

**A FEW THINGS,
GOOD TO KNOW FOR PASSENGERS ON A
RICKMERS CARGO VESSEL**



The picture shows the crew, **not** the passengers

Once you are on the ship you may wish to copy this document for fellow passengers or crew members and are free to do so, of course.

If you received your copy of this document from a fellow passenger on the ship I would kindly ask you to transfer the fee for it when you are back home*. There is a lot of work involved to keep the content alive. In addition, I would also encourage you to let me have your comments and suggestions for ongoing improvement.

*crew members are not expected to pay for this, their feedback however will be very welcome.

A date behind a port's name indicates when the last update was made

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1 Introduction

From the end of January to June 2008 I went round the world as a passenger on the Heavy-Lift cargo vessel "Rickmers Jakarta" from Hamburg to Hamburg. Although I was given some advice by the booking agency in advance, I experienced that there are a lot of things to know about which could make a passenger's life much easier if only this information was supplied by someone. With this little booklet I will try to be that "someone" to the best I can.

Every journey, even those on the Rickmers ships, will be different from any other but a lot of things will remain for a while as they were found by me and my fellow passengers. So, please understand that you may find your ship docking at another berth than I did and – of course – things like Bus numbers going into a certain downtown area from the port may have already changed while I write this paper.

I will try to keep all information up-to-date and expand it to those ports I did not go to. I can do this thanks to the great support of Rickmers' Agents all over the world.

Any information from you will be highly appreciated for this purpose, too. If you are able to send me update information while still on the trip I will let you have updates for the ports you are heading for, in return!

I recommend printing out this document so you can use the maps once you get to the different places.

2 Before boarding

What I will not talk about here are the preparations for the journey you have to make “by law” like, visa issuing or vaccinations.

There are many websites and other sources available giving general information on what a passenger on a cargo ship should know and take with him. I will not add another collection but just mention a few things I found to be useful.

- Take some **currency** for the countries you are expecting to visit. This can save you a lot of time for running around and looking for ATMs which, once you found them, sometimes don't work with your card. At the end of your journey you can make the remaining money part of your tip so you don't have to convert it back.
- The best things to have for me were a **Laptop** and a **mobile GPS** device. Why I took a GPS with me and how it contributed to improving my journey can be read in a separate chapter of my website.

The laptop was used to write a diary, to watch DVDs etc. (Sometimes one of the crew members detected an open WLAN in a port and so we all set on the pilot deck reading and sending our eMails)

- You may want to exchange pictures with other passengers or ask the captain to send off an email for you. So, an **USB memory stick** is very important to have.
- Only a few weeks before I started my journey I discovered that there is a complete version of the **Wikipedia** (a snapshot at a certain date) available on DVD. This DVD was especially useful to read about countries and places we were going to. Besides that it could answer **all** the questions that came up in the talks between passengers, like “Who were the actors in film xyz?”. Please search the Internet to find where you can buy a copy in your country. I paid less than 10 € for it.
- Power supply on the Rickmers ships is to German standard. If you want to run things like a laptop or a battery charger you should take a multiple socket with you. In Germany they look like this:



- You should make sure with your provider that your **mobile phone** is able to work abroad. It should have GSM and UMTS (3G). I experienced that my phone did not work in Japan because they seem to use a different standard from the rest of the world.
- If you want to do **data transfer** (eMail, Internet) from your mobile phone, laptop or PocketPC make sure that you are subscribed to the best tariff.
- While **soap** and **washing powder** are supplied on the ship you cannot buy shampoo or tooth paste there.

3 On board

Here is a collection of things that may be helpful when you are on board and which I did not know before boarding:

3.1 Communication systems

3.1.1 Using the ship's satellite phone

You cannot be called on the ship using its telephone system unless in cases of urgency. You should ask your agent for the ship's satellite phone number which has different prefixes depending on the current location.

To call from the ship over satellite you can buy a phone card. I paid 20 USD for a card that allowed for 20 minutes in off-peak hours and on weekends. I bought it from the captain.

