Phuket

A BREATHTAKING ANDAMAN SEA COASTLINE, STUNNING SUNSETS AND AN EVER-INCREASING ABUNDANCE OF GLAMOROUS HOTELS.

Delicious dining, fabulous shopping and leisure have seen Phuket skyrocket to become one of Asia’s most desired holiday destinations.

The west coast has the lion’s share of the best beaches and resorts, while old Phuket Town and Boat Lagoon lie to the east. Other Thai cities may have more in the way of traditional culture on offer, but when you are kicking back pool or seaside with a tasty cocktail in hand, we doubt you’ll mind very much. Gosh, sometimes life is just a beach, isn’t it?
• Have your concierge's and/or driver's number with you at ALL times

• Weather: Dry season is Nov-Apr (Apr is sweltering), rainy season is May-Oct (surfing season), and Aug-Oct is wet and windy, but even in the rainy season most days see a good chunk of sunshine too

• Phuket's high season is Nov-Mar

• In low season some bars and restaurants may have reduced opening times or even decide to close completely; have your concierge check ahead to avoid immense disappointment

• Airport to Patong (not that you'll be staying there): 45 mins / from 650 baht by cab

• Taxis are run like cartels and are a total rip-off, so hire a car and driver, or self-drive (see Drab vs Fab)

• Remember, in Thailand the G/F is 1/F

• Thai law requires you to carry your passport at all times, although hardly anyone does

• The King's Cup Regatta in Dec is the jewel in the crown of Asia's yachting fraternity

• Stock up on cash as credit cards will often NOT do nicely, sir, with the exception of hotels, larger stores and restaurants

• Most bars are open till 3am – Huzzah!

• Don't touch monks, point with your feet, or pass remarks about the Royal Family

• Temples and shrines have dress codes - bare shoulders, shoes and short-shorts are not acceptable

• The country code for Thailand is +66 and 76 for Phuket

• Police 191, fire 199, tourist police 1155, marine police 076 215 438
Anthony Lark's career in hospitality has spanned more than three decades, beginning in his native Australia, and continuing in Phuket in 1998 with his appointment as General Manager at the original Aman resort, Amanpuri. Under his leadership, the hotel quickly became synonymous with exceptional design and standout service the world over, a reputation that has stayed with the brand throughout its global expansion, including within the four regional Aman hotels Anthony went on to open. In 2000, he became and remains a partner and Executive Director of the magnificent and award-winning Trisara development. 

www.trisara.com
1) WHAT’S THE ONE THING EVERY VISITOR TO PHUKET MUST DO AND WHY?

The one great experience around Phuket is to take a sports cruiser from Trisara up into the magical Phang Nga (James Bond Island) Bay. It’s a world heritage national park and the giant limestone islands and green water are an extraordinary sight.

2) WHERE WOULD YOU GO FOR A DATE NIGHT OUT AND WHY?

The Siam Supper Club, a cool little restaurant with great food and music, almost like a little New York Jazz Club. (see LUXE Loves)

3) WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE SHOPS IN PHUKET? WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT THEM?

Surin Plaza, a shopping center and home to a number of great homeware, antique and fashion shops. www.theplazasurin.com

4) WHAT AND WHERE IS THE BEST STREET FOOD IN PHUKET, AND WHY?

Ko Ta restaurant in Phuket Town. The best Hainanese chicken rice on earth! Tilok Utis 1 Road / Phuket Town / near the Metropole Hotel

5) WHERE WOULD YOU GO TO GET A SENSE OF WHERE PHUKET’S SCENE IS AT RIGHT NOW?

A little street in the old town called “Soi Ramanee,” a restored part of the old town, filled with cute coffee shops and jazz bars.

LUXE INSIDER

Anthony Lark
LUXE Loves

TRISARA
Hotel

If privacy is the ultimate luxury money can buy, then Trisara is the motherlode. The demure and stylish ocean-view and ocean-front villas feature dark teak floors, super-comfortable beds, private infinity pools and decks, plus world-class dining at the excellent Trisara Grill, one of Phuket’s best bars, and a sinfully indulgent spa.

60/1 Moo 6 Srisoonthorn Rd / Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 310 100
www.trisara.com

TWINPALMS PHUKET
Hotel

A cool, modern deviation from the default “antique” Thai look, this hotel features sleek minimalist suites, terrazzo foyer, pool, spa, and bar, plus good Sunday brunch at Oriental Spoon restaurant. Catch Beach Club is a mere stroll away, and the Grand Deluxe Lagoon Room and Penthouse Residence are good for pool proximity and private dips respectively.

