

Differences in Vocabulary and Pronunciation Between **Taiwan** and Mainland China

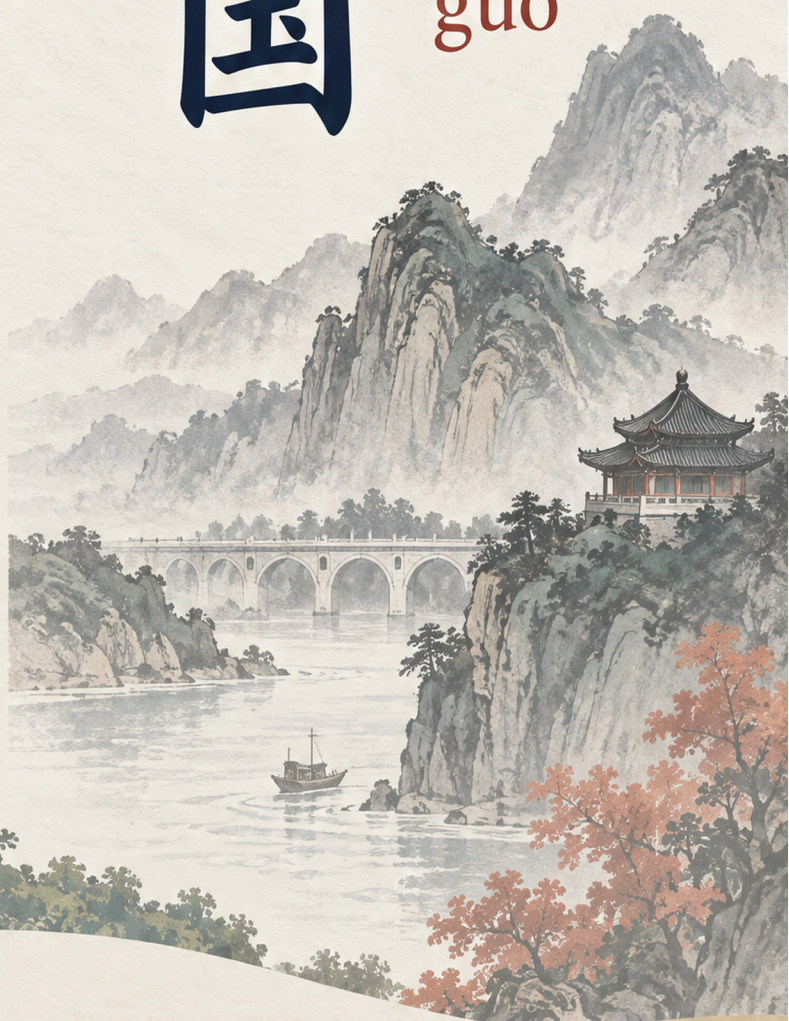
臺灣

ㄊㄞˊ ㄨㄢˊ

中国

zhōng

guó



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兩岸用語 Taiwan & Mainland Vocabulary

People in Taiwan and mainland China speak the same Mandarin, but many everyday words are different. This handout covers 105 word pairs, from the Ministry of Education's cross-strait word list and from everyday life, grouped by topic.

Taiwan what you will hear and see in Taiwan

Mainland what you will meet in mainland media, apps and books

Both sides say it the word is shared, only the extras differ

Learn the Taiwan word first. Treat the mainland word as something you need to understand when you meet it.

Part 1

Food & Drink

Menus and markets are where you will first notice the two vocabularies drifting apart.

漢堡

hànbǎo

簡 漢堡

→

漢堡包

hànbǎobāo

繁 漢堡包

burger **Both sides say it**

冰淇淋

bīngqílín

繁簡同

→

冰激凌

bīngjīlíng

繁簡同

ice cream. bīngqílín is also written on the mainland. **Both sides say it**

湯匙

tāngchí

簡 湯匙

→

湯勺 / 勺子

tāngsháo

繁 湯勺

sháozi

繁簡同

spoon. In Taiwan, tāngsháo is a soup ladle.

