

Phuket

Phang-nga • Krabi • Trang
Nakhon Si Thammarat
Phatthalung





Contents

<i>Phuket</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Nakhon Si Thammarat</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Phang-nga</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Phatthalung</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Krabi</i>	<i>28</i>		
<i>Trang</i>	<i>36</i>		

Map of Phuket



Ao Phang-nga

Andaman Sea





Ao Maya, Ko Phi Phi Le



Hat Pansea

Phuket

Blessed by nature and the smiling hospitality of its people, and supported by superb tourism facilities, Phuket is today one of the world's premier tropical resorts.

Located 867 kilometres south of Bangkok, Phuket is Thailand's largest island, shaped like an irregular pearl and measuring approximately 21 kilometres long. Connected to the mainland by a causeway, it has a coastline fringed with white sandy beaches and quiet coves, bathed by the clear blue waters of the Andaman Sea and set against a backdrop of green hills, coconut groves and rubber plantations.

Phuket formerly derived its wealth from tin and rubber, and has a rich and colourful history. The island was on one of the major trading routes between India and China, and was frequently mentioned in foreign ships' logs. The Portuguese, Dutch, English and French came to trade during that time.

Phuket's most famous monument is the memorial statue of the heroines Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Sisunthon, who rallied the islanders in 1785 to repel Burmese invaders.

Blessed by nature and the smiling hospitality of its people, and supported by superb tourism facilities, Phuket is today one of the world's premier tropical resorts. Palm-fringed beaches, an island-studded sea, superb accommodation, delicious seafood, numerous sporting and leisure opportunities and, of course, year-round sunshine, to conclude the perfect recipe for a truly memorable holiday.

Climate

Phuket has two main seasons: rainy from May through to October and hot from November to April. However, there are sunny days throughout the wet season, showers customarily lasting little more than 2-3 hours. The best months to visit are Novem-

Laem Phromthep





Hat Nai Yang

ber to February. Average temperatures range between 22 and 34 degrees Celsius.

Beaches & Bays

Phuket's glory is its magnificent coastline. Beaches range from gentle crescents of white sand to rocky headlands. Counter-clockwise, from the island's northern tip, where the Sarasin Bridge connects with the mainland, the major beaches and bays are:

Hat Mai Khao

This pine-fringed stretch of sand is Phuket's longest beach. Each year, from November through to February, giant sea turtles struggle ashore to lay their eggs here.

Hat Patong



Hat Nai Yang

This forms part of the Sirinat National Park and is backed by casuarina pines, as well as a mangrove forest. The tranquil surroundings are ideal for relaxation, picnics, swimming and snorkelling.

Hat Pansea & Hat Surin

The two scenic coves offer very picturesque settings although dangerous undercurrents can make swimming unsafe.

Hat Kamala

Another fine stretch of sand. The northern end, which is partly shaded by casuarinas, is suitable for swimming.

Hat Patong

Phuket's most developed beach offers numerous leisure, sporting, shopping and recreational options along its 3 km. crescent bay. In addition to its daytime attractions, Patong is also known for its vibrant nightlife among which seafood restaurants prominently feature.

Hat Karon & Kata

Both beaches are impressive, peaceful and eminently suitable for swimming, snorkelling, windsurfing and sunbathing.

Hat Nai Han

This white sandy beach fronts a shallow lagoon between rocky headlands. Conditions for swimming, windsurfing, sailing and sunbathing are all excellent.

Hat Rawai

The palm-fringed beach is best known for its village of "Sea Gypsies", formerly a nomadic fishing minority believed to be of

Hat Kata



Melanesian descent.

Ao Chalong

A location popular for its several restaurants serving some of Phuket's best seafood.

Laem Phanwa

The southern tip of the cape is the location of the Marine Biological Research Centre and Phuket's Aquarium, where visitors can see several hundred exotic and colourful marine species.

Ko Si Re

The small island separated from the mainland only by the Tha Chin Canal, is located 4 km. northeast of the town. There is a sea gypsy village considered the largest in Phuket

Sirinart National Park

The park, located near Phuket International Airport along Routes No. 402 and 4026, some 30 km., occupies a total area of 90 square kilometres and has an uninterrupted 13 km. long stretch of beaches: Hat Nai Thon, Hat Nai Yang, Hat Mai Khao, and Hat Sai Kaeo.

Major Sights & Attractions

Mueang Phuket

The compact provincial capital serves mainly as a commercial and shopping centre although traces of the old Sino-Portuguese architecture provides distinctive character.

Khao Rang

This provides a pleasant view of the town, also a park and series of hillside sculptural tableaux.

Phuket Fantasea

Inspired by Thailand's rich and exotic heritage, Phuket Fantasea not only showcases the charm and beauty of Thailand, but also enriches ancient Thai traditions with the wonder of cutting edge technology and special effects. The result is a stunning 140-acre theme complex packed with a multitude of activities and entertainment: a festival village with carnivals, games, handicrafts and shopping; a 4,000-seat restaurant offering a grand buffet of Thai and international cuisine; a breath-taking Las Vegas-style theatrical show, where state-of-the-art technology and special effects enhance the beauty of Thailand's myths, mysteries and magic in a wondrous extravaganza certain to delight everyone.



Wat Phra Thong

The Thai Village

On Thep Krasattri Road, the village serves typical southern Thai specialities for lunch and dinner, as well as staging cultural shows featuring Thai dances, sword-fighting, Thai boxing, elephants and local customs. Handicrafts are also on display.

Thalang National Museum

Located near the Two Heroines Monument, the museum contains a collection of exhibits of ancient artefacts and other materials illustrating life in old Phuket.

Wat Phra Thong

Inland from Hat Nai Yang, the temple enshrines a famous, partially buried Buddha image. Local legend relates how a boy tethered his buffalo to what he thought was a post sticking out of the ground. Subsequently, this boy and his animal fell mysteriously ill. Suspicious villagers uncovered the post and found that it was the decorative topknot of a buried golden Buddha. They were able to unearth no more than the upper part of the image, over which the present temple was constructed. When Burmese invaders attempted to remove the statue in the 18th century they were attacked by a swarm of hornets.

