







Contents



01 NOUVEAU KAOHSIUNG



03YANCHENG DISTRICT

05GUSHAN DISTRICT

07 LOVE RIVER



FENGSHAN DISTRICT



GANGSHAN STYLE

19 HIKING IN KAOHSIUNG



23
CULTURAL PLACES OF INTEREST

25 EXCELLENCE ON THE PLATE





aohsiung is a big port city built on big, brawny shoulders. Its superb natural harbor was deepened and facilities expanded by the Japanese during their 1895-1945 period, with an eye on their great Southeast Asia colonial push.

As can be imagined, it was not a prime destination for tourists. However, over the past two decades a great push has been on to remake the urban center as a garden of aesthetics (and healthy outdoor exercise). Everyone's in on the act, from government and big-capital business with grandiose architectural statements to small-cap entrepreneurs presenting attractive modern-design eateries, shops, and other ventures.



YANCHENG **DISTRICT**

This district, the city's smallest, is tucked in snugly between the port's north end on its southwest, Love River east, and south tip of Shoushan ("Longevity Mountain"; see our Hiking article, page 28) northwest. "Yancheng" means "salt fields"; in Chinese imperial times the marshes here were drained for salt production. Also one of Kaohsiung's oldest districts, it has seen a tourism renaissance, with open waterside plots used for new big-statement architectural works, long-empty warehouse clusters transformed into au courant leisure/cultural-creative hubs, young entrepreneurs sprucing up heritage retail shops.

The Kaohsiung Music Center (KMC), opened in 2021, is a monumental work that stands on the north side of the Love River mouth. It serves as a landmark for pop-music performances in south Taiwan, nurturing domestic pop talent and supporting networking within the pan-Asia industry. The center's dynamic design has been integrated with the surrounding harbor scenery, and various free outdoor activities are held, to make it a destination tourist attraction.



The KMC won gold at the 2021 FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Awards in the Public Infrastructure and Amenities category. In a nod to the importance of the marine environment for Kaohsiung, the bright-white exterior features towers that resemble crashing sea waves and honeycomb-look facing symbolizing coral-reef communities. The complex is surrounded by pedestrian/cycling paths giving visitors broad port & river views. The Dolphin Walkway, said to resemble a leaping dolphin, delivers visitors over the Love River mouth to other KMC facilities on the south side. One of the Kaohsiung Light Rail's charming bus-stop-style stations, Love Pier Station, is right along the raised pathway. On the south side is the Whale Promenade and the Coral Zone - the roof looking like coral as seen from the Dolphin Walkway - used for exhibits and cultural-creative retail.

The Pier-2 Art Center special zone, portside just northwest of the KMC, is the heart of the city's ongoing cultural-creative bloom, and one of its most popular attractions. The first of the three renovated warehouse clusters here was transformed in the 2000s. The long-abandoned structures were once used to store such treasures as fish meal and granulated sugar. Today they are cultural-creative incubator stages, venues for domestic and international exhibitions and festivals, live indoor and outdoor musical, theatrical, and busker performances, and largescale outdoor installation artworks and graffitistyle/3D murals, many wonderfully quirky and whimsical, some created by artists-in-residence. There are also cultural-creative merchandise shops, cafés/eateries, and other entrepreneurial ventures.

VR Film Lab, in warehouse C9, is a future-isnow entertainment hub opened by a team of local talents that produces original VR works. The 360 Cinema is Taiwan's only 8K stereoscopic VR theater. The Interactive Zone is a space for standup and other interactive VR experiences.

OLD MEETS NEW The old former warehouses of The Pier-2 Art Center are now home to voung and modern businesses





Kaohsiung Music Center



TOOLS to LIVEBY, in C6, is a lifestyle store bringing aesthetics to life's small practical items, importing classic-brand stationeries from Europe, the US, and Japan as well as designing its own unique creations, such as calligraphy practice notebooks, scissor pins, ceramic pins, typographic postcards, etc.

In C11 is a SunnyHills outlet set up like a bar, with a long bar-type service counter across one end and lines of tables before it. SunnyHills' signature treat is pineapple cakes using 100% indigenous Taiwan pineapples grown in central Taiwan's Mt. Bagua area. Visitors sit down here to free product samples and tea.

KAOHSIUNG MUSIC CENTER (高雄流行音樂中心)

- **(**07) 521-8012
- No. 1, Zhen'ai Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區真愛路 1 號)
- kpmc.com.tw

THE PIER-2 ART CENTER (駁二藝術特區)

- **(**07) 521-4899
- No. 1, Dayong Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區大勇路 1號)
- pier2.org







GUSHAN DISTRICT

Two constituent parts of this district are Shoushan and, key for our purposes in this article, its south-southeasternmost section, a large, long, rectangular pier area that runs parallel and very close to Yancheng District's southwest side, forming a narrow inner harbor. The manmade extension runs all the way past the KMC. "Gushan" means "drum mountain," from an old name for Shoushan, "Beat the Drum Mountain," imperiously changed to the more pleasantsounding Longevity Mountain by the Japanese in 1923.

Holo Park is located halfway down the just-mentioned pier area, smack in the middle, with no water on either side. This is a market square-style attraction formed by two converted warehouses in an "L" shape and, finishing the horseshoe, a line of visual treats such as a bright-red English double-decker bus, merry-go-round, and superlong "BITE2GO" food truck. The splendor of 1950s Yancheng, then Kaohsiung's most prosperous district, is recreated using the latest holographic and VR technology with the bricks-and-mortar elements.

Between park and water of the inner harbor is Kaohsiung Port Depot 410, opened in January 2022. This is a cluster of four warehouses. As elsewhere, the inner beam-and-column frameworks have been retained and are on display, original "No Fire" signs are still in place, etc. Each repurposed warehouse has its own style - no.7 is for ladies' fashion, 8 for gatherings and dining, 9 for sports and fashion, and 10 has an illuminating exhibit of harbor-area historical photographs.

Jumping the inner harbor from these warehouses to the Yancheng mainland is the arched, sleekly shapely pristine-white Great Harbor Bridge. This 110m pedestrian/cyclist passageway is Taiwan's first horizontally rotating landscape bridge, Asia's longest cross-port rotating bridge (3min rotations at 3pm daily; at 7pm Fri/Sat/Sun). Its streamlined profile is in the image of a dolphin and seashell. The Kaohsiung Light Rail's Dayi Pier-2 Station is right off the Yancheng end, making public-transport travel a breeze.

Kaohsiung Port Warehouse No. 2, opened in its present guise in 2018, is steps north of the aforementioned long-pier area, looking into the main harbor area. Ferries leave from here for Qijin Island across the way, the long, thin barrier island that created the natural harbor. The harbor's startlingly narrow north-exit mouth is in clear view. There are iconic Taiwan food-brand and cultural-creative outlets on the first floor, artist-exhibit spaces on the second.