沙拉

shālā

繁簡同

→

色拉 / 沙律

sèlā

繁簡同

shālǜ

繁簡同

salad. shālǜ is the Hong Kong spelling. **Both sides say it**

烏龍茶

wūlóngchá

簡 烏龍茶

→

青茶

qīngchá

繁簡同

oolong tea. qīngchá is the name of the tea category.

米粉

mǐfěn

繁簡同

→

米粉 / 米面

mǐfěn

繁簡同

mǐmiàn

繁 米麵

rice noodles **Both sides say it**

宵夜

xiāoyè

繁簡同

→

夜宵

yèxiāo

繁簡同

late-night snack

馬鈴薯

mǎlíngshǔ

簡 馬鈴薯

→

土豆 / 洋芋 / 山藥蛋

tǔdòu

繁簡同

yángyù

繁簡同

shānyàodàn

繁 山藥蛋

potato. In Taiwan, spoken tǔdòu means peanut.

番茄

fānqié

繁簡同

→

西红柿 / 番茄

xīhóngshì

繁 西紅柿

fānqié

繁簡同

tomato. fānqié is also common on the mainland.

鳳梨

fènglí

簡 鳳梨

→

菠蘿

bōluó

繁 菠蘿

pineapple

奇異果

qíyiguǒ

簡 奇異果

→

猕猴桃

míhóutáo

繁 猕猴桃

kiwi

柳丁

liǔdīng

繁簡同

→

橙子

chéngzi

繁簡同

orange

地瓜

dìguā

繁簡同

→

红薯

hóngshǔ

繁 紅薯

sweet potato

紅蘿蔔

hóngluóbo

簡 紅萝卜

→

胡萝卜

húluóbo

繁 胡蘿蔔

carrot

花椰菜

huāyēcài

繁簡同

→

菜花

càihuā

繁簡同

cauliflower

青花菜

qīnghuācài

繁簡同

→

西兰花

xīlánhuā

繁 西蘭花

broccoli

便當

biàndāng

簡 便當

→

盒饭

héfàn

繁 盒飯

boxed meal

泡麵

pàomiàn

簡 泡面

→

方便面

fāngbiànmian

繁 方便麵

instant noodles

優酪乳

yōulàorǔ

簡 优酪乳

→

酸奶

suānnǎi

繁簡同

yogurt drink

外帶

wàidài

簡 外带

→

外卖

wàimài

繁 外賣

takeout. On the mainland, ^{wàimài} 外賣 also

covers home delivery. Taiwan says

^{wàisòng} 外送 for delivery.

結帳

jiézhàng

簡 结帐

→

买单

mǎidān

繁 買單

pay the bill. Taiwan also says ^{mǎidān} 買單
these days.

鮪魚

wěiyú

簡 鲔鱼

→

金枪鱼

jīnqiāngyú

繁 金槍魚

tuna

鮭魚

guīyú

簡 鲑鱼

→

三文鱼

sānwényú

繁 三文魚

salmon

高麗菜

gāolìcài

簡 高麗菜

卷心菜 / 包菜

→ juǎnxīncài

繁 捲心菜

bāocài

繁簡同

cabbage

小黃瓜

xiǎohuángguā

簡 小黃瓜

黃瓜

→ huángguā

繁 黃瓜

cucumber

起司

qǐsī

繁簡同

芝士 / 奶酪

→ zhīshì

繁簡同

nǎilào

繁簡同

cheese

洋芋片

yángyùpiàn

繁簡同

薯片

→ shǔpiàn

繁簡同

potato chips

速食

sùshí

繁簡同

快餐

→ kuàicān

繁簡同

fast food

酪梨

luòlí

繁簡同

牛油果

→ niúyóguǒ

繁簡同

avocado

櫻桃

yīngtáo

簡 櫻桃

車厘子 / 櫻桃

→ chēlízǐ

繁 車釐子

yīngtáo

繁 櫻桃

cherry. ^{chēlízǐ} usually means large
車釐子
imported cherries.

Part 2

Everyday Life & Transport

Things you buy, carry, use and ride. Many of these appear on signs and in shops.

