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01

Taiwan might be a small country, but it is a **diverse**<sup>1</sup> land with a **fascinating**<sup>2</sup> history, beautiful scenery, **a wide range of**<sup>3</sup> 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

## 台灣：放眼如畫



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**<sup>4</sup> 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.





**Widespread**<sup>5</sup> immigration has also affected Taiwanese religious practices. But whereas languages have generally remained separate, different religions have **blended**<sup>6</sup> 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**<sup>7</sup> of built-up areas, you will find factories, industrial zones, and technology parks. Taiwan's economy has **come a long way**<sup>8</sup> 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.



- 1 **diverse** a. 不同的；多種多樣的
- 2 **fascinating** a. 迷人的；極好的
- 3 **a wide range of** 各種各樣的
- 4 **be home to**  
……的棲息地、產地
- 5 **widespread** a. 分布廣的
- 6 **blend** v. 混和；交融
- 7 **outskirts** n. (複數) 郊外；郊區
- 8 **come a long way**  
取得很大的進展
- 9 **brehtaking** a. 驚人的
- 10 **pay a visit** 參觀；拜訪

Away from the bright lights and industry of the towns and cities, Taiwan's natural scenery is **brehtaking**<sup>9</sup>. 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**<sup>10</sup>.

# Landscape and Climate 景觀與氣候

## Vocabulary

- 1 **located** a. 坐落的；位於的
- 2 **landscape** n. (陸上的) 風景；景色
- 3 **idyllic** a. 田園詩的
- 4 **boundary** n. 邊界；分界線
- 5 **as a result** 結果
- 6 **uninhabitable** a. 不適於居住的
- 7 **in addition to** 除了……之外
- 8 **species** n. 種類；品種
- 9 **mere** a. 僅僅的；只不過的
- 10 **humid** a. 潮濕的
- 11 **urban** a. 都市的
- 12 **rural** a. 農村的；鄉村的



Central Mountain Range  
中央山脈



Yehliu 野柳



## Reading 02

Taiwan is **located**<sup>1</sup> 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 km<sup>2</sup>, Taiwan is a small island. Despite its size, Taiwan is home to a variety of **landscapes**<sup>2</sup> including towering mountains, sun-kissed beaches, coral reefs, and **idyllic**<sup>3</sup> 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**<sup>4</sup> of two of them. Millions of years ago, these plates began pushing against one another, causing the land to rise. **As a result**<sup>5</sup>, 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<sup>6</sup>, 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<sup>7</sup> its beaches, Kenting is also famous for its coral reefs, which contain hundreds of species<sup>8</sup> 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<sup>9</sup> 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

## Unit 1

台灣：放眼如畫

### 1

景觀與氣候

Although the weather in Taiwan is mostly warm and **humid**<sup>10</sup>, 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**<sup>11</sup> and **rural**<sup>12</sup> 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



# Reading Comprehension

Choose the correct answer based on the Reading.

..... 1. Based on the passage, which of the following geographical features does Taiwan have?

- ☐ a Volcanoes.
- ☐ b Very long rivers.
- ☐ c Deserts.
- ☐ d Beautiful lakes.

..... 2. What is said about Taiwan's mountains?

- ☐ a They aren't all very tall.
- ☐ b Most are surrounded by trees.
- ☐ c They're mostly in the south.
- ☐ d Lots of rice is grown there.

..... 3. Which part of Taiwan is closest to China?

- ☐ a Green Island.
- ☐ b The Penghu Islands.
- ☐ c The Matsu Islands.
- ☐ d Kinmen.

..... 4. Apart from the mountains, where in Taiwan does it get coldest in winter?

- ☐ a The north.
- ☐ b The east.
- ☐ c The south.
- ☐ d The west.

..... 5. What is implied about the weather in Hengchun?

- ☐ a The weather is very good in springtime.
- ☐ b The weather is very bad in wintertime.
- ☐ c The weather is very good all through the year.
- ☐ d The weather changes a lot throughout the year.



## Dialogs

- 1 **gorge** n. 峽谷
- 2 **valley** n. 山谷；溪谷
- 3 **cliff** n. 懸崖；峭壁
- 4 **ferry** n. 渡輪
- 5 **saltwater** a. 鹽水的
- 6 **fantastic** a. 極好的
- 7 **blossom** n. 花



03

### Taking a trip in Taiwan 在台灣旅遊



Taroko Gorge 太魯閣峽谷

**Ivy** I'm thinking about taking a trip around Taiwan. Where do you think I should go?

**Tom** It depends on what kinds of things you want to see and do.

**Ivy** Hmm, I suppose I'd like to go for a good hike and then go somewhere else to relax.

**Tom** Well, there are lots of big mountains in Taiwan like Alishan 阿里山, Yushan, and Hehuanshan 合歡山, but my favorite place to go hiking is Taroko **Gorge**<sup>1</sup> 太魯閣峽谷.

