

# Taiwan's Islands



Beautiful, well off the beaten path for most Western travellers and as chock-full of culture and history per square kilometre as you're likely to find in East Asia, Taiwan's outer islands abound with opportunities for those intrepid enough to make the trip.

Kinmen and Matsu, both in the Taiwan Strait, have remained out of the travel spotlight until very recently. Situated between mainland China and Taiwan, these islands have been a source of tension, war and fierce political debate for more than half a century. Because of their location and history, they offer a superb window into Taiwan's turbulent military past and also the rich cultural heritage of coastal Fujian. As trade and travel relations between Taiwan and mainland China develop, these islands are being transformed from barriers into gateways.

Penghu, the most visited of the Strait Islands, is a popular resort destination that attracts beachgoers – both local and foreign – who flock here in summer for the fine-sand beaches and water sports. As autumn sets in and the winds pick up, the archipelago attracts sailors and windsurfers, drawn by its combination of excellent water and high winds. Off Taiwan's Pacific coast lie Green Island, with beautiful hot springs and pristine coral reefs, and Lanyu, Taiwan's furthest outpost in geographical and cultural terms.

The outer islands are still a well-kept secret among travellers, but as Taiwan seeks to promote the beauty of its farthest-flung counties both nationally and abroad, more and more people are finding a side trip to the outer islands a highlight of their Taiwan experience.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Sleep in a traditional Fujian-style home on **Matsu** (opposite)
- Soak in a sea-water hot spring on **Green Island** (p320)
- Spend a few days living in a Yami family home on **Lanyu Island** (p319)
- Bird-watch at Kinmen's **Shuangli Wetlands Area Centre** (p304)
- Temple-hop and windsurf in **Penghu** (p306)



## National Parks & Forest Recreation Areas

Though you'll find higher mountains and larger stretches of green in Taiwan proper, the outer islands have things well covered when it comes to park land. Reforested Kinmen itself is a national park (quite fitting, we think, as the whole area was once totally deforested by Ming dynasty general Koxinga to build a sailing fleet), and there's talk of turning Green Island into a national park in the next few years. Except for a few small towns, mountainous Lanyu is almost entirely covered by forests, and its indigenous Yami inhabitants are quite militant about fighting any improper development. Spreading across the whole archipelago, the Matsu Island Bird Sanctuary provides a protected home to 30 avian species (mostly gulls and terns). Most of the Penghu archipelago are desert islands and are covered with low-lying cacti and other succulents. Trees in Penghu's Lintou and Chitou parks tend to all grow at a pronounced angle thanks to the persistent wind.

## MATSU 馬祖

☎ 0836 / pop 9000

If you're looking for an 'off the beaten path' experience, look no further; you can't get much farther from Taiwan on an ROC visa than here. Matsu (Mǎzǔ) lies directly off the coast of mainland China's Fujian province, and its people – though nominally schooled

in Mandarin – speak a dialect mostly unintelligible to speakers of Taiwanese. And politically, though Matsu is a part of the ROC (with a serious troop presence to prove it), most Matsu folk identify with their kin across the narrow Straits separating them; people who, for over a generation, they could only watch through binoculars.

Matsu, like Kinmen, still retains much of its feel as a place perpetually on the military defensive. However, while both are still considered military posts, we find the Matsu vibe a bit more martial; for one thing, half the people you run into on Matsu are in uniform. For another, while Kinmen has a number of fine war museums, you're unlikely to be serenaded by live-ammo drilling, a regular occurrence on Matsu (and on that note, mind where you wander there!).

## History

The development of Matsu began in the 1400s with the arrival of Fujianese mainlanders escaping political turmoil in their homeland. Later, the migrant waves of the 1600s from mainland China to Taiwan saw an increase in Matsu's population as boatloads of Fujianese fishermen arrived on the island. They brought with them the language, food, architecture and religious beliefs of their ancestors, much of which is still around today.

Throughout the 1700s and 1800s piracy plagued the islands, causing residents at various times to temporarily abandon their homes

Island(s)	...in ten words or less?	Who should go?	Best time to visit	Page
Matsu	Ancient nautical culture, beautifully preserved	Temple-lovers, traditional-architecture buffs, war historians and people who want to get seriously off the beaten path	summer, autumn	above
Kinmen	Front-line military outpost transformed into national park	Military enthusiasts and bird-watchers	summer, autumn	p296
Penghu	Spectacular beaches and more temples than you'd ever think possible	Windsurfers, beachcombers, spiritual travellers	spring, summer, autumn (winter if you like high winds)	p306
Green Island	Yesterday's prison, today's paradise	Political-history enthusiasts, snorkellers, divers and hot-spring lovers	Year round (crowded in summer)	p320
Lanyu	Tribal island with otherworldly feel	Hikers, bird-watchers, those interested in authentic aboriginal culture	spring, summer, autumn	p316



to seek shelter elsewhere. Matsu was largely politically insignificant until the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949 and established Matsu, along with Kinmen, as a front-line defense against the communists. Matsu residents saw their quiet islands transformed into battlefields and had to adjust to the constant threat of war. The Mainland bombed Matsu intermittently until the deployment of the US 7th Fleet in 1958 prevented any further escalation.

Martial law was lifted from Matsu in 1992, a number of years after it was lifted over in 'mainland' Taiwan. In 2001, Matsu (along with Kinmen) became an early stepping stone in cross-strait travel when the 'Three Small Links' policy was instituted, permitting limited trade and limited travel between ROC- and PRC-controlled territory. Today, people in Matsu are permitted to travel freely between their islands and ports in Fujian, and many Taiwanese businesspeople use Matsu as a way station between Taiwan and the Mainland (though not as many go through Kinmen, which has better infrastructure and is close to Xiamen).

## Orientation

Of all of Taiwan's outer islands and archipelagos, Matsu is the trickiest to get around. Eighteen islands (many of which are still off limits to tourism) make up the area collectively known as Matsu. These islands are grouped into townships with the main ones being Nangan, Beigan, Jyuguang and Dongyin. Nangan and Beigan are the largest islands, the closest

together and, rather inconveniently for those wishing to tour the other islands, the only ones with airports. Jyuguang is 45 minutes by ferry south of Nangan, and the boat from Nangan to Dongyin takes about two hours.

## Dangers & Annoyances

Travellers in Matsu, especially Nangan, should be mindful of the fact that live-firing exercises are conducted regularly. Warning signs should be obeyed and straying too far off marked roads is a bad idea

## NANGAN 南竿 Orientation

Shaped like a poorly baked croissant, Nangan (Nángān, Nankan) is Matsu's largest island. Compared to the rest of Matsu, it's a veritable hotbed of activity. The largest settlement on Nangan is **Jieshou Village** (also spelled Chiehshou), which is where you'll find places to rent scooters and the island's only bank. The walk to Jieshou from the airport takes about 20 minutes, and is quite pretty. Ferries to outlying islands leave from Fu'ao harbour (Fu'ao Gǎng), just a few kilometres from Jieshou. The central bus station is in Jieshou Village, at the end of the main road leading to the harbour. Tour buses and public buses depart from here too.

## Information

Taiwan's tourism department has information booths in the airport and ferry terminal, both of which are stocked with English travel information. There's also a good English map of Matsu in the park in front of Jieshou's public vegetable garden.

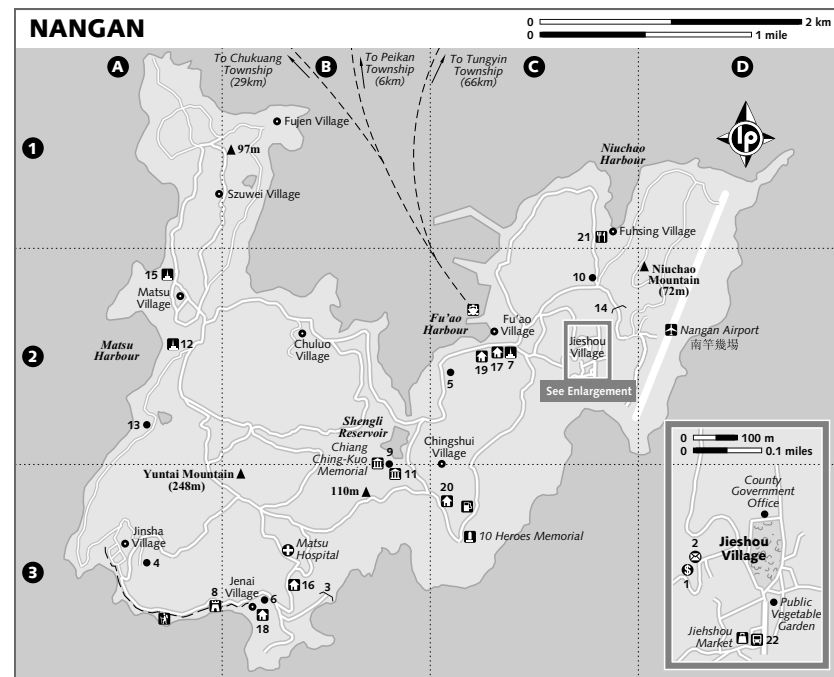
**Bank of Taiwan** (Táiwān Yínháng; Map p291; ☎ 25400; 257 Jieshou Village) The only place in Matsu to change money.

**Military Post Office** (Jūn Yóujú; Map p291; ☎ 22050; 258 Jieshou Village) For all your mailing needs.

## Sights & Activities

### DISTILLERY TOURS

Like booze but don't like paying for it? Well, friend, a tour of Fùxing Cūn's **Matsu Distillery** (Mǎzǔ Jiǔchǎng; Map p291; ☎ 22820; 208 Fuhsing Village; admission free; ☎ 8.30-11.30am & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 3-5pm holidays) may well be for you. This factory is where two of Matsu's best-loved products are made: *Gāoliáng jiǔ* (Kaoliang liquor), made from sorghum, and *làojiǔ* (medicinal rice wine). Try to tag along with a Chinese-language tour to



partake of the samples that are given out liberally at the end of each session. Don't worry about not finding the place – you'll smell it before you see it.

## MILITARY HISTORY

Matsu is replete with forts, tunnels and other sights connected with the islands' important position in the struggles between communist and Chinese Nationalist forces. While some of these sites are open for tourism, others are still active military bases. Telling the two apart is sometimes tricky; if there are armed soldiers eyeing you suspiciously, assume you're at the gates of the latter. We've gone ahead and listed a couple of our favourite tourist sites.

Most impressive is the abandoned **Iron Fort** (Tiě Bǎo; Map p291), really a rocky strip of granite jutting out over the sea and hollowed out to house Matsu's amphibious forces. Visitors are allowed to enter and have a look at the spartan living quarters of the soldiers who once lived there. Be sure to look out over the ocean through sniper slots. Gruesome stories are told by Matsu residents of how Mainland frogmen would sneak inside the

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## EATING

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fort at night, slit the throats of the Taiwanese guards on duty and carry back an ear to show their comrades.

Close to Fu'ao harbour is the **Fushan Illuminated Wall** (Zhèngē Dàidàn; Map p291). Facing mainland China, the bright-red characters warn communist forces across the water to 'sleep on spears', Chiang Kai-shek's way of reiterating his intention to one day invade despite his temporary setbacks.

The 700m **Beihai Tunnel** (Běihǎi Kēngdào; Map p291; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) was carved out of a sheer rock face by soldiers using only simple hand tools. Begun in 1968, the project took more than three years and many young men lost their lives in the process. The tunnel was used as a hiding place for military boats and is supposedly large enough to hide 120 small vessels inside its cavernous interior in case of attack.

At the top of 248m **Yuntai Mountain** (Yúntái Shān), Nangan's highest peak, sits a **military museum**. Though the museum is normally closed to the public, tour groups are sometimes let in. It's worth the trip in any event, both because the peak offers a lovely panoramic view of the Chinese coast and the surrounding islands, and because the front of the structure bears a metal plaque showing Chiang Kai-shek urging his soldiers to fight diligently. The last time we visited, Chiang's image seemed to have been recently pelted with one or more eggs.

## TEMPLES & VILLAGES

The **Matsu Temple** (Mǎzǔ Tiānhòu Gōng; Map p291) is adjacent to Matsu harbour (Mǎzǔ Gǎng) in Matsu Village (Mǎzǔ Cūn). It's the oldest temple on the Matsu Islands and is considered one of the most sacred temples dedicated to popular folk deity Matsu in Taiwan. (Locals say the bones of Matsu were once stored here.) Show up on Matsu's birthday (p216) to check out a serious festival.

The **Huakuang Tati Temple** (Huáguāng Dàdì Miào; Map p291) in Fu'ao Village is named after the god of fire. Legend has it that during the Ming dynasty a Fu'ao villager dreamt that the god of fire came to him and told him about an incense burner made of sandalwood that was buried somewhere in Fu'ao. The man woke up, searched for the burner and discovered it where the god had said it would be. Later the villagers built this temple in the god's honour.

The **White Horse God Temple** (Bái Mǎ Wén Wǔ Tiān Wáng Miào; Map p291) is a small temple devoted to the worship of a deified general who once defended Fujian. The story is told that during the Qing dynasty two bodies washed up onto Matsu's shores and the locals buried them. Supposedly, the spirit of the general spoke through a spirit medium, asking the villagers to build a temple in his name, which they did. Now, whenever a storm approaches, locals say a light can be seen moving across the water, guiding ships to the harbour.

A collection of old Fujian-style stone homes perched on a hill overlooking the sea, **Jinsha Village** is well worth a visit. In the centre of town is a lovely 200-year-old temple with ornate paintings on stone walls depicting gods and legends playing *Xiàngqí* (Chinese chess). One tiny stone building has been transformed into something of an unmanned museum; over its door is painted the phrase 'What inspires you? Being playful and finding the unexpected beautiful.'

We think this sentiment sums up the charm of Matsu nicely.

## Sleeping BUDGET

**Fuhua Hotel** (Fúhuá Lǚdiàn; Map p291; ☎ 22990; Fu'ao Village; 福澳村; r NT700) A bit dumpy, but cheap. Its proximity to the harbour makes it a good place to stay if you need to catch an early-morning ferry.

**Kaixiang Hotel** (Kǎixiāng Kèzhàn; Map p291; ☎ 22652; Fu'ao Village; 福澳村; r NT1000) Just up the street from the Fuhua Hotel, this place is marginally nicer.

## MIDRANGE

**Hailanghua Hotel** (Hǎilānghuā Kèzhàn; Map p291; ☎ 22569; Jenai Village; 仁愛村; r from NT1200) Clean, modern rooms, friendly management and ocean views from the coffee-shop patio make the Hailanghua Hotel a good midrange choice. Popular with tour groups in the high season, so book ahead.

**Shennong Hotel** (Shěnnóng Shānzhuāng; Map p291; ☎ 26333; Chingshui Village; 清水村; r from NT1800) With Yuntai Mountain on one side and the ocean on the other, this five-storey hotel offers some beautiful views. The manager, Mr Lin, will ply you with excellent tea and, if you speak Chinese, regale you with tales of his travels into the wilds of China.

## TOP END

**Coast Hotel** (Rìguāng Hǎir'àn Hǎijīng Lǚquǎn; Map p291; ☎ 26666; fax 25638; Jenai Village; 仁愛村; r/ste incl breakfast NT2000/3000) Definitely the prettiest place to stay in Nangan, this small seaside hotel boasts fabulous ocean views and an excellent restaurant and coffee shop. There are only 10 rooms, all tastefully furnished, most with Japanese soaker tubs. Well recommended.

## Eating

There are a number of Taiwan-style restaurants along the main streets in the villages of Jieshou, Matsu and Fu'ao.

**Banrixiang** (Bànrìxiāng; Map p291; 140 Fuhsing Village; dishes from NT150; ☎ 10am-2pm & 5-10pm) This lovely little restaurant is operated by a local artist, and the décor definitely shows its artistic sensibilities through hand-crafted glass-topped tables surrounded by scrolls, paintings and other works of art on the walls. Banrixiang serves a good mix of dishes, from seafood hotpot utilising locally caught ingredients to Western-style sandwiches on home-baked bread. The village itself (just over the hill from Jieshou) is picturesque and well worth the visit. The loft space is the owner's private art studio and you can check it out if you take your shoes off.

## Getting There & Away

Uni Air has three flights daily from Taipei (55 minutes) to Nangan airport (Nángān jǐchǎng).

During spring and summer boats run between Nangan and the outlying islands of Matsu. Schedules are cut back in autumn and winter because of bad weather. Between Nangan and Beigan, boats leave hourly from Fu'ao harbour (NT100, 10 minutes).

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Nangan's small size means that the airport is close to many of the main sights. Taxi and

motorcycle touts hang around outside and are more than happy to offer their services. If you're travelling light, it's only a 20-minute walk to Jieshou or Fuhsing Villages.

## CAR, MOTORCYCLE & MICROBUS

Motorcycles can be rented for NT500 per day, excluding petrol. If you want to get around the island in style, cars are available for NT1500 to NT2000 per day. If you're travelling with a group of people, you can rent a microbus with driver for NT4500 per day, excluding petrol. The information counter at the airport can help you book vehicle rentals.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses run hourly around the island (NT15 per trip), and schedules and routes are printed in English. Oddly enough, most soldiers we've met can speak a bit of English and are usually glad for a chance to help foreign tourists find their way around.

During summer, tours leave frequently from the central bus station. Most of the time it's possible to buy a ticket as you board. The tours will be conducted in Chinese but it's still a good way to see the island. Prices for the half-day tour vary, but average roughly NT100.