計程車

jìchéngchē

簡 計程車

出租車 / 出租汽車 / 的士

→ chūzūchē

繁 出租車

chūzūqìchē

繁 出租汽車

díshì

繁簡同

taxi. ^{díshì} is used in Hong Kong and
的士
Guangdong.

摩托車

mótuōchē

簡 摩托車

摩托車 / 摩托

→ mótuōchē

繁 摩托車

mótuō

繁簡同

motorcycle. Mainland speakers often
shorten it to ^{mótuō}. **Both sides say it**
摩托

機車

jīchē

簡 機車

摩托車 / 摩托

→ mótuōchē

繁 摩托車

mótuō

繁簡同

scooter, motorbike. On the mainland,
^{jīchē} means a railway locomotive.
機車

公尺

gōngchǐ

繁簡同

米

→ mǐ

繁簡同

meter

哩

lǐ

繁簡同

迈 / 英里

→ mài

繁 邁

yīnglǐ

繁簡同

mile. ^{yīnglǐ} is common in Taiwan too.
英里

衛生紙

wèishēngzhǐ

簡 衛生紙

廁紙

→ cèzhǐ

繁 廁紙

toilet paper. ^{wèishēngzhǐ} is also used on
衛生紙
the mainland. **Both sides say it**

原子筆

yuánzǐbǐ

簡 原子笔

→

圓珠筆

yuánzhūbǐ

繁 圓珠筆

ballpoint pen

手電筒

shǒudiàntǒng

簡 手电筒

→

電筒 / 手电 / 电棒儿

diàntǒng

繁 電筒

shǒudiàn

繁 手電

diànbàng

繁 電棒兒

flashlight

日光燈

rìguāngdēng

簡 日光灯

→

螢光燈

yíngguāngdēng

繁 螢光燈

fluorescent light. Both words are used on both sides. Both sides say it

套裝

tàozhuāng

簡 套裝

→

套服

tàofú

繁簡同

matching suit for work (jacket with skirt or trousers)

成衣

chéngyī

繁簡同

→

成服

chéngfú

繁簡同

ready-to-wear clothing

雪人

xuě rén

繁簡同

→

雪羅漢

xuěluòhàn

繁 雪羅漢

snowman. Most mainland speakers also say ^{xuě rén} 雪人

捷運

jiéyùn

簡 捷运

→

地铁

dìtiě

繁 地鐵

metro

公車

gōngchē

簡 公車

→

公交车 / 公共汽车

gōngjiāochē

繁 公交車

gōnggòng qìchē

繁 公共汽車

city bus

腳踏車

jiǎotàchē

簡 腳踏車

→

自行车

zìxíngchē

繁 自行車

bicycle

冷氣

lěngqì

簡 冷氣

→

空調

kōngtiáo

繁 空調

air conditioner

洗髮精

xǐfàjīng

簡 洗发精

→

洗发水

xǐfàshuǐ

繁 洗髮水

shampoo

沐浴乳

mùyùrǔ

繁簡同

→

沐浴露

mùyùlù

繁簡同

body wash

塑膠袋

sùjiāodài

簡 塑膠袋

→

塑料袋

sùliàodài

繁簡同

plastic bag

便利商店

biànlì shāngdiàn

繁簡同

→

便利店

biànlìdiàn

繁簡同

convenience store

宅配

zháipèi

繁簡同

→

快递

kuàidì

繁 快遞

parcel delivery. Taiwan also says

^{kuàidì} 快遞

洗手間

xǐshǒujiān

简 洗手间

化妝室

huàzhuāngshì

简 化妝室

→ 卫生间
wèishēngjiān
繁 衛生間

restroom. *huàzhuāngshì* is a polite sign
in Taiwan's public places.

