



ABOUT SINGAPORE

OLD SINGAPORE

Singapore was originally called "Temasek" which meant sea town. According to legend Sang Nila Utama, a prince of Sri Vijaya, landed at Temasek and saw a strange beast, which he mistook for a lion. He promptly renamed the place "Singa Pura" (Lion City).

MODERN SINGAPORE

Modern Singapore was born in 1819 when a British East India Company official, Sir Stamford Raffles, claimed Singapore as a regional base. With its fine, natural harbour and ideal location, Singapore flourished as a trading centre for the East and West. The policy of free trade attracted merchants and migrants from all over Asia, the Middle East and even Europe. They brought with them their diverse cultures, traditions and cuisines. Singapore's growth and progress were halted only momentarily by the Japanese Occupation in 1942. Post-war Singapore progressed from a British Crown Colony to self-government in 1955 and, after two years in the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore became an independent republic on 9 August 1965.

LOCATION

Singapore lies 137km (85 miles) north of the Equator.

Neighbouring countries are Malaysia and Thailand to the north, the Philippines to the north-east and Indonesia to the south.

Singapore is connected to Malaysia by the Johore Causeway, a 1km (3/4 mile) road and rail "bridge".



AREA

Singapore consists of the main island and 57 small islands. The total area is 647 sq km (240 sq miles). The main island is 42 km (26 miles) east-west and 23 km (14 miles) north-south with a 136 km (85 miles) coastline. The city is 97 sq km (38 sq miles).

Manufacturing has become an important industry with products ranging from garments to precision equipment, half of them being exported to developed countries. Singapore is one of the world's largest oil refining, blending and distributing centres, a major world supplier of electronic components and a leader in shipbuilding and repairing.

The port of Singapore is the world's busiest, in terms of shipping tonnage, and is used by more than 500 major shipping lines. The harbour provides excellent anchorage facilities for vessels ranging from super tankers to small cargo boats. On the average, a vessel enters or leaves the harbour every 15 minutes.

With more than 130 banks, mostly international, Singapore is an important financial centre in Asia. In the field of telecommunications, the Republic is linked to the rest of the world via satellite, 24-hour telegraphy, telex, facsimile and international direct dialling facilities.

The central position of this island city, its cleanliness and superb tourist facilities have attracted an increasing number of tourists, international convention delegates and incentive travellers.

CLIMATE

The climate is tropical with average daily temperature at 27°C (80°F).

POPULATION

The total population is 3.7 million, with 76% Chinese, 15% Malay, 7% Indian and 2% others.

LANGUAGES

English is the language of business and administration and is widely spoken and understood. Most Singaporeans are bilingual and, besides English, also speak Mandarin, Malay or Tamil. An increasing number of Singaporeans are fluent in French, Japanese or German.