

Language

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After the Kuomintang (KMT; Nationalist Party) fled China for Taiwan in the late 1940s, it promoted Mandarin Chinese as the official language for the island. At the time, however, few Taiwanese could speak it. The main languages of Taiwan then were Hokkien, usually referred to as 'Taiwanese' (also called *Minnanhua*, a name that emphasises its roots in southeastern China, where it is also spoken), and Japanese. Hakka, another Chinese language, is also spoken in some areas, and Taiwan's aboriginal tribes have their own languages, which belong to a completely separate language family to Chinese.

Although Taiwanese is often referred to as a 'dialect' of Mandarin, the two are in fact separate languages and are not mutually intelligible. Relatively little has been written in Taiwanese beyond Christian religious material, due in part to the efforts by the authorities during the Japanese colonial era (1895–1945), and later by the KMT, to suppress the language. Despite these years of suppression, the Taiwanese language has endured, and today at least half

the population prefers to speak Taiwanese at home, especially in the south and in rural areas. It's too soon to know whether the government's recent creation of a Hakka-language TV station will succeed in helping revive the use of Hakka.

Travellers to Taiwan can get by without having to even attempt any Taiwanese. Virtually all young and middle-aged people speak Mandarin. Many older people also know Japanese as a result of the 50-year Japanese occupation of Taiwan.

Although Taiwan's students are required to study English, few actually learn to speak it. As a result they tend to read and write English much better than they can speak it so if you need to communicate in English try writing your message down. The reason for this is that students learn English from textbooks, without any opportunity for conversation. Introductory English now begins in junior, rather than secondary school, and classes have begun to focus more on the spoken language. This shift is too recent to have had any noticeable effect on the proliferation of spoken English.

MANDARIN

TONES

Mandarin, Taiwanese and Hakka are all tonal languages – by altering the voice's pitch within a syllable, the meaning of a word is completely changed. Getting your tones wrong can have embarrassing consequences – *wǒ gǎnmào*, for example, means 'I've caught a cold', while *wǒ gān mǎo* means 'I copulate with cats!' Mandarin has four tones, while some of the other Chinese languages have as many as nine. For example *mā*, has a number of meanings in Mandarin depending on which tone is used:

high tone	<i>mā</i>	'mother'
rising tone	<i>má</i>	'hemp' or 'numb'
falling-rising tone	<i>mǎ</i>	'horse'
falling tone	<i>mà</i>	'scold' or 'swear'

There is also a 'neutral' tone, which is usually not indicated by a tone mark.

Mastering tones is tricky for the untrained Western ear, but with discipline it can be done. Try practising the following tongue-twister: *Māma qí mǎ. Mǎ màn. Māma mà mǎ.* (Mother rides a horse. The horse is slow. Mother scolds the horse.)

Don't let yourself be discouraged by the language. Apart from the problem of tones, Mandarin is not especially difficult to master. Most people in Taiwan are very friendly and will praise your linguistic skills if you manage to say even a few words in one of the island's languages.

CHARACTERS

The greatest difficulty associated with the language is its written form: Chinese characters. To borrow from a Chinese proverb, it can take a lifetime and a little bit more to learn how to read and write Chinese. The reason for this is that, unlike most languages, written Chinese does not employ an alphabet. This has led many to the false conclusion that Chinese characters represent a system of 'idea-pictures' or ideograms; in reality, the vast majority of characters consist of a phonetic element and another element called the 'radical', which provides a semantic clue to the meaning.

Some dictionaries list more than 55,000 characters, but many of these entries are no longer used or they are variants. The 2400 most frequently used characters account for 99% of most texts. A further complication in learning to read Chinese is that some 20% of characters have more than one pronunciation.

The sounds represented by Chinese characters are each one syllable long, but few Mandarin words are monosyllabic. As a result, many characters cannot stand alone as words, much as the prefix 'im-' in 'impossible' is a unit of meaning, but not a complete word in itself.

Taiwan doesn't use the system of 'simplified' characters that was progressively introduced in China after the communist takeover. Instead, Taiwan has retained the use of traditional characters, which are also found in Hong Kong and in many Chinese communities abroad.

ROMANISATION

Romanisation is the rendering of non-Roman alphabet languages, such as Arabic,

Mandarin, Thai or Russian, into a form that can be read or spoken by anyone familiar with the Roman alphabet (ie a, b, c etc) and the sounds it represents. Contrary to popular belief, it is entirely possible to Romanise Mandarin, but travellers to Taiwan are unlikely to encounter much Romanisation other than for names of people, places and streets. Unfortunately, Taiwan's approach to Romanisation has been slapdash, resulting in the island's road signs and maps displaying a veritable Babel of Romanisation systems, and even outright misspellings. There are many tales of signs exhibiting a variety of spellings for the same street – even at the same intersection!

