

TRAVEL



Little India Shophouses: The vintage gaily-painted shophouses in Little India which have become a Singapore icon.

Big wonders in Little India

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Even if you walked around blindfolded, you would still be able to find Little India.

Yes, this picturesque part of Singapore is distinguishable thanks to its entrancing aroma of exotic spices and the scent of burning incense. Being one of the most vibrant, colorful and alluring spots to visit in the island, Little India is one of the key cultural precincts Singapore is proud of.

Strolling around this area is a joy of its own. Here too you can find the gaily-painted shop-houses that have become a Singapore icon. Stores piled up with various textiles, eye-catching saris and gold bangles; the pungent fragrance of jasmine, spices

and incense wafts from the doorways coming in one blend with Bollywood's latest soundtracks blaring from every other alleyway. As you walk, don't be surprised if you hear Chinese Singaporeans speaking fluent Tamil, while the Indian sellers may converse in Mandarin.

Start your trail at Tekka Center, located at the corner of Serangoon Road and Rochor Road. A lively blend of wet market, food venues and shops, Tekka Center is a place where several ethnic communities converge to create a multicultural shopping fiesta. Being a place with a variety of cultural influences, food of South and North Indian, as well as Chinese and Malay are found here.

What stands out in the middle of your wander will be Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple in Serangoon Road, Little India's busiest and oldest temple built in 1855 by Tamil laborers. Another famous temple is the Sri Srinivasa Perumal temple. This is a classic example of South Indian temple architecture charac-

SPECIAL ISSUE



Little India goodies: Little India is packed with shops selling colorful accessories.

terized by its pyramid-shaped tower.

When you walk through the Tekka Market toward Buffalo and Kerbau Roads, you will be greeted by a number of goldsmith shops here. The aroma of jasmine and spices still lingers as you come across a Chinese Villa next. Don't forget to visit the colorful Tan Teng Niah House, with its lovely courtyard, gilded nameplate with a calligraphic inscription symbolizing endurance. The intricately carved *Pintu Pagar* (decorative swing doors) is something you won't forget.

The famous Campbell Lane shouldn't be missed either, with its array of shops that sell everything from accessories, handicrafts and India-imported vegetables, to religious items and Indian vegetarian food.

Talking about food, remember to enjoy some culinary highlights from

this area. Take a break from your stroll, sit and order some *teh tarik* (pulled tea). Named as such due to the way it is made, where the tea is tossed repeatedly from one mug to another to create a thick froth. Just watching the skilled "pullers" demonstrating this art of it is such a fun and exciting thing to watch.

Need a snack to accompany the hot tea? Order some *roti prata*. Soft, yet crispy, this Indian "pancake" is not only a pleasure to eat, but also to watch when being made. Stretched, flipped, folded to form a flat shape, it will then be tossed onto a flat griddle coated with hot oil until it turns a delicate golden brown. With curry, honey, or even on its own, it is a delectable snack to eat.

There are a lot of restaurants in the area where you can explore more Indian culinary delights. One spe-

cialty of Little India is actually a dish called fish head curry, a dish unique to Singapore. As strange as it sounds and looks, the head has actually a lot of meat to offer. After slow and long cooking, it falls apart so easily.

For any first-time visitor, getting to Little India is not much of a task either. The MRT (especially on weekends) is a more preferable way to get there than cabs. The North-East MRT line's Little India and Farrer Park stations near Serangoon Road are convenient points to get into the area.

Accommodation is what you can also find in Little India. Of course, it varies according to your budget. Wanderlust, an experimental boutique hotel located in Dickson road is one of the unique ones, with its capsule-shaped rooms in different hues.

Another exciting thing that visi-

tors can do in Little India is to join its festivals. Thaipusam for example, held yearly during the full moon in the lunar month of Thai - usually January/February. Another is called Deepavali, the Hindu festival of lights that magically turns Serangoon Road into a festively decorated street with open-air markets selling Deepavali-related goodies.

Like Thaipusam, the exact date is determined by the lunar calendar, but it takes place in October/November. There's also a fire walking festival called Thimithi, where you can see a lot of male devotees walking across a platform of burning coals.

Being a unique part of the island bursting with so much personality and breathing a lot of colorful life, Little India is a place never to be missed while visiting Singapore.

ADVERTORIAL

Getaway to the shopping paradise



It's time to experience the spirit of shopping in Hong Kong, Singapore or Bangkok, three top destinations in Asia well-known for their hipness, unique stores and professionalism and friendliness in the retail industry; and Singapore Airlines, the most admired air carrier in Asia according to *Fortune* magazine, will happily serve you to enjoy sales on just about anything in each of the cities.

In Singapore, be prepared to discover a wealth of opportunities for shopping at Marina Bay, Little India, China Town, Bugis Street and the legendary Orchard Road as the Great Singapore Sale is approaching. The Great Singapore Sale, tipped as one of the biggest events, is a yearly shopper's festival offering slashed prices and unbelievable discounts of up to 70 percent at most shops and guaranteeing an unforgettable shopping experience in the Lion City.

This year's Great Singapore Sale is set to kick off on May 27, culminating on July 24, during which shoppers can expect to enjoy special prices on clothing, jewelry, watches, electronics and a whole lot more at exclusive shopping malls, smaller retailers and various stores. Late night shopping and extended hours at signature stores also mean that shoppers can capitalize on their time at the festival, which also includes attractive entertainment and dining offers and packages that are centered on the event.

Hotels will also offer special rates, providing great times to stay in the city-state. Last but not least, don't forget to fly Singapore Airlines (SIA), the most admired - and the only from Asia - airlines according to *Fortune*. The global business magazine recently listed the air carrier among the "Top 50 World's Most Admired Companies" in its annual survey. The annual

World's Most Admired Companies airlines list is based on results of a global survey of airline executives, directors and analysts who rate companies in their own industry on nine criteria: people management, quality of management, innovation, long-term investment, use of corporate assets, financial soundness, social responsibility, quality of product and services and global competitiveness.

Singapore Airlines rose to the 18th spot, from the 27th in 2010, on *Fortune*'s 2011 all-star list; and, among non-US companies, the airline was the most admired this year. Singapore Airlines is also the top Singapore representative and the only Asian airline listed in the magazine.

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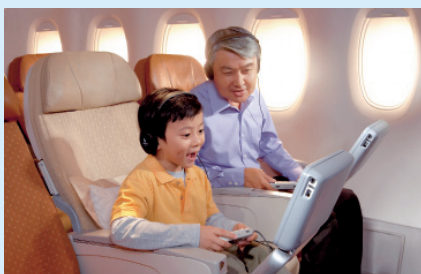
A selection of the finest wines, handpicked for Singapore Airlines by the panel of renowned wine consultants, complements Singapore Airlines' World Gourmet Cuisine. Customers who require special meals for religious or medical reasons are also catered for, with meal requests taken at the time of reservation. Singapore Airlines has new

comforts in First Class, Business Class, Economy Class and KrisWorld on its B777-300ER. The new KrisWorld extends the greatest shows in the sky with wide LCD screen in every seat, offering the highest resolution of 1280x768 pixels; the latest Hollywood blockbusters and award-winning TV programs. There is also office software comprising a suite of business applications available at every seat in every class.

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