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Thailand Scuba Diving Courses

Adventure



Relaxation



Culture



Trip Name: Thailand Scuba Diving Courses **Trip Code:** THSD **Duration:** From 1 week

Trip Highlights

- Learn scuba diving from scratch – or improve your skills – in the beautiful blue waters off Thailand.
- Or carve out a career in diving – become a scuba diving instructor in Thailand.
- The complete diving school – everything from open water to elite divemaster qualifications.
- One of the best scuba diving spots in South East Asia.



Overview

If you're interested in scuba diving, you'll already know how wonderful the underwater world can be. Scuba diving in Thailand – in a beautiful setting like the Gulf of Thailand, you'll be experiencing some of the best diving anywhere in Asia, maybe the world.

Learn, qualify, enjoy

We're offering you proper, serious training with fully accredited leaders, giving you a great opportunity if you want to start a career in scuba diving. But if that's not your goal, even the basic qualification opens up a world of adventure and excitement that's yours to explore safely so you can scuba dive in Thailand.

Destination Info

The school is in Koh Tao, a sheltered island in the Gulf of Thailand. Sheltered means it's perfect for diving all through the year. Most dive sites are a short boat ride from the island and there are some great sites a little further out where you'll see larger species of fish. Local weather conditions vary from one side of the island to the other – so if it's bad here, it might well be good there. So doing your course on Koh Tao means that you can nearly always

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get a dive in, whatever the weather.

Koh Tao is a great place to spend time when you're not scuba diving in Thailand. It might be an island, but it has banks, internet cafés, good transport, shops and restaurants. Despite which, it's kept a lot of its Thai charm.

With all these modern conveniences, the idyllic and relatively unspoiled location and some of the best diving in South East Asia, Koh Tao is the place to do your scuba diving course in Thailand.

And if you are spending time scuba diving in Thailand, why not visit Thailand properly? It's beautiful, has lots of impressive architecture, lovely friendly people and, of course, it has real Thai food! Check out our Thailand trips.

Itinerary



Choose your programme depending upon your current diving experience and how far you want to go with your scuba diving. Your Thailand itinerary will change according to the course choices you make.

All of our courses follow the PADI standard. If you've trained to the BSAC (British Scuba Aqua Club) equivalent, our programme will get you to PADI standard.

Level 1 – PADI Open Water

A four-day course giving you a basic licence to scuba dive anywhere in the world to a maximum depth of 18 metres. There are five academic modules, four open water dives and additional confined dives.

Level 2 – Advanced Open Water

A two or three day course (depending on the electives you choose), giving you a licence to scuba dive anywhere

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in the world to a maximum depth of 30 metres. You have to complete five scuba dives – night dive, deep dive, underwater photography or videography and more.

Level 3 – Emergency First Response

This non-scuba diving qualification is a pre-requisite for all divers looking to go beyond Level 2. You learn both primary and secondary care, including resuscitation techniques, CPR skills and identifying how to treat someone in difficulty. You can take this course at the same time as the Rescue Diver qualification.



Level 4 – Rescue Diver

In four days you'll complete five academic modules that equip you to be a competent rescue diver. You learn emergency management, how to identify equipment problems, ways of identifying diver stress and panic, and how to administer diver first aid.

Please note: To start a PADI Rescue course you will be required to have 20 logged dives. If you are starting from no certification (doing the Open water to Rescue programme), you will have 9 dives after the 2 courses and will require an extra week to ensure that you have the required number of dives. If you are already certified (either Advanced & Rescue programme or straight Rescue course) you may already have enough logged dives.

Level 5 – Divemaster

This professional qualification is the most sought after of all diving qualifications and a starting point for a scuba diving career. It allows you to work in a scuba diving school or centre and to work alongside instructors teaching students. The course takes eight weeks, includes 42 dives and covers a wide range of theory, practical instruction and dive mentoring. We offer four programmes that include this qualification, depending on your experience. You must have completed 60 logged dives overall to achieve the Divemaster qualification.

