

ONE WAY AMERICA

Your Guide to Singapore

TELEPHONE: Country code (+65). Singapore does not use area codes. Telephone numbers generally have 8 digits.

STANDARD TIME: GMT +8 hours. Singapore does not observe daylight saving time.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Metric.

ELECTRICITY: 230v AC, 50Hz. Singapore generally uses Type G electrical sockets, the same three-pin configuration commonly used in the United Kingdom. U.S. appliances designed solely for 110–120v will require a suitable step-up transformer or voltage converter as well as a plug adapter. Dual-voltage appliances labelled 100–240v, 50/60Hz can normally be used with an appropriate plug adapter.

INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: No routine vaccinations are generally required for travellers arriving from the United States. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for travellers arriving from, or who have transited through, certain countries where yellow fever is a risk. Routine vaccinations should be kept up to date. Requirements should be checked before travel as health regulations can change. U.S. Travel Information

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: Singapore has 11 gazetted public holidays each year: New Year's Day, Chinese New Year (two days), Hari Raya Puasa, Hari Raya Haji, Good Friday, Labour Day, Vesak Day, National Day, Deepavali and Christmas Day. The dates of religious holidays vary from year to year. If a public holiday falls on a Sunday rest day, the following working day is generally a public holiday. Ministry of Manpower Singapore

For 2026, the gazetted public holidays include New Year's Day January 1st, Chinese New Year February 17th and 18th, Hari Raya Puasa March 21st, Good Friday April 3rd, Labour Day May 1st, Hari Raya Haji May 27th, Vesak Day May 31st, National Day August 9th, Deepavali November 8th and Christmas Day December 25th. Where applicable, the following Monday becomes a public holiday when the holiday falls on a Sunday. Ministry of Manpower Singapore

OFFICE HOURS: Generally Monday to Friday, approximately 9.00am to 6.00pm, although working hours vary by employer and industry. Singapore's normal working arrangements can include flexible working arrangements and some businesses operate longer hours.

BANK HOURS: Banking hours vary between banks and branches. Many branches traditionally operate during normal business hours Monday to Friday, with some branches offering Saturday or extended opening hours.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 999 – Police. 995 – Ambulance and Fire. 1777 – Non-emergency ambulance services.

U.S. EMBASSY IN SINGAPORE:

U.S. Embassy Singapore 27 Napier Road Singapore 258508 Telephone: +65 6476 9100
Emergency after-hours: +65 6476 9100 Website: U.S. Embassy Singapore

The U.S. Embassy provides consular services and assistance to U.S. citizens living or travelling in Singapore, as well as U.S. visa and other U.S. government services. U.S. Travel Information+1

SINGAPORE EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES:

Embassy of the Republic of Singapore 3501 International Place NW Washington, DC 20008 USA
Telephone: +1 202 537 3100 Fax: +1 202 537 0876 Website: Embassy of the Republic of Singapore in Washington, D.C.

The Embassy provides consular, visa and notarial services to Singapore citizens and other applicants. Consular services are generally provided by appointment. Default+1

Part 1 – Background Information on Singapore

Background

Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country situated at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia.

Originally an important trading settlement, Singapore became a British trading port in the 19th century and subsequently developed into one of the world's leading commercial and maritime centres.

Singapore became self-governing in 1959 and joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 before becoming an independent republic on 9 August 1965.

Today, Singapore is a major international centre for finance, trade, shipping, aviation, technology, manufacturing and professional services. Its strategic location and highly developed infrastructure have made it an important base for multinational companies operating throughout Asia.

Geography

Singapore is located just north of the equator and consists of the main island of Singapore together with numerous smaller islands.

It is situated at the southern end of the Malay Peninsula, separated from Malaysia by the Johor Strait and from Indonesia by the Singapore Strait.

Despite its relatively small geographical size, Singapore has highly developed transport, telecommunications, port and airport infrastructure.

The country is highly urbanised, with residential, commercial, industrial and recreational areas connected by an extensive public transport network.

Singapore's location makes it an important gateway to Southeast Asia and a major international shipping and aviation hub.

Population

Singapore's total population stood at approximately 6.21 million in June 2026, comprising Singapore citizens, permanent residents and non-residents. National Population and Talent Division

Singapore is highly multicultural, with major population groups including Chinese, Malay, Indian and other communities.

A substantial proportion of the population consists of expatriates, international students and foreign workers, making Singapore a particularly international environment for relocating families.

