

Why Taipingshan Should Be Next on Your Travel List



Taipingshan is the crown jewel of Yilan's southern countryside. This striking mountain area is famous for its colorful trees, peaceful lakes, and misty forests. It was first a hunting ground for the Atayal people, and its forests survived years of Japanese logging.

Some of the best views of Taipingshan's magical slopes can be seen along Jancing Historic Trail . This route follows an old Japanese railroad around the mountains. At any time of year, you can expect beautiful views. On clear winter days, for example, you'll catch sight of Dabajian Mountain's snowy peak. Later, in spring, the path is lined with soft white sakura flowers.

Anyone who feels tired after their hike here should head straight for Jiuzhize Hot Spring . This relaxing place was first built by the Japanese. The hot spring has a few bathing areas, one of which is cut out of a huge mountain rock. For a delicious snack, try one of the hot spring eggs, which you can boil in a woven basket using naturally heated water.



While it might be a mountain, you don't have to do much walking to get a sense of Taipingshan's beauty. The Bong Bong train travels three kilometers through the forest past lovely valley views. This cute train was created to help the Japanese transport logs through the forest. Today, it only carries people. The fact that it has open sides means you can take some great photos during the ride.

Cueifong Lake , on Taipingshan's east side, is another highlight. At 1,840 meters above sea level, it is one of Taiwan's highest bodies of water. Due to its remote location, Cueifong has hardly been disturbed over the centuries. It looks just as it did thousands of years ago, with a perfectly still surface bordered by pine trees.

Just to the south of Cueifong, Wangyangshan Trail offers breathtaking views. From the top of this hike, you can look out over a sea of clouds. It's the perfect place to take a breather while you take in the majesty of Taipingshan.

Fun Facts



Most of us love the dogs and cats in our lives. Sometimes, though, the things they do leave us confused! Luckily, animal experts know the reasons for many of our pets' odd habits. Let's learn about a few of them.

We begin with man's best friend, dogs. You probably have seen dogs stick their nose or even their head out the window on a car ride. This isn't just because they like the wind in their face. It's also about dogs' great sense of smell. They get a blast of smells and sights every time they put their head out the window of a moving car. This shows how much they love new experiences!

After a dog is done exploring, it likes nothing more than to curl up for a good sleep. But dogs have a strange habit of circling a few times before they lie down. This helps them get comfortable, but it's also about protection. In the wild, dogs would dig a small hole to sleep in. Curling into a ball keeps them warm and protects their soft bellies.



Many people love their cats, but cats can sometimes be a little harder to understand than dogs! They don't show feelings with their faces, but mostly with their actions. One famous way cats communicate is their purr. You may think cats only purr when they're happy. This is true most of the time, but not always. Cats might also purr if they're hurt or in pain. Some experts suggest the speed of a purr helps a cat heal itself. Purring helps a cat's bones grow faster, and it can even help humans feel better.

To many people's confusion, a cat might roll over and show its belly, but get angry when we pet it! Dogs and cats both show their bellies to people they trust. But in cats, this can also be a defensive position. They can use their claws and teeth more easily. Don't damage your cat's trust by touching its belly unless you know it likes that! Instead, pet it on the head, especially the cheeks and chin.

Animals may seem to act strangely, but we can understand them if we know what their actions mean. Get to know your pets better by learning their language!

The Race into Space



As World War II concluded, the world hoped to see an end to all conflict. This wasn't to be the case, though, as another war was about to begin. But this was a new type of war: one that featured many elements of a sci-fi movie. The Cold War was a race between two great powers: the capitalist US and the communist Soviet Union. Instead of fighting directly, they competed to build the most advanced technology and weapons. Each country believed in its own ideology and both were determined to be the winner. The 1950s saw the war move away from Earth and into space, starting what's known as the "Space Race."

The Soviet Union took the lead in this race to space. In 1957, it successfully launched the Sputnik and Sputnik 2 satellites. A year later, the US launched its first satellite, called Explorer 1. However, the harder the US tried to catch up to the Soviet Union, the further behind it fell. On April 12, 1961, the Soviet Union put the very first person into space. This man's name was Yuri Gagarin. Gagarin returned to Earth as a global hero, and his name forever lives on as the first to enter space.



By the mid-1960s, the Space Race was still being led by the Soviet Union. However, this changed when the US made a plan to land people on the moon before 1970. Sadly, the project got off to a tragic start. In 1967, an accident during a launch practice for the Apollo 1 spacecraft resulted in the deaths of three astronauts. In spite of the disaster, the US continued with its plan. On July 20, 1969, the Space Race saw its most significant moment. Three US astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins, successfully landed the Apollo 11 spacecraft on the moon.

After the successful moon landing, the US declared that it had won the Space Race. From that point on, neither the US nor the Soviet Union maintained as much interest in space missions. Gradually, the two countries began to work together. In 1975, astronauts from both countries met each other in space and shook hands. This was a sign that the Cold War was coming to an end. American and Russian astronauts now often work alongside each other on board the International Space Station.

