

Travel in

2017
NOV & DEC

TAIWAN

No. 84

CLOUD COUNTRY GUANWU

RAILWAY TRAVEL
NEIWAN BRANCH LINE

ADVENTURE
TREE CLIMBING IN TAOYUAN

THEME PARK
JANFUSUN FANCY WORLD

FOOD
FINE TAIWANESE CUISINE

Android



iOS



Taiwan

THE HEART OF ASIA



TAICHUNG 台 中

KEELUNG 基 隆

TAIPEI 台 北

TAINAN 台 南

JIAOSI 礁 溪

BANGKOK 曼 谷

PENANG 檳 城

PARIS 巴 黎

SHANGHAI 上 海

Delights
in Every Touch
真情 微笑 在每一次相遇





Welcome to
Taiwan!



Dear Traveler,

Welcome to cool, late-autumn Taiwan! Usually, in each issue we present readers with a smorgasbord of outings to locations all around Taiwan and our offshore islands. But the recent great influx of athletes, officials, and “Little Olympics” tourists visiting Taipei for the wonderfully successful 2017 Taipei Universiade reminded us that most visitors throughout the year come in, and spend most of their time in, the north. Hence, in this edition we proffer a travel menu heavily weighted in this region’s favor.

Sprawling Shei-Pa National Park is laid out over the top of scores of Taiwan’s highest peaks, well over 3,000 meters high. In our *Feature* we head out and up on a driving tour along a branch of the watershed that stretches from coastal Hsinchu City, Taiwan’s high-tech jewel, to the trails of the park’s Guanwu Recreation Area, a jewel of nature stretched out around the 2,200-meter level. Bring your camera, for countless “take-home” scenic delights await you.

In *Hidden Treasures* spend an afternoon in Wanhua, one of the oldest districts of Taipei City, still an exuberant bubbling spring of character and old-way enterprise. Explore the “three treasures of Wanhua” on a walking tour – its heritage temples, old-shop commercial streets, and old-time local snack treats.

On leafing over into the *5 Things To Do* pages, you’ll find yourself on Taipei’s north side in Beitou District, always a tourist draw but especially popular in the cooler months when its hot-spring resort area, launched by the soak-loving Japanese in the early 1900s, and its many other historical and cultural attractions are especially warming to the heart and body.

Still in Taipei, in *Island Feast* discover how traditional Taiwanese fare is receiving a makeover at upscale city restaurants, where new ways are being explored in the quest for high-end cuisine built on fresh and healthful local produce. In *A Day In the Big City* take a Taipei Metro tour of the best of the capital’s tourism, including such 5-star attractions as Taipei 101, Xingtian Temple, and Shilin Night Market.

Glad to have you visiting us as this most eventful of years comes to an end. Enjoy!

Joe Y. Chou, Ph.D.
Director General
Tourism Bureau, MOTC, R.O.C.

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IN TAIWAN

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Sunrise at Sheipa Leisure Farm (photo by Chen Cheng-kuo)



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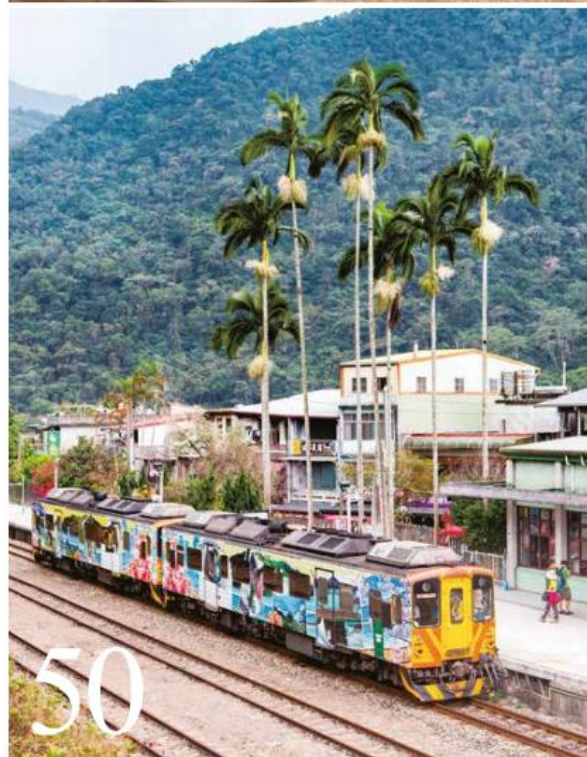
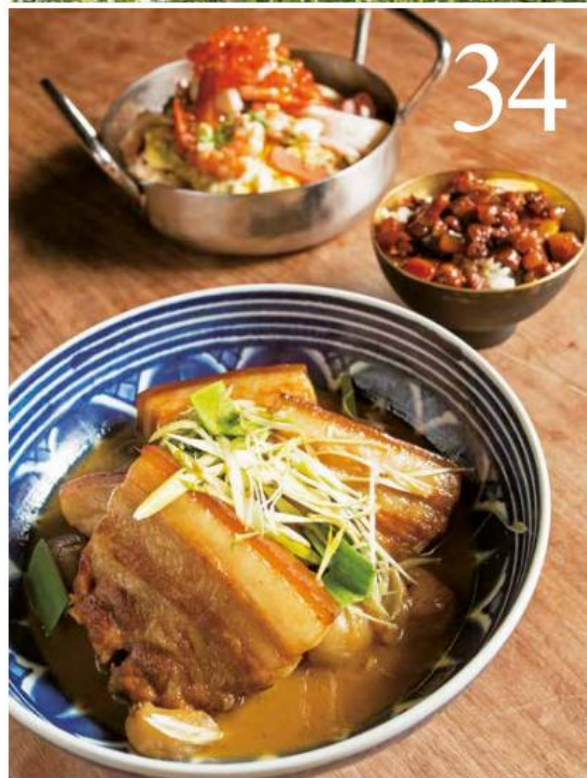
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RAIL TRAVEL

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Taiwan Tourism
Events Calendar
website



臺灣觀光年曆
Time for Celebration
TAIWAN TOURISM EVENTS



Wintertime! New Year!

Exciting Events in Late 2017 and Early 2018

Until
10/23

TAIWAN HOT SPRING FINE-CUISINE CARNIVAL

臺北溫泉季



Why go to a hot-spring resort in Taiwan? Well, you have quite a few good reasons. During the colder months of the year especially, soaking in warm spring water is one of the simplest and most satisfying pleasures to be had. Add to this the slew of natural health benefits that the mineral-rich waters are said to have in store, including increased blood circulation, stress reduction, and relief of various skin conditions, to name but a few. Making the experience even more enticing are the many attractive offers by hot-spring resorts, such as spa services, dining on hot-spring cuisine, and fine accommodation. Find out more about resort locations and special offers on the carnival's official website.

Locations: Hot-spring resort areas around Taiwan
Website: taiwanhotspring.net

12/22
~
01/01

CHIAYI CITY INTERNATIONAL BAND FESTIVAL

嘉義市國際管樂節



Are there marching bands in Taiwan? There sure are! If you're a fan of drum and brass instrumental music and love to watch bands marching through the streets, head to Chiayi City in southern Taiwan during the last week of December. The highlight of the festival is a great street parade through central Chiayi on December 23, with many brass bands from schools around Taiwan taking part. Specially invited are also bands from abroad, including from Japan and Hong Kong. A host of side events such as concerts at various venues around the city are also part of this truly grand music extravaganza.

Locations: Various venues in Chiayi City
Website: www.chiyiband.org

11/11
~
11/26

SEA OF FLOWERS IN XINSHE

新社花海節



What is a "sea of flowers"? Where is Xinshe? In Taiwan, the description "sea of flowers" (花海) is often given to large swaths of land with one or more varieties of flowers, for example garden cosmos, in many instances planted by farmers on fallow fields. Xinshe is a rural district of Taichung City in central Taiwan. The tourist-attraction sea of flowers here is on the grounds of the Taiwan Seed Improvement and Propagation Station, a vast area (over 30 hectares) of flat land covered with all kinds of flowers, including sunflowers, lavender, cosmos, sage, and begonias. Among other attractions are flower sculptures, an exhibition area, and a food court where you can try local specialties.

Location: Xiecheng Borough, Xinshe Dist. Taichung City (臺中市新社區協成里)

12/31
~
01/01

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION

臺北最HIGH新年城 - 跨年晚會



Where is the best location in Taipei, and maybe all of Taiwan, to spend New Year's Eve? If you don't mind being part of a huge crowd of revelers, head straight to Taipei 101, the ever-looming skyscraper that defines the capital's skyline more than any other structure. Party-goers are entertained by a line-up of top local pop stars performing on stage. If you want to stay clear of the masses, however, consider hiking up Elephant Mountain, just southeast of the tower, which has great vantage spots. The low-elevation mountain is also a good place to avoid the smoke created by the fireworks, which might obstruct the view.

Location: Civic Plaza; No. 1, City Hall Rd., Xinyi Dist., Taipei City (市民廣場; 臺北市信義區市府路1號)
Website: www.facebook.com/2017taipeihigh/

Nov.
~
Jan.

CHRISTMASLAND IN NEW TAIPEI CITY

新北市歡樂耶誕城



While in Western countries Christmas is for many the most important festival of the year, in Taiwan, where followers of the Christian faith make up only about 4.5% of the population, it is naturally of lesser importance. There is, however, one big-time Christmas-themed event, Christmasland in New Taipei City. The center of attention each year is a giant artificial Christmas tree, illuminated with a sophisticated light and imagery show. Last year the façade of the New Taipei City government building also served as a gigantic canvas for an entertaining animation show.

Location: Xinban Special District, Banqiao District, New Taipei City
(新北市市民廣場新北市板橋區)

Website: tour.ntpc.gov.tw

11/23
~
12/03

TAITUNG COUNTY TAIWAN OPEN OF SURFING

臺灣國際衝浪公開賽暨東浪嘉年華



Is Taiwan a good place for surfing? If looking at the reactions of professional surfers who have attended the Taiwan Open of Surfing in recent years, it most definitely is. They have been impressed by the beautiful setting of the event, the quality of the waves, and the friendliness of the people. Part of the Asian Surfing Championship, this event attracts world-class athletes from around the world. Since it is still comparatively small in scale, sports fans have a great chance to see their surf idols up close and watch them show off their incredible wave-riding skills.

Location: Jinzun Harbor, Donghe Township, Taitung County
(金樽漁港臺東縣東河鄉)

Website: www.facebook.com/taiwanopenofsurfing

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Taiwan Tourist Shuttle website

The North Coast by Bus



Taking Taiwan Tourist Shuttle Buses Between Tamsui and Keelung

The North Coast of Taiwan is the stretch of coastline from the port town of Tamsui in the west to the harbor city of Keelung in the east. Getting to the starting points of trips along this scenic coast from downtown Taipei is convenient. If you want to follow the coast from west to east, take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi Line to the northern terminus, Tamsui Station; if you want to start in the east, take a commuter train to Keelung Railway Station. Then hop aboard a Taiwan Tourist Shuttle bus (*en. taiwantrip.com.tw*) from designated stops located outside the MRT station in Tamsui or close to Keelung's railway station.

In Tamsui, board a bus plying the **Crown Northern Coast Line**, which will take you to such scenic attractions as Baisha Bay, the Fugui Cape Lighthouse (at the northernmost tip of Taiwan), Shimen Arch, the town of Jinshan's Shitoushan Park, and Yehliu Geopark. For a stretch (between Shimen Arch and Jinshan) the bus leaves the coast and takes a minor road uphill to the Juming Museum (Ju Ming is an internationally acclaimed Taiwanese sculptor) and Yun Garden (the cemetery where famous pop singer Teresa Teng is buried).

At Keelung, you can take a bus on the **Keelung Shuttle Bus West Line**, which passes by Lovers Lake Park and Green Bay and terminates at Yehliu Geopark. If you want to travel all the way between Tamsui and Keelung using the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle service, you need to change buses at Yehliu Geopark or Guihou Fishing Harbor.

Note: Other regular buses ply the coastal road as well, in full or in part, including No. 860 (Tamsui-Sanzhi), No. 863 (Tamsui-Jinshan), and No. 862 (Tamsui-Keelung), but these do not stop at some of the tourist attractions, such as the Juming Museum/Yun Garden, Shitoushan Park, and Yehliu Geopark.

A third way to get to the North Coast (at Jinshan) from central Taipei by bus is via the mountain route traversing Yangmingshan National Park. Take a Royal Bus Co. (*www.royalbus.com.tw*) No. 1717 bus from Taipei Main Station (the bus stop is a 3-min. walk from Exit M8 at MRT Taipei Main Station, on Gongyuan Road). Buses leave every 30~60 minutes, the ride from Taipei to Jinshan takes about 90 minutes, and tickets are priced NT\$150. This route has the advantage that you can take in the splendid mountain scenery of Yangmingshan on your way to the coast. At Jinshan, you can then take a Taiwan Tourist Shuttle bus headed for Tamsui or Yehliu.



Fugui Cape Lighthouse

Crown Northern Coast Line Stops:

MRT Tamsui Station, Exit 2 (捷運淡水站 - 2 號出口) → Qianshui Bay (淺水灣山莊) → Sanzhi Visitor Center and Gallery (三芝遊客中心及名人文化館) → North Coast & Guanyinshan National Scenic Area (Baisha Bay) (北觀風景區管理處 [白沙灣]) → Shimen Wedding Plaza (石門婚紗廣場) → Fugui Cape Lighthouse (Laomei Green Reef) (富貴角燈塔 [老梅綠石槽]) → Shimen Arch (石門洞) → Yun Garden (筠園) → Juming Museum (朱銘美術館) → Jinshan (Old Street) (金山 [老街]) → Jinshan Visitor Center (Shitoushan Park) (金山遊客中心 [獅頭山公園]) → Jiatouli (Hot Spring Area) (加投里 [溫泉區]) → Yehliu Geopark (野柳地質公園) → Guihou Fishing Harbor (龜吼漁港)

Fare:

1. NT\$15 charge per section; 2. One-day pass NT\$160 (purchase pass on day of bus ride); EasyCard and iPASS accepted

Departures:

Weekdays (May~October): Top of the hour between 9am and 5pm except for 12noon from MRT Tamsui Station and Guihou Fishing Harbor.

Weekends/Holidays (May~October): Every half hour between 9am and 5pm except for 12noon from MRT Tamsui Station and Guihou Fishing Harbor.

Service is less frequent November through April; please refer to the timetable on the official website and bus-stop signs.

Keelung Shuttle Bus West Line:

Keelung Railway Station (Visitor Information Center) (臺鐵基隆站 [旅遊服務中心]) → Lovers Lake Park (情人湖公園) → Dawulun Tourism Factory (大武壠觀光工廠) → Green Bay (翡翠灣) → Guihou Fishing Harbor (龜吼漁港) → Yehliu Geopark (野柳地質公園)

Fare:

One-day pass NT\$50

Departures:

Weekdays (May~October): Top of the hour between 9am and 5pm from Keelung Railway Station and between 10am and 6pm from Yehliu Geopark.

Weekends/Holidays (May~October): Top of the hour between 8am and 6pm from Keelung Railway Station and between 9am and 7pm from Yehliu Geopark.

There are only five departures a day in each direction November through April; please refer to the timetable on the official website and on bus-stop signs.



Queen's Head Rock at Yehliu Geopark



Juming Museum



Shitoushan Park

NEWS

& Events around Taiwan

TRAIN-BUS TOURIST PASS



If you plan to explore Taiwan using public transport, note that the Taiwan Tourism Bureau, in cooperation with the Taiwan Railways Administration, has issued a Train-Bus Tourist Pass this year. The pass, which is priced at NT\$888 and is valid until July 31, 2018, allows you to choose one of ten Taiwan Tour Bus itineraries listed in the pass (which comes in the form of a passbook), including trips to Taroko Gorge, Kaohsiung, Jiufen / Northeast Coast, Gaomei Wetlands / Taichung, and the Loofoo Village / Window on China theme parks. Thirty-three related Taiwan Tour Bus itineraries are also available at various reduced prices and further 61 itineraries are available at discounts of 10~15%. In addition, the pass entitles you to buy two commuter train tickets (any distance) at a reduced price (15% off). The pass is available from tour operators organizing Taiwan Tour Bus tours. More info at taiwantourbus.com.tw.

TAINAN TEMPLES NOW MULTILINGUAL



Visiting Taiwan's old temples is often a key part of sightseeing itineraries for tourists with an interest in culture and history. Unfortunately, information in English and other foreign languages can be hard to find at these heritage sites. The old city of Tainan in southern Taiwan, Taiwan's original imperial capital, is a prime destination for temple-exploration tours; and recognizing foreign-tourist interest in temple architecture, rituals and practices, and history, the city government has now assisted nine major places of worship in providing information in English and Japanese for overseas visitors. These include Tiangong Temple, Tainan Sacrificial Rites Martial Temple, and Datianhou Temple. Visitors can now understand the temples better, and learn Taiwan temple-visit do's and don'ts.

WULAI LOG CART RUNNING AGAIN



After a hiatus of two years, the mini-train service connecting the Wulai Old Street area with the Wulai Waterfall area is in operation again. Known as the Wulai Log Cart, this facility dates back to the 1895-1945 Japanese colonial era, when it was a push-cart line used to transport timber down from the mountains. The line originally reached Fushan village, about 20km into the mountains from the village of Wulai. It was first used for tourism in the early 1950s, and in 1974 the system was motorized. One of the main tourist attractions in Wulai, best-known for its hot-spring and indigenous-culture draws, the line was shut down after typhoon Soudelor caused major damage in 2015. The colorful trains are now running again, to the delight of tourists looking for a more fun (or lazy) way to get to the waterfall area, one of the most scenic spots in the greater Taipei area.

NORTH GATE PLAZA MAKEOVER COMPLETED



One of the fascinating things about Taipei is the pace with which the cityscape has been changing over the past few decades, and how the Taiwan capital has become a prettier and more pleasant place to live and travel. One of the latest major projects that have changed the city's looks is the recently completed North Gate Plaza remodeling, located west of Taipei Main Station. After the dismantling of an elevated road that used to obscure views of the old gate, its beautiful swallow-tail roof and red walls on its upper half can now be enjoyed from all sides. Two remarkable buildings on the perimeter of the plaza are the old Taipei Post Office and the grand Taipei Railway Workshop building, part of a large complex that is currently being renovated to house a railway museum in the future.

CULTURE

Concerts, Exhibitions, and Happenings

12/08
~
12/10

Taipei International
Convention Center



FLATLEY 2017, LORD OF THE DANCE: DANGEROUS GAMES

舞王 ~ 危險遊戲 | 2017 愛爾蘭踢踏舞劇

Website: kham.com.tw

Michael Flatley is the superstar of Irish dance, an art form now popular worldwide thanks to the dancer's incredible enterprise. Flatley retired from dancing last year, but is intimately involved with this production. The Taipei shows will be the only performances in Asia on Flatley's current world tour.

