

# A Guide to Heritage Roads of Singapore



This guide brings you to our five Heritage Roads, which showcase some of the best of unique tree-scapes in Singapore. As a renowned Garden City, mature trees form the backbone of Singapore's landscape along the roads. As Singapore develops and progresses, it becomes increasingly important that its sense of identity in the physical landscape is kept. One way to do this is to conserve some of the more scenic and significant tree-lined roads in Singapore.

The Heritage Road Scheme was started in 2001 by the National Parks Board (NParks). This scheme aims to conserve the tree-scapes along some of the roads in Singapore, designating them as Heritage Roads. Currently, there are five gazetted Heritage Roads – Arcadia Road, Mount Pleasant Road, Mandai Road, Lim Chu Kang Road, and South Buona Vista Road. The green ambience and mature trees that line the Heritage Roads are a result of more than 40 years of growth and care. If mature trees are felled, these precious assets will be lost and it will take a very long time to redevelop or recreate the mature tree-scape. In some situations, the existing natural wooded ambience cannot be recreated to its original condition. The Heritage Road Scheme will ensure that part of Singapore's landscape will be preserved for a long while, contributing to Singapore's sense of identity and history.

Embark on a leisurely drive or simply put on a comfortable pair of shoes and take a slow walk on these roads. Take a closer look at the mature trees while enjoying the cool shade the tree canopy provides. Though you might have driven through the roads countless times, exploring them is definitely an experience like no other.



**Total distance of all five roads:**  
Approximately 6.2km

**Estimated average walking time:**  
3 – 4 hours inclusive of travelling time

### Safety tips

- When touring the Heritage roads, please look out for vehicles on the road.
- You are also recommended not to tour the roads during inclement weather due to risk of lightning as well as falling trees and branches.



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## Highlights

- Opportunities to walk along lesser-known Heritage Roads, rather than just driving past them quickly.
- Enriching lessons on the history of Singapore along the Heritage Roads
- A close look at majestic trees, which include two Heritage Trees

## How to get there

### By Car:

You may visit these five roads together by following our recommended route, or you may choose to explore them individually. Depending on your starting point, here are the suggested routes to get from one Heritage Road to another:

#### a Arcadia Road to Mount Pleasant Road

Arcadia Road → Adam Road → Dunearn Road → Whitley Road → Mount Pleasant Road

#### b Mount Pleasant Road to Mandai Road

Mount Pleasant Road → Thomson Road → Upper Thomson Road → Mandai Road

#### c Mandai Road to Lim Chu Kang Road

Mandai Road → Woodlands Road → Kranji Road → Kranji Loop → Kranji Way → Neo Tiew Road → Lim Chu Kang Road

#### d Lim Chu Kang Road to South Buona Vista Road

Lim Chu Kang Road → Jalan Bahar → PIE → Clementi Ave 6 → AYE → South Buona Vista Road

#### e South Buona Vista Road to Arcadia Road

South Buona Vista Road → Pasir Panjang Road → Alexandra Road → Queensway → Farrer Road → Adam Road → Arcadia Road



## By Public Transport:

### 1 Arcadia Road

Alight at the bus stop along Adam Road (opposite the Japanese Association, Singapore) and take a short walk towards Arcadia Road.

SBS Transit 74, 93, 157, 165  
SMRT 852, 855

### 2 Mount Pleasant Road

Alight at the bus stop along Thomson Road (Singapore Polo Club) and take a short walk towards Mount Pleasant Road.

SBS Transit 54, 130, 132, 156, 162, 162M, 166  
SMRT 167, 851, 980

### 3 Mandai Road

You may tour Mandai Road on SBS Transit Bus No. 138. You may also like to alight at the bus stop at Upper Seletar Reservoir Park to explore the area further.

### 4 Lim Chu Kang Road

You can enjoy the beautiful scenery while riding on SMRT Bus No. 975 from Choa Chu Kang MRT Station. To get up close with nature, you may alight at any of the bus stops along the road.

### 5 South Buona Vista Road

Hop onto SBS Transit Bus No. 200 from Buona Vista or Kent Ridge MRT Stations to enjoy a tour along the road. You may also alight at any of the bus stops along the road.

