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The Splendor of Andaman Old Towns





Introduction

The west coast of Thailand, from Phang-nga, Phuket, Krabi, Trang, to Satun, borders the Andaman Sea, which is part of the Indian Ocean. These cities on the Andaman Coast were once thriving ports on the ancient maritime trade routes dating back thousands of years. From ancient ports and trade stations, their prosperity — and decline — was determined by economic and political changes that occurred with the passing of time.

In Phang-nga, Thung Tuek Archaeological Site on Kho Khao Island and the ancient Vishnu Statue at Phra Noe Mountain are among the evidence showing Indian influences in this area through maritime trade routes in ancient times. Takua Pa, meanwhile, attests to Phang-nga's prosperity during the tin mining boom.

Around 1,800 years ago, Phuket appeared in *Geography*, an ancient book penned by Ptolemy, a Greco-Roman geographer and astronomer, who called the island Jung Ceylon. From an important port in the maritime trade route around the Malay Peninsula, Phuket saw many phases of prosperity through time. Together with Phang-nga, Phuket became rich from the tin mining boom. In today's tourism era, Phuket has become one of the world's top destinations. In 2015, Phuket won UNESCO's recognition as the City of Gastronomy.

Krabi, a former vassal state of Nakhon Si Thammarat, was dense with jungles, where mahouts came to get wild elephants. It was also a port town called Pakasai in the old days. At present, it is as famous as Phuket as a world-class tourist destination.

Trang, like other provinces on the Andaman Coast, is rich with natural environment and was once an active port in the ancient maritime trade routes dating back thousands of year. When the southern railway made Kantang the center to link with the Andaman Coast, Kantang's development was rapid and it expanded to Thap Thiang, now the city of Trang — another gem on the Andaman Coast.

Satun is different from other cities on the Andaman Coast. The majority of the people there are Muslims, who have long lived in harmony with other ethnic group in a multicultural society. Satun was once a thriving port town on the ancient maritime trade routes. Its ancient port, Su-ngai U-pe, was called "Little Penang," now in Thung Wa district.

Despite the passage of time, the ancient towns on the Andaman Coast still have many traces of old cultures and civilizations for us to learn, admire, and take pride in their history, architecture, culture, and different ways of life. This precious cultural heritage is also a tourism treasure. This book, *The Splendor of Andaman Old Towns*, compiles their history and cultural heritage so that visitors from around the world can experience another dimension of beauty of the Andaman Coast.

History of Phuket



The name of Ko Thalang appeared in the book *Geography* by Ptolemy, a Greco-Roman geographer, around 157 AD. Ptolemy discussed the maritime route from Suvarnabhumi to the Malay Peninsula and mentioned the ancient town “Takola,” situated on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. He also wrote about a cape stretching southward and described Ko Thalang as a big island on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula. He called this island “Jung Ceylon” and recorded it in a map outlining the islands in the area.

As time passed, the Srivijaya Empire expanded its power to this area. Its power center was at Nakhon Si Thammarat and Chaiya. After the decline of the Srivijaya Empire in the 16th Buddhist century, the new dominant power was the Tambralinga Kingdom led by King Chandrabhanu. He called his new empire Siri Tham Nakhon, with the power center at Nakhon Si Thammarat. The empire’s administration system was designed after a zodiac sign. Each subordinate town was given an animal sign in the zodiac as its symbol. Thalang was called Takua Thalang, with a dog sign as the town symbol.

In 1257, the Sukhothai Kingdom declared independence from the Khmer Empire. Nakhon Si Thammarat and its vassal towns came under Sukhothai’s control and sent tin to Sukhothai as tribute. When the Ayutthaya Kingdom rose to power (around 1340) and dominated Sukhothai, all Sukhothai’s vassal states came under Ayutthaya. During the reign of King Ekathosarot (1605–1610), Takua Pa, Takua Thing, and Thalang were recorded as being administered by the Defense Ministry, so the viceroys of these towns must have been appointed by Ayutthaya.

In 1626, King Songtham of the Ayutthaya Kingdom granted a license to Dutch merchants to set up a station to buy tin at Ko Thalang, but because of excessive business exploitation, Thalang residents chased the Dutch away. In 1685, King Narai the Great signed a trade treaty with France and gave France a tin buying and stocking monopoly at Ko Thalang. This was recorded by the French Ambassador, Monsieur de La Loubère, in 1687. When the reign of King Narai the Great ended, so did French power in Ayutthaya. Thalang, however, continued to be an important city until the end of the Ayutthaya Kingdom in 1767. Throughout the Thonburi Kingdom, Thalang remained an active port town and the center of tin mining.

In 1785, during the reign of King Rama I of the Rattanakosin Kingdom, Burmese King Bodawpaya (Padung) launched an all-out attack on Siam in the Nine Armies’ Wars. On the southern front, the Burmese armies attacked Chaiya and Nakhon Si Thammarat. General Yi Wun led a 3,000-strong navy to attack Takua Pa, Takua Thung and Thalang. The Thalang governor, Phaya Phimon Aiyakhan had just passed away. His wife, Thanphuying Chan, and her sister, Khun Muk, mobilised the locals to fight the Burmese army and they defeated the enemies on 13 March 1785. King Rama I then elevated Thanphuying Chan to a higher status as Thao Thepkrasattri and Khun Muk as Thao Si Sunthon.

According to the Thalang Archive, Thalang was already engaging in international trade, especially with Captain Francis Light (Phraya Ratcha Kapitan) of the British East India Company, who was later the Superintendent of Penang. The name Mueang Phuket appeared for the first time, according to the Thalang Archive, in the letter Thanphuying Chan wrote to Captain Light after the Siamese-Burmese War in 1785.

In 1809, during the reign of King Rama II, Burma attacked Ko Thalang again. The Thalang viceroy, Phraya Phetkhiri Phichaisongkhram Kamhaeng (Thian) could not defend the city. After Thalang was defeated, the majority of residents fled to the mainland and Phang-nga. Some headed down south to live in Chalong and Kathu. Others gathered at



Ban Tha Ruea and received assistance from Je Ma Joem, a Thalang official of Madras descent. Later, Chao Phraya Nakhon Si Thammarat, who governed Thalang, appointed Je Ma Joem to be viceroy, called Phraya Thalang, based in Ban Tha Ruea from 1809 to 1827.

Phraya Thalang (Joem) sent his son Kaew to govern Phuket at Ket Ho near Ban Kathu. His title was Phra Phuket Lohakasetrarak (Kaeo). Back then, Phuket was not yet stable and tin mining was not yet widespread. Phuket was therefore under Thalang’s control.

In 1849, toward the end of the reign of King Rama III, Luang Phithak Thawip (That), son of Phraya Phuket (Kaeo) was promoted to Phra Phuket (That) and became the Phuket viceroy after his father’s death.



Phuket Old Town Architecture

Phuket Old Town Architecture



Phuket Old Town manifests the prosperity of the town, which began to develop in the reign of King Rama IV and reached its prime in 1901-1913, when Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi (Khaw Sim Bee Na Ranong) was appointed high commissioner of Monthon Phuket. During that time, several roads were constructed and the town was divided into the commercial quarter and local administration complex. A hospital and other basic utilities were created, mostly by using fees collected from mining operators. A lot of foreigners, including Chinese, Indians, Arabians, Malays, and Europeans, came to live and do business in Phuket. Buildings and houses constructed here are similar to those in other port towns in the Malay Peninsula, such as Penang, Melaka, and Singapore, as well as in Takua Pa and Ranong. The arrivals of these foreigners made Phuket town rich in cultural diversity with unique lifestyle, customs, costume, food, language, and architectural characteristics, which are still alive in the present time.

The architecture of Phuket Old Town can be divided into five groups, based on utilization of the buildings.

Public Buildings

Public buildings are large buildings which are used as offices of state agencies, association headquarters, and schools. The following are examples of public buildings in Phuket:

Standard Chartered Bank Building. Built in 1907 on a street corner where Phuket and Phang-nga roads intersect, the bank is a two-storey, brick masonry building with hipped roof structure. The prominent feature of the building is a five-foot-wide Ngo Kha Khi covered walkway, or arcade, in the front to provide shelter for pedestrians and to create air flow. The use of circular columns and arches gives a sense of firmness and indicates the application of some Classic elements. Capitals on the first floor are decorated with a simple pattern resembling Doric-style columns, while the upper floor's capitals are adorned with volutes in Ionic style. Entablatures are embellished with dentils. The structure received the Architectural Conservation Award in the institutional and public building category from the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage in 1989.

Tambon Talat Yai Police Station. The police station was built in the same period as Standard Chartered Bank. The two-storey, brick masonry building is also located on the corner of Phuket and Phang-nga roads. The most noticeable feature of the building is a four-storey clock tower covered with a roof which is shaped like an old-style police hat. The building has arched doors and windows with stucco ornaments over the upper edges. The walls are also decorated with pilasters.

[Khaw Sim Bee]

In the curriculum vitae archive of Phuket Town officials in Monthon Phuket, Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi's old name was "Khaw Sim Bee" with the word "Bee" in rising tone -- the way it was pronounced in the works of King Rama 6 and Prince Damrong Rajanubhab. However, the public call him "Khaw Sim Bee" by pronouncing "Bee" in falling tone, probably from the meaning of his Chinese name which is "beautiful heart."

Phuket Post & Telegraph Office. Built in 1934, the one-storey building is located on Montri Road. It is a reinforced-concrete structure with a hipped roof, finished with cement tiles. The building's outstanding features are the building's proportion and a front portico topped with a stucco sign bearing the building's name: "ที่ทำการไปรษณีย์โทรเลข POST & TELEGRAPH OFFICE". The front portico columns are in a square shape. Above each wooden double window is a clerestory topped with stucco moldings. The building has no eaves, but uses a ferro-concrete awning to provide shade instead. Braces are placed as decorative elements of the awning. The Phuket Post & Telegraph Office received the Architectural Conservation Award in the institutional and public building category from the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage in 2010.

Phuket Hua Bun School (Phuketthaihua School). The school, situated on Krabi Road, was built in 1934. The two-storey building was designed by Chinese architect Eaw Nga Ian and constructed by a contractor named Chean Vanich. The building features a symmetrical rectangular plan with an open court in the middle. It has a hip-gable roof





finished with barrel vault terracotta tiles. A ferro-concrete awning, about one meter wide, stretched out beneath the roof to provide shade. The main distinguishing feature of this building is its front part, which consists of a five-step ferro-concrete staircase along the length of the building. Located on top of the staircase are three arches supported by circular columns with lotus-decorated capitals in a mixed Ionic and Corinthian styles. Walls are grooved and decorated with stucco cornices, which lay between the lower and the upper floor. The school's name signs, written in English, Thai, and Chinese languages, are placed above the cornices. The second storey has three window chambers, each with two window sets. Glass clerestories are placed above each window panel which is topped with a Roman-style gable pediment. The gable end is decorated with the stucco image of a bat, regarded as an auspicious animal in Chinese belief. The building received the Architectural Conservation Award in the institutional and public building category from the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage in 2008.

Shophouses

Typical components of shophouses are a front arcade, or Ngo Kha Khi; a terracotta-tiled high roof; and an open inner court or open inner court with well to improve ventilation in the house. Shophouses designed for a residential purpose usually have a single door in the middle and two windows at both sides of the door, while shophouses for commercial purposes have a removable panel to cover the shop front. Shophouse architecture can be divided into three generations:

The first generation. Shophouses which were built during the beginning of city development, between the years 1868–1900, can be found along Thepkrasattri Road. These shophouses have low sloping roofs with large concrete pillars. Some owners later added a mezzanine or an attic to the house. Examples of modified shophouses are house numbers 122, 124, 126, and 128 on Thalang Road. These shophouses are two-storey, brick masonry buildings with simple design. Each unit is 3–3.50 meters in width. The second floor is enclosed with wooden walls with large wooden louvered windows. Second floor capitals are plain.

The second generation

Type 1. An outstanding feature of this type of shophouse is the application of Chinese designs and motifs in wall decorations. The left and right columns imitate brick masonry by using color plastering and grooving techniques. The capitals are made of stucco in protruding lotus shape and decorated with mural paintings or porcelain. The lower part of the walls on the second floor is adorned with green glazed tiles in Chinese style. Wooden louvered windows are placed above a balustrade covering the full width of a shophouse unit. The floor beams on the second floor are embellished with stucco dolls in the front, depicting Chinese principles. The shophouse has a round-shaped gable end from Chinese architecture.



Type 2. This type of shophouse is characterized by an integration of European architecture, which embraces plain design, in building decorations. The front wall on the second floor features two or three windows of equal size, depending on the width of the unit front. Window chambers are typically in round arch or segmental arch shape. Some shophouses have full-length louvered windows with internal wooden balustrade, while others have waist-high windows with solid panels or louver shutters.

Type 3. Similar to a Type 2 shophouse, this type of shophouse has an influence of western architecture. However, one distinctive features of a Type 3 shophouse is the increased width of the front which is 4 to 6 meters wide. The height of each floor is also higher than older type shophouses. Steel and concrete beams are used as support beams for the front part of the second floor. The design of window chambers and the use of arches are similar to Type 2 shophouses. The most outstanding element of a Type 3 shophouse is the decorations of walls, arches, and capitals with a mixture of Chinese and western ornaments. The decorative features include stucco depicting Chinese auspicious animals, flowers, and offerings and western-style patterns.





• **Type 4.** This type of shophouse emerged shortly before the arrival of Art Deco and Modern architectures. Similar to a Type 3 shophouse, columns and cornices are decorated with Classical-style stucco. Interestingly, diamond-shaped patterns are used in glass window panels and decorative stucco on the walls. More reinforced concrete was used during this period, such as the construction of reinforced concrete awnings on the second floor.

The third generation. This is the era of Modern architecture (1933-1956). Buildings constructed in this period usually have 2-4 floors. The façade of a shophouse is different from the second-generation shophouse, with a more modern look. Vertical fins and thin awnings are used to provide shade. Windows are in a square shape with glass grids or solid panels. Air vents or a clerestory are placed above the windows

Commercial Buildings

These are large buildings of hotels and private companies. Examples of old commercial buildings in Phuket are:

On On Hotel. Situated on Phang-nga Road, the building was specially designed and built as a hotel, the first of its kind in Phuket. Constructed by a group of artisans from Penang in 1930, the two-storey, brick masonry building has four units in total. Prominent features of the hotel building are the front arches. The middle arch, which is a square arch with rounded corners, is flanked by two low arches. The arches are adorned with stucco in natural forms. The front wall on the second floor is decorated with stucco in the forms of garlands, fruits, and sunburst pediments above the windows.

Aikwanich Company. The company's building is a two-storey, brick masonry structure on Dibuk Road. Distinguishing features of the building are a covered walkway on the ground floor and a walkway balcony on the second floor. The walkways are covered with arches and supporting columns — square recessed columns on the ground floor and paired round columns on the second floor. The walkway balcony on the second floor and rooftop are enclosed with cement balustrades. Windows are arch-shaped with clerestory and decorative stucco molding on top.

Private mansion or Ang Mor Lao (western style mansion)

Ang Mor Lao is a two-storey single mansion made of brick masonry. The exterior, which extensively uses decorative stucco, and window design are quite similar to a shophouse. Most of these mansions were built between the late reign of King Rama V to the reign of King Rama VII. The mansion architecture received a great deal of influence from Penang, Malaysia. Following are examples of private residences in Phuket Old Town:

Luang Anuphas Phuketkarn's house (Hongyok House).

Constructed in 1930, this large two-storey mansion is situated on Thepkrasattri Road. It was designed by architect Khun Phisansarakam. A large semi-circular entrance portico in front of the mansion is the most prominent feature of the mansion. There are also three low arches on the ground floor, with supporting Doric-style round columns. Walls are delicately grooved to make a rusticated surface. The exterior of the upper floor is decorated with cement balustrades, while the interior decorations are distinctly in Chinese style. The structure received the Architectural Conservation Award in the private residence category from the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage in 1987.



Chinpracha House.

Built by Phra Phitakchinpracha (Tan Ma Siang) in 1903, the residence is a two-storey, brick masonry building situated on Krabi Road. Its architectural characteristic is a mix of western and Chinese styles. The building originally had two-storey protruding porticos of semi-hexagonal shape at the left and right wings of the building, but the structures had collapsed. The house owner, therefore, replaced them with one-storey porticos. The entrance door is decorated with lacquer and gilding. A doorplate written in Chinese characters is placed above the door. The house has an open court in the middle for better ventilation. Most of the furniture is in Chinese style inherited from the house owner's ancestors, while decorative items were imported from overseas. The house received the Architectural Conservation Award in the private residence category from the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage in 2009.



Luang Amnart Nararak's house.

Luang Amnart Nararak (Tan Kuat) built this house in 1911, located on Dibuk Road. The two-storey house with a front portico is made of brick masonry. The house is delicately adorned with beautiful stucco. Capitals are decorated with Ionic-style volute figures and Corinthian-style paco ferns or leaves. The entablature is of Classical Greek style decorated with stucco of Chinese auspicious features such as bats, swans, clouds, leaves, and fruit.

Religious Places

Buildings in Phuket Old Town which were built for religious purpose include:

Sang Tham Shrine (Teng Kong Tong).

The shrine, situated on Phang-nga Road, was built in 1891 by Fujianese of the Tan Luan Jae family headed by Luang Amnart Nararak (Tan Kuat). The premise is a place to worship Bodhisattva and other Chinese deities, as well as a venue for the gathering of family members and friends. The one-storey shrine is of Chinese architecture with brick load-bearing walls. The roof is made of wood and finished with terracotta tiles. The shrine received the Architectural Conservation Award in the religious premise category from the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage in 1997.





Old Kuti (monk's dwelling) of Mongkol Nimit Temple (Wat Klang). There are two old *kuti* buildings at Mongkol Nimit Temple. The first one was built in 1924 with a gable pediment bearing a phrase written in Thai: "Phra Khru Sikhorarat Samanakhun, funded by donations from the Buddhist Community B.E. 2467." The second one was Kuti lam Anusorn, which was built in 1929. Both *kuti* buildings have two-stories and were built from reinforced concrete. Their distinguishing feature is a protruding front portico with a gable roof. The buildings have full-length wooden windows with semi-circular clerestory above.

