

Southern Thailand

Overview

This itinerary covers some of the best diving areas in the Andaman Sea, south of Phuket down towards the Malaysian border. Most trips are 4 nights although occasionally, or on request, they may be scheduled for 5 or more nights.

These Thailand Master itineraries are sometimes scheduled so guests looking to experience the absolute '[Best of Thailand](#)' can combine the 4 night Southern Thailand liveaboard trip with a 6 night [Similan & Surin Islands](#) itinerary which enables up to 33 dives while spending 10 nights on board cruising some of the fabulous north Andaman Sea areas as well as the south.

Embarkation & Disembarkation & Transfers

Please check schedules and booking details carefully to confirm the applicable start and end locations and times for your chosen departure dates, which are usually as follows.

4 Nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 19:00 (7 pm)
- **Disembarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 14:00 (2 pm)

5 Nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 19:00 (7 pm)
- **Disembarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 17:00 (5 pm)

A shared transfer from hotels in Phuket to the pier is provided free of charge on embarkation day. Additionally, we offer a complimentary transfer from Phuket Airport on embarkation day with one pick-up time only.

Transfer from the pier to local hotels or Phuket Airport is also provided free of charge at the designated disembarkation time only.

Private transfers, and transfers from or to hotels and resorts outside of the local Phuket area, can be arranged for an additional charge.

Diving Information

Diving conditions in the Andaman Sea around Thailand are mostly suitable for all levels of divers. However, due to depths and changeable currents, some of the dives offered on this itinerary may be challenging or unsuitable for inexperienced divers or those with entry-level certifications.

All divers must have insurance which covers scuba diving activities and depths beyond 18 metres as well as emergency evacuation, recompression treatment and hospital costs.

PLEASE NOTE: Phi Phi National Park Regulations state:

- All diving guests must dive with a guide.
- Gloves, pointers and selfie sticks are prohibited at [Phi Phi dive sites](#).

Minimum dive certification and experience:

We recommend divers have **PADI Advanced Open Water certification* or equivalent**, with a **minimum of 10 logged dives and experience in strong currents**.

*For divers with Open Water certification, PADI Advanced Open Water Course can usually be completed on board but, it must be pre-booked and requires students to complete PADI e-learning before their trip starts.

- To dive [Hin Daeng](#), [King Cruiser Wreck](#), or [Kled Gaeow Wreck](#), **divers must have Advanced certification or show proof of Deep Diver training** otherwise, they must participate in an Adventure Deep Dive as part of the trip.
- Divers participating in **Deep dives** (beyond 18 metres) or **Sunset/Night dives must have Advanced Certification and show proof of logged dives** within that field, or participate in an Adventure Deep Dive or Adventure Night dive as part of the trip.

Guests who do not fulfil the minimum requirements, or who the crew feel do not have sufficient skills or experience to dive safely in certain conditions may be denied participation in some or all dives.

Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveaboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveaboards.com/terms-conditions.

Marine Park & Port Fees: (to be paid on board)

- Divers: 50 USD per person
- Non-divers: 35 USD per person

The Southern Thailand itineraries involve some long-distance travel and, whilst we endeavour to ensure the number of planned dives is fulfilled, weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific area in good time and may impact the number of dives that are possible.

Number of scheduled dives:

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

A typical full diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing and Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by a briefing and Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by a briefing and Dive 3
- Snacks and relaxation followed a briefing and Dive 4
- Dinner

Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you, or any of your group, do not speak or fully understand English, please let us know before you travel.

4 Night itinerary

Day 1: Embarkation at 19:00 followed by briefings and dinner.

Days 2-4: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive.

Day 5: Two morning dives followed by lunch before the vessel commences the cruise to port for disembarkation at 14:00. (*Guests flying out of Phuket on the day of disembarkation will not be permitted to dive.*)

5 Night itinerary

Day 1: Embarkation at 19:00 followed by briefings and dinner.

Days 2-5: Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive.

Day 6: Up to 3 dives* (Two morning dives and one after lunch) before the vessel commences its cruise to the harbour for disembarkation at 17:00.

*We kindly request that guests departing on flights from Phuket on the day or day after disembarkation ensure they leave 24 hours between their final dive and flight departure.

