

My Beautiful Taiwanese Experience



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The trip to Taiwan from Valencia was quite interesting. First, the flights, I love to do it in big planes and I wished to see the landscape from the airplane when we flew over India, Pakistan or the former Soviet Republics but it was the night. Our short stop in Bangkok was my first startle with people and a culture different to ours. There was high humid and hot, it was suffocating. One thing that appeals to me were the Thai stewardess, they are small and delicate compared with the huge Holland ones of KLM. I am also small, so I prefer the Thai ones. When we arrived to Taipei it was raining, I remember this city as a humid and noisy one. A huge amount of motorcycles replace the bicycles that were used not so long ago. The people drive in a chaotic way and just cross the street, even when the traffic light is green is an adventure. The streets were dirty by the engine oil and the air highly polluted. The economic growth brings also the pollution, it is the same



in Europe, but here, there are a general ecologist thinking that I did not find in Taiwan. The food was strange, the bread is not used, and I love it, and also you do not add salt to the food. In the food there are mixes of bitter and sweet tastes and my palate is not used to this. Nevertheless, the meals are varied and healthy, which I thank because I hate the fast food. There are a lot of little restaurants that invade the sidewalk and when you take a walk the smells of the food mixed with the smog giving a special smell to Taiwan. In the sidewalks there are also a huge amount of shops that are open until late and on Sundays; this is not the

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same in Spain. I do not like the Consumer society, so I do not like this aspect of the Taiwanese society. Anyway, I do not know if this is a new thing or maybe the evolution of the traditional life style. We used the fast and modern Taipei's tube to move around the city, we went to the zoo. I love the animals and the Nature, so I enjoyed the visit to the zoo as it is located inside a subtropical forest. On our way to the zoo I saw a cemetery, it was so different to the ones we have in Spain. In Taiwan they are beautiful and care, you notice that the Taiwanese respect their ancestors. But what I most like of my trip was Tainan. When we arrived from Taipei, my colleague in the National Cheng-Kung University, her husband and one of her PhD students were waiting us in the train station. They were so kind with us, they invited us to have dinner and we enjoyed a wonderful dinner in a nice company. The day after, they showed us the city and some of the temples. I really enjoyed the

sightseeing; this was the China I expected to find.

The National Cheng-Kung University shocked me; the campus is enormous with a lot of Faculty with economical resources and the departments are well endowed with. The studies are planned as in USA and they are different to ours, but the research is quite similar. But, again the scarce importance that you have with the environmental appeals to me, for example in the treatment of the dangerous residuals, a thing that in my opinion must be improved as soon as possible for the good of all. Everybody in the University has a good level of English and the communication between us was nearly always easy and fluent. There were no moments when we feel alone as the Taiwanese people are kind and affectionate. However, its way of amuse and enjoy the free time is quite different from ours. I believe that in Europe, and especially in Spain, we have a leisure culture stronger, my colleague will notice what I meant

when she visits Spain. We work less hours so we have more time for other activities and enjoy the free time in a different way; we go out for dinner with friends, to take some drinks, dance or do several one-day trips to the beach, countryside. What I saw is that the first entertainment in Taiwan is to go to the KTV, of course, I was in one. It was my first time and I was ok. But, I prefer dance and listen the music while I talk with some friends that look to the screen and sing for hours.

I also visited the wetlands that surround Tainan and I was astonished for the quantity of exotic birds that fly in freedom so near the city and also for the extensive aquaculture equipments where the Taiwanese growth every kind of fish and shellfish. We have to congratulate the government and the people of Taiwan for its work in the field of the aquaculture. It was in that

trip that I taste for the first time fried oysters, and I really like them. In my country we also eat different kinds of fish and seafood, in this thing Spain is more similar to the Asian countries than European ones. We also eat a lot of rice cooked in a different way- and Valencia is like some cities in Taiwan surrounding for rice camps.

Sometimes I still dream about the streets of those cities I visited in Taiwan and with the beautiful colors of the neon lights with those Chinese characters that illuminate the streets.