11/18

Neo Studio



LA MAXIMA 79 IN TAIWAN: COLADA ASIAN TOUR

Website: www.facebook.com/LATINOSTAIWAN

It's almost impossible to not be moved by – and move to – the soft salsa music of La Maxima 79, a group from Milan, Italy. Formed in 2010, these talented musicians present salsa in the style of the '70s with modern elements mixed in. After growing a sizable fan base in Europe, La Maxima 79 is now winning over salsa lovers in Asia as well.

Until
12/25

National Palace Museum



THE MAKING OF
A NATIONAL
TREASURE: SELECT
MASTERPIECES OF
PAINTING AND
CALLIGRAPHY
國寶的形成—
書畫菁華特展

Website: www.npm.gov.tw

The National Palace Museum in Taipei has a whopping 700,000-plus Chinese imperial artifacts and other artworks in its collection. Deciding which of these pieces are true masterpieces, and which qualify as national treasures, is a major undertaking. This exhibition explains the process, and presents 45 major painting and calligraphy works, of which 33 have been bestowed "National Treasure" ranking.

Until
03/04

Songshan Cultural and
Creative Park



ONE OF A KIND: LINO TAGLIAPIETRA— A VENETIAN GLASS MAESTRO IN ASIA

「再也不會有的 Lino Tagliapietra 威尼斯玻璃之神駕臨亞洲

Website: www.liuli.com.tw

Lino Tagliapietra, a world-renowned master of glass art who hails from Venice, Italy, learned his craft at an early age, and was granted the title of master glass blower in his early 20s. An independent artist since 1989, Tagliapietra's amazing creations have been shown in major museums around the globe.

Until
03/18

National Museum of
Natural Science



ELEPHANTS: EVOLUTION AND TRAGEDY OF THE LAND MIGHTY

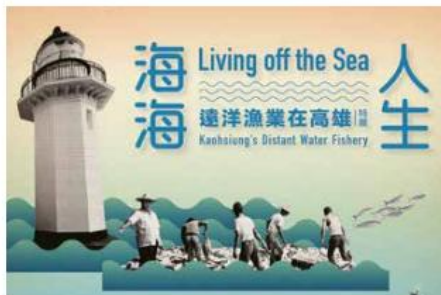
象群—走過興盛與衰落的陸地巨獸

Website: www.nmns.edu.tw

This is a very informative exhibition about elephants featuring 200 elephant-related items, including rare fossils and skeletons. It introduces you to various types, from the prehistoric pig-like *moeritherium* to the familiar elephants today living in Asia and Africa, providing a wide range of both serious info and fun facts.

Until
01/21

Kaohsiung Museum of History



LIVING OFF THE SEA: KAOHSIUNG'S DISTANT WATER FISHERY

海海人生—遠洋漁業在高雄特展

Website: khm.org.tw

Ever since it was built during the 1895-1945 Japanese colonial era, the port of Kaohsiung has been home to distant-sea fishing operations. Its leading role in Taiwan was cemented with the construction of Qianzhen Fishing Harbor in 1967. This exhibition presents a fascinating look at how the harbor has developed over the past 50 years.

11/24
~
12/03

National Theater



CLOUD GATE DANCE THEATRE: FORMOSA

雲門舞集《關於島嶼》

Website: www.cloudgate.org.tw

Formosa is the latest creation of Lin Hwai-min, founder of Taiwan's foremost modern-dance ensemble, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. Dancing in front of a large backdrop of moving Chinese characters, the performers create riveting scenes representing the many vicissitudes of this constantly changing island.

11/30

National Concert Hall



QUATUOR HERMÈS – DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

愛瑪仕四重奏 – 死與少女

Website: npac-ntch.org

Quatuor Hermès is a string quartet from France whose young members have received praise for their maturity and finesse. In 2012 they took the top prize in New York's prestigious Young Concert Artists International Auditions. As part of this recital the group will perform *Death and the Maiden*, String Quartet No. 14 by Franz Peter Schubert.

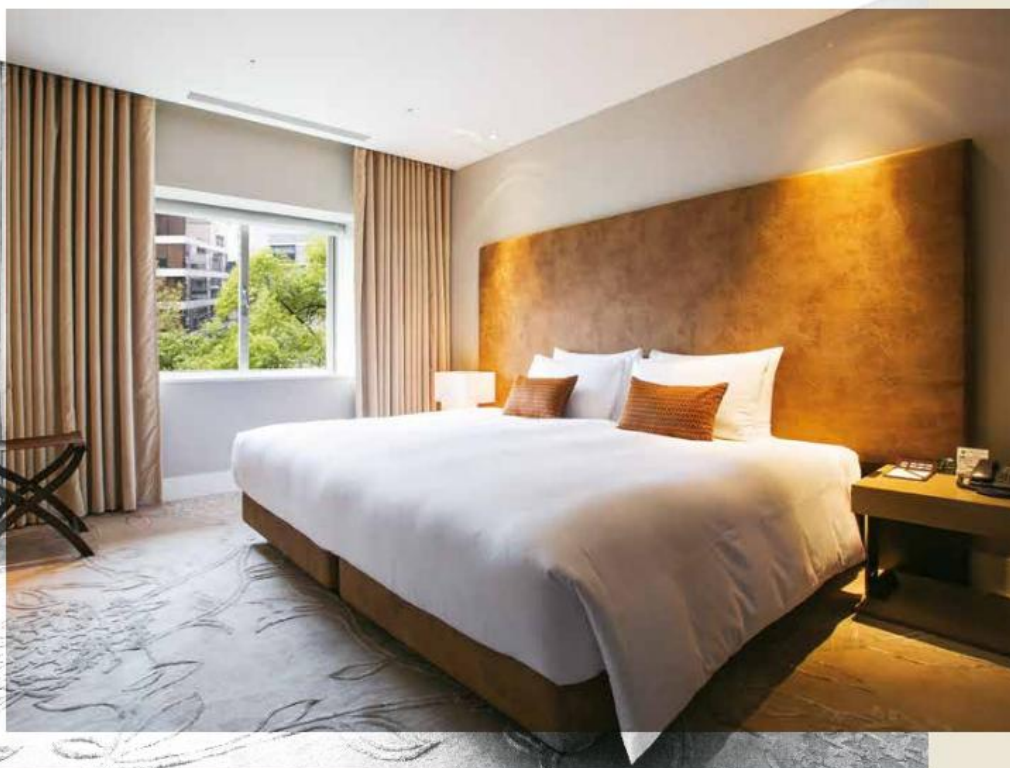
11/07
~
08/31National Museum of
Natural Science

HYPER REALITY: VIRTUAL SPACE – TIME FANTASY ADVENTURE EXHIBITION

超·實境：虛擬時
空奇幻歷險展

Website: www.nmns.edu.tw

Enter a world where the lines between reality and virtual reality are blurred. With the help of the latest technology, spaces are created that allow visitors to experience life on this planet hundreds of millions of years ago, and to better understand the evolution of living creatures. The many interactive features make visiting this exhibition an especially fun experience.



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CLOUD COUNTRY

An Uplifting Road Climb
into the Snow Mountain Range

Text: Rick Charette

Photos: Chen Cheng-kuo

For your edutainment – a driving excursion up, up, and up yet higher into Hsinchu County's Shangping River watershed, from its key market town, Zhudong, at its flatlands end, to the Guanwu Recreation Area and just-below-heaven views of the glorious Holy Ridge, which connects a string of the Snow Mountain Range's highest peaks.

Sunrise at Sheipa Leisure Farm



Crossing one of the suspension bridges in Qinguan



Former Residence of Zhang Xueliang



Its Alice Café and Food

Add: No. 5-8, Neighborhood, 1, Ruifeng Borough, Zhudong Township, Hsinchu County (新竹縣竹東鎮瑞峰里1鄰5-8號)
Tel: (03) 594-9063



At Ruanqiao Painted Village



Bacon and mushroom omelette at It's Alice

Along the Mountain Base

Zhudong – Ruanqiao – Qingquan

The busy town of **Zhudong** in the foothills of Hsinchu County, just east of the high-tech coastal city of Hsinchu on the same river system, is located where Provincial Highway 3 jumps the Shangping River. The old town began life in the Qing Dynasty as a marketplace for farm produce grown in the area. A sudden boom started after Taiwan became a Japanese colony in 1895, when the new regime began vigorously extracting timber from high up in the Shangping watershed in what is today's Shei-Pa National Park. Zhudong filled up with sawmills and other related enterprises.

Leave Zhudong on County Highway 122, which intersects with Provincial Highway 3 just south of the latter's Shangping River bridge. A few kilometers on, the highway zips through small Ruanqiao, a Hakka farming village. In imperial times the Hakka were a persecuted Han Chinese minority, and in Taiwan many Hakka settlements were squeezed into the contested flatlands-mountain borderlands between the Han majority and hill-dwelling tribes. Today somnolent Ruanqiao is a minor tourist draw, dubbed **Ruanqiao Painted Village**. Buildings and walls throughout are festooned with bright-paint cartoonish artworks crafted by locals, many delightfully whimsical, depicting local farm life, Ruanqiao historical vignettes, and matters undecipherable.

The farm-plot-carpeted alluvial-plain floor of the Shangping valley spread out below Ruanqiao ends immediately inland. The valley suddenly closes with a veritable geo-handclap, rocky hillsides on either side brought tight together like two palms raised in prayer. The drive hereafter on Route 122 becomes much more winding, the sweeping vistas far more thrilling.

From Ruanqiao to Qingquan village, a drive of about 45 kilometers, you stay relatively near the valley base. At Qingquan you start driving uphill, climbing ever higher, reaching the entrance to the Guanwu area at about 2,200 meters in about 70 minutes without breaks.

After Ruanqiao, stop in at the homey, breeze-whisked **It's Alice Café and Food**, just off Highway 122, a Wonderland-esque chalet-style place that sits on a bluff looking down at the river. The amiable English-speaking proprietor serves Western foods; many of her recipes she picked up while on extended overseas adventures. Pretty much everything can be recommended, but dearest to this writer's heart (I'm a repeat area visitor) are the German Fruit Curry and Spicy Italian Sausage & Cheese Sandwich.

***Tip:** The homemade desserts are the signature treats, however, so be sure to leave tummy room for the delicious wildberry glazed tart and cookies.*

On entering **Qingquan**, a fork awaits. Highway 122 continues on the right, headed for the high mountains. Bear left and descend to the river. Here you'll see how the village is divided into two sections, gazing at each other across the stony Shangping riverbed, stitched together by three pedestrian bridges and two vehicle bridges. In addition to the tremendous mountain-backdrop scenery, Qingquan also entices with historical and cultural attractions.

This is an Atayal-tribe community. The Atayal, inhabitants of the hilly terrain of northern Taiwan, are the island's largest tribe by territory. Beside a large car park close to the river is a traditional Japanese-style dark-wood building that is today titled the **Hall of Indigenous Peoples**, home to displays on the Atayal and Saisiyat, a smaller tribe whose members also inhabit the Shangping watershed.

Across the river is a similar Japanese-built heritage structure, the reconstructed **Former Residence of Zhang Xueliang**. Zhang was a notable figure in modern Chinese history – in the pivotal 1936 Xi'an Incident the Manchurian warlord kidnapped Generalissimo Chang Kai-shek, seeking to force him to fight the invading Japanese. Most of

Zhang's remaining years were spent under house arrest; Qingquan was his lonely home-far-from-home 1946-1957. Chinese-language info boards on his life and days here are found both inside and outside.

Qingquan is also a popular hot-spring destination. Residents consider it something of a miracle that, after disappearing for a long period due to geo-activity, the springs were brought back to life with the great shake provided by Taiwan's infamous 921 Earthquake in 1999. There are riverside indoor and outdoor facilities, with overnight accommodation available.

Tip: *If time is too short for a proper hot-spring bath, you can sit down to a soothing foot soak at public facilities close to the former Former Residence of Zhang Xueliang.*

Back on Highway 122, above the aforementioned fork, is the **Holy Cross Catholic Church**. Fitted perfectly atop a high-promontory tip, it looks out serenely over the Qingquan attractions described above. The original church, built close to the river by missionaries who'd left mainland China after the Communist takeover, was destroyed during a typhoon a long time ago. Father Barry Martinson, a Jesuit raised in San Diego – and a well-known figure in Taiwan – came here 42 years ago after spending time among the Yami (Tao) tribe on Orchid Island. He loves visitors, giving church tours, and talking about his Atayal flock and mission. Be sure to check out the ethereal stained-glass windows; Father Barry creates them, and new creations are requested by churches from all around Taiwan.

Tip: *Right by the church and run by the church is the **Fountain of Youth Hostel**, perhaps the cleanest, most inexpensive, and most hospitable overnight accommodation in Qingquan.*
For more info, visit chingchuanhostel.catholic.org.tw.



Holy Cross Catholic Church



Sunrise at Sheipa Leisure Farm



Just Below the Peaks

Sheipa Leisure Farm

This high-mountain recreational farm of soaringly high repute, 20 minutes below Shei-Pa National Park's Guanwu entrance, is laid out in three tiers on an east-facing mountainside. Along the middle is the reception building, cabin/lodge-style accommodations, and another building housing the farm's café, two restaurants, and DIY-experience facilities. On the upper tier are landscaped gardens and small greenhouses. On the lower are organic orchards and farm plots, a warehouse with the owner's large collection of commissioned artworks sculpted from driftwood pieces, plus worker dorms and accommodations for long-stay guests (hikers often spend significant time in the national park).

The owner is a retired agriculture expert with a love of Taiwan's mountains, the national park, and the Zhudong/Shei-Pa region's history and culture. A high-level figure in both the public and private sectors, among other things he played a key role in launching Taiwan's blueberry and kiwi production in the 1980s. The energetic 85-year-old drives up from Zhudong daily; you'll see him zipping about on his scooter, constantly chatting with guests.

Sea of Clouds

The "sea of clouds" phenomenon is dubbed one of Taiwan's eight natural scenic wonders. Cool/warm air masses collide in Taiwan's deep valleys, creating tremendous tidal waves of cloud that surge upward, filling valleys to their brims and leaving mountain-tops as islands thrusting high out of swirling, shifting cloudy seas.

Mountains and clouds





Wooden huts of the farm



Four-person guestroom

Sheipa Leisure Farm (雪霸休閒農場)

Add: No. 380-1, Minshi, Taoshan Village,
Wufeng Township, Hsinchu County
(新竹縣五峰鄉桃山村民石 380-1 號)

Tel: (03) 585-6192

Website: www.sheipa.com.tw



Though below a major national park, this high-peak area has a limited array of accommodation/eatery options, and the owner opened the farm (purchased from Atayal people) to entice more fellow citizens to come experience the joys of the mountains, and provide a “base camp” facilitating exploration of Shei-Pa National Park’s gems.

The cabin-style rooms are spread out along pathways well away from the café/restaurant area to ensure privacy. All wood-themed rooms are stylishly modern, and equipped with full in-room bathroom/shower facilities. Each faces east, toward the sunrise.

Prices start at NT\$6,640. Included in the price are afternoon tea/coffee, blueberry jam- or vinegar-making experience, guided tours of the grounds and the forest trail above the farm, Chinese restaurant buffet dinner, a video presentation on the Guanwu Recreation Area, Chinese breakfast, and a Guanwu guided tour. For a little extra, you can upgrade to a Western-style buffet lunch and a la carte dinner (best entrees the smoked half-chicken and short-rib steak).

One of the farm’s splendid unsung treasures is the constant birdsong, the winged guests attracted by the fruit of the orchards and the cherry blossoms, tulips, peonies, and other nectar sources in the landscaped gardens. Of course, not all birds are plant-life gourmants – on the research trip for this article, as the *Travel in Taiwan* crew pulled in, a large eagle floated by less than 10 meters above us, eyeing us and swishing on, evidently spying nothing nutritious.

Highlights on the easy-grade, loop-trail secondary-forest walk, which





Exploring the forest at Sheipa Leisure Farm

takes about one hour, include more bird sightings, views from across the valley taking in the farm itself, introduction to local plant life (including “tomorrow leaf” – more later), and if lucky enjoyment of Taiwan’s high-mountain “sea of clouds” phenomenon and sighting of animals as large as the furtive Reeve’s muntjac, flying squirrels, and pheasants.

A number of farm specialties are featured at your afternoon tea/coffee break, served at the café. Hot waffles and tea are made with the farm’s “tomorrow leaf,” more commonly called ashitaba, a popular East Asia folk-medicine herb believed to help with digestion, stamina, eyesight, and much else. The “tomorrow” comes from its seemingly magical growth overnight. As well, dine on fresh blueberry jam and two-bite-sized blueberry pound cakes.

Tip: Photo buffs take note: the café’s large outdoor terrace is perhaps the area’s prime location for viewing the sunrise and seas of clouds – unless you’re out at a national park trailside high-point, of course. Local stargazing is also first-rate; on this trip the Travel in Taiwan team reveled in the clear-sky viewing of the Milky Way.

Another Tip: If thirsting to take the tastes of Sheipa Leisure Farm home with you, beyond the DIY jam or vinegar you’ve crafted, visit the retail shop beside the café, where such tasty goodies as fresh-picked blueberries (NT\$250 box), blueberry mini pound cakes (NT\$250 box of 10), blueberry jam (NT\$700 jar), and tomorrow-leaf tea bags (NT\$350 box) are displayed.



Large outdoor café terrace



Waffles and “tomorrow leaf” tea



Blueberries fresh from the bush

DIY blueberry vinegar





On Guanwu's Yunwu Trail

Top of the Taiwan World

Guanwu Recreation Area

The spacious **Guanwu Visitor Center** is at the entrance of the recreation area. Bursting with information on park and region, with first-rate English, every second spent here will double your rewards when you probe on foot deeper. Learn – among many other takeaway info-gems – how Guanwu was originally called Maoyili by the Atayal, meaning “high-rising hills.” How in days gone by this was a hard-to-access Atayal hunting area, and how the Japanese built a high-mountain police outpost on this site in the 1910s to control rebellious hold-out native warriors.

How the Japanese then launched regional logging, how until 1964 ropeways and pushcarts on narrow rails were used to bring logs down-mountain, and how the road you’ve just traveled up was blazed to enable access by trucks. How, once logging was commenced, Japanese mountaineers followed, and how Shei-Pa’s peaks and the Holy Ridge were opened up by the Taiwan Mountaineering Association in the late 1920s/early 1930s with the help of indigenous guides.



The Holy Ridge

The Holy Ridge Trail (mountain permit required) runs north-south from Mt. Dabajian to Snow Mountain Main Peak. Averaging over 3,000m, with 31 peaks in total, the average between north and main peaks is over 3,580m. The ridge’s sharp undulations, precipices, cirques, landslide areas, and other unusual terrain features make this a must-conquer prize among regional mountaineers. One of Taiwan’s most difficult trails, it takes 5~9 days to complete. The distinctively shaped Mt. Dabajian is sacred to both the Atayal and Saisiyat, who consider it their birthplace. Its shape earned it the sobriquet “Wine Bottle Mountain” among early Han Chinese immigrants.



