Singapore Learning Journey

A one-day journey to experience various multi-cultural, historical and modern aspects of Singapore

The modern history of Singapore began on 6 February 1819 when Englishman Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles claimed her as a trading outpost for the British Empire.

As Singapore grew to become an important port in the region, many immigrants from China and India flocked to the island to seek their fortunes, settling in the ethnic enclaves of Kampong Glam, Little India and Chinatown.

Kampong Glam

Prior to the arrival of the British, Kampong Glam was the traditional seat of Malay royalty. Under the urban town planning of the Raffles Plan of 1822, the area also housed the ethnic Malays and Arab merchants who had settled in Singapore.

Today, Kampong Glam, also known as Arab Street, remains a centre for Muslim activities. Here we pick up a tip or two on sarong-tying and catch various old trades in action, before they die out in a rapidly urbanizing city.

Our journey also takes us to the historic Sultan Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in Singapore and a major heritage landmark, where we gain valuable insights into the Islamic faith. (Note: Please wear sleeved top and long skirts/pants for the visit to the mosque.)

Little India

Little India, as its name suggests, is the centre for the local and expatriate Indian community in Singapore. To the Tamil community, it is also known by its historical name, Tekka, which in Hokkien (a Chinese dialect) refers to the bamboo clumps which once grew in abundance along the banks of the Rochor Canal. Appreciate the richness of the Indian culture with fun-filled interactive activities such as sari-tying, henna art and sweets sampling in the midst of colourful sights, exciting sounds and fragrant smells.

At the heart of Little India sits the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple, one of the oldest temples in Singapore. Built by Indian pioneers, the temple is dedicated to the Hindu Goddess Kali. Enjoy an insightful introduction to Hindu practices and temple architecture to gain a deeper appreciation of Hindu philosophy and its way of life.

After a delightful lunch of North Indian cuisine, we tread the paths taken by early Chinese immigrants to Chinatown.

Chinatown

When the early immigrants from China came to Singapore, they settled mainly in Singapore’s Chinatown. Among the Chinese, this area is commonly known as Niu Che Shui (meaning “bullock cart water” in Chinese), a reference to the bullocks that were used to haul drinking water.

Visit the UNESCO-marked Thian Hock Keng Temple, the oldest Hokkien-Chinese temple in Singapore. The main temple is dedicated to Mazu, the Taoist goddess of the sea and the guardian of seamen and early immigrants who made the perilous journey across the South China Sea to Singapore. Enjoy some relaxing moments to appreciate the fragrance and philosophy of Chinese tea through the art of tea appreciation.

Then we travel through the timeline of the country’s development to modern Singapore.

Civic District

Considered the historic birthplace of modern Singapore, the Civic District of the Padang, Old Supreme Court, Old Parliament House and City Hall, was also part of the Raffles Plan of 1822. Two important events took place here – the surrender of the Japanese to the British in 1945 and the declaration of independence from the British in 1965. Today, the area is a mix of landmark buildings and monuments, and the street circuit for Formula 1 night races.

Esplanade - Theatres on The Bay

Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay sits on six hectares of waterfront reclaimed land alongside Marina Bay to the east of the Padang. Affectionately called “The Durian” by the locals, it is the premier arts centre of Singapore and houses a concert hall, theatre, recital and theatre studios and Singapore’s first performing arts library, library@esplanade.

For dinner, we go on an adventure of local food, local style!

Singapore Food Trail

@ Singapore Flyer

Street food culture is a unique institution in Singapore with hawker centres, where delicious local food is sold, dotting all parts of the island. What better way to experience this unique culture than at the Singapore Food Trail, a dining concept with the nostalgic feel and charm of Singapore in the 1960s. Order your food at the hawker stalls (including 17 heritage ones), watch it being cooked before you and tuck in heartily!

In the evening, we end our journey at the famous Night Safari.

Night Safari

See a myriad of nocturnal animals in a secondary jungle of the World’s first dedicated night zoo. Look out for fierce predators and timid forest dwellers in their natural habitat under the subtle glow of the moon and enjoy an action-packed Creatures of the Night animal show.

Write-up: NTU Library & Journeys Pte Ltd
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