

Taiwan



Capital:	Taipei
Population:	22.7 million (approx). Almost 55% of Taiwanese are under the age of 30.
Religion:	Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism (together about 93%) are the predominant religions. About 4.5% of the population are Christian, and a small minority are Muslim.
Government:	Republic. The chief of state is the president. The head of government is the premier, who is appointed by the president. There is a National Assembly of some 400 seats, plus a unicameral legislative cabinet of 220 seats.
Ethnic Groups:	84% Taiwanese, 14% Chinese, 2% Aboriginal.
Language:	Mandarin (northern Chinese) is the official language. South Fukien Chinese and Taiwanese dialects are commonly spoken. Hakka dialects, a form of 'Hokkien', and various aboriginal tongues are also used.
Currency:	Taiwan's unit of currency is the New Taiwan dollar, indicated by the symbol 'TWD'.

- Located approximately 130 kilometres off the south-east coast of mainland China, the island republic of Taiwan is dominated by a mountain range running north south.
- Taiwan, also identified as Formosa, was originally inhabited by Malayo-Polynesian aborigines.
- It calls itself the Republic of China but since 1949 it has had very negative dealings with mainland China. Taiwan was a Japanese colony from 1895 to the end of World War II when it was handed to the Nationalist government of General Chiang-Kai-shek in China. This government was defeated in 1949 by Mao's communists and Chiang fled with his army to Taiwan claiming it as the 'temporary' Republic of China. Due to the constant threat of communist invasion, Taiwan was governed with severe authoritarianism for nearly 40 years. Outbound travel from Taiwan was not permitted until 1979, and martial law was not lifted until 1987. Gradually trade and tourism with China was opened up as most world leaders moved to recognise Communist China as the official China and cut their diplomatic links with Taiwan. However Taiwan's economic success has led it to having good trading relations with most of the world.
- Foreigners should faithfully observe the autonomy of Taiwan in their communications with Taiwanese. For example, one should never refer to Taiwan as the People's Republic of China. Taiwan's official name is the Republic of China (ROC).

Business and Social Etiquette

- Be punctual to meetings. This is expected from foreigners and is a sign of good business practices. Do not get upset, however, if your counterpart is late.
- Shaking hands is the normal form of greeting.
- Business cards should be presented and received with both hands, as should any other object. Your card should be printed in English on one side, and in Mandarin Chinese on the reverse side.
- Elderly people are very highly respected, so it is polite to speak with them first.
- For business, men should wear a conservative suit and tie. Women should wear a conservative skirt and blouse or suit. Dress modestly for casual activities.
- Business in Taiwan is fast paced and competitive, and Taiwanese are often blunt and direct. However international business people, in communicating with Taiwanese, should use a fairly formal style. For example, brute honesty is not appreciated and you should always address Taiwanese by their family names until invited to use a given name.
- While Taiwan may seem very westernised, the heart of the culture is still very traditional. Westernisation is often a veneer, and the older generation still retains the decision making authority in society.
- For meetings, you will probably be taken to an informal sitting area and served coffee and tea.
- The basis of a business relationship in Taiwan is respect and trust. When negotiating, be sincere and honest. Humility is a virtue and a breach of trust will not be taken lightly. Take time to establish a rapport with your associate. Initially, you will have to overcome the Taiwanese distrust of westerners. Meet face to face as often as possible, and keep in touch after your trip is over.
- Protecting 'face' is a very important and delicate matter. Therefore, never embarrass another person, especially in public.
- Business will tend to take place at a slower pace than in North America or Europe. Be patient with delays. Do not talk about deadlines.
- It is still rare to have women participate in business in Taiwan. Foreign women will have the additional challenge of overcoming this initial hesitancy.
- Avoid using your hands when speaking. Chinese rarely use their hands while speaking and become distracted by a speaker who does.
- Modesty is very important in Taiwan. Do not enter an office until you are invited, and do not seat yourself until you are asked to do so. If you receive a compliment, politely refute it and expect others to do the same.
- Avoid being loud and boisterous around the Taiwanese, since they interpret strong emotions as a loss of self control. Westerners are stereotyped in Taiwan as being loud and emotional.
- In business situations, avoid talking about negative topics, such as theft or business failures, as this may be perceived as inviting bad luck.

- Try not to be too loud or forceful in conversation. It is polite to play down your achievements and to modestly refuse a compliment. However, it is good manners to flatter your host or counterpart quite generously, even though they will then refuse your praise and perhaps claim to be 'embarrassed'.
- Hospitality is very, very important. Expect to be invited out every night after hours. This will entail visiting local night spots and clubs, often until late at night. Entertaining is most often done in a restaurant and rarely in a home. If you are invited to a home, consider this an honour. Do not discuss business during a meal unless your host brings it up first.
- When invited to a restaurant, it is customary for the host to pay and order for the guests.
- Gift giving is often practiced within a business setting. When giving or receiving a gift, use both hands. The gift is not opened in the presence of the giver.

Language

- Family names are traditionally mentioned first, then the given name composed of one or two parts eg. Suan Imm is the given name of Lim Suan Imm. Given names should not be broken up. Many overseas Chinese have adopted Western first names or reversed the order of their name. Chinese women keep their own family names when they marry, and the Chinese rarely call each other by their given names. Use Mr, Mrs or Miss unless an alternative is offered.

English	Mandarin	Phonetics
Hello	Ni hao	Knee how
Good morning	Zao shang hao	Tzaow shang how
Good evening	Wan shang hao	Wahn shang how
Good bye	Zai jian	Dzeye jee-en
Yes	Dui	Doo-ee
No	Bu dui	Doo doo-ee
Please	Qing	Ching
Thank you	Xie xie	Shee-yeh shee-yeh
You're welcome	Bu xie	Boo shee-yeh
I don't understand	Wo bu dong	Wah boo dong

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