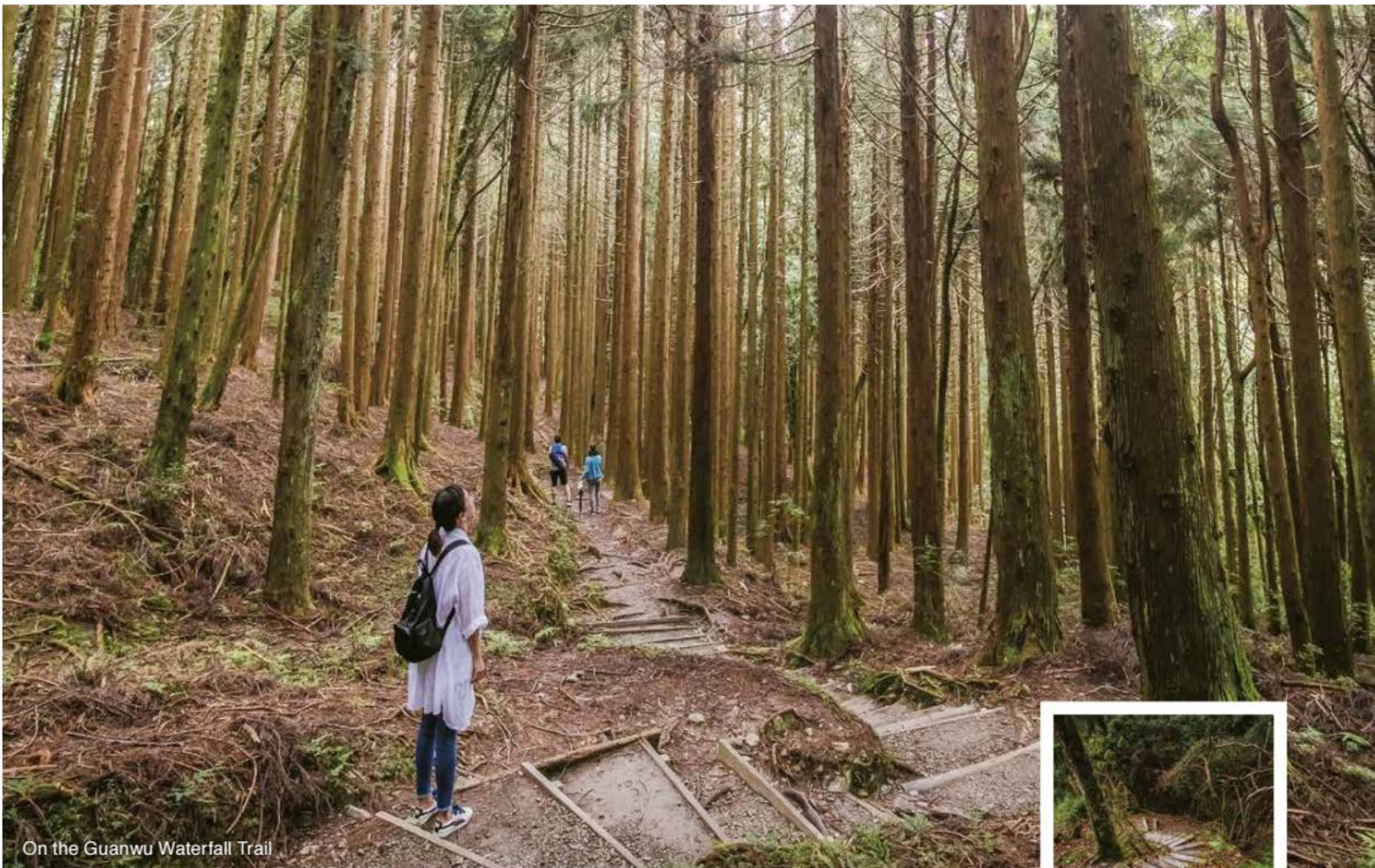
Guanwu Waterfall

A salamander's quick dash away from the visitor center is the informative **Guanwu Formosan Salamander Ecology Center**. Did you know that Taiwan is home to five salamander species? And that one is the protected, dark-brown Guanwu salamander, denizen of the Snow Mountain Range's northern part, living at altitudes of 1,200 to 3,100 meters? I didn't, but now I do. Through displays featuring good English, learn who it preys on, who preys on it, the habitat-destruction threats it faces (logging in the past, increased typhoon and torrential-rain frequency today due to climate change, etc.), systematic habitat-restoration efforts since 2008, and much beyond.

Step out of the last gallery and you step into the airy, glass-fronted **Yunwu ("Cloud and Mist") Café**. Sit down to a heart-warming cup of fresh-made local-brand tea or coffee and such light foods as beef and chicken cheese rolls. The mist-swept terrace outside has umbrella-shaded tables from which white moistness rolling up from the waterfall-base valley before and the Holy Ridge, spread out like a model set far in the distance beyond, are savored. Wild avians of much-differing shapes and paint schemes flit about the humans looking for freebies (be a true friend – don't feed them!).

Tip: Premium high-mountain Oolong tea is grown on Guanwu-area farms, and the café doubles as a souvenir shop. Gift-box teas here start at NT\$1,600 for a 150g canister (spring tea).

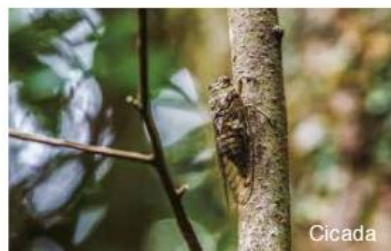




On the Guanwu Waterfall Trail



Waterfall trail



Cicada

Now, on to the *raison d'être* of this scenic area – the trails:

The short, boardwalk **Yunwu Trail** begins beside Yunwu Café, running in a loop up and down the high hill overlooking it. It provides clear looks down into the deep valley below, Mt. Zhen across the valley, and the Holy Ridge far beyond that. Explanations on these, with clear picture maps and English, are found at the trail's viewing decks.

The **Guanwu Waterfall Trail** starts beside a parking lot not far down the road beyond the visitor center. With a total length of 1.5km, it takes 1.5~2 hours to complete. Descend deep into a valley through a mix of broadleaf and fragrant coniferous forest, your reward found at trail's end – the lofty **Guanwu Waterfall**. The trail has long, easy sections interspersed with steep stepped sections, the most demanding toward the bottom.

A short distance along the road past the waterfall-trail entrance is the starting-point of the short, easy 450m Honeymoon Path. This brings you to the head of **Kuaishan Big Trees Trail**, also reachable via another road from the Guanwu entrance. This 4km trail takes about 2.5 hours (return) to complete. The highlight, beyond the terrific high-point panoramas, is the trail's five gigantic thousand-year-old Formosan Cypress trees. History buffs will be thrilled that the path was once an artery for timber-pushcart tracks, with physical traces still in evidence.

Shei-Pa National Park

One of Taiwan's eight national parks, sprawling and exhilaratingly shaped Shei-Pa ("Xue-Ba" in Hanyu Pinyin romanization) is spread over 768 sq. km. Within it are 51 mountain peaks soaring above 3,000 meters, all members of the Snow Mountain Range. The park has three easily accessible recreational areas, Guanwu and Xuejian in Miaoli County and Wuling in the northeastern corner of Taichung City. These offer a beguiling range of activities, from picking fruit to spending time at info-rich visitor centers and small museums to hiking on trails of differing difficulty to tackling some of Taiwan's highest peaks if desired. Crisp air, pure-water streams and, spring/autumn, average temperatures of around 20 degrees Celsius under clear blue skies await. For more info about the national park, visit www.snp.gov.tw.



Misty forest on Yunwu Trail



Google map with info

Getting There

If self-driving, turn onto County Highway 122 just south of where Provincial Highway 3 bridges the Shangping River. The 122 is winding and very narrow in many spots, so drive carefully. Conditions are often foggy, especially in the upper sections.

If not self-driving, note that Sheipa Leisure Farm offers a free shuttle-bus service between the farm and Hsinchu High-Speed Rail Station (advance booking required). **Lion Travel** (www.liontravel.com) offers a two-day bus tour that takes in Guanwu Recreation Area and Qingquan (with English-guide service; it also handles customized tours). The **Taiwan Tour Bus** service (www.taiwantourbus.com.tw) features an English-language two-day tour visiting Zhudong, Qingquan, Sheipa Leisure Farm, and Guanwu Recreation Area.



Further along the road past the Honeymoon Path entrance to the waterfall-trail entrance is the **Zhenshan (Mt. Zhen) Trail** head. The geo-position of Mt. Zhen was indicated in the Yunwu Trail section above. This is a trail of open views, chirping birds, and flowers in blossom year-round that stretches 4.13km and takes about 4 hours to conquer (return). Your outward prize is the Mt. Zhen peak – if you thought the Snow Mountain Range and Holy Ridge views from the Yunwu Trail were exhilarating, here you'll find them extraordinary. 📌

Tip: Be aware that beyond Yunwu Café and a beverage-vending machine in the visitor center no food and drink is available in the recreation area. Currently, there is also no overnight accommodation; the **Guanwu Cabins**, former forestry-worker dorm facilities, are being renovated and are expected to soon reopen, with food services to be provided.

English and Chinese

Atayal tribe 泰雅族
Former Residence of Zhang Xueliang 張學良故居
Fountain of Youth Hostel 天主教清泉山莊
Guanwu Formosan Salamander Ecology Center 雪霸觀霧山椒魚生態中心
Guanwu Recreation Area 觀霧遊憩區
Guanwu Visitor Center 觀霧遊客中心
Guanwu Waterfall Trail 觀霧瀑布森林浴步道
Hall of Indigenous Peoples 清泉原住民族館
Holy Cross Catholic Church 清泉天主堂
Holy Ridge 聖稜線

Honeymoon Path 蜜月小徑
Kuaishan Big Trees Trail 檜山巨木群步道
Mt. Dabajian 大霸尖山
Qingquan 清泉
Ruanqiao Painted Village 軟橋彩繪村
Saisiyat tribe 賽夏族
Shangping River 上坪溪
Shei-Pa National Park 雪霸國家公園
Snow Mountain Range 雪山山脈
"tomorrow leaf" 明日葉
Wuling 武陵
Xuejian 雪見
Yami (Tao) tribe (雅美族 / 達悟族)
Yunwu Trail 雲霧步道
Zhenshan (Mt. Zhen) Trail 榛山步道
Zhudong 竹東



Taiwan, the Heart of Asia – Taichung, the Heart of Taiwan!

An Eclectic City Oasis – Tempus Hotel Taichung

Taichung is protected by the Central Mountain Range and is one of the most livable cities in Taiwan. The city emanates a happy feeling, and is a place where visitors feel free and at ease, with modern tall buildings set amongst luscious green landscapes; even delicate frangipani trees can be found along the streets. The smiling pedestrians and unhurried traffic give the whole city a vibrant atmosphere.

Tempus Hotel Taichung is located in central Taichung, on Taiwan Boulevard. Entering the hotel, guests receive a sincere and warm welcome. Stay at the hotel and, whichever type of room you choose, the modern pop art style, the classical warm feel, or the Scandinavian minimalist design, will make you feel perfectly relaxed.



Put down your bags, slip into something more comfortable, and pop over to the adjacent Mandara Life Club and soak up the exotic charm of Palm Grove swimming pool. Here, bathed in sunshine, with the breeze gently caressing the palm trees, you will forget all your troubles and unwind in this tranquil corner amidst the city bustle. The club also has a well-equipped gym, a sauna, and offers courses, allowing guests to enjoy premium city hotel and resort hotel enjoyment in one go. Go to Jingcheng Shopping District, within easy walking distance, to feel the artistic vitality of Little Europe, encounter small cafés hidden away in alleys, and hear the city's stories from friendly locals. Or you can go shopping at one of the nearby large department stores and indulge in the world's top luxury brands.

Taichung is filled with secrets waiting to be discovered and Tempus Hotel Taichung will be the warmest companion on your journey!



Hotel Info

Tempus Hotel Taichung (台中永豐棧酒店)

Add: 689, Sec. 2, Taiwan Boulevard, Xidun District, Taichung City 407 (407台中市西屯區臺灣大道二段689號)

Tel: 886-4-2326-8008

Fax: 886-4-2326-8060

E-mail: tempus@tempus.com.tw

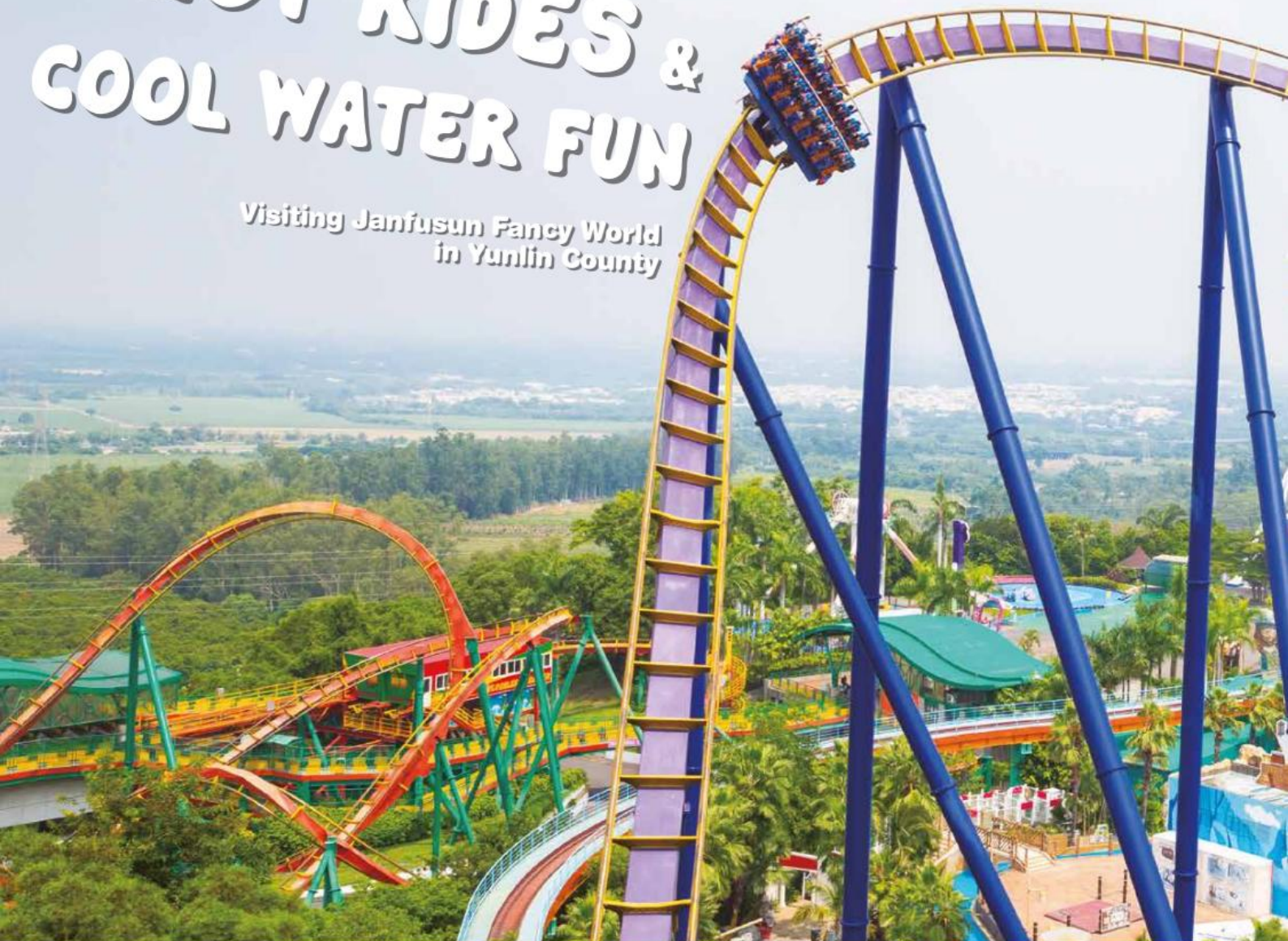


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HOT RIDES & COOL WATER FUN

Visiting Janfusun Fancy World
in Yunlin County



What most of the two million annual visitors that come to Janfusun Fancy World notice first when entering is a beautifully landscaped park, which showcases local flora from all around Yunlin and Taiwan, a celebration of local culture and bio-culture.

Opened in 1986, Janfusun Fancy World brings together the arts and traditions of Taiwan's central-southwest region with high-tech entertainment and virtual reality, thrilling roller coasters, an exciting waterpark, a world-class family fun center, and fantastic live shows by local and international performers. With twenty-eight rides across four parks – SkyPlaza, Janfusun Kiddy Land, Vicky the Viking, and Vicky the Water Park – Janfusun is Taiwan's biggest and busiest theme park.

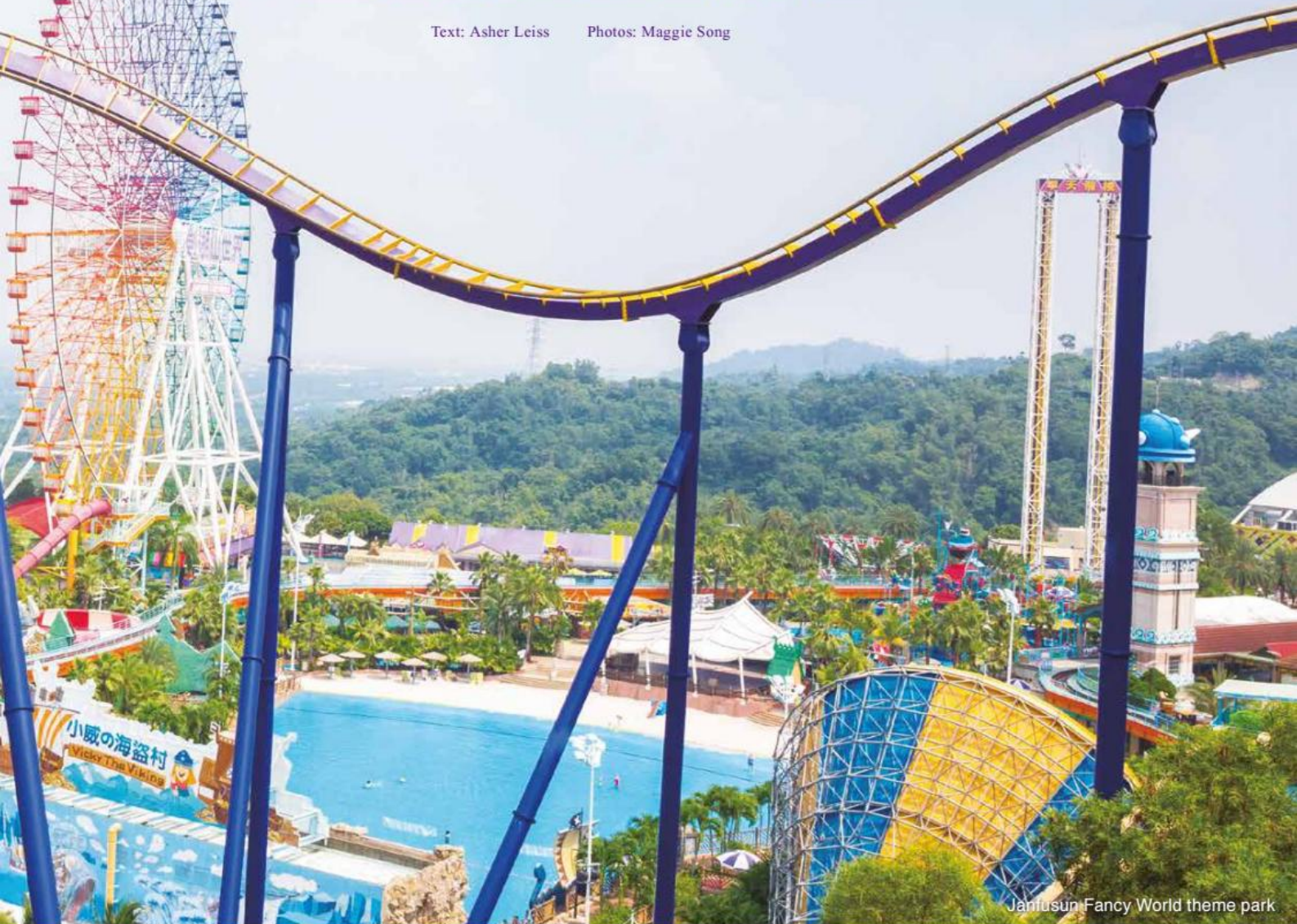
There are also many restaurants serving up local and international

delights, street foods, and a six-course-meal banquet hall, a live circus with acrobats, as well as a resort-hotel operation, the Janfusun Prince Hotel, which offers childcare services and a full-service spa, along with many other services/facilities.

