

# PHUKET 101

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PHUKET TRAVEL GUIDE  
BY LOCAL TRAVEL EXPERTS

## 10 MOST BEAUTIFUL PHUKET BEACHES

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### FIRST TIME IN PHUKET

Things you should know

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### PHUKET TRAVEL TIPS & ADVICES

When is the best time to go?

# 5 MOST POPULAR BEACHES TO STAY



## 01 | PATONG BEACH

Patong is the main beach on the west coast of Phuket, and choosing to book a hotel here is a personal choice. It's a big town full of restaurants, shops, markets, bars and go-go bars, but it's not really Thailand anymore. The middle part of the beach can get busy but is still beautiful and relatively quiet on the northern end.



## 02 | KATA BEACH

Kata Beach is the second most loved beach in Phuket after Patong. It is popular for families as it also enjoys a wide white sandy beach with an incredibly blue sea during the high season. Kata is less crowded than Patong and offers a large selection of dining, shopping, and decent nightlife.



## 03 | KARON BEACH

Karon Beach is the second longest beach in Phuket and one of the most popular. The beach is an impressive stretch of white sand and clear blue water in high season, so vast that it never feels crowded. There are many good hotels across the main beach road, but Centara Grand Beach Resort is the only one to have real beach access.



## 04 | KAMALA BEACH

Kamala Beach used to shine by a lack of particular signs, but everything changed with Fantasea Park's arrival and the world-famous Cafe Del Mar beach club. It is a beautiful beach with clear waters, especially at the northern end. Kamala's small town offers decent dining and shopping options in several hotels, including some with beach access.



## 05 | BANG TAO BEACH

Bang Tao is one of the longest beaches in Phuket, halfway between the airport and Patong on the west coast. With its beautiful stretch of sand, Bangtao is always associated with the resort complex known as 'Laguna Phuket'. Bang Tao has become one of Phuket's most lively and trendy beach destinations, with many beach clubs and a vast beach dining choice.

# 5 MOST BEAUTIFUL PHUKET BEACHES



## 01 | FREEDOM BEACH

Freedom Beach is one of the most beautiful beaches of Phuket, blessed with incredibly soft white sand and bathing in clear blue waters. Surprisingly, it's just next to the crowded Patong, but despite being a little heaven, it's relatively quiet. The reason is simple: there are only two ways to access it: by boat during high season or through a very steep slope.



## 02 | KATA NOI BEACH

Kata Noi Beach is a wonderful bay if you want to be near Kata but stay away from the tourist herds. This beautiful strand of sand had clear blue water during the high season and was once voted one of the world's most beautiful beaches. Fortunately, its 'Out of the way' location kept it relatively quiet, and unless you know about it, you probably will miss it.



## 03 | NAI HARN BEACH

Nai Harn is a lovely, top-rated beach surrounded by green hills and small islands. The sand is incredibly soft, and the water is bright blue in the high season. It's very different from the touristy spots on the west coast because the park surrounding the bay is somehow protected, but you can find plenty of Thai restaurants and street food just behind the line of trees.



## 04 | SURIN BEACH

Kamala Beach used to shine by a lack of particular signs, but everything changed with Fantasea Park's arrival and the world-famous Cafe Del Mar beach club. It is a beautiful beach with clear waters, especially at the northern end. Kamala's small town offers decent dining and shopping options in several hotels, including some with beach access.



## 05 | BANANA BEACH

Bangtao is one of the longest beaches in Phuket, halfway between the airport and Patong on the west coast. With its beautiful stretch of sand, Bangtao is always associated with the resort complex known as 'Laguna Phuket'. Bangtao has become one of Phuket's most lively and trendy beach destinations, with many beach clubs and a vast beach dining choice.

# 10 BEST THINGS TO DO IN PHUKET <sup>(1/2)</sup>



## 01 | PHANG NGA BAY

The incredible scenery of Phang Nga has always been at the top of our list of places to visit. There are many ways to explore it. You can take a sunset cruise on a Chinese Junk or explore Phang Nga by canoe through caves and enclosed lagoons. If you can afford it, a full day on a customised private cruise around Phang Nga is the most relaxing and enjoyable experience.



## 02 | PHI PHI ISLAND

Phi Phi is a beautiful archipelago made of fantastic beaches and immense cliffs over two bays you can admire from a famous viewpoint. Phi Phi is also renowned among young crowds for those legendary beach parties lasting all night long, reminding a bit of the Full Moon Parties on Koh Phangan.



## 03 | BIG BUDDHA

The Big Buddha is an iconic 45-meter white marble statue sitting at the top of Nakkerd hill in the south of the island. The construction of this statue, entirely from donations, started in 2002. You can contribute too by sponsoring one small white marble tile and signing your name on it. It's a great thing to do; your name will be there forever.



