



# PACKAGING MATTERS

SINGAPORE'S FOOD PACKAGING STORY  
FROM THE EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



## CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY BOOKLET

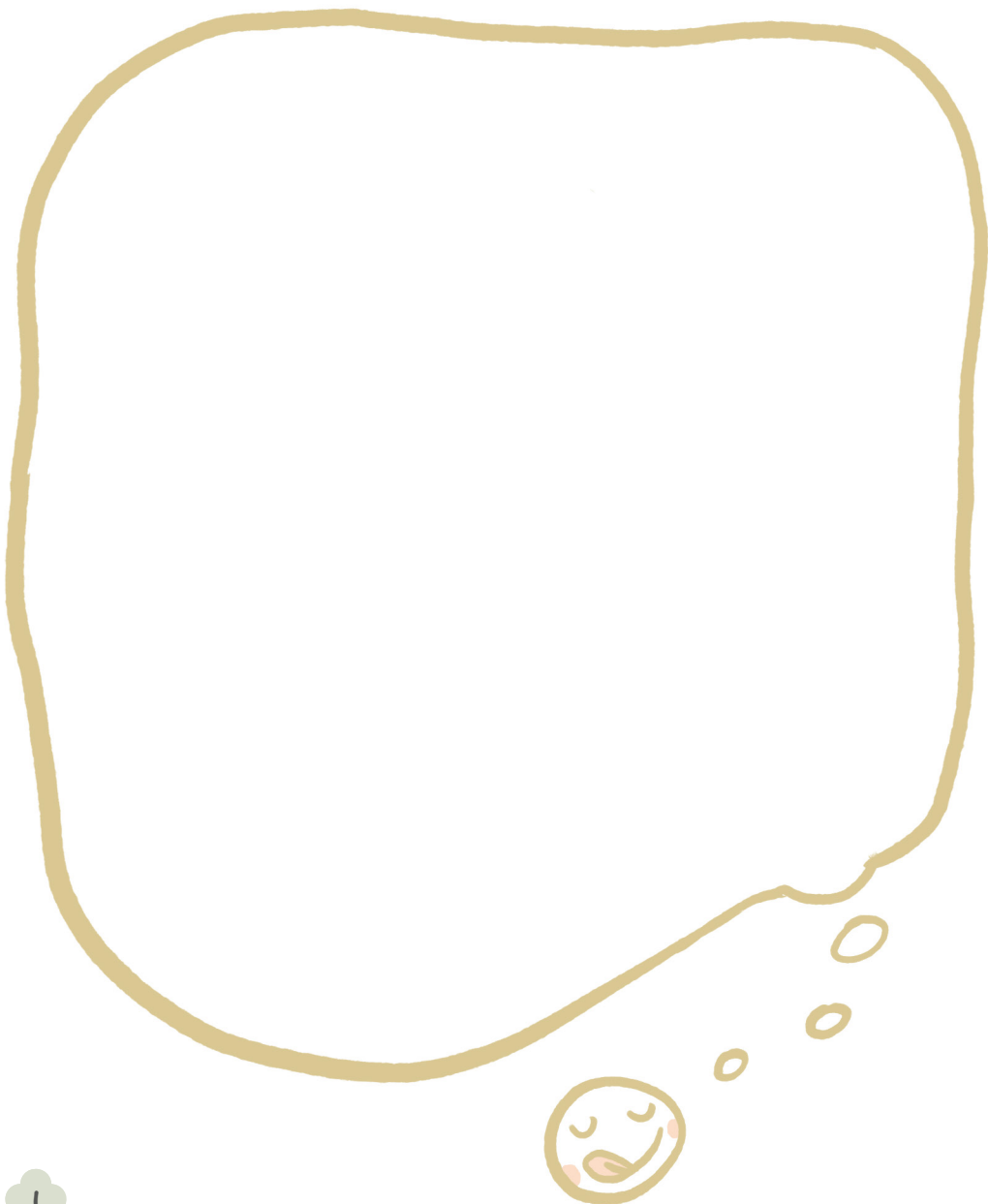
Recommended for ages 5 to 10

This book belongs to:

