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**EXCHANGE AT NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY,  
SINGAPORE**

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by

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Gen E 303

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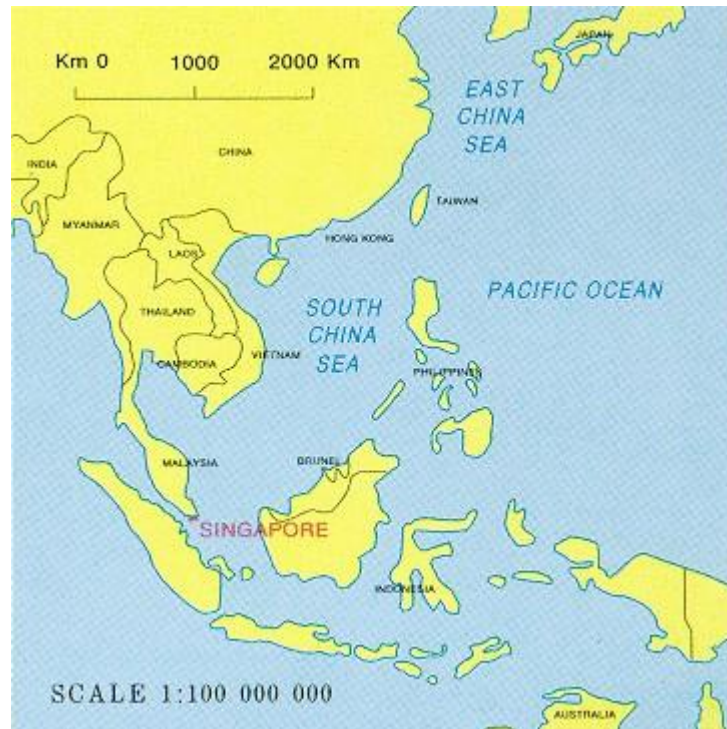
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# **1 SINGAPORE, THE LION CITY**

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Singapore, also known as the Lion City, is one of the most prosperous nations in Asia. A mere 137 kilometres north of the Equator (between latitudes 1° 09' N and 1° 29' N and longitudes 103° 36' E and 104° 25' E), the island state is also dubbed "City in a Garden" as the city-state brings nature into its urban surroundings.

Singapore is the largest port in Southeast Asia and one of the busiest in the world. The diamond shaped island is only 685.4 square kilometres and is separated from peninsular Malaysia by the Johor Strait. Once a British colony and now a member of the Commonwealth, the southernmost point in continental Asia became an independent state on Aug. 9, 1965.



## **1.1 Demographics**

Around 4.16 million people of diversified ethnicity live in Singapore. Due to considerable past immigration, the population is predominately Chinese (75%), with Malays and Indians comprising of about 23%. The city-state has one of the highest population densities in the world (6075 square kilometers), as well as the lowest birth and population growth rates in Southeast Asia. Males and females both have high average life expectancies at the ages of 76.8 and 80.6 respectively.

There are four official languages in Singapore: English, Mandarin Chinese, Malay, and Tamil. English is the medium of communication in administration, industry and instruction in schools. Many Chinese speak Mandarin Chinese as a way to transcend the dialect barriers. The major religions are Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity.

## **1.2 Climate**

Singapore is at the equatorial monsoon region of Southeast Asia with high temperatures and fairly constant precipitation throughout the year. The average temperature varies between 25 and 32 degrees plus humidity. Some of the most intense rainfalls and thunderstorms occur in the region, especially from November to March.

## **1.3 Government, Economy and Trade**

The government system is based on the Westminster model, and the Organs of State consist of a Head of State and a Cabinet. The Head of State is elected for a fixed term of six years and is currently President S R Nathan. The Cabinet is currently Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's third Prime Minister.

Singapore is a powerful financial and industrial sector and has the most advanced economy in Southeast Asia. It has few natural resources, therefore any fruits, vegetables and poultry are raised for local consumption. The economy depends heavily on exports in electronics, manufacturing, and raw materials. Primary imports are machinery, transport equipment and crude petroleum. Primary trading partners include Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong, China, and the US.

