

Sea, Sand, Sun, Surf and eh, Serenity

Koh Samui has got a laid back air about it where lazing by the beach during the day is the cool way to recover after a hectic night's partying as David Bowden discovers

Know before you go

Fly

Firefly (www.fireflyz.com.my) and Bangkok Airways (www.bangkokair.com) fly from Kuala Lumpur direct to Koh Samui and flights take a little over an hour.

Stay

Stay in the deluxe accommodation of Samui Hansar Resort (www.hansarsamui.com) along the peaceful seafont of Bophut Bay and Fisherman's Village.

Drink

The beer is cold, wet and available all over Samui at prices that will bring tears to most Malaysian's eyes. Pay RM6 for a large Chang in shops (load up the mini bar) and from RM5-RM10 (small) in restaurants and cafés. Local beers include Leo, Singha and Chang which are joined by all the international suspects. Thai whisky (actually rum) is also worth trying.



← Romantic Retreat

So you've left your mates behind and are heading off to Koh Samui on a romantic interlude? Impress her with your loving care and attention by booking a room at Hansar Samui (www.hansarsamui.com). With just 74 rooms, all facing Bophut Bay, a fabulous infinity pool, *Chill Bar* (love the orange bean bags) and enticing Chef's Dinner in *H Bistro*, you'll impress the pants of her.



→ Singha Sunset

Every island's got one and the Sunset Bar on Koh Samui doesn't disappoint with a spectacular lightshow and cool drinks. This open-sided thatched 'hut' overlooks Bophut Bay next to Big Buddha. They do snacks too and there are as many locals here as tourists which is always a good sign. Talking of beer; Bee's Knees (www.samuibrew.pub) microbrewery has opened on the popular Chaweng Beach with four locally brewed ales – 'Summer Bee', 'Wheaty Bee', 'Bitter Bee' and 'Black Bee'.



Start Packing

Next month we head to one of the nearest Indonesian island to Malaysia and no; it's not Bali.

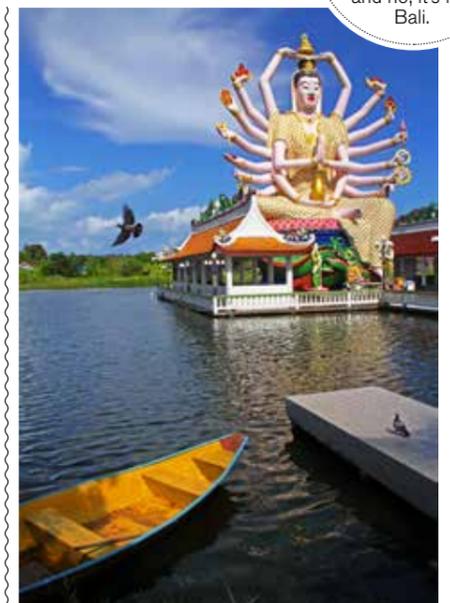
↑ Here's the Rub

Getting a rub down is just so easy in Koh Samui and it seems that if you're not cooking noodles on the roadside, you're hankering to give a passing tourist a rub down. Every massage style is offered with Thai massage being the rub of choice and for those unfamiliar with it, be prepared for a physical assault on the body. Massages range from a beachside affair for RM25/hour to the ultimate in luxury at LUXSA Spa in the Hansar Samui (www.hansarsamui.com).



↑ Thai Boxing

Muay Thai or Thai boxing is popular as a spectator and participatory sport if you're up for a bit of blood and gore (Chang Beer uses bloodied fighters in their ads). This is probably not something to leap into without a little bit of practice and there are several places to learn the boxing cum kicking caper. Head to Lamai Stadium on Monday nights to watch the action.



→ Blues on the Beach

Settle into some cool blues on the beach at the happening Beach Republic (www.beachrepublic.com) over the weekend of 14-16th August. *Chai and the Blues Maniac* plus *Jafar Curry* will be performing and it's free including a free first drink. The super cool escape game *Escapology* (www.escapology.com) is located in the resort so take time out to test your wits, crack the clues and break the clock playing two games – the 'Cuban Crisis' and 'Shanghaied'.



↑ Time 4 Temples

Most Thai's are Buddhists and colourful temples are dotted over the island as they are all over Thailand. Big Buddha is, eh, like the biggest on the island and the one to visit. Arguably more interesting is Wat Plai Laem located close by beside a lake. Another more traditional temple to visit is Kho Hua Jook perched on a hillock above Chaweng Beach and offering great views of the airport, beach and northeastern Samui.