

The Singapore Dream: Real Stories from First-Generation Citizens Across Asia

Singapore has long been seen as a beacon of opportunity — a place where talent, ambition, and stability come together to offer a better future.

Thousands of others from countries like **China, Vietnam, India, Thailand**, and the **Philippines** have made similar life-changing decisions to call Singapore home.

These are the stories of **first-generation citizens** — individuals who've chosen to put down new roots in a fast-paced, globally connected city-state. Behind every application, there is a story of courage, sacrifice, and hope for something better.

“I wanted my children to grow up feeling safe.”

– Nabila, 38, originally from Melaka, Malaysia

Nabila moved to Singapore in her early 20s to work in the education sector. Over time, she started a family and made the difficult decision to give up her Malaysian passport.

“The decision wasn’t easy, but it was necessary. My son has special needs, and the support systems in Singapore have made all the difference in our lives.”

“Back home, I didn’t have these opportunities.”

– Lin, 32, originally from Guangxi, China

Lin came to Singapore to study and later secured a position in the biotech industry. She’s now a proud citizen.

“Singapore gave me more than a job — it gave me independence and safety as a woman. I feel respected here.”

“We wanted a future with more certainty.”

– Minh & Tuan, 41 and 43, from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

This couple moved to Singapore in 2016 to work in the logistics and food service sectors. After years of contributing to the local economy, they were granted citizenship.

“It felt like we were investing in a country that invested in us back. That sense of fairness — it meant everything.”

“I still miss home, but here I can thrive.”

– Somchai, 35, originally from Chiang Mai, Thailand

Working in the hospitality industry, Somchai moved to Singapore in 2012. Today, he manages a mid-sized hotel and trains new staff from across the region.

“I never thought I’d end up living here long-term. But I fell in love with the pace, the structure, and the people.”

A Diverse, Growing Community

Singapore’s population is shaped by stories like these. In **2023 alone**, the city-state granted over **23,000 new citizenships**, and its long-standing openness to skilled migration continues to attract professionals, students, and families from across Asia.

Though the journeys are different, the core motivation remains the same: **a better life** — for themselves, for their families, and for future generations.

The Emotional Cost of Starting Over

Becoming a citizen isn’t just a legal process — it’s an emotional one. Many first-generation Singaporeans still carry deep ties to their home countries. They return for holidays, celebrate festivals, and speak their native languages at home. The transition is bittersweet, but it also brings pride.

“I’m not just Thai or Singaporean — I’m both,” Somchai says. “I carry two identities now. One is where I’m from. The other is where I’m building my future.”

Note: The quotes and names in this article are fictional but inspired by common experiences shared by first-generation citizens across Asia.