

TAIPEI 台北

No. 39

Spring | 2025

A Day in Taipei

Historic District Dadaocheng
South of the Old City Walls

Out in Nature

Tianmu Historic Trail and Mt. Shamao

Fine Food

Vegetarian Dining
Unique Tearooms



**Taipei,
City of Sports**

2025 Baseball Season
X-Sport Facilities
World Masters Games

TAIPEI 台北

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Taipei Main Station, Ximen,
Minquan W. Rd. and C.K.S. Memorial
Hall of Taipei Metro



Editor's Note

In the culture-rich international city of Taipei, it's "take me out to the (base)ball game!" – plus, in this issue of TAIPEI, "take me out for some X-sports, to the World Masters Games, to the Tianmu Historic Trail, to unique tea-tasting experiences, to spring's splendiferous flower festivals" ... and much, much else. Off we go!

Our triumvirate of feature articles is dedicated to the vibrant local sports scene. The main feature introduces you to the island's popular pro baseball world. A great way to deep-dive into Taipei culture is by taking in a game at the Taipei Dome or the Taipei Tianmu Baseball Stadium.

The second feature drops you into the thriving extreme sports world. The city government has been systematically expanding facilities recently, and we show you where to enjoy rock climbing, BMX, skateboarding, etc. The third feature is a helpful info primer, for participants and spectators, on the upcoming 2025 World Masters Games.

Our duo of *A Day in Taipei* city-neighborhood walkabout articles bring you to Dadaocheng and Chengnan. Dadaocheng, beside the Tamsui River, is one of this city's oldest communities. Visit such attractions as old-world commercial Dihua Street, the 1850s-built Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple, and a heritage *wagashi* confectionery. In Chengnan – which means "south of the old city walls" – take in the celebrated National Museum of History and adjacent Taipei Botanical Garden, beloved Nanmen Market, and other cultural beacons in the area.

Awaiting in our two *Out in Nature* adventures is a "varied and meandering wander through Yangmingshan's southern foothills," starring the Tianmu Historic Trail and Mt. Shamao Trail, and an "untamed Taipei" nature-photography encounter with two gorgeous resident raptors, the collared scops owl and the crested goshawk. In our *Fine Food* twosome, visit tearooms presenting newfangled tea-tasting experiences (teas and tea cocktails) and vegan restaurants taking "meat- and dairy-free fine dining to the next level."

Over in the *DIY Fun* department, delve into dyeing at a textile art workshop in Dadaocheng, and in *Where to...* immerse yourself in the magnificent floral blooms of the Taipei all-year-discovering where you'll find the season's very best flower festival showcases.

Enjoy your time here with us in Taipei – this city of infinite traveler possibilities!



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

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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



Taipei Floral Picnic

花伴野餐

The Taipei Floral Picnic encourages people of all ages to step outside and enjoy a picnic connecting with nature, appreciating flowers, and experiencing the diversity of different cultures. The various picnic zones offer a range of attractions, including swing dance, pet activities, nature art, and more. The event also includes a nighttime concert, a cultural-creative market, and – a new addition this year – a PAW Patrol meeting event.

📍 Daan Park
大安森林公園

📅 March 15
🌐 2025floralpicnic.taipei

#02 Baosheng Cultural Festival

保生文化祭



Hosted by Dalongdong Baoan Temple, the Baosheng Cultural Festival celebrates the birth of Grand Emperor Baosheng. Key highlights include folk opera performances, a fire lion show, and a series of traditional ceremonies. The festival also features a ceremony for the birthday of Grand Emperor Shennong, revered as the god of agriculture and herbal medicine.

📍 Dalongdong Baoan Temple 大龍峒保安宮
📅 April 2-May 28, Fire Lion Show on April 11
🌐 www.baoan.org.tw

#03 Taipei International Dragon Boat Championships

台北國際龍舟錦標賽



Held at Dajia Riverside Park on the left bank of the Keelung River, this is Taiwan's largest dragon boat competition, attracting over 200 teams from Taiwan and around the world. Beyond the thrilling on-water races, visitors can also enjoy the vibrant on-land atmosphere with exciting stage performances, engaging family activities, and a variegated food market featuring local and international specialties.

📍 Dajia Riverside Park 大佳河濱公園
📅 May 30-June 1
🌐 dragonboat.taipei

TAIPEI

臺北·台北

Scan to watch the introduction video of Taipei!





#04 Zhuzihu Calla Lily & Hydrangea Festival

竹子湖海芋季及繡球花季

The Zhuzihu Calla Lily & Hydrangea Festival offers flower lovers a mountain-location floral spectacle. The Zhuzihu area, nestled in Yangmingshan National Park, produces 80–90% of Taiwan’s white calla lilies. The expansive calla lily fields draw crowds of visitors eager to photograph their beauty. There are designated Instagram-worthy spots that feature landscaping and floral art backdrops; a photo printing service is available as well. A market showcasing creative produce from young farmers adds to the experience. The peak of the calla lily season typically runs from mid-March to late April. From May onwards, the colorful and diverse hydrangeas gradually come into bloom, their pastel hues and summery charm rivaling the elegant simplicity of the calla lilies. Both flowers have become popular subjects on social media, attracting a steady stream of flower enthusiasts.

📍 Zhuzihu, Yangmingshan National Park 陽明山國家公園竹子湖地區
 🕒 March-June 🌐 www.flowersfestival.taipei

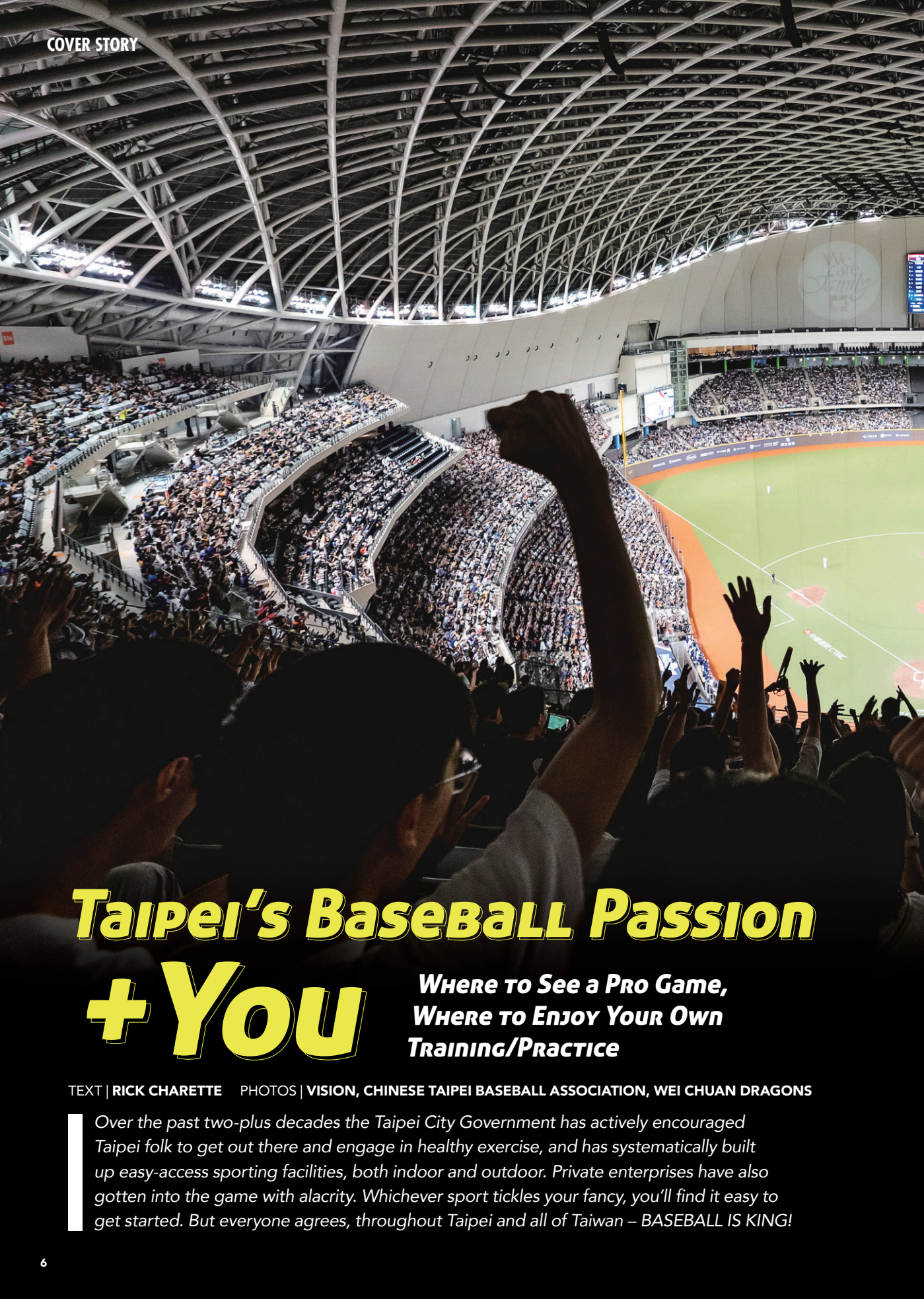


#05 Eid-al-Fitr in Taipei

台北開齋節歡慶活動

The Eid-al-Fitr event is held in Taipei each year at Daan Park. Muslims worldwide celebrate the end of Ramadan with Eid-al-Fitr, a time of joy and togetherness. After a month of fasting, families and friends gather to share delicious meals. Featuring a halal market – offering international cuisine, cultural souvenirs, and daily necessities for Muslims – and a rich program of stage performances, as well as activities like henna hand painting, Arabic calligraphy lessons, and gamelan music experiences. The event attracts about 30,000 people each year. Many participants enjoy picnics on the park’s grassy areas, while singalongs create a festive atmosphere filled with music and food. Staging the event is part of Taipei City’s efforts to create a Muslim-friendly environment.

📍 Daan Park 大安森林公園
 🕒 April 13



Taipei's Baseball Passion + You

Where to See a Pro Game,
Where to Enjoy Your Own
Training/Practice

TEXT | RICK CHARETTE PHOTOS | VISION, CHINESE TAIPEI BASEBALL ASSOCIATION, WEI CHUAN DRAGONS

Over the past two-plus decades the Taipei City Government has actively encouraged Taipei folk to get out there and engage in healthy exercise, and has systematically built up easy-access sporting facilities, both indoor and outdoor. Private enterprises have also gotten into the game with alacrity. Whichever sport tickles your fancy, you'll find it easy to get started. But everyone agrees, throughout Taipei and all of Taiwan – **BASEBALL IS KING!**



*Take me out to the ball game, take me out to the crowd,
Buy me some instant noodles and a nice boxed lunch,
I don't care if I never get back...*

Taipei Dome

Which is to say, attend a pro game here in Taipei and you'll see that the Taiwanese play this beloved international game with distinct island flavors, as you'll see momentarily. Baseball was introduced to Formosa not by the Americans, but by the Japanese when they ruled Taiwan (1895-1945). It has long been the No. 1 local sport, locals' passion in large part stemming from the national pride built up by thrilling hitting-above-one's-weight success on the international stage, most notably in Little League World Championships through the 1970s and '80s and, over the past three decades, by the success of the men's national team in international competitions. Affectionately known as *Team Taiwan*, most recently (November 2024) the men's squad won its first-ever WBSC Premier12 championship, one of the globe's elite international tournaments. The team then resiliently advanced to the 2026 World Baseball Classic in February 2025.

Taiwan's men's pro league, the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL), was founded in 1987. Today there are six teams, each owned by and named after a major Taiwanese corporation. The regular season runs from March through October, with a one-week all-star break in June/July (playoffs in late October/early November). Each team has a regional market and a home city – the *Wei Chuan Dragons* in Taipei – but will play some games in smaller markets outside the six main home bases, to widen their fan base.

In 2020, the CPBL made international headlines as the professional baseball league to hold its opening game of the season first, thanks to Taiwan's successful containment of the global pandemic. In 2024, with the addition of a new team, the *TSG Hawks*, the number of total games played increased to 360 from 300. Total attendance soared by 53.7%, from 1,800,130 to 2,766,386 spectators.



Taipei Tianmu Baseball Stadium

Taipei has two international-caliber stadiums where you can catch a game, which we'll now visit.

► Taipei Tianmu Baseball Stadium

This facility, in Shilin District's Tianmu area, which has a heavy expatriate population and pronounced cosmopolitan character, is the lair of the *Wei Chuan Dragons*, league champions in 2023. It's not far – short bus or taxi ride, 15min walk – from MRT Mingde Station. Sitting within the 16.8ha Tianmu Sports Park complex, it was opened in 1999 and served as the venue for the Baseball World Cup in 2001.

