GUIDE

Best Beaches in Thailand

Twenty-six beaches on three coasts, what each one is good for, and which month to go

By Mike Haslam · Updated 28 Nov 2026 · Prices as of November 2026

Some links are affiliate links. We may earn a commission at no extra cost to you.

Checked November 2026. Latest version: thailandexplorer.org/guides/best-beaches-in-thailand

Contents

1. Pick your coast by month
2. Which beach is for you
3. Map of the beaches
4. Andaman coast: Phang Nga and Phuket
5. Andaman coast: Krabi
6. Andaman coast: Trang and Satun
7. Gulf of Thailand
8. East coast, near Bangkok
9. Swimming safely
10. Book it
11. Where to go from here

Thailand's two coasts have opposite rainy seasons. A beach that's perfect in February can be wild and empty in August, so the best beach for you depends on your month as much as on what you want from a beach.

This guide picks 26 beaches across three coasts, says who each one suits and when to go, and puts them all on a map. I checked the facts in November 2026.

Boats, fees and park rules change, so look again before you book.



Phra Nang, near Railay in Krabi. Photo: kallerna, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Pick your coast by month

Get this right first. A rainy month on one side is often a fine month on the other.

Coast	Beaches in this guide	At its best	Hardest months
Andaman	Phuket, Khao Lak, Krabi, Phi Phi, Lanta, Trang, Satun	November to April	June to September
Gulf	Hua Hin, Ko Samui, Ko Pha Ngan, Ko Tao	January to September	November, with October and December mixed
East, near Bangkok	Ko Samet, Ko Chang, Ko Kut	November to April	June to September

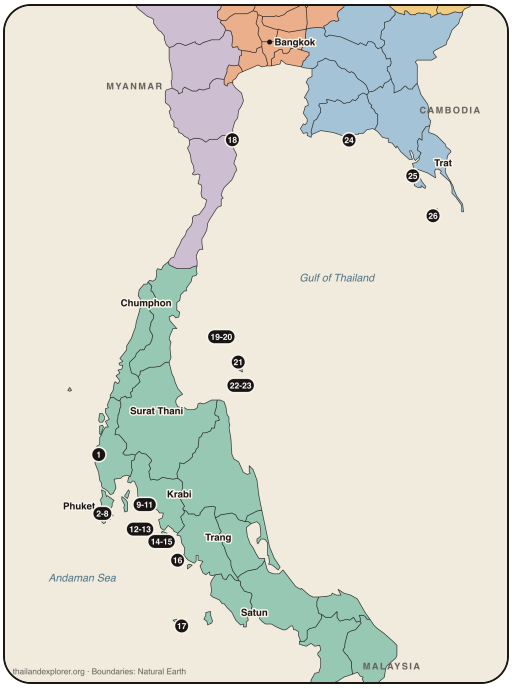
From January to April both coasts are usually good, which is also why that's the busiest and most expensive stretch. In July and August, go to the Gulf. In November, go Andaman. Our Andaman vs Gulf page goes month by month, and the month-by-month guide covers the rest of the country.

Which beach is for you

If you want	Try
The postcard: cliffs and calm water	Railay West, Phra Nang
Quiet, with not much to do	Ko Kradan, Kantiang Bay, Bottle Beach, Klong Chao
Nightlife	Patong, Chaweng
Families and easy swimming	Kata, Khao Lak, Long Beach on Ko Lanta, Nai Yang
Snorkelling off the sand	Ko Kradan, Ko Nang Yuan, Long Beach on Phi Phi
Sunsets	Railay West, Sairee, Bang Tao
Rock climbing	Tonsai
A beach near Bangkok	Hat Sai Kaew, Hua Hin

Map of the beaches

The numbers on the map match the numbers in this guide. Where beaches sit too close together to show apart, one marker carries a range.



Tap a number to jump to that beach. Want more islands? See the Islands of Thailand guide, or browse our map of Thailand.

