



# Taiwan



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## ON THE ROAD

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# Itineraries



1  
WEEK

## Taipei & the North

Start with four days in **Taipei** being awestruck by the National Palace Museum collection and sensorially overloaded at Longshan and Bao'an Temples, as well as shopping and snacking at night markets and local shops.

Activities around Taipei abound. If you like tea, take the gondola to mountainous **Maokong** and experience a traditional teahouse. For hot springs, historic **Beitou** is just an MRT ride away. Or spend an afternoon on a stinky tofu tour along the restored old street of **Shenkeng**. Then rent a bike and ride along the river paths in Taipei or hike the trails in **Yangmingshan National Park** or **Wulai**, a mountainous district with natural swimming pools.

On day five, bus further afield to the old mining towns of **Jiufoen and Jinguashi**. The next day head to nearby Ruifang and catch the **Pingxi Branch Rail Line** down an 18km wooded gorge to photograph the old frontier villages and hike paths cut into steep crags.

On day seven round off the trip: head back up the coast, stopping at the bizarre rocks of **Yeliu** and renowned sculptures at **Juming Museum**. From **Tamsui**, a seaside town with beautiful colonial houses, the MRT takes you back to Taipei.



3  
WEEKS

## Ultimate Taiwan

Start with a few days in **Taipei** to see the sights and catch the groove of this dynamic Asian capital. It has the best Chinese art collection in the world, a thriving street-food and coffee scene, a living folk-art heritage, and some world-class cycling and hiking in **Wulai** and other on-the-doorstep locations.

Then hop on a train to **Hualien** and spend two days wandering the bedazzling marble-walled **Taroko Gorge**. More scenic delights await down Hwy 9, which runs through the lush Rift Valley. Take a train to **Yuli** and hike the nearby **Walami Trail**, an old patrol route running deep into subtropical rainforest, then recuperate at **Antong Hot Springs**. Next, head to **Taitung** and catch a flight or ferry to **Lanyu**, an enchanting tropical island with pristine coral reefs and a unique indigenous culture.

Back on the mainland, another train ride – across Taiwan's fertile southern tip – takes you to **Kaohsiung**, Taiwan's buzzing second-largest city, where the best of urban Taiwan mingles with southern hospitality. Check out the museums, spend half a day at the uplifting Pier-2 Art District, enjoy modern Taiwanese cooking at Do Right or Ban Jiushi, then follow up with a night of jazz at Marsalis Jazz Bar or the funky one-of-a-kind Beng Mi Pang.

For beaches or scootering along beautiful coastline, head down to **Kenting National Park**. Continue by train up the coast to the old capital of **Tainan** for a couple of days of temple touring and snacking on local delicacies. If you like literature, don't miss the laudable Museum of Taiwanese Literature. Rent a vehicle for the drive up the winding **Dongshan Coffee Road** then spend the evening in rare mud hot springs in **Guanziling**. The following day continue up into the wild expanse of mountain ranges in the **Alishan National Scenic Area**. 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 high-mountain scenery and should be taken slowly. At the lake, stop to sample oolong tea and maybe catch a boat tour. Heading north, fans of traditional arts and crafts will enjoy the following day's stops in **Lukang**, home to master lantern, fan and tin craftspeople; **Sanyi**, Taiwan's woodcarving capital; and **Yinggu**, a town devoted to ceramics.





Above: View of Taipei from Elephant Mountain (p78)

Left: Wulai Waterfall (p127)





2  
WEEKS

## A Cross-Island Tour

Start your tour in **Taichung**, checking out the nation's top Museum of Fine Arts, then taking a walk in the beautiful and historic Taichung Park and the atmospheric Zhongxin Market nearby. After Taichung, your next stop is Chung Tai Chan Temple in **Puli**, an awe-inspiring centre of Buddhist art and research. After Puli the highway rises into the Central Mountains, where one gorgeous landscape after another begs to be photographed. For a side trip head to **Aowanda National Forest Recreation Area**, a top birdwatching venue, and spend a night in a little cabin among cherry and plum trees.

Returning to Hwy 14, continue to the end to find the **Nenggao Cross-Island Trail**. You can walk the whole thing or just hike in and spend a night in a cabin before heading north up Hwy 14甲. Prepare for an endless windy road and numerous washouts – and 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 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 few days to spare, climb **Snow Mountain**, Taiwan's second-highest mountain.

Past Wuling the road winds down the mountains past indigenous villages, with their trademark churches and steeples, to the Lanyang River plains and one very large cabbage patch. From here it's a seamless connection with the **North Cross-Island Hwy**. 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 **Lalashan**, or you can 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 stop to look at the masterful Tzushr Temple before connecting with National Fwy 3 to **Taipei**.



2  
WEEKS

## The East Coast Loop

From **Hualien**, a low-key coastal town with good eating and seaside parks, it's a quick hop to **Taroko Gorge**, Taiwan's premier natural attraction. After a couple of days hiking, biking and marvelling at the marble walls, head up Hwy 11 to the **Qingshui Cliffs**, among the world's highest.

Return to Hualien and take Hwy 11 to **Taitung**. It's three days on a bike alongside some of Taiwan's best coastal scenery; otherwise, rent a car or scooter. Plan to stop often, but in particular at **Shitiping** for seafood and jaw-dropping views, and **Dulan**, Taiwan's funkiest town, for an art scene centred on a reclaimed sugar factory, or for surfing when the waves are up. From Taitung, catch a ferry or flight to **Green Island** and/or **Lanyu** for a few days of snorkelling, hot springs and exploring the island culture of the indigenous Tao.

To head back north, take Hwy 11 west and connect with 東45 and later County Rd 197 for a scenic drive up the Beinan River valley, with the crumbling **Liji Badlands** on one side and the jagged cliffs of **Little Huangshan** on the other.

The 197 drops you off on Hwy 9, near **Luyue**, a bucolic pineapple- and tea-growing region with a stunning plateau. Just north, connect with the South Cross-Island Hwy for some yodel-inducing high-mountain scenery, and the chance to hike to **Lisong**, a wild hot spring that cascades down a multicoloured cliff face.

For more scenic eye candy, stop at the organic rice fields of **Loshan** and the flower fields of **Sixty Stone Mountain**. Spend the night at **Antong Hot Springs** so you are fully rested for a cycle the next day out to historic **Walami Trail**, a Japanese-era patrol route. Opportunities to indulge in local foods are numerous along this route – don't miss the indigenous **Matai'an**, a wetland area with some unique dishes. You'll be well fed for the final stretch back to Hualien, which you should do along quiet County Rd 193. For one last adventure, veer off before Hualien and ride up the wild **Mugua River Gorge** for a dip in a marble-walled natural swimming hole.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/MRT/MTR station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Skytrain/Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

*Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book*



## 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 Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, 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



### Piera Chen

[Northern Taiwan](#), [Taroko National Park & the East Coast](#), [Yushan National Park & Western Taiwan](#), [Southern Taiwan](#), [Taiwan's Islands](#), [Plan Your Trip](#), [Understand Taiwan](#), [Survival Guide](#) When not on the road, Piera divides her time between hometown Hong Kong, Taiwan and Vancouver. She has authored more than a dozen travel guides and contributed to as many travel-related titles. Piera has a BA in Literature from Pomona College. Her early life was peppered with trips to

Taiwan, China and Southeast Asia, but it was during her first trip to Europe that dawn broke. She remembers being fresh off a flight, looking around her in Rome, thinking, 'I want to be doing this everyday.' And she has.

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