

Taiwan by Bike

Bike & Culture – Bike tours on “The Cycling Island”

The Idea:

Cycling for all senses: Impressive landscapes and fascinating people make Taiwan an attractive destination

A place where almost every stone is witness to thousands of years of Chinese history, and where the future is being created one piece at a time, cycling in Taiwan is more exciting and eventful than almost anywhere else. Impressive natural sights with lush vegetation and stunning views make cycling in Taiwan incredibly enjoyable. The welcoming people and excellent cuisine make the perfect holiday.

We have visited the island many times and wanted to make the feeling of adventure and discovery available to others – the idea of **Taiwan-by-Bike** was born.

A passion for manufacturing of high quality bikes is combined with the love of exploring on two wheels to create a land where cycling has become a way of life. This is immediately noticeable when traversing the countryside on the specially constructed, modern cycle path network.

Taiwan covers the same area as Baden-Württemberg, but contains a fascinating range of landscapes for travellers to enjoy. National Parks, tea and rice plantations, imposing mountains and gorges, waterfalls and lakes, and ancient temple compounds combine nature and culture into a once in a lifetime adventure.

Safety and comfort are never an issue: a support vehicle follows the group for the whole tour, with room for luggage, rest, first aid (mechanical and physical), and a safe space for valuables.

Those who love authenticity will see Chinese culture in its ancient form, as, unlike on the mainland, the Cultural Revolution did not damage the artwork and relics of the past.

The journey is the destination, and nowhere is this truer than on a cycle tour through Taiwan. Behind every bend in the road is a new discovery, and arriving at the end of a stage is only a pause before exploring onwards in the next day. There is no other place where all five senses are stimulated and nourished as in Taiwan – every kilometre further remains a unforgettable experience.

Participants can be sure that the tour is individual and unique. Between the local guide and myself, you will be provided with insights above and beyond a normal tour.

I have personally explored the island to find the best spots to explore and experience. The cycle path network is constantly improved and expanded, in order to more comfortably reach the traditional villages and sights. The best tour will always include our favourite locations, as these become more accessible.

Taiwan is the place to see the source of many famous brands, fitting for “The Cycling Island”. The group will visit *Pacific Cycle*, one of the oldest bike manufacturers in Taiwan. The company’s museum offers a history of travel on two wheels, and I will provide historical insights, exciting stories and fascinating details from my time working with the islands producers.

Taiwan has developed from a land of producers to a wonderful holiday destination that fulfils the dream of an exotic destination, whilst also providing security and reliable infrastructure.

Special thanks goes to the team at the Taiwan tourism office, Frankfurt, and Bike Team Radreisen, Freiburg, for their support in organising the trips and in preparation of the beautiful images you see here.

Sincerely, Roland Liertz



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On the way in Paradise

Impressive cycle paths invite provide access to the incredible wilderness

- ✓ BEAUTIFUL, VARIED LANDSCAPES: FROM MOUNTAINS TO COASTS, RICE PADDIES TO GORGES
- ✓ INCREDIBLE TAIWANESE AND CHINESE CUISINE
- ✓ ANCIENT CHINESE CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS
- ✓ EXPLORE INDIGENOUS VILLAGES ON THE ISLAND
- ✓ "TAIPEI BY BIKE": EXPLORE THE CAPITAL ON CYCLE PATHS
- ✓ VISIT A BIKE FACTORY: A MUST IN THE LAND OF THE CYCLE MANUFACTURERS!

Dates and Prices, Including Flight

12.03.2017 - 26.03.2017 3595 €

+ Visit the Taipei Cycle Show – The largest bike manufacturers convention in the world



12.11.2017 - 26.11.2017 3595 €



Additional Services

Single Room Surcharge	695,00 €
Rail & Fly 2.Class	69,00 €
Bike Hire	200,00 €

Day 1: Dream destination Taipei

Our flight leaves at midday from Frankfurt to Taipei.

