

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Colorful Singapore neighborhoods - May 6, 2023

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SUMMARY

"Only mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun." And Farnsworths. By the time we got a bite to eat and service on Scott's phone (don't get me started!) it was about 11:00am. The plan for the day was to do some neighborhood walks. We started in Kampong Glam, the Muslim quarter. On our route - the Sultan's Mosque, Arab Street, Haji Lane, and the blue tile Malabar Mosque. Next was Little India which was very much like I picture India being with narrow streets and crowded sidewalks. There we saw the Tan Teng Niah House (super colorful), Campbell Lane with stalls selling vegetables, fruit, marigolds and antiques,

Sri Veeramakaliammam Temple, and Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple. By then it was 2:00pm with a combined heat and humidity "feels like" temperature of about 106F and we were done! Back to the hotel for a dip in the pool and a bit of a rest before dinner on nearby Clarke Quay. - Karen

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DETAIL

In a long, sad, series of "lasts", today is our last full day in Asia. Our goal today? Explore some of the many interesting neighborhoods in Singapore. It's expected to be warm, no surprise. We dress coolly and head out. We still have no cell service and no local currency. We're a piece of work. My phone works for GPS and I've downloaded an app (MAPS.ME) and pre-loaded the walking routes for some of the neighborhoods we want to check out.

We're hungry (for either breakfast or lunch) and most places take plastic. We order a sandwich, muffin and coffee at place called SwissBake. Our order placed, we take our flashing disk and find a table. We don't know this restaurant but all the food's prepared, on display and just needs to be heated and plated. Everything looks really good. We guess they're playing off the efficient, fast and European angle. It is good.

An employee at the restaurant points us to a 7-11 downstairs (in the metro station) where we should be able to get a SIM card. We've walked past it a few times so know exactly where it is. They do have hanging cards for cell service in a range of GBs and prices. I can't actually see/feel a SIM in the hanging card but maybe they keep them behind the counter. "No," I'm told, no SIMs. Where? The answer is "any station". Hm, well this *is* a station, but maybe she means one of the NE stations (i.e. a station on the NE metro line). This is both of those. Any? NE? Sigh.

We catch the metro to our next destination and find another convenience mart. They have SIMs, yay! I have to give my name, passport number, phone number, hotel address and phone, home address, underwear size, but eventually I have a SIM and it's in the phone! Wait... there's a message. After a call to her tech guru (hubby taking care of the baby back at the apartment) we realize my phone's locked. (Dummy, you knew that. Grrrrr).

BUT I have another phone that I know isn't locked. I try it in there. No luck. Wait, I have an e-SIM in this phone and it's on. I turn it off and the new physical SIM on and eventually we have cell service and maps and email and messages. Yay! Karen, bless her soul, stood patiently by while I beat my head repeatedly against this SIM card wall.

Back above ground the sky is blue and the sun is shining. That's good and bad. Everything is very well lit for pictures but the heat is oppressive. We're at the start of the Kampong Glam neighborhood. It looks super fun and funky. This we can handle. We start following the route and walk past shops selling pashmina scarves, spices, clothing, and of course Persian carpets. Thankfully the sales people aren't as cut throat as they are in Tangiers.

Karen buys a replacement scarf (for the one you've seen her pictured in for the last decade or two). They have three levels of quality: \$8, \$10, and \$15. (To get to US\$ just multiply by 0.75.) There's lots of colors but she just wants white. Either they don't make a lot of those or everyone else has bought them. There are some and she buys one (with a credit card). We entered the store on Arab Street and exit out the back, on Haji Lane. It's wild with huge murals, tattoo parlors, tea shops, restaurants and bars.

After some more wandering we stop in the shade for lunch. The food is good and the beer is cold. We do more wandering, past a huge gold onion dome on some mosque next to a couple of towers for calling the believers to prayer. A bit further on there's another mosque, this time in blue. Down and across the river we pass from Arab Town into Little India. The streets are crazy busy and less clean. We pass a resale computer store with laptops lined up on every wall like books in a library. I ask if I can take a picture and the heavy man up front shrugs.

We walk along the edge of the street towards our next destination. We choose the side of the street with no parked cars but also no sidewalk (over the side with a sidewalk but totally blocked by cars). We split our time, as we walk, three ways: trying to stay in the shade, marveling at the craziness in each shop, and trying not to be hit by the occasional car or truck. It seems the majority of money in this neighborhood is earned by selling cards of stick-on fake jewels (to stick on your body). We pass.

