



SINGAPORE TODAY

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City Of Contrasts



Alive with contrasts, Singapore is both one of the most modern, and traditional nations in Asia. Its colourful colonial history, long-standing attraction to a menagerie of minority groups and a sponge-like ability to take in new sights, sounds and tastes make it an ideal destination to experience a multitude of culture and cuisine.

But sterile it is not. Singapore is both reaching into the past to resurrect the bustling days of old, and lunging into the future with new developments that boggle the mind, eyes and wallet. From the revitalised Bugis area to the gargantuan Marina Bay Sands and the ever-expanding shopping experience, Singapore is far from quietening down. Whether staying for one or five nights, clients can take it as easy or fast as they like while acquiring a taste for durian, buying bindis and henna, getting a suit or dress made, or partying under the neon lights of Clarke Quay.

Singapore's layout was planned down

to the last cobble stone, allocating each culture its own enclave and giving people the opportunity to make their mark. This approach to town planning means the city is dotted with communities that emanate individuality and energy. But this doesn't translate into a separatist approach to life. Singapore is Asia's melting pot, in the truest sense of the word, as cultures collide and take the best each has to offer—providing visitors with a unique insight into the most distinct parts of the region, all within stone's throw of each other.

Not So Little India

Little India is big on personality and energy. This enclave is one of the more traditional areas in town, where locals still visit specialty tradesmen and women to have their spices ground, their henna touched up or their 24-carat gold needs seen to. Visit with an empty stomach and sample the Indian sweets at the Moghul Sweet Shop on Serangoon Road, opposite the Tekka Centre, or grab a chapatti from Azmi Restaurant before sorting through saris and chattering with the locals over a chai.

Getting Around

Singapore's underground MRT train system is a hassle-free way for clients to get around Singapore's main attractions. Passes are from SGD5 and can be loaded with any amount. Each ride deducts the fare (from SGD1, depending on the length), and clients can move between the four lines without surfacing. Taxis are generally SGD3 at flagfall, and tariffs range from SGD20 cents. A taxi from the airport is SGD18-SGD38 (cabbies charge if they handle your luggage).



Kampong Glam-our

The centre of Singapore's Muslim heritage, Kampong Glam (pronounced kampong gu-lam) features some of the city's oldest shop houses, painted bright colours and surrounded by wafts of hookah smoke. Dominating the landscape is the Sultan Mosque—open to visitors outside of prayer time—which was re-built with the help of every family in the quarter in 1925. Families that could not afford to buy building materials donated glass bottles to the project, and they now form the base of the huge golden dome. Each street is named after an important Arab or Muslim city; and they boast Arab and Malay style clothing, textiles and food outlets.

Celebrate Geylang Serai

This part of town is home to many Malay Muslims. Almost in defiance of the continual development of mega malls, Geylang Serai is returning to a simpler way of life—it's a community with everything it needs in specialist shops. During Ramadan (this year 01-29 Aug) the streets are strung with celebratory banners, and massive tents are erected to host Iftar and Suhoor feasts after sunset and before dawn.

Getting There In Style

Singapore Airlines has today launched return Business Class fares ex AKL/WLG and CHC to Singapore from \$4805, inclusive. The levels are valid for sales to 02 Sep and travel to 30 Nov. Clients can add one of the carrier's Singapore Stopover Holidays to the fare, adds SQ, priced from \$96 per person, share twin in a category B hotel. Details, see the SQ Agent Info Portal.



China About-town

The focal point of Chinatown is the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple—which draws both the faithful and foreigners in with the sounds of chanting monks and the pungent aroma of joystick (incense). Upstairs is a Buddhist bookshop and restaurant, where only a donation is asked for in return for a vegetarian meal. Across the square from the temple, past the groups of elderly men playing checkers, is the Chinatown Complex, a three-level market where locals go for their daily produce. Watch out for the stalls selling frogs on the bottom level (it's believed by some that feeding babies and toddlers frog legs makes their legs strong!) The lanes and streets around this area are lined with stalls and hawker carts selling silk robes, Buddha statues and I Heart Singapore t-shirts.



