



Taiwan

THE HEART OF ASIA



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The beautiful island of Taiwan, known historically as Formosa, covers an area of just 36,000 square kilometres (14,400 square miles) but is blessed with rich natural resources and diverse cultures. Continuous tectonic movements have given it a rich landscape adorned with majestic peaks, rolling hills, plains, basins, coastlines, other natural formations. With the Tropic of Cancer passing through its centre, Taiwan's tropical, sub-tropical, and temperate climates have fostered a variety of natural ecosystems. The island is home to many rare or endangered species, such as the Formosan landlocked salmon, Formosan rock monkey, Formosan black bear, and Swinhoe's pheasant, making Taiwan a key contributor to the global wildlife preservation movement.

The essence of Taiwan's natural beauty and scenic hotspots is encapsulated in its eight national parks, 13 national scenic areas, and 18 national forest recreation areas. Here you can trek along the steep, magnificent cliffs of Taroko Gorge; take a ride on the Alishan Forest Railway, and experience a breathtaking sunrise or a soothing sea of clouds; or hike to the summit of Northeast Asia's highest peak, Mt. Jade. You can also soak up the sun in Kending, Asia's version of Hawaii; stand



Taiwan's Provincial Highway No.9 gives access to the east coast

at the edge of the legendary Sun Moon Lake; take in the fresh air of the East Rift Valley; or sample the unique style and culture of the offshore islands of Kinmen and Penghu. With all these attractions plus the warm hospitality of the locals, it is no wonder why Taiwan has become a top destination for repeat visits by foreign travellers.

Taiwan is home to many groups from different cultural backgrounds, including the southern Fujianese who migrated to the island over the centuries, the Hakka people who originated from southern China, the mainland Chinese who immigrated to Taiwan in the late 1940s, and the island's indigenous Austronesian population. These diversified cultures have demonstrated harmonious co-existence in many respects of society, such as religion, architecture, language, lifestyle, and, of course, food, one of Taiwan's major attractions. From traditional Taiwanese

dishes, Hakka food, Hunan cuisine, and Sichuan dishes to Japanese and Korean food, as well as the famous local dishes and snacks, its amazing range of delicious cuisine has rightfully earned Taiwan an international reputation as a "culinary kingdom." This is without a doubt one of the best places in the world for foreign tourists to experience great food, scenery, and culture.

Several world-famous media have affirmed that Taiwan is one of most popular tourist destinations in Asia, and have designated this island as "Asia's best-kept secret". Come visit us in "Taiwan-the Heart of Asia", Taiwan will always welcome you with open arms!



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INDEX

04 Time to Eat

Traditional Chinese food, exotic cuisine and alluring night market snacks make Taiwan an unmatched culinary paradise.

10 Time for Two Wheels

Refresh your mind and body with a scenic bike ride or relaxing hot spring bath.

16 Time for Nature

Get close to nature by exploring Taiwan's unique geological formations and rich wildlife resources.

22 Time to Shop

Shopping malls, department stores, commercial areas, cultural districts and traditional old streets await.

28 Time for Love

Build everlasting memories of love at romantic scenic spots such as Alishan, Sun Moon Lake and much more.

32 Time to Marvel

Feel Taiwan's lively cultural energy through its arts, folk activities and traditional festivals.

38 Time for Celebration

From flowers and music to lanterns and dragon boat races, Taiwan guarantees a great time all year round.

40 International Spotlight

Sample world-class tourism, cuisine, lifestyle and cultural highlights recommended by Taiwan's Tourism Bureau.

42 Taiwan Tourist Shuttle and Taiwan Tour Bus

Convenient transport options to major attractions all across the country.

44 Travel Information



Tropical Kending beaches



Yangmingshan's sea of calla lilies



04

Night market delicacies



28

Scenic Sun Moon Lake



Time to Eat

Taiwan is a culinary paradise, a melting pot of fine food from all across the globe. From traditional Chinese cuisine to exotic delights, Taiwan has just about everything food aficionados can dream of and more.

Traditional Chinese cuisine is an embodiment of thousands of years of culinary wisdom and experience, an art form that turns even the most ordinary of raw materials into great delicacies which deliver on taste, aroma, color and presentation. It is no wonder why Taiwan's Chinese cuisine attracts hordes of visitors to the island every year just for the food, from Din Tai Fung's legendary *xiaolongbao* (steamed soup dumplings) and King Join's traditional desserts to the handmade delights of Dongmen Dumpling.

Chinese restaurants in Taiwan have embraced all the culinary traditions from the mainland. They not only bring together all eight major cuisines of China – they also fuse them and continuously innovate to invent new food creations. There are restaurants inspired by the flavors of northern Chinese areas such as Beijing, Tianjin and Shandong, as well as flavors from the south, such as Sichuan, Hunan, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Shanghai and Fujian.

Taiwanese cuisine integrates food from China's Fujian and Guangdong provinces, the Hakka people, and other Chinese regions, and mixes them with local characteristics. Some examples include braised pork rice, Taiwanese omelet with dried radish, three-cup chicken, oyster thin noodles, and milkfish congee. Another must-try for foreign visitors is delicacies made with local produce, such as Changhua Ba-wan (Taiwanese meatballs), Hsinchu vermicelli, Keelung tempura and Tamsui fish balls.

Hakka cuisine is popular in Taiwan. The early Hakka people dried and preserved their food so they could roam from place to place, resulting in dishes that tend to be strong in flavor, aroma and saltiness. The signature dish is the Hakka stir-fry, while other famous dishes include fatty pork with pickled mustard cabbage, pig intestines with shredded ginger, duck with preserved vegetables, and glutinous rice cakes.



Deep fried oysters



Fo Tiao Qiang

BUDDHA JUMPS OVER THE WALL

Buddha Jumps over the Wall (Fo Tiao Qiang) is a traditional Fujian delicacy. The dish dates back to the Qing Dynasty and has many origin stories, one of which says that it was first made for Fujian commissioner Zhou Lian by a Fuzhou official. The original dish was created with 10 ingredients such as chicken, duck, lamb elbows and pork trotters, which were simmered in a pot of Shaoxing wine. Zhou loved the dish so much that he asked his chef back home to replicate it. The chef improved the recipe by adding new ingredients such as seafood, and the dish soon gained widespread acclaim all over the country. A scholar later wrote a poem about the dish, saying that its aroma was so alluring that even Buddha jumped over the wall to see where the smell was coming from. Since then, this dish has been known as "Buddha Jumps over the Wall," one of China's most famous dishes.



EXOTIC CUISINE

Taiwan's diverse cultural exchanges have cultivated a multitude of popular restaurants serving foreign and exotic cuisine, from American, Japanese, Korean and European to Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern. For example, most Taiwanese people these days are very familiar with classic Japanese dishes such as sushi, sashimi, miso soup and tempura. In recent years, the influx of migrant workers from Southeast Asia has boosted the number of Thai and Vietnamese restaurants, while Korean TV dramas have led to a craze for Korean dishes such as kimchi, bulgogi and bibimbap in not just restaurants but also food courts. Other international cuisine, such as American hamburgers, Italian pizzas and pasta, German pork knuckle, French food and Indian cuisine, all have a special place in Taiwan's amazing food culture. The plethora of personal food blogs reviewing Taiwan's food establishments is a good place to start for visitors unsure of where to go and what to try.

TAIWANESE SNACKS

Notwithstanding its wealth of Chinese, Taiwanese and exotic cuisine, Taiwan's culinary culture is probably best known internationally for its unparalleled local snacks. Diverse, delicious and cheap, these snacks represent the best of what Taiwan has to offer. There's oyster omelets, stir-fried vermicelli, Taiwanese meatballs, oyster and intestine thin noodles, Taiwanese tempura, Danzai noodles, *zongzi* (meat-stuffed rice dumplings), lumpia (fresh spring rolls), hot herbal jelly, *tongzi migao* (bamboo tube rice with various ingredients), squid thick soup, and Dongshan duck heads, just to name a few.

These snacks are not only a part of the everyday life in Taiwan – they are also reflection of lifestyle and culture. Many snacks are known for utilizing local ingredients. Seafood, for instance, is used in a lot of dishes due to the island's rich marine ecology. Some favorites guaranteed to please include the aforementioned oyster omelet, as well as stir-fried calamari, seafood congee, squid congee and milkfish soup.





Steamed soup dumplings
(Xiaolongbao)



Taiwanese stewed beef noodle soup



Stinky tofu



Oyster vermicelli



Peking Duck

ZONGZI

Zongzi (also referred to as meat rice tamales) is a steamed glutinous rice dumpling wrapped in bamboo leaves along with ingredients such as diced pork, mushrooms, peanuts or egg yolk. The origins of *zongzi* can be traced back to Qu Yuan, a patriotic poet who lived during China's Warring States Period. Persecuted by corrupt officials and forced into exile, Qu drowned himself in the Miluo River as a furious protest against his government. Following his death, locals moved by Qu's plight threw rice into the river so the fish would not eat his body. This practice eventually evolved into the Chinese tradition of eating *zongzi* to commemorate Qu's death around the time of the Dragon Boat Festival on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. For the Taiwanese, however, *zongzi* are not merely restricted to the festival but are eaten all year round as either a snack or light meal.

Xiaolongbao is a small, thin-skinned steamed meat dumpling that erupts with delicious hot soup upon the first bite. The snack, which originated from China's Jiangnan region, has become one of the best-known Chinese delicacies in the world. Taiwan has many famous *xiaolongbao* restaurants that always attract huge lines, and the snack itself has become a top priority for foreign visitors.

Stewed or braised beef noodle soup is a delightful Taiwanese specialty. The Taipei Beef Noodle Festival has been held every year since 2005, attracting many chefs and restaurants from around the country to compete for prizes and media exposure. According to food historian Lu Yao-tung, even though it is sometimes referred to as Sichuan beef noodle soup the dish is actually a Taiwanese creation originating from military dependents' villages in Kaohsiung's Gangshan District, where residents added Sichuan-style hot bean sauce to their noodles as seasoning. The recipe soon spread and grew popular all over the country, thus becoming an important part of Taiwan's unique culinary culture.

Stinky tofu is an extremely popular Taiwanese snack traditionally made from fermented tofu and served with pickled cabbage and chili sauce. Commonly deep fried to a golden brown, the snack is crispy on the outside and soft on the inside, though



it can also be steamed or stewed. Many foreign tourists are initially reluctant to sample stinky tofu due to its pungent odor, but those who dare to try soon understand why locals always say: "The stinkier the tastier!"

Taiwanese snacks are a must for foreign tourists who want to fully experience the local lifestyle. The quickest way to sample a variety of snacks is to head straight to a night market or traditional market and hop from stall to stall to try a little bit of everything.

NIGHT MARKET SNACKS

While typical Taiwanese snacks can be found just about everywhere on the island, nothing beats a visit to one of the country's famous night markets, where a surfeit of scrumptious delights await to be explored and sampled. Each night market has its own unique characteristics and flavors. Some are located next to local temples, giving tourists an opportunity to do some sightseeing and experience a touch of local culture before going stall-hopping for delicious snacks. Spending time at some these night markets will open your eyes and add a whole new perspective to your travel experience in Taiwan.

TAIWAN'S UNIQUE DINING TRENDS

In addition to its traditional Taiwanese snacks and Chinese cuisine, Taiwan has also developed a number of unique dining trends in recent years that reflect the continuously shifting lifestyles and tastes of its residents.

One such trend is the growth of food establishments embracing a mix of health and nature. There are now many restaurants in Taiwan serving creative, menuless cuisine in the countryside or by creeks in the mountains, where the food is made from nothing but local in-season ingredients and the chef's ingenuity. Some restaurants can



TAIWAN'S TOP 10 NIGHT MARKETS

Tastiest, Friendliest	Miaokou Night Market (Keelung)
Most Charming	Shilin Night Market (Taipei)
Best Shopping	Huaxi Street Night Market (Taipei)
Unique Characteristics	Ningxia Night Market (Taipei) Wenhua Night Market (Chiayi) Flower Night Market (Tainan) Zhonghua Street Night Market (Fengshan)
Tastiest	Fengjia Night Market (Taichung)
Most Charming, Most Popular	Liuhe Night Market (Kaohsiung)
Friendliest	Luodong Night Market (Yilan)





Pearl milk tea

only be found after navigating deep into the mountains; others may be refurbished farm houses with wooden floorboards and tatami mats or Zen decorations, or built in a traditional Chinese garden style and display cutlery and tea sets made by local artists. For those who enjoy nature and creative cuisine, dining at one of these restaurants can be a soothing pleasure no other place can replicate.

Hotpot restaurants are also flourishing in Taiwan. Many hotpot establishments now offer all-you-can-eat sets that can cost just NT\$399 or NT\$499 for an endless smorgasbord of meat, seafood and vegetables. The most famous type of hotpot is probably the spicy *mala* hotpot, though there are also lighter options including broth made with seaweed, tomatoes or lemongrass. These days, it is common for hotpot restaurants to offer separate pots for each individual customer, making this style of affordable dining a popular choice for locals and tourists alike.

PEARL MILK TEA

Pearl milk tea, also known as bubble tea, is a Taiwanese beverage combining black tea, fresh milk and "pearls" or "bubbles" made out of sweet potato starch or tapioca. It was originally concocted by cafe owners in Taichung who decided to add a chewy texture to a traditional drink. The beverage, which soon became the rage all over Taiwan, has even spread overseas, where it is now available in most Chinatowns around the world.

Taiwanese people love their stir-fries. Given difficult economic times, inventive restaurant owners are pushing the boundaries by promoting fresh seafood stir-fries for as low as NT\$100 a dish. This type of quick-fire budget cuisine has grown immensely popular in Taiwan in recent years, with countless hundred-NT stir-fry joints popping up all across the country.

Taiwanese people are also masters at using agricultural produce to develop creative new dishes that express the essence of local characteristics. Papaya, bamboo shoots and mangoes, for instance, are frequently used in dishes emphasizing natural and healthy eating. The tea-themed dishes of Pinglin in New Taipei City, the lotus seed dishes of Baihe in Tainan; the daylily dishes of Zhiben in Taitung, the bluefin tuna feast at the port of Donggang in Pingtung, and the Shaoxing wine banquet of Puli in Nantou – these are just some of the innovative cuisines that reflect the unique tastes of Taiwan.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Aside from enjoying all kinds of gourmet cuisine and snacks in Taiwan, visitors should also not miss the opportunity to sample special delicacies from different local areas. Purveyors of these products often provide a free gift packaging service, which is convenient for travelers who want to take them home as presents for friends and relatives.

Famous local delicacies include pineapple cakes, sun cakes, Taiwanese mochi, mung bean cakes, peanut candy/brittle, ox tongue-shaped cookies, braised duck tongues and wings, beef jerky, and many more. In addition to being a food haven, Taiwan is also a tea kingdom. Well-known types of Taiwanese tea include Wenshan Baozhong (Pouchong), Dongding Oolong, and Tieguanyin, as well as Hakka ground tea, and of course the world-famous pearl milk tea.