Day 2: Welcome to the “Beautiful Island” – Dive into the pulse of Taipei

In the morning, we arrive on the island that the Portuguese once called “The Beautiful Island.” A transfer to the hotel is provided, where participants will have time to relax. After bikes are delivered, we embark on a short (15km) city exploration ride of the city. In the evening, there is an opportunity to explore some of Taipei’s many colourful night markets. A comfortable night at the hotel prepares the group for the adventure.

**Fascinating Temples**

Atmospheric lighting that doesn’t just entice the photographers

Day 3: The mountainous northeast coast / Taipei - Luodong (Level 1: approx. 59km / 380Hm, Level 2: approx. 69km / 620Hm)

Into the mountains: A small transfer out of the city, with the tour beginning in the foothills of the city. Cycle through narrow river valleys into the sparsely populated Pingxi region, previously the site of heavy coal mining. A picturesque narrow gauge railway and regular lantern festivals make this a romantic region. After a walk through the tight alleyways of Jingtong, the ride continues downriver along the railway line.

If participants want to, they can take the lonely mountain passes into the next river valley. Otherwise a bus through a tunnel is provided, taking the group in the direction of the cliffs of the northeast coast. The stage ends at the Sandajiao lighthouse, where the bus waits to take the group to Luodong and its large night market. On the way we also find Taiwan’s only whiskey distillery, where ten special whiskeys are available to try, before the night in Loudong

**Mountains and Valleys**

Day 4: Mountains, valleys and their inhabitants / Luodong - Wuling Farm (Level 1: approx. 59km / 750Hm / Level 2: approx. 77km ca. 1200Hm)

Further through the mountains; where friendly monkeys can be seen on the side of the trail. Flat terrain for 20km allows the group to develop their rhythm and pace. We then travel into the wide Lanyang Valley, at the end of which a bus is waiting to bring the group up the pass to 2000m above sea level. There, a whole new landscape is revealed. The route takes us through high valleys, similar to the Bavarian Alps. The night is spent in the Wuling Farm valley of the Sheipa National park.

**Day 5: Rugged mountain landscapes / Wuling Farm - Taroko gorge (approx. 97km / 480Hm)**

Today we reach the high point of the tour – the most stunning views of the island, and the greatest altitude reached. An hour-long bus ride transfers the group through the steep orchards of the mountain region to the beginning of the stage. We journey through rugged mountains, along gently rising roads, in the direction of the ridge (2600m). After a stop to enjoy the view comes the reward: A comfortable descent to the Taroko gorge.

The spectacular road is dug into the gorge sides, and travels through many small tunnels on the way to Taroko. A small guesthouse at the end of the gorge is the location for tonight's stay.

**Day 6: Waterfalls and gorges / Taroko-gorge - Hualien (approx. 25km / approx. 50Hm)**

The day begins early, so that the participants can experience the gorge before the arrival of the tour buses. After a comfortable ride, the group arrives at the hotel on the shore near the provincial capital Hualien. There is time for a walk on the beach, or to simply relax, as the rest of the day is for your own enjoyment.



Rugged gullies are securely crossed with modern bridges

Day 7: Ancient settlements and indigenous people / Hualien – Guangfu (approx. 66km / 440Hm)

Today the group follows the rift valley, populated by the darker-skinned indigenous people of Taiwan. A former sugar factory in Guangfu now houses a handcrafts market, where traditional goods can be purchased. Try the world-famous ice cream, or browse the food stands that surround the factory, and then enjoy the traditional manufacturing techniques on show.



Traditional clothes being made in Guangfu

Day 8: Caves and cliffs / Guangfu - Yuli (approx. 74km / 590Hm)

Today the cyclists can watch rubber dinghies in the white water, while they follow the river through the rift valley and coastal mountains. The goal is a beautiful beach, where a delicious picnic is planned. After lunch we head south to the fascinating Baxian caves. These caves developed millions of years ago under water, and today are accessible via the cliffs. The caves are important pilgrimage sites, and now contain Buddhist statues and artefacts.