Andaman coast: Phang Nga and Phuket

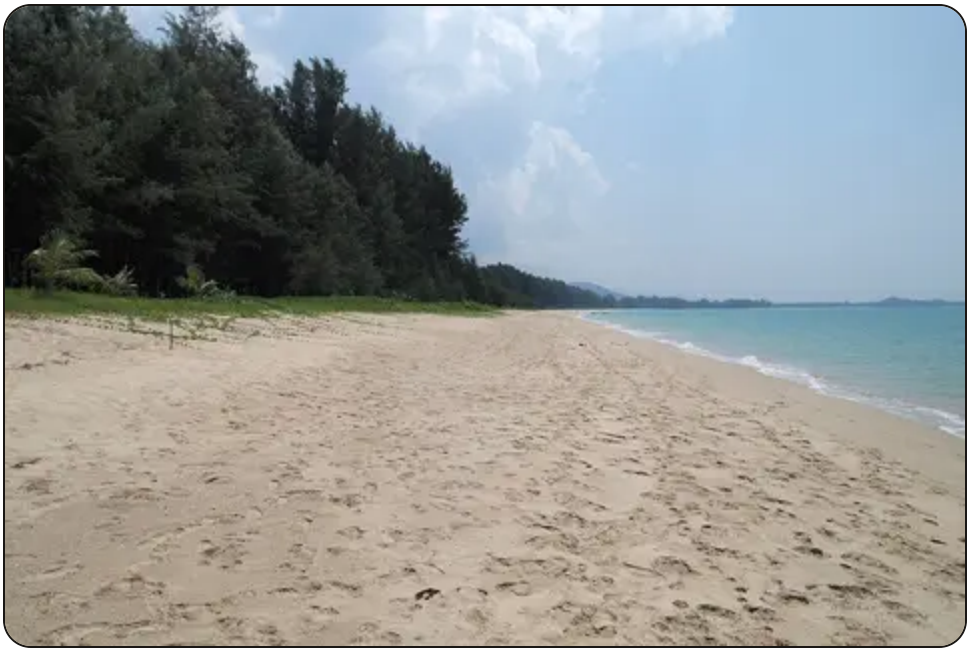
Phuket has the most beaches in one place, and they're very different from each other. Patong is the party, Kata and Karon are the easy middle, and the quieter ones are at the north and south ends. From about May to October the west coast gets bigger surf and stronger currents, so watch the flags.

1. Khao Lak

Khao Lak · Phang Nga

A long run of beaches north of Phuket, and the most convenient place to leave from for the Similan and Surin islands, which are open from about mid-October to mid-May. If you have a spare day, a day trip to the Similans leaves from here. Nang Thong and Bang Niang are the most practical areas, with the quieter beaches further north. When rain brings big waves, the red flags go up and nobody should swim.

Best for: families, divers, a quieter base · **Best months:** November to April



Khao Lak. Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

2. Nai Yang

Nai Yang · Phuket

A big, sandy, quiet beach about 3 km from Phuket airport, right next to Sirinat National Park. The water is very shallow. In the monsoon it turns into a kitesurfing spot and the currents get stronger, so it’s not a swimming beach in those months.

Best for: your first or last night near the airport, shallow water · **Best months:** November to April



Nai Yang, Phuket. Photo: Andy Mitchell, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

3. Bang Tao

Bang Tao · Phuket

A long, very quiet beach, about 8 km of sand on Phuket's northwest coast. Come for the space and the sunset.

Best for: long walks, sunsets, space · **Best months:** November to April



Sunset at Bang Tao, Phuket. Photo: Anton Zelenov, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

4. Patong

Patong · Phuket

Phuket's biggest and busiest beach, 2,850 meters of sand with the island's nightlife right behind it. If you want bars, crowds and everything open late, this is it. If you're traveling with kids or want a quiet swim, pick another beach on this list.

