

ABOUT SINGAPORE

Some refer to her as the “little red dot”, but Singapore’s presence in the world today is larger than that moniker. In fact, Singapore is a bustling cosmopolitan city that offers a world-class living environment, with her landscape populated by high-rise buildings and gardens. One interesting facet you’ll discover about Singapore is a ubiquitous collage of cultures, where people of different ethnicities and beliefs coexist. Besides a vibrant multicultural experience, there’s more you can discover about Singapore.

Singapore’s location on the major sea route between India and China. The strategic position has made it grow into an excellent harbor for trade and tourism. Its geographical location is 136.8 km north of the equator, between latitudes 103°38’E and 104°06’E.

Singapore’s Central Business District actually spreads across both the central and southern parts of the island (you’ll know when you’re there - it boasts striking high-rise structures). You can get a good visual orientation to the city as you cross the Benjamin Sheares Bridge on the East Coast Parkway, which links the airport to the city center.

Airport Tax

A S\$21 Passenger Service Charge should be incorporated in your air ticket. If this has not been done, you are required to pay the S\$21 during check-in.

Banking

The local currency is Singapore dollars and cents. Notes come in denominations of SGD 2, SGD 5, SGD 10, SGD 20, SGD 50, SGD 100, SGD 500, SGD 1,000, and SGD 10,000. Coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents and SGD 1.

Brunei currency is acceptable at par with the Singapore currency. All banks in Singapore are obliged to accept the Brunei currency notes and coins at par for deposit. This is provided for under the Currency Interchangeability Agreement between Brunei and Singapore which took effect on 12 June 1967 and continues to be effective till to-date. There is no reason for businesses to shy away from accepting Brunei notes.

Banking hours are Mondays to Fridays: 1000 hrs to 1500 hrs. Saturdays: 0930 hrs to 1300 hrs (some banks are open until 1500 hrs. Sundays: 0930 hrs to 1500 hrs (some banks in Orchard Road).

Most banks handle travellers’ cheques and change foreign currencies. However, some banks do not have foreign exchange dealings on Saturdays.

Passports are required when cashing in travellers’ cheques. A nominal commission may be charged.

Climate

Singapore is an equatorial country with relatively uniform temperature, high humidity and abundant rainfall. Temperatures reach a maximum of 31 degree Celsius during the day, falling to a pleasant 25 degrees during evening hours. There are no distinct wet or dry seasons but the heaviest rainfall occurs between November and January.

Currency and Credit Cards

The unit of currency is the Singapore dollar (S\$). There is no limit to the amount of foreign currency you can bring in. Money exchange facilities are available at banks and money changers which are

located in most shopping centres and at the airport. \$1 SGD is approximately equal to \$0.723 USD as at May, 2010. All major credit cards are widely accepted by establishments in Singapore.

Major cards are widely accepted by establishments in Singapore. Should any shop insist on adding a surcharge, contact the respective card company to report the errant shop-owner.

American Express

Tel: (65) 6880 1111

Diners Card

Tel: (65) 6416 0800

JCB

Tel: (65) 6734 0096

MasterCard

Tel: 800 - 110 0113 (toll-free in Singapore only)

Visa

Tel: 800 - 448 1250 (toll-free in Singapore only)

Dress Code / Clothing

The dress code for all official meeting and dinners will be business suit.

Drinking Water

It is perfectly safe to drink water straight from the tap in Singapore. However, for those who prefer bottled mineral water, local supermarkets and grocers usually carry a sizeable selection.

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse is viewed seriously in Singapore. Illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is strictly prohibited.

Electricity

Singapore's voltage is 220-240 Volts AC, 50 Hz. The power plugs used in Singapore are of the three-pin, square shaped types. On request, most hotels will provide transformers to visitors with electrical appliances of a different voltage, such as 110-120 volts, 60 cycles per second. When shopping for electrical appliances, do remember to check the voltage of the item against the acceptable voltage in your home country.

You may wish to visit the following website for more details of the plugs:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/singapore/>

Food

Eating out in Singapore offers the greatest feast in the east. From side-street hawker stalls to Cordon Bleu, the city is home to a mouth watering array of Chinese, Indian and Malay cuisines as well as culinary favourites from all over the world. There are eating places which suit every budget.

Goods and Services Tax

There is a 7% Goods and Services Tax (GST) levied on all goods imported into Singapore. You may, as a visitor to Singapore, claim for refund of GST paid on your purchases if you have spent a minimum of \$300 on goods at a shop or different outlets of the same retail chain displaying either the "Tax Refund" or "Tax Free Shopping" logo. You may process your claim forms during your departure from Singapore Changi Airport. There are GST Refund Counters at Terminal I -Terminal III of Changi Airport.

Hotel Phone Services

Most hotels offer in-room international direct dial (IDD) telephone services. However, some hotels may impose a minimal 30 cents successful call transaction surcharge. As there are different IDD service providers in Singapore, rates and access codes are dependent on the service provider used by the hotel. Generally, local calls are charged at 10 cents for every three minutes.

Internet Access

Delegates are encouraged to bring their own wireless LAN card to make use of the wireless access facilities located at various meeting venue.

At major public areas, including Changi Airport, delegates may go online by making use of and logging on to Wireless@SG. More details are can found here:

<http://www.ida.gov.sg/Programmes/20061027174147.aspx?getPagetype=36>

Language

There are four languages; English, Malay, Chinese (Mandarin) and Tamil. English is the business language and it is widely spoken.

Laundry

Same-day laundry service is available in most hotels. Typically, it costs SGD 5 for a laundered shirt, SGD 10 for a dress and SGD 14 for a dry-cleaned suit. Independent dry-cleaners can be found in the Yellow Pages of the Singapore Phone Book.

