

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Acquired tastes

Savour and savvy: at the *Local Food Trail* in the Hawker Centre of the ION Orchard acquire some Asian tastes under expert guidance → p. 66

INSIDER TIP Magic spirals

The wooden *Henderson Waves*, Singapore's highest pedestrian bridge, winds at treetop height through a jungle park → p. 56

INSIDER TIP Rock 'n' roll on the waterfront

Singaporean bands give free concerts when night falls at the weekend on the open-air stage in front of the *Esplanade Culture Centre* → p. 106

INSIDER TIP Occupied Singapore

Memories of times past at the *Old Ford Factory*: here where cars once left the production line, you will gain deep insight into life in the city state during the time of the Japanese occupation → p. 60

INSIDER TIP Be amused with the drag queen

Kumar, Singapore's top drag queen, makes fun of everything her countrymen hold sacred. (S)he is definitely the only one who can get away with it → p. 89

INSIDER TIP Tasty Laksa

Singapore's traditional dish is much more than just noodle soup – and it tastes best at the 328 *Katong Laksa* snack bar (photo right) → p. 69

INSIDER TIP In the Peranakan world

Immerse yourself in the life of Singapore's early immigrants; you will find all of the information you need on the Peranakan culture in the *Katong Antique House* → p. 102

INSIDER TIP Spinning round in circles

A top-class Chinese restaurant, the *Prima Tower*, revolves above an old flour mill. The establishment's famous Peking duck tastes all the better in the 1960s ambience and with the spectacular view → p. 67

INSIDER TIP Bargaining a must!

Paradise for shopaholics: the traders at the *Queensway Shopping Centre* offer sports shoes and eye-wear at special prices in their typically jam-packed Asian shops. Goods are original products by popular sports brands, 20 percent below city-centre prices → p. 77

INSIDER TIP Halls full of furniture

Buyers have been plundering Asia's antiques shops for years; much is now sold out. But at *Tan Boon Liat Building* you still have the chance to find just what you're after among the old and reproduction furniture, accessories and carpets → p. 79

INSIDER TIP See and be seen

Guaranteed to cause a stir! Send the folks back home your favourite photo of Singapore – as a *postage stamp*. But let the recipient in on the secret: make sure the little gem on your holiday greetings don't end up unnoticed in the waste paper basket → p. 123

INSIDER TIP Made to measure

The oldest shirt-maker in Singapore, *Cyc*, not only produces the best men's shirts – and ladies' blouses – in the city but also repairs frayed cuffs and collars; years later, if desired → p. 80

INSIDER TIP Bales of material

If you love fabrics, the thrill of the hunt, and haggling to your hearts content, make sure to visit the Chinese stores in *People's Park* (photo left) → p. 80

INSIDER TIP Cheers!

Cucumber juice, pepper, chocolate? At *Bar Stories* in the hip district *Kampong Glam* no ingredient is too exotic for the barkeeper for your personal dream cocktail → p. 85

INSIDER TIP Country outing at the port

The most beautiful *food court* in town is located by the sea on the roof of the *Vivo City* shopping centre and looks like an old Chinese village → p. 65



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● Free Friday

On Friday between 6 and 9pm you do not have to buy a ticket to go to the revered *Singapore Art Museum*. You can start the weekend by admiring the art of South-East Asia and the special exhibitions free of charge → p. 37

● Refreshing water

Each restaurant in sweltering Singapore can turn out to be a real oasis; since you can generally get free iced water to drink. Just ask for it if it is not offered automatically. Your glass will be refilled as often as you like during the meal → p. 71

● Waterside panorama

At weekends, Chinese residents fly their kites on the roof of the Marina Barrage. With good reason: from here, you get a fabulous view of the skyscrapers, the new Botanic Gardens and the sea → p. 42

● Playtime

Many attractions for children have to be paid for in expensive Singapore. But the younger generation can romp around for free in the old Botanic Gardens: *Jacob Ballas Children's Garden* provides climbing frames, a water playground and a delightful café next door → p. 114