Further complicating the matter is the fact that, until recently, Taiwan tended to use the Wade-Giles Romanisation system, which most native English speakers find counterintuitive due to the use of apostrophes to represent phonetically related sounds (such as 'b' and 'p', written in Wade-Giles as *p* and *p'* respectively). This explains why English has the spelling *Taoism* for what would be represented in most other systems as *Daoism*. Although there are sound linguistic reasons for this approach, the problems for the uninitiated are obvious. To make matters worse, the apostrophes are often routinely omitted, making it impossible even for those few who are familiar with the Wade-Giles system to be able to read it reliably. Without the apostrophes, for example, what is written *Kuting* could be pronounced 'Kuting', 'Guting', 'Kuding' or 'Guding'. Although Taiwan officially switched to the less ambiguous MPS2 Romanisation system in 1986, implementation was spotty and halfhearted, resulting in perhaps even more ambiguity and confusion than before.

The good news is that after years of complaints from foreigners Taiwan has finally begun to take steps to correct its use of Romanisation. The bad news is that the new signs tend to be in one of two different Romanisation systems: Hanyu Pinyin, which is used in China (and has become the international standard for Mandarin), and Tongyong Pinyin, a home-grown alternative born in the late 1990s of the desire to help differentiate Taiwan from China. Although advocates of Tongyong Pinyin often claim that the systems are 85% the same, in reality

only about half of place names are spelled the same way in the two systems.

The major differences between the two systems are as follows:

HANYU PINYIN	TONGYONG PINYIN
zh-	jh-
q-	c-
x-	s-
-ü*	-yu
-ui	-uei
-iu	-iou
wen	wun
weng	wong
feng	fong
jjong/qiong/siong	jjong/cyong/syong
zi/ci/si	zih/cih/sih
zhi/chi/shi/ri	jih/chih/shih/rih

*ü is written u (ie without the umlaut) when no ambiguity would result. Thus, *ju*, *qu*, *xu*, and *yu* should be pronounced as if they were written *jü*, *qü*, *xü*, and *yü*.

Although the central government has declared Tongyong Pinyin to be Taiwan's official Romanisation system for both Hakka and Mandarin (but not for Taiwanese), it left local governments free to make their own choices. Taipei has selected to use Hanyu Pinyin and has applied the system consistently. In times of budget constraints, however, most local governments have priorities other than putting up new signage for the benefit of foreigners, so progress toward standardisation in any form of Pinyin is slow in most of the country.

Taipei has also introduced a system under which major roads have been assigned numbers. Although this 'nicknaming' system might at first glance seem like a boon to visitors to the city, don't bother asking for directions to '4th Boulevard', because no-one in Taipei knows what streets the numbers are supposed to match. This system is best ignored.

To sum up the situation, signage in Taiwan can be found in MPS2, Wade-Giles (which most people also use inaccurately for spelling their names), Hanyu Pinyin (mainly in Taipei), Tongyong Pinyin (mainly on highway signs and at train stations), plus a range of other possibilities employed with varying degrees of inaccuracy.

Given such a range, what is the poor traveller to do? When something written in

Romanisation doesn't seem to make sense, a few guidelines can help you make an educated guess as to what is actually being referred to. Anything with *x*, *q* or *zh* will be in Hanyu Pinyin. Anything with *jh*, *iu* or *uei* will be in Tongyong Pinyin. Anything with *r* used as a vowel (eg *shr*) will be in MPS2.

If you're going to learn only one Romanisation system, your best bet is to learn Hanyu Pinyin and study a few of the most common differences (such as those listed below) to help you navigate through the other systems you'll likely encounter.

The following Hanyu Pinyin conversion could fairly safely be assumed where different systems are used:

WRITTEN	HANYU PINYIN
c	q
ch	zh/q/j/ch
jh	zh
k	g
p	b
s	x
t	d
ts/tz	z/c
h (at the end of a syllable)	– (no letter)

For example, Chihpen and Chihben are sometimes seen for Zhiben, and Kueishan for Gueishan/Guishan.

More Info on the Internet

For a list of Taiwan's city names, street names, and names of railroad stations in Hanyu Pinyin and traditional spellings, see www.romanization.com.

For loads more information on Chinese characters, Pinyin and Romanisation, including a full comparison of the main Chinese Romanisation systems, check out www.pinyin.info.

If you'd like more information on the ins and outs of Chinese characters there are many suitable books on the subject listed at www.pinyin.info/readings/. 'The Ideographic Myth' at www.pinyin.info/readings/texts/ideographic_myth.html is an extract from *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy* by John DeFrancis (University of Hawai'i Press, 1984). DeFrancis gives an interesting and detailed history of the widely-held belief that Chinese characters are ideographic (ie pictorial) in nature.

