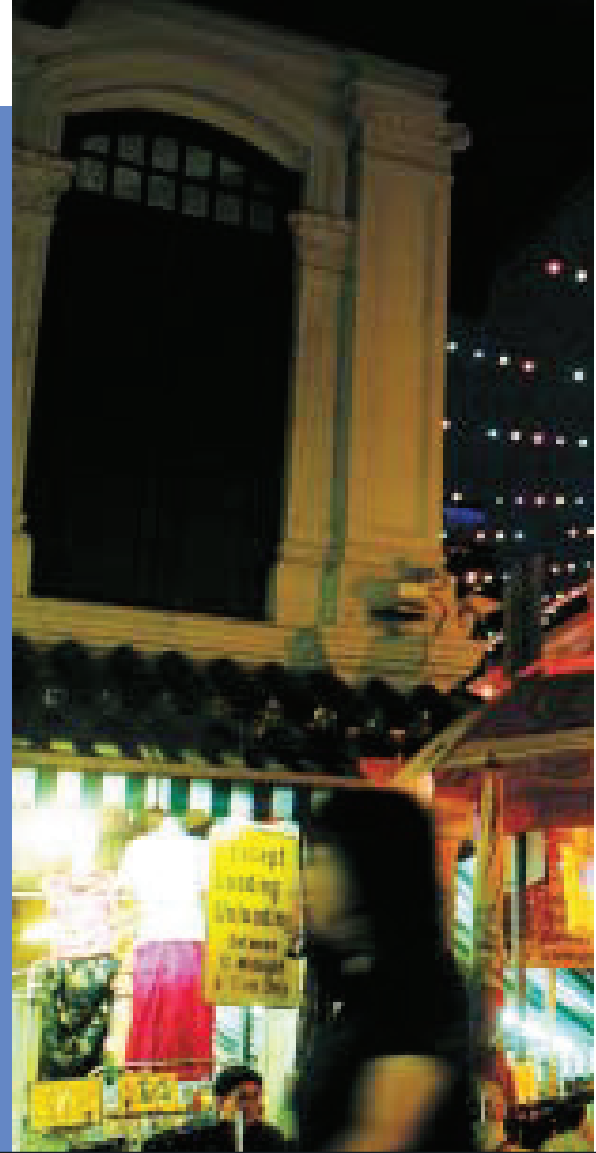


In Singapore, few places evoke a greater sense of place or identity than Chinatown. Its appeal is as myriad as the fascinating nuggets of history that dot the area. With its high concentration of original shophouses — some dating as far back as 1840, but restored to their original glory — you can't help but be brought back to the past.



