

200 years in 20 objects

The past two centuries have left an imprint on everyday life in Singapore. We look at 20 objects that highlight key developments, one for each decade.



1820s: Treaty of Friendship and Alliance

This treaty signed by the East India Company with Sultan Hussein and Temenggong Abdul Rahman fully ceded sovereignty over Singapore to the British

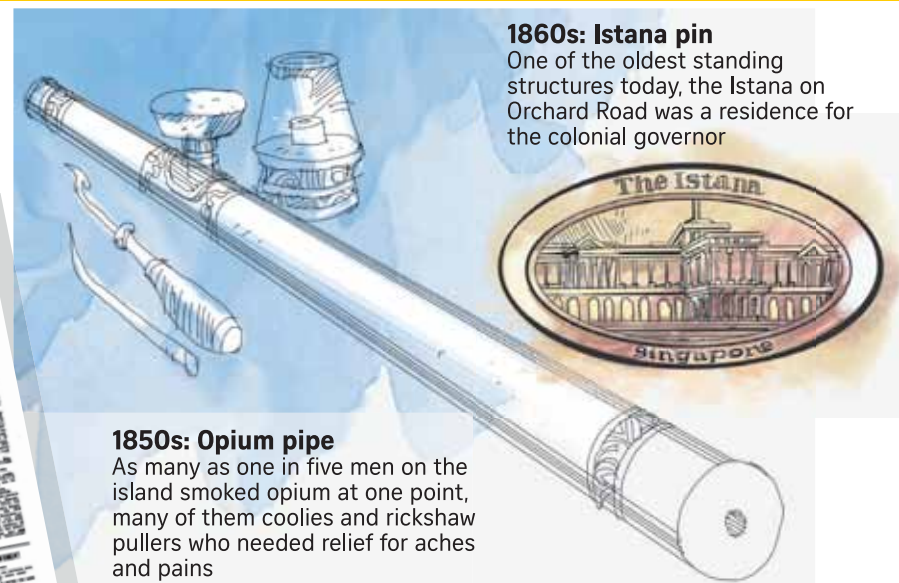


1830s: Raffles Institution school badge

Although Thomas Stamford Raffles laid the foundation stone for a school in 1823, it was only a decade later that a functioning school was up and running on this island. The badge is a more recent addition

1840s: First edition of The Straits Times

It was not the first newspaper in Singapore, but The Straits Times is one of the world's oldest surviving newspapers dating back to 1845



1850s: Opium pipe

As many as one in five men on the island smoked opium at one point, many of them coolies and rickshaw pullers who needed relief for aches and pains

1860s: Istana pin

One of the oldest standing structures today, the Istana on Orchard Road was a residence for the colonial governor



1870s: POSB passbook

The bank most are familiar with began under the Straits Settlements' postal department in 1877, to offer affordable banking to ordinary workers



1880s: F&N bottle

One of Singapore's oldest companies, Fraser & Neave (F&N) was founded by two Scotsmen in 1883 and sold soft drinks and cordials



1890s: Golf ball

The first golf club, the Singapore Golf Club, was formed and the game became a hit among the island's well-heeled. The club later merged with another to form the Singapore Island Country Club

1900s: Piece of railway track

The first stretch of the Singapore-Kranji railway line opened in 1903 and when an extension to Woodlands was ready, connected travellers to Malaya with a ferry service across the Johor Strait



1910s: Singapore Sling

The gin-based cocktail was developed by a bartender at the Raffles Hotel and has become the drink associated with this island

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1920s: Axe Brand Universal Oil

One of Singapore's smallest but more well-known products globally, Axe Oil began to be produced. It is named after the axe as the item used to be an essential item, to cut wood for fire



1930s: Samsui woman's hat

The trademark cloth headgear distinguished Samsui women, many of whom arrived from China to toil under the blazing sun to build a rapidly urbanising nation's infrastructure



1940s: Banana notes

The Japanese occupied Singapore during World War II and the currency they issued was nicknamed "banana money" after the fruit trees on the \$10 notes



1950s: Singapore Flag

The red and white flag was designed after Singapore gained self-government within the British Empire in 1959, and adopted later that year. It was retained when Singapore became a state in Malaysia, and upon independence in 1965

1960s: HDB key envelope

Public housing was built at breakneck speed to house a young nation, and the keys to their first Housing Board flat continue to be a rite of passage for many Singaporeans



1970s: Model Singapore Airlines plane

The national carrier was incorporated in 1972 following the split of Malaysia-Singapore Airlines, and has built up a reputation as one of the world's best airlines and helped make Singapore a leading air hub



1980s: Singa the lion

The mascot for the national courtesy campaign became a well-known icon for young and old alike. He even "resigned" in 2013 as part of a stunt by the kindness movement to jolt public awareness



1990s: In-vehicle unit

The IU, as it has become known, became an essential part of every motor vehicle with the introduction of electronic road pricing

2000s: NEWater bottle

Technology to recycle or reclaim water achieved a milestone in 2003 when this made-in-Singapore essential was rolled out. NEWater now meets a sizeable proportion of the island's water needs



2010s: Olympic gold medal

Top sports victories are rare for a nation with many other firsts, till the Republic celebrated its first-ever Olympic gold in 2016 when swimmer Joseph Schooling won the 100m butterfly race at the Rio de Janeiro Games

