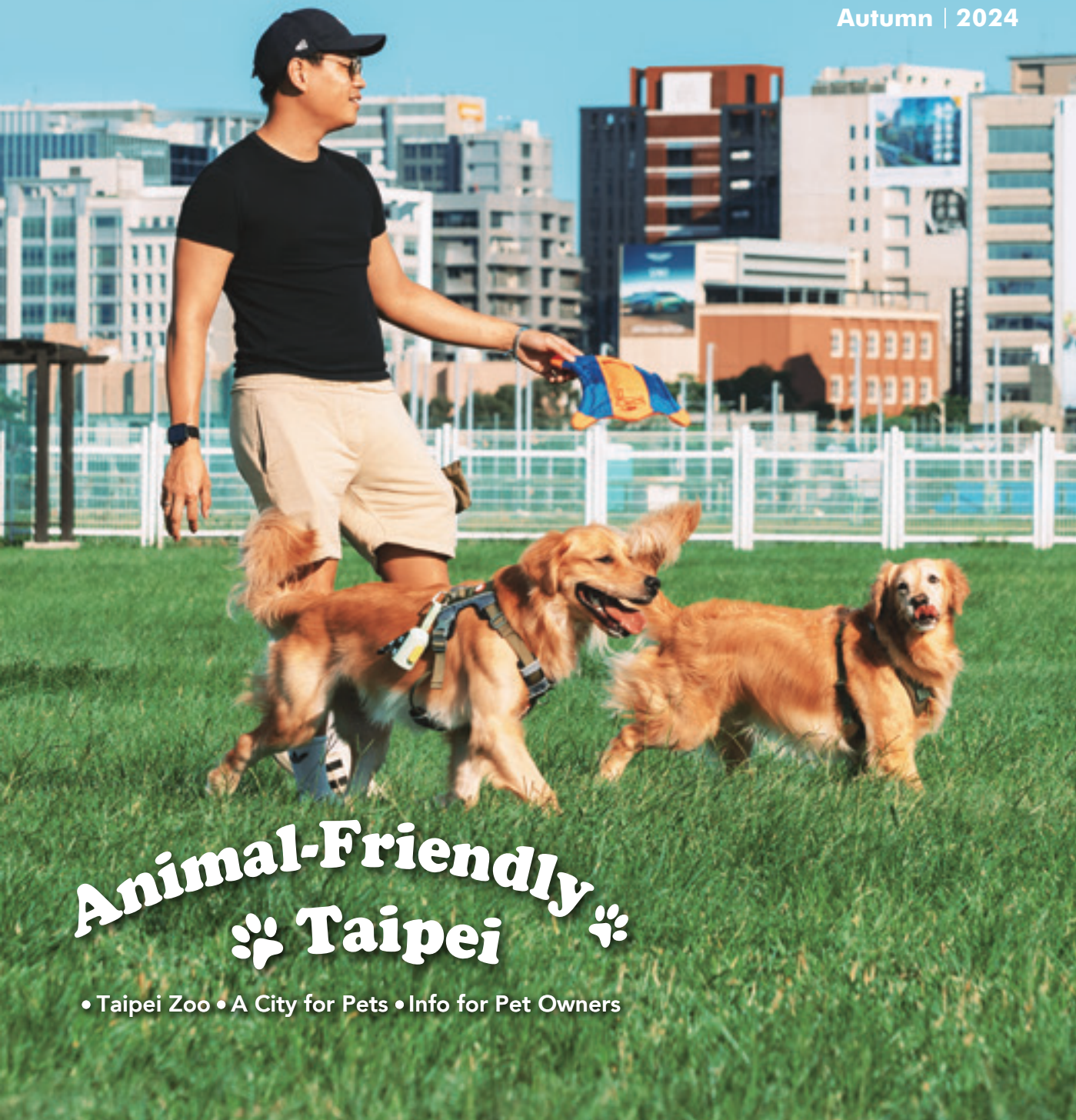


TAIPEI 台北

No.37

Autumn | 2024



Animal-Friendly
🐾 Taipei 🐾

• Taipei Zoo • A City for Pets • Info for Pet Owners

TAIPEI 台北

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Editor's Note

Welcome to autumn in Taipei! The sultry heat of the summer is finally giving way to the cool breezes of the fall. Let's embark on an adventure together and discover why Taipei is a truly enchanting city.

Our three feature articles bring you into Taipei's animal kingdom. First, spend a day of entertainment and education at the Taipei Zoo, celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. Then see firsthand how Taipei folk love their pets, with special visits to premier spots for animal enthusiasts. And finally, we provide helpful city-specific practical info for pet owners.

In each issue of *TAIPEI*, we introduce popular city neighborhoods. This time around we're exploring mountain-backed Beitou, discovering history, hot springs, old-time eats, and a rejuvenated market. In riverside Guandu, the focus is on nature, traditional culture, relaxed bicycling, and enjoying food and drink by the riverside.

Then we hike up to Taipei's highest peak, Mt. Qixing in Yangmingshan National Park, which is especially scenic during the silver grass season in autumn, before we return to the city center with a nature photography showcase of gorgeous birds residing in sprawling Daan Park.

Also included in this issue is an article about jewelry DIY, where you will learn about crafting your unique keepsake treasure in heritage-rich Dadaocheng. We also introduce Taipei's cozy café culture by visiting two relaxing late-night cafés. Finally, we dive into the joyfully serendipitous treasure hunting that Taipei locals love, with a quick tour of recommended weekend creative markets.

On these cooling autumn days, Taipei City welcomes you with the warmest of embraces and encourages you to have fun exploring. Enjoy!



Please complete this online questionnaire to help us improve our magazine. Thank you!

TAI^台PEI^北

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This magazine was printed with environmentally friendly soy ink. We hope you enjoy reading this issue of TAIPEI. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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Seasonal Festivals and Events

#01



Nuit Blanche Taipei

台北白晝之夜

Taipei's rich cultural diversity makes it an ideal Asian capital for hosting Nuit Blanche. This annual event serves to showcase Taipei's advanced visual and performing arts on the global stage while fostering connections between the city and other international cities. Facilitating the exchange of cultural ideas across borders, Nuit Blanche Taipei offers citizens a unique opportunity to collectively experience and celebrate the vibrant artistic and cultural energy in Taiwan's capital. The event unfolds throughout the night, inviting the public to actively participate free of charge.

- 📍 Daan Park and surrounding areas
大安森林公園暨周邊場域
- 📅 November 2-3
- 🌐 www.nuitblanche.taipei

#02

Shilin Residence Chrysanthemum Festival 士林官邸菊展



The Shilin Residence Chrysanthemum Festival is one of Taipei's premier annual floral events. It's a spectacular showcase featuring a lavish array of chrysanthemum varieties artfully integrated with landscape elements, creating a visually striking theme. It took two years to cultivate the more than 1,000 large/upright and specially-modeled chrysanthemums on display. On weekends, the festival venue comes alive with cultural activities that blend local traditions and international influences.

- 📍 Chiang Kai-shek Shilin Residence Park
士林官邸公園
- 📅 November 29-December 15

#03

Taipei Hakka Yimin Festival 台北客家義民嘉年華



The Taipei Hakka Yimin Festival is a major celebration of Taiwan's Hakka community rooted in Yimin ("Righteous People") beliefs. The three-day event showcases Taiwanese Hakka culture, with 23 Yimin temples from across Taiwan participating. The festival's centerpiece is a parade re-enacting the traditional "giving away rice on poles" ritual, highlighting Hakka cultural practices. Diverse artistic performances showcase the richness of Hakka culture through music, dance, and other captivating displays.

- 📍 Main Plaza, National Theater & Concert Hall
國家兩廳院藝文廣場
- 📅 October 26-28

#04

Guandu International Nature Art Festival 關渡國際自然藝術祭



Each year, a diverse group of artists from Taiwan and abroad are invited to create works of art in Guandu Nature Park using only locally sourced, natural materials. The art installations, presented outdoors throughout the park, express artistic beauty and convey powerful messages of environmental stewardship, fostering a consummate synergy between art and nature. For this year's event, the theme is "Ecology, as a Perception." Six artists from Taiwan, Thailand, France, and Japan were selected.

- 📍 Guandu Nature Park
關渡自然公園
- 📅 September 22-December 31
- 🌐 www.guandu-natureart.tw



#05 Taipei International Birdwatching Fair 台北國際賞鳥博覽會

Each winter, the Wild Bird Society of Taipei hosts the Taipei International Birdwatching Fair, which brings together international perspectives, local engagement, and environmental education. The fair showcases nature-related knowledge and experiences. Bird societies and ecological conservation groups from around Taiwan and abroad are invited to present Taiwan's diverse ecosystems and prime birdwatching locations. Through interactive eco-games, both old and young participants can learn about wildlife and conservation in an engaging, enjoyable manner. Under the theme "Neighbirdhood," this year's event offers a unique opportunity to learn about Taiwan's captivating birdlife, with a special focus on species that thrive in Taipei's neighborhoods.

📍 **Guandu Nature Park**
關渡自然公園

📅 **October 19-20**

🌐 **www.wbst.org.tw**





Where the **WILD THINGS** Are

HISTORY, CONNECTIONS, AND CONSERVATION AT THE TAIPEI ZOO

TEXT | JENNA LYNN CODY PHOTOS | VISION, TAIPEI ZOO

For over a century, the development of the Taipei Zoo has been intertwined with the history of Taipei, from its origins during the Japanese era to the beloved animals it has housed. The zoo celebrates its 110th anniversary this year, making this the perfect time to showcase its contributions to wildlife conservation and biodiversity in Taiwan and abroad.



Taipei Zoo

The city's zoo is a popular day-trip destination for tourists and Taipei residents alike. Today situated in the Muzha neighborhood of Wenshan District, close to the tea plantation area of Maokong, the zoo hasn't always been in this location. Older Taipei residents remember the original site at Yuanshan in the city core, not far from the Grand Hotel Taipei. Originally a private zoological park owned by a Japanese resident, the site was purchased by the Japanese government in 1914 (during which Taiwan was under Japanese rule) and named the Maruyama Zoo after the Japanese name for Yuanshan. In 1946, the zoo was officially taken over by the Taipei City Government, and in 1986 was moved to its current location to allow for expansion. It is now conveniently accessible via the MRT Taipei Zoo Station.





The zoo encompasses 165ha, 90 of which are open to the public. In addition to the Children's Zoo, which includes farm animals such as Lanyu (Orchid Island) pigs, there is the Insectarium, the "Bird World" aviary, the Amphibian and Reptile House, as well as habitat zones for temperate, desert, rainforest, African savannah, and Australian animals. Particularly popular areas include the Giant Panda House, Penguin House and Formosan Animal Area, which includes clouded leopards, Formosan black bears, Eurasian otters, and sika deer. Also visited by many is the Pangolin Dome, which gives visitors a close-up look at rainforest animals such as the scarlet ibis, two-toed sloth, cotton-top tamarin, and some tortoises. One can also walk under the unique Arapaima Pool to see arowanas, stingrays, and other Amazon River fish.

