

10 days cruise sample itinerary

This is a sample itinerary for our one week or 10 day Thailand trips. However, no two trips are ever exactly the same; one of the greatest things about being on a sailboat is the flexibility to change our minds and our route to suit personal preferences, prevailing wind conditions, etc. The start and finish points are fixed, of course - but all else is changeable according to the whims of the wind gods and those on board !

Day One

After 'Welcome on Board!' drinks and our boat briefing, we'll set sail for our first destination of **Ko Wai** - a very relaxed first hop of just 6 miles.

This group of islands immediately to the south of Ko Chang were designated a protected national park in 1984. Existing establishments & villages were allowed to stay - but there will be no McDonalds and Best Westerns built here !

The main beach of Ko Wai is still a lively little spot, however - there are several little beach bars and those wonderfully decadent Thai beach massages! Being so close to Ko Chang, the beach attracts a fleet of daytrip boats to enjoy the white sands and snorkel around the coral reefs. Lucky us that we can be there long after they have departed...

For the evening, we'll move venue to a quiet little bay around the corner.

Day Two

Morning departure for **Ko Mak** - recently nominated by the Sunday Times as one of the 'Top Ten Beaches in the world!' It's another easy sail of just 12 miles, with the prevailing winds perfect for a relaxed, downwind cruise. The biggest privately owned island in Thailand, Ko Mak is shaped by the history of it's owners, an extended family of Chinese origin who established extensive coconut plantations and rubber farms. They were a devoutly Buddhist family who attracted many interesting characters and artists to the island.

The island's 'Eco Trail' is a pathway which follows much of this history, including the family's Buddhist temple. The island is flat enough for a rented bicycle - or those who prefer to stay a little cooler, a scooter is a great way to explore too!

Day Three

Ko Kut

Even the backpackers only found this island in the past decade ! Apart from these intrepid western travellers, Ko Kut has been a vacation host to more well-to-do-Thais for a while, and has some lovely, traditional resorts to cater to this market. Behind this beachfront veneer, Thai island life goes on as it has for centuries - the real 'Thailand-before-the-Tourists.'

Ko Kut is all about gorgeous white sand beaches; waterfalls and river pools swim in; rivers, temples and local villages to explore; night hikes to watch fireflies. Oh, and let's not forget some serious chilling-out in little beach-bars and of course the obligatory Thai massage !

It's a longer sail of about 25 miles down to our first stop of Ao Phrao, in the south of the island. The beach is postcard-material; the resorts ashore low-key and backpacker-style. For the intrepid on board, there is a chance to explore up the river - to an area which is completely untouched by tourism. It's a real National Geographic experience of the local culture and community, including a working temple (none of the gilded finery one sees in one sees in Bangkok temples!)

Day Four

Waterfall time ! **Ao Klong Chao** - yet another gorgeous beach to anchor off, and for the athletically-inclined amongst us, a Waterfall Expedition ! A dinghy ride up the river, followed by a 30min hike into jungle territory - and there is it, cascading fresh water and pools to cool off in. It even comes with a 'Tarzan rope' (what waterfall would be complete without one??)

For our evening stop, we'll move on to **Ao Bang Bao** - a perfectly sheltered horseshoe bay, with just three little resorts ashore. Our favourite is a stunning spot to watch the sunset over a cocktail or two, fantastic food and - very important to us yachties - onshore showers we can use too!

Day Five

Sailing back northwards, our destination for the day is Ao Check Ki - renamed by local yachties as **Captain Hook's Bay**.

This is a place one could 'chill' for days without wanting to move - a stunning palm-tree lined beach; hammocks, massages and a 'sunset viewing platform'.

And right there, in the middle of this traditional, tranquil 'nowhere' - an unexpected dose of western decadence; a great swimming pool, complete with swim-up bar !

If that sounds all a little too tranquil for some - don't worry, there's some good healthy hikes for you too! Another cool trek to a little waterfall nearby, to offset all that relaxing stuff...

Day Six

A longer sail today, back into the Marine Park islands - our destination today being **Ko Rang**. This is the top dive/snorkeling spot of the area, with an abundance of live coral and marine life.

An interesting cultural site sits on the southernmost shore of the island - a phallic shrine, boasting an array of symbols of all shapes and sizes, guaranteed to dent any even slightly insecure male egos!

Day Seven

A morning sail north for Salak Phet, and a farewell to those who are sailing for one week. For those who are staying on board, there is chance to do a kayak trip up a little river lined with weird and wonderful mangroves. For those who are departing, we'll have you **back on the dock for 12noon**, in good time to catch a flight from Trat, or else chill out for a final night at a nearby resort.

In the afternoon, we'll take off for Bang Bao - a short distance of about 10 miles. This is a bustling little village, built precariously in stilts above the water - an entirely different experience from the previous islands. This is 'civilization' again, of sorts... There is a bank, ATMs, tour operators by the dozen, bars and shopping !! - dozens of little stalls selling everything from locally made wood carvings to brightly-coloured sarongs and lots of fun costume jewelry.

Day Eight

Ko Khlum

One of the favourite dive/snorkel islands in the marine park - it's a steep, heavily forested island, quite uninhabited - no, not even one massage place!

We'll set off early for an extended lunch stop to give us plenty of time to explore the underwater terrain, and/or take kayaks paddling around the rocky coastline.

For our evening stop, we'll be heading for one of Ko Chang's southernmost beaches; there is a choice of 'quiet and tranquil' (**Lonely Beach**), or a little more lively in the next beach north, **Khlong Prao**.

Day Nine

We'll continue to sail around to the north-west side of Ko Chang - a coastline lined with miles of long, white-sand beaches. This is the more 'westernized' part of the island - although we're still a long ways from the disco lights of Pattaya and Phuket!

This is a chance to experience some more adventurous onshore activities - elephant trekking (run by an eco-friendly camp supported by the Asian Elephant Foundation). The more adventurous can get to ride on the elephant's neck, like a real mahout ! Bizarrely, they also offer a 'Buddhist Style Wedding' at the elephant camp. No, we haven't tried that one yet. Looking for volunteers.

There's also the Tree Top Adventure Park, where one can swing from tree-to-tree in the jungle canopy, in a fair Tarzan imitation. Or would that be Cheetah?

Day Ten

Sail to **Whitesands Beach**, our final destination. Surprisingly enough, 'Whitesands' is a long, palm-lined stretch of sand, with crystal-clear waters. It's a great place to just chill; or easy access to any of Ko Chang's other attractions, such as one of the island's temples. Considering it is not exactly a highly populated island, there are quite a variety to choose from! Buddhism is still a very active force in Thai culture; it is considered that every Thai male should spend at least 3 months at some time in his life as a monk. It's not so much expected of women, but they are just as welcome (and make great 'merit' for their families), if they join as nuns!

Whitesands is the most 'touristy' of all Ko Chang's beaches, with bars, shops, restaurants and a buzzing nightclub for anyone who would like a grand finale night on the town!