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Health

BEFORE YOU GO

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Robert Kelly
Joshua Samuel Brown

PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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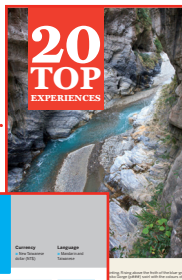
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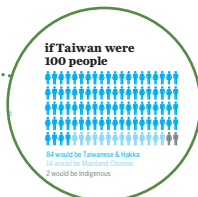
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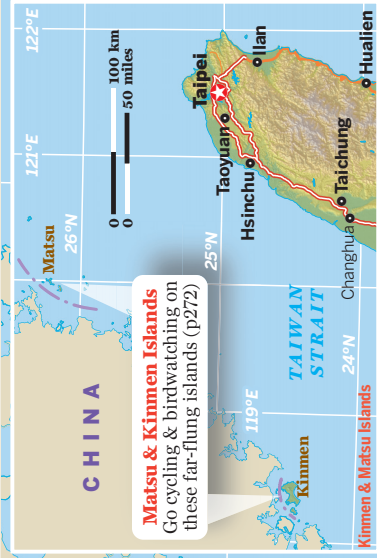
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Go cycling & birdwatching on these far-flung islands (p272)

Taipei
Visit Taipei's National Palace Museum (p59)

Wulai
Explore old aboriginal hunting paths (p113)

Keelung
Fill up on tasty local snacks at the night market (p126)

