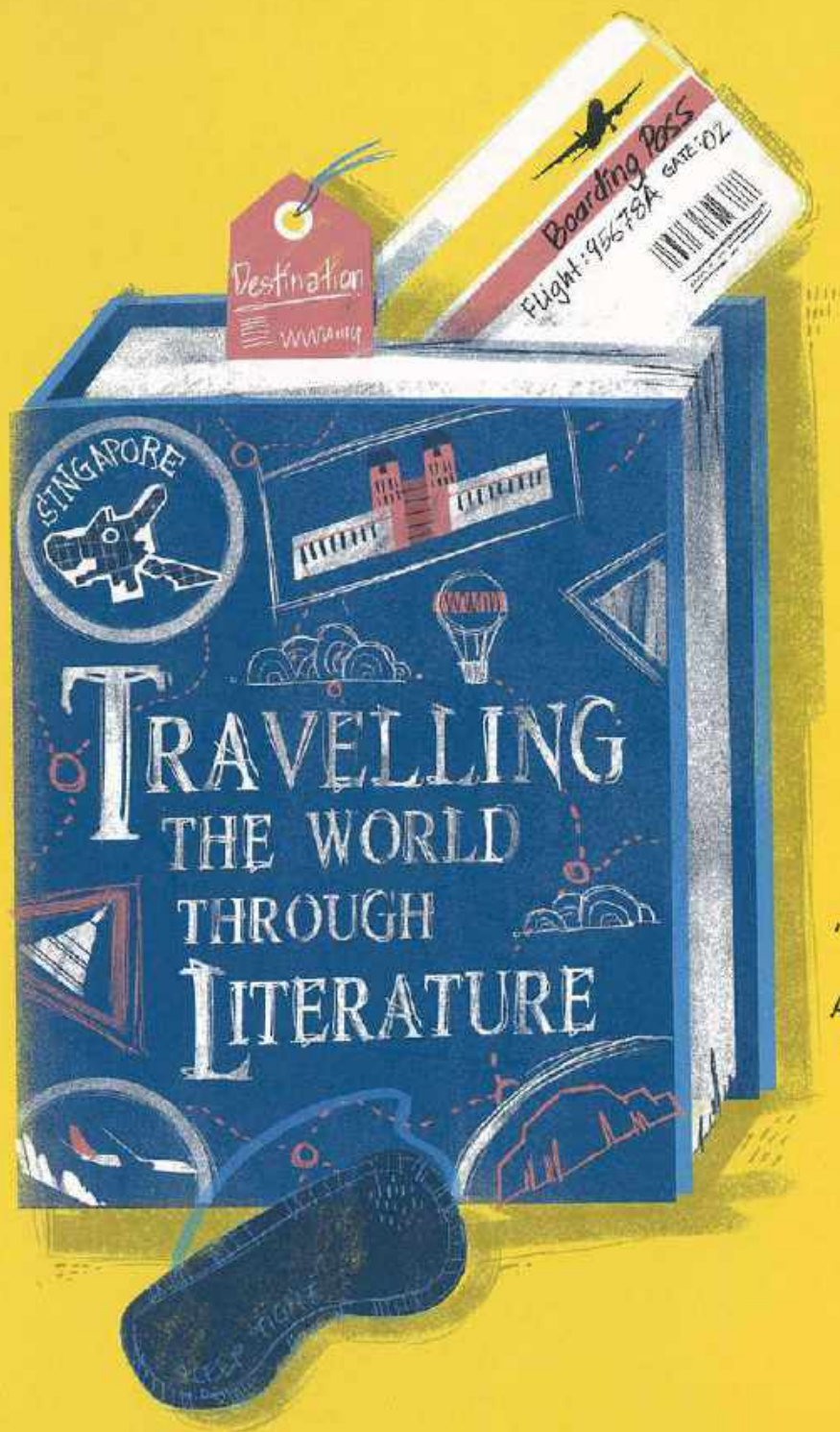




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FRESH:
'THERE IS ONLY
ONE PLANET
AND WE DON'T
HAVE A SPARE'

LANDING IN:
CONQUERING
LONG DONG

MAY REP
OT SAYS
HA' TO
LOLULU!