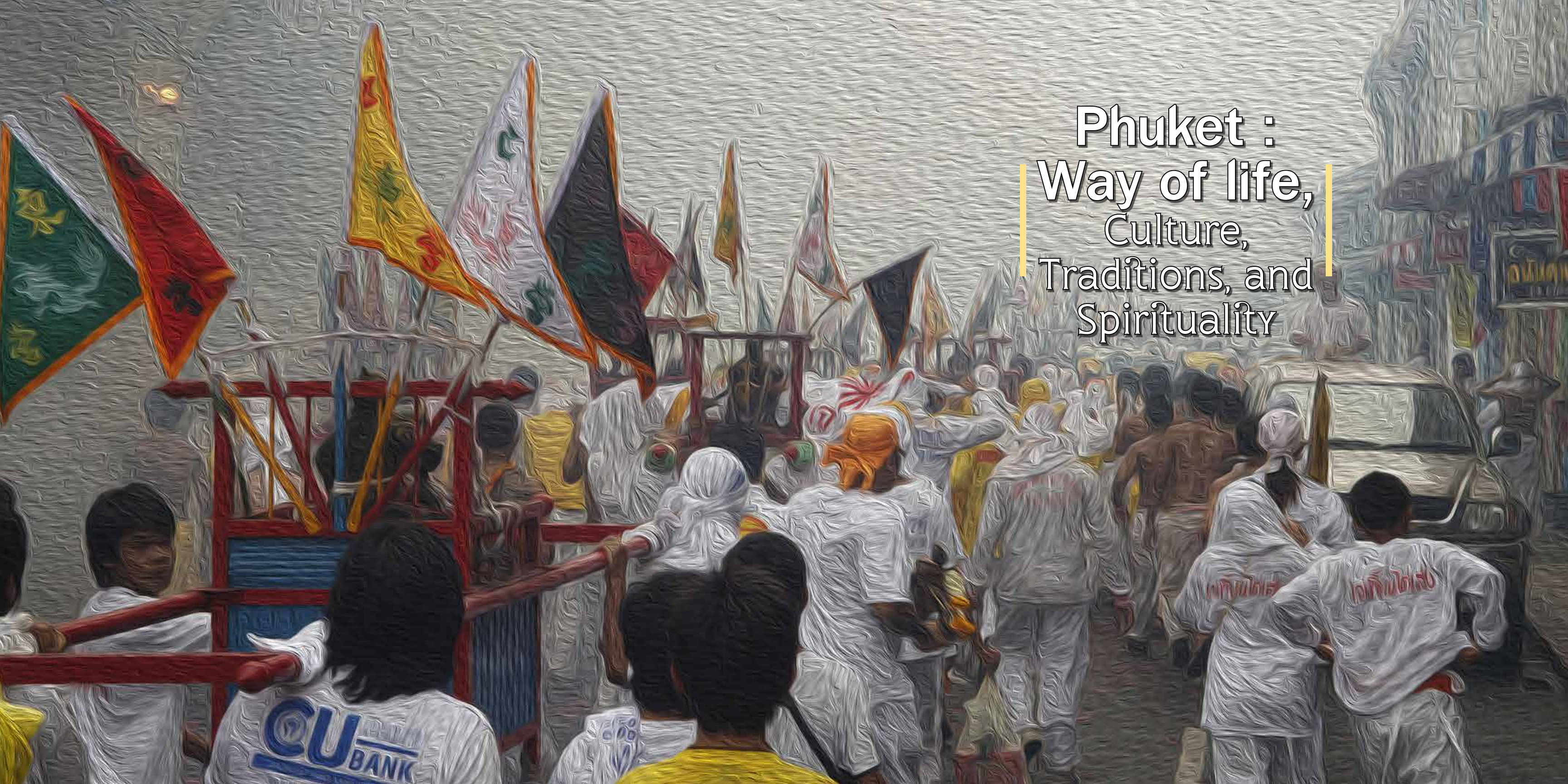
Apart from the above-mentioned buildings and structures, Phuket Old Town also features modern buildings, which showcase constructive modifications of old structures to serve present-day utilization, as well as preserving the historical value of the premises and the surrounding areas. Examples of these modern buildings are Bank of Ayudhya (Phuket branch) on Ratsada Road; Kasikorn Bank on Phang-nga Road; 99 Boutique Hotel on Thalang Road; and Honda showroom at the Phuket-Thalang intersection. However, there are many historical buildings of significant value that are deteriorating, while others are being replaced by new structures that may destroy the unique characteristics of Phuket Old Town.

The preservation and development of Phuket Old Town formally began in 1994, when state agencies, private sector, and local civil groups jointly mapped out measures to preserve the old town. The effort prompted the Ministry of Science and Technology to issue an announcement declaring Phuket Old Town a natural and cultural environmental conservation area, which covers a 175-*rai* (70-acre) tract along Phang-nga, Yaowarat, Krabi, Dibuk, Thalang, Phuket, and Thepkrasatri roads. The announcement outlines conservation regulations, such as restriction of building height to a maximum of 12 meters, and encourages building owners to preserve original architectural elements of the buildings, especially covered walkways in the front. In 1997, the ministry amended the announcement, extending the conservation area to cover the eastern side of Thalang and Phang-nga roads, bringing the total area to 210 *rai* (84 acres). Later on, Phuket City Municipality and the Old Phuket Foundation, together with academic institutions, state agencies, and the private sector jointly launched "Phuket's Old Commercial Quarters Conservation Project," with an aim to create awareness and promote participation of local people in the conservation of the architectural and cultural heritage as well as the environment of Phuket Old Town. This project, which is still ongoing, has been proved to be successful and should serve as a model for other old towns. In the latest development, the Cabinet on 11 April 2017 approved a proposal to declare a 2.76-square kilometer old commercial quarter of Phuket the Old Town Area. Relevant agencies have been working on a master plan for the conservation and development of the area.



[Footnote for architecture in Phuket]

"Sino-Portuguese" is a local architectural term describing the hybrid buildings in Andaman coastal area. Influenced by the art from Penang, Malaysia, the architecture has prominent features including a five-foot covered walkway — called *Ngo Kha Khi* or arcade that provides shelters for pedestrians and creates air flow, arched window and Chinese-style fence. The term that defines a hybrid architecture Chinese and Portuguese was first coined by an architect over 20 years ago. It was later widely used as it well demonstrated the uniqueness that could be a marketing highlight and tourist attraction. However, an in-depth research into history and architecture later showed the architecture didn't include an Portuguese art element, but a combination between Chinese and European (classic and Art Deco) elements. The "Sino-European" term should therefore be more accurate to describe the architecture.

A painting depicting a traditional Thai festival. In the foreground, a crowd of people is seen from behind, many wearing white clothing. One person in the lower left wears a white t-shirt with the 'CU BANK' logo. The crowd is moving through a street lined with buildings. In the background, a large structure is being carried on a wooden frame, supported by several people. This structure is adorned with numerous colorful flags, including red, yellow, white, and black ones. The overall style is that of a textured, expressive painting with visible brushstrokes.

Phuket :
Way of life,
Culture,
Traditions, and
Spirituality

Phuket : Diversity as a Way of Life

The apparel of the Baba ethnic group, for example, has won wide acceptance by other groups in Phuket and is proudly presented as the unique dress of the province.

Phuket's cultural pluralism is also reflected in different ethnic cuisines that are popular across cultures. Muslim food is widely available, such as *mataba* for breakfast. Popular Chinese food include *dim sum*, *curry fan*, *curry mai fan*, *mi hokkien*, *mi sapam*, *loba*, *o tao*, and *o eo*. The Buddhist Thais, meanwhile, love spicy southern-style curries, *nam phrik kung siap* – chilli paste with pounded dried shrimp – and other southern dishes. From morning to night, Phuket has a variety of unique local foods not to be missed.



Phuket is a multicultural society where ethnic Thai Buddhists and Muslims live in harmony with Chinese immigrants and the Baba – their children with local women. Each ethnic group has distinct customs, ways of life, and beliefs, and a strong determination to preserve their cultural identity.



Each ethnic group also has its own traditional activities throughout the year. The Vegetarian Festival in Phuket is internationally famous. Other important festivals are Chinese New Year, the Moon Festival, and Pho To, the ceremony to give offerings to ancestors and wandering spirits. The annual religious festivals of Thai Buddhists include Makha Bucha, Visakha Bucha, Asanha Bucha, Buddhist Lent, End of Buddhist Lent, the 10th Lunar Month Festival, and Lak Phra Festival. The Muslims, meanwhile, faithfully observe Ramadan and Eid ul-Fitr to celebrate the end of the fasting period with joy, goodwill, friendship, and a feast.



At present, tourism is Phuket's biggest industry, which makes the island a world-class destination. But Phuket still retains many old occupations from its past. For example, traditional blacksmithing, *khanom chin* noodle making, car repairing in garages, Nang Talung Manora shadow playing, and *pukar* art painting. Phuket's lively fresh markets and unique wooden buses that operate only in the provinces along the Andaman Coast are still alive and well, offering the old charms of Phuket for everyone to experience.

Baba: Thai-Chinese Peranakan in Phuket



When a group of Chinese immigrants from Fujian came to seek fortunes in Phuket, they settled down and married local women who were Chinese descendants or ethnic Thai. Their sons were called Baba and their daughters Yaya because the locals could not pronounce the right word “Nyonya” for daughters correctly. Later, the word Baba, a Hindu word, referred to both the boys and girls. The word Peranakan¹ has a root in Bahasa Indonesia. The meaning is the same as Baba - Chinese descendants born outside mainland China. The Baba Peranakan culture is unique, be it in the traditional wedding ceremony, apparel, or cuisine, which is a mixture of Chinese, Thai, and Malay cuisines.



The elaborate Baba wedding ceremony in Phuket was revived on October 23, 2005 through the initiatives of Assoc. Prof. Pranee Sakulpipat. The occasion saw 48 couples joining the Baba Peranakan wedding ceremony. The revival of this long-forgotten tradition has revived old pride and triggered new businesses among the younger generations.

The Baba Peranakan bride wears a high bun and a long, traditional bridal gown. The parents will carefully choose the traditional wedding gown for their daughter’s big day. The long-sleeved blouse with mandarin collar is made from Swiss lace. The blouse is fastened with *kerosang*², or *kosang* in short as it is called in Phuket. The main *kosang* brooch in gold and diamonds is in the shape of a water drop, while the smaller ones in the same set are round. Some families prefer the jewelry in a less glittering cut of diamond called *phet sik* in Thai, a unique Baba Peranakan artistic style. The outer blouse is made of Organdy fabric imported from Great Britain through Penang.

The Peranakan bride wears a body-hugging *pateh* or batik sarong fastened with a gold belt. The white blouse has a mandarin collar and long sleeves with frills. The outer garment, in sweet colors, is made from sheer fabrics. The *kerosang* brooch is pinned on the collar of the inner blouse, while the Hokkien-style brooch called *pintang* is pinned on the outer garment. When there are many brooches, they are pinned in a straight line according to size. The bride usually wears many gold necklaces. Another popular jewelry item is



the oval-shaped *hang hong* (meaning swan’s tail) earrings to brighten up the bride’s face. Nowadays, Peranakan women forego the outer gown, using only the dress with a *pateh* sarong to cut cost, calling it Baba dress. The use of Baba here is different from its original meaning, which refers to the male descendants of Chinese immigrants who married local women. The second generation is called Baba Kia.

Traditional Apparel for Phuket Identity

Yaya blouse: This is a blouse with intricate embroidery from the collar to the hem of the blouse. The front is wider than the back because the blouse has no buttons. The left and right front parts are fastened with two brooches attached by a string of gold chain. This flexibility allows the wearers to use the same blouse whether they are losing or gaining weight. The classic *yaya* blouse is worn with a batik sarong – truly elegant and timeless. The modern generation of Peranakan women call this classic attire a *yaya* dress. The price of *pateh* or batik sarong varies from 100 to 10,000 baht, depending on the quality.

The rich cultural diversity reflected in Phuket’s cuisines has won it a prestigious City of Gastronomy Award from UNESCO. In 2015, UNESCO honored Phuket as one of 18 cities around the world as a City of Gastronomy. Phuket is the first in Asia and Asean to win this international award. The man behind this success is Dr. Kosol Tang-Uthai, president of the Thai Peranakan Association, then vice-mayor of Phuket. He worked with the Phuket Municipality and the Office of Contemporary Art and Culture to campaign for global recognition of Phuket as part of UNESCO’s creative cities network. The Phuket Rajabhat University was the main institution responsible for collecting information about Phuket gastronomy.



Footnote 1

The word, Peranakan, in Malay means locally born, which refers to a child born to a Chinese father and a Malay mother. A child born to a Chinese father and a Thai mother in Phuket and Phang-nga (Takua Pa) is called “Baba”. However, the term, Peranakan, is also widely used in Phuket while the same word, with a stronger accent on P at the beginning of the word, is pronounced in Phang-nga, Krabi, Trang and Satun.

Footnote 2

The word, Kerosang, in Malay means a brooch. According to Malay dictionary, it’s pronounced as kerosang. But the word is pronounced differently in Thailand, depending on the location. It’s called “kosang” in Phuket, “kro-saang” in Phang-nga, and “kerosang” in Satun, for instance

The Charms of Phuket Cuisines



Visitors to Phuket should not miss local cuisines, to see why they are so popular. There are many types of foods to fit different tastes. For breakfast, Phuket has a wide variety of spicy curry to start the day. Authentic southern-style *nam ya pla* made of fish fresh from the sea is fragrant with spices and creamy from coconut milk. Or try *nam ya pu ta le* made from blue crabs. For lovers of really hot food, *kaeng phung pla* is a must-try. It is made from fermented fish maw cooked with the curry paste made from galangal, lemongrass, pepper, and dried chilies (without seeds) ground well together. Small pieces of dried fish are added when the curry becomes fragrant, followed by pea eggplants, cashew nuts, peeled jackfruit seeds, and other vegetables. This spicy breakfast often comes with steamed fish curried mousse and sea fish balls called *luk chin* or *ho mok thot*. The breakfast is eaten with fresh and pickled vegetables, pineapple, and dried *ching chang* small fish, offered for free for the customers. The customers only pay for the *khanom chin* and their orders.

For those who prefer Chinese food, the favorite Chinese breakfast is *dim sum*, or *khanom chip* in Thai. In Phuket, however, it is called *seo boi* in Cantonese. The *khanom chip* shop offers a wide variety of delicacies such as steam buns, *seo boi*, *hakao*, and *o koi*, all served steaming hot in small plates. There is also *bak kut teh* - pork ribs in hot soup with Chinese herbs - rice soup with fish, and *mi sua* fried noodles, a favorite Phuket dish. Coffee, tea, and other beverages are available.

For Muslim breakfast, Phuket has a few famous *roti* places. Apart from *roti*, they also have *mataba*, fried eggs with butter, and hot beverages.

Visitors should also try having breakfast as the locals do - drinking hot coffee in traditional *kopi* shops, which offer a wide variety of sweets in a big tray to pick and choose from. Sipping coffee and munching the sweets while listening to the locals' lively chats in Phuket dialects is indeed a memorable experience.



For noodle lovers, the best lunch is fried *mi hokkien*. The spaghetti-size Hokkien noodle is fried with seafood and *bog choy* and eaten with onions and lettuce. Highly recommended is fresh spring rolls. The Hokkien fillings are different from Teochew spring rolls in Bangkok because it is made of fried jicama. For those who love shellfish, don't miss *ko tao* (Ko in Hokkien means chewy). Sometimes called *o tao*, meaning oyster, this fried dish is very famous in Taiwan. An egg and taro cubes the size of dice are fried before small oysters are added into the wok, then topped with crispy shallots and pork cracklings. The customers can order how spicy hot they want it.

Dinner is usually a big seafood meal. Fish is a favorite ingredient for making *tom som*, *kaeng som* or the moderately spicy *kaeng lueang*. Fried and grilled fish are the main orders when in Phuket. The Phuket smoked fish is the signature dish because it is smoked with coconut husks, which makes the fish meat especially fragrant. In Phuket, different kinds of greens are used as condiments for most dishes, particularly with chili dips with dried shrimp, or *nam phrik kung siap*, and *nam phrik kung sot*. The latter is boiled shrimp meat mixed with thinly sliced shallots, lemon juice, and grilled shrimp paste, then seasoned to taste. Phuket is also famous for fresh blue crabs and giant mud crabs. The Baba in Phuket also love *mi hun kaeng pu*, a creamy curry with crab meat, which goes with boiled rice noodles. Steamed blue crabs are eaten with tangy seafood dipping sauce.

Preserving Traditions and Faiths of Phuket



Being a multicultural society, Phuket is home to different religious beliefs that are passed on from generation to generation. The result is a wide array of colorful cultural festivals from different ethnic groups to mesmerize visitors, making it a world-class destination.



Among Phuket's famous festivals are:

Vegetarian Festival

This is Phuket's most famous festival. It is held for nine days from the 1st to 9th day of the waxing moon in the 9th lunar month, or between September and October. During this period, the Chinese descendants in Phuket abstain from meat consumption and observe religious teachings to cleanse their minds. This long tradition also features several rituals, such as the processions to invite the deities to preside over the festival and to return them to the shrines, fire walking, and the rites to dispel bad luck. The Vegetarian Festival attracts a large number of both foreign and domestic tourists every year.





Chinese New Year

The Chinese New Year Day falls on the 1st day of the 1st month in the Chinese calendar, or the 2nd or 3rd month of the lunar calendar. The New Year rituals take three days.

Day One is for the preparation of food and offerings for worshipping ceremonies the next day.

Day Two is for the deity worshipping ceremony in the morning and ancestor worshipping rites in the afternoon. Afterwards, the food is shared in the family. The children get *ang pao* (or *tae ia*) as gifts.

Day Three is called Wan Thiao in Thai, a day to go out and enjoy. The Chinese will wear brand-new clothes to welcome good luck and go to pay homage to deities at the shrines. They often travel to visit relatives who live in other communities. No work is allowed, nor harsh words.



Wai Thewada Ceremony

This is a ceremony to pay homage to deities in heaven who are looking after human beings. The ceremony begins after midnight on the 8th day of the 1st month in the Chinese calendar, or at the start of the 9th day of the 1st month in the Chinese calendar. The necessary offerings are two sugarcane stalks and a variety of food and sweets.