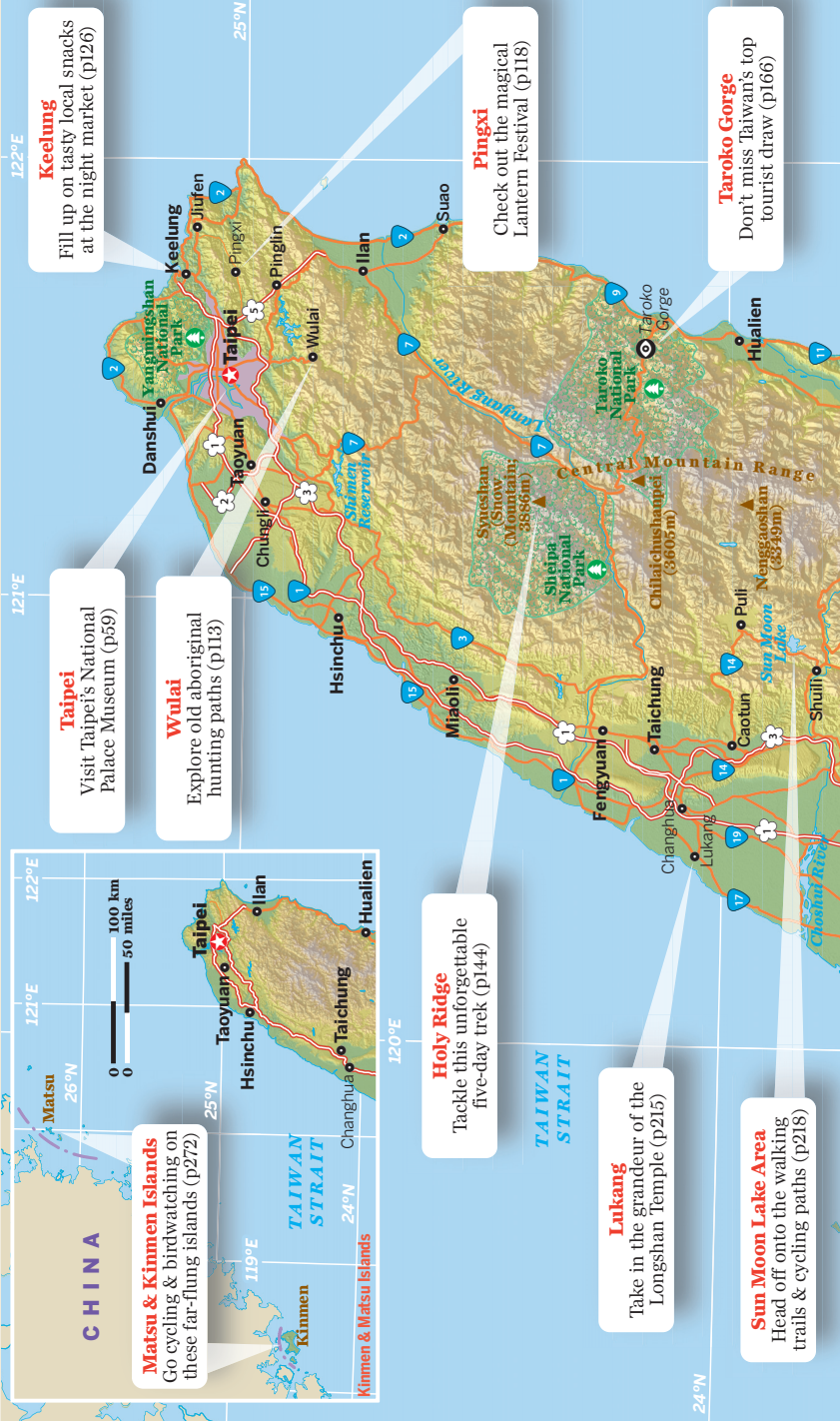
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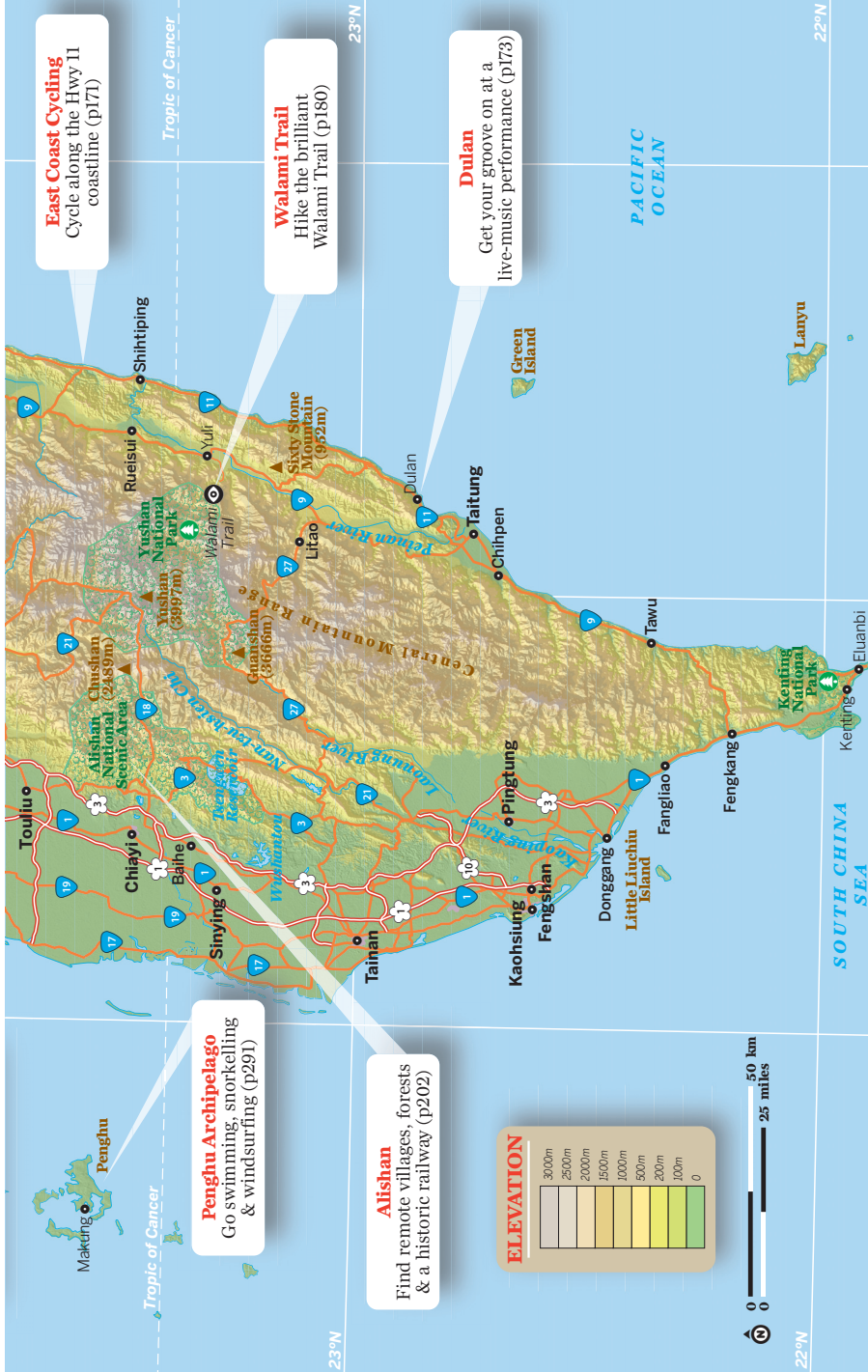
Lukang
Take in the grandeur of the Longshan Temple (p215)

