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GUIDE

YOUR DESTINATION

Everything you need to know about your destination



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STUDY DESTINATION

TAIPEI, TAIWAN

1. ARRIVAL IN TAIPEI, TAIWAN

We recommend traveling to Taipei at least a few days before the start of the study program, if possible. This will give you a chance to get to know the surroundings and recover from possible jetlag before the beginning of your semester. However, we don't recommend arriving in Taipei too early, especially with a tourist visa. Please let us know if you for some reason are unable to arrive in Taipei in time.

Once you arrive at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, go through the Immigration and Customs control. Present your passport and other documents when asked to the immigration officers. Please be polite to all the officials at the airport. After the inspection, go to the luggage pick-up area to collect your luggage. There is also a possibility to purchase a local SIM card from the airport, but you can also do it later after being settled to your destination.



There are different options for transport from the airport. Find out more about transportation in Taipei, Taiwan from below.

1.1. Documents you need when arriving

Please have the following document at hand when arriving in Taiwan:

- **International Passport** (The passport must be valid for a minimum of six months after arriving in Thailand. A passport with a validity of 18 months is sometimes required when applying for a one-year Multiple Entry Visa. Please note this also when sending Asia Exchange your application for the study abroad program.)
- **Official Acceptance letter**
- **A valid travel and health insurance in English**
- **Visa**

1.2. Registering with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

We recommend that all students register their trip at their home country's embassy or Ministry for Foreign Affairs before the start of the study abroad program. Once you have a local cell phone subscription, you can give the number to your local embassy. Most countries offer citizens the possibility of registering online.

Registration includes giving out your personal data, contact information for the duration of your trip and information about your stay abroad to the ministry in case of emergencies or crises.

All independent travelers are advised to register their trips.



2. HOST UNIVERSITY – SHIH CHIEN UNIVERSITY

Shih Chien University, formerly known as Shih Chien College of Home Economics, is a private university located in the heart of Taipei, Taiwan. Over the years, the institution evolved from a junior college to an institution with the power to grant Bachelor's degrees and was renamed Shih Chien College of Design and Management in 1991. In 1997, the institution was promoted to university status.

Shih Chien University is comprised of 2 campuses, made up of 5 colleges that are further divided into 33 different departments. Home to approximately 16,000 students and 700 staff, Shih Chien strives to deliver the best education possible to its students. Shih Chien has been ranked among the top 60 design schools in the world with the master's program in industrial design having achieved a top 30 rank. Taipei is a bustling, international, modern metropolis that combines an ancient heritage with a modern outlook on life.

Fittingly therefore, Shih Chien specializes in integrating old ways of life with new ones. Courses integrate humanities with the latest technology to provide students with a wide outlook not just on their studies, but on life as well.

There are two campuses in Shih Chien University, one in Taipei and one in Kaohsiung. Your studies will take place in the Taipei campus, located in the Zhongshan district (中山區). The swimming pool and numerous sports fields on the campus are all accessible with a student card.

The central location of the campus combined with multiple options for public transportation in Taipei ensure that students can access attractions, shopping areas, restaurants, and night life with ease.



3. WORKING IN TAIWAN

You are not allowed to work in Taiwan with either a tourist or student visa. Taiwan has very strict rules regarding employing foreign nationals because they try to prevent foreigners from taking up positions that can be filled by a native.

4. CONTACTS

The main contact person for you is Mr. Ian Wong, Secretary of the International Director of International Affairs

Email: ianwong@g2.usc.edu.tw

Tel. +886-2-2538-1111#1162

5. MONEY

The official currency of Taiwan is the New Taiwan Dollar (NTD or TWD). You will need cash in Taipei as the opportunities to pay with a credit card are very limited. You might find it difficult to exchange your home currency into New Taiwan Dollars in your home country, but you can easily do it when you arrive at the airport in Taiwan or withdraw money directly from the ATM there. You will need some cash immediately for transportation and other purchases, so be sure to have some on you before you leave the airport.

5.1. Cash withdrawing money, and credit cards

ATMs are everywhere, including the airport and near the campus. You have to pay a commission for every withdrawal so we advise you to withdraw the maximum amount at once. It's possible to withdraw up to 20,000 NTD at once, depending on the ATM you are using.

We advise that you take at least a Visa Electron card or similar debit/credit card with you. Make sure you don't run out of cash, because there might be some difficulties when withdrawing money.

5.2.Tipping

Tipping in Taiwan is not mandatory, but you can always leave a few extra NTD if the service exceeds expectations. In restaurants, a 10 percent service charge will be included on the final bill and is considered a sufficient tip. With taxi drivers, depending on the quality of their service it's kind to show your appreciation by rounding up the total sum or let the driver "keep the change".

5.3. Bargaining

Unlike in most of Asia, bargaining is not too common in Taiwan. It is mainly done when buying goods at night markets. At first, it might feel stressful, but you will get used to it. Don't take bargaining too seriously. You will get the best price with a sense of humor and a few words of Chinese. We recommend you to start communicating in Mandarin as soon as possible. Already a few words show respect towards the locals and their culture. People will give you better service and lower prices for sure. Bargaining can be a pleasant experience for you and also for the seller.

6. PHONE CALL AND CELL PHONE SUBSCRIPTION

Getting a Thai SIM card:

Once you arrive in Taipei, you should get a local prepaid phone subscription as soon as possible. The main operators have their shops all over the city. The most popular local operators are Chunghwa Telecom (中華電信), Taiwan Mobile (台灣大哥大) and Far EasTone (遠傳電信). Apart from Skype, this is the cheapest way to keep in touch with your family and friends back home. It will also help you communicate with your new friends in Taipei.

