amazing THAILAND

Ko Samui

Surat Thani | Chumphon | Ranong





Ao Khao Khwai

CONTENTS

KO SAMUI 8

Beaches 9

Other Attractions 12

Nearby Islands 14

How to Get There 17

SURAT THANI 18

Major Attractions 19

How to Get There 23

CHUMPHON 24

Major Attractions 25

How to Get There 27

RANONG 28

Major Attractions 29

How to Get There 34

Ko Samui

Surat Thani | Chumphon | Ranong





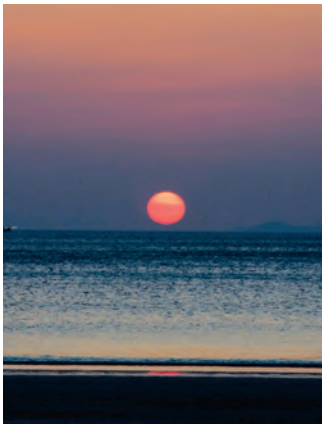










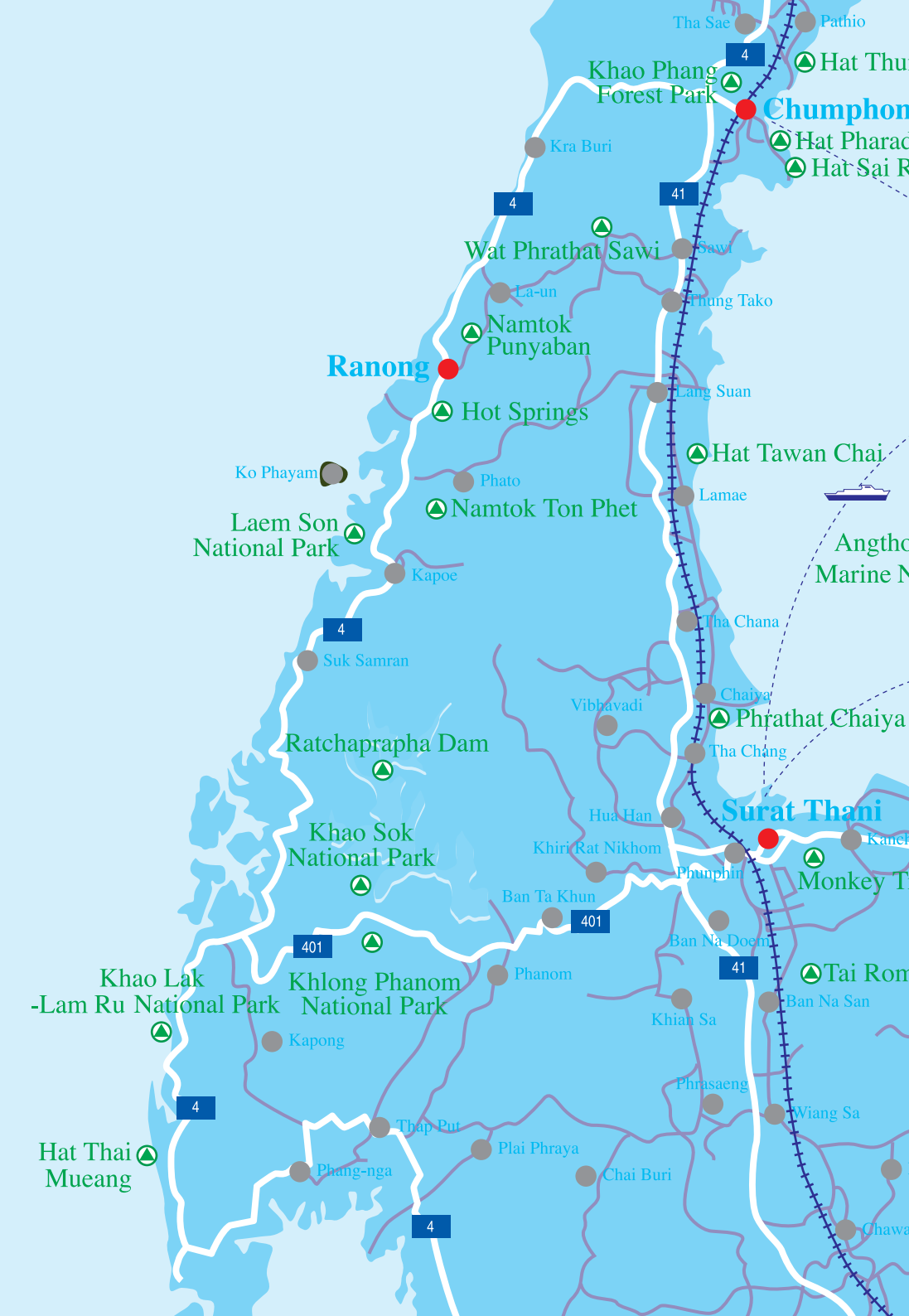








amazing
THAILAND


Tha Sae
Pathio
4
Khao Phang
Forest Park
Hat Thu
Chumphon
Hat Pharad
Hat Sai R
Kra Buri
41
4
Wat Phrathat Sawi
Sawi
La-un
Thung Tako
Namtok
Punyaban
Ranong
Lang Suan
Hot Springs
Hat Tawan Chai
Ko Phayam
Phato
Lamae
Namtok Ton Phet
Laem Son
National Park
Angtho
Marine N
Kapoe
Tha Chana
4
Suk Samran
Chaiya
Vibhavadi
Phrathat Chaiya
Ratchaprapha Dam
Tha Chang
Surat Thani
Hua Han
Khao Sok
National Park
Khiri Rat Nikhom
Phunphin
Monkey T
Ban Ta Khun
401
401
Ban Na Doem
41
Tai Rom
Khao Lak
-Lam Ru National Park
Khlong Phanom
National Park
Phanom
Ban Na San
Khian Sa
Kapong
Phrasaeng
4
Wiang Sa
Thap Put
Plai Phraya
Hat Thai
Mueang
Phang-nga
Chai Buri
4
Chawa


ng Wua Laen
donphap
Ri
Gulf of Thailand
Ko Tao
Ko Pha-ngan
ong
N.P.
Ko Samui
Don Sak
Khanom
raining Centre
Sichon
n Yen National Park
401
Tha Sala
Phi Pun
Phrom Khiri
ang
Bangkok
Chumphon
Ko Pha-ngan
Ranong
Ko Samui
Surat Thani
N
W
E
S
Ko Samui
Surat Thani
Chumphon
Ranong
Main Highway
Provincial Highway
Railway
Changwat (Province)
Amphoe (District)
Tourist Attraction
Laem Sai
Hat Bo Phut
Ao Choeng Mon
Hat Maenam
Ko Mat Lang
Na Thon Pier
Samui Monkey Centre
Namtok Hin Lat
Samui Highlands
Hat Chaweng
Namtok Na Mueang II
Laem Chon Khram
Hat Lamai
Ao Thong Yang
Namtok Na Mueang
Hin Ta Hin Yai
Ao Taling Ngam
Ao Thong Krut
Samui Butterfly Garden
Road
Tourist Attraction
Ko Samui



Hat Chaweng

Ko Samui

At 247 sq. kms., Ko Samui is Thailand's third largest island, which has become one of Southeast Asia's premier tourist destinations in just a decade. Samui sits snugly in the Gulf of Thailand, surrounded by other gem islands like Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao, and is located 84 kms. east of Surat Thani, the provincial capital on the mainland. Many visitors are content to laze their days away on the beach, soaking up the sun and cooling off in the turquoise waters, but for action enthusiasts there are plenty of choices like diving and snorkelling, windsurfing and paragliding, beach volleyball, off-road driving, and other soft adventure activities.

