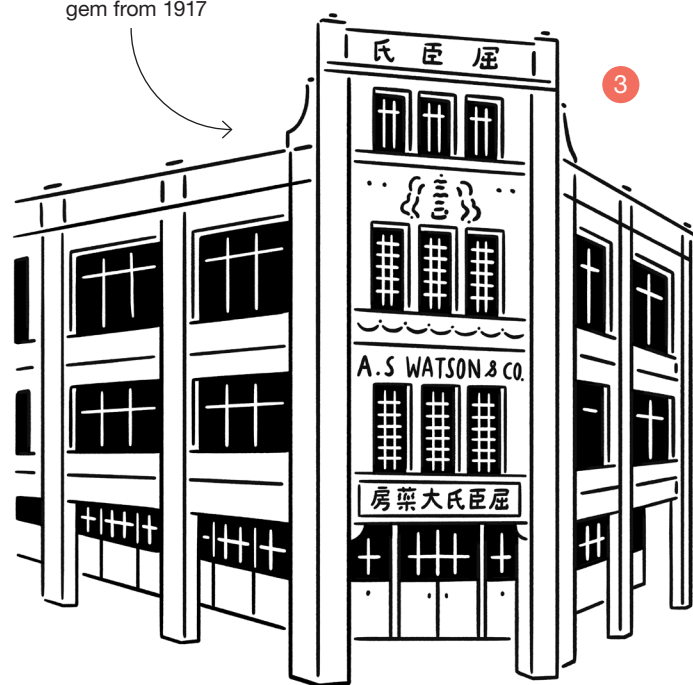


An architectural gem from 1917



INVENTORY: Sketchbook

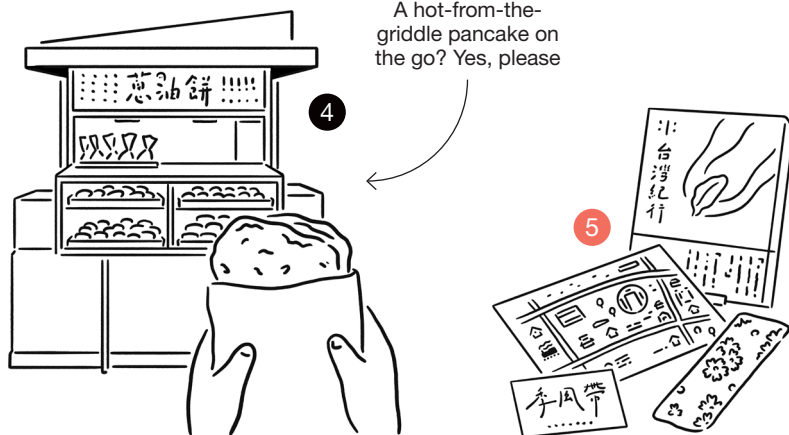
# Taipei personality Taiwan

Dadaocheng is one of the Taiwanese capital's oldest and most atmospheric corners. It's an area that demands exploration – and we've jotted down a few essential stops to help you along the way.

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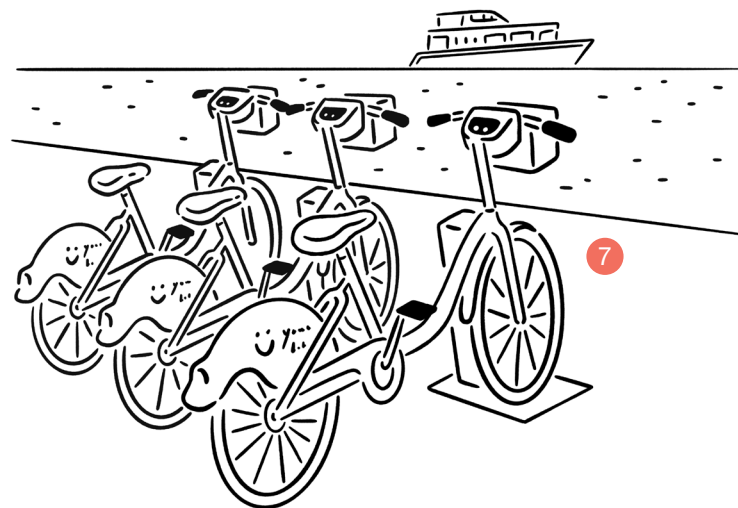
Dadaocheng is the oldest part of Taipei and one of its best-preserved areas. Its illustrious past as a rice-trading centre during the late Qing Dynasty in the 19th century left a grand architectural legacy. This district on the eastern banks of the Tamsui river has an unexpectedly baroque feel, with architecture and streetscapes dating back to Taipei's time as a Japanese colony.

Today these streets are a backdrop to some of the best under-the-radar independents in the city, including bookshops, restaurants and tearooms, as well as the many street-food delights to be found along the revived wharf. It's a neighbourhood with more than its fair share of diversions. Here are a few of our Dadaocheng favourites. —

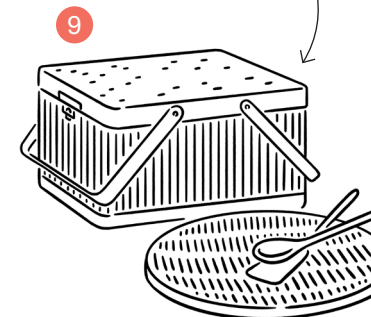


A hot-from-the-griddle pancake on the go? Yes, please

Lunch at Rice and Shine goes against the grain



Score a souvenir from Gao Jian Bucket Shop



3. **See**  
The AS Watson Building from 1917 was the first Western-style pharmacy on the island. The stone-cut façade now houses a bookshop and tea house.

4. **Try**  
A pancake hot from the griddle at the Yongle Scallion Pancake stall. Enjoy it coated with sweet soy sauce and topped with egg and a dash of white pepper. Then have a doughnut for afters.

5. **Shop**  
Monsoon Books – an independent tucked into the second floor of an unassuming shoe shop – specialises in the work of Asian authors. It's great for a guidebook, illustrated postcard or tasteful bookmark.

6. **Order**  
The roast chicken, soup and freshly milled Tainong No 71 rice at Rice and Shine is not to be missed. Drizzle soy and hot lard over the rice and order the iced black tea flavoured with *maqaw* (mountain pepper).

7. **Visit**  
The riverside Dadaocheng Wharf Pier 5 Container Market has plenty to recommend it. Hire a bike to explore, or board a boat to see the city from the river. For a snack, try a Hong Kong waffle at the smartly branded I Love Bow concession.

8. **Drink**  
Tea, of course. You're in Taiwan. Preferably at the South Street Delight Tea House. The "oriental beauty" is a fermented oolong with a honeyed taste, served with dried fruit and sweet-bean petit fours.

9. **Take home**  
Wooden tchotchkes, bamboo spice baskets or a rattan granny basket (all the rage here) from the Gao Jian Bucket Shop.

10. **Don't miss**  
The Love God, a 40cm statue – one of 600 deities represented in the Xia Hai City God Temple – is known for his matchmaking skills. People flock from all over Taiwan to seek his supernatural guidance and spiritual approval.

1. **Read**  
*Seek*, an English-language travel and culture magazine from Taipei journalist Sheena Lee. Pick up the latest copy – and a coffee too – at Kuo's Astral Bookshop.

2. **Stay**  
Originn Space is a petite inn in a century-old mansion with just a handful of rooms. The third-floor suite has a six-metre vaulted ceiling riven with cypress beams.