

Follow the Sizzle: Eating Your Way Through Taiwan!

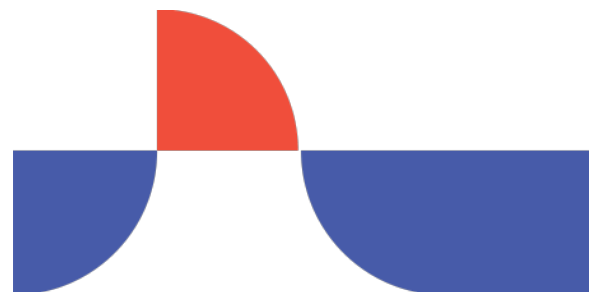
A Real Traveler's Guide to the Night Markets, Local
Secrets, and Soulful Bites of Taiwan

By: **Amaiwan Traveler**

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Glossary for Hungry Travelers

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Bonus: Taipei Food Lover's Guide

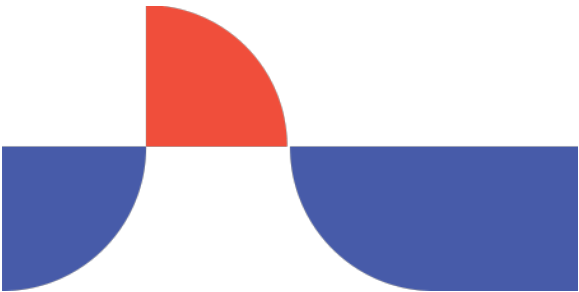
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A Real Traveler's Guide to the Night Markets, Local Secrets, and Soulful Bites of Taiwan





Quick Start: Plan Your Trip by Chapter

Just Landed? Start with Chapters 1 & 2 for a crash course in night market survival.

First Food Crawl? Head to Chapter 3 for the must-try street snacks.

Sweet Tooth? Chapter 4 dives into Taiwan's drink & dessert culture.

Leaving Taipei? See Chapter 5 for regional eats and hidden flavors.

Want to Eat Like a Local (without speaking Mandarin)? Go straight to Chapter 7.

Holiday Trip? Chapter 11 covers festive food traditions and seasonal specialties.

Bonus Tools: Check the Glossary & Taipei Food Guide in the back for offline help and can't-miss spots.



01

Welcome to the Island of Night Markets





How It All Began

I didn't come to Taiwan for the street food. I came in the mid-90s, long before bubble tea had its own emoji. Taipei back then was scooters, mystery noodles, and a sense that something was happening. I showed up with a backpack, a camera, and a few weeks carved out of a restless life. I didn't plan on coming back.



But I did. Again and again. Taiwan became my second home, a part-time life lived between two worlds. And while the reasons I stayed changed, one thing kept pulling me back to the street: the food.

This book is for travelers like me. The ones who land hungry. The ones who skip the brochures and wander the alleys. The ones who don't speak the language but speak fluent curiosity. If that's you, welcome. Let's eat.

Discovering the Pulse of Taiwan, One Bite at a Time

The first time you step off the MRT near Shilin, the smell hits: fryer oil, grilled meat, and something borderline illegal-smelling—but addictive. That's your welcome to Taiwan's night markets. They don't whisper. They slap you awake.

Night markets are where Taiwan comes alive after dark. Teenagers wander, families huddle, vendors shout, flames leap from woks. It's chaos. It's comfort. It's dinner.



Back in the day, stalls were fewer, lights dimmer, but the energy? Still electric. Whether it's Shilin, Liuhe in Kaohsiung, or Keelung's waterfront frenzy, every market has its own vibe. Some blast Mandopop, others hum old ballads. All smell like adventure.

To truly know Taiwan, skip the museum. Walk into the steam. Follow the smoke. Let your nose and your gut do the navigating.

The Soul of the Streets

One of my first meals in Taiwan was down a Tainan alley barely wide enough for a bike. A man in a stained apron handed me beef soup and vanished. I didn't get a smile. I got umami.

Over 300 night markets span the island. Some specialize in seafood. Others in fried snacks or hot soups. They all follow one rule: roam, snack, and keep moving. You're not here to sit. You're here to wander.

This isn't fine dining. This is fine wandering.





What Makes This Culture Unique

Unlike Western meals—order, sit, sequence—Taiwan’s night markets are a freestyle affair. A bite of fried chicken here, a sip of sweet tea there, maybe grilled squid for the win. No rules. No wrong turns.

