

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

The National Museum of Singapore presents two showcases that trace our nation’s evolving identity through the lenses of travel and food

- *The National Museum’s new, immersive travel-themed showcase titled **Now Boarding: Experiencing Singapore through Travel, 1800s–2000s** explores Singapore as a popular travel destination*
- *The museum’s signature **Children’s Season 2023** also returns to give young visitors a glimpse into the transformation of Singapore’s rich food culture over the years*

Singapore, 22 May 2023 – The National Museum of Singapore presents two of its newest showcases that will explore the development of Singapore’s identity through one of Singaporeans’ favourite pastimes, travelling, as well as our passion for food! Visitors can look forward to the special exhibition ***Now Boarding: Experiencing Singapore through Travel, 1800s–2000s*** which opens on 27 May, and the annual family favourite, Children’s Season at the National Museum, as it returns this year with ***Get Curious! All About Food***.



A thematic experience inspired by a travel guidebook to Destination Singapore

2 The exhibition ***Now Boarding, Experiencing Singapore through Travel, 1800s–2000s*** offers perspectives about Singapore as a popular destination for travellers across two centuries, through the eyes of those who arrived at our shores from past to present. Set against the backdrop of Singapore’s colonial past and its post-independence decades up to the present, it takes visitors through a specially curated selection of close to 600 material culture and visual

icons ranging from postcards, posters and prints, to travel paraphernalia and everyday objects that explore the way Singapore has presented itself – and been presented – to the world over the years.

3 Chung May Khuen, Director of the National Museum of Singapore, said, “With travel coming back into focus after the pandemic, this is a timely opportunity to present a travel-themed exhibition that explores Singapore’s identity through our role as a travel hub, and how this has evolved through the centuries. Using travel as a focal point provides a platform for us to connect visitors, both locals and tourists, to their own personal memories of travel to and within Singapore, and to create a stronger appreciation of our place in the world.”



Changi Airport Terminal 2 flight information display flip board. Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

4 The exhibition’s travel-inspired experience starts the moment visitors step into the museum, as they are first greeted by the iconic Changi Airport flight information display flip board at the museum’s Rotunda. Standing close to 5.3m tall, the flip board is being displayed publicly for the first time since it was donated to Singapore’s National Collection by the Changi Airport Group in 2020. As part of the National Museum’s Collecting Contemporary Singapore initiative, where objects and stories are acquired to record key milestones in Singapore’s history as and when they unfold, the flip board seeks to recreate the “flipping” function of the board and the departure experience at the airport that it was associated with. The customised message on the flip board invites visitors to “check-in” to receive a “boarding pass” to enter the exhibition and

discover its four key sections that are presented as “chapters” of a travel guidebook that revolve round the themes of transport, accommodation, food and beverage, sights and shopping.



Exhibition View of Getting Around. Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

5 The first section, **Getting Around**, explores Singapore’s reputation as a global hub via the different modes of international arrival, highlighting the island-city’s links to major shipping and aviation routes in the world throughout its history. This section also features the various means of domestic transport that both tourists and locals took to get around Singapore over the years. Visitors will be greeted by colourful travel posters and travel brochures from the early 20th century that painted Singapore as part of the exotic Far East, while personal artefacts offer an intimate glimpse into the travels of those who made their way here via land, sea or rail. From the rickshaws and trishaws that populated the streets of Singapore for almost five decades since the late 19th century, to the modern Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) system, the section also outlines the evolution of Singapore’s local transport system that has become known for its convenience and efficiency. As a global travel hub, Singapore’s connections to the world are best represented by our national carrier Singapore Airlines (SIA), arguably the nation’s most renowned brand ambassador. In addition to other SIA-related artefacts, be sure not to miss the display of SIA’s iconic first-generation Suites cabin seat from its A380 aircraft, which was added to the National Collection last year.



Exhibition View of Places to Stay. Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

6 **Places to Stay** investigates how the various accommodation offerings in Singapore shaped travellers' impressions of the island-city. The grand dame Raffles Hotel plays a prominent role in this section as it demonstrates how hotels in the early 20th century propagated romanticised visions of Singapore as the “Exotic East”, represented by its iconic doorman uniform still in use today. Fast forward to present day, where world-class hotels such as the Marina Bay Sands (MBS) distinguish us as a global city, with unique offerings catered to the experience-driven traveller. Visitors can explore MBS through its association with *Crazy Rich Asians*, a Hollywood film that sparked criticism from Singaporeans for its presentation of Singapore as a glamorous, opulent playground for the rich. Visitors may also scan their “boarding passes” here to hear some lounge music as they explore the objects and stories, with another station that can be accessed in the Sights and Shopping section.



Exhibition View of Eating Out. Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

7 As described by a *Lonely Planet* guide to Singapore, our love for food is something of an obsession. The next section, **Eating Out**, captures the wide range of food options in our culinary landscape, which reflects our culturally diverse yet cosmopolitan nature that is best exemplified by our ubiquitous hawker culture. Visitors in this section will discover a range of kitchen utensils and tools used by hawkers past and present, complemented by an array of *kopitiam* cups, drinking glasses, soft drink bottles and advertisement trays that were a common sight in coffeeshops from the 1950s to the 2000s. These items typically featured the brands of popular beverages, including homegrown ones such Fraser & Neave (F&N) and Tiger Beer. A series of photographs and postcards featuring itinerant hawkers and hawker stalls document the evolution of hawkers in Singapore, while an assortment of restaurant menus from the 1950s to 2000s offering a diverse range of international and multicultural cuisine is testament to the vibrancy of Singapore's food and beverage landscape. Using an interactive touch screen, visitors can also browse through the pages of each restaurant menu, which includes those of iconic restaurants such as Allen & Wright Family Restaurant (A&W), which was the first fast food chain to open in Singapore.