3.1.2 Internet access and eMail

On my ship there was a test installation for Internet access which was not working yet. You can ask the captain for the ship's email address and give that to your family and friends. The captain may also send off your messages (stored on an USB stick).

3.1.3 Using your mobile phone

Your mobile phone will only work when you are close to coast lines or ports. I never had a connection when the ship was more than about 10 miles off the coast.

3.1.4 GPS

If you have your own GPS with you you are always able to figure out where you are and how long it will take to some place you are heading for. I did not want to miss things like entering into a port. So, when my GPS "told" me that we would not be there before e.g. 8 hours I could go to bed in good confidence.

3.1.5 Radio reception

Only short wave stations can be received on the ship. For this you have to bring your own receiver and – very important – an external aerial. Without that you will not hear anything on your radio.

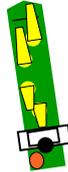
3.2 Slopchest

At the weekly Slopchest you can buy beer, coke, whisky, wine and things like SNICKERS.

You cannot buy SHAMPOO and TOOTH PASTE.

4 Going ashore (and coming back hopefully)

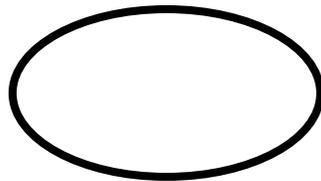
I provide little maps for each port showing the ship's position when I was there like this:



When I refer to public transport stations they will appear in the map like this:



What I thought was "Downtown" is marked like this:



Once you know where the ship has arrived it is much easier to find out how to get to the places you want to see. Since the ship's personnel are very busy while approaching the port and after that as well it will be difficult to get that information from them. What you should ask for, however, is some information the ship's port agent may have for you, like telephone numbers of taxi companies, taxi fares or the nearest bus station. You will not get that kind of knowledge without your own initiative.

I experienced that sometimes important information was given to single but not to all passengers. So, it is a good idea to arrange for a horizontal information flow between them.

Before you go ashore you have to ask the ship's security officer on duty. He will tell you if the ship is cleared, hand over your passport and sometimes additional documents and tell you by what time shore leave expires. Don't risk missing that time but always try to be back at least an hour before. You will experience that it can be very adventurous to get back to your ship and it will not wait for you.

Before you go out of the gate, make sure to write down or even take a picture of the name of the place. In many cities taxi drivers don't know much about the ports and the more information you have (e.g. a map from this paper or a picture on your camera) the more chances you have to get back to the ship (although it will still be an adventure in spite of this, sometimes). You should also ask the gate's personnel if there is a closing time for the gate and if there is another gate open after that. In some ports the quays are numbered. It is a good idea to know that number when going home.

Leave your mobile phone number with someone (e.g. the steward) and take the captain's or an officer's phone number with you.

Don't take any pictures in US ports! They are watching you and may take your camera!

Always be very careful at the quay – especially during cargo operations!

