

THAILAND

Hua Hin Area



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FOREWORD



Thanks for downloading this FREE interactive travel guide. You've made an excellent choice if you plan on **GETTING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK** in (LOCATION). Before you delve into the content of this travel guide, please take a few minutes to read this foreword. It outlines how to make the best use of the information contained within.

First-hand experience: This travel guide has been put together using first-hand experience gained from traveling to, and exploring, all the locations presented within. The information and photos featured in my travel guides, have been collated over years of putting boots on the ground. There is no second-hand information, or information which is plagiarized from other travel sources, within this guide. Every cave, waterfall, river, viewpoint, jungle trail, temple site, guesthouse and restaurant presented, or promoted, I have been to and seen and/or experienced myself.

Getting off the beaten track: The primary focus of my travel guides is **ADVENTURE TRAVEL** (and activities) to locations which are non-mainstream tourist destinations. As an example, there is no information for the mainstream tourist locations of **THAILAND** (except as transit hub's before heading off to a more remote location) listed in this travel guide. As such, the information in this guide is directed towards travelers (not tourists) who

are keen for a bit of adventure - caving, climbing, jungle trekking, kayaking - in an off the beaten track location, of South East Asia. If these types of activities aren't to your liking, then this travel guide won't be much use to you. There's no information in here about the party towns in South East Asia.

Budget travel: Knowing the importance of making the most of your hard-earned currency, my travel links ([12GO ASIA](#)) and accommodation links ([AGODA](#)) are predominantly budget oriented. They provide a range of options for getting to a central hub, or base, from which you can make your daily explorations.

Independent sightseeing: Instead of going on group tours, I strongly promote the idea of renting your own vehicle (car or motorbike) and venturing out yourself. To help you get to the exact location, there's always a [GOOGLE MAPS](#) link to show the route from a hub (hotel or guesthouse) to the sightseeing attraction. If there's a local tour operator offering excellent adventure type tours, or activities, I'll provide links to their website. A good example of a great adventure tour operator is [GREEN DISCOVERY LAOS](#), who offer excellent caving, kayaking and trekking tours throughout Laos.

The Table of Contents: This is page four of the travel guide and has a sequential list of sections, which you can go to directly by clicking on the **GREEN** numbered tab.

YouTube Links: These take you directly to my YouTube Vlog ([Megaworld Asia](#)) where you can see short, high quality travel videos of the numerous attractions listed in my travel guides. If you enjoy the videos, please hit the like button and don't forget to subscribe to see my upcoming adventures.

Your next adventure is just one click away

Safe travels,

MEGA

Hua Hin Area

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**Your Next Adventure
Is Just One Click Away**

How To Use This Interactive Travel Guide

The Table Of Contents: To effortlessly move from the **TOC** to the page you want to view, simply click on the **page number**: **1**

YouTube Links: These will take you to a short highlights video, of the sightseeing attraction, in the section you're looking at:



Other Links: These take you to ancillary services such as recommended restaurants, or car and motorbike rental agencies, in the location you're traveling to:

ANCILLARY SERVICES

Travel Links: This takes you to **12GO ASIA**, an excellent travel group which provides a range of options for getting around the region:



The Table Of Contents: To move back to the **TOC**, click on the **yellow arrows**, at the bottom of each Page: 

Google Maps Links: These provide a route from a designated location (e.g., a hotel) to a particular sightseeing attraction:



Information Links: These links take you to information sites, such as Wikipedia or Wiki-voyage, to provide more in-depth info on a particular subject or location:



Accommodation Links: This takes you to the Agoda website to check accommodation availability and make bookings:



It's Time To Get Off The Beaten Track



HEADING SOUTH FROM BANGKOK

About: For most visitors to Thailand the Southern Provinces invariably means the beach resort islands of Phuket and Koh Samui. Both locations are well set up for mainstream tourism with a large infrastructure of hotels, restaurants, nightlife action and tour companies. With a multitude of local flights each day from Bangkok, getting to either location is a breeze. Areas closer to the capital, such as Hua Hin and Prachuap Khirikhan, seem to be a less traveled path due to access being only by train or bus.

