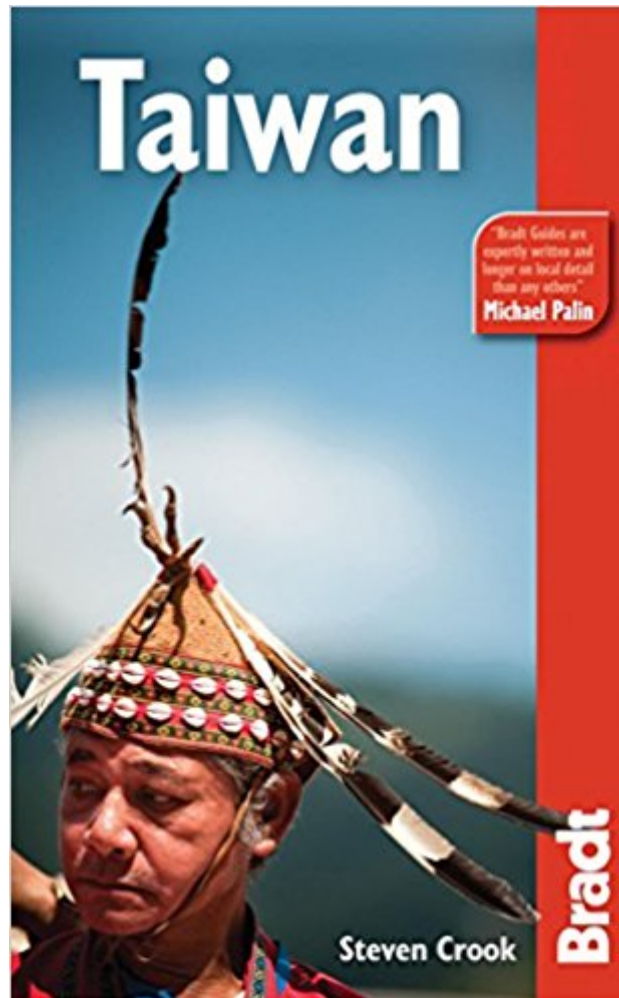




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Taiwan: The Bradt Travel Guide



Synopsis

From sword-wielding shamans to unique birds – an in-depth guide to Taiwan’s human and natural attractions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

‘[Bradt travel guides are] attractive and clearly targeted books, combining professionalism and focus while keeping a personal flavour.’ The Sunday Times ‘Recommended reading’ Wanderlust

Chinese-speaker Steven Crook has lived in Taiwan since 1991, and has been writing about the island’s travel destinations since 1996. He is the author of several books on life in Taiwan.

I bought this book before I swore off ever buying another travel guide (a separate issue to be sure), and I have enjoyed it thoroughly. It does a great job of displaying the transliterated place names which in Taiwan are not in pinyin. The pictures are gorgeous and the information is truly useful. The mark of a good travel guide is that it should inspire you to want to make your vacation much longer and make you want to see way more than you could actually get to, which this book definitely does. As for Taiwan, I liked it so much that I almost moved there, so five stars for Taiwan too.

Here is another interesting travel guide from Bradt in a format I find enjoyable- that is to say, covering all essential information while also delving into things of deeper interest. It manages to be

informative without being overcrowded, with brief lists of accommodations and dining for all budgets, and also giving the wider background to each location. Coverage of travel options, history, maps and food is good. My only gripe is that the authors' interest in environmental matters and nature seems quite limited and second-hand- at least compared to other Bradt guides.

My first time with Bradt. Despite an endorsement from Michael Palin, I find it to be inferior. To be fair, however, I must admit that my journey to Taiwan is a month off, and the ultimate test has therefore not occurred. I cannot find a map of the Taipei metro, a huge deficiency. The maps in general are not promising. And I note that the listings of lodgings are on the skimpy side. UPDATE ! Presently in Taipei, and luckily I brought along an old Lonely Planet. Bradt is decidedly inferior with lousy maps, skimpy hotel listings, and generally poor layout compared to LP. If I had to rely on Bradt I be cursing it constantly trying to figure out exact location of sights in relation to text. NO MAP OF METRO!!!! Yes, maps are readily available, but what an omission!

Compared to Lonely Planet, this guide misses a lot and is disorganized. I wish I hadn't purchased it. It was not helpful.

I've read several Taiwan travel guides (I lived in Taiwan for 10 years), and quite enjoyed the old Lonely Planet ones written by Robert Storey, but nowadays your best bet for a Taiwan guide is this one, written by journalist and author Steven Crook, an Englishman with nearly two decades experience on the island formerly known as Formosa. The text in this book crackles with fine writing and intriguing bits of information. The history section, especially, shines brightly, shunning generic treatment and diving down deep to haul up some absorbing obscure facts. The history segment (and others) helps the guidebook do what a good guidebook should: engage the reader while whetting their appetite to explore further, to learn more. The Tainan section (Tainan is a city in southern Taiwan) also sparkles, but then you'd expect it to. The author wrote a nifty little book called *Keeping Up With the War God* which describes the metropolis and its folk religion traditions. In fact, the author lives in Tainan, but there is nothing stale in the presentation of the former capital; the writer's love for the quirky burg is perceptible and enduring, and as someone who spent nearly all his Taiwan time in Taipei, I found this section quite edifying. Crook is also a passionate outdoorsman, and those keen to get out of the concrete and neon of the lowlands will appreciate data on sanity-restoring, fresh-air sojourns into the island's green zone. Anyone planning on hiking Taiwan's Yushan or Snow Mountain, for example, will find heaps of sustaining advice and

detail. Many guidebooks have gone cookie-cutter, but if this one is any indication of the quality of others, I'm going to make a note to check out Bradt in the future. In addition to being a good guidebook, it's a good read. Five stars. You couldn't ask for better. Troy Parfitt, author *Why China Will Never Rule the World*

Glad the Bradt guide folks finally got around to doing a Taiwan guide. After years of Lonely Planet dominating there is finally a worthwhile alternative, and it's a better one (not saying the Lonely Planet guide is bad, just for ages it was the only one worth reading). The Bradt guide is more comprehensive and more accurate. It's more attractive than Lonely Planet as well, with some great photos (though the Nat Geo Traveler has some nice photos as well and a lovely layout--that's all it has going for it. Ditto for the Michelin Guide). The author has an eye for telling details and good judgement on just how much historical detail to add for colour and interest but without being overwhelming or pedantic. If you have to choose one Taiwan guide, this is the one to get.

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