A choice of fine dining selections

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Family Fun At Sentosa



Tip Of The Day

Urge Sentosa-bound clients to use the Tiger Sky Tower to get their bearings once on Imbiah Lookout. The seven-min. ride climbs 131m high, and revolves several times at the top—offering a view of the island's attractions, plus there's a commentary to help point things out. The tower operates every 15 mins 0900-2100 daily, cost SGD15/SGD10. See sentosa.com

Getting There & Around

While Sentosa is accessible by MRT, bus and car, a new and more exciting way to get to the island is the Singapore Cable Car, which alights on Imbiah Lookout, and priced from SGD26/SGD15 return. Once on the island, getting around Imbiah Lookout, Resorts World and Universal Studios is easily done. Clients can conquer longer distances with the continuous bus services around the island.



Our intrepid reporter Jess trying out iFly in Singapore yesterday.

I Believe iFly

Singapore iFly: it's skydiving in a bottle, almost! Checking in for the 'flight' and suiting up in red or blue, you feel like you're on a mission. There are hand signals to learn, and straps to tighten, then all of a sudden you're swirling around in the world's largest wind tunnel (with a trained instructor, mind!) as if you've just leapt from a plane. Remember to smile for the camera—this is one of the few attractions around the world where the souvenir pic is worth it. iFly is suitable for all ages and priced from SGD79 for two 'dives'. See iflysingapore.com

Home of Universal Studios, the 49ha, SGD6.59 billion Resorts World Sentosa has further widened access to Sentosa Island, providing both families and high-rolling gamblers with a base from which to see Sentosa and the rest of Singapore with its casino and four hotels. Festive Walk boasts a range of shopping options, with gigantic candy stores for the kids and wine cellars for mum and dad. Its vast dining options include fare from Michelin-starred chefs to traditional Singaporean dishes and the Hard Rock Cafe. The most family-friendly is the Festive Hotel which features 390 rooms and suites that can sleep up to seven family members—some are themed with Universal Studios merchandise, and the kids sleep in alcoved bunk-beds.

Sentosa's Universal (Studios) Appeal

Universal Studios needs no introduction and Singapore's offering pays homage to its Hollywood home the moment visitors step through the gates.

Thrill seekers will hone in on Sci-Fi City, a twin roller coaster Battlestar Gallactica ride. Meanwhile, the Blue Cylon coaster leaves riders' legs dangling, twisting and dropping within feet of the traditional seated red Human ride—the Cylon is the more exciting of the two, no question.

If clients need warming up before testing that theory, visit Lights, Camera, Action, a sound-stage attraction 'hosted' by Steven Spielberg that shows off the power of movie-making.

For the little ones (or the young at heart!) Madagascar's Marty, Melman, Gloria and Alex the Lion will entertain and delight (as pictured above right). Far Far Away takes Shrek fans into a world of princesses and ogres.

For more movie nostalgia, The Lost World Jurassic Park-themed attraction is a must-do—suggest clients save it for the end of the day though, the drenching at the end of the Rapids Adventure is more than welcome!

The park has become a major draw-card since its official grand opening in May, the queues wind out into Resort World's Bull Ring long before its 1000



opening. For this reason, it's worth investing in an Express Pass (weekends SGD48 or weekdays and school holidays SGD30) to by-pass the long queues. Entry is from SGD66/SGD48. See rwsentosa.com

Zippy Adventures

Adventurous clients can strap on to a wire and take a zip at the Mega Zip Adventure Park—one of Sentosa's newest attractions and a Singapore first. For families, parents can ride with younger kids, and pairs can race each other to the bottom for a spot of friendly rivalry. Also on offer is an aerial rope course and free-fall simulator. Clients can take buses or the SGD2 trolley rides to get there, and tell them to have lunch beforehand—the heavier you are, the faster you go!

Lookout Sentosa

Imbiah Lookout is a vast playground of attractions with something for everyone—whether clients like parrots, butterflies, heights or speed. 4D Magix is a sensory overload, wetting, tickling and shaking viewers along a theatrical ride; while the Sentosa Luge's new track the Dragon Trail offers new twists and turns to navigate day or night. The return trip up the Skyride offers panoramic views—and it's a good place to observe the track. The iconic merlion, an enduring symbol of Singapore is replicated on Sentosa to give visitors a unique view of the island, from the mouth of the lion. Most attractions start or are based at the top of the lookout, so urge clients to see all they want to there, to avoid trekking back and forth up the hill in the heat.

Sentosa's merlion lookout



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Marina Bay Sands: A World Of Its Own



Since its opening in Apr 2010, Marina Bay Sands has attracted over 19 million visitors—and it's just another reason why Singapore is now so much more than just a stopover destination.

