



AUTUMN 2023

## Slow Living, Tranquil Life

### COVER STORY

Guandu: the Natural Oasis of Taipei

# TAIPEI 台北

# TAI<sup>台</sup>PEI<sup>北</sup>

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EDITOR'S  
INTRODUCTION

## Exploring Taipei's Autumn Charms

Feel the cooling embrace of autumn as it sweeps over Taipei, inviting outdoor pursuits and urban escapes. The verdant charm of Guandu offers a welcome respite from the departing summer heat, boasting the city's sole paddy field and hosting captivating events like the Guandu International Nature Art Festival and the Taipei International Birdwatching Fair. A leisurely riverside bike ride to Guandu Wharf and the scenic Guandu Riverside Park unveils the city's natural oasis.

In the tapestry of Taipei's architectural history, the Xinyi District emerges as a canvas for international architects. Beyond the iconic Taipei 101, Taipei Nan Shan Plaza and The Agora Garden are indispensable. Additionally, the luxurious Four Seasons Hotel and the soaring The Sky Taipei are shaping the future form of the city's skyline. The neighboring eastern district comes alive with Nuit Blanche Taipei in October, a vibrant fusion of arts, shopping, and culinary delights centered around the Taipei Dome.

Meanwhile, Guting is a haven of traditional Japanese architectural gems that intertwine with the city's sense of modernity. This issue delves into the intricate histories of these residences and explores century-old churches, a testament to Taipei's architectural legacy fused with diverse cultural influences.

In the same vein, renowned calligrapher Chu Chen-Nan has left his artistic imprint on Taipei's landmarks, including Taipei Main Station and Taipei City Hall's grand lobby.

In late October, Taipei hosts Southeast Asia's largest Pride Parade, drawing LGBT+ organizations and advocates from around the globe. This 21-year milestone celebration is explored through a conversation with the Taiwan Equality Campaign, offering insights into the city's LGBT-friendly environment.

Speaking of big draws, Taipei's gastronomic scene allures food enthusiasts from every corner, offering an array of culinary experiences around the clock. For the Mid-Autumn Festival, we present a handpicked selection of barbecue destinations perfect for your Taipei journey.

As all of this comes together, the international media gravitates toward Taipei, and rightly so. Freelance journalist Alice Herait shares her perspectives on media, daily life, and the cultural contrasts between Taiwan and her native France.

Whether indulging in events, savoring diverse cuisines, or embracing the city's dynamic contrast of tradition and innovation, this autumn issue serves as a beacon of inspiration for those eager to explore Taipei's multifaceted charm.



Join our lucky draw to win a prize by completing TAIPEI's online questionnaire!

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We hope you enjoy reading this issue of *TAIPEI*. If you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to email or fax us.



(Photo • Guandu Nature Park)

# TAIPEI<sup>台</sup>北

2023 — AUTUMN

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# Guandu: the Natural Oasis of Taipei

**Author** Hsin Ya Teng, Louis Zhang

**Photographer** Zifilm Studio, Louis Zhang, Guandu Nature Park, Wild Bird Society of Taipei

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Welcome to Taipei, the vibrant capital city of Taiwan, where towering skyscrapers and bustling streets make for an electrifying cityscape. Amidst this urban jungle, Guandu (關渡) is a tranquil sanctuary where you can truly breathe and connect with nature while immersing yourself in the local culture.

Located in the Beitou District of Taipei City, Guandu was formerly known as “Gandoumen (甘豆門).” This charming locale is embraced by the majestic Guanyinshan (觀音山, Mt. Guanyin) and Datunshan (大屯山, Mt. Datun), while its gaze is fixed upon the meandering Tamsui River. Its location at the confluence of the Tamsui and Keelung Rivers creates a flourishing wetland ecosystem, making it a haven for diverse bird species during their migratory stopovers, thus earning its reputation as a vital avian sanctuary.

The fertile Guandu Plain is also Taipei’s only large-scale urban agricultural area, accounting for 90% of the city’s agricultural land, with hundreds of hectares of sweeping rice paddies. Here, you are immersed in the time-honored traditions of rice cultivation, where the prolific cycle of planting, harvesting, threshing and milling are experienced season after season. As visitors wander through the vast emerald rice fields, the rhythmic dance of rice swaying with the gentle breeze presents a unique escape from the city’s hustle.

Guandu’s natural charm and environmental significance attract residents and visitors alike to bike along the Guandu waterfront on weekends and holidays. The riverside bikeway from Guandu to Tamsui provides a front-row seat for the beautiful scenery, while allowing travelers to experience many of the famous sites Guandu has to offer.

# Pedal to Explore: Embarking on an Eco Tour

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## Guandu Nature Park 關渡自然公園

Guandu Nature Park has always played an important role in the wetland ecosystem. The park not only provides shelter for a wide variety of fish, shrimp and crabs, but also serves as a shelter to rest or stay for the whole winter for birds migrating south. Birds such as the black-winged stilt (高蹺鴉) and green-winged teal (小水鴨) are frequent avian visitors to the park.

To preserve Guandu's wetland, the Taipei City Government established the Guandu Nature Park in 1996. The park is responsible for habitat maintenance and conservation research, as well as the promotion of ecological education. Visitors can sign up for a guided tour of the wetland to learn more about the wetland's history and its diverse flora and fauna. Bird enthusiasts can join informative workshops with diverse topics about birds organized by the Wild Bird Society of Taipei (台北市野鳥學會). On weekends, visitors are encouraged to head to the second floor of the Nature Center to take advantage of the bird-watching equipment with the help of interpreters to capture graceful flyers through the lens.

1. The Guandu Plain is a large urban wetland with a rich ecology in Taipei. | 2. Guandu is adjacent to the Tamsui River, with a beautiful riverside environment.





3. The Tamsui Riverside Bikeway along the Guandu area is flat and easy to ride, suitable for parent-child travel. | 4. Guandu Wharf can take boats to and from the Tamsui River. | 5. Guandu Waterfront is a good place for cycling, sports, and leisure activities. (Photo • Louis Zhang)

## Guandu Riverside Park 關渡水岸公園

Adjacent to Guandu Temple and Guandu Fishing Port, Guandu Riverside Park spans approximately 6.3 hectares. In addition to pedestrian walkways and the riverside bikeway, the park also features recently renovated Guandu Wharf, which serves as one of the Taipei River Cruise (台北市藍色水路) embarkation points for rides to other wharves along the route. Visitors can set out on a delightful journey and experience the charming river scenery, whether it's during the day or under the enchanting night lights.



In addition, Guandu Riverside Park has been adorned with artistic installations and deck chairs, providing a relaxing setting for visitors to enjoy art and the scenic beauty of the river after a bike ride. During the day, visitors can observe the rich wetland ecosystem in the intertidal zone. In the evening, they can enjoy the picturesque landscape of Bali's Mt. Guanyin. From dawn to dusk, the riverside panorama offers ever-changing delights, making every moment a unique and captivating experience.

## Guandu Temple: A Journey of Blessings, History, and Architectural Aesthetics

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Guandu Temple boasts a rich history, with a legacy spanning over three centuries, making it the oldest Mazu (媽祖) temple in northern Taiwan. Looking out from the temple, one can see fishing boats docked at Guandu Fishing Port, a reminiscence of a bygone era when Taipei's forefathers fished for their livelihood.





6

Before heading out, they would pray to the sea goddess Mazu, seeking her protection and blessings for safety and prosperity.

The architectural aesthetics of the temple are truly worthy of appreciation. Despite several renovations, the temple still boasts numerous stone carvings

from different eras, such as dragon, flower and bird columns, as well as stone lions. These intricate stone carvings, displayed as murals, not only tell the stories of Mazu, but also provide insight into the historical context of the temple through their materials and carving techniques.



7

6. Guandu Temple has been standing for more than 300 years, and is the center of local religious practice. | 7. The main hall of Guandu Palace is dedicated to Mazu, the Holy Mother of Heaven.

From the beams and pillars to the window frames, the temple is adorned with captivating stories. Some wooden carvings tell tales of folklore, while others depict floral and bird patterns that symbolize good fortune and blessings. The roof itself is also a sight to be seen; visitors can find dragon, phoenix, and floral decorations, meticulously crafted through the technique of “cut-and-paste,” also known as the fragmented ceramic art. Next time you visit, take a moment to appreciate the temple’s architectural adornments, as they represent the aesthetic essence of Taiwanese temples.

# Taipei National University of the Arts: Cradle of Artistic Talent

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A seven-minute bike ride from MRT Guandu Station will take you to the entrance of Taipei National University of the Arts (國立台北藝術大學, TNUA). Nestled on a picturesque hillside, the campus offers a bird's-eye view of the serene Guandu Plain as you pedal uphill. Watch in awe as the distinctive architecture of the colleges gradually reveals itself.

TNUA was established in 1982 as the former National Institute of the Arts (國立藝術學院). Today, the university houses seven colleges, including the School of Music, School of Fine Arts, School of Theatre Arts,

School of Dance, School of Film & New Media, School of Cultural Resources, and School of Humanities. With an extensive network of accomplished alumni flourishing in Taiwan's cultural and artistic scene, TNUA has undoubtedly earned its reputation as a dream institution for aspiring talents in the arts and humanities.

An array of cultural and artistic spaces is available to art enthusiasts, including exhibition halls and bookstores that provide rich sources of inspiration and ample room for creativity. One of the gems here is the Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts, where museum-goers can admire the works of local and international artists. The museum also offers hands-on craft workshops. The opportunities to appreciate different art forms and participate in immersive experiences are an indication that art is already seamlessly woven into the daily lives of the locals.



8. Taipei National University of the Arts is built along the hillside, overlooking the beautiful Guandu Plain.



The work "A Leaf Shelter" by Lee Jo-Mei at the 2022 Guandu International Nature Art Festival. (Photo • Guandu Nature Park)





9. The Taipei International Birdwatching Fair is held every autumn and winter. (Photo • Wild Bird Society of Taipei )

## Unveiling the Splendor of Fall — Discover Guandu’s Annual Festivals

Guandu hosts an array of annual festivals, most of which focus on environmental and conservation issues. Among these, the renowned Guandu International Nature Art Festival and the highly anticipated Taipei International Birdwatching Fair stand out as true highlights. These remarkable events enthrall nature art enthusiasts and birdwatchers. And what better time to indulge in outdoor activities than on a picturesque fall day?

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

Every year, the Guandu International Nature Art Festival takes center stage in Guandu Nature Park,

and has captivated audiences since its inception in 2006. From September to the end of the year, the festival gathers artists from around the world to create artworks on-site using natural materials. The resulting works not only embody artistic concepts and aesthetics, but also carry powerful messages of environmental awareness.

The festival also highlights public participation, which is the best form of support for the local community and artists. Events such as the grand opening, artists’ workshops, art tours, cultural performances, nature tours, and farmers’ markets provide a delightful range of experiences. Through these artistic and cultural activities, the festival serves as a medium to convey the beauty of the harmonious relationship between man and nature.

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

Every winter, when migratory birds from the north seek refuge from the cold, Guandu becomes their ideal site to stopover during their migration or spend the winter. Autumn and winter are the perfect seasons to observe these avian visitors. That is why birdwatchers cannot miss the annual Taipei International Birdwatching Fair organized by the Wild Bird Society of Taipei (台北市野鳥學會) at Guandu Nature Park. The event attracts not only local visitors, but also birdwatching enthusiasts from abroad.

This year’s theme is “Endemic Birds of Formosa (寶島特有種).” Amidst the environmental challenges many species face for survival, the theme aims to raise awareness about Taiwan’s unique species. It serves as a reminder that these precious avian friends have always lived among us and need our conscious efforts to protect them.

The fair also offers a variety of activities, including games, film screenings, lectures, and workshops. These engaging events offer participants the opportunity to deepen their understanding of birds, birdwatching activities, and topics related to ecological conservation.

Guandu is the radiant emerald nestled in the cityscape. Encompassing a rich ecosystem and cultural resources, it offers the perfect escape to unwind and savor the tranquility where you can immerse yourself in the tapestry of local customs and the warm embrace of the community. Just a

20-minute drive from downtown, Guandu is reckoned as Taipei's natural oasis, where you can experience the verdant facets of this enchanting city. Whether you're a resident or a visitor, Guandu promises a delightful journey of exploration and relaxation. 