5 Information on the ports

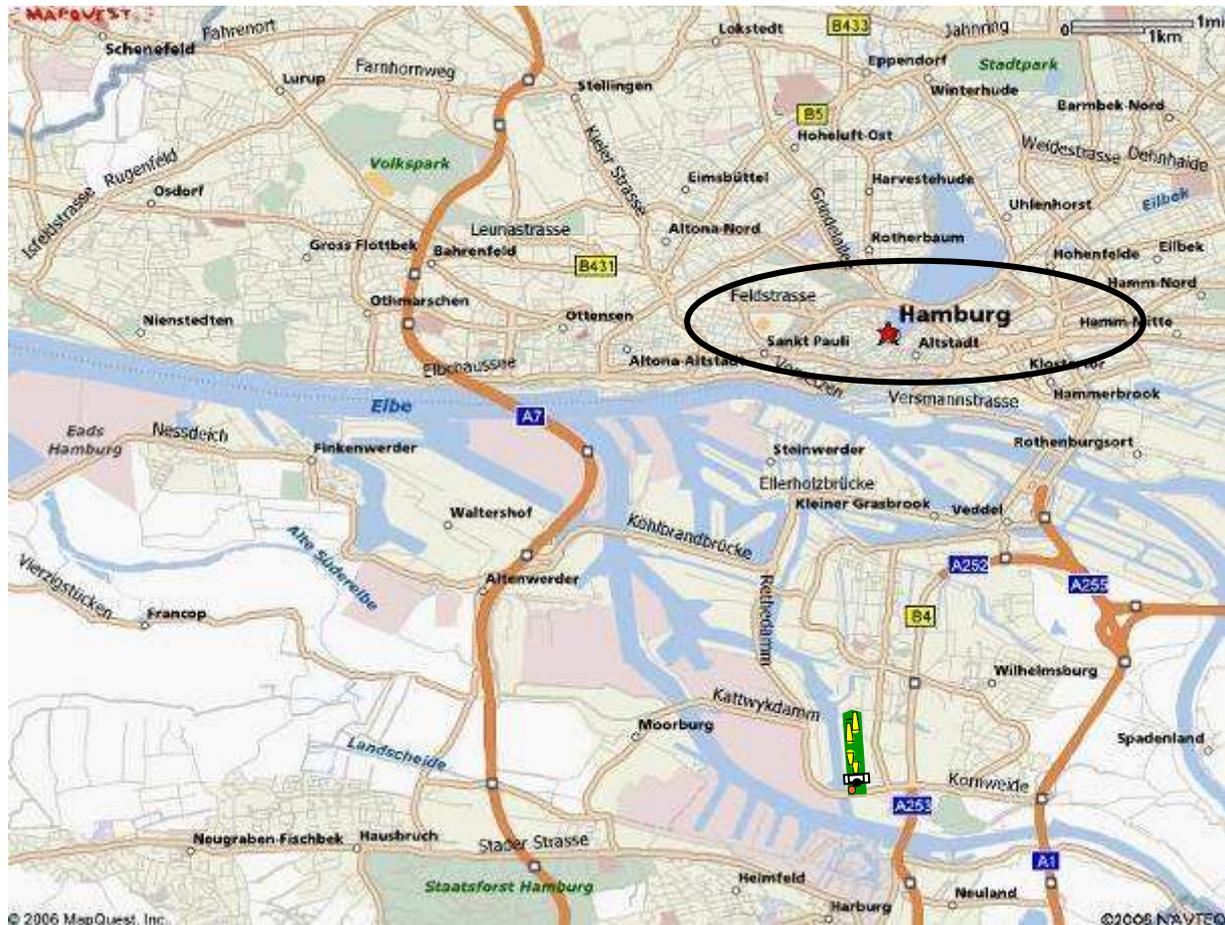
In this section my personal experience in different ports is dealt with. Besides, little maps are provided which show the place of the ship's berth when I was there. When applicable I give an indication on where a Bus was found and draw a circle around the area which I considered to be "downtown".

In some places I found it easier to stay in a hotel than to return to the ship in the evening. I will state in which hotels I stayed and where they are.

There will also be maps for ports I did not go to but which are called by the Rickmers ships sometimes. I will try to cover as many as possible of them and – for all ports – update the maps when I find that the ships go to different berths regularly. While this will happen in many places there are others like Hamburg, Antwerp, and Houston where Rickmers ships seem to always go to the same berth. But even if your ship goes to another area of the port the maps and information should be helpful to you.

For those ports I visited I leave the information about my personal experience in the document even if I received updates later which are given too.

5.1 Hamburg - Germany



My personal experience and findings:

