THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA AT A GLANCE

TAIWAN 2015

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Temples in Taiwan are noted for their stunning architecture and intricate detail.

ROC SNAPSHOT

Official name	Republic of China
National Flag	
National Flower	
Area (Taiwan and associated islands)	36,192.8 square kilometers
Population	23.43 million (December 2014)
Ethnicity	Over 95 percent Han Chinese (including Holo, Hakka and other groups that originated in mainland China), 2 percent indigenous Malayo-Polynesian peoples, 2 percent new immigrants, primarily from mainland China and Southeast Asia
Government	Multiparty democracy
President	Tsai Ing-wen
Capital	Taipei City
Special municipalities	Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Taichung City, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City
National currency	New Taiwan Dollar (NT$ or TWD)
Official language	Mandarin (Chinese)
Dialects and other languages	Holo (Taiwanese), Hakka, Austronesian languages
Major religions	Buddhism, Taoism, I-Kuan Tao, Chinese folk religions, Christianity, Islam

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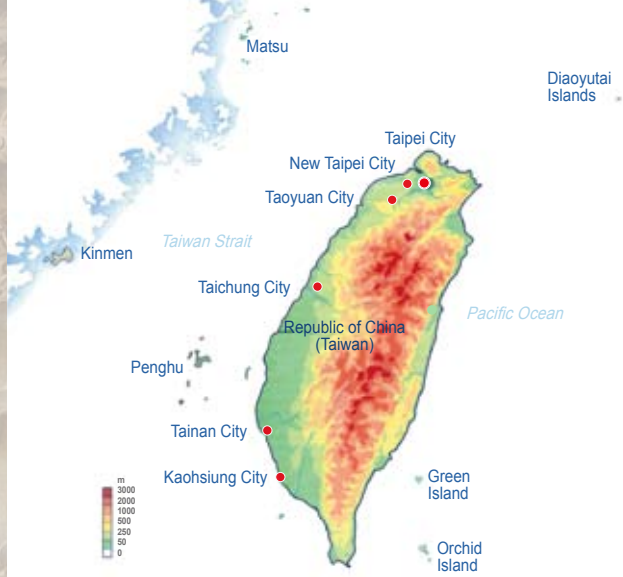

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NATURAL TAIWAN

The Republic of China, popularly known as 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

DO YOU KNOW?

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

Qingshui Cliff in eastern Taiwan rises vertically from the Pacific Ocean to an average height of more than 800 meters. (Jimmy Lin)

other islets. The total area of Taiwan proper and its outlying islands is 36,192.8 square kilometers. At about the size of the Netherlands, but with a population of some 23 million, Taiwan is more populous than three-quarters of the world's nations.

Taiwan proper has more than its 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 Tungsha (Pratas), Nansha (Spratly), Shisha (Paracel) and Chungsha (Macclesfield Bank) island groups, are also an inherent part of ROC territory.

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 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.

SNAPSHOT

Land area: 36,192.8 square kilometers
Length of Taiwan: 395 kilometers
Width of Taiwan: 144 kilometers
Agricultural land: 7,998.3 square kilometers
Highest peak: Jade Mountain (3,952 meters)
Average temperature: 22°C
January: 18°C
July: 29°C

The smaller islands, meanwhile, have their own unique natural features, such as the basaltic pillars 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 120 species of mammals, 670 species of birds, 141 species of reptiles, 65 species of amphibians, 400 species of butterflies and 3,100 species of fish are known to inhabit Taiwan. The island's plant life comprises 674

species of ferns, 4,596 species of angiosperms and 34 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, 20 wildlife refuges and 37 major wildlife habitats.

Among the most famous Taiwanese species of fauna is the Formosan landlocked salmon. 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.

Laomei Algal Reef in northern Taiwan's New Taipei City (Courtesy of Tourism Bureau)

NATIONAL PARKS

PEOPLE

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 than such a generalization implies. The

DO YOU KNOW?

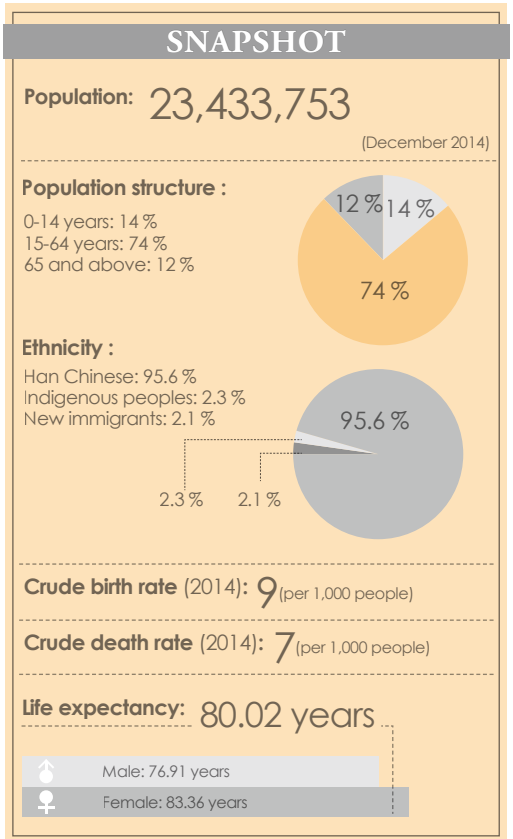
- **There are 16 officially recognized indigenous tribes in Taiwan.**
- **The nation is home to more than 500,000 new immigrants, most of whom hail from mainland China and Southeast Asia.**

Tsou Ma Lai Farm in southern Taiwan's Tainan City is a popular recreational destination. (Courtesy of the Tourism Bureau)

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 the Mandarin Chinese language. Taiwan proper has been a melting pot not only of diverse Han subgroups, but also of indigenous Malayo-Polynesian peoples and immigrants from all over the world. Recent years, for example, have seen an influx of new arrivals from mainland China and Southeast Asia, mostly through cross-cultural marriages. Currently, the number of new immigrants is over 500,000.

There is a growing appreciation in Taiwan for the cultural legacies of the 16 officially recognized Austronesian-speaking subgroups, which constitute a little more than 2 percent of the population. Both public and private organizations are making efforts to revitalize their languages and cultures, as illustrated by the launching 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.

