Gateway Singapore

Tidy and efficient, Singapore is a modern marvel in a region full of anachronisms. It's a perfect intersection of Western-style order in an Asian setting and intelligently cultivates culture, history and, most importantly, cuisine on a tiny spit of land. The island can be tackled in a few days thanks to the slick MRT train system, which delivers city explorers to glitzy Orchard Rd malls, colonnaded antique buildings in the Colonial District, or the pungent lanes of Little India. It's affluent, high-tech and occasionally a little snobbish, but also a great food city with ubiquitous and raucous hawker centres.

See Lonely Planet's Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei guidebook for more information.

INFORMATION Bookshops

Borders (🕿 6235 7146: 01-00 Wheelock Pl. 501 Orchard Rd) Kinokuniya (🖻 6737 5021; www.kinokuniya.com.sq; 03-10/15 Ngee Ann City, 391 Orchard Rd)

Emergency

Ambulance (🕿 995) Fire (🕿 995) Police (🕿 999)

Internet Access

Every backpacker hostel now offers internet the majority of them for free, some for a nominal charge. There are numerous free wi-fi hotspots throughout the city.

Medical Services

Raffles SurgiCentre (🗃 6334 3337; www.raffleshospital .com; 585 North Bridge Rd) Singapore General Hospital (🖻 6321 4311; Block 1, Outram Rd)

Monev

Moneychangers can be found in every shopping centre and most do not charge fees on

FAST FACTS

- Country code: 🕿 65
- Population: 4.6 million
- Time: GMT + 7
- Visas: most nationalities get a 30-day tourist visa on arrival

foreign money or travellers' cheques. Many shops accept foreign cash and travellers' cheques at lower rates than you'd get from a moneychanger.

Post

Changi Airport (024-39, Terminal 2) **Comcentre** (31 Exeter Rd) Lucky Plaza (02-09 Lucky Plaza, Orchard Rd) Ngee Ann City (04-15 Takashimaya, 391 Orchard Rd)

Tourist Information

Most Singapore Tourism Board (STB) offices provide a wide range of services, including tour bookings and event ticketing. STB head office (Tourism Court; 2 1800-736 2000; 1 Orchard Spring Lane; 😯 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat) STB branches Orchard Road (336 7184; cnr Orchard/

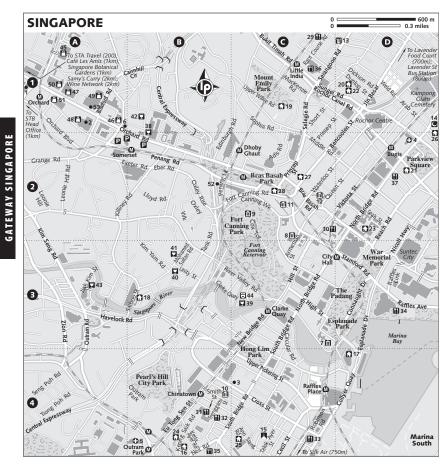
Cairnhill Rds; (9.30am-10.30pm); Little India ((6296) 9169; Inn Crowd, 73 Dunlop St; (>) 10am-10pm)

Travel Agencies

Jetabout Holidays (🖻 6822 2288, 6734 1818; 06-05 Cairnhill PI; 15 Cairnhill Rd) Misa Travel (🕿 6538 0318; 03-106 Hong Lim Complex, 531A Upper Cross St) STA Travel (🖻 6737 7188; www.statravel.com.sg; 07-02 Orchard Towers, 400 Orchard Rd)

SIGHTS **Colonial District**

Architectural remnants of British rule are neatly arranged around the Padang, an old cricket pitch. The state-of-the-art Asian Civilisations Museum (📾 6332 7789; www.acm.org.sg;



1 Empress PI; adult/child & concession S\$5/2.50; (>) 1-7pm Mon, 9am-7pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, 9am-9pm Fri) has 10 thematic galleries dealing with Asian culture, from the Islamic world to Japanese anime. At the Armenian St branch (a 6332 3015; 39 Armenian St; adult/child & concession S\$3/1.50; N 1-7pm Mon, 9am-7pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, 9am-9pm Fri) permanent displays include Peranakan culture, Chinese ceramics and Buddhist artefacts. To visit both, buy a combined ticket (adult/ child & concession S\$6/3); there is also discounted admission between 7pm and 9pm on Fridays.

The architecturally stunning National Museum of Singapore (🛱 6332 3659; www.national museum.sg; 93 Stamford Rd; adult/child \$10/5; 🕑 10am-9pm daily) includes a Singapore history gallery.

