



Your Singapore Little Black Book

Introduction

Let's be honest: if Singapore were a high school student it would be the nerd of the classroom (the non-chewing-gum-kind of course). This high achiever clearly wants to be the best and first at everything: home to some of the world's swankiest hotels; host of the world's first F1 night race; home to the world's biggest observation wheel. And that floating crystal pavilion at Marina Bay Sands? It belongs to Mr Louis Vuitton and yes, it's the first of its kind. This little red dot may have been on your radar, but we've uncovered the Singapore you don't know – the one that speaks four official languages, likes to eat roti prata at lam and dessert at 2am before catching a flick at 3am. The only way to truly figure out this enigmatic city is to discover and experience it progressively. So scratch beneath the surface, take it all in, and you just might realise there's far more chic to this geek.

This Little Black Book belongs to...

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Tel + 61 2 8239 5990
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Editorial

Guide Editor Laura Venuto
Art Director Phil Bunting
Contributors Vanessa Mulquiney, Clare Brundle, Terence Goh, Sandra Leong, Mathew Webb, Matthew Lee

Executive

Managing Director Justin Etheridge
justin.etheridge@au.timeout.com
Commercial Director Michael Rodrigues
michael.rodrigues@au.timeout.com

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Throughout the book, these little red dots denote a Time Out favourite

Singapore in context

Size doesn't matter: this tiny city-state has big ambitions



Singapore skyline

No, Singapore is not part of China; yes the commercial import of chewing gum is banned (although the chewing of it isn't); and yes – it is very, very clean.

Nicknames are one way of getting a grip on modern Singapore: Lion City, Garden City, New Asia, the Little Red Dot and Fine City – there have been so many that they start to cancel one another out. Singapore, is after all, an inadvertent nation that has made itself up as it has gone along. It proudly proclaims its Asianness and routinely tops world globalisation indexes with pride. This high achiever has a chic side too. It's home to some of the world's swankiest hotels, along with an increasing number of boutique hotels and bars. And then there's the mega-malls – yes, they're all that they're cracked up to be.

The people are intelligent, well-dressed, and not so modest. They're predominantly Chinese, but there are significant numbers of Malays and Indians plus a foreign element: about 18% are non-residents, and another 7% permanent residents. With this cultural mix, it's only natural that the food choices are plentiful. As the different races intermingled, they exchanged recipes, cherry-picked techniques and ingredients and adapted their cuisines. Singapore is highly urbanised but its nickname 'the Garden City' is one to be proud of. Outside the city centre are nature reserves and pockets of rainforest, and even some farmland.

So look beyond the Singapore clichés about chewing gum and cleanliness: there's more to this little red dot than such simplifications allow. The only way to find out is to leave the confines of Changi Airport and explore. Because if the airport is this good, can you imagine what's beyond?

Word up Got Singlish lah!

A brief guide to Singapore's own pidgin English...



It's not surprising that Singapore is the modern-day Babel, with four 'official' languages – English, Chinese, Tamil, and Malay – a host of unofficial languages, and Singapore's unique gift to the English-speaking world, Singlish – a pidgin English that draws heavily from Chinese grammar translated back to English, spoken with the cadences and the speed of Malay, and peppered with Hokkien, Malay and some Tamil expressions.

Singlish adds 'lah' to the end of sentences or exclamations for emphasis, such as telling an impatient person to 'Wait, lah!'. There are other versions of this – lor, meh and mah being favourites. Sentences are often abbreviated until all that's left is the verb. In answer to a query about driving to the airport, a taxi driver might reply 'can' or 'cannot'. Other examples include 'want' and 'don't want' which might sound like 'wan' and 'donwan', as the 't' will be dropped.

English expressions have also taken on new meanings in Singlish. Spoit means broken, as in 'this camera is spoit', and 'to keep' means to 'put away' thus 'keep the clothes' would mean 'put the clothes away'.

"Ah beng"

A male bogan.

"Ah lian"

Female form of Ah Beng.

"Aiyah/Ayioh"

Chinese equivalent of 'Oh no!' or 'Oh dear!'

"Ang moh"

Literally means 'red hair'. A commonly used term for Caucasians.

"Aunty/Uncle"

Pronounced 'Antee' or 'Uncaaaal', these are used as a generic address for middle aged or elderly woman/men. Referring to older Singaporeans in this way will give an Ang Moh a lot of credibility.

"Kopitiam"

Literally means 'coffee shop'.

"Kiasu"

Literally means to be afraid of losing/missing out on something. It's a defining characteristic of many Singaporeans who will rush for early-bird event tickets, opening-night tables at new restaurants or exploit any other opportunity to get ahead.

"Lah/Leh"

Tagged at the end of a sentence as an exclamation except in questions.

"Sotong"

Forgetful, or not knowing what's going on.

"Spoil market"

Someone who does his work so well that he makes everyone else look bad.

"Ta pau"

Take away.

Singapore Events Calendar

January–February Chinese New Year Festivities

This is the biggest festival of the year. Activities take place all over town but are centred on Chinatown with street-lighting ceremonies, the spectacular Chingay parade, lion dance competition and magnificent fireworks.



Chingay Parade

March–May Singapore Biennale

Contemporary art takes over the city as international and local artists present exciting and challenging new works across a number of venues.



Singapore Biennale

Late April–early May World Gourmet Summit

Cook and dine with the culinary masters at this summit spread across the city's top restaurants and bars.



Singapore Arts Festival

Mid May Asia Fashion Exchange

Be among the first to spot the hottest new local labels and ogle world-class collections by international designers at this celebration of fashion.

Mid May–June Singapore Arts Festival

Running for more than 30 years, this festival celebrates the music, dance, theatre and visual arts of Singapore's diverse community.

Great Singapore Sale



May–July Great Singapore Sale

Need we say more? Shopping, the national obsession (after eating and talking about eating) goes into overdrive.

June–July Singapore River Festival

Follow the Singapore River from Boat Quay to Robertson Quay as it bursts into life with bumboat parades, live music and aerial shows nightly.



Singapore Food Festival

July Singapore Food Festival

A fortnight-long string of foodie events held across town. You won't find gourmet chefs, though; top street food vendors are the focus.

August–September Mid-Autumn Festival

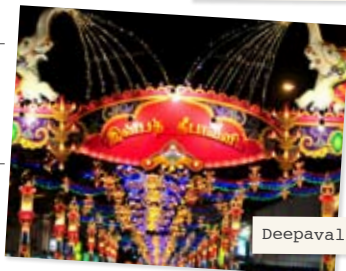
This Chinese Festival in honour of the full moon is celebrated with colourful paper lanterns and street lights. The food of the festival, mooncakes, abound in Chinatown.



Singapore F1 GP

Hari Raya Puasa

For this celebration of the end of the month-long fasting period of Ramadan, the streets of Kampong Glam come alive with roadside bazaars and traditional Malay food.



Deepavali

Late September Singapore F1 Grand Prix

Expect high-speed action on the Marina Bay F1 street circuit, with its spectacular city backdrop.

Late October Deepavali

Little India's Serangoon Road is artfully illuminated for this Hindu festival symbolising the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness.

Mid November–December Christmas in the Tropics

Orchard Road and Marina Bay are dressed in Yuletide finery from mid-November, marking the beginning of Christmas celebrations.



Marina Bay New Year Countdown

December/January Marina Bay New Year Countdown

The hottest countdown in town.

Your Singapore Must-Do List

No trip to Singapore is complete without...



SkyPark

✓ Get sky high

See the whole of Singapore from the **SkyPark** of Marina Bay Sands. At 200 metres above ground, the boat-shaped SkyPark took three months to lift up to the 57th storey where it now sits prettily atop three hotel towers and is home to the famous infinity rooftop pool. **10 Bayfront Ave, Marina Bay.** (+65 6688 8868 www.marinabaysands.com).

✓ Walk the talk

Put on your walking shoes and join an **Original Singapore Walk** by Journeys, as guides talk you through Singapore's lesser-known history. From atmospheric night walks through the old red-light district of Chinatown to fascinating war trails, expert storytellers shine a light into the nooks and crannies of the city even locals don't know about, bringing its fascinating history and culture to life. (+65 6325 1631 www.journeys.com.sg).



Clarke Quay

✓ Find a unique treasure in Haji Lane

Budget bohemia thrives in Haji Lane, a sliver of an alley sandwiched between Arab Street and Bali Lane. Mini-boutiques mix with Middle Eastern shisha cafes and design houses. Pick up some monochrome accessories at **Salad** (55 Haji Ln, +65 6299 5808) and for kitsch appeal, don't miss **Pluck** (31/33 Haji Ln, +65 6396 4048). For an even more exciting fashion experience you'll need to leave ground level and make your way to the second floor of the shop houses. **Soon Lee** is one such must-visit shop offering an eclectic range of one-of-a-kind clothes, jewellery, hats and accessories (56 Haji Ln +65 6297 0198).

✓ Feel the beat of Clarke and Boat Quay

Down by the riverside of the Colonial District is where much of Singapore have their fun, with a number of the most popular bars, pubs and nightclubs perched on the edge of the river along Clarke and Boat Quay. Discover a little Latin flavour at **Cuba Libre** (01-13 Clarke Quay, +65 6338 8982) or rub shoulders with the beautiful people at **Attica** (3a Clarke Quay, +65 6333 9973). If your dance moves leave a little to be desired, you can always get your thrills beyond the bars. Try the **G-MAX Reverse Bungee** or **GX5 Extreme Swing** instead – no rhythm required. (3E River Valley Road +65 6338 1146).



Night Safari

- ✓ Give your feet a fish pedicure

Don't inflict your stinky feet on some poor pedicurist. Instead, let the fish take care of them. A shoal of industrious little Turkish fish wait in a pool to nibble away dead skin and leave your toes fresh and exfoliated. Best avoided by those with ticklish feet! Fish reflexology is \$35 for 20 minutes in the pool and 20 minutes foot reflexology. **Kenko Reflexology and Fish Spa** 313 Orchard Rd. (+65 6887 0303 www.kenko.com.sg).

- ✓ Go wild at the Night Safari

Through the use of special lighting, the night zoo allows you to observe what 900 nocturnal animals get up to after dusk. The 45-minute narrated tram ride is the best way to see the animals from the safety of your seat. After the trip, brave the dark walking trails to get a closer look at smaller animals such as flying squirrels and dangling bats. 80 Mandai Lake Rd. (+65 6269 3411 www.nightsafari.com.sg).

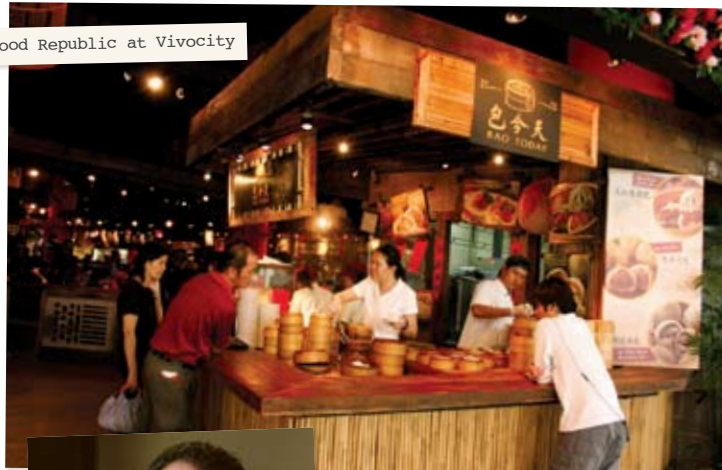
- ✓ Join Singapore's culture club

Catch a performance by international touring companies like the Royal Shakespeare Company or local talents like the Singapore Symphony Orchestra at the iconic landmark and world-class artistic venue, **The Esplanade**. 1 Esplanade Dr. (+65 6828 8377 www.esplanade.com).