Through the years, the Taipei Zoo has been home to many notable and publicly beloved animal stars. These include Lin Wang, an elephant who served in the Second Sino-Japanese War



Malayan Tapir Rimuru ©Taipei Zoo



Giant Panda Yuanzai



Pangolin Dome

(1937-1945) and famously lived to a very old age. Lin Wang featured in a prominent storyline in the acclaimed novel *The Stolen Bicycle* by Wu Ming-yi, which was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize 2018. The zoo has also been home to Baobao, a silverback gorilla eventually sent to the Apenheul primate park in the Netherlands to aid his socialization. Another unique resident is Kulong, which means “cool dragon” in Mandarin. Kulong is a tomistoma – a crocodile-like reptile with a long, narrow snout – who is said to wag his tail for humans he knows and likes. Other famous zoo residents are the giant pandas: Tuantuan and Yuanyuan, who were gifts from China, and their children Yuanzai and Yuanbao (note: Tuantuan passed away in 2022). In recent years, Malayan tapir calves born at the zoo have become internet sensations as well. Every time one of these adorable creatures turns a month old, the zoo will hold an online naming event, attracting participants from the general public, including celebrities and influencers.



Clouded Leopard Suki ©Taipei Zoo



Tomistoma Kulong (Cool Dragon) ©Taipei Zoo

Animal Behavior Academy

On Sunday mornings, people of all ages make their way through the Children's Zoo to a small amphitheater. Waiting for the doors to open at eleven o'clock, they watch lemurs play in the tunnel connecting their habitat to the stage inside, and a parade of geese may pass through, waiting to be fed. Around the amphitheater's tiered seats, rope ladders and branches allow the animals to climb and scamper.

Once seated, the audience is reminded by zookeepers of the ground rules: secure your belongings, avoid loud noises that might make the animals nervous, don't touch any animal that seems curious about you, and most importantly, don't be scared – and indeed, when I looked around during a recent visit, some of the attending children seemed a little nervous!

The animals are then introduced one by one. Lemurs from the habitat nearby climb above. Audience volunteers – usually children – are allowed to feed chickens, Lanyu pigs, an alpaca, and a miniature horse. Lemurs, meerkats, snakes, raccoons, and a clever sunflower-crested cockatoo may also make appearances. While seeing the animals up close, the zookeeper

teaches the audience about each one, including anatomy, adaptation, climate, and locomotion, with an audience question-and-answer period at the end. Visitors may learn, for instance, how the cockatoo can hold a carrot in its claws, how raccoons use their dexterous paws, and how alpacas make use of their three stomachs.

The Animal Behavior Academy not only seeks to teach humans about the animal world, but also to socialize the animals who participate: that is, to get them more comfortable around humans. The program takes a principled approach in which animals are never forced or unnaturally trained to perform for audiences. Instead, each animal is encouraged to come out and interact in ways that align with their instincts, with some positive reinforcement of their natural behaviors. Raccoons are encouraged with snacks they would naturally be drawn to, and lemurs given space to climb of their own volition. As such, which animals join the event may differ slightly each time.

Entry to the Animal Behavior Academy is free with admission to the Taipei Zoo. Sessions are approximately 30min long and are held in Mandarin.



Miniature horse



Feeding an alpaca



Encouraging a raccoon with snacks



動物行為學院
Animal Behavior Academy

動物員食超能力

Animal Conservation

Like most zoos, the Taipei Zoo is more than a tourist attraction; it's also devoted to animal conservation, rescue, and biodiversity. Many of the animals native to Taiwan and popular with zoo visitors are also vulnerable or endangered. These include the Formosan black bear, clouded leopard, leopard cat, Formosan pangolin, and Eurasian otter. The Taipei Zoo not only engages in conservation efforts to increase the captive population of these species but has also been building a "rewilding" program to reintroduce some animals to their native habitats.

Pangolins are among the zoo's most famous denizens, and conservation efforts have been particularly successful. Chinese pangolins, which inhabit both Taiwan and China, are a critically endangered species (Taiwan's Formosan pangolin is a subspecies). They are illegally hunted for their meat, scales, and claws, making them one of the world's most trafficked mammals.

Unfortunately, pangolins are known to fare poorly in captivity, which can confound conservation efforts. "Pangolins eat ants and other insects in the wild, but in captivity, we can't feed them enough insects, as we can't get

them from the wild," notes Eve Wang, the Taipei Zoo's General Secretary.

However, zoo conservationists came up with a solution: a formula, created and perfected through cooperation with animal experts at National Taiwan University. "Now...we have some mating, we have offspring," Wang states. "It all comes from a good formula. We now have twenty individual pangolins, so it's quite a successful case."

Other conservation efforts are less obvious. For example, the Taipei Zoo collaborates with other institutions to monitor wetland fauna and conserve habitats, among other goals boosting the population of frogs in the Taipei area.

The zoo also operates a rescue center as part of its animal conservation efforts. Due to the targeted nature of its endeavors, it is not open to the public. Many of the animals under care have been confiscated from individuals engaged in raising wild animals illegally, or at customs facilities as people attempt to smuggle them into Taiwan. The zoo works closely with the Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency in deciding post-rescue steps.



Leopard Cat ©Taipei Zoo



Eurasian Otter ©Taipei Zoo

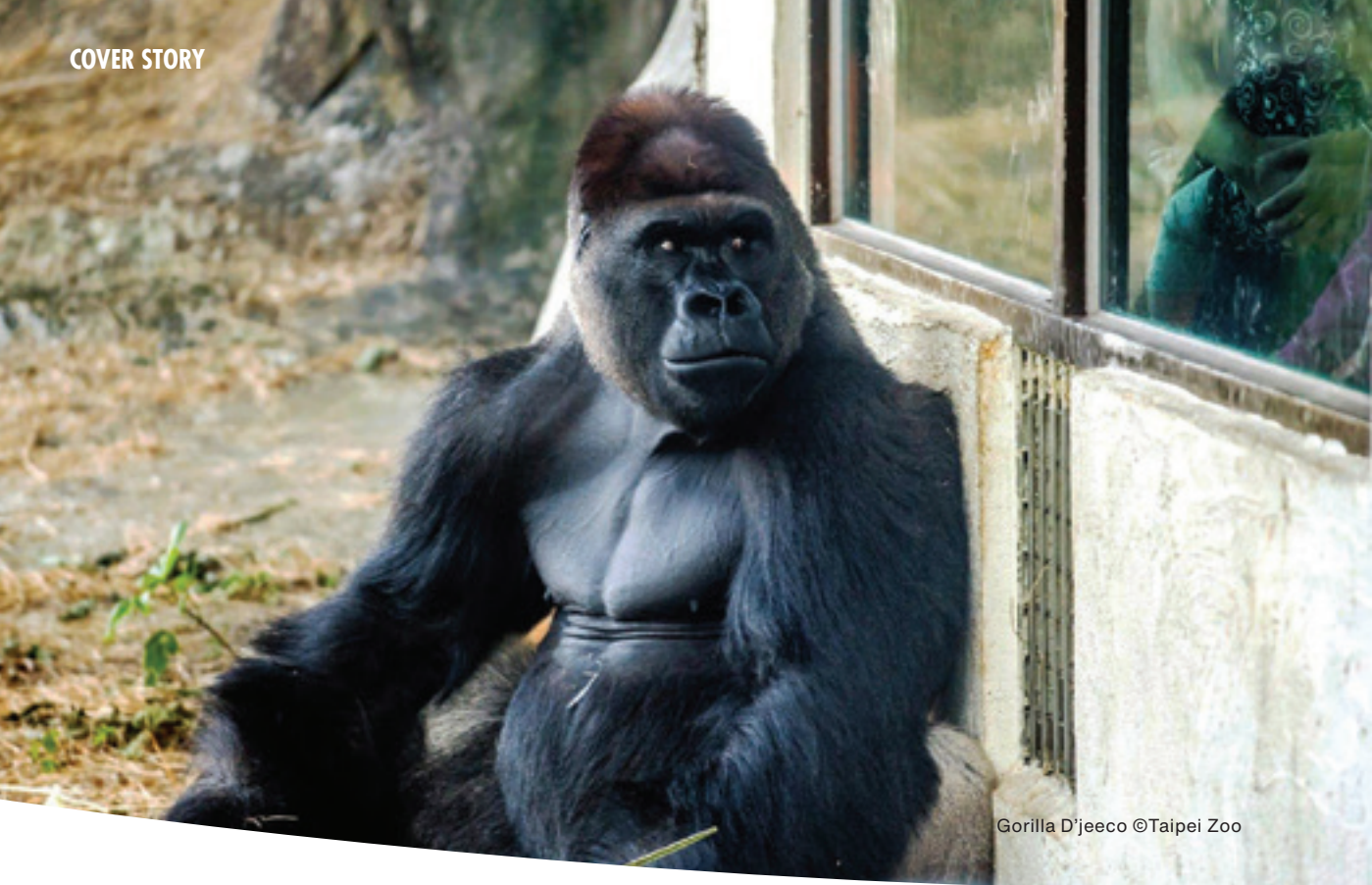


Pangolin ©Taipei Zoo

“Some animals rescued from customs are very weak or in poor condition. The mortality rate is high in the beginning, as some have long-term injuries,” Wang points out, stressing the importance of public education to stop poor treatment of animals. The majority of the animals taken in by the rescue center are reptiles. “In Taiwan, some people like to keep unique reptiles. They look unique and they’re easy to carry. Some people like to collect animals, but this is not good for animal welfare.”

Devoting to Rewilding

In recent years, the Taipei Zoo has made great efforts to reintroduce members of endemic species to the wilderness. The zoo has rewilded leopard cats and pangolins and hopes to do the same with Eurasian otters soon. The rewilding process is long, as animals in the program must be trained from birth. With a steadfast commitment to rewilding, the zoo is celebrating its 110th anniversary by focusing on 13 key species and their habitats. Dedicated to preserving biodiversity and inspiring visitors, it provides high-quality care for its animals and collaborates with conservation partners worldwide, aiming to reverse the trend of species endangerment and restore wild spaces for future generations.



Gorilla D'jeeco ©Taipei Zoo

International Cooperation

Animal conservation is often a cross-border effort. To increase endangered species populations, zoos frequently cooperate on innovations in care and breeding techniques as well as engage in animal exchanges, with the animal's interests in mind. This isn't only done to give visitors to the zoo more animals to see and learn about; it is a crucial vector for maintaining biological diversity in captive populations, where maintaining 90% biodiversity over a century is the goal.

The Taipei Zoo has been a proactive collaborator with other zoos and organizations around the world. These include the US-based Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA). As its pangolin conservation program has been so successful, the zoo has given pangolins to such institutions as the Leipzig Zoo and Prague Zoo. It has also made significant contributions to gorilla biodiversity, first in gifting the silverback Baobao to the Netherlands, where he afterward established a family, and later working with the European Endangered Species (EEP) program to integrate a male gorilla D'jeeco from Poland and two females from the Netherlands in Taipei, where they

too have produced offspring.

Wang explains, "Gorillas have to be in a family for six years and be taught by their parents to 'be a gorilla.' Individual male gorillas will fight, so it's better to have a family. Baobao is happy now, he has a child. Here in Taipei, we need to ensure a suitable habitat for the gorillas as well. We've developed a comprehensive ten-year plan to establish a thriving gorilla family."

The Taipei Zoo also cooperates closely with Japan on exchanging a variety of animals, including red pandas and tapirs. Unfortunately, tragedy has struck in one case. Earlier this year, a Malayan tapir named Hideo, from a zoo in Yokohama, was pronounced dead on arrival in Taiwan.

"Everyone is heartbroken," Wang said. "Because we treasure the relationship, we don't want to blame anyone. In the future, we may need more checkpoints and checklists, and if the Japanese zoo officials feel comfortable, we can check everything together." This incident will certainly not change the zoo's commitment to collaborate with other zoos, but will serve as a lesson for the zoo to be even more meticulous about animal welfare in the future.