Best for: nightlife, everything in walking distance · **Best months:** November to April



Patong, Phuket. Photo: Wolfgang Holzem, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

5. Freedom Beach

Freedom Beach · Phuket

About 300 meters of soft white sand around the headland from Patong, with no road to it. Most people take a longtail from the south end of Patong. It's about 10 minutes and roughly 1,200 to 1,500 baht there and back. You can also hike down from the road between Patong and Karon, 15 to 30 minutes on steep trails with ropes, and there's a 200 baht entry fee if you walk in. Skip it from June to October, when the boats often don't run and the trail gets slippery.

Best for: a beach day away from the crowds, snorkelling at both ends · **Best months:** December to May



Freedom Beach, Phuket. Photo: Joachim Lutz, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

6. Karon

Karon · Phuket

The second most built-up beach after Patong, split into Karon Yai and Karon Noi. It's a good choice if Patong is too much but you still want somewhere busy.

Best for: a busy beach without Patong's nightlife · **Best months:** November to April



Karon, Phuket. Photo: กสิณธร ราชโอรส, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

7. Kata and Kata Noi

Kata · Phuket

Kata is the balanced Phuket beach: busy and clean, with good surf in season. Kata Noi, just around the point, is its quieter sister. If you're not sure which Phuket beach to pick, start here.

Best for: first-timers, families, surfing in season · **Best months:** November to April



Kata, Phuket. Photo: Radek Kucharski, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

8. Nai Harn

Nai Harn · Phuket

A quieter beach in the south of Phuket, near Promthep Cape, and a locals' favorite. There are no jet skis here, which makes a big difference. Wikivoyage calls it "probably the best" beach on the island.

Best for: a calmer Phuket beach, sunset at Promthep Cape · **Best months:** November to April



Nai Harn, Phuket. Photo: Wolfgang Holzem, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Andaman coast: Krabi

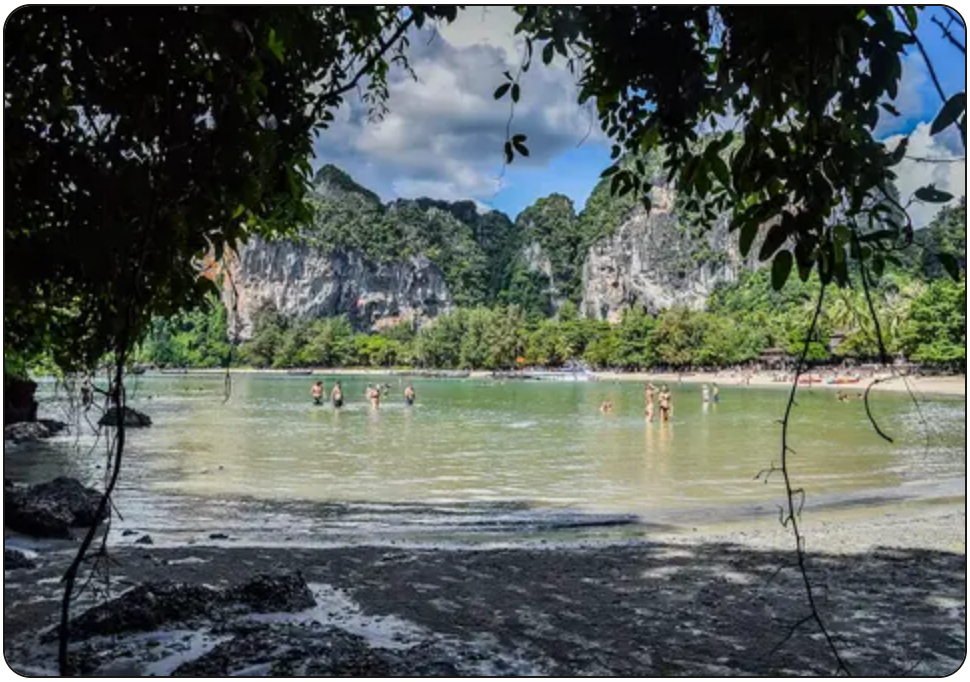
Railay sits on a peninsula you can only reach by boat. Ko Phi Phi and Ko Lanta are a ferry ride away.

