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Muji's biggest store in Singapore opens with exciting offerings



1 of 2 Muji's flagship store at Plaza Singapura is its 11th store in Singapore. In addition to Muji staples, the store also has new-to-market concepts, product lines, a gallery space and an embroidering station.

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No-frills Japanese label opens its biggest Singapore store in Plaza Singapura, rolling out new features such as a gallery space and an embroidering station

Natasha Ann Zachariah ✉

The retail scene in Singapore might be riding out some tough times, but there is no stopping popular lifestyle brand Muji.

The no-frills Japanese label, known for its minimalist products, opened its biggest store here yesterday. Located on the first floor of Plaza Singapura mall, it spans 1,640 sq m. It is also the first flagship store in South-east Asia for the brand.

Mr Yuki Yamamoto, 45, director and general manager for the Southwest Asia and Oceania division of Ryohin Keikaku, Muji's parent company, says the brand has spent two years looking for a big space, even as many other retailers have shuttered or stopped expanding. This is Muji's 11th store here.



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He says: "It's a good opportunity for Muji to expand as it's not a luxury brand. We have good-quality products at reasonable prices."

At the new store, shoppers can browse an extensive range of about 5,000 products, which include fashion, furniture, homeware items and stationery.

They can also catch a breather at the 70-seater Cafe&Meal Muji, which serves deli sets, desserts and drinks - the brand's third eatery here. The menu has two exclusive items: Pork Katsu Donburi (\$15.90) and Cheese Baked Butter Curry Chicken Rice (\$17.90).

But beyond these offerings, the flagship store is filled with many "attractions" that would please Muji fans, says Mr Yamamoto.

Highlights that cannot be found in other stores here include a gallery space, which will host exhibitions and workshops; an embroidery station, where customers can have cute motifs or letters stitched onto apparel; and exclusive apparel and furniture lines.

The interior is snapshot-worthy too. It is designed by Super Potato, a well-respected Tokyo-based design studio that has also done hotel projects in Singapore.

Heavy on wood furnishings, which make the store feel cosy and homely, there are also quirky installations, such as potted plants dangling above a display island and Muji's famed pens artistically suspended from the ceiling in the stationery section.

Given that Singapore shoppers are familiar with the brand, Mr Yamamoto says this store takes the Muji experience to the next level. "We can't just provide products for sale. It's time to disseminate the philosophy of Muji too. It's not just for shopping, but we hope that customers will spend time here."

Ms Nicole Wu, 32, a marketing assistant manager, is planning a trip to the flagship this weekend. She likes that the store has other features beyond just products. "It feels like a personalised experience when you go to Muji for a workshop, for example, and you get to know more about the brand. It's enticing that there's more to do beyond shop."

•Muji Plaza Singapura is at 01-10 Plaza Singapura, 68 Orchard Road and opening hours are 10am to 10pm daily.

FOUR HIGHLIGHTS IN THE STORE TO CHECK OUT

1 FOUND MUJI

The brand's trend-hunting designers scour the world to find inspiration from everyday objects.

Once they have found them, the designers give the products the Muji treatment and tweak various aspects of the object, such as size, material and colour, to fit the lifestyle of Muji customers.

The collection includes a simple bench influenced by the traditional Chinese oak bench and woven baskets from Lithuania. Prices range from \$3.60 for a tempered glass cup to \$189 for an oak bench.

This month, the Found Muji collection focuses on handmade products by traditional Indian craftsmen, such as intricately woven rugs, braided baskets and bags made with delicate block print textile inspired by the historic city of Jaipur.

Since 2003, the brand has built an archive of products that have influenced the Found Muji collection.

Some of these are on display at Open Muji, a gallery space in the store. The exhibition runs until Sept 3. Thereafter, the Open Muji space will be used for other exhibitions, workshops and talks. The brand is exploring future collaborations with local artists and designers.

2 MUJI LABO AND IDEE





Muji Labo (above), an apparel offshoot from the main collection, features clothes with a simple style for both men and women. The understated range comes in colours such as white, black and blue. Prices range from \$29 for a pair of sandals to \$139 for a dress.

If Muji's minimalist products are too clean-cut for your style, check out Idee, a new-to-market line that features furniture, decorative accessories, kitchenware, fabrics, jewellery and art pieces in more colourful designs. Prices range from \$6.90 for a handkerchief to \$5,990 for a sofa.

Designers for Idee (pronounced yi-day) work with the best craftsmen from around the world to produce wares such as carpets woven in Turkey and the renowned Nambu ironware from Japan.

3 EMBROIDERY STATION



Create your own bespoke product by adding custom embroidery on a Muji T-shirt, shirt or handkerchief. The embroidery is done by a machine.

There are more than 200 motifs to choose from, such as animals, plants, musical notes and even a Merlion. These come in two sizes: a small motif costs \$3 and a big motif costs \$5.

You can also choose to have letters embroidered onto items. There are three fonts available and they come in different sizes. The first 10 letters cost \$5, while every additional letter is priced at fifty cents each.

Expect to wait at least two hours to collect your embroidered product, or up to three days if demand is high.

Those who have old Muji apparel can also take them to the store to jazz up with new add-ons.

4 BAG WALL





Last month, Muji Singapore held a tote bag design competition where students were challenged to design an image to fit the theme Rediscovering Singapore.

The top five winners had their designs printed on cotton tote bags, now displayed prominently on a wall (above) in the new store.

These bags are for sale at \$10 each. All proceeds from the sale of the bags will be donated to the [Children's Cancer Foundation](#).

A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Straits Times on July 22, 2017, with the headline 'Expect more at Muji's first regional flagship'. [Print Edition](#) | [Subscribe](#)

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