The original warehouse here, built in 1914, was severely damaged in WWII Allied bombing and thereafter reconstructed with concrete support pillars and rebar. Informally called the "Banana Warehouse," it was used for banana and sugar exports.

Chao Da Food is a well-known Kaohsiung chain selling tasty Taiwan traditional-style jerky and dried fruits. Established in a small shop by a husband-wife team over 35 years ago on the city's famed Sanfeng Central Street, a narrow century-old covered market street that is Kaohsiung's largest grocery goods wholesale center, it's now second-generation run. Among its bestsellers are its honey-glaze pork jerky, pepper pork jerky, dried mango, and dried pineapple. Foods used are Kaohsiung-region sourced.



Holo Park



Chao Da Food dried fruits

HOLO PARK (光禹浮空劇院生活廣場)

- O(07) 521-7534
- O No. 1-12, Penglai Rd., Gushan District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鼓山區蓬萊路1之12號)
- www.holopark.net (Chinese)
- www.facebook.com/holopark29

KAOHSIUNG PORT WAREHOUSE NO. 2 (棧貳庫)

- (07) 531-8568
- O No. 17, Penglai Rd., Gushan District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鼓山區蓬萊路17號)
- www.kw2.com.tw (Chinese)







LOVE RIVER

The Love River, known as the urban center's "spine," divides it in two. Once heavily polluted, today locals and tourists stream to its lower section, enjoying the long promenades and greenery along both sides, public artworks, cafés and other leisure establishments, romantic-mood nighttime promenade lighting and river-bridge rainbow lighting, and boat tours.

Love River Beer Garden is a cool and refreshing alfresco oasis on the river's right bank downriver from Zhongzheng Bridge on Zhongzheng 4th Road. It's between the promenade and a quiet local street behind, backed by a row of tall wide-canopy trees.

The garden's forecourt is filled with long beer hall-style tables. Forming a backdrop semi-circle are two service kiosks - cargo containers with faux Bavarian chalet-style facades and a metal-frame sculpture in the shape of a giant beer keg, lit up with string lights. Parked out in front you'll see the nifty resident bicycle bar, waiting for partiers to jump on and head out self-powered for riverside/neighborhood joy rides (fee).

On the liquids side of the menu are German Erdinger and Hofbräuhaus beers, Buckskin (Taiwan) beers, cocktails, soft drinks, and hot drinks (coffee and various teas). On the solids side are German-style pork knuckle, BBQ German sausage, chicken wings, and varied skewers, etc. (assorted platters available).





Please drink responsibly







Love River gondola

While the beer garden is "backed" by trees, the cross-river White Lover Container House is "in" trees. The "house" is made of four white-painted containers. Two are end-to-end conjoined at ground level back from the promenade, open-faced service counter running the entire length. Between these and the promenade is a spacious low-rise wood-board deck with varied-style seating, tree trunks rising up from deck openings, foliage above providing much-appreciated shade during intense-sun days. Against the promenade's waterside railing is a seating line constituted of whitepainted barrels with round wood-plank tops and high chairs.

The second level, reached by metal stairs, is right up in the tree canopies, treehouse-style. Two open-side cargo containers (with seating) jut out at slants, stopping just at the promenade's edge. More seating is available on a deck built atop the ground-level containers and a long, wide metal-frame catwalk with boardwalk bed that runs between the containers' promenade ends. At night a festive feel warms the place when the glowing-white string lights hung everywhere come on.

On the almost-endless menu's chewy side are "DIY Toast Sets." teppanyaki/fried rice/burrito/sandwich/roll/noodle soup options, deep-fried snacks, and sweet things (waffles/honey toast). On the non-chewy side are color-filled fruit and milk-based drinks, soft drinks, yogurts, coffees, teas, and myriad alcoholic drinks.

A Love River boat cruise is a veritable rite of passage for international travelers visiting Kaohsiung. Rides on quiet electricpowered, open-sided Love Boats and on gondolas are offered. Two launch points are located just upriver and downriver from Zhongzheng Bridge, on the left bank, the latter right beside White Lover Container House.

The experience is soothingly peaceful, especially in the evenings, with the promenade and bridge light reflections rippling on the water, the music of the leisure establishments wafting through the air, and the air of romance enhanced by the afterglow of the setting sun or perhaps the glow of an overhanging moon.

Cruises are weekdays 6pm~10pm and weekends/holidays 3pm~10pm. Check details in person at the ticket booths beside the cruise-outing locations.

LOVE RIVER BEER GARDEN (愛河啤酒花園)

- (07) 521-0802
- No. 10, Hexi Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung 高雄市鹽埕區河西路10號)
- **→ WWW.facebook.com/loveBeerKHH**→ WWW.facebook.com/loveBeerKHH

 → WWW.facebook.com/lov

WHITE LOVER CONTAINER HOUSE (白色戀人貨櫃屋)

- (07) 281-5380
- No. 189, Hedong Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung 高雄市鹽埕區河東路189號)
- www.facebook.com/whitelover.189

YANCHENG DISTRICT

In this section we revisit Yancheng District, exploring how new blood is being infused into the older commercial/ residential neighborhoods.

Yancheng First Public Retail Market is a heritage market, established in 1949, rebuilt in 1975, and reborn in 2022, with old stands and bricks-and-mortar shops beautied up and newer, hipper ventures setting up. It takes up almost the whole block formed by Xinle Street, Qixian 3rd Road, Lainan Street, and Wufu 4th Road. You enter a labyrinth of narrow alleyways, almost all artery sections roof-covered, immersed in a tight-knit neighborhood world unto itself. There's small clothing shops and shaved-ice shops and all manner of other shops, even a tiny mom-and-pop neighborhood grocery store, a hardware store, a couple of old-time barber shops – and fronts with no shop at all within; you look in at residents sitting in their cozy little living rooms, just feet away.

The market's heart is a section in the middle sporting a new high gabled wood-plank roof with exposed wood trusses and numerous skylights. The artery sections immediately surrounding now have translucent roofing. In the wooden-roof warren is a beehive of open stalls. You'll find unusual photo opps aplenty here: a smart pizza stall across from an old-style butcher's stall, a dapper sit-down beer-on-tap stand beside a fish seller. (*Note: the leisure/entertainment-type spots tend to open later in the day.*)

Yama Ichi Tempura is a cozy, stylish eatery of attractive Japanese trappings that has swordfish as a specialty. The business was started by the owner's great-grandfather about 70 years ago, selling swordfish meat to Taiwanese/Japanese restaurants, later expanding into tempura products. The eatery serves stewed, steamed, and fried selections, with assorted-platter options.