106/46 Moo 3 Surin Beach Rd / Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 316 500
www.twinpalms-phuket.com

SIAM SUPPER CLUB
Dining

It’s tropical sophistication at its best in this moody cocktail den-cum-international-eatery. Intimate ambience and mellow jazz provide the perfect backdrop to the Mediterranean-inflected menu and traditional tipples served at the see-and-be-seen long bar. Island personality Sean plays host with the most on this swingin’ safari of sip, sup and sounds.

382 Srisoonthorn Rd / Cherngtalay / opp. Laguna Resort Entrance / +66 76 270 936 / dinner only
www.siamsupperclub.com
LUXE Loves

**OPUS ONE**
Dining

Atop the Surin Plaza shopping complex lies clubby, polished-wood haven Opus One. The chic, warm interior and expansive deck offer you two fabulous spots to enjoy Bocuse-trained Christoph Lindner’s sumptuous modern French dishes, while the glamorous bar will keep oenophiles and the style set amused for hours.

The Plaza Surin / 5/50 Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 386 562 / lunch & dinner daily

www.opusonephuket.com

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**CATCH BEACH CLUB**
Dining / Bar / Activities

With a prime Surin Beach position, Catch is a sun-drenched mecca for the kaftan-ed and fabulous. Sample fresh seafood, grills, pastas, pizzas and local favorites from the international menu, or simply enjoy cocktails and bubbles at the bar, or from the comfort of your own umbrella-d sunbed. Keep an eye out for special events too.

Surin Beach / Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 316 567 / 8am-1am

www.catchbeachclub.com

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**KRU WIT**
Dining

Board a long-tail boat at Laem Hin Pier for the five minute journey to Kru Wit, where myriad fruits of the sea are plucked fresh from the onsite marine reservoir, then steamed, fried or barbecued to perfection and served alfresco on the floating dining platform.

Laem Hin (2-3km south of Boat Lagoon) / long-tail boat (FOC) from the small wooden pier for five min journey / +66 89 873 7398 or +66 81 088 0533

www.kruvitraft.com

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**CHADASAI SPA**
Spa

This floaty, beachy alcove offers fab value-for-money therapies and outdoor showers in each room. Spoil yourself with tropical and Thai-inspired treatments, aromatherapy, mani/pedi, massages and facial, or visit the hair salon for the perfect pre-dinner wash and blow out. Pamper-licious!

424-432 Srinsoonthorn Rd / Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 325 006

www.chadasaispa.com

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**LEMONGRASS HOUSE**
Shopping

These all-natural spa products, oils, diffusers, herbal teas and fragrances are stocked by many of the world’s leading hotels and spas. Head to the funky, colorful shed to find delicious ready-made goodies, or create your very own signature blend to take home as a dreamy holiday memento.

10/2 Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 271 233 / 9am-8pm

www.lemongrasshouse.com

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**KATALINA COLLECTION**
Shopping

If there’s any town where a hot swimsuit is a wardrobe essential, it’s Phuket. Luckily Katalina Collection stocks scorching cossie brands from all over the world, including Gideon & Oberson, Sunseeker Australia, Gottex, and Gerry St Tropez. One visit and you’ll be pool, beach, boat and seaside strut ready.

Boat Lagoon / 20 Moo 2 Thepkaatthari Rd / Tambon / Koh Kaew / +66 76 238 664

www.katalinacollection.com
LUXE Loves

UNDERWOOD
Shopping

John Underwood turns junk to funk in the most stylish of fashions, with artistic, recycled and repurposed objects reborn as glamorous furniture and décor. His one-of-a-kind and custom pieces made from distressed wood and brushed copper can be found in some of Phuket’s top-end villas and homes, and now they can feature in yours too.

49/6 Moo 5 Chalermphakiat / Ror 9 Rd / +66 76 261 104 / good restaurant on site

www.underwood-phuket.com

PHUKET INTERNATIONAL HORSE CLUB
Activities

Canter through the woods, or get the Andaman sea air in your hair on a sunset beachside gallop atop a strapping stallion. PIHC has more than 20 horses and ponies to suit all experience levels, plus you can get up close and personal with Nellie on elephant rides too.

394 Moo 1 Bangthao / Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 324 199

www.phuketdir.com/pktintihorseclub

SUNSET DINNER CRUISE
Activities / Dining

Get the sparks flying, enjoy the great outdoors and take in a famous Phuket sunset all at once on a romantic dinner cruise on the lagoons of the Banyan Tree resort. A Sanyak Rak long-tail boat, traditional music and succulent cuisine ensure it will be a supper to be remembered.

