



ASIAN TIGERS  
MOBILITY

# Settling-in Taiwan



# What's Inside?

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The Basics



Let's Talk About Culture



Settling in Tips



Let's Have Fun

Need Help?





A vibrant street-level scene in Taiwan featuring a yellow train stopped at a station. The train is positioned on tracks that run alongside a paved walkway. To the right of the tracks, several people are walking, some carrying bags or umbrellas. In the background, there are various shops and buildings, including one with a sign that reads "天燈 \$50". The scene is set against a clear blue sky with some clouds. The overall atmosphere is lively and colorful.

# The Basics



# About Taiwan

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Following centuries of ethnic, cultural assimilation and development, today Taiwan has a population of about 23 million and a unique culture that is both rich and diverse. It is the only green island lying on the Tropic of Cancer, with a plethora of natural landscapes that includes mountains, hot springs, lakes, seas, as well as a richness of biological diversity that encompasses 150,000 species of butterflies, birds, and other plant and animal life. A quarter of these are endemic species, such as the Formosan Landlocked Salmon (櫻花鉤吻鮭), Formosan Black Bear (台灣黑熊), Swinhoe's Pheasant (藍腹鵲), and Black-faced Spoonbill (黑面琵鷺), making Taiwan an important base for nature conservation.

In addition to its cultural and ecological riches, Taiwan also enjoys comprehensive educational, medical, and transportation systems, along with entire national infrastructure, advanced information technology and communication networks, and electronics industry and related subcontracting industries that are among the cutting edge in the world.





# Taiwan's Facts & Figures

Land Area	: 36,000 sq. kilometers
Population	: 23.58 million
Capital	: Taipei City
Currency	: New Taiwan Dollar (Yuan) / NT\$
Time Zone	: GMT + 8 hours
Narional Day	: 10 <sup>th</sup> October
Language	: Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese, Hakkanese, indigenous languages
Religions	: Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam, others
Weather	: Lies on Tropic of Cancer General climate is marine tropical Northern and Central regions are subtropical The average rainfall is 2,600 millimetres per year





Let's Talk About Culture



# Local Culture

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Taiwan has a long history. The population of Taiwan consists of Chinese, indigenous tribes, Dutch, Spanish and Japanese, which created a varied culture and developing different local customs and traditions along the way. The multifaceted cultures of this beautiful country are therefore established.

The indigenous people arrived at Taiwan long long time ago. Those who remain today are divided into 16 tribes; the Amis, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Puyuma, Rukai, Tsou, Saisiyat, Yami (or Tao), Thao, Kavalan, Truku, Sakizaya, the Sediq, the Kanakanavu, and the Hla'alua. Years pass, other tribes, especially flatland groups, increasingly came in contact with the Han Chinese, their daily lives becoming more integrated, and by now most of them have assimilated with the Chinese. The other tribes, however, have also managed to preserve some of their traditional customs, tribal structures and architecture, and continue to keep the tribal spirit alive through the practice of conventional worship.

The most important part of Taiwan's cultural history was played by the Han Chinese who brought the traditional customs from China and created new ones in Taiwan. Whether they were southern Fujianese who immigrated over the centuries, the Chinese who came in the late 1940s, or Hakkas, they created their own cultures, traces of which can still be found all over Taiwan.



# Cultural Dos & Don'ts

## Dos

Call people towards you with their palms facing down, waving towards the ground.

When exchanging business cards, presents or tokens of esteem, presenting them with both hands can tell your counterpart that you are offering them unreservedly, as a wholehearted expression of yourself.

When someone pours you a drink, the appropriate way to pass on your thanks is to tap the table next to the drink about three times with your finger. This is a miniaturized imitation of the tradition of bowing three times when thanking a superior.

It is always appropriate to greet the eldest person first when meeting a group of people.

## Don'ts

Don't behave in a way that causes someone to be embarrassed in front of others, or in front of you.

Don't comment or tell jokes that imply death or disaster since Taiwanese believe in bad omens in general.

Don't send a clock to someone as a gift. The phrase "to give a clock" (Sung Chung) sounds just like "to attend a funeral" in Chinese.

Don't be afraid to pick up your rice bowl and hold it under your chin when you eat.

It is common that hosts place food on the guest's plate. Don't be surprised by such action and don't refuse when this happens.

