

ISE Map 2021 edition

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE



9th Management
Committee

SMU iCON

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ABOUT ICON

1. Introduction
2. "You're a part of us"
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Introduction

"Hello Friends!"

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Welcome to the family! It's always hard to leave the place you know as home, but we hope that you will eventually come to think of Singapore as your second home. We're absolutely thrilled to have you here with us! There's so much we want to share with you to alleviate the anxieties you're sure to be having over questions like: how are you going to navigate through Singapore, where the good food is at, and how to cope with your studies?

We're a group of senior students from SMU International Connections (ICON). With the support of the Diversity, Inclusion and Integration (DII) unit from the Office of Dean of Students (ODOS), we have prepared this nifty guidebook to help you kick start your life in Singapore and at SMU. Not too long ago, we were in the same shoes as you and having gone through the whole process, we know that it can be really daunting with information overload. But fret not, we're right here to help you through every step of the way! But first, who exactly are we?

SMU ICON is the international students' department of the SMU Students' Association (SMUSA) comprising 13 diverse cultural clubs and an executive committee. It champions integration efforts on campus and celebrates cultural diversity among local and international students by organising events and programmes to showcase the unique cultures and talents present in the diverse campus population. ICON spearheads initiatives that build friendships between international and local students. Through their 13 cultural clubs, the committee welcomes both international and Singaporean members, who come together to plan activities for the SMU community to enhance cross-cultural understanding.

Introduction

"You're a part of us"

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We love stories. Even better, we love stories we can share. You, our valued international friend, come with stories of your culture, heritage and experiences tucked within you. The essence of your nation is a part of you, so don't be afraid to let it show, just be yourself! We like you just the way you are, and of course, would love to share our stories with you as well!

Here in Singapore and SMU, we are home to all homelands. As an international student, you play an integral part in contributing to the multicultural nature of SMU and Singapore, keeping it alive by sharing your knowledge and experiences of your country.

*To keep yourself updated on the latest ICON events, **do connect with us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Telegram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)**! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at smuicon@sa.smu.edu.sg (SMU International Connections) or dii@smu.edu.sg (Diversity, Inclusion & Integration).*

We look forward to see you on campus!

Follow us on
[Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Telegram](#), [LinkedIn](#)



Our 13 Cultural Clubs



SMU AL KHALEEJ
Middle East



SMU APSARA CAMBODIA
Cambodia



SMU BARKADA
Philippines



Chào Vietnam
SMU CHAO VIETNAM
Vietnam



SMU CONNECT CHINA
China



SMU FRANCOPHILES
France



SMU INDIAN CULTURAL
SOCIETY (ICS)
India



SMU JAPANESE CULTURAL
CLUB (JCC)
Japan



SMU MYANMAR
CUMMUNITY (MC)
Myanmar



SMU ROOTS
Singapore



SMU TRULY MALAYSIA (TM)
Malaysia



SMU WOORI SAYI
Korea



YIM SIAM
SMU YIM SIAM
Thailand



1. SMU Al Khaleej

Shown on the right

Have you ever wondered what it is like to experience the Middle East? If your answer is yes, get ready for Al Khaleej! Expand your horizons and discover the wonders of the Gulf through events organised to celebrate Middle Eastern culture. From belly dancing workshops to Arab food trails to Henna workshops as well!

IG: [@smualkhaleej](https://www.instagram.com/smualkhaleej)

Email: alkhaleej@sa.smu.edu.sg



Students after grooving to mesmerizing tunes of the Gulf in the Belly Dancing workshop!



Spicing things up in the Pastry making workshop!



2. SMU Apsara Cambodia

Shown on the left

Join Apsara Cambodia for their exciting activities ranging from shadow puppet to kite flying! Enjoy free refreshments and cultural snacks from the heartlands of Cambodia while you are at it!

IG: [@apsara_cambodia](https://www.instagram.com/apsara_cambodia)

Email: apsaracambodia@sa.smu.edu.sg

Telegram: [Link](#)



3. SMU Barkada

Shown on the right

Barkada is the Filipino equivalent of the word 'clique' and more specifically, it is a group of friends. That's exactly what Barkada is all about- a bunch of really good friends enjoying good food and having a blast together! From engaging in the local music scene to diving into the Filipino cuisine, there's no shortage of interesting activities!

IG: [@smu.barkada](https://www.instagram.com/smu.barkada)

Email: smubarkada@sa.smu.edu.sg



Kilig

Movie screening of Heneral Luna!



BBQ night shenanigans!



4. SMU Chao Vietnam

Shown on the left

Love munching on Banh Mi and slurping on Pho? Join in the fun with Chao Vietnam as they give you a taste of Vietnam! From their welcome tea to BBQ nights- keep a look out for their events!

IG: [@chaovietnam.smu](https://www.instagram.com/chaovietnam.smu)

Email: chaovietnam@sa.smu.edu.sg

FB: [Link](#)



5. SMU Connect China

Shown on the right

Everyone knows that China has the world's largest population and is an economic giant. But did you know that China has well over 100 cities of over a million people? Or the fact that there is a rich history behind every exciting dish? Join SMU Connect China to learn more! Hop onto their instagram for some fun facts!

IG: [@smuconnectchina_official](https://www.instagram.com/smuconnectchina_official)

Email: connectchina@sa.smu.edu.sg



All smile in their traditional outfits



6. SMU Francophiles

Shown on the left

Always wanted to learn French and didn't know where to start? Want to learn how to bake the best of French culinary treats? Delve into the French culture with our France fanatics at Francophiles!

