

2023-2024

TAIWAN

at a Glance



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Published by Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Republic of China (Taiwan)

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# Taiwan Snapshot

Official name Republic of China (Taiwan)

National Flag 

National Flower Plum blossom

Area (Taiwan and outlying islands) 36,197 square kilometers

Population 23.3 million (June 2023)

Ethnicity Over 95 percent Han people (including Holo, Hakka and other groups that originated in China), 2.5 percent Indigenous Malayo-Polynesian peoples, 2.5 percent new immigrants, primarily from China and Southeast Asia

Government Multiparty democracy

President Tsai Ing-wen (until May 20, 2024)  
Lai Ching-te (since May 20, 2024)

Capital Taipei City

Special municipalities Taipei, New Taipei, Taoyuan, Taichung, Tainan, Kaohsiung cities

National currency New Taiwan dollar (NT\$ or TWD)

Languages Mandarin (Chinese), Holo (Taiwanese), Hakka, Austronesian languages

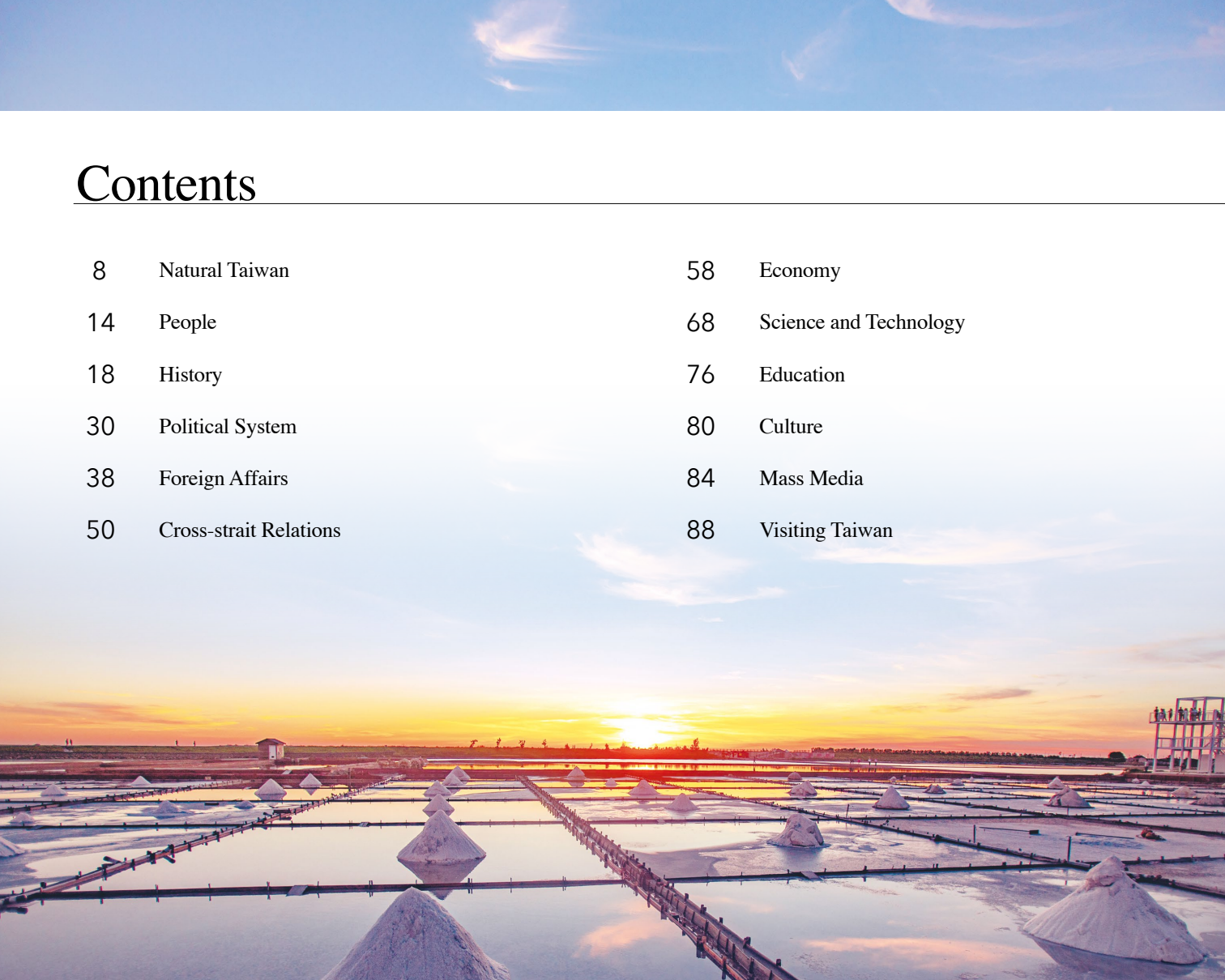
Major religions Buddhism, Taoism, I-Kuan Tao, Chinese folk religions, Christianity, Islam



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Geological formations shaped by the forces of nature at Yehliu Geopark in northern Taiwan's New Taipei City (Chin Hung-hao)

# Natural Taiwan

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## Fact Focus

Taiwan's Jade Mountain is the highest peak in East Asia. Around 20 percent of the country's land area is protected.

The Republic of China (Taiwan) is situated in the West Pacific between Japan and the Philippines. Its jurisdiction extends to the archipelagoes of Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, as well as numerous other islets. The total area of Taiwan proper and its outlying islands is around 36,197 square kilometers. At about the size of the Netherlands, but with a population of some 23

## Snapshot



Land area :

**36,197** square kilometers

Length of Taiwan: **394** kilometers

Width of Taiwan: **144** kilometers

Agricultural land : **7,900** square kilometers



Highest peak :



**Jade Mountain**  
(3,952 meters)

**18°C**

January

Average  
temperature

**22°C**

**29°C**

July

million, Taiwan is more populous than three-quarters of the world's nations. Taiwan proper has more than its fair share of natural splendor. Mountain ranges with many peaks reaching over 3,000 meters—including East Asia's highest, Jade Mountain (Yushan)—and forested foothills occupy more than half of its area. The island also features volcanic mountains, tablelands, coastal plains and basins. The Diaoyutai Islands, which lie northeast

of Taiwan, and a number of islands in the South China Sea, including those in the Dongsha (Pratas), Nansha (Spratly), Xisha (Paracel) and Zhongsha (Macclesfield Bank) islands, are also part of the territory of the ROC.

Sitting in the path of warm ocean currents off the east coast of continental Asia, Taiwan proper is uniquely blessed with a wide range of climatic zones from tropical to temperate. This, in combination with fertile soil and abundant rainfall, makes it an agricultural paradise where virtually any kind of fruit or vegetable can be cultivated. It also makes the island a recreational

A Mikado pheasant forages in the undergrowth at Alishan National Scenic Area in southern Taiwan's Chiayi County. (Lin Min-hsuan)





wonderland. In the winter, one can watch the snow fall on the slopes of Hehuan Mountain in Nantou County and then travel a mere 200 kilometers to balmy Pingtung County to enjoy skin diving at coral reefs along the island's southern tip.

The smaller islands, meanwhile, have their own unique natural features, such as the columnar basalt on the Penghu Islands and the marine hot springs along the shores of Green Island and Guishan Island.

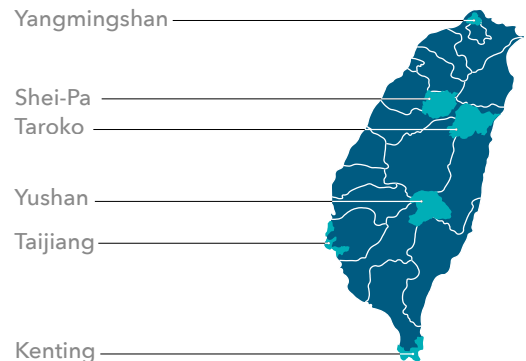
### Flora and Fauna

Taiwan's tropical-to-temperate spectrum of climatic zones and wide range of topographies have endowed the island with a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Some 121 species of mammals, 702 species of birds, 118 species of reptiles, 43 species of amphibians, 401 species of butterflies and 2,956 species of fish are known to inhabit Taiwan. The island's plant life comprises 791 species of ferns, 5,645 species of angiosperms and 107 species of gymnosperms. To protect the ecosystems in which these plants and animals reside, the government has reserved about 20 percent of the nation's land area as protected areas, comprising nine national parks and one national nature park, 22 nature reserves for special ecosystems, six forest reserve areas, 21 wildlife refuges and 39 major wildlife habitats.

Among the most famous Taiwan species of fauna is the Formosan landlocked salmon (*Oncorhynchus masou formosanus*). The fish is believed to have become trapped in the frigid mountain waters of central Taiwan

during the last ice age when ocean levels dropped dramatically and the salmon could no longer migrate back and forth between fresh water and salt water. To protect the endangered species, the Formosan Landlocked Salmon Refuge was established in the upper reaches of the Dajia River in Shei-Pa National Park.

### National Parks



Members of Taiwan's Indigenous tribes perform an Amis dance in front of the Presidential Office as part of National Day celebrations. (Courtesy of Presidential Office)



## People

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### Fact Focus

There are 16 officially recognized Indigenous tribes in Taiwan. The nation is home to over 580,000 new immigrants, most of whom hail from China and Southeast Asia.

While Taiwan may be described as a predominantly Han Chinese society, with more than 95 percent of the population claiming Han ancestry, its heritage is actually much more complex. The successive waves of Chinese immigrants that began arriving in the 17th century belonged to a variety of subgroups with mutually unintelligible languages and different

customs. Today in Taiwan, however, distinctions between them have become blurred as a result of extensive intermarriage and the universal use of Mandarin. Taiwan is a multicultural society comprising diverse Han subgroups, as well as Indigenous Malayo-Polynesian peoples and immigrants from all over the world. Recent years, for example, have seen an influx of new arrivals from China and Southeast Asia, mostly through marriage. Currently, the number of new immigrants is over 580,000.

There is growing appreciation in Taiwan for the cultural legacies of the 16 officially recognized Austronesian-speaking tribes, which constitute a little more than 2.5 percent of the population. Public and private organizations are making efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures, as illustrated by the launch of Taiwan Indigenous Television and the passage of the Indigenous Peoples Basic Act.