9. Railay West

Railay · Krabi

The classic Thai beach: fine white sand and shallow water with limestone cliffs at both ends. There's no road, so you come by longtail, about 10 minutes from Ao Nang. The north end is better for swimming, the south end is a little rocky underfoot, and it's at its best around sunset. Prices about double from November to April. Staying in Ao Nang? The Railay and 4-island sunset cruise is an easy way to see it from the water.

Best for: the postcard view, swimming, sunsets · **Best months:** November to April



Railay West, Krabi. Photo: Krzysztof Golik, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

10. Phra Nang

Railay · Krabi

On the southern tip of the Railay peninsula, Phra Nang has fine white sand under the cliffs and excellent swimming. Princess Cave sits at the end of the beach, and it's free. Longtails take up a lot of the sand in high season, so come early in the morning or just before sunset. A steep, muddy trail leads up to a viewpoint and a hidden lagoon, with a near-vertical rope on the way down.

Best for: swimming, the cave, the climb if you're up for it · **Best months:** November to April

11. Tonsai

Railay · Krabi

The cove around the corner from Railay West, where climbers and backpackers stay in cheap rooms. There are over seven hundred bolted climbing routes in the area. Get there by a short longtail ride or a walk through the jungle.

Best for: rock climbing, cheap rooms, a backpacker crowd · **Best months:** November to April



Tonsai, Krabi. Photo: kallerna, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

12. Maya Bay

Ko Phi Phi · Krabi

The beach from the 2000 film The Beach, on Ko Phi Phi Leh. The crowds that followed did so much damage that the bay closed in 2018 and stayed shut for nearly four years. Now it runs with rules: boats anchor at the back of the island and you walk in, visits are timed, and there's no swimming. The park fee is 200 baht, and the bay closes every year from 1 August to 30 September. Get there early, because the speedboats arrive from about 9 am. Staying on Phi Phi Don? An early speedboat from Phi Phi gets you there before them.

Best for: seeing the famous view, the right way · **Best months:** November to April



Maya Bay, Ko Phi Phi Leh. Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

13. Long Beach, Ko Phi Phi

Ko Phi Phi · Krabi

Hat Yao, south of Ton Sai village on Phi Phi Don, with quieter resorts than the village. You can walk there, and longtails run back if you don't feel like walking. There's coral off the beach, and you can swim out to Shark Point, where the blacktip reef sharks are harmless. There are no cars on Phi Phi.

Best for: snorkelling, a quieter night on Phi Phi · **Best months:** November to April



Long Beach, Ko Phi Phi. Photo: Anton Zelenov, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

14. Long Beach, Ko Lanta

Ko Lanta · Krabi

Phra Ae, a long crescent of sand in the north of Ko Lanta Yai, and a peaceful place to stay. The sea is about 29°C all year, and Ko Lanta is an easygoing island.

Best for: families, a peaceful base · **Best months:** November to April



Long Beach, Ko Lanta. Photo: Luděk Chmurovský, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

15. Kantiang Bay

Ko Lanta · Krabi

About a kilometer of beach on a gently curving bay, 18 km south of Saladan, with only a few resorts. There's good coral for snorkelling, and it feels uncrowded even in the busy holidays.

Best for: quiet, snorkelling · **Best months:** November to April



Kantiang Bay, Ko Lanta. Photo: Stefan Fussan, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Andaman coast: Trang and Satun

The far south of the Andaman coast, quieter and further to go.

16. Ko Kradan

Ko Kradan · Trang

There are no roads on Ko Kradan. The main beach looks out at a reef about 200 meters offshore, and there's another one off Ao Nieng in the south, so you can snorkel without a boat.

