

# Travel Guide

What to know before you go!

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Grasshopper Adventures operates Asia's leading bicycle tours, from the heights of Northern Vietnam to the plain of Bagan in Myanmar. This guide contains everything you need to know before you travel with us in Taiwan. If you need additional information about your tour please [contact us](#) or visit [our website](#).





# Welcome

To Taiwan, a cyclist's heaven, where convenient riding, dramatic views, and delicious fresh food await. Whether you enjoy spending time by the sea, cycling through stunning gorges or lush jungle, Taiwan has it all. Along the way, experience a strong indigenous culture in a place most tourists overlook. So hop on your bike and let's get exploring!





# What sets us apart

We're a family owned company with dedicated in-country teams who use their inside knowledge to provide you with that special 'Grasshopper' experience. Travel with a conscience as you visit local initiatives doing good in their communities and get ready for a unique cultural discovery led by our expert guides! Wherever you go, rest assured that you are in good hands as you pursue a high-quality Grasshopper exploration.



# Did you know?

- There are 16 recognized aboriginal tribes in Taiwan, making up nearly 2% of the country's population
- More than half the country is blanketed in thick forest
- The most popular religions in Taiwan are Buddhism and Taoism
- Taiwan was formerly called Ilha Formosa by the Portuguese, meaning 'Beautiful Island'







# Weather & 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 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. For this reason we run most of our tours during the autumn, winter and spring.

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.





# Food

Taiwan is well known for its variety of teas, fresh seafood, and beef noodles. The food is often a highlight of time spent in Taiwan and a surprise offering a fusion of Chinese and Japanese tastes!

Most of our tours include local snacks and meals along the way, and we always have water on hand for cyclists. Our multi-day and family guided tours generally include three meals a day. Typically, at lunch your guide will arrange a selection of local dishes, and at dinner you can order off the menu. If you find a meal is not to your liking please let your guide know. We can always find something that suits your tastes.

On free days we don't generally include lunch or dinner to give you the chance to explore local restaurants on your own, or grab that pizza you've been craving.

Drinks other than water are not included because everyone enjoys something different. Prices vary widely between a soft drink and bottle of wine. Our tours can cater for vegetarian or gluten free and other diets, please check with us for information about strict dietary requirements. Any food allergies must be clearly explained in advance.





# Accommodation

The places we stay vary from five-star hotels and resorts to cozy family guesthouses. At the larger resorts you will experience a high quality of service, world-class dining and comfy beds.

All accommodations are at least 3 stars with ample amenities and facilities. Accommodations are usually one of the highlights of the Grasshopper Adventures experience and here in Taiwan have been selected by our very own Simon Foster, current author of *The Rough Guide to Taiwan*! Be sure to check out the detailed itinerary for your tour to ensure that you know what to expect, but rest easy knowing that no matter where we go we always have your comfort in mind.

The cost of all accommodations during the tour is covered in your fee. If you are traveling with a friend, family member or partner we can pair you together. Otherwise you will be paired with a rider of the same sex. For those wanting extra privacy a single supplement is available.





# Electronics & Communication

## **Internet:**

As you would expect, Taiwan is a modern hub and there is wifi just about everywhere you go (even at the top of it's highest peaks)! We recommend bringing a tablet, laptop, or smartphone to stay in touch with friends and family back home.

## **Mobile Phones:**

Your mobile phone should work in Taiwan, providing you set up your phone for international roaming. An alternative to this is to buy a local prepaid SIM card once you land in the country. These are generally fairly cheap. Some international phones are locked and do not accept foreign SIM cards, so be sure to check this before you leave home. If your phone will not accept a new SIM card and you need to make calls, we suggest purchasing a cheap Nokia or Samsung device for as little as \$30. You can buy these online, or get one at a local phone shop when you land in country.





# Beginners Guide to Local Culture & Language

When visiting a foreign country, it helps to be familiar with the country's etiquette in order to be a respectful traveler.







# Taiwan

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.

The national language of Taiwan is Mandarin.

**Hello:** *Ni-hao* (你好)

**Goodbye:** *Zai-jian* (再見)

**Thank you:** *Shie-shie* (謝謝)

**Bicycle:** *Zi-shing-chuh* (自行車)

**Could I have a beer please:** *Wo-yao-yi-bei-pi-jiu* (請給我一瓶啤酒)

**Yes:** *Shi* (是)

**No:** *Bu-Shi* (不是)



# Preparing for your trip

Essential information and tips for a memorable trip.