The route ends in a small fishing harbour. We travel by bus across the rift valley to Yuli, where the night is spend in a guesthouse adjacent to a Thermal baths – a wonderful end to the stage.



The millions of years old caves now contain Buddha statues

Day 9: Farms and hot springs / Yuli - Zhiben (approx. 67km / 430Hm)

From the guesthouse the group rides down into the rift valley, and further south through small indigenous villages. After a stop at an Eco rice farm, the stage continues to the Burun tribe open-air museum. We stay the night at the famous hot springs of Zhiben – another opportunity for a relaxing swim.



Lush fields, exotic temples

Day 10: Between the rainforest and green fields / Zhiben - Kenting National park (approx. 60km / 410Hm)

Here the hills are close to the ocean, and we avoid the busy traffic by traveling south on the bus. At first opportunity, we then ride along small streets through a subtropical rain forest, and down to the coast at the edge of the Kenting national park. The rainforests lead to lush green fields all the way to the ocean, covered in grazing sheep and goats.



Variable, lush Landscapes

Day 11: Oceans and Monasteries / Kenting National park (up to approx. 10-20km)

Hidden in this gnarled coastal forest is the southernmost point of the island. The point can be explored or, if you are not afraid of a few more steep climbs, participants can chose to ride up into the national park to enjoy the view of the coast. At midday the group rides together to Sun-Moon Lake, arriving in the late afternoon.



Beautiful coastal views await the cyclists

Day 12: Culture and Cycle / Sun Moon Lake and Cycle Museum (approx. 15km)

In the morning the group rides about half way around the Sun-Moon Lake, on comfortable cycle paths. A short bus ride to a cycle component factory and bike museum offers fascinating views into the cycle industry. Afterwards we return to the Capital Taipei, which we reach in the early evening.



A picturesque view of the „Sun Moon Lake“



Decorated altars show the dedication of the people



Pacific Cycle Museum

Day 13: Forests and coasts / Yangminshan National park (approx. 67km / approx. 920 Hm)

Today a small challenge awaits the group. Initially riding out of the city along broad cycle paths by the river, the stage then turns up through bamboo forests above the harbour city Tamsui. The destination: Yangminshan National Park, and a relaxing bath in the public hot springs. The spectacular scenery of the national park is often used by couples for wedding photo-shoots, and it is easy to see why. After the midday break, the participants cycle down to the north coast and have the opportunity to saunter through narrow lanes in the village of Jinshan.

The last few kilometres are along the cliffs to the harbour of Yehlui, with its colourful fishing cutters. After this the bus returns the group to Taipei.



The dreamy fishing villages and painterly coasts of southern Taiwan

Day 14: Symbol of the city, the Taipei 101 / evening return flight

What would a holiday be without souvenirs? The last day allows time for shopping, and the opportunity to ride one of the fastest elevators in the world (16,8 m/s or 60km/h) in the fifth highest building in the world, the Taipei 101. In the afternoon it is time to say goodbye, with a transfer to the airport provided for the evening flight back home.



Up with record speed! The lifts in the Taipei 101 travel up to 60km/h

Day 15: Morning arrival in Frankfurt



Services

- Flight from Frankfurt-Taipei and return (other departure locations available on request)
- 10 overnight stays with breakfast in hotels and guesthouses (mid-range), 2 overnight stays in simple traditional guesthouses
- 8 Picnic lunches or lunch meals, 5 evening meals
- Support vehicle with luggage transport, service trailer and ride-on potential (for groups of 8 or more)
- Entrance to attractions listed in the plan
- German speaking BIKETEAM-Tour guides
- GPS-Tracks for your navigation device
- BIKETEAM-Cycle Jersey (please include desired size when booking)
- Group size: 8 - 12 participants

Additional Costs

- Meals not listed above
- Drinks
- Bike hire, additional costs for bike transport on flight
- Costs for optional activities
- Tips

Difficulty (630 km / 4500 hm)**Contact****Contact Person**

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Further Information - Taiwan by Bike

Registration

Please fill in the **Contact sheet** for the desired bike tour. We will be in contact as soon as possible. Your travel details will be provided to the **BikeTeam** in Freiburg, for processing. All important information and documentation for registration can be provided.

