

Insider Guide: Best of Singapore

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Singapore is all about the new -- like Gardens by the Bay's 18 "Supertrees," vertical gardens covered in bromeliads, ferns and tropical flowering climbers.

(CNN)—What Singapore lacks in size, it goes out of its way to make up for in everything else.

The global traveler is hard pressed to find a cleaner, more welcoming city.

But everyone knows that.

Far more exciting is that Singapore has cast off its reputation as "Asia Lite" to become one of the region's top destinations for eating, shopping and entertainment.

Got a few days? This handy guide will show you the way to the best of Singapore.

Hotels

Luxury

Marina Bay Sands

Dining

Pollen

Pollen isn't a typical fine dining experience.

This new Singapore restaurant by Gordon Ramsay protégé Jason Atherton sits in a climate-controlled environment in one of the world's coolest venues -- Gardens by the Bay.

In fact, it's the only restaurant in the spectacular dome.

Pollen serves Mediterranean-inspired modern European cuisine.

The setting is ace; diners are surrounded by olive trees, herbs and vegetation, complete with a sub-20 C temperature, allowing diners to escape the Singapore heat and humidity.

This is one of Atherton's four ventures in Singapore -- he also has a tapas bar, Esquina, British-inspired snack bar Keong Saik Snacks and its neighbor, password-only cocktail bar The Library -- and offers classics from his acclaimed flagship Pollen Street Social in London.

POLLEN | Flower Dome, Gardens by the Bay 18
Marina Gardens Drive #01-09, Singapore 018953
Singapore | +65 6604 9988

See TripAdvisor
reviews and photos

Based on 419 reviews

VIEW 

Maxwell Food Center

Newly renovated, Maxwell is a great option for cheap eats if you're near Chinatown or want to squeeze in a quick meal before heading to the nearby bars.

Maxwell is famous for several stalls, chiefly Tian Tian Chicken Rice (#01-10/111), which is among the best Hainanese style chicken rice found in Singapore.

Other stalls to try are Jin Hua Sliced Fish Beehoon (#01-77), serving a soupy sliced fish noodle dish in milk broth, and the Amoy Food Centre Fried Kway Teow Stall (#01-01) famed for its "wok hei."

The center is open 24 hours a day, but after 10 p.m. only select stalls remain open.

Best of all, the stalls and restaurants don't charge "tourist" prices; a meal will cost around S\$2-\$5.

Maxwell Road Hawker Centre | 1 Kadayannallur St,
Singapore 069184 Singapore

See TripAdvisor
reviews and photos

Based on 1049 reviews

VIEW 

Cocotte



Cocotte promotes communal dining. Problem is, you're not going to want to share.

Cocotte hasn't been around for long, but it's already one of the city's best places for French cuisine.

Set in Singapore's Wanderlust boutique hotel near Little India, Cocotte promotes communal dining -- that is to say you'll be sharing large portions.

The roast chicken is a standout; marinated for two days the meat barely even needs the gravy -- the thickness and flavor is measured by the levels of guilt you'll feel for eating so much of it.

<p>Cocotte 2 Dickson Street, Singapore Singapore +65 6298 1188</p>	<p>See TripAdvisor reviews and photos  Based on 79 reviews</p>	<p>VIEW </p>
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Jumbo Seafood Restaurant

Jumbo Seafood's chili crab is a best of Singapore experience.

Engage any Singaporean in a conversation about food and two things will happen.

First, they'll talk your ear off -- food is the conversation topic of choice in the city.

Then they'll ask if you've tried chili crab, the island's unofficial national dish.

One of the top places to order this best of Singapore dish is Jumbo Seafood Restaurant.

As the name suggests, the menu includes plenty of other seafood dishes.

Also highly recommended are the razor clams and cereal prawns.

There are six Jumbo Seafood outlets in Singapore, but Riverside Point probably has the best view and setting -- outdoors, riverside.

<p>Jumbo Seafood Riverside 30 Merchant Road #01-01/02 Riverside Point #01-01/02, Singapore 058282 Singapore</p>	<p>See TripAdvisor reviews and photos  Based on 709 reviews</p>	<p>VIEW </p>
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Keisuke Tonkotsu King

Near the Tanjong Pagar MRT -- a neighborhood filled with museums and Korean barbecue eateries -- Keisuke Tonkotsu serves some of the best ramen in Singapore.

The line is often long -- a classic Singapore sign that the food is special.

This small restaurant serves customizable ramen of different styles.

Customers can choose how strong they want the flavor -- first timers might want to consider going with the "medium" option, as Keisuke's ramen really has a kick.

<p>Keisuke Tonkotsu King 1 Tras Street #01-19 Orchid Hotel, Singapore Singapore +65 6636 0855</p>	<p>See TripAdvisor reviews and photos  Based on 43 reviews</p>	<p>VIEW </p>
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Red House Seafood Restaurant

Lightly battered, then deep-fried and coated in a blend of milk, butter and kaffir leaves.

Located in upscale Robertson Quay, Red House serves some of the best seafood in the area.

Next to the river, Red House offers Chinese-style dining at round tables -- great for group meals but not necessarily for intimate moments.

For seaside dining, there's also a Red House branch at East Coast.

Red House Seafood Restaurant, #01-14 The Quayside, 60 Robertson Quay; moderate; +65 6735 7666; moderate

[Red House Seafood Restaurant, Robertson Quay 60, 238252 Singapore, Singapore 238252 Singapore; +65 6735 7666](#)

Forest

After a break from the culinary scene, local celebrity chef Sam Leong has made a comeback by way of Forest, a Thai-accented modern Chinese restaurant on the ground level of the Equarius Hotel.

Open for dinner only, Leong's Discovery Menu wows with haute Chinese creations such as pan-seared foie gras with smoked duck breast on homemade crispy bean curd skin.

[Forest, Lobby, Equarius Hotel, Resorts World Sentosa, Sentosa Island Singapore; +65 6577 7788](#)

Stellar/1-Altitude

The view from Stellar takes in Marina Bay Sands, the Singapore Flyer and East Coast Park.

The food at Stellar is top-notch and well presented, but you're mainly paying for the incredible view and atmosphere.

The food is described as "modern cuisine focusing on artisanal methods of preparation."

Window seats are a hot ticket, so reservations are recommended.

At 282 meters, adjoining 1-Altitude is the world's highest al fresco bar -- for now, at least.

[Stellar/1-Altitude, 1 Raffles Place; +65 6438 0410](#)

Nox -- Dine in the Dark

One of the island's more creative culinary concepts, not only do you eat in the dark, you're also prevented from bringing to the table anything that emits light (i.e., no mobile phone).