## TAXI

The flat on-call taxi rate to anywhere in Nangan is NT100. Drivers will rarely use the meter. Taxis in line-ups are usually NT200. Your taxi driver might offer to take you on a tour around the island. For this service expect to pay NT500 to NT600 an hour.

## BEIGAN 北竿

Nangan too boisterous for you? A quick ferry brings you to Beigan (Běigān, Peikan), which boasts spectacular coastal scenery, fine beaches and wonderfully preserved Fujian

## FLYING TO THE ISLANDS

During holidays and the summer months it's often difficult to book plane tickets to Taiwan's outer islands (especially on the weekends), so we recommend you book in advance. However, one peculiarity of Taiwan's aviation industry is that it allows passengers to book seats over the phone with neither prepayment nor penalty for not showing up. As a result of this, 'fully booked' flights often wind up having a good number of spaces for wait-listed passengers. If you're travelling in a small group and aren't on too tight a schedule, chances of just showing up at the airport and getting on a 'fully booked' flight to Kinmen, Penghu or Matsu are better than average. However, you'll have less luck on the 12- and 24-seat planes that go to Lanyu and Green Island.



architecture that you do more than visit, you can actually live there.

## Orientation

Ferries to Beigan dock in Baisha harbour. The island's largest village is **Tangci** (Tángqí Cūn, Tangchi). The road is windy and steep in places, but the scenery is lovely. Beigan is a small island, so you can see the whole place in a day on foot, or even an afternoon with a scooter; and you could tour the village of Tangci in an hour.

## Sights & Activities

### VILLAGES

What makes sleepy Beigan really worth the visit is its architecture. Buildings are unique, well preserved, and unlike anything you're likely to find in Taiwan proper. Chief among the preserved villages of Beigan is **Cinbi Village** (Qinbi Cūn), comprising low-lying interconnected one- and two-storey homes built into the side of Bi Mountain, overlooking Turtle Island. The houses are built from slabs of granite and feature high, narrow windows to protect the inhabitants from wind and pi-

rates. Roofs have bright-red or black tiles. About half of the homes in the small village have been transformed into guest houses, and spending the night in one of these should be one of the highlights of your trip to Matsu.

A walk of a kilometre or so up the coastal road takes you to the foot of Leishan (Thunder Mountain), where you'll find **Ciaozai Village** (Qiáozāi Cūn). The village has some beautifully restored temples devoted to the thunder god. Nowadays the village is mostly empty save for a few elderly residents who maintain the temples (the gods in the temples outnumber villagers now, or so they say). Outside of the odd grandchild, about the youngest person you'll find in the village is the woman who runs the **Ciaozai Village Folk Museum** (Map p294; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm), a cool little museum with various articles from Matsu's nautical past (no English signage, though).

Although Tangci Village is modern and not terribly remarkable, it is home to a couple of temples with Fujian-style architecture: boxy buildings nearly square in shape, made of grey stone, with curved roofs and octagonal windows. If you're leaving Matsu

from Beigan airport, leave a couple of hours to wander around town, finding the unexpected beautiful.

### SWIMMING

**Tanghou Beach** (Tánghòu Shātān) is a thin strip of sand, divided by a road, which connects the villages of Tangci and Houwo (Hòuwò Cūn). Before the road was built, locals had to wade through water during high tide to travel between the two villages. Some locals that we've spoken to pine for the preroad days.

**Banli Beach** (Bǎnlǐ Hǎitān) is a pretty little beach just up the road from where boats dock. There's a military base nearby, and also a rather attractive pink-and-yellow temple dedicated (naturally) to the goddess Matsu.

Cinbi Village overlooks a nice little patch of beach facing a small cluster of rounded rocks that looks like a turtle. Naturally this is known as **Turtle Island Beach** (Guǐdǎo Shā), and it's a lovely place to swim most of the year. It's also known as Cinbi Beach.

### Sleeping

Spending a night in the old Fujian-style stone houses in Cinbi Village is a big part of the reason people visit Beigan. Currently there are two groups managing guesthouses in the town; they're both next to each other, and in our eyes, fairly interchangeable. They are traditional Fujianese homes, complete with pleasant, breezy rooms, wooden-shuttered windows and ocean views, and are locally owned and operated. Interclan rivalry? Hard to say. On the day we visited both owners were having tea together on the veranda of the Cafe Cinbi. We've included the numbers for both, as you'll want to make reservations during the high season.

**Cinbi Village Homestay** (Qinbi Mínsù Cūn; ☎ 55456; 49 Cinbi Village; dm/d NT700/1200) is run out of the Cafe Cinbi and has nice four-bed dorms and decent double rooms.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

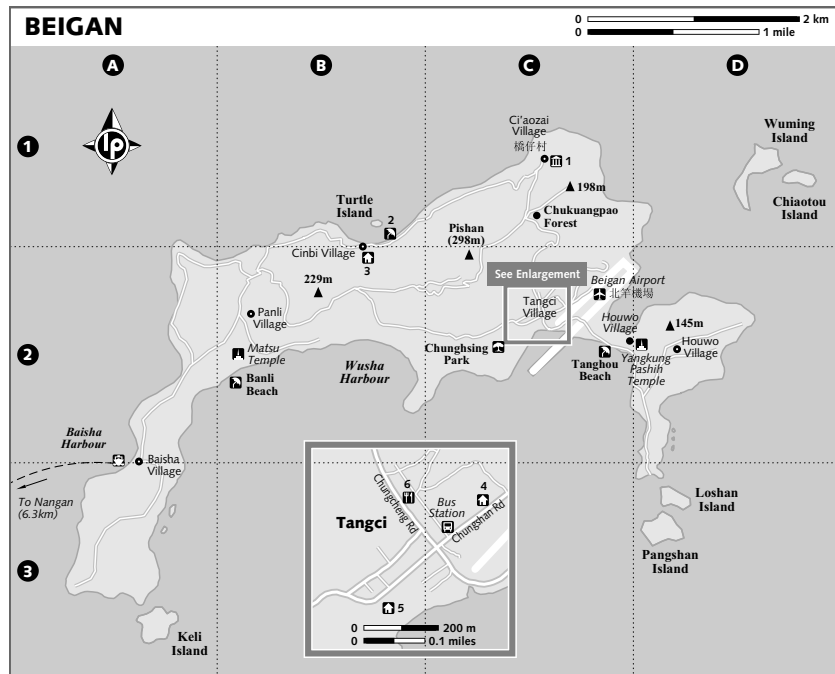
Ciaozai Village Folk Museum 橋仔村博物館.....	1	C1
Cinbi Beach 芹壁沙灘.....	2	B1

### SLEEPING

Cinbi Village Homestay 芹壁民宿村.....	3	B2
Di Zhonghai Homestay 地中海名宿.....	(see 3)	
Golden Dragon Holiday Villa 龍福山莊.....	4	C3
Hongrui Hotel 宏瑞大飯店.....	5	B3

### EATING

Cafe Cinbi 芹壁人文咖啡館.....	(see 3)	
Di Zhonghai Restaurant 地中海餐館.....	(see 3)	
Hong Xing Ping Seafood Restaurant 鴻星平海鮮樓.....	6	B3



**Di Zhonghai Homestay** (Dì Zhōnghǎi Mínsù; ☎ 56611; 54 Cinbi Village; dm/d NT860/1300) is run out of the Di Zhonghai Restaurant, and seems a tad newer than the Cinbi. Di Zhonghai also offers breakfast and free pick-up from the airport or ferry pier.

If staying in a stone building that's more than 200 years old doesn't do it for you (to be fair, they are on the drafty side), there are a number of hotels in Tangci Village.

**Hongrui Hotel** (Hóngruì Dà Fàndiàn; s & d NT800) Right on the main drag as you come into town, the Hongrui is run by a nice family, and the rooms are clean and well maintained.

**Golden Dragon Holiday Villa** (Lóngfú Shānzhūāng; ☎ 55066; www.matsu-play.com.tw; s/d NT1700/2500; 📍) A newly opened hotel (right across from the airport) with lovely wooden furniture and ocean views. Also the only place in town (to our knowledge) with wi-fi, for laptop-toters.

### Eating

**Hong Xing Ping Seafood Restaurant** (Hóng Xīng Píng Hǎixiān Lóu; Tangchi Village, 242 Chungcheng Rd; dishes from NT120; ☎ 10am-2pm & 5-8pm) This is a good place to meet the locals and try some of Beigan's seafood. The *yú miàn* (fish noodles) and *tángcù huángyú* (sweet-and-sour yellow croaker) are terrific.

**Cafe Cinbi** (Qinbi Rénwén Kāféi Guǎn; 49 Cinbi Village; coffee from NT100, snacks from NT50, dishes from NT120; ☎ 10am-9pm) With a terrace and a view of Turtle Island this is the perfect place to linger for an hour or two over coffee and Matsu pastry on a sunny day.

**Di Zhonghai Restaurant** (Dì Zhōnghǎi Cāntīng; 54 Cinbi Village; dishes from NT120; ☎ 10am-9pm) Connected to the homestay of the same name, this place serves good seafood, hotpots and other local fare.

### Getting There & Away

Uni Air has three flights daily from Taipei (NT2110, 55 minutes) to Beigan airport (Bèigān Jīchǎng). Be prepared for last-minute cancellations and delays because of Matsu's volatile weather, especially in spring and winter.

### Getting Around

#### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Beigan airport is at the end of Tangci Village's one main street. Were the runway any closer, it would be Tangci's one main street.

**CAR, MOTORCYCLE & MICROBUS**

Motorcycles can be rented for NT500 per day, excluding petrol. If you want to get around the island in style, cars are available for NT1500 to NT2000 per day, excluding petrol. If you're travelling with a group of people, you can rent a microbus with driver for NT4500 per day, excluding petrol. The information counter at the airport can help you book vehicle rentals.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Buses run hourly around the island (NT15), though there's less English signage than in Nangan.

**TAXI**

The flat on-call taxi rate to anywhere in Beigan is NT100. Drivers will rarely use the meter. Taxis in line-ups are usually NT200. Your taxi driver might offer to take you on a tour around the island. For this service expect to pay NT500 to NT600 an hour.

**MATSU'S OUTER ISLANDS**

Most casual travellers only make it to Beigan and Nangan, but if you're serious about heading way off the beaten path, the islands of **Dongyin** (Dōngyīn, Tongyin), **Dongjyu** (Dōngjū, Tongchu) and **Hsijyu** (Xijū, Hsi-chu) await.

North of Beigan, Dongyin is the largest of the three outer islands, and thought to be the most beautiful section of the archipelago. Dongyin's landscape consists of steep cliffs, grassy hills and wave-eroded coastline. The main township is also called Dongyin, and it's here you'll find hotels and restaurants. Dongyin's most famous landmark is the **Dongyung Lighthouse** (Dōngyōng Dēngtǎ), a simple white structure on a grassy hill overlooking the ocean. The lighthouse was built by the British in 1904 and remains an important part of Taiwan's coastal defence system.

Dongjyu and Hsijyu are the most southerly of Matsu's Islands. Both are remote and sparsely inhabited, poor in actual tourist sights but rich in friendly locals, pretty scenery and excellent food. The commercial centre of Dongjyu is **Taping Village** (Dàpíng Cūn). The **Dongjyu Lighthouse** (Dōngjū Dēngtǎ) sits high on a hill at the northeast tip of the island. Built by the British in 1872, the white-granite building aided the navigation of merchant ships during the Opium Wars.

The other main attraction of Dongjyu is the **Tapu Stone Engraving** (Dàpù Shíkē), on the south side of the island. The memorial is dedicated to a general from the Ming dynasty who successfully drove pirates off the island without losing a single one of his soldiers.

Hsijyu is rowdier than its sister island, but not by much. This small island was once a busy seaport, though there's little evidence of that now. During the Korean War, American companies set themselves up in **Chingfan Village** (Qīngfán Cūn) and nicknamed it 'Little Hong Kong'. Chingfan is still the centre of activity on the island, though most of the hotels are in the nearby village of **Tienwo** (Tiánwò Cūn).

The **Shinwa Boat Company** (Keelung ☎ 02-2424 6868; Nangan ☎ 22395) runs a night boat that leaves from Keelung around 9pm and gets to Matsu around dawn. The boat alternates, going directly to Nangan one night and to Nangan via Dongyin the next. In theory, this would make for a great travel tool, as visitors would be able to tour Dongyin for a day before taking a ferry to Nangan and points beyond. In practice, however, we've found Shinwa to be unreliable, cancelling trips without notice and leaving passengers stranded in Keelung. If you'd like to reserve a ticket, you'll need to do so three days in advance.

From Nangan to Dongyin (two hours), there is one boat a day from Fu'ao harbour. Boats to the two southern islands run two to three times a day, stopping first at Dongjyu before heading to Hsijyu. You'll need to check at Fu'ao harbour for current schedules and ticket prices as these seem to fluctuate with the seasons.

**KINMEN 金門**

☎ 082 / pop 45,000

Along with Matsu, Kinmen (Jīnmén; formerly known as Quemoy) occupies a unique place in modern history. It's a small chunk of Fujian province occupied by ROC forces and administered from Taiwan. Lying only 2km off the coast of mainland China, Kinmen is an odd remnant from the bitter civil war between communist and Nationalist forces, and this struggle (particularly the losing side's tenacious hold on the islands) is a major part of Kinmen's own history. And though war history supplies a big chunk of

Kinmen's appeal to tourists, there's plenty here to attract those with interests other than military history.

As a result of its strategic position, Kinmen is fairly well developed. Roads are wide and well cared for (so they can double as runways, just in case) and Kincheng has several internet cafés, where you'll often find off-duty soldiers practising their combat skills playing video games. There are ATMs, a not-bad pizza joint and plenty of English signage to make your trip fairly hassle-free. Though the environment is relaxed, don't lose sight of the fact that Kinmen is still a military outpost with restricted areas and a few beachfront properties bearing land-mine warnings.

**History**

Settlers began arriving on Kinmen as early as the Tang dynasty (AD 618–907), changing the original name of the island from Wuzhou to Kinmen, literally meaning 'Golden Gate' after the hopefully impenetrable gates that were put up to defend the island from pirate attacks. During the Ming (AD 1368–1644) and Qing (AD 1644–1912) dynasties, increasing numbers of Chinese migrants settled on Kinmen's shores. The Ming loyalist Koxinga, also known as Cheng Cheng-kung, used Kinmen as a base to liberate Kinmen and Penghu from the Dutch. In the process, he chopped down all of Kinmen's trees for his navy, something the residents still grumble about. Koxinga's massive deforestation project made Kinmen vulnerable to the devastating soil-eroding winds that commonly sweep across the Strait.

Kinmen was a fairly peaceful place until 1949, when Chiang Kai-shek transformed the island into a rear-guard defensive position against the communist forces that had driven his own Nationalist army off the Mainland. Though his original plan was to have his soldiers recuperate on the island for a short period before launching a full-fledged attack on Mao Zedong's armies, this never quite happened. Instead, martial law was declared on Kinmen as the island became the final flashpoint of the Chinese civil war. As a result, Kinmen was subject to incessant bombing from the Mainland throughout the 1950s and '60s.

Martial law was lifted in 1993 and Kinmen residents are now allowed to travel freely to

and from Taiwan. In 1995, Taiwan established Kinmen as the ROC's sixth national park, starting a massive reforestation project with the hopes of turning the once off-limits military zone into a tourist destination. Soldiers have been put to good use planting trees, maintaining roads and restoring the island's old houses, many built during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

In 2001, the so-called 'Three Small Links' were established between Taiwan and China, allowing legal (though limited) trade and travel between the two countries, via the Straits Islands – for the first time in more than half a century. This further opened Kinmen up to the outside world, and made it a vital channel for Taiwanese businessmen looking to travel to the Mainland more cheaply. Although there is some talk of opening these links further, the Xiamen–Kinmen route is not yet open to foreigners. Nonetheless, with all of its natural beauty and history, Kinmen is well worth a visit.

**Orientation**

Kinmen consists of 15 islands and islets at the junction of the mouth of the Chiulung River and Xiamen of mainland China. The largest islands (and the only two open to tourism) are Kinmen and Little Kinmen (Liehyu). The other islets are tiny, with three being controlled by mainland China and the rest by the ROC. There are a number of spots on Kinmen and Liehyu from which you can check out the PRC-controlled islands and have a gander at how 'the other side lives'. The main island of Kinmen is divided into Kincheng, Kinhu, Kinning and Kinsha Districts (you could say they share a 'kinship').

**Getting There & Away**

**Kinmen Airport** (☎ 322 381; Map pp298-9; www.kma.gov.tw/index-e.htm) is about 8km east of Kincheng city, and has a counter providing English information.

In spring, Kinmen is often fogged in, leading to cancelled flights. Book a return ticket, because flights are often fully booked as business people use Kinmen as a transit point to head into the Mainland.

**Uni Air** (☎ 324 881), **TransAsia Airways** (☎ 321 501) and **Far Eastern Air Transport** (☎ 327 339) all have offices at Kinmen airport and fly directly to Kinmen from Taipei, Chiayi, Taichung, Tainan and Kaohsiung.

## Getting Around

### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Bus 3 travels hourly between Kincheng, Shanwai and the airport for NT15. From the Kinmen airport to Kincheng or Shanwai, taxi drivers charge a flat NT250. Coming from the opposite direction, the fare should be around NT200.

