

# Ko Samui

Surat Thani • Chumphon  
Ranong





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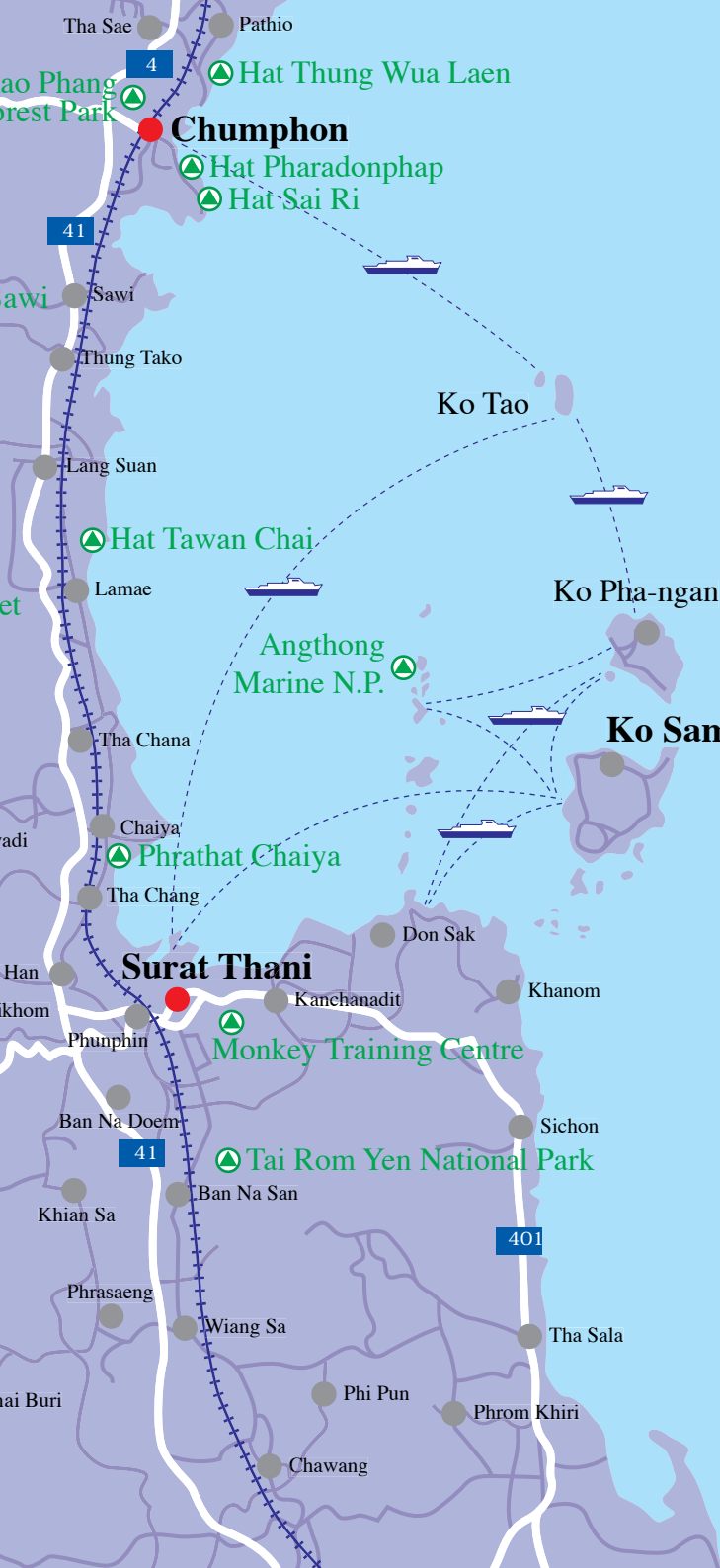
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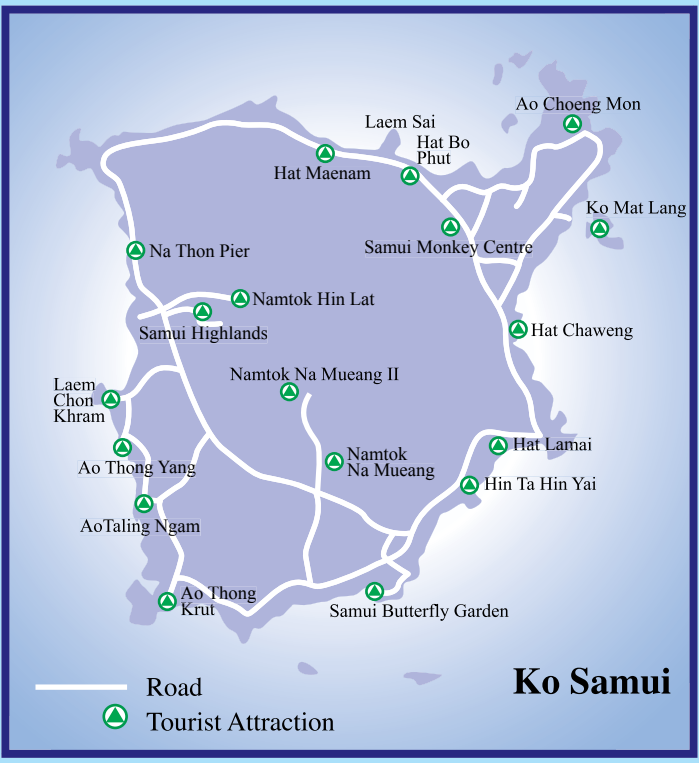
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Gulf of Thailand





