

Quaran-tips, Packing List & Coping Mechanisms

Hello fellow quarantiners. Here is a suggested packing list, coping mechanisms and lesson I've learnt while being in quarantine at a SHN Dedicated Facility. Please feel free to take what you need.

ESSENTIALS TO PACK:

- Digital thermometer (some hotels provide for free, but it's always good to have your own, just in case)
- Multi-plug adaptor
- USB fan (for ventilation in case you get a room with sealed windows)
- Metal cutlery / plates / bowl / mug (eating out of a plastic container gets exhausting and this somewhat helps reduce plastic waste)
- Dishwashing soap / sponge / dish drying towels
- Water bottle (some hotels do not provide bottled water, only tap)
- Scissors
- Sharp knife
- Masking tape
- Wet wipes
- Surface cleaner
- Febreze (lack of ventilation can make the fabric surfaces/curtains in the room extremely dank. The Febreze Ambi Pur version helps a lot with countering cigarette smoke/smell. Yes, I had someone who smoked close to my room.)
- Bag sealers / rubber bands
- Laundry liquid / clothes drying line / 3M hooks
- Sarong or a long shawl (to tape onto the wall for a visual background in Zoom calls / drape over table tops for a less dreadful dining experience)
- Fuzzy bedroom slippers
- Fluffy sweaters (centralised air conditioning can get really cold, especially when it rains)
- A pillow / pillowcase you love
- Yoga mat

LUXURIES TO CONSIDER:

- Chromecast / HDMI cable
- Kindle
- Scented candles (preferably the ones in a glass jar and cover for better safety / helps nullify the stench) P.S. Some hotels do not allow scented candles btw.
- Nut butter (breakfast spreads / cereal)
- Magiclean Dry Wipes to "sweep" the floor.
- Desk fan (ventilation is a major issue in my hotel room due to the sealed windows. I considered purchasing a strong PowerPac USB desk fan for \$20 bucks or so, but in the end my housemate graciously sent over my KDK desk fan, which has immensely helped with air circulation and drying wet towels)
- Old Hen cold brew coffee. I was not very prepared to accommodate my coffee needs and thought I could put up with 3 in 1 sachets for 14 days after a steady intake of

lattes. Old Hen is a local cafe that delivers cold brew coffee/drinks which are well packaged and is ideal to be stored in the hotel fridge for about 3 to 5 days.

<https://www.OLDHENCoffee.com/online-order>

COPING MECHANISMS:

- Buying myself lilies. From what I know to be true, lily buds tend to have a lifespan of 10 days, watching it blossom and wither alongside my quarantine days brought me great comfort and helped me feel the sense of time passing. I highly recommend getting yourself flowers, especially ones that do not come in excessive packaging and frills. I purchased 5 stalks of lilies from Far East Flora Wholesale Market: <https://fareastfloramarket.com/>
- Yoga Classes on Zoom via ClassPass. I recently discovered an excellent yoga instructor who is extremely capable in coordinating Zoom yoga classes and attentive towards your individual needs/abilities. He is Priyan from Nithya Priyan School Of Yoga. I am an existing ClassPass user (which is great if you wanna sign up for other virtual non-yoga classes) but you can also sign up for classes on their website: <https://priyan.yoga/schedule>
- Notebook and pen. (I work as a writer and writing is the way I make sense of the world. But I don't think you need to be a writer to enjoy the value of penning everything down to help your mind feel less crowded. I jotted down every minute detail of what was happening to me, MOM calls, meal times, temperature, weather and most importantly, what I wanted to do and what I ended up doing each day)
- Schedule periodic video calls with people you love and those who love you back. Having a set calendar of check-in calls really helped me get through the sudden pangs of loneliness, it also gave me something to look forward to every few days)
- Plate your SHN food whenever you can. Someone in this group recommended it and I am happy to report that they were absolutely spot on. It helps with mood and portion control.

QUARAN-TIPS UPON ARRIVAL:

- Test out every aspect of your hotel room, when you first arrive. Every light switch, tap, plug point, telephone, doorbell. Every nook and cranny. Run a speed test of your WIFI. This is how I discovered that my hotel phone was not working, the kettle was a bit rusty and the WIFI times out every 15 minutes. Gather as much information as you can from your hotel, especially with regards to their designated timings for laundry, fresh linen, meals and delivery service (some hotels do not allow round-the-clock delivery). The Oasia Hotel Novena staff have been really swift in resolving the issues I encountered.
- Create designated quadrants in your living space. I have an average sized room, no balcony or bath tub, but two gorgeous bay windows. First thing I did was to create a workspace, kitchen, reading/rest space, dining and a place to take video calls.
- Homer App. The app only "recognised my phone number" on Day 2. The Ministry of Manpower and the SHN hotline both advised me to record my temperature three times a day, manually until the Homer app works for me and they assured me that it was no fault of mine that the app was not functional. MOM also called twice a day to check in until the app finally worked.
- RedMart. <https://redmart.lazada.sg/> Affordable option for dry groceries.

