

Krabi & Phi Phi Island

Introduction

Krabi is a southern province on Thailand's Andaman seaboard with perhaps the country's oldest history of continued settlement. After dating stone tools, ancient coloured pictures, beads, pottery and skeletal remains found in the province's many cliffs and caves, it is thought that Krabi has been home to homo sapiens since the period 25,000 - 35,000 B.C. In recorded times it was called the 'Ban Thai Samor', and was one of twelve towns that used, before people were widely literate, the monkey for their standard. At that time, c. 1200 A.D., Krabi was tributary to the Kingdom of Ligor, a city on the Kra Peninsula's east coast better known today as Nakhon Si Thammarat.

At the start of the Rattanakosin period, about 200 years ago, when the capital was finally settled at Bangkok, an elephant kraal was established in Krabi by order of Chao Phraya Nakorn (Noi), the governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat, which was by then a part of the Thai Kingdom. He sent his vizier, the Phra Palad, to oversee this task, which was to ensure a regular supply of elephants for the larger town. So followers many emigrated in the steps of the Phra Palad that soon Krabi had a large community in three different boroughs : Pakasai, Khlong Pon, and Pak Lao. In 1872, King Chulalongkorn graciously elevated these to town status, called Krabi, a word that preserves in its meaning the monkey symbolism of the old standard. The town's first governor was Luang Thep Sena, though it continued a while as a dependency of Nakhon Si Thammarat. This was changed in 1875, when Krabi was raised to a fourth-level town in the old system of Thai government. Administrators then reported directly to the central government in Bangkok, and Krabi's history as a unique entity separated from the other provinces, had begun.

During the present reign, the corps of civil servants, the merchants, and the population generally of Krabi and nearby provinces have together organized construction of a royal residence at Laem Hang Nak Cape for presentation to His Majesty the King. This lies thirty kilometers to the west of Krabi Town on the Andaman coast.

Administration

Krabi is divided into eight districts : Amphoe Muang (Krabi Town), Khao Panom, Khlong Thom, Plai Phraya, Ko Lanta, Ao Luk, and Lam Thap and, Nhua Khlong.

Location, size and Boundaries

Krabi is on the Andaman Sea coast of south-west Thailand, between 7' 30" and 8' 30" north latitude, and 98' 30" and 99' 30" west longitude. Total area is 4,709 square kilometers bounded thus :

North	Connects with Phang-nga and Sura Thani Provinces.
South	Connects with Trang Provinces and the Andaman Sea.
East	Connects with Trang and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provinces.
West	Connects with Phang-nga Provinces and the Andaman Sea.

From Krabi city to nearby provinces

- Phang Nga 86 kms.
- Phuket 176 kms.
- Trang 131 kms.
- Phattalung 193 kms.
- Surat Thani 211 kms.
- Nakhon Si Thammarat 233 kms.
- Satun 276 kms.

From Krabi city to its districts

- Ao Luk 43 kms.
- Plai Phraya 66 kms.
- Khao Panom 39 kms.
- Khlong Thom 42 kms.
- Ko Lanta 103 45 kms.
- Lam Thap 67 kms.
- Nua Khlong 17 kms.

Geography

Krabi's mountainous physical geography is broken by highlands and plains on the mainland. The provincial administration also covers more than 130 islands in the Andaman Sea. Natural forest cover is chiefly mangrove and Cassia trees. Krabi's sandy clay soil conditions are perfect for a variety of agricultural products, including rubber trees, palms, mangos, coconuts, and coffee. The Krabi River flows 5 kilometers through the city and falls into the Andaman at Tambon Pak Nam. There are other streams as well: the Khlong Pakasai, the Khlong Krabi Yai and the Khlong Krabi Noi in the province's highest range of mountains, the Khao Phanom Bencha.

Climate

Weather in Krabi is typically that of the tropical monsoon, providing the province with just two seasons, the hot season from January to April, and the rainy season from May to December. Monsoon winds, which change according to season, blow from the southeast, the southwest, and the northeast. Temperatures range between 16.9 and 37.3 degrees Celsius and the yearly rainfall averages 2,568.5 millimeters.

Tourist Attractions

Amphoe Muang (Krabi Town)

Khao Khanap Nam

These two hills, roughly 100 meters tall, flank the Krabi River running between them to form a distinctive vista and the town's most prominent landmark. To visit them, take a long-tail boat from Chao Fa Pier. Travel time is just 15 minutes. From there take stairs leading up to caves with stalactites and stalagmites. A large number of human skeletons have been found here. It is theorized that they and the remains of people who came and established a home at Kanab Nam, but were cut off by an inundation and quickly perished.