One of the island's most appealing features is the loop road, which makes a 50-km. circuit around the island, giving a glimpse of superb beaches on the north, east and west coasts. It runs past sleepy fishing villages and through seas of coconut palms, passing Ko Samui's most impressive waterfall and tempting turn-offs into the highlands along the way. Other attractions on or near the road include a butterfly garden, a snake show, a monkey training centre, and health spas dedicated to pampering the body. There is plenty on Ko Samui to keep even the most jaded traveller happy for a week or two, but for anyone spending even a few days here, an opportunity not to be missed is a trip to the emerald islands of the Muko Angthong National Marine Park, which offers another perspective of a tropical paradise.



Hat Lamai

BEACHES

Hat Chaweng

Situated on Ko Samui's east coast, Hat Chaweng is the island's longest and most beautiful beach. It is a 6 kms. strip of powder-soft sand beach fronted by crystal-clear water. There is plenty of accommodation, ranging from five-star resorts to simple bamboo bungalows, available on this beach. In the day time, Hat Chaweng is the centre for water sports; such as, windsurfing and jet-skiing and also a great social scene at night, when the dance clubs pulsate to the latest rhythms.

Hat Lamai

Also on the east coast, just south of Hat

Hat Bo Phut



Hat Maenam

Chaweng, the playful waters of Hat Lamai always attracts surfers, as they run a little deeper than any other beaches in Ko Samui. Behind the beach are several spas where visitors can treat themselves to an herbal sauna, a relaxing Thai massage, or even a mud facial.

Hat Bo Phut

If you love eating out by the sea, Hat Bo Phut is the place. This former fishing village has been modified as a famous cluster of eateries on Ko Samui. The beachfront road is lined with an array of restaurants, including pubs and bars, mostly with breezy outdoor corners along the beach.

Hat Maenam and Hat Bang Rak

These are all located along the north coast, and are ideal places for those who want to get away



Hat Chaweng

from it all. Hat Bang Rak is often called "Big Buddha Beach" because of the huge Buddha image at the eastern end of the beach, which is particularly stunning during sunset.

