



Faces of Chinatown

The colourful past of Chinatown comes alive within the walls of three beautifully-restored shophouses, comfortably nestled in the midst of Singapore's bustling Chinatown district.

Every nook and cranny in the Chinatown Heritage Centre pulsates with the memories of yesteryear, offering an experience like no other, as one is transported to Chinatown in the budding years of Singapore's establishment as a seaport.

From the desperate hopefulness of the many *sinkheh* (migrants) risking life and limb to embark on an arduous journey from various Chinese provinces to the promised land of Singapore, to the raw, seedy and underground practices of gambling dens and secret societies, be prepared to experience a sense of nostalgia and sentimentality as you step into the pages of Chinatown's history.

每种面貌背后都有个故事。
每个故事都希望有人来聆听。
踏一步回到从前，重温以往的回忆及未说的故事。

Level 1

Discover the circumstances that forced early migrants to look for greener pastures overseas. Understand the torrid conditions that early settlers underwent to arrive safely in *Nanyang*, a place perceived to be filled with gold.

Level 2

Walk through these corridors of destitution, beginning from their arrival on the shores of Singapore, and how they struggled to make ends meet. The dark and dim settings of this gallery serve as a reminder of the hardships many of them faced.

Level 3

Showcasing the 'golden years' of Chinatown, the galleries paint a bright and colourful picture of life in the early 50s, much in contrast to that of Level 2. Here, find out about the bustling activities and trades that were prevalent in Chinatown and take a peek into life in Chinatown, through the eyes of former residents.

牛车水的面貌

每种面貌背后都有个故事。每个故事都希望有人来聆听。踏一步回到从前，瞧瞧这些照片，体验早期殖民者为了维持生计而天天面对的挣扎。座落于宝塔街三间重修得非常美丽的店屋的牛车水原貌馆保存着许多从前的回忆和未说的故事。您可在这发掘许多千里迢迢冒险来新加坡的殖民者的秘密及纪事。

如果这些店屋及房间会说话，它们会说出怎样的故事？前来倾听吧，跨入殖民者勇于探索未知世界以及探讨牛车水所隐藏的良机与秘密的时代。

博物馆咨询：
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宝塔街48号，新加坡059207
电话：6-33-TOURS (86877)
电邮：chc@ducktours.com.sg
www.chinatownheritagecentre.sg



The Singapore Heritage Restaurant

Located at the ground floor of the Chinatown Heritage Centre, it delivers a rich and colourful menu that is an innovative take on the traditional flavours of Singapore. Fill your tummies as Chef Alvin Koh, Singapore's renowned Porridge King, takes you on a gastronomic journey of Neo-Asian Fusion Cuisine. Restaurant opens daily from 10 am to 10 pm. Reservations: 6-22-540-24



Visitor Centre

Tourist information is available at the Visitor Centre located at the lobby of Chinatown Heritage Centre. Tour reservations and transfers are available for the tours and attractions. Please approach service desk for assistance.

- Original Singapore DUCKtours
- Singapore Sightseeing Pass
- The Singapore Pass
- HIPPO Citysightseeing
- HIPPO River Cruises
- Sentosa Saver Packages
- Singapore Flyer Packages
- Universal Studio Packages
- Night Safari, Zoo, Birdpark
- Underwater World



For more information please call our Guest Hotline at 6-33-TOURS (86877) or visit www.singaporeDUCKtours.com

Visitor Information

Location

48 Pagoda Street, Singapore 059207

Opening Hours

Daily: 9 am to 8 pm. Last admission before 7pm

Admission Charges

Adult: \$10. Child(3-12 years): \$6
School and group discounts available upon application

Wheelchair Friendly

Wheelchair / stroller friendly with lift facilities for physically challenged and elderly visitors.

