

Step-by-step guide to see superb sights in Singapore

By Jennani Durai SINGAPORE, The Straits Times/Asia News Network
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SINGAPORE--Singapore's urbanites are increasingly taking to exploring the city on foot.

At least three walking groups have sprung up here in the last two years that focus on the city's heritage.

"People complain that Singapore is too small and there's nothing to see," says Jeya Ayadurai, 52, who started a walking group called The Jeywalkers two years ago with some friends. "But when you start walking, you discover the beauty of the country."

The group now counts about 15 members, who take turns to come up with a 10 to 12km walking route every Sunday morning, says Ayadurai, who is the director of Changi Museum.

The group's heritage walks include one from the Padang to the museum—a route which Allied prisoners were forced to march during the Japanese Occupation.

Solonia Teodros, who started a walking community here last year with her friend Abena Ofori, believes the fast pace of change in Singapore has prompted people to cherish what the city has to offer now.

"New areas are going to keep popping up so there is more interest in the underlying story of Singapore," says the 30-year-old American, who moved to Singapore four years ago and runs a social initiatives consultancy.

Ofori, 27, who works as a team operations manager for the Earth Hour campaign, adds: "If you experience a city by walking instead of sitting in a bus or a car, you become more in tune with and connected to it."

The Ghanaian was born and raised here.

The two women adapted a walking initiative that started in Vancouver, Canada, in 2007. Called Jane's Walk, the movement was started to honor American-Canadian Jane Jacobs, an urban activist who studied urban planning and championed walking as a way of getting to know a city. She died in 2006 at age 89.

While Jane's Walk events usually take place once a year in May, the group has held five events here this year that were attended by more than 100 walking enthusiasts, says Teodros.

These included a food-themed walk in Katong, a heritage walk in Bukit Brown cemetery and a walk with a literary theme through the Bras Basah and Victoria Street areas led by



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poet-academic Kirpal Singh, an associate professor of English literature at the Singapore Management University.

Teodros says: "It's so much easier to just hop on an air-conditioned bus here, but it's only when you walk that you get a real sense of places and how the character of each area and neighborhood differs."