### CAR, MOTORCYCLE & SCOOTER

Cars, motorbikes and scooters can easily be rented in Kincheng. Scooter rental is generally NT300 to NT500 a day, depending on the number of days rented. Cars can be rented for about NT1300 a day, excluding petrol. Kinmen has very little traffic and driving or riding a scooter is the easiest way to see the island.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Kinmen has bus stations in Kincheng, Shanwai and Shamei. Though buses run regularly, you'll have less flexibility if you decide to see Kinmen by public transport. Buses run every one or two hours between 6am and 5pm, with a few buses offering services into the evenings. Bus schedules are posted in the bus stations in Chinese but people are pretty willing to help if you know where you're going.

Buses 1 and 2 travel between Kincheng and Shanwai, and buses 5 and 18 go to Shamei. Buses run hourly and cost NT15.

### TAXI

Most taxi drivers in Kinmen prefer to ask for a flat fare rather than use the meter. If you think

your trip will be cheaper with the meter on (probably so), then by all means insist on this method. Rides to and from the airport and for taxis waiting in taxi stands are flat fares that range from NT200 to NT300.

Taxi tours will cost around NT2000 to NT2500 a day and it's unlikely your driver will speak English. Most hotels can arrange discounted tours, as can the **Youth Activity Centre** (☎ 325 772).

### BOAT

There is a frequent ferry service between Shuitou harbour in Kinmen and Chiukang harbour (NT20, around 15 minutes) on Little Kinmen (Liehyu) Island. During winter, the ferry service can be suspended if the water is

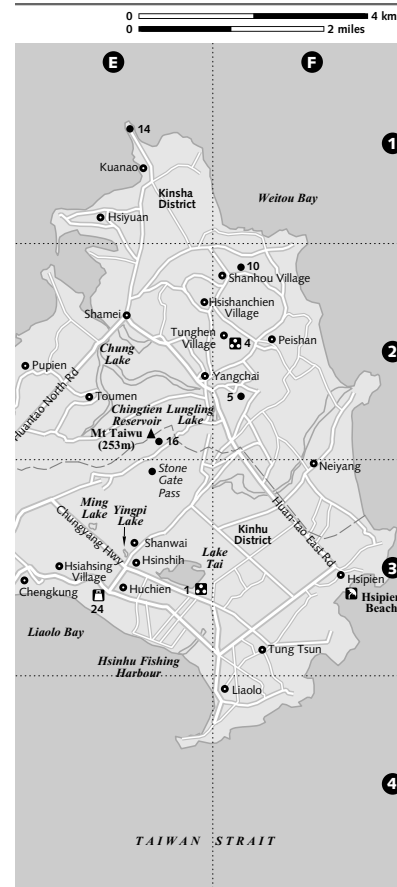
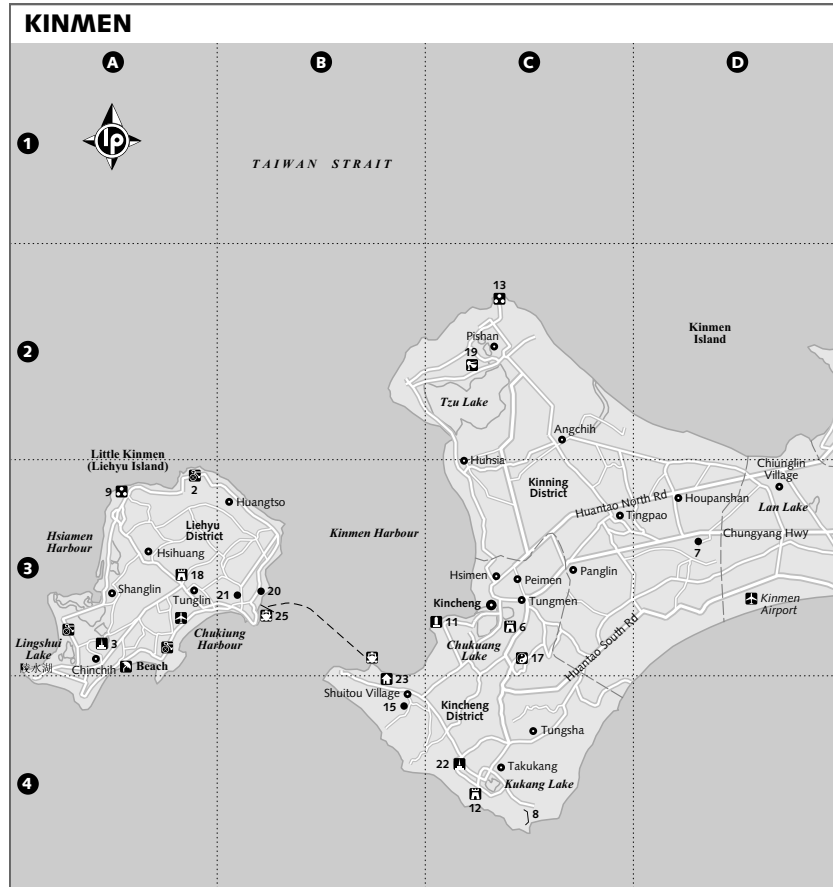
too choppy. There's also a boat to Fujian, but at the time of writing, only ROC nationals with the proper paperwork can board it.

## KINCHENG 金城

The Kincheng District (金城鎮, Jinchéng Zhèn) is in the southwest region of Kinmen Island. This is where most of the hotels are. Kincheng City (Jinchéng) is the busiest town on the island, with sights and restaurants all pretty much within walking distance of each other.

### Information

The Bank of Taiwan has an international ATM on the west side of Minsheng Rd, south of the King Ring Hotel. The beautiful **Kinmen County Cultural Centre** (Jinmén Xiàn Wénhuà Zhōngxīn; ☎ 325 643; 66 Huandao North Rd, Kincheng; ☎ 8am-noon & 1.30-5pm) is a bit on the outskirts of the city. There's a café out the back where you can pick up a copy of the excellent and informative *Kinmen Sightseeing Guide*.



### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

August 23 Artillery War Museum 八二三戰史紀念館.....	1 E3
Banyan Garden 榕園.....	(see 1)
Bike Path.....	2 A3
Chaste Maiden Temple 烈女廟.....	3 A3
Chen Chien Ancient Tomb 陳健墓.....	4 F2
Chen Chien Memorial Arch 陳祺恩墓坊.....	5 F2
Chiang Chingkuo Memorial Hall 經國先生紀念館.....	(see 7)
Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Forest 中正紀念林.....	(see 1)
Chukuang Tower 莒光樓.....	6 C3
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Huchingto War Museum 湖井頭戰史館.....	9 A3
Kinmen County Cultural Centre 金門縣文化中心.....	10 F2
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Kukang Tower 古崗樓.....	12 C4
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Kuningto War Museum 古寧頭戰史館.....	(see 13)
Mashan Observatory 馬山觀測.....	14 E1
Moon Grasping Tower 得月樓.....	15 B4
Mt Taiwu Cemetery 太武公墓.....	16 E2
Mr Yu Tawei Museum 俞大維先生紀念館.....	(see 13)
Mumahou Shrine 牧馬候祠.....	17 C3
Pata Memorial 八達樓子.....	18 A3
Shuangli Wetlands Area Centre 雙鯉澤地自然中心.....	19 C2
Siwei Tunnel 四維坑道.....	20 B3
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Youtong Villa.....	(see 15)
<b>SLEEPING</b>	
West Sea International Hotel 西海國際大旅店.....	23 B4
<b>SHOPPING</b>	
Kinmen Ceramics Factory 金門陶瓷場.....	24 E3
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Chiukung Pier 九宮碼頭.....	25 B3



## Sights

Filled with winding alleys, brick-paved market streets, temples and interesting architecture, Kincheng is a great place to explore on foot; all of the sights listed here are free except where noted, and most are open from dawn to dusk. **Mofan St** (Mófán Jiē; Map p300) is a five-minute southeasterly walk from the Kincheng bus station. Built in 1924, the buildings on this charming little street have brick exteriors and arched door fronts modelled after both the Japanese and Western architecture that was in fashion back in the day. The street has a small but hip café district, so come back for cocktails.

Further east takes you into a busy brick-paved market area, in the middle of which you'll see Memorial Arch to Qiu Liang-Kung's

Mother (Qiū Liánggōng Mǔ Jiéxiào Fǎng; Map p300). You'll be hard pressed to find a better example of Han Chinese-influenced filial devotion. Qiu Liang-kung, a native of Kinmen who became governor of China's Zhejiang province, had the arch built in 1812 to honour his mother who refused to remarry after her husband died. His mother instead chose to live 28 more years as a widow. The market is a great place to buy candy, dried seafood, knives and a wide variety of local knick-knacks.

Heading east through narrow alleyways, make your way to Chupu South Rd, where you'll find the cool little **Kuei Pavilion** (Kuí Gé; Map p300). This two-storey pavilion was built in 1836 to worship the god of literature, and it's here that aspiring scholars would come

to pray for success in the civil-service examinations. You can saunter northward to **Wu Jiāng Shū Yuàn** (Map p300), a walled complex constructed in the ancient Ming style. In the 1800s, the central building was a library and it was here we presume that aspiring scholars would come to study after receiving the spiritual message to 'hit the books' from the god of literature at the Kuei Pavilion. The most arresting thing about the complex is its deep, almost bloodlike red colour.

From here you can wind back west and check out the **Wu River Academy** (Map p300), a walled complex built in 1780 that once housed one of Kinmen's ancient schools. You won't find classes going on inside, but you will find the **Chutzu Shrine** (Zhūzǐ Cǐ), which honours the neo-Confucian scholar Chu Hsi, who sought a revival of Confucian values during the Sung dynasty.

## Sleeping

### BUDGET

**Kinmen Hotel** (Jinmén Lǚguǎn; Map p300; ☎ 321 567; 169 Mintsu Rd; 金城 民族路169號; d from NT1000; 📶 🚶) A quick walk from the bustle of Mofan St and

Kincheng's main market, the Kinmen Hotel offers clean rooms, cable TV, and free ADSL for those toting their own laptops.

**Six Brothers Hotel** (Liù Guì Fāndiàn; Map p300; ☎ 372 888; 166 Chukuang Rd; 金城 莒光路166號; s/d/tr/q NT1000/1200/1500/1800) Down a side street off Minchuan Rd, this small quiet hotel has some lovely antique furniture in the lobby and rather friendly management. Rooms are clean and a bargain for the price.

### MIDRANGE

**Ta Chen Hotel** (Dà Chéng Dà Fāndiàn; Map p300; ☎ 324 851; 16 Mingsheng Rd; 金城 民生路16號; s & d from NT1200; 📶) This hotel is right in the thick of things, just down the road from the Kincheng bus station. Rooms are shabby but clean and the décor is a bit on the eccentric side with mismatched antique furniture and other curios. The hotel also has wi-fi.

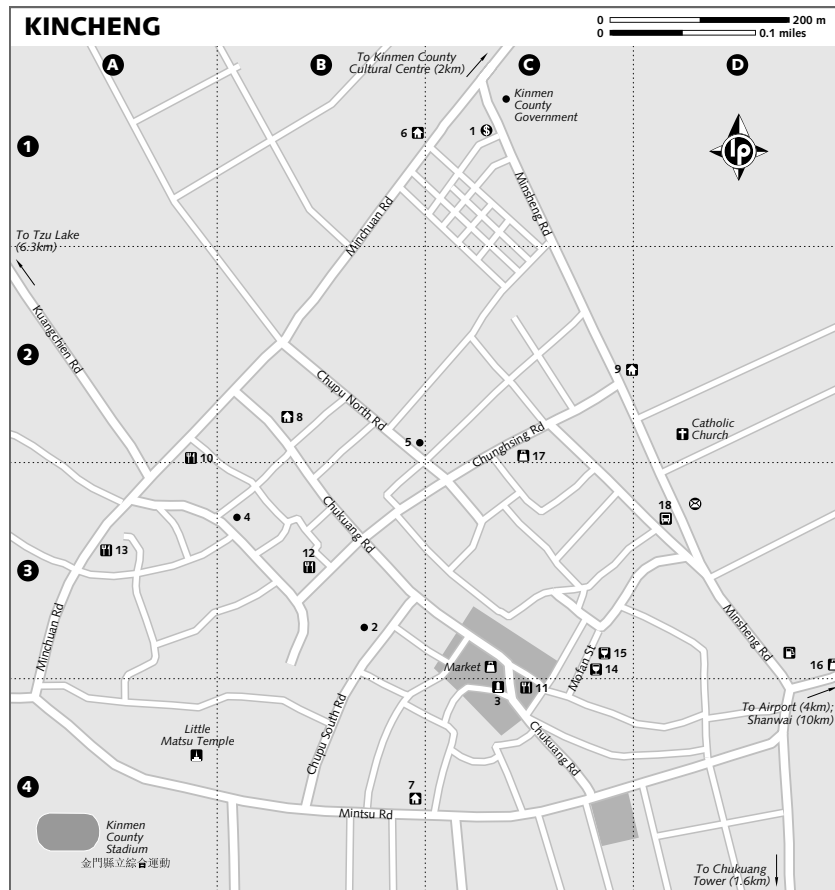
**King Ring Hotel** (Jīnrúì Dà Fāndiàn; Map p300; ☎ 323 777; 166 Minchuan Rd; 金城 民權路166號; d/tr NT1680/1995, q from NT2310) The King Ring enjoys a good reputation among travellers and tour groups, meaning it's often fully booked. The hotel is just close enough to the town centre to be convenient, but just enough on the edge to be quiet as well.

**West Sea International Hotel** (Xīhǎi Guójī Dàlǚdiàn; Map pp298-9; ☎ 322 992; 9 Xihai Rd; 金城 西海路9號; s/d NT1200/1500) Located outside Kincheng City, the West Sea is right next to the ferry that goes to Little Kinmen, making it a good place to stay if you're planning to spend the day exploring Lihyu. Rooms are comfortable, and pretty big for the price.

## Eating

Central Kincheng, with its busy market streets and winding alleys, is a foodie's paradise. The area around Mofan St is chock-a-block with small stands and restaurants selling a variety of Kincheng snacks and sweets. Some of Kinmen's specialities include *gòng táng* (hard candy), *miàn xiàn* (sticky-rice noodles) and *chǎo shāchóng* (fried sandworms). Come to the market in the early morning or evening to get the best of what's on offer.

**Shou Ji Kuangtung Zhou** (Shòuji Guǎngdōng Zhōu; Map p300; 50-1 Chukuang Rd, Sec 1; dishes from NT30; 🕒 6.30am-12.30pm) This restaurant, more than 80 years old, serves up steaming bowls of Cantonese-style congee. Locals favour the *zhū dù* (pig-stomach) congee but there are other varieties available.



<b>INFORMATION</b>	
Bank of Taiwan ATM 台灣銀行.....	1 C1
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	
Chutzu Shrine 朱子祠.....	(see 5)
Kuei Pavilion 奎閣.....	2 B3
Memorial Arch to Qiu Liang-kung's Mother 邱良功母節孝坊.....	3 C4
Wu Jiang Shu Yuan 滄江書院.....	4 B3
Wu River Academy.....	5 B2
<b>SLEEPING</b> 📶	
King Ring Hotel 金瑞大飯店.....	6 B1
Kinmen Hotel 金門旅館.....	7 B4
Six Brothers Hotel 六桂飯店.....	8 B2
Ta Chen Hotel 大成大飯店.....	9 C2
<b>EATING</b> 🍴	
Lao Liu Hsiao Kuan 老六小館.....	10 A2
Shou Ji Kuangtung Zhou 壽記廣東粥.....	11 C4
Wen Ji Mian 文記麵.....	12 B3
Xin Damiakou 新大廟口.....	13 A3
<b>DRINKING</b> 🍷	
Hung Lou 紅樓.....	14 C3
Pa Sa 吧薩燒烤店.....	15 C3
<b>SHOPPING</b> 🛍️	
Chin Ho Li Steel Knife Factory 金合利鋼刀.....	16 D3
Kinmen Minsu Wenwu Chih Jia 金門民俗文物之家.....	17 C2
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Kincheng Bus Station 金城車站.....	18 D3

**Wen Ji Mian** (Wénjī Miàn Xiàn Hú; Map p300; 37 Chungshing Shihchang; dishes from NT30; ☎ 5am-noon) Here you can find Kinmen's famous sticky-rice noodle soup, served with fresh oysters. The noodles are a popular dish for breakfast, though they can be found around town at other times of the day, too.

**Lao Liu Hsiao Kuan** (Lǎo Liú Xiǎo Guǎn; Map p300; 65 Minchuan Rd; dishes from NT100; ☎ lunch & dinner) This restaurant serves great seafood, including locally caught whole steamed fish.

**Xin Damiaokou** (Xīn Dàmiàokǒu; Map p300; Minchuan Rd; dishes from NT100; ☎ lunch & dinner) Right next to a small temple on the west side of Kincheng, this restaurant serves up some mighty fine seafood. Weather permitting, management sets up tables so guests can sit outside and feast next to the temple.

## Drinking

**Pa Sa** (Bāsà Shāokǎo Diàn; Map p300; 13 Mofan St; coffee from NT100, alcohol NT120, dishes from NT100; ☎ 11am-11pm) The Pa Sa is a chic bar-café selling a range of rice and noodle dishes as well as fruity drinks and coffees.

**Hung Lou** (Hóng Lóu; Map p300; 24 Mofan St; coffee from NT150, alcohol NT120; ☎ 10am-11pm) Across the street from Pa Sa, this place is extremely funky, with walls covered in political art representing both sides of the cross-Strait conflict. There's also lots of graffiti and guests are encouraged to add their own.

