

WARTIME TRAILS

Journey into Singapore's military history at these historic sites and trails.

Fort Siloso

Singapore's rich military history and significance in World War II really comes alive when you make the effort to see the sights for yourself. There are four major sites for military buffs to visit. If you prefer to stay around the city centre, go for the Civic District or Pasir Panjang trails, but if you have time to venture out further, you can pay tribute to the victims of war at Changi and Kranji.

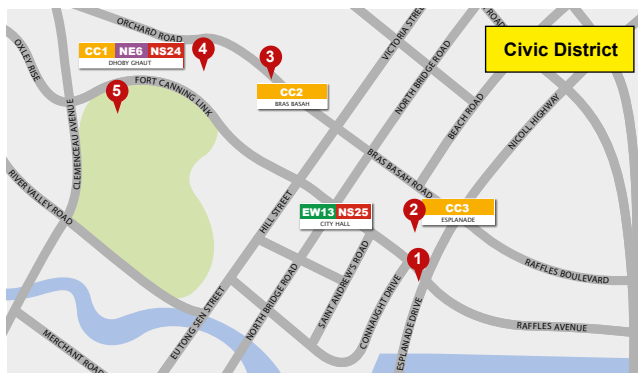
The Japanese invasion of February 1942

February 8 Japanese troops land and attack Sarimbun Beach	February 9 Kranji Beach Battle	February 10 Battle for Bukit Timah	February 13-14 Battle of Pasir Panjang Ridge	February 15 British surrender Singapore to the Japanese
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CIVIC DISTRICT

Singapore's civic district, which was once the site of the former British colony's commercial and administrative activities in the 19th and 20th century, is where you'll find plenty of important buildings and places of interest.

Start at **1 Esplanade Park** near City Hall MRT station, historically significant as recreation grounds for early Singaporeans. Today, it houses landmarks like the Cenotaph, a war memorial erected in honour of those who fought and died during World Wars I and II. While you're here, don't miss the Indian National Army Monument, the Lim Bo Seng Memorial and the Tan Kim Seng Fountain, each of which has its own historical story to tell.



Another major site downtown is the **2 Civilian War Memorial**, affectionately known to locals as 'The Chopsticks' thanks to the four tall, straight pillars rising up to 60 metres high. The monument pays tribute to all who suffered or perished during the harrowing Japanese

Occupation from 1942 to 1945.

You can catch more glimpses into Singapore's past under Japanese rule at **3 Singapore Art Museum** (formerly St. Joseph's Institution, a boy's school) as well as the **4 YMCA**. During WWII, the former school grounds were

used by the British for military casualties, then by the Japanese army as temporary barracks during their occupation. The YCMA, meanwhile, was the headquarters of the much-feared Japanese military police, the *Kempeitai*, and was the site of brutal interrogations of Singapore's civilians.

End your tour of the district at **5 Fort Canning Park**, a small hill that was once a fort complete with military barracks (now Fort Canning Centre), underground bunker (now The Battle Box) and an arms store, and played an important role in the defence of the island during WWII. Frequently used as an entertainment and live music venue today, the park has nonetheless retained its rich history, and you can still see a 9-pound cannon on site. If you'd like to explore Fort Canning Park further, you can also sign up for a free guided tour at www.nparks.gov.sg.

CHANGI

Military history buffs will undoubtedly be familiar with Changi's significance in WWII and the Japanese Occupation—it was a site of wartime suffering and is well worth a day trip for its moving history. For the full Changi experience, you can book the award-winning Changi WWII tour from www.journeys.com.sg, which costs \$55 per adult and \$30 per child.

Start your trip at **1 The Changi Museum & Chapel**. The original Changi Prison, where Allied prisoners of war were detained by the Japanese, has been demolished, but you



Fort Canning Park

can get an impression of what life there was like through the museum's five zones. Highlights not to miss are the touching artworks (including the Changi Murals) created by prisoners, and a replica of the makeshift chapel built by prisoners. They hand-built this place of solace out of whatever materials they had on hand—the cross, for instance, was made out of a spent artillery shell.