Locals treat it like a scavenger hunt. Everyone’s got their stall. Their secret bite. Their grandma vendor frying tofu since the ‘80s. Tourists chase the Instagram-famous. The real stuff? It’s tucked between the forgotten corners.

Etiquette here is unwritten but vital: wait your turn, don’t block the lane, share tables, and thank your vendor—even if all you manage is a smile.



A Note to First-Time Travelers

New to Taiwan? No Mandarin? No problem. Pointing works. So does curiosity. So does hunger.

The beauty of Taiwan's food scene is how open it is. You don't need to know the language. You just need to show up and try. You'll be welcomed.

Wrapping It Up

Night markets aren't just places to eat. They're places to feel. They hum with the rhythm of the island. The smells, the sounds, the steam—it's a crash course in Taiwan, one skewer at a time.

If you want to understand this place, don't follow a map. Follow the smoke. Follow the crowd. Start with your stomach. Let the story unfold from there.





02

Mastering the Night Market Game



Rookie Moves and a Skewer Mishap

My first time in a Taiwanese night market, I nearly bit into raw pork. I pointed, smiled, and faked confidence at a meat skewer stall. The vendor yanked it from my hand just in time. His face said it all: rookie.

Consider this chapter your street food boot camp. No guesswork. No embarrassment. Just tips to get you moving through the market like a local.



Walk First, Bite Later

Do a full lap before buying anything. Smell everything. Listen to the sizzle. See where the locals line up. The best bites are rarely at the front.

Pro tip: If it's deep in the market, smells incredible, and has a line? That's your jackpot.

Timing is Everything

- Golden Hour (7–9 PM): Peak chaos, peak flavor.
- Early Bird (before 6 PM): Fewer crowds, fresher seats.
- Late Night (after 9:30): Leftovers, discounts, and late-night energy.
- Weekdays: More locals, fewer tourists. Tuesdays are gold.
- Rainy Nights: Fewer lines. Locals stay. Tourists don't.





Blend In Like a Local

- Move with the crowd.
- Don't block stalls or paths.
- Share tables—it's expected.
- Watch others order, then mimic. Point. Smile. Nod.
- Thank the vendor: a smile or “xièxiè” goes far.

Rookie Mistakes to Avoid

- Don't fill up on the first snack.
- Don't assume you know what something is.
- Don't skip dessert.
- Don't try to juggle four things while walking. One hand free, always.

Bourdain Moment: This isn't about conquering the market. It's about surrendering to it.

The Confidence Booster

Start safe: fried chicken cutlet, scallion pancake, or braised pork rice. Nail that. Then go deeper.

And if you screw up? Burn your tongue? Order the wrong thing? Perfect. That's part of the fun.

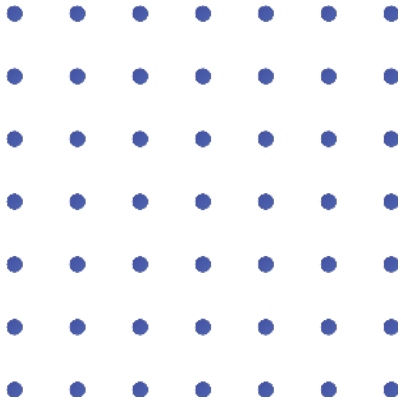
Next stop: the iconic dishes that define Taiwan's street scene—your edible playlist. Let's eat.





About the Author

TINAM



Billy Murphey is a travel YouTuber, longtime Taiwan enthusiast, and the creator of Amaiwan Traveler—a channel dedicated to capturing the stories, streets, and eats of Taiwan and beyond. With a voice that leans more Anthony Bourdain than travel brochure, Billy brings curiosity, grit, and heart to every meal and moment.

He first landed in Taiwan in the mid-1990s with a camera, a backpack, and zero Mandarin. What started as a short trip turned into a decades-long love affair with the island’s food, culture, and people. Now, he splits his time between Taipei and Fort Lauderdale, Florida—still filming, still blogging, and still hungry.