Tham Sua

or "**Tiger Cave**" is located about 3 kilometres from Krabi Town. Inside the cave there are what appear to be tiger paw prints in the stone. The surrounding area is covered with large trees hundreds of years old, particularly in the Khiriwong Valley. Mountains are on all sides and there are smaller caves in great number. Aside from being the site of a meditation center, it is also a place of archaeological and historical interest. Stone tools, pottery remains, and the mold for making Buddha footprints have been found in excavations.

Tham Sadet

is located at Ban Nong Kok, Tambon Sai Thai, 7 kilometres from the town on Highway No. 4034. It is a beautiful cave with stalactites and stalagmites. In 1909 the future King Rama VI visited the cave here, earning it the title "Sadet" indicating the presence of royalty.

Sa Kaeo

composed of eight small natural swamps in a vast valley of Tambon Khao Thong. This forms part of a which is being turned into recreational area. Sa Kaeo is accessible by the Krabi-Nai Sa route (Highway No. 4034), a distance of 28 kilometres.

Susan Hoi (Fossil Shell Beach)

The shell graveyard at Ban Laem Pho was once a large freshwater swamp, home to a kind of snail. Over eons dating from the Tertiary Age, about 40 million years ago, these snails lived and died by the million, to the extent that the dead snails formed a layer upon which existed the living. Eventually, weather changes precipitated the swamp's disappearance, but by then the layer of fossilized snail shells was forty centimeters thick, resting on ten centimeters of lignite below which is the subsoil. Because of geographic upheaval, this Shelly limestone is now distributed in great broken sheets of impressive magnitude on the seashore at Laem Pho.

Hat Noppharat Thara - Mu Ko Phi Phi National Park

This 2 kilometer long beach is about 18 kilometers north-west of Krabi. It is a scenic beach lined with casuarina trees and is popular among locals especially at weekend. Accommodation at the beach is available. Reservation should be made in advance at the Forestry Department in Bangkok, Tel. (02) 5797223, 5795734 or at the Hat Noppharat Thara National Park, P.O.Box 23, Amphoe Muang, Krabi 81000, Tel. (075) 6347436.

Ao Nang

Ao Nang is a large bay with scenic beaches and 83 small islands. Its famous beaches include East Rai Le, West Rai Le, Tham Phra Nang which stretch to the foot of a conspicuously prominent limestone range. Accommodation and other facilities including diving shops, boats for rent and sightseeing by canoe are available. From Ao Nang tourist may hire boats to visit nearby islands of Poda, Thap and Mo which have white sandy beaches, clear water and colorful fishes and coral.

Mu Ko Phi Phi

An archipelago of six islands consists of Ko Phi Phi Don and Ko Phi Phi Le as the major islands. The superb scenery of the islands includes high hills with jutting cliffs surrounded by marvelous beaches and emerald sea, hiding underneath a bank of coral reefs and colorful marine life. Places to visit of Mu Ko Phi Phi include

Ko Phi Phi Don

covers a total area of 28 square kilometers. An outstanding attraction is Ao Ton Sai, a vast bay with a curving white sandy beach stretching to a mountain range which reaches into the sea. Beside Ao Ton Sai, there are also other scenic beaches and bays around the island which can be reached by boat. At the north end of the island is Laem Tong where a sea gypsy village is located and which is renowned for its underwater natural beauty. Day trip around the island by boat is recommended.

Ko Phi Phi Le

An island of steep cliffs, covers a total area of 6.6 square kilometers. Phi Phi Le has several beautiful bays such as Pi Le which reaches into a valley and gives a lake-like scenery. This part of the sea is almost encircled by steep cliffs. To the south of Pi Le is a small bay called Lo Sa Ma which hides in a fold of a steep rock and provides a good spot for snorkeling. Another attraction is Tham Viking, a huge vast and airy cave which is home to a large number of swallows. On the cave wall are ancient paintings of sailing ships similar to those used by ancient Vikings. It takes about 30 minutes to get to Phi Phi Le by boat from Phi Phi Don.

Ko Phai

lies to the north of Phi Phi Don. There are lovely beaches on the north and east sides, and coral gardens spreading to the south.

Ko Yung

also lies to the north of Phi Phi Don. There is a rocky beach on the eastern side, a small beach in a fold of the hill and perfectly preserved coral gardens.