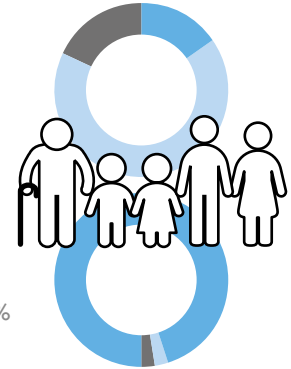
This convergence and interplay of currents of humanity in Taiwan have helped transform it into an open-hearted, forward-looking society that has incorporated diverse elements of civilization from around the world in a distinctive and harmonious manner.

## Snapshot

Population: **23,373,283** (June 2023)

Population structure :

- 0-17 years: 15.41%
- 18-64 years: 66.67%
- 65 and above: 17.92%



Ethnicity :

- Han Chinese: 95%
- Indigenous peoples: 2.5%
- New immigrants: 2.5%

Crude birth rate (2022): **5.96** (per 1,000 people)

Crude death rate (2022): **8.89** (per 1,000 people)

Life expectancy (2022): **79.84** years

Male: **76.63** years

Female: **83.28** years



Tainan Confucius Temple in the southern Taiwan city dates back to 1665. (Pang Chia-shan)



## History

### Fact Focus

Dutch and Spanish settlers established bases in Taiwan in the early 17th century. Around 1.2 million people relocated from China to Taiwan along with the Republic of China (Taiwan) government in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The ROC was founded in 1912 in China. At that time, Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule as a result of the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, by which the Qing ceded Taiwan to Japan. The ROC government began exercising jurisdiction over Taiwan in 1945 after Japan surrendered at the end of World War II.

The ROC government relocated to Taiwan in 1949 while fighting a civil war with the Chinese Communist Party. Since then, the ROC has continued to exercise effective jurisdiction over the main island of Taiwan and a number of outlying islands, leaving Taiwan and China each under the rule of a different government. The authorities in Beijing have never exercised sovereignty over Taiwan or other islands administered by the ROC.

## Historical Timeline

The following timeline focuses on Taiwan's recorded history dating from about 400 years ago, although it has been home to Malayo-Polynesian peoples for many millennia.

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**1500s** It is commonly believed that European sailors passing Taiwan record the island's name as Ilha Formosa, or beautiful island.

Taiwan continues to experience visits by small numbers of Chinese merchants, fishermen and pirates.

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**1624** The Dutch East India Company establishes a base in southwestern Taiwan, initiating a transformation in aboriginal grain production practices and employing Chinese laborers to work on its rice and sugar plantations.

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**1626** Spanish adventurers establish bases in northern Taiwan but are ousted by the Dutch in 1642.

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**1662** Fleeing the Manchurian conquest of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Ming loyalists under Zheng Cheng-gong, or Koxinga, drive out the Dutch from Taiwan and establish authority over the island.

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**1683** Qing dynasty (1644-1912) forces take control of Taiwan's western and northern coastal areas.

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**1885** Taiwan is declared a province of the Qing Empire.

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**1895** Following defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), the Qing government signs the Treaty of Shimonoseki, by which it cedes sovereignty over Taiwan to Japan, which rules the island until 1945.

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**1911-1912** Chinese revolutionaries overthrow the Qing Empire and establish the ROC.

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**1943** During World War II, ROC leader Chiang Kai-shek meets with U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in Cairo. After the conclusion of the conference, the Cairo Declaration is released, stating that "...Formosa [Taiwan], and the Pescadores [the Penghu Islands], shall be restored to the Republic of China..."

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**1945** The ROC, U.K. and U.S. jointly issue the Potsdam Declaration, calling for Japan's unconditional surrender and the carrying-out of the Cairo Declaration.

After World War II, ROC government representatives accept the surrender of Japanese forces in Taiwan. The Chief Executive of Taiwan Province Chen Yi sends a memorandum to the Japanese

governor-general of Taiwan, stating that “As the Chief Executive of Taiwan Province of the ROC, ...I restore all legal territory, people, administration, political, economic, and cultural facilities and assets of Taiwan [including the Penghu Islands].”

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**1947** The ROC Constitution is promulgated Jan. 1 and is scheduled to take effect Dec. 25. In March and the following months, ROC troops dispatched from China suppress a large-scale uprising of Taiwan residents sparked by the February 28 Incident.

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**1948** As full-scale civil war rages in China between the Kuomintang-led ROC government and CCP, the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion are enacted, overriding the ROC Constitution and greatly expanding presidential powers. This begins the period of White Terror that lasts until 1991 when the Temporary Provisions are lifted.

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**1949** The ROC government relocates to Taiwan, followed by 1.2 million people from China.

Oct. 25 sees the Battle of Kuningtou on Kinmen, in which the ROC armed forces defeat the CCP on the northwestern coast of the island.

Martial law is declared in Taiwan and continues to be in force until 1987.

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**1952** Following the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan signed by 48 Allied nations on behalf of the United Nations, the Treaty of Peace is signed between the ROC and Japan at Taipei Guest House, formally ending the state of war between the two parties. It is recognized that under Article 2 of the San Francisco Treaty, Japan has renounced all right, title, and claim to Taiwan (Formosa) and Penghu (the Pescadores) as well as the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands. All treaties, conventions and agreements concluded before Dec. 9, 1941, between China and Japan become null and void as a consequence of the war.

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**1954** The ROC-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty is signed in Washington.

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**1958** Aug. 23 sees the start of an artillery duel between the ROC garrison on Kinmen and Chinese forces that lasts more than 40 days.

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**1966** The first Export Processing Zone is established in Kaohsiung City, southern Taiwan. The creation of such zones propels Taiwan toward becoming a developed nation, setting a paradigm for other countries to follow.

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**1968** The nine-year compulsory education system is launched at a time when fewer than nine countries globally have compulsory education systems of this length or more.

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**1971** On Oct. 25, the United Nations General Assembly passes U.N. Resolution 2758 recognizing the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the only legitimate representative of China to the global body. The ROC withdraws from the U.N.

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**1979** Democracy activists demonstrating in Kaohsiung are arrested and imprisoned following what is known as the Kaohsiung Incident, which eventually leads to the formation and development of the Democratic Progressive Party in 1986.

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**1987** Martial law, in effect since 1949, ends, and bans on the formation of new political parties and news publications are lifted. Democratization goes into high gear.

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Cross-strait people-to-people exchanges begin.

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**1991** The Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion are abolished. A complete re-election of all congressional representatives, including members of the Legislature and National Assembly, takes place from 1991 to 1992, giving the people of Taiwan full representation. From 1991 through 2005, the ROC Constitution undergoes seven rounds of revision.

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Taiwan becomes a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

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**1992** Government-authorized representatives from across the Taiwan Strait meet for the first time in Hong Kong, and via subsequent communication and negotiations, arrive at various joint acknowledgements and understandings.

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**1995** The National Health Insurance program begins. The February 28 Incident Disposition and Compensation Act goes into effect.

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**1996** The ROC holds its first-ever direct presidential election, with the KMT's Lee Teng-hui and running mate Lien Chan garnering 54 percent of the vote.

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**2000** Chen Shui-bian and Annette Hsiu-lien Lu of the DPP are elected president and vice president, ending the KMT's more than 50-year rule and marking the first transfer of ROC government executive power in Taiwan between political parties.

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**2002** Taiwan becomes a member of the World Trade Organization.

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Two national defense laws based upon the principle of unifying military policymaking and command are officially enforced on March 1. New subordinates of the Ministry of National Defense are established and organized with regulations to carry out the task of "nationalization of the armed forces."

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**2003** The Legislative Yuan passes the Referendum Act, providing a legal basis for citizens to vote directly on issues of local or national importance.

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**2004** The first national referendum is held in conjunction with the third direct presidential election, in which Chen and Lu are re-elected.

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**2005** The Legislative Yuan passes a constitutional amendment package, halving the number of its seats from 225 to 113 and introducing the single-district, two-votes system for legislative elections.

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**2008** Ma Ying-jeou and Vincent C. Siew of the KMT are elected president and vice president of the ROC, marking the second transfer of ROC government executive power in Taiwan between political parties.

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**2009** Taiwan attends the World Health Assembly as an observer, marking its first participation in an activity of the U.N. since its withdrawal in 1971.

President Ma signs the instruments of ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

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**2010** The ROC inks the Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with China to institutionalize economic and trade relations across the Taiwan Strait.

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**2011** The centennial of the ROC is celebrated in Taiwan.

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**2012** Incumbent Ma Ying-jeou and his new running mate Wu Den-yih, representing the KMT, win the election for president and vice president.

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**2013** Taiwan signs an agreement on economic cooperation with New Zealand and an agreement on economic partnership with Singapore.

Taiwan attends the 38th session of the International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly as the guest of the council's president.

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**2014** Mainland Affairs Council Minister Wang Yu-chi holds a formal meeting with China's Taiwan Affairs Office Director Zhang Zhijun in Nanjing in February, marking the first official contact between the heads of the respective government agencies responsible for cross-strait relations.

Sunflower Movement protesters occupy the Legislature to oppose the passing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement, preventing its passage.

A record 11,130 candidates are elected nationwide for nine categories of local government representatives in what are known as the "nine-in-one" local elections.

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**2015** President Ma and Chinese leader Xi Jinping meet in Singapore in November, marking the first top-level meeting between the two sides in 66 years.

Taiwan signs the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement and submits its instrument of acceptance to the organization.

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**2016** DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen and academic Chen Chien-jen are elected president and vice president of the ROC.

The DPP gains its first legislative majority after securing 68 of the 113 seats.

President Tsai Ing-wen officially apologizes on behalf of the government to the nation's Indigenous peoples for the pain and mistreatment they endured for centuries.

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**2017** The Indigenous Languages Development Act is enacted to preserve and promote the native tongues of Taiwan's 16 officially recognized Indigenous tribes.

Taiwan hosts the Taipei 2017 Summer Universiade.

FORMOSAT-5, the nation's first homegrown ultra-high resolution Earth observation satellite, is launched.

