SCUBA DIVING & SNORKELLING

Koh Phangan is an excellent place to dive and snorkel with numerous dive sites and a relaxed yet professional attitude to the sport. Groups are usually small, four people a typical size, with the vibrant coral reef that follows the west coast of the island, there are plenty of beach dive sites and areas easily accessible to snorkellers. It is also a very inexpensive place to learn to dive, with PADI Open Water courses at some of the best rates in the world and courses right up to instructor level. Best of all is the location, as we are only 20 kilometres away from the best dive sites in the Gulf of Thailand.

DIVING COURSES

There are various options open to those who want to learn to dive, from a one day introductory course to see if you like it, to the PADI Open Water Certificate that is an internationally recognised qualification to allow you to dive anywhere in the world. For experienced divers there are a multitude of courses such as Rescue Diver, EFR, and even Nitrox Enriched Air for those who want longer down under. There are also Divemaster courses for those who want to enter the first step on the professional ladder in diving, with assistant instructor and instructor courses for the fully initiated.

Choose Phangan

More and more people are choosing Koh Phangan as their base for scuba diving, it is less crowded and students tend to get smaller groups with better instructor ratio. Phangan is also closest to Sail Rock, the premier dive site in the Gulf of Thailand. Highlights include some excellent beach dives for beginners and whale shark spotting at Sail Rock. In terms of learning, many dive resorts now have purpose-built swimming pools suitable for training and have first class facilities including free accommodation for students.
Scuba Dive
Koh Phangan...

FIVE STAR INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT RESORT
DIVE CENTER – ACCOMODATION – RESTAURANT – BAR
as recommended by the lonely planet / PADI Award winner 2012

> DAILY FUN DIVING & SNORKELLING
> All PADI courses from Non diver to PADI Staff Instructor
> CONTACT US: ☏ 077 374321 or 080 0788920
info@sailrockdiversresort.com / www.sailrockdiversresort.com
We are located in Chaloklum – booking office in Salad Beach.

Popular Dive Trips -
Snorkelling Trips -
Dive Maps -
- Recommended Dive Schools
- Scuba Diving Courses
- Marine Life Gallery
www.kohphangandiving.com
Sail Rock
Sail Rock is undoubtedly the most famous dive site in the Gulf of Thailand and is located in-between Koh Phangan and Koh Tao. A spectacular rock formation that rises out of the sea, creating an excellent wall dive with a great range of marine life, spectacular underwater scenery, rock formations and the legendary “Chimney” swim-through! A fantastic site that can be explored by all levels of divers; maximum depth 40m.

Koh Tao and Koh Nang Yuan
Koh Tao has loads of beach dive sites and two major dive sites; Shark Island nearby and Southwest Pinnacle about 15kms away. Both are exceptional sites with a great variety of reef fish and alluring rocky formations; maximum depth 32m.

For more information about Koh Nang Yuan and day trips to the island see page 120.

Koh Ma
Koh Ma is a small picturesque island connected to Koh Phangan by a sandbar at Haad Mae Haad on the north west coast. It is possible to beach dive from either Mae Haad or Koh Ma and several local scuba schools do trips by boat. That said, it is far from crowded and is an excellent place to see the local marine life, with schooling fish, bannerfish & big grouper, barracuda and a vast range of coral; maximum depth 24m.

Haad Salad, Haad Yao & Haad Chao Phao
These three beaches are all bordered by the long coral reef that thrives on the west coast of Phangan and runs up to Koh Ma. Any one of these beaches offers great beach and boat dives with a range of hard corals & reef fish; maximum depth 19m.

Koh Tae Nok
Koh Tae Nok is located near Thongsala on the south coast of Koh Phangan and is a great local boat dive; with reef fish, hard corals and the odd small reef shark; maximum depth 19m.
Ang Thong Marine Park
The Marine Park of Ang Thong consists of a string of about 42 islands and offers some of the most beautiful, vibrant, undamaged coral in Thailand. The boat trip takes about two hours to get to the northernmost tip of the Marine Park and Koh Ang Thong has the best range of fish within the Gulf of Siam. There is a good chance of seeing the rarer creatures such as turtles or seasnakes and the sites are also very scenic, featuring 2m giant hydroids and black corals; ideal not just for beginners but also for the more experienced diver; maximum depth 25m+.

There are several tour operators that run regular trips to Ang Thong Marine Park, for more information and a full review of Ang Thong check out page 118.

Dive Schools

Chaloklum Diving (right)
077 374025 or 08 1477 2005
www.chaloklum-diving.com
Established over 17 years (with 30+ years experience!), Chaloklum Diving offer luxury diving and snorkelling trips with personal PADI courses from novice to pro (in most languages). Their full facility PADI dive centre is in Chaloklum village, with bases at Mae Haad and Haad Yao beaches. They have a simple policy: only small groups, genuine individual care, long relaxed dives and consistent high standards. Their big, comfortable dive boat means lots of space (non-divers truly welcome) and stability; room to spread out; enjoy the ride, the good food and the social side of the day. Chaloklum Diving sponsor the local deco-chamber and are members of Divers Alert Network; they have insurance cover for all customers and are TAT approved.

