

[Keelung Night Market 4]

Never-Ceasing Night in Keelung: Its Advantages in Location and Design

It is never too late to visit

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Similar to the other night markets in Taipei, Keelung night has two common advantages: strong reachability and commercial surroundings. However, Keelung night market has two distinct features: its location near the beautiful Keelung Harbor and its design for safety.

Advantage I: Strong Reachability by Train and Foot

Reachability is one of the fundamentals which may sway your determination to visit or not. Concerning Keelung night market, it is near Keelung Train station and it takes you approximately ten minutes to reach there on foot. If you do not want to walk, taxis are largely available at the entrance of the station. Concerning traffic safety, along the roads to the night market, there is a line of



arcades, which separates visitors from the fast traffic lanes, and some overpasses, substitutions for crosswalks for visitors. Even during the rainy season, walking in the arcades can protect you from rain.

If you are driving, please note that most roads there are one-way and narrow, and that the parking tower is a bit far from the night market. Consequently, taking a train plus walking is strongly recommended, while taking a taxi or driving the second-best choices.

Advantage II: Commercial Surroundings

Similar to Shiling and Sheda night market which are much-publicized for not only food but also some groceries and entertaining facilities around, you can go to Keelung night market not only for enjoying delicious food but also for buying daily necessities. Around Keelung night market, some shops and stands provide a supportive element, such as McDonald, KFC, Hamburger King, handmade accessories, Seven Eleven, traditional clothes, and so on. These are found along the roads to the night market or around it. Coming to the night market is not simply for dinner or night snacks, but also daily necessities.

Definitely, delicious food is the main focus in the market but you may have “Obsessive compulsive disorder”. For instance, you go to the night market and you may also want to visit these fast-food restaurants if there are new things or the market is crowded. Sometimes you do not want to be squeezed into, or you are bored of the fast food and you may want to go the night market nearby for some traditional food. Therefore, these commercial surroundings provide you with more choices.

Advantage III: Beautiful Keelung Harbor

After stuffing yourself with multifarious and delicious foods, do not hasten to go home; go take a walk on the sidewalk along Keelung Harbor and enjoy its beauties. At night, walking along the sidewalk, you can see some lights shining in the distance in the mountain where the sign of Keelung is shining. On the right hand side, you can find some ships anchored at the harbor and, further down, some buildings emitting lights from their windows. Especially, with the wind blowing from the sea and touching your face, you feel cool and have a sense of relaxation. If you have a girl- or boyfriend, it will be quite romantic when both of you walk together hand in hand and side by side at the harbor.



Advantage IV : Don't Worry, No Thief

In the market, you will notice there are some monitors and loudspeakers hanging on the eaves; i.e. the surveillant system and broadcasting system of the night market. They are equipped to supervise whether there are thieves and to keep things in order. Therefore, you do not have to worry about whether someone will steal your purses or harass you and you are aware of it. Once these incidents take place or these “people” are discovered, police officers will come to your side. Consequently, the market is very safe.



Alas! Some Problems...

Being a traditional one, Keelung Night Market still has some disadvantages; such as lack of organization of a night market, no commodious space for eating food, invisible price lists and no washing room. Therefore, if Keelung night market can further improve these disadvantages, it will definitely attract more and more people from all over Taiwan to relish its distinct and delicious foods.

Disadvantage and Improvement I: Lack of Organization

When you just enter the market, you will find the night market organized. However, when you go much further inside, you will find yourself lost in the “people jungle” without any signs or marks to tell your friends where you are. At the entrance of the market, you will notice that some much-publicized stands are arranged by the number while the other stands with common foods like Fried rice noodles, Braised pork rice, Pigs blood cake are not. Maybe this is what a traditional night market is like: that the famous stands are emphasized, while around them swarm the other common stands, some legal and some illegal. However, the legal stands should be included in the organization of the night market, while the illegal ones banned. The government, therefore, should require all of the stands to register themselves in order to be organized and numbered by the government. Organization of the stands represents order of the night market, which, in turn, provides visitors with a clear sense of their own location as well as an overview of the night market.

Disadvantage and Improvement II: Not Enough Space for Relishing Your Foods

After deciding what food you want to eat and sit down, suddenly there is one visitor accidentally bumping your back and causing you to spill your soup on your trousers. What do you think of it? Definitely, each stand wants to have more visitors eat their foods in order to make money. Therefore, sometimes stands may put their desks beyond the regulated space. As a result, originally the street in the market is narrow enough, and then their ideas of accommodating more visitors make the street much narrower by enlarging their space selfishly. In addition, to find other places for visitors is another

way to accommodate more visitors. Some stands may lead you to the place where they consider appropriate but, as a matter of fact, is unsuitable or put desks exceeding the regulated space in order to continue running their business, such as the case of **Ding-Bian-Cuo**.

Therefore, to seek adequate space for each stand in order to make the streets wider is a problem needing solving or negotiating between the government and stands or among stands to give visitors convenient space. The space extension is relevant to the organization of the night market corresponding to the preceding improvement. Providing all of the managers with their registered stands, the government can do space management to distribute enough space for each stand depending upon its size and property.