South and West Coast Beaches

On the south and west coasts are very isolated beaches not linked by the island's ring road, yet access is easy enough for those in search of tranquility. At Laem Set in the south, the sea is too shallow for swimming but it is compensate by the huge smooth boulders on the beach and the coconut palms leaning over at impossible angles. On the island's southwest, Hat Taling Ngam may not be quite as perfect as Hat Chaweng, but the long strip of sand that is often deserted makes it an ideal spot for a beach ramble.

SPORTS

With such clear waters and an abundance of marine life, water sports are very popular on Ko Samui, and the hottest one is diving. Around a dozen diving companies based on the island offer a chance for experienced divers to enjoy themselves and for beginners to learn how to dive, which can be arranged through the hotels and bungalows. If diving sounds too challenging, then snorkelling is your second choice. Join a trip to one of the nearby coral reefs, put on a mask, a snorkel and fins, then go floating above the reefs and discover colourful fish. For those who would rather keep their head above water, then maybe sea kayaking is the sport for them. Once they have mastered how to propel this small light craft, they can explore the shoreline in perfect peace. Other thrilling



Hin Ta and Hin Yai

activities include windsurfing, jet-skiing or paragliding. Those who are not a water sports lover can enjoy relaxing at the beach or join in one of the spontaneous games of beach volleyball, or even Takro, a traditional Thai ball game, using feet, elbows and shoulders. If exploring the island's interior sounds like fun, hire a 4WD vehicle and try off-road driving on the bumpy trails leading to the highlands. Moreover, there are standard golf courses with sea view for you to enjoy golfing while taking in the seascape at the same time.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Monkey Shows

The abundance of coconut tree makes it the main source of Ko Samui's economy and monkey plays an important role in working in the coconut plantations. During the performance, all their skills are shown to ludicrous effect.

Hin Ta and Hin Yai

Meaning "Grandfather and Grandmother Rocks", these unusual rock formations were named after their similarity to male and female sexual organs. Located at the south end of Hat Lamai, this site is one of Ko Samui's most photographed features.

Samui Butterfly Farm

Set on a gentle slope at the southeast corner of the island, the garden contains a wide range of bright and unusual flowers. Many species of butterflies, insects, moths and some beehives create captivating scenery amidst the breathtaking view of the coast.



Namtok Na Mueang

Snake Shows

For anyone fascinated by snakes, a visit to one of the island's snake shows is a must. The fearless handlers play with deadly species, and offer visitors the chance to get up close and touch the reptiles' slithery skin.

Namtok Na Mueang

There are two levels to this attractive waterfall, which tumbles down steep cliffs. The nearest one to the road is about 20 metres high with a refreshing pool for relaxing. A steep side road leads to the higher level, which is even more impressive. Trekking on an elephant's back is also available here.

Na Thon

Situated on the west coast, Na Thon is the island's main town and port and is constantly bustling with visitors arriving and departing. This is the place to go shopping for beach gear, extending visas or just watch the goings-on at the port from a street cafe.

SHOPPING

There are plenty of shops behind Hat Chaweng where visitors can buy beachwear, as well as a suit or a dress in which the tailors will get the measurement and make them while the customers are relaxing on the beach. For those looking for souvenirs, the option ranges from colourful carved soaps to chopsticks and coasters made from local coconut wood. There are also several art shops selling reproductions of famous works of art at very reasonable prices.

NEARBY ISLANDS

Muko Ang Thong National Park

Situated about 35 kms. west of Ko Samui, this archipelago of 42 islands fits everyone's image of a tropical paradise, with huge limestone rocks covered in virgin rainforest rising out of the aquamarine waters. There is a fantastic viewpoint on Ko Wua Talap, just above the park headquarters, looking out over the uninhabited, pristine islands. A day trip from Ko Samui to this national park is available, and trips around the park usually include a visit to a delightful concealed lagoon on Ko Mae Ko, as well as the opportunity to paddle a sea kayak around the strange limestone formations. For more information, contact the Department of National Park, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. +66 2561 0777 or Muko Angthong National Park at Tel. +66 7728 6025, +66 7728 0222 Fax. +66 7728 6588 Website: www.dnp.go.th

Ko Pha-ngan

Situtated 20 kms. north of Ko Samui and a short boat trip away, Ko Pha-ngan is a mountainous island ringed by secluded bays that offer ideal getaways. The town centre of the island, Thong Sala has a bank, a post office, a supermarket and shops selling beach equipment and souvenirs. Many of its beautiful beaches are



Muko Ang Thong National Park

Ko Pha-ngan

accessible only by boat, though pick-up trucks and motorbikes also ply the island's rough roads. The famous beach of this island is Hat Rin, located to the southeast corner of the island. It is the location of the world-famous full moon parties that attract thousands of visitors each month to dance the night away on the beach. The island's most picturesque beach is Thong Nai Pan, a double bay in the northeast of the island, which has good swimming and snorkelling sports, as well as the island's most comfortable accommodation. A little south of Thong Nai Pan is Than Sadet or the "Royal Stream", the island's most impressive waterfall, which is a frequently visited site by many Kings of Thailand, and was once King Chulalongkorn's favourite place.