*Hat Mae Hat, Ko Tao*



*Hat Lamai*

## Ko Samui

*With soft sandy beaches shaded by towering palms, delicious fresh seafood and a vibrant nightlife, Samui has a magical formula that seems to cast its spell on everyone.*

Ko Samui is Thailand's third largest island at 247 sq. km., and during the last decade it has become one of Southeast Asia's premier tourist destinations.

Samui sits snugly in the Gulf of Thailand, surrounded by other island gems like Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao, and is located 84 km. east of Surat Thani, the provincial capital on the mainland. With soft sandy beaches shaded by towering palms, delicious fresh seafood and a vibrant nightlife, Samui has a magical formula that seems to cast its spell on everyone. Many visitors are content to laze their days away on the beach, soaking up the sun and cooling off in the turquoise waters, but for action enthusiasts there are plenty of choices like diving and snorkelling, windsurfing and paragliding, beach volleyball, off-road driving, and other similar activities.

One of the island's most appealing features is the loop road, which makes a 50 km. circuit around the island, giving a glimpse of superb beaches on the north, east and west coasts. It runs past sleepy fishing villages and through seas of coconut palms, passing Samui's most impressive waterfall and tempting turn-offs into the highlands along the way. Other attractions on or near the road include a butterfly garden, a snake show, a monkey training centre, and health spas dedicated to pampering the body.

There is plenty on Samui to keep even the most jaded travel-

*Hat Rin, Ko Pha-ngan*





*Ao Muang, Ko Tao*

ler happy for a week or two, but for anyone spending even a few days here, an opportunity not to be missed is a trip to the emerald islands of the Mu Ko Angthong National Marine Park, which offers another perspective of a tropical paradise.

## Beaches

### Hat Chaweng

Situated on Samui's east coast, this is the island's longest and most beautiful beach, a 6-km. strip of powder-soft sand fronted by crystal-clear water. At Hat Chaweng, there is plenty of accommodation, ranging from five-star resorts to simple bamboo bungalows. In the day time, Hat Chaweng is the centre for water sports such as windsurfing and jet-skiing and also a great social scene at night, when the dance clubs pulsate to the latest rhythms.

### Hat Lamai

Also on the east coast, just south of Hat Chaweng, the playful waters of Hat Lamai always attracts surfers, as they run a little deeper than any other beaches in Ko Samui. Behind the beach

*Hat Chaweng*



*Hat Lamai*

are several spas where visitors can treat themselves to an herbal sauna, a relaxing Thai massage, or even a mud facial.