An open-air venue primarily used for baseball, it has a capacity of 10,500. Tianmu was Taiwan's first pro baseball stadium fitted with artificial turf, in 2021. This, in tandem with world-class site drainage capabilities, significantly reduces the impact of inclement weather. There are numerous different seating areas to choose from, such as the festive O-GRILL area in the right field, which has picnic tables, BBQ facilities, and other special-offering packages for groups; a “glamping” area for groups, with yurt-style tents sporting comfy interior/exterior seating and large viewing windows plus a special food/beverage combo (beer and snack set, fresh-prepared BBQ group meal); and a “doubles seating” zone on the third-level infield area with small tables for two, side-by-side seats, and fresh-prepared BBQ boxed lunches for two.



O-GRILL area



“GLAMPING” area

You may have taken in ball games in stadium venues in many other lands, but you'll never have an experience as happily raucous as a Taiwan big-league game. There is a wholesome party atmosphere, with large squads of cheerleaders leading chants and a large army of dedicated home-team fans seated together and drumming, blowing whistles, and beating plastic cheer sticks – through pretty much the entire game. The *Wei Chuan Dragons*' squad is called the *Dragon Beauties*, and each of them has their own jersey number and uniform, signifying that they are an indispensable part of the team.

The cheerleading troupes have an impressively wide repertoire of dances/chants, a practice borrowed from Korean baseball in 2013. Many home team fans will stand and dance/chant along. There's a game-opening routine performed on the field, specialized dances/chants for individual players, etc. Many of the cheerleaders have become celebrities, making appearances outside of games both with their squads and on their own, at public events (such as the 2024 Taipei New Year's Party), in movies, and on TV variety shows. With their popularity drawing in new audiences, cheerleading culture has significantly boosted the visibility of the CPBL and is widely regarded as a driving force behind the resurgence of baseball in Taiwan. One especially popular cheerleader is Dahye Lee who is currently the captain of the *Dragon Beauties*. The first cheerleader from Korea to have a successful career in Taiwan, she has starred in countless events organized by the Taipei City Government.

Special Hot Zone infield-area seating is found at every Taiwan pro-ball stadium, in Tianmu directly in front of the two dugouts, the main cheerleader performance spots.



TAIPEI TIANMU BASEBALL STADIUM

台北市天母棒球場

📍 77, Sec. 2, Zhongcheng Rd., Shilin Dist.

☎ (02) 7755-1999

🌐 www.wdragons.com/tianmu_stadium



Cheering on the crowds during a WBC Premier12 game at Taipei Dome



Team Taiwan at the Taipei Dome during a WBSC Premier12 game

► Taipei Dome

The Taipei Dome is downtown in the heart of the city, on Zhongxiao East Road, not far from the city's main tourism-brand icon, the Taipei 101 skyscraper. MRT Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall Station is right before it.

The striking facility, opened in October 2023, is a multi-purpose domed stadium with a capacity of 40,575, the country's first indoor facility of such size. Its primary use is for baseball – it is in full compliance with World Baseball Softball Confederation regulations – but it's also designed to handle a wide array of other large-scale events, including softball and soccer games, as well as concerts and celebrations. Taipei served as a host for opening round games in last autumn's Premier12 competition, with games played at both the dome and in Tianmu. This year, the dome welcomed the 2025 WBC Qualifiers and will serve as a key venue for the 2025 World Masters Games (*wmg2025.tw*), which Taipei/New Taipei City are co-hosting.

The opening of the dome is a key milestone in the evolution of Taiwan baseball. The venue is a world-class site far larger than the island's other pro baseball venues, providing players with experience on a stage far larger than most have been exposed to and preparing them better for international competition. In 2024, a total of 38 regular-season games of the CPBL were played inside the dome, drawing close to 800,000 spectators. On average about 20,000 spectators attended the games.

These sporting events, along with numerous concerts by world-class pop stars, have attracted a large number of visitors to Taipei City, leading to near-full occupancy rates at hotels in the Xinyi, Daan, and Songshan districts near the Taipei Dome. The stadium has played a significant role in boosting the city's tourism, driving revenue growth in the hospitality industry, and benefiting numerous local businesses.

Inside the dome, the Hot Zone encompasses the seats directly in front of the dugouts as well as the infield-closest seating running in between, behind the home plate area. There are also specially reserved seating areas for fans of the home team adjacent to this – i.e., seating running further down along the first and third base lines as well as directly in behind these areas' Hot Zone seating.

Now, about that little “Take me out to the ball game” ditty at this article’s opening. You can get your American ball-park classics – hot dogs, burgers, pizza – at Taiwan’s pro-ball parks, but ball-park culinary staples that fuel the Taiwan fan’s passion include instant noodles, deep-fried chicken cutlets, the Taiwan boxed lunch version of the Japanese bento, and a newer classic, Taiwan-invented pearl milk tea. Your beer also comes Taiwan-style – vendors patrol the stands and pump your pint cup full with fresh draft from back-carried canisters.

Among the non-sport-related attractions inside the dome is the Garden City shopping mall. Part of the mall is the Gourmet Park, featuring 14 restaurants serving Taiwanese and international cuisine. A Showtime Cinemas complex is expected to open in the second quarter of this year as well.

Outside the dome, you’ll find a top-tier roster of tourist attractions within walking distance of the stadium. The city block on which the dome stands is shared with the expansive Songshan Cultural and Creative Park, a former tobacco factory complex (built 1930s) transformed into a cultural hub home to exhibition, retail, and food & beverage spaces. The nearby East District and the Xinyi Commercial District, over which Taipei 101 towers, teem with high-end malls, restaurants, and entertainment spots.



Weekend Chicken Burger Club, Taipei Dome (top), Songshan Cultural and Creative Park (center), Xinyi Commercial District (bottom)

2025 CPBL Season

The next CPBL season will commence at Taipei Dome on March 29 with a matchup between the reigning champions, CTBC Brothers, and the Uni-President 7-Eleven Lions. Tickets are expected to be in high demand, so early purchase is recommended. For the 2025 schedule, visit the official CPBL website at en.cpbl.com.tw/schedule.

TAIPEI DOME 台北大巨蛋

- 📍 515, Sec. 4, Zhongxiao E. Rd., Xinyi Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2722-8811
- 🌐 www.farglorydome.com.tw

Taipei Dome in the evening



► Places to Practice Baseball Yourself

Besides enjoying the game as a spectator, there are many places where you can have fun swinging a bat yourself. The Major League Baseball and Softball Batting Cage is located in the Ximending area, Taipei's mecca for youth retail and entertainment. A short walk from MRT Ximen Station, it's on the eighth floor of Eslite Spectrum Ximen, a trendy high-rise mall. Just recently renovated, there's an assemblage of baseball and softball batting cages in a stylized playing field. Each machine-pitched batting round consists of 20 balls, you choose from an array of aluminum bats, and you can select the pitch speed and type (fastball, curveball, etc.) coming at you. Staff recommends that novices begin with faster 100mph pitches because balls at 80mph seem quite slow and require better timing. There are also small pitching cages where you can test your prowess on the mound with targets.

The 71 Sports Classroom is a baseball-dedicated center located on Shezi Island, which is not an island at all but a long, slender peninsula, formed by long-ago silting, in the crook where the Tamsui and Keelung rivers meet. It's in a large, high-ceilinged former industrial building on grounds shared with the popular Garden Mall (www.gardenmall.com.tw), a sizeable flower/herb-themed family amusement attraction. On stepping in you take in the entire classroom operation at a glance – green artificial turf carpets on the floor, and green safety netting is everywhere, including hanging down from the ceiling.

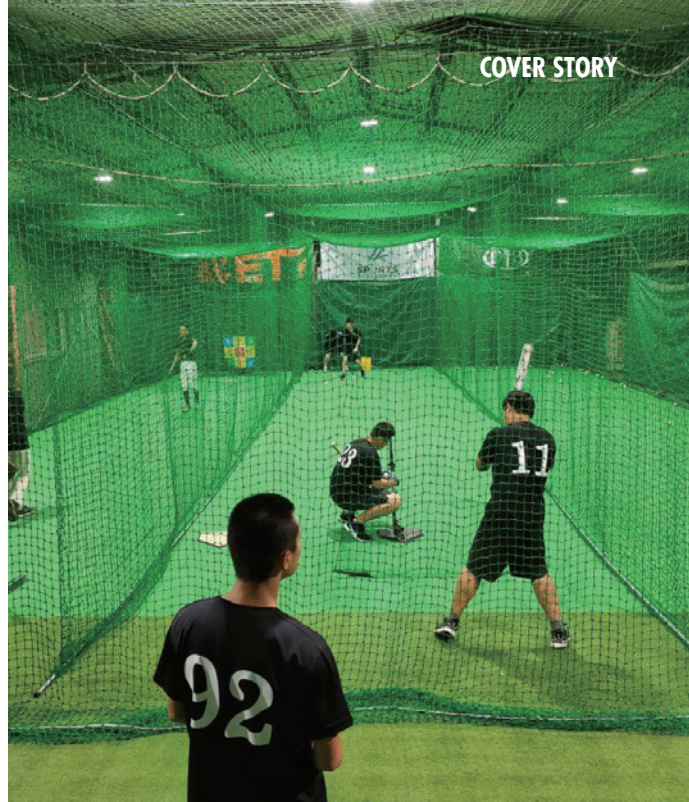
The facility provides trained instructors, all experienced ball players, for a spectrum of teaching sessions (hitting, defense skills/strategy, etc.). Among the advanced equipment of 71 Sports Classroom is the iPitch Smart Pitching Machine, which was first introduced to Taiwan by the center and is said to have played a major role in improving the batting of the *Team Taiwan* squad, which won last year's WBSC Premier12 tournament.

The focus is on personal teaching and small class teaching, with specialized instruction regimens tailored for different age groups (children through adults), gender, and skill levels. On-field classes are also available, with instructors traveling to chosen sites throughout the Taipei/New Taipei City area. Batting and pitching cages at the Shezi facility can also be rented.

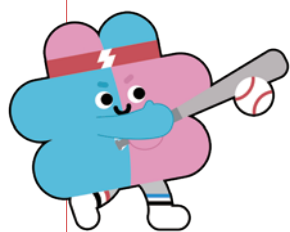




iPitch Smart Pitching Machine and batting space at 71 Sports Classroom



The Taipei Youth Program Association (www.typa.org.tw), based on the Taipei American School (TAS) campus in Tianmu, offers baseball teaching and game competition programs (fee) for kids from K-1 through grade 5 (training only for K-1). The fields used are on the TAS campus. Practice sessions are once a week, on a weekday afternoon, and games are on Saturday afternoons. Parents must be TYPA members – foreign nationals holding a foreign passport; registration is simple. Emphasis is on catching, throwing, and hitting techniques while reinforcing basic positioning and game strategy. If you're a die-hard baseball fan, or if your child simply loves the game, why not let them experience the thrill of playing on a real baseball field? You never know – the next baseball superstar might be living right in your own home! 🏆



Baseball Events During the 2025 World Masters Games

Baseball and softball (regular, slow pitch) games will be played at both the Taipei Tianmu Baseball Stadium and Taipei Dome during the games (as well as Yingfeng Riverside Park's baseball field), which will run from May 18 to 29 and feature athletes 30 and older. Admission is free. Teams compete in different categories: Competitive, Recreational, and Open, with divisions according to age. There are men's, women's, and also mixed competitions in slow-pitch segment.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL BATTING CAGE

大聯盟棒壘球打擊場

- 📍 8F, 52, Emei St., Wanhua Dist.
- ☎️ (02) 2388-3229
- 🕒 11:30am-10:00pm

71 SPORTS CLASSROOM 投打學苑

- 📍 18-2, Sec. 7, Yanping N. Rd., Shilin Dist.
- ☎️ 0912-905-271
- 📱 [instagram.com/71sportsclassroom](https://www.instagram.com/71sportsclassroom)
- 🕒 Tue-Fri 10:00am-10:00pm
Sat 10:00am-7:00pm
Sun 10:00am-6:00pm



Shezi Island | 社子島
Songshan Cultural and Creative Park | 松山文創園區
Tianmu | 天母
Ximending | 西門町
Yingfeng Riverside Park | 迎風河濱公園



MAP



PLACES TO PUSH YOUR LIMITS ♡

CITY VENUES FOR EXTREME SPORTS

In recent years, Taipei City has significantly invested in infrastructure for extreme-sports enthusiasts, including dedicated gyms, skateboarding parks, and skating rinks. Most of these facilities are both easily accessible and affordable. The city is rapidly becoming a hub for adventure and athleticism, allowing residents to hone their extreme-sports skills, such as rock climbing, skating, skateboarding, rollerblading, and BMXing.