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**2018** Taiwan's Transitional Justice Commission is inaugurated May 31. President Tsai issues an apology to victims of political persecution during the country's White Terror period from 1949 to 1991 following the commission's decision to expunge their criminal records.

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**2019** A special law legalizing same-sex marriage is passed, making Taiwan the first country in Asia to allow LGBT unions.

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**2020** Tsai Ing-wen and running mate Lai Ching-te of the ruling DPP party win the 2020 presidential election. The DPP retains its legislative majority.

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**2022** The MND establishes Jan. 1 an All-out Defense Mobilization Agency for the purpose of utilizing military reserves and assisting with all related activities and affairs.

The Ministry of Digital Affairs is established Aug. 27 to facilitate the development of related industries and coordinate the overall planning of digital governance and infrastructure.

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**2024** Lai Ching-te and Hsiao Bi-khim of the DPP are elected president and vice president of the ROC (Taiwan). It is the first time a party has held the office for three consecutive terms since Taiwan began direct presidential elections in 1996.

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The historic Presidential  
Office Building in Taipei City  
(Pang Chia-shan)



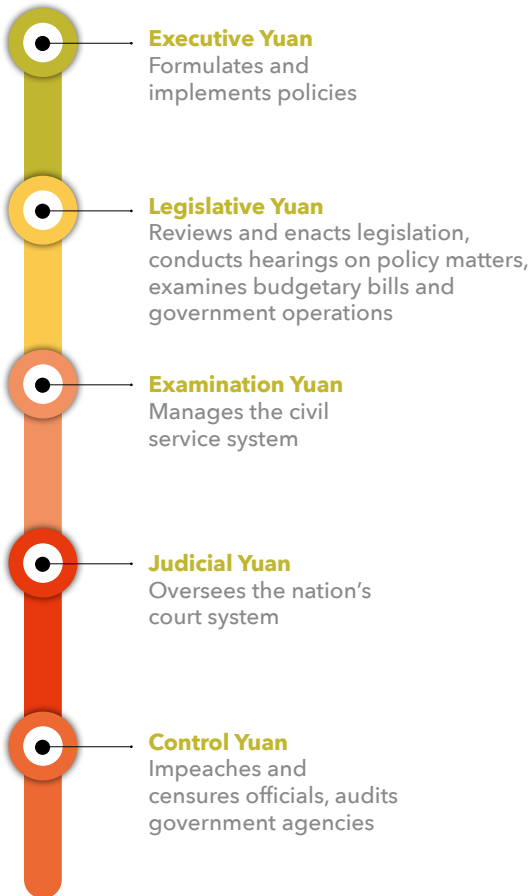
## Political System

### Fact Focus

The ROC president and vice president are directly elected every four years. In Taiwan's legislative elections, each voter casts one ballot for their district and another for at-large seats.

The ROC Constitution, promulgated Jan. 1, 1947, did not begin to serve its intended purpose as the foundation for democratic governance and rule of law until after 1987, when martial law was lifted in Taiwan. Since then, it has undergone seven rounds of revision in 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2000

## Five Branches of the Central Government



and 2005 to make it more relevant to the country's contemporary conditions.

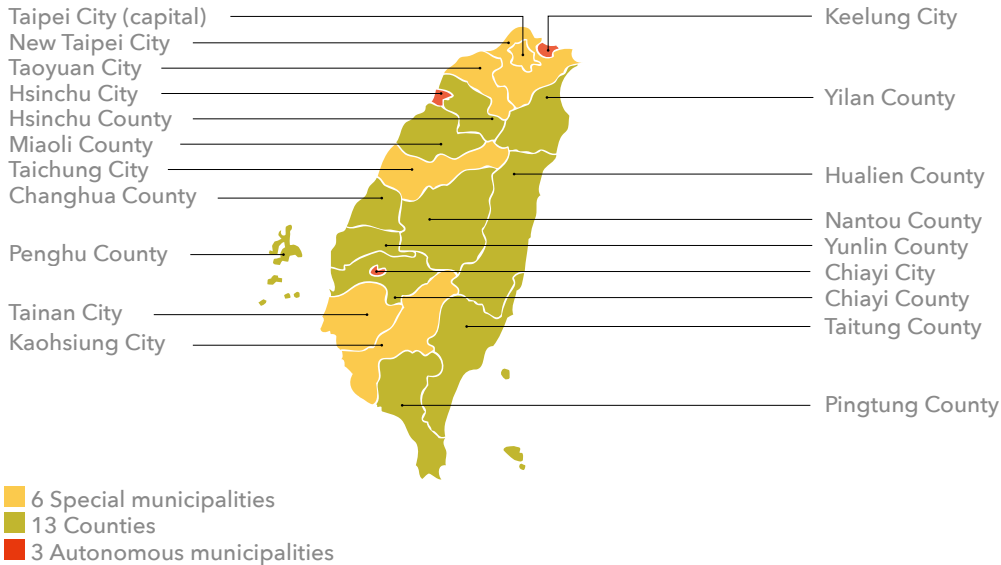
One of the important consequences of these amendments is that since 1991, the government has acknowledged that its jurisdiction extends only to the areas it controls. The president and legislators, therefore, are elected by and accountable to the people of those areas only.

In accordance with constitutional amendments promulgated in June 2005, the number of seats in the Legislative Yuan was halved from 225 to 113 and legislators' terms were increased from three to four years. Under the new legislative election system, each electoral district elects just one seat. Each voter casts two ballots—one for the district and the other for at-large seats. The power to ratify constitutional amendments is now exercised by citizens through referendums.

### Levels of Government

The central government comprises the presidency and five major branches, or yuans. The local governments at present include those of six special municipalities, 13 counties and three autonomous municipalities with the same hierarchical status as counties. Beginning in 2014, all heads and representatives of local governments are popularly elected simultaneously in cities and counties across Taiwan every four years. In addition, there are 198 county-administered townships and cities, as well

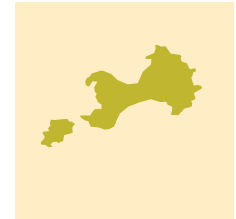
## Local Administrative Regions



Lienchiang County



Kinmen County



as 170 districts—including six Indigenous mountain districts—in autonomous and special municipalities.

Special municipalities are top-level administrative entities that fall under the direct jurisdiction of the central government. They play an important role

in leading regional development. This status gives access to greater funding and the opportunity to set up additional agencies and employ more civil servants. The six special municipalities are, in order of population, New Taipei, Taichung, Kaohsiung, Taipei, Taoyuan and Tainan cities.

## Presidency and Premiership

The president and vice president are directly elected, serve terms of four years and may be re-elected for one additional term. The president is head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces, represents the nation in foreign relations and is empowered to appoint heads of four branches of the government, including the premier, who leads the Executive Yuan, or Cabinet, and must report regularly to the Legislative Yuan, or Legislature. The heads of ministries, commissions and agencies under the Executive Yuan are appointed by the premier and form the Executive Yuan Council. To improve administrative effectiveness, the Executive Yuan is undergoing restructuring to reduce the number of Cabinet-level organizations from 37 to 30.

After the reorganization, which commenced at the start of 2012, the Executive Yuan will consist of 14 ministries, nine councils, three independent agencies and four other organizations. Under the ROC Constitution, neither the president's appointment of the premier nor the premier's appointment of ministers is subject to legislative confirmation.

Presidential appointment of the members of the Control Yuan and the Examination Yuan, as well as justices of the Judicial Yuan, must be confirmed by the Legislature. Lawmakers elect the president of the Legislature, or speaker, from among their ranks.

## Political Parties

Given the key role of the presidency in the overall functioning of the government, the term "ruling party" denotes which political party occupies the Presidential Office. The Kuomintang held the presidency in Taiwan for more than five decades before the Democratic Progressive Party won the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. The KMT returned to power in 2008 and in 2012. The DPP won the 2016, 2020 and 2024 presidential elections, the first time a party has stayed in power for three consecutive terms since the country's democratization.

In the January 2024 legislative election, the KMT gained 52 of the 113 seats, while the DPP secured 51, the Taiwan People's Party took eight and independents two.





President Tsai Ing-wen gives King Mswati III from the Kingdom of Eswatini a red-carpet welcome at the Presidential Office.

(Courtesy of Presidential Office)

# Foreign Affairs

### Fact Focus

A total of 172 countries and territories accord visa-free, landing visa or e-visa privileges to Republic of China (Taiwan) passport holders. Taiwan is the only nation included in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program that does not maintain formal diplomatic relations with the United States.

The ROC is a sovereign and independent state that maintains its own national defense and conducts its own foreign affairs. As enshrined in the ROC Constitution, the country aims to “cultivate good-neighborliness with other nations, and respect treaties and the Charter of the U.N. ... promote international cooperation, advance international justice and ensure world peace.” The

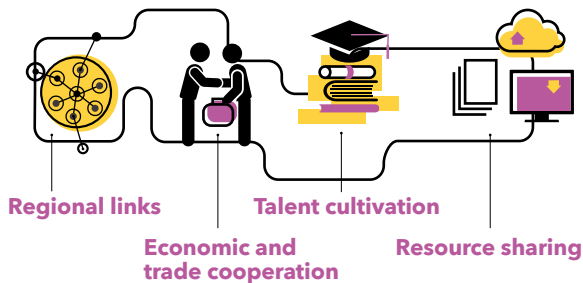
ultimate goal of the country's foreign policy is to ensure a favorable environment for the nation's preservation and long-term development.

The government is committed to its approach of steadfast diplomacy, which aims to advance mutual assistance for mutual benefits. The policy is also defined as firm in purpose and is targeted at building robust relationships with diplomatic allies and countries that share the common values of freedom and democracy. Under this approach, the focus of the country's diplomatic work is shifting from the one-way provision of foreign aid to two-way dialogue, with bilateral cooperation projects taking into consideration the development of both industries and markets.

Under President Tsai Ing-wen's New Southbound Policy, Taiwan is also striving to broaden exchanges with the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, six South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand on economic and trade cooperation, talent cultivation, resource sharing and regional links. The long-term goal is to create a new type of cooperation based on shared benefits.

