



Australian
International
School

30+
YEARS
IN SINGAPORE

MOVING TO SINGAPORE e-GUIDE

2025



Gardens by the Bay
The Garden City, Singapore



Merlion Park -
1 Fullerton Road

Welcome to Singapore!

Welcome to the Australian International School (AIS) in Singapore!

Whether you're just considering a move or have already touched down on our sunny island, we're here to make your transition as smooth as possible. AIS is home to a vibrant community, with students from over 50 nationalities, including 2.6% from Brazil, creating a unique blend of cultures, traditions, and friendships.

We understand the challenges of relocating to a new country —we've been there too. That's why we've compiled this "Moving to Singapore" e-guide, packed with practical tips, insights, and life hacks to help you settle in quickly and easily. Inside, you'll find everything you need to feel confident about your move, from navigating Singapore's essentials to discovering its hidden gems.

Welcome to your new home, and welcome to the AIS family!



Papilionanthe Miss Joaquim -
Singapore National Flower





Safety

Singapore is known for its high level of safety and security. The crime rate is low compared to many other cities, and the government invests significantly in law enforcement and public safety measures. The city has well-lit streets, efficient public transportation, and a visible police presence, contributing to a sense of safety. Additionally, strict laws and regulations help maintain order, making it a comfortable place to live and visit.

Singapore is ranked among the top three countries for Order and Security, marking the seventh consecutive year of this achievement. Overall, Singapore is often regarded as one of the safest cities in the world.



Language Diversity

Singapore is a multicultural society that embraces four official languages: English, Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil, reflecting its diverse heritage.

- English**
 Is the primary language for official communication, business, and education. Most Singaporeans are bilingual in English and another language, making it easy for expats to communicate and in daily tasks.
- Mandarin Chinese**
 Is widely spoken, particularly among the Chinese community. Learning basic Mandarin can be useful for engaging with locals.
- Malay**
 Is the national language and holds cultural significance. While less commonly spoken than English or Mandarin, knowing simple Malay phrases can enhance social interactions.
- Tamil**
 Is spoken by the Indian community and holds official status. Learning basic Tamil can be beneficial when interacting with Tamil speakers.

Expats aren't expected to master all four languages, but showing interest in local languages fosters positive relationships and enriches the expat experience in Singapore.



Visa

Securing the correct visas is the first crucial step for families moving to Singapore. Your Human Resource Team will help with the application and issuing, if relevant, work permits for you and dependent passes for your children to study in Singapore.



AIS Students -
Australian International School Singapore



- **Employment Pass (EP) or S Pass:**

If you are relocating for work, you will likely need an **Employment Pass (EP)** or **S Pass**, depending on your job and salary level.

- **Dependent's Pass (DP):**

Your spouse and children (under 21) will generally require Dependent's Passes (DP) to stay with you in Singapore. DP holders can live and attend school in Singapore without additional permits. This pass does not allow holders to work in Singapore.

Student Pass (STP) for Schooling

If your children are not eligible for a Dependent's Pass they will be issued a student pass with support from the school; your Human Resources Department will advise you accordingly.

Pro Tip



Get Started On Vaccine Verification Early If Your Child Is 12 And Under

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) in Singapore requires foreign-born children aged 12 years and below and are applying for a Dependent's Pass (DP), Long Term Visit Pass (LTVP), or Student's Pass (STP), to undergo vaccination verification. This process ensures that children entering Singapore receive vaccinations to protect themselves and others from preventable diseases. You may want to get started early by checking your child's vaccines and arranging the doctor's endorsement of the immunization record. This step can take a few weeks and slow down the visa process if there are missing vaccines or documents.

Healthcare and Insurance

Singapore boasts world-class healthcare with both public and private options, ensuring a high standard of medical care for residents and expatriates alike. The public healthcare system, overseen by the Ministry of Health (MOH), is known for its excellent services and modern facilities, primarily catering to citizens and permanent residents. The private healthcare sector is also top-tier, offering shorter waiting times, more convenience, and a wide range of specialized treatments, making it a popular choice for expatriates.