Food & Beverage

Singapore Heritage Restaurant
Tel: 6-22-54024

Venue Rental & Visitor Services

Tel: (65) 6-22-19556 (for centre information)
Tel: (65) 6-33-TOURS (868-77) (for group / corporate bookings)
Email: chc@ducktours.com.sg, website: www.chinatownheritagecentre.sg

Centre Visitor Etiquette

- Smoking is not permitted within the centre premises.
- Food and beverage is not permitted within the centre.
- Photography without flash, and videography are permitted with handheld cameras. Special photography / filming sessions require special permission. Please contact 6-33-868-77.
- Please turn your phone to silent mode and use your mobile phones outside the centre.

Go Green. Help us to Recycle. Do return this Visitor Guide to our front desk at the end of your visit.



The Chinatown Heritage Centre
is managed by
DUCK&HIPPO
www.singaporeDUCKtours.com

Information is accurate at time of print.



Visitor Guide

"Every face has a story to tell and every story seeks to be heard"

1

Leaving for Nanyang

In the late 1800s, Chinese began arriving in Singapore in large numbers. They were drawn to 'Nanyang' (Southeast Asia) because of the promise of jobs and a brighter future. Their hopes were to earn money for their families, and save up enough to return home.



2

Arrival

Depending on the winds, it could take a few weeks to a few months to reach Singapore. Not surprisingly, due to very bad conditions onboard, many died even before they set foot here.



3

Roots

Many of the migrants (*sinkheh*) who came to this foreign land were of different dialect groups and they specialised in different trades. The wall of words, as shown on the right, showcases the root of common surnames in China.



4

Clans

The need for mutual support and collective culture in a foreign land resulted in the emergence of clan associations. They were formed based on dialect groups, surnames, occupations or places of origin. The clan association was the centre of life for the migrants.



5

Vices

Life in early Singapore was lonely and hard. Many turned to drinking, gambling, brothels and opium smoking to forget their troubles. Opium was the downfall of many as they lost everything to their addiction, including their dreams to return to China.



6

Food Culture

As the lives of the *sinkheh* prospered, so did Chinatown. This teahouse is a replica of Da Dong Tea House the way it used to be in the 1950s to 60s. It was a veritable landmark and has since reopened at the corner of Smith Street.

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Festivals

Chinatown is normally abuzz with life and colour during the festive seasons. Gods and legends are remembered and celebrated; stories of motherly sacrifice, filial piety, justice and retribution fill the days of the year.



8

Civil History

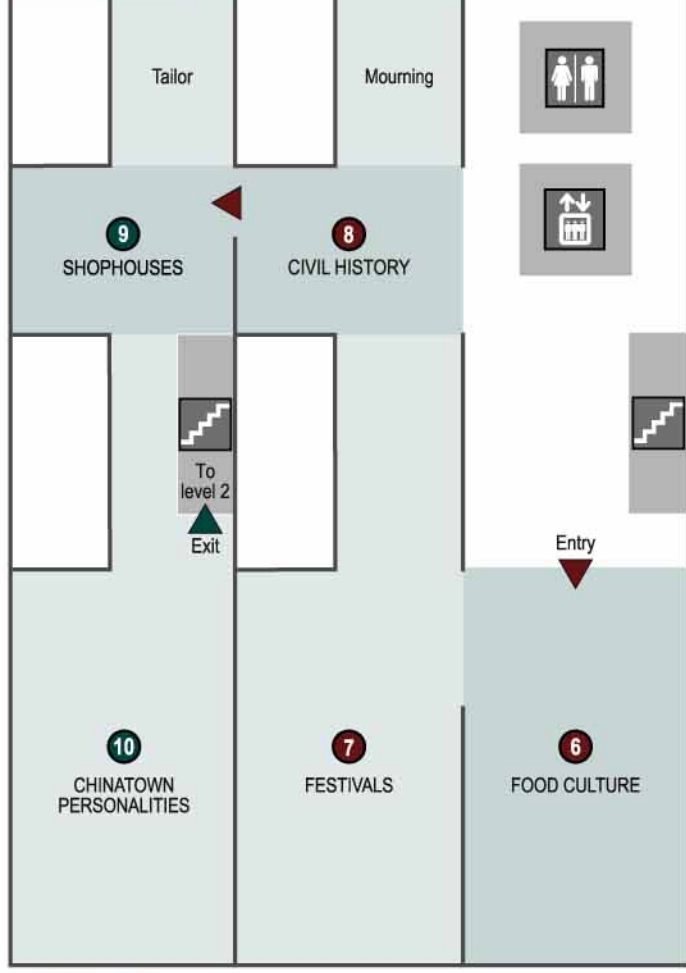
Many different races were residing in the Chinatown area, making Chinatown culturally diverse and unique. Various places of worship were also located in close proximity to one another. These races learned to live in harmony with understanding and respect.



