

# Your Guide to **Monument Trail** in Empress Place, Esplanade Park and War Memorial Park

This walking trail starts near the mouth of the Singapore River, once the heart of Singapore's commercial activity and entrepôt trade. It will bring you through Empress Place and Esplanade Park before ending at War Memorial Park. Along the way, you will visit several historical landmarks that tell the story of Singapore's history, growth and development.

The park in Empress Place is bounded by Empress Place Road and Fullerton Road, and surrounded by Victoria Concert Hall and Asian Civilisations Museum. It started as a public square outside the buildings and was named Empress Place in 1907 in honour of Queen Victoria.

Esplanade Park, one of the oldest parks in Singapore, was built on reclaimed land in 1943 and redeveloped in 1991 to enhance the Civic District's identity. It stands before the Padang, Supreme Court and City Hall, with its boundaries defined by Connaught Drive, Stamford Road, Esplanade Drive and the mouth of the Singapore River. War Memorial Park, located near Esplanade Park, is another prominent feature of the Civic District. As you walk along this trail, do stop at significant historical landmarks including Queen Elizabeth Walk, the Lim Bo Seng Memorial, the Cenotaph, the Tan Kim Seng Fountain and a World War II marker indicating the location of the former Indian National Army Monument. Linger at the Civilian War Memorial, built in remembrance of those who died during the Japanese Occupation in World War II. Look out too for the interesting trees on this trail, in particular, the heritage Rain Trees along Connaught Drive, the "Gor Zhang Chiu" Angsanas and the Cannon Ball Tree at Esplanade Park.