Delicious fruits



Ox tongue-shaped cookies



Dragon fruit



Dried persimmon



Taiwanese mochi

To round off the trifecta, Taiwan is further known as a fruit kingdom. From quality bell fruit and mangoes to bananas, papayas and custard apples, Taiwan is blessed with an abundance of sweet, juicy and affordable produce all year round. Apart from being a valuable export commodity, Taiwan's fruits are also commonly used for fresh juices, ice desserts and even gourmet dishes, giving every taste a kick of distinctive Taiwanese flavor.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Taipei	Pineapple cakes, Wenshan Baozhong (Pouchong) tea, Muzha Tieguanying tea, <i>xiaolongbao</i> (steamed soup dumplings), mung bean cakes, <i>lu wei</i> (braised food).
New Taipei City	Tamsui iron eggs, fish balls, A-Gei (stuffed bean curd) and fried fish crackers; Sanxia croissants, Shulin red rice yeast, Sanzhi bitter tea oil.
Taoyuan	Bean curd, peanut candy
Hsinchu	Pork balls, rice vermicelli, Zhuqian Cake (meat cake)
Miaoli	Strawberries, grapes, Belly Button Cake (with mung bean or sweet potato stuffing)
Taichung	Sun cakes, butter shortbread
Changhua	Ba-wan (Taiwanese meatballs), Lugang mud shrimp, phoenix eye cakes
Nantou	Puli Shaoxing wine
Yunlin	Xiluo soy sauce, Gukeng coffee, Beigang peanuts
Chiayi	High mountain tea, square cookies
Tainan	Guanmiao pineapple, Madou pomelo, Baihe lotus seed, Anping preserved fruit
Kaohsiung	Papaya milk, Gangshan honey, <i>doubanjiang</i> (bean sauce), Qishan bananas, Jiaxian taro
Pingtung	Mullet roe, sakura shrimp, Wanluan pork knuckles, bell fruit
Yilan	Ox tongue-shaped cookies, <i>gaozha</i> (fried broth), sugarcane-smoked duck, preserved fruit
Hualien	Taiwanese mochi, Taiwanese <i>yokan</i> (red bean jelly)
Taitung	Custard apples, roselle, Chenggong dried bonito, Taimali daylilies
Kinmen	Peanut brittle, Kaoliang liquor (sorghum spirits)
Matsu	Kaoliang liquor (sorghum spirits), Matsu pastries, Jiguang pastries (Matsu hamburgers or Matsu bagels), fish noodles



Time for Two Wheels

Travel is sometimes a reflection of one's attitude towards life. Taiwan is a place that offers visitors an endless number of ways to enjoy a LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) vacation, a trend that is quickly gaining popularity around the world. Riding a bicycle along one of the island's scenic coastal highways, for example, whether at a challenging speed or at a leisurely pace, is just one of the many ways to experience the LOHAS spirit in Taiwan.

With an oriental flair and unique character, Taiwan provides tourists with many ways to stay healthy. Come and enjoy LOHAS Taiwan-style through the island's wide variety of scrumptious cuisines, sports and leisure activities.

Get close to nature through cycling and give your taste buds a treat with healthy organic cuisine, or achieve physical and mental balance the oriental way with yoga, Zen meditation, martial arts or Tai Chi.

If relaxation is what you're after, then a visit to one of Taiwan's popular spas, hot springs or foot massage parlors might be just what you need to let your mind and body unwind. Or if you just want to enjoy some of life's simpler pleasures, try looking for a comfortable hot spring hotel or savor a cup of hot tea at a traditional tea house.

CYCLING

Cycling has become a popular trend in Taiwan in recent years, with many scenic, eco-friendly and fun cycling tracks appearing all over the island within a very short period of time. Some lighter tracks are suitable for the whole family, while others contain mountain paths that can pose a challenge even for professional riders. An island network of cycling paths 5,000 kilometers long that links the whole country together is still under development.

Apart from leisure cycling paths, Taiwan also offers bicycle hire stations at many locations across the country, including hotels and bed & breakfasts. Taipei City has a public bicycle hiring network called YouBike, which allows locals and tourists alike to rent bikes with a simple swipe of their EasyCard. A similar public service is available in southern Kaohsiung City, where riders can use their credit cards or I-Pass card. Given the popularity of leisure cycling in Taiwan, bicycle repair stations are also extremely common. Even some police stations have a special service station offering water, air pumps and navigational service to cyclists.

Cycling paths in every Taiwanese city and county have their own unique characteristics and flavor. The cycling paths in the greater Taipei region, for example, take advantage of the area's many rivers to offer a waterfront riding experience, while the Bali Left Bank bike path



Bike trails at Taroko Gorge



Paragliding at Luye Highlands



near Tamsui is ecologically friendly and full of culture. The cycling paths in Taichung, on the other hand, are based on the region's old rail tracks. The pride of Taiwan is the Sun Moon Lake bike path, which was listed by international travel network CNNGo as one of the 10 most beautiful cycling paths in the world. Last, but not least, the path along the Gaoping River in Southern Taiwan offers the country's longest river side cycling path, while cycling in Hualien is a great way to appreciate Taiwan's beautiful eastern coastlines.

The Taiwan Cycling Festival is held in November every year and features professional races, short-distance cycling tours and even trips around the entire island. Scenic areas such as Yilan, Hualien, Taitung, Sun Moon Lake and the Northeast Coast all hold cycling events during the festival.

The 33-km-long bike track surrounding the world renowned Sun Moon Lake is a great way to spend the day. Not only does it provide fantastic exercise for your body, the scenic ride is also a wonderful opportunity to check out some of the attractions in the area such as Wenwu Temple, Peakcock Garden, Xuanzang Temple, Ci'en Pagoda, Xuanguang Temple and Hanbi Peninsula.

Hualien, with its enchanting scenery and fresh air, has made a serious push to become a cycling city in recent years. Its ecologically friendly, scenic bike paths have become a favorite of cycling enthusiasts, while its various international races have made the city a gathering place for local and foreign professional riders alike.

Visitors to the coastal cycling path in Yilan will be able to see the turtle-like Guishan Island in the distance, experience bird-watching at the mouth of the Lanyang River, and observe the simple farming lifestyles of the locals in the Zhuangwei region.

Cycling has also become a popular activity in Kending with quite a few foreign tourists coming to the Southern Taiwan region for biking tours. The Kenting National Park has established a special cycling track that traverses attractions such as Guishan, the National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium, the Houwan District and shooting sites from the movie *Cape No. 7*. As the path runs along the undeveloped west coast of Taiwan, it offers panoramic views and is suitable for family bike rides.



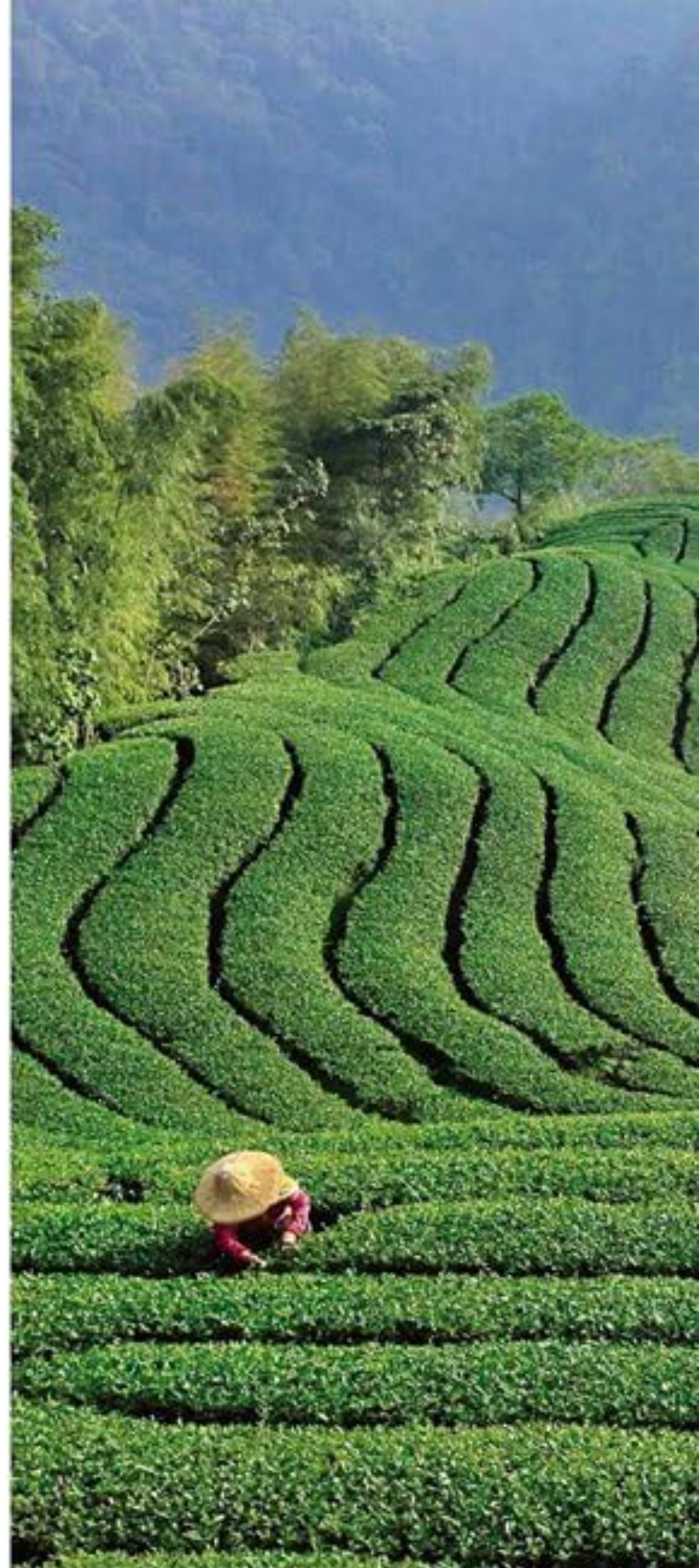
BIKE SAFETY

- **Before setting off:** check brakes, speed gear, tires and seats. Remember to wear a safety helmet.
- **During your trip:** slow down or stop when sightseeing; follow road rules and, slow down at intersections; do not swerve suddenly. Refrain from riding in slippery conditions or when visibility is poor. Always hold the handles with both hands; reduce speed upon descent; brake gradually rather than suddenly. Complete gear changes before ascents; ride in a line when in groups; always maintain a safe distance from the bike ahead.





Lailai rock fishing area



GOOD HEALTH AND TEA

In addition to cycling, Taiwan-style yoga, Zen meditation, foot massages and Tai Chi, another way to experience the Taiwanese LOHAS lifestyle is to enjoy a fine cup of tea in one of the island's exquisite tea houses.



FOOT MASSAGE: THE TAIWANESE WAY TO GOOD HEALTH

Foot massage uses stimulation of the feet to improve blood circulation and remove wastes and toxins from the body. Certain parts of the foot may experience pain when massaged, but afterwards the entire body will feel comfortable and completely relaxed. The Father Wu Foot Massage chain is especially popular in Taiwan, as are massage services organized by charitable foundations for the blind. Foot-massage parlors in Taipei are concentrated near the Xingtian Temple area, Section 2 of Zhongshan North Road, and Jiuquan Street. A number of health clubs also provide excellent foot massage packages.



WENSHAN BAOZHONG TEA

Baozhong (or Pouchong) tea usually refers to semi-fermented tea. After the tea leaves are processed, four ounces are wrapped with two pieces of rectangular paper into a square pack marked with the name of the tea and the seal of its maker. This is how the tea earned the name "baozhong," which



Tea gardens of Dalin Mountain

tea leaves sucked by green leafhoppers, giving it a strong fruit, honey and floral aroma. The honey-flavored black tea from Ruisui Township in Hualien County won the gold medal in a world-class tea competition in 2006.

HOT SPRINGS

Taiwan is well known for having more than a hundred hot spring areas, many of which are located in clusters and with some even possessing the rare "cold spring." Different springs have different therapeutic properties. Carbonic acid springs, with their natural massaging qualities, can be found in Guguan in central Taiwan; Baolai, Bulao, and Sichongxi in Southern Taiwan; and Zhiben and, Jiuzhize in eastern Taiwan. The cold springs in Su'ao also belong to this group. The sodium bicarbonate springs in Wulai, Jiaoxi, and Tai'an lubricate the skin, while the sulfur springs in Yangmingshan and Beitou can soften and exfoliate. The hot springs at Jinshan are pure water and thus gentle on the skin, whereas the salt springs at Tainan's Guanziling can bring warmth to cold hands and feet.

Volcanic activity has produced numerous hot springs in the Yangmingshan area. Most of the hot spring hotels and restaurants in this area are clustered in Pingdeng Village near Lengshueikeng and Macao off the Yangmingshan-Jinshan Highway, as well as Yangde Boulevard. Apart from hot springs, these establishments also offer fine cuisine, tea and accommodation services.

Xiaoyoukeng, Juansi Waterfall, Qingtiangang, and Menghuan Pond are all popular tourist spots in the region, with the government-run Lengshueikeng's free bathhouse a particular hit with tourists for its warm sodium bicarbonate spring.

Beitou's hot-spring area is fed by water from Geothermal Valley (Diregu) and Longfong Valley near Xingyi Road. The region has a high concentration of hot spring hotels rich in natural and cultural resources. You can take the MRT to Xinbeitou station and walk to the Taipei Public Library's Beitou Branch,

literally means "the wrapped kind" in Chinese. Wenshan District in Taipei City grows some of the best and rarest baozhong teas because of its fertile soil and surrounding mountains, which contribute to the cool and moist climate in the region all year round.

ORIENTAL BEAUTY TEA

Legend has it that the name "Oriental Beauty" was bestowed by the Queen Victoria of England, who was amazed by this tea's unique flavor when she first sampled it. This type of oolong tea is produced only in the summer after the green leafhopper has sucked certain nutrients from the leaves, leaving it with a naturally pleasant taste. The leaves are usually fermented and roasted into a rich yet sweet tea with a honey or fruity aroma.

ALISHAN HIGH MOUNTAIN TEA

The Alishan area is well known both for its scenery and tea. High altitude brings a cold climate and large temperature variations between day and night, which slow the growth of tea trees and produce tea leaves that are thick and tender with stems that are soft. With irrigation from the mountain springs, the tea leaves grown here are fragrant, rich and leave a lingering smell and taste, and can also be brewed repeatedly. The tea's superior quality has won it numerous tawards in national tea competitions and the title of "Taiwan's No. 1 tea."

RUISUI HONEY-FLAVORED BLACK TEA

The East Rift Valley promotes pesticide-free organic farming and produces premium honey-flavored black



Unique natural hot springs

which is the first library in Taiwan set in an eco-friendly green building with solar energy. While you're there, don't forget to visit the nearby Beitou Hot Spring Museum.

The colorless and odorless sodium bicarbonate hot springs in Wulai are known as "beauty baths" for the water's skin-softening and moisturizing qualities. Tourists can enjoy a hot spring bath in the area's holiday hotels or privately-run hotspring houses, many of which are upscale spas with hydrotherapy facilities. Visitors to Wulai can also experience the culture, cuisine and spirited dancing of the Atayal indigenous people. For those on a tight budget, check out the free public open-air hot spring on the Nanshi River bank.

Jiaoxi hot springs and Su'ao cold springs in Yilan are also clear and odorless. The carbonated cold springs in Su'ao are regarded as unique in East Asia and are known to leave visitors with silky smooth skin and a refreshed feeling. There are nearly a hundred hot springs hotels or baths around the Jiaoxi Train Station area. The Jiaoxi

Hot Spring Park set up by the Yilan County government, in particular, has comprehensive leisure facilities suitable for the whole family, including budget-friendly public baths and free foot spas.

The Tai'an Hot Springs are located in the mountains of central Taiwan's Miaoli County, which is renowned for its quiet ambience and beautiful scenery. The famous Guguan hot-spring area along the Central Cross-Island Highway is beloved by tourists for its odorless water and trout cuisine. The Dongpu Hot Springs are situated in the scenic mountains near Yushan National Park. There are several well-known scenic sites close to the springs, including the Batongguan Historic Trail and Rainbow Waterfall. The area is also known for its excellent plum juice, plum vinegar and plum cuisine.

