# **PHANG-NGA**

A small yet tranquil province, Phang-nga is nestled among majestic mountains and the beautiful blue waters of the Andaman Sea. Located on the western coast of the Malay peninsular, the province has evolved from a small prehistoric settlement to a major trading port. In its heyday, the city was a tin mining town generating an annual revenue of over ten thousands million baht. Today, Phang-nga has become one of the world's most popular tourist destinations offering spectacular natural beauty both onshore and underwater. What fascinates most of the tourists is the scene of limestone Mountains covered with lush tropical forests-natural formations created by the forces of winds and rains over the years.



Phang-nga's underwater world also has a lot to offer. Unspoiled seascapes and islands on both coasts of Phang-nga are recognized as Thailand's most beautiful sea terrain. Aside from captivating blue waters and white sandy beaches, the province is also blessed with stunning rock formations, colorful corals and fish. It is truly a diver's paradise where two world-class national parks, the Similan and Surin archipelagoes are located. Besides, the world-famous Ao Phang-nga is home to islets of various sizes and shapes and is an important breeding ground for all kinds of marine lives.

Despite its endless list of natural wonders to be explored, Pang-nga still manages to preserve most of its simple but charming lifestyles, a factor that will help make your visit an idyllic retreat from the

## Phang-nga





## 1. Ao Phang-nga:

Ao (Bay) Phang-nga boasts a wealth of natural heritage that makes it one of Thailand's most frequently visited

breathtaking view of emerald water sea dotted by over 40 islands of different shapes and sizes-a unique seascape hardly found elsewhere in the country. Most of the islands' cliffs are well known for caverns that house magnificent stalagmite and stalactite formations. Besides distinctive rock formations, the bay is also renowned for its vast mangrove forests and abundance of exotic marine creatures. Recommended fun-filled activities include canoeing and boat cruises. Call Ao Phang-nga National Marine Park Office at tel. +66 7648 1188, +66 7648 1163 for more information. www.dnp.go.th





### 2. Muko Similan:

56 km, from Thap Lamu Pier ...... A11 Perfectly located in the Andaman Sea, Muko Similan is an archipelago of nine islands hightly praised for its pictur esque settings, both underwater and

onshore. The archipelago enjoys a globe-sapnning reputation as one of the world's most beautiful diving spots for both snorkeling and scuba diving. Diverse marine life, including more than ten species of dolphins, can be found along a valley of coral reefs. Lush forest, home to many bird species, offer fascinating trails for nature enthusiasts. Visitors should notify Similan National Park Officer before embarking on their trips. Call tel. +66 7645 3272 for more details. www.dnp.go.th





0 km. from Khura Buri Pier ...... A2 Catch a glimpse of Thailand's largest and most perfect shallow water coral beds at Muko Surin, group of five islands in the Andaman Sea. Over an area of

square kilometers, colorful soft and hard corals can be found alongside many fish and crabs. Additionally, Richeliu Rock, the world-renowned diveng spot, is a must-not-miss underwater destination for divers. Onshore, a trip to a Moken (Sea Gypsy Village) may prove to be quite memorable as you can explore their traditional culture and learn their ways of life. Please contact Muko Surin National Park Office at tel. +66 7647 2145-6 peior to taking the trip.





An official symbol of Phang-nga, Khao Chang is a large mountain that resembles a crouching elephant. Found

Chang (Elephant Belly Cave), a cavern adorned by glittering stalagmite and stalactite formations. Nearby attractions include an old city hall situated in front of the cave. The Unique Western architectural heritage of King Rama VII's period is reflected through the hall's terrace, pediment, and Baroquestyle balustrades.





## 5. Ko Yao Noi:

138 km from the city ...G16 The island is an ideal paradise for those seeking to explore unspoilt natural beauty in a spectacular environment: long stretches of white sandy beaches

dotted by multi-colored pebbles and a spectacular view of Krabi's shoreline on the east. Cycling, trekking, swimming and canoeing are popular activities. Other leisurely pursuits include home-stay programs that offers such interesting activities as harvesting rubber plants and fishing in a small boat.