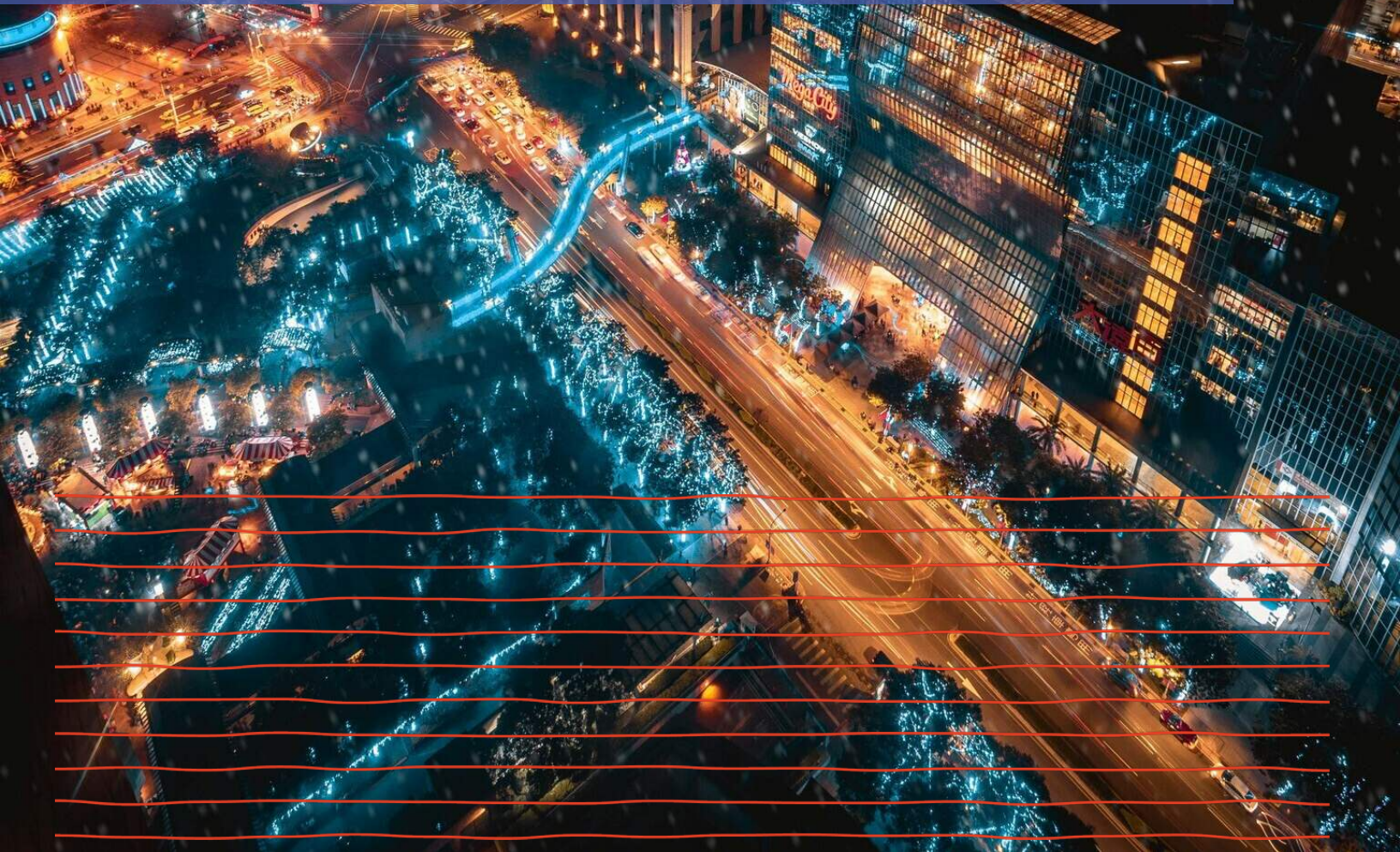
When he’s not chasing dumpling carts or sipping brown sugar boba, you’ll find him hiking Elephant Mountain or making the case that lu rou fan belongs on the list of world’s greatest comfort foods.

Follow his journey: [👉 youtube.com/c/AmaiwanTraveler](https://www.youtube.com/c/AmaiwanTraveler)





Back Cover Summary





Street Food : Eating Your Way Through Taiwan

Skip the tourist traps and dive straight into Taiwan's steamiest, stickiest, and most satisfying food experiences.

In this gritty and heartfelt guide, travel YouTuber and street food veteran Billy Murphey takes you from neon-lit night markets to back-alley breakfast joints—sharing the bites, smells, and stories that define the island's culture.

Inside you'll get:

- Must-try dishes (and which ones to skip)
- Real strategies for navigating Taiwan's food scene—even if you don't speak Mandarin
- Local insight on where to eat, what to order, and how not to embarrass yourself
- Region-by-region flavor maps and bonus food hacks

Whether you're a first-timer with a short layover or an expat still figuring it out, this isn't just what to eat in Taiwan. It's how to experience it.

"The best kind of food writing makes you hungry and makes you want to go. Billy does both."