## **1.4 Education**

Education is highly valued in Singapore. The primary instruction is in English, but students in primary schools are required to learn one of the other three official languages as a second language. Students involved in higher learning can enroll in one of the three universities or five technical colleges. The three universities located in Singapore are the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and Singapore Management University (SMU).

## **1.5 Shopping and Food**

With its central location and duty and tax free shopping, many tourists come to shop. Orchard Road, Chinatown and Little India are popular locations for shoppers. Orchard Road is literally filled with malls (Tanglin Mall, Tanglin Shopping Centre) selling anything you can imagine. You can find inexpensive souvenirs and many other things

as well in Chinatown and Little India. The Mustafa Shopping Centre in Little India is one I recommend.

For electronics, Sim Lim Square and Funan Centre are your best bets for good deals. They're both IT Malls which have floors of anything related to computers, electronics, and video games. Sim Lim Square is a short walk from Bugis MRT station, and Funan Centre from City Hall MRT station.

A little closer to campus, you have Jurong Point Shopping Centre located right at Boon Lay MRT station where you can buy groceries and other things if you desire. It's just like a typical shopping mall you'd find in Canada.

Food in Singapore is plentiful and of a wide range. There are tons of Asian cuisines:



Malay, Chinese, Indonesian, Indian, Thai, Japanese, and Korean. You can also find some fancier restaurants and western cuisines at **Clarke Quay, Boat Quay and Holland Village** (near Buona Vista MRT). There also find some at Suntec Tower (near City Hall MRT).

Hawker stands are a much cheaper alternative for food in Singapore, and they're literally everywhere! Hawkers are essentially outdoor food courts where you can buy whatever you want to eat. You can buy a decent meal from S\$2 to S\$5.

As for food on campus, all the residence halls on campus have their own canteens. There are also three additional canteens on campus, Canteen A, B, and NIE, located in North Spine, South Spine, and NIE respectively. There are also two cafes and a coffee shop on Campus: Cafe al Fresco (located near the International Student Centre), Cafe at the Quad and Coffee Club Express (both located between North and South Spines near Nanyang Auditorium).

## 1.6 Tourism

Tourism is becoming increasingly important to the Singaporean economy. So during your time in Singapore, here are a few places you should definitely find the time to check out.

- **Singapore Zoo** – What separates the Singapore Zoo from all others is their open concept. Rather than having the animals locked up in cages, they're allowed to roam free within landscaped areas.

- **The Night Safari** – Near the zoo, the night safari is essentially another zoo but the world's first for nocturnal animals. You can take a guided tram tour throughout the area and/or wander around the moonlit pathways yourself.

- **Jurong Bird Park** – They have a collection of over 8000 birds of more than 600 species. Like the zoo, you can get real up-close and personal with the birds. Here you can also find the world's largest manmade waterfall.

- **Sentosa Island** – A popular weekend getaway spot for Singaporeans, it's like an island resort with your white sand beach (Siloso Beach) by the ocean, but it also has a number of other attractions; such as, the Merlion, Underwater World, VolcanoLand, and a Dragon Trail Nature Walk. The island is also the southernmost point of Continental Asia.



- **Palau Ubin** – A small island off the coast of Singapore, it's the only part of Singapore left untouched by urban development. You can rent a bike there and spend the day riding through the trails while exploring the nature and rural scenery.

## **1.7 Transportation and Travel**

Within Singapore, there are many ways to get around Singapore through public transportation in Singapore. The Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) service has lines running North-South, East-West and North-East with 65 stations serving over a million trips a day. The Boon Lay MRT station is easily accessible from NTU campus by taking either bus 179 (South Campus) or 199 (North Campus). To get the most cost-effective rate on both the MRT and SMRT buses, one should definitely buy the EZLink Card. This is available at all MRT stations and it's essentially a prepaid card that you just swipe every time you get on and off any bus or MRT train. I've included a map of the MRT system at the end of this report.