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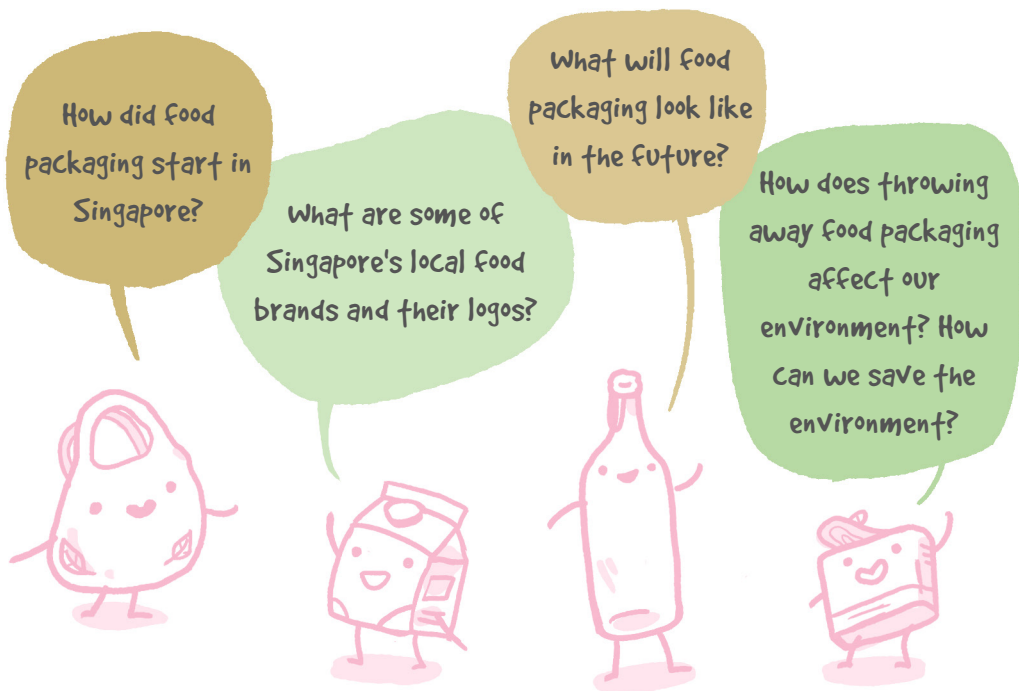


Let's draw! What packaging does your  
favourite food come in?



**Packaging Matters:** This exhibition explores the world of food packaging in Singapore over the past 200 years. As you walk around the gallery, you will discover different types of food packaging materials and how they have changed over the years.

**In this exploration, let's find out...**



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# FINDING YOUR WAY!

## How to use this book:

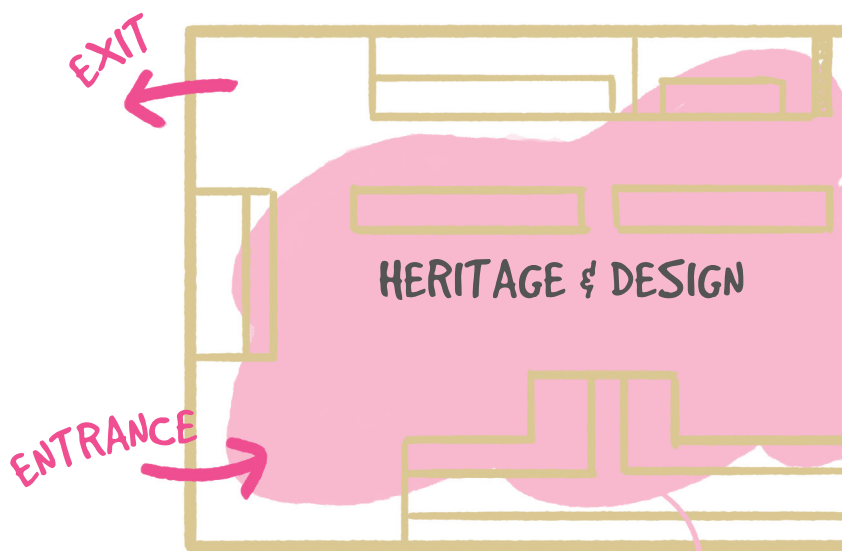
Follow the sequence in this booklet and look out for objects in the gallery marked with these stickers!



