



Singapore with kids

Description

I think that Singapore is a destination that nobody, especially families, don't get to by mere chance, by the way.

Singapore is not a destination for budget travelers like us because it is very expensive.

So why get to Singapore ? Because it is a popular hub for flights connections. In to and out of Singapore. The other popular hubs in SEA are usually Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur. We chose Singapore because that's where we found the cheapest flight for the dates we wanted.

We decided that if we're already there, we'll stay for a couple of days and experience something that is quite different from the rest of SEA. We didn't know how much different. The Natives went on and on about the supposedly great Wi Fi they will probably find in Singapore. Generally speaking, The Natives rank the places we pass through in our journey according to the quality of their Wi Fi. But of course, Wi Fi is only the tip of the iceberg since Singapore is absolutely not the classic SEA destination.

Let's start with the Singapore airport - the famous Changi. It's quite a piece. Already once you land in Changi you realize this isn't SEA. What is it then? I think that the best description would be Europe on steroids.

It's all neat and clean, well organized, polite, very western, very cosmopolitan.

My dear friend Una sent me a few months ago a link of the sculpture "Kinetic Rain" located in Terminal A in Changi. We saw it only on the outgoing flight from Singapore but it was really special and I strongly recommend not missing it. It's not only about how stunning it is. For me the choice to set (Lay ? Hang ? It's a moving sculpture anyway) a grandiose and unique piece of art in the middle of an airport terminal is a choice that represents Singapore and its special character no less than the clean streets, the enormity of everything, the lush screaming from every corner, the four official languages of the city-state (English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil) and the exemplary order.



The Kinetic Rain sculpture in Changi airport

Sleeping in Singapore

We booked in advance, after thorough explorations in the internet, a room through AirBnb. Staying in Singapore is very expensive. For comparison, during the 8 months of our journey our daily accommodations budget is about 20\$ and we meet it most of the time. There are some more expensive places and there are cheaper places but all in all they cover up for each other and it averages within our budget limit. For example in big cities or in a relatively expensive place like parts of The Philippines we stayed for 30\$ a night but in other places we could find accommodations for as cheap as 12\$ a night. In Singapore the cheapest deal we've found was, pay attention, a room in a local family's apartment for 50\$ per night. The building is nice, the neighborhood is lovely, the room is spacious with a parquet floor and, yep, the Wi Fi is bolt speed, but bitches please, 50\$ a night for a single room with a double bed and two mats on the floor in an apartment with additional guests other than us with one bathroom for all ?? Unreal, but believe me, you can't get any better than that for the price we paid. How do I know it? Because if there were something better The One would probably have found it. Nevertheless, the hosts were very polite and friendly, in fluent Chinese, and yet!

Transportation in Singapore

We have been in Singapore only four days, but we ran around quite a lot. We had some arrangements to do (Yes, really! Just imagine. People traveling in SEA sometimes have things to do other than traveling. We had to go to embassies. Thailand embassy for visa and Israel embassy to sign the council on a paper that we will sign on once again in the embassy in Bangkok. Arrrrgh. But that's another story for another post). Except for arrangements we thought "we're in Singapore once in a lifetime (possibly), won't we walk around a little? Won't we go and see some attractions? So, how to move from one place to another in Singapore? By public transportation. And when I say public transportation I don't mean a taxi or a tuk tuk (there are no tuk tuks in Singapore and taxis are expensive!) but actual public transportation. Buses and trains.

The public transportation in Singapore is efficient and easy to understand and use. It's convenient, air conditioned (freezing actually). Perfect, in short. Like anything else in Singapore it's not cheap, but if you plan to move a lot it is definitely worthwhile to buy the Tourists Pass that applies both to buses and MRT. It costs 16 Singapore dollar (1 Singapore dollar is about 75 cents) for two days of unlimited travel per person. The price for children is the same. Nice of them to treat children as "persons". By the way, it's a bit annoying that purchasing this pass is only possible after 12pm and it's not valid for 24 hours but only until the end of the day it was purchased. It is also not possible to purchase it in every station so you might have to pay for a ticket to take you to the next selling point station. You might prefer, like we did, to send one of you (The One of course) to that ride to buy the passes for everybody and pay for one ticket instead of five for this necessary but undesired ride.

Once you hacked this thing of acquiring the Tourists Pass, the MRT of Singapore is simply amazing. It's fast, well designed (you'll almost never have to wait more than a few minutes switching between lines), insanely clean (there's a 5000 Singapore dollars fine for eating or drinking in the train and a double for smoking) and in line with the buses network in a manner that you will not have to wait on a bus for than a few minutes too. It's easy to manage and build comfortable routes between any two points within the city. In short, it's a hit. Just one thing! Why is the aircon set on 10 degrees fellas? Cover with longyi, then uncover, cover, uncover.

What to do in Singapore with kids

If not being so expensive, Singapore would have been a great place to spend time with kids. It has a lot of attractions to offer and we could have easily spent at least a week there. But as one great man once said, "If I had no children, today I would have a million to give to each one of them", or in short, it's expensive in Singapore in case I was not clear enough with that point so far, and that's why if you're a budget traveler staying only for a couple of days you might have to choose one or two from the ample of options available to the overwhelmed tourist, who still did not get used to the fact that while trying to cross the road nobody tries to run him over and people actually stop and let him cross it safely. And then moves on to the next destination like Bangkok or Ho Chi Minh City, back to the real SEA.

We chose one free attraction, paid for another and the rest we did mostly around the "where do we eat" question which let us have a glimpse of few more regions of this beautiful city.

