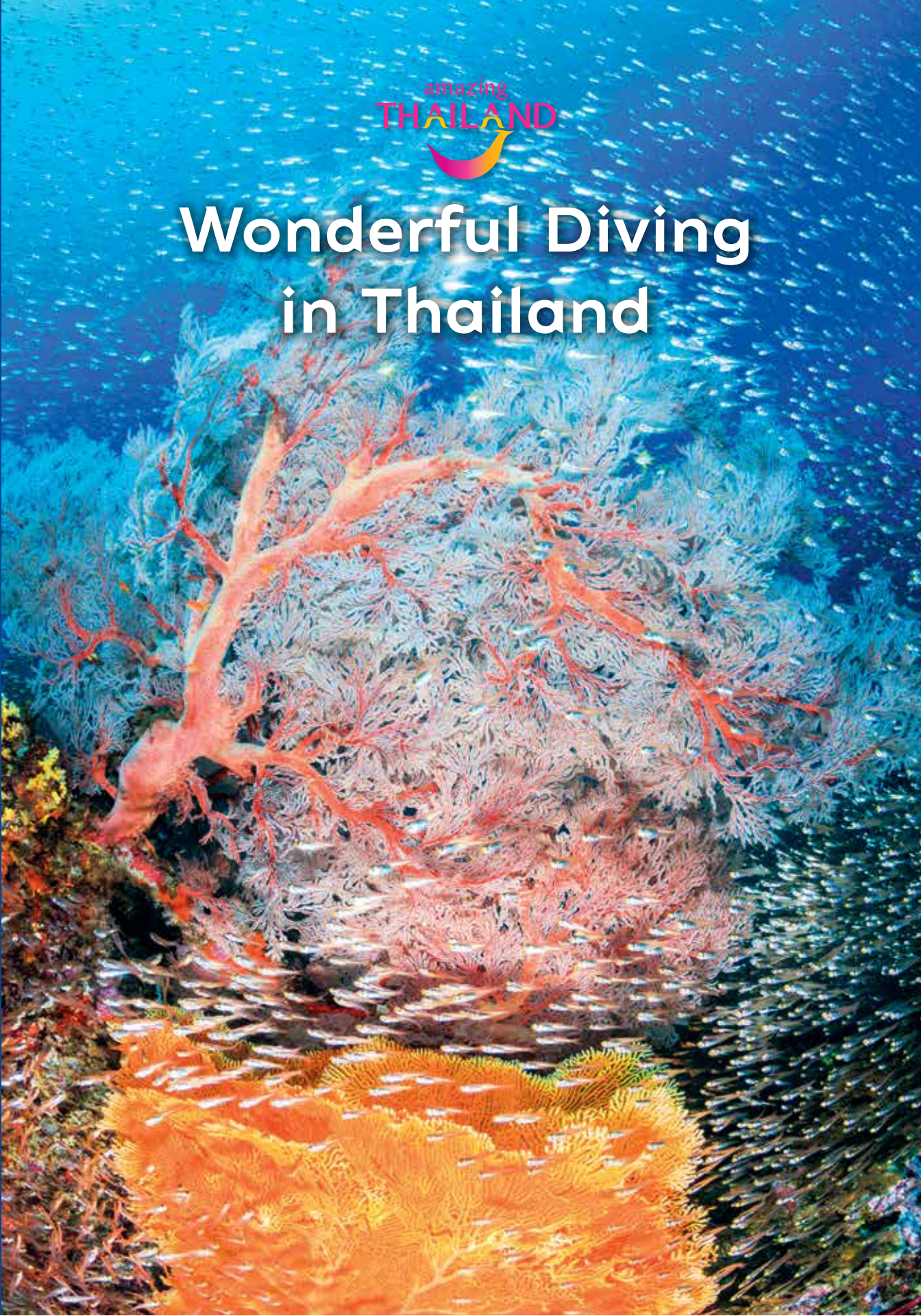




Wonderful Diving in Thailand







Thailand - the Tropical Paradise for Diving

Thailand is often referred to as 'the diver's heaven' and is the focus for scuba diving in Southeast Asia. Clear turquoise seawater, a variety of marine life, and beautiful coral reefs are the attractions to explore the underwater world of Thailand. Visitors will find the diversity of natural beauty preserved for the enjoyment of future generation Thais and foreigners.