Find me!



Feel me!



**DISCOVER** Singapore's early bottling and canning factories, places where food is packaged and sold, and learn about our local food brands. Plus, guess the packaging materials in our four "feely" boxes!



**LEARN** about reusable food containers and cleaning activities by environmental groups, and identify recyclable packaging materials and ways to reduce packaging!



**EXPLORE** food packaging materials through puzzles and be inspired by recycled crafts created by artists together with seniors from the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA)!



# EARLY PACKAGING FACTORIES

Did you know that there were many plantations in Singapore in the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Year 1800 – 2000)? Plantation owners grew many different types of crops. A favourite crop was pineapple as it grew very quickly. The pineapples were sliced and packed into tin cans in factories for sale.



Empire Marketing Brand (EMB) poster of Malayan pineapples, 1931.  
National Museum of Singapore Collection.

What are the people in this picture doing?  
What fruit can you see?



### Let's define!

A **PLANTATION** is a large area of land where crops are grown.  
**CROPS** are plants or plant products that are grown and harvested for food or for sale.

### Fill in the blanks!

What other types of plantations were there in Singapore?



C \_ \_ \_ N \_ \_

R \_ \_ B \_ R

P \_ \_ \_ \_ R



**SPOT** this poster!  
Can you **GUESS** why  
an image of a tiger  
was used to advertise  
canned pineapples from  
Singapore?



**Find me!**

Empire Marketing Brand  
(EMB) poster, "Buy  
Singapore pineapples in  
tins", 1931. Gift of Raffles  
Holdings Ltd.

Ans: The tiger was used to represent Malaya, which Singapore was  
part of at the time.

# TYPES of FOOD PACKAGING

Even in those days, there were many different ways of packaging food in factories.



Tinning of confectioneries



Canning of fruits



Bottling of soft drinks



Boxing of frozen food

## Puzzle Time!

Can you **FIND** the following words in the crossword?

CANNING  
BOTTLING  
TINNING  
BOXING

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | I | E | T | E | N | W | T | Y |
| O | C | A | N | N | I | N | G | N |
| T | T | U | N | G | L | T | H | T |
| T | B | L | R | N | A | I | O | G |
| L | N | O | A | L | G | N | N | H |
| I | B | I | X | I | G | N | P | L |
| N | R | G | U | I | B | I | G | N |
| G | A | X | G | O | N | N | O | M |
| W | O | R | B | A | M | G | X | O |

# I spy with my little eye...



YOU ARE  
HERE!

Can you **SPOT** these tins in the gallery?



Khong Guan biscuit tin, 1950s; Thye Hong biscuit tin, 1950s; Nam Thong restaurant mooncake tin. National Museum of Singapore Collection.



Find me!

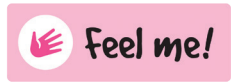
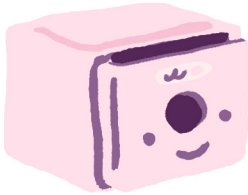
Are your biscuits packed in tins like these?

You might have seen such beautifully-designed biscuit tins, especially during festive seasons such as Chinese New Year and Christmas. What other materials are biscuits usually packed in?



# Fun with Feely boxes!

**PUT** your hands into the two pink boxes in this section and feel the materials inside. What do you think is in each box? **WRITE** your answers below!



Pink Box 1 contains  
the material:

-----

Pink Box 2 contains  
the material:

-----



How do the materials  
in the boxes feel  
similar or different?

Pink Box 1: Paper  
Pink Box 2: Plastic

I spy with my little eye...



YOU ARE  
HERE!



Find me!

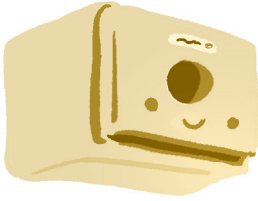
**LOOK** carefully and you will see that each bottle has a distinct shape of its own!

