

# AMAZING NEW CHAPTERS



amazing  
THAILAND

# Phang-nga



# Phang-nga

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**Underground minerals, floating houses, stunning caves and striking mountain ranges in this land of flourishing flora and natural abundance**

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**The area which is now known as Phang-nga has been inhabited by human settlers as far back as prehistoric times, and there exists a large amount of archaeological evidence that backs this up, including pottery, stone and shell bracelets found around the area where Wat Suwana Ku Ha now stands in Takua Thung district, as well as cliff paintings at Khao Khian in the Phang-nga National Park.**

**It is presumed that the name Phang-nga evolved from the city's previous Malay names of 'Phu-nga' and 'Pang-Ka', meaning 'coastal forest'; a name that perfectly described the geographical features which include swathes of dense woodland, expansive bays, a plethora of islands and shady mangrove forest areas where freshwater and seawater merge and mingle. When foreign visitors became interested in the area for its mineral trading potential, they saw the name written in Romanized text as 'Phunga' or 'Punga' and inadvertently mispronounced it as 'Phang-nga' which eventually became its official name.**

**During the reign of King Rama I, Phang-nga was recognized as a city, along with neighbouring Takua Thung and Takua Pa settlements. In 1894, however, Takua Thung was absorbed into Phang-nga city as a district before being later converted to a province in 1916. In 1930, during the reign of King Rama XII, Takua Pa, formerly recognized as a province, was reduced to the status of a district, and included in the expanding Phang-nga province.**

The geographical features of the province include undulating mountain ranges running from north to south, a stretch of coast 239.25 km. in length and a variety of deciduous, evergreen and mango forests. There is also an elevated plateau which runs down from west to east and out into The Andaman Sea where the province's 105 islands, including the famous Surin and Similan archipelagos, lay surrounded by cool blue waters.

Phang-nga's beaches, mountains, caves, waterfalls, hot springs, and the longest stretch of mangrove forest in Thailand, as well as its impressive cultural and architectural diversity created by the Thai, migrant Chinese and Muslim communities that make up its population, make it one of Thailand's most highly appreciated tourist spots at present.



# Phang-nga Map





# Tham Phung Chang (Elephant's Belly Cave)

Mueang, Phang-nga

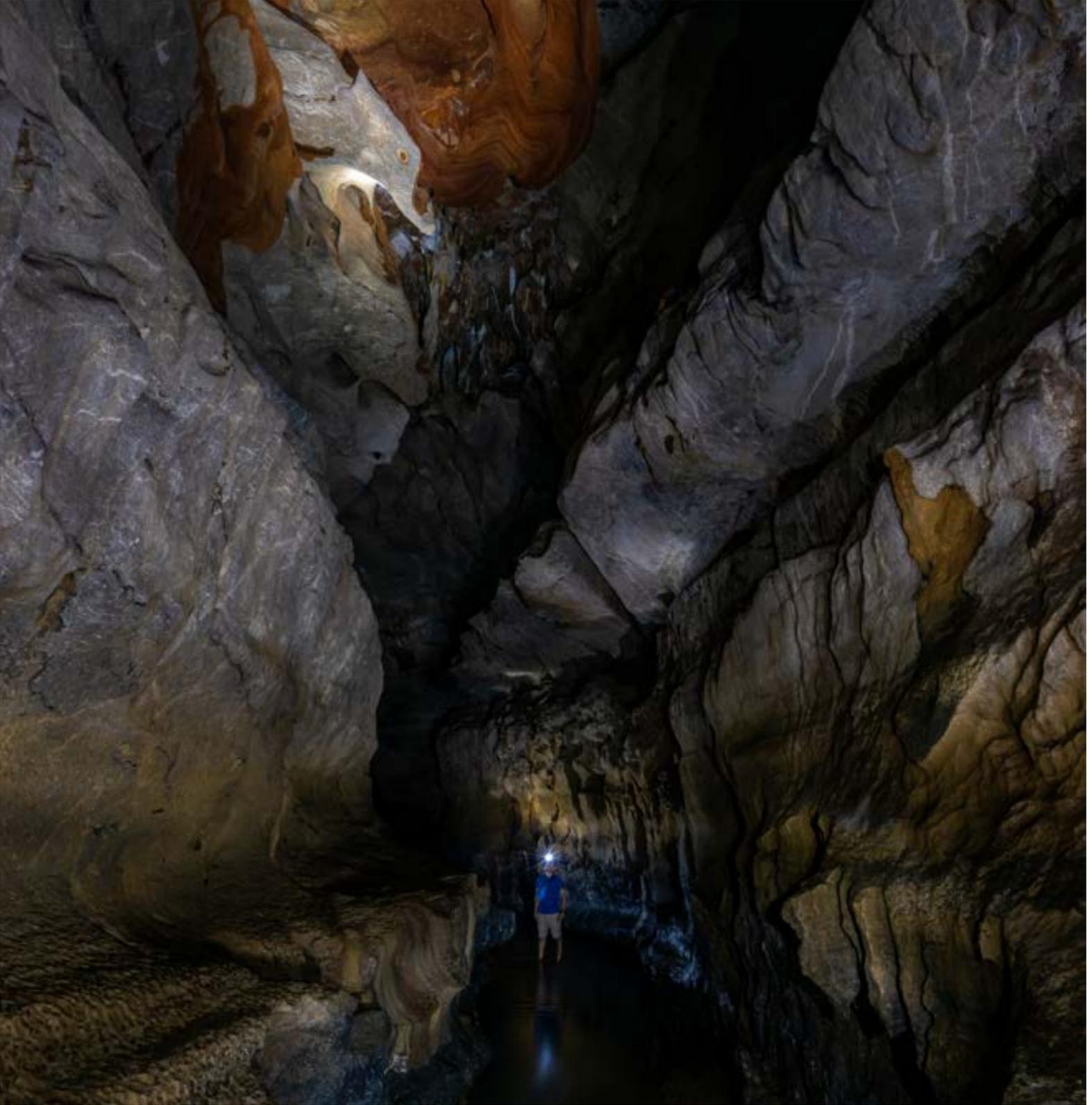


## Tham Phung Chang (Elephant's Belly Cave)

Mueang, Phang-nga

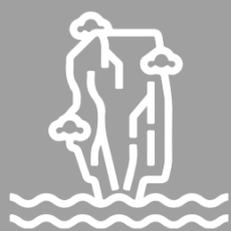


Located close to Wat Prapas Prachim Ket and the provincial town hall, this large cave sits in a mountain which resembles an elephant lying prone and features a running stream inside, meaning the only way to enter is to paddle in by canoe and change to a bamboo raft to lie on in order to pass through the parts where the cavern is lowest, before following the stream on foot for another 1200 metres. Along the way visitors will encounter eye-catching stalagmite and stalactite formations, including one that resembles an elephant standing just inside the cave's mouth and a spiralling line of smaller elephants just a little further inside. Most of these intriguing rock formations are formed from large lumps of carambola stone and visitors will also encounter stones shaped like lotus flowers, jellyfish, egrets and yet more elephants as well as a cauldron of rat-faced bats and Kitti's hog-nosed bats, the latter being the world's smallest known bat species and exclusive to Thailand. This site was recently selected to be featured as part of the Unseen Thailand tourism campaign.



