



Adventure Time
Clockwise from top left: Rock climbing in Longdong Bay; Villa 32; Taiwan is paradise for mountain bikers.



Taipei Thrills.

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

weekends if you're looking for peace and quiet. Other trails in Taipei include the **Four Beasts Mountains** (*Sishou Shan*) in the Xinyi district where hikers can enjoy spectacular night views of the city and Taipei 101. (Some of the trails are even lit at night.)

■ TICKET TO RIDE

With its shady forest trails and 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. +

■ 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 Qixing, 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

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