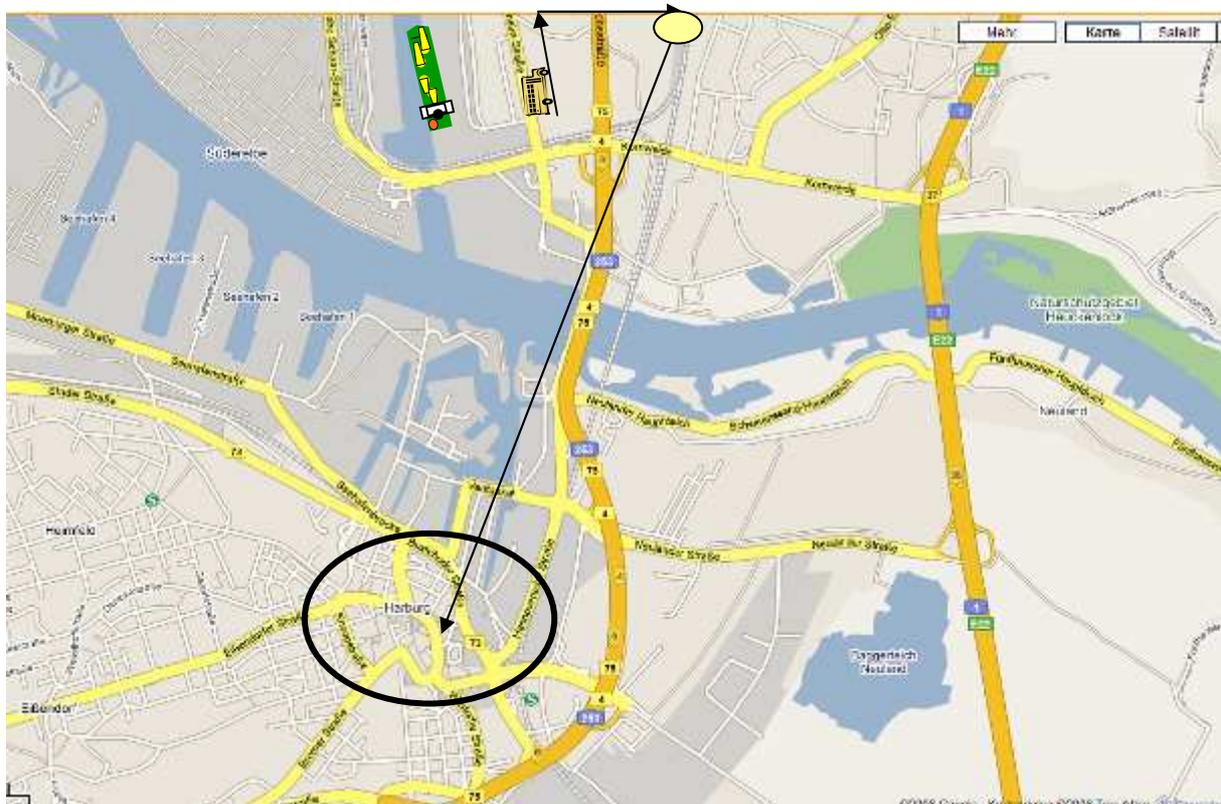
In Hamburg, the Rickmers ships have "their own" berth at Wallman Kai (Pollhornweg is the street's name). To get there from downtown will cost about 30 €. The Hamburg Taxi phone number is: +49 40 211211.