Open daily from 06.00 – 16.00 hrs.

**Entrance fee:** 500 baht/person and a tour of the cave takes around 1.5 hours



# Khao Tapu and Khao Phing Kan (James Bond Island)

Mueang, Phang-nga



## Khao Tapu and Khao Phing Kan (James Bond Island)

Mueang, Phang-nga



Khao Tapu, is a large limestone column that protrudes from the sea to a height of around 20 metres, located in the Kalai district, Phang-nga Bay, around 15 km. from the national park. From a distance Khao Tapu resembles a large nail, hence the name ('Tapu' means nail in Thai). The lower part of the rock formation has been eroded by the sea and weather conditions and is much slimmer than the top.

The site has always been popular with tourists but became even more so when it was chosen to feature in the James Bond movie 'The Man with the Golden Gun' in 1974 and it became unofficially known as 'James Bond Island' shortly after.

Khao Phing Kan lies just 40 metres from Khao Tapu and the smaller of its twin peaks leans towards the larger, sturdier one at an angle of around 75 degrees. There is also a stretch of sand which connects the islands. Khao Phing Kan was originally a single peak but became separated

into two due to movement of the earth's tectonic plates, before being eroded by the sea around the base, causing the smaller of the two peaks to part further. The incline to the side of the peak can be climbed using the stairs and the summit offers some wonderful views of the surrounding bay.



**Entrance fee** : adults 300 baht / children 100 baht

Tourists can purchase a one-day package tour from tourist agencies in Phuket or Phang-Nga, including those located at Phang-Nga town pier, Surakul pier and Hin Rom Pier in Takua Thung.

**For further details contact** Tel. 0 7648 1188 [www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)





# Ko Panyi

Mueang, Phang-nga



## Ko Panyi

Mueang, Phang-nga



This wide-peaked limestone mountain provides good protection from the ocean waves and features a sizable sandbank which has become a settlement containing four small villages surrounded by resplendent nature, shady mangrove forests and the numerous islands of Phang-nga National Marine Park.

The ancestors of the current inhabitants can be traced back to three Javanese families who sailed to Thailand's Andaman coast from Indonesia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These seafarers decided that when they found land suitable for settling, they would mark it as theirs with a flag displaying the title 'Pulao Panji', simply meaning 'our flag'. After establishing themselves on the island, they have continued their lifestyles based on Islamic principles for three centuries.

The villages located on the island are registered as part of the Ko Panyi subdistrict, which has a population of around 1400, spread over 150 households, most of which are single-storey stilt houses, set into the limestone cliffs at the front of the island, looking out into the Phang-nga bay. The 1 square rai area at the foot of the mountain is used as a communal area and houses a two-storey marble mosque with a beautiful golden dome and a cemetery.

The shallow waters around the island are suited to fishing as well as cockle and fish farms, the main sources of income for most of the islanders. However, the recent influx of tourists has seen some locals turn their hand to other ways of making a living including opening restaurants, organizing boat trips or selling souvenirs, dried seafood products and jewellery made from the pretty local oyster shells. All of these avenues allow the islanders to make a living between December and April when there is no monsoon rain.

Nearby Phu Khao Khian features primitive red pigment drawings of humans and animals and the site lies just 400 metres before reaching Ko Panyi. There is also Thum Talu, a minute island with a channel that can be entered by canoe to reach a lagoon inside.



**Getting there:** Tourists can purchase a one-day package tour from tourist agencies in Phuket or Phang-nga, including those located at Phang-nga town pier, Surakul pier and Hin Rom Pier in Takua Thung.



# Thum Lot and Ko Hong

Mueang, Phang-nga



## Thum Lot and Ko Hong

Mueang, Phang-nga



Located in the Phang-nga National Park, this island features a natural passage which leads into a cave containing stalagmite and stalactite formations caused by years of natural erosion. Entrance to the cave is possible by canoe, kayak or other small boat, but it should be noted that the tide and water levels are very important and should be consulted before entering. Ko Hong is an island which contains a stunning lagoon in its centre with limestone cliffs and verdant forest on all sides.



**Getting there:** Tourists can purchase a one-day package tour from tourist agencies in Phuket or Phang-nga, including those located at Phang-nga town pier, Surakul Pier and Hin Rom Pier in Takua Thung. Once the boat reaches the mouth of the cave, tourists can then switch to a canoe and enter.



# Ban Bang Phat

Mueang, Phang-nga



## Ban Bang Phat

Mueang, Phang-nga



Located at Mu 8, Bang Toei subdistrict, Ban Bang Phat is one of 105 islands in Phang-nga bay. The island was originally known as Ban Bang Ling due to the large colony of macaque monkeys that inhabits the forests there. The island is surrounded by Khlong Bang Toei and Khlong Ban Ling canals and flanked by flourishing mangrove forest which stretches for a distance of 240 km. The first Muslim inhabitants arrived back in 1953 and began to construct stilted wooden huts above the water's surface.

As the settlers began fishing and taking steps to expand, a village was established in 1973 with concrete roads connecting the island to the mainland, and construction of a school and a mosque followed soon after. With the new infrastructure came a change of name and from 1986 onwards the village was henceforth known as 'Ban Bang Phat'



At present, it's a popular ecotourism destination and the mangrove forest acts as a nursery for countless marine species and a place where tourists can witness the Muslim villagers living contented lives in accordance with their religious precepts, as well as being a place where interested visitors can take part in a variety of activities including sunrise boat trips, fishing trips and trips to neighboring attractions like the mangrove forests, Khao Tapu, Tham Lot, Khao Maju and Khao Khian.

Those who are looking to do their bit for the environment can help plant some saplings and visitors who wish to stay overnight can do so in the local homestays which offer fresh seafood meals and have unique souvenirs for sale.



**Getting there:** Take highway 415 (Phang-nga - Thap Put) for around 10 km., until you reach Wat Khao Tao temple and turn right onto the Khao Tao - Bang Phat road, following it for another 10 km. until you reach the village.



# Khao Phra Thong

Khura Buri, Phang-nga



## Khao Phra Thong

Khura Buri, Phang-nga



Located around 2 km. from the coast off Khura Buri, the eastern side of this island is abundant with mangrove forests, while the west flank mainly houses sandy beaches. The centre of the island, however, is mostly taken up by grassy plains with paperbark trees scattered throughout, and unsurprisingly it has become known as 'Thailand's Serengeti', as well as being listed amongst the Unseen in Thailand tourist attractions.