There are also five taxi service companies in Singapore which is quite affordable if you can fill your taxi with four people. One caveat is that they charge 150% between the hours of 12am and 6am.

For those long weekend trips, there are a few no-frills airlines (Tiger Airways, Air Asia, JetStarAsia, and ValuAir) which fly to a number of destinations in Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Thailand). Also, it would be good to check out Singapore Airlines as they have special promotions every once in awhile.

For trips to places in Malaysia, you can also take the public bus. There are a number of bus companies (ie. Transnasional) located near the Lavender MRT station. You can also take ferry rides to places in Indonesia (ie. Bintan).

## **1.8 Communications**

Over 80% of the population in Singapore has a mobile phone. Most exchange students obtain a prepaid plan with one of the three mobile phone operators in Singapore: Singtel, M1, and Starhub. For calls home, you can buy phone cards on campus (ie. Nanyang Supermarket near Canteen 2), or if you have a computer, you can use a program called Skype which allows you to call from a PC to a phone quite inexpensively.

## **2 NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

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The school is located on the southwestern side of Singapore in Jurong about 25km from the city centre, and contains around 23000 students from countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Hong Kong, China and India.

Primarily an engineering and business school, it's organized into colleges and schools. The College of engineering is comprises of five schools:

- School of Civil and Environmental Engineering
- School of Computer Engineering
- School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- School of Materials Engineering
- School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering



There is also three other schools:

- Nanyang Business School
- School of Communication and Information
- School of Biological Sciences

On the north side of NTU campus you can find the National Institute of Education (NIE), a teacher training institute. Here they conduct courses on education, arts and science. I've included a map of NTU's campus at the end of this report

Standard preparation information is given in the International Handbook which they send you upon acceptance. However, I have included below some additional information and pointers which I thought would be helpful.

When you first arrive in Singapore, you should try to bring around S\$1000 with you. This is to pay for things such as student fees, residence hall fees, immediate necessities, your student pass, and an EZLink Card. Also, if you have a debit card



from Canada with the PLUS logo, you can take out money from any ATM on campus (ie. OCBC, POSB).

You can also open a bank account at the OCBC Bank on campus. But they'll charge you S\$20 if you close the account before 6 months. If you want to bring a large sum of money with you, it is best to bring it in the form of a large bank draft in Singapore Dollars. Ensure that on the bank draft, there's an address where the local bank can



cash the draft in Singapore. This way you can get your money directly in your account. Another option is to bring Traveler's cheques, but they can only be cashed at money changers (closest ones at Jurong Point Shopping Centre).

Even though the handbook tells you otherwise, you can wear shorts and sandals if you wish to classes. Another caveat is that the classroom air-conditioning is quite cold, so it would be good to bring a sweatshirt or jacket with you to wear in class.

If you plan to travel to places like Vietnam or Cambodia, bring some passport photos with you for arrival paperwork and some visas.

Electrical appliances run on 240 volts and the plugs are three big flat pins (similar to the one used in the United Kingdom).

The university can arrange transportation for you to get from the airport to NTU. You should get an email regarding this before you leave. If you choose this option, then there will be a person standing at the exit gate with an NTU sign. Otherwise, you can take the taxi or MRT. Taxis cost about S\$30 to get from Changi Airport to NTU since the two are on opposite sides of the island. It should take about 45 minutes to campus. The MRT costs around S\$3 but could be difficult if you have a lot of luggage. You take the MRT to Tanah Merah MRT station, and then take the Green Line (East-

West) all the way to Boon Lay MRT station. Then take bus 179 or 199 depending if your hall is located on the south or north side of campus respectively. The bus ride costs around S\$1. The entire trip should take about an hour and a half depending on wait times.

Bus 179 and 199 run back and forth from campus to Boon Lay/Jurong Point. The buses come quite often so you don't really need a bus schedule. To get around campus, NTU has its own internal shuttle which costs S\$0.20 per trip.