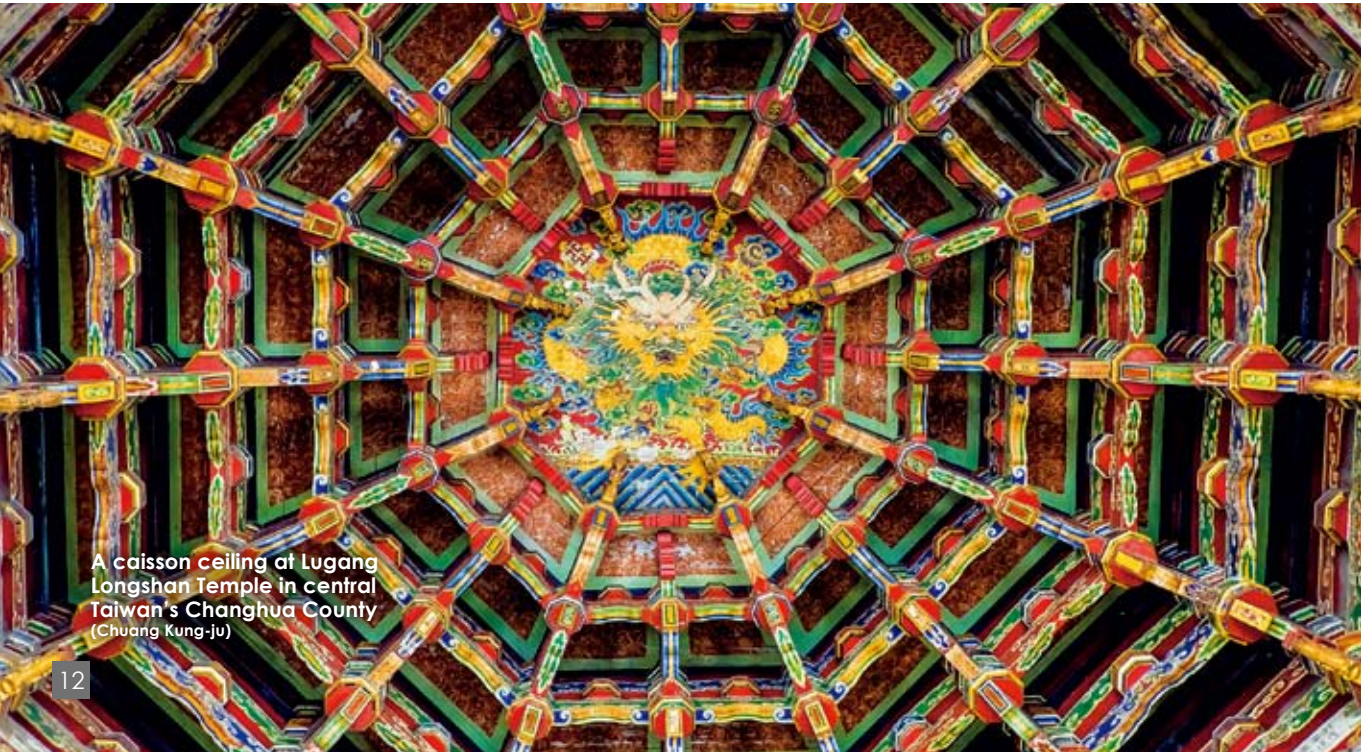


HISTORY

The Republic of China was founded in 1912 on the Chinese mainland. At that time, Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule as a result of the 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki, by which the Qing court ceded Taiwan to

DO YOU KNOW?

- **Both Dutch and Spanish settlers established bases in Taiwan in the early 17th century.**
- **Around 1.2 million people relocated from mainland China to Taiwan along with the ROC government in the late 1940s.**



A caisson ceiling at Lugang Longshan Temple in central Taiwan's Changhua County (Chuang Kung-ju)

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 after its defeat in the Chinese Civil War. 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 the Chinese mainland each under the rule of a different government. The authorities in Beijing have never exercised sovereignty over Taiwan or other islands currently 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.

1500S	It is commonly believed that Portuguese sailors passing Taiwan record the island's name for the Europeans as *Ilha Formosa* (Beautiful Island). Taiwan continues to experience visits by small numbers of mainland Chinese merchants, fishermen and pirates.
1624	The Dutch East India Company establishes a base in southwest Taiwan, employing mainland Chinese laborers to work on its rice and sugarcane plantations.
1626	Spanish adventurers establish bases in northern Taiwan, but are ousted by the Dutch in 1642.
1662	Fleeing the Manchurian conquest of Ming dynasty (1368-1644) China, Ming loyalists under Zheng Cheng-gong (Koxinga) drive out the Dutch from Taiwan and establish their authority over the island.
1683	Qing dynasty (1644-1912) forces take control of Taiwan's western and northern coastal areas.
1885	Taiwan is declared a province of the Qing Empire.
1895	Following defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War, the Qing government signs the Treaty of Shimonoseki, by which it cedes sovereignty over Taiwan to Japan, which rules the island until 1945.
1911 – 1912	Chinese revolutionaries overthrow the Qing Empire and establish the Republic of China.
1943	During World War II, ROC leader Chiang Kai-shek meets with US President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in Cairo. After the conclusion of the conference, the Cairo Declaration is released, stating that Taiwan and the Penghu Islands should be restored to the Republic of China.

1945 The ROC, United Kingdom and United States 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, and Taiwan is restored to the ROC.

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

1948 As civil war rages in China between the Kuomintang (KMT)-led ROC government and Chinese Communist Party rebels, the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the communist Rebellion are enacted, overriding the Constitution and greatly expanding presidential powers.

1949 The ROC central government relocates to Taipei, followed by 1.2 million people from mainland China. The ROC government on Taiwan, acting on the basis of the ROC Constitution, has never, even today, forsaken its sovereignty over the mainland.

1949 October 25 sees the Battle of Kuningtou on Kinmen Island, in which the ROC Armed Forces defeat the Communists on the northwestern coast of Kinmen Island. Martial law is declared in Taiwan and continues to be in force until 1987.

1952 The Treaty of Peace is signed between the ROC and Japan at the Taipei Guest House, formally ending the state of war between the two sides and reiterating Japan's position in renouncing all claims to Taiwan, Penghu and the Nansha (Spratly) and Shisha (Paracel) islands. The peace treaty states that the Treaty of Shimonoseki is null and void, and that the ROC has regained sovereignty over Taiwan.