The ROC (Taiwan) has official relations with diplomatic allies and substantive ties with many others such as Australia, Canada, EU nations, Japan, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S. President Tsai made diplomatic visits to Paraguay and Panama in 2016; Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu in 2017; the Kingdom of Eswatini,

## | New Southbound Policy |



Paraguay and Belize in 2018; and Palau, Nauru, the Marshall Islands, Haiti, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and St. Lucia in 2019.

In September and December of 2021, President Tsai delivered special video messages respectively commemorating the bicentennial of Central America's independence and marking the 30th anniversary of the Central America Integration System.

From March 29-April 7, 2023, President Tsai visited allies Guatemala and Belize under the theme of Meeting Democratic Partners, Fostering Shared Prosperity. The trip demonstrated Taiwan's determination to expand exchanges and cooperation with allies. From Sept. 5-8 the same year, President Tsai visited the Kingdom of Eswatini on her Celebrating Enduring Friendship,

Advancing Sustainable Cooperation tour to mark 55 years of independence for the African nation, the 55th birthday of H.M. King Mswati III and 55 years of bilateral ties.

## International Participation

Taiwan has full membership in 45 intergovernmental organizations and their subsidiary bodies, including the World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, World Organisation for Animal Health and Central American Bank for Economic Integration. It also enjoys observer or other statuses in 28 IGOs and their subsidiary bodies, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and committees of both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Central American Integration System. In light of Taiwan's robust capital market and pivotal position in Asia, the Central American Bank of Economic Integration opened an office in Taiwan on July 6, 2021, becoming the first new branch to be opened outside of Central America and deepening Taiwan's participation in regional integration outside the Indo-Pacific.

Taiwan will, while upholding national sovereignty and dignity and advancing the welfare of the people, engage with the international community pragmatically and professionally to contribute wherever possible. To this end, it seeks meaningful participation in intergovernmental organizations and mechanisms such as the World Health Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and International Criminal Police

Organization to safeguard and contribute to humanity and the welfare of all humankind. These efforts have won the staunch support of diplomatic allies and like-minded countries.

## Strong Relations

As of May 31, 2023, 172 countries and territories have accorded visa-free, landing visa or e-visa privileges to ROC (Taiwan) passport holders. Taiwan has also inked working holiday agreements with 17 countries.

Notably, among the 40 countries included in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program, Taiwan is the only one that does not maintain formal diplomatic relations with the United States, highlighting the otherwise close relationship between the two sides. The Taiwan Relations Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 1979, has continued to provide a strong foundation for Taiwan-U.S. cooperation in the absence of formal diplomatic ties. The U.S. has repeatedly reiterated its security commitments to Taiwan under the TRA and the Six Assurances. In 2018, the Taiwan Travel Act was passed unanimously by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by then U.S. President Donald J. Trump. This legislation encourages visits by officials at all levels from the two sides, underscoring the strong support for Taiwan from the executive and legislative branches of the U.S. government. In 2020, the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act (TAIPEI Act) was also passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law, expressing U.S. support for Taiwan's diplomatic alliances around the world and Taiwan's participation in international organizations. In

2021, the Biden administration reiterated the country's commitment to Taiwan, issuing new guidelines for U.S. government interactions with Taiwan counterparts to encourage greater engagement. Subsequently, the U.S. House of Representatives signed the National Defense Authorization Act for 2023 into law and passed the NDAA for 2024. The acts incorporate policies and initiatives to aid Taiwan in bolstering its self-defense capabilities and play a key role in maintaining regional security. As Taiwan and the U.S. continue to expand the breadth of their cooperation, their bilateral partnership has grown into one of global cooperation.

The ROC (Taiwan) and the Holy See have long-standing diplomatic relations, marking the 81st anniversary of official ties in 2023, and possess a shared commitment to religious freedom and humanitarian relief. In line with Pope Francis' call to end the wars and promote lasting peace, Taiwan has collaborated with the Holy See to assist areas impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and provide essential goods to affected Ukrainians. Taiwan will continue to be an indispensable partner to the Holy See and like-minded countries in their efforts as they work to foster love, charity and world peace.

Likewise, Taiwan and the EU, together with other European countries, have developed close cooperation and exchanges across numerous fields. Taiwan and the EU have strengthened their robust and vibrant economic and trade ties, and the two sides are increasing cooperation in up-and-coming sectors such as green energy, new technologies, digital

transformation and supply chain restructuring. Taiwan and the EU are also expanding cooperation in the field of human rights. Through the annual Taiwan-EU Human Rights Consultations, both sides are working together on topics of mutual concern and interest, including gender equality, LGBTI rights and migrant worker rights. In October 2021, the European Parliament adopted a report on EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation for the first time, followed by a resolution on the situation in the Taiwan Strait in September 2022.

Taiwan and Japan continue to enjoy strong ties, as demonstrated by the renaming of their respective representative offices to incorporate "Taiwan" in 2017. Thus, Taiwan's Association of East Asian Relations became the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association, and the Japan Interchange Association became the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association. In Japan's 2020 Diplomatic Bluebook, Taiwan is classified as an extremely important partner, while Japan is an unwavering advocate for Taiwan's international participation as well as a staunch promoter of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

With the mutual support during the pandemic, the two countries overcame the challenges and created a virtuous cycle. In 2021, over 4.2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine donations from Japan contributed substantially to raising overall vaccination coverage in Taiwan. In return, Taiwan donated masks, oximeters, medical oxygen generators and other medical devices to Japan.



The strength of Taiwan and Japan's trade relations is evident in the annual economic and trade conference as well as the biannual economic partnership committee, which both recommenced in 2022 after hiatuses. The two countries additionally held their annual meetings on maritime affairs in May 2023 and explored opportunities for further collaboration in scientific research and maritime security.

In November 2015, Taiwan and the Philippines concluded the Agreement Concerning the Facilitation of Cooperation on Law Enforcement in Fisheries Matters to safeguard the security of fishermen from both sides.

On July 19, 2016, President Tsai put forth four principles and five actions pertaining to issues in the South China Sea. The four principles are: Firstly, disputes in the South China Sea should be settled peacefully in accordance with international law and the law of the sea, including the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. Secondly, Taiwan should be included in multilateral mechanisms aimed at resolving disputes. Thirdly, states concerned have an obligation to safeguard freedom of navigation and overflight in the region. Lastly, disputes should be resolved by setting aside differences and promoting joint development. Through negotiations conducted on the basis of equality, Taiwan is willing to work with all states concerned to advance peace and stability in the South China Sea, and to jointly conserve and develop resources in the region. The five actions encompass safeguarding the country's fishing rights, participating in multilateral consultations, promoting

scientific cooperation, conducting humanitarian assistance and rescue operations and nurturing experts in the law of the sea.

The government is working to transform Taiping Island in the Nansha (Spratly) Islands into a base for humanitarian aid and supplies in the South China Sea. Since assuming responsibility in 2000 for maintaining the government's presence on Taiping Island as well as the Dongsha (Pratas) Islands, the Coast Guard Administration under the Cabinet-level Ocean Affairs Council has continued to carry out disaster response and humanitarian aid missions and assisted individuals from home and abroad. The CGA is committed to deepening collaboration with its counterparts from neighboring countries in line with the government's policy of working with all relevant parties to advance peace and stability in the South China Sea.

With an area of 0.51 square kilometers, Taiping Island has full capacity to sustain human habitation and an economic life of its own. It meets the criteria of an island as defined in Article 121 of the UNCLOS, affording the ROC full rights associated with territorial waters, a contiguous zone, a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone and a continental shelf under the UNCLOS.

### **Win-Win Cooperation**

As a model citizen in global society, Taiwan will continue to promote humanitarian aid and disease control while actively participating in international efforts to tackle

climate change, terrorism and transnational crime. Going forward, the nation will build lasting partnerships with allied and like-minded countries through fostering governmental interactions, business investments and people-to-people exchanges, and work with its partners around the world to uphold and promote the universal values of peace, freedom, democracy and human rights.

The Global Cooperation and Training Framework established in 2015 serves as an important platform for Taiwan, the U.S., Japan, Australia and other like-minded partners to jointly organize training programs attended by officials and experts from around the world. Over the years, the initiative has helped numerous countries build capacity in nearly 20 prominent fields, including public health, law enforcement, cybersecurity, energy security, media literacy, women's empowerment, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. GCTF continues to expand in terms of participating countries and the range of issues addressed.

Taiwan's reaction to the coronavirus pandemic, featuring high-tech contact tracing and transparent sharing of information, is now known globally as the Taiwan Model. Its success, as well as donations of masks and other medical supplies to over 80 countries, has opened the door for the country to collaborate closely with natural allies on coronavirus vaccine development and studies.

Widely celebrated for saving lives and strengthening the global response to COVID-19, the Taiwan Model was tested by the largest domestic outbreak of

coronavirus of the pandemic. A swift response from all segments of society—supported by a virtuous circle of vaccine donations from home and abroad—saw Taiwan stage a successful COVID-19 fightback. Buoyed by this backing, Taiwan will continue to bolster cooperation with like-minded countries on public health so as to curb the pandemic and safeguard Health For All.

Changes in society, economic liberalization and democratic transformation in Taiwan have created a fertile environment for the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations have flourished. Civil society today plays a key role in ensuring good governance and enabling Taiwan to exert its soft power in the international community. NGOs have raised Taiwan's profile by engaging in various international cooperation projects closely aligned with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. To better connect Taiwan's NGOs to the world, the government is devoted to helping them participate in international conferences and events while building their overall capacity. The government is also committed to facilitating INGOs in their efforts to establish a presence in Taiwan, providing a more enabling environment for the further promotion of democracy, freedom, human rights and prosperity.



The Straits Exchange Foundation in Taipei City manages cross-strait technical and business affairs. (Chin Hung-hao)

# Cross-strait Relations

## Fact Focus

President Tsai Ing-wen's four commitments:

- The commitment to a free and democratic constitutional system;
- The commitment that the ROC (Taiwan) and the PRC should not be subordinate to each other;
- The commitment to resist annexation or encroachment upon our sovereignty;
- The commitment that the future of the ROC (Taiwan) must be decided in accordance with the will of the Taiwanese people.