PRONUNCIATION

The following is a description of the sounds produced in spoken Mandarin Chinese. The letter *v* is not used in Chinese. The trickiest sounds in Pinyin are *ç*, *q* and *x*. Most letters are pronounced as in English, except for the following:

Vowels

a	as in 'father'
ai	as the word 'eye'
ao	as the 'ow' in 'cow'
e	as in 'her'
ei	as in 'weigh'
i	as the 'ee' in 'meet'; also as the 'oo' in 'book'
ian	as the word 'yen'
ie	as the word 'yeah'
o	as in 'or'
ou	as the 'oa' in 'boat'
u	as in 'flute'
ui	as the word 'way'
uo	as 'w' followed by the 'o' in 'or'
yu	as German 'ü' – round your lips and try saying 'ee'
ü	as German 'ü'

* The letter 'i' is pronounced as 'oo' only when it occurs after *c*, *ch*, *r*, *s*, *sh*, *z* or *zh*.

Consonants

c	as the 'ts' in 'bits'
ch	as in 'church', but with the tongue curled back
h	guttural, a bit like the 'ch' in Scottish 'loch'
q	as the 'ch' in 'cheese'
r	as the 's' in 'pleasure'
sh	as in 'she', but with the tongue curled back
x	as the 'sh' in 'ship'
z	as the 'ds' in 'suds'
zh	as the 'j' in 'judge' but with the tongue curled back

Consonants other than *n*, *ng*, and *r* can never appear at the end of a syllable.

In Pinyin, apostrophes are occasionally used when a syllable in the middle of a word begins with a vowel, eg *ping'an* ('ping-an') compared with *pin'gan* ('pin-gan').

PHRASEBOOKS & DICTIONARIES

Conflicting Romanisation systems aside, reading place names or street signs isn't too

difficult, since the Chinese name is usually accompanied by some form of Pinyin; if not, you'll soon learn lots of characters through repeated exposure.

Lonely Planet's *Mandarin Phrasebook* includes script throughout and loads of useful phrases – it's also a very useful learning tool. A small dictionary with English, Pinyin and Chinese characters is also useful for learning a few words.

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...

<i>Wǒ yào zhǎo ...</i>	我要找 ...
camping ground	露營區
<i>lùyíngqū</i>	
guesthouse	賓館
<i>bīnguǎn</i>	
hotel	旅館
<i>lǚguǎn</i>	
tourist hotel	飯店
<i>fàndiàn</i>	
hostel	招待所/旅社
<i>zhāodàisuǒ/lǚshè</i>	
youth hostel	旅社
<i>lǚshè</i>	

Where is a cheap hotel?

Nǎlǐ yǒu piányi de lǚguǎn?
哪裡有便宜的旅館?

What is the address?

Dìzhǐ zài nǎlǐ?
地址在哪裡?

Could you write the address, please?

Néngbùnéng qǐng nǐ bǎ dìzhǐ xiě xiàlái?
能不能請你把地址寫下來?

Do you have a room available?

Nǐmen yǒu fángjiān ma?
你們有房間嗎?

I'd like (a) ...

<i>Wǒ xiǎng yào ...</i>	我想要 ...
bed	一個床位
<i>yíge chuángwèi</i>	
single room	一間單人房
<i>yíjiān dānrénfáng</i>	
double room	一間雙人房
<i>yíjiān shuāngrénfáng</i>	
bed for two	雙人床
<i>shuāngrén chuáng</i>	
room with two beds	兩個床位的
<i>liǎng gè chuángwèi de</i>	雙人房
<i>shuāngrénfáng</i>	
economy room (no bath)	雅房(沒有浴室)
<i>yǎfáng (méiyǒu yùshì)</i>	

room with a bathroom

tàofáng (yǒu yùshìde fángjiān)

standard room

biāozhǔn fángjiān

deluxe suite

háo huá tàofáng

to share a dorm

zhù sùshè

How much is it ...?

... duōshǎo qián? ... 多少錢?

per night

yíge wǎnshàng 一個晚上

per person

měi gè rén 每個人

May I see the room?

Wǒ néng kànkan fángjiān ma?
我能看看房間嗎?

Where is the bathroom?

Yùshì zài nǎlǐ?
浴室在哪裡?

Where is the toilet?

Cèsuǒ zài nǎlǐ?
廁所在哪裡?

I don't like this room.

Wǒ bù xǐhuān zhèjiān fángjiān.
我不喜歡這間房間。

Are there any messages for me?

Yǒu méiyǒu rén liú huà gěi wǒ?
有沒有人留話給我?

May I have a hotel namecard?

Yǒu méiyǒu lǚguǎn de míngpiàn?
有沒有旅館的名片?

Could I have these clothes washed, please?

Qǐng bāng wǒ bǎ zhèxiē yīfú xǐ gānjìng.
請幫我把這些衣服洗乾淨。

I'm/We're leaving today.

Wǒ/Wǒmen jīntiān líkāi.
我/我們今天離開。

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.