1954 The ROC-US Mutual Defense Treaty is signed in Washington D.C.

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

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

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.
1971	The ROC loses its seat in the United Nations due to a General Assembly vote to give the China seat to the authorities in Beijing.
1979	Democracy activists demonstrating in the southern city of Kaohsiung are arrested and imprisoned following what is known as the Kaohsiung Incident, which eventually led to the formation and development of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in 1986.
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. Cross-strait people-to-people exchanges begin.
1991	The Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion are abolished. From this year through 2005, the ROC Constitution undergoes seven rounds of revision. The ROC becomes a member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.
1992	Government-authorized representatives from across the Taiwan Strait meet for the first time in Hong Kong, and via subsequent communication reach an understanding that there exists one China, but subject to different interpretations. This is later referred to as the "1992 Consensus" by the KMT-led government.
1995	The National Health Insurance program begins.
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.
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.
2002	The ROC becomes a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
2003	The Legislative Yuan passes the Referendum Act, providing a legal basis for ROC citizens to vote directly on issues of local or national importance.
2004	The first national referendum is held in conjunction with the third direct presidential election, in which Chen and Lu are re-elected with a slight majority.

2005	The Legislative Yuan passes a constitutional amendment package, halving the number of its seats from 225 to 113 and introducing the "single-seat-district, two ballot" system for legislative elections.
2008	Ma Ying-jeou and Vincent C. Siew of the KMT are elected president and vice president of the ROC, garnering 58 percent of the vote and marking the second transfer of ROC government executive power in Taiwan between political parties.
2009	The ROC attends the World Health Assembly as an observer, marking its first participation in an activity of the United Nations since losing its seat in 1971. President Ma Ying-jeou signs the instruments of ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
2010	The ROC inks the Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement with mainland China to normalize economic and trade relations across the Taiwan Strait.
2011	The centennial of the ROC is celebrated in Taiwan.
2012	Incumbent Ma Ying-jeou and his new running mate Wu Den-yih, representing the KMT, win the election for president and vice president with 51.6 percent of the vote.
2013	The ROC signs an agreement on economic cooperation with New Zealand and an agreement on economic partnership with Singapore. The ROC attends the 38th session of the International Civil Aviation Organization Assembly as the guest of the council's president.
2014	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.
2015	ROC President Ma Ying-jeou and mainland Chinese leader Xi Jinping meet in Singapore in November, marking the first top-level meeting between the two sides in 66 years.
2016	DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen and 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.

POLITICAL SYSTEM

The ROC Constitution, promulgated on January 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

DO YOU KNOW?

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

The Presidential Office Building, which was built during the period of Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan (1895–1945), is located in downtown Taipei. (Courtesy of Office of the President)

in Taiwan. Since then, it has undergone seven rounds of revision—in 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2005—in order to make it more relevant to the country's current condition.

One of the important consequences of these amendments is that since 1991 the ROC government has acknowledged that its jurisdiction extends only to the areas it controls. The ROC 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 ROC citizens through referendums.

Levels of Government

The national 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.

Special municipalities are top-level administrative entities that fall under the direct jurisdiction of the central government. The status carries with it 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, Kaohsiung, Taichung, Taipei, Taoyuan and Tainan.

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 and must report regularly

FIVE BRANCHES OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Executive Yuan: Formulates and implements policies

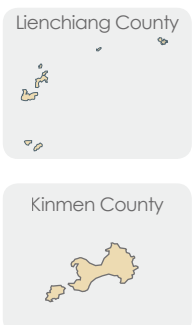
Legislative Yuan: Reviews and enacts legislation, conducts hearings on policy matters, examines budgetary bills and government operations

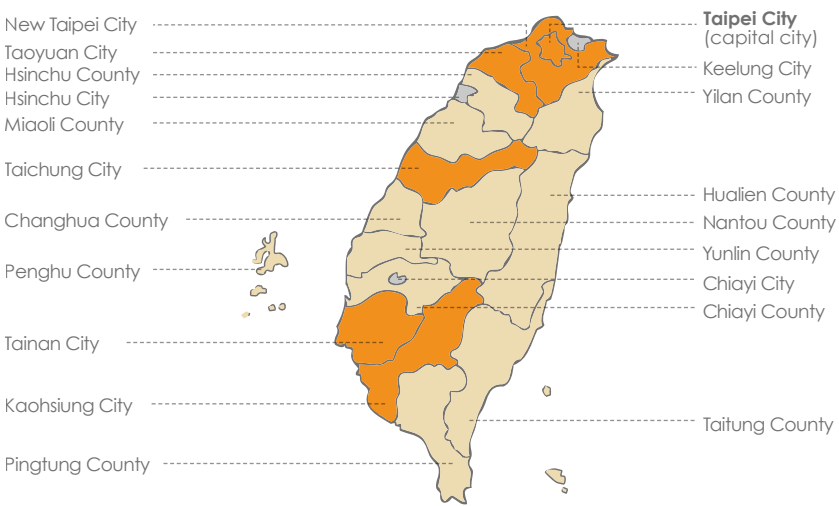
Examination Yuan: Manages the civil service system

Judicial Yuan: Operates the nation's court system

Control Yuan: Impeaches and censures officials and audits government agencies

LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS





Special municipalities

Autonomous municipalities

Counties

to the Legislative Yuan (Legislature). The heads of ministries, commissions and agencies under the Executive Yuan are appointed by the premier and form the Executive Yuan Council, commonly referred to as the Cabinet. To improve administrative effectiveness, the Executive Yuan is undergoing restructuring to reduce the number of Cabinet-level organizations from 37 to 29. After the reorganization, which commenced at the start of 2012, the Executive Yuan will consist of 14 ministries, eight councils, three independent agencies and four other organizations. Under the 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, however. Legislators elect the head of the Legislature, or speaker, from among their ranks.

Political Parties

Given the key role of the presidency in the overall functioning of the ROC government, the term "ruling party" denotes which political party occupies the Office of the President. The Kuomintang (KMT)—or Nationalist Party—held the presidency in Taiwan for more than five decades before the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. The KMT regained power by winning the 2008 race and held on again in 2012. The DPP won the 2016 presidential election, marking the third transition of power since the country's democratization.

