KOH SAMUI GUIDE
YOUR FREE KOH SAMUI GUIDE FROM THE ASIA TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

Welcome to Samui, one of the coolest tropical holiday destinations on the world map. Samui is a cosmopolitan melting pot, attracting budget travellers that sometimes stay for a month or two in simple beachside bungalows as well as the mega rich, dropping by for a weekend at a luxury resort or beach villa. Koh Samui is unique among Thailand’s islands in maintaining a broad appeal to everyone. This helps to foster the distinctive relaxed atmosphere that sets it apart.

Samui has a wide range of accommodation, great nightlife, action sports, and beautiful scenery. Experience first-class spas, holistic activities, ladyboy

WEATHER
Koh Samui has a tropical monsoon climate. Humidity is high and temperatures average around 28°C and the one thing you will rarely feel is cold. The island offers world-class diving sites with optimum conditions between March and August. The hottest time is between March and April (avg. 30° C plus). September till November sees the heaviest rainfall and the weather can be unpredictable. Best time to go: December to February, for cooler temperatures, little rain, calm seas, and light winds.

http://www.kosamui.com/weather.htm

AIRPORT TRANSFERS
There is a reliable minibus service to all major beach towns around the island. You can buy tickets at the transport counter in the arrivals area and white minibuses with a blue stripe on the front and both sides are to be found outside in the parking lot. The fares are inexpensive; for example to go to Chaweng will cost less than 150 baht per person.

Another option is to use private car service from the same counter. There are also car rental counters where you can hire cars from Avis, Budget, Sixt and Hertz. Bring along your passport and driving license. If you want to save trouble and splash out a little, book a limousine service through kosamui.com website.

http://www.kosamui.com/transfer/

SIM CARDS AND DIALING PREFIXES
Prepaid SIM cards are available for purchase at most convenience stores (you will find 7-Elevens everywhere) as well as the service operators’ shops – DTAC, AIS and TRUE – located inside shopping malls. To make a call to a landline within Samui, dial 077 then the six digit number. Making a call outside Samui requires a three digit area code, starting with 0, the area code, then the six digit number. Calls between mobile phones require the three digit prefix (08x), followed by the seven digit subscriber number.

GETTING AROUND
Samui’s only public transport are the colourful ‘song-teows’ – converted pickup trucks that ‘run’ 24 hours. After dark it’s harder to find them except at the island’s major nightlife spots such as Chaweng and Lamai and you should negotiate fares before boarding. The cheapest and fastest way to get around is by motorbike taxi. Metered taxis are also available but at present it’s a miracle if they turn the meter on for you therefore to bargain and agree on a price beforehand is a must.

Travellers arriving at Samui Airport have a choice between an airport minibus, private taxis and limousine service. All offer reasonable fares. Many visitors find it cheaper and more convenient to rent their own vehicle. Motorbikes start at 150-250 baht a day while car rentals start at about 800 baht a day.

http://www.kosamui.com/travel-info/getting-around.htm

CURRENCY
Thai baht (THB). US$1 = approximately THB 30.00

TIME ZONE
GMT+7 (the same as Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam).

ELECTRICITY
Voltage is 220 Volts with either two flat blades (NEMA 1-15 or JIS C 8303) or round two pin plugs (Europlug CEE 7/16).

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Police 191
Tourist Police 1155, 077 421281
Ambulance 077 421230
Fire 199, 077 272400
Samui International Hospital 077 422272
Bangkok Samui Hospital 077 429500
Samui Rescue 077 421444
Operator-assisted overseas calls 100
Directory Assistance 1133
Koh Samui Airport 077 425012
Tourist Information Center 077 420504
Immigration 076 221 905
KOH SAMUI AREA GUIDES

The paradisiacal island of Samui is located in the Gulf of Thailand and covers a total area of 247 sqkm. It features beautiful coral, clear water, golden and whitesand beaches and lots of coconuts. Over the past decades, Samui has become a remarkable unique destination and is never short of interesting things to do and see. Let our Area Guides help you navigate through Thailand’s third-largest island to discover its wonders.

1. CHAWENG BEACH
Chaweng is not only the biggest but the most exciting and developed town on the island. Located on the east coast, its sandy beach is popular for all kinds of fun activities including banana boat riding and parasailing. Visitors can find just about everything here within easy enough walking distance so expect to see the usual business setups in the neighborhood such as dive shops, souvenir shops, internet cafés and tour companies.

2. LAMAI BEACH
In the past, Lamai was a favourite location for backpackers with its beautiful beach, cosy and easy-going ambience and many budget and cheap accommodations scattered here and there, but that’s not the case anymore. As the second-largest beach on the island, Lamai is still quieter than Chaweng but lately there have been more sophisticated businesses opening up including luxury resorts and trendy cafés and restaurants.

3. BOPHUT
On northern coast of Samui lies Bophut, made up of two places: Bophut Beach, which stretches several kilometres between Big Buddha and Maenam beaches and the well-preserved Fisherman’s Village situated in the middle section of the beach. The undeniable charm of this picturesque village features old wooden Chinese shop-houses and fishing boats coming and going day after day.

4. MAENAM BEACH
Visitors who desire a long powdery beach fringed by swaying palms should look no further than Maenam Beach. Located north of Chaweng and Bophut, Maenam is considered a haven for all, whether you are on a budget or have some cash to spend. Here you can check in to a very simple style room with fan or a luxury five-star pool villa or something in between, the choices are there!