A few things, good to know for passengers

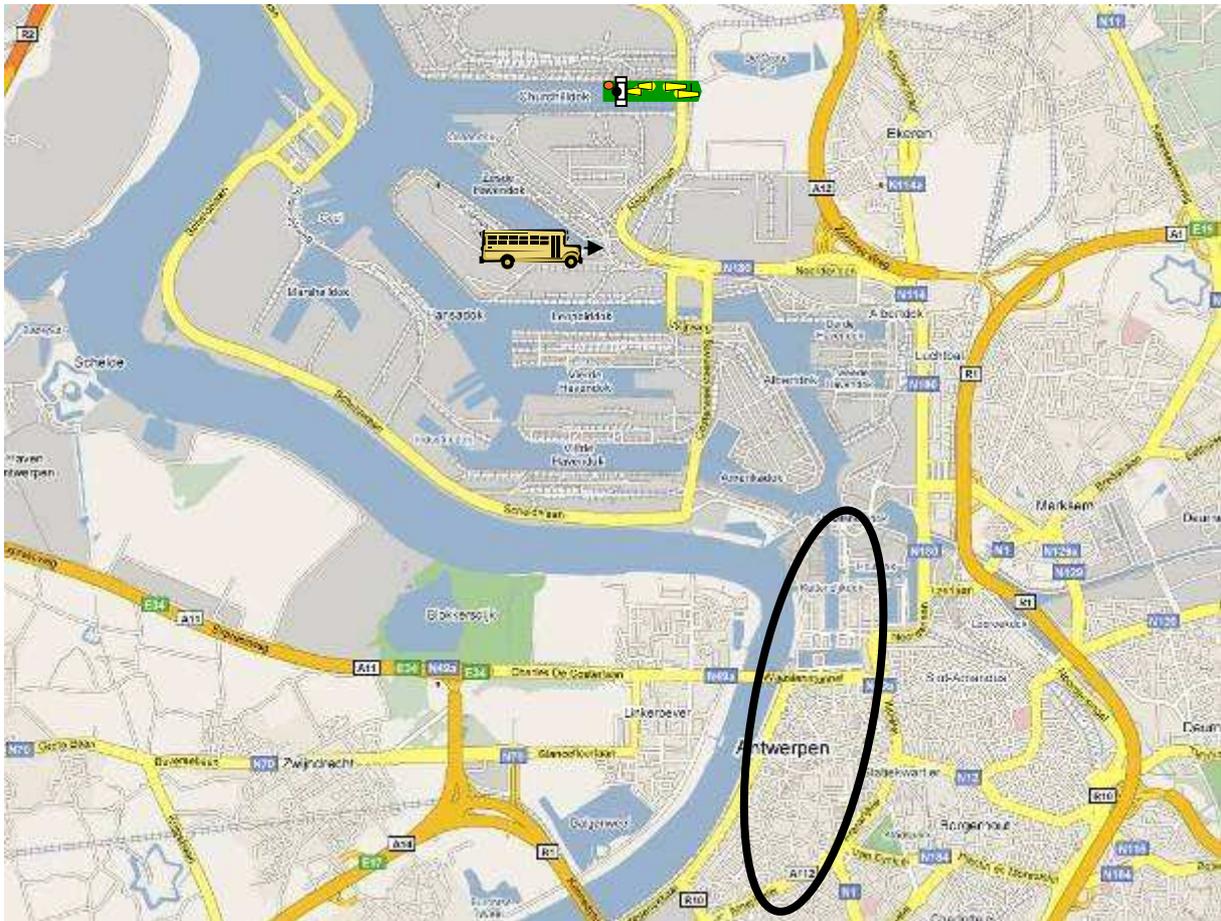


Wallmann Kai, the berth for Rickmers ships in Hamburg.

If you are already on the ship when coming to Hamburg and just would like to go to a nearby place for some shopping, you should go to Hamburg-Harburg (see Map below). This is much cheaper to do by taxi (maybe about 12 €) than going to the City of Hamburg. There is a Bus 154 from Wilhelmsburger Reichsstrasse going to the S-Bahn (Local train) Station WILHELMSBURG (the small circle in the map) where you can board the S3 to Harburg (which is a part of Hamburg).



5.2 Antwerp – Belgium – 2008-07-04



My personal experience and findings:

The gate is very close to the ship and going out or getting back in was easy. The name of the dock is CHURCHILDOK and the quay's name/number – which a taxi driver will like to know – is 468.DP World Muisbroeklaan.

I had to walk for about 30 min to get to the bus station from where the 731 Bus goes to the Rooseveltplaats in the centre every 20 minutes. Duration of drive is 20 minutes.

In the Central Station there is an office of the Antwerp public transport authority (De Lijn) at ground floor level where I bought a 3-days go-as-you-please ticket (3-DAGENPAS) for Antwerp's buses and trams at € 10. A taxi ride from or to the ship was about 20 €.