Laem Phromthep

The southernmost point of Phuket is the perfect place where picturesque sunsets are seen.

Ko Kaeo

This is an offshore isle about 3 km. from Hat Rawai and can be reached in 30 minutes by boat. There are sandy beaches and a



Ko Racha

captivating underwater scenery, as well as a replica of the Holy Footprint on the island.

Ko Racha Yai

The gleaming beaches can be reached by chartered boat from Ao Chalong. It takes about 2-3 hours for the boat trip during the off-monsoon season (December-April). At Ko Racha Yai, there is the most perfected and versatile of corals for visitors to see. Sightseeing services are available from tour operators in town. Accommodation is available.

Namtok Ton Sai & Khao Phra Thaeo Wildlife Sanctuary

An idyllic setting cooled by sonorous cascades, this 22 sq. km. area is rich in wildlife, including bears, porcupines, gibbons and macaques, as well as over 100 bird species. For nature enthusiasts, the sanctuary has also mapped out walking trails.

Wat Chalong

A few kilometres inland from Ao Chalong, the temple enshrines statues of Phuket's two most revered monks: Luang Pho Chaem and Luang Pho Chuang.

Pearl Farms

Several pearl farms are located in and around Phuket. Please contact TAT's Phuket office for details of arranging visits.

Native Handicrafts Centre

Located on Thep Krasattri Road, the Centre has artisans skilled in silk weaving, lacquerware, silverware, jewellery-making and

the crafting of parasols.

Phuket Butterfly Garden & Insect World

The farm is situated 3 km. from town and has a fascinating collection of such tropical creatures as butterflies and insects; all displayed in natural surroundings. Open daily 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Tickets are 200 baht. Tel. 0 7621 5616, 0 7621 0861
Website: www.phuketbutterfly.com

Wat Phra Nang Sang

A historical Phuket landmark, Wat Phra Nang Sang was originally a fort built to resist Burmese invaders. Enshrined in the main hall are three old and large Buddha statues made of tin.

Tours & Cruises

Several tour operators arrange island tours, visit to pearl farms, island cruises, dive safaris and more. Full and up-to-date information on these and other sightseeing and touring options are available at TAT's Phuket office on Phuket Road.
Tel: 0 7621 2213, 0 7621 1036

Sporting Opportunities

Golf

There are four top 18-hole golf courses in Phuket, which offer excellent and challenging play. All offer reasonably priced green fees, golf club rentals and caddy services.

- *Phuket Country Club (in Kathu)*
Tel. 0 7632 1038-40
- *Blue Canyon Country Club (in Amphoe Thalang)*
Tel. 0 7632 8088
Website: www.bluecanyonclub.com
- *Laguna Phuket Golf Club (at Hat Bang Thao)*
Tel. 0 7632 4350
- *Loch Palm Golf Club (in Kathu)*
Tel. 0 7632 1929, 0 7632 1933-4

Horse Riding

There are three riding clubs: the first is on Patak Road, on the way to Hat Kata, the second is Ban Sai Yuan situated at Hat Nai Han route and the Laguna Phuket at Bang Thao. These three have facilities for visitors' convenience and courses for both beginners and experienced riders.

Windsurfing

This sport can be enjoyed at most major beaches. Boards may be rented by the hour, half-day, full-day or week. Expert tuition is also available.



Sailing

Sailing

Small boat sailing is popular, especially at Hat Nai Han, Hat Patong and Hat Kata. Toppers and Dinghies are found at Hat Patong, while Catamarans, Hobie Cats and Top Cats are available at Hat Kata.

Water-skiing

Popular at Hat Patong on a half-hour or hourly basis. Cable water-skiing is available at Phuket Waterski Cableway, located behind the Loch Palm Golf Course in Amphoe Kathu.

Deep Sea Fishing

Daily tours, departing early morning and returning late afternoon, cruise around the smaller offshore islands for game fish.

Swimming

You can enjoy swimming throughout the year with good conditions in most locales. However, there are undertows off certain beaches, especially hazardous in the rainy season. It is best to seek local advice regarding safety.

Snorkelling

This can be enjoyed at many sheltered bays around Phuket, the most readily accessible spots being Hat Patong, Hat Kata and Hat Karon. Fins, masks and snorkels can be rented on a daily basis from numerous shops around the island.

Scuba-diving

Dive boats regularly leave Phuket for expeditions of 1 to 7 days

around neighbouring islands, as well as further afield, notably to Mu Ko Phi Phi, in Krabi, some 2 hours east of Phuket, and Mu Ko Similan, which lie in Phang-nga some 110 km. north-west of Phuket. Several dive shops are concentrated in Hat Patong, Hat Kata and Hat Chalong areas. These dive shops also have Thai and expatriate dive instructors who are qualified to provide expert tuition. All diving equipment is available for hire.

Sea Canoeing

This form of ecotourism, exploring islands and marine caves that are accessible only by canoe, has become extremely popular in recent years. Day tours and overnight camping trips, mostly in Phang-nga, are offered by various sea canoe companies, with full details being available from TAT's Phuket office.

Yacht Charters

Yacht charters, either with or without crews, as well as sailing courses are available. Contact TAT's Phuket office for names of charter companies and full details.

Special Events

Thao Thep Krasattri & Thao Sisunthon Fair

Held annually on 13 March, the Fair commemorates the Two Heroines who rallied the people of Thalang to repel Burmese invaders in the 18th century.

Loi Ruea Chao Le Tradition

In the middle of the 6th and 11th lunar months, Chao Le (Sea Gypsies) celebrate a time-honoured tradition in which they float model boats in a symbolic gesture of banishing bad luck.

