



Singapore – Colonial charm with a bit of Asian mystery

Most countries have rather different social and political systems than Europe, the food is different, and not everybody speaks English. It's certainly easier to travel to America or Australia, especially if you're all by yourself, but there is one city that could be described as the perfect first stop in Asia: Singapore.

Thanks to its rich and multicolored history, Singapore became a melting pot of different Asian cultures, languages and cuisines mixed with a strong English influence that goes back to colonial times and resulted in English being the official language in this South East Asian city. In addition, the city is fairly easy to navigate, thanks to its clearly structured subway system, and the variety of food makes it a foodie heaven!



Food for everyone

There are many hostels all over the city. Most of them are close to a subway station, and the ticket prices are very low, so transportation isn't a problem. And the city offers something for everybody: from Little India to Chinatown, from the prestigious Marina Bay Sands hotel to Orchard Road, from the Raffles hotel to the Botanic garden, visitors can choose and switch between a modern metropolis, old Asian scents and secrets, historical buildings from colonial times and beautifully colored Indian shops in between Hindu temples.

One typical location in Singapore are the many food halls, little market halls full of different food stands with all kinds of delicacies ranging from Chinese chicken to western steak. One of the biggest and most famous of these food halls is called Lao Pa Sak and can be found right in the middle of the financial district. It is awfully crowded around lunch, but the early afternoon hours are usually much more manageable.

If you're looking for a quick snack and a beautiful view in the evening, visit MankanSutra at Marina Bay and enjoy a beautiful view of the bay and a delicious curry. A more western atmosphere can be found in one of the many little cafes and restaurants lining the river along Clark quay. And if you're going out for drinks and don't mind using your credit card, order a Singapore Sling at the Raffles Hotel. This colonial structure is one of the sights of Singapore and was built in 1887 to honor the founder of modern day Singapore – Sir Stamford Raffles.



About National Orchid garden and Chinatown

Another sight of the city, and its emblem, is the Merlion. This creature, half fish half lion, is built in stone and overlooks Marina Bay, offering a perfect background for a touristy souvenir. If you need a break from all the big city lights, take the subway to the botanical gardens and enjoy a day of peace and quiet in the beautiful greenery. Flower fans should definitely also check out the National Orchid garden – it houses over 1.000 different varieties of orchids! And if you need a shopping spree after all the peace and quiet: Orchard Road with its shopping malls and the Singapore Hard Rock Café is only a few bus stops away.



For the typical Asian feeling, enjoy a stroll through Chinatown. Make sure to buy souvenirs made out of Jade and silk for your loved ones, and if you can, visit one of the temples in the middle of Chinatown, for example the wonderful Buddha Tooth Relic Temple with its traditional Chinese design and wonderful golden Buddha Statues. You can enter the temple and walk around, but make sure to pick up one of the Saris provided at the entrance and cover your legs and, if you're a woman, preferably also your hair. A visit in the temple and an Asian snack from the market afterwards will definitely make you feel like you've entered the heart of the Asian empire.



(text and pictures: Carolin Schmitt)