

Adventure awaits in Koh Samui, Thailand

 By [Eugene Yiga](#)

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From island hopping in a speedboat to cycling the scenic coast, the Thai island of Koh Samui offers plenty of ways to get active and relax when you're done.

After a short flight from Bangkok to Koh Samui, it was good to escape the heat and humidity with two things that became essentials during our stay: air-conditioned vans and cold towels.

Indeed, as much as I never thought I'd ever fall in love with cold towels, they always seemed to come in handy at just the right time.

It was the case when we arrived at the pier and got ready to board a private speedboat that took us on a day of adventure in the Angthong National Marine Park. We darted off into the middle of nowhere, which made me feel kind of like James Bond except that I was more concerned with catching up on sleep than I was about solving some international crime committed by an appropriately villainous thug.

Once we reached our destination, it was time for a refreshing dip in the ocean to snorkel and marvel at the corals and fish. There was more sightseeing around the other private islands in the park, as well as a kayaking excursion that required a tad more energy than I could spare.

To fuel us up for the rest of the afternoon, we enjoyed a traditional Thai lunch on yet another island at a restaurant called Number One Seafood (they lived up to the name). From there, we made our way to see "Talay Nai", an amazing saltwater 'emerald' lake that was worth the hike up what felt like an endless series of steep steps. As a fit guy with a perfectly rational fear of heights, it was a lot better going up than it was coming down.



Source: pixabay.com

Things were just as active, albeit in a different way, when we spent the next day cycling along Koh Samui's south coast. There wasn't much to figure out besides picking the right bike, fitting a comfortable helmet, and finding which gears work best for you.

Still, that didn't stop me from fiddling with the different levels until I realised that higher gears work better on beach sand while lower ones are ideal for the road.

But it didn't take long for everything to become second nature, allowing me to marvel at the natural beauty all the while avoiding motorbikes, cars, and dogs. At that point, it felt like a breeze (quite literally when we were lucky) to cycle through the streets, enjoying the benefit of gravity taking me downhill while pretending to myself that I wouldn't have to pedal all the way back up.

Fortunately, there were more than enough stops to take a break, first for fresh coconut water, then for a lunch of coconut-based dishes, and finally to a coconut plantation to learn about the variety of products that had made up such a large part of our day.

It was here that we learned how all parts of a coconut tree are used in various ways, from food to furniture and more, just like how one person working in a village can feed an entire family back home.

We also got to meet some of the workers on the plantation. One man was manually peeling open the coconuts with a machete – apparently, he can get through a thousand in a day – so that they could be sent to the city where people don't want to bother doing it themselves.

Another man was making a traditional Thai dessert with two giant oars that we were told he had to keep stirring for up to three hours at a time.

Both activities seemed too strenuous for me so I opted for something more laidback. Quite literally in this case given that it was a traditional coconut oil massage to loosen all the aches and pains from the day.



Source: www.melatiresort.com

The relaxation continued at the Melati Beach Resort & Spa, a luxury property that was our home for two nights. We were welcomed with jasmine wreaths on our wrists, which were an ideal way to make us feel fresher than we probably were and set the tone for the wonderful floral scent that permeates the lush tropical property.

There's a variety of accommodations on offer, from the Grand Deluxe Wings (with access to private courtyards or balconies and outdoor baths) all the way up to the 347m2 Presidential Suite with a sundeck and full-sized swimming pool. There's a similar variety in terms of cuisine, with the Kan Sak Thong Restaurant serving traditional Thai selections accompanied by various forms of entertainment on different themed nights.

My favourite was an aptly named The View restaurant, where the pool blends into the sea. It serves a breakfast buffet – trust me when I say that Thai omelettes and coconut pancakes are the perfect way to start the day – as well as cocktails and light meals until the early evening.

This is when the focus shifts to the wonderful themed buffets, Mediterranean cuisine, fresh seafood, and Thai delights, with the restaurant boasting an open kitchen for you to feast with your eyes too.

The sensory delights continued in my suite. Besides the special brownies and cheesecake that the pastry chef prepared especially for our arrival, there were more desserts that I gobbled down before I even knew what they were. It turns out there are different turndown treats depending on the day, with each day of the week having a different colour and theme.

You can also customise your room experience by choosing your own personal scent, music, and pillow so that you can smell, hear, and feel nothing but bliss as you drift off to sleep. After a full day of activity, it's just what you need as a reward.

Eugene Yiga was a guest of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

ABOUT EUGENE YIGA

Eugene graduated from the University of Cape Town with distinctions in financial accounting and classical piano. He then spent over two-and-a-half years working in branding and communications at two of South Africa's top market research companies. Eugene also spent over three-and-a-half years at an eLearning start-up, all while building his business as an award-winning writer. Visit www.eugeneyiga.com, follow @eugeneyiga on Twitter, or email hello@eugeneyiga.com to say, um, hello.

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