Vegetarian Festival

Phuket's biggest and most exciting annual celebration, the Vegetarian Festival takes place over the first nine days of the 9th lunar month (usually October). It is a time when Phuket islanders of Chinese descent follow a vegetarian diet as a form of purification in order to ensure good fortune in the coming year. It is marked by colourful processions, and by devotees performing amazing acts of self-mortification, including fire walking and piercing the body with skewers.

Phuket Triathlon

During October and November, the triathlon (consisting of a 1.8 km. swim, a 55 km. bike race and a 12 km. run) attracts top-class athletes from around the world.

Tourist Season Opening Festival

First initiated in 1985 at Hat Patong to welcome the start of the tourism season, the Festival is staged on 1 November and features many colourful and interesting activities, such as merit-making, watersports contests and a “Miss Visitor” contest.

King’s Cup Regatta

Each year in early December, the Phuket Yacht Club hosts international yachtsmen, who compete for royal trophies in a series of races from Mu Ko Phi Phi to Phuket.

Getting There

By Air

• *Thai Airways International*

The airline operates several daily flights Bangkok-Phuket, with a flight time of 1 hour.

Bangkok office tel. 0 2280 0060, 0 2628 2000, Hotline 1566

Phuket office tel. 0 7625 8240

Website: www.thaiairways.com

• *Bangkok Airways*

Flights from Bangkok, some via Ko Samui, are operated by Bangkok Airways.

Bangkok office tel. 0 2265 5555, Hotline 1771

Phuket office tel. 0 7622 5033-5

Website: www.bangkokair.com

• *Air Asia*

Call Center 0 2515 9999

Website: www.airasia.com

• *Orient Air*

Call Center 1126

Website: www.orient-thai.com

• *Phuket Air*

Bangkok office tel. 0 2679 8999

Website: www.phuketairlines.com

King’s Cup Regatta



• *Nok Air*

Call Center 1318

Website: www.nokair.co.th

Phuket is also served by international flights from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Australia.

By Bus

Air-conditioned and non air-conditioned coaches leave Bangkok’s Southern Bus Terminal daily. Please contact tel.

0 2435 1199 for more information.

Website: www.transport.co.th

By Car

It is 862 km. by road from Bangkok to Phuket, the drive taking about 12 hours.

By Rail

There is no direct rail link to Phuket. The nearest railway station is Phun Phin in Surat Thani from where bus services connect with the island. For further information, please contact the Travel Service Unit of the State Railways of Thailand.

Tel. 0 2220 4334, Hotline 1690

Website: www.railway.co.th

Accommodation

Phuket offers a huge range of accommodation, from super deluxe resorts to beach bungalows. A full list of hotels may be obtained from TAT’s Phuket office and

Website: www.tourismthailand.org.

Shopping

Cultivated pearls, batiks, pewter ware and tailor-made clothing are Phuket’s best known buys. The widest range of shops, including department stores, are found in Phuket town and at Hat Patong.

Situated immediately north of Phuket, from where it is an easy excursion option, Phang-nga covers an area of 4,170 sq. km. and its provincial capital lies 788 km. to the south of Bangkok. The province’s main attractions stem primarily from the area’s geological formations. This has produced an extraordinary number of islands, caves and rocky outcrops, the most notable being those preserved in the national marine parks of Ao Phang-nga,



Mu Ko Similan

Phang-nga

With a remarkable geological site, Phang-nga is essentially a province to explore, as well as where to find some of the country's best scuba-diving spots.

Mu Ko Similan and Mu Ko Surin.

Inland the major sights are caves, waterfalls, temples and the archaeological site of Ban Thung Tuek. With a remarkable geological site, Phang-nga is essentially a province to explore, as well as where to find some of the country's best scuba-diving spots. There are, however, beaches and a choice of resort accommodation, which allow for a tranquil vacation amid the most stunning natural scenery.

Climate

The rainy season is from May through to October, yet most days are sunny. The best time to visit is between December and April.

Islands

Ao Phang-nga

Designated a marine national park in 1981, Ao Phang-nga covers a coastal and offshore area. Mangrove forests are found along the shoreline. However, the most striking feature is the bay, which is dotted with more than 100 islands, weirdly shaped limestone outcrops swathed in tangles of creepers, shrubs, and mostly uninhabited. Some rise sheer from the water, others are humped or jagged and all present a haunting aspect. Many have notable features, such as Khao Khian, where prehistoric rock paintings can be seen on the cliffs; Ko Panyi where there is a Muslim fishing village built on stilts; Ko Phanak with beautiful caves, and "James Bond Island" which is famous for the location of the movie "The Man with the Golden Gun."

Ao Phang-nga





Mu Ko Similan

Several tour companies operate organised excursions to these islands, departing either from the Customs Pier (Tha Dan) on the Phang-nga mainland, or from Phuket.

Mu Ko Similan

Like Ao Phang-nga, Mu Ko Similan are also preserved as a national marine park, extending over an area of 32,000 acres. Set in the Andaman Sea about a 3-hour boat ride from the mainland, the nine islands of the archipelago are quite distinct from those of Phang-nga. The islands are of granite, not limestone which makes them a rare beauty. The formations are also uniquely different. Together with hiking trails and other onshore attractions, however, Similan's reputation is its 30 excellent and dissimilar diving sites. Coral walls, huge sea fans and barrel sponges, rock reefs, swim-throughs and other underwater features offer a wide variety of opportunities for experiencing, while plenty of shallows afford excellent conditions for snorkelling.

Mu Ko Surin

This National Marine Park, comprising five islands and covering more than 33,000 acres, is located north of the Similans. The islands are best reached from the Khura Buri Pier (125 km. north of Phang-nga town), and takes 4 hours. Again the main attractions are scuba-diving and snorkelling, as the coral formations are spectacular. However, the two largest islands, Ko Surin Nuea and Ko Surin Tai (North and South islands, respectively) have good potential for exploring on land, with several hiking trails and, on Ko Surin Tai, a Sea Gypsy village.