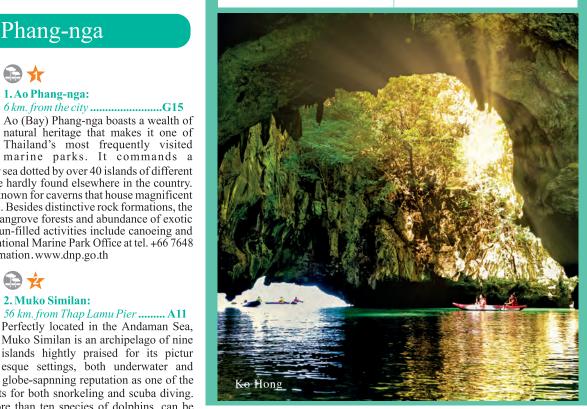
### 6. Hat Khao Lak:

25 km from Takua Pa Part of Khao Lak-Lam Ru National Park, Phang-nga's largest tourist destination, Khao Lak offers sandy beaches and supreme tranquility. A

waterfall nearby, Lam Ru Waterfall, offers scenic views of a 5-tiered cascade set against the backdrop of lush forests. As Khao Lak has come into its own among tourists around the world, a large variety of high-class accommodations and restaurants are available. Khao Lak is where a diving trip to the famous Muko Similan is started.



Downtown	
Phang-nga Market	Shrimp paste, Dried shrimp, Preserved seafo
Ban Tham Nam Phut	Nutmeg in syrup, Preserved mangosteen and durian
Takua Pa	
Talat Yai Takua Pa Market	Preserved seafood, Khanom Tao So
Mu Ban Sanambin	Cashew nut
Thai Mueang	
Near Sarasin Bridge	Phuket pineapples
Takua Thung	
Stalls along Takua Thung-Thai Mueang Rd.	Preserved seafood
Kra Som Market	Shrimp paste, Preserved seafood
Ko Pan Yi	
Ko Pan Yi Market	Shrimp paste, Dried shrimp, Preserved seafor Tabun tree's root
Ko Yao Noi	
Ko Yao Noi Market	Dried shrimp Preserved seafood







7. Namtok Tam Nang: 35 km. from Takua Pa .

Situated among a lush tropical forest is Si Phang-nga National Park's largest waterfall, called Namtok Tam Nang. It cascades 60 metres down a step cliff,

passes many tiers before making its last splash in Wang Pla Phent, a large basin that is home to Pheng or Phluang fish (brook carp). The Unspoilt natural environment of the waterfall can be studied through 10 different information signs located throughout the area. For more information, contact Si Phang-nga National Park Office at +66 8 6952 5246 www.park.dnp.go.th



## 8. Ko Hong-Ko Phanak:

A unique limestone island, Ko Hong possesses an inland lagoon that serves as a natural residence for various bird species. Once in the lagoon, which is

enclosed by high cliffs on all sides, you will feel as if you are in a spacious hall of water. For those addicted to adventurous activities, canoeing through the islands' many small grottos is definitely a challenge. Ko Phanak, on the other hand, boasts caverns that house splendid stalagmite and stalactite formations. Tham Kaeo, for instance, is famous for its fabulous glistening interior. Some of the caves even have their own small but beautiful waterfalls



### . Khao Lam Pi-Hat Thai Mueang National Park:

7 km. from the city This 13-kilometres long white sandy beach dotted by rows of pine trees is a perfect spot to captivate a romantic at

sunset. But what's special about the beach is its regular visitor. Each year, from November to February, sea turtles crawl up on the beach to lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch, there is an annual Sea Turtle Festival held in March to release them into the sea. Located next to the middle of the beach is a 240-acre grassland locally referred to as Thung Samet Khao, a place where most inhabitants are local and migratory birds. Nearby are two beautiful waterfalls, Lam Pi and Ton Phrai.