We do find the Abdul Gafoor Mosque which is white and black and pretty much obscured by walls and trucks. What we can see of it is impressive. Further along, at the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple, we marvel at the crazy roof totally covered by an orderly mound of people and beings.

On the way back to the metro (to get to our room and some air conditioning) we accidentally find one of our other targets in Little India: the Tan Tent Niah House. It's extremely colorful with each slat of each shutter a different color. It's very jovial and uplifting but can't overcome our desire for cooler temperatures. So many other neighborhoods still to visit!

At the hotel we do cool off and even take a dip in the lovely pool. After some blog work and sunset we head back out for dinner. We eat at a restaurant (Sque as in Skewer) on the banks of the Clarke Quay (pronounced Key). The beers, food, and people watching are all good. Afterwards we walk along the busy, noisy quay on both sides, listening to the thumping music and watching the people, diners, and buskers. We just miss a well attended, impromptu juggler show but do see him taking in tips. We pass an ice cream shop with great looking flavors but sadly they only take cash, something we still don't have.

Photos



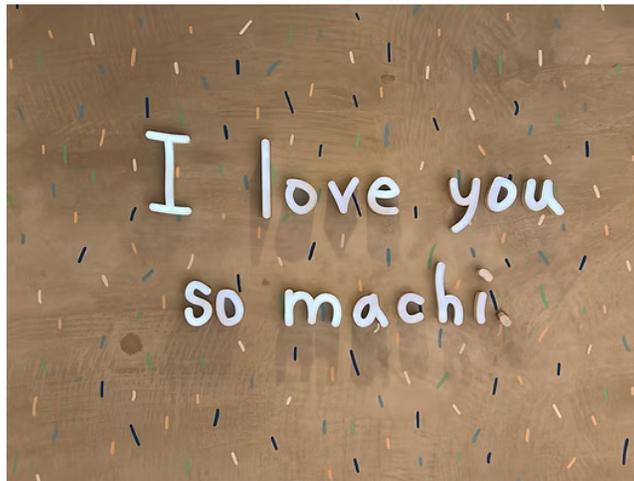
In Singapore, any journey of 1,000 kilometers starts with a visit to the subway. So clean, cheap, and easy to use!



Kampong Glam neighborhood. Very colorful and Arabic.



Lots of Pashmina on offer. Karen's in the market. This is the front 1/2 of the store.
Here I'm a size XL!



A local tea shop riffing off of a famous mural from our own Austin, Texas (that says "I love you so much!")



All of the "Insta influencers" are in heaven here. It's hard to walk around for all of the fab photos being posed.



A very impressive masque. On either side of the walking street are restaurants wishing for us to have a second lunch there.



It seems that fish-heads are really big here and everyone claims to have the best. We will definitely take their word for it!



Another mosque. This one in blue.



To the left is a northbound street and a southbound one. Each has a different name. Same thing to the right. Good luck being a taxi driver in this city!



Despite a whole lot of eyelash batting on my part I couldn't get Karen to go with me into this cat cafe!



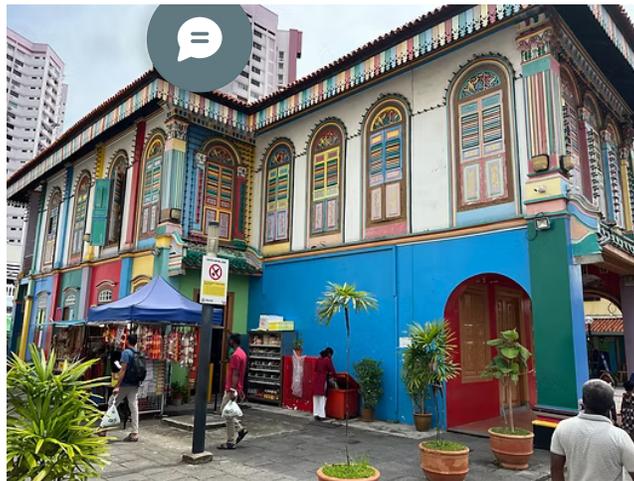
Near by was a restaurant with one of those Japanese cats with its paw in the air, made of Lego. Ah, cats.



FARNSIENTE



We're not sure if we like the name of the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple better or the roof. Maybe we need to redo our roof at home! Hm...



Or... maybe just a new paint job! Here's the one on the Tan Tent Niah House.



Clarke Quay, where we're staying, is also pretty colorful, as shown here in this file photo.



This photo, of a building on the quay, we did take.

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