### Hat Maenam, Hat Bophut and Hat Bang Rak

These are all located along the north coast, and are ideal places for those who want to get away from it all. Bang Rak is often called "Big Buddha Beach" because of the huge Buddha image at the eastern end of the beach (particularly impressive at sunset.)

### South and West Coast Beaches

On the south and west coasts are very isolated beaches not linked by the island's ring road, yet access is easy enough for those in search of tranquility. At Laem Set in the south, the sea is too shallow for swimming. However, the huge smooth boulders on the beach and the coconut palms leaning over at impossible angles make it look spectacular. In the island's southwest, Hat Taling Ngam may not be quite as perfect as Hat Chaweng, but has a long strip of sand that is often deserted and makes an ideal spot for a beach ramble. At the northern end of the bay, the luxurious Ban Taling Ngam Resort has several swimming pools and villas set on a hill with great views of the beach.

*Hat Bang Rak*





*Ao Thien Ok, Ko Tao*

## Sports

With such clear waters and an abundance of marine life, water sports are very popular on Samui, and the hottest one is diving. Around a dozen dive companies based on the island offer a chance for experienced divers to join them and for beginners to learn how to dive, which can be arranged through the hotels and bungalows. If diving sounds too challenging, then snorkelling is your second choice. Join a trip to one of the nearby coral reefs, put on a mask, a snorkel and fins, then go floating above the reefs and discover colourful fish. For those who would rather keep their head above water, then maybe sea kayaking is the sport for them. Once they have mastered how to propel this small light craft, they can explore the shoreline in perfect peace. For more thrills, try windsurfing, jet-skiing or paragliding, and feel the tropical breeze. For those who are watershy, just hang around the beach in the evening and join in one of the spontaneous games of beach volleyball, or even *Takro*, a traditional Thai take on the game, using feet, elbows and shoulders. If exploring the island's interior sounds like fun, hire a 4WD vehicle and try off-road driving on the bumpy trails leading to the highlands.

*Hat Chaweng*



## Other Attractions

### *Hin Ta and Hin Yai*

Meaning “Grandfather and Grandmother Rocks”, these unusual rock formations were named after their similarity to sexual organs, and they are located at the south end of Hat Lamai. The site is one of Ko Samui’s most photographed features.

### *Namtok Na Mueang*

There are two levels to this attractive waterfall, which tumbles down out of the highlands. The nearest one to the road has about a 20-metre drop and a refreshing pool for relaxing. A steep side road leads to the higher level, which is even more impressive. Here, elephant treks are also possible.

### *Na Thon*

This is the island’s main town and port, situated on the west coast, and is constantly bustling with visitors arriving and departing. This is the place to go shopping for beach gear, extending visas or just watch the goings-on at the port from a street cafe.

### *Na Thon Samui Butterfly Garden*





Set on a gentle slope in the southeast corner of the island, the garden contains a wide range of bright and unusual flowers. Up in the air flit hundreds of butterflies, creating a captivating environment beneath meshed nets. There is also a display of insects, moths and some beehives.

### Snake Shows

For anyone fascinated by snakes, a visit to one of the island's snake shows is a must. The fearless handlers play with deadly species, and offer visitors the chance to get up close and touch their slithery skin.

### Monkey Shows

The monkeys' famed ability as coconut collectors once formed the basis of Samui's economy. During the performance, all their skills are shown to ludicrous effect.

## Shopping

There are plenty of shops behind Hat Chaweng where visitors can buy beachwear, and tailors will measure them and make up a suit or dress while they are relaxing on the beach. For those looking for souvenirs, there are so many options, ranging from colourful carved soaps to chopsticks and coasters made from local coconut wood. There are also several art shops selling reproductions of famous works of art at very reasonable prices.