Chopsticks should be placed either on the table or across the top of the bowl. Don't stick them vertically into the bowl.

When writing anything in a friendly way, don't use red ink.





# Settling in Tips



# Getting Around

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## Air Travel

Taoyuan International Airport (about 40km from Taipei) and Kaohsiung International Airport serve Taiwan's international air routes.

### Flights across the Taiwan Straits

The person with a foreign passport may enter from and depart to Mainland China via Kinmen, Matsu, or Penghu if they are:

- Visitors with valid visas and passports or other travel documents,
- Visitors with valid passports with which they can enter the Republic of China visa-exempt,
- Residents of Hong Kong and Macau who hold valid entry and exit permits.

Officers of the NIA will examine travel documents.

Taiwan airports with direct flights to Mainland China are listed as following: Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei International Airport, Kaohsiung International Airport, Taichung Airport, Hualien Airport, Taitung Airport, Magong Airport, and Kinmen Airport.

### Domestic Flight

Taiwan has a well-developed domestic flight network with 17 airports serving Taiwan as well as the surrounding islands. Flights should be reserved before departure, directly with an airline or through a travel agency. The person who holds a foreign passport needs to present the passport at check-in and boarding.

## Taiwan High Speed Rail

The High-Speed Rail (HSR) has become one of the primary choices for north-south bound passenger transportation along Taiwan's west coast. It travels from Taipei to Kaohsiung in less than two hours, with stations in Taipei, Banqiao (Banciao), Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Taichung, Chiayi, Tainan, and Zuoying in Kaohsiung.

People can transfer between HSR and Taiwan Railway Administration (TRA) trains at the following stations: Taipei, Banqiao (Banciao), Taichung, and Zuoying. All stations have shuttle buses, taxis, reserved pickup, and car rental services for other destinations. All stations have parking facilities nearby.

## Round-the-island

The railway is one of the best ways to travel around Taiwan. The round-the-island railroad connects all of Taiwan's major cities. There are also local routes, including the Jiji(集集), Pingxi (Pingsi)(平溪) and Neiwan(內灣) lines that give access to special scenic areas.

Tickets can be reserved up to 14 days prior to travel via telephone or website, but they must be picked up at the railway station or the post office within two days of making the reservations. For long weekends and holidays, it is advised to make reservations early.

Foreign students who are in Taiwan on short-term study tours can present their foreign passports, international student certification, or a travel pass issued by the National Youth Commission (NYC) (青輔會) and purchase a cheap 5-day, 7-day, or 10-day Taiwan Rail Pass (TR-PASS). These passes are not available to foreigners with resident certificates. This offer gives young people an ideal opportunity to learn about Taiwan by taking an inexpensive trip around the country.

## Metropolitan Rapid Transit Systems

Both Taipei and Kaohsiung have mass rapid transit systems that provide convenient access to tourist spots within the cities and connecting buses are available to surrounding areas. Travelers planning to stay in Taiwan for an extended period can save time by purchasing a Smart Card (or an IC Card), such as the EasyCard in Taipei, or I-Pass and TaiwanMoney Cards in Kaohsiung. Smoking, eating and drinking, and chewing gums are prohibited in MRT stations and on the trains.

## Long-distance Bus Service

Many long-distance bus services are available for convenient travel between cities. Some bus routes operate 24 hours a day. Traveling by long-distance buses is cheaper than by train or by plane.



## Local Bus Service Transportation

Every city and town in Taiwan has a municipal or highway bus network, providing convenient transportation. In Taipei and Kaohsiung you can use the MRT and connecting shuttle buses to save time. Signs at bus stops show the routes of the buses so that a traveler can check the route before boarding.

## Taxis/ Car Rental Taxis

Taiwan taxis are easily identifiable by their bright yellow color and the “Taxi” lightbox on their roofs. Taxis in major cities charge by the meter, but tariffs vary from city to city. Some long-distance taxi drivers do not charge by meter. Therefore passengers should check with the drivers before using the service. In most cities in Taiwan, you can call for taxi services. Certified taxi drivers who have passed English proficiency tests are available in Taipei and Kaohsiung. To use this service, call the International Community Service Hotline (0800-024-111). A taxi reservation service is available in most convenience stores.