Dachi Coffee is a cutesy, cubbyhole retro café brimming with furnishings and merchandise from 1970s/1980s Japan (some Taiwanese too) – vinyl records, record player, alarm clock, etc.











The café logo, adorning the door and elsewhere, is the head of a cartoon cat. There's varied coffees (honey + nutmeg latte especially interesting), cane sugar or cocoa milk, and handmade bagels.

Milk Tea Street is a three-block-long (short blocks) section of Xinle Street bubbling with milk tea shops, stretching from Dayong Road to Dazhi Road. You may know beloved "milk tea" by one of its many other names: bubble (milk) tea, pearl milk tea, boba tea, and so on. Hot Kaohsiung seems to have a special passion for this cold drink, and now celebrates it each autumn with the Yancheng Milk Tea Festival, launched in 2020, centered on Milk Tea Street.

The festival celebrates many things, among these the glories and stories and delicious foods of old Yancheng. and how young folk are returning to Kaohsiung to renovate old shops and open new businesses. Milk Tea Street was long known as "Gold Street," filled with jewelry shops.

Hwa Da Milk Tea is today an island-wide chain. The Xinle Street location, opened in 1982, is the progenitor of both chain

and Xinle's milk tea bloom. The façade and interior have been elegantly modernized by the younger generation, the former now featuring slabs of polished black marble. Mounted on one arcade column is an unmissable human-sized mockup of the iconic Hwa Da paper cup, deep-black distinctive calligraphy on a pure-white background. Black tea is the standard for milk tea, but Hwa Da like other Kaohsiung sellers also uses Pu'er tea, as well as Oolong.

It would be easy to mistake Sungyi Milk Tea for an art gallery rather than a milk tea purveyor. The open-front façade looks like a work of installation art. Black, Pu'er, and Iron Goddess tea are used here. Free fresh-made "bubbles" (tapioca-starch balls) are offered until sold out daily, starting 11am.

On an intersection, wide wraparound saloon-style boardwalk (with seating) out front, Ou Jia has an exterior festooned with loud, inviting signage. A specialty here is use of lotus root, in both the liquid and hand-made bubbles, and of kumquat.

DACHI COFFEE (大橋珈琲)

- O No. 213-46, Xinle St., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區新樂街 213-46號)
- www.facebook.com/dachicoffee
- @ www.instagram.com/_dachicoffee_

SUNGYI MILK TEA(松藝奶茶)

- Q (07) 533-3567
- No. 106, Xinle St., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區新樂街 106號)
- www.facebook.com/sungyi.tw

HWA DA MILK TEA (樺達奶茶總店)

- (07) 551-2151
- O No. 101, Xinle St., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區新樂街 101號)
- www.facebook.com/HWADAmilktea

OU JIA (藕家)

- **(**07) 521-1388
- No. 195-1, Xinle St., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區新樂街 195之1號)
- 1 www.facebook.com/long5211388

FENGSHAN DISTRICT



This large district is east/northeast of the districts we've been visiting so far, on the east side of Kaohsiung's main urban agglomeration. Its north is served by the Kaohsiung Metro's Orange Line, which terminates in the west just off the port in Gushan District. The attractions we intro below are along this line.

The word "humongous" and the title National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying) pair easily together in a sentence. This facility has become a destination for its almost indescribable from-the-future exterior appearance as much as for the artistry displayed within at its Opera House, Concert Hall, Playhouse, and Recital Hall, and in the fancifully designed amphitheater for outdoor performances, which is ensconced in a purpose-constructed depression in the sloping roof. The center's superlatives are many, among these: world's largest performance arts center under one roof and home of Asia's largest pipe organ.

The site of the arts center and adjoining, gracefully landscaped Weiwuying Metropolitan Park was used as a military base from way back in the Qing Dynasty to late last century. The center's open structure is designed to cooperate with Taiwan's subtropical climate, cooling breezes flowing through the center-piercing tunnels like compressed winds rushing through canyons.

Close by the arts center is the entertaining Weiwuying Street Art Village, a residential neighborhood where over 100 low-rise building façades have been used as giant canvases for wonderfully whimsical murals by local and international talent, and offbeat groundlevel installation works dot the landscape. Of Taiwan's cities, Kaohsiung has most eagerly embraced street art, with this community following in the footsteps of the Jiuru Street Art Factory and The Pier-2 Art Center last decade. Sample mural subjects:





massive coralfish-surrounded stag at ocean's bottom, intricate antler rack become spreading coral; massive owl staring intently back at you; massive sun shooting curly flames in all directions.

Dadong Wetlands Park is a large, tranquil park of tall mature trees and rest pavilions and benches aplenty that is bracketed by the narrow Fengshan River on the east and, on its north, an irrigation canal branching off it dating to the Qing Dynasty. The park dates to 1981. In recent decades Mother Nature has been made a partner "renovating" the picture-postcard small lake at its core, vestige of a manmade irrigation lake from imperial times, resulting in abundant waterfowl, turtles, and fish life.

Directly facing the park is another big and proud Kaohsiung architectural statement, the young, green, magnificent membrane-roof Dadong Arts Center. 0

NOTE

The Kaohsiung City Govt. officially uses the Tongyong Pinyin romanization system while the central government uses Hanyu Pinyin. Since this magazine is published by the central government's Taiwan Tourism Bureau, Hanyu Pinyin is used for place names throughout this article. Example: Qijin Island (Hanyu Pinyin) instead of Cijin Island (Tongyong Pinyin).



Dadong Wetlands Park

@ ENGLISH AND CHINESE

Chao Da Food 超大食品果乾 Dadong Arts Center大東文化藝術中心 Dadong Wetlands Park大東濕地公園 Fengshan District 鳳山區 Fengshan River鳳山溪 Jiuru Street Art Factory 九如鐵道藝廠 Kaohsiung Port Depot 410 大港倉 410 Great Harbor Bridge大港橋 Gushan District 鼓山區 Love River愛河 Milk Tea Street 奶茶一條街 Qijin Island旗津島 Shoushan 壽山 SunnyHills 微熱山丘 TOOLS to LIVEBY 禮拜文房具 VR Film Lab VR體感劇院 Weiwuying Metropolitan Park 衛武營都會公園 Weiwuying Street Art Village衛武迷迷村 Xinle Street 新樂街

Yancheng District鹽埕區

Zhongzheng Bridge中正橋



Yancheng First Public Retail Market鹽埕第一公有零售市場



Gangshan Eye

Gangshan Style

A Tourist's Day in One of Kaohsiung's Northwest Districts

TEXT | RICK CHARETTE PHOTOS | ALAN WEN

Included in a full and fulfilling Gangshan District day touring: a sweeping skybridge panorama, countryside reservoir-pathway hike, goat meat specialty eatery dining, shaved-ice and minced-pork pie sweet and savory foodie experiences, "line of sky" gorge traverse, and magical visits to a peculiar stone temple and abnormal moon-like world.



