

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Singapore Air flight 36 now boarding - May 7, 2023

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SUMMARY

The final day of our Asian adventure and we spent the morning doing one of our favorite things. We were up early and out the door to visit the Singapore Botanic Garden, a UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, one of very few botanic gardens to receive the honor. It was enormous - 82 hectares - and verdant and beautiful (and free)! The highlight was the area set aside as the National Orchid Garden (not free) which was amazing with lush tropical plants and hundreds of different types of orchids growing in amongst them. We had brunch at Privé in the garden then returned to our hotel for a final packing. Metro-ed to Changi Airport and happily

surrendered our luggage (carry-on size but still pretty heavy) before wandering to the Jewel, an amazeballs indoors waterfall in the next terminal over. Relaxed in one of the lounges til boarding time. - Karen

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DETAIL

Today we fly back home. Eventually. Our flight is scheduled to take off at 6:40 pm, so we have most of the day to see more of Singapore. The hotel has pushed our checkout time to 13:00, as they call it. Very nice of them.

We're mostly packed and head down to the metro, which we've become very familiar with and fond of. It's clean, quiet, comfortable and easy to use. Our destination? The Singapore Botanical Garden, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You know it's going to be spectacular. And within that, we'll be heading to their National Orchid Garden.

We were thinking, yesterday, that we might get over there early, like when it opens. You know, make the most of our day. Turns out that it opens at 5 am. OK, we're not going that early, but apparently a lot of people do go to the gardens early. It's not crowded but there are a fair number of families with their strollers, joggers, and especially people with their dogs. Singapore people have cute dogs.

The gardens (free to enter) are extremely well manicured, which is what you'd expect from Singapore. The subway dropped us off at one end of the park (at Botanic Station) and the Orchid Garden is all the way at the other end. That's actually nice, in that we get to see many other cool areas of the park. All the sections are nicely done and well maintained. Being early, the weather's cool (for this part of the world). The grass, plants and irrigation make it cooler than the rest of the city.

The Botanical Garden is huge, and the Orchid Garden (even though it's totally within the Botanical Garden) is also big. There are trails everywhere, and trails leading off other trails and meeting back up again. There's a VIP section where, if you're a visiting VIP, they will cultivate a new orchid just for you! We see a pretty one for our current Vice President, Kamala Harris, and a less pretty (but very striking) one that they did for Margret Thatcher.

There are misters frequently to keep the humidity up but those can't do everything needed for certain orchids. As such, the Orchid Garden also has a special (huge) enclosed glassed in space for the varieties of orchids normally only found at the higher elevations, that is, where it's cooler. So we go past the two pair of automatic sliding doors and into the enclosure. Immediately we're 10 degrees cooler. And there are more spectacular orchids. After walking all the trails inside the cooler we reluctantly head back out. We've been exploring the Orchid Garden now for maybe an hour. There's more to see but our feet are tired and we have to watch the time.

Back outside the Orchid Garden we head to Privé, an open air, covered restaurant within the Botanical Garden. It allows pets (dogs and cats only) but we see a patron heading out carrying a big grey rabbit in a sling. There are chickens wandering around, including a mom chicken (I guess you'd say a hen) with three adolescent chicks. We're not supposed to feed them, but the chickens would prefer we ignore that rule. When someone leaves their table we see a chicken hop on top to see what looks good. The lady server comes over and shoos the chicken away, but does so timidly, as if doing so in the past hasn't always ended well.

Breakfast is good and soon we're back on the subway towards our hotel. We check out, for real this time, with all our luggage in tow. We've checked how many Singapore dollars we still have on our transit cards (\$\$5.40) and checked what they charge to get to the Changi International Airport (\$\$1.87). We can obviously cover it but dang, that's cheap!

At the airport we prepare to give up our two suitcases but first we check the weight. Each is a little over 12 kilograms, so 50 pounds between the two. Not bad! With our load lightened we head to The Jewel, a new addition adjacent to the airport. It's a huge glass terrarium, with a multi-story shopping mall on the outer side, and in the middle: the biggest man-made waterfall I've ever seen. The building is shaped like a big hair bun, but it's made of glass, so there's lots of light, and there's a big hole in the center, through which is falling a crazy amount of water.

After many pictures we go through security and to the lounge. We hang out there for a couple of hours (and eat and drink). Before long we're on the plane, getting comfortable. It's going to be a 15 hour flight. We're not in business class, but neither are we in economy, in that in-between space called premium economy. The seats are a bit bigger, and they're fine for us. We have dinner (pretty good Indian food) and settle in for sleep. When we wake up we hope to be just a few more hours flight to Los Angeles, our stop before we continue on to Austin.

Photos



Spoiler alert: They have lots of orchids!



Some are custom bred expressly for some VIP. This ugly fella was bred for The Iron Lady, Margret Thatcher. We think they didn't like her so much.



Their temperature/humidity controlled area. The orchids really like this area.



Proof we were there.



Last orchids picture, I promise.



After our orchid viewing we did brunch.
Here's the self appointed clean-up
chicken. Not a staff favorite.



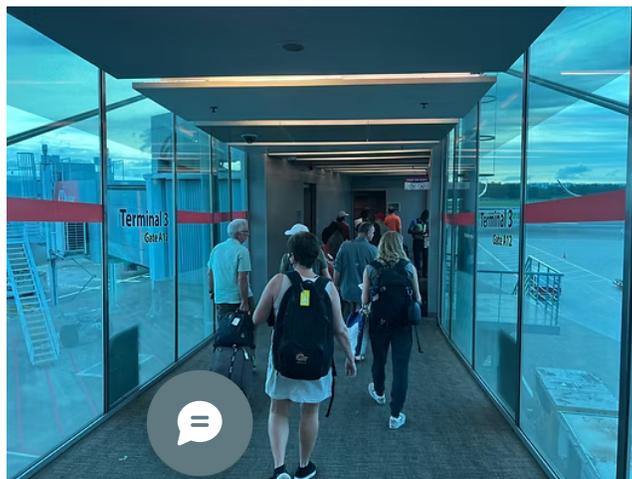
The jewel of the Singapore International Airport called... The Jewel. Amaze-balls, as Miss Karen says.



FARNSNIENTE



A possible back-up way to get home??



Time to board. (Whaaaaa!)



One of the flight attendants. All the same height, weight, hair color and style. They were the Stepford stewardesses. (Nice, though)



Our route. Threading the needle so we're over water most (if not all) of the way.

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