## Nearby Islands

### Mu Ko Angthong National Marine Park

Situated about 35 km. west of Ko Samui, this archipelago of 42 islands fits everyone's image of a tropical paradise, with huge limestone rocks covered in virgin rainforest rising out of the

### Monkey Training



*Mu Ko Angthong National Marine Park*

aquamarine waters. Most people come here for a day trip tour from Ko Samui, which is easy to organise. There is a fantastic viewpoint on Ko Wua Talap, just above the park headquarters, looking out over the uninhabited, pristine islands. Trips around the park usually include a visit to a delightful concealed lagoon on Ko Mae Ko, as well as the opportunity to paddle a sea kayak around the strange limestone formations. For more information, contact the National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department Tel. 0 2562 0760 or Mu Ko Angthong National Marine Park Tel. 0 7728 6025, 0 7728 6588, 0 7728 0222. Website: [www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)



*Hat Rin, Ko Pha-ngan*

### **Ko Pha-ngan**

Just 20 km. north of Ko Samui and a short boat trip away, Ko Pha-ngan is a mountainous island ringed by secluded bays that offer ideal getaways. Its only town of any size, Thong Sala, has a bank, a post office, supermarket and shops selling beach equipment and souvenirs. Many of its beautiful beaches are accessible only by boat, though pick-up trucks and motorbikes also ply the island's rough roads. Its most famous beach is Hat Rin, in the southeast corner of the island, which is the location for the world-famous full moon parties that attract thousands of visitors each month to dance the night away on the beach. The island's most picturesque beach is Thong Nai Pan, a double bay in the northeast of the island, which has good swimming and snorkelling, as well as the island's most comfortable accommodation. A little south of Thong Nai Pan is Than Sadet, the island's most impressive waterfall, which was once King Chulalongkorn's favourite place.

### **Ko Tao**

“Tao” means turtle, and the island is named for its shape when seen from out in the waters of the Gulf. Smaller than Samui and Pha-ngan, Ko Tao lies about 40 km. northwest of Ko Pha-ngan, and is also easily accessible from Chumphon. The island is particularly popular among divers, and has a reputation for some of the most exciting underwater excursions in the entire Gulf. Several dive companies based at Mae Hat, the island's only town, can arrange underwater excursions for beginners and experienced divers. There are many peaceful and idyllic beaches on the island such as Hat Sai Ri, the island's longest beach on its west coast, Hat Chalok Ban Kao and Hat Sai Daeng on the south coast. There is also a unique geological phenomenon at Ko Nang Yuan, a tiny cluster of islets just off the northwest coast of Ko Tao, where stunning causeways of sand join the islands, offering visitors the choice of two seas to swim in.

*Ko Tao*





*Cruising in the Gulf*

## Getting There

### *By Air*

For reservations, contact Bangkok Airways, Bangkok office  
Tel. 0 2265 5555 Samui Airport office Tel. 0 7724 5601-8.  
Website: [www.bangkokair.com](http://www.bangkokair.com)

### *By Rail*

Trains leave from Hua Lamphong Railway Station in Bangkok to Surat Thani, from where it is necessary to take a bus to Don Sak Pier and then a ferry across to the islands.  
Railway Station Hotline: 1690 or Hua Lamphong Railway Station Tel. 0 2220 4334  
Surat Thani Railway Station Tel. 0 7731 1213  
Website: [www.railway.co.th](http://www.railway.co.th)

### *By Bus*

Buses from Bangkok leave the Southern Bus Terminal three times a day for Ko Samui, but the fare does not include the ticket for the ferry. The bus takes around 14 hours.  
Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. 0 2435 1199  
Surat Thani Bus Terminal Tel. 0 7720 0032  
Website: [www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### *By Boat*

#### To Ko Samui

The ferries for passengers and cars from Don Sak Pier to Ko Samui depart from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., taking about one and a half hours. Fare ranges between 84 and 220 baht. Some ferry company's fare may include a ticket for an air-conditioned bus. If one loves travelling at night to get a great view of stars and sky, there is also an overnight boat to Ko Samui which departs at 11.00 p.m. and arrives at 5.00 a.m.

### To Ko Pha-ngan

There are three alternative piers to catch a boat from Don Sak Pier (Surat Thani), Na Thon (Ko Samui), and from the Ban Don Pier (overnight boat). Boat fares are between 80 and 160 baht.