5. EAST AND SOUTH COASTS
Travelers who would like to learn more about the island away from the usual touristy spots should explore Samui’s east and south coasts as the majority of these areas still maintain their exotic charm and a smalltown atmosphere. You will also find interesting small beaches or in some cases the rocky bays looking out to beautiful islets nearby.

6. KOH PHANGAN & KOH TAO
It’s true that you can’t separate the world-famous full moon party from Koh Phangan’s image but that’s not all that the island has to offer. Located north of Samui, Phangan has what it takes to become an incredible holiday destination with lovely beaches, tropical surrounding along with modern comforts. For those who are looking for more, a trip to Koh Tao (or Turtle Island) will suit you just fine.

More at http://www.kosamui.com/beaches.htm
BEST LUXURY HOTELS

1. BANYAN TREE SAMUI, LAMAI BEACH
   ★★★★★
   Set on a pristine white beach, the 78 all-pool villa Banyan Tree Samui combines the best elements of a tropical getaway with white beaches and sun, while being just 19km from Samui International Airport. Overlooking the sapphire waters of scenic Lamai Bay, the resort is formed from a series of cascading terraces on a private hill cove on the southeastern coast of Koh Samui.
   Book Now!

2. INTERCONTINENTAL SAMUI BAAN TALING NGAM
   ★★★★★
   Scaling along the cliffs amid twenty-two acres of lush landscaped tropical gardens, InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort rises majestically over the beautiful Taling Ngam bay below. Situated on the unspoilt west coast of Koh Samui, it is a place of luxurious seclusion, with breathtaking crimson sunsets and spectacular views of the brilliantly blue Gulf of Thailand.
   Book Now!

3. VANA BELLE A LUXURY COLLECTION RESORT
   ★★★★★
   Tucked away in a secluded cove near the world-famous white sands of Chaweng Beach and with breathtaking views over the island, Vana Belle is more than just a resort. With a prime beachfront location, sparkling cerulean waters, white ivory sand, and emerald lush tropics, effortless island living awaits.
   Book Now!

BEST BOUTIQUE HOTELS

1. ZAZEN BOUTIQUE RESORT AND SPA, BOPHUT BEACH
   ★★★★★
   Distinctive and personal bungalows are located on the beachfront and amongst verdant tropical gardens, with up-market furnishings, the latest in technological entertainment, and designed in a bright, luxurious style. Where Zazen excels is in its flagship restaurant - French Executive Chef Cyrille Keyser has helped win Thailand Tatler’s ‘Best Restaurant’ award for four straight years.
   Book Now!

2. MAI SAMUI BEACH RESORT, LAEM YAI BAY
   ★★★★★
   All 97 rooms provide stunning beach views, with one king or two queen-sized beds, the interior design is rich with local textures such as wood and Thai fabrics. Just steps away from the golden sands of Laem Yai Beach on the west coast of Samui, Mai Resort has not only five-star luxury rooms and amenities but also three restaurants, a beach club, lobby lounge, two pools, spa facilities, tennis courts, a conference room, library, gift shop and an internet room.
   Book Now!

3. PAVILION SAMUI BOUTIQUE RESORT, LAMAI BEACH
   ★★★★★
   Pavilion Samui Boutique Resort is a smart collection of Thai-inspired accommodation located beachfront of Lamai, in Samui, Thailand. Lamai, while home to a wide stretch of waters that is best for swimming, also contains several some of the most interesting tourist attractions available on the island.
   Book Now!

BEST BEACH RESORTS

1. HANSAR SAMUI RESORT, BOPHUT BEACH
Hansar Samui Resort is located in Bophut, just a 10-minute ride from the airport and a few minutes’ walk to the famous Fisherman’s Village. Guestrooms are designed with an open-floor plan; the wooden floors, stone basins, and generous furniture open up the interiors. All units feature ocean views and come with an oversized outdoor sala complete with a daybed lounge, large enough for sleeping.

Book Now!

2. MUANG SAMUI SPA RESORT, CHAWENG BEACH
Muang Samui Spa Resort is a five-star accommodation setup located in Chaweng Beach overlooking the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Thailand. Accommodation at this idyllic resort comprises 63 Suites and 14 Pool Villas and is made up of four distinct categories: 90sqm Terrace Suites; 125sqm Pool Suites; 160sqm Family Suites, and 160sqm Pool Villas.

Book Now!

3. SAREERAYA VILLAS & SUITES, CHAWENG BEACH
Sareeraya Villa and Suites is a five-star 49-room resort located at Chaweng Beach on the eastern coast of Koh Samui in the Gulf of Thailand. Designed in classic and traditional Thai-style, Sareeraya is a great example of contemporary facilities blending with antiquity.

Book Now!

BEST FAMILY HOTELS

1. ANANTARA LAWANA RESORT & SPA, CHAWENG
Located at the north end of Chaweng Beach, Anantara Lawana, room sizes start at a whopping 61sqm with villas sized up to 160sqm. Enjoy the great location, state-of-the-art amenities and facilities that include Thai cooking classes, a whole raft of water-based activities including deep-sea fishing, a good variety of spa treatments, five food & beverage outlets (including a treetop fine-dining restaurant) and of course that famous Thai hospitality.

Book Now!