IG: [@francophiles.smu](https://www.instagram.com/francophiles.smu)

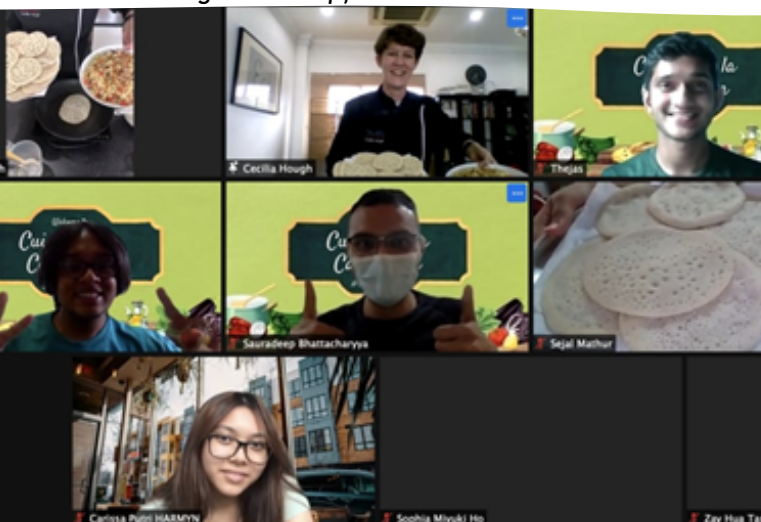
Email: francophiles@sa.smu.edu.sg

Telegram: [Link](#)

Fun French movie night!



Online cooking workshop, Cuisiner a la Casablanca



7. SMU Indian Cultural Society

Shown on the right

Indian Cultural Society is a club that aims to promote Indian Culture in SMU and Singapore. For all the Indians who have come to Singapore, this club gives you a family away from home. You can come down for our events and be a part of our family!

IG: [@smuics](#)

Email: ics@sa.smu.edu.sg

Telegram: [Link](#)



Indian Cultural Club Welcome Tea



JCC networking event!



8. SMU Japanese Cultural Club

Shown on the left

Pick up a new language or learn about the iconic sights in Japan's many prefectures with JCC events! JCC strives to cultivate a deeper understanding of Japanese culture through intercultural exchanges with Japanese students, learning the language and even celebrating holidays.

IG: [@smujcc](#)

Email: japanesecc@sa.smu.edu.sg

FB: [Link](#)

9. SMU Myanmar Community

Shown on the right

A place to immerse yourself in rich Burmese traditions. We strive to create a comfortable space for everyone to learn about Myanmar. Join us through our upcoming social events!

IG: [@smu_mc](#)

Email: myanmarcommunity@sa.smu.edu.sg

FB: [Link](#)



Travel and culture sharing session!



All smile in their traditional outfits



Stomach full and hearts too!



Getting Ready for the Pottery workshop!



10. SMU Roots

Shown on the left

A home for SMU students, local and international, to experience Singapore's unique culture. Expose yourself to what Singapore has to offer through their various events

IG: [@smuroots](#)

Email: smuroots@sa.smu.edu.sg

FB: [Link](#)



11. SMU Truly Malaysia

Shown on the right

A food haven to yum cha: nasi briyani, nyonya kueh, roti canai, bak kut teh... A rojak of vibrant hues: Malay, Indian, Chinese, Peranakan... A wonderland to jalan jalan: Mt. Kinabalu, Semporna, Genting highlands, Batu caves...

Experience the culture and spirit of Malaysia with us at SMU Truly Malaysia. With our baking workshop, Malaysia trip and many more events, we can't wait to belanja you Leng Zais and Leng Luis!

IG: [@smu_tm](#)

Email: smumalaysia@sa.smu.edu.sg

FB: [Link](#)



Food trail fun at JB



Cultural Immersion Trip



Running Man Camp!



Woori Day!



12. SMU Woori Sayi

Shown on the left

Love K-POP, K-Drama, or Korean Food? SMU Woori Sayi is a club that aims to spread awareness and promote all facets of Korean culture to the SMU community via Korean games, food, pop culture, history, language, and more!

Come join us in our events such as Woori Day and Running Man Camp, where you get to play a variety of games involving different aspects of Korean culture in exchange for attractive prizes like delicious Korean food!

IG: [@smuwoorisayi](#)

Email: woorisayi@sa.smu.edu.sg

Telegram: [Link](#)



13. SMU Yim Siam

Shown on the right

Welcome to SMU Yim Siam, "the Club of Smiles" where you will learn about the culture of smile and the Thai lifestyle! Check out the upcoming events and join our community in the link below! Hope to see you soon :)

IG: [@smuyimsiam](https://www.instagram.com/smuyimsiam)

Email: yimsiam@sa.smu.edu.sg

FB: [Link](#)

Telegram: [Link](#)



Siam Food Trail!



How to survive in Bangkok 101

Join our cultural club(s) and begin your ICON journey today!

Do check out their social media accounts for the latest updates!

2.0

ABOUT SMU

1. SMU Culture Shock
2. The SMU Lingo
3. Advice from Senior International Students
4. Survival Tips from SMU Alumni and Seniors

1. SMU Culture Shock

SMU will bring you many surprises, but for some it could also be a culture shock! Here are some student experiences.

PG Orientation / School Events

Remember to attend your PG Orientation programme and the necessary briefings, to learn about resources and support services that would be useful to you! Participate in the various school activities (whether in-person or online) as much as you can, to forge new friendships and expand your networks!

Class Participation

It is really important to speak up and participate in class discussions during lessons. In fact, the professors award a percentage of the overall grade to how actively you partake in class discussion, so always remember to pre-read your lesson materials and don't be afraid to voice your opinions!