Disadvantage and Improvement III: Price lists

In the night market, sometimes you may see some stands with no price lists and you may be afraid whether the foods are quite expensive. Therefore, your anxiety may cause you not to buy them. Some foods in Keelung night market, especially priced according to its' weight like sea food and pork, mostly give you general concept of prices which is hard to comprehend unless you do really order them. You will absolutely understand the prices. Consequently, clear and visible price lists are indispensable directions which help you choose what they want to eat depending upon your budgets. In order to circumvent unnecessary misunderstanding leading to quarrels, the use of visible price lists is required for visitors to consult and make decisions whether they are capable of affording certain prices.

In addition, when pricing their food, all the stands should not use the measurement of fresh food market; in other words, the form of pricing food by weight perplex customers because they can hardly estimate how much they eat by "weight"; rather, they can relate more to the measurement of "bowl," "plate" and "bag" when they can see the sizes of these containers

Disadvantage and Improvement IV: Washing Room

Once you visit the market, you will notice that when you want to go to the washing room, you can find it in fast-food restaurants. However, some restaurants require provide such facilities only to their consumers. What would you do? Keep holding it or?

The establishment of public facilities is indicative of whether the government pays attention to the sustainable development of a



night market; namely, the establishment of public facilities provides convenience for visitors to meet their needs of washing rooms, trash cans or wider roads for walk freely on. In Keelung night market, due to its limited space, it is hard for the government to extend the space in order to establish washing rooms for use. Thanks to its commercial surroundings, visitors can go to some restaurants, such as McDonald's, KFC, Hamburger King, and so on, to borrow washing rooms. It is another alternative to deal with this problem. Or, providing outhouses for use is the most effective way to tackle this problem so far.

Local Consumers' Opinions

Perhaps, simply reading this magazine will not give you any real experience in visiting Keelung Night Market. However, don't worry! We will give you opinions of how consumers think of this night market in order to give a general overview. We pass down our questionnaires via e-mail to students studying in *National Taiwan Ocean University*, which is located near Keelung night market, approximately 15-minute walk. There are nineteen male students and eleven female student respondents in our collected questionnaires. Just take a look at their choices and responses to Keelung night market.

Regarding the frequency of their visiting the night market, most of the consumers said once or twice a week. Basically, they often go there by motorcycles and mostly due to their friends' invitation. Though being close to the night market, they don't go there oftener, because, as you can see below, the foods there are too salty or oily and the streets, too crowded. If it is not on a special day or for a special occasion, they will not visit there frequently.

However, do you know what motivates them to visit the night market? For 23 out of 30 students, it is the delicious foods, though this motivation seems to conflict with their low visiting frequency. Furthermore, they all have their favorite foods, like **Spareribs Soup, Pao-Pao Ice, Tempura**, and so on.

What is strange is that most of the respondents agree that they go there for delicious foods, but they also criticize the foods for being too salty, oily, ordinary, and unsatisfactory. However, they still go. If the foods are not delicious enough, why do they still go to there? One possible reason is that it is the whole commercial circle that meets their various needs. Some

students said that they may take a walk to the surroundings after having their dinner, or go there to buy daily necessities as another route after visiting the market. Furthermore, for female students, these surroundings are indispensable. where they go to regularly for cosmetics, clothes or CDs, and so on. In a word, for local residents, the night market is treated as a place they go to for foods, while the surroundings meet their other needs.

Another reason for the relative low visit frequency is that the majority of students, though liking the foods, think some improvements should be made on the Keelung night market. For instance, they all point out that prices (50 dollars at least) are too high for them to afford. If we compare the average prices of foods in Keelung night market with other markets in Taipei, this complaint is affirmed indeed. (not mentioned) In addition, the narrow streets is another problem in need of improvement, for they cannot accommodate huge numbers of visitors at one time, especially on the weekends. Last but not the least, the respondents also pointed out a problem we have discussed above: the lack of public facilities such as washing rooms.

In spite of high prices, insufficient services, and oily, salty foods in the night market, the students still go there and do have their own favorite foods. They indicate that the foods there represent the value of traditional foods. In the past, life was harsh and most people there were laborers who sweat through their work. Therefore, their foods should contain much salt to supply them with sodium and make them feel energetic instead of feeling listless or crampy. In other words, these traditional foods had their standards of oil and salt which reflect the health concern of the past. (hard to understand, or repetitions)

These local students' responses, of course, cannot account for every consumer's opinion of the night market. However, their responses remind us of the current situation of the night market, its advantages and disadvantages. The results of the questionnaires are for your reference (see the last page).

My Foot is Stuck in Keelung Night Market

According to the result of our observation and questionnaires, Keelung Temple night market does have things to improve on: such as: lack of space, hygiene, and lack of rest room. These are actually some problems most of the night markets in Taiwan share; it's just that some night markets have more space to expand, and less tradition to be tied to than Keelung Miaokow. However, Keelung does have its unique charm: being close to some historical

sites such as Jiou-fen and Dutch District, located at temple front and by a harbor, having some unique Taiwanese foods originating here.