- Ironing board. This is a hack I highly recommend to folks who need to conduct live streams or board meetings and do not have movable furniture/desks in their room, and their only table is facing their bed. The ironing board came in really handy for me as it allowed me to situate by the window/a decent flat background.
- Never take advice/feedback from people who have never been through quarantine. Do not allow anyone to tell you what you are going through and/or how you are supposed to get through it. Every SHN experience varies according to an individual's circumstances, finances and privileges. It is a costly and strenuous exercise. Please do everything you can to look after yourself, in the ways you know and with the means you have.

P.S. Much of the above applies to folks who are single/staying alone, which is a privilege in itself. I acknowledge that this may not apply in entirety to folks in SHN with kids and partners. Wishing you the absolute best! :)



Ironing Board livestream studio hack

Johor Bahru to Singapore Border Crossing Information & Best Practices

Hello fellow travellers and quarantiners. I am a Malaysian citizen holding an EPass and crossed the Johor Bahru - Singapore border via land travel, through the PCA (Periodic Commuting Arrangement). On Nov 20, 2020, the Singapore Government enforced new regulations/requirements for Malaysian travellers which included a PCR test 72 hours prior, a 14-days SHN instead of 7 days and the mandatory quarantine at a SHN dedicated facility instead of the hotel of our choice. Here are the facts, departure day procedures I've gathered and some best practices that helped me get by:

Please be advised that border-crossing procedures are continuously changing, therefore parts of this document may or may not apply to you. For the most recent updates, refer to <https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/pca/requirements-and-process>

NECESSARY PRE-TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

- Printed Approved PCA
- Negative PCR Test. [Medical report must be in English and issued by an accredited lab/clinic, contain your passport number and dated exactly 72 hours before your trip. Easiest and unfortunately expensive strategy is to take your passport and have the test done at a private hospital. They know exactly what to do and will issue your report within 24 to 36 hours.]
- Printed Health Declaration Form [submit 72 hours prior to travel, ICA will prompt you via email to update/resubmit this form if your PCR test is positive or if you came into contact with anyone Covid positive]: <https://eservices.ica.gov.sg/sqarrivalcard/>
- Work Permit / EPass card
- Passport
- Malaysian IC
- Singapore SimCard
- Install Trace Together and Homer app. It will not be activated yet, best to just have it ready.
- PRINT OUT ALL DOCUMENTS. Keep them in a sturdy file.
- Recent updates and further information will be available here: <https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/pca/requirements-and-process>
- ***A signed letter from your company's HR declaring your need to travel interstate and internationally. The letter must specifically state your travel dates and mode of travel. (you will need this original letter and your approved PCA printed out and a photocopied set to submit to the police, when applying for an interstate travel permit during CMCO)
- ***Police permit for interstate travel during CMCO/lockdown. (I travelled from Selangor to Johor Bahru, so I got this done as my nearest police station in Subang Jaya. The police will stamp the original HR letter and PCA letter and you need to show these 2 documents at every roadblock.)

*NOTE: Points marked with *** refer to information/procedures that were valid during Malaysia's Movement Control Order which restricted interstate travel.*

JB SENTRAL TO WOODLANDS CHECKPOINT / DEPARTURE DAY PROCEDURE:

