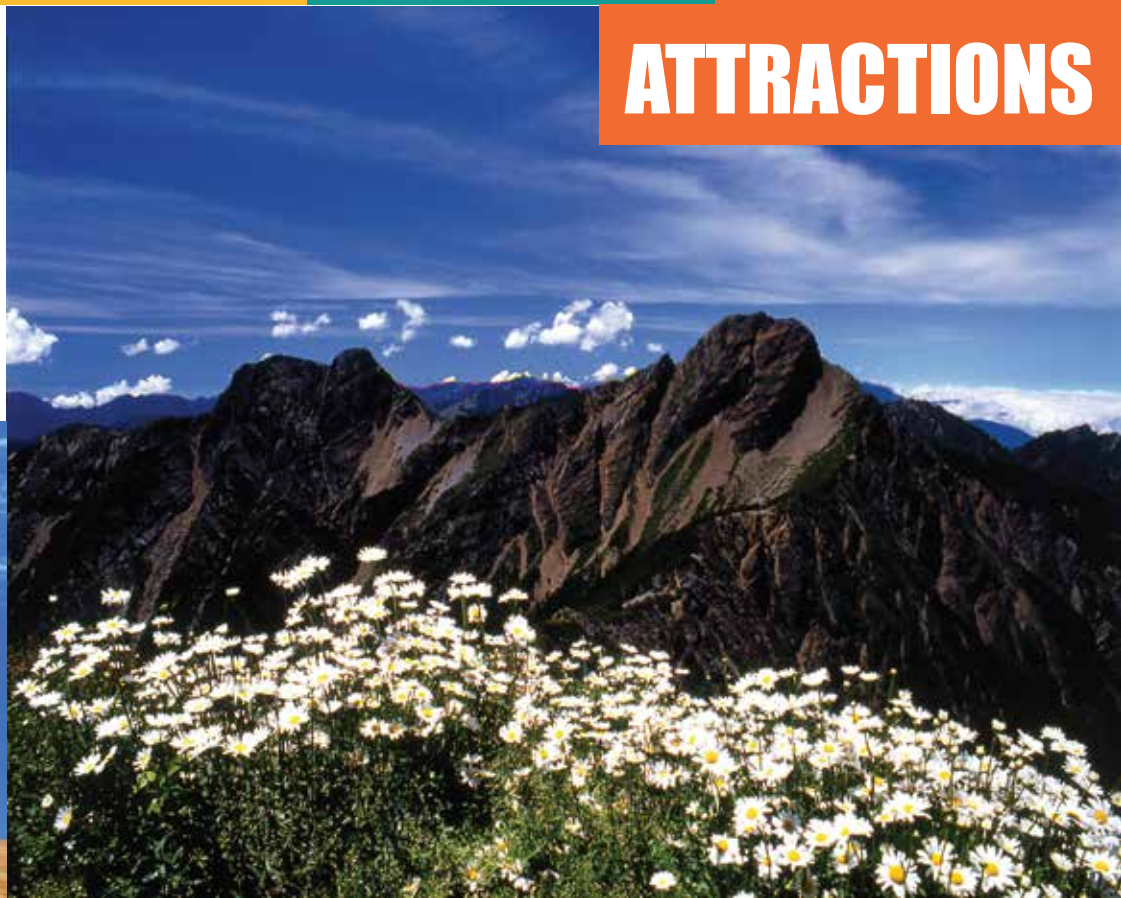




# Taiwan

THE HEART OF ASIA

## ATTRACTIONS



Taiwan is known for its towering mountains and, indeed, is spotted with numerous mountains peaks that rise over 3,000 meters. It is also the home of Northeast Asia's tallest mountain, Yu Mountain (Yushan), which is nearly 4,000 meters in height. Besides mountains, beautiful coastal scenes are part of Taiwan's great natural assets. Starting from the northern tip of the island is the North Coast & Guanyinshan National Scenic Area and Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area, featuring a wide variety of coastal geography. Traveling around the island to the east, you come to the scenic East Coast National Scenic Area and East Rift Valley National Scenic Area; go to the south, and you will come to the Southwest Coast National Scenic Area and then the Dapeng Bay National Scenic Area, blessed with sunshine and a tropical touch. Alongside the western edge of the Central Mountain Range is the Maolin National Scenic Area, where a lot of indigenous people live and place you can check out the world of butterflies, Rukai stone houses, and splendid natural scenes.