Amphoe Ao Luk

Than Bokkhorani National Park

covers 37.5 rai (1 rai = 160 square meters) in Tambon Ao Leuk Tai, one kilometer from the Tambon Ao Leuk Neua Market intersection on the Ao Luk Sak road. The park is shady and forested by many different species of trees growing around the attractive pool after which the park is named, the Sa Bokkhorani.

Species include the wild gardenia, asoka, and Apocynaceae. The Sah Bohk Koranii flows through a winding passage in the mountain. At the north end of the pool is a footprint of the Buddha carved in wood and a shrine of Chao PhoTo Yuan - To Chong.

Tham Lod Nua - Tham Lod Tai

can be reached by taking the Ao Luk-Laem Sak route for about two kilometers. Then take a right turn to the Bo Tho Pier then transfer to a rental boat along the Ta Prang canal. About ten minutes after passing a mangrove swamp will be the Tham Lod Tai, which is a cave beneath a limestone hill with a stream flowing through narrow passages. The main attractions are beautiful stalactites and stalagmites. The Tham Lod Nua is a large cavern with meandering passages longer than at the Tham Lod Tai. They are navigable only during low tide.

Tham Phi Hua To or Tham Hua Kalok

is located in Amphoe Ao Luk on Phi Hua To Mountains, which are surrounded by mangrove swamps. The cave is accessible by the same route as Tham Lod Tai with its entrance not far beyond the canal to Tham Lod Tai. From the entrance, the cave divides into 2 routes, the left one leading to a vast chamber pierced by a shaft of light, while the right route leads to a hall believed by archaeologists to have been once a shelter for prehistoric people. Rock paintings can be seen within the cave. The paintings, 70 of them, are painted in red and black and portray people as well as animals. The cave was named Phi Hua To or Big-headed Ghost owing to the unusually large skulls discovered there. A large pile of shells were also found in the cave.

Tham Phet

is 3 kilometers from the intersection at Ao Luk Nua market. In front is enshrined an image of Buddha. The name of this cave "Phet" means diamond, and indeed sparkling stone casts beautiful reflections on the cave wall. The best way to get there is to first contact the National Park Office at Than Bokkhorani for guide.

Tham Chao Le

is a beautiful cave on the west side of Laem Sak. Inside, there are stalactites and stalagmites as well as prehistoric cave paintings of people, animals and various geometrical shapes.

Mu Ko Hong

comprises a number of large and small limestone islands. Ko Hong itself is the largest island. These limestone islands have a beach and coral reefs in both deep and shallow water levels. Boats leave for Ko Hong from Ao Nang and the trip takes about one hour. A canoe trip to Ko Hong organised by some travel agents at Ao Nang is a popular activity among tourists.

Amphoe Khao Phanom

Kao Phanom Bencha National Park

is 20 kilometers from Krabi along Talat Kao-Ban Huai To Road. It covers a total area of 50 square kilometers including some parts of Amphoe Ao Luk, Amphoe Khao Phanom, and Amphoe Muang.

Khao Phanom Bencha National Park has thick forest on its highest peaks. Its marvellous scenery is enhanced by streams, waterfalls, and wild animals. The park's major attractions are follows:

Namtok Huai To

located some 500 meters from the park's office, has as its source Phanom Bencha Mountains. The waterfall itself runs down over rocks onto 11 huge pools, each with its own name such as Wang Thewada, Wang Sok, Wang Chan etc.

Namtok Huai Sa-de

runs down over a high cliff. The waterfall is about 1.2 kilometers from the park's office.

Tham Khao Phung (Khao Phung Cave)

is located some 3 kilometers from the park's office. Another 5 caves are in the area nearby. The cave's beauty is enhanced by countless stalagmites and stalactites of various shapes. Some are like mushrooms, other pagodas and curtains. The walls are white and glitter brightly.

Namtok Khlong Haeng

It is about 500 meters high and springs from Khao Thep Bencha which is the tallest mountain in Krabi and is 10 kilometers from Amphoe Khao Phanom.

For accommodation within the park please contact the Khao Phanom Bencha National Park, Tambon Thap Prik, Amphoe Muang, Krabi 81000.

Amphoe Klong Tom District

Wat Khlong Thom Museum

is situated within the precincts of Wat Khlong Thom between Km.69-70 on Phetchakasem Highway, one kilometer from the District office, the museum features various kinds of artifacts discovered during excavations within an area called "Khuan Luk Pat" or a bead mound behind Wat Khlong Thom. The discoveries include stone tools, stone and earthen ornaments in the shapes of animals and particularly beads from some 5,000 years ago.