James Bond Island



Mu Ko Surin

Other Attractions

Tham Phung Chang

This cave is located within the grounds of Wat Phra Phat Phra Chim Kaet behind the Provincial Hall. Inside are stalagmites, stalactites and a stream that runs all year round. Two-hour excursions on foot, canoe, or raft through the cave are available (contact Thongthae Sea Canoe Tel. 0 7641 2292.)

Khao Lampi-Hat Thai Mueang National Park

The National Park covers an area of 18,000 acres. The main features are Namtok Lampi (a medium-sized cascade with three levels reaching a height of about 100 metres) and Ton Phrai (a large waterfall with a powerful flow year-round.)

Wat Suwan Khuha

Located at Mu 2, Tambon Krasom, this is one of Phang-nga's most important and most fascinating Buddhist temples. Located within the temple compound is a series of superb caves, the largest of which (Tham Yai), measuring more than 20 metres by 40 metres, enshrines Buddha images, the biggest being a magnificent 15-metre Reclining Buddha.

Khao Lak-Lam Ru National Park

Extending over a vast area, the park encompasses both mountain and coastal environments and includes a number of interesting features such as Hat Khao Lak, Hat Nang Thong, Hat Bang Niang. Khao Lak Mountain is famous for the shrine of Chao Pho Khao Lak and also the 5-tier waterfall of Lam

Ru.

Tham Lot

Beautiful stalagmite and stalactite formations can be seen in this cave, which is located in the Ao Phang-nga area.

Ban Thung Tuek Ancient Town

Of interest to history buffs, the site of Ban Thung Tuek, in Amphoe Khura Buri, bears a few archaeological remains that attest to its ancient importance as a port of call for Arab, Indian and Malay merchants engaged in the spice trade.

Sporting Opportunities

Scuba-diving

Some of Thailand's very best dive sites are located off the shores of Phang-nga, especially around Mu Ko Similan and Mu Ko Surin. To visit these waters is by joining excursions organised by dive operators.

Snorkelling

As with scuba-diving, snorkelling conditions in the waters off Phang-nga are excellent.

Sea Canoeing

Many of the islands in Phang-nga are riddled with marine grottos, to which Phuket-based sea canoe operators offer organised tours.

Special Events

Free the Turtles Fair

Held usually in March at Hat Thai Mueang, the 7-day festival is celebrated by the release of baby turtles into the sea.

Getting There

By Air

Thai Airways International and Bangkok Airways operate several daily flights from Bangkok to Phuket, from there you can take a bus or rent a car for the 58-km. drive to Phang-nga.

By Bus

There are four daily bus services from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal (Tel: 0 2435 1199) to Phang-nga, the journey taking 12 hours.



By Car

It is 788 km. from Bangkok to Phang-nga, the drive taking around 12 hours. From Phuket to Phang-nga is 87 km. with a travel time of about 1 hours.

By Rail

There is no direct rail service to Phang-nga, and the closest railway station is Surat Thani, a two-hour bus ride away. For more information, please contact Bangkok's Hua Lamphong Railway Station, Tel.1690 or 0 2220 4334.

Website: www.railway.co.th

Accommodation

A range of hotel and resort accommodation is available on Phang-nga mainland, while basic accommodation such as bungalows or tents is provided on both Mu Ko Similan and Mu Ko Surin. Full details are available from the TAT office in Phuket or www.tourismthailand.org.

Shopping

Phang-nga's most famous local buys are its artificial flowers made from rubber and fish scales. The quite exquisite products are sold at the Phang-nga Provincial Agricultural Office (Tel: 0 7641 2019) and the Farmers Housewives Group.

For many, Krabi, located 814 km. south of Bangkok, is the most beautiful province along the Andaman coast. It is the kind of place where tired clichés like idyllic and pristine take on a whole new meaning. With the display of characteristic beaches and qualified soft coast of the Andaman, fine white sand, warm clear water and lush tropical greenery spilling onto the shore, provides a dramatic backdrop to the sites.

The locations are rust-hued cliffs, some soaring to 1,000 feet. There are also offshore islands, most famously the twin Phi Phi isles, the location for the movie *The Beach*, and reputed Ko



Ko Poda

Krabi

With the display of characteristic beaches and qualified soft coast of the Andaman, fine white sand, warm clear water and lush tropical greenery spilling onto the shore, provides a dramatic backdrop to the sites.

Lanta.

Krabi has a wealth of “green” attractions; for example, Khao Phanom Bencha National Park, a lush nature preserve noted for its impressive waterfalls, as well as a comparative wealth of wildlife. Further north is Than Bokkhorani National Park, another immensely picturesque area of limestone mountains, waterfalls, pools, mangrove forests, caves and islands.

Climate

The weather is similar to that of Phuket, and sunny days can be expected even in the May - October rainy season.

Beaches & Islands

Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park

This marine national park covers the coastal area and offshore islands within Amphoe Mueang. The varied scenes within the park limits include the tranquil casuarinas-backed beach of Hat Noppharat Thara, the long sandy stretch of the more developed beach of Ao Nang, Mu Ko Phi Phi and Susan Hoi (Shell Cemetery) a beach of fossilised limestone and shells formed some 40 million years ago.

Mu Ko Phi Phi

Now famous as the location for the movie *The Beach*, there are two principal islands in the Phi Phi group, Phi Phi Don and Phi Phi Le. The former is larger and has been developed with bungalow accommodation and other tourist facilities. Phi Phi Le, smaller and uninhabited, is stunningly beautiful with sheer cliffs, idyllic bays, hidden coves and caves.

Phra Nang Cave





Ao Nang

Laem Phra Nang

Around the headland from Ao Nang are three of Krabi's best beaches, Ao Phra Nang, Hat Rai Le and Ao Nam Mao. The area can be reached only by boat and is quite spectacular. Rock climbing and cliff-trekking to a hidden pool and a magnificent viewpoint are among the attractions.

Mu Ko Lanta National Park

Several different islands are encompassed by the park, some of which are surrounded by beautiful coral reefs, while the main island of Ko Lanta Yai is an up-and-coming resort destination.