Red Panda Weilai (Future) ©Taipei Zoo



Japan has also given Taiwan a male red panda named Weilai, which means “future,” with the hope that it might breed with the Taipei Zoo’s female red panda. Wang comments, “We encourage natural breeding, but it has failed many times, because Weilai and our female don’t have the experience. However, we will keep on encouraging them to have a ‘future’!”

Going forward, the Taipei Zoo will continue to work closely with international zoos and associations to bring Taiwan’s positive contributions in animal conservation, breeding, and biodiversity to the global stage. 📌



Eve Wang | 王怡敏
Forestry and Nature Conservation Agency | 林業保育署
Grand Hotel Taipei | 圓山大飯店
Maokong | 貓空
Muzha | 木柵
The Stolen Bicycle | 單車失竊記
Wu Ming-yi | 吳明益
Yuanshan | 圓山

110th Anniversary of Taipei Zoo

The Taipei Zoo has organized several events this year to celebrate its 110th anniversary. Some of these have been international in scope, aiming to reverse global biodiversity loss. Locally, themed MRT carriages have been unveiled. The 110th anniversary day falls on October 26, and a grand celebration will be held that day on the zoo’s main plaza, featuring performances by the children’s choir of the Taipei City Indigenous Peoples Commission and a market organized by corporate partners, including the Taiwan Association of Zoological Park and Aquarium, partners based in the Maokong area, schools, NGOs, and other organizations. Other events and activities are also planned throughout the month.

TAI PET CITY

Taipei Provides Ample Opportunities for Pet Owners to Enjoy the City with their Furry Friends

TEXT | HOLLIE YOUNGER PHOTOS | VISION, SOMETHING STUDIO

Taipei, the birthplace of the world's first cat café, has seen a surge in pet ownership in recent years. Pets are everywhere. You might catch sight of a Shiba Inu sporting sunglasses in a stroller or a skateboarding pup cruising through a pedestrian zone. Even parrots can be seen perched on their owners' shoulders. From the quirky to the adorable, this city's love for animals is undeniable. Following, we introduce some of Taipei's best spots for pet lovers and animal enthusiasts alike.



There are a total of 21 dog-friendly parks in the city with areas for off-leash fun. The best-known and undoubtedly Fido's favorite is Yingfeng Dog Park in Songshan District. This 1ha dog sports park, split into areas for small (under 9kg) and large doggies, lets man's best friend run with abandon through the grass, splash in a paddling pool, sniff out some new friends, and frolic with various obstacles, such as tunnels and seesaws.

Similar to Yingfeng, other dog-friendly areas are located in riverside parks, such as Tanmei, Zhoumei, Meiti, Sanjiaodu, and Fushun (all along Keelung River); Yanping (Tamsui River); Huajiang, Huazhong, and Guting (Xindian River). Huashan, located along Civic Boulevard, and Jingqin, near Taipei Medical University, are closer to residential areas. Perhaps the most convenient and centrally

located dog-friendly area is Xinyi Plaza, a round fenced-off green space in the shadow of towering Taipei 101, perfect for low-angle dog shots with the skyscraper as background.

In 2017, the city introduced dog-friendly bus services, with leashed dogs of all sizes welcome on designated buses. There are now 19 dog-friendly bus routes in total, all with stops near parks with dog facilities in all of Taipei's 12 districts. When riding a bus, pooches must sit by their owners' feet. The drivers are prepared to accommodate pets and their owners, and some emergency clean-up supplies are available on board.

For information about all dog-friendly bus routes and parks, visit the web page of the Taipei City Animal Protection Office: <https://bit.ly/dogfriendlytaipei> (Chinese).



Leashed dogs can ride dog-friendly buses without being kept in carriers/strollers





Restaurants for Pet Lovers

In addition to its official pet-friendly services and facilities, Taipei boasts a thriving community of pet-loving entrepreneurs. These individuals have created a variety of businesses that welcome both pets and their owners. For instance, the city has several pet-friendly cafés and even a photography studio that specializes in capturing animals' unique personalities.

In the history-rich district of Dadaocheng, the iconic red-brick façades, baroque flourishes, and arched corridors hark back to the heyday of the nineteenth-century tea trade. On the quieter end of Taipei's oldest street, Dihua Street, one heritage teahouse still retains charming original features, but instead of being used to dry tea leaves, the open courtyard now houses a resident pet duck. No longer flogging Formosan Oolong tea, this is now a place with a cosmopolitan menu that offers set meals for dogs.

This is Oppa Poodle, a café catering to people and pets. It is home to a golden-haired sausage dog, a happy duck, and the adorable pair of gigantic OMG and Oppa, Standard Poodles with nothing standard about them. Almost the size of a small Shetland pony, they'll smile for selfies and sit up at the table as you feed them their favorite, chicken cake with egg-white frosting.

Patrons are welcome to bring their pets; just check with the boss in advance. All the house animals at Oppa Poodle are friendly, interacting with guests and, during our visit, one couple's curious pet duck named QBoy.

The café has a minimum spend requirement. I ordered a brown-sugar iced latte for myself and a canine cake for the resident dogs – I did not bring a pet – that looked good enough for me to eat. Oppa Poodle also has an extensive menu of creature comforts on the food side for humans, from chicken wings to truffle pasta.



OPPA POODLE 大稻埕貴賓

📍 302, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong District

☎ (02) 2550-9399

📘 facebook.com/oppapoodle

🕒 12:00pm-8:00pm





Some might say that cat cafés are among Taiwan's greatest gifts to the world. Since the first such café opened in Taipei in 1998, the city has become a haven for feline friends, with numerous spots to sip a coffee and cuddle with cats.

One of these cafés stands out for its altruistic approach to our beloved felines. Hidden Duoduo, in Songshan District, doubles up as a halfway house for 35 adoptable street cats searching for forever homes. Since opening the café in 2019, the owners have taken calls night and day to rescue abandoned kitties. I met Nina, a playful ginger kitten, who I have learned has since been adopted, along with Kiwi, a three-legged rescue, who staff reassured me can jump and run around just like his friends.

If you establish a special bond, you can apply to take home your new four-legged, or even three-legged, friend. The adoption process requires an interview and home visit. In the basement of the café is a wall plastered with polaroids of successful adoptees and their new parents.

The airy two-story café is a nice place to enjoy afternoon tea or coffee while playing with the cats. I opted for grape juice with a gooey chocolate brownie and ice cream. The café requires a minimum spend on weekends, and on weekdays each visitor must at least purchase a drink.

HIDDEN DUODUO 朵朵嚕嚕

📍 17-2, Ln. 222, Dunhua N. Rd., Songshan Dist.
 ☎️ 0928-010-063
 📘 facebook.com/hiddenduoduo
 🕒 Tue-Sat 12:00pm-9:00pm
 Sun 12:00pm-6:00pm



Kiwi, a three legged rescue cat





Shelter dogs are best showcased with a white backdrop

Animal Photography

Located in a lane off busy Chongqing North Road in Datong District is Something Studio, the brainchild of a pet lover, Mr. Yang, who set up this photography studio in 2018. The space is reminiscent of an artsy New York loft: a white, airy penthouse with the largest windows I've seen in any traditional Taiwanese building. Here, he shoots minimalist photographs of four-legged friends and all sorts of other animals.

"You really captured her personality!" a customer exclaims, leaving the studio with a rendered A4 frame of her ginger kitten waving cheekily for the camera. Yang is a master at seizing the perfect moment.

He believes that almost anyone can take a cute photo, but he uses each 30min photo session to really understand every pet's quirks, encouraging them to jump through their owner's arms, pose in cute dresses, or, in the case of one rabbit, wear plastic arms. He'll capture the perfect shot mid-sneeze to create a rock star portrait.

All members of the animal kingdom can be captured: he's worked with rabbits, owls, chameleons, and hens. Clients are welcome to bring their pet's favorite accessories and toys or choose from Yang's whimsical collection. The photographer is a bona fide animal whisperer – owners can relax, and he understands little accidents happen in this line of business. He can calm an over-agitated German Shepherd, harness the energy of an excited Husky, and make an anxious feline feel right at home. He is also able to accommodate foreign pet owners who don't speak Chinese.

However, Yang's primary mission is to help as many animals as possible through his work. On Wednesdays, Something Studio offers a free outreach to animal shelters across the greater Taipei area, photographing rescue cats and dogs in search of a loving home. He skillfully captures the pups posing in front of a whiteboard to showcase their best looks and unique personalities.





Da Lang, an adopted Miniature Schnauzer

© Something Studio

Yang had noticed that most adoption ads feature poor-quality photos of sad-looking animals. Pity brings in donations, but as the proud owner of a rescue dog himself, he realized that playful, expressive shots were more effective at capturing the hearts of prospective owners. Yang hopes to turn the tide, proving that rescue dogs are just as lovable as pedigree purebreds.

One success story is Da Lang, a mixed gray Miniature Schnauzer, who spent thirteen years in foster homes. After a shoot with Wang, he found his forever home to live out the rest of his days. His new parents brought him back to the studio for another shoot, where he posed for one of the studio's most iconic shots, a grumpy canine in a roll-neck sweater. 📷

SOMETHING STUDIO 三牲工作室

📍 2F, 315, Sec. 3, Chongqing N. Rd., Datong Dist.

🌐 somethingstudiotaiwan.com

🕒 Reservation Only



Dadaocheng | 大稻埕
Dihua Street | 迪化街
Yingfeng Dog Park | 迎風狗運動公園



MAP

Taipei Animal Protection and Education Month

Every year in September, the city coordinates online events and in-person activities for animal lovers who wish to learn more about animal protection, welfare, and care. At the Taipei Animal Shelter, you can enjoy free coffee while getting to know animals you might want to adopt. Dog owners can receive free rabies vaccines at Taipei dog parks, and if you are a new pet owner you can take an online course to learn proper care techniques. There are also online contests, quizzes, and prize drawings, all on the topic of nurturing our animal friends.



Dogs and Cats Welcome!

Helpful Info for Pet Owners

TEXT & ILLUSTRATIONS | VISION

Taipei's reputation as a pet-friendly city, teeming with furry companions and their dedicated owners, is well-deserved. But what does this truly mean for pet owners? Let's dive into some of the practicalities of enjoying the city with your furry friends by providing some helpful information.

Dog-Friendly Bus Services

There are a total of 19 dog-friendly bus routes in Taipei, available on both weekdays and weekends. Each bus stops within short walking distance of one of the 21 parks with dedicated dog run areas. Dogs ride for free, leashes are required. Use the QR code on the right to quickly open a Google map showing the locations of all these parks and the nearest bus stop of a dog-friendly route.