TEXT | TRENT JACKSON PHOTOS | VISION

ROCK CLIMBING

DOUBLE 8 DADAOCHENG

Nestled within Taipei's historic Dadaocheng neighborhood, a few blocks southwest of MRT Daqiaotou Station, this gym boasts excellent facilities and a welcoming atmosphere. Featuring a variety of climbing routes, including bouldering and top-rope setups, it caters to climbers of all levels, from curious kids (ages 3 and up) to seasoned enthusiasts. The climbing area is located on the second floor, while the first floor houses an office and a small shop where you can buy your own equipment, like climbing shoes. (During courses, equipment is provided.) Despite its relatively compact size, the gym's route diversity ensures challenges to keep both aspiring and experienced climbers engaged. The friendly staff prioritizes safety while guiding you through the experience, making climbing fun and accessible from the very beginning.



DOUBLE 8 DADAOCHENG

大稻埕岩究所攀岩館

📍 251, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.

☎ (02) 2550-8081

🌐 www.double8.com.tw

🕒 By reservation only



DOUBLE 8 Y17

Conveniently located near MRT NTU Hospital Station, Double 8 Y17 is an excellent choice if you're looking to advance your climbing skills under the supervision of experienced instructors. Featuring diverse terrain and a climbing height of up to 12 meters, the expansive walls and varied routes are designed to challenge climbers with at least some basic skill level. Difficult overhangs and demanding bouldering problems are available, ensuring climbers of varying abilities can find suitable tests. The professional climbing surfaces are meticulously maintained, and skilled staff are on hand to guide climbers through vexing sections.

DOUBLE 8 Y17 Y17 岩究所攀岩館

- 📍 9F, 17, Sec. 1, Renai Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
- ☎️ (02) 2351-5215
- 🌐 double8-y17.rezio.shop
- 🕒 By reservation only



SKATEBOARDING, INLINE SKATING, and BMX



XINSHENG PLAYGROUND SKATEPARK

Beneath Xinsheng Elevated Road, west of MRT Zhongxiao Xinsheng Station, is a popular skatepark frequented by skateboarding enthusiasts. The elevated road shields the park from both sun and rain, allowing skaters and cyclists to enjoy their sport year-round regardless of the weather. The park has well-designed smooth concrete surfaces and multifarious obstacles such as rails, ledges, benches, ramps, and a mini half-pipe, catering to a wide range of skill levels. This appealing mélange of features is great for exploring one's creativity and attempting new tricks.

A magnet for skateboarders from across the city, the park is fostering a vibrant community where you can share your passion, push your limits, and connect with fellow enthusiasts. It also possesses a basketball court and space for artistic expression. For those seeking to experience Taipei's vibrant skateboarding scene and/or find an exciting spot to hone their skills, this spot is an absolute must-visit.



XINSHENG PLAYGROUND SKATEPARK

新生高架橋下運動場滑板場

📍 Under Xinsheng Elevated Rd. between Bade Rd. and Civic Blvd. (Beside Huashan 1914 Creative Park)

🕒 8:00am-10:00pm



TAIPEI EXTREME SPORTS TRAINING CENTER

The Taipei Extreme Sports Training Center in Nangang District, by MRT Nangang Station, stands out as one of Taiwan's premier destinations for skateboarding, inline skating, and BMX. Home to the island's largest half-pipe, alongside quarter pipes, rails, ramps, a foam pit, and more, this center offers an unparalleled environment for extreme-sports training. Entrance fees are quite reasonable and, even on weekends, the center rarely experiences overcrowding.

This venue serves as the stage for the annual Taipei Extreme Sports Festival in the autumn, as well as various other competitions and events. It's important to note that most of the facilities are designed for more experienced riders, so beginners might find it challenging. For advanced skaters and riders, however, this center provides an exceptional platform to practice with some of the finest amenities in all of Taiwan.

TAIPEI EXTREME SPORTS TRAINING CENTER

台北市極限運動訓練中心

📍 382, Sec. 7, Zhongxiao E. Rd., Nangang Dist.

☎ (02) 2789-0001

🌐 www.wpxsports.com.tw

🕒 9:00am-9:00pm

Taipei Extreme Sports Festival 台北市極限運動大賽

Organized by Taipei City's Department of Sports, this annual event, happening over two days in autumn, is the biggest extreme-sports competition in Taiwan. Around 150 talented athletes from Taiwan and abroad compete in skateboarding, inline skating, and BMX at the Taipei Extreme Sports Training Center.

©Taipei City Govt.



RAINBOW RIVERSIDE PARK PUMP TRACK

The Rainbow Riverside Park Pump Track stands as Taipei's first and Taiwan's largest pump track, offering a thrilling experience for BMX bikers, inline skaters, and skateboarders of all ages. The expertly designed track features a series of challenging hills and bumps that provide endless fun.

Remember to always wear proper safety gear, including helmets, knee pads, and elbow pads, to minimize the risk of injury. Even seemingly simple bumps can be deceptively challenging. When this writer visited the track with his children, they all experienced a few spills, but the excitement and unforgettable memories far outweighed all the minor mishaps.

Situated within the picturesque Rainbow Riverside Park, the pump track seamlessly blends physical activity with outdoor recreation, making it an ideal destination for a weekend adventure. Whether you're a curious beginner or an experienced rider looking to refine your skills, this track promises an exhilarating and rewarding experience.

RAINBOW RIVERSIDE PARK PUMP TRACK

彩虹河濱公園輪狀車練習場

📍 223, Sec. 1, Tiding Blvd., Neihu Dist.

(Right bank of Keelung River)

🕒 24H

©Taipei City Govt.



SKATING



©Taroko Sports

ROLLER186 SKATING RINK

Conveniently located within Taipei Arena in Songshan District, which has its own eponymous metro station, Taroko Sports' Roller186 Skating Rink is the largest in northern Taiwan, attracting inline skating fans of all ages and skill levels. The spacious, smooth skating surface caters to both leisurely cruising and energetic freestyle moves, making the rink one of the city's most iconic skating venues.

Evoking the vibrant spirit of 1970s American roller rinks, the venue boasts retro lighting, vibrant colors, and a nostalgic charm. There is a classic American diner-style area, further enhancing the retro ambiance. The lively atmosphere is amplified by upbeat music, creating an exhilarating recreational experience.

Weekends and holidays often see larger crowds, frequently consisting of high school and college students. Weekday visits are therefore recommended. On busier days, arriving early is advisable to minimize wait times.

For newcomers, the rink offers convenient rental services featuring skates and protective gear for optimal safety and comfort. A lounge area is available for relaxation, creating a welcoming environment for all. Whether you seek a leisurely glide, a platform to practice advanced tricks or simply a nostalgic outing with friends and family, Roller186 is the ultimate inline-skating destination in Taipei.



©Taroko Sports

©Taroko Sports

ROLLER186 SKATING RINK

ROLLER186 滑輪場

📍 2, Sec. 4, Nanjing E. Rd., Songshan Dist.

☎ (02) 2578-6745

🕒 Mon-Thu 10:00am-9:00pm

Fri 10:00am-11:00pm

Sat 9:00am-11:00pm

Sun 9:00am-9:00pm

AURORA ICE RINK

Located within NOKE Mall, a short walk from MRT Jiannan Road Station, Aurora Ice Rink holds the distinction of being Taiwan's first mall-based ice rink to meet international ice hockey standards. It also ranks as the second-largest ice rink in Taiwan, surpassed only by the rink at Taipei Arena. For those without equipment, the facility conveniently provides rental services for skates and protective gear.

The modern, indoor complex offers a spacious layout with smooth, high-quality ice. It's an ideal venue for family outings and group activities. Skating sessions are offered throughout the day for an additional fee, allowing for dedicated coaching time.

Beyond traditional skating, Aurora Ice Rink hosts a variety of exciting events, including seasonal ice shows, skate competitions, and curling tournaments, showcasing both local and

international talent. The facility also features a unique snowboarding area where learners can practice balancing and carving on a large, sloped, and slippery treadmill.

Located inside a mall with many options for dining, shopping, and entertainment, the Aurora Ice Rink is a must-visit destination for anyone seeking a distinctive and enjoyable ice-skating experience, especially those who want to escape the heat when the weather is hot outside. **T**

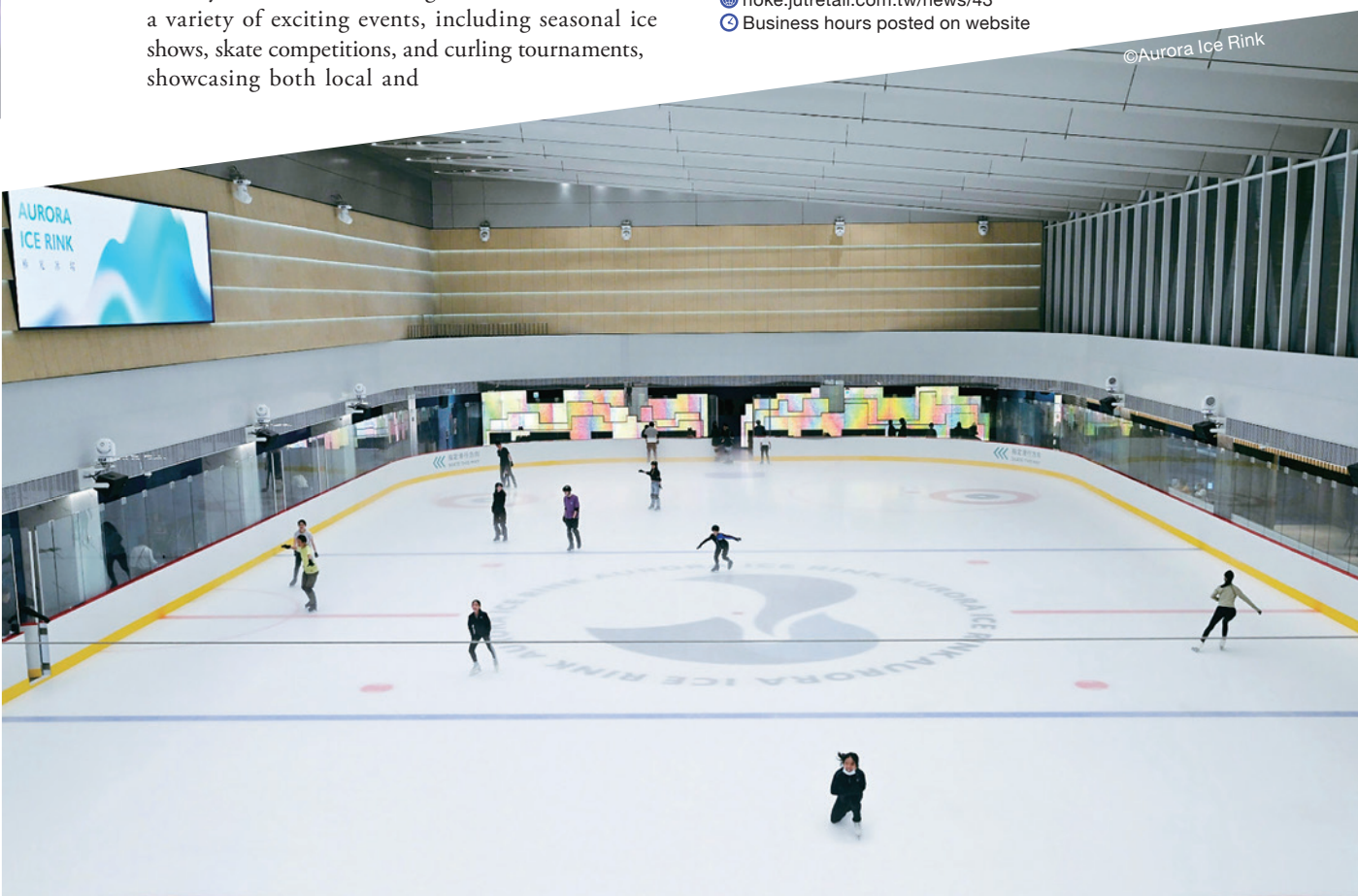
AURORA ICE RINK 極光冰場

📍 6F, 200, Lequn 3rd Rd., Zhongshan Dist.

☎ (02) 8501-5799

🌐 noke.jutretail.com.tw/news/43

🕒 Business hours posted on website



Dadaocheng | 大稻埕
NOKE Mall | NOKE 忠泰樂生活
Rainbow Riverside Park | 彩虹河濱公園

Taipei Arena | 台北小巨蛋
Taroko Sports | 大魯閣
Xinsheng Elevated Road | 新生高架道路



MAP



IMGA



TAIPEI CITY
NEW TAIPEI CITY

THE WORLD MASTERS GAMES

Things to Know About This Year's Biggest Sports Event in Taipei

WORLD MASTERS GAMES

2025 TAIPEI CITY
NEW TAIPEI CITY

TEXT AND PHOTOS | VISION

This year, Taipei will once again host a major multi-sports event. Compared to the Deaflympics (2009) and the Summer Universiade (2017), the World Masters Games will be much larger in scale, in terms of the number of participants, sports, and venues. Here are some facts and information for participants in this grand international athletic gathering.

