

Taiwan (Republic of China) (臺灣)



The official name of Taiwan is the Republic of China although it has had various other names, including Formosa. Taiwan views itself as the legitimate government for all of China. Neither Taiwan or the People's Republic of China, which is the formal name for Mainland China, recognize each other politically. However, the two nations have strong economic ties, leading to de facto recognition. Due to its complicated relationship with Mainland China, Taiwan also has a complicated relationship with international bodies. Despite this, Taiwan has maintained relations with many countries.

FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS & CUSTOMS

Traditionally, Taiwanese families consist of a nuclear family and extended family with a structured hierarchical relationship based on Confucianism. The eldest son and his wife are expected to live with and take care of the son's parents and ancestral graves. Major holidays include: New Years Day (January 1st); Chinese New Year's Eve (Last day of the 12th month in the lunar calendar, typically in January or February); Chinese New Year (1st-3rd day of the 1st month in the lunar calendar); the Dragon Boat Festival (5th day of the 5th month in the lunar calendar, typically June); National Day (October 10th); Sun Yat-sen's Birthday (November 12th); and Constitution Day (December 25th).

ETHNICITY

98% of Taiwan is ethnic Han Chinese. Of this group 86% are descendants of early Han Chinese immigrants. Most of this group came from Fujian in mainland China and spoke Hokkien (today often referred to in English as "Taiwanese"). The other 14% of the Han population arrived after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, coming from a variety of provinces. The remaining 2% of the population is divided among 14 major Taiwanese aboriginal groups, which have genetic and linguistic ties to other so-called Austronesian peoples living throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands.

RELIGION

Taiwan is diverse in its religious beliefs and practices. According to the Department of Civil Affairs, in 2005 35.1% of the population identified as Buddhist while 33% identified themselves as Taoist. There are also a number of traditional East Asian, folk, and Western religions. Before the arrival of Dutch Protestant missionaries in the early 17th-century, native Taiwanese practiced nature worship. Spanish missionaries later brought Catholicism while the Japanese brought Shintoism. Buddhism and Taoism emerged as more Chinese migrants settled on Taiwan.

QUICK FACTS

Population: 23.3 million

Area: Island in East Asia (22,356 sq mi); surrounded by the East China Sea, Philippine Sea, South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait

Capital: Taipei (7 million)

Language: Mandarin Chinese (official), Taiwanese (Hokkien), Hakka dialects, Taiwan aboriginal languages (Austronesian language family)

Terrain: Eastern two-thirds mostly rugged mountains; flat to gently rolling plains in west.

EDUCATION

After reforms made in 2014, education in Taiwan became compulsory for twelve years from primary school through High School. These reforms also decentralized the curriculum and emphasized early-childhood education in an effort to reduce the pressure put on students by exams. The literacy rate is 98.5% for those aged 15 and older. Taiwanese students frequently achieve some of the highest test scores in the world. In 2012, its students were ranked 4th in math, 7th in reading and 13th in science according to the Program for International Student Assessment. Students are required to attend a military education class and participate in national defense drills.



CONTEMPORARY TAIWAN

Han Chinese began migrating to Taiwan on a large scale in the 17th century and the island was annexed by the Qing Empire in 1683. Qing rule ended when Japan defeated the Chinese in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 and took control of Taiwan, establishing colonial rule.

The Republic of China gained control of the island after Japan was defeated in 1945. Following their defeat at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party and the establishment of Mao Zedong's PRC in 1949, there was a mass exodus of Nationalist forces (the Guomindang) lead by Chiang Kai-Shek from Mainland China. Taiwan has never recognized that defeat and still claims sovereignty over all of Mainland China. Likewise, Mainland China claims sovereignty over Taiwan. These tensions have shaped Taiwanese politics with some factions advocating a declaration of independence while others want closer ties to Mainland China.

Economically, Taiwan experienced rapid economic growth and industrialization throughout the latter half of the 20th century. During this period of growth the government kept tight control over the economy as well as politics. Chiang Kai-shek and his son led the country in a one-party state from 1949 into the 1980's. The rise of the Taiwanese economic eventually led to calls for political change. Beginning in the 1980's, Taiwan began to liberalize its political system and multiple political parties were allowed to form. The first direct presidential election was held in 1996. Today Taiwan enjoys a healthy democracy and a vibrant economy. Closer ties to Mainland China have fueled much of the recent growth and many Taiwanese businessmen own factories within Mainland China.

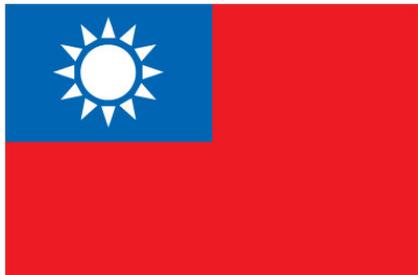


TAIWANESE IN THE USA

Prior to the Nationalist takeover in 1949 immigration to the U.S. from Taiwan had been small. Beginning in the 1950's the first wave of immigrants from Taiwan began to land in the United States. Most of those immigrating were those who fled Mainland China post-1949. As economic and political conditions in Taiwan improved in the 1980's immigration began to slow. Today there are almost a million people of Taiwanese descent in the United States.



Created in 1917 the flag of Taiwan has the official flag since 1949. The blue represents nationalism and liberty, white democracy and equality, and red people's livelihood and fraternity.



NAMES

Names in Taiwan generally follow the same pattern as names in Mainland China. First names, or given names, come second, after someone's family name. Generally, most Taiwanese people have three syllables in their name, one for their family name, and two in their given name. Traditionally, the first part of someone's name was determined by what generation they were part of, with siblings and cousins all sharing a name. However, unlike in Mainland China where it has become increasingly less common, Taiwan has continued to use three syllable names.

FAMOUS TAIWANESE

A few famous Taiwanese include: Ang Lee, Jay Chou, Chiang Kai-shek, Chien-Ming Wang, and Wei-Yin Chen. Some famous Americans of Taiwan heritage include: Jeremy Lin, Jerry Yang, Lucy Liu, Connie Chung, and Elaine Chao.

MANDARIN PHRASES

Hi	Nǐhǎo
Bye	Zàijiàn
Good morning	zǎoshàng hǎo
Yes	Shì
No	Bù
You're welcome	Bùkèqǐ
Thank you	Xiè Xiè
How are you?	Nǐhǎo Ma?
What is your name?.....	Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi
My name is	Wǒ jiào
Where are you from?	Nǐ shì cóng nǎlǐ lái de?

USEFUL LINKS

- [CIA World Factbook: Taiwan](#)
- [Taiwan Tourism Page](#)
- [Taiwan News Online](#)
- [Taipei Times](#)