The Singapore Art Museum (🖻 6332 3222; www .museum.org.sg/sam; 71 Bras Basah Rd; adult/child S\$3/1.50; Non-6pm Mon, 9am-6pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun, 9am-9pm Fri) is housed in the former St Joseph's Institution, once a Catholic boys' school, and hosts world-class exhibitions.

Fort Canning Park offers a peaceful and leafy retreat. The Battle Box (2 6333 0510; 51 Canning Rise; adult/child S\$8/5; 🕅 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) is an underground warren that once served as a British base during WWII.

Chinatown

Bustling Chinatown is crammed with small shops, eateries and tradition, though the latter is being renovated into extinction. One highlight is the Thian Hock Keng Temple

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(🕿 6423 4626; 158 Telok Ayer St; 🕑 7.30am-5.30pm), Singapore's oldest Hokkien building. For a peek into the past, Chinatown Heritage Centre (🖻 6325 2878; www.chinatownheritage.com.sg; 48 Pagoda St; adult/child S\$8/4.80; 🕑 10am-7pm) is crammed with interactive, imaginative displays.

Orchard Rd

The city's mall corridor, Orchard Rd ranks among Singapore's retail attractions. Far East Plaza is the best spot for cheap clothes and shoes, Tangs was Singapore's first department store and Wisma Atria Shopping Centre has mainstream fashions. Next door is Ngee Ann City, packed with high-end brands. Lucky Plaza sells electronics and Paragon's shops maxes out credit cards. Heeren specialises in hip looks for teens. Rest from retail at the serene Singapore Botanic Gardens (🖻 6471 7361; www.sbg.org.sg; 1 Cluny Rd; admission free; 🕎 5am- midnight).

Little India & Kampung Glam

Disorderly and pungent, Little India is an incongruous appendage. The area is a sight in itself and one of its pleasures is wandering the little side streets and soaking it all in. For temple hounds there is the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple (🖻 6293 4634; 141 Serangoon Rd; 🕑 8am-12.30pm & 4-8.30pm), dedicated to the goddess Kali.

Southeast of Little India is Kampong Glam, Singapore's Muslim quarter. Here, you'll find the golden-domed Sultan Mosque (26 6293 4405; 3 Muscat St; 🕑 5am-8.30pm), the biggest mosque in Singapore.

Elsewhere

Nestled among the forest, the Singapore Zoological Gardens (🗟 6269 3411; www.zoo.com.sg; 80 Mandai Lake Rd; adult/child S\$15/7.50; № 8.30am-6pm), has an open layout for free-ranging orangutans and lemurs. Next door is the Night Safari (🖻 6269 3411; www.nightsafari.com.sg; adult/child \$\$15.45/10.30; (*) 7.30pm-midnight), a 40-hectare forested park where you view nocturnal animals in their habitats. To get to the zoo, go to Ang Mo Kio MRT station, then catch bus 138; or Choa Chu Kang MRT, then bus 927. After the Night Safari catch a return bus by 10.45pm to ensure you make the last train from Ang Mo Kio (11.30pm) or Choa Chu Kang (midnight).

Sentosa Island (🖻 1800-736 8672; www.sentosa.com .sg; admission S\$3; (>) 7am-midnight) is a theme-park resort filled with such attractions as luge rides (luge & chairlift \$9, 3 rides for \$16; 🕑 10am-9.30pm) and the aquariums of Underwater World (@ 6275 0030; www.underwaterworld.com.sg; adult/child S\$19.50/12.50; (>) 9am-9pm). Take the Sentosa Express light rail (7am and 11.45pm) from the VivoCity shopping centre next to the MRT station. For a more spectacular ride, take the cable car (adult/child \$10.90/5.50 return) from the World Trade Centre.

SLEEPING

Singapore has some excellent hostels and guesthouses, even in the more expensive parts of the city. For a little comfort upgrade to a sleek boutique.

Colonial District & the Quays

New 7th Storey Hotel (🖻 6337 0251; www.nsshotel .com; 229 Rochor Rd; dm S\$17, d S\$53-80; 🕄 🛄) This well-run hotel has four-bed dorms and double rooms with shared or private bathroom.

