

ASEAN CROSS-CULTURAL EXTERNSHIP PLACEMENT COUNTRY BACKGROUND

1. Republic of China (R.O.C.) or Taiwan



Taiwan, also known as Formosa (from Portuguese: Ilha **Formosa**, "Beautiful Island"), is an island situated in East Asia in the Western Pacific Ocean and located off the southeastern coast of mainland China. Taiwan comprises most of the territory controlled by the Republic of China (R.O.C.) since 1949. "**Taiwan**" is also the commonly used alternative name both domestically and internationally to refer to the Republic of China. Taipei is the Capital of R.O.C.

Taiwan generally enjoys an oceanic and subtropical monsoon climate. The entire island experiences hot, humid weather from June through September. The temperature during the cool, mild winters averages 18°C / 64°F, and the average temperature rises to 31°C / 88°F Taiwan's annual weather patterns are strongly influenced by the East Asian monsoonal flow. The winter monsoon lasts from October to late March and brings steady rain to northeastern Taiwan, while the central and southern parts of the island experience mostly sunny winters. Many of Taiwan's offshore islands are buffeted by powerful winds during this time. The summer **monsoon** begins with the "plum rain" season (so named as it coincides with the plum season) in May and June and usually ends in late September. During this period, the south experiences high levels of precipitation while the north remains comparatively dry. Natural

hazards such as typhoons from May to September and **earthquakes** are common in the region.

Separated from the Asian continent by the 120 kilometers wide Taiwan Strait, the main island of the group is 394 kilometers long and 144 kilometers wide. To the northeast are the main islands of Japan and the East China Sea, and the southern end of the Ryukyu Islands of Japan is directly to the east; the Philippines lie to its south across the Bashi Channel. The mountainous island spans the Tropic of Cancer and is covered by tropical and subtropical vegetation.

Although Taiwan is located in the subtropics, in winter, cold fronts from Siberia often drive temperatures to below 10 degrees Celsius and high mountains even receive snow. In summer, however, due to the influence of the subtropical Pacific high-pressure system, temperatures frequently rise to 35 degrees Celsius and above. The island's mercurial weather patterns are further complicated by the Central Mountains (Elite study in Taiwan, 2015).

2. History/background

Post-martial law until now

With Taiwan all but excluded from the international community and China growing economically and militarily, **Lee Teng-hui** had his work cut out for him. Early in his presidency, Lee paid lip service to the 'One China policy,' but as the years progressed he developed a more pro-independence stance. Mistrustful of Lee, China launched a series of missiles only 25km away from the Taiwanese coast in 1995. But the scare tactics backfired, and Taiwan reelected Lee Teng-hui in open elections the following year.

Sensing that the 'stick' approach had failed, China switched to carrots, and in 1998 offered to lift the ban on shipping and direct flights. The offer was rebuffed by Lee, who incensed China even further the next year by declaring openly his belief that China and Taiwan, as two separate countries, should enjoy 'state to state' relations.

In 2000, with Taiwan's presidential elections looming on the horizon, there was much cross-Strait sabre rattling. Despite this, DPP candidate **Chen Shui-bian** won in a three-party race, ending 54 years of KMT rule in Taiwan. Though the election signalled pro-independence, Chen was widely seen as a disaster by Beijing. The newly elected Chen soon softened his stance somewhat, declaring in his inauguration speech that the status quo would be maintained as long as China did not attempt to take Taiwan by force. But Beijing was hardly won over by Chen's words, demanding a firm commitment to the 'One China principle.'

Chen found himself between a rock and a hard place, unable to please either his supporters or his detractors. As a result, cross-strait relations stalled during Chen's first term, with the only glimmer of improvement being the opening of limited trade and travel between

China and Taiwan's offshore islands. Though often overshadowed by the more high-profile presidential election, Taiwan's legislative election of 2001 was equally revolutionary, reducing the KMT (albeit temporarily) to minority party status in a legislature they'd once controlled with an iron grip.

Chen's reelection in 2004, by the slimmest of margins, was surrounded by strange circumstances to say the least; an assassination attempt on the day before the election resulted in both president and vice president being mildly wounded, both by the same bullet. Needless to say, some felt the event was staged for sympathy. China, fearing that Chen's reelection would embolden pro-independence factions, caused cross-strait tensions to be ratcheted to their highest level in years with the issuing of an 'anti-secession law'. The law, in brief, codified China's long-standing threat to attack Taiwan should the island's leaders declare independence. Though Beijing's move was protested by massive rallies throughout Taiwan, cross-strait tension seems to have abated somewhat since, and there's been little outside of the usual sabre rattling for the past two years.

