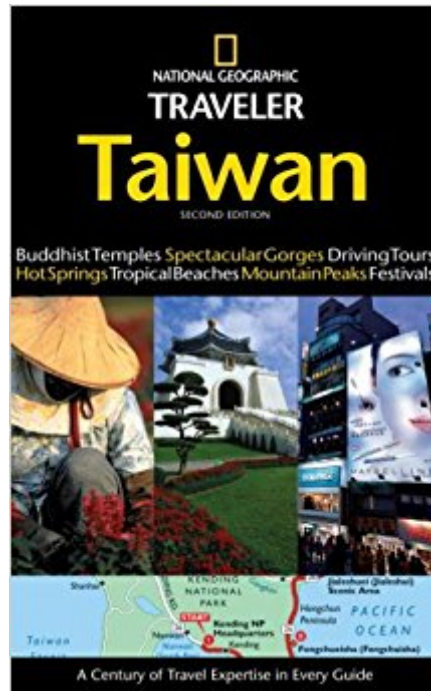




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National Geographic Traveler: Taiwan 2nd Edition



Synopsis

Visitor arrivals in Taiwan grew by an impressive 14.5% in 2005, reaching 3.4 million travelers and continuing to rise. With surveys showing that readers specifically trust National Geographic to provide expert advice on exotic destinations, we've fully updated our popular guide to the tiny island nation. An island of diverse attractions, Taiwan charms visitors with its little-known surprises: misty peaks famous for sunrises and high-mountain tea, the world's finest Chinese art museum, coral reefs that thrive in tropical waters, and some of the best Chinese cuisine in the world. Arranged in regional chapters, this comprehensive guide covers Taiwan in fascinating detail—from Taipei, where traditional night markets and Taoist temples contrast a 21st-century skyline (the world's tallest building is here)... to stunning Taroko Gorge, a marble canyon etched with hiking trails... to gorgeous beaches lapped by turquoise waters... and aboard the alpine railway to the top of 10,000-foot Alishan, a mystical realm above the clouds offering fabulous scenery and sublime relaxation. National Geographic Traveler: Taiwan (2nd Edition) includes full-spread, mapped driving and walking tours; three-dimensional illustrations; and an extensive visitor information section describing how to get around, what to see and do, and where to stay and eat—with an insider's handpicked list of exceptional hotels and restaurants in all price ranges. Veteran travel author and longtime Southeast Asia resident Phil Macdonald brings his authoritative guidance to this in-depth tour, ably acquainting visitors with an alluring, varied, and increasingly popular destination.

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Customer Reviews

I found this book to be about the most useful travel book I have ever purchased. I work for a major US airline, was formally a college Geography professor, and have traveled to over 30 countries, so I have used just about every kind of travel guide. I purchased it because I read a review by a person who also swore by Lonely Planet (as I have always done), but ended up using this more on her trip--which was exactly what I ended up doing. I purchased both this one and the Lonely Planet Taiwan, and hardly used the Lonely Planet. This National Geographic guide made my whole trip better, and enabled me to see more than I ever would have using the other guide. I rented a car from Taipei and drove almost the whole country in 3 days--stopping at all of the major interest points along the way with the help of this book. It has driving maps with all of the important things listed along the routes, and best of all has glorious photos of things, so you know what you want to see in the first place. I would suggest anybody going to Taiwan purchase this fantastic book! I would also suggest that anybody driving in Taiwan purchase a Taiwan map before you go. It is hard to get a good map over there. Driving over there is pretty easy, as long as you stay out of the big cities. You can't see the many beautiful national parks on the east coast without a car.

I bought both the National Geographic Traveler and Lonely Planet guides for Taiwan before working there for a month. While I was there, I found that National Geographic Traveler was more useful for planning places to go and things to do because it uses in depth highlights of tourist spots to visit and has full color photos and drawings throughout. However, I found that the Lonely Planet guide had more information, both useful and not. It had descriptions, hours of operations, and costs for many destinations that both tourists and residents would frequent. It could be described as an insider's guide of what to do in Taiwan, but the quantity of information was more than the quality. Lonely Planet's few color plates were okay, but not as helpful as those found in the National Geographic Traveler. This made the Lonely Planet harder to decide what to do from the many options provided because the choice was usually only based on a couple of sentences. The maps were better in Lonely Planet, but I ended up using a tourist map when I was in Taipei. I recommend getting both. I found that I would see interesting photos in National Geographic Traveler and then look up the information in Lonely Planet to decide if it was worth doing or not.

I purchased this book based on reviewers' comments. I'm delighted with the book and will use it, in conjunction with Passport Taiwan, to map out our itinerary. I would certainly recommend both books -- and a map of Taiwan -- to anyone considering a trip to that country.

Beyond some nice photography, there's not a whole lot of substance to this guide book.

Descriptions are brief and not entirely comprehensive. One positive was the introductory pages that explained the history and culture.

I brought both the Lonely Planet and National Geographic Guide to Taiwan. The Lonely Planet book was great, because the names of places were given in both English and Chinese characters. The Chinese characters are a must for taxi drivers. There are not a lot a pictures, so the National Geographic Guide came in real handy as well. If you are only buying one, the lonely planet guide is essential.

There aren't that many travel guides for Taiwan, and the ones that are out here basically fall into two categories. The first category are ones such as this that are very nice in terms of pictures, descriptions, cultural info, and are very good for pre-planning and deciding what major attractions to visit. The second category are the getting-around type of guides that aren't a lot of help for deciding what to do, but do give you excellent directions and more detailed listings (for instance Lonely Planet is the second type). I'd say this is probably the best of the first type. I used it quite a bit before visiting my in-laws in Taiwan. All the major attractions are well described and the history and cultural sections were very informative and useful. If you're going to be dealing a lot with people outside of the tourist industry and need cultural guidance, this book is probably as good as any guidebook out there. Since my wife grew up in Taiwan and is fluent in Chinese, directions and such weren't much of an issue, so there wasn't any need to go to a more hands on guide. If I had really been in a situation where I was getting around my own, though, I think I would have wanted the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet. I've had a chance to look through most of the Taiwan guides out there, and I'd say for an all-around guide this is middle of the pack. Rough Guide is the only one that really stands out as having both the history/culture/descriptive aspects and the practical getting around aspects. Not surprisingly, it's also the thickest and heaviest.

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