Ko Tao



Ko Nang Yuan

Ko Tao

"Tao" means turtle, and the island is named for its shape when seen from a cruise in the waters of the Gulf. Smaller than Ko Samui and Ko Pha-ngan, Ko Tao lies about 40 kms. northwest of Ko Pha-ngan, and is also easily accessible from Chumphon. The island is particularly popular among divers, and has a reputation for some of the most exciting underwater excursions in the entire Gulf. Several dive companies based at Mae Hat, the island's only town, can arrange underwater excursions for beginners and experienced divers. There are many peaceful and idyllic beaches on the island; such as, Hat Sai Ri, the island's longest beach on the west coast, Hat Chalok Ban Kao and Hat Sai Daeng on the south coast. There is also a unique geological phenomenon at Ko Nang Yuan, a tiny cluster of islets just off the northwest coast of Ko Tao, where stunning causeways of sand join the islands, offering visitors the choice of two seas to swim in.

Ko Nang Yuan

Lying next to Ko Tao, this tiny island offers a unique panoramic view of sparkling white sand beach stringing three small islands together. There is only one resort on Ko Nang Yuan, which opens for tourists on a day-trip to the island to get the impressive view of the outcrops free of charge. Here you can enjoy diving in shallow water, trekking to the look-out point from where the fascination of the Southern coastline on the east is revealed, or just relaxing by the magnificent beach.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

Bangkok Airways operates daily Bangkok – Ko Samui flights, contact Bangkok office Tel. 1771,+66 2270 6699 or Samui Airport office Tel. +66 7742 8500 or visit www.bangkokair.com for more information.

Bangkok Airways also operates Phuket – Ko Samui flights everyday.

By Rail

Trains leave from Hua Lamphong Railway Station in Bangkok to Phun Phin, Surat Thani, from where it is necessary to take a bus to Don Sak Pier and then a ferry across to the islands. Railway Station Hotline: 1690 Surat Thani Railway Station Tel. +66 7731 1213 Website: www.railway.co.th

Songserm Rungraung Joint Ticket operates train ticket include ferry ticket to Ko Samui. For mor infomation, contact Songserm office on Khaosan Rd., Tel. +66 2280 8073-74, +66 2629 3415 or visit www.songserm.com

By Bus

Buses from Bangkok leave the Southern Bus Terminal three times a day for Ko Samui, but the fare include the ticket for the ferry. The bus takes around 12 hours. Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. +66 2894 6122 Surat Thani Bus Terminal Tel. +66 7720 0032 www.transport.co.th

Lomprayah High Speed Ferries operates VIP buses from Bangkok (Tanao Rd.), with transfer services to Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan, Ko Tao and Ko Nang Yuan by Lomprayah high speed catamaran and local boat. For more information, contact Lomprayah High Speed Ferries Co. Ltd. Bangkok Office on Tanao Road, Tel. +66 2629 2569-70, +66 2629 2550-51 or visit www.lomprayah.com

By Boat

To Ko Samui

The ferries for passengers and cars from Don Sak Pier to Ko Samui depart from 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., taking about one and a half hours. Some ferry company's fare may include a ticket for an air-conditioned bus. If one loves travelling at night to get a great view of stars and sky, there is also an overnight boat to Ko Samui which departs at 11.00 p.m. and arrives at 5.00 a.m. from Ban Don pier

To Ko Pha-ngan

There are three alternative piers to catch a boat to Ko Pha-ngan; namely, Don Sak Pier (Surat Thani), Na Thon (Ko Samui), and Ban Don Pier (overnight boat from Surat Thani).

To Ko Tao

To travel to this island, alternative departures are at Ko Pha-ngan, Ko Samui and Tha Yang Pier in Chumphon Province. For more information, contact Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Samui office Tel. +66 7742 0504 or visit www.tourismthailand.org

Several companies operate ferries to Ko Tao from Surat Thani, Ko Samui and Ko Pha-ngan. Information can be obtained from the piers.

ACCOMMODATION

Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao offer a variety of hotels and guesthouses to suit all budgets, ranging from luxurious five-star hotels to simple bamboo bungalows on the beach. For further information, contact the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Samui office Tel. +66 7742 0504 Website: www.tourismthailand.org



Ban Nam Rat

Surat Thani

Surat Thani is southern Thailand's largest province, covering almost 13,000 sq. kms., including the region of the Gulf of Thailand that contains its most famous beach resorts, on the islands of Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao. This province lies 644 kms. south of Bangkok, and most visitors arriving by bus or train head on to the islands by ferry from here or the nearby Don Sak Pier.

