

Tips to feeling more like a local when studying abroad <http://tinyurl.com/y9b9lf3>

As a student studying abroad in a foreign city, you obviously would like to see all the tourist hot spots. You definitely want to learn and see all the things that attracted you to pick that city. But where there are tourist attractions, there are lots of tourists. Often doing things and activities that the locals do gives you the student more insight into the people and culture of the city in which you are temporarily a member. The following are easy (and cheap!) ways to immerse yourself into the city you are learning in.

1. Get a newspaper. Just like papers that circulate here, there are sections dedicated to telling the reader what entertainment is happening for the week i.e. shows, local bands playing in parks, flea markets, etc. Many of these things are free or relatively cheap.

There are two free news papers in Singapore handed out daily at MRT stations that give a good overview of the local news and happenings:

- **Today**
- **My Paper**

The Straits Times can be purchased at almost every street corner for less than S\$2, and provide a more extended overview of happenings, concerts, cinemas etc.

2. Ride public transit. Taxis are not only expensive, but they offer little interaction. Hop on a bus and just ride its route. You can not only people watch and observe, but you also can see a lot of the city that you might not have seen otherwise. The public transport system in Singapore is very highly developed, and you can easily get to any part of the island.\$

By Bus

- Singapore's buses run very frequently, are inexpensive and provide a good amount of comfort during travel (some even have TV's). For information on routes and times go to: www.sbstransit.com.sg or www.smrt.com.sg

By Subway and Light Rail

- The Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) is the easiest way to travel throughout Singapore. The subways and light rails run from about 5:30am to Midnight. Information on the routes and timetables can be found at www.smrt.com.sg

For a overview of all public transport services offered in Singapore including suggested itineraries please visit: www.publictransport.com.sg

3. Shop at the local markets. In the local markets, many non branded apparels as well as local delicacies and very affordable fruit and vegetables can be found. These local markets can be found everywhere in the city. Check in area for the nearest market.

For cheap shopping – go where the locals go: City Plaza, near Paya Lebar MRT station.

4. Eat food from a street vendor. Food from street vendors may sound questionable, but it is often quite delicious. Do be cautious though, and wait until you have fully adjusted to local cuisine before trying street vendor food. Use your best judgment!

Visit Lau Pasat food court in the middle of the CBD on Sundays for Satays (Malay dish: skewed meat, BBQ'ed and served with peanut sauce)

Or try the very popular Chinese dish, Chicken Rice, which can be found in every food court and hawker center. Ask the locals for recommendations for the best one.

5. Walk and wander. Though riding public transit is part of the experience, walking is an adventure all in itself. You will come across a variety of shops, eateries, clubs, etc. You will find things you did not know existed. As well as discovering hidden treasures, exploration will help you better acquaint yourself to the city. In no time, you will be able to easily find your way around town and may even be comfortable enough to give directions to others. Then you will really feel like a local and less like a tourist or visitor.

Good spots to visit:

- Bishan Park
- East Coast Park: For an active day. Reasonable priced hire of rollerblades and bikes.
- Chinese Garden: For a glimpse of Chinese culture and architecture. Located by Chinese Garden MRT station on the Green Line

These are just five simple actions you as a student can do to “fit-in” and learn about everyday life for locals in the city you are studying abroad in. These are cheap and easily accommodating ways to feel like a local on a student budget. When not popping around the city with a camera, take a break and do as the locals do.