

Moving to Singapore



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Moving to Singapore?

Moving to another city is hard enough; moving to a new country comes with additional challenges, especially with children in tow. Also, since the time the pandemic has set-in people are sceptical about moving to a new country.

However, Singapore is one of safest places to relocate with family in the present times, given the fact that the country has managed the pandemic exceptionally well.

Finding a new home, choosing a new school for your child and managing all the other logistics that come with relocating to Singapore can seem overwhelming.

This guide gives you a quick overview to help you get acquainted with Singapore even before you arrive to make your relocation easier.



About Your New Home

If you're planning to relocate to Singapore, you're in good company. Thousands of other families have made the same decision, and they haven't been disappointed.

For the 4th year in a row, more than 22,000 expats called Singapore the best place to live and work.

Besides being known as a great place to raise a family, Singapore has a thriving economy, with an impressive GDP and a highly skilled workforce. (The Singapore dollar — SGD — is our official currency).

Five primary languages are spoken on the island:

- **Malay**
- **Chinese**
- **English**
- **Mandarin**
- **Tamil**

However, those aren't the only languages you'll hear as you stroll along the streets and spend time in shops and cafes. Singapore is incredibly diverse; its population of 5.8 million represents a variety of nationalities from all over the world.

While the largest segments of the population are of Chinese, Malay and Indian descent, there is considerable diversity among these groups too. The city-state is well-known for its multicultural scene, as well as its unique local culture.



Housing



Singapore offers public housing (known locally as HDB homes) – an attractive choice for residents looking for budget-friendly living accommodation. A wide selection of options is available in private housing too – condominiums, villas and bungalows. You can explore housing availability by comparing listings online.

Check out these resources to find a home that's the right fit for your family.



[propertyguru.com.sg](https://www.propertyguru.com.sg)



[srx.com.sg](https://www.srx.com.sg)



[iproperty.com.sg](https://www.iproperty.com.sg)

Neighbourhoods

Although Singapore is not an especially large city, it's home to many neighbourhoods.

1

Holland Village

The first expats to arrive here flocked to Holland Village. Today, it's still a prime destination because it's one of the most family-friendly communities on the island.

2

Tanjong Pagar

If you're looking for a central location that's a mix of local and expat families, Tanjong Pagar is a great place to put down roots, too.

3

East Coast

Another favourite location for expats who love proximity to the beach and a relaxed lifestyle.

4

North East Region

Punggol and Sengkang are also gaining popularity among expats as a vibrant waterfront town with new and affordable housing.

You may want to consider neighbourhoods that are close to your child's school or your workplace. The good news is, you can travel across the city in less than an hour, so most locations will be relatively convenient.



Cultural Hubs

Chinatown

The narrow streets of Chinatown offer a blend of old-world and modern traditions. Experience the local culture at the many shops and restaurants. Streetside vendors may invite you to sample their authentic dishes. The area is home to Buddhist and Taoist temples, too. The atmosphere becomes especially festive in this section of the city during the Chinese New Year.

Katong

Malay and Chinese culture meet in the Katong neighbourhood. The Peranakan community here has managed to preserve much of its culture, right down to its vintage architecture. Shops sell traditional clothing, crafts and other wares. The area is also the premier place to experience authentic Peranakan cuisine.

Little India

There's always something going on in Little India, a community teeming with retail and dining venues. What sets this neighbourhood apart is the Mustafa Centre, a huge department store selling wide variety of goods.



Education



**Singapore boasts of the
best education systems
in the world.**

**Both its public and private
schools afford children an
excellent education.**



Public Schools

Public schools in Singapore have a reputation for providing a first-rate education that prepares students to excel on standardised tests, in technical school and at university. Public schools are also an attractive option because of the lower tuition fees.

Expat students can seek admission to these Ministry of Education Schools beginning in their first year of primary school. For admission to P2-P5, they

must pass the Admissions Exercise for International Students (AEIS). Even then, seats are not guaranteed. Public school admissions are competitive, with priority given to Singaporean citizens and permanent residents. Hence, most expat students attend one of the island's many world-class international schools.



International Schools

If you opt to send your child to a private school, you will have several options to choose from. Over 50 international schools of American, French, Australian, British, Indian, Korean, Japanese origin cater to diverse expat population

in Singapore. These schools offer internationally recognised curricula like International Baccalaureate (IB), IGCSE (Cambridge) or American Education Programme and impart quality education to students.



Values

Consider the values that are most important for your family and look for a school that aligns with them. Schools, such as GHS that offer a values-based education provide a

supportive environment with an emphasis on integrity and respect for self and others. These schools often include service-learning opportunities in the curriculum.



