



Tour 02/19 LCGB TAIWAN TOUR 2019 with PTG including NORTH BORNEO and SOUTH KOREA extension options.

Taiwan by Rail (13-26th March 2019) with North Borneo (9-14th March) South Korea extension (26-31st March)

Circular 1A – July 2018

We are offering the PTG “**Hidden Taiwan by Rail**” tour to club members. As an incentive to those booking through the club you will receive a year’s free LCGB membership if booked before 31st December 2018

Introduction

Taiwan may not be a name which immediately comes to mind when one thinks of rail travel. It is an island with a length approximately the distance between London and Harrogate and with a breadth that of Birmingham to Cambridge. It is largely mountainous and that rail which there is forms a circle around the perimeter of the island. In addition to the ring of conventional rail, the tracks on the west coast are duplicated by a parallel high speed rail line, operating at 300km/hour, and which is the length of the UK’s HS1 and future HS2 combined.

The conventional rail system is also very modern, electrified and functional, but with four fascinating non-electrified branch lines heading inland. We will travel on each of these, with visits and photos, and also, we plan to use a steam locomotive on two of these charming branches. We will also visit two former sugar mill railways now given over to tourist operation. Overall, we plan the use of 5 steam locomotives together with a period railcar. The highlight of our rail experiences will be the incredible Alishan branch with its triple spiral, the only one anywhere so far as we know, which traverses a number of climatic zones, from bamboo, through tea plantations to the fir forest, the very reason the line was originally constructed.

The bulk of our travel during the tour will be by rail, with road used predominantly for transfers, but we do break our journeys to visit some places of rail interest and also the typically Chinese terminals of each of the branches.

We also include an option for an extension in South Korea, where we take a train to the Demilitarised zone and the virtually unused exchange station with the North. We can see North Korea and take a mine train under the DMZ to see where the North once attempted to tunnel into the South.

Highlights

- Ride the NG Alishan Railway with its unique triple spiral
- Steam locomotive haulage on several lines
- Ride 3 rural branch lines to Chinese Villages
- A traditional part of China bypassed by the ‘Revolution’
- South Korea extension with train to DMZ

Wednesday 13th March Evening flights to Taipei are planned. For Taiwan only, we hope to be able to secure direct flights to Taipei. For Taiwan + Korea outbound may be via Seoul.

Thursday 14th March (D) It may be an early evening arrival in Taipei, and we begin our rail travel immediately on arrival by using the airport rail link to speed us to the centre of Taipei and then our hotel, where dinner can be taken. Please consider travelling one day earlier if more time in Taipei is desired.

Friday 15th March (B,D) It's a reasonably early transfer the Taipei Main Station. The station is now sub-surface, but outside a tank locomotive with coaches are nicely preserved. We then travel north-east by the main line to Houtong, an old mining town, and where we can cross the river to visit the mine by train. Our first branch line, the Pingxi Line, commences at Houtong, and we take this scenic route alighting at Shifen, where the tracks pass the old buildings along the street. We break here for photos and a Chinese experience. Lunches will generally not be provided, and the possibilities today may be something Chinese, but on other days, a snack from any of the many 7/11 convenience stores will suffice. We take an afternoon train to the end of the line, another former mining area, as the rail direction curves back to Taipei. Our return to Taipei will be completed by transfer to a gondola station, then the Gondola through the mountains to the Taipei Zoo station of the Wenhua skytrain line of the Taipei MRT, and then back to the centre by overhead rails.

Saturday 16th March (B,L,D) Our first visit today will be to the Peace Memorial Park and the National Taiwan Museum. The main interest for railfans will be the two preserved locomotives, one of which is a very early Avonside. Close again is the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and the changing of the guard at 11:00. After lunch we transfer to the Confucius and Bao'an Temples. Then to the interest of the traditional Chinese Dihua Street after which there is some free time, when another attraction such as Taipei 101, once the tallest building in the world, might be visited.

Sunday 17th March (B,D) We speed away from Taipei on the HS line to Hsinchu and here change to the Liujia branch for just one station, where the branch line to Neiwan can be taken. We will take a break in the old town right in the lee of the hills, before riding back to Hsinchu's conventional railway station. There will be time to walk to God's Temple, the largest Cheng Huang temple in Taiwan, before resuming our train journey down the main line to Changhua. En route we will break for the Maioli Railway Museum, with its collection of steam and diesel locomotives.