10. Old Sino-Portuguese Building at Takua Pa: 9 km. from Takua Pa .....D8 Takua Pa or Takola used to be a major trading port situated on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula. The port

reached its apex in the reign of King

Rama VII when the tin-mining industry was booming. These days, we can witness part of its glorified history through the Sino-Portuguese style buildings located along Si Takua Pa Road. Most of them are two-storey buildings with arched doorways similar to those built in Phuket. Some buildings feature rectangular posts decorated with colored glass, wood carvings or plastered motifs. Others display the architectural influence of Greece or Rome, with columns and colored glass windows.



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Cotting There		





From Bangkok, there are two driving routes to Phang-nga, which is located 788 kilometres from Bangkok, an approximately 12 hour

: Take Highway No. 4 through the provinces of Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon, and Ranong directly to Phang-nga.

2: Take Highway No.4 to Chumphon and then Highway No. 41 to Amphoe Tha Chang, turning right onto Highway No. 401. Keep driving to Amphoe Ban Ta Khun (about 50 kilometres) and then take Highway No. 415 for the final 30 kilometres to Phang-nga

Visitors traveling from Phuket should take Highway No. 402, over the Sarasin Bridge. Highway No.4 north (left) leads towards Khao Lak, while Highway No.4 "south" (right, but still in a northerly direction) leads to Phang-nga town. Both Khao Lak and Phang-nga town are around 90 kilometres from Phuket, a journey of around 1 hour and 30 minutes.

There are daily bus services from Bangkok to Phang-nga departing in the morning and evening. Traveling time is around 12 hours. For more information call the Southern Bus Terminal at tel.+66 2872 1777, or the Phang-nga Bus Terminal at +66 7641 2014 or visit www.transport.co.th, www.thairoute.com

The nearest airport to Phang-nga is Phuket, which is serviced by numerous Thai and international carriers from destinations within Thailand and abroad. From Phuket, visitors can take a bus, rent a car, or take a taxi to Phang-nga, around 90 kilometres away.

It is also possible to fly to Krabi, where it is then possible to rent a car or get mini-bus transportation to Phang-nga, an approximately

The best way to get around Phang-nga is in a rental car. The attractions around the province are quite spread out, even around Khao Lak, which covers an enormous stretch of coastline. Cars can be rented in Phuket or Krabi.

It is possible to get around the more densely populated areas via songtaew, pickup trucks with benches in the rear, that pick up and drop off passengers at any location along a fixed route.

Motorbike-taxis can also be found in the town areas and are convenient for very short distances.

To get to the Similar Islands from the Khao Lak area, Thap Lamu Pier is located 70 kilometres north of Phang-nga town at Amphoe Thai Mueang. A boat trip by speedboat takes around 2 hours. However, there is no regular boat services to the Similan Islands; boats are only available through group tours or via private boat rental, the latter of which can cost upwards of 3,200-9,000 baht. Jack Similan Travel(www.jack-similan.com), Thap Lamu Andaman Tour (www.toursimilan.com), and South Siam Divers (www.southsiamdivers.com) are several companies that can arrange for you to book passage on a boat to the islands, even if you are planning to camp on one of the islands.

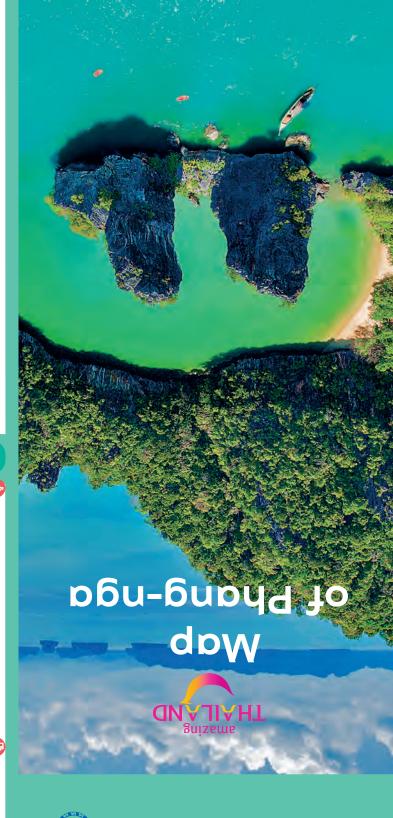
A boat trip from Patong Beach, Phuket takes around four hours. These are typically day trips or multi-day live-aboards for snorkelers

