Taiwan Without a Taiwan Number

Every answer on one page. Verified 2026-10-19.

The short version

- Get a SIM or eSIM that includes a Taiwan phone number, so text-message codes reach you.
- No Taiwan number? Rent a YouBike with your email and a Visa, Mastercard, or JCB card.
- Carry NT$ cash for EasyCard top-ups, night markets, and small stalls.
- Buy a ticket for THSR and for Taroko, Puyuma, and Tze-Chiang 3000 trains; an EasyCard won't work on them.

Phone, SIM, and eSIM

ⓘ Good to know

Get a SIM or eSIM that comes with a Taiwan phone number, so text-message codes from local services reach you.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: Chunghwa Telecom: Prepaid SIM and eSIM for visitors (NT$ cash only) · Chunghwa Telecom: Prepaid SIM user manual (local calls and texts) · Chunghwa Telecom: eSIM FAQ (visitors need 2 IDs and an unlocked phone) · Hsinchu City Government: YouBike Q&A (membership requires a Taiwan mobile number) (PDF, Chinese)

ⓘ Good to know

On a data-only travel eSIM, some local apps may not connect; travelers say Wi-Fi or a VPN set to Taiwan helps.

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwan: "YouBike for foreigners: needed VPN to unlock bikes" (Apr 2026)

⚠ Will get stuck

YouBike membership and LINE Pay both need a Taiwan mobile number, so plan on a credit card and cash instead.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: Hsinchu City Government: YouBike Q&A (membership requires a Taiwan mobile number) (PDF, Chinese) · LINE Pay Taiwan Help Center: LINE must be set to a Taiwan mobile number (Chinese)

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwan: "How to rent YouBike without local number" (Mar 2023)

YouBike

⚠ Will get stuck

Full YouBike membership needs a Taiwan mobile number; without one, use Single Rental instead.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: Hsinchu City Government: YouBike Q&A (membership requires a Taiwan mobile number) (PDF, Chinese) · Taipei City Dept. of Transportation FAQ: YouBike for visitors without a local phone (Chinese)

Works fine

You can rent a YouBike with just an email address and a Visa, Mastercard, or JCB credit card.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: Taipei City Dept. of Transportation FAQ: YouBike for visitors without a local phone (Chinese) · YouBike: Rental info for one-time users · YouBike: Fees (Single Rental is credit card only; 120-hour authorization) (Chinese)

Good to know

Single Rental places a NT$3,000 hold on your credit card, much like a hotel deposit.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: Taipei City Dept. of Transportation FAQ: YouBike deposit and NT$3,000 pre-authorization (Chinese) · YouBike: Fees (Single Rental is credit card only; 120-hour authorization) (Chinese)

Good to know

One traveler couldn't unlock a YouBike on a travel eSIM until they turned on a VPN set to Taiwan.

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwan: “YouBike for foreigners: needed VPN to unlock bikes” (Apr 2026)

EasyCard, MRT, and buses

Works fine

Top up your EasyCard with cash at convenience stores or MRT stations.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: EasyCard Corporation: Where to add value

Will get stuck

You can't top up a regular EasyCard with a foreign credit card, so keep some NT$ cash for it.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: EasyCard Corporation: Co-branded credit cards and Autoload · TRA: Credit card payment rules (no credit card for EasyCard top-ups; 3-D Secure; accepted cards; ticket pickup) (Chinese)

Foreign government source (not Taiwan) Checked 2026-10-19: U.S. International Trade Administration: Taiwan business travel (cards, ATMs, mobile pay). A U.S. government page, not a Taiwan source.

