

# The Best of Thailand, The Phinisi

## 10 Nights Itinerary

There are three embarkation and disembarkation possibilities for this itinerary; Please be sure to check your specific departure dates when you make your booking to confirm the applicable start and end points.

### Phuket to Khao Lak

- **Embarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 18:00
- **Disembarkation Point:** Thap Lamu Pier, Khao Lak at 10:00

### Khao Lak to Phuket

- **Embarkation Point:** Thap Lamu Pier, Khao Lak at 18:00
- **Disembarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 10:00

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- **Embarkation Point:** Chalong Pier, Phuket at 18:00
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Transfer between Phuket Airport, or local hotels and The Phinisi on embarkation and disembarkation day are included in the liveboard price for all departures, regardless of embarkation and disembarkation point.

Transfers from and to hotels and resorts outside of these areas can be arranged for an additional charge.

**Marine & Port Fees:** 115 USD per person (to be paid on board)

### Minimum dive certification and experience:

Diving conditions in and around the Andaman Sea are generally suitable for all levels of divers, although some of the dives offered may be challenging for inexperienced divers.

We recommend divers have **PADI Advanced Open Water certification\***, or equivalent, with a **minimum of 10 logged dives and experience in strong currents.**

\*Advanced Open Water Course can usually be completed on board with advance notice (pre-booking required).

***Guests who do not fulfil the minimum certification and experience requirements may be denied participation in some or all dives.***

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: [www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions](http://www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions).

## Itinerary Details

The Best of Thailand itinerary combines our 4 nights Southern Thailand itinerary with the 6 night Similan & Surin Island itinerary to offer guests the opportunity to experience the highlights of both in a single 10 night liveboard trip.

This itinerary involves some long distance travel and, whilst we attempt to ensure the number of planned dives is fulfilled, bad weather and sea conditions can affect the boat's ability to reach a specific dive site in good time and may impact on the number of dives that are possible.

**Number of scheduled dives:** Up to 33

**PLEASE NOTE:** In some cases, this itinerary may be adjusted to run as consecutive 4 nights [Southern Thailand](#) and 6 nights [Similan & Surin Islands](#) (or vice versa)\* to accommodate guests who are unable to do the full 10 night duration.

\* Itineraries starting from Chalong and ending at Thap Lamu will do 4 nights Southern Thailand followed by 6 nights Similans and Surin Islands.

\* Itineraries starting from Thap Lamu and ending in Chalong will do 6 nights Similan & Surin Islands before heading South for 4 nights.

However, should there be a need to do so for any reason, ***this does not impact on the areas visited or the number of dives*** that are normally possible over the course of the full 10 nights itinerary; it simply means that guests can embark or disembark in Chalong while others remain on board as The Phinisi travels between the Southern Islands and the Similan Islands.

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

***Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you, or any of your group, do not speak or understand English, please contact us.***

**Day 1:** Embarkation at 18:00 is followed by introductions, safety briefings and dinner.

**Day 2-9\*:** Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and a sunset or night dive. A typical diving day is scheduled as follows:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation followed by briefing & Dive 3
- Snack
- Briefing for Dive
- Dinner

\*If the itinerary has been adjusted to allow guests to disembark after 4 nights or 6 nights as determined by the 10 night itinerary embarkation location, the vessel will briefly stop at Chalong enroute to or from The Similan Islands on either day 5 or day 7.

**Day 10:** Usually 2 morning\* dives before The Phinisi commences the cruise to port.

**Day 11:** Breakfast on board followed by disembarkation between 09:30 and 10:00 am.

\*We kindly request that guests check their flight departure times to ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and the departure of their flight.

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, the safety of all on board remains paramount. In the unlikely event we are unable to reach a specified dive site, we always do our best in offering diving at alternative locations.

The following is a description of the dive sites that we may visit during your liveaboard.