Name-tent

Always bring your given name-tent along for classes on campus, as this is how the Professors and Teaching Assistants identify you, and it helps in scoring those precious class participation points!

Mugging

You may be familiar with the term 'mug' as in simply a cup that is used to contain hot tea/ coffee. However, in SMU, this term has a completely different meaning! The term 'mug' or 'mugging' actually refers to studying intensively especially before exams.

Group Presentation

SMU has a culture where group presentations can take up a significant portion of the grade. Learn how to engage in effective teamwork with your classmates of different nationalities, besides improving on your presentation and Powerpoint skills



2. The SMU Lingo

As if Singlish (Singaporean slang) wasn't hard enough to get used to, you can expect to be thrown further off your guard by a flurry of acronyms shot at you on the SMU campus. To avoid getting confused by our rather convoluted language, here are some popular acronyms that will help you speak like a native SMUgger.

General Terms

CCA: Co-curricular activity
CR: Class Room- Used for large group activities or some classes
Convoc: Convocation
CSP: Community Service Project
Facilitator/ Faci: Camp/ Orientation Group leader
FOMO: Freshman Orientation Moves Online
GSR: Group Study Room- For group meetings (and small birthday celebrations)
ICON: International Connections
OCSF: Overseas Community Service Project
PR: Project Room- Rooms equipped with LCD screens available in the library
RA: Research Assistant
SAC: Students Association Council
SMUgger: An SMU student- "SMU" and "mugger" (refers to a student of SMU)
SMUSA: SMU Students Association
SR: Seminar Room- Well-equipped room used to conduct most classes in SMU
TA: Teaching Assistant – Each module has each own teaching assistant, so hit them up for questions you may have about your class!

Faculty Names

LKCSB/SOB: Lee Kong Chian School of Business/School of Business
SCIS: School of Computing and Information Systems
SOA: School of Accountancy
SOE: School of Economics
SOSS: School of Social Sciences
YPHSL/SOL: Yong Pung How School of Law/School of Law

Offices

C4SR: Centre for Social Responsibility
DKHMCC: Dato' Kho Hui Meng Career Centre
IITS: Integrated Information Technology Services
OCIS: Office of Campus Infrastructure and Services
OCCM: Office of Corporate Communications and Marketing
OFIN: Office of Finance
OSL: Office of Student Life
OSS: Office of Safety & Security
OUAFA: Office of Undergraduate Admissions & Financial Assistance
WKLSWC: Mrs Wong Kwok Leong Student Wellness Centre
SSH: Student Services Hub

CBs (Constituent Body)

ACF: SMU Arts & Cultural Fraternity
ASoc: SMU Accounting Society
Bondue: SMU Business Society
Ellipsis: SMU Computing & Information Systems Society
OIKOS: SMU Economics Society
SICS: SMU Special Interest & Community Service Sodality
SMUX: SMUXploration Crew
SOSCIETY: SMU Social Sciences Society
SSU: SMU Sports Union
The Bar: SMU Law Society

3. Advice from Senior International Students



1) Seek Support

Ask for help and it will be given. If you need professional advice, the Mrs Wong Kwok Leong Student Wellness Centre provides complimentary counselling services for those who need a listening ear. If you prefer to speak with a fellow student, the SMU Peer Helpers will be glad to help. These peer helpers are SMU students trained by the Centre's professional counsellors. Make an appointment with the WKLSWC [here](#).

Tel: 6828 0786

Email: counselling@smu.edu.sg

2) Relax after Class

As a city campus, there are endless options nearby where you can unwind with some friends after a long day in school.

- Try Bricklane at campus green for some food, drinks and games.
- Watch the latest movies at The Cathay Cineplex
- Just 15 minutes away is Clarke Quay with the largest selection of restaurants and nightclubs in Singapore as well as the adrenaline-pumping Gmax reverse bungee ride

3) Guide to navigate SMU Life

Recommendations for some food places in SMU (personal opinion):

- Kenboru – Japanese salad
- Tea Party – Western pasta
- Koufu & Connexion Level 1 – Food court
- Soi Aroy – Thai food

Useful links

- Class materials on [eLearn](#)
- Useful school apps and checklist on [OASIS](#)

Recommendations for study areas

- Li Ka Shing Library
- Kwa Geok Choo Law Library
- Study Lounge "Fish Tank" at School of Economics
- Group Study Room and Project Room at all school buildings and libraries through the Facility Booking System on OASIS.

Use this [map](#) to help you navigate your trip around SMU. With indication of essential buildings and landmarks in the map, you can easily locate your destination.

4. Survival Tips from SMU Alumni and Seniors

- they've been there, done that and this is their advice to you

1) Study Life in SMU

Make the most of SMU Libraries resources; if you find some quality article on HBR or FT that requires subscription, you can search for it on SMU Libraries website to get full access to it for free!

Zheng Yunsi, Master of Human Capital Leadership

We are the biggest beneficiary of our own hard work, when we read, research, participate in class, collaborate and contribute, ask questions and seek advice, and challenge ourselves to continuously learn and grow.

Zheng Yunsi, Master of Human Capital Leadership

Stay focused, but have fun! Remember that you are here as a student and to complete your studies the shortest possible time, but don't forget to interact, enjoy and meet new friends along the way. Don't be so caught up just in your studies, as it is about building your network and learning from your peers which makes the experience studying abroad more worthwhile than the grades you have on paper. After school, do spend some time to go around Singapore and enjoy the views!

Kendra Luisa Baylon Gadong, Master of IT in Business

It is challenging but more interesting to do group projects with someone you do NOT know. Time to break your comfort zone.