## Car Rental

Renting a car in Taiwan is very convenient. Rental companies offer various kinds of vehicles at major airports and railway stations in major cities. Chauffeur services are also available.

## Bicycles

In recent years, the Taiwan government has been promoting leisure cycling. Working with local bicycle-manufacturing industry, the government put lots of efforts to transform Taiwan into a “Cycling Island.” Many of the island’s main tourist destinations have bicycle rental shops and designated cycling paths. Taipei City, Taipei County, and Kaohsiung City offer public bike rental with pickups at one location and returns at another.

# Food

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Diverse ethnic groups influence the characteristics of Taiwanese cuisine. Taiwan has everything from exquisite palace dishes and fine foreign foods to innovative local creations.

## Local Food

Rice is Taiwan's staple food for every meal. With their traditional cooking methods, Taiwanese have used local ingredients to develop all kinds of rice dishes. With a wide variety of fried rice and rice with toppings, rice noodles, and vermicelli, Taiwanese have also made good use of the varied characteristics of different rice varieties to produce a wide range of rice-based snacks such as turnip cakes, mochi, leaf-wrapped glutinous rice zongzi dumplings, as well as the New Year's cake. Restaurants that line the streets and lanes of Taiwan offer all kinds of noodle dishes, of which danzai (peddler) (擔仔麵) noodles and beef noodles have developed their Taiwanese characteristics.

## Diverse Culinary Culture

Taiwan is a great melting pot for Chinese and foreign cuisines, all of which are served in a variety of restaurants around the island. Taiwanese cuisine emphasizes the natural features of the ingredients and adds soy sauce, rice wine, sesame oil, fermented black beans, sweet basil, green onions, coriander, and other spices to produce its own characteristic colors, aromas, and flavors. Seafood is another significant feature of the island's diet. The Hakka people have developed their own cuisine with a strong emphasis on heartiness, flavor, and aroma.

The indigenous peoples use fresh local ingredients to cook their dishes, which are accompanied by a sweet wine made of millet. With new cuisines from immigrants from Southeast Asia as well as from other foreign cuisines and cultures, Taiwan now has a wide range of foods that can satisfy any palate.



# Night-market Snacks

Located around the cities' busiest regions and temples, Taiwan's night markets present their very own special kind of dining culture. Upon entering a brightly-lit night market, visitors will see clusters of vendors and stalls selling all kinds of delicious snack foods, such as oyster omelets, milkfish belly stew, fried rice vermicelli, "little cake wrapped in a big cake", pork knuckles, oyster noodles, and an endless variety of other snacks. Dining at a night market is convenient, fast, and affordable. Shopping and tasting foods at a night market is definitely an integral part of any Taiwanese experience.

## Night Markets:

- Miaokou Night Market
- Shilin Night Market
- Raohe Street Night Market
- Huaxi Street Night Market
- Liaoning Night Market
- Jingmei Night Market
- Linjiang Street Night Market
- Ningxia Night Market
- Fengjia Night Market
- Flower Garden Night Market
- Liuhe Night Market
- Luodong Night Market
- Nanbin Night Market



# Medical Care

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## National Health Insurance

The National Health Insurance (NHI) system is a compulsory social insurance in Taiwan, providing equal medical rights to all residents. Under the provisions of the National Health Insurance Act, permanent residents without full-time employment should take their documentation and participate in the NHI program after they have lived in Taiwan for four months. Foreign nationals with a full-time job should participate in the program on the day of their employment. If they have dependents who are also foreign nationals, those dependents have to obtain Taiwan residency documentation and live on the island for four consecutive months before they can take out their insurance.

Insured persons living in Taiwan need only to receive their NHI IC Card and pay their premiums regularly. In the cases of injury, illness, or childbirth, the insured person needs to present the insurance card to a contracted medical care institution and only pay the registration fee and partial payment for hospitalization or treatment to receive full medical care. For more information consult with a Bureau of National Health Insurance Office.

## Bilingual Healthcare Service

Most public hospitals and large-scale medical centers in Taiwan offer Chinese and English healthcare services, and most of their websites, information desks, and signage are in both languages. If you need an English medical consultation, you can contact a hospital service representative. Some hospitals also have international healthcare centers that provide convenient healthcare services that include interpreters to help foreign patients at a consultation session. Some hospitals can work out a plan of treatment and cost estimation before you arrive in Taiwan, provide transportation information upon your arrival, and offer you information on medical tourism services.