YMCA International House (🗃 6336 6000; www.ymca .org.sg; 1 Orchard Rd; dm S\$30; 😢 💷 🕥) Even after you add on the \$3.15 temporary membership, the Y's spacious dorms are a steal, with a pool, free breakfast and central location. Strand Hotel (🖻 6338 1866; www.strandhotel.com.

sq; 25 Bencoolen St; d S\$85-95; 🔀 🛄) An aboveaverage midranger, the Strand is decorated with earthy colours and jungle-print fabrics. Gallery Hotel (🕿 6849 8686; www.gallery

hotel.com.sg; 76 Robertson Quay; d from S\$295; 💦 🛄 😰) Singapore's first boutique hotel is still totally hip. Rooms go retro with zanily coloured linen, frosted-glass bathroom walls and room numbers branded into the floorboards.

Fullerton Hotel (🖻 6733 8388; www.fullerton hotel.com; 1 Fullerton Sq; d from S\$400; 🔀 🛄 😰) Named after Robert Fullerton, the first Straits Settlements' Governor, this converted 1928 post office is one of the places to stay in Singapore.

Raffles Hotel (🖻 6337 1886: www.raffleshotel.com: 1 Beach Rd; ste from S\$750; 🔀 💷 🕥) Is it worth coughing up the cash to stay at Raffles? The rooms aren't as bright as modern hotels, but wooden floors, high ceilings, leafy verandas, unwavering colonial ambience more than compensate.

Chinatown

A Travellers Rest-stop (2 6225 4812; www.atravel lersreststop.com.sq; 5 Teck Lim Rd; dm/s/d/tw S\$20/40/65/70; 🔀 💷) Brightly painted and extremely friendly, this well-appointed hostel is the best budget spot in Chinatown.

Roval Peacock Hotel (2 6223 3522; www.roval peacockhotel.com; 55 Keong Saik Rd; s from S\$105, d from S\$145; 🕄) Beautiful lobby, beautiful staff, and peacock-palette rooms with character by the bucket-load. Cheaper rooms are windowless and cramped.

Scarlet (🛱 6511 3333; www.thescarlethotel.com; 33 Erskine Rd; d/ste from S\$210/500; 🕄 💷) Sexy Scarlet has seduced Singapore's boutique-hotel market with a string of gorgeous 1924 shophouses and bordello-decorated rooms.

Little India & Kampung Glam

Most hostels in this area include free internet and breakfast.

Inn Crowd (🕿 6296 9169: www.the-inncrowd.com: 73 Dunlop St; dm/d S\$18/48; 🔀 🛄) Extremely popular for its location, atmosphere and very cheap dorm, as well as its self-endowed title as a backpacker party spot.

Sleepy Sam's Guesthouse (🖻 9277 4988; www .sleepvsams.com: 55 Bussorah Rd: dm/s/d S\$25/45/69; 🛄) By far the most peaceful of the area's hostels, Sam's dorms and rooms are a bit cramped, but the location on this strip of restored heritage shophouses more than makes up for it.

Hangout@Mount Emily (26 6438 5588; www .hangouthotels.com; 10a Upper Wilkie Rd; dm S\$35, d & tw S\$88; 🔀 💷) For state-of-the-art hostelling you can't beat the Hangout. Modern rooms with dorm beds (not bunks).

Perak Hotel (a 6299 7733; www.peraklodge.net; 12 Perak Rd; d with breakfast S\$128-188; 🔀 🛄) The renovated Peranakan-style Perak Hotel (formerly Perak Lodge) is deservedly popular. Staff are helpful, interiors feature lashings of natural timber and ceramics. Cheaper rooms don't have windows.

EATING

You'll eat well in Singapore from a buffet of ethnic traditions: Malay, South Indian, Cantonese, Hokkien, Teochew and Indonesian among others.

Colonial District & the Quays

A former convent, CHIJMES (30 Victoria St) has been converted into a den of worldly pleasure housing more than 20 bars, restaurants and clubs.

Yu Kee (🖻 6337 7525; cnr Liang Seah St & North Bridge Rd; mains S\$3-7; 🕑 7am-11pm Sun-Thu, 7am-2pm Fri & Sat) Usually packed, Yu Kee does great duck rice. Friday and Saturday nights see a devoted crowd slurping down the Katong laksa.

My Humble House (🕿 6423 1881; 02-27/29 Esplanade Mall; mains \$\$20-25; 🕅 lunch & dinner) With décor that's Alice in Wonderland-meets-Phillipe Starck, this place is anything but humble. Business groups dine from an elaborate Sichuan menu filled with delicacies. Dress snazzy; reservations essential.