Sun Moon Lake Area
Head off onto the walking trails & cycling paths (p218)

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Check out the magical Lantern Festival (p118)

Taroko Gorge
Don't miss Taiwan's top tourist draw (p166)





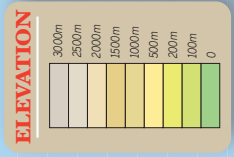
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Cycle along the Hwy 11
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Hike the brilliant
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Get your groove on at a
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Go swimming, snorkelling
& windsurfing (p291)

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Find remote villages, forests
& a historic railway (p202)



22°N

23°N

22°N

23°N

Tropic of Cancer

Tropic of Cancer

SOUTH CHINA SEA

PACIFIC OCEAN

Makding
Penghu

Tropic of Cancer

Lanyu

Green Island

Keelung
Keelung National Park
Eluanbi

Feng'gang

Fangliao

Little Liuehhu Island

Donggang

Fengshian

Kaohsiung

Pingtung

Tainan

Sinying

Balhe

Chiayi

Touliu

Alishan National Park
Alishan Scenic Area
(2439m)

Yushan National Park
Yushan
(3997m)

Guanshan
(36166m)

Sixty Stone Mountain
(9522m)

Litao

Rueisui

Yuli

Shihtiping

Taitung

Chilpen

Dulan

Litao

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**Look out for these icons:**

Our author's recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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itineraries

Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to lonelyplanet.com/thorntree to chat with other travellers.



One Week

Taipei & Around

Spending the first two days museum-hopping in the capital; with the world's greatest collection of Chinese art, **National Palace Museum** takes a day on its own. At night, hit the city's myriad **night markets** before or after the clubs and bars. They're all open late.

On day three, spend the morning exploring different perspectives on Taiwan's past in the **2-28 Peace Park & Memorial Museum** and at the **Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall**, then blast into the neon future with a visit to **Ximending**, Taipei's youth central. Head south the next day for an afternoon sipping tea in **Maokong**, followed by a ride to the top of **Taipei 101** to take in the whole city as the sun goes down. That night head to **Raohe Night Market** for a late dinner at one of the best snacking venues in town.

If it's sunny on day five, rent a bicycle and ride the river trails to **Danshui**, followed by strolling and snacking along the **Old Street**. The next day you can go hiking on **Yangmingshan** followed by a hot spring in nearby **Beitou**. On the final day explore the city's old temples, **Longshan** and **Bao-an**, centres of both folk faith and folk art.



Three Weeks

Ultimate Taiwan

Almost every trip to Taiwan will start with a week or so in and around the capital, Taipei. Don't miss the **National Palace Museum** for the world's foremost collection of Chinese art, and **Longshan Temple**, a vibrant centre of Taiwanese folk worship. If you have time, ride the gondola to **Maokong** for an afternoon of fine oolong tea, followed by an evening visit to the sprawling, snack-rich **Shilin Night Market**. Burn it all off the next day in **Wulai**, an expanse of wild jungle with loads of biking, cycling and river tracing opportunities just outside the city.