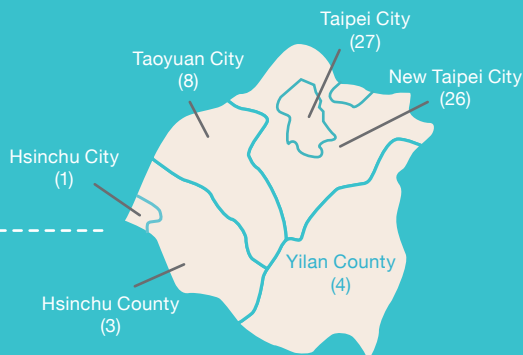
For detailed information about the 2025 World Masters Games, visit the official multilingual event website (wmg2025.tw) and follow the social media accounts (FB, IG, and YouTube). General information about the Games, which are held every four years, can be found on the International Masters Games Association website (imga.ch).

Dates

May 17-30

Venues

69



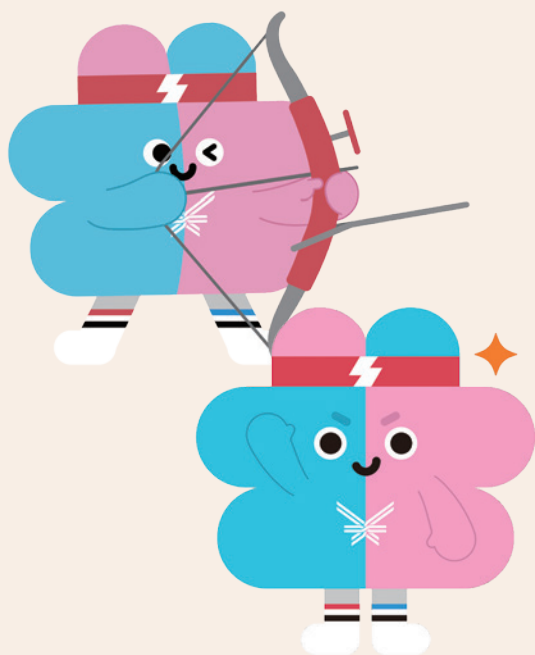
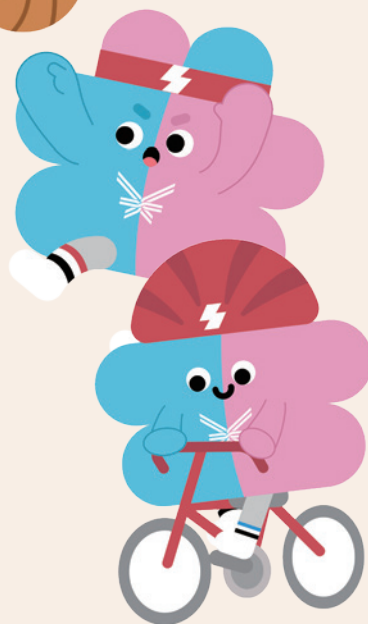
● Sports

Participants will compete in 35 sports, ranging from popular choices like football, basketball, and swimming to less common disciplines such as flying disc, woodball, and orienteering.

● Participants

More than 25,000 athletes from over 130 countries, including more than 6,000 international competitors, will participate in the Games. Among them are renowned local and international athletes, past their prime but with impressive records in professional international competitions. These include Taiwanese archers Chen Szu-yuan (Silver) and Yuan Shu-chi (Bronze), medalists at the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics. Also expected are taekwondo Taiwanese-American Elva Adams, a Bronze medalist at the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics; Tanja Engels, who represented West Germany in international competitions from 1973 to 1980; and wrestler/influencer Jang Eun-sil from South Korea who was invited by the city government last year to visit Taiwan and promote the Games.

Among the notable non-professional athletes are Taipei City Mayor Chiang Wan-an and New Taipei City Mayor Hou Yu-ih who will compete in table tennis.



● Watching the Games

Spectators can attend the competitions for free. The Games will also be broadcast live on WMG's official YouTube channel (youtube.com/@WMG2025).

● WMG2025 FunPASS


The Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government has launched a limited edition of 3,000 WMG2025 FunPASS cards to coincide with the event. These cards, featuring the Games' mascot "Strong" function like standard stored-value EasyCards and can be used for public transport and purchases at convenience stores. They also grant free admission to 3 of 20 popular attractions across Taipei, New Taipei City, Keelung, Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Yilan, plus free gifts and shopping discounts at participating stores in four popular Taipei tourist areas: Yongkang, Maokong, Dadaocheng, and Ximending.

Beyond the sports competitions, the Games offer a wonderful opportunity for visitors to explore Taipei and the surrounding areas. For travel recommendations, visit www.travel.taipei/wmg2025/en/tours.

● Opening and Closing Ceremonies

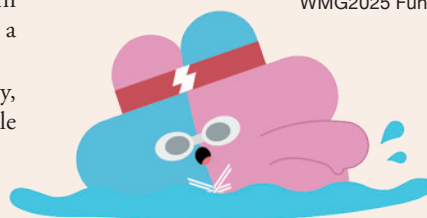
The opening ceremony, themed "We Share the Same Sky," will be held on May 17 at 7pm at the Taipei Dome. The program will feature a dance and music performance blending Taiwanese classics with high-tech elements.

The closing ceremony, themed "Formosa and Friends," will take place on May 30 at 7pm at the New Taipei City Art Museum in Yingge District. It will include performances by local entertainers, a fireworks display, and the Flame of Hope transfer.

Both ceremonies are open to the public. The opening ceremony, however, requires tickets (see the official website for details), while the closing ceremony is free. 



WMG2025 FunPASS card



Ambling Through Dadaocheng

Cultural Discoveries Awaiting You in Taipei's Famous Historic District

TEXT | RAY HECHT PHOTOS | CHEN CHENG-KUO, VISION

The Dadaocheng neighborhood, located in Datong District, not far north of Taipei's main railway station, is an intriguing destination for an afternoon walk. Here you can enjoy educational experiences at heritage sites, shop for unique gifts, and sample a diverse array of foods, including traditional pastry and tea.

We start our walk at the southern end of Dihua Street, about 500m north of MRT Beimen Station.



Yongle Market

Dihua Street



Dihua Street is Taipei's oldest street, and it is full of old-world charm with many interesting shops on both sides. Some sell traditional-style fabrics, like the always-busy Yongle Fabric Market, while others specialize in tea and herbs used for traditional medicine. Vendors with small carts offer classic Taiwanese snacks in front of well-preserved old brick buildings. Many of the brick-and-mortar businesses have been in operation for over a century. This is an excellent area to find gift items, such as bamboo and wooden crafts, as well as traditional goods, such as incense, spices, and dried food. There are also numerous young establishments, such as boutique clothing stores and coffee shops, opened in heritage buildings. Down some of the alleyways, you'll even find bars where live music is played in the evenings.



Dadaocheng Visitor Center

Not far from the southern end of Dihua Street lies the Dadaocheng Visitor Center, a good place to start your exploration of this enclave. The center provides helpful information about the area in Chinese and English. On the second floor, retro costumes are available for rent. Ladies can dress in a *cheongsam* and act out the roaring 1920s while posing for photos. The center recently added a traditional tea ceremony corner where visitors can take pictures. You can head outside to take advantage of the unique local backdrops. On the same floor are mock-ups of old-time businesses, titled Chunsheng Tea Shop and Kean Chinese Medicine Shop, where you can experience a sense of Taipei during the good old days (1950s). The third floor features a recreation of an old-day common school classroom during the Japanese era as well as the Yongle Lantern Shop, in which colorful paper lanterns are exhibited.

DADAOCHENG VISITOR CENTER

大稻埕遊客中心

📍 44, Dihua St., Datong Dist.

☎ (02) 2559-6802

🌐 travel.taipei/vintage-clothing/en

🕒 9:00am-6:00pm

(Reservation required for dress-up experience)



Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple

Across from the visitor center, just north of Yongle Market building, is the Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple. Although not a particularly large temple, it is known for having one of the highest densities of deity statues of any temple in Taiwan. Built 1856-1859, among the key deities worshipped in the temple are the City God himself, the Wife of the City God, and Yue Lao, or “Old Man Under the Moon,” who is revered as a matchmaking god. Expect to see individuals and couples burning incense and praying in the hope of, respectively, receiving celestial help in finding a partner (help from Yue Lao) and having their partnerships blessed (help from the City God’s wife), and those who return to the temple to thank the deities after their wishes have been fulfilled, often offering gifts such as wedding cakes.





Following, we visit some of the many interesting shops in Dadaocheng.

Yao de Herb

Running parallel to Dihua Street, on the other side of Yongle Market, is Minle Street, which is home to several businesses worth visiting. It's a little quieter here than on Dihua Street, and thus the perfect location for a place like Yao de Herb. This is a tea room with a unique charm. On wooden racks, you'll see a vast inventory of all sorts of dried tea leaves and herbs used in traditional Chinese medicine. At the counter out front, you can also try a range of reasonably priced herbal teas.

YAO DE HERB 姚德和青草號

- 📍 55, Minle St., Datong Dist.
- ☎️ (02) 2558-9510
- 📘 facebook.com/YaodeHerb
- 🕒 Mon-Sat 8:00am-7:00pm
Sun 8:30am-6:00pm





Earthing Way

Also located on Minle Street, Earthing Way is a select shop with an eclectic supply of fancy products. There are racks and cabinets full of jewelry, tea ware, candles, incense, baskets, antiques, and even vintage clothing apparel. At the time of this writer's visit, there was a display of paper artwork among the handmade crafts, and the store owner emphasized that 90% of the items in the shop are made by Taiwanese creators. Check the shop's website for examples of different items to purchase, which can also be ordered online.



EARTHING WAY 地衣荒物

- 📍 34, Minle St., Datong Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2550-2270
- 🌐 earthingway.waca.ec
- 🕒 Wed-Mon 12:30pm-7:30pm



Monsoon Books



Book lovers will enjoy choosing from among several independent bookstores on Dihua Street, and one that particularly stands out is Monsoon Books. Note that it is a bit hard to find, as it is in the rear of a building behind a shoe store. To get to the bookstore, go up a set of stairs behind the store. There is a small but varied selection of English-language books available, including children's books and art books, and this is a quiet place where you can take your time browsing before buying. The staff is helpful, and there are many gift options perfect for the literary traveler, such as artistic fabric carrying bags, postcards, and bookmarks.

MONSOON BOOKS 季風帶書店

- 📍 2F, 198, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.
- ☎ (02) 8732-8546
- 🌐 mzbooks.shop
- 🕒 11:00am-6:00pm

To satisfy your culinary cravings, consider visiting the following businesses along Dihua Street.

Tong-An Family

Tong-An Family is a family-owned enterprise that has recently moved to a new location. This traditional-style tea house is quite large, with multiple rooms used for different purposes. In the front end, facing Dihua Street, tea and cake are served. This space has a distinctly traditional, charming atmosphere. Further in the back, there is a full-service restaurant where authentic Taiwanese cuisine is served. On special occasions, live music can be enjoyed. Try the *Pouchong* tea and the stewed chicken dishes. On the second floor, space is reserved for art exhibits. During this writer's visit, there was an exhibit showcasing clothes and crafts made from repurposed plastic.



- TONG-AN FAMILY 同安樂**
 📍 235/237, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.
 ☎️ (02) 2557-6939
 📘 facebook.com/Taipeiness
 🕒 11:00am-9:00pm





Lins Wagashi

Confectionery



For those with a sweet tooth, Lins Wagashi Confectionery, with a history of over 70 years, crafts unique tastes that blend the shared history of Japan and Taiwan. *Wagashi* are traditional Japanese sweets made with bean paste, glutinous rice, and plenty of sugar. They go well with tea, and Lins also serves *dorayaki*, which is a kind of filled pancake. The flavors vary from strawberry to pineapple and more. The shop, like many other ventures on Dihua Street, has retained its yesteryear look, with old weighing machines and ingredient jars decorating the windowsills. A hot seller during the winter (strawberry season in Taiwan) is the strawberry *daifuku*, which features a whole single strawberry inside a mochi wrapping filled with sweet adzuki bean paste. A favorite among both tourists and locals, this delightful treat is rather limited due to its painstaking handmade production. Long queues are often seen outside the store as eager customers hope to purchase a box.