Curricula

Some international schools often country-specific curricula, such as German, Canadian and Australian. These schools are popular for families who are planning to return to their home countries while their children are still school-age. Children can thus continue their studies with a curriculum that's familiar to them.

Other schools, such as Global Indian International School, offer globally recognised curricula, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme, Cambridge Curriculum, International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

Schools that use these approaches are a wise choice for parents who aren't sure where their next move will take them, as their children will be prepared to attend school anywhere in the world. Frequently, students who follow internationally recognised curricula gain admission to the world's most prestigious universities. Research shows that secondary school graduates of these international programmes are better able to handle the challenges of higher education and the workforce than their peers who don't have access to these curricula.



Facilities

School should be an inviting place for children to learn. Look for brightly lit classrooms and hallways, displays of students' work and up-to-date infrastructure. Technologically advanced learning facilities and dedicated spaces for students to collaborate and have fruitful interactions should be key factors while assessing a school.

Athletic facilities should be on-site, so students don't have to travel for PE classes and team sports. When you're relocating to Singapore, the best way to know if a school is right for your family is to talk to the admissions team and take a virtual tour.

Global Indian International School

GIIS is one of the top international schools in Singapore. What started as a school with a handful of students is now a humongous K-12 campus with students of nationalities from different parts of Asia and the world.



Life in Singapore

Singapore is a vibrant city. With its thriving community of 1.64 million expats, you will find other like-minded people who can help you adjust to your new home. Here's a quick overview of the amenities this world-class city offers.



Family-Friendly Things to See and Do

This small city-state has so many things to see and do. Read guidebooks. Ask locals and expats alike about the best places to visit. Learning about points of interest before you arrive will help you and your family get excited about living in Singapore. Here are a few ideas to help you get started.



**Gardens
by the Bay**



**Singapore Discovery
Centre**



**Wild Wild Wet
Singapore**



ArtScience Museum



Marina Bay

When you feel like venturing off the island, there are many attractions within a few hours of Singapore. Nearby Sentosa is home to Universal Studios Singapore, as well as beautiful beaches. A few more popular destinations nearby are Bintan and Batam islands in Indonesia and the Legoland theme park in Malaysia.

Virtually Limitless Shopping, Dining and Entertainment



Singapore boasts retailers of all kinds. Besides traditional grocery stores, expats and locals alike enjoy frequenting the city's wet markets, where you can buy fresh, quality produce at reasonable prices. When it comes to furniture and fashion, Singapore has everything from bustling shopping malls to small traditional shops selling ethnic crafts and clothing.

Singapore offers dining options for every palate. From upscale restaurants to street hawkers, you can sample dishes from a variety of cultures — Japanese, Chinese, French, Italian, Indian and Malay, to name a few. Many restaurant menus feature internationally famous dishes.

The island also has its share of movie theatres, casinos and nightlife. Its rich mix of cultures allows for plenty of festivals and holiday celebrations, such as National Day, Singapore Heritage Fest, Diwali, Dragon Boat Festival and many more.



Connecting with Nature

If you enjoy the outdoors, be sure to check out the island's many green spaces — parks, playgrounds, reservoirs and beaches.

Whether you're looking for a place to spend a few hours with your family or you're planning a weekend staycation, Singapore offers something for every occasion. Some of our most popular outdoor attractions:

A lush garden filled with various types of orchids and other tropical plants, with a paved path winding through them.

Orchid Garden

A long, narrow suspension bridge with a metal mesh floor and green handrails, stretching across a dense forest canopy.

MacRitchie Reservoir Park



Bollywood Veggies



Botanic Garden



Bukit Timah Trail

Whatever your favourite outdoor sport, you'll be able to enjoy it here. Take in a day of wake-boarding at the beach, or try a horse ride and explore Singapore's tropical landscapes.

A Few Things You **Should Not Do**

While there's plenty to do in Singapore, there are a few things you should not do.



Litter on the street



**Eat and drink on buses
and trains**



Jaywalk



Have chewing gum

Saving Money

Depending on what country you come from, you may find the cost of living somewhat higher here. To help reduce sticker shock, here are a few practical, easy tips for saving money.



Public Transit

A relatively inexpensive way to get around Singapore. To make it even more affordable, use a value card (EZ Link) on public transport.



Home Rental

Worried about paying too much for a home rental? You can check statistics on the last amounts paid for residential home rentals to make sure you're not overpaying. Visit [ura.gov.sg](https://www.ura.gov.sg) for more info.



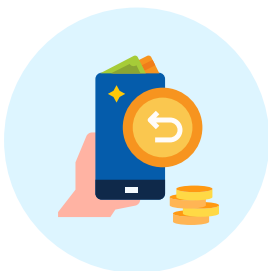
Grocery Bills

Want to recoup some of your grocery bills? Use a credit card that gives you cashback on grocery shopping.