The island is perfect for nature lovers who are looking to get off the beaten track and there are plenty of activities like cycling and travelling around the island on a pick-up or local 'E-taek' tractor. There are also some simple accommodation options for those looking to spend the night.



**Getting there:** Travelers wishing to visit the island can book at the Khura Buri pier or else ask their proposed accommodation on the island to arrange a ferry across. The journey from the pier to the island takes approximately one hour.



# Muko Surin National Park

Khura Buri, Phang-nga



## Muko Surin National Park

Khura Buri, Phang-nga



Located in the Ko Phra Thong subdistrict, 60 km. from the Khura Buri pier, this island was discovered by Phraya Surinratcha (Nokyoong Wisetkul), who was governor of Phuket at the time, during one of his ocean surveys and it was he who named the archipelago. The cluster of five islands includes Ko Surin Nuea, Ko Surin Tai, Ko Ri (Ko Stock), Ko Khai (Ko Torinla) and Ko Klang (Ko Pajumba). Later, in 2007, Richelieu Rock was also added, making a total of 88,282 rai (141.25 square km.)

The Ko Surin National Park features stretches of coral reef in shallow waters, the most pristine and abundant in the whole of Thailand, surrounding islands dotted in the ocean which protect the reefs, especially around Surin Nuea and Surin Thai islands. During low tide, visitors are easily able to walk to the 200 metres or so between the two islands

through a channel the locals refer to as 'Ao Chong Khat'

The tide rises and falls 4 times during the day, with a 3-metre difference in level between high and low tide. These constant tidal movements and the impact of the current against the rocks have led to a diverse marine ecosystem forming here, with 4 species of sea turtle and the occasional whale shark as well as countless shoals of colourful fish that call the reef home. Ao Mae Yai, Ao Mai Ngam and Ao Suthep are peaceful bays with beauty to be found both on the sandy beaches and under the sea's surface.

The three remaining small islands. Ko Ri, Ko Khai and Ko Klang are rocky land masses covered with trees and shrubbery and are home to a range of wildlife, particularly smaller land animals, and around 80 bird species, including the rare Nicobar Dove.

The most interesting thing to do while visiting the islands is to study the lifestyles of the local Moken people, a group of ethnic islanders or 'sea gypsies' who live here in a 200 strong community. This community is the last of its kind and they take pride in retaining the traditional lifestyles of their ancestors. A row of Moken huts and tribal flags can be found on Ao Bon beach at Ko Surin Tai and the inhabitants make a living by fishing, selling souvenirs to visiting tourists and doing work for the national park authorities.

The tourist season runs from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 30<sup>th</sup> April each year and the park offers lodge accommodation and restaurants around the Ao Chong Khat area and a campsite with tents and equipment at Ao Mai Ngam, Ko Surin Nuea. There are also diving trips available from the island.



**For further details contact** Tel. 0 2562 0760-3 or 0 7647 2145-7  
[www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)

**Getting there:** It takes approximately 1.5 hours by speedboat to reach the islands and the boats leave from Khura Buri Pier in Phang-nga at 9.00 hrs and leave the island for the return trip at 13.30 hrs.

Various tourist packages are available from travel agents in Phuket or at the Khura Buri Pier itself and are priced at around 2,000 - 2,500 baht.



# Takua Pa Old Town

Takua Pa, Pang-nga



## Takua Pa Old Town

Takua Pa, Pang-nga



In the past, this area was a buzzing, bustling city which attracted scores of foreign traders, including the Chinese who set up mineral and tin mines here as well as build their own homes. It was the most prominent and important city in the whole of southern Thailand for a period of time, as well as being a cultural melting pot with Chinese immigrants, Indians and Arabs all settling alongside the resident Thais. The history of the area can still be felt today, with examples of Sino-Portuguese architecture lining the five main roads of Thanon Sri Takua Pa, Thanon Udom Tara, Thanon Klan Kaew, Thanon Montri 2 and Thanon Na Mueang.

However, the town is more than just a residential area and many of the buildings have been converted into cafés, shops with many of the walls adorned with street art detailing the area's rich history. Every Sunday evening the town's main road, Sri Takua Pa, becomes a walking street with local food, sweets and snacks on sale.



# Khlong Sang-Ne

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



## Khlong Sang-Ne

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



Located in Bang Nai Si subdistrict, visitors can check out the view in a motorized boat or even paddle a canoe down the leafy waterways here. Both sides of the canal are lined with banyan trees, some of them centuries old with branches intertwined overhead, forming a natural tunnel at some points. Along the way, there's a good chance of encountering some of the local wildlife, including rare colourful hornbills.

The surroundings here are reminiscent of a rainforest, leading to the locals naming the area 'Little Amazon' and many famous movies have featured scenes shot around the area. The boat trip covers a distance of around 2 km., takes around an hour and is available daily between 09.00 - 17.00 hrs. and the price is 500 baht for a canoe with a guide (2 persons) or 700 baht for a motorboat (2 persons)



For further details contact Tel. 08 6953 1789, 0 7642 4176



# Khao Lak Coast

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



## Khao Lak Coast

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



This long stretch of coast extends from the bottom of Ban Nam Khem, right to Khao Lak - Lam Ru National Park. The entire stretch features wide sandy beaches with plentiful shade from the rows of fir and coconut trees that run alongside, with rock formations of various sizes and shapes interspersing the sand. The water is perfect for swimming or paddling and there are also watersports available, including skimboarding and SUP boarding, leading to the area being widely known as Thailand's 'Surf Town'.

Khao Lak is also renowned for being one of the Andaman coast's most breathtaking sunset spots as well as being home to popular tourist attractions like Memories Beach, Hat Nang Thong (Black Sand Beach), The Khao Lak Lighthouse, Kuek Kak Beach, Pak Weep Beach, Bang Sak Beach and many more. Most of the beaches here features impressive accommodation options as well as shops and restaurants for convenience.