Tropical Dive Club (right)
077 445081, Thong Nai Pan Noi
www.tropicaldiveclub.com
New location, based at the end of the beautiful beach of Thong Nai Pan Noi at Thongtapan Resort next to I-Sea Beach Bar the Tropical Dive Club is a multi-lingual school specialising in Deutsch and English tuition. To ensure the best quality dive trips, Tropical Dive only works with small groups of divers or on a one-to-one basis. They also appreciate that most visitors prefer a few extra hours in bed which is why the boat departs directly from the bay at around 11am! The full range of PADI and SSI dive courses are available including Discover Scuba for those wanting to sample the thrill of diving. Snorkellers are always welcome.
Haad Yao Divers (p41)
08 4841 2102 or 08 6279 3085
www.haadyaodivers.com

Haad Yao Divers is the first PADI 5 Star IDC Dive Resort and only Go ECO Operator on Koh Phangan and is recommended by Lonely Planet. The dive shop is on Haad Yao, the IDC Center on Haad Chao Phao.

When diving on Koh Phangan one of the most knowledgeable and friendly operations is the team from Haad Yao Divers. This small 5 Star IDC Center is known for being a pioneer in diving along Koh Phangan’s West coast. They promise small groups, high standards of teaching and a relaxed friendly atmosphere with personal tuition. Courses range from half/one day Discover Scuba Diving courses right up to the Instructor qualification and can be taught in English, Deutsch, Dutch, Spanish or Français with teaching materials available in many other languages.

Reefers 5 Star Dive Resort (below)
077 349291, Haad Yao
www.reefersdiving.com

A tranquil dive resort situated at the north end of Haad Yao beach offering great dive/stay packages. The resort is set in beautiful surroundings and offers everything you need for a relaxed, friendly diving environment. There is a fully equipped center, airy classrooms, equipment rental and retail and 8 lovely bungalows set on a small hillside which are included with all PADI courses. The lounge and garden restaurant are the perfect places to hang out after a days diving with perhaps a cocktail from the bar. For groups that want some adventure, Reefers also do overnight trips to the Ang Thong Marine Park - the inspiration for the book The Beach.

Lotus & Crystal Diving, Haad Rin (p35)
Haad Rin Office, 077 375535
www.backpackersthailand.com

Lotus Dive Resort is the only Koh Phangan 5-star PADI dive company with a Haad Rin office recommended by Lonely Planet Thailand! Crystal is Koh Tao’s award-winning dive centre. Pre-book PADI courses for a FREE transfer and FREE rooms on Koh Tao! After Full Moon Party Koh Tao is normally full, so best to pre-book!

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Pirate Divers, Haad Salad (right)
08 1077 4470
www.piratediversthailand.com
Pirate Divers is located in Haad Salad beach where you will find a tropical reef, great for scuba diving or snorkeling. Pirate Divers PADI and SSI professional staff strive to give their best in customer service. Highly competitive prices are offered on all diving and equipment sales. With guaranteed small groups you will be sure to have an unforgettable experience. Dive at Sail Rock and Ang Thong Marine Park; 2 of the best sites in the Gulf of Thailand. All PADI and SSI courses are available from beginner up to Divemaster. Teaching is available in many languages. Less than a year old dive equipment and compressor for your comfort and safety. Join Pirate Divers on their boat for snorkeling and dive trips.

Fun Factory, Thongsala (above)
077 238745 or 08 1677 2101
www.phanganfunfactory.com
The Fun Factory is a small independent dive school, which seeks to offer an exceptional service. A taxi will pick up and deliver you to the dive boat in Chaloklum bay. From there you will be taken to the best dive sites around. The food is good, the atmosphere friendly, the equipment well maintained and the staff professional, with the emphasis on small to individual groups. The staffs available are native speakers of a wide variety of languages. The dive shop is located in Thongsala. They offer fun dives for trained divers as well as trial dives if you just want to know how it feels. We offer SSI and PADI courses from beginner to professional level. Snorkelers and non divers are welcome on the boat too.

Sail Rock Divers (p39)
Chaloklum, Haad Salad & Haad Rin
077 374321
www.sailrockdivecentre.com
Koh Phangan’s premier 5 STAR Instructor Development Centre, Sail Rock Divers are the first and only one stop dive resort with air-con bungalows starting from 900 Baht per night, Thai and International restaurant and poolside bar. Also the only IDC centre with a full time course director on staff as well as 3 master instructors and The only dive school in Thailand to recieve the PADI Award for Outstanding Contribution to Diver Education 2012. They have 2 purpose built dive boats which serve all of the major dive sites in the Gulf of Thailand. Nitrox is also available from their own filling station. The dive center has 2 air-con classrooms with the latest multi-media PADI materials and a 3m deep purpose built dive training pool. All courses from beginner to instructor are available. Gopro - Open Water to Dive Master or Instructor Internships. Recommend by the Lonely Planet. Sail Rock Divers received the PADI AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTING TO DIVER EDUCATION 2012.

