

TAIWAN TRIP ITINERARY

March 20–29, 2023 | 10 Days | Taipei · Hualien · Taichung · Nantou · Yushan

Source: mariasometimesniskie.wordpress.com

ESSENTIAL INFO

Visa	Visa-FREE for Philippine passport holders — up to 14 days Passport valid 6+ months required
Currency	New Taiwan Dollar (TWD/NTD) 1 TWD = ~1.85 PHP Use Bank of Taiwan ATMs (avoid airport booths)
Language	Mandarin (especially among elderly) Use Google Translate Locals are very helpful
Weather	Spring (March) = 18–25°C Four seasons: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter
Power Socket	Type A 110V (same as Philippines)
Transport	Efficient trains, buses, taxis, Uber (Grab not available) Trains 6 AM–11 PM
Internet	Buy SIM card or pocket WiFi at Taoyuan Airport after immigration Works even in mountains
Yoyo Card	Stored-value card for MRT and buses — buy at airport or stations Load 80 TWD (~PHP148)
Masks	Mandatory on public transit and indoors during this trip period
Locker	MRT station lockers available up to 24 hrs — extendable
Bikes	Youbike app — link Taiwanese number + credit card Park in designated bike lanes
Budget	PHP 60,000 / 30,000 TWD for 10 days inclusive of Yushan hike

FLIGHTS & ARRIVAL COSTS

Expense	TWD	PHP
Round-trip flight MNL ↔ Taipei (20kg baggage + insurance)	—	PHP 9,731
Philippine Travel Tax (pay before flight)	—	PHP 1,620
SIM Card (Klook, pre-booked)	—	PHP 810.80
Yoyo Card (stored-value MRT card, Klook)	80 TWD	PHP 550

ACCOMMODATION SUMMARY

Expense	TWD	PHP
Morwing Hotel, Taipei (Mar 20–22, 2 nights, private w/ bathroom)	—	PHP 4,381
Bay House Comfortel, Hualien (Mar 22–24, 2 nights)	—	PHP 2,597
Adagio Hostel, Taichung (Mar 24–25, 1 night, balcony room)	—	PHP 2,821
Backpack 41 Youth Hostel, Taichung (Mar 25–27, 3D2N mixed dorm)	800 TWD	PHP 1,510
Paiyun Lodge, Yushan (Mar 26–27, included in DIY hike package)	—	Included

Meander Taipei Hostel, Ximending (Mar 27–29, 2 nights, female dorm)	—	PHP 2,075
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- ★ Bay House Comfortel Hualien: Staff very helpful with food recs | 9-min walk to MRT | No elevator
- ★ Adagio Hostel Taichung: Has elevator | No signage outside — look carefully
- ★ Backpack 41: Password-protected rooms | No luggage storage at front desk — extend stay to store bags
- ★ Meander Taipei: Near Ximen Station | Laundry available | Only 2 guests in room

■ TRANSPORT IN TAIWAN

Expense	TWD	PHP
Train: Taipei → Hualien (Puyuma Express, 10:24–12:39)	440 TWD	PHP 814
Train: Hualien → Taichung via Changhua (Puyuma Express, ~4 hrs)	815 TWD	PHP 1,508
Klook Private Driver Tour: Taroko Gorge (full day)	—	PHP 4,947
Klook Joiner Tour: Sun Moon Lake (fare + lunch + fees + bike)	—	PHP 3,238
Bus 260: Taipei Main MRT → Yangmingshan (45 min)	Yoyo Card	Yoyo Card

- ★ Book TRA train tickets at tip.railway.gov.tw | Print at any station or 7-Eleven (8 TWD fee)
- ★ High-speed rail: North to South in under 1 hour | Regular trains also available

■ DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 — March 20 (Mon) | TAIPEI 🇹🇼 ■ Arrival

9:30 AM — Taoyuan International Airport

- Arrive Taoyuan Airport | Long immigration line but moves quickly
- Pick up **SIM Card** (PHP 810.80) + **Yoyo Card** (PHP 550) outside immigration
- Take Taoyuan MRT to Taipei

11:30 AM — Taipei City

- Check in at **Morwing Hotel**, Ximending | Leave bags and explore
- Lunch: **Yong Kang Beef** — beef tendon noodles | **250 TWD (~PHP 465)**
- 2:00 PM — Hike **Elephant Mountain** — 600 steps, 1.5 km | **FREE**
 - Stunning 360° view of Taipei skyline including Taipei 101
- 6:00 PM — Coffee with Swiss friend at **Louisa Coffee**, Ximending
- 8:00 PM — Early rest

Day 2 — March 21 (Tue) | YANGMINGSHAN + JIUFEN

8:00 AM

- Meet up with college friend Mia at Taipei Main MRT Station
- 9:00 AM — Bus 260 from Taipei Main MRT → **Yangmingshan National Park** (45 min)
 - 11,338 hectares | Only park in Taiwan with hot springs and volcanic terrain