Legendary tales depict the subtle beauty of the Alishan National Scenic Area, where you can enjoy relaxing scene of the sun rising over a sea of clouds. The incomparable natural setting of the Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area waits in the center of the island, and the Tri-Mountain National Scenic Area offers eagle-spotting at Bagua Mountain, the highland fruits of Lishan and the sacred Buddhist sanctuary of Lion's Head Mountain. Taiwan's topography makes it an ideal spot for adventure activities in both the mountains and the sea -- from mountain biking, hiking, walks to deep sea diving, snorkelling, banana boat etc for an adrenaline rush!





**The Penghu National Scenic Area** encompasses ninety islets scattering in the Taiwan Strait. Flat landscapes make these islands much different from Taiwan itself. Located in the sea southeast of Taiwan is, Green Island, part of the East Coast National Scenic Area, which offers unique saltwater hot-spring bathing and spectacular diving on colorful coral reefs. The Matsu National Scenic Area comprises four townships on five islands. Most of the tourist sites are located on the island of Nangan. Beigan is famous for its traditional stone house and fish noodles. Juguang for its fishing port and lighthouse. On Dongyin you will find fantastic rock formations and the Dongyin branch of the Matsu Distillery.

Natural and cultural attractions abound in the Siraya National Scenic Area in southern Taiwan's Tainan City. In addition to five scenic reservoirs (Zengwen, Wushantou, Baihe, Jianshanpi, and Hutoupi), the scenic area embraces the geologically fascinating Caoshan Moon World, the Zouzhen archaeological site, and the skin-pampering mud springs of Guanziling. Colorful indigenous events and tasty local specialties also await you at Siraya. The scenic area is also known for a varied coastline of sand dunes, sand banks, marshes, and wetlands, offering precious habitats for wildlife.



Taiwan now has nine National Parks: **Yangmingshan National Park** in suburban Taipei, which is famous for its volcanic landscapes; **Shei-Pa National Park**, spanning Hsinchu and Miaoli counties and famous for the unique and endangered Formosan landlocked salmon; **Taroko National Park**, known for its lofty canyon landscapes; **Yushan National Park**, known for its bright sunshine and the highest peak in Northeast Asia; **Kenting National Park** gives at the southern tip of the island, giving a touch of Southeast Asia; and **Kinmen National Park**, containing legacies of war decades ago. **The Dongsha Atoll National Park** was established in January 2007 on the northern waters of the South China Sea, marking the southern portal to the Taiwan Strait. The atoll has a unique white sand landscape formed of coral and shell. Finally, **Taijiang National Park**, with its cultural, historic and environmental protection functions; and South **Penghu Marine National Park**, which brings together natural ecology and geological landscape with cultural and historic sites. These nine national parks await for your discovery.

Spread in about 60 kilometers, landscape of the **Taroko National Park** changes dramatically from a deep sea level to some of the tallest peaks in Taiwan! The area also is known for the world's deepest and most beautiful marble canyon and about 144 species of birds, 10 percent of which are unique to Taiwan. It also hosts over 30 large species of mammals including deer, boar and bear. There are also about 251 species of beautiful butterflies, 32 species of reptile and 18 species of fish. Interestingly, the name Taroko, means the 'magnificent and splendid' in the language of Truku, the aboriginal tribe some of who still resides in the area.