The provincial capital of Surat Thani rose to importance during the Srivijaya period (7th -13th centuries) because of its strategic position at the mouth of the Tapi and Phum Duang Rivers. These days its port is important for the trade in rubber and coconuts.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Chaiya

Located 54 kms. north of Surat Thani, just a few kilometres east of Highway No. 41, Chaiya is one of southern Thailand's oldest towns. It is believed to have been a centre of the Srivijayan Empire, which was a Mahayana Buddhist sect based in Sumatra, with strong Indian influences. In fact, it is likely that the town's name comes from the second part of the word "Srivijaya." A great number of artefacts dating back a thousand years or more have been uncovered here, including a bronze statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, an acclaimed masterpiece now on display in the National Museum in Bangkok. Chaiya's two main sights are Wat Phra Borommathat Chaiya Ratchaworawihan and the Chaiya National Museum, located next to each other on the west side of town. The main feature of the temple is its Chedi, which dates back to the ninth century and is one of the few remaining examples of Srivijayan architecture.

Phumriang Village and Laem Pho

Located at Tambon Phumriang, Amphoe Chaiya, about 7 kilometres from the district office, this Muslim-dominated community is well known for its silk weaving skill. The high quality Phumriang silk, a famous local product of Surat Thani, is silk which embossed with silver and gold brocade in delicate patterns that is unique to residents of Phumriang. Two kilometres from the Village on the beach road, is Laem Pho, a seaside destination of Tambon Phumriang, with fresh seafood on offer, especially the Venus Shell, a specialty of Laem Pho.



Phumriang Village



Khao Sok National Park

Khlong Roi Sai

A community nearby to the city area of Surat Thani in the Tapi River basin, Khlong Roi Sai or " a hundred canals" community is where the river-based way of life of the people has been kept. Activities for visitors include visiting riverside orchards, coastal fishery and traditional Thai houses, observing fireflies and mangrove forest on a river cruise, and experience the local lifestyle by trying the art of handicraft with coconut hard shells and water hyacinth stems, batik painting. Here visitors can also pay homage to the highly revered Luangpho Khao Suk at Wat Bang Bai Mai. Moreover, homestay accommodations are available. Those interested in daytime or evening cruises along the canal can obtain further information at the Tapi River's Khlong Roi Sai Tour Promotion Club (Mr. Phanu Chamnanmuang)at Tel. +66 8 6267 6695

Khao Sok National Park

Covering an area of over 700 sq. kms. to the west of Surat Thani, Khao Sok National Park consists of tropical rainforest draped over limestone outcrops and rugged high cliffs, which form hundreds of islands in Ratchaprapha Dam, resulting in some of the country's most dramatic landscapes. The Park is home to over 180 bird species as well as other rare wildlife; such as, wild elephants, bears, leopards, serow, tigers and banteng. Khao Sok also has the world's largest flower, the Raffiesia Kerrii, which can grow up to 70 centimetres wide when it blooms for a few days in December or January. There are several hiking trails within the park that are suitable for everyone, though for steep routes hikers must be in good physical condition. A less strenuous, but equally pleasurable activity is to take a canoe trip around the towering

rocks that protrude from the dam. Situated approximately 4 kilometres from the park office are Namtok Mae Yai and Namtok Sip Et Chan (eleven-tiered waterfall), which are the magnificent waterfalls and caves that are the popular sites to visit in this national park. Khao Sok is best visited between January and April, when skies are usually clear. There are plenty of places to stay near the visitor centre. Contact the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. +66 2579 6666, +66 2561 0777 Khao Sok National Park Tel. +66 7739 5139, +66 7739 5155 www.dnp.go.th

Ratchaprapha Dam or Chiao Lan Dam, is located in the area of the Electricity Authority of Thailand (EGAT) in Mu 3, Tambon Khao Phang, 90 km from the town of Surat Thani. It is a multipurpose dam with a rockfill central clay core, 95 m high and 700 m long. The dam area and reservoir are shady with large trees and a beautiful garden. With striking limestone mountains standing in the dam and natural beauty amidst the seemingly cool green lake, this is an ideal place for leisure.

Li Let Village The villagers here mostly earn their living from fishing, shrimp farming, and coconut plantations. There are various ecotourism activities; such as, a cruise to see a mangrove forest and fireflies, and a tour to admire ancient monuments and objects; for example, Wat Khao Si Wichai and Wat Khao Phra Anon. Besides, visitors can see and learn



Ratchaprapha Dam

about the local handicrafts of the group of housewives, as well as the way of life.

SPECIAL INTEREST

Wat Than Namlai (Suan Mokkh Balarama)

This forest temple, located 6 kms. south of Chaiya on Highway No. 41, means "Garden of Liberation" and was home to the late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, one of Thailand's most revered monks, famous for his "back-to-basics" approach to Buddhism. Both Thais and foreigners flock here to study meditation courses, which begin on the first day of every month and last for ten days. The technique used is called "mindfulness with breathing" by which participants keep their attention on their breathing, and return to it whenever the mind wanders. Foreigners study in the International Dharma Heritage building just a kilometre from Wat Than Namlai (Suan Mokkh Balarama), and visitors are welcome to drop by 07.00 am-05.00 pm. For more information, contact Tel. +66 7743 1661-2, Website: www.suanmokkh.org

SPECIAL EVENT

Chak Phra Festival

October

"Chak Phra" literally means "pulling the Buddha", which takes place at the end of the Buddhist Lent in October when Buddha images from all the town's temples are paraded along the streets, with the most important one floated with pride on the river. During this annual event, the local people offer new robes and daily necessities to the monks, while Tapi River becomes the scene of some exciting longboat racing.