In the January 2012 legislative elections, the KMT gained 57 percent of the seats in the Legislature to the DPP's 35 percent. In the January 2016 legislative elections, the DPP gained 60 percent of the seats in the Legislature, while the KMT secured 31 percent. Other major parties that have a presence in the Legislature include the New Power Party and the People First Party.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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,

DO YOU KNOW?

- **More than 150 countries and territories accord visa-free, landing visa or e-visa privileges to ROC passport holders.**
- **The government has adopted a flexible and pragmatic approach to conducting international affairs known as "viable diplomacy. "**

A TaiwanICDF health expert, left, poses with Solomon Islanders who have benefitted from the organization's initiatives. (Courtesy of International Cooperation and Development Fund)

and respect treaties and the Charter of the United Nations … promote international cooperation, protect 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 ROC currently has diplomatic relations with 22 countries and substantive ties with many others. From 2008 to 2015, the number of cooperative projects the ROC had in place with its diplomatic allies increased from 167 to 480 and 11 presidential trips were made to these countries.

From mid-2008 to mid-2016, under the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou, the nation adopted a foreign policy approach based on the principles of pragmatism, dignity, autonomy and flexibility known as "viable diplomacy." Professionalism and uprightness are the hallmarks of the ROC's diplomatic efforts to enhance the country's international presence.

The ROC has full membership in 36 intergovernmental organizations (IGO) and their subsidiary bodies, including the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Asian Development Bank. It also enjoys observer or other statuses in 22 IGOs and their subsidiary bodies, including the World Health Assembly, the supreme decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as the Inter-American Development Bank,

Former Vice President Vincent C. Siew, third from right in back row, represented Taiwan at the 2013 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Bali, Indonesia.

the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and committees of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The ROC is fully committed to fulfilling its international obligations and contributing to the world community. It cooperates closely with other governments to combat terrorism and crime; strives to act in conformance with international covenants on human rights; and provides technical as well as humanitarian aid to countries in need through various programs funded by its International Cooperation and Development Fund and the private sector.

In September 2013, the ROC received an invitation to attend the triennial assembly of the

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a U.N. specialized agency. The United States, European nations and other major countries have backed Taiwan's participation in agencies such as the ICAO and the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as its expanded participation in the WHO. Meanwhile, as of December 1, 2015, 158 countries and territories had accorded visa-free, landing visa or e-visa privileges to ROC passport holders. The ROC had also inked working holiday agreements with 13 countries by the end of 2014.

Notably, among the 38 countries included in the US Visa Waiver Program, Taiwan is the only one that does not maintain diplomatic relations with the United States, indicating the otherwise close relationship between the two sides. The Taiwan Relations Act passed by the US Congress in 1979 has continued to provide a strong foundation for Taiwan-US cooperation in the absence of formal diplomatic ties. In April 2014, Gina McCarthy, administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, came to Taiwan, marking the first visit by a US Cabinet-level official to the country in nearly 14 years.

In August 2012, the ROC proposed the East China Sea Peace Initiative, which urges parties involved in sovereignty disputes over the Diaoyutai Islands to shelve their differences and work together to explore and develop the area's natural resources. It envisions the formulation of an East China Sea Code of Conduct that would help foster regional peace and stability. A result of the peace initiative came on April 10, 2013, when Taiwan signed a fisheries agreement with Japan after 17 rounds of negotiations since 1996, further safeguarding the fishing rights of Taiwanese vessels in the waters surrounding the Diaoyutais. In February 2014, the ROC issued the Statement on East China Sea Airspace Security to call for the peaceful resolution of regional disputes. Sharing the same spirit, the ROC's South China Sea Peace Initiative was launched in May 2015.

PRINCIPLES OF ROC'S SOUTH CHINA SEA PEACE INITIATIVE

- Exercise restraint, safeguard peace and stability and refrain from taking any unilateral action that might escalate tensions.
- Respect the principles and spirit of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, peacefully settle disputes through dialogue, and jointly uphold the freedom and safety of navigation and overflight.
- Ensure that all parties concerned participate in maritime cooperation and shared codes of conduct in order to enhance peace and prosperity.
- Shelve sovereignty disputes and establish a regional cooperation mechanism for the development of resources under integrated planning.
- Coordinate and cooperate on nontraditional security issues such as environmental protection, scientific research, maritime crime fighting, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Since the ROC government relocated to Taiwan in 1949, it has exercised jurisdiction over Taiwan proper, the Penghu Islands, Kinmen Islands, Matsu Islands and a number of smaller islands, while the Chinese

DO YOU KNOW?

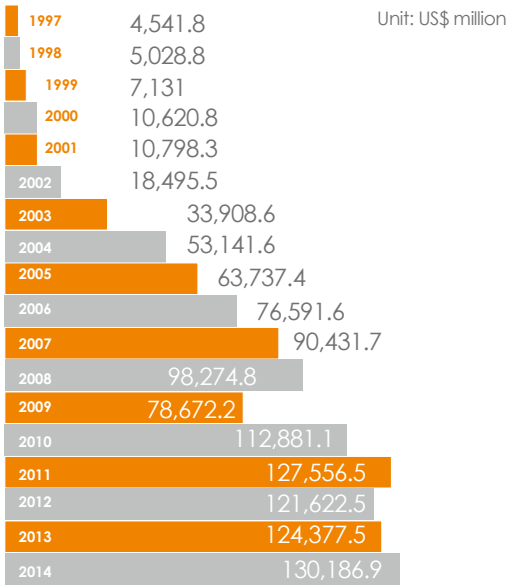
- **Institutionalized cross-strait talks resumed in June 2008.**
- **The Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement was concluded in 2010.**

Tourists from mainland China pose in front of the National Palace Museum in Taipei. The number of visitors from across the Taiwan Strait has soared since 2008. (Central News Agency)

mainland 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 economic exchanges with the Chinese mainland have been lifted. These days, Taiwan is one of the biggest investors in mainland China, and more than 1 million Taiwanese managerial and technical experts and their families live and work there.

While in office from May 2008 to May 2016, former President Ma Ying-jeou worked to cultivate closer and more amicable relations with mainland China. In June 2008, institutionalized talks between Taiwan's semi-official Straits Exchange Foundation and the mainland'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 strait, producing 23 formal agreements and two consensuses. Areas and issues covered include direct transportation, food safety, financial cooperation, joint crime-fighting, mutual judicial assistance, industry standards, fishery and agricultural collaboration, protection of intellectual property rights, medical care, nuclear energy safety, investment protection, customs, trade in services, meteorological cooperation, earthquake surveillance, flight safety and taxation. In addition, four

TRADE BETWEEN TAIWAN AND MAINLAND CHINA



Source: ROC Customs Statistics

memoranda of understanding had been signed regarding cross-strait cooperation on financial supervision and currency clearing.

