

TAIWAN BY RAIL

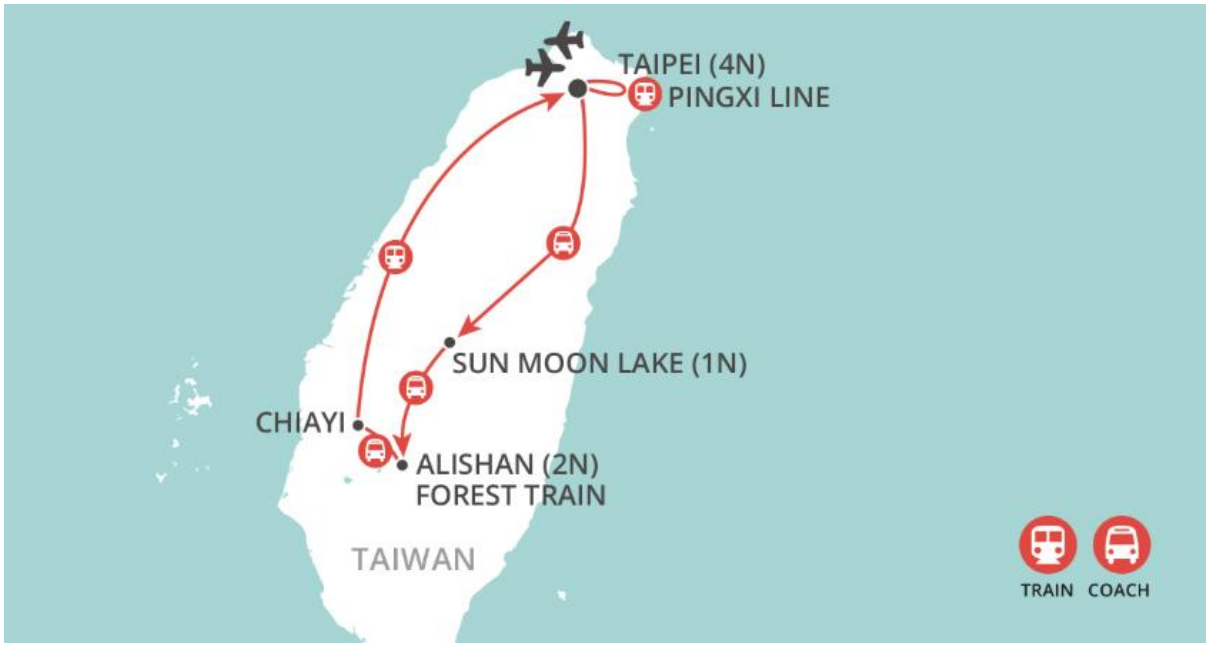
Classic Group Tour | 10 Days | Physical Level 1

Taipei – Sun Moon Lake – Alishan – Taipei

Discover Taiwan's rich diversity on a journey that takes you from the lively capital to peaceful lakesides and misty mountain forests. Travelling mostly by rail, you'll experience the country through the eyes of a local, whether it's on a high-speed train between cities or a heritage line through the hills. Along the way, uncover cultural landmarks, traditional towns and dramatic scenery, all at a relaxed pace that lets you take in the best of this often overlooked island.

- Discover vibrant Taipei
- Explore villages along the Pingxi Line
- Cruise the tranquil Sun Moon Lake
- Sample local tea and coffee in Alishan

TOUR MAP



TAIWAN BY RAIL TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking local National Escort
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Taiwan on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 1:

Our tours come with a physical rating to guide you in selecting a holiday that suits your comfort level. Joining any of our tours involves independent mobility and the ability to stay active throughout the day, which is essential for fully enjoying the unique charm of each destination.

'Taiwan by Rail' is rated as a physical level 1 tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights, and climbing some steps. Please consider:

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time, often on uneven surfaces.
- You will be required to get on and off small boats, coaches and trains without assistance.
- During the Pingxi Line day tour, you will be getting on and off the train unassisted. As this train is a regular commuter train, seats aren't reserved and you may have a period of standing.

Our National Escort is dedicated to providing a high level of service and support throughout your journey. However, their primary role is to manage the daily aspects of the tour. They are unable to offer extensive personal physical assistance. We kindly ask our travellers to be prepared for the physical aspects of the tour to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable experience for everyone.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 10 days in duration including international flights or 8 days in duration based on 'Land Only'.

