



Attractions

If you need a break from all that lounging on the beach, there are lots of unusual attractions which make the most of the island's culture and island charm. Forget the theme parks and hi-tech attractions. Instead, try the monkey show or the snake farm, or better still hire a car and go sightseeing.

Horse back riding

Why not explore Samui's beautiful scenery from a different angle? Instead of watching the Samui scenery whiz by from the back of a motorbike, slow down and really enjoy the view on horseback. Ride on Ranch offers several different guided tours around Samui's beaches and jungles. The European standard horses are calm and well trained and all equipment is provided. For package deals and more information, telephone: 09 972-424-1. **Route 4169, near Tesco Lotus, Chaweng.**

Karate Samui's own karate kid, Geoff Pickup has been learning the martial art for the past 14 years and teaching full time for the last three since becoming a black belt. Geoff arrived on Samui a couple of years ago to establish his own Dojo. The school is located in the hills behind Lamai and has become a popular spot for local expats to develop their *chi* and learn the basics of Goju Ryu Karate. One-hour Self Defence classes are available three mornings a week and are an ideal introduction to Goju Ryu. Everyone from 16 years old upwards is welcome to join. Classes cost around 500 baht per hour. Bungalows for full karate retreats are scheduled to open in 2005. **Behind Lamai. Tel. 01 968 0359 for more info.**



Big Buddha

On the northern coast of Koh Samui is the famous Big Buddha shrine. Probably Samui's most well known landmark, the 12 metre high golden Buddha can be seen from several kilometres away. Inside the surrounding temple are many different shrines and other smaller ornate Buddhas. There is also a small market selling a wide range of lucky charms and other souvenirs, alongside numerous food stalls. **Route 4171, near the airport.**



Buffalo fighting

If spectator sports are more to your liking how about a bit of buffalo fighting? This local sport was traditionally held as entertainment after the rice harvest but now is a regular gig with sometimes millions of baht changing hands over the winner - and that's no bull!

A good opportunity to see a snapshot of southern Thai life. Lots of excitement attracting a neighbourhood crowd who delight in a good old dust up. The more aggressive the buffalo the greater the appreciation from the audience. There are several "stadiums" around the island, most being a basic cleared area under the palms with a wall of bamboo matting or coconut leaves to hinder the view of those who haven't paid for a seat. Men pay about 100 Baht, women enter free. The fight ends when one animal runs away, usually well before either animal gets hurt.



Butterfly farm

Located in the south of the island, Na Tian Butterfly Garden is a kaleidoscope of colour provided by hundreds of spectacular butterflies. For bug enthusiasts there's also an Insect Museum, featuring rare insects from Thailand and other countries, and a bee house, which allows the visitor to observe the activities of bees. Don't forget your camera!

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Bowling There are two places to go bowling on Samui, both provide all equipment including shoes. Living Bowl in central Chaweng has been open for a few years and is open from 10am until 10pm every day. The brand new MegaBowl in the Tesco Lotus complex is open from 9am until 10pm every day. Both venues have strobe lighting and burger bar restaurants. **Living Bowl, Chaweng Centre, Chaweng beach road and Mega Bowl, Tesco Lotus complex, route 4169, Chaweng.**

Bungy jump Not for the fainthearted! Samui bungy jump is located next to the reggae pub, which is handy for those needing some dutch courage before hand! The 50 metre jump is held over a large specially designed plunge pool. The brave (or insane!) among you can choose between individual jumps, tandem jumps, and even submersion jumps where you get dunked in the pool! Samui Bungy offers a free pick up service from your hotel. **Soi Reggae, Chaweng Beach. Telephone: 07 741-425-2**

Canopy Fun To explore Koh Samui's jungle from a different perspective go to Koh Samui Canopy Adventures. Swinging through the trees on over 500 metres of cable is definitely a different way to see the island! Featuring 6 different tree houses, beautiful waterfalls and even a hammock bar for a refreshing drink. They also provide a free shuttle from anywhere on the island. Samui Canopy Adventures is located in the jungle inland from Bophut beach and is well signposted. **Moo 2, Bophut. Telephone: 077 414-150-1**

Cinema Koh Samui

📌 **Kiteboarding** The worlds latest aquatic craze has arrived on Samui in style - located at the Samui Orchid Resort in Laem Set, the Koh Samui Kite Centre uses the latest Airrush equipment and offers a full range of kiteboarding courses for all ability levels. The location also benefits from a shallow sandy bay, which is perfect for beginners. November to March when the north easterly to easterly wind blows between 8 to 20 knots is probably the best time to go. **Tel. 077 424 017-501.**