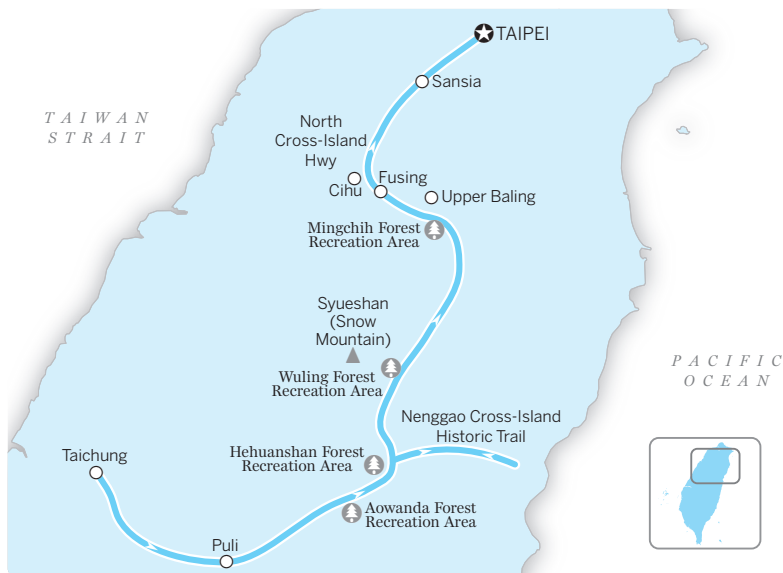
When it's time to move on, catch a tilting train to **Hualien** and spend two days wandering the bedazzling marble-walled **Taroko Gorge**. More scenic delights await down Highway 9, which runs through the lush rift valley. Train it down to **Yuli** and spend the afternoon hiking the nearby **Walami Trail**, an old patrol route running deep into a subtropical rainforest. Rest and recuperate that night at nearby **Antung Hot Springs**.

Another train ride – this time across Taiwan's fertile southern tip – takes you over to **Kaohsiung**, Taiwan's second-largest city, for two days of seafood and urban adventures in the old harbour district. In winter take a two-day side trip to **Maolin Recreation Area**, home of Rukai aborigines, and the overwintering site of millions of purple butterflies.

Continue by train up the coast to the old capital of **Tainan** for a couple of days of temple and relic touring. Rent a car now for the drive up the **Dongshan Coffee Road**. At **Guan-ziling** that evening indulge yourself in rare mud hot springs. The following day continue up into a wild expanse of mountain ranges in the **Alishan National Scenic Area**. The next day ride the Alishan Forest Train up to the sunrise viewing platform and then hike around **Tatajia** in the shadow of Yushan, Taiwan's highest mountain.

The drive from Yushan to **Sun Moon Lake** the following morning passes some sublime high-mountain scenery and should be taken slowly. At the lake itself, stop to sample oolong tea and maybe catch a boat tour. Heading north, fans of traditional arts and crafts will enjoy the next two days with stops in **Lukang**, home to master lantern, fan and tin craftsmen; in **Sanyi**, Taiwan's woodcarving capital; and in **Yingge**, a town devoted to ceramics.

Finally, on that home stretch to Taipei, drop in on the Tzushr Temple in **Sansia**, a top example of traditional design and decorative arts.



Two Weeks

A Cross-Island Tour

After **Taichung** your first stop is the Chung Tai Chan Temple in **Puli**, an amazing centre of Buddhist art and research. After Puli the highway starts to rise into the Central Mountains, and from here on it's just one gorgeous landscape after the other begging for a photo. For a side trip, head down to **Aowanda Forest Recreation Area** and spend the night in little cabins among cherry and plum trees. Keep an eye out for the birds: this is a top birdwatching venue.

Returning to Hwy 14, continue to the end to find the **Nenggao Cross-Island Historic Trail**. You don't need to do the whole thing, but consider hiking in and spending a night in the cabin. Retrace your route, and head north up Hwy 7甲. Prepare for an endless windy road and numerous washouts. Also prepare for a stunning landscape of receding blue-tinged mountain ranges.

After Wuling Pass (3275m), the highest bit of road in Northeast Asia, stop in **Hehuanshan Forest Recreation Area** to photograph (and maybe stroll over) the treeless hills of mustard-coloured Yushan cane. Then head up Hwy 8 to Hwy 7甲 and follow this north to **Wuling Forest Recreation Area**, an area of thick forests, high waterfalls and cool mountain streams, some of which are home to the endangered Formosan landlocked salmon. If you have a couple of days to spare, climb **Snow Mountain**, Taiwan's second-highest mountain.

