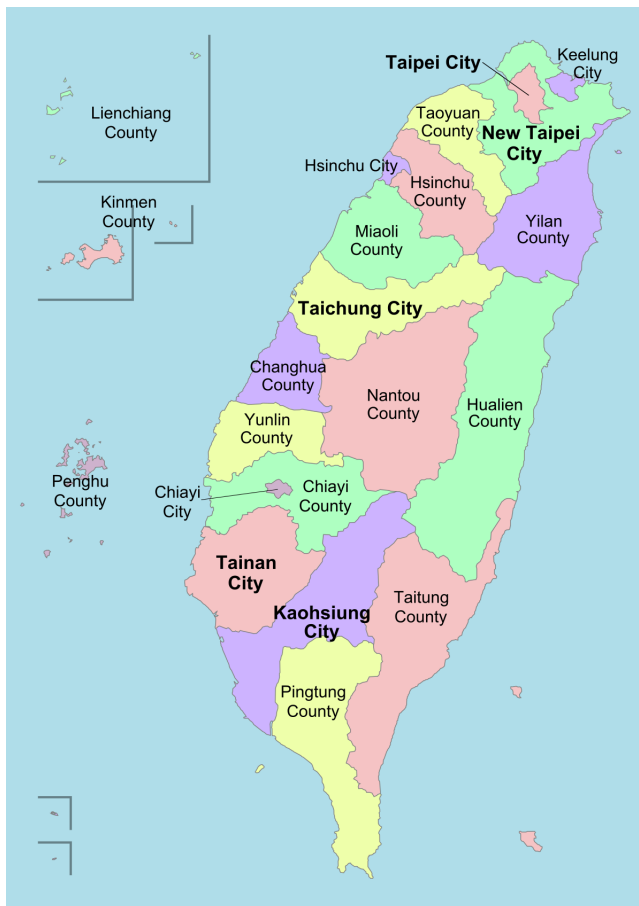
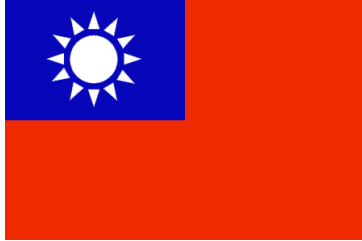




TAIWAN

FLAG



FACTS AND STATISTICS

Location: Eastern Asia, islands bordering the East China Sea, Philippine Sea, South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait, north of the Philippines, off the southeastern coast of China

Capital: Taipei

Climate: tropical; marine; rainy season during southwest monsoon (June to August); cloudiness is persistent and extensive all year

Population: 23 milion (2019 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Taiwanese (including Hakka) 84%, mainland Chinese 14%, indigenous 2%

Religions: mixture of Buddhist and Taoist 93%, Christian 4.5%, other 2.5%

Government: multiparty democracy

Business Culture: Ranked 42nd in the Business Culture Complexity Index™



LANGUAGE IN TAIWAN

The official language of Taiwan is Mandarin Chinese, but because many Taiwanese are of southern Fujianese descent, Min-nan (the Southern Min dialect, or Holo) is also widely spoken.

The smaller groups of Hakka people and aborigines have also preserved their own languages.

Many elderly people can also speak some Japanese, as they were subjected to Japanese education before Taiwan was returned to Chinese rule in 1945 after the Japanese occupation which lasted for half a century. The most popular foreign language in Taiwan is English, which is part of the regular school curriculum.

TAIWANESE PEOPLE, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

The People

Taiwan's population is mostly Han Chinese who were born on the mainland or have ancestors that were. They are divided into three groups based on the dialect of Chinese they speak: Taiwanese, Hakka, and Mandarin. Taiwan also has a small population of aborigines who comprise about 2 percent of the total population.

Most people in Taiwan have traditional values based on Confucian ethics; however, pressures from industrialization are now challenging these values. Still, some traditional values remain strong, including piety toward parents, ancestor worship, a strong emphasis on education and work, and the importance of "face." Since industrialization, women enjoy greater freedom and a higher social status, individual

creativity is regarded as equally important as social conformity and acquiring material goods and recognition is increasingly important.

Some tensions exist between social groups. The majority of people in Taiwan came from or have ancestors who came from mainland China before 1949. They are known as Taiwanese and enjoy the highest standard of living in Taiwan. Because of their wealth and numbers, they also have the greatest influence on economic and political issues.

Mainlanders are people who arrived in Taiwan after mainland China fell to the Communists in 1949. Many Mainlanders work for the government. Tensions between Taiwanese and Mainlanders have eased substantially. The aborigines, who live mainly in rural villages, are the least privileged social group in Taiwan.

Confucianism

The teachings of Confucius describe the position of the individual in society. Confucianism is a system of behaviors and ethics that stress the obligations of people towards one another based upon their relationship. The basic tenets are based upon five different relationships:

- Ruler and subject
- Husband and wife
- Parents and children
- Brothers and sisters
- Friend and friend

Confucianism stresses duty, loyalty, honor, filial piety, respect for age and seniority, and sincerity.