POCKET GUIDE: ■ Good eats from HarbourFront to Punggol ■ Next stop: Ancient Athens
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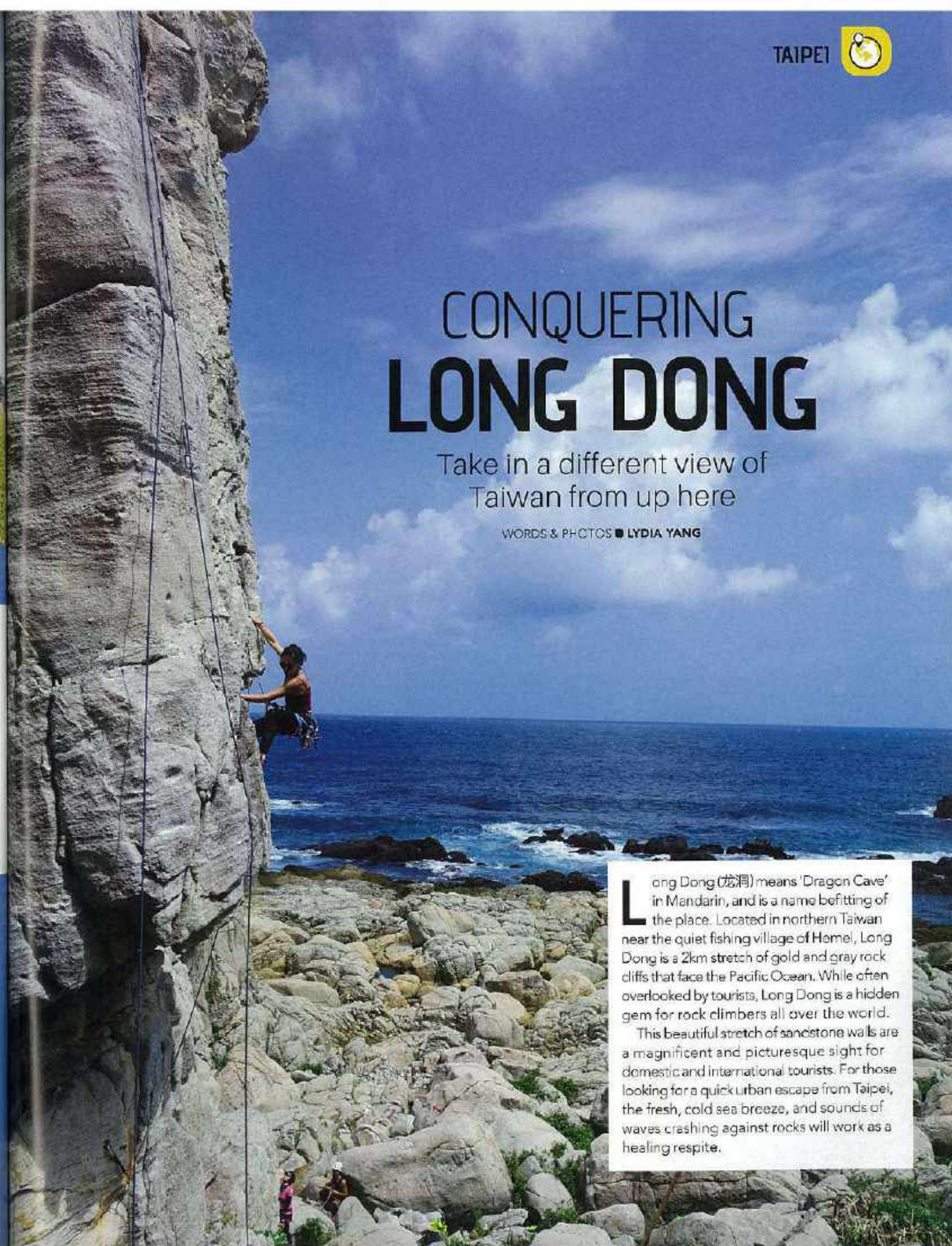
TAIPEI



CONQUERING LONG DONG

Take in a different view of
Taiwan from up here

WORDS & PHOTOS ■ LYDIA YANG



Long Dong (龙洞) means 'Dragon Cave' in Mandarin, and is a name befitting of the place. Located in northern Taiwan near the quiet fishing village of Hemel, Long Dong is a 2km stretch of gold and gray rock cliffs that face the Pacific Ocean. While often overlooked by tourists, Long Dong is a hidden gem for rock climbers all over the world.