While we wish to show you the best diving possible, the safety of all on board remains paramount throughout each itinerary. The following is an overview of dive sites we may visit during the Southern Thailand liveboard itinerary; some depend on the season, itinerary duration and other factors so, not all listed locations are included on every trip.

Disclaimer: This information is only a general indication of the areas covered and some of the possible dive sites; the inclusion of specifically named sites is not guaranteed. Various factors determine which sites are selected to dive on each trip, including sea and weather conditions, how many other vessels are at a particular location, and restrictions that may be imposed, at short notice, by the Thai Marine Park authorities. In the unlikely event we are unable to reach a specified area for any reason we will offer diving at alternative locations

The Racha Islands

Racha Yai

Just an hour-and-a-half cruise from Chalong Bay, Racha Yai is an excellent location for beginners and for those who have not dived for a while to reacclimatise to the underwater environment. Indeed for any guests aboard carrying out Advanced Open Water courses, Racha Yai offers the perfect opportunity for navigation and peak performance buoyancy training dives, with sloping hard coral reefs, white sandy bottoms and a choice of wrecks on the west coast.

Racha Noi

This island has some of the best visibility of all sites in the area. Often described as a 'mini Similans' the granite boulder topography is also unique compared to other sites in the area. It offers a choice of hard coral reefs, boulders with large swim-throughs and the beautiful pinnacle on the south point of this island. Strong currents can make the southern sites challenging, however, with a year-round chance to see manta rays, it is worth the effort to dive here.

Koh Haa

Possibly some of the most underrated diving in the whole of Thailand, Moo Koh Haa (meaning Five Islands) sits almost halfway between Koh Phi Phi and Hin Daeng and is part of the Koh Lanta National Marine Park. While they may not be much to look at above water, these amazing islands offer a variety of pinnacles, walls, boulders, caverns, and swim-throughs beneath the surface. There are numerous dive sites around Koh Haa but the highlights are **Koh Haa Lagoon, Koh Haa Neua, and Koh Haa Yai.**

Encompassed by islands #2, #3 and #4, **Ko Haa Lagoon** is ideal for night dives, courses, and snorkelling. Protected by the surrounding islands, the calm, crystal-clear shallow water of the lagoon ranges in depth from 5-15 metres with an abundance of corals around the edges of the islands; clown frogfish, sea moths, and even guitar sharks are just some of the more unusual marine life that can be found in the sandy areas and around the corals.

At **Koh Haa Neua** (Island #1) **The Chimney** is a cavern system which features a narrow, vertical tunnel that experienced divers can enter at around 18 metres and ascend to an open chamber at 5 metres. Close to The Chimney entrance, scatterings of large, coral-covered boulders create crevices and swim-throughs that are suitable for everyone to explore and enjoy.

Koh Haa Yai, the largest of the islands, is where the stunning site known as **The Cathedral** is located; a massive underwater cavern which is infiltrated by shafts of light creating an ethereal experience. The surrounding reef extends beyond 30 metres and features large boulders and interesting rock formations that are covered in a variety of corals.

Hin Daeng & Hin Muang

Translating as Red Rock and Purple Rock, these remote pinnacles derive their names from the colour of the corals they host. Reaching depths of over 70 metres and surrounded by open ocean, they are well known for manta rays and whale shark encounters. The nutrient-rich water which draws these majestic creatures to the area is also responsible for the thriving

reefs and exceptional biodiversity that make Hin Daeang and Hin Muang world-class sites, on par with Richelieu Rock.

In addition to oceanic pelagics, the sites also offer giant moray eels, pharaoh cuttlefish, schooling rainbow runners and snappers, barracudas, groupers, fusiliers, and bluefin trevally. On the pinnacles, there are fields of Magnificent Anemones, walls covered in Dendronephthya Hemprichi soft corals, and huge Gorgonian sea fans.

Koh Lipe (October - April only)

This beautiful, pristine island near Langkawi Island and the Malaysian border harbours some amazing dive sites such as **Stonehenge & 8 Mile Rock**. As these locations are very exposed, strong currents are common and should be expected. It also means that diving Stonehenge, as well as 8 Mile Rock, depends on weather conditions and is not always possible. If we are unable to dive at either of these sites, there are plenty of other equally stunning ones to choose from around Koh Lipe.

