

THAILAND MASTER

Best of Thailand, 8 nights

Chalong or Thap Lamu | Southern Thailand, Similan and Surin Islands

Thailand's Andaman Sea at its most varied, with remote national parks that few boats reach.

A horseshoe-shaped limestone pinnacle is draped in purple soft corals and magnificent sea anemones, with pharaoh cuttlefish, tiger tail seahorses, frogfish and schooling snapper, and occasional manta rays and whale sharks.

Open-ocean pinnacles are home to giant moray eels, rainbow runners and bluefin trevally.

The reefs of the Surin Islands have some of the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand, with Napoleon wrasse, bumphead parrotfish and turtles, and no tourist hordes.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
9 days / 8 nights	Chalong Pier or Thap Lamu Pier	Thap Lamu Pier or Chalong Pier	Advanced recommended







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

Embarkation is followed by introductions, safety briefings and dinner.

STOP 2

Diving days: Seven diving days

Your Cruise Director schedules up to 4 dives a day: 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive.
A typical diving day is a light breakfast, briefing and dive 1; full breakfast, relaxation, briefing and dive 2; lunch, relaxation, briefing and dive 3; a snack and a briefing for the sunset or night dive; then dinner.

STOP 3

Last diving day: Two morning dives

Usually two morning dives before the boat sails to port.

STOP 4

Disembarkation

Breakfast on board, then disembarkation.

THE TRIP

How the trip works

ITINERARY DETAILS

The itinerary involves some long distance travel. Bad weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a dive site in good time and may reduce the number of dives.

WEATHER AND ROUTE

The itinerary is an example. The route and dive sites depend on local regulations, weather and sea conditions, and are at the Captain's discretion. Where a named dive site cannot be reached, the crew offers diving at an alternative location. The itinerary includes several overnight sailings.

DIVING EXPERIENCE

We recommend divers have PADI Advanced Open Water certification, or equivalent, with a minimum of 10 logged dives and experience in strong currents. The Advanced Open Water course can usually be completed on board with advance notice. Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements may be denied participation in some or all dives. Diving insurance covering emergency evacuation and recompression is mandatory. Leave a minimum of 24 hours between your final dive and the departure of your flight. Safety and dive briefings are given in English.

THE DIVING

Dive sites

Named sites are examples of where the boat may dive; which sites are visited depends on conditions and the length of the trip.

KOH HAA NATIONAL PARK

Possibly some of the most underrated diving in the whole of Thailand, Moo Koh Haa (meaning Five Islands) sits almost halfway between Hin Daeng and Phi Phi and is part of the Ko Lanta National Marine Park. While they may not be much to look at above water, these amazing islands offer a variety of pinnacles, walls, boulders, caverns, and swim-throughs

beneath the surface. There are several dive sites around Koh Haa but the highlights are Koh Haa Lagoon, Koh Haa Neua, and Koh Haa Yai. Koh Haa lagoon is ideal for night dives, courses, and snorkelling, while The Chimney and The Cathedral offer things that you cannot see on other Thailand liveaboard itineraries with caverns, swim-throughs and chambers littering the sites. Koh Haa has varied marine life too, with ornate ghost pipefish, morays eels, octopus, hawksbill turtles, sea horses, marble rays, and sometimes even leopard sharks.

HIN DAENG AND HIN MUANG

Translating as Red Rock and Purple Rock, with their names derived from the colour of the corals they host, these two sites are pinnacles in the open ocean, reaching down to over 70m, and are best known for manta ray and whale shark encounters. Whether these are sighted or not, the sites also offer giant moray eels, pharaoh cuttlefish, schooling rainbow runners and snappers, barracudas, groupers, fusiliers, and bluefin trevally. On the pinnacles, there are fields of Magnificent Anemones, walls of Hemprics soft corals, and huge gorgonian sea fans. Almost perpetual good visibility and dramatic topography combined with huge fish numbers makes for excellent liveaboard diving.





SIMILAN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

The above water scenery will provide stunningly beautiful white sandy beaches with small forested areas. Dive some of the following sites; Boulder City, Sharkfin Reef, Anita's Reef and Three Trees. Under the surface you may see: Leopard (zebra) shark, blue spotted stingrays, clown triggerfish, rabbit fish, scorpion fish, snappers, emperor fish, giant trevally and angelfish. The coral gardens, bommies and boulder formations are wonderful to dive. Elephant Head Rock, visible from the surface, is the biggest pinnacle in the Similans and has some fantastic swim-throughs. White tip reef sharks, batfish, trevally and barracuda can often be seen on the perimeter of the boulders. If you look closely in the cracks and in the rubble you can see smashing mantis shrimp, porcelain crab, moray eels and cleaner shrimp. There are also sites dominated by huge granite boulders such as Deep Six, Christmas Point, and North Point where you can see white tip reef sharks, schooling giant trevally, and schools of neon fusiliers.





KOH BON

This is generally the most likely place to see manta rays on this itinerary. You are also likely to see Napoleon wrasse, sweetlips, octopus, bluefin trevally, giant moray eels, great barracudas, fire dart goby, spiny lobster and nudibranchs of many types. The dive sites vary from wall diving to gently sloping reefs and from submerged boulders to coral gardens. Diving on the West Ridge can be an adrenaline filled drift, with amazing views, while the North Reef is a gentler experience over a hard coral garden.

KOH TACHAI

This island is famous for its pinnacle dive site, known by many as Twin Peaks as well as more relaxed reef diving on the North Reef and South Reef. Normally, turtles, barracuda, pipefish, and nudibranchs can be found here. There is also a chance to see bigger species in this area like manta rays and whale sharks, especially by late January until April.

RICHELIEU ROCK

This limestone pinnacle was named by Jacques Cousteau after Cardinal Richelieu due to the similarity to the colour of his gown as there are gorgeous purple dendronephthya soft corals covering most of the pinnacle. There are other areas covered in magnificent sea anemones as well. Barely breaking the surface at low tide, this horseshoe-shaped outcropping slopes steeply to a sandy bottom at 18 to 35 metres (60-120 Ft). This site offers great diversity for such a small and isolated spot. It also offers excellent multi-level diving and, because it's a high-profile reef, there's always sheltered areas to hide from currents. The marine life is prolific and includes amongst, many other things; pharaoh cuttlefish, large octopi, all 5 varieties of anemone fish of the Andaman Sea, variety of moray eels, ornate ghost pipefish, smashing mantis shrimps, harlequin shrimps, tiger tail seahorses, spanish mackerel, frog fish, many schooling snapper and occasional sightings of manta rays and whale sharks.







SURIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

The topside scenery of Koh Surin, with evergreen forests, mangroves, and small beaches, surpasses even that of the picturesque Similan Islands. Under water the reefs of Surin have some of the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand. Across sites like Torinla Pinnacle, Hin Kong, and Turtle Ledges you are likely to see Napoleon wrasse, yellow-masked angelfish, bumphead parrotfish, tomato anemonefish and barramundi, as well as lots of turtles that still come ashore in this area to lay their eggs. Because of the remoteness not many liveaboard boats visit these islands and you will be able to enjoy the dive sites without sharing it with tourist hordes.