



Press release: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009

## **Latest news from The Taiwan Tourism Bureau**

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### **1. FLY TO TAIWAN FOR JUST £290 WITH AIR ASIA**

From July 2009, it will be possible to fly from the UK to Taipei via Kuala Lumpur from just £290 one-way without taxes with Air Asia. Travellers can save even more money by pre-booking meals and baggage online.

Air Asia plans to launch a five-weekly Kuala Lumpur to Taipei direct flight on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009. The flights will be operated by AirAsia's low-cost long haul carrier affiliate, AirAsia X. The Malaysian-based airline already flies from London Stanstead to Kuala Lumpur for as little as £272 one-way.

Josephine Huang, marketing manager, Taiwan Tourism Bureau (Europe), commented:

"This new fare from Air Asia makes it possible for British travellers to visit Taiwan very cheaply and we look forward to welcoming even more tourists to our island. The Kuala-Lumpur to Taipei route also opens up the possibility of twinning a holiday in Taiwan with one in Malaysia, which will no doubt be very popular with the British market."

[www.airasia.com](http://www.airasia.com).

### **2. SPRING AND SUMMER EVENTS IN TAIWAN**

Taiwan is host to a plethora of events and festivals throughout the year. Here's a selection of what's happening this spring and summer in 2009:

- Dragon Boat Festival –28<sup>th</sup> May 2009, nationwide**

Together with Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival is one of Taiwan's three major annual holidays.

Because of its origins and customs, it is related to the remembrance of Cyuyuan, a poet in the Warring States Period, who tried to commit suicide by drowning himself in a river to protest against the cruel government.

Legend has it that when the poet jumped to his death into the river, the local people rowed their boats to and fro in search of him. This slowly evolved into the dragon boat races. Today, dragon boat races are a popular activity.

Each year, most local areas in Taiwan hold their own races. For example, the Taipei Dragon Boat Festival will be taken place at Dajia Riverside Park from 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009. During the Festival, there are dragon boat races and spectators eat glutinous rice dumplings called zongzih.

- **World Games 2009 – 16<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> July 2009, Kaoshiung**

The 2009 World Games will be held in Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan this summer. This will be the first Olympic-related event to be hosted by Taiwan since the start of their participation as Chinese Taipei in the events at the 1984 Summer Olympics. It will be by far the largest and most high-profile multi-sports event ever held on the island.

The World Games was first held in 1981 and is a competition of sports that are not played in the Olympic Games. Sports next year include: orienteering, body building, powerlifting, finswimming, squash, netball, water skiing and casting.

- **Ghost Festival, 19<sup>th</sup> August – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Keelung**

The Ghost Festival combines the Buddhist Ullambana (deliverance) Festival and the Taoist Ghost Festival, both of which honour dead spirits. The seventh lunar month is known as 'ghost month' and each year a different Keelung clan is chosen to sponsor it.

Highlights of the event include folk-art performances, the opening of the gates of hell and the release of burning water lanterns. At this time, families make offerings to their ancestors and ghosts of the underworld. The festival takes place in the large port town of Keelung, just outside Taipei. Keelung is also renowned for having some of the best nightmarkets for food in the country.

- **International Swimming Festival, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Sun Moon Lake**

Sun Moon Lake is the largest lake in Taiwan as well as a popular tourist attraction. Normally swimming is not permitted in the lake, except for this one day in September when around 10,000 people attempt to swim the 3km to the opposite shore. In the evening, people gather at the lakeside for a party and firework display.

Sun Moon Lake is located inland in Western Taiwan. The area is also home to the luxurious five star hotel, The Lalu, which boasts the country's longest infinity swimming pool.

- **Deaflympics – 5<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> September 2009, Taipei**

The 21st Deaflympics will take place in Taipei between 5th and 15th September 2009. To prepare for the games, the Taipei City Government has reconstructed the forty year-old stadium and other venues in the city to welcome athletes in September 2009. More than 3,200 deaf athletes and officials from 67 nations participated in the last Deaflympics, which was held in Melbourne, Australia, in January 2005. The Deaflympics were first established in 1924. This year, judo, karate and Taekwondo have been added to the Deaflympic sports competition programme.

**- Ends -**

For more information on Taiwan, please see [www.taiwan.net.tw](http://www.taiwan.net.tw) or telephone 020 7928 1600.

For media information and image or if you're interested in visiting Taiwan on an individual or group press trip, please contact Susie Tempest or Sarah Habicht at the Saltmarsh Partnership on 020 7928 1600 or email [susie@saltmarshpr.co.uk](mailto:susie@saltmarshpr.co.uk) / [sarah@saltmarshpr.co.uk](mailto:sarah@saltmarshpr.co.uk).