

PEDAL TAIWAN OCTOBER 2017





Pedal Taiwan

The 12-day, 770km Pedal Taiwan cycling tour offers a unique opportunity to ride stunning and challenging routes, in a part of the world that until now has remained largely untouched by western cyclists. With its imposing mountain ranges (Jade Mountain stands at nearly 4000m), rolling paddy fields, gorgeous ocean roads, ultra-modern cycle lanes and world famous cuisine, Taiwan provides the perfect blend of safety, comfort and adventure to make it an ideal location to explore by bike.

Starting in the capital, Taipei, you'll head east into the volcanic national parks, finding natural hot springs, waterfalls and small mountain communities along the way. You then hit the coast, where the East China Sea meets the Pacific, and from here hug the rugged coastline until we begin one of South East Asia's most beautiful and challenging climbs, high into Taiwan's central mountains.

But what goes up must come down, so after reaching the peak you'll enjoy the once in a lifetime opportunity to glide over 60km down through the iconic Taroko Gorge, before a rest day in the culinary capital of Taiwan - Hualien.

Back on the bike, you'll meander through miles of ancient paddy fields and cosy farming villages, before rejoining the undulating coastal road and following it all the way to Taiwan's southernmost tip, Kenting. A surfing hot spot, grab a board or simply chill on the beach.

To wrap things up, we'll take the High Speed Rail, with a top speed of 300km/h, back to Taipei. After a day of seeing the sights, enjoy a memorable dinner in one of Taipei's best loved local restaurants to conclude the tour.

With a local cycle guide and 2 support vehicles with you at all times, you can simply relax and enjoy the ride, savouring all the delights Taiwan has to offer – think night markets, national parks, temples, waterfalls, geothermal hot springs and much more!

Whilst the support vehicles will be with us at all times, it should be noted that this route is not one to be taken lightly. A huge part of Taiwan's incredible natural beauty comes from the severity and scale of the central mountain range that rises straight up from the Pacific Ocean. So whilst you'll cover between 50km - 100km per day, expect to climb an average of 1000m. It is for this reason that we would only recommend this tour to individuals with good experience of road riding and to those that are confident they can handle this level of exertion. See the full itinerary below for more details.

Dates and Weather

The tour will run from Sunday 22nd October - Friday 3rd November, with the first day of cycling on Monday 23rd.

The late autumn weather in Taiwan is ideal for cycling and a welcome break from the wind and rain back home. Average highs top out at 27°C before dropping to a comfortable overnight low of 18°C. Combine this with usually clear skies and low rainfall (November is the country's driest month) and conditions for cycling are fantastic.

However, as with any tropical country, expect changeable weather conditions - so we would advise bringing some waterproofs as there is likely to be the odd shower.



Flights and Insurance

This tour will not be run for commercial purposes, and as such, we are unable to offer flights or travel insurance as part of the package.

Return flights from London to Taipei are currently available for approximately £400. You will need to arrive in Taipei at the latest by the evening of Sunday 22nd October, when we will have a tour get-together and introductory meeting. The final night of your included accommodation is Friday 3rd November. Should you wish to stay beyond this, let us know and we will try to help you make any further accommodation arrangements.

No visa is required by UK, EU, US, Canadian, Australian or New Zealand nationals for up to 30 days in the country. If you hold a passport from a different country or need more information, visit the Taiwanese Bureau of Consular Affairs website – www.boca.gov.tw

It is a condition of the tour that you must hold valid travel insurance to cover you in case of any accidents. By participating in the tour it is understood that you accept all responsibility for your health and any accidents you may cause.

Bringing your own bicycle

Although we will provide you with excellent rental bikes, direct from Taiwan's premium bike manufacturer, Giant, we understand that some people may wish to bring their own. There is no problem with this whatsoever, as long as you let us know in advance. We cannot, however, accept any responsibility for any loss or damage to personal bikes, so would highly recommend obtaining bike insurance if you plan to bring your own.

Food

Taiwan is world renowned for its food. An incredible blend of indigenous, Chinese and Japanese flavours, we know that you will find it a real highlight of your trip.

Breakfast and lunch is included in the cost of the trip, and we will provide you with some local recommendations for dinner in the evening, as well as organising a few trips to night markets to really get a taste of authentic Taiwanese street food.

If you have any special dietary requirements we will do our utmost to accommodate, however, please do let us know in advance.

Cost

This tour is being offered to you at cost price, and as such, is significantly cheaper than any other similar tours. The total cost of accommodation, bike rental, food, local cycle guide, support vehicles and transport will be £1500pp. Single travellers are more than welcome, however, there will be a single-room supplement unless you are willing to share a twin room.