chinatown



SOUTH BRIDGE ROAD



CHINATOWN

central

53



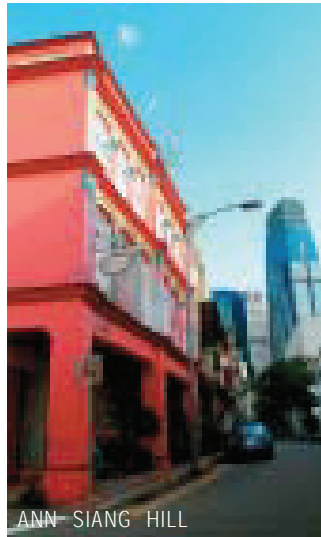
SRI MARIAMMAN TEMPLE

explore

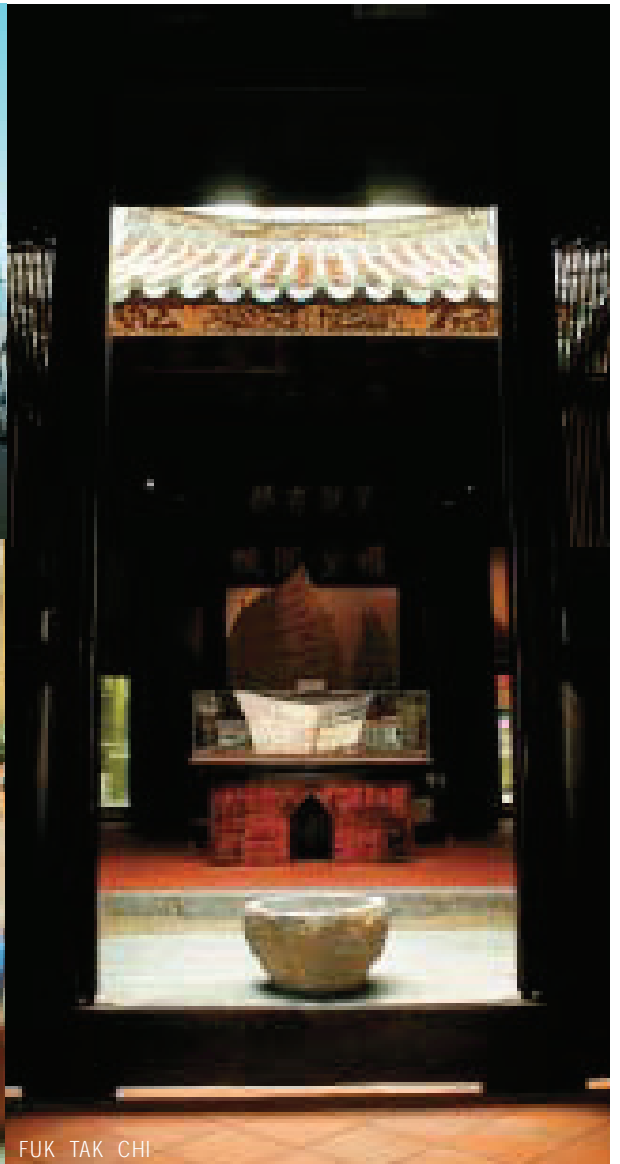
There really is no ideal spot to start your explorations of this very old quarter of Singapore. At every corner, temples and mosques rub shoulders with old Chinese herbalists; labyrinthine lanes turn off into more lanes, each exuding an almost perceptible aura of age and long-forgotten secrets of the original inhabitants who sailed from

Southern India, Canton, Foochow and Hainan while intricately-carved eaves shelter modern PR agency offices and another turn might bring you to a bazaar of stalls and restaurants. The triangle bordered by Bukit Pasoh, Kreta Ayer, Telok Ayer and Tanjong Pagar should keep you happily engaged for days with its lovingly-restored homes,

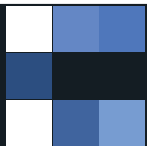
aromatic restaurants and numerous shops selling knick-knacks and religious icons for use in various religious festivals. Start with the eye-poppingly dramatic **Sri Mariamman Temple** (244 South Bridge Road). This Hindu temple with its colourful entrance tower was built in 1843 in homage to its namesake goddess and is Singapore's oldest. While you're on the stretch, visit the elegant **Jamae Mosque** (218 South Bridge Road) with its slender pagoda-inspired minarets. Telok Ayer Street is the site of the grand Hokkien Taoist **Thian Hock Keng Temple** and the **Nagore Durgha Shrine**. Across the road at **Far East Square** is **Fuk Tak Chi** — Singapore's first Chinese temple — built in 1825 and today fully restored and turned into a museum. While you're in the area, wander around



ANN SIANG HILL



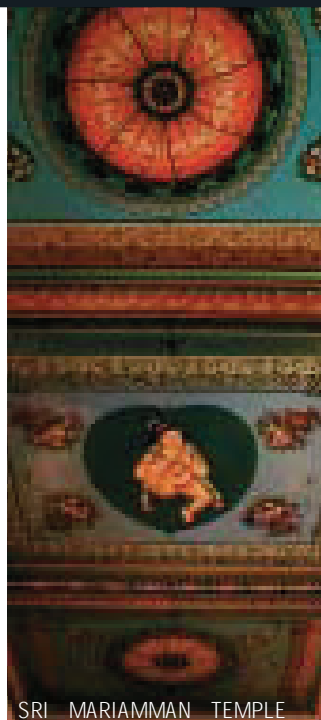
FUK TAK CHI



SOUTH BRIDGE RD/PAGODA ST

the square's heritage spots which are cleverly blended in with the surrounding bars, restaurants and offices.

For a realistic snapshot of what life in the 'good old days' was like, head for the **Chinatown Heritage Centre** (46 Pagoda Street), which recreates with startling authenticity the cramped and dark living quarters of the early immigrants.