影印

yǐngyìn

繁简同

→ 复印
fùyìn
繁 複印

photocopy

塞車

sāichē

简 塞车

→ 堵车
dǔchē
繁 堵車

traffic jam

遊覽車

yóulǎnchē

简 游览车

→ 旅游大巴
lǚyóu dàbā
繁 旅遊大巴

tour bus

寶特瓶

bǎotèpíng

简 宝特瓶

→ 塑料瓶
sùliàopíng
繁简同

plastic bottle

洗衣精

xǐyījīng

繁简同

→ 洗衣液
xǐyīyè
繁简同

laundry detergent

立可白

lìkěbái

繁简同

→ 修正液
xiūzhèngyè
繁简同

correction fluid

網咖

wǎngkā

简 网咖

→ 网吧
wǎngbā
繁 網吧

internet café

Part 3

Society, Work & School

Jobs, schools and social life.

國小

guóxiǎo

简 国小

→ 小学
xiǎoxué
繁 小學

elementary school. Next come
guózhōng and *gāozhōng* in Taiwan,
國中 高中
chūzhōng and *gāozhōng* on the mainland.
初中 高中

郵差

yóuchāi

简 邮差

→ 邮递员 / 投递员
yóudiyuán tóudiyuán
繁 郵遞員 繁 投遞員

mail carrier

保全

bǎoquán

繁简同

→ 保安 / 保安员
bǎo'an bǎo'ānyuán
繁简同 繁 保安員

security guard

警衛

jǐngwèi
簡 警卫

警卫员

→ jǐngwèiyuán
繁 警衛員

guard. On the mainland, jǐngwèiyuán 警衛員 can also mean a bodyguard.

Both sides say it

酒會

jiǔhuì
簡 酒会

冷餐会

→ lěngcānhuì
繁 冷餐會

reception, cocktail party

Both sides say it

代溝

dàigōu
簡 代沟

代差

→ dàichā
繁簡同

generation gap

外遇

wàiyù
繁簡同

婚外情 / 婚外恋

→ hūnwàiqíng hūnwàiliàn
繁簡同 繁 婚外戀

affair (outside marriage)

薪水

xīnshuǐ
繁簡同

工资

→ gōngzī
繁 工資

salary. Taiwan also says xīnzī 薪資.

健保

jiànbǎo
繁簡同

医保

→ yībǎo
繁 醫保

health insurance

補習班

bǔxíbān
簡 补习班

补习班 / 培训班

→ bǔxíbān péixùnbān
繁 補習班 繁 培訓班

cram school, tutoring centre. On the mainland, bǔxíbān 補習班 is also used.

專案

zhuān'àn
簡 专案

项目

→ xiàngmù
繁 項目

project

Part 4

Tech, Numbers & Ideas

Computers, phones and the words you meet in the news and at work.

水準

shuǐzhǔn
簡 水准

水平

→ shuǐpíng
繁簡同

level, standard. In Taiwan, shuǐpíng 水平 means "horizontal."

道地

dàodi
繁簡同

地道

→ dìdao
繁簡同

authentic. In Taiwan, dìdao 地道 means an underground passage.

