

Welcome to my blog posts from partlycloudy.co.uk, the travel journal I wrote when living in Singapore from 2012-2017. Not wanting to do away with website content, I've made PDFs of some of the posts and uploaded them here, to keep the adventures alive.

Christmas in Wonderland

Dec 3 2016



Now that December is finally here, we can talk about Christmas openly and without fear of ridicule. As a lifelong Yule fan I live in the perfect city to complement such a passion. So maybe when the lights went up in October it was a tad early, even for me. But yay, it's December, and the Christmas ribbon has been cut and curled around a few gifts. Let the festivities commence!

We live at the top of Orchard Road, which is Singapore's main shopping street. People come here every December just to see the famous light display, brighter and better year on year. This year's effort – blue and green sparkly reindeer prancing the 2k+ stretch from Tanglin Mall to Plaza Singapura – is actually a shade more demure than in previous years. Raffles Hotel (see above) may be sticking to classic red, green and white, but anything goes in this town. Down all the main roads there's an explosion of purple, clementine, lemon yellow and rose pink, with baubles and lights every step of the way. It's a Willy Wonka acid bath of kaleidoscopic joy.

Singapore's malls vie for best-dressed contest and we get some crazy themes. There were fluorescent pink acrobats and unicorns last Christmas. Another year we had dangling gifts and spinning tops, because of course that's what Christmas is all about. This year, Forum Mall is lit up with toadstools at the front, and there's a huge curtain of giant tulips as you venture in. I mean *vrolijk kerstfeest* right?

So the roads are locked in a permanent jam, but everything has an upside. Static traffic means we get a better look at the turquoise Tiffany tree at ION mall, and the massive white puffball outside Paragon. There's an unashamed homage to shopping at Centrepoint in the shape of an exploding toy bag strung high above the store front, and a life-sized collection of sweets and cakes at the entrance. Frankincense and myrrh? Not a patch on what a modern-day Singapore king might offer.

I love it all and wish I'd seen it as a child. Back then I was truly devastated when Christmas came to an end, because we had to wait an agonising 364 days until the next one. But when you're a grown-up [looks around to find a grown-up] you realise the spirit of Christmas is all about family, and not being near mine is hard. Big thanks go to my sister for flying out in the middle of the sad post-Christmas patch for



a festive visit to Malaysia. The little girl in me is ridiculously grateful to have this lovely visit to break up the grey post-Christmas fog, and we're already planning what to eat first. We've alerted the roti prata stalls.

Not that I want to go all [Richard Curtis](#) here, but of course we all know this time of year is about the build-up, the anticipation, the writing of cards, the staying in touch, the thinking of those you love and those you've lost. Maybe the commercial side of things is dialled a little high in this shop-tastic city, but Singapore makes it a cheery old time for sure.

So if a giant snow globe just happens to manifest on a pavement in the middle of Orchard Road, with an actual fairytale gingerbread house inside, I'll be the first one to loiter nearby in full-on festive mode.