Great sightseeing: Having seen a good deal of Thailand over the years it's my considered opinion that the surrounds of Hua Hin, including the wider province of Prachuap Khiri Khan, have the most diverse range of sightseeing attractions in the Kingdom. Aside from the great beaches there are some brilliant national parks to the south, and some amazing temples, caves, and waterfalls directly to the west of the city.

However, in keeping with the general theme of this travel guide, many of the locations I describe are off the beaten track and will not be on the tour companies list of sites to visit.

Getting there: Getting to Hua Hin, from Bangkok, is straight forward and the two modes of transport available are the train or minibus. A minibus normally takes about three hours but if you want a more relaxed but slower trip, then the train is a good option. Travel time from BANG SUE STATION to Hua Hin is approximately 4.5 hours. A second-class seat is currently around 350 THB. **Click the link below for a full schedule of train departure times from Bang Sue Station:**

THAI RAIL

For other transportation options, such as bus, minibus, or taxi, click the link below:



The train to Hua HIN

HUA HIN - GENERAL INFORMATION

About: Hua Hin is probably the nearest mainland location to Bangkok with decent beaches and is also one of Thailand's oldest tourist destinations. One of the previous Kings of Thailand (Rama V) built his summer palace there, a century ago, for vacations away from the nation's capital. It also seems to be the place where the Euro tourist crowd go to work on their tans and enjoy their evenings at the restaurants along the beach front.

Accommodation in Hua Hin: As far as accommodation goes there are plenty of choices available, budget and otherwise, and Wiki-travel is an excellent reference source. However, when it comes to hotels, guesthouses, etc in Hua Hin the rule of thumb is the less expensive places are on the western side of the main highway through the town, with the more expensive being on the Eastern side and up against the beach.

The EU Bakery & Guesthouse is a budget priced accommodation choice on the western side of the main road (on Hua Hin 74 street), and only a 400 meter walk from the **Hua Hin Railway station**.

For booking inquiries at the **EU Bakery & Guesthouse**, click the link below:



Transportation: Another benefit of staying at the EU Bakery & Guesthouse is they can arrange a motorbike rental for you on the spot. Having your own transportation gives you the flexibility of setting your own schedule and itinerary. Motorbike rental rates around Hua Hin are currently 250 - 300 THB per day.

Organised Tours: If you're happy with doing organized tours around the Hua Hin area, click the link below for inquiries:



Hua Hin Train Station

THE THREE CAVES - SUMMARY

The Three Caves: Approximately 32 kilometers from the railway crossing in Hua Hin (or 30 - 40 minutes travel time) you will come to the intersection of route # 3218 and route # 3301. This is actually the location of a small township called Ban Nong Phlap. Within the first 8 kilometers along route # 3301 there are three very interesting temple caves to visit: **Dao Cave, Lub Lae Cave, and Kai Lon Cave.**

During my first visit to Hua Hin in 2012 I was fortunate to have the guidance of a local expat, Jim Currie, with twenty years' experience in the area. Jim took me on personalized guided tours to all three cave sites which otherwise I would have no knowledge of. All three cave sites (temples) are on the left of route # 3301 and spaced 2 - 3 kilometers apart. **Note:** All the caves are on Buddhist Temple grounds, so please respect local religious etiquette. **For directions from Hua Hin to the Ban Nong Phlap turn-off, click the link below:**



Note: A tour through all three caves will take up at least a half day. Dao Cave & Kai Lon Cave (the 1st and 3rd caves) have internal lighting. Lub Lae Cave does not. For a safe tour through Lub Lae Cave, take your own lighting (torches) and use solid footwear.



HUA HIN AREA - DAO (TURTLE) CAVE

About: Dao cave is part of a temple complex which is 500 meters along route #3301. Click the link below for directions from Ban Nong Phlap.



On-site: Enter the temple grounds and follow the signage to a parking area which is adjacent to the short cement stairway up to the cave entrance. The initial entry chamber is well lit with two large Buddha statues situated within. One is in an alcove directly in front and the other is situated along the left wall. The cave is lit with evenly spaced fluorescents highlighting the more interesting features and formations. There is general direction to follow through a labyrinth of small rooms and passageways before eventually coming back to the entry chamber. Although well lit throughout it's always advisable to carry your own torchlight as a back-up. There are bats in many of the cave rooms and they can be seen hanging from the ceilings at various points.



