



Yushan National Park & Western Taiwan

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Best Hikes

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- ➔ Aowanda National Forest Recreation Area (p236)
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Best Temples

- ➔ Chenghuang Temple (p214)
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Why Go?

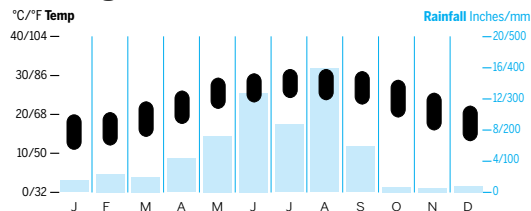
If you're looking for variety in your Taiwan travel experience, look west. The Matsu Pilgrimage, one of the country's biggest and holiest celebrations, is definitely a highlight. This nine-day parade across half of Taiwan is an extravaganza of feasting, prostrating, praying and great acts of generosity.

Keen on hiking or trekking? Head to Yushan National Park to climb the highest peak in Northeast Asia; if you continue down the back route trails you'll be in total wilderness for days at a time. Alternatively, hike Dasyueshan or Hehuanshan, two awe-inspiring, high-altitude forests of pristine alpine scenery. For a glimpse of indigenous traditions, spend the night at one of the firefly-lit aboriginal villages in the Alishan Range.

For a bit of nostalgia, look no further than the quaint Japanese-era railway legacy in Alishan or the frozen-in-time streets in villages such as Lukang, both of which provide beautiful examples of the Taiwan of yore.

When to Go

Taichung



Apr Colourful nine-day Matsu Pilgrimage honours the patron of seafarers and fisherfolk.

Mar–Jun Firefly-watching in Alishan.

Sep–Dec Best time for hiking in Yushan National Park.

National Parks & Forest Recreation Areas

Western Taiwan has its share of parks, including pristine Yushan National Park, home of the 3952m-high Yushan (Jade Mountain), the highest peak in Taiwan. Rather tame by comparison, the Alishan Forest Recreation Area is its polar opposite, with an old alpine train and cherry-blossom trees as the main draws. Dasyueshan Forest Recreation Area

and Aowanda National Forest Recreation Area offer the best birdwatching venues in the country, while rugged Hehuanshan Forest Recreation Area offers scenic hikes above the treeline. Huisun, Sitou and Shanlinhsi Forest Recreation Areas are cool mountain retreats with short hikes and plenty of good scenery.

The Linnei area has a bird reserve for the globally threatened fairy pitta, and is also a mass gathering point on the purple crow



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Highlights

- 1 Climb Yushan, Northeast Asia's highest mountain, in **Yushan National Park** (p204).
- 2 Cycle, boat and stroll along **Sun Moon Lake** (p228).

- 3 Seek the spiritual at the **Matsu Pilgrimage**, which starts in **Dajia** (p212).
- 4 Get lost in the old streets of **Lukang** (p224).
- 5 Bird- and butterfly-watch around **Linnei** (p227).

- 6 Explore ancient forests at **Alishan** (p217).
- 7 Take in the quaint countryside around **Jiji Small Rail Line** (p233).
- 8 Revel in the picture-perfect mountain scenery of **Highway 14** (p236).