Tan Congsu, MSc in Applied Finance

Keep an open mind on the learning process and be extremely structured, flexible, and agile. This applies to everything from classroom lectures, online classes, and working in a group project. It's not all about getting good grades, you must learn to enjoy the journey.

Alisa Binti Abd Kadir, Master of Human Capital Leadership

Don't be shy when you want to ask questions in a class that you might think has really smart people who voice themselves a lot, there's usually the rest of the class with similar questions and doubts.

Sai Sravani Lanka, Master of IT in Business

4. Survival Tips from SMU Alumni and Seniors

- they've been there, done that and this is their advice to you

2) Networking and Internships

Make the most of SMU's highly diverse and supportive community. You'll be encouraged and inspired to see how ready your peers, professors, program and career advisors, alumni, and even guest speakers are to share and support, and how much you can learn from them while they also value your inputs. So take the initiatives to make friends and build relationship.

Zheng Yunsi, Master of Human Capital Leadership

Be proactive during your internship as internships are important to get firsthand experience working in Singapore especially if you are an international student. This is also your opportunity to get converted to a full-time role after your studies, so be curious, collaborate, and be a proactive owner of the projects you are handling. Your employer would no doubt convert you if they see the value you added in the team!

Kendra Luisa Baylon Gadong, Master of IT in Business

Don't just stick with the same people in group projects. Collaborate with as many different people as possible. It's a great way to build relationships and learn from different people. Take the lead in some group projects and also learn to switch places, be ready to be the backbone of the group.

Alisa Binti Abd Kadir, Master of Human Capital Leadership

Overseas opportunities are very competitive but don't get discouraged if you don't get into the high profile ones. The lower profile OCSPs and universities give you the best experiences and friends! Everything is more personal and you get many more chances to really stand out and forge real friendships.

Sai Sravani Lanka, Master of IT in Business



4. Survival Tips from SMU Alumni and Seniors

- they've been there, done that and this is their advice to you

3) Beyond Studies in Singapore

Make the most of SMU's golden location as well. Don't waste the free admission to the beautiful National Gallery and National Museum (just show your SMU student card), and don't miss taking a walk in the iconic Fort Canning and CHIJMES, all within walking distance of the campus.

Zheng Yunsi, Master of Human Capital Leadership

Do your research on the cost of living...and how to budget your finances. Do also spend your time wisely. Good thing when I was doing my Stay Home Notice in a hotel, school has not started yet, so I was free to do a lot of things I wanted to do, take this as an opportunity to brush up on some technical skills if you've been out of school for a while. I participated in Python classes offered by the school, and I even did some courses online on how to communicate effectively. But of course, don't forget to enjoy since when you start going back to school and studying, there's no turning back! Have some fun, watch your favorite movies, and TV shows, maintain a healthy lifestyle and spend time to talk with your friends and family back home.

Kendra Luisa Baylon Gadong, Master of IT in Business

Signing up for various campus and outdoor activities organized by SMU is one of the best ways to enjoy your life here as students, because you will busy studying literally every week.

Tan Congsu, MSc in Applied Finance

Don't stick around the town area, explore the heartland as there are lots of hidden gems in less prominent areas.

Sai Sravani Lanka, Master of IT in Business



3.0 —

ABOUT SINGAPORE

1. Singlish 101
2. Singapore Essentials

Information for those new to the Little Red Dot

(a friendly nickname for Singapore)



1) A safe country

Singapore is indeed one of the safest countries in Southeast Asia and though it is safe to hang out after midnight, always carry your identification card or document with you. That being said, low crime does not mean no crime so always remember to be careful when going out late at night!

2) GST

It is not mandatory to tip in restaurants or cafes- the total bill will already have accounted for a 7% GST (Goods Service Tax) and a 10% service charge.

3) Chope

Any hawker centre, note the unique methods Singaporeans use to reserve their seats. A small token (a packet of tissues, umbrella, nametag, etc) is placed on the seat or table to signal the seat is taken. Shift it and you'll risk the infamous Singapore scolding. You've been warned!

4) Food

Our common love for food is what binds this multi-racial island! The cuisine available at our unique local hawker centres will definitely whet your appetite. To understand why Singapore is renowned as a food capital, be adventurous and discover beloved local dishes such as the chili crab, durians, 'orh lua' (oyster omelette), fish head curry, frogs leg porridge and much more. The best part is that local food is affordable. The rule of thumb is - the longer the queue at the hawker stall, the better the food. Yes, Singaporeans love to queue!

5) Taking off your shoes

Always remove your shoes when visiting a local's residence as a sign of respect. Applies to some businesses too.

6) Flip flops

Informally known as Singapore's national footwear. Comfortable? Absolutely, and a great way to beat the heat.

7) Dress code

Singaporeans generally dress casually in loose and light clothing for maximum comfort. Students usually wear jeans, T-shirts and bermudas. Formal attire may be expected for formal class presentations/ functions.

8) Unpredictable weather

Singapore can be scorching hot one minute and pouring rain the next. Temperatures may vary from 31 degrees Celsius during the day to 24 degrees Celsius at night. An umbrella will protect you from the heat and rain, especially during the monsoon season. However, indulging in our cold desserts- iced kacang, iced longan drinks and artisan ice creams is a fun way to feel instantly refreshed!



1. Singlish 101

To get closer to the local people, learn the local language. You could get lost without it!

Example

Ok *ah, this is *damn important!

First thing when you land in Singapore at Changi, you will hear people talking some *cheem language you won't understand, but don't *kan cheong. You will be *blur for a while, but *aiyah very soon, you will be okay one *lah. No, we're not scaring you. This will *confirm happen, but *nehmind (never mind), all *ang mohs and foreigners will *kena this culture shock."