Turn right at the main street (NORDERLAAN) to go to the bus station. You will find one (760) after a few meters already but this bus seems to run only twice a day. I never saw it. To get to the "real" bus station will take about 20 min. to walk. (See detailed map below)

Latest update information received from Rickmers representative:

Gates are open 24x7 (you have to get registered there)

Gate is in short walking distance to the ships berth

No nearby seaman's mission (I think I heard of one but am not sure, HF)

Bus 760 from PAYS into downtown (I remember this bus goes only a few times per day. I had to walk to Bus 731 as stated above; HF)

A few things, good to know for passengers

Taxi ride takes about 15 m into downtown

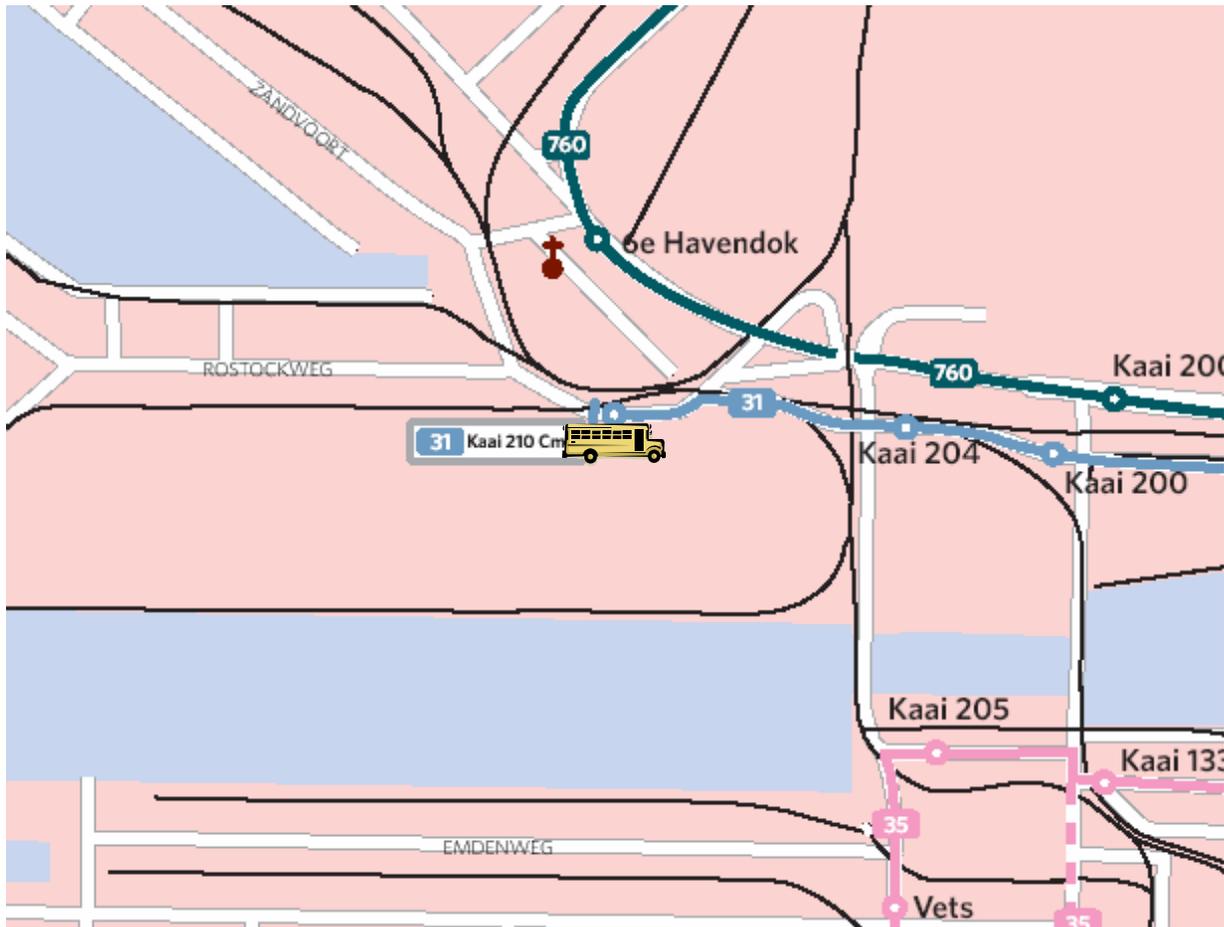
Taxi fare is about Euro 20/25 (one way)

