



TAIWAN BY RAIL

Private Tour | 8 Days | Physical Level 1

Taipei – Hualien – Sun Moon Lake – Alishan – Taipei

This Taiwanese odyssey offers the perfect way to explore the captivating combination of old and new, natural beauty and high-tech modernity of this little explored nation. Incorporating two enchanting historic railways, alongside a taster of local life aboard a modern commuter and high-speed train, this private tour is the perfect introduction to Taiwan's most iconic rail journey's and must-visit sights.

- Ride along the historical single-track Pingxi Line, once used to transport coal to remote villages
- Travel by train down the stunning east coast from Taipei to Hualien to explore the only marble gorge in the world at Taroko National Park
- Explore the highest narrow-gauge mountain railway in Asia on the Alishan Forest Train and get a taste for the locally grown tea
- Unwind at beautiful Sun Moon Lake, national scenic areas

IMPORTANT TRAVEL INFORMATION – UPDATED JUNE 2024:

Following the earthquake on April 3, 2024, which impacted parts of Taroko National Park and the Cross-Island Highway between Hualien and Sun Moon Lake, the following changes are in effect until further notice:

1. Cross-Island Highway Closure:

- The Cross-Island Highway is closed indefinitely.
- Travellers will now drive directly from Taipei to Sun Moon Lake instead of traveling from Hualien to Sun Moon Lake.

2. Tour to Taroko National Park:

- The tour to Taroko National Park is replaced with a tour to Hualien City, with a return to Taipei by train.
- Hualien City serves as the gateway to Taroko National Park. If any part of the park reopens, a tour of the park will be included instead of Hualien city. (See page 5 for details.)

3. Accommodation Changes:

- The overnight stay initially planned for Hualien (Taroko) will now be an overnight stay in Taipei.

TOUR MAP



TAIWAN BY RAIL TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches & 1 dinner
- All accommodation in 3–4star standard
- All domestic transportation trains in standard seats, transfers and sightseeing by private air-conditioned vehicles or taxis with assistant where stated
- English speaking Local Guide/driver including entrance fees for sightseeing listed
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only things you have to pay for are international flights, meals at leisure, personal expenditure e.g. drinks, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

PRIVATE TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who want some independence and flexibility. They offer the choice to explore local cuisine, leisure time for optional activities or excursions, and travel when it suits you. Our Private Tours offer excellent value holidays alongside the assurance that most of your arrangements are taken care of. You will also be accompanied by a dedicated and professional guide for sightseeing whose knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Taiwan by Rail’ is rated as a physical level 1 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it’s more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You’ll be getting in and out of cars and trains, walking around the sights and climbing some steps. There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time.

Of course, our Local Guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 8 days in duration. Join the tour on Day 1 in Taipei and end the tour on Day 8 in Taipei.

The price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Taipei

Meals: Nil

Arrive in Taiwan's capital, Taipei, where you will be met by a driver in the arrival hall and transferred by private vehicle to your hotel to check in. Depending on your time of arrival, the remainder of the day is at leisure to start soaking up the local culture.



Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

Accommodation: The Riviera Hotel, Taipei (or similar)

Destination Information

Taipei – Taipei has an interesting blend of Chinese culture with a fusion of Japanese, Southeast Asian and American influences. The city is a modern metropolis and is known for its lively street-food scene and many night markets.

Day 2: Pingxi Line Tour

Meals: B, L

After breakfast, meet your guide at the hotel lobby and head to Taipei railway station by public transportation. Board the train to Ruifang, where you start your guided tour along the scenic 8-mile Pingxi Line. There are 12 stations on Pingxi Line and your guide will recommend the best places to hop on and off to explore the local country villages and waterfalls. A stop at Shifen Old Street is a must for all travellers, where you can purchase a sky lantern to carry wishes and hopes for the coming year.



After touring, take train back to Taipei and return to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

Destination Information

Pingxi Line – An 8-mile long, single-track branch line originally built to transport coal. Travellers on this line can savour the beauty of mountain cliffs, streams, and waterfalls along the way and view the rustic lifestyle of country villages and small mining towns.

Day 3: Taipei City Tour

Meals: B, L

Today you will explore Taipei by public transport with your local guide, starting with visit to the National Palace Museum. Start with a visit to the Chiang Kai-Shek (CKS) Memorial Hall, a monument dedicated to the former leader. Inside are various artifacts including two of his Cadillacs, documents and items from his daily life. Take the high-speed elevator to the observation deck on the 89th floor of Taipei 101 for a birds-eye view of Taipei. Later, explore Longshan Temple, and in the evening visit one of Taipei's night market, famous for a snack-focused street food. Return to your hotel for an evening at leisure.



