



# Hua Hin & the Upper Gulf

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## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Rang Yen Garden (p501)
- ➔ Hua Hin Koti (p510)
- ➔ Prikhorm (p524)
- ➔ \* Rim Lom (p519)
- ➔ Rabieng Rim Nam (p498)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Baan Bayan (p508)
- ➔ Brassiere Beach (p514)
- ➔ Away Hua Hin (p513)
- ➔ NaNa Chart Baan Krut (p521)
- ➔ House 73 (p518)

## Why Go?

Known as the 'royal' coast, the upper gulf has long been the favoured playground of the Bangkok monarchy and elite. Every Thai king from Rama IV on has found an agreeable spot to build a royal getaway. Today, domestic tourists flock to this coast in the same pursuit of leisure, as well as to pay homage to the revered kings whose summer palaces are now open to the public.

Culture meets the coast here, with historic sites, national parks and long sandy beaches ideal for swimming all an easy commute from Bangkok. And while Thais have long known of the region's delights, increasing numbers of Western travellers are now falling for the combination of an unspoiled coastline and the easy pace of provincial life on offer. There's little diving or snorkelling, but kiteboarders will be in paradise as this region is by far the best place in Thailand to jump the waves.

## When to Go

- ➔ The best time to visit is during the hot and dry season (February to June). From July to October (southwest monsoon) and October to January (northeast monsoon) there is occasional rain and strong winds; but the region tends to stay drier than the rest of the country because of a geographic anomaly.
- ➔ During stormy periods, jellyfish are often carried close to shore making swimming hazardous. The Thais get around this by swimming fully clothed.

# Hua Hin & the Upper Gulf Highlights

- 1 Motorcycling between curvaceous bays and limestone peaks in **Prachuap Khiri Khan** (p516)
- 2 Strolling the long blonde coastline of **Hua Hin** (p502) dotted with wave-jumping kiteboarders
- 3 Eating and shopping (and eating some more) at Hua Hin's **night market** (p509)
- 4 Escaping into the depths of **Kaeng Krachan National Park** (p499) and spotting gibbons and wild elephants
- 5 Being a beach bum on laid-back **Hat Thung Wua Laen** (p522)
- 6 Exploring the hilltop palace and underground caves, while dodging monkeys, in **Phetchaburi** (p495)
- 7 Making the popular pilgrimage to **Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park** (p514) to see the illuminated cave shrine of Tham Phraya Nakhon
- 8 Letting the kids run around all day in their bathing suits at **Dolphin Bay** (p513)