Fortune Telling

A kind of fortune teller frequently found in the older days relied on a little bird to read the future. He would decipher the meaning of cards that the bird picked out to tell one's fortune. There was no fixed price for fortune telling; patrons paid any amount they wished.

Level 3



9

Shophouses

The 'shophouse' is unique to Singapore and parts of Malacca. Businesses were ran on the ground floor and families stayed on the floors above. There were as many as 8 cubicles on each floor and its tenants would share the kitchen, toilet and water facilities.



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Chinatown Personalities

In the creation of the CHC, many early residents of Chinatown were interviewed. Ahead of you is what we call the Personalities Gallery. You will hear the personal stories told by a former *samsui* woman, hawker, dessert seller, seamstress, tailor and the son of philanthropist, Eu Tong Sen.



Ant Traps

Bowls filled with water would be placed at the base of cabinets storing food to prevent crawling insects like ants from getting into the cabinet.

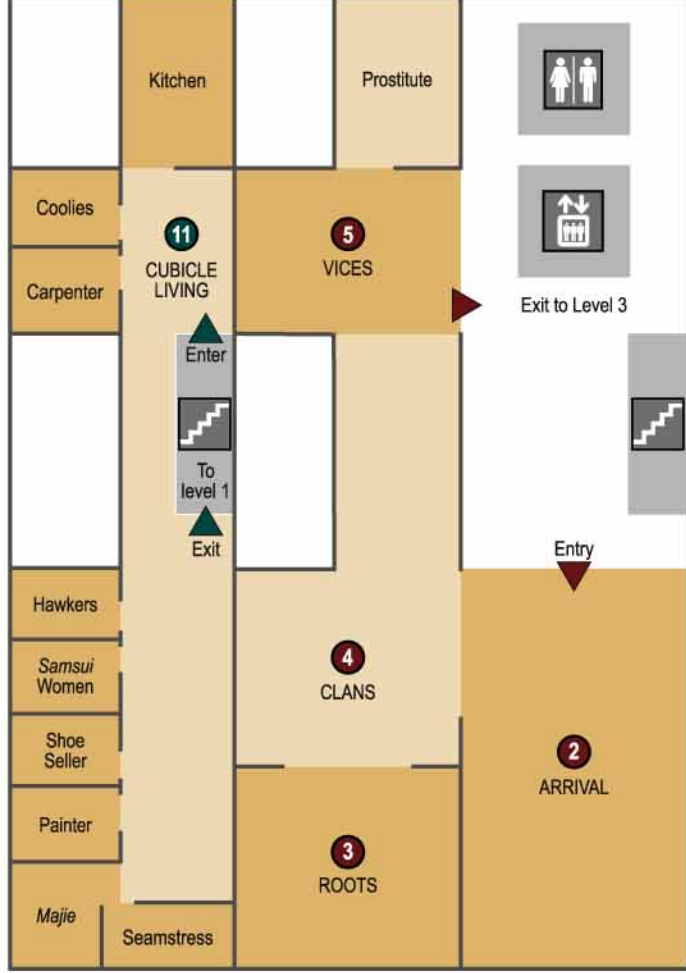
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Cubicle Living

On this floor is an authentic recreation of the living quarters of unit 50, Pagoda Street. The cubicles were made so authentic that former residents could not believe their eyes when they stepped inside for the first time.



