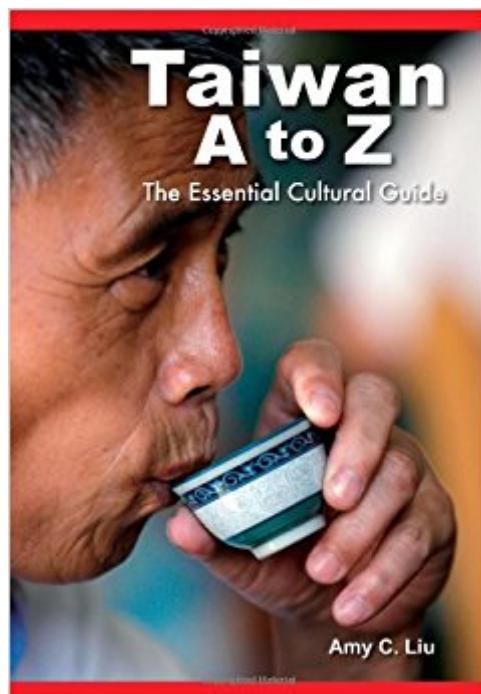


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Taiwan A To Z: The Essential Cultural Guide



Synopsis

Taiwan A to Z provides the essential information you need to know before you go to Taiwan. Whether you're planning to be there a week or three years, this book is a must-read for any foreigner to Taiwan who wants to be successful there. Do you know: Why it's a very bad idea to give a clock as a gift? Why so many Taiwanese people have PhDs? How Taiwanese parents choose names for their children? Why a new mother shouldn't take a bath for a month after giving birth? The answers to these and many other intriguing questions can be found in Taiwan A to Z, a product of the author's discovery of her own roots. Written by a Taiwanese who has a deep understanding of both Western and Eastern cultures, this book provides foreigners to Taiwan with true insights into the fascinating intricacies of Taiwanese culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The saying "When in doubt, check it out" is always good advice. This thoroughly practical book is just the place to turn for knowledgeable and sensitive insights into the intricacies, joys, challenges, and rewards of living and working in Taiwan. Only one warning: don't read the food sections too late at night - "you may be forced to search out the nearest all-night dumpling shop!" Richard R. Vuylsteke, President, AmCham Hong Kong (former President of AmCham Taipei) "A book dedicated to the success of working effectively with your Taiwanese colleagues! Amy C. Liu, a reputable trainer and dear friend who has long provided professional cultural seminars to my teams at Dell Taiwan in improving collaboration and productivity, has graciously transferred the essence of understanding the difference in cultural values, insights and

behaviors in the workplace into an easy reading work. This book can help increase cultural awareness, develop effective communication strategies and enhance global competency in building trust and stronger relationships with your Taiwanese counterparts. Congratulations, Amy C.!”—Kefetew Selassie, Dell Inc., Director, Business Product Group, Taiwan and China Design Center “For the past ten years, Amy C. Liu has welcomed hundreds of expatriates to Taiwan by sharing her tremendous knowledge about and enthusiasm for its history and culture through her cross-cultural training programs. With great respect for new arrivals, she helps them to embrace the process of making Taiwan their new home. Now hundreds more will benefit from Amy’s expertise through her book, Taiwan A to Z: The Essential Cultural Guide. Expatriates will have a much richer experience in Taiwan aided by Amy’s detailed knowledge of the thought and customs of its people. From communication styles, to the concept of face, to the background of Chinese chops, Amy’s book is full of facts and insights to make Taiwan more accessible and memorable for newcomers and long-timers alike.” —Mary Chua, Former Director of the Community Services Center, Taipei.“Amy C. Liu is well respected and appreciated for her work with the foreign community in Taiwan in the field of cross-cultural training. With the publication of Amy’s book: Taiwan A to Z: The Essential Cultural Guide, the casual tourist, business visitor or longer-term expatriate has essential reading for a greater understanding and appreciation of the culture and customs encountered during a stay of any length in Taiwan. This book gives a fascinating insight into the traditions, superstitions, festivals, food and etiquette surrounding everyday life on this very special island. There is a great range of interesting information and practical advice which will help in gaining the most from the experience of visiting or living in Taiwan. Whether it’s guanxi, feng shui or mianzi, Amy’s book explains it all!” —John Nixon, MBE, Chief Executive Officer --Taipei European School

Amy C. Liu (Amy Chien-ju Liu) was born and raised in the heart of downtown Taipei, where she completed her primary education before her family immigrated to San Jose, California, USA when she was 13 years of age. Based in Taipei, Taiwan since 1999, she works locally at the Community Services Center and with major intercultural service providers globally to provide intercultural training and global leadership programs. As a bicultural and bilingual consultant, Amy has successfully delivered both individual and group cross-cultural training to top-level expatriates relocating to Taiwan as well as programs for Taiwanese managers based in Taiwan who desire to work more effectively in today’s global marketplace. She has lived and worked in the USA and Taiwan and has also spent nearly two years living in Japan. She travels extensively, and has

visited over thirty countries, including India, Czech Republic, Hungary, Turkey, Cambodia, Vietnam, Germany, Italy, France, Paraguay, and Brazil. Amy holds a Master's degree in Counseling Education from San Jose State University as well as a Bachelor's degree in Economics with a minor in Business Management from the University of California, Irvine.