Though there are four parks of widely differing character and attractions, when visiting I will always first head straight for the roller coasters of Sky Plaza. The **Diving Machine G5**, which is a short roller coaster with a massive drop, is especially thrilling because it is built on the hillside, maximizing the experience, scaring the living daylights out of its passengers. As the cables pull you 65 meters up into the air, the track hangs over the edge of the hill, offering you a beautiful view of the park – an experience somewhat dampened by the knot in your throat as you hang there precariously for a few moments, suspended by the seat restraints. Then the latch lets go and the car plummets down, racing

Located high on a hillside in central Taiwan's Gukeng Township, Yunlin County, Janfusun Fancy World has been Taiwan's number one amusement park for more than two decades. Let's find out what makes this park so special!

Text: Asher Leiss Photos: Maggie Song



Janfusun Fancy World theme park

under a bridge and out of sight, only to appear on the other side a moment later. This thrilling journey takes you up to 110km per hour along a 381-meter track, subjecting you to forces of up to 5G.

My next favorite roller coaster is the aptly named **Crazy Coaster**. This floorless ride is placed much higher up and it reaches speeds of 90km per hour as it races around 360-degree corkscrews and through loops on a two-minute journey around red-color tracks. Because there are 27 more fun rides in the park, I've found that the roller coasters in Janfusun Fancy World are much more accessible than roller coasters in the amusement parks of my home country, the United States. Each time I've visited Janfusun I've been able to ride any selected roller coaster and waterslide as many times as I have wanted without being subjected to hour-long lines like I'm used to experiencing at parks back home. Local patrons

seem more drawn to the other kinds of rides, such as the virtual-reality experiences, which are definitely also quite exciting. If you go on a weekday, especially, chances are that you won't have to wait in line (for long) before going on the roller coasters.

Note, however, that some rides are much more popular than others. The **Sky Jet**, a 65-meter-tall freefall tower, is one of the biggest draws in the park. You get shot up into the air at 80km per hour, enjoying a bird's-eye view of the park before experiencing the weightlessness of freefall at 65km per hour back down to the bottom. This certainly, shall we say, makes you feel alive.

Sky Plaza is also home to the park's most prominent structure, **The Sky Wheel**, at 88 meters high the tallest Ferris wheel in Taiwan. It has fifty carriages, and a ride offers more spectacular views of the park and its surroundings. Other popular Sky Plaza rides include the



Very Big Bowl



Poseidon



Diving Machine G5

Ha-Ha Train, which takes you on a tour of the park, a flume ride, two jumbo swings, and various spinning and twisting rides that are sure to get your heart pumping.

The experience of going on the pirate-ship-themed ride **Poseidon** has recently been enhanced with virtual-reality technology. After donning your 3D Virtual Reality goggles, looking in any direction, including behind the boat, you will spot giant boat-eating sharks jumping onto the ship as it swings back and forth, devouring it almost entirely. There are stormy skies and rough waters, lighting flashes and thunder rumbles as the Poseidon rides tremendous waves that move in sync with the pendulum of the ride, carrying the passengers across an angry sea. Sharks and worse jump out to snap at you on your “doomed” ocean adventure. I don’t want to give the ending away here, but the show has a pretty spectacular finish. This was my first virtual-reality theme-park ride experience, and was much more intricate and detailed than I had expected.



Coffee-roasting experience

While I love the roller coasters and other rides in Sky Plaza, I also always find myself drawn to **Vicky the Water Park**. Taiwan has hot weather most of the year, and one of the best ways to escape the heat is by playing in cooling waters. This park has a beach, **Vicky Beach**, a canal for tubing, **Vicky River Voyage**, and a wave pool, **Vicky Waves**. There’s also a giant water-themed jungle gym and play place, the **Large Dock**, and my favorite, a fast waterslide called **Very Big Bowl**, which shoots you around a vortex like water being drained from the bottom of a bathtub. The high speed and centrifugal forces keep you pressed along the edge of the bowl for several rotations before sending you down the drain and out the bottom.

Another great water ride is **Tornado**, a seven-story-high flume that sends a jumbo inflatable holding up to four people up the side of a giant horn. You can tell these two rides are going to be thrilling by the warnings on the signposts advising those with heart conditions and high blood pressure, pregnant women, and people who have suffered spinal injuries in the past not to get on. Tornado is quite a thrill, and not for the faint of heart.




Dance performance at Janfusun Kiddy Land

Visitors to Vicky the Water Park are required to wear proper swimwear, including swimming caps, to go on the water rides. If you have not brought your own you can purchase these items from the gift shop.

Most of what I've described above are the more thrilling and extreme rides at Janfusun. Roller coasters and fast rides are why I go to amusement parks, but many more rides for families and visitors seeking a calmer and more casual experience are on offer here as well. You'll find the rides that are more suitable for small children in **Janfusun Kiddy Land**. There is even a miniaturized version of the Sky Tower ride from the Sky Plaza section. Kiddy Land also has a 265-square-meter ball pit for kids to romp around in, complete with slides, toys, and other fun fixtures.

Another park designed for young children is **Vicky the Viking**. Here you can go on an educational journey, traversing a story of courage, wonder, and understanding as you travel through the park and help Vicky along her way. Attractions include **Vicky's House** and **Vicky's Story House**, which are interactive storybook adventures, and the **Magic Mirror Maz**, which takes you on a journey across a star-studded Scandinavian night sky featuring a 720-degree aurora.

Janfusun Fancy World is also a place to get in touch with and understand local culture. Yunlin, which has long been one of the agricultural centers of Taiwan, is home to a wide variety of agricultural products. The theme park's restaurants celebrate this by serving up delicacies which feature local ingredients, such as pineapples, bananas, guavas, and bamboo shoots. Coffee is also grown in Yunlin, including on the Janfusun grounds. Visitors can learn about how coffee is made, and can roast and grind their own beans, crafting a fresh cup of coffee from start to finish. 

Janfusun Fancy World (劍湖山世界主題樂園)

Add: No. 67, Dahukou, Yongguang Village, Gukeng Township, Yunlin County (雲林縣古坑鄉永光村大湖口 67 號)

Tel: (05) 582-5789

Website: fancyworld.janfusun.com.tw



Guestroom at Janfusun Prince Hotel



Getting There

Bus: From Douliu Railway Station you can take a Douliu Gukeng Shuttle Bus, part of the Taiwan Tourist Shuttle bus network (taiwantrip.com.tw). Buses depart from Douliu at 8:10am, 9am, 11am, and 1:30pm. You can also take a bus of Taisi Bus Co.; departures are at 7:30am, 9:15am, 10:45am, 11:45am, and 2pm.

Self-drive: Take Freeway 3 to Gukeng System Interchange, take Expressway 78 to Gukeng Interchange, take Provincial Highway No. 3 south, and follow the signs to Janfusun.

Accommodation

If you wish to stay at Janfusun overnight, you can book a room at the **Janfusun Prince Hotel** (www.jph.com.tw), which is a full-service park-themed resort inside the park itself.

Tickets

Adult-ticket prices for Janfusun are NT\$799, with special discounts for students (NT\$599) and seniors (NT\$399). Cheaper afternoon tickets are available after 1pm. Ticket holders have unlimited access to all park attractions, except those that require tokens. The price includes all taxes, insurance, and fees.



Tree climbing in the forested hills of Taoyuan



Hangin*g* from Trees

Experiencing Tree Climbing in Taoyuan

There is no shortage of trees on this subtropical/tropical mountainous island. Even from the center of northern Taiwan's densely populated urban centers, it usually takes just a short bus or taxi ride to bring you to a trailhead and lush forest. If you want to find out how to climb the forest denizens with the help of professional tree-climbers, read on!

Text: Han Cheung Photos: Maggie Song



Swinging from a tree branch

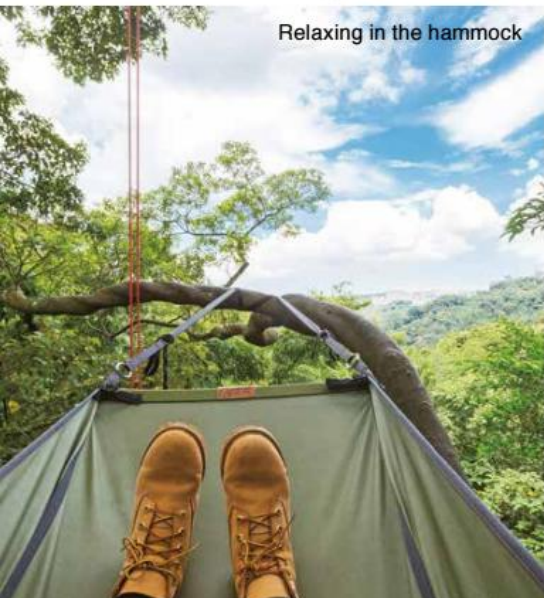
Note: During this activity care is taken to avoid damaging the trees you are climbing.



Maverick Du of Climbing Tree



Knowing the knots is essential



Relaxing in the hammock

After about an hour of relaxing in hammocks hung near the top of a tree about 10 meters above ground our instructor, Weng Heng-bin, asks if we want our lunchboxes delivered up to us.

“You can do anything up here – stare into space, play with your phone ... and we’ll deliver what you want to you,” he says, then adds with a laugh, “Of course, coffee will cost extra. “Someone even asked for beer once, but we told him that it would make him want to go to the bathroom, and he would have to descend from the tree sooner than he’d like to.”

It makes sense; as you will no doubt find out, you’ll want to stay in the tree for as long as possible. There’s a nice breeze, birds are chirping, and everything feels a bit surreal – it’s still hard to believe I managed to haul myself up here.

Arborist-Style Climbing

This type of recreational tree climbing is completely different from what you did when you shimmied up and down trunks and branches in your grandma’s backyard as a child. Derived from professional arborist techniques, this version of tree climbing involves securing a rope on a branch and pulling yourself upward.

“And most of the time, you’re climbing the rope instead of the tree,” Weng says.

It can be a little intimidating for some, as climbers are dangling in the air for most of the journey upward, which can take quite a while depending on the individual’s conditioning. After being obliged to abort my first attempt upon getting “treesick” from swaying in the air, I feel better when Hsu Nen-nen, another instructor, tells me that she also felt nauseous and panicky when she tried tree climbing for the first time. She soon became addicted to the thrill of climbing higher and higher, honing her craft to the point of winning first place in the female division of this year’s Taiwan Tree Climbing Championship.

Weng and a third instructor, Maverick Du, are no slouches either – both are among a handful of Taiwanese to receive professional

certification from the International Society of Arboriculture. But since demand for arborists is rather low in Taiwan, the two spend a lot of time providing recreational services through their business, **Climbing Tree**.

Based in Taoyuan City’s Guishan District just a short drive from Taoyuan Railway Station, Climbing Tree offers tree climbing experiences on a plot of sloped land with trees of several different species and degrees of climbing difficulty. It’s a serene spot that climbers have all to themselves, save for the three resident black dogs that laze around a large pavilion. At least six people are required per group for a whole-day session, with a ceiling of 20. Each person pays NT\$1,400, which includes equipment, lunch, and insurance. It’s even possible to spend a night up in one of those trees.

While people have been climbing trees recreationally in Taiwan since 2000, popular interest has only picked up in the past two years or so. Local public interest in individual outdoor activities comes and goes in cycles, and Weng believes that tree climbing is just reaching its peak. Jason Liang of **Oudo Explore Travel**, a travel agency that promotes and handles bookings for this and other such experiences around Taiwan, says that it is among the current top three outdoor activities, along with kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding.

There are many reasons to climb trees, but Weng says most customers tell him that they enjoy the feeling of accomplishment after challenging themselves to such an unlikely feat. He adds that many people who may not have the ability to partake in other extreme sports, such as rock climbing, can handle tree climbing because it can be done in tiny increments.

“As long as you don’t give up, you will make it to the top eventually,” he says, adding that he’s taught students from age 4 to 65. They must be able to fit in the harness, though, which has a 42-inch (106.68cm) waist limit.

And there’s the stunning bird’s-eye views enjoyed once you are up high in the tree.



Tree-climbing can be an enjoyable experience

Weng recommends that participants attempt to climb to at least 10 meters – at that point, when they look downward they will marvel at the view, and start feeling that all the hard work is worth it.

“It’s way different from the experience of climbing just five meters,” he says.

Weng has a master’s degree in environmental education, and hopes that his customers also develop an appreciation for trees and nature. “Many people tell me that they had not realized how strong trees are,” he says. “I hope that they can feel the vitality of trees and start thinking about how to protect them.”

Vertical Ascent

Despite Taiwan’s high population density, it’s still pretty easy to get away from civilization into mountainous areas where scalable trees are abundant. With most of the island belonging to the subtropical evergreen-forest eco-region, Taiwan is home to a wide range of forest types, including some that contain massive “sacred trees” that Weng has his set his sights on scaling.

But without proper equipment and preparation, tree climbing can be quite dangerous, and only those well-versed in the sport should venture out on their own. Before we set off, Weng gives us a presentation on safety and how to use the equipment, for

which there are very specific requirements; techniques used for other activities should never be substituted. Weng and his team also care for the trees they use, and make sure before each group’s arrival that the targeted branches are healthy enough to support human weight.

The equipment consists of a helmet and gloves, plus harness, carabiners, and a rope. Fortunately, there’s no need to learn how to put the latter group together – the instructors will take care of that. All you have to do is to master the climbing motions.

I look upward, and Du is already scampering about the higher branches setting up a hammock and waiting to provide support to the other climbers. He looks far away, and I feel a bit queasy at the thought of being at that height.

“If you’re afraid of heights, that doesn’t mean heights are dangerous,” Weng says. “Also, you have a great deal of control during tree climbing – you can go at your own pace, and take a break whenever you want.”

After the instructors secure a rope to a suitable branch, they connect it to the climber’s rope, creating a “doubled rope system” with a foot strap. The climber puts a foot in the strap, pulls his or her body upright, and pushes a knot on the dangling rope in an



The descent is the hardest part



upward motion. In the beginning it's rather difficult to maneuver while dangling in mid-air, and I end up struggling mightily, body jerking around in all directions, just to make miniscule progress. I get the hang of it after a while, and suddenly I find I'm higher than I thought I could go.

Getting into the hammock is also quite a challenge, as I have to swing (with Du's assistance) and enter feet first. But once I lie down and get comfortable, the trembling subsides and the sweating stops. I marvel at our photographer Maggie, who swings around seemingly with ease, or at least without fright, as she snaps photos while being several meters higher than me.

Under the soft warmth of sunshine raining through the canopy, with the occasional falling leaf floating serenely by, I look down from the hammock. Yeah, the view is pretty worth it.

The wind isn't too strong today, but occasionally it does sway the hammock gently back and forth, in time with the branches. As mentioned earlier, it's possible to get "treesick," feeling dizzy and nauseous – but even this can eventually be overcome. I stop worrying and doze off.

The hardest part is the descent – you have to really place your faith in that rope to be able to leave the hammock and head into the nothing-ness below. Once I'm stabilized enough, I push the knot downward to descend, trying to control my speed for a smooth landing.



Finally, I'm on the ground. I'm pretty beat; but the day is not over yet, for we next head over to a nearby camphor tree to swing from one of its branches. 📍



Booking and More Info

Oudo Explore Travel (歐都探索旅行社)
Tel: (03) 425-2581
Website: oudo.com



If You Go

Due to the lack of parking space close to the climbing site, Climbing Tree recommends that guests park at Daoji Temple, at the entrance to Lane 1300, Datong Road, Guishan District, and walk uphill from there. If you don't have a car, note that the site is about 20 minutes by cab from Taoyuan Railway Station. Pick-up service (for a fee) can be arranged for groups of more than ten.

Climbers should wear comfortable clothes, with long-sleeved shirts and pants, and sneakers or hiking boots. Other recommended items include a thermos, mosquito repellent, and a change of clothes.



English and Chinese

Climbing Tree 攀樹趣
Daoji Temple 道濟院
Guishan District 龜山區
Hsu Nen-nen 許嫩嫩
Jason Liang 梁信舜
Lane 1300, Datong Road 大同路 1300 巷
Maverick Du 杜裕昌
Weng Heng-bin 翁恆斌



Experience Taipei
Embark on a New Odyssey



Christmas & New Year Special Deals





West coast of Lanyu in the evening



Coral reef scuba diving



A Fun-Filled Summer Holiday

Island Hopping off Southeastern Taiwan

Text and Photos: Quyen Tran

With its indigenous villages, flying-fish culture, and mountainous landscape, Orchid Island (Lanyu) makes an eclectic destination for cultural and eco-tourism, while Green Island, often touted as Taiwan's diving capital, is a convenient getaway for underwater enthusiasts like myself. So recently, when the time came to decide where my next summer holiday would take place, it really wasn't a difficult decision to go island-hopping between these two islands off the coast of southeastern Taiwan.

Approaching **Orchid Island** by ferry, I was completely taken aback by how green it is – so much so that it is probably more deserving of the title “Green Island” than its smaller counterpart to the north. Its impressive mountains, covered top to bottom in lush vegetation, are home to many, many (and more) goats. Every direction you look, there they are, contentedly munching grass, unperturbed as the tourists visiting the island pass by.

I very much enjoyed riding around the island on a motor scooter, visiting the caves, villages, and other attractions, especially chasing sunsets from high-vantage points. But, most definitely, the highlight was an invitation to a family meal where we were fed such local delicacies



Exploring an underwater wonderworld

as the island's ubiquitous flying fish and a peculiar mountain fungus that grows only after rain has fallen. Known as “Lovers' Tears,” this algae-like fungus is often seen in Taiwan's indigenous cuisine, though this was the first time I had the good fortune to savor it. It was wonderful to leave the island with newly-formed friendships and having enjoyed an authentic taste of its offerings.