Public Buses

- Small pets must be in a secure, leak-proof carrier at all times
- Carrier size limit: 55 × 45 × 40cm
- One pet per passenger
- Owners have to clean up after their pets if needed
- Pets are not allowed on seats and luggage racks, or in aisles
- Poultry are prohibited; small-sized pet birds are allowed
- Guide dogs are welcome, including puppies in training

Taipei Metro

- All pets must be in leak-proof and secure carriers/strollers at all times; poultry are prohibited
- Small carriers/strollers (combined length, width, and height less than 175cm) are allowed at all stations for free.
- Large strollers: A NT\$80 ticket is required regardless of distance, buy ticket at info booth and enter through the service gate; not allowed at Taipei Main Station, Zhongxiao Xinsheng, and all stations on the Wenhua (Brown) Line; allowed only during weekdays from 10:00am to 4:00pm and from 10:00pm to midnight, and on weekends and holidays all day
- One pet per passenger
- Use elevators and prioritize the elderly/disabled; board at train ends and avoid occupying wheelchair spaces
- Regulations above does not apply for service dogs and puppies in training



Taiwan Railway and Taiwan High Speed Rail

- Cats, dogs, and other pets (poultry and snakes are prohibited) are allowed in secure, leak-proof carriers/strollers
- Carrier size limit: 55 × 45 × 38cm
- TR: One carrier/stroller per passenger
- THSR: One carrier/stroller free of cost; for a second carrier/stroller passenger needs to purchase an additional full ticket
- Pet containers are not allowed on seats or luggage racks, or in luggage storage areas
- Service dogs and puppies in training are exempt from carrier rules



Pet Registration and Chipping

- Pet registration, including chipping, can be done at the Taipei City Animal Protection Office or one of 259 authorized locations throughout the city
- The cost to chip a pet is NT\$300 (incl. chip, name tag, and procedure); chip registration is NT\$500 for neutered pets and NT\$1,000 for pets that have not been neutered yet

More info at: www.pet.gov.tw (Pet Registration Information System; Chinese)

Neutering

- For residents of Taipei City with microchipped and rabies-vaccinated dogs/cats, there are subsidies available for the neutering surgery; NT\$800 for the males, NT\$1,500 for the females
- Steps: 1. Choose any veterinarian for the procedure 2. Apply for the subsidy after the procedure through the Animal Protection Office or online (Applications must be submitted by December 20 of the same year as the neutering procedure.)
- In general, subsidies apply to dogs and cats only, but may occasionally be available for other pets. Follow Taipei City Animal Office on Facebook (facebook.com/tcapo.tas) for latest info.

Pet Adoption

If you wish to adopt a dog or cat, you can visit the Taipei Animal Shelter. Its current, temporary, location is at 191, Anmei Street, Neihu District. (Tue-Sun 10:00am-4:00pm). Steps to adopt a pet can be found on the website of the Taipei City Animal Protection Office at bit.ly/dogcatadoption (Chinese).

Apart from dogs and cats, it is also possible to adopt rabbits and rodents. The Taiwan Rabbit Saving Association and the Taiwan Rodents Care offer cute little ones for prospective owners. 🐰



Taipei City Animal Protection Office | 台北市動物保護處
 Taipei Animal Shelter | 台北市動物之家
 Taiwan Rabbit Saving Association | 台灣愛兔協會
 Taiwan Rodents Care | 台灣愛鼠協會

If you happen upon animals that need to be rescued, call the Taipei City Animal Protection Hotline at 1959.



Beyond the Hot Springs

Discovering Culinary, Cultural, and Scenic Attractions in Beitou

TEXT | RICK CHARETTE PHOTOS | VISION

English-language travel guides for Taiwan often highlight Taipei's mountain-backed Beitou District as a must-see destination. This area, home to Taiwan's first developed hot-spring resort, remains a premier location for lovers of a good soak. But there's much more to the Beitou experience – following we're introducing favorite local eating joints, a heritage market in new quarters, and two history-rich parks at the district's heart.

First, we will visit the Beitou Market. From the Taipei Metro's Beitou Station, walk north for about 7min along Guangming Road. The expansive market buildings stretch between the parallel Gongguan and Huanggang roads.



Traditional pastries in the “Food” area



The “Food” area offers simple seating

Beitou Market

The original Beitou Market building, opened in 1981, was located at the intersection of Huanggang Road and Xinshi Street. It used to be an important part of daily life for the local residents. In recent years it became clear the aging edifice was no longer up to the task, and a new building is now going up on the same spot, scheduled for completion in 2028. In late 2022, the hundreds of market-stall operators moved en masse from the old building into a series of long, comparatively narrow structures, lined up end to end along Huanggang Road's north side. Though their usage as market buildings will be short – the structures are collectively called the “Beitou Interim Market” – they are all highly visually appealing inside and outside, and the temporary site has become a big hit in its own right.

There is clear and prominent English on the façade of the color-coded buildings, each designated an “Area.” Area A (separated into two buildings) is named “Fruits, Vegetables and Others,” Area B “Meat, Poultry and Seafood,” Area C “Groceries,” and Area D “Food” (as in ready-to-serve foods).

Let's have a look at food options inside the market and in its vicinity.

The Best of Tradition

Less than 5min by foot from MRT Beitou Station, this shop sells *douhua*, which is the transliteration of the Chinese for tofu pudding. Tofu pudding is fresh, uncurdled tofu even softer than silken tofu. In the southern China version beloved in Taiwan, it is served with a gingery syrup (hot) or with sugary water and optional ice (cold). A great variety of other ingredients are available for addition, per one's preference. Two of the most-ordered selections here are the mung bean/peanut and the cold tapioca balls.

THE BEST OF TRADITION 傳統之最豆花堂

📍 71, Datong St., Beitou Dist.

🕒 Tue-Sun 6:00am-6:00pm

Kao's Tea

A short walk west of the Beitou Market, this enterprise, in operation since 1980, sells a wide variety of refreshing cold tea drinks, the tea leaf sourced from Pinglin in New Taipei City. High in demand is the original-flavor series, including black tea, green tea, Oolong tea, and the "no worries tea" (a combination of green and Oolong teas). The peculiar name is a pun, coming from the Chinese homophones of Oolong and green tea. Another favorite is the milk tea series, with all the aforementioned flavors, plus options containing cooling grass jelly chunks.

KAO'S TEA 高記茶莊

📍 54, Ln. 25, Qingjiang Rd., Beitou Dist.

🕒 6:30am-10:00pm

Lin Family Black Pepper Bun

About 120m west of Kao's Tea, this shop sells broth-filled pepper buns. Cooked in a tandoor-style charcoal oven, they feature a filling of minced pork, pork slices, and chopped chives in a thick dough shell. Each maker tweaks its lean/fat meat proportion, marination, chive, and dough mix. Lin Family's signature variation is its "exploding lava" version; other options star black sesame, chopped green onion, and sweet paste innards.

LIN FAMILY BLACK PEPPER BUN 林記碳烤爆漿胡椒餅

📍 27, Qingjiang Rd., Beitou Dist.

🕒 12:00pm-7:00pm



A-Zong Oyster Omelet

Across Huanggang Road from Beitou Market's Area A, this long-in-place eatery's signature classic treat is made on a griddle – Taiwan's oyster omelets are a gooey mix of egg, plump oysters from the southwest coast, and sweet-potato starch. The de rigueur hot and sweet ketchup-based sauce is key, and A-Zong's traditional-recipe house creation has a pleasant hot chili sauce base. Also popular are the red-yeast meatballs – made with red-yeast rice, which imparts a red color and distinctive fermented taste.

A-ZONG OYSTER OMELET 阿宗蚵仔煎

📍 20, Huanggang Rd., Beitou Dist.

🕒 11:00am-10:30pm



Ai Zi Cai Braised Pork Rice

Inside the Beitou Market, the reputation of this vendor extends well beyond Beitou, with outsiders visiting the district for any reason making a special stop at this stall. The iconic comfort food served features a bed of fresh-steamed rice overlain with tender, succulent pork that has been braised in a savory brew of soy sauce, garlic, and fragrant spices. Ai Zi Cai's edition is enhanced with tender-yet-chewy braised pork intestine. Also in high demand is its braised pig foot and braised Chinese cabbage.

AI ZI CAI BRAISED PORK RICE 矮仔財滷肉飯

📍 Market Stall No. 418-421, 432-434

🕒 Tue-Wed 7:00am-1:00pm

Fri-Sun 7:00am-1:00pm



369 Fried Rice/Fried Noodles

A fried rice or fried noodles dish is a staple in communal meals around Taiwan and is also eaten individually as a snack. The bestsellers at this stall are its shrimp fried rice and beef fried noodles. The first dish is popular for its freshly peeled large shrimps. Other, figuratively and literally, hot sellers are clear-broth beef noodles, hot and sour soup, and pork ball soup.

369 FRIED RICE/FRIED NOODLES 三六九炒飯 / 炒麵

📍 Market Stall No. 430

🕒 Tue-Wed 10:00am-2:00pm

Sat-Sun 10:00am-2:00pm



Let's now penetrate deep into Beitou's history with a wander up through the narrow, thickly green park entered directly across from Xinbeitou Station's main entrance.

Beitou Park

This park carpets the base of a short, shallow, gentle-grade valley, the valley's open mouth right in front of the metro station. The Beitou Stream runs through it, gurgling and steaming with hot-spring waters. This was ground zero for the area's development as an upscale mineral-waters getaway by the Japanese, starting soon after their 1895 takeover of Taiwan.

The park has numerous attractions. The capacious Beitou Hot Spring Museum is in a Japanese-Western eclectic building from the Japanese era (built in 1913) as Taiwan's first public bathhouse. The still operating Japanese-style bathhouse Long Nice Hot Springs, right beside the park, is Beitou's oldest bathing facility, dating to 1907. Steam-filled Thermal Valley, also called Hell Valley, is a tiny high-walled side valley that is the Beitou Stream's source, featuring a bubbling, spitting sulfur-water lake.



Beitou Stream



Long Nice Hot Springs



Beitou Hot Spring Museum



Thermal Valley



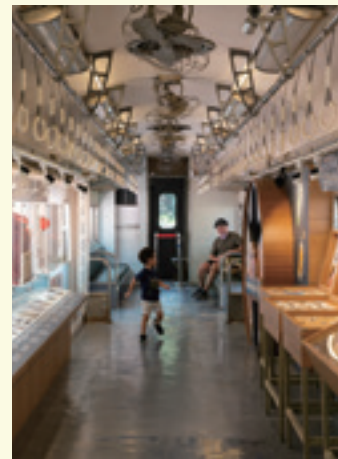
Xinbeitou Historic Station

Xinbeitou Historic Station

This spacious, airy, fetching wood-frame heritage building is a big tourist draw, located just south of the metro station in Qixing Park. Today's MRT Xinbeitou Line, a short branch line, uses the right-of-way of a line built by the Japanese to bring tourists to the hot-spring area from the city center. This is that line's terminus station, also Japanese-constructed, opened in 1916. The heritage structure has had quite a ride over the years – it was completely disassembled in the 1980s, for a time was on display in a central Taiwan theme park, was brought back to Taipei in the 2000s thanks to the city government and other organizations, and opened again to the public in 2017.

The station's most pronounced feature is the ox-eye windows in the steeply sloped roof, added in a 1937 expansion. Inside are displays on its construction, short period films and photos, and a gift shop area with many railway-theme collectibles. The oldfangled original ticket windows have been preserved, one now used as the gift shop counter.


To cap off your journey, end your day of savoring local specialties and exploring Beitou's attractions with a visit to a distinctive teahouse.



Inside old railway car



1975 Antique's Cafe Tea Room

This neat, posh modern-décor British-style combo café/tea room is located on the north side of the metro station. Savor the antique-style teapots, Union Jack-theme furnishings, and even a faux telephone box entrance, while enjoying afternoon tea, cranberry scones, a classic English breakfast, roast beef, and other British culinary icons. Light meals are available as well, including a lemon chicken dish featuring especially tender meat. This establishment warmly welcomes four-legged companions, inviting patrons to bring their canine friends along.

This concludes our tour of Beitou, but this northern district of Taipei has countless more treasures, beckoning you to return, including the Beitou Museum and the Sulfur Valley Recreation Area. 



