



Hua Hin & the Upper Gulf

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Why Go?

The upper gulf has long been the favoured playground of the Thai elite. Following in the footsteps of the royal family – every Thai king from Rama IV on has spent his summers at a variety of regal holiday homes here – they in turn have inspired countless domestic tourists to flock to this stretch of coast in pursuit of fun and fine seafood.

A winning combination of outdoor activities and culture is on offer here, with historic sites, national parks and long sandy beaches ideal for swimming all an easy hop from Bangkok. Increasing numbers of foreign travellers are also drawn here, by the twin delights of an unspoiled coastline and the relaxed pace of provincial life. There's not much diving or snorkelling, but kiteboarders will be in paradise as this part of the gulf is by far the best place in Thailand to ride the wind.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Rang Yen Garden (p492)
- ➔ Hua Hin Koti (p501)
- ➔ Prikhorm (p515)
- ➔ In Town (p510)
- ➔ Rabieng Rim Nam (p489)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Baan Bayan (p500)
- ➔ Brassiere Beach (p505)
- ➔ Away Hua Hin (p505)
- ➔ House 73 (p509)
- ➔ Pattana Guest House (p499)

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. 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** (p507).
- 2 Strolling the long blond coastline of **Hua Hin** (p493) dotted with wave-jumping kiteboarders.
- 3 Eating and shopping (and eating some more) at Hua Hin's **night market** (p500).
- 4 Escaping into the depths of **Kaeng Krachan National Park** (p490) and spotting gibbons and wild elephants.
- 5 Stepping off the backpacker trail on laid-back **Hat Thung Wua Laen** (p513).
- 6 Exploring the hilltop palace and underground caves, while dodging monkeys, in **Phetchaburi** (p486).
- 7 Making the pilgrimage to see the illuminated cave shrine of Tham Phraya Nakhon at **Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park** (p505).
- 8 Finding your own secluded strip of sand to laze on at **Ban Krut** (p511).