Green Island, though smaller than Orchid Island and lacking any indigenous-culture presence, has its own charms, owing mainly

to its unique history and its surrounding waters. I tried to imagine what life was like for the poor souls sent to the infamous prison on the island during Taiwan's period of martial law, explored a few caves, and enjoyed a soak in the Jhaorih Hot Spring in the southeast corner of the island.

As an avid diver, however, getting into Green Island's clear waters and around its beautiful corals was the highlight of this entire trip. Though I didn't catch the renowned hammerhead migration (Green Island is one of a few dive destinations in Asia where you can see this), we saw plenty of sea life, including moray eels and sea snakes, and it was good to see the long-finned batfish, which is making a healthy comeback in the island's protected waters.

A week on these islands was truly the relaxing yet fun-filled summer holiday I needed. The various attractions kept me on my toes, but the landscapes, local company, and good food always helped me wind down at the end of the day. As you can tell by the photos, it was amazing island fun! 📷

English and Chinese

Lanyu (Orchid Island) 蘭嶼
Green Island 綠島
“Lovers' Tears” 情人的眼淚
Jhaorih Hot Spring 朝日溫泉

Haute Cuisine Taiwan-Style

Reinventing
Taiwanese Food in Taipei

Text: Dana Ter
Photos: Maggie Song



Dining at TUA restaurant



TUA restaurant

What is old is new as traditional Taiwanese fare receives a modern makeover, with many restaurants finding new ways to create high-end cuisine focusing on fresh and healthful local produce.

When Taiwanese food is mentioned, many people will first think of street food – for example, a bowl of NT\$50 roadside *ganmian*, or “dry noodles.” Many travelers come to Taiwan especially for the street food, as well as for the night markets, where they will almost surely encounter the wafting, somewhat unpleasant odor of stinky tofu and will likely enjoy a big cup of bubble tea as well. For some, night markets are a gastronomical nirvana, while for others a visit is simply an experience to tick off a “did that” while pinching their noses.

Locals love to eat at mom-and-pop eateries serving staple foods such as oyster omelets and steamed dumplings, hotpot restaurants where they can cook their own mix of meats and vegetables, and all-you-can-eat seafood and vegetarian buffet restaurants offering a wide variety of food options. Also popular are *re chao* restaurants – cheap, cramped, no-frills places serving stir-fry meat and vegetable dishes that are almost always downed with glasses of cold local beer.

For a long time, Taiwanese food has been thought of as being traditional, fast, and cheap, though a few restaurants, such as Shin Yeh and Mansui, have been serving higher-end Taiwanese cuisine for quite

some time. For the most part, however, fine dining in Taiwan has meant Japanese, Italian, or French cuisine, for which many of the ingredients are imported.

There has, nevertheless, been a gradual shift over the last few years towards modernizing Taiwanese food and emphasizing fresh, local, and seasonal produce. This is important because it shows that Taiwanese ingredients are in fact of the highest quality as well, and can be utilized to create upscale Taiwanese-style dishes.

A couple of factors have encouraged this change, including a rising GDP and more exposure to such global trends as the healthy-eating and green-living movements. Young people have more time – or are making more time – for leisure pursuits, and this includes trying new cuisines.

While the term “new Taiwanese cuisine” has yet to become a catchphrase, fine-dining Taiwanese restaurants have of late been revamping their menus to infuse a more modern ethos, and new restaurants serving higher-end versions of Taiwanese food, or Taiwanese fusion, have been opening in Taipei to cater to people’s changing palates.



Assorted dishes at TUA

TUA

One of the restaurants spearheading this change is TUA. Located on a residential road in the middle of Taipei's busy Da'an District, TUA is a quiet haven for connoisseurs.

There is no signage, since the chef and owner, Calvin Chen, detests signs and believes that the charm of the rustic, tree-shrouded double-story building that is home to the restaurant should be enough to make TUA a recognizable landmark. A visual-arts major in college, Chen entered the food & beverage industry as a result of the serendipity of life and fate. "Back then Taiwanese people didn't appreciate art as much, but I know how much we love food, so I decided to try my hand at cooking," Chen says with a sense of mirth.

Chen's previous ventures have included Japanese restaurants, which made use of ingredients imported from Hokkaido, but he grew tired of that and started to question why Taiwan's chefs were not sourcing locally. Si Zhi Tang, another of Chen's current endeavors, was his first foray into upscale Taiwanese cuisine using local ingredients. While Si Zhi Tang serves more traditional versions of Taiwanese dishes, TUA – the word itself means to "enjoy a scrumptious dinner with good friends" in Taiwanese – is fusion and experimental.

It's pouring rain the day I visit TUA. The inside is dimly lit yet inviting, like a country inn that's both a bit mysterious and cozy. Chen's preferred attire is an oversized t-shirt and painter's pants, and it's obvious that both his eccentricity and penchant for fine things are in line with the restaurant's decor.

Upside-down potted plants dangling from the ceiling, and rows of antique shelves bedecked with his exhaustive collection of books and paintings from around the world, draw the curiosity of diners. He tells me that he imported the restaurant's chairs from Denmark, the lamps from the UK, and the handmade soap in the washroom from the south of France.

Unlike the décor, however, the ingredients in the kitchen are nearly 100% Taiwanese. Chen visits different markets in Yilan County and New Taipei City by sunrise every morning to buy fresh seafood and vegetables. Though he uses Facebook as a visual diary to post pictures of his market finds, he tries not to preach too much about farm-to-table dining, and instead emphasizes the importance of community. "It's about channeling the simple joy of sharing a meal with friends that is so integral in Taiwanese culture," Chen explains. For this reason, TUA has long communal tables rather than two-person seaters.

The restaurant's menu is hand-written in Chinese calligraphy, adding a sentimental touch. "In a way, it's to evoke the sense of a home-cooked meal," Chen says. Though the menu is minimal, with just ten dishes, and is rotated every few weeks, Chen keeps the base ingredients the same, and trades soy sauce and sugar – which are common in Taiwanese cooking – for healthier options such as olive oil. He also prefers to extract the natural sweetness of fruits and use it in his cooking instead of adding sugar.

"I just don't believe in having cheap things," Chen reiterates. You won't find him in cramped restaurants chowing down on a bowl of fried noodles. Rather, Chen's approach is to treat decorating his restaurant and cooking for his guests like an art. "The ambiance needs to match the quality of the food," he insists.

This doesn't mean that he's shunned tradition, though. Chen's **pork with dried octopus, lychee, and Chinese mustard** (NT\$780) is a harmonious blend of elements and his own rendition of Western-style pork belly. Chen uses a light soy sauce and pairs the meat with pickled Chinese mustard as well as longans and lychees, tropical fruits cultivated in Taiwan. The natural sweetness of the

fruits amplifies the buttery taste of the pork belly, which has been steamed, pan-fried, then stewed and slow-cooked to achieve a charred but chewy texture.

The **seafood risotto** (NT\$850) is another example of a dish that seamlessly blends different cooking styles. Chen invokes a simple comfort dish here – fried rice – which is topped with shrimp, squid, roe, quinoa, and Taiwanese red shallots. The textures and flavors are as varied as the colors in the bowl, the result of which is a mix of familiarity and intrigue.

The most interesting dish, however, is the **seasonal salad**. Priced at NT\$1,000 and served in a giant hinoki-wood box, it may raise a few eyebrows. In the version I sample the ingredients are highly varied – grilled figs and mushrooms, raw lettuce and tomato – the most interesting element the chicken-soup jelly, which Chen makes from chicken broth. It tastes delightfully cool and herbal. The sesame dressing is incredibly cleansing and pulls the different elements of the salad together.

As Chen likes to say: “You need to respect the ingredients.” A few years ago, I might have scoffed at this. Only on rare occasions would I fork over NT\$1,000 for a salad. But TUA is one of those exquisite dining experiences that are exceedingly hard to replicate in Taipei.

Shin Yeh

Shin Yeh's restaurants have been serving high-end Taiwanese food since 1977. Starting from a humble space on Shuangcheng Street near the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Shin Yeh has since expanded, and today the name signifies a group of several restaurants throughout the city. The most iconic branch is on the 85th floor of the Taipei 101 tower, which boasts a sleek and sparkly interior, featuring an abundance of chandeliers, mirrors and, of course, expansive windows through which patrons can gaze out at the Taipei skyline.

Shin Yeh's set menu includes more upscale renditions of traditional Taiwanese fare, such as **stir-fried rice noodles**, **sautéed king prawns**, and a fair amount of **seafood**. A set for one person will cost between NT\$1,000 and NT\$2,000.

Mansui

Taiwan's subtropical climate means that it's home to a wide array of fruits, and locals have long been adding fruit to drinks such as tea. Mansui puts fruits to creative use in its dishes. While the interior, which is designed as a traditional Taiwanese banquet hall, is nothing to shout about, the menu contains some interesting concoctions, for instance the **stir-fried beef with pear** (NT\$570/large bowl, NT\$380 small bowl) and **stir-fried fish fillet with mango** (NT\$720/large bowl, NT\$480/small bowl).

There are numerous healthy options, such as the **stewed loofah with mushroom** (NT\$540/large bowl) and, of course, old-school Taiwanese favorites such as **grilled sausage in deep-fried intestines** (NT\$540/large bowl, NT\$360/small bowl). 🍴



Vegetable plate at Shin Yeh



Shrimp and vegetable dish at Mansui

TUA (TUA 攤)

Add: No. 15-1, Ln. 44, Siwei Rd., Da'an Dist., Taipei City
(台北市大安區四維路 44 巷 15-1 號)
Tel: (02) 2708-2082
Website: www.tuaculture.com

Shin Yeh (欣葉)

Add (original outlet): No. 34-1, Shuangcheng St., Zhongshan Dist., Taipei City
(台北市中山區雙城街 34-1 號)
Tel: (02) 2596-3255
Website: www.shinyeh.com.tw

Mansui (滿穗台菜)

Add: 1F, No. 128, Songjiang Rd., Zhongshan Dist., Taipei City
(台北市中山區松江路 128 號 1 樓)
Tel: (02) 2541-2020
Website: www.mansui.com.tw

English and Chinese

Calvin Chen 陳超文
Da'an District 大安區
ganmian 乾麵
re chao 熱潮
Si Zhi Tang 四知堂



Strolling Through Taipei's Past

A Walkabout Tour of
Wanhua District's Historical Treasures

Text: Rick Charette

Photos: Vision



The “three treasures of Wanhua” are renowned in Taiwan – heritage temples, old-shop commercial streets, and old-time local snack treats. Let’s spend a relaxed, pleasant day exploring them on foot!

At Xinfu Market in Wanhua District



Longshan Temple



Vendor on Herbal Lane

Wanhua is the cradle of Taipei's history. Situated where the Dahan and Xindian rivers meet to form the Tamsui, this was originally the site of a Ketagalan settlement. The Ketagalan indigenous tribe dominated the Taipei Basin before the arrival of Han Chinese settlers starting in the early 1700s.

The oldest Han Chinese settlement in what is today's Taipei City, Wanhua began to flourish in the early 1800s, its *raison d'être* service as an entrepot between the local natives, immigrant Han Chinese growers and extractors (tea, camphor, etc.), and the China homeland market. Today it sports the greatest collection of historical sites in the city in its old, crowded streets, almost all just as alive and important to the community now as they were in the past.

Learn about the history and traditions of Wanhua, and the city as a whole, with a day-tour walkabout into its lively past taking in six key Wanhua attractions, all within easy walking distance of each other, conveniently located between MRT Longshan Temple Station and MRT Ximen Station.

Longshan Temple

Longshan ("Dragon Mountain") Temple is among both the city's most important places of worship and the island's key historical sites. Founded in 1738, this is one of the world's greatest showcases of Chinese temple art, renowned for its exquisite stone sculptures, woodcarvings, and bronze work. Of special note are the twelve major support columns in the main hall, enveloped in writhing auspicious dragons hewn from solid stone.

The story goes that a merchant from Quanzhou prefecture in mainland China's Fujian province, from whence most ancestors of today's Taiwanese denizens emigrated, stopped at the spot on which Longshan Temple today stands to relieve himself. He suspended his lucky incense pouch on a tree to avoid committing sacrilege, but forgot it there when he left. Locals later saw a bright light emanating from the pouch, found an inscription stating it came from renowned Longshan

Temple in Quanzhou, took this as a clear sign, and Taipei's version of the temple was built.

More than 100 icons of myriad gods are enshrined within the temple. The key deity, Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, has proven unusually powerful over the centuries. In one example, when the area was devastated by an earthquake in 1815, Guanyin emerged serene and unscathed. In another, during WWII allied bombers hit the temple (the Japanese commonly billeted troops in such places). The explosions and ensuing fire razed the main hall, but somehow missed the goddess – though the surrounding iron railings had melted, Guanyin was singed and nothing more.

Tips: Chanters gather at around 6am, 8am, and 5pm daily. As well, be sure to visit Old Man Under the Moon, the Chinese Cupid (in the rear, on the far left of the temple complex) if looking for help finding true love.

Herbal Lane

Right outside the temple's east-side wall is Herbal Lane, a covered narrow alley 50m long lined with open-faced shops piled high with canvas sacks and display boxes of different teas and well over 100 herbs. The heady mixture of aromas here is bracing.

In the past, markets commonly sprang up outside Chinese temples, often the busiest gathering spots in local communities. The bazaar here began forming immediately upon Longshan Temple's establishment, with foodstuffs, textiles, and embroidery originally the key goods. Later, cooked goods, candles, and other items primarily used in worship rites were offered. Eventually the focus was shifted to medicinal herbs.

It was long common for worshippers to ask a temple god for guidance on treating ailments and logical that the supplies needed were made available close by. However, in the 1980s the Taipei City

government issued regulations prohibiting temples from issuing medicinal divination slips, bringing the practice of deities “treating” illnesses to an end. Today Herbal Lane continues to supply items for traditional medicines and tonic foods, and it serves as a popular “living classroom” where students are brought to learn about traditional local culture.

Tip: Buy a cup of herbal tea or other tonic drink at one of the numerous drink stands at the lane’s entrance and along Guangzhou Street. Vendors will be happy to explain which drinks are best for summer cooling or winter warming of your metabolism.

Huaxi Street Tourist Night Market

In Taipei’s old-city neighborhoods, the charms are myriad and the nostalgia-inducing food and drink treats nigh endless. Huaxi Street is a two-minute walk directly west of Longshan Temple. Taiwan’s first tourist night market, it is announced with a dramatically eye-catching Chinese-style red entrance arch, and colorful red lanterns hang in rows down both sides of the narrow street. In days past the infamous “snake-gutting shows” brought many sightseers, but today the nest of snake shops is history.

This is a bustling place of old-style shop signs, traditional Chinese-massage parlors, gift boutiques, and eating options galore, both brick-and-mortar eateries and vendor stands. One old-style snake eatery that survives – traditional belief is that snake increases the libido – is the euphemistically titled “Asia Poisonous Snake Research Institute” (No. 14). The menu is wide-ranging – bile soup, anyone?

Tip: More conventional iconic must-try culinary choices include bowl rice cakes, cooling aiyu jelly ice, and danzai noodles.



Bopiliao Historic Block

Just east of Longshan Temple/Herbal Lane, this attractive renovated city-block section, a solid and uninterrupted cluster of heritage architecture dating from the late Qing Dynasty through the 1895-1945 Japanese colonial era, is among Taipei’s best-preserved historical sites.

The place name “Bopiliao” goes back much further. During the Qing Dynasty China fir was brought to Wanhua’s port by Fujian traders, then brought here for stripping. “Bopi” literally means “to strip.” The area took shape as a commercial-trade street during the reign of Qing Emperor Jiaqing (1795-1820), and thrived over three eras – the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese colonial period, and the early Republican era.

During the Japanese period the southern end of the cramped original street was opened up to the younger, more prosperous Guangzhou Street. This street features buildings erected by the Japanese with Baroque-style elements; the older section has Qing-era structures. Bopiliao is now a precious resource for education on Taipei’s native-soil history and culture.

Tip: Make time to view the various exhibits on Taipei/Taiwan history in the Heritage and Culture Education Center of Taipei, encompassing numerous conjoined buildings on Guangzhou Street, from education under the Japanese to old-time river transport to the introduction of Western medicine.

Xinfu Market

On Guangzhou Street's south side across from Bopiliao is the old Xinfu Market building, fronted by scores of traditional-style market stalls in narrow, covered lanes. The building, opened in 1935, was Taipei's first modern public market, housing stalls selling fresh fish/meats, fruits/vegetables, tobacco/alcohol items, Chinese cakes/pastries, etc.

Its heyday was in the 1950s, after Taipei's population had exploded following the migration of the Nationalist government from mainland China in the late 1940s. Increased competition, notably from the dense grid of stalls that grew before it and later the then-novel supermarkets of the 1990s, led to its eventual abandonment. Now thoroughly renovated, it was reopened earlier this year, housing a history display, café, and other facilities.

The distinctive old building has a horseshoe shape and a narrow central courtyard that facilitates ventilation and light entry. The exterior is Art Deco, and the radial and stair patterns that were avant-garde when it opened have been retained.

Tip: Try "Grandma's Sticky Rice," 2009 winner in the city's annual "World's Best Vendor" competition, right outside the Xinfu Market building entrance, which makes its rice with wooden bamboo steamers.



Inside Xinfu Market



「威汀城市酒店Hotel rêve Taichung」座落於台中市大雅區市中心，鄰近中部科學園區、逢甲商圈。全館擁有125間客房，融合時尚及人文藝術之元素，專為商務和休閒旅遊遊客而設計，強調客房舒適、盡覽城市美景，創造出兼具典雅及休閒風格的住宿空間，在舊城中注入多元新生命，營造簡約、低調的都會風格。

Hotel rêve Taichung is located in the center of Taichung City's Daya District, close to Central Taiwan Science Park and Fengjia Commercial Area. The hotel has 125 guestrooms with an attractive interior design that combines fashion and cultural elements. Business and leisure travelers alike feel at home in the comfortable rooms affording splendid views of the city. The hotel stands out for its elegance and relaxing ambience. It has infused an old neighborhood with fresh new elements while at the same time keeping a subtle and simple style.

威汀城市酒店

— hotel rêve taichung —



威汀城市酒店 Hotel rêve Taichung
地址：428台中市大雅區民生路一段100號
ADD: No. 100, Sec. 1, Minsheng Rd., Daya Dist.,
Taichung City 428, Taiwan
TEL: +886-4-2568-0558
FAX: +886-4-2567-7134
Website: www.hotel-reve.com.tw

Xibenyuan Temple Square

Though in a busy area, close to MRT Ximen Station and 7~10 minutes away from the Bopiliao/Xinfu sites on foot, this heritage Pure Land Buddhist temple complex feels hidden away, partially blocked from view by high walls. Built up in the years after 1922, Xibenyuan Temple was Taiwan's largest Japanese-style Buddhist temple during the Japanese period. A fire in 1975 destroyed the Grand Hall and other key structures, only the Rinbansyo (temple abbot's residence) and Tree Heart Hall (lecture hall) escaping.