The Guanziling Hot Springs area in southern Taiwan is known for its rare mud springs with skin beautifying qualities. The Baolai and Bulao Hot Springs, fed by clear water from Baolai and Bulao Valley in Liugui District of Kaohsiung City, are at the western end

HOT SPRING REMINDERS

Clean your body thoroughly before jumping into a hot spring. In accordance with hot spring rules, visitors to public springs need to wear swimming costumes and caps, while those attending the nude section must proceed without any clothing or towels. People who have communicable or skin diseases, and women in their menstrual period, are prohibited. Those with heart problems or high blood pressure should follow medical advice. Avoid hot springs on an empty or full stomach or after consuming alcohol.



of the Southern Cross-Island Highway. The road to the springs is lined with cliffs and passes through a majestic scenic landscape. Several new hot spring resorts have sprouted up here in recent years. Remember to try the taro rice cake made with the famous Jiaxian taro.

Techniques: splash your entire body with the hot-spring water, starting from the feet and working your way up. First soak half your body before completely immersing yourself in the water to prevent hyperemia. The recommended duration of each soak is 15 minutes. Depending on skin tolerance, 38-42 degrees Celsius is the optimal water temperature, while anything above 45 degrees Celsius should be avoided.

GOLF HOLIDAYS

As Taiwan is a mountainous island, most of its golf courses are built on slopes or hills. Diverse landforms have inspired world-famous designers to create unique courses offering both challenge and excitement. Looking

down on these fairways from above enables golfers to appreciate the full extent of their spectacular beauty. Most caddies in Taiwan are female, well-trained, experienced and patient. Intimately familiar with the fairways, wind directions and terrain, these caddies will always bring out your best on the golf course.

Hot-spring tours can be combined with golf tours. What could be better than relaxing in a hot spring after completing a round of golf? The baths and cuisine at Taiwan's hot-springs resorts are something that touring golfers cannot afford to miss.

Golf courses in northern Taiwan provide gorgeous panoramic views to go with challenging fairways designed to match the uneven natural terrain. One of the most challenging is the historic golf course situated on the gentle hills of the Tamsui River estuary, where golfers have to contend with strong sea breezes. The Beitou hot-springs area has a course that offers views of Yangmingshan, the Taipei Basin and the Tamsui River estuary.

Playing golf on its undulating terrain and varied fairways has been compared to taking a pleasant stroll through the woods.

Golf courses in Linkou are mostly situated on uneven hills, with some offering broad views over the ocean. Several high-quality private golf clubs in this region also serve as social networking sites for Taiwan's political and business elites. Taoyuan County also possesses many world-class golf courses, some of which have hosted famous international competitions.

Most golf courses around Taichung are located in the foothills surrounding the urban area and feature open vistas and undulating terrain. Of course, there are several interesting golf courses in southern Taiwan as well, including tropical golf resorts and premium courses featuring challenging water hazards and bunkers. Golf courses in east Taiwan, such as those in Hualien, are reputed to be as beautiful as forest gardens reputed with dense woods, flat landscapes and magnificent natural beauty.



Time for Nature

Taiwan is a narrow island well-known for its mountainous terrain, with 272 peaks measuring at least 3,000 meters above sea level. The 3,952-meter Yushan (Mt. Jade), in particular, is the tallest mountain in Northeast Asia. Situated at the meeting point between the Eurasian Plate and the Philippine Plate, Taiwan has been experiencing continuous tectonic movements for millions of years, resulting in a spectacular array of complex and ever-shifting geological formations. Apart from tall mountains, the island also boasts an abundance of hills, plains, basins, gorges, delightful coastlines and submarine coral reefs.

Taiwan lies in the tropical and subtropical zones, with the Tropic of Cancer running right across its midriff. But with mountains like Mt. Jade that rise nearly 4,000 meters above sea level, Taiwan's climatic conditions range from the tropical, the subtropical and the temperate to the frigid. Despite its relatively small size, this beautiful island is abundant in natural resources and provides habitats for an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 living species.

Taiwan is home to approximately 18,400 species of wildlife. The proportion of wildlife species and subspecies native to the island is relatively high at over 20%, making Taiwan one of the world's most important wildlife conservation regions. These unique species include the Formosan black bear, the Formosan rock monkey, the Formosan sika deer, the Formosan landlocked salmon, the Reeve's muntjac, the Formosan gem-faced civet, the Chinese pangolin, the Mikado pheasant, the Formosan blue magpie, the Swinhoe's pheasant and the grey-cheeked fulvetta. Some 17,000 different species of butterflies are known around the world; almost 400 can be seen in Taiwan. Taiwan is the place which has the most species of butterflies per unit area in the world.

Equally impressive is the profusion and variety of Taiwan's plant life. The island has more than 4,000 recorded native vascular plant species, approximately 1,000 of which are native to Taiwan. These include the Wulai azalea, the Yushan eonymus, the Da-Ann hygrophila and the Taiwan catkin yew.

Eight national parks and 13 national scenic areas have been established to protect Taiwan's natural beauty and preserve the island's finest scenic attractions. The most popular itineraries for sightseers include a visit to the breath-taking steep mountain gorges at Taroko; a mini train ride up Alishan to watch the sunrise and the clouds; a climb up Mt. Jade, the highest of all peaks in Northeast Asia, to experience the grandeur of a mountain scenery that changes with the seasons;



a trip to Sun Moon Lake to enjoy the majestic beauty of the lake and its surrounding mountains; a sojourn at Kending to soak up the holiday mood of this passionate tropical paradise; and tours on the Hualien and Taitung coasts to enjoy Taiwan's cleanest air.

WILDLIFE

Taiwan is world renowned for its wealth of living species, which are extremely varied and in some cases very rare. The island has been called a microcosm of the entire northern hemisphere ecosystem and a treasury of natural wonders. Everything from Taiwan's flora and fauna through to its coastal formations and ocean ecology is worth exploring by the inquisitive visitor.

Flora and fauna: Taiwan is ecologically rich and diverse in its animal and plant life, much of which is also very rare. For instance, Taiwan has the only cypress forest habitat in the subtropics. Also rare are high-altitude prairies, taxus trees, Taiwanese mangroves, Taiwan cow-tail firs, and the Taiwan quillwort, while rare fauna species include the Formosan salamander, the Formosan black bear, the Mikado pheasant, and the Formosan landlocked salmon. Besides these wonders, one can also enjoy gorgeous seasonal scenes such as azaleas, cherry blossoms and maple leaves. For those looking to appreciate Taiwan's varied animal and plant life, be sure to check out one of its national scenic areas, forest recreation areas, national parks and nature reserves.



THE FORMOSAN LANDLOCKED SALMON – A NATIONAL TREASURE

The Formosan landlocked salmon, also known as Taiwanese salmon, is considered a national treasure of Taiwan. It is a species that enjoys a cool (below 18°C) and clean environment, and is one of the very few temperate-climate fish that have adapted to subtropical waters. In ancient times, the adult fish would return from the sea and make their way up to the source of the stream where they would mate and lay eggs; the hatchlings would grow into young fish before heading to sea, where they would eventually retrace the journey of their parents to complete the circle of life. Then came the Ice Age, when Taiwan rose up from the sea to such an extent that the passage between the stream and the sea was blocked off. Fortunately, the conditions in Dajia River remained favorable, allowing the salmon to survive as a land-locked species. Nowadays, the Taiwanese salmon inhabits the Qijiawan and Gaoshan brooks in Shei-Pa National Park in Miaoli County. Technically a subspecies, it is endemic to Taiwan and is protected as a threatened species.

Coastal geology: With oceans surrounding all sides, Taiwan has a long coastline with diverse scenic features. The west coast is monotonously straight and flat with sandy beaches, lagoons and sandbanks. By contrast, the coastal plains of the east tend to be narrow as they are sandwiched between high mountains and deep seas. The rocky coastline up north is mostly irregular with many bays and capes, while down south, the coast is also rocky but filled with coral reef formations. The offshore islands harbor many geological wonders, like the basaltic rocks of the Penghu archipelago, the granite formations of Kinmen, and the sea-sculpted rugged beauty of the Matsu islands.

Ocean ecology: Taiwan is rich in marine life. The waters around Kending and Green Island, for example, are warm and clear and particularly suited to coral formation. The area is an ocean garden of dazzlingly colorful corals and provides an ideal environment for all sorts of tropical fish. At Wang'an and Dongyuping in Penghu County and Lanyu (Orchid Island) in Taitung County, green sea turtles can be seen migrating up the shore to lay eggs. Whales and dolphins are mainly seen off the coast of Yilan, Hualien and Taitung, with reported sighting rates as high as 90% for guided boat tours.

NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

Mountainous and with many small islands off its long coastline, Taiwan is rich in natural resources and possesses 13 national scenic areas. These include the North Coast and Guanyinshan National Scenic Area with its unique coastal landforms; the Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area; the Tri-Mountain National Scenic Area, with a fruit paradise and sacred Buddhism site; the Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area, famous for its magnificent lake view and sunrises; the Alishan National Scenic Area; the Southwest Coast National Scenic Area with its glorious lagoons; the Siraya National Scenic Area, the cultural birthplace of the indigenous Pingpu tribes; the Maolin National Scenic Area, headlined by the culture of the Rukai tribe; the Dapeng Bay National Scenic Area with its rich flora and fauna; the East Coast National Scenic Area and East Rift Valley National Scenic Area along the east coast; and finally, the offshore Penghu National Scenic Area and the Matsu National Scenic Area.

The Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area has a rich oceanic landscape characterized by a complex and ever-changing coast and undersea





The Queen's Head at Yeliu



Sun Moon Lake's Lalu Island

QUEEN'S HEAD, NATURE'S MIRACLE ON THE NORTH COAST

Of all the scenic wonders in the North Coast and Guanyinshan National Scenic Area, the most spectacular is perhaps the rock formations at Yeliu Geopark. These masterpieces of nature were formed through the continuous pounding of wind and waves over thousands of years, creating rocks shaped like mushrooms, beehives, ginger, candle sticks and tofu. The most famous of them all is a mushroom rock known as the Queen's Head, which has been said to bear an uncanny resemblance to the head of Queen Elizabeth ever since the top of the rock fell apart between 1962 and 1963. Estimates place the Queen's Head at around 4,000 years old.

terrain. There are underwater coral reefs all along the way from Nanya to Bitou, with the sun coral being the most unique species. There are also great varieties of colorful corals from Bitou to Longdong. Longdongwan Park and Longdong South Ocean Park are great locations to experience the wonders of marine biology, from green algae and sea anemones to sea hares and barnacles.

Located in Nantou County, the world-famous Sun Moon Lake is named after its distinguishing features – round like the sun on one side and slender like the crescent moon on the other. Sitting at 748 meters above sea level, the lake resembles a dreamy painting with its watery aura and multilayered mountainscape. The natural environment in this area has given birth to a rich ecosystem filled with numerous varieties of beetles, butterflies, fireflies, birds and fish, including the renowned President's Fish.

Another major attraction for foreign visitors is Alishan and its five wonders – its sunrise, sea of clouds, sunset, forests, and mountain railway. Alishan's sea of clouds is one of Taiwan's eight scenic wonders and is best experienced in autumn, usually around sunrise or early in the evening. Alishan is also famous for its trees, especially the amazing Taiwan cypress forest. Mid-March to mid-April every year is Alishan's flowering season, when a sea of beautiful cherry blossoms

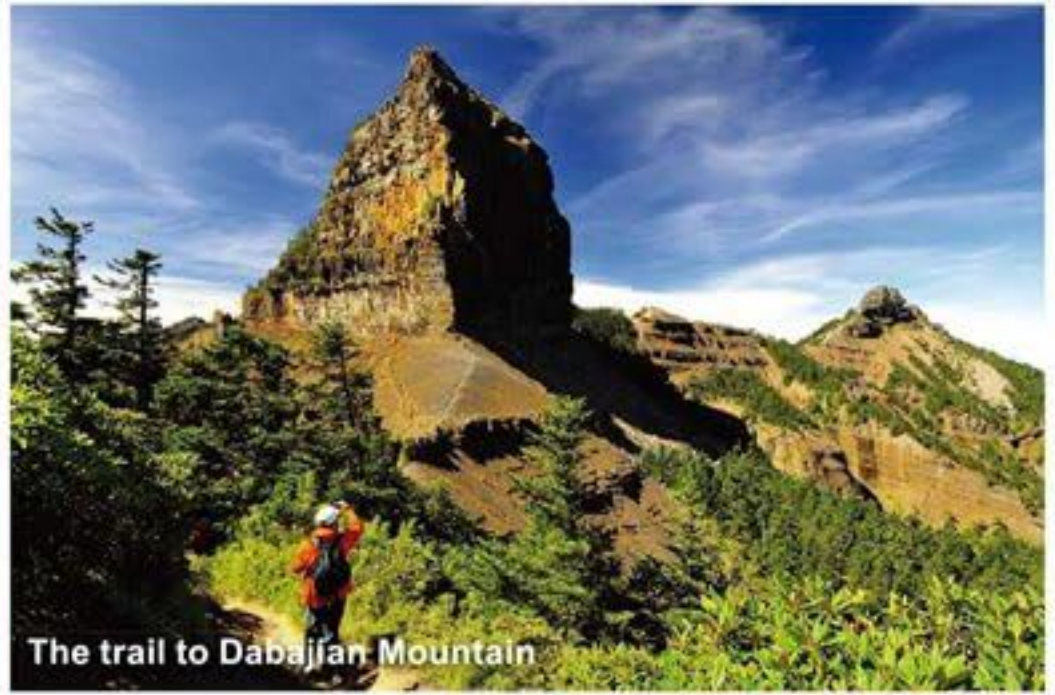
decorates the entire mountainside. Alishan is also one of Taiwan's top 10 bird-watching sites. If you take a walk along the forest trails, you might be able to hear the sweet singing of birds of the Timaliidae, Sylviidae, Paridae, and Turdidae families.

The main features of the Southwest Coast National Scenic Area are its widespread sandbanks, wetlands, lagoons, and abundant ecological resources. A highlight is the Black-faced Spoonbill Refuge which attracts hundreds of this large endangered bird every winter.

The Dapeng Bay National Scenic Area features the only single-mouth bag-shaped lagoon in Taiwan. There are many wetlands near the lagoon, such as the Mangrove Wetland Eco-Park, where visitors can see schools of mudskippers and various types of fiddler crabs. Herons are the most commonly seen birds in the area, especially the little egret.

Little Liuqiu is the only coral island among Taiwan's offshore islets. This beautiful little island is known for three things: it is the best place to see sunrises and sunsets, it has the most varieties of corals, and the entire island itself is coral.

Famous for its unique flora and fauna, the East Coast National Scenic Area is a place where tourists can enjoy leisure activities such as boating, whale watching and diving. The tropical



The trail to Dabajian Mountain



Liushidan Mountain



Roseate Tern

rainforest on either side of the Xiuguluan River, the thorn forest of Xibulan Island, as well as the coral reefs of Shitiping, Sanxiantai and Little Yeliu, are all part of Taiwan's unique ecological landscape. In terms of animals, the Formosan macaque (or rock monkey) is probably the most famous, and also the easiest to spot. The bird that most represents the area is the endemic Taiwan bulbul, which can only be found on the east side of Taiwan and in Hengchun. This black-headed bird and the white-headed Chinese bulbul found on the west coast of Taiwan form an intriguing example of geographical segregation.

Penghu and Matsu are offshore island groups with diverse geological features. The white sand beach at Penghu's Jibei Island is composed mainly of coral and shell fragments and is a spectacular sight particularly from above. Tiezhanyu Island has a classic basaltic hill terrain that attracts many breeding seabirds during the summer, while the basalt columns of Tongpan have earned the island the reputation of "Penghu's Yellowstone." Matsu features steep cliffs and sea-shaped terrain on the one hand and beautiful flat beaches on the other. Its Beigan Island is known for possessing amazing sandy beaches such as Tanghoudao Beach and Wusha Beach.