### To Ko Tao

To travel to this island, alternative departures are at Ko Pha-ngan, Ko Samui and Tha Yang Pier in Chumphon province. The fare is 400-500 baht. Nevertheless, going at night will cost only 200 baht. The boat departs at 12.00 a.m. arriving at 6.00 a.m.

- Raja Ferry (Don Sak, Ko Samui and Ko Pha-ngan)  
Tel. 0 7747 1151-3 (Don Sak office) or 0 7741 5230-3 (Ko Samui office)
- Seatran Ferry (Don Sak, Ko Samui and Ko Pha-ngan)  
Tel. 0 7727 5060
- Ban Don Pier (overnight boat to Ko Samui and Ko Pha-ngan)  
Tel. 0 7728 4928
- Tha Yang Sea Port (overnight boat to Ko Tao)  
Tel. 0 7750 3052-4

## Accommodation

Ko Samui has a variety of hotels and guesthouses to suit all budgets, ranging from luxurious five-star hotels to simple bamboo bungalows on the beach. Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao also have many attractive places to stay. For further information, contact the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Samui Tourism Coordination Centre Tel. 0 7742 0504 or 0 7742 0720-2.

### *Ko Nang Yuan*





Wat Phra Borommathat Chaiya

# Surat Thani

*The provincial capital of Surat Thani rose to importance during the Srivijaya period (7<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries) because of its strategic position at the mouth of the Tapi and Phum Duang Rivers.*

It lies 644 km. south of Bangkok, and most visitors arriving by bus or train head on to the islands by ferry from here or the nearby Don Sak Pier. The provincial capital of Surat Thani rose to importance during the Srivijaya period (7<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> centuries) because of its strategic position at the mouth of the Tapi and Phum Duang Rivers. These days its port is important for the trade in rubber and coconuts.

Surat Thani is southern Thailand's largest province, covering almost 13,000 sq. km., including the region of the Gulf of Thailand that contains its most famous beach resorts, on the islands of Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao.

## Major Attractions

### Chaiya

Located 54 km. north of Surat Thani, just a few kilometres east of Highway No. 41, Chaiya is one of southern Thailand's oldest towns, believed to have been a centre of the Srivijayan Empire, which was a Mahayana Buddhist sect based in Sumatra, with strong Indian influences. In fact, it is likely that the town's name comes from the second part of the word "Srivijaya." A great number of artefacts dating back a thousand years or more have been recovered here, including a bronze statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, an acclaimed masterpiece now on display in the National Museum in Bangkok. Chaiya's two main sights are Wat Phra Borommathat and the Chaiya National Museum, located next to each other on the west side of town. The main feature of the temple is its Chedi, which dates back to the ninth century and is one of the few remaining examples of Srivijayan architecture.

### Ratchaprapha Dam



### Khao Sok National Park

Covering an area of over 700 sq. km. in the west of Surat Thani, Khao Sok National Park consists of tropical rainforest draped over limestone outcrops, which form hundreds of islands in Ratchaphra Dam, resulting in some of the country's most dramatic landscapes. The Park is home to elephants, bears and even a few tigers, though visitors are more likely to hear the raucous whoops of gibbons and glimpse a few of the 188 bird species during a stay in the park. Khao Sok also has the world's largest flower, the *Rafflesia Kerrii*, which can grow up to 70 centimetres wide when it blooms for a few days in December or January.

There are several hiking trails within the park that are suitable for everyone, though for steep routes hikers must be in good physical condition. A less strenuous, but equally pleasurable activity is to take a canoe trip around the towering rocks that protrude from the dam. Khao Sok is best visited between Janu-

*Meditation at Wat Suan Mokkh*



*Chak Phra Festival*

ary and April, when skies are usually clear. There are plenty of places to stay near the visitor centre.

National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department  
Tel. 0 2562 0760

Khao Sok National Park Tel. 0 7739 5139

Website: [www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)

## Special Interest

### Wat Suan Mokkh

This forest temple, located 6 km. south of Chaiya on Highway No. 41, means "Garden of Liberation" and was home to the late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, one of Thailand's most revered monks, famous for his "back-to-basics" approach to Buddhism. Both Thais and foreigners flock here to study meditation courses, which begin on the first day of every month and last for ten days. The technique used is called "mindfulness with breathing" by which meditators keep their attention on their breathing, and return to it whenever the mind wanders. Foreigners study in the International Dharma Heritage building just a kilometre from Wat Suan Mokkh, and visitors are welcome to drop by any time.