Best for: quiet, snorkelling straight off the beach · **Best months:** November to April



Ko Kradan, Trang. Photo: Marcin Konsek, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

17. Sunrise Beach, Ko Lipe

Ko Lipe · Satun

Ko Lipe's east-facing beach, at the end of Walking Street, looks across to the mountains of Ko Adang. The water around Lipe is calm and clear, with coral about 20 meters off the beaches. Boats run from about November to May, and the ferries from Langkawi in Malaysia from mid-October to the end of May.

Best for: sunrise, snorkelling · **Best months:** November to April



Sunrise Beach, Ko Lipe. Photo: Koh Lipe Beach Resort, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

Gulf of Thailand

These are the beaches to pick when the Andaman side is wet, from about June to September. The Gulf's own rainy spell is around November.

18. Hua Hin

Hua Hin · Prachuap Khiri Khan

A six kilometer beach about three to four hours south of Bangkok, and the easiest beach trip from the city. Up to ten trains a day run from Bangkok and take about four hours. In parts, the beach disappears at high tide. The best months are November to February, and September is the wettest.

Best for: a beach near Bangkok, getting there by train · **Best months:** November to February



Hua Hin. Photo: Elmschrat, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

19. Sairee, Ko Tao

Ko Tao · Surat Thani

The biggest beach on Ko Tao, facing west, with dive schools right on the sand. The sun sets over the sea, so get there about an hour before. There are hardly any currents around the island, but in November the sea gets choppy and visibility drops to about 5 meters.

Best for: learning to dive, sunsets · **Best months:** January to September



Sairee, Ko Tao. Photo: David Sim, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

20. Ko Nang Yuan

Ko Nang Yuan · Surat Thani

Three small islands off Ko Tao, joined by a sandbar. The climb to the viewpoint is short and steep. Plastic bottles are banned and bags get checked, so bring a refillable bottle. Take the first boat of the day, or join a snorkelling trip around Ko Tao and Ko Nang Yuan.

Best for: the viewpoint, snorkelling · **Best months:** January to September



Ko Nang Yuan. Photo: Isderion, CC BY-SA 3.0 de, via Wikimedia Commons

21. Bottle Beach, Ko Pha Ngan

Ko Pha Ngan · Surat Thani

Haad Khuat, on the north coast, is a very quiet beach with clean water for swimming. You get there by longtail from Chalok Lam, about 150 baht each, or by a tough two to three hour hike. The name is said to come from the bottles hikers used to mark the trail. There are no ATMs or 7-Elevens, so bring cash.

Best for: getting away from it all · **Best months:** January to September, skip November



Bottle Beach, Ko Pha Ngan. Photo: kallerna, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

22. Chaweng, Ko Samui

Ko Samui · Surat Thani

The biggest and most built-up beach on Ko Samui, with luxury hotels next to backpacker guesthouses and a busy nightlife. If you want everything on your doorstep, stay here.

Best for: nightlife, choice of places to stay · **Best months:** January to September



Chaweng, Ko Samui. Photo: Maksim Sundukov, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

23. Lamai, Ko Samui

Ko Samui · Surat Thani

Less crowded than Chaweng, with the Hin Ta Hin Yai rocks at its south end. Think of it as the middle ground on Samui.

Best for: a busy beach without the crowds of Chaweng · **Best months:** January to September



Lamai, Ko Samui. Photo: Fabio Achilli, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

East coast, near Bangkok

Same seasons as the Andaman side, best from November to April, and the closest island beaches to Bangkok.

24. Hat Sai Kaew, Ko Samet

Ko Samet · Rayong

The name means “crystal sand beach”, and it’s about a kilometer of it, close to the main pier. It gets busy and a bit noisy with boats, and there are fire shows in the evenings. Ko Samet is a national park, so foreign adults pay 200 baht to enter (children 100). From Bangkok, take a bus to Ban Phe, about three and a half hours, then a 30 to 45 minute ferry. You can book the bus and ferry online. Samet is one of the driest islands in Thailand, even in the rainy season.

