

Taroko National Park & the East Coast

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Best Places to Eat

- Yuelu Restaurant (p172)
- Jowu (p172)
- Adagio (p176)
- Makaira Coffee Restaurant (p192)
- Cifadahan Cafe (p184)

Best Places to Sleep

- Adagio (p176)
- Wisdom Garden (p186)
- Silks Place Hotel (p181)
- Taroko Lodge (p181)

Why Go?

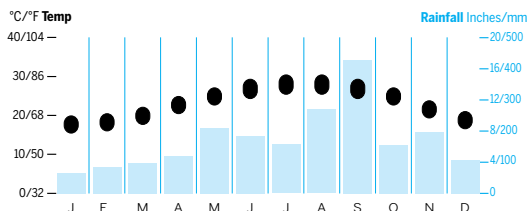
Much is made of the old Portuguese name for Taiwan, Ilha Formosa, which translates as 'the Beautiful Isle'. Well, it's this part of the country that they gave it to, and this part to which it still applies best.

The eastern landscape is dominated by towering sea cliffs and marble gorges, rice fields and wooded mountain ranges. There are no bad views here, and if you spot a worried look on a traveller's face, it means 'I hope they don't ever ruin the east'.

The east is Taiwan's premier outdoor playground, and cyclists have discovered an ideal environment combining knockout scenery, good roads and plenty of cosy B&Bs. Others find the high concentration of indigenous people gives the region an appealing distinction – and a less manic vibe than the west. Just look at the top speed limit: 70km/h! You don't rush through the east; you savour it.

When to Go

Hualien



Jan Great time for beating the crowds at Taroko National Park.

Jul & Aug Indigenous festivals light up the summer.

Sep–Dec The best months for biking.

Taroko National Park & the East Coast Highlights

1 Bombing Master Handan (p194)

Donning your shorts, goggles and gold amulet and braving the firecrackers and bottle rockets at this feisty local festival in Taitung.

2 Taroko Gorge (p177)

Following ancient hunting trails and being awed by marble canyon walls.

3 Hualien (p168)

Enjoying a taste of cafe-hopping and food-crawling.

4 Taitung (p191)

Learning about prehistoric Taiwan at the National Museum of Prehistory, and seeing the evidence at the Caves of the Eight Immortals, then catching a gig at Tiehua Music Village.

5 Luye Plateau (p190)

Relishing the natural and pastoral wonders.

6 Highway 11 (p173)

Cycling down the winding coastline.

7 Sixty Stone Mountain (p183)

Enjoying a tiger lily ice-lolly amid dream-like orange fields.

8 Mugua River Gorge (p184)

Swimming in pools of crystal-blue water.