Past Wuling the road winds down the mountains past quaint aboriginal villages, with their trademark churches and steeples, until it reaches the Lanyang River plains and one very large cabbage patch.

From here it's a seamless connection with the **North Cross-Island Highway**. First stop: **Mingchih Forest Recreation Area** and its nearby forest of ancient trees. More ancient trees can be found a couple of hours later at **Upper Baling** or you can just continue on to enjoy stunning views of high forested mountains and rugged canyons. Stop for lunch at **Fusing** and then explore Chiang Kai-shek's legacy at nearby **Cihu**. At Daxi head north towards **Sansia** and perhaps stop to look at the masterful Tzushr Temple before connecting with National Fwy 3 for the 30-minute ride to **Taipei** – and the crowds.



Two Weeks

The East Coast Loop

From **Hualien**, it's but a quick hop to **Taroko Gorge**, Taiwan's premier natural attraction since the '30s. After a few days exploring this treasure, head down **Highway 11**. If you can manage the ride, it's three great days on a bike alongside some of Taiwan's best coastal and mountain scenery.

South of Taitung, stop at **Chihpen Hot Springs**, first opened during the Japanese colonial era. Nearby **Chihpen Forest Recreation Area** offers quiet trails through monkey-filled banyan forests.

When you're ready to head back north, remember to take **Highway 9**. You're between two mountain ranges here, in the rice belt of Taiwan. At **Luye** get a bird's-eye view of the valley at Taiwan's top parasailing venue. The next day, stop at **Yuli** to cycle out to the historic **Walami Trail**, once a Japanese patrol route. On the way up the valley you'll have many opportunities to soak weary muscles in hot springs. To indulge the tastebuds, head to aboriginal **Maitan**, a wetland area with some unique local dishes on offer.

Three Weeks

Island-Hopping

Start with **Matsu** to get a taste of maritime Fujian culture that you can't find in Taiwan proper. A night in the traditional houses of Beigan, a walk through old military tunnels and a meal of fresh-off-the-boat seafood are considered obligatory.

From Matsu, fly to **Kinmen** via Taipei and explore the island's ancient villages and Cold War history. Birdwatchers will want to include an extra day for walking around the saltwater lakes, home to a mixture of waterfowl you can't find in Taiwan proper.

Next, get in some beach time (or wind-surfing) on **Penghu** via Taipei, and explore the archipelago's myriad temples. The Makung Matsu may be Taiwan's first. Moving on from Penghu, fly to Kaohsiung and catch a train across southern Taiwan to Taitung. Take a boat or fly to **Green Island** and **Lanyu**, both top diving and snorkeling venues. Lanyu is home to the Yami, an aboriginal people with close ties to the sea, while Green Island boasts a rare seawater hot spring best enjoyed with the stars over-head, at night.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Robert Kelly

Coordinating Author; Maokong (Taipei), Northern Taiwan, Taroko National Park & the East Coast, Yushan National Park & Western Taiwan, Southern Taiwan, Taiwan's Islands

Ever since he learned that his dad's airline job meant he could fly for peanuts (thanks, Dad), Robert has been travelling. He arrived in Taiwan 15 years ago and quickly found a place he could call home. Though never one to go native, Robert has picked up a few new habits including a deep love of tea, affection for poisonous snakes, an appreciation of the difference between shale and schist mountain slopes, and a love of all things soy. This is Robert's third time writing the *Taiwan* guide for Lonely Planet and once again his final remark remains the same: he has no plans to leave this country now that he's seen yet even more of what it has to offer.



Joshua Samuel Brown

Taipei, Keelung (Northern Taiwan) A 2009 USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism fellow, prolific traveller, writer and photographer, Joshua Samuel Brown (aka Josambro) has written for an eclectic variety of publications around the globe, including the *South China Morning Post*, *Business Traveller Asia*, *Clamor Magazine* and *Cat Fancy*. Joshua's debut book, *Vignettes of Taiwan*, offers tales of betel nut beauties and how to avoid jail time by impersonating a Mormon; it's

available through his website www.josambro.com. Still going strong five years on, his blog, *Snarky Tofu*, can be read at <http://josambro.blogspot.com>. This is Joshua's seventh guide for Lonely Planet.

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