

Exchange Report: Nanyang Technological University Singapore



A Report Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for GEN E 303

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Option for International Studies in Engineering

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Foreword

So you have decided to set forth towards the unknown, to a foreign land far from the familiarities of home and friends. Then you are in for the adventure of a lifetime! Of course heading overseas to another country is not just simple fun and games. There would be many logistical hurdles, especially in the beginning as you prepare for the exchange and get orientated with the country.

This report is meant to fill in the gaps and give some background for an exchange to Singapore, with some pointers on NTU. Hopefully the information contained within would help you make an informed decision about planning a study term abroad.

Enjoy!

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1.0 Background

1.1) Why Singapore?

Singapore is one of the best places you can possibly go to for an exchange. Located just 130 km from the equator, Singapore boasts of tropical 36 degree weather all year around, with some of the most well maintained and advanced infrastructure anywhere in the world. The public transport system is affordable and efficient, and the the cost of living is excellent and highly affordable for the typical foreign student. The culture is an interesting mix of Chinese, Malay and Indian, and there is no shortage of cultural events and museums for those with such inclinations. There are also many clubs and tasteful bars for those interested as well. And if you are the sporty type then you have reached the edge of heaven – Singapore is quite active in competitive sports, owing to the compulsory military service which requires its population to be constantly fit.

1.2) Why NTU?

One of the first problems you will find in arranging an exchange to a university where no one has ever been to before would be finding equivalent courses. NTU however has had a long history of UW students going there for an exchange – the language of instruction is in English, and as an engineering school just like Waterloo, there is a huge selection of courses in nearly every engineering discipline.

NTU is not as conveniently located as the National University of Singapore - however there are two bus routes (179 and 199 at the time of writing) which service the university and take you straightaway to the bus/ MRT station/ mall.

The campus also has a very vibrant extracurricular life – there is a club for everything and many of them organize weekly events open to the public and its members. You can take part in unique activities which simply do not exist in North America, such as Wushu and Dragon Dance. Additionally, each week the Nanyang Auditorium is packed with one event or another, whether it is cultural festivals, the International Student Fair, job and career fairs, engineering projects exhibition, performances, and etc.

For more information, a list of clubs and activities can be found here:

<http://www.ntu.edu.sg/publicportal/students/ecas+and+clubs/default.htm>

Some photos of campus life can be found here: <http://www.ntu.edu.sg/DSO/Photo+Gallery/>

2.0 On Singapore

For general information on Singapore, the following link may be useful:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore>

2.1) Time, Units and Measurements

Singapore's timezone is GMT +8:00. For those living in Waterloo or Toronto, the timezone is GMT -5:00. Since Singapore does not subscribe to daylight savings time, this means there is usually a 13-14 hour time difference between Singapore and Waterloo, with Singapore ahead by one day.

It should be noted that Singapore (as with the rest of the world except North America) uses the metric (SI) system. It is almost useless to bring paper, binders or clipboards from home as invariably they are incompatible (the metric equivalent to 8.5" x 11" paper is actually larger, meaning that your Singaporean paper and hole spacing will not match with anything back in North America)

2.2) International Area Codes

Singapore's international area code is 65. Their phone numbers are 8 digits long. Phone numbers starting with a "9" indicate cellphones, and phone numbers starting with a "6" indicate ground lines. Note that Singapore does not have provinces or regional area codes, so you can reach anyone in Singapore by dialing only the 8 digit number

2.3) Temperature, Climate and Weather

Singapore has no seasons as it is known in North America – it is described as either "wet" or "dry" but even that has little variability. Typically throughout the year the temperature is anywhere from 30 °C degrees and up. Unlike Canada, the hot weather is typically humid as opposed to being dry. Brief showers occur nearly daily, most of them occurring in the late afternoon or evening.

3.0 On NTU

3.1) Orientation and Initial Steps

You will usually get your orientation package in the mail 2 months before your scheduled departure. This package will contain a lot of the information you need, including instructions on getting a student Visa. Just follow the steps outlined in the package.

The International Exchange Office will usually send out an email as well with instructions as to how to log on and confirm your courses. There is also an online form which they will get you to fill out, which you put down your plane and arrival information. With the details provided, the exchange office will send a student volunteer to pick you up at the airport and help you get acquainted with everything.

3.2) Language of Instruction

NTU's courses are taught entirely in English.