Since the government relocated to Taiwan in 1949, it has exercised jurisdiction over Taiwan proper, Penghu Islands, Kinmen Islands, Matsu Islands and a number of smaller islands, while China has been under the control of the authorities in Beijing. Beginning with the acceleration of Taiwan's democratization in the late 1980s, many restrictions concerning civil exchanges

with China have been lifted. Today, Taiwan is one of the biggest investors in China. Between 1991 and the end of December 2022, approved investment in China comprised 45,195 cases totaling US\$203.33 billion. In 2022, the value of cross-strait trade was US\$205.11 billion.

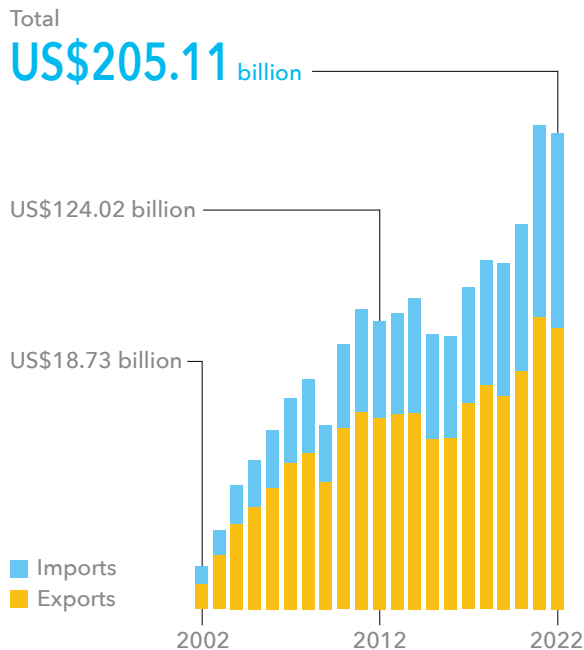
In June 2008, institutionalized talks between Taiwan's semiofficial Straits Exchange Foundation and China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits resumed after a 10-year hiatus. By August 2015, 11 rounds of negotiations had been held alternately on either side of the Taiwan Strait, producing 23 formal agreements, of which 21 have come into effect, and two consensuses. Most significant among the accords is the Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement concluded in June 2010, which aims to institutionalize trade and economic relations between Taiwan and China.

### Peace and Stability

In order to promote thorough domestic reforms, the country requires a peaceful and stable external environment, especially with regard to relations with China. President Tsai Ing-wen, since taking office May 20, 2016, and following her reelection in 2020, has worked to build a consistent, predictable and sustainable cross-strait relationship based on existing realities and political foundations.

The government's unchanged position is to maintain the cross-strait status quo. This is Taiwan's commitment

## Cross-strait Trade



Source: Customs Administration, Ministry of Finance

to the region and the world. Peace, prosperity and development in Asia are common responsibilities of all countries in the region. Therefore, cross-strait issues are connected to regional peace. Taiwan will fulfill its responsibilities of safeguarding regional security by continuing to extend goodwill and maintaining stable, consistent and predictable cross-strait relations.



In recent years, however, China has set political preconditions for cross-strait exchanges, unilaterally suspended official interactions, and continuously exerted political suppression and military coercion on Taiwan. On Jan. 2, 2019, China proposed exploration of the “one country, two systems” model for Taiwan, disrupting the status quo of regional peace and stability. In the face of China’s increasingly aggressive political agenda, President Tsai put forth guidelines March 11, 2019, aimed at strengthening national security measures, safeguarding national sovereignty and ensuring current and future generations have the right to decide Taiwan’s future. The Legislature also passed the Anti-Infiltration Act, which took effect on Jan. 15, 2020.

In 2022, Nancy Pelosi, then speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, visited Taiwan, and the following year President Tsai met with the subsequent House speaker, Kevin McCarthy. In the wake of both events, the Chinese authorities ramped up pressure on Taiwan through intensified political interference and military threats along with economic coercion and other gray zone tactics.

In light of geopolitical tensions, the government has been updating the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area. Amendments passed to date have established an oversight mechanism for cross-strait political agreements and adjusted fines for unauthorized Chinese investment. Articles were also amended to

tighten restrictions on travel to China by anyone who possesses or has access to key national security-related technologies and was commissioned by or received a research grant from the government, as well as to strengthen regulations preventing Chinese enterprises from conducting unpermitted business activities in Taiwan via third party investment.

As part of Taiwan’s COVID-19 pandemic response, the government implemented border restrictions on Chinese citizens entering Taiwan. These measures have since been relaxed to address humanitarian concerns, industrial needs and education rights, allowing Chinese citizens to come to Taiwan for family visits, to comply with contractual business obligations as part of internal personnel transfers within multinational enterprises, and to attend academic exchange or degree programs in Taiwan. Moving forward, the government will continue to review and adjust its policies in accordance with the latest international, regional and cross-strait developments.

The government will consider the development of the cross-strait situation in accordance with the principles and directions of President Tsai’s cross-strait policy. It will listen to voices from all sectors of society, strengthen management mechanisms for cross-strait exchanges, improve democracy and security defense mechanisms and coordinate with the relevant authorities to conduct amendments of laws and regulations when necessary. This is intended to promote positive cross-strait interactions and

maintain normal and orderly exchanges between the two sides.

## Consistent Approach

The government will continue to address cross-strait ties based on the ROC Constitution, the Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area, and the will of the people.

In addition, the government calls upon the authorities in China to face up to the reality that the ROC exists and that the people of Taiwan have an unshakable faith in the democratic system. President Tsai presented the “four commitments” on her National Day address in 2021, namely the commitment to a free and democratic constitutional system, the commitment that the ROC and the PRC should not be subordinate to each other, the commitment to resist annexation or encroachment upon our sovereignty, and the commitment that the future of the ROC (Taiwan) must be decided in accordance with the will of the Taiwan people. These commitments are supported by the mainstream public opinion in Taiwan and represent the bottom line we are determined to safeguard.

In her National Day address on Oct. 10, 2022, President Tsai emphasized the need to enhance Taiwan’s resilience in the four key areas of economy and industry, social safety net, free and democratic governance, and national defense in order to

strengthen the country’s ability to safeguard freedom and democracy at home and abroad.

China is encouraged to embrace President Tsai’s call for “peace, parity, democracy and dialogue,” thus fostering positive interactions that truly serve the well-being of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. As long as the Beijing authorities are willing to resolve cross-strait antagonism and improve cross-strait relations, Taiwan is willing to jointly promote meaningful dialogue on the basis of parity and dignity. Taiwan also looks forward to the gradual resumption of normal and orderly exchanges between the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait when the pandemic is brought under control. Lastly, the government will continue deepening cooperation with the U.S., Japan and other like-minded countries to counter China’s threats to Taiwan, promote regional peace, stability and prosperity, and protect the nation’s interests.



Taiwan has the world's highest density of precision manufacturing hubs constituting complete industrial supply chains. (Chin Hung-hao)

## Economy

### Fact Focus

Taiwan was the world's 17th largest exporter of merchandise in 2022. Under the New Southbound Policy, Taiwan is deepening ties across the board with the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, six South Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand.

Taiwan holds an important position in the global economy. It is a top player in the world's information and communications technology industry as well as a major supplier of goods across the industrial spectrum.

According to the World Trade Organization, Taiwan was the 17th largest exporter and importer of merchandise

in 2022. It was also one of the largest holders of foreign exchange reserves as of December 2022. According to the International Monetary Fund, Taiwan's gross domestic product per capita reached US\$32,756 in 2022. In terms of nominal GDP, Taiwan ranks close to Poland and Switzerland, while its GDP per capita expressed as purchasing power parity is similar to that of the Bahamas and South Korea.

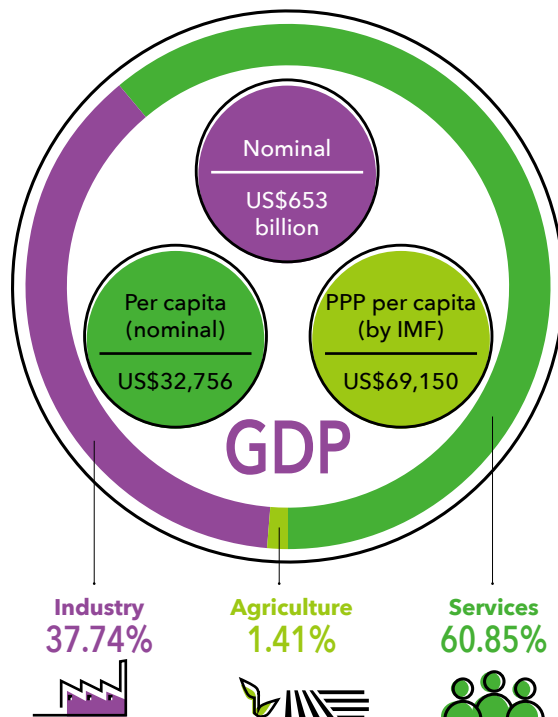
### Trade Growth

In 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic eased, global economic activity gradually returned to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, the global economy benefitted from emerging technology and digital transformation business opportunities. Although the second half of the year was affected by the slowdown in the global economy, Taiwan's annual import and export figures still hit record highs, with a total value of US\$907.4 billion, for an increase of 9.6 percent. Specifically, Taiwan's exports and imports increased 7.4 percent and 12.1 percent, respectively.

Annual surveys of the world's economies, including those conducted by the International Institute for Management Development and Business Environment Risk Intelligence have ranked Taiwan among the top nations year after year with respect to long-term growth and technological development. Results announced in 2023 were no exception (see table "Global Survey Rankings" p. 66-67).