Khao Khanap Nam

These mountains, walling the Krabi River in between, are somewhat a symbol of the town. It is accessible within 15 minutes by long-tail boat from Tha Chao Fa, the main pier in the town.

Ao Nang

Ao Nang, located 6 km. from Hat Noppharat Thara, is a large bay with scenic beaches and 83 small islands. A number of hotels and bungalows as well as dive shops are available.

Inland Attractions

Mueang Krabi

The markets and the river frontage of Krabi town, an unpretentious little place huddled near the mouth of the Krabi River, are worth strolling around for their local colour. The main attraction, however, is Khao Khanap Nam, a rock



Rock Climbing at Hat Rai Le

outcrop in the river facing the town where there are caves with stalagmites and stalactites.

Susan Hoi / Fossil Shell Beach

The place is 17 km. from town along the route to Hat Nop-pharat Thara. A tremendous number of shells embedded near the seashore piled up a large amount of shells some 40 million years ago.

Wat Tham Suea

Situated about 7 km. from Krabi town, Tiger Cave Temple as the name translates, is a famous forest temple set in a wooded valley surrounded by high cliffs where monks practice meditation.

Khao Phanom Bencha National Park

Covering a total area of 50 sq. km. and located about 20 km. from Krabi town, the park is typified by forested peaks, and its marvellous scenery is enhanced by streams, waterfalls and a comparative wealth of fauna.

Susan Hoi / Shell Fossil Beach



Than Bokkhorani National Park

Off the main Krabi-Phang-nga highway some 45 km. from town, the park extends over an area of 121 sq. km. and has many attractions including limestone cliffs, caves and waterfalls. The focal point of this popular beauty spot is a lotus pool fed by a waterfall splashing down from the rocks overhead. Streams flow from the lagoon and meander through a botanical garden of tropical flowers, trees and shrubs. In the area, there is a replica of the Lord Buddha's footprint carved from wood and a shrine of Chao Pho To Yuan-To Chong.

Sporting Opportunities

Scuba-diving

Excursions into Krabi's waters are organised by dive operators in Krabi and Phuket.

Snorkelling

Conditions are good for snorkelling, especially around the offshore islands.

Rock Climbing

The limestone cliffs at Ao Nam Mao, Hat Rai Le by Phra Nang headland are ideal for rock climbing, and a number of professional companies provide equipment and tuition.

Special Events

Visit Krabi and Andaman Festival

Held annually to inaugurate the province's tourism season, the festival features local entertainment, traditional shows and water sports.

Loi Ruea Chao Le Festival

Celebrated on the full moon night of the 6th and 11th lunar months at the beach near Ban Sala Don on Ko Lanta, the Sea Gypsies of the region gather in order to float model boats in the sea to bring good luck. The Festival also features typical southern dance and traditional music.

Getting There

By Air

- *Thai Airways International*

Bangkok office Tel. 0 2280 0060, 0 2628 2000, Hotline 1566

Krabi office Tel. 0 7562 2439

Website: www.thaiairways.com

- *PB Air*

Bangkok office Tel. 0 2261 0220
 Krabi office Tel. 07569 2143
 Website: www.pbair.com

By Bus

Coaches leave daily for Krabi from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal. Please Tel. 0 2435 1199 for more information.

By Car

From Bangkok to Krabi, the route via Phetchaburi-Prachuap Khiri Khan-Chumphon-Ranong-Phang-nga is 946 km.

By Rail

There is no direct rail service to Krabi. The closest southern rail stations are Trang and Nakhon Si Thammarat, from where visitors can take a bus or taxi to Krabi. For more information, please contact the State Railways of Thailand.
 Tel. 0 2220 4334 or Hotline 1690

Accommodation

Hotels in all categories, from super deluxe to budget bungalows are to be found in Krabi. For full details, please contact the TAT's Krabi office located on Uttarakit Road in Krabi town, Tel. 0 7562 2163.

Shopping

Souvenirs of Krabi include turtle dove cages, while the local fish paste and dried fish and shrimp are popular. Shopping is best on Uttarakit Road.

South of Krabi, the province of Trang is something of a mid point, figuratively speaking, an up-and-coming tourism destination that has yet to achieve the status of Krabi or Phuket. It is also distinguished by offering both coastal and inland attractions.

With a coastline of nearly 200 km. and more than 46 offshore islands, Trang's prime marine attractions are cruising the coastal waters, visiting such notable sights as Tham Morakot or Emerald Cave along with excellent opportunities for snorkelling and scuba-diving. Then, for a change of scenery, inland excursions



Ao Maya, Ko Phi Phi Le

*Ko Muk*

Trang

Trang's prime marine attractions are cruising the coastal waters, visiting such notable sights as Tham Morakot or Emerald Cave along with excellent opportunities for snorkelling and scuba-diving.

are equally rewarding, with a lush and hilly landscape dotted with caves and waterfalls.

The area is also of considerable historical interest, most notable as the place where, in 1899, rubber trees were first introduced to Thailand and so began the cultivation of what has become one of the South's major commodities. Currently less developed than other parts of the Andaman coast, Trang also retains much of its local character and so affords good insights into traditional southern lifestyles.

Climate

The best time to visit is between November to April although Trang's waterfalls are at their most spectacular towards the end of the rainy season in September and October.

Beaches & Islands

Hat Pak Meng

Located 39 km. from Trang town, this is a marvellous and mostly deserted-sandy beach stretching for 7 km. around a lovely bay, the seascape is made dramatic by several offshore limestone outcrops. Pak Meng Pier has boats for all famous tourist destinations.

Hat Chang Lang

South of Pak Meng, Chang Lang is a similarly attractive beach set within Chao Mai National Park.

Ko Kradan





Ko Ngai

Hat San & Yong Ling

Continuing south, these beaches are distinguished by the natural beauty of rugged cliffs and a mountain with caves.

Hat Chao Mai

The pine-fringed beach, backed by limestone hills with caves, has added attractions of simple restaurants with excellent seafood, a ferry to Ko Libong, and sea canoes for hire.

