

20 TOP EXPERIENCES



Taroko Gorge

1 Taiwan's top tourist draw is a walk-in Chinese painting. Rising above the froth of the blue-green Liwu River, the marble walls (yes, marble!) of Taroko Gorge (p166) swirl with the colours of a master's palette. Add in grey mist, lush vegetation and waterfalls seemingly tumbling down from heaven, and you truly have a classic landscape. Walk along the Tunnel of Nine Turns to see the gorge at its most sublime, or brave the Jhulu Old Trail, a vertigo-inducing 500m above the canyon floor.



Hiking the High Mountains

2 Don't forget your boots, because two thirds of Taiwan's terrain is mountainous – and what mountains they are. Hundreds soar above 3000m, and well-established hiking routes run everywhere. These are the real deal (no shops, no restaurants) and on remote trails you might just find yourself alone for several days. Everyone wants to tackle Yushan (p194), the highest peak in Northeast Asia, but the second highest, Snow Mountain, is a more scenic climb, and leads to the sublime Holy Ridge (p144), a 5-day walk on an exposed ridgeline that never drops below 3000m.



The National Palace Museum

3 By a pure accident of history, Taiwan houses the greatest collection of Chinese art in the world (take that Beijing!). With ancient pottery, bronzes and jade, Ming vases, Song landscape paintings and calligraphy even a foreign eye can appreciate, Taipei's National Palace Museum (p59) isn't merely a must-visit; it's a must-repeat-visit. Why? Out of the estimated 60,000 pieces in the museum's collection – pieces spanning every Chinese dynasty – only a tiny fraction are ever on display at the one time.