Difficulty level: **Easy**



Distance: **1.5km**



Walking time: **45min**







23 Tan Kim Seng Fountain



22 The Cenotaph



15 Cannonball Tree



11 Lim Bo Seng Memorial



10 Queen Elizabeth Walk



7 Singapore's First Pedestrian Underpass



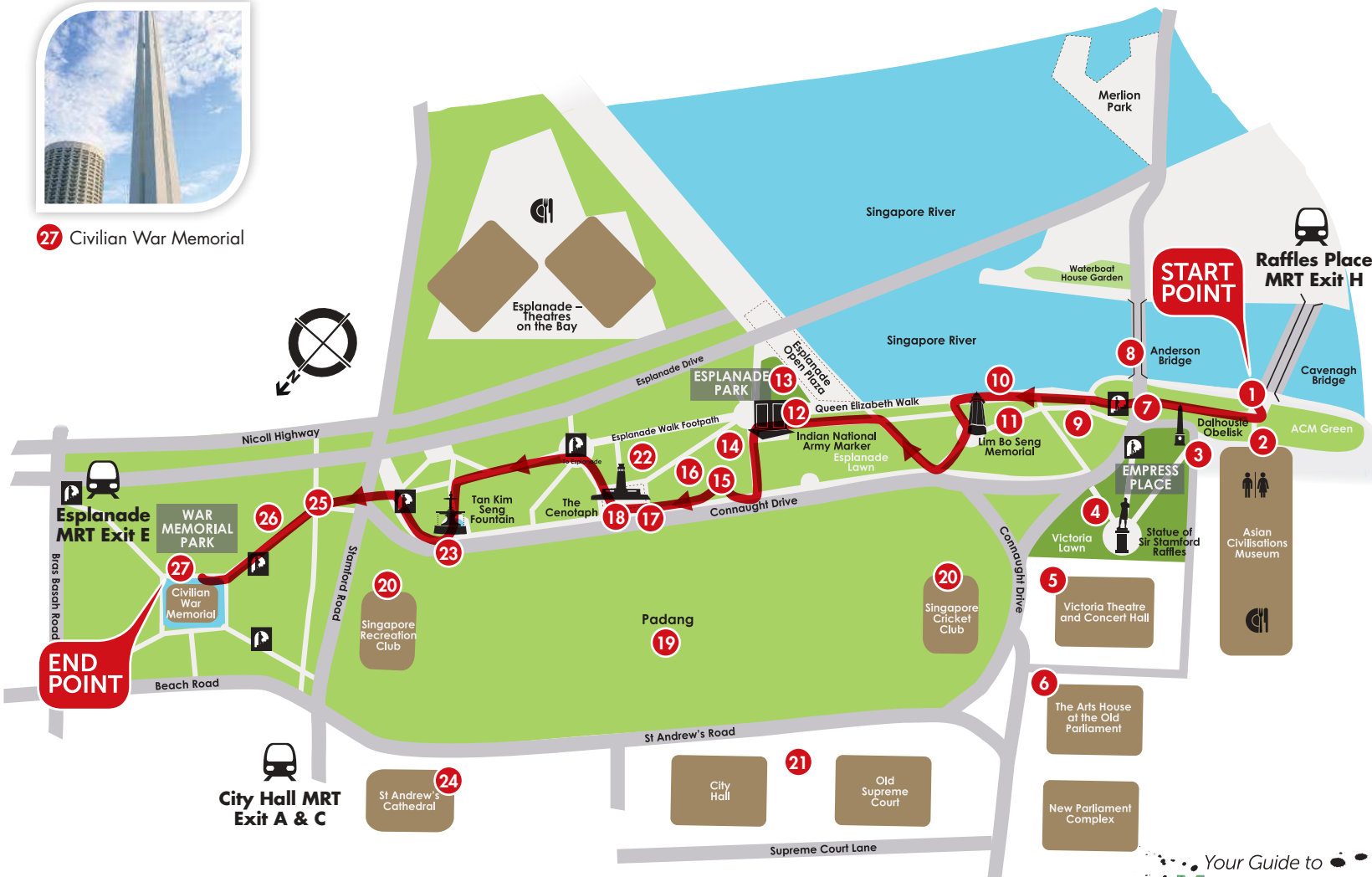
3 Dalhousie Obelisk



27 Civilian War Memorial



1 Cavenagh Bridge

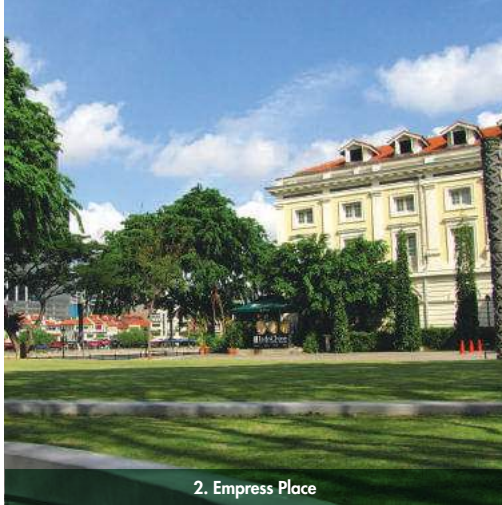


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1. Cavenagh Bridge



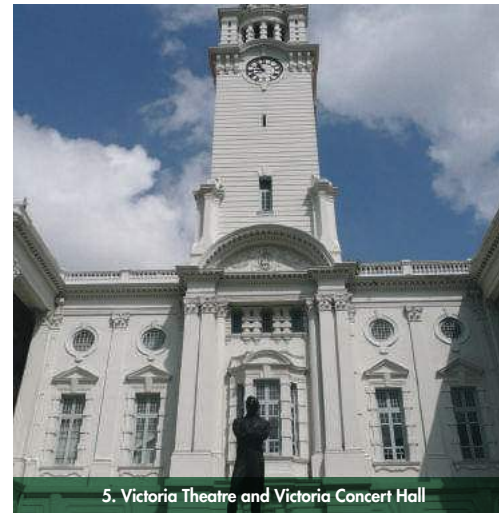
2. Empress Place



3. Dalhousie Obelisk



4. Statue of Sir Stamford Raffles



5. Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall



6. The Arts House at the Old Parliament



7. Singapore's First Pedestrian Underpass

## START POINT

### ▶ 1 Cavenagh Bridge

Stand on Cavenagh Bridge overlooking the Singapore River and imagine you are Sir Stamford Raffles, surveying the bustling trading scene. As soon as he landed here in 1819, Raffles must have realised the island's importance. In the same year, the north bank of the Singapore River was drained for the construction of government buildings, and in 1822, the south bank was reclaimed.