To get to the Surin Islands there is ferry that leaves the dock on Highway No.4, six kilometres north of Khura Buri town, between Takua Pa and Kapoe. The ferry takes around 4 hours to get to the



## Getting Around Phang-nga

Mini-bus and ordinary bus services operate between Phang-nga and other districts. Mini-buses normally leave Phang-nga Market every 15-30 minutes while ordinary buses leave Phang-nga Bus Teminal







## Glossary of Thai Terms

**Note:** English spellings given here try to approximate Thai pronunciation. Posted signs may be spelled differently.

## Important Telephone Number TAT CONTACT CENTER (8.00-20.00 hrs.) Tel. 1672

TAT Phang-nga Phuket International Airport Tel.+66 648 1900-2 Phang-nga Hospital Tel.+66 7641 1616 Tel.+66 7658 4250 Bus Terminal (Phang-nga Town) Tel.+66 7641 2014 Bus Terminal (Takua Pa) Police Station Provincial Public Relations Office Tel.+66 7648 1456 Khao Lak

+66 7648 5470

+66 7648 5614

+66 8 7891 8912 +66 9 3582 3040

# Transportation

### To Muko Similan and Muko Surin

Similan Diving Safaris

IQ Dive

No regular boat service is available since there are no local residents on both island groups. The most convenient form of transportation is a one-day tour package available from Sea Transport Company for 1,500-2,500 baht each. The boat in this package leaves Phang-nga at 8.30 a.m. and usually returns at 3.00 p.m. However, it is best to confirm the actual time for the return trip with the operators. Charter boats are also available. For inquiry and reservation call:

Kura Buri Greenview Travel Rak Talay Travel

+66 7640 1400 +66 7638 3228, +66 8 6292 5522

## Getting to Ao Phang-nga

Tourists can take chartered boats which are available from various piers such as the National Park Pier, Surakun Pier and Custom or Tha



## Food & Drink

### Options in Phang-nga

As with most tourist destinations, Phang-nga has restaurants providing both Thai and international cuisine. However, Thai food in the south varies slightly from cuisine in central and northern Thailand. Known for its incredible spiciness, Southern Thai recipes have strong influences from Malay, Indonesian and Indian cuisines as these groups have played a historic role in the region. Dishes representative of these influences include Massaman, an Indian-style Muslim curry, and rice noodles (Khanom Jeen) in fish curry sauce.

Seafood is also one of the dominating influences on Phang-nga cuisine. Fresh fish and shellfish are typically on display outside beachfront restaurants, where diners can select the fish they wish to eat and then order it served in a variety of ways, including grilled with a selection of spices.

For regional specialties, Phang-nga's Ko Panyi is famous for its Shrimp Paste and Takuapa for its Chinese-style baked cakes.

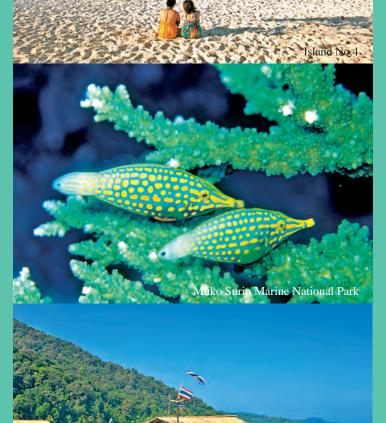


### Symbols Primary Highway Snorkelling/Skin diving 411 Secondary Highway Temple (Wat) 4035 Provincial Highway 4034 Route Numbers Camping area Scuba Diving 4035 Local Road Beach Tourist village National Park Amphoe/District Map of Muko Similar Waterfall (Namtok) Nature trail 3 Map of Muko Surin Map of Ao Phang-nga Cave Map of Khao Lak Top Attractions ★★★ Must see ★★ Worth a visit ★ Interesting

