

7 days in Thailand



Enjoy a glass of wine while looking out to sea at the Six Senses Yao Noi resort
Although most of Asia is still a relatively new cruising ground, high-end tourism has been booming in Thailand for well-over ten years now. With an abundance of islands, excellent diving, wonderful food and a great winter season climate, chartering a yacht in this area will soon become the go-to place.

Day 1:Phuket to Koh Roi

Meet at Yacht Haven Marina, just a 15-minute drive from Phuket International Airport. Located in the narrow channels separating Phuket from the mainland, you'll cruise east towards Phnag Nga Bay past fish farms; coconut, rubber and pineapple plantations too. Despite the sheer-sided islands, the water is very shallow here – less than 5m for most of the bay, so you can easily anchor.

Take to a small tender or kayak and head to Koh Phanak for your first stop. Over the years the limestone has eroded leaving numerous caves on this island each with secret lagoons to discover only at low tide though. After lunch jump back aboard and head north to Khao Phing Kan – better known as 'James Bond Island' – it is featured in the movie Man With the Golden Gun. End the day at private anchor off the island of Koh Roi. This little island has an easily accessed lagoon and a few small beaches. As darkness falls, you might spot the many fruit bats

that roost on nearby Koh Kudu.



Words By
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Follow in the footsteps of James Bond and visit the island featured in *Man With the Golden Gun*
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Day 2: Koh Roi to Koh Pak Bia

Your next stop will be Koh Yao Noi. This island is still largely undeveloped (compared to Phuket) but does hold a few lovely resorts. Why not treat yourself to a spa day, or lunch on the beach at the Paradise Koh Yao Noi Beach Resort & Spa or the Six Senses Yao Noi resort. After a relaxing day, head towards Pak Bia. Among the mushroom-shaped rocks, you'll find some perfect white sand beaches. Now that the day-tripper boats have gone, enjoy having sundowners on your own exclusive beach.



Spend an afternoon at the delightful Six Senses Yao Noi resort

Day 3: Koh Pak Bia to Rai leh Beach, Krabi

After breakfast sail south to Krabi. Ao Nang is a large touristy bay, so it's probably worth sailing a little further to Rai Leh Beach. Here, there are a handful of high-end resorts sitting side-by-side with a few private residences scattered around. The Krabi headland is a fabulous place to go climbing. Try out some low-level 'bouldering' right on the beach, or take on the roped-climbs up the limestone cliffs.



Try out your climbing skills on Rai Leh beach, Krabi

Day 4: Rai Leh Beach to Phi Phi Don via Ban Pa Ko Dam

Heading south you'll see the nearby peaks of Ko Dam (sometimes called chicken Island because of a peculiar outcrop). Depending on the wind or tide, you can anchor either side of a wonderful white sandspit that joins the two islands. Take a stroll on shore or get the snorkelling gear out. The water surrounding Ko Dam is unbelievably clear.

Arriving in Phi Phi Don, Ton Sai bay is the place to go if you want to make the most of Phi Phi's legendary and slightly wild nightlife, but it's a busy noisy bay, with loud music, ferries, fishing boats, un-silenced longtail boats and revellers galore. Monkey Bay seems to belong on a different island altogether, with its soaring forested cliffs, perfect deserted sand and abundant wildlife.



Koh Phi Phi Don

Day 5: Phi Phi Don to Koh Racha via Phi Phi Leh

Phi Phi Leh, by contrast is uninhabited except for National Park guards. If you can, get here early, in time for breakfast before the tourist boats arrive. The central bay is almost a closed lagoon – and you'll recognise it as the location from the film 'The Beach.' This is still a lovely spot, with a wide white sandy beach, towering cliffs, jungle and coral.

Head southwest towards the islands of the Koh Racha group. Koh Racha lies south of Phuket and is open to the Andaman Sea, so the water is very clear here. This is probably the best place for diving in the area. The reefs are in pretty good shape, and you have the chance of spotting larger pelagic species. Whales have been spotted in these waters as well as large sailfish. Trailing a trolling line from the yacht or tender may reward you with a tasty tuna or Spanish mackerel. On shore there are a few resorts and bars, but development is fairly low key.



Take to the set of The Beach, Maya Beach, Phi Phi Leh
© Fotolia

Day 6: Koh Racha to Nai Harn Bay

It's time to return towards Phuket. Nai Harn Bay lies right on the southwest corner. There is an arc of golden sand, blue sea and some nice resort developments ashore. This corner of the island is popular with expats, it is not too over-developed, instead lots of villages and villas nestle among palm trees and jungle, and there are some interesting arts and crafts shops too. The headland above the bay, with its elephant shrine, is a very popular place to watch the sunset into the Andaman Sea.

At Christmas time and New Year the bay may be filled with up to a hundred sailing yachts. This is a good place to enjoy a slice of beach life, relax on the sand and eat some fiery Thai food fresh from the local restaurants that are just set back from the beach among the casuarina trees.



Nai Harn Bay is one of the most beautiful bays in Thailand to snorkel
© Fotolia

Day 7: Nai Harn Bay to Patong or Nai Yang via Kata

Take a slow cruise up Phuket's west coast, with bay after bay rimmed with pale soft sand, some high end resorts, numerous villas, hotels, hostels and bars. The Bay at Kata is one of the nicest on the coast. In high season it is lined wall-to-wall with sunloungers and umbrellas, but the development is low-rise and there are some good clothes shops and places to grab souvenirs. Mom Tri's Boathouse is a bit of an institution in Phuket. This long-running restaurant has one of the most extensive wine lists you'll find outside of the top resorts coupled with excellent Thai and western food. Perhaps stop there for lunch on the terrace overlooking the beach.

Patong Bay is one of the largest bays on the west coast. Popular with large yachts due to its ample space and easy access via jetties, Patong is a tourist hotspot. There are high-rise developments, endless fake designer shops, restaurants and the girlie bars that are found across Thailand. It's a great place for a wild night out.

If you prefer the quiet life then Nai Yang Bay, to the north of the island is the spot for you. Here you'll find a couple of very good resorts, but the best food is to be had in the beach restaurants. You'll sit on plastic chairs with your feet in the sand while the cooks rustle up a meal under little more than a tent. However, you'll get the freshest seafood, tastiest curries and cold beers served up with a smile. This is a nice authentic way to round off your trip. After darkness falls, take a dip and enjoy the explosion of green phosphorescence as the sea comes alive.

From Nai Yang it's just 5 minutes to the airport (if you stay in Patong, a limo will take you to the

airport in 30-40 minutes).



Mom Tri's Boathouse is a bit of an institution in Phuket

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