機率

jīlǜ
簡 机率

概率 / 或然率 / 机会率 / 几率

→ gàilǜ huòránlǜ jīhuìlǜ jīlǜ
繁簡同 繁簡同 繁 機會率 繁 幾率

probability, chance

通貨膨脹

tōnghuò péngzhàng
簡 通货膨胀

通胀

→ tōngzhàng
繁 通脹

inflation. Taiwan media shorten it to

tōngpéng 通膨

硬體

yìngtǐ
簡 硬体

硬件

→ yìngjiàn
繁簡同

hardware

軟體

ruǎntǐ

簡 软体

→

软件

ruǎnjiàn

繁 軟件

software

網路

wǎnglù

簡 网路

→

网络

wǎngluò

繁 網絡

network, internet

滑鼠

huáshǔ

繁簡同

→

鼠标

shǔbiāo

繁 鼠標

computer mouse

螢幕

yíngmù

簡 萤幕

→

屏幕

píngmù

繁簡同

screen

隨身碟

suíshēndié

簡 隨身碟

→

U 盘

U pán

繁 U 盤

USB drive

筆電

bǐdiàn

簡 笔电

→

笔记本电脑

bǐjìběn diànnǎo

繁 筆記本電腦

laptop

簡訊

jiǎnxùn

簡 简讯

→

短信

duǎnxìn

繁簡同

text message

資訊

zīxùn

簡 资讯

→

信息

xìnxī

繁簡同

information

程式

chéngshì

繁簡同

→

程序

chéngxù

繁簡同

program

影片

yǐngpiàn

繁簡同

→

视频

shìpín

繁 視頻

video

預設

yùshè

簡 预设

→

默认

mòrèn

繁 默認

default setting

伺服器

sīfúqì

繁簡同

→

服务器

fúwùqì

繁 服務器

server

品質

pǐnzhí

簡 品质

→

质量

zhìliàng

繁 質量

quality

智慧型手機

zhìhuìxíng shǒuji

簡 智慧型手机

→

智能手机

zhìnéng shǒuji

繁 智能手機

smartphone

數位相機

shùwèi xiàngjī
[簡] 數位相機

→

数码相机

shùmǎ xiàngjī
[繁] 數碼相機

digital camera

部落格

bùluògé
[繁簡同]

→

博客

bókè
[繁簡同]

blog

寬頻

kuānpín
[簡] 寬頻

→

宽带

kuāndài
[繁] 寬帶

broadband

列印

lièyìn
[繁簡同]

→

打印

dǎyìn
[繁簡同]

print

印表機

yìnbǎoji
[簡] 印表机

→

打印机

dǎyìnji
[繁] 打印機

printer

硬碟

yìngdié
[繁簡同]

→

硬盘

yìngpán
[繁] 硬盤

hard drive

記憶體

jìyìtǐ
[簡] 记忆体

→

内存

nèicún
[繁] 內存

memory (RAM)

光碟

guāngdié
[繁簡同]

→

光盘

guāngpán
[繁] 光盤

CD, disc

檔案

dǎng'àn
[簡] 档案

→

文件

wénjiàn
[繁簡同]

computer file

資料夾

zīliàojiǎ
[簡] 资料夹

→

文件夹

wénjiànjiǎ
[繁] 文件夾

folder

換行

huànháng
[簡] 换行

→

回车

huíché
[繁] 回車

Enter key, new line

人工智慧

réngōng zhìhuì
[繁簡同]

→

人工智能

réngōng zhìnéng
[繁簡同]

artificial intelligence (AI)

LINE

→

微信

Wēixin
[繁簡同]

chat app. Taiwan mostly uses LINE
and the mainland uses WeChat.

Part 5

Body & Sensitive Topics

Choose the register to match the setting. Medical and formal settings call for the politer wording.

大便

dàbiàn

繁簡同

→ 大解 / 解大手

dàjiě

繁簡同

jiě dàshǒu

繁簡同

to poop, bowel movement. ^{dàjiě} is more polite.
大解

小便

xiǎobiàn

繁簡同

→ 小解 / 小遺 / 解小手

xiǎojiě

繁簡同

xiǎoyí

繁

小遺

jiě xiǎoshǒu

繁簡同

to pee. ^{xiǎojiě} is more polite.
小解

墮胎

duòtāi

簡 墮胎

→ 打胎 / 人工流产 / 人流

dǎtāi

繁簡同

réngōng liúchǎn

繁

人工流產

rénliú

繁簡同

abortion. ^{réngōngliúchǎn} is the formal medical term.
人工流產

Part 6

Same Word, Different Meaning

These words exist on both sides but mean different things. They cause the most misunderstandings.

愛人

àirén

簡 愛人

Taiwan A lover or romantic partner, often outside marriage. Not a word to use for your spouse.

Mainland Spouse: a husband or wife. A perfectly normal word there.

土豆

tǔdòu

繁簡同

Taiwan Spoken Mandarin for peanut, borrowed from Taiwanese Hokkien.

Mainland Potato.

機車

jīchē

簡 機車

Taiwan Motorbike or scooter. As slang, annoying or fussy.

Mainland Railway locomotive.

質量

zhìliàng

簡 質量

Taiwan Mostly the physics term "mass."

Mainland Quality, as well as physics "mass."

同志

tóngzhì

繁簡同

Taiwan A gay person, or LGBTQ people more broadly.