Best for: a weekend from Bangkok · **Best months:** November to April



Ko Samet. Photo: Ken Eckert, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

25. White Sand Beach, Ko Chang

Ko Chang · Trat

Hat Sai Khao is the busiest beach on Ko Chang, because it's the first one you reach from the ferry. A songthaew from the pier costs about 50 baht. For parties go to Lonely Beach, and for quiet try Klong Kloi. It rains a lot from June to October, and many guesthouses close.

Best for: an easy first beach on Ko Chang · **Best months:** November to April



White Sand Beach, Ko Chang. Photo: nakhon100, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons

26. Klong Chao, Ko Kut

Ko Kut · Trat

A white sand beach where the Klong Chao river meets the sea, with kayaks to rent on the mangrove-lined river. The island's biggest waterfall, Klong Chao, is a 20 to 30 minute walk from the turn-off and has a pool you can swim in, for free. Ferries from Laem Sok near Trat run all year, about an hour and a quarter to an hour and three quarters. In the rainy months, only about 40% of the resorts stay open.

Best for: quiet, a river and a waterfall near the beach · **Best months:** November to February



Ko Kut. Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Swimming safely

The sea here changes with the seasons. A few things to know:

- **Watch the flags.** When the red flag is up, stay out of the water. In Phuket and Khao Lak this happens most from about May to October, when the monsoon brings big surf and strong currents.
- **Pick your side by month.** Most beach trouble comes from going to the wrong coast in its rainy season. The table at the top of this guide is the quick fix.
- **Maya Bay is no swimming.** Respect the rules there. They're why the bay is open again.
- **Marine parks have fees and rules.** Ko Samet, Maya Bay and several islands charge park fees, and some islands ban plastic bottles.

Book it

Base	Stay	Tours
Khao Lak	Places to stay	Tours and day trips

Base	Stay	Tours
Kata, Phuket	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Railay	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Phi Phi	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Lanta	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Kradan	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Lipe	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Hua Hin	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Tao	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Pha Ngan	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Samui	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Samet	Places to stay	Snorkel trip to Ko Thalu
Ko Chang	Places to stay	Tours and day trips
Ko Kut	Places to stay	

Where to go from here

- The Islands of Thailand guide writes up 31 islands, with ferries and park closures.
- Hopping between beaches? Try island hopping, or build your own trip and drop the beaches in any order.
- New to Thailand? Start with Thailand for Beginners.

Common questions

What is the best beach in Thailand?
It depends on what you want and when you go. Railay West and Phra Nang near Krabi are the classic picks for limestone cliffs and calm water. For somewhere quiet, try Ko Kradan, Kantiang Bay on Ko Lanta or Bottle Beach on Ko Pha Ngan.

Which side of Thailand has the best beaches?
Both coasts have great beaches, but they have opposite rainy seasons. The Andaman side (Phuket, Krabi, Trang, Satun) is best from about November to April. The Gulf islands around Ko Samui are good for most of the year but wettest in November.

Can you swim at Maya Bay?
No. Since Maya Bay reopened in 2022, swimming isn't allowed. Boats stop at the back of the island and you walk in for a timed visit. The bay also closes every year from 1 August to 30 September.

Is it safe to swim in Phuket in the rainy season?
Be careful. From about May to October the west coast gets bigger surf and stronger currents. Swim only where the flags say it's safe, and stay out when the red flag is up.

What is the best beach near Bangkok?
Hat Sai Kaew on Ko Samet, about three and a half hours by bus to Ban Phe and then a short ferry. Hua Hin is also an easy trip, about four hours by train.

Which Thai beach is good for families?
Kata on Phuket, Khao Lak and Long Beach on Ko Lanta are good picks. Nai Yang on Phuket has very shallow water. Avoid the west coast of Phuket in the monsoon months.

Thailand Explorer is a free guide to places across Thailand, from a family with a farm in Buriram. See it at thailandexplorer.org

Not sure where to go next?

Tap one button in the Thailand Explorer app. It picks a place, shows it on a map with a travel video, and lets you save it to your bucket list.

Get the free iPhone app

No account, no subscription.