiums, check with the managing agent on where to dispose of your recyclables. Find out more from NEA: www.nea.gov.sg/3Rs



Along the Corridor

- Keep lifts and common areas clean.
- Keep corridors and staircases clear of obstruction. Cluttered corridors and staircases are potential fire hazards and impede evacuation in the event of fire.
- Throw garbage into rubbish chutes, but
 - Do not stuff oversized items that block the chute.
 - Do not throw chemicals or other flammable items into the chute.
- Dispose of bulky items at the estate's Bulky Items Disposal Bins, or call the Town Council (www.towncouncils.sg) to remove them.

Around the Estate

- Keep dogs on leash and pick up your pet's waste.
- Cats are not allowed as pets in public housing flats.
- Do not feed pigeons.
- Respect religious practices, including:
 - The placement of crucifixes on main doors and Taoist altars outside homes.
 - The burning of joss paper, particularly during the Hungry Ghost Festival.

- Common spaces, such as void decks, can be booked for a range of activities. These include for wedding ceremonies, funeral rites and religious affairs. Be tolerant of such uses.

Find out more about being a good neighbour from HDB: www.hdb.gov.sg

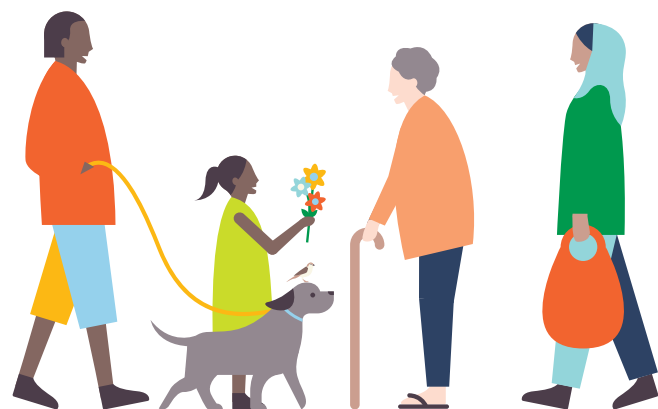
Get Involved

Adjust to life in Singapore by meeting new friends and joining activities.

Learn a new sport, language or skill at Community Clubs (CCs) or join activities organised by the Residents' Committees (RCs), including trips to places of interest in Singapore. Find out what is available from these organisations led by the People's Association (www.onepa.sg).

Support a cause and help others in need. Seek out relevant opportunities at the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre's Giving.sg (www.giving.sg).

Join programmes that promote cross-cultural exchanges. OnePeople.sg (www.onepeople.sg) offers resources and opportunities to learn about other cultures.



WORKING

Singapore's labour force is made up of citizens as well as professionals and skilled workers from around the world. They are attracted by the fair work environment and the country's robust labour laws overseen by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) (www.mom.gov.sg).

Meritocracy at Work

Singapore is a meritocratic society and employers are encouraged to recruit based on merit, be sensitive to employee's welfare and not discriminate based on ethnicity, religion, age, gender, amongst other factors. Many companies adopt the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices. It consists of five principles as advocated by the Tripartite Alliance for Fair & Progressive Employment Practices (www.tafep.sg):

- 1 Recruit and select on the basis of merit (such as skills, experience or ability to perform the job) regardless of age, race, gender, religion, marital status and family responsibilities, or disability.
- 2 Treat employees fairly and with respect and put in place progressive human resource management systems.
- 3 Provide employees with equal opportunities for training and development based on their strengths and needs, to help them achieve their full potential.
- 4 Reward employees fairly based on their ability, performance, contribution and experience.
- 5 Comply with the labour laws and abide by fair employment practices.



Employment Rights and Resolving Disputes

Working conditions and rights are spelled out under the Employment Act, which provides the basic terms and working conditions for all types of employees, with some exceptions. Some terms covered are working hours, overtime, leave entitlement and other matters.

If problems arise at work, this can be first addressed by resolving amicably with the other party or through an internal grievance handling procedure. Help is also available via the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) (www.tadm.sg) and from over 60 employees' trade unions, most of which are affiliated to the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) (www.ntuc.org.sg).

Work Safely

The Workplace Safety and Health Act ensures the safety, health and welfare of persons at work. Organisations conduct regular safety briefings and fire drills to teach work safety rules and what to do in an emergency.

Working Together

Most workplaces, be it a multinational corporation to a small business or public agency, have people of different ethnicities and nationalities working side-by-side. This diverse workforce is why it is important to use English as the common language at all aspects of work (e.g. contracts, documents and meetings).

NATIONAL SERVICE AND WORK

Singaporean males may have to take time off work to report for In-Camp Training (ICT). This is part of their National Service commitment in the armed forces, police or civil defence. Employers and managers are given advance notice so that arrangements can be made to cover the employee's duties. Many companies also support their employees in fulfilling their duties as Operationally-Ready National Servicemen (NSmen). For example, they make special work arrangements or reward staff with monetary incentives when they do well in their National Service training.