Travellers booked on a 'Land Only' package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Taipei and end the tour on Day 9 in Taipei. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Fly overnight to Taipei Meals: D



Fly overnight to Taipei, Taiwan's vibrant capital city, where ancient temples sit side by side with buzzing night markets and towering skyscrapers. Upon arrival, you will be met by driver and transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel. In the evening, meet your guide and enjoy an informal welcome dinner at the hotel around 6pm.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

Destination Information

Taipei – Taiwan's capital is a city of contrasts, where Chinese traditions blend with Japanese, Southeast Asian and American influences. It's modern and fast-paced, yet traces of the past are everywhere, from Japanese-era alleyways to bustling shopping streets. With its legendary street food scene and lively night markets, Taipei has a buzz that's hard to resist.

Day 3: Explore Taipei Meals: B, L, D



Begin the day with a visit to the National Palace Museum, home to thousands of artefacts from across Chinese history, including many from the Ming and Qing dynasties. Next, visit the grand Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and later, take the high-speed elevator to the 89th floor of Taipei 101 and enjoy panoramic views over the city. After dinner, stop by a night market.

Destination Information

National Palace Museum – The National Palace Museum has a permanent collection of nearly 700,000 pieces of ancient Chinese imperial artefacts and artworks, making it the world's largest and arguably finest collection of Chinese art. The collection covers 5,000 years of China's historical and artistic achievements and includes treasures in painting, calligraphy, bronzes, lacquerware, ceramics, jade and religious objects.

Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall – This grand monument honours the former President of the Republic of China. Set within Liberty Square, the white marble structure with its blue-tiled roof is surrounded by gardens and ponds. Inside, you'll find a museum and a large seated statue of Chiang Kai-shek guarded by ceremonial soldiers.

Taipei 101 – Once the tallest building in the world, Taipei 101 is a modern icon of the city skyline. Shaped like a bamboo stalk, the 508-metre tower combines design with engineering innovation. High-speed elevators whisk visitors to the 89th floor observatory for panoramic views across the city and beyond.

Day 4: **Explore the Pingxi Line** Meals: B, L, D





Travel by coach to the town of Shifen, situated on the Pingxi Line. Wander through the Shifen Old Street, where you'll see the tradition of sky lanterns being released for good luck, and take a leisurely walk around 20 minutes to Shifen Waterfall (sometimes called the "Little Niagara of Taiwan"). Walk back to town and board the scenic Pingxi Line, a historic railway once used for coal transport. After a short ride, disembark in Pingxi and enjoy time to explore the town and admire the old architecture.

The last stop for the day is nearby Jiufen, a picturesque hillside town known for its lantern-lit lanes, teahouses and ocean views, then return to Taipei.

Please note – the Pingxi Line is operating as a local commuter train. There is no reserved seating, therefore you may not be able to sit immediately on boarding the train. Sightseeing schedule may be adjusted on the day depending on local conditions.

Destination Information

Pingxi Line – Originally built in 1918 to transport coal, the Pingxi Line is a scenic branch railway that winds through forested hills and former mining towns. Today it's a popular day trip from Taipei, offering a laid-back way to explore Taiwan's rural northeast.

Shifen Old Street – Set along the railway tracks, Shifen Old Street is known for its nostalgic charm and sky lantern tradition. Visitors write wishes on colourful lanterns before releasing them into the sky, a tradition that can be traced to mainland China's Fujian province.

Jiufen – A hillside village once at the centre of Taiwan's gold rush, Jiufen is now famous for its narrow lanes, teahouses and red lanterns. With ocean views and an atmospheric charm, the town is said to have inspired scenes from the famous Studio Ghibli film *Spirited Away*.

Day 5: Taipei to Sun Moon Lake Meals: B, L, D



This morning, transfer to the train station in Taipei and travel by high-speed rail to Taichung station, reaching speeds of up to 300km/hr. Continue by road to the picturesque Sun Moon Lake, a designated National Scenic Area.

On arrival, visit the lakeside Wen Wu Temple, known for its grand architecture and scenic views. Later, take a shared motorboat cruise around the lake and enjoy the beautiful surroundings.

After dinner, set out on a tour of the night market. Sample some local sweet treats for dessert and enjoy free time to explore the markets at your own pace.

Luggage notice – Your luggage will be transferred to Sun Moon Lake by coach. Please ensure all valuables are carried with you.