Exhibition View of Sights and Shopping. Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

8 Finally, **Sights and Shopping** introduces visitors to the various attractions, entertainment, and retail offerings that make our nation a fun and vibrant lifestyle destination. From past Singapore Tourism Board posters with catchy taglines to memorabilia from Zouk (one of Singapore's most internationally renowned nightlife hotspots), and souvenirs that highlight Singapore's architectural and visual icons, this section depicts the plethora of sights and

entertainment experiences that visitors have included in their itineraries from the late 19th century until today. It explores how some sights have endured, while others have lost ground in land-scarce Singapore, a city-state which also has a penchant for change and novelty. Just as the list of things to see and do has increased with time, they have also been packaged and marketed with increasing savviness and refreshed through the years. This section also underscores how Singapore's greenery, multiculturalism and modernity continue to be aspects of her identity touted with pride.

9 As part of the exhibition experience, visitors are invited to reflect on how Singapore has been portrayed over the years, and to contribute their personal impressions of our home through digital kiosks located within the gallery. Visitors can also look forward to the nostalgic experience of sharing their travel stories with their loved ones through a postcard-writing activity. A limited-edition postcard – reproduced from the National Museum's collection with the original on display within the exhibition – is available with a donation to the museum. These postcards can be sent to anywhere in the world via the Singapore Post mailbox outside the exhibition gallery. Visitors can also play an accompanying *Now Boarding* mobile game that introduces the exhibition and its themes. Players who successfully complete the game may also redeem a bonus digital gift.



Disco pop-up room. Photo courtesy of National Museum of Singapore.

10 The fun doesn't end here! Throughout the exhibition period, visitors can also explore complementary pop-up rooms around the museum's spaces that further bring some of the elements in the showcase to life. This highly immersive experience will be launched in two phases, with a disco-themed room opening in end-May featuring an interactive that invites

visitors to dance along, while two other transportation and hotel-themed rooms will be introduced later in August together with a theatrical audio tour. There will also be complementary programming catered to different audiences throughout the exhibition period. More information can be found in **Annex B**.

Whetting the younger audiences' appetite for fun and learning



11 Jointly opening to the public within the same weekend is the museum's annual highly anticipated Children's Season, themed *All About Food*, exploring Singaporeans' favourite topic of food through intergenerational conversations and learning through play. Inspired by the Eating Out section of the *Now Boarding* exhibition, the series of interactive spaces and family-friendly on-site programmes will give young visitors a glimpse into our ever-evolving food identity from war times to present day, and illustrate how Singapore's diverse food offerings overlaps with the progress of our nation.

12 Featuring collaborations with different partners such as My First Skool, APSN Chaoyang School and 3Pumpkins, a socially-engaged arts organisation, *Get Curious! All About Food* will engage the thoughts and abilities of diverse groups of children. Chung May Khuen, Director of the National Museum of Singapore, said, "The interactive installations and programmes seek to evoke our community's shared experiences and memories around food to guide conversations and active discussions on the evolution of Singapore's food culture and cultural diversity, while

touching on topics of sustainability and science. We hope that these experiences will help connect audiences to one another through food as one of our favourite pastimes.”

Admission details and exclusive merchandise

13 Entry to the *Get Curious! All About Food* installation showcase is free for all, while some of the complementary programmes are ticketed. Visitors can head to the Children’s Season event webpage for the full details of the offerings. *Now Boarding* is free for Singaporeans and Singapore permanent residents. Visitors are encouraged to pre-book their museum admission tickets for this ticketed show ahead of their visit. For opening hours and ticketing details, please refer to **Annex A**. For more information, please visit go.gov.sg/nowboarding and go.gov.sg/nms-cs23 or the National Museum’s [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.

- **Annex A: Now Boarding: Experiencing Singapore through Travel, 1800s-2000s details**
- **Annex B: Pop-up rooms experience and complementary programming**
- **Annex C: Children’s Season: Get Curious! All About Food programming details**



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About the National Museum of Singapore

With a history dating back to 1887, the National Museum of Singapore is the nation's oldest museum with a progressive mind. Its galleries adopt multi-perspective ways of presenting history and culture to redefine the conventional museum experience, featuring its collection of artefacts that tell the stories of Singapore and the world. A cultural and architectural landmark in Singapore, the museum is home to thought-provoking exhibitions and hosts exciting events all year round including the Singapore Night Festival. The programming is supported by a wide range of facilities and services including F&B, retail, and a Resource Centre. The National Museum of Singapore re-opened in December 2006 after a three-year redevelopment. It refreshed its permanent galleries and re-opened them in September 2015 for Singapore's Golden Jubilee. In 2022, it celebrated its 135th anniversary. For more details, please visit www.nationalmuseum.sg.