Nǐ hǎo. 你好
Nǐn hǎo. (more polite) 您好

Goodbye.

Zàijiàn. 再見

Please.

Qǐng. 請

Thank you.

Xièxie. 謝謝
Nǐ hǎo. (more polite) 您好

You're welcome. (don't mention it)

Bùkèqì. 不客氣

Excuse me, ...

Qǐng wèn, ... 請問, ...

EMERGENCIES

Help!

Jiùmìng a! 救命啊!

emergency

jǐnjǐ qíngkuàng 緊急情況

There's been an accident!

Fāshēng yìwài le! 發生意外了!

Could you help me, please?

Nǐ néng bùnéng bāng wǒ ge máng?
你能不能幫我個忙?

I'm lost.

Wǒ mílùe. 我迷路了

Go away!

Zǒu kāi! 走開!

Leave me alone!

Bié fán wǒ! 別煩我!

Call ...!

Qǐng jiào ...! 請叫 ...!

a doctor

yīshēng 醫生

the police

jǐngchá 警察

When asking a question it is polite to start with the phrase *qǐng wèn* 請問 – literally, 'may I ask?' – this expression is only used at the beginning of a sentence, never at the end.

I'm sorry. (forgive me)

Duìbùqǐ. 對不起

May I ask your name?

Qǐngwèn nín guìxìng? 請問您貴姓?

My (sur)name is ...

Wǒ xìng ... 我姓 ...

Where are you from?

Nǐ shì cóng nǎlǐ lái de? 你是從哪裡來的?

I'm from ...

Wǒ shì cóng ... lái de. 我是從 ... 來的

I like ...

Wǒ xǐhuān ... 我喜歡 ...

I don't like ...

Wǒ bù xǐhuān ... 我不喜歡 ...

Wait a moment.

Dèng yíxià. 等一下

Yes & No

There are no specific words in Mandarin that mean 'yes' and 'no' that are used in isolation the way they are in English. When asked a question the verb is repeated to

indicate the affirmative. A response in the negative is formed by using the word *bù*, 不 (meaning 'no') before the verb. When *bù* (falling tone) occurs before another word with a falling tone, it is pronounced with a rising tone.

Are you going to Taichung?

Ni qù Táizhōng ma? 你去台中嗎?

Yes.

Qù. (literally 'go') 去

No.

Bù qù. (literally 'no go') 不去

No. (don't have)

Méi yǒu. 沒有

No. (not so)

Bùshì. 不是

DIRECTIONS

Where is (the) ...?

... *zài nǎlǐ?* ... 在哪裡?

Go straight ahead.

Yízhí zǒu. 一直走

Turn left.

Zuǒ zhuǎn. 左轉

Turn right.

Yòu zhuǎn. 右轉

at the next corner

zài xià yíge zhuǎnjiǎo 在下一個轉角

at the traffic lights

zài hónglǜdēng 在紅綠燈

Could you show me (on the map)?

Ni néng bùnéng (zài dìtú shàng) zhǐ gěi wǒ kàn? 你能不能(在地圖上)指給我看?

behind	<i>hòumiàn</i>	後面
in front of	<i>qiánmiàn</i>	前面
near	<i>jìn</i>	近
far	<i>yuǎn</i>	遠
opposite	<i>duìmiàn</i>	對面

beach	<i>hǎitān</i>	海灘
bridge	<i>qiáoliáng</i>	橋樑
island	<i>dǎoyú</i>	島嶼
main square	<i>guǎngchǎng</i>	廣場
map	<i>dìtú</i>	地圖
market	<i>shìchǎng</i>	市場
old city	<i>jiù shìqū</i>	舊市區
palace	<i>gōngdiàn</i>	宮殿
sea	<i>hǎiyáng</i>	海洋

HEALTH

I'm sick.
Wǒ shēngbīngle. 我生病了。

SIGNS

入口	<i>Rùkǒu</i>	Entrance
出口	<i>Chūkǒu</i>	Exit
詢問處	<i>Xúnwènchù</i>	Information
開	<i>Kāi</i>	Open
關	<i>Guān</i>	Closed
禁止	<i>Jìnzhǐ</i>	Prohibited
有空房間	<i>Yǒu Kōng Fángjiān</i>	Rooms Available
客滿	<i>Kèmǎn</i>	No Vacancies
警察	<i>Jīngchá</i>	Police
警察局	<i>Jīngchájú</i>	Police Station
廁所	<i>Cèsuǒ</i>	Toilets
男	<i>Nán</i>	Men
女	<i>Nǚ</i>	Women

I need a doctor.

Wǒ děi kàn yīshēng. 我得看醫生。

Is there a doctor here who speaks English?

Zhèlǐ yǒu huì jiǎng yīngwén de yīshēng ma? 這裡有會講英文的醫生嗎?

It hurts here.