USD are **not** accepted by taxi drivers

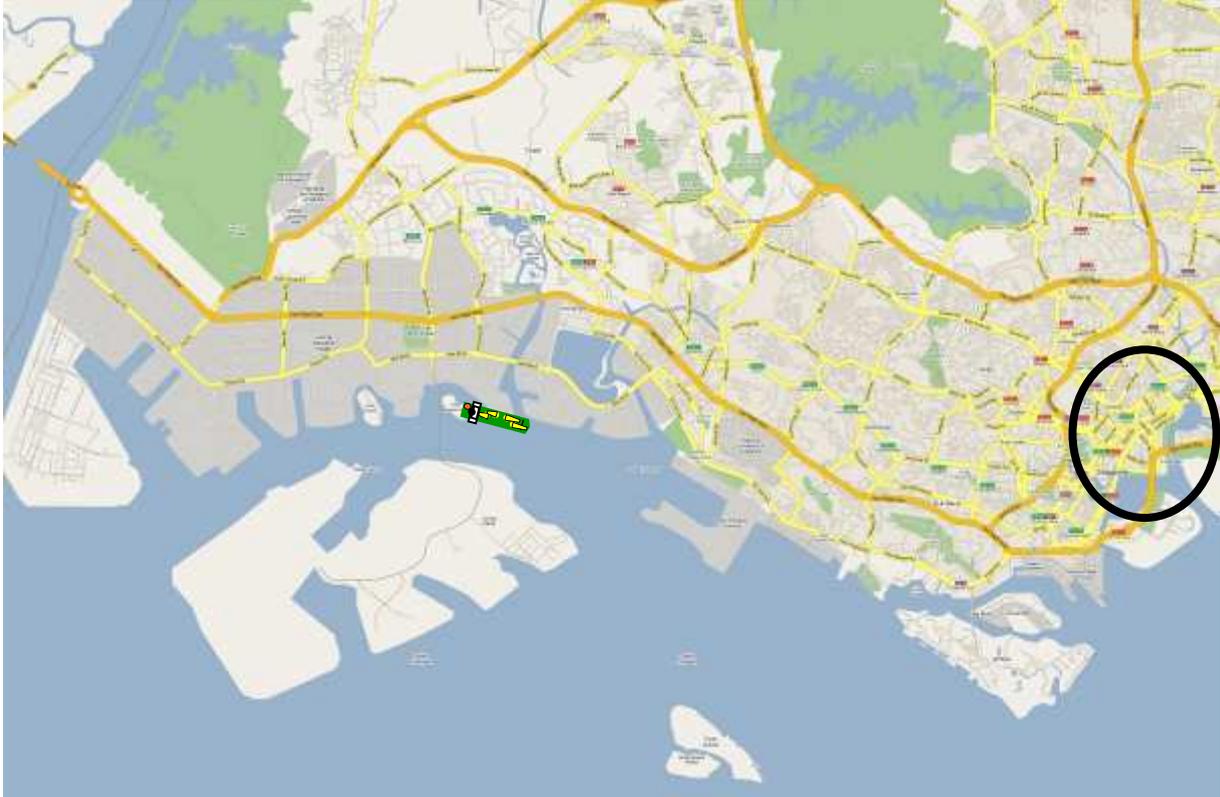
Taxi company: Metropole +32 3 231 31 31

Walking into downtown is not possible

There is a gas station nearby where some small shopping is possible



5.6 Singapore



My personal experience and findings:

Distance from ship to downtown appr. 15 miles

Singapore was the place where I and all other passengers, too, had big problems to get back to the ship in the evening. We were sent from the Main Gate to the West Gate and back to the Main Gate. So, if you leave make sure to understand, which gate will be open for you.

Here is a map with the gates marked:

Latest update information received from Rickmers representative:

A few things, good to know for passengers