Pho To Ceremony

This ceremony of Chinese descendants in Phuket is held between the 7th month in the Chinese calendar or the 9th month of the Thai lunar calendar. The ceremonies to worship ancestors' spirits and deities require a special offering — a sweet in red made of flour and in the shape of a turtle. The Chinese believe that the turtle is a symbol of longevity. Giving turtles as offerings to the gods is believed to be a great merit that will make one live longer.

The Moon Festival

Falling on the 15th day of the 8th month in the Chinese lunar calendar, the Moon Festival is the second most important festival, after Chinese New Year. The Chinese call it the Mid-Autumn Festival or Zhong Qiu because it usually occurs in September or October, which is in the middle of autumn. The offering for this occasion is the mooncake (*tong chiu pia*) and *khanom ko*. The Moon Festival has been observed for thousands of years and there are many legends about the Moon Festival. The popular ones are about the goddess Chang E flying to the moon and the rabbit on the moon.



Exploring Phuket Old Town

Exploring Phuket Old Town



The charm of Phuket lies not only in its magnificent beaches and sea, but also in the city's rich historical and cultural treasures that make this island a world-class tourism destination. The history of Phuket dates back to several centuries, according to the memoirs of Greek navigators who voyaged to the island about a thousand years ago. From ancient times to present days, Phuket has journeyed through periods of glory and continued to move forward to prosperity.



Phuket Old Town is one of Phuket's most famous attractions, welcoming visitors all year round. The Sino-European¹ architecture can be seen all over the town, especially along the roads leading to the town center. Phuket Old Town has been meticulously taken care of – from putting electricity wires underground to preserving and maintaining original architectural elements of old buildings, as these structures create the unique identity of Phuket. Taking a walk around Phuket Old Town allows visitor to admire the beauty of Sino-European architecture and historical buildings, as well as to indulge in the culture and the locals' way of life.

Popular sightseeing routes in Phuket Old Town are:

Route 1: Phuket–Ratsada–Ranong Roads

Start from the street corner where Phang-nga and Phuket Roads intersect, toward Ratsada Road, where the Thavorn Hotel is situated. The hotel, which is one of the oldest in Phuket, has an exhibition room featuring the interesting story of Phuket in the past. The next spots worth a visit are the Bank of Ayudhya building; a group of buildings around Suriyadet Circle or Fountain Circle; and the *pho thong* public transport station. *Pho thong* is an open-air passenger vehicle which is a unique mode of transportation in Phuket. Some old houses and mansions are located behind Ban San fresh market, such as Phra Aram Sakhonkhet Mansion, which is in the same compound with Thai Airways Phuket Office.



Route 2: Phangnga–Phuket–Montri Roads

Commence at the Phang-nga–Yaowarat intersection; many spectacular buildings can be found along the route. Among them are Sang Tham Shrine, the ancient Chinese worshipping place; On On Hotel; a newly-constructed Kasikorn Bank building in Sino-European style; Phuket Baba Museum to celebrate HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (former Standard Chartered Bank building); and Peranakannitat Museum (former Promthep News Center Clock Tower), which is situated at the Phang-nga–Phuket intersection. Walking down Phang-nga Road and turning left at Montri Road, you will find the old Phuket Post & Telegraph Office. The well-preserved building now houses the Phuket Philatelic Museum.

Route 3: Thalang Road and Soi Rommani

One of the most popular areas for tourists, this route runs from the Thalang–Thepkrasattri intersection to the Thalang–Yaowarat intersection. Thalang Road is flanked by long lines of alluring Sino-European shophouses, which are still in good condition. These shophouses, more than 151 units, accommodate a variety of uses such as shops, guesthouses, restaurants, coffee shops, pharmacies, and galleries. A group of shophouses with distinctive elements are between house numbers 107 to 129 and those on the even-numbered side of the road. There are also old shophouses on both sides of Soi Rommani, a former red-light district, which links Thalang Road with Dibuk Road, where Mongkol Nimit Temple is situated.





Route 4: Krabi and Satun Roads

Start from the Krabi-Yaowarat intersection adjoining Thalang Road, head west to Satun Road junction and walk straight to Chinpracha House. From the house, walk back on Satun Road to Dibuk Road junction. This section of the road is packed with beautiful Sino-European style buildings, such as Phuket Thai Hua Museum. There are also many local food restaurants in this area, including Kanom Chin Pa Mai, which serves rice noodles with curry, and Peh Teow noodle shop.

Route 5: Dibuk Road

From the Satun-Dibuk junction, walk eastward and you will find the old mansion of Luang Amnart Nararak at the first corner. There are many exquisite shophouses along both sides of Dibuk Road. Most of these shophouses are residential buildings, which have been preserved in good condition. Some of the more interesting premises are located on the section from Yaowarat Road to Thepkasattri Road, such as the Phuket Hokkien Association building, which is on the right, and Mongkol Nimit Temple or Wat Klang on the left. Opposite the temple is Soi Rommani, where another set of old shophouses is there to visit.

Route 6: Thepkasattri Road

Make the first two stops at Hongyok House and Anuphas & Sons Company building before moving on to the Thepkasattri-Dibuk intersection, where the delicate building of Raya restaurant is situated. Walking past the intersection, you will find rows of old shophouses on both sides of the road with many famous dining places such as Thaeo Nam roti shop and One Chan Cafe n' Restaurant. Another must-see spot on this road is Sanguan Pharmacy at the Thepkasattri-Thalang intersection. Arguably the most beautiful pharmacy in town, the building maintains its original charm of Sino-European architecture.



[Footnote 1]

Sino-Portuguese architecture is a local term used in Phuket. The academic term for the hybrid architecture is Sino-European architecture.

แผนที่ท่องเที่ยว เมืองเก่าภูเก็ต Phuket Old Town Tourist Map





Phang-nga

Old Town Architecture

Phang-nga Old Town Architecture

Takua Pa Old Town

Takua Pa Old Town features the glorious past of this former port town, which used to be a hub of maritime trade via Takua Pa River and the Malay Peninsula. During the mining industrial revolution in Thailand, a great number of people, including the Chinese migrating from mainland China or relocating from Penang and Singapore, came to Takua Pa to work in the tin mining business. They started off as coolie laborers, but some gradually built up their wealth until they became tin mine owners, winning onshore and offshore mining concessions. Thanks to the tin mining industry, Takua Pa's economy grew tremendously. New buildings were erected to serve local businesses, such as company offices, hotels, grocery stores, kopi (coffee) shops, cinemas, and entertainment venues. Commercial areas emerged along Udom Thara, Si Takua Pa, Klan Kaeo, Montri and Na Mueang roads. After the Siamese Revolution of 1932, the government policies on city development and the promulgation of mining laws attracted westerners to invest in mining businesses in Takua Pa, especially dredge mining. These foreign investors brought with them modern machines and advanced mining technology to improve ore production. With huge sums of investment, they managed to expand tin mining areas throughout the Andaman coast. The mining industry boom triggered the emergence of new businesses in the area, pumping up Takua Pa's economy to its peak in early 1957. But, when tin deposits were depleted and mining companies began to close down, once-vibrant commercial areas became stagnant over the years. However, despite its economic decline, the multi-cultural town of Takua Pa manages to maintain its rich cultural diversity through the lives of Chinese workers' mixed-race descendants known as "Baba," who have unique costumes, food, language, and customs, such as the century-old Vegetarian Festival and procession of Chinese deities' images. Their cultural heritage can also be seen through settlement patterns and exquisite architecture.

The architecture of Takua Pa Old Town can be divided into five groups, based on utilization of the buildings.

Public Buildings

Public buildings are large buildings that are used as offices of state agencies, association headquarters, and schools. The following are examples of public buildings in Takua Pa Old Town.

Tao Ming School building. Situated on Montri Road, the school was established through funds raised by Chinese tycoons in Takua Pa, Ranong, and Phuket. The two-storey reinforced concrete building with plastered masonry walls was constructed by Chinese artisans in 1922. It has a covered walkway and balcony around the building. The hipped-roof structure was made of wood and finished with galvanized sheet metal. The building's distinguishing features include a Palladian-style front portico with a balcony and a tympanum decorated with stucco image of the 12-ray sun, which resembles the Kuomintang Party flag and the national emblem of the Republic of China. The 12 rays represent 12 months and 12 traditional Chinese hours (one Chinese hour equals two standard hours). The sun-decorated tympanum reflects the role of the Chinese community and politics in Takua Pa.

Shophouses

One common element of shophouses in Takua Pa Old Town is "ngo kha khi" (five-foot way) on the ground floor, linking shophouse units. These covered walkways or arcades provide shade from the sun and rain and help generate air flow. A typical shophouse has a high roof covered with terracotta tiles. An open inner court or open inner court with well is located inside the building to improve air ventilation. The architectural characteristics of Takua Pa shophouse can be divided into three styles:

Chinese-style shophouse. These shophouses were built in the early period of the town establishment and development (1827-1897). They are located along Udom Thara Road, where the settlement started.



The two-storey, Chinese style structure was built from brick masonry, 4-5 meters in width and 15-20 meters in length. The ground floor is made of earth or polished concrete floor, while the upper floor is made of wood. The building's wooden roof frame is covered with barrel vault terracotta roof tiles. One of the shophouse's prominent features is the extended roof that covers the walkway in the front of the building. Each unit has only one window on the front wall of the second floor.

Straits Settlement-style shophouse. Built during the years 1877-1932, most of the shophouses of Straits Settlement style are situated on Si Takua Pa (Nai) Road. Its architecture received influences from Penang and Singapore. This type of shophouse has two stories, 4-6 meters in width and 20-40 meters in length. It is built from reinforced concrete with a plastered masonry wall. The ground floor is used for commercial purposes, while the second floor is residential. The front wall of the second floor is built in two styles — a wooden wall with awning windows, or a plastered masonry wall with three round-arch windows and segmental arch. The exterior is decorated with stucco at the pole tops, walls, and around the windows. A very long shophouse may have several open inner courts inside the building. Ngo kha khi covered walkways of this type of shophouse are 2-3 meters wide to provide shelter from nearly year-round rain.

Mixed-style shophouse. The mixed-style shophouses, mostly situated on Si Takua Pa (Nok) and Klan Kaeo roads, were built during the

prime era of the mining industry (1927-1967). The reinforced concrete structure has two stories with plastered masonry walls. The distinguishing features of the building are a wider covered walkway, which is around three meters wide, and ferro-cement awnings at the front of the second floor and the upper part of the building. Some of them have a front balcony on the second floor. The exterior part of the building is adorned with decorative elements in geometric patterns, such as diamond-shaped quadrangles and circles at the bottom edge of the window.

Commercial Buildings

These are large buildings for hotels and private companies. Examples of old commercial buildings in Takua Pa Old Town are:

Jootee Tin Dredging Co., Ltd. Located on Si Takua Pa Road, the company was established by Mr. Jootee Boonsoong, who inherited a tin mining business from his father. After World War II, the company expanded its business by importing machines from foreign countries to build a tin dredge, which operated in Phang-nga Bay for many years until the decline of the mining industry in 1977. The Jootee Tin Dredging Co. building is a modern two-storey ferro-concrete structure. The front part of the ground floor has been turned into a museum of the company's history, with collections of mining equipment and tools, as well as the company's office in the old days.





hipped roof. There are three enclosed porticos at the center, the west end, and the east end of the building. The central one is a three-columned portico; the west portico is two-columned; and the east portico is four-columned. The central portico is linked to the west and the east porticos by a seven-columned front porch on each side. The Fine Arts Department registered the building as a national archaeological site in 2001.

Wat Nikorn Wararam. The construction of the temple commenced in 1793 with donations from two local residents, Kaew and Ram. The temple, which is one of the oldest temples in Yan Yao market community, received a royal endorsement to build an ordination hall in 1842.

Phang-nga Old Town

Shophouses and wooden row houses on Si Muang Road

Shophouses. Like shophouses in Takua Pa Old Town, Yan Yao shophouses consist of Straits and mixed-style architecture. The shophouses are two-storey reinforced concrete buildings with plastered masonry walls and covered walkways.

Wooden row houses. The two-storey buildings are wooden structures with covered walkways. One of the distinguishing features of the row houses is the wooden wall on the second floor, which has waist-high windows with solid panels or louvered shutters. Some houses have louver panels installed above the windows for better ventilation.

In spite of its appealing nature, Yan Yao market old community has not yet been systematically surveyed to appraise the value of its cultural heritage.

Mueang Phang-nga community was established in the Ayutthaya era during the heady days of the tin mining industry. Mueang Phang-nga initially had a khwaeng status under the administration of Mueang Takua Pa before being upgraded to a town — the same status as Mueang Takua Pa. Since then, the town has become the center of Phang-nga Province, with several significant buildings and structures.

Old Phang-nga Provincial Hall. Built in 1930, the single-story, reinforced concrete building is situated on Phet Kasem Road. The building has a reduced form of classical architecture with a narrow rectangular pattern. It has a hipped roof and three enclosed porticos at the center and the left and right wings. The central portico is three columns wide, while the left and right porticos are two columns wide each. The central portico is linked to the wing porticos by a seven column front porch on each side. The central portico comprises three round arches, the upper part of which is decorated with low stucco balustrades. On top of the central portico is a high gable with a pediment bearing the Garuda emblem. The pediment is flanked by corbels with floral vine stucco decorations. The Fine Arts Department registered the building as a national archaeological site in 1987.

Phang-nga Governor's Residence. Situated on Phet Kasem Road, the building was constructed in 1933 and had been used as an office of the Australian-owned Phang-nga Tin Company, which operated a tin dredging business. The building was sold to the state after the company closed down. It was later renovated and used as the residence

of Phang-nga governors. The two-storey, reinforced concrete building is in an eclectic style with a hipped roof. The distinctive element is a drive-through arch portico in the front. The Fine Arts Department registered the building as a national archaeological site in 2001.

Shophouses and wooden row houses. One common element of shophouses and wooden row houses is the ngo kha khi (five-foot way), or arcade, on the ground floor. The covered walkways provide shelter from the sun and rain, as well as improving ventilation.

• **Thaweasuk Hotel.** The two-storey structure is located on Phet Kasem Road. The hotel consists of two shophouse units. It was built from reinforced concrete, with plastered masonry walls. The front wall on the upper floor has three round-arch windows with stucco decorations around the window chambers and capitals. Situated next to Thaweasuk Hotel is another two-storey shophouse of four units. The front wall on the upper floor has three windows of the same size and shape. An outstanding feature of this shophouse is the exterior decoration of the front wall with geometric patterns, such as diamond-shaped quadrangles and circles at the bottom edge of the windows.


• **Wooden row houses.** Located on Talat Khwang Road, the two-storey row houses are half wood and half concrete. A distinctive feature of these row houses is the wooden wall on the second floor, which has waist-high windows with solid panels or louvered shutters. Some houses have louver panels installed above the windows for better ventilation.

• **Chean Vanich Family shophouse.** Located on Charoen Rat Road, the two-storey, reinforced concrete shophouse with plastered masonry walls has two units. The prominent feature of the structure is the front part of the upper floor, which has a balcony and a wall that consists of a center door flanked by two windows. The ground floor has a wooden wall with a door in the middle. Situated next to the Chean Vanich Family shophouse is a two-storey, single-unit, wooden row house. The front wooden wall on the second floor is divided into two sections. The lower section is a waist-high solid panel, while the upper section has three wooden double windows.

Prachum Yothee Temple. The temple, which is located on Phet Kasem Road, was initially built as living quarters for Buddhist monks, before it was developed into a monastery. In 1849, Chao Chom Yisun Na Nakorn, the eldest daughter of Phang-nga Governor Phraya Borirak Phuton (Sang Na Nakorn), led the renovation of the monastery, which was later upgraded to a temple. Historic structures at the temple include the Tripitaka Hall and a museum building.

Ma Cho Po Shrine. Situated on Borirak Bamrung Road, Ma Cho Po is one of the oldest Chinese shrines in Mueang Phang-nga. The shrine features Chinese architecture with plastered masonry walls and wooden roof structure. There are mural paintings on the inner walls of the shrine. A royally bestowed joss stick pot with King Chulalongkorn's royal cypher is placed inside the shrine.



A photograph of a traditional wooden restaurant interior. The ceiling is made of dark wooden beams, and a large, cylindrical, woven bamboo lantern hangs from it. The walls are also made of wood, with a lattice pattern on the upper part. In the foreground, a group of people are seated around a round table, eating. A woman in a bright pink shirt is standing and serving food. The background shows other tables and chairs, and a wall with several framed pictures or notices. The overall atmosphere is warm and traditional.

Way of Life and Identity of Phang-nga People

Way of Life and Identity of Phang-nga People



As a hub of maritime trade on the Andaman coast, Phang-nga was not only a place where traders met to exchange their goods, but also a venue where different cultures crossed and intertwined. People from various ethnic groups -Thai Buddhists, Muslims, and Chinese - decided to put down their roots at this port town a long time ago. Time passed, but their identities and ways of life remain intact, including language, food, costumes, customs, religion, and beliefs, which have been passed on from generation to generation.

In the present day, the major occupations of Phang-nga people are agriculture, such as rubber and fruit plantations, and fishing. But in the past, mining was the booming business in Phang-nga, thanks to its rich tin deposits. Abundant natural resources and valuable ore deposits drew people from other parts of Thailand and overseas Chinese, traveling on Chinese junks, to Phang-nga to work at the tin mines in Kapong and Takua Pa districts.

However, when the mining industry faded, some Chinese returned to mainland China, while others decided to stay on. Many of them married local women and built up families in Takua Pa, formerly known as Takola. Children of these Chinese



immigrants are called “Baba” for boys and “Nyonya” for girls. Baba and Nyonya have the same meaning, which is “locally born Chinese.” Over time, the word Baba has been used to refer to all mixed-Chinese descendants, both men and women.

Muslim residents, meanwhile, set up their communities in coastal areas and on islands, such as Ban Khok Khrai in Thap Put district and Ban Bang Phat in Mueang Phang-nga district, which are two of the most famous Muslim fishing villages. Surrounded by mangrove forests, the area is abundant in marine and aquatic resources. The villages’ seafood markets sell a variety of fresh and processed marine products such as hard clams, oysters, groupers, snappers, blue swimming crab, jelly fish, banana shrimp, kung siab crispy shrimp, and kapi krill paste, as well as related products such as southern-style curry paste made by the Khok Khrai Women’s Group.