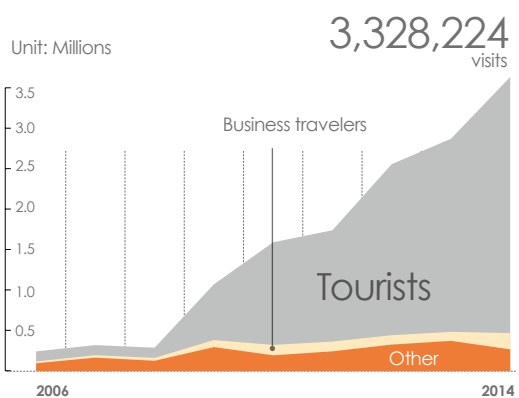
Most significant among the accords is the Cross-Straits Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) concluded in June 2010,

which aims to normalize trade and economic relations between Taiwan and the mainland. The pact calls for the progressive elimination or reduction of tariffs on most goods as well as the opening of the service sector to investment and competition.

Civil exchanges across the strait have also increased as bilateral relations have warmed. The two sides agreed to allow tour groups from mainland China to visit Taiwan in July 2008 and individual tourists in June 2011. In 2014, mainland Chinese tourists made more than 3.3 million visits to Taiwan, in contrast to only around 70,000 mainland Chinese people traveling to the nation, mostly for business purposes, in 2007. In November 2014, the Civil Aeronautics Administration announced that up to 840 direct cross-strait flights per week would be allowed between 10 airports in Taiwan and 55 airports in mainland China. Pertinent restrictions have also been lifted to allow mainland Chinese students to pursue degrees at Taiwan's universities.

On November 7, 2015, then President Ma Ying-jeou met with mainland Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Singapore, marking the first top-level meeting between the two sides since Taiwan and mainland China came under separate rule in 1949.

MAINLAND CHINESE VISITORS TO TAIWAN



Source: National Immigration Agency, Ministry of the Interior, ROC

ECONOMY

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

DO YOU KNOW?

- Taiwan's economy grew by 3.92 percent in 2014.
- The nation signed free trade deals with New Zealand and Singapore in 2013.

The Port of Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan is the nation's largest commercial shipping hub. (Yeh Ming-yuan)

According to the World Trade Organization, it was the 20th-largest exporter and 18th-largest importer of merchandise in 2014. It was also the fifth-largest holder of foreign exchange reserves as of December 2014. Taiwan's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita reached US$22,648 in 2014. In terms of nominal GDP, Taiwan ranks close to Argentina and Belgium, while Taiwan's GDP per capita expressed as purchasing power parity ranks close to that of Denmark.

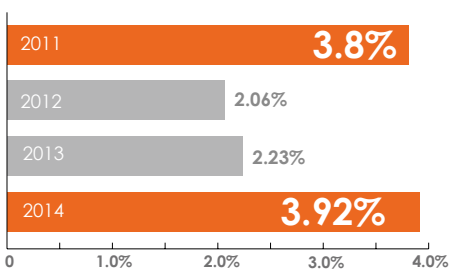
After weathering the global financial crisis through 2009, Taiwan's export-oriented economy took another hit in the second half of 2011 attributable to the eurozone debt crisis and financial deleveraging in developed countries. However, the situation has since improved, and statistics indicate that in 2014 Taiwan's overall exports and imports rose 2.7 percent and 1.6 percent, respectively, while its economy expanded 3.92 percent, the highest rate since 2012, over the previous year.

Authoritative annual surveys of the world's economies—including those conducted by the World Economic Forum, Business Environment Risk Intelligence and the Economist Intelligence Unit—have ranked Taiwan among the world's top nations year after year with respect to long-term growth and technological development. Results for 2014 were no exception (see table "Global Survey Rankings").

To foster the country's sustainable economic development, the Executive Yuan unveiled a massive economic stimulus plan (the Economic Power-Up Plan) in September 2012 to strengthen the country's responses to external influences like the European debt crisis and to improve prospects for long-term growth. To achieve these goals, the plan focuses on five initiatives: promoting innovative and diverse industries, developing new export markets, cultivating industry talent, spurring investments and public construction, and enhancing government efficacy.

In April 2013, the Cabinet outlined its Free Economic Pilot Zones (FEPZ) project aimed at liberalizing trade through regulatory easing on flows of capital, goods and talent. The FEPZ initiative will leverage Taiwan's advantages in

ECONOMIC GROWTH RATES



Source: Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics

human resources, ICT and services, as well as its pivotal location in Asia and special economic ties with mainland China to develop high added-value economic activity. The FEPZ Phase 1 promotion plan was launched in August 2013. The draft of the Special Act for Free Economic Pilot Zones was passed by the Executive Yuan in December 2013 and was reviewed by the Legislative Yuan in 2014.

In July 2013, the ROC signed the Agreement between New Zealand and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu on Economic Cooperation (ANZTEC). The high-quality economic cooperation pact is Taiwan's first with a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. In November the same year, a similar pact, the Agreement between Singapore and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu on Economic Partnership (ASTEP), was signed between the ROC and Singapore. It is Taiwan's first such accord with a trading partner in Southeast Asia. Both ANZTEC and ASTEP go beyond World Trade Organization requirements.

