

THAILAND · BEACHES · ISLANDS · DIVING · NIGHTLIFE · FOOD · ADVENTURE



*Phuket, Krabi & the Andaman coast*

Phuket, Krabi and the islands of Phang Nga Bay are Thailand's classic winter-sun escape, with limestone karsts, longtail-boat island-hopping and some of Asia's best diving. The dry season runs from November to April; from May to October the south-west monsoon brings rougher seas, red-flag beaches and lower hotel prices.



**The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all but essential travel to parts of Thailand.**

Check whether Phuket, Krabi & the Andaman coast is affected in the latest FCDO travel advice.

|                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div> COUNTRY</div> <div>Thailand</div>              | <div> BEST TIME</div> <div>Nov–Apr</div>                           | <div> FLIGHT FROM LONDON</div> <div>12h direct<br/>~£600–£1,100 return</div> | <div> DAILY BUDGET</div> <div>£40–£240<br/>££ Moderate</div> |
| <div> WARMEST MONTH</div> <div>February (33°C)</div> | <div> SEA TEMPERATURE</div> <div>28–30°C<br/>coolest–warmest</div> | <div> TIME ZONE</div> <div>Bangkok<br/>+6h vs UK now</div>                   | <div> CURRENCY</div> <div>Thai baht<br/>£1 ≈ THB 44.94</div> |

Phuket is the hub, with the international airport and a string of west-coast beaches that each have their own character: Patong for nightlife, Kata and Karon for families, the north around Mai Khao for quiet resorts. Across Phang Nga Bay, Krabi's Ao Nang is the jumping-off point for Railay's climbing cliffs and the Phi Phi and Hong islands, while Koh Lanta and Khao Lak offer a slower pace. Plenty of visitors split a fortnight between Phuket and Krabi, linked by ferry. Come from November to April for calm, clear water; the Similan Islands national park closes from mid-May to mid-October.

## Highlights

1

NATURE

**Phang Nga Bay**

Sheer limestone towers rise from green water between Phuket and Krabi. Sea-kayak through tidal caves into hidden lagoons, and see Khao Phing Kan, the 'James Bond Island' from The Man with the Golden Gun.

2

ADVENTURE

**Railay**

Cut off by cliffs and reached only by longtail boat from Ao Nang, Railay has world-class sport climbing, Phra Nang beach with its cave shrine, and sunset views across the bay to the islands.

3

BEACH

**Phi Phi Islands**

Koh Phi Phi Don has the hotels and bars; uninhabited Phi Phi Leh has Maya Bay, famous from The Beach, now seen from a boardwalk with no swimming. Take an early boat to beat the day-trippers.

4

NATURE

**Khao Sok National Park**

About an hour inland from Khao Lak, or two to three hours from Phuket or Krabi, ancient rainforest and limestone peaks surround the flooded Cheow Lan Lake. Stay a night in a floating raft house, then kayak, swim and look out for gibbons and hornbills.

5

## ARCHITECTURE

**Phuket Old Town**

Pastel Sino-Portuguese shophouses on Thalang Road and Soi Romanee recall the tin-mining boom. Come for the Sunday walking-street market, Peranakan dishes such as moo hong and mee hokkien, and cafés in restored shopfronts.

**Where to stay**

## WHERE TO STAY

**Kata and Karon**

Two long, sandy bays on Phuket's west coast with a calmer feel than Patong; good for families and couples wanting restaurants within walking distance.

## WHERE TO STAY

**Patong**

Phuket's busiest resort, with Bangla Road's bars and clubs, big hotels and every watersport; suits groups and nightlife fans rather than anyone seeking peace.

## WHERE TO STAY

**Ao Nang**

Krabi's main resort, with mid-priced hotels and longtail boats to Railay, the Hong islands and Phi Phi; a practical base for island-hopping couples and families.

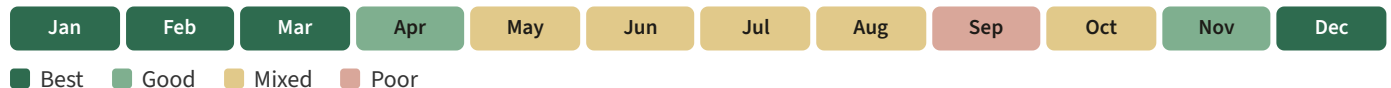
## WHERE TO STAY

**Koh Lanta**

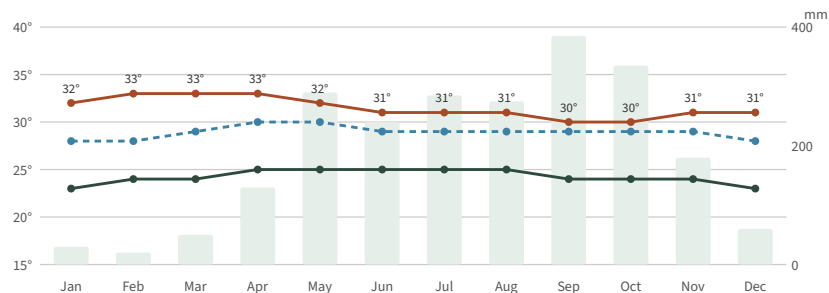
A long, laid-back island south of Krabi with wide beaches, small resorts and early nights; suits families and couples after a slower pace.