Please note - The National Palace Museum is closed on Mondays. Your sightseeing in Taipei will be swapped if it falls on a Monday.

Destination Information

CKS Memorial Hall – The CKS Memorial Hall is a national monument erected in memory of the authoritarian leader Chiang Kai-shek, former President of the Republic of China.

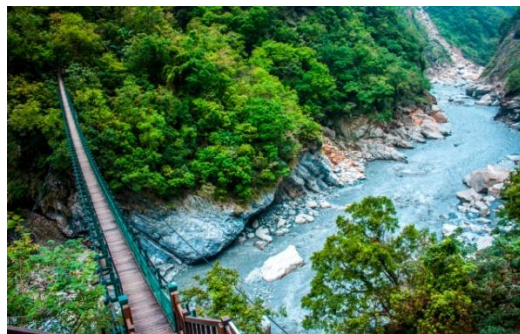
Longshan Temple – Longshan was built by Han immigrants from Fujian as a gathering place for Chinese settlers. Today it is one of the city's top religious sites, and it is a wonderful mix of the Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian faiths.

Taipei 101 – Taipei's skyline is crowned by the iconic 509m-tall, Taipei 101 skyscraper. From its opening in 2004 until 2010 it was classified as the world's tallest building.

Day 4: Train to Hualien & Explore Taroko Gorge or Hualien

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, an English speaking assistant will accompany you by taxi to the train station for your 2-hour scenic East train to Hualien, with the coastline on the left and mountains on the right.



***On arrival meet your English-speaking guide/driver for your tour of Taroko Gorge, the only marble gorge in the world. Enjoy some light hiking in the national park for about 30 minutes - 1 hour, depending on your energy and interest. Explore the stunning Taroko Gorge Gateway, and the Eternal Spring Shrine. ***

Take the evening train back to Taipei where an English speaking assistance will meet you at Taipei train station and transfer you back to your hotel by taxi.

***Due to the earthquake on April 3, 2024, which impacted Eastern Taiwan including Taroko National Park, the park is currently closed for repairs. In light of this, we have arranged an alternate tour of the beautiful nearby city of Hualien until the park reopens.*

Rest assured, if Taroko National Park reopens in time for your arrival, we will revert back to the original plan and proceed with the tour of the park.

Start your tour of Hualien at Gangtian Temple, an impressive example of traditional Taiwanese architecture and a serene place of worship. Next, visit the historic Pine Garden, once a military office during the Japanese occupation, now a tranquil spot offering beautiful views and art exhibitions.

*Continue to Ji'an Qingxiu Temple, where you can admire the intricate carvings and vibrant decorations that make this temple a visual delight. Finally, immerse yourself in the local arts scene at Hualien Culture & Creative Park. This vibrant space, housed in a former distillery, features galleries, shops, and cafes, showcasing the creativity and craftsmanship of Hualien's artists. ***

Destination Information

Taroko National Park – Taroko National Park features high mountains, many of its peaks towering above 3,000m, sheer gorges, waterfalls and lush vegetation. The park was named after the Taroko Gorge, the landmark gorge of the park carved by the Liwu River. Almost all the bio-geographical zones in Taiwan are represented here, providing a sanctuary for half of the island's plant and animal species.

Eternal Spring Shrine – The Eternal Spring Shrine stands majestically on the cliffside, overlooking the Liwu River, about 300m away from the main road. It is dedicated to the workers who lost their lives building the highway. A constant flow of the natural spring water pours out onto the rocks and river below.

Day 5: Taipei to Sun Moon Lake

Meals: B

This morning, meet your English-speaking driver/guide and travel approximately 3-4 hours by road to Sun Moon Lake, a designated National Scenic Area, and drive along the lake to indulge yourself in the natural beauty all around, visiting Wen-wu Temple with a beautiful lake view. Also explore the historic Jiji Old Town. Stay overnight at Sun Moon Lake.



Accommodation: Lealea Garden Hotel The Moon (or similar)

Destination Information

Sun Moon Lake – Taiwan's largest lake's name is inspired by the beauty of the area.

Wen Wu Temple – Before the construction of a dam in 1919 there were two temples on the shore of Sun Moon Lake, the water level rise led to these temples being consolidated at the temple's present location and rebuilt in the Chinese palace style in 1969.

Jiji Old Town – Nestled in Taiwan's Nantou County, Jiji Old Town is a picturesque historic district celebrated for its impeccably preserved Japanese colonial-era architecture. Dominated by the iconic Jiji Train Station, the town offers a stroll through charming streets, featuring traditional buildings, Wuchang Temple and the historic Jiji Bridge over the Zhuoshui River.