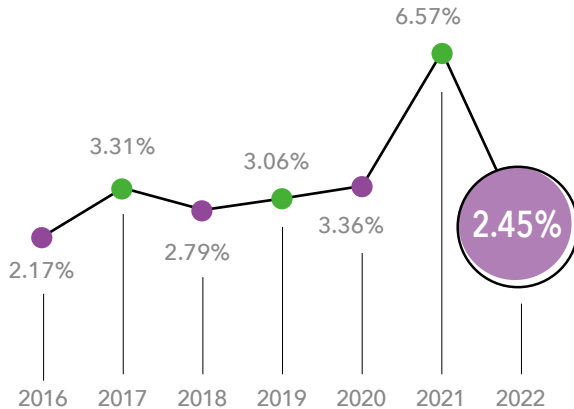
In July 2013, Taiwan signed an economic cooperation agreement with New Zealand, its first with a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. An economic partnership accord was also inked with Singapore in November the same year,

### | GDP Snapshot (2022) |





## Economic Growth Rates



Source: Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics

marking Taiwan's first such pact with a trading partner in Southeast Asia. Both agreements exceed WTO commitments. Developments like these are expected to facilitate Taiwan's participation in regional economic integration blocs such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Taiwan and the U.S. held the third Taiwan-U.S. Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue in November 2022 and signed the first agreement under Taiwan-U.S. Initiative on 21st-Century Trade in June 2023. Taiwan also signed economic cooperation agreements

with Paraguay, the Kingdom of Eswatini and Belize in 2017, 2018 and 2020, respectively. These agreements are aimed at strengthening economic, investment, technological and trade ties while enhancing friendship with the three countries.

## Development Approaches

In 2016, the Taiwan government launched a new industrial development policy to expedite transformation and upgrades. This policy was the Five Plus Two Industrial Innovation Plan and became the key factor in driving industrial growth in next-generation smart machinery, Asian Silicon Valley, biotech & pharmaceuticals, green energy, national defense, new agriculture and circular economy.

In 2020, building on previous policies, six core strategic industries were identified to link the Investing in Taiwan's Three Major Plans of 2019. These were: information and digital, cybersecurity, precision health, national defense and strategy, green and renewable energy, and strategic stockpile industries. These will enhance Taiwan's overall industrial development and create a better investment environment for sector transformation and upgrades.

The government is also promoting the Forward-looking Infrastructure Development Program to meet national infrastructure needs over the next 30 years. This program contains eight major elements: railway development, digital infrastructure, aquatic environments, food safety, green energy, urban-rural

## Trade and Investment Profile (2022)

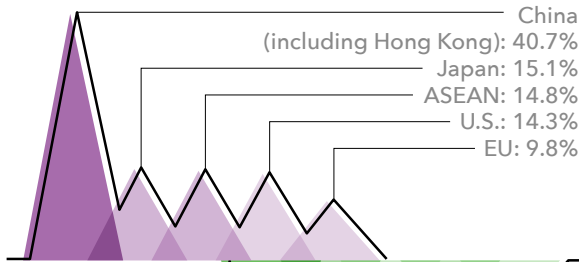
Total trade volume: US\$907.4 billion

Exports: US\$479.4 billion

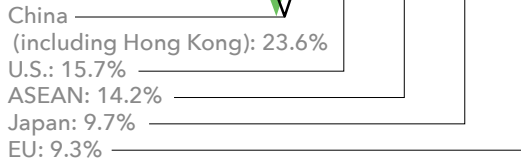
Imports: US\$428 billion

Trade balance: US\$51.4 billion surplus

### Top export destinations:



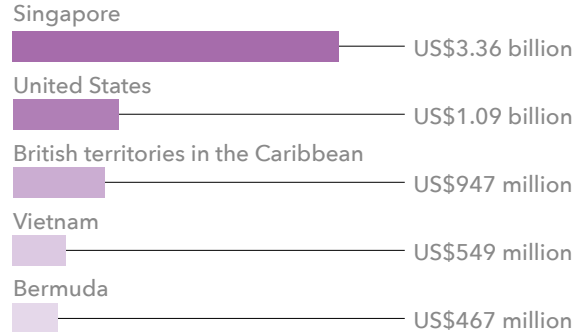
### Top import sources:



Foreign exchange reserves: **US\$554.9 billion**  
(As of December 2022)

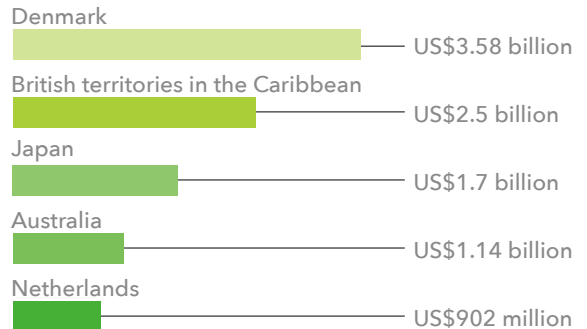
Registered outward investment: **US\$9.96 billion**

### Top five destinations



Registered inward investment: **US\$13.3 billion**

### Top five sources



## Global Survey Rankings

| Topic of Survey (Date of Publication)            | Rank | Countries Surveyed | Surveying Institution                  |
|--|------|--------------------|--|
| World Competitiveness Yearbook (June 2023)       | 6    | 64                 | Institute for Management Development   |
| Profit Opportunity Recommendation (January 2023) | 14   | 50                 | Business Environment Risk Intelligence |
| Index of Economic Freedom (February 2023)        | 4    | 184                | The Heritage Foundation                |

development, boosting birthrates and childcare facilities, and nurturing talent and employment.

As it works to advance innovative industries, the government is also committed to protecting the environment. With this in mind, the new economic model seeks to fully integrate industrial restructuring, national land-use planning and regional growth strategies to foster sustainable development while promoting the use of green energy resources.

To respond to the challenges of the post-pandemic global economy in 2023, the government passed the “Special Act for Enhancing Post-pandemic Economic and Social Resilience and National Sharing Economy Achievement” with a budget of US\$125 billion, which will help reduce financial burdens, stabilize consumer prices, restructure the industrial sector and maintain economic momentum.

Under this approach, the government aims to raise wage levels and enhance regional development while mitigating the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the prolonged U.S.-China trade war. Measures are expected to improve industrial competitiveness and further bolster Taiwan’s economy.



# Science and Technology

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## Fact Focus

Taiwan is one of the world's leading producers of information and communications technology products. International Institute for Management Development ranked Taiwan 6th out of 64 economies in the World Competitiveness Yearbook released in June 2023.

To realize the government's Smart Taiwan 2030 vision, which aims to "Make Taiwan Innovative, Inclusive and Sustainable," the National Science and Technology Council is strengthening cooperation with other ministries as it works to better understand the needs of the country's diverse populace, integrate innovative technologies into everyday life and open

Visitors enjoy an immersive exhibition at Future Vision Lab in eastern Taiwan's Hualien Cultural and Creative Park. (Chen Mei-ling)

up opportunities for new eco-friendly industries. With science and technology serving as a key driver of economic growth and national progress, the NSTC strives to advance related development by nurturing startups, promoting the nation's three science parks and supporting academic research. It also implements a range of measures and programs to foster creativity and ensure research focuses on the needs of industry.

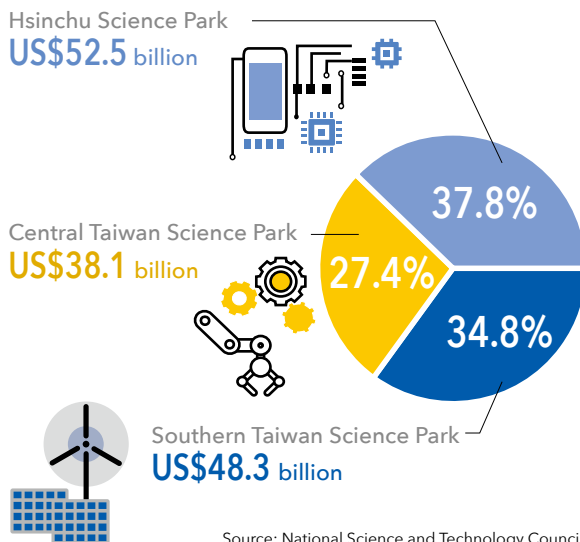
The success of Taiwan's high-tech enterprises is largely attributable to the government's generous funding of applied scientific development. With government support, the Industrial Technology Research Institute, National Applied Research Laboratories and Institute for Information Industry all played important roles in jump-starting the nation's rise as a technological powerhouse by conducting research, aiding the private sector with R&D and exploring new technologies.

### Supporting Innovation

ITRI's expertise in technological innovation is best illustrated by its remarkable award achievements. Over the past 15 years, it has garnered 50 esteemed R&D 100 Awards, along with 12 Edison Awards since 2017 and seven Clarivate Top 100 Global Innovator recognitions since 2015. The Institute has also played a pivotal role in nurturing companies that have achieved significant success in the global market. Among them are Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC) and United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC), renowned as leading custom integrated circuit chipmakers worldwide.

Hosting seven national research centers covering four major areas of environment technology, information and communications technology, biomedical technology and S&T policies, National Applied Research Laboratories seeks to establish R&D platforms, support academic research, promote frontier science and technology and cultivate high-tech talents. NARLab's Taiwania supercomputers drive national scientific research and connect with industry.

### Turnover of firms in Taiwan's three major science parks (2022)



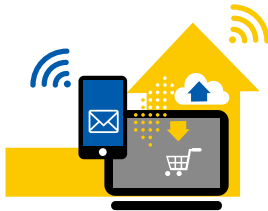


In 2022, Taiwan served over 6,000 users, logged more than 18 million hours of weighted service time, and supported more than 1,800 research projects. Its users have published over 900 academic papers in the fields of physics, chemistry, mathematics, atmospheric science, engineering, and life science, helping to achieve many breakthroughs.

The goal of III is to boost Taiwan's global competitiveness by providing a platform for digital transformation. The institute conducts R&D on innovative ICT products and applications. It also plays a key role in advancing ICT development in the public and private sectors by serving as a think tank on related policymaking and promoting talent cultivation. Over

## Six Core Strategic Industries

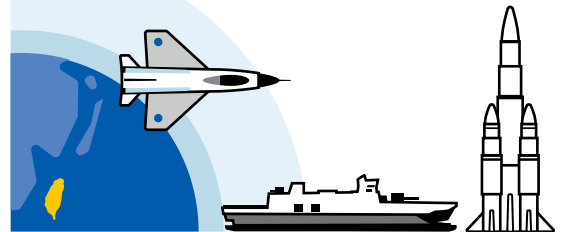
### Information and Digital Industries



### Cybersecurity Industry



### National Defense and Strategic Industries



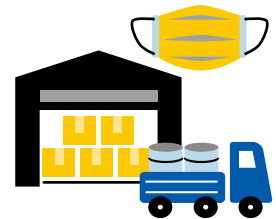
### Precision Health Industry



### Green and Renewable Energy Industry



### Strategic Stockpile Industries



## Global Survey Rankings

| Topic of Survey<br>(Date of Publication)                | Rank<br>(category)  | Countries Surveyed | Surveying Institution                   |
|---|---|--------------------|---|
| Global Competitiveness<br>Report 2019<br>(October 2019) | <b>4</b><br>(innovation capability)   | <b>141</b>         | World Economic Forum                    |
| 2023 World<br>Competitiveness<br>Yearbook (June 2023)   | <b>8</b><br>(technological infrastructure)<br><b>5</b><br>(scientific infrastructure) | <b>64</b>          | Institute for Management<br>Development |

the past four decades, more than 500,000 professionals have received training through ILL.