Gangshan Eye seen from below





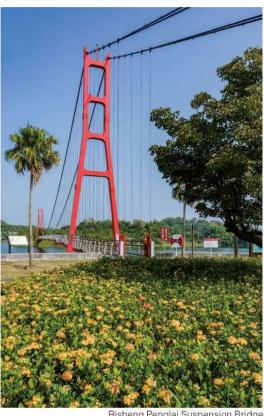
angshan is a suburban district north/ northeast of Kaohsiung's city center. It is primarily flat, with a central mountains foothills section in the east. The flat area, which straddles the north-south National Freeway 1 and Provincial Highway 1, is heavily populated and is home to a concentration of light industry. The highway runs right through the urban heart. The district is also served by the Kaohsiung Metro's Gangshan South Station (Red Line) and the regular-railway system's Gangshan Railway Station. Following, we're taking you on a twotheme tour - scenic tourist attractions in the rural east, beloved foodie spots in the urban heart.

Gangshan Eye and A Gong Dian Reservoir

The artistically bold Gangshan Eye (entry fee) stands high up near the tip of a peninsula-like foothills section that juts out into the Gangshan flatlands, the foothills' westernmost point. This is a long, gleaming-white skybridge with a music theme. It is 88m long and soars 40m above the ground, held by suspension cables ("violin strings") extending from a giant violin-sculpture central pylon. Speakers provide soft jazz music. The long A Gong Dian Reservoir is spread out below just to the east, and on clear days Kaohsiung's space-rocketlike 85 Sky Tower can be seen far to the south.

The reservoir has an easy-grade hiking path/ bikeway, 2.38km in length, that is lined with indigenous Taiwan plants, the most splashily colorful being flowering bushes and trees. Bike rentals (Youbike) are available. During your jaunt you'll pass by waterside viewing platforms, jump the water on two comely suspension bridges, and on the eastern foothills side meander through forest and by hoary small-plot fruit farms.





Risheng Penglai Suspension Bridge

Food Options in Gangshan

The "Gangshan three (culinary) treasures" are goat meat, spicy soybean paste, and honey. Goat raising was brought to the area in the 1920s because of the poor suitability of Gangshan soil for crop cultivation.

One of the busiest local spots for finding goat meat is the "Zhengzong Goat Meat Restaurant." The spic-and-span interior here is long and thin, with large windows facing the street along one wall. The most in-demand menu options are hot pots and soups, which feature rich, savory stocks and come with both meat and offal options. While goat meat has a reputation for being tough and gamey, here it is tender and piquantly aromatic.

The Chinese hot-snack food called xian bing is translated many ways. Here we'll use "Chinese minced-pork and scallion pies" (minced beef is also used). These are mini-pies that fit in your palm, featuring a crispy deep-fried shell made with dough containing a super-hot juicy pork filling. Bite in carefully!

The very popular "Longji Pie" is a large, old-looking openfaced stand that is only open three hours daily. Lineups are constant. It sells just two items, pork xian bing and another traditional hot savory treat, fried leek dumplings. Longji's pies come with an extra-generous filling and unusually thick shell, the skin extra-crispy outside, soft inside.



- " ZHENGZONG GOAT MEAT RESTAURANT"(正宗羊肉店)
- (07) 621-1187
- O No. 302-1, Gangshan Rd., Gangshan District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市岡山區岡山路 302-1號)
- O 10:30am~11pm
- www.facebook.com/www.masamune.tw
- LONGJI PIE"(龍記餡餅)
- O Kaiyuan St./Renshou Rd. intersection, Gangshan District, Kaohsiung City [adjacent to Dali Fruit Juice Shop] (高雄市岡山區開元街跟仁壽路交叉口,大力果汁店旁)
- @ 3pm ~ 6pm

A LITTLE ICE (冰一點黑糖剉冰專門店)

- O No. 211, Pinghe Rd., Gangshan District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市岡山區平和路 211號)
- O 1pm~9pm