# A Guide to Heritage Roads of Singapore



What you will see along each Heritage Road

## → 1

### Arcadia Road

**Start:** Junction with Adam Road  
**End:** Arcadia Road End  
**Distance:** 918m

Visitors are welcome to take a leisurely stroll or a slow drive along the beautiful Arcadia Road, which is nestled amid the secondary forest near MacRitchie Reservoir. Lined with mature Rain Trees on both sides, the road skirts past the Adam Park Estate, which was built for civil servants of the then colonial government.

The **Rain Tree** (*Samanea saman*) is a common roadside tree in Singapore, and its umbrella-shape crown provides plenty of shade for motorists and pedestrians. When it blooms, the crown of this tree will be covered in clusters of pink-white flowers like small upturned brushes. The leaves of the tree will also close up during rainy weather and just before sunset. This is why it is called the *Pukul Lima* in Malay, which means 'five o'clock'.

Arcadia Road may be a welcome stretch of peace and quiet these days, but did you know that an intense battle was once fought there during the World War II? During the invasion of the Japanese army in February 1942, the soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Cambridgeshire Regiment, fought hard against the Japanese army at the Adam Park Estate. The Battalion's headquarters was at House Number 7. The British held out

against intense bombing and attacks by the invaders, but finally, on 15 February, they received an order for a cease-fire at 4 p.m. The British then surrendered to the Japanese forces that evening. Now, the house is used as the Adam Park Guild House of the National University of Singapore Society.

Historical information adapted from [http://heritagetrails.sg/content/612/7\\_Adam\\_Park.html](http://heritagetrails.sg/content/612/7_Adam_Park.html)

## → 2

### Mount Pleasant Road

**Start:** Junction with Denham Road  
**End:** Pan Island Expressway slip road  
**Distance:** 1,353m

Curving through a hilly area of the same name, Mount Pleasant Road is a quaint housing estate with black-and-white bungalows along the road, built for the officers of the Police Force during colonial times. An early resident, Mr G. H. Brown, owned the estate in the 1860s and lived in a house called Mount Pleasant on the hill. One can only imagine the soothing views of the hill from his residence. Part of the property had been called Bukit Brown, possibly after Mr Brown, and cemetery grounds now cover the hilly slopes along Lornie Road.

A stone's throw away from the city, Mount Pleasant Road is now flanked with mature **Saga trees**. Wild-sown trees like **Wild Cinnamon, palms** and **figs** also front the garden fences of old bungalows.



Arcadia Road

1



Adam Park House Number 7



Rain Tree



Mount Pleasant Road

2



Burmese Banyan



Bird's Nest Fern on the Rain Tree



Leaves and Seed Pods of the Saga Tree

While you are there, visit the **Burmese Banyan** (*Ficus kurzii*), a Heritage Tree located in front of House Number 162. This tree is about 30m tall and has hanging roots. Over the years, the roots have grown to the ground and rooted, creating the majestic tree structure that you see today. If you look closely, you can see that it is actually the same tree on both sides of the gate!

There are two Burmese Banyan trees in the Heritage Tree list. The other such Heritage Tree is located at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, Lawn A, near to Swan Lake. Visit [www.nparks.gov.sg/heritagetrees](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/heritagetrees) for more information on Heritage Trees.

# A Guide to Heritage Roads of Singapore



→ 3

## Mandai Road

**Start:** Opposite Upper Seletar Reservoir Park Carpark  
**End:** Junction with Mandai Avenue  
**Distance:** 1,084m

Located alongside the Upper Seletar Reservoir, this stretch of Mandai Road was an old carriageway constructed in 1855 which served as one of the main links between Woodlands and Upper Thomson, connecting the agriculture and poultry farming villages in areas such as Bukit Mandai, Sungei Mandai and Nee Soon Village. Surrounded by rows of mature Rain Trees and lush secondary forest, a journey down this road is definitely a tranquil experience.

