Singapore

Perceived by many to be the cleanest country in the world, Singapore consists of a large main island close to the Malaysian mainland and about 60 smaller islands. It is known as "Lion Island", but, contrary to popular belief, Singapore is not a sanctuary for wild lions. So, where does the name come from?

The name of the country itself is derived from Singa Pura, which, in Malaysian, means "lion city". But this does not refer to a lion, but rather a Merlion – a lion-headed fish riding on the waves. The fish-tail image of the Merlion symbolises the humble beginnings of Singapore as a coastal fishing village.

The Merlion symbol was designed by Alec Fraser-Brunner in 1964, and, in 1986, The Lion Head was officially adopted as the national symbol of Singapore. According to the country's National Heritage Committee, The Lion Head also represents the three core values of the nation: courage, strength, and excellence.

Though tiny, its outstanding modern success comes from its physical location and its status as a financial marketplace, built upon a legislative, regulatory, and institutional framework that allowed easy and secure overseas transactions years before other Asian countries opened up their markets.

Singapore is not just one island; approximately how many islands are there?

How many years were there between the design of the Merlion – or "Lion Head" – symbol and its adoption as Singapore's national symbol?

What values does The Lion Head symbol represent?