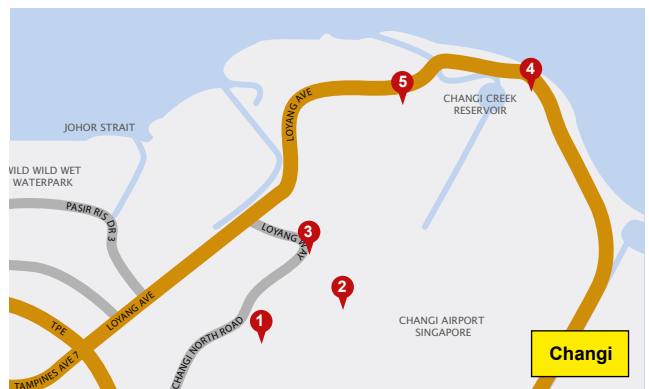
Changi Museum Chapel

Down the road is **2 Johor Battery**, which comprises three replica naval guns installed by the British to defend Singapore against invaders—a defence

tactic that didn't work on the Japanese forces in 1942, to the British troops' dismay. Nearby is **3 Selarang Camp**, formerly Selarang Barracks, which was used by the Japanese army to house prisoners of war in poor, overcrowded living conditions.

While you're in the area, stop by the idyllic **4 Changi Village**, where you'll find plenty of local hawker fare, before ending your tour at **5 Changi**

Beach Park, the site of one of the brutal Sook Ching massacres in 1942, where 66 Chinese men identified as hostile elements in Singapore were lined up along the beach and executed by the *Kempeitai*.



history



PASIR PANJANG

The southwestern coast of Singapore, Pasir Panjang (Malay for 'long beach') is where history was made in February 1942. In what is known as the Battle of Pasir Panjang Ridge, the Japanese launched and won a two-day military attack on the Allied forces defending the island—after which Singapore fell under Japanese control.

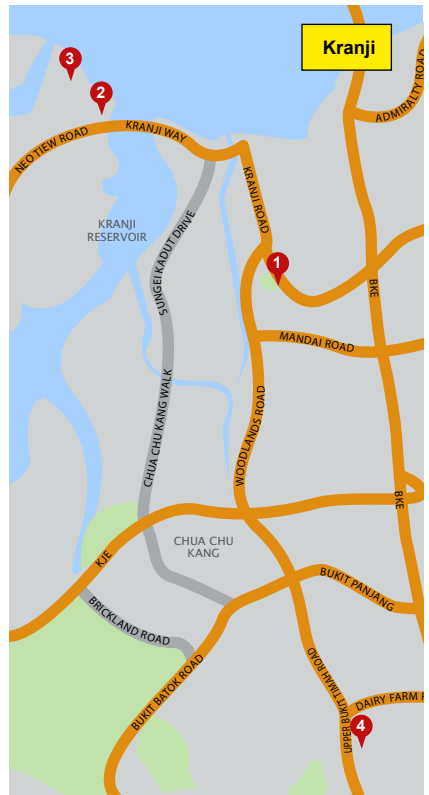
Today, this area is a hubbub of commercial activity, being the gateway to pleasure island Sentosa and home to shopping malls VivoCity and HarbourFront Centre. You can begin exploring the history of this area with a short trip to Sentosa to explore **1 Fort Siloso**. Built by the British in the 19th century, this fort was meant to protect the western

entrance to Singapore's harbour, and is now home to plenty of WWII artefacts (including actual artillery) and memorabilia.

You can learn more about the Battle of Pasir Panjang Ridge at **2 Reflections at Bukit Chandu**, a historical gallery of artefacts and multimedia exhibits that trace the heroic footsteps of the Malay Regiment soldiers as they fought bitterly against a 13,000-strong Japanese army. From here, take a scenic stroll through the Southern Ridges trail to **3 Kent Ridge Park**, the original slopes of Pasir Panjang where the battle was fought.