Destination Information

Sun Moon Lake – Sun Moon Lake is Taiwan's largest lake. The name is inspired by the beauty of the area. The east side of the lake is round, like the sun, while the west side is long and narrow, like a crescent moon. The lake and its surrounding countryside have been designated one of 13 national scenic areas in Taiwan. Due to low rainfall and droughts over recent years as a result of climate change, please be mindful that water levels may be low during the time of your visit.

Wen Wu Temple – In the past, two temples were located on the shore of Sun Moon Lake. In 1919, a dam was constructed, causing the lake's water level to rise, and the temples were torn down and consolidated at the temple's present location in 1938. In 1969, Wen Wu temple was rebuilt again in the Chinese palace style. There is a walk of around 5 minutes on a steep slope up to the top and three-story steps down to the entrance.

Day 6: Sun Moon Lake to Alishan Meals: B, L, D



Depart Sun Moon Lake and travel to Bantaoyao Craft Park, once a working pottery factory and now a creative hub for local artisans.

Continue to Yuyupas Cultural Park, set in the Alishan mountains, to gain insight into the heritage of the Tsou Tribe. Learn about the tea leaves and coffee beans grown here and sample a cup or two yourself.

Check into your hotel in Alishan for the next 2-nights and prepare for an early morning start.

Please note – Alishan National Forest Recreation is a high-altitude, forested area within a national park, where conservation and environmental protection are top priorities. You'll be staying in a clean and comfortable 3-star hotel, but breakfast and facilities are simple and reflect the remote mountain setting. Hot water may not be available at all times.

Destination Information

Bantaoyao Craft Park – Once a traditional pottery factory, Bantaoyao has been transformed into a colourful cultural park celebrating Taiwan's ceramic heritage. Wander through the workshops, admire large-scale mosaic art, and try your hand at decorating your own tile.

Yuyupas Cultural Park – Set in the mountains of Alishan, Yuyupas showcases the traditions of the Tsou, one of Taiwan's indigenous tribes. Visitors can enjoy cultural performances, learn about Tsou customs, and sample locally grown Alishan coffee and tea.

Alishan National Scenic Area – Famed for its ethereal sunrises, sea of clouds, ancient forests and high-mountain tea, Alishan is one of Taiwan's most iconic natural destinations. Originally home to the Tsou indigenous people, the area rose to prominence during the Japanese era due to its logging industry and narrow-gauge forest railway, which still operates today.

Day 7: Board the Alishan Forest Train

Meals: B, L, D



Rise early this morning to watch the sunrise from your balcony. Weather permitting, witness magnificent dawn views.

Spend the day exploring the Alishan Forest Recreation Area, a tranquil landscape of towering cypress trees and misty trails, including a short ride on the Alishan Forest Train. Stop to see some of the area's natural highlights, including the Sister Ponds, Brother Tree and the towering Three Generation Tree. Sightseeing today will be around 2-3 hours on foot.

Please note – the itinerary may vary depending on weather conditions and train schedules. Travel within the park will be a combination of shuttle and forest train.

Alishan's cherry blossom season is typically in mid-March to mid-April, but exact timings may vary each year depending on weather conditions. While departures are scheduled to align with the expected bloom, cherry blossom viewing cannot be guaranteed. Sightseeing in the area may be adjusted to make the most of the seasonal scenery.

Destination Information

Alishan Forest Train – One of Taiwan's most iconic railways, the Alishan Forest Train climbs through dense forests and misty mountains. Originally built for logging in the Japanese era, today it offers a nostalgic journey with scenic views, especially popular at sunrise from the Zhushan viewing platform.

Day 8: Return to Taipei Meals: B, L, D



This morning, visit the mountain village of Fenqihu, known for its nostalgic charm and narrow lanes lined with traditional shops. Enjoy a classic old lunch before transferring to Chiayi station to board the high-speed train back to Taipei, reaching speeds of up to 300km/h.

On arrival, explore the 18th-century Longshan Temple, then check in to your hotel in Taipei for your final night then head out for a farewell dinner.

Luggage notice – Your luggage will be transferred to Taipei by coach. As the train journey is faster than driving, your luggage will arrive a couple of hours after you. Please ensure all valuables are carried with you. You may wish to bring a change of clothes for the farewell dinner.