Tel. 0 7743 1661-2, 0 7743 1596-7, 0 7743 1552



*Ko Tao*

Website: [www.suanmokkh.org](http://www.suanmokkh.org)

## Special Event

### Chak Phra Festival

“Chak Phra” literally means “pulling the Buddha”, and takes place at the end of Buddhist Lent in October when Buddha images from all the town’s temples are paraded along the streets, and the most important one is floated with pride on the river. It is a time of great joy, and people offer new robes and daily necessities to the monks, while Tapi River becomes the scene of some exciting longboat racing.

## Getting There

### *By Air*

Thai Airways operates flights between Bangkok and Surat Thani daily. (1 hour 15 minutes.)  
Bangkok office Tel. 0 2280 0060, 0 2628 2000  
Website: [www.thaiairways.com](http://www.thaiairways.com)

### *By Rail*

*Ko Tao Pier*



Trains from Hua Lamphong Railway Station in Bangkok to Surat Thani leave many times a day and take 12 hours. The Surat Thani Railway Station is 12 km. from town and there is a shuttle bus between the station and the town.

Railway Station Hotline: 1690

Hua Lamphong Railway Station Tel. 0 2220 4334

Surat Thani Railway Station Tel. 0 7731 1213

Website: [www.railway.co.th](http://www.railway.co.th)

### *By Bus*

Several buses leave the Southern Bus Terminal in Bangkok for Surat Thani daily.

Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. 0 2435 1199

Surat Thani Bus Terminal Tel. 0 7720 0032

Website: [www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### *By Car*

Take Highway No. 4 via Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan and finally Highway No. 41 to reach Surat Thani.

## Accommodation

Ask for recommendations on where to stay in Surat Thani at

*Mu Ko Angthong National Marine Park*





*Hat Thung Wua Laen*

# Chumphon

*Chumphon, covering approximately 6,010 sq. km., is a tiny province with the important title of “Gateway to the South” of Thailand.*

Near the provincial capital, the southbound road splits into two, one following the south Gulf coast and the other branching over to the Andaman coast. Chumphon’s port at Pak Nam is a convenient place to take a boat to Ko Tao, which is in Surat Thani but easier to approach from here. Yet visitors should not be too hasty to leave Chumphon’s pretty coastline, as there are fine beaches and coral-ringed offshore islands both north and south of town.

Situated almost 500 km. south of Bangkok and nearly 200 km. north of Surat Thani, Chumphon, covering approximately 6,010 sq. km., is a tiny province with the important title of “Gateway to the South” of Thailand.

## Major Attractions

### Hat Thung Wua Laen

Easy to reach and situated 16 km. north of town, this sandy beach is backed by lush hills and is a good place for relaxing or setting off on diving and snorkelling trips to nearby coral reefs. There are several resorts and bungalows right on the beach, making this a tempting place to stay. The Chumphon Cabana Resort rents out diving equipment, offers instruction and arranges boat trips to dive sites.

Chumphon Cabana Resort Bangkok office Tel. 0 2427 1825

Chumphon office Tel. 0 7756 0245-7

Website: [www.cabana.co.th](http://www.cabana.co.th)

### Hat Sai Ri

It is also possible to go diving or snorkelling around the islands

*Hat Sai Ri*





*Ko Langa Chio*

of Mu Ko Chumphon National Park near Hat Sai Ri, which is 20 km. south of Chumphon. The beach is another long stretch of enticing sand with lodgings.