In all honesty, most Singaporean students (at least in EEE) don't read textbooks for their classes and study purely from detailed class notes. However, you can buy textbooks on campus (at a fraction of the cost in comparison to Canada!) at two books stores: Popular (South Spine), Campus Book Store (NIE Canteen).



Going on exchange was one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had, and it definitely was one of the highlights of my life. Going to school and living in

a totally new environment is something few people get the opportunity to do, not forgetting to mention all the other exchange students you get to meet, go to school, and travel with. It's also great to make some local Singaporean friends, as they can show you and have you experience aspects of Singapore that you may overlook being a visitor to the country.

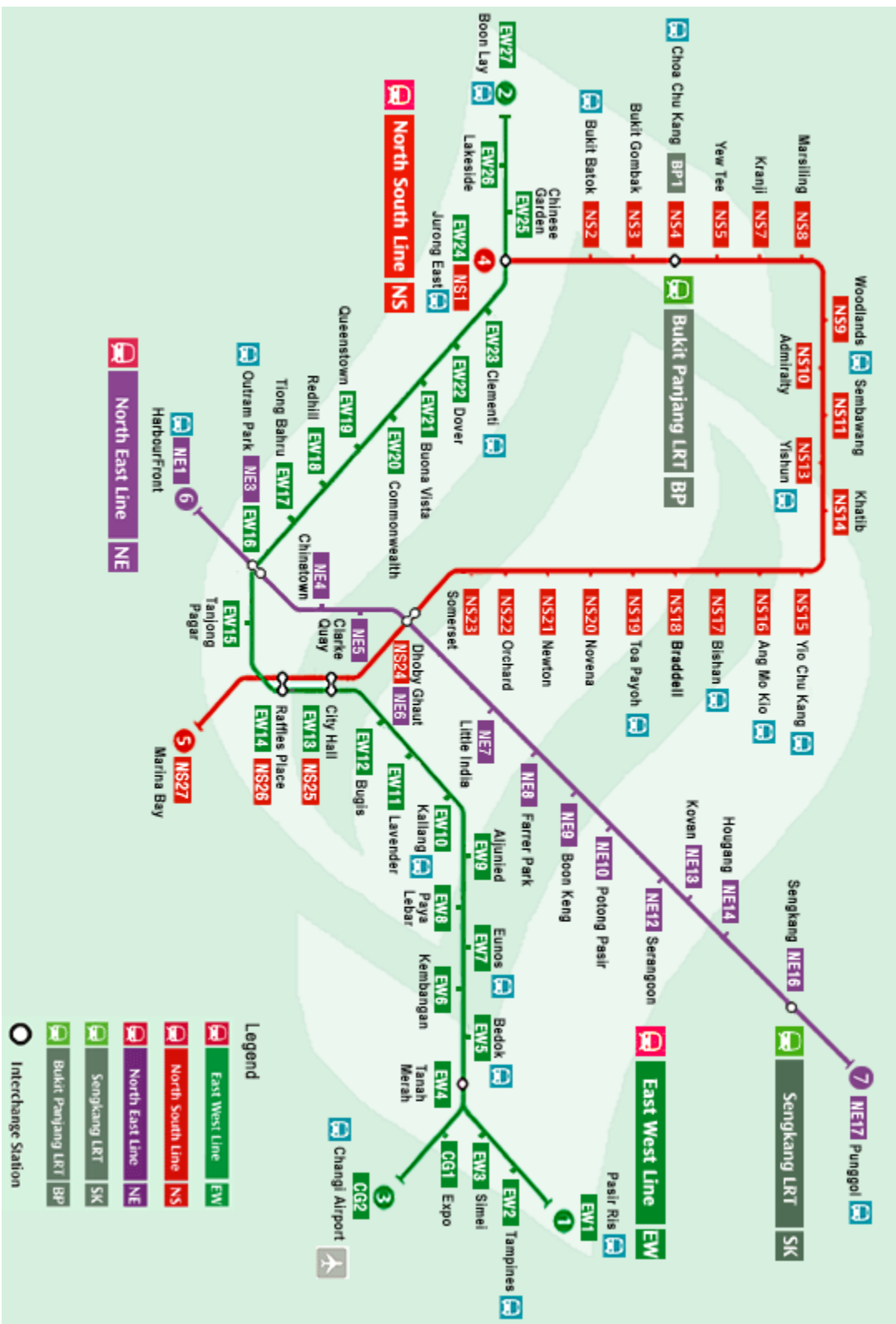
## Singapore Public Holidays 2005, 2006

New Year's Day	1st January 2005	1st January 2006
Hari Raya Haji	21st January 2005	10th January 2006
Chinese New Year	9th February 2005	29th January 2006
	10th February 2005	30th January 2006
Good Friday	25th March 2005	14th April 2006
Labour Day	1st May 2005	1st May 2006
Vesak Day	22nd May 2005	12th May 2006
National Day	9th August 2005	9th August 2006
Deepavali#	1st November 2005	21st October 2006
Hari Raya Puasa	3rd November 2005	24th October 2006
Christmas Day	25th December 2005	25th December 2006
Hari Raya Haji	1st January 2005	31st December 2006

## NTU Academic Year

<b>Semester 1</b>	
Third Monday in July	<i>Start of semester 1</i>
October/November	<i>Semester 1 examinations</i>
November	<i>Start of semester 1 vacation</i>
<b>Semester 2</b>	
Second Monday in January	<i>Start of semester 2</i>
April/May	<i>Semester 2 examinations</i>