This beautiful stretch of sandstone walls are a magnificent and picturesque sight for domestic and international tourists. For those looking for a quick urban escape from Taipei, the fresh, cold sea breeze, and sounds of waves crashing against rocks will work as a healing respite.



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About Dr Harold Ma

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- Member of the International Society

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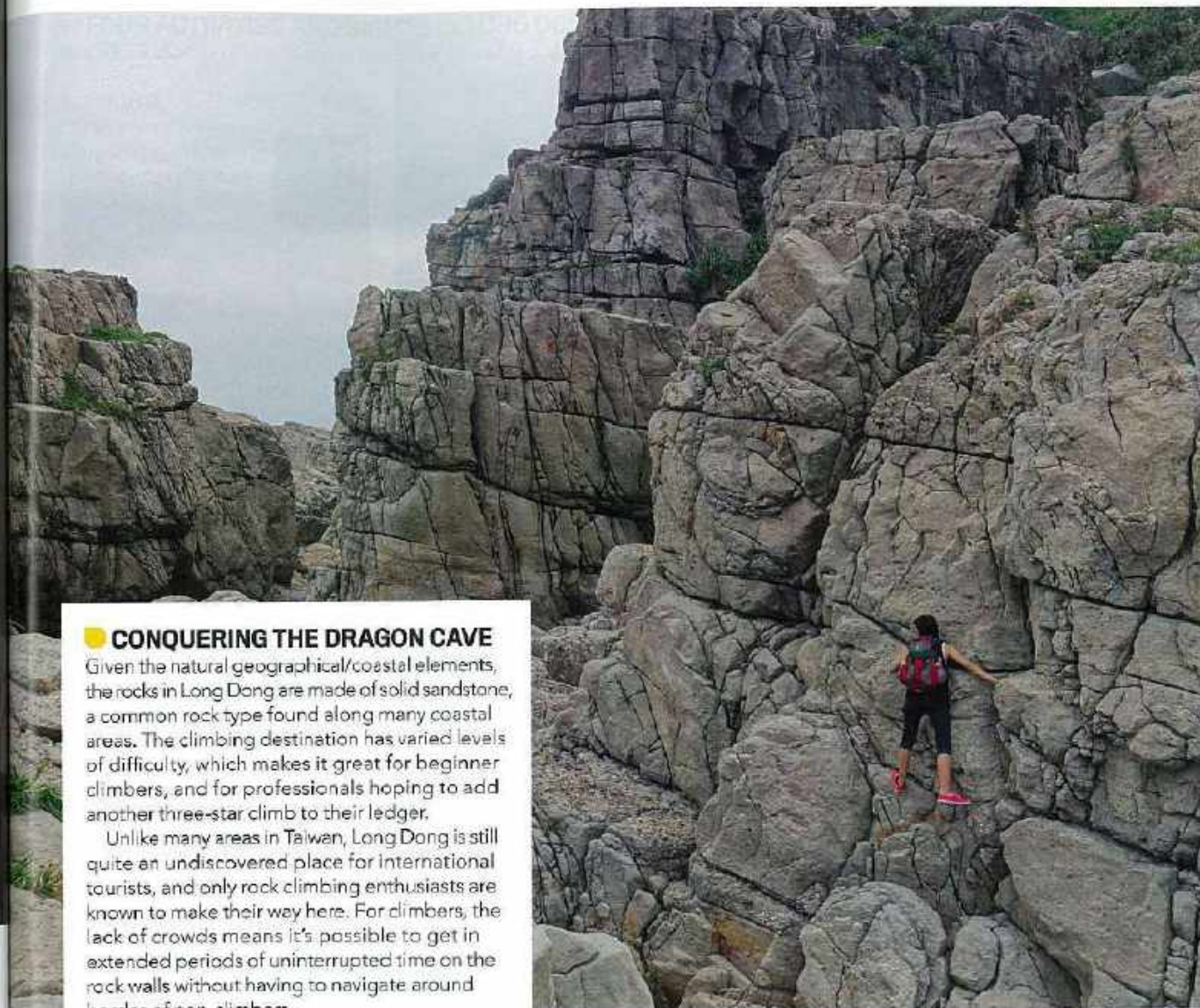
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Legend: Tips.

