

# Taiwan



## Bike Taiwan

12 days ex Taipei

Taipei – Taroko National Park – Dramatic Coastal Scenery – volcanic Green Island – hot springs – temples and monasteries – historic Tainan

Coined “La Ilha Formosa” (The Beautiful Island) by the Portuguese, Taiwan offers beautiful beaches, breathtaking gorges, picturesque peaks, serene lakes, tropical forests, aboriginal peoples, stunningly ornate temples, intact Chinese cultural legacy, neon-clad cities, and an unbelievably diverse culinary heritage. Amazingly, this is all contained in an island only 250 miles long and less than 100 miles wide.

This classic route takes us from Taroko Gorge down the rugged east coast and then south across the mountains to Kenting in the tropical south. At day's end the island offers yet more surprises: whether marveling at the sheer power of the Pacific, soaking away the stresses of life in one of the island's numerous hot springs or just slurping down a hearty bowl of delicious noodles, Taiwan assaults your senses and leaves you hungry for more!



## Itinerary

### Day 1 | Taipei

On Day 1 people will be arriving throughout the day. We'll meet in the evening to get to know one another over dinner and have an introduction to the tour. (D)

### Day 2 | Taroko Gorge

Today we drive along the dramatic coastal highway to breathtaking Taroko Gorge which forges its way through the Central Mountain Range. Whether shrouded in mist or glowing in sunlight, this sheer marble gorge is a captivating sight. On arrival we take a gentle hike along a stunning tributary of the main gorge.

(B, L)

### Day 3 | Baci

We make an early start to make the exhilarating ride down through Taroko Gorge and to the sea. Avoiding the main highway we ride narrow lanes lined with banana palms and temples, taking beachside rest stops on our way south along the coast. South of Hualien there are a few decent hills to prepare us for tomorrow before we reach our lovely overnight rest-stop nestled in a beautiful bay.

(B, L, D)

*Approx Distance Cycled: 85km*

### Day 4 | Tropic of Cancer, East Coast

Today we take a break from the coastal route to explore little-used mountain roads into the picturesque East Rift Valley, a land of lush green rice paddies and small aboriginal communities. After lunch we cut east back across the mountains and emerge at the Tropic of Cancer monument where today's ride ends. (B, L, D)

*Approx Distance Cycled: 85km*

### Day 5 | Chengong, East Coast

Today we'll continue our ride south along the coast, towering mountains to the right, rice paddies and then endless blue swell to the left. We end our day at a lovely resort, right on the ocean. (B, L, D)

*Approx Distance Cycled: 60km*

### Day 6 | Green Island

This morning we'll ride a short way down the coast to Fugang, from where we'll take a ferry across to rugged Green Island, a tiny volcanic outcrop set in the deep blue Pacific. We'll ride around the whole island (all 18km of it ...) taking in dramatic coastal vistas, beautiful coral beaches and bathe in seawater hot springs right on the shore – one of only three places in the world you can do so. (B, L, D)

*Approx Distance Cycled: 60km*

*NB Today's riding is subject to ferry times, and the program may need to be amended accordingly.*

### Day 7 | Zhiben

Today we'll take the ferry back across to the mainland, and then transfer to Zhiben where we'll have a rest day to relax in the therapeutic hot springs, or take a hike in the nearby national park which is teeming with wildlife. (B)

### Day 8 | Daren



This morning we continue along the east coast, and then cut inland and up into the tropical southern central mountains. We end the day in a tranquil mountain town. (B, L, D)  
*Approx Distance Cycled: 70km*

### Day 9 | Kenting

Today we ride south through the jungly low hills of the Hengchun Peninsula on small, little used roads passing remote aboriginal communities, eventually emerging at Kenting, Taiwan's tropical playground. (B, L)  
*Approx Distance Cycled: 60km*

### Day 10 | Kenting

Today is a rest day for you to relax on the beach, go swimming or snorkelling, or take a hike in the national park. (B)

### Day 11 | Tainan

This morning we drive north to Tainan, the island's oldest city which showcases Taiwan's varied culture through its lively temples, traditional cuisine and colonial remnants. In the afternoon we'll take a wander around one of the old parts of the city. In the evening we head out for a local delicacy dinner to celebrate our two-wheeled journey through Taiwan. (B, D)

### Day 12 | Tour Ends

The tour ends after breakfast. From Tainan there are regular High-Speed-Rail (HSR) connections to Taoyuan International Airport and Taipei. Kaohsiung International Airport is also within an hour of Tainan and from here there are international flights to Hong Kong and many other Asian destinations. (B)

*NB. The itinerary is subject to change without notice in the case of extreme conditions (see Climate).*

## Tour Details

### Style

Fully supported bicycle tour

### Inclusions

Support vehicle, tour leader, many meals, entry fees

### Group Size

Minimum 4, Maximum 12

### Food

11 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners

### Accommodation

11 nights comfortable hotels

### Single Room Supplement

On Grasshopper Adventures single travellers do not have to pay extra to join our trips – we will match you up with another same sex, single traveller. However, should you wish to have your own room we are happy to book you a single room for you for the duration of the tour. This single supplement charge for this tour is US\$1000. We should also point out that on occasion single rooms may not be



available and in these instances you may need to share for a night or two – we will refund part of your single supplement in these cases.