The Singapore Flyer

It is advertised as the world largest giant wheel. Like the London Eye but bigger. Well, I told you, Europe on steroids. It's really, but really, impressive. The 360 degrees view around you is breathtaking, Singapore's port, the green park next to it, the skyscrapers and the gigantic buildings scattered all around the city, the river crossing. It's an half an hour of non-stop photo shooting and slight breathlessness. It is very very high. Let's let the pictures talk for themselves.



The views from the Singapore flyer

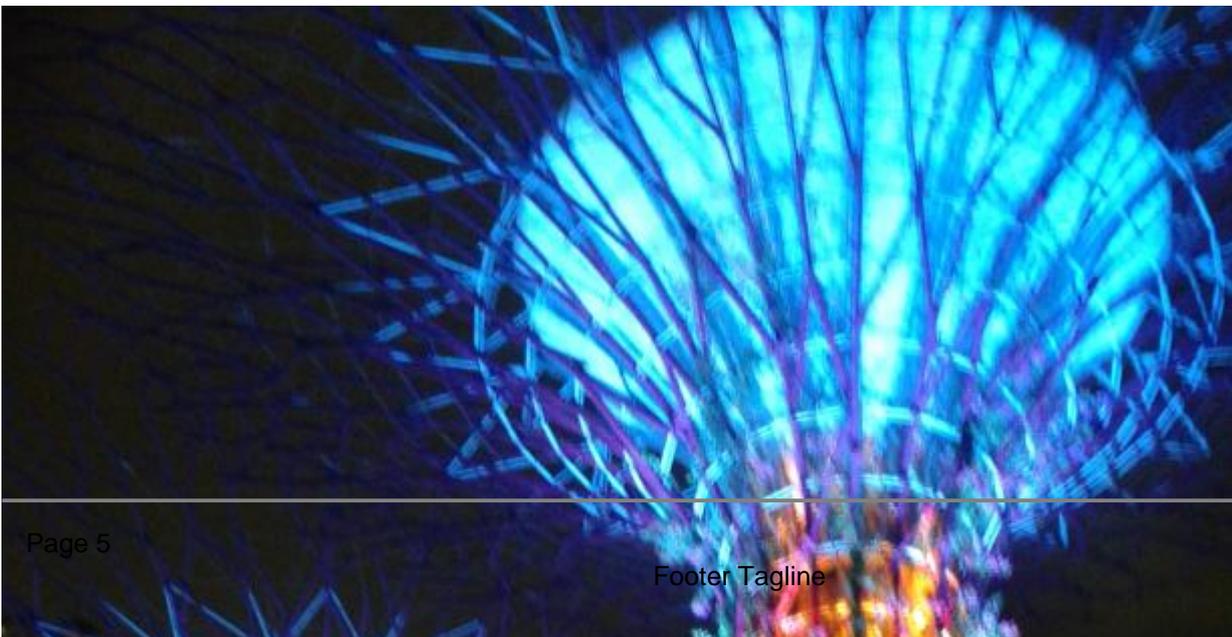






The Gardens by the Bay

This is a lovely place to go both in the morning and in the evening. It has some parts free to access and some other that require payment. We decided to go there in the evening when it's more impressive, and it is impressive. The electric trees garden, the excellent river view, the item from the previous paragraph in clear shining lights, all the luxury hotels that look even more luxurious at dark. Wonderful. There's also a zoo with a night safari. We passed it. We don't cherish the idea of caged animals and as a nice Singaporean said to me on the subway "You can get a combo ticket to the zoo and safari. In daytime you watch the animals and at night the animals watch you".



The Gardens by the bay, Singapore







The scenic view of the city by the river at night

â€œMommy, where do we eat!!!â€

The exclamation marks at the end of the question are not there by mistake. Thatâ€™s what marketing people call in their jargon â€œa call for an actionâ€ and it happens every couple of hours. We use it as an excuse to drag The Natives to places recommended by TripAdvisor and that also produces the opportunity to see a bit more of the city.

And thatâ€™s how weâ€™ve found ourselves touring the city of Singapore (did anybody say Europe on steroids?) in search for the best hummus. Someone told us that there is a fair chance to find excellent hummus in Singapore because it has lively Arab quarter, but our hummus was found in the City, following a TripAdvisor recommendation as mentioned, and itâ€™s called **Fill a Pita**.

While stumbling exhausted and hunger struck into this nice little place, Hassan told us he was just preparing to close but he quickly understood that thereâ€™s no way and immediately seated us and told me not to worry. He was already out of Falafel so he sacrificed for us the last one he had just finished packing for delivery (I suspect it was the lunch of deserted client which was still hot) and started flooding the table with hot pita breads, several versions of hummus, a great plate of feta cheese with olive oil and a nice tahini in a bottle. It was excellent. We enjoyed a nice chat with Hassan, a wonderful person, paid a total of less than 25 SGD and went out happy and satisfied.



Hassan says yes to selfies. Fill-A-Pitta, Singapore



Humus and much more in Fill-A-Pitta, Singapore

One more place we toured under the rational culinary excuse of “Mommy, we want Indian food” is **Little India**. I don’t even have the name of the stall but you just get off the MRT in Little India station, follow your noses and let your senses choose it for you. It took us to one of the stalls offering our favorite Indian dishes “ Chicken Korma, Aloo Gobby, very good Dahl with Basmati rice, warm Nan and that’s it “ start chewing. As we finished eating it started to rain and The Natives were saved from a walk around Little India.

Shopping in Singapore

Good luck with that. It’s all on steroids, same goes for the prices (at least for us budget travelers who didn’t buy anything for last 8 months). But the variety is huge and you will be able to find anything you need.

Category

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Tags

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