# Sai Rung Waterfall

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



## Sai Rung Waterfall

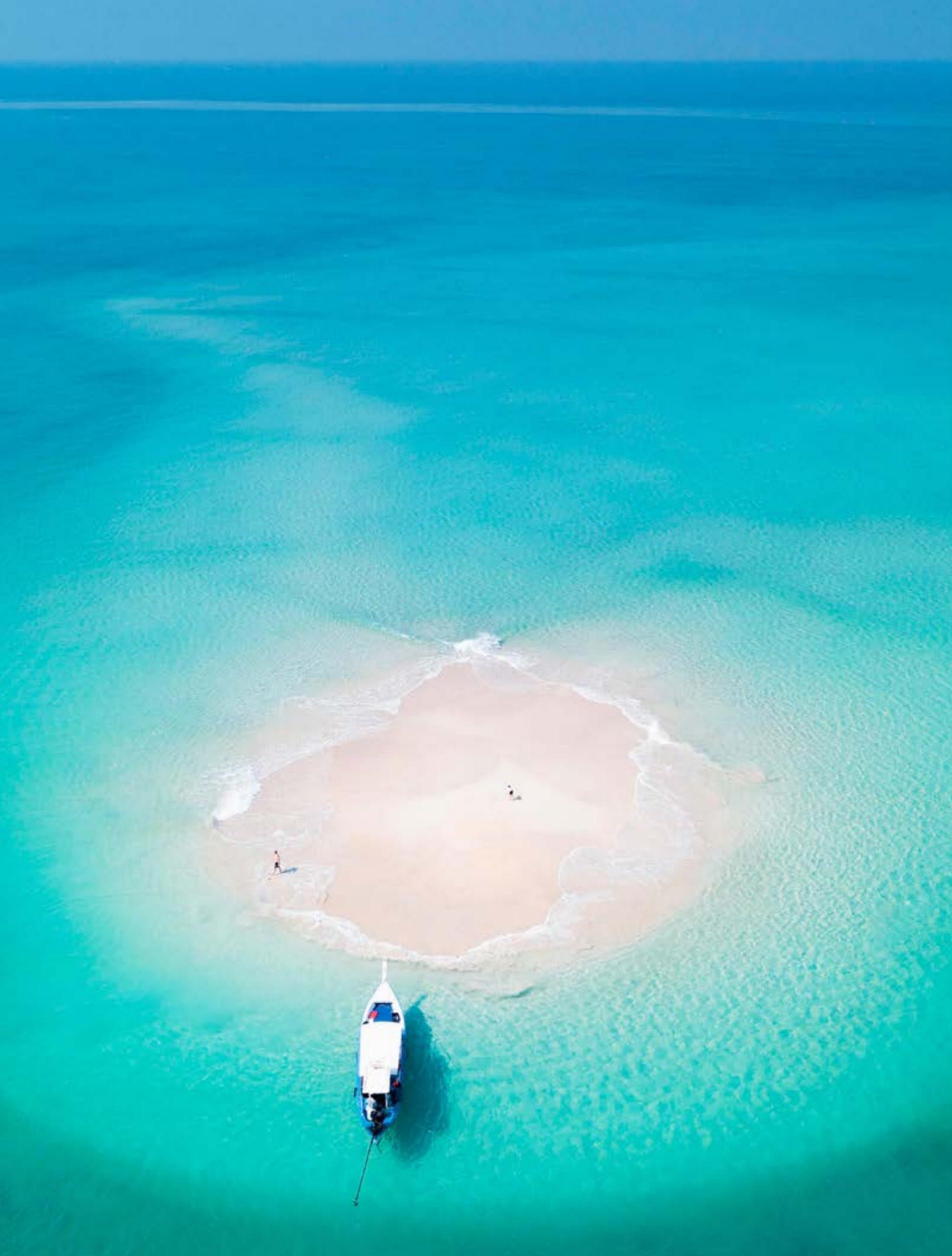
Takua Pa, Phang-nga



Located in Kuek Kak subdistrict and known to the locals as 'Pak Weep Falls', this is undoubtedly one of Phang-nga's most impressive waterfalls. The stream cascades over a sheer rock face from a spot about 60 metres overhead and into a large, natural pool at the foot of the fall which is perfectly safe for splashing about in. The surrounding area is verdant and green, particularly during the rainy season when the waterfall is at its most majestic and there are restaurants and shops where visitors can purchase a cooling drink before dipping their toes in the nearby stream. The spot is a huge hit with both domestic and foreign tourists.



**Getting there:** The waterfall lies 74 km. from Phang-nga and takes around 1.5 hours to reach by car. There's a further 300-metre walk from the car park to the fall itself.



# Ko Pha

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



## Ko Pha

Takua Pa, Phang-nga



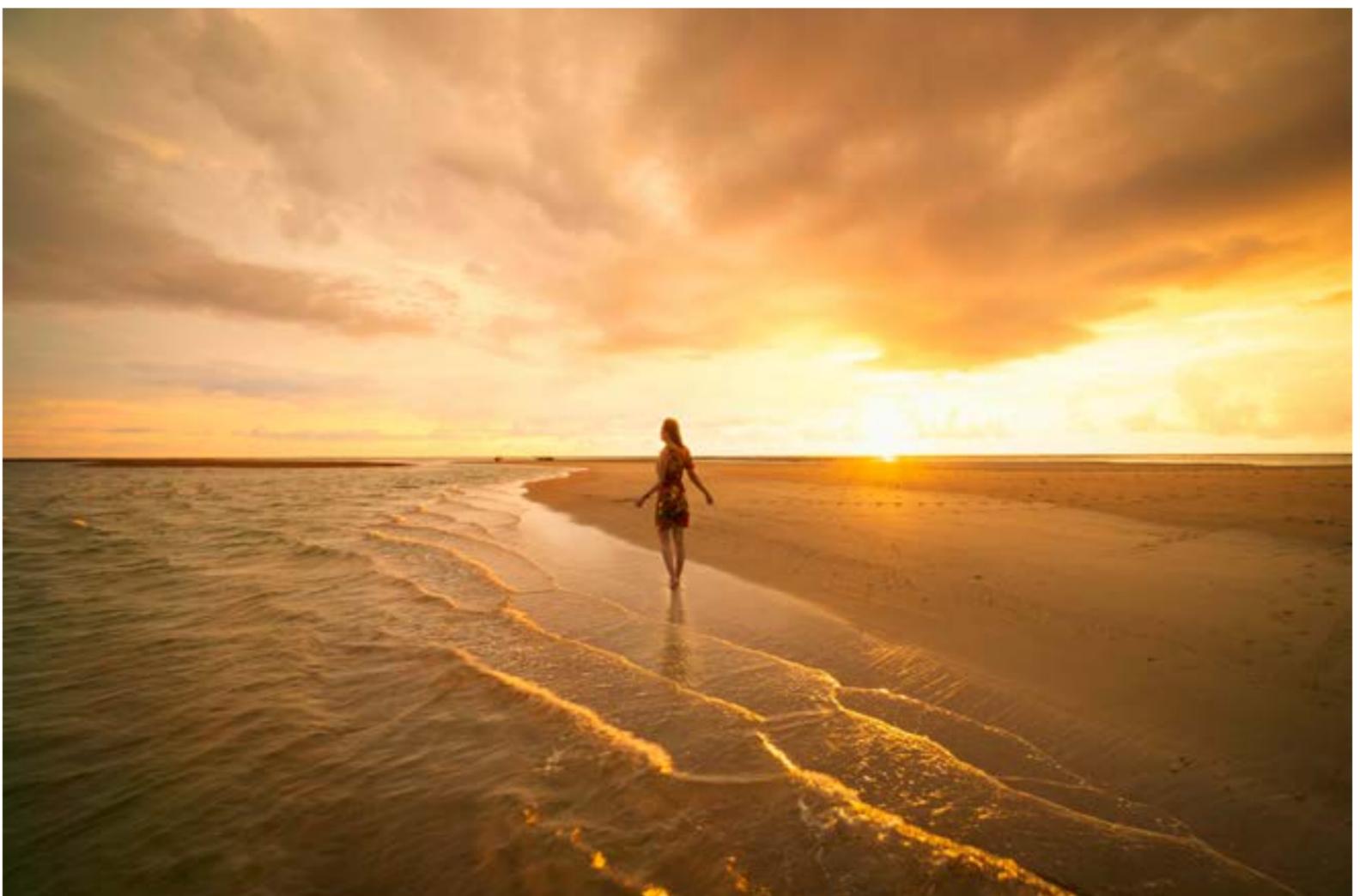
Located in Ko Kho Khao subdistrict, 10 km. off the Phang-nga coast, the island consists of a bank of fine sand which has accumulated over time and is said to resemble a white cloth stretched out over the sea. The Andaman waters that surround 'Sand Pile Island' are clear and beautiful and when the tide is on its way out and the sea level drops, three sandy mounds can be clearly seen above the ocean, slowly becoming one island as the tide reaches its lowest ebb. The island's area is about 10 rai in total, around half of which is covered with fir and coconut trees. Tourists used to flock here to sunbathe, relax and take part in activities but following the tsunami of 2005, the island temporality disappeared, only for the sand to reaccumulate and form a new island

