

What Surprises You About Taiwan?



I'm sure most of the people have ever heard about Taiwan as one of the most prosperous countries in Southeast Asia and also about its high density population in urban areas; well, this general knowledge about this island was not wide enough for me to imagine the multiple transportation options that residents of Taiwan could have.

During my first day going around Taipei everything seemed to be as I expected, like others international cities in the world, full of commerce, government and culture. But my big surprise happened while waiting at the red light when I noticed just how many scooters were on the road, actually not only on the road but also thousands of them that were parked along the sidewalks.

By that time I was not aware of the fact that there are around 10 millions scooters throughout Taiwan. But even though traffic jam could get heavy during rush hours, everyone basically knows what's going on, and so long as people remain predictable in their motions and even in their speed, traffic actually flows pretty well.

Typical Taiwanese families usually have at least three scooters for every household. Why? Pretty simple, they are cheap, convenient and easy to park in the city where finding a space is a total nightmare. What is particularly interesting about the scooters is the variety of people riding them, that goes from old women, young women, students, big guys, little guys, people in suits, delivery people, and entire families, everyone just pattered along.

Related to ways of transportation, the use of bicycles is also pretty common as a tool for commuting and recreation. My own experience as a student of National Taiwan University that has the biggest campus in Taiwan was quite special because I never thought I could ever see that many bicycles gather together. Since my first day at school some students recommend me to get a bike since it is considered the most popular form of transport on campus because skateboard, roller-blade and motorcycle are forbidden in campus. Bike has become very popular because they are easy to ride and maintain, it's also very convenient for students living in and around campus, as they can bike to classes and school. In addition, NTU provides bicycle service stations on and near campus where students can purchase bike equipment, store bikes and obtain minor repair services.



I also got to say that Taiwanese's integrity and honesty have surprised me the most. I remember listening to some foreigners being impressed for getting back wallets or personal belongings that they had lost or dropped on streets, MRT or any store. Well, is hard to believe until you experience it on your own, and that's what happened to me, I accidentally dropped my mobile phone while riding my bicycle inside school and sadly I didn't realize it until couple of hours later; obviously I had no idea where I left my phone so I went back to all the stores that I visited during the day with no succeed at all; however it didn't take long to the person who found it to call one of my friends asking where he could find me. Minutes later I got my

phone back and couldn't say anything else but thank you so much. In addition to this point, I must say Taiwan is a very safe place to live in. I always feel secure whether I am riding the bus or walking down the street no matter what time of the day or night, and this is for sure something all Taiwanese people should be proud of.