# Daily Needs

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## Rent a House

The cost of renting an apartment or house varies with location and size, so look around and compare. Before renting a place, look at the place in person, and communicate with the landlord. After you decide, no matter how long you intend to rent, you must sign a lease to protect your interests. In addition to the rent itself, you will most likely be asked for a deposit; if you go through a real estate broker, you will also have to pay the brokerage fee. You can check the websites of legal brokers for details of properties for rent. The following website and hotline may also help:

Tsuei Ma Ma Foundation for Housing and Community Service:

<http://www.tmm.org.tw/English>

International Community Service Hotline:

0800-024-111

## Groceries

Buying fresh food and daily necessities is easy. You can purchase goods from wholesale stores, supermarkets, and popular traditional markets. Taiwan also has a high density of convenience stores, including 7-Eleven, Family Mart, Hi-Lift and OK chains. Many of them are open 24 hrs a day, 365 days a year, and sell packaged foods, drinks, and daily necessities. Additionally, they collect various utility bills and other public service fees, accept packages from parcel service companies, provide ATM machines, handle pickups of goods bought online, sell postage stamps and event tickets, and collect taxes and fines.

Buying groceries in traditional market is also an option. Traditional markets' attractive prices and friendliness make them extremely popular. Traditional markets offer all kinds of fresh produce and local delicacies. The morning traditional markets usually run from 4 - 5 in the morning until noon; the sunset markets typically run from 3 in the afternoon until 8 in the evening. Prices at the sunset markets usually are lower than those at the morning markets.

## Banking

There are 37 domestic banks, 32 foreign banks, and a total of more than 3,000 branches in Taiwan providing banking services including deposits, withdrawals, remittances, loans, bill collection, and transactions of financial products.

Opening a New Taiwan Dollar deposit account in Taiwan is not difficult at all. Just take your passport with a valid entry visa (or stamp) and your ARC. If you have not received an ARC, please apply for a “Record of ID Number in the ROC” as a substitute at a county/city service center of the NIA. When you open an account you can apply for a bank card at the same time for deposit, withdrawal, or transferring of funds. Different banks use different procedures. For details, check with the individual bank

## Utilities

It is proved that Taiwan’s tap water is safe, with 99% of tested water meeting quality standards. The Taipei Water Department supplies water in Taipei City while the Taiwan Water Corp supplies outside Taipei City. You can find Information on applications for service, payment of fees, and other water-related matters online.

Taiwan’s household electricity is supplied at both 110 and 220 volts. Lights, TVs, refrigerators and other small appliances generally use 110 volts, while most air conditioners use 220 volts. You should check the voltage requirements of the electrical products brought from overseas. When the electrical products neither match the voltage nor fit the sockets, you will have to use an adapter or transformer.

Households in Taiwan generally use natural gas delivered via pipelines or pressurized containers. You will need to contact the local gas supplier if you want to get a natural gas pipeline into your residence. A containerful of gas can be ordered from a local supplier who will deliver it to your home and replace the empty one. According to government regulations, gas suppliers add a strong odor substance to the natural gas, so people can detect the leakage by smell, and action can be taken quickly to avoid accidents.



## Telephone and Mobile

Foreigners can apply for a local telephone landline by visiting a telecom business office with their ARCs, passports, and a local citizen guarantor (with his/her ID Card, NHI IC Card). English bills are available upon request. To call another party in your area, just dial the local telephone number. To make a domestic long-distance call (to another county or city), first dial the area code and then the local number. To make international calls, first dial the international access code, the country code, the area code, and finally the number of the party.

Taiwan has 6 cellphone carriers providing 2G, 3G and PHS services. Foreign residents can choose their service provider based on the pricing plans offered. Cell phone pricing plans are categorized into 2 types: monthly plans and prepaid plans. Foreign residents applying for cell phones need to present their ARCs, passports, and personal ID documents, together with a deposit or a local citizen acting as guarantor. If you have just arrived in Taiwan or are here for only a short stay, you better apply for a prepaid cell phone plan.