KRANJI

If your schedule permits, a day trip to the northern part of Singapore is well worth



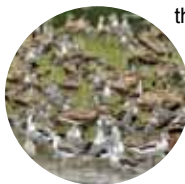
your time, for it's the site of the Kranji Beach Battle in February 1942, Japan's second attack on Singapore (before the Battle of Pasir Panjang).

Your first stop is **1 Kranji War Memorial and Cemetery**, near Kranji MRT station. Pay tribute to the men and women who died defending Singapore in WWII at the cemetery, as well as over 24,000 Allied soldiers whose bodies were never found—their names are inscribed on one of the 12 memorial walls.

Kranji is a relatively undeveloped part of the island, so many of its notable sites

remain quite untouched. You can head up to the north coast of the island and visit **2 Kranji Beach**—the battle site itself—and the nearby **3 Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve**, a protected area of mangroves that attracts migratory birds from all over the world (and is thus a favourite with birdwatchers).

Finally, travel south to **4 Memories at Old Ford Factory**, a former automotive assembly plant that was swiftly occupied as headquarters of



Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

the Japanese Imperial Army. This is where the British officially surrendered to the Japanese after multiple fierce battles. Later, the factory was used by Nissan to assemble military vehicles for

the Japanese forces. Today, it houses a WWII exhibition gallery showcasing life under Japanese rule—a poignant and disturbing reminder of the horrors of war.

ADDRESS BOOK

➔ CIVIC DISTRICT

CIVILIAN WAR MEMORIAL

War Memorial Park, Beach Road.
www.yoursingapore.com
🚗 Esplanade

ESPLANADE PARK

Connaught Drive.
www.nparks.gov.sg
🚗 City Hall

FORT CANNING PARK

70 River Valley Road.
www.nparks.gov.sg
🚗 Bras Basah

SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

71 Bras Basah Road.
(65) 6332-3222.
www.singaporeartmuseum.sg
🚗 Bras Basah

YMCA

1 Orchard Road.
☎ (65) 6336-6000.
www.ymca.org.sg
🚗 Dhoby Ghaut

➔ CHANGI

CHANGI BEACH PARK

Changi Coast Road.
www.nparks.gov.sg
🚗 Changi Airport

THE CHANGI MUSEUM & CHAPEL

1000 Upper Changi Road North.
☎ (65) 6214-2451.
www.changimuseum.sg
🚗 Changi Airport

CHANGI VILLAGE FOOD CENTRE

2 Changi Village Road.
🚗 Changi Airport

JOHOR BATTERY

Cosford Road,
off Upper Changi Road North.
☎ (65) 6546-9897.
🚗 Changi Airport

SELARANG CAMP

30 Selarang Ring Road.
🚗 Changi Airport

➔ PASIR PANJANG

FORT SILOSO

33 Allanbrooke Road, Sentosa.
☎ (65) 6275-0388.
www.sentosa.com.sg
🚗 HarbourFront

KENT RIDGE PARK

Vigilante Drive, off South Buona Vista Road.
www.nparks.gov.sg
🚗 Queenstown

REFLECTIONS AT BUKIT CHANDU

31K Pepys Road.
☎ (65) 6375-2510.
www.nhb.gov.sg
🚗 Queenstown

➔ KRANJI

KRANJI BEACH BATTLE SITE

Kranji Reservoir Park,
Kranji Way.
www.nparks.gov.sg
🚗 Kranji

KRANJI WAR MEMORIAL AND CEMETERY

9 Woodlands Road.
www.yoursingapore.com
🚗 Kranji

MEMORIES AT OLD FORD FACTORY

351 Upper Bukit Timah Road.
☎ (65) 6462-6724.
www.moff.nas.sg
🚗 Bukit Batok

SUNGEI BULOH WETLAND RESERVE

301 Neo Tiew Crescent.
☎ (65) 6794-1401.
www.sbwr.org.sg
🚗 Kranji