#### **Mu Ko Chumphon National Park**

This small park, covering 317 sq. km., has its headquarters 21 km. south of town near Hat Sai Ri. Visitors may camp here and walk along trails that lead off from the Tourist Information

*Fruit Market, Amphoe Lang Suan*



Centre. The park includes beaches like Thung Makham and Arunothai, as well as over 40 small offshore islands. Several of them, like Ko Chorakhe and Ko Ngam, are surrounded by beautiful coral reefs, while Ko Thong Lang has a long white sandy beach. Tel. 0 7755 8144

#### **Chumphon National Museum**

Open on Wednesday to Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., this museum includes displays on the province's history with titles such as, Chumphon during World War II, Chumphon and Typhoons, plus Nature and Outstanding Heritage of Chumphon. It is located in the Chumphon Governmental Centre, Khao Sam Kaeo, Tambon Nacha-ang, Amphoe Mueang on Phetchakasem Road at the 484-km. marker before approaching Pathomphon junction.

Tel. 0 7750 4105, 0 7750 4246

#### **Chumphon Night Market**

After dark, stalls are set up along Krom Luang Chumphon Road creating a lively night market, just near the train station, which is a good place to explore on foot. Try a new Thai snack, pick up a pizza or enjoy a coffee at one of the many shops and street outlets.

## **Special Event**

#### **Chumphon Marine Festival**

Each March or April, the town holds a Marine Festival, which includes cultural and folk art exhibits, a fishing competition, and seafood festival, as well as a mini-marathon and a wind-surfing competition at Hat Sai Ri.

*Orchards in Amphoe Lang Suan*







*Mu Ko Chumphon National Park*

## Getting There

### *By Rail*

Chumphon is on the rail line from Bangkok to the south (about 8-9 hours.) Visitors can take a train from either Hua Lamphong Railway Station or Thon Buri Railway Station (formerly known as Bangkok Noi Railway Station) in Bangkok.

Railway Station Hotline: 1690

Hua Lamphong Railway Station Tel. 0 2220 4334

Thon Buri Railway Station Tel. 0 2411 3102

Chumphon Railway Station Tel. 0 7751 1103

Website: [www.railway.co.th](http://www.railway.co.th)

### *By Bus*

Visitors can take either a regular or an air-conditioned Bangkok-Chumphon bus.

Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. 0 2435 1199

Chumphon Bus Terminal Tel. 0 7757 6796

Website: [www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### *H.R.S. Chumphon*



### *By Car*

From Bangkok, take a 6-to-7-hour-drive south of Bangkok along Highway No. 4 (Phetchakasem) via Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, then turn left at Pathomphon junction and drive 8 kilometres to the town.

## Accommodation

Ask for recommendations on where to stay in Chumphon at the TAT Southern Office: Region 5 Tel. 0 7728 8817-9.

Website: [www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org).

### *Ko Khai*





*Namtok Punyaban*

# Ranong

*In the northeast of the province, the Kra Isthmus signals the narrowest point of the peninsula, where just 44 km. separate the Andaman Sea from the Gulf of Thailand.*

Covering an area of 3,298 sq. km., Ranong is located 568 km. from Bangkok and about 300 km. north of Phuket. It is bordered to the west by the Andaman Sea, to the north by Myanmar, to the east by Chumphon and to the south by Surat Thani.

Ranong is the wettest province in Thailand, with over 4,000 mm. of rain per year, and also the country's least populous province. As it has a long rainy period, which lasts for around 8 months each year, it is best visited between December and April. Its compact area includes many natural wonders such as hot springs, waterfalls, white sandy beaches and offshore islands. In the northeast of the province, the Kra Isthmus signals the narrowest point of the peninsula, where just 44 km. separate the Andaman Sea from the Gulf of Thailand.

## Major Attractions

### Ranong Hot Springs and Raksawarin Arboretum

Just 1 km. to the east of town, on the grounds of Wat Tapotharam, are some hot springs, which bubble up out of the ground at a scalding 65-70 degrees Celsius. This is too hot to bathe in, but the rustic public baths are a much cooler 42 degrees, while the nearby Jansom Thara Hotel has a large public spa that uses the same waters. The hot springs are surrounded by the Raksawarin Arboretum, where there are benches for relaxing in the shade, and from where it is possible to take elephant rides. Try the Jansom Hot Spa Ranong Hotel, with its own mineral water spa from a natural geyser.