2. NEW STAR BEACH RESORT, CHAWENG NOI
New Star Beach Resort is a haven for tasteful people in search of a contemporary and stylish tropical residence for their holiday. Set right on the tranquil Chaweng Noi Beach in a magnificent lush garden, the resort is situated at only four kilometres from Samui Airport (New Star can arrange transfers for its guests) and a few minutes drive away from Chaweng Beach and its attractive scene of restaurants, boutiques and nightlife entertainment venues.

Book Now!

3. CHABA CABANA BEACH RESORT & SPA, CHAWENG
Chaba Cabana Beach Resort & Spa is a four-star resort located beachfront at Chaweng in Samui, Thailand. Within walking distance from the hotel is the exciting Chaweng Beach, home to a pristine white sandy stretch of turquoise waters, making it a perfect spot to relax, swim and dive.

Book Now!

Koh Samui's repertoire of things to do and see is varied and interesting: the island hosts a great deal of splendid natural and man-made attractions from mummified monks to the famous grandma and grandpa rocks (Hin Ta & Hin Yai) to attractive waterfalls and more, there’s nothing to stop you having a blast on Samui Island. For those interested in religious imagery and architecture the Big Buddha will impress - especially at sunset. Nature lovers can visit Ang Thong Marine National Park on a day trip to enjoy a genuine ‘get away from it all’ feel in the splendid tropical islands it hosts.

1. **BIG BUDDHA**
   - On the northern coast of Koh Samui is the famous Big Buddha shrine. Probably Samui’s most well known landmark, the 12 metre high golden Buddha can be seen from several kilometres away. Inside the surrounding temple are many different shrines and other smaller ornate Buddhas. There is also a small market selling a wide range of lucky charms and other souvenirs, alongside numerous food stalls. Read more...
   - **Open:** All year round  
   - **Location:** Buddha Beach  
   - **How to get there:** Taxi

2. **HIN TA AND HIN YAI**
   - Art often imitates Nature, but less common is Nature imitating Art, especially the art of the ribald. But in Thailand anything is possible including, on Koh Samui, the natural geological formations known as Hin Ta and Hin Yai Rocks (the Grandpa and Grandma rocks), which look, respectively, like male and female genitalia. Read more...
   - **Open:** All year round  
   - **Location:** Lamai Beach  
   - **How to get there:** Taxi

3. **ANGTHONG NATIONAL MARINE PARK**
   - Ang Thong National Marine Park is a pristine archipelago of 42 islands in the Gulf of Thailand with towering limestone mountains, thick jungle, white-sand beaches, fertile mangroves, waterfalls and hidden coves and lakes to explore. Within sight of Koh Samui, Ang Thong park is a protected area of more than 100sqkm of land and sea, and home to a rich variety of exotic wildlife and sea creatures. Read more...
   - **Open:** Best time is March - October  
   - **Location:** Nathon Beach  
   - **How to get there:** Taxi

4. **NAMUANG WATERFALL**
   - Although Samui has several waterfalls, the two Na Muang waterfalls are probably the most picturesque. The name Na Muang refers to the massive purple rocks at the waterfalls. Rocks and tree roots form a natural staircase that leads to the base of Na Muang 1. A large natural pool sits under the waterfall. A 10-minute walk further up the mountain leads to Samui’s most beautiful waterfall, Na Muang 2. Read more...
   - **Open:** All year round  
   - **Location:** Nathon Beach  
   - **How to get there:** Taxi

5. **MUMMY MONK AT WAT KHUNARAM**
   - The body of Samui’s most famous mummified monk - there really are several - Luang Pordaeng is on display here. Luang Pordaeng died over 20 years ago and as per his instructions, his body was placed in a specially designed glass case for posterity. It has remained there ever since and has showed few signs of decay. Read more...
   - **Open:** All year round  
   - **Location:** South of Lamai  
   - **How to get there:** Taxi

6. **SAMUI AQUARIUM WITH TIGER SHOW**
   - Both the aquarium and the zoo have many of Thailand’s tropical favourites above and below the water. Lots of coral fish, huge catfish and several sharks including Leopard and Black Tips Samui’s local zoo adjacent to the aquarium, house some south-eastern Asian tigers, parrots, hornbills, sea hawks, eagles or even otters who will perform for you …. if they are in the mood. Read more...
   - **Open:** 9:00 - 18:00  
   - **Location:** Ban Harn Beach  
   - **How to get there:** Taxi

7. **LADYBOY CABARET SHOWS**
   - Ladyboy Cabarets might not be everyone’s cup of tea but for fans, Chaweng Beach has plenty to choose from! Thailand’s katoeys or the ‘third sex’ are world famous, partly because there are so many of them and also because they are so feminine. In fact it can be difficult to tell if the beautiful young lady paying you attention was a lady at birth… as many a surprised tourist has discovered. Read more...
   - **Show time:** Nightly but hours vary  
   - **Location:** Chaweng Beach

8. **SECRET BUDDHA GARDEN**
   - Wat Chalong has been extending a warm welcome to visitors for over a century. Locals come to pray and Westerners come to learn something about Buddhism. The most revered and impressive of Phuket’s 29 temples, it is dedicated to two highly venerated monks, Luang Pho Chaem and Luang Pho Chuang who helped heal many miners with their knowledge of herbal medicine during a tin miners’ rebellion in 1876. When visiting please dress respectfully with no revealing garments. Read more...
   - **Location:** Hills of Samui

More at http://www.kosamui.com/top10-attractions.htm
WHAT TO DO IN KOH SAMUI

Face it; we all dream of escaping to a piece of paradise and for many, paradise happens to be a tropical island with soft sand and sparkling-blue sea. Koh Samui offers just that and much more. It’s a true holiday getaway with a wide variety of things to do including elephant trekking, kayaking and snorkeling. Our following recommended top eight activities are among the most popular tours here.