May	<i>Start of semester 2 vacation</i>

# MRT Map



## NTU Campus Map

### NTU CAMPUS DIRECTORY

#### OFFICES

Centre of IT Services (CITS) NS, L2 & L4  
 Corporate Communications Office AB, L1  
 Graduate Studies Office AA, L3  
 International Relations Office Nanyang Avenue  
 International Student Centre (ISC) Nanyang Drive  
 Office of Academic Services AA, L1  
 Office of Admissions AA, L2  
 Office of Estate and Amenities (CEA) NS, N1 B1  
 Office of Finance AA, L3; AB, L2 & L3  
 Office of Professional Attachments AA, L4  
 Student Affairs Office AA, L5 & L6

#### SCHOOLS

Biological Sciences (SBS) Nanyang Drive  
 Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE) NS, N1  
 College of Engineering (CoE) SS, S3 2  
 Communication & Information(SCI) Nanyang Drive  
 Computer Engineering (SCE) NS, N4  
 Electrical & Electronic Engineering (EEE) SS, S1 & S2  
 Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS) SS, S3 2  
 Materials Engineering (SME) NS, N4.1  
 Mechanical & Production Engineering (MPE) NS, N3  
 Nanyang Business School (NBS) SS, S3

#### LIBRARIES

Lee Wee Nam Library NS, N3 L2 - L5  
 Library 2 NS, N2 B1-94  
 Media Resource Library NS, N2 B3  
 NIE Library NIE, Bk 4

#### LECTURE THEATRES

Main Lecture Theatre (MLT) SS, S3 B2  
 Lecture Theatre 1T1 & 1A, 1T2 & 2A NS, L1 & L2  
 Lecture Theatre 3 - 1B NS, L2 & L4  
 Lecture Theatre 19 & 20 NS, B1  
 Lecture Theatre 22 to 27 SS, B2  
 Lecture Theatre 28 & 29 SS, B1

#### FACILITIES

Campus Book Shop (NIE) NIE, Bk 4, B1-10  
 Eight Flags Computer Shop SS, S3 B3-4  
 Hair Salon Hall 2  
 Medical Centre SS, S3 B2-15  
 Nanyang Supermarket Hall 2  
 OCBC Bank NS, N3 L1  
 Popular Bookshop SS, S4 B5-01

Abbreviation  
 AA - Admin Avenue AB - Admin Building NS - North Spine SS - South Spine