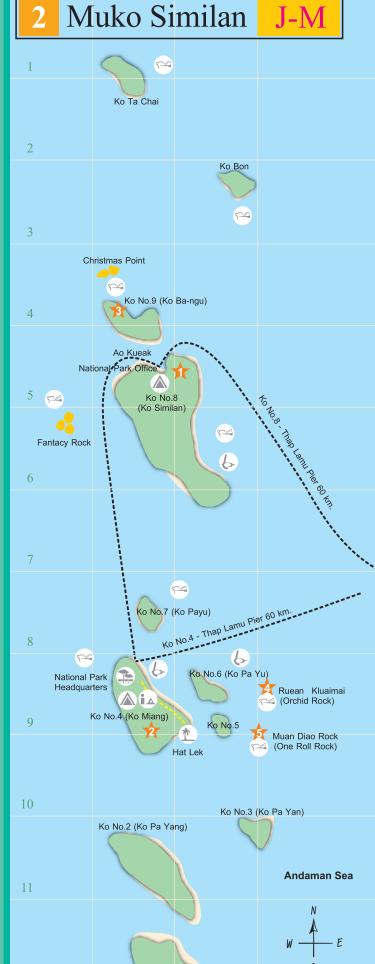
Pier	Boat	Destinations	Fares (Baht) ** Subject to change	Number of Passenger
A. Di			1,000-3,500	1-10
Ao Phang-nga NP. Pier	-		3,500-4,500	2-40
NP. PIET	20000		5,500-7,000	50-80
			1,000-3,000	1-10
Tha Dan		Ao Phang-nga	2,000-3,500	11-30
(Custom Pier)		Ao Fhang-nga	5,500-8,000	40-80
(Custom Fice)	2000		2,000-3,000	1-10
Surakun Pier	-		2,000-2,200	11-20
Surukun 1 ici	:3155E		2,000-2,800	21-30
Ban Sam Chong		Khao Phing Kan,	1,500-1,800	1-10
Pier		Khao Ta Pu	_,-,	
Khlong Khian Pier	-	Ko Hong, Ko Phanak	2,000-3,500	1-10
Bang Rong Pier		Ko Yao Noi,	1,200	Per person
(Phuket)		Ko Yao Yai	,	1
Thap Lamu Pier	<b></b>	Muko Similan	4,000 (package 1 day)	Per persor
(leave 8.30 a.m.)		(The Similan Islands)	2,500-4,000	Per person
			(Package 1 day)	
Khura Buri Pier		Muko Surin	3,000-4,000	Per person
(leave 8.30 a.m.)			(package 1 day)	
		(The Surin Islands)	2,500-3,500	Per person
		(The Surin Islands)	2,500-3,500 (Package 1 day)	Per pe







Muko Surin Marine National Park



# Prime | Muko Similan

Ko No.1 (Ko Hu Yon



1. Island No. 8 (Ko Similan) Recognized as Similan's largest and most beautiful island, No. 8 features a massive rock formation in the shape of a sailing boat. The rock, which is situated at the headland of Ao Kueak, has already become a symbol of Similan. Teeming with unspoilt coral reefs, the area around the rock is considered perfect for diving. A short trail leading to the island's peak provides a panoramic view of the horseshoe-shaped bay. Another spot ideal for a quiet camping and swimming is Ao Kueak which is located right on the



2. Island No. 4 (Ko Miang). The second largest island of the Similan archipelagoes where the office of the National Park is located, No. 4 offers a unique view of scenic beach set against verdant forests. From the office, there is a 380-metres nature trail cutting through a tropical forest and leading to a small and tranquil beach on the opposite side. As the island's best diving spot can be conveniently reached by foot, it is easy to spot anemone and butterfly fish among the coral reefs. Onshore, rare birds are also frequently sighted. At night there is an observation point where you can watch chicken crabs come out to scuttle. Accommodation on the island is right on the beach.



3. Island No. 9 (Ko Ba-ngu). The crystal-clear blue sea makes No.9 the best site for snorkeling in the archipelagoes. Its underwater world is full of dazzling corals, colorful sea fans, and different kinds of fish-all of which can be seen from the surface. It is one of Thailand's fewdive spots with sea fans.