► **Guandu International Nature Art Festival**



► **Taipei International Birdwatching Fair**



10. Guandu Nature Park provides the public with birdwatching binoculars.



# Eastern District + Xinyi District Taipei's East, Internationalized Gallery of Architectural Masterworks

Author

Rick Charette

Photographer

NeverEndingStudio, Agora Garden, Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government, Taipei Nan Shan Plaza, Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government, Taipei City Office of Commerce, Chieh-Li Yen, Miller Hsu

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Through the second half of the last century, well into its last decade, travel writers regularly described Taipei as “the ugly duckling of Asia.”

Today that is ancient history. In chrysalis style, the Taipei cityscape has since been reborn, emerging as one of Asia’s most strikingly photogenic, with its modern, internationalized beauty heightened further by the verdant mountain backdrop that surrounds the metropolis on all sides.

Starting from around the midpoint of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, severely cash-poor after the Chinese Civil War and faced with an influx of millions of refugees from China, Taiwan emphasized expediency over beauty, resulting

in what has been charitably termed “homely but lovable” architecture dotted with such splashes of imagination as boldly colorful Chinese temples and more staid and stately Japanese-era buildings.

Today, the golden hive of architectural activity is the glitzy eastern district, especially Xinyi District within it, a magnet for landmark buildings in what is Taipei’s most internationalized sector. You’ll wander amidst an ever-growing forest of eco-friendly architectural imaginings that are showcases of the innovative integration of form and function. The skyline is a grand competition stage for the great names from the global arena of architects, vying for the cachet brought from association with visionary Taipei projects.

Let's visit Xinyi District, Taipei's commercial and financial heart, for a more intimate view of some of its best architectural artworks.

## Taipei 101 — Taiwan's Tallest Building, National Icon

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The skyscraping Taipei 101 — yes, 101 stories high — is the crown jewel in the Taipei architectural treasure trove. Visible from great distances as you near the city by plane or vehicle, it appears like a shining beacon in the deep Taipei Basin, the soaring structure at the same time looking like a great upright rocket-ship landed on Xinyi District, especially when dynamically lit up at night. This was Earth's tallest building from December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004 to January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and still stands proud as the world's tallest green building, sporting LEED Platinum certification.

Being the best-known and most resonant of Taipei's landmarks among foreign visitors, it is even more recognizable around the globe as the platform for the spectacular fireworks show of the annual Taipei New Year's Eve Party.

Designed by internationally acclaimed Taiwanese architect C.Y. Lee (李祖原), the 508-meter-high structure is a postmodernist work that evokes classical Asian aesthetics in a modern structure incorporating advanced industrial materials and technology.

The green-tint glass-façade nodal-design tower has an eight-section wedge-shaped series of eight floors each. In Chinese culture, the number eight is a symbol of prosperity and good fortune. The nodes collectively also resemble a bamboo stalk, a symbol of resilience and ceaseless growth (i.e., prosperity).

High on the must-do list for international tourists is a visit to the Taipei 101 Observatory. You can view the surrounding world from floors 88/89/91, the bravest souls able to take a guided tethered walk outside. On view inside is the mind-boggling tuned mass damper, the world's largest wind-damper sphere, with a weight of 660 tons, and a diameter of 5.5 meters.



1. A stunning view of the heavily internationalized eastern district Taipei. (Photo • NeverEndingStudio) | 2. The night view of Taipei City. (Photo • Chieh-Li Yen)

## Other Landmarks in Xinyi District

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The city's eastern district is its globe-watching trendsetter, Xinyi its commercial and financial nerve center. While the older western section is where tradition and history are preserved and nurtured, the internationalized east, especially Xinyi, eagerly looks to the future, seeing the wide world as its stage and passionately embracing all that is most modern and advanced. In a wide swath from Taipei 101 to the new Taipei Dome (台北大巨蛋), the "Big Egg," nearer the city center, the towering cityscape is a powerful exhibit of metropolitan self-confidence and flair looking out at the world stage.

The design for the luxury Four Seasons Hotel Taipei, under construction directly south-facing Taipei 101

with an expected opening in 2025, was created by the Pritzker Architecture Prize-winning giant Richard Rogers.

The hotel will be 31 stories and 180 meters high, have about 260 rooms, and offer both city and mountain views. The design concept is to build "A utopia in the sky in the city center" with three primary criteria: internationalization, modernization, and landmark. The glass-curtain exterior — the tall, thin structure will have the look of a leviathan gold-tint mobile phone standing upright — will feature ultra-white low-emissivity glass and low-profile landscape elevators. The top floor will have a high ceiling to create a public-access skyline space allowing sensational panoramic views to flood in.

The soon-to-open The Sky Taipei (台北天空塔) is a half-block north of Taipei 101, immediately east



3. Taipei Nan Shan Plaza is a key component of the core of Xinyi District. (Photo • Taipei Nan Shan Plaza)



4. Agora Garden, the world's first three-dimensional residence with a rotating shape. (Photo • Agora Garden)

of Taipei City Hall. The pan-Asia private equity real estate firm Riant Capital is developing this combination hotel/retail/performance hall/private club skyscraper and podium complex, which will be anchored by a duo of Hyatt Hotels luxury brands, the boutique Park Hyatt and the lifestyle Andaz. Responsible for the architectural design is the renowned team of Italian national treasures, Antonio Citterio and Patricia Viel.

This is Hyatt's first dual-hotel luxury development project in Asia, and makes Taipei only the world's third international city, after Tokyo and Shanghai, to have both Park Hyatt and Andaz brands within the same city skyline. They will have about 500 guest rooms combined.

The design is a celebration of Taiwan's unique harmony of tradition and modernism, and especially

Taipei's energetic metropolitan vibe. The green-tinted glass curtain exterior draws inspiration from Taiwanese bamboo shoots and the pleats of ancient Greek columns, combining elements of both Taiwanese and Western cultures. In the 54-story tower, the Park Hyatt will take up floors 16 to 28, Andaz floors 30 to 49. Floors 50 to 51 will be a retail space. At 280 meters tall, the tower will be Xinyi's second-tallest structure.

Completed in 2018, Taipei Nan Shan Plaza (台北南山廣場), to the immediate east of the Taipei 101 complex, was designed by acclaimed architect Sube Yasuhiro (須部恭浩) of the prestigious Japanese architecture firm Mitsubishi Jisho Design (三菱地所設計). The complex has three structures: a 48-story, 272-meter-high office tower with some commercial floors, a 7-story mall, and a diamond-shaped entrance building with an open cultural/arts space.

The overall design interlinks these structures of differing height like a range of mountain peaks, in homage to Taiwan's thick north-south spine of mountains. The twin spires that envelop the central core of the glass-curtain tower are in the shape of hands in prayer, symbolizing thankfulness. Floors

46 to 48 are filled with restaurants and bars offering stunning panoramic views. The cultural/arts building shares a polyhedron exterior-design motif with the tower. The mall consists of a series of stacked cubes of differing geometric shapes, their staggered positioning in turn creating a series of rising terraces which brim with trees; the overall visual effect is of a small forested mountain.

The Agora Garden (陶朱隱園) is a few blocks northeast of Taipei 101. This dazzling luxury high-rise building, completed in 2018, is 21 stories high, 93.2 meters tall. Designed by the celebrated Belgian architect Vincent Callebaut, who specializes in futuristic eco-district ventures focused on sustainability, the structure enjoys LEED Gold certification as well as Diamond level recognition from the Low Carbon Building Alliance.

Its external appearance is dynamically flowing, with a singular serpentine shape in the form of a DNA strand, the double helix bending vigorously a full 90 degrees from base to roof. Each of the floors, which have a stacked appearance, is rotated 4.5 degrees from the ones above and below.

Shrouding the roof and exterior are approximately 23,000 trees and shrubs, almost as many as in New York's Central Park, eating up about 130 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually. Plants are also grown inside the tower's hallways, which have glass flooring.

**5.** Due to Agora Garden's unique shape and its resemblance to Godzilla, it has become a tourist attraction on Google Maps, enticing visitors to check-in and take pictures. (Photo • Miller Hsu) | **6.** The 2020 Nuit Blanche Taipei featured piece entitled *Tentacles* by British artist Filthy Luker. (Photo • Department of Cultural Affairs, Taipei City Government)



## Big and Boisterous Events Coming Up in Xinyi District

Adding to the sophisticated, modern vibe of the eastern district is an event calendar filled with international festival celebrations.

In the early autumn, one must-experience will be *Nuit Blanche Taipei* (台北白晝之夜), an event deeply connected with the concepts of urban innovation and public design. It's an all-night arts festival held on the first Saturday night of October, running from 6 pm to 6 am, inviting the public to explore the city in-depth through a wonderful array of live performances, installation artworks, multimedia projections and more. This year's party will be on October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>; the venue will be near the Taipei Dome, another of Taipei's new monumental works of public architecture, and the Xinyi Shopping District (信義商圈).

The first *Nuit Blanche* was held in Paris in 2002; the Taipei edition, launched in 2016, has become one of the city's liveliest large-scale arts extravaganza. Taipei's unique multicultural diversity makes it one of Asia's most *Nuit Blanche*-suitable capitals, the grand jamboree showcasing its artistic dynamism to the world and boosting its profile as an international cultural capital.

As the season progresses toward winter, the festive atmosphere will continue with international visitors and expats flocking to *Taipei Xmas* (繽紛耶誕玩台北) and *Taipei New Year's Eve Party* (台北最高新年城). The first is held mid-November through early January, integrating department stores and boutiques across Xinyi and other shopping districts, the venues festooned with Christmas lighting decorations and



**7.** The 2022 piece entitled *Taipei Xmas* is an arched tunnel in a sea of flowers, allowing visitors to take pictures, check-in, and feel the Christmas spirit. (Photo • Taipei City Office of Commerce) | **8.** The annual Taipei New Year's Eve Party is put together by the Taipei City Government in Civic Square. (Photo • Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government)

featuring live entertainment, revelers using a stamp map and roaming over 70 check-in points.

The second is a colossal countdown party ringing in the new year, designed as a “once in a lifetime Asia” spectacle, with a phantasmagoria of lights put up around Taipei City Hall, a massive six-hour party with pop stars and bands, and the tremendous Taipei 101 midnight fireworks show, broadcast around the globe. There are also party events on January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> to ensure an extended festive experience. 



# Guting: Leisure in Southern Taipei

Author

Faith Zhang, Jean Hsieh

Photographer

Qingtian 76, The Liang Shih-Chiu House, Wistaria Tea House, Thome Courtyard, Rongjin Gorgeous Time, The Cafeist, Ooh Cha Cha, Moon Romantic Taipei, Kishu An Forest of Literature

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Located in southern Taipei, the Guting area comprises several well-known streets, with Shida Road (師大路) standing out for its bustling night market. Formerly a busy business district, Guting is also home to many publishers and used bookstores, as well as the former residences of several literary giants. The poet Yu Guangzhong (余光中) wrote of his time living here in a poem that evokes the literary atmosphere of old Guting, titled “Debussy: Claire de Lune,” which begins, “The alleys of Xiamen Street are long and narrow...”

National Taiwan University (國立台灣大學, NTU)  
National Taiwan Normal University (國立台灣師範大學, NTNU) and Taipei Language Institute (台北語文學院, TLI) are all located nearby. Thanks to the presence of NTNU’s College of Arts, the area is also filled with

art shops and galleries. This abundance of language learning resources draws people here from all over the world to learn Chinese, lending Guting the air of an international institution.

Chaozhou (潮州街) and Wenzhou Streets (溫州街) are dotted with dormitories for NTU faculty. Many old Japanese-style houses have been preserved in the alleys here, including the famous Wistaria Tea House (紫藤廬). Even today, the neighborhood remains one of southern Taipei’s most beautiful sights. Jinhua Street (金華街) is also home to many gorgeous old houses built in Japanese style, sometimes giving passersby a sense of stepping back in time. Meanwhile, on the western side of Guting (古亭) lie Nanchang Road (南昌路), known for its furniture stores, Xiamen Street (廈



1. The original site of Rongjin Gorgeous Time served as a dormitory for correctional officers. (Photo • Rongjin Gorgeous Time) | 2. Qingtian 76 is a 92-year-old house which not only serves up free guided tours, but also regular geographic specimen displays. (Photo • Qingtian 76) | 3. Qingtian 76 serves traditional Japanese cuisine. (Photo • Qingtian 76)



門街), known for secondhand stores; and Guling Street (牯嶺街), known for used bookstores. Theaters and other venues for the arts cluster here, contributing to Guting’s distinctive mix of academia and the arts.

The following are Guting’s best-known buildings and literary landmarks. Each and every one is well worth visiting.

