

### **Tipping**

Tipping is not usually practiced in Singapore. A 10% Service Charge is added at most restaurants and hotels, as well as bars and nightclubs. No extra tipping is expected.

### **Forms of Greeting**

People should be met with a hand shake, followed by a giving and receiving of a business card using both hands. Ensure that you look at the business card before putting it away. Punctuality is essential for business and social meetings, which may take place at any location, formal or relaxed.

### **Local Phrases**

Four languages are widespread in Singapore, these being Malay, English, Mandarin and Tamil, though Malay is the national language. The official business language is English. Most Singaporeans have a good understanding of English, and have developed a form of communication called Singlish, based on English with Cantonese, Hokkien and Malay dialects. Here are a few words of Singlish which you may hear in Singapore:

Alamak!      exclaiming disbelief or frustration  
Heng            good luck  
Inggrish      English  
Kiasu          afraid of being left out / left behind  
Kopi tiam     a coffee shop  
Lah            an ending to any phrase or sentence to create emphasis  
Looksee      have a look around  
Shack         tired  
Shiok         very good  
Steady lah    a way of passing on praise to someone

### **Dress Code**

Due to the extreme heat and humidity in Singapore, casual clothes that provide plenty of air circulation are acceptable, preferably made from natural fibres. Businessmen, for example, commonly wear a short-sleeved shirt and slacks, with or without a tie. The more exclusive bars and restaurants may not allow shorts, singlets or running shoes to be worn inside.

### **Local Customs**

If you visit a temple or mosque, please act in a respectful manner, wear the appropriate clothing and always remember to remove your shoes when entering either a mosque or Hindu temple. Do not eat with your left hand, as it is considered unclean.

Singapore is one of the safest cities in the world. However, there are strict laws against jaywalking, littering and spitting to name but three. There are also tight laws on where you can and can't smoke. These are usually well signed but in general it is illegal to smoke on public transport, in government offices, cinemas, air-conditioned restaurants and in shopping centres.

It is polite to ask permission before taking photographs of people or taking pictures in temples or mosques. Try to take outside photographs in the early morning or late evening - the light is much better and you won't get the colours washed out due to the bright sun.