TAIPEI



CONQUERING THE DRAGON CAVE

Given the natural geographical/coastal elements, the rocks in Long Dong are made of solid sandstone, a common rock type found along many coastal areas. The climbing destination has varied levels of difficulty, which makes it great for beginner climbers, and for professionals hoping to add another three-star climb to their ledger.

Unlike many areas in Taiwan, Long Dong is still quite an undiscovered place for international tourists, and only rock climbing enthusiasts are known to make their way here. For climbers, the lack of crowds means it's possible to get in extended periods of uninterrupted time on the rock walls without having to navigate around hordes of non-climbers.



PHOTOS: INDIASCAPES.COM

ABOVE: Slowly making our way across boulders
LEFT: A face of satisfaction after conquering the rock climbing route in Long Dong

THE SPECIALTY OF LONG DONG - TRAD CLIMBING

With its 'crack' formations, Long Dong is famous for trad climbing. Short for traditional climbing, this style involves placing all gear required to protect against falls, and then removing it all when the passage is complete. Trad climbers use metal nuts, hexagonal-shaped chocks, slings, spring-loaded camming devices, tricams, and more as temporary anchor points in the rock to secure the rope. Helmets are strongly encouraged for belayers, as there might be falling rocks once in a while.



FOUR ACTIVITIES AND SIGHTS IN LONG DONG, TAIWAN

Not a rock climber? That's okay, as Long Dong has many other exciting things to do:

1. HIKING

For an immersive trip into Taiwan's nature, go hiking at Long Dong. The beautiful cliffs and hilltops here are quite spectacular from multiple lookout points. From the peak, it's possible to see the true beauty of Long Dong, and the craggy coastline.

2. SNORKELLING

A must-try at Long Dong is snorkelling. The large range of visibility makes it easy for even novice snorkellers to spot various types of fishes underwater.