Medical Facilities

Most hotels have their own doctor on 24 hour call. Contact the front office and/or Concierge for assistance. Doctors are listed under "Medical Practitioners". For Ambulance call 995.

Safety

Increasingly, personal safety and security are becoming critical concerns of international travellers. The situation in Singapore remains calm and stable, and the island remains one of the safest in the world to visit.

Enhanced security measures at key installations and other sensitive places ensure that Singapore continues to remain safe. The Singapore Government explicitly states that extremism originating from religion or race has no place in Singapore and swift action will be taken against any extremist or terrorist groups or individuals.

Shopping

Truly a shopper's paradise, Singapore offers treasures from both the sophisticated West and the exotic East. Air-conditioned shopping centres and bazaars offer a wide variety of goods ranging from the latest electronic products to jewellery and souvenirs. Elegant off-the-peg fashions and the finest haute couture from Paris, Milan, London and New York are available. Duty-free shopping for items such as clothing, cameras, watches and electrical product are also available for visitors to Singapore at selected stores both in the city and at the airport.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in public service vehicles, museums, libraries, lifts, theatres, cinemas, air-conditioned restaurants, non-airconditioned eating houses, hawker centers, hair salons, supermarkets, department stores and government offices. In line with efforts to improve the nightlife experience for all, there are smoking restrictions on entertainment outlets. Smoking is no longer allowed in all pubs, discos, karaoke bars and nightspots, unless within approved smoking rooms or smoking corners. Offenders can be fined up to SGD 1,000.

From 1st January 2009, smoking is also prohibited at:

- Indoor public places (eg. shops, shopping/neighbourhood centres, factories, offices) regardless of whether they are air-conditioned;
- Lift and hotel lobbies;
- Within 5 metres of entrances and exits to indoor area of buildings and facilities where smoking is prohibited;
- Playgrounds and exercise areas;
- Markets;
- Multi-storey and basement car parks;
- Ferry Terminals

Standard Singapore Time

Singapore Standard Time is 8 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+8).

Spitting

Spitting in public places is an offence.

Tipping

Tipping is not customary. It is generally not expected at hotels and establishments, which levy a 10% service charge.

Touting and Soliciting

While shopping in Singapore is a hassle-free and pleasurable experience, there are, on occasion, incidents of touting and soliciting, as well as incidents where visitors feel pressured into buying products or services from vendors who approach them on the streets. As a consumer, you have every right not to transact with any of these vendors. If you are not interested, ignore the touts or tell them firmly you are not interested and then walk away.

Here is a short list of what to be wary of:

- representatives from companies selling timeshare programmes,
- promising freebies or deals if you fill in a survey form,
- visit their showroom or attend a briefing at their office.
- representatives claiming to be from reputable department stores selling premium products like perfume or watches at attractive prices.

Trishaw

An interesting way to tour the streets of Singapore is to take a trishaw ride. We recommend that you avoid hailing a trishaw off the road. If you do, make sure that you agree on the fare to your destination before the trip commences. However, there are many trishaw tours that you can join that are run by some of the major tour operators. [Click here](#) for more on trishaw tours

Useful Telephone Numbers

Here is a list of useful telephone numbers.

Police

999 (toll-free)

Emergencies/Ambulance/Fire Brigade

995 (toll-free)

STB Touristline (24-hr automated tourist information system)

Tel: 1800 736 2000 (toll-free in Singapore only)

CitySearch (operator-assisted Yellow Pages)

Tel: (65) 1900 777 7777

International Calls

Tel: 104

Time of day

Tel: 1711

Trunk Calls to Malaysia

Dial 109 for operator assistance or 02 for direct dial.

Toll-free lines

Dial 1800 followed by the toll-free line number (in Singapore only).

Weather

Tel: (65) 6542 7788

Visa and Entry Facilities

Generally, foreigners who do not require visas for entry and are visiting Singapore as tourists, may be given up to 30-day social visit passes upon their arrival in Singapore.

For more information on visa requirements, [click here](#). To find out more about the types of visas and to download the necessary application forms, [click here](#).

What to Wear

Singapore has a warm and humid climate throughout the year with a daily average temperature range of 24 degrees Celsius to 31 degrees Celsius. Light and summer clothing made from natural fabrics like cotton is best for everyday wear. Casual dress is acceptable for most situations and occasions but some establishments may require a more formal dress code. It is always advisable to check beforehand on dress regulations, if any.

**Time Differences**

City	Hours Behind/Ahead of Singapore
Amsterdam	-7
Athens	-6
Auckland	+4
Bahrain	-5
Bandar Seri Begawan	none
Bangkok	-1
Beijing	none
Beirut	-6
Brisbane	+2
Brussels	-7

Cairo	-6
Calcutta	-2.5
Chicago	-14
Colombo	-2.5
Copenhagen	-7
Darwin	+1.5
Dublin	-8
Frankfurt	-7
Geneva	-7
Hanoi	-1
Helsinki	-6
Hong Kong	none
Honolulu	-18
Jakarta	-1
Johannesburg	-6
Karachi	-3
Kuala Lumpur	none
Lisbon	-8
London	-7
Los Angeles	-16
Madrid	-7
Manila	none
Melbourne	+2
Montreal	-13
Moscow	-5
Mumbai	-2.5
Nairobi	-5
New Delhi	-2.5
New York	-13
Osaka	+1
Oslo	-7
Paris	-6
Perth	none
Prague	-7
Rio de Janeiro	-11
Rome	-6
San Francisco	-16
Seoul	+1
Stockholm	-7

Sydney	+2
Taipei	none
Tehran	-4.5
Tel Aviv	-6
Tokyo	+1
Toronto	-13
Vancouver	-16
Vienna	-7
Yangon	-1.5
Zurich	-7