***please refer to the pages below for explanation**

Almost all Singaporeans understand English. They do, however, have an adorable tendency to insert some Chinese and Malay words into their string of sentences, so you'll need to watch out for the slang. That's not all. They also add 'words' like lah, leh, ah, meh and mah (just to name a few) at the end of sentences to give emphasis to statements. This is what Singaporeans proudly call 'Singlish', and if you are *blur after reading the preceding paragraph, believe us, this is just the tip of the iceberg of what to expect during your stay in Singapore.

Many non-natives think Singaporeans speak very fast, but it's just the intonation. Really. Prick your ears up when a local speaks, learn the lingo and try it out for yourself. You'll soon pick up a very valuable survival tool here in Singapore!

Tips to master this strange language

If you don't understand Singaporeans the first time around, it's alright to ask them to repeat what they say. Just say: "**HARRRR?**" loudly. That means: "Excuse me but I did not get what you just said. Could you kindly repeat that please?"

Keeping silent and looking *blur will not get you anywhere. See? Singaporeans are highly efficient in replacing an entire sentence with just a single "word". We have to add that this addictive Singlish language also spills over to text messaging via mobile phones.

***NOTE: Singlish is not an official language. It's just an informal medium for social communication.**

For example:

"Eh rmbr ah, prof wants us to come at 3.30pm, don late ah"

Translated: "Remember, the Professor wants us to come at 3.30pm, so don't be late!"



retrieved from: visitsingapore.com

1. Singlish 101



WHEN LESS IS MORE

Singlish is the art of getting to the point as quickly as possible. See how just one or two words can convey so much!

- CAN MEH?** I don't quite believe you.
- CAN WHAT?** I'm sure. Why don't you believe me?
- CAN HOR?** Are you certain?
- CAN LOR** Yes. I think so.
- CAN LEH** Yes. Of course.
- CAN AH?** Can you or can't you?
- CAN LAH** Yes, it can be done.

TRY THESE PHRASES

MAI TU LIAO [Pronounced MY-TU-LIAO] Means: Hurry up Example: We are going to be late for the movie, mai tu liao!	SHIOK [Pronounced SHEE-OKE] Means: Extremely awesome Example: Just ate the best nasi lemak of my life, shioh man!	ALAMAK [Pronounced AH-LA-MAK] Means: Oh no! Example: Alamak! Forget to bring my wallet today.	PAISEH [Pronounced PAI-SAY] Means: Shy or embarrassing Example: I don't want him to pay for my meal, very paiseh!
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WANT TO MASTER OUR TRICKY LANGUAGE?

CHECK OUT MORE WORDS FROM THE SINGLISH DICTIONARY! ➔

retrieved from: visitsingapore.com

Uniquely Singapore Acronyms (USA)

Singaporeans love to abbreviate almost everything into an acronym. Here are a few get you acquainted

- ATM Automated Teller Machine
- BMT Basic Military Training
- BKK Bangkok
- ECP East Coast Parkway
- ERP Electronic Road Pricing
- 5C's The Singapore Dream : Cash, Car, Credit Card, Condominium, & Country Club
- CBD Central Business District
- CIP Community Involvement Project
- CNA Channel News Asia
- CPF Central Provident Fund
- CTE Central Expressway
- 4D 4-Digits, Singapore lottery
- FOC Free-Of-Charge

- FT Foreign Talent
- GSS Great Singapore Sale
- GST Goods and Services Tax
- HDB Housing Development Board
- IC Identity Card, or In Charge
- IDD International Direct Dial
- IR Integrated Resort
- JB Johor Bahru
- KIV Keep In View; refers to items, documents or papers to be kept for later consideration
- KL Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- KPE Kallang-Paya Lebar Expressway
- LRT Light Rapid Transit
- MBS Marina Bay Sands
- MM Minister Mentor
- MOE Ministry Of Education (Singapore)
- MP Member of Parliament
- NMP Nominated Member of Parliament
- MRT Mass Rapid Transit
- NATO No Action, Talk Only
- NEL North East Line
- NDP National Day Parade
- NETS Network for Electronic TransferS
- NLB National Library Board
- NRIC National Registration Identity Card
- NS National Service
- OB Out of Bounds
- OCBC Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation
- PAP People's Action Party
- PIE Pan Island Expressway
- PM Prime Minister
- PR Permanent Resident
- RWS Resorts World Sentosa
- SGH Singapore General Hospital
- SMS Short Messaging Service
- SMU Singapore Management University
- SM Senior Minister
- SG Singapore
- ST Straits Times
- UP Usual Price

These are just a few of the acronyms used in Singapore. The actual list is endless.

1. Singlish 101



How to order kopi



retrieved from: [article link](#)

SUNDAY TIMES GRAPHICS

How to order at Singapore Kopitiam (Coffee Shops)

Singapore's Kopitiam culture dates back to the 1920s. One of the oldest Kopitiam is Tong Ah Eating House on Keong Saik Road in Chinatown. "Kopi" is Malay for coffee and 'tiam', Hokkien (a Chinese Dialect) for shop. Kopitiam's are a great place to meet locals, learn the lingo and discover this unique part of Singapore culture. Starbucks may be difficult enough but ordering your preferred drink at a local kopitiam is a whole different ball game. Worry not, this chart will help!



retrieved from: [kopi guide](#)



2. Singapore Essentials

The essentials to survival in Singapore

The time between your arrival in Singapore and your actual start of term at SMU will be occupied with the aforementioned formalities required to settle in Singapore. However, in light of Covid-19, there would be changes to how the formalities are normally carried out. For more information on navigating through the matriculation process, check out [this page](#).