■ *Cherry blossoms (sakura) in full bloom during March!*

- 12:30 PM — Return to Taipei | Lunch: **TKK Fried Chicken**
- Afternoon — **Jiufen Old Street** (2 hrs) — ancient street + local food
 - *Try: **Gan Yi Taro Balls** — street food must-try*
- 6:00 PM — Back to Taipei | Freshen up
- 7:00 PM — Attempted Taipei Restaurant Bus via Klook (didn't arrive) → settled for McDonald's
 - *Got full refund via Klook for the Restaurant Bus no-show*

Day 3 — March 22 (Wed) | TAIPEI → HUALIEN

8:00 AM

- Breakfast at McDonald's with Mia
- 10:24 AM — **Puyuma Express** train Taipei → Hualien
 - *Duration: ~2 hrs 15 min | Ticket: 440 TWD (~PHP 814)*
- 12:39 PM — Arrive Hualien | Drop bags at Bay House Comfortel (check-in at 4 PM)

Afternoon — Hualien Food Crawl

- 1:30 PM — **A Kuei's Sticky Rice** — steamed rice in bamboo + sausage | **125 TWD (~PHP 231)**
- 2:00 PM — Deep-fried egg scallion pancake (spicy) near hotel | **75 TWD (~PHP 139)**
- 3:30 PM — Hotel check-in
- 6:00 PM — Dinner at **Wang Teahouse** | **300 TWD (~PHP 555)**
- 7:00 PM — **Dongdamen Night Market** — massive & well-organized | Live singers, gaming booths
- 10:00 PM — Drinks at **1709 Cafe Bar** with Swiss friend

Day 4 — March 23 (Thu) | TAROKO GORGE ■■ (FREE entry)

9:30 AM — Picked up by private driver (Klook) | Full day tour — PHP 4,947

- **Stop 1: Qingshui Cliff** — cliffs plunge 1,000m to Pacific Ocean | Stunning viewpoint
- **Stop 2: Shakadang Trail** (Mysterious Valley Trail) — 4 km | Crystal-clear blue water + marble rocks | No swimming
- **Stop 3: Buluowan Suspension Bridge** — longest & highest in Taroko | Indigenous Taroko tribe exhibits
 - *Try: mochi at Buluowan — smooth and delicious*
- **Stop 4: Taroko Visitor Center + Swallow Grotto + Tunnel of Nine Turns** — narrowest canyon section | Helmet required
- **Stop 5: Changchun Temple** (Shrine of Everlasting Spring) — waterfall + mountain views | Veterans memorial
- **Stop 6: Taroko Gorge Entrance Gate** — iconic photo stop
- **Stop 7: Qixingtan Beach** — pebble beach, crystal-clear water | 30 min relaxation stop

Evening — Hualien Night Food

- 7:00 PM — **Hua Lien Xiang Shrimp Dumpling Soup** | **75 TWD (~PHP 139)**
- 8:00 PM — **Guo Sheng Chicken Cutlet + Squid** | **250 TWD (~PHP 463)**

■ *Taroko National Park is completely FREE to enter*

Day 5 — March 24 (Fri) | HUALIEN → TAICHUNG

9:30 AM

- Breakfast at **Starbucks**, Hualien
- 10:26 AM — **Puyuma Express 271** Hualien → Changhua
 - *Duration: ~4 hrs 20 min | Ticket: 815 TWD (~PHP 1,508)*
- 3:30 PM — Arrive & check in at **Adagio Hostel**, Taichung

Afternoon & Evening — Taichung Explore

- 4:00 PM — **Animation Lane** — colorful anime/cartoon murals alley | **FREE**
- 5:00 PM — **Taichung 2nd Market** — beef puff | **40 TWD (~PHP 74)**
- 5:30 PM — Traditional noodles at **Archie**, 2nd Market | **150–200 TWD (~PHP 278–370)**
- 6:00 PM — **Chun Shui Tang Teahouse** — inventors of bubble milk tea! | **150 TWD (~PHP 278)**
- 7:00 PM — **Miyahara Ice Cream** — fancy shop, affordable ice cream | **250 TWD (~PHP 463)**
 - *Rich, creamy, very flavorful — highly recommended*

Day 6 — March 25 (Sat) | SUN MOON LAKE + FENG JIA NIGHT MARKET

Full Day — Sun Moon Lake Joiner Tour (Klook) — PHP 3,238

- Klook tour includes: transport, aboriginal lunch, entrance fees, bike rental, ropeway fees
- **Sun Moon Lake** — Taiwan's largest lake | One of world's top 10 most beautiful bikeways (CNNgo)
 - *Biked around the lake — incredibly relaxing | Plan 2–3 days if revisiting*
- Food tried: Ganoderma soup, sizzling venison, Shuzi red fish, bamboo shoots, Thao charcoal BBQ
- Saw **beetle trees** — unique to Nantou region | Tried authentic aboriginal meal

Evening

- 7:00 PM — Check in at **Backpack 41 Youth Hostel** | **800 TWD (~PHP 1,480)** for 3D2N
- 8:00 PM — **Feng Chia Night Market** — one of Taichung's most famous night markets | 30 min from hostel

