

Singapore



Singapore is south-east Asia's hi-tech city-state which is famed for its obsession with cleanliness and rules against chewing gum. The country comprises the main island - linked by causeways to the southern tip of Malaysia - and around 50 smaller islands. Once a colonial outpost, Singapore has developed into one of the world's most prosperous places - with glittering skyscrapers and a thriving port.

SINGAPORE FACTS

Population: 4.2 million (UN, 2003)

Capital: Singapore

Major languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, Tamil

Major religions: Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity

Life expectancy: 76 years (men), 80 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 Singapore dollar = 100 cents

Main exports: Computer equipment, machinery, rubber products, petroleum products

Average annual income: US \$21,500 (World Bank, 2001)

Internet domain: .sg

International dialing code: +65

Singapore was founded as a British trading colony in 1819. It joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963 but separated two years later and became independent. It subsequently became one of the world's most prosperous countries with strong international trading links (its port is one of the world's busiest) and with per capita GDP equal to that of the leading nations of Western Europe.



Flag Description: two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and white; near the hoist side of the red band, there is a vertical, white crescent (closed portion is toward the hoist side) partially enclosing five white five-pointed stars arranged in a circle. To listen to the Singaporean national anthem go to http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1143240.stm