Travel

Taipei can be reached using many international airlines. A direct flight from Frankfurt to Taipei with China Airlines is proposed.

Organisers AGB

The AGB can be found on the website of the Travel Organiser:

<https://www.biketeam-radreisen.de/reiseinformationen/reisebuchung/allgemeine-geschaftsbedingungen>

Double Rooms

Single rooms are unfortunately limited in number and not always cheap. The single surcharge can be avoided by sharing a double with another traveller. We will try our hardest to find a fitting partner for anyone interested. The simplest solution of course is to travel with a friend!

If a fitting partner registers for the trip we will be happy to refund the single room surcharge.

If you have registered for half of a double room at least 4 weeks before departure, and no partner is found, we offer a 50€ discount towards the surcharge.

Electricity

An adapter is required from Europe, as Taiwan uses Type A and B sockets.

A power converter is also required if traveling from the EU, as Taiwan mains electricity is rated for 110V at 60Hz

Health

The standard travel immunisations (for example those recommended by the Robert-Koch-Institute) should be topped up and checked. This recommendation does not replace a check up and consultation with your doctor! Detailed information on medical treatment can be found on the website of the centre for travel medicine:

www.crm.de.

Medical care is on the level of any other industrialised nation.

We recommend not drinking water directly from the taps.

Climate

The average temperature in Taiwan is 22° in the North and 24° in the South.

From May to September it is subtropical to tropical, and very hot and humid.

The cheapest travel times are March/April and October/November.

Trustworthiness

Biketeam Radreisen was inspected by independent assessors in October 2015, and certified by [TourCert](#).

<https://www.biketeam-radreisen.de/ueber-uns/nachhaltigkeit>

Bikes

We offer optional bike rental. We have 26" mountain bikes (Hard tail with front suspension), with 24 gears and either V or disk brakes. For your own comfort you can bring along your own seat or pedals. Our guides will be happy to help mount these for you! Alternatively participants can take their own bike. We are able to offer advice and information regarding luggage costs and airline regulations.

Travel Documents / Visas

Travellers from Germany require a passport. The ID card is not valid as a travel document.

This also applies to Swiss citizens, and citizens of most other EU countries.

German citizens do not require a visa for visits of up to 90 days.

Travel documents must be valid for a minimum of 6 months from the date of arrival.

Questions about visa requirements for other countries can be directed to the Taipei Consulate or to the Taiwan Tourist Office in Frankfurt.

<http://www.boca.gov.tw>

www.taiwanembassy.org/de/muc

www.taiwantourismus.de



Travel Insurance

Please see the information provided by the organiser, Biketeam-Radreisen.

<https://www.biketeam-radreisen.de/reiseinformationen/reisebuchung/reiseschutz>

Tips

Tips are not usually given in Taiwan. Prices in hotels and restaurants will usually include a 10% service charge.

Public Transport

Staff at train stations and airports often speak good English. Travel by train or bus is usually unproblematic. If traveling by taxi, it is recommended to have the target address, name and telephone number written in Chinese.

Currency

Taiwan uses the New Taiwan Dollar (NT\$). The exchange rate as of the 27th July 2016 was 1 Euro = 35,95 NT\$.

Payment Options

Most hotels and restaurants accept credit cards.

Time Zone

The time difference between CET and Taiwan is +7 hours. During summer time this is +6 hours.

Customs Regulations

For travellers aged 21 or older, import of Alcohol and tobacco is allowed in limited quantities (1l alcohol, or 10 taster bottles of wine (each 10cl), 200 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 0.5kg Tabaco). Items for personal use with value up to 10,000NT\$ (used goods) and 20,000NT\$ (new goods) are allowed. Import of foreign currency is allowed in any amounts, however anything over 10,000USD must be declared. Special rules govern the import of Renminbi. Without prior written permission of the Taiwanese central bank only money up to the value of 60,000NT\$ is allowed. Gold is allowed up to a value of 20,000USD.