Days 7–8 — March 26–27 (Sun–Mon) | YUSHAN (MT. JADE) HIKE

- Hike Mt. Jade (Yushan) — Taiwan's highest peak at **3,952m**
- Stay at **Paiyun Lodge** (included in DIY package)
- Part of the Asian Trilogy: Mt. Kinabalu, Mt. Jade, Mt. Fuji
 - *See separate blog: mariasometimesniskie.wordpress.com/2023/04/02/conquering-mt-jade/*

Day 9 — March 28 (Tue) | TAIPEI (Rest Day)

7:00 AM

- Breakfast at **Fu Hang Dou Jiang** (Michelin-starred!) — long queue but worth it
 - *Egg pancake, soy milk, thick bread with egg | 150 TWD (~PHP 278)*
- 5:30 PM — Dinner at **Hooters Taipei** with hiker friends

- 6:30 PM — Skipped Taipei Observatory (too foggy)
- 7:30 PM — Souvenir shopping at **Ximending**
- 10:00 PM — Early sleep (exhausted after Yushan hike)
- *Originally planned Kaohsiung but skipped due to exhaustion — Taipei rest day instead*

Day 10 — March 29 (Wed) | DEPARTURE

- 2:00 PM — Arrived back in the Philippines
- Just in time for a meeting!

■ FULL COST SUMMARY

Flights & Pre-Departure

Expense	TWD	PHP
Round-trip flight MNL ↔ Taipei (20kg baggage + insurance)	—	PHP 9,731
Philippine Travel Tax	—	PHP 1,620
SIM Card (Klook)	—	PHP 810.80
Yoyo Card (MRT stored-value)	80 TWD	PHP 550

Accommodation (All Hotels/Hostels)

Expense	TWD	PHP
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Bay House Comfortel, Hualien (2 nights)	—	PHP 2,597
Adagio Hostel, Taichung (1 night)	—	PHP 2,821
Backpack 41 Hostel, Taichung (3D2N)	800 TWD	PHP 1,510
Meander Taipei Hostel, Ximending (2 nights)	—	PHP 2,075
TOTAL ACCOMMODATION	—	PHP 13,384

Transport in Taiwan

Expense	TWD	PHP
Train: Taipei → Hualien (Puyuma Express)	440 TWD	PHP 814
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Klook Private Driver: Taroko Gorge (full day)	—	PHP 4,947
Klook Joiner Tour: Sun Moon Lake (all-in)	—	PHP 3,238

Food & Activities

Expense	TWD	PHP
Yong Kang Beef — beef tendon noodles, Taipei	250 TWD	PHP 465

A Kuei Sticky Rice — steamed bamboo rice, Hualien	125 TWD	PHP 231
Egg Scallion Pancake (spicy), Hualien	75 TWD	PHP 139
Wang Teahouse dinner, Hualien	300 TWD	PHP 555
Shrimp Dumpling Soup, Hualien	75 TWD	PHP 139
Guo Sheng Chicken Cutlet + Squid, Hualien	250 TWD	PHP 463
Beef Puff at Taichung 2nd Market	40 TWD	PHP 74
Traditional Noodles at Archie, Taichung	150–200 TWD	PHP 278–370
Bubble Milk Tea — Chun Shui Tang, Taichung	150 TWD	PHP 278
Miyahara Ice Cream, Taichung	250 TWD	PHP 463
Fu Hang Dou Jiang breakfast (Michelin), Taipei	150 TWD	PHP 278
Elephant Mountain hike, Taipei	FREE	FREE
Taroko National Park	FREE	FREE
Animation Lane, Taichung	FREE	FREE
Expense	TWD	PHP
ESTIMATED GRAND TOTAL (10 days, incl. Yushan hike)	~30,000 TWD	~PHP 60,000

■ PRACTICAL TIPS

Money

- Use **Bank of Taiwan ATMs** — avoid airport exchange booths (bad rates)
- Cannot exchange TWD in Philippines — bring USD or use ATM upon arrival
- Small shops rarely accept credit cards — carry cash
- Load Yoyo Card as needed — use for MRT, buses, and some convenience stores

Getting Around

- Trains: 6 AM – 11 PM | Book TRA tickets at tip.railway.gov.tw
- Print tickets at any train station or 7-Eleven (8 TWD printing fee)
- Uber available (Grab is NOT in Taiwan) | Taxis also available
- Youbike app for bike rentals — link Taiwanese SIM + credit card

Taroko Gorge Tips

- Book private driver or joiner tour — DIY is possible but transport is tricky
- Wear a helmet at Swallow Grotto and Tunnel of Nine Turns — mandatory at some trails
- No swimming in Shakadang Trail area — dangerous currents
- Start early — best visited in the morning before tour buses arrive

General Taiwan Tips

- Hostel check-in: 3 PM – 11 PM | Can leave bags before check-in time

- MRT lockers available at all stations — up to 24 hrs, extendable
- Masks were mandatory on transit and indoors during this trip period
- Taiwanese people are very polite and helpful despite language barrier
- Google Translate works well — Mandarin is dominant especially among elderly

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