1975 ANTIQUE'S CAFE TEA ROOM

 719-1, Daye Rd., Beitou Dist.
 11:00am-7:00pm



Beitou Hot Spring Museum | 北投溫泉博物館
 Beitou Market | 北投市場
 Beitou Park | 北投公園
 Qixing Park | 七星公園
 Thermal Valley | 地熱谷
 Xinbeitou Historic Station | 新北投車站



MAP



BIKING AROUND GUANDU

TEXT | RICK CHARETTE
PHOTOS | VISION

Sightseeing and Snacking Along the Tamsui River

The old Guandu community, to the north of where the Keelung River flows into the Tamsui, was one of northern Taiwan's earliest locations settled by Han Chinese. Today, the area sees a steady stream of day-trippers arriving to explore the avian riches of Guandu Nature Park, the magnificent heritage Guandu Temple, riverside bikeway cycling, old-timey shops, and the sleek new Guandu Wharf Container Market.



GETTING THERE AND GETTING AROUND

Start your day-trip outing by riding the Taipei Metro to MRT Guandu Station, then renting a bike, either a YouBike at the station or a bike from the Taipei Riverside Bike Rental Center, approximately 14min on foot by the riverside, immediately north of Guandu Temple. The bike rental center is close to the Guandu Wharf Container Market on the Guandu

section of the city's extensive riverside bikeway system. This network of interconnected gentle-grade bikeways stretches well over 100km, looping the city's central core and heading out into New Taipei City, including the coastal port town of Tamsui along the Tamsui River. The Guandu section is among the most popular and an ideal ride for cycling tourists.



GUANDU NATURE PARK

Immerse yourself in the wildlife bounty at the 57ha Guandu Nature Park wetland area where the Tamsui and Keelung rivers meet. It's a short 15min walk south of the metro station. An important stop for migratory birds, this pristine birding haven hosts birds of passage in great numbers from October to April, with over 300 species recorded. There are also wetland endemic plants, fiddler crabs, mudskippers, and other flora/fauna attractions, making this one of Taiwan's most cherished nature-edutainment treasures.

Among the wealth of facilities that maximize the pleasure of your visit are nature trails, wood-built birdwatching cabins, and a nature center. The trails bring you through a coastal forest area, riparian ecology area, freshwater ponds, crab-watching area, and low-elevation forest area.



GUANDU FLOWER CARNIVAL



This November bloom floral fest showcases vast fields of diverse flowers, including garden cosmos, offering countless photo opportunities. These flowers spring naturally from seeds scattered across a large area of farmland on the scenic Guandu Plain, adjacent to Guandu Nature Park. The iconic Mt. Guanyin and Yangmingshan massif provide a stunning backdrop. This level terrain is ideal for cycling excursions.



Now let's switch from appreciation of charmers nature-made to sensory enchanters man-made. Big, bold, color-extravagant Guandu Temple is a 10min walk west of the nature park entrance, overlooking the Tamsui shore.

GUANDU TEMPLE

Why a great temple here? This spot flourished as a wharf area in imperial times, a key disembarkation point for Han Chinese settlers who would spread out across north Taiwan, and an important entrepot for cross-Taiwan Strait trade. Guandu Temple was founded in 1712, its main deity Mazu, Goddess of the Sea, responsible for the safety of all those braving the oft-treacherous strait passage.

Set against a cliff that rises high above it, this is one of Taiwan's three oldest and most important Mazu temples, the other two being Tianhou Temple in central Taiwan's Lukang town and Chaotian Temple in the south's Beigang. The complex is a treasure house of master-crafted dragon pillars, stone lion, and wall sculpture art.

Another highly unusual, beguiling feature is the Ancient Buddha Pit, entrance to the main hall's right, a cliff tunnel stretching over 100m (a transformed air-raid shelter) featuring vividly painted life-sized statues of 28 Buddhist deities set into the walls. At



Ancient Buddha Pit

the passage's end is a magisterial golden statue of a thousand-armed Guanyin (Goddess of Mercy). The exit behind leads to a terrace with a splendid river view. Note that another cliff tunnel leads to an even grander view atop the cliff.

GUANDU TEMPLE 關渡宮

📍 360, Zhixing Rd., Beitou Dist.

☎ (02) 2858-1281

🌐 www.kuantu.org.tw

OK, tummy says time for food and drink! Here are three recommended temple-neighbor heritage shops selling traditional baked treats and teas.

Si Tang sells a delicious range of traditional Chinese pastry treats, savory and sweet, hand-crafted on-site by master bakers. Buy items individually or in pretty gift-box packaging. Head out on a cultural exploration with your palate exploring such items as Golden Pastry, Money Pastry, Good Fortune Pastry, Kaz Pastry, and Chili Pastry.

SI TANG 歡饅餅舖

- 📍 212-3, Ln. 301, Sec. 3, Dadu Rd., Beitou Dist.
- ☎ 0986-678-363
- 📱 instagram.com/sitang111
- 🕒 9:00am-6:00pm



Taiwan is one of the world's great producers of premium tea leaf, and De An Baking Tea, which roasts its teas on-site, provides a diversity of both processed leaf and cold fresh-made tea drinks perfect for quenching your thirst on warm days of walking or cycling. Among its selection of English-labeled cooling beverages are Honey Flavored Black Tea, Tieguanyin Tea, High Mountain Jinxuan Tea, Green Tea, and Aged Tea.

DE AN BAKING TEA 德安茶行

- 📍 223, Ln. 301, Sec. 3, Dadu Rd., Beitou Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2858-1956
- 🕒 Wed-Sun 10:00am-6:00pm



A Dui Twins is another classic Taiwan-style family-run shop, open-faced with the display/service counter right on the street, and customers lining up outside. The signature goodie at this maker of traditional pastry is *shuangbaotai*, literally "twins," a sweetened donut-style treat of Fuzhou origin consisting of two small balls of chewy dough stuck together and deep-fried.

A DUI TWINS 阿對雙胞胎

- 📍 222, Ln. 301, Sec. 3, Dadu Rd., Beitou Dist.
- ☎ 0918-880-607
- 🕒 Tue-Fri 12:30pm-6:00pm
Wed-Sun 10:30am-7:00pm



Let's turn our attention to the area's newest magnet drawing in tourists, the riverside Guandu Wharf Container Market. It's just north of Guandu Temple, beside the Taipei Riverside Bike Rental Center mentioned earlier.



GUANDU WHARF CONTAINER MARKET

The Guandu Wharf Container Market was set up by the city government as part of its efforts to connect the city's riverbank areas with adjoining neighborhoods. In the past, the dikes in between, built to protect Taipei's urban areas from typhoon-caused flooding, gave rise to a sense of separation.

Its grand opening ceremony was held this past May. Inspired by the popular Dadaocheng Wharf Container Market in the city's Datong District, which has become a must-experience for foreign tourists, this is a thick cluster of cargo containers attractively transformed into food and beverage outlets. Directly before it is Guandu Wharf, used for river cruises. The family-friendly plaza the market sits on is also home, immediately on the north of the container market/bike-rental center, to a section outfitted in 2023 with an expanded and vivified Guandu Wharf Fountain and new sand play and physical fitness facilities.

The container market's varied operators supply a wide range of local and international fare to choose from, such as Western-style pizzas, burgers, pasta, and fries to Thai curry rice dishes to Korean spicy chicken to Japanese pleasures such as onigiri and unadon to local food and drink favorites including hotpot and

tofu pudding. Note that a number of the enterprises are licensed to serve alcohol, providing beer and cocktails. Choose from stylish alfresco seating on the railing-protected container roofs and awning-shade picnic table sections at ground level. The market is busy in the evenings, especially so for the glowing sunsets over low Mt. Guanyin across the river, to the northwest. Live music performances are regularly scheduled, most heavily on weekends and holidays, during the day and in the evening. 📍






Ancient Buddha Pit | 古佛洞
Dadaocheng Wharf Container Market | 大稻埕碼頭貨櫃市集
Guandu | 關渡
Guandu Flower Carnival | 關渡花海
Guandu Nature Park | 關渡自然公園
Guandu Temple | 關渡宮
Guandu Wharf Container Market | 關渡碼頭貨櫃市集



MAP



Guandu Wharf Container Market

 Please drink responsibly

Where Silver Grass Whispers

Hiking up Mt. Qixing, Taipei's Tallest Mountain

TEXT | AMI BARNES PHOTOS | VISION



Yangmingshan National Park's ever-changing beauty is the gift that keeps on giving. Each passing season brings cause for a return visit, and as the summer heat retreats, the silver grass on Mt. Qixing's slopes dons its annual shimmering gown of feathery plumes – time to lace up those hiking boots and take on Taipei's tallest peak.

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A triumvirate of trails converge at the summit of Mt. Qixing. One strikes out from Lengshuikeng, another from Xiaoyoukeng, while a third climbs the southern slopes starting from outside the Yangmingshan Scout Center. There are some who – whether training for high-mountain climbs or masochistically chasing that next-day thigh burn – choose to traverse all three in a route known as the *Mt. Qixing Three In, Three Out* (about 11.3km and nearly 1,200m of elevation gain). However, the most popular route is a steep 4.8km, 2.5hr climb beginning at Xiaoyoukeng and descending via the even steeper trail ending at Lengshuikeng

– handily served by bus stops at either end.

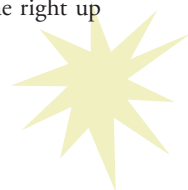
Loosely translated, Xiaoyoukeng means “little oil pit.” The “pit” in question is located behind the Xiaoyoukeng Visitor Center and is, in truth, a fumarole – a smoking crater belching out a continuous stream of steam – while “oil” holds memories of sulfur extraction and processing when the yellow mineral would be treated with heat until it melted into a viscous oil-like substance. Leaving the visitor center, the trail climbs gently at first, passing close to several smaller fumaroles. Peer closely at the sulfur deposits clustered around each smoke-spewing cavity, and you’ll see the feather-fine structure of the yellow crystals.



Silver grass along the Mt. Qixing trail

Part-way up, a viewing deck offers a great place to rest and rehydrate, and beyond that, the remainder of the climb is spent in a corridor of arrow bamboo so dense you'd strain to see someone standing even two meters off the trail. Here and there, a smouse breaks up the wall of stems. A couple are entry points to significantly more adventurous trails, and some are likely paths beaten by locals equipped with bamboo harvesting licenses.

And speaking of bamboo, if you're lucky, you might meet some of the resident bamboo partridges. These rust-and-ash-hued birds are generally shy, but the ones living here have become so inured to the passage of hikers that – if you stand still – they'll come right up to you without fear.



Xiaoyoukeng sulfur pit



Mt. Qixing main peak seen from the East Peak


A pole engraved with the peak's name and elevation (1,120m) marks the summit of Mt. Qixing, and from up here, there are grand, sweeping views in all directions. To the west, you can see Mt. Guanyin standing behind the lazy sine wave sweep of the Tamsui River. To the northeast, rice and sweet potato fields reach the coast around the town of Jinshan, and southward, almost the whole city lies cupped within the Taipei Basin.

Moving on, the trail briefly dips before climbing again to Mt. Qixing East Peak. From this peak all the way down to Lengshuikeng, the trailside slopes are cloaked in silver grass (also known as pampas grass or miscanthus). The tall plant is rather plain for much of the year, but come autumn, it erupts into a showy display. Atop each culm, an elegantly arched plume of downy seeds bobs and waves in the breeze – lit up by oblique fingers of the afternoon sun, it is as if the whole mountain has been given a peach-fuzz halo.

