

Dive And Cruise

WORLDWIDE

<http://www.dive-and-cruise.com>



MV PAWARA

SIMILAN ISLANDS & RICHELIEU – 4 DAYS/4 NIGHTS

DAYS	ITINERARY	DIVES
DAY 0	Our liveaboard customers will be picked up at their hotel or at the airport in the afternoon, and taken to our pier at 7pm and board the boat. Most days we will depart around 9pm after a full boat briefing and a full hearty dinner.	---
DAY 1	Similan Islands. Here, you can explore swim-throughs, avoiding the huge sea fans; you may see a shy white-tip or black-tip shark, as they speed off into the blue. In good visibility, the granite boulders truly can seem like an underwater city. On the east side of the Similan islands, you can drift through coral gardens and streams of fusiliers, watch dozens of Christmas worms pop closed as you pass, or observe fields of garden eels, swaying in the sand.	4
DAY 2	Richelieu Rock is world-famous for sightings of the magnificent, yet gentle, whale shark. The plankton concentration here is often very high and thus, the amount and variety of fish and coral is larger than anywhere else on Thailand's west coast.	4
DAY 3	Koh Bon, Koh Tachai. Located halfway between Surin and Similan, Koh Tachai and Koh Bon offer fantastic scuba dives with many soft coral and schools of large tuna and barracudas. The main attraction of Koh Tachai is a huge underwater reef with big boulders, sea fans, and swim-throughs. Koh Bon is the ultimate spot for deep dives, as the impressive reefs and walls drop down to depths of more than 45 meters (150 ft.) in crystal clear, blue water. Also, manta rays are frequently sighted in this area.	4
DAY 4	On the final day of the cruise, we only make two dives, and return to our pier about 3pm. There's usually a lot of photo taking and email exchanging among new found friends, and after some goodbyes to each other and to the boat we drive our customers back to their hotels.	2
TOTAL DIVE		14

BOAT SPECIFICATIONS

Technical specifications	Accommodation and Facilities	Navigation and Communications
<p>Year built : 2004 Lengths : 35m Width : 7m Engine : 2x HP Hino Cruising speed : 13 knots Max speed : 15 knots Generators : 2x 50 KVA Electricity : 220V & 240V Compressors : 2x k14</p> <p>NITROX</p>	<p>Staterooms : 10 Each cabin is equipped with its own unit of air conditioning, and each room has en suite private toilet and shower.</p> <p>Max passengers : 20 Crew : 12</p>	<p>VHF Marine Band radio, Local band radio, 2 way radio, Radar, Sounder, GPS, Chart Plotter,</p>

FAQ

Flying to Thailand and Phuket

There are two airports in **Bangkok**, with all international flights arriving to the new international airport of **Suvarnabhumi** (airport code BKK). Most major airlines fly direct to at least Bangkok, and often to Phuket. Thai Airways International (THAI) is the national airline and is regarded as one of the best airlines in the world, with another great carrier being Singapore Airlines who have multiple flights to Bangkok and Phuket daily.

Phuket also has an international airport, with at least five flights a day (this varies from high-season to low-season) arriving from Bangkok year-round. Phuket also welcomes planes from Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, and even Europe to its airport.

If you have a connecting flight to Phuket then it can leave from Suvarnabhumi or from the old international airport of **Don Mueang** (airport code DMK, which is now purely domestic). Please check your tickets, transfer times, and lay-over times between flights as passage between the two airports can be time consuming. Thailand has a number of discount and budget domestic airlines which can be good as long as you don't want to change your travel plans. You can save 50% or more using these carriers if you book early but keep in mind that they usually limit your luggage weight to 15kg or 33lbs. For many divers this is simply not enough and by the time you pay the over weight fees, you may not end up saving any money.

Visa Requirements

All travellers to Thailand must have a passport that is valid for at least six months from the date of entry into the Kingdom. Although nationals of most countries in Southeast Asia, Europe, America, and Oceania are granted **visa on arrival** for up to 30 days, some are only granted 15 days, and others must have **visa before arrival**. See the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for an up to date list of what is required.

If in doubt please contact the Thai embassy in your country for more information, see here for a list of Thai Embassies around the world.

Accommodation upon Arrival in Phuket

It is highly recommended that you **arrive at least one day prior to your cruise**.

Electricity Supply

In Thailand 220Volt/50Hz is standard with sockets mixed between 2 and/or 3 pin flat and/or round pins. To avoid confusion or disappointment we suggest guests bring at least one travel adapter

Currency

The common currency of Thailand is the **Thai Baht (THB)**. Visa and Mastercard are commonly accepted in most stores (though American Express is less so) and **cash machines** are widely available in tourist areas. Currency exchange is also widely available, though we suggest using banks (where you will get a fair exchange rate and often pay no commission) rather than hotels or others who generally provide poorer rates. You will sometimes find that US Dollars, Euros, and the GB Pound are accepted in larger hotels.

Eating out and Thai Food

No matter what your gastronomical tastes there is something for everyone in Phuket with world wide fast food outlets, street carts, fine international restaurants, and wonderful traditional Royal Thai Cuisine all available. With all the major resorts and Phuket City offering a wide choice you can eat somewhere new every night !

Climate

Thailand's tropical climate is influenced by the southwest and northeast monsoons. There are three basic seasons: Dry (November through Feb), Hot (March through May) and Rainy (June through October). Day trip diving is possible all year round, though the liveaboard season is restricted to the 'dry' and 'hot' seasons

Air and Water Temperatures

Air temperature: 23°C - 35°C (73°F - 95°F), always warm and can be very hot and humid, nights sometimes a little cooler. Water temperature in the Andaman Sea averages around 27°C to 30°C (80°F - 86°F), very pleasant although sometimes thermo clines occur. A 3mm short wetsuit is normally enough, though with 4 dives per day you may want to think about a full length suit particularly if you are susceptible to the cold. Please contact the office a week or so prior to the trip for current water temperatures if you are concerned.