The development has 2561 hotel rooms and suites (there are 15 categories) across three towers offering ocean or city views, and convenient access to Singapore's key entertainment and shopping districts. Its own glitzy offering includes two theatres, a casino, convention centre and over 300 luxury shops, from Tiffany's to Singaporean jewellery designers,

Lion King At MBS

It seems fitting that Singapore's most talked about new development is playing host to The Lion King musical production—both have attracted millions from around the world. There are a couple of small deviations from the main plot, with a distinct Singapore flavour. If clients want to see the show, recommend they choose seats in the stalls, even if they're in a lower category compared to available dress circle tickets. Let's just say they'll feel like they're a part of the show! Tickets are from SGD65, or with Marina Bay Sands accommodation packages. Those staying onsite Aug-Oct get 10% off. See marinabaysands.com

as well as an array of nightspots. Staff compensate for the sheer size of the place by being particularly accommodating and friendly—ask for a city-facing room at check-in and they can check if there is one available. Check-in time is from 1500, but unless they're on a schedule, recommend clients arrive a little after this, as everyone seems to want to check-in as soon as possible and things can get crowded.

Upon entering their room, the curtains automatically open to reveal stunning views of cosmopolitan Singapore, or on a clear day, a distant Indonesia over the Singapore Strait in the other direction.

... Insider Tips

The Sky Deck's 200m pool is quietest in the mornings, and the most crowded at sunset as guests clamour for that all-important shot of the sun setting behind the Singapore skyline reflected in the infinity pool. Suggest to your clients that they have an early breakfast at Sky 57 before reading the newspaper poolside. Every night at 2100 at the Event Plaza in front of The Shoppes, guests are treated to a visual and musical extravaganza that lights up all of Marina Bay. Lasers, dramatic music and pyrotechnics feature prominently!

Exploring Riverside Point

Across the Singapore River from Clark Quay is Riverside Point, formerly part of Singapore's original sea-trading centre. Now, it boasts dining and playing options, complete with brewery Brewerkz, and Café Iguana, that 'sells the best frozen margaritas in town'—they go down nicely after a day trekking around the shops.

Zouk: A Must-see

Zouk is to clubbers what Raffles' high tea is to colonial Singapore—a must-visit, if only to say you have! A mainstay of Singaporean nightlife, Zouk has endured for decades with its four clubs pumping out diverse tunes all night. Cover charges tend towards SGD20 for each section, redeemable for drinks to fuel the fire, and Wed is retro night. See zouk.com

Swanky SIN At Sunset

Atop Marina Bay Sands' Sky Park is Ku De Ta, one of Singapore's newest luxury hangouts. The well-heeled congregate here at sunset. It's a place to be seen (so dress accordingly) and great for pre-theatre drinks. Sky 57 has recently opened its deck area to guests to enjoy its bar-food offering by star chef Justin Quek, with optional cigar. Pangaea and Avalon are found in the Louis Vuitton Crystal Pavillion on Marina Bay in front of the expo centre—two more high-end nightspots.

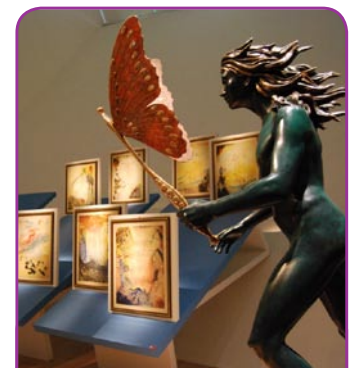


Quay's Neon Nights

Day and night, the rows and networks of shophouses on Clarke Quay offer a myriad of waterhole options, from Irish-themed pubs, to flashy clubs under a custom built cover, neon lights and spouting water features. For a touch of novelty, take a seat, errr wheelchair, at The Clinic where neon drinks are served in IV bags hung from stands, just try to remember not to wheel yourself away in the chair at the end of the night. On the MRT, alight at Clarke Quay on the north east line.

Haji Lane Chillout

After dark, the trendy shops on Haji Lane close and the street shuts to make way for carpets, hookah pipes and Singapore's student set. It's a great spot for younger clients to start a night out and the locals are more than happy to share a few nightspot hints.



Making Art A Science

The lotus-shaped building to one side of the Marina Bay Sands complex (pictured above left) houses the ArtScience museum—currently home to Van Gogh and Salvador Dali exhibitions, until 09 and 30 Oct respectively. Shipwrecked, a display of Tang Dynasty artefacts, has now been extended to 02 Oct. Tickets include access to all exhibitions—guests can visit Dali and come back for Van Gogh after having lunch across the way in the food court. Tickets are from SGD15-SGD25 for all exhibitions and the gallery is open 1000-2200 daily.