I am really enjoying this book as a reference for Taiwanese culture. Ms Liu has written a superb book in a comfortable style that didn't overwhelm me. I recommend this book to anyone with a desire to learn more about Taiwan, but especially anyone traveling there.

Amazing book. Reading it you will become an expert about Taiwanese people.

So glad I picked up this book before my month long trip to Taiwan. I learned about multiple Taiwanese customs and taboos that I would have never known about otherwise.

Written by a Taiwanese who partly grew up in the US, the book promises a good balance between inside information and outsiders' astonishment. I was personally hoping for Taiwan-specific, in-depth cultural information in daily life. However, the book deals with a lot of rituals and obvious differences, targeting an audience that has little experience in the far east. The tone of voice is very enthusiastic, personal and a bit too positive. Everything is 'wonderful', 'delicious' and 'amazing'. I personally would have preferred a more factual description, and more about the subtle, unconscious differences when dealing with the Taiwanese, what to do and what not to do. Note that I'm European (Dutch), so maybe Americans like her way of writing better. Also annoying to me is that sometimes she considers the US and 'the West' to be the same thing, 'the way we celebrate Thanksgiving in the West'. We don't celebrate Thanksgiving in my part of 'the West'. Conclusion: A nice book if you're looking for a quick read on Chinese rituals and trivia. Not for when you really want to understand what makes the Taiwanese tick.

Having ordered both *Culture Shock Taiwan* and this book for an upcoming trip to Taiwan, I was disappointed that it contained so little information. My expectation had been that it would be far superior to the *Culture Shock* book, seeing as how it was written by a Taiwanese who moved to this country as a teen. I thought she would know what information Americans would need in order to travel with confidence in her native country. There was depth on some topics like betel nuts. However, I didn't think a page and a half in a 150 pg book, was really necessary. It was not at all

comprehensive and a real disappointment. I sent it back and have found the Culture Shock book(smaller typeface and nearly double the pages of info) by Bates to meet my needs at a much lower price.

I agree with the other reviewers about the author's love for Taiwan coming through. However, a major flaw in this book is the lack of tone marks on the pinyin spellings of Mandarin words. Without tone marks, a visitor has absolutely no hope of pronouncing any of these words to that a Mandarin speaker can understand them. How bad is it? Try asking for "beer", but saying "fart wine" because you used the wrong tone. It would be like leaving out every third letter of an English word, and expecting someone reading the words to be understood. This is a terrible flaw that the author could fix in a day, and that the publisher should incorporate into the next printing.

For many of us expatriates who find ourselves in foreign cultures, working out norms and expectations without offending anyone is a really daunting prospect. I know when I first came to Taiwan for a visit in 2006 for three weeks I was petrified nearly the entire time that I would do something stupid and offend my then boyfriend, now husband's family. I was one of the lucky ones - I didn't mortally offend anyone but then I did have the best guides possible in my mother-in-law and my lovely man. For those who come to Taiwan without such an advantage, this book is the next best thing to having someone personally guiding you through the confusion. Amy C. Liu, the author of this book, grew up in Taipei in the late 70's and early 80's before moving to the United States with her family. She completed her education there, gaining a Masters degree in Counselling Education from San Jose State University but then surprised a lot of her friends and family by returning to Taiwan. Having become completely Americanized during her time in the States, it was on a trip to Japan as an exchange student that Amy came to realize that she knew far less than she would like about her home country and its rich and diverse culture. Thus started the journey that lead her back to Taiwan where she has been living and working since 1999 as a cross-cultural educator with the Community Services Center in Taipei, a center set up to assist expatriates relocating to Taipei. Taiwan A to Z really is just what the title says it is. It covers everything you ever wanted to know about the culture in Taiwan as well as many things you'd never thought of. It gives clear advice about how to decode what Taiwanese people really mean when they say "Yes" and why they hardly ever say "No".

This book has great insights into the culture of Taiwan. After living in Taipei for three years I learned

some of the information contained in the book. I wish I had this book before moving there. Although this book is good for ex-pats I think that visitors would enjoy it as well. The country and culture of Taiwan are wonderful, this guide helps you understand and appreciate everything that makes it so wonderful but sometimes incomprehensible.

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