Located on the banks of the Upper Seletar Reservoir is a Heritage Tree called the **Ordeal Tree** (*Erythrophleum suaveolens*). The bark was used in the past in the trials of various African tribes. In these trials, the accused party would be given a water extract of the bark to drink; if he dies, he would be deemed guilty, but if he does not, he would be released. Also known as Red-water Tree due to the red sap produced when the tree is wounded, this tree stands at a height of 25m and has a girth of about 3.67m.

*\*Tip: The best location to capture a photo of this picturesque road is at the exit of the carpark.*

→ 4

## Lim Chu Kang Road

**Start:** Junction with Sungei Gedong Road  
**End:** Junction with Ama Keng Road  
**Distance:** 1,780.5m

Built before the 1900s to serve the gambier, pepper and rubber plantations dotting the northwestern countryside, Lim Chu Kang Road then became the main link between the villages and the city-bound roads of Choa Chu Kang and Bukit Timah, as the population grew in the area.

Attap and zinc-roofed houses scattered along this road were sheltered by **Angsana** (*Pterocarpus indicus*) and **Broad-leafed Mahogany** (*Swietenia macrophylla*) trees still standing today.

The **Angsana** tree has yellow flowers that are faintly fragrant. Blooming for only a day, they then rain down the next morning, creating yellow carpets on the ground. The **Broad-leafed Mahogany** is viewed as the 'original' mahogany of the furniture trade, and its timber is regarded as among the best in the world. Its wood is used for making fine furniture and musical instruments.

**Rubber Trees** (*Hevea brasiliensis*), **Simpoh Ayer** (*Dillenia suffruticosa*) and the **Common Sendudok** (*Melastoma malabathricum*) can also be found along much of the rural segments of the



Mandai Road



Lim Chu Kang Road



Ordeal Tree



Broad-leafed Mahogany



Lim Chu Kang Road



Angsana

road. As you walk along the stretch, enjoy the verdant vegetation and relish the old kampong ambience of bygone days.

There are many farms located in the Lim Chu Kang area, close to the Heritage Road.

You may consider dropping by one of these farms to experience for yourself what life in the countryside used to be like. Visit [www.kranjicountryside.com](http://www.kranjicountryside.com) for more information.

# A Guide to Heritage Roads of Singapore



→ 5

## South Buona Vista Road

**Start:** Before Junction with Stockport Road  
**End:** Junction with Vigilante Drive  
**Distance:** 1,066m

Known for its notorious curves, South Buona Vista Road, nicknamed “99 turns”, provides passage from Dover to Pasir Panjang Road through the high ridges of Kent Ridge. South Buona Vista Road was also once known as ‘The Gap’. The road was used as part of racing circuits for motorcars and bicycles from the 1950s to 1980s. Constructed before World War II, one used to have a good view of the sea from the descending slope of the ridge, which explains why it was given the name, “Buona Vista”, meaning “good sight” in Italian. It was also on this part of the ridge that the famous battle of Pasir Panjang was fought in February 1942 between the forces from the Malay Regiment and the Japanese invaders.

The road is flanked by a hilly forest. Wild-sown plants such as **Simpoh Ayer** (*Dillenia suffruticosa*) and **Wild Cinnamon** (*Cinnamomum iners*) growing at the forest edge line the road. Some of the trees planted on both sides of the road also include **Pelong Trees** (*Pentaspadon motleyi*) and **Yellow Flame** (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*) trees.

Take a short walk up Vigilante Drive and you will reach Kent Ridge Park, where you can enjoy stunning views of the sea and offshore islands

from various look-out points. From there, you can also choose to embark on a trail at the Southern Ridges.

**We hope you have enjoyed exploring the Heritage Roads. To see more of nature related to history, embark on the Heritage Trees trails in Changi, Fort Canning Park, Pulau Ubin, and Singapore Botanic Gardens. To obtain another DIY trail-guide on one of Singapore’s parks, visit [www.nparks.gov.sg/eguides](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/eguides).**



South Buona Vista Road

5



Fruits of Simpoh Ayer

Leaves of Simpoh Ayer

Wild Cinnamon



Flowers of Yellow Flame