## Qingtian 76 (青田七六)

Located at 6, Alley 7, Qingtian Street (青田街), Qingtian 76 was built in 1931 combining Japanese and Western influences. It was designed by Adachi Masashi (足立

仁) (1897-1978), who came to Taiwan to become an assistant professor at Taihoku Imperial University and a professor at the Affiliated College of Agriculture and Forestry. Adachi himself resided here, as did the renowned geologist Ma Tingying (馬廷英) (1899-1979), who was among the first to take over the university and renamed it NTU after World War II.

Restored and maintained under the principle of adaptive reuse of historical sites, Professor Ma’s residence appears just as it did when he lived here, though now it has become today’s Qingtian 76. The old layout of the Japanese-style house includes a reception room, dining room, and study, as well as a tatami room for maids, all of which have now become space for a restaurant. The 76 Fun Club (七六俱樂部)

hosts all sorts of cultural activities, such as wagashi-making (a traditional Japanese confection) and *kimono* experiences. Free house tours and talks on cultural topics are also available. Guting locals often visit this quaint place to experience its cultural charm in the relaxing atmosphere.

## The Liang Shih-Chiu House (梁實秋故居)

The great man of letters Liang Shih-Chiu (梁實秋) (1903-1987) was editor-in-chief of many English-Chinese dictionaries and English textbooks, as well as the first to introduce the K.K. phonetic symbols to Taiwan. His former residence, located on Yunhe Street (雲和街), is a work of Japanese-Western eclectic architecture built in 1933. Its first resident was Tomita Yoshisuke (富田義介) (1893-unknown), an English

teacher in Taipei. After the end of Japanese rule, it became a dormitory for Taiwan Provincial Teachers College faculty. Liang lived here from 1952-1959.

The building's wooden construction is a distinctive presence amid the city bustle, occupying an area of about a hundred square meters. It was originally built as a middle-class attempt to imitate upper-class residences of the time that combined a Western-style space for receiving guests, featuring elements like a foyer and reception room, with interior areas in the traditional Japanese style, including bedrooms and a tea room. A giant breadfruit tree — mentioned in Liang's poetry — grows in the courtyard.

This quietly elegant residence is open to the public. An NT\$50 ticket will get you in the door to enjoy the beauty of this vintage Japanese-style house.



4. The huge breadfruit tree in the courtyard of the Liang Shih-Chiu House was planted by Liang himself to commemorate his wife's passing. (Photo • The Liang Shih-Chiu House)



5. Wistaria Tea House used to be a gathering place for social activists in the 1950s. (Photo • Wistaria Tea House) | 6. Above is the original historical site of Kishu An, and below is the current site. (Photo • Kishu An Forest of Literature)

## Wistaria Tea House (紫藤廬)

The Wistaria Tea House was Taiwan's first site to be designated a city historical monument, as well as Taipei's first living monument to be recognized for its historic and artistic significance and its unique value as a public space.

In the 1950s it was a gathering place for liberal scholars. In 1981 it was converted into the Wistaria Tea House, named for the three old wistaria trees growing in the garden. It became Taiwan's first tea house to hold art salons, using tea as a vehicle for hosting a wide range of talks and other activities centered on the arts. Today, the tea house remains a favorite among those with an artistic bent.

## Kishu An Forest of Literature (紀州庵文學森林)

Kishu An was constructed in 1917, when Taiwan was still under Japanese rule. It originated as a Japanese restaurant run by the Hiramatsu (平松) family; the lovely view granted by its location near Xindian River (新店溪) made it popular among southern Taipei locals. After World War II, Kishu An became a residence for the families of civil servants. In 2004 it was named a historical monument by Taipei City Government, and in 2011 a new building was added next to the old one. In this new form it was renamed the Kishu An Forest of Literature, with the mission of promoting literature, and quickly became a major center for literary culture in Taipei. It features both a bookstore and a restaurant, nestled in the tranquil environment of the old house and the big trees around it.



7. The reconstruction of the historic house at Thome Courtyard, now transformed into a *kaiseki-ryori* and art space. (Photo • Thome Courtyard) | 8. Rongjin Gorgeous Time Park not only offers many gourmet restaurants but also provides a *kimono* experience. (Photo • Rongjin Gorgeous Time Park)

## Thome Courtyard (東美院)

Located on Guling Street, the Thome Courtyard was a dormitory for professors at Taihoku Imperial University under Japanese rule. After World War II, it became a residence for NTU professors. The great philosopher Thomé H. Fang (方東美) (1899-1977) lived here for nearly thirty years. Guided by the principles of revitalization of old buildings and adaptive reuse of cultural assets, its two Japanese-style buildings were restored in 2022.

The Thome Courtyard has the mission of promoting everyday aesthetics. It serves *kaiseki-ryori* (懷石料理), a type of traditional Japanese meal, and also offers tea tastings and a craft gallery in addition to periodic artistic performances. In short, it is a paragon among revitalized Japanese-era buildings.



## Rongjin Gorgeous Time ( 榕錦時光生活園區 )

Rongjin Gorgeous Time is a new plaza created via the restoration of a group of old Japanese-style houses on Jinhua Street. Since its grand opening in

September 2022, a number of Taipei's most renowned restaurants have opened locations here, including Good Cho's, Simple Kaffa, and Taihu Brewing. The original Japanese-style wood construction has gained a new face with the addition of modern elements like glass and steel, while mature ficus, Chinese toon, and camphor trees have been preserved, creating a beautiful harmony between old and new. 

### RECOMMENDED EATS NEAR GUTING

#### The Cafeist ( 咖啡學人 )

The area between Tongan Street ( 通安街 ) and Jinmen Street ( 金門街 ) is home to a multitude of coffee shops. Two of the most distinctive among them belong to The Cafeist. The Cafeist & Jackwell, near MRT Guting Station, features a small space with casually arranged furniture, while The Cafeist & Old Jack, located on the corner of Jinmen Street, is another small space in which groups of international students can often be spotted studying.



#### Ooh Cha Cha ( 自然食 )

Ooh Cha Cha serves all plant-based foods and beverages. Though small, the space is bright and airy, with floor-to-ceiling windows on two sides of the triangular eating area. This restaurant is popular among international residents, as well as vegetarians and vegans. All their food is unprocessed and made by hand without the use of dairy products or refined sugar. Ingredients are clearly listed on the menu. With plenty of vegan desserts to choose from, even non-vegans are sure to find something to love.



#### Moon Romantic Taipei ( 台北月見ル君想フ )

Hidden away on Chaozhou Street with a sentimental Japanese name meaning "viewing the moon, thinking of you," Moon Romantic Taipei was founded by Terao Budha ( 寺尾 Budha ), a lover of both music and curry. The Japanese chef serves up spice curry (based on Indian curry) as well as unique cocktails, while the basement features a small live house (a term for a live music club that originated in Japan) that sometimes hosts acoustic performances. Japanese musicians are frequently invited to perform here, making this venue quite well-known among both Japanese students and Japanese culture enthusiasts.





The Guandu Bridge is an important landmark across the Tamsui River.  
When it was completed in 1983, it was one of the three largest steel bridges in the world.  
(Photo • Zifilm Studio)



# The Beauty of Sacred Spaces — A Taipei Church Tour

Author  
Photographer

Jenna Lynn Cody  
Chè-lâm Church, Dadaocheng Church, Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government,  
Kerstin Hsu, Louís Zhang

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1. The facade of Dadaocheng Church presents a wonderfully decorative face to the city street. (Photo • Department of Information and Tourism, Taipei City Government) | 2. The bells of Dadaocheng Church can play many different songs. (Photo • Dadaocheng Church)

When most people think of spiritual architecture in Taipei, their minds go first to the temples. While it's undeniable that Taipei's historic temples are integral to its urban identity, the city also boasts a number of beautiful churches that have garnered the interest of architects, architecture enthusiasts and urban explorers alike. Scattered across Taipei, these churches are testament to the city's religious and cultural diversity, as well as its multifaceted history.

Some architectural gems also have a colorful story to tell, such as the Dadaocheng Presbyterian Church (台灣基督長老教會大稻埕教會), founded by Dr. Leslie Mackay in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but relocated and rebuilt since then. Others are even older, such as the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Chè-lâm Presbyterian Church (台灣基督長老教會濟南教會), or named for well-known figures, such as the Lee Chun-Sheng Memorial Christ Presbyterian

Church (李春生紀念基督長老教會). Unlike its red-brick counterparts, the Chungshan Presbyterian Church (台灣基督長老教會台北中山教會) has a distinctive black-and-white edifice that draws visitors from across Taipei, serving as a local landmark.

Whichever church you choose to visit, these architectural gems reveal some of Taipei's quieter history to those who take the time to look.

## Dadaocheng Presbyterian Church

Few foreigners who have built lives in Taiwan have had as much impact on its history as Dr. George Leslie Mackay, founder of the Dadaocheng Presbyterian Church. Mackay arrived in Taiwan as a missionary in 1872, offering a mobile dentistry services before founding both churches and hospitals. The Dadaocheng Church was first built in 1875 on what is now Section 3, Yanping North Road (延平北路三段). It was destroyed in the Sino-French War in 1884, moving temporarily to what is now Dihua Street (迪化街). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lee Chun-Sheng (李春生), the "father of Taiwan tea," donated the land along what is now Ganzhou Street (甘州街), where the church stands today.

The current building was completed in 1915, making it the oldest church in Taipei by construction date. In fact, it is one of the four remaining Presbyterian church buildings constructed during the Japanese era in Greater Taipei. The other three are the Chè-lâm, Chungshan and Tamsui (淡水) churches.

Walking down quiet, leafy Ganzhou Street, one might not expect to come upon this unassuming red-brick church. A modern church building towers over the original 1915 chapel, but it is the older edifice that

draws those interested in historical architecture. The facade echoes the traditional look of old Taiwanese mansions, strongly influenced by the architectural trends of the Japanese era. The overall style balances simplicity and fine craftsmanship with the decorative elements of Japanese-influenced Gothic architecture, most notably the organic lines of the ornamental clay work around the *oeil-de-boeuf* (ox-eye window) in the center gable, a clear nod to Art Nouveau design. Other elements, such as the gothic pointed arches with hood molds, clerestory windows and imitation Corinthian columns are all clear indications of church architecture. Keen observers will notice that the church has two entrances on each side of the main gable, rather than one central entrance. This is because, in the past, the church segregated seating by gender; men and women were required to use separate entrances as well. The church also has a unique musical bell clock that rotates between seven different songs on its 25 bells to mark the noontime hour.



3. Dadaocheng Church is one of the oldest churches from the Japanese era. (Photo • Dadaocheng Church)

# Chè-lâm Presbyterian Church

A visitor to Taipei would likely not expect an 18<sup>th</sup>-century style church tucked into a corner next to the Legislative Yuan, in a neighborhood known for government offices. Its neighbors are the Ministry of Education and the Control Yuan. But this is Taipei, where gems can be found in unexpected places! The edifice is rendered in locally-produced red brick made by Taiwan Renga, a brick manufacturing company during the Japanese era, intricately layered with white stone quarried in northern Taiwan.

The fundamental design is that of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Neo-Gothic church; it would not be out of place in a rural English town, and was indeed intended to imitate that style. The front edifice is composed of recessed Tudor-style gables with a large clerestory window, which had been fitted with clear glass in 1985 before being reverted to its original stained-glass glory. Buttresses and Gothic pointed arches abound, as well as square windows ringed with staggered masonry. The shutters on the bell tower are actually stone, built for durability, light reduction and ventilation. It is the only church roof in Taiwan to be composed of distinctive fish-scale shingles, which are no longer produced in Taiwan.

The Chè-lâm Prebyterian Church, its colloquial name taken from the intersection where it is located, has not only weathered storms, earthquakes and armed conflicts, but has also borne witness to a critical period not just in Taipei's history, but in Taiwan's as a whole. While Western Missionaries such as James Laidlaw Maxwell and Dr. George Leslie Mackay made the church an institution, Japanese Presbyterians also played a role in the establishment of the congregation. Before the construction of the Chè-lâm Church, this



4. Chè-lâm Church was built with red bricks produced during the Japanese era and white stones quarried in Taiwan. (Photo • Chè-lâm Church) | 5. The interior of Chè-lâm Church is very austere and grand. (Photo • Chè-lâm Church)

smaller group met on what is now called Hankou Street (漢口街), near the Red House (紅樓) in Ximending.