Harmony / Group Relations

- Due to the Confucian tenets Taiwanese culture is a collective one.
- There is a need to belong to a group larger than themselves, be it their family, school, work group, or country.
- They treat people with respect and dignity regardless of their personal feelings.
- In order to maintain a sense of harmony, they will act with decorum at all times and not do anything to cause someone else public embarrassment.
- They are willing to subjugate their own feelings for the good of the group.

The Concept of Face / Mien-tzu

- The concept of face is extremely important to the Taiwanese.
- Face is difficult to translate into words but essential reflects a person's reputation, dignity, and prestige.

- Face can be lost, saved or given to another person.
- Companies, as well as individuals, have face and this often provides the rationale behind business and personal interactions.

Giving Face

Face can be given to people by complimenting them, showing them respect, or doing anything that increases their self-esteem. Specific examples include:

- Complimenting individuals (be careful not to single out individuals when the work was a corporate effort)
- Praising group (company, school, family, country)

Losing Face

You can cause someone to lose face by causing someone embarrassment, and/or tarnishing their image and reputation. Examples include:

- Direct or indirect criticism of an individual or group
- Giving someone a gift that is beneath their status
- Turning down an invitation or a gesture of friendship
- Not keeping your word
- Demonstrations of anger or excessive emotionalism

Saving Face

In the event that you cause someone to lose face, or someone is embarrassed by circumstances that arise, the best recourse is to appropriate blame for problems that arise. For example:

- Appropriating blame for problems that arise:
- Perhaps I didn't explain myself clearly."
- Oh that kind of thing happens in our country too."
- I have done the same thing myself."

"Guanxi" – Connections/Relationships

- Most Taiwanese business is conducted among friends, friends of friends, and family.
- Such connections, or "guanxi" (pronounced gwan-she) are developed with people at your own level or of a higher status in both business and social situations.
- "Guanxi" opens doors, smoothes out problems, and leads to even more connections.

MANNERS AND ETIQUETTE IN TAIWAN

Meeting and Greeting

- Greetings are formal and the oldest person in a group is always greeted first.
- Handshakes are the most common form of greeting with foreigners.
- Many Taiwanese look towards the ground as a sign of respect when greeting someone.
- You need not follow their example as they understand that westerners tend to smile warmly when introduced.
- Most greetings include the rhetorical question, "Have you eaten?"
- The Chinese traditionally have 3 names. The surname, or family name is first and is followed by one or two personal names.
- Chinese women do not change their names when they marry other Chinese, and the children's last name will generally follow that of the father.
- Often their personal names have some poetic or otherwise significant meaning, so asking about the meaning is a good way to break the ice.
- When you are first meeting a person, address the person by their academic, professional, or honorific title and their surname.
- If those you are meeting want to move to a first name basis, they will advise you which name to use.
- Some Chinese adopt more western names in business and may ask you to call them by that name.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- 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.
- Do not give scissors, knives or other cutting utensils as they traditionally indicate that you want to sever the relationship.
- Do not give clocks, handkerchiefs or straw sandals as they are associated with funerals and death.
- Do not give white flowers or chrysanthemums as they signify death.
- Do not wrap gifts in white, blue or black paper.
- Red, pink and yellow are considered to be auspicious colours.
- Elaborate gift wrapping is imperative.
- Do not give an odd number of gifts, since odd numbers are considered unlucky.
- Four is also an unlucky number. Do not give four of anything.

- Eight is the luckiest number. Giving eight of something brings luck to the recipient.
- Avoid giving anything made in Taiwan.
- Present gifts using both hands. Gifts are not opened when received.
- Gifts are generally reciprocated
- Do not give a lavish gift unless it is to reciprocate an expensive gift that you have received.

Dining Etiquette

- 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 honor.

Meeting people

- A handshake is a common greeting.
- Handshakes are not as firm as in many other countries.
- Men should wait for a woman to extend her hand.
- Many Taiwanese lower their eyes during the greeting as a sign of respect.
- Greet or introduce the most important person first.
- If you are in a group, try to assemble in rank order, with the most senior person first.
- People are usually addressed by their title and surname.
- If the person does not have a corporate or government title, use the honorific Mister, Miss, or Madame followed by the surname.
- Wait until invited before using someone's first name.
- Business cards are exchanged after the initial introductions.
- Have one side of your business card translated into Chinese using the traditional script not the simplified script as used in China.
- Business cards are exchanged using both hands.
- Present your card so the typeface faces the recipient.
- Examine a business card carefully before putting it on the table next to you or in a business card case.
- Treat business cards with respect. The way you handle someone's card is indicative of the value you place on the relationship.
- Never write on someone's card in their presence.

Communication Style

Taiwanese value a well-crafted message. They appreciate sharing a deep and broad contextual understanding in order for the core message to be delivered and understood. That context comes in the form of words, gestures, and facial expressions. Brevity is not particularly valued, especially if it sacrifices something in the delivery.

It is important for people from direct cultures (USA, Germany, Scandinavia, etc), where context is not as highly valued and brevity is crucial, to realize that messages might be misconstrued as rude and the information provided might be inadequate because of its lack of context. People from direct communications cultures should take care to patiently listen for the information needed. Furthermore, a tendency to have few gestures may make it more difficult for the message to be understood so be prepared for questions.