- ✓ See how the locals live

Venture beyond the hub of the city to visit the heartlands and suburban neighbourhoods where locals reside, shop and socialise. **Toa Payoh** features a bustling local mall as well as the grand Buddhist temple, **Lian Shan Shuang Lin monastery** (www.shuanglin.sg). **Katong** and **Joo Chiat** are also worth a visit for their melting pot of cultures – from Malay to Indian to Chinese to Peranakan – making them brilliant areas to visit for sampling the local food stalls alone.

Food Republic at Vivocity



Tetsuya Wakuda

- ✓ Buy lunch with your spare change...

Start with a dirt-cheap yet delicious lunch from one of Singapore's many hawker centres. Catch delicious roast pork or fluffy pancakes at **Tiong Bahru Hawker Centre** (Cnr Lim Liak St & Seng Poh Rd) for around \$3 (no kidding) or fabulous seafood at **Lau Pa Sat** (Cnr Boon Tat St & Robinson Rd). Or if you are in a shopping mall, check out the food courts such as **Vivocity's Food Republic** (1 Harbour Front Walk).



Waku Ghin

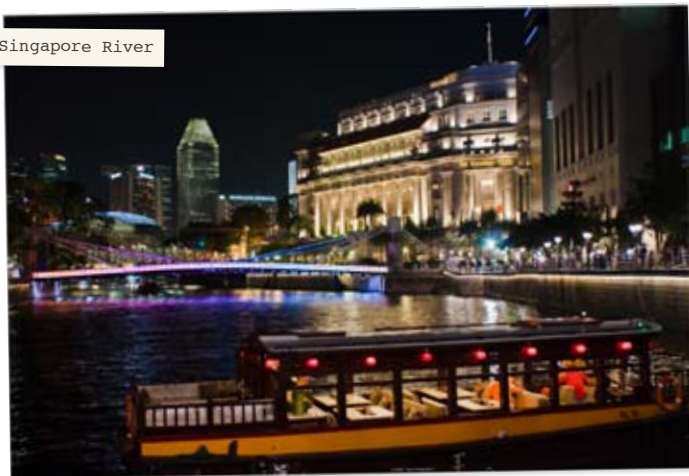
- ✓ ...then blow the budget for dinner

Splurge on a lavish and memorable dinner at Tetsuya's **Waku Ghin**, which offers multi-faceted dining at its quirkiest. Take in the opulent surroundings as you work your way through the incredible 10-course degustation menu, which starts at \$325. 10 Beyfont Ave, Casino Lvl 2, Marina Bay Sands. (+65 6688 8507).

Around Town & Sightseeing

Make the most of Singapore's best attractions

Singapore River



Journey's 'Secrets of the Red Lantern' Walking Tour

Go here to... learn about Chinatown's dodgy past

Singapore may resemble Disneyland but once upon a time (circa 1887) it was the ultimate Sin City and for good reason: there were more brothels, opium and gambling dens than you could poke an incense stick at. Take a Friday evening walking tour through the once-notorious red-light district in Chinatown and learn why the area was once known as Bu Ye Tian – the Place of Nightless Days. *Prices start at \$30 (adult) and \$15 (child). Child aged 6 years and below joins for free. D'Centennial Building, 100 Lorong 23 Geylang, #07-01. (+65 6325 1631 www.journeys.com.sg).*

Pulau Ubin

Go here to... turn back time

A reminder of old Singapore, the boomerang-shaped island is covered in trees (the remnants of rubber plantations) and dotted with beaches and characterful old Malay houses. It contains the country's last kampongs where villagers still count on wells for water and generators for electricity. The best way to explore is by bike, which cost \$3–\$8 to rent. Less tiring (but less fun) is a taxi van – they're unmetered, so negotiate the fare beforehand. There are three cycling trails (on paved and dirt roads), which lead past old fruit and rubber plantations, mangrove swamps, water-filled quarry pits and old wooden houses. (+65 6542 4102 www.parks.gov.sg).



Jurong Bird Park

Jurong Bird Park

Go here to... have breakfast with the birds

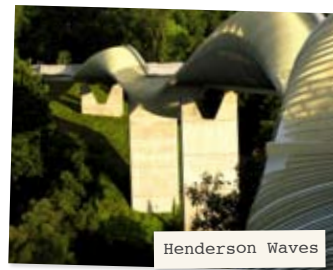
This top-notch attraction contains 8,000 birds from 600 species. There's a multitude of exotic and endangered South-East Asian species, alongside pelicans, penguins, flamingoes, ibises, swans, toucans, birds of paradise – and more. Key attractions include the largest walk-in aviary in the world, where you'll find a 30m (98ft) man-made waterfall and 1,500 birds from Africa and South America flying freely within the huge compound. Make new feathered friends like Big John, the park's oldest cockatoo, and Merlin, a yellow-naped Amazon who tells fortunes at the interactive Early Bird Breakfast Show on daily from 8.30am. 2 *Jurong Hill (+65 6265 0022 www.birdpark.com.sg).*

Singapore Bumboat Cruise

Go here to... take in the sights of the Singapore River

See the city from the water on a no-frills 30-minute journey aboard a bumboat. You can alight at any of the nine jetties along the Singapore River, including the Esplanade, the Fullerton, Riverside Point, Boat Quay and Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel. Boats run daily (9.30am–10.30pm). (+65 6336 6111/19 www.rivercruise.com.sg).

Top 5... Green trails



Henderson Waves

1 Labrador Park & Henderson Waves

Labrador Park provides the perfect coastal setting for a scenic skirmish with wartime history. While Henderson Waves, Singapore's highest pedestrian bridge spans Mount Faber Park, Telok Blangah Hill, Hort Park and Kent Ridge Park.

2 Bukit Timah Reserve

There are four walking trails to enjoy but more interesting are the unpaved trails: Route 3 (green) follows a winding forest path, past caves used by Japanese soldiers in World War II.

3 Sungei Buloh Wetlands

This wetland reserve of mangrove swamps, ponds and secondary forest is home to 140 species of birds; early morning is the best time for birdwatching.

4 MacRitchie Reservoir

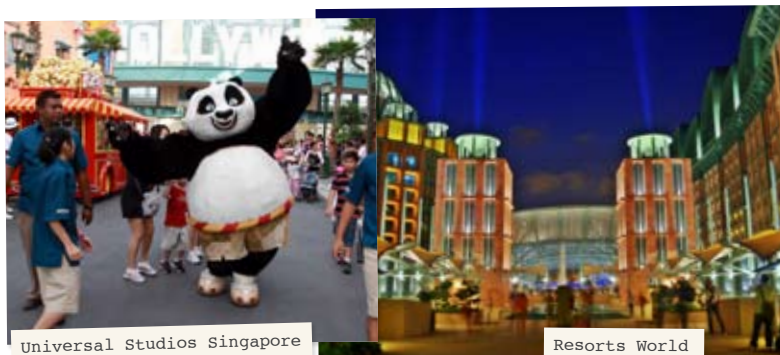
Singapore's oldest and most popular nature park is a haven for joggers, families and weekend strollers; occasional free concerts are held on Sundays.

5 Gardens by the Bay

See Singapore's tropical diversity first-hand, and keep an eye out for the 55m-tall Super Trees in Marina Bay!

Sentosa Island

In what used to be a small fishing village now stands Singapore's most exciting playground. Sentosa Island is jam-packed with a myriad of activities, from theme parks to a mega-resort and much more...



Universal Studios Singapore

Resorts World

Universal Studios Singapore

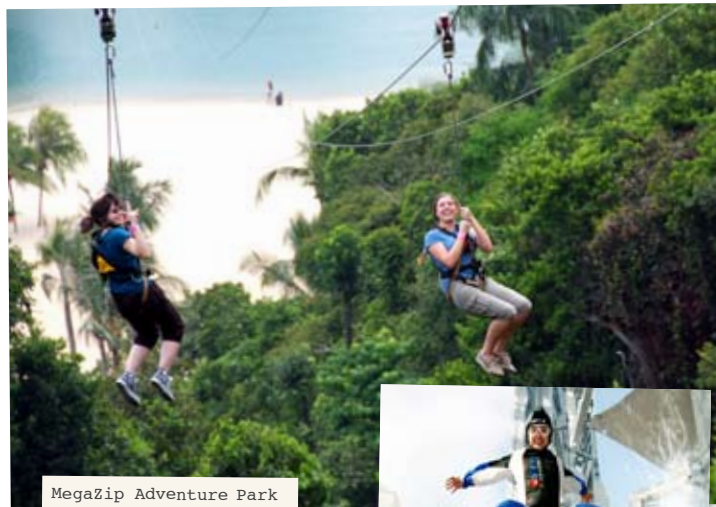
Young VICs (Very Important Children) reckon this is where the real fun is and mum and dad just might agree: spanning 20 hectares, Universal Studios is big enough to tire your little mites out. There are 24 attractions across seven Hollywood blockbuster-themed zones including *Jurassic Park Rapids Adventure*, *Waterworld*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and our favourite, *Revenge of the Mummy*. The indoor rollercoaster ghost train travels through a pitch-dark room and has enough surprises to scare the bejesus out of you – flying (fake, of course) mummies and insects, water splashes (real), and a live flame that bursts suddenly on top of your head. Grab the front seat and leave the designer sandals home. **1 Day Adult Pass \$66, 1 Day Child Pass \$48.** 39 Artillery Ave, Sentosa. (+65 6577 8888 www.rwsentosa.com).

Resorts World Sentosa

This pleasure seeker's mecca of non-stop entertainment, shopping and dining hosts everything from a Vegas-style casino to six unique world-class hotels, to Universal Studios itself (see left). Resorts World is also set to house the soon-to-open Marine World where you can get up close and personal with the ocean's most fascinating creatures, and history buffs can also explore the history of the Maritime Silk Route at the Maritime Xperiential Museum. **8 Sentosa Gateway.** (+65 6577 8899 www.rwsentosa.com).

MegaZip Adventure Park

Singapore's longest and steepest flying fox ride will send you soaring at breathtaking speeds across the 450m course. Best on an empty stomach. **Imbiah Hill Rd, Sentosa.** (+65 6884 5602 megazip.com.sg).



MegaZip Adventure Park

Sentosa Luge

This part toboggan, part go-cart ride down a choice of two 650-metre-long tracks, involving hairpin bends and speedy straight sections, is a thrilling, adrenaline-fuelled adventure for kids and kids-at-heart. The tracks are even open at night for downhill dare-devilling in the dark. At the end of the track you can hop on the free SkyRide across the treetops back to the start. **Imbiah Lookout, beside Beach station.** (+65 6274 0472 www.hg.sg/sentosa/luge).