The silver grass bloom begins in September, intensifies in October, and is at its peak in November with large parts of the mountain slopes covered in

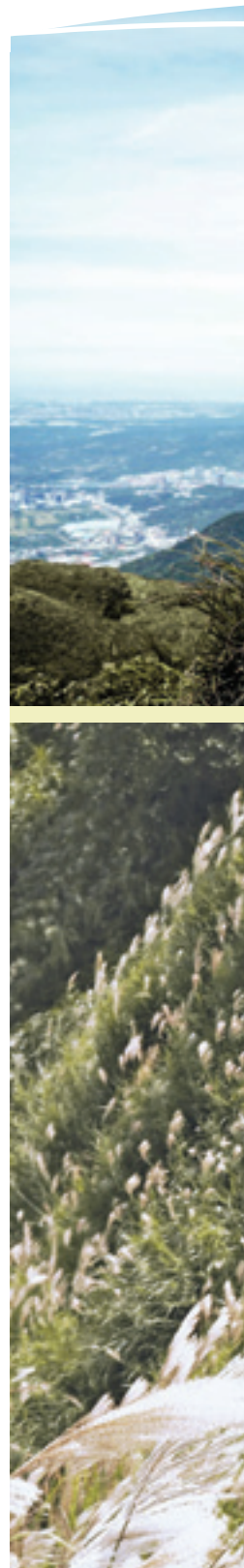
silvery white. The best spot to view this natural phenomenon and take memorable photos is a winding stretch of the trail, between the 0.3km and 0.6km markers, close to Lengshuikeng. Thanks to Yangmingshan's volcanic soil, some of the silver grass, mainly in the Qingtiangang and Xiaoyoukeng areas, also has a distinct red hue not seen elsewhere.

To cap off your adventure, there's no better way than by swinging by the public hot-spring facilities at Lengshuikeng and easing those weary feet with a soak in the footbaths. You can get there either by following the road up from the Lengshuikeng trailhead, or by detouring past the dark charming scenery of Menghuan Pond.

In terms of practicalities, this is a straightforward hike. You'll want about a liter of water and a snack for energy. The visitor centers at the Xiaoyoukeng and Lengshuikeng trailheads both have a water dispenser for topping up bottles. Aside from food and water, another matter to be aware of is that the weather is unpredictable up here, and the trails are exposed, so sun protection and a light raincoat are sensible additions to your kit. Other than this, if your knees are prone to grumbling on descents, you might want to consider a hiking stick. 



Lengshuikeng | 冷水坑
 Menghuan Pond | 夢幻湖
 Mt. Qixing | 七星山
 Mt. Qixing East Peak | 七星東峰
 Xiaoyoukeng | 小油坑
 Yangmingshan Scout Center | 陽明山童軍露營場
 Qingtiangang | 擎天崗



MAP



Marker of Mt. Qixing Main Peak



Untamed Taipei

Encounters with Extraordinary Wildlife in the City

TEXT & PHOTOS | VISION

Who knew capturing wild birds on camera could be so effortless, especially in the heart of a bustling metropolis like Taipei? At Daan Park, you might find yourself thinking the birds are practically posing in front of your lens. The Friends of Daan Forest Park Foundation reports that in 2023 the park was home to 52 bird species, with members of 22 of these nesting on the two small islands of a large eco pond — a hotspot for avian gatherings and a photographer's paradise.



Taiwan Barbet

The Taiwan Barbet (*Psilopogon nuchalis*), a species endemic to Taiwan, is a favorite among local bird enthusiasts. These birds have adapted well to urban life, maintaining a cautious yet comfortable relationship with humans when selecting nesting sites. The bird's call is loud and distinctive, easily heard in the forest. Its unique sound resembles the rhythmic beat of a wooden fish, an instrument used in Buddhist temples. This similarity has earned it the nickname "monk of the forest." In Daan Park, Taiwan Barbets often choose trees adjacent to or directly beside the bustling pathways, their nests in plain view of passersby. During the breeding season, locating these trees is simple: just look for clusters of photographers gathered around them, their lenses trained on the colorful residents.

Chinese name: 五色鳥 (lit. "five-color bird")
Size: about 20cm
Plumage: mostly green, with the head featuring blue, yellow, red, and black
Breeding season: April to August
Food: Fruits and insects

Little Egret

Daan Park's eco pond islands host a thriving egret colony, among them numerous Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*). Little Egrets have yellow feet, which helps distinguish them from other egrets. Their large nests, woven from twigs and reeds, can be seen across the pond on the trees, with the air resonating with the birds' distinctive (often noisy) calls. The snow-white egrets glide effortlessly between their perches and the water's edge, where they stalk fish and other prey with keen eyes and dagger-like beaks. In shallow water, they stir up the ground with their feet to startle prey. They can also be seen traversing the park's lush grassy areas in search of food. 📌



Chinese name: 小白鹭

Size: 55-65cm

Plumage: entirely white

Breeding season: March to September

Food: mostly fish, but also amphibians, small reptiles, and insects

Note: The Friends of Daan Forest Park Foundation maintains a very informative Chinese website introducing you to Daan Park's ecology: www.daanecology.tw



Silver and Stone DIY Class

TEXT | HOLLIE YOUNGER
PHOTOS | CHEN CHENG-KUO

Discovering the Art of Jewelry Making in Dadaocheng

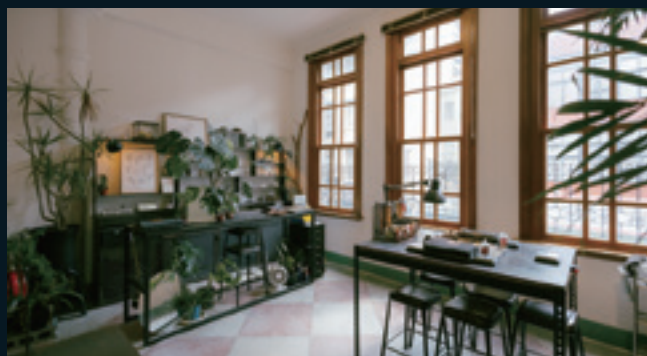
Unleash your creativity at MixGene Jewelry Studio! Craft a unique souvenir to commemorate your Taipei visit, design a heartfelt gift for someone special, or indulge yourself with a personalized piece for your collection.

Dihua Street, situated in the city's heritage-rich Dadaocheng neighborhood, is among the most popular destinations with tourist visitors to Taipei. It is renowned for the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple, a plethora of shophouses selling traditional dried goods and Chinese herbal medicine, and the bustling market of the Taipei Lunar New Year Festival held annually before the Spring Festival. Nearby, Dadaocheng Wharf features a trendy container market and is considered one of the best spots in Taipei for enjoying a riverside sunset.

Down a quiet side street off Dihua Street is MixGene Jewelry Studio, which specializes in the crafting of bespoke handmade rings, bracelets, earrings, and necklaces. MixGene was founded by Nada Xie in 2015, and the current location of the studio was opened in 2022. The studio offers private classes conducted under the knowledgeable guidance of skilled silversmiths. There are two options, a metalworking class during which you can hammer and chisel away at silver and brass, and the experience a friend and I opted for during a recent visit, a gemstone ring class.



The class, lasting somewhere between 90 minutes and two hours, is suitable for beginners and the not-so-artistically inclined. The instructor provides easy-to-follow instructions and can step in if clumsy fingers need a helping hand. My friend, who has studied ceramics, is a dab hand at anything artsy. I, on the other hand, am a complete crafting novice who failed art class. Nevertheless, after just two hours we both came away with pieces to be proud of, and I had surprised myself with my newfound creativity.





Nada welcomed us into the relaxing, green, air-conditioned oasis of her three-story studio atelier and introduced us to Jenna, the instructor for our session. Entering the silver sanctuary, we first stopped to peruse the second-floor showroom to garner some inspiration before heading up to the third-floor gemstone workshop. After donning our craftsmen's aprons, we picked our gemstones. The experience included one larger and four to five smaller stones, with shimmering square-cut green zircon and smoky oval-shaped spinel available. I selected a triangle-cut amber corundum with vibrant turquoise to contrast. My friend opted for a heart-shaped topaz and sparkling white gems.

Then it was time to get to work. We measured our ring sizes and were each given a ball of silver clay to

roll into a 7cm-long sausage. It was hard to believe we would turn this unassuming clay into sparkling silver jewelry in less than two hours.

We shaped our clay strips around a ceramic cylinder and began the fiddly process of picking up each tiny gemstone and setting them into the band with a firm push. Next, we customized the texture of our rings, dabbing wet paintbrushes into the still-unset clay to create a mottled surface, giving them a boho hand-made finish.

After this, the most exciting part: fire! We took up handheld blowtorches, and the blue flames removed any moisture from the clay, leaving our clay rings solid hard and silver-pure. Once the rings stopped steaming into the Korean-BBQ-style ventilators set up above, Jenna took them to dry and finish.



Step. 1



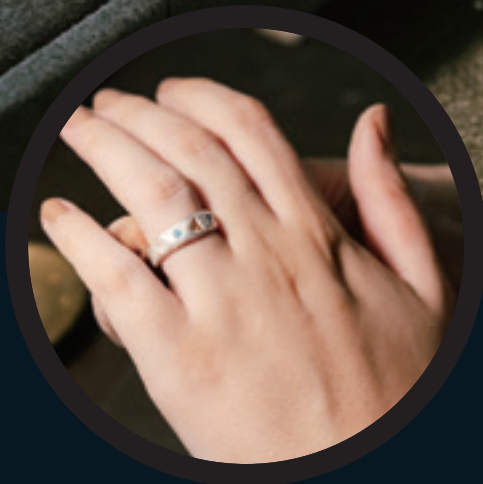
Step. 2



Step. 3




Step. 4



Later, she handed us back brownish-grey rings of clay. We gently sanded away the dusty exterior, revealing shimmering silver and sparkling gemstones. Our works of art were complete!

Jenna and Nada then presented us with beautiful metal gift boxes, and our jewelry was ready to take home. My friend had some new bling to add to her bejeweled fingers, and I had handcrafted a unique treasure for my partner, made with love and jewels picked just for her.

MixGene can provide anything from one-on-one instructions to classes with up to a dozen participants, ideal for teambuilding events, tour groups, and parties. Nada told me that many couples come for the experience; it's a perfect date-night idea. MixGene also welcomes families; the minimum age for metalworking is 8 and for the gemstone class 11. Instructions are available in Chinese, English, and Spanish. All experiences include refreshments and two free maintenance visits per year. 

MIXGENE JEWELRY STUDIO

混合基因

📍 2F, 4, Minle St., Datong Dist.

🌐 mixgene.easy.co



Dadaocheng | 大稻埕

Taipei Lunar New Year Festival | 台北年貨大街

Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple | 台北霞海城隍廟



Step. 5



Step. 6



Step. 7



Step. 8

Fine Hakka Dining

Discovering Culinary Excellence in Taipei

TEXT | TRENT JACKSON PHOTOS | VISION

Among Taiwan's earliest Han Chinese settlers, the Hakka brought a distinctive cuisine that has profoundly shaped the island's culinary landscape. Characterized by its unique textures, Hakka cuisine is known for a variety of dishes that incorporate braised/minced pork and preserved/salted vegetables, usually crafted using locally sourced ingredients. This culinary tradition reflects the Hakka people's resourcefulness and their deep connection to the lands they settled.