### **Additional Accommodation**

Should you require additional accommodation in Taipei before or after your trip we can offer you competitive rates at the tour hotel.

### **Arriving in Taipei**

International flights arrive at Chiang Kaishek (CKS) Airport in Taoyuan, from where there are two main options to get to the hotel:

- The airport shuttle bus runs every 30mins and costs NT\$100-150 (US\$3-5) for the hour journey.
- Meter taxis will cost NT\$1200-1400 (US\$40-45) and take around 45 minutes to get to the hotel. Ignore taxi touts who offer taxis in the arrivals hall and proceed outside to the official taxi rank.

The meeting point for this trip will be advised when you book the tour. The hotel is well-located in the heart of Taipei and the surrounding streets are full of markets, restaurants and shops.

### **Transportation**

All transport listed is included in this trip.

## **Cycling Details**

### **Days Cycling**

6

### **Kilometers Cycled**

Approx 420km

### **Difficulty Rating**

Moderate - Difficult

### **Cycling Conditions**

We ride on well-made roads some of which have designated cycle lanes. The terrain varies from gently undulating along parts the East Coast to the steep ascent and descent over the coastal mountain range. Traffic is generally light although there will be stretches on busier roads.

### **Bicycles**

You can either bring your own bike or we have Giant Great Journeys touring bikes for hire (US\$150).

### **Helmets**

Helmets are now compulsory on all Grasshopper Adventures bicycle tours. Failure to wear a helmet will result in not being accepted on the tour.

### **Support Vehicles**

Throughout the tour we will have vehicle support. The vehicles will carry all our luggage and any riders who are unable to ride at any time. We will use the same vehicles to make transfers for any sections that we do not ride.

## **Travel Details**

### **Visas**



In Taiwan, 30 day single entry visas are free on arrival for many nationalities (US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa & Ireland; UK citizens are granted 90 days). On arrival you may need to show proof of onward travel, so make sure you have your actual ticket or the e-booking number.

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

### Flights

International flights to and from Taipei are not included in the price of this tour. Several airlines fly direct to Taipei ([www.ba.com](http://www.ba.com), [www.cathaypacific.com](http://www.cathaypacific.com), [www.evaair.com](http://www.evaair.com), [www.jal.com](http://www.jal.com), [www.nwa.com](http://www.nwa.com), [www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au), [www.united.com](http://www.united.com)), otherwise Hong Kong is the nearest major hub, from where there are regular flights to Taipei and Kaohsiung ([www.china-airlines.com](http://www.china-airlines.com), [www.dragonair.com](http://www.dragonair.com), [www.eva.com](http://www.eva.com)), whilst Bangkok ([www.thaiair.com](http://www.thaiair.com), [www.airasia.com](http://www.airasia.com)) and Singapore ([www.jetstar.com](http://www.jetstar.com)) are a little further away.

### Money

The official currency of Taiwan is the New Taiwan Dollar (NT\$) which must be used for all transactions. Taiwan has a modern banking system and there are ATMs accepting foreign cards in all major settlements. However, machines break down, eat cards or are just empty, so it's worth having some back-up (mint condition) cash or traveller's cheques, ideally in US\$.

For current exchange rates visit: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

### Costs

Taiwan is certainly less expensive than Europe, North America or Australasia, but isn't as cheap as neighbouring China or the Philippines. Whilst local produce and favorites can be very cheap, imported items are far from a bargain. To give you some rough idea of prices: 1.5L bottle of water NT\$30/US\$1, Street vendor snack \$30/US\$1, large bottle of beer (shop NT\$50/US\$1.60, bar NT\$120/US\$4).

Some meals are included in this trip, but we recommend you bring around NT\$1000 /US\$30) per day as spending money, more if you plan to buy a lot of gifts.

### Packing

You will be required to carry your own luggage at times, so we recommend packing lightly and bringing a backpack. What clothes you decide to pack depends on the season (see Climate, below) and your personal tastes, however a hat and waterproof jacket can come in useful any time of year and the following might be of help as a basic checklist:

<b>Personal Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Backpack</li><li>• Long trousers</li><li>• Shorts</li><li>• Shirts</li><li>• Light sweater clothes for evenings</li><li>• Hat</li><li>• Sandals/Light Shoes</li><li>• Sunglasses</li><li>• Light Rain Coat</li><li>• Toiletries</li><li>• Small Towel</li><li>• Sunscreen</li><li>• First Aid Kit</li></ul>	<b>Bicycle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. daypack</li><li>• Helmet</li><li>• Cycling gloves</li><li>• Bike shorts</li></ul> <b>Travel Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Passport with 6 months validity and 2 spare pages</li><li>• Travel insurance details</li><li>• Flight tickets</li><li>• Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques</li></ul>
---	---