**When to go to Phuket, Krabi & the Andaman coast**

Best time: **Nov–Apr.**

**Average climate in Phuket**

— High °C 
 — Low °C 
 — Sea °C 
 ■ Rain (mm)

**How much does Phuket, Krabi & the Andaman coast cost?**

## SHOESTRING

**£40**

per person / day  
≈ THB 1,798

## MID-RANGE

**£105**

per person / day  
≈ THB 4,718

## COMFORTABLE

**£240**

per person / day  
≈ THB 10,785

Per person per day excluding flights. Return flights from London typically cost £600 off-peak and £1,100 in school holidays.

## Visas & entry for Phuket, Krabi & the Andaman coast

Shown for a British passport.

**No visa needed**

From 15 September 2026, if you enter Thailand under the visa exemption scheme, you can stay for up to 30 days for tourism only. Visa-exempt entry does not cover business travel, including attending conferences, meetings or other business activities. If you are travelling for business purposes, you should obtain the appropriate visa before you travel.

Visa-exempt entry for tourism through land-border immigration checkpoints is normally limited to 2 entries per calendar year. This restriction does not generally apply to arrivals by air. If you frequently enter Thailand as a tourist, immigration officials may ask for evidence of your onward travel, accommodation, or sufficient funds, and may refuse entry if they believe you are not a genuine visitor.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

## Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

### RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A   Tetanus

### SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya   Dengue   Hepatitis B   Japanese encephalitis   Measles   Rabies   Tuberculosis   Typhoid

### YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

### MALARIA

**Malaria risk varies across the country**

- There is a low risk of malaria in the rural, forested borders of Thailand with Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.
- There is a very low risk of malaria in the remaining areas of Thailand including Kanchanaburi (Kwai Bridge): awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.
- There is no risk of malaria in the cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Koh Phangan, Koh Samui, and Pattaya: bite avoidance recommended.

This information covers the whole country; check with a travel health professional whether Phuket, Krabi & the Andaman coast itself is affected.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

# Public holidays in Thailand

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

|                 |                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Fri 23 Oct 2026 | HM King Chulalongkorn Memorial Day                                                                                   |
| Sat 5 Dec 2026  | HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great's Birthday · National Day · National Father's Day                               |
| Mon 7 Dec 2026  | HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great's Birthday (in lieu) · National Day (in lieu) · National Father's Day (in lieu) |
| Thu 10 Dec 2026 | Constitution Day                                                                                                     |
| Thu 31 Dec 2026 | New Year's Eve                                                                                                       |
| Fri 1 Jan 2027  | New Year's Day                                                                                                       |
| Sat 9 Jan 2027  | National Children's Day                                                                                              |
| Sun 21 Feb 2027 | Makha Bucha                                                                                                          |
| Mon 22 Feb 2027 | Makha Bucha (in lieu)                                                                                                |
| Tue 6 Apr 2027  | Chakri Memorial Day                                                                                                  |
| Tue 13 Apr 2027 | Songkran Festival                                                                                                    |
| Wed 14 Apr 2027 | Songkran Festival                                                                                                    |
| Thu 15 Apr 2027 | Songkran Festival                                                                                                    |
| Sat 1 May 2027  | National Labour Day                                                                                                  |
| Mon 3 May 2027  | National Labour Day (in lieu)                                                                                        |
| Tue 4 May 2027  | Coronation Day                                                                                                       |
| Thu 20 May 2027 | Visakha Bucha                                                                                                        |
| Thu 3 Jun 2027  | HM Queen Suthida's Birthday                                                                                          |
| Sun 18 Jul 2027 | Asarnha Bucha                                                                                                        |
| Mon 19 Jul 2027 | Buddhist Lent Day                                                                                                    |
| Tue 20 Jul 2027 | Asarnha Bucha (in lieu)                                                                                              |
| Wed 28 Jul 2027 | HM King Maha Vajiralongkorn's Birthday                                                                               |
| Thu 12 Aug 2027 | HM Queen Sirikit The Queen Mother's Birthday · National Mother's Day                                                 |
| Wed 13 Oct 2027 | HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej Memorial Day                                                                              |

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

## Know before you go

- From May to October, strong rip currents make the west-coast beaches dangerous: red flags mean no swimming, and tourists drown every year. Boat trips are also cancelled in rough weather.
- Phuket's taxis and tuk-tuks charge high fixed fares, so Grab and Bolt are usually cheaper. In peak season, book Phuket–Phi Phi and Krabi ferries a day or two ahead.

Plugs, money, phrases, emergency numbers and more: see our Thailand guide.