3.3) Curriculum Structure

Unlike Waterloo, NTU is very flexible regarding the order which you take courses. You can take courses in any order in any term you want providing you have the prerequisites for it, and you will obtain your engineering degree in your chosen field as long as you have taken all the courses required for that major. The flexibility in order means that for the exchange student, you can usually find any course you want whether it is in fall or spring.

There are 2 terms in NTU: Semester 1 which runs from late July to late November and Semester 2 which runs from January to early May. It works out quite well with the UW schedule.

Singaporean students also finish their degrees in 4 years, just like in Canada. However, in their third year they only have 1 term of school – the other term is spent on an “industrial attachment”. However, for their degree they must take just as many courses in total as their North American counterparts (about 40), and consequently their course load is usually more than 5 per term – with some hardcore students even going up to 8 per semester.

3.4) Style of Instruction

For engineering courses, they are almost exactly the same as Waterloo – typically they are in lecture style format, with 3 hours of lectures per week plus tutorials. Unlike Waterloo however, some courses take attendance for tutorials, and the university reserves the right to deny you credit or refuse a challenge against for a poor exam mark should your attendance be particularly poor.

Many courses do not use the textbook. Usually the notes posted online are completely self sufficient, with worked out problems and examples. Tutorials are the only form of “homework” (which are usually not collected, but that depends on the course), and most tutorials only have 5 questions. A lot of self studying is in the hands of the student, and that might be where a textbook would come in handy (although not mandatory).

Class sizes for 1st and 2nd year classes number from 100 – 500+ (depending on the discipline), while third year classes tend to shrink significantly.

Exams make up nearly 100% of the final grade.

3.5) Courses Taken:

There are a wide variety of courses available in NTU.

The following link has the entire undergraduate calendar – simply use the drop down menu to access the courses (called “subjects” in NTU) for a particular program and year.

http://www.ntu.edu.sg/mae/Academic/undergraduate/links/subject_content.asp?year=&special=GE

To assist you in the finding the right courses, I've compiled a table of acronyms referred to in the drop down menu, in case you are wondering which discipline they refer to. Some of them may have changed however, and may no longer be accurate:

EEE	Electrical Engineering
MPE	Mechanical and Production Engineering
MAT	Materials Engineering
CEE	Civil and Environmental
CSC	Computer Science
CE	Computer Engineering

Table 1: Department Acronyms

When I went to Singapore I was in 3A mechanical engineering in 8-stream, having gone during the Waterloo winter term (or the Singapore “Semester 2”). I had taken the following courses:

<i>Course Code in Waterloo</i>	<i>Equivalent Course in NTU</i>
ME 559 Finite Element Methods	M460 Design Optimization and Analysis
ME 354 Thermodynamics 2	MP 2003 Thermodynamics
ME 340 Manufacturing Processes	MP 2004 Manufacturing Technology and Materials
ME 321 Kinematics and Dynamics of Machines	MP 2002 Kinematics and Dynamics of Machinery
ME 351 Fluid Mechanics 1	MP 2005 Fluid Mechanics
ME 303 Advanced Engineering Mathematics	Deferred to a later term

Table 2: Course Taken

For the mechanicals reading this paper, it should be noted that ME 303, in spite of its vague name and course description, deals with “numerical methods of partial differential equations and ODEs”.

In NTU there is a course which deals with PDEs, but only spends $\frac{1}{4}$ of its time doing so. That course is MP2007, Mathematics 4.

There are also courses in other departments which deal with numerical methods, but not for PDEs.

In short, it is likely you would have to take ME 303 on campus in another term, as it combines both PDEs and Numerical Methods. Or you may have to take two NTU courses to get equivalent credit for ME 303. In NTU, if you find a course that seems equivalent, try to make sure they cover exact and numerical solutions of PDEs and ODEs. You may want to try “CV2002 Computational Methods” (a civil engineering course), but there are no guarantees that credit will be approved. Consult your UW department officer for more details.

3.6) Registering for Courses:

Courses are registered for you before you arrive in Singapore. In your paper application to NTU, you are required to fill out the courses you want to take. These will be registered for you, barring conflicts. Should something not work out, you can always add and drop courses in the first few weeks of class, via the Office of Academic Services (OAS). It is technically possible to do it online, but it is usually the simplest to drop by OAS in person and sign the appropriate forms.