From Muslim villages on the coastline, we turn to the well-known island of Ko Panyi, where another Muslim community, called Ban Klang Nam, is located. The Muslim islanders on Ko Panyi live a simple and tranquil life. They earn a living from fishing and selling processed seafood products and craftwork souvenirs, such as batik fabric to tourists.

The fascinating life of Moken sea gypsies can be seen at Mu Ko Surin. In the past, Moken people traveled in the Andaman Sea aboard their kabang boats, like floating houses, before settling down in the

Surin Islands. They practice animism and worship ancestors’ spirits.

Different ways of life of Buddhists, Chinese, and Muslim people are reflected in the culinary diversity of Phang-nga. The city offers a wide variety of food, ranging from southern Thai-style dishes such as khanom chin (rice noodles with curry sauce), native vegetables with chili paste, and traditional sweets to Hokkien cuisine or Baba Peranakan food. Visit a morning market and you will see plenty of Baba Peranakan food, such as mi Hokkien fried noodles, loba (deep fried stewed pig’s head), keam koi (rice flour cake topped with sweet and sour sauce), kosui (steamed rice cake flavored with brown sugar), chi cho (glutinous rice balls stuffed with bean paste), kee koi (soybean cake with syrup), and khe man (steamed rice flour cake topped with a coconut milk crust). Popular Muslim foods are roti and curry, roti with fried egg, and seafood.

Apart from intriguing food culture, unique customs and rituals of each ethnic group, which have been passed on for generations, also make Phang-nga an attractive destination. Among them are the Ching Pret ceremony, in which the locals offer food and other utilities to the spirits of their ancestors, the Tenth Lunar Month Festival, Vegetarian Festival, Ma Cho Po Statue Procession, the Te Krachat give-away ceremony in Kapong district, the Moken’s boat floating festival in the 5th lunar month, and the Hari Raya Aidilfitri Festival to mark the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

Baba...Peranakan in Phang-nga ¹

Peranakan is a Malay term used for descendants of Chinese immigrants who married local women in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and the Andaman coast of Thailand. Many people use the term “Baba” to refer to Peranakan Chinese.

In Phang-nga, Baba set up their communities in Mueang Phang-nga, Kapong, Takua Pa, Takua Thung, and Thai Mueang districts. They have a distinct way of living and culture, which is reflected in their costumes, food, language, customs, and beliefs.

Similar to Penang and Phuket, most of Takua Pa locals are Baba descendants who have a delicate and unique style of apparel, especially women’s costumes, that displays a blend of various cultures. Followings are examples of Peranakan garments:

A po blouse is a mandarin-collar blouse with Malay-style long sleeves. The blouse is short, similar to a Mon/Burmese bodice. It is usually worn with an Indonesian-style patch sarong.

Baju panjang is a long, loose, calf-length outer garment worn over an inner undershirt and a sarong. The long-sleeved blouse has no buttons but it is fastened by kerosang, which is a three-piece set of brooches made from gold and jewels. Baju panjang is normally donned by the wife of a mine owner, who is the master of the house.

Short outer blouse is a waist-length, long-sleeved outer garment fastened with kerosang, similar to the baju panjang. The blouse is usually made from lace or cotton lawn fabric. The shorter design helps the wearer move easily when doing house chores or daily activities.

Pua tueng te blouse, or Nyonya blouse, or kebaya, is a figure-hugging blouse with v-shaped neckline and an open front which is secured by kerosang, often in forms of flowers or auspicious animals. The kebaya is hip-length, with a pointed hem in the front. There are three styles of kebaya:

- **Kebaya renda** is decorated with fine lace imported from Holland on the front and outer hems.
- **Kebaya biku** has a curved hem on the front to make it more stylish.
- **Kebaya sulam** is adorned with colorful floral vines and auspicious animal embroidery.

The bridal gown is the most beautiful Nyonya attire. The long-sleeved, mandarin-collar gown is usually made of Rubia fabric or fine Chinese silk in white or bright colors such as orange, pink, or light blue. An outer blouse is embroidered with flowers and auspicious animals, according to ancestral beliefs.



The Nyonya’s intricate wedding dress is made more gorgeous with bridal ornaments such as a hua guan tiara made from gold and silver threads with flowers and beads. On the wedding day, a Nyonya bride wears a high bun called chak iboi or feng-huang hairdo, trimmed with swan hairpins or bodkins made from gold and diamonds. Lan te pai and ko pi chi gold necklaces, together with 6-12 pintang brooches and gold-diamond tassel earrings or swan earrings are among must-have items for the bride. The elegant dress will not be complete without bracelets, anklets, a diamond-shaped bayae ring, and beaded shoes.

Modern Nyonyas, however, like to wear figure-hugging lace blouses and beautiful patch batik sarongs with different accessories to suit different functions.

For Babas, there are various traditional garments for them to choose.

Tueng chuang is a Chinese-style shirt with standing collar. The shirt has a vertical or side opening fastened with five Chinese button knots. Tung juang is usually paired with pang lin Chinese silk trousers in blue, brown, or black.

Mine owner’s outfit is composed of a Chinese-style, long-sleeved shirt with a standing collar. This shirt is similar to Thai-style Raj Pattern shirt, which has four front pockets. Made of tai seng or West Point fabric, the shirt is worn with formal pants or khaki pants and a kalo sun helmet.

The western suit was influenced by the West during World War II. On their wedding day, Baba would wear either a western suit or a mine owner’s outfit with a boutonniere.

Besides their unique costumes, Baba also created distinctive foods, derived from a mix of Chinese and local cuisines. Popular Baba foods in Takua Pa are Hokkien-style dishes such as loba (deep fried stewed pig’s head, offal, and pork served with spicy dip), mu hong (stewed pork belly with herbs), which is a mix of Chinese and Indonesian cooking styles, and braised pork belly with salted fish and tofu in ginger soup.



¹ Information by Jarin Neeranartwarodom

There is also a wide selection of snacks and desserts to go with morning coffee or afternoon tea. Popular items include ang ku or “red tortoise cake,” which is made from glutinous rice flour with sweet bean paste filling. Ang means red, an auspicious color in Chinese culture, while ku means tortoise. The red tortoise cake, which is a symbol of longevity, is often served during important functions such as Chinese New Year celebrations, the Ghost Festival, ceremonies worshiping ancestors and deities, and the ceremony to welcome a newborn. “White tortoise cakes,” on the other hand, are served at funerals. Other Baba snacks are keam koi rice flour cake topped with dried shrimps, fried shallots, and sweet and sour sauce and tao sor cake, which is one of the most popular souvenirs from Phang-nga and Phuket.

Culinary Pride of Phang-nga

Phang-nga is blessed with pristine forests, an abundant sea, and beautiful tourism destinations. The cultural diversity and harmony between people of different races add to the charms of the province. Delicious local food, ranging from hot and spicy southern Thai-style dishes, Hokkien food, mouth-watering seafood, and Muslim fare, also make Phang-nga second to none.

Morning markets are a place where you can find almost every local food item and sweets such as deep-fried sesame balls, pumpkin cake,

pao lang grilled sticky rice stuffed with caramelized coconut, khai pla sugar-boiled rice flour with toddy palm (adapted from a Chinese dessert), koi ta lam steamed flour with pandan juice topped with coconut milk custard, and chai thao koi steamed or fried white radish cake. Phang-nga residents usually pair these sweets with coffee for their quick and simple breakfast.

Phang-nga cuisine also offers a variety of light meals. They are tae tiam, or dim sum, which include shumai and various types of steamed buns of assorted fillings; mi sua, rice noodle soup; khao yam pa hom, spicy rice salad with fever vine leaves, a traditional food of people on the Andaman coast of Thailand; and khanom chin, rice noodles with sweet and sour or fish innards curry served with fresh, blanched, and pickled vegetables. Phang-nga natives usually add a crispy dough stick or peanut crackers to their khanom chin to make it even more delicious.

Lunch is a time to indulge more appetizing dishes, including seafood, traditional, Muslim, or Hokkien foods. To taste the real Phang-nga cuisine, try Hokkien fried noodles with seafood, pork, or pig offal; chili paste with shrimp; chor laeng, shrimp soup in coconut milk and sliced lemongrass; nam prik kung siab, krill paste with crispy shrimps; mu pad koei khem, stir fried pork belly with krill paste and herbs; or roti with chicken or fish curry, which is the most popular Muslim food.

It can be said that culinary diversity, which has been cooked up into a perfect taste, is the true cultural charm of Phang-nga.



Living Traditions and Roots of Faith of Phang-nga People

Phang-nga, a remote province on the Andaman coast, is truly multicultural, with each ethnic group managing to pass on their faith, traditions, customs, and practices from generation to generation.

Significant traditions and ceremonies have been around for centuries:

The Vegetarian Festival is a Hokkien Chinese cultural event held for nine days and nine nights from the 1st to the 9th day of the waxing moon in the 9th lunar month, around September and October. During the festival, Thai-Chinese people in Takua Pa and Thai Mueang districts dress in white, observe a vegetarian diet, and do good deeds to cleanse the body and soul. They pay respect to their ancestors’ spirits, which are

believed to have safeguarded their family members. They believe the ceremony will drive away bad fortune, bring good luck, good health, and longevity. It also promotes unity among local residents.

Several interesting activities and rituals are held during the Vegetarian Festival such as the parade of ma song, or devotees who are believed to be the mediums of Chinese deities. These devotees impale themselves with various objects, climb knife ladders, and do fire-walking. Each shrine also prepares free vegetarian food for participants throughout the festival.

The Te Krachat give-away ceremony is an event organized by Mahayana Buddhists in Kapong district on the 15th day of the waxing moon in the 10th lunar month, or around 13 September of each year. Followers attend religious ceremonies and prayers led by Buddhist monks at Inthaphum Temple before taking part in the te krachat (emptying food baskets) ritual, giving away food and other utilities to needy people. During the event, people also make merit for their ancestors’ spirits, abandoned souls, stray spirits, and demons.

The Ma Cho Po Statue Procession takes place every year after the Chinese New Year celebration, between February and March. Organized by Thai-Chinese communities in Phang-nga, the procession is held for seven days and seven nights. During the ceremony, the statue of the goddess Ma Cho Po is carried on an ancient Chinese carriage around the town, as people pack both sides of the road to pay homage to the goddess’s statue. Local residents also put a worshipping table covered with red cloth in front of their house. It is believed that if the ma song, or deity representatives, pick up sweets or fruit from a table, the house owner will be blessed with good fortune.

The Tenth Lunar Month Festival is one of the most significant festivals of people in the South. It is held from the 8th day to 15th day of the waning moon in the 10th lunar month. People go to temples to offer food and dessert to the monks and make merit for their ancestors’ spirits. After that, they will place khanom la silky crepe and kra ya sat Thai-style cereal bars at various spots inside the temple compound. At the end of the religious activities, poor people or sea gypsies will show up to collect the food and other donated goods in the Ching Pret ceremony.

The Moken Boat Floating Festival is a cultural event of the Moken people, who live on the Surin Islands. The festival, which takes place annually in April or May, is held to celebrate their ancestors’ spirits. The ceremony includes activities by mediums, ancestor worshipping, Moken traditional arts performances, and the floating of kabang boats, which is believed to take away suffering, sickness, and bad luck from the Moken community.

Exploring Phang-nga Old Town



Exploring Phang-nga Old Town



Nestled in a valley, Phang-nga is a peaceful town and most certainly one of the most beautiful places on the Andaman Coast. Sharing the same history as Phuket, Phang-nga went through similar periods of tin mining prosperity and decline. Visitors can still feel its living history and charms through the city's captivating architecture, which reflects its past glory.



The most distinctive architecture of Phang-nga is in Takua Pa Old Town, the center of economic prosperity during the height of the tin mining boom. Pockets of beautiful old buildings in Phang-nga town district also allow us to follow Phang-nga's history over the years.

Here are Phang-nga's architecture tourism routes:

Takua Pa Old Town

Route 1: Si Takua Pa Route

Start from the three-way junction heading to the town center from Ta Kua Pa District. A left turn leads to Tao Ming, an old Chinese school. The right turn, meanwhile, will take you through a neighborhood of old Sino-Takua Pa buildings on both sides of the street. After passing Khun Intrakhiri Mansion, you will arrive at the Mo Phitak intersection. Turn left to the Pae Sam Te three-way junction, and then turn right to see the area with the highest density of well-preserved old Sino-Takua Pa buildings. At the curve is Pae Sam Te, a popular coffee shop for the locals' morning gathering, right in front of Sin Chai Tueng Shrine (Kuan U Shrine). On Sundays during the high season, the area becomes a walking street, the better to admire Takua Pa's charming architecture.



Route 2: Udom Thara Route

To the left of the Pae Sam Te three-way junction is a small road with several old buildings, including the mansion of Khun Chamnong Phakdi Kulawanit, a row of old-style Chinese buildings, and the old residence of the Takua Pa governor, with remnants of its surrounding walls. The rest is a row of wooden shophouses opposite the old Governor's Residence, now an archaeological site.

Route 3: Klan Kaeo Road

Cutting through the fresh market, Klan Kaeo boasts beautiful Sino-Takua Pa buildings on both sides of the road. At the intersection with Si Takua Pa Road, a huge painting on the wall of one building depicts the working life of tin miners in the past.

Route 4: Exploring Religious Architecture

Start with Sin Chai Tueng Shrine (or Kuan U Shrine) on Si Takua Pa Road, followed by Senanut Rangsang Temple, Phra That Khiri Khet Temple near the Senanut roundabout, and Na Mueang Temple on Na Mueang Road.





Phang-nga Old Town

Route 1: Thanon Khwang Route

This is a short road from Phet Kasem north of town to Thanon Khwang, until it meets with Borirak Bamrung Road. Both sides of this route are lined with old-style wooden shophouses that still serve as residences, rubber buying shops, and general shops. At the intersection of Thanon Khwang and Borirak Bamrung roads, there are unique shophouses; their lower parts are in concrete but the upper parts, including the roofs, are covered with corrugated sheets.

Route 2: Phet Kasem Route

Starting from north of town, the Phet Kasem route heads south, passing beautiful buildings on both sides of the road. At the north end are the Thaweasuk Hotel and adjacent buildings. On the opposite side are a number of Sino-Portuguese buildings and shophouses. On the south end are the Governor's Residence and the old City Hall, also in Sino-Portuguese style.

Route 3: Thanon Rong Ruea Route

Two unique buildings stand on this short route. One is the Chianwanit Mansion and the other is a new building in beautiful Sino-Portuguese architecture near where the route intersects with the Tetsaban Bamrung Road.

Route 4: Exploring Religious Architecture in Old Phang-nga Town

The Ma Jo Po Shrine is on Borirak Bamrung Road. The Prachum Yothi Temple is on Phet Kasem Road, north of town.

Talat Yan Yao Old Town

There is only one route. Sino-Portuguese buildings line both sides of Si Mueang Road, some of which have been renovated into modern buildings. Others remain interesting old buildings with old charms, such as the row of wooden shophouses of the Yan Yao Hotel and the unique shophouses covered with corrugated sheets supported by concrete bases. These shophouses are near Khlong Takua Pa Pier, which was once a Chinese community.

[Footnote 2]

The terms, "Sino-Portuguese" and "Sino-Takua Pa" architecture, have been widely used by the locals. However, the academic term for the hybrid architecture is Sino-European architecture.





History of Krabi

History of Krabi

By Ajarn Klin Khongmueanphet

Krabi is a small province on the western coast of the Thailand's southern region. It grew from a small settlement that began just over a century ago. There is very little evidence by way of archaeological sites or artifacts. The region was politically dominated by Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Krabi was part of what was called Thale Na Nok (Outer Frontier Sea). In those days, the area was mostly jungle, abundant with natural resources. People were able to make a livelihood only at the mouths of rivers and khlongs and the coastal areas. However, there is historical evidence that the area was home to prehistoric settlements.



Prehistoric Krabi

There is evidence of human settlement dating back to the Upper Pleistocene era from several archeological excavations, such as a Tham Lang Rong Rian and Tham Mo Khiao caves, which date back 37,000 - 27,000 years. The excavations unearthed skeletons, stone weapons, pottery, and other artifacts that date to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic eras, up to the final years of the Stone Age, about 3,000 B.C. Cave paintings have been found in Ao Phang-nga in Krabi. These have been dated back 5,000-3,000 years, indicating that there has been a constant flow of human migration through this area, moving into coastal plains and combining different cultures to become the first local inhabitants of the South.



Krabi Settlement

The South of Thailand is a peninsula that stretches between two seas to Java and Malaya. It was therefore a gateway for those travelling between two seas, with several overland routes that are evident throughout the southern region.

In Krabi, one of the most important of these routes links Khlong Pak Lao – Marui – Pak Phanom – Khlong Phum Duang – Ta Pi River – Ao Ban Don in Surat Thani Province. This route was once used to transport royal property from the western sea to the capital, as the army route during the Mueang Thalang battle, and for local travel during later times.

Another route linked Khlong Thom – Khlong Sin Pun – Ta Pi River – Ao Ban Don in Surat Thani province, or further on to Nakhon Si Thammarat Province.

The proliferation of travelers, merchants, and adventurers over the years, and the trade between east and west, led to the establishment of numerous settlements on both coasts. There is evidence of a former community around Khuan Luk Pat in Amphoe Khlong Thom in Krabi, where a large number of artifacts have been found. This community must have been a trading center, a port, and a production center for beads and other items. It also served to link communities in the east of Ao Ban Don. The artifacts have been dated back to the 5th-12th centuries of the Buddhist Era. Historians have indicated that the old port town of Takola on the western coast must have been in this area. After B.E. 1200, the Khlong Thom community was deserted for some unknown reason, possibly an epidemic, enemy invasions, or the prevalence of large sea-going vessels that made small harbors redundant. However, communities on the east coast grew into powerful entities, such as the Tambralinga Empire in Nakhon Si Thammarat and the Srivijaya Empire. Some historians have placed Krabi as one of the “12 zodiac constellation towns,” with Ban Thai Samo still using the monkey as the local symbol.

The Building of Krabi

After the disintegration of Khlong Thom community, this region was left deserted, a vast jungle with pockets of inhabited areas around water sources and coastal areas.