📌 **Crocodaile farm**

A fascinating look at some of Thailand's jaws and claws! They're all here. Siam crocodiles, Caimans, Saltwater crocodiles, snakes, lizards, monkeys and many others. **Showtime twice a day 14:00 and 16:30. Located behind the airport and easy to find.**



📌 **Na Muang Waterfalls**

Although Samui has several waterfalls, the two Na Muang waterfalls are probably the islands most stunning. The name Na Muang (meaning purple in Thai) refers to the massive purple rocks that create the waterfalls. Rocks and tree roots form a natural staircase that leads to the base of Na Muang 1. A large natural swimming pool sits under the waterfall, although beware of the hidden rocks when diving and swimming. The water is always icy cold, so it's perfect for a hot day. A gentle walk 10 minutes further up the mountain leads you to Samui's most beautiful waterfall, Na Muang 2. Na Muang waterfalls are easily accessible from the main ring road between Nathon and Lamai and are well signposted. Elephant trekking is also available at the Nu Muang waterfalls. **Route 4169, Between Nathon and HuaThanon.**

📌 **Monkey Shows**

Koh Samui is synonymous with coconut trees - there are literally plantations all over the island, and until tourism arrived, coconuts were the main industry here. How do you get at the coconuts? . Enter the monkey, considered as man's best friend, these industrious little animals are greatly prized and give a demonstration of their incredible dexterity (and not just at picking coconuts) in the outdoor theatre. The entertainment also includes performing elephants. **Look for the theatre on the main road behind Bophut Village.**



📌 **Sea Aquarium and Zoos**

Both the aquarium and the zoo have many of Thailand's tropical favourites above and below the water. Lots of coral fish, huge catfish

now proudly boasts its own three screen cinema in the Tesco lotus complex. Showing both Western and Thai movies, the cinema is modern and is proving a big hit with the locals. Reasonably priced and with comfortable and spacious seating, the cinema is the same as any in the west. The only notable difference is everyone standing during the national anthem which plays before each feature. As with all Asian cinemas the air conditioning is set at freezing so remember to bring a jumper! **Tesco Lotus Complex, Route 4169, Chaweng beach. Telephone: 07 742-729-9**

📌 **Thai cooking** Thai

cooking courses are an increasingly popular activity on the island. Thai cuisine's increasingly high profile worldwide and the easygoing environment of Samui's cookery schools no doubt encourage many visitors to take a course. The best known independent school on the island, SITCA (Samui Institute of Culinary Arts, South Chaweng, Tel. 077 413 172) has two courses a day, a separate food carving course, a well stocked shop and an excellent restaurant, The Dining Room, attached. **Central Samui Beach Resort** and **Santiburi Resort** both let guests loose in the kitchen for a variety of half and one day courses. The affable Toy Suwan at the Blue Banana (Big Buddha Beach, Tel. 077 245 080) has a lunchtime and evening class and also sells a wide range of ingredients and utensils.

📌 **Elephant**

treksSeveral companies around the island run elephant ride operations and many can be booked through travel agents, often in combination with all day tours of the interior. Over fifty elephants call Samui home and all work in the tourist industry. A typical 'trek' lasts between 15 minutes and half an hour and is an excellent way to see the island's jungle clad interior. Some companies take visitors up into the hills for magnificent views over the island, others go through waterfalls, where riders run the risk of receiving a cooling shower. Chaweng Elephant

📌 **Mountain bikes** One alternative way to explore Koh Samui is by bicycle. Red Bicycle in Lamai offers guided tours around the island, bike rentals and sales. They stock quality bicycle brands such as Cannondale and provide all equipment from helmets to kneepads. All trips are led by experienced guides fully trained in first aid response. Red Bicycle also insures all rides and riders, which is reassuring as Samui's roads are renown for being some of the most dangerous in Thailand. **Route 4169, Lamai beach. Telephone 07 723-213-6**

📌 **Thai boxing** Thailand's beloved national sport Muay Thai, is taken very seriously throughout the country and Koh Samui is no exception! Although Thai boxing is regarded as the worlds most dangerous martial art it is surprisingly graceful to watch. Chaweng stadium near the Reggae Pub is the biggest on Samui and hosts all the major fights on the island. Fights are usually held twice a week on Monday and Friday nights but during peak season an additional Sunday night fight is often held. Fights start at 9pm and the evening normally lasts around three hours, with as many as ten smaller bouts before the main fight. If you only want to catch the main event then drop in for an hour around 10/10.30pm. The atmosphere in Chaweng Stadium is excellent with a live commentator and traditional Thai music - although some find the noise a bit overpowering! Both Thai and foreign fighters compete

in the ring, most are professionals, all are pretty entertaining. Chaweng Stadium charges an entry fee and you can choose between a ringside table or a seat in the surrounding stands. **Soi Reggae, Chaweng Beach.** For more information telephone: 07 741-350

📌 Golf From mini-golf to the real thing. The island's first and currently only, professional standard golf course, opened in 2003 offering great golf and a gorgeous location in the hills above Maenam. If you prefer something less challenging, there's always mini-golf...

