

■■ TAIPEI WAY

January 24–27, 2020 | 3 Days 2 Nights | Taipei & Taichung
Group Trip with The Hypebeast Squad | Source: mariasometimesniskie.wordpress.com

"TRAVELING — It leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."

— IBN BATTUTA

■ TRIP OVERVIEW

Trip Dates	January 24–27, 2020 (3 Days, 2 Nights)
Destinations	Taipei + day trip to Taichung
Group	The Hypebeast Squad — group of friends Solo accommodation arranged separately
Visa	VISA-FREE for Philippine passport holders — up to 14 days Passport valid 6+ months
Accommodation	Taiwan Youth Hostel and Capsule — female dorm (cheap and clean)
Currency	New Taiwan Dollar (NTD) ~1 NTD = ■1.85 PHP
Transport	MRT (Taipei Metro), buses, walking Yoyo card recommended for MRT
Weather	January = Winter Cool to cold, ~10–18°C in Taipei
Language	Mandarin Google Translate recommended
Internet	Buy SIM card or pocket WiFi at Taoyuan Airport after immigration
Power Socket	Type A 110V (same as Philippines)
Note	This trip was just before COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns (Jan 2020)

■ ACCOMMODATION

- **Taiwan Youth Hostel and Capsule** — taiwanyh.com
 - *Female dorm chosen (receptionist recommended over mixed dorm)*
 - *Cheap, clean, excellent toilets | Great for solo or budget travelers*
 - *Highly recommended — would return for mixed dorm experience next time*
- Friends stayed at a separate accommodation | Met up nightly for food exploration
 - ★ *Capsule and youth hostels in Taiwan are great value — modern and well-maintained*
 - ★ *Check-in typically starts 3 PM | Can store bags before check-in if you arrive early*

■ DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 — January 24 (Friday) | ARRIVAL + WANHUA + NIGHT MARKETS

Arrival in Taipei

- Arrived in Taipei | Cleared immigration at Taoyuan International Airport
- Picked up SIM card and Yoyo card (stored-value MRT card) at airport
- Checked in solo at **Taiwan Youth Hostel and Capsule** (female dorm)
- Met up with **The Hypebeast Squad** at **Wanhua District**
 - *Group signature pose photo taken here — one of the best travel decisions ever made*

Evening — Night Market & Street Food Crawl

- **Shilin Night Market** — one of Taipei's most famous night markets
 - *Massive, lively, and packed with street food stalls and games*
- **Ximending District** — Taipei's youth culture and street food hub
 - *Bubble milk tea | Beef noodles | Taiwan beer — food heaven!*
 - *'Orgasmic feeling' — food in Taipei is life-changing according to the blogger*
- ★ *Try local Taiwan Beer — light, refreshing, and pairs perfectly with street food*
- ★ *Beef noodles and bubble milk tea are absolute must-tries on Day 1*

Day 2 — January 25 (Saturday) | TAIPEI 101 + NATIONAL MUSEUM + PINGXI

Morning — Taipei 101 Area

- **Taipei 101** — iconic 508m skyscraper | World's tallest from 2004–2009
- Lunch: **Din Tai Fung** inside Taipei 101
 - *Verdict: FAR better than Din Tai Fung branches in the Philippines and Singapore*
 - *'Not even close' — the Taipei original is in a different league*
- *The Starbucks with tower view was closed during their visit — check opening hours*

Afternoon — Culture & History

- **National Palace Museum** — one of the world's greatest collections of Chinese art
 - *Houses over 700,000 artifacts | Allow at least 2–3 hours*
 - *Admission: ~200 NTD (~\$370) | Free audio guide available*

Late Afternoon — Pingxi Day Trip

- **Pingxi Old Street** — charming historic mountain town
 - *Famous for sky lantern releasing | Old-style shops and traditional food*
 - *~1.5 hours from Taipei via train | Pingxi Branch Line — scenic mountain railway*
- ★ *Buy a sky lantern in Pingxi and write your wishes — unforgettable experience*

Day 3 — January 26 (Sunday) | YEHLIU + TAICHUNG DAY TRIP

Morning — Yehliu Geopark

- **Yehliu Geopark** — dramatic coastal rock formations on the north coast
 - *Famous for the 'Queen's Head' mushroom rock | ~45 min from Taipei*
 - *Entrance fee: ~80 NTD (~\$148) | Best visited in the morning before crowds*

