DISCOVER KOH SAMUI · 2026–27 EDITION

The Koh Samui *Starter Guide*

Everything we'd tell a friend before their first trip: when to go, which beach suits which month, what a day really costs, and where and what to eat.

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2 · BEACHES BY SEASON

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1 · WHEN TO GO

Samui doesn't follow the rest of Thailand

Koh Samui sits in the Gulf of Thailand and catches the northeast monsoon, so its wettest stretch is roughly October to December — the opposite of Phuket. The best window is **February to April** (February is the pick); **June to September** is the next best and better value.

Month	Rain	Rainy days	High	Sea	Verdict
January	86 mm	14	29°C	28°C	Good — dry once New Year crowds thin
February	54 mm	5	29°C	28°C	Best — driest, sunniest; calm, clear sea
March	81 mm	4	31°C	29°C	Best — dry, hot, calm; great for diving
April	83 mm	7	33°C	30°C	Very good — hottest; Songkran mid-April
May	156 mm	13	33°C	30°C	Good — green season; short showers
June	124 mm	13	33°C	30°C	Good — warm, quieter, good value
July	116 mm	13	32°C	30°C	Good — school holidays; passing showers
August	111 mm	13	32°C	30°C	Good — busy summer month; fairly dry
September	122 mm	14	31°C	29°C	Good — quiet shoulder month
October	310 mm	20	30°C	29°C	Fair — rains build; seas roughen
November	507 mm	20	29°C	29°C	Poor — wettest month; ferries may cancel
December	210 mm	17	30°C	28°C	Fair — improves through the month; festive peak

Long-term climate averages (Weather Atlas). Individual years vary — check the forecast before booking boat trips.

Cheapest: October–November, when hotel prices hit their lowest and beaches are quiet. Book boat trips early in your stay so you have spare days if one is cancelled.

Most expensive: Christmas to New Year. The best resorts book out months ahead and some charge for compulsory New Year's Eve gala dinners.

The right beach for the month you're going

Two things decide a Samui beach day: the season (which coast the wind hits) and the tide (the north and west coasts turn very shallow at low tide).

When	Go for	Keep in mind
February–September dry & green season	The east coast at its best: **central Chaweng** (the deepest, most reliably swimmable water on the island), **Lamai**, **Choeng Mon** and tiny **Silver Beach** for the clearest water.	North Chaweng sits behind a reef and is only wading depth at low tide, especially mid-year.
October–December northeast monsoon	The sheltered **west coast** — **Lipa Noi** is calm, quiet and has the best sunsets. **Lamai**'s anti-jellyfish net enclosure makes it a sensible family default in the higher-risk months.	Chaweng and Lamai take the waves — respect red flags. Choeng Mon is reported to get a steeper drop-off and some undertow in Nov–Dec.
Any time for sunsets	**Bo Phut**, **Bang Por**, **Lipa Noi** and **Taling Ngam** face the sunset.	Great for views, seafood dinners and walks; shallow for swimming at low water.

Our top beaches at a glance

Chaweng

EAST · FIRST-TIMERS, SWIMMERS, NIGHTLIFE

The headline beach and best all-rounder, with the biggest choice of hotels and restaurants behind it.

Lamai

EAST · VALUE, FAMILIES

Chaweng's relaxed, better-value neighbour. The central bay holds water well.

Choeng Mon

NORTH-EAST · CALM SWIMMING

A small, sheltered, upmarket bay. Stick to the sandy middle — rocks at both ends.

Silver Beach

EAST · CLEAR WATER, SNORKELLING

A tiny cove between Chaweng and Lamai. Come early: little sand at high tide.

Maenam

NORTH · QUIET STAYS, PADDLING

Long, palm-shaded and calm; shelves very gradually — lovely at high tide.

Lipa Noi

WEST · SUNSETS, MONSOON CALM

Wide and quiet, with sunsets over the mainland. Shallow a long way out at low tide.

Sample budgets, in Thai baht

Samui spans backpacker island to honeymoon splurge. Rooms and taxis cost more than on the mainland, but street food and massages stay cheap.