The Dive Inn (right)
077 374262, Chaloklum
www.the-diveinn.com
The Dive Inn, situated in Chaloklum Village, specialises in PADI courses, from beginner to professional. Courses are conducted in multiple languages and at a pace to suit you. Daily trips to prime diving and snorkeling sites in the Gulf of Thailand, under the guidance of some of the most highly experienced and dedicated staff on Koh Phangan. Small groups, based on activity and experience, are guaranteed to ensure your enjoyment and safety. The Dive Inn can also arrange flexible courses, so if you want to take a day off, no problem, it’s your holiday after all.

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France Plongée, Haad Salad (above)  077 349 323, 09 0067 0394  www.franceplongee.com

Notre club est situé sur une des plus belles plages de Koh Phangan, Haad Salad beach au coeur du familial resort Haad Salad Villa. Face à la plage, nous sommes immédiatement dans l’eau pour votre baptême, votre formation ou votre plongée locale. Nous organisons aussi des plongées à la journée sur les sites de Sail Rock, Marine Park, Koh Tao, 3 Pinnacles, Koh Ma etc. Issus d’une double formation PADI et FFESSM, vous trouverez chez nous la formation que vous désirez. Nous vous attendons pour partager avec vous notre passion de la plongée sous marine. VENEZ GOUTER LA DIFFEREN... More info from franceplongee.phangan@gmail.com.

**Snorkelling**

There are many good spots to enjoy a bit of snorkelling on Koh Phangan. The best area is all along the west coast, especially the following beaches:

- Koh Ma (see p40)
- Haad Chao Phao (see p158)
- Haad Yao (see p160)
- Haad Salad (see p160)
- Haad Khom (see p162)

*PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THE CORALS AND THINK SAFETY*

There is very little to be warned about as the Gulf does not harbour many sea-nasties, though look before you put your feet down and **NEVER** stand on coral as it kills thousands of years of growth instantly. Beware of strong currents, wear a t-shirt to stop your back burning….and enjoy.

If you are not on Koh Phangan too long or don’t want arrange your own transport, an excellent way to visit the best snorkelling spots is by booking on an around-the-island boat trip. These organised boat trips run every day depending on the weather of course – if you have booked ahead only to find that it is wet and windy you will receive a full refund. Most depart at around 12.00pm and arrive back at 6.00pm and will include lunch, snorkel and mask.

_Itsaramai Sailing Yacht (p102)   Thongsala, 08 7268 0940_  
Overnight 2 day cruise to Ang Thong Marine Park. Itsaramai, a beautiful 20m wooden yacht, sails to let you discover the jewels in the Gulf of Thailand away from the crowds. White sand secluded beaches, hidden lagoons, caves, snorkelling and fishing. Good food, good care and good fun…we speak English, French and Thai.

_Orion Boat Trips, Thongsala (p103)   08 1999 2000 or 08 1894 5076   www.phanganboattrips.com_  
Orion Boat Trips offer regular cruises to Ang Thong National Marine Park (see page 118) to see some of Thailand’s most hidden treasures. With plenty of outside space and shade, this wooden cruiser offers a unique all day adventure, complete with light breakfast, buffet lunch, snacks and soft drinks, fruit and snorkelling equipment. Prices are 1,800 Baht per person or 2,000 Baht with kayaks, and includes all the marine park entrance fees. Orion is also available for private charter.

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**Marine Conservation**

CORE Sea, Chaloklum (above)  www.coresea.com  
08 7273 9663 or 08 3106 7360  
CORE Sea is Koh Phangan’s only dedicated marine conservation and research center. You can help to protect the beautiful and unique coral-reefs of the island by joining for a day-trip or one of the courses for marine conservation, ecology and research. No previous experience needed. Volunteering opportunities are available, as is the possibility to conduct research for university credit. Every contribution makes a difference, so get involved today!

Visit the center in Chaloklum (see page 162) for information or a chat with the resident marine biologists, or just give them a call!
Marine Life

Koh Phangan has a diverse variety of marine life that you can expect to see. Photographs kindly provided by:
Johnny Williams
Koh Phangan Dive Instructor
Haad Yao Divers
www.haadyaodivers.com
Chaloklum Diving
www.chaloklum-diving.com
The Dive Inn
www.thediveinn.com

Whale Shark

Lion Fish

Teira Batfish

Blue Spotted Stingray

Indian Tube Worm

Scorpion Fish

Christmas Tree Worms

Yellow Boxfish

Hawksbill Turtle

Grouper

Crab