



FUN IN TAIWAN!

The Best Guide to Taiwan

AUTHOR

Andrew Crosthwaite

PROOFREADERS

Cheryl Robbins and Zachary Fillingham





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Cosmos Culture Ltd.
Tel: +886-(0)2-2365-9739
Fax: +886-(0)2-2365-9835
Website: www.cosmoselt.com
Email: onlineservice@icosmos.com.tw

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Author • Andrew Crosthwaite
Proofreader • Cheryl Robbins, Zachary Fillingham
Editor • Peggy Ting
Graphic designer • Peggy Ting

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01

Taiwan might be a small country, but it is a **diverse**¹ land with a **fascinating**² history, beautiful scenery, **a wide range of**³ cultures, and a strong economy. Visitors to the country might be surprised by just how much there is to see, do, and experience.

Taiwan— The Big Picture



The history books generally say that Taiwan was discovered in 1544 by Portuguese sailors, but people have actually been making their way here for tens of thousands of years. As a result, there are many different cultures and ethnic groups on the island. In addition to various Chinese ethnic groups, Taiwan **is home to**⁴ a large number of indigenous tribes. More recent immigration has brought people from Southeast Asia and Western nations, and they have also had an impact on everyday life in the country.

Since Taiwan is made up of so many different ethnic groups, a lot of languages are spoken here. In addition to the official language of Mandarin Chinese, there are indigenous languages, Hakka, and Taiwanese Hokkien, which is spoken by much of the population. Recent governments have also worked hard to promote English. Students have to learn the language from an early age, and it can also be seen on official signs throughout Taiwan.





Widespread⁵ immigration has also affected Taiwanese religious practices. But whereas languages have generally remained separate, different religions have **blended**⁶ together. The majority of people now follow a faith that is a mix of Buddhism, Taoism, and traditional folk beliefs. Owing to all of these religious influences, Taiwan is now home to hundreds of different gods that are worshipped in thousands of temples around the island. People worship these gods and their ancestors by offering incense, paper money, which is also called joss paper, and food.

Looking around Taiwan, visitors will quickly notice that there's a big difference between Taiwan's urban and rural areas. Towns and cities are usually highly developed with shops and restaurants lining the streets. On the **outskirts**⁷ of built-up areas, you will find factories, industrial zones, and technology parks. Taiwan's economy has **come a long way**⁸ in the last 60 to 70 years. In the early 20th century, it was dominated by agriculture, but it developed quickly after the 1950s. During the 1980s, Taiwan was one of the world's largest manufacturers and it has since developed into a center for hi-tech innovation.



Away from the bright lights and industry of the towns and cities, Taiwan's natural scenery is **brehtaking**⁹. Both local people and tourists from around the world enjoy visiting the country's holiday destinations. The Central Mountain Range offers great scenery and enjoyable hikes. Relaxation can be had at Sun Moon Lake or at one of Taiwan's many hot spring resorts, and sandy beaches dot the northern, eastern, and southern coastlines.

Taiwan might be a small place, but it makes a big impact on anyone who learns about it or decides to **pay a visit**¹⁰.

-
- 1 **diverse** a.
 - 2 **fascinating** a.
 - 3 **a wide range of**
 - 4 **be home to**
 - 5 **widespread** a.
 - 6 **blend** v.
 - 7 **outskirts** n.
 - 8 **come a long way**
 - 9 **brehtaking** a.
 - 10 **pay a visit**

Landscape and Climate

Vocabulary

- 1 located a.
- 2 landscape n.
- 3 idyllic a.
- 4 boundary n.
- 5 as a result
- 6 uninhabitable a.
- 7 in addition to
- 8 species n.
- 9 mere a.
- 10 humid a.
- 11 urban a.
- 12 rural a.



Central Mountain Range 中央山脈



Yehliu 野柳



Reading 02

Taiwan is **located**¹ in East Asia. To its west is the Taiwan Strait, which separates the island from China, and the Pacific Ocean lies off its east coast. With a total area of only 35,801 km², Taiwan is a small island. Despite its size, Taiwan is home to a variety of **landscapes**² including towering mountains, sun-kissed beaches, coral reefs, and **idyllic**³ lakes. It's one of the most beautiful and geographically varied countries in the world.

The surface of the earth is made up of several massive plates of land, called tectonic plates, and Taiwan sits at the **boundary**⁴ of two of them. Millions of years ago, these plates began pushing against one another, causing the land to rise. **As a result**⁵, the center of Taiwan is covered by huge mountains.

Jade Mountain, or Yushan 玉山 as it's known in Chinese, is Taiwan's highest peak, measuring 3,952 meters in height. It's situated in Nantou County 南投縣 in the center of the country, and like many of the island's mountains, it's surrounded by thick forests. Hikers climbing the mountain are able to enjoy amazing views.

Taiwan's tall mountains reach all the way to the sea along lengthy sections of the east coast, and there are even mountains close to the capital city of Taipei in the north. Western Taiwan is quite different, though, as it is mostly flat. Since the country's mountainous center is mostly **uninhabitable**⁶, many Taiwanese people live on the western plains. Much of the country's rice and wheat are grown there as well.

Sandy beaches can be found at Fulong 福隆 in the north and around Kenting 墾丁 in the south. **In addition to**⁷ its beaches, Kenting is also famous for its coral reefs, which contain hundreds of **species**⁸ of fish.

Taiwan is actually made up of a number of islands. On top of the main island, which is called Taiwan, there's also Green Island 綠島 and Orchid Island 蘭嶼 in the Pacific Ocean as well as a few island groups in the Taiwan Strait. The Matsu Islands 馬祖列島 lie northwest of Taiwan and are only about 20 km from the Chinese coast. Further south, Kinmen 金門 is a **mere**⁹ 2 km from China. The Penghu Islands 澎湖群島 to the southeast of Kinmen are much closer to Taiwan.



Yushan 玉山



Kenting 墾丁



Fulong 福隆

Although the weather in Taiwan is mostly warm and **humid**¹⁰, the winters can get quite cold, especially in the north. In Taipei, it's not unusual for the temperature to fall below 15°C in the winter. High up in the central mountains, it often snows between December and February. In other parts of the country, the difference between summer and winter is less obvious. In fact,

Taiwan's most southerly region is called **Hengchun** 恆春, which means "constant spring" in Chinese.

Most of Taiwan's rain falls in the summer months, and July through September is the typhoon season. These extreme weather systems bring strong winds and heavy rain, and they can cause a lot of damage in both **urban**¹¹ and **rural**¹² areas.



Hehuanshan 合歡山



Hengchun 恆春



Kinmen 金門



Twin Hearts Stone Tidal Weir on the Penghu Islands
澎湖群島的雙心石滬



Dongyong Lighthouse on the Matsu Islands
馬祖列島的東湧燈塔