Canon Ball Tree

© Mark Jones

Canon Ball Trees: Outside the cave, on the temple grounds, there are a couple of interesting features well worth a few minutes of your time to check out. The first, and most visible, is the enormous seated Buddha statue which fronts the limestone cliffs in which the cave is located. The second, and a quite unusual piece of flora, are the canon-ball trees which are off to the sides of the temple grounds. These trees have low hanging, seed pods which are the size of canon-balls and bunched like large grapes.



Dao Cave Entrance

HUA HIN AREA - LUB LAE (SLEEPING LADY) CAVE

About: Lub Lae Cave is the second cave/ temple site along route # 3301 (approx. 2 kilometers from the T-Junction of route #3218) and is probably the most rugged and least developed of the three. **Click the link below for directions from Ban Nong Phlap:**



On-site: As with Dao Cave it is part of a local temple complex and gets its name from an unusual rock formation within, which **looks like a sleeping lady**. A short dirt track, at the rear of the temple, leads to the cave entrance. This cave is the deepest of the three and in many places is unlit so a personal flash light (torch) is a requirement for a safe traverse. There is a general route to follow of approximately 200 meters before exiting the cave at another point beyond the initial entry point. This cave also has the greatest number of resident bats within and as such has resident cave dwelling vipers (non-venomous) which feed on the bats.



HUA HIN AREA - KAI LON (FALLING CHICKEN) CAVE

About: Kai Lon Cave is the third cave/temple along route # 3301 and probably the most remote and least visited of the three. Follow route # 3301 for approx. 4 kilometers until you see the turn off to Kai Lon Cave on the left. Follow the dirt track to the very end until you reach the temple and parking area. **Click the link below for directions from Ban Nong Phlap:**



On-site: Kai Lon Cave gets few visitors due to its remoteness and the rather arduous ascent up to the entrance; there is a steep, uninterrupted run of 200 steps directly from the parking area. According to local information this was the temple where the late king of Thailand spent some time as a monk.

Falling Chicken: Kai Lon Cave was given its name apparently by a local farmer who discovered it when searching for a missing chicken. The chicken fell through the hole in the cave roof, so the story goes.



The cave: Has a large entry chamber with some impressive formations within. The large hole in the roof allows plenty of natural lighting to illuminate the many Buddha statues within, some of which are reported to be at least four hundred years old. Further inside the cave, a passageway leads to another room with a hole in the ceiling. Directly below is a **Buddhist Monument (stupa)** which is nicely illuminated by the natural light coming from above.



WAT PA BAN WALAI - THE MUMMIFIED MONK

About: From the junction of route # 3218 and route # 3301 continue along # 3301 towards Pala-U Waterfall for approximately five kilometers and you will come to Wat Pa Walai (on the right). Click the link below for directions from Ban Nong Phlap.



On-site: The temple is in a remote remote jungle setting and has a very unique attraction, compared to other Buddhist temples in Thailand. In a mausoleum, at the highest point of the temple grounds, is a MUMMIFIED MONK sealed in a glass casket. On my first visit to Hua Hin in 2012 I was fortunate enough to have local expat Jim Currie as my guide. Aside from knowing the location of Wat Pa Walai, and its mummified monk, he also informed me he personally knew the monk while he was still alive. Flanking the air tight casket there is also glass display cabinets with the dead monk's personal effects, photographs, and some historical information regarding his life's work.



PALA U WATERFALL - GENERAL INFO

Getting to Pala U Falls: Continuing from Wat Pa Ban Walai, towards the Burmese Border, the road enters an area which is devoid of human habitation. This is a wildlife sanctuary with dense jungle up to the roads edge. Care should be taken when driving along this stretch of road in the late afternoon or at sunset as wild elephants often emerge from their jungle habitat to feed at the edge. If you are on a motorbike you should stop at a good distance from them (at least 200 meters) as they are not tame and can be hostile if provoked, or they feel threatened. During the day time this isn't an issue as the elephants will remain in the cool surrounds of the jungle avoiding the heat. **Click the following Google Maps Link for directions to Pala U Waterfall:**



Forest Conservation: You will eventually emerge from this no-man's land of wild jungle to a small village where there is an information center about forest conservation and wild elephant management. This area, close to the Burmese border, is one of the most picturesque and undeveloped locations in Thailand. There is no large hotels or resorts anywhere in sight.