A £500 deposit is required to secure your place on the trip, which will be subtracted from the total cost when the final balance is due.

Itinerary

Day 1:

Start: Taipei

Coffee: Tamsui - 20.4km

Lunch: Beitou Hot Springs - 13.7km

Afternoon Tea: Yangminshan Southern Peak - 18km

End: Keelung - 30.9km

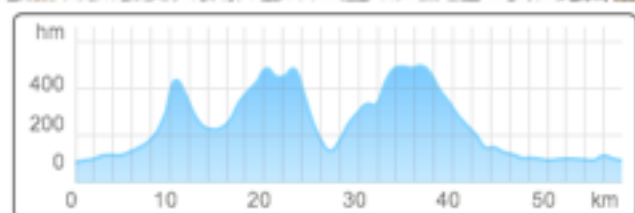
Total Distance: 83km

Total Climb: 1210m

We'll ease you into the adventure on day 1 with a gentle ride along the river. This first 20km will see us leave Taipei city along the pedestrianised river path and will finish with a coffee stop in the old market of Tamsui.

Take half an hour to explore the old streets - the closest Taiwan has to Marrakech's souks - before beginning the first small climb of the holiday up through the edge of the beautiful Yangminshan National park, taking lunch at Beitou as well as a short stop at a natural hot spring.

Leaving Beitou we climb over Yangminshan's southern peak where we will have afternoon tea, and finally it's (nearly) all downhill to our stop for the night in the famous port town of Keelung.



Day 2:

Start: Keelung

Coffee: Shifen Waterfall - 15km

Lunch: Jiufen - 15.3km

End: Fulong Beach - 27.5

Total Distance: 57.8km

Total Climb: 1560m

Day 2 will see us take in some of the most popular sites around New Taipei City, starting with a sharp climb to reach Shifen Waterfall, where we will also have a coffee break looking out over one of the biggest falls in Taiwan.

From Shifen we climb over Riuping Valley and up to Jiufen, a mountain town developed at the turn of the 20th century during the Taiwanese Gold rush, and the inspiration for the 2001 film 'Spirited Away'. Here we'll have lunch looking out

over the valleys, and if the weather is clear, it will be possible to make out the famous Taipei 101 building in the distance.

Finally we descend towards our final stop in Fulong, famous for its wide beach and exquisite seafood.

Day 3:

Start: Fulong Beach

Coffee: Sandiaojiao Cape Lighthouse - 8.9km

Lunch: Wufengchi Waterfalls - 39.6km

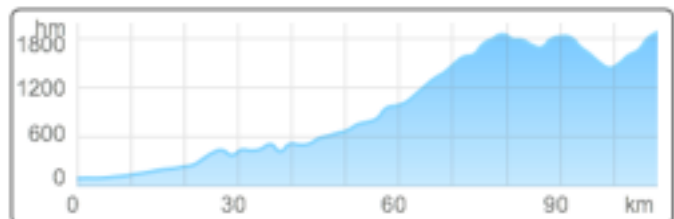
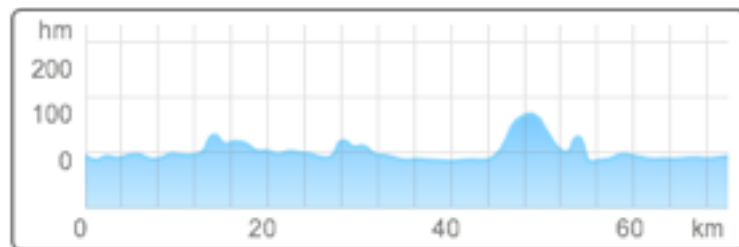
End: Luodong Township - 21.5 km

Total Distance: 70km

Total Climb: 690m

A break from climbing on day 3 will see us follow the coast round to Sandiaojiao Cape Lighthouse, also know as the ‘Eye of Taiwan’. This spot, which was also a battlefield during the Pacific campaign of WWII, marks the boundary between the East China Sea and the Pacific. Often to the right, the Pacific is a body of calm water, but to the left the East China Sea area is an unceasing stretch of waves and spray for thousands of hectares. This is caused by a large underwater fault that runs all the way north to Okinawa, Japan.

From the cape, we stay on the costal road, turning off just past Toucheng to head up to Wufengchi Waterfalls where we will take lunch, and perhaps a swim! In the afternoon it’s a leisurely ride through paddy fields to reach Luodong where we will stay for the night.