## Internet Connection

Taiwan offers a convenient and diversified range of internet services, allowing you to choose from ADSL, optical fiber, TV cable, Wi-Fi, and 3G mobile. Please apply to a fixed network company for getting connected by ADSL or optical fiber . If you want to get connected by cable, you will need to apply to the cable TV operator in your area. Many public areas like transport stations, restaurants, coffee shops, and other establishments offer WLAN internet connection. For internet connection on your 3G cell phone, please apply with your cell phone operator for a 3G number and a 3G wireless card.

## Postal Services

Taiwan's postal services are very convenient. The Chunghwa Post Co. offers both domestic and international express delivery, delivery of refrigerated goods, home pickup services, etc. Besides, some private parcel services also offer comparable services as well as 24-hour pick up at convenience store chains. The Chunghwa Post also issues exquisite stamps on all kinds of subjects and objects for collections - a passion that is catered to on the Philately section of the company's website.

# International Schools

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Taiwan currently has 19 international schools. The schools offer curricula from kindergarten to the 12th grade according to their respective capabilities and facilities. Please consult the individual schools for the qualifications required for entry, registration and tuition fee.

Below is the foreign schools in Taiwan:

Taipei American School

02-2873-9900

[http:// www.tas.edu.tw](http://www.tas.edu.tw)

Grace Christian Academy

02-2785-7233

<http://www.gcataipei.org>

Dominican International School

02-2533-8451

<http://www.dishs.tp.edu.tw>

Taipei Adventist American School

02-2861-6400

<http://www.taastaiwan.com/>

Hsinchu International School

03-538-8113

<http://www.hdis.hc.edu.tw>

American School in Taichung

04-2239-7532

<http://www.ast.tc.edu.tw>

Kaohsiung Japanese School

07-224-9314

<http://takaojs.hihosting.hinet.net>



An aerial, high-angle view of a city street at night. The street is illuminated by streetlights, and a yellow taxi is visible in the lower right. The surrounding buildings are lit up, and there are various signs and markings on the street. A semi-transparent orange and yellow gradient overlay covers the center of the image, where the text "Let's Have Fun" is written in white.

Let's Have Fun

# Shopping

Taiwan offers a diverse shopping experience, with most shops staying open for more than 12 hours a day. In addition to the department stores and large shopping centers, many unique shopping districts are found island-wide, each with its own uniqueness, showing off the local products. These shopping districts offer all kinds of quality merchandise and a wide range of services. Shopping in Taiwan will be a genuine pleasure.

Taipei, Taichung, and Kaohsiung, are Taiwanese shoppers' paradises offering the latest styles and fashions. The shopping districts in these cities can offer products satisfying everyone's needs. The mass transportation networks also make these shops accessible within these cities.

## Taipei Ximending Shopping District

The name "Ximending" was given during the Japanese Occupation (1895-1945). The Taipei City Government has transformed the area into the city's Times Square. On weekends and holidays, Ximending is crowded. People come for cultural and musical performances, shopping, and other activities. The modern and traditional elements there come together to offer a new experience.

## Taipei Zhongxiao Dunhua (Eastern) Shopping District

One of the most popular and convenient business districts in Taipei City is the Eastern District. The MRT and bus systems provide connections to this district benefitting the department stores and restaurants. Many well-known fashion brands and flagship stores are located in this area.

## Taichung Jingming 1st Street

Cafes, restaurants and art galleries all line this boulevard. There are outdoor tables on the sidewalks and outdoor concerts, as well as art exhibits and other community activities. This is a street for leisure.

## Kaohsiung New Juejiang (Horie) Shopping District

Over the past years, the New Juejiang Shopping District has developed into the largest and most well-known place for imported goods in southern Taiwan. It offers a particularly attractive shopping experience for youngsters.



A close-up, low-angle shot of a red and blue public payphone. The phone is mounted on a wall. The keypad is visible, with numbers 1 through 9 and a star key. A handset is attached to the side. The background is blurred, showing a window with greenery outside.

Need Help?

# Emergency Contacts

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## Emergency

Emergency Helpline (Police)	: 110
Emergency Helpline (Fire, Ambulance)	: 119
Personal Safety Hotline	: 113

## Directory

Overseas Operator	: 100
Chinese Local Directory Assistance	: 104
English-language Directory Assistance	: 106
Tourist Information Hotline	: +886-2-2717-3737
24-Hour Travel Information Call Center	: 0800-011-765
International Community Service Hotline	: 0800-024-111

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