Dense Jungle Area: The road to Pala-U is well marked with directional signage and as you continue you'll begin to descend into a mountainous, heavy jungle terrain of amazing natural beauty. Due to fact there is so much dense jungle in this area, rainfall can occur at any time of the year. I visited in the month of February, which is generally considered the dry season, and there were heavy afternoon thunderstorms. Wet weather gear is an advisable option, particularly if you're on a motor bike.



PALA U WATERFALL - SIGHTSEEING

Pala-U Waterfall site: This is a picturesque site, in thick jungle surrounds, approximately 65 kilometers due west of Hua Hin. It is a place which predominantly only locals go to for a picnic or a day's outing and is well worth the effort of visiting. As mentioned it is in mountainous, jungle clad surroundings and only a few kilometers from the Thai/Burmese border. There is a 300 THB entry fee to pay at a checkpoint before entering the park area. The waterfall is actually a number of small falls, or steps, in a stream which descends from the mountains beyond. There is a developed trail which follows the stream to the fifth level. After that the trail is mostly non-existent. Lots of fish can be seen in many of the pools. However, no fishing is allowed. Many visitors like to feed the fish.

WARNING: At the beginning of the trail there is a foot bridge which crosses the stream. In the late afternoon, a group of monkeys often gathers around this area, perhaps waiting for handouts from tourists. Be very careful as these monkeys can become hostile, or dangerous, if provoked and will attempt to grab any personal belongings you may have with you. Keep all personal possessions, such as phones or cameras, in a bag or on a lanyard.



Fish feeding



Beware of the Monkey's



Swimming at Pala U

KHAO KALOK HEADLAND - GENERAL INFO

About: This is a coastal nature reserve, which also includes Thaa Ko Sa Forest Park, located 31 km south of Hua Hin. In terms of a sightseeing experience, it's off the beaten track, as the only way to get there from Hua Hin is by independent means (car or motorbike). **Click on the link below for directions from Hua Hin.**



Getting there: From Hua Hin get onto Highway # 4 and head south until the turn off (on the left) to route # 1019. Follow route # 1019 to the end where it meets Pak Nam Pran Road (route # 3168). Turn left at the T-Junction, then go straight until you hit the beach road. Turn right at that T-Junction then follow all the way until you arrive at Khao Kalok Headland. Once you arrive there, park your bike in one of the roadside parking areas, then grab a drink to cool off before you begin exploring the headland.

Karst geography: The headland is quite extensive and aside from the picturesque, white sand beach along its northern edge, there are several challenging nature trails running across the peak's upper topography. The headland's terrain is composed of jagged karst rock with steep cliffs being



Challenging Nature Trails

a predominant feature. At the top of the northern face there's a lookout giving excellent views along the coastline. As with all karst features there's also a number of interesting small caves which the park rangers can guide you to for a small fee.



© Mark J.

Khao Kalok Headland

KHAO KALOK HEADLAND - SIGHTSEEING

The nature trails: There are two starting points for the nature trails over the headland, and both join. When you arrive at the parking area at the northern end of the headland you'll see the park ranger's office. If you feel you need a guide for hiking across the island, this is where you can arrange to hire one for a small fee.

Hiring a guide: If you feel confident about hiking independently the start of one of the hiking trails is just a few meters south of the ranger's office. This trail is on the western flank of the headland and goes up and over the top of the peak, to eventually join the trail which runs across to the remote Say Beach, on the southern side of the headland.

The trail to Say Beach: From the road (parking area) at the very northern end of the headland, go onto the beach and follow the cliff line around to the east (you'll be walking towards the sea). Approximately 100 meters around you'll see a cement stairway which goes straight off the beach and up the cliff face (a few meters) before branching in two directions. Take the trail to the left; this is the one which crosses the headland to Say Beach. The branch to the right goes up to the viewpoint at the top of the peak, and provides a nice view along the beaches to the north. **Note:** This trail eventually takes you back down to the western flank and the park office.



