

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.

Things I've Noticed After Four Years in Sing

July 12 2016



Snails are huge. Roads are long. Escalators are high.

Does the taxi smell of lunch? It's not your cab, drivers can do what they like. But if they've just had a big dish, remember that a long drive + a full stomach + hot weather = sleepy, so avoid taking the long airport route during afternoons.

Bubble tea = genius. Why did we not know about it before Singapore? Gong Cha, Each-a-Cup, Koi, we [heart] you.

It is hot. I tried to be all relaxed about this at first and I hated people saying: "Too hot for you, ah?" Well alright, yes, since you ask, yes it is hot. I give in.

Know your curry puffs. You can have a good one or a bad one. #killiney

Toastbox is actually fine for dinner #chickencurry

Cinema tickets are SO cheap, dirt cheap. How can this be? Cinema air con is SO cold, how is this necessary? Bring sweater, scarf and gloves.

Mandarin will be something I won't ever master. And if I do attempt it, no one congratulates me for trying my hand at a cautious 你好 or 再见. Mind you, back in the UK, if a Spanish person is talking English, do we give them a bear hug for being bilingual? No. Maybe we should.

In Singapore, no one can see you trying out all the very fit sporty things, so you can do what you want without your rubbish sporting reputation preceding you. Result.

"Inside table, please." Did I really say that? Yes I did. It is hot.

Why does the milk never spoil and the bread never go mouldy? Do not ask that thing.

I don't think "freedom" eggs does what it says on the box.

The business of being able to get to Indonesia or Malaysia and back in a day – without having to get on a plane – is something I will never fail to get excited about.

A country that's the size of London, yet east and west can seem as far apart as Glasgow and Penzance.

Going to school means getting on a motorway.

The time difference from here to the UK is better in Singapore. I can start my day and be ready for all your messages when they start pinging at around 16:00.

There is crime. We don't see it, or we choose not to, and I'm pretty sure the papers are ~~censored~~

I love the tankers, truly. And I always swim on Sentosa. But OK yes, #rubbishinthesea

Singlish is a language, a real one, with a dictionary. Why no one tell you this, lor?

Don't feed the monkeys.

Don't be mean to geckos, they eat mosquitos.

Don't leave the plates overnight. Ants.

Cockroaches chase you.

If a bird hits your window, wait. It's probably going to be OK.

You have possibly had mycoplasma several times, you just didn't know it.

Singapore is the unspoken theatre capital of the world, or on its way to being. There's a seriously fast-moving drama scene out here, and I should be buying more tickets.

There is nothing on Starhub. NOTHING.

Plates will always be cold. And your food, often. And coffee lukewarm.

Go to the longest queue at the hawker.

In department stores, don't seek help if you need information on anything other than the thing the staff member is selling. Total mystery. Don't these salespeople ever venture outside of their own shops in department stores? Or is it just that they aren't allowed to tell people the answers?

If I'm a size 39 and would like a black pair, then suggesting I try a blue size 36 is not helpful. But thank you.

Buses run in all weathers, roads are built for buses, roads have proper bus lanes. Transport works because it has to. Respect for this country's awesome transport system – and renewed respect for London's incredibly complicated tube map.

If the MRT goes wrong, stand-in buses will immediately line up for the rescue, taking you straight to where you want to go.

Kids need travel cards, but then again travel is cheap. It's a balance.

Tapping on and off buses – inspired. Don't forget to do it, lah.

Four in a cab is cheaper than bus or MRT, which is why we do it so often. But if eight of us squeeze into a karaoke bus then it's not so much cheap as very loud.

There's an emergency runway on the way to Changi – all those flower beds in the middle of that last long stretch of PIE? Portable. Clever eh?

There is a reason that Changi is repeatedly voted best airport in the world, and that's because it is.

Palm trees and lianas, right there by the side of the pavement. Now that's what I call "hedge". A beach at the end of the tube. Yes, really.

Have you bothered going up East Coast Park? There's a huge long strip of blue water lapping the shores all the way up the southern coast of this country. Go check it out and remember that you live somewhere a.w.e.s.o.m.e.

Buy the tissues off the old man. It is his actual job #pensionless

Have you had your lunch? You must. Literally, it's essential, like in France.

I've yet to see (m)any homeless people. But I refer to the above point about tissue-vendors and old folk not having pensions. That said, the HDB system does seem to provide housing for all. Mind you, the choices aren't all gorgeous. Back and forth, back and forth my brain goes with all the looking-and-thinking.

Storms are like whirlwinds, whiteout in five minutes flat with all the palms bent sideways. Then twinkling and scorchio half an hour later, bonkers.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: lightning makes noises.

I'm so often called 'Lawson' that I now quite like it. Surname first, always.

This is Asia Lite, yes, but it's still Asia and you're not in Kansas anymore. Respect the differences.

Great view? Cherish it, they'll probably start a load of building work tomorrow.

On the construction plus side, the lifts usually work.

As for expat friends, get close if you want, but they might be gone in six months.

Singapore is very far from England. Still.