In this article, we'll explore two upscale dining establishments in downtown Taipei offering traditional Hakka cuisine. First, we'll visit May Snow Hakka Food, a Michelin-recommended restaurant that honors classic Hakka flavors. We'll then move on to Kitchen Restaurant, another esteemed Hakka eatery, which has recently garnered attention from a notable patron. Both venues embrace the communal spirit of Hakka dining, serving shared plates and generous portions.



May Snow Hakka Food

According to the *MICHELIN Guide Taiwan*, this restaurant offers a refreshing take on traditional Hakka cuisine, featuring lighter flavors and innovative twists.

On a recent visit to the restaurant, we tried three dishes: *Salt baked chicken*, *Fried soft silk noodles pickled with red yeast rice*, and *Stir-fried minced pork with long cowpeas*. True to its name, the signature salt-baked chicken arrived well-seasoned, presented in traditional style with bones intact. What elevates this dish is its accompanying dipping sauces. While the hot sauce, a piquant blend of soy and chili pepper, offers a spicy punch, the real star is the kumquat sauce. This zesty condiment perfectly balances citrusy tang and subtle sweetness, harmoniously complementing the chicken's flavors.

The second dish, which, despite its English name, contains no noodles, had a delightful mix of textures. Its tender cuttlefish contrasted pleasingly with the onions. The defining feature was undoubtedly the red yeast rice sauce, deep-fried onto the cuttlefish. Red yeast rice dishes are commonly prepared during festivals, celebrations, and special family gatherings, highlighting their cultural significance in Hakka cuisine. This technique not only imparted a rich, complex flavor but also created a visually striking dish with a vibrant red hue.

The stir-fried minced pork stood out as a dish particularly appealing to Western palates. The pork and beans had a fragrant, irresistible aroma and surprisingly, the pork's taste and texture were so refined that it more closely resembled well-seasoned fish than a traditional pork dish. The accompanying buns were an inspired complement to the savory meat, their subtle sweetness balancing the meat's richness.

The restaurant's interior creates a warm and inviting atmosphere. Round tables are a prominent feature, ideal for sharing meals with friends and family. Delicate paintings of flowers and birds grace the walls, adding a calming touch of nature to the space. The wait staff, dressed in traditional attire, provides attentive yet unobtrusive service appealingly synchronized with the comfortable, friendly ambience.

MAY SNOW HAKKA FOOD

五月雪客家私房珍饈

📍 16, Ln. 329, Sec. 1, Dunhua S. Rd., Daan Dist.

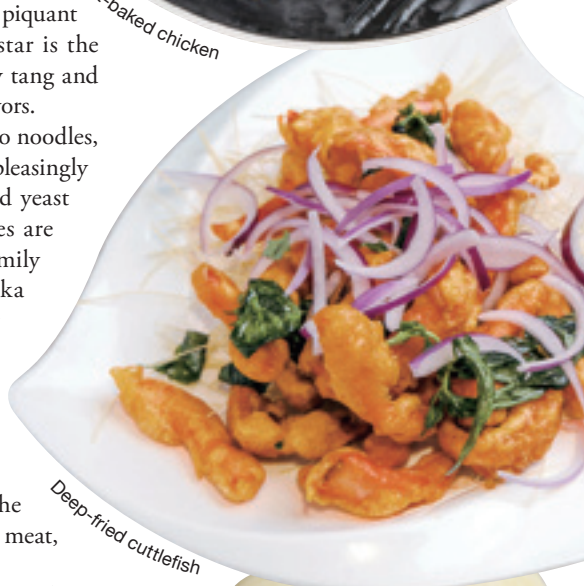
☎ (02) 2700-6248

🌐 www.maysnow.com.tw

🕒 11:30am-2:00pm, 5:30pm-9:00pm



Salt-baked chicken



Deep-fried cuttlefish



Minced pork and buns



Kitchen Restaurant

Close to Nanjing Fuxing Station on the Taipei Metro's Green and Brown lines, Kitchen Restaurant serves up a traditional Chinese dining experience with a distinctive Hakka flair. The restaurant's exterior catches the eye, with the prominent display of a photograph of Jensen Huang, the CEO of NVIDIA, a testament to the recent visit of perhaps the establishment's most high-profile guest to date.

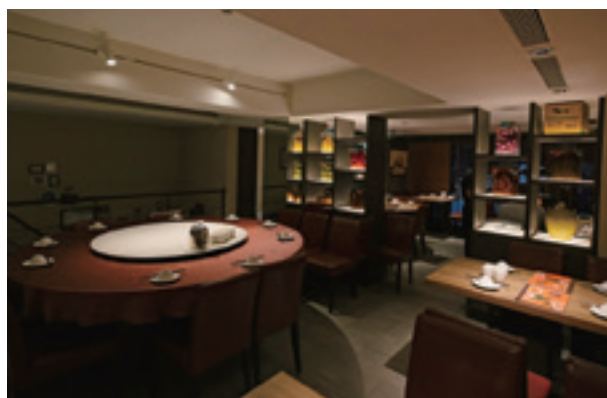
During our visit to the restaurant, we sampled two distinctive dishes: the *Hakka-style braised pork with pickled vegetables* and the *Rice flour with flag fish and taro*. The first dish featured *guabao*, which is often described as "Taiwanese hamburgers." We were served six steamed buns, folded in half, accompanied by succulent braised pork, fresh cilantro, and crisp onions. You craft your own perfect combo, which adds a playful element to the dining experience.



Braised pork and *guabao*

The *Rice flour with flag fish and taro* was a rich medley featuring fried sailfish, pork, onions, octopus balls, shrimp, and rice noodles. The soup this medley comes in had a creamy overlying taro flavor and included interesting textures, notably those of the chewy fried sailfish and the crunchy celery. The octopus balls were soft and succulent and added their own hint of spice. This was a hearty and satisfying dish, packed with textures and flavors from crunchy to chewy and savory to soft, offering a delightful combination in every bite. The ingredients all played their part, without any one overpowering the others. The portions served by this restaurant are generous, filling, and meant for sharing, so come with at least three or more foodie buddies.

Both restaurant are upscale traditional Hakka Chinese restaurants that have limited seating and fill up quickly, so reservations are recommended, even on weekdays. Each features large round tables accommodating up to ten diners, but there are also smaller tables seating four. The hospitable atmosphere in both places makes it easy to relax and linger. Note that the English on the menus may not always accurately describe the dishes served, but I believe most foreign diners will love any of these dishes from the first bite. 📌



KITCHEN RESTAURANT 廚房客家美食

📍 20, Ln. 120, Dunhua N. Rd., Songshan Dist.

☎ (02) 2546-5186

🌐 www.taipei-kitchen.com

🕒 11:00am-2:00pm; 5:00pm-9:00pm



Fried soft silk noodles pickled with red yeast rice | 紅麴軟絲
guabao | 刈包

Hakka-style braised pork with pickled vegetables | 客家封肉

Rice flour with flag fish and taro | 旗魚芋頭米粉

Salt baked chicken | 野山鹽焗雞

Stir-fried minced pork with long cowpeas | 飯掃光窩窩頭



Rice flour with flag fish and taro



Hakka stir-fry



Spicy tender tofu



LATE-NIGHT COFFEE OASES

TEXT | RAY HECHT
PHOTOS | RAY CHANG

TAIPEI'S COZY CAFÉ CULTURE AT ITS BEST

Take a stroll through almost any neighborhood in Taipei and you're sure to see a variety of independent cafés. Unlike the ubiquitous branches of chain operations like Starbucks and Louisa, these destinations each express their own unique style, often featuring music and art in addition to quality caffeinated drinks. The city provides many choices for places to hang out and socialize, including the two late-night java joints introduced below.



Fig Jam Coffee

Remember Me

This enterprise is located in the heart of Songshan District. A short walk from MRT Taipei Arena Station (Exit 5), it has a rustic atmosphere with exposed-brick walls hung with artwork along with candid Polaroid photos. Submissions are welcome, encouraging patrons to make use of the exhibition space to express themselves. The wooden tables, which look like old school desks, are a clever aesthetic choice. Some have a drawer containing pencils and sketchpads filled with drawings by customers.

This is an intimate place with seating for 30 to 40 people, including outdoor seats at the entrance. Live music is hosted every night, from 7:00pm to 9:00pm, but since space is limited, don't expect large bands. Feel free to tip the artists, and apply if you want to perform yourself. The café is open late on most nights, until 2:00am.

Opened nine years ago by Ray Fu, it is named after the 2010 Robert Pattinson film *Remember Me*. The owner wanted to create a space with an air of nostalgia. Hot drinks with milk come served with a small note each, bringing back memories of passing notes in school when we were young. It's a cute gimmick and makes for a nice conversation starter during a date. My note said, in English, "Life is full of impossible situations, but it's up to us to make every situation possible."

Besides coffees and other hot drinks, the menu also includes beers and ciders, as well as light meals and desserts. The Fig Jam Coffee is particularly recommended. It has a strong green tea note with lemon juice, fig jam, and pineapple sauce, garnished with a dried pineapple slice. The Remember Me Coffee is the café's namesake drink, made in collaboration with the well-known local sweets shop Chocoholic, and contains chocolate sauce with a hint of hazelnut. Stir it well and enjoy; it even comes with a Ferrero Rocher treat. The Tiramisu, one of the signature desserts, is very rich and creamy. Savory options are also served, such as the usual sides of french fries and other snacks, as well as rice dishes, pasta, and salads. The main-dish menu is eclectic, including such international-cuisine creations as the enjoyable fried fish with Thai sweet chili sauce salad. There's much to choose from, and customers are sure to find something they like.



Creamy tiramisu



Live music entertainment



Polaroid photos by patrons

REMEMBER ME 記得我

📍 16, Aly. 4, Ln. 133, Sec. 4, Nanjing E. Rd., Songshan Dist.

☎ (02) 2547-1517

📘 facebook.com/remembarmacafe

🕒 Tue-Sat 12pm-2am, Sun-Mon 12pm-10pm



YABOO

This café is something of a hidden gem. Located near Daan District's bustling Yongkang Street area – well known for restaurants and boutiques – it is a bit off the beaten path. One must have precise directions to find this inconspicuous place with a rather small sign. The nearest metro station is Dongmen Station (Exit 5).

A spacious spot with plenty of seating, including a basement floor for extra room, YABOO has a distinct rock-and-roll ambiance. Colorful music festival posters adorn the walls, and tattooed baristas work behind the counter. The customer base is hip and

young. Expect to hear indie rock music playing in the background. There are also shelves filled with books to browse and an outdoor patio in the front area.

A family operation, YABOO was founded by sisters Emily and Tina Tsai in 2010. The name came from an inside joke among the sisters. “Yaboo” was a term they liked to use with each other because it sounded like “y’know.”

Many kinds of typical coffee beverages are on offer, such as cappuccinos, served with intricate flower designs drawn on the foam. A vegan milk substitute is available for customers with dietary restrictions.

For fans of chocolate, high-end Valrhona brand chocolate is used in a variety of mixed drinks. Available flavors are strawberry, banana, hazelnut, and toffee.

If you're looking for a twist, numerous other drinks also include spirits, such as a café latte made with Baileys liqueur. The menu has an entire section of milk teas made with Kahlúa, rum, and more. These drinks combine the relaxing social lubricant of alcohol with a caffeinated kick.

The food menu, though not particularly extensive, contains dishes both flavorsome and filling such as pastas and panini sandwiches. There are also seasonal desserts available, with the offering at the time of writing being matcha cheesecake, a very Taiwanese kind of fusion creation that fits well in a Taipei café.