2006 brought a number of interesting political developments, as two major figures from Taiwan's 'old guard' made much-touted visits to mainland China. Other major political stories of 2006 and 2007 have been the changing the names of various state-run departments and buildings to incorporate the word 'Taiwan' instead of 'China,' and the large scale removal of thousands of statues of former dictator Chiang Kai-shek from many public spaces in Taiwan. As of this writing, there's even talk of removing Chiang's statue from one of Taipei's most famous landmarks, Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall; the hall's name itself might have been changed to the National Taiwan Democracy Memorial Hall by the time this edition goes to print. Probably the biggest political story of 2007 has been Taiwan's extended state of political gridlock thanks to a number of high-profile corruption charges involving major figures from both the KMT and the DPP. What affect this will have on Taiwan's internal and external situation in the coming years is anybody's guess (Lonely planet, 2015).



In 2005–2007 and 2009–2014, **Ma Ying-Jeou** first won the presidency by 58.45% of the popular vote in the presidential election of 2008, and was re-elected in 2012 with 51.6% of the vote. He was sworn into office as president on 20 May 2008, and sworn in as the Chairman of the Kuomintang on 17 October 2009; he resigned as Chairman of Kuomintang on 3 December 2014.

Read more: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/taiwan/history#ixzz3ZFocxdDA>

3. Population

In the latest survey conducted by National Chengchi University in 2014 and published in early 2015, 60.6% of respondents identified themselves exclusively as Taiwanese, 32.5% identified themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese and 3.5% identified themselves as Chinese. (Wiki, 2014) **Taiwan ended 2014 with a population of 23,434,000 people**, which represents an increase of 60,000 people compared to 2013. Taiwan has a high population density, with 651 people per square km and it was in position 177th in our ranking of density population in 2014 (countryeconomy, 2015).

The ROC government reports that **over 95% of the population is Han Chinese**, of which the majority includes descendants of early Han Chinese immigrants who arrived in Taiwan in large numbers starting in the 17th century. Alternatively, the ethnic groups of Taiwan may be roughly divided among the "Taiwanese" (84%, including Hakka), mainland Chinese (14%), and indigenous peoples (2%).

The Hoklo people are the largest Han subgroup (70% of the total population), whose ancestors migrated from the coastal southern Fujian region across the Taiwan Strait starting in the 17th century. The Hakka comprise about 15% of the total population, and descend from Han migrants to Guangdong, its surrounding areas and Taiwan. Additional people of Han origin include and descend from the 2 million Nationalists who fled to Taiwan following the communist victory on the mainland in 1949. (Wikipedia, 2015)

4. Main Religions and Ethnicities

The Constitution of the Republic of China protects people's freedom of religion and the practices of belief. There are approximately 18,718,600 religious followers in Taiwan as of 2005 (81.3% of total population) and 14–18% are non-religious. According to the 2005 census, of the 26 religions recognized by the ROC government, the five largest are: Buddhism (8,086,000 or 35.1%), Taoism (7,600,000 or 33%), Yiguandao (810,000 or 3.5%), Protestantism (605,000 or 2.6%), and Roman Catholicism (298,000 or 1.3%) (Wikipedia, 2015).

5. Main Languages and Dialects

Mandarin is the official national language and is spoken by the vast majority of the population of Taiwan. It has been the primary language of instruction in schools since the end of Japanese rule. As in Hong Kong and Macau, Traditional Chinese is used as the writing system in Taiwan.

The 70% of the population belonging to the Hoklo ethnic group speak Taiwanese Hokkien (a variant of the Min Nan speech of Fujian province) as their mother tongue, in addition to Mandarin, and many others have some degree of understanding. The Hakka ethnic group (15% of the population) use the Hakka language. Most waishengren speak primarily Mandarin. Although Mandarin is the language of instruction in schools and dominates

television and radio, non-Mandarin languages or dialects have undergone a revival in public life in Taiwan, particularly since restrictions on their use were lifted in the 1990s. (Wikipedia, 2015)

6. Political System Important Information

The political and legal statuses of Taiwan are contentious issues. The People's Republic of China (PRC) claims that the Republic of China government is illegitimate, referring to it as the "Taiwan Authority". The ROC, however, with its own constitution, independently elected president and armed forces, continues to view itself as a sovereign state. The present territory of the state has never been controlled by the PRC. Internationally, there is controversy on whether the ROC still exists as a state or a defunct state per international law due to the loss of membership/recognition in the United Nations and lack of wide diplomatic recognition. **In a poll of Taiwanese aged 20 and older taken by the TVBS in March 2009, a majority of 64% opted for the status quo, while 19% favored independence and 5% unification.** (Wikipedia, 2015)

7. General Legal System and Laws of Everyday Importance

For information, please visit this website:

<http://www.immigration.gov.tw/lp.asp?ctNode=30026&CtUnit=16705&BaseDSD=7&mp=2>

8. Cultural Do's and Don'ts

- **Arrive on time!**
- 4 = unlucky, death.
- 8 = prosperity, good luck.
- Don't giving **clocks!**, avoid giving umbrella's and handkerchiefs and all white flowers. There is too much negative symbolism connected with these gifts.