It is quite typical to spend a lot of time sorting out courses if you are unlucky, but it is very important to make sure you have the right ones. It might be strategic to register for 7 to 9 courses (conflict permitting), attend a few classes, and drop the redundant ones accordingly.

3.7) Unique Courses:

There are some courses in NTU not available in Waterloo, and the exchange can present a wonderful opportunity to experience something unique. NTU offers an astounding amount of electives in the humanities, media arts and of course engineering.

These include Chinese Brush Painting, Biomechatronics, Optomechantronics, Taoism, Islam and Malay Values, Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering the list is endless. A list of courses is found at: http://www.ntu.edu.sg/mae/Academic/undergraduate/links/subject_content.asp?year=&special=GE

3.8) Examinations

These are usually worth 100% of your final mark. The length of an exam is typically 2.5 hours, sometimes less for certain subjects. From experience, the difficulty is about the same as Waterloo exams, with some courses significantly harder while others are slightly easier.

For examinations requiring calculators, you have to register it with your home department. Each department has its own procedures. Ask them in person for more details.

Unless there has been a recent policy change, usually the student is never allowed to see the actual mark on their exam. It is impossible to ever check where they went wrong, although it is possible to appeal the mark to have it changed – but the whole process is closed to the eyes of the student, even local students.

4.0 Practical Information

4.1) Communications

4.1.1) Internet

Singapore is well equipped in this regard with over 2.3 million internet users in a population of 3 million.

4.1.2) Cellphones

Cellphones are an integral part of Singaporean culture, and even if you've never touched one prior to the exchange, it is quite likely that you would find yourself sucked in to the convenience. For the record, nearly all of the exchange students had cellphones, but not a ground line – partly in due because of the extensive amounts of traveling they experience.

You can use your North American phone in Singapore if and only if it is a Triband phone. In the case you do have a Triband phone, you can take it to any cellphone store in one of the many malls of Singapore and with some alterations and the purchase of a SIMcard, your phone would be ready to use.

In the case you don't have a Triband phone, you can buy one in Singapore from past exchange students or in any of the stores. Usually unused phones of the most basic functions costs \$150 SGD – you can easily find a used one anywhere from \$60 - \$100 SGD.

After securing a phone, most students get a “SIM card”, which is a prepaid phone card. With a SIM card added to your phone, you would have a local Singaporean phone number. You can add minutes to the SIM card by buying “top up” and calling the number listed. There is usually no alternative to a SIM card - Singaporean law usually prevents non citizens from registering for normal cellphone plans.

4.2) Electricity

When going to a foreign country there are two considerations regarding the electricity: the frequency & voltage and the shape of the plugs/outlets.

4.2.1) Frequency and Voltage

Singapore uses electricity of 230 V, 50 Hz with plugs of Type G. The voltage and frequency of Singapore's electricity is different from North America's 120V, 60 Hz.

If you wish to use your your laptop and electronics from North America, you would need to make sure

it has the “universal voltage” label on the adapter for it to work properly. If this label is not on the adapter, then you would need to buy a transformer – you can find these in Radio Shack.

Alternately you can buy all of your electronics in Singapore.

4.2.2) Plug Shape

There is also the shape of the plug. North American outlets will not fit into Singaporean ones; you can find an example picture here: <http://users.pandora.be/worldstandards/electricity.htm#plugs>