1. SEA SAFARI ANGTHONG MARINE PARK
   ANGTHONG NATIONAL MARINE PARK - TOUR DURATION: 9 HOURS
   Our Number One tour gets you away from it all to one of the world’s most beautiful islands and its surroundings in a matter of minutes. While everyone else is on their way to Phi Phi you’re already there, island hopping, dropping in on the monkeys at Ao Ling, snorkeling the crystal clear waters in Hin Klang.

2. FULL DAY KOH TAO & NANG YUAN BY SPEED BOAT
   KOH TAO & NANG YUAN - TOUR DURATION: 9 HOURS
   The best snorkeling in the Gulf of Thailand is waiting for you at Koh Tao and Koh Nangyuan, two incredibly beautiful islands. Discover the beautiful coral reef at Mango, Tian Nok, Hin Wong, and Sairee bays. The sandbar beaches, formed by sea currents interacting with the three peaks of the island, are unique.

3. HALF DAY 9 IN 1 ECO SAFARI
   ELEPHANT TREKKING - MONKEY SHOW - JEEP SAFARI - AND MORE... - TOUR DURATION: 5 HOURS
   This extensive half-day program offers guests a range of activities to enjoy the best of this tropical island and provides countless photograph opportunities as there is always something to see or do. On top of the diverse schedule, a delicious meal is included in the price. This tour is interesting, exhilarating and will leave you yearning for more.

4. HALF DAY SAMUI SAFARI CITY TOUR
   ELEPHANT TREKKING - BIG BUDDHA - GRANDMOTHER AND GRANDFATHER ROCKS - TOUR DURATION: 6 HOURS
   This tour takes you around Samui, making sure you see the most interesting and unforgettable sights of the island. Elephant trek, watch a baby elephant and monkey show, pay a visit to the famous Big Buddha then go shopping at the local market in colourful Nathon Town. After your lunch, visit the Kunaram Temple, the site of Samui’s mummified monk after which you can cool off at the Secret Waterfall.

5. CRAZY HORSE - PRIVATE CHARTER AROUND ISLAND
   AROUND KOH SAMUI, ANGTHONG MARINE PARK, KOH TAO AND KOH PHANGAN
   Very fast twin mast catamaran for a unique sailing experience. This boat is a winner in international Regattas! Very easy handling makes the boat a pure pleasure craft for 3-8 crew on board. Perfect for island hopping and sailing safaris. A must try for every cat sailor.

6. FULL-DAY ECO ADVENTURE
   SAMUI JUNGLE - NAMUANG WATERFALL - THE BUDDHA MAGIC GARDEN - KOH TAN - TOUR DURATION: 8 HOURS
   Sate your appetite for environmental conservation with an eco-tour. Whether it be a jungle tour, a full-day eco adventure, or a feature-packed safari tour, all lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of Mother Nature.

7. ELEPHANT TREK 60 MINS
   NAMUANG JUNGLE
   Jungle Trip by Elephant. The mighty elephant is Thailand’s national animal – a symbol of royalty and strength. Samui has tropical rainforest in its centre and to travel through this verdant lushness on elephant back is to truly experience Thailand at its most natural.

8. SANTIBURI SAMUI GOLF COUNTRY CLUB
   MAE NAM
   Welcome to Santiburi Samui Country Club. Santiburi Samui Country Club is a championship golf course landscaped on a Samui Island hillside. Each of the 18 holes on this 6,930-yard, par-72 course, has its own unique character and challenges.

WHAT TO EAT

While Thai food needs little introduction, these popular dishes are must-try while you visit Thailand. The below list spans everything from staple backpacker favourites to Thai classics. Although some of them may sound familiar, don’t be surprised if they taste nothing like what you usually find back home.

1. **TOM YUM GOONG (SPICY SHRIMP SOUP)**
   
   A bold, refreshing blend of fragrant lemongrass, chilli, galangal, lime leaves, shallots, lime juice and fish sauce. Tom Yam is a versatile dish that can fit within virtually any meal – its invigorating sour-spicy-hot taste just screams ‘Thailand’!

2. **PAD THAI (THAI STYLE FRIED NOODLES)**
   
   From Cape Town to Khao San Road, the default international Thai dish. Dropped in a searing hot wok, fistfuls of small, thin noodles do a steamy minute-long dance alongside crunchy bean sprouts, spring onions and egg, before disembarking for the nearest plate.

3. **GAENG DAENG (RED CURRY)**
   
   Made with morsels of meat, red curry paste, smooth coconut milk and topped off with a sprinkling of finely sliced kaffir lime leaves, this rich, aromatic curry always gets those taste buds tingling.