Safety and quality are never a concern, as Singapore's healthcare system consistently ranks among the best globally. However, it's essential to know that healthcare costs can be high, particularly in the private sector. As a result, having comprehensive health insurance is crucial for expatriates to cover potential medical expenses, from routine checkups to emergency care.

Options for health insurance are plentiful, with local and international providers offering plans tailored to different needs, including coverage for specialist treatments, hospital stays, and even repatriation in some cases. While public healthcare is affordable, expats often choose private insurance for greater flexibility in accessing world-class medical facilities. It's advisable to review your insurance coverage to ensure it meets your family's specific needs, including dental and maternity care if relevant.

Housing

Given its small size and high population density, housing in Singapore is typically high-rise condos or apartments, often equipped with pools, gyms, and playgrounds, ideal for families. Housing costs vary, but rents in central areas are higher. For example, a one-bedroom apartment in the city centre costs around SGD 3,800 monthly, while a four-bedroom apartment in the suburbs may cost around SGD 8,000 - SGD 12,000. Many expats prefer to live near their workplace or their children's school convenience.

Best Neighbourhoods for Expat Families

1. Central Orchard

If you love a lively atmosphere with shopping malls, cinemas, and restaurants, Orchard is ideal. It's also a peaceful neighbourhood with green spaces for families with small children. However, housing here comes at a premium, making it one of the more expensive areas in Singapore.

2. Serangoon

Serangoon is a family-friendly neighbourhood ideal for expat families, particularly those with children attending the nearby Australian International School (AIS). The area offers a variety of housing options, from condos to landed homes, along with abundant green spaces and parks like Serangoon Stadium and the nearby Kovan Sports Centre. Nex Mall and the famous Chomp Chomp Food Centre are for dining and shopping. With easy access to the Serangoon MRT and nearby schools, the area provides a peaceful yet well-connected lifestyle, all at more affordable prices than central neighbourhoods like Orchard.

3. Woodlands

Located in the north, Woodlands is known for its slower pace of life and lush greenery. The Admiralty Park offers nature trails and mangrove areas, perfect for outdoor-loving families. With a large community of American expats due to its proximity to the Singapore American School, Woodlands is popular with families. It is also more affordable than Orchard, offering spacious family homes and a suburban feel.

4. Bukit Timah

Known for its cycling and hiking trails, Bukit Timah is surrounded by greenery and nature reserves, making it ideal for active families. Housing options range from apartments to landed homes, and the area's convenient transportation links make it easy to reach the city's popular spots.



5. Sentosa Cove

For families looking for luxury and coastal living, Sentosa Cove is perfect. This island offers stunning beachfront properties, from villas to condos, but has a higher price tag. The island also boasts recreational activities like Universal Studios, Adventure Cove Waterpark, and SEA Aquarium, making it an exciting place for children. Most residents rely on cars or private hires for transportation due to its distance from the central city.

6. East Coast

East Coast is perfect for families looking for seaside living and city convenience. With affordable housing compared to downtown, the area offers a vibrant lifestyle with ample dining, medical clinics, and outdoor activities, such as beach walks and parks. It's also close to the airport, making it convenient for frequent travellers.

7. Holland Village

Holland Village, known for its European charm and vibrant food scene, is a favourite among expats. It offers easy access to schools, medical clinics, and public transportation, making it a convenient area. While housing is pricier, it caters to various budgets, offering both private properties and HDB flats.

Holland Village has a lively atmosphere with many cafes, galleries, and shops.

8. River Valley

River Valley is a quiet yet lively neighbourhood close to the city centre, offering proximity to the CBD and lush natural spaces like Fort Canning Park. It's perfect for families who enjoy urban and serene living. The area has numerous international schools and playgrounds, making it great for families with young children. River Valley offers mostly private condos, with prices reflecting its central location.

MRT & LRT System Map





Public Transport

1. MRT (Mass Rapid Transit):

The MRT system is the backbone of Singapore's public transportation. Trains are fast, clean, and reliable, with numerous stations covering key neighbourhoods and business districts, with adults paying between SGD 0.92 to SGD 2.17 per ride.

2. Buses:

Singapore's bus network is extensive, covering even areas not directly connected by MRT. Buses are air-conditioned and equipped with wheelchair access, making them family-friendly.