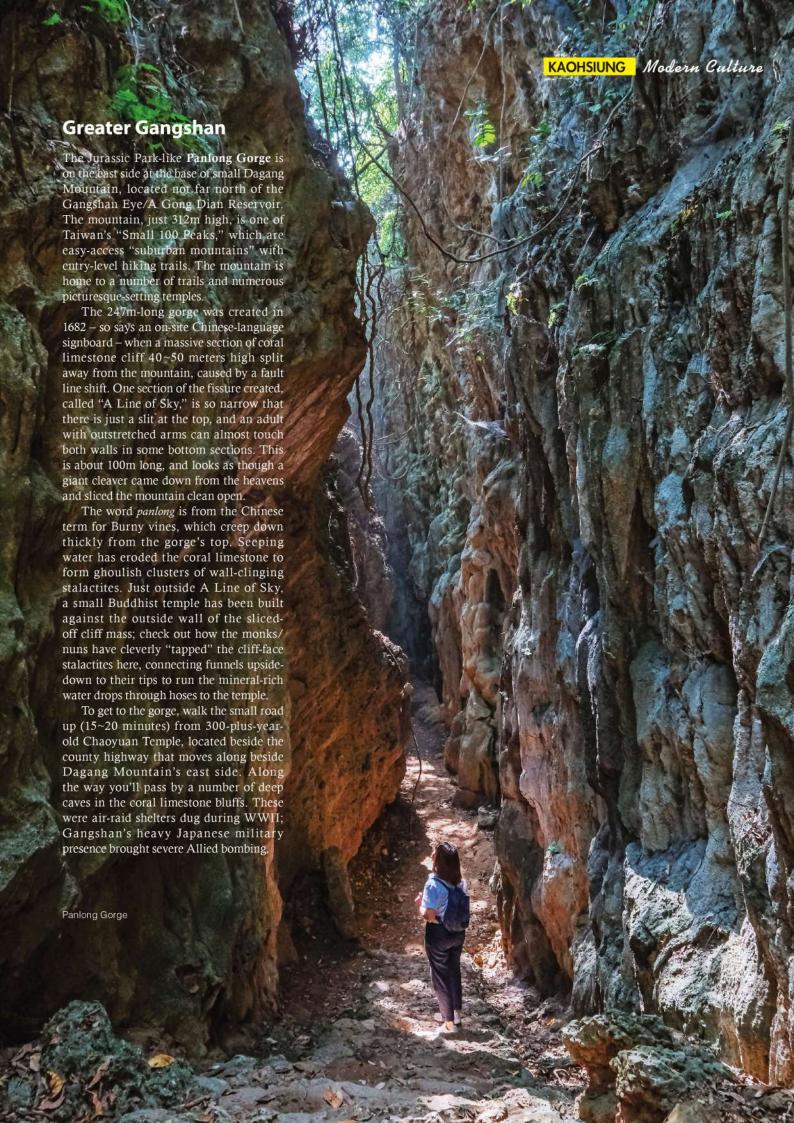


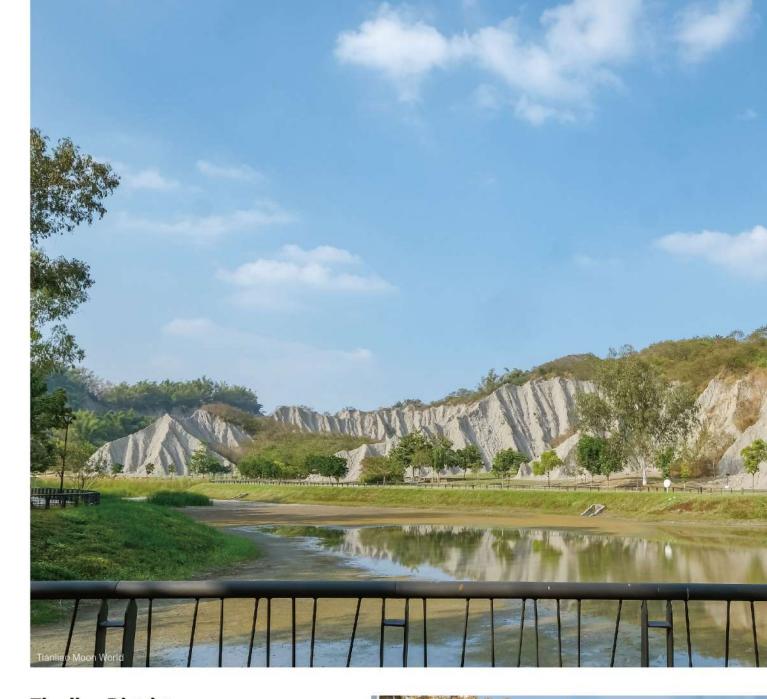
The Kaohsiung region produces such fresh-fromthe-field goodies as mango, sugarcane (i.e., cane sugar), and pineapple. It's darned hot, too. Add these ingredients up and you get the popularity of shavedice shops.

A Little Ice is a cozy hole-in-the-wall with an exterior combo of gleaming-white and much glass, and an interior equally gleaming-white with modernchic minimalist furnishings. Its signature creation is the "Classic Brown Cane Sugar Shaved Ice," for which you pick five sweet or sweetened (such as adzuki bean) toppings. House-made tofu pudding treats are also served.

Note: The three spots introduced here are within a few blocks of each other, making for an easy multi-hour town-center culinary tour.







Tianliao District

The marvelously quirky Stone Temple is located not far northeast of the Gangshan Eye/A Gong Dian Reservoir. Your initial impression will be that long ago Gaudi must have journeyed to Taiwan and was given carte blanche on this complex, constructed of bleached coral rock and seashells (i.e., covering the concrete base). Or perhaps that a magical undersea palace was raised high into the dry mortal realm by tectonic activity.

The backstory is unique. In the mid-1990s about 500 Southeast Asian migrant workers, hired for nearby freeway construction, were stranded after the contractor went belly up. To thank the local temple that took them in and housed/ fed them during their protracted Taiwan stay, they built this new temple - and were obviously given carte blanche to craft their own "Chinese temple" interpretation.

Across the plaza from the temple is a small museum, façade also crafted of coral rock and seashells, that houses displays on old-days local craftworks and household objects.



Stone Temple



The entrance of the otherworldly Moon World attraction is deeper in the foothills north of the Stone Temple. This is a large badlands/mud volcano landscape, the most touristdeveloped of its kind on Taiwan. A long, well-done pathway takes visitors from the scenic area's entrance complex deep into one of the barren desert-like valleys and then up onto the ridges above, where there are viewing pavilions and scintillating vistas across the top of the badlands. Signboards with English along the way explain what you're looking at.

At the entrance area's visitor center is a large convenience store and vendor stands selling local produce and specialty agri-products. Don't miss the ice-cream vendor who has created a yummy grayish "mud" ice cream using locally grown beans - the texture is true "grainy/creamy mud." Note as well that this area is known for excellent free-range chicken, which is served at a number of simple, inexpensive, quality restaurants outside the Moon World entrance. •

@ ENGLISH AND CHINESE

xian bing餡餅

85 Sky Tower 高雄 85 大樓 A Gong Dian Reservoir 阿公店水庫 "A Line of Sky" 一線天 Chaoyuan Temple 朝元寺 "Classic Brown Cane Sugar Shaved Ice" 經典黑糖刨冰 Dagang Mountain 大崗山 fried leek dumplings 韭菜盒 Gangshan District 岡山區 Gangshan Eye 崗山之眼 "Gangshan three treasures" 岡山三寶 Moon World 月世界 "mud" ice cream 泥土冰淇淋 Panlong Gorge 盤龍峽谷 Stone Temple 石頭廟











Hiking in Kaohsiung

Shoushan and the Tengjhih National Forest Recreation Area

TEXT | STEVEN CROOK PHOTOS | RAY CHANG, VISION

Flying into Kaohsiung, it's the city's vast harbor and the glitzy buildings adorning the waterfront that'll catch your eye. Yet, on the west and north sides of the urban core, there are rugged green hills equally deserving of attention.

These tree- and bamboo-covered ridges are but a teaser for the topographic glories that lie in the city's hinterland. Far from Kaohsiung's airport, beyond quaint towns like Meinong, long rivers run between steep mountains. In fact, the northeasternmost point of Kaohsiung abuts Mt. Jade, the highest peak in Northeast Asia.

Over the past century, the upland that separates the north section of Kaohsiung's urban core from the Taiwan Strait has had various names attached to it, the most often used being **Shoushan** ("Longevity Mountain") and Chaishan ("Firewood Mountain"). It's a midget compared to the mountains that dominate the interior of Taiwan – the highest point is a mere 349m above sea level – but it's possible to explore here from morning to dusk without retracing your steps.

Visitors should come prepared for a serious hike. That means proper footwear, water, and snacks, and, from March through October, protection against the sun. There's no need to carry a map, as all major trail junctions have bilingual signs or mapboards.









Some trails are stretches of boardwalk with lots of steps. In other places, you'll be walking on an uneven mix of stone and dirt. There are several pavilions where you can sit down and, even on weekdays, be sure to meet amiable local hikers.