Whaleshark at Richelieu Rocks, Mu Ko Surin National Marine Park

Diving Sites and Seasons

Diving in Thailand is possible at all times of the year, depending on the seasons of the different areas. On the west side of Thailand is the Andaman Sea, best visited from October to April. Here, popular dive sites are found in Phuket, Muko Similan, Muko Surin, Krabi, and Trang provinces. On the East coast is the Gulf of Thailand and this is most suitable for diving from May to September. Examples of the dive sites here are Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan, Ko Tao, Ko Nang Yuan, Ko Chang, and Muko Ang Thong Marine National Park. Snorkelling trips are offered on almost every island and are usually combined with sea kayaking and picnics on the islands or in the national parks.



Malabar Grouper at Chumphon Pinnacle, Chumphon

Diving Trips in Thailand

Beneath the clear blue waters of the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand are stunning coral reefs and beautiful marine creatures. **Ko Chabang**, in the Tarutao Marine National Park of Satun Province, offers opportunities for visitors to dive and snorkel to observe the light-coloured flower corals. At **Ko Kradan**, visitors can view a variety of colourful fish in the shallow water corals.

Phang-nga Province offers many diving opportunities; such as, at **Muko Similan Marine National Park**, a group of nine islands stretching from the north to the south of the province. These islands are consistently ranked in the world's top 10 dive sites as they feature a rich marine life consisting of sea fans, barrel sponges, feather stars, and reef fish, and spectacular underwater granite rock formations. Visitors can take scuba diving trips at the Similan Islands, the site of some of the best coral reefs in Thailand. The islands of the **Muko Surin Marine National Park** are one of the best places for snorkelling in Asia. This unspoiled group of islands offers amazing opportunities for divers to observe shallow reefs with beautiful corals, turtles, lobsters, humped head parrot fish, and bat fish.

Muko Phi Phi National Park in Krabi Province is home to several popular snorkelling and diving spots; such as, Ko Phi Phi Le, Ko Phi Phi Don, Ko Phai, Ao Maya, and Ao Lo Sama. Divers can see fascinating aquatic species including turtles, seahorses, leopard sharks, scorpion fish, and black tip reef sharks. Also located in Krabi Province is **Ao Nang**, a large bay containing 83 small islands with over 200 species of fish and 80 species of coral reefs.

Blenny fish



Mu Ko Similan National Marine Park, Phang-Nga



A group of Lionfish at Phi Phi Island, Mu Ko Phi Phi National Marine Park, Krabi



Phuket Province provides numerous opportunities for visitors to explore the underwater world. **Ko Racha Yai** offers stunning coral reefs to divers, whereas **Hat Kata, Hat Patong,** and **Hat Karon** are for snorkellers to enjoy spotting shallower water coral and fish.

Ko Samui, Ko Tao, and **Ko Nang Yuan** in Surat Thani Province feature crystal clear seas with an abundance of aquatic animals and a variety of coral formations. If lucky, a boat trip at **Muko Ang Thong Marine National Park** gives snorkellers and divers a chance to swim with dolphins.

Diving Facilities in Thailand

Throughout Thailand, divers can find modern amenities, international standards, and professional diving facilities that allow a complete diving experience. Friendly snorkelling trips are provided around the beach destinations and basic lessons are available for inexperienced snorkellers. All reputable dive shops are affiliated with Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) or other international dive bodies, and most hold courses in multiple languages. Those who are non-divers can relax, swim, and enjoy the natural beauty of life on board the ship while friends and family explore the world beneath the water.

Dive Green

As tourism expands, coral reefs come under increasing pressure. People in Thailand value the beauty as well as the importance of the marine treasures and are active in protecting these coral reefs. A diving community in Phuket Province started the Green Fins group that aims to preserve the ocean's natural beauty, and to establish a network of environmentally-friendly dive operators to promote sustainable tourism in coral reef areas and assist in the monitoring of coral reefs in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Green Fins intends to award "green" certificates to dive operators who offer tours in accord with environmentally-friendly guidelines.

Dive Responsibly

Be considerate to the natural environment by keeping them clean. Rubbish thrown into the sea or discarded in the forest can be harmful to the environment.

Do not buy products made from coral or endangered plants and/or animals.

Do not stand on, touch, or remove items from the reef, including coral.



Coral Planting at Ko Tao, Surat Thani



Coral Planting at Ko Tao, Surat Thani



Corals at Mu Ko Similan National Marine Park, Phang-Nga

For more information, visit www.tourismthailand.org or contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at +66 2579 6666, +66 2561 0777 or visit www.dnp.go.th.



Muko Phi Phi National Marine Park, Krabi



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