Level 6 – Instructor Development Course

This 19 day course equips you with all the skills you need to work in or run a dive centre – including business skills. At the end of the course you'll take a 3-day instructor exam, moderated by external PADI examiners.

To start the course you must already have completed everything from Level 1 to Level 5, taken Level 2 at least six months earlier and completed 100 logged dives. The course is preceded by a two day prep course that allows our

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course director to assess your strengths and identify the areas to concentrate on.

The course has two parts:

- The Assistant Instructor – you will assist the instructor training students
- The Open Water Scuba Instructor programme

Fun Dives - An option to book fun dives is also available, however, please be aware that you are required to have an open water licence to do this.



Scuba diving courses in Thailand give more than just qualifications.

If you already hold some scuba diving qualifications, you can sign on for a paid videography internship. You can train to be an underwater camera op, which opens up all sorts of great opportunities for paid work. You can start by recording people's first diving experiences and you can go on eventually to be a full-on commercial underwater videographer. It's a great way to get extra dive experience and also to subsidise your travels.

Dive equipment

If you're taking the Level 5 course and training to be a PADI Divemaster, your fee includes a full set of diving equipment that's yours to keep – a great start if you're thinking of a career in the diving industry.

The kit:

- Wet-suit
- Buoyancy control device
- Regulator and gauge
- Kit bag
- Dive knife
- Safety pack – signaling devices
- Fins
- Mask and snorkel
- Wetsuit boots
- Safety marker buoy

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We supply leading brands, including Scuba Pro, Mares and Seakodive.

If you already own scuba diving equipment, we'll subtract the cost of our kit from your fee. And if you want to upgrade any of your gear, we'll take care of that for you.

Accommodation

All accommodation is included. If your programme is for less than four weeks, you will stay in a comfortable but basic bungalow for the duration of your stay, with your own private room. Most rooms have a double bed, fan and shower. During busier periods, you may be required to share a twin room.

The bungalows are located two to three minutes walk from the dive centre. There is a small convenience shop on-site and there are a number of bars and restaurants a short walk away. Sairee beach, a popular place to sunbathe and swim is around five minutes walk from the guesthouse.

If your programme duration is for more than four weeks, you will stay in a bungalow with shared or private facilities with other participants on the programme in a resort owned by a lovely local Thai lady.

Programme Services and Facilities

Internet

There are Internet cafés on the island of Koh Tao. They are very cheap to access at 30 Baht per hour.

Telephone

The international telephone access code for Thailand is +66. To place an outgoing direct dialled international call, dial +44 for the UK followed by the telephone number. For example to call Real Gap dial +44 1892 516164.

One option is to buy a phone card for around 300B, these can be used from landlines and are a cheap way to make calls.

Alternatively, if you are taking your mobile, there is signal coverage on the island. You will be able to buy a Thai SIM card for your mobile for about £5. Please make sure you check with your phone provider that your handset is unlocked and also that you check the cost of your tariff if you choose to stick with your phone provider - calls from abroad can become very expensive. Remember to bring your mobile phone charger and an adaptor!

Laundry

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You will be able to hand wash your clothes at the hostel. Don't forget you non-biological washing powder!

Electricity

There are electrical sockets in the Koh Tao accommodation.

Meals

All meals are also included during your stay. You will eat at the resort restaurant where you will have food vouchers to use for breakfast, lunch and dinner on a wide choice of foods, including a number of western dishes. The menu has a good variety and caters to a number of different diets.

What's Included

- All accommodation
- All meals
- Professional instruction
- Course materials
- Diving equipment



What's Not Included

- Flights,
- Travel insurance, which must cover you for scuba training
- Airport transfers
- Transfers between Koh Tao and Bangkok
- Any necessary visas



Additional Information

Scuba Medical

To take part in the scuba diving course you will need to complete the following medical questionnaire which you can access by [clicking here](#). Also, while it is not a necessity to visit a doctor before participating in a PADI course in Thailand, if you are not sure if you are able to participate for health reasons or answer yes to any of the questions on the PADI questionnaire, please contact us so that we can consult our dive centre before you travel as you may need to consult a doctor before you can participate.

