

Krabi





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Tha-le Waek

Krabi

Krabi's major attractions are located largely along its extensive coastline, which contains several well-known beaches and bays, and numerous offshore tropical islands.

This coastal province covers an area of 4,709 square kilometres and is located 814 km. south of Bangkok. Krabi's major attractions are located largely along its extensive coastline, which contains several well-known beaches and bays, and numerous offshore tropical islands.

History

From archaeological discoveries, it is believed that Krabi was one of the oldest communities in Thailand dating from the pre-historic period. It is also believed that Krabi was once the town of Ban Thai Samo, one of 12 royal cities that used a monkey as the town symbol. Krabi was a dependency town of the Nakhon Si Thammarat Kingdom. Another legend indicates that the town may have taken its name after the meaning of Krabi, which means sword. This may have stemmed from a legend that says an ancient sword was unearthed prior to the city's founding. Later, the sword became a symbol of Krabi.

Geography

Krabi's mountainous physical geography is broken by highlands and plains on the mainland; the provincial administration also covers more than 130 large and small islands in the Andaman Sea. Natural forest cover is chiefly mangrove and Cassia trees. Krabi's sandy clay soil is perfect for a variety of agricultural produce, including rubber trees, palms, oranges, coconuts, and coffee. The Krabi River flows 5 kilometres through the town and empties into the Andaman Sea at Tambon Pak Nam.

Ao Nang



Attractions

Khao Khanap Nam

Khao Khanap Nam is regarded as the symbol of Krabi. It sits before the city and can be visited by long-tail boat from Chao Fa Pier. Travel time is about 15 minutes. From the boat, one climbs a staircase to see caves with stalactites and stalagmites. A boat can be rented for 300 baht per trip to visit Khao Khanap Nam, mangrove forests and the Ko Klang fishing village.

Susan Hoi or Fossil Shells Beach

Situated at Ban Laem Pho, 17 kilometres from town. The area was once a large freshwater swamp, home to a kind of snail. Over eons dating from the Tertiary Age, about 40 million years ago, these snails lived and died by the millions. Eventually, weather changes caused the swamp's disappearance, but by then the layer of fossilised snail shells was 40 centimetres thick, resting on 10 centimetres of lignite below which is the subsoil. Because of geographic upheavals, the fossilised shells are now distributed in great broken sheets of impressive magnitude on the seashore at Laem Pho.

Ao Nang

This bay is situated some 20 km. from town. Its white sandy beach stretches to the foot of a prominent limestone range. Accommodation is available along the beachfront. Other facilities include diving shops, boats for rent and sightseeing by canoe. From Ao Nang, tourists may hire boats to visit nearby attractions such as Hat Rai Le, Tham Phra Nang located on the land to the east of Ao Nang, as well as other offshore isles such as Ko Poda, Ko Kai, Ko Mo and Ko Thap.

Hat Noppharat Thara

Susan Hoi or Fossil Shells Beach



Khao Khanap Nam

This is a 3-km. long sandy beach located 6 km. from Ao Nang. The beach, paved with tiny seashells, was formerly called "Hat Khlong Haeng" by locals, which means "dried canal beach". The canal will dry up during low tide and the area turns into a long beach. The headquarters of *Hat Noppharat Thara-Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park* are situated here. The park covers a large area both onshore and offshore. Website: www.dnp.go.th

Hat Rai Le

This beach is generally divided into two sections, east and west. West Rai Le offers a broad sandy beach. Although it has less facilities to offer than Ao Nang, West Rai Le is quieter and more peaceful.

Across the peninsula from West Rai Le is East Rai Le, which

Hat Rai Le





Hat Tham Phra Nang

varies from the other beaches in the area. It could actually be classified as a mud flat, especially during low tide. Even so, it does offer some rather remarkable views. One end of the beach is covered with mangroves.

Hat Tham Phra Nang

Accessible only by boat, this sweeping beach offers fine-grained white sand and crystalline waters, as well as magnificent cliffs and caves. Although visitors flock to this beach year-round, it is still extremely pristine, and considered to be the most attractive one in the area.

The Inner and Outer Phra Nang Caves, and Phra Nang Lagoon are close by, and offer some truly spectacular views. Accommodation is available over a wide price range. Despite the fact that it is reachable only by boat, this area offers plenty of recreational activities.

Wat Tham Suea

This temple, also known as “Tiger Cave”, is 9 km. north of Krabi Town. The inside of this cave features tiger prints captured in stone, and it’s in the middle of a lush forest, with enormous, ancient trees. As well as serving as a temple, this site is also very significant archaeologically, as many artefacts have been found on the premises, including tools, pottery, and a mould for the Buddha’s footprint. In addition, there are several other caves in the surrounding hills.

Tham Sadet



Wat Tham Suea

This cave is at Ban Nong Ngok, 7 km. from Krabi town. The villagers named it to mark the visit of King Rama IV (before he ascended to the throne). The cave features marvellous stalactite and stalagmite formations.

Krabi Horticultural Centre

This agrotourism attraction, supported by the Department of Agricultural Extension, is some 20 km. from Krabi on the way to Amphoe Ao Luek. The centre covers a large area and boasts a collection of local fruits, flowers and plants.

Mu Ko Phi Phi

Phi Phi Mu Ko is located an equal distance from both Krabi and Phuket, about 40 km. Made up of six small and large isles, the main features are sheer limestone cliffs and rocks. Some have beautiful beaches and coral reefs. The best time for a visit is between November and April.

Ko Phi Phi Don covers an area of 28 sq. km. Laem Tong in the north offers beautiful marine nature. Diving can be done as well at Laem Hua Raket, Hat Yao and Hin Phae. A number of accommodation is available.

Ko Phi Phi Le is a lovely island that covers an area of only 6.6 sq. km. It is surrounded by limestone mountains and high hills with jutting cliffs. On average, the sea is 20 metres deep and the deepest point to the south of the island is around 34 metres. Ko Phi Phi Le is blessed with scenic bays such as Ao Pi Le, Ao Maya, and Ao Lo Sa Ma. In the northeast of the island is a



Viewpoint of Ao Phra Nang



Ao Lo Sa Ma

large cave called Tham Viking. The cave was renamed “Tham Phaya Nak” or “Serpent Cave” by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej because of a stone resembling the mythical creature, which His Majesty saw when he paid a visit here in 1972. The cave is considered sacred to locals who come here to collect swallows’ nests. Inside the eastern and southern parts of the cave are ancient colour paintings of elephants and various types of boats, including an Arabian sailboat, a European sailboat, a sampan, a Chinese junk, and a steamboat. It is believed the paintings were the works of sea merchants or pirates because the study of west-to-east ship routes indicates that this area may have been a stopover for boats seeking shelter from storms, transferring cargo or making repairs.

Ko Yung is north of Ko Phi Phi Don. The island has a stone beach to the east and small sandy beaches amid valleys. It is teeming with various kinds of colourful coral reefs.

Ko Phai is north of Ko Phi Phi Don and not far from Ko Yung. Marvellous beaches are in the north and east of the island. The bank of coral reefs with antler corals, in particular, stretches from north to south of the island. The best time to visit Ko Phi Phi is during the monsoon-free season, which is from November to April.

Ferries depart from Chao Fa Pier in Krabi town to Ko Phi Phi at 10 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. The 2½-hour trip costs about 150 baht per person. Heading back, the ferries leave Ko Phi Phi at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. A one-day trip on a speedboat is available at Ao Nang.

The trip runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tel. 0 7563 7152-3 for more information. *Andaman Wave Master Co., Ltd.* operates boat services, departing Chao Fa Pier at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tel. 0 7563 0471 (Krabi Office) or 0 2281 1463-5 (Bangkok Office). On arrival to Ko Phi Phi Don, trips to the surrounding islands can be made in a long-tail boat. Visitors travelling from Phuket can contact tour operators who organise a one-day trip to Ko Phi Phi.

Khao Phanom Bencha National Park

The park office is at Ban Huai To, 20 km. from town. The park covers a total area of 50 sq. km. with high mountains and thick forests. Its marvellous scenery is enhanced by streams, waterfalls, and wild animals. Namtok Huai To is some 500 metres from the park office. The waterfall plunges over rocks into 11 huge pools, each with their own name, such as Wang Thewada, Wang Sok, and Wang Chan. There is also Namtok Huai Sade, a 3-tier waterfall located 300 metres from the park office. Trekking to the peak of the Phanom Bencha Mountain, 1,397 metres high, is an interesting activity for adventurous tourists. Treks take at least 3 days, passing streams, waterfalls, caves and viewpoints on high cliffs. Admission is 200 baht per person. A tent can be rented for 50 baht a day per person. Contact the headquarters of Phanom Bencha National Park, P.O. Box 26 Amphoe Mueang, Krabi 81000, Tel. 0 7662 9013.