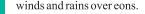




# Prime | Ao Phang-nga



1. Khao Ma Chu. A limestone mountain recognized from afar by its distinctive dog-like shape. This striking rock formation can easily be spotted, with the dog's head, body and fluffy tail naturally sculpted by high





Located en-route to Ko Panyi, the mountain attracts tourists wishing to explore an early human settlement. Standing above the sea is the cliff where aintings of reddish brown human

beings and animal figures are etched. These paintings are over 3,000 years old and are testimonies to the existence of pre-historic human settlements in



3. Tham Lot (Ko Thalu Nok) ......T3 This limestone cave was carved out by waves. Its feature are the numerous stalactite formations on the ceiling. As the cave is not that large, there is only

room for a small boat to pass through to

the other side of the island. That is why the best way to explore it is to glide through via sea-canoes. The nearby mangrove forest, which serves as a nursery for marine lives is also worth visiting.



4. Khao Tapu-Khao Phing Kan .....T4 As the name implies, Khao Tapu is a nailed-shaped island renowed for its striking appearance like a solitary rock diven into the sea. Khao Phing Kan is

named so because of two vertical cliffs leaning against each other. Both are internationally known for being the setting of a James Bond movie.



5. Ko Panyi The island is home to a 200-year-old Muslim fishing community, the only one of its kind in Thailand. More than 200 households rest on high stilts in the sea, connected by walkways that link

the whole community together. A mosque is located at the center of the community. Forbidden things on the island are alcohol, drugs and pork. Ko Panyi is an ideal place to explore the fishermen's lifestyle, taste fresh seafood and bargain for local souvenirs.

# Prime Muko Surin



The largest bay in the Surin archipelogoes with 1,200-metres of unspoilt shallow water coral beds is home to all kinds of large and small marine animals, such as scaly giant clams and docile leopard sharks, which are regular visitors to this bay. The bay has Thailand's first underwater nature trial. With 10 observation points, it is easy to study the diversity of the underwater ecosystem. The trial's waterproof handbooks are available at the Park's Tourist Center.



2. Nature Trail to Hat Mai Ngam.

A 2-kilometres walking path that offers an uncompromising first-hand experience, the nature trail cuts through Ko Surin's lush tropical forest. Park's Tourist Center, ventures through beachfront forest, mangrove swamps and tropical forest to end at Mai Ngam Beach, a perfect snorkeling spot located on the opposite side of the island. The trip takes for 1-2 hours approximately. Alongside and above the tropical forest are different kinds of exotic birds and large banyan trees.



3. Ao Mai Ngam. The island's only snorkeling spot can be reached by a 2-kilometres walking trail. The bay is an underwater haven for divers. Pristine and diverse coral reefs, especially the stag horn, mushroom and upright corals inhabited by different kinds of fish are regular scenes of the bay.



4. Ao Tao (Turtle Bay) ... This lovely bay consists of a long beach with a stretch of teeming coral reefs populated by with an abundance of marine life. It is the most popular snorkeling spot on Muko Surin and is Thailand's best place to see hawksbill turtles. Cluster and hard corals as well as sea fans can be sighted in the area.



5. Richeliu Rock. This rock is one of the world's most famous scuba diving spots and it's located near the legendary Muko Surin. From the surface, they may appear to be ordinary stones. When you are in the water, however, they are extraordinary. The rock is indeed a refuge from the busy world. Found here are the most colorful corals, sponges and all kinds of creatures great and small, from plankton to whales. To top it off, this is the premiere place in Thailand to spot whales.



4. Ruean Kluaimai (Orchid Rock). This group of stones can be found approximately 30-50 feet under water. Covered with large sea fans, coupled with pink, red, orange and yellow corals, the rock is nothing but a large orchid garden of the ocean. Different kinds of marine creatures add more charm to the area.

Ko Khai (Ko Torilla)



5. Muan Diao Rock (One Roll Rock)..

This gigantic stone is located 50 feet under the water. It is teeming with young corals in vibrant red, yellow and orange dotted with large sea fans. The scene is so spectacular that it entices most divers to shoot a whole roll of film, hence its name.

