

Taiwan

Introduction

Background: In 1895, military defeat forced China to cede Taiwan to Japan, however it reverted to Chinese control after World War II. Following the communist victory on the mainland in 1949, 2 million Nationalists fled to Taiwan and established a government that over five decades has gradually democratized and incorporated the native population within its structure. Throughout this period, the island has prospered to become one of East Asia's economic "Tigers." The dominant political issue continues to be the relationship between Taiwan and China and the question of eventual reunification.

Geography

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

Geographic coordinates: 23 30 N, 121 00 E

Map references: Southeast Asia

Area:

total: 35,980 sq km

land: 32,260 sq km

water: 3,720 sq km

note: includes the Pescadores, Matsu, and Quemoy

Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Maryland and Delaware combined

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,566.3 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

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

Terrain: eastern two-thirds mostly rugged mountains; flat to gently rolling plains in west

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: South China Sea 0 m

highest point: Yu Shan 3,997 m

Natural resources: small deposits of coal, natural gas, limestone, marble, and asbestos

Land use:

arable land: 24%

permanent crops: 1%

permanent pastures: 5%

forests and woodland: 55%

other: 15%

Irrigated land: NA sq km

Natural hazards: earthquakes and typhoons

Environment - current issues: air pollution; water pollution from industrial emissions, raw sewage; contamination of drinking water supplies; trade in endangered species; low-level radioactive waste disposal

Environment - international agreements:

party to: none of the selected agreements

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

People

Population: 22,191,087 (July 2000 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 22% (male 2,485,421; female 2,292,901)

15-64 years: 70% (male 7,869,939; female 7,629,195)

65 years and over: 8% (male 1,013,074; female 900,557) (2000 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.81% (2000 est.)

Birth rate: 14.42 births/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Death rate: 5.91 deaths/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.38 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.08 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.08 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 1.03 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 1.12 male(s)/female

total population: 1.05 male(s)/female (2000 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 7.06 deaths/1,000 live births (2000 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 76.35 years

male: 73.62 years

female: 79.32 years (2000 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.76 children born/woman (2000 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Chinese (singular and plural)

adjective: Chinese

Ethnic groups: Taiwanese (including Hakka) 84%, mainland Chinese 14%, aborigine 2%

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

Languages: Mandarin Chinese (official), Taiwanese (Min), Hakka dialects

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 86% (1980 est.); note - literacy for the total population has reportedly increased to 94% (1998 est.)

male: 93% (1980 est.)

female: 79% (1980 est.)

Government**Name:**

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Taiwan

local long form: none

local short form: T'ai-wan

Data code: TW

Government type: multiparty democratic regime headed by popularly elected president

Capital: Taipei

Administrative divisions: since in the past the authorities claimed to be the government of all China, the central administrative divisions include the provinces of Fu-chien (some 20 offshore islands of Fujian Province including Quemoy and Matsu) and Taiwan (the island of Taiwan and the Pescadores islands); note - the more commonly referenced administrative divisions are those of Taiwan Province - 16 counties (hsien, singular and plural), 5 municipalities* (shih, singular and plural), and 2 special municipalities** (chuan-shih, singular and plural); Chang-hua, Chia-i, Chia-i*, Chi-lung*, Hsin-chu, Hsin-chu*, Hua-lien, I-lan, Kao-hsiung, Kao-hsiung**, Miao-li, Nan-t'ou, P'eng-hu, P'ing-tung, T'ai-chung, T'ai-chung*, T'ai-nan, T'ai-nan*, T'ai-pei, T'ai-pei**, T'ai-tung, T'ao-yuan, and Yun-lin; the provincial capital is at Chung-hsing-hsin-ts'un

note: Taiwan uses the Wade-Giles system for romanization

Holiday: 10 October (1911) (Anniversary of the Chinese Revolution against the Ching Dynasty)

Constitution: 1 January 1947, amended in 1992, 1994, and 1997

Legal system: based on civil law system; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage: 20 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

note: President-elect CHEN Shui-bian is scheduled to take office on 20 May 2000

head of government: Premier (President of the Executive Yuan) Vincent SIEW (since 1 September 1997) and Vice Premier (Vice President of the Executive Yuan) LIU Chao-shiuan (since 10 December 1997)

cabinet: Executive Yuan appointed by the president

elections: president and vice president elected on the same ticket by popular vote for four-year terms; election last held 18 March 2000 (next to be held NA March 2004); premier appointed by the president; vice premiers appointed by the president on the recommendation of the premier

election results: CHEN Shui-bian elected president; percent of vote - CHEN Shui-bian (DPP) 39.3%, James SOONG (independent) 36.84%, LIEN Chan (KMT) 23.1%, HSU Hsin-liang (independent) .63%, LEE Ao (CNP) .13%

Legislative branch: unicameral Legislative Yuan (225 seats - 168 elected by popular vote, 41 elected on the basis of the proportion of votes received by participating political parties, eight elected from overseas Chinese constituencies on the basis of the proportion of votes received by participating political parties, eight elected by popular vote among the aboriginal populations; members serve three-year terms) and unicameral Assembly (334 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: Legislative Yuan - last held 5 December 1998 (next to be held NA December 2001); Assembly - last held 23 March 1996 (next to be held NA 2000)

election results: Legislative Yuan - percent of vote by party - KMT 46%, DPP 29%, CNP 7%, independents 10%, other parties 8%; seats by party - KMT 123, DPP 70, CNP 11, independents 15, other parties 6; Assembly - percent of vote by party - KMT 55%, DPP 30%, CNP 14%, other 1%; seats by party - KMT 183, DPP 99, CNP 46, other 6

