

SINGAPORE

Singapore, officially the Republic of Singapore, is an island city-state located at the southern tip of **the Malay Peninsula**, lying 137 kilometres (85 mi) north of the equator, south of the Malaysian state of Johor and north of Indonesia's Riau Islands. At 710.2 km² (274.2 sq mi), Singapore is a microstate and the smallest nation in **Southeast Asia**. This is substantially larger than Monaco and Vatican City, the only other surviving sovereign city-states.

Before European settlement, the island now known as Singapore was the site of a Malay fishing village at the mouth of the Singapore River. Several hundred indigenous Orang Laut people also lived along the nearby coast, rivers and on smaller islands. In 1819, the British East India Company, led by **Sir Stamford Raffles**, established a trading post on the island, which was used as a port along the spice route. Singapore became one of the most important commercial and military centres of the **British Empire**, and the hub of British power in Southeast Asia.



Having undergone a spectacular facelift as a **national heritage site**, **CHIJMES** (pronounced "chimes") is now a popular dining, shopping and entertainment site. CHIJMES Hall, the restored chapel, provides a breath-taking backdrop for musicals, recitals, theatrical performances and weddings. Formerly one of the last few cloistered convents in the world, the fine gothic architecture is a favourite theme among photographers.

Dalhousie Obelisk

In harmony with the historic Singapore River area at **Empress Place**, this stately monument was built to commemorate the visit to Singapore in 1850 by Marquis Dalhousie, **Governor-General of India**.

Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay is one of the world's busiest arts centres, officially opened on 12 October 2002. The original Esplanade was built in 1943 and refers to a park that today occupies 2.4 hectares along **Connaught Drive** opposite City Hall. In 1985, the Master Plan for an arts centre to be built in Singapore was developed and Esplanade was chosen to be the site upon which it sat. The original Esplanade site was redeveloped in 1991 to enhance the civic district and while further reclamation work for the arts centre was also begun.

The Istana (or "palace" in Malay) is the official residence of the **President of Singapore** and just five times a year, its gates are open to members of the public. Built on an old nutmeg plantation, the Istana was the former official residence of the representative of **the British Crown**. Classical in style, the Istana is a magnificent building with multiple design influences, from the ornate Victorian Renaissance to the Roman Classical, with Gothic, Chinese and Malay touches. The sprawling grounds and manicured gardens contain rare plants lovingly cared for by superintendents of **the Singapore Botanic Gardens**.

Built in 1894, **Lau Pa Sat** is the largest remaining Victorian filigree cast-iron structure in **Southeast Asia**. Located in the heart of **Singapore's** business district, the former wet market has been restored and is now a favourite food centre of the locals, offering a wide and affordable variety of local food.

The Merlion was first designed as an emblem for the **Singapore Tourism Board** (STB) in 1964 – the lion head with a fish body resting on a crest of waves quickly became Singapore's icon to the rest of the world. The Merlion and the Cub became a popular tourist attraction for visitors. The installation ceremony took place on 15 September 1972, officiated by the then Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr **Lee Kuan Yew**. Measuring 8.6 metres high and weighing 70 tonnes, the Merlion statue was built from cement fondue by the late Singapore craftsman, Mr Lim Nang Seng. The lion head represents the lion spotted by **Prince Sang Nila Utama** when he re-discovered Singapura in 11 AD, as recorded in the "Malay Annals". The fish tail of the Merlion symbolises the ancient city of Temasek (meaning "sea" in Javanese) by which Singapore was known before the Prince named it "Singapura" (meaning "lion" (singa) "city" (pura) in Sanskrit), and represents Singapore's humble beginnings as a fishing village.

Founded by Indonesian collector **Kwee Swie Teng** in 2003, **Art Retreat** is Singapore's first private museum with a collection of modern Asian and European art. It is dedicated to the appreciation and collecting of art through exhibition, education and research.

Changi Chapel & Museum. A beacon of hope for the hopeless. The Changi Chapel, housed within the open-air courtyard of the Museum, is a symbolic replica of the many chapels built during **the Japanese Occupation**. Built by Changi Prison inmates, it stands as a monument to those who maintained their faith and dignity during those dark years. Letters, photographs, drawings and personal effects in the Museum relate the agony of the Japanese Occupation (1942-45) and imprisonment for more than 50,000 civilians and soldiers in Changi. One of the museum's main highlights is the replica of **The Changi**

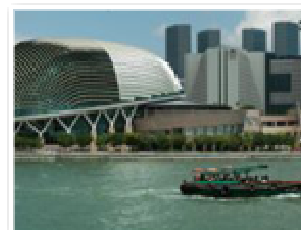
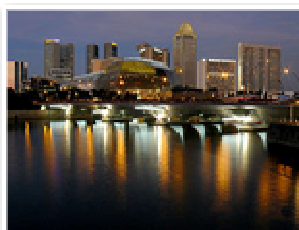
Murals, a series of magnificent wall paintings recreated from the originals painted by bombardier Stanley Warren.

Designed and built by **George Coleman** as a colonial mansion in 1827, Singapore's oldest government building has been renamed and re-launched as **The Arts House**. Formerly the home of Singapore's democratically-elected Parliament, the building now offers a charming and intimate venue for cutting edge contemporary visual arts, music, dance, film, comedy and theatre by Singaporean and international artists. Walk down **the Corridors of Time**, an exhibition reliving the life and times of the House and its many famous personalities. Not to be missed, gracing the exterior of the stately building, is a bronze elephant statue, a gift from **King Chulalongkorn of Siam** in 1871.

TO DO

It may surprise many to know that the small **city-state of Singapore** is only one of two cities in the world to have a significant area of primary rainforest within its boundaries – the other being **Rio de Janeiro**. Only 12 kilometres from the city, this lush 164-hectare reserve contains more species of trees than the entire **North American continent**.

Trek through the jungle via well-marked paths and look out for exotic birds, butterflies, monkeys, squirrels and flying lemurs, as well as unique plantlife like the insect-eating pitcher plant.



SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX

Each autumn runs the **Singapore Formula 1 Grand Prix** in Singapore.

For more information: [Singapore Grand Prix](#)

INFORMATION

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