Zhèlǐ tòng. 這裡痛。

I'm ...

Wǒ yǒu ... 我有 ...

asthmatic	<i>qìchuānbìng</i>	氣喘病
diabetic	<i>tánngniàobìng</i>	糖尿病
epileptic	<i>diànxiánbìng</i>	癲癇病

I'm allergic to ...

Wǒ duì ... guòmǐn. 我對 ... 過敏。

antibiotics	<i>kàngshēngsù</i>	抗生素
aspirin	<i>àsípīlín</i>	阿司匹林
penicillin	<i>qīngméisù</i>	青黴素
bee stings	<i>mífēng dīng yǎo</i>	蜜蜂叮咬
nuts	<i>jiāngguǒ</i>	堅果

anti-diarrhoea medicine

zhǐxièyào 止瀉藥

antiseptic cream

xiāodú yàogāo 消毒藥膏

condoms

bǎoxiǎn tào 保險套

contraceptive

biyùnyào 避孕藥

diarrhoea

lā dùzi 拉肚子

headache

tóutòng 頭痛

medicine

yào 藥

sanitary napkins (Kotex)

wèishēngmián 衛生棉

sunscreen (UV) lotion

fángshàiyóu 防曬油

tampons

wèishēngmián tiáo 衛生棉條

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

Do you speak English?

Ni huì jiǎng yīngwén ma? 你會講英文嗎?

Does anyone here speak English?

Zhèlǐ yǒu rén huì shuō yīngyǔ ma? 這裡有人會說英語嗎?

How do you say ... in Mandarin?

... *zhōngwén zěnmé shuō?* ... 中文怎麼說?

What does ... mean?

... *shì shénme yìsi?* ... 是什麼意思?

I understand.

Wǒ tīngdédǒng. 我聽得懂

I don't understand.

Wǒ tīngbùdǒng. 我聽不懂

Please write it down.

Qǐng xiěxiàlái. 請寫下來

NUMBERS

0	<i>líng</i>	零
1	<i>yī</i>	一
2	<i>èr, liǎng</i>	二, 兩
3	<i>sān</i>	三
4	<i>sì</i>	四
5	<i>wǔ</i>	五
6	<i>liù</i>	六
7	<i>qī</i>	七
8	<i>bā</i>	八
9	<i>jiǔ</i>	九
10	<i>shí</i>	十
11	<i>shíyī</i>	十一
12	<i>shí'èr</i>	十二
20	<i>èrshí</i>	二十
21	<i>èrshíyī</i>	二十一
22	<i>èrshí'èr</i>	二十二
30	<i>sānshí</i>	三十
40	<i>sìshí</i>	四十
50	<i>wǔshí</i>	五十
60	<i>liùshí</i>	六十
70	<i>qīshí</i>	七十
80	<i>bāshí</i>	八十

90	<i>jiǔshí</i>	九十
100	<i>yībǎi</i>	一百
1000	<i>yīqiān</i>	一千
2000	<i>liǎngqiān</i>	兩千

PAPERWORK

name

xìngmíng 姓名

nationality

guójí 國籍

date of birth

chūshēng rìqī 出生日期

place of birth

chūshēng dì 出生地

sex (gender)

xìngbié 性別

passport

hùzhào 護照

passport number

hùzhào hàomǎ 護照號碼

visa

qiānzhèng 簽證

visa extension

yáncháng qiānzhèng 延長簽證

Foreign Affairs Police

Wàishì Jīngchá 外事警察

credit card ...

xìnyòngkǎ 信用卡

number

hàomǎ 號碼

expiry date

yǒuxiào rìqī 有效日期

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	<i>Shéi?</i>	誰?
What?	<i>Shénme?</i>	什麼?
What is it?	<i>Shì shénme?</i>	是什麼?
When?	<i>Shénme shíhòu?</i>	什麼時候?
Where?	<i>Zài nǎlǐ?</i>	在哪裡?
Which?	<i>Nǎge?</i>	哪個?
How?	<i>Zěnmé?</i>	怎麼?

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...

Wǒ xiǎng mǎi ... 我想買 ...

How much is it?

Duōshǎo qián? 多少錢?

I don't like it.

Wǒ bù xǐhuān. 我不喜歡

Can I see it?

Néng kànkan ma? 能看看嗎?

I'm just looking.

Wǒ zhǐshì kànkan. 我只是看看

It's cheap.

Zhè bùguì. 這不貴

Is there anything cheaper?

Yǒu piányi yīdiǎn de ma? 有便宜一點的嗎?

That's too expensive.

Tài guile. 太貴了。

I'll take it.

Wǒ mǎi zhège. 我買這個。

Can I pay by travellers cheque?

Kěyǐ fù lǚxíng zhīpiào ma? 可以付旅行支票嗎?

more

duō 多

less

shǎo 少

smaller

gèng xiǎo 更小

bigger

gèng dà 更大

too much/many

tài duō 太多

Do you accept ...?