## 04 | BANGLA ROAD

Bangla road might not be to everyone's taste, but judging by the enormous crowd walking up and down Patong walking street every night, Bangla is on many people's must-see list. Unlike what most people believe, Soi Bangla is not a Sin City for Single Men. It's a colourful and vibrant street full of life, restaurants, shops, bars and dancing girls



## 05 | WAT CHALONG

Chalong Temple, built at the beginning of the 19th century, is the largest and the most visited Buddhist temple in Phuket. The most iconic building on the temple grounds is a 60 meters tall stupa sheltering a fragment of bone from Buddha. Inside the building, beautiful paintings narrate the life of Lord Buddha, and each floor is full of donated golden statues.

# 10 BEST THINGS TO DO IN PHUKET <sup>(2/2)</sup>



## 06 | OLD PHUKET TOWN

It's hard to resist those old Sino-Portuguese streets with beautiful shophouses and magnificent mansions. Phuket's old town is perfect for a half-day. You can reach there by tuk-tuk or even with the local blue bus that stops at the city market, then walk to Thalang road, the most popular of the old streets of Phuket Town.



## 07 | NIGHT MARKETS

Phuket has a lot of night markets, but on any day of the week, the line between a night market and a night bazaar is relatively thin. Some markets only open during the weekend, and some during the weekdays. The Sunday Walking Street Market on the old Thalang road of Phuket Town is the most creative.



## 08 | JAMES BOND ISLAND & KOH PANYI

James Bond island is one of those bucket list items many people want to tick off their list, and nearby Koh Panyi is a surprisingly small fishermen's village built entirely on stilts in the middle of Phang Nga Bay. You can explore the narrow 'streets' and see the water through the crevices of the floor, do some local shopping and enjoy a tasty seafood lunch.



## 09 | ANDAMANDA WATERPARK

Andamanda Phuket is an immense new water park near Phuket Town, passed Kathu when coming from Patong Beach. This massive park covers a staggering 100,000 sq.m. and 25 attractions, including many impressive waterslides, a 10,000 sq.m. swimming area with artificial waves and the longest lazy river in southeast Asia



## 10 | PROMTHER CAPE

Promthep Cape is not as grand as you might expect, but it still attracts busloads of tourists every evening at sunset. The elevated location at the very south of the island offers beautiful views of the bay and the few nearby islands. You can enjoy local shopping and even an excellent Thai dinner at the 'Promthep Restaurant'.

# 5 GREAT DISHES TO TRY IN PHUKET



## 01 | TOM YAM GOONG

Tom Yam is undoubtedly the best-known Thai food worldwide; many know about it, and everybody loves it. Tom Yam is a hot soup in many versions, with prawns or mixed seafood, red or clear. Use many herbs such as lemongrass, galangal, kafir lime leaves, and chillies. It is spicy and sour, with a unique personality and a delicious taste.



## 02 | PAD THAI

Pad Thai is a big favourite for most travellers, often sold on night markets streets (where tourists hang out), it's an excellent introduction to Thai food as it is not spicy. Fried white noodles with prawns and omelette, often served with crunched peanuts, soybeans, lime, herbs and a good spoonful of sugar!



## 03 | KHAO PAD

Khao Pad is the most basic rice dish served almost anywhere in Thailand. You can order it with chicken (kai), porc (moo), or shrimp (Koong). It is served with a few slices of cucumber (always 3, for no known reason) and goes nicely with Plik Nampla, a strong fish sauce with small but powerful chillies.



## 04 | TOM KHA KAI

Tom Kha Kai is another favourite soup using chicken, mushrooms, galangal, tomatoes and lemongrass cooked in coconut milk. Most of the time, it does contain any chilli, which makes this dish great for people who like something exotic but not spicy. You should be able to order Tom Ka in any restaurant around Phuket (and Thailand)



## 05 | GENG KHEAW WAN GAI

Green curry with chicken is a traditional Thai food found in many restaurants. It is cooked with two types of eggplants, some big round eggplants cut in quarters and some tiny round ones that treacherously look like green peas. These are known to help lowering cholesterol levels. Geng Kheaw Wan is served with steamed rice.

# 5 BEST LOCAL RESTAURANTS



## 01 | KRUVIT FLOATING RESTAURANT

Kruvit Raft or Kru Suwit Seafood Restaurant brings a unique tropical touch to a lunch or dinner. The seafood is in nets between the rafts, and the Thai food is delicious. Prices are a little higher than in roadside seafood restaurants, but it includes the transfer by longtail boat from the Laem Hin Pier.



## 02 | MOR MU DONG



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### ▷ **Raya Restaurant in Phuket Town**

Raya Restaurant (also known as Raya House) is a unique restaurant combining all the right ingredients to make it a perfect local experience. They serve great food, reasonable...

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## 05 | RAYA HOUSE

Raya House is an old classic restaurant that hasn't changed much since its opening several decades ago. It's a beautiful old house serving excellent Thai food, mainly known for its crab curry with rice vermicelli. It started modestly and became so popular; it's not unusual to meet Thai celebrities from Bangkok stopping over to enjoy dinner here.

# 5 BEST SHOPPING SPOTS IN PHUKET



## 01| PHUKET SUNDAY STREET MARKET

Phuket Walking Street weekend market is now the most popular attraction on Thalang Road in Phuket City. This Sunday street market was an instant success, denoting a need for something to happen in Thalang Road, the historical part of town.



