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## My Four Years in Singapore

Moving is always the most difficult. If leaving San Diego was tough, then leaving Singapore is eternal torture. There are too many good memories here. Of course, when we first arrived to Singapore, it was an explosion of cultural shock in our faces, especially me and my younger brother. Singapore was the complete opposite of San Diego. The peace of the suburbs was replaced by the din of traffic and people. The gloomy, cold and dry weather was switched to an incredibly hot and humid atmosphere, with an occasional thunder storm during the hottest of days. I remember, unable to cope with the temperature a few days after we arrived, my brother and I went for a swim, only to run back inside immediately after seeing a single bolt of lightning.

Then school started. I felt like I was being zapped by lightning. I didn't know anything were studying, and even worse, how they were studying. It was a note-taking system and I had never done anything like it before in my life. I didn't even get used to it after a year. Fifth grade was, undoubtedly, the worst year of my schooling. As if school was bad enough, it used to take us an hour or more to reach school by bus and train. Mornings were not bad because it was cool with little sun, but afternoons were unbearable. And yet, my brother and I never complained and did it day after day for almost three months. I'm still grateful that we moved closer to school and got a car, even if it may have made some incredibly strange noises while driving and broke down randomly and started up two minutes later.

The best part of the school year was the one week, when most of the grade travelled to Malaysia or Indonesia, camping and living in the wilderness. My first OBT was to Kota Tinggi. That was the first time I travelled to a different country without my parents and the thrill was undeniable. Sixth grade was my favorite OBT, on a quiet beach for turtles on Tioman Island. Seventh grade was all about the mountains, dawn till dusk was dedicated to trekking. I made so many friends during those trips. My friends are one of the key reasons it makes it so hard to leave. I've created so many good memories with them, from caving in Cameron Highlands to singing Coco C line in our last French class in eighth grade. I didn't really understand what leaving school really meant until my last day, when I found that I wouldn't see their faces every day at school.

The best thing about where we lived in Singapore is that the ECP was next door. We were free to go and bike or run on the path just walking distance from our house. I can vividly recall and laugh at all the times that my brother and I have crashed and fallen on the ECP. All of our triathlons took place over there. I love how Singapore was able to incorporate green spaces and bike paths even in the middle of the CBD. My triathlon team once biked all the way up to Lau Pa Sat, the super popular hawker center.

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I never actually had local food. The smell of the specialties like Nasi Lemak and Singaporean noodles drove me away from food courts. While it may be tasty, I could never take the smell and probably never will. My favorite food in Singapore would be GYG's Burrito Bowl closely followed by Bisibele Bhath from MTR. I love going to Din Tai Fung, Fat Boy's and Ved's favorite Ichiban Boshi. The way he attacks and spears the poor sea creatures with his fork because he can't use chopsticks is forever seared in my mind.

Speaking of trying new things, we also travelled to plenty of new and exotic places. As a result of Singapore having a perfect geographical positioning in Asia, everything was just a few hours away by plane. We took full advantage and travelled to numerous countries (Cambodia, Maldives, India, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and United Arab Emirates) while living in Singapore. My favorite trip, during our stay in Singapore, hands down, were the Maldives. I also got to go to Denmark as part of an exchange program for my school. By learning the cultures of Denmark, sharing the cultures of Singapore and comparing them to the American culture, I realized how much I evolved and changed in the four years of Singapore.

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