4. **SOM TAM – (SPICY GREEN PAPAYA SALAD)**
   
   Hailing from the Northeast (Isan), this outlandish dish is both great divider - some can’t get enough of its bite, some can’t handle it – and greatly distinctive. Garlic, chilies, green beans, cherry tomatoes and shredded raw papaya get dramatically pulverized in a pestle and mortar, so releasing a rounded sweet-sour-spicy flavour that’s not easily forgotten.

5. **TOM KHA KAI (CHICKEN IN COCONUT SOUP)**
   
   A mild, tamer twist on Tom Yam, this iconic soup infuses fiery chilies, thinly sliced young galangal, crushed shallots, stalks of lemongrass and tender strips of chicken. Topped off with fresh lime leaves, it’s a sweet-smelling concoction, both creamy and compelling.

6. **PAK BOONG FAI DAENG (STIR-FRIED MORNING GLORY)**
   
   The leafy plant with hollow green stems and thin fragile leaves forms the main component of this super easy favourite. Cloves of garlic and birds eye chilies join it in a wok alongside oyster sauce, fish sauce and fermented bean. A few lazy stirs, and it’s done!

7. **GAENG KEOW WAN KAI (GREEN CHICKEN CURRY)**
   
   Another all-time favourite dish, served alongside a bowl of fragrant rice. Green curry paste and coconut milk form the creamy base. Morsels of fresh chicken, cherry-sized eggplants, bamboo shoots, sprigs of coriander and generous handfuls of sweet basil add body to this seminal curry.

8. **YAM NUA (SPICY BEEF SALAD)**
   
   If there was such a thing as a ‘Salad Hall of Fame’, Yam Nua would surely take pride of place. The fresh, fiery thrill of Yam Nua – with its sprightly mix of onion, coriander, spearmint, lime, dried chili and tender strips of beef – perfectly embodies the invigorating in-the-mouth-thrill of all Thai salads, the yummy-ness of yam.

More at http://www.kosamui.com/dining/
Barracuda Restaurant

Tasteful, well designed, and intimate, award-winning Barracuda in Mae Nam is aimed at people who appreciate fine dining at reasonable cost. The German-born chef here is affable and an extremely good host and steers his culinary output towards a marriage of European and Asian dishes. Read more... Open: Daily 18:00 – 22:30 Location: Mae Nam Tel: +66 (0)77 921 633

Café 69

Café 69 is a trendy venue located diagonally opposite Samui Go-Kart on Samui Ring Road. The colourful and modern décor is emphasised by clever lighting effects to create a welcoming vibe. The food served at Café 69 is “a new twist of Southern Thai Indigenous Cuisine” as they call it themselves. Read more... Open: Daily 13:00 - 23:00, Fri: 16:00 - 23:00, and Sat: 13:00 - 23:00 Location: Bophut Tel: +66 (0)81 978 1945

The Boudoir

Swirling silks, scintillating satins, reams of textiles and the sort of place a Pasha would feel right at home in sprawled among the cushions, The Boudoir is dining opulence. Essentially French cooking, there’s a good selection of cheeses, meats, foie gras and even escargots – and a good and cheap house wine. Read more... Open: 18:00 – late. Closed Monday Location: Mae Nam Tel: +66 (0)85 783 1031

Stacked

Stacked is the signature restaurant of OZO Chaweng Samui, a trendy resort set right on the central part of Chaweng Beach. Stacked menu is largely oriented towards North American favourites and features a long-list of signature burgers. Guests can enjoy Happy Hour everyday from 11:00 – 12:00 and from 17:00 – 19:00. Read more... Open: 11:00 – 01:30 Location: Chaweng Tel: +66 (0)77 915 222

Tree Tops

Located in Anantara Lawana in north Chaweng, Tree Tops is one of Samui’s most accomplished restaurants and is definitely the place to head to if you are a fine-dining enthusiast. With only eight tables in the restaurant and each table an individual ‘tree house’ the experience here is unique. Read more... Open: Sundays 18:00-24:00 Location: Chaweng Tel: +66 (0)77 960 333

Kob Thai

With a relaxing atmosphere, excellent service, and delicious food, Kob Thai is a highly recommended place if you come by Lamai. Under French management, Kob Thai Restaurant’s Thai Chef prepares all the classics of Thai cuisine from outstanding seafood to spicy salads to mouthwatering Thai desserts, all of them at affordable prices. Read more... Open: 10:00 – 23:00 Location: Lamai Tel: +66 (0)82 534 9325

9Gems Lounge Restaurant

Tung Ka Café offers vistas of Phuket Town by night as well as 180-degree vistas stretching all the way along the island’s ‘backbone’ of hills. It’s all pretty spectacular and in reality Tung Ka’s dishes play second fiddle to the views but nevertheless there’s some good Thai food to be had here with a colourful choice of unusual Thai desserts. Read more... Location: Chaweng

Dining on the Rocks

A romantic dinner under the stars at the Dining on the Rocks, the signature restaurant of Six Senses Samui can be a unique and superb experience. Relax on the terraced decks whether in the open air or in the covered seating areas and with fantastic 270 degree views of the ocean and surrounding islands. The menu offers ‘New Asian Cuisine with a crossover accent’ and is a fine exponent of the fast becoming popular ‘slow cuisine.’ Read more... Location: Big Buddha Tel: +66 (0)77 24 5678

More at http://www.kosamui.com/dining/
WHERE TO GO FOR NIGHTLIFE

As one of the prime holiday destinations in southern Thailand, Koh Samui hosts a great choice of nightlife entertainment options. The undisputed Ground Zero of nightlife on Samui is of course Chaweng, which is the Samui version of Patong Beach in Phuket; featuring a myriad of lounge clubs, naughty bars, beach bars, and discos, it is definitely the place to have fun at night. But where is it really kicking apart from there? Each of the main resort towns in Koh Samui - Lamai, Bophut, and Maenam - also has interesting night spots to be discovered. Have a browse through our Top 10 nightlife recommendations to find out where the best places are to plan a really great night out.

