



COUNTRY REPORT

A close-up photograph of a globe with a magnifying glass over it. The globe is partially obscured by the magnifying glass's frame, which is in sharp focus. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office setting with lights.

SINGAPORE

Last reviewed & updated February 2024

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Singapore is a prosperous city-state that is considered to be a low-risk travel destination. Crime rates and the threat posed by terrorism are minimal in Singapore.

The city-state's infrastructure and medical facilities are considered to be advanced and of a high quality. Natural disasters are not considered to be a major threat to Singapore, but they do have the potential to cause infrastructural damage, though the authorities can preempt and respond to related incidents.

The most likely issue to affect foreigners in Singapore relates to the city-state's strict enforcement of restrictions on actions such as chewing gum, smoking, and littering in public. Violation of the laws surrounding these actions can carry hefty fines or further punishment.

Despite the benign risk environment, travelers should not be complacent and remain vigilant in public areas, keeping valuables close by always.



Country Risk Level	MINIMAL (1)
Capital	Singapore
Region	Southeast Asia
Official Language	Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Tamil, and English
Currency	Singapore Dollar (SGD)
Country Calling Code	+65
Time Zone	UTC+8
Emergency Numbers	999 (Police) 995 (Emergency)
Freedom House Rating	Partly Free

HEALTH & MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Singapore has public and private health sectors, both of which are of high quality and typically possess modern, life-saving equipment. Most healthcare staff members are fluent in English while being highly trained and capable. Healthcare treatment can be expensive in the country and travelers should ensure they always have adequate insurance coverage.

Singapore has occasional outbreaks of Dengue Fever, which is transmitted by a mosquito that incubates in stagnant water. Historically, most of the outbreaks happened on the eastern side of the island. Preventing mosquito bites is an important preventative measure for travelers and these include wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats, and using insect repellants that preferably contain DEET. The Singaporean government has taken actions to prevent dengue fever and cases have been on the decline in recent years. One method involves the spraying of a pesticide mist (locally known as fogging) in areas containing stagnant water. In addition to Dengue Fever, there have been reported outbreaks of Chikungunya and Japanese Encephalitis, both of which are transmitted by mosquitos.

Hand-foot-mouth disease (HFMD) is also present in Singapore. Transmitted by contact with saliva, mucus, and feces, HFMD affects mostly children. Outbreaks of HFMD usually break out around March, peak in May, and continue into October. It can easily be prevented by ensuring proper hygiene is maintained and numbers have decreased significantly since the COVID-19 pandemic, which authorities own to better hygiene practices.

Air quality in Singapore can be a concern between June and October due to pervasive smoke originating from land clearance fires in nearby Indonesia. This smoke has been known to blanket Singapore with fine particle matter that can settle in the lungs and cause health problems for those with chronic lung and heart problems. Healthy individuals may just experience coughing, sneezing, or eye irritation due to the haze.

CRIME & SAFETY OVERVIEW

With some of the harshest penalties for crimes in the world, a robust and well-trained police force, and the installation of numerous security cameras in public spaces throughout the island nation, Singaporean crime rates are among the lowest in the world. Most of the crime that does occur in Singapore tends to be petty, opportunistic, and non-violent. This includes pickpocketing and bag-snatching, usually occurring in crowded places such as commercial centers, transportation hubs, and



Consult the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](https://www.cdc.gov) for Singapore prior to travel.

tourist sites. Certain neighborhoods in Singapore are known to have higher rates of crime. In particular, Geylang is known to have higher rates of crime and prostitution compared to the rest of Singapore.

Electronic cigarettes are illegal in Singapore. Singaporean law also prohibits the drinking of alcohol in public spaces between the hours of 2230 and 0700 local time. Vandalism laws are strict in Singapore and can inadvertently be violated if a traveler litters or spits in public. Chewing gum is a banned substance in Singapore unless it is being used for a medical purpose. Violations of any of these laws can potentially lead to a hefty fine or, on rare occasions, possible arrest, and deportation.

Cybercrime is on the rise in Singapore and is currently a moderate threat. To mitigate the threats posed by cybercrime travelers are advised to ensure all essential confidential data is encrypted and protected by strong passwords. Travelers are advised to be mindful of phishing attempts. Avoid clicking on any unidentified links or downloading suspicious attachments. Encrypt network traffic with a virtual private network (VPN) when connecting to public or hotel Wi-Fi. Ensure two-step authentication is enabled wherever available and anti-virus software is installed on all devices. Visitors should regularly monitor their statements and report any untoward transactions to their bank immediately.

Kidnappings have occurred in Singapore but only on rare occasions and usually are related to business deals that have gone wrong. Virtual kidnappings – whereby an abduction of a person does not take place but through deception a ransom is extracted from family members – are also rare but occur more frequently than physical abductions.

TERRORISM

The threat of terrorism in Singapore is deemed low. Although a small number of Singaporeans are reported to have links with terror groups such as the Islamic State and have expressed an interest in carrying out attacks in Singapore, the threat of terrorism in Singapore is negligible. In the past, authorities have discovered and thwarted plots by terrorists to attack Singapore's Changi Airport, the US Embassy, public transport hubs, and Singaporean water supply infrastructure.

Singaporean authorities have taken several proactive steps to minimize the threats posed by terrorism and are well-trained to handle potential terror incidents that do occur. The Singaporean International Security Act (ISA) allows authorities to arrest and detain suspected terrorists for up to two years without a trial. The Singaporean government launched the [SGSecure](#) application, in 2016, which can be accessed for relevant information on how to respond to an attack. Singapore's strict and well-enforced border security as well as regulations on firearms means that if any attack were to take place, it would likely be primitive entailing knives or the use of a vehicular attack.