The Ups and Downs of Roller Coaster History



When you think of a roller coaster, what comes to your mind? Is it a modern metal machine that allows people to go very fast on a track? If so, you're like most people. But what came before these quick and mighty roller coasters? Let's jump into the history of this exciting ride.

The Russians were the first to build "roller coasters." These were made a long time ago, in the 1600s, and were basically gravity rides. They built tall wooden ramps and covered them with water in winter, which soon turned to ice. To ride them, people would climb up a 21-meter ladder, and then sit down on a sled. After being pushed, the rider would enjoy speeding down a 183-meter-long path. Big cities and small towns alike enjoyed the ice slides.

The French took the idea back to France in the early 1800s and named it "the Russian mountain." Because France has a warmer climate, the French started to use wax slides instead of ice. Later, they began adding wheels to the sleds for more function throughout all of the seasons.



The idea of riding roller coasters didn't make it across the Atlantic Ocean until the early 19th century. The Mauch Chunk Switchback Railway was the first coaster in the US. Originally built to carry coal, the railway went through a 14-kilometer-long downhill track in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

The golden age of roller coasters took place from the early 1920s to the end of the decade. During this time, designers were making roller coasters taller, longer, and faster than ever before. The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II put an end to this time of roller coaster prosperity.

In 1955, Walt Disney brought back the popularity of roller coasters by building a new amusement park in California, US: Disneyland. A new type of roller coaster, the Matterhorn, opened in Disneyland in 1959. It was built with steel. Using steel allowed the roller coaster to go in many more directions than the previous wooden rails did. This idea changed the roller coaster industry into what it is today.

The Rise of the Rose through History



Of all the flowers in the world, there is perhaps none more iconic than the rose. Allusions to this flower are scattered throughout modern culture; however, this alluring bloom was just as significant in the past. In fact, the rose has long been used to communicate a number of ideas, ranging from romance to political alliances. In this way, the flower has served as a powerful symbol throughout time.

It is believed the rose first became important in Greek mythology. When Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, emerged from the ocean, the sea foam that touched her body turned into bushes of white roses once it reached the shore, creating a symbol closely connected with her beauty.

During the period of the Roman Empire, roses began serving another purpose. Roses were painted on the ceilings of banquet rooms as a way to remind guests that anything discussed under the influence of wine should be kept secret. This gave rise to the Latin phrase *sub rosa*, meaning “under the rose,” which is used to denote confidentiality.

Later, at the end of the Middle Ages, roses were associated with power. In 15th-century England, two warring houses, the House of Lancaster and the House of York, were both represented by a single rose: a red one and a white one, respectively. When the House of Lancaster won control of England, Henry Tudor became King Henry VII. After he married Elizabeth of York, he combined both roses to show the relationship between the two houses, creating the Tudor Rose.

Today, roses are largely used to express feelings for others. For example, red roses popularly symbolize love, yellow roses are connected with friendship, and a gift of dark pink roses traditionally shows gratitude. With more than 30,000 varieties of roses existing today, there is no shortage of ways to express yourself with these beautiful flowers.

Hidden Figures



It's the early 1940s, and the US's National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) has a problem. It doesn't have enough mathematicians because many American men are fighting in World War II. To make up the numbers, NACA hires a small number of Black women. These women will not only challenge racism in the US but also make some of the greatest achievements in modern science.

In 1942, Dorothy Vaughan, a single mother, teacher, and laundry worker, is hired into the organization. Because of her race, she's made to work in the West Area, a separate office away from most white mathematicians. The West Area is managed by two white women, but when they leave the job, no one is a better replacement than Dorothy. She becomes NACA's first Black manager in 1951.

Soon after, Dorothy is joined by Mary Jackson. Smart and outspoken, Mary won't tolerate racism. When she sees a "colored workers" sign in the NACA cafeteria, she secretly takes it down. Mary's hard work eventually earns the respect of the management. She's later made an engineer, a job even most white women cannot get.

Another of the brilliant minds to join NACA is Katherine Coleman. Katherine is such an excellent mathematician that she was among the first Black students at a university in her native West Virginia. She moves some distance from her family for the job. Like Mary, she refuses to be treated differently because of her race. Her research into plane crashes and her charming personality earn her the respect of many people at NACA.

When they join NACA, Dorothy, Mary, and Katherine find themselves in a strange situation. They are working on some of the most advanced scientific problems in the world. However, they are also working in Virginia, a US state where segregation remains legal. As a result, when Katherine is first promoted, her boss fails to give her a pay raise. Meanwhile, when NACA asks Mary to take further training at a white university, she must beg the government to let her enroll.

Difficult as these challenges are, the three women remain focused on their work and they help achieve several advances in flight technology.