## Southern Thailand

### Koh Phi Phi National Park

Lying in Phang-Nga Bay, about 45 km east of Phuket and 30 km southwest of Krabi, two breathtaking limestone islands make up the greater part of Moo Koh Phi Phi, an archipelago of 6 islands, with the largest island of Phi Phi Don being a few kilometres north of Phi Phi Lae. Limestone cliffs rise vertically into the sky, where the trees take over. There are many beaches, coves, and bays which make for dramatic scenery to enjoy during surface intervals.

There are many, many dive sites around the Phi Phi island group, many consisting of wall dives, the limestone dropping to depth ranges between 10m and 25m. The walls can have gorgonian fans, soft corals and coral bushes and interesting rock formations and swim throughs. At the base of these walls there are often hard coral gardens to explore. You can expect a great amount of fish life, including lionfish, wrasse, moorish idols, angelfish, rays, trevallies. Also keep an eye out for leopard and nurse sharks sleeping on the sandy bottoms or blacktip reef sharks cruising the reefs. Turtles are also commonly seen here. Lastly, check the fans and bushes for tigertail seahorses and harlequin ghost pipefish.

## King Cruiser

The King Cruiser was a car ferry that used to travel between Phi Phi and Phuket until, in 1997, 'The Cruiser' hit Anemone Reef on her crossing and sank a short distance away. No lives were lost, but divers were left with a great wreck dive! Although now largely broken up, she is covered with soft corals and hides some wonderful gems, as well as being home to several large schools of snapper. While currents can be strong and visibility sometimes challenging, this is a great site to dive as part of an Advanced Open Water Course.

## Shark Point and Anemone Reef

These pinnacles are part of the same reef system and are only a very short distance apart from each other. Both sites are covered with colourful soft corals and anemones with a variety of fish to suit all divers. From barracuda to seahorses and, for the lucky ones, the iconic leopard shark!

## Koh Haa National Park

Possibly some of the most underrated diving in the whole of Thailand, Moo Koh Haa (meaning Five Islands) sits almost halfway between Hin Daeng and Phi Phi and is part of the Ko Lanta National Marine Park. While they may not be much to look at above water, these amazing islands offer a variety of pinnacles, walls, boulders, caverns, and swim-throughs beneath the surface. There are several dive sites around Ko Haa but the highlights are **Ko Haa Lagoon, Ko Haa Neua, and Ko Haa Yai.**

Ko Haa lagoon is ideal for night dives, courses, and snorkelling, while **The Chimney** and **The Cathedral** offer things that you cannot see on other Thailand liveaboard itineraries with caverns, swim-throughs and chambers littering the sites. Ko Haa has varied marine life too, with ornate ghost pipefish, morays eels, octopus, hawksbill turtles, sea horses, marble rays, and sometimes even leopard sharks.

## Hin Daeng & Hin Muang

Translating as Red Rock and Purple Rock, with their names derived from the colour of the corals they host, these two sites are pinnacles in the open ocean, reaching down to over 70m, and are best known for manta ray and whale shark encounters. Whether these are sighted or not, the sites also offer giant moray eels, pharaoh cuttlefish, schooling rainbow runners and snappers, barracudas, groupers, fusiliers, and bluefin trevally. On the pinnacles, there are fields of Magnificent Anemones, walls of Hemprics soft corals, and huge gorgonian sea fans.

Almost perpetual good visibility and dramatic topography combined with huge fish numbers makes for excellent liveaboard diving.

## Similan Islands National Park

The above water scenery will provide stunningly beautiful white sandy beaches with small forested areas. Dive some of the following sites; **Boulder City, Sharkfin Reef, Anita's Reef** and **Three Trees.** Under the surface you may see: Leopard (zebra) shark, blue spotted stingrays, clown triggerfish, rabbit fish, scorpion fish, snappers, emperor fish, giant trevally and angelfish. The coral gardens, bommies and boulder formations are wonderful to dive.