LINS WAGASHI CONFECTIONARY
滋養和菓子

📍 247, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.
☎ (02) 2553-9553
🌐 www.wagashi.com.tw
🕒 9:00am-6:00pm



LI TING XIANG 李亭香

📍 309, Sec. 1, Dihua St., Datong Dist.
☎ (02) 7746-2200
🌐 lee-cake.com
🕒 10:00am-7:00pm



Li Ting Xiang

Furthest north on Dihua Street on this quick tour through Dadaocheng, Li Ting Xiang is a pastry shop that was established in 1895. This cozy establishment has a small seating section where customers can order teas and coffees to go with traditional Taiwanese cakes. These include the usual Americanos, as well as oolong teas and various herbal teas. The personal-sized cakes come in many flavors, ranging from nougat-filled to black sesame and toffee. Some are even adorned with edible gold leaf, for a fancier experience.

And if one prefers savory to sweet, there's curry cake too. This is also a nice place to buy gifts, as packaged sets of cakes and tea leaf are available. 📍



Chunsheng Tea Shop | 春生喫茶店
Dadaocheng Theater | 大稻埕戲苑
Dihua Street | 迪化街
Kean Chinese Medicine Shop | 客安中藥行

Taipei Xia-Hai City God Temple | 台北霞海城隍廟
Yongle Lantern Shop | 永樂燈苑
Yongle Market | 永樂市場
Yue Lao | 月老



MAP

South of the Old City Walls

A Tour of the Local History
and Culinary Delights in Taipei's
Famous Historic District

TEXT | JENNA LYNN CODY
PHOTOS | VISION

Although Taipei's city walls, erected in the late 19th century and torn down in the early 20th century, only existed for a very short time due to regime change, even today, the surrounding place names and neighborhood boundaries still largely follow the divisions of those city walls and their gates, a testament to their enduring legacy.



Rongjin Gorgeous Time

The part of old Taipei known as Chengnan is no exception. Encompassing an area roughly to the south and east of Xiaonanmen (Little South Gate), one of the still-standing city gates, its name translates unsurprisingly to “South of the Wall.” Accessible from the Xiaonanmen, Guting, and C.K.S. Memorial Hall metro stations, Chengnan offers quiet tree-lined streets, historic buildings and museums from the Japanese (1895-1945) and post-war eras, bustling markets, and some of Taipei’s best food.



National Museum of History

Imagine a morning stroll through lush gardens dotted with ponds, little bridges, and historic sites. You might first learn about the profusion of plants, watch some birds, spot a group of turtles, or set up an easel or sketchbook in a picturesque spot. Then you wander over to a history museum to have lunch in a restaurant overlooking a pond covered with lotuses. Your afternoon is spent wandering art and artifact exhibits from Chinese antiquity and Taiwanese modern history.

This isn’t a dream itinerary: Taiwan’s National Museum of History and Taipei Botanical Garden sit side-by-side in the heart of Chengnan.

The architecture of the National Museum of History, built in 1955, is a Sino-European blend with Chinese palace-style red pillars, hip-and-gable tiled roofs, and door gods along with newer materials such as cement and etched glass. The foundation of its collection is a trove of Chinese historical artifacts returned from post-war Japan, including everything from oracle bones to Tang Dynasty ceramics, priceless calligraphy, and much beyond.

The museum reopened in early 2024 after nearly six years of renovations, now featuring expanded exhibition space. Despite its name, it is known just as much for art as history: recent exhibits of Chinese female artists and works by Chinese-French painter Sanyu have drawn a great deal of positive attention.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY 國立歷史博物館

- 📍 49, Nanhai Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2331-1220
- 🌐 www.nmh.gov.tw/en
- 🕒 Tue-Sun 10:00am-6:00pm

Taipei Botanical Garden

The Taipei Botanical Garden has been providing a quiet green space for city residents since the Japanese era. First built as Taipei Nursery in 1896 by the Japanese, this garden was briefly neglected during World War II before it flourished again with 17 themed plant areas and nine ponds, showcasing over two thousand plant species, with blooms changing with the seasons.

The Succulent Plants Garden features winding stone paths, and the indigenous-plant section helps visitors better understand flora native to Taiwan. The Chinese Zodiac Plants Garden boasts curated plants with various relationships to the 12 Chinese Zodiac animals, and the ponds and wooded areas are popular with artists and birdwatchers, who often stake out specific spots that individual birds, such as the Taiwan barbet, are known to frequent. Although the Lotus Pond is most beautiful in June and July, egrets and herons can be seen on its shores for much of the year.



TAIPEI BOTANICAL GARDEN 台北植物園

- 📍 53, Nanhai Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2303-9978
- 🌐 tpbg.tfri.gov.tw/en
- 🕒 5:30am-8:00pm

After a visit to the National Museum of History and/or Taipei Botanical Garden, foodies know to head to Nanmen Market, a short walk east.



Nanmen Market

Nanmen (South Gate) Market has existed in some form for over a century, first as an outdoor market, founded in 1907, and later in its current building on Roosevelt Road, to which it has recently returned after a temporary relocation to allow for extensive renovations.

The first floor of the four-story market is especially popular in the weeks leading up to the Lunar New Year, as it's well-known for its dazzling variety of candy, buns, and preserved meats. Its dry goods and packaged ready-made dishes are also popular, including hard-to-find foodstuffs from abroad. The produce is often said to be among the freshest in Taipei and, depending on the season, includes such locally rare items as banana peppers and large Western eggplants. The food court on the second floor is a renowned meal spot with seating.



NANMEN MARKET 南門市場

- 📍 8, Sec. 1, Roosevelt Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.
- 🌐 www.tpnanmen.org.tw
- 🕒 Tue-Sat 7:00am-7:00pm (second floor opens at 9:30am)





True Bao Maker

The gourmet experience doesn't end at Nanmen Market, though. True Bao Maker, in an alley on the other side of Roosevelt Road, gives classic *gua bao* (aka the "Taiwanese hamburger") a twist. This small shop decorated with funky orange chairs and comic book memorabilia makes some of the most creative *bao* you'll find in Taipei – imagine spicy beef *bao*, sweet *bao* filled with cinnamon apple, vegetarian pumpkin *bao*, and side dishes like pumpkin tempura and tomato beef soup.

TRUE BAO MAKER 有情出包所

📍 25, Ln. 9, Ningbo E. St., Zhongzheng Dist.

📱 [instagram.com/truebao_maker](https://www.instagram.com/truebao_maker)

🕒 Tue-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30pm-10:00pm (Fri & Sat till 12:00am)
Sun 12:00pm-8:00pm



Angelica Mutton Soup



ANGELICA MUTTON SOUP 樂天羊肉

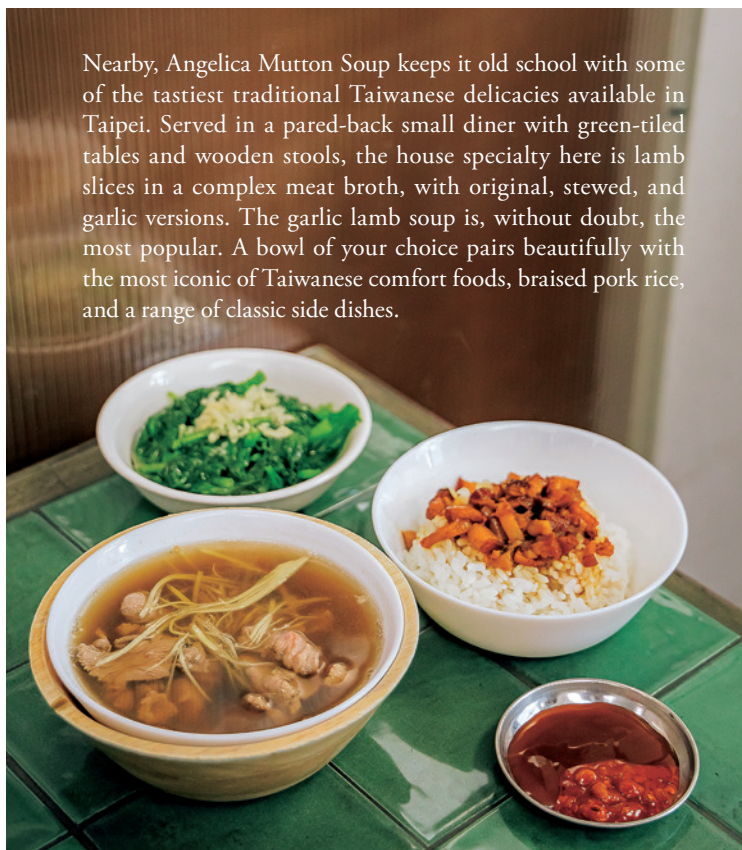
📍 25, Sec. 1, Roosevelt Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.

☎ 0958-572-101

📱 [instagram.com/sixdaymutton](https://www.instagram.com/sixdaymutton)

🕒 Mon-Sat 11:30am-9:00pm

Nearby, Angelica Mutton Soup keeps it old school with some of the tastiest traditional Taiwanese delicacies available in Taipei. Served in a pared-back small diner with green-tiled tables and wooden stools, the house specialty here is lamb slices in a complex meat broth, with original, stewed, and garlic versions. The garlic lamb soup is, without doubt, the most popular. A bowl of your choice pairs beautifully with the most iconic of Taiwanese comfort foods, braised pork rice, and a range of classic side dishes.



Rongjin Gorgeous Time

The “South Gate” area isn’t the only part of Chengnan with great food. Head further east from the area to Rongjin Gorgeous Time, a Japanese-era complex of former government dormitories. Situated between MRT Guting and Dongmen stations, this long strip of wooden buildings once served as housing for workers in the Taipei Criminal Office; a prison once stood next door. After a period of abandonment, with some buildings destroyed by fire or due to severe neglect, the Department of Cultural Affairs began a years-long renovation project of the site.

Now, Rongjin Gorgeous Time is a haven filled with popular restaurants, cafés, and shops. It’s also a pleasant place for a stroll, especially around sunset. Inside the complex, restaurants and shops seamlessly blend with the site’s Japanese cultural heritage, rounding out Chengnan’s reputation as a neighborhood where culture, food, and history meet.



The old wall of the former Taipei Criminal Office complex on the northern side of Rongjin Gorgeous Time

Taihu Gyoza Bar



Taihu Gyoza Bar is from the Taiwanese brand: Taihu Brewing, and it's a popular spot for Taiwanese craft beer and Japanese cuisine. With both indoor and outdoor seating, patrons can soak up the vintage atmosphere while chowing down on fried gyoza, steamed dumplings, chicken karaage, curry rice, tempting noodle bowls, and more. Some try for free dishes by partaking in drinking challenges!

TAIHU GYOZA BAR

臺虎居餃屋

- 📍 155, Jinhua St., Daan Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2391-0150
- 📘 facebook.com/taihu.gyozabar
- 🕒 Mon 4:00pm-11:30pm
Tue-Thu 12:00pm-11:30pm
Fri-Sat 11:00am-12:30am
Sun 11:00am-11:30pm



Jin Jin Ding



After your gyoza and beer adventure, head to dessert purveyor Jin Jin Ding for its castella, a Japanese honey sponge cake topped with gold foil that requires a highly precise preparation method. The shop also serves colorful sugar gemstones with a crunchy exterior encasing a jelly-like center and an indulgent black sesame buttercream cake. Drinks are available to help wash down the different sweets. 📍

JIN JIN DING

金錦町榕錦時光店

- 📍 139, Jinhua St., Daan Dist.
- ☎ (02) 2395-2688
- 🌐 www.jinjind.com
- 🕒 11:00am-7:00pm



South Taipei Fun Carnival

Each April for the past seven years, the General Association of Chinese Culture (GACC), in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and local civic and farmers' associations, has staged the South Taipei Fun Carnival outside the National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute, Taipei Branch, which itself boasts a handicraft museum. The carnival

offers shopping, eating, and exploration of the history of south Taipei. There is a farmers' market where fresh local produce and foodstuffs are sold and the public can meet farmers to learn about sustainable practices. The organizer has also cooperated with animal protection associations to offer pet health checks and pet travel photography exhibits.



Chengnan | 城南
gua bao | 刈包
Rongjin Gorgeous Time | 榕錦時光生活園區

Sanyu | 常玉
South Taipei Fun Carnival | 城南有意思
Xiaonanmen | 小南門



MAP

Waterfalls and Wisteria

A Varied and Meandering Wander
on Yangmingshan's South Side

TEXT | AMI BARNES PHOTOS | VISION

The Yangmingshan massif on Taipei's north side, home to Yangmingshan National Park, is one of Taipei's greatest natural and scenic assets. Its wild corners and manicured gardens offer hikers a playground, nature enthusiasts a classroom, photographers a muse, and fitness fans a gym. What's more, accessing all of this could hardly be easier. Convenient transport connections link downtown Taipei with its green spaces, and many walks – such as the one featured here – start right from the city's urban fringes.