Shōu bùshōu ...? 收不收 ...?

credit cards

xìnyòngkǎ 信用卡

travellers cheques

lǚxíng zhīpiào 旅行支票

Excuse me, where's the nearest ...?

Qǐng wèn, zuìjìn de ... zài nǎlǐ?

請問, 最近的 ... 在哪裡?

I'm looking for a/the ...

Wǒ zài zhǎo ...

我在找 ...

ATM

zìdòng guiyuánjī/ 自動櫃員機/

tíkǎnjī 提款機

bank

yínháng 銀行

chemist/pharmacy

yàojú 藥局

city centre

shìzhōngxīn 市中心

... embassy

... dàshǐguǎn ... 大使館

foreign affairs police

wàishì jīngchá 外事警察

currency exchange

wàihuì duìhuànchù 外匯兌換處

hospital

yīyuàn 醫院

hotel

bīnguǎn/ 賓館/

fàndiàn/ 飯店/

lǚguǎn 旅館

market

shìchǎng 市場

museum

bówùguǎn 博物館

police

jǐngchá 警察

post office

yóujú 郵局

public toilet

gōnggòng cèsuǒ 公共廁所

telephone

diànhuà 電話

telephone office

diànxìnjú 電信局

the tourist office

guānguāngjú 觀光局

change money

huàn qián 換錢

telephone card

diànhuà kǎ 電話卡

international call

guójì diànhuà 國際電話

collect call

duìfāng fùfèi diànhuà 對方付費電話

direct-dial call

zhíbō diànhuà 直撥電話

fax

chuánzhēn 傳真

computer

diànnǎo 電腦

email (often called 'email')

diànzìyóujiàn 電子郵件

internet

wǎnglù/ 網路/

wǎngjī wǎnglù (more 網際網路

formal name)

online

shàngwǎng 上網

Where can I get online?

Wǒ zài nǎlǐ kěyǐ shàngwǎng?

我在哪裡可以上網?

Can I check my email account?

Wǒ jiǎnchá yíxià zìjǐ de email xìnxiāng, hǎo ma?

我檢查一下自己的 email 信箱, 好嗎?

TIME & DATES**What's the time?**

Jǐ diǎn? 幾點?

... hour ... minute

... diǎn ... fēn ... 點 ... 分

3.05

sān diǎn líng wǔ fēn 三點零五分

When?

Shénme shíhòu? 什麼時候?

now

xiànzài 現在

today

jīntiān 今天

tomorrow

míngtiān 明天

day after tomorrow

hòutiān 後天

yesterday

zuótiān 昨天

in the morning

zǎoshàng 早上

in the afternoon

xiàwǔ 下午

in the evening

wǎnshàng 晚上

weekend

zhōumò 周末

Monday

Xīngqīyī 星期一

Tuesday

Xīngqī'èr 星期二

Wednesday

Xīngqīsān 星期三

Thursday

Xīngqīsì 星期四

Friday

Xīngqīwǔ 星期五

Saturday

Xīngqīliù 星期六

Sunday

Xīngqītīān 星期天

January

Yīyuè 一月

February

Èryuè 二月

March

Sānyuè 三月

April

Sìyuè 四月

May

Wǔyuè 五月

June

Liùyuè 六月

July

Qīyuè 七月

August

Bāyuè 八月

September

Jiǔyuè 九月

October

Shíyuè 十月

November

Shíyīyuè 十一月

December

Shí'èryuè 十二月

TRANSPORT**Public Transport****airport**

jīchǎng 機場

long-distance bus station

kèyùn zhàn 客運站

subway (underground)

jiéyùn 捷運

subway station

jiéyùn zhàn 捷運站

train station

huǒchē zhàn 火車站

What time does ... leave/arrive?

... jǐdiǎn kāi/dào? ... 幾點開/到?

the boat

chuán 船

intercity bus; coach

kèyùn 客運

local/city bus

gōngchē 公車

minibus

xiǎoxíng gōngchē 小型公車

the plane

fēijī 飛機

train

huǒchē 火車

I'd like a ...

Wǒ yào yízhāng ... 我要一張 ...

one-way ticket

dānchéng piào 單程票

return ticket

lái huí piào 來回票

platform ticket

yuètái piào 月台票

1st-class ticket

tóuděngcāng 頭等艙

2nd-class ticket

èrděngcāng 二等艙

I want to go to ...

Wǒ yào qù ... 我要去 ...

The train has been delayed/cancelled.

Huǒchē (wǎndiǎn le/ 火車(晚點了/

qǔxiāo le). 取消了)。

When's the ... bus?