## 02| CHILLVA NIGHT MARKET PHUKET

Chillva Market is the best young night market in Phuket. Everyone loves those night markets and Thai teenagers more than everyone else, especially with this new trend of using old containers! Every town in Thailand seems to have a surprising amount of those weekend markets, and they are always busy.



## 03| JUNGCEYLON PHUKET

Jungceylon Phuket is the first and still the most successful shopping mall in Phuket. It covers a large area in a central strategic location in Patong Beach, just at the end of the famous Bangla Road. It features a massive range of shopping, food, entertainment and even a good hotel called Millennium Resort Patong.



## 04| CENTRAL PHUKET

Tu Kab Khao is a favourite Thai restaurant in Phuket town serving great southern Thai food, a chance to try their selection of dishes typical from Phuket. Tu Kab Khao is the name given to every Thai house's small closet long ago to keep the food safe from ants and flies for the next meal.



## 05| MALIN PLAZA PATONG

Malin Plaza is a relatively new night market at the southern end of Patong Beach. It succeeded where other night markets failed because they kept in mind that food is the magnet that makes people come in the first place. It applies to shopping malls just as well.



# 5 BEST NIGHTLIFE SPOTS IN PHUKET



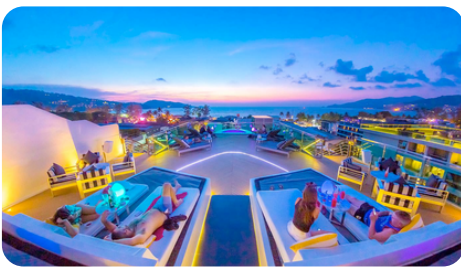
## 01 | BANGLA WALKING STREET

Bangla Walking Street is where Phuket's nightlife truly happens. The small street lined with small bars that used to be Phuket's red-light district has become a concentration of massive international nightclubs, excellent live music bands, tattoo parlours, and bars. It's colourful and fun, open to everyone with an open mind.



## 02 | ENJOY A BEACH CLUB

What goes better on a tropical island than a beach club? Phuket has quite a few, including some famous names such as Cafe Del Mar and the local favourite Catch Beach Club. Luckily those beach clubs are all over the west coast, mainly on Bangtao and Maikhao beaches, so you should be able to find one near you.



## 03 | SUNSET ON A ROOFTOP BAR

There are many rooftop bars around the island and just a few in Patong Beach. However, only a handful are really at the top of a building since an old law forbade the construction of tall towers in Phuket. Don't expect high-rise towers like in Bangkok. Many are built high on hillsides, offering superb panoramic views of the ocean and fantastic sunset opportunities.



## 04 | LIVE MUSIC BARS

Live music bars have always played a large role in Phuket's nightlife. Thirty years ago, you could already hear the sound of Hotel California coming out of every bar and even restaurant, not always well played. Still, nobody minded as it was somehow the island anthem. Things have evolved, and some bands got excellent sound and light systems.



## 05 | PHUKET SIMON CABARET

Phuket Simon Cabaret is another long-time stage performance with glitters, special effects, and excellent sound light systems. The stage design, costumes and choreographies are beautifully executed. However, the main reason why the theatre is always full is that the pretty ladies on stage (and they are gorgeous) are all male!

# 5 USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT PHUKET



## 01 | PHUKET SEASONS

Phuket has mainly two seasons: the high season from December to April and the rainy season from May to November. In addition, we also identify two special times in the year: The peak season, December and January, which are getting busy because the weather is at its best with blue sky but not yet hot. The hot season is April and May when the temperature can reach 35 C and feel even hotter because of the high humidity.



## 02 | GETTING AROUND

Phuket doesn't have a good public transport system, but Tuk-Tuks are everywhere and can take you anywhere, day or night. Blue buses can take you from selected beaches to Phuket Town. The Smart Bus takes you from beach to beach. Taxi meters and Grab taxis are also available. Renting a van with a driver for the day is also a great way to explore the island.



## 03 | CHANGING MONEY

If you are on a budget, exchange rates can make a difference in your holiday. The best rate is to change in the many booths in the streets once in Phuket, they are everywhere. If you really need a bit of cash, change what you need at home or at the airport. Avoid changing at the hotel.



## 04 | WHAT TO PACK FOR PHUKET?

The answer to this question is very simple: Phuket is warm all year round, never colder than 25 C, so you will never need warm clothes! For the rest, you can take your usual medicine and electric adaptors, but if you forget anything, you will easily find it in the many supermarkets, convenience stores and night markets.



## 05 | MISTAKES TO AVOID IN PHUKET

Like in any country, there are a few customs to respect: Don't disrespect the Royal Family, don't wear shoes inside a temple or a home, don't ride a motorbike without experience or license, don't take selfies with protected wildlife, don't ride elephants, don't visit a temple in short clothes, don't feed the fish and don't collect coral or shells to take home!