Clock = _

- **Don't Stab Your Rice with Your Chopsticks!**

If you are coming to Taiwan from a country that is heavily influenced by religion, you may be surprised by the lack of religion that you see in Taiwanese daily life. There are temples everywhere, and there are lots of little symbols you run across, such as burning ghost money and lighting firecrackers, but overall, it's very minor and it often flies under the radar. Don't be fooled though.



- Pointing your finger is considered offensive in Taiwan. Using your whole hand to point isn't.
- Make sure your foot never touches anybody. It's considered to be highly offensive.

9. **Work Place Culture Do's and Don'ts**

- It's considered polite to stay humble when you are given a compliment.
- You are expected to be **on time** even when your Taiwanese counterpart tends to be late.
- Make sure you use the correct Chinese characters on your business card for Taiwan. Be honest when negotiating and don't exaggerate. You don't want to risk a breach of trust!
- The Taiwanese almost always attend meetings as a group. At the negotiation table, the person highest in hierarchy sits in the middle. The person on his/her left is second in command, the one on the right is third in command, the second person on the left comes next etc.
- Be careful when complimenting on someone's tie or artifacts in someone's office (Cultureinc.com, 2015).

10. **Dress Codes Do's and Don'ts**

- In general, Taiwanese people are not overly formal or easily offended. Furthermore, most people in Taiwan are very familiar with Western customs, so a visit to Taiwan

does not necessitate a crash course in any long list of unfamiliar rules. What's more important is to remember to bring along a generous stockpile of smiles. **People in Taiwan are quite hospitable (though many may be shy or nervous when meeting a foreigner)**, and a friendly disposition will make up for a host of faux pas.

- The Taiwanese are also especially appreciative of foreign guests who are curious about their culture. An avid interest in things Chinese, and the unique aspects of Taiwanese living, will win you a lot of friends. (taiwanembassy.org, 2015)

11. Cross Gender Do's and Don't's

- It's not common practice in Taiwan to shake hands with women. Wait for a Taiwanese woman to initiate the handshake (when she doesn't just nod your head) and initiate the handshake yourself when you are a Western woman
- For men please don't say **"Do you want to eat fried rice"** with women expect in the restaurants.

12. Common Communication Challenges and Do's and Don'ts

- When they meet each other, people in Taiwan usually shake hands. They generally do not bow as in Korea or Japan, except on very formal occasions, such as when receiving an award or addressing an audience.
- When presenting a gift, money, a package or a document, it is polite to offer it with both hands. This symbolizes that the present is an extension of your person.