Located on the southeast side of Koh Lipe, **Stonehenge** is a vibrant pinnacle densely covered in soft corals. Giant granite stones protruding from the sandy seabed are what earned this site its name, and add to the overall appeal of this colourful dive. Amongst the crevices and channels created by the rock formations, you will discover a variety of moray eels, shrimps, crabs and nudibranchs as well as the masters of disguise - stonefish and scorpionfish. Look out into the blue and you are likely to see schools of barracudas, trevallies and yellow snappers.

8 Mile Rock is a world-class dive site consisting of several submerged pinnacles located about 8 nautical miles (15 kilometres) south of Koh Lipe. Many large pelagics can usually be spotted cruising by - devil rays, mantas and eagle rays are among the usual suspects; others include tuna, mackerel, barracuda and trevallies.

Reaching up from the 45+ metres deep ocean floor to 15 metres below the surface, the pinnacles are a soft coral paradise, densely covered with soft coral trees in an array of colours. A variety of reef fish species can be found in large numbers including fusiliers and snappers. Other highlights include leopard sharks, big groupers and, if you are really lucky, you may even see a whale shark (or several).

Phi Phi Islands

The amount of time and number of dives around the Phi Phi Islands depends on the season and the inclusion, or exclusion of Koh Lipe.

Lying in Phang-Nga Bay about 45 km east of Phuket and 30 km southwest of Krabi, two breathtaking limestone islands make up the greater part of Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park, an archipelago of 6 islands. The largest and only inhabited island is Phi Phi Don with the second largest being Phi Phi Leh. A short distance from Phi Phi Leh, the southernmost of the Phi Phi Islands chain are the small Bida Islands - Koh Bida Nai and Koh Bida Nok.

The islands offer numerous diving possibilities and the locations we visit may vary from one trip to the next; Many of the dive sites are 10-25+ metres deep walls featuring gorgonian fans, soft corals, black coral bushes, interesting rock formations and swim-throughs. Along the base of many walls, you will find hard coral gardens to explore where you may spot leopard and nurse sharks sleeping on the sandy bottom, or blacktip reef sharks cruising the reefs.

You can also expect abundant fish life, including lionfish, wrasse, Moorish idols, angelfish, rays and trevallies. Turtles are also commonly seen at many of the Phi Phi dive locations.

Kled Gaeow Wreck

Kled Gaeow is a decommissioned Royal Thai Navy support vessel, scuttled in 2014 to create an additional wreck dive site and artificial reef. Located just off Koh Phi Phi Ley, the wreck ranges in depth from 16 metres at the top of the conning tower to 28 metres where the hull rests on the seabed, with the main deck at around 20 metres. As such, and following Phi Phi diving regulations, it is only suitable for divers with Advanced certification or Deep Adventure Dive training.

Shark Point and Anemone Reef

Northwest of Koh Phi Phi Don, these two pinnacles are part of the same reef system and are only a short distance from each other. Both sites are covered with colourful soft corals and anemones with a variety of fish to suit all divers. From barracuda to seahorses and for the lucky ones, of course, the iconic leopard shark!

King Cruiser

Susceptible to strong currents and reduced visibility, this can be a challenging dive at times and is only suitable for those with advanced, or deep diver training and experience in similar conditions.

'The Cruiser' was a car ferry that used to travel between Phi Phi and Phuket until, in 1997, 'she hit Anemone Reef and sank a short distance away. No lives were lost, but divers were left with a great wreck dive! Although now largely broken up, she is covered with soft corals and hosts abundant marine life including several large schools of snapper. The wreck ranges in depth from the wheelhouse at 16 metres to the seabed at 30-33 metres, with the most interesting locations being between 20 and 26 metres.

Koh Doc Mai

To the west of Shark Point, Koh Doc Mai is a small limestone island located 20 kilometres east of Chalong Bay. Normally diving here will be focused along one side of the island depending on currents and waves although, if conditions are right, it is possible to circumnavigate the entire island in a single dive. The east side forms a steep wall from 5 metres to just over 25 metres, covered in soft corals, whip corals and sea fans, and features caves and overhangs where a host of delights can be discovered. The western side is a sloping reef with large beds of hard corals and anemones.

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