Tourists can take a boat to the island during the morning to take photos, play in the sea, snorkel around the coral reefs to observe the marine flora and fauna, or paddle a kayak around the island's perimeter. Tourism season runs from November to April.



**Getting there:** A ferry service runs from Ban Nam Khem Pier in Ko Kho Khao subdistrict, and it takes 40 minutes to reach Ko Pha. 8 person boats can be hired privately for a cost of 2,500 baht.

**For further details contact** Ko Kho Khao Rental Boat Association at Tel. 08 4841 2367, Ko Kho Khao Ecotourism Group at Tel. 09 8020 2742, or Wonderland Tours Tel. 08 1187 4040





# Hat Thai Mueang

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



## Hat Thai Mueang

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



Situated in the Khao Lumphi National Park, Hat Thai Mueang is an expansive, 13 km. long beach with a seafront road running alongside it with rows of fir trees to keep the beach cool and well shaded. The beach itself is quiet with clear water and makes a great place to take in a glorious southern sunset. As well as being an idyllic relaxation spot, from November to February, when there are no monsoon rains, sea turtles venture onto the sands to nest and lay eggs and nature lovers come to watch the turtles bury their eggs by moonlight. In addition, during March there is a joyful celebration known as 'Prapanee Ploi Tao' where locals and visitors release the young turtle hatchlings into the ocean

The beach also received 5-star certification from The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment due to the longevity and abundance of its ecosystem.



# Ban Tha Din Daeng Community

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



## Ban Tha Din Daeng Community

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



Located at Mu 4, Lam Kaen subdistrict, 14 km. from Thai Mueang district. This unique ecotourism village gives visitors a chance to glimpse the real lifestyles of Phang-nga locals. The original members of this community were Muslim settlers who migrated here sometime before the Second World War, and the village sits on a cape that juts out into the sea, flanked by mangrove forests, and is currently populated by around 500 people. The village was barely damaged by the tsunami, with the dense forest surrounding it absorbing most of the damage, and as a result the villagers helped to repair and replant this natural barrier following the disaster. The area's natural resurgence led to the village being established as an ecotourism destination and in tribute to its past as a tin mine, the erection of the 40-metre concrete 'Mueang Rae Muen Larn' memorial which included old mining tools, took place around 50 years ago. There are also regular demonstrations of mining techniques here.



**For further details contact** Ban Tha Din Daeng Ecotourism Group,  
Tel. 08 4443 3539 (Bang Lhon), 08 6273 0823 (Bang Deen),  
08 6274 7061 (Bang Jiw)





# Khao Khai Nui

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



## Khao Khai Nui

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



Situated in Ban Fai Ta, Thung Mapraw subdistrict, this peak offers unbeatable 360-degree views from 200 metres above sea level and is equally impressive at sunrise or sundown. For views over The Andaman Sea and a rolling sea of mist, take a short hike up to the peak or hang around at the foot of the hill where the trees form a picturesque backdrop. The best time to visit is between 05.30 - 8.00 am and if you are looking to get your fill of some refreshing cool weather, spend the night in one of the lodge accommodations or campsites here, where the temperature hovers around 18 - 25 degrees during the night. The land to the west, towards The Andaman Sea, contains rubber plantations owned by a local by the name of Bang Kai, and to the east, towards Phu Jor Mountain, is an area which belongs to Bang Nui, another local landowner. When the area was first opened for tourism, it was conveniently named after the two local landowners.



**Getting there:** Tourists can visit Khao Kai Nui all year round, both for one day trips and overnight stays. It takes around 40 mins in a 4-wheel drive vehicle as the path up to the summit is a steeply inclined gravel path. To make enquiries contact Khao Kai Community Homestay on Tel. 09 3227 8671 Or Ban Nai Mok on Tel. 08 9593 1432





# Bamboo Rafting at Wang Kiang Khu

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



## Bamboo Rafting at Wang Kiang Khu

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



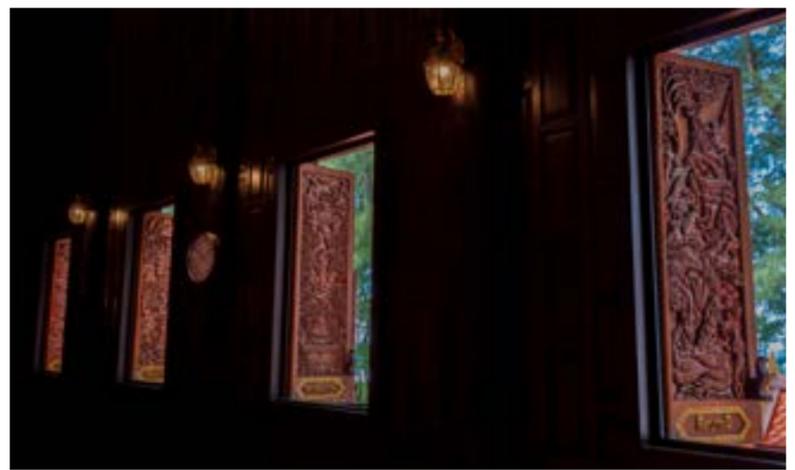
This area is home to large numbers of carpenter bees and the waterways that flow through here originate from higher up in the Khao Lak - Lam Ru National Park before flowing into the Lam Ru Yai Canal, passing the Wang Kiang Khu waterfall on the way. The raft journey covers a distance of around 3 km. and takes around 40 minutes to complete and a raft for two people with a local oarsman will set visitors back 500 baht. The climate is cool and shady, and the water is exceptionally clear, so clear in fact that the canal bed can be seen for most of the journey. The water is also shallow and still enough to be able to swim or paddle safely in many spots all year round. Many locals offer raft services as a way of making income and supporting their families as well as helping to maintain the local environment and prevent it from sustaining irreparable damage.