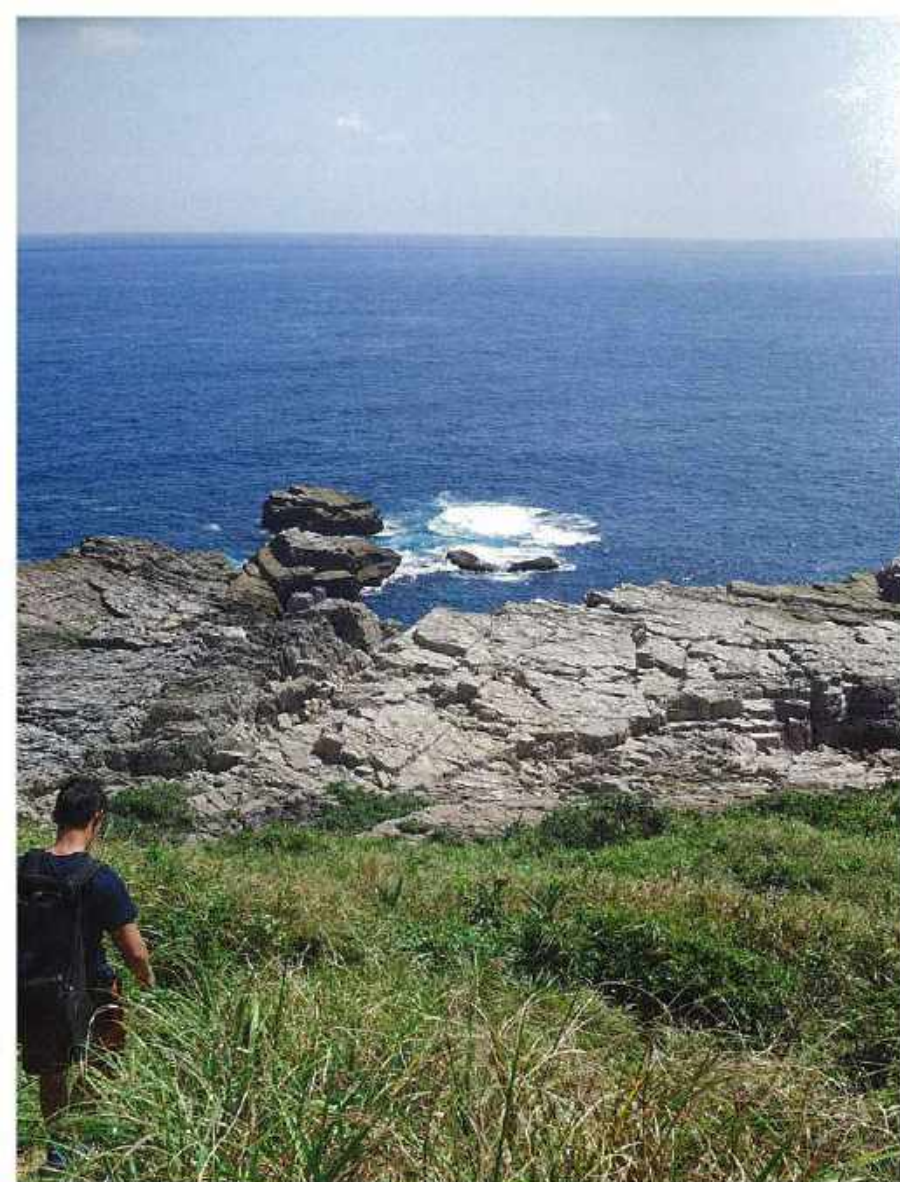
3. DIVING

Of course, if snorkelling is present, diving cannot be left out. The northeastern part of Taiwan is an ideal place for diving all year round. Its reef formations extend from Long Dong to form the 'Dragon's Back', and 'Dragon's Tail', where there are an abundance of marine life to be found.

4. FEASTING ON FRESH SEAFOOD

There are plenty of local seafood options in this little fishing village, including fish, crabs, shrimps, and even lobsters. Have a chat with the locals to find out the best places to have a meal here. **D**

BELOW:
View of the
Pacific Ocean in
the evening
after a late climb
FAR BELOW:
Fishing boat at
the coast