During the Rattanakosin Era, in 1784, Chao Phraya Surindaraja (Chan), viceroy of the western towns, requested approval from the capital to open the Khlong Marui – Pak Lao route to transport royal property across the peninsula and on to the capital. He pioneered this route and set up a station manned with personnel, and people began settling down here.



Chronicles of the Second Reign dated 1809 refer to noblemen under the jurisdiction of Nakhon Si Thammarat who supervised the Pak Nam Pakasai checkpoint:

“Khun Phinit, Checkpoint Head, entitled to 400 rai of land; Khun Thip, Deputy Checkpoint Head, entitled to 300 rai of land; Muen Wichit, Muen Phet, Muen Chana, Muen At, Patrol Officers, entitled to 200 rai of land.”

They were responsible for securing the Pak Nam checkpoint and reporting to the capital, as the Burmese often invaded the western coastal towns during that time.

Chao Phraya Nakhon (Noi), viceroy of Nakhon Si Thammarat, was a shrewd administrator and trader. He had several ships built for overseas trade. He also instructed the deputy governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat to catch wild elephants from the western jungles, which he exported twice to India in 1812 and 1815. During this time, settlements grew along this route, which was called the “Chao Phraya Nakhon Elephant Trading Route” at Ban Khlong Wai Lek, in Amphoe Nuea Khlong. Today, evidence of an elephant bridge still exists.

When the settlements grew around the rivers and coastal areas, each existing independently of each other, the city of Nakhon Si Thammarat decided to combine several communities into one, naming it Pakasai prefecture, with the administrative office at Pak Nam Pakasai checkpoint.

Pakasai retained its status as a small prefecture for a while before the administrative office was moved to Ban Hin Khwang at the mouth of the Krabi Yai River, since it was more convenient for marine transportation. At first it was called Mueang Pakasai Prefecture until 1872, when King Rama V elevated Mueang Pakasai Prefecture to Mueang Krabi, with Luang Thep Sena as the viceroy. In those days, the viceroy was able to set his own duty collection system. In 1877, a new government system was introduced, and Krabi became a fourth-class town reporting directly to Bangkok.

When Phraya Uтарakit Wichan became viceroy (1900–1903), the administrative office was moved once again, this time to Tambon Pak Nam, where it remains today. Ban Hin Khwang is now known as Ban Talat Kao.

Krabi is a small town that is abundant with natural resources. It has continued growing even to this day.



Krabi

Old Town Architecture



Krabi Old Town Architecture

Talat Nai Old Market Community

This is an important old commercial district of Krabi Province. The original settlers were Hokkien Chinese, who set up a flourishing trading community. This area soon became a commercial center for nearby areas such as Khlong Thom, Khao Phanom, or from Surat Thani and Nakhon Sri Thammarat provinces. Local people from the inland areas would bring items such as animal hides, animal horns, honey, and lac, loaded on elephant back to trade with coastal villagers in exchange for salt, rice, clothing, and dried foodstuffs. Changes began with the construction of a new road between Nuea Khlong and Khao Phanom that diverted from the original local road. People preferred to use this new road because it was more convenient. Later, the Phet Kasem highway was improved, so the center of trade moved from the market to the sides of the highway. The community reverted to a sleepy town, as it remains today. However, the Talat Nai old community still retains some unique buildings that are a cultural and historical heritage of the area:



Wooden Shophouses are two-storey structures, both with a covered arcade walkway and without. The outstanding feature is the wooden façade of the second storey; the waist-high windows possess either louvered shutters or plain panels. Above the windows, beneath the eaves, are air vents that are in Chinese-style or purely decorative. Some shophouses also have a balcony on the second storey.

Contemporary Western Shophouses are two-storey buildings made of reinforced concrete, either with or without an arcade walkway. The façade is basic, without stucco cornices, or in semi-circular shapes. The only essential decorative elements are the air and light vents. The outstanding feature is the front balcony decorated with scaffolding, baluster railings, and folding doors.

San Chao Cheng Chui Cho Su Kong is a Chinese shrine that is highly respected by local villagers. Inside are a 12-storey pagoda and a pavilion to the god of hot water.

The conservation project of the Talat Nai Old Community was launched with a street fair on 24–26 April 2015. This was a joint effort between the public and private sectors as well as the community itself, and aimed to create an awareness of the value of their local heritage through various cultural activities, including food, music, and art. In the future, this old community will be promoted as a new cultural tourism destination of Krabi Province.





The Old Siraya Community

The Old Siraya Community is located in the southern part of Ko Lanta Yai. Its importance lies in being the former location of the Ko Lanta District Office. It was a trading post and a frontier town on the Andaman Coast on the marine route between Phuket, Krabi, Penang, and Singapore. As a result, there was an eclectic mix of cultures — seafarers, Muslims, Chinese, and Thai — living together in harmony. Changes began in 1947 with the building of the Phet Kasem highway along the coast, which provided greater convenience over the marine route in terms of transportation and logistics. The communities gradually lost their economic edge. Then, when the Ko Lanta District Office moved to Ko Lanta Noi in 1998, the town became quiet. However, the old Siraya community still retains several old buildings that reveal a unique cultural heritage:

The Wooden Shophouses are two-storey structures with gable roofs covered with zinc sheets or corrugated roof tiles. A covered arcade walkway provides protection from sun and rain, and an airy space for socializing with neighbors. The structure is unique for its length of 20–80 meters; it also has a wooden façade on the second storey and waist-high windows with solid panels. Above the windows, just below the eaves, you can find lattice air vents or solid ones. Some have balconies on the second storey, too.

Government Buildings

- **The Old Ko Lanta District Office** was built in 1901, a two-storey building in Colonial style with a front portico and a hipped roof. The roof of the front portico is a gable roof covered with kite-shaped tiles. It has a symmetrical, T-shape floor plan. The front portico is an open porch with stairs on either side. Above the windows, below the eaves, are lattice air vents. Inside the building is an exhibition on the history, culture, and way of life of the people on Ko Lanta.

- **The Midwife House** is a simple, one-storey building with a raised floor 0.60 m high and a gable roof. There are two rooms with front and back porches.

- **The Public Health House** is a simple, one-storey building with a raised floor 2.40 m high and a gable roof. There is an access stairway and a front porch, as well as stairs in the back. The building is three pillars wide, with three rooms and a main hall.

- **The Warden's House** is a simple, one-storey building with a raised floor on two levels and a gable roof. There are front stairs to access the building, which is 2.30 m high, while the back is 1.50 m high. There are three rooms and a hall.

The Chinese Shrine is a one-storey building, 5.4 m by 10.8 m, with a statue of a deity well-respected by the community.

The conservation of the old Siraya community began after the Asian Tsunami on 26 December 2004, which affected the residences in the coastal communities of Hua Laem and Siraya to a great extent. After that event, the Chumchonchai Foundation, academics, lecturers from various educational institutes, private enterprises, and the local people joined forces to preserve the old wooden shophouses and restore the old Ko Lanta District Office into a folk museum, which opened in December 2007. The fresh water well was preserved, and the role of the community was adapted toward cultural tourism. Several wooden shophouses were turned into retail stores, gift shops, restaurants and cafes, housing, and rented accommodation for tourists.



with a well. The front hall is a one-storey building the width of three shophouse units, with a five-meter arcade walkway, while the back structure is two storeys.

Today, the Old Laem Sak Community has been promoted as a nature and fishing community tourist destination, with various local activities such as boat-building, boat repair, seaweed farms, cockle catching, and fish net making.

Wooden Shophouses at Amphoe Ao Luek intersection. These are two-storey buildings made from two uneven units, with a five-meter arcade walkway in front to provide protection from the sun and rain, or for socializing. The upper storey comprises wooden joists and floors, with a gable roof made of wood beams covered with corrugated cement tiles. The main feature is the wooden façade, windows and doors on the ground floor, and the wooden façade on the upper floor, which has two windows in the larger unit and one in the smaller unit.



Old Laem Sak Community

The Old Laem Sak Community is an old fishing village in Amphoe Ao Luek. It was first settled by Hokkien immigrants from China, followed by Muslims and Buddhists, who eventually formed a multi-cultural society, with their respective religious center as the focal point of each culture. These include Laem Sak Shrine, Laem Sak Mosque, and Wat Maha That Laem Sak. As time passed, the old structures were replaced by more modern ones, leaving only a few wooden shophouses and the Laem Sak Shrine to reflect the cultural heritage of the Old Laem Sak Community.

Original Wooden Shophouses are two-storey structures, each comprising two units of different widths. The floor, originally made of compacted earth, became polished concrete. The second floor comprises wooden joists and wood floors. The gable roof with wood beams is covered with zinc sheets. Outstanding features are the wood façade, the windows and doors on the ground floor, the arcade walkway in front, and the wood façade with a window in each unit on the second floor.

Second-generation Wooden Shophouses are two-storey shophouses with a gable roof covered with corrugated fiber cement tiles. Some shophouses have a covered walkway or the traditional five-meter covered arcade walkway in front to provide protection from the sun and rain, or as a socializing area for residents. The second-floor wood façade has two waist-high windows with solid panels in each shop unit. Above the windows and below the eaves are air vents in a lattice design. Some shophouses have windows along the entire length of the façade.

Laem Sak Shrine is located on a small knoll facing the sea. It is of simple Chinese architectural style with brick and cement walls. Inside is an intricately carved wooden Bodhisattva, with several other deities.

Apart from the wooden shophouses and the Chinese shrine, the Old Laem Sak Community also boasts a modern building that is a contemporary adaptation of the various architectural styles of the Andaman towns, namely the reception hall of the Bulan Anda Baba Resort. This comprises two brick and cement structures interconnected via an open inner court

Krabi

Way of Life,
Multi-cultural
Way of Life



Krabi Way of Life, Multi-cultural Way of Life

As an ancient port town dating back over 2,000 years, it was trade that drew people to settle here — Chinese, Muslims, and ethnic seafarers — who integrated well with the locals.

Amphoe Nuea Khlong, “Lat Nai,” is a Chinese community that dates back several generations. This is one of Krabi’s main trading centers, where old wooden shophouses stand alongside modern brick shophouses. Despite the passage of time, the people of Lat Nai have preserved their Chinese customs and traditions, making this area one of Krabi’s cultural centers. Every weekend the road becomes a walking street, lively with folk cuisine, traditional Chinese fare, and local desserts.



The charm of Krabi lies not only in its coastal beauty, white sand, azure seas, and lush, natural environment, but also in the unique and gentle lifestyle of the people.

In the past, Krabi had numerous ancient settlements such as at Amphoe Khlong Thom. Evidence of this can be seen by the excavation at Khuan Luk Pat, where a large number of colored glass fragments were found buried under a mound, as well as glass bracelets, silver, ancient weapons, pottery, and other utensils made from stone and bronze.

Across the river from Krabi town is Ko Klang, a Muslim settlement where residents plant rice on an island at the mouth of the Krabi River. It is said that the indigenous Sang Yot rice here is particularly tasty because of the soil, which is mixed with brackish water. When cooked, the rice is fragrant and tender, unlike anywhere else. Residents of Ko Klang are also fishermen, since they are located at the mouth of the Krabi River, surrounded by mangrove forests, which harbor various animals such as shrimp, shellfish, crab, and fish. The locals are also known for various handicrafts, such as making model long-tail boats, scaled down from the boats they use in daily life and intricately carved from wood, and for making a unique style of batik cloth that is based on the Malay batik technique.

The community at Ban Laem Sak, Amphoe Ao Luek, combines three different cultures — Thai Buddhist, Chinese and Muslim. Locals here are mostly fishermen, and their work place is teeming with marine life. They also farm lobster and sea grapes in floating baskets, make processed seafood, and grow local bananas.

Ao Luek villagers are also adept at making batik. Each design comes from their imagination as well as a keen observation of nature, such as the cave paintings of seafarers in Tham Phi Hua To Cave dating back thousands of years, which provide historical evidence of the past lifestyle of the Krabi people, and designs based on long-tail boats, marine life, lady’s slipper orchids, local flora, and the Gurney’s Pitta.

Ko Lanta has an eclectic community comprising Thai Buddhists, Chinese, Muslims and ethnic Orang Lawoi or the Moken.



In the past, Ban Siraya was a thriving port town, known for its long wooden houses that stretched out into the sea, which locals call “Ban Yao.” These are still inhabited by the descendants of Chinese immigrants. The charm of this old neighborhood lies in the traditional Chinese architecture, with the houses being interconnected via covered arcade walkways that protect against the sun and rain. Air vents above the doors are intricately carved and also serve a practical purpose.

Set amidst mangrove forests is Ban Thung Yi Pheng, a Muslim fishing community. Besides their fishing skills, the locals are also famous for their shrimp paste made from fresh shrimp and krill, which has become a famous product of Krabi Province. The local people are also into eco-tourism, offering tours around the mangrove forests by kayak, and island hopping in long-tail boats.

At the southern end of Ko Lanta is Ban Sangka U, home of the ethnic Moken seafarers who have lived here for generations. Ko Lanta is essentially their capital. They worship their ancestors and are not keen farmers, but are second to none in fishing. They also excel at boat-building.

The Moken love vivid colors. During the Lobong Festival, which is held every six months, they decorate the venue with gaily colored cloth. They also love music and dancing, both in the traditional and modern styles. It is said that their foot movements resemble old European style dancing, which is believed to have come from Penang.

This cultural and religious diversity in Krabi is what gives this coastal town on the Andaman Sea its unique charm.



Krabi's Culinary Delights

Krabi is also well-known for its culinary delights, which are as diverse as they are tasty. They also reflect the way of life in this charming town.

Krabi cuisine is much like other southern dishes, whether boiled, stir-fried, curried, or fried. A key ingredient is turmeric, which adds a fragrant and piquant taste to the food, along with other spices, as well as local vegetables and fresh seafood. Most popular are sand whiting fried with turmeric, stir-fried shrimp with bitter beans, cockle curry with wild betel leaves, yellow curry and spicy *khua kling* herbal stir-fry. Staple dishes are chili dips and soups served with fresh picked vegetables such as bitter beans, tree beans, cashew leaves, and *man pu* leaves

For breakfast, locals go for coffee and tea accompanied by local sweets and *dim sum*. They also like rice noodles as a main dish, served with southern *nam ya* or *nam phrik* sauce, *kaeng tai pla* curry or jungle curry. This is served with fried chicken, curry mousse, and boiled egg, accompanied by fresh and pickled vegetables.

The most famous seafood dish in Krabi is the dog conch which is smaller than a normal conch shell. The shell is white and brown, and it has a brown appendage used for walking. To eat, just pull on the “foot” to release the flesh from the shell.

Dog conches are abundant in Krabi. Local fishermen catch them and soak them in water to get rid of the mud. Then they are boiled or steamed. The flesh is sweet and chewy, and is delicious with spicy seafood sauce. Not to be missed!

Processed seafood is also used in many famous dishes in Krabi, such as steamed salted krill. A batch of shrimp or krill is marinated with salt and sugar for 2–3 weeks, then it is washed and mashed with egg and a bit of coconut cream with shallots, lemongrass, and chili. It is then steamed. The result looks like steamed egg, but the taste is slightly salty and creamy, with a tinge of lemongrass fragrance.

Not only is Krabi famous for its spicy southern dishes, but it is also known for its Muslim specialties, such as *roti* and hot tea for breakfast. They use fragrant southern tea leaves, and the *roti* is soft yet crisp, and is eaten with savories such as chicken, beef, or goat curry, *roti* with egg or stuffed *roti*, or as a dessert such as crispy *roti*, *roti* with butter, milk and sugar, and crisp *roti* sheets. There is also biryani rice with chicken, goat, or beef, and chicken or beef soup, which are popular main dishes.





Festivals of Krabi

Krabi's diversity of religion, culture, and traditions serve to enhance its abundance in natural resources — azure seas and lush green jungles — making it a truly perfect destination.

The various festivals in Krabi are no less colorful than in any other province on the Andaman coast. These include:

Sat Duan Sip (Ghost Festival) is influenced by Hindu beliefs and reflects the respect of the southern people for their ancestors. It is believed that the spirits of the ancestors will be released from the afterlife to visit the living to receive merit during the 10th lunar month, or September. On the first day of the new moon of the 10th lunar month, villagers will make an offering of savories and sweets including *khanom la* (symbolizing clothes), *khanom phong* (rafts for travelling), *khanom kong* (jewelry), *khanom ba* (games), and *khanom cho hu* (currency). These are presented to monks at the temple. The day of the new moon of the 10th lunar month is the final day of merit-making of the year. Local people will make merit at the temple for the spirits of their ancestors, concluding with a fun-filled Ching Pret ritual, when offerings are shared with the public.

Chinese New Year is the most important festival for Thais whose ancestors emigrated from China and settled in the area a long time ago. This is a happy time for the family to get together, not unlike the international New Year or the Thai Songkran Festival.

On Chinese New Year, Thais of Chinese ancestry will shop for food and fruit. Chicken symbolizes progress, fish — harmony and abundance, and vermicelli — longevity. These will be offered to the gods and the ancestors. After making their offerings, people will dress up in colorful clothes — red is the color of good fortune — as a way of chasing away evil spirits. Then they go on outings, or they visit respected elders to receive their blessings and lucky money in an atmosphere of happiness and fun.

The Vegetarian Festival is another ancient tradition for Thais of Chinese descent. This is a merit-making festival when people can cleanse their spirits and avoid taking life. From the 1st day to the 9th day of the full moon of the 9th lunar month (September–October), locals will dress in white and refrain from eating meat and other prohibited food, as well as committing other vices.

Throughout this period, there will be processions carrying statues of gods from the 40 Chinese shrines around Krabi to allow the people to pay their respects for posterity. The gods will also display their might through mediums who pierce their bodies with sharp objects, walk over burning charcoal, climb steps of knives, and perform other wonders.

The Lobong Festival is the most important one of the Moken seafarers. This is held twice a year on the full moon of the 6th lunar month (May) and the 11th lunar month (October) when the seasons change. The Moken take three days off work and gather at Ban Sangka U, Ko Lanta. A shaman performs the ceremony, which involves appeasing the spirits and allowing them to possess the shaman's body for the purpose of fortune telling.