Let's **COUNT**! How many bottles are there in this display?

Are soft drinks still packed in glass bottles today? What other forms of packaging do soft drinks come in?

Ans: There are 36 glass bottles in the display!

## Fun with Feely boxes!



**PUT** your hands into the beige box, which contains the material glass. There are \_\_\_\_\_ glass items in this box.

How would you describe what glass feels like? **CIRCLE** your answer!

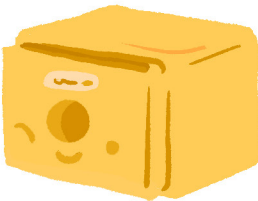
Soft

Smooth

Cold

Hard

Rough



There is one last box in the gallery! Can you **SPOT** it? Put your hands into the yellow box to feel the material inside. How would you describe it? What sound does it make? **WRITE** your answer below!

The yellow box contains the material:

— — —

Yellow Box: Tin



# PLACES WHERE I BUY MY FOOD



YOU ARE  
HERE!

What do you see in this photo?

How do you think fruits were packed in the past?

Do people still buy fruits from stalls like these today?

How are fruits packed today?



Find me!

Fruit stall in Chinatown, 1950s–1960s. National Museum of Singapore Collection.

## Did You Know?

Supermarkets such as Cold Storage, Sheng Siong and NTUC FairPrice only came about in the last 100 years! Supermarkets make it a lot easier for people to buy a large variety of food products.

However, more packaging materials are needed to pack and transport items to the supermarkets, as compared to when people bought food from traditional wet markets and individual food-sellers.



YOU ARE  
HERE!

# PACKAGING FUN FOR THE FAMILY

## Welcome to the Family corner!

Take a closer look at the large mural on the wall – how many food packaging items can you **COUNT**? What types of packaging do you recognise?



There are \_\_\_\_\_ food packaging items.



## Look UP!

Can you see a tetrahedron packet, tin can and plastic bags hanging from the ceiling? They show different ways of packaging drinks in Singapore over the years. These art works are made from recycled paper instead of the actual materials to minimise waste.

Let's define!

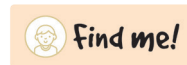
A **TETRAHEDRON** is a "triangular pyramid".



Have you seen these types of packaging before? Ask your grandparents or parents if they are familiar with these materials!



## Recycled art!



Can you **SPOT** these recycled crafts in the display shelf? They were created by seniors who are around your grandparents' age! What packaging materials are they made from? What can you create with food packaging materials in your home?



## craft ideas!

Here are some craft ideas using recycled food packaging that you can create with your family at home!



A plastic bottle can become a pencil holder.



Two plastic bottles can become a superhero's rocket jetpack outfit!



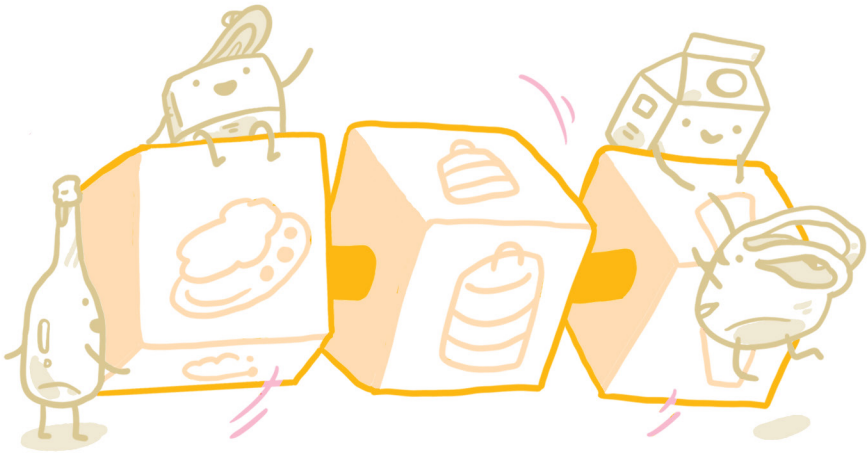
Make terrariums from glass jars,



lanterns from tin cans,



and boats from egg cartons!



