

welcome to Thailand's Islands & Beaches



Best Beach Ever

Thailand's beaches are legendary; tall palms angle over pearlescent sand, coral gardens flourish in the shallow seas and beach parties are liberally lubricated with alcohol and fun. With a long coastline (actually, two coastlines) and jungle-topped islands anchored in azure waters, Thailand is a tropical getaway for the hedonist and the hermit, the prince and the pauper. And in between the kissing cousins of sea and sky are dramatic limestone mountains standing sentinel. Perhaps as impressive as the beaches themselves is the variation of seaside holidays to be had. Scale the sheer sea cliffs of Krabi, cavort with gentle whale sharks at pinnacles off of Ko Tao and Ko

Pha-Ngan, toe the curling tide alongside gypsy fishermen in Trang, gorge on sea-food snacks among the steamy stalls of Hua Hin or relish perfectly practised butler service at your luxury digs in Phuket. The adventure awaits.

Gorge-ous Thailand

It may be the beaches that bring you to Thailand, but it's the food that'll lure you back for seconds. Adored around the world, Thai cuisine expresses fundamental aspects of Thai culture: it is generous and warm, outgoing and nuanced, refreshing and relaxed. And it is much more delicious in its native setting. Each Thai dish relies on fresh and local ingredients - from pun-

Bays of peach-tinged sand, cotton hammocks swinging lazily between palm trunks, castle-like karsts emerging from the deep. These dreams of a tropical paradise become a reality along the coasts of southern Thailand.

(left) Long-tail boat on Hat Hin Khom, Ko Phi-Phi Don
(below) Elephant on a beach in Krabi



gent lemongrass and searing chillies to plump seafood and crispy fried chicken. With a tropical abundance, a varied national menu is built around the four fundamental flavours: spicy, sweet, salty and sour. And then there are the regional differences, which propel travellers on eating tours around the country. Lucky for you, dear beachgoer, these days it's quite easy to sample the kaleidoscope of national flavours without leaving the comforts of your island getaway.

Sun-Kissed Smiles

Whether it's the glimmering eye of the meditative *wâi* (palms-together Thai greeting) or the mirthful smirk of passers-

by, it's hard not to be charmed by the Land of Smiles. The moniker is not only apt but also well earned in a kingdom where hospitality has aged like a fine wine. Thailand has long been Southeast Asia's mama-san, inviting foreigners from near and far to indulge in the kingdom's natural splendours. This utopian recipe is perfected along the beaches and islands where the heady mix of seascapes, soaring limestone towers and equatorial sunshine provides the perfect backdrop to expertly run resorts catering to whimsy with flair and a desire to please.