STUDYING

The education landscape in Singapore is diverse. Publicly-funded institutions under the Ministry of Education (MOE) (www.moe.gov.sg) offer a wide range of options for students, from the primary and secondary, to the post-secondary levels. There are also private institutions for students of different education levels, with some serving the needs of specific nationalities.

Meritocracy in Schools

In Singapore, students are admitted, ranked and rewarded according to their academic and non-academic achievements. Such a system ensures all students have equal opportunities to learn, achieve and excel. Meritocracy is also the best means to maximise the different capacities of the population.

A Diverse Learning Environment

The education system embraces a culture of openness between genders and among communities to make learning more effective.

Multicultural and mixed gender: It is common to find students of different races, religions and genders in the same classroom.

Multi-languages: Most lessons are taught in English and it is the main language used, in order to maintain a common space for communication and learning. At the same time, bilingualism is emphasised in schools to keep Singapore's diverse cultures and traditions alive. Students are thus encouraged to be fluent in both English and their mother tongue, be it Malay, Mandarin, Tamil or other ethnic languages.



Student Benefits

Access affordable services while studying in Singapore.

Accommodation: Students may opt to stay on-campus, in private hostels, private apartments or HDB flats.

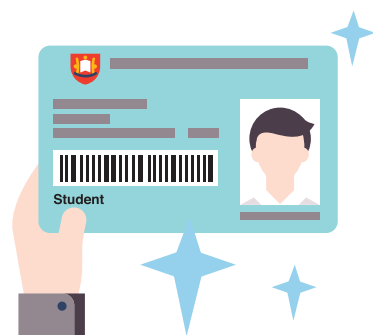
Healthcare: Students may wish to visit private clinics or polyclinics if medical services are required.

Transportation: Full-time students from publicly-funded schools and institutions can enjoy student fares or apply for monthly concession passes to travel on buses, MRT and LRT trains. Find out more from TransitLink: www.transitlink.com.sg

Making Friends

Interacting with other students promotes cultural understanding and integration.

- Join the school's clubs, societies and uniformed groups and get immersed in student life.
- Volunteer time and give back to society and the less fortunate. Besides volunteer programmes organised by schools, the National Youth Council (NYC) (www.nyc.gov.sg) has many initiatives, such as the Young ChangeMakers and the Youth Expedition Project, to help students contribute back to society.



WORKING WHILE STUDYING

International students on Student's Pass may work if they meet specific requirements. Full-time matriculated students from approved institutions are allowed to work without work pass during vacation. They may also work during school term, without a work pass, if such work does not take up more than 16 hours a week or as part of the school's industrial attachment programme that contributes towards graduation requirements. Find out more from MOM: www.mom.gov.sg

STAY CONNECTED

Settling into a new country can be overwhelming. Beyond this handbook, there are other avenues to learn about Singapore.

More Online

Keep up to date with the Singapore government at gov.sg and other related websites.

<u>Matters</u>	<u>Agencies</u>	<u>Websites</u>
Community	People's Association (PA) National Integration Council (NIC)	www.pa.gov.sg www.nationalintegrationcouncil.org.sg
Education	Ministry of Education (MOE)	www.moe.gov.sg
Immigration	Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)	www.ica.gov.sg
Labour	Ministry of Manpower (MOM)	www.mom.gov.sg
Postal	SingPost	www.singpost.com
Public Housing	Housing and Development Board (HDB) Town Councils	www.hdb.gov.sg www.towncouncils.sg
Tax	Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS)	www.iras.gov.sg
Transport	Land Transport Authority (LTA) TransitLink	www.lta.gov.sg www.transitlink.com.sg

Go Digital

Check out these apps and e-services that showcase how Singapore is harnessing technology to empower people to lead meaningful and fulfilled lives. Find out more from the Smart Nation Office: www.smartnation.sg

eAppt@ICA	Make appointments with the immigration authority.
myENV	Stay updated of the weather and environment.
MyTransport Singapore	Plan your commute.
NLB Mobile	Borrow eBooks and access other library services.
OneService	Report municipal issues.
Parking.sg	Pay for parking in coupon-based public car parks.
PayNow	Send and receive money via your mobile number.
SGSecure	Be alerted during major emergencies.
Wireless@SG	The nation's largest free Wi-Fi network.

Helplines

Who to contact in case of an emergency or for assistance.

Police (Emergency)	999
Police (Non-critical)	1800 255 0000
Fire brigade or Ambulance (Emergency)	995
Ambulance (Non-emergency)	1777
The Samaritans of Singapore	1800 221 4444

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National Heritage Board
Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices
Urban Redevelopment Authority