Built in 1916, the Chè-lâm Church was designed by Ide Kaoru (井手薰), an architect whose other accomplishments include Zhongshan Hall (中山堂) in Ximen, the Judicial Yuan, designed in the Imperial Crown style, and the nearby Executive Yuan, in a more modern Art Deco style. Ide also sought the guidance of Japanese designer Moriyama Matsunosuke (森山松之助), who was involved in designing the Presidential Office Building and the Tobacco and Liquor Monopoly Bureau, all considered important historical buildings in Taipei.

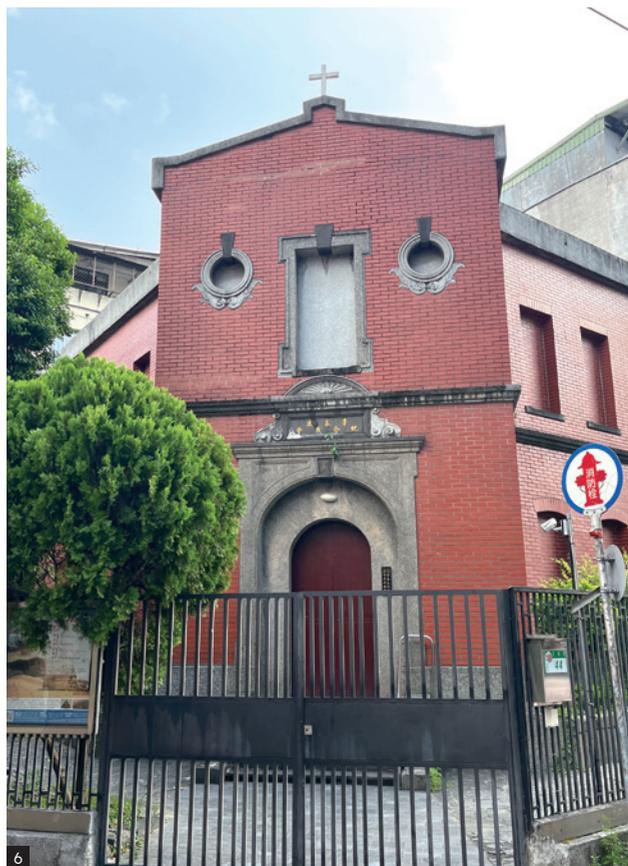
## Lee Chun-Sheng Memorial Christ Presbyterian Church

Anyone who has not just a memorial, but a memorial church named for them, must have been quite a towering historical figure. The Lee Chun-Sheng Memorial Christ Presbyterian Church, dedicated by the eponymous Lee Chun-Sheng's grandchildren and other descendants, is a small, unassuming red-brick building. One of the more interesting qualities of the church is the front façade, which resembles a face — the main doorway suggesting a mouth and the two upper windows resembling eyes. It sits on quiet, narrow Guide Street (貴德街) in the westernmost slice of the Dadaocheng neighborhood.

6. Lee Chun-Sheng Memorial Church features red brick architecture and western decorative elements. (Photo • Kerstin Hsu)

Lee Chun-Sheng indeed played an important role in Taiwanese history, known today as the “Father of Taiwan Tea.” Lee was born the son of a poor boatman in Xiamen, Fujian, China. He worked for Chinese tea companies before being recruited for his managerial talent by John Dodd, turning tea into Taiwan's most valuable export.

Lee was also a committed Christian, donating both capital and land for the construction of multiple Presbyterian churches across Taipei. The Lee Chun-Sheng Memorial Church was constructed in 1935, and originally functioned as the Dadaocheng Post and Telegraph Office — the first post office in Taiwan.





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The building itself is still in use today: a modest two-story chapel that takes its cues from Japanese-era Neo-Baroque style and other Western influences, such as the double-arched doorway with a keystone lintel, molded decorative elements and *oeil-de-boeuf* windows. Also notable is the Chinese-style plaque above the door bearing the name of the church.

## Chungshan Presbyterian Church

Red-brick chapels on quiet streets might seem to be the standard for Taipei's churches, but the Chungshan Presbyterian Church's distinctiveness lies in the bucking of these expectations. Situated on the busy intersection of Linsen North Road (林森北路) and

Changan East Road (長安東路), the Chungshan Church is a popular site for wedding photography due to its striking Neo-Gothic facade, which in a certain light may appear black and white.

Constructed in 1937 under Japanese pastor Ohashi Rintaro (大橋麟太郎), the Chungshan Church began its life not as a Presbyterian house of worship, but an Anglican one. When the Japanese left Taiwan, however, there was no local Anglican diocese at the time, and thus it was agreed that it would be taken over by the Presbyterian mission instead.

The exterior design imitates a church in England, but in a very different sense than the aforementioned Chè-lâm Church. The high-contrast edifice is made of white stone paired with dark pebbledash, which adorns the



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7. The black and white architectural appearance of Chungshan Church is very different from other churches in Taipei. (Photo • Louis Zhang) | 8. Chungshan Church imitates the English architectural style. (Photo • Louis Zhang)

staggered masonry along the buttresses. Inside, milk glass pendants hang from a hammer beam roof, giving the space a sense of elegant timelessness.

When viewed from above, the roof forms a cross, with a bell tower at one end. At either end are *oeil-de-boeuf* windows, each with a stained glass rendering of Jesus: in one he prays at the Garden of Gethsemane, and in the other he acts as a shepherd, a common Christian symbol. Stained glass chevrons above the old wooden

door and Gothic pointed arch windows add to the splendor of this small church.

Besides Mandarin and Taiwanese service, Presbyterian churches in Taipei are known to provide services in other languages such as English, Japanese and Hakka. In addition, visitors are reminded to ask permission before taking pictures. Visits outside of regular service hours are possible, but it is advised to call in advance if you wish to enter the buildings. 📍

### 2023 Taipei Christmas — Infinite Love



When discussing churches in Taipei, one cannot overlook the significance of “Taipei Christmas — Infinite Love” as a prominent event. Christmas is a special time for the city, and each year, Taipei City Government collaborates with religious groups and others to organize the Taipei Christmas event series.

This year marks the third year of the collaboration, featuring a range of activities from Christmas tree lighting and caroling to shopping district promotions and raffles. The event is scheduled to run from early December 2023 to early March 2024, covering the Gongguan Shopping District, Yongkang Shopping District, Exit 11 of Daan Park, and the vicinity of Section 1 to Section 3 of Xinsheng South Road. It will showcase dazzling, Insta-worthy light displays and enticing promotion events. As the year draws to a close, the event invites everyone to experience the heartwarming Christmas atmosphere in Taipei.



# Tracing Taipei's Calligraphy Then and Now: Chu Chen-Nan's Artistic Journey and Insights

**Author** Kai-Ping Fang  
**Photographer** George Zhan, Nan Art

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Chu Chen-Nan, a revered figure in calligraphy and ink wash painting, is well known for his inscriptions entitled *Taipei Station* and *Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport*. Additionally, *On the way* (在旅行的路上), located inside the first terminal of the airport, is the busy transport hub's most photographed piece among travelers, though most are likely unaware this is also one of Chu's works.

Chu seamlessly blends tradition with contemporary elements, enchanting audiences worldwide with his aesthetic. Within the city of Taipei, Chu's calligraphy masterpieces grace the metropolitan landscape, contributing significantly to the modern development of this ancient art form.

Art, especially calligraphy, is often regarded as an esoteric realm accessible to a select few. However, Chu believes, "Art should be accessible to the masses."

## Unveiling the Evolution of Calligraphy Culture in Taipei

As a seasoned calligrapher and painter, Chu has dedicated himself for years to studying Taipei's calligraphic heritage and its historical origins. His insights stem from a lifelong commitment to the art form.

Chu recalls how Japanese calligraphy significantly influenced northern Taiwan before 1949, with the celebrated Tsao Chiu-pu (曹秋圃) of the Danlu Calligraphy Society (澹廬書會) emerging as a prominent figure during that era. Subsequently, after the Nationalist government's arrival in Taiwan, these new calligraphy luminaries led the Taipei calligraphy community for nearly three decades. During this period, calligraphy evolved from studying ancient steles to focusing on calligraphy models, and the atmosphere in Taipei leaned towards a conservative approach deeply rooted in traditional Chinese calligraphy.

As globalization took its course, Taipei became a melting pot of diverse cultures which profoundly influenced the trajectory of local calligraphy. Returning artists from various countries brought innovative Western concepts, encompassing multiculturalism, abstract expressionism, postmodernism, and anti-traditional movements. The intense fusion of these

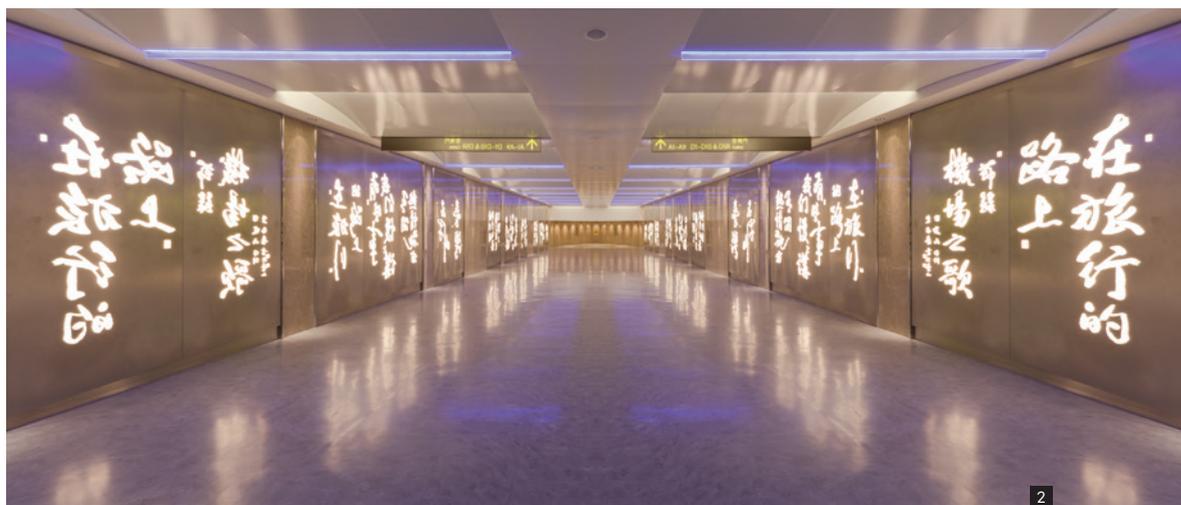
distinct artistic genres sparked a renaissance, nurturing cross-disciplinary art that highlighted Taipei's distinct features. Over time, modern Taipei calligraphy evolved to embrace self-expression, infused with Western elements, resulting in the exciting array of creative styles that we witness today.

## The Wellspring of Calligraphy Creation

In Chu's art, nature and human interactions serve as inspirations. Skillfully weaving elements from his surroundings, he captures grand and subtle nuances, infusing his own personal experiences to create spectacular artworks.

Chu's profound connection with nature has its roots in his humble beginnings. Growing up in poverty, he was shaped by the remarkable influence of his mother's wisdom. Etched in his memory are her words, "Do

1. Chu Chen-Nan's personal gallery, Nan Art, displays his vast collection of work. (Photo • George Zhan) | 2. Chu's work *On the way*, located in Terminal 1 of Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, is a hot spot for travelers.





3. Chu believes that calligraphy should belong to the general public. (Photo • George Zhan) | 4. Chu's special exhibition entitled *RE: THE SKY IN FRANCE* at Zhongshan Hall.

everything early in life, except for dying (做人什麼都要趁早, 死不能早),” which fueled his passion for painting and calligraphy.

Whether it's a personal creation or a commissioned work, Chu requires a personal connection with his subject. For example, when tasked with the writing of the inscriptions for Taipei Main Station (台北車站) and several other railway stations in Hualien (花蓮), he visited each one personally, tailoring his creative direction accordingly.

He discerned the need for distinct styles to reflect each station's unique atmosphere, exemplifying his unwavering commitment to his art. Through his travels, Chu has also produced numerous artworks in global settings such as the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie,



Notre-Dame de Paris, and Fontbonne University in St. Louis. These encounters with architectural marvels and diverse cultures have influenced his artistry in more ways than one.

## Taipei and Taiwan: Nurturing Calligraphy Aesthetics

Both Taipei and Taiwan as a whole shape Chu's aesthetics. Taiwan's cultural heritage and calligraphic tradition fuel his passion, while Taipei's vibrant atmosphere adds an international dimension to his creations.

