

Your Guide To Taiwan (Introducing Taiwan)

General

- 1) Taiwan is also known as Republic of China (Former name "Formosa" meaning beautiful in Portuguese)
- 2) It is the home to 23 million Taiwanese including 360,000 indigenous people who still live here; they can be distinguished into 14 different tribes.
- 3) There are 5 special municipalities, namely Taipei City, Kaohsiung City, New Taipei City, Taichung City and Tainan City.
- 4) There are also 14 Counties, Provincial cities, 184 Townships (both rural and urban) and 17 County-controlled Cities across Taiwan.
- 5) Today many airlines fly to Taiwan including budget airlines
- 6) While the official language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese, Southern Min language is also widely spoken
- 7) Taiwan boasts an excellent infrastructure, convenient transportation system, and high-quality communication services.
- 8) Taiwan enjoys warm weather all year round with the exception between springs and winters which see the strong fluctuations in weather conditions.
- 9) It is also due to the Japanese rule that Taiwan evolved from a traditional society into a modern society.
- 10) Many infrastructures which we seen today were started under the Japanese rule.
- 11) Taiwan is highly diversified in terms of religious faith.

Geography

- 1) Taiwan is located at the south eastern coast of mainland Asia which is also the western edge of the Pacific "rim of fire"
- 2) The Central Mountain Range stretches along the entire country from north to south.
- 3) Due to its geographical location, earthquakes are very common.
- 4) It covers an area of approximately 36,000 square kilometres (14,400 square miles)
- 5) With some 258 mountain peaks are more than 3,000 meters high, Taiwan is also reputable as a "Mountainous Island"
- 6) Geographically Taiwan is also the world's fourth-highest island with Yu Shan standing at 3,952 meters above sea level.
- 7) Yu Shan is also the highest mountain peak in Northeast Asia.

History

- 1) There is evidence of human settlement in Taiwan which dated back 30,000 years despite Taiwan's history can only be traced back to 7000 years ago.
- 2) Since 17th century, Taiwan had been under the rule of Dutch, Spanish, Ming loyalist, Qing Dynasty and the Japanese Empire.
- 3) Koxinga retreated to Taiwan as a self-styled Ming loyalist and established the Kingdom of Tungning (1662–1683)
- 4) Taiwan officially formed part of the Qing Dynasty after the Koxinga's grandson's surrender.
- 5) Taiwan and Penghu were ceded in full sovereignty to the Empire of Japan after First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895)
- 6) The Japanese colonial rule was considered the longest covering over a span of 50 years until the end of World War II.
- 7) Taiwan was officially liberated from colonial rule after World War II.
- 8) During the Civil War in 1949, it was estimated 2 million people arrived in Taiwan.
- 9) In 1986, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was formed and inaugurated as the first opposition party in Taiwan to counter the Kuomintang.

Politics and Government

- 1) Taiwan is ruled under the Constitution of the Republic of China which was drafted in 1947.
- 2) The President is head of state who is also the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.
- 3) The president has authority over the five administrative branches (Yuan): Executive, Legislative, Control, Judicial, and Examination.
- 4) The premier (President of the Executive Yuan) is head of government, are responsible for policy and administration.
- 5) Since the civil war, Taiwan had remained a de facto one-party state under martial law until 1987.
- 6) With the lifting of martial law, Taiwan gradually formed into a 2 party's country.
- 7) The major political party in Taiwan were the Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party.
- 8) In 2000, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party, was elected as the first non-Kuomintang President.

Ecology and climate

- 1) Taiwan has tropical, sub-tropical, and temperate climates which provide a clear differentiation between the different seasons.
- 2) Two-thirds of the total area is covered by forested mountains.
- 3) Currently there are 8 national parks and 13 national scenic areas to preserve Taiwan's best natural ecological environment and cultural sites.
- 4) To date, there are 18,400 species of wildlife on the island, with more than 20% being too rare or endangered species.
- 5) Taiwan also has a very rich marine ecology.
- 6) With the exception of a few mountain areas, no traces of snow can be found during winters.
- 7) During summer (June to August) typhoons sometimes approach or land the country.