**Ivy** I haven't heard of it. What is it like?

**Tom** It's a huge gorge in Hualien County 花蓮縣. If you go there, you'll travel through a narrow **valley**<sup>2</sup> with tall, rocky **cliffs**<sup>3</sup> rising up on either side of you.

**Ivy** Sounds great. So where can I go to relax?

**Tom** Why not take a **ferry**<sup>4</sup> from Taitung 台東 out to Green Island? It has some beaches, and there's also a rare **saltwater**<sup>5</sup> hot spring.

**Ivy** **Fantastic**<sup>6</sup>! I think I know where to go on my trip. Thanks, Tom.

## Talking about when to visit Taiwan

### 談論造訪台灣的最佳時機



- Steven** Hi, Lisa. After hearing you talk about Taiwan so much, I think I'd like to go there on holiday.
- Lisa** Great, I think you'll love it. When are you going to go?
- Steven** I don't really know. When do you think would be the best time of year?
- Lisa** That's a hard question to answer. Summer is nice and hot, but it's often humid and it can rain a lot, too.
- Steven** There are typhoons in the summer as well, right?
- Lisa** Yeah, Taiwan usually experiences a few typhoons every year.
- Steven** OK, what about winter?
- Lisa** It's nice in the south during winter, but it gets quite cold in the northern areas and in the mountains.
- Steven** That doesn't sound good. What about spring?
- Lisa** Spring might be perfect. It's not too hot or cold, there's no chance of a typhoon, and you might even get to see the cherry **blossoms**<sup>7</sup> on the trees in the mountains.
- Steven** You've convinced me. Spring it is!

# Vocabulary Test

Choose the correct word(s) to complete each sentence.

humid

Saltwater

as a result

uninhabitable

rural

boundary

In addition to

ferry

landscapes

cherry blossoms

located in

fantastic

1. Since Taiwan lies on the Tropic of Cancer, the weather is usually hot and \_\_\_\_\_ in the summer.
2. Sun Moon Lake is \_\_\_\_\_ Nantou County, which is the only landlocked county in Taiwan.
3. Towering mountains, sun-kissed beaches, and coral reefs are common \_\_\_\_\_ you can find in Taiwan.
4. Most Taiwanese people live on the western plains because the country's mountainous center is mostly \_\_\_\_\_.
5. During the typhoon season, strong winds and heavy rain cause lots of damage in both urban and \_\_\_\_\_ areas.
6. If you want to go to Green Island, you need to take a \_\_\_\_\_ from Taitung.
7. In spring, groups of tourists visit the mountains to admire the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Taiwan sits at the \_\_\_\_\_ of Eurasian and Philippine Sea plates.
9. Taroko Gorge is a \_\_\_\_\_ place to go hiking and to enjoy incredible scenery.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ hot springs are rare, but you can find one on Green Island.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ the hot weather in summer, heavy storms are also common.
12. Western Taiwan is quite flat, and \_\_\_\_\_, it has the largest population.



## More Facts

### About Taiwan

#### Alishan 阿里山



Alishan is Taiwan's most popular mountain resort area. People go there to ride the famous Alishan mountain train, and to see forests of ancient trees, cloud and mist formations, and beautiful sunsets and sunrises. When people visit Alishan, they often wake up early and ride the train to a sunrise viewing platform.

#### Orchid Island 蘭嶼



Orchid Island lies to the southeast of Taiwan, and it is generally much warmer than the rest of the country. The landscapes are mostly volcanic, and hard black rock can be seen throughout the island. Despite its name, Orchid Island is not covered with flowers. Instead, there are numerous paddies for growing taro root.

#### Shifen Waterfall 十分瀑布

As Taiwan is so mountainous, it has hundreds of waterfalls. One of the most beautiful is Shifen Waterfall, which is located in Pingxi 平溪 in northern Taiwan. Although it's only about 20 meters high, it measures 40 meters across, and many people say it looks like a mini Niagara Falls.



#### Monsoon Winds 季風

Temperatures in the winter can fall quickly in Taiwan because of the monsoon winds, which blow in from Central Asia. The winds are felt most strongly in the Penghu Islands, but all of the islands in the Taiwan Strait suffer relatively cold winters.

#### Typhoon Morakot 莫拉克颱風

In 2009, Taiwan was hit by Typhoon Morakot. It dumped close to 3,000 mm of rain on parts of Taiwan, and it was the worst typhoon the country had ever experienced. The heavy rainfall caused massive landslides, and an entire village in Kaohsiung County was buried in mud. Hundreds of people died as a result of Morakot, and total damages amounted to over NT\$100 billion.



photo by NASA



#### Unit 1

台灣：放眼如畫

#### 1

景觀與氣候