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Explore Singapore's Historical Charms

Singapore's rich cultural diversity and regional strategic importance provide the ideal backdrop for clients to immerse themselves in the island nation's history—from its place in World War II to Chinatown's seedy old world underbelly of opium dens and prostitution.

Tour company Journeys operates The Original Singapore Walks, which take clients deeper into the city's main cultural attractions Mon-Sun on two- to three-hour walks. Priced from SGD30/SGD15, the tours are led by extremely knowledgeable guides, who are clearly passionate about Singapore and its history.

The Wed tour, End of Empire—Singapore 1942, delves into the history of Singapore's three-year occupation by Japanese forces during WWII. It visits key battle areas including Mount Faber and Labrador Battery, and seeks



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to challenge the common perception that Percival lost Singapore by the simple error of having guns pointed in the wrong direction. Kiwi military forces fought in Singapore during this time, to help free Singaporeans from the grip of the feared Japanese Kempetai. The tour culminates with a sobering visit to the Kranji War Cemetery, where thousands of soldiers are laid to rest. Guide Hemlata can provide moving accounts of the actions of many soldiers.

Heritage Centre Closed

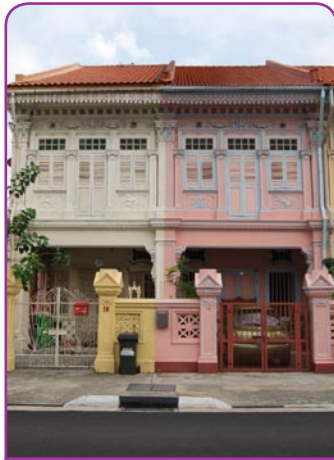
Singapore's Malay Heritage Centre in Kampong Glam is closed for renovations. It is expected to reopen in Jun 2012, says a notice on the centre's gates.

Sentosa's Shangri-La

Fresh from a SGD80 million upgrade, the Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa Resort is the only totally beach-front resort on the island, and is close to key Sentosa attractions, as well as housing some of its own attractions, including a circus trapeze. The resort is geared towards travellers of all kinds, however has a particular focus on families and has a three-storey kids club. Dining options at the resort are extensive too, with Thai, Moroccan and Singaporean chefs creating their specialty fare daily. A free shuttle bus to the Harbourfront shopping centre and MRT station operates every 20 minutes until 2300, making access to the resort a breeze. See shangri-la.com

Bumboat Business

For an insight into Singapore's maritime history, clients can take a cruise on the Singapore River, day or night, on a brightly painted bumboat (pictured). Departing Clarke Quay and heading out to Marina Bay, a commentary outlines the importance of each area, from Raffles first landing place to Riverside Point, peppered with tails of boats jostling for position to dock. The boats cruise past the iconic merlion fountain and clients cruising around 2100 will be treated to the laser and music show at Marina Bay Sands. Urge clients to sit at the back of the boat for the best photo opportunities. Priced from SGD15. rivercruise.com.sg

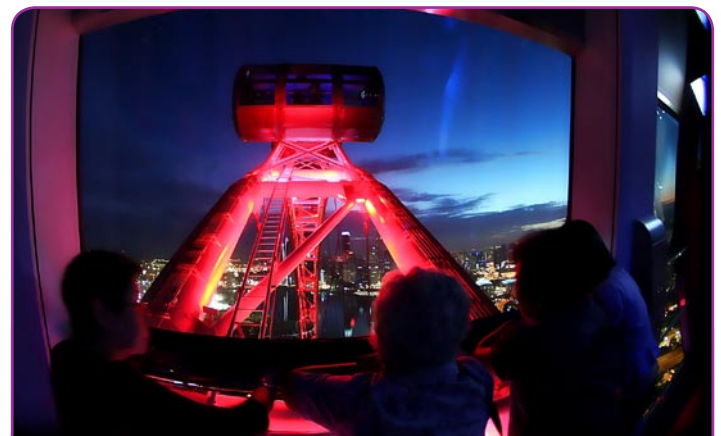


Peranakan Perfection

The Peranakan culture was born from a Malay mother, and Chinese father. It's this intriguing combination of two nationalities that gave the world laksa, unique and intricately beaded clothing and homewares, and the colourful Peranakan houses in Katong, painted bright colours and showing off quirky little features such as the peeking square from the top floor to the front stoop—for the Peranakan women to look through to see who was at the door, and if they could show themselves! Those interested in the history of the Peranakan people can visit the Peranakan Museum just off Armenian St or check out Rumah Bebe for luxurious beaded gifts and treasures. See rumabebe.com