5. Presenting the *Creed*, written by calligrapher Chu Chen-Nan, to Pope John Paul II. | 6. Chu's calligraphy breaks away from traditional forms.

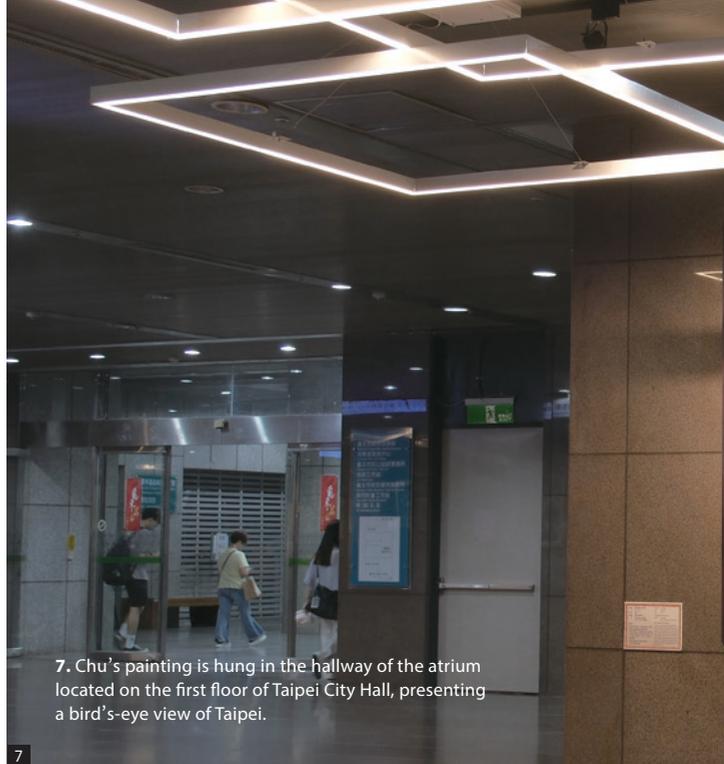


Chu has frequently painted Taipei, particularly during his realistic era as an artist. Armed with a keen sense of observation, he captured the essence of Taipei's architecture, vegetation, and people. Through countless paintings he relentlessly explored the city's distinctive style and characteristics, uncovering subjects in the ordinary streetscapes of the grand metropolis. Taipei City is not only his home, but also his inspiration.

## A City Filled with Calligraphy

As Chu points out, "Taipei is unquestionably a haven for calligraphy enthusiasts." Public institutions like Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall and Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall showcase the art form well. Even private establishments like Dalai Food (大來小館) and Din Tai Fung also display the works of esteemed calligraphers.

Chu's works are also showcased at the Ever Rich Duty Free inside Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei City Hall, and the School of Music, Taipei National University of the Arts (國立台北藝術大學音樂學院). There are many more public spaces such as the evocative *Yue Yang Lou Ji* (岳陽樓記) in the International Hall of National Taipei University of Technology (台北科技大學國際廳).



7. Chu's painting is hung in the hallway of the atrium located on the first floor of Taipei City Hall, presenting a bird's-eye view of Taipei.

Of course, the National Palace Museum is also a treasure trove of collected calligraphy, housing a rich collection of masterpieces from different eras, as is Taipei Artist Village (台北國際藝術村), hosting dynamic exhibitions for contemporary calligraphers.

Chu's personal gallery, Nan Art (南院藝術), situated on Section 1, Xincheng South Road (新生南路一段), offers an immersive experience into his ever-evolving artistry. In Nan Art, there are different themed exhibitions. You can see Chu's work from every era, including his European-influenced work from when he studied in Paris. Various fonts and sizes in his calligraphy works can all be seen at this very place.





## Appreciating Calligraphy as a Layperson

Chu believes that the ethos of calligraphy is rooted in its embodiment of truth, goodness, and beauty. His advice for appreciating these artworks, even for an audience without an extensive background in the art, centers on keenly observing the overall momentum and brush strokes. Elements such as elegance, theme, style, and seals contribute to the viewer's perception, while presentation shapes the overall appreciation experience.

"When appreciating calligraphy, there's no need for excessive expertise. One simply needs to feel with their heart, savor slowly, and even if they don't fully understand, they can still find enjoyment in the beauty of appreciation," Chu explains.



**8.** The four Chinese characters for "Taipei Station" on the outer wall of Taipei Main Station, were also written by Chu Chen-Nan. | **9.** Works by Chu on the exterior wall of the National Taiwan College of Performing Arts represent two concepts: "Dancing into the world" and "Seeing life as a stage play."

Chu values "trusting one's instincts" in art appreciation. No excessive expertise needed; everyone can find delight in its beauty through their unique perspectives. ◆



# The Taiwan Equality Campaign — A Proud Pride Trailblazer

**Author**  
**Photographer**

Rick Charette  
Taiwan Equality Campaign, Kerstin Hsu, Chieh-Li Yen

1

In May 2019, Taiwan became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, and in May of this year the Legislative Yuan, the national government's legislative assembly, granted same-sex couples the right to jointly adopt a child neither are related to. These are milestones in the history of LGBT+ rights in Taiwan, demonstrating the diversity and inclusivity of Taiwanese society and serving as a model for the rest of its neighboring countries.

Iconic in this equal-rights movement has been the Taiwan LGBT+ Pride, staged annually in late October in Taipei. This year, it is held on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Being East Asia's largest pride parade, this spectacular happening has achieved high visibility well beyond the region's shores, attracting participation by gay groups and

social activists from around the globe. First staged 20 years ago, in 2003, this year's edition has epochal significance.

For the last several years, at the forefront of the local LGBT+ rights movement has been the non-governmental organization Taiwan Equality Campaign (彩虹平權大平台, TEC) founded in 2016.

## Motivation and Goals

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Today, the organization's goal is to "make an LGBT-friendly environment a part of everyday life," says Executive Director Joyce Teng (鄧筑媛). In the beginning the NGO was called the Marriage Equality

Coalition (婚姻平權大平台), advocating for marriage equality and “promoting diverse narratives of love.” In 2020, after the same-sex marriage legalization in Taiwan, “We realized there was still much more work beyond this, so we transformed into the TEC, and expanded our goals to include elimination of all forms of gender inequality and realization of an even more diverse and inclusive Taiwan.”

## Biggest Challenges and Most Moving Milestones

Both the NGO’s most daunting obstacles and the most satisfying achievements can be addressed in one overarching answer, says Teng — “They’ve both been intrinsic parts of the same process of evolution.” Early on, she says, the NGO would stage events and the general public would at times show little interest, which disturbed and deeply saddened her and other campaigners.

“Despite these setbacks, we had to take a positive view. Taiwan is in general a very open and accepting society, and the apathy we saw was just that the subject of LGBT+ rights was an ‘invisible’ issue — simply not part of the general public’s daily reality, not on their radar. And it was our job to make this so.”

Over the years, being immersed deep in the struggle, progress has often seemed maddeningly, glacially slow. “But look back from where we are here in 2023,” she says, smiling, “you can feel that the strides made in such a short span of time have been remarkable. We’re



turning this society around. In 2019, same-sex marriage was allowed. In January this year, same sex transnational marriage was allowed between Taiwan citizens and those of all other countries, China excepted. And in May, allowance of joint adoption by same-sex married couples of children neither spouse is related to passed.”

1. The historical moment when same-sex marriage law was passed, as activists chanting passionately in the rain. | 2. Taiwan Equality Campaign marches in the Taiwan LGBT+ Pride on the streets of Taipei.

Previously, under the same-sex marriage special law, married spouses could only adopt each other's biological children. In contrast to heterosexual couples, same-sex spouses had no right to apply for other adoptions, nor could they adopt each other's adopted children.

Asia as a whole has always been very conservative regarding LGBT+ rights, Teng adds, and the public's attitudes have traveled light years in, historically speaking, the blink of an eye. Much more people today support LGBT+ equality and recognition, and the subject has increasingly become part of everyday consciousness and conversation. "Increasingly," says Teng, "but not automatic."





3. The Taiwan LGBT+ Pride held every October attracts tens of thousands of participants. | 4. Taiwan Equality Campaign Executive Director Joyce Teng shares her personal journey in fighting for LGBT+ rights. (Photo • Chieh-Li Yen) | 5. Custom-made pins by TEC. (Photo • Kerstin Hsu)

## Changing Social Attitudes, Changed Campaigning & The TEC’s Path to the Future

Teng states that another, more recent setback faced is social attitude “slippage” or “backsliding.” The TEC has conducted a Social Attitudes Survey each spring since the 2019 same-sex marriage milestone. Until this year, public support for such issues as whether same-sex couples can marry and raise children has continued to grow, and general acceptance of the LGBT+ community has also been increasing. But this year, overall friendliness and support declined slightly, and the ratio of non-support or active opposition increased.

Among the wide range of categories seeing slippage of a few percentage points were acceptance of one’s children, relatives, bosses or teachers, fellow students or colleagues, top government officials, and councilors or lawmakers being homosexual.

Teng replies that a positive within these negative results is that overall public support remains well above 50 percent. “A key issue here is that when you present the concept of LGBT+ rights and fairness to young-generation members, they understand the moral rationale and most permanently modify their values. But we’ve found this year that the new attitudes have not become second nature for the generations above, who grew up in a world of different accepted beliefs, and there has been slippage. It’s thus up to the TEC and other groups to work harder to keep these issues at the forefront, increasing both the breadth and depth of our social education and communication. And as the current young generation ages, the ‘second-nature’ attitudes will spread more



6. The bright sunlight shines on the Taiwan rainbow flag during the Pride. | 7. A Pride Parade mobile ad vehicle passes through Taipei's eastern district. | 8. Advocates firmly state their position for equality in front of the Presidential Office Building.

widely and take deeper root. In terms of campaigning, we have to make the open presence of LGBT+ community members in every corner of everyday life a normal, accepted thing, not something seen as special.”

Thus, the key overarching TEC campaign focus is now to move Taiwan society beyond “From setting us apart as a ‘special’ community — my ‘gay’ family member, ‘gay’ colleague, ‘gay’ customers, ‘gay’ elected representative — to simply engaging with us as ‘my’ family member, colleague, customers, representative,” Teng adds. The TEC is busy in a comprehensive range of activities in pursuit of this objective.

For example, on the larger scale, “In terms of policy advocacy, we’re pushing for equal rights to assisted reproductive technologies, now restricted to hetero-married spouses,” Teng goes on. “In terms of political participation, we’re encouraging more out-of-the-closet candidates to run for office and encouraging more government officials to come out. Right now, out of the 11,000 or so top positions, only three individuals are openly LGBT+.”

And on the smaller scale, says Teng, “In terms of social education, we train volunteers to conduct interaction to enhance understanding of the LGBT+ community. We ask businesses that want to identify as friendly if we can send trainers to teach staff how to comfortably deal with LGBT+ patrons. And we’ve done things like design heart-shaped signs with rainbow colors that businesses can post to indicate they are friendly, and designed stickers our community members can use on their health cards to let medical personnel know how they prefer to be addressed — Mr., Ms., by name only, etc. — to help put both sides at ease.”

All these things help in the slow process of “normalizing LGBT-friendly norms.”

## Recommended LGBT+ Resources

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If planning to visit or already in Taipei, a good launch point should you wish to learn more about the LGBT+ scene is the Travel by Rainbow section on the city government's Taipei Travel Net (*travel.taipei*). This introduces an array of tourist attractions with significance in regard to LGBT+ issues and history. Examples include 228 Peace Park (二二八和平紀念公園), where the gate is painted in the rainbow flag colors, and the Presidential Office Building facing Ketagalan Boulevard (凱達格蘭大道), a key venue for human rights demonstrations. The section also has an "LGBT friendly spaces" link button.

As well, visit the city's Taipei Friendly Store site (*friendlystore.taipei*), where you can search for friendly businesses in various categories: gender-friendly, English-friendly, Muslim-friendly, etc.

"In October the city also arranges special Rainbow Sightseeing Bus Tours," says Teng, "as part of the annual Color Taipei series of activities that lead up to the Taiwan LGBT+ Pride parade. The goal of Color Taipei is to bolster the city's rainbow tourism and commerce; the bus tours are great fun, with drag queens serving as hosts." Day tours are focused on relevant historic sites and milestones, night tours on the LGBT+ bar/nightclub scene.

