



Around The Island



GARRYA
Tongsai Bay Samui

Koh Samui lies 35 kilometers off Suratthani the provincial capital, and about 700 kilometers south of Bangkok.

It is the 3rd largest island in Thailand and was discovered several hundred years ago by fishermen and sea traders whilst sailing through the Gulf of Thailand.

Chinese and Malay fisherman enjoyed many of the bays of Koh Samui and it is widely believed the name of the island derives from the word "Saboeu", which means "safe haven" in the Chinese tongue.

"Koh" is the Thai word for "Island".

Maps of the island date as far back as the 17th century but there is very little documented history.

Samui is 21 kilometers at its widest point and 25 at its longest with one major road 'Ring Road' which circumvents the island. Until 1940 there were no roads or vehicles on Koh Samui.

People moved around the island on foot or followed the coastline by boat.

Please refer to the following list of places that you may enjoy

discovering while holidaying here...

Driving Around KOH SAMUI

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1. Wat Plai Laem (วัดปลายแหลม)

Wat Plai Laem is a Buddhist temple compound only 2 km from Garrya Tongsai Bay Samui, featuring a striking white 18-arm image of Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy and Compassion. Wat Plai Laem offers visitors a view into Chinese-Thai beliefs as well as some elaborate Buddhist-themed art and architecture. Wat Plai Laem is a living and active temple, where devotees come daily to pay homage to Guanyin and the Buddha, who is also depicted in a number of statues and murals around the temple. This is a relatively new temple but the art techniques used in its creation are centuries-old and based on ancient beliefs. Adding to its feel of tranquility, the temple is surrounded by a lake, which is teeming with fish.

Visitors who make a donation to the temple are given a small basket of food to feed the fish.



2. Big Buddha - Wat Phra Yai (วัดพระใหญ่)

The number one sightseeing attraction on Samui is perhaps Wat Phra Yai where the famous golden Buddha statue graces the headland separating Baan Plai Laem from Big Buddha beach. The 15-meter smiling deity dominates the temple grounds and offers some excellent photo opportunities, particularly at sunset. The temple was built in 1972 and the upper platform is lined with huge prayer bells. In Thai “Phra” means “Monk” and “Yai” means “Big”.



3. Wat Khao Hua Jook (วัดเขาหัวจุก)

Wat Kao Hua Jook looks like a big golden bell atop a lush green hill that towers off Koh Samui airport. Not a hugely popular temple for tourists, as it is not sign posted, and unless you are in or on a vehicle the 90 meter walk straight up hill can be a bit too much on a hot Samui day. We'd recommend a visit even if you do have to do it on foot; it's worth it for the superb 360-degree views from the coastline to interior. The temple is a lovely peaceful place, with lots of seated areas to sit and enjoy watching the planes coming in and going. One of the best times to visit is sunset, spectacular!



4. Beverley Hills View Point (จุดชมวิว)

From the view point you can see the Gulf of Siam spread out before you and the 7 km Chaweng Beach. The first land you would come across over the horizon is The Philippines. You will notice many spirit houses along the side of the road and how the drivers “Honk” their horns when they pass. It is for good luck!



5. Hin Ta and Hin Yai (หินตา หินยาย)

These two strange rock formations are known as Grandfather and Grandmother Rock and are situated a few kilometers southwest of Lamai. These two ancient stones have been slowly molded by sea, wind and rain into representations of male and female genitalia.

Their formation and shape have been personified into a local tale describing their existence on the island. The story is that of two doomed lovers who drowned themselves at sea because of their family's disapproval of their relationship. In Thai "Hin" means "Rock", "Ta" means "Grandfather" and "Yai" means "Grandmother".



6. Muslim village (หมู่บ้านมุสลิม)

Hua Thanon better known as "the Muslim Village" is the beacon for fishermen living in a time warp.

The village is accessible by a path linked to the main road. The fishermen in the village still build their boats by hands, using traditional colors and natural painting, and go about their daily chores in the calmest environment.



7. Wat Khunaram (วัดคุณาราม)

Wat Khunaram is Samui's famous shrine to the mummified monk, known when alive as Lung Padaeng.

This highly respected monk was carefully preserved when he died in 1973 and today sits mediating inside a glass case. You can see nearby the ancient numerology sticks, which are used to read your fortune.



8. Na Muang Waterfalls (น้ำตกหน้าเมือง)

Although Samui has several waterfalls, the two Na Muang waterfalls are probably the islands most stunning. The name Na Muang (meaning purple in Thai) refers to the massive purple rocks that create the waterfalls.

Rocks and tree roots form a natural staircase that leads to the base of Na Muang 1. A large natural swimming pool sits under the waterfall, although beware of the hidden rocks when diving and swimming. The water is always cool so it's perfect for a hot day. A gentle walk 10 minutes further up the mountain leads you to Samui's most beautiful waterfall, Na Muang 2. Na Muang waterfalls are easily accessible from the main ring road between Nathon and Lamai and are well signposted.



9. The Magic Garden (น้ำตกตาน้ำ)

The Magic Garden is not a temple but feels like one. It is located high in the hills above Baan Saket in the southwest of Samui up a winding road that leads from the main road through a military zone to one of Samui's most attractive and bizarre sights. In a small valley, a 77-year-old Buddhist devotee, Khun Nim Thong-Suk, began creating figures from his dreams and was still working on the garden when he died a few years ago at the age of 91.

Uncle Nim's statues are a sight to behold as are the views from this spectacular mountain location.



10. Samui Rum Distillery (โรงกลั่นสุรา)

Magic Alambic rum is made on Samui using the finest fruits and sugar cane in the old French tradition.

The rum is distilled for a year in stainless steel vats and then diluted to 40 degrees and sold as a high-quality spirit. Visitors can learn about the process from the owners and in season can watch the rum being made.

A great place to stop and enjoy a spot of rum tasting at the on-site garden bar.



11. Wat Khao Chedi (วัดเขาเจดีย์)

From the various vantage points, visitors will enjoy spectacular views of Bang Kao Bay, Suratthani mainland and the nearby villages. The panorama of Laem Sor Chedi and Bang Kao Bay really is breathtaking from many places on top of the hill, and certainly a great opportunity to take some fantastic photos.

With Wat Khao Chedi's unique location, monuments and sculptures this Wat really is worth a visit.

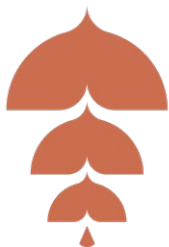


12. Boy's Organic Coffee - Thong Krut (ท้องถิ่น)

Keep your eyes peeled for this compact coffee spot situated along the beach at Thong Krut. The hunt for Boy's Organic Coffee is well worth it, for it is known to serve up some of the best coffees on the island.

The excellent brews, made from top-quality beans from Chiang Mai, produce cups of coffee with a caramel flavor, made all the better with the addition of creamy milk. If coffees are not to your fancy, a good selection of teas and juices are also on offer.

**Enjoy your stay
on Koh Samui**



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