

A B O U

T

A I W A N

CAPITAL

Taipei, officially known as Taipei City, is the capital city of Taiwan. Central Taipei is home to nearly 2.7 million people. Sitting at the northern tip of the island, Taipei's appropriate name literally means "north of Taiwan."

HISTORY

The name "Taiwan," meaning "terraced bay," was first used in 1430. In the 16th century, the Portuguese named the island "Ilha Formosa" meaning "Beautiful Island." The name Formosa was used until the end of WWII. Situated between northern and southern Asia, Taiwan has long played a crucial role in trade and politics. Taiwan's location brought frequent invasions, but also provided the conditions needed for a modern, prosperous and democratic country.

CULTURE

The culture of Taiwan is a blend of modern and traditional, national and international, unique and universal. Due to Taiwan's complex political history, the influences of indigenous culture, Confucianism, Japan, and Western civilization all can be seen at the same time. The dominant culture in Taiwan is Chinese. Immigrants from mainland China brought Confucianism and Chinese culture to Taiwan and visitors will see ornate temples and traditional Chinese characters here.

LANGUAGE

Officially the largest and most commonly understood language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese. The form of 'standard Chinese' is taught as the primary language in schools and spoken fluently by virtually the entire population under sixty years old. There is also a widespread dialect form of Chinese known as Hokkien (also known simply as Taiwanese) that originates from the widespread historical immigration of populations from Southern China.

PEOPLE

Taiwan has a population of about 23 million people which consists of various ethnic groups. The larger part of the country's inhabitants are the descendants of immigrants from various provinces in China. Taiwanese people are unquestionably some of the friendliest in Asia, if not the entire world, and most foreign visitors are impressed by people's hospitality from the moment they arrive. The Taiwanese are a warm, hospitable group of people who never fail to be courteous and helpful.

WEATHER

Taiwan is located mainly in the tropical area, so the weather is usually warm to hot and humid. The average temperature is from 18°C to 31°C. Southern Taiwan has a tropical, marine climate with generally warm and relatively dry weather. However, during winter in the north of Taiwan, it might be chilly and rainy in Taipei.

Rain may fall at any time, but the greatest amount usually falls from April to August. Typhoon season is from May to September.

GEOGRAPHY

Taiwan is located at the western edge of the Pacific Ocean, between Japan and the Philippines. The Central Mountain Range divides the east and west coasts and stretches from north to south. A wonderful variety of geo-geographical contrasts exist: mountains, hills, plateaus, plains, basins and coastline, all of which have a diversity of unique flora and fauna thrive.

CURRENCY

Currency in Taiwan is the New Taiwan Dollar. The currency code is *TWD* and is commonly abbreviated as NT\$ or simply \$ in front of the amount, or a Chinese character 元 following the amount.

1 USD ≈ 30 NTD

VOLTAGE

Electricity in Taiwan is 110 Volts, alternating at 60 cycles per second. If you bring a device that does not accept 110 Volts at 60 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter. Also, outlets in Taiwan generally accept 1 type of plug, so if your appliances plug has a different shape, you may need a plug adapter