



Latest news from the Taiwan Tourism Bureau

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1. Last chance – New Year fireworks from world's tallest building

New Year's Eve 2009 will be the last time that visitors to Taiwan can see fireworks from the world's tallest building. Taipei 101 in Taiwan's capital city will retain the accolade until 4th January 2010, when the Burj Dubai is expected to officially open as the new tallest building in the world.

As with previous years, thousands of people gather on New Year's Eve in Taipei's east district – home to skyscraper Taipei 101 – to see in the New Year with a lively programme of entertainment and live music. Top Taiwanese rock and pop groups perform on a large stage in front of the Taipei City Hall before the countdown to 2010 begins.

Following the chimes declaring midnight, the skies of the capital come alive with light and colour. Audiences are entertained for several minutes by a display of special effects and fireworks, making the move into New Year. Most partygoers then celebrate well into the night.

While the fireworks at Taipei of 101 are distinctive to Taipei, there are similar New Year's Eve gatherings and celebrations in all major cities around the island, making Taiwan a great and undiscovered destination to party into 2010.

www.taipei-101.com

2. Celebrate Chinese New Year in Taiwan, 13th-16th February 2010

Revellers discontent with just one New Year's celebration can celebrate this event twice during Taiwan's traditional Chinese Lunar New Year festivities. Celebrations will take place on the island from 13th-16th February 2010.

Lunar New Year is one of the most important and colourful events of the year and festivities last for up to four days. Family is central to the festival and it joins together to enjoy a New Year's Eve banquet on 13th February 2010. Gifts are exchanged for the coming year and children and younger people are given money in traditional red envelopes.

All of Taiwan's temples are usually very busy during this time of year, as Taiwanese people crowd into them to pray for good luck. At the stroke of midnight on Lunar New Year's Eve, the doors of temples are thrown open and locals surge forward in an attempt to be the first to place their incense sticks into the censer, as the first person to do so is believed to be blessed with good luck for the coming year.

Shopping for Lunar New Year's fare begins early and local street markets bustle with people buying groceries for the festival. Familiar songs and traditional music associated with the Lunar New Year are broadcast in shopping centres, many of which hold sales in celebration of the event.

www.taiwan.net.tw

3. Taiwan's Lantern Festival to light up Chiayi City, February 2010

The streets of Chiayi City, one of Taiwan's largest southern cities, will be awash with colour and ancient Chinese tradition during Taiwan's Lantern Festival, which will take place between 28th February and 7th March 2010.

Laser shows and firework displays will light up the night to celebrate this 'second New Year', which forms the final celebrations of the traditional Chinese Lunar New Year.

Towns and villages throughout Taiwan put on beautiful displays of decorative lanterns depicting birds, beasts and historical figures. Lanterns are carried by children in processions, which are used to colourfully decorate temples and light up family homes. The Lantern Festival is themed according to the animal of the Chinese zodiac representing that year, with 2010 being the year of the Tiger.

Festivities can last up to five days and traditional themes are celebrated with modern technology, such as laser light shows, fireworks and robotics, which produce dramatic shows and draw huge crowds.

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For more information on Taiwan, please see 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 / sarah@saltmarshpr.co.uk.