



Taiwan



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LANDSCAPE NEAR
HUALIEN (P173)

ON THE ROAD

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YOUBIKES (P117), NEAR TAIPEI 101 (P83)
BY ARCHITECT CY LEE, TAIPEI

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Itineraries



1
WEEK

Taipei and 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 tea-house. 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 **Shengkeng**. 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 take a bus further afield to the old mining towns of **Jiufen and Jinguashi** for sightseeing and a little hike. 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 **Jiuming 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 one of the best Chinese art collections 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 dazzling 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 and the uplifting Pier-2 Art Centre, and indulge in excellent seafood, followed by a night of jazz. Then for beaches or scooting 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. 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**. Spend some time touring postcard-perfect Alishan. If there's time, hike around **Tatajia** in the shadow of Yushan, Taiwan's highest mountain.

From Alishan or Yushan, take the bus to **Sun Moon Lake** the following morning. 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 days' stops in **Lukang**, home to the magnificent Longshan Temple and many traditional crafts; and **Yingge**, a town devoted to ceramics, before returning to Taipei.



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Top: Jiufen (p143)

Bottom: Lotus Pond
(p254), Kaohsiung



Explore Southern Taiwan

Start your tour in **Kaohsiung**. Spend a few days here visiting exquisite private museums, exploring industry-turned-art-spaces, flea markets, historic neighbourhoods and music dives, indulging in seafood meals and drinking cocktails, and relaxing on Cijin Island. Make side trips to the centre of Buddhism in southern Taiwan, **Foguangshan**, and to the fantastical **Stone Temple** in the northern district of Tianliao.

Next head to the fishing port of **Donggang** in Pingtung County by taking the Kenting Express to Dapeng Station. Pay a visit to **Fu Wan Chocolate** to tour the cacao farm and stuff your face with award-winning chocolates. Return to Kaohsiung and fly to the **Penghu Islands** for a few days of windswept fun – sightseeing, water sports, island hopping and feasting on seafood.

Return to Kaohsiung and take the high-speed train to **Tainan**. Take it easy for a few days checking out museums, ancient forts and Taiwan's oldest temples. Alternate sightseeing with cafe crawling, souvenir shopping and snacking. End your nights with cocktails and live music. If you're into history and old temples, make a side trip to **Luermen** for the Luer'men Mazu Temple and the Orthodox Lu'er'men Mazu Temple.

From Tainan, cab it to the bucolic Hakka village of **Meinong**. Stay in a courtyard house for a couple of days, and spend your time cycling in paddy fields, visiting traditional craftspeople and historic sights, and eating your fill of Hakka fare.

Take the bus to **Changhua**. There are a couple of laudable temples downtown, but mainly use Changhua as a base to visit the historic town of **Lukang**. Spend a full day in Lukang, sampling traditional cakes and wandering through cobbled streets, majestic temples and grand mansions.



The East Coast Loop

The best way to negotiate this route is to have your own vehicle. You can also hire a car and a driver. 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 **Shihiting** for seafood and jaw-dropping views, and **Dulan**, Taiwan's funkier 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 couple of days of snorkelling, hot springs and exploring the island culture of the indigenous Tao.

To head back north, take Hwy 11乙 (aka Hwy 11B) west and connect with 東45 (aka East 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 **Luye**, 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 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 indigenous foods are numerous along this route. You'll be well fed for the final stretch back to Hualien, which you should do along quiet County Rd 193.



Southern Taiwan with Kids

Southern Taiwan with its tropical weather, proximity to the sea and colourful history can be a wondrous place for children. This route explores the child-friendly side of eclectic Kaohsiung, historic Tainan and leafy Pingtung.

Spend a couple of days in Tainan. Make an appointment with the eye-opening **Thousand Fields Seed Museum** a few days before your arrival. Head east to central Tainan and visit the modern **Tainan Art Museum Building 2**. Its criss-crossing staircases, multiple entrances and airy atrium make it a pleasant space to explore when you tire of the art. There are plenty of fruit stalls and cafes around this area. **Hayashi Department Store** has beautifully packaged Taiwanese snacks, handicrafts and stationery. Be sure to check out the art deco lift. The **Confucius Temple** nearby has a lovely park where the dogs are timid and the squirrels bold; bring nuts. For dinner **Da Dong Night Market** has an assortment of delicious options.

Next morning, go south to **Ten Drum Rende Creative Village**. Watch drum performances, go on long slides and rooftop swings, and launch a sky lantern in a chimney. Have something to eat in the cafe. Head back to Tainan proper and explore **Anping Tree House** and the scenery. A cruise on the **Anping Canal** is an option if you have the energy. Head to Kaohsiung and stay two days. Mornings can be spent on virtual-reality theatre **i-Ride**, and the mechanical and laser thrills of **Taroko Park**. **Pier-2 Art Centre** and **Cijin Island** are better visited in the afternoon. Depending on your schedule, you can have lunch at Taroko Park or Pier-2. Cijin Island is great for coastal cycling for the whole family, and swimming and watching the sunset on the beach. Kaohsiung has plenty of excellent restaurants, but for range of options, you can't beat **Liuhe Night Market**.

From Kaohsiung head to **Fu Wan Chocolate** in the fishing port of Donggang in Pingtung. A tour and shopping at the chocolate farm's boutique should take a couple of hours. You can spend the night in one of the villas here, but can also head straight to **Kenting** for two days of sun and beach, and some sightseeing thrown in.

Behind the Scenes

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Cover photograph: Temple rooftop, Anakin Tseng / Getty Images ©

THIS BOOK

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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'.

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