

“The Sights and Sounds of Taipei, Taiwan”

Taipei, situated at the center of the Taipei Basin is the political, economic, cultural and educational center of the province of Taiwan.

台北

National Flower of Taiwan - plum blossom



Culture and tradition is very much alive and celebrated beneath the modern, vibrant city of Taipei. Treasure is held in Taipei's National Palace Museum, which contains the world's largest collection of Chinese artifacts. The city's most celebrated monument is the museum dedicated to the former Chinese president, the Chiang Kai Shek Memorial Hall. Lungshan Temple, south west of the city center, is the place to be in the early evening. Next door, to complete the picture of Taiwan's Chinese style, are jars of pickled snakes and demonstrations with live pythons at the Huahsi Night Market, known locally as Snake Alley. Taipei is a gourmet's paradise, boasting cuisine from every region of China. When the eating is done, there's karaoke, live music, dancing and festivals throughout the year.

Key Attractions:

National Palace Museum

The National Palace Museum is considered one of the three top museums in the world and is home to over 650,000 priceless Chinese artifacts - the world's largest collection.

Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall

Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall is an imposing tomb and shrine to Taipei's most well known leader, which also houses Taipei's main venues for the performing arts, the National Theater and National Opera House.

Taipei 101

The tallest tower in the world, Taipei 101 offers 101 floors of entertainment and dining. Everything is here - bars and restaurants, a health club, a cinema and designer boutiques. While you're there, take the fastest lift in the world up to The Observatory for the ultimate city view.



National Palace Museum



Lungshan Temple

Lungshan Temple

This, by contrast, is the city's most atmospheric Taoist temple-with dragons, incense and burning paper 'ghost money'.

Night Markets

As shopping and eating are the top entertainment activities in Taiwan, a good place to experience these are at the many night markets throughout the city, many open until midnight. ShihLin night market is the largest and a popular favorite, while Huashi Street Night Market (Snake Alley) is the most famed. These night markets sell everything from snake soup to painted umbrellas to a much needed shoulder massage after all the shopping. Don't forget to bargain.

Warner Village Cinema Multiplex

Located in Shin Yi District, the Warner Village is also a great area for eating, drinking and shopping.

Getting Around:

Public Transport

There are two main public transportation routes around the city: the metro and the bus. The MRT Mass Rapid Transit System has signs in English and is an efficient way to get around the city; it is also inexpensive. Its six lines cover major areas and trains run every 4 to 7 minutes. Taipei also has an astounding number of buses. City bus services are frequent, reliable and comfortable.

Taxis

Taxis are inexpensive and plentiful; they are also the most convenient way to get around if you're new in the city. They operate on a meter and can be hailed on the street, picked up outside hotels, or a dispatch taxi may be called via an English-speaking radio calling system from almost any destination.

Shop Till You Drop

Taipei is also known as a shopping haven for travelers. With specific destinations for every interest, Taipei's main shopping districts are Simending, Jhongsiao and Sinyi. Theme streets such as the jade markets and computer lane make shopping for one item convenient. The Living Mall, is known as the largest shopping mall in Asia, but the newest and largest shopping and leisure extravaganza is in Taipei 101 Mall. Here international designers from Armani to Louis Vuitton exhibit alongside local designers. Dihua Street and the Chinese Handicraft Mart is a one stop shop for inexpensive traditional items, great for bargain souvenirs to bring home.

■ *By Suzy Guttler*



▲ Warner Village Cinema Multiplex

▶ Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall



◀ MRT Mass Rapid Transit System

▼ Simending Shopping District



Night Markets