Long left abandoned, squatters were evicted from the site and renovation efforts were carried out through the 2000s to restore the former glory of the complex, giving birth to a new city landmark. The stately Bell Tower stands atop a hillock at the square's entrance. The brick-built Tree Heart Hall, once used for Dharma teaching, is now a space for art exhibits and temple/area history displays. **T**

Tip: Savor premium Taiwan teas in the elegant Eighty-Eightea teahouse in the renovated Rinbansyo, rich in Japanese aesthetics, the large central room's tatami flooring creating a Kyoto tea-ceremony ambience.



Getting There & Around

The MRT Longshan Temple and Ximen stations are on the Taipei Metro's Banan Line (Blue Line). The latter is a transfer station, connecting to the Songshan-Xindian Line (Green Line). Large guide maps showing key area sites, with good English, are posted in all Taipei Metro stations. The places introduced in this article are all within walking distance from each other.

English and Chinese

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| aiyu jelly ice 愛玉冰 | Huaxi Street Tourist Night Market |
| "Asia Poisonous Snake Research Institute" 亞洲毒蛇研究所 | 華西街夜市 |
| Bell Tower 鐘樓 | Longshan Temple 龍山寺 |
| Bopiliao Historic Block 剝皮寮歷史街區 | Old Man Under the Moon 月下老人 |
| Dahan River 大漢溪 | Rinbansyo 輪番所 |
| danzai noodles 擔仔麵 | Tamsui River 淡水河 |
| Eighty-Eightea 八拾捌茶 | Tree Heart Hall 樹心會館 |
| Grand Hall 本堂 | Wanhua District 萬華區 |
| "Grandma's Sticky Rice" 阿婆油飯 | "World's Best Vendor" 天下第一攤 |
| Guangzhou Street 廣州街 | Xibenyuan Temple Square |
| Herbal Lane 青草巷 | 西本願寺廣場 |
| | Xindian River 新店溪 |
| | Xinfu Market 新富市場 |

Japanese-style building at Xibenyuan Temple Square



A Journey of Discovery on Taipei MRT's Tamsui-Xinyi Line

Pacific Business Hotel 太平洋商旅

The MRT's Tamsui-Xinyi Line provides easy access to some of the best-known attractions in Taipei. Go to: **Xiangshan Station** to view the city night scene from Elephant Mountain; **Taipei 101/World Trade Center Station** to enjoy a bird's eye view from the Taipei 101; **Dongmen Station** to enjoy delicious mango ice; **Zhongshan Station** to explore elegant coffee shops; **Jiantan Station** to taste delicious snacks at Shilin Night Market; **Xinbeitou Station** to soak in a hot-spring bath; **Tamsui Station** to view the sunset.

A single MRT line allows you to experience the diverse pulse of the city. Come with us to discover all Taipei has to offer along the Tamsui-Xinyi Line!



Pacific Business Hotel is located on Guangfu South Road in Taipei City's Xinyi District. Transport is very convenient as the hotel is just five minutes' walk from MRT Taipei 101/World Trade Center Station on the Tamsui-Xinyi Line, an MRT line that offers more attractions than any other MRT line. The hotel has 105 guestrooms, each with floor-to-ceiling windows through which you can view Taipei 101 not far away. The hotel provides free WiFi and a tasty buffet breakfast. After enjoying a hearty breakfast, set off on a journey of discovery across Taipei!

淡水站 Tamsui Station

MRT Tamsui Station

Enjoy tasty food on Tamsui Old Street, watch the sunset, and collect fond memories of your journey along the Tamsui-Xinyi Line!

新北投站 Beitou Station

新北投站 Xinbeitou Station

MRT Beitou Station

From Beitou Station take the Xinbeitou Line to Xinbeitou Station where you can experience hot-spring bathing. Also visit Taipei Public Library Beitou Branch, a wooden green library, which once was chosen as one of the "25 most beautiful public libraries in the world."
Add: No. 251, Guangming Rd., Beitou Dist., Taipei City (台北市北投區光明路251號)

士林夜市 Shilin Night Market

劍潭站 Jiantan Station

圓山站 Yuanshan Station

MRT Yuanshan Station

Go for a walk through the spacious Taipei Expo Park and check out the distinctive stores of Maji Square. Appreciate modern art at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, which often organizes special exhibitions.
Add: (Park) No. 1, Yumen St., Zhongshan District, Taipei City (台北市中山區玉門街1號)
Add: (Museum) No. 181, Sec. 3, Zhongshan N. Rd., Zhongshan Dist., Taipei City (台北市中山區中山北路三段181號)

雙連站 Shuanglian Station

中山站 Zhongshan Station

MRT Dongmen Station

Visit King Mango, famed for its Irwin Mango Ice with sweet taste and enticing fragrance, to be enjoyed in big mouthfuls.
Add: No. 2-1, Ln. 2, Yongkang St., Da'an Dist., Taipei City (台北市大安區永康街2巷2-1號) (2 min. on foot from the MRT station)

台北車站 Taipei Main Station

MRT Taipei 101/World Trade Center Station

Taipei 101 is Taipei's most iconic skyscraper. Take the super-fast elevator to the observatory on the 89th floor to look out over the city from on high. At 44 South Village – Good Cho's enjoy Taiwan-flavor handmade bagels and visit the holiday market/cultural-creative gift stores
Add: No. 54, Songqin St., Xinyi Dist., Taipei City. (台北市信義區松勤街54號)

東門站 Dongmen Station

信義安和站 Xinyi Anhe Station

臨江街夜市 Linjiang Street Night Market

太平洋商旅 Pacific Business Hotel

Pacific Business Hotel (太平洋商旅)

Add: 11F, No. 495, Guangfu S. Rd., Xinyi Dist., Taipei City (台北市信義區光復南路495號11樓)

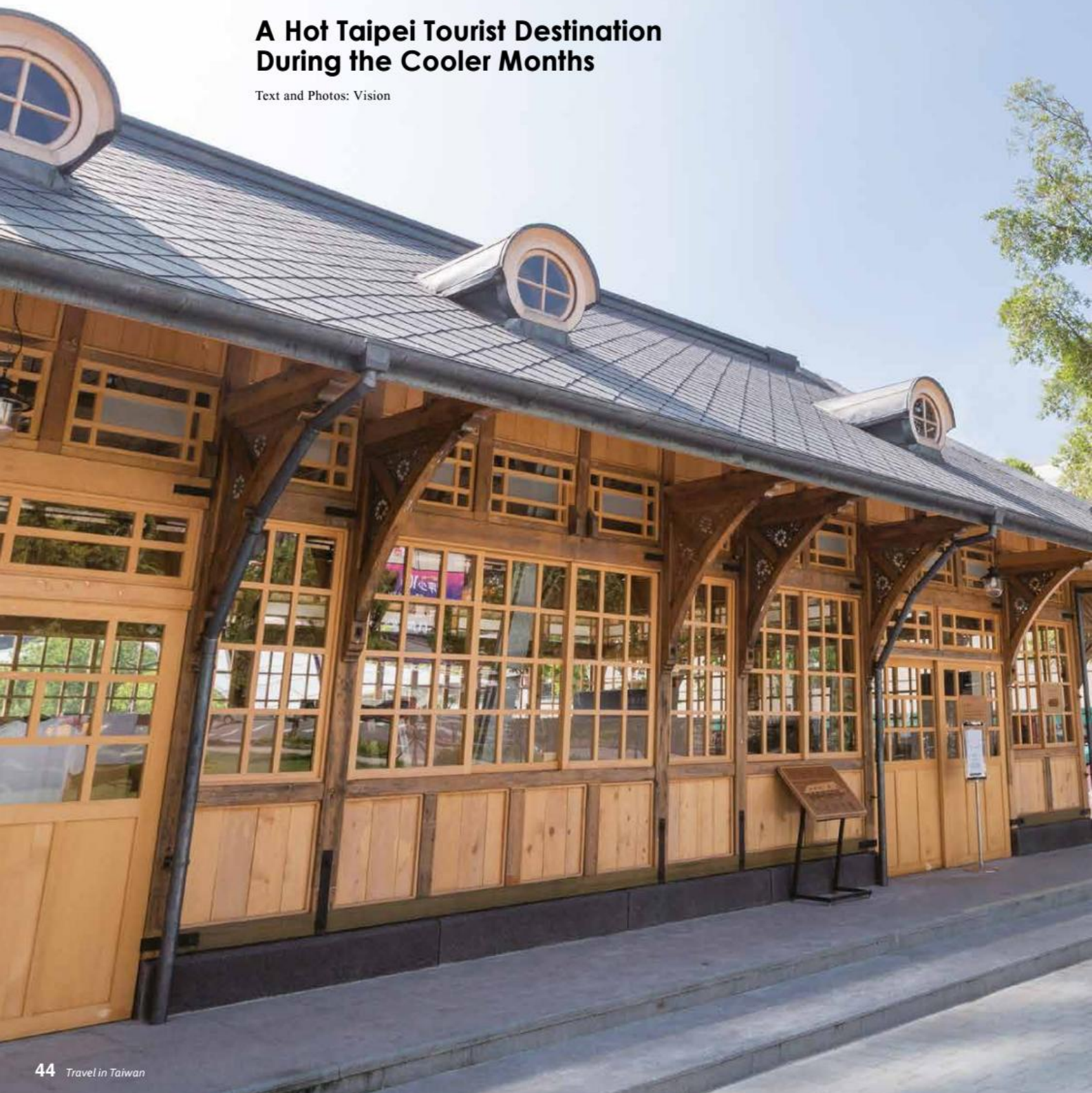
Tel: (02) 8780-2000 | Website: www.businesscenter.com.tw/

Beitou

Hot Springs and History

**A Hot Taipei Tourist Destination
During the Cooler Months**

Text and Photos: Vision



Hot springs are found all around the island of Taiwan, close to the sea, high up in the mountains, and in between. Many of these springs have been developed into resort areas, which first became popular during the time of Japanese colonial rule from 1895 to 1945. One of the best of these resort destinations – and among the most convenient to get to – is in the Taipei district of Beitou. Located at the foot of the mountains that are collectively known as Yangmingshan, Beitou is an old neighborhood rich with narrow lanes and alleys. At its heart is Beitou Hot Spring Park. Inside and around this park are the following must-visit attractions.

1 Xinbeitou Historic Station

Beside MRT Xinbeitou Station is a heritage building you don't want to miss, the Xinbeitou Historic Station (www.xbths.taipei). Located in the small park on the southern side of the station, this important work of heritage architecture was reopened earlier this year. Originally built in 1916, the station was dismantled in 1988 to make room for the MRT station, and was then purchased, rebuilt, and displayed at the Taiwan Folk Village in Changhua County, central Taiwan, before being returned to Taipei in 2013. After being painstakingly restored once again over a period of four years, the station has now become one of the most iconic historic attractions in the city.



Xinbeitou Historic Station



Wooden plate at the historic station



Hot-spring bathing in Beitou

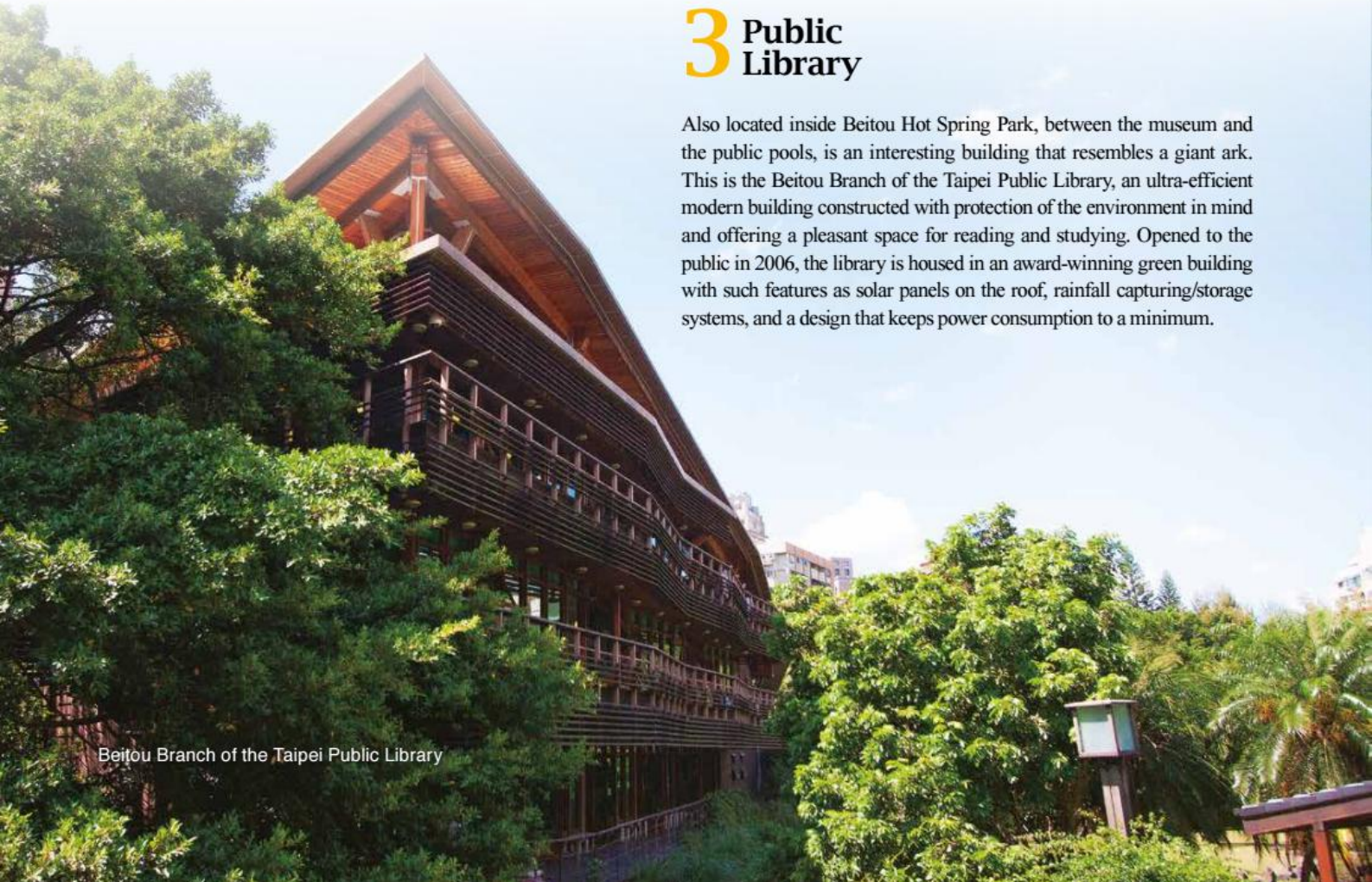
2 Hot Springs

Before MRT Xinbeitou Station (see *Getting there* below), you will see the entrance to Beitou Hot Spring Park across the main road, to the right. Take a walk through this long and narrow park, and check out the shallow Beitou Stream, steaming with hot-spring water. About two-thirds of the way through the park, which slopes upward from the main road, you'll spot a beautifully restored historic building, today home to the Beitou Hot Spring Museum (hotspringmuseum.taipei). This was originally a public bathhouse, built in 1913, at the time the largest of its kind in East Asia. Here you can learn about the history of hot-spring bathing in Beitou while, among other things, viewing a restored Romanesque pool with Roman-style columns as well as a Japanese-style tatami post-bathing rest area.

There is a wide range of options in Beitou for your own hot-spring bathing, including upscale hot-spring hotels such as the Grand View Resort Beitou (www.gvrb.com.tw). If you are on a limited budget, however, and just want to experience the simple pleasures of outdoor-pool soaking together with local hot-spring lovers, head to the Beitou outdoor public hot springs, formally called the Millenium Hot Spring, a few minutes on foot west of the hot-spring museum along Zhongshan Road (open daily; tickets NT\$40). For more info about hot-spring bathing options in Beitou and around Taiwan, visit www.taiwanhotspring.net.

3 Public Library

Also located inside Beitou Hot Spring Park, between the museum and the public pools, is an interesting building that resembles a giant ark. This is the Beitou Branch of the Taipei Public Library, an ultra-efficient modern building constructed with protection of the environment in mind and offering a pleasant space for reading and studying. Opened to the public in 2006, the library is housed in an award-winning green building with such features as solar panels on the roof, rainfall capturing/storage systems, and a design that keeps power consumption to a minimum.



Beitou Branch of the Taipei Public Library

4 Thermal Valley

At the far, upper end of the hot-spring park, look left and you'll spot the entrance to Thermal Valley, the source of the park area's sulfurous hot-spring water. Surrounded by trees, this deep, rock-strewn depression was created long ago by a volcanic burst. The sulfurous waters in the depression's large pool bubble and spit, the steam sometimes filling the entire little valley on cool days. The Ketagalan people who once lived in the area called the valley "Patauw," meaning "witch" or "sorceress." "Beitou" is a bastardization of this original name.



Thermal Valley

5 Beitou Museum

Further uphill from the hot-spring park and the thermal-spring valley, on Youya Road, is the Beitou Museum (www.beitoumuseum.org.tw), an excellent place to learn more about Beitou's history, indigenous culture, and the Japanese colonial era – the museum building was original constructed in 1921 as a fancy hot-spring hotel for the Japanese elite – and also to taste fine cuisine (Kaiseki-style) and take in irregular cultural performances (in a spacious tatami room). **T**

Getting there:

Getting to the heart of Beitou is easy and convenient. Take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi Line to Beitou Station and transfer to the short Xinbeitou Line, which takes you to Xinbeitou Station in Beitou's hot-spring resort area.

For more information about Beitou and other popular tourist areas in Taipei City, visit www.travel.taipei/en.

English and Chinese

Beitou 北投
Beitou Hot Spring Museum
北投溫泉博物館
Beitou Museum 北投文物館
Taipei Public Library,
Beitou Branch
臺北市立圖書館北投分館

Thermal Valley 地熱谷
Xinbeitou Historic Station
新北投車站
Yangmingshan 陽明山



Beitou Museum

BEST OF TAIPEI

A Leisurely MRT Tour of Popular City Attractions

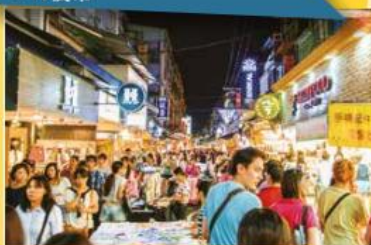
Text and Photos: Vision

With a history dating back to 1876, Taipei City is not only the political and economic center of Taiwan, it also has a deep history and diverse culture. Following, we showcase some of the city's top historical, cultural, and gastronomic attractions in a model one-day city tour via MRT (the Taipei Metro), the most convenient way to get around, offering the optimal speed/comfort/cost option for experiencing Taipei's captivating charms.

Shilin is Taipei's largest and best-known night market. Large and small stores and stalls stretch all the way from Wenlin Road to Jihe Road in Shilin District, attracting large crowds each evening. The most attractive thing about Shilin Night Market, apart from its myriad fun and novel products along with fashionable and inexpensive clothing items, is the delicious array of Taiwanese snacks available.

