

Culture in Taiwan

Swedish-Taiwanese Friendship Association

The purpose of the association is to work to spread information about Taiwan and to raise an interest in its history, culture and society, to contribute to cultural exchange between the two countries and to increase mutual understanding between people in Sweden and Taiwan.

The association does not take sides in issues concerning Taiwanese domestic politics.

The association considers it self-evident that any future decision on Taiwan's political status can and will be made solely by the people in Taiwan, without economic, diplomatic or military pressure from outside.

Do you want to become a member?
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Visiting Taiwan implies getting to know a unique cultural mix, the result of Taiwan's location between China, Japan and the Pacific. The Chinese heritage is the most evident, considering that the Taiwanese share most of their traditions with the Mainland Chinese, and that they have a common culture (which, incidentally, has been better preserved in Taiwan, which was spared the destructive turbulence which affected China between 1949 and 1980). Furthermore, the ethnic makeup of Taiwan has been topped up by successive waves of migrations, most recently in connection with the revolution in China 1949.

One of the results of the most recent wave of migration is that the national treasure of China, brought by the government of the Republic of China when it fled the Communist troops on the Chinese mainland, is now on display in the National Palace Museum (國立故宮博物館). The tastefully designed museum is one of the

” On the East coast, summer is punctuated by harvest festivals

major sights of Taipei, as well as being the most impressive collection of Chinese art in the world.

Those who prefer aboriginal dance can visit the open air museum Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village (九族文化村) in central Taiwan, near Sun Moon Lake. Alternatively, for a more authentic experience, travel around on the East coast, where Formosan aboriginal culture has been best preserved, and where late summer is punctuated by harvest festivals. The Formosan aboriginals have influenced Taiwanese cuisine, as well as other local

customs. One example of aboriginal influence is the habit of chewing betel nuts, which are used (and misused) as a stimulant in most of South East Asia.

During the half century between 1895 and 1945, Taiwan was part of the Japanese Empire. The Japanese heritage is clearly visible in the architecture of older parts of Taipei and other cities, in the cuisine, in the orderliness of the population, as well as the Taiwanese partiality for melancholic melodies. A lot of what is typical of Taiwan is the result of a unique mix of Chinese and Japanese culture. Be sure to try the Japanese-inspired, but typically Taiwanese, lunchbox, *biandang!*