SNAPSHOT

GDP (nominal):
US$530 billion (25th in the world)

GDP per capita (nominal):
US$22,648 (36th in the world)

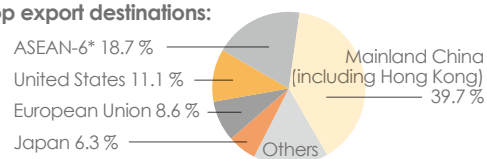
GDP (PPP) per capita (by IMF):
US$42,617 (16th in the world)

(2014)

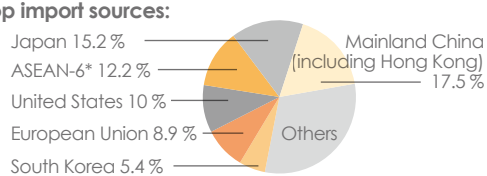
TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROFILE (2014)

Bilateral trade volume: US$588 billion
Exports: US$313.8 billion
Imports: US$274.2 billion
Trade balance: US$39.6 billion surplus

Top export destinations:



Top import sources:



Foreign exchange reserves: US$418.98 billion

(among the top five in the world as of December 2014)

*ASEAN-6: Six of the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines,Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam

Registered outward investment: US$17.12 billion

• Top five destinations

US$9.83 billion	Mainland China
US$3.08 billion	British Territories in the Caribbean
US$680 million	Japan
US$651.4 million	United Kingdom
US$646.5 million	Vietnam

Registered inward investment: US$6.1 billion

• Top five sources

US$1.52 billion	British territories in the Caribbean
US$582.7 million	United States
US$558.7 million	Germany
US$548.7 million	Japan
US$511.4 million	Hong Kong

Taiwan has also completed research with both Indonesia and India on the feasibility of an economic cooperation agreement (ECA), with the results released in Jakarta in December 2012 and in New Delhi in September 2013, respectively. Developments such as ANZTEC, ASTEP, the ECAs and FEPZs are expected to facilitate the country's participation in such regional economic integration blocks as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

Global Survey Rankings

Topic of Survey (Date of Publication)	Rank	Countries Surveyed	Surveying Institution
World Competitiveness Scoreboard (May 2015)	11	61	International Institute for Management Development
Investment climate (April 2015)	5	50	Business Environment Risk Intelligence
Networked Readiness Index 2014 (April 2015)	18	143	World Economic Forum
2015 Index of Economic Freedom (January 2015)	14	186	Heritage Foundation & *The Wall Street Journal*
2015 Legatum Prosperity Index (November 2015)	21	142	Legatum Institute
Ease of Doing Business (October 2015)	11	189	World Bank
Global Competitiveness Index 2015-2016 (September 2015)	15	140	World Economic Forum

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In April 2014, the National Science Council, which was established to strengthen academia-industry links, support academic research and develop Taiwan's science parks, was reorganized and renamed

DO YOU KNOW?

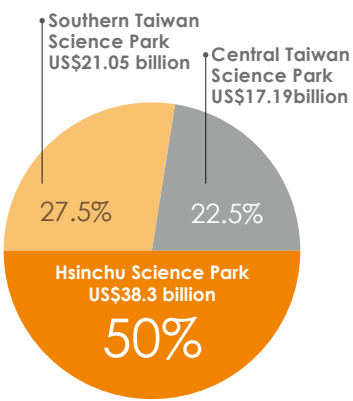
- Taiwan is one of the world's leading producers of information and communications technology products.
- The country has been ranked ninth globally in technological and scientific infrastructure.

A Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. employee at one of the firm's 12-inch wafer fabrication facilities (Courtesy of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.)

as the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). While continuing its predecessor's innovative measures and programs, the MOST aims to focus academic research on the needs of industry as Taiwan relies on the science and technology sector as a key driver of economic growth and national progress.

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

TURNOVER OF FIRMS IN TAIWAN'S THREE MAJOR SCIENCE PARKS (2014)



Source: Ministry of Science and Technology

The ITRI has been instrumental in establishing several companies that have gone on to command prominent positions in the global marketplace, including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. and United Microelectronics Corp., which are among the world's top custom integrated circuit chipmakers. The institute's innovative prowess is best illustrated by the fact that in the past seven years it has won a total of 18 R&D 100 Awards; highly prestigious honors given out by US-based R&D Magazine. Two of these award-winning technologies for the cement and LED industries have already been licensed to Taiwan Cement Corp. and MPI Corp., respectively.

The III strives to boost Taiwan's global competitiveness by developing the country's information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, and plays a key role in promoting ICT in both the public and private sectors. To that end, the III serves as a think

PRODUCTION VALUE & GLOBAL SHARE OF TAIWAN-MADE PRODUCTS & SERVICES (2014)

No. 1 Worldwide

Category	Production Value (US$ million)	Quantity	Global Share (%)
Custom IC fabrication	28,863		68.54
IC testing & packaging	13,753		50.5
Fiberglass cloth	705		32.6
Chlorella		841 tons	49.3
Functional fabrics	4,548		28.18
High-end bicycles		3,470,000	44

No. 2 Worldwide

Personal navigation devices	1,174		48.67
IC substrates	2,242		25.7
Large-sized TFT-LCD panels	21,018		21.85
Electro-deposited copper foil	1,288		25.38
IC design	17,062		19.9
Silicon-based solar cells		9,611 MW	21.3
Assistive devices (electric scooters and wheelchairs)		143,483 units	21.4
Printed circuit boards	7,284		16.7

Source: Industry & Technology Intelligence Services Project, Ministry of Economic Affairs

tank on ICT policy, conducts extensive research and provides training. The institute has also played a role in facilitating the development of 165 startups in the past five years.

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 ICT, biotechnology, precision machinery and nanotechnology. According to the *Global Competitiveness Report 2015-2016* released by the World Economic Forum, Taiwan ranked 28th among the 140 economies surveyed in the "technological readiness" category and 11th in the "innovation" category. It also ranked ninth in the categories of technological infrastructure and scientific infrastructure among the 61 top economies surveyed in the 2015 *World Competitiveness Yearbook*, which is compiled by the International Institute for Management Development.

EDUCATION

Education is strongly emphasized in the ROC and a large share of government expenditures is allocated for educational purposes. With an increasing portion of the public pursuing higher education, people with at least a

DO YOU KNOW?

- Taiwan implemented a 12-year compulsory education system in 2014.
- The government's Taiwan Scholarship Program provides grants to foreign students interested in pursuing undergraduate or graduate studies at local universities.

Students in an environmental science class at Taipei Municipal Zhongzheng Senior High School help keep a pond on their campus clean and ecologically balanced. (Jimmy Lin)

junior college or university degree now account for 42 percent of Taiwan's population aged 15 and above, which is 10 percentage points more than a decade ago.

To offer young students a longer period of basic learning, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in April 2012 announced plans to extend universal education in Taiwan from nine to 12 years. The new program, designed to ensure that students spend an additional three years at academically oriented senior high schools, vocational senior high schools or junior colleges, was implemented in 2014.