Cuifeng Waterfall

We start our hike near the northern end of Section 7, Zhongshan North Road, in the Tianmu neighborhood of Beitou District.



Southern end of Tianmu Historic Trail



Tianmu Historic Trail is not one of those walks that eases you into the swing of things. Leaping off into the greenery from Tianmu's sleepy residential shoulder, it commences with a thigh-burning, lung-straining ascent up stone steps – around 1,300 to be precise. Old brick and stone dwellings line the first couple of hundred meters. Their courtyards are filled with quilted jackets and faded vests, hinting at silver-haired residents – presumably, particularly hardy silver-haired folks if they have to lug their weekly groceries up these steps.

Further up, allotments boast beds of cabbages, taro, and beans, while banana palms and bamboo grow on steep scruffy terraces. On a recent foray, every couple of hundred meters I spotted wooden brooms leaning against a tree trunk or wall, left there by the early risers whose morning visits involve sweeping the trail clear of leaves and other debris. When I passed through at 9:30am, the sweepers had long since been gone and the path had already begun amassing their leaf quota for the next morning.

After about 20 minutes of climbing, the steps bring you to the old black water pipe that gives this route its alternative name – Tianmu Water Pipe Trail. The steel structure is so large that it would be impossible for your hands to touch if you tried hugging it. The first version was a ceramic pipe installed during Taiwan's period of Japanese era (1895-1945) as part of the Grass Mountain Waterworks – a project initiated to supply Taipei with both water and hydroelectricity. These days, Taipei meets its water and electricity needs elsewhere, but a faint susurrous of running water still emanates from the pipe.



Waterpipe along the trail

Hikers briefly climb in lockstep with the water pipe. The steps then level out beside Zizai (Carefree) Pavilion, and besides where many walkers pause to catch their breath or fill up their water bottles, the pipe dives beneath the trail on its way to meet a pumping station.

Make your way uphill from the pavilion towards Alley 4, Lane 61, Guanghai Road. Just before you hit the road, the trail swings left and embarks on the most relaxing portion of the day's adventure. A broad gravel track hugs tight to the hill's contours, stretching out under the generous shade of a mixed broadleaf forest. The path is flat and easy to walk – a happy byproduct of having a water pipe buried beneath the trail.

This spot is also one of Taipei's most reliably successful monkey-spotting locations, with the resident troupe of some 20-plus Formosan macaques often seen lounging on rocks or fences at either end of the day. In recent years, public education campaigns have helped reduce human/monkey conflicts to near zero, but it's still worth reiterating that – like all wild animals – they should be treated with due caution.

The righthand side of the trail is bordered by a towering andesite cliff, an impressive feature – bluntly named the “Big Rock Face” – upon which lichens and a few hardy plants have created abstract-art masterpieces. To the left of the path, the distinctive twin-bumped dome of Mt. Shamao can be spotted in the distance, while even further away, a sandy scar gives away the location of Beitou District's Liuhuanggu (Sulfur Valley) Geothermal Scenic Area. And speaking of sulfur, as the trail rounds a bend to head northeast, a faint whiff of the pungent mineral hangs in the air, evoking the happy promise of a hot-spring soak awaiting you at the end of your journey.



Zizai Pavilion



Big Rock Face



Cuifeng Waterfall

If you're looking for a short, slightly adventurous side sortie, take a detour to the following secluded waterfall.

Leaving the rockiest part of the rock face behind, look out for an unmarked flight of steps darting into the trees on the left (if you pass a pavilion with seating, you've gone too far). This optional diversion leads to Cuifeng Waterfall (it takes about 30 minutes to get to the waterfall and come back). It is considerably more rugged than the rest of the walk featured here, and as such should only be attempted by those in possession of a sturdy pair of shoes and an intrepid spirit.

Steps descend to a clearing, then a narrow dirt path – little more than an animal track – forks right. A rustic three-slab Earth God (Tudi Gong) shrine guards the woods here. Time has faded the shrine's red banner, and the idol is riddled with beetles-bored cavities, but fresh incense ash indicates continued obeyances. Beyond the shrine, roots, ropes, and a

scattering of long-ago-placed stones guide your steps ever downwards – all the while, the voice of the local creek swells from hiss to roar.

Cuifeng Waterfall tumbles through a tight V-shaped gorge, to land in a neat pool bounded by steep rock walls. The main flow is fulsome, if a little short, but by far the most eye-catching element of the scene is the rocks. They are orange. Red-brick, Crayola-crayon, middle-part-of-candy-corn orange. This bizarre coloration comes from the minerals present in the waters of Pine Creek, minerals which also turn the water into a cloudy yellowish hue. Viewed against nature's regular palette of greens, grays, and browns, the orange rocks seem impossibly vibrant – as if someone has gone a little over the top with the Photoshop dials of reality.

For the second part of this hiking outing, we move on to walk up the interestingly shaped Mt. Shamao.

Once you've restored your inner peace with some waterfall-watching, it's time to shake off the reverie and get moving again. Retrace your steps up to Tianmu Historic Trail, then keep following the path until it joins Lane 12, Aifu 3rd Street. Turning left, you'll soon find yourself crossing a bridge over Pine Creek and walking up a short flight of steps to Shamao Road.

If you're beginning to flag, there's an easy out here – just hop on a bus (from The First Scenic Lookout bus stop, bus no. 128 to MRT Shipai Station or no. 230 to MRT Beitou Station). But for those still full of beans, turn left and make your way along the road for about 350m to the start of the Mt. Shamao Trail, on the roadway's right. At this point, you enter the confines of the celebrated 11,300ha Yangmingshan National Park, which takes up a good portion of the Yangmingshan massif.

Mt. Shamao is a small(ish) and near-perfectly formed lava dome named for its resemblance to an ancient Chinese official's gauze hat. On a map, its tight concentric contour lines look like a kid's attempt at free-hand circles, while in profile, the peak is a pleasing mound with a dimple at the center. In hikers' terms, this translates to an ascent that starts steep and gradually levels off before sliding down an equally steep pathway on the far side.



Trail up Mt. Shamao

Formosan sweet gum trees, bamboo, ferns, occasional cherry trees, and azaleas all add beauty and/or shade to the route. In spring, hikers' steps are accompanied by the rustle and darting of skinks, and as the summer heat bears down, the trail thrums to the beating of butterfly wings. The mountain is also known for its significant snake population.

A 1.2km climb brings you to the summit, but just before you arrive, the trail passes the remains of the Taizi Pavilion. This structure was built ahead of the 1923 grand tour of Taiwan by Japanese Crown Prince Hirohito (posthumously honored as Emperor Showa). The Japanese authorities were keen to show their future emperor the natural beauty and resources of Taiwan, but Hirohito never graced the slopes of Shamao. The pavilion, though fit for royalty, was only ever used by civilians.

A wooden viewing deck caps the summit of Mt. Shamao and rewards hikers with panoramic views. On clear days, Mt. Qixing's seven-spiked crown dominates the landscape to the northeast, at the foot of this mountain's western slopes lie the flower fields of the Zhuzihu area, and to the west of that, Mt. Datun's various peaks taper down towards the Tamsui River estuary. The views are good, but on the platform, it can also be relentlessly windy, so hold on to your hat!

View from Mt. Shamao





Bathhouse in Qianshan Park



Wisteria flowers

The trail concludes at Qianshan Park, where buses regularly depart for central Beitou and Shilin destinations. However, it's well worth exploring some of the park's attractions before you head back down to the city. The public hot-spring pools, set to reopen this spring, are close to the trailhead. The pools are sex-segregated and free to enter, and bathers are naked save for an obligatory shower cap. If you've never been to public hot-spring facilities in Taiwan before and are unsure about the etiquette, fear not – the elderly locals who patronize these springs are generally eager to impart their advice.

For one final point of interest, head to the Wisteria Pavilion at the northern edge of the park. The wisteria season runs from March to April, so at the time of publication the pavilion will be dripping in a photogenic cascade of purple flowers – the perfect place to snap a triumphant “we made it” commemorative photo or two. **T**



Creek inside Qianshan Park



Wisteria Pavilion



Big Rock Face | 大岩壁
Cuifeng Waterfall | 翠峰瀑布
Mt. Datun | 大屯山
Mt. Qixing | 七星山
Mt. Shamao | 紗帽山
Pine Creek | 松溪
Qianshan Park | 前山公園

Liuhuangu Geothermal Scenic Area | 硫磺谷地熱景觀區
Taizi Pavilion | 太子亭
Tamsui River | 淡水河
Tianmu Historic Trail | 天母古道
Tianmu Water Pipe Trail | 天母水管路步道
Wisteria Pavilion | 紫藤花亭
Zizai Pavilion | 自在亭
Zhuzihu | 竹子湖



MAP

UNTAMED

Encounters with Extraordinary Wildlife in the City

TAIPEI

Hiking in the hills and mountains of Taipei City's northern districts, you might well hear the sound of raptors shrieking, circling high above in search of prey below. These majestic creatures can even be found thriving within the heart of the city, although they usually go completely unnoticed by most city dwellers.

TEXT | TWELLI

PHOTOS | RAPTOR RESEARCH GROUP OF TAIWAN

Collared Scops Owl

As a nocturnal predator, the collared scops owl (*Otus lettia glabripes*), the most common owl in Taiwan, can be elusive, especially in bustling Taipei City. However, sightings have been reported in areas like Daan Park, the Taipei Botanical Garden, and various school campuses. This is the only owl in Taiwan able to live in the city throughout the year and breed successfully. Nesting in natural or previously occupied tree cavities, the owl lays 3-5 eggs per brood. The best time to spot them is from February to April, on calm days in the evening. Experienced birders suggest looking for the bird perched on low branches of trees with sparse foliage, maintaining a respectful distance of about 15 meters. During the breeding season, males persistently call with a rising “woop,” while females utter a descending “wheoo” or “pwok.”

Chinese name: 領角鴞

Size: 23-25 centimeters

Plumage: Grayish-brown or rufous-brown with a pale collar on its neck

Breeding season: Nov-Feb (city), Feb-May (mountains)

Food: Insects, occasionally small mammals, reptiles, frogs

Crested Goshawk

In recent years, the crested goshawk (*Accipiter trivirgatus formosae*) has increasingly adapted to Taipei's urban life. It is the only diurnal raptor in Taiwan that can live and breed year-round within the city's urban environment. Two decades ago, birders had to venture into natural environments like Yangmingshan National Park in the city's mountainous north to spot these birds. Now, an average of 15-20 nests are discovered in central Taipei annually, typically high in the crowns of tall trees. The goshawk spends most of its time perched, taking flight more often in warm weather, usually for short periods. Highly territorial, the male can be seen soaring above its territory to patrol it. 📺

Note: The YouTube channel of the Raptor Research Group of Taiwan ([youtube.com/@RRGT](https://www.youtube.com/@RRGT)) offers extensive close-up footage and even annual live streams of Crested goshawk's nests within Daan Park.



Chinese name: 鳳頭蒼鷹

Size: 42-46cm

Plumage: Gray head, brown wings, whitish underparts with thick orange-brown stripes in the belly area

Breeding season: Mar-Jun

Food: small mammals, lizards, frogs, large insects, and birds

Happy DIY Dyeing.

Dipping into the World of Textile Art in Dadaocheng

TEXT | AMI BARNES PHOTOS | RAY CHANG

Despite – or perhaps because of – Taipei’s reputation as a hub of hustle culture, many residents manage to carve out time for creative pursuits. Small studios and craft spaces catering to this need can be found in almost every neighborhood. The historic trading district of Dadaocheng is home to more than its fair share, among them Fleacise – a textile art workshop with a distinct local flair.



Fleacise's DIY workspace

Husband and wife duo Zoma and Guang run their textile art enterprise out of a loft space on the trendier northern end of Dihua Street. The pair, who met during their university years, shared a creative streak and an affection for browsing flea markets – specifically those moments of surprise elicited by finding something utterly wonderful hidden among a pile of junk.

When Guang – the one with a formal background in arts and crafts – introduced Zoma to textile dyeing, he discovered dyeing brought that same sense of anticipation and delight. From this seed, Fleacise was born (“flea-” encapsulating the thrill of flea markets, “-cise” for the idea of exercise and devoting your energy to a creative practice). Initially selling their work at craft markets and on platforms like Pinkoi (an online platform similar to Etsy), they later started incorporating simple DIY workshops, and finding their own studio space came as the next natural step.