● Free titbits

You can sample the local specialities such as biscuits, grilled pork and mooncakes (photo) at the stands set up in the special area in the basement of the *Takashimaya* department store on the days before important Chinese festivals → p. 76

● Work up a sweat for free

Are you fit and not put off by a little heat? Then you should give some of Singapore's sports a try – from dragon-boat racing to a so-called 'Prosperity Run', which should make you wealthy! The *Singapore Sports Hub* offers free two-hour sessions, mostly on Saturday mornings, when you can have a go at these and more besides → p. 18

● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of...' tips

ONLY IN SINGAPORE

Unique experiences

● Eat like the locals

Forget all about the gourmet restaurants and eat seated on a plastic stool in one of the countless food courts or 'hawker centres'. Do not worry about the quality: taxes and rent are very low so that makes it possible for the stall owners to serve high-class traditional food for a couple of dollars. One of the best hawker centres in the city is *Makansutra Gluttons Bay* directly next to the Esplanade → p. 66

● Gamble like the Chinese

The Chinese love to gamble. Spend an evening with the locals and join in the fun. The best place is in the Marina Bay Sands complex where the charm of Las Vegas goes hand in hand with the compulsive gambling of the Chinese → p. 23, 42

● Black delights

It is true; they do look like they were dipped into axle grease. Put on an old, dark shirt (to hide the spots) mingle with the Singaporeans and sink your teeth into the *black pepper crabs* at the East Coast Seafood Centre → p. 68

● Speed along the coast

If you want to find out what Singapore is really like, pedal along the surfaced promenade of the *East Coast*. Just take a taxi as far as Marine Cove where you can rent bikes and inline skates every few hundred yards; all the rental facilities are equally good → p. 55

● Shop until you drop

The Singaporeans love shopping – the real spending variety or just window shopping. Do not only stroll through the main malls, visit the small merchants on Pagoda Street in Chinatown or in the side streets of Serangoon Road in Little India → p. 46, 51

● Floral glory

Singapore's national flower is the orchid (photo). Prominent visitors to the city state are often honoured with a new variety named after them. One recent addition you will be able to admire in the beautiful *Orchid Garden in the old Botanic Gardens* is the *Dendrobium Angela Merkel*. The German Chancellor was one of the first to inhale the perfume of its violet and mint-coloured blossoms in 2011 → p. 57



ONLY IN



DISCOVERY TOURS

1

SINGAPORE AT A GLANCE



START: 1 Botanic Gardens

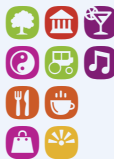
END: 14 1-Altitude

1 day

Actual walking time
2 hours

Distance:

→ 21 km/13 mi (8.5 km/5.3 mi on foot)



COSTS: approx. 40 S\$ without food and drink

WHAT TO PACK: Sunscreen and water, if you don't want to stop off specially too often; in the rainy season, an umbrella

IMPORTANT TIPS: For individual stages of the tour, take a taxi, rickshaw or the underground.

From tai chi under tropical trees to a nightcap in one of the most beautiful rooftop bars in south-east Asia – in the coming hours you'll get to know Singapore in all its variety. Naturally, this also includes the districts of Chinatown and Little India. But it's also worth exploring its colonial heritage and the famous Raffles Hotel.

Cities have many faces. If you want to get behind the scenes to explore their unique charm and head off the beaten track or find your way to green oases, handpicked restaurants or the best local activities, then these tailored Discovery Tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

07:30am The best way to work off the effects of your long flight is with some **INSIDER TIP** early-morning Chinese sport in the fresh air: in Singapore's old **1 Botanic Gardens** → p. 57 there are a number of groups which offer free tai chi, gymnastics or fan dance. You can join in wearing your normal clothes. **The simplest way is to head for the large open space at the Visitor Centre (Cluny Park Gate)**, where dozens of early-morning exercisers get together when it's not raining. After that you will have earned your breakfast against this green backdrop. The **Casa Verde**

1 Botanic Gardens

