

## Suggested attractions & activities for Koh Samui

Koh Samui in Surat Thani province is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Thailand. Besides beautiful beaches, underwater beauty and spectacular viewpoints, the island has waterfalls, temples, a lively fishermen's village as well as several world class wellness spas. Koh Samui has its own airport with frequent flights from Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai and other cities in Asia. Options of accommodation here range from luxury beach or pool villas to guesthouses. The best time to visit Koh Samui is from February to August.

Koh Samui is surrounded by many white sandy beaches, with **Chaweng and Lamai Beaches on the east coast** being the liveliest, both having accommodations, restaurants, bars, shops, and spas suitable for every budget. During the day, Chaweng Beach is the centre for water sports such as windsurfing and jet skiing, while after dark, this part of the island is a centre for dining and nightlife. Central Festival which is the island's biggest shopping mall is also located close to Chaweng Beach. Visitors who prefer less crowded beaches have options of **Bo Phut and Mae Nam Beaches on the north coast, Na Thon Beach and Taling Ngam Bay on the west coast.**

Must see attractions include Big Buddha Temple, Grandfather & Grandmother Rocks (also known as Hin Ta Hin Yai) and Na Muang Waterfall.

The famous **Big Buddha** can be found on the north coast of Koh Samui. It's Samui's best known landmark and can be seen from several kilometres away. The temple is about 3km north of Samui International Airport and just over 7km away from Chaweng Beach. The temple is open to visitors all day, but for those hoping to catch a true cultural experience it's best to go in the early morning, when local people bring their food and other offerings and the monks do their morning chanting. Since this is a sacred place, visitors are advised to dress politely. Be sure to wear shirts or scarves that cover the shoulders, trousers or long shorts, and no beachwear.



Set on the rocky coastline between Lamai and Hua Thanon, **Hin Ta Hin Yai** is a natural phenomenon caused by the erosion of the sea water on granite. The erosion results in the peculiar formation of the rocks like male and female genitalia. There are a number of reasonably-priced souvenir stalls selling everything from coconut shells, coconut oil, to a must try local dessert “Kalamae” i.e. a chewy candy made of glutinous rice flour, palm sugar, and coconut cream.

Visitors looking for Thai styled seafood should visit **Bo Phut Fisherman’s Village**. Here you will find a number of historic shophouses, which are now boutique stores, trendy restaurants and guesthouses. Every Friday night the Fisherman’s Village Walking Street brings this small town to life.

Just a short boat ride from the north of Bo Phut Fisherman’s Village, you will find the famous **Koh Pha Ngan**, where the full moon (and half moon) parties are celebrated.

Towards the centre of the island, you can visit **Na Muang Waterfall** and **Secret Buddha Garden**. Access to both places is best done with a 4WD vehicle, or as part of a jungle/safari tour.

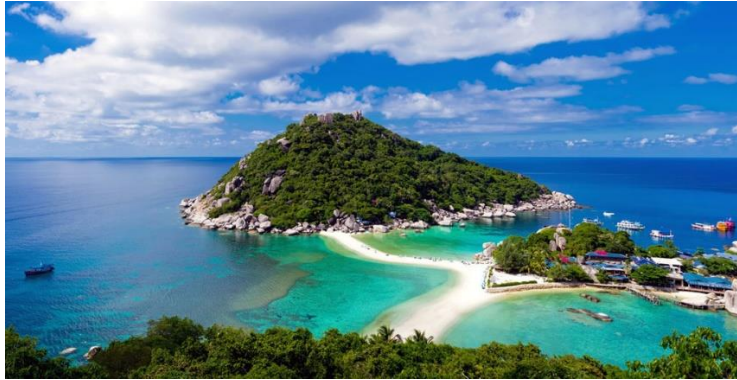
Once you have enough of the outdoor activities, find time to pamper yourself with **spa treatment** or **Thai massage**. For those who love Thai food, there are many cooking schools offering **Thai cooking classes**. For active travellers, there are plenty of **diving** schools and **Muay Thai** camps offering classes for all levels.

#### **Suggested day trips from Koh Samui:**

Most of the local tour operators in Koh Samui offer a day trip to **Mu Koh Anghong National Marine Park**, a pristine archipelago of over 40 islands in the Gulf of Thailand. Most tours stop at a few different islands. Activities on offer range from hiking to snorkelling, kayaking or simply sightseeing or lounging on the beaches. There is a fantastic viewpoint on Koh Wua Talap, just above the park headquarter, looking out over the uninhabited, pristine islands.



There are also frequent boats from Koh Samui to **Koh Tao, Koh Pha Ngan and Koh Nang Yuan**. Home to a beautiful coral reefs with marine life and pristine white sandy beaches, these small islands in the Gulf of Thailand have attracted beach lovers and scuba divers from around the world for years. Koh Pha Ngan is widely known among party lovers for its full moon parties.



Some tour operators also offer a day trip to closer islands of **Koh Taen** and **Koh Matsum**.