Website: [www.jansomthararanong.com](http://www.jansomthararanong.com)

*Ranong Hot Springs*





*Kra Isthmus*

### Victoria Point

Ranong has long been popular among Thais as a jumping off point for a glimpse into Myanmar at Victoria Point, known as Ko Thuang to the Burmese and Ko Song to the Thais. Boats leave from Saphan Pla, Ranong's port and harbour about 5 km. southwest of the town centre. For a small fee, foreigners can also take the short boat ride across the Kra Buri River to this bustling island, which is mostly dedicated to fishing, but also produces a high number of champion kick-boxers. Among the many shops in Victoria Point are some selling intricately made baskets, lacquerware and gems.

Immigration Checkpoint Tel. 0 7782 1216

### Kra Isthmus

The narrowest part of the peninsula that connects Thailand with Myanmar is Ban Thap Li, 545 km. from Bangkok and 66 km. northeast of Ranong town. A small monument just off Highway No. 4 marks the spot where the peninsula's waist measures a slender 44 km., while just 22 km. separate the Gulf of Thailand from Kra Buri River, which flows south into the Andaman, and forms the border between Thailand and Myanmar.

### Namtok Ngao

Located within sight of Highway No. 4, about 12 km. south of Ranong, this waterfall tumbles down from a great height, and is particularly impressive during the wet season.

National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department  
Tel. 0 2562 0760

Namtok Ngao National Park Tel. 0 7784 8181

Website: [www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)

### Ko Chang

Not to be confused with Thailand's second largest island with the same name over on the eastern gulf, this 18 sq. km. island has four beaches strung along its west coast, and also bungalows to rent. Though there is a small village here, there are no cars as yet, so it is a very tranquil place.

### Ko Phayam

Similar in size and just south of Ko Chang, Ko Phayam thrives on its cashew orchards, tended by a handful of local residents, who include "Chao Le" or sea gypsies. The island also has some great beaches, and accommodation on Ao Yai and Ao Khao Khwai. Both these islands are best visited between November and May, to avoid the monsoon rains. Longtail boats to Ko Chang and Ko Phayam leave from Saphan Pla port near Ranong.

### Laemson National Park

Situated 45 km. south of Ranong on the Andaman Sea coast and occupying 315 sq. km., including over 60 km. of coastline, two archipelagoes and 8 islands, Laemson National Park offers a chance to enjoy unspoiled nature, as few people live in this region. The Park headquarters is at Hat Bang Ben, which is typical of others in the region, a broad spread of sand, backed by shady casuarina. Four kilometres further on from here, Hat Laemson is a memorably peaceful spot, good for birdwatching. Park staff can arrange boat trips out to other islands such as Ko Khang Khao and Ko Kam Yai, the latter of which has some fabulous beaches and lies an hour and a half off the coast. National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department  
Tel. 0 2562 0760 Laemson National Park Tel. 0 1978 6620  
Website: [www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)

### Ko Chang



## Getting There

### *By Air*

Phuket Air flies one flight daily between Bangkok and Ranong (1 hour 20 minutes.)

Phuket Air Bangkok office Tel. 0 2679 8999 (Headquarters) or 0 2535 6695 (Bangkok International Airport) or 0 7782 4591-2 (Ranong Airport)

Website: [www.phuketairlines.com](http://www.phuketairlines.com)

### *By Bus*

Both air-conditioned and regular buses in Bangkok depart from the Southern Bus Terminal to Ranong every day (8 hours.)

Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. 0 2435 1199

Ranong Bus Terminal Tel. 0 7781 1548

Website: [www.transport.co.th](http://www.transport.co.th)

### *By Car*

From Bangkok, take Highway No. 4 via Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan and Chumphon, a total distance of 568 km.

## Accommodation

Ask for recommendations on where to stay in Ranong at the TAT Southern Office: Region 5 Tel. 0 7728 8817-9.

Website: [www.tourismthailand.org](http://www.tourismthailand.org)

### *Laemson National Park*



*Ao Yai, Ko Phayam*



## TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND

### HEAD OFFICE

Tourism Authority of Thailand  
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Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400 THAILAND  
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