Day 4:

Start: Luodong Township

Coffee: Pork Ribs River Hot Spring - 33.3km

End: Lishan Township - 74.3km

Lunch - TBD

Total Distance: 107.6km

Total Climb: 3180m

Transport provided

Recommended: Enjoy a break from the saddle and drive high into Taiwan’s central mountain range near Lishan. Spend the day with one of our guides hiking the northern points of world famous Taroko Gorge.

Cycle: Only for advanced cyclists, this is one of the most challenging climbs in all of South East Asia.

Leaving from Luodong our first stop will be at Pork Ribs River Hot Spring, where you can take a soak along with refreshments. From there, it is an almost relentless 70km climb up to the mountain village of Lishan where we will rest for the night.

As always, the support vehicles will be available for the entirety of the route.

Day 5:

Start: Lishan

Breakfast and Ride Start: Xiulin Peak

Coffee: Wenshan Hot Spring - 21km

Lunch: Taroko Grotto - 22.5km

End: Hualien - 42.4km

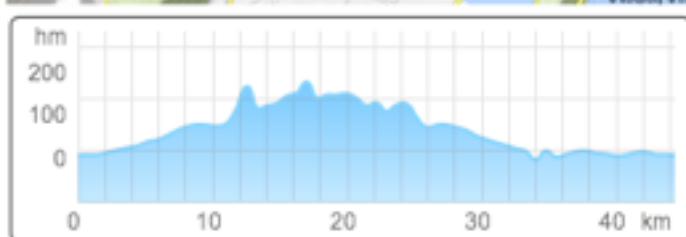
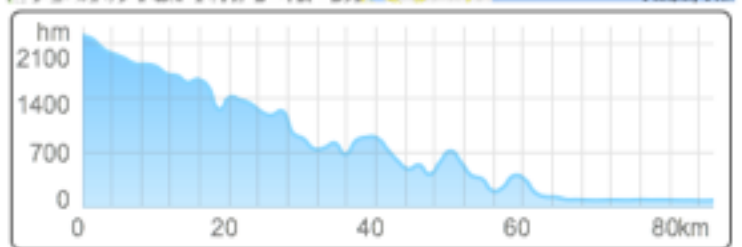
Total Distance: 85.9km

Total Climb: 870m

An early start on day 5 will see us drive 30km further up through the mountains until we reach Xiulin Peak. Hot coffee and breakfast will be provided whilst we watch the sun rise over the central mountain range.

From here the day is almost entirely downhill. Glide 60km all the way down to the Pacific through the iconic Taroko Gorge, stopping for refreshments and photo stops along the way of course!

After reaching the ocean, we turn south until we reach the culinary capital of Taiwan - Hualien.



Day 6: REST DAY

OPTIONAL CYCLE:

Coffee: Liyu Lake - 17.1km

Lunch: East Coast National Scenic Area - 17.9km

End: Back to Hualien - 14.2km

Total Distance: 49.2km

Total Climb: 330m

Day 6 is the time to enjoy a well earned rest! Explore the city of Hualien and the surrounding areas at your leisure, or head off to the beach for a spot of sunbathing.

If, however, you're itching to be back on the bike, a gentle optional ride will be available taking in Liyu Lake, popular for Taiwanese canoe racing, and the East Coast National Scenic Area where you

can witness spectacular views of Hualien City.

In the evening a group trip to Hualien's famous night market is provided to try any and all of Taiwan's delicious street food.

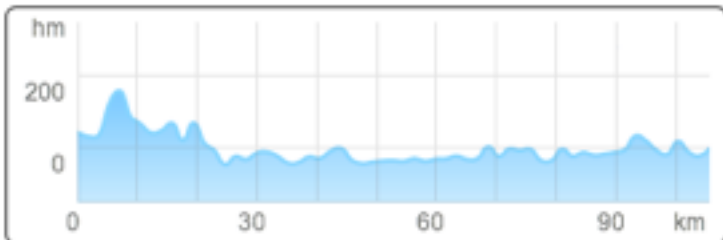
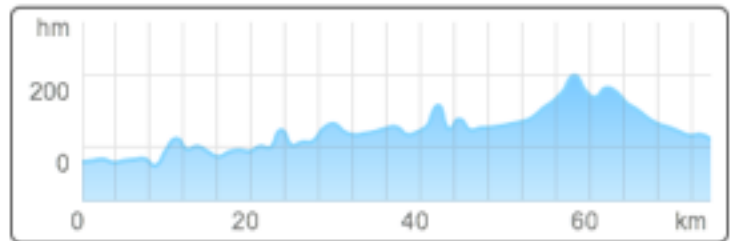
Day 7:

Start: Hualien
Coffee: Fenglin - 32.6km
Lunch: Guangfu - 18.4km
End: Ruisui - 23km

Total Distance: 74km
Total Climb: 760m

Back on the road after our day off, we will be following the river south through Taiwan's east coast paddy fields and small villages, all framed on either side by imposing mountains.