Forbidden is the import of fake coins and notes, pornographic material, weapons and ammunition and endangered plants or animals, without import permission.

Since the 1st October 2008 import of agricultural goods (i.e. fruit) and meat (including fresh and processed) is punishable by an 80-400 Euro fine. Travellers should dispose of items before customs or inform officials of them.

It is forbidden to import fake goods protected by copyright.

About Taiwan

Overview

The Republic of China (Taiwan) was founded in 1912, and was the first Asian country with a democratic government.

Taiwan covers an area of 36,193 km², with a population of 23.3 million. The capital, Taipei, has 2.7 million residents, with approximately 8 million living in the surrounding area.

The harbour city of Keelung is the second largest city, with 1.5 million residents, followed by Taichung (1 million) and Tainan (760,000).

Although Taiwan has its own government, it has never been recognised as an independent state by the EU. It therefore has no diplomatic services in any EU country, as the country still officially belongs to China

Languages: Taiwanese / Mandarin / Hakka and further indigenous languages

Religions: Buddhism / Taoism / Christianity / Islam

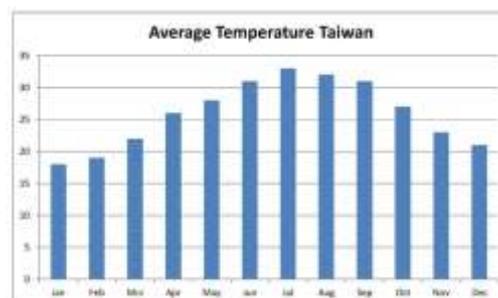
President: Ms. Tsai Ing-Wen

Geography

Taiwan lies in the Pacific Ocean, approximately 160 km from the Chinese Mainland. Taiwan lies at the centre of Asia, with Korea and Japan to the North, and Honk-Kong and the Philippines to the South.

The Island is 394km long, and at its widest point 144km across, shaped like a tobacco leaf. A mountain range separates the island, Running North to South along its entire length. The highest mountain is Yushan (Jade Mountain), with 3.952m. A large portion of the island consists of rugged mountains. The coastal regions in the east flow in steps down from the mountains, through flatland and to coastal plains. The West is flat and heavily settled. Much of the infrastructure and industry can be found in this region.

Climate



Climatically, the island can be split into a north and south sector.

The subtropical north has mild winters with monthly average temperatures of 14 - 15 °C. In the warmer summer months this rises to an average of 25 und 28 °C. The temperature falls to 5 °C at night.

The tropical south of the island has a yearly average temperature of 24 - 25 °C. Winters are comfortably warm, at an average of 19 °C. In Mai to October temperatures are regularly over 30 °C, and rarely sinks below this even at night.

Best travel times to the island are at the beginning of the year and in the autumn, so from March to May, and September to November.

Autumn is warm and dry, but not as hot as summer. The cyclone season has also ended by this time.

Spring is also warm, with clear, clean air caused by isolated rain in the north and east.

History

More than 500 prehistoric settlements have been discovered on the island, the oldest of which are over 10,000 years old. Taiwan has had a tumultuous history, with hundreds of years of invasions and occupations by Seafaring European nations, The Japanese and Chinese empires.

In the 14th till 16th century the island was a haven for Chinese and Japanese pirates, before it was discovered by a Dutch explorer in the middle of the 16th century. The island was visited regularly by Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish ships for the next hundred years, who set up trade ports and settlements. In 1661 the Dutch were removed from the island after an invasion by mainland Chinese forces.

The British and French spent the 19th century attempting to use the key strategic location of the island to increase their sphere of influence in Asia. Japanese interest in the island came to a head in 1894, leading to an invasion during the first Sino-Japanese war. After their loss in the war, China was required to cede control to the Japanese Empire. Control was returned to China with the defeat of the Japanese in the Second World War in 1945.

