

## Singapore – The Land of Greens and Technological Expertise

By

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### Abstract

Singapore evolved from a fishing village and pirate outpost to a British colony in 1824, gaining independence in 1965 after a brief merger with Malaysia. It transformed from a low-income port city into a global hub for finance, trade, and innovation, boasting the highest per capita GDP in Asia and iconic attractions like Changi Airport's Rain Vortex and Gardens by the Bay.

### Keywords

Singapore, Independence, Multiculturalism, Economy, Airport, Gardens

### History and Origin

Singapore, originally called Temasek from the Javanese word *tasek* ("sea") and later "*Singapura*" (meaning "*lion city*"), is an island located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. Originally inhabited by fishermen and pirates, it also served as an outpost for the Sumatran empire of Srīvijaya.

From the Kingdom of Singapura to the Malacca Sultanate, followed by the Johor Sultanate, Singapore became a British colony in 1824 and was later invaded and occupied by the Japanese from 1942 to 1945. When the Japanese surrendered, Singapore came back under British control, with increasing levels of self-government, resulting in Singapore's merger with the Federation of Malaya to form Malaysia in 1963. However, social unrest, racial tensions, and political differences between Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) and Malaysia's Alliance Party resulted in Singapore's expulsion from Malaysia.

Singapore separated from Malaysia on August 9, 1965, to become an independent, sovereign state.

## A Hallmark of Growth and Development

The city is characterised by a clean environment, abundant flora, fresh air, zero pollution, wide roads, an extensive public transportation system, high-rise buildings, modern architecture, a world-renowned education system, and advanced infrastructure systems.



**Image 1: Buildings in Singapore; PC: Vandana Bhasin**

Singapore has achieved remarkable economic growth and diversification since the 1960s. In addition to establishing itself as a *world trade centre*, it has also developed powerful financial and industrial sectors. Singapore is the *largest port* in Southeast Asia and one of the busiest in the world.

*Singapore's per capita income* has seen significant growth. In 1960, Singapore's GDP per capita was one-third that of Western Europe's, but by 1994, it had surpassed Western Europe in terms of average income, and by today, its average income is approximately double that of the region. Its GDP per capita rose from approximately \$428 in 1960 to an astounding figure of about \$90,689 in the late 2024. This remarkable economic transformation converted it from a low-income port city into a high-income global hub for finance, innovation, and high-end services.

It now has the highest per capita GDP in Asia, 7th in the world, and is ranked 9th on the UN Human Development Index.

*Singapore Changi Airport* is renowned as the world's largest and best airport offering extensive shopping, dining, gardens and art installations for passengers. It is a world-leading international aviation hub, known for its efficiency, experience, and unique attractions like the iconic Rain Vortex.



**Image 2 : Rain Vortex at Changi Airport; PC: Google**

The Rain Vortex is a stunning 40-meter-tall waterfall that cascades through a dome, visible from various levels of the Jewel complex and is surrounded by the Shiseido Forest Valley's lush gardens. This architectural marvel uses recycled rainwater for its flow and becomes a vibrant light and sound show at night, offering a unique blend of nature and technology.

The airport adorns several unique gardens, including a butterfly garden, a cactus garden, and an orchid garden, providing an incredible experience for the passengers.



**Image 3: Supertree Grove at Gardens by the Bay; PC: Vandana Bhasin**

*Gardens by the Bay* is a 101-hectare nature park in Singapore's Marina Bay with a diverse collection of over 1.5 million plants that hail from every continent. It is a leading example of the nation's "City

in a Garden" vision, featuring iconic attractions like the Supertree Grove, the world's largest glass greenhouses—the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest—and the OCBC Skyway.



**Image 4: A dome arrangement of Orchids at the Flower Dome; PC: Vandana Bhasin**

Gardens by the Bay is a showpiece of horticulture and garden artistry that presents the plant kingdom in a whole new way, entertaining while educating visitors with plants seldom seen in this part of the world, ranging from species in cool, temperate climates to tropical forests and habitats.