# Flights & Insurance

## Flights

At Grasshopper Adventures we specialize in providing the best bicycling tours in Asia and leave the airline ticketing business to others. Therefore our tours do not include flights to and from your home country. You will need to arrange international flights yourself. If necessary, we can assist with or recommend local flights and transfers before or after your tour with us.

Some of our multi-day tours do include regional flights as part of our tour itinerary. For these tours we will arrange all included flights on your behalf and the ticket price will be included in your tour. In these cases we will need a color scan of your passport.

## Health Insurance

For your safety we require all participants of our tours to hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Your insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. We will request your insurance details before your arrival so that all information is readily accessible in the event of an emergency.

We can strongly recommend:

- [World Nomads](#) (a great choice for anyone)
- [1Cover](#) (Australia only)
- [Allianz Travel Insurance](#) (US and Canada only)





# Passports & Visa

## Passports

Regardless of your destination you must ensure that you hold a valid passport with at least **6 months** before the expiry date and plenty of spare pages for all necessary visas and stamps. If this is not the case, you will need to acquire a new passport before you travel.

## Visas

In Taiwan, 30 - 90 day single entry visas are free on arrival for many nationalities (UK, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa & Ireland). On arrival you may need to show proof of onward travel, so make sure you have your actual ticket or the e-booking number. For the latest information, please visit [government website](#).





# Health & Safety

## **Vaccinations**

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..

## **Malaria**

Malaria is rare in Taiwan.

## **Medication**

Please note that our guides are not permitted to administer medication to our guests. Please be sure to bring an adequate supply of any necessary medication.

## **General Safety**

The areas through which we travel are generally incredibly safe, although common sense goes a long way in preventing unwanted issues. This means keeping valuables locked in a safe during stays in hotels and not carrying around large purses when walking around cities. Our guides keep your safety and comfort top priorities and are well-trained so rest assured knowing you are in good hands!





# Health & Safety

## **Safety & First Aid**

All Grasshopper Adventures guides travel with a phone for making or receiving emergency calls. Our guides also have first aid training and we carry a full first aid kit on all tours.

Please bring any essential medications with you.

Although available in most locations you may also wish to bring:

- ibuprofen or paracetamol
- plasters and blister kit
- anti-diarrhea tablets
- antihistamines
- muscle rub or Tiger Balm
- knee braces (if needed)







# Money & ATMs

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 and 7 Elevens island wide. Below are a few tips to help you on your way:

1. Always have a backup plan. Make sure that you have at least two ways to access your money.
2. We recommend changing only a small amount of money into the local currency before you travel. Cash exchange rates here in Asia are usually better. Bring just enough to get you through the first few days.
3. Many currencies are easy to exchange once you arrive in country, not only USD. This includes AUD, CAD, NZD, EUR as well as other European currencies.

The best place to change money is at the airport which offers fixed rate money exchange.

4. ATMs are available in almost every destination where we travel and a useful way to access local cash. Check with your bank to learn about any foreign ATM fees that may apply.
5. Travelers checks are another good backup if you don't have a second way to access funds. Travelers checks are generally accepted in banks although only in major cities (Taipei, Hualien, Taitung & Kaohsiung).
6. Before you travel, it's always a good idea to look up the current exchange rate. There are also many Android or iPhone apps available for free download to your smartphone. These apps can track exchange rates or convert prices on the go. This can be very helpful while bartering over prices at local markets.





# Local Costs

## **Suggested Daily Allowance:**

Our guided multi-day tours are all inclusive, and we generally cover all the costs you will have throughout your trip with us. 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 favourites 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\$120-150/ US\$4-5). We recommend you bring around US\$30 per day as spending money, more if you plan to buy a lot of gifts.

## **Tipping:**

Tipping in Taiwan can be offensive, so it is best not to. But don't worry about tipping during your trip with us. Grasshopper Adventures will cover all tips at hotels and restaurants along the way so you don't have to!

*Please note there is no tipping requirement for your Grasshopper guide and support team, but if you feel you received excellent service from your team we suggest: 3% - 5% of the tour price per guest. This is just a suggested rate and you are free to leave any tip you feel is appropriate for the service you were given.*



# Packing checklist

Our bikes come with standard, flat pedals. A helmet and a handlebar bag are included. If you would like, you are welcome to bring your own pedals (or toe clips and shoes) and we can fit them when you start the tour. Keep in mind we do not recommend road cycling shoes with protruding cleats - only those with recessed cleats.