1. **SOI GREEN MANGO**
   Chaweng is Koh Samui’s Party Central. The epicentre of all this hedonism and fun is undoubtedly Soi Green Mango. A classic Chaweng night out wouldn’t be complete without clubbing around and on to cool places such as Solo Club, Sweet Soul Café, Mint Bar, Ark Bar and Sound Pub. Read more... Location: Chaweng

2. **SOI REGGAE**
   The main attraction of Soi Reggae is the huge, two-storey Reggae Pub with a live music stage and pool tables but then again this place has not moved with the times and only seems to attract the type of people who actually like to hear Bob Marley imitations and even Hotel California played night after night. Read more... Location: Chaweng

3. **LAMAI CENTRAL PLAZA**
   If you’re into sequins, heavy makeup and boys who look more like girls than girls do, Simon Cabaret is the place for you. A Phuket institution, it started out in a single shop-house and has grown exponentially over the years into its present-day form as a transvestite/transgender extravaganza. Neatly choreographed and mimed, the show’s impressive enough, but also keep an eye on the audience’s faces. Please note that cast members expect payment for photos taken of them after the show. Read more... Location: Lamai

4. **KOH PHANGAN FULL MOON PARTY**
   Koh Phangan lies northwest of Samui, has become more renowned for its Full Moon Parties than its indubitable picturesque landscape. Haad Rin Nok Beach is only about 800 metres long but on Full Moon Party nights more than 12 powerful sound systems crank out tunes. In short, Koh Phangan’s Full Moon parties are the most celebrated and longest-running dance culture events in the world. Read more...

5. **LADYBOY CABARET SHOWS**
   It’s hard to believe that some of these beautiful show girls were not born as women. They look terrific sporting fabulous costumes and tiaras when singing, dancing or making fun of themselves. Check out the famous nightly shows at Moulin Rouge (+66 (0)82 815 4843) and Starz Cabaret (+66 (0)84 744 9074). Read more... Location: Chaweng

6. **SWING BAR**
   No, Swing Bar is not a wife-swapping venue, as the name suggests. Rather, it’s a big beachside affair with rope-suspended swing chairs facing a well-frequented bar right on the beach itself at Lamai. Here, you can enjoy a whole raft of cocktails or even a Sang Som or vodka ‘bucket’ while watching the nightly fire dances. Read more... Location: Lamai

7. **THAI BOXING (MUAY THAI)**
   Thai boxing is Thailand’s National Sport and is developed from the ancient Muay Thai martial art. Before getting in the ring, fighters train hard and learn many skills to be able to combat successfully. Visitors can catch Muay Thai bouts at Phetch Buncha Stadium on soi 13 in Chaweng three nights a week. Read more... Location: Chaweng

8. **Q BAR**
   Here, you’ll dance to top international DJs but people don’t start coming in till late so Q Bar really doesn’t start happening until at least 23:00. But when it happens here it really does swing, with live strolling guitarists and saxophonists mingling with the crowds. Read more... Location: Chaweng

More at http://www.kosamui.com/nightlife/
WHERE TO SHOP

The best shopping opportunities in Samui are located in the most popular resort towns of the island: from Chaweng, which hosts an impressive scene of boutiques and shopping malls including the giant Central Festival Samui, to Lamai to Bophut to Maenam which respectively host a mellower yet interesting shopping scene, shopaholics can certainly find something for their taste on Koh Samui. It never hurts to bargain, too - especially in privately owned stores and at markets, although in fixed-price supermarkets and stores it’s obviously not a good idea. Have a browse through our Top 10 Shopping venues List to see where those bargains are hiding.

1. CENTRAL FESTIVAL SAMUI
   Central Festival Samui describes itself as ‘the most complete and largest lifestyle shopping complex in Samui’; with three storeys and around 90,000sqm of retail space, there couldn’t be a better description for this huge shopping and dining mall, which is located between Chaweng’s Beach Road and the nearby lake. Read more... Open: 11:00 – 23:00
   Location: Chaweng

2. SAMUI HOT CLUB
   Samui Hot Club has row after row of colourful sarongs, T-shirts, beachwear and more, all billowing under extra-strong ceiling and floor fans. It also has strict purchasing rules: Customers are not allowed to try items on and once purchased the shop will not refund or exchange them. Read more... Open: 09:00 – 21:00
   Location: Nathon & Lamai

3. CHAWENG WALKING STREET
   Chaweng Walking Street is a riot of colours, sounds and scents. This is where you can haggle for items such as T-shirts, sunglasses, knockoff watches, beach dresses, lamps, sexy cutoff jeans; copied Ralph Lauren polo shirts, flip-flops, bags of all shapes and sizes, carved wooden souvenirs, kids clothing and cosmetics. Read more... Location: Chaweng

