



Ko Chang & Eastern Seaboard

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Best Places to Eat

- » Mum Aroi (p201)
- » Barrio Bonito (p226)
- » Cool Corner (p215)
- » Pan & David Restaurant (p197)

Best Places to Stay

- » Birds & Bees Resort (p201)
- » Tubtim Resort (p208)
- » Ban Jaidee Guest House (p214)
- » Bang Bao Sea Hut (p224)
- » Paradise Cottages (p224)

Why Go?

Bangkok Thais have long escaped the urban grind with weekend escapes to the eastern seaboard. Some of the country's first beach resorts sprang up here, starting a trend that has been duplicated wherever sand meets sea. As the country became industrialised, only a few, like Ko Samet beaches, remain spectacular specimens within reach of the capital. Further afield, Ko Chang and its sister islands offer the best 'tropical' ambience in the region but expect crowds.

Just beyond the foothills and the curving coastline is Cambodia, and the east coast provides a convenient, cultural link between the two countries. Many of the mainland Thai towns were at some point occupied by the French during the shifting border days of the colonial era. Migrating travellers who take the time to explore these lesser-known spots will find remnants of Old Siam, tasty market meals and an easygoing prosperity that defines ordinary Thai life.

When to Go

The best time to visit is at the end of the rainy season (usually around November) but before the start of high season (December to March). The weather is cool, the landscape is green and rates are reasonable. Peak season on Ko Chang is during the Christmas and New Year holiday period. Crowds thin in March but this is the start of the hot season.

The rainy season runs from May to October. Some businesses on Ko Chang close for the season and the nearby islands of Ko Wai, Ko Mak and Ko Kut shut completely. Your best monsoon bet is Ko Samet, which is relatively drier.

Ko Chang & Eastern Seaboard Highlights

- 1 Beachcombing and jungle trekking on **Ko Chang** (p218)
- 2 Floating the day away on the crystalline waters of **Ko Kut** (p230)
- 3 Swimming with the fishes in the gin-clear coves of **Ko Wai** (p228)
- 4 Cove-hopping on pretty **Ko Samet** (p205), so close to Bangkok but so far away
- 5 Strolling the old city and watching the gem traders in **Chanthaburi** (p210)
- 6 Running errands with the Thai housewives in the day markets of **Trat** (p213)
- 7 Avoiding Bangkok's hustle and bustle with an alternative layover in **Si Racha** (p194) and a day trip to **Ko Si Chang** (p196)
- 8 Admiring the modern masterpiece of Pattaya's **Sanctuary of Truth** (p198), an elaborately carved testament to the artistry of Buddhism and Hinduism
- 9 Dining on seafood beside the sea everywhere, the primary reason Thais travel to the beach