In the boat floating ritual, the Moken ask the spirits for permission to take salacca wood to carve into images of people representing family members and utility items, which they place in model boats to symbolize floating away bad luck. They also place pieces of wood around the perimeter of the village to prevent evil spirits from entering. After dispelling all misfortunes, they celebrate with a lively session of dance and music.

| Exploring |
| Krabi Old Town |



Exploring Krabi Old Town

Inhabitants of the early communities were therefore elephant hunters and marine traders who lived by the coast. Only a few places remain that can be traced to ancient times, such as Lanta Old Town on Ko Lanta, which was an old trading post, and Tambon Laem Sak, where some old buildings can still be seen. Some new buildings have been designed to reflect the old-style architecture, such as the lobby of the beautiful Bulan Anda Baba Resort.

Lanta Old Town

The tourist route follows the coastal road starting from the roundabout in front of Amphoe Ko Lanta's old buildings, which are now the Ko Lanta Folk Museum. Drive along the road from south to north, and on both sides of the road are old wooden houses with air vents, old-fashioned windows, and clapboard walls. Some have cement foundations with zinc roofs. These houses have now been turned into guest houses, restaurants, souvenir shops, cafes, and retail shops.



Krabi is an important historical destination in the South of Thailand, particularly with regard to the pre-historic settlements in the area. However, in Krabi Old Town, this might not be as evident as in some other towns along the Andaman coast because Krabi was originally a jungle full of elephants.





Lat Nai Nuea Khlong Community

This is a short stretch of road on the west side of Amphoe Nuea Khlong, which was once the ancient city of Pakasai. Along this road are houses and shophouses, both brick and wood. Most of these have been adapted as modern residences, though they still retain some distinct traditional architectural elements, such as air vents and covered arcade walkways. Many old-style Chinese wooden houses can still be found tucked away in the small sois.

On the west side of the road all the way to Nuea Khlong Canal are old communities with traditional wooden houses. During weekends, these sois are transformed into lively community markets. Traditional wooden houses can also be found in Ban Bang Phueng between the Phet Kasem highway and Amphoe Khlong Thom.

Old Town in Amphoe Ao Luek and Tambon Laem Sak

There are several old wooden houses at the Amphoe Ao Luek intersection, and near the Chinese Shrine at Tambon Laem Sak you can find two or three Chinese shophouses that have been preserved. At the far end of Laem Sak is the Bulan Anda Baba Resort, whose lobby is designed in Sino-European style as a reminder of the past.



History of Trang





History of Trang



As a port town, Trang was a gateway to ancient sea routes in this region for thousands of years. The history of Trang dates back to prehistoric times, before alphabets had been developed. There is evidence of prehistoric human settlements in Trang dating back over 10,000 - 5,000 years.



The early inhabitants of Trang began farming and husbandry. They formed permanent settlements on the mountains and in the plains called Mu Khao, Mu Na, and Mu Thung, respectively. Former sea wanderers settled down along the coasts, called Mu Le, and engaged in fishing. The Munni tribe roamed the mountains as before.

About 1,000 years ago, the sea level rose 1-2 meters. The local folklore, reflecting this phenomenon, tells of an Indian junk sinking at Phra Wiset Mountain, the area near Wang Nok Nam wetlands. The vast expanse of water reached as far as Thung Song. When the water receded, the topography changed into river basins along the Trang River and its tributaries, such as Khlong Pang, Khlong Lam Phu Ra, Khlong Chi, and Khlong Nang Noi, giving rise to farm communities along the river.

The Trang River was one of the trade routes used by traders from India, Arabia, and Europe, as evidenced by archaeological remains and folklore. Evidence includes the ancient amulets in Amphoe Huai Yot; the legend of Phra Borom That Chedi Nakhon Si Thammarat about the journey of Phra Kumarn and Nang Hemchala passing the port of Trang; the Nang Lueat Khao story about Wat Phra Si Sanphet Phuttha Sihing Temple; and the brick foundations of ancient buildings dating back 1,000 years at Tambon Na Phla in the Khlong Na Noi river basin. Trang was at the crossroads of trade, religion, and diplomacy since the beginning of the Tambalinga Empire, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Srivijaya. Later, Trang became a vassal town of Nakhon Si Thammarat.

It is believed that the early town of Trang was where Khlong Pang and the Trang River intersect at Ban Hu Nan, formerly called Krung Thani, dating back to the 7th and 8th Buddhist centuries. The area is now rubber plantations, with no visible archaeological evidence.





The area near Tham Khao Sai Cave in Tambon Bang Di, Huai Yot District, shows settlement development from prehistory to the forming of a large community. Evidence of trade and religious exchange with India includes ancient amulets dating back to the 13th and 14th Buddhist centuries at Khao Sai Cave, Khiri Wihan Cave, and Khao Nui Cave. Traces of ancient port communities appear in many old temples along the Trang River. At Yan Kluean Temple, a symbol of the Ayutthaya period was found on a *sema* stone, along with ceramic pieces. Trang was still a port in the early Ayutthaya period when the Europeans first arrived. In 1511, the Portuguese traveled through Trang to trade with Siam. In 1642, the governor of Trang persuaded Dutch traders to trade with Trang, as well. When the river became shallow, the port moved downstream to Khao Sam Bat in Tambon Na Ta Luang, in Amphoe Mueang.



The date “B.E. 2157” was found written on the cave wall of Khao Kam Bat, proving the area was once a town that grew in the same period with Khlong Nang Noi community. Wat Photharam Temple was built in 1612, followed by Wat Phra Phuttha Sihing, Wat Phra Ngam, Wat Sarikaram, and Wat Khuan Khan. About 200 years ago, communities expanded, moving closer to the Trang River, as evidenced by temples along both sides of the river.

Back then, Trang was divided into two parts by the river. The eastern part was Mueang Phura. Its governor was at Ban Na Thong Lang, with Wat Photharam as the town center. The governor of the western part was at Ban Khuan, now in Tambon Na Wong in Amphoe Huai Yot. In 1787, Trang Governor Phra Phakdi Borirak combined them into Trang Phura Town.

After this, the town moved to Ko Libong temporarily. When Phraya Libong (To Pang Ka Wa) died, he was succeeded by his son-in-law, Luang Ritthi Songkhram. A poem in Malay in 1809 mentioned Luang Ritthi Songkhram as leader of the Trang army when cities in the South, including Saiburi, joined forces in Ko Libong to protect Thalang from the Burmese army. There are still remnants of the city moats at the mouth of Ban Phrao Canal and at To Pang Ka Wa Cemetery.

The registry of Nakhon Si Thammarat officials in 1811 mentions Luang Uphai Ratchathani (or Uphai) as governor of Trang. Khuan Thani and its City Pillar were built during this period. Chao Phraya Nakhon (Noi) positioned Trang as a port for marine trade and warfare. Java, Malaya, and India were important trade partners. Exports included birds’ nests, rice, tin, and elephants. Monks embarked for pilgrimages to Sri Lanka at Trang’s deep sea port on Ko Libong. Shipyards were built along the river and the coast, particularly U Taphao near Khao Sam Bat and Palian.

After taking over Penang, Great Britain sent a trade delegation to Siam, resulting in the Burney Treaty, which was signed in Trang in 1826. The reception residence was at Khuan Thong Si checkpoint. Another significant event was the attack by the Wanmalee pirates in 1838.

Another site of the old city was at Ban Na Khaek in Tambon Nong Trut, Amphoe Mueang Trang. Evidence included testimony from the governor’s descendants, old copies of the Three Seals Law, and remnants of deep holes for keeping prisoners. It is believed that Khuan Thani was the city center, but the governor lived and worked at Na Khaek. The next governor, Phra Trangkha Wisayanurak Pithak Rathasima, was appointed in 1853. He lived at Ban Nang Noi but worked at Khuan Thani.

Early in his reign, King Rama V appointed a high commissioner to Phuket when the western coast became an important source of tin. After the uprising of Chinese laborers, the high commissioner moved to Khuan Thani in Trang. The king’s former regent, Somdet Chao Phraya Borom Maha Si Suriyawong (Chuang), renovated Trang and wanted it to be under Bangkok’s direct control. But he died first and Trang continued to be under Phuket. During this time, Phraya Montri Suriyawong (Chuen) ordered a canal dug between Tha Kaem and Hua Sai to shorten the distance between Khuan Thani Port and the Governor’s House. Phraya Trangkha Phumaphiban (Iam), who was governor in 1888, was replaced by Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahisaraphakdi (Khaw Sim Bee) in 1890 when King Rama V visited and saw Trang in a run-down condition. The new governor moved the city to Kantang in 1893.



Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi was instrumental in Trang development. A visionary leader, he started city planning, built new public offices and new roads between districts in Trang and to connect Trang with neighboring provinces. The Trang-Phatthalung Road, or Thanon Khao Phap Pha, later became famous nationwide.

Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi also systematically launched Trang’s foreign trade which further strengthened Trang economy. Importantly, Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi was the person who introduced rubber trees to Siam. The first rubber tree in Thailand was planted in Trang, marking the beginning of rubber plantations in the country.

In 1913, the southern railways which ended at Kantang became operational, bringing Trang a development boom and putting Kantang in the world’s map.

In 1915, King Vajiravudh or Rama VI visited Trang. During that period, World War I just broke out in Europe and King Vajiravudh deemed Kantang which is situated in low land unsafe during wartime from the possible outbreak of contagious diseases. City expansion was also difficult due to its location. King Vajiravudh deemed Tambon Thap Thiang, Amphoe Bangrak, and Amphoe Mueang Trang more practical geographically. In 1915, Trang City was therefore relocated to Tambon Thap Thiang where it is now.

A sunset scene with a row of palm trees in the foreground. The sky is a gradient of orange, yellow, and pink. In the distance, a person is riding a bicycle on a path. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

| **Old Ways** |
of Life in Trang |

Old Ways of Life in Trang



The geographical diversity in Trang, the hills, uplands, lowlands, and the sea, combined with the long history of ethnic diversity, including Thais, Indians, and Chinese, has led to a variety of designations that reflect the demographic differences of people who live there.

The hill people live at the bases of hills, foraging for food in nearby forests as well as farming.

The rice people grow rice in the central lowlands. Hundreds of place names in Trang are related to rice fields.

The sea people are fisher folk, mostly of Indian descent and following Islam. They set up abodes along the shorelines and on islands.

The natural riches of Trang have long blessed the locals, who practice barter exchange between different communities, be they the hill people with forest products, the rice people with grains, or the sea people with fish and salt. Such communal inter-dependence has long existed.

The subsequent arrival of Chinese settlers, with their expertise in commerce, soon led to emergence of market communities and, eventually, the city.

All in all, everyone can take pride in being a vital part of Trang.



Hill and Rice People

The Banthat mountain range is the source for hundreds of streams in the central South, including the Trang River and its offshoot Khlong Nang Noi, and the Palian River. Among the early settlements, the largest was the rice farming communities near Khlong Nang Noi, who have close ties to the hill people nearby.

The hill people harvest food from the forest but also engage in rubber tapping and fruit growing. The rice farmers' year-round calendar has long been embedded in their beliefs in Buddhism and the Rice Goddess.



The fifth lunar month marks the beginning of the new year. The hill people stop tapping rubber, while the rice farmers finish harvesting in the fields. After the Songkran celebration, the next thrill is the boat procession of the Buddha statue, which is later carried out on land. At present, the Khuan Khan Community in Trang Municipality is the only place that carries on the tradition, at an old temple dating to the Ayutthaya period. The event falls on the first day of the new moon.

In the sixth and seventh lunar months, the rainfall heralds new buds on local fruit trees, like mangoes and *sa-to*, or bitter beans. The rice farmers start weeding and prepare for tilling the fields and broadcasting or transplanting seeds. As the Buddhist rains retreat approaches, some families witness their sons getting ready to enter the monkhood, according to long-held tradition.

In the eighth lunar month, villagers prepare *khao tok*, or popped rice, for the coming rains retreat, when heavy rainfalls and poor transportation sometimes make it difficult to provide daily alms to monks. After the first three days of the retreat is the day of "celebrating [*khao*] *tok*." The collected pool of popped rice will be blessed by the chanting monks. Another popular dish used in the special celebration is durian with coconut milk, as this is also the season for harvesting durian. But there are also plenty of other ripening fruits such as rambutan, mangosteen, jackfruit, and longan, to name a few.

In the ninth lunar month, rice farmers must keep a close watch on their fields, especially to prevent any damage to ditches. With enough water, the rice grows steadily, turning the land into a sea of green.

The tenth lunar month is the time to make a variety of local sweets to be offered to the ancestors' spirits. Part of the ritual is a rush to grab at the offerings, making the melee a real thrill, especially for children.

The heavy monsoon rain in the eleventh month triggers fishing and cooking of fish-based dishes, including fish sauce, preserved in jars. As the rains retreat begins with popped rice, the end is symbolized by another dish featuring sticky rice cooked with coconut milk and wrapped in *krapo* leaves. The highlight of the celebration for the end of the retreat revolves around the procession along the waterways of a Buddha figure on an elaborately decorated boat. The old community of Pak Pron once witnessed a yearly congregation of these religious boats from the entire province. Nowadays the custom has been modified to on-land processions, and the Thung Chaeng sports field in Mueang district draws over fifty beautiful boats, a new annual attraction of Trang.

Remarkably, Buddhists in Ban Pak Pron in Hat Samran District still keep much of their unique tradition. The villagers propel the Buddha boat across the sea to nearby Libong Island in Kantang District, where they perform certain rituals and alms offerings before guiding the vessel back to the original pier. A replica boat is usually released during the journey, to symbolically float away bad luck. As the end of the rains retreat usually coincides with high tides, when the villagers have to go out catching fish, the day of the celebration at Pak Pron, unlike elsewhere, is postponed to the eighth day of the new moon.



The famous Loy Krathong festival is celebrated in the twelfth month with overflowing water, when the rice crop is almost ripe.

The harvesting season, from the first to third lunar months, comes with eastern winds. While locals cut each ear of rice with a tool called a *kae*, a strong whooshing sound across the rice fields at Na Muen Si signals that the season of “*luk lom*” has finally arrived.

Luk lom, a sort of miniature wind turbine, is a local homemade toy that emits an inimitable sound. It is usually hung at the top of a tree or a bamboo pole. The sound is produced as the breeze squeezes through the holes of a piece of bamboo stuck on the end of each turbine blade called “*luk rong*”. Every local maker of *luk lom* has his or her own special techniques to produce the sounds they want. The “fully dressed” set comes elaborately decorated.

A few *luk lom* remain after the windy season at Na Muen Si. But come February, the annual Luk Lom Festival turns the fields into a virtual concert hall, with hundreds of humming turbines competing for the top prize.

The fourth lunar month, in the dry season, witnesses major changes as the rubber plantations turn golden and the rice fields brown with harvested stumps. Fish once swimming freely there get trapped as the water recedes, thus providing a great opportunity to catch the remaining bounty. Among the common dishes served at local food shops are deep fried gourami, or curry made from the fish’s belly cooked in a way similar to *kaeng tai pla*.

A common saying that “people from Trang are either shadow puppeteers or Nora dancers” may not be entirely accurate. But it reflects an outsider’s impression moved by Trang folks’ wittiness, inclination for lyricism, and spontaneous rhetoric, all essential for the performances. Not

surprisingly, a number of renowned masters from past to present hail from Trang, such as Nora dancer Toem and shadow puppeteers Chuli and Narong (the latter also a National Artist). As the harvest season ends, the local artists will go on their “circuit tours,” staging performances that have been booked well in advance.

Trang is also the birthplace of a folk performance called *likay pa*. Among the fisher folks, a popular entertainment called *rong ngeng* is said to have originated on Lanta Island in Krabi Province, before spreading across the western shorelines, including Trang.

Be it Nora dance, shadow puppeteering, *likay pa*, or *rong ngeng*, these folk performances have long been part and parcel of Trang’s way of life.

In Khok Saba Subdistrict, the Nora dance thrives so well that there are almost ten troupes. Thanks to the guidance of the Thailand Research Fund, the locals set up a learning center that focuses on Nora, which has become another tourist attraction named the Khok Saba Home of Nora.

Another well-known saying, “After the harvest, women weave while men cast iron,” is still a legacy preserved at Na Muen Si. Besides an iron knife workshop and an altar for the master of iron smiths, many homes keep weaving looms as family heirlooms. Once on the verge of extinction, due to competition from machines, the cottage industry has been resurrected, thanks to collaboration across the community.

The much-acclaimed tapestry from Na Muen Si consists of two major types: traditional patterns developed by local weavers who use traditional looms, and modern patterns developed by experts from the Department of Industrial Promotion, who also introduced flying shuttle looms. Woven products are available for sale at the community shop.

Most folks in Na Muen Si treasure their ancestors’ weaving. Upon embarking on a research project to revive the art, many donated over a hundred pieces, now on display at the Na Muen Si Tapestry Museum. Open every day, it serves as the communal repository and public learning center where one can appreciate the creativity of Na Muen Si folk in designing marvelous tapestry patterns.

Sea People

The 119-kilometer shoreline and 46 small and large islands in Trang are home to the sea people, the majority being Muslims, but some are Buddhists and some of Chinese descent.

Among the main practices in the Muslim code of conduct are the daily prayers, the Hari Raya celebrations, circumcision of boys, 24-hour deadline for burial of the dead, marriage within the same faith, and mourning the dead every three, seven, and forty days. On festive occasions, friends and family usually bring food, money, or other items to the hosts. Local beliefs and values are also incorporated into the religious rites, such as the celebration of the new-born or the wedding dowry procession. Food served at such occasions is similar to that in the rest of Trang, but without pork. Goat curry is one of the staples.

Despite religious differences, when it comes to social and cultural activities like weddings or funerals, the Muslims and Buddhists in Trang join hands and help one another. For example, Buddhist hosts would prepare special food for their Muslim seafaring guests.

Ko Libong is the largest island in Trang. A sanctuary for migrating birds, the fertile area is home to dugong, thanks to the abundance of sea grass there. Visitors wishing to catch a glimpse of this rare animal may try the viewpoint tower or certain spots in the open sea. Other attractions include a waterfall and an amazing freshwater spring right next to the sea!

Besides natural wonders, Ko Libong also boasts a glorious history, being the town center dating back to the period of Rama I. Among the surviving evidence is the burial site of a former ruler, demarcation boundaries beneath the sand, and artifacts found in caves and underwater. The port at Khlong Saphan Chang is where elephant traders bound for India and other ships waiting for the monsoon used to embark.