1) Useful apps to make Life Easier

We're all familiar with apps such as Tik Tok and Instagram to keep ourselves updated on what's popping. While you browse through various renditions of renegade to keep yourself entertained, give some of these apps a look! From Food delivery services to hailing a cab or even getting your hands on some good deals, having some apps handy would be great for added convenience especially given how technologically adept Singapore is! Here is a breakdown of some of these useful apps:

1. Taxi Services: **Grab, Gojek, ComfortDelGro**

- All fares are stated up front, and you can choose what type of vehicle you would prefer. This is a really popular choice and affordable as well!

2. Public Transit:

- Explore Singapore MRT Map: subway map of Singapore
- bus@sg: tells you when a bus is scheduled to arrive in real-time and additionally allows you to mark bus stops you use often to get your information quicker
- Citymapper: Gives key details about journey in SG
- Google Map: Guide you the way and suggest the fastest route to get to a certain location

3. Food

- For delivery: GrabFood, Foodpanda, Deliveroo
- For food deals: Eatigo, Chope, Burpple
 - You can make reservations for restaurants beforehand and claim deals up to 50% off or 1-for-1
 - Helps you search for food based on cuisine and location as well
- Redeem offers: McDonalds, Starbucks
 - You can find a Mcdonalds and Starbucks almost anywhere in Singapore!

4. Weather: **Weather@SG, MyEnv**

5. Shopping

- Clothing and other goods: Shopee, Zalora, Lazada, EZbuy
- Online marketplace to buy and sell goods: Carousell
- Grocery Shopping: Fairprice, Sheng Siong, Cold Storage
- Cheap grocery shops: Japan Home, Daiso

6. Entertainment

- Fave: get really cool deals off of food, activities, beauty and more!
- Popcorn: book movie tickets and check out what's showing in the local theatre

7. Banking apps: to easily transfer money via your phone number

- DBS PayLah!
- Paynow
- DBS SG
- OCBC Bank

2. Singapore Essentials

8. Messaging apps:

- **Telegram:** this is one of the most important apps you will need in SMU. Given the frequency of group work in SMU, it's a norm for students to have Telegram. You'll be using this app for most of your communication and it's a great platform to stay updated on what's going on in school as well as potential opportunities
- **Zoom:** Online classes will usually be conducted through Zoom so it would be great to get acquainted with the platform
- **Microsoft Teams/Webex:** These are other great platforms for group projects and meetings online, so do set up an account for them as well!



You can also make payment for several food/ clothing items using the features in the apps listed above such as GrabPay, FavePay, AliPay and DBS Paylah!

Do check out these apps and give it a download to make life a little easier!



2) General Living Expenses

An international student in Singapore spends, on average, about S\$750 to S\$2,000 a month on living expenses. The amount will, of course, vary depending on your lifestyle and course of study.

This table gives a rough estimate of basic monthly expenditure for an international student:

Item	Cost per month (\$)	Comments
Accommodation	\$200-\$800	Rental varies with geographical areas, type of accommodation, demand, facilities provided & the number of people sharing, etc.
Utilities (excluding water and electricity)	\$40-\$100	N.A for hostel stay that includes utilities
Food	\$300-\$450	Based on \$10-\$15 per day for 3 meals at a food court
Transportation	\$20-\$150	Depends on the distance and mode of transport. Tips: Full-time students can enjoy concessionary travel on the MRT and public buses.
Telecommunications	From \$30	Varies with usage and promotional packages subscribed for telephone services, mobile services and internet access services
Books & Stationery	From \$100/ term	Booklink at the SMU concourse stocks almost all the required textbooks. Of course, second hand textbooks are cheaper, and are quite readily available too! Ask your seniors to check that out or even get an online pdf version instead.
Personal expenses	\$100-\$300	Varies with the individual. Could include expenses on clothes, toiletries, entertainment, haircut, miscellaneous.
Medical Hospitalisation	Depends	As a SMU student, you are automatically entitled to SMU Medical Insurance Coverage scheme that covers your basic medical treatment and consultation. Refer to this site for more information

When having your meals in the eateries at the SMU basement concourse, ask for the SMU student discount. This discount may not be automatically given, so you MUST request for it by showing them your student pass.



2. Singapore Essentials

3) The Art of Connecting

While you will definitely make new friends at SMU, there is nothing that can warm the heart more than hearing your parent's concerned inquiry, old friends' gossiping or even the voice of that special someone back home.

Mobile Phones

Nothing beats good old international phone calls, and they do not have to come at a hefty price! You may want to consider a two-year contract with one of the 5 main telecommunications ('telcos') service providers in Singapore: Starhub Mobile, SingTel, M1, Circles. Life or TPG (for SIM only plan)

Each service provider offers different types of subscription plans; you can compare and choose the subscription plan that meets your needs. You can get a mobile phone at a significantly cheaper price by signing up for a two-year plan; however, you will need to stay with that service provider until the contract is over.

Deciding between a Prepaid or Postpaid Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Card:

- One advantage of a post-paid SIM card is that if you lose your SIM card, you can have a replacement without having to change your phone number
- You can also get cheaper rates with a subscribed line. Some phone plans provide free incoming and/or free IDD (international direct dial) calls.
- It is recommended that you get a postpaid SIM card if you make calls frequently
- Stick with a prepaid SIM card if you don't expect to make many and/or long calls; or just don't want to go through the hassle of applying for a subscribed line.

Prepaid SIM cards are available in 7-Eleven Convenience Stores islandwide. All you have to do is bring your passport along! For a postpaid plan, you can approach any telco shops in most shopping malls for more information about the application process.