Now, do you want to visit here? If you are foreigners, come and visit Keelung night market as an example of Taiwan's liveliness. If you live here and know all kinds of convenient transportations, you simply cannot refuse a chance to come for some of the following options. If you like traditional flavors such as noodle and rice food, you get it here! If you love fresh seafood, just come and enjoy all kinds of fish and crabs. If you are having a diet, don't worry, because here you can find everything you need such as fruit and juice. What about the crowd? Just relax and feel the flow besides you! There is always someone to lead you to your seat. And if not, remember to look around for a seat on the stairs of the temple. Last but not the least, after your night market trip, don't forget to stroll by the harbor to enjoy a peaceful view at the mountain, the ships and Keelung at rest.


So, it's your turn to come here! Welcome and enjoy! Stick around and have fun!

Appendix: The Questionnaire

Hi! We are students from English Language and Literature Dept. at Fu Jen Catholic University. Now, we are working on our E-Magazine Project, Keelung Night Market. Please spend time briefly answering the following questions. Your answers will be highly appreciated. Thank you!

您好，我們是輔大英文系的學生。現在我們在做有關基隆夜市的電子雜誌。麻煩花少許時間幫我們填下面的問題。您的答案將會對我們雜誌有很大的幫助。謝謝！

Answering in either English or Chinese is acceptable. 用英文或中文回答皆可。

遇到格子問題，只要把你想要的答案反白(或用顏色)就可以了，譬如 →  everyday。填完麻煩寄給鄭羽利他哥, utada_hikaru_sam@yahoo.com.tw。

Age: 18~ 23

Job: Mainly students

Gender: ☐ Male (19) ☐ Female (11)

How long have been living in Keelung? 你住基隆多久了?

☐ 1 ~ 2(18) ☐ 2 ~ 3 ☐ (12) 3 ~ 4 ☐ above

☐ once a week(12) ☐ twice a week(12) ☐ more than twice a week(6) ☐ everyday ☐ never

1. Do you think the location of the night market is strongly reachable?

你認為基隆夜市的可達性非常高? (譬如火車站到夜市的距離很近)

☐ yes(28) ☐ no(2)

2. What transportation means do you usually take to reach there?

你通常都搭什麼交通工具去夜市?

摩托車(26) 公車(4)

3. What's motive for causing you to go there?

讓你會想要去夜市的動機是什麼呢? (譬如吃東西，或買衣服等等)

吃東西(20),買衣服(9), 都是剛好經過(1)

就吃完順便逛逛。買生活用品。當然是買衣服囉。朋友約。

4. What foods impress you a great deal in the night market?

夜市裡的什麼食物讓你印象深刻最深? (譬如泡泡冰...)

泡泡冰,糖葫蘆, 天一香滷肉飯，一口香腸, 天婦羅, 營養三明治, 滷排骨飯, 三兄弟, 生魚飯

5. Whether foods all meet your needs for various flavors? Why?

是否夜裡的食物口味都能符合你的需要? (譬如食物太鹹或太淡)為什麼?

☐ yes(3) ☐ no(27)

油膩膩, 貴死。看了沒有很想吃。鹹! 鹹到爛透了, 不過台灣的食物本來就是那樣。不錯, 多重選擇。

6. Do you think commercial surroundings will make the night market more attractive? Why?

夜市旁邊的商業區域會使夜市本身更有吸引力嗎? 為什麼?

☐ yes(24) ☐ no(6)

沒有什麼, 吃飽還可以散步。因為人都需要吃飯, 而且也可當是一個休閒。買東西比吃東西重要。應該是商業區旁邊的夜市使得商業區本身更有吸引力, 夜市沒啥吸引力。可以順便買生活用品阿。買衣服阿。

7. Do you consider the night market needs some improvements? E.g. public facilities, crowded space... and so on.

你認為夜市需要去做些改善嗎? (譬如公共設施, 或擁擠空間..等等)

☐ yes(29) ☐ no(1)

擁擠, 價錢, 沒廁所。

8. What is your opinion on food prices? Cheap, so-so, or expensive?

你對於夜市普遍價格有怎樣的意見? 便宜, 還好還是很貴?

Expensive (29) No idea (1)

貴翻天。都是 50 塊起跳。

9. What are your favorite foods?

你最喜歡的食物是什麼呢?

泡泡冰(18), 糖葫蘆, 滷肉飯, 三兄弟豆花 (11)

10. Do you think Keelung night market has its own unique features,
compared with the others in Taiwan? In what aspects?

跟其他台灣其他夜市比起來, 你認為基隆夜市有獨特的特色嗎? (譬如食物還是傳統...等等)在哪方面?

☐ yes(23) ☐ no(6)

價錢貴。食物比較有自己的特色。人異常的爆多。廟口。People Mountain People Sea。