Built in 1868 by Indian convicts serving their sentence in Singapore, the bridge was named after Lieutenant-General Sir William Orfeur Cavenagh, the last Governor of the Straits Settlements (1859-1867) appointed by British India. This bridge now serves pedestrians travelling between the financial district and Empress Place, and is the oldest bridge across the Singapore River.

### ▶ 2 Empress Place

A short distance away, Empress Place – named in commemoration of Queen Victoria and possibly the oldest pedestrian space in Singapore – houses some important historical landmarks. You may wish to visit them (4 to 7) before getting back on the walking trail.

### ▶ 3 Dalhousie Obelisk

Look out for the obelisk, built to commemorate the visit of the then Governor-General of India, Lord James Andrew, Marquis of Dalhousie, and his wife in 1850. It stands as a reminder to all merchants of the benefits of free trade.

### ▶ 4 Statue of Sir Stamford Raffles

Nearby stands the statue of Raffles, originally erected on the Padang (near St Andrew's Cathedral) in 1887 to commemorate the Queen's birthday. Then, the statue was positioned to face the sea to salute the people who were instrumental in the founding of Singapore. This statue was relocated to its present site in 1919.

### ▶ 5 Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall

The Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall, buildings behind the Raffles statue, are symbols of Singapore's thriving cultural scene. The Victoria Theatre, built between 1856 and 1862, is of 19th-century British Neoclassical architecture. This building first served as the Singapore Town Hall and later became a theatre.

Victoria Concert Hall, then known as Victoria Memorial, was built later in 1905, in memory of Queen Victoria. This second building was used as a hospital when the Japanese bombed Singapore in 1941 to 1942, and after World War II in 1945, it was the venue for Japanese war crime trials. Look out for the 54m clock tower that links the two buildings.

### ▶ 6 The Arts House at the Old Parliament (previously Parliament House)

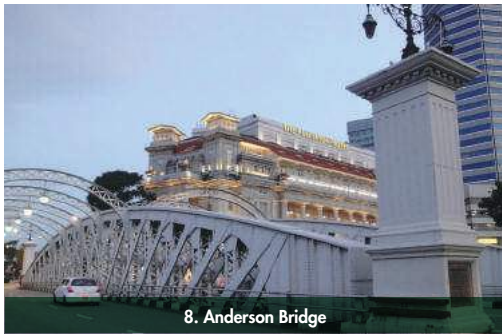
The oldest government building in Singapore, Parliament House, was initially meant for residential use but was later used by the judiciary. It eventually served as government offices (1839-1875) before being reoccupied by the judiciary until 1939 (when the present Supreme Court was built). It has now been renamed as The Arts House at the Old Parliament. A new parliament house was constructed to replace this building.

### ▶ 7 Singapore's First Pedestrian Underpass

Walk over to the small green with its lovely cluster of Yellow Flame, Tecoma and Rain Trees in front of the Asian Civilisations Museum. Use the underpass (tucked under Anderson Bridge on your right) to get to Esplanade Park. This underpass, which was built in 1964, is Singapore's first pedestrian underpass. It links the park to Connaught Drive.

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8. Anderson Bridge



9. Esplanade Park



10. Queen Elizabeth Walk



11. Lim Bo Seng Memorial



12. Indian National Army Marker



13. Singapore's City Skyline



14. Frangipani Trees



15. Cannonball Tree

### ▶ 8 Anderson Bridge

As you emerge from the underpass, turn around and get a good view of the steel, arched structure that is Anderson Bridge. This bridge was built in 1909 to replace Cavenagh Bridge. It was named after Sir John Anderson, Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States (1904–1911).

### ▶ 9 Esplanade Park

You are now at one of Singapore's most historical parks. This park was built on reclaimed land after World War II. Situated close to the mouth of the Singapore River, it houses several important historical monuments that you will see as you continue your walk. Several historic events were held at this site – Jubilee Day (27 June 1887) commemorating the 50th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign, the Japanese forces' surrender ceremony in Singapore (12 September 1945) marking the end of World War II, and Singapore's first National Day celebrations (9 August 1966).

The Esplanade Park Memorials, Lim Bo Seng Memorial, Tan Kim Seng Fountain and the Cenotaph were gazetted as National Monuments in December 2010 to recognise significant individuals who contributed to the community and Singapore, or to commemorate war victims.