Monday 18th March (B,D) We expect to encounter our first working steam locomotive today, when 2-8-2 DT668 leaves the Changhua roundhouse. We plan to take it south down the mainline to Ershui, and then along the Jiji branch to its Checheng terminus. If we can use the loco on the branch, we hope to arrange some photo opportunities and also within the railway museum at Checheng. For those who do not wish to stay with the train over lunch, we can visit the top attraction of the Sun Moon Lake to take lunch there. On our return from the branch, we plan to alight at Ershui where there is a small locomotive park, before we continue to Chiayi by service train for our overnight.

Tuesday 19th March (B,D) We will take a morning train from Chiayi up the Alishan narrow-gauge branch through the amazing Dulishan spiral to Fenqihu, where the depot containing 2 Shay locomotives can be visited, as also the small mountain town. A landslip a decade or so ago has severed the Alishan line and the journey must be continued by road. We stay in Alishan for two nights, where a small part of the line downhill and that uphill too, operate tourist services which we may take and visit various attractions.

Wednesday 20th March (B,D) The day is spent in and around Alishan and is basically free-time. There will be a 'sunrise' train or two to Zhushan – the only services expected here. During the remainder of the day there will be frequent trains to both Zhaoping and Sacred Tree. It's the Cherry Blossom Festival and four of the scheduled morning trains to Zhaoping are expected to be hauled by a Shay locomotive. We can both ride and photograph these trains whilst enjoying the mountain environment. One Shay ride is planned to be included.

Thursday 21st March (B,D) If we want to take a photo of one of the expected two uphill trains on the main line making for Fenqui we will need an early departure. At Chiayi we visit the Beimen locomotive park and depot and where we are negotiating with the railway to make Shay no. 25 available for a short charter train, in the Beimen vicinity. Hopefully we can go to Jhuci. We stay overnight in Chiayi.

Friday 22nd March (B,D) Our journey today is by road. First it is to Xihu Sugar Mill for a charter train with a Franco-Belge 0-6-0T and mixed stock on the Mill's 4km track. In the afternoon we move to Wushulin Mill for a similar experience with a narrow-gauge railcar. Our overnight destination is Tainan.

Saturday 23rd March (B,D) Tainan is a city of temples and we can visit one of these together with the Chihkan Tower and the Anping Tree House in the old Dutch colonial quarter. We also have some plinthed locomotives to view before taking a mid afternoon train to Kaohsiung, where we stay overnight.

Sunday 24th March (B,D) Our morning will be spent in and around the Pier 2 cultural area, which includes the Takao Railway Museum containing a number of locomotives, and the Hamasen Railway Museum, housing a model railway of the entirety of Taiwan. In the mid afternoon, we take a 2hour high-speed line train to Taipei and stay here for 2 nights.

Monday 25th March (B,D) We take a morning train along the east coast line as far as Hualien. Here, we have a steam charter on a narrow gauge line before returning to Taipei for our farewell dinner. Anyone who is travelled-out can take a free day in Taipei and visit more of its attractions.

Tuesday 26th March (B) This is our departure day, either returning to Europe or, joining us on a 2 ½ hour flight to Seoul, for further Eastern Adventures. Either way, we ensure you get to Taipei's Taoyuan International Airport in good time for your flight.

South Korea Optional add-on

Tuesday 26th March (D) Late afternoon arrival at Seoul's Incheon International Airport with a time change of 1 hour, then travel to Seoul Station on the fast airport rail line before transfer to our hotel in the Itaewon area of Seoul.

Wednesday 27th March (B,L,D) It's not an early start, but we get directly into what for many will be the most fascinating part of any visit to Seoul and that is to visit the DMZ some 50km north. We will travel by train on Korail's excursion which, after security checks at Imjingang, we cross the fortified Imjin River, reminiscent of a one-time journey to East Berlin, and enter the DMZ security zone. Our train deposits us at the Dorosan International Station – but ours is the only train that uses it. After lunch, we visit the Dora Observatory to look across to the so-called Democratic People's Republic, and after which, we descend by rack-train under the DMZ to look at one of the attempted invasion tunnels dug by the North. On our return we alight at Imjingang to visit the Peace Park with its 2 war locomotives and transfer to Seoul by road.