**Elephant Head Rock**, visible from the surface, is the biggest pinnacle in the Similans and has some fantastic swim-throughs. White tip reef sharks, batfish, trevally and barracuda can often be seen on the perimeter of the boulders. If you look closely in the cracks and in the rubble you can see smashing mantis shrimp, porcelain crab, moray eels and cleaner shrimp.

There are also sites dominated by huge granite boulders such as **Deep Six**, **Christmas Point**, and **North Point** where you can see white tip reef sharks, schooling giant trevally, and schools of neon fusiliers.

## Koh Bon

This is generally the most likely place to see manta rays on this itinerary. You are also likely to see Napoleon wrasse, sweetlips, octopus, bluefin trevally, giant moray eels, great barracudas, fire dart goby, spiny lobster and nudibranchs of many types. The dive sites vary from wall diving to gently sloping reefs and from submerged boulders to coral gardens.

Diving on the **West Ridge** can be an adrenaline filled drift, with amazing views, while the **North Reef** is a gentler experience over a hard coral garden.

## Koh Tachai

This island is famous for its pinnacle dive site, known by many as **Twin Peaks** as well as more relaxed reef diving on the **North Reef** and **South Reef**. Normally, turtles, barracuda, pipefish, and nudibranchs can be found here. There is also a chance to see bigger species in this area like manta rays and whale sharks, especially by late January until April.

## Richelieu Rock

This limestone pinnacle was named by Jacques Cousteau after Cardinal Richelieu due to the similarity to the colour of his gown as there are gorgeous purple dendronephthya soft corals covering most of the pinnacle. There are other areas covered in magnificent sea anemones as well. Barely breaking the surface at low tide, this horseshoe-shaped outcropping slopes steeply to a sandy bottom at 18 to 35 metres (60-120 Ft). This site offers great diversity for such a small and isolated spot. It also offers excellent multi-level diving and, because it's a high-profile reef, there's always sheltered areas to hide from currents.

The marine life is prolific and includes amongst, many other things; pharaoh cuttlefish, large octopi, all 5 varieties of anemone fish of the Andaman Sea, variety of moray eels, ornate ghost pipefish, smashing mantis shrimps, harlequin shrimps, tiger tail seahorses, spanish mackerel, frog fish, many schooling snapper and occasional sightings of manta rays and whale sharks.

## Surin Islands National Park

The topside scenery of Koh Surin, with evergreen forests, mangroves, and small beaches, surpasses even that of the picturesque Similan Islands. Under water the reefs of Surin have some of the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand. Across sites like **Torinla Pinnacle**, **Hin Kong**, and **Turtle Ledges** you are likely to see Napoleon wrasse, yellow-masked angelfish, bumphead parrotfish, tomato anemonefish and barramundi, as well as lots of turtles that still come ashore in this area to lay their eggs. Because of the remoteness not many liveboard boats visit these islands and you will be able to enjoy the dive sites without sharing it with tourist hordes.

## Khao Lak Wrecks

Before disembarking in Khao Lak, if conditions and timing are favourable there is a choice of easily diveable wrecks between the Similan Islands and the port of Tap Lamu. **The Boonsung** and **The Premchai** are old tin miners that were sunk in the 1990's and are a treat for underwater photographers as well as lovers of life of all kinds!

Only in 18m of water they are covered in nudibranchs and various kinds of shrimps. Many quite unusual honeycomb morays also made these wrecks home. There are also huge numbers of schooling fish as well as rays and sharks that can occasionally be seen. **Sea Chart 1** is a slightly more challenging dive and lies between 40 and 25 metres. Sunk during a storm in 2009 with a full load of teak, she is relatively new but already hosts an abundance of schooling fish.

Along the route there are some incredible views from the boat including verdant forests, deserted beaches, and limestone karsts climbing vertically from the ocean. There will be several opportunities to leave the boat and take a walk on the islands. A walk up the trail to Sail Rock is definitely time well spent! You can even be entertained by marine life while relaxing on board The Phinisi as dolphins cruising along with the boat are not an unusual sight.