### ▶ 10 Queen Elizabeth Walk

This promenade you are standing on is named in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953. Bougainvilleas lining the promenade add a splash of colour along the seafront. Look out to sea as you stroll along the promenade. The sea is the foundation of Singapore's rapid development from a humble fishing village to a modern, thriving cosmopolitan city.

The famous Satay Club occupied the area along Queen Elizabeth Walk from 1970 to 1995. Families would crowd round each stall in clusters, watching the satay man grill the meat over hot charcoals. The Satay Club had to vacate the area to make way for the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay and Nicoll Highway's extension.

### ▶ 11 Lim Bo Seng Memorial

This is an important historical monument at Esplanade Park. The 3.5m tall marble pagoda that you see here was built as a tribute to Major-General Lim Bo Seng, a local hero who headed the anti-Japanese resistance movement during World War II. Subjected to torture by the Japanese, he died a martyr in 1944.

### ▶ 12 Indian National Army Marker

A short distance away from the Lim Bo Seng Memorial is this World War II marker, on the site of a former memorial dedicated to Indian National Army (INA). INA had fought alongside the Japanese against the British and Allied Forces in Burma during World War II. This memorial was erected in 1945 but was destroyed by the British right after the Japanese surrender in the same year. The current marker, put up in 1995 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, is now part of a series of World War II site markers in Singapore.

### ▶ 13 Singapore's City Skyline

Look across the waters to your right for a sweeping view of Singapore's city skyline. Iconic buildings include the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, the Singapore Flyer and Marina Bay Sands, with its iconic ship-like roof structure. The Marina Bay Sands SkyPark's rooftop greenery is one of Singapore's many greening efforts as it evolves into a City in a Garden.

### ▶ 14 Frangipani Trees (*Plumeria rubra* cultivars)

As you continue on this walking trail, notice the Frangipani Trees with bright-red flowers lining the path in this park. Widely used in parks, the Frangipani Tree blooms throughout the year. Its flower petals are large and waxy and the flowers exude a strong fragrance, which is especially intense at night, to attract pollinating moths.

### ▶ 15 Cannonball Tree (*Couroupita guianensis*)

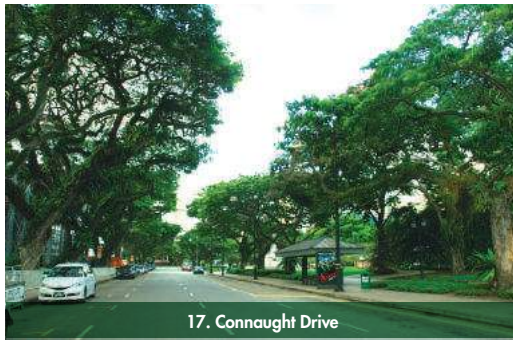
Walk towards the bus stop on Connaught Drive. The tree behind the bus stop with large, round fruits is the Cannonball Tree. This unusual and fast-growing tree is a popular attraction among locals and tourists. It is deciduous and sheds its leaves every six months. It has one of the largest flowers for a flowering tree in Singapore. You will see another Cannonball Tree in a corner (near the escalator) at the end of this park. Take a moment to smell the lingering scent of the flowers.

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16. Leopard Tree



17. Connaught Drive



18. Rain Tree



19 &amp; 20. Padang with the Singapore Cricket Club and Singapore Recreation Club



21. Old Supreme Court Building



21. Old Supreme Court Building and City Hall

► **16 Leopard Tree, Brazilian Ironwood**  
(*Libidibia ferrea*)

Right behind the Cannonball Tree stands a beautiful Leopard Tree. This slow-growing, small to medium size tree can tolerate a wide range of climates. This makes it a suitable ornamental specimen in parks and gardens. Observe how its fine lacy crown (with graceful, drooping branches) casts an inviting shade.

► **17 Connaught Drive**

In 1890, the land in this area (including where you are standing right now) was reclaimed and a road named New Esplanade Road was created. This road was then renamed Connaught Drive to commemorate Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, who visited Singapore in 1906.