Orientation

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At the start of your programme you will receive a local orientation. This orientation will be conducted by our programme co-ordinator and will cover the following areas:

- Course Outline and Criteria: You will be briefed on what the course requirements are and what is expected of you at the assessment stage of each qualification
- Koh Tao: An outline of the local amenities, places of interest and what to do in your free time
- Safety: How to keep safe in the local area and how to ensure everyone's safety whilst on the programme
- After course options: Where the centre can help you find work, further training etc
- Questions/Answers Session: An opportunity for you to ask any further questions

What to Pack

Please note that this kit list is intended to help you plan what you may need to take with you and therefore, you may not need all of the listed items on your travels nor is it exhaustive.

Personal Admin

- Passport, insurance certificates and personal documentation
- Photocopies of all the above to be left at home with your next of kin
- Spending money
- Cash for airport departure tax
- Proof of inoculations (please speak to your GP about necessary immunisations)
- Log Book showing proof of scuba diving qualifications- if any
- Guidebook on country – recommended Lonely Planet or Footprints

General

- Sleeping Bag
- Day bag / rucksack (for excursions)
- A torch
- Mobile phone
- Camera and batteries
- Telephone charger with a two pin adaptor plug
- Playing cards for free time
- Diary – you will have so many amazing experiences to remember
- Ipod/ CD walkman and speakers (if you wish)
- Tissues
- Plastic bags
- Snacks (cup of soups, biscuits etc)
- Pocket-knife
- Towel
- Non-biological washing powder

Clothing

- Hat
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals
- Waterproof Jacket
- Fleece/pullover (for cool evenings)

- Long trousers
- Warmer clothing for winter
- Swimwear (you will need several swimming costumes)

Minimum Age

Minimum age 18, maximum decided on potential participant's health

Flights

Your programme begins in Koh Tao on the Programme Start Date. You can make your own arrangements to arrive in Koh Tao on Programme Start Date or you can add our airport pickup, two-night Bangkok stopover and Koh Tao transfer package, for which you will need to arrange your flights to arrive in Bangkok on the Friday before your Programme Start Date.

Your onward travel arrangements from Koh Tao to Bangkok should be arranged for your Monday Programme End Date.

To book your flights, please contact your travel advisor who will do their best to get you the best deal on the day. Please provide them with your full name as it is stated in your passport. Before you make the call please make sure you have your required departure dates, return dates and other details you may require.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you add these details to your online account or alternatively you can contact us with your departure date, the flight number and arrival time at your destination.

FAQs

- 1. What are the group sizes like?**
Groups sizes vary depending on the time of year but you can expect to be in a group of around 4-6 people on the same course as you. There will also be many other people on the same boat doing other courses as well. Koh Tao is a very social island!
- 2. Can I make my own way to Koh Tao?**
Yes, If you have given us your arrival ferry information we can arrange for you to be collected at the ferry dock by our partner representative.
- 3. What visa do I need?**
When entering Thailand you will automatically receive a 30-day tourist visa. If you intend to stay longer than 30 days, you need to get the 60-day or 90 day visa before you go directly through the Thai Embassy.
- 4. Do I need any vaccinations?**
As we are not medically trained we cannot give you medical advice. You must make an appointment to see your GP or travel nurse who will be able to give you the best and most up to date travel health advice and more information about vaccinations.
- 5. Is Thailand safe?**
Absolutely, and you have co-ordinators with you at all times to ensure your safety.

6. **Do I need to take a sleeping bag?**

No, you don't need to take one with you.

7. **Do I need to take a mosquito net?**

You can take a net if you really want to, some people do and some don't. Usually it is a good idea to use mosquito repellent especially around early morning and dusk.

