

ASIA · FOOD · CITY BREAKS · HIKING · MOUNTAINS · CULTURE



Taiwan

Taiwan crams in marble gorges, peaks approaching 4,000m, Japanese-era hot springs and some of Asia's best night-market food into an island whose high-speed trains link Taipei and Kaohsiung in as little as 90 minutes. Taipei is efficient, friendly and endlessly edible; beyond it lie Taroko's chasms, Sun Moon Lake and the temples of old Tainan.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Taiwan and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 28 August 2026.

 CAPITAL Taipei	 CURRENCY New Taiwan dollar (TWD) £1 ≈ NT\$43.58	 LANGUAGE Mandarin, Taiwanese Hokkien Hakka	 BEST TIME Oct–Dec, Mar–Apr
 DAILY BUDGET £45–£200 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type A, B 110V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 13h 30m direct ~£700–£1,250 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+8 standard time

Taiwan's geography sets the route. A spine of high mountains runs north to south, so the densely populated west coast, linked by high-speed rail, holds Taipei, Taichung, Tainan and Kaohsiung, while the wilder east coast, with Hualien, Taroko and Taitung, is reached by conventional train along the Pacific shore. A classic first trip spends four or five days in and around Taipei, including Jiufen and the Pingxi branch line, then loops the island: down the west via Sun Moon Lake or Alishan to Tainan and Kaohsiung, and back up the east coast. Two weeks covers it comfortably; ten days feels rushed.

Taiwan is easy, efficient and good value: transport is punctual, city signs are bilingual, convenience stores sell almost everything, and a superb night-market dinner costs a few pounds. Accommodation is the main expense, especially in Taipei. It suits food lovers, hikers, culture enthusiasts and first-timers to Asia. Visitors are often surprised by the mountains, which reach 3,952m at Yushan, by the helpfulness of strangers, by the scooter swarms at every junction, and by the layering of Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese colonial and modern democratic culture, visible in everything from temple festivals to the café scene.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

CULTURE

National Palace Museum

One of the world's great collections of Chinese art, much of it shipped from the mainland to Taiwan in 1948–49: bronzes, calligraphy, Song-dynasty paintings and the famous Jadeite Cabbage. Displays rotate, so no two visits are alike.
- 2

NATURE

Taroko Gorge

Marble cliffs rise hundreds of metres above the Liwu River in Taiwan's most famous national park. Rockfalls from the April 2024 Hualien earthquake closed many trails, some of the best known for years, so check which routes are open before planning around it.

3

NATURE

Sun Moon Lake

Taiwan's largest lake, ringed by forested hills at around 750m in the island's centre. Cycle the lakeshore path, take the cable car to the Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village, or hop between Shuishe and Ita Thao piers by boat.

4

HISTORY

Tainan's old town

Taiwan's oldest city and its capital until 1887, packed with ornate temples, the Dutch-era Anping Fort and Chihkan Tower. It is also the island's food capital, famous for milkfish, danzai noodles and shrimp rolls.

5

CULTURE

Jiufen

A former gold-mining town clinging to the hills above the north-east coast, with steep stepped lanes of teahouses and red lanterns. Go on a weekday evening, and combine it with sky lanterns on the Pingxi line.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Taipei

≈ 7 million people

A relaxed, efficient capital where temples sit between tower blocks: Taipei 101, the National Palace Museum, hot springs at Beitou and night markets such as Raohe and Ningxia.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Taichung

≈ 2.9 million people

The sunny second city has Toyo Ito's cave-like opera house, Fengjia night market and a claim to have invented bubble tea. A good gateway to Sun Moon Lake.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Kaohsiung

≈ 2.7 million people

The southern port city has reinvented itself with harbourside arts spaces at Pier-2, the Lotus Pond's dragon and tiger pagodas, a light-rail loop and easy access to Kenting's beaches.

Taipei's figure is for the metropolitan area including New Taipei and Keelung; Taichung and Kaohsiung are special-municipality populations.

When to go to Taiwan

Best time: **Oct-Dec, Mar-Apr.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

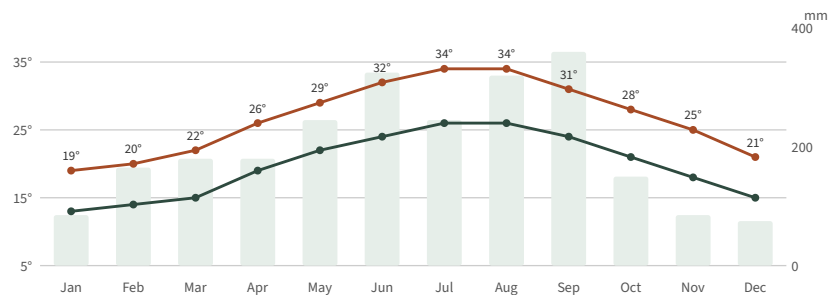
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Taipei

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb–Mar

Lantern Festival

The 15th day of the lunar new year ends the holiday with lantern displays nationwide; Pingxi releases thousands of sky lanterns, and Yanshui stages its riotous beehive fireworks.