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mosquito Repellent</li> <li>• Camera and Film/Memory</li> <li>• Alarm Clock</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrase book</li> <li>• Photocopy (or electronic copy) of all important travel documents</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### Health

There are no specific health requirements for travelling to Taiwan unless you have been in Africa or South America within the previous six days in which case a Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate is required for entry. However we recommend visiting a travel medicine doctor before your trip; WHO advises vaccination against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Hepatitis A & B, Typhoid, Japanese B Encephalitis and Tuberculosis. You should carry a well-stocked First Aid Kit and any personal medication with you when you travel. All Grasshopper Adventures Group Leaders are First Aid trained, but they are not permitted to dispense any medication.

### Climate

The belt of mountains which runs along the centre of Taiwan lends a diverse climate to such a small island. Throughout the summer (May to October) the entire country experiences high temperatures and humidity, although cool escapes are offered by mountains, the ocean, regular rainstorms and the occasional typhoon.

#### Typhoons

Typhoons (from *taifeng*, meaning strong wind, known elsewhere as tropical cyclones or hurricanes) regularly hit Taiwan between May and September and can occasionally arrive as late as November. Although they can be tracked, their exact course cannot be forecast and during such times itineraries may need to be adjusted. Likewise, after a typhoon, roads may be closed and we may have to alter our route accordingly.

Winters can be cool and wet in the north, but south of the Tropic of Cancer, Taiwan rarely sees temperatures lower than 15°C/60°F, and in the height of winter, Kenting can still enjoy sunny days peaking in the high twenties °C (mid eighties °F). Taiwan experiences a rainy season which tends to arrive in May or June and finish in August. Whilst the north continues to get some rain throughout the winter, this is the south's driest time, with clear, sunny warm days.

Overall, Spring (March-April) and Autumn (October-December) are the best times to visit Taiwan, when temperatures and humidity are more comfortable and there is little rainfall (especially in Autumn). This said, hot spring pools are best appreciated in the middle of winter, whilst the beaches are at their most appealing mid-summer – Taiwan is a year-round destination.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Taipei</b>												
Max (oc)	19	19	22	26	29	32	34	34	31	28	24	21
Min (oc)	13	14	15	19	22	24	26	26	24	22	19	15
Rainfall (mm)	87	166	180	183	259	319	248	305	275	139	86	79
<b>Tainan</b>												
Max (oc)	23	23	26	29	31	32	33	32	32	30	28	25
Min (oc)	14	15	17	21	24	26	26	26	25	22	19	16
Rainfall (mm)	6	17	20	46	53	166	107	154	56	8	1	5

### Communication

You will be able to access email, phone, fax and post offices almost everywhere on this trip. You should leave you family or friends your tour leader's local cellphone number or Grasshopper's Taiwan office number in case of an emergency. Our office staff will be able to get in touch with us in an emergency.



## Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit

### Dress

Taiwan is a hot and relaxed country and in the cities you'll see similar styles of dress as you might in a European, North American or Australasian city.

### Etiquette

Taiwan's melded history, so removed from Western civilization has left a minefield of different social customs which can initially be baffling to foreign visitors. Fortunately the Taiwanese view foreigners as very different from themselves and in most situations cultural *faux pas* will be ignored. However, that isn't to say you shouldn't try to conform whilst here – if you do your actions will be both noticed and appreciated. Your group leader will fill you in on “do's and don'ts” in Taiwan. As well as the items mentioned under donations and packing, it's worth bringing your business cards, which are highly valued items in the Chinese world.

### Language

One of the highlights of a visit to Taiwan is her people and whilst English is increasingly spoken, away from the cities, Chinese, Taiwanese, regional and ethnic dialects rule. We'll teach you some of the basics of *gwoyu* (National Language), the most widely-spoken version of Chinese, but it's also worth bringing a phrasebook along with you.

### Donations

Whilst Taiwan isn't completely free from poverty, it is certainly far wealthier than many other Asian countries. Whilst you won't be drawn into the dubious activity of giving away sweets or pens in Taiwan, it's certainly worth bringing some things from your home country (postcards, photographs) to give as gifts to people you meet along our journey.

Grasshopper Taiwan supports two local charities, Liouguei Christian Mountain Children's Home ([www.twcmch.org/history.htm](http://www.twcmch.org/history.htm)), a local orphanage, and BARK ([www.bark-taiwan.org](http://www.bark-taiwan.org)), a local charity which takes injured animals off the streets and endeavours to find permanent homes for them. We make a contribution to both organizations for every tour we run in Taiwan, and there is also the opportunity for you to donate individually during your trip.

### Important

All information in these tour notes is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures

