

THAILAND MASTER

Southern Thailand, 4 or 5 nights

Chalong Pier, Phuket | Racha Islands, Phi Phi, Koh Haa and Hin Daeng

Southern Thailand reaches out to open-ocean pinnacles painted red and purple by soft corals, best known for manta ray and whale shark encounters.

Almost perpetual good visibility and dramatic topography combine with huge fish numbers, from schooling rainbow runners to giant moray eels.

Racha Noi is often described as a mini Similans, with granite boulders, big swim-throughs and a year-round chance of manta rays.

Limestone walls around Phi Phi drop away with gorgonian fans and soft corals, while leopard sharks sleep on the sand and turtles drift by.

LENGTH	DEPARTURE PORT	ARRIVAL PORT	EXPERIENCE
5 days / 4 nights	Chalong Pier, Phuket	Chalong Pier: 14:00 (4N), 17:00 (5N)	Advanced recommended







Your route

STOP 1

Embarkation

Embarkation at 19:00 is followed by introductions, briefings and dinner.

STOP 2

Days 2 to 4, or 2 to 5: 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

Disembarkation day: 2 or 3 dives

Depending on the disembarkation time there are usually 2 or 3 dives on the last day before the boat starts her return to Phuket.
Disembarkation is at 14:00 on the four night trip and 17:00 on the five night trip.

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. You can combine the four night Southern Thailand trip with a six night Similan and Surin Islands trip for the Best of Thailand, with up to 33 dives over 10 nights.

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.

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.

RACHA YAI

Located south of Phuket, Racha Yai offers the perfect location for a check dive with great visibility, sheltered sandy-bottomed bays, sloping hard coral reefs and underwater statues to explore.

RACHA NOI

This island has some of the best visibility of all sites in the area. Often described as a 'mini Similans' the granite boulder topography is also unique compared to other sites in the area. It offers a choice of hard coral reefs, boulders with large swim throughs and the beautiful pinnacle on the south point of this island. Strong currents can make the southern sites challenging, however, with a year round chance to see manta rays, it is worth the effort to dive here.

KING CRUISER

The King Cruiser was a car ferry that used to travel between Phi Phi and Phuket until, in 1997, 'The Cruiser' hit Anemone Reef on her crossing and sank a short distance away. No lives were lost, but divers were left with a great wreck dive! Although now largely broken up, she is covered with soft corals and hides some wonderful gems, as well as being home to several large schools of snapper. While currents can be strong and visibility sometimes challenging, this is a great site to dive as part of an Advanced Open Water Course.

SHARK POINT AND ANEMONE REEF

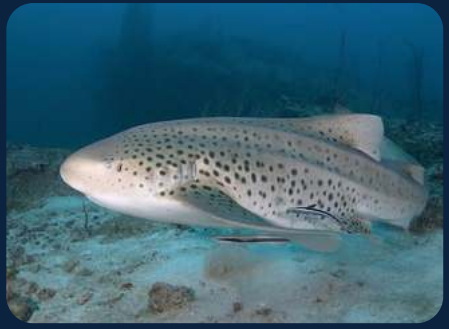
These pinnacles are part of the same reef system and are only a very short distance apart from each other. Both sites are covered with colourful soft corals and anemones with a variety of fish to suit all divers. From barracuda to seahorses and for the lucky ones of course, the iconic leopard shark!

KOH PHI PHI

Lying in Phang-Nga bay about 45 km east of Phuket and 30 km southwest of Krabi, two breathtaking limestone islands make up the greater part of Moo Koh Phi Phi; the largest island of Phi Phi Don being a few kilometres north of Phi Phi Lae. Limestone cliffs rise vertically into the sky, where the trees take over. There are many beaches, coves, and bays which make for dramatic scenery to enjoy during surface intervals. There are many, many dive sites around the Phi Phi island group, many consisting of wall dives, the limestone dropping to depth ranges between 10m and 25m. The walls can have gorgonian fans, soft corals and coral bushes and interesting rock formations and swim throughs. At the base of these walls there are often hard coral gardens to explore. You can expect a great amount of fish life, including lionfish, wrasse, moorish idols, angelfish, rays, trevallies. Also keep an eye out for leopard sharks sleeping on the sandy bottoms or blacktip reef sharks cruising the reefs. Turtles can also quite commonly be seen here. Lastly, check the fans and bushes for tigertail seahorses and harlequin ghost pipefish.

KOH HAA

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 Koh 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.





KOH LIPE

This beautiful, pristine island near Langkawi Island and the Malaysian border harbours some amazing dive sites such as: Stonehenge and 8 Mile Rock. Stonehenge is a vibrant pinnacle densely covered in soft corals. Look out in the blue for schools of barracudas, trevallies and yellow snappers. Smaller creatures include seahorses, varieties of shrimp, crabs and nudibranchs. Find the masters of camouflage: stonefish or scorpionfish. As this site is very exposed, strong currents are common and can be expected. It also means that diving Stonehenge, as well as 8 Mile Rock below, depends on local weather conditions and that it is not always possible. 8 Mile Rock is a world class submerged pinnacle located about 8 miles south of Koh Lipe. Many a large pelagic can be spotted cruising by: devil, manta and eagle rays are among the usual suspects. Other highlights include leopard sharks, giant barracudas and big groupers. When you are really lucky you may even see a whale shark on your dive! The pinnacle reaches up from the ocean floor at about 50m to 15m under the surface. It's a soft coral paradise: purple, blue and red soft tree coral pop up everywhere. A variety of reef species can be found here in great abundance and size.