Banyan Tree / 33 Moo 4 Srisoonthorn Rd / Cherngtalay / Talang / call the concierge on +66 76 324 074

www.banyantree.com
LUXE Loathes

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<th>TAXI MAFIA</th>
<th>IMMODEST TOURISTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>The abyss... abandon all hope</td>
<td>What a complete rip-off!</td>
<td>Always sunburnt, drunk, topless, bottomless, brainless and hopeless</td>
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<td>JETSKIS</td>
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<td>Extremely annoying sound pollution</td>
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Drab vs. Fab

GETTING AROUND
Avoid relying on cartel-like taxi services to help you traverse the island at enormous expense. Instead, consider hiring a surprisingly affordable private driver from Khun Oil (with cars) or Khun Karn (with minivans), or hire a vehicle from World Rent A Car and drive yourself.
Khun Oil call +66 84 189 7648
Khun Karn call +66 89 647 5522
www.worldrentacarphuket.com

CUISINE
Sampling amazing Thai food all holiday long, then going home only to dream of eating something so delicious once more is no fun. Instead, learn to prepare local specialties at the Blue Elephant cooking school, so when you are back home and the mood strikes, you can whip up your favorites and relive your trip all over again.
www.blueelephant.com

SIGHTSEEING FLIGHT
Visiting the gorgeous and legendary James Bond location Phang Nga Bay might leave you shaken by hordes of tourists, rather than stirred by its beauty. Get a far more Q07-worthy view of the bay, plus the rest of Phuket, on a glamorous HeliThai & Associates sightseeing chopper ride.
www.helithaiandassociates.com

SPA INDULGENCE
Don’t just ‘settle’ for an on-sunbed, beachside massage – spoil yourself with a six-handed Royal Massage at Trisara’s stunning sea-view spa. Sheer decadence.
www.trisara.com

BOAT CHARTER
Instead of gazing longingly upon the glittering Andaman Sea from dry land, get out on the water in the highest style on a fully catered and crewed half-day, full-day or overnight motor yacht trip with Tawan Cruises.
www.tawancruises.com
Dazzling sunsets, azure waters and tropical heat – a recipe for romance if ever there was one. Phuket has all these ingredients, plus the icing on the cake – luxurious resorts, delicious cuisine and indulgent spas. Rise and shine in your private, beachfront villa at Trisara (see LUXE Loves), and surprise your special someone with a delivery of colorful exotic blooms from I Am Flower. After a splash in your private infinity pool, take a car to the Boat Lagoon Marina in Phuket’s east, where you can board a glamorous HeliThai & Associates (see Drab vs Fab) chopper for a sightseeing tour over the island. There are tried and tested routes, or you can charter to anywhere you fancy. Once back on firm ground, head to nearby Laem Hin, where you will board a long-tail boat for the five-minute journey to Kru Wit (see LUXE Loves), a delightful alfresco dining platform with live marine reservoir and seriously tasty seafood. Head back towards your hotel, of course stopping for a spot of shopping along the way. Ladies, you’ll wish to visit Katalina Collections (see LUXE Loves) to pick up a sizzling swimsuit, while a stop past Lemongrass House (see LUXE Loves) will snare you ample spa products, oils and fragrances to ensure the romance continues long after the trip comes to an end. Speaking of spas, you’re very close to pretty, floaty Chadasai Spa (see LUXE Loves), and since this is a Thailand holiday it would be downright rude not to stop for a treatment. Feeling refreshed and ready for the evening, head to moody restaurant/bar Siam Supper Club (see LUXE Loves) for some Mediterranean-inflected eats and post-dinner swaying to smooth jazz sounds. Stop for a nightcap at the sultry Trisara bar before retiring to that oh-so-private villa suite.
In recent years, Phuket’s burgeoning travel industry has given rise to a slew of fabulous luxury resorts, pamper-licious spas, elegant restaurants and chic shopping locales. So stylistas rejoice – Phuket is a destination to be reckoned with! While many have tried to steal the crown, the original and perennially popular **Amanpuri** is still the Queen of beach frontage, so waste no time in checking into one of her contemporary Thai villas. First things first – getting kitted out for your day on display is of paramount importance, so head to nearby Surin Plaza to pick up the essentials, namely stylish resortwear, jewelry and accessories from **Andara Boutique**, and saucy swimwear from **Island Bliss**, located just outside the complex and to the right. A morning spa session is almost a rite of passage on a Phuket break, and luckily you are a stone’s throw from the cool, clean white oasis, **Palm Spa**. After a relaxing face, body or beauty treatment (or go on, treat yourself to a Dream Package comprising multiple therapies), it’s time to get your fashionable strut on. A mere 175 meters from the Palm Spa lies the ultra-hip and fashionable **Catch Beach Club** (see LUXE Loves). You are probably famished after your morning’s activities, so first stop is your late lunch table, where you can take your pick of an international menu featuring salads, seafood, grills, sandwiches and pizzas. Once you’ve had your fill, set up camp on one of the beach lounges, and alternate stylish sun-worship with cocktail list acquaintance, but be sure to stick around to take in the sunset. Swish back to your villa at the Aman to freshen up, then charge straight on to your pre-booked dinner table at chic French diner **Opus One** (see LUXE Loves). Hit nearby **StereoLab** for post-drinks and dancing, before ambling home to your sumptuous Aman suite.
With glittering seas, lush jungles and a warm climate, Phuket is an outdoor action-lover’s dream destination. Firstly, you will need to arrange transport, as this itinerary will have you zipping to and fro across the island, so try World Rent A Car if you want to self-drive, or Khun Oil or Khun Karn if you’d like a driver too (see Drab vs Fab for all). Upon rising, meet Saltwater Dreaming for a one-hour surfing lesson at either Kamala or Surin Beach. They cater to all experience levels, and will have you up on your feet quick sticks. Since you’re near Laguna, and action is your middle name, you are perfectly poised for a ride with Phuket International Horse Club (see LUXE Loves). Get your heart racing as you gallop along the seashore, or for a slower pace, sign up for an elephant tour instead. You’re surely hungry by now, so head back to Surin Beach for a toes-in-the-sand style Thai/European lunch at gorgeous seaside diner Pla Seafood, then stop in for a restorative massage at Hideaway Laguna Spa, where face, body, hand, foot and sauna therapies are also on the menu. Drive east, and pause for a quick 9-hole round at Red Mountain Golf Club, where the rolling course is sculpted among dramatic canyons, then carry on towards Phuket Town, where the fun continues. Swish straight in to your pre-booked dinner table at local institution Ka Jok See. This bric-a-brac taverna simply has to be experienced – its energetic atmosphere, good Thai food, and late-night ‘cabaret’ shows are sure to leave you and your party in stitches. Back in the car you go, and make a beeline to svelte modern resort Twinpalms (see LUXE Loves) for a nightcap at the bar before retiring to your suite.
LUXE ITINERARY