📌 Paintball Children of all ages can play war at 3D Paintball's huge, sculpted terrain in the hills above Maenam. The same location is also used for bouncing around on quad bikes, though they are strictly for adults only. Alternatively, for a full day out, the management will organise a variety of adventure games deep in the jungle. So if you like the sound of 'transferring the president', 'capturing the flag', 'village attack' or 'smugglers vs. police' this could be an ideal day out. Standard paintball guns are free - customers only pay for pellets, which are 3 Baht each. There's also a selection of BB Guns for hire, which are moulded to look menacingly like M16s and Kalashnikovs. Free hotel transfer. **Maenam, Tel. 01 371 0744**

📌 Shooting range While not everyone's cup of tea, if your idea of holiday heaven is letting a few rounds fly then Koh Samui has the place for you! The shooting range has fully trained instructors and a wide range of guns to choose from. They also provide live ammunition. The range is open from 9am to 6pm every day. Reasonably priced too - doesn't Samui just blow you away? **Route 4169, Chaweng Beach**

and several sharks including Leopard and Black Tips Samui's local zoo adjacent to the aquarium, house some south-eastern Asian tigers, parrots, hornbills, sea hawks, eagles or even otters who will perform for you if they are in the mood.

You can have your photo taken with the tiger (Mainly to impress your friends) for 100 Baht per person with your camera, or 200 Baht if you borrow the zoo's Polaroid camera. Money goes to the Tiger's Foundation, just to make you feel better. On the way out, don't forget to say "hi" to the birds and monkeys in smaller cages across the parking lot, some of the parrots are quite friendly and their language, as well as their feathers, can be quite colourful. **Located in Hua Thanon.**



📌 Secret Buddha Garden

The secret Buddha Garden was the inspiration of one man who built several statues, temples and waterfalls, in a hidden location high up in the hills of Samui. It's possible to drive to the garden by 4WD vehicle, but probably less hassle to take one of the many jungle tours offered by travel agencies and resorts. Contact a few places to compare prices.

📌 Snake farm

Some of the most famous scary and poisonous snakes in Asia are goaded into action by experienced snake wranglers, who dodge and weave, duck and dive, as the snakes try to grab their attention. A must-see for almost anyone visiting the island. A ringside view! Also includes displays of centipedes and scorpions, as well as demonstrations of Thai Cock Fighting.

The programs are both informative and entertaining in typical Thai style. Great fun for the entire family. Just make sure your child doesn't bring home any live souvenirs. **Follow the road signs to get to their location in Talingnam, south of Nathon. Shows start at 11 am and 2 pm daily.**



Trekking (Tel. 077 231 210), Living Thailand (Tel. 077 418 680) and Island Safari Co (Tel. 077 230 567) are all recommended. NB: Some companies keep gibbons and other endangered species as pets to entertain visitors - as well as being cruel, this is illegal in Thailand and should not be encouraged.

📌 Football golf For a fun day out have a game of Football Golf in Choeng Mon beach. The first of its kind in Asia the course is well designed and well shaded. After a relaxing stroll around the 18 hole course enjoy a free drink supplied by the owner. Open every day from 9.30am till 6.30pm. **Choeng Mon, Next to the Imperial Boathouse Hotel.** Telephone: 09 771-749-8

📌 Fishing Koh Samui's only freshwater fishing spot, TopCats has more than 4000 fish from 20 different species in their 2 man made lakes. Don't worry if you've never fished before, expert guidance is on hand! All equipment and bait is provided. TopCats has a sports bar and restaurant and a large swimming pool. They also offer a free shuttle service. Telephone: 07 741-538-7. **Route 4170, Ban Taling Ngam.**

📌 Go-karting If your competitive spirit rears its head while you're on Koh Samui then why not go Go-karting for the day? Suitable for both beginners and more experienced riders the course is fun and fast. Samui Go-Kart provides everything from instructions to helmets, all you have to do is jump in and go. The course is open from 9am to 9pm every day and located just west of Bophut of the main ring road. **Route 4169, Bophut beach.** Telephone: 07 742-509-7