There are five main telecommunications service providers in Singapore – M1, Singtel, StarHub, Circles.life and TPG. There's no one telecommunications service provider that's distinctively better than the rest, so you might want to check out the different plans they offer and see which sounds best for you!

Prepaid: (get additional perks if you top up online!)

Prepaid SIM details		
Telco:	Plans Available	Additional Top-up
Starhub	Click here	Click here
M1	Click here	Click here
Singtel	Click here	Click here

If you're looking for a further breakdown of all the different prepaid plans offered by the various telcos together with some side-by-side comparison do check out this comprehensive guide compiled by a travel blogger!

SIM ONLY/ Postpaid plans:

SIM Only plans are postpaid plans and function like your traditional mobile plans. Depending on what's important to you (data, talk time or SMS), you can pick out the right SIM only plan for yourself!

To check out the deals for the cheapest SIM ONLY mobile plans here for more info and for a more detailed Data vs Price comparison, do look at this guide that includes a SIM ONLY price comparison tool.

Postpaid SIM details (no contract)	
Telco:	
Starhub	Click here
M1	Click here
Singtel	Click here
Circles.Life	Click here
TPG	Click here

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4) Opening a Bank Account

- **Opening a bank account is fairly simple in Singapore.** You will need a bank account to save your money, pay your tuition and/or accommodation fees and for regular withdrawals for day-to-day expenses. You can approach any of the major local banks to open a savings account, using your passport, student pass and Proof of Residency, which can be requested from the Student Services Hub if your Singapore residential address has been updated in OASIS. When selecting a bank, you may want to choose one with a branch or an ATM (Automated Teller Machine) which is near your accommodation
 - **You can choose any bank in Singapore.** SMU has a tie-up with DBS Bank, so that when the time comes for payment of tuition fees, the payment can be electronically processed through a system called GIRO. There are several banks to choose from but the most popular among SMU students are DBS/POSB and OCBC. You will need your passport and student pass to open an account.
 - **Do visit the banks' website for further information on student loans, etc.**
1. **ATM debit card/ NETS card-** enable you to withdraw cash from ATM machines located all over Singapore. A convenient method of payment, NETS, is the most common form of cashless transaction in Singapore, the local equivalent of debit card services in many other countries in the world. NETS can be used in many places such as the supermarkets, various eating places, fast food restaurants, and entertainment places like the cinema.
 2. **Internet Banking (IB)-** allow you to view your account records from any computer with internet access. Transfer funds, pay for rent and online shopping via this quick and easy method.
 3. **Inter-bank GIRO-** a means to pay bills electronically. Just arrange for payment to be made and the system will automatically deduct the money from your account and pay it to the designated recipient. All you need to do is fill out an application form that you can get from the billing organisation. There is no charge for setting up a GIRO service. You are highly recommended to make use of this service.
 4. **Cash card-** help you make payments for many services, including the printing/ copying and library services. You can buy and top them up in any 7-11 store.

You may request for services to enhance your banking experience, free of charge, such as:

Bank Name	Contact No.	Exhaustive list of branches
DBS/POSB	1800 339 6666	Click here Nearest ATM branch: Plaza Singapura/ Bras Basah MRT station/ Raffles City
OCBC	1800 363 3333	Click here Nearest ATM branch: SMU concourse
UOB	1800 222 2121	Click here Nearest ATM branch: Bras Basah MRT station/ Raffles city

2. Singapore Essentials

5) Transportation: A guide to public transport in Singapore

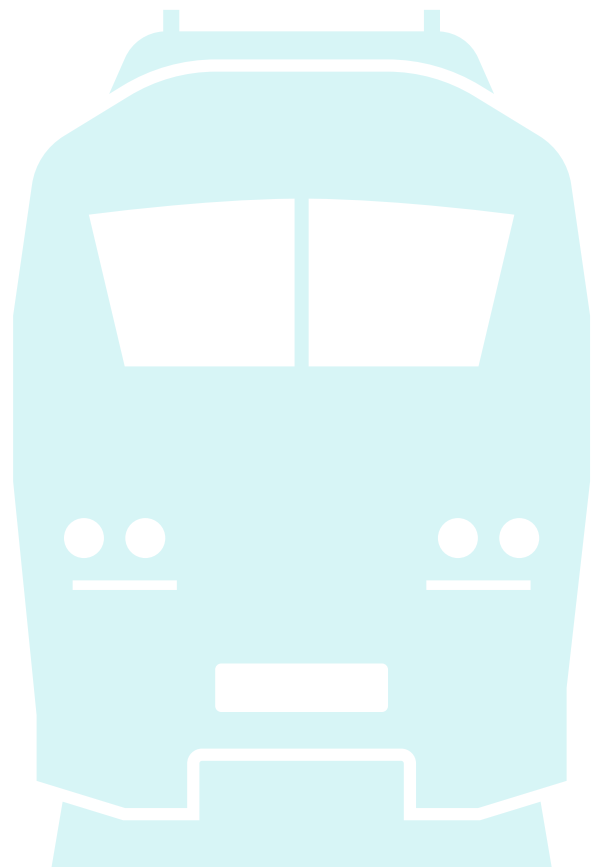
- **MRT** - train, the tracks run through various regions. To get to SMU, alight at any of these stations:
 - City Hall MRT Station (EW13/NW25),
 - Bras Basah MRT Station (CC2),
 - Bencoolen MRT Station (DT21) or
 - Dhoby Ghaut MRT Station (NS24/NE6/CC1)
- **Bus** - Singapore has more than 300 buses to take you to almost every street. While this offers the benefit of sending you to the doorstep of your destination, the journey usually lasts longer than a MRT ride.
- **Taxi** - The fastest and most convenient means of transport- especially when you're running late. Taxi fares may be expensive and there are considerable surcharges at peak hours. Be sure to check out the various taxi hailing apps to get the best price.