## Spin the cubes!

**MATCH** the food items to their packaging materials from the past and present. Check the answer board to see if you got them right!



## Show your creativity!

Before moving on to the next section, take a seat and show us your creativity! Pick up a template from the tables and **DESIGN** a new packaging for your favourite food.

Display it at the "Creativity Corner" for all to see when you're done!

# PACKAGING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

YOU ARE  
HERE!



I'm sturdy and  
biodegradable!



I have separate  
layers for soup, rice  
and dishes!



I'm light and can  
be folded away  
after use!



Wood carrier and painted enamel tiffin carrier (*tingkat* in Malay), early-mid 20th century. National Museum of Singapore Collection. Cloth bag, 1950s-1960s. Gift of Ms Eng Tow.



Find me!

Which of these carriers would you like to use? Why?

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## What happens to our rubbish?

We usually throw away the packaging our food comes in, such as plastic bags, bottles, metal cans and styrofoam boxes. Did you know that some of this rubbish floats out to sea, polluting the oceans and choking sea creatures?



Most of what we throw into dustbins gets burnt up at places called incinerators and the ashes are buried in landfills. However, landfills can eventually run out of space. In Singapore, 1.67 million tonnes of waste were collected in 2017 – this could fill 1,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools!

What can you do to cut down on the amount of rubbish that you throw away?

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# Ways to help save the environment

## REDUCE

We can use products that come in less packaging materials, such as products with this logo. Can you spot this logo in the gallery? Try and find it on food packaging the next time you go to the supermarket!



## REUSE

We can reuse plastic bags to collect rubbish, and reuse glass and plastic bottles as pots for growing plants. Can you think of more ideas?



## RECYCLE

One way to help save the environment is to recycle suitable packaging materials.



Common food packaging materials include **GLASS, METAL, PAPER** and **PLASTIC**. Most glass and metal food packaging can be recycled once the contents are emptied and the containers are rinsed and dried. But do you know which types of paper and plastic food packaging can be recycled?

### Can these papers be recycled?

Yes/No

Paper box with printed materials

Paper packaging contaminated with food

Disposable paper cups and plates

Beverage cartons such as milk, juice and other drink packets

Waxed paper used for wrapping rice

Paper containers with metals like aluminium and plastic lining

Paper bag

Sweet wrappers and tissue paper

### Can these plastics be recycled?

Yes/No

Plastic bottles such as sauces, juices, and containers used for carbonated and non-carbonated drinks

Plastic disposable cutlery such as straws, forks and knives

Plastic bag

Plastic film packaging for packet drinks, sliced bread, egg trays

Plastic packaging with foil such as potato chips

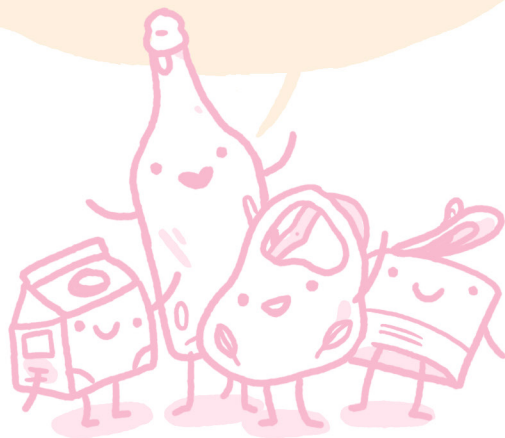
Plastic packaging contaminated with food

Styrofoam cups such as coffee cups and takeaway food containers

Answers on opposite page.

Source: <https://www.nea.gov.sg/docs/default-source/our-services/waste-management/list-of-items-that-are-recyclable-and-not.pdf>

We hope that you  
have learnt more about  
food packaging materials and  
how you can do your part to save the  
environment. Enjoy your time at the  
National Museum and we look  
forward to seeing you again!



Paper: Yes / No / No / Yes (Empty contents, rinse and flatten) / No / No /  
Yes / No  
Plastic: Yes (Empty contents and rinse) / No / Yes / Yes (Empty contents) /  
No / No / No



Booklet design: Joy Ho | Cover design: Neo Ann Gee

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