Chinatown

Chinatown Complex Food Centre (Smith St; 19 9am-11pm) As you'd expect, the large, eternally busy hawker centre here has some fantastic Chinese food, appropriately unkempt atmosphere and wallet-friendly prices.

Da Dong (🖻 6221 3822; 39 Smith St; mains S\$12-20, yum cha items S\$2.80-4.80; (7am-11pm) Grab a serve of the celebrated dim sum from the steamer trollevs that are wheeled to your table.

Lau Pa Sat (18 Raffles Quay; 🕑 10am-10pm) Famous for its renovated Victorian market building, this place can be so bewildering it even has street numbers. Try the steamed dim sum from stalls on Street 8.

Qun Zhong Eating House (2 6221 3060; 21 Neil Rd; mains S\$8-10: Y lunch & dinner Thu-Tue) Lunchtime queues conga onto the street for seafood, pork and vegetable dumplings.

Little India & Kampung Glam

Banana Leaf Apolo (🖻 6293 8682; 54-58 Race Course Rd; meals from SS6: 10am-10pm) The runaway winner among Singapore's many fish-head curry joints, this place will make you a fan of dishes that sound disgusting.

Tekka Centre (cnr Bukit Timah & Serangoon Rds; 🕑 10am-late) Indian-Muslim stalls excel in prawn vadai (deep-fried prawn dumplings served with savoury lentil sauce or yogurt) or a spicy cup of Indian tea.

Lavender Food Court (cnr Jln Besar & Foch Rd: 11-3am) Much less touristed than most food centres, and stays open until the wee hours. The wonton noodles and dim sum are worth queuing for.

Orchard Rd Area

Samy's Curry Restaurant (🖻 6472 2080; Civil Service Clubhouse, Dempsey Rd; dishes from S\$3) A Singaporean institution, this banana-leaf curry joint is a culinary pilgrimage and housed in an old wooden army mess hall,

Café Les Amis (🗃 6467 7326; Singapore Botanic Gardens, 1 Cluny Rd; meals S\$7-14; 🕥 breakfast, lunch & afternoon tea daily, dinner Sat & Sun) The mild-mannered all-day menu here covers all the luncheon bases and meals are served on an outdoor fountain terrace.

Din Tai Fung (🖻 6836 8336; B1-03/06 Paragon Bldg, 290 Orchard Rd; mains S\$8-17; 🐑 10am-10pm) Famous for its dumplings, but its wonton noodle soups are also excellent.

DRINKING & ENTERTAINMENT

The main party places include Mohamed Sultan Rd, Clarke and Boat Quays, and Emerald Hill Rd off Orchard Rd. Most bars open from 5pm daily until at least midnight Sunday to Thursday, and till 2am on Friday and Saturday. Cover charges at clubs range from S\$15 to S\$25. For frugal imbibers, the cheapest way to drink is in a hawker centre.

Long Bar (Raffles Hotel; 🖻 6337 1886; 1 Beach Rd; (> 11-12.30am) It's a compulsory cliché to sink a Singapore Sling (S\$16, or S\$25 with a souvenir glass) in the Long Bar, but for a less touristy experience head for the snooker tables at the Bar & Billiard Room.

Crazy Elephant (🕿 6337 1990: 01-07 Clarke Ouav) One of Clarke Quay's oldest and best bars, the grungy Elephant has been bashing out live blues and rock forever.

live blues and rock torever. **Zouk** ((a) 6738 2988; www.zoukdub.com.sg; 17 Jiak Kim St) The stayer of the Singapore scene still nabs top-name DJs. It's actually three clubs in one (Zouk, Phuture and Velvet Underground), plus a wine bar, so go the whole hog and pay the full entrance charge. **Ministry of Sound** ((a) 6235 2292; www.ministryof sound.com.sg; 01-02 Clarke Quay; cover charge S\$15-25) Its international credentials made it an instant successer attracting big name DIs and hurge

success, attracting big name DJs and huge weekend crowds.

Wine Network (26 6479 5739; Block 13 Dempsey Rd) A rustic bar nestled among the trees and old army barracks of Dempsey Rd.

Emerald Hill has a collection of bars in renovated shophouses including the cool Alley Bar (🖻 6738 8818; 2 Emerald Hill Rd) and even cooler No. 5 (🖻 6732 0818; 5 Emerald Hill Rd). Longtime haunts in the Mohamed Sultan Rd area include Next Page (🖻 6238 7826; 17/18 Mohamed Sultan Rd) and dbl0 (🕿 6735 2008; 01-24, 11 Unity St).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

For information on getting to specific regions in Borneo, see these chapters: Sabah (p87), Sarawak (p171), Brunei (p220) and Kalimantan (p237).