We will follow the valley all the way to our evening stop in Ruisui, where we will have a traditional Taiwanese tea ceremony.



Day 8:

Start: Ruisui
Coffee: Bashian Caves - 34.2km
Lunch: Sansiantai Bridge - 32.4km
Afternoon Tea: Donghe - 22.4km
End: Dulan - 20km

Total Distance: 109km
Total Climb: 1140m

One of our longest rides, day 8 will start by climbing out of the valley and back down to the Pacific Ocean. Our first stop will be at Bashian Caves, large sea caves that have become famous for their Old Stone Age ruins.

From there we will continue down to Sansiantai Bridge, an incredible piece of Chinese architecture designed to resemble a dragon, which connects the main land to the 'Island of the Three Immortals'.

After lunch and some time to explore the island, we stay on the coastal road to the town of Donghe, where we will have refreshments and the chance to marvel at Taiwan's up hill river!
 After Donghe, the final 20km stretch will take us to Dulan, a beautiful fishing village set against the backdrop of the mountains.

Day 9:

Start: Dulan

Coffee: Taitung - 20.1km

Lunch: Duoliang - 41.1km

End: Daren - 21km

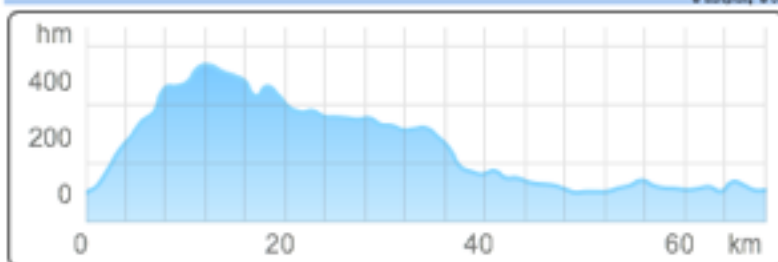
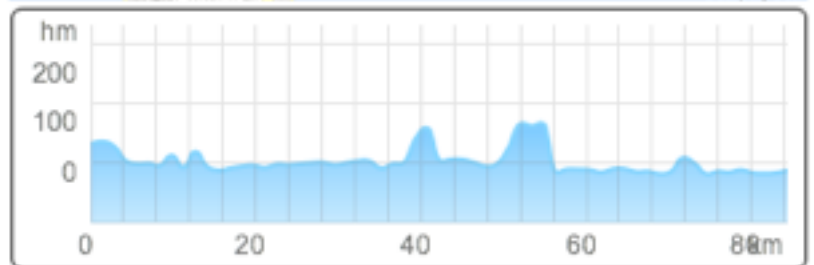
Total Distance: 82.2km

Total Climb: 560m

On our final day on the east coast road, we will continue south until we reach our coffee break in the city of Taitung.

From Taitung, we head towards old Duoliang Station. This station, now abandoned, was by some considered to have the best view of any station in the world. It is with this backdrop that we will take our lunch.

After Duoliang, another 20km ride will take us to the end of the coastal road at Daren, where we will stop for the night.



Day 10:

Start: Daren

Coffee: TBD

Lunch: Mundan - 39.1km

End: Kenting - 28.9km

Total Distance: 68km

Total Climb: 760m

Leaving the coast behind, day 10 starts with a steep climb high into the southern mountains. After a coffee stop near the peak, we will begin our descent towards Mundan for lunch, and finally, Kenting.

It is here, in the most southern town in Taiwan, that we will stay for the next two nights.



Day 11: REST DAY

Put your feet up and relax! You have just cycled the entire length of Taiwan, and there can be no better place to recuperate than the beachy town of Kenting. Popular with Taiwanese as the best place to surf on the island, feel free to rent a board for the day or go exploring one of the many beaches in the area.

If you're desperate to ride still, there will of course be an option to take a bike along the coast to take in some of the small fishing villages and the region's famous rock formations.

Day 12:

A morning bus will transport you all to Kaohsiung City, where you will catch the High Speed Rail (HSR) back to Taipei. Travelling at a top speed of 300km/h, this journey back to our start location will take only 90 minutes!

Spend the afternoon exploring the sights of Taipei, such as the Chiang Kai Shek memorial, before taking a short hike up Elephant Mountain for sunset.

We will end our trip with a group dinner at one of Taipei's best loved local restaurants.

Day 13:

End of tour

Total Tour Distance: 772.7km

Total Tour Climb: 11,060m

Elements of this route may change slightly due to weather conditions, road closures or unforeseen circumstances.