YABOO is open daily until midnight. In addition, a second location was opened nearby, YABOO II, a good alternative if the first outlet should get too crowded. However, note that the newer place is smaller with more limited hours. No matter which you choose, YABOO makes for a nice example of the charm that central Taipei's cafés have to offer. 🍷

 Please drink responsibly



Resident cat



Coffee and matcha cheesecake

YABOO 鴉埠咖啡

📍 26, Ln. 41, Yongkang St., Daan Dist.

☎ (02) 2391-2868

📘 facebook.com/yaboo.lalala

🕒 Mon-Fri 12pm-12am, Sat-Sun 11am-12am

WHERE TO BROWSE CREATIVE MARKETS

Weekend Markets Have Gained Immense Popularity in Taipei in Recent Years

TEXT & PHOTOS | VISION



Taipei Expo Farmer's Market



"Cultural-creative" is a term that has been widely used in recent years to describe a burgeoning local entrepreneurial trend. Young individuals are at the forefront of this movement, launching businesses centered around crafting products imbued with significant cultural value. Weekend markets offer creators the opportunity to present their creativity and sell their products. These markets have proliferated in recent years, with numerous locations in the city offering a diverse range of products, each market presenting great opportunities to discover hidden gems.

Following are short introductions to some of the most popular, regularly held weekend markets in Taipei City. Apart from these, a number of other creative markets are organized throughout the metropolis, often with irregular schedules. These can coincide with larger events such as music festivals or occur seasonally or annually, with some focusing on specific products, such as indigenous handicrafts.

Creatives and Art Market

西紅市創意市集

The Red House in Ximending (www.redhouse.taipei) is a historic site, conveniently located right beside the MRT Ximen Station. This market, held in the North Square of the Red House, has been a hub for young artists and designers. Bustling with creativity, the bazaar serves as a platform for young talents to showcase their unique creations, featuring around 100 stalls displaying one-of-a-kind clothing, jewelry, trinkets, accessories, and other types of gems.

🕒 [Sep-May] Fri 2:30pm-9:30pm, Sat 1:30pm-10:00pm,
Sun 1:30pm-9:30pm
[Jun-Aug] Fri & Sun 3:00pm-9:30pm, Sat 3:00pm-10:00pm

Tianmu Life Market

天母生活市集

Located in the expat-heavy Tianmu neighborhood of Shilin District, Taipei's oldest second-hand market has been a hotspot for treasure hunters for many years. Held at the crossroads of Zhongshan North and Tianmu West/East roads, it features a diverse selection of second-hand clothes and vintage items. With a strong community feel, the market is filled with everyday folks showcasing their products directly on the ground.

🕒 [All Year] Fri-Sun 4:00pm-10:00pm
[Oct-May] on Sat also 9:00am-3:00pm



Taipei Expo Farmer's Market 花博農民市集

This market is situated in Taipei Expo Park (beside MRT Yuanshan Station). Organized by the city government, it promotes quality agricultural products from rural areas around Taiwan. What makes visiting the market a rewarding experience is meeting producers in person, giving you the chance to learn about produce origin and cultivation methods. For more info, visit www.expofarmersmarket.gov.taipei.

🕒 Sat-Sun 10:00am-6:00pm

Sui Sui Market 水水市集

Spacious Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, located close to MRT Sun Yat-Sen Memorial Hall Station, provides the perfect backdrop for this small artsy weekend market that has become very popular. It's a unique marketplace that showcases quality Taiwanese handicrafts and original designs. Combine browsing the market's wide selection of handmade treasures with an exploration of the park's cultural offerings, including art and design exhibitions.

🕒 Sat-Sun 12:00am-6:00pm



MAP



Gala Gala Weekend Market

Gala Gala Weekend Market 嘎啦嘎啦市集

Unusually housed on the third floor of a residential building on Jilin Street, near MRT Xingtian Temple, this intimate market has a limited capacity of only around 20 vendors indoors. The small size allows for careful curation, ensuring only the highest-quality products are offered.

🕒 Sat-Sun 1:00am-7:00pm

Hangout Market 混市集

Dive into the heart of Taipei's bustling shopping scene at this market, nestled on a triangular plaza along Zhongxiao East Road and on an adjacent tree-shaded plaza, just steps away from the iconic SOGO department store. Vendors here sell all kinds of cute items, such as accessories and jewelry. The market also has food stalls and live music.

🕒 Sat-Sun 2:00am-10:00pm

Jianguo Holiday Flower/Jade Market 建國假日花市/玉市

A Taipei classic, this sprawling market has been a local favorite since the 1980s. Tucked beneath the Jianguo South Road overpass, it's a haven for plant and gemstone enthusiasts. One end bursts with colorful flowers and greenery, while the other showcases a wide selection of jades and other precious stones, all available at friendly prices. 📍

🕒 Sat-Sun 9:00am-6:00pm



TRAVEL INFO

METRO TAIPEI

Service Hours: 6:00am - 12:00 midnight

Customer Service Hotline: (02)218-12345

METRO TICKETS



ONE-WAY TRIP TICKET
NT\$20 - NT\$65



DAY PASS
NT\$150



24HR PASS
NT\$180



48HR PASS
NT\$280



72HR PASS
NT\$380

IC CARDS

EasyCard (left) and iPASS (right) are available at MRT stations and convenience stores. Just add value before entering the system; the fare for each journey will be deducted appropriately. These cards also have an e-purse function for use at convenience stores and other authorized businesses, and for YouBike rentals.



EasyCard



iPASS

TAIPEI CITY BUS

TICKET PRICE

Adult: NT\$15, regardless of using cash or an EasyCard

Student: NT\$15 when paying cash; NT\$12 when using an EasyCard (Student ID required)

Child under 115cm or under six years old: Free (ID required)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Taipei eBus

ebus.gov.taipei

YOUBIKE

YouBike is Taipei's public rental bike system. To rent a bike, you can use an EasyCard or a credit card. The charge per 30 minutes is listed below.



To register as a member, please check youbike.com.tw/region/taipei/register/

TAIPEI FUN PASS

There are four types of Taipei Fun Pass available: the Unlimited version (attractions+transportation), the Exploring version (attractions +EasyCard), the Classic version (2 attractions+EasyCard) and Transportation version (transportation only). You can visit Taipei City, New Taipei City, Keelung City, and Taoyuan City within the validity.



Unlimited
1 Day Pass/
2 Day Pass/
3 Day Pass
NT\$1,200/1,600/1,900



Exploring
2 Day Pass/
3 Day Pass/
4 Day Pass
NT\$650/850/1,050



Classic
Taipei 101 +
National Palace Museum
14-Day Valid
NT\$950



Transportation
1 Day Pass/2 Day Pass/
3 Day Pass/5 Day Pass/
Maokong Gondola
1 Day Pass
NT\$180/310/440/700/350

TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

Tourism Administration, Ministry of Transportation and Communication: 0800-011-765

Information for Foreigners in Taiwan: 1990

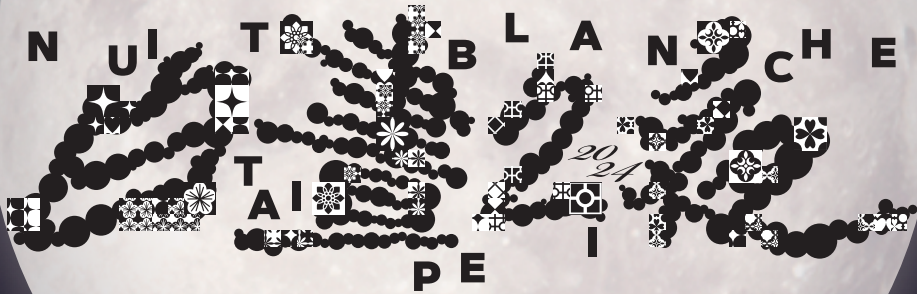
Taipei Citizen Hotline: 1999 (Outside Taipei City, please dial 02-2720-8889)

Taipei Travel Net: travel.taipei/en; presents travel information on Taipei City in Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Spanish



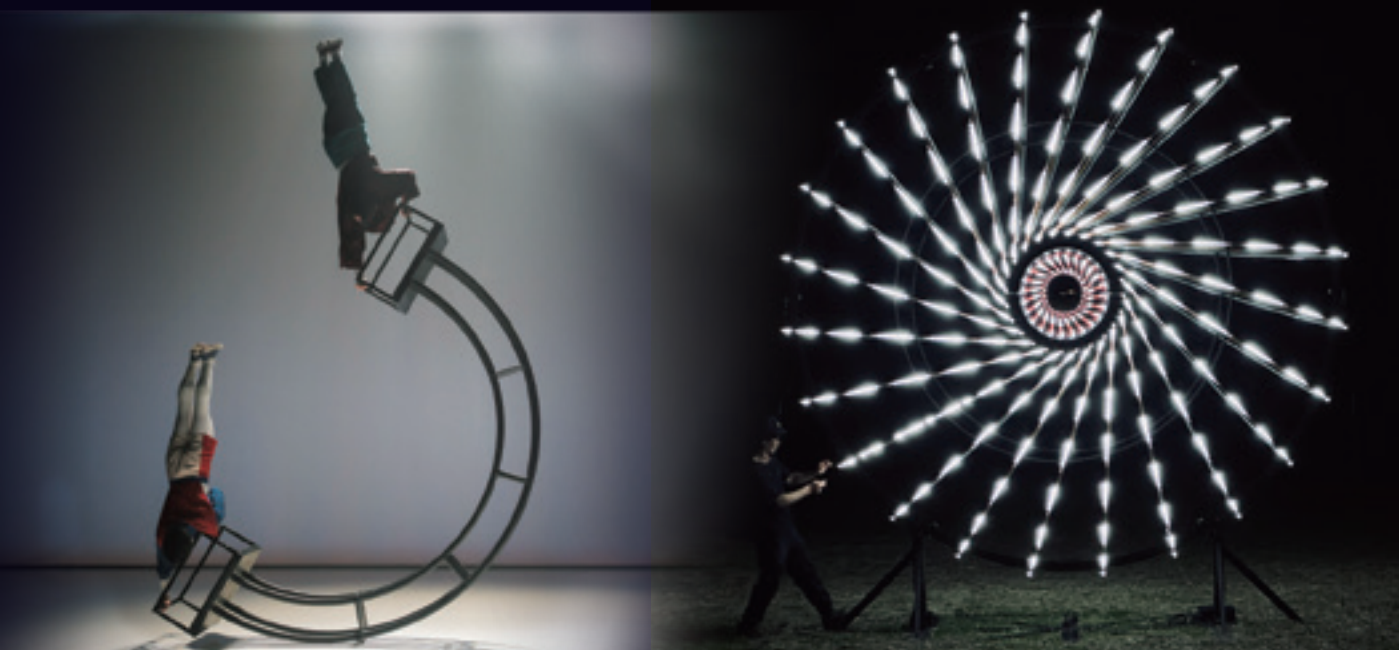
Taipei Sightseeing Bus
(02)8791-6557 ext.30

Under the moonlight, I beckon you.



Nov 2nd (Sat) - Nov 3rd (Sun)

2024 NUIT BLANCHE TAIPEI COMING SOON



2024 第二十六屆臺北國際賞鳥博覽會
2024 26th Taipei International Birdwatching Fair

10.19 - 10.20
sat sun
09:00 - 16:30

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Neighbirdhood

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