- Go directly to JB Sentral's CIQ Drop Off Point on Jalan Sultan Iskandar:
<https://goo.gl/maps/D1HMMuJ3bCAbYkvf9>
You can take a cab or get someone to drop you off. There is no place for long goodbyes, you have to alight the car and go straight into the elevator that will take you one floor up, walk across the overhead bridge and you will see the first check in point.
- Walk to the Immigration Point as instructed. Be ready to produce all your printed/necessary documents multiple times.
- SHUTTLE BUS from JB Sentral to Woodlands Checkpoint operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm, at roughly 30 minute intervals. It is a **free** service. The bus operator will wait for more passengers to fill up, this may take more than 30 minutes. My shuttle bus did not have a luggage carrier at the bottom and it was really cramped. Be prepared to carry your luggage up and onto the bus. The bus staff/enforcers will not assist you even if you are elderly and/or unable.
- At the shuttle bus point, you must have your mask on at all times. Ventilation is dire as there are no fans and it can get really humid and sweaty. There is one convenience store and this is the last place you can purchase bottled water/snacks/whatever you need before you end up at your SHN facility in Singapore.
- The shuttle bus journey to Woodlands Checkpoint is approximately 10 minutes.
- Upon arrival at Woodlands Checkpoint, procedures will move at a rapid pace. SG enforcers/staff will help you and your luggage disembark the shuttle bus and usher you every step of the way towards the Immigration checkpoint.
- You will be asked to sit down with an officer who will read out the rules/laws you must abide by and explain what is going to happen to you. You must verbally accept the terms. If you are placed in a SHN Dedicated Facility, you will be issued a pink dot sticker to wear. You will NOT be told which hotel you will be placed in, at this point.
- In your Health Declaration form, IF YOU DECLARED 'YES' to visiting a hospital in the last 14 days, you will be brought to a medical tent. The doctor will take your temperature, ask you to fill up your particulars (including your SG phone number and residential address) and the reason why you visited a hospital. Prior to this journey, I visited a hospital for follow up with an orthopaedic specialist and of course the required PCR test for this trip. Ironic but hey, this is what was asked of me.
- At the customs checkpoint, the officers will thoroughly inspect every zipped bag and folded item in your luggage. If you have medicine/supplements, you will be asked to explain your usage of them and/or produce a pharmacist's/doctor's letter.
- Once done, you will be ushered to a shuttle bus point that has seats and social distancing. The staff/enforcers will assist you with your luggage. Use this time to change your Sim Card.
- I only discovered where I would be quarantined for 14 days, when the bus pulled over at the lobby of Oasia Hotel Novena.
- SHN Hotline (provided by ICA): +65 68125555

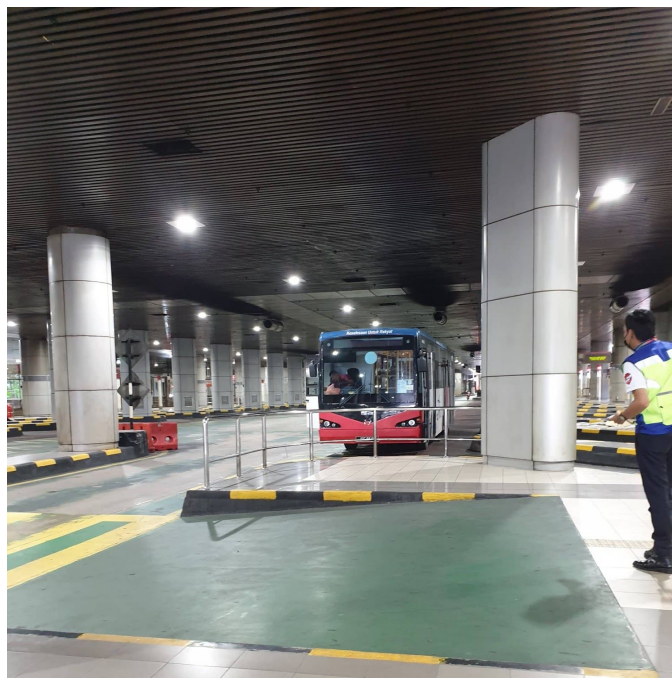
BEST PRACTICES:

- Print out and file everything.
- Carry cash in MYR and SGD (at least \$300 in each currency as back up. Most transactions in Malaysia prefer cash and transactions in Singapore are usually via credit card/online prepayment)
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Pack your belongings in travel organisers. (Daiso/Muji is great for this)
- Carry breathable face mask, wet wipes, pocket tissue / towel, hand sanitiser
- Bring a notebook and pen down everything that is happening to you. This really helped me cope with the anxiety of not knowing what could happen next.
- Upon arrival at your SHN facility/hotel, immediately ask the staff who is checking you in about:
 - Windows (sealed/balcony) - you may/may not be able to change your room but it is always good to know what you need to brace yourself for.
 - WIFI situation - conduct a speed test anyway: [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net)
 - Designated timings for meals, laundry services, fresh linen, delivery hours (some hotels do not allow round-the-clock delivery)
 - Hotel's phone number / contact info, for daily needs/emergencies

RELIABLE SUPPORT GROUPS:

- Getting Back home to SG 🇸🇬
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/541094413507820/about>
- Singapore Hotel Quarantine Information & Experience
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2797259530372365/about>

Wishing you a smooth and successful journey forward. :)



Shuttle Bus from JB Sentral to Woodlands Checkpoint