Every year in international competitions such as the International Science Olympiad, young people from Taiwan win distinctions in physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology and informatics. Taiwan's successful high-tech sector continues to motivate the majority of university students to major in science and technology, but the last few years have seen a slight growth in interest in the arts, humanities and social sciences.

Taiwan's high-caliber human resources have contributed tremendously to enhancing economic prosperity and quality of life. In 2013, the MOE absorbed the former Sports Affairs Council as part of the government's efforts to promote sports for all. Taipei will host the 2017 Summer Universiade, the second-largest multi-sport competition after the Olympics.

Local universities, excluding those in the vocational education system, offer more than 110 degree programs taught in English. Both government and university scholarships are available for international students. The Taiwan Scholarship Program, for instance, offers grants to students interested in Mandarin Chinese studies as well as those who wish to pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees in diverse fields. Interested applicants may contact the ROC's embassies and representative offices or visit the MOE's website at *english.moe.gov.tw*.

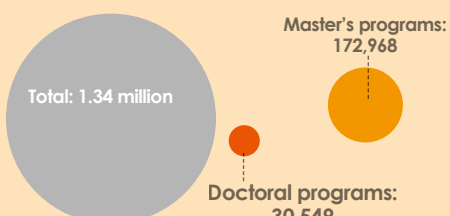
SNAPSHOT

Literacy rate (15 or older)**: 98.5 percent** (2014)

Government outlays for education, science and culture: 19.7 percent of central government budget (2015)

Institutions of higher learning:159
(145 universities and colleges, 14 junior colleges)

Students enrolled in institutions of higher learning:



(2014)

CULTURE

Taiwan is renowned for its fascinating blend of traditional and modern culture.

For a start, it is home to the National Palace Museum, famous for its collection of Chinese

DO YOU KNOW?

- Taiwan is the center of the Mandarin-language pop music industry.
- The National Palace Museum in Taipei contains one of the largest collections of ancient Chinese artifacts in the world.

The prominent Taiwanese opera troupe Ming Hwa Yuan Arts and Cultural Group performs its classic work *Formosa – The Legendary Heaven.* (Courtesy of Ming Hwa Yuan Arts and Cultural Group)

antiquities and one of the world's finest museums. Traditional architecture is another attraction, not only as seen in Taiwan's temples and historical residences, but also in the many old structures restored and repurposed as community centers, cafés, stores and other public spaces. In fact, many facets of traditional Chinese arts, crafts and customs are better preserved here than anywhere else in the world. Taiwan is one of the few places that still use traditional Chinese characters, for example, while calligraphy competitions and festivals are always popular events.

Traditional tenets of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism continue to be well represented in everything from temple celebrations to literature to the visual and performing arts. In addition, visitors can discover the heritage of the country's Holo, Hakka 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 round-the-clock entertainment options. There are widely regarded modern dance troupes as well as a vibrant music scene, which is hardly surprising as Taiwan is the world capital of Mandarin-language pop music. The local television and movie industries have seen a resurgence in recent years, while the country's booming cultural and creative sector is evident in the many designer stores, markets and exhibitions that are growing in number every year.

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

The Guoguang Opera Company performs in an outdoor space at the National Center for Traditional Arts in Yilan County, northeastern Taiwan. (Chin Hung-hao)

MASS MEDIA

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

DO YOU KNOW?

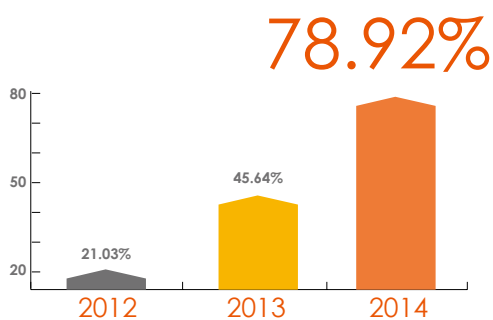
- **There are more than 2,700 news agencies in Taiwan.**
- **Local book publishers release more than 40,000 new titles each year.**

Taiwan's media industry, which is known for its dynamism and competitiveness, enjoys extensive press freedoms. (Jimmy Lin)

Most types of media are engaged in an industry-wide transition to digital forms of distribution. Print editions of magazines and newspapers, including the four 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 book industry, which releases over 40,000 new titles each year.

Terrestrial television switched from analog to digital broadcasting at the end of June 2012. Cable television service, available throughout all but the most mountainous areas of Taiwan, also provides digital programming.

DIGITAL TV HOUSEHOLD PENETRATION RATE



Source: National Communications Commission

SNAPSHOT

Radio stations: 171

Terrestrial television stations: 5

Cable television operators: 57

Satellite broadcasting companies: 112 (294 channels)

TV and radio program production and distribution companies: 16,539

Audio (compact disc, etc.) production companies: 14,294

Newspaper publishers: 2,514

Magazine publishers: 12,004

Book publishers: 18,543

News agencies: 2,771 (2014)

VISITING TAIWAN

With its unique fusion of cultures, breathtaking scenery, diverse cuisine, exciting city life and well-developed hospitality industry, Taiwan is the ideal destination for various types of travelers. Citizens of 45

DO YOU KNOW?

- **Citizens of 45 countries can enter Taiwan visa-free for 30 or 90 days.**
- **Taiwan has a 24-hour multilingual travel information hotline (0800-011-765).**

Members of the Amis tribe, Taiwan's largest indigenous group, perform a traditional dance at a harvest festival. (Yeh Jui-tsung)

countries 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 345-kilometer high-speed rail system along its west coast. The high-speed trains allow travel between Taipei and Kaohsiung in 96 minutes. These two cities are also equipped with mass rapid transit systems that greatly help facilitate metropolitan transportation.