8. **Will there be a safe/safety deposit box available?**

There are safety deposit boxes in the resort reception, however the reception is closed between 8:30pm and 8am in the morning. If you would prefer to leave your passports with the dive school they can lock them away in the dive shop for you.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

The unit of currency in Thailand is the Baht (THB; symbol). There are 100 Satang to the Baht and coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 25 and 50 Satang or 1, 2, 5 and 10B. Paper bills come in 20B (green), 50B (blue), 100B (red), 500B (purple) and 1000B (beige).

US Dollars are the other most widely accepted currency and credit cards can be used for a fee in most large cities or at resort hotels but are not often accepted by small locally run businesses. ATMs are found in all major cities and

almost all provincial banks.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant around \$3

Domestic beer (from a local store) \$2

Domestic beer (at a restaurant) \$3

Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) \$0.53

Water (1.5 litre bottle) \$0.5

(Prices quoted in US Dollar)

Passports and Visas

You should ensure that you have a full passport that is valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information provided below is to help you with that process. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Citizens of the UK, the USA, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and most European countries do not require a visa for stays of less than 30 days. For stays of between 31 and 60 days you can obtain a 60-day tourist visa for a fee from a Thai embassy or consulate before you travel. For stays of up to 90 days, you can extend the 60-day visa for a further 30 days while you are in the country, for a fee.

Visa courier service

For those of you who would prefer to use a specialist visa service to help you obtain the right visa for your travels, we have teamed up with VisaCentral, to offer you specialist assistance and advice - making preparations for your trip easier and more straight forward.

Click on [VisaCentral](#) to find out more about their services and prices.

Cultural Considerations

Whilst parts of Thailand are developing very quickly and Bangkok can feel more modern than many Western cities, much of the country is still very poor and people have challenging lives. The accommodation you will be staying in is very basic and you will not have the luxuries that you may have in this country. Please respect that this is the way locals live and take the opportunity to experience this new way of life. The friendly people, the great atmosphere and beautiful location will more than make up for this. Most travellers enjoy this change in lifestyle. It is very healthy, refreshing and opens your mind to a new world.

Religion

Religion is an important part of Thai day-to-day life and the main religion is Buddhism. Around 4% of the country are Muslim (largely concentrated in the far south of the country) and there is a small Christian population.

Clothing

Note to all regarding clothes: Thailand is a very conservative country and, away from the beaches, people generally like to dress as smartly as possible and, even in rural areas you will see that most people are very conscious of being in clean and conservative clothes. Although no-one expects you to wear a suit and tie, and when at your project old t-shirts and shorts/jeans are totally appropriate, please do remember to cover up and try not to show too much flesh.

Boys – please note that wandering around without wearing a shirt/t-shirt is frowned upon (away from the beach) and in urban areas can draw the attention of the police.

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Girls – please try not to expose too much flesh. Try to avoid t-shirts that expose too much and don't wear short shorts.

NOTE: When visiting a temple you are expected to cover up. Wear trousers or skirts and cover your shoulders, midriff and back.

There are plenty of opportunities to sunbathe and swim whilst in Thailand, so remember to take your bikini, swimsuit, swimming shorts etc. Flip-flops are the easiest and coolest footwear to take with you. Whenever you enter houses, temples, or home stays you will need to remove your shoes and leave them at the door. This will soon become habit and you won't even realise you are doing it. Remember to take some trainers with you as well for the outdoor activities.

There are many opportunities to buy cheap clothes from markets. These are cool, cheap and ideal for the climate and social norms.

Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in Thailand and readily available. However, please respect other people. Smoking is not permissible in volunteer apartments or the host families' homes. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact upon any volunteer work you undertake. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated.

It is absolutely forbidden to carry drugs into Thailand. Being caught in possession of drugs can lead to at least a prison sentence and a hefty fine if you are lucky but remember there is still a very real threat of the death penalty for carrying drugs in Thailand. Always keep an eye on your luggage while travelling. Never bring anyone else's luggage through customs.

Bathroom Facilities

You will experience a range of different shower and toilet facilities. Unless you are staying in a hotel you will rarely have hot water. The cool water takes a little getting used to but we are sure you'll find it refreshing after a hot and humid day. Toilets will be a combination of western and Asian. Remember to put all toilet tissue in the bin provided and not in the toilet.

