insider adventure



Taipei Thrills. From mountain biking to rock climbing, the city is an outdoor enthusiast's dream. By LAURA MILLER



mountain passes, Taiwan is an off-road paradise for mountain bikers, and you don't even have to leave Taipei. Local establishment Alan's Mountain Bike (No. 38 Roosevelt Rd., Section 5; 886-2/ 2933-4319; alansmountainbike.com.tw) near National Taiwan University has rentals (from NT\$800 a day), while the friendly owners happily dole out advice on local trails. Call ahead to make sure your bike of choice is available.

HEAD FOR HEIGHTS

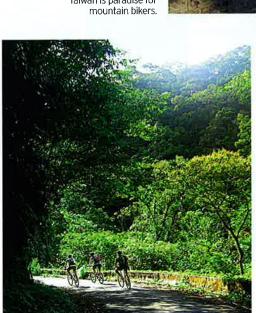
Sheer sandstone cliffs over the sea make Longdong Bay, about an hour away from Taipei, Taiwan's best rock-climbing spot. Beginners can test their skills at Dapaoyan, or Big Cannon Cliff, in Yangmingshan. XHZ Adventure (xhz.com.tw) organizes regular climbs as well as indoor training sessions.

SPA BREAK

Soothe your muscles in one of Taipei's many hot springs. Our pick is the Zen-like Villa 32 in Beitou (No. 32 Zhongshan Rd.; 886-2/6611-8888; villa32.com; use of hot spring from NT\$1,500 per person; suites from NT\$16,000), built alongside Beitou's Di-re Gu, or Hell Valley, geothermal hot spring. After a soak, stay for dinner at the award-winning Italian restaurant, which has an unrivalled wine cellar, +



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■ GET WET

Don a hard hat, gloves and non-slip booties and go river tracing, a sport that involves scaling waterfalls, navigating rapids and swimming upstream. Adventure outfit In Motion Asia (inmotionasia.com; trips from NT\$6,000 per person) leads groups through forgotten streams and narrow gorges in the mountainous Wulai Scenic Area, just 25 kilometers south of Taipei.

HIT THE TRAILS

Popular with hikers, campers, bird watchers and flower enthusiasts, the 11,455-hectare Yangmingshan National Park is located in Taipei's north and has more than 15 peaks, including the 1,120-meter Mount Oixing, an extinct volcano. The main trails are paved in stone and feature steep staircases, though hardy hikers can opt for less-traveled dirt paths. Log onto ymsnp.gov.tw for maps. Avoid the