Taiwan's tech ecosystem provides an ideal environment for global investors looking to establish a presence in Asia. Local venture capitalists, engineering service providers and technology developers have extensive experience collaborating on cutting-edge R&D. This is on display at Taiwan Tech Arena, a new hub for innovation and startups that is attracting young entrepreneurs from around the world. Bringing together accelerators, venture capital firms and enterprises, TTA has bases in Taipei and Tainan Cities, from which it works to build a vibrant international startup ecosystem. TTA is the voice of Taiwan tech startups, as well as a launching pad for global tech enterprises.

After years of dedication by the public and private sectors toward developing technological expertise, Taiwan's science parks are now home to clusters of companies pursuing breakthroughs in fields such as biotechnology, personal computing and peripherals, integrated circuits, nanotechnology, optoelectronics, precision machinery and telecommunications.



Extracurricular activities play an increasingly important role in Taiwan's education system. (Pang Chia-shan)

## Education

### Fact Focus

Taiwan has implemented a 12-year basic education system since the 2014 school year. There are 148 universities, colleges and junior colleges in Taiwan.

Education is an important component of government policymaking and accounts for a large portion of the budget. With an increasing emphasis on attaining tertiary education, those with a technical college or university degree account for 48.8 percent of Taiwan's population aged 15 and above, an 8.1 percentage point increase over the past decade.

To offer students more opportunities, the Ministry of Education introduced the 12-year basic education to build on the nine-year compulsory education beginning in 2014. Every year in competitions such as the International Science Olympiad, young students from Taiwan win distinctions in biology, chemistry, earth sciences, mathematics, informatics and physics. The talent in Taiwan's workforce has contributed tremendously to enhancing economic prosperity and quality of life.

Recognizing the multicultural nature of the nation, the government has included in its 12-year basic education system mandatory courses on Hakka, Holo, languages of Taiwan's 16 Indigenous tribes and those of the new immigrants to spur the transmission, revival and development of such languages. Furthermore, to enhance the global competitiveness of Taiwan's talent and industry, the government adopted the Bilingual 2030 policy in 2021.

### Scholarship Programs

Both government and university scholarships are available for international students. The Taiwan Scholarship program, for instance, offers grants to students who wish to pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees in diverse fields. Interested applicants can contact the country's embassies and representative offices or visit the MOE's website: <https://english.moe.gov.tw/lp-24-1.html>.

To encourage international students to learn Mandarin in Taiwan, the MOE established the Huayu Enrichment

Scholarship. This program enables foreign students to undertake Mandarin courses at 64 university-affiliated Mandarin learning centers around the nation, while also boosting international awareness and understanding of Taiwan culture and society.

A list of Mandarin training centers and information on learning the language in Taiwan can be found on the websites of the MOE, Study in Taiwan ([www.studyintaiwan.org](http://www.studyintaiwan.org)) and the Taiwan Mandarin Educational Resources Center ([https://lmit.edu.tw/lc/school\\_list/](https://lmit.edu.tw/lc/school_list/)).

### Snapshot

Literacy rate (15 or older): **99.2%** (2022)

Outlays for education, science and culture:  
**18.1%** of central government budget (2023)

Institutions of higher learning: **148**  
(136 universities and colleges, 12 junior colleges)

Students enrolled in institutions of higher learning:

Total: **1.14** million  
Master's programs: **174,926**  
Doctoral programs: **28,672** (2022)

Lanterns are an important part of Taiwan's religious and holiday traditions.

(Chin Hung-hao)



## Culture

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### Fact Focus

Taiwan is the center of the Mandarin pop music industry.

National Palace Museum in Taipei City houses one of the largest collections of ancient Chinese artifacts in the world.

Taiwan is renowned for its fascinating blend of traditional and modern culture. To showcase the nation's history and cultural diversity, museums have been established across Taiwan, including National Palace Museum, National Taiwan Museum, National Museum of History, National Museum of Prehistory, National Museum of Taiwan Literature and National Taiwan Museum of Fine



Arts. Taiwan also has performance venues nationwide, including National Theater and Concert Hall, National Taichung Theater, National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying) and Taiwan Traditional Theatre Center. Such high-quality facilities have made Taiwan a center for the arts in Asia, hosting events like Taiwan International Arts Festival and Taipei Arts Festival. Traditional architecture abounds, not only in the country's magnificent monuments such as temples and official residences, but also in the many old structures that have been revitalized for use as community centers, cafes, stores and other public spaces. In fact, many aspects of traditional Chinese arts, crafts and customs are better preserved in Taiwan than anywhere else. For example, Taiwan is one of the few places still using traditional Chinese characters, and calligraphy competitions are always popular events.

Traditional tenets of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism continue to be well represented in everything from temple celebrations and literature to the visual and performing arts. In addition, visitors can learn about the heritages of the country's Hakka, Holo and Indigenous peoples. Taiwan also shares its cultural riches throughout the world via programs such as the Taiwan Academy resource centers.

At the same time, Taiwan's larger cities are thriving metropolises that offer 24/7 entertainment options. There are highly regarded dance troupes, as well as a vibrant music scene, which is hardly surprising as Taiwan is the world capital of Mandopop, or Mandarin

pop music. Recently opened, Taipei Music Center and Kaohsiung Music Center have both become major performance venues. The local television and film sector has seen a resurgence in recent years, while the country's booming cultural and creative industries are evident in the many designer stores, markets and exhibitions that are growing in number every year.

From literary arts and folk festivals to the lively atmosphere of night markets, Taiwan's traditions are closely intertwined with everyday life, adding to a thriving culture in which the past gives vitality and depth to the present.

Taiwan is dedicated to preserving the centuries-old art of shadow puppetry. (Chin Hung-hao)



More than 56,000 new titles hit the shelves in Taiwan in 2022.

(Chin Hung-hao)



## Mass Media

### Fact Focus

Taiwan ranks first in Asia in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index released by Reporters Without Borders.

The diversity of Taiwan's media is reflected in the plethora of outlets and intense competition within the industry. The nation's press operates in a media environment that is one of the freest in Asia.

Taiwan was ranked 35th globally and first in Asia in the 2023 World Press Freedom Index released

## Snapshot

Radio stations: **186**



Terrestrial television stations: **5**



Satellite broadcasting providers:

**90** (218 channels)



Cable television operators: **64** (2023 statistics)



Source: National Communications Commission

May 3 by France-based Reporters Without Borders. In the survey of 180 countries and territories, Taiwan finished ahead of South Korea, 47th; Japan, 68th; Hong Kong, 140th; and China, 175th. Norway, Ireland and Denmark topped the index, in that order. As of August 2023, a total of 151 journalists from 82 media organizations in 22 countries were based in Taiwan.

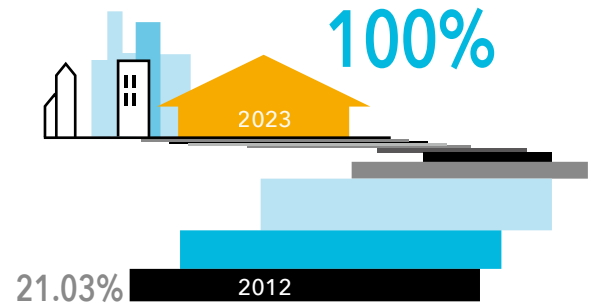
Most types of media are engaged in an industrywide transition to digital forms of distribution.

Print editions of magazines and newspapers, including the three major dailies, continue to lose ground to internet competitors. Drawing on Taiwan's strengths

in information and communications technologies, e-publishing is injecting fresh vitality into their development as well as that of the local book publishing industry, which released 56,121 new titles in 2022.

Digitization of cable television has not only significantly improved the visual experience of viewers, but also unleashed more innovative and diverse broadband services. With digitization virtually completed, cable television has become an important platform for various multimedia applications.

## Digital TV Household Penetration Rate



Source: National Communications Commission



Jingzaijiao Salt Field in southern Taiwan's Tainan City is now a popular tourist destination. (Pang Chia-shan)

# Visiting Taiwan

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## Fact Focus

Citizens of more than 66 countries and territories can enter Taiwan visa-free for 30 or 90 days.

Taiwan has a 24-hour multilingual travel information hotline (0800-011-765).

With its unique fusion of cultures, breathtaking scenery, diverse cuisine, exciting city life and well-developed hospitality industry, Taiwan is an ideal destination for many types of travelers. Citizens of more than 66 countries and territories are eligible for visa-exempt entry for a period of 30 or 90 days.



In addition to about 1,100 kilometers of conventional railway lines, Taiwan has a 350-km high-speed rail system along its west coast. The high-speed trains allow travel between Taipei and Kaohsiung in 94 minutes. These two cities and the northern and central metropolises of Taoyuan and Taichung, respectively, are also equipped with state-of-the-art mass rapid transit systems.

From local snacks to Michelin-star fare, Taiwan has something to satisfy every palate. (Lin Min-hsuan)



## International Trade Shows

Throughout the year, the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) organizes shows covering the entire spectrum of industries. Major venues include the Taipei World Trade Center's Exhibition Hall, Nangang Exhibition Hall as well as Kaohsiung Exhibition Center in southern Taiwan. For more details, visit [www.taiwantradeshows.com.tw](http://www.taiwantradeshows.com.tw).

## General Information for Visitors

The government maintains numerous websites and hotlines to provide foreign nationals with information about traveling, living and working in Taiwan.