At the village, there are activities such as ATV riding, zip lines and elephant rides and there are other spots of interest nearby including Khao Lak beach and Tap Lamu Sea Turtle Nursery.



# Wat Tha Sai (Wat Thet Thammanawa)

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



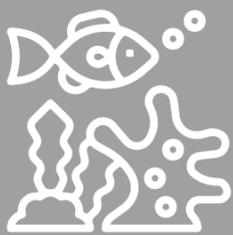
## Wat Tha Sai (Wat Thet Thammanawa)

Thai Mueang, Phang-nga



Standing in Ban Ta Taeng in the Na Toei subdistrict, this seafront temple is surrounded by fir trees and houses a Thai-style teak chapel building which replicates the architectural details of the chapel at Wat Aranyawasri, Tha Bo district, Nong Khai. The distinctive feature is the intricately carved sections around the doors which depict important scenes from Buddhist history and were the work of master artisans from Ayutthaya.

The gable apex, however, was created by skilled Chiang Mai carpenters and inside lies an Indian-style Buddha image carved from white jadeite, in the attitude of giving the first sermon. The chapel is encircled by a wall constructed from natural, untreated wooden branches and boundary stones carved from white jadeite and is widely regarded as one of the southern region's most valuable and aesthetically pleasing temples.



# Muko Similan Marine National Park

Khura Buri, Phang-nga



## Muko Similan Marine National Park

Khura Buri, Phang-nga



The park can be found in Ko Phra Thong subdistrict, Khura Buri District, although it was originally established in Thai Mueang District.

It lies around 70 km. from the Thap Lamu pier and the name means 'nine' in the Malay tongue, referring to the nine islands that make up the archipelago. These being (from northernmost to southernmost) Ko Bon, Ko Bangu, Ko Similan, Ko Payu, Ko Ha, Ko Miang, Ko Payan, Ko Payang and Ko Hu Yong. Ko Tachai was later added in 1998 and these islands cover a combined total of 87,500 rai or 140 square kilometres.

Muko Similan Marine National Park has been given the accolade of one of the world's ten best dive sites and as there are many superb shallow water snorkelling spots around Ao Hin, Ao Reau Bai, Ao Kwang En, Hin Dok Mai and the area to the rear of Ko Miang. For scuba diving to the area around Ko Bon, Christmas Pinnacle, Fantasy Pinnacle, Ao Kwang En, Lighthouse Cape, Buzar Pinnacle, Sam Korn Pinnacle, Hua Ko Miang, Suan Pla Lai, San Chalam and other stretches of reef. Many types of coral can be found here, including *Seriatopora histrix*, which is found exclusively around the Surin and Similan islands and there is a selection of marine life which includes sponges, soft corals, Gorgoniidae, lobsters, clams, whales, bottle nosed dolphins, moray eels, several species of sea turtle and over 50 species of fish.

The area is made up of 65-million-year-old granite boulder formations with a peak which reaches 233 metres above sea level and houses 'Hin Ruea Bai', a large sailship-shaped stone, which has become the symbol of the archipelago. Most of the remainder of the island's area is covered by sparse forest and bushes and inhabited by various mammals and bird species, none of which are fierce or potentially dangerous. The middle of the island forms a plateau which is encircled by powdery white sand and the waters which surround it are clear, shimmering turquoise and full of flourishing coral reef.

The tourist season begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November and stretches through until the 30<sup>th</sup> of April each year and the park limits the number of visitors to 3,850 per day and the number of scuba divers to just 525. Ko Tachai has been closed since 2018 and remains so at present to allow the ecosystem to recover and replenish itself without human intervention.



**Getting there:** You can reach Muko Similan by speedboat and the journey takes around 1.5 hours from the Thap Lamu Pier in Lam Kaen subdistrict, Thai Mueang district, Phang-nga.

The boat leaves for Ko Miang at 08.00 hrs. and starts the return journey at 15.00 hrs.

Package tours are available from travel agents in Phuket or at Thap Lamu pier and are usually priced at around 2,000 - 2,500 baht per person.

**For further details contact** Tel. 0 2562 0760-3, 0 7645 3272-73 or 0 7645 3275 or online at [www.dnp.go.th](http://www.dnp.go.th)



# Ban Sam Chong

Takua Thung, Phang-nga



## Ban Sam Chong

Takua Thung, Phang-nga



Ban Sam Chong Tai and Ban Sam Chong Nuea, both located in Kalai subdistrict, are fishing village communities with a pure, uncomplicated way of life. Most of the inhabitants are Muslims and over the years of habitation, they have converted their community into an ecotourism site which allows visitors to explore Phang-nga coastal mangrove forests.

There are three canals that flow through the village from the north, namely Khlong Bang Lam, Khlong Chiang Mai and Khlong Ta Jo, hence the local name 'Khlong Sam Chong' (three canals). The village is split into two zones, the southern sector, which is set on a cliff and contains around 100 households, and the northern part, which is located on a separate island surrounded by the ocean and contains around 250 households. The inhabitants of the island use only natural resources for sustenance.

The views from both the north and south villages take in Phu Khao Pra-art Tao and the areas of mangrove forest that encircle the village, as well as warming sunrays and silvery wisps of fog over the sea. During low tide a sandbank emerges from the water and is usually covered by hundreds of seashells.

Visiting tourists can take a longtail boat ride to admire the sunrise of Phang-nga Bay as well as watch the local fishing methods and visit the reserve and Meder's Mangrove Crab nursery. There's also the opportunity to paddle a canoe or kayak through the forest, explore Tham Lot Cave, scale the ladder to check out the shimmering stalactites and stalagmites at Tham Phet Pakarang Cave, observe the primitive cave paintings, and view the 'love trees', a pair of Avicennia trees that have protruded from the sea for over 70 years during low tide before disappearing again for 6-8 hours as the tide rises.

There are also activities such as visiting the crab bank, fish and oyster and mussel farms, cockle collecting, watching the fabric dyeing and batik process, tasting local southern cooking including local steamed shellfish with spicy seafood dipping sauce, coconut milk curry with cockles and local vegetables, trying your hand at making local sweet delicacies, watching the sunset and spending the night in cosy homestay accommodation. There is also a good deal of local produce on sale with soaps made from sea holly, seafood products and rare mangrove honey.



**Getting there:** From Phang-nga town, head to Kalai subdistrict in Takua Thung, take a right at the Ban Sam Chong junction and keep driving until you reach the Mangrove Forest Research Centre. From there, turn left and follow the road for 3 km. until you reach the southern village. The northern village is a further 5 minutes by boat and the fare is 20 baht.