Over the past decade, they’ve established several classes, including plant dyeing, indigo dyeing, and stencil printing, as well as tutorials on more niche interests like *tsutsugaki* (a Japanese resist-dyeing technique). Classes can be conducted in Mandarin, English, or Japanese, and are bookable via Fleacise’s website (or Pinkoi in English). Small groups of 3-5 are welcome. For larger groups, it is best to contact the studio directly via the official website email address to discuss arrangements. The casual, creative atmosphere makes the experience great for tourists seeking a break from pounding the pavements, or families wanting to organize a crafty kids’ party.



Zoma explaining textile dyeing



Hand-dyed socks and other items



On a January afternoon, with Dihua Street getting into the swing of its boisterous annual Lunar New Year market, a friend and I slipped away from the hawkers and gawking crowds to step into Fleacise's quiet second-floor workspace.

We were greeted by Zoma, who promptly kitted us out with aprons (the work isn't messy, but I wouldn't advise wearing a brand-new white T-shirt). We had opted for a two-hour Majolica-tile-inspired dyeing session and picked out two simple projects – a kerchief and a tote bag. Zoma began by deftly demonstrating how to concertina the fabric to create a repeating pattern. I'm no novice to the world of tie-dyeing, but my previous efforts could best be described as being quite try-it-and-see in nature, and even under Zoma's guidance it took me a couple of attempts to achieve a satisfying uniformity in my folds.

The next step involved drawing lines across our pieces using disappearing markers. The lines helped guide our fingers during the final folding stage as we gathered the fabric together, securing it with the quick twist of a rubber band. This step was much harder for my friend, who was working on the tote bag, but as Zoma reassured us, there's no wrong way to tie-dye – whatever the result, it is uniquely, serendipitously yours.



Testing different color combinations



Folding and tying the fabric with rubber bands



Rinsing the fabric

With the tying part of the class out of the way, it was time to move on to the dyeing portion. We were let loose with a palette of dyes that had been selected for their similarity to the colors used in Majolica tilework, and also because – no matter how bad you are at pairing colors – any combination would work together. Zoma encouraged us to test the dyes on swatches of kitchen towels so we could see how they'd bleed into each other and showed us examples of previous projects to illustrate how various choices might shake out. I settled on a mix of orange day lily, chitose midori (a dark pine green), and some kind of light blue – the names given to each dye are drawn from Japanese dyeing traditions. Then, it was time to soak our creations in a fixative and wait.



Majolica tile

Fleacise's hook, what sets it apart from other similar experiences, is that each session is crafted to incorporate some elements of Taiwanese arts and aesthetics. The purpose of this is twofold. Not only does it give participants a deeper connection to Taiwan and local handiwork, but it also fills twenty minutes that would otherwise be spent twiddling your thumbs as you wait for the dye to set. In our case, we were treated to a brief introduction to Majolica tiles – how they came to represent a very specific era in Taiwan's architectural history, which motifs are unique to Taiwan, and where they can be seen. Other classes dip into the local indigo-dyeing industry, or tea and other tinctorial plants. For the culturally curious, Fleacise offers concise and well-conceived basic primers.

When it was finally time to rinse our designs, mine unfolded to show a Rorschachian array of tessellating starbursts, while my friend's efforts had resulted in an abstract garden-esque design. The unveiling was genuinely exciting, and I can easily understand how Zoma and Guang came to be addicted to this thrilling moment of revelation. 📺



Kerchief with majolica tile pattern

FLEACISE 蚤操染織

📍 2F, 248, Sec. 1, Dihua St. Datong Dist.

🌐 www.fleacise.com

🕒 By reservation only

Veritably Vegan

Taipei's Restaurateurs Take Meat- and Dairy-Free Fine Dining to the Next Level

TEXT | JAMES BARON PHOTOS | VISION

Aside from dedicated Buddhist establishments, vegan eateries were once quite limited in Taipei, but a proliferation of options has emerged in recent years. Here are two newer additions to the roster that foreground aesthetics, fine dining, and flavorful ingredients to create an experience that goes beyond just vegan cuisine.



Warm Salad with Smoked Paprika Sauce



The first restaurant is located in Songshan District's Minsheng Community, a quiet neighborhood known for tree-shaded streets and stylish businesses, most notably boutiques, cafés, and restaurants nestled in the suburban-style verdure.



Homemade Spicy Sauce and Beyond Meat Patties Pasta

◆ Clavius ◆

Not far south of Taipei Songshan Airport, on Fujin Street, lies Clavius. In front, a wabi-sabi-style garden with a water fountain and a hand-washing basin filled with translucent beads lets patrons engage in a pre-dining cleansing ritual. Three paths – grass, shingle, and pebbledash – snake toward the restaurant entrance on one side, while a creek-like waterway resembling Taiwan's old countryside irrigation channels connects to a pond on the other. In terms of space management and color scheme, the interior has a more Mediterranean feel.

"Balance is our core value and concept," says proprietor Robin Lee. For this reason, he says, the restaurant does not focus on creating a specifically vegan experience, but on delivering healthy and flavorful food for all diners.

Dishes such as the Warm Salad with Smoked Paprika Sauce exemplify this philosophy: red onions, slowly baked to remove sharpness; smoky red and yellow bell peppers; and baby corn, topped off with arugula leaves drizzled in balsamic vinegar and lemon-infused olive oil. For more piquancy, try the Homemade Spicy Sauce and Beyond Meat Patties Pasta, a noodle dish featuring Beyond Meat mince, which is topped with wiry strands of dried, shredded chili. An interesting touch for the Mushroom and Yellow Lentils Green Curry Risotto is the use of shishito peppers – a gentle capsicum commonly found in Taiwan's markets – which gives the rice its color and relative mildness.

One especially imaginative dish is the Pan-Seared King Oyster Mushrooms with Five Flavors, fashioned into scallops, each topped with an individual flavoring, among these vegan mayonnaise and carrot, *mentaiko*, and vinegar, and presented on a

bed of *guoba*-style scorched crispy rice. The waitstaff recommends eating the mushrooms in clockwise order, starting with the mildest flavor, accompanied by a glass of red wine.



CLAVIUS 雲川水月

📍 120, Fujin St., Songshan Dist.
 ☎️ (02) 2514-0356
 📱 [instagram.com/clavius_taiwan](https://www.instagram.com/clavius_taiwan)
 🕒 Mon-Sun 11:30am-10:00pm

Mushroom and Yellow Lentils Green Curry Risotto





Our second restaurant is a refined vegetarian operation situated along an alley off Zhongxiao East Road, one of Taipei's busiest thoroughfares.

◆ Foldie ◆

"Everything here is twisted a bit," says Andy Chu.

For any diners apprehensive about a potentially bizarre gastronomical experience, fear not: the twisting in question refers to surprising and often delightful tweaks to Taiwanese classics and Western-style dishes alike. Chu, who ran a fine-dining restaurant in New York for three years, cites the Cold Angel Hair Pasta with Sesame Dressing and Chili Crunch Paste Oil as an example.

Despite the fancy name of the dish, which is redolent of haute cuisine, this is an imaginative riff on *liang mian* (cold noodles), a simple Taiwan street food. Noting that the local variety rarely varies from a set script, Chu says he aims to quite literally bring something new to the table. While the julienned cucumber is a standard *liang mian* garnishing, in place of the strips of processed ham that sometimes accompany the dish, slivers of beer-infused jello make for an intriguing substitute. Providing the perfect counterpoint to the chewiness of this dish/offering is the crunchy homemade chili sauce.



Cold Angel Hair Pasta with Sesame Dressing and Chili Crunch Paste Oil



Oyster Mushroom Tempura Salad

Tomato Wonton with
Creamy Chili Dressing

Another menu item that's been given a thorough reworking is that most iconic – not to mention malodorous – night-market classic, stinky tofu. In the Truffle Flavor Stinky Tofu French Toast, the deep-fried cubes are reimagined as breadcrumb-coated triangles, and feature a combination of truffle-flavored soy protein with the fermented variety. The hefty chunks are best divided and dipped in the accompanying gooey peanut condiment, which provides the ideal complement to the crumbly exterior.

However, perhaps the selection with the most mouthwatering flavor on the menu is a wholly original creation – the Oyster Mushroom Tempura Salad, which includes avocado and contains yuzu juice, giving it a tangy twang.

For most of its dishes, Foldie uses bean and mycoprotein as a substitute for the original meat and fish components. However, Chu emphasizes that the aim is not to just “mimic” the taste and texture of popular meat dishes but to recreate the culinary experiences. He uses the example of the wonton. “A wonton should have a slippery mouthfeel,” he says. “As long as I can get that final purpose, it doesn't matter how it's achieved.”

It's not just the dishes that reflect this attitude. The restaurant's name is a portmanteau of “foodie” and “fold” – the latter term reflecting the positive “twists” in the approach to the culinary process. Likewise, the restaurant interior, which is dimly lit and juxtaposes warehouse elements with bucolic motifs to indicate blend boundaries. “I call it ‘misty forest,’” says Chu, “because in the darker parts of the wood, you can't clearly see all the outlines.” **F**

FOLDIE

📍 11, Aly. 7, Ln. 205, Sec. 4,
Zhongxiao E. Rd., Daan Dist.
📱 [instagram.com/foldietapei](https://www.instagram.com/foldietapei)
🕒 11:30pm-3:30pm, 5:00pm-9:45pm



Andy Chu | 朱安
guoba | 鍋巴
liang mian | 涼麵
Minsheng Community | 民生社區
Robin Lee | 李怡明



MAP



Truffle Flavor Stinky Tofu French Toast



Salad Nicoise

Teas with a Twist

Two Unique Tearooms in Taipei

Tea is deeply ingrained in Taiwanese culture, yet surprisingly, large-scale cultivation and export didn't begin until the 1860s when British trader John Dodd started shipping tea leaf from his processing/warehouse facilities in what is now Taipei's Dadaocheng neighborhood. The thriving trade transformed the sleepy enclave into a bustling port town. Today, traditional tea culture lives on alongside newer practices in Dadaocheng and beyond.

TEXT | **JAMES BARON**
PHOTOS | **VISION**





Below, we introduce two establishments, one in Dadaocheng and the other in Daan District, offering unique tea-tasting experiences in small, cozy, and stylish settings.

Asaban Tea Dadaocheng

Up three flights of narrow, steep stairs that are typical of the old buildings in Dadaocheng is a unique tearoom. A Zen-like atmosphere and aesthetic pervades Asaban Tea Dadaocheng: marble slabs serve as coasters on a sturdy wooden table, while a narrow red mat bisects its surface like a celebrity red carpet. Tranquil instrumental music murmurs from an unseen speaker.

Asaban founder Arthur Chuang emphasizes that the soundtrack and background elements change with the vibe of the guests. “It could be reggae, jazz, or even hip-hop,” he says. “Some people chat during the tea ceremony, others prefer silence. Some read, some draw.” In contrast to the neighborhood’s old-school tea masters, Chuang dresses casually, wearing a baseball cap and slacks.

However, appearances should not deceive: the fundamentals are always in place at Asaban, so guests can be “in the moment” during the ceremony, says Chuang. While brewing skills remain important, Chuang believes a “stable mentality and emotions” are paramount. The perfect tea ceremony, he says, is a form of *dongzhongchan*, literally meditation in motion, or dynamic meditation.

This unorthodox approach is reflected in Asaban’s menu or, rather, lack of one. While a portable device outlines three basic courses – one, two, or three types of tea or tea cocktails – there is no list of tea varieties

and alcoholic accompaniments. Instead, Chuang discerns guests’ tastes with questions about the flavors they favor. Not having a set-in-stone list draws people out of their comfort zone, he suggests.

Tea leaf is sourced locally and imported from countries like Japan, Thailand, and Myanmar, with Chuang incorporating subtle differences into his treatment of each variety. The tea ordered is first presented to the drinker in an aluminum caddy spoon for olfactory inspection, then again in a petite clay pot after a customary rinsing. Finally, there’s the tasting of the finished brew. “We want people to experience the tea at all stages,” says Chuang.

Asaban hosts three sittings per day, each lasting up to two hours. Individuals and groups of up to four are welcome, with the ceremonial table accommodating nine people at most. Home-made mochi balls, grilled on a portable stove and drizzled with soy sauce, are offered as a dessert. Reservations are necessary and can be made through the Asaban website or Instagram.

ASABAN TEA DADAOCHENG

📍 4F, 218-1, Guisui St., Datong Dist.