Level 2



Coolies: A young group of coolies occupied this cubicle, which also doubled up as an opium den. It was said that a fire started here because of a careless opium smoker.



Samsui Women: A group of thrifty women shared this small little cubicle. These women, in their characteristic red headgear - a common sight at construction sites - were adept at carrying heavy loads, being tough and hardworking. They pledged to celibate for life.



Shoe Seller: Ah Nghoh Chieh was a clog maker who lived alone in this tiny room. With all her wares packed tightly in the room, there is barely enough space for her. Every morning, Nghoh Chieh would drag her sacks of shoes down the narrow stairs and sell them along the five-foot-way.

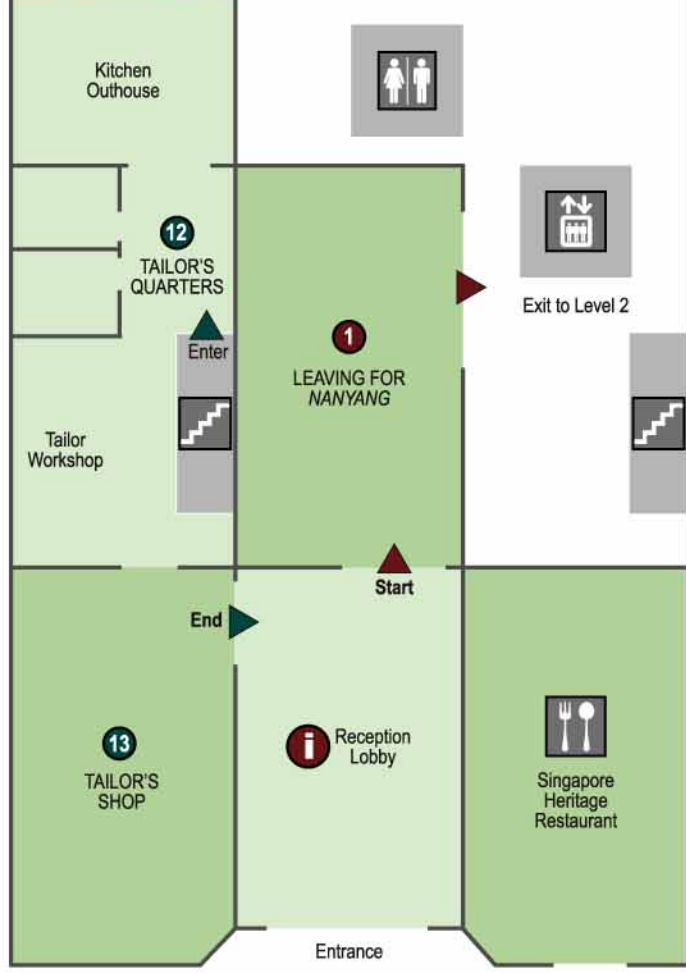


Majie: A group of 4 or 5 *majies* rented this cubicle. They are white-and-black uniformed housemaids who lived with their employers. *Majies*, like the *Samsui* women, were pledged to celibacy. They served mainly the British and rich Chinese.



Seamstress: This cubicle has been recreated from the recollections of See Cheng, a former seamstress. The immigrants in the early days were often single and their torn clothing was mended repeatedly by the roadside seamstress for a small fee.

Level 1



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Tailor's Quarters

More affluent than the other occupants in the building, the tailor had his own rooms - one held his family and the other, his apprentices. He had his own kitchen and an airwell. One can see from the living space that the line between work and family living is often blurred.



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Tailor's Workshop & Shop

Behind the shop front lies the main workshop, where assistants carried out sewing, ironing and other miscellaneous work. This shop on the ground floor of the shophouse is a replica of the many tailor shops that used to line Pagoda Street.



Legend
Information & Ticketing (i icon)
Stairs (stairs icon)
Lift (lift icon)
Restaurant (fork and knife icon)
Restroom (restroom icon)