Than Bok Khorani National Park

The park office is situated 46 km. from town or 1 km. from Ao Luek Nuea Market. Near the park office there are several natural ponds of emerald water in a shady forested area. Tourists can enjoy swimming in these pools. Other attractions in the park include several caves in limestone mountains, verdant mangrove forests, and beautiful islands which can be reached only by boat. Admission is 200 baht per person. Camping in the park can be done but tourists have to bring their own tents.

Tham Lot can be reached by boat from Bo Tho Pier. The pier is located 2 km. from Amphoe Ao Luek on the way to Laem Sak, where visitors can ride a long-tail boat along a canal passing through mangrove forests for 15 minutes. *Tham Lot* is a tunnel under a limestone mountain where a natural stream runs through a small tunnel and charming stalactite and stalagmite formations are found. The cave can be visited only during low tide.

Tham Phi Hua To is 500 metres from *Tham Lot* and can be visited by boat from Bo Tho Pier. The cave is in Phi Hua To

Mountain which is surrounded by mangrove swamps. There are 2 split paths inside the cave. On the left lies the shortcut to the back of the cave where the sun can shine through, and on the right is a path to a chamber hall believed to have once been a shelter for cave dwellers. Prehistoric paintings of men, animals, human organs and numerous seashells can be seen in the cave. Big human skulls were also discovered, thus inspiring its name, "Big-headed Ghost Cave".

Tham Chao Le is located to the west of Laem Sak in a bay surrounded by mountains and picturesque islands. It is accessible by boat from Laem Sak. The trip takes 10 to 15 minutes. In the cave, there are primitive paintings featuring men, animals and geometric symbols including stalactite and stalagmite formations. It is assumed that the paintings may have been painted after those of *Tham Phi Hua To*.

Mu Ko Hong is a group of limestone islands including Ko Lao or Ko Sa Ka, Ko Lao Riam, Ko Pakka and Ko Lao La Ding. Most of them are limestone islands with fine beaches, coral reefs in both deep and shallow water, and various kinds of fish. Ko Hong or Ko Lao Li Pe is the biggest island in the south. There is a 400-metre hiking trail around the island. This area is also suitable for sea-canoeing. *Mu Ko Hong* is located at the edge of the Than Bok Khorani National Park, and is accessible by boat from Ao Nang. The trip takes about an hour. The park charges 200 baht for an entrance fee and 20 baht for camping on the island.

Tha Pom-Khlong Song Nam





Mu Ko Hong

Wat Khlong Thom Museum

This local museum in a temple compound is located 1 km. from Khlong Thom District Office, between Km. 71 and Km. 72 of Highway No. 4. The museum features various kinds of artefacts that were discovered during the excavations within an archaeological site called “Khuan Luk Pat” or “a mound of beads” behind the temple. Other discoveries include stone tools, earthen ornaments in the shape of animals, and the beads are about 5,000 years old.

Namtok Hin Phoeng

This waterfall is situated 25 km. from Khlong Thom District. Drive along Highway No. 4 (Krabi-Trang), and turn left for 8 km. at Khlong Phon Market. On arrival at the lower basin, visitors must walk along the edge of a mountain for 400 metres to see the waterfall on a steep cliff.

Namtok Ron Khlong Thom

These hot springs are steaming at Ban Bang Kham. Travel some 45 km. from town to Amphoe Khlong Thom, then take Sukhaphiban 2 Road for 12 km. The area is full of hot springs in a shady forest. The temperature is warm at 40-50 degrees Celsius. The hot springs and cool streams converge on a slope to form lovely cascades with warm water. Admission is 10 baht per person.

Khao Pra-Bang Kham Wildlife Sanctuary



Ko Lanta Yai

At Ban Bang Tiao, 18 km. from Amphoe Khlong Thom, there is a 2.7 km. nature trail through a lowland forest with the Emerald Pool and a variety of natural habitats. The forest is home to rare birds like Gurney’s Pitta, Rufous-coloured Kingfisher and Black Hornbill, and various kinds of plants. Visitors are allowed to stay overnight but they have to bring their own tents.

Ko Lanta

Ko Lanta consists of two adjacent islands: Ko Lanta Yai and Ko Lanta Noi. Ko Lanta Yai is full of tourist facilities while Ko Lanta Noi is the location of the district office. Most of the beaches on Ko Lanta Yai lie in the west and offer a wide range of accommodation. These beaches include Kho Kwang, Khlong Dao, Phra Ae, Khlong Khong, Khlong Nin and Ba Kan Tiang, all can be reached by road. Sala Dan Pier in the north is where tour operators, shops and banks are situated. At the south end of the island is the headquarters of Mu Ko Lanta National Park of which has a camp ground and beautiful views. Travelling to the east of the island, visitors can see an old community of Ko Lanta and a sea gypsy village. Some guesthouses are available. Motorbikes can be rented at Sala Dan to explore the island. The peak season lasts from November to April.