Surfing Safari

Put your surfing skills to the ultimate test at Wave House Sentosa. Grab a boogie board and ride the rush of water on the Double FlowRider, or try surfing the more challenging Flow Barrel, an endless six-foot wave. **36 Siloso Beach Walk.** (+65 6274 0472 www.wavehousesentosa.com). Otherwise, if you just fancy a stroll along the sand, a relaxing paddle in a kayak or even beach volleyball, Sentosa has 3.2km of white, sandy beaches to fit the bill.



iFly

iFly

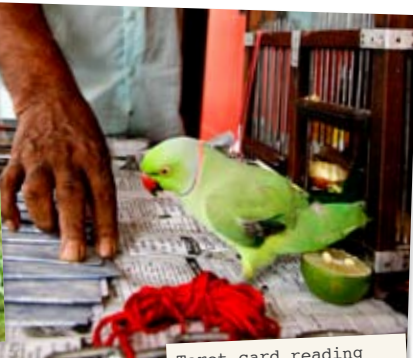
Ever fancied the idea of skydiving but not the risks that come along with hurtling yourself out of a plane with nothing but a parachute? iFly, the world's largest wind tunnel gives you the chance to experience the jelly-cheeked, wind-in-your-hair adrenaline-rush of having just jumped out of a plane... without actually having to. **Siloso Beachfront, Beside Beach Station.** (www.iflysingapore.com).

Fort Siloso

If you visit only one World War II-related site, make it this one. The story of Japan's victory is punchily told, alongside displays on the local civilian experience during the Japanese occupation. **Siloso Point, Near Underwater World, Sentosa Island.** (+65 1800 736 8672 www.fortsiloso.com).



Bollywood Veggies



Tarot card reading

Alternative Singapore

Scratch beneath the surface to discover another side of Singapore

Cook up a storm
Love Singapore food? Then why not learn how to cook it so you can continue to enjoy it when you return home? Learn the secrets of some of Singapore's top chefs and cookbook authors at **Shermay's Cooking School**. (Chip Bee Gardens, Holland Village, Blk 43 Jalan Merah Saga, +65 6479 8442 www.shermay.com).

Escape to the country
If you think Singapore is all about the fast-paced bustle of the city, think again. **D'Kranji Farm Resort** is Singapore's first and only farm stay, where you can soak up the countryside in luxury villas overlooking working fruit and vegetable plantations. Explore the farms by day and enjoy the fruits of its labour on your dinner plate that evening at the retreat's restaurant. 10 Neo Tiew Ln 2, Kranji. (+65 6862 9717 www.dkranji.com.sg). While you're in the area, it would be rude not to pop in to **Bollywood Veggies** and say hello to Mrs Ivy Singh-Lim, owner and self-proclaimed 'gentle-warrior farmer'. 100 Neo Tiew Rd, Kranji. (+65 6898 5001 www.bollywoodveggies.com).

Upskill
There are hundreds of short courses on offer in Singapore, so why not take a new skill home in your suitcase along with the rest of your souvenirs – perhaps Chinese paper cutting, Tai Chi or qi gong meditation?

Take a pilgrimage
Kusu Island (which means Tortoise Island in Chinese) lies six kilometres off the southern end of Singapore. A tranquil isle dotted with trees, lagoons, shrines and a Taoist temple, it is quiet most of the year, but during the ninth lunar month, which falls between September and November, thousands of people flock to the island to pray for health, wealth and good fortune. There is also a sanctuary where hundreds of tortoises are housed. (+65 6534 9339).

Find your fortune
Walk around Tekka Market in **Little India**, and more likely than not you'll come across a weathered Indian man with his faithful parrot, both ready to tell the fortune of any passerby, for \$5 per reading. *Near the Tekka Market steps, Serangoon Rd.*



Singapore Flyer



Marina Bay Sands SkyPark



Jewel Cable Car

Top 5... Viewpoints

1 Singapore Flyer
Marina Bay's giant, 42-storey, 165m observation wheel is as touristy as it gets but you can't beat the 360-degree views of the city. Try the Singapore Food Trail while you're there. 30 Raffles Ave. (+65 6333 3311 www.singaporeflyer.com.sg).

2 Marina Bay Sands SkyPark
At 200 metres above ground, the SkyPark is large enough to hold 4.5 A380 jumbo jets, and offers unparalleled city views from the Observation Deck. \$20 adult, \$14 child. 10 Bayfront Ave, Marina Bay. (+65 6688 8868 www.marinabaysands.com).

3 New Asia Bar
It's located on Level 71 of the Equinox Complex, so you can expect a stunning cityscape as your backdrop while you gyrate to top 40 tunes. *Swissôtel the Stamford, Lvl 71, Equinox Complex, 2 Stamford Rd.* (+65 6837 3322 www.swissotel.com).

4 Lookout near Reflections at Bukit Chandu
Take in tranquil views of the verdant Kent Ridge Park, a marked contrast from the inner-city skyscrapers and skyline you'll see from the SkyPark and the Singapore Flyer. 31K Pepys Rd. (www.nhb.gov.sg/www/rbc.html).

5 Jewel Cable Car Ride at Mount Faber
Enjoy views of the HarbourFront precinct and southern islands on this 12-minute cable car ride from Mount Faber to Imbiah lookout on Sentosa Island. Take the ride at night when the whole city lights up. *The Jewel Box Cablecar Station, 109 Mount Faber Rd.* (+65 6377 9638 www.mountfaber.com.sg).

Art & Culture

Thanks to Singapore's diverse population there is a whole melting pot of cultures to experience within one compact city. Think of it as Instant Asia...



National Museum of Singapore

National Museum of Singapore



After a mega-bucks (\$118 million) refurbishment and rebranding, the Singapore History Museum reopened as the National Museum of Singapore, the largest museum on the island. The museum comprises two main galleries: the Singapore History Gallery, which traces the history of Singapore from its beginnings in the 14th century to the present day, and the Singapore Living Galleries, which focus on four lifestyle themes – food, fashion, film and photography. The main gallery is jam-packed with objects and film footage, accompanied by no less than seven hours of audio narrative, explanations, dramatisations and soundscapes. It's worth a visit just for the building, an imposing neoclassical structure, complemented by modern glass additions. Look out for films shown on the outdoor screen. 93 Stamford Rd. (+65 6332 5642 www.nationalmuseum.sg).

8Q SAM

8Q is the Singapore Art Museum's newest contemporary art extension. Housed in the former Catholic High School, this multidisciplinary space is set to become a place for homegrown artists and the public to engage in a lively art exchange. The National Heritage Board recently renovated and converted the classrooms in the four-storey building into six galleries to showcase contemporary installation works, video and photography installation, performance art and sound art. 8 Queen St. (+65 6332 3222 www.singaporeartmuseum.sg).

Chinatown Heritage Centre

Housed within three restored shop houses, these 15 galleries feature the rich history and cultural heritage of Chinatown, including the story of Chinese immigrants who came to find work in Singapore during the colonial days. Highlights include rooms replicating coolies' living quarters and clan associations' activity halls prominent in those times. Tour guides are on hand and paint a vivid picture and, in true Singapore style, the gift shop is a good source of souvenirs. 48 Pagoda St. (+65 6325 2878 www.chinatownheritage.com.sg).



Esplanade Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade Theatres on the Bay

Few buildings have created such a stir as this one. Opened in 2002, the eye-catching bayfront complex has been dubbed 'the durians' by locals because of its resemblance to the spiky tropical fruit. Built at a cost of \$600 million, the Esplanade is Singapore's premier performing arts centre and often draws comparisons with the Sydney Opera House. Its crown jewels are the 1,600-seat Concert Hall and the 2,000-seat Theatre. There is also a black box Theatre Studio (seating 220) and a Recital Studio (245). Programming is an eclectic mix, veering from Western to Eastern flavours and including festivals and touring productions. 1 Esplanade Dr. (+65 6828 8222 www.esplanade.com).

Tanjong Pagar Distripark

For a whirlwind contemporary art fix, head to Singapore's foremost hub of emerging, forward-thinking art galleries, all housed in a single converted warehouse space. Start at Australian Indigenous art specialist ReDot Fine Art Gallery, then head to South-East Asian fine art photography specialist L2 Space to check out their latest showcase of Chinese artists from New York and Shanghai. Also merging Eastern and Western art is the increasingly prolific Fortune Cookie Projects, known for bringing such contemporary art grantees as Julian Schnabel and Daze to Singapore. Valentine Willie Fine Arts are devout champions of cutting-edge, provocative South-East Asian modern art, famous for their latest regional finds. Blk 39 Tanjong Pagar Distripark, 39 Keppel Rd.

Top 5...

Temples, mosques & churches



Thian Hock Keng Temple

1 Thian Hock Keng Temple

Newly arrived immigrants came here to burn incense in thanks to Ma Cho Po, a Taoist deity and protector of seafarers. 158 Telok Ayer St. (+65 6423 4616 www.thianhockkeng.com.sg).

2 Sri Mariamman Temple

Oddly enough, the oldest Hindu temple in Singapore is smack in the middle of Chinatown and the site of Theemidhi, a fire-walking ceremony held a week before Deepavali. 244 South Bridge Rd. (+65 6223 4064 www.heb.gov.sg).

3 Sultan Mosque

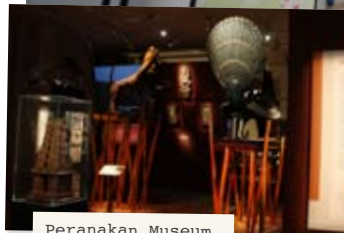
The largest unofficial centre of worship for local Muslims, the Sultan Mosque has a dome with a base made up of many glass bottles. 3 Muscat St. (+65 6293 4405 www.sultanmosque.org.sg).

4 St Andrew's Cathedral

Guided tours of this impressive Gothic edifice – built by Indian convict labourers and consecrated in 1862 – highlight distinctive features such as the Coventry Cross. 11 St Andrew's Rd. (+65 6337 6104 www.livingstreams.org.sg).

5 Wak Hai Cheng Bio Temple

Also known as the Calm Sea Temple, the temple was built in 1826 by Teochew fishermen and you may smell it before you see it: the forecourt is dominated by incense coils hung on wires. 30b Phillip St.



Peranakan Museum

Peranakan Museum

The name Peranakan describes both a rich culture and a unique ethnic group, arising from the meeting of Chinese and Malay peoples. This ten-gallery exhibition venue houses the world's largest and best overview of Peranakan life over three floors. Explore documents and artefacts – jewellery, silver, furniture, textiles and crockery predominate – brought to life through interactive and multimedia stations. The introductory gallery defines the Peranakan culture of Singapore, Malacca and Penang in broad terms; the second level is devoted to the Peranakan wedding and its associated rituals and accessories; and on the third level explore religion, public life and food. 39 Armenian St. (+65 6332 7591 www.peranakanmuseum.sg).

Changi War Museum & Chapel

This is the most famous of Singapore's World War II sites, even though the museum is housed in a purpose-built venue, and the chapel is a reconstruction (the original was shipped to Australia after the war, and is found in Canberra today). The main interest lies in the stories of industry and ingenuity within the POW camp. The civilian and military internees essentially established an alternative, if somewhat surreal, society, catering for everything from entertainment to the manufacture of thousands of everyday items. The chapel, located in the courtyard of the museum, encourages quiet reflection. It also houses copies of the kitschy but affecting Changi murals, recreated by the original artist, Stanley Warren, after a widely publicised international effort to find him; the preponderance of blue and white is because of his reliance on billiard cue chalk. The \$8 audio guide is comprehensive and complements the displays well. 1000 Upper Changi Rd North. (+65 6214 2451 www.changimuseum.com).

Shopping

You've died and gone to retail heaven...



ION Orchard

ION Orchard

Best for... the ultimate megamall experience with stunning architecture

It claims to be the 'centre of gravity' in the Singapore retail scene – and with jaw-dropping frontage, cutting-edge design, and more than 300 stores, it makes a good case. Apart from the obvious reason for coming here – shopping – be sure to check out the extra bells and whistles. There's ION Sky, a double-storey observation deck on the top two floors; a media 'membrane' – a 117m 'skin' that wraps round the complex that broadcasts telecasts of events and shows; ION2, the largest sheltered area on Orchard Road, that plays host to national parties; and

ION Art Level, 5,300² ft of art. Close by and worth a look is Japanese-owned Takashimaya (391 Orchard Rd, +65 6738 1111 www.takashimaya-sin.com) housed inside Ngee Ann City, which carries all the chi-chi fashion labels (Cartier, Gucci, Fendi). 2 Orchard Turn. (+65 6238 8228 www.ionorchard.com).

