

The Phinisi

The Best of Thailand

10 Nights - Itinerary

Join The Phinisi on this unique itinerary exploring the very best diving that Thailand has to offer, taking in the highlights of Hin Daeng, Hin Muang, Koh Haa, Koh Phi Phi, King Cruiser, the Similan Islands and, Koh Bon, Koh Tachai and Richelieu Rock.

Schedule

Your Cruise Director will schedule up to 4 dives per day; 3 day dives and either a sunset or a night dive. The diving day has a typical schedule 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, relaxation, followed by briefing & Dive 4
- Dinner (if Night Dive, it will be after dinner)

For your final day aboard we schedule 3 dives to allow plenty of time for off-gassing before disembarkation and your flight home. The Cruise Director is happy to listen to requests from guests to visit or remain at certain sites and providing it is possible and the schedule allows, then guest's requests are respected.

Itinerary

Please note: we wish to show you the very best diving possible but a number of factors can determine where we visit. Weather, tides, currents and how busy a site is with other dive vessels all play a part in the Cruise Director's decision of which route the yacht takes. Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives we have scheduled is fulfilled, bad weather can hinder the yacht's ability to reach a specified dive site in good time. The safety of all on board is paramount and we always do our best in offering diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit those sites listed below:

Southern Thailand

Koh Phi Phi

With mini-walls and shallow coral gardens predominating, there are a host of dive sites to choose from around the Phi Phi national Park. Hin Bida, Koh Bida Nok, Koh Bida Nai, Pilay Wall, Hin Dot and Ao Maya all offer something special. Wildlife is hugely varied across the sites with black tip reef sharks common, tigertail seahorses, ornate ghost pipefish, cornet fish, octopus, scorpion fish, blue fin trevally, barracudas and more.

King Cruiser

The King Cruiser was a car ferry that used to travel between Phi Phi and Phuket. 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! While she is largely broken up now, 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 of course, the iconic leopard shark!

Koh Haa

Possibly some of the most underrated diving in the whole of Thailand, Moo Koh Haa (literally 'five island group') sits almost halfway between Hin Daeng and Phi Phi and is part of the Ko Lanta National Marine Park. There are actually several dive sites around Ko Haa but the highlights are Ko Haa Lagoon, Ko Haa Neua, and Ko Haa Yai.

Around these amazing islands you can see pinnacles, walls, boulders, caverns, and swim-throughs. 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

These two sites are pinnacles (translating directly as Red Rock and Purple Rock) in open ocean, reaching down to over 70m, and are best known for manta ray and whale shark encounters but, whether they are sighted or not, the sites also offer giant moray eels, pharaoh cuttlefish, schooling rainbow runners and snappers, barracudas, groupers, fusiliers and blue fin 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 number makes for excellent liveaboard diving.

Similan and Surin Islands

Similan Islands

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 Honeymoon Bay. Under the surface you may see: Leopard (zebra) shark, blue spotted stingrays, clown trigger fish, 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, this 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.

Koh Bon

Often, this the most likely place to see manta rays on this itinerary. You are likely to see Napoleon wrasse, sweetlips, octopus, blue fin 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.

Elephant Head Rock, visible from the surface, this is the biggest pinnacle in the Similans and has some fantastic swim-throughs. If lucky you might see some 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.

Koh Tachai

This island is famous for its pinnacle dive site and more relaxed reef diving. Normally, turtles, barracuda, pipe fish, 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 General Richelieu, who was an important Danish officer in the Thai Navy. There are gorgeous purple dendronephthya soft corals covering most of the pinnacle and 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 meters (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 current.

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 sea horses, Spanish mackerel, frog fish, many schooling snapper and occasional sightings of manta rays and whale sharks.

Surin Islands

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 the greatest hard coral diversity in Thailand. 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 liveaboard 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 sank 25 or so years ago 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.

Top Side

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 with The Phinisi with dolphins cruising along with the boat not an unusual sight.