Climate

Singapore has a tropical climate throughout the year, characterised by high temperatures, high humidity and abundant rainfall.

There is relatively little seasonal variation in temperature.

Singapore experiences two principal monsoon seasons: the Northeast Monsoon from December to early March and the Southwest Monsoon from June to September. Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms can occur throughout the year. Singapore Weather Service

Temperatures generally remain warm throughout the year, and new arrivals from cooler climates should be prepared for consistently hot and humid conditions.

Economy

Singapore has one of Asia's most developed and internationally connected economies.

Major sectors include financial services, banking, insurance, manufacturing, electronics, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, logistics, shipping, aviation, information technology, telecommunications, professional services and tourism.

Singapore's port and airport are major regional and international transport hubs.

The country is also an important headquarters location for multinational companies seeking access to Asian markets.

Its highly developed infrastructure, business environment, political stability and skilled workforce have contributed to Singapore's role as a major regional business centre.

Language

Singapore has four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil.

English is widely used in government, education, business and everyday communication and is particularly important for expatriates.

Malay is the national language, while Mandarin and Tamil are also widely used within their respective communities. AGC

Religion

Singapore is a multi-religious society.

Major religions include Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Taoism, with other faiths and people with no religious affiliation also represented.

Singapore's multicultural population means that a wide range of religious festivals and traditions are observed.

Education

Singapore has a highly developed education system comprising primary, secondary and post-secondary education.

English is the main language of instruction in schools, with students also generally studying a second language.

Singapore has a strong state education system and also offers a wide selection of international schools.

International schools cater to expatriate families and may offer American, British, Australian, International Baccalaureate and other curricula.

Families relocating from the United States should investigate school admissions well in advance, particularly if they wish their children to continue with an American curriculum.

Healthcare

Singapore has a well-developed healthcare system combining public and private healthcare providers.

The country has modern hospitals, specialist centres, private medical facilities and a wide range of general practitioners and specialist services.

Singapore's public healthcare system is subsidised for eligible Singapore citizens and permanent residents, while expatriates and other foreign residents generally require private medical insurance or employer-provided healthcare arrangements.

U.S. citizens relocating to Singapore should ensure that their health insurance provides appropriate international or Singapore coverage.

Currency

The currency is the Singapore dollar (SGD or S\$).

The Monetary Authority of Singapore issues Singapore's notes and coins, which are legal tender in Singapore. MAS

Singapore banknotes are commonly issued in denominations including \$2, \$5, \$10, \$50, \$100 and \$1,000, although the availability and use of denominations can vary.

Coins include 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents and \$1.

Major credit and debit cards are widely accepted, and electronic payments are extensively used.

Utilities

Singapore uses 230v AC, 50Hz electricity and Type G three-pin electrical sockets.

U.S. appliances designed solely for 110–120v cannot simply be connected using a plug adapter. They require a suitable step-up transformer or voltage converter.

Many modern electronic devices, including laptops, phones and chargers, are dual voltage. Check the manufacturer's label before shipping.

Equipment labelled "100–240v, 50/60Hz" can generally be used with an appropriate plug adapter.

Television and Electronics

U.S. televisions and other electrical equipment should be checked carefully before being shipped to Singapore.

In addition to voltage differences, television broadcasting standards, regional streaming services and subscription arrangements may differ between the United States and Singapore.

Modern computers, tablets, mobile phones and other dual-voltage electronics are generally easier to use internationally.

Transport

Singapore has an extensive and highly developed public transport system comprising MRT trains and buses.

Taxis and private-hire vehicles are also widely available.

Singapore drives on the left-hand side of the road.

U.S. residents relocating to Singapore should be aware that driving arrangements, vehicle ownership and registration requirements differ significantly from those in the United States.

Part 2 – Singapore Import Customs Regulations

The following information provides general guidance for U.S. residents relocating to Singapore with household goods and personal effects.

Singapore Customs states that imported goods are generally subject to GST and/or duty unless a specific relief or exemption applies. Singapore Customs

Because this guide is intended for relocations from the United States, household goods arriving from the U.S. should be treated as imports from outside Singapore.

Customs requirements can change and may depend on the status of the person relocating, the type of goods being imported and the method of shipment.

Used Household Goods and Personal Effects

Individuals transferring their residence to Singapore may qualify for GST relief on eligible used household articles and personal effects.