Doing the hike: The sign at the start says the round trip to the remote beach on the southern side of the headland is 1.2 km. That estimate would seem correct. The hike has some difficult sections to negotiate, particularly in the initial two to three hundred meters of the trail. Cement steps, steel walkways, and haul ropes have been put in place to aid in the more challenging stretches. **Note:** If the tide is up when you make the hike across the headland you will be disappointed to find no beach when you arrive on the other side. The beach, obviously, only appears once the tide goes out so consider this before beginning the hike.



KHAO KALOK HEADLAND - SIGHTSEEING

The trail over the northern peak: As mentioned, the trail to Say Beach joins the trail back over the northern peak, and then down the western flank. If you are still feeling full of energy after returning from the hike out to the Say Beach, continue the trail to the view point at top of the northern peak. **Note:** When you get back to the split, instead of dropping down to the beach, go straight on.

A sreep ascent: The first part of this trail is quite arduous as it ascends quite steeply for fifty meters or so before arriving at the viewpoint at the top. As with the other trail, cement steps and haul ropes have been put in place to aid in the more challenging sections of the track. An interesting feature of this section of the headland are the number of small caves along the trail.

Inaccessible Cave: One, at the very top of the headland, is quite large but **unfortunately is inaccessible without climbing equipment**. From the viewpoint at the top, the trail drops down through a labyrinth of large rocks and small caves and eventually emerges out onto the road along the western flank of the headland.



Trail to the top



Inaccessible cave



The Northern Viewpoint

KHAO KALOK HEADLAND - SIGHTSEEING

The skull Cave of Khao Kalok (Thailand): The skull cave gets its name from a rock feature, within an unmarked cave on the Khao Kalok headland, in which light passes through three holes thus creating a skull like image. This cave is not very far from the road along the western flank of the headland but due to being unmarked, is difficult to locate. The track to the cave entrance branches off the main trail, some fifty meters up from the road, and has no markings to indicate the direction. It also has a tight ascent through an eight-meter vertical shaft, by way of a steel ladder, so enlisting the help of a park guide is the best option for viewing skull cave.

The Keyhole Cave: The vertical shaft opens out onto a small plateau. A short distance beyond is a narrow entrance (a keyhole) into another cave which then drops fifteen meters down into a pit which, for all intents and purposes, looks like a dead end. Luckily the local guides know their way around.

The tunnel: At the bottom of the pit, on the right-hand side, is a small tunnel leading to another larger cave room beyond. The tunnel is less than five meters in length and narrows to less to a meter in diameter before opening out into the Skull Cave.



The descent

The Skull: There is a dirt slope to scramble down before taking the trail down into the Skull Cave. The cave room is perhaps fifteen meters in height and the skull feature is up towards the roof. The light shining through three well positioned holes gives the eerie effect of two eyes and a mouth, looking down at you.



The Skull cave of Khao Kalok

KHAO SAM ROI YOT NATIONAL PARK - GENERAL INFO

About: This impressive National Park is located approximately 50 km south of Hua Hin. There are some hotels and resorts within the national park area but most people tend to stay in Hua Hin and travel to Sam Roi Yot on day excursions.

Large Area: The spread of the park is quite extensive, encompassing 98 square km from north to south, and because of this you will need a vehicle to take in all the main attractions. Most people traveling from Hua Hin, if they aren't on an arranged tour, will rent a motorbike for the day. Travel time from Hua Hin to Sam Roi Yot on a motorbike is approximately one hour.

Note: There is an **entry fee for foreigners of 200 Baht** for all the cave sites at Sam Roi Yot. However, you only pay the fee once for the day so if you have the energy reserves to visit more than one site, you won't need to pay again. **Click on the following link for directions:**



National Park: The English language translation of Khao Sam Roi Yot is "**mountain with 300 peaks**" and as you approach the national park it certainly seems that way as the myriad of distinctive, jagged peaks will come into view. The park's highest peak is just on 605 meters.

Jagged Terrain: The geography of Sam Roi Yot is one of craggy, jungle covered limestone terrain. Due to the weathering over past millennia much of the surface topography is sharp underfoot. It is mainly for this reason alone it is recommended you wear good footwear, **proper hiking shoes and not flip flops**, as visitation to all of the attractions involves a substantial amount of hiking.