Kenko Fish Spa

After a day of adventuring around Singapore on foot, take a load off at Kenko spa at the Singapore Flyer mall on level two. Clients can indulge in a foot reflexology massage before dipping tired legs into cool water tanks housing thousands of tiny fish that will nibble away dead skin cells. The treatment is said to promote circulation and smooth skin—but it does take some getting used to! See kenko.com.sg



Singapore Flying High

For spectacular views of the expansive Singapore skyline, clients should look no further than the Singapore Flyer, the world's largest observation wheel. Flights are from SGD29.50, and the attraction also offers special in-flight dining options with full butler service, and discounts for on-line bookings. See singaporeflyer.com



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Food And Fashion Refined In SIN

New High Street

High street stores not found in New Zealand that are worthy of a mention are Muji and Uniqlo—both easily affordable and stocking a range of good quality staple clothing. They frequently have in-store specials. See muji.com/sg or uniqlo.com/sg

Ann Siang Cool

For those after something a little different, a small selection of local boutiques and vintage offerings are popping up in Kampong Glam's Haji Lane and near Chinatown. Clients should visit if they're after original clothing, books and jewellery.

East of Chinatown lies Ann Siang Hill Road, a small network of charming streets featuring fine dining restaurants, cafes and boutiques. Standout stores include The Little Dröm Store and Kki café; The Cottage Crafts, a specialist interior design store; and Oakham Market, perhaps Singapore's first dedicated vintage clothing store, packed full of retro and designer threads to sift through. Expect to pay prices comparable to New Zealand—this isn't traditional Chinatown. See thelittledromstore.com, thecottagecraft.com and oakhammarket.com



In Singapore, shopping is a national pastime and food is consumed with religious fervour. These facts are well known among Kiwi travellers, so what's new?

The latest additions to the 2km-long Orchard Road are ION Orchard, 313@Somerset, Mandarin Gallery and Orchard Central. Each centre boasts all the usual suspects from high street stores like Top Shop, Zara and Esprit to stores like Miu Miu and Harry Winston, for the super-wealthy or a spot of

window shopping and daydreaming. ION Orchard offers tourists the opportunity to sign up for a discount card, which will get clients small discounts at selected stores, generally 5%-10% on full-priced items. The annual Singapore Sale, usually Jun-Jul, seems to extend into Aug, as many stores continue to discount stock by up to 70%—there is still good stuff to be found.

Hidden Tea-time

After a spot of tea? On the corner of Baghdad and Kandahar Sts is an unnamed eatery that serves 'the best tea in Singapore' along with simple Malay fare such as chicken rice. Look out for the bright blue painted surround, and the alcove of extra tables.

Royal Treatment

The ParkRoyal Beach Road is close to the city's main attractions, and rooms in the higher floors offer views of Kampong Glam and the Sultan Mosque. The brasserie has an extensive range of both Western and Asian fare, and its fourth floor pool and St Gregory spa area offer an ideal setting to relax at the end of the day. See parkroyalhotels.com



Re-fuelling

There are options for dining on every corner in Singapore, from hawker stands in Chinatown to celebrity-chef offerings at the big malls and hotels and waterfront options at Riverside Point, Makansutra Glutton's Bay and Clarke Quay. Singapore has taken hold of the celebrity chef restaurant concept like no other city. ION Orchard has a Salt Grill by Luke Mangan and Marina Bay Sands unsurprisingly boasts several options, as does Resorts World Sentosa. If it's quaint and down-to-earth your clients are after, look no further than the cultural precincts: Kampong Glam for an Arab-influenced meal, Chinatown and Little India for their respective cultural cuisines, and Katong for a true Singapore laksa and Peranakan delights.



Dempsey Dining

A former army barracks, Dempsey Hill has been transformed into a jungle of dining and entertainment experiences. It was first thought that Dempsey was too far away from the rest of Singapore's nocturnal hotspots, but Singaporeans and visitors alike flock to the hill every night to pay homage to the food gods. House restaurant boasts a tasty menu with produce from all over the world, focusing on pasta and pizza. It also hosts a Vintage Tea Party on Thu and Fri 1500-1730 (SGD22 plus tax)—think lemon pistachio cake and macaroons. See dempseyhouse.com



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