... bānchē shénme shíhòu lái? ... 班車什麼時候來?

first

tóu 頭

last

mò 末

next

xià 下

boarding pass

dēngjīzhèng 登機證

left-luggage room

jīfàng chù 寄放處

platform number

yuètái hàomǎ 月台號碼

ticket office

shùpiào chù 售票處

timetable

shíkèbiǎo 時刻表

ROAD SIGNS

讓	Ràng	Give way
繞行	Ràoxíng	Detour
禁止進入	Jìnzhǐ Jìnrù	No Entry
禁止超車	Jìnzhǐ Chāochē	No Overtaking
禁止停車	Jìnzhǐ Tíngchē	No Parking
入口	Rùkǒu	Entrance
保持暢通	Bǎochí Chàngōng	Keep Clear
收費	Shōufèi	Toll
危險	Wéixiǎn	Danger
減速慢行	Jiǎnsù Mǎnxíng	Slow Down
單行道	Dānxíngdào	One Way
出口	Chūkǒu	Exit

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a ...

Wǒ yào zū yīliàng ...	我要租一輛 ...
car	
qìchē	汽車
motorbike	
mótuōchē	摩托車
bicycle	
jiǎotàchē	腳踏車

How much is it per day?

Yītiān duōshǎo qián? 一天多少錢?

How much is it per hour?

Yīgè xiǎoshí duōshǎo qián? 一個小時多少錢?

How much is the deposit?

Yājīn duōshǎo qián? 押金多少錢?

road	lù	路
section	duàn	段
street	jiē	街
No 21	21 hào	21號
diesel	cháiyou	柴油
petrol	qiyóu	汽油

Where's the next service station?

Xià yíge jiāyóuzhàn 下一個加油站在
zài nǎlǐ? 哪裡?

Please fill it up.

Qǐng jiāmǎn. 請加滿

I'd like ... litres.

Wǒ yào ... gōngshēng. 我要 ... 公升

Does this road lead to ...?

Zhè tiáo lù dào ... ma? 這條路到 ... 嗎?

How long can I park here?

Zhèlǐ kěyǐ tíng duōjiǔ? 這裡可以停多久?

Can I park here?

Zhèlǐ kěyǐ tíngchē ma? 這裡可以停車嗎?

Where do I pay?

Zài nǎlǐ fùkuǎn? 在哪裡付款?

I/We need a mechanic.

(Wǒ/Wǒmen) xūyào (我/我們)需要
qìchē wéixiūyuán. 汽車維修員

The car has broken down (at ...)

Chēzi (zài ...) pāomáo le. 車子 (在...) 拋錨了

The car/motorbike won't start.

Qìchē/mótuōchē 汽車/摩托車
fādòng bùqǐlái. 發動不起來

I have a flat tyre.

Lúntāi pòle. 輪胎破了

I've run out of petrol.

Méiyóu qiyóu le. 沒有汽油了

I had an accident.

Wǒ chū chēhuò le. 我出車禍了

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Is there a/an ...?

Yǒu ... ma? 有 ... 嗎?

I need a/an ...

Wǒ xūyào ... 我需要 ...

baby food

yīng'ér shípín 嬰兒食品

baby formula (milk)

yīng'ér nǎifěn 嬰兒奶粉

baby's bottle

nǎipíng 奶瓶

children's menu

értóng càidān 兒童菜單

(disposable) nappies/diapers

niàobù 尿布

(English-speaker) babysitter

(huì jiǎng yīngwén de) (會講英文的)

yīng'ér bǎomǔ 嬰兒保姆

highchair

yīng'ér cānyǐ 嬰兒餐椅

potty

yīng'ér mǎtǒng 嬰兒馬桶

stroller

yīng'ér chē 嬰兒車



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Mandarin Phrasebook

Glossary

See also Language (p361) for useful phrases, and Food & Drink (p58) for an explanation of Taiwanese food terms.

aborigines (*yuánzhùmin*) – the original residents of Taiwan, of which there are currently 13 recognised tribes; considered possibly the ancestors of all Austronesian people

ARC – Alien Resident Certificate; foreign visitors must apply for one if planning to stay for long-term work or study

Ami – Taiwan's largest aboriginal tribe; lives on the coastal plains of eastern Taiwan

Atayal – Taiwan's second-largest aboriginal tribe; lives in mountainous regions of the north

bángqiú – baseball

Baochung – type of oolong tea grown around Pinglin

bensheng ren – Taiwanese people whose ancestors came to Taiwan prior to 1949

black gold (*hēi jīn*) – in Taiwan this refers to political corruption and not oil

Bunun – Taiwan's third-largest aboriginal tribe; lives in Central Mountains

catty – unit of measure (600g)

chá – tea, especially Chinese tea

chi (qi) – vital energy

Chu-kuang (*Júguāng*) – 2nd-class regular train

congee – rice porridge

cūn – village

dàgē'dà (literally big-brother-big) – mobile phone

DPP – Democratic Progressive Party; Taiwan's first opposition party

Forest Recreation Area – similar to a state or provincial park in the west

Fujianese – people originally from Fujian province in China who migrated to Taiwan; the Taiwanese dialect is derived from that of southern Fujian