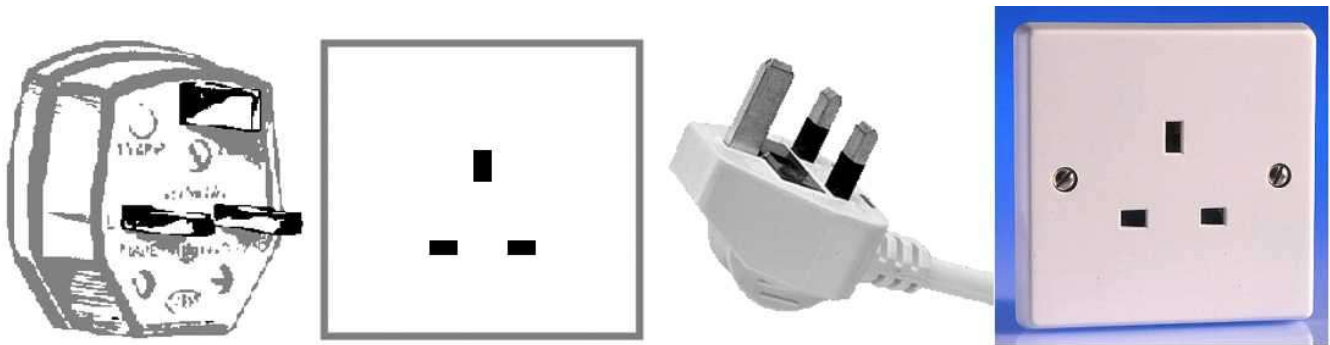


Figure 1: Electric Plugs

You can usually buy converters that allow you to convert a North American (Type A) plug to a Singaporean one, which is Type G. These converters are available in “Radio Shack” in Canada or readily available in Singapore stores at a much cheaper price.

4.3) Health and Safety

Singapore is really safe and clean by any standard in the world; however there are tropical diseases in that region which do not exist in Canada. Be sure to check http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp and the WHO website <http://www.who.int/en/> for regular updates and recommendations for immunizations and outbreaks of diseases.

Usually for Singapore you need at least vaccination to **Hepatitis A**.

In case you do not have travel insurance, NTU does have an insurance plan for exchange students, with rates like \$36 SGD for 4 months. It is very inexpensive. The NTU plan also covers consultation fees for the on campus clinic, which you will find yourself going to quite often should you choose to travel to other countries and need vaccination advice.

Warning! Singaporean laws are quite strict and regularly enforced, resulting in a safe and clean society. Consequently Singapore carries severe penalties for what would be considered “minor” transgressions in Canada. Littering and chewing gum usually results in fines of \$500 to \$1000. Drug trafficking, possession of drugs or drug use usually carries the death penalty.

4.4) Monetary Matters

4.4.1) Exchange Rate

At the time of writing, the exchange rate between the Canadian dollar and Singapore dollar is 1 SGD = 0.73 CDN. This means that everything in Singapore is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cost of the same item in Canada, usually even less.

4.4.2) Taxes

It should be noted that in Singapore taxes are included in everything you buy. Consequently there are no pennies; the lowest denomination is a 5 cent coin, which is rarely used. The listed price for any item is the exact amount that you pay.

4.4.3) Credit Cards and Convenience

For convenience, it is highly recommended that you register with one of the local Singaporean banks. Many of the credit cards or debit cards in North America are not usable here. In rare cases, if you have the “Plus” logo on your North American card, you might be able to use it in Singapore ATM; however save yourself the trouble and bring a large amount of money in cash so that you can start a temporary account in Singapore. One of the few Canadian banks in Singapore include CIBC – however, its office is located 1 hour by subway from NTU, so this is hardly convenient for the student.

There is an on campus bank called OCBC, located in the “North Spine”. OCBC is one of the most popular banks in all of Singapore – its ATM machines are everywhere, and OCBC is the only bank with ATMs on campus. The staff there are quite familiar with exchange students and temporary accounts, so feel free to ask them any questions and they'll be quite helpful in guiding you through the process of starting a new account. Usually, if you start an account for only 1 term, you have to pay a \$30 SGD cancellation fee – however this is a small price to pay for the convenience.

OCBC's Website: <http://www.ocbc.com.sg/global/main/index.html>

There are also two other popular local banks as well:

UOB <http://www.uobgroup.com/>

Maybank <http://www.maybank.com.sg/>

4.4.4) Cost Tabulation

Tuition is paid out to Waterloo, but NTU's low cost ancillary expenses make it much cheaper than studying in Canada.