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwan: “Easycard top up at 7-11 – paying with foreign credit card” (Mar 2024) · r/taiwantravel: “Quick Taiwan prep questions: EasyCard / Uber / Alishan” (Feb 2026)

Cash, cards, and night markets

ⓘ Good to know

Night markets and small food stalls usually take cash only, so carry small NT$ bills and coins.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: Taiwan Tourism Administration, Seoul office: FAQ on cash-only places, including night markets (Korean) · Taiwan Gold Card Office (National Development Council): “In Taiwan, many places do not accept credit cards”

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwantravel: “Quick Taiwan prep questions: EasyCard / Uber / Alishan” (Feb 2026)

ⓘ Good to know

Don't count on a phone wallet alone: LINE Pay needs a Taiwan number, so bring your physical card too.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: LINE Pay Taiwan Help Center: LINE must be set to a Taiwan mobile number (Chinese) · THSR notice: Visa cards on Apple Pay / Google Pay in T Express

Foreign government source (not Taiwan) Checked 2026-10-19: U.S. International Trade Administration: Taiwan business travel (cards, ATMs, mobile pay). A U.S. government page, not a Taiwan source.

Trains: THSR and Taiwan Railway (TRA)

Can I just tap my EasyCard on the train?

TRAIN	TAP EASYCARD?
THSR (high speed rail)	No Buy a ticket
TRA Taroko, Puyuma, Tze-Chiang 3000	No Book a seat
TRA tourist, group, and special trains; business and family cars	No Book a seat
Other TRA trains (other Tze-Chiang, Chu-Kuang, local)	Yes No assigned seat

Details and sources

Tap onto a train where EasyCard isn't allowed and you're treated as riding without a ticket: you pay the fare plus 50% of the fare for the distance traveled. At THSR gates, the only EasyCard that works is a co-branded credit card from a Taiwanese bank with Autoload turned on, and only for non-reserved seats.

Official Verified 2026-10-19

- TRA: Rules for riding with stored-value cards (Chinese)
- TRA poster: Trains you can't board with a stored-value card (PDF)
- THSR: EasyCard co-branded credit cards

Works fine

THSR's website and T Express app take Visa, Mastercard, and JCB; American Express works online only if issued in Taiwan.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: THSR: Online booking (accepted cards; pay at stations or convenience stores) · THSR: Buying tickets in the T Express app

Good to know

In the T Express app, a Visa card on Apple Pay or Google Pay may be declined; type in the card number instead.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: THSR notice: Visa cards on Apple Pay / Google Pay in T Express · THSR: Buying tickets in the T Express app

Good to know

If THSR online payment keeps failing, you can still pay at a station or convenience store, or buy at the ticket window.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: THSR: Online booking (accepted cards; pay at stations or convenience stores) · THSR Pass site: passes and One-Way Tickets for short-term foreign visitors (buy here or from a travel agency) · THSR news (2024): KKday and Klook named as designated agents for foreign-visitor One-Way Tickets

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwantravel: THSR online payment failed on several cards; bought at the Taipei Main Station counter · r/taiwantravel: "THSR online booking doesn't work?" (blank page; Safari worked) (Jan 2025)

Will get stuck

A regular EasyCard won't open THSR gates, so buy a THSR ticket.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: THSR: EasyCard co-branded credit cards (the only EasyCard accepted at THSR gates)

Works fine

Reserved THSR seats sold out? A non-reserved ticket works on any train on its travel date.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: THSR: Non-reserved seats

Will get stuck

You can't ride Taroko, Puyuma, or Tze-Chiang 3000 trains on an EasyCard, so book a seat ahead.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: TRA: Rules for riding with EasyCard and other stored-value cards (Chinese) · TRA poster: Trains you can't board with a stored-value card (PDF, Chinese/English)

Good to know

East coast trains sold out? You can tap an EasyCard onto other train types and ride without an assigned seat.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: TRA: Rules for riding with EasyCard and other stored-value cards (Chinese)

Not officially confirmed — user-reported Checked 2026-10-19: r/taiwan: "A tourist question about trains" (Tainan to Taitung sold out) (Jun 2025)

Works fine

You can book TRA tickets online with a foreign card and pick them up with your passport.

Official Verified 2026-10-19: TRA: Credit card payment rules (no credit card for EasyCard top-ups; 3-D Secure; accepted cards; ticket pickup) (Chinese)

Last verified: 2026-10-19. Rules change, so check the official source linked on each answer before you rely on it.

Will get stuck Good to know Works fine describe what to expect if you don't have a Taiwan phone number.

Official means we checked the answer against the linked official page. Not officially confirmed — user-reported means it comes from traveler reports only.

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