Singapore Customs states that, to qualify, the individual must generally:

- Be changing their place of residence from outside Singapore.
- Own the imported household goods and personal effects.
- Have owned and used the goods for at least three months.
- Import the goods within six months of their first arrival in Singapore.
- Undertake not to sell, give away, dispose of or transfer the goods within three months of importation.

GST relief is assessed by Singapore Customs and is not automatic. Singapore Customs¹

Documentation

For a U.S.-to-Singapore household goods shipment, documentation may include:

- Passport.
- Proof of relocation to Singapore.
- Employment Pass, Dependant's Pass, Student's Pass or other relevant immigration documentation.
- Employer's letter of appointment, where applicable.
- Detailed packing inventory.
- Shipping documents.
- Bill of Lading or Air Waybill.
- Customs documentation.
- Declaration of Facts (DOF), where required.
- Supporting documents required for GST relief.

Singapore Customs requires supporting evidence demonstrating the transfer of residence and eligibility for GST relief. Singapore Customs

Unaccompanied Household Goods

Where household goods are shipped separately from the person relocating to Singapore, the GST relief process should be arranged before the shipment arrives.

Singapore Customs states that a Declaration of Facts should be submitted before the goods arrive.

Once GST relief is approved, the appointed shipping or forwarding agent can apply for the relevant Customs In-Non-Payment (GST Relief) permit.

If the GST relief application is rejected, GST will generally be payable before the shipment can be cleared. Singapore Customs

It is therefore important that the customs process is started before the shipment reaches Singapore.

Goods Not Eligible for GST Relief

Singapore Customs specifically states that GST relief for a change of residence does not apply to:

- Intoxicating liquor.
- Tobacco products.
- Motor vehicles.
- Private aircraft.
- Boats and yachts.
- Commercial goods.

Applicable duties and GST may therefore be payable on these items. Singapore Customs

Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages are not eligible for the normal GST relief available to qualifying household goods.

Alcohol is also a dutiable category in Singapore.

Do not include wine, spirits, beer or other alcoholic beverages in a household shipment without obtaining specialist advice regarding applicable duties, GST and permits. Singapore Customs+1

Tobacco

Tobacco products are not eligible for the normal GST relief available to household goods.

Tobacco is also a dutiable category and is subject to strict Singapore regulations.

Cigarettes, cigars, tobacco and related products should not be included in a household shipment without checking the current import requirements. Singapore Customs+1

Food Items

Food products imported into Singapore are subject to food safety and import controls.

Meat, seafood, dairy products, fresh produce and other foodstuffs may be subject to restrictions or require approval from the relevant Singapore authority.

For household removals, it is generally advisable to avoid including food unless the specific product has been checked for import eligibility.

Plants and Plant Products

Plants, seeds, soil and certain plant products may require permits or phytosanitary documentation.

Singapore maintains controls on the importation of plants and plant material to protect agriculture and the environment.

Do not include plants, soil or seeds in a household shipment without checking the current requirements before packing.

Pets

Singapore permits the importation of dogs, cats and certain other pets subject to strict veterinary and import requirements.

All pet imports are regulated by Singapore's Animal & Veterinary Service (AVS).

Requirements can include:

- Import licence.
- Microchip identification.
- Rabies vaccination, where applicable.
- Veterinary health documentation.
- Blood tests or additional vaccinations depending on the country of export.
- Quarantine requirements, depending on the circumstances.
- Approved transport arrangements.

Pets relocating with their owners may qualify for GST relief where the owner is transferring residence and meets the applicable conditions. [AskGov+1](#)

Pet owners should begin preparations well in advance because Singapore's animal-health requirements can affect the timing of the move.

Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles are not eligible for GST relief under the normal change-of-residence household goods scheme. [Singapore Customs](#)

Vehicles imported into Singapore are subject to specific customs, taxation, registration and vehicle approval requirements.

Singapore's vehicle taxation system can make the importation of a privately owned U.S. vehicle expensive.

Before shipping a vehicle, owners should obtain a detailed assessment covering:

- Customs duty.
- GST.
- Vehicle registration requirements.
- Certificate of Entitlement (COE) requirements.
- Vehicle approval and inspection.
- Emissions and technical requirements.
- Insurance.
- Registration fees and other applicable charges.

It is strongly recommended that the full cost of importing a U.S.-specification vehicle is established before the vehicle is shipped.