3. Taxis and Ride-Hailing:

Taxis are readily available in Singapore, and fares are relatively affordable compared to other major cities, between 10 SGD (US\$ 7.60) and 25 SGD (US\$ 19.10). Expats can easily hail a taxi from the street or book one through apps like ComfortDelGro. Ride-hailing services such as Grab and Gojek are also popular alternatives.

Pro Tip



Private transport such as Grab and Gojek

Children under 1.35 meters must wear an approved child restraint for their height and weight. Private vehicles are required to refuse your fare without such devices. Rider Safer is an example of one such device.

4. Cycling:

Singapore is becoming increasingly bike-friendly, with a growing network of cycling paths. Areas like East Coast, Bukit Timah, and River Valley have scenic cycling routes, offering families a fun way to explore the city. For short rides, you can also rent bicycles from bike-sharing services like SG Bike or Anywheel.

5. Driving:

While owning a car in Singapore is expensive due to high Certificate of Entitlement (COE) costs, some expat families choose to drive. Car leasing is a popular alternative for families staying short-term. An International Driving Permit (IDP) or a conversion to a Singapore driving license is required after 12 months for expats driving in Singapore.



MRT Train
Chinatown Station



Australian International School Bus Service

The Australian International School (AIS) provides a dependable and convenient bus service for students aged 2 and above, ensuring safe and efficient transportation to and from school. Operated by a trusted local transport company, this service covers a wide range of neighbourhoods across Singapore, making it accessible to families in various areas.

The school buses are equipped with essential safety features, including seatbelts, and are supervised by trained bus attendants who ensure that students are properly monitored throughout their journey. For extra peace of mind, parents can track the bus's location in real-time through a GPS system, allowing them to stay informed about their child's commute.

The bus service offers flexible pick-up and drop-off points and multiple routes to suit busy families. It ensures that students arrive on time and return home safely, providing a stress-free daily commute for parents who prioritize both convenience and safety.

Bus Safety

All buses are staffed with bus monitors who ensure students wear seatbelts or restraints correctly and follow proper bus etiquette. Students aged 2 to Prep must use school-approved child safety restraints while travelling on the bus, with the Ride Safer vest being a popular option. Year 1 and above students may also use a school-approved booster seat, depending on parental preference.

30% of AIS students rely on the bus service, highlighting its popularity and the peace of mind it provides for families.



*Lau Pa Sat -
Iconic Hawker Centre, 18 Raffles Quay*



Where to Eat

Singapore is a food lover's paradise, offering diverse culinary experiences that reflect its multicultural heritage. From affordable hawker centres to upscale dining spots, there's something for every palate. Here's a breakdown of where to eat and the types of food you can expect:

1. Hawker Centers

Are a quintessential part of Singaporean life, offering affordable, local, and multicultural dishes under one roof. You can find a variety of cuisines here, such as Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Peranakan. Popular hawker centres include:

- **Maxwell Food Centre:**
Known for its famous Hainanese chicken rice, laksa, and nasi lemak.
- **Old Airport Road Food Centre:**
Offers local favourites like satay, char kway teow, and wanton mee.
- **Chomp Chomp Food Centre (Serangoon Gardens):**
Famous for grilled seafood, satay, and sugarcane juice.

2. Local Coffee Shops ("Kopitiams")

Kopitiams are informal dining spots in almost every neighbourhood. They offer a mix of hawker-style food stalls where you can enjoy affordable dishes such as kaya toast, Hokkien mee, nasi padang, and more. Popular kopitiams like Toast Box and Ya Kun are great places for a casual, quick bite.

3. Casual Restaurants

For families seeking a relaxed dining experience with a more extensive menu, casual restaurants in malls and around popular neighbourhoods offer international cuisines and local dishes. You'll find:

- **Thai and Vietnamese:**
Places like NamNam Noodle Bar and Nakhon Kitchen serve flavorful Southeast Asian dishes.
- **Japanese:**
Sushi Tei and Ichiban Boshi are popular for fresh sushi, ramen, and tempura.
- **Western:**
Din Tai Fung offers Asian and Western-influenced dishes, while Baker & Cook is perfect for pastries and brunch options.



