

Phuket's

Secluded Neighbours



Phuket has long been the star of Thailand's Andaman coast - golden beaches, island energy, and the promise of holiday ease. Yet only a short boat ride away, the pace changes completely - quieter beaches, local life, and a tranquility that is a world apart from Phuket's busy shoreline. Many travellers overlook Phuket's quieter neighbours, though they sit almost within sight.



Koh Yao Noi

Koh Yao Noi feels like a memory of Phuket before the boom, despite it being only a thirty-minute boat ride from Phuket's pier. Small villages, a slower pace of living, and beaches that still feel untouched define the island. The friendliness of the locals sets the tone the moment you arrive.

The horizon carries that unmistakable Phang Nga silhouette with cliffs rising like temples from the sea.

Quiet beaches wrap the coastline, each with its own character. Pasai Beach is the liveliest, with simple restaurants on the sand grilling fish straight off the fire. Tha Khao Beach, tucked beneath limestone cliffs, stays wide and calm throughout the day. Further along, Long Beach takes a little more effort to reach, but the clear water and peaceful setting make it a rewarding stop.

Accommodation spans every level, from humble guesthouses, small boutique stays, to the luxurious Six Senses - all blending naturally, in tune with island life. Wherever you stay, you wake to the same soundtrack roosters, waves, and the chatter of locals.

Rent a scooter or bicycle and circle the island at your own pace. You will pass rice fields dotted with buffaloes and egrets, rubber plantations, and stretches of coast with swaying palm trees. Wellness follows

the same unhurried spirit - yoga and sound-healing sessions led by locals, rooted in tradition rather than trend.

The market brings the island together. There's plenty to try, but the favourite is the fried chicken skin so crispy and addictive that one packet is never enough. Most eateries are halal, reflecting Koh Yao Noi's strong Muslim heritage.

Towards evening, Sunset Bar draws both locals and visitors. It is a low-key deck overlooking Phang Nga Bay, known for its welcoming staff. They greet guests as though welcoming the family home. It is rare to find a place that feels this open-hearted. Koh Yao Noi still does.

Koh Yao Yai

A fifteen-minute boat ride south lies Koh Yao Yai, the bigger sister that somehow feels even more remote. Its long roads curl past coconut groves and unmarked turn-offs lead to deserted beaches.

The best beaches are found on the west and south coasts. Loh Pared Beach is an absolute gem and has a wonderfully relaxed vibe. Ao Muang sits further along, quieter and more remote, with just a drinks stall and fishermen at work. By sunset, Laem Had Beach settles into its best light.

Most visitors rent a motorbike to explore the island. Activity centres offer island-hopping trips to Koh Hong and the small limestone islets nearby, while mangrove kayaking is available without feeling overly commercial. Nothing is packaged; it is travel shaped by what the day allows.

Dining stays close to the island's roots. Family-run cafes serve fresh seafood, Thai curries, and noodles cooked to order, often just a few steps from where the family lives. A handful of understated resorts sit quietly in the hills, offering views across the Andaman without crowding the shoreline.

There's no real nightlife, but that's part of the appeal. The quiet roads, unclaimed beaches and slower feel are what make the island memorable. For travellers who want the Andaman without the noise, this is the island that offers exactly that.

In this spread,

A slow afternoon above Phang Nga Bay; Temple details; Village life where fishing boats and homes are unhurried; Loh Pared Beach and its pale-gold sand.



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Coconut Island

Coconut Island sits just minutes from Phuket, but the contrast is striking. A short long-tail boat ride from Laem Hin Pier brings you to an island with three beaches - the west welcoming day-trippers, the central stretch busy by day then quiet by dusk, and the east offering soft sand and clear water ideal for swimming.

The island's character reveals itself in small discoveries - a ride past coconut groves, a walk between villages, a stop at the pearl farm. Keep going and the island opens up further. Clear patches for snorkelling near the islets, quiet paths to wander, and long-tail boats that take you out for fishing trips.

Accommodation ranges from simple bungalows to low-key resorts, and dining stays casual, seafood fried to order, Thai dishes from family-run shacks, and floating restaurants visible from the boat ride in.

Coconut Island is close enough to Phuket to be convenient, but distant enough to feel like its own little world. For travellers who want a gentle escape without travelling far, this small patch of coastline offers exactly that.

In this spread,

Seafood Tom Yum cooked fresh; Sip on coconut water at a local beach cafe; Swing over white sandy beaches overlooking turquoise water; A world of breathtaking coral and bright tropical fish.





Koh Racha Yai

South of Phuket, Koh Racha Yai feels like a small revelation. The speedboat ride is quick, but the island's colour is what stops you - the water shifts between glassy turquoise and bright blue, so clear it almost looks unreal.

Ao Patok, the main bay, is the one that first gets photographed. Walk further into Siam Bay, a wide arc of pale sand and glassy emerald water you can snorkel right from the shore.

Racha has long been a favourite for snorkellers and divers, thanks to its clear water. By late afternoon the day crowds are gone, the beaches quieten, and evenings are usually just seafood by the sand. Simple, but it leaves an impression.



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Phuket may still be the gateway, but beyond its shore lies another world - one that asks for less and offers more. Sometimes all it takes is a short boat ride to discover somewhere worth adding to your next trip.

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