Exuberant young people jump for joy while attending the Taiwan International Balloon Fiesta in southeastern Taiwan's Taitung County. (Cheng Yuan-ching)

Major Festivals & Events

Month	Location	Festival/Event*
Jan.	Islandwide	New Year's Eve Celebrations
Feb.	New Taipei City	Pingxi International Sky Lantern Festival
Mar.	Tainan City	Tainan Yanshui Beehive Fireworks Festival
	Taichung City **	Taiwan Lantern Festival
	Kaohsiung City	Songjiang Battle Array (folk performances)
Apr.	Taichung City	Mazu International Festival (religious pilgrimage)
	Islandwide	Hakka Tung Blossom Festival
	Penghu County	Penghu Ocean Fireworks Festival
May	New Taipei City	Fulong Sand Sculpture Art Festival
June	Changhua County	Lukang Dragon Boat Festival
	Taitung County	Taiwan International Balloon Fiesta
July	New Taipei City	Hohaiyan Gongliao Rock Festival
	Matsu Islands	Matsu Tern-watching Tour
Aug.	Nantou County	Sun Moon Lake International Swimming Carnival
Sep.	Miaoli County	Sanyi International Woodcarving Art Festival
Oct.	Islandwide	Taiwan Hot Spring & Fine-Cuisine Carnival
	Tainan City	Kunshen Wangye's Salt for Peace Festival (folk culture)
Nov.	Islandwide	Taiwan Cycling Festival
	Taitung County	Taiwan Open of Surfing
Dec.	Hualien County	Taroko Gorge Marathon

*For more information, please visit the Tourism Bureau's website at *www.taiwan.net.tw* or *eventaiwan.tw/en/*.

**The Taiwan Lantern Festival is held in a different city or county each year. It will be held in Taoyuan in 2016.

Major Tourist Attractions

Northern Taiwan

National Palace Museum: *www.npm.gov.tw*

Taipei 101: *www.taipei-101.com.tw*

Yingge Ceramics Museum: *www.ceramics.ntpc.gov.tw*

Shilin Night Market: *eng.taiwan.net.tw*

National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall: *www.cksmh.gov.tw*

Lungshan Temple: *www.lungshan.org.tw*

Yangmingshan National Scenic Area: *www.ymsnp.gov.tw*

Northeast and Yilan Coast National Scenic Area: *www.necoast-nsa.gov.tw*

North Coast and Guanyinshan National Scenic Area: *www.northguan-nsa.gov.tw*

Central Taiwan

Sun Moon Lake National Scenic Area: *www.sunmoonlake.gov.tw*

Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village: *www.nine.com.tw*

Tri-Mountain National Scenic Area: *www.trimt-nsa.gov.tw*

National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute: *www.ntcri.gov.tw*

Lukang Township: *www.lukang.gov.tw*

National Museum of Natural Science: *www.nmns.edu.tw*

Yushan (Jade Mountain) National Park: *www.ysnp.gov.tw*

Eastern Taiwan

Taroko National Park: *www.taroko.gov.tw*

Taiwan Forest Recreation Areas: *recreation.forest.gov.tw*

East Coast National Scenic Area: *www.eastcoast-nsa.gov.tw*

East Rift Valley National Scenic Area: *www.erv-nsa.gov.tw*

Southern Taiwan

Kenting National Park: *www.ktnp.gov.tw*

Alishan (Mount Ali) National Scenic Area: *www.ali-nsa.net*

Siraya National Scenic Area: *www.siraya-nsa.gov.tw*

Outlying Islands

Penghu National Scenic Area: *www.penghu-nsa.gov.tw*

Matsu National Scenic Area: *www.matsu-nsa.gov.tw*

Green Island and Orchid Island: *tour.taitung.gov.tw*

International Trade Shows

The Taiwan External Trade Development Council organizes trade shows throughout the year encompassing the entire spectrum of industries. Major venues include the Taipei World Trade Center Exhibition Halls in downtown Taipei and Nangang Exhibition Hall in suburban Taipei, and the Kaohsiung Exhibition Center in southern Taiwan. For more details, please see *www.taiwantradeshows.com.tw*.

General Information for Visitors

The ROC 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*	Dutch, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Spanish
Travel Information Hotline 0800-011-765 (24 hours)	Mandarin, English, Japanese, Korean
Information for Foreigners *iff.immigration.gov.tw*	Chinese, English
International Community Service Hotline 0800-024-111 (24 hours)	Mandarin, English, Japanese

Currency

National currency: New Taiwan Dollar (NT$ or TWD)
Exchange rate: NT$31 per US$1 (December 2014)

Time Differential

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

Credit Cards & Travelers' Checks

Major credit cards are widely accepted. Travelers' checks can be cashed at foreign exchange banks, 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.

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*

Customs Regulations

Customs Administration
Ministry of Finance
Phone: (+886-2) 2550-5500 ext. 2116
Website: *web.customs.gov.tw*

LEARNING MANDARIN

Taiwan is home to numerous high-level institutions that offer Mandarin-language classes to nonnative speakers. Since the establishment of the Mandarin Training Center at National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei

DO YOU KNOW?

- The number of foreign students learning Mandarin in Taiwan has doubled over the past decade.
- The government's Huayu Enrichment Scholarship offers financial support to foreign students who wish to study Mandarin in Taiwan.

Students from all over the world come to Taiwan to learn Mandarin. (Chuang Kung-ju)

City in 1956, more than 40 university language institutes have been set up across the country. The number of foreign students attending these centers increased from 7,647 in the 2004-05 school year to 15,526 in the 2014-15 school year, according to statistics from the Ministry of Education (MOE).

The MOE offers short-term study programs for groups of overseas Mandarin teachers as well as foreign students of the language. Under these initiatives, the MOE provides subsidies to groups of teachers from abroad who wish to visit the nation to enhance their professional development and/or observe Mandarin teaching in Taiwan. The MOE also offers subsidies to groups of students to study Mandarin in the country during the summer and winter academic breaks. Students find that in addition to being able to enjoy the benefits of modern teaching facilities, they gain a great deal of knowledge about Chinese culture by experiencing Taiwan's unique blend of tradition and modernity. Students attending classes in Taiwan can also learn traditional and simplified Chinese characters while enjoying the advantages of living in a free and democratic society.

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 affiliated language training centers around the nation, while also boosting international awareness and understanding of Taiwanese culture and society. The scholarships are awarded by Republic of China (Taiwan) representative offices or embassies based on the merits of the applicants. A monthly stipend of NT$25,000 (US$800) is provided to scholarship recipients. Applicants may select the duration of the scholarship, which can last for two months (summer course), three months, six months, nine months, or a maximum of one year.

A list of university Mandarin training centers and information on learning Mandarin in Taiwan can be found on the websites of the MOE (http://english.moe.gov.tw/), the Foundation for International Cooperation in Higher Education of Taiwan (www.fichet.org.tw), the World Chinese Language Association (www.wcla.org.tw), and the Association of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (www.atcsl.org).