Telecommunication Service

- 1) Tourists can purchase a prepaid SIM card for their usage during their tour in Taiwan.
- 2) Telecom companies in Taiwan are; Chungwah Telecom, Taiwan Mobile and Far East Tone.
- 3) Customer service counters located at both Taoyuan and Kaohsiung airport.
- 4) 2 identification documents are needed for registration.
- 5) The value of prepaid varies from NT \$300 to NT \$1000.
- 6) Each top up will last for a period of 6 months.
- 7) Top-up card can be purchased at any 24hrs convenience shops.

Currency Exchange and withdrawal

- 1) The unit of currency for Taiwan is New Taiwan Dollar (NT\$)
- 2) Paper money comes in NT\$2000, NT\$1000, NT\$500, NT\$200 and NT\$100 denominations.
- 3) Coins come in NT\$50, NT\$20, NT\$10, NT\$5 and NT\$1 denominations.
- 4) All foreign currencies can be exchanged at government-designated banks, money changer and hotels.
- 5) Major credit cards such as American Express, Master Card are accepted in most shops.
- 6) Visa, and Diners Club are accepted and traveller's checks may be cashed at foreign-exchange banks.
- 7) Tourists can withdraw money from ATMS machines (located inside 24hrs convenience shops)

Discovering the beauty of Taiwan

- 1) Mountainous Country;Taiwan has the largest number and density of high mountains in the world. There are about 165 mountains over 3,000 metres above sea level.
- 2) Gorgeous Coastal Lines;Taiwan also known as Beautiful Island, has many beautiful coastal especially eastern coastal.
- 3) Beautiful Scenery;Others than gorgeous coastal lines, Taiwan also a paradise of beautiful scenery. It is no surprising that one could find beautiful scenery at another part of Taiwan.
- 4) Sea of Clouds;One of the most spectacular views one can enjoy in Taiwan especially when you are standing at high mountains. Some of the famous spot for viewing sea of clouds include Alishan, Taiping Shan, Cingjing.
- 5) Taroko Gorge;Used to be Army supply route in the past. High Mountains, deep valleys and spectacular view. Taroko Gorge also famous for its marble.
- 6) Alishan Recreation Area;A recreation area at 2880 meters above sea level. No words could describe its spectacular views. No one can say he/she been to Taiwan without going to Alishan
- 7) Sun Moon Lake;Sun Moon Lake is the largest water body in Taiwan. The scenery is only second as compared to Alishan.
- 8) Hiking Trails;In Taiwan, there are many nature hiking trails. Some of these trails were used as highway or army supply routes in the olden days. Among them is the famous Smangus Old Trail.
- 9) National Parks;Taiwan had 8 national parks. Each park had its own attractions and beauty.
- 10) Hot Springs; Different types of hot springs to suit your liking. Taiwan also has a rare underwater seabed hot spring on Green Island. In additional, Taiwan also has cold and mud springs.
- 11) Geothermal activity; Others than hot spring, Taiwan also has many special nature art of state such as Fire and Water Homologous, Flames of Gas, Water Flow Upwards and Mud Volcanoes.
- 12) Formosan Cypress; Some of these giant cypress were calculated to be as old as 3000yrs. They can be found at Alishan, Taiping Shan area. Alishan Sacred Tree is the most famous of all.
- 13) Japanese Alike;Taiwan was under Japanese Rule for 50 years, it is very common to see old towns/streets or building with Japanese style. One can always be mistaken for traveling in Japan when touring old towns.
- 14) Taiwan Railway; Taiwan railway was first built in 1891 by Qing Dynasty. Experience a new tour route with the old railway. Currently Alishan Forestry Train still remains the best recommended railway with 100years of history.
- 15) Wooden Railway Station; Due to Japan Rule, Taiwan still preserve old wooden railway stations which were built by the Japanese. A couple of them are in operating status. Eg Qingtong and Baoan Stations
- 16) Fortress of Yesterday; Since 16th Century, Taiwan had slowly but steady rising to be a strategic point for sailors and colonists. Ruler of the island had always left their name on the history by building fortress around the island.
- 17) Taiwan Old Streets; Taiwan have many old streets which built during Japanese Rule. Some streets were built as early as 17th century.
- 18) Aborigines Festival Celebration; There are many aborigines people in Taiwan. One can join in and celebrate with the aborigines people and experience the different on culture.
- 19) Flower Farms;Tourists can tour around Taiwan at different seasons and enjoy the blossoming of different flowers.
- 20) Eating Paradise;Taiwan is one of the leading eating paradises in Asia. Tourists can easily find delicious foods anywhere in Taiwan.