Caves & Viewpoints: The main attractions are the caves in the area but there is also a great viewpoint at the southern end of the park which gives spectacular views along the cliff line and out over the ocean. Additionally there is a picturesque Buddhist Temple, located directly below **Khao Daeng View-point**.



PRAYA NAKORN CAVE - GENERAL INFO

About: This is the main attraction of the Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park and most of the tour companies will promote this site in their outings there. If you are doing the trip independently there is plenty of sign posting along the way providing direction to the starting point for the hike to the cave: **Bang Pu Beach**.

Hiking: One thing to keep in mind about cave tours is that when you see the word cave, you can immediately put the word hike before it. There are actually two hikes to get to the cave. The first one is from the start point (the ticket office) at Bang Pu Beach. The trail rises up over the headland to the next beach south, Lam sala. The distance is approx. 1 km and there are some fantastic views along the way, as the trail runs around the edge of the cliff face.

The second hike: Once you arrive at the southern side of the headland, the trail drops down to Lam Sala Beach. There's then a flat five hundred meter walk, through a pine forest, to the base of the next cliff face.



Hiking Trail

A Challenging Climb: This second hike is uphill all the way, and more arduous than the first. Be prepared to perspire a lot. The sign at the bottom says 430 meters but half-way up one may wonder if that is the actual track distance or elevation above sea level; particularly if you've done the hike over the headland as well.



Bang Pu Beach

PRAYA NAKORN CAVE - SIGHTSEEING

The cave: Once at the cave entrance though, the perspiration of getting there is well worth the effort. The cave has large roof openings creating plenty of natural lighting within; so there's no real need for a flashlight. The main feature of the cave is the small temple situated on a sand hillock in the inner chamber. The information plaque says the temple was erected approximately 200 years previously.

The Boat Option: If you don't have a good level of general fitness I would highly recommend foregoing the hike from Bang Pu to Laem Sala Beach, and taking the boat transfer (200 THB each way) to conserve energy levels for the final hike up to the cave entrance. After you've seen the cave, definitely take the boat back to Bang Phu Beach.



Cave entrance



Praya Nakorn Cave

SAI CAVE - SIGHTSEEINGSai

Sai Cave: Sai cave is situated at the southern end of the park and is less visited than Praya Nakorn Cave. However, if you are a cave enthusiast, it is definitely worth the effort of having a look as there are some impressive formations inside. The start point for the hike to the cave is a beach at the end of a road which branches off route 4020. **Click the link below for directions:**



Sharp Rocks: The hike to the cave entrance is only 280 meters from the carpark but includes a hike up a steep trail littered with jagged, loose rocks.

Footwear & Lighting: Wearing sturdy footwear is highly recommended. Proper hiking boots are ideal as they have tread which will grip the rocky terrain and help with stability. The cave itself smaller in size than Praya Nakorn but it is a dark cave and you will need a flashlight. The main feature of the cave is the impressive formation in the farthest section of the cave where a hole in the roof allows some natural lighting in.



KHAO DAENG VIEWPOINT - SIGHTSEEING

About: Khao Daeng viewpoint is at the southern end of the park and provides a spectacular view across the peaks and coast line to the north. The sign at the parking area says 750 meters but I believe that is the actual track distance and not the elevation. The elevation is approximately 300 meters above sea level. **Click the link below for directions:**



Jagged Terrain: The hike is not so difficult and for someone with a reasonably good level of fitness, it should take approximately 40 minutes. Wear sturdy footwear as the terrain is jagged and track is littered with loose rocks and take a good supply of drinking water (1 litre per person). Also be sure footed on the ascent and descent as the track is lined with spikey cacti on many sections. Once you arrive at the top a cool breeze and a great view await you.

Khao Daeng Temple: This ornate structure sits directly below Khao Daeng Viewpoint. The entrance to the temple grounds is well



Khao Daeng Temple

sign-posted and is on the same road to the parking area of the trail to Khao Dang Viewpoint. If you have time it's worth spending 30 minutes or so there, before getting started on the hike to the viewpoint. **Click the link below for directions to Khao Daeng Temple:**



Khao Daeng Viewpoint

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