Location: Between Dadong Rd., Danan Rd., Wenlin Rd., and Jihe Rd.
Getting there: Take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi Line to Jiantan Station. The night market is two minutes on foot from Exit 1.

Shilin Night Market 士林夜市



Din Tai Fung Xinyi Restaurant 鼎泰豐信義店



Established in 1958, Din Tai Fung is a restaurant chain specializing in flour-based foods. It was once named a restaurant worth a special trip by *The New York Times* and its delicate and delicious 18-fold steamed dumplings are internationally renowned. The Xinyi branch is the chain's original restaurant, and is at the top of the list of places to eat for many visitors to Taiwan.

Add: No. 194, Sec. 2, Xinyi Rd., Da'an District, Taipei City
(台北市大安區信義路二段 194 號)

Tel: (02) 2321-8928

Hours: Mon. ~ Fri. 10am ~ 9pm; Sat. & Sun. 9am ~ 9pm

Website: www.dintai fung.com.tw

Getting there: Take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi or Zhonghe-Xinlu Line to Dongmen Station. The restaurant is two minutes on foot from Exit 2

This temple is devoted to Guan Sheng Di Jun, also known as Guan Yu, the God of War. Originally a mortal, he was one of the most famous generals in Chinese history. Because he attached great importance to loyalty, trust, and righteousness, and was a supreme tactician, he is now worshipped as a patron god for businesspeople, who visit the temple to pray for smooth affairs and prosperity. Xingtian Temple is one of the most popular temples in northern Taiwan, sometimes attracting up to 20,000 worshippers in a day.

Add: No. 109, Sec. 2, Minquan E. Rd., Zhongshan District, Taipei City
(台北市中山區民權東路二段 109 號)

Getting there: Take the MRT Zhonghe-Xinlu Line to Xingtian Temple Station. The temple is two minutes on foot from Exit 3.



Xingtian Temple 行天宮



National Palace Museum
國立故宮博物院

One of the most iconic museums in the world, the National Palace Museum was completed in 1965. Its buildings were constructed in magnificent Chinese-palace architectural style, and the museum is packed with more priceless Chinese art treasures than any other museum in the world. The collection, which consists of more than 655,000 pieces spanning almost all of the 5,000 years of Chinese history, mainly from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, is known as a “treasure trove of Chinese culture.” This is one of the must-see places for visitors to Taiwan.

Add: No. 221, Sec. 2, Zhishan Rd., Shilin District, Taipei City (台北市士林區至善路二段 221 號)
Hours: Sun.–Thurs. 8:30am ~ 6:30pm;
Fri. & Sat. 8:30am ~ 9pm
Website: www.npm.gov.tw
Getting there: Take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi to Shilin Station, transfer to bus No. 255, 304, S19, or R30 and get off at National Palace Museum (故宮博物院) bus stop.



Towering over Taiwan’s capital at a dizzying height of 509.2 meters, Taipei 101 was the world’s tallest building from December 31, 2004 to January 4, 2010. It is the ninth-tallest building today, and is the tallest on the Pacific Ring of Fire. With numerous upscale stores and a wide variety of high-quality products, the Taipei 101 Mall on the lower floors of the tower is an excellent place to shop. To enjoy a fantastic bird’s-eye view of the whole city, head to the observatory on the 89th floor. This is also an unrivaled spot for viewing the stunning city lights from high up during the evening.

Add: No. 7, Sec. 5, Xinyi Rd., Xinyi District, Taipei City (台北市信義區信義路 5 段 7 號)
Hours: 9am ~ 11pm
Website: www.taipei-101.com.tw
Getting there: Take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi Line to Taipei 101/World Trade Center Station



Taipei 101
台北 101



Folio Daan Taipei
富藝旅台北大安



Opened in August 2016, Folio Daan Taipei is a hotel brimming with creativity and art. It is housed in an old building that was formerly a bank dormitory. Hotel guests will get more than a taste of the charm of Taipei’s heritage architecture – this “art museum” also allows them to interact with art in different ways, and shows off the abundance of local cultural-creative artistic talent.

Add: No. 23, Ln. 30, Sec. 4, Xinyi Rd., Taipei City (台北市信義路四段 30 巷 23 號)
Tel: (02) 6626-0658
Website: www.folio-hotels.com
Getting there: Take the MRT Tamsui-Xinyi Line to Da’an Station. The hotel is three minutes on foot from Exit 4.



Formerly one of the largest tea-growing areas in the Taipei region, Maokong is known for the production of excellent Wenshan Baozhong and Tieguanyin (Iron Buddha) teas. The area has many teahouses that combine traditional tea art with good food, serving up excellent tea along with tasty dishes that feature tea as an ingredient. Maokong can be easily reached by taking the Maokong Gondola from MRT Taipei Zoo Station. Enjoy a leisurely time sipping fine tea while looking out over Taipei City in the distance, the sparkling panorama especially delightful in the evening.

Getting there: Take the MRT Wenshu Line to Taipei Zoo Station, transfer to the Maokong Gondola, and get off at Maokong Station.



Maokong
貓空

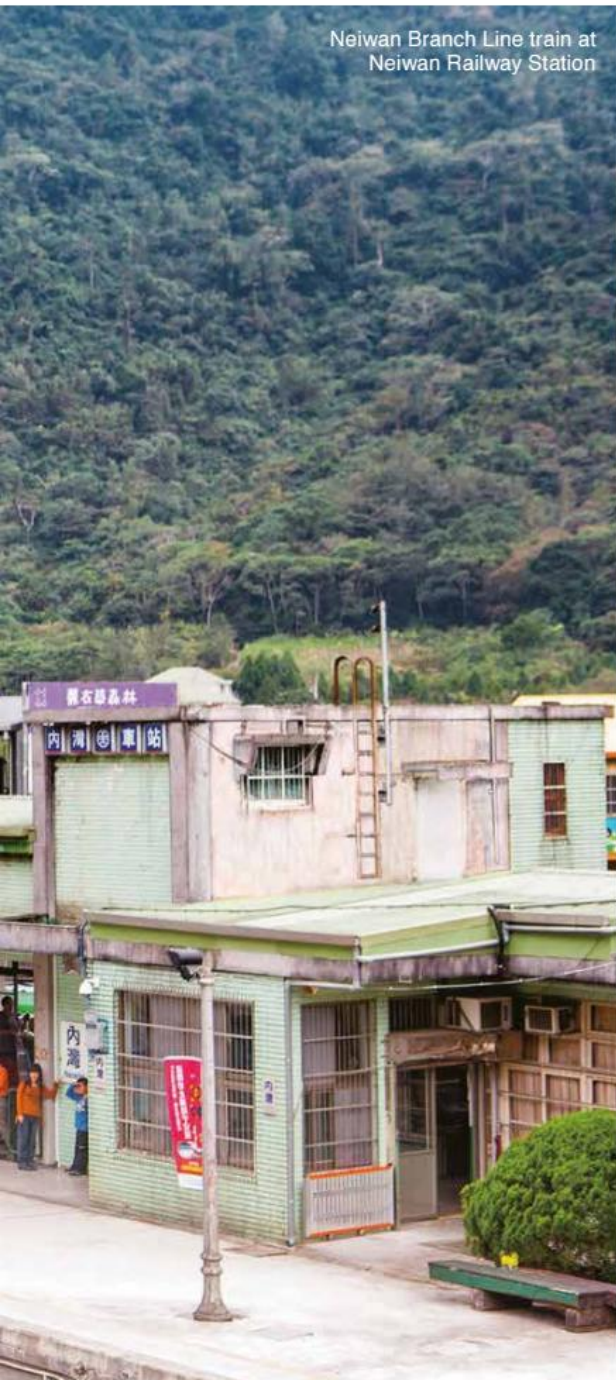
- Wenshu Line (BR)
- Tamsui-Xinyi Line (R)
- Songshan-Xindian Line (G)
- Zhonghe-Xinlu Line (O)
- Bannan Line (BL)
- Maokong Gondola



Riding the Neiwán Branch Line



Old carriage and modern sculptures

Neiwan Branch Line train at
Neiwan Railway Station

The Neiwan Branch Line

Riding Back in Time by Train

Text: Steven Crook Photos: Vision

Neiwan is one of four popular branch-railway lines in Taiwan, the others being the Pingxi/Shen'ao, Jiji, and Alishan lines. A slow train on this route takes you from the modern yet traditional city of Hsinchu deep into the hilly countryside to the tourist-popular village of Neiwan, on the way passing intriguing cultural and historical sites.

The first time I experienced the Neiwan Branch Line was on another assignment for *Travel in Taiwan*, nearly twenty years ago. I thereafter rode the train to Neiwan once more, but that was long before the line's closure, renovation, and reopening in late 2011. So when the magazine recently asked me if I'd like to go back, my eagerness to see if the area has changed spurred immediate acceptance.

Even better, the editor wanted me to write something about downtown Hsinchu, one of my favorite cities in Taiwan. Hsinchu is usually thought of as a citadel of high-tech industry, which it is. But it also has some of the island's finest traditional architecture, as well as a wide range of tasty local delicacies every bit as good as those of Tainan, the recognized capital for old-style snack treats on the island.

On a glorious sunny day, with an unusual spring in my step, I walked from the Hsinchu high-speed railway station to the adjacent Liujia Railway Station, which serves conventional trains operated by the Taiwan Railways Administration (TRA). The construction of the Liujia station and 3.1km of new tracks was a key part in overhauling the Neiwan line. Commuters can now get from the high-speed rail station stop to the heart of Hsinchu in just 19 minutes.

Before boarding the *dianche* ("electric car") – i.e., local commuter train – to downtown Hsinchu, I bought a one-day jump-on/jump-off ticket valid for both the Neiwan and Liujia lines. This pass (NT\$95 for adults, NT\$50 for kids and senior citizens) can also be purchased at Hsinchu Railway Station and some other TRA stations, including Taipei Main Station.

Sightseers heading straight to Neiwan should get off at the next station after Liujia, Zhuzhong, and make sure they wait on the right platform. If you're heading into the city, as I was, there's no need to change trains.

Assuming you've come via the High Speed Rail (HSR) service from Taipei (no more than 35 minutes) or Taichung (even quicker), and the Neiwan Branch Line is your main objective, you'll probably not want to spend more than a couple of hours in downtown Hsinchu. Fortunately, a bunch of interesting sights are within 15 minutes on foot from the city's main railway station.

At Hexing Station



Hsinchu City

I made a beeline for the **City God Temple** (aka Chenghuang Temple). The obvious route to this perpetually bustling place of worship takes you right past the **Yingxi Old East Gate**. The gate is all that remains of the protective wall that once surrounded Hsinchu, but it is lovingly preserved.

For those intrigued by Taiwanese folk religion, the abode of the City God is a fascinating place. For everyone else, it's a great place to enjoy Hsinchu specialties like **rice vermicelli** and **pork meatballs**. The former often comes fried, while the latter are usually served in a soup with chopped scallions. Around two dozen food vendors, a couple of which have air-conditioned seating areas, are clustered tightly around the temple's forecourt. You won't see a word of English, but many of these eateries have picture menus. Few dishes cost more than NT\$50 per serving.

Across the road from the temple is a tall building bearing Chinese characters which mean "hundred-year-old (i.e., 'heritage') shop." This is the flagship store of **Hsin Fu Jean**, a maker of traditional Chinese-style cakes that has been in business since 1898. Step inside, pick up an English-language leaflet, and accept the staff's offer of a free sample or two before making your purchase selection.

Hsin Fu Jean's signature product is a flaky pastry called a **Chu-chan cake**. Chu-chan is the old name of Hsinchu ("Zhuqian" would be the standard Hanyu Pinyin spelling for this). The filling is mostly ground pork, but it's the zesty green onion that makes this baked delight especially memorable. The company also sells walnut cakes, mochi, and rice puffs.

If you've the time and energy, consider straying a bit further from the railway station, along Beimen Street, Chengbei Street, or Aiwen Street. All three have retained a great deal of pre-World War II character.

Just six trains per day go all the way from Hsinchu to Neiwán (and four of these depart before 8am), so you'll likely change at **Zhuzhong Railway Station**, just east of the city limits in Hsinchu County, from which there's an hourly service between 8:46am and 9:52pm.

As part of the revamping of the Neiwán line, stations such as **Shangyuan** and **Ronghua** were modernized for the convenience of commuters. But many other features were not changed. For much of its 27.9km length, the branch line remains single track. And while almost all of Taiwan's railway network has now been electrified, the Hsinchu County stretch of the Neiwán Branch Line continues to be an exception. At Zhuzhong you'll find yourself boarding a short diesel-electric train. By comparison with HSR and TRA expresses, these look like toy trains!



Zhudong day market



Traditional cakes

Hsin Fu Jean (新復珍)

Addr: No. 6, Beimen St., Hsinchu City (新竹市北門街 6 號)

Hours: 8am ~ 10:30pm

Website: www.hfj.com.tw (Chinese)



Zhudong

The journey time from Zhuzhong to Neiwán is 42 minutes, but there's a host of good reasons to get off before the terminal stop. For my first digression, I chose Zhudong, the only sizable town along the branch line.

Comic-book and animation fans come to this town to visit **Zhudong Anime Park** (admission NT\$100 for adults; open 9:30am to 6pm Wednesday to Monday). The entrance is on the right as soon as you leave the railway station.

Being more interested in history and industrial heritage, however, I bypassed the anime park and walked 200m to the **Zhudong Timber Industry Exhibition Hall** (admission free; open 9am to 12noon and 1pm to 5pm Wednesday to Sunday). Throughout the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945) and for some years after, the hills and mountains inland of Zhudong were heavily logged. The exhibition hall, an attractive wooden structure built in 1943, contains old equipment, photos of great interest, and quite a bit of English-language info.

Whether you make Zhudong a stop on the way to or back from Neiwán, do walk a bit further, as far as the Ren'ai Road/Donglin Road intersection. The first thing to see here is a **Roman Catholic church**. In Taiwan, Catholic houses of worship tend to be either European-style edifices with spires or inspired by classical Chinese architecture. This one isn't either, although the cross on the roof and the dove emblems make its allegiance obvious.

From dawn to almost lunchtime, the **traditional food market** that occupies the lanes and alleyways across from the church on the other side of Donglin Road buzzes with activity. Starting well before dusk, the neighborhood then becomes a good place to find dinner.



Hsinchu Railway Station



Zhudong Anime Park



Traditional cake, rice vermicelli and pork meatball soup

The flat river-valley land between Hsinchu and Zhudong has seen a lot of development over the past two decades. But when I got back on the train after my Zhudong interval, I noticed that inland of Zhudong the landscape remains ruggedly rural.

It's the kind of scenery that rewards careful observation. Amid the preponderance of bland, cheaply constructed postwar housing, you'll spot the occasional traditional brick-and-tile abode built long ago for a member of the local gentry; lovingly tended vegetable patches; and egrets standing in paddy fields. At **Jiuzantou**, a tiny station no longer manned, grass grows across the roof and foliage is beginning to obscure the walls.

Hexing

I made one more stop before Neiwan, stepping off at Hexing station. The area around the station has been remade and dubbed **Love Plaza**, enhanced by public art and tasteful redecoration of the original Japanese-style buildings. Two retired passenger carriages have been converted into shops where you can enjoy juices, ice cream, and other refreshments. The chances of you coming here and not taking a photo (or a dozen) are infinitesimal.

Neiwan

The best is saved for last on the Neiwan Branch Line. Neiwan is, in this writer's humble opinion, the most interesting stop along the railway. One reason for this is the area's history.

If you visited Neiwan at the end of the 19th century, you would have found a tiny hamlet dependent on the camphor trade. At that time Taiwan was the world's No.1 source of camphor, a key ingredient in mothballs,

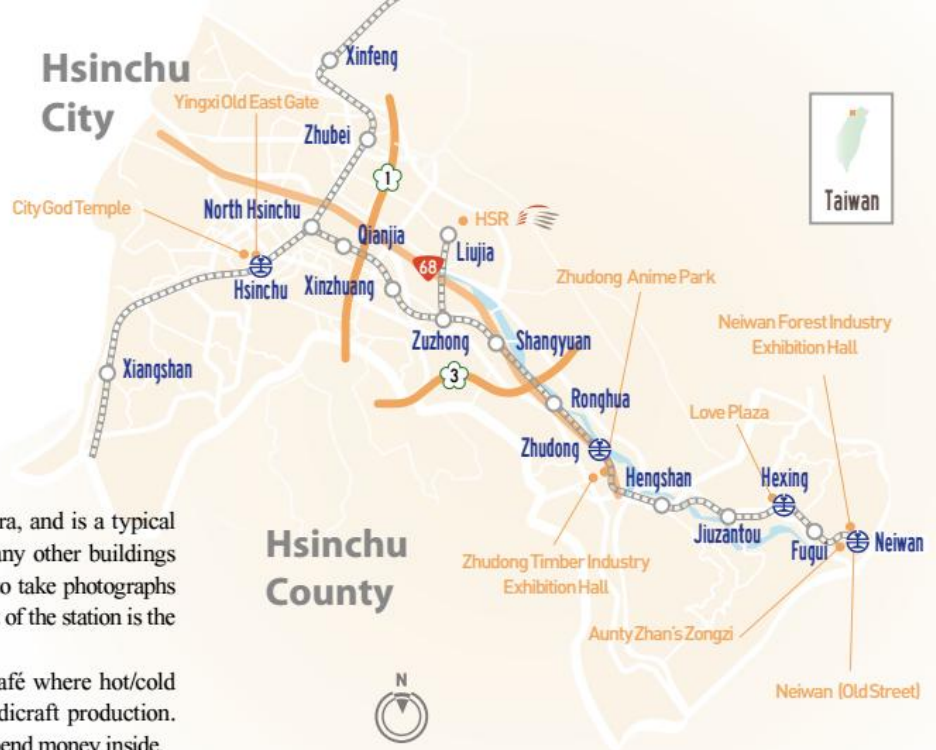
smokeless gunpowder, and celluloid film. Later on, timber and then coal were extracted from the surrounding hills and mountains.

By 1934 a narrow-gauge railway linked Neiwan to the lowlands. This was upgraded to regular gauge (which in Taiwan means 1,067mm) in 1951. By that time, Neiwan was a bustling place with its own movie theater and other places of entertainment.

The handsome **old theater** still stands and deserves a look, even if you've no desire to watch a movie while enjoying a meal inside. Finding it – and everything else in Neiwan – is a cinch. Almost everything stands between the station and the two bridges (one for cars, one for people) that cross the **Youlue River**, so just follow the crowd. That said, note that two worthwhile sights are located on the uphill side of the tracks. The police station is one, New Hakka Cultural Park (open 10am to 5pm Wednesday to Monday) the other.



At Hexing station



The **police station** was built during the Japanese era, and is a typical Japanese single-story wooden structure. Unlike many other buildings from that era, it hasn't been renovated. If you want to take photographs of trains as they leave or enter the station, just in front of the station is the best (and safest) place to be.

New Hakka Cultural Park has a spacious café where hot/cold drinks and snacks are sold, as well as on-site handicraft production. Admission is NT\$50 per person, redeemable if you spend money inside.