May–Jun

Dragon Boat Festival

On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, crews race dragon boats on rivers in Taipei, Lukang and elsewhere, and everyone eats zongzi, sticky rice wrapped in bamboo leaves.

Sep–Oct

Mid-Autumn Festival

Families gather for outdoor barbecues, a distinctly Taiwanese twist on the moon festival, sharing mooncakes and pomelos under the full moon of the eighth lunar month.

How much does Taiwan cost?

SHOESTRING

£45

per person / day

≈ NT\$1,961

hostels, street food, buses

MID-RANGE

£100

per person / day

≈ NT\$4,358

3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis

COMFORTABLE

£200

per person / day

≈ NT\$8,715

4-star+, guided trips, private transfers

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Beef noodle soup

Taiwan's unofficial national dish: chewy wheat noodles in a rich beef broth, either spicy red-braised or clear, with chunks of shank and pickled mustard greens.

Lu rou fan

Braised pork rice: finely chopped fatty pork stewed in soy, rice wine and five-spice, spooned over white rice; a cheap, comforting staple everywhere.

Bubble tea

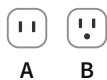
Sweet milk tea with chewy tapioca pearls, invented in Taiwan in the 1980s; Taichung and Tainan both claim the original, and shops let you set sugar and ice levels.

Getting around

Taiwan High Speed Rail runs down the west coast from Taipei to Zuoying in Kaohsiung in roughly 90 minutes to two hours, while conventional TRA trains circle the island, including the scenic east coast. Taipei, Taichung and Kaohsiung have metro systems; an EasyCard covers trains, buses, YouBike bikes and convenience-store purchases. Uber works in the main cities, and buses run to Sun Moon Lake and Alishan.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



110V — bring a UK-to-A/B adapter

DIALLING CODE

+886

TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

TIPPING

Not expected; hotels and many sit-down restaurants add a 10% service charge. Tip tour guides, and leave small change only for exceptional service.

ETIQUETTE

Eating, drinking and chewing gum are banned on the MRT and in stations, and people queue in marked lines. Don't stand chopsticks upright in rice, and hand over cards and money with both hands.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport (TPE), Taoyuan (for Taipei); Taipei Songshan Airport (TSA), Taipei; Kaohsiung International Airport (KHH), Kaohsiung

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance and fire: **119**

Police: **110**

Coastguard: **118**

Domestic abuse and sexual assault hotline: **113**

Any further assistance: **0800 024 111** ('Information for Foreigners in Taiwan' helpline)

Source: FCDO "Getting help"

TIME ZONE

UTC+8 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the right

Visas & entry for Taiwan

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit Taiwan without a visa for up to 90 days. You can extend this by a further 90 days once you have arrived in Taiwan. You can get more information on entering Taiwan without a visa ('visa-exempt entry') from the Taiwan Bureau of Consular Affairs. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events.

If you plan to stay in Taiwan for longer than 180 days, you must have a visa before you arrive. If you stay beyond the time given on your visa, you will get a fine and risk being deported from Taiwan.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya Dengue Hepatitis B Japanese encephalitis Rabies Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Taiwan

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sun 25 Oct 2026	Taiwan Restoration and Guningtou Victory Memorial Day
Mon 26 Oct 2026	Taiwan Restoration and Guningtou Victory Memorial Day (observed)
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Constitution Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	Founding Day of the Republic of China
Thu 4 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year's Eve
Fri 5 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year's Eve
Sat 6 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year
Sun 7 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year
Mon 8 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year
Tue 9 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year (observed)
Wed 10 Feb 2027	Chinese New Year (observed)
Sun 28 Feb 2027	Peace Memorial Day
Mon 1 Mar 2027	Peace Memorial Day (observed)
Sun 4 Apr 2027	Children's Day
Mon 5 Apr 2027	Tomb-Sweeping Day
Tue 6 Apr 2027	Children's Day (observed)
Fri 30 Apr 2027	Labour Day (observed)
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Wed 9 Jun 2027	Dragon Boat Festival
Wed 15 Sep 2027	Mid-Autumn Festival
Tue 28 Sep 2027	Confucius' Birthday
Sun 10 Oct 2027	National Day
Mon 11 Oct 2027	National Day (observed)

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Mandarin

ENGLISH	MANDARIN	SAY IT
Hello	你好	<i>nee HOW</i>
Thank you	謝謝	<i>syeh-syeh</i>
Please	請	<i>ching</i>
Excuse me	不好意思	<i>boo how ee-suh</i>
How much is this?	這個多少錢?	<i>jay-guh dwor-shao chyen</i>

Know before you go

Convenience stores are a lifeline: 7-Eleven and FamilyMart sell hot meals, top up EasyCards and SIM cards, print tickets at their kiosks and have ATMs that take foreign cards.

Book High Speed Rail and east-coast trains early for Lunar New Year and long weekends, when seats sell out days ahead; standing tickets on TRA trains are an uncomfortable fallback.

Typhoons strike mainly from July to October, occasionally earlier or later, cancelling flights and closing mountain roads; build slack into your itinerary and check Taroko and Alishan access before setting off.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.