**For further details contact** Tel. 09 3663 0259, 09 1034 4913, 08 6741 7949



# Samet Nangshe Viewpoint

Takua Thung, Phang-nga



## Samet Nangshe Viewpoint

Takua Thung, Phang-nga



Situated at Ban Samet Nangshe, Khlong Khian subdistrict, this 800-metre-high viewpoint offers beautiful panoramas of the surrounding scenery and the vast expanse of the Phang-nga Bay with its still, turquoise waters, and backdrop of striking, craggy limestone peaks towering over vivid green mangrove forests. At dawn, as the sun's first rays begin to illuminate the coastal vista, visitors can see the fisherman contentedly starting their daily routines and this remarkable and inspiring scene often stays embedded in the memory of tourists long after they leave.

By dusk, the sky is filled with glittering stars and tourists love nothing more than to camp out here and bask in the moonlight scenes or stay in one of the local lodge accommodations and take photos of the celestial bodies above the bay. The area is privately owned, and it was converted into a tourist destination in 2016, complete with accommodation and facilities. There are two main spots from which the bay below can be best viewed, and the first of these is a mere 300-metre walk to 'Samet Nangshe Boutique' accommodation and campsite.

The vantage point offering the best views can be found at Bay View Café and there is a car park and shuttle service with a 60-baht fare. For further details contact Tel. 06 4926 5556

The second spot is a further 500 metres from the first and is located in Samet Nangshe Resort, which offers camping and bungalows for visitors who wish to spend the night. There is parking available and a 90-baht shuttle service to and from the viewpoint. For further details contact Tel. 08 1894 1159

Due to the sharp incline of the path leading to the viewpoints, visitors should park in the car park and take a local pick-up truck from the shuttle point. Those wishing to reach the summit by foot can do so but must pay a conservation fee of 30 baht/person.



**Getting there:** Take the Phuket-Sarasin Bridge-Phang-nga route for 60 km. or the Phang-nga-Koke Kloy route (Samet Nangche is located on the border between Phang-nga and Phuket). From there, turn into the lane to Ban Tha Yu and Khlong Khian and continue for around 15 km. until you come across a signpost for Samet Nangshe Viewpoint on your right.





# Ko Yao Yai

Ko Yao, Phang-nga



## Ko Yao Yai

Ko Yao, Phang-nga



Ko Yao district can be found in the southernmost sector of Ao Phang-nga National Park and was established in 1988, after 85 years as a branch district. The district consists of two islands, Ko Yao Yai and Ko Yao Noi and is jointly governed by the Ko Yao Yai Municipality, the Phru Nai Municipality (on Ko Yao Yai Island), the Ko Yao Municipality and the Ko Yao Noi subdistrict Administrative Office. The district covers an area of 141.6975 square kilometres (87,482.72 rai)

The geography of Ko Yao Yai consists of a mountain range running from north to south with fringes of dense jungle and beaches on both east and west sides of the island. Sandy inclines lead up from these beaches to an elevated plateau with occasional sharp peaks and there are several capes covered with mangrove forests jutting out into the sea.

A total of eleven villages are spread over the island's 94.54 square kilometres (59,025.75 rai) and approximately 90% of the inhabitants are Muslim. Tourism on the island developed alongside the lifestyles of the locals, which remain uncomplicated, peaceful and nature based, in spite of the establishment of accommodation and various facilities and the activities which currently take place on the island.

The points of interest include trips around the island on a vehicle, checking out the views and the local ways of life of the fishing communities at Ban Laem Larn and Laem Had, swimming or kayaking from Chong Lard to the Dragon's Back Ridge at low tide, snorkelling among the coral reefs at Ko Kai, visiting the stunning beaches at Ao Hin Kong and Ao Lan and watching the glorious sunsets at Loh Chak Bridge.

Tourists can also take a longtail boat from Chao Lard Pier to view the local farms which raise rainbow lobsters, oysters, mussels, crabs and various species of fish in large floating baskets or watch the local fishing methods which are self-sustaining, waste-free, environmentally friendly and prevent the extinction of endangered wildlife, as well as taking a boat trip into the mangrove forest and through a tunnel of trees at Hat Son.



Visitors searching for a spectacular sunrise should make their way to Hin Kong Pier in the early hours, and while they are there, they can take 4 km. trek through the forest, relax on the white sand beach, ride a bicycle through the nature, watch the locals make products from goat's milk, demonstrate the local sweet recipes and show off the 'Muay Ka Yong' boxing style.

Those looking for a slightly longer stay can spend the night in a homestay to get closer to the local lifestyles and enjoy a wonderful evening meal.



### Getting there:

- **From Phang-nga** - Boats leave from Dan Sulkakorn Pier at Mueang Phang-nga and travel across to the main pier on Ko Yao Yai. (There's also a boat service between Chong Lard Pier and Manoh Pier on Koh Yao Noi, which takes just 10 minutes to make the journey across)
- **From Krabi** - Boats leave from Thalen Pier, Ao Luek district and travel across to the main pier on Ko Yao Yai.
- **From Phuket** - Boats leave from Bang Rong Pier, Pa Klok Subdistrict, Thalang district but the best and most convenient way to get there is from Khlong Hia Pier, as there are numerous crossings per day. The journey across takes 40 minutes and the fare is 50 baht. There's also a speedboat that crosses to Ko Yao Yai which takes around 30 minutes. The fare is 200 baht for a one-way ticket.

**For further details contact** CBT Ko Yao Yai on Tel. 08 9726 2419, 08 7272 6733



# Ko Yao Noi

Ko Yao, Phang-nga



## Ko Yao Noi

Ko Yao, Phang-nga



This island lies to the north of Ko Yao Yai and comprises an area of 47.1575 square kilometres (28,456.97 rai), with a hilly ridge running through the centre of the island with dense jungle on both sides. On the east side, which is used entirely as agricultural land, a plateau leads to a cliff. Almost the entire perimeter of the island features fine sandy beaches which attract many tourists. In fact, as Ko Yao Noi lies in close proximity to Ko Hong, Krabi province, tourists often decide to hop between the two.

There are 13 predominantly Muslim village communities on the island, most of them making a living by fishing or breeding fish and lobsters for sale or tending to rubber plantations and farming. Others choose to organize and run tourism related ventures.

The island has been instated in the 'Ecotourism Association' for tourist destinations which eliminates or reduces harm to the environment, works harmoniously and encourages equal distribution of wealth and income and it has recently been awarded several accolades both domestically and internationally.

## Tourism Activities on Ko Yao Noi

Tourists can rent vehicles or explore the island by bicycle and observe the locals at work as they plant and harvest crops and create fishing equipment. There is also the opportunity to try your hand at natural fabric dyeing and check out products made from local coconuts. There are boat rides out to sea to watch the locals fishing and see the fish farms as well as swimming, snorkelling or just relaxing on the 400-metre stretch of sandy beach at Hat Khlong Chak and Hat Ta Khao on the island's north coast. This stretch of pristine sand with eye-catching rock formations is also the prime location to watch a golden sunset.