## Shopping

Visitors to Kinmen generally leave with two of the island's most famous products: a potent liquor made from sorghum; and

extremely sharp knives constructed from spent shell casings lobbed over from the Mainland. Booze and weaponry: always a potent combination.

First the liquor. At 58% proof, Kaoliang liquor is sold all over the island; try a few shots at a local bar before purchasing any serious quantities to take home. 'Blinding' is an adjective often used to describe the liquor's effects. As for the knives, these unusual souvenir items are said to be made from melted-down artillery shells left over from the Mainland bombardments. The knives are available all over Kinmen and come in a variety of shapes and sizes, but the most fun place to shop for them is at the **Chin Ho Li Steel Knife Factory** (Jīnhé Gāngdǎo; Map p300; www.5657.com.tw/maestrowu/index.htm; 236 Bóyù Rd, Sec 1; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm) just outside the city, where you can watch Maestro Wu as he crafts high-quality knives. Prices start at around NT800, and if you want to watch yours being made, don't come between noon and 2pm; that's when Maestro Wu rests. And of course, don't forget to pack your knives (or meat cleavers, swords or axes) in your checked baggage before trying to board the plane.

A wonderful little curio shop in central Kincheng is the **Kinmen Minsu Wenwu Chih Jia** (Jīnmén Mínsù Wénwú Zhī Jiā; Map p300; Lane 1, 124 Chungshing Rd), where you can find all sorts of ceramic knick-knacks, dishes and one-of-a-kind items to take home.

Another popular item is Kinmen's tasty hard candy, called kung (*gòng*) or 'tribute' candy because it was once used to pay tribute when visiting the imperial court. The candy comes in a variety of flavours, with

### WATCHING THE MAESTRO AT WORK

Living under bombardment has taught the people of Kinmen to make the best of things, and the island has done a good job transforming war history into tourist trade. One place where you can see this done with unique aplomb is at the Chin Ho Li Steel Knife Factory (see above), otherwise known as the factory of Maestro Wu. It's here where spent shell casings are transformed into one-of-a-kind knives. What makes a Maestro Wu knife so unique is what they're made from: old propaganda-laden shells lobbed by the communist Chinese in the '50s. These are shaped into beautiful steel blades of various sizes, intended for functions as varied as kitchen use and war souvenirs.

The current Maestro Wu is a wiry middle-aged fellow named Wu Tsong-shan, who studied smithing and weapon crafting under the tutelage of his father (another Maestro Wu, as the title is passed down). Wu says that the countless tons of shells that were lobbed over are ideal for making knives for both kitchen and ornamental use. Unlike regular shells, which were designed to shatter into killing fragments, propaganda shells are made of high grade steel, designed to split neatly open and demoralise the opponent.

## WIND LIONS

Travelling around Kinmen, you'll no doubt notice an abundance of stone lions. These are Kinmen's Wind Lions, traditional totems said to have the power to control the winds and keep the land fertile. According to locals, these totems began appearing after Kinmen was deforested to build Koxinga's navy. The locals, forced to turn to supernatural aid as the denuded soil of their island ceased bearing crops, began placing the lions around the island. While the island has since been reforested, the Wind Lions can still be found in almost every village around the island. Replicas are a popular tourist item and a good place to pick them up is the **Kinmen Ceramics Factory** (Jīnmén Táocǐ Chǎng; Map pp298-9; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-5pm), said to produce some of the finest ceramics in Taiwan. The factory sells various pottery items made from the highly prized *gaoling* clay, found in abundance all over the island. Unlike other souvenirs (such as knives), ceramic Wind Lion statues can be packed in your carry-on luggage.

peanut being the most common. You'll see it being sold in barrels along the streets or in boxes in more upscale gift shops. If you have a sweet tooth, the candy is a must-buy item.

## AROUND KINCHENG

Twelve kilometres long and roughly bow-tie shaped, Kinmen is easy to get around by scooter. The island is full of ancient towns, battlefield monuments and great parks (technically speaking, the whole island is a national park). The Kinmen County government puts out the excellent *Kinmen Sightseeing Guidebook* that you can get both at the airport and at the Kinmen County Cultural Centre (p299); the government also maintains a bilingual website with pictures, maps and plenty of useful information at [www.kinmen.gov.tw](http://www.kinmen.gov.tw). We recommend you spend at least two days on the island if you want to check out all the sites listed here.

### Battle history & War museums

Just south of the city lies **Chukuang Tower** (Júguāng Lóu; Map pp298-9; admission free; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-5pm, closed Mon), a three-storey tower constructed in the style of a classical Chinese palace. It was built in 1952 as a memorial to the fallen soldiers of Kinmen. There's an excellent museum inside with bilingual exhibits that give a good introduction to the history and culture of the region. Buses 3 and 6 go here.

On the southern end of the Kincheng District sit the **Dishan Tunnels** (Dīshān Kēngdào; Map pp298-9; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-5pm). Blasted out of solid granite in the early 1960s by soldiers, these tunnels stretch 357m to the ocean and were designed to protect boats from bombs during wars. Tourists are allowed to walk

through the spooky interior or follow a bridge over the entrance that leads to the piers.

Located in Kinning District (Jīnníng Xiāng), north of Kincheng, is the site of some ferocious battles between the communist Chinese and Taiwan. The **Kuningtou War Museum** (Gúnníngtóu Zhànshì Guǎn; Map pp298-9; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-5pm) sits on the site of the Kuningtou Battlefield and provides an excellent look into one of Kinmen's most gruesome conflicts, where 15,000 soldiers from both sides lost their lives in a battle lasting more than 56 hours. Buses 10, 11 and 26 stop at the museum.

The Kinhu District takes up the south-eastern portion of Kinmen. Shanwai is the biggest town here, so you can eat here. Just south of town is the **August 23 Artillery War Museum** (Bā Èr Sān Zhànshì Guǎn; Map pp298-9; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-5pm). The museum documents the horrific battle that occurred on 23 August 1958, when the communists launched an artillery attack against Kinmen that lasted for 44 days and shelled the island with more than 474,000 shells. Outside are fighter planes, tanks and cannons used during the siege. Adjacent to the museum is the **Mr Yu Tawei Museum** (Yú Dàwéi Xiānshēng Jìnián Guǎn; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-5pm), dedicated to the ROC's first minister of defence.

On the farthest northeast tip of Kinmen, in the Kinsha District lies the **Mashan Observatory** (Mǎshān Guān Cèzhàn), a fortified observation station that looks out at the Mainland (a mere 2km away). A dark, winding tunnel leads to a pillbox where you can peer through high-powered binoculars at villagers in Fujian. Though once this was a strictly controlled area, nowadays you'll find people trekking here to save money on



their mobile-phone bills by making calls to the Mainland using Chinese-bought phones (from this close, mobile phones automatically latch into Fujian networks, as they do from much of Liehyu).

### Temples & Shrines

To the southwest of Kincheng sits the **Koxinga Shrine** (Yánpíng Jūnwáng Cí; Map pp298–9), built in memory of the Ming general Koxinga who fought against the Dutch occupation (see p33). The shrine seems to be most popular with Taiwanese tourists – locals haven't quite forgiven him for cutting down all their trees. Not too far away is the **Mumahu Shrine** (Mùmǎ Hóu Cí; Map pp298–9). Bus 7 stops close by.

In the southern end of the Kincheng District you'll find **Kukang Lake** (Jūgāng Hú; Map pp298–9) and **Kukang Tower** (Jūgāng Lóu; Map pp298–9), just north of which sits the 14th-century **Wentai Pagoda** (Wéntái Bǎotǎ; Map pp298–9), considered one of the oldest constructions in Taiwan. The five-level hexagonal pagoda was originally built for the Ming emperor Hungwu as a place to honour the stars and celestial deities. Sitting on top of a giant boulder within the pagoda is the **Hsuchiangshiao Ancient Inscription** (Xūjiāng Xiào Wò Jié; Map pp298–9), carved by the Ming general Hsuchiang. The general, they say, used to come here to look at the sea. The inscription reads 'Hsuchiang is shouting and lying here'. There's a stand next to the pagoda that sells eggs fermented in Kaoliang liquor if you feel like you need something to make you shout and/or lie down. Bus 6 stops here.

In Kinsha District, check out the **Chen Chien Ancient Tomb** (Chén Jiàn Gǔ Mù; Map pp298–9), which commemorates an important official of the Ming dynasty. More impressive than the tomb (which doesn't contain the official's earthly remains, just his hat and gown) is the **Chen Chien Memorial Arch** (Chén Zhēn Ēn Róng Fǎng; Map pp298–9), dedicated to Chen Chien's father. It's considered one of the best-preserved Ming arches in Taiwan.

### Parks & Nature Preserves

With its beautiful lakes, forests and bird sanctuaries, Kinmen truly is, as locals say, 'a garden built upon a fortress'. So much so that the island attracts visitors with no interest in military history.

North of Kincheng is **Tzu Lake** (Cí Hú), one of the most scenic spots in Kinmen and a habitat for migratory birds. The saltwater lake opens to the ocean and is on the migratory paths of a number of bird species not normally found in Taiwan. Ducks, kingfishers, herons and geese make their homes on the lake year round, and cormorants nest here in winter. Just north of the lake itself is the **Shuangli Wetlands Area Centre** (Shuānglǐ Shìdì Zìrán Zhōngxīn; Map pp298–9; ☎ 8.30am–5pm), a research facility devoted to wetlands preservation. Some English information is available, and the 1st floor has a multimedia room, café and bird-viewing area. Buses 9, 10 and 11 stop here.

East of the city is the **Chungshan Memorial Forest** (Zhōngshān Jìniàn Lín; Map pp298–9), Kinmen's largest forest area. It was with the creation of this area that the government really showed its dedication to reforesting an island that had been stripped bare. Bus 1 passes by.

Just south of Shanwei is **Lake Tai** (Tài Hú), a 5m-deep lake that was dug entirely by hand in the 1960s. It's a popular picnic spot for locals and also a feeding ground for cormorants and ospreys. These species are best seen in the early morning. Check out the **Banyan Garden** (Róng Yuán; Map pp298–9), just south of the lake and inside the **Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Forest** (Zhōngzhèng Gōngyuán; Map pp298–9).

The highest mountain on Kinmen is **Mt Taiwu** (Tàiwǔ Shān) at 253m. On the west side of Mt Taiwu is the **Mt Taiwu Cemetery** (Tàiwǔ Shān Gōng Mù; Map pp298–9), built in 1952 to honour the ROC soldiers who died in battle. Though solemn, the grounds are peaceful as well. If you take the time to read the inscriptions on the flat grave markers, you'll note that officers are buried to one side, and enlisted men in the centre. The walk up the path takes about an hour and takes you past a number of small temples and shrines, and even an inscription of one of Chiang Kai-shek's favourite one liners, 'Wú Wàng Zài Jǔ Lèshì' or 'don't forget the days in chu' (in reference to a doomed battle that was saved at the last moment).

### Ancient Villages

Kinmen has some fascinating examples of old Fujianese architecture the likes of which aren't found elsewhere (certainly not as well

preserved). Old villages in Kinmen differ from those in Matsu both in building style and in layout as Kinmen is flat and Matsu mountainous. You'll come across such villages every few kilometres (another reason to ditch the bus and rent a scooter). One of our favourites is **Shuitou Village** (Shuítóu Cūn; Map pp298–9) in the Kincheng District. It's an old fishing community with ancient Fujian-style houses built by a wealthy merchant clan named Huang during the Qing dynasty. The **Youtang Villa** (Yǒu Táng Biéyè) is an excellent example of southern-style Qing architecture. Shuitou is also the home of the **11m-high Moon Grasping Tower** (Déyuè Lóu).

**Chiunglin Village** (Qiónglín Cūn) in Kinhu is famous for having more shrines than any other village on Kinmen. The most famous is the **Tsai Family Shrine** (Cài Shì Cí), which sits in the centre of the village. The characters on the main wall read 'loyalty and filial piety' and 'honesty and thriftiness'.

Probably the most well-maintained of Kinmen's ancient townships is in **Shanhou Village** in the Kinsha District. The **Kinmen Folk Cultural Village** (Jīnmén Mínsú Wénhuà Cūn; Map pp298–9) is a grouping of 18 Fujian-style houses, all interconnected, with narrow alleys and bricked walls. The roofs sport the 'horseback ridges' and 'swallow tails' common to southern Fujian architecture but unique in Taiwan. Buses 25 and 31 service the area.

### LITTLE KINMEN 小金門

Little Kinmen (Xiǎo Jīnmén) is the common name for Liehyu Island (Lièyǔ Xiāng), a small 2-sq-km patch of land west of the main island. If Kinmen is an outpost, than Little Kinmen is the outpost of an outpost, a chunk of ROC territory so close to the PRC that cell phones automatically switch to Fujian-based networks (mind those roaming charges!). Pretty and windswept, Little Kinmen is basically an island park that just happens to sit atop of the 1958 war's last front lines.

### Sights & attractions

A point of interest on Little Kinmen is the **Victory Gate** (Shènglǐ Mén; Map pp298–9), which stands in perpetual greeting to visitors coming off the ferry.

The **Pata Memorial** (Bādá Lóuzi; Map pp298–9) is a replica of one of the towers on the Great Wall of China. This was built in 1963 by the Kinmen-stationed troops to

commemorate seven soldiers who died in a 1933 battle against Japan. On the top of the tower stand stone soldiers, arms perpetually cocked flinging grenades.

The **Chaste Maiden Temple** (Liè Nǚ Miào; Map pp298–9) is dedicated to Wang Yu-lan, a woman who, legend has it, fought against communist soldiers. She chose to swim out to the ocean to avoid being molested by the soldiers. The temple is built on the spot where she was buried after her body floated back to shore.

**Huchingtou War Museum** (Hújīngtóu Zhànshǐ Guǎn; Map pp298–9) contains war memorabilia and an observation room with pay binoculars from which you can see Xiamen on a clear day.

The **Siwei Tunnel** (Siwéi Kēngdào; Map pp298–9; ☎ 8.30am–5pm), on southeastern Liehyu, is an underground tunnel blasted through a granite reef. It's 790m in length, twice as large as the Dishan Tunnel on Kinmen, and is the top tourist attraction on the island. It's also home to Liehyu's only coffee shop. The Liehyu visitor centre is right next to the tunnel entrance.

### Activities

Bicycling is the best way to see Little Kinmen and the price can't be beat. In an effort to increase tourism, the Kinmen tourism department actually loans visitors mountain bikes... free! Just head to the Siwei Tunnel when you get off the boat from Kinmen and pick one up at the visitor centre. Liehyu's perimeter is ringed by a bike path passing through lovely coastal scenery including Lingshui Lake, an artificial salt-water lake that's home to a number of species of waterbirds native to Fujian province. There are a couple of small stores that sell local specialities such as deep-fried oyster cake, in addition to groceries.

The beaches along the west side of the island are no good for swimming because of anti-amphibious landing defences in the water (not to mention potential mines). There is a long, swimmable beach (though we've yet to find shower facilities) along the southeastern coast. There are also a few interesting sights: a decommissioned tank being slowly covered by flowering vines; small shrines surrounded by semiwild gardens; and a (sadly, poorly maintained) climbing wall. Liehyu has an hourly bus service travelling north

and south around the island. As it's such a tiny place, it's probably faster to walk than wait for a bus.

## PENGHU 澎湖

☎ 06 / pop 90,000

Penghu (Pénghú), also known as the Pescadores, is famous for its beautiful beaches, glorious temples and a plethora of traditional Chinese-style homes which are surrounded by walls made from coral. Penghu is famous for another thing as well; though the weather in the summer is hot and beautiful, in winter and spring the archipelago is quite possibly the windiest place in the northern hemisphere. Wind not a tourist draw, you say? Tell that to the droves of windsurfers who consider Penghu a sporting mecca and the Canary Islands of the Orient.

A flat, dry place covered mostly with low bush and grasslands, Penghu is quite a change from the mountainous subtropical environment. The wind- and water-eroded coastlines of the islands feature stunning basalt cliffs, reefs and, without question, some of the finest beaches in Taiwan.

### History

Windswept Penghu has served for centuries as a strategic connection point between Taiwan, mainland China, Japan and Southeast Asia. But its strategic position proved both a blessing and curse, and over the centuries Penghu was grabbed by various colonisers from Asia and Europe looking to have a toehold in the Taiwan Straits.

The Dutch were the first to take the islands in 1622 but they moved to the Taiwanese mainland when they learned that the Ming imperial court had plans to remove them from Penghu by force. In 1662 the Ming loyalist Koxinga was sent to oust the Dutch from Taiwan for good. Penghu was a convenient place to station his troops as he drew up his battle plans. Some troops stayed in Penghu after the Dutch were gone and set up their own regime, which was short lived, however, because the Qing court threw them out in 1683. The French were the next to arrive in 1884, followed in 1895 by the Japanese, who settled down and stayed for the next 50 years, only to be replaced by the Nationalists in 1945.

Penghu is rich with historical relics, evidence of its long colonial history. Martial law lifted from the islands in 1979 and mainland Taiwanese were finally able to visit the island. To capitalise on Penghu's history and boost a drooping economy, the islands were transformed into a beach mecca for local and foreign visitors. The Penghu Archipelago has been designated a national scenic area and the islands have been given a makeover for the visitors that crowd Penghu's shores each summer.