NATIONAL PARKS

There are eight national parks in Taiwan. Yangmingshan National Park is located only 30 minutes by car from downtown Taipei and is known for its volcanic formations, hot springs, and rich ecosystem. At the peak of its flowering season in February and March every year, the park attracts massive crowds that come to admire its colorful azaleas and pink cherry blossoms. March and April are the calla lily season at Zhuzihu, where visitors can witness a spectacular sea of blooming calla lilies stretching as far as the eye can see. Mt. Datun in autumn has a unique beauty of its own, with the swaying crimson-tipped silver grass painting an exquisite picture that will delight every visitor.

Yushan National Park is located in mountainous central Taiwan, where there are 30 peaks of 3,000 meters or higher. The park's terrain stretches from the 3,952-meter-high Yushan (Mt. Jade) to the Lakulaku stream, which is just 300 meters above sea level. This has created a climate that ranges from the temperate to the frigid, resulting in an abundance of flora and fauna species.

Ordinary visitors planning to sightsee in recreation areas and scenic spots within a 50-metre zone on either side of the highway can do so without official permission. Top attractions in the northwest area include the New Central Cross-Island

Highway, the Tataka Recreation Area, the Yunlong Falls and the Dongpu Hot Springs, while in the southern area there are the South Cross-Island Highway, Meishan, and the Tianchi Recreation Area. The eastern area includes the Nan'an Falls and the Nan'an Visitor Center.

Kenting National Park, the first ever national park established in Taiwan, is situated in the country's southernmost Pingtung County. Continuous movements of the Earth's crust over millions of years have created geological formations such as coral reefs, sea-eroded terrain, and sloping cliff terrain. The huge numbers of migratory birds that fly here from the north every winter present a sight to behold. Attractions worth visiting include South Bay, Longluan Lake, Maobitou (Cat's Nose Cape), Guanshan, Baisha Bay, Houbihu, Wanlitong, Eluanbi Park and Shedding Natural Park.

Taroko National Park sits astride Hualien, Nantou and Taichung, and is famous for its granite formations and magnificent precipitous marble gorge. There are more than 30 walking tracks of varying levels of difficulty for hikers to choose from here, including scenic, fitness and mountain-climbing routes. Walking along the highway above the Liwu River, one confronts towering cliff faces, gorges and tunnels everywhere. The most arresting sights



HUSBAND AND WIFE TREES

The Husband and Wife Trees are two legendary Formosan cypress specimens on the New Central Cross-Island Highway. The two trees were mortally scorched during a bush fire in 1963, though their twin trunks, like a husband and wife in a warm embrace, remain standing decades later, thus giving birth to their nickname. Another legend has it that once upon a time two star-crossed lovers of the indigenous Bunun tribe jumped off a cliff because their parents opposed their love, and the cypress trees sprouted from the exact spot where they died. Regardless of whether this story is true or not, the Husband and Wife Trees have become the most romantic attraction along Taiwan's New Central Cross-Island Highway.



are Yanzikou (Swallows' Grottos) and the Jiuqudong Tunnel (Tunnel of Nine Turns), both of which can be found at the two narrowest sections of the deep gorge. On the cliffs facing Yanzikou across the gorge are many small holes; this place is called Swallows' Grottos because every summer and spring swallows such as the house swift and the Pacific swallow twitter and frolic or build nests inside the holes.

RECREATION FARMS

Most of the recreation farms in Taiwan are designed with family activities in mind, which is why they have become a top destination for families throughout Southeast Asia. Taiwan has more than 200 recreation farms boasting a variety of themes, from sightseeing fruit farms to flower or tea farms, as well as farms that revolve around cattle-farm life, ecology, fishing or wine. With the explanations and guidance of the owners, a trip to a recreation farm is a great opportunity to better understand the natural environment and wildlife of Taiwan. Many farms also provide carefully designed meals, fresh tea or coffee, home-brewed alcohol and

DYI activities for visitors to experience and enjoy.

Some recreation farms have natural forest landscapes as their main drawcard and feature experimental plant farms or native tree farms. Tourists can take a relaxing stroll through the dense forest to cleanse their bodies and clear their minds, or they can engage in more physical activities such as joining an organized river adventure or nature discovery tour.

Some farms also let visitors learn through experience. Most of these farms are spacious homes to cattle, horses or goats and are rich in agricultural and ecological resources. Visitors can feed the cute animals, learn to milk and even make their own dairy products. Some farms also manufacture their own branded food products and souvenirs.

As Taiwan is surrounded by water on all sides, there are also farms with fishing as their central theme. Joining local fishermen to catch live fish using bare hands is a rare experience for city people and is particularly attractive to children, making such farms perfect destinations for family trips.

Another popular type of farm is the fruit or vegetable farm, where tourists can experience the joy of picking their



Black-faced Spoonbill

own fruits and vegetables. Some fruit farms are filled with fruit trees and can be visited all year round, while others have special Chinese medicine herb gardens. There are also farms that have retained a traditional rural village style and enable tourists to live the life of a real farmer for a day. It is said that after a day toiling in the vegetable gardens and rice paddies, visitors will really begin to appreciate the efforts of farmers and that even the rice and vegetables served at dinner will taste more delicious.

FOREST RECREATION AREAS

Nearly 60% of Taiwan's 36,000 square kilometers is covered with forests. There are national forest recreation areas in the country's north, south, east and central regions open to the public.

NORTHERN REGION

The Neidong National Forest Recreation Area and the Manyueyuan National Forest Recreation Area are best known for their array of waterfalls and great locations for forest bathing, bird-watching, and hiking. The Dongyanshan National Forest Recreation Area has dense forests and has retained the relics of the old logging industry. Taipingshan National Forest Recreation Area has a precious primitive Taiwan cypress forest that is also among the easiest to access on the island. The Guanwu National Forest Recreation Area has many bushwalking tracks which lead to ancient trees that have been around for as long as 2,000 years or more.

CENTRAL REGION

The Wuling National Forest Recreation Area is suitable for visits every season of the year, with primitive forests, cherry blossoms, snow, waterfalls and creeks. With a climate ranging from the tropical and temperate to frigid, Daxueshan National Forest Recreation Area is full of rich wildlife. It is a great place for bird-watching, hiking or stargazing. Basxianshan National Forest Recreation Area has lush greens and clear streams that originate from deep in the mountains, giving rise to a lively ecosystem. Hehuanshan National Forest Recreation Area is Taiwan's most famous site to see snow and the gives easy access to some of the island's highest mountains. Crowds tend to flock to the area during the winter to see the falling snow, but the area is also known for offering spectacular views of clouds and beautiful plant life. The Aowanda National Forest Recreation Area is famous for its maple leaves and always attracts hordes of tourists during autumn.

The Alishan National Forest Recreation Area is known for its five wonders – its sunrise, sea of clouds, sunset, forests, and mountain railway. Visitors can also check out the Taiwan Pleione Nature Reserve to see this protected pink orchid native to the northern and central parts of the country. And of course, don't forget to sample some world-famous Alishan high mountain tea. Tengzhi National Forest Recreation Area has natural hardwood forests and man-made plantations, and is rich in plant varieties such as the dragon spruce and Tawania, as well as bird species. The Shuangliu National Forest Recreation Area has many tracks for forest bathing and hiking and is a great place to observe insects, fish and birds, including more than 130 species of butterflies alone. The Kenting National Forest Recreation Area is regarded as a must-visit tourist destination for its 1,000-plus species of tropical plants, abundant coral rock formations, and a unique geological landscape sculpted by the elements, including many spectacular canyons, caves, stalactites and stalagmites.



THE SHEEP SHOW AT QINGJING FARM

Qingjing Farm is a must-visit destination for visitors to Nantou County. At 1,800 meters above sea level, the farm's lush meadows are its most popular attraction; it also contains a cliff-side track that offers heavenly views of the peaks of Taiwan's Central Mountain Range and the whole of the farm. The sheep show hosted by a New Zealand farmer is one of the farm's highlights. Visitors can watch sheep dogs guide the flock, witness live shearing demonstrations and take up-and-close photos with the cute animals.

EASTERN REGION

The Chinan National Forest Recreation Area in Hualien is primarily focused on exhibiting Taiwan's forest industry, with a rare wood transport cableway running from 170 meters to 850 meters above sea level. Fuyuan National Forest Recreation Area is also in Hualien and contains the largest forest of camphor trees of any recreation area in Taiwan. It is also famous for its renowned Butterfly Valley and scenic waterfalls. Xiangyang National Forest Recreation Area was a former work station for Taiwan's Forestry Bureau and is the gateway to Jiaming Lake, which is the second-highest mountain lake in Taiwan and is said to be the only lake in the country created by a meteor strike. The Zhiben National Forest Recreation Area, known for its rich natural scenery and bird species, features a scenic 80-meter suspension bridge that cuts across the Zhiben River. This wonderful vantage point offers views of the famous Zhiben Hot Springs, where visitors can enjoy a relaxing natural hot spa.



Time to Shop

From north to south, Taiwan has no shortage of large shopping malls and department stores that combine leisure and recreation with branded fashion, luxury goods, cuisine, bookstores, cinemas, retailers, and amusement parks, satisfying the needs of every visiting customer.

Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung all possess large-scale commercial districts with endless shopping opportunities for foreign tourists. The best places to shop in Taipei include Ximending, Wufenpu, Dihua Street, and the Zhongxiao-Dunhua district. Meanwhile, the Xinyi Commercial District, the site of many department stores as well as Taipei 101 tower, movie theaters, and bookstores, has also become a must-visit for tourists. Other top destinations include the Jade Market and the electronics-filled Guang Hua Digital Plaza. In Taichung, there is the artistic Jingming 1st Street and the Tunghai Art Street, while in Kaohsiung there is the lively Xinkujiang area, the Sanduo Commercial District, and the massive Dream Mall, all of which are favorite hangouts for the city's young people.

Apart from trendy clothes and accessories, the culture-infused old streets of Taiwan are also must-visits that show off the island's profound culture and strong vitality.



STREETS OF CREATIVITY AND ART

Thanks to the sprouting cultural and creative industry in Taiwan, local artists are now enjoying more opportunities to show off their ideas and designs. Shopping in Taiwan nowadays is more than just shopping; it can be a pleasant experience that enriches your mind and broadens your world. From north to south, Taiwan has many artistic spots and commercial districts full of wonderfully creative products that display the ingenuity of the Taiwanese people and guarantee tourists a fun shopping experience.

Dihua Street in Taipei's Dadaocheng area is a hub for goods of mixed variety. Visitors can come here to buy items to prepare for the Chinese New Year, take a tour of the cloth market, or visit the old commercial Art Yard next to the Watsons pharmacy. Local artist brands such as Hakka Blue and Studio in Bloom, with their originally-designed pottery, cloth bags, and so forth, will surely please visiting tourists looking for unique and special art and design as well as an outdoor café. The side alleys are filled with trendy clothing stores and avant-garde tattoo shops.



SPECIAL RECOMMENDATION: CULTURAL PARKS

Huashan 1914 Creative Park, a former liquor factory built in 1914 during the Japanese colonization period, was transformed into a center for culture and creativity in 2007. The Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, which was transformed from the old Songshan



Xinyi Commercial District

as well as small accessory shops and restaurants.

Situated next to Central Park, the Urban Spotlight Arcade is a must-visit for those traveling to Kaohsiung. Inconspicuous during the day, the arcade comes alive at night through colorful bright lights that turn the street into an artistic pathway. It is a unique space filled with music, arts, and leisure, and a place where tourists can enjoy a fresh cup of coffee, sample local cuisine, listen to live music, or shop for souvenirs.

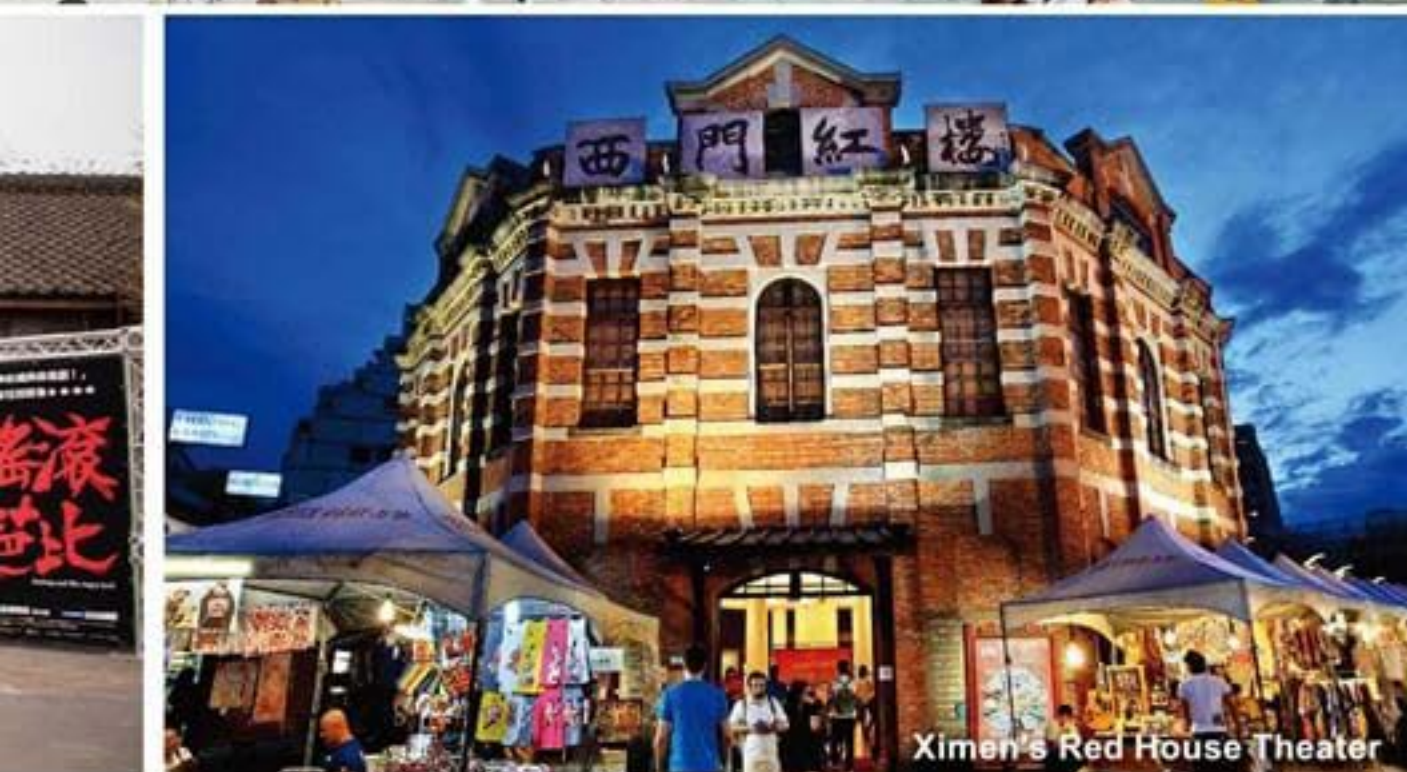
The Pier-2 Art Center sitting beside Kaohsiung Harbor is a former unused warehouse that has been transformed by a group of artists into a space for artistic and cultural events, including seminars, exhibitions, performances, and even markets, on weekends and holidays. The center is currently planning to extend its functions, including establishing a digital industrial center and opening a warehouse restaurant.

OLD STREETS

No trip to Taiwan is complete without a visit to one of its old streets, where travelers can enjoy the unique retro atmosphere while strolling past historical sites, shopping for vintage handicrafts and sampling local delicacies.

Jiufen is a tourist destination with a unique history. At the end of the 19th century, a gold rush in the area transformed the formerly impoverished nine-household village into a mining town of 3,000 to 4,000 families. The gold rush reached its peak during the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945) but commenced its decline soon after. It was not until *A City of Sadness*—a 1989 film set in Jiufen—won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival that the area became prosperous again as a tourism hotspot. With its distinctive feel and golden history, Jiufen is now a favorite location for artists and tourists searching for that nostalgic atmosphere.

