

ABOUT ORCHARD ROAD

Orchard Road is a 2.2km one-way street located in the central region of Singapore and stretches from Tanglin Road / Grange Road to Dhoby Ghaut. Its underground infrastructure include underground pedestrian walkways connecting different malls, both beneath Orchard Road as well as other streets in the vicinity.

Orchard Road is the nation's top shopping, dining and entertainment hub. It is regularly visited by the local population as well as being a must-visit tourist attraction. The surrounding area is known colloquially as, 'Orchard'.

HISTORY

Although Orchard Road was already cut in the 1830s, the new road was not named in George Coleman's Map of Singapore. Then, the Orchard Road area was the scene of gambier and pepper plantations. Later, nutmeg plantations and fruit orchards dominated the area and were planted on either side of the thoroughfare, giving the street its name.

The spread of houses soon reached up to Tank Road by 1846. At that time, there were none on the left side and only about three or four houses past Tank Road on the right side of Orchard Road.

One major sight during this period was a certain Mr. Orchard tending his garden, which helped endorse the road's name. He had a garden and plantation at the corner of what is now Scotts Road and Orchard Road.

Towards the later part of the 1840s, graveyards began to appear along the road. By 1846, the Chinese had a large graveyard around what is now the Meritus Mandarin Hotel and Ngee Ann City, while the Sumatrans from Bencoolen had their burial ground where the current Grand Central Hotel stands. Later a Jewish cemetery (only demolished in 1984) was established and located at the current Dhoby Ghaut MRT Station site.

In the 1860s, Orchard Road had a great number of private houses and bungalows on hills looking down through the valley where the road ran. Early in the 1890s, His Majesty Somdetch Phra Paramindr Maha Chulalongkorn, the supreme King of Siam, acquired "Hurricane House" in the vicinity of Orchard Road through Tan Kim Ching, the Thai Consul in Singapore. Two further pieces of adjoining property were added later and these subsequently became the site of the present Royal Thai Embassy at 370 Orchard Road.

In 1900, much of Orchard Road was still a tree flanked dirt road. Commercial developments on this street only began early this century. On 30 March 1905, the Singapore Cold Storage opened their store to distribute food supplies. The Cold Storage Milk Bar, where The Centrepoin Shopping Centre stands today, was a popular hangout in the 1960s and offered ice-cream, cake and other refreshments.

From the 1930s, Orchard Road became the new social magnet for the colonial city. The popular Orchard Market where Cuppage Plaza now sits, between Cuppage Road and Koek Road, provided fresh produce for residents until the mid-1960s.

In 1958, C.K. Tang Department store opened, and was a prominent landmark with its Chinese styled roof. Because Orchard Road lies in a depression, floods were very common in the area up to the 1950s and 1960s when the widening and deepening of canals allowed for an outflow through Stamford Canal. Open sections of the canal can be seen behind former Specialists' and Tanglin Shopping Centres. The trendy Fitzpatrick's Supermarket stood where Paragon now is. On Wisma Atria was the unique Balinese-styled architecture of the Wisma Indonesia offices of the Indonesian Embassy. Three old cinema theatres on this street were the Pavilion, the original Lido (1958) and Orchard Theatre which had Jackie's Bowl Orchard on the ground floor.

MEMORABLE LANDMARKS AROUND ORCHARD ROAD

Hotel Singapura's 24 hour Coffee house was the first of its kind at that time. There was also the Orchard Circus, a traffic island roundabout, which fronted the Government House where Clemenceau Avenue cuts through Orchard Road. Istana Negara was previously the Government House. The Prince's Hotel Garni sat where the Park Hotel, Orchard stands today.

From the 1970s through to the 1980s, commercial and hotel development intensified resulting in the Mandarin Hotel (1973) with the "Top of the M" revolving restaurant that gives rare views of the road from the 39th floor and the pagoda-styled Singapore Marriott Hotel (formerly the Dynasty Hotel 1982) with links to C K Tang.

Other notable features include the Orchard Road Car Park hawker stalls which were popular with both tourists and locals from the late 1960s right through to the late 1970s.

Peranakan Place is an excellent attempt to preserve the predominantly Peranakan residence and culture. Busy Orchard Road became a one-way street from 1974 with the introduction of the Orchard Road-Orchard Boulevard pair scheme.

Three train stations - Orchard, Somerset and Dhoby Ghaut - serve the dynamic and vibrant Orchard Road, a street which has been compared to Champs Elysees and New York's 5th Avenue.

FROM BRANDED STREET TO BRANDED EXPERIENCE

Orchard Road recently underwent a \$40 million revamp. The Mall Enhancement works have created a more pleasant and congenial pedestrian experience for traversing from one shopping mall to another. The addition of new cool street lamps, street furniture, flowers totems, specially crafted glass panel and the creation of planter boxes and urban green rooms contribute to the New Orchard Road experience.

By end of 2009, The New Orchard Road will have more than 40 shopping malls and over 8 million square feet of retail space. More than 50 Luxury fashion flagship stores are located in Orchard Road. There are more than 5000 fashion and lifestyle retail stores, 800 restaurants, bars and cafes, 7 Departmental stores and 4 movie theaters with 38 screens. New shopping playgrounds at Orchard Central, ION Orchard, Mandarin Gallery and 313@Somerset are due to be opened progressively through 2009.

Orchard Road is also home to 20 hotels and 13 Service Apartments with approximately 14,000 guests' rooms. There is a wide variety of establishments including famous hotel chains like Four Seasons, Grand Hyatt, St.Regis and Shangri-la.

Interesting architectural buildings include ION Orchard (opening in July 09), Peranakan Place, Goodwood Park Hotel, Pan Pacific Service Apartment.

Other places of attraction include Istana Park, Thai Embassy, Emerald Hill, Escape Youth Park (opening in 2010) etc.

Orchard Road holds 5 large-scale annual events which includes the annual Christmas Light-up event, Singapore Fashion Festival and Great Singapore Sale.

Note: Statistics are estimated