

Taipei - the capital of 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.

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Taipei, the capital of (the Republic of China on) Taiwan, is located in a valley surrounded by mountains in the northern part of the main island.

From being a sleepy backwater town during the first years after Chiang Kai-Shek came with his forces from China, Taipei has developed into a modern city with approximately 2.5 million inhabitants.

For a long time, Taipei was considered to be a boring, ugly and dirty city. Exhaust fumes from thousands of cars, buses and motor scooters made the air hazardous to breathe.

There is still a lot of traffic in Taipei, but the situation has improved dramatically.

New generations of buses and cars have supplanted the older ones. More importantly, the MRT (Mass Rapid Transport) subway system has reduced the traffic on roads and thereby improved air conditions, and also made travelling easier.

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Taipei also has a number of green breathing holes offering fresh air and opportunities to relax in a peaceful environment in the city centre. Examples of this are Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Park and Da'an Forest Park, both very centrally located.

Taipei is a city that never sleeps. Department stores like Sogo and Mitsukoshi, as well as the skyscraper Taipei 101 (until recently the tallest building in the world) are open until late in the evenings. When they close, the traditional

night markets take over. There, visitors can buy food, clothes, electronic gadgets and souvenirs. Traditional culture is preserved in the Longshan Temple, the Confucius Temple and the Ximen Red House. But the most impressive hallmark of Taipei is the food, with a brilliant variation of traditional Taiwanese cuisine, dishes from every section of Chinese and East Asian cuisine, as well as Western cuisine.

In the outskirts of the city you can find spectacular hot springs, both in Beitou and Yangmingshan north of Taipei, and Wulai in the south. Nor is it far to Danshui, with its picturesque fishing harbour where you can admire the sunset over the sea.

