

5 of the best hotels in Phuket

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Phuket used to have a party reputation, with backpackers lining the streets for cheap cocktails and partying until 2am. But its reputation is changing as five star hotels and restaurants open along the Andaman coast and with celebrities like Blake Lively and Beyoncé owning villas in the tropical getaway.

Fancy some winter sun? Here are the best places to stay while you're in Thailand's sun-soaked holiday destination.

Manathai Surin

Your first stop should be Surin beach. Around half way down the coast, it's a destination which has glorious beaches and some of the best hotels. The Manathai is a quaint little hotel, just opposite Surin beach, with the friendliest and most polite staff. The best rooms look directly into the swimming pool – at the quietest time of the day it's like you have your very own personal pool. The hotel's restaurant, aptly named Pad Thai, serves traditional Thai food, and has happy hour cocktails.



Manathai Surin

If secluded beaches are your thing and you fancy a 20 minute trek from the hotel, you'll find Leam Singh beach. Tucked into a cove, you can grab a beach bed while they deliver you cocktails. They'll charge you 100 Thai Bhatt to visit but it's so worth it – you'll feel like you're on a deserted island. Just make sure you save some energy for the steep large steps on the way out.

Rates from £68, manathai.com/phuket

The Surin Phuket

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If you have a bigger budget, then the Surin is perfect. Sundowners are a must here – you can watch the sun go down every day at the Surin's beach bar while you sip on a happy hour margarita or two. Set on its own private (Pansea) beach on the west coast of the Island, the most tiring choice you'll have to make is which restaurant to eat in. The resort has 103 cottages and suites dotted along the beachfront and forested area – which makes them look like cute tree houses. And if you're feeling energetic, there's also a beachside pool, yoga and a gym.



The Surin Phuket

If you get bored of a life of luxury head out of the hotel and left up to Bangtao beach, where you'll find a lively beach town, with restaurants and bars on the beach. Try out the Palm Seaside lounge for drinks and sea food, which gives you a great view for sunset and the beach, which goes on for miles.

Rates from £400, thesurinphuket.com

The Nai Harn

Leaving Surin, head further south of Phuket, and just 20 minutes from the hustle and bustle of Patong you'll find the Nai Harn hotel. The views alone are worth visiting this hotel for: set overlooking Nai Harn beach, the pool and sun loungers look down to the lapping Andaman sea and glorious views. Book a room with a sun lounger, grab your book and you are pretty much sorted for an afternoon. Or if you feel like you need a stretch, roll out your yoga mat and do some poses in the sun. The inclusive breakfast here is a breakfast of dreams - with everything from traditional English to Continental, and even a walk-in fridge where you can help yourself to cheeses, yogurts and

fruit.



The Nai Harn

For dinner, you can head to the hotel's restaurant Rock Salt – which is overseen by chef Kevin Fawkes, who has previously worked with Gordon Ramsay and René Redzepi. If you want local authentic food make sure you head out of the resort too and find the local restaurants, just down the road, for traditional Thai food that will cost you around 200 Baht. It's easy and quite cheap to get around the island, especially by taxi.

Rates from £184, thenaiharn.com

Kata Rocks

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Driving back up the Island and just minutes away from Patong you'll find Kata Rocks. From the moment you arrive in Kata Rocks you feel like a VIP. Jumping in a buggy they whizz you up and down their resort like you're a star fresh from a film set. Its apartments are like no other – designed like you're on a yacht and with their own infinity pools. If all the sunbathing gets a little bit too much for you then head to the spa, where there are water beds, sleep pods and traditional Thai massages - heaven.



If you're not popping out into the nearby town for dinner, then you can book into the pool side restaurant for sundowners and food made with fresh local produce, which ranges from traditional Thai dishes to lobster.

Rates from £560 per night, katarocks.com

Khao Lak

If you're looking to explore further than Phuket then just a little north is Khao Lak, where you'll find a spattering of hotels including The Manathai Khao Lak. Although not in a particularly built up area, it looks set to transform itself in the next few years, so, like Phuket, it will become a go-to place for tourists. The highlight of the hotel is the pool, which faces directly on to the golden sands. The resort has daily morning yoga classes, which, if you can get up early enough, really set you up for the day.



Khao Lak

The resort also has a restaurant for breakfast and dinner, along with a bar for poolside snacks and evening drinks. Make sure you also check out the beach restaurants, then head to the beach bar where you can drink cocktails until midnight.

Rates from £58, manathai.com/khaolak

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