Wherever you start, you'll soon find yourself amid soothing stands of bamboo and the beguilingly ornate branch and root systems of banyan trees. Highlights include the sudden cliffs and deep defiles around Taiguo (Thailand) Valley and the view over the city as you approach Xiaoping Pavilion. But it's the strangely pitted rocks that lend Shoushan its special character, as well as its distinctive natural history.

Like nearby Banpingshan and Qijin Island's Qihoushan - both of which are part of Shoushan National Nature Park - Shoushan came into being when tectonic activity pushed layers of coral limestone above sea level. The 485ha park was

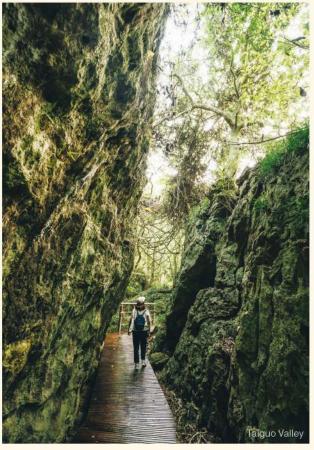
established in 2011 to preserve the area's environment and develop it as a leisure destination. Admission is free, and no permits are required for the main trails.

The way in which coral limestone weathers and breaks apart, influencing soil depth and chemistry, is key to the park's biodiversity. Including trees and ferns, 917 plant species thrive here, along with 137 bird species. Information panels beside the trails tell visitors to look out for freshwater crabs and Reeves's muntjacs. The latter are about the size of a dog. Thanks to their canine yap, they're nicknamed "barking deer."

And, of course, there are lots of monkeys. Shoushan is synonymous with Formosan rock macaques, so much so that English-speaking Kaohsiung residents often refer to the area as "Monkey Mountain." Some of Shoushan's macaques have gained a reputation for snatching food out of visitors' hands or otherwise behaving aggressively. Bilingual signs near the trailheads advise visitors how to avoid trouble. In short, don't tempt them, and stay calm if one tries to open your backpack.

Among Shoushan's biggest fans is Mark Roche, who's lived in Kaohsiung for 31 years. "Even on a short visit to the city, it'd be a mistake to bypass it. For outdoor types, it's an adventure playground, such is the variety of activities that can be done there," says the Irishman, who - when he's not leading bicycle tours or high-mountain treks - visits the area at least three times a week for triathlon training.

In addition to hiking and mountain biking, it's now possible to go caving in the area as well. Four of Shoushan's 150-plus caves can be visited if arrangements are made in advance through the National Nature Park website (nnp.cpami.gov.tw; Chinese).



KAOHSIUNG Modern Culture





New walkway in Shoushan Zoo



Zoo residents

The trailhead behind Longquan Temple provides around-the-clock access to what's probably the most unspoiled part of the national nature park. Buses plying a couple of routes will get you within 200m of the temple, including the frequent #R32 service from Aozihdi Station on the Kaohsiung Metro's Red Line. Near the stone steps at the start of the trail you'll find vendors selling drinks, snacks, hats, and hiking poles.

If you're driving a car, Qianguang Temple, about 500m further south, may be a more convenient starting point. It has a sizable parking lot, as well as bathrooms.

There's also the Shoushan Hiking Area South Entrance, which is closer to major urban-core tourist attractions such as The Pier-2 Art Center. From the final stop on the #56 bus route (hourly from Kaohsiung Main Station), it's a short walk through 228 Peace Memorial Park to the entrance.

On the same side of the ridge, Kaohsiung Martyrs' Shrine commemorates those who died fighting for the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) cause. However, most people come here for a different reason: In clear weather, the superb view fully justifies the 20min walk from Sizihwan Station on the Kaohsiung Metro's Yellow Line or Hamasen Station on the Circular Light Rail. Posing by the "LOVE" sign on the viewing platform in front of the shrine is a must-do for both young couples and those who've just graduated from college.

Rather than chilling out at the Martyrs' Shrine, travelers with young children might prefer to spend a couple of hours at the recently reopened Shoushan Zoo. Taiwan's very own Formosan black bears and Formosan sambars, plus many other animals, can be seen here.

Kaohsiung's taxi drivers are intimately familiar with all of these urban-core places. However, to get to our next destination, your best option is to rent a car.

The Tengjhih National Forest Recreation Area (admission NT\$120 per person) is a two-hour drive from central Kaohsiung. Located around 1,500m above sea level, it lies within the territory of the indigenous Bunun tribe.

To protect the pristine environment, the number of outsiders allowed into the forest area each day is strictly limited. It's possible to book visitor slots up to 14 days in advance through tj.forest.gov.tw (Chinese). Applications for weekdays have a much higher chance of success than those for a Saturday, Sunday, or public holiday.

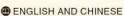
In recent years, Tengjhih - or, rather, the road that links it to the lowlands - has suffered severe and repeated typhoon damage. For this reason, before setting out, tourists are advised to check if their visit can go ahead, and to have a backup plan ready.

Fortunately, the mountainous northeastern half of Kaohsiung is jam-packed with scenic alternatives, among them the tribal villages of mountainous Maolin District and the multiethnic mountain valley known as Namasia.

It's worth getting to Tengjhih National Forest Recreation Area early in the day (opening times are 8am to 5pm), as there's a lot to see. In addition to expanses of old-growth forest and



Entrance to the forest recreation area (@Tengjih NFRA)



228 Peace Memorial Park高雄市二二八和平公園 Banpingshan 半屏山 Bunun tribe 布農族 Chaishan 柴山 Cryptomeria Observation Deck柳杉平台 Kaohsiung Martyrs' Shrine 高雄市忠烈祠 Longquan Temple龍泉禪寺 Maolin District 茂林區 Meinong 美濃 Mt. Jade 玉山 Namasia 那瑪夏

Qianguang Temple千光宫 Qihoushan 旗後山 Qijin Island旗津 Shoushan 壽山 Shoushan Hiking Area South Entrance南壽山登山口 Shoushan National Nature Park壽山國家自然公園 Shoushan Zoo 壽山動物園 Taiguo (Thailand) Valley泰國谷 Tengjhih National Forest Recreation Area藤枝國家森林遊樂區 The Pier-2 Art Center 駁二藝術特區 Xiaoping Pavilion小坪亭



Going on a hike through coniferous forest (@Tengjih NFRA)

impressive stands of conifer and broadleaf trees, there are giant ferns and rhododendrons which bloom in springtime.

Tengjhih's marked trails total 7.25km in length - more than enough for a good workout, if that's what you've come for. Those who prefer flat saunters to uphill marches can aim for the Cryptomeria Observation Deck and its picnic tables. Cryptomeria (Japanese cedar) were planted in Tengihih during the 1895-1945 period of Japanese rule for their economic value. These days, they're cherished for their beauty.