► **18 Rain Trees (*Samanea saman*)**

The Rain Trees lining Connaught Drive are one of the highlights of this walking trail. With massive umbrella-shaped and wide spreading crowns, Rain Trees are commonly planted throughout Singapore's major roads and expressways to create an avenue or a 'green tunnel' effect. Some of the heritage Rain Trees still standing today were planted in mid-1880s when New Esplanade Road (now Connaught Drive) was constructed, making them more than 135 years old.

► **19 Padang**

This large green on the other side of Connaught Drive is the Padang. Imagine a line drawn halfway across the Padang, with the Singapore Cricket Club on one end and the Singapore Recreation Club on the other. This imaginary line would have been the original shoreline. When Raffles arrived in 1819, half the Padang was the beach itself.

Padang was the stage for several important events in Singapore's history. In the 1830s, it was a recreational ground for Europeans. During the Japanese Occupation, the Japanese army used the Padang as a holding area for the whole European population. Three years after the fall of Singapore, it was from the steps of the City Hall (overlooking the Padang) that the Japanese surrendered to the Allied Forces.

The Padang remains an integral part of Singapore's history and heritage today, hosting several public and sporting events such as the National Day Parade.

► **20 Singapore Cricket Club and Singapore Recreation Club**

Look out for the distinct buildings of the Singapore Cricket Club and Singapore Recreation Club (located on opposite ends of the Padang). These were built in 1870 and 1885 respectively to support the variety of recreational activities held on the Padang.

Near where the Singapore Recreation Club now stands, there once stood a small knoll known as Scandal Point. It gained its name possibly because it was a popular meeting place for gossip. From the knoll, one could see the ships arriving. Raffles landed there during his second visit to Singapore. To protect the settlement, a battery of 12-pounder guns facing the sea was situated at Scandal Point. The guns were removed when the sea wall along the Esplanade was built in 1851.

► **21 Old Supreme Court Building and City Hall**

Across the Padang, two important state buildings – Old Supreme Court and City Hall – stand side by side. The Old Supreme Court Building, built on the site of the former Hotel de L'Europe in 1939, was gazetted as a National Monument. Even from Esplanade Park, you can view its interesting architecture, in particular, the large Corinthian columns and a miniature version of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral in London.

Built between 1926 and 1929, the City Hall building was the setting for many important events in the history of Singapore. One of them was the signing of surrender papers when Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, on behalf of the Allied Forces, accepted the surrender of the Japanese forces on 12 September 1945.

These two historic buildings will be converted into the new National Art Gallery by 2015.

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22. The Cenotaph



23. Tan Kim Seng Fountain



24. St Andrew's Cathedral

▶ **24 St Andrew's Cathedral**

Catch a glimpse of the neo-Gothic architecture of St Andrew's Cathedral (Singapore's largest cathedral) that is located across the road from the Singapore Recreation Club. This building is the third (built by Indian convicts in 1836) since its original construction in 1835. This cathedral served as an emergency hospital in 1942 shortly before the fall of Singapore to the Japanese. Gazetted as a National Monument in 1973, it is now an important part of the Padang and Singapore's city skyline.

▶ **25 War Memorial Park**

Take the pedestrian underpass (at the junction of Stamford Road, Esplanade Drive and Raffles Avenue) and use the Stamford Road exit to get to War Memorial Park. This park is a prominent feature of the Civic District as it contains the Civilian War Memorial.



25. War Memorial Park



26. Belinjau Trees

▶ **26 Belinjau Trees (*Gnetum gnemon*)**

The walkways on the open lawn leading to the Civilian War Memorial are lined with Belinjau Trees. This tree is a slow-growing, evergreen tropical tree with a narrow conical crown and short drooping branches. It is best known for the bitter belinjau crackers that are made from its seeds.



27. Civilian War Memorial

▶ **27 Civilian War Memorial**

This war memorial, also known as 'chopsticks', was built to honour civilians killed during the Japanese Occupation. The four pillars of the memorial, standing at 67m, symbolise the Chinese, Malays, Indians and people of other races who died in the war. The pillars are joined at the base to signify unity of all races. A memorial service is held every year on 15 February (Total Defence Day) to commemorate the anniversary of the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1942 and the people killed during the occupation.

*We hope you have enjoyed your walk on this trail.*

*For another slice of Singapore's history, embark on the Pioneers Trail in Ann Siang Hill Park and Telok Ayer Green.*

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