

The World's Most Powerful Passport Is Wasted On Singaporeans. Here's Why.

March 3, 2018 | The Bald Guy & Girl (Both)

Scrolling through my Facebook news feed during one of my coffee breaks, I stumbled upon an interesting piece of news.

Breaking News:

Singapore has the "most powerful" passport in the world

- The Straits Times
(25th October 2017)

Singapore passport ranked "most powerful"

- The Straits Times
(1st March 2018)

I clicked on my favorite part, the "comment's section", just to amuse myself by reading "popcorn worthy" comments made by my fellow Singaporeans.

- "Congratulations and kudos to the government for making our passport the most international recognized in the world"
- "We can now visit 180 countries Visa Free! How cool is that?"
- "What a proud day it is to be a Singaporean"
- "We've come a long way from the days of being just a tiny fishing village"

Visa free access to 180 countries? Well that's great news, for me (and some other avid travelers) at least. But for most Singaporeans in general (let's just say 99% of the population)? How does this news benefit them? (besides shorter queues at immigration counters) How many Singaporeans have made use of their "powerful passport" to visit any of these 180 countries?

And by countries, I mean "exotic countries"; those made possible by only because of the visa free privileges our passport carries. Not those countries like Switzerland, or Iceland where almost any country's passport has excess too.

Will Singaporeans use this privilege to explore the world, expose themselves to other cultures, and embrace new experiences?

I think not.



Enjoying the sunset in **Maputo, Mozambique**

For most of us Singaporeans, we will likely just lord it around on Facebook groups congratulating each other how lucky we are that our passport is so impressive. Next, we will come up with a hundred excuses why we can't fulfill the potential of our passport.

And the question is, "why not?"

Money issues? Unlikely.

Many Singaporeans can afford both a \$1000 smart phone and \$500 branded wallet as far as I know. Dining at expensive Japanese restaurants every week is also a non issue

Commitment issues? Possibly.

After all, the typical Singaporeans life is; study, graduate, get a job, get a car, get a partner, get a flat, have a family, retire, then die.

Mindset issues? Definitely [\(and also ignorance\)](#)

"What? Travel to Ukraine? Aren't they at war? Count me out. I'm going to Iceland" [\(a country which Singaporeans never even heard of before 2010\)](#).

Thanks to Paraguay [\(a country which most Singaporeans can't be bothered to travel to\)](#) for removing visa requirements for Singapore citizens, we managed to edge out Germany for the top spot.



Drenched by the spray at the awesome **Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

So, if you will excuse my ranting above, let me breakdown in detail exactly WHY our passport is wasted on Singaporeans (it's not wasted on "The Girl & I"; we're grateful, and unlike most Singaporeans, we actually use it. And no, not on countries like Switzerland)

My point is, Singaporeans don't even attempt to visit the countries our passport waives visa's for. And here's why.

1. Singaporeans (most) have a "Cultural Diversity Bias"



Traveling by Mokoro in the **Okavango Delta, Botswana**

In other words, many Singaporeans whether consciously or subconsciously, discriminate against other cultures and races unlike our own.

Most Singaporeans are very comfortable in their own environment (or environments similar to our own) and are not willing to accept, or even to be interested to experience other cultures or environment.

India or Bangladesh for holiday? "Eeeeyer!! So smelly, so dirty, the country is filled with rapists. Why would you want to go there!

Africa for a holiday? "There are many black men there, isn't it dangerous? Everyone has AIDS there don't they? I'm not really an animal person (assuming all Africa has are just animals), let's head to New York instead, i hear the factory outlets in the USA have some really good bargains on luxury items!"

Singapore still suffers from a White Supremacy Inferiority Complex. Countries with "white people" as the majority are probably great places to visit (think Australia, NZ, Europe and the USA).

Countries with "yellow skinned" people are some what similar (think Taiwan, Korea and Japan). And when visiting these similar countries, Singaporean's don't feel too far away from home. The foods great, the fashion's great, they love it!

And as for countries with a black majority, Singaporeans don't even consider them as holiday destinations because of "perceived danger" and a perceived "lack of activities to do.