### Orientation

Penghu County includes 64 islands (only a third of which are inhabited). There's plenty to see and do on the main archipelago, four interconnected islands that collectively form a horseshoe containing the townships of Makung, Huhsi, Paisha and Siyu. Ferries run daily during high season between Makung and the two largest outer islands, Chimei and Wang'an, and tours are available to bring you to some of the smaller islands as well. Makung (on Penghu Island) is the only city, and though you can find whatever you need here, by Taiwanese standards Makung is more like a large town.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

Makung is well connected to Taiwan's major cities, and flights leave daily from Taipei, Taichung, Tainan, Kaohsiung and Chiayi. Flights also leave regularly going to nearby Chimei and Wang'an Islands. Travel agencies around Chungcheng Rd can help arrange tickets. The following airlines have offices in Makung airport.

**Fuhsing Airlines** (☎ 922 8866)

**Mandarin Airlines** (☎ 922 8688)

**TransAsia Airways** (☎ 922 8888)

**Uni Air** (☎ 922 8999)

#### BOAT

The **Taiwan Hangye Company** (Kaohsiung ☎ 07-561 3866; 5 Chiehhsing-1st St; Makung Map pp308-9 ☎ 926 4087; Makung Harbour Terminal Bldg) operates *Taiwanline*, a boat that travels between Kaohsiung and Makung (NT800 to NT1300, 3½ hours) from mid-March into September. The schedule changes every three months and boats are limited in winter.

The *Tomorrow Star* runs between Putai (near Chiayi) and Makung (NT812, 90 minutes). To inquire call **Makung Tomorrow Star** (☎ 926 0666; Makung Harbour Terminal Bldg; Map pp308-9).

### Getting Around

#### TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

An airport shuttle bus makes hourly rounds to Makung between 7.20am and 6.50pm. A taxi to and from Makung airport costs around NT300. If you're not too heavily weighed down, consider walking to the main road from the airport and hailing a

cab there; you'll save around NT100 doing it that way.

#### CAR, MOTORCYCLE & SCOOTER

Car, motorcycle and scooter rental places are on and around Chungcheng Rd in Makung. Rates for motorcycles and scooters are generally NT350 to NT400 a day, excluding petrol. Small cars can be rented for NT1300 a day. Most rental agencies require an international or Taiwan licence for cars, but some will let the requirement slide for scooters.

#### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

There are two bus lines that traverse the archipelago, but they only run about once an hour from the **main bus station** (Chèzhàn; Map pp308-9) in Makung. Enough Penghu folk will stop for foreign tourists to make hitchhiking viable.

#### TAXI

Taxi drivers prefer flat rates to using the meter. A trip to just about anywhere on Penghu will

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Chihli Beach 時裡沙灘.....	2	A3
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Chungshe Old Dwellings 中社古厝.....	4	A4
Dutch Fort 風櫃尾紅毛城遺址.....	5	A3
Erkan Old Residences 二坎古厝.....	6	A2
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Green Mossback Turtle Sightseeing and Preservation Centre 綠蠵龜觀光保育中心.....	8	A4
Hsiaomen Geology Museum 小門地質博物館.....	9	A2
Lintou Park 林投公園.....	10	B3
Peichi Temple 北極殿.....	11	B3
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West Fortress 西台.....	20	A3
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#### SLEEPING

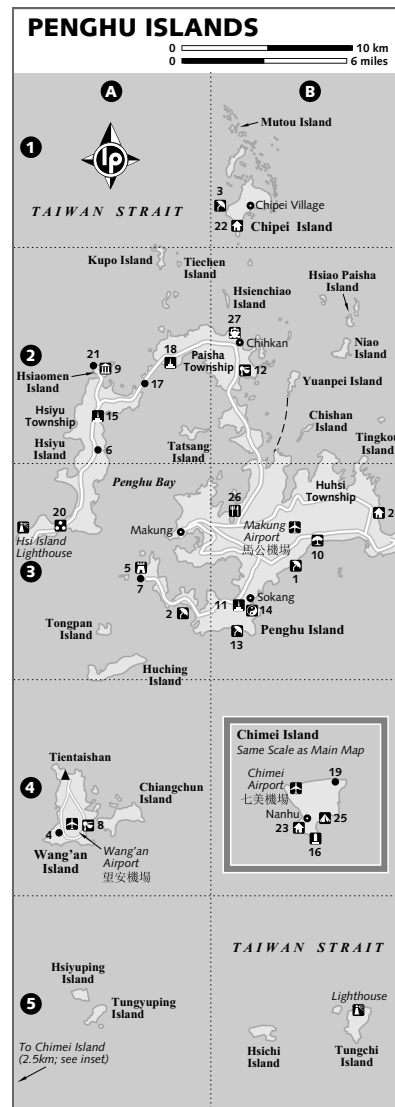
Chipei Sea Paradise Resort 吉貝海上樂園.....	22	B1
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cost NT200 to NT300. Taxi tours can be had for about NT2500 to NT3000 a day.

## MAKUNG 馬公

Makung (Mǎgōng, Magong, Makong) is a pretty seaside town with a history stretching back to the 14th century. Though it's thoroughly modern (there's even a McDonalds, something which Makung people seem unusually proud of), you won't have to look far to find remnants of bygone dynasties. The Japanese have also left their mark in Makung with a number of Japanese-style administrative buildings around town. It's definitely worth spending a day exploring Makung before heading out to see the rest of the Archipelago or any of the outer Penghu islands.

Summer is prime time in Makung, with streets full of tourists and hotel prices rising like the temperature. In winter, when the howling of the wind sometimes becomes deafening, the town is markedly more subdued. Autumn and spring, however, can be perfectly lovely, with the weather warm enough to swim, cheaper accommodation, and low-to-no crowds.

## Information

Visit <http://tour.penghu.gov.tw/English> for general info about the Penghu Islands.

**Bank of Taiwan** (Map pp308-9; ☎ 927 9935; 24 Jenai Rd) Foreign currency exchange and reliable cross-culturally-attuned ATMs.

**Penghu Tourist Service Centre** (Pénghú Yóukè Fúwù Zhōngxīn; ☎ 921 6445; 171 Kuanghua Lane; ☎ 8am-

5pm) Penghu pamphlets, magazines and books in English aplenty. The drawback? Bad location, halfway between the airport and Makung. Try to pick up your travel guides in the airport if possible.

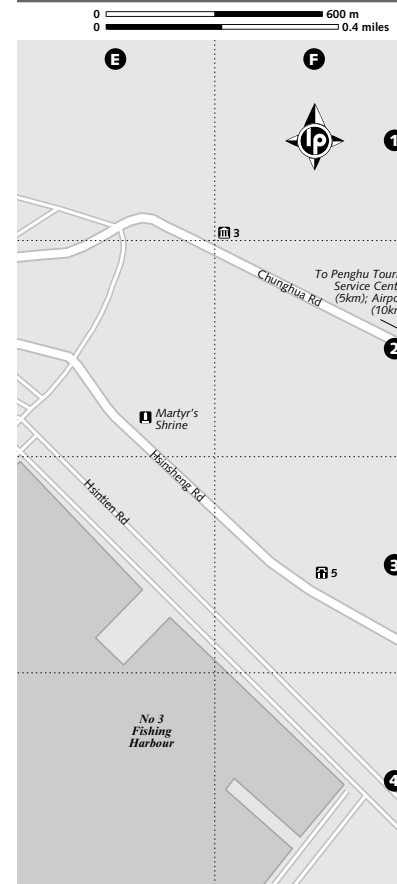
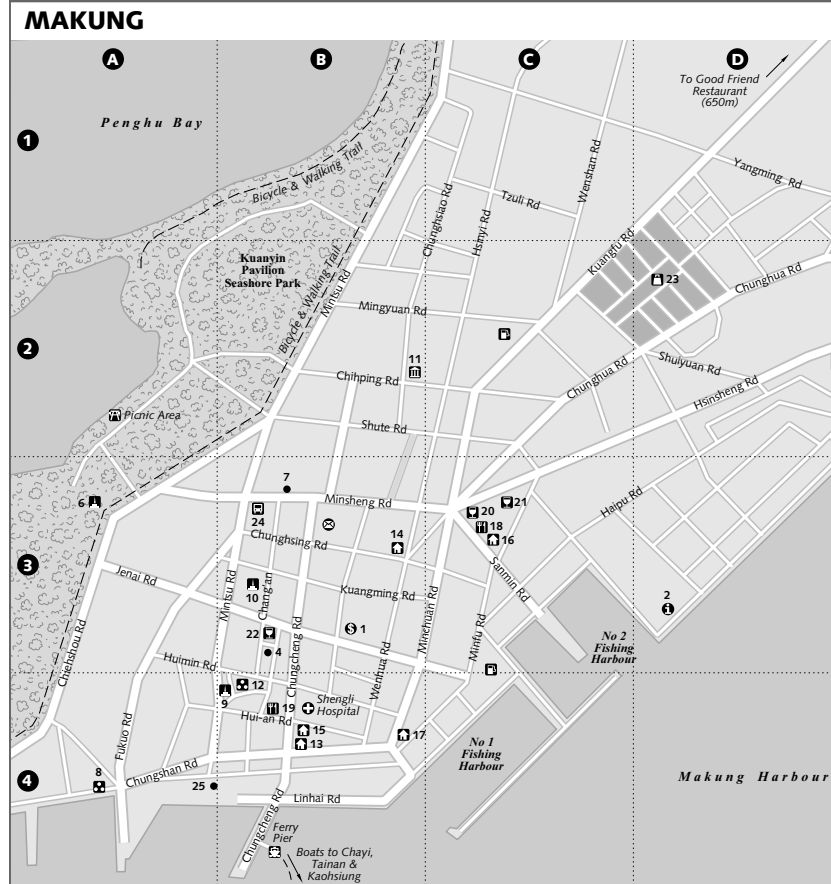
**South Seas Tourist Service Centre** (Nánhǎi Yóukè Fúwù Zhōngxīn; Map pp308-9; ☎ 926 4738; Makung Harbour Third Fishing Dock; ☎ 8am-5pm) This centre provides information about Chimei, Wang'an and Tongpan Islands, as well as boat tickets. They also provide a free left-luggage service.

## Sights

Makung is great to explore by foot or bicycle. Its old buildings, narrow cobblestone alleys, temples and remnants of the old city wall are waiting to be checked out. Chungcheng Rd is basically the main drag and it's here where

you'll find more coffee shops than you'd think a small Taiwanese city could ever support.

Probably the best place to start your exploration is down by the harbour at the end of Chungcheng Rd (this is where the boat from Taiwan leaves you). A quick walk west along Chungsan Rd takes you to **Shuncheng Gate** (Shùnchéng Mén; Map pp308-9) and a section of the **Makung Old Wall** (Mǎgōng Gǔ Chéng; Map pp308-9). City walls were constructed around Makung as a defensive measure. After the occupying French left the city in 1885, the walls were mostly knocked down by the Japanese. Parts of the wall are in the process of being overrun by cacti and aloe plants the size of ponies. The old neighbourhood around the wall is dilapidated,



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Chienyi Tang Chinese Traditional  
Medicine Store 乾益堂中藥行.....4 B3  
Confucius Temple 孔廟.....5 F3  
Kuanyin Pavilion 觀音亭.....6 A3  
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Makung Old Wall 馬公古城.....8 A4  
Matsu Temple 馬祖天后宮.....9 B4  
Peichen Temple 北辰宮.....10 B3  
Penghu County Cultural Area 澎湖縣文化園區.....(see 3)  
Penghu Reclamation Hall 澎湖開拓館.....11 B2  
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Taiwan Hangye Company.....(see 25)



providing an interesting counterpoint to the renovated 'old' town sections.

A few blocks to the northeast is one of Penghu's most celebrated spots, the **Matsu Temple** (Mǎzū Tiānhòu Gōng; Map pp308-9; Hui-an Rd; ☎ 5am-8.30pm). It was constructed in the late 16th century, and locals say it's the oldest temple in Taiwan. Sailors have been coming here for centuries to pray to the goddess Matsu (see p216) for a safe voyage. The temple was originally built without using a single nail and though it has been refurbished several times over the years, the craftsmanship remains superb. Unlike many temples in Penghu, this temple still looks and feels ancient.

Behind the temple are a series of winding brick-paved pedestrian lanes that are home to a number of interesting sights such as the **Shihkung Ancestral Shrine** (Shīgōng Cì; Map pp308-9) and **Well of a Thousand Soldiers** (Wàn Jūn Jīng; Map pp308-9), where in 1682 the goddess Matsu was said to have bequeathed a magical well to Ming soldiers massing for an invasion of Taiwan. Also in this warren of old streets and eclectically built homes of 1920s Western and Fujian buildings is the **Chienyi Tang Chinese Traditional Medicine Store** (Qiányì Tāng Zhōngyào Háng; Map pp308-9; 42 Chungyang St; ☎ 7am-9.30pm); though the proprietor speaks no English it's a fun place to shop for traditional Chinese remedies.

From here, you can head back east and wander through Makung, checking out some of the town's unique architecture and abundance of smaller temples and shrines, including **Peichen Temple** (Bēichén Gōng; Map pp308-9).

Alternatively, if you're in the mood to swim or just chill out in the sea breeze, head over to Makung's western shoreline, where you'll find the city's fabulous waterfront park, which has a great enclosed bay great for swimming. The park is named for the 300-year-old **Kuanyin Pavilion** (Guānyīn Tíng; Map pp308-9; ☎ 5am-8pm), dedicated to Kuanyin, goddess of mercy. This is one of the most important places for Buddhist worship around, which says a lot, as there are a great many places for Buddhist worship in Penghu. The most important artefact in the temple is the old bell, which dates back to 1696.

To the northeast of the park is the **Penghu Reclamation Hall** (Pénghú Kāi Tuò Guǎn; Map pp308-9; 30 Chihping Rd; admission NT30; ☎ 10am-10pm, closed Mon &

last day of each month). This building was built by the Japanese, its architecture displaying an elegant mix of Japanese and Western styles. Inside are displays about Penghu culture and history as well as a small library (all in Chinese). From here you can continue to walk northeast and check out the Peichen market, a cool traditional wet market with a heavy fishing vibe; try the sea urchin, or some snails. There are also some stalls selling all manner of cooked foods around the market.

Though it's a bit of a hike from the centre of town, on the eastern edge of Makung you'll find the very grand Confucius Temple (Kǒng Miào; Map pp308-9). The temple was formerly the Wenshi College, built in 1766 and an important centre of learning during the Qing dynasty. The name of the college was changed to the Confucius Temple during the Japanese occupation to take advantage of the Japanese respect for Confucius, in the hope that the college wouldn't be torn down.

Also on the outskirts of Makung lies the **Penghu County Cultural Area** (Pénghú Xiàn Wénhuà Yuánqū; Map pp308-9; 230 Chunghua Rd), which has several museums and an art gallery worth visiting. On the grounds is the cultural bureau, a library, **Penghu Marine Exhibition Hall** (Pénghú Hǎiyáng Zīyuán Guǎn; admission NT20; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Wed-Sun) and the **Penghu County Science Hall** (Pénghú Xiàn Kēxuéguǎn; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Wed-Sun). Both the marine hall and the science hall have changing exhibitions devoted to Penghu's ecology and natural resources. Most of the information is in Chinese but the displays are interesting enough to make a visit worthwhile. Kids, in particular, will enjoy the dinosaur fossils housed in the science hall. Art enthusiasts might want to check out the nearby **Chao Ertai Art Museum** (Zhāo Èrdài Yìguǎn; 240 Chunghua Rd; Map pp308-9; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Wed-Sun), a gallery displaying the works of Chao Ertai, a multitalented artist who is considered the Picasso of Penghu.

### Activities & Festivals

Though the **Lantern Festival** (yuánxiāojié) is a sight to behold anywhere in Taiwan, Penghu's festival is truly a unique celebration. It takes place on the 15th day of the first lunar month (about 15 days after the first day of Chinese New Year, which begins anywhere from mid-January to mid-February, depending on the year). Penghu's celebrations include a bacchanalian parade with

dancers, and fireworks through the streets and past the many temples of Makung. One twist unique to Penghu is the parading of gigantic golden turtle effigies through the streets. In the days before the festival most bakeries in town devote half their oven space to the production of turtle cakes, which are given away and eaten during the course of the festival.

Penghu is fast becoming Asia's premier spot for windsurfing. The **Penghu Pro-Am Windsurfing Festival** happens every November, attracting sailboard enthusiasts from all over the world. For more information on the festival check out [www.penghuwindsurf.idv.tw](http://www.penghuwindsurf.idv.tw). Windsurfing lessons and equipment rental are available at both the Penghu Sunrise B&B (right) in Guoyeh, and in Makung at **Liquid Sport** (Map pp308-9; ☎ 926 0361; 36 Minsheng Rd). The first lesson is NT1500, including equipment, and Liquid Sport owner Alex Mowday says he can teach most beginners to windsurf in 'about two hours'.

### Sleeping

During summer, hotel prices in Makung rise dramatically, and rooms are hard to come by on weekends and holidays. In high season book ahead or sleep on the beach. October and November are considered low season, and though windier than in the summer, the weather is usually still hot. The prices listed here are summer rates; in winter (October to March) sizable discounts can be had at even the most expensive of hotels.

### BUDGET

**Chunghsin Hotel** (Zhōngxīn Dà Lǚshè; Map pp308-9; ☎ 927 2151; 22 Chunghsing Rd; 中興路22號; r from NT700) A good budget choice. It's in a convenient location, walking distance to all the Makung sights and shopping. The 21 rooms here fill up quickly in summer so book ahead.

