

Taiwan

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

Area:

total area: 35,980 sq km

land area: 32,260 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 1,448 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

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

Land use:

arable land: 24%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 5%

forest and woodland: 55%

other: 15%

Environment:

current issues: water pollution from industrial emissions, raw sewage; air pollution; contamination of drinking water supplies;

trade in endangered species

natural hazards: earthquakes and typhoons

People

Population: 21,500,583 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 24% (female 2,543,134; male 2,665,878)

15-64 years: 68% (female 7,191,964; male 7,482,814)

65 years and over: 8% (female 734,535; male 882,258) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.93% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 15.33 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 5.71 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -0.37 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 5.6 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 75.47 years

male: 72.17 years

female: 78.93 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 1.81 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Chinese (singular and plural)

adjective: Chinese

Ethnic divisions: Taiwanese 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:

total population: 86%

male: 93%

female: 79%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Taiwan

local short form: T'ai-wan

Type: multiparty democratic regime; opposition political parties
legalized in March, 1989

Capital: Taipei

National holiday: National Day, 10 October (1911) (Anniversary of
the Revolution)

Constitution: 1 January 1947, amended in 1992, presently
undergoing revision

Suffrage: 20 years of age; universal

Flag: red with a dark blue rectangle in the upper hoist-side corner
bearing a white sun with 12 triangular rays

Economy

Overview: Taiwan has a dynamic capitalist economy with considerable government guidance of investment and foreign trade and partial government ownership of some large banks and industrial firms. Taiwan currently ranks as number 13 among major trading countries. Traditional labor-intensive industries are steadily being replaced with more capital- and technology-intensive industries.

Industries: electronics, textiles, chemicals, clothing, food processing, plywood, sugar milling, cement, shipbuilding, petroleum refining

Agriculture: accounts for 4% of GDP and 16% of labor force (includes part-time farmers); heavily subsidized sector; major crops - vegetables, rice, fruit, tea; livestock - hogs, poultry, beef, milk; not self-sufficient in wheat, soybeans, corn; fish catch increasing, reached 1.4 million metric tons in 1988

Illicit drugs: an important heroin transit point; also a major drug money laundering center

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 4,600 km;

Highways:

total: 20,041 km

Pipelines: petroleum products 615 km; natural gas 97 km

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

Airports:

total: 41

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy (includes Marines), Air Force, Coastal Patrol and Defence Command, Armed Forces Reserve Command, Military Police Command