The city is today filled with stores, bars, nightclubs, etc. that are LGBT-friendly, so choices are wide rather than restricted, says Teng. However, she specifically recommends The Red House (西門紅樓) in the Ximending (西門町) area. The large South Square (南廣場) at The Red House, an important heritage-architecture complex, is filled with gay bars and

shops, with alfresco seating. The surrounding area also brims with LGBT-friendly retail and entertainment establishments. "The South Square vibe is so safe, relaxed, and inviting," she says, "that I've even heard from straight folk, couples and singles, that they go there because nobody will hassle them. The late-night drag shows on weekends are especially popular."

Also, says Teng, indie bookstores are especially friendly. The GinGin Store (晶晶書庫) in the city's south is an LGBT+ community spiritual symbol opened in 1999 as Asia's first dedicated composite culture shop, selling LGBT+ publications and products while from time to time staging exhibits and other cultural-arts events.

Beyond the services provided by her own organization, Teng also specially cites those of the Taiwan Tongzhi (LGBTQ+) Hotline Association (台灣同志諮詢熱線協會), Taiwan's largest and oldest community counseling and support group founded in 1998. Among its many accomplishments, this is the group that started the beloved Taiwan LGBT+ Pride, a parade no visitors should miss. ◆





Guandu Nature Park is a multi-functional area with an eye toward conservation, education, and research.  
It is also a national wetland.  
(Photo • Zifilm Studio)





# Feast Around the Clock: An All-Day Gourmet Expedition in Taipei

**Author** Tina Teng, Lin Han-ching  
**Photographer** RAW, Le Palais, Bob Tung, Kerstin Hsu, Lydia Chin

1

Taipei is a world-renowned foodie heaven that never seems to sleep. For travelers venturing to Taiwan, one of the most enticing aspects is Taipei's culinary delights that promise an unforgettable 24/7 gastronomic experience. But what exactly makes Taipei the undisputed food capital of Taiwan?

Born and raised in Taipei, veteran food journalist Lin Hanching (林涵青) shares her thoughts on Taipei's culinary offerings. "As the capital of Taiwan, people from all over the country and even the world have come to settle in Taipei, each bearing a delectable piece of their hometown's cuisine. This diverse migration weaves a captivating cultural fabric that enriches the flavors that dance upon the taste buds of both locals and tourists." People in Taipei have an

unabashed love for food and do not mind spending money to indulge. From hole-in-the-wall street stalls to opulent fine dining establishments, a score of culinary delights caters to a broad spectrum of food enthusiasts.

Taipei boasts a vibrant late-night snack culture, which first emerged to satisfy the appetites of night-shift workers and those who stayed late at work. Over time, this culture became intertwined with Taipei's unique 24/7 bookstore scene, adding to the city's unique charm. With the advent of nighttime festivals such as Taipei Lantern Festival (台北燈會), Nuit Blanche Taipei (台北白晝之夜), and Taipei Summer Festival (大稻埕夏日節), Taipei's nocturnal landscape has been transformed into a vibrant canvas of celebration.

These events, combined with Taipei's convenient transportation and security, laid the foundation for the thriving late-night economy.

Leveraging her extensive expertise in the world of food, Lin has crafted this exclusive one-day culinary guide to Taipei.

## 07:00 Breakfast

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Taipei offers a wide variety of breakfast options unparalleled by other big cities. Don't miss Fu Hang Soy Milk (阜杭豆漿), once recommended by the MICHELIN Guide (米其林指南) five years in a row. The place is always busy with long queues. Be sure to try

1. MICHELIN two-star restaurant RAW is the perfect representative of fine dining in Taipei. (Photo • RAW) |
2. Fu Hang Soy Milk is a well-known Chinese breakfast restaurant. |
3. Eating Taiwanese traditional food in front of Dadaocheng Cisheng Temple is an especially local way to spend part of the day.

their roasted buns with egg (厚餅夾蛋) as the freshly roasted buns always exude a delightful aroma. You can also enjoy the unique flavor of its famous savory soy milk.

For the more adventurous visitors, why not take up the challenge and browse the impressive menus of traditional Taiwanese breakfast shops. Egg crepes (蛋餅), turnip cakes (蘿蔔糕), Taiwanese hamburgers and sandwiches, served with black or milk tea, make for a typical hearty local breakfast.

## 12:00 Lunch

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For lunch, venture over to local Taiwanese food stalls. There are more than 20 food stalls in front of Dadaocheng Cisheng Temple (大稻埕慈聖宮), serving up delicacies including pork congee (肉粥), four herbs soup (四神湯), pork rib soup (排骨湯), pig's blood soup (豬血湯), pork knuckle vermicelli (豬腳麵線), and seafood stir fry (海鮮熱炒). A stop in Dadaocheng will leave you more than satisfied. The locals' favorite lunch combination is a bowl of rice vermicelli soup (米



粉湯) or pork congee with three or four *heibaiqie* (黑白切), side dishes of various sliced ingredients. Food connoisseur Shu Kuochih (舒國治) once summed up Taiwanese *xiaochi* (小吃) culture best: “The most satisfying approach is to try a little bit of everything.” Dining under the banyan tree in front of the temple also adds a unique charm to the experience.

Beef noodle soup also holds a special place in the hearts of Taiwanese people, with several variations to suit every palate. Whether you prefer braised (紅燒), stewed (清燉), or tomato broth (番茄湯頭), each has its devoted fans. Choose your favorite texture and flavor by opting for either thinly sliced or diced beef. As for the noodles, there are a delightful range of options — from thin, plain, sliced, to noodle knots.

Beef noodle soup can be enjoyed at humble roadside stalls or famous establishments such as Yong-Kang Beef Noodle (永康牛肉麵), Jianhong Beef Noodles (建宏牛肉麵), Lin Dong Fang Beef Noodles (林東芳牛肉麵), and Lao Shan Dong Homemade Noodles (老山東). Even five-star hotels such as the Regent Taipei and Sheraton Grand Taipei Hotel proudly offer this fulfilling Taiwanese specialty as part of their dining options.

## 16:00 Afternoon Tea

With so many options, it is never easy deciding on your afternoon tea snack in Taipei. At Guting, there is always a long line of foodies in front of Wenzhou Street Radish Pancake (溫州街蘿蔔絲餅達人) patiently waiting for



their freshly fried treat. Meanwhile, outside Guang Hua Digital Plaza (光華商場) and Qingguang Market



(晴光市場), street stalls selling red bean cakes (紅豆餅), also known as wheel pies (車輪餅), offer delicious afternoon pick-me-ups for visitors and locals alike. Wherever you go, just follow the crowd.

On the other hand, traditional desserts like tofu pudding (豆花) and shaved ice (剉冰) are also wonderful and affordable options. You can never go wrong with beloved tofu pudding shops such as Beans Village (豆花莊) in Ningxia Night Market (寧夏夜市), Chuan Tong Zhi Zui Dou Hua Tang (豆花堂) in Beitou and Longtan Tofu Pudding (龍潭豆花) in Gongguan (公館); Bai-Shui Douhua (白水豆花) on Yongkang Street (永康街) and Yu Nau Chuan Douhua (芋芳川豆花店) in Neihsu are popular, trendy, up-and-coming shops. For shaved ice, traditional ice shops such as Lung Tu Shaved Ice Shop (龍都冰菓專業家), Taiyi Milk King (臺一牛奶大王), Eastern Ice Store (東區粉圓) and Sweet Uncle (水龜伯古早味) are popular with locals. The best thing about Taiwanese shaved ice is the variety of toppings you can choose from to create your own personal favorite, such as taro balls and tapioca.

## 19:00 Dinner

RAW, a renowned two MICHELIN-starred restaurant, has become the epitome of Taiwanese fine dining on the global culinary scene. The chef's masterful use of locally sourced Taiwanese ingredients and the deconstruction of elements of Taiwan's beloved street food are masterfully incorporated, resulting in a remarkable and distinctive expression of Taiwanese bistronomy.



4. Beef noodles are one of the most representative delicacies of Taipei. | 5. In the afternoon, you can have the famed Wenzhou Street Radish Pancake for a snack. (Photo • Kerstin Hsu) | 6. Traditional ice dessert shops have a wealth of ingredients that can be freely mixed and matched. (Photo • Lydia Chin) | 7. Cantonese Style Crispy Roast Goose is the signature dish of Le Palais. (Photo • Le Palais)



8

Japanese cuisine in Taipei is also of an exceptionally high standard. Of the 35 MICHELIN-starred restaurants in Taipei in 2023, eight are dedicated to Japanese cuisine. In particular, Sushi Nomura (鮨野村) excels at edomae nigiri-zushi (江戸前壽司), earning a well-deserved one-star status for six consecutive years. Meanwhile, Ken Anho (謙安和) embraces a minimalist Japanese aesthetic in both its decor and culinary offerings. On the other hand, Mudan Tempura (牡丹), which elevated from one star to a two-star Michelin restaurant this year, presents an understated yet refined tempura menu that captivates diners with its exquisite flavors.

Indulge in the richness of Chinese cuisine at the acclaimed Cantonese restaurant Le Palais (頤宮), a six-time MICHELIN three-star winner. Be sure to pre-order their signature dish — Cantonese Style Crispy Roast Goose Course (火焰片皮鵝) — an absolute must. For Taiwanese delicacies, Shin Yeh Taiwanese Signature (欣

葉·鐘菜), also MICHELIN-starred, offers a delectable array of local dishes in a cozy, family-style dining environment. And for a taste of the opulence of the 1930s, Mountain & Sea House (山海樓), having won both MICHELIN star and MICHELIN Green star, offers a fine dining experience reminiscent of a bygone era.

## 21:30 Night Market

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Don't hurry back to your hotel just yet. Visit the vibrant and bustling night markets and try out all that they have to offer. This part of your gourmet expedition is not to be missed! Raohe (饒河), Ningxia, Shilin (士林), and Linjiang/Tonghua (臨江/通化) are some of the most famous night markets in Taiwan. Even at 10 pm, these busy markets remain vibrant, with irresistible aromas wafting from the various street food vendors lining the streets. Food lovers will find iconic Taiwanese snacks such as stinky tofu (臭豆腐), oyster

omelette (蚵仔煎), pork intestine vermicelli (大腸麵線), Taiwanese popcorn chicken (鹽酥雞), *luwei* (滷味) (Taiwanese braised dishes), fried chicken cutlet, and the ever-popular bubble tea.

## 23:00 Bars

As the night deepens, Taipei becomes even more enchanting, providing a haven for sake, wine, whiskey, craft beer, and cocktail enthusiasts. In recent years, the city's innovative cocktail scene has garnered international acclaim, and the renowned Indulge Bistro has consistently secured a spot in Asia's 50 Best Bars. This year, the British-inspired The Public House made its debut on the prestigious list. For those intrigued by old-fashioned charm, WOSOM ASW Tea House (沃森茶酒館) on the second floor of the historical Watson's Pharmacy (屈臣氏大藥房) building in Dadaocheng (大稻埕) comes highly recommended. Its vintage, nostalgic setting and Taiwan's *tê sio-tsiú* (茶燒酒) (tea-infused spirits) promise a unique and delightful taste of Taipei's nighttime allure.