Day 6: Sun Moon Lake to Alishan

Meals: B

Depart your hotel after breakfast, travelling approximately 2.5-hours by road to Yuyupas, an indigenous cultural park dedicated to the education of the Tsou Tribe and a part of an Alishan tea garden. Enjoy a tea-tasting experience before transferring to your Alishan accommodation for an overnight stay.



Accommodation: Longyun Leisure Farm (or similar)

Please note the accommodation in Alishan is limited to basic, 3-star hotels.

Overnight altitude: approx. 1,500 metres

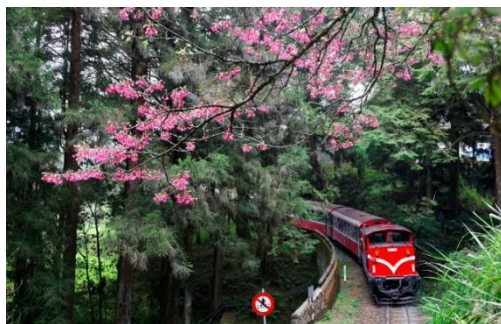
Destination Information

Yuyupas Cultural Park – Situated at an elevation of 1,200 meters in the Alishan Mountain ranges, Yuyupas encompasses an array of cultural and historical artifacts, as well as dining areas, tea houses, a theater, millennium wood exhibits, and an arts and crafts center.

Day 7: Alishan to Taipei

Meals: B

This morning, start your exploration of the beautiful Alishan Forest Recreation Park. Enjoy a short ride on the Alishan Forest Train, the highest narrow-gauge train in Asia as it winds its way through dense forests. Continue your sightseeing around Alishan stopping at natural sights such as the Sister Pond, Brother Tree and Three Generation Tree. This afternoon, transfer 1.5-2 hours to Chiayi train station for your high-speed train, reaching speeds of up to 300km per hour, approximately 1.5 hours back to Taipei. Meet your English-speaking assistant on arrival and transfer to your hotel by taxi for an evening at your leisure.



Please note: you will need to carry your own luggage on and off the train. Whilst onboard, you will be unescorted by a guide.

Accommodation: The Riviera Hotel, Taipei (or similar)

Destination Information

Alishan Forest Recreation Park – Nestled in Taiwan's Alishan Mountain range, this area is a renowned national park celebrated for its picturesque landscapes and misty mountains. With its serene environment and lush forests, Alishan is a popular destination for those seeking a tranquil retreat and a connection with nature in the heart of Taiwan.

Day 8: Depart Taipei

Meals: B

After breakfast and check-out, the day is yours at leisure until it's time to transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



TAIWAN - TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Visas are not required for New Zealand passport holders for entry into Taiwan for stays of up to 90 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into New Zealand.

At the time of booking Visa conditions may have changed, currently no visa is required for New Zealand Passport holders. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original

EATING IN TAIWAN:

Taiwanese cuisine is delicious, colourful and healthy. Meals are usually served with a bowl of rice and several dishes of vegetables, sea food (normally fish and/or shrimps), and meats (pork, beef or chicken). Taiwan's other main staple is noodles, most famous being beef noodle. Food is an important element of Taiwanese culture. It is a time for families and friends to come together and much of family life revolves around the dinner table. Most food is eaten with chopsticks so best get practicing as cutlery is not always available at restaurants.

Meals as listed in the itinerary (excluding drinks) are included. Breakfast will be at your hotel and mostly buffet style but may be a set-menu. Dinners where included are usually the hotel is usually buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of high-quality Taiwanese and Western dishes, whereas lunch at a local restaurant is usually Taiwanese pre-set options. We usually find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. Beverages will be at your own expense and are readily available.

Please note: if you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in New Zealand

**** Please inform us of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking ****

DEVELOPMENT IN TAIWAN:

Taiwan is an advanced economy and as such matches the west in modernity and technological advances in many aspects. Taiwan is safe to visit, and the locals are very friendly and willing to help visitors.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Taiwan are fairly modern, especially in the more populated areas.

Express trains: Second class reserved seats are booked for our groups on trains; there will be toilet facilities on board. Due to the limited space on trains, a separate luggage transfer service will be arranged for all suitcases.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping in Taiwan is a way to show satisfaction with the service of guides and drivers. It is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. Therefore, in order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort. If you are travelling in a smaller group, we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller, to be fair to the guide(s). We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in Taiwan. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the New Zealand and Taiwan. We cannot guarantee the availability of double beds.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air-conditioning, TV and telephone. Hotels in Taiwan often do not have porters and you will be required to carry your own luggage. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/local guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your need.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5 Kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Updated: July 2024