Mainland Traditionally "comrade." Younger people also use it for gay people.

酒店

jiǔdiàn

繁簡同

Taiwan A hostess club or bar. Hotels are usually called ^{fàndiàn} or ^{lǚguǎn}.
飯店 旅館

Mainland A hotel. A perfectly normal word.

飯店

fàndiàn

簡 飯店

Taiwan A hotel.

Mainland A restaurant. Big hotels also use ^{fàndiàn} in their names.
飯店

小姐

xiǎojiě

繁简同

Taiwan A polite way to address a young woman, as in "Miss." Fine for calling a waitress.

Mainland Often avoided when calling a waitress, because it can suggest a sex worker. People say fúwùyuán or měinǚ instead.
服務員 美女

窩心

wōxīn

简 窝心

Taiwan Heartwarming; something that makes you feel touched and cared for.

Mainland Frustrated and upset, feeling wronged but unable to say so.

高考

gāokǎo

繁简同

Taiwan The national civil service exam.

Mainland The national university entrance exam.

研究所

yánjiūsuǒ

繁简同

Taiwan Graduate school, as in duìyánjiūsuǒ (to do a master's degree).
讀研究所

Mainland A research institute. Graduate school is yánjiùshēngyuàn, and people say duìyán.
研究生院 讀研

檢討

jiǎntǎo

简 检讨

Taiwan To review what went wrong and how to improve. Common in meetings and at school.

Mainland Often means a formal self-criticism, which sounds much heavier.

單位

dānwèi

简 单位

Taiwan A unit, or a department or office in an organization.

Mainland Also your workplace or employer, as in nǐ zài nǎ ge dān wèi gōng zuò ?
你在哪個單位工作

Part 7

Pronunciation Differences

The characters are the same, but Taiwan and the mainland read them differently. These are some of the words you will hear most often.

Taiwan	垃圾 lèsè 繁簡同	Mainland	垃圾 lājī 繁簡同	trash, garbage
Taiwan	和 hàn 繁簡同	Mainland	和 hé 繁簡同	"and" in spoken Mandarin, as in nǐ hàn wǒ . 你和我 Taiwan also says hé.
Taiwan	星期 xīngqī 繁簡同	Mainland	星期 xīngqī 繁簡同	week
Taiwan	期待 qídài 繁簡同	Mainland	期待 qídài 繁簡同	to look forward to
Taiwan	頭髮 tóufǎ 簡 头发	Mainland	头发 tóufa 繁 頭髮	hair
Taiwan	企業 qìyè 簡 企业	Mainland	企业 qǐyè 繁 企業	business, company
Taiwan	危險 wéixiǎn 簡 危险	Mainland	危险 wēixiǎn 繁 危險	dangerous
Taiwan	微笑 wéixiào 繁簡同	Mainland	微笑 wēixiào 繁簡同	to smile
Taiwan	研究 yánjiù 繁簡同	Mainland	研究 yánjiū 繁簡同	research
Taiwan	液體 yìtǐ 簡 液体	Mainland	液体 yètǐ 繁 液體	liquid
Taiwan	品質 pǐnzhì 簡 品质	Mainland	品质 pǐnzhì 繁 品質	quality
Taiwan	法國 Fàguó 簡 法国	Mainland	法国 Fǎguó 繁 法國	France