When Mao Zedong came to power in China in 1949, his opponent, Chiang Kai-shek, along with millions of troops and supporters fled to Taiwan. After the death of the son of Kai-shek in 1988, Lee Teng-hui became the first President, leading the country towards a true democracy.

The first democratic Presidential elections took place in 1996. China retains a claim over the Island, but limits its interference to political discussions. Taiwan has become an important trade partner, and was a key investor in industrialisation and trade infrastructure in the Shenzhen region of southern China.

For the Taiwanese the answer to a reunification with China, as happened with Hong Kong, is a resounding no.

There are many locations in Taiwan where visitors can experience tradition, culture and language. For example, in the south of Taiwan, near Shanti is a museum village, containing an indigenous research institute. The culture of the indigenous inhabitants is celebrated and kept alive with regular theatre and music performances all over the island

Nature and Landscapes / Flora & Fauna

The large altitude differences and geological situation give Taiwan extremely variable climates, allowing for singular Flora and Fauna. Between tropical and subtropical climates live a vast range of plant and animal types. Taiwan is well known as a paradise, with over 400 types of butterflies, giant tree ferns and many types of orchids.

The government is committed to protecting the diverse Fauna in its natural habitat, working closely with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and TRAFFIC (Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce). Almost a fifth of the island is protected by nature reserves and national parks.

Culinary Tradition

Food plays an important roll in Chinese culture. The round table of traditional restaurants allows sharing of dishes, promotes conversation and therefore fulfils an important social function.

Authentic Chinese cooking is vastly different from western “Chinese” restaurants. The form and function of a meal is a vital component of the cultural landscape.

Taiwanese cuisine is amongst the best representation of the Chinese art of cooking.

Harmonic variations in smell and flavour combine with a highly developed presentation to make each dish an experience. An array of excellent restaurants offers all the distinctly different Regional specialities of China.

The major influences include traditional Taiwanese, Cantonese, Shanghai, Peking and Sichuan. All over the island Dim Sum and Hot Pot has become a particular speciality.

Fish, Meat, Tofu, Shellfish and vegetables of all sorts are available, Steamed, grilled, and roasted. It’s all possible!

Economy

The Per Capita GDP in 2014 was 22,475 USD (528 Billion USD total GDP). Taiwan has a high growth rate of 3-4% p.a. and an inflation rate of 1%. Unemployment has sunken recently, and currently sits at a very low 3.9%. The economy is Stable.

Taiwan is a highly developed economy, with high tech industry and excellent infrastructure. The work force is well educated, and quality of products is well above that from comparable firms in mainland China.

More than 100,000 Taiwanese firms have settled in mainland China, and have contributed to significantly to the growth of the economy there.

Taiwan is dependent on exports. 40% of goods go to China, followed by the USA and the EU.

The most important economic sectors are optical devices, plastics and plastic manufacturing, as well as machine and plant construction.

Taiwan is a leading producer of semiconductors, computers, vehicle components and machinery for almost every industry (iron, steel, glass, ceramics, wood, etc.).

The chemical industry provides 25% of the exports of Taiwan.

Relationship with Germany

Taiwan is the seventh most important trade partner of Germany in Asia

Extensive overseas study programs strengthen the relationship between Germany and Taiwan for students, German Institutions and the German Business Mission provide for economic interests. Cooperation has grown in all economic areas in the last decades, and many products our now designed and produced by multinational teams.

Taiwan is represented in Germany by TAITRA (Taiwan Trade Centre) and other trade organisations.

Recommended Reading

Oskar Weggel, Geschichte Taiwans: Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis heute, edition global, München 2007
Polyglott: „Taiwan“ und National Geographic Traveller: „Taiwan“

Movies from Taiwan

Eat Drink Man Women (Ang Lee / 1994) and Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (Ang Lee / 2000)