**Donghai Hotel** (Dōnghǎi Lǚshè; Map pp308-9; ☎ 927 2367; 38 Sanmin Rd; 三民路38號; r from NT500) Near the fish market, this place is cheap but run down and dingy, and should only be considered if all the other hotels are full. There are a couple of other cheap hotels on the same block.

### MIDRANGE & TOP-END

**Hwa Shin Palace Hotel** (Huáxīn Dà Fàndiàn; Map pp308-9; ☎ 926 4911; 40 Sanmin Rd; 三民40號; r from NT1680) The rooms here are well-maintained and comfortable, and the hotel is in a central part

of town and offers free airport pickup. During our last visit, management said the hotel would undergo renovation in mid-2007, so prices may be more expensive by the time you read this. However, there are similar quality hotels on the same block.

**Mongfun Hotel** (Htiān Dà Fàndiàn; Map pp308-9; ☎ 926 2936; [www.069263936.com.tw](http://www.069263936.com.tw); 2 Minchuan Rd; 民權路2號; r from NT2800; ☎) One of the newest hotels in Makung, the Mongfun has a very cool boutique feel to it, from the Art-Deco lobby to the 9th-floor Zen tea shop. Rooms are definitely comfy, and some have sea views. The whole place is wireless equipped, and management speaks English. There 30% discounts in the off-season.

**Jih Lih Hotel** (Rìlǐ Dà Fàndiàn; Map pp308-9; ☎ 926 5898; 25 Huimin 1st Rd; 惠民一路25號; d NT2200-8800) The Jih Lih has large, very pleasant rooms and offers deep discounts in winter. The hotel is a one-minute walk to Chungcheng Rd, the main shopping street of Makung, and close to the Peichen Temple.

**Hotel Ever Spring** (Chángchūn Dà Fàndiàn; Map pp308-9; ☎ 927 4881; [www.everspring-hotel.com.tw](http://www.everspring-hotel.com.tw); 6 Chungcheng Rd; 中正路6號; r incl breakfast NT1800-3800; ☎) This is a nice place located very close to Makung harbour, with free internet access and breakfast. Some rooms have ocean views and there's even a 'Captain's Suite'.

**Boha Hotel** (Bǎohuá Dà Fàndiàn; Map pp308-9; ☎ 927 4881; 2 Chungcheng Rd; 中正路2號; d incl breakfast NT1750) Adjacent to Makung harbour, the Boha offers spotless rooms, some with ocean views. The 2nd-floor restaurant serves surprisingly good Western food, a rarity in Penghu.

**Penghu Sunrise B&B** (Pénghú Mínsū Guōyè Guǎnrólóu; Map p307; ☎ 992 0818; 129-3 Guoyeh village; 菓葉村129-3號; d incl breakfast NT2000) Run by Jan and Sylvia, a Taiwanese couple who decided to swap the rat race for windsurfing and sunshine, the Sunrise is a bona fide B&B with ocean views, fresh morning coffee and English-speaking hosts. Rooms are bright, airy and comfortably furnished, and there's a great communal lounge area with a panoramic view of the ocean. The B&B is in Guoyeh, 12km west of Makung, close to some great beaches. Scooter, bicycle, windsurfing and sea-kayaking equipment are available for rent and airport pickup is free of charge.

### Eating

First and foremost, Makung is a seafood-lover's paradise; there are some other local

specialties, such as *jīnguā mǐfěn* (pumpkin rice-noodles), *xián bǐng* (salty biscuits) and *shāo ròu fàn* (grilled meat with rice), but it's the seafood that keeps people coming back. Raw *lóng xiā* (lobster) and fried *wú xiāng cìhétún* ('five-flavour' balloonfish) are favourites. The one item that no Taiwanese visitor leaves without is Penghu's famed *hēi táng gāo* (brown-sugar sponge cakes); you can buy these all over Makung.

There are restaurants all over town and you'll find street food cooking in front of just about any temple, especially during high season. We've recommended just a few places that you might not otherwise find on your own.

**Starfish** (Hǎixīng Degùxiāng; Map pp308-9; ☎ 926 1406; 22 Hui-an Rd; dishes from NT150; 🍴 lunch & dinner) A bit kitsch but fun, with swing-bench seating and seashell-covered walls. Meals are mostly seafood (naturally), curries and casseroles, and the place is in the pedestrian maze behind Matsu Temple.

**Jingwang Vegetarian** (Jīngwǎng Végèitāriān; Map pp308-9; 46 Sanmin Rd; dishes from NT40; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Vegetarians will want to know about this little storefront eatery with five tables. Though they only serve a handful of dishes (that are on display all the time, so just point), it's all good.

**Dongwei Homestyle** (Dōngwèi Hāibīn Kējīcāncūn; Map p307; ☎ 921 7688; 6-1 Dongwei Village; dishes from NT100; 🍴 lunch & dinner) This generic-looking restaurant is adjacent to a hotel called the Dong Wei and a bit out of the city. Nonetheless it's worth the trip. It serves excellent Hakka food. Manager Kevin speaks enough English to help those not familiar with Hakka-style food to pick out some dishes.

**Good Friend** (Hǎopéngyǒu; ☎ 926 1158; 320 Sanduo Rd; dishes from NT100; 🍴 lunch & dinner) Though it's on Makung's northern edge, we had to tell you about this primarily vegetarian restaurant which makes the best Taiwanese *niúròu tāngmiàn* (beef noodle soup) we've ever eaten. Quite the paradox, eh?

### Drinking

**Sunny Colony Bar** (Yángguāng Zhī Míndì; Map pp308-9; Lane 3-6 Chungcheng Rd; drinks NT150-180; 🍷 6pm-2am) This bar is a trendy place to spend the evening. Speciality drinks include Penghu *xiànrénzhāng zhī* (cactus juice) mixed with alcohol.

**Freud Pub** (Fūlǚyǒidè; Map pp308-9; 2-1 Hsinsheng Rd; drinks from NT90; 🍷 11-2am) This sports bar is where visiting windsurfers hang out. The house special is the potent cocktail 'Absolutely Drunk', made with six kinds of alcohol.

### KEEPING UP WITH THE JONSES, PENGHU STYLE

For an archipelago of 90,000 people, Penghu has a lot of temples. We aren't talking small roadside shrines here (though there are plenty of these), we mean full-blown three- to five-storey temples with stone columns depicting legendary scenes, ornate hand-carved doors, boisterously painted interiors and exteriors and enough statues and devotional artwork to make even the most casual tourist wish they'd bought a larger memory card for their digicam. A scooter trip through the main islands looks something like this:

'...Flat bushland on one side, ocean on the other...small one-grocery store hamlet...massively grandiose three-storey Taoist temple...'

'...Pretty farms surrounded by coral walls...beautiful beach with scattered windmills...blindingly ostentatious six-storey temple dedicated to Matsu...'

'...Water buffalo grazing in field...7-Eleven...three-tiered temple complex surrounded by half a dozen stone deities re-enacting events of cosmic significance...'

During the high season, you'll generally see tourists in these palatial temples. In the low season, perhaps a monk or two. Or you might have the place to yourself. Though some are built by religious organisations, we understand that many of these grand temples were built with the private funds of locals who've left the island to seek their fortunes on Taiwan or abroad. The reason behind the temple construction? As near as we can tell, the ever-increasing grandeur is as simple as keeping up with the Joneses (or Huangs, or Zhuangs).

'The Hong family spent 10 million to build a temple in Ting-wan? We'll spend 15 to build ours in Tung-shih!'

In any event, it makes the island a magnificent place for shutterbugs. Invest in that 2-gigabyte memory card, you'll fill it up quickly.

**Sha Ai Chuang** (Shā Ài Zhuāng; Map pp308-9; 14 Hsinsheng Rd; cocktails from NT150; 🍷 10am-midnight) Loosely translated as 'foolish love pub', this place was once the home of Penghu's first county chief. It has been transformed into a colourful bar with great ambience. The fruit-juice cocktails are especially good on a warm night.

### Shopping

Makung is full of shops selling all kinds of Penghu speciality items such as pink and black coral, shells and veined stones. We recommend against buying coral items as it only hastens the destruction of coral reefs and the decline of the marine creatures that live within them. If you need to bring home a nonedible souvenir, why not go for some nautically themed jewellery or perhaps a wind-chime set?

Edible items are especially popular with Taiwanese tourists, and stores selling squid jerky, smoked fish and dried seafood in general (but thankfully not shark's fin) can be found all over Makung. And of course, you can buy just about anything edible, from freshly caught fish and oysters to local vegetables and cooked snacks at the bustling **Peichen Market** (Bèichén Shìchǎng; Map pp308-9) in central Makung. Snacking is best here before 1pm.

### AROUND PENGHU ARCHIPELAGO

Though it's actually four islands, most locals simply refer to the horseshoe-shaped archipelago as the main island, or simply Penghu. The U-shaped route 203 shoots north from Makung on the west side of the main island, passing through the Paisha township before heading on to Hsiyu Island via the Great Bridge. Hsiyu is a long, narrow island, and 203 continues to the Western Fortress and lighthouse on its southern tip. The total distance of the one-way trip is just under 37km, so you can spend a full day exploring the sights along that road on a scooter and still make it back to Makung before dark. Good English-language travel information is available on <http://tour.penghu.gov.tw/English>, a fine site with maps. We've listed our favourites, along with some lesser-known spots.

### Ancient Towns & Temples

Some call Penghu the Hawaii of Asia, but how many temples does Hawaii have? We frankly lost count of how many we saw in Penghu, but we think the person-to-temple ratio is

### HIDDEN BUDDHIST DELIGHTS

While riding on Paisha island keep your eyes towards the west just before you get to the area of the **Penghu Aquarium** (Pénghú Shuǐzúguǎn; Map p307). When you see a large seated Buddha off in the distance, turn down that road to find a small Buddhist temple surrounded by several dozen astounding statues.

10 to one. Travelling around Penghu you'll undoubtedly stumble across some. On the wide, flat plains the huge, colourful complexes are a bit hard to miss.

Just southwest of Makung lie the **Sokang Pagodas** (Sòuǎng Zīwú Bǎotǎ; Map p307). These are two north- and south-facing stone towers that have been blessed by a Taoist priest and are reputed to contain supernatural powers that ward off evil and protect residents from natural disasters. So far they're working.

Not too far from the pagodas is the **Peichi Temple** (Bèiji Diàn; Map p307), where you'll find a large gold turtle that represents longevity. This temple is a hub of activity during the Lantern Festival (see p149). The ruins of the **Dutch Fort** (Féngguīwéi Hóngmáo-chéng Yìzhì; Map p307), abandoned by the Dutch when they were driven out of Penghu by the Ming army in 1624, is at the end of the peninsula.

Paisha, north of Penghu Island, has a number of wonderful temples that will appeal to earth-worshippers. In Chiangmei you'll come across the Lungte temple, built around a large and ancient banyan tree. But don't get too impressed. In Tunliang Village, just south of the **Trans-Ocean Bridge** (Kuàhǎi Dàqiáo; Map p307) is the 300-year-old **Tunliang Banyan Tree** (Tōngliáng Gǔróng; Map p307) which dwarfs the Lungte banyan. A beautiful temple complex has been built there, and the two are now inseparable. It's said that during the Qing dynasty, a ship sunk off the coast of Penghu and a small seedling floated to shore and was planted by locals. There's a little snack shop next to this temple that sells cactus-fruit sorbet, something you'll only find in Penghu. Well worth trying.

On Hsiyu Island, the 200-year-old **Ta-yi Temple** (Dàyi Gōng; Map p307) is dedicated to Kuanyu, the god of war. Some say that when the French tried to attack Penghu,



mysterious forces kept them away from the temple.

Just south of the temple is where you'll find the **Erkan Old Residences** (Èrkǎn Gǔ Cuò; Map p307; admission NT30; ☎ 8am-7pm). It's a group of houses dating back a century. These homes are built in a melange of southern Fujian, Western and Japanese styles. There's a small (but often noisy) temple over on one end of town with elaborately carved beams and columns. Though a tourist attraction, the village is inhabited and some of the people living there keep their front gates open and invite visitors to check out their unique homes.

On the southern tip of Hsiyu sits the **West Fortress** (Xī Tǎi; Map p307; admission NT30; ☎ 7.30am-6.30pm summer & 8am-5.30pm winter). It was built in 1887, following the Sino-French War, and 5000 soldiers were once stationed in this fortress. Interestingly, it's constructed with mud and sticky-rice pulp. It's possible to go inside and wander around.

## BEACHES & COASTAL SCENERY

South of Makung, **Shanshui Beach** (Shānshuǐ Shātān; Map p307) has smooth white sand and breaking waves, and is a great place to relax. On the weekends, the beach is fairly crowded with sun worshippers from Taiwan, but during the week you may well wind up sharing the beach with a handful of other bathers. The beach is popular with Penghu's surf set when the waves are up.

**Chihli Beach** (Zhīlǐ Shātān; Map p307) is up the coast to the northwest. The shell-sand beach stretches for over 1km and is popular with beach-sport enthusiasts and sunbathers. This stretch of coast is known for its bizarre rock formations, formed thousands of years ago by cooling basalt magma. Sea erosion has created many unusual gullies and crevices that have taken the imagination of Penghu residents and tourists. Not far is **Fengkuei Cave** (Fēngguì Dòng; Map p307), on Penghu's south shore, a sea-eroded gully that reportedly makes a peculiar sound when the wind rushes through it during high tide.

The green expanse of pines in **Lintou Park** (Lǐntóu Gōngyuán; Map p307; NT30) is a rare sight in dry, windswept Penghu. The one-hectare forest borders a white-sand beach, a superb spot for a picnic. **Aimen Beach** (Àimén Shātān; Map p307) is a favourite among locals for all kinds of water sports and beach activities. It's possi-

ble to camp out here, though in summer it can be quite crowded. Both of these are around 20 minutes by scooter from Makung.

The western coast of Hsiyu is quite dramatic, full of steep cliffs and gullies. **Whale Cave** (Jīngyú Dòng; Map p307) is a hole in a rock that kinda-sorta looks like a whale; locals say the hole was created by a gigantic whale crashing into the rock, but we kinda-sorta doubt that. Checking it out gives you a fine excuse to ride over the Trans-Ocean Bridge, of which Penghu folks are quite proud.

## MUSEUMS & AQUARIUMS

The **Penghu Aquarium** (Pēnghú Shuǐzú Guǎn; 58 Chitou Village; admission NT200; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Wed & Fri-Sun) is on Paisha island and is one of the best little aquariums in Taiwan. The two-storey marine exhibition centre provides information on all the aquatic creatures swimming around Penghu. Kids and adults alike will have a great time communing with the sea turtles. The highlight of the aquarium is the 14m glass tunnel, allowing visitors and fish to meet eye-to-eye. There's also a petting tank where the little ones can touch starfish on the second floor.

On the northern tip of Hsiyu island is the **Hsiao-men Geology Museum** (Xiǎomén Dìzhī Bówùguǎn; 11-12 Xiaomen Village; admission NT20; ☎ 8am-5pm), with exhibits explaining the natural history of the Penghu Archipelago.

## OUTER ISLANDS

The two largest of Penghu's outer islands are Chimei and Wang'an. Both are south of the main island and have boat and air service to Makung. Third largest is Chipei, north of Paisha, which has some great beaches.

### Wang'an 望安鄉

About 30 minutes by boat from Makung harbour, Wang'an (Wàng'ān) is a must visit for those interested in aquatic wildlife. It's home to the **Green Mossback Turtle Sightseeing and Preservation Centre** (Lǜ Xīwú Guānguāng Bǎo Yù Zhōngxīn; Map p307; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), one of the few wild-turtle reserves in Taiwan. Inside are bilingual exhibits about the state of sea turtles in Taiwan and around the world. There's also information on wildlife preservation efforts in the Strait Islands and in Taiwan proper.

The **Chungshe Old Dwellings** (Zhōngshè Gǔ Cuò; Map p307) are a group of abandoned but

## LOCAL VOICES: THE ORIGINAL FLAVOUR OF PENGHU *Jessica Du*

When people ask me about the island of Penghu – where I was brought up – I usually say that Penghu is to Taiwan what Hawaii is to the USA. This group of small islands is tranquil and simple. It is my home. After travelling around for a few years, I decided to come back to teach. There is a Taiwanese saying that goes, 'Always pray to the trees when you eat fruit; and always think of the origin when you drink spring water.' By returning to the place where I grew up, I feel that I am returning to my origins, to my source.

Growing up in Penghu gave me both an enthusiastic nature and a strong sense of contentment, characteristics common to Penghu people. Though many young people are leaving Penghu to make their fortunes in the Taiwanese mainland, I feel that I should return to give something back to the islands of my birth.

As a teacher, I will bring what I have learnt, what I have seen and what I know back to the next generation. I will tell them we should be proud of being 'Penghu Ren', which means Penghu people, and that we should keep our 'original flavour' no matter where we find ourselves in life.

well-preserved houses in Chungshe Village (Zhōngshè Cūn). The highest point on the island is Tientai Mountain (Tiāntái Shān), actually a grassy hill with some cows. The footprint of Li Tungbin, one of China's Eight Immortals, is impressed on a rock here; his other footprint is on one of the smaller of Penghu's Islands.