Mustafa Centre

Best for... just about everything

A Singapore institution, Mustafa's is open round the clock, offering 75,000² ft of bargains, not to mention a hotel, café and supermarket. It's a treasure trove of discount shopping that carries everything from skincare and electronics to sports wear and luggage. 145 Syed Alwi Rd. (+65 62955855 www.mustafa.com.sg).

My Singapore...

Camilla Franks

My Singapore in 3 words is...

Vibrant, ever-changing, fabulous! **Singapore style is...** Premium, with a colourful resort feel. I love nothing more than losing the heels, picking my most colourful kaftan and headscarf (for the humidity) and going exploring.

The best thing about shopping in Singapore is... That it combines the premium designer stores of Paris, with awe-inspiring shopping malls of Dubai and the quirky up-and-coming street designers of Tokyo – it's a shopper's paradise right on our doorstep.

The shop I can't walk past without buying something... Herve Leger in ION Orchard – his dresses are to die for!

Best bar to flaunt your new wardrobe... Lantern Bar on top of the Fullerton Bay Hotel. It's a poolside oasis complete with a gorgeous white fabric tent that overlooks Marina Bay – and the cocktails are bliss.

If you buy one thing in Singapore it should be... You can't just buy one! But if you had to, sunglasses or other goodies at the beautiful La Perla store in The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands.

My favourite thing I've bought in Singapore is... Beautiful hand-painted tiles from Arab Street. They inspired the design of my Camilla Singapore Weekender Bag and always take me back to remind me of the buzzing and unique atmosphere of the Arab Quarter.

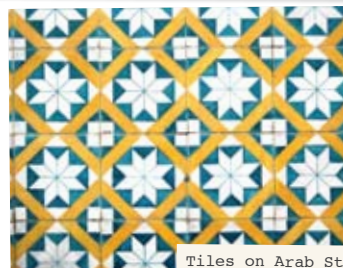
Best-kept shopping secret... Get off the beaten track. Shopping in Singapore is not just restricted to the premium brands and shopping malls that the city is renowned for, but also offers unique shopping hotspots you simply must explore down the backstreets and in the cultural districts. Head to Haji Lane in the Arab Quarter for beautiful fabrics and cute knick knacks, or Chinatown for its chic small boutiques. www.camilla.com.au



Australian designer Camilla Franks



Singapore Weekender Bag by Camilla



Tiles on Arab St

My top 5... Shopping secrets



Fashion writer and girl-about-town, **Grace Tay**, offers her top five Singapore shopping secrets

- 1 The Little Drom Store**
For local art, books, kitsch, and childhood memories. Don't forget to perve on the heavenly cakes from the co-share patisserie K ki. Pop round the corner to Stevie General Store (93 Club St, +65 6536 8590 www.steviegeneralstore.com) for edgy fashion and more vintage curios. 7 Ann Siang Hill. (+65 6225-5541 www.thelittledromstore.tumblr.com).
- 2 The Tong Tong Friendship Store**
For delightfully kooky Chinese-inspired fashion and accessories. #01-04/05 Shaw Towers. (+65 6396 3887 www.tongtong.sg).
- 3 City Plaza**
For lots of fashion finds here on the cheap; if you have time and patience to trawl, that is. Geylang Rd. (+65 6747 4728).
- 4 Boo-tiful**
For fine furniture for kids. Even if you don't have a kid, you'll want one of everything. 10 Winstedt Rd, #01-11. (+65 6737 0868 www.boo-tiful.com).
- 5 Beauty Emporium**
I love the visual merchandising and it's a way-cool shopping mart for self-pampering! 8D Dempsey Rd. #02-01 (+65 6475 7833).



The Shoppes

The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands

Best for... Designer, darling

Hailed as one of the premier luxury shopping experiences on the planet, Marina Bay Sands is the glittering home to the to the who's who of the designer world – from Hermès to Cartier, Gucci to Fendi, Yves Saint Laurent to Manolo Blahnik, and for the boys, there's even a Ferrari shop. But the high-end shops aren't the only impressive thing about this mall – if you find you're burning a hole in your soles (as well as your pocket) you can always put your feet up with a glamorous, luxurious boat ride along the canals which winds its way through the shops. 10 Bayfront Ave. (+65 6688 8868 www.marinabay Sands.com/shopping).

Tangs Orchard

Best for... department store shopping

After 76 years, the brainchild of local retail pioneer CK Tang remains a shopping paradise. The original department store is a nostalgic place for many Singaporeans and is still fit to boast the Tangs slogan 'All the Best Under One Roof'. Don't neglect to take a shopping break at the rooftop Island Café. 310 Orchard Rd. (+65 6737 5500 www.tangs.com).

Branding exercise

Look out for these big-name brands in Singapore, because you may not find them at home

1 H&M

This Swedish powerhouse is at the forefront of affordable chic, with guest designers including Lanvin, Viktor & Rolf and Stella McCartney lending their haute vision to fast fashion. Orchard Building, 1 Grange Rd. (www.hm.com).

2 Topshop/Topman

The UK high-street super brand is no doubt one of the most wished-for stores (by those unfortunate enough to live in a city without one), thanks to its savvy fashion collections at purse-friendly prices. ION Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn, with additional outlets. (+65 6509 8602, www.topshop.com). Fashion-conscious males also get a look-in with Topshop's offshoot Topman, which offers cutting-edge men's fashion that won't break the bank. Isetan Scotts, 1 Scott Rd. (+65 6733 1111 www.topman.com).

3 Marc by Marc Jacobs

The king of fashion (one of the few designers to make the *Time* 100 Influential People list) brings his supremely wearable styles to the streets of Singapore. Isetan, 350 Orchard Rd. (+65 6304 1393 www.marcjacobs.com).

4 Miss Selfridge

Fun and quirky, Miss Selfridge is one of the UK's leading high street brands stocking everything from party frocks to casual wear, accessories, swimwear and lingerie. Paragon, 290 Orchard Rd. (+65 6836 4867 www.missselfridge.com).



Uniqlo

5 Uniqlo

Japan's popular casual clothing brand offers functional staples that combine classic cuts with on-trend styles, designed to be mixed-and-matched into your own unique style. 313@Somerset, 313 Orchard Rd. (+65 6834 4073 www.uniqlo.com/sg).

6 Warehouse

Another UK high-street favourite, Warehouse's fashion leans towards the sleek and sexy, ideal for 20-somethings who know the latest trends by heart. ION Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn. (+65 6884 6035 www.warehouse.co.uk).

7 Pull and Bear

For the casual-chic shopper, this Spanish retailer will fit the bill with its cool but laidback urban offerings. Takashimaya Shopping Centre, 391 Orchard Rd. (+65 6735 9445 www.pullbear.com).

My Singapore... Antonia Kidman



Antonia Kidman

Universal Studios



Tekka Market, Little India



Wild Wild Wet

My Singapore in 3 words is...

Fragrant, green and safe.

Singapore with kids is...

So easy. There is always so much to do. From Universal Studios and the Aquarium at Sentosa to the Night Safari Zoo. The Science Centre is great and so is the Peranakan Museum. I love walking around Fort Canning or the Evolution Garden in the Botanical Gardens.

Cycling along the East Coast is fun and at night I love to hop on a River Boat and then grab some dinner at one of the waterside restaurants.

Best view in Singapore... Skypark at the top of Marina Bay Sands.

Best place to escape the crowds... MacRitchie Reservoir.

My favourite kind of Sunday in Singapore involves...

Breakfast at 'Boomarang' Café for some Aussie fare then moving into a relaxed afternoon either at home or with friends.

Best place to soak up the culture in Singapore... Tekka Market, Little India.

Best place for family fun... Wild Wild Wet!

Favourite place to visit from Singapore...

Phuket – it's close, has crystal clear water and I'm also a big fan of Thai food.

Louis Vuitton

Best for... wow factor

Visit the super-chic designer brand's 'island' store – a glass-and-steel Crystal Pavilion that floats on the water, smack bang on Marina Bay. We think it definitely compares with the Takashi Murakami-themed store in Tokyo. *Marina Bay Sands. (www.marinabay-sands.com).*



Far East Plaza

Sim Lim Square

Best for... electronics (don't forget to claim your GST on departure)

Though rough around the edges, and full of sour-faced, hard-nosed shopkeepers, this old mall offers some of the best deals in town. Crammed with hundreds of tiny shops, it's a good bet for hard-to-find computer and electronic parts, but also crowded and frustrating. The higher you go, the lower the prices are for accessories and blank DVDs and CDs. Hagglng is compulsory; make sure you shop around for the best price. *1 Rochor Canal Rd. (+65 6338 3859 www.simlimsquare.com.sg).*



Louis Vuitton

Bugis Street

Best for... suburban shopping

Formerly Singapore's red-light district, Bugis has been cleaned up and redeveloped. Straits-Chinese shophouses were glassed in to form part of this mall, which contains plenty of teen-friendly shops. Bugis Junction's outdoor fountain is where you will often see drenched, screaming kids having a whale of a time. As the water comes from the floor and in various shapes and patterns, guessing where the next spout will spurt from is half the fun. *200 Victoria St. (+65 6557 6557 www.bugisjunction-mall.com.sg).*

Far East Plaza

Best for... cool one-offs

When it comes to street fashion, this grubby five-level mall just off Orchard Road is the spot, offering everything from common Korean imports to rare cult items such as \$2,000 sneakers. Basically, the more decrepit the shop, the cooler it is. Subculture types flock here to stock up on clothes, scoff cheap but delicious food and get tattooed and pierced – Far East Plaza has the largest concentration of tattoo parlours in Singapore. *14 Scotts Rd. (www.fareast-plaza.com).*

Shop: beyond the malls



Arab St



Rervin Quak

Find antiques and quirky boutiques on the streets of Singapore...

Arab Quarter & Haji Lane

Budget bohemia thrives in Haji Lane, a sliver of an alley sandwiched between Arab Street and Bali Lane. Mini-boutiques mix with Middle Eastern shisha cafes and design houses. Hotspots include **Pluck** (No. 31/33, +65 6396 4048) for kitschy cushions, jewellery, clothing, vintage fabrics and wallpaper, and a tiny ice-cream parlour; and **Salad** (No. 25/27, +65 6299 5808), which specialises in black-and-white goods – from T-shirts to home accessories. Fashionistas flock to **Hoity Toity** (No. 53A, +65 6396 6902) for pretty dresses from Australian designers. Indie music shop Straits Records can be found a block over in **Bali Lane** (22 Bali Ln, +65 9341 1572). While you're in the neighbourhood, browse the proliferation of ethnic shops along nearby Bussorah Street, the pedestrianised strip in front of the Sultan Mosque.