"Line" is a popular phone app widely used in Taiwan. The main idea is similar to Whatsapp: calls and texts through Line are free.

Internet and cell phone coverage:

Free wi-fi is very common in Taiwan, especially in the city area and tourist destinations. However, the connection is not always the best. On the campus, there is free wi-fi available for the students.

When traveling, it is good to keep in mind that there are places in Taiwan with no internet and cell phone coverage.

International calls:

Note that by far the easiest and cheapest way to call your friends and family overseas is via WhatsApp, Skype, Hangouts, or another similar service, as wi-fi connections are widely available in Taiwan.

Ask your Taiwanese phone operator or surf online to find the most affordable overseas plans, so you can call your friends and from Taiwan. There are various international discount codes that are dialed before the actual phone number. However, please remember that the discount codes are usually not valid when sending text messages.

The country calling code to Taiwan is +886.

Taiwan Emergency telephone numbers:

- 110 - Police
- 119 - Fire
- 112 – Emergency Telephone Number
- 165 – Scam Watch
- 113 – Women & Children Protection Hotline

7. TRANSPORTATION IN TAIPEI, TAIWAN

Getting used to how big Taipei is takes a while but get an up-to-date map and do some homework before you jump on any vehicle. Taipei has an excellent public transportation system that includes buses, youbikes, and the MRT (mass rapid transit). The Taipei MRT is vast but after you've familiarized yourself with the most useful lines, it is easy to navigate. Plan your route [here](#). You can find an MRT map in Annex 2 of this Guide.

You can pay for public transport with cash, but the most convenient way to pay is to get an EasyCard. Easy cards can be purchased from 7/11's everywhere and you can top up your card at MRT stations or at 7/11's.

Public transportation is cheap and so are the taxis for shorter distances.

Keep in mind that knowing which district you are going to will make traveling much easier. Google maps often works relatively well to tell you which bus to take or which MRT-lines you need to use.

Paying on buses can be a bit confusing at first. When stepping onto the bus, look to see what the sign says. It says either pay on boarding (上車收票) or pay on alighting (下車收票). When the sign says pay on boarding you get pay when getting on the bus. When the sign says pay on alighting you pay when getting off the bus. Most buses in Taipei will have the English language versions up as well as the Chinese, but if there are no signs, you can just look at the first symbol. 上 (shàng) means to pay when boarding. 下(xià) means to pay when getting off the bus.

The traffic can often be a bit chaotic so watch your step. Even though there are zebra crossings, cars will not necessarily stop for pedestrians.

Rush hour is also something you need to calculate in when estimating your travel time. The rush hour lasts from about 7.00 am to 9.00 am, and from about 5.00 pm to 7.30 pm. During these hours the MRT can get very crowded. Fortunately, it runs about every 3-5 minutes so if you cannot fit into one train, it won't take long for the next one to arrive.

Taxis and Uber are relatively cheap ways to travel in the city. Uber has the advantage of allowing you to input your destination beforehand, so you won't need to worry about the language barrier. Most taxi drivers do not speak English or other foreign languages, so be sure to have the name and address of your destination written down to show your taxi driver.

Save your taxi receipt because it contains the taxi's identification number which might come in handy if you forget your valuables in a taxi or have any problems with the ride.

Youbikes are a popular and cheap way to get around the city. Scattered around the city you will be able to find stations with bikes that you can rent with your EasyCard.

The starting cost for the use of a bike is 5 NTD for the first 30 minutes. Taipei has built an excellent bike path system for cyclists to enjoy the city conveniently and safely.

Note! Eating and drinking in public transportation in Taiwan is strictly forbidden and will lead to considerable fines.

7.1 Making your way to the airport

Most flights coming in to Taipei arrive at the Taoyuan International airport. Located in Taoyuan about 40 kilometers from Taipei, there are multiple options for you to get to your transportation from there.

Pick-up service

Shih Chien University offers a pick-up service for incoming students. Volunteers will meet you at the airport and bring you to the university and help you register on campus. This is a great way to get to Taipei without a hassle and also to meet locals immediately! The cost of the pickup service is around 1000 NTD.

MRT

The airport MRT runs directly from Taoyuan airport to Taipei Main Station. The MRT can be reached from both Terminal 1 and Terminal 2. The cost of a one-way trip is 160 NTD.

The USC campus is located along the MRT Wenhua Line (Dazhi Station). To reach the campus, exit the station through Exit 1 and walk along Dazhi Street until you reach USC.

BUS

Buses run from outside the airport to numerous locations in Taipei. Bus 1819 to Taipei Main Station provides the best options for further connections. Other buses to the city center are: 1960 East Bus, 1961 West Bus, and 5201. Buses that go to the city, but not the center are: 1840, 1841, 1843. Fares for these buses range from 60 NTD to 150 NTD. The bus stops closest to the USC campus are Dazhi stop on Beian Road and Dazhi Gas Station on Mingshui Road.

TAXI

There are always taxis outside the airport willing to take you to the city. Taxis in Taiwan are trustworthy, so you don't need to be on the lookout for them trying to scam you. However, most taxi drivers do not speak English, so be prepared to have your address written down in Chinese for them. Taxi trips to the city are usually at least a 1000 NTD. Uber is also popular in Taipei.

YOUR WAY ABROAD

The world has an interesting way of giving great experiences
to the ones who are passionate about their dreams.

Miia Muukkonen, Asia Exchange student