Daxi Town in Taoyuan County encapsulates the legacy of two former Taiwanese presidents, Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo. The town's traditional architecture and alleyways, folk performances, unique



Ximen's Red House Theater

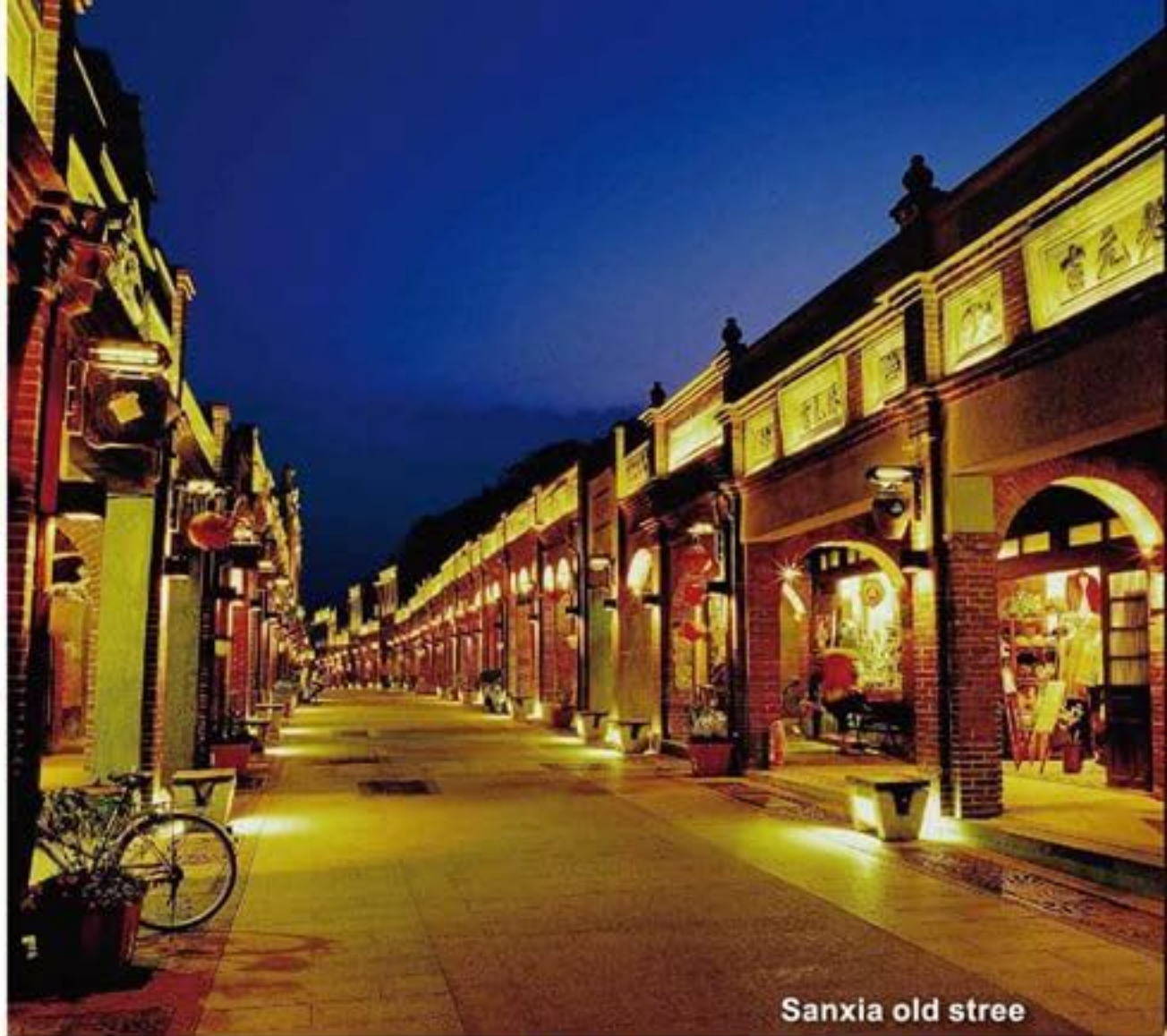
Tobacco Factory in 2010, still possesses many of its historical structures built as far back as the 1930s. The two parks, with their green grass and ample performance spaces, have become favorite outdoor leisure destinations for locals. They are places where artists come to exchange ideas and where tourists come to relax, watch performances, and look for cultural souvenirs.

Jingming 1st Street in Taichung has shades of France's Champs-Élysées, with beautiful sidewalks, delicate signs, boutique stores, cafés, exotic restaurants, and galleries. Cultural events, free concerts, exhibitions, and street performances are popular here during weekends and holidays.

The Tunghai Art Street in Taichung, situated near Tunghai University, is a street filled with the rich flavor of humanities and the arts. With a retro-European feel, the street is lined with uniquely decorated stores and postmodern-style cafés,



New Year's shopping at Dihua Street



Sanxia old street

shops and food vendors have attracted many tourists looking to savor the richness of traditional Taiwanese culture. Its famous old street, which is extremely well-preserved with red-brick archways and Baroque-style architecture, is definitely worth checking out.

The old street of Sanxia District in New Taipei City dates back to more than a century ago. Walking along this

NANZHUANG OLD STREET

Nanzhuang Old Street, a top tourist attraction of Miaoli County, features an abundance of traditional wooden Japanese architecture. The post office retains the same style it had during the Japanese occupation, while the popular Sweet Osmanthus Lane still contains red-brick walls, a public laundry pit, and old stores selling traditional Japanese kimonos. There are also plenty of bed and breakfasts, villas, restaurants, and cafes in the area for tourists to choose from.

street with its seemingly never-ending stream of red-brick archways and antique buildings is like stepping into a time warp. The characters carved on the old houses represent family names, occupations, or store numbers, with the Chinese character for "dye" signifying that the area was dominated by dye shops. Traditional hand-dyed clothing stores can still be found in the area, as well as stores selling antique toys, wooden handicrafts, noodles, and ice desserts.

Visitors to Tainan must take a walk down the renowned Anping Old Street, the first street built by the Dutch when they occupied the area almost four hundred years ago. Many of the buildings here feature a special talisman designed to ward off evil spirits – the sword lion, which features an image of a lion with a sword across its mouth. The sword lion is believed to have originated from the era of Koxinga, otherwise known as Zheng Cheng-gong (Cheng Ch'eng Kung), the legendary Chinese military leader who was credited with freeing Taiwan from Dutch rule during the 17th century. Nowadays, the sword lion can be seen on a lot of merchandise and souvenirs for sale along the street.

Qishan Old Street in Kaohsiung dates back to when Taiwan's sugar industry was burgeoning in the 1920s. Its



Old streets of Jiufen

main characteristic is the unique mix of Chinese and western-style architecture, with mud brick huts, traditional Chinese courtyards, stone archways, and Baroque-style designs. The Qishan Train Station features European Tudor-style buildings, while the Hong Family Mansion has a traditional Chinese landscape garden. Taking a stroll down the street will help visitors appreciate just how many different cultures have influenced this part of Taiwan.



FASHIONS, TRENDS, AND BOUTIQUES

Taipei is a dream destination for those who love modern city life. The East District is the city's most bustling commercial area. Thanks to the Taipei Metro (also known as the MRT) and a large number of city bus routes, the East District is easy to access and navigate with department stores, trendy restaurants, and cafes galore. Fashion buffs can hit one of the many chic boutiques in the alleys and the underground East Metro Mall along Zhongxiao East Road, which extends

all the way to the Xinyi Commercial District. Lovers of high-end fashion can also take time to shop at Breeze Center, SOGO Taipei's Dunhua branch, Bellavita, and The Mall, where many of the world's top luxury brands can be found.

The iconic Xinyi Commercial District is dubbed "Taipei's Manhattan". The district is a busy and prosperous financial center during the day, but once the sun sets it transforms into Taipei's hippest leisure and shopping area, with amazing night views and an endless array of things to see, buy, and experience.



EASY CARD

Taipei's multipurpose EasyCard can be used to get around on the city's metro, bus, train and high speed rail networks, as well as on some taxis. Using the EasyCard on the Taipei MRT is especially advantageous as it provides a 20% discount on standard fares. Meanwhile, those who would like to make use of Taipei's automated U-Bike bicycle sharing service can rent bicycles with a simple swipe of their EasyCard at select locations across the city. Many convenience stores and scenic spots all over Taiwan also accept EasyCard payments, making it the perfect card for tourists who want to avoid the hassle of carrying too much cash or loose change in their pockets.

TAIPEI PASS

The Taipei Tourism Passport (Taipei Pass) is an IC ticket that offers unlimited access to city buses (both Taipei and New Taipei) and the MRT for durations ranging from one to five days. For more information, go to: <http://www.tsc.com.tw/taipeipass/tp2013.pdf>

I-PASS

The I-Pass is Kaohsiung's multi-purpose card, which can be used on the city's MRT, buses and ferries. Special one-day and two-day passes are available for the convenience of tourists.



Kaohsiung MRT Formosa Boulevard Station



Ximending Pedestrian Area

NIGHT LIFE IN TAIPEI

For those who enjoy the nightlife, Taipei's flourishing East District has no shortage of pubs and clubs, some of which boast top DJs and performances from world-class bands. Some karaoke bars (KTVs) and cinemas stay open all night so you don't have to cut your night out short. It is no wonder that Taiwan's fashionable young people love to sing and dance and stay out until daybreak every weekend.

Night owls who prefer the arts can head to the Dunhua branch of Eslite Bookstore, which is open 24 hours a day and is well-stocked with both Chinese and foreign-language titles.



For trendy and affordable clothes, Wufenpu is the place to go. Located near Songshan Train Station, the area is littered with hundreds of wholesale stores with clothing made from Taiwan as well as imported from Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand, and Singapore. Remember to test your haggling skills to make sure you grab the best prices!

Kaohsiung is also a shopping paradise. The Xinkujiang Shopping Area is filled with opportunities to shop for trendy goods and sample tasty cuisine. Situated near the President Department Store, which sits at Kaohsiung's busiest crossroad of Wufu 2nd Road and Renzhi Street, Xinkujiang is the biggest and most famous shopping district in southern

Taiwan, with many fashionable clothing stores, jewelers, cosmetic shops, watch shops, cinemas, and restaurants.

The Yuansu Yuzhu Shopping Area appeals to the tastes of young consumers, with a NOVA electronics mall, Yuansu Square, a Japanese boutique, and trendy restaurants. As a highly popular shopping destination, Yuansu Yuzhu is a strong competitor to the nearby Xinkujiang Shopping Area and has the added advantage of having major landmarks such as Central Park and Urban Spotlight in its vicinity. The area is infused with a trendy atmosphere reminiscent of Japan's Harajuku, with exotic merchandise ranging from clothing and accessories to charms and charming gifts.



DEPARTMENT
STORE SALES
AND CONSUMER
ELECTRONICS

Taipei's Xinyi Commercial District is designed to satisfy the shopping needs of urban residents. The area's low-density and low-volume development is matched with uniquely designed corporate and commercial architecture. Famous landmarks that make the area an unmissable destination include the Shin Kong Mitsukoshi Department Store, the Eslite Bookstore's flagship Xinyi branch, ATT 4 FUN shopping mall, Uni-Hankyu Department Store, Vieshow Cinemas' Xinyi branch, W Hotel, Le Méridien Taipei Hotel, the Grand Hyatt Taipei, and of course, Taipei 101.

The world-famous Taipei 101 building stands 508 meters tall and rises above the city's skyline like a giant stalk of bamboo. With curled ruyi figures – an ancient symbol associated with heavenly clouds – littered over the exterior, Taipei 101 is a modern marvel of architecture that combines the best of the East and the West. The building is also the annual venue of one of Taiwan's most popular New Year's Eve celebrations, attracting crowds from near and far with a fantastic fireworks display and a free concert in the public square of the nearby Taipei City Hall.

In Taichung, there are department stores and malls such as Shin Kong Mitsukoshi, KS SOGO Taichung, and Chungyo Department Store, as well as Tiger City, a huge mall that sits on nearly 33,000 square meters of space and offers multiple services ranging from leisure and entertainment to shopping and dining.

Sanduo Shopping District in Kaohsiung is headlined by Shin Kong Mitsukoshi, SOGO, and the FE21 Mega Department Store, which form a spectacular multi-functional commercial area that has been heavily promoted by the city government in recent years along with the 85-story Tuntex building nearby. Clothing and general merchandise sold in the neighboring areas are highly popular among teenagers as they are



generally cheaper than those found in department stores.

Thanks to Taiwan's well-developed IT industry, there are many outlets and plazas across the country specializing in computers, communication equipment, and consumer electronics. The most famous ones in Taipei are the Guang Hua Digital Plaza at the intersection of Bade Road and Shimin Boulevard in the Zhongzheng District and the NOVA electronics mall located across the road from Taipei Railway Station, whereas Kaohsiung is largely dominated by the Sunfar 3C chain.

ANNIVERSARY
SALES

Taiwanese department stores and malls have two major anniversary sale periods. The first is in May, before and after Mother's Day, and the second runs from the end of September all the way to December. Apart from generous rebates, these sales feature significant discounts on products ranging from clothes to household appliances. The biggest drawcards tend to be cosmetics and skincare products, which always attract long queues of female customers hours before the stores open for business.

PRICE BARGAINING

English	Mandarin	Taiwanese
How much is this?	Je ge Duo Shao Chien?	Jeh Wah Jie Chin?
Too expensive!	Tai Gui Le!	U Kao Kui Eh!
A little cheaper!	Suan Pien Yi Yi Dian!	Ka Sio Tam Bo Ah Lal



Time for Love

Taiwan is an island full of romantic surprises. Since the 1950s, it has attracted many honeymooners from all over the world, while in recent years it has become a popular destination for wedding photos and romantic getaways. After taking studio and outdoor shots in their selected outfits, the bride- and groom-to-be can spend the remainder of their time traveling across the country, visiting exotic hot springs, taking leisure bike rides and enjoying spectacular sunsets. Before returning home, couples can select their favorite photos and the completed album will be sent directly to their homes as part of an efficient and high-quality package. Check below for the most romantic attractions in Taiwan's north, center, south and east, as well as its nearby islets.

Yangmingshan's picturesque scenery offers couples a romantic atmosphere all year round. Cherry blossoms and azaleas cover the mountain in the spring; white calla lilies blossom at Zhuzihu in March and April; Qingtiangang terrace is a land of pure green grass in the summer; white silvergrass flowers spread across Datun Mountain in the autumn; and in winter time, all of Yangmingshan is shrouded in a thick mist. It is the perfect place for lovebirds to plan a trip at any time of the year.

The Shimen Wedding Plaza on the Taiwan's north coast is a hotspot for romantic photos. With its white-themed Mediterranean-style architecture and pure white bell tower set against the crystal clear blue sky, the plaza is a popular destination for lovers and married couples alike. Once you are here, don't forget to also check out nearby attractions such as Fugui Cape Park, Yeliu, Fulong Beach and Green Bay.

Couples who love the retro style of the olden days can visit Jinguashi and Jiufen in New Taipei or the Taipei Story House, Ximen's Red House Theater, the Spot Taipei Film House, and the Taipei Water Park in Taipei City. Take a voyage through the old streets, take some photos and absorb the nostalgia of old-time Taiwan.

The majestic Sun Moon Lake in Central Taiwan, with its ever-changing beauty, is the place to be for couples in love and newlyweds. Climb the Ci'en Pagoda for panoramic views of the lake or take a walk along the nearby trails to experience the unmatched romantic atmosphere of the area.

Qingjing Farm in Nantou County, at 1,800 meters above sea level, sits in Taiwan's Central Mountain Range and is as beautiful as any European grassland. With dreamy landscapes and many European-style guest houses, the farm is the perfect location for a romantic escape.