Taiwan	亞洲 Yǎzhōu 簡 亞洲	Mainland	亚洲 Yàzhōu 繁 亞洲	Asia
Taiwan	暫時 zhànshí 簡 暂时	Mainland	暂时 zànshí 繁 暫時	temporarily
Taiwan	曝光 pùguāng 繁簡同	Mainland	曝光 bàoguāng 繁簡同	exposure; to be exposed
Taiwan	擁抱 yǒngbào 簡 擁抱	Mainland	擁抱 yǒngbào 繁 擁抱	to hug
Taiwan	跌倒 diēdǎo 繁簡同	Mainland	跌倒 diēdǎo 繁簡同	to fall down
Taiwan	綜合 zònghé 簡 綜合	Mainland	综合 zōnghé 繁 綜合	comprehensive, mixed
Taiwan	蝸牛 guāniú 簡 蝸牛	Mainland	蜗牛 wōniú 繁 蝸牛	snail
Taiwan	發酵 fāxiào 簡 发酵	Mainland	发酵 fājiào 繁 發酵	to ferment
Taiwan	認識 rènshì 簡 认识	Mainland	认识 rènshi 繁 認識	to know, to meet
Taiwan	休息 xiūxi 繁簡同	Mainland	休息 xiūxi 繁簡同	to rest
Taiwan	知識 zhīshì 簡 知识	Mainland	知识 zhīshì 繁 知識	knowledge
Taiwan	可惜 kěxí 繁簡同	Mainland	可惜 kěxí 繁簡同	what a pity
Taiwan	打擊 dǎjī 簡 打击	Mainland	打击 dǎjī 繁 打擊	to strike; a blow
Taiwan	夕陽 xīyáng 簡 夕阳	Mainland	夕阳 xīyáng 繁 夕陽	setting sun

Taiwan	廣播 guǎngbō 簡 廣播	Mainland	广播 guǎngbō 繁 廣播	broadcast, radio
Taiwan	突然 tūrán 繁簡同	Mainland	突然 tūrán 繁簡同	suddenly
Taiwan	穴道 xuédào 繁簡同	Mainland	穴道 xuédào 繁簡同	acupuncture point
Taiwan	紊亂 wènlùn 簡 紊乱	Mainland	紊乱 wěnlùn 繁 紊亂	disorder, chaos
Taiwan	參與 cānyù 簡 参与	Mainland	参与 cānyǔ 繁 參與	to take part
Taiwan	傍晚 bāngwǎn 繁簡同	Mainland	傍晚 bàngwǎn 繁簡同	dusk, early evening
Taiwan	帆船 fānchuán 繁簡同	Mainland	帆船 fānchuán 繁簡同	sailboat
Taiwan	指甲 zhǐjiǎ 繁簡同	Mainland	指甲 zhǐjia 繁簡同	finger nail
Taiwan	從容 cōngróng 簡 从容	Mainland	从容 cóngróng 繁 從容	calm, unhurried
Taiwan	叔叔 shúshu 繁簡同	Mainland	叔叔 shúshu 繁簡同	uncle
Taiwan	骰子 tóuzi 繁簡同	Mainland	骰子 shǎizi 繁簡同	dice
Taiwan	檔案 dǎng'àn 簡 档案	Mainland	档案 dàng'àn 繁 檔案	file
Taiwan	企圖 qìtú 簡 企图	Mainland	企图 qǐtú 繁 企圖	to attempt; intention
Taiwan	差不多 chābùduō 繁簡同	Mainland	差不多 chābùduō 繁簡同	about the same, almost

Taiwan 炸雞 zhàjī 簡 炸鸡	Mainland 炸鸡 zháji 繁 炸雞 fried chicken
Taiwan 玫瑰 méiguī 簡同	Mainland 玫瑰 méiguī 繁同 rose
Taiwan 細菌 xìjūn 簡 细菌	Mainland 细菌 xìjūn 繁 細菌 bacteria
Taiwan 夾克 jiākè 簡 夹克	Mainland 夹克 jiākè 繁 夾克 jacket
Taiwan 結實 jiéshí 簡 结实	Mainland 结实 jiēshi 繁 結實 sturdy, solid
Taiwan 痕跡 hénjī 簡 痕迹	Mainland 痕迹 hénjì 繁 痕跡 trace, mark

Erhua and neutral tone. Taiwan readings here follow the Ministry of Education dictionary. In some pairs the only difference is a neutral tone on the mainland, as in ^{xiūxi}休息 and ^{rènshi}認識. Northern mainland speech adds an r-sound to many nouns (like ^{wánr}玩兒) and uses more neutral tones (like ^{dōngxi}東西). Taiwan Mandarin uses both less, so words sound a little more even: ^{xǐhuān}喜歡 and ^{piàoliàng}漂亮 are often said with full tones in Taiwan.



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