4. Fine Dining

For families seeking a relaxed dining experience with a more extensive menu, casual restaurants in malls and around popular neighbourhoods offer international cuisines and local dishes. You'll find:

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- **Japanese:**
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- **Western:**
Din Tai Fung offers Asian and Western-influenced dishes, while Baker & Cook is perfect for pastries and brunch options.

5. International Cuisines

Singapore's diverse expat community has led to a thriving international dining scene, with restaurants specializing in:

- **Italian:**
Places like La Nonna and Pasta Brava serve authentic Italian dishes.
- **Mexican:**
El Mero Mero and Papi's Tacos offer delicious Mexican cuisine, from tacos to burritos.
- **Indian:**
Try Samy's Curry or Muthu's Curry for flavorful South Indian cuisine, including their popular fish head curry.

Whether seeking local flavours at a hawker centre or indulging in international cuisine at a fine dining establishment, Singapore's dining scene offers endless options for food enthusiasts to explore.





Sport & Activities

Singapore offers a wide variety of sports and recreational activities catering to all interests. Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy hiking and cycling at popular spots like Bukit Timah Nature Reserve and East Coast Park. Water sports such as kayaking, paddleboarding, and wakeboarding are available at places like Sentosa and Marina Bay.

For those who prefer organised sports, football, rugby, tennis, and cricket clubs spread throughout the island. Families can enjoy activities like ice skating at Kallang Ice World or exploring adventure parks such as Forest Adventure. Gyms, fitness centres, and yoga studios are plentiful, offering everything from traditional workouts to specialised classes like CrossFit or martial arts. With a mix of indoor and outdoor activities, Singapore provides ample opportunities to stay active and enjoy a healthy lifestyle.





Welcoming New Families to The Australian International School

Co-curricular Activities (CCA) at AIS

The CCA activities offered at AIS allow students to enhance their creative, musical, and athletic skills alongside peers who share similar interests. The connections formed through these groups lay the foundation for a vibrant school culture that celebrates diversity and excellence. We encourage all students to take advantage of the benefits that Co-Curricular Activities offer. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for involvement, including but not limited to:

- Fitness Camp
- Build a Business
- Science and Coding
- Lego Club
- Cambodia House Build
- Chess and Chinese Cultural Games
- Senior Maths Club
- Music (including choir, ensembles, and bands)
- Duke of Edinburgh International Award
- Theatre and Performing Arts

Portuguese After School Program (CCA) at AIS

Launching in January 2025, AIS is proud to offer an after-school (CCA) Portuguese program to immerse students in Brazilian culture through interactive and engaging activities and enhance students' Portuguese language skills, focusing on spoken and written aspects in an age-appropriate approach. Programs will be offered in the early and elementary years, expanding to additional year levels subject to demand and availability. Native-speaking Portuguese teachers from Brazil will oversee the program.

Buddy System for new students

During their first week, new students will be paired with a "buddy" to help them acclimate, navigate the school, and get introduced to their surroundings. The class teacher oversees this induction process. School Counsellors also support the buddy system and can assist students facing transitional challenges. New students are encouraged to speak with their class teacher if they have questions or concerns.



Parents' Association - AISPA

The primary goal of the Parents Association is to foster community spirit at AIS. Whether you're new to the school or have been part of our community for years, there's something for everyone.

Alongside various events throughout the year, we aim to assist you and your family in settling into school and life in Singapore by providing information, resources, and friendships. We understand that all parents have busy lives, but even a tiny amount of your time and energy can make a big difference in creating a vibrant and supportive community.

AISPA is a great chance to connect with other parents and engage in school life. We welcome your involvement and assure you that it will be a rewarding and enjoyable experience!



*AIS Whole Campus
1 Lorong Chuan, Singapore*



Disclaimer:

The Australian International School wrote this E-Guide; it was designed to provide information to our families moving to Singapore. We can't guarantee that the information contained in this guide is always up-to-date or complete. Details may change and should not be considered to be legal, financial, or professional advice. Please double-check with experts if needed. The Australian International School isn't responsible for any issues or losses from using the guide.



*Gardens by the Bay -
The Marina Bay Sands view towards Singapore*

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