Chak Phra Festival



Chak Phra Festival

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

Thai Airways operates daily flights Bangkok to Surat Thani. (1 hour 15 minutes.) Bangkok office Tel. +66 2356 1111 www.thaiairways.com
Nok Air operates flights from Bangkok to Surat Thani, contact Tel 1318 or visit www.nokair.com.
AirAsia operates flights from Bangkok to Surat Thani, contact Tel. +66 2515 9999 or visit www.airasia.com.
Thai Lion Air operates flights from Bangkok to Surat Thani, contact Tel +66 2529 9999 or www.lionairthai.com.

By Rail

Trains from Hua Lamphong Railway Station in Bangkok to Surat Thani leave many times a day and take 12 hours. The Surat Thani Railway Station is 12 km. from town and there is a shuttle bus between the station and the town. Railway Station Hotline: 1690 Surat Thani Railway Station Tel. +66 7731 1213 www.railway.co.th

By Bus

Several buses leave the Southern Bus Terminal in Bangkok for Surat Thani daily. Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. +66 2894 6122 Surat Thani Bus Terminal Tel. +66 7720 0032 www.transport.co.th

By Car

Take Highway No. 4 via Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan and finally Highway No. 41 to reach Surat Thani.

ACCOMMODATION

Ask for recommendations on where to stay in Surat Thani at the TAT Surat Thani Office at Tel. +66 7728 8817-9. www.tourismthailand.org



Ko Langka Chio

Chumphon

Chumphon is situated almost 500 kms. south of Bangkok and nearly 200 kms. north of Surat Thani with the southbound road splitting into two, one following the south Gulf coast and the other branching over to the Andaman coast. Chumphon's port at Pak Nam is a convenient place to take a boat to Ko Tao, which is in Surat Thani but it is more convenient to depart from here. Yet visitors should not be too hasty to leave Chumphon's pretty coastline, as there are fine beaches and coral-ringed offshore islands both north and south of town.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Hat Thung Wua Laen

Easy to reach and situated 16 kms. north of town, this sandy beach is backed by lush hills and is a good place for relaxing or setting off on diving and snorkelling trips to nearby coral reefs. There are several resorts and bungalows right on the beach, making this a tempting place to stay. The Chumphon Cabana Resort rents out diving equipment, offers instruction and arranges boat trips to dive sites. For more information, contact Chumphon Cabana Resort Chumphon office Tel. +66 8 9724 9320, +66 8 9724 9319 Website: www.chumphoncabanaresort.com

Hat Sai Ri (Sai Ri Beach)

It is also possible to go diving or snorkeling around the islands of Muko Chumphon National Park near Hat Sai Ri, which is 20 kms. south of Chumphon. The beach is another long stretch of enticing sand with lodgings.

Muko Chumphon National Park

This small park, covering 317 sq. kms., has its headquarters 21 kms. south of town near Hat Sai Ri. Visitors may camp here and walk along trails that lead off from the Tourist Information Centre. The park includes beaches like Thung Makham and Arunothai, as well as over 40 small offshore islands. Several of them, like Ko Chorakhae and Ko Ngam, are surrounded by beautiful coral reefs, while Ko Thong Lang has a long white sand beach. Boat can be hired to travel around the surrounding islands and tent camping at the national park can also be done.



Hat Sai Ri



Ko Ngam Yai

Contact TAT Chumphon Office at Tel. +66 7750 1831-2, +66 7750 2775-6 for more information.

Chumphon National Museum

Chumphon National Museum is the depository of significant historical and archaeological evidence of the province. Built in 1995, the ground floor serves as the service section, with a library. The second floor is the exhibition area presented in movies, light and sound, detailed narrative boards, models and life-size mock up venues. The displays are on province's history with titles; such as, Chomphon Today, Chumphon during World War II, and Nature and Cultural Heritage of Chumphon. The light and sound "Typhoon Gay" is presented twice a day, at 10.00 and 14.00 hrs. The museum is located in the Chumphon Governmental Centre, Khao Sam Kaeo, Tambon Nachaang, Amphoe Mueang on Phetkasem Road at the Km. 484 marker before approaching Pathomphon junction. The museum is open Wednesdays through Sundays, except on Monday Tuesday and public holidays, from 9.00 to 16.00 hrs. Contact Tel. +66 7763 0758 for more information.

Chumphon Night Market

After dark, stalls are set up along Kromluang Chumphon Road near the train station, creating a lively night market. Try a new Thai snack, pick up a pizza or enjoy a coffee at one of the many shops and street outlets.