Cycling attire	Other clothing	Electronic gadgets	Health & safety	Personal hygiene	Others
2 cycling shorts or leggings	Long trousers	Torch or headlamp & batteries	Travel insurance	Toothbrush + paste	Hydration pack & small daypack
2 regular sport shorts to wear over leggings	Tshirt & casual wear	Camera & memory card	Medications & anti-malaria	Deodorant comes in handy	Passport, Visa and plane tickets are vital
2 quick dry cycling shirts	Small lightweight quick dry towel	Cell phone	Mosquito repellent with DEET	Shampoo & conditioner	4 Passport photos
Trainers with a stiff sole or cycling shoes	Lots and lots of socks	Tablet or e-reader	Sunscreen & lip balm	A spare roll of toilet paper is a good idea	A photocopy of your passport
Cycling gloves	Sandals or flip-flops	A weather-proof watch	Glasses or contacts & solution	Hand sanitizer	Different credit cards & money
Hat & sleeves or arm warmers	Swimwear is a must	All your chargers + plug adapters	Polarized sunglasses can be a big help	Sanitary products	A good book
Windbreaker/vest/jacket for tours in colder regions or high altitudes	Raincoat/ poncho if cycling during rainy season	Waterproof or ziplock bags to store your tech	Optional first aid kit	Earbuds, incase you have a noisy roommate	A taste of adventure ;)





# What not to pack

Definitely do not pack:

- Illicit drugs of any kind - Penalties for possession of drugs in Taiwan are severe.
- Weapons - Many of the areas through which we travel are safer than your own home, weapons are unnecessary and could even be against local laws.
- Food - There will be an abundance of food on each tour, from snacks to meals and all in accordance with dietary requirements.
- Heavy winter clothes - The weather in Taiwan is generally very warm or hot, at the most a light jacket or pair of pants may be needed and a sweater is useful in the winter (for the evening) and incase of strong air conditioning on trains!

Unnecessary items that will weigh you down:

- Towels - All accommodations will provide clean towels
- Toiletries - If toiletries (such as a razor, hair dryer, toothbrush etc) are not provided in your accommodations, they should be readily available and extremely cheap. Bring the necessities and pick up the rest as needed
- Helmets - We provide helmets in a wide variety of sizes. Of course, if you are more comfortable in your own helmet, feel free to bring it along
- Don't forget: Airlines are strict about liquid, aerosol and gas allowances in your carry-on luggage. You may have a few 100 ml containers, otherwise store it all in your checked baggage





# Training Guide

Here is a suggested guide on how to get in shape for one of our medium-difficulty multi-day tours in Asia.

Rest assured knowing that our support vehicles will always be on hand in case you cannot complete a day's ride or need a little rest. Bike & Boat tours have special itineraries for those who wish to join on the tour without cycling.

Suggested Training for a medium-difficulty Multi-day or Self-guided tour:

- Start cycling roughly 8 weeks before you travel.
- Cycle 2 or 3 times per week if possible. Don't forget to hydrate!
- Week 3: try one ride of at least 40 km.
- Week 5: try 2 consecutive days riding 30 - 40 km each day. By this point you are ready for most multi-day tours. Well done!
- Week 6: Keep up the good work, or increase distances as you see fit. If you can, try out some varied terrain and hills.
- Week 7: Ride often but take it easy. Don't burn yourself out right before your trip.
- Week 8: Rest up and start packing (see our packing guide on page 28)



