

# Transportation

## *Finding Your Way Around*

The street numbering and naming system here is a little bit different from what you may be accustomed to. For example, consider the following imaginary address: Chung Shan N. Rd., Sect. 1, Lane 31, Alley 8, #5. Chung Shan N. Rd. is a fairly long street, which is therefore divided both into North and South, as well as having section numbers. So, you must first be sure that you are on Chung Shan NORTH Rd., and then that you are on Sect. 1 of the North segment road (it has at least six sections). Then, to find Lane 31, look at the numbers of the buildings. If you see No. 29, you should know you are close to finding Lane 31, because lanes are numbered as though they were also buildings. It would then be a simple matter to find Alley 8, since an alley is attached to a lane in the same way that a lane is attached to a street. Not all addresses are this complicated, but it is important to understand that section numbers refer to the street, not to a particular section of the city. Usually street names are written in Chinese with the largest part first (e.g., Taiwan, Taipei, Chung Shan N. Rd., Sect. ...) the opposite of the custom in the U.S. (#5, Alley 8...Taipei, Taiwan)

## **Bus**

Many grantees and their families have found the public bus system in Taipei is very convenient, as buses go everywhere in the city. However, they are often very crowded (standing-room only) during the rush hours, and are not for the faint of heart or slow of foot. The normal fare is NT\$15, payable either by coin (exact change) or the Easy Card. Some buses/bus companies want you to pay as you get on the bus while others as you depart. It's not a bad idea to follow a local resident on and observe when to pay. Most buses have priority seats for the elderly or physically challenged passengers (they are marked as such in Chinese, with appropriate icons). All Taipei buses run between 5:30 am and 11:00 pm. Recently, the buses (at least in Taipei) also have signs in English indicating the beginning and ending locations of their route. For information about bus routes in English, see <http://www.taipeibus.gov.taipei/Dybus.aspx?Lang=En>

Bus service in cities other than Taipei is of similar quality, though bus guides in English may not be available. Instead, you can ask local residents about the routes, or just experiment by trying them out yourself.

## **Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS)**

Since 1994, Taipei has been constructing a mass rapid transit system that includes both subway and elevated portions. Six major sections have now been completed and have considerably improved the traffic situation. Signs and announcements are in English as well as Chinese, making it more user-friendly than buses and taxis for foreigners. Tickets can be purchased from machines inside the stations. Information about routing, tickets, etc. is available at <http://www.trtc.com.tw>. You can purchase an Easy ticket, or "Smart Travel" card (Easy Card), which can be used both on buses and the MRT. They are available at machines in the MRT stations.

The location of a MRT station nearby is an important factor to consider when deciding where to live in Taipei.

## **Bicycle**

Apart from bus and MRT, cycling gradually becomes as a short-distance transit vehicles. In the hope of elevating life and culture in the city and in response to a global trend of energy conservation and carbon mitigation, the Taipei City Government, in collaboration with Giant Taiwan, initiated the Taipei Bike Sharing System Service Plan, also known as "YouBike". YouBike uses an electronic unmanned automated management system to provide "A leases and B returns" bike rental service. Riding a YouBike as the short-distance transit vehicle has been more and more popular among citizens. YouBike is indeed commuter and tourist-friendly. Rental payment can be made via the "Smart Travel" card (Easy Card), major credit cards and mobile phones. More information is available at <http://youbike.com.tw/en/index.php>.

## **Taxis**

You can hail taxis on the street. Most drivers don't speak English, so it is often essential, if you don't know the Chinese name of your destination, to have it written in Chinese characters to show the driver.

With the recent increases in oil prices, it is expected that taxi fares may be raised soon, but as of May 2016, the beginning charge for the first 1.25 kilometers is NT\$70 and the meter goes up in increments of NT\$5 according to both distance (every 200M) and time (1 minute 20 second). At the end of your ride, you must pay whatever is shown on the meter. It is not necessary to tip the driver. A surcharge (+20NT) is added to taxi fees during the morning rush hours of 7-9 am, and evening rush hours 5-7 pm, evening 11pm-5am and from noon to 2 pm on Saturdays. The driver tabulates this fee by pushing the far right button on the taxi's meter. If you have problems with your taxi driver, you may call Taipei's Traffic Police Squad Tel: (02)2394-9007, Office of Motor Vehicle Inspection Tel: (02) 2767-8271, Department of Communications Tel: (02) 2729-1181. Don't forget to include the taxi's number, displayed on the rear window of each vehicle. If you need to go out during the late night hours, it is possible to call a taxi by phone. The numbers recommended are:

Taiwan Taxi 台灣大車隊

Tel: (02)4058-8888 / (cell phone) 55688

[http://www.taiwantaxi.com.tw/EN/en\\_about.html](http://www.taiwantaxi.com.tw/EN/en_about.html)

M Taxi 大都會計程車隊

Tel: (02)4499-178 / (cell phone) 55178

<http://www.mtaxi.com.tw/>

It is generally considered better for women not to take a taxi alone at night, unless it is one of those summoned by phone.

If you accidentally leave some of your belongings in a taxi, there is a fairly good chance that the driver may turn it into the Police Broadcasting Service (警察廣播電台)<sup>10</sup>, where you can pick it up.

In general, taxis are safe and the drivers polite, friendly, and very skillful at maneuvering through the crowded streets and around motorcycles and pedestrians.

## **Transportation to and from the International Airport**

Taipei: The most inexpensive way to travel from Taipei to Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport in Taoyuan is by the airport bus service, which runs every fifteen minutes from the East Station of the Taipei Railway-Bus Terminal at No. 3, Beiping West Road(台北市中正區北平西路 3 號). There is also a stop at the domestic (Sungshan 松山) Airport in Taipei. The cost is about NT\$145 for a one-way trip. The buses can also be taken for the trip from the airport back to the city. Another bus service goes another route, from the airport to and from the World Trade Center (世貿中心), with a stop at the Howard Plaza Hotel (福華飯店), much more convenient for those who live in the National Taiwan University area. The cost is similar.