4. BUDDY ORIENTAL PLAZA
   With plenty of parking and appealing post-colonial design, Buddy Oriental Plaza is all meant to complement the Buddy Oriental Samui Beach Resort and does so in style. In the plaza you'll discover an almost genteel serene-like atmosphere light years away from, say, Chaweng’s almost frenetic pace when it comes to shopping. Read more...
   Location: Lamai

5. MAENAM WALKING STREET
   This is a lovely but rather noisy family experience and the only difficult thing about visiting Mae Nam walking street on Thursday evenings when the market takes place is finding a place to park nearby but this can be circumvented by getting there early before six o’clock. Mae Nam’s walking street is only a couple of hundred metres long but it’s packed with interesting stalls, snack vendors and even mobile cocktail bars! Read more... Open: Thursdays from 17:00 onwards
   Location: Maenam

6. BOPHUT PLAZA
   Bophut Plaza is a collection of open-sided boutiques and shops located about halfway along Bophut’s Fisherman’s Village’s main street. The opening of the soi is flanked by a Majesty tailor shop with its bespoke shirts and suits. Further along, you’ll come across ceramics, jewelry, sarongs, bags, T-shirts, and hand-carved soaps. Read more...
   Open: 10:00 – 22:00
   Location: Bophut

7. LAMAI NIGHT PLAZA
   In the centre of town, diagonally opposite McDonald’s and leading to a bar beer square, you’ll find a mini-version of Bangkok’s Patpong night market. With lots of pirated goods, copied clothes, trashy ‘Swiss’ army knives, the usual displays of flip flops. It’s a fun place to get your shopping in. Read more... Open: Every day from 17:00
   Location: Lamai

8. CHAWENG FASHION SHOPPING
   For those looking for beachwear, sportswear, imported leisurewear, and cheap-and-cheerful holiday wear, Chaweng can seem like heaven itself. Simply stroll along the main beach road and take in the wonder world that is Chaweng shopping. Read more...
BEST ACTIVITIES IN KOH SAMUI

A hive of activity, Koh Samui has many choices when it comes to getting out there and really enjoying yourself. If you’ve never been on an elephant trek then now’s the time to give it a chance and after you can discover total relaxation at one of the island’s many spas. Why not take some local culinary knowledge home with you by learning how to cook Thai at a cooking school? Find out just how vivid the region’s sub-aquatic life is by snorkeling at Koh Tao and Angthong or give the kids free rein at a Go-kart track. All this and more is just waiting for you on Samui. Go for it.

1. ELEPHANT TREKKING
A Jungle Trip by Elephant, The mighty elephant is Thailand’s national animal – a symbol of royalty and strength. Samui has tropical rain forest in its centre and to travel through this verdant lushness on elephant back is to truly experience Thailand at its most natural. Pass exotic fauna and flora, stop at refreshing waterfalls along the way-discover Samui in the most regal way possible. Read more...

2. SPA TREATMENTS
Koh Samui has always attracted those in search of a place to relax and recharge, with many new age centres established years before Spas became mainstream. Asian beauty secrets, traditional massage, de-stressing body treatments... Samui is the place to find them. Read more...

3. SKY FOX TREE TOP CABLE RIDE
The Sky Fox is a fantastic ride for those who like to experience speed and a feeling of freedom. You can slide along the cables from platform to platform and feel what it’s like to fly. The Sky Fox has seven separate stations. The first is not scary at all and allows you to go back to the start in case you don’t want to proceed. Most people get such a thrill that they can’t wait to get onto the next line. Read more...

4. GO KART
Why not go Go-karting for the day? Suitable for both beginners and more experienced riders the course is fun and fast. Samui Go-Kart provides everything from instructions to helmets, all you have to do is jump in and go. The course is open from 9am to 9pm every day and located just west of Bophut of the main ring road. Read more...

5. COOKING CLASSES
While a visit to Koh Samui may seem like paradise, SITCA’s curriculum is down-to-earth, comprehensive and above all enjoyable. All chefs are Thai experts with years of experience cooking Thai, and a love of their art. Whether avid home cook or aspiring professional, you will learn all the skills you need to cook one of Asia’s most varied and fascinating cuisines. Read more...

6. SAFARI TOUR BY 4WD
One of the most popular spectator sports in Thailand is the martial art of Muay Thai. Exciting enough on TV - the furious punches, crushing elbow strikes, lethal kicks and artful feints are even more riveting when seen live. Phuket has a lot of training camps open to all ages and genders. The training programmes cater for those who simply desire to improve their health and boxing skills. Read more...

7. SNORKELLING IN KOH TAO
Koh Nang Yuan sandbar beaches, formed by the ocean’s currents interacting with the three peaks of the island, are unique to the world. Their beauty will take your breath away. Enjoy snorkelling in clear water and a chance to encounter the most beautiful ocean life. Continue to Koh Tao where we stop for lunch at Bingo Restaurant. After a wholesome meal you can either snorkel, sunbath or just relax under the coconut trees. Read more...

8. SAMUI FOOTBALL GOLF
Football Golf is an original and more and more popular game created in Thailand at Samui Football Golf, and is becoming better known around the world. The idea is simple enough: it’s a hybrid of football and golf in which players try to steer a football into the 18 holes in as few strokes as possible - using their feet of course. Read more...