Ko Sukon (Ko Mu) has shoreline strips where locals grow rice and watermelons, deemed the tastiest in the whole province. This may be the only place in Thailand where water buffalo roam around freely, being granted special protection status by a district bylaw which imposes a penalty on any driver who hits the animal. Scenes of buffalo frolicking in the sea are a common sight.



Among the local plants turned into value-added products is *panan pandan*. Thanks to the fiber's versatility, it can be woven into mats, baskets, and other household items, which were so popular they were considered the trademark of Trang. Today the plant-based products have been redesigned as handbags, phone pouches, and other mementoes, usually ordered direct in large volumes by foreign customers. The center of this cottage industry is in Sikao District, especially at Ban Du Hun in Bo Hin Subdistrict.

The brackish water zone near the estuary is where nipa palms sprout densely. Yan Sue Subdistrict in Kantang District used to export millions of attap roof thatches per year to Malaysia and Indonesia. Nowadays, visitors to Ban Nai Lum will see locals working all day long in open spaces under the stilted houses. Both young and old participate in the labor-intensive process of making palm-derived products, from cutting and removing the sheaths, tying knots, and drying, to the packaging of young leaves to be sold for rolling cigarettes. From May to October, one can enjoy fresh nipa fruit or have it served in iced syrup. The leftover cut stems are also made into handicrafts or household items, baskets, and wreaths. Of note are the woven products from Ban Na Yot Thong in Wang Won Subdistrict, near the Palian River, which are highly praised for their craftsmanship and receive large orders from overseas.

City People

Chinese settlers moved into Trang in the Ayutthaya period. In the hilly areas, they engaged in mining, and along the shores in fishing, farming, and trading, and gradually reached the lowlands, where they set up businesses. Among the major commercial hubs are Tha Chin, Thap Thiang, Lamphu Ra, Tha Kham, Thung Yao, and Kantang. Soon rice fields and farms turned into markets and towns. The market dwellers are mostly Chinese, many of whom still uphold their ancestors' beliefs and cultural practices.

Each of the Chinese groups — Hokkien, Hainan, Teochew, and Hakka — have their own shrines for worship. The year-round calendar of customs, like the Chinese New Year, Ancestors' Tomb Sweeping, and Moon Festival, marks the times for family reunions, when all members get together to perform their rites. The only exception is the Vegetarian Festival, usually a large communal affair.

Legends say that the Vegetarian Festival was started by Chinese settlers at Ban Tha Chin, at Wat Prasitthichai (Wat Pon). However, the large turnout, especially from Thap Thing, made the venue too small, hence the erection of Kio Ong la Shrine in Thap Thiang, which carries on the tradition.

One of the highlights during the festival is the public procession of elaborate palanquins housing the sacred deities, usually followed by a large retinue of adherents as well as spiritual mediums called *ma song*. At each stop, the house owner prepares an altar of offerings and receives a blessing from the deities, as firecrackers reverberate throughout the whole town.

A number of shrines across Trang organize activities during the Vegetarian Festival, but the spiritual hub is Kio Ong la Shrine. Later, the Chao Pho Muen Ram Shrine was founded, where the festival also attracts a large attendance. Both shrines offer free vegetarian food to the public for nine consecutive days. Donations are voluntary. Those who want to receive three vegetarian meals to eat at home can pick them up in exchange for a couple of hundred baht. Each year the festival witnesses thousands of participants from near and far who come to enjoy not only vegetarian cuisine but also an opportunity to make merit together. Spectacular shows, like the mediums' body-piercing feats, are held to demonstrate their deep faith.

Trang is also renowned for food. From dawn till the wee hours, food shops are open on every street.



Coffee shops in Trang are always full of people, especially in the morning. Diners can enjoy a large variety of dishes, like *dim sum*, dumplings, steamed buns, and other sweets, always with the *khom chueang* dip, the trademark of Trang. On almost every menu are Chinese deep-fried dough, cooked rice vermicelli, and egg noodles. One indispensable part of an authentic breakfast for Trang locals is grilled pork. One can hang around these local coffee shops all day long, with only a cup, and a large stomach for social and political discussion, but don't expect to have your grilled pork in the evening.

The grilled pork is made from a small pig, marinated with spices and honey, and grilled in a special oven until it has a crisp skin and sweet meat. Originally the meat was a ceremonial offering and a highlight in banquets, but now it is also a breakfast snack and prized souvenir for visitors to Trang.

Another popular souvenir is Trang cake. But Chinese pastry seems to be an up and coming favorite.

The original recipe for Trang cake was from Lamphu Ra Subdistrict in Huai Yot District. Now it is available throughout the province. The unique feature is a hole in the middle and raisins sprinkled on top.

Other local snacks are stuffed rice crepe, pig's head with morning glory, and *khanom wak*, which goes well with the ever-popular *khom chueang* dip.

The traditional ways of life among Trang folk, be they the hill or field people, seem to blend so well with the know-how of foreign settlers, especially the Chinese with their excellent cuisine. Top it off with abundant resources and no wonder Trang is famous as a "town of food connoisseurs."



| Exploring Trang Old Town |

กันตัง
KAN TANG



Exploring Trang Old Town



Trang Province has a long history as a bustling commercial center. There remain a number of surviving mementos scattered across the three districts of Mueang Trang (aka Thap Thiang), Huai Yot, and Kantang. The old town of Thap Thiang in Mueang Trang district was a hub of development, thriving on trade and commerce. Huai Yot once flourished on tin mining. Last but not least, Kantang used to serve as a key trading port and showcased the first train station for the country's first and only railway route along the Andaman coast.



Following are the major routes for travelers interested in the old town history of Trang:

Thap Thiang Old Town

Route number 1: Rama VI Road from the Clock Tower Circle to the Railway Station

Along this route are numerous old shophouses on both sides of the street. Some are early-generation hotels, such as the Koh Teng Hotel, Jing Jing Hotel, and Sri-Trang Hotel. Others are shophouses with differing designs, reflecting the time when they were built. One highlight of this street is its clean look, due to the relocation of all electrical wires to underground. The Morning Market in the alleys connecting Rama VI Road and Ratchadamnoen Road is where one can witness the old ways of life, with vivid stories that still keep Trang's past alive and vibrant.



Route number 2: Ratchadamnoen Road, from Ko Kun Intersection to Tha Klang Intersection

The road boasts several old buildings full of stories about trading from past to present. Once the tallest structure in Thap Thiang, the Cho Chin Chun pharmacy is adjacent to the Siriban stationery shop, which won the Architectural Heritage Award for the Southern Region and was also the childhood home of S.E.A. Write poet Chiranan Pitpreecha. Many other buildings lining both sides of the road are old Chinese drugstores, namely Yin Chi Thong and Tai Yian Thong, along with gold and jewelry shops and clothing shops, to name a few. More sight-seeing spots are along the alleys near the Tha Klang intersection. A few interesting old buildings on Huai Yot 2 and Sai Ngam roads include the Hakka Association Center and Thap Thiang Old Town Café.

Route number 3: Kantang Road, from Kantang Intersection to Tha Klang Intersection

The former commercial hub of Trang now features rows of beautiful Sino-European shophouses in almost mint condition. The five-foot-wide arcade that serves as the common walkway allows visitors to stroll between the shops that are still in business. The buildings are made either of concrete or a mix of concrete and wood, painted in attractively bright colors. A short distance from the Tha Klang intersection is the well-known Trang Church. In the opposite direction from Kantang intersection is another row of historic shophouses.



Huai Yot Old Town

A number of Sino-European buildings line up on both sides of Phet Kasem Road south of the Huai Yot Police Station intersection. Among the highlights are the Srilertwongsa Building, Kong Fa Phanit Building, Mo Muan Chon Building, Phinit-Osot Building, an old local drugstore, and Phian Phrom Building, which houses the local Morning Market. An old wooden structure at Huai Yot School is also worth taking a look at.

Kantang Old Town

Route Number 1: Ratsada Road, from the Corner near the History Learning Center of Kantang to Kantang Pier

The stretch of Ratsada Road opposite the Trang River, from the corner near the Kantang History Learning Center to Kantang Pier, was previously a bustling port area for transporting goods from Penang to the rest of the country. Among the surviving buildings of historic value are the wooden Kong Kuan Hokkien Shrine opposite Kantang Pier, the Ban Seng Hin Company, and Keng Chio Hoi Kuan Shrine (also known as Chao Mae Thapthim Shrine). Other buildings can be found along Sathon Sathan Phitak Road.

Route Number 2: Old Kantang Heritage Sites

The highlight is the Kantang Railway Station, the first on the Andaman route, which continues in operation, followed by an old two-storey house now serving as the Museum of Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi (Khaw Sim Bee), and Wat Trangkhaphum Phutthawat on the Trang-Kantang highway No. 403.



แผนที่ท่องเที่ยวเมืองเก่าตรัง
Trang Old Town
Tourist Map



แผนที่ท่องเที่ยวเมืองเก่ากันตัง
Kantang Old Town
Tourist Map



History of Satun

History of Satun



During the early Rattanakosin period, Satun was only a small subdistrict or tambon under Saiburi. Its old name was “Mukim Setul,” meaning the place of santol trees. In 1813, the Rattanakosin Court sent Phraya Aphainurat (Tonku Bisnu), the Rayamuda or deputy governor of Saiburi, to govern Satun, in order to end his conflict with his elder brother Phraya Saiburi Pa-ngae Ran, the Saiburi governor.



From a Rayamuda of a city to a governor of a small, remote town, Tonku Bisnu could not cope with the change. Broken-hearted, he died two years later and Satun was void of rulers for the next 28 years.

Later, the Saiburi governor shifted loyalty to Burma. In 1821, Phraya Nakorn (Noi), governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat and supervisor of Saiburi, led an army to suppress Saiburi. The governor fled to Penang to seek protection from Great Britain before moving to Malacca. In 1838, his descendants joined forces to get Saiburi back. The attacks came from different directions. The army attacked Songkhla on land while the navy ships landed on Trang to capture it, then went on to Satun in order to capture Phatthalung next. Although they were defeated, the war totally destroyed Satun. The houses were burned down to the ground and people had to hide in the jungle for safety.

After the Saiburi war, King Rama III divided Saiburi into three cities — Alor Star, Perlis, and Satun. He appointed Tonku Muhammad, the eldest son of Tonku Bisnu, to govern Satun. Tonku Muhammad succeeded in rebuilding Satun into a well-known commercial center, called Negeri Satun Mumbang Segara, meaning Satun the city of the ocean god. It soon became a favorite place for settlements of Chinese, Malay, and Indian traders and immigrants.

Since Satun was part of Saiburi, its official language was only Malay. Satun was governed by four governors with the title of Phraya Aphainurat, all members of Saiburi royalty, up until 1896. When the last Phraya Aphainurat (Tonku Abdul Rohman) became too sick to rule, the Saiburi governor sent Kuden Bin Kumae, a commoner from Saiburi, to assist him.

Kuden Bin Kumae was later appointed the Satun governor. His last title was “Phraya Phuminat Phakdi.” He added Thai as another official language and hired Thai-Malay interpreters at all main government offices such as the city hall, court house, and the district office of Amphoe Su-ngai U-pe, an important port town back then. Phraya Phuminat Phakdi also hired sepoy, Indian infantrymen trained by the British army, from Penang as security guards for government offices and important figures.

Su-ngai U-pe was a thriving port town on the Trang-Penang pepper route. The high popularity of pepper from Trang, called Tarang Pepper, attracted the Chinese from Penang to migrate to Trang and nearby towns, including Su-ngai U-pe, to grow pepper for export. Thousands of Chinese came to Trang during the time of Phraya Aphainurat (Tonku Abdul Rohman). They settled down, had families, and practiced the Straits Chinese culture from Penang. Their homes, food, clothes, and customs were exactly the same as Penang Chinese, so much so that Su-ngai U-pe was called Little Penang.

From 1890 to 1904, Su-ngai U-pe was at its height of prosperity. Under the governance of Phraya Phuminat Phakdi, more than 7,000 Chinese migrated here to cash in on the pepper trade. Ferries came in and out the port to transport pepper, goods, and passengers on the Penang - Su-ngai U-pe route four times week. Cut-throat competition between two ferry companies even led to a drop in ticket prices by 50%. Entertainment, gambling, and prostitution with sex workers from China and Japan became part of port life. Gambling dens were especially crowded, bringing the gambling tax as high as 200-1,500 *rian* each night.

Up until this period, Satun did not use Siamese money but the British form called Straits Settlement currency for its colonies. This was mainly because Satun did not have land routes to trade with nearby towns but was active in maritime trade with Perlis, Saiburi, Penang, Kantang, and Phuket. Saiburi and Penang were its main trading partners. When the Satun traders got British coins from their trading, they kept the coins in tin boxes to buy goods and pay wages back in Satun. The locals, in turn, bought goods with these coins they called "*bia rian*" until they become the main currency. Even the officials got salaries in *bia rian*, at a rate of 1 *rian* to 1.50 baht.

During his governance from 1909 to 1914, Satun was the only province in the country that used a semi-vassal state system with the governor's total monopoly over Satun economy. The prices of all merchandise were set by his tax officials and the governor did not have to send all of the income from the province to the central government.

In 1912, Phraya Samantararat Burin (Tui Bin Abdullah/Burin Samantararat) was appointed the deputy governor. After he became governor in 1914, he staged comprehensive political and economic reform in Satun. All high-ranking officials were sent from the central government, as with other *monthon* or counties in the country. Thai became the only official language. The economic monopoly was over. Satun had to use the same taxation system as the rest of the country. The citizens could trade freely. Prices were determined by market supply and demand. More roads were built to enable people across Satun to meet and trade with one another.

The new governor further strengthened the local economy by supporting coconut and rubber plantations, following the policy of Phraya Ratsadanupradit (Khaw Sim Bee), the commissioner of Monthon Phuket. He also supported family economy by encouraging people to grow vegetables and raise five hens per family. He encouraged the Chao Le on Li Pe Island to settle down. The coconut trees found today on Li Pe were planted during his time. He also built 12 primary schools to support the local people's education.



In 1923, the Satun-Khuan Niang Road was completed. Phraya Samantararat Burin persuaded Khun Phunpanit, a Chinese businessman, to set up a bus transportation company in Satun. The first bus was second-hand and powered by a steam engine, brought from Penang. It ran one Satun - Khuan Niang trip every day. With more convenient transport, more goods from Hat Yai came to Satun. The number of traders increased, the economy expanded, and Britain's colonial currency fell into decline. With Phraya Samantararat's support for the use of Thai baht, "*bia rian*" was no longer the main currency in Satun. His term ended in 1932.

At the end of the 25th Buddhist century, around 1957, the southern national highway to Hat Yai was finally completed. Satun then was linked to Hat Yai via Yontrakarn and Phet Kasem roads. Penang was overshadowed and Satun people began to send their children to school in Songkhla instead of Penang. *Bia rian* totally disappeared from the Satun economy.

In the same period, the government set up a self-help land settlement at Khuan Kalong. Many landless farmers from Songkhla, Phattalung, and other provinces joined the program allowing them to farm in allocated lands. As a result, the Thai population in Satun increased significantly, so much so that Khuan Kalong was soon upgraded to a district. During the big Buddhist festival in the 10th lunar month, the bus station at the settlement intersection was bursting at the seams because the settlement members were heading back home to make merit for their ancestors.

That is now history. Nowadays, the settlement members are doing much better financially, thanks to their forefathers' hard work. The new generations own cars, which have seriously affected bus transportation. After 60 of service, the bus transportation company, which dispatched a bus to a different destination every 15 minutes, from 5 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. every day, finally called it quits in 2017.

From exporting natural resources ranging from timber, seafood, and forest goods, Satun's main source of income is now tourism. World-class tourist attractions such as Li Pe Island, Tarutao Island, Satun Geopark, Thale Ban National Park, and many other ecotourism sites are now Satun's main income earners.

But Satun is more than Li Pe. It's more than a center of ecotourism. Satun has a colorful history and its old town quarter is still well-preserved. Satun architecture is also unique, as it is a mixture of three different cultures which peacefully co-exist with one another. Apart from beautiful nature, the cultural harmony in Satun is another magnet that never fails to charm visitors from around the world.

Satun Old Town Architecture





Shophouses and Wooden Houses

Straits architecture. These are two-storey concrete shophouses with load-bearing walls. The ground floor is used for business, while the upper floor is a residential area. The five-foot covered arcade walkway has a double function – rain protection and air ventilation. The front columns are decorated with simple stucco. This style can be found along Buri Wanich and Samanta Pradit roads.

Mixed architecture. The two-storey structures are built from reinforced concrete and have plastered brick walls. Examples of outstanding architectural features, such as covered walkways, louver shutters, and roof beams under the eaves, can be found on Satun Thani Road.

Western-style shophouses have from two up to five storeys. Vertical and horizontal lines are the main feature, as seen in the Satun Chong Hua Association Building.

Wooden shophouse Style 1 is a two-storey wooden structure with an arcade covered walkway. It features two types of windows – French windows and regular ones – louver shutters, and air vents above the windows. This style can be found on Satun Thani Road.

Wooden shophouse Style 2 is a simple, two-storey wooden structure. The ground floor is a commercial area, while the second floor is a residential area. From outside, you can see a front folding door on the ground floor and the front windows decorated with door panels on the second floor. Air vents are under the roof. This architectural style can be found on Sulakanukul and Satun Thani roads.

Satun Old Town Architecture

Satun Old Town

Satun old town reflects how Satun was once a prosperous port town and a hub of the Malay Peninsula. The port city was under rapid development during the time when Phraya Samantarar Burin, who was laying the foundation for town development, was governor and when Phraya Ratsadanupradit Mahison Phakdi (Khaw Sim Bee Na Ranong), the commissioner of Monthon Phuket, was supportive of Satun's development. The cohabitation between the Thai Chinese, Thai Muslims, and the local Thais made Satun Old Town a multi-cultural community, featuring a varied way of life, traditions, costumes, cuisine, language, and architecture even to the present day.

Architecture in Satun Old Town is divided into four categories, depending on their functions:

Public Buildings

These are large-scale buildings that often belong to government agencies, associations, or schools.