Wat Thep Charoen (Rapro Cave)

Situated at Mu 4, Tambon Tha Kham, Wat Thep Charoen has been registered as a national archaeological site on 27 September 1936. The temple is set on the slope of Rapro Hill, the site of the ancient town of Uthumphon, a strategic port at the crossing to the Malay Peninsula in the past. The principal Buddha image named Luangpu Lak Mueang was built in the cave, with 577 Buddha images in the Subduing Mara posture and in full royal costume. The cave system includes the Ai Tae Cave, the interior of which was modified as a meditation site with an unfinished color painting of a reclining Buddha on the cave wall, and Sai Cave, formerly used as a shelter for high-ranking royals and senior officials supervising the construction of the Shrine of the City Pillar. The caves are resplendent with stalagmite and stalactite. The Rat Samakkhi Pavilion houses the non-decomposed corpse of a revered Lord Abbot, Luangpu Sai, with a Lord Buddha's footprint in

sandstone carved in 108 auspices and stories of minorities' settlements featured on the frame. Moreover, there is a local museum with the display of artefacts discovered in the area and fine shadow play figures carved by Uncle Wen Chitthara.

Chumphon Marine National Park Nature Education Centre

This center is the state agency which gives the education to youths, students and the residents of the country by arranging the exhibition and activities such as the training by the experts, an exhibition at the centre or even the road show exhibition including supporting the eco-tourism activities such as: trekking, camping, Scuba Diving and Snokeling, Kayaking, etc.

SPECIAL EVENT

Chumphon Marine Festival

March or April

The festival features cultural and folk art exhibits, a fishing competition, and seafood festival, as well as a mini-marathon and a windsurfing competition at Hat Sai Ri.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Rail

Chumphon is on the rail line from Bangkok to the south (about 8-9 hours). Visitors can take a train from either Hua Lamphong Railway Station or Thon Buri Railway Station (in Bangkok. Railway Station Hotline: 1690 Hua Lamphong Railway Station Tel. +66 2612 8701 Thon Buri Railway Station Tel. +66 2411 3102 Chumphon Railway Station Tel. +66 7751 1103 Website: www.railway.co.th

By Bus

Visitors can take either a regular or an air-conditioned Bangkok-Chumphon bus. Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. +66 2894 6122 Chumphon Bus Terminal Tel. +66 7757 6796 Website: www.transport.co.th

By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway No. 4 (Phetkasem Road) via Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, then turn left at Pathomphon junction and drive 8 kilometres to the town. The total trip takes around 6-8 hours.

ACCOMMODATION

Ask for recommendations on where to stay in Chumphon at the TAT Chumphon office Tel. +66 7750 1831-2, +66 7750 2775-6. Website: www.tourismthailand.org.



Hat Thung Wua Laen



Ao Khao Khwai

Ranong

Covering an area of 3,298 sq. kms., Ranong is located 568 kms. from Bangkok and about 300 kms. north of Phuket. It is bordered to the west by the Andaman Sea, to the north by Myanmar, to the east by Chumphon and to the south by Surat Thani. In the northeast of the province, the Kra Isthmus is the narrowest point of the peninsula, where just 44 kms. of land separates the Andaman Sea from the Gulf of Thailand.

Ranong is the wettest province in Thailand, with over 4,000 mms. of rain per year, and also the country's least populous province. The extended rainy period, which lasts for around 8 months each year, makes the period between December and April to be the best time to give Ranong a visit.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Ranong Hot Springs and Raksawarin Arboretum

Just 1 km. to the east of town, on the grounds of Wat Tapotharam, are some hot springs, which bubble out of the ground at a scalding 65-70 degrees Celsius. This is too hot to bathe in, but the rustic public baths are a much cooler at 42 degrees Celsius, while the nearby Jansom Thara Hotel has a large public spa that uses the same waters. The hot springs are surrounded by the Raksawarin Arboretum, where there are benches for relaxing in the shade, and from where it is possible to take elephant rides.



Ranong Hot Springs and Raksawarin Arboretum



Rattana Rangsan Palace

Rattana Rangsan Palace

The structure was appointed by a royal command as one of the 19 palaces of the country, and one of the six such palaces built in the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V. The original palace was later demolished and Ranong Administration had constructed a replica of the Rattana Rangsan Palace on the slope of the Niwet Khiri Hill, in the same area of the original building. The three-storey building is made of rare Hopeaodorata wood on a concrete structure. The first floor is open, supporting the second floor in octagonal shape which houses a leather-covered writing table and chair like that seen in the Wimanmek Royal Mansion, Dusit Palace in Bangkok, complete with a reclining royal chair carved in rose pattern in accordance with that used by King Chulalongkorn during his overnight sojourn in Ranong. The roof is in modified form without a gable, decorated with fine woodworks.