More at http://www.kosamui.com/activities/
CARRY SMALL CHANGE
Samui is relatively inexpensive, unless you plan to enjoy all your shopping, dining and nightlife inside a hotel or upscale shopping malls. Sooner or later, you will find out that taxi drivers, food vendors and shopkeepers don’t have change for your big bills. So, save a few headaches and make sure that you break the 1000 baht notes into a few 100s and small coins. The 5 and 10 baht coins usually come in handy when taking a taxi or songtheaw truck, the island’s answer to a bus system.

BEWARE SCAMMERS
If you are fancy an idea of hiring a jetski in Samui beware of a fact that not many of them are properly insured or for the matter of fact have insurance of any kind. On top of it there might be some surprises when it’s time to return the jetski. You might be asked to pay for an already existing dent. It ain’t cheap!

DRINK LOTS OF WATER
This tip, of course, applies even to the Antarctic. But packing a supply of the wet stuff in Samui’s sticky, stifling heat is even more crucial to your wellbeing. Our unscientific rule of thumb: drink more than you sweat. Fortunately you are never more than a few paving stones from a drinks vendor. Always make sure bottled water is sealed. For a change, take your chosen tipple modern Thaistyle, in a small plastic bag with handle and straw. Its quirky but, as you’ll find when rummaging around markets, also convenient.

BARTER, BUT NICELY
The first rule of Samui shopping: if there’s no barcode or set price, get haggling. It’s expected. However, instead of adopting a confrontational “give me it for this price, now!” attitude, try the gracious, smiley “what’s your best price, my friend?” approach. Why? If not because you’re polite, then do it because a smile here goes further than a sneer. Aim to chip anything from 50% off the quoted price. And by all means, walk away if the price is disagreeable – more often than not you’ll be called back for last ditch negotiations!

CARRY A PHOTOCOPY OF YOUR PASSPORT
Whether it be an impromptu demand from a local policeman or a request from security at one of the city’s swanky nightspots, carrying ID is a must in Thailand. The fact that you are 25 but look like you’re pushing 40 doesn’t matter – proving who you are is a day-to-day formality, something Thais are finicky about. Instead of dragging your passport around with you, and with it the constant fear of losing it, take a photocopy.

TAXI TIPS
Samui offers good choices of transport. However, follow these tips and your journey needn’t be temper fraying: (1) Book only with reputable tour companies because their vehicles have full insurance. (2) Insist your taxi driver switch his meter on. If he refuses, do bargain and agree on a price prior to getting in. (3) Finally, make sure you leave nothing behind. There’s nothing worse than watching your gaily coloured taxi whiz off, carrying with it your valuables.

EASY THAI PHRASES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Krab / Ka</th>
<th>Words added at the end of a sentence/phrase to add politeness. Krab if you are a male. Ka if you are a female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phom / Chan</td>
<td>I (male / female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khun</td>
<td>You (polite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawad Dee (krab / ka)</td>
<td>Hello (male / female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khob Khun (krab / ka)</td>
<td>Thank you (male / female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phom / Chan Pood Thai mai pen</td>
<td>I (male / female) don’t speak Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong nam yuu nai?</td>
<td>Where are the restrooms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tao rai (krab / ka)?</td>
<td>How much does it cost (male / female)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lod dai maak sood tao rai?</td>
<td>What’s your best price?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pood len rue plao</td>
<td>Are you kidding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ni khong jing rue khong plom</td>
<td>Is this real or fake?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ao ped ped</td>
<td>I want my food very spicy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai ped</td>
<td>Not spicy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check bin / Kheb tang</td>
<td>Can I have the bill please?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khun lor / suay maak</td>
<td>You are very handsome / beautiful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FULL DAY SAFARI AND SNORKELING

This full day eco-adventure around Koh Samui includes elephant trekking and an elephant show, a 4X4 discovery jeep safari with an experienced driver, a jungle walk to 80-metre Namuang Waterfall along with a refreshing swim, a visit to a magical Buddhist garden with great hilltop views and unusual stone sculptures, then snorkelling at beautiful nearby Tan Island with its untouched coral reefs and thousands of colourful tropical marine creatures. This exciting and varied day out also includes a delicious Thai buffet-style lunch at a beach restaurant. Read more...

Only 1,530 THB per person (normal price 1,700 THB) 10% discount!

ANGTHONG MARINE PARK

The magical island chain of Angthong Marine Park can be explored on this full day trip to three different islands - Wao Island, Tai Phow Island and Mae Kho Island. Enjoy the pristine beaches, kayaking, secluded lagoons and breathtaking viewpoints only one hour from Samui by speedboat. Guests also have the opportunity to go elephant trekking or enjoy a fish spa included in the price. Read more...

Only 1,980 THB per person (normal price 2,200 THB) 10% discount!

KOH TAO BY SPEEDBOAT

Pick up from your hotel to board speed boat at Bophut pier. Arrive Koh Nang Yuan 90 minutes later. The sandbar beaches, formed by the ocean's currents interacting with the three peaks of the island, are unique to the world. Their beauty will take your breath away. Enjoy snorkeling in clear water and a chance to encounter the most beautiful ocean life. Continue to Koh Tao (translates as Turtle Island, so named because of its shape) where we stop for lunch at Bingo Restaurant. After a wholesome meal you can either snorkel, sunbath or just relax under the coconut trees. Read more...

Only 1,890 THB per person (normal price 2,100 THB) 10% discount!

More at http://www.kosamui.com/tours/