History buffs will also find something to their liking. The forest area preserves remnants of the trails and police stations that were established by the colonial authorities as they tried to exert control over the highland forests and Taiwan's recalcitrant indigenous tribes.

If you get to Tengjhih, or another high-altitude spot nearby, and find yourself enjoying moments of utter serenity, you'll understand this: The people who told you Kaohsiung City is an industrial hub were only half right, and that Kaohsiung's other half is awash with wondrous nature. •



Cultural Places of Interest



The Kaohsiung Museum of History (free entry), beside the Love River's lower section, is about a blockand-a-half from the Yanchengpu Station (Orange Line) and about three blocks along the Love River from the Fullon Hotel.

Its home is a striking colonial-architecture building from Taiwan's Japanese occupation period, built in 1938, purpose-constructed to house the city administration. It continued in this role after WWII, the municipal government moving out in 1992, the museum opening in 1998. The structure was built in what is called the Japanese Imperial Crown style, meaning Japanese-style roofing atop Neoclassical-style buildings, often with a centrally elevated structure capped with a pyramidal dome.

Its exhibits cover a varied range of topics, from the national, including the infamous 228 Incident of 1947 and educational development in Taiwan, to the local, including Kaohsiung's Han Chinese pioneer settlement and its port development.

The Alien Art Centre (entry fee) is one block from the Shoushan Park Station (Kaohsiung Light Rail line).



Alien Art Centre





KAOHSIUNG MUSEUM OF HISTORY

(高雄歷史博物館)

- (07) 531-2560
- No. 99, Hexi Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鹽埕區河西路 99 號)
- khm.org.tw

ALIEN ART CENTRE (金馬賓館當代美術館)

- (07) 286-5858
- O No. 111, Gushan 1st Rd., Gushan District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鼓山區鼓山一路 111號)
- @ www.alien.com.tw

KAOHSIUNG MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS (高雄市立美術館)

- (07) 555-0331
- No. 80, Meishuguan Rd., Gushan District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市鼓山區美術館路80號)
- www.kmfa.gov.tw

SHOYOEN JAPANESE GARDEN (逍遙園)

- (07) 222-5136
- No. 15, Lane 55, Liuhe 1stRd., Xinxing District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市新興區六合一路 55 巷 15號)

ENGLISH AND CHINESE

Central Park 中央公園 Chan Yee Group承億集團 85 Sky Tower 高雄 85 大樓 Fulong 福隆

Kaohsiung Exhibition Center高雄展覽館

Kaohsiung Lighthouse 高雄燈塔

Kaohsiung Main Public Library高雄市立圖書館總館 Kaohsiung Port 高雄港

Kaohsiung Port Cruise Terminal高雄港埠旅運中心

Neiweipi Cultural Park 內惟埤文化園區

Qiiin Island 旗津島

Yancheng District鹽埕區

Dedicated to the display of contemporary art by both Taiwanese and overseas talent, the home of the center is a former military hostel built in 1967 to handle navy/ army personnel transitioning to and from the Kinmen and Matsu archipelagoes just off the China coast, held by the Republic of China (Taiwan) since the end of the Chinese Civil War. The complex had been abandoned for a time before Alien Art, a multi-discipline art team dedicated to integrating artistic experiences with unique works of architecture, was entrusted with renovation and operation of the space. The museum was opened in 2018. There is also a special display on the building's unusual history, with period photos and military vets' oral histories.

Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts (entry fee) is four blocks from the Aozihdi Station (Red Line).

This facility is in the 40ha Neiweipi Cultural Park, once the site of a large wetland and irrigation ponds. Among the park's other attractions are the Children's Art Museum, Sculpture Park, Ecology Park, and Austronesian Cultural Area. Walk the beautifully landscaped grounds, along the large, tranquil lake and pathways lined with Madagascar Almond trees, inspecting some of the 37 large-scale installation sculptures, which have English introductions.

The large four-story museum primarily showcases contemporary works by Taiwanese artists, with a strong focus on creations by talents from the south, including indigenous artists. At the museum's core is the Sculpture Hall, entered from the spacious first-floor lobby, which soars four stories high and is topped with a large skylight, draping the artworks in natural lighting.

Shoyoen Japanese Garden (free entry) is a block-plus from the Sinyi Elementary School Station (Orange Line).

The complex dates to 1940, built as a villa residence and grounds for a patriarch of Japanese Buddhism's Jodo Shinshu branch who called Taiwan a jewel of the Japanese empire and decided to resettle here. He used the site as an education base for Taiwan agricultural development. The complex survived the intense Allied bombing of Kaohsiung in WWII and in 2017 was launched on a 3-year historical renovation project by the city government, opened again to the public in 2020.

The villa itself is a two-story structure with an appealing harmonious blend of classical Mediterraneanand Japanese-style architectural and interior design elements. Guided tours in Chinese are available. •





A Selection of the South's Bib Gourmand Eateries

TEXT | STEVEN CROOK PHOTOS | RAY CHANG, ALAN WEN

Michelin, publishers of the world's best-known restaurant guides, included the south of Taiwan for the first time when researching the latest edition of their Red Guide gourmet bible.

f the 321 eating establishments featured in the Michelin Guide Taipei 2022, Taipei, Taichung, Tainan and Kaohsiung, some 44 are in the historic former capital of Taiwan, Tainan, while 39 are in the seaside metropolis of Kaohsiung. Of the remainder, 170 are in Taipei and 68 are in Taichung.

Always looking for an excuse to stuff ourselves, Travel in Taiwan has recently tried out several of the southern eateries that received a "Bib Gourmand" accolade in the 2022 guide. This category was created to recognize places which, in the words of Michelin's website, offer "exceptionally good food at moderate prices."

KAOHSIUNG

Beef Chief

Many Bib Gourmand honorees are family businesses that have never given a thought to expansion. Beef Chief, by contrast, has grown into an island-wide operation. It has six branches, including two in Taipei, but it was the original location, an outpost close to Kaohsiung's Central Park, that caught the eye and tickled the tastebuds - of the Michelin team.

If you're here in a group of three or more people, do what most customers do and order a hot pot. What's a hot pot? It's a brothfilled pot in the center of your dining table, heated on an easyto-control gas hub, in which you cook to your own satisfaction a range of delectables, including meat, seafood, vegetables, and processed items known as huo guo liao (lit., "hot pot ingredients").

What with the leafy greens, the tofu, and the chunks of sweetcorn on the cob bobbing in the soup base, the initial reaction of hot-pot aficionados is likely to be "so far, so standard." And they'd be right. But the thin slices of marbled beef, if simmered for three to five seconds (the timing advised by the staff - don't forget to swirl the meat with a chopstick to ensure it cooks evenly), are, quite simply, to die for.