Food

While we're on the topic of food, you can get dining discounts of up to 50% on sites like [eatigo.com](https://www.eatigo.com).



Cashback and Rewards

There are other ways to cash in on cashback and other rewards. You can use sites like [shopback.sg](https://www.shopback.sg) on portals such as Expedia, Book Depository, Lazada, Zalora and Deliveroo.

Concerning COVID-19



Like many families relocating to Singapore, you may be concerned about the prevalence of COVID-19 here. You and your family can rest assured knowing that Singapore is at the forefront of testing, tracing and otherwise stemming the spread of the coronavirus.

In fact, Harvard University rated the government's mitigation measures as the gold standard in fighting COVID-19. The number of cases here

remain low. Nonetheless, the country continues to be proactive about containing the virus.

Likewise, GIIS is following the latest safety protocols to protect students, staff and their families. Regular communication keeps families up-to-date on COVID-19 dos and don'ts so we can protect ourselves and others.

Here's what we're doing at GISS to promote our school community's well-being:

Virtual Classrooms

Being a SMART Campus, we switched to Virtual seamlessly. Virtual classrooms help students seamlessly connect to lessons being held in school from the comfort of their homes. This facilitates a blended learning model where fifty percent students can attend lessons from school and the rest from home.



Social-distancing

We adhere to compulsory social-distancing requirements (11 metre) in classrooms, staff rooms and other common areas of the campus.



Daily Cleaning and Disinfection

Daily cleaning and weekly-disinfection is carried out throughout the school, especially in heavily-used areas.



e-School

The e-School is a unique initiative by GISS Singapore that offers virtual schooling to students who have plans to relocate to Singapore, Japan and Malaysia in the near future or those who are based in Singapore and financially impacted by the pandemic. The e-School has a highly-affordable fee structure and reduces the cost of education by 50%. Available for Grade 1 to 5 students, it offers CBSE programme for core subjects like English, Math, Science and Social Science.



Online Activities

We hold activities online such as book purchases and school-wide events to discourage large gatherings.



Digital Signage

Our Digital Signage system provides reminders about hygiene protocols.



Healthcare in Singapore

Singapore has an excellent healthcare system and provides subsidised care to permanent residents and citizens.

If you are relocating to Singapore with a work permit and don't yet have permanent resident status, you may want to consider buying a global health insurance policy.

Although you can access good healthcare at Singapore's public and private hospitals, most expats prefer the private option because of the shorter wait time at the clinic or hospital.



Connecting with Other Expats

Singapore is a diverse city, with people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds looking for ways to connect. You can begin meeting other expat families even before you arrive. Many expat groups have a presence on social media. Members share tips on how to adjust to living in a new country, where to eat and shop, how to save money and more.

Singapore boasts a host of social clubs too — some are specific to a particular culture or nationality, while others centre around shared interests. Here are a few leads to explore:

- **singaporeexpats.com**
- **livinginsingapore.org**
- **Maharashtra Mandal**
- **Kannada Sangha**
- **Bengali Association**
- **Global Indian Cultural Centre**
- **Temple of Fine Arts**



Making the Transition

Assimilating in a new country and learning your way around takes time. Having vital information at your fingertips before you arrive can make the transition less stressful.



Banking

It's a good idea to explore the major banking options before you get to Singapore. The island is home to major banks including OCBC, UOB, DBS and more for all your transactions.



Cash and Cashless Payments

Cash and credit cards are accepted throughout Singapore. Additionally, you can use Paylah, NETS and more.



Groceries and Essentials

When it's time to stock your cupboards, you can find what you need at our international and local grocers. Well-known names on the island include Jasons, NTUC, Cold Storage and Sheng Siong.



Public Transit

Singapore's public transit system is safe and runs 24 hours a day. Apart from hailing cab services like Gojek and Grab, reasonably priced taxi service can be found across the island.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS



995

Emergency Ambulance



999

Police



1800 255 0000

Police hotline (non-emergency)



6547 1818

Traffic Police



1800 778 8888

SP Power



1800 555 1661

City Gas

Have questions?

We're here to help!

As you prepare for your move, you're bound to have many questions and concerns. Feel free to contact us for more info.



GIIS SMART Campus

📍 27 Punggol Field Walk, Singapore 828649

GIIS East Coast Campus

📍 82 Cheviot Hill, Singapore 459663

☎ +65 6914 7100

✉ Admissions.sg@globalindianschool.org

Visit singapore.globalindianschool.org to learn more.