Don't agree? So how many African countries have you been to Singaporeans? When was the last time you visited Bangladesh? What is the ratio of white majority countries you've visited as apposed to black majority countries?

2. Singaporeans (most) are "Ignorant & Skeptical"



A mind blowing experience at **Chernobyl, Ukraine**

Suggest Ukraine as a travel destination and Singaporean's will probably question, "Ukraine? Isn't there a war going on there at the moment? Won't we get killed?"

Singaporeans are skeptical of traveling to "exotic locations" and fulfilling the potential of our red passport because of our lack of knowledge, (ignorance if I may say so) about the world.

We get majority of our news from the tightly controlled government mouthpiece; "The Straits Times". We tend to believe all we read, and many of us actually think we have an "advanced worldview" after acquiring immense knowledge simply by reading the news.

"Ukraine is at war! What if we get shot at or kidnapped by Russian Separatist forces? (Crimea is at war occasionally, but Kiev and Lviv are fine)

Colombia is all about drugs (Pablo Escobar's era was over 20 years ago).

Singaporeans use "these fears" to justify why they shouldn't visit exotic countries. Why would any visit a place where people are supposedly out to kill you?

Cultural ignorance, I call it.

Singaporeans are like ostriches, burying their heads in the sand, oblivious to the world out there, choosing only to immerse themselves in the "world they know, or want to believe".

3. Singaporeans (most) have a "Career 1st/Career Only" mindset



Driving along the Highway of Death, from Kuwait City to Basra, Iraq

In countries like Australia, New Zealand, The U.K, and even Israel, a "Gap Year" (Sabbatical year), aimed at promoting "maturity and independence" is highly encouraged. Most use this "gap" (either before/after University or in the case of Israel, after National Service), to travel the world and widen their horizons.

In Singapore?

It's all about securing "valuable internships", mass spamming of resumes, and competing with our peers to see who secures the "highest paying/coolest sounding job". After securing that much coveted job, next comes years of slogging, perhaps finally finding a partner to settle down with, having kids, and before we know it, we're grand parents with barely any retirement funds to survive on.

Traveling yes. But short trips + "safe countries", because everyone has a loved one they need to come back to (don't we all?). Put your career on hiatus to travel Africa and South America for a year? Not in a typical Singaporean's book (except for a select few with a rich daddy).

4. Singaporeans (most) Are Kiasee (Afraid to die)



Moldova, the least visited country in Europe

Africa? Guerillas, kidnapers and terrorists!

India? Rapists lurking around every corner.

The Middle East? ISIS! Hezbollah, Islamic Jihadists!

Eastern Europe? (and I don't mean Croatia) kidnapers, robbers

It's weird but considering how Kia-Su and money conscious Singaporeans are, I don't think I would be wrong in assuming that most Singaporeans would pass on a \$100 return air ticket to Lebanon in favor of an overpriced \$400 air ticket to Bangkok.

Don't get me wrong, "The Girl" and I don't have a death-wish either. I still want to have kids and be a father someday. And it's not like we don't have a family waiting for us back home.

Just that it's kind of ironic that the very Singaporeans who are so fearful of "danger" are the ones jostling for the cheapest air ticket promotions to some of the most dangerous cities like Paris, Bangkok and J.B. (Yes, those who willingly get stuck in the causeway jam for a couple of hours for Johor's most famous commodity; cheap petrol)

"Paris or Bangkok more dangerous than Africa? Who are you to judge? I go to BKK and JB every other month and nothing's ever happened to me!"

Well, I've visited all of Eastern Europe, a third of the Middle East, and eleven African countries as well as Paris, Bangkok and Johor.

Have you? (until you have, I daresay my opinion carries more weight)

5. Singaporeans (most) are mostly Instagram whores.



Literally Living Life on the Edge, at **Devils Pool, Zambia**

Many Singaporeans prostitute themselves to Instagram and travel according to where they want people to see them at rather than where would be a great place to visit. Don't believe me? Do a poll among your group of friends on what their "bucket list" itinerary would look like.