SRI MARIAMMAN TEMPLE



shop

From traditional medicine to handicrafts and souvenirs, there's no end to what you can pick up in Chinatown.

Eu Yan Sang (269 South Bridge Road) stocks a wide range of traditional Chinese herbal tonics and medicines including exotic powdered pearls, ginseng and soups for every kind of ailment — and then some. For lacquer ware and exotic beauty treatments, **Temple Street** is a good bet while the shop at 52 Smith Street stocks every imaginable kind of condiment and sauce for Chinese cooking. Over at **Chinatown**



chinatown

55

Complex on Trengganu Street, wander through its maze of corridors and you could well chance upon the wet market where there are stalls selling frogs and snakes; as well as shops stocking CDs, computer games, mahjong sets and clothes. **Sago Street** has rattan mats and a furniture restorer.



eat

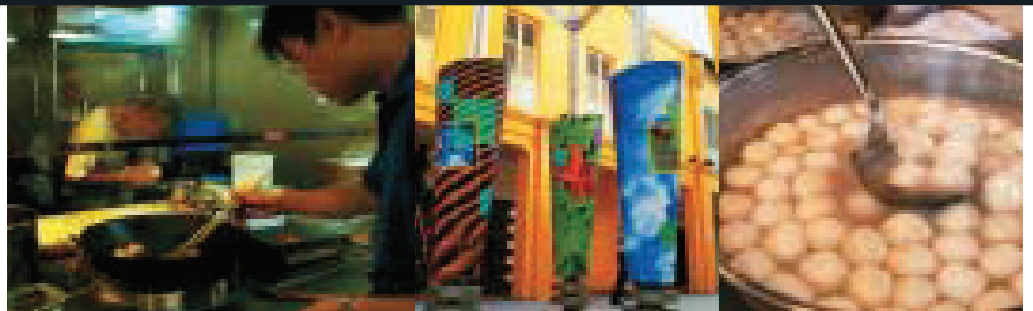
It comes as no surprise that Chinatown fairly bursts at its seams with eating places.

Chinatown Food Street (Smith Street) offers, among others, authentic Cantonese, Peranakan and Teochew hawker fare in air-conditioned comfort and *al fresco* dining, while the recently-renovated **Maxwell Road Food Centre** still offers some of the best peanut pancakes, *hum chim peng* Hainanese curry rice, fish head *bee hoon* and peanut soup around. Ann Siang Hill has wonderful fishhead soup at **Damenlou Hotel** while a block



SMITH ST/MAXWELL RD/CLUB ST

down, **Club Street** has an unusually high concentration of fine dining ranging from Californian to French *faïe grasto* South American roasts and oven-baked pizzas. If you're after something a little more low-key, **China Square Food Centre** is a massive four-storey food court with everything from *nasi padang* to *dim sum*.



- 1 Chinatown Heritage Centre
- 2 Jamee Mosque
- 3 Sri Mariamman Temple
- 4 Eu Yan Sang
- 5 Damenlou Hotel
- 6 Maxwell Rd Food Centre
- 7 Thian Hock Keng Temple
- 8 Nagore Durgha Shrine
- 9 Fuk Tak Chi
- 10 Eateries

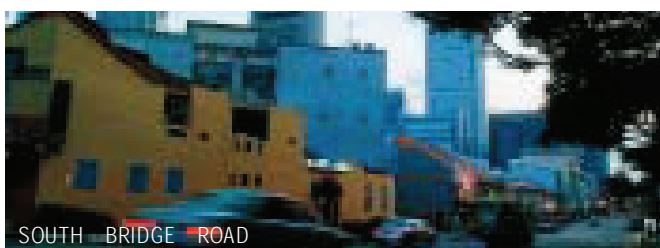


getting there

Chinatown is a five to 15-minute walk from Raffles or Outram MRT Stations, depending on your destination. The Chinatown MRT Station was recently completed and will open next year.

trivia

Did you know that South Bridge Road was built in 1833 and is the oldest street in Chinatown? Also, before Telok Ayer Bay was reclaimed in 1887, Telok Ayer Street ran along the shoreline.



SOUTH BRIDGE ROAD