13. Types of Food (Delicious Foods and Foods to Watch Out For)

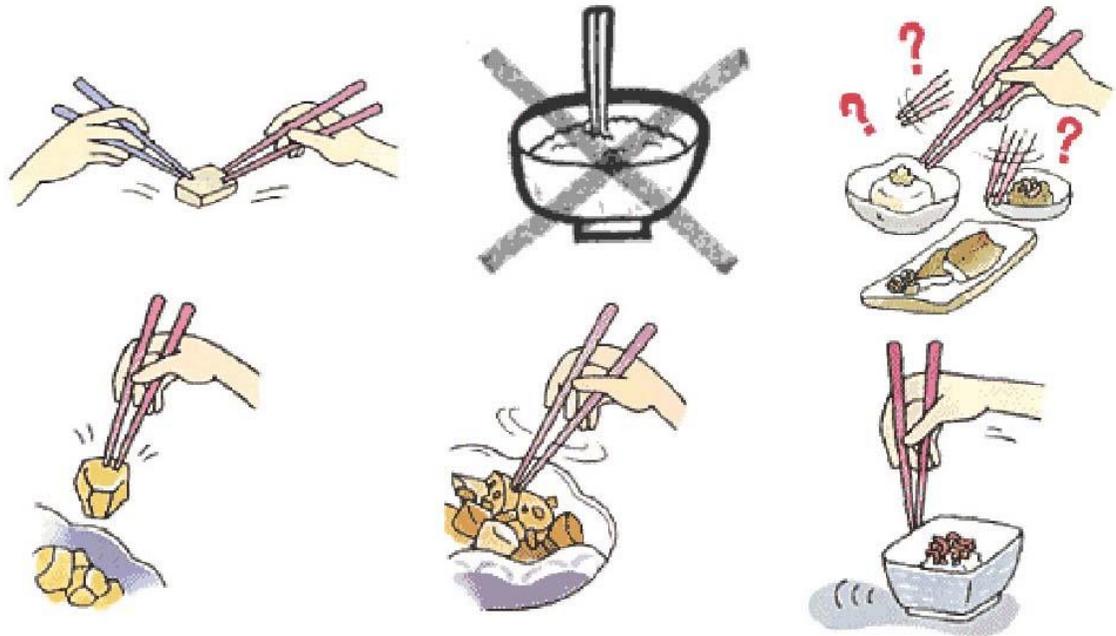


From: Taiwan.net.tw

For more information: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxCZzgk1zAY>

14. Eating Etiquette (Customs)

- It is important to learn to use chopsticks!



From: mglobemall.com

- It is acceptable to hold the bowl containing rice in your hand while eating, and to bend over the plate while eating. when the bowl of rice is nearly empty, hold the rice bowl close to your mouth while eating, and push the rice through your mouth with the chopsticks. Do not, however, lift the flat plates from the table.
- The Chinese prefer to entertain in public places rather than in their home, especially when entertaining foreigners. If you are invited to a Taiwanese home, it will happen once you have developed a relationship and should be considered a great honor.
- Do not be offended if a Chinese person makes slurping or belching sounds; it merely indicates that they are enjoying their food.
- When you have finished eating, place your chopsticks on the chopstick rest or on the table. Do not place your chopsticks across the top of your bowl.
- **Do not put bones in your bowl. Place them on the table or in a special bowl for that purpose!**

15. Body Language Etiquette (Customs) Do's and Don'ts

- The Chinese dislike being touched by strangers. Do not touch, hug, lock arms, back slap or make any body contact.
- Clicking fingers or whistling is considered very rude.

- **Never put your feet on a desk or a chair. Never gesture or pass an object with your feet.**
- Blowing one's nose in a handkerchief and returning it to one's pocket is considered vulgar by the Chinese.
- To beckon a Taiwanese person, face the palm of your hand downward and move your fingers in a scratching motion. **Never use your index finger to beckon anyone.**
- Sucking air in quickly and loudly through lips and teeth expresses distress or surprise at a proposed request. Attempt to change your request, allowing the Chinese to save face.

Chinese point with an open hand. Never point with your index finger.

16. Money/Shopping/Item Buying Customs

1 Bath = 1 NW



From: colourlovers.com

- Gifts are given at Chinese New Year, weddings, births and funerals.
- The Taiwanese like food and a nice food basket or a bottle of good quality alcohol are gifts.
- A gift may be refused the first time it is offered out of politeness. Attempt to offer the gift again; however, never force the issue.
- **Red, pink and yellow** are considered to be auspicious colours.
- Avoid giving anything made in **China!**
- Present gifts using both hands. (kwintessential.co.uk, 2015)

17. Housing/Accommodation Do's and Don'ts

- The Taiwanese prefer to entertain in public places rather than in their home, especially when entertaining foreigners. If you are invited to a Taiwanese home, it will happen once you have developed a relationship and should be considered a great honour.
- Dress well. A great deal of emphasis on appearance. Dressing well gives face to your hosts.
- Remove your shoes before entering the house.
- Greet the eldest person first.

18. Visa Information

For more information, please visit this website:

<http://www.roc-taiwan.org/th/ct.asp?xItem=17838&CtNode=3221&mp=232&xp1=>

19. Country Information Websites

<http://www.roc-taiwan.org/th/mp.asp?mp=232>

<http://iff.immigration.gov.tw/iffwelcome.asp>

<http://www.taiwanembassy.org/US/NYC/ct.asp?xItem=13527&ctNode=2973&mp=62>

<http://www.studyintaiwan.org/>

http://www.esit.org.tw/introduction_taiwan.php?&lang=eng

http://www.oia.nchu.edu.tw/english/03_exchange/01_exchange.php?MID=3&SID=9

<http://www.movetotaiwan.com/things-not-to-do-in-taiwan/>

http://www.vacationzone.co.th/info/index_taipei.php

<http://www.taiwan.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=25904&ctNode=1955&mp=999>

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/taiwan.html>

http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_cn.htm

<http://www.immigration.gov.tw/lp.asp?ctNode=30026&CtUnit=16705&BaseDSD=7&mp=2>