Kuden Mansion on Satun Thani Road. Built in 1898 by Phraya Phuminat Phakdi (Tunku Baharudin Bin Tamma-ngong), who governed Satun, the mansion was meant to be accommodation for King Chulalongkorn during his trip to the South, but the king did not stay here. The mansion was later used as a residence and then served as the city hall from 1947 to 1963. It wasn't until 1994 that the Fine Arts Department turned the building into the Satun National Museum. The two-storey Kuden Mansion was built in concrete, while the wooden hipped roof is covered by ceramic tiles. With Neo-Palladian influence, one unique part of the building features the sun design in blue stained glass on the gable. The building has windows around it on both floors and is decorated with stucco cornices. The building was registered as a historical building in 1988.



Mansions

Phraya Samantarot Burin Mansion, on Satun Thani Road, was built in 1914 after the design of a mansion in Trok Phra Kocha in Thonburi. A combination between western and local designs, the mansion is a structure on low stilts with a hipped roof, stretching out from the main building.

Ban Lang Pu Te is on Rueangrit Charun Road. Built on stilts with a hipped roof, it is partly influenced by western architecture.

Religious Sites

Religious sites are places where people gather to perform sacred activities.

Po Che Keng Shrine is on Samantarot Pradit Road. Influenced by Chinese architecture, it is decorated with statues of swans and dragon on the rooftop, with statues of Chinese deities and Buddha images inside the shrine.



Masjid Mambang, or Satun Central Mosque, stands on the corner of Buri Wanich and Satun Thani roads. Built when Phraya Aphainurat (Tunku Muhammad Akib) governed Satun, the *masjid* was designed by architects from Malacca, Malaysia. The funds came from the sale of boats in Saiburi. The *masjid*, however, was demolished and re-constructed on the same plot. The inauguration ceremony was graciously presided over by the late King Rama IX on 20 September 1979. The three-storey building is built with reinforced concrete and has a basement. The distinctive feature of its contemporary design is the eight-point golden dome, gold stained glass, and the symbol of Islam on the dome.





Wat Chanathip Chaloom is on Sulakanukul Road. Once named Wat Mambang, the temple was built in 1882 and revived to function fully in 1930. The two-storey *ubosot* is in concrete and wood, with stairs on both sides of the ordination hall.

The preservation and development of Satun Old Town was designed by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in 2015. As a result, an area of 0.85 sq km was declared the old town by the Committee for Preservation and Development of Krung Rattanakosin and Old Towns on 27 April 2016. Plans are afoot to manage, preserve, and develop Satun Old Town.



Thung Wa Old Community

Thung Wa old community formerly known as “Su-ngai U-pe”, was a significant port city and a Chinese community. Pepper used to be the main export to other cities in the region, especially Penang. The community became much larger after an influx of merchants. However, the trade between Thung Wa and Penang, then colonized by Great Britain, was affected by the dispute between Great Britain and Thailand during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. As a result, the Chinese traders returned to Penang and the pepper trade subsided, making Thung Wa just another sleepy town. However, the historical and architectural heritage of past prosperity is left behind to be discovered in buildings and wooden shophouses in Thung Wa Old Community

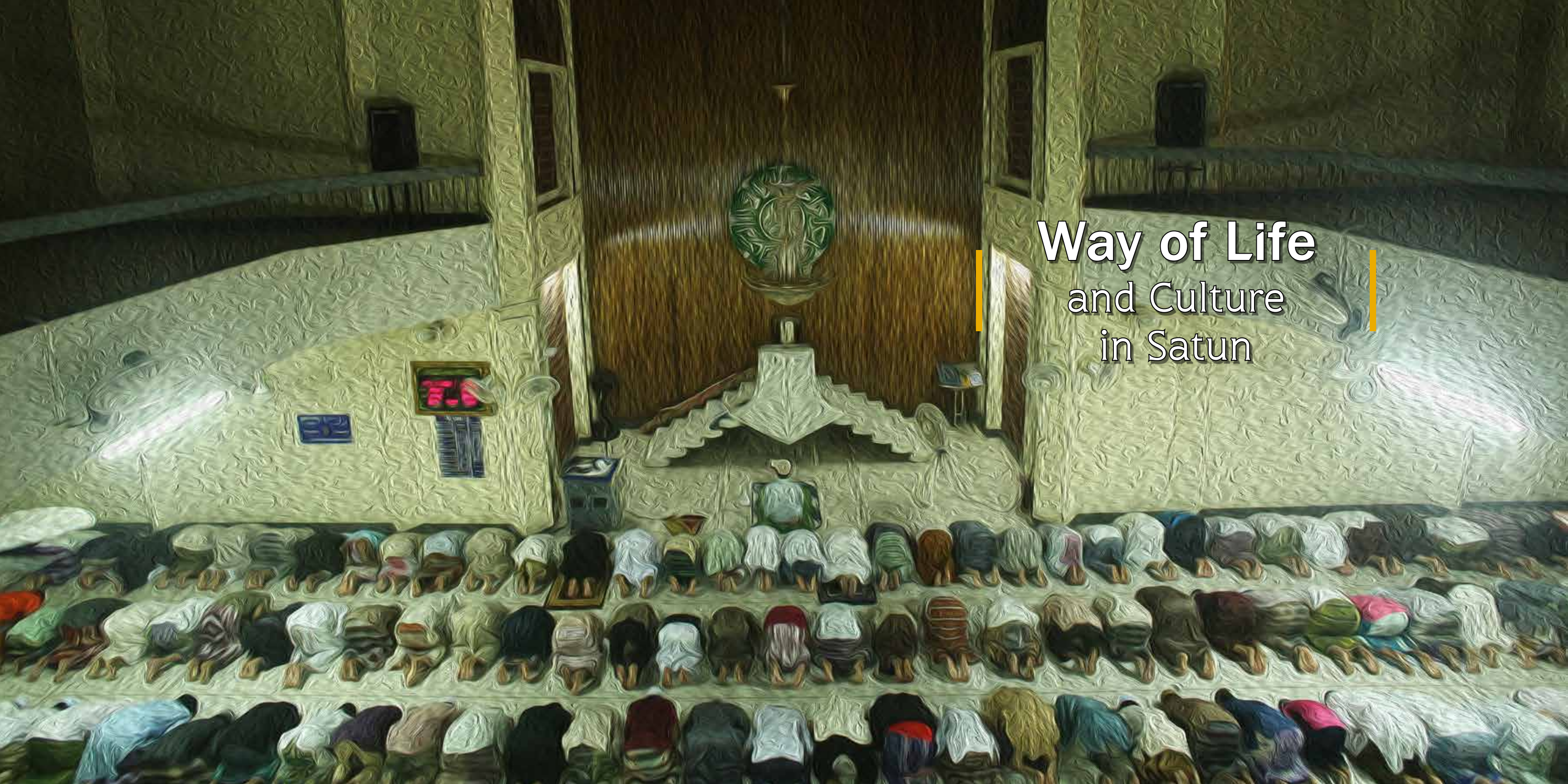


First-generation shophouses are two-stories, with load-bearing walls and the five-foot arcade walkway to block the sun and rain. The upper floor features two French windows with segmental arches. The window panels are in both opaque and louver shutters.

Second-generation shophouses are also two-storey structures with load-bearing walls and a covered walkway. The difference is the windows on the upper level, which are equally divided into three parts, instead of two. Above the windows are air vents.

Third-generation two-storey shophouses are built with reinforced concrete and plastered brick walls. The distinctive features include the roof beam and the balcony on the upper floor. The windows are equally divided into three parts, with four equal air vents above.

Wooden shophouses. The ground floor of a two-storey wooden shophouse is used for commercial purposes, while the upper level is a residential area. The folding doors on the ground floor stretch from left to right across the room, while the windows on the upper floor are decorated with opaque panels, with air vents above.



Way of Life and Culture in Satun

Way of Life and Culture in Satun

The Straits Chinese culture is a result of cross-cultural marriage between Chinese men and Malay women. Malay wives had to follow the culture of their husband's ancestral family. However, the Malay culture was preserved in features such as the *pateh* tube skirt, *baju kurung* (knee-length blouse), chewing betel nut, and their traditional cuisine, that has been adjusted to a mild taste for the husbands.

The Malay culture was later compromised in the following generations. The Java blouse worn by Malay women saw additional Chinese embroidery on the sleeves and accessories like *kerosang* – an arrangement of three brooches. The contemporary design is called "*pua tung teh*," a half-length blouse, worn with contrasting-colored tube skirt.



What five cities along the Andaman sea - Satun, Trang, Takua Pa, Ranong, and Phuket - have in common is their Peranakan culture, or the Straits Chinese culture. Despite their similar location, above the Strait of Malacca, Satun is unique for its rich Malay culture, which is reflected in the local cuisine, spoken language, and costume.



Original Malay women wear a similar blouse, but different in pattern and fabric. In the past, Malay women didn't wear a *hijab* as some do today, but they used a light-fabric scarf to cover the head.

Satun is a multi-cultural town, with Chinese and Malay as the main cultural influences. This is reflected on the dining table of the Satun people, where every dish is a blend between Chinese, Malay, and Thai. This also shows how Thais are open to blending new culture into theirs, making the fusion cuisine in Satun unique.





Khao man to-mae is rice steamed with coconut cream, pandan leaves, cloves, and anise. The flavored rice is served with fish curry, cooked with five spices and curry leaves. A portion of acar is also served.

Pulut kunyit kari ayam is thick chicken curry served with turmeric rice. The aromatic dish used to be eaten only during special occasions, but it can be easily found today.

Butu piring is a dessert. The preparation is to pour *chao phrom* rice flour into a small mold, then stuff brown sugar inside. Steam until it's cooked, and serve with salted grated coconut.

Kuih badak is a deep-fried snack, with a crisp skin but soft texture. It is made from mashed sweet potato mixed with flour and stuffed with coconut and shrimps, stir-fried with mild spices.

Kuih lopis. Sticky rice grains are soaked in the juice of pandan leaves until they turn green, and then are sieved and let dry. Then it is fried in coconut cream, wrapped in a banana leaf, and steamed until cooked. It is served with grated coconut and condensed palm sugar.

Ang koo or *khanom tao* (turtle-shaped) is made from sticky rice dough, with red food dye, and stuffed with stirred mung bean. Put a portion in a turtle-shaped mold and then steam it until cooked.

Pulut tai tai has a few different names in Thai, such as *niao at*, *niao heng*, *niao anchan*, and *niao sabu*. It is two-toned sticky rice, white and blue (from butterfly pea flower). Steamed sticky rice is mixed with coconut cream and compressed in a rectangular box. Then it is cut into bite-sized pieces. The chewy texture goes well with creamy, sweet Thai custard.



There are a number of local food stalls or coffee shops (*kopi* shop) where you can grab breakfast. You may take away, eat in, or even bring in food from other shops to eat at a coffee shop. *Roti* are served around the clock with strong tea, or *teh tarik*. The coffee shop is like a community center where rubber plantation workers stop by after work in the morning for a chat with palm plantation workers, and government officials and office workers are about to leave for work. It is a quality time for the community, when people exchange updates.

A strong devotion to local cuisine has not only helped local dessert makers and chefs to preserve their food culture, but also vendors who bring food to your doorstep. These retailers select a variety of snacks and desserts from the market in the early morning and display them in their truck or cart. The food is sold at offices and in communities for those who can't manage to shop at the market.

A catchphrase of Muslims in Satun is "Allah," which is pronounced differently by the local people. It is similar to "Oh my God" in English. However, what's unique about the catchphrase in Satun is that no matter what religion or ethnic group people belong to, everyone is saying the same word.

Another one is "*mati*," which means dead or worn-out. It is used as a suffix to expand terms, such as *yalan mati* (dead end), *taliphone mati* (empty telephone battery), and *motorbike mati* (broken motorbike).

The unique variety of culture reflects the harmony of the community, in which the majority are faithful Muslim followers who maintain their religious practice. Men walking straight to the *masjid* once the call for prayer is heard in the community, while well-covered women stay home for the daily prayers, is the common scene. This is the practice of faith, which is an important element that keeps a diverse community in peace.



Inheriting Traditions and Faith from Ancestors



From the older generation to the younger, people in the three ethnic groups celebrate their new years with different festivities and at different times. The calendar year begins with Chinese New Year, with family reunions and “ang-pao” exchange. The first full moon after New Year is “chap ngo mae”. It is when Satun people like to appear in their best costume and tour around the decorated town on rickshaws and visit relatives. The tradition is being revived.

Next is Thai New Year, or Songkran Festival, which is celebrated in both religious and social practices. The water splashing festival among the younger generation is an activity that draws people to come home.

The last New Year celebration for Satun people is “Hari Raya Aidilfitri” by the Muslim community on Buri Wanich Road. The city’s oldest road — where a century-old Sino-European building now stands — is closed for the celebrations. Young people join the procession on the street in their traditional costumes. Competitions and performances relating to traditional culture, such as “khan mak” or gifts presented to the bride on the wedding day, *rong-ngeng* dances, and cooking will be demonstrated. The festival is enjoyed by locals of all ethnic groups, as well as tourists.



Apart from the three new year festivals, Satun is also known for its Vegetarian Festival, Hom Pha Phra That Festival (wrapping the pagoda with cloth), Chak Phra Festival, and a ceremony on the 12th month to make merit to the ancestors.

Other famous celebrations include a local kite festival that has been held in Satun since 1976 and later upgraded to the International Kite Festival in 1992. It is also a competition joined by kite makers from 35 countries around the world. There are six categories, including beauty, creativity, practicality, and locality.

The kite festival is held annually in the first week of February. The 38th Satun International Kite Festival 2018 was held at the Royal Thai Air Force base, just outside the city, with a view of Sankalakhiri Mountain in the east. With all the unique kites from around the world flying on the Satun sky, every photograph taken at the festival is exceptionally beautiful.



Exploring Satun Old Town



Exploring Satun Old Town



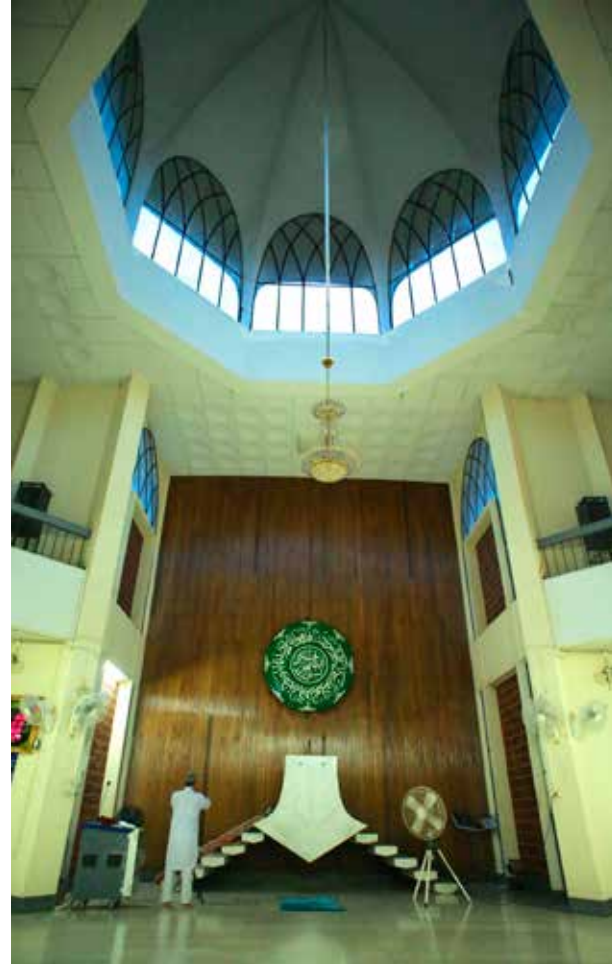
Situated in the furthest part of Thailand's Andaman coast, Satun is a small town where Thai Muslims, Chinese descendants, and Buddhist Thais live in harmony. Although the Muslims outnumber the others, sharing culture and co-inhabitation is the cultural norm. The old town of Satun was originally named Su-ngai U-pe, which is now Amphoe Thung Wa. The prosperity of the old port city is now seen in the historical buildings there. Satun has now become a commercial border town, by both land and sea, between Malaysia and Thailand.

Travel Routes in Satun:

Satun Old Town Route

Route 1: Buri Wanich Road, from Masjid Klang Satun T-junction to Samanta Pradit Intersection

The road has always been the bustling commercial center from the past till present. The Sino-European buildings on a 200-meter section of the road show that this area used to be where the Chinese did their business. There are over 20 old and renovated buildings of interest, while a few are replicas of old Satun architecture.



Route 2: Satun Thani Road, from Masjid Klang Satun to Samanta Pradit T-junction

This old road features historical buildings. Most are half-wood, half-concrete buildings. A few are concrete ones, such as the shop adjacent to Masjid Klang Satun and the Chong Hua Satun Association building. A few wooden buildings are on Soi Satun Thani 1, connecting to Buri Wanich Road.

Route 3: Samanta Pradit Road, near Po Che Keng Shrine roundabout to Wanich Buri Road and Sulakanukul Road

On a 30-meter section of Samanta Pradit Road near the shrine stand seven well-preserved Sino-European buildings. When you turning left to Sulakanukul Road, there is a 15-unit, half-wood, half-concrete building. An old wooden house hidden inside an alley next to Kasikorn Bank is also worth visiting.



Route 4: Exploring Historical Sites in Satun

Chanathip Chalerm Temple on Salakanukul Road has a beautiful sermon hall. Masjid Klang Satun, or Masjid Mam Bung, located between Satun Thani and Buri Wanich roads, boasts an outstanding Islamic architecture and its golden dome. Po Che Keng Shrine on Samanta Pradit Road features Chinese architecture, matching the golden dragon pillar near the roundabout and Kuden Mansion or National Museum on Satun Thani Road.

The Old Su-ngai U-pe Route in Amphoe Thung Wa

The 50-meter long route is located on both sides of Phet Kasem Road, between Amphoe La-ngu and Amphoe Thung Wa. About 150 meters after turning left at Thung Wa Intersection, you will be greeted by old structures made of half wood and half concrete. Sino-European architecture is shown in the ventilation outlets, doors, windows, and balconies. Only a few of them are concrete structures; one is a Chinese-inspired two-unit building. The Su-ngai U-pe port or Thung Wa port — the old trading route — sits deeper in the Western part, bordering Khlong Thung Wa.



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