Liushidan Mountain



Northeast coast scenic area



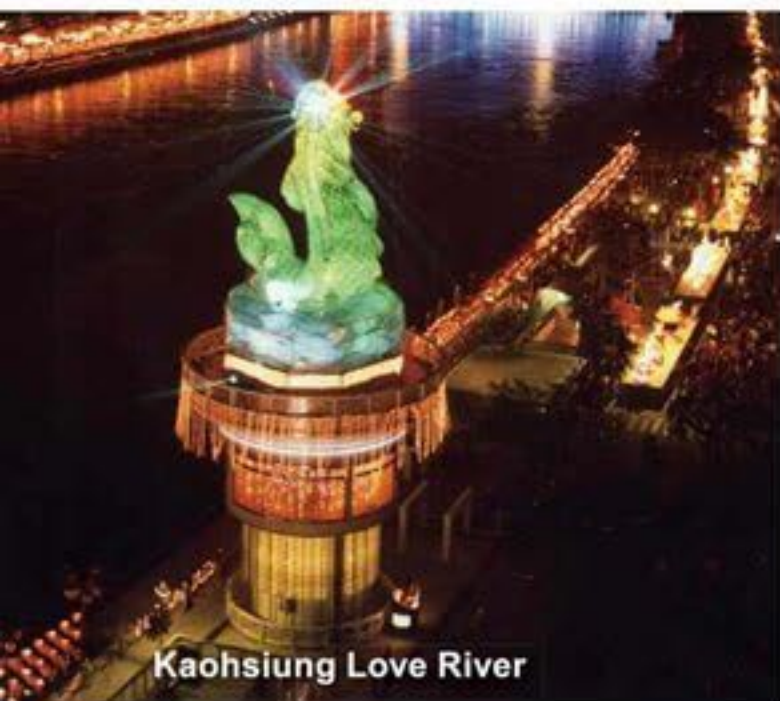
The dawn of Sun Moon Lake



Kaohsiung's Love River in southern Taiwan has become the city's most romantic dating venue, suitable for photographs at any time of the day. Further south lies the resort haven of Kending, which has beaches of pure white sand for romantic strolls and photos. While there, don't forget to stop by the nearby Eluanbi Lighthouse, Shedding Nature Park, and Chuanfan Rock (Sail Rock).

When in Hualien, go to the beautiful Qixingtian Beach to observe the stars at night, including the seven bright stars known as the Big Dipper. Locals regard the area as the region's best place for a date, especially on the hills where couples can get a magnificent view of the entire bay.

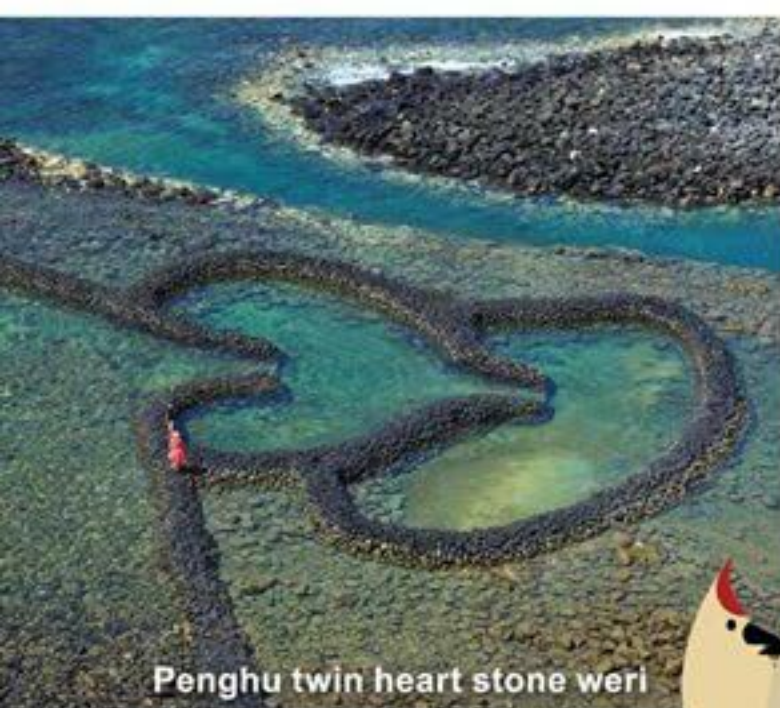
The Twin Heart Stone Weir, with its romantic atmosphere, has repeatedly topped polls as the best attraction in Penghu. The weir comprises two semi-circle-shaped stone walls that resemble hearts. It was originally built in early times to trap fish, though now it has become Penghu's most romantic scenic spot.



Kaohsiung Love River

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF TV IDOLS

The shooting locations of popular TV idol dramas and films have become dating hotspots for Taiwan's star-chasing couples. For example, the South Korean TV drama *On Air* showed off the beauty of Sun Moon Lake and the exclusive Lalu hotel, while *Secret*, starring and directed by Taiwanese pop king Jay Chou, made the former Tamsui Customs Officer's Residence (Little White House) and Tamkang High School famous. Vacation scenes from *In Time with You*, winner of Best TV Series at the 2012 Golden Bell Awards, have also made Tai'an hot springs in Miaoli and the scenic spots in the area extremely popular.



Penghu twin heart stone weir

DATING HOTSPOTS

There are many prime dating locations in Taiwan with amazing scenery that frequently attract couples looking for a romantic experience or an opportunity to grab an unforgettable snapshot.

Events held in New Taipei's Pingxi District during the Qixi Festival in the seventh month of the lunar calendar, otherwise known as Chinese Valentine's Day, attract thousands of lovers and even marriage proposals every year. The famous Ferris wheel in Taipei's Miramar Entertainment Park, on the other hand, is perfect day or night for couples to spend some quiet time together while enjoying a spectacular view of the city from above.

The Jingguo Parkway in Taichung is one of the most popular dating venues for couples. With tall trees, green grass and rows of park benches lining the 1.7-kilometer path, the parkway is the ultimate destination for romantic strolls and heart-to-heart talks. The National Museum of Natural Science, the

National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung Citizens Plaza, and Feng Le Sculpture Park are all close by. The area is also a great location for shopping and dining with many restaurants, department stores and five-star hotels.

Xizi Bay, well-known for its beautiful sunsets and natural reefs, is a dating haven for locals in Kaohsiung. A 20-minute drive from the city center, the spectacular bay is backed by mountains and faces the sea, with fishing lights adding to the romantic flavor especially at night. National Sun Yat-sen University is located inside the Xizi Bay Scenic Area. The bay's public beach, the entrance to which is on the left hand side of the visitor center, is a popular attraction during the summer.

The picturesque Liyu (Carp) Lake in Hualien's Shoufeng Township is encircled by a four-kilometer highway and provides booths and parks for picnics as well as camping areas and boat hire. In suitable weather conditions, the lake and its nearby mountains become a paragliding paradise; in late spring and autumn, the lake is a romantic spot to watch fireflies light up the evening sky.

TRAVEL BY RAIL

Visitors who want to avoid navigating and traffic can plan a railway holiday that offers breathtaking views of Taiwan's coastlines and mountains, farms and countryside. Round-trip tickets can be purchased at cheaper prices.

A train ride on the Eastern Line offers stunning and magnificent views of Yilan, Hualien and Taitung. In a journey that allows travelers to appreciate an amazing array of scenery, the train moves along Taiwan's eastern coastline between the mountains and the sea, passing the Yilan (Lanyang) Plain, Guishan Island, Su'ao, and the East Rift Valley National Scenic Area. The railroad also passes by Taroko National Park and Taroko Gorge, where you can see the Swallows' Grottoes, Tunnel of Nine Turns, and more. Apart from appreciating nature, visitors can also arrange a trip that includes indigenous culture, bird-watching or hot springs.



Longteng earthquake collapsed bridge

The South-Link Line is the only railway line that offers sights from both the Taiwan Strait and the Pacific Ocean. Running alongside the sea and through the southern part of the Central Mountain Range, the line connects Taitung and Pingtung and provides travelers an opportunity to witness the gorgeous mountain and sea views of the southeast coast while also appreciating Taiwan's unique indigenous culture.

Also, don't miss the slow mini-train that operate only on certain routes. For first-time visitors, these slow, scenic rides offer a highly recommended way to see Taiwan.

The Pingxi Line in New Taipei City can be reached by taking the North-Link Line and transferring at either Ruifang Station or Houtong Station. The ride offers wonderful views of mountains and waterfalls and the retro atmosphere of old towns and mines. Key attractions include Shifen Waterfall, the Yeren Valley waterfalls, and Lingjiao Waterfall.

The Neiwan Line in Hsinchu County can be reached by transferring at Hsinchu Station. The slow-moving train enables travelers to enjoy the scenery of Taiwan's mountain towns. The main attractions include Beipu and Five Fingers Mountain.

The Jiji Line cuts across Changhua and Nantou counties and offers simple and nostalgic pleasures from rural Taiwan. Major sights along the line include the Green Tunnel, the historic Jiji Train Station, old pottery factories and Jiji Town.

The Alishan Forest Railway is one of only three mountain railways left in the world. The world-famous tracks pass from tropical to temperate climate conditions and offer travelers spectacular sights from sunrises and seas of clouds to ancient trees and flowering seasons.

ROMANTIC DAY LILY FIELDS ALONG THE SOUTH-LINK LINK

Go to Taimali Township on the South-Link Line for a tour of the leisure farms at Jinzhen (Daylily) Mountain. Astonishingly beautiful yellow daylilies cover the entire mountain from the end of July to the end of August every year. Stand on the lookout on the mountain ridge and overlook the Pacific Ocean, Green Island and Orchid Island. The lookout is also a romantic location to observe the sunrise, sunset and stars. Apart from the daylilies, January to March every year is the season of cherry and apricot blossoms, while April to June is the season of the hydrangea and wild lily flowers.



Sun Moon lake cycling route



ROMANTIC SUNSETS AND NIGHT VIEWS

Enjoying a sunset or night views with a partner is one sure-fire way to bring lovers closer together. Fortunately for couples in Taiwan, the island is full of such romantic scenic spots.

The sunset at Tamsui, with the silhouettes of returning fishing boats set against the reflection of the setting sun in the water, is an intoxicating experience not to be missed. The beautiful Fisherman's Wharf, the spacious Outdoor Lawn and Sculpture Park, and the boat-shaped Lover's Bridge of Tamsui, are all great spots for magnificent views of the Tamsui estuary. Another good place for sightseeing is the Gold Shore behind the old streets of Tamsui, which is lined with interesting shops and offers broad views of Mt. Guanyin on the opposite shore.

To really see all the beauty of Tamsui, catch a ferry running between Tamsui and Bali or Taipei's Dadaocheng. Alternatively, take the Great River Queen ferry from Guandu, which will follow the Blue Highway all the way to the Tamsui estuary and Fisherman's Wharf.

To experience the spectacular night views of Taipei, go to Chinese Culture University or Taiwan Theological College and Seminary on Yangmingshan. With thousands of city lights against the backdrop of starry skies, this is the perfect location for romance.

The lookout at the top of Tiger Mountain, situated southeast of Taipei's Xinyi Commercial District, is another fine

place to overlook the city in the evening. With the world-famous Taipei 101 building right before your eyes, along with the other stylish modern buildings of the district, the lookout offers a unique view of Taipei that cannot be found elsewhere. A further location for excellent views is Bishanyen in the Neihu District, where visitors can see the clustered night lights of Neihu and Nangang, as well as the planes taking off and landing at Taipei's Songshan Airport.

Lovers looking for night views in Kaohsiung need to look no further than the aptly named Love River. It is hard to imagine a more romantic experience than strolling along the river bank as neon lights reflect on the surface of the water and inhaling the seductive aroma of coffee at cafés on either bank, all while listening to the lovely music playing around you. Another romantic idea is to take the sightseeing Love Boat for a gentle ride along the river at dusk or in the evening.

True Love Pier at the mouth of the Love River is a splendid scenic spot for couples with its artistic white-sail theme. Its wooden platform offers views of Xinguang Pier and Tuntex Sky Tower in the distance and a place for street musicians to perform, adding to the unique flavor of southern Taiwan's night life. On weekends and holidays, tourists can enjoy a leisure ride on ferries between the wharf and Qijin Fishing Port.

Lovers Wharf at Xingda Fishing Port, built with a dash of European

romanticism, is a popular place for couples to enjoy sunsets and night scenery. Shou Mountain, a key landmark of Kaohsiung, is a great destination to check out night views of the city and observe the sun setting on Xizi Bay.

THE SUNSET AT GAOMEI WETLANDS

The sunset at the Gaomei Wetlands in Taichung is different from those in the cities. With an area of 1,500 hectares, the wetland possesses rich natural resources and is perfect for watching birds and sunsets. At dusk every day, the wetlands turn into a magnificent sea of orange from the warm rays of the setting sun, with the complementary wind turbines on the west coast and migratory birds painting an enchanting scene guaranteed to conjure up a mood for love.





Time to Marvel

Taiwan's amazing mix of cultures, customs and traditions comes from its long list of inhabitants throughout its storied history, from prehistoric humans and indigenous tribes to the Dutch, the Spanish, the Japanese, and the Han Chinese. The traces left behind by these varied cultures have merged to make Taiwan a unique place that will touch the heart of every visitor.

Taiwan's history goes back tens of thousands of years. According to archeologists, prehistoric humans were the first to inhabit the island, proof of which can be found in the caves of Taitung in the southeast as well as other locations. Recent research suggests that the ancestors of Taiwan's indigenous population arrived on the island more than 8,000 years ago, and today's indigenous residents have amazingly managed to preserve many parts of their traditional customs, tribal structures and architecture. Taiwan's indigenous people continue to keep their tribal spirit alive through the practice of traditional worship and festivals.

Traces of culture left by the Dutch, the Spanish and the Japanese can still be seen today, such as Fort San Domingo in Tamsui and the remains of Anping Old Fort (Fort Zeelandia) in Tainan. The most important role in Taiwan's mainstream historical traditions, however, belongs to the Han Chinese, who brought with them traditional customs from China and created new ones in Taiwan. Whether the southern Fujianese who immigrated over the centuries, the Chinese who came in the late 1940s after the civil war, or the Hakka people, elements of each of these unique cultures can still be found all over Taiwan. In Taipei, Tainan and Lugang, for example,



Harvest Festival of the Rukai



Pingxi Sky Lantern Festival

INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES

Taiwan's indigenous population can generally be separated into the two major systems of the High Mountain tribes and the Plains tribes.

Together they account for all 14 tribes on the island. From January to March is the Bunun tribe's Millett Sowing Festival, where the internationally famous Pasibutbut song can be heard. From February to March is the Flying Fish Festival, where the Yami tribe will practice the art of catching flying fish. From April to May is the Ear-shooting Festival, a rite of passage ceremony where male members of the Bunun tribe will test their hunting skills by targeting the ears of animals. Other tribes, such as the Tsou, Amis and Atayal, also have their own respective harvest ceremonies to celebrate every year.



Liberty Square



Sanyi woodcarving

THE SIGNALS AND BLESSINGS OF SKY LANTERNS

The Pingxi Sky Lantern Festival is one of the most colorful activities of Taiwan's annual Lantern Festival. As Pingxi is a remote hillside town, sky lanterns were originally used by locals as a method of communication. Over time, the practice has evolved to symbolize a prayer for peace and good fortune, and visitors often write their wishes on the lanterns before releasing them into the evening sky.

visitors can experience the atmosphere of old towns, streets and temples, while historic sites and settlements remain hot attractions on the off-shore islands of Kinmen, Matsu and Penghu.