Hat Samran

Hat Samran is a splendid beach with a tranquil setting, reached via Yantakhao, south of Trang town.

Ko Muk

The most famous of Trang's offshore islands is Ko Muk and its major attraction Tham Morakot, which can only be entered by swimming through a 80-metre dark tunnel at low tide. The roof of the cave has collapsed and once inside visitors will be enchanted by the sunlit lagoon scenery and sandy beach surrounded by 360 degrees of sheer cliffs. It can be reached via boat from Pak Meng Pier.

Ko Ngai

Here the sandy strand is complemented by a beachfront restaurant. The island is one of a kind, with bungalow accommodation. It can be reached via boat from Pak Meng Pier.

Ko Kradan

Widely regarded as the most beautiful of the islands that are part of Hat Chao Mai National Marine Park. Ko Kradan has rubber and coconut plantations, as well as beaches and coral reefs. On the side, facing Ko Muk is a reasonable diving site. It can be reached via boat from Pak Meng Pier.

Ko Libong

This is Trang's largest island with reasonable beaches and several fishing villages where a traditional lifestyle is maintained. It can be reached by boat from Kantang of Hat Chao Mai.

Ko Sukon

Also known as Ko Mu, the island is a quiet place with fine beaches, while the waters around offer good conditions for diving and snorkelling. It can be reached by boat from Paliean.

Caves & Waterfalls

Tham Le

Situated 37 km. north of Trang town, this thrilling cave is explored by boat. At times, the ceiling is very low and the rocky sides close by; at other spots the cave opens up and visitors can leave the boat to explore small chambers with stalactite and stalagmite formations.

Tham Khao Pina

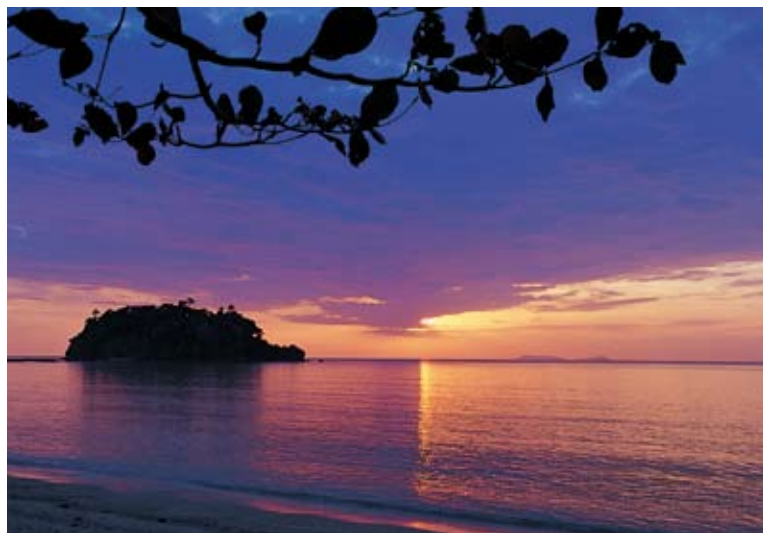
Located in the same direction from town as Tham Le, this is a series of six caves that enshrine Buddha images.

Tham Phra Phut

Located in the northeast of the province in Amphoe Huai Yot, this cave has several Buddha images, most notably a large reclining statue dating from the Ayutthaya period.

Tham Khao Chang Hai

Ko Libong



East of Trang town in Amphoe Nayong, this is one of the largest and finest caves in the province, most impressive for its variety of rock formations.

Namtok Ton Te

Located 46 km. southeast of Trang town, Ton Te is the province's largest waterfall, tumbling an impressive 320 metres down a forested hillside. A path leads up the hill and the climb is well worthwhile.

Namtok Ton Tok

Situated in the same vicinity as Ton Te, these falls are smaller but extremely picturesque in a lush green setting.

Namtok Sai Rung

Located off Highway 4125 at the 12 km. marker, Sai Rung is noted for its rainbow effect as the sun catches the water cascading over a steep rock face.

Namtok Phrai Sawan

Just 3 km. away from Sai Rung, Phrai Sawan is a 7-tier waterfall that has a clear pool at its base suitable for swimming.

Khao Chong Wildlife & Nature Education Station

There are two pretty waterfalls, Ton Yai and Ton Plio, in this nature reserve situated 20 km. east of Trang town. The whole area is extremely attractive and easily accessed by a number of walking trails.

Other Attractions

Khlong Lamchan Waterfowl Park

Located off the Trang-Phatthalung Highway at the 17 km. marker, this wetland area is a protected habitat for teal, ducks and other native and migratory waterfowls.

Monument of Phraya Rasdanupradit Mahissara Phakdi

Located 1 km. out of town on the road to Phatthalung, this is the monument of an important ruler of Trang who first initiated the idea of growing rubber plants in Trang. Nearby is Kraphang Surin, a broad lagoon where the surroundings are suitable for relaxation.

Mueang Trang

While offering no monumental sights, Trang town is full of character, still very traditional and mostly unchanged in its quiet ways. City sights as such do not extend much beyond a handful of Buddhist and Chinese temples, and instead Trang depends



Sunset at Hat Pak Meng

its charm on its own sure sense of identity. In culinary terms, the town is famous for its crispy roast pork, *mu yang*, and its strong southern-style coffee, *ko-pi*.

Sporting Opportunities

Scuba-diving & Snorkelling

Trips can be arranged through local tour agencies. For the best diving site, water is much clearer in the offshore islands.

Bull Fighting

This is a popular local spectator sport, with bull against bull. Neither men nor animals get killed.

Special Events

Food Festival

Trang celebrates its culinary traditions with a cake festival in August and a festival devoted to roast pork in September, marked by parades, fairs and entertainments.

Vegetarian Festival

Held usually in October, is a festival of Chinese origin. It is celebrated over nine days and features ceremonies at local Chinese temples and parades during which devotees perform remarkable feats of self-mortification.

