

URECA Proposal Submitted by (Student Name)

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ida Fadzillah Leggett

Project Title: Researching Food Markets in Singapore and Malaysia to Better Understand Cultural Preferences in Terms of Food Availability, Prices, and Popularity

Over the 2023 Summer I will be helping Dr. Ida Leggett lay the groundwork for future field research in Southeast Asia. This exploratory research will be conducted over the course of 2 weeks, and is part of a larger focus on the cultural context of food and foodways (the process and conceptions around finding, making, and eating food) in non-Western societies, and examines how two bordering nations, Singapore and Malaysia, conceptualize food and health. The overall aim of her research is to better understand the relationship of food availability to the rising rates of Type 2 diabetes in both countries, which are some of the highest in the region of Southeast Asia (Singapore) and the world (Malaysia) (“Singapore Is No. 2 Nation With Most Diabetics: 5 Things About Diabetes”). In this first stage of research, I will be going to Singapore with Dr. Leggett from May 22 to June 4. While there I will help Dr. Leggett explore the contents, layouts, and purchasing patterns of two different kinds of food markets: the first is the traditional wet market, usually outdoors and selling fruits, vegetables, and meats on a daily basis. This is where most Singaporeans of all ethnicities (the three main ethnic groups in Singapore are the Chinese, Malays, and Indians) do their daily food shopping. The second kind of food market I will explore is the Western supermarket, of which there are several including Cold Storage, and Fair Price. While walking through both types of markets, I will survey what goods are being sold, what is popular, at what prices, and also the perceived demographics of the shoppers. The data gathered will help

ascertain the bigger picture of how food availability defines healthy and nonhealthy options locally.

During the second week of research Dr. Leggett will go to Kuala Lumpur and conduct research in the same venues. While Dr. Leggett is in Malaysia I will stay in Singapore and be in charge of a secondary survey of the wet markets and supermarkets, narrowing down the inventory of fruits, vegetables, and meats regularly available and purchased. I will be learning ethnographic field skills through my observations and notetaking in the markets, and also be in charge of photographing (with permission) the stalls and shelves. I will not be conducting any interviews on this trip, so IRB permission is not required. At the end of the research project, upon returning to Murfreesboro on June 5, Dr. Leggett and I will co-author an article on “Foodways in Southeast Asia” and submit it to the *Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography* for possible publication. As part of this research project, I will also create a presentation on my field research for a presentation at the Study Abroad Fair in Fall 2023.

References

Jayasanker, Laresh. *Sameness in Diversity: Food and Globalization in Modern America*. 2020.

“Singapore Is No. 2 Nation with Most Diabetics: 5 Things About Diabetes.” *Singapore Is No. 2*

Nation With Most Diabetics: 5 Things About Diabetes | the Straits Times, 8 Apr. 2016

www.straitstimes.com/singapore/singapore-is-no-2-nation-with-most-diabetics-5-things-about-diabetes.

Akhtar, Sohail, et al. “Prevalence of Type-2 Diabetes and Prediabetes in Malaysia: A Systematic

Review and Meta-analysis.” *Prevalence of Type-2 Diabetes and Prediabetes in Malaysia: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis* | PLOS ONE, 27 Jan. 2022,

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263139>.

Project Timeline/Itinerary

May 21st: Depart from Nashville BNA Airport.

May 22nd -: Arrive at Singapore SIN Airport. Check into Salvation Army Praise Haven center for lodging. (Lodging dates for this location: 5/22-5/28)

May 23th- May 28th: Visit the traditional wet markets to survey what goods are being sold, what is popular, at what prices, and also the perceived demographics of the shoppers, accompanying Dr. Leggett

May 29th- June 2nd: Visit the Western supermarkets to do the same as noted in the above dates. However, this will take place on my own as Dr. Leggett will spend the second week doing part of the research in Malaysia.

June 3rd: This is a free day to revisit a location if necessary and to prepare for the trip by to Nashville.

June 4th-June 5th: Depart from Singapore SIN Airport.

June 6th: Begin to create a final research paper with Dr. Leggett to co-author an article on "Foodways in Southeast Asia" and submit it to the *Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography* for possible publication. This will take multiple meetings with Dr. Leggett to review drafts, annotations, and presentation details. I am projecting that the completed research project will be completed before the last week of July to the first week of August.



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Sun, May 21, 2023

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Flight 2 of 4 UA29

Class: United Economy (Q)

Sun, May 21, 2023

10:50 AM

San Francisco, CA, US (SFO)

Mon, May 22, 2023

06:45 PM

Singapore, SG (SIN)

Flight 3 of 4 UA28

Class: United Economy (W)

Sun, Jun 04, 2023

09:00 PM

Singapore, SG (SIN)

Sun, Jun 04, 2023

09:20 PM

San Francisco, CA, US (SFO)

Flight 4 of 4 UA283

Class: United Economy (W)

Sun, Jun 04, 2023

11:06 PM

San Francisco, CA, US (SFO)

Traveler Details

eTicket number:

Mon, Jun 05, 2023

05:34 AM

Nashville, TN, US (BNA)

Seats: **BNA-SFO 35C**
SFO-SIN 57B
SIN-SFO 57J
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Sun, Mar 19, 2023

Airfare:	1643.00 USD
U.S. Transportation Tax:	42.20 USD
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U.S. APHIS User Fee:	3.83 USD
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Total: 2073.35 USD