Taiwan's cultural and traditional festivals and activities are vibrant and full of life. Popular cultural attractions include the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, the Lan Yang Dancers Troupe, the Ming Hwa Yuan Arts & Cultural Group, and the Holo Taiwanese Opera Troupe. The I Wan Jan Puppet Theater and Wu Chou Yuan are two of the country's most famous professional hand puppet performance groups. When it comes to handicrafts, there is the renowned ceramic arts of Yingge in New Taipei City, Shuili of Nantou, and Kinmen; the wood-carvings of Sanyi in Miaoli; the stone-carvings of Hualien; the paper umbrellas of Meinong in Kaohsiung; and of course, the traditional works of Taiwan's indigenous peoples. The growing crystal glass industry has also injected new life into Taiwan's art culture, with Tittot and Liuligongfang emerging as the two leading local brands.

Taiwan's folk festivals and activities

are especially spectacular. Every street and alley becomes infused with the festive spirit during the Chinese New Year holidays, while mesmerizing lantern ceremonies can be seen across the country in the ensuing Lantern Festival. The birthday of Mazu, the indigenous goddess of the sea, is celebrated during the third month of the Chinese lunar calendar, whereas the Dragon Boat Festival in the fifth month always attracts many foreign tourists to its dragon boat races and customary glutinous rice dumplings (*zongzi*). During the Ghost Festival in the seventh month of the Chinese lunar calendar, religious ceremonies are held to help lost spirits pass over to the other side.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Cultural activities are also thriving in Taiwan through performance arts and exhibitions that represent the island's charismatic artistry.

The National Palace Museum in Taipei is a must-visit destination for international visitors. Renowned for its collection of cultural relics, this world-

class museum features a staggering 650,000 pieces from 5,000 years of Chinese civilization. While you are there, don't forget to visit the Zhishan Garden at the east side of the museum to experience the elegance of a traditional Chinese garden.

Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, which commemorates the late Taiwanese president Chiang Kai-shek, is located in the center of Taipei City. The sharp contrast between the blue-glazed tiles and the white marble walls, the roof designed in the style of Beijing's Temple of Heaven, and the pyramid-shaped body all come together to make this magnificent monument a sight to behold. Situated in front of the hall are the palace-like National Theater and National Concert Hall, where highly respected artistic performances are held throughout the year. Another important memorial hall in the city is the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, with its Tang Dynasty-style architecture commemorating the nation's founding father, Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The beautiful Chung Shan Park in which the hall sits hosts many cultural and arts exhibitions



Lukang Tianhou Temple



Cloud Gate dance

and is regarded by locals as a great place for relaxation and leisure activities.

The Taipei Confucius Temple, Dalongdong Bao'an Temple, and Taipei's Museum of Contemporary Art form a historical and cultural line that runs through the Datong District. The Museum of Contemporary Art, for instance, is the first art museum in Taiwan promoting contemporary art and was remodeled from a historical building. The exhibits at the museum are well known for demonstrating the contemporary trend of artistic diversification and interdisciplinary integration.

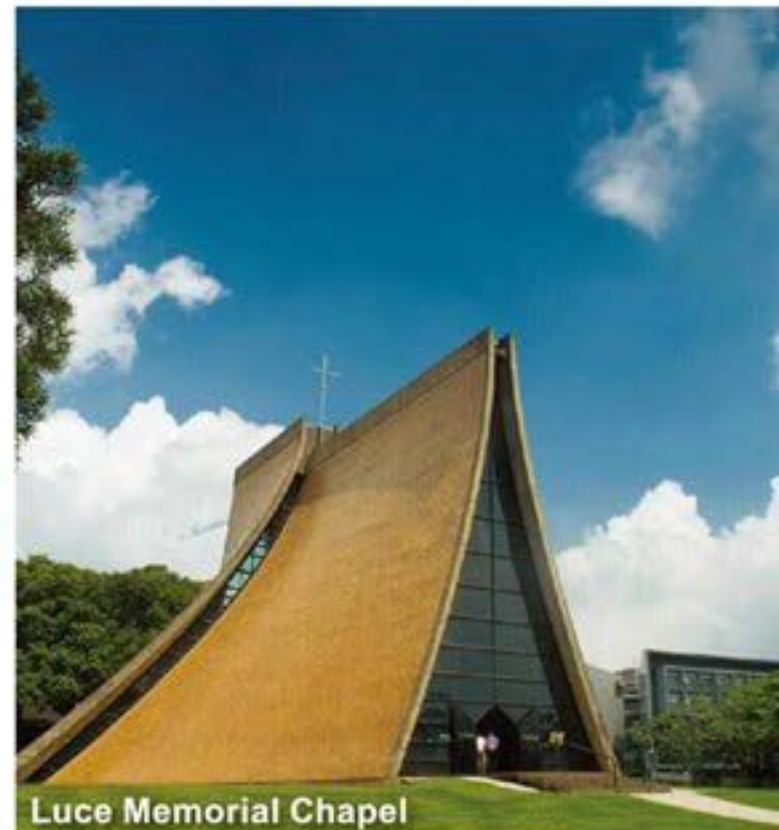
The flavor of culture is also rich in Taichung in central Taiwan. The National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, the National Museum of Natural Science, and the Taichung City Government's Cultural Affairs Bureau form an iron triangle of

aesthetics, culture and knowledge. The Song Dynasty-style Taichung Confucius Temple and the adjacent Martyrs Shrine are imposing and solemn, while the Lien Cheng Saxophone Museum in the Houli District is also definitely worth a visit.

The most charming part of Lukang (Lugang) in Taiwan's western Changhua County is its old streets and historic alleys with their deep, narrow patio-type houses. The temples in Lukang are also worth seeing for their ancient artistic and architectural merit. Lukang Tianhou Temple is known for its masterfully-crafted beams and design, while Longshan Temple is regarded as the most well-preserved piece of Qing Dynasty architecture in all of Taiwan. The Lukang Folk Arts Museum, with its classical European style, is also a great tourist destination.



Juming Museum



Luce Memorial Chapel

TUNGHAI UNIVERSITY'S LUCE MEMORIAL CHAPEL

The Luce Memorial Chapel is a major landmark at Taichung's Tunghai University, designed by renowned architect I. M. Pei. The chapel was funded and built by Time magazine founder Henry Luce in honor of his father, Rev. Henry W. Luce, an American missionary. The curved, tent-like structure is covered by glazed, diamond-shaped tiles and features a unique sunroof that stretches across the top of the chapel in a narrow line, a perfect symbol of its grace and romantic elegance.



Taiwanese opera performer



Meinung oil-paper umbrella

Tainan is the oldest city in Taiwan and remained the center of the island's historic and cultural development until the end of the 19th century. Remains of historic buildings built by the Dutch in the 17th century include Fort Provintia and Anping Fort (Fort Zeelandia), as well as the French-designed Eternal Fortress from the Qing Dynasty. All are must-visit first-grade historical attractions.

The southern city of Kaohsiung has long been a vital transportation hub and contains many of Taiwan's most significant historic sites and relics, such as the Zooying city walls from the Qing Dynasty period, the former British Consulate at Takao, and the Qihou Fortress and Lighthouse. Kaohsiung's ancient temples are also a popular tourist attraction. The Queen of Heaven Temple (Tianhou Temple), for

example, is one of the oldest temples in the city. Built in 1691, it is devoted to the worship of Mazu, the goddess of the sea. The Confucius Temple at Zuoying is built in the architectural style of the Song Dynasty and is the largest Confucian temple in Taiwan. The nearby Chengqing Lake, with its Jiuqu Bridge (Nine-Turns Bridge), tranquil waters and classic pagoda, also merits a leisurely visit.

TRADITIONAL PERFORMING ARTS

Glove puppetry is one of Taiwan's most important traditional performing arts, incorporating literary motifs, music and voice acting. The puppets are expertly crafted with carved wooden heads, elaborate attire, and other trimmings that make them works of art in their own right. Their faces have no obvious expression – the liveliness of the figurines depends entirely on the skills of the puppeteer. Accompanied by traditional music and blaring sound effects, glove puppetry shows are an artistic and entertaining form of immersive storytelling that remains popular among audiences of all ages and from all walks of life.

The two best-known glove puppetry performance groups in Taiwan are the I Wan Jan Puppet Theater and Wu Chou Yuan, which despite their long histories have continued to attract the younger generations by screening their puppet shows on TV and film enhanced with modern technology. Yunlin County in western Taiwan, a famous puppetry region, is home the Taiwan Temple & Shrine Art Museum, which contains a puppetry pavilion with an impressive collection of more than 200 puppets.

Taiwanese opera is a major form of traditional entertainment that has been enjoyed by locals for generations. This unique opera format used to be seen regularly at temple festivals but has since become popular on TV. In recent years, Taiwanese opera has transformed through innovation, combining old and modern elements to become an artistic theater show often played to large crowds and international audiences.

Taiwan also has an accomplished handicraft industry. Sanyi in the south of Miaoli County is known for its hundred-year history of wood carving, with the township's vivid creations attracting visitors from far and wide. To witness the beauty of Sanyi's wood carvings, be sure to visit the famous wood carving street and the Sanyi Wood Sculpture Museum, the only wood-themed museum in Taiwan. In addition to the wood carvings, visitors can also check out the nearby Westcoast Ecology District, Shengxing Railway Station, the ruins of the Longteng Bridge, and Sanyi Station, or perhaps even go fruit picking in the southern township of Zhuolan.

Come to the Hakka town of Meinong in southern Taiwan to see beautiful oil-paper umbrellas, which play an important role in the life of the Hakka people. In addition to providing shelter from sun and rain, they are also a symbol of good fortune and nobility, making oil-paper umbrellas a uniquely Taiwanese handicraft. Remember to visit the Meinung Folk Village or the Yuan Siang Yuan Paper Umbrella Culture Village to learn how oil-paper umbrellas are made. Other attractions in the area include the Meinong Hakka Cultural Museum, the Meinong Tobacco Education Center, the Yellow Butterfly Valley, and the Bulao Hot Spring in the Liugui District.

OIL-PAPER UMBRELLA – A BLESSING OF FERTILITY

The pronunciation of "oil paper" in Mandarin is similar to "having children," while the Chinese character for "umbrella" includes four Chinese characters for "people." Giving an oil-paper umbrella to someone as a gift therefore symbolizes a wish for many children.

TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS

There are fascinating festivals and traditional activities in Taiwan all year round that shape the unique flavor of the island's rich culture.

To many Taiwanese people, the first day of the first month in the Chinese lunar calendar is the true start to a new year. Before Chinese New Year's Eve, families complete their spring cleaning to sweep away the misfortunes of the previous year and make New Year rice cakes (which is pronounced identically to "year" and "high" in Mandarin) to symbolize the reaching of new heights in the coming year. Another popular tradition is to stick spring couplets and auspicious New Year prints on the doors and windows of homes to bring good luck. On the 30th day of the last month of the Chinese lunar calendar, families gather for a New Year's Eve feast. Adults give the younger members of the family, particularly children, red envelopes with cash inside, a gift symbolizing peace and good fortune. The recipients return the favor by staying up with the rest of the family until they cross over into the New Year, as a symbol their wish of longevity for their elders. And of course, firecrackers will be set off once the clock strikes midnight to welcome the arrival of the New Year!

Chinese New Year customs also include going around to friends and relatives to offer New Year's greetings on the first day of the New Year, visiting the in-laws on the second day and welcoming the God of Wealth on the fourth before reopening for business on the fifth.

The Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first month of the lunar calendar is also known as "Little New Year." The lively celebrations all over Taiwan include the guessing of lantern riddles and eating of sweet rice-flour dumplings. The releasing of thousands of sky lanterns over Pingxi in New Taipei City in the north and the spectacular fireworks display of the Yanshui Beehive Rocket Festival in Tainan in the south are two of the most renowned events during this period. Taiwan's Lantern Festival has become one of the favorite celebrations for



Festival of Mazu

international tourists and has even been recommended by the Discovery Channel as one of best festivals in the world.

The fireworks display of the Yanshui Beehive Rocket Festival in Tainan is perhaps the most exciting event of the Lantern Festival. Legend has it that the tradition originated from a plague that broke out during the rule of Emperor Guangxu in the Qing Dynasty. Locals successfully drove the disease away after inviting Guan Yu, the Taoist God of War, to tour the area while also setting off loud fireworks. The legend has since evolved into a famous sightseeing event, though for safety reasons it is highly recommended that visitors wear protective clothing and helmets to avoid accidental injury when the rockets are launched.

The Dragon Boat Festival, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth month in Chinese lunar calendar, is one of Taiwan's three major annual traditional holidays along with Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival. The festival commemorates the life and death of Qu Yuan, a famous poet from the Warring States Period in ancient China. According to legend, when Qu drowned himself in the Miluo River as a protest against corruption, locals rowed their boats up and down the waters to find him. When they could not locate his body, they tossed rice into the river to feed the fish so his body would be left alone. Gradually, these practices evolved into

the dragon boat race and the custom of eating glutinous rice wrapped in bamboo leaves, otherwise known as **zongzi**.

Today, the dragon boat race is a world-renowned activity, with many areas in Taiwan from New Taipei City to Yilan County and Changhua County to Kaohsiung each holding its own events to celebrate the festival. In recent years, the festivities have been expanded to include international races featuring competing teams from Taiwan and abroad.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

The seventh month of the Chinese lunar calendar is known as Ghost Month, when according to legend the gates of the underworld open on the month's first day and close on its 29th. During this period, households prepare peace offerings such as fruit and gifts to ghosts and hold ceremonies to help lost souls cross over to the other side. The month's festivities reach a peak on the 15th day, also known as the Zhongyuan Festival, when people will hold rituals to solicit salvation from disaster and misfortune.

The releasing of water lanterns at Badouzi Fishing Harbor in Keelung is another longstanding tradition of Ghost Month. Its purpose is to help light the way for lost souls in the water and to invite them on land to enjoy the offerings prepared for them. It is also said that the further a lantern floats on the water, the better the fortune that the clan it represents will enjoy in the coming year.



Ghost month's "Grappling with the Ghosts" contest



The mythical Eight Infernal Generals

Another not-to-be-missed activity of Ghost Month is "Grappling with the Ghosts," a pole-climbing competition held in Toucheng Township in Yilan County and Hengchun Township in Pingtung County. The dangerous contest features multiple teams of five who must work together to climb to the top of a greased pole to capture a flag. In the early days, people migrating to Yilan from mainland China's Guangdong and Fujian provinces were killed by natural disasters, accidents, and disease. Afraid that nobody was going to be left to make offerings to the deceased, locals held the pole-climbing ceremony to commemorate those who had passed away during the year.

Mazu, known as the goddess of the sea, migrated to Taiwan with the people of Fujian province in the 17th century to become one of the most revered deities on the island with around 870 temples dedicated to her worship. Every

year, in the third month of the Chinese lunar calendar, temples all over Taiwan hold birthday celebrations for Mazu, highlighted by ritualistic parades to Mazu temples in the area. The largest and oldest of these celebrations is the eight-day pilgrimage which begins at Dajia's Zhenlan Temple in Taichung City. There are also many other exciting temple activities during this month, including puppet and theater performances, embroidered banner displays, float parades, and dragon and lion dances. It is a time when tens of thousands of worshippers get together for wild celebrations, displays of fireworks, and parties for friends, relatives and returning pilgrims.

The burning of the Plague God Boat is a folk ritual practiced by fishermen in southwestern Taiwan. The original purpose of this ritual was to send the Plague God out to the sea,

taking disease and pestilence along with him. Today, it has evolved into a ritual symbolizing peace and good fortune. The festival is held once every three years around the ninth month of the Chinese lunar calendar at Donglong Temple in Pingtung County's Donggang Township. A similar festival is also held in the fourth month of the Chinese lunar calendar at Qing'an Temple in Xigang, Tainan County.

The grand boat-burning celebration in Donggang runs for eight days and seven nights. The delicately crafted boat, modeled after ancient battleships and made of wood, is said to cost several million Taiwanese dollars. According to custom, the boat is set on fire after being transported to the seashore on the final day of the celebration, with the spectacular flames marking the highlight of the entire festival.