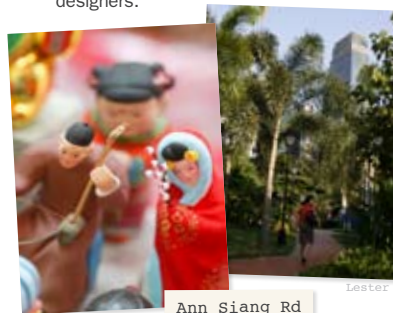
Tiong Bahru

Tiong Bahru is one of the oldest housing estates in Singapore, which may not instantly scream 'shopping destination' but you'd be mistaken if you didn't hotfoot it there quick-smart for an off-the-grid retail experience. It was once most famous for its bird-singing corner, but now it's a must-visit destination for bookworms, thanks to **BooksActually**, a comforting yet chic bookstore owned by local couple Kenny and Karen (No 9 Yong Siak St, +65 6222 9195). Once you've purchased a treasured tome, head straight to **40 Hands Café**, a perfectly squishy bar that serves excellent coffee, and is considered among the league of cafés that are driving Singapore's quiet coffee revolution (78 Yong Siak St, +65 6225 8545).



Chinatown

The brightly coloured conservation shop-houses in the enclave formed by Ann Siang Road, Erskine Road and Club Street are home to an increasing number of hip-to-the-beat boutiques, offering expertly curated ranges of cult fashion, chic furniture and homeware, and quirky gifts. The baroque Scarlet Hotel forms an imposing landmark here, setting the tone for shops like **Egg3** (33 Erskine Rd, +65 6536 6977), with its glossy homeware and graphic T-shirts, and **Asylum** (22 Ann Siang Rd, +65 6324 2289 www.theasylum.com.sg). The latter is one of Singapore's top design companies, with an office in the basement and a concept shop on ground level filled with vintage Enid Blyton books, art publications and clothing by too-cool-for-school local and international designers.



Ann Siang Rd

Lester



Shang Antique & Craft

Dempsey Road & Holland Village

Occupying the former British army barracks, Dempsey Road is a great place for lovers of antiques, notably objets d'arts from Indo-China. It's across from the Botanic Gardens, but you'll need a cab to get into the densely forested enclave. **Shang Antique & Craft** (#01-04/05 16 Dempsey Rd, +65 6388 8838 www.shangantique.com.sg) sells antiques dating from the seventh century, as well as fine reproductions. Holland Village is a much-loved shopping enclave, especially with expats, but the tight-knit community of Chip Bee Gardens, across from Holland Village proper, is way hipper. Jalan Merah Saga is the main drag. Food is a theme: in addition to cafés, restaurants and gourmet butchers, you'll find organic foodstore Bunalun, baked goods specialist **Phoon Huat** (#01-48 Block 44, +65 6471 5250 www.phoonhuat.com) and **Shermay's Cooking School** (#03-64 Block 43, +65 6479 8442 www.shermay.com).





Charles & Keith



Purple Gold



TravelPAC

Singapore souvenirs

It would be rude to leave without picking up at least a few of these Singapore-designed products...

1 Charles & Keith Shoes

Every Singaporean woman knows Charles & Keith. After all, what self-respecting female wouldn't want to become well acquainted with two blokes dedicated to supplying them with sexy sandals and stilettos that are so reasonably priced they can afford a new pair to match every outfit? *ION Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn. (+65 6238 1840) and The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands. (+65 6688 7035 www.charleskeith.com).*

2 TWG Tea Company

From the magnificent rotating tea wall to the delightful patisserie counter serving the prettiest sweet treats, as well every tea accessory you can imagine, Singapore's first and only high-end luxury tea salon is a must-stop shop for tea buffs. It boasts a range of more than 800 single-estate teas from around the world but don't leave without trying one of their unique tea blends – opt for the Singapore Breakfast Blend or the Singapore Paris Blend. *ION Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn. (+65 6535 1837 www.twgtea.com).*

3 CYC The Custom Shop

Singapore's oldest and most established custom shirt maker boasts an impressive clientele of famous personalities and celebrities. Established in 1935 by Chiang Yick Ching, this fashion institution lets you choose everything from your materials to buttons, collar size and cuff style to create your perfect shirt. *Raffles Hotel Arcade, 328 North Bridge Rd. (+65 6336 3556, www.cycustomshop.com).*

4 Mother & Child Project

Here you can pick up a local, handmade product and feel good about your purchase, not only because it makes a cute souvenir but also because a percentage of the profit goes towards helping disadvantaged women. The project provides them with home-based work so they can become economically self-sufficient. *You can buy Mother & Child products at a range of locations in Singapore. To find out more visit www.motherandchildproject.com or call +65 6341 735.*

5 RISIS

What better way to remember your Singapore stay than with a version of the delicate national flower that will never wilt (nor cause you any hassle at customs)? The jewellery and accessories brand RISIS dips real orchids in 24-carat-gold and turns them into necklaces, brooches and earrings. *Botanic Gardens, 1 Cluny Rd, with additional outlets. (+65 6475 5014, www.risis.com).*

6 Woods & Woods

Add a hot young local designer to your wardrobe. Not literally of course, but head to award-winning rising star Jonathan Seow's boutique Woods & Woods and bag yourself some of his unconventional creations, which feature unusual fabrics and quirky colour combinations. You'll turn heads wherever you go. *Raffles City Shopping Centre, 252 North Bridge Rd. (+65 6338 6775).*

7 Hansel

Named after her beloved Jack Russell terrier, Jo Soh's Hansel label has something of a cult following for her ladylike and whimsical designs that are cut to perfection. You'll be hard-pressed to restrain yourself from wanting to buy

everything in the shop – and it's not all clothes, you can accessorise your new outfit with printed canvas bags, or some seriously cute costume jewellery, too. *Meritus Mandarin Orchard, 333 Orchard Rd. (+65 6337 0992 lovehansel.com).*

8 Purple Gold

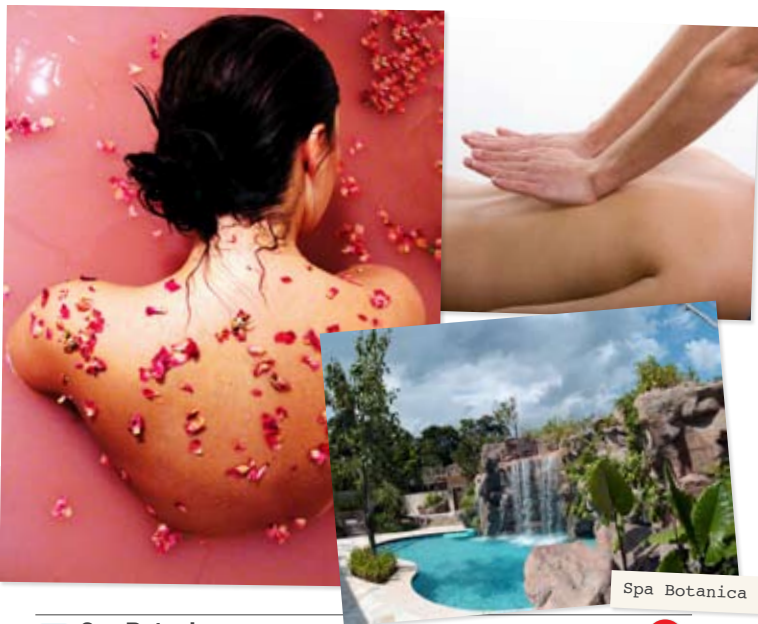
You've no doubt heard of white gold, yellow gold and rose gold, but purple gold? This Singaporean innovation is created by mixing 80 per cent gold with 20 per cent other precious metals. The chemical reaction creates the purple colour, and it has been crafted into all manner of jewellery from bracelets, to earrings and necklaces, which now adorn the likes of Sir Elton John. For jeweller locations, visit purplegold.com.

9 TravelPAC

Get your geek on at this one-stop shop for all things gadgety. The sleek designs lend a sexy edge to the tech treats. From a psychedelic mouse to bold iPhone cases and the best in earphone design. For retail outlets visit www.travelpac.com.sg or phone +65 6295 7208.

Spas

Soothe body and mind at one of Singapore's pampering palaces



Spa Botanica

Spa Botanica

Go here for... an all-day spa session in a garden setting

Tucked away from the hustle and bustle of city life, Spa Botanica occupies a lush, tropical compound on the island of Sentosa. For a close-to-nature experience, there are private, Balinese-style outdoor pavilions, plus a man-made waterfall (all the better to pummel knotted backs with), mud pool, labyrinth garden and lounge pool to flop down beside, before and after your treatment. The sprawling spa menu runs the gamut from Tibetan oil and clay massages to anti-ageing facials featuring 24-carat gold. And you don't even need to get dressed and leave should you get hungry: just pull up a chair at the adjoining Garden restaurant – a light-and-airy eatery serving a range of organic juices, salads and light dishes for the health-conscious. *2 Bukit Manis Rd, Sentosa.* (+65 6371 1318 www.spabotanica.com).



Bliss Spa

Aramsa Garden Spa

Go here for... an alfresco massage in the park

Aramsa's unusual location in the middle of suburban Bishan Park means that it is surrounded by nature and feels like a million miles from the concrete jungle of the city centre. Individual spa suites are linked via resort-style covered walkways and some also boast sunken bathtubs in private gardens. Keep it simple and book the 150-minute Exotic Coconut Treat (\$395 per couple) for maximum lovin'. After you've been rubbed down with warm coconut oil, get your rough bits exfoliated and knots released with a *huna huna* or bamboo massage. *Bishan Park II, 1382 Ang Mo Kio Ave 1.* (+65 6456 6556 www.aramsaspas.com).

Benjaphan Thai Herbal Spa

Go here for... the most authentic Thai massage outside of Bangkok

Tucked away in the unlikely King's Arcade, this spa is a secret among the well-heeled residents of Bukit Timah. It's rare to find authentic yoga-style Thai massage (termed Royal Thai Massage here) outside Thailand, let alone one of the quality found at unpretentious Benjaphan. Treatment rooms are airy and

comfortable, equipped with oversized massage beds that allow the therapists to clamber on to inflict some serious deep-tissue bodywork. The popular Royal Experience (\$130) is a two-hour treatment with a body scrub, fresh herbal steam bath and a full-body massage. Pain never felt this good. #03-02 King's Arcade, 559 Bukit Timah Rd. (+65 6469 7622 www.benjaphan.com).

Bliss Spa

Go here for... pampering SATC-style

Bliss, NYC's cult spa made famous by the *Sex and the City* gals, has finally arrived in Singapore. Setting up shop within the Sephora ION Orchard store, the Bliss set-up features a nail lounge, four recliners for on-the-spot mini-treatments (try the oxygen blasts and seaweed masks) and four cosy (we think they mean small) 'capsule' rooms for such treatments as the triple-oxygen energising mask, or the hot milk and almond pedicure. Services aside, it's the cute extras that set Bliss apart – a spa buffet with brownies, olives, crackers and cheese, and if you book any two treatments in a 30-minute time slot, or any three within 45 minutes, you'll be distracted with a classic movie. #01-05/06 ION Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn. (+65 6509 3511 www.blissworld.com).

Beauty Emporium

Go here for... everything beauty

Pick up a massage, facial, manicure or Brazilian wax at this Dempsey Road one-stop shop for all your beauty and nutritional needs. You'll get a handpicked selection of tunes, flowers and books, plus an exclusive beauty range, from Aunt Ilesci, Books Actually, Browhaus, La Compagnie De Provence, Love Da Music and more. *House, Block 8D Lvl 2, Dempsey Rd.* (+65 6475 7375, www.dempseyhouse.com).

Food

With more than 40,000 eateries on this tiny island, Singapore takes its chow very seriously. Here are a few Time Out favorites...