<i>Typical Expenditure</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Residence Fees	These range from \$200 - \$250 SGD per month, depending on the residence. There are 15 residence halls at the time of writing; the higher the number the newer (and better quality) the residence is. Most do not have air conditioning.
Food	<p>\$1.50 to \$3.50 SGD per full meal. All throughout campus are canteens which serve a wide variety of food, catering to different ethnic groups. It is like a North American food court, with lower prices and better quality. Usually there is at least one food stall each of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Western food, as well as a drinks and dessert stall. Some dishes include Chicken Rice (\$1.50 SGD), Mee Rebus (\$1.50 SGD), Claypot Rice (\$3.50).</p> <p>The “international food court” pattern is followed outside of campus as well, in the form of “hawker stalls” which sell at higher prices, typically \$2.50 to \$5.00 SGD for a full meal.</p>
Textbooks	\$25 - \$45 SGD per textbook. Content wise, these textbooks are exactly the same as the ones used in North America, except the publisher replaces the hardcover with a soft cover, and chisels the words “International Edition: Not for Sale in North America” on the front cover
Transportation	Using the public transport system, you can expect to spend about \$5 SGD roundtrip to get to downtown and back
Miscellaneous Fees/ Starting Costs	You need at least \$1000 SGD upon your arrival in Singapore – you will be required to have \$500- \$1000 in order to apply for an ATM card, and you may be required to pay the residence rent up front. There will also be miscellaneous costs involved with processing a student visa as well as the possibility of buying a cellphone
International Travel	This varies greatly depending on your personal tastes and desire for travel. Please refer to the “Regional Travel” section for greater detail.

Table 3: Costs Breakdown

4.5) Getting Around

4.5.1) Public Transport

As mentioned before, Singapore's infrastructure is top notch and it is very easy to get around the city. There are two bus routes (179 and 199) which cycle through the campus and connect to the bus/MRT interchange. Bus 179 services the south end of the campus while Bus 199 cycles through the north end.

Most of the public transportation, whether they are buses, taxis or trains, are run by SMRT. You can find routes and maps here: <http://www.smrt.com.sg/>

At the time of writing, there are 3 main MRT lines in Singapore. The most important line for NTU students is the east-west line which stretches from one end of Singapore to another. In fact, the easternmost station of this line is Changi International Airport, where you will arrive from Canada. The westernmost station is Boon Lay, linked to the campus via buses 179 and 199.

Unlike Toronto, Singapore does not use tokens. Instead it uses the “EZ-Link” card which you can add money to, and you simply swipe the card on well placed scanners upon entering and disembarking a bus. You are then charged according to the distance traveled. If you do not swipe your card on the exit fare, you are charged extra the next time you use your card.

There are usually plasma screens and TVs on the buses and MRTs in case you are bored.

The cost of a journey on the MRT is very cheap. For an example, taking an MRT from Changi Airport to Boon Lay costs you \$1.72 SGD. For the Torontonians reading this, this is comparable to the distance between Scarborough Town Centre to Kipling Station on the Bloor Line.

The public transport usually shut down at 12:00 AM, forcing you to take a taxi if you are out late.

4.5.2)Taxis

Taxis are all metered, quick and strongly regulated. There is absolutely no bartering required on the price. It is a fairly inexpensive mode of transport – taking a taxi from the airport to NTU is about \$25 SGD, and it is feasible to get to the downtown area in Singapore from campus at relatively low cost if you share the cab with 3 other people.

Note: After midnight, all taxis charge 50% more than the regular price.

5.0 Regional Travel

5.1) Around Singapore

You are completely spoiled for choice for things to do in Singapore. You can easily pick up detailed maps and travel brochures put out by the Singapore Tourism Board, and these are available in any of the key attractions of Singapore as well as the International House in NTU. Or you can check out the official tourism website here: <http://www.visitsingapore.com>. To navigate quickly to the attractions in Singapore, click on the “What to See” tag.

You might also be tempted to buy guidebooks to Singapore, but this may not be necessary as the websites and brochures that you can readily access for free are of such high quality that planning a trip around Singapore is a snap.

You can reach nearly all of the destinations by public transport.

5.1.1) Author's Favourite Attractions in Singapore

As they say, a photo is worth a thousand words, so rather than describing them to you, I've put together this gallery. This is by no means a complete or objective list, as personal tastes vary greatly.



Ethnic Areas: Chinatown, Arab Street, Little India, Colonial District



Chinese Garden



Sentosa Island's Musical Fountain night shows
<http://www.sentosa.com.sg/>



Clarke Quay at Night



Festivals and National Holidays (Chinese New Year Shown)



Jurong Bird Park

<http://www.birdpark.com.sg/Main/>

Figure 2: Author's Favorite Attractions in Singapore

5.2) To Surrounding Countries

5.2.1) Introduction

Singapore is just a short jaunt away from neighboring lands such as Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia and Cambodia. Singapore is located centrally as a travel hub and many inexpensive airlines and buses are available for traveling around the region.