Getting There

By Air

Thai Airways International (Tel: 0 2628 2000) operates daily

flights from Bangkok to Trang.

By Bus

Coaches leave daily for Trang from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal. Please Tel: 0 2435 1199 for more information.

By Car

Bangkok is 827 km. from Trang.

By Rail

There are two overnight rail services from Bangkok to Trang. For more information, please contact the State Railways of Thailand Tel: 1690 or 0 2220 4334.

Accommodation

The best hotels are in Trang town, while bungalow accommodation is available on some of the islands. More details can be obtained from the Trang Tourism Coordination Centre Tel: 0 7521 5867-8.

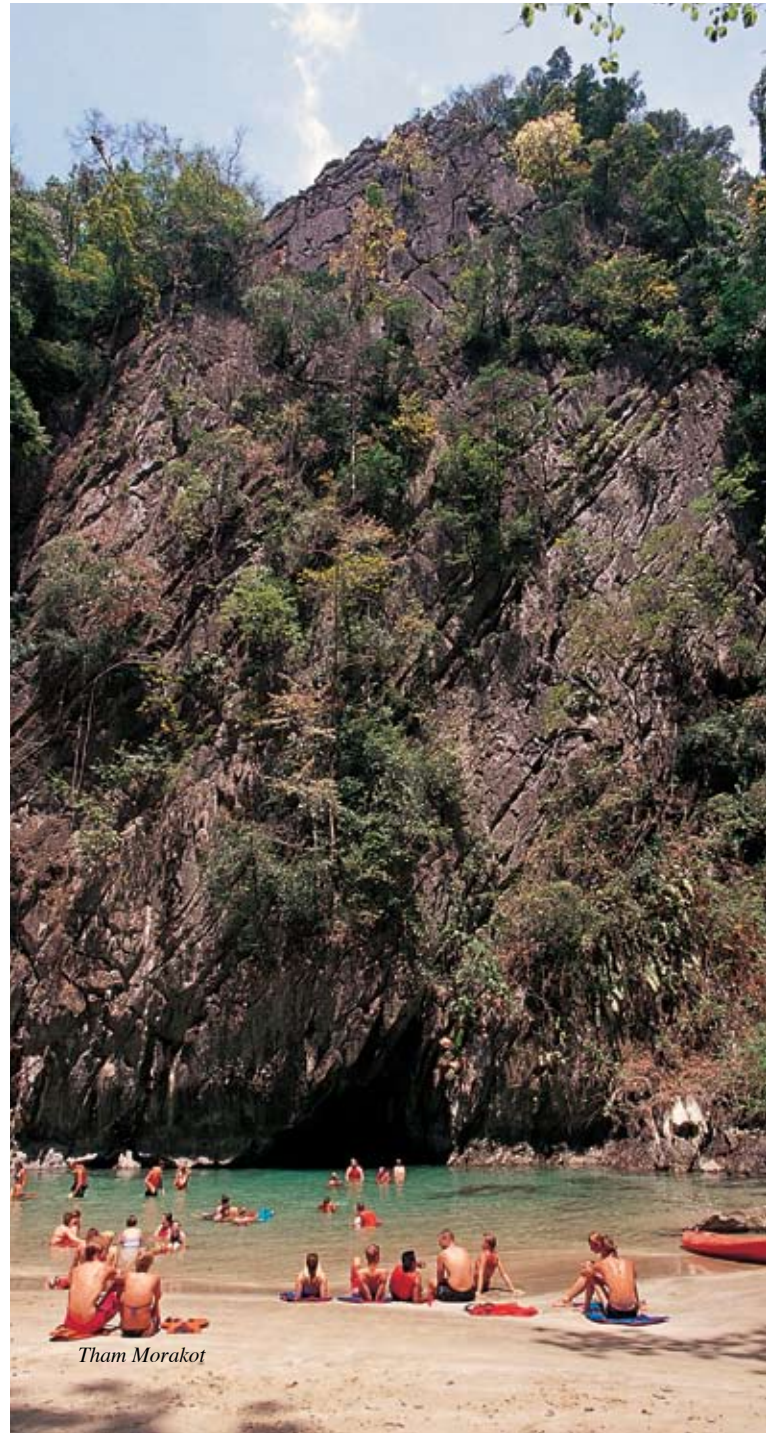
Website: www.tourismthailand.org

Shopping

Souvenirs from Trang include *yan liphao*, handbags and purses made from finely split jungle vines, and *nang talung*, traditional shadow puppets.

The province of Nakhon Si Thammarat, situated approximately 780 km. from Bangkok on the eastern coast of the southern peninsula, is the historic heart and the second largest city of the region. Originally known as Ligor, Nakhon Si Thammarat dates back to 2nd century AD and subsequently gained importance as a staging post on the early trade route between China and southern India.

Between the 8th and 13th centuries, the area was part of the powerful Srivijaya empire. After the rise of the Thais, Nakhon Si Thammarat served as a religious and cultural centre when Theravada Buddhism spread from Sri Lanka to Sukhothai in the late 13th century. Today, the city remains a cultural hub, notably for shadow puppets, southern Thai dance, and the nielloware craft of fashioning objects out of silver mixed with a black alloy. Most of the city is mountainous and forested, although there are several attractive beaches along the eastern coastline.



Tham Morakot



Festival of the 10th Lunar Month

Nakhon Si Thammarat

Today, the city remains a cultural hub, notably for shadow puppets, southern Thai dance, and the nielloware craft of fashioning objects out of silver mixed with a black alloy.

Climate

The east coast of the southern peninsula has a rainy season from November to February.

City Sights

Wat Phra Mahathat

The South's largest temple and believed to be more than 1,000 years old, Wat Phra Mahathat occupies a large compound. The complex is dominated by a 77-metre-high Chedi, topped by a solid gold spire. Several halls enshrine Buddha images and other religious objects, considered of architectural interest.

Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum

Providing a good introduction to the art and culture of the South, the museum houses an excellent collection of priceless artefacts, as well as examples of the region's major crafts, including *yan liphao* vine-woven handbags that were traditionally royal gifts, and nielloware.

Old City Wall

The city's defences were rebuilt in several periods, the last time was in the 17th century. Today a 2,230-metre length survives to give a good insight into Nakhon Si Thammarat's original power and significance.

Chedi Yak

The city's second tallest Chedi, believed to have been construct-

Wat Phra Mahathat





Nang Talung (shadow puppet) Making

ed in the year 1003.

Other Attractions

Hat Hin Ngam

A beautiful rocky beach located 66 km. north of Nakhon Si Thammarat, where there is comfortable accommodation.

Hat Khanom

Situated 100 km. north of the provincial capital, Hat Khanom comprises three sandy beaches, Nai Praet, Hai Phlao and Pak Nam. Bungalow-style accommodation is available.

Khao Luang National Park

Covering an area of 570 square kilometres, the park is noted for its several waterfalls, the largest of which, Namtok Karom, is about 1,300 metres high and falls over 19 levels.

Khao Kha Archaeological Site

Located in Amphoe Sichon, this is the site of an ancient city dating back some 1,500 years. Fragments of ruins scattered around the area include the remains of a hilltop laterite shrine.

Laem Ta Lum Phuk

This scenic headland, about 40 km. from the provincial capital, is a long sandy cape jutting out into the Gulf of Thailand. On the western shore is a fishing village and to the east is a pine-fringed beach.

Ho Phra Buddha Sihing

The Shrine of Phra Buddha Sihing Image revered by all Buddhists is located near the City Hall. The image is assumed to have been constructed during the Sukhothai Period.

Ban Nang Talung Suchart Subsin

Mr. Suchart Subsin has become well known as a shadow puppet performer and maker, and has obtained many national awards for his excellent skills. He opens his home at 110/18 Soi Si Thammasok Road, to the people who are interested in puppetry with the hope of reviving *Nang Talung* or shadow puppet play. Many shadow puppets from Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand as well as farming tools are on display.

Special Events

Hae Pha Khuen That

Held in February, the Festival pays homage to the locally

enshrined relics of the Lord Buddha. There are a number of religious ceremonies, among them a traditional merit-making procession during which the Phra Bot cloth painting the Lord Buddha's life is placed over the relics.

Festival of the 10th Lunar Month

Celebrated in September through to October, the Festival is held during the 15 nights of the 10th waning moon and brings merit to the souls of ancestors.

Getting There

By Air

Thai Airways International (Tel: 0 2628 2000) operates daily flights between Bangkok and Nakhon Si Thammarat.

By Bus

Coaches leave daily for Nakhon Si Thammarat from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal. Please Tel: 0 2434 7192, 0 2435 1199 for more information.

By Car

It is just under 800 km. by road from Bangkok to Nakhon Si Thammarat.

By Rail

Most southbound trains from Bangkok stop at Thung Song, about 40 km. west of Nakhon Si Thammarat, although two daily trains take the branch line from Thung Song to the city. For more information, contact the State Railways of Thailand Tel: 1690 or 0 2220 4334.

Accommodation

Hae Pha Khuen That Festival



Festival of the 10th Lunar Month

A full list of hotels can be obtained from the TAT office in Nakhon Si Thammarat at Sanam Na Mueang, Ratchadamnoen Road. Tel. 0 7534 6515-6 or www.tourismthailand.org.

Shopping

Niellaware items and shadow puppets are among the top local buys.

Lying directly south of Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phatthalung presents a traditional picture of Thailand's Far South, and combines natural and cultural sights well worth exploring.

From mountains, forests and high plateaus in the west, the eastern side of Phatthalung slopes down to the upper shores of Songkhla Lake, while culturally the province is distinguished as the original home of two famous southern entertainments such as Thai shadow play and the enchanting Manora dance.

Climate

The east of the southern peninsula has a rainy season from November to February.

Other Attractions

Tham Khuha Sawan

This cave enshrining Buddha images is located just outside



Khao Ok Thalu

Phatthalung

Phatthalung presents a traditional picture of Thailand's Far South, and combines natural and cultural sights well worth exploring.

Phatthalung town.

Khao Ok Thalu

There are fine views from the top of this 250-metre-high hollow hill which has become a symbol of Phatthalung.

Namtok Khao Kham

This waterfall, cascading from high cliffs, is located about 30 km. from Phatthalung town.

Tha-le Noi Waterfowl Park

A part of Songkhla Lake declared a non-hunting area is home to more than a hundred species of waterfowl. It is located in the area of Tambon Tha-le Noi, 15 km. from Amphoe Khuan Khanun or 32 km. north of Phatthalung. Boats are available for tourists to watch water birds which are plentiful during December to April. Pink lotus blooms are widely seen in the lake every morning. Famous handicrafts woven from the bulrush are on sale in the village.

Khao Pu-Khao Ya National Park

Extending over parts of Nakhon Si Thammarat and Trang, as well as Phatthalung, the park has several caves and waterfalls, as well as viewpoints and hiking trails.

Wat Wang

This important temple of Phatthalung constructed during the reign of King Rama III is famous for splendid mural paintings depicting the story of the Lord Buddha's life. The temple houses

Tha-le Noi Waterfowl Park





Tha-le Noi Waterfowl Park

some architectural buildings and more than 100 Buddha images lined around the chapel. It is located 6 km. from town along Route No. 4047.

Getting There

By Bus

Coaches leave daily for Phatthalung from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal.

Tel. 0 2434 7192, 0 2435 1199

By Car

Phatthalung is 840 km. from Bangkok.

By Rail

Phatthalung is located on the main southern railway line from Bangkok. For more information, please contact the State Railways of Thailand.

Tel. 1690 or 0 2220 4334

Website: www.railway.co.th

Accommodation

A full list of hotels can be obtained from the TAT office in Nakhon Si Thammarat. Tel. 0 7534 6515-6 and www.tourismthailand.org.



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