■ *Rock formations are fragile — do not climb or touch them*

Afternoon — Taichung Day Trip

- **Zhongshe Flower Market**, Taichung — seasonal flower fields and gardens
 - *Colorful tulips, sunflowers, and local blooms depending on season*
 - *~2 hours from Taipei by high-speed rail or bus*
 - **Rainbow Village** (Caihong Juancun) — vibrant murals by veteran artist Huang Yung-Fu
 - *Every surface painted with colorful folk art characters and animals | FREE entry*
 - *Located in Nantun District, Taichung | 15 min from Taichung HSR station*
- ★ *Combine Zhongshe Flower Market + Rainbow Village in one Taichung day trip*

Day 4 — January 27 (Monday) | DEPARTURE → SINGAPORE

- Departed Taipei | Flight to Singapore
- Upon landing in Singapore — news broke of **Kobe Bryant's passing**
 - *A memorable and bittersweet end to a wonderful trip*

■ ALL SIGHTS AT A GLANCE

■	Wanhua District	<i>Historic district in Taipei Longshan Temple area Great for night photography</i>
■	Shilin Night Market	<i>Taipei's largest and most famous night market Endless street food, games, shopping</i>
■ ■	Ximending	<i>Taipei's youth culture hub Street food, fashion, bubble tea, live performances</i>
■ ■	Taipei 101	<i>508m skyscraper Observation deck Din Tai Fung restaurant inside Icon of modern Taiwan</i>
■ ■	National Palace Museum	<i>World-class collection of Chinese imperial artifacts Must-visit for culture and history</i>
■	Pingxi Old Street	<i>Mountain village Sky lantern releasing Scenic railway Old-style shops</i>
■	Yehliu Geopark	<i>Dramatic coastal rock formations Famous 'Queen's Head' rock North coast of Taiwan</i>
■	Zhongshe Flower Market	<i>Seasonal flower fields in Taichung Colorful and photogenic Best in spring</i>
■	Rainbow Village	<i>Taichung Murals by 90-year-old veteran artist Entire village painted FREE entry</i>

■ FOOD & DRINK HIGHLIGHTS

Food / Drink	Where	Notes
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Bubble Milk Tea	Ximending / Night markets	<i>Life-changing — Taiwan is the birthplace of bubble tea Try original and taro flavors</i>
Beef Noodles	Ximending street stalls	<i>'To die for' — rich broth, tender beef Taiwan's most iconic comfort food</i>
Din Tai Fung	Taipei 101	<i>Original Taipei branch far superior to PH/Singapore versions Xiao Long Bao a must</i>
Taiwan Beer	Night markets / restaurants	<i>Light, crisp lager Pairs perfectly with night market food Try the classic green can</i>
Street Food	Shilin Night Market	<i>Stinky tofu, oyster omelette, scallion pancake, grilled corn, taro balls</i>
Sky Lantern Snacks	Pingxi Old Street	<i>Local food stalls along the old street Try traditional rice dishes and sweet treats</i>

■ TRAVEL TIPS

Getting Around

- MRT (Taipei Metro) is the easiest way to get around | Buy a **Yoyo Card** at the airport
- Yoyo Card = stored-value card for MRT, buses, convenience stores
- Taichung day trip: Take the **High Speed Rail (HSR)** from Taipei HSR Station (~40 min)
- Pingxi Old Street: Pingxi Branch Line train from Ruifang Station (~45 min from Taipei)
- Yehliu: Bus from Taipei Bus Station or organized tour (~45 min)

Money & Shopping

- Currency: NTD | Withdraw from ATMs after arrival (better rates than airport booths)
- Major shops accept credit cards | Small stalls and night markets prefer cash
- Tax-free shopping available for foreigners with passport | Min. purchase: 2,000 NTD
- Ximending is the best area for fashion, street wear, and unique Taipei souvenirs

Food Strategy

- Night markets are the best bang for your buck — eat dinner here every night
- Book Din Tai Fung at Taipei 101 early or arrive when it opens to avoid long waits
- Bubble tea shops are everywhere — try different flavors and brands
- 7-Eleven and FamilyMart are open 24/7 — great for breakfast, snacks, and late nights

Practical Notes

- Visa-free for PH passport holders — 14 days maximum stay
- Power socket: Type A | 110V — same plug as Philippines, no adapter needed
- Google Translate works well for Mandarin menus and signage
- Taiwan is extremely pet-friendly — lots of cats and dogs in cafes and shops
- People are very kind and helpful despite potential language barrier

★ *Taiwan is very safe — solo travel and group travel are both comfortable and easy*

★ *Would highly recommend for a first-time East Asia trip — very beginner-friendly*

Source: mariasometimesniskie.wordpress.com | Taipei Way Blog — January 24–27, 2020

Note: This blog predates the COVID-19 pandemic. Entry requirements may have changed since this trip.