White Rabbit

The White Rabbit

Go here for... dining in a converted church

We all remember the White Rabbit with the pocket watch from *Alice in Wonderland*, who leads Alice down a hole into a phantasmic world. Back to reality – and Harding Chapel, where Singapore's own White Rabbit has emerged from its 'hole'. This church was abandoned for 15 years but now invites patrons into a restaurant and bar that, with its high ceilings and generously proportioned dining and drinking areas, has the mise-en-scène of a mead hall. There's more than 40,000 square feet of lush greenery surrounding the chapel. Located at the back of the church is the bar area, which opens to a grassy knoll where a family of animal sculptures made of wire and grass occupies the backyard. Diners return for the desserts: the unexpected crunch of toasted almonds in the crème brûlée is, like everything about the White Rabbit, an unmitigated delight. 39C Harding Rd. (+65 6473 9965 www.thewhiterabbit.com.sg).

PS Café – Palais

Go here for... casual brunch or bistro-style dining

In-mall dining is about as romantic as a Saturday afternoon in IKEA, but even though the latest PS Café is stationed in the Palais Renaissance, this third, demure outlet surprises with its charm. The space – think colonial conservatory with rattan seating – is divided into three sections: a bar/patisserie where the famous PS cakes are displayed; a large, dimly lit section favoured by hip media types; and the pièce de résistance, a white-tiled terrace with colossal windows that open onto a view of the verdant Thai Embassy grounds (though blinds shoot down at the first sign of rain). Try the café's famed Chocolate Crunch Doorstep Cake (\$15.90) and onion-heavy PS Steak Burger (\$28). Palais Renaissance #02-09A, 390 Orchard Rd. (+65 9834 8232 www.pscafe.sg).

Long Beach

Go here for... for chilli/black pepper crab

Long Beach has been around for as long as anyone can remember and, judging from the weekend crowds of multi-generational families, it will remain for a long time to come. Don't be distracted by the noisy patrons; just concentrate on the huge Sri Lankan crabs (known for their sweet flesh) bathed in a thick, tangy gravy made from ginger, chilli and turmeric (chilli crab) or the equally delicious black pepper crab doused in crushed peppercorns. Mop it all up with crispy, fried mantou bread. #01-04 East Coast Seafood Centre, 1202 East Coast Parkway. (+65 6448 3636 www.longbeachseafood.com.sg).

Iggy's

Go here for... a five-star degustation

Named *Time Out Singapore* Best Independent Restaurant 2010, Iggy's is fast becoming one of island's most famous (and best) restaurants. Reservations are still made way in advance to secure a spot, and its bold menu shifts with the seasons, but a recent favourite is char-grilled sea bass with truffle gnocchi and rosemary oil. The Japanese white peach with Champagne jelly, sorbet and elderflower foam dessert makes this modern European eatery well worth the splurge. The Hilton Hotel, 581 Orchard Rd. (+65 6732 2234 www.iggys.com.sg).

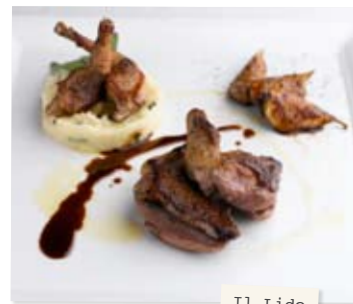


Iggy's

Tippling Club

Go here for... progressive cuisine by Aussie boys

Some chefs make the mistake of labelling molecular gastronomy a cuisine, rather than the culinary toolset that it actually is; hence, underneath all their faffing with foams, there's nothing but hot air. Fortunately, the duo behind the Tippling Club, chef Ryan Clift and award-winning mixologist Matthew Bax, is not mistaken. The humour and sensibility throughout their delightful, thought-provoking menu – a champagne-and-kümmel cocktail is called F*** the Sub Prime – are proof of this. 8D Dempsey Rd. (+65 6475 2217 www.tipplingclub.com).



Il Lido

Il Lido

Go here for... home-style Italian food

As expected, the sea views don't disappoint and the curved balcony offers prime sunset-watching. Beneath the restaurant's centrepiece – a Marc Wanders chandelier – guests dine on chef Michele Pavanello's superb home-made pasta with creamy sea urchins and squid-ink tortellini stuffed with Atlantic cod. For dessert, don't go past the tiramisu – it's touted as the best in town. Sentosa Golf Club, 27 Bukit Manis Rd, Sentosa. (+65 6866 1977 www.il-lido.com).

Muthu's Curry

Go here for... fishhead curry

Among the scores of Indian restaurants in Little India, Muthu's is easily the most dressed up. The menu is small (try the creamy butter chicken and the crispy onion-flecked brinjal) with a very good vegetarian section, and easy on the hip pocket (mains are \$8-\$20). The star attraction is the award-winning fishhead curry: a huge bowl of tart, pineapple-scented sauce bathing a fleshy, whole fish head. The serving island – hot trays of luridly coloured curries and a hulking tandoor – offers a takeaway option. #01-01 138 Race Course Rd. (+65 6392 1722 www.muthusc Curry.com).



Red Star

Red Star

Go here for... authentic yum cha

The gaudy interiors – complete with a dinky stage – have not changed in decades, and that's the charm of the Red Star. The food, too, has not been updated so it's all a little less refined than, say, Crystal Jade, but no one cares. Most of the regulars come for the weekend dim sum feast (\$10–\$15 per head) where trolleys of siew mai, braised chicken feet, char siew tarts, roast pork and century egg congee are wheeled around by loud, scowling aunts with hearts of gold. Come early on Sundays (around 10.30am) else be prepared to wait and risk the food going cold by then. #07-23, Blk 54 Chin Swee Rd. (+65 6532 5266).

TWG Tea Salon and Boutique

Go here for... the best tea blends

Such a pretty set-up: a little bejewelled nook framed in warm timber, its walls of hand-painted tins and glass jars filled with just about every tea imaginable, as well as plenty you couldn't have conceived. The man behind it all is the former master tea blender at celebrated Parisian salon Mariage Frères, so its credentials are impeccable. The teas – more than 200 varieties and blends – are the main draw (try the Singapore Breakfast Blend from \$8 a pot) but the sweets are tempting too. The macaroons in a variety of tea flavours are delicately wrought, while the cakes are effortlessly refined. *The Shoppes at Marina Bay Sands, 2 Bayfront Ave. (+65 6535 1837 www.twgtea.com).*

Flutes at the Fort

Go here for... old-world romance with new-world food

Prices may be steep, but there really is nowhere else quite like Flutes for a romantic meal à deux or a special occasion. Located in an old black-and-white colonial home tucked away among the frangipani of Fort Canning's slopes, the modern Australian menu features such hits as a salad of warm smoked kangaroo followed by roasted Australian lamb rack with lotus chips and garlic mash. Any complaints? The waiters can be a little too quick to top up the wine glass, which can make the wooden steps down to the street a little hard to navigate. *Fort Canning Park, 21 Lewin Tce. (+65 6338 8770 www.flutesatthefort.com.sg).*



TWG Tea

Singapore must-eats!



Kopi, Kaya Toast & Eggs



Katong Laksa

1 Singapore Chicken Rice

A simple yet beloved dish of succulent poached chicken paired with red chilli sauce and rice steamed with ginger, garlic and chicken stock. Despite the fact that it is sometimes called Hainanese chicken rice, the dish doesn't actually exist in Hainan and is considered a true Singaporean classic. On the other hand, Singapore Fried Noodles, despite the geographic reference in the name, isn't a Singaporean dish, and try as you might, you won't find it served here. It was actually created by Asian diaspora all the way in Australia.

Try it at... *Maxwell Rd Hawker Centre, Cnr South Bridge Rd & Maxwell Rd.*

2 Coffee and tea Singapore style

The lingo needed to order a coffee or tea in Singapore is akin to that of an espresso bar in Rome. Straight *kopi* or *teh* contains both sugar and condensed milk. If this is too sweet for you, order it *kosong* (without sugar) or *o kosong* (straight and bitter). A *kopicinno* on the other hand, is exactly what it sounds like. **Try it at...** *Ah Tengs Bakery, Raffles Hotel Complex, 1 Beach Rd. (+65 6412 1816).*

3 Kaya Toast & Eggs

This local breakfast favourite is a little like Singaporean soldiers: delicious coconut egg jam that is spread on toast, which you then dunk into the accompanying soft-boiled eggs. **Try it at...** *Chin Mei Chin Confectionery, 204 East Coast Rd. (+65 6345 0419).*

4 Go beyond chilli crab

It's difficult to go past the sweet, sour and spicy chilli crab, but you'd be missing out if you didn't also sample the black pepper crab, butter crab or crab bee hoon. **Try it at...** *Sin Huat Eating House, Geyland Rd. (+65 6744 9755).*

5 Do battle in the Katong Laksa Wars!

Several laksa joints along the East Coast Road lay claim to being home of the original Katong laksa – a coconut curry soup laced with fish cake, cockles and daun kesum leaves. The territorial tussle has become known as the Katong Laksa Wars. We recommend 328 Katong Laksa – but you be the judge. **Try it at...** 328 *Katong Laksa, 328 East Coast Rd.*

Hawker food

For a uniquely Singaporean food experience, head to a hawker...



The food is fantastic and made to order; prices are rock-bottom (a dish plus drink costs about \$5); and they're noisy, vibrant and bustling warrens of local life – an antidote to the sanitised, manicured side of Singapore. You'll find a treasure trove of taste sensations, gathering under one roof an entire microcosm of cuisines – Chinese, Malay, Peranakan, Indian, Eurasian.

Hawker centres have been around since the late 1950s, often attached to a wet market selling fresh produce. But it wasn't until the government

clamped down on street food (mainly for hygiene reasons) in the early 1980s that they became ubiquitous, each neighbourhood having its own designated centre. There are around 120 hawker centres in Singapore, each sheltering anywhere from 50 to 100-plus food stalls, often family-run and each specialising in a few dishes, drinks or desserts. All stalls get a cleanliness rating (A to D) posted on the front of their stall.

Communal sharing of the tables is the norm. To reserve or 'chope' a space, locals sometimes place a packet of tissues on a seat while their ordering their food. To order, join a queue (the longer the line, the better the food), wait for the cook's assistant to bark at you – courtesy is not a strong point here – then tell him what you want and the number of your table. Pay when your food arrives; usually it will be brought to you, but some stalls are self-service.

How to order and pay at a hawker centre

- 1 Find your table before you order. Communal sharing of the tables is the norm here so there'll be no 'table for two'. You could have someone from the group sit at the table while others go to order. Take note of your table number before you head to a food stall to order.
- 2 Do a scout of the stalls to see what takes your fancy as far as menu and price – but by all means order from more than one stall. It's not a bad idea to check out the cleanliness rating on the front of each stall when making your final selection.
- 3 To place your order, join a queue (the longer the queue, the better the food) and wait for the cook's assistant to call you.
- 4 If the stall bears the sign 'self-service' it means you need to take your plate to your table yourself, other stalls will ask for the number of your table and deliver the food to you.
- 5 If it is being delivered, you pay when your food arrives.

Don't forget to try...



Char kway teow

Thin loops of local fettuccine are piled into a wok with cockles and bean sprouts, soy sauce, cubes of fried lard, garlic and Chinese sausage. The hot wok imparts a fragrant smokiness to the dish – an essential ingredient.



Roti prata

Part of the thrill of eating roti – a Malaysian dish that's ubiquitous in Singapore – is watching the Indian chef make it. A glob of oily dough is smacked onto a steel surface and transformed into a translucent sheet and folded. Fried on griddle, the crisp pancake is served with curry sauce.



Grilled stingray

Who knew that stingray was this delicious? Basted with hot sambal (chilli and garlic paste), the fish is lightly grilled over a hot flame. The result? Snowy-white flesh that's firm, moist and moreish.