The Essentials

ROMANCE

• Trisara (see LUXE Loves)

• I Am Flower
  5/82 Maeloun Rd / Phuket Town /
  +66 81 797 3301
  www.iamflower.biz

• HeliThai & Associates
  (see Drab vs Fab)

• Kru Wit (see LUXE Loves)

• Katalina Collections
  (see LUXE Loves)

• Lemongrass House
  (see LUXE Loves)

• Chadasai Spa (see LUXE Loves)

• Siam Supper Club (see LUXE Loves)

STYLE

• Amanpuri
  Pansea Beach / +66 76 324 333
  www.amanresorts.com

• Andara Boutique
  The Plaza Suring / 5/50 Moo 3
  Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 271
  624 / 10am-8pm daily

• Island Bliss
  116 Moo 3 Cherngtalay / Talang /
  +66 76 621 553

• Palm Spa
  Twinpalms / (see LUXE Loves)

• Catch Beach Club (see LUXE Loves)

• Opus One (see LUXE Loves)

• StereoLab
  Surin Beach South / Front Beach
  Walk / +66 76 386 559
  www.stereolabphuket.com
LUXE ITINERARY

The Essentials

ACTION

- World Rent A Car (see Drab vs Fab)
- Khun Oil (see Drab vs Fab)
- Khun Karn (see Drab vs Fab)
- Saltwater Dreaming
  108/3 Moo 3 Cherngtalay / Talang / +66 76 271 050
  www.saltwater-dreaming.com
- Red Mountain Golf Club
  38 Moo 5 Vichitsongkram Rd / Kathu / +66 76 321 929 / www.redmountainphuket.com
- Pla Seafood
  Surin Beach / +66 81 085 0706 / lunch & dinner
  www.plaseafood.com
- Hideaway Laguna Spa
  382/33 Srisoonthorn Rd / Cherngtalay / Talay / +66 76 271 549
  www.phuket-hideaway.com
- Phuket International Horse Club
  (see LUXE Loves)
- Ka Jok See
  26 Takuapa Road / Phuket Town / +66 76 217 903 / dinner Tue-Sat
- Twinpalms (see LUXE Loves)
Your LUXE notes