Getting to Ko Lanta, visitors can take air-conditioned vans from Krabi Town. The van boards a motor-raft at Ban Hua Hin and then another raft at Ko Lanta Noi. The trip takes 2 hours. To return, the vans depart from Sala Dan (on Ko Lanta Yai) at 7 a.m. and 12 noon. For more information, contact *Krabi Lanta Tour*

Tel. 0 7562 2792. Visitors can also take the boats from Chao Fa Pier (available from November to May). The trip takes 2 hours. Tel. 0 7563 0470-2 *Royal Fern Co., Ltd.* operates boat services to Krabi via Ko Cham (or Ko Jum) and to Ko Ngai, Ko Rok and Ko Kradan. Tel. 0 7568 4163, 0 1719 4811

Mu Ko Lanta National Park

The park has an office at the south end of Ko Lanta Yai. The park covers an area of 152 sq. km. and occupies many islands including parts of Ko Lanta Yai, Ko Lanta Noi, Ko Ta Leng Beng, Ko Ha, Ko Rok, and Ko Ngai. Camping is allowed near the park office with advance notice. Ko Rok also provides tents for tourists. Please contact Mu Ko Lanta National Park, No.5, Tambon Ko Lanta Yai, Amphoe Ko Lanta, Krabi 81150, Tel. 0 7562 9018-9.

Ko Talabeng is a limestone island, similar to Ko Phi Phi Le, and blessed with small lovely beaches. During low tide, the cave is clearly visible. Swallows can be seen on the island.

Ko Rok comprises two islands: Ko Rok Nai and Ko Rok Nok. Ko Rok Nai is an island consisting of steep cliffs, superb beaches and unspoiled coral reefs. Ko Rok Nok has similar features, while Hat Thalu and Ao Man Sai are situated at the end of the island. Tourists can contact tour operators, resorts and bungalows on Ko Lanta Yai for an excursion to Ko Rok by speedboat. The trip by long-tail boat is not recommended.

Ko Rok Nai



Ko Ngai or Ko Hai is a small island that has a long sandy beach in the east and unspoiled coral reefs in shallow water at the beachfront. The island is accessible by taking a ferry and a chartered boat from Pak Meng Pier, Trang province.

Hin Daeng is a rock that poses a hazard to ships on the outer edge of the Andaman Sea. With a dazzling array of coral reefs, it is a great diving spot.

Ko Ha is an archipelago of five islands. Ko Ha Yai is where coral reefs are found in shallow water.

Interesting Activities

Canoeing

One of several ecotourism activities available in Krabi is sea-canoeing, and there are few better ways to enjoy the spectacular scenery than by drifting leisurely amongst the limestone cliffs. This is perhaps the best way to explore Krabi's countless inlets and deserted beaches, allowing travellers to discover the true magic of the area at their own pace.

Kayaking

Kayaking is available in the waters off Krabi and Phang-nga provinces, which boast some of the most spectacular seascapes and marine life anywhere. The sport is accessible to beginners and veterans alike, since operators offer training at the start of the trip. The sea-kayaking centre is at Ao Nang, which blends

Ko Ngai





Canoeing

the rugged appeal of rocky outcrops with the serene beauty of beaches and crystal-clear water. Off its shore lie limestone outcrops honeycombed with caves and hollows and fringed by mangrove forests. Canoe and kayak rentals are available at many of the guesthouses in the Ao Nang area, and guides are also available to lead you through the myriad of small, deserted islands.

Snorkelling & Diving

Dive shops provide mask, snorkel and fins for hire at around 150 baht a set per day. You will probably have to pay a deposit of around 500 baht. They also offer you dive trips and advice about some of the most spectacular destinations in Southern Thailand.

Biking

Mountain bikes can be found around Ao Nang. The terrain is spectacular and this is a great and healthy way to take in the most captivating scenery.

Rock Climbing

Every year thousands of climbers come to Krabi specifically to challenge themselves on the famous limestone karsts, and most agree it's well worth the trip. There are over 150 bolted routes, concentrated primarily on the Phranang peninsula, between Hat Tham Phranang and Hat Rai Le. These routes are typically in the mid-to-high difficulty range, with numerous overhangs, and sheer limestone faces. However, there are also several beginner

climbs, so that even the novice climber can experience the thrill of climbing. Equipment rentals, instruction, and guides are all available.