Payment system

You can pay for public transport with your prepaid Ez-Link card, though coins are also accepted for bus rides. The EZ-Link card is sold at all MRT stations. It costs \$12 to buy one, which comprises a one-time, non-refundable fee of \$5 and a value of \$7 for your transport payment.

*NOTE

- You may also use your EZ Link card to operate laundry machines in Prinsep Street Residences (PSR)
- Many modern bank cards can double up as EZ Link cards as well. You may check with your bank while setting up your account if you wish to activate this service.



4.0



FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS IN SINGAPORE

1. Must-try Singaporean Dishes
2. Shops to get hometown food



Singaporeans love to talk about food, food and more food! Our number one sport is eating. Yes, the Singapore cuisine is fantastic, and the choices are mind blowing. Luckily, there is no shortage of delicious food options in and around SMU. A comprehensive list of all the food places within SMU can be found [here](#). Majority of these meals are below \$10 so get ready to dig in!

1. Must-try Singaporean Dishes

Singapore is a melting pot of cultures and that is truly evident in the cuisine which draws inspiration from the various regions in Southeast Asia. You may have heard of the famous Chicken Rice, Laksa and Hokkien Mee. But there are just so many exciting dishes awaiting in Singapore- the list is truly endless, but here are some must-try (perhaps not as common) dishes to get you hyped and ready!

- *Fish Head Curry- originally created by Singapore's Malayalee (Indian ethnic group) with Chinese & Malay influences, the dish includes the head of a red snapped stewed curry consisting of coconut milk, tamarind juice and vegetables and served with rice or bread.*
- *Chilli Crab- probably the most popular seafood dish in Singapore. Despite its name, chilli crab is not a very spicy dish. Was listed as the top 50 in the world's most delicious foods!*
- *Roti John- egg dipped bread filled with various ingredients (meat and onions) and fried. Accompanied with chilli sauce- a hawker centre staple.*
- *Curry Puff- a flaky pastry stuffed with curry chicken or sardine, potato cubes and a slice of hard boiled egg/*
- *Pineapple Tarts- small, bite-size pastries topped with pineapple jam. Mainly sold during festive periods such as Chinese New Year*
- *Singapore Sling- famous cocktail founded in Raffles Hotel*
- *Sambal Stingray- slices of stingray smothered in sambal and served on a banana leaf. Very unique in Singapore!*



1. Must-try Singaporean Dishes

- *Ice Kacang*- a mound of grated ice on a base of jelly, red bean, corn and attap seeds, topped with coloured sugar syrups such as palm sugar, rose syrup and evaporated milk
- *Bobur Cha Cha*- yam and sweet potato cubes served in coconut milk and sago
- *Chendol*- coconut milk drink mixed with palm sugar, cendol (green, pandan flavoured starch strips), red bean and shaved ice
- *Kueh Lapis*- a rich, multi-layered cake using a large amount of egg whites and stuffed with prunes
- *Bandung*- rose syrup drink with evaporated milk. Best served ice cold!
- *Tropical fruits*- some must-try fruits in Singapore are rambutans, mangosteen, longan, lychee, dragon fruit, star fruit, mango, papaya and the king of fruits, durian
- *Dum Biryani*- basmati rice baked with either spiced mutton, chicken, vegetable or fish curry
- *Murtakbak*- Indian-Muslim dish consisting of folded roti prata dough stuffed with spiced miced meat, onions and egg and served with curry
- *Kaya toast and soft boiled eggs*- unofficially Singapore's national breakfast set meal. People enjoy kaya toast and eggs throughout the day, washed down with a cup of coffee or tea. This is a breakfast that truly transcends race, language and age group (starting at \$1.20 for two slices of toast)



****AND that is still not the end. We hope you discover your favourite Singapore foods. And remember, the best way to start a conversation with locals is to talk about the food!***

2. Shops to get hometown food

Do you miss snacks/food from your hometown? Are you craving for them in Singapore? Here are some shops/malls/websites to get your delicious hometown food! Please note that these are just suggestions from ICON Cultural Clubs!

China	Shops selling snacks: Yue Hwa Chinese Products & Si Jia Ke Supermarket located at Chinatown
France	Online shop: thefrenchgrocer + so-france
India	Snacks+ Groceries: Mustafa centre located at Farrer Park, Restaurants/shops at Little India Online website selling snacks and drinks: Shivsaga
Indonesia	Snacks: ABC Bargain Sari Ratu Restaurant at Haji Lane
Japan	Snacks: Donki located at several places such as Somerset, Farrer Park and Novena
Korea	Snacks: Shine Korea located at Bugis
Malaysia	Online shop: buyjb Shop selling snacks: NTUC Restaurant: JB Ah Meng Restaurant located at Geylang Rd + Makan Melaka at Jurong West
Myanmar	Restaurant + shops selling snacks: Peninsula Plaza located at City Hall
Philippines	Kabayan Filipino restaurant located at Lucky Plaza Mall Max's Restaurant located at Far East Plaza More information and suggestions available at Paluto sa SG on Facebook
Thailand	Snacks + Restaurants: Golden Mile Complex located near Nicoll Highway MRT station
Vietnam	Shops selling snacks: Tạp Hóa Việt Nam Tại Singapore located at Jalan Berseh Restaurant: Am Thuc Viet, Quan An Vat & Shoonkou Café at Bugis

That's all folks!

This is proudly brought to you by 17th SMU ICON! You truly have an ICON-ic journey waiting for you and we can't wait to welcome you with open arms :-)



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