Thursday 28th March (B,D) Today we take another rail journey due south to Uiwang, the location of the Korean Railroad Museum followed by museum railway around a large lake. Then, it's a cross-country transfer via the Samsung Transport Museum to the UNESCO World Heritage Hahoe Folk Village, a living museum. We stay nearby in Andong.

Friday 29th March (B,D) We make a brisk start with a transfer to Yeongju for a slow 'sightseeing' train through the mountains to Cheoram History Town. After a railfan break we, transfer to Ganghreung Unification Park, where a captured North Korean submarine can be visited. We return to Seoul by HS train.

Saturday 30th March (B,D) Our final day permits us time to view the capital city of our hosts. We visit the Gyeongbokgung Palace and view the changing of the guard, the adjacent Bukchon Village with its traditional Hanok buildings. After lunch we tour the Changdeokgung Palace. There are also preserved locomotives and trams to see.

Sunday 31st March (B) We will try for daytime direct flights to London, hopefully Korean Air or,

Sunday 31st March (B) A single day's extension in Seoul is recommended if time permits, visiting such attractions as the Namsan Seoul Tower by cable car and lift, seeking other preserved locos in Incheon area, museums, or getting another view of the DMZ at the Cheorwon area.

North Borneo – Pre-tour add-on

Sunday 10th March Morning flights to Kota Kinabalu in Sabah via Kuala Lumpur or Singapore are planned for those departing from London.

Monday 11th March (D) Arrival at Kota Kinabalu and transfer to our nearby resort hotel for three nights. For morning arrivals we plan an optional visit to the Lok Kwai Wildlife Park in the afternoon where Orang Utang can be viewed.

Tuesday 12th March (B,D) It's a reasonably early transfer to the nearby Sembulan station of the Sabah Railway for a diesel charter train along the coastal line then, from Beaufort, south into the Tenom gorge as far as Tenom itself. Here we take our midday break and then return in the afternoon.

Wednesday 13th March (B,L,D) Today we ride the **North Borneo** train which is expected to be steam-hauled and operates from the nearby Tanjung Aru station to Papar. A 'tiffin' lunch is served on the return train. On arrival back at Tanjung Aru, we hope to be able to take a depot visit and then visit the Sabah Museum where there are preserved steam locomotives. We take a Borneo farewell dinner this evening.

Thursday 14th March It will be an early transfer to the airport before breakfast for our c.3 hour flight to Taipei.

Holiday prices per person

- Full 12-night holiday including flights from London to Taipei: £3,995. (a higher price may apply to late bookers)
- Own travel to Taipei: £3,350

Options

- Pre-tour North Borneo add on: £750 (single supplement add £155)
- 5 night extension in South Korea: £1,250 (single supplement add £275)
- Single room supplement in Taiwan: £830
- Additional day in Seoul on B + B basis shared/single: TBC

Deposit

- Full package Taiwan (including flights): £1,250
- Full package Taiwan + Korea: £1,500
- Full package Borneo + Taiwan + Korea: £1,750
- Own travel to Taiwan: £500
- Own travel to Taiwan + Korea: £750
- Own travel to Borneo + Taiwan + Korea: £1,000

All bookings before 1st September 2018 pay just £100 deposit with balance of deposit due by 1st October 2018.

Price includes

- All travel and excursions as outlined in the itinerary
- Good quality en-suite accommodation
- Meals as shown in the itinerary; B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner
- Services of tour manager. Holiday is fully escorted.

There will be a flight option to continue directly from Seoul to Johannesburg for those that want to take part in the Sandstone Festival.

Please complete an LCGB Overseas Tours Booking (note ref to sae in conditions does not apply): http://www.lcgb.org.uk/images/OTBF_2018.pdf.

Conditions: <http://www.lcgb.org.uk/html/tours/TourConditions.htm>. These are available from the contact below. Please include 3 s.a.e.'s if you do not use email.

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