☎ (02) 2311-1800

🌐 www.asabantea.com

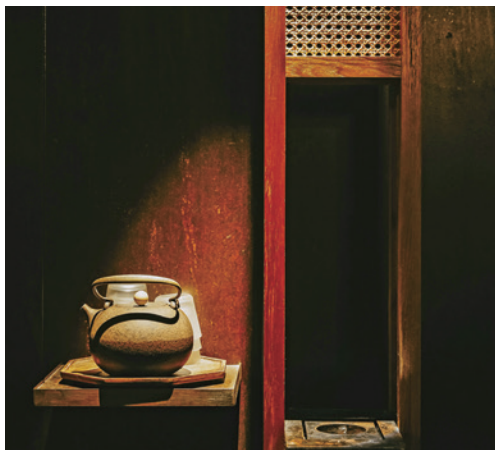
🕒 By reservation only

tei by OBOND

Blink and you'll miss this upmarket tea-showcase cocktail lounge, which is located close to the popular Tonghua Street Night Market. At first glance, the rusty bronze façade of tei by OBOND, which was included in 50 Best Discovery (www.theworlds50best.com), could be mistaken for the exterior of an ironmonger's workshop. But the glowing orb in one corner compels a closer look, and beside the orb is a narrow corridor leading to a door segmented by wooden bars through which glimmers of light beckon curious passersby.


Give the portal a push and an entrancing space is revealed – a tearoom that retains whiffs of Taiwan's past while incorporating contemporary Japanese design elements. Featuring coppers, bronzes, and earthy greens that represent different types of Taiwanese tea, the mottled, uneven surfaces of the furnishings communicate shabby chic. From this anteroom, access to the main lounge is achieved through a tea-offering ritual (*fengcha*) with a delightful twist. Black tea sourced from central Taiwan's Nantou County is poured into a cup sitting in a groove atop a rectangular post. The staff explains that a welcoming brew for visitors was once standard in Taiwan, particularly in the military dependents' villages that sprang up after World War II. Upon presentation of the cup to guests, a panel door slides open, revealing a capacious barroom.

Equipped with earpieces alerting them to numbers and requirements in advance, staff seamlessly convey patrons to their seats. An introduction to the house business philosophy ensues courtesy of Joe, the bartender-cum-mixologist. Each menu entry is split into sections that detail the variety of tea, its origin in Taiwan, other ingredients (including the type of alcohol), and, finally, a flavor profile.








While other establishments also offer tea-infused concoctions, OBOND adopts a special “laboratory” technique, extracting from the tea at specific temperatures for a flavor that complements the other ingredients. In particular, the tannins – astringent from the tea extract and sweet from the wines – are brought to the fore. Counterintuitive taste sensations are created, an example being cocktail no. 6 – the *Yulan Magnolia Oolong*, which pairs muscatel with a homemade pandan leaf and osmanthus blend. Based on “Taiwanese food memory,” the combo evokes a taro-type sweetness. Glasses are dusted with matcha powder mixed with salt. Sipping from the unblemished side before trying the coated side is encouraged. The fruity woodiness of the former contrasts sumptuously with the umami of the latter. Says Joe, “Our brand explores the possibilities of Taiwanese tea. It’s our way of sharing the Taiwan story.”

WOK by OBOND, a Michelin-starred restaurant from the same brand, was introduced in the 2024 Winter issue of TAIPEI magazine. Well aligned with its brand ethos, WOK highlights the special character of Taiwan’s tea as well. 

TEI BY OBOND

 553, Guangfu S. Rd., Xinyi Dist.
 [instagram.com/tei_by_obond](https://www.instagram.com/tei_by_obond)
 By reservation only



Arthur Chuang | 莊子德
 Dadaocheng | 大稻埕
dongzhongchan | 動中禪
fengcha | 奉茶



MAP

Where to Enjoy Taipei's Springtime Floral Blooms

The Season's Very Best Festival Showcases

TEXT | RICK CHARETTE

Colors, colors, bright pastel colors everywhere! The people of Taipei – and all of Taiwan – developed the same love of flower viewing the Japanese are famed for during its Japanese era from 1895 to 1945. Throughout the year, the city's chorus line of blooms is always kaleidoscopic – here are key wheres and whens for planning this season's flower-appreciation outings.



1 Shan-Tseng-Chi Flower Festival

- 🕒 January–March
- 📍 Ki-Pataw Shan-Tseng-Chi Park, Beitou District

1 Shan-Tseng-Chi Flower Festival

The locale for this early spring happening is broad-hillside Shan-Tseng-Chi (“Three Tier Highland”) in Beitou. Yangmingshan peaks rise up behind, and the city core’s skyscrapers are far-off visible before. The hillside is festooned with long, undulating rows of cosmos, silver ragwort, zinnia, lavender, sage, nasturtium, and other rich-hue flowers, mimicking the famed sea of flowers at Furano in Japan’s Hokkaido. Special yukata rental, hot-spring soaking, and Beitou cuisine experiences are also promoted.

2 Camphor Trail Flower Carnival

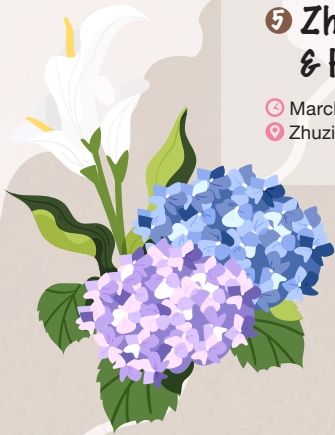
The family-friendly Camphor Trail is located in the hills of Taipei’s south in the Maokong area, famed for tea farms, farm-run teahouses, and tea-cuisine restaurants with terrific far-off city views. The trail area’s floral scenery changes dramatically with the seasons: lupines (dull-ice flowers) in spring, cosmos flowers in summer, and sunflowers in autumn. The highly popular trail, located close to the metro-connected Maokong Gondola station, is part of Section 7 of the Taipei Grand Trail (taipeigrandtrailen.gov.taipei).

3 Azalea Festival

The big venue for this florid fiesta is Taipei’s tree-dense Daan Park in Daan District. The festival runs the full length of March. Beyond the admiring of the charming city flowers in splendid numbers along with lavender flowers and hydrangeas in strong supporting roles, festival activities include music concerts, guided tours, themed reading sessions, DIY handicraft classes, a creative market, and an outdoor cinema. Adding to the color are cute installation artworks placed among the flower beds, especially animal figures. Also happening in Daan Park during March is the Taipei Floral Picnic event (see page 4).

5 Zhuzihu Calla Lily & Hydrangea Festival

- 🕒 March-June
- 📍 Zhuzihu area, Yangmingshan, Beitou District



4 Taipei Rose Festival

- 🕒 March-April
- 📍 Xinsheng Park, Zhongshan District



4 Taipei Rose Festival

Pretty Xinsheng Park is the site for Taiwan's largest rose exhibition. It is one of the contiguous parks that make up the expansive Taipei Expo Park. Over 5,000 roses from 800 varieties sourced from around the globe are on display in a kaleidoscopic sea of color, the florascaping done in classical European garden style. The park's excellent children's playground and garden maze make this festival especially popular with young families.

Zhuzihu Calla Lily & Hydrangea Festival

A special festival mention is the months-long Zhuzihu Calla Lily & Hydrangea Festival staged in picture-postcard Zhuzihu, a large depression high up on Yangmingshan filled with small cash-crop farms and numerous rustic farm-operated eateries (more on page 4).

3 Azalea Festival

- 🕒 March
- 📍 Daan Park, Daan District



For more information on these and other Taipei flower-appreciation parties, visit the "Flowers in Taipei" website: flowersfestival.taipei. For travelers not able to make it to these particular events, note that there is an abundance of floral beauty year-round in numerous efflorescent city green spots, most notably the abovementioned Yangming Park, Floriculture Experiment Center, CKS Shilin Residence, and Daan Park.

2 Camphor Trail Flower Carnival

- 🕒 January-February (lupines)
- May-June (cosmos flowers)
- September-October (sunflower)
- 📍 Camphor Trail, Maokong area, Wenshan District



TRAVEL INFO

METRO TAIPEI

Service Hours: 6:00am - 12:00 midnight **Customer Service Hotline:** (02)218-12345



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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

Taipei Sightseeing Bus

The open-top, double-decker buses offer a hop-on/hop-off service, allowing tourists to take in the cityscape and visit many of Taipei's prime destinations.
Website: taipeisightseeing.com.tw



Taipei Restaurant Bus

Taiwan's only sightseeing bus with a luxury dining experience. Savor exquisite cuisine while a multilingual audio guide unveils Taipei's hidden charm.
Website: taipeirestaurantbus.com



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.



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3 Day Pass/
4 Day Pass
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National Palace Museum
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NT\$950



Transportation
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3 Day Pass/5 Day Pass/
Maokong Gondola
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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





WORLD MASTERS GAMES 2025

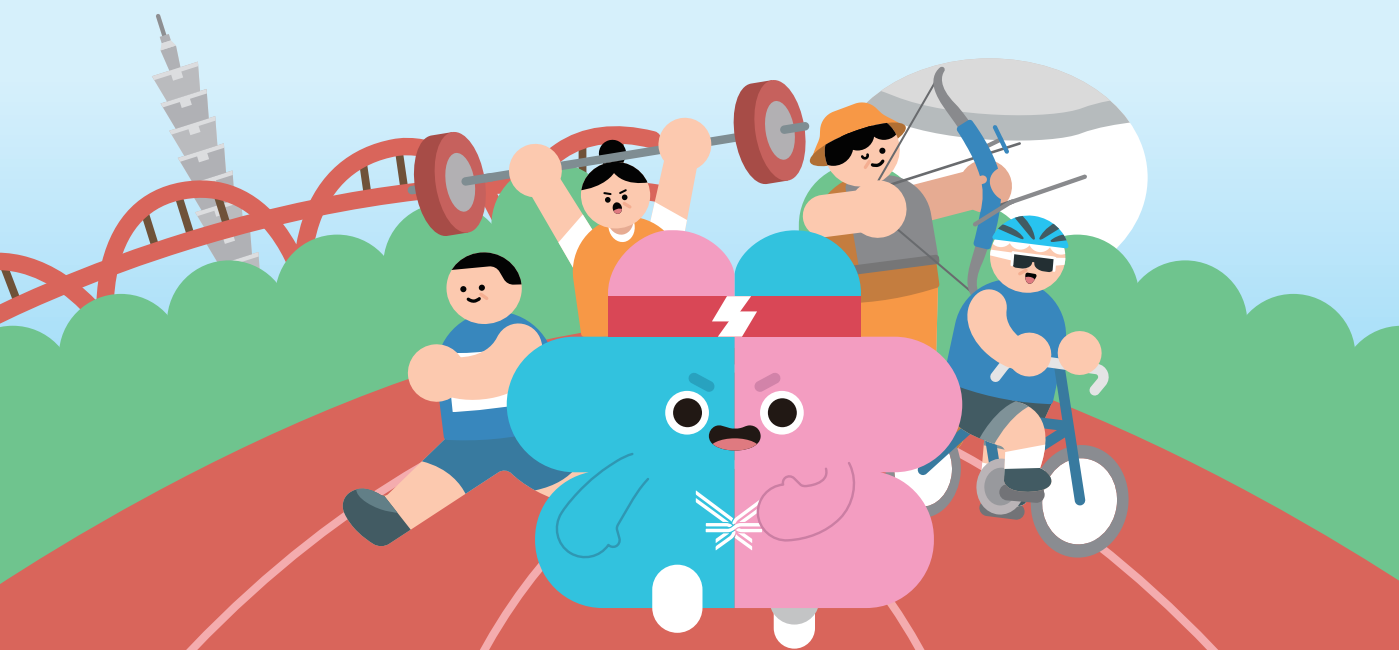
WORLD MASTERS GAMES

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AD


 **Taipei Camellias Show**
Mid-January

 **Azalea Festival x Floral Picnic**
March



 **Shan-Tseng-Chi Flower Festival**
Late January to March


 **Taipei Rose Festival**
Mid-March to Mid-April

 **LOHAS Cherry Blossom Festival**
Late January to February

 **Zhuzihu Calla Lily & Hydrangea Festival**


Calla Lilies Mid-March to Mid-April


Hydrangeas Mid-May to Mid-June

 **Yangmingshan Flower Festival**
Late January to Mid-March

 **The Camphor Trail Flower Carnival**
January to February
May to June
September to October

 **Taipei Riverside Flower Carnival**
January to February Guting Riverside Park
Mid-October to November Dajia Riverside Park
November to December Zhongzheng Riverside Park

 **Shilin Residence Tulip Festival**
Late February

 **Shilin Residence Chrysanthemum Festival**
Late November to Mid-December

さあ、行こう。お花見をしよう

走吧！

我們去看花

우리 모두 꽃놀이 가자

Let's Go Flower Viewing

2025 花IN台北 FLOWERS IN TAIPEI