Victoria Point

Ranong has long been popular among Thais as a place where they can get a glimpse into Myanmar at Victoria Point, known as Ko Thuang to the Burmese and Ko Song to the Thais. Boats leave from Saphan Pla, Ranong's port and harbour about 5 kms. southwest of the town centre. For a small fee, foreigners can also take the short boat ride across the Kra Buri River to this bustling island, which is mostly dedicated to fishing, but also produces a high number of champion kick-boxers. Among the many shops in Victoria Point are some intricately made baskets, lacquer ware and gems. For more information, contact Immigration Checkpoint Office at Tel. +66 7782 6938, +66 7782 2444



Victoria Point

Phloen Phrai Si Nakha Community

Awarded Outstanding Ecotourism Attraction by Tourism Authority of Thailand, this is the destination for watchers of the rare "Crinum thaianum-water onion" in existence only at Khlong Nakha. Local residents have efficiently managed the ecotourism program known as "Rafting and Watching the Water Onion Flowers". Rafters can opt for an open bamboo raft or a dinghy for a cruise of about 2 to 4 hours along the peaceful natural waterway under the shade, while watching birds and wild flowers, as well as legumes; such as, the delectable oak ferns. Contact Mr. Chamni Unkawe Tel. +66 8 6120 9700.

Khlong Nakha Wildlife Sanctuary

From Kapoe district, travel along Highway No.4 (heading towards Phang-Nga) for about 2 kilometres, and turn left at the sign pointing to Khlong Nakha Wildlife Sanctuary Headquarters. The sanctuary covers an area of 31,456 rai of one of the most fertile natural forests in the South. Here you can find the water onions, in bloom during September to November each year. The sanctuary is linked to the Khlong Saeng Wildlife Sanctuary of Surat Thani and the National Park of Si Phang-Nga, with lofty hills and various watersheds such as Langkha Tuek Mountains, Nakha Mountains, Pho Ta Luang Kaeo Mountains and Mueang Ron Mountains. For more detail, contact the Khlong Nakha Wildlife Sanctuary Tel. +66 7782 8174.



Kra Isthmus

Kra Isthmus

The narrowest part of the peninsula that connects Thailand with Myanmar is Ban Thap Li, 545 kms. from Bangkok and 66 kms. northeast of Ranong town. A small monument just off Highway No. 4 marks the spot where the peninsula's waist measures a slender 44 kms., while just 22 kms. separate the Gulf of Thailand from Kra Buri River, which flows south into the Andaman, and forms the border between Thailand and Myanmar.

Namtok Ngao

Located within sight of Highway No. 4, about 12 kms. south of Ranong, this waterfall tumbles down from a great height, and is particularly impressive during the wet season. For more information, contact Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation Tel. +66 2562 0760 or Namtok Ngao National Park Tel. +66 7781 0651 Website: www.dnp.go.th

Ko Chang

Not to be confused with Thailand's second largest island with the same name over on the eastern gulf, this 18 sq. kms. island has four beaches strung along its west coast, and also bungalows to rent. Though there is a small village here, there are no cars as yet, giving this location an untouched, tranquil ambience.

Ko Phayam

Similar in size and just south of Ko Chang, Ko Phayam thrives on its cashew orchards, tended



Namtok Ngao



Ko Phayam

by a handful of local residents, including "Chao Le" or sea gypsies. The island also has some great beaches, and accommodation on Ao Yai and Ao Khao Khwai. To avoid the monsoon rain, both islands are best visited between November and May. Long-tail boats to Ko Chang and Ko Phayam leave from Saphan Pla port near Ranong.

Laem Son National Park

Situated 45 kms. south of Ranong on the coast of the Andaman Sea and occupying 315 sq. kms., including over 60 kms. of coastline, two archipelagoes and 8 islands, Laem Son National Park offers a chance to enjoy unspoiled nature, as few people live in this region. The Park's headquarters is at Hat Bang Ben, a broad spread of sand, backed by shady casuarina. Four kilometres further on from the park's headquarter is Hat Laemson, a memorably peaceful spot, which is good for birdwatching. Boat trips can be arranged out to other islands; such as, Ko Khangkhao and Ko Kam Yai, the latter of which has some fabulous beaches and is an hour and a half off the coast. The Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at Tel. +66 2562 0760 Laem Son National Park Tel. +66 7786 1431 Website: www.dnp.go.th

HOW TO GET THERE

By Air

Nok Air operates Bangkok – Ranong and Ranong - Bangkok. Contact 1318 or visit www.nokair.com for more information.

AirAsia also operates Bangkok-Ranong and Ranong-Bangkok Contact Tel. +66 2515 9999 or visit www.airasia.com

By Bus

Both air-conditioned and regular buses in Bangkok depart from the Southern Bus Terminal to Ranong every day (8 hours). Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal Tel. +66 2894 6122 Ranong Bus Terminal Tel. +66 7781 1548 Website: www.transport.co.th

By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway No. 4 via Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan and Chumphon, a total distance of 568 kms.

ACCOMMODATION

Ask for recommendations on where to stay in Ranong at the TAT Chumphon Tel. +66 7750 1831-2, +66 7750 2775-6.



Pier, Ko Phayam



Laemson National Park

Printed in Thailand by Promotional Material Production Division,
Marketing Services Department,
Tourism Authority of Thailand for free distribution.
www.tourismthailand.org E/MAR 2020
The contents of this publication are subject to change without notice.

www.tourismthailand.org