Please note that different countries have different visa requirements. For example:

- Thailand does not need a visa from Canadian citizens, however you must pay a 500 baht airport tax upon leaving the country
- Cambodia has visas available upon arrival, if you cross over from Thailand by land. The official cost of a visa is \$20 USD; however due to scams and corruption you usually wind up paying \$1000 baht.
- Malaysia does not need a visa from Canadian citizens
- China requires a visa. You can get a 30 day visa for \$50 SGD at the Chinese Embassy in Singapore

This list is by no means exhaustive; it would be best to check visa requirements when researching trips.

5.2.2) When to Travel

In NTU there is a “reading week” in the middle of the term in which there is no lectures. This is an ideal time to tour the region; additionally you may want to travel in the many long weekends available in Singapore. However, as a result you may miss out on the festivals happening locally.

The public holidays in Singapore are as follow. Its time of occurrence for 2005 are listed to give you a rough idea what time of the month they occur (some holidays do not have a specific date):

<i>Holiday</i>	<i>Time Period</i>
New Year's Day	Jan 1st
Hari Raya Haji	Jan 21st
Chinese New Year	Feb 9, 10
Good Friday	March 25th
Labour Day	May 1st
Vesak Day	May 22nd
National Day	Aug 9th
Deepvali	Nov 1st
Hari Ray Puasa	Nov 3rd
Christmas Day	Dec 25th

Table 4: List of Holidays

5.3) Surrounding Countries: Places to Go

5.3.1) Malaysia

Malaysia is easily accessible by bus. You can find inexpensive bus tickets to cities like Melaka at \$18 SGD, round trip. Even far away trips to Malaysian cities like Penang costs only \$36 SGD (Penang is 8

hours away from Singapore by bus!). There are many jaw dropping attractions in Malaysia, ranging from the massive temple of Kek Lok Si in Penang, to the 88 floor Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, to the sun swept beaches of Pulau Tioman.

Visit <http://www.virtualmalaysia.com/> if you need some ideas for trips and attractions.

To get the bus tickets, you can find a wide selection of agencies and bus companies at the Golden Mile Complex Mall or the Singapore-Malaysia bus terminal. To reach either, get off at Lavender Station on the green line.

Head north on Lavender street to reach the Singapore-Malaysia bus terminal at Lavender and Kallang. If you had instead headed south from Lavender station on Crawford Street, then you would eventually reach Beach Road. Turn west to reach the Golden Mile Complex.

You can find an interactive map here: <http://www.streetdirectory.com>

5.3.2) Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Brunei

These are all easily accessible from Singapore by air. Thankfully Changi Airport is graced by some of the most inexpensive and high quality airlines with networks all over Southeast Asia. Prices for airfare fluctuates constantly, but it is quite easy to fly to Bangkok, Thailand for less than \$200 SGD return fare.

There are also many outrageous promotions featured almost weakly by each of the airlines. For an example, there was once a promotion to fly from Singapore to Hanoi (a distance of 4+ hours) for \$9.98 SGD – normally, this trip would cost you more than \$400 SGD.

It is best if you kept your eye out for these promotions by checking the websites everyday, and simply planned your trips around the promotions, rather than waiting for them to fall neatly on a convenient weekend.

Some useful airlines are tabulated as follows. You can conveniently book all of your tickets online; all you need is a credit card.

5.3.3) Inexpensive Airlines:

<i>Website</i>	<i>Description</i>
www.tigerairways.com	The ultimate in cheap airlines. They have outrageous deals nearly every week, usually in the range of \$10-\$25 SGD to places as close as Bangkok to even places as far as Taiwan. Even their normally prices for flights is cheap – it is quite easy to fly to Bangkok for less than \$100 SGD. It is a mystery how they stay in business.
www.jetstarasia.com	Has a lot of promotions as well, usually to Bangkok, Taipei and Hong Kong, usually from \$25- \$128 SGD.
www.singaporeair.com	At regular price, their tickets are quite expensive. However, they have a promotion nearly every week that greatly reduces the cost – ex, \$128 round trip to Bangkok. The quality is splendid; the meals are excellent, there is a TV in every seat, and once I even got a free Singapore Sling cocktail!
www.airasia.com	An incredibly “no frills” airline with no amenities included, but it meets student budget criteria very well. They usually do not have any deals but their normal pricing tends to be very good. Be careful, as sometimes flights are delayed or even canceled with little warning!
http://www.airfares.com.sg/	A travel agency that lists discount airfares from across the various airlines servicing Singapore