Judicial branch: Judicial Yuan, justices appointed by the president with the consent of the Assembly

Economy

Economy - overview: Taiwan has a dynamic capitalist economy with gradually decreasing guidance of investment and foreign trade by government authorities. In keeping with this trend, some large government-owned banks and industrial firms are being privatized. Real growth in GDP has averaged about 8% during the past three decades. Exports have grown even faster and have provided the primary impetus for industrialization. Inflation and unemployment are low; the trade surplus is substantial; and foreign reserves are the world's third largest. Agriculture contributes 3% to GDP, down from 35% in 1952. Traditional labor-intensive industries are steadily being moved off-shore and replaced with more capital- and technology-intensive industries. Taiwan has become a major investor in the mainland of China, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The tightening of labor markets has led to an influx of foreign workers, both legal and illegal. Because of its conservative financial approach and its entrepreneurial strengths, Taiwan suffered little compared with many of its neighbors from the Asian financial crisis in 1998-99. Growth in 2000 should pick up a bit from 1999, backed by expansion in domestic consumption, exports, and private investment.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$357 billion (1999 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 5.5% (1999 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$16,100 (1999 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 3%

industry: 33%

services: 64% (1999 est.)

Population below poverty line: 1% (1999 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 0.4% (1999 est.)

Labor force: 9.7 million (1999 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: services 55%, industry 37%, agriculture 8% (1999 est.)

Unemployment rate: 2.9% (1999 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$36.82 billion

expenditures: \$40.53 billion, including capital expenditures of \$NA (1999 est.)

Industries: electronics, petroleum refining, chemicals, textiles, iron and steel, machinery, cement, food processing

Industrial production growth rate: 7.5% (1999 est.)

Electricity - production: 133.586 billion kWh (1998)

Electricity - production by source:

fossil fuel: 65.91%

hydro: 7.84%

nuclear: 26.25%

other: 0% (1998)

Electricity - consumption: 124.235 billion kWh (1998)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (1998)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (1998)

Agriculture - products: rice, corn, vegetables, fruit, tea; pigs, poultry, beef, milk; fish

Exports: \$121.6 billion (f.o.b., 1999)

Exports - commodities: electronics, electric and machinery equipment 52%, metals, textiles, plastics, chemicals

Exports - partners: US 26%, Hong Kong 21%, Europe 18%, Japan 10%, Singapore 3% (1999)

Imports: \$101.7 billion (c.i.f., 1999)

Imports - commodities: electronics, electric and machinery equipment 45%, minerals, precision instruments

Imports - partners: Japan 27%, US 18%, Europe 16%, South Korea 6%, Malaysia 4% (1999)

Debt - external: \$35 billion (September 1999)

Economic aid - recipient: \$NA

Currency: 1 New Taiwan dollar (NT\$) = 100 cents

Exchange rates: New Taiwan dollars per US\$1 - 31.395 (yearend 1999), 32.216 (1998), 32.052 (1997), 27.5 (1996), 27.5 (1995)

Fiscal year: 1 July - 30 June (up to FY98/99); 1 July 1999 - 31 December 2000 for FY00; calendar year (after FY00)

Communications

Telephones - main lines in use: 12 million (October 1999)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 10.2 million (October 1999)

Telephone system:

domestic: provides modern telecommunications service for every business and private need; completely digitalized

international: satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Pacific Ocean and 1 Indian Ocean); submarine cables to Japan (Okinawa), Philippines, Guam, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Australia, Middle East, and Western Europe (1999)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 218, FM 333, shortwave 50 (1999)

Radios: 16 million (1994)

Television broadcast stations: 29 (plus two repeaters) (1997)

Televisions: 8.8 million (1998)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 15 (1999)

Transportation

Railways:

total: 2,481 km (519 km electrified)

narrow gauge: 2,481 km 1.067-m (1999)

Highways:

total: 34,901 km

paved: 31,271 km (including 538 km of expressways)

unpaved: 3,630 km (1998 est.)

Pipelines: petroleum products 3,400 km; natural gas 1,800 km (1999)

Ports and harbors: Chi-lung (Keelung), Hua-lien, Kao-hsiung, Su-ao, T'ai-chung

Merchant marine:

total: 175 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 4,944,166 GRT/7,710,891 DWT

ships by type: bulk 45, cargo 33, combination bulk 1, container 69, petroleum tanker 17, refrigerated cargo 8, roll-on/roll-off 2 (1999 est.)

Airports: 38 (1999 est.)

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 35

over 3,047 m: 8

2,438 to 3,047 m: 9

1,524 to 2,437 m: 8

914 to 1,523 m: 7

under 914 m: 3 (1999 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 3

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

under 914 m: 2 (1999 est.)

Heliports: 2 (1999 est.)

Notes to Visitors and Users:

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