### Chimei 七美鄉

Chimei (Qīmèi) is located south of Wang'an; its name means 'Seven Beauties' and refers to a legend (a somewhat common one in Chinese culture) involving seven women who, in the Ming dynasty, threw themselves into a well rather than lose their chastity to Japanese pirates. After the well was turned into a tomb, seven trees sprung up to surround it, and the resulting **Tomb of the Seven Virtuous Beauties** (Qīmèi Rén Zhōng; Map p307; adult/child NT30/15) is a well-visited spot on Chimei Island. Another pretty Chimei spot quickly becoming a Penghu icon is the **Two Hearts Stone Weir** (Shuāng Xīn Shí Hù; Map p307), a heart-shaped ring of stones designed to catch fish during low tide.

There are several seafood restaurants by Nanhu harbour as well as a couple of small inns and homestays. We recommend the **Fupeng Inn** (Fúpéng Lǚshè; Map p307; ☎ 997 1043; 10 Nankang Village; r NT700-1200), a small and homey inn run by the Gong family. Though they speak no English, they'll come down to the harbour to get you if you can have someone communicate for you.

If you're carrying your own camping gear, there are some fine, flat expanses of grassland with great ocean views for camping out.

Try the **Yuyue Yuli Harbour Camping Area** (Yúyuè Yúlǐgǎng Lùyíngqū; Map p307).

### Chipei 吉貝

With its lovely sand-shell beaches, Chipei (Jībèi), north of Paisha, buzzes with tourists in summer but shuts down almost completely in winter.

**Chipei Sand Beach** (Jībèi Shātān; Map p307) is the most popular beach on the island. This long strip of golden sand juts out into the water, its size changing with the coming and going of the tides. During summer, windsurfing, boating and even parasailing are popular activities here. Equipment is available for rent at the beach resort or in the small shops around the beach. During winter, you'll have the whole place to yourself. You can stay right on the beach at the **Chipei Sea Paradise Resort** (Jībèi Hǎishàng Lèyuán; Map p307; ☎ 991 1311; 187 Chipei Village; cabins from NT1500), which rents out small beachfront shacks whose great location more than makes up for their spartan nature. The beach is popular with speedboaters and sailors, and a wide variety of water toys are for rent. Chipei Village also has an assortment of homestays and small hotels.

## Getting There & Away

**Mandarin Airlines** (Kaohsiung ☎ 07 802 6868; Makung ☎ 921 6966) has flights between Kaohsiung and Chimei (35 minutes) and Chimei and Makung (15 minutes); flight prices vary, but are under NT1000 each way.

Boats to Chimei and Wang'an leave from the **South Seas Tourist Service Centre** (Nánhǎi Yóukè Fúwù Zhōngxīn; Map pp308-9-00; ☎ 926 4738; Makung



Harbour Third Fishing Dock; ☎ 8am-5pm) in Makung. In the high season you can often find boats that go to both before returning in the evening, often stopping on Tongan (Tōngpán) and Huching (Hūjǐng), two of the smaller islands on the way. A full-day trip that hits four islands with one- and two-hour stops at Wang'an and Chimei (and brief stops at the other two) costs around NT500, as posted on the operators. Schedules are posted in the tourist service centre.

Boats leave for Chipei from the **North Sea Tourist Service Centre** (Běi Hǎi Yóukè Fúwù Zhōngxīn; Map p307) in Chihkan, in northeast Paisha, daily. Schedules vary, and some boats will go to Chipei as part of an overall tour to many of the smaller islands north of Paisha.

### Getting Around

Rental scooters are available in Chimei, Wang'an and Chipei for NT400 to NT500 a day. Walking is another possibility, if you have the time and energy.

## LANYU 蘭嶼

☎ 089 / pop 3000

The Yami people call their island home 'Pongso No Tao' or 'Island of the People' in their native tongue. The Taiwanese call it Lanyu (Lányǔ, Orchid Island), naming it after the flowers that have almost been picked to near extinction. A volcanic, mountainous island covered with a carpet of tropical rainforest, Lanyu lies about 65km southeast of the city of Taitung, making it the southernmost outpost of the Republic of China.

Lanyu's status as a far-flung outpost isn't merely geographical, but cultural as well, as the island is by far the least Chinese part of the Republic of China. The Yami people are of Australasian descent, speak their own distinct language and have a culture well removed from that of the people 'on the mainland' (as they sometime refer to the Taiwanese).

Coral reefs, perhaps the least spoiled in Taiwan, surround the rocky coastline, and at first glance the island appears a tropical paradise. In many ways it is. But to its inhabitants, the island is a sacred land, one mistreated for decades by a larger colonising neighbour and there are certain frictions between natives and outsiders. The opening of

the island to tourism in the 1960s, coupled with controversial government policies, have forced the Yami to struggle particularly to retain their culture in the face of increasing outside influence. The Yami are well aware that most Taiwanese visitors view them as an oddity, so Western visitors to Lanyu should tread especially lightly.

### HISTORY

For centuries the Yami were the only tribal group on their island and it wasn't until the 20th century that their way of life began to be seriously disturbed by outsiders.

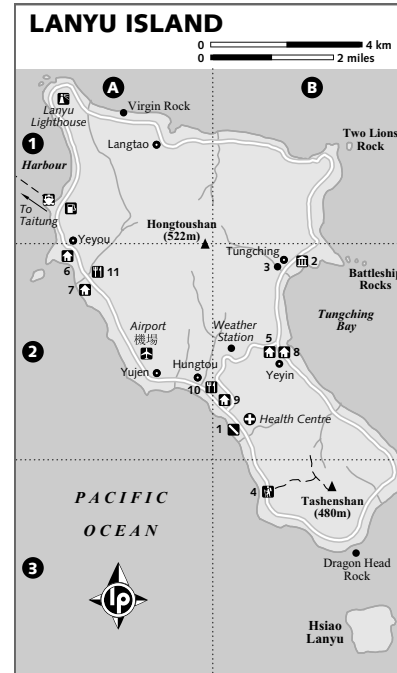
During the Japanese occupation, the Japanese were fascinated by the local customs of the Yami and did little to interfere with their way of life. Things changed drastically after the KMT came to power and attempted to introduce Chinese language and culture to the Yami. Boatloads of mainland Chinese were shipped to the island in the hope that interracial marriages would Sinicise the Yami population. The Yami resisted this encroachment and years of fighting with the mainlanders ensued. In the late 1960s the government ordered that the traditional underground homes of the Yami be torn down and new cement structures built in their place. The houses were poorly made and couldn't hold up to the typhoons that whip through the island every year. At about the same time the housing law was passed, the island was opened to tourism and Taiwanese tourists began to arrive in droves. Christian missionaries also arrived, converting a large percentage of the population who are, to this day, primarily Christian.

Hardly based on mutual respect, the relationship between the Taiwanese government and the Yami took a turn for the worse when the government decided that the island would be a good place to dump nuclear waste. Long Men (Dragon Gate), at the southern tip of the island, was selected as a temporary storage facility for mid- and low-level nuclear waste. The site, which government representatives told locals was 'a fish cannery', became depository for up to 100,000 barrels of nuclear waste in 1982. When islanders discovered the truth from Taiwanese news reports they raised a furious outcry, protesting both on Lanyu and in front of the various government buildings in Taipei. Despite government promises that the dump would be removed, the barrels remain and there is evidence that approximately 20%

of the original barrels are beginning to leak and the concrete trenches they are buried in are cracking. Soil samples from the south end of the island show higher than normal levels of radioactivity and the possibility of health problems resulting from long-term contamination is of great concern to Yami people.

The Yami are doing their best to preserve their culture in the face of various social issues not uncommon in aboriginal communities. Alcoholism is a problem on the island, as is the overall brain drain caused by so many young people leaving to find greater economic prosperity in Taiwan. Even so, Yami traditions on Lanyu remain alive and one of the benefits that tourism has brought to the island has been to encourage the younger generation to learn more about their heritage before heading off to Taiwan to seek their fortunes. Visitors to Lanyu are generally made to feel welcome as long as they behave respectfully. Ask people before taking their photograph and don't wander into anyone's home or garden without getting permission first.

And no matter how cute they are, don't pick up the baby goats.



### ORIENTATION

Lanyu Island is made up of two steep, jungle-covered mountains surrounded by a thin strip of coastal land. The 45km road circling both mountains can be driven in about 90 minutes, and a shorter, twisting road winds between both mountains from just south of the town of Hungtou on the west coast to the village of Yeyin on the east. This road also branches off to reach the weather observation centre at the top of Hongtoushan (Red Head Mountain). There are six villages located on the narrow flat strip of land wedged between the mountains and the sea, and the island's only petrol station is just north of the town of Yeyou.

### INFORMATION

Summer is high season on Lanyu, and plane tickets are hard to get and accommodations scarce and more expensive. After mid-September, however, Taiwanese visitors are few and far between (especially during the week), despite the fact that the weather still leans towards the idyllic end of the scale. Consider visiting Lanyu between mid-September and mid-November, as long as there are no typhoons on the horizon.

There are no international ATMs on Lanyu, though the one in the post office accepts Taiwanese cards. Since high winds and rough weather (common around these parts, especially during low season) cancels flights and boats, coming prepared with money for a few unplanned days is a wise idea.

**Teresa** (☎ 0937 608 814; tbunnyteresa@yahoo.com) is one of the few people on Lanyu fully fluent in English. Though employed as a nurse at the island's health clinic, Teresa also acts as a guide for those interested in Yami culture, as well as an interpreter for Westerners

#### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Badaiwan Diving 八代灣潛水	1	B2
Si Kang Chai Art Studio 市岡菜	2	B2
Three Sisters 三姐妹	3	B2
Tienchi Trailhead	4	B3

#### SLEEPING

Enhui Mingsu Zijia 恩惠民宿之家	5	B2
Hai Yang Kuo Chi Hotel 海洋國際飯店	6	A2
Lansya Mingsu 藍翔民宿	7	A2
Lanyu Guesthouse 嵐羽風味屋	8	B2
Lanyu Hotel 蘭嶼別館	9	B2

#### EATING

Breakfast 早餐	10	A2
Kai Yuan Restaurant 開元海鮮快炒餐廳	11	A2

looking for hotels, homestays or activities on Lanyu. Rates for her guide service are quite reasonable, but she asks that visitors contact her in advance. Teresa is keen on promoting both responsible travel and the culture of her people and will generally know the dates of various village's Flying Fish Festivals.

## SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

### Rock Formations

Visiting Lanyu is an otherworldly experience indeed and one of the features that gives Lanyu a vaguely Lovecraftian vibe is the twisted, jagged volcanic rocks jutting dramatically out of the ground and out to sea off the coast. Naturally, some of these strange geological formations have been named. Taiwanese tourists like to pose before formations with imaginative monikers such as **Dragon Head Rock** (Lóngtóu Yán) and **Two Lions Rock**. On the north coast of the island one rock has been dubbed **Virgin Rock** (Yùnnǚ Yán); this is likely because the elliptical rock is hollow, save for a stalactite-like formation in the middle that gives the whole affair an appearance reminiscent of...well, you get the picture. Come see for yourself. In any event, the rocks' monikers have been assigned by the Taiwanese and not the Yami themselves (who generally find the names somewhat silly).

### Hiking

The narrow island road winding past craggy cliffs, waterfalls, deep caves and the occasional village is really the only part of Lanyu level enough to be settled. This leaves the interior open for some magnificent hiking. One of the best hikes on Lanyu leads up to **Tienchi** (Tiānchǐ; Map p317), or Heaven Lake, a pond formed inside of a volcanic crater on the top of Tasenshan (Tashen Mountain). The hike to the lake and back is fairly easy, though one section requires hikers to navigate their way through a large, rocky ravine. The trailhead begins inauspiciously enough, across from the island's landfill, but you'll soon find yourself climbing into higher jungle elevations with beautiful views and amazing opportunities for both bird and butterfly watching. Allow three to four hours to do the round-trip hike.

### Diving & Snorkelling

Because of heavy currents and an overall dearth of sandy beaches, Lanyu's shores

are best suited for strong swimmers or the suicidally inclined. Snorkelling, however, is another matter and Lanyu offers some of Taiwan's most unspoiled coral reefs. **Badaiwan Diving** (Bādàiwān Qiānshuǐ; Map p317; ☎ 0921 729 313; 126 Hungtou Village) is run by a Lanyu native called Shaman, who charges NT400 for a half-day's snorkelling (including equipment and guide). Shaman is also a qualified diving guide but currently lacks rental equipment. His wife Teresa is a local guide, speaks excellent English, and will translate for him.

### Traditional Crafts

Yami craftsmanship is quite unique. One of the most important cultural traditions is the building of elaborately carved wooden canoes, made from 27 individual pieces of wood, ingeniously held together without nails. However, buying such a canoe is unfeasible unless you intend to row it home (not advisable). However, the **Si Kang Chai Art Studio** (Shì Gāng Cǎi; Map p317; 38 Tungching Village) has an eclectic assortment of more portable sculptures and paintings on display. Close by is **Three Sisters** (Sān Jiě Mèi; Map p317; 23 Tungching Village), which sells woven bracelets, woodcarvings and paintings.

### Festivals

The Flying Fish Festival is a traditional coming-of-age ceremony for young men whose societal standing was based on how many fish they could catch. The spring festival is a very localised affair and each of the villages holds theirs on a different day chosen by the elders of the village. During the festival, the men of the village wear traditional Yami loincloths, silver helmets and breastplates, and smear the blood of a freshly killed chicken on the rocks by the sea, all the while chanting 'return flying fish' in unison before heading out to sea in their canoes. According to custom, women are not allowed to view the festival, but most villages will make exceptions for visitors.

## SLEEPING

### Hotels

The few large hotels on Lanyu are concrete-block buildings run by Taiwanese and are generally cosy but nothing to write home about. Rooms are mostly doubles and rates vary by season.

**Lanyu Hotel** (Lányú Biéguǎn; Map p317; ☎ 342 226; d NT1200-1800) Popular with Taiwanese tourist

groups, the Lanyu Hotel has reasonably clean double rooms, some with ocean views. During the high season this place fills up quickly, so advance booking is a good idea.

**Hai Yung Kuo Chi Hotel** (Hǎiyúng Guójī Fāndiàn; Map p317; ☎ 732 166; d/tw NT1620/1800) This Lanyu stalwart is within walking distance of the harbour and in the centre of the action in Yeyou village (for what that's worth). Rooms are a bit musty, but some have ocean views.

### Homestays

Travellers looking for a more interesting, not to mention easier on the budget, experience should consider a homestay. Though the families running the homestays have limited to zero English ability, they're generally pleased by Western guests. Note that most homestays charge by person, not by room, and that charges are higher during the high season.

**Enhui Mingsu Zijia** (Ēnhuì Mínsù Zhìjiā; Map p317; ☎ 732 979; per person incl dinner NT300/400) Staying in the home of husband-and-wife team Li Ge and Li Sao is a great way to get to know both Lanyu and the Yami. Their home, located on a hill in Yeyin on the east side of the island, is spotless and has four doubles and a large dorm on the upper floor. Li Ge is an excellent guide, highly knowledgeable about both culture and botany, and Li Sao is a fine cook. For an extra NT100 per person, she'll cook up a suppertime feast of fish, pork and traditional Yami vegetables.

**Lansya Mingsu** (Lánxiáng Mínsù; Map p317; ☎ 732 236; per person NT500) This homestay, run by the Fu family of Yeyou, is clean, comfortable and convenient to both the airport and harbour. The Fuses have both doubles and dorms. They also have a small gift shop where they sell arts and craft items.

**Lanyu Guesthouse** (Lányú Fēngwèiwū; Map p317; ☎ 732 891; per person from NT400) This guesthouse is run by a hip young Yami who digs Western rock music and speaks basic English. The guestroom is one large room and beds are priced dependent on group size. It's NT400 per person if you've got a group of three or more and NT600 per person with two or less. The room can fit eight, so naturally the place is popular with students.

### EATING

The Yami diet consists primarily of fish and locally grown vegetables with a bit of pork and mutton (goats wander freely all over the is-

land) on special occasions. Given a few hours' notice most homestay owners are happy to cook up a feast for their visitors. The east side of the island lacks restaurants but there's an open-air market on the weekends in Tungching and a couple of grocery stores in Yeyin. The island's few restaurants are centred in Hongtou and Yeyou.

**Kai Yuan Restaurant** (Kāi Yuán; Map p317; 16 Yeyou village; dishes NT60-NT120; ☎ lunch & dinner) This is a decent little noodle shop with a good selection of seafood, meat and vegetable dishes. They'll also cook up meat-free dishes for vegetarians.

**Breakfast** (Zǎocān; Map p317; 9 Renai jie, Hungtou village; dishes NT25-NT50; ☎ breakfast) The name says it all, and the open doors of Breakfast will be a welcome sight for those getting an early start on the day and looking for a filling Taiwanese breakfast. Expect homemade soymilk and instant coffee from 6.30am.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Daily Air Corporation** (☎ 362 489) has a counter in the Lanyu and Taitung airports, and flies six planes daily between the two places. The flight costs NT1405 each way and takes 20 hair-rising minutes. During summer, the 19-seat planes fill up quickly so you'll want to book both ways as far ahead as possible. In the winter months, flights in and out of Lanyu are erratic due to the volatile weather. Should the weather turn rough during your stay, you'll be stuck on Lanyu, so carry enough cash and clean clothes with you to wait out the storm.