Namtok Hin Phoeng

is located at Mu 8, Ban Hin Phoeng, Tambon Khlong Phon, a distance of 25 kilometres from the District Office. This is accessible via Phetchakasem Highway, (Krabi-Trang route) turning left at Khlong Phon, and travelling a further 8 kilometres. To reach the waterfall which runs down over a steep rock, one has to take a 400-meter walk along the hillside.

Thung Teao Forest

is located in the area of Khao Pra-Bang Khram no-hunting zone next to the Bang Teao Village, 18 kilometres from Amphoe Khlong Thom. It is a virgin forest with natural ponds, rare floral and species of birds. A 2.7-kilometre nature trail offers opportunity to study the environment. Information can be

obtained from the no-hunting zone office at Ban Bang Teao.

Namtok Ron

is located in the forest within Tambon Khlong Tom Nua, about 12 kilometres from the district town. The source of this fall is from underground thermal water, hence the high temperature of the water.

Amphoe Koh Lanta

Mu Koh Lanta National Park

comprises of many different-sized islands, some of which are surrounded by beautiful coral reefs such as Ko Ha, Ko Rok and Ko Hai. The main island in the park is

Ko Lanta Yai, where both the District Headquarters and National Park Office are located. The island itself is generally rugged and mountainous. There are beaches both gravelly and sandy toward the south. The suitable time to visit Ko Lanta is from November to April.

Ko Lanta Yai is also home to "**Chao Le**" or sea gypsies. They still maintain their old way of life and have peculiar traditions, such as setting a boat a drift to drive out evil and bring good luck. This is done during the full moon in June and in November.

Travel to Koh Lanta

Boats depart from downtown Krabi to Ko Lanta Yai daily. The journey takes 2 and a half hours. Boat tickets are available at Chaofa Pier. Tourists may take a minibus from Krabi Town to Bo Muang Pier in Amphoe Khlong Thom, 80 kilometres away. Few boats depart from Bo Muang Pier to Ko Phi Phi daily. The trip takes about 45 minutes.

How to get there

By Car

From **Bangkok** take Route 4, passing Phetchaburi, Prachuap Khirikhan, Chumphon, Ranong, and Phangnga Provinces before reaching Krabi a total distance of 946 kilometers. An alternate route is to take Route 4 to Chumphon and then turn onto Route 41. This leads through Lang Suan and Chaiya Districts of Chumphon to Wieng Sa District of Surat Thani from there follow Route 4035, passing Ao Luk District of Krabi, back onto Route 4, and down to Krabi Town. This shortcut is just 814 kilometers, and is followed by the bus services.

From **Phuket**, there is an air-conditioned bus operating from Phuket Bus Terminal (on Phang-Nga Road) to Krabi. It operates from 06:00-18:30 hrs. daily. Trip takes about 3 hours and fare is Baht 117 per person per way. Telephone number of Phuket Bus Terminal is 076-211-977.

By Bus

Buses leave Bangkok for Krabi daily in the evening. The journey takes about 12 hours. The fare for 24 seats air-conditioned bus is about 655 baht, and 446 and 421 baht for 40 seat air-conditioned bus and 234 baht for non air-conditioned bus. Contact Bangkok Southern Bus Terminal (Borommaratchonnani Road) at Tel.(02) 435-1199, 435-5061 (air-conditioned bus) and (02) 4345557 (non air-conditioned bus).

By Train

From Bangkok Railway Station take the train to one of the following stations : Trang, Phun Pin in Surat Thani Province, or Thung Song in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. From any of these places a bus may be taken onward to Krabi. Regarding train schedules and costs, contact Bangkok Railway Station , Tel.(02)223-7010, 223-7020.

By Air

Thai Airways International operates daily flights from Bangkok to Krabi.

[Please click here to preview flight timetable or to book a flight](#)

Festivals

Andaman Sea Festival

This Festival takes place in November and celebrates the opening of the tourist season in Krabi. Water sport competitions, cultural shows, and good-natured fun are the schedule.

The Setting Adrift of the Chao Le Boats

takes place on Ko Lanta during the full moon night of the sixth and eleventh lunar months. This is a religious rite performed by Sea Gypsies or "Chao Le" who gather on the beach near Ban Saladan Village. They dance their famous "rong ngeng" round the boats to be set adrift. Ceremonies feature singing and dancing. The reason for the fest is to bring prosperity and happiness to the participants.

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