Neiwán Old Street is the nickname given to part of Guangfu Road, but in a place this compact there's really no need to pay attention to street names. Simply go where your eyes, your nose, or your stomach leads you.

Even on weekdays, there's an excellent selection of snacks to sample. My favorites include the bite-sized sticky-rice dumplings at **"Aunty Zhan's Zongzi."** Just walk down the stairs from the railway station and you'll immediately see the dumplings, wrapped in bamboo leaves and tied together with string.

If it's coffee and cake you crave, a good bet is the very characterful **Migration Café and B&B**, down a quiet side street at No. 18, Heping Street. Three rooms are available for overnighters.

If you should find you still have a bit of time before your train departs, pop in to the **Neiwán Forest Industry Exhibition Hall** (admission free; open 9am to 5pm Wednesday to Sunday). There's no English inside, but the black-and-white photos, taken more than 60 years ago, need little explanation.

These engrossing images make it clear that, despite the use of ropeways, narrow-gauge trains, trucks, and what was called the "wooden horse track" (a slide along which bundles of logs were dragged and pushed), in the old days getting timber out of the forest and down to the lowlands required a great deal of muscle and sweat. Makes you glad to be a tourist in 2017, doesn't it? 📷

English and Chinese

- Aiwen Street 愛文街
- "Aunty Zhan's Zongzi" 詹阿姨野薑花粽
- Beimen Street 北門街
- Chengbei Street 城北街
- Chu-chan cake 竹塹餅
- City God Temple 都城隍廟
- dianche 電車
- Donglin Road 東林路
- Guangfu Road 光復路
- Heping Street 和平街
- Hexing 合興
- "hundred-year-old shop" 百年老店
- Jiuzantou 九讚頭
- Liujiia Railway Station 六家車站
- Love Plaza 愛情廣場
- Migration Café and B&B 遷徙咖啡民宿
- Neiwán (Old Street) 內灣 (老街)
- Neiwán Forest Industry Exhibition Hall 林務局內灣林業展示館

- New Hakka Cultural Park 好客好品希望工場
- pork meatballs 撻丸
- Ren'ai Road 仁愛路
- rice vermicelli 米粉
- Ronghua 榮華
- Shangyuan 上員
- "wooden horse track" 木馬道
- Yingxi Old East Gate 迎曦東門城
- Youluo River 油羅溪
- Zhudong 竹東
- Zhudong Anime Park 竹東動漫園區
- Zhudong Timber Industry Exhibition Hall 竹東林業展示館
- Zhuzhong Railway Station 竹中車站



Neiwán's old theater



Inside the theater

Hotels of Taiwan

Visitors to Taiwan have a wide range of choice when it comes to accommodation. From five-star luxury hotels that meet the highest international standards, to affordable business hotels, to hot-spring and beach resort hotels, to privately-run homestays located in the countryside there is a place to stay that satisfies every traveler's needs. What all hotels of Taiwan — small and big, expensive and affordable — have in common is that serve and hospitality are always of the highest standards. The room rates in the following list have been checked for each hotel, but are subject to change without notice. Room rates at the hotels apply.

* Hotel list in alphabetical order from Northern to Southern Taiwan.

TAIPEI GALA HOTEL

麗泰大飯店 Taipei 台北



NO. OF ROOMS: 160
ROOM RATES:
 Single Room NT\$ 6,400
 Deluxe Single Room NT\$ 7,000
 Deluxe Twin Room NT\$ 7,800
 Suite Room NT\$ 12,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, Japanese, Chinese
RESTAURANTS: Golden Ear Restaurant (Western semi buffet); Golden Pot (Chinese Cuisine)
SPECIAL FEATURES: Business Center, meeting rooms, airport transfer service, parking lot, laundry service, free Internet access, LCD TV, DVD player, personal safety box, mini bar, private bathroom with separate shower & bath tub, hair dryer

186 Songjiang Rd., Taipei City, 10467
 10467 台北市松江路186號
 Exit 1 of MRT Xinglian Temple Station on the Luzhou Line.
 Tel: +886-2-2541-5511 Fax: +886-2-2531-3831
 Reservation Hotline: +886-2-2541-6888
 E-mail: galaht@ms18.hinet.net
www.galahotel.com.tw

GLORIA PRINCE HOTEL TAIPEI

華泰王子大飯店 Taipei 台北



NO. OF ROOMS: 220
ROOM RATES:
 Single / Deluxe / Executive NT\$ 6,000- 8,500
 Suit NT\$ 9,500-20,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, Japanese, Chinese
RESTAURANTS: L'IDIOT RESTAURANT & BAKERY (Western), CHIOU HWA RESTAURANT (Chinese)
SPECIAL FEATURES: Coffee Shop, Fitness Center, Business Center, Meeting and Banquet Facilities, Laundry Service, Non-smoking Floor, Parking Lot, Airport Transfer Service

369, Lin-sen (Linsen) N. Rd., Taipei City, 10447
 10447 台北市林森北路369號
 Tel: +886-2-2581-8111 Fax: +886-2-2581-5811
www.gloriahotel.com

THE GRAND HOTEL

麗山大飯店 Taipei 台北



NO. OF ROOMS: 500 (Suites: 57)
ROOM RATES:
 Single/DBL NT\$ 8,200-13,000
 Suite NT\$ 18,000-30,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, French, Spanish, and Japanese
RESTAURANTS: Western, Cantonese, Northern China Style Dumplings, tea house, coffee shop, steak house
SPECIAL FEATURES: Grand Ballroom, conference rooms for 399 people, 10 breakout rooms, business center, fitness center, sauna, Olympic-size swimming pool, tennis courts, billiards

1 Chung Shan N. Rd., Sec. 4, Taipei City, 10461
 10461 台北市中山北路四段1號
 Tel: +886-2-2886-8888
 Fax: +886-2-2885-2885
www.grand-hotel.org

PARK TAIPEI HOTEL

台北美侖大飯店 Taipei 台北



NO. OF ROOMS: 143
ROOM RATES:
 Standard Room NT\$ 14,000
 Superior Room NT\$ 16,000
 Deluxe Room NT\$ 18,000
 Deluxe Triple Room NT\$ 20,000
 101 View Room NT\$ 22,000
 Executive Room NT\$ 26,000
 Executive 101 View Room NT\$ 28,000
 Park Suite NT\$ 56,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, Japanese, Chinese
RESTAURANTS: Food Symphony (Full Buffet)
SPECIAL FEATURES: Separate bathroom and toilet, TOTO washlets, Denmark Damixa Merkur bathroom hardware, DVD player, Japanese satellite broadcast, safety deposit box, gym with massage chairs, VIP lounge, high-speed broadband Internet access (computers available), free high-speed WiFi throughout hotel, conference room, balcony (smoking allowed)

317, Sec. 1, Fuxing S. Rd., Taipei City 10665
 10665 台北市復興南路一段317號
 Tel: 886.2.5579.3888 Fax: 886.2.5579.3889
www.parktaipei.com

HOTEL SENSE

伸適商旅 Taipei 台北



NO. OF ROOMS: 79
ROOM RATES:
 Superior Room NT\$ 7,500
 Business Room NT\$ 8,500
 Deluxe Room NT\$ 9,500
 Executive Suite NT\$ 10,000
 Sense Suite NT\$ 15,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, Japanese, Chinese
SPECIAL FEATURES: Business center, fitness center, meeting rooms, Club House with luxury furniture and advanced media facilities for private meetings and gatherings, wood-floored open-air Sky Garden, parking tower, close to the MRT system near Zhongshan Elementary school MRT station and key commercial and entertainment districts.

477, Linsen N. Rd., Zhongshan District, Taipei City 10451
 10451 台北市林森北路477號
 3 minutes by foot from
 Exit 2 of MRT Zhongshan Elementary School Station
 Tel: +886-2-7743-1000 Fax: +886-2-7743-1100
 E-mail: info@hotelsense.com.tw
www.hotelsense.com.tw

MIRAMAR GARDEN TAIPEI

美麗信花園酒店 Taipei 台北



NO. OF ROOMS: 203
ROOM RATES:
 Deluxe Room NT\$ 9,000
 Business Room NT\$ 11,000
 Executive Deluxe Room NT\$ 13,000
 Boss Suite NT\$ 17,000
 Premier Suite NT\$ 21,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, Japanese, and Chinese
RESTAURANTS: Rain Forest Buffet Restaurant, Tic-Tac-Toe Bakery, Light Café, JIU BAR
SPECIAL FEATURES: Business Center, Pyramid Club, Sauna, Fitness Club, Outdoor Swimming Pool, Multifunction Room, Car Park

83 Civic Boulevard, Sec. 3, Taipei City, 10491
 10491 台北市市民大道三段83號
 Tel: +886-2-8772-8800 Fax: +886-2-8772-1010
 E-mail: info@miramargarden.com.tw
www.miramargarden.com.tw

MIRAMAR HOTEL HSINCHU

新竹美麗信酒店 Hsinchu 新竹



NO. OF ROOMS: 141
ROOM RATES:
 CORNER 8 NT\$ 6,000
 COMFY ZONE NT\$ 7,000
 D ROOM NT\$ 8,000
 QUEENS NT\$ 9,000
 KINGS NT\$ 12,000
 STUDIO M NT\$ 20,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK: English, Japanese, and Chinese
RESTAURANTS: The Zone Bar & Restaurant
SPECIAL FEATURES: Gym, Sky Lounge, Sky Garden

111, Sec. 2, Gongdao 5th Rd., East Dist., Hsinchu City 30070
 30070 新竹市公道五路二段111號
 Tel: +886-3-623-1188 Fax: +886-3-623-1199
 E-mail: info@miramar-hsinchu.com
www.miramar-hsinchu.com

53 HOTEL 寶島53行館 Taichung 台中



NO. OF ROOMS: 70

ROOM RATES:

Standard Room	NT\$ 4,500
Superior Room	NT\$ 5,000
Deluxe Room	NT\$ 5,500
Family Room	NT\$ 6,000
Deluxe Family Room	NT\$ 6,500

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK:

English, Japanese, Chinese

SPECIAL FEATURES:

Our guests enjoy easy access to all attractions lively Taichung City has to offer. From the hotel it's a two-minute walk to Taichung Railway Station and a three-minute walk to the bus station, from where guests can easily reach popular tourist sites, such as Qingjing Farm, Xitou Forest Recreation Area, and Sun Moon Lake.

53 Hotel offers a wide range of services, including laundry/dry cleaning, a business center, a gym, and free wireless Internet access.

27, Zhongshan Rd., Central District, Taichung City, 40042
(two minutes from railway station)

40042 台中市 中區 中山路 27 號 (距離火車站 2 分鐘)
Tel: +886-4-2220-6699 Fax: +886-4-2220-5899
E-mail: service@53hotel.com.tw

www.53hotel.com.tw

HOTEL RÉVE TAICHUNG 歐汀城市酒店 Taichung 台中



NO. OF ROOMS: 125

ROOM RATES:

Standard Double	NT\$ 5,200
Business Double	NT\$ 7,000
Family Queen	NT\$ 8,000
Deluxe Family Suite	NT\$ 9,000
Family Suite	NT\$ 10,000
Executive Suite	NT\$ 10,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK:

English, Japanese, Chinese

RESTAURANTS:

RÉVE Kitchen (6:30-10:30 Daily Breakfast)

SPECIAL FEATURES:

Business Center, Conference Room, Fitness Gym, Parking Lot, Laundry, Bike Renting, Free Wifi, Personal Electronic Safety Box

100, Sec. 1, Minsheng Rd., Daya Dist., Taichung City, 42866

42866 台中市 大雅區 民生路一段 100 號
Tel: +886-4-2568-0558 Fax: +886-4-2567-7134
Email: service@reve.com.tw

www.hotel-reve.com.tw

LISHIUAN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL 麗軒國際飯店 Hualien 花蓮



NO. OF ROOMS: 95

ROOM RATES:

Standard Twin Room	NT\$ 4,800
Standard Double Room	NT\$ 4,800
Standard Triple Room	NT\$ 5,800
Standard Family Room	NT\$ 6,800
Deluxe VIP Suite	NT\$ 10,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK:

English, Chinese

RESTAURANT:

Lishiuan Restaurant, Tastefulness Cafe

SPECIAL FEATURES:

Rooftop Garden, Fitness Center, Business Center, Spa

99-1 Chung Mei Rd. Hualien County 97061

97061 花蓮市中區 美路 99-1 號

Tel: +886-3-824-6898 Fax: +886-3-824-6299
www.lishiuan.com

HUALIEN TOONG MAO RESORT HOTEL 花蓮統茂渡假莊園 Hualien 花蓮



NO. OF ROOMS: 84

ROOM RATES:

Standard Room	NT\$ 5,500
Tianye Double Room (two small beds)	NT\$ 7,700
Daoxiang Double Room (one large bed)	NT\$ 7,700
Zhuangyuan Triple Room (one large/one small bed)	NT\$ 9,350
Zhuangyuan Quadruple Room (two large beds)	NT\$ 11,000

DESK PERSONNEL SPEAK:

English, Japanese, Chinese

RESTAURANTS:

Shi-man Breakfast Buffet, Shi-man Dinner (Taiwanese hot pot)

SPECIAL FEATURES:

Multi-functional conference room, travel info desk, DIY handicraft studio, shopping area, reading room, souvenir shop, entertainment center, bicycles, table tennis room

199, Sec. 2, Jileng Rd., Ji'an Township, Hualien County 97358

97358 花蓮縣吉安鄉 檜香村 吉豐路二段 199 號
Tel: +886-3-854-2111 Fax: +886-3-854-1000
Email: tsb@uniongo.com.tw

www.toongmao.com.tw/hualien

Taipei City Tour 台北市區觀光	NT\$1,100	Pingxi Sky Lantern Experience & Old Street Walk 平溪天燈體驗、老街漫步	NT\$1,500	3-Day Southern Taiwan Tour (Tainan, Kaohsiung, Kenting) (Taiwan High-Speed Rail - Bullet Train Ride) 三天二夜 台南·高雄·墾丁深度之旅 (含台灣高鐵體驗)	NT\$14,500	 <p>台北市松江路 190 號 4F 4F, 190 Song Jiang Rd., Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.</p> <p>TEL: +886-2-2563-5313 +886-2-2563-4621 +886-2-2541-6785</p> <p>FAX: +886-2-2563-4803 +886-2-2531-1353</p> <p>E-mail: edisons@msb.hinet.net http://www.edison.com.tw</p>
Wulai Aboriginal Village Tour 烏來高砂族部落觀光	NT\$1,500	"Thousand Island Lake" & Pinglin Tea Plantation 千島湖、坪林自然美景 茶飄香	NT\$1,500	4-Day Central & Southern Taiwan Tour (Sun Moon Lake, Kaohsiung, Kenting) 四天三夜 台灣中南部觀光 (日月潭、高雄、墾丁)	NT\$ 14,000	
Taipei Night Tour 臺北夜景觀光	NT\$1,500	1-Day Taroko (Marble) Gorge Tour 花蓮太魯閣 (大理石) 峽谷觀光	NT\$4,200	4-Day Eastern Taiwan Tour (Yilan, Hualien, Taitung) (Taiwan Railway Train Ride) 四天三夜 海岸、縱谷豐富之旅 (宜蘭、花蓮、台東) (含臺灣鐵路體驗)	NT\$ 15,500	
Northern Coast Tour 基隆港、野柳、北海岸公園觀光	NT\$1,200	2-Day Sun Moon Lake, Puli & Lukang Tour (Stay at Sun Moon Lake) 2天1夜 日月潭、埔裡鎮、及鹿港觀光 (住日月潭)	NT\$6,600	5-Day Round Taiwan Island Excursion (All hotels are 5-star hotels) 五天四夜 台灣環島巴士之旅 (全程五星級旅館)	NT\$ 16,900	
Folk Arts Tour (Sanxia & Yingge) 民俗藝術觀光 (三峽、鶯歌)	NT\$1,300	2-Day QingJing & Fruit Picking Tour (Stay at QingJing) 2天1夜 南投清境 世外桃源採果趣 (住清境)	NT\$6,900			
Yangmingshan National Park & Hot-Spring Tour 陽明山國家公園及溫泉觀光	NT\$1,500	3-Day Tour to Sun Moon Lake & Alishan 3天2夜 日月潭、阿里山觀光	NT\$12,500			
Jiufen Village & Northeast Coast Tour 九份、東北角海岸觀光	NT\$1,300					



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The Great Roots Forestry Spa Resort Taiwan's Only Double-SPA Resort Combining Rainforest and Hot Springs

Rarest and Most Precious Rainforest in North Taiwan

The Great Roots resort is the only location in north Taiwan with buttress-root rainforest, with many breathtaking grand specimens on display. The giant vines and towering trees have been spreading, outward and upward, century after century. The Great Roots rainforest, spanning about 20 hectares at medium-low altitude, is a veritable "secret treasure vault of tropical rainforest plant life." Its rich trove of ecological variation makes it a rival to the deep high-altitude mountain stock found at Alishan. This unique gem highlights the great green beauty of The Great Roots, and at the same time is the only place of its kind in all Taiwan.

New Sanxia Landmark – The Great Roots Beauty Soaking · Springs in the Forest

The Great Roots hot springs are a unique Sanxia phenomenon. The springs were successfully developed by an international mineral-spring exploration team, from a deep underground source, the filtering through multiple geo-formations generating ultra-pure waters. Stringent testing and certification in accordance with Japanese national standards has resulted in premium-quality colorless and odorless sodium bicarbonate saline spring waters.



The Great Roots Forestry Spa Resort (大板根森林溫泉酒店)

Add: 80, Chajiao Borough, Sanxia District,
New Taipei City (新北市三峽區插角里80號)

Tel: 886-2-2674-9228

Website: www.dabangan.com.tw





北投熱海溫泉大飯店
ATAMI HOTEL TAIPEI ONSEN

北投熱海溫泉大飯店 Atami Hotel
Tel: (02) 2891-5161
Fax: (02) 2891-6741
Email: info@atamihotel.com.tw
Add: No. 258, Guangming Rd.,
Beitou District, Taipei City
(台北市北投區光明路258號)
Website: www.atamihotel.com.tw



Taipei City Hotel No. 014-1
(台北市旅館014-1號)

View Beitou from the Side of Beitou Creek

Imposing Atami Hotel Taipei Onsen stands tall on Guangming Road at the side of Beitou Creek, the gushing water of which has flowed unceasingly since time immemorial. Amidst unchanging scenery, the Atami Hotel has faithfully served its guests for over 40 years. Open the window of your room and hear the sound of the flowing water while breathing in the sulfur-scented air, creating a memorable Beitou moment you will remember fondly.

Guestrooms and Hot-Spring Water Compose a Sweet Song

Enter the Atami Hotel and you will be greeted by a grand spacious lobby, the opulence reflecting our guest-first approach. The sunlight shining into the guestrooms tells of the attentive care we extend to each and every guest. In the hot-spring bathhouse, built using natural construction methods, where the sulfur scented air has been unchanged since ancient times, you can wash away the noise and hassle of the city, recharge your tired spirit, the guestrooms and the hot-spring water composing the uniquely and moving song of the Atami Hotel.



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