You'll find that many places don't have soap or toilet/tissue paper in the bathrooms. Without going into too much detail, that's what the water can be used for (as well as flushing) or often a small water spray pipe next to the toilet. It can be useful to carry a small bottle of antibacterial gel for washing hands and small packets of tissues.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

As in most countries there are people who try to take advantage of tourists. The following advice is intended to help you keep safe:

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- Always keep your personal items such as passport, money and camera with you and in a safe place. You can buy mini padlocks to prevent people from going into your day sack without your permission.
- Always walk around in groups, never go off with strangers and people that you have only just met
- Never go out alone after dark
- Stick with the escorted trips. If you do go out in the evening unescorted, you do so at your own risk. Please tell the co-ordinator or your home-stay family where you are going, what time you will be back and ensure you sign the release from.
- Please do not get into fights, or arguments with local Thais. We cannot guarantee your safety and it could provoke future attacks on other travellers
- As in this country there have been reports of drinks being spiked on the islands. Please do not leave your drinks unattended and do not accept drinks from strangers.
- Most importantly of all, if you wouldn't do whilst your at home, then don't do it whilst you are away!

This information is not intended to scare you. Unfortunately, bad things can happen, as they can do in any country and we want you to be prepared. We want you to stay safe and have a good time.

We would like to add that the majority of the locals are friendly, warm and hospitable people who love meeting our travellers. Please be friendly, respectful and stay aware and you will have a great time.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk

USA: www.travel.state.gov

Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing 'traps' in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

Thailand Terrorist Threat

Thailand is one of the most popular destinations for visitors to Southeast Asia. Most visitors enjoy a trouble-free stay. However, Thailand does have a history of political instability and has experienced a number of military coups since 1932. The political future of the country remains uncertain, though the situation remains stable.

Over the past 3-4 years there have been a number of political demonstrations in Bangkok and some other urban areas. Tensions rise and fall but other than in 2010, most protests are usually peaceful and Thais still go out of their way to be hospitable to visitors. However, it's always advisable to avoid large gatherings and listen to the advice of the team in country

Language Guide

Here are some useful phrases to remember when you get to Thailand. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Hello (Male speaker) - *sawatdee krup*
Hello (Female speaker) - *sawatdee kaa*
How are you? - *sabai dee reu*
Thank you - *kop koon*
I can't speak Thai - *phoot Thai mai dai*
I don't understand - *mai kao chai*
Do you understand? - *kao chai mai*
Where is the rest room? - *hong nam yoo tee nai*
How much does this cost? - *nee tao-rai*
What is this? - *nee aria*
Good-bye - *la gon*
Sorry/Excuse me - *kor thoad*
The bill please - *Gep taang*

Food & Drink

It's normal in Thailand to eat rice dishes for breakfast and it is all part of the cultural experience. In fact, rice and noodles are served with all meals. The food is gorgeous, with fresh vegetables tasting far better than they do back home. Vegetarians will be happy, as Tofu is widely available as is plenty of fresh fruit. And meat lovers will also be tantalising their taste buds visiting the many local markets where you can buy chicken satay (marinated kebabs), beef kebabs and other types of meat. It is very cheap too. Remember to let us know before you depart if you have any special dietary requirements.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from Thais who use long weekends to get away from the big city.

Weather

Thailand's equatorial climate remains tropical and warm for most of the year, with the south getting the best of the weather. The monsoon season falls between May and October, bringing warm and humid air and dipping to a minimum of 18°C. This means that Thailand is a great destination at most times of the year, though the best months are between November and February when temperatures are comfortable and rains have slackened off.

Time

Thailand is 7 hours ahead of GMT.

Electricity

The electricity in Thailand is 220 volts and frequency 50 Hertz. Devices that do not accept this voltage will need to be used with an adapter. Outlets in Thailand generally accept 2 types of plug:



Flat blade plug

or



Two round pins

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as we make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

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