I'll bet you anyone of my Rolex'es that a typical Singaporeans bucket list contains; "seeing the Northern Lights", climbing the Eiffel Tower, seeing the Cherry Blossoms in Japan and doing a road-trip across the USA to visit the Grand Canyon, Statue of Liberty and the Niagara Falls; pretty much a compilation of the "typical" Instagram post we see almost everyday.

Simply put. If it's not "Insta-worthy", it's not "Singa-worthy".

6. Singaporeans (most) are Sheep



The greatest statue you've never heard of; Hero Monument, **Brest, Belarus**

Let's do a poll. How different from today was Iceland back in say 2010? Did the Blue Lagoon not exist? Did the water from the Gullfoss stop flowing? Or perhaps the glaciers had yet to form, and the "northern lights" decided that they would light up the night sky only in recent years.

You don't think that's the case? Then why are Singaporeans in a desperate rush to visit Iceland only in recent years? What changed in Iceland?

Instagram that's what. Combined with the famous "Singaporean Herd Mentality". So & So went, it looks great, he/she had plenty of likes, therefore I have to go, I have to be seen there & I want to go to Iceland now.

Me: "Hey (typical Singaporean), how about visiting Azerbaijan next?"

Typical Singaporean: Nah, I haven't seen it on Instagram yet.

7. Singaporeans Keep Saying They've "No Money To Travel"



Lazying the day away at **Cupid's Rock, Cyprus**

A typical Singaporean spends \$5k - \$10k on a European vacation consisting of France or Italy.

I spend \$2k on a European vacation to Albania or Ukraine. Are these destinations any less beautiful or inspiring?

Italy has a beautiful coastline. Albania shares that very same coastline (almost) at a cost 3 times lesser. France has a host of many beautiful cities, but then again, so does Ukraine (but Singaporeans don't know that) at a cost 4 times lesser.

Traveling is expensive, but visiting Paris is not.

Traveling is expensive but the owning the latest iPhone is not.

Traveling is expensive, but I need to be decked out in branded stuff.

No money to travel?

8. Singaporeans (most) are generally just behind the times.



Doing absolutely nothing at **Cape Maclear, Malawi**

If I had a dollar for every time I heard, "That country you just went to, it's beautiful. I've never heard of it, but wouldn't mind going on my next trip", I might just be able to add another Rolex to my collection.

By the time a country is actually "popular" among Singaporeans, the rest of the world has probably moved on.

Our passport gives us Singaporeans the privilege of visa free travel to Belarus?

No thanks, let other people go first, if it's nice then I'll go.

Where is that? I don't see pictures of it on Instagram.

Belarus? It's probably dangerous, I have a family I need to come back to.

Singaporeans; always at the back of the queue.

Final Thoughts



The ancient city of **Byblos, Lebanon**

So, "The Girl" & I are a married Singaporean couple; and the reason for this post is because we (it's more of me, the Bald Guy actually), find it really annoying that while Singaporeans are entitled (because they get this powerful passport by default) to literally visit almost any country they please, they don't. They will never make the most of the Singapore passport.

Our passport is more useful in the hands of an African refugee; at least they'll use it to make their way to some country to build themselves a new life. Many nationalities would kill to have the travel freedom granted by a Singapore passport.

But us Singaporeans? We're oblivious to it. All most of us do about it is comment and "share" the news with our friends on Facebook. Singaporeans could have a passport limiting travel to 20 countries and that would probably suffice. What a waste of a passport!





Fun at the mud volcanoes, **Gobustan, Azerbaijan**

Perhaps I shouldn't use broad strokes to "label" everyone. There are some Singaporeans out there exploring the world and encouraging their friends to do the same; "The Girl" and I definitely aren't the only ones.

But the majority of Singaporeans erect barriers and bury their heads in the sand, choosing to believe that they understand the world perfectly simply by watching the news. That's the equivalent of learning how to execute free kicks from YouTube and believing that they can bend it ([the ball](#)) better than Beckham can.

Singaporeans! What are you doing with your passport? Don't agree? Prove us wrong then.