## 02:00 Midnight Snack

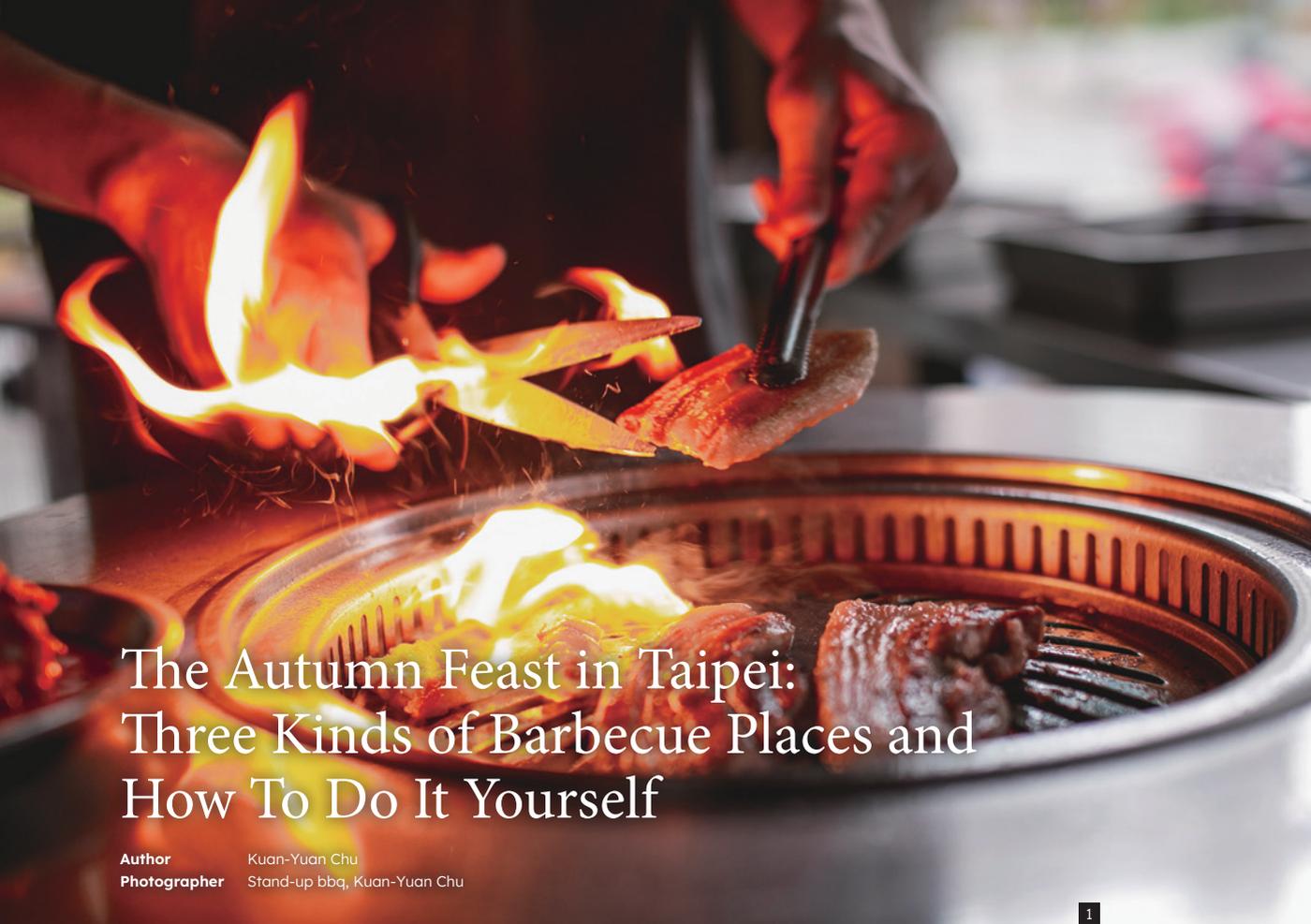
Hungry again after a round or two at the bar? Xiaolizi Rice Porridge (小李子清粥小菜) on Fuxing South Road (復興南路) is open from 5 pm to 6 am, with nearly 100 kinds of side dishes to choose from. Hong Soy Milk King (洪記豆漿大王), Ruian Soy Milk King (瑞安豆漿大王) and Fu Te Cold Noodle (福德涼麵) are affordable options at your disposal around the clock.

And this is how Taipei keeps you fed and happy. As a matter of fact, Taiwan's convenience stores always have an array of delectable options readily available. From classic tea eggs, hot dogs, and oden, to a variety of coffee choices, as well as Chinese and Western-

style food boxes made in collaboration with renowned restaurants, the selection is bound to impress. The sheer assortment of snacks and food offerings at these convenience stores goes beyond what one can imagine. Whatever you're craving, Taipei has you covered with a delightful array of treats at your fingertips. Ⓢ



**8.** There are always a variety of food stalls in the night market to choose from. (Photo • Lydia Chin) | **9.** There are many specialty bars where you can go for a drink and experience the nightlife in Taipei. (Photo • Lydia Chin) | **10.** A porridge and side dish restaurant, open from evening to early morning, is the best place to go for a late-night snack.



# The Autumn Feast in Taipei: Three Kinds of Barbecue Places and How To Do It Yourself

**Author**  
**Photographer**

Kuan-Yuan Chu  
Stand-up bbq, Kuan-Yuan Chu

1

When autumn arrives, barbecue with loved ones while watching the full moon during the Mid-Autumn festival has long been a must-do for people in Taipei.

There are various theories regarding the start of this trend, such as the influence of ubiquitous advertisements of barbecue sauces that first aired in the 1970s, or the widespread sales of barbecue grills to local people due to the manufacturers' failure to export them overseas.

No matter what is behind this unique phenomenon, having a barbecue with loved ones is one thing Taiwanese people of all walks of life can agree on.

As an international, cosmopolitan city, barbecue from a variety of cultures can be spotted throughout

Taipei. In this article, we introduce three distinct styles. Additionally, tips and recipes for handmaking barbecue are also included so you too can enjoy the process of making a festival feast.

## Mongolian Barbecue — Dagebi Mongolian Barbecue (大戈壁蒙古烤肉)

Described by CNN as one of the world's best kinds of barbecues in 2017, it can be confusing that Mongolian barbecue was actually invented in Taiwan, and the way it is cooked is distinct from many other kinds of grilled barbecues.



1. People often use scissors to cut into the meat when grilling to judge whether the meat is done or not. (Photo • Stand-up BBQ) | 2. Unlike other kinds of barbecue, the Mongolian version is cooked on a large, flat metal surface. | 3. The “Taiwanese” Mongolian barbecue in Dagebi is a must-have in Taipei.

It is said the first Mongolian barbecue stand was opened in 1951 by Wu Zhaonan (吳兆南), a crosstalk artist known for performing the traditional Chinese comedy. Interestingly, this cuisine is only loosely related to Mongolia. Wu was actually inspired by the barbecue style of his hometown, Beijing, and thus wished to call it “Beijing barbecue.” However, due to the political sensitivity surrounding China’s capital, Wu named it “Mongolian barbecue” instead.

Mongolian barbecue is actually similar to Chinese stir-fry and Japanese teppanyaki, the two cooking styles that it is believed to be influenced by. It is cooked on a circular flat metal surface, while the chefs quickly use their wooden chopsticks to stir fry sliced meat, vegetables and sauces.

Dagebi is an institution standing in the center of Taipei, serving Mongolian barbecue in a way that customers can appreciate the chefs’ refined skills. The chefs elegantly move their chopsticks on the trademark metal surface, creating a scene that brings satisfaction even before the appetizing aromas waft into the air.



If you are dazzled by the variety of ingredients, the restaurant recommends an easy recipe for everyone: one spoon of all sauces, or simply go with their special sauce whose recipe is a chef's exclusive. Mongolian barbecue offers a selection of meats including beef, chicken, pork, pork belly, and lamb. There's also a variety of ingredients for customization, such as noodles, scallions, onions, greens, tofu, bean sprouts, enoki mushrooms, carrots, pickled tomatoes, and more.

## Japanese Barbecue — Yakikon Japanese Yakinku (大阪焼肉焼魂)

When it comes to Japanese barbecue, the Tiaotong (條通) area near Section 1, Zhongshan North Road (中山北路一段) surely has plenty to provide, as it is one of the most popular places for Japanese people in Taipei. Established by the Japanese founder Miyazawa

Hirotake (宮澤寛竹), Yakikon Japanese Yakinku provides customers with an authentic Japanese dining environment. The decorations and atmosphere are delightful, while the hospitality of the staff, with their loud, energetic welcome, draws people into a heartwarming experience around the flaming grills.

Amongst their main serving which is beef, one of their signatures, harami (diaphragm) with spring onions, is highly recommended. The harami are roasted to a stage wherein the outside is crispy while the inside is medium-cooked. Then, a generous portion of spring onions is spread on the meat. The tender meat compliments the spring onions which in turn keep the dish from taking on an overly oily texture.

The ribs-in-pot is especially satisfying and delicious as well. The ribs are seasoned with miso, thus endowed with a wonderfully sweet taste after being cooked to medium-well.



4. Yakikon Japanese Yakinku is an authentic Japanese barbecue in the Tiaotong area of Taipei.



5. The beef hanging tender in Stand-up BBQ can't be beat, perfectly marinated and delicious. (Photo • Stand-up BBQ)

As an Osaka-style Japanese barbecue joint, the variety of beef organs is also an advantage that makes Yakikon Japanese Yakinku stand out from the crowd. The artery and the superior stomach (the first stomach) of the cow are really unique and tasty here. Both provide a strong taste of beef, while the artery is crisp and the stomach is pleasantly chewy.

## Korean Barbecue — Stand-Up BBQ (新村站 著吃烤肉)

As the first branch of the landmark Seoul-based BBQ restaurant Yeonnam Seo Sikdang, Stand-up BBQ guarantees to bring customers a taste of the Korean tradition's iconic standing barbecue over an oil barrel grill.

In the vibrant restaurant, a variety of side dishes are placed in the Korean convenience store-style

refrigerator, adding a scene of Korean daily life to the dining experience. Kimchi and seaweed are recommended, while rice, lettuce and seaweed sheets are also fine compliments to balance the oily meal.

Their recommended dish is the beef hanging tender, imported from the same Australian ranch as it is in the original Korean restaurant. After being marinated in their own authentic Korean barbecue sauce, the hanging tender is roasted on the oil barrel grill. The marinating process also adds some Korean-style sweet and salty flavor to it. It's just plain tasty, hands down.

The Iberian pork is also a must-try. Different from the beef, the pork is not marinated, and salt is provided instead.

The cheerful atmosphere, the Korean dishes, the popular soju that comes in many flavours, and the vibrant drinking events have helped this 70-year-old Korean landmark thrive in Taipei.



6. Standing around the oil barrel to dine is the specialty of Stand-up BBQ. (Photo • Stand-up BBQ)

## Taiwanese Barbecue — Do It Yourself

Setting up your own grills and having a Taiwanese barbecue is also a popular choice in Taipei. Zack Lin, owner and professional barbecue chef of grill bar Moubu (夢婆炭火小酒館) shares some tips regarding DIY barbecue.

### Prep Work

When it comes to DIY barbecue, how to make a proper fire under the grill is a task that requires special skill.

A simple DIY grill and charcoal can be bought at any chain supermarket. Beside the traditional lighter and tinder, Zack also recommends a blowtorch as it is especially handy when making a fire.



### BUTTER GOLDEN NEEDLE MUSHROOM (奶油金針菇)

Ingredients: Golden needle mushroom, butter, black pepper, salt, garlic and other preferred spices.

1. Use aluminum foil to make a bowl, or just buy disposable ones.
2. Cut the brown part of the mushroom, and put the butter, black pepper, salt, garlic, and other spices in.
3. Put the wrap on the grill for 10 minutes.



### CLAM LUFFA (蛤蜊絲瓜)

Ingredients: Luffa, clams, beer (or other alcohol), salt and other seafood if preferred.

1. Use aluminum foil to make a bowl, or just buy disposable ones.
2. Clean the clams and the seafood, put them in with the luffa.
3. Put as much beer (or other alcohol) as you want, then put some salt in it.
4. When all the ingredients (especially seafood) are cooked after 15 minutes, enjoy!

The charcoal should be put beneath the grill with a size of around 3 × 8 to 10 centimeters, and they should be placed into the shape of a tower and layered as one would when playing a game of Jenga. This way, the oxygen can get through the tower while the heat will spread evenly.

The charcoal should be heated until it turns red. After the base of the tower turns red, it should be broken down evenly so the burning charcoal can spread the heat to the rest of the pieces.

## During the Barbecue

Here Zack provides one interesting way to determine the heat degree of the grill. Simply put your palm 10 centimeters above it and see how long you can endure. If you can stand it for three seconds, the grill has a strong heat. If you are able to put your palm above it for five to seven seconds, this indicates a medium heat, while ten seconds is a low heat. To regulate the heat, take some burning red charcoal out of the grill or slowly, slightly water it. Then, according to your needs, put in more burning charcoal to raise the heat.

For grilling meat, a strong heat is recommended. To barbecue a perfect slice of beef, the tip is mainly grilling one side without turning it. When the upward facing side is full of juice, then turn the meat to the other side with just a slight touch of heat, and the beef is ready to eat!