### Website/Hotline

### Languages

Taiwan Tourism Bureau  
[www.taiwan.net.tw](http://www.taiwan.net.tw)

English, French, German, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Spanish, Thai, Russian, Vietnamese

Travel Information Hotline  
0800-011-765 (24 hours)

English, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin

National Immigration Agency  
[www.immigration.gov.tw](http://www.immigration.gov.tw)

English, Indonesian, Khmer, Mandarin, Thai, Vietnamese

24 hours:  
English, Japanese, Mandarin

Information for Foreigners  
Hotline 0800-024-111

9:00-17:00 on weekdays:  
Vietnamese

13:00-17:00 on weekdays:  
Indonesian, Khmer, Thai



## Major Tourist Attractions

### Northern Taiwan

National Palace Museum: [www.npm.gov.tw](http://www.npm.gov.tw)

Taipei 101: [www.taipei-101.com.tw](http://www.taipei-101.com.tw)

New Taipei City Yingge Ceramics Museum:  
[www.ceramics.ntpc.gov.tw](http://www.ceramics.ntpc.gov.tw)

National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall:  
[www.cksmh.gov.tw](http://www.cksmh.gov.tw)

Lungshan Temple: [www.lungshan.org.tw](http://www.lungshan.org.tw)

Shei-Pa National Park: [www.snp.gov.tw](http://www.snp.gov.tw)

Yangmingshan National Park: [www.ymsnp.gov.tw](http://www.ymsnp.gov.tw)

Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area:  
[www.necoast-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.necoast-nsa.gov.tw)

North Coast and Guanyinshan National Scenic Area:  
[www.northguan-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.northguan-nsa.gov.tw)

### Central Taiwan

Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area:  
[www.sunmoonlake.gov.tw](http://www.sunmoonlake.gov.tw)

Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village: [www.nine.com.tw](http://www.nine.com.tw)

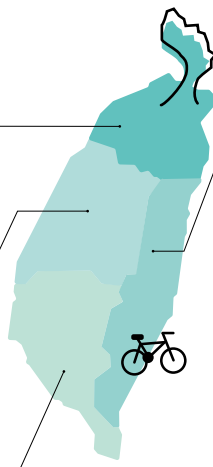
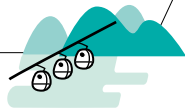
Tri-Mountain National Scenic Area: [www.trimt-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.trimt-nsa.gov.tw)

National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute:  
[www.ntcri.gov.tw](http://www.ntcri.gov.tw)

Lukang Township: [www.lukang.gov.tw](http://www.lukang.gov.tw)

National Museum of Natural Science: [www.nmns.edu.tw](http://www.nmns.edu.tw)

Yushan (Mt. Jade) National Park: [www.ysnp.gov.tw](http://www.ysnp.gov.tw)



### Eastern Taiwan

Taroko National Park:  
[www.taroko.gov.tw](http://www.taroko.gov.tw)

Taiwan Forest Recreation Areas:  
[recreation.forest.gov.tw](http://recreation.forest.gov.tw)

East Coast National Scenic Area:  
[www.eastcoast-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.eastcoast-nsa.gov.tw)

East Rift Valley National Scenic Area:  
[www.erv-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.erv-nsa.gov.tw)

### Southern Taiwan

Taijiang National Park: [www.tjnp.gov.tw](http://www.tjnp.gov.tw)

Kenting National Park: [www.ktnp.gov.tw](http://www.ktnp.gov.tw)

Alishan National Scenic Area: [www.ali-nsa.net](http://www.ali-nsa.net)

Siraya National Scenic Area: [www.siraya-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.siraya-nsa.gov.tw)

Dapeng Bay National Scenic Area: [www.dbnsa.gov.tw](http://www.dbnsa.gov.tw)

Maolin National Scenic Area: [www.maolin-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.maolin-nsa.gov.tw)

Southwest Coast National Scenic Area:  
[swcoast-nsa.travel](http://swcoast-nsa.travel)



### Outlying Islands

Kinmen National Park: [www.kmnp.gov.tw](http://www.kmnp.gov.tw)

South Penghu Marine National Park: [www.marine.gov.tw](http://www.marine.gov.tw)

Matsu National Scenic Area: [www.matsu-nsa.gov.tw](http://www.matsu-nsa.gov.tw)

Green Island and Orchid Island:  
[tour.taitung.gov.tw/en/discover/offshore-islands](http://tour.taitung.gov.tw/en/discover/offshore-islands)



# Major Festivals & Events

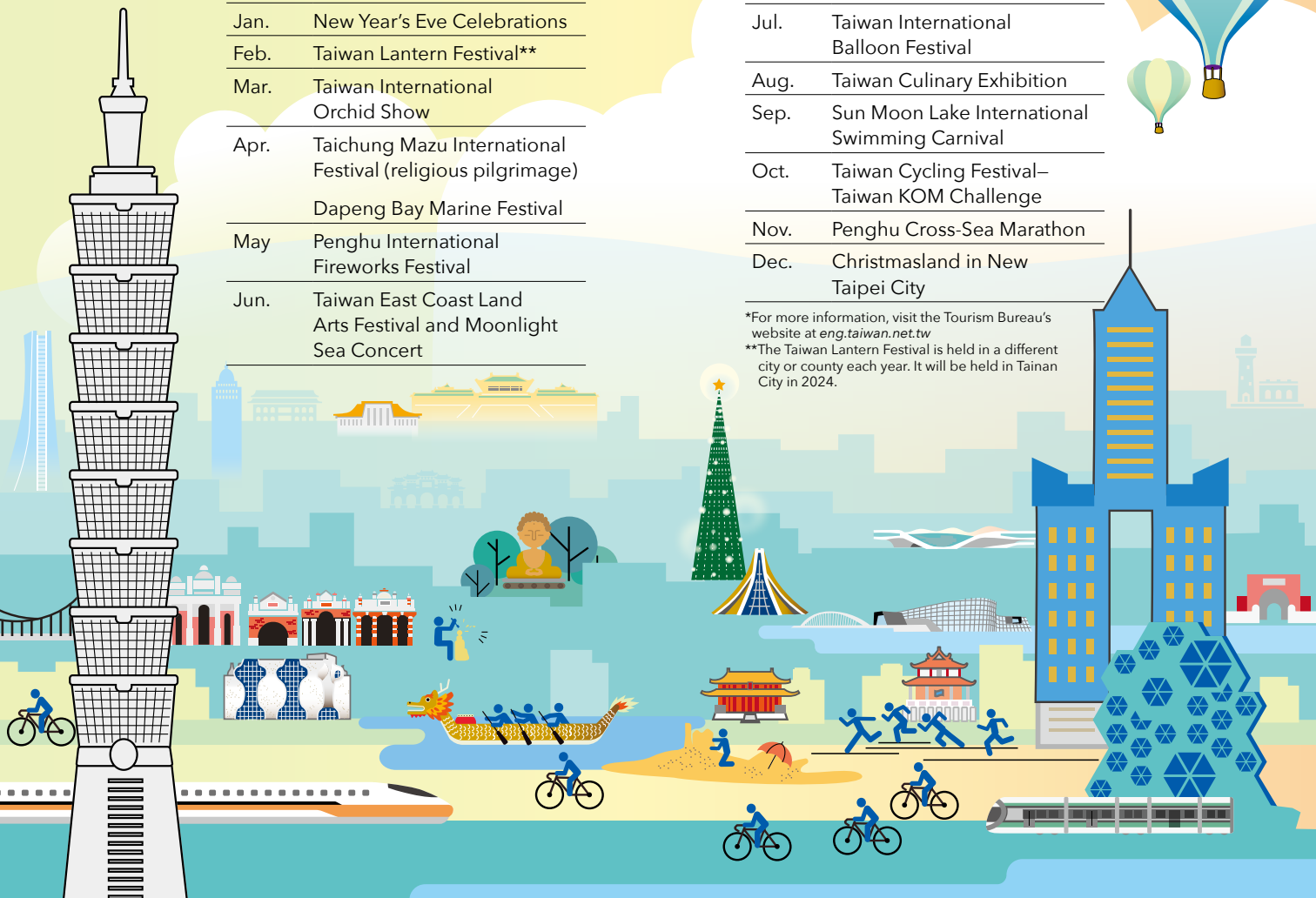
## Month Festival / Event\*

|      |   |
|------|---|
| Jan. | New Year's Eve Celebrations   |
| Feb. | Taiwan Lantern Festival**   |
| Mar. | Taiwan International Orchid Show  |
| Apr. | Taichung Mazu International Festival (religious pilgrimage)<br>Dapeng Bay Marine Festival |
| May  | Penghu International Fireworks Festival   |
| Jun. | Taiwan East Coast Land Arts Festival and Moonlight Sea Concert                            |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| Jul. | Taiwan International Balloon Festival            |
| Aug. | Taiwan Culinary Exhibition                       |
| Sep. | Sun Moon Lake International Swimming Carnival    |
| Oct. | Taiwan Cycling Festival–<br>Taiwan KOM Challenge |
| Nov. | Penghu Cross-Sea Marathon                        |
| Dec. | Christmasland in New Taipei City                 |

\*For more information, visit the Tourism Bureau's website at [eng.taiwan.net.tw](http://eng.taiwan.net.tw)

\*\*The Taiwan Lantern Festival is held in a different city or county each year. It will be held in Tainan City in 2024.



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## Currency

New Taiwan dollar (NT\$ or TWD)

Exchange rate: NT\$31.4 per US\$1 (June 2023)



## Time Zone

All territories in same time zone, UTC +8 hours (no seasonal adjustments)

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## Credit Cards and Travelers' Checks

Major credit cards are widely accepted.

Travelers' checks can be cashed at foreign exchange banks as well as many hotels and tourist-oriented stores.



## Tipping

Tipping is not customary in Taiwan. A 10 percent service charge is often added to room rates and meals at hotels and restaurants.

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## Electricity

AC 110 V / 60 Hz



## Visa Information

Bureau of Consular Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Phone: (+886)-2-2343-2888

Website: [www.boca.gov.tw](http://www.boca.gov.tw)

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## Customs Regulations

Customs Administration, Ministry of Finance

Phone: (+886)-2-2550-5500 ext. 2116

Website: [web.customs.gov.tw](http://web.customs.gov.tw)