Beef Chief's insistence on using only the most freshly slaughtered beef is key to its enduring success. At other hot-pot establishments, there's a more-than-even chance the meat has sat in a freezer for a spell, especially if it's beef.

For those who'd rather not have a hot pot, the restaurant's bilingual menu offers a wide range of stir-fried bovine delicacies, including brisket, heart, liver, tendon, tripe (most priced around NT\$200 per serving). Beef fried rice is NT\$130. These can be washed down with soda, tea, or beer.



Beef Chief





BEEF CHIEF (牛老大涮牛肉 高雄總店)

- (07) 281-9196
- O No. 18, Ziqiang 2ndRd., Qianjin District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市前金區自強二路 18號)
- (closed on Monday)
- Www.facebook.com/nldk2
- figuide.michelin.com/tw/en/kaohsiung-region/kaohsiung/ restaurant/beef-chief-zihciang-2nd-road

Hung Chi Rice Shop

The dish that's elevated this modern-looking, comfortably furnished eatery to renown beyond its neighborhood is a blue-collar favorite. Every day, hundreds of thousands of portions of what Hung Chi's bilingual menu calls **Minced Pork Rice** (NT\$35) are wolfed down by Taiwanese truck drivers and construction workers around the country.

Done well, as it is here, minced pork rice, aka braised pork rice, is a profoundly satisfying blend of protein and carbs, almost always accompanied by a soup (options here include clam, fish ball, and wonton, NT\$45 to NT\$65), and sometimes by a portion of vegetables. For the latter, a truly local choice would be water spinach or sweet-potato leaves (both NT\$40).

Going beyond the merely traditional, Hung Chi also offers **Spicy Minced Pork Rice** (NT\$45) – the hotness of which shouldn't be underestimated – and over-easy eggs (NT\$15, great for mixing into the rice), in addition to the usual braised eggs (NT\$15) and braised tofu (NT\$15).









Spicy Minced Pork Rice and other dishes

Bei Gang Tsai Rice Tube

Located a stone's throw from the Love River, Bei Gang Tsai Rice Tube – now operated by the founder's grandchildren – specializes in *migao*, a snack that's two-thirds glutinous rice, one-third highly savory protein. Here, small pieces of pork, along with some of the gravy the meat was braised in, are placed in a coffee mug-sized metal container. This cylinder (or "rice tube") is then filled with precooked rice and placed in a steamer.

Each time a customer orders a **Rice Tube** (NT\$45), one is pulled from the steamer and emptied upsidedown in a bowl. Your food arrives with the meat and sauce at the top, shaped, some say, like a traditional Hakka roundhouse. (This treat, however, has no particular connection to Taiwan's Hakka minority.)

Like several other items described in this article, one serving of an eatery's signature attraction doesn't make a meal. *Travel in Taiwan* also unreservedly recommends the unique-in-our-experience **Steamed Egg Soup** (NT\$45), which contains sliced mushrooms and slivers of pork. Other especially tasty options include the **Swordfish-Ball Soup** (NT\$45) and **Bitter Gourd Pork Ribs** (NT\$55).

Rice Tube



Caizong Li

Being a vegetarian doesn't mean you can't enjoy traditional Taiwanese snacks, thanks to places like Caizong Li. This shop and it certainly looks more like a shop than a restaurant, though it has tables for eat-in customers - offers just two items. The first, from which it takes its name, is a fist-sized pyramid-shaped Vegetarian Glutinous Rice Dumpling (NT\$35), aka zongzi. The other is Kelp Miso Soup (NT\$12), a bowl of which is a perfect complement to a dumpling.

Whereas conventional zongzi are packed with fatty pork, egg yolk, peanuts, and - it has to be said - a fair bit of oil, those that keep Caizong Li's customers coming back are altogether lighter and healthier. Apart from peanuts, it's 100-percent rice, steamed in a way that seems to retain the subtle fragrance of the grain.

Glutinous-rice dumplings are best eaten hot with a dash of soysauce paste and a teaspoon of ground peanuts. But they're fine cold, and they make great hiking snacks. Consider buying one or two if you're setting out for Shoushan National Nature Park (see page 28).



Vegetarian Glutinous Rice Dumpling

Duck 3hen

There's no prize for guessing which protein plays a starring role at this eatery, now in its seventh decade. A 10-minute walk from Pier-2 Art Center, Duck Zhen continues to pull in foodies in impressive numbers.

Some of those who've visited Duck Zhen attribute its success to the way they marinate the meat, which is done for four hours. It emerges neither greasy (a complaint often made by those who other duckmeat restaurants have failed to win over) nor fishy. Be prepared for quite a few bones - in Taiwan, duck meat is commonly served without bones being removed - but also for deliciously tender flesh.

If here by yourself, you're best off ordering a small portion of Duck Rice (NT\$60), which includes finely chopped braised pork as well as slices of mouthwatering waterfowl. Adventurous gourmands might want to try the Combination Soup (NT\$60), a bit-of-everything dish that includes duck heart, duck liver, duck gizzard, and duck intestine. Vegetables and pork-gravy rice (NT\$25/35) are also available.

HUNG CHI RICE SHOP (弘記肉燥飯舖)

- **(**07) 558-3777
- No. 96, Liwen Rd., Zuoying District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市左營區立文路96號)
- O 11:30am~2:30pm, 5pm~8:30pm
- guide.michelin.com/tw/en/kaohsiung-region/ kaohsiung/restaurant/hung-chi-rice-shop

BEI GANG TSAI RICE TUBE (北港蔡筒仔米糕)

- (07) 551-7443
- No. 167, Hexi Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City 高雄市鹽埕區河西路167號)
- © 2:30pm~9:30pm (closed on Wednesday)
- www.facebook.com/hungchiriceshop
- guide.michelin.com/tw/en/kaohsiung-region/kaohsiung/ restaurant/bei-gang-tsai-rice-tube-yancheng

DUCK ZHEN (鴨肉珍)

- (07) 521-5018
- No. 256/258, Wufu 4th Rd., Yancheng District, Kaohsiung City
- (高雄市鹽埕區五福四路 256/258號)
- O 10am~8pm (closed on Tuesday) www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100046519766105
- guide.michelin.com/tw/en/kaohsiung-region/ kaohsiung/restaurant/duck-zhen

CAIZONG LI (菜粽李粽店)

- (07) 331-3087
- No. 159, Chenggong 1st Rd., Lingya District, Kaohsiung City (高雄市苓雅區成功一路159號)
- 6:30am~6:15pm (closed on Tuesday)
- guide.michelin.com/tw/en/kaohsiung-region/ kaohsiung/restaurant/caizong-li