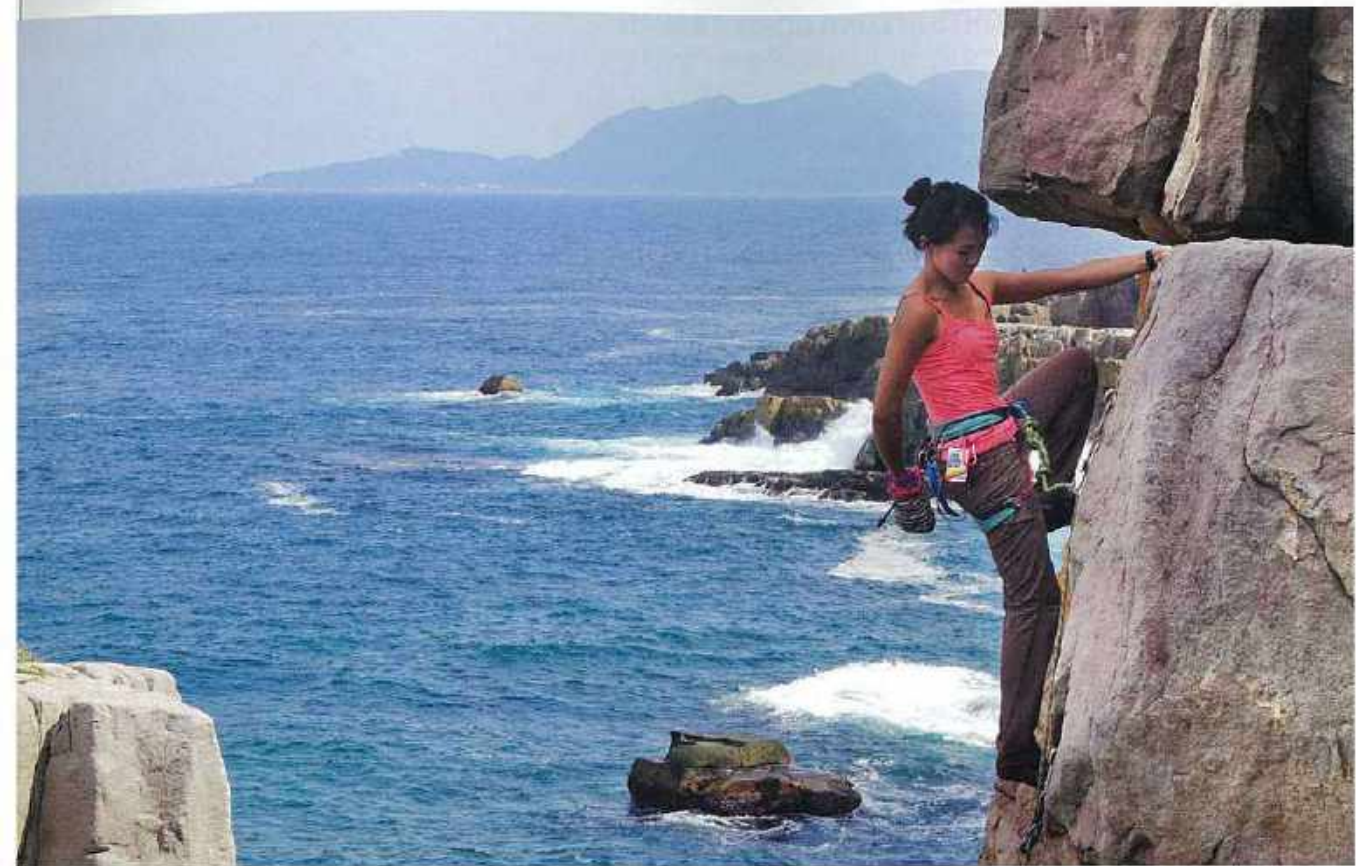


ABOVE:
Hiking instead of
climbing Long Dong
will lead you to these
rewarding views
RIGHT:
Hidden nature at the
base of Long Dong





TAIPEI



ABOVE: Braving the elements and a fear of heights was worth the effort for this majestic view



WHEN TO GO?

The ideal time to climb Long Dong is in fall and spring, as there is less rain and the weather is much cooler. Opt to climb on weekdays if possible, as weekends will see larger crowds of local climbers. If you are not sure of where to start or get equipment, there are local and international climbing instructors located in the vicinity where you can sign up to learn trad climbing. Klook has a comprehensive day climb at Long Dong that is perfect for first-timers. The package includes instructor's fees, rock climbing equipment, photos and insurance provided by the operator. (Klook.com/activities/3788-long-dong-rock-climbing-taipei)

HOW TO GET TO LONG DONG

Long Dong is just 45 minutes by car from central Taipei, and the north entrance near Hemei Elementary School provides the safest parking lot for climbers. If traveling without a car, it's possible to reach Long Dong via train or bus as well. From Taipei Station, take the train towards Keelung, Fulong, or Ruifang, then take a taxi to Long Dong. You can also take buses that travel to Luidong or Yilan via the Coastal Highway.

ACCESSING LONG DONG

At Long Dong, the cliffs are accessible from the North, South or Central Parking Areas. The hiking trail can be found at the central area, and is famous among tourists for its picturesque sceneries of the ocean and stone cliffs. At the north entrance, tourists will be able to find washrooms and showers to clean up after a hike or climb. There are also a number of shops to buy snacks, drinks, and even beer for those looking to picnic along the coast.

OVERNIGHT IN LONG DONG

Long Dong is extremely safe but it is still wise to exercise caution during your travels. It's easy to walk around or even hitch-hike to save money when touring the area. Accommodation choices are limited to guesthouses in Hemei Village at Long Tung Ski in Fulong, or you could pick pricier options at motels and hotels nearer inland. For a one-of-a-kind experience, you can even camp out at Long Dong, although you would have to bring your own gear/pitch as there are no local camp operators in the area.



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