### Boat

Taking a boat to and from Lanyu is a distinct option, as several boat companies operate small vessels from Fukang harbour, outside of Taitung, to Lanyu. We've also heard that one company plans to begin service to Lanyu from Kenting soon, though as of writing schedules and prices haven't been made available. Our experience with trying to boat it to Lanyu has been a bit sketchy; schedules are dependent both on weather and the number of passengers, making booking further than a day in advance an iffy proposition (especially in the low season). We hear the three-hour trip can be quite an ordeal, even for the strongest of stomachs, which is probably the main reason that visitors and locals alike prefer to take the more expensive

but infinitely more comfortable plane ride. If you're still set on taking the boat, verify with a travel agency in Taitung or at the harbour what boats are running and when. And bring those motion-sickness pills!

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Hotels will provide transport to and from the airport if they're notified in advance, as will most of the homestays. If a ride isn't available, it's about a 20-minute walk to Hung-tou village, twice that to Yeyou. There are also a few taxis on the island; most of these hang out at the airport when planes come in and will take you anywhere on the island for around NT250.

## Bus

A bus circles the island four times a day, stopping at various points. Locals just flag the bus down, so you should too. Due to its relative infrequency, the bus really isn't an ideal way of getting around the island unless you're absolutely committed to going with the flow completely. If you've got anything even vaguely resembling a schedule, you're better off renting a scooter. Hitch-hiking is also an option.

## Car & Motorcycle

There's a vehicle rental shop next to the Lanyu Hotel. Motorcycles cost NT500 a day and cars NT1500 a day, excluding petrol. In winter, renting a car might be safer and more comfortable than a motorcycle because of the slippery road conditions.

## Walking

If you have the time, walking is a fine way to see Lanyu and its people. As long as you stick to the main road (which, except for the road that cuts across the mountain, is also the

only road) you shouldn't get lost. Don't be surprised if locals stop you for a chat and offer you betel nut. The six villages of Lanyu aren't exactly evenly spaced, so don't forget to bring along water and snacks. Waterproof gear and a walking stick would be handy.

# GREEN ISLAND 綠島

☎ 089 / pop 3000

Beautiful and lush, boasting good beaches and one of only three seawater hot springs in the world, Green Island (Lǚdǎo) is a popular resort destination for Taiwanese looking for rest and recreation. But in the not too distant past, the phrase 'off to Green Island' didn't conjure up visions of leisure pursuits in the Taiwanese psyche; quite the opposite, in fact, for once upon a time the very name of this tiny volcanic island, 30km east of Taitung, was synonymous with repression. It was where, under martial law, political opponents of the regime were sent to languish at the island's notorious prison camp, sardonically referred to as 'Green Island Lodge'.

Today, the prison's metal doors have been flung open and this once potent place of repression has been transformed into a museum and human-rights memorial. To a new generation of Taiwanese the island is thought of not primarily for its infamous past, but as a place to come to see pristine coral reefs and gorgeous tropical fish through glass-bottom boats and hang out on the beach and soak in the hot spring under the night sky.

## ORIENTATION

Smaller than Lanyu, Green Island is ringed by a 17km road that you can get around on a scooter in 30 minutes. With one main road hugging the shore and another leading

up to Huoshao Mountain (great for hiking), getting lost is pretty difficult. Though you could spend a three-day weekend here easily, plenty of visitors fly to Green Island for a day of swimming and exploring and fly back to Taitung in the evening (a shame in our opinion, as the hot springs are best experienced under the stars).

## INFORMATION

**Green Island Tourist Information Centre** (Lǚdǎo Yóukè Zhōngxīn; ☎ 672 027; 298 Nanliao Village; ☎ 8am-5pm) Near the airport, the centre can help with maps and information about the island. Staff can also arrange diving trips and make reservations for the camp site in the south of the island. During summer there are daily multimedia presentations about the island.

## SIGHTS

Standing forlorn on a windswept coast, its back to a sheer cliff, sits the notorious **Green Island Lodge** (Lǚdǎo Shānzhuāng, Oasis Village; Map p322). It's now empty except for one wing which has been turned into a Human Rights Memorial Hall (Rén Chuán Jìniàn Yuán Qū) to document both life in the prison and during Taiwan's 'White Terror' period. It was during this period when dissidents, activists and others considered 'hooligans' by the Kuomintang (KMT) were sent here to languish. Visitors are welcome to walk around the halls of the prison itself, now open to the public, and inspect the cells where former prisoners like current vice president Annette Lu and Taiwanese writer Bo Yang (author of *The Ugly Chinaman*) once spent years. It's a sombre place, of course, so visit here first and devote the rest of the trip to more cheerful pursuits.

The 33m-high **Green Island Lighthouse** (Lǚdǎo Dēngtǎ; Map p322) stands in the northwestern corner of the island. It was built in 1937 under the Japanese after the American ship *President Hoover* struck a reef off the coast of Green Island and sunk. The KMT refurbished the lighthouse and changed the original gas lantern to an electric light.

Further down the coast is the **Kuanyin Cave** (Guānyīn Dòng; Map p322), an underground cavern with a stalagmite in a red cape. Locals have draped a red blanket around the rock as a sign of respect. Legend has it that during the Qing dynasty, a fisherman became lost at sea and a fiery red light came down from the sky and led him to safety in the cave. The

fisherman believed the light to be the goddess Kuanyin and the stalagmite in the cape to resemble the form of the goddess. The cave was designated a sacred spot on the island and people come here from all over Taiwan to pay their respects.

Close to Kuanyin Cave is the **Yutzu Lake Ancient Dwellings** (Yòuzǐ Hú). This was the site of the first village on the island and some old stone houses still remain. Nearby is a sea-eroded cave that is worth a look.

Green Island has some intriguing volcanic-rock formations scattered around the coast, leading some Taiwanese to give the rocks curious names. The **Sleeping Beauty Rock** (Shuì Měi Rén), off the east coast of the island, is supposed to resemble the figure of a sleeping woman. You may need to use your imagination for this one. Near Sleeping Beauty is the **Hsiao Changcheng** (Xiǎo Chángchéng; Map p322), a rock that some believe resembles the Great Wall in China (only not quite so great).

**Pahsien** (Bā Xiān Dòng; Map p322) and **Lunghsia Caves** (Lóngxiā Dòng; Map p322), both offer great exploration opportunities.

## ACTIVITIES Hot Springs

History and strange rock formations aside, what brings people to Green Island is the sea; not just in the form of beaches, but also the **Chaojih Hot Springs** (Zhāorì Wēnquán; Map p322; admission NT150; ☎ 5am-11pm). One of only three of the planet's known sea-water hot springs, we think these hot springs are best visited during the low season. In the summer, the unshaded hot baths are a bit too intense during the day, and at night they're always crowded. Under an evening sky in autumn or winter, a soak in the hot pools followed by a quick dip in the sea is positively blissful. There are two sets of pools to choose from, the older circular stone hot-spring pits down by the beach and the modern tile pools in the better-lit part of the complex. The latter set features pools of varying temperatures, from just above freezing to just below scalding, artfully shaped artificial privacy grottos and a good number of massage showers (overhead pipes jetting down spring water at jackhammer frequencies).

## Hiking

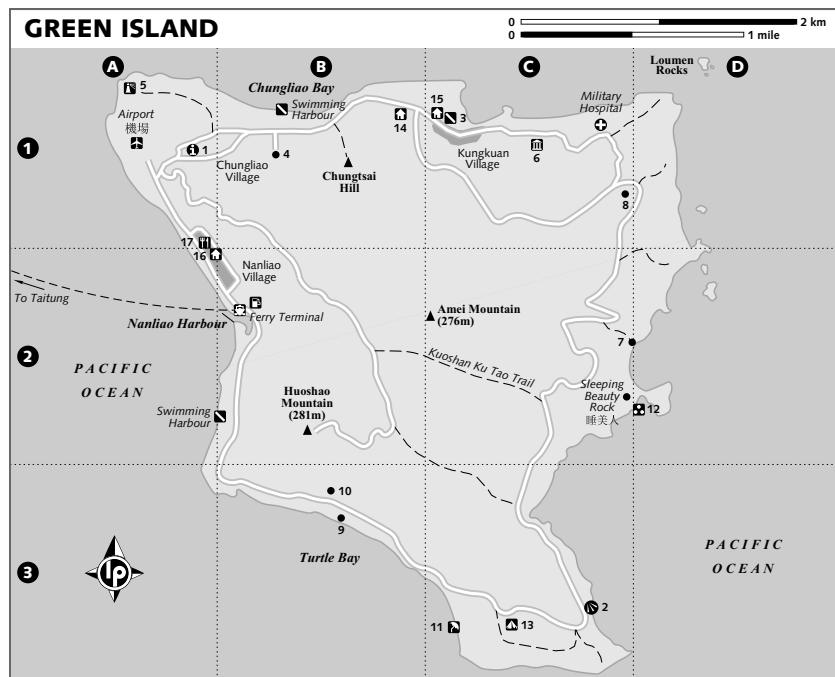
Huoshao Mountain (Huōshāoshān), translated as 'fire mountain' and actually an extinct

### GREEN ISLAND TRAVEL QUOTA

So popular has Green Island become as a travel destination that a quota system is currently being established for the high season that will keep daily visitors at an environmentally sustainable level. As of this writing the number had yet to be set, but locals in the tourist business suggest it will be around 3500 to 4000 per day. What this means for the independent traveller is the possibility of being turned away at the dock or airport if the daily quota has already been filled.

For this reason, we recommend making reservations well in advance during the high season (summer, Lunar New Year and most three-day weekends), either with one of the hotels or with **Green Island Adventures** (☎ 0972 065 479; www.greenislandadventures.com). There is also talk of turning Green Island into a national park, which would further limit development on the island.





volcano, stands a towering 281m. Hiking trails go around the mountain, but you can't get to the summit (there's a military post there). The Kuoshan Ku Tao (Guòshān Gǔ Dào) trail, is another lovely and secluded hiking path, stretching 1.8km from behind Nanyiao Village to the east coast of the island.

### Diving & snorkelling

One of the main reasons people come to Green Island is to take advantage of the island's excellent coral reefs, some of Taiwan's most well preserved. Tourist authorities report that Green Island has over 176 types of coral and over 602 types of fish swimming around the coast. The waters surrounding the island are filled with tropical fish, possibly thanks to nutrients deposited in the water by the hot spring on the southern tip, and the government has gone to considerable lengths to protect the remaining reefs. Green Island is also popular with divers, who come from all over Asia and beyond to dive. In 2005 the island hosted Taiwan's first ever underwater wedding ceremony, with vows written out on waterproof cards!

Most hotels on the island arranges snorkelling and diving trips. Equipment can be rented at shops in Nanyiao Village and around the harbour. Rates depend on how many people you have in your group and the type of equipment you'll need to rent.

**Tapaisa Beach** (Dàbáishā; Map p322) has fine white coral sand and is known for its stunning coral reefs, making it a good spot for snorkelling as is the small stretch of beach east of the Green Island Lighthouse.

One reputable place is the **Chufu Diving Centre** (Jūfú Qiǎnshuǐ; Map p322; ☎ 672 238; 78-3 Kungkuan Village). Run by diving enthusiast Mr Tsai, the centre offers diving and snorkelling tours, equipment rental, and summer trips aboard a glass-bottomed boat (NT350). The boat is a particularly good way to see the coral reefs and marine life within without leaving an ecological footprint. Hire boats depart from Nanyiao harbour.

### TOURS

For trips to and around Green Island, **Green Island Adventures** (GIA; ☎ 0972 065 479; www.greenislandadventures.com) comes highly recommended.

### INFORMATION

Green Island Tourist Information Centre  
綠島游客中心.....1 A1

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Chaojih Hot Springs 朝日溫泉.....2 C3  
Chufu Diving Centre 居福潛水.....3 C1  
Green Island Correctional Facility 綠島監獄.....4 B1  
Green Island Lighthouse 綠島山莊.....5 A1  
Green Island Lodge 綠島山莊.....6 C1  
Hsiao Changcheng 小長城.....7 C2  
Human Rights Memorial Monument  
人島權紀念園區.....(see 6)  
Kuanyn Cave 觀音洞.....8 C1  
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Pahsien Cave 八仙洞.....10 B3  
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### SLEEPING

Camping Ground 露營區.....13 C3  
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Lijing Hostel 麗景山莊.....15 C1  
Par Far Hotel 雙發平價.....16 A2

### EATING

Chi Tang You Yu 池塘有魚.....17 A1

Though the company's tour-guide brief has expanded to include Taiwan's outer islands and central Taiwan, Green Island is where they cut their teeth (professionally speaking). GIA founder Eddie Viljoen arranges year-round transport to the island, accommodations, and tailor-built tour packages including snorkelling, scuba diving, hiking, and of course, hot springing. He can also arrange the use of a glass-bottom-boat for tours around the island's fabulous coral reefs.

### SLEEPING

There are accommodations all over Green Island, mostly in Nanyiao Village close to the harbour, but other places are scattered around the island. Green Island is a popular place in summer for Taiwanese tourists, which

means that most hotels will be booked solid on weekends. With the new quota system looming, it seems that the days of just showing up at the dock will be a thing of the past, at least in the high season. During the low season (or even weekdays in summer), you'll likely be met by people at the boat offering to bring you to their hotels and guesthouses. In the low season, most hotels offer discounted prices, though this may change as Green Island becomes more difficult to visit.

**Lijing Hostel** (Lijing Shānzhuāng; Map p322; ☎ 672 000; Kungkuan Village; dm NT500, d/tr NT2500/4500) A friendly place run by local Mrs Tien, the Lijing offers dorm accommodations, doubles and triples. Mrs. Tien can also arrange motorcycle rentals.

**Par Far Hotel** (Shuāng Fā Píngjiǎ; Map p322; ☎ 672 552; Nanyiao Village; r NT1200) The Par Far is a true bargain and highly recommended. Rooms are immaculate and very spacious. Hoteliers Mr and Mrs Wong are nice folk and during the off season are willing to negotiate room prices.

**Green Island Star Hotel** (Lùdǎo Zìxīng Lǚguǎn; Map p322; ☎ 671 355; d NT2800) One of the newer and pricier hotels on the island, this tall yellow building seems a bit out of place on otherwise low-slung Green Island. But rooms are comfortable, and during the off season discounts of up to 40% can be negotiated.

**Camping Ground** (Lùyíng Qū; Map p322; camping on grass NT300, on wooden platform NT350) This camping site is in the south of the island near Tapaisa Beach. The tourist information centre takes all reservations for the camp sites and rents out equipment. We've heard that rental equipment can be a bit shoddy, and as the campsite is popular with mosquitos, we recommend those intent on roughing it at least bring their own gear. And bug repellent.

### THE GREEN ISLAND VOMIT BARGE *Joshua Samuel Brown*

Green Island is among Taiwan's loveliest offerings, and as a traveller and writer I recommend a visit highly. However, a word on the boat: I am an islander, of sorts (Staten Island, New York, where the ferry to and from Manhattan, though hardly a strenuous voyage, was a daily routine for a decade). I've travelled extensively by ship and ferry around Taiwan, by riverboat through China's Pearl River Delta and Southeast Asia, and by a host of seagoing vessels large and small around Maritime Canada and in the Pacific Northwest.

Only twice in my extensive travels have I found myself, face pressed against a rolling floor, stinking of my own vomit, begging for the sweet, sweet release of death.

The first time was on the boat to Green Island while researching the chapter you're currently reading. The second was on the boat back. Consider yourselves warned.

**EATING**

Nanliao Village has quite a few seafood restaurants. Local dishes include *hǎi xiāngū* (sea mushrooms) and *suàn xiāng zhāngyú* (garlic octopus).

**Chi Tang You Yu** (Chi Táng Yǒu Yú; Map p322; 150 Nanliao Village; dishes NT100; ☎ lunch & dinner) A congenial atmosphere and wonderful outdoor patio makes this a great place to have a beer and relax after a long day of diving. The garlic octopus is especially delectable.

**GETTING THERE & AWAY****Air**

**Mandarin Airlines** (☎ 672 585) has three flights a day between Taitung and Green Island (NT1028, 15 minutes) on small 19-seat propeller planes. During winter, flights are often cancelled due to bad weather. In summer it's hard to get on a flight unless you've booked your seat several weeks ahead. Mandarin Airlines has a reservation counter in the Green Island airport.

**Boat**

During summer, boats travel frequently between Taitung and Green Island (one-way/return NT420/800, 50 minutes). Boats also travel from Fukang harbour, north of Taitung, to Green Island. The boat schedule fluctuates so check with a travel agency or at one of the harbours for the exact times of departure. You can buy your ticket as you board the boat, but once the quota system comes into play we recommend that you book in advance.

During winter, boats run infrequently, if at all, due to choppy water. If you dare to take a boat during winter, prepare your stomach in advance and brace yourself for a very rough ride. Definitely not for the faint of heart.

**GETTING AROUND****Bus**

There is a bus that circuits the island several times daily; things are pretty casual on Green Island, so you can just flag it down. The fare is NT15 for the circuit, but schedules do not appear to be consistent so you may be better off taking a taxi if you're in a hurry (or walking if you're not).

**Scooter**

Scooters are the best way to get around Green Island; just remember that wandering cattle always have right of way. You'll find plenty of people willing to rent you a vehicle at the harbour and the airport. Rates are generally NT400 to NT500 a day, excluding petrol.

**Taxi**

Taking a taxi around the island costs around NT600 for a quick trip, more if you want to stop and do some exploring. Negotiate fares in advance.

**Walking**

Walking around the island is a totally viable option, but bring plenty of water (and sunscreen); outside of the towns there are few stores.

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