By taxi, the charge is from NT\$900-1,100, but it can be negotiated. You can call any of the taxi numbers listed above.

A limo service is also available for approximately NT\$1000-1500.

With the Taoyuan Airport MRT opened for operation this year, you may choose to take the Taoyuan Airport MRT now at A1 Taipei Main Station, A12 Airport Terminal 1 Station, and A13 Airport Terminal 2 Station. There are express trains and commuter trains available, and both cost \$160 NTD. For a one-way ride between Taoyuan Airport and Taipei City, express trains take around 35 minutes while the commuter trains take around 50 minutes.

## **Travel between Cities**

### ***Bus & Train***

Buses and trains go all over Taiwan, leaving from the main railway-bus terminal located at 209, Sec1, Civic Ave. (市民大道一段 209 號) The information desk at the station can usually provide some information in English. Some of the tour books such as *China Travel and Trade* (free) also can provide some of the basic schedules needed.

Train travel is generally safe, comfortable and fast if you take the express trains. You may purchase round trip tickets as early as four days in advance at the railway station, but only the first

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<sup>10</sup> 17 Guang-chow St. (台北市廣州街 17 號), Tel: (02) 2388-8099.

Website: <https://www.pbs.gov.tw/eng/index.php>

part of your trip will have the seat number reserved. The return seat reservation must be made after you arrive at your destination. The same is true of bus tickets. During the lunar New Year and other major holiday weekends, it is difficult to obtain tickets at all. Special schedules for purchase of tickets will be announced in the newspapers and people will even camp overnight at the train/bus station in order to buy tickets. It is better to stay at home on such holidays. There is now a web site in English where you can find out the train schedule and make reservations online:

<http://railway.hinet.net/>

#### Railway Station Information Desk

Taipei (02) 2371-3558

Taichung (04) 2222-5150

Kaohsiung (07) 221-2376

Yilan (03) 931-2152

Taitung (089) 238-231

A bullet train line was opened, going from Taipei to Kaohsiung on the southern tip of the island in just under two hours (longer if you take the train with more stops in between). Tickets and timetable information is at <http://www.thsrc.com.tw/en> It will be operated by the Taiwan High Speed Railway Corporation for 35 years before being turned over to the government.

#### *Domestic Air Travel*

Flights between the major cities of Taiwan are fairly frequent\* and tickets can be easily purchased at the domestic airports shortly before the flight in Taipei, Hualien, Kaohsiung, Tainan, Taitung, and Chiayi, except on weekends and holidays. Flights to the offshore islands of Penghu, Kinmen (Quemoy), Orchid Island, and Green Island are also available. There are tourist "hotlines" at the following domestic airports:

Songshan Airport, Taipei (02) 8770-3460

Taichung Airport (04) 2615-5000

Tainan Airport (06) 260-1016

Kaohsiung Airport (07) 805-7630

Hualien Airport (03) 821-0768

Kinmen Airport (082) 322-381

Taitung Airport (089) 361-111

*\*Since the opening of the high-speed railway, domestic air travel has been seriously affected, and thus flights will not be as frequent as in the past; also, some airlines have been forced out of business as a result.*

#### **Driver's License**

An R.O.C. driver's license can be obtained fairly easily by application at the bureau located on Pateh Road, Sec. 3, Taipei. You'll need photos and a valid U.S. driver's license. They will also require you to get a medical examination, but when the forms are given to you, they will also tell you where and

how to get this examination at a nearby hospital. The entire procedure takes a morning or afternoon, but is worth it, since you cannot rent a car without a valid local or international license. If you get an international license before you leave for Taiwan and change it to a local license after arrival it may be easier, but it can depend on which state issues the international drivers' license.

As for the Issuance of International Driving Permits (IDP), the required documents are as follows:

1. Valid international driver's license issued in U.S.  
(note: If you want to apply for a Taiwan Driving Permit, please authorize your international driving permits by the TECO offices in U.S. before you leave for Taiwan.)
2. Valid domestic driver's license issued in U.S.  
(note: If you want to apply for a Taiwan Driving Permit, your U.S. license must have been authenticated in the U.S. by the TECO offices before you leave for Taiwan.)
3. Passport or Alien Resident Certificate (ARC).
4. One 1 x 1 inch ID photo (taken within the last 6 months).
5. Health certificate issued by a Taiwan Public Hospital.

The issued Taiwan International Driving Permits will be valid as long as the ARC is valid.

For more information, please refer to the website: <https://tpcmv.thb.gov.tw/English/>

## **Car Rentals**

There are a number of car rental agencies, and almost all repair shops are willing to rent you a car. However, this kind of arrangement is not very reliable. The Hotai Leasing Corporation (和運租車) has proved to be reliable and reasonably priced. Their staff all speaks English. 24hr service line is 0800-024-550. Their website is in English (<https://www.easyrent.com.tw/English/index.html>). The Car Plus rental Service (格上租車) have many service point in most of the HSR station. You may either check their website ([www.car-plus.com.tw](http://www.car-plus.com.tw)) or call them (0800-222-568) for further information.

## **Driving and Auto Accidents**

With care and some luck your driving experience will be a good one. There is a system to the traffic as you'll discover after you drive a bit. If you are involved in an accident call the Foreign Affairs Police at their 24-hour Traffic Accident Number: (02) 2537-3852. Motorcycle riding in Taipei is very dangerous, but in other cities of Taiwan, such as Yilan, may be the major means of daily transportation in the absence of a public bus service.