#### **SG60—A Celebration of 60 Years of Independence**

Singapore marked a significant milestone this year, commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Independence Day (SG60) on August 9, 2025. Observed as **SG60**, the year-long celebrations reflect on the nation's resilience since its separation from Malaysia in 1965, honouring its journey of growth and prosperity.

The official theme for NDP 2025 is "*Together, As One*", which reflects unity, resilience, openness, multiculturalism, and the journey forward as one nation.

The entire country seems to be in the spirit of celebration as a host of activities have been organised to celebrate the journey of growth and start the new chapter in the Singapore story. It is also expected to fuel civic spirit, with nationwide participation across education, business, community, arts, and sports sectors.



**Image 5: Marina Bay; PC: Vandana Bhasin**

The list of events includes, but not limited to, Sentosa Cares Week 2025, World Para Swimming Championships, National Celebration of Seniors (NCOS), The Purple Parade, Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology (SWITCH)– Asia's largest startup event catalysing global deep tech innovation and collaboration, Get Active Singapore (GASG), Racial and Religious Harmony Month, Singapore Youth Festival 2025, National Family Festival, International Conference on Cohesive Societies, World Aquatics Championships, SIFA 2025–Singapore International Festival of Arts, Singapore Writers' Festival, Sentosa SG60 Celebrations.

### **Multi-cultural, Multi-linguistic**

The population of Singapore is diverse due to considerable past immigration. Chinese predominate, making up some three-fourths of the total, while Malays are the next largest ethnic group, and Indians the third.

Singapore's rich culture is a blend of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Western influences. The openness and multiculturalism of the country are reflected in its diverse cuisine, languages, and religions like Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. Singaporeans of different ethnicities and religions often come together to celebrate festivals, from Chinese New Year to Hindu Deepavali, from Muslim's Eid and Ramadan to Good Friday and Christmas of Christianity, and even the celebrations of Buddhist Vesak.

Singapore has several distinct ethnic neighbourhoods, including Katong, Kampong Glam, Chinatown and Little India, which celebrate heritage while embracing modernity.

Katong is the home of the Peranakans and has unique architecture.

Little India is known and patronised by all races within the population for its South Indian food that is largely vegetarian and served on the traditional banana leaves.

Chinatown is an ethnic neighbourhood featuring distinctly Chinese cultural elements and a concentrated ethnic Chinese population.

While English is the primary language spoken in the country, you find a large population speaking Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil as well. Linguistic differences are less pronounced among the Malays, but they include Indonesians speaking Javanese, Boyanese, and other dialects. The Indian group is the most diverse, consisting of Tamils, Malayalis, and Sikhs.

Singaporeans use Singlish, which they call their local lingo. Singlish is a colourful and unique local slang that blends Malay, Tamil and a variety of Chinese dialects.

## Conclusion

Singapore truly reflects the “*One Nation, Many Cultures*” philosophy. Whether you’re taking it slow by indulging in the calmness and beauty of nature, or discovering urban sanctuaries or state-of-the-art architecture or innovative technologies (the entire country runs on apps!), revitalising your mind and body is easy in Singapore. It’s a country that values hard work, discipline and a healthy lifestyle.

## References

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## About the Author

Ms. Vandana Bhasin is a writer, an editor, and an artist based out of Gurugram. She is a published author and a recipient of numerous prestigious awards for her literary contributions. A few notable among these are Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee Award 2018 by Arpita Foundation; Women of Influence Award 2019 by Garnet and Gold; Wordsmith Award (English Story) 2019 by Asian Literary Society and Prasanna Jena Memorial Award 2019 by Asian Literary Society. She was long

listed for Women Achievers Award by ALS for 2019. She also won second prize for ALS Wordsmith Award for English Poetry 2020, Certificate of Excellence for ALS Wordsmith Award for Hindi 2020 and third prize for ALS Sagar Memorial Award 2020 for Children's Literature. Her debut book "Roads" was awarded "Best Debut Poetry Book" by ALS in Feb 2021. An ex-banker with corporate experience of more than a decade, she is also a Cost and Works Accountant (ICWA), and a Life Coach.