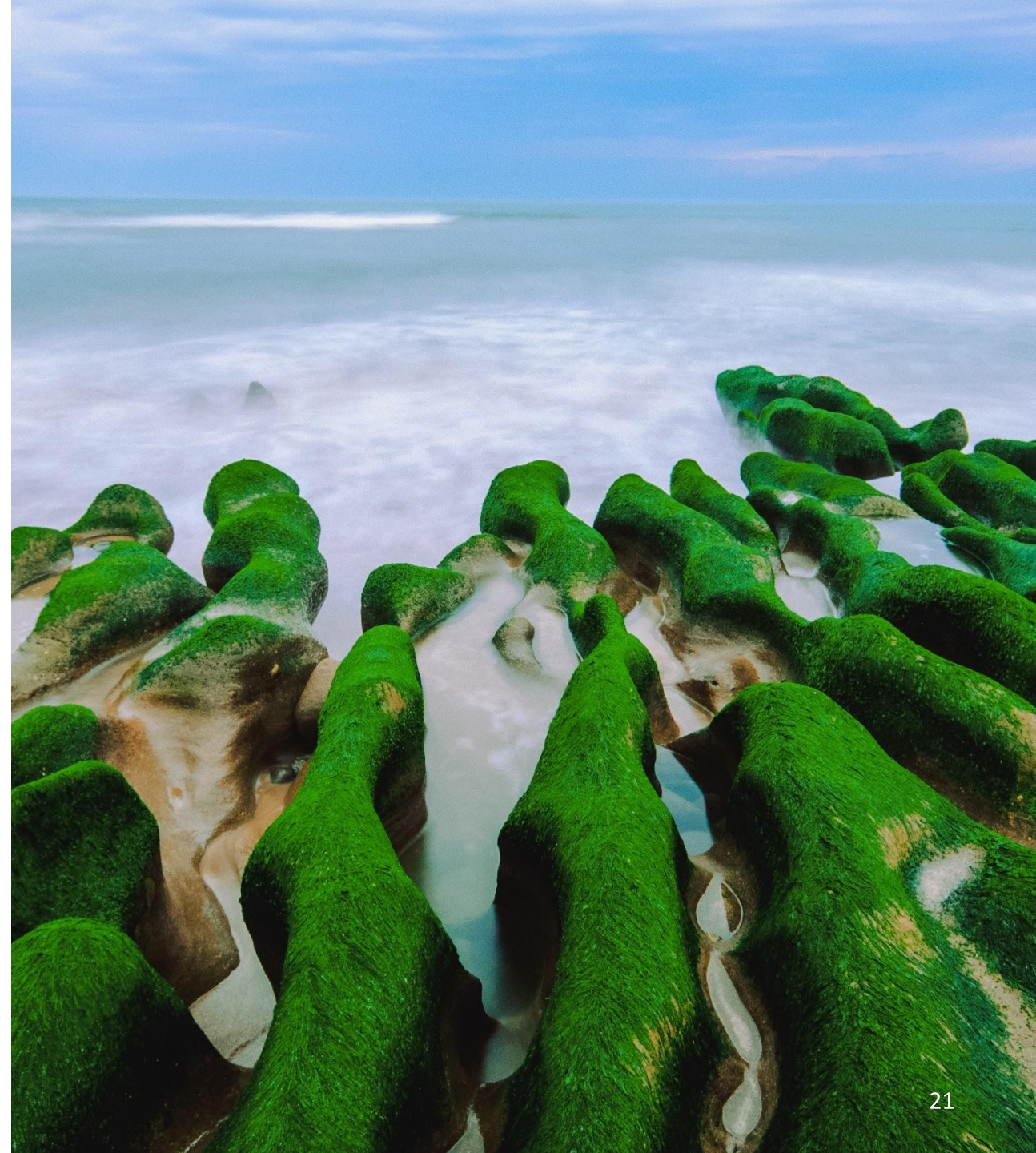
# Save the planet

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 and we ask you to be considerate with littering, water usage and electricity along the way. Here are a few things you can do to help:

1. Re-use disposable coffee cups for the duration of your stay or to bring your own from home
2. Do not use free toiletries offered in hotels and bring your own from home
3. Refill your water bottles from water machines in hotels / restaurants or from your support vehicles
4. Do not use disposable chopsticks - your tour leader will provide you with complimentary chopsticks to keep and take home
5. Make it your goal to pick up 10 pieces of litter everyday

Your tour leader will carry washing up liquid, sponges and tea towels to help you keep your items clean and will help you to dispose of any litter!

Together, we can make a change!





# Contact us

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**General inquiries:**

[asiaops@grasshopperadventures.com](mailto:asiaops@grasshopperadventures.com)

**International phone numbers:**

AU: 1-800-763-395

JP: +81 368 514 771

UK: 0-808-189-0991

US/CA: 1-844-874-3720

**Emergency Contact:**

Tour-specific emergency contact information is provided in your Trip Notes, please refer to this.

## Thanks

And see you soon!

[grasshopperadventures.com](http://grasshopperadventures.com)