Medium and small heat is great for some ingredients that are unique to Taiwanese barbecue like Tempura (甜不辣) or pig's blood cake (豬血糕). A stick can be used here to see if they are ready to eat. Poke the stick in to feel the texture. When the outside is crisp and the inside is soft, it is set to enjoy. Remember to use some Taiwanese barbecue sauce while grilling! ◆



7. Additional items to enhance the Taiwanese barbecue experience.



► Barbecue Joints in  
Taipei Riverside Parks

### Dagebi 大戈壁蒙古烤肉

**ADD** 3F, 152, Songjiang Rd.,  
Zhongshan Dist.  
**HOURS** 11:00am – 3:30pm  
5:00pm – 9:00pm

### Yakikon Japanese Yakinku (Linsen) 大阪燒肉燒魂 (林森本店)

**ADD** 132, Sec. 1, Xinsheng N. Rd.,  
Zhongshan Dist.  
**HOURS** Sun. to Mon. 5:30pm – 0:00am  
Tue. to Sat. 5:30pm – 2:00am

### Stand-up BBQ 新村站著吃烤肉

**ADD** 159, Sec. 5, Zhongxiao E. Rd.,  
Xinyi Dist.  
**HOURS** Sat. to Sun. 11:30am – 1:00am  
Mon. to Thu. 11:30am – 3:00pm  
5:00pm – 1:00am  
Fri. 11:30am – 3:00pm  
5:00pm – 2:00am



# A Journalist's Journey: Unraveling Taipei's Complexities and Charms

Author  
Photographer

Chieh-Li Yen  
Alice Herait, Kerstin Hsu, Chieh-Li Yen

In September 2022, CNN expanded its operations to Taipei by inaugurating a new bureau to spearhead their coverage in the region. This move highlights the evolving landscape of globalization, with Taiwan assuming a crucial role for the news platform.

Taipei, known for its elevated standards of news freedom, and bolstered by its distinctive geographical location, has not only enticed CNN to establish a base here, but has also attracted numerous other international journalists in recent years. Their presence reflects a collective aspiration to capture firsthand information within Asia's dynamic and ever-changing political environment. In this edition, we feature an insightful conversation with Alice Herait, a French freelance journalist who has called Taipei home for the past four years.

## From Chinese Studies to International Relations

Alice's academic background in International Relations paved the way for her journey as a journalist, specializing in politics across Asia with a keen focus on Taiwan, China, and the broader region. As a freelance journalist, Alice contributes to different media such as *FRANCE 24*, *LE FIGARO*, and *HKFP* (*Hong Kong Free Press*). She sometimes works as a fixer for TV programs as well, where she mediates between the programs and journalists. When asked about the genesis of her interest in Asian politics, she recounts a moment during her high school days when she decided to take up Chinese classes out of her interest in learning a new language —



“It began as a simple desire to learn a new language, yet it gradually propelled me onto an unforeseen journey into the realm of journalism.”

In 2012, Alice ventured to Beijing, China, immersing herself in a two-month Chinese studies program. It was her first solo journey to Asia, a place far away from her home in Paris. Reflecting on that transformative experience, she candidly shares, “I was just 19 years old at the time; the cultural shock overwhelmed me, to say the least.”

Her unwavering passion for Chinese studies and language remained undiminished, serving as the catalyst that ultimately kindled her interest in exploring Taiwan. In 2019, Alice’s aspirations came to fruition when she arrived in Taipei as an exchange student, enrolling in the Chinese Literature program at National

Taiwan University. Coincidentally, it was during this time that she had encounters with professional journalists, sparking a shift in her academic journey, prompting her to switch her major to International Relations.

## Taiwan’s Unique “Codes” and Security

Reflecting on her experience in Taipei, Alice remarks, “I didn’t encounter as many cultural shocks compared to my time in Beijing.” However, she astutely observed that there were differences in communication styles between Taiwanese and French people. She explains, “While interacting with my Taiwanese classmates, I struggled at times due to both the language barrier and differing approaches to handling disagreements.”

1. Alice Herait chose her favorite quiet spot, Ecole Cafe, to chat with us. (Photo • Kerstin Hsu) | 2-3. Alice likes to roam around Showa-cho Antique Market. (Photo • Kerstin Hsu & Chieh-Li Yen)





“In Taiwan, there’s a cultural tendency to avoid conflicts or express dissent openly,” Alice further elaborates. “Taiwanese people have other ways of saying things that we as Westerners don’t necessarily understand.” This inclination also extended to Alice’s work experience in Taiwan. She observes, “In France, people are generally outspoken and unafraid to express their opinions, even with strangers. Thus, it was quite challenging for me to gauge their true opinions when faced with disagreements.”

However, after residing in Taipei for four years, she gained a deeper comprehension of the cultural codes and assimilated some of these traits. As a result, she now finds herself adopting a more relaxed and less defensive approach when engaging in conversations back in Paris.

Another thing that shocked Alice about Taipei was the exceptional level of security. “The security measures in Taiwan are truly unparalleled,” she says. She recounts an incident where she forgot her phone at a bank,

only to return an hour later and discover her phone exactly where she had left it. She emphasizes that such incidents were not isolated occurrences, but rather a common phenomenon in Taiwan.

## A Journalist’s Perspective and Discovery of Taipei

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Having done numerous interviews and reports, ranging from Taiwan’s military service to her travel experiences, Alice shares that most media are willing to report on the political situation and it is the subject that most French media are interested in regarding Taiwan. From her perspective, she believes a lot of other aspects, and in particular things that are related to Taiwan’s identity, are worthier to report. “I am writing an article for the French newspaper *Le Monde*

*Diplomatique* on the narrative war between those who still believe in the ROC, and those who dream of a country named Taiwan.” She emphasizes that when it comes to talking about the history of Taiwan, the two sides have totally different versions of facts. When asked about her thoughts on Taiwan being labeled as “The most dangerous place on Earth” by *The Economist*, Alice says that “I think the goal was to convey a message to the world that a major conflict could rise here; not to say that Taiwan is a dangerous place to live,” she pauses. “On the other hand, Taipei always gives me a vibe that we live in probably one of the safest places in the world.”

Alice has moved through various areas over the past four years. Her first home was by Linsen North Road (林森北路), an area known for its numerous bars and bustling nightlife. Later, she lived in the vicinity of Zhongshan Elementary School (中山國小). Currently, she resides near Guting (古亭), which has become her favorite area in Taipei.

Living in one of Taipei’s most diverse areas, Alice has developed an appreciation for Guting’s greenery, antique stores, and cozy coffee shops. As a freelancer, she often chooses to work at cafés in her area, with RoastTing Coffee (烘焙者咖啡) being one of her favorites, thanks to its delightful patio space. Ecole Cafe (學校咖啡館) is another coffee shop she enjoys, and in fact is where she chooses to conduct our interview.

Apart from coffee shops, Alice likes to roam around Showa-cho Antique Market (昭和町市集) in the area. She candidly admits, “I never buy anything, but I just like looking at them.” Yet, when it comes to shopping, Alice’s preferences shift towards the traditional wet market, where she indulges her passion for cooking Taiwanese cuisine from scratch.

Outside of work, Alice engages in outdoor activities such as hiking, practicing yoga in Daan park, and leisurely walks. When asked about her favorite spot in Taipei, she recommends Jinmianshan (金面山, Mt. Jinmian) located in Neihu. “It’s a hidden gem,” Alice shares with a smile, “less crowded with tourists, yet it offers a challenging hike with well-maintained trails and safety ropes alongside,” she adds. “Taiwan is the best place to hike.” Alice also relishes the experience of hiking around Maokong (貓空) and Wulai (烏來), each offering its own unique charm and natural beauty.

Among the local culinary delights, Alice recommends Baxian Grill (八仙炭烤), which has been a popular spot among foreigners in Taipei, herself included, as she enjoys the vibrant atmosphere at Taiwanese *rè chǎo* (熱炒) establishments. Moreover, her personal favorite is Jinjiang Tea House (晉江茶堂)—a Hakka restaurant. “It’s definitely the spot I would take my friends and family to when they visit Taipei,” she says. This includes her parents who are soon to be visiting her in Taipei. Alice’s profound appreciation for Taipei’s natural beauty, cultural treasures, and delightful culinary scene reflects the genuine love she has developed for this alluring city she now calls home. ◆



4-5. Alice’s favorite hiking spot in Taipei — Mt. Jinmian. (Photo • Alice Herait)

# TRAVEL INFO

## METRO TAIPEI

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

### METRO TICKETS



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



**DAY PASS**  
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**24HR PASS**  
NT\$180



**48HR PASS**  
NT\$280



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### IC CARDS

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



EasyCard



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## TAIPEI CITY BUS

### TICKET PRICE

**Adult:** NT\$15, regardless of using cash or an EasyCard  
**Student:** NT\$15 when paying cash; NT\$12 when using an EasyCard (Student ID required)  
**Child under 115cm or under six years old:** Free (ID required)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Taipei eBus**  
ebus.gov.taipei

## YOUBIKE

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



To register, please check [youbike.com.tw/region/taipei/register/](http://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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Taipei 101 +  
National Palace Museum  
14-Day Valid  
NT\$950



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

## TRAVEL INFORMATION SERVICES

**Tourism Bureau, 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

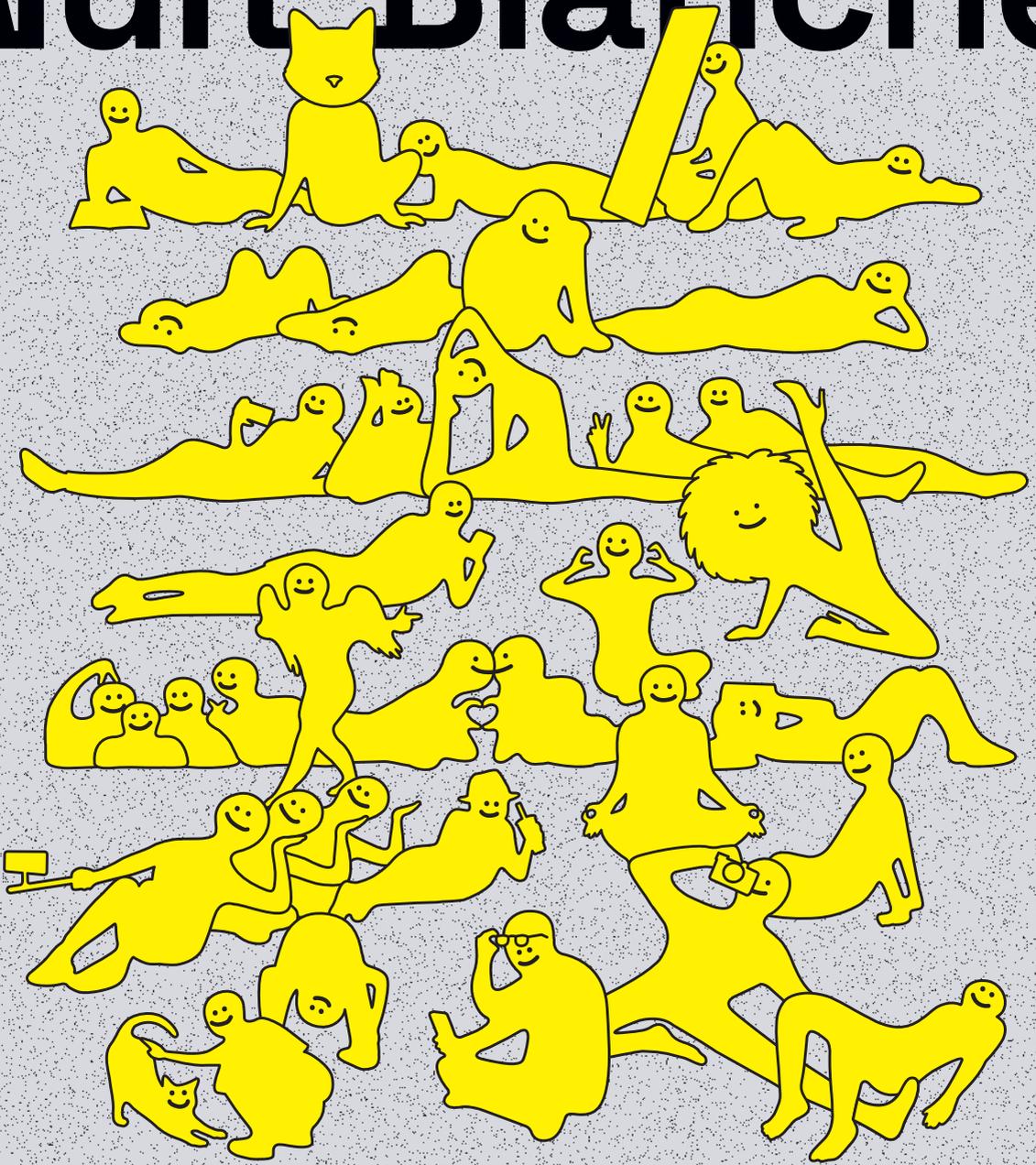


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Taiwan bamboo-partridge

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