

# The Similan and Surin Islands, Thailand

## Itinerary - 4 Nights and 6 Nights

- **Arrival airport:** Phuket International Airport (HKT)
- **Departure airport:** Phuket International Airport (HKT)
- **Embarkation Point:** Thap Lamu Pier, Khao Lak at 19:00 hr
- **Disembarkation Point:** Thap Lamu Pier, Khao Lak at 14:00 hr

When you fly in on embarkation day, you can book our free transfer from Phuket Airport that goes once a day. Please ensure that you arrive on time for this transfer. On the last day, we schedule 2 morning dives followed by disembarkation at 13.00 hr. Phuket airport is about a 1 hour drive from the embarkation/disembarkation point. Please allow at least 2 - 3 hours for international flight check-in and 1.5 - 2 hours for domestic flights.

### **Marine & Port Fees:**

- 4 nights: 50 USD per person
- 6 nights: 65 USD per person

Marine park fees can be paid in advance, or on board.

### **Minimum dive certification and experience:**

Diving conditions in and around the Andaman Sea are generally suitable for all levels of divers.

Divers wishing to join this itinerary are advised to have Advanced Open Water certification\*, or equivalent, with a minimum of 10 logged dives and experience in strong currents.

\*Advanced Open Water course can be completed on board

Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements may be denied participation in some or all dives.

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: [www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions).

### Number of scheduled dives:

- 4 nights: Up to 14
- 6 nights: Up to 19

This itinerary involves some long distance travel and, whilst we attempt to ensure the number of planned dives is fulfilled, bad weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific dive site in good time and may impact on the number of dives that are possible.

**Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you, or any of your group, do not speak or understand English, please contact us.**

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

Day 1: Embarkation at 18:00 followed by lunch and briefings. If time allows there may be a check dive scheduled but diving on embarkation day is not guaranteed.

Day 2-4 (4 nights) or Days 2-6 (6 nights): Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive. A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Dive
- Dinner

Day 5 (4 night) or day 7 (6 night): Following breakfast, usually 2 morning\* dives before the vessel commences the cruise to port. Disembarkation is scheduled for 14:00.

\*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and the departure of their flight.

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, the safety of all on board remains paramount. In the unlikely event we are unable to reach a specified dive site; we always do our best in offering diving at alternative locations.

The following is a description of the dive sites that we may visit during your liveaboard.

### Similar Islands

The above water scenery will provide stunningly beautiful white sandy beaches with small forested areas. Dive some of the following sites; **Boulder City, Sharkfin Reef, Anita's Reef** and **Three Trees**. Under the surface you may see: Leopard (zebra) shark, blue spotted stingrays, clown triggerfish, rabbit fish, scorpion fish, snappers, emperor fish, giant trevally and angelfish. The coral gardens, bommies and boulder formations are wonderful to dive.

**Elephant Head Rock**, visible from the surface, this is the biggest pinnacle in the Similans and has some fantastic swim-throughs. White tip reef sharks, batfish, trevally and barracuda can often be seen on the perimeter of the boulders. If you look closely in the cracks and in the rubble you can see smashing mantis shrimp, porcelain crab, moray eels and cleaner shrimp.

There are also sites dominated by huge granite boulders such as **Deep Six**, **Christmas Point**, and **North Point** where you can see white tip reef sharks, schooling giant trevally, and schools of neon fusiliers.

## Koh Bon

This is generally the most likely place to see manta rays on this itinerary. You are also likely to see Napoleon wrasse, sweetlips, octopus, bluefin trevally, giant moray eels, great barracudas, fire dart goby, spiny lobster and nudibranchs of many types. The dive sites vary from wall diving to gently sloping reefs and from submerged boulders to coral gardens.

Diving on the **West Ridge** can be an adrenaline filled drift, with amazing views, while the **North Reef** is a gentler experience over a hard coral garden.

## Koh Tachai

This island is famous for its pinnacle dive site, known by many as **Twin Peaks** as well as more relaxed reef diving on the **North Reef** and **South Reef**. Normally, turtles, barracuda, pipe fish, and nudibranchs can be found here. There is also a chance to see bigger species in this area like manta rays and whale sharks, especially by late January until April.

## Richelieu Rock

This limestone pinnacle was named by Jacques Cousteau after Cardinal Richelieu due to the similarity to the colour of his gown as there are gorgeous purple dendronephthya soft corals covering most of the pinnacle. There are other areas covered in magnificent sea anemones as well. Barely breaking the surface at low tide, this horseshoe-shaped outcropping, slopes steeply to a sandy bottom at 18 to 35 meters (60-120 Ft). This site offers great diversity for such a small and isolated spot. It also offers excellent multi-level diving and, because it's a high-profile reef, there's always sheltered areas to hide from current.

The marine life is prolific and includes amongst, many other things; pharaoh cuttlefish, large octopi, all 5 varieties of anemone fish of the Andaman Sea, variety of moray eels, ornate ghost pipefish, smashing mantis shrimps, harlequin shrimps, tiger tail seahorses, spanish mackerel, frog fish, many schooling snapper and occasional sightings of manta rays and whale sharks.

## Surin Islands (6 nights only)

The topside scenery of Koh Surin, with evergreen forests, mangroves, and small beaches, surpasses even that of the picturesque Similan Islands. Under water the reefs of Surin have some of the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand. Across sites like **Torinla Pinnacle**, **Hin Kong**, and **Turtle Ledges** you are likely to see Napoleon wrasse, yellow-masked angelfish, bumphead parrotfish, tomato anemonefish and barramundi, as well as lots of turtles that still come ashore in this area to lay their eggs. Because of the remoteness not many liveaboard boats visit these islands and you will be able to enjoy the dive sites without sharing it with tourist hordes.

## Khao Lak Wrecks

Before disembarking in Khao Lak, if conditions and timing are favourable there is a choice of easily diveable wrecks between the Similan Islands and the port of Tap Lamu. **The Boonsung** and **The Premchai** are old tin miners that were sunk in the 1990's and are a treat for underwater photographers as well as lovers of life of all kinds!

Only in 18m of water they are covered in nudibranchs and various kinds of shrimps. Many quite unusual honeycomb morays also made these wrecks home. There are also huge numbers of schooling fish as well as rays and sharks that can occasionally be seen. **Sea Chart 1** is a slightly more challenging dive and lies between 40 and 25 metres. Sunk during a storm in 2009 with a full load of teak, she is relatively new but already hosts an abundance of schooling fish.

Along the route there are some incredible views from the boat including verdant forests, deserted beaches, and limestone karsts climbing vertically from the ocean. There will be several opportunities to leave the boat and take a walk on the islands. A walk up the trail to Sail Rock is definitely time well spent! You can even be entertained by marine life while relaxing on board our vessel as dolphins cruising along with the boat are not an unusual sight.

Should you have any questions or queries concerning the dive sites or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team [dive@masterliveboards.com](mailto:dive@masterliveboards.com) who will be pleased to assist and advise you.