Firearms and Weapons

Singapore has strict laws governing firearms, ammunition, weapons and related items.

Firearms, ammunition and other controlled weapons should not be included in household goods without obtaining specialist advice and all required approvals before shipment.

Items that may be legal to possess in the United States can be prohibited or heavily controlled in Singapore.

Vapes and E-Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes, vaporisers and related products are prohibited in Singapore.

U.S. residents should not include vapes, e-cigarettes, vaporisers or related components in their household shipment.

The U.S. Department of State also highlights Singapore's prohibition on possession, purchase and use of vapes and e-cigarettes. [U.S. Travel Information](#)

Medication

Prescription medication should be transported in its original packaging and accompanied by appropriate medical documentation.

Certain medicines, particularly those containing controlled substances, may require approval before being brought into Singapore.

Before shipping or travelling with medication, check the current requirements for the specific medicine and quantity.

Drugs and Narcotics

Singapore has extremely strict laws concerning controlled drugs and narcotics.

Do not include illegal drugs, controlled substances or products containing prohibited substances in a household goods shipment.

Cash and Monetary Instruments

Travellers entering or leaving Singapore carrying physical currency and bearer negotiable instruments with a total value exceeding S\$20,000, or its foreign-currency equivalent, must make the required declaration. [ICA](#)

This requirement should be considered when relocating significant amounts of cash or negotiable instruments.

Restricted and Controlled Goods

Singapore has a number of controlled goods for which an import licence, approval or other authorisation may be required.

These can include certain:

- Telecommunications equipment.
- Radio communication equipment.
- Weapons and ammunition.
- Medicines.
- Food products.
- Plants and plant products.
- Animals and animal products.
- Chemicals.
- Hazardous materials.
- Other regulated products.

Where goods are controlled, the relevant approval should be obtained before importation.

Singapore Customs provides a HS/CA Product Code Checker to help identify whether goods require approval from another Competent Authority. Singapore Customs

Prohibited Items

Singapore has strict controls over prohibited and restricted goods.

Items that should not be included in a household shipment without specialist confirmation include:

- Controlled drugs and narcotics.
- Firearms and ammunition.
- Prohibited weapons.
- Vapes and e-cigarettes.
- Certain publications or materials prohibited under Singapore law.
- Counterfeit goods.
- Certain wildlife and endangered-species products.
- Prohibited or controlled food products.
- Certain chemicals and hazardous materials.

If you are unsure about an item, it should be checked with Singapore Customs before packing.

Works of Art, Antiques and Cultural Items

Works of art, antiques and other valuable cultural items should be accurately described on the inventory.

Items containing materials derived from endangered species, including ivory, certain animal skins, feathers or other protected materials, may be subject to CITES requirements.

Documentation proving ownership, age and provenance may be useful for valuable antiques and works of art.

Endangered Species and CITES

Singapore implements international controls relating to endangered species and wildlife products.

Items such as ivory, certain animal skins, exotic wood, coral, feathers and other wildlife products may require permits or may be prohibited.

Old pianos can sometimes contain ivory components, so owners should obtain specialist advice before shipping older instruments.

Counterfeit Goods

Counterfeit goods and goods infringing intellectual-property rights may be detained by Singapore authorities.

Do not include counterfeit branded products in a household shipment.

Wooden Packing Materials

Wooden crates, pallets, dunnage and other wood packaging used for international shipments may be subject to phytosanitary requirements.

Where applicable, wood packaging should comply with the relevant ISPM 15 international standards.

Your packing company should ensure that all wooden packing materials used for a U.S.-to-Singapore shipment meet the current requirements before loading.

Customs Clearance

Once a GST relief permit has been approved, an appointed shipping or forwarding agent can normally handle the physical collection and customs clearance of shipped personal effects.

Singapore Customs states that sea-freight shipments are collected from the port area and air-freight shipments from the Changi Airfreight Centre, with the appointed agent handling the physical collection. Singapore Customs

Disclaimer

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in this Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date, One Way America cannot accept liability for any inaccuracies, omissions or changes in Singapore, U.S. or international regulations.

Customs, immigration, tax, health, vehicle, pet, food and import requirements can change without notice.

Anyone relocating from the United States to Singapore should confirm the current requirements with Singapore Customs, the relevant Singapore authorities and their customs or relocation agent before shipping household goods.

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More info on our website: <https://onewayamerica.com>.