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

The Mid-Autumn Festival, also called the Moon Festival, is the holiday with the most romantic atmosphere. In ancient times, as the holiday usually coincided with the end of the growing season, people chose this day to make offerings and thank the gods for a bountiful harvest. In modern times, most activities associated with this holiday are related to the moon. Some like to take a stroll under the full moon, while others like to eat moon cakes, a symbol of unity and togetherness. Eating pomelos is another custom, since the Chinese word for the fruit sounds like "care and protection." More recently, barbecues have become a popular tradition on this holiday, as it is considered a perfect time for families and friends to get together and enjoy a meal under the tranquil moonlight.

Time for Celebration

1

- New Year's Eve Celebration



2

- Taiwan Lantern Festival
- Pingxi Sky Lantern Festival
- Taiwan Lantern Festival—Yanshui Beehive Rockets Festival



8

- Taiwan Culinary Exhibition
- Keelung Ghost Festival
- National Yimin Festival



7

- Taiwan Balloon Festival
- Tern-Watching Tour, Matsu
- Yilan International Children's Folklore & Folkgames Festival
- Hohaiyan Rock Festival in Gongliao
- Taoyuan International ACG Carnival



9

- Sanyi International Wood-carving Art Festival
- Sun Moon Lake International Swimming Carnival
- Toucheng "Qianggu"-Grappling with the Ghost pole-climbing competition



10

- Taiwan Hot Spring & Fine-Cuisine Carnival
- Love in Alishan—Wedding under Sacred Tree
- Yunlin International PuppetArts Festival
- Taiwan Open of Surfing





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3

- Taichung City Mazu International Festival
- Song-Jiang Battle Array in Neimen, Kaohsiung



4

- Dapeng Bay International Regatta
- Taiwan Wedding and Honeymoon Photography Activity
- The Hakka Tung Blossom Festival
- Spring Wave Music & Art Festival



6

- Taiwan Fun on the Tropic of Cancer
- Xiuguluan River Rafting Activity
- Tibetan Culture & Art Festival
- Lukang Dragon Boat Festival



5

- Fulong Sand Sculpture Art Festival
- Penghu Ocean Fireworks Festival



11

- Taiwan Cycling Festival
- Kunshen Wangye's Salt for Peace Festival
- Taroko Gorge Marathon
- Taiwan International Festival of Arts



12

- Purple Butterfly Watching Activities
- Taipei Marathon
- Chiayi city International Band Festival



International Spotlights

<http://theme.taiwan.net.tw/intlspotlight>

The International Spotlight program is an initiative from Taiwan's Tourism Bureau to promote the country's world-class tourist attractions and strengthen the competitiveness of its domestic travel industry. It is a program that aims to entice more international travelers to come and experience Taiwan's unique charisma and sample cultural highlights from all across the island.

NORTHERN REGION **Da'an Culture Walk**

Da'an Humanity Walk is situated in downtown Taipei City. It begins at Dongmen Market in the north and stretches to National Taiwan University in the south, while its east and west sides are bound by Da'an Forest Park and Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, respectively.

The Da'an District has long been the traditional cultural, educational, and leisure center of Taipei. There are numerous universities in the district, such as National Taiwan University, National Taiwan Normal University, National Chengchi University, and Tamkang University, as well as many unique cafés, shops, independent bookstores, exotic restaurants, variety stores, and art galleries. Travelers can also visit the former residences of two late renowned scholars, Liang Shih-chiu and Yin Hai-guang, or check out the ancient castle-style gothic architecture of National Taiwan Normal University. Another noteworthy highlight is the Taiwan Cow-tail Fir Garden off Jinshan South Road, which features a Taiwan Cow-tail fir tree that is at least 80 years old, and a row of traditional Japanese-style houses dating back to the Japanese occupation period.

Culture and Nature in Greater Beitou

Greater Beitou lies in the northernmost part of Taipei City and includes the Beitou and Yangmingshan areas. The region, which has always been blessed with natural beauty, has more recently become one of the most important hot



Taipei Public Library Beitou Branch

spring districts in northern Taiwan. The incredible Yangmingshan, known for its ever-changing scenic views across all four seasons, has attracted countless writers and artists over the years, many of whom have been seduced into settling permanently in the picturesque mountains.

Attractions in Greater Beitou include the Beitou Branch of the Taipei Public Library, Beitou Park, and the Ketagalan Culture Center. At Beitou Museum, take a class to learn the art of the Japanese tea ceremony, or check out the old traditional shops and stalls at Beitou Market, which sell everything from tea and fabrics to rice and grass-woven products. On Yangmingshan, visit the former residence of late academic Lin Yutang, Grass Mountain Chateau, and Yangming Shuwu (a historical villa used by former Taiwanese president Chiang Kai-shek as a summer retreat and for receiving foreign dignitaries).

EASTERN REGION **Taitung's Tiehua Music Village**

Eastern Taiwan's International Spotlights starts at Tiehua Music Village in Taitung City and extends to Chishang on the East Rift Valley tourist route, up the coast to the indigenous Gangkou Village, (Makutaay) and all the way into Hualien City.

Tiehua Music Village was transformed from a barren place into a fertile music wonderland thanks to the musical talents of its locals, who combine vibrant voices with a leisurely attitude nurtured by their mountain-and-sea lifestyle. In addition to music, artists here are known for producing works from natural materials such as drift wood, metal, stone, and bamboo.

Chishang Spotlight

Chishang Township in the East Rift Valley is famous for its rice and beautiful scenery all year round. Spring is for leisurely picnics by the hillside pond; summer is the time to sample dishes made with renowned locally grown rice; autumn celebrates the Chishang Music Festival and a bountiful harvest; while winter is the time to see golden canola flowers and attend cultural seminars. Chishang locals are also extremely clever with their rice and are experts at making rice snacks for visitors to enjoy.

Hualien Spotlight, Gangkou Spotlight

Hualien Spotlight has teamed up with the O'rip Studio to plan, organize, and promote many tours of indigenous villages in the region, giving tourists

an opportunity for a more in-depth experience of the county and neighboring Taitung.

Gangkou Village sits on the northern shore of Hualien's Xiuguluan River where it meets the ocean. According to legend, it is where the ancestors of the indigenous Amis tribe first arrived in Taiwan thousands of years ago. Apart from amazing sea scenery, the village is known for its diverse art, wealth of indigenous cultural heritage, and creative cuisine.

CENTRAL REGION

A Journey of Six Senses

With Taichung City's Calligraphy Greenway as its starting point, International Spotlight Central Region embraces the motto of "Live it, Taste it, Central Taiwan" and invites tourists to discover the culture, tea, natural scenery, and cuisine of the region's five major cities and counties – Taichung, Nantou, Yunlin, Changhua, and Chiayi. Incorporating the LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) concept, the program promotes the region as a place where visitors can enjoyably explore while learning many new and interesting things at the same time.

The first wave of the program highlights more than 50 local stores as "LOHAS Spots," with each spot telling an inspirational story about the dreams and efforts of its owner. These LOHAS Spots include health food stores, cafes, and designer boutiques, which bring to life Taichung's unique style and enable

visitors to experience the city with all five senses, as well as a sixth – "the touching of the heart" – thus creating a glorious "Journey of six senses." Highly recommended is the LOHAS Workhouse, which offers LOHAS-inspired classes such as tea-making, healthy cooking, and DIY musical instruments.

SOUTHERN REGION

A Journey of Ancient Monuments, Old Mansions, Delicacies and the Ocean

International Spotlight Southern Region is driven by its "four key factors of vitality": ancient monuments, old mansions, fine cuisine, and the ocean. Tours routes are designed around these four main themes and are complemented by storytelling-type guidance to unveil the region's rich culture and historical background.

Details of each of the four spotlights are as follows:

Culinary Spotlight: Food is the paramount necessity of the people; likewise, rice is the most indispensable element of all Chinese diets. Chinese rice culture is closely linked to the historical development of the festivals, traditions, and historical incidents of Taiwanese society. To help the public learn more about the evolution and cultural background of Taiwan's rice products, International Spotlight Southern Region has planned a series of permanent exhibitions as part of the first food-themed museum in the country.

Old Mansions Spotlight: Regular

activities centered on the region's old mansions are organized. With the assistance of an internet promotion campaign, it is hoped that the importance and value of these glorious pieces of history can be cultivated among the public.

Ocean Spotlight: Various activities are held to encourage a better understanding of Taiwan's oceanic culture.

Passionate bloggers and backpackers are invited to enrich the content of the Ocean Spotlight by discovering and sharing Taiwan's stories of the sea so they can be passed down through the generations.

Ancient Monument Spotlight: The deep historical background of Tainan has given the city a unique atmosphere. The locals are extremely proud of Tainan's well-preserved historical heritage sites, which have become a promotional focus for Taiwan's tourism industry both domestically and abroad.

The Southern Region has 12 planned tour routes, which include: the Tour of Divine Creatures, which teaches travelers about legendary divine creatures through visits to Tainan's ancient monuments; the Tour of Yue Lao, the God of Love, which takes travelers to four temples housing the city's most famous gods of love; and Tour of Culture and Arts, which takes travelers on a stroll through numerous ancient structures to appreciate the city's historical charm. Other tour themes include old mansions, old markets, Confucian temples, the Mid-Autumn Festival, the five senses, and more.



Eastern Region – Tiehua Music Village



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<http://www.tteacafe.tw/>

Eastern Region | <http://www.easternspot.com/>

Central Region | <http://www.lohaspot.com.tw>

Southern Region | TEL: +886-2-2758-6306

<http://www.nanspot.tw/>

Taiwan Tourist Shuttle



<http://www.taiwantourbus.com.tw> 24-hour toll free hotline: 0800 011 765

For those searching for an affordable and flexible way to explore Taiwan, look no further than the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle, a convenient and friendly Tourism Bureau service covering all the major attractions across the country.

As a service specifically designed for holiday planners, the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle takes sightseers directly to the country's top tourist destinations from the nearest major train stop or High Speed Rail station. It is the most suitable method of travel for people without a car or those who don't feel like joining tour groups. With frequent services and reasonable fares, the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle is ideal for those who like to travel at their own pace; the fact that it is also an environmentally friendly way to travel is an added bonus.

The service covers travel routes from northern to southern Taiwan. The Jiaoxi Route is a favorite for tourists who like to take a dip in the hot springs of Jiaoxi in Yilan County; the Gold Fulong Route is perfect for those planning a trip to Jinguashi and Jiufen in New Taipei City; the Cihu Route in Taoyuan can take tourists on day-trips to Daxi; the Nanzhuang Route in Miaoli enables travelers to experience the charms of a traditional Hakka town in Nanzhuang; and the Lugang Route in Changhua takes tourists to Ba-



guashan or the old streets of Luqang. Whether you visit the world-famous Sun Moon Lake, the majestic Alishan, the spectacular Taroko Gorge, scenic Kenting or historic Hengchun, the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle will have your return trip fully covered.

To get to the must-see Sun Moon Lake, for example, the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle takes just 90 minutes from Taichung Gancheng Bus Station or HSR Taichung Station. Once there, visitors can take advantage of local transportation such as the Round-the-lake Bus, ferries or bicycles to link their journey into a diverse and flexible travel experience. A recommended one-day itinerary might be Take the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle from Taichung Gancheng Bus Station, TRA Taichung Railway Station or HSR Taichung Station to Taomi see the unique Paper Dome church. Hop back on the shuttle and head to the Sun Moon Lake's Shuishe Wharf, where you

can catch a ferry to Ita Thao Wharf to watch a dance performance from the indigenous Thao tribe. Next, jump on the Sun Moon Lake Ropeway for a bird's-eye view of the lake's breathtaking scenery, followed by a ride on the Round-the-lake Bus, during which you can check out attractions such as the Wenwu Temple, before heading back to Shuishe.

This is just one of the many ways the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle service caters to the travel needs of tourists looking for an in-depth experience of Taiwan and the best possible opportunity to sample the island's unique charm. Check out the official website for more information, including tour routes, schedules and prices.

Official website:

<http://www.taiwantrip.com.tw>

24-hour toll free hotline:

0800-011-765



Taiwan Tour Bus



<http://www.taiwantourbus.com.tw> 24-hour toll free hotline: 0800 011 765

The simple pleasures of life! Launched by the Tourism Bureau in conjunction with local agencies, The Taiwan Tour Bus is a deluxe transport service designed for independent travelers who want to explore the country just the way they like it.

The Taiwan Tour Bus offers convenient sightseeing tours and itinerary planning services for both domestic and international visitors alike. Users need not worry about limited seats or wasting time planning their trip, because the service offers travelers the most accommodating sightseeing experience possible with daily pick-ups to and from hotels, airports and stations as part of a seamless transport package. The buses are staffed with experienced guides who can speak Mandarin, English or Japanese, and travel insurance is automatically included. It is a relaxing and trouble-free way to enjoy the sightseeing pleasures of Taiwan.

The Taiwan Tour Bus offers more than 40 packaged tours covering all the major scenic spots, including Yilan, the Northeast Coast, Yeliu, Yingge, Taichung, Lugang, Sun Moon Lake, Penghu, Kaohsiung, Kending, and Taroko Gorge. The service has been highly popular since its launch with over 900,000 customers, more than half of whom are foreign visitors. It remains one of Taiwan's most important high-quality travel options for tourists looking for an in-depth experience of the country.

Travelers who take the Taiwan Tour Bus can select their tour packages in a variety of ways. They can go according to geographical location, such as northern, central, southern or eastern Taiwan or even its offshore islets; or by interest, such as culture and history, nature and ecology, sightseeing and leisure, or fashion. The top 10 attractions recommended by internet users include Penghu's Shili Beach,

Beigang's Chaotian Temple, Kaohsiung's Love River, Zuoying's Lotus Lake, Taroko National Park, Hualien's Seven Star Lake, Kaohsiung Harbor at night, Hualien's Farglory Ocean Park, Sun Moon Lake, and the sunset at Pingtung's Guanshan.

Reservations are required. Interested travelers can visit the official website or contact a travel agent for more information. The majority of tours are half-day or one-day, though packages can be tailored with discounted accommodation to create two or three-day adventures. The pricing for each route includes transportation, tour guides and insurance; meals and entry tickets can be arranged upon request.

Official website:

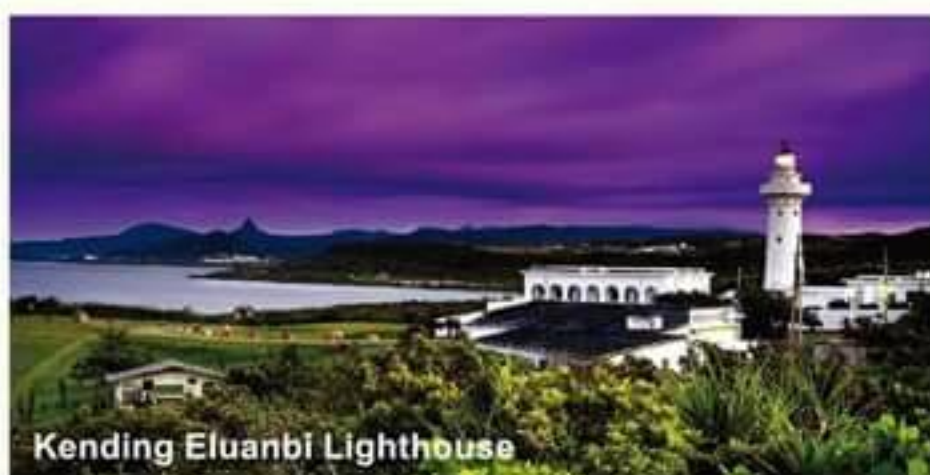
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WuanChuanGo Park



Kending Eluanbi Lighthouse



Tainan Nankunshen Temple



Sun Moon Lake

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