Excursions

Travel shops in Ao Nang sell island tour tickets which pool strangers into one boat. This has made two daytrips very affordable. The Tham Phra Nang and Ko Poda daytrip costs about 200 baht per person, and the Ko Hong daytrip costs 250 baht per person. The price usually includes snorkel, mask, lunch of fried rice, water and fruit. Each boat leaves around 9 a.m. and returns about 4 p.m. Booking is available at most bungalows and at travel counters. The Ko Poda group of islands is recommended with a stay at Ko Kai, to relax, snorkel and sunbathe. At low tide on Ko Kai a powdery white land bridge forms linking three islands. The Phi Phi daytrip by boat leaves Ao Nang at 9 a.m. daily and returns at 5 p.m. A roundtrip ticket costs around 700 baht including a simple lunch, touring the Viking Cave and snorkelling in Maya Bay. The Khlong Thom Hot Springs and Forest Hiking costs about 500 baht per person.

The Ao Luek daytrip to visit waterfalls and caves costs around 500 baht. Please note that the prices may vary slightly between travel agents.

How To Get There

By Car

Rock Climbing





Route A: Drive along Highway No. 4, passing Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Chumphon, Ranong, Phang-nga, to Krabi. The distance is 946 km. from Bangkok.

Route B: Drive along Highway No. 4 and turn into Highway No. 41 at Chumphon via Lang Suan and Phunphin, Surat Thani. Continue driving along Highways No. 401 via Ban Ta Khun, No. 415 and No. 4 via Ao Luek to Krabi. This route is 814 km. from Bangkok.

By Bus

Air-conditioned buses depart from Bangkok's Southern Bus Terminal to Krabi every day. The journey takes 12 hours. For more information, contact Tel. 0 2435 1199. Lignite Tour (Tel. 0 2884 5767) also operates daily bus services to Krabi.

By Rail

There is no direct train from Bangkok to Krabi. Visitors may take a train from Bangkok Railway Station to Surat Thani and then take a bus or a taxi to Krabi. For more information, contact Tel. 0 2220 4334 or Hotline 1690 Website: www.railway.co.th

By Air

Thai Airways operates daily flights to Krabi. Tel. 1566, 0 2280 0060, 0 2628 2000 (Bangkok Office) or 0 7563 6543 (Krabi Office) or visit www.thaiairways.com

P.B. Air also flies to Krabi. For more information, Tel. 0 2261 0220 (Bangkok Office), 0 7569 1942 (Krabi Office) or visit

www.pbair.com.

Phuket Airlines also flies between Bangkok and Krabi. Tel. 0 2679 8999 or visit www.phuketairlines.com.

Travel Around Krabi

Getting around the town is very convenient by local taxi (tuk tuk). Some attractions like Hat Noppharat Thara, Susan Hoi, Ao Nang, Wat Tham Suea, Namtok Huai To, and Ao Luek can be reached by local mini-bus (Song Thaeo). The mini-buses depart from Vogue Department Store on Maharat Road in Krabi Town. Trips to other attractions can be made by taxi and rental car.

Travel To Neighbouring Provinces

There are bus services from Krabi Bus Terminal (Tel. 0 7561 1804) to several provinces such as Phuket, Phang-nga, Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Trang, Phatthalung, Songkhla (Hat Yai), Satun and Ranong.

Events & Festivals

Krabi Boek Fa Andaman Festival

The festival is held annually to inaugurate the province's tourist season. The festival features parades, local products contests, sea kayak competitions and boat races.

Loi Ruea Chao Le Festival

This is a rare sea gypsy festival on Ko Lanta. The festival is held annually, on the full moon day in the sixth and the eleventh

months of the lunar calendar. The sea gypsies on Ko Lanta and from neighbouring areas will gather at the beach near Ban Sala Dan to float boats in the sea in order to bring good luck. The *Rong Ngeng*, a typical southern dance, as well as traditional music, will be performed around the boats.

Souvenirs

Bird cages and mats made from *Toei Panan* (pandanus trees) are sold in shops on Uttarakit Road in Krabi Town. Preserved seafood products such as shrimp paste, dried fish and shrimp, and Shogun oranges are also available. Shops in most tourist areas sell batik with various designs and colours.

Ko Lanta Yai



Ko Phi Phi Le





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Missouri, New York, New Hampshire, New
Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania,
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