Clothing and Dress Codes

In all tourist resorts shorts and t-shirts are acceptable attire. This is also appropriate at night, though 'smart casual' is preferred in the better eating establishments. Jackets and ties are not required anywhere. Ladies are expected to **dress appropriately** when visiting temples, for example, cover your shoulders and wear dresses or trousers below the knee at the very least. Aside from this, light natural fibers are advised as they are comfortable and allow the air to circulate, man made fibres can cause you to sweat in this humid climate and can cause heat rash or worse.

Health

Health services are excellent in Thailand with modern, well equipped hospitals in all major towns. Although Thailand is officially a malarial area, most of the country (including Phuket) is **Malaria** free, though **Dengue Fever** is not unknown. We recommend you check the status of your vaccinations and seek your doctor's advice on inoculations and medication. Normal sensible precautions with food should keep you out of trouble, and be sure to **drink lots of bottled drinking water** to prevent dehydration (especially if your best laid plans have still left you with a bout of diarrhoea). DO NOT drink tap water in Thailand! Also, be sure to wash regularly and wear light, loose clothing made from natural fibres as heat rash and fungal infections for visitors are not unusual in this humidity.

Religious Matters

Nearly all Thais are **Buddhist** (somewhere approaching 90%) with a small percentage (some 5%) being **Muslim**, though the south has a higher proportion of Muslims. The remainder of the country is made up

of various religions with Christianity, Hinduism, and Confucianism making up most of the 5 or 6% left. There is a great tolerance between religions symbolised by the fact that the King is the Protector of All Faiths

Simple Etiquette

King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the head of the constitutional monarchy in Thailand and is, along with the whole royal family, held in the highest esteem. The family has the love and respect of the entire nation and showing disrespect can get you into trouble. Joking about the Royal Family is simply not done ! Do not point your feet at people, especially monks or representations of Buddha, as this seen as highly disrespectful, as is touching adults on the top of their heads.

If you are in a situation that leads you to be in contact with the police for ANY reason, you must **remain calm and respectful** at all times. Raising your voice, displaying anger, making demands will get you nowhere, in fact will probably make matters worse no matter whether the problem is your fault or not. Good humour and patience will get you a long way in any situation.

Time Zone

Local time is GMT+7 hours throughout the year. Thailand has no daylight savings time and sunrise and sunset are pretty regular year round with sunrise between 6:00am and 6:45am and sunset between 6:00pm and 6:45pm.

Postal Services

The Thai postal service is mostly reliable, especially if posting abroad, though speed does not seem to be a priority. **Post offices** in Thailand are open from 9:00am until 3:30pm. Important items can be sent by Express Mail Service (**EMS**) from most post offices which is both faster and more reliable (with a proportionally higher cost). Both **DHL** and **UPS** have offices on Phuket if you want to be sure of their international standards.

Telephone and Internet Services

International dialling is available from almost all major hotels (and many smaller ones), as well as many offices offering travel and/or internet services. To make an international call, dial 001 plus Country Code plus Area Code plus Phone Number. Services tend to be very reliable. Internet is also widely available with everyone from hotels to coffee shops offering computers with internet service and WIFI. The speed of internet is still not up to western standards but internet calls via Skype are mostly clear and consistent as long as you don't try to involve a webcam.

Shopping and Bargaining

There is a massive amount of shopping available in Phuket. Regular purchases such as clothing, perfumes, shoes, sunglasses, souvenirs, computer gaming hardware and software are all available. Beware when buying (especially anything designer or software) that you are buying the real thing when paying 'real' prices. **Tailors** are also very very popular in Phuket, and rightly so. Within 24-48 hours you can have a bespoke dress, shirt, coat, or three piece suit made in the material of your choice at an incredibly low price ! There are also, genuine, traditional Thai wares available outside of the resorts, especially in Phuket City. These include **wood carvings, teak ware, porcelain, paintings, and Buddha imagery**. Thai **silk products** are very popular too with outlets such as the legendary Jim Thompson now available on Phuket. If you want something traditionally 'Phuket', look out for **pearls, tin, and pewter ware**, all of which are widely available outside the resorts.

Jewellery is also very popular on Phuket with gold, diamonds, and coloured gems particularly prevalent. Be aware when buying since authentic gems should come with a certificate that states the value of the object and a statement of its value, if this is not present and you are not in the business yourself be very careful.

Crime and the Police

Known as the land of smiles Thailand is a very safe place to travel around, as demonstrated by the high volume of young backpackers flocking here every year. The police keep a very high profile, with dedicated **Tourist Police** in all tourist areas designated to looking after the rights of foreign visitors.

As in almost all countries, **pick-pocketing** happens in crowded areas such as bus and rail stations, tourist spots, and busy gatherings (festivals and bars) so watching your valuables in these areas would be wise. It is not unknown for things to go missing from hotel rooms, but by the same token it IS very unusual. By enlarge, Thai staff are very polite and honest. By taking sensible precautions you should have no problems while in Thailand.

It is also worth noting here that **drugs** are very much to be avoided in Thailand. The government has a very vocal and well known harsh system for dealing with people it considers to be involved in this business (including their infamous 'shoot now ask later' system from several years ago), and penalties are very strong.

If you are involved in any kind of incident then the police must be informed (ideally tourist police if they can be contacted). As stated in 'Simple Etiquette', when dealing with the police remain calm and polite in order to get the best help and co-operation.

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