Bak Kut Teh

While the direct translation of bak kut teh (meat bone tea!) leaves a bit to be desired, this Chinese soup is far more delicious than it sounds, consisting of meaty pork ribs simmered in a delicious broth infused with star anise, cinnamon, cloves, fennel and garlic.



Oyster omelette

This most decadent of omelettes is cooked in a super-hot pan with good lard, creating a beautifully crisp outside layer that's filled with creamy egg and juicy oysters.

Top 5... Hawker centres



Maxwell Road

- 1 **Lau Pa Sat**
Packed at lunchtime with suits from neighbouring offices, this is one of the fancier hawker centres. Try the grilled skate and seafood at stall 43. *Cnr Boon Tat St & Robinson Rd.*
- 2 **Zion Riverside Food Centre**
Slurp sweet Asian desserts at Mohamed Sultan Rd Cheng Tng (stall 32) or rojak – the spicy mixed vegetable and fruit salad – at Clementi Brothers Rojak (stall 21). *Cnr Zion Rd & Ganges Ave.*
- 3 **Tiong Bahru**
Highlights include roast pork from Tiong Bahru Roasted Pig Specialist (stall 02-38) and fluffy pancakes from Mian Jian Kueh, a few stalls down at No. 34. *Cnr Lim Liak St & Seng Poh Rd.*
- 4 **Chomp Chomp**
Arguably one of Singapore's finest is, sadly, only accessible by car, but jump in a cab and the tastiest grilled stingray awaits (stall 1). *20 Kensington Park Rd.*
- 5 **Maxwell Road**
Be quick if you want Tian Tian Hainanese Chicken Rice (stall 10) at one of the oldest centres. *Cnr South Bridge Rd & Maxwell Rd.*

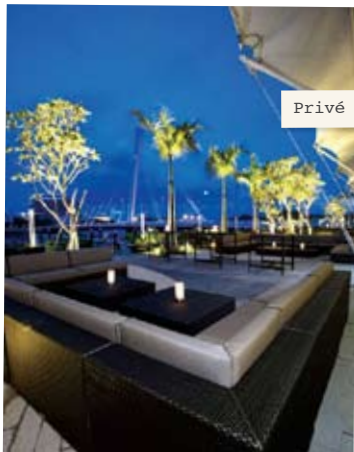
Bars & Nightlife

Here are our picks for when you want to get out on the town...

Privé

Go here for... glam by the sea

On an island not so far away from Singapore sits the rather slick Privé, where in-the-know locals love to escape in the evening to lounge about on one of the bar's large sofas. A short cab ride across a sleek, trendy bridge on the ground floor of Keppel Island's marina, Privé's waterfront bar is stunning in the simplicity of its décor, and how it incorporates the sights and sparkling lights of the boat park and nearby Caribbean-style condo into its open, breezy atmosphere. Drinks are well made and you come back to the main island (yes, Singapore) feeling like you've been away somewhere else completely. 2 Keppel Bay Vista. (+65 6776 0777 www.prive.com.sg).



Privé



Klee

Klee

Go here for... cocktails in a cool neighbourhood setting

The cocktail is king at this speciality bar that says no to bubbly, wine and beer, and a big yes to mixed drinks – especially those made with freshly squeezed fruit juices and premium alcohol. Housed on a hillside in what used to be a caretaker's lodge, this 30-seater boasts works by local artists hanging on the walls and a baby grand piano (complete with singer) parked in a corner. Try the kiwi martini: it isn't the cheapest cocktail in town, but when you consider they juice a whole kiwi into a martini glass and muddle it up with a generous serving of Smirnoff Black or Belvedere Vodka, you feel less disgruntled about forking out the cash. Deceptively fresh-tasting, you can easily forget how many you've been through – 'til it's time to stand up. #01-04, 5B Portsdown Rd. (+65 6479 3997).

Boomarang Bistro & Bar

Go here for... trivia and to cheer on your team

No, that's not a typo. Boomarang is the correct way to spell the name of this relaxed, family-friendly riverside hang out featuring open-air seating, picnic-style wooden tables and low-back chairs. A popular haunt of local Aussie expats, this is the place to sink a few cold ones while watching live coverage of the AFL Cup Final, Melbourne Cup or any other major event in the Australian or international sporting calendar. The bar's trivia nights on Tuesday at 7.30pm are also worth a look-in with the winning table receiving their bar tab on the house (tabs have gone as high as \$1,700). Get yourself along if you know the first Grammy Award-winning song to include the f-word in its lyrics. #01-15 The Quayside, 60 Robertson Quay. (+65 6738 1077 www.boomarang.com.sg).

Timbre



Tasting note: The symbol '++' means you'll pay an extra service charge (10%) plus GST (7%) on top of a bill.

Timbre@Old School

Go here for... chilling out to live music

This is the latest addition to the Timbre franchise, known for its laidback vibe and showcase of local bands. While the other two outlets at the Substation (45 Armenian St, +65 6338 8030) and the Arts House (1 Old Parliament Ln, +65 6336 3386), feature livelier music, Timbre@Old School is home to acoustic sounds. Fittingly, the venue keeps a chilled ambience. Value-for-money happy-hour promotions – two Erdinger pints and an order of buffalo wings for \$28++, or one bottle of house wine and a pizza for \$38++ – make this a great hangout for casual evening drinks, spent listening to fantastic vocals. #1-05, 11 Mt Sophia Rd. (+65 6338 0800 www.timbre.com.sg).



Zouk

Villa Bali

Go here for... casual drinking in a garden setting

For a taste of the magical Indonesian isle while in Singapore, head to this address and cross the wooden bridge into a luxuriant garden. Welcome to Villa Bali, the creation of owner-designers Robin Greatbatch and Andrew Seow, who set out to recreate their experiences in Indonesia with this bar, part of the larger Little Bali 'lifestyle resort'. Filled with daybeds and divans, and surrounded by wild plants and ponds, it's an idyllic drinking spot in the heart of Gillman Village. Service is efficient, but unobtrusive, allowing you to kick back and chill out undisturbed. The usual bar stock dominates, but there are also Balinese wines that go well with the Asian tapas. *9A Lock Rd, Gillman Village. (+65 6473 6763 www.littlebali.com).*

Zouk

Go here for... dancing the night away to the best DJs

Three clubs in one, this iconic music venue is where anything and everything happens. Electro bad-girl Peaches put the 'sin' in Singapore when she sported a dildo while performing 'Shake Yer Dix' in the club's main room, and revolutionary hip-hop group De La Soul brought the house down when they rapped and rhymed in Velvet Underground's cosy atmosphere. The third club, Phuture, makes room for resident DJ Andrew Chow and his now-infamous Flava Fridays. This place pumps even mid-week with Wednesday's Mambo Jambo, when clubgoers make like mad things to retro pop tunes from the 70s, 80s and 90s. It's no wonder that Zouk won *Time Out Singapore's* Best Club 2010 award. *17 Jiak Kim St. (+65 6738 2988 www.zoukclub.com).*

Top 5... Rooftop bars



Ku Dé Ta



Loof



Lantern

1 Ku Dé Ta

Bali's world-famous beachfront hotspot recently arrived in Singapore and instantly overthrew the establishment by taking the prime location on top of the 57-story Marina Bay Sands. One helluva space, one helluva place. *Sky Park, Marina Bay Sands North Tower, 1 Bayfront Ave. (+65 6688 7688 kudeta.com.sg).*

2 Lantern

This new hotel's combo of city views, 25m pool, border of whirlpool niches, faux-rattan cabanas, live band and 5m-wide lantern-inspired bar are hard to beat – and the truffle fries are to die for. *The Fullerton Bay Hotel, 1 Fullerton Rd, Marina Bay. (+65 6597 5299 www.fullertonbayhotel.com).*

3 Loof

An eccentric rooftop bar that attracts an easygoing, eclectic crowd to its leather loungers on a deck lit by a huge electric billboard. *Odeon Towers, #03-07, 331 North Bridge Rd. (+65 6338 8035 www.loof.com.sg).*

4 The Terrace

This popular drinking spot is atop the Screening Room's five-story cinema-restaurant-bar complex on trendy Ann Siang Road. *The Screening Room, 12 Ann Siang Hill. (+65 6221 1694 www.screeningroom.com.sg).*

5 Orgo Bar & Lab

A hidden treasure perched at the top of the Esplanade where you can admire the view or be entertained by the Japanese mixologist hard at work behind the bar. *The Esplanade, 8 Raffles Ave. (+65 6336 9366 www.orgo.sg).*

Hotels

From colonial gems to 72-storey giants, Singapore hotels are on the up and up...

✓ Raffles Hotel

Best for... old-school charm

The grande dame of colonial hotels, Raffles needs no introduction. Established in 1887, the Raffles legend endures, thanks to its fusion of timeless elegance, classical architecture and tropical gardens. Buildings are linked by cool verandahs, and rattan furniture and oriental rugs still dot the rooms. Refurbished in 1991, all 103 rooms are now suites. The seven Grand Suites are the most nostalgic, with lofty ceilings, polished wooden floors, opulent drapes and balconies overlooking the garden. Among the numerous bars and restaurants are the traditional Raffles Grill and of course, the Long Bar: the place to try a Singapore Sling. *1 Beach Rd. (+65 6337 1886 www.rafles.com).*

✓ Amara Sanctuary Resort

Best for... pure indulgence

Situated on the former premises of the British Sergeants' Quarters, the Amara Sanctuary is 121 rooms of pure luxury. Set in a tropical 3.5-hectare space, the resort stands out as a result of its hybrid architectural style, where modern glass, steel and blond-wood elements exist alongside the premises' original 1930s colonial features. In addition to housing Si Bon, Singapore's only kush-ige restaurant (traditional Japanese cuisine where fresh ingredients are coated in egg, breadcrumbs, deep fried and served on skewers), there are also

three swimming pools scattered about. *1 Larkhill Rd, Sentosa Island. (+65 6825 3888 www.sentosa.amarahotels.com).*

✓ Marina Bay Sands

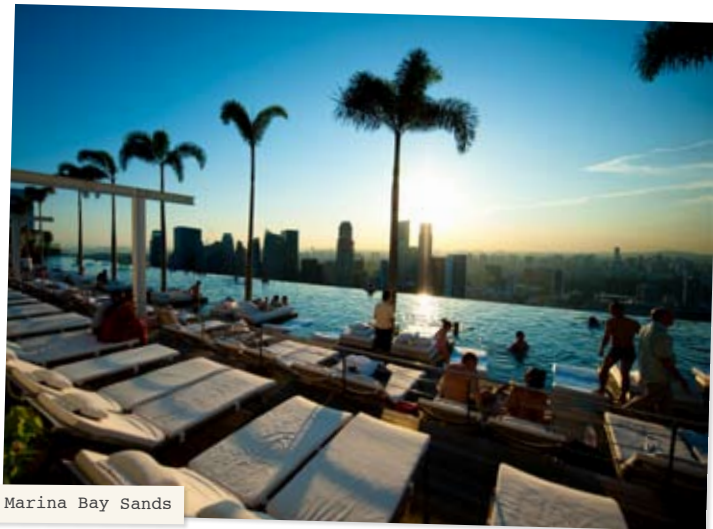
Best for... swimming in the sky

With more than 2,500 rooms and suites, Marina Bay Sands claims to be the biggest hotel in Singapore. We believe them. The rooms offer views of the South China Sea or Marina Bay and the Singapore skyline, but let's be honest: the Moshe Safdie-designed SkyPark is the real crowd puller. Sitting prettily atop the three hotel towers 200 metres high, hotel guests and outsiders (who part with \$20 for the privilege) can enjoy unfettered views from the Observation Deck. The best views are to be had from the infinity pool, the largest of its kind. Swimming is for hotel guests only but outsiders can watch smug guests swim while munching on \$6 hot dogs, which is almost as fun. Sort of. *10 Bayfront Ave. (+65 6688 8868 www.marinabaysands.com).*