There's also the 50 metre-long crescent shaped Ao Khian bay on the north of the island, which is perfect for swimming, kayaking, volunteering to plant the mangrove forest, and checking out the views across the water to Ko Pak Bia and Ko Hong.

There is a small selection of homestay accommodations on the island as well as a few private resorts.

As well as maintaining natural abundance and balancing the ecosystem, Ko Yao Noi also utilizes solar power and campaigns to conserve the endangered hornbills that live on the island by preserving their habitat and creating nesting areas for these rare birds to lay their eggs. In recent years, the hornbills have become a real draw in tourist circles.

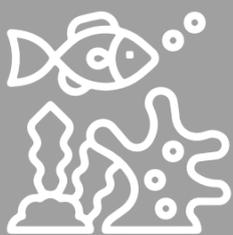




### Getting there:

- **From Phang-nga** - Boats leave from Dan Sulkakorn Pier, Ko Panyi, Mueang Phang-nga and disembark at Sukhapiban Pier on Ko Yao Noi. There is only one trip per day, leaving the mainland at 12.00 hrs. and arriving on the island 30 mins later. The fare is 150 baht/person per journey. There are also 10-12 person capacity boats for hire with negotiable prices.
- **From Krabi** - Boats leave from Thalen Pier, Ao Luek district. The fare is 100 baht/person per journey.
- **From Phuket** - Boats leave from Bang Rong Pier, Pa Klok, Thalung district.
- **Visitors** can take a Songtaew truck from Phuket Town for about 10 km. and get off at the Heroines Monument. From there it's a short 30-baht motorcycle ride to Bang Rong Pier where boats cross to both Sukhapiban and Manoh Piers on Ko Yao Noi. Boats leave every hour, take an hour to reach the island and the fare is 50 baht. There are also longtail boats which take a slighter shorter time of 45 minutes with a 200-baht fare and a speedboat which takes 30 minutes at a fare of 300 baht/person.

**For further details contact** Ko Yao Noi Ecotourism Group, Tel. 08 1968 0877 or Ko Yao Noi Ruam Jai Homestay Group, Tel. 08 9970 3384, 0 7659 7086 or at [www.kohyaohomestay.org](http://www.kohyaohomestay.org)



# Ko Khai

Ko Yao, Phang-nga



## Ko Khai

Ko Yao, Phang-nga



Located in Phru Nai subdistrict, to the north-east of Ko Yao Yai, Ko Khai is made up of three small private islands, namely Ko Khai Nai, Ko Khai Nui and Ko Khai Nok. These islands resemble a fried egg from an ariel view, and they occupy the ocean space between Ko Sire (Phuket) and Ko Yao Yai (Phang-nga). The water is crystal clear with stunning coral reefs, making this island popular with Phuket tourists, as it's a just a short 15-minute boat ride away.

The main activities available on the island are checking out the beaches, snorkeling among the coral reefs, and taking pictures with the intriguing, curved rock formations. The island itself is tiny in size and has just a handful of trees for shade, no fresh water, no accommodation, electricity or mobile network service, so it's only really suitable for day trips.

Ko Khai Nai, or Ko Kai Maew as it is often known due to the 80 strong cat population that sprung from some of the islanders' pets and can be found lounging on the beaches or around the local shops, has become very popular with tourists who take the boat ride across to admire the feline residents.

The beaches on the island are impressively unblemished and cover an area around 500 meters in length. It's possible to walk uninterrupted long the entire length of beach on both the northern and western sides. The eastern side features interesting rock faces and formations that have been sculpted into shapes such as elephant's heads and a trio of turtles by the process of natural erosion, and this flank of the island is perfect for photography.

Beneath the surface of the azure blue waters, shoals of white damselfish numbering in the hundreds dart around the underwater rocks and boulders. Visitors should take care around the rocks though, as they are both sharp and slippery in places. The island, in addition to its clear, shallow waters, offers activities like Banana Boat and jet ski rides and a decent selection of restaurants and refreshment shops. There are also deck chairs with parasols providing shade from the midday sun lined along the beach.

Ko Khai Nui is connected to Ko Khai Nai, and a short ten-minute trip takes you from one to the other. Ko Khai Nui is popular with tourists who often swim in the shallow waters and snorkel around the reefs here, admiring the colorful shoals of fish.

The island covers an area of just 2 rai with a tiny beach area, and so coming aboard is not allowed, especially with sharp rocks and sea urchins dotted around the coast. Tourists should take particular care when disembarking from the boat, getting off at the back away from the rocks.

Ko Khai Nok, when viewed from a distance looks somewhat like a fried egg surrounded by blue sea and the locals often refer to it amusingly as 'the fried egg in the sea'

The island is popular with tourists due to the serene vibe here, especially after the island's nature was allowed to replenish itself. The beaches consist of fine, powdery white sand which contrasts with the

turquoise seas and there are striking, curving rock formations on display at low tide. Visitors who walk around 80 meters towards the peak in the center of the island will be greeted with resplendent views out over the ocean from the island's best vantage point.

Below, a small sandy ridge connects the islands with the rocks and there is a small section of beach with shoals of fish darting to and fro in the clear seas. It's safe to swim and snorkel here and there are some excellent opportunities to get some snaps of the coral reef and resident marine life. There are jet skis, rubber rings and kayaks for hire too, as well as food and refreshments on sale and plenty of sun loungers in the shade for those looking to kick back and relax.



#### **Getting there:**

**From Phang-nga** - Tourists can rent a longtail boat with a driver from Loh Chak Pier and travel across to Pak Khlong Pier, Ko Yao Yai. The trip takes around 30 minutes, and you can contact the accommodation or tourism groups on the island for details.

**From Phuket** - The Ko Khai archipelago is just 14 km from the Phuket coast and can be reached in 15 minutes on a speedboat from the Sirae, Laem Hin, Rasata and Ao Chalong and Bang Rong piers.



## TAT CONTACT CENTER

### TOURISM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (HEADQUARTERS)

1600 New Phetchaburi Road, Makkasan,  
Ratchathewi, Bangkok 10400

Tel : 0 2550 5500 Fax : 0 2253 7440

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

email: [info@tat.or.th](mailto:info@tat.or.th)

Open every day between 08.30 - 16.30 hrs



### Suvarnabhumi Airport

Domestic Terminal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Gate 3

Tel : 0 2134 0040

Open 24 hours

### Don Mueang Airport

International Terminal (Building 1), 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Gate 2

Tel : 0 7621 1036, 0 7621 2213 Fax : 0 7621 3582

Open 24 hours

## TAT, Phang-nga Office

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Responsible for tourism in Phang-nga province only