Air

The Changi International Airport (🖻 6541 2267; www .changi.airport.com.sg) is about 20km east of the city centre. SilkAir flies daily from Singapore to Balikpapan in Indonesia's Kalimantan province. Here are a few airlines that fly in and out of Changi:

Jetstar Asia (🖻 6822 2288; www.jetstarasia.com) Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.

Malaysia Airlines (2 6336 6777; www.sq.malay siaairlines.com; 02-09 Singapore Shopping Centre, 190 Clemenceau Ave)

SilkAir (🗃 6223 8888 www.silkair.com; 77 Robinson Rd, SIA Blda)

Singapore Airlines (🖻 6223 8888; www.singaporeair .com; Level 2, Paragon Bldg, 290 Orchard Rd)

Tiger Airways (🗟 1800-388 8888; www.tigerairways .com) Australia, China, Indonesia, Macau, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

If you plan to fly to Malaysian Borneo, Johor Bahru's airport in Malaysia often has cheaper flights on Air Asia and Malaysia Airlines. Passengers of Malaysia Airlines can take a connecting bus service (S\$12) from Singapore's **Copthorne Orchid Hotel** ((262503333; 214 Duneam Rd), leaving at 9am, 12.20pm and 3.50pm every day.

Boat

Ferries connect Singapore to Indonesia's Riau archipelago. There are two departure points: the HarbourFront Centre (next to HarbourFront MRT station) for Pulau Batam, Tanjung Balai and Tanjung Batu; and Tanah Merah ferry terminal for Pulau Bintan and Batam. To reach Tanah Merah, take the MRT to Bedok and then take bus 35. A taxi from the city is around S\$15. Expect to pay around S\$16 for a one-way ticket to Batam, S\$24 to S\$36 to Bintan, Balai or Batu.

Bus

If travelling across the Causeway from Singapore to Johor Bahru in Malaysia, take bus 160 from Kranji MRT station (S\$1.10). The buses stop at the border for immigration formalities and to pick-up passengers on the other side. Keep your ticket so that you can reboard.

Train

Singapore's train station is on Keppel Rd. The Malaysian company **Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad** (@ 6222 5165; www.ktmb.com.my) operates three air-conditioned express trains daily to Kuala Lumpur (3rd class S\$19, 2nd class S\$34) with connections on to Thailand.

GETTING AROUND

Singapore has a fantastic transport system. For frequent MRT train and/or bus trips, buy a \$\$15 EZ-link card from any MRT station (which includes a refundable \$\$5 deposit and \$\$10 credit). This electronic card can be used on all public buses and trains and offers reduced fares (from \$\$0.66 to \$\$1.75). EZ-link credit can even be used at food outlets such as McDonald's.

To/From the Airport

Changi Airport has connections by the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) to and from points within the city. Public bus 36 leaves for the city approximately every 10 minutes between 6am and midnight, and takes about 45 minutes. Taxis from the airport pay a supplementary charge (S\$3 to S\$5 depending on time) on top of the metered fare, which is around S\$18 to the city centre.

Bus

Public buses are operated by **SBS Transit** (www .sbstransit.com.sg) and **SMRT** (www.smrt.com.sg). Fares start from S\$0.80 and rise to a maximum of S\$1.70 and most buses run between 6am and midnight.

The **SIA Hop-On** ($\textcircled{\baselinethinstyle}$ 9457 2896; http://siahopon .asiaone.com.sg/; 1-day ticket for SIA passengers \$\$3, adult/ child non-passengers \$\$12/6) tourist bus does 19 loops of the city between 9am and 7.30pm, stopping at 21 points of interest.

Mass Rapid Transit

The **Mass Rapid Transit** (MRT; www.smrt.com.sg) subway system is the most comfortable way to get around. It operates from 6am to midnight, with trains running every three to six minutes. Single-trip tickets cost from S\$0.90 to S\$1.90 with a S\$1 deposit for every ticket.

Taxi

The major taxi companies are **City Cab** (**@** 6552 2222), **Comfort** (**@** 6552 1111) and **SMRT** (**@** 6555 8888) and **TransCab** (**@** 6553 3333).

Fares start from S\$2.80 for the first kilometre, then S\$0.20 for each additional 385m. There are various surcharges: peak-hour, late-night and public-holiday services, airport pick-ups and bookings. You can flag down a taxi any time or use a taxi rank. © Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'