These steep valleys and narrow canyons were at Taroko were formed thanks to a relatively fast rate of geological activity that gave it its unique characteristics. Over the last 70 million years, forces of nature came together to form Taroko which is now the world's deepest marble canyon and is a sight to behold in Taiwan! The slot canyons here are remarkable and distinct and many narrows sections rise to almost a thousand feet high and are only a few hundred feet apart.

The best way to get to Taroko is via a express train that is affordable and very reliable and takes about 2 hours from Taipei to Hualien. The closest train station to the park entrance is Sincheng from where you can hire a taxi service to enjoy the beauty of Taroko!

When you get here we also recommend a ride through the beautiful Tunnel of Nine Turns and the lovely water sheet cave. Named for the cave at the end of the trail - here water literally pours down in sheets from the roof. Hiking to this point takes one through many narrow, long, completely unlit tunnels – an interesting, sometimes spooky and worthwhile experience!

Taroko Gorge is ideal for adventure activities such as mountain climbing, hiking, rappelling, cycling and much more.





The picturesque **Sun Moon Lake** enjoys the unique distinction of being the only natural big lake in Taiwan. Its crystalline, emerald green waters reflect the hills and mountains which rise on all sides and is a great spot for young couples and lovers! An ideal wedding and honeymoon destination, Sun Moon Lake, situated in Nantou County's Yuchi Township near the center of Taiwan is divided by the tiny but beautiful Lalu Island. The eastern part of the lake is round like the sun and the western side is shaped like a crescent moon, hence the name "Sun Moon Lake". Hot air ballooning in the Sun Moon Lake area is a beautiful experience and gives a bird's eye view of the entire area.

The Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area is praised for its five major recreational systems, including the lake, Shueili River, Puli, Jhuoshuei River and Jiji. The surrounding areas stretch to cover known tourist spots including Taumi, Checheng, Jiji, Shueisheda Mountain, Sangyong Falls, Mingtan Reservoir and Shueili River. Divided by Lalu Island, the Sun Moon Lake scenic area got its name from the unique terrains that look like sun on one side and crescent moon on the other. Crowned as one of the Eight Wonders of Taiwan, Sun Moon Lake is also the most famous source of hydroelectric power; offering key tourist themes - "high mountain and lake", "indigenous culture", and "nature ecology," the Sun Moon Lake Scenic Area attracts more than six million visits each year.

Sun Moon Lake features the only full-range 3D tours (lake, sky and land) in Taiwan. The lake cycling trail has been dubbed by CNN, CNN as one of the most beautiful cycling trails in the world. Top scenic spots in the lake area include Lalu island, Weneu Temple, Cien Pagoda, Lalu Island, Syuentzang Temple, Xian Mountain, Yongjie Bridge, Tongxin Bridge, Christian Church, Meihe Garden, Formosan Aboriginal Cultural Village and Snake Kiln, and the 14 lake trails are the top choices for sightseeing and leisure activities; specialty recreational locations in surrounding areas include (organized based on tour theme): Jiji and Checheng (Railway Nostalgic Trip); Dili and Sangyong (Indigenous Village Tour); Lugao and Seshui (Black Tea Pottery Tour) and Puli Taumi and Toushe Live Basin (Nature and Ecological Tour).



There are plenty of islands to discover off the grid, from unspoiled golden-sand beaches to secluded mountain trails and coves where you'll see more wildlife than other travellers.

**Kinmen and Matsu**, lying in the Taiwan Strait, have preserved some of the country's oldest villages and a rich legacy of Cold War struggles that saw the islands turned into battlefields. Today, it's also a twitcher's dreamland. Lanyu, Taiwan's furthest outpost, combines a volcanic landscape with the deep charms of an indigenous people living off the sea.

In Green Island and Penghu, divers and beach lovers will find much to like about the perfect sand beaches, pristine waters and coral reefs. Each location has a top draw you won't find anywhere else: Green Island boasts one of the world's rarest seawater hot springs. Taiwan is surrounded by 9 offshore islands – **Penghu, Matsu, Kinmen, Turtle, Liuqiu, Lanyu, Xiyu, Yuanbei & Bird**.