POLITICAL STABILITY

The government of Singapore is considered to be stable. Demonstrations over controversial government policies tend to be organized as peaceful rallies held at locations designated by the government. All demonstrations require a permit to be issued by the government before gathering. Speakers' Corner in Hong Lim Park is a common location for peaceful, government-sanctioned demonstrations to occur. In the past, these demonstrations have remained peaceful and involved minimal disruption. The last notable period of violent protests occurred in December 2013, when a small episode of unrest broke out involving disenfranchised workers from South Asia. However, this incident was isolated, and further violent unrest is unlikely, although it cannot be completely ruled out.

Critics of the political system have cited the country's rule under one party, the People's Action Party (PAP) since 1959 as a cause for concern. More recently, freedom of the press has also been called into question. The ruling PAP has been accused of stifling political opponents and undertaking undue legal action against any journalists critical of the PAP. A general election was held in 2020 and passed peacefully. Despite some gains by the opposition, the PAP maintained a majority, securing its 15th consecutive term in government. The next general election is due in November 2025 and is expected to transpire peacefully.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Road conditions and road safety are particularly good throughout Singapore. Speed limits are strictly enforced and anyone choosing to operate a vehicle is highly advised to maintain proper speed limits and follow all driving laws. Consider that cars will not usually yield to pedestrians and it is therefore of utmost importance to exercise caution when walking on or crossing streets. Jaywalking is illegal and can result in fines.

Taxis are the most expensive option to travel around Singapore; taxi fares are subjected to an additional surcharge of 25% to 50% during peak and unsociable hours (midnight to 6:00 am). There is also a surcharge of SGD 3/5 from the airport. The cheapest option to travel in Singapore is via their extensive public transport system that is modern and well-maintained. Travelers should consider buying an EZ-Link card that can be used on the buses and subways.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Singapore experiences two distinct monsoon seasons each year: one from December to March (northeast monsoon season) and the other from June to September (southeast monsoon season). During these periods, torrential rain and violent winds are likely to occur. Due to Singapore's geographic location, typhoons do not strike often and are a limited concern.

Travelers can monitor the [Meteorological Service Singapore's Website Administration](#) for updates and information on weather

Singapore is located some distance away from the 'Ring of Fire' an active seismic zone. Earthquakes of a large magnitude can on occasion be felt in Singapore, but do not cause any damage. Singapore's robust infrastructure has also enabled the country to withstand the force of past earthquakes.

FEMALE TRAVELER SAFETY

Singaporean authorities strictly enforce the 'Outrage of Modesty' law which involves measures criminalizing the harassment of women in public spaces. Violation of this law can lead to a sentence of corporal punishment being enacted against the offender. This has done much to improve the safety of women in Singapore. Drink spiking is a minor concern in Singapore. If drinking, always keep your drink within sight and do not accept drinks from strangers or recent acquaintances.

LGBTQ+ TRAVELER SAFETY

Singapore is not considered an LGBTQ+-friendly country. Same-sex unions are not legally recognized by Singaporean authorities and same-sex relations between males are criminalized; however, the Singaporean government has stated they will not enforce penalties against men participating in same-sex activities. Same-sex relations between females are not considered illegal.

Permits for rallies supporting LGBTQ+ issues are issued on occasion in Singapore, but the authorities severely limit the size and locations of such rallies. Foreign advocacy for LGBTQ+ issues is severely limited in Singapore by the government. Discrimination of LGBTQ+ individuals by the Singaporean public does occur but violence against this community is rare.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Smoking and vaping are considered illegal in many areas within Singapore. Travelers may be searched and fined upon arrival in the country at land, air, and sea entry points if caught in possession of vaping devices. Do not anticipate proper signage will be present; the burden is on the smoker to find a designated area to smoke. Leaving a cigarette butt on the ground is considered littering and can result

in a hefty fine. The chewing of gum in public is considered, under most circumstances, to be illegal and can also result in a hefty fine. It is considered impolite for a man to attempt to shake the hand of Muslim women.

In business dealings, it is traditional to present a business card with both hands. Once another's business card is received, it is considered polite to briefly review the card and store it carefully within a jacket or shirt pocket. Not caring for one's business card after it is presented is considered to be impolite.

TRAVELER ADVICE

- ✓ Self-driving is not advised unless the traveler is familiar with local driving conditions and laws.
- ✓ If involved in a car accident, it is advised that all vehicles and parties remain at the scene and wait for the authorities to arrive, particularly if injuries are sustained.
- ✓ Always carry a form of photographic identification, a photocopy of your passport or relevant I.D. can also suffice.
- ✓ Do not leave food or beverages unattended in public areas. Do not consume any food and drinks offered by strangers.
- ✓ Monitor local news for reports of natural hazards that could impact your travel plans (e.g. tropical storms, haze).
- ✓ Be aware that there are legal restrictions surrounding same-sex relations and societal discrimination is common.

The information provided to you within this report has been compiled from a multitude of available sources and is based on current news and analysis at the time of writing. The security team at On Call International, LLC has provided this analysis, supporting advice and recommendations in good faith to assist you in mitigating risks that could arise. However, no implied or express warranty against risk, changes in circumstance, or other fluid and unforeseen events can be provided. By reading this report, you will agree that any reliance you place on this information is therefore strictly at your own risk and that you will not hold On Call International, LLC or the authors responsible for any inaccuracies, errors or oversights here-in. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise without the prior permission of On Call International, LLC.