Style	Per person, per day*	What it covers
Budget	฿1,200–1,800	Hostel or simple room, street food, songthaews, the odd beer
Mid-range	฿3,500–6,000	3–4 star hotel or pool bungalow, mixed dining, an activity, taxis & Grab
Luxury	฿12,000+	Beachfront resort or villa, spa, private boat trips, fine dining

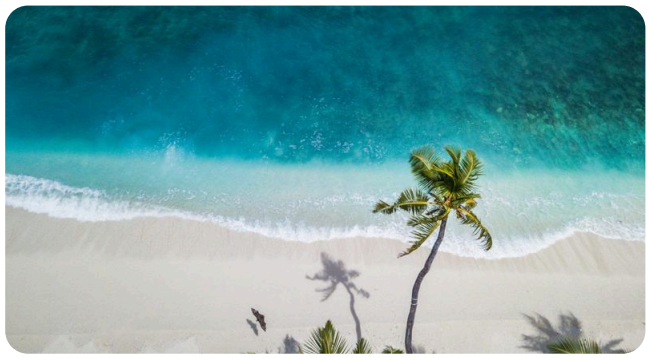
*Excluding flights. The mid-range band is the sweet spot for most couples. Lamai is the best-value main beach; Chaweng and Bo Phut are pricier.

Typical prices

Item	Price
Pad thai or rice dish, local spot	฿60–120
Western main, tourist restaurant	฿250–500
Large beer	฿80–140
One-hour Thai massage	฿300–500
Scooter rental, per day	฿200–350
Rental car, per day	฿1,200–1,700
Ang Thong day trip (group boat)	฿1,200–2,000
Thai cooking class	฿1,500–2,500

Five money tips

- **Bring cash.** Outside hotels, malls and bigger restaurants, Samui runs on baht.
- **Withdraw big, withdraw rarely.** Thai ATMs charge foreign cards a fixed ฿220–250 per withdrawal.
- **Look for AEON ATMs** (inside Big C and Lotus's) — ฿150 per withdrawal.
- **Always pay in baht.** Decline the ATM or card terminal's "conversion" — its rate is almost always worse.
- **Tipping** isn't obligatory: round up taxis, leave ฿20–50 for good service. Upscale restaurants may add 10%.



Where — and what — to eat

Dishes to seek out

- **Gaeng som** (southern sour curry) and **massaman**
- **Grilled seafood** — whole fish, prawns and squid, often sold by weight
- **Som tam** (papaya salad) and **moo ping** (pork skewers) from street stalls
- **Khao soi** — northern, but widely available and worth it
- Fresh fruit and coconut everything — Samui made its name on coconuts

Sit-down dinners

Bo Phut and Fisherman's Village have the densest cluster of good restaurants — Thai, Italian, seafood and wine bars within a few hundred walkable metres. **Chaweng** covers everything from cheap eats to chains; the luxury resorts in **Choeng Mon** and on the north coast run destination restaurants with sunset views. A **Thai cooking class** is one of the best half-days on the island.

Night markets by day

Day	The one to go to
Mon · Wed	Smaller Fisherman's Village market (Wharf end)
Thu	Chaweng Walking Street, by Chaweng Lake
Fri	**Fisherman's Village Walking Street** — the big one, from about 5 pm
Sat	Chaweng Walking Street
Sun	Lamai walking street (usually on — check locally)

Daily food markets open every evening in Chaweng, Lamai, Bo Phut, Bang Rak, Maenam and Nathon, so whatever night you arrive there's somewhere to eat. Street-food plates cost about ฿40–120.

Plan it in this order

The order that saves the most money and the most stress — with the guide on our site that covers each step.

- [ ] **Pick your month.** Use the table on page 2; if you're tied to December or November, plan for rain days. discoverkosamui.com/weather
- [ ] **Choose your beach area before your hotel.** Chaweng for action, Lamai for value, Bo Phut for food and atmosphere, Choeng Mon for calm, Maenam for quiet. discoverkosamui.com/hotels
- [ ] **Book your room early for high season.** From mid-December to April the best-value rooms go first; many offer free cancellation.
- [ ] **Decide how you'll get there.** Fly direct to Samui (USM) — fastest — or fly to Surat Thani and take the van-and-ferry transfer, usually a good deal cheaper. discoverkosamui.com/flights
- [ ] **Book the trips that sell out.** Ang Thong Marine Park and Koh Tao snorkelling fill up days ahead in high season; Ang Thong usually closes for the monsoon from 1 November to 15 December. discoverkosamui.com/activities
- [ ] **Sort your data.** A Thailand eSIM means you land already online. discoverkosamui.com/getting-around
- [ ] **Know your taxi fares** before you land, so the airport rank can't overcharge you. discoverkosamui.com/taxi-fares
- [ ] **Pick an itinerary** — ready-made 3, 5, 7 and 10-day plans. discoverkosamui.com/itineraries

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