Destination Information

Fenqihu – Tucked into the mountains, Fenqihu is a nostalgic village with narrow alleyways, traditional shopfronts, and a peaceful forest backdrop. Once a key stop for train conductors and loggers, it's now best known for being the place to sample old-style railway bento boxes. Typically served in metal tins, the box features braised pork, pickled vegetables, tofu, and a tea egg.

Longshan Temple – One of the largest and oldest temples in Taiwan, Longshan was built in 1738 by Han immigrants from Fujian as a gathering place for Chinese settlers. Today it is one of the city's top religious sites, and it is a wonderful mix of the Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian faiths.

Days 9-10: Depart Taipei to New Zealand Meals: B



Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, per the departure time of your international flight, arriving in New Zealand the following day.

Late checkout is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

TAIWAN TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders are currently permitted entry to Taiwan without a visa for stays of up to 90 days. An online immigration arrival card must be completed before entry – details will be provided in your final documentation.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back in New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN TAIWAN:

Taiwanese cuisine is varied and flavourful. Meals may be served with rice and several dishes of vegetables, seafood and meat, including pork, beef or chicken. Noodles are another important part of Taiwanese cuisine, with beef noodle soup being one of Taiwan's most famous dishes.

Food is an important part of Taiwanese culture, with a wide variety of regional dishes and snacks enjoyed across the island. Sharing food is an important part of dining, and Taiwan's culinary culture reflects its diverse history and influences.

Meals as listed in the itinerary, excluding drinks, are included. Breakfast will be at your hotel and is mostly buffet-style. Included dinners are usually served at the hotel and are typically buffet-style, featuring a wide selection of Taiwanese and Western dishes. Lunch at a local restaurant is usually served as a Taiwanese set menu. We find this style of dining suits the wide and varied tastes of our customers on tour. Beverages are at your own expense and are readily available.

Most food is eaten with chopsticks, although cutlery can be requested where available.

This itinerary includes a market food tour to immerse you in the local culture. There is no seating during this walking tour.

If you have any dietary requirements, you must inform us before your tour starts, and please be aware that restaurants may not always be able to accommodate these. Gluten-free food may not be as readily available as in New Zealand.

PLEASE INFORM US OF ANY ALLERGIES AND/OR SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS AT TIME OF BOOKING.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Taiwan are fairly modern, especially in the more populated areas.

High Speed Train: Taiwan's High Speed Rail (HSR) operates along the west coast of the island, connecting major cities including Taipei, Taichung, Tainan and Kaohsiung. The modern trains are comfortable and air-conditioned, with spacious seating and large windows. High Speed Rail is used on some of our tours to provide a convenient and efficient way to travel between destinations. Seat reservations are made in advance where possible, although specific seats cannot always be guaranteed.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling during the following public holidays, please be aware that celebrations can last for several days and may extend beyond the official holiday dates. During these periods, some businesses may close, and coach, air and train travel could be affected. While tourist attractions generally remain open, they may be busier than usual.

- **Chinese New Year:** 4–10 February 2027, and 25–30 January 2028
- **Tomb Sweeping Day (Qingming Festival):** 3–6 April 2027, and 4 April 2028
- **Dragon Boat Festival:** 9 June 2027, and 28 May 2028
- **Mid-Autumn Festival:** 15 September 2027, and 3 October 2028
- **National Day:** 9–11 October 2027, and 10 October 2028

2028 dates are provisional at time of writing

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is chosen for its convenience, comfort, or character. Hotels are generally of a good quality three-to-four-star standard, though there is no international classification system, so facilities and quality may differ from New Zealand.

All group tour hotels include private Western-style bathrooms, air conditioning, TV, and a telephone. Due to environmental regulations, toiletries may not always be provided. If you encounter any issues, please speak to your National Escort. Rest assured, all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected to ensure they meet our standards.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase and one piece of hand luggage. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. We recommend packing only as much as you can lift as porterage is not included.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Taiwan is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

Porterage is not included and you will be expected to carry/move your own luggage.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

Wendy Wu does not give specific health advice, but we do recommend you see your doctor at least six weeks prior to travel for advice and to allow time for any necessary vaccinations. Please remember to take your itinerary with you. Safe travel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Please note that it can take 2-7 business days to confirm a Private Tour. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Occasionally where time and weather conditions permit, your National Escort may offer optional activities, usually in the evening. These excursions are optional and paid for locally in cash.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Last Updated: November 2026