Fu-hsing (*fúxīng*) – 2nd-class regular train

gǎng – harbour/port

gāosù gōnglù – national highway

gōng – Taoist temple

guānxi – the art of giving and receiving favours; mutually supportive and cooperative relationships

Hakka – nomadic subset of the Han Chinese, the Hakka were among the first Chinese to settle in Taiwan; many prominent Taiwanese are also Hakka people

Hanyu Pinyin – system of Romanisation used in mainland China; though there is some crossover, most signs in Taiwan outside Taipei use the Tongyong Pinyin or Wade-Giles systems

HSR – High Speed Rail, Taiwan's newly built 'bullet train'

Ilha Formosa – the name Portuguese sailors gave Taiwan, meaning 'beautiful island'

jiǎotàchē zhuānyòngdào – bike path

jié – festival

jiē – street

jīn – unit of measure; see *catty*

jīngjù – see *opera* (Taiwanese)

Kaoliang – liquor made from sorghum; made in Matsu and Kinmen

KMT – Kuomintang, Nationalist Party of the Republic of China

KMRT – Kaohsiung's MRT system

koi – carp

láojiǔ – medicinal rice wine made in Matsu

laver – edible seaweed

liǎng – unit of measure (37.5g)

Lu Tung Pin – one of the eight immortals of classical Chinese mythology; couples avoid his temples as he likes to break up happy lovers

Matsu (Mǎzǔ) – Goddess of the Sea, the most popular deity in Taiwan; one of the Taiwan Strait Islands

mào – general word for temple

mínsù – B&B, homestay

mountain permit – special permit you pick up from local police stations to allow you to enter restricted mountainous areas

MRT – Mass Rapid Transit; Taipei's underground railway system

National Trail System – a system of hiking trails running over the entire island

One China – the idea that mainland China and Taiwan are both part of one country; People's Republic of China

oolong (also *wulong*) – semifermented tea, most popular kind in Taiwan

opera (Taiwanese) – also known as Beijing or Chinese opera, a sophisticated art form that has been an important part of Chinese culture for more than 900 years

Paiwan – small aboriginal tribe
ping – unit of measure for property: land, apartments etc (4 sq metres)
PPF (People First Party) – offshoot of KMT started by James Soong
PRC – People’s Republic of China
pùbù – waterfall
Puyuma – small aboriginal tribe

qiáo – bridge
qū – district/area

ROC – Republic of China; covered all of China before the PRC was established
suòxī – river tracing; popular sport that involves walking up rivers and streams with the aid of nonslip shoes
Rukai – small aboriginal tribe; lives in southern part of Central Mountains

Saisiyat – very small aboriginal tribe, lives in mountains of Miaoli County
sēnlín – forest
shān – mountain
shěngdào – provincial highway
xiàndào – county road
sì – Buddhist temple
Sinicism – Chinese method or customs
shoji – rice paper

tael – unit of measure; see *liǎng*
taichi – graceful but powerful slow-motion shadow-boxing commonly practised as the sun rises
tái kè – describes someone or something as very Taiwanese in style; formerly a derogatory term for low class, now embraced by many young people looking to assert a local Taiwanese identity
Taipeiers – people from Taipei
Three Nos – refers to no support for Taiwan independence; no support for ‘two Chinas’ and no support for

Taiwan’s entry into any international organisation for sovereign states
Three Small Links – the opening of cross-strait trade between China and Taiwan’s offshore islands
Tieguanyin (Iron Buddha Tea) – type of oolong tea grown in Maokong, south of the Taipei Zoo
Tongyong Pinyin – system of romanisation used in parts of Taiwan
Tsou – small aboriginal tribe
tuántífáng – youth hostel dormitory
Tze-Chiang (*Ziqiáng*) – the fastest and most comfortable regular train

VAT – Value-Added Tax
waisheng ren – Taiwanese who immigrated from mainland China following the KMT defeat in the Chinese civil war
Wade-Giles – a Romanisation system for Chinese words; widely used until the introduction of Hanyu Pinyin
Wang Yeh – a Tang dynasty scholar, said to watch over the waters of southern China; worshipped all over the south
wēnquán – hot spring
White Terror – a large-scale campaign started by the KMT to purge the island of political activists during the 1950s; one of the grimmest times in Taiwan’s martial-law period
xiàng – lane

Yami – A small aboriginal tribe inhabiting Lanyu island
yèshi – night market
Youth Guesthouse Network – program set up by the National Youth Commission to establish cheap hostel accommodation around the island.

zhàn – station
Zhuyin – Also known as ‘Bopomofo’; system of symbol-writing used to teach children and foreign students how to pronounce Chinese words

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