✓ The Fullerton Hotel & The Fullerton Bay Hotel

Best for... location, location, location

You couldn't ask for a perfect positioning than that of the Fullerton Hotel and Fullerton Bay Hotel – both of which are perched right on the banks of the Singapore River. Built in 1928, The Fullerton Hotel has been lovingly restored from its former life as the island's GPO building, and retains all of its Art Deco charm and elegance, right in the heart of the happening Quay district. Only a short stroll around the corner is the equally luxurious, but decidedly more modern, The Fullerton Bay Hotel. Book early to bag yourself a much-desired corner room overlooking the Marina, and if you need a little respite from the city, while away a few hours at the super chic rooftop pool. Don't miss the award-winning rooftop Lantern bar. *The Fullerton Hotel, 1 Fullerton Square (+65 6733 8388 www.fullertonhotel.com). The Fullerton Bay Hotel, 80 Collyer Quay (+65 6333 8388 www.fullertonbayhotel.com).*



Marina Bay Sands



Raffles Hotel

Top 5... Boutique hotels

Naumi



Halo at Wangz

1 Naumi

The *Time Out Singapore* Best Boutique Hotel 2010 comes equipped with some of the niftiest extras any traveler could wish for. Aesop toiletries, a Nespresso machine, designer furniture like Poltrona Frau's Don'do Rocking Chair and the all-important iPod docking station are standard in every room. 41 Seah St. (+65 6403 6000 www.naumihotel.com).

2 New Majestic Hotel

You'll feel like a rock star here thanks to the big white lobby, vintage fans, designer chairs and idiosyncratically themed guest rooms. 31-37 Bukit Pasoh Rd. (+65 6511 4700 www.newmajestichotel.com).



New Majestic

3 The Club

The Club is the Harry's Bar chain's first crack at the boutique hotel market. Sip in style at Ying Yang, the sleek rooftop bar. 28 Ann Siang Rd. (+65 6808 2188 www.theclub.com.sg).

4 Wangz

Located in the heritage area of Tiong Bahru, this 41-bedroom hotel is something of a sculptural marvel. Make sure to head up to Halo, the rooftop lounge to watch the sun go down with a cocktail in hand. 231 Outram Rd. (+65 6595 1388 www.wangzhotel.com).

5 The Scarlet

Occupying a series of shophouses, the rooftop bar, Breeze, offers delicious cocktails and city views. 33 Erskine Rd. (+65 6511 3333 www.thescarlethotel.com).

Your Singapore notes & memos...

See more...

...and save with these great Singapore passes

Singapore MRT



See Singapore Attractions Pass

Powered by iVenture, the See Singapore Attractions Pass is a smart-card style attraction pass. Available for 1–3 days, the credit card-style pass includes entries to over 15 of Singapore's favourite attractions. *1-day pass: adult \$79, child \$49. (see singaporepass.iventurecard.com).*

Sentosa Play Pass

This pass allows users to access up to 13 attractions on Sentosa island and there are variations of this pass which cater to a full day, half day, premium attractions and even one that offers mouth-watering 'all-you-can-eat' local delights. *Day Play Pass: Adult from \$63.90, child from \$47.90. (www.sentosa.com.sg/en/whats-on/promotions/sentosa-play-pass).*

Park Hopper 3 in 1 Pass

Combines the Singapore Zoo, Night Safari and Jurong Bird Park into 1 pass which saves money on entries. (www.zoo.com.sg).

The Singapore Tourist Pass

The Singapore Tourist Pass, the only pass that offers travellers unlimited rides on Singapore's public transport system. The pass includes the MRT, LRT and basic bus services. (www.the-singapore-tourist-pass.com).

The Singapore Traveller's Creed

- 1 I shall venture beyond Changi Airport next time I transit in Singapore.
- 2 I shall not limit myself to the Singapore Sling. It may be famous but there's more fun to be had with a cloud-enveloped Nitro Dry Martini from the Tippling Club, or red hot Chilli Padi Mary from Astor Bar St Regis. *Tippling Club, 8D Dempsey Rd. (+65 6475 2217 www.tipplingclub.com). Astor Bar, 29 Tanglin Rd. (+65 6506 6888).*
- 3 I shall learn how to use 'lah' appropriately in a sentence, and extend my family by several thousand people, by referring to all middle-aged Singaporean men and women as uncle and aunty.
- 4 I shall not leave Singapore before discovering an appetite for 2am Sambal Stingray. *Chomp Chomp, Stall 1, 20 Kensington Park Rd.*
- 5 I shall party Ibiza-style at Zouk and Ku Dé Ta and end the night with a sophisticated drink in a tiny hidden gem only the locals know, like Orgo Bar & Lab. *Roof Terrace, The Esplanade, 8 Raffles Ave. (+65 6336 9366 www.orgo.sg).*
- 6 I shall understand Singapore's secret food language: 'Kopi O Kosong' will deliver me a straight, bitter coffee. I shall say the food is 'shioh', 'very shioh', or 'very very shioh', depending on how good it is.
- 7 I shall not leave Orchard Road without buying from the high-street stores my own weight in clothes not yet stocked at home. *ION Orchard, 2 Orchard Turn. (+65 6238 8228 www.ionorchard.com).*

Essential information

All the stuff you need to know before you fly...

Useful phone numbers

Police	999
Ambulance/Fire	995
Flight information	1800 542 4422
Tourist information	1800 736 2000
Singapore country code:	+65

Useful websites

yoursingapore.com
timeoutsingapore.com

Attitude & etiquette

In general, Singaporeans are friendly and helpful. However, race and religion are usually not topics of conversation.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on public transport, in museums, libraries, lifts, cinemas, supermarkets, department stores, hair salons, air-conditioned restaurants and government offices. Alfresco cafes have designated smoking areas. Smoking is permitted in air-conditioned pubs, discos, karaoke bars and nightspots, but not in eating places. Light up where it's allowed, otherwise be prepared for a hefty \$1,000 fine.

Tax refunds

A seven per cent Goods & Services Tax (GST) is charged on most items. Foreign visitors can claim back the GST when leaving Changi Airport. You must spend a minimum amount of S\$100.00 (including GST) on purchases from the same retailer in the same day to qualify for refund under the TRS. You

may accumulate up to a maximum of three same-day receipts or invoices from the same retailer to meet this minimum purchase amount.

Customs

To buy duty-free goods when entering Singapore, you have to have been away for at least two nights. You can't bring cigarettes into Singapore, but you can buy them on the way out. There are no duty-free concessions on cigarettes or other tobacco items. You are not allowed to bring in chewing gum, firecrackers or pirated DVDs and CDs. (www.customs.gov.sg).

Tipping

Singaporeans don't generally tip, as hotels and restaurants levy a 10 per cent service charge on bills, denoted by ++ on menus and bills.

When to go

Singapore's weather is hot and humid with little variation throughout the year. The average daytime temperature is 31°C dropping to around 24°C at night, so if you want to weather the weather, dress accordingly.

Visas

Nationals of most Western countries do not require visa to visit, and if visiting as a tourist will be given 'social visit' passes valid for up to 30 days upon arrival. Australian passport holders get a social visit pass valid for three months.

Essential apps



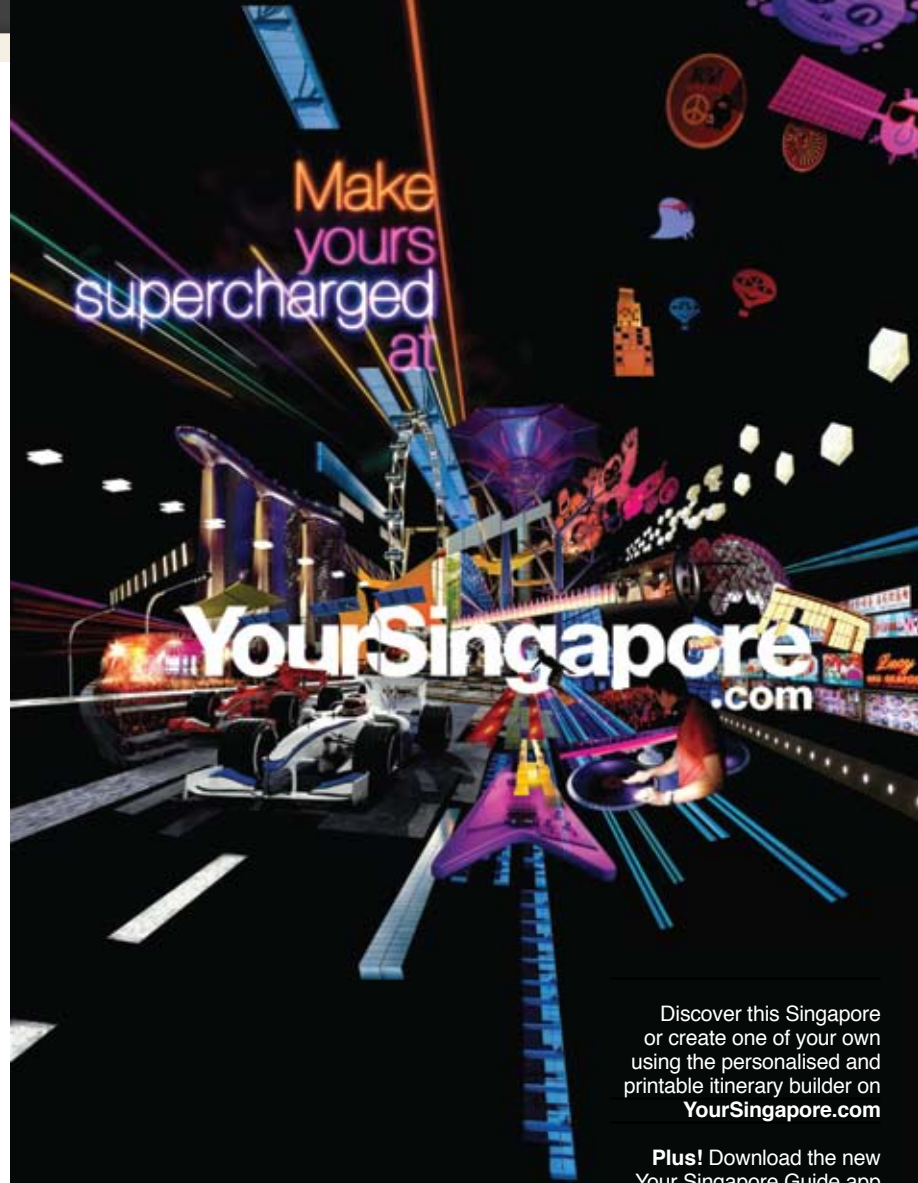
HoSay! Speaks useful English phrases on demand



Weatherlah Keep up to date with the local forecast



HungryGoWhere Locate restaurants, bars, and cafés quickly



Discover this Singapore or create one of your own using the personalised and printable itinerary builder on **YourSingapore.com**

Plus! Download the new Your Singapore Guide app

Your Singapore Little Black Book

Good things come in small packages.
Time Out's Little Black Book is your
essential guide to the best of that
island they call 'The Little Red Dot'
– including sightseeing, dining,
shopping, nightlife, spas and more