Table 5: List of Cheap Airlines

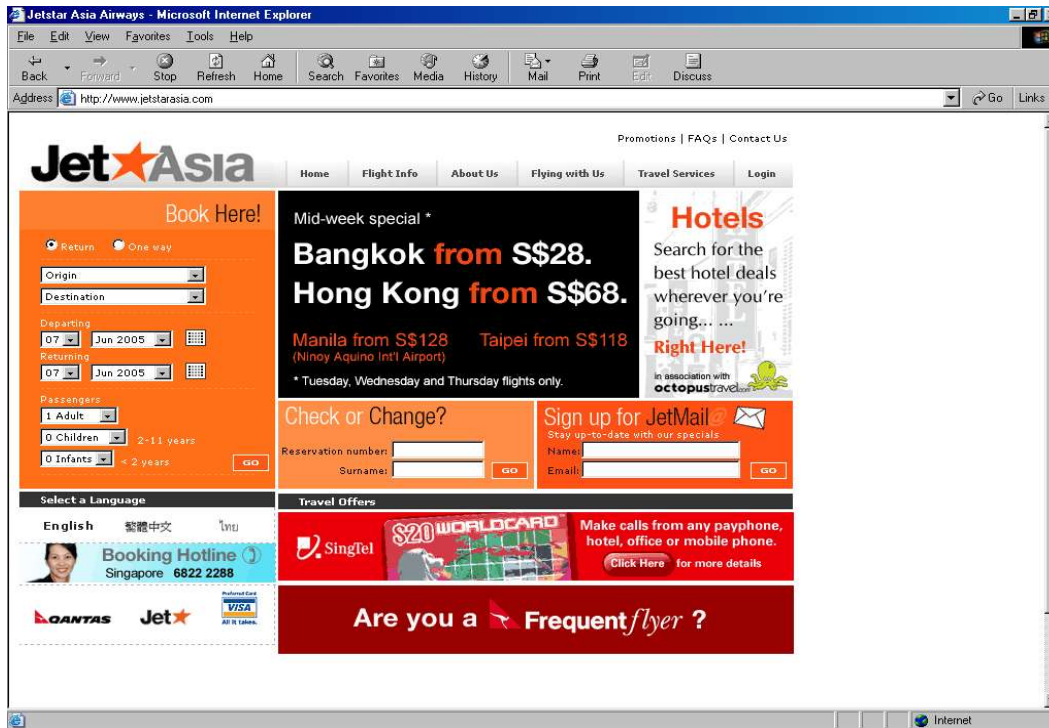


Figure 3: Outrageous deals at www.jetstarasia.com

5.3.4) Trip Planning Links

You'll find that many of your trips can be planned entirely by resources found online. Be sure to check these out:

- a) The Canadian Consular
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp

The website of the Canadian Consular. For those contemplating travel in Southeast Asia, you can take a look at the “Travel Reports” here telling you how horrifying it is to be in anywhere but Canada. In the ensuring paranoia, you'd probably wind up glued to your chair for the rest of your life. Seriously folks, if you act sensibly and carefully there really should be no problem visiting those countries. If anything, all incidents are mentioned for completeness, so that at least the government can say “we warned you” if something does happen. However, this does not mean you should ignore the warning.

- b) Hostel world
<http://www.hostelworld.com/>

Every hostel we stayed at was booked through this useful site. Sites that register through Hostelworld are usually more expensive than if you booked in person. However, the difference is negligible – I had spent around an average of \$3 USD per night in most hostels without any problems.

Afterword

So, in the grand scheme of things was this exchange worth it?

Definitely. Studying in Singapore presented an opportunity of a lifetime, being able to experience a myriad of cultures and see the world in a different light. The opportunities to travel were fantastic, and the amount you learn about others start to rebound on you as you begin to pick up on things about yourself.

There is a great amount of flexibility in this whole experience, and how much you decide to make of the whole exchange is completely in your own hands. There is great potential to travel, but if you prefer to spend your time mingling and integrating with the locals instead, that too is a rewarding experience. The information presented in this report is by no means exhaustive. Keep an open mind, experiment and take the opportunity to try out many new things!

Good luck!