



Asia

ancient+modern

Located off the coast of southern China, this island nation's high-tech products are consumed worldwide, but its dramatic scenery awaits further discovery. Street markets in the capital, Taipei, abound with indigenous delicacies, such as steamed dumplings, oyster omelette and soupy beef noodles. Culture buffs should make for the **National Palace Museum** (npm.gov.tw), which houses the world's largest collection of Chinese art treasures. Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek shipped most of the priceless paintings, furnishings, ceramics and jade sculptures from China to Taiwan in 1948, as he fled Mao's Communist revolution.

Stay overnight at the 162-room **amba Taipei Ximending** (ambahotels.com/en/home), a design hotel created by a collective of Taiwanese architects, artists and music stylists. Ximending is a buzzing district with a flourishing design and lifestyle scene, and curbside restaurants,

kiosks and market stalls selling a cornucopia of xiao chi street snacks. For branded luxury, **W Taipei** (wtaipei.com), in the Xinyi fashion and nightlife district, affords commanding views of the 508-metre high **Taipei 101** (taipei-101.com) – the world's third-tallest building – best enjoyed from the 10th-floor heated swimming pool and Tai Chi Garden.

Described by 16th-century Portuguese voyagers as Ilha Formosa (beautiful island), Taiwan's outdoor discovery is its greatest asset. Locally based adventure specialists **In Motion Asia** (inmotionasia.com) whisks active travellers in comfort to Yangmingshan National Park, 10km south of Taipei, to hike and cycle among majestic mountains, dormant volcanoes and bamboo forests. Blissed out from the scenic splendor, you'll move on to Wulai, home to the Atayal Aboriginal tribe. Lying in a hot spring valley, Wulai offers a wealth of thrilling adventure sports. Leap off a cliff into churning

whitewater, swim upstream through a high-walled river canyon, or climb the face of a roaring waterfall. Afterwards, indulge tired limbs in the soothing hot spring waters of the **Landis Wulai** (wulai.landishotelsresorts.com) and feast on a banquet of Taiwanese dishes.

As an alternative option, Cam McLean, Director of In Motion Asia, suggests jumping aboard an ultra-modern high-speed train – which travels at up to 300kph – from Taipei, where you should make the scenic 220km journey to Nantou gateway and the sublime Sun Moon Lake. Located in the heart of Taiwan, the island's largest freshwater body boasts calm, emerald-green waters framed by towering mountains. Stay in a highly contemporary courtyard villa at **The Lalu** (thelalu.com.au), with panoramic views of the lake, and visit ancient temples and aboriginal villages dotted among the hills, before savouring dinner and wine on a sunset cruise under a full moon.

Main image:
the rooftop pool
at W Taipei

Taiwan

This 'Ilha Formosa' – beautiful island – is rich in culture and exotic, indigenous food