

## **Southern Route**

**Phuket - Ko Butang - Penang - Ko Adang - Ko Rok Nok - Phang Nga, Ko Hong - Similan islands - Phuket**

**All tours are offered with English speaking guides. The length of the tours is given as an indication only as it may vary depending on the road, weather, sea and traffic conditions and the group's pace.**

**Time spent on site is also given on an indicative basis only. Minimum number of participants indicated per coach or group**

**The level of physical fitness required for our activities is given as a very general indication without any knowledge of our passenger's individual abilities. Broadly speaking to enjoy activities such as walking, hiking, biking, snorkelling, boating or other activities involving physical exertion, passengers should be fit and active. Passengers must judge for themselves whether they will be capable of participating in and above all enjoying such activities.**

**All information concerning excursions is correct at the time of printing. However Star Clippers reserves the right to make changes, which will be relayed to passengers during the Cruise Director's onboard information sessions.**



**Excursions including snorkelling may have to be modified (change of location) or indeed cancelled without compensation if the organiser and/or captain of the boat judge that local conditions are not consistent with passenger safety.**

**Hiking tours in National Parks, please note : Jungle or Green guides are employed by the National Park Authority. They are specially trained to conduct park tours with emphasis on the knowledge of fauna and flora. They are usually natives who live around the same area. English is not their mother tongue hence they may not be very smooth in engaging long conversation with guests. The park authority does not allow outside guides to conduct tour within the vicinity. The local guide who will take care of visitors is their decision only.**



The Andaman Sea, with Phuket at its hub, will always be the jewel in Thailand's maritime crown. Some of the world's most stunning scenery is to be found here, framed by beautiful crystal-clear waters. The vegetation is lushly tropical with forests reaching up to 80 metres high, and vast rubber and coconut plantations, instead of the rice and sugar cane fields of central Thailand.

The region's heartland is characterised by the sheer limestone crags which pierce the horizon, providing stunning views from the road and enhancing the dramatic intensity of the landscape. Even more spectacular is the Andaman Sea itself; the translucent turquoise water is so clear that in some places you can see to a depth of 30 metres. Home to the country's largest coral reefs, it is without doubt the best diving area in Thailand.

All calls depend on weather conditions and tide. The Captain onboard may decide to change the itinerary or the schedule of a call.

### Phuket, Thailand

Phuket (pronounced "poo-ket") island, the gem of the Andaman Coast, is Thailand's top beach resort. Shaped like an irregular pearl and measuring approximately 21 km wide by 48 km long. Phuket is Thailand's largest island and a province in its own right. Phuket has prospered since the last century when Chinese merchants became involved in tin mining and sea trading and later established a flourishing rubber industry there. Phuket remains the wealthiest province in Thailand with the highest per capita income; unsurprisingly, the primary source of revenue is tourism. Apart from the town itself the area is sparsely populated, and the landscape is one of lush green hills, coconut groves, rubber plantations and a coastline dotted with a dozen spectacular beaches. Set against a backdrop of palm trees and casuarinas, each idyllic stretch of sand has a character and charm all its own. The island's size and plethora of beaches mean that there is something to suit every taste. Patong beach for example is the most developed area and appeals to those who seek a variety of attractions and easy access to all parts of the island. Ao Patong is the most developed beach in Phuket and also the most popular. Located 5km south of Ao Kamala and 15km west of Phuket town, the broad 3km beach offers great sand and plenty of shade beneath the casuarina trees and parasols, plus top hotels and the best choice of water sports activities and diving spots.

### Ko Butang, Thailand

The Butang group is part of the Tarutao marine national park and provides the clearest waters and most beautiful coral gardens in the area. The group consists of Koh Butang, Koh Lipe, Koh Rawi, Koh Adang and Koh Sawang. Koh Butang offers many attractions with its crystal-clear water, verdant rainforest growing all the way down to pure white sand beaches, birds, monkeys and superb snorkelling. In case of bad weather/tidal situation ship might anchor at Adang or Lipe island or another island of the group



### Penang, Malaysia

Penang is a tropical paradise that offers something for everyone: a luxury beach resort, superb local cuisine and a rich cultural heritage. Known as "The Pearl of the Orient", Penang is the most culturally diverse East Asian holiday destination, a melting pot of Chinese, Indian and Malay civilisation with a dash of British, Dutch and Portuguese influence thanks to the lucrative spice trade.

Originally a territory belonging to the Sultan of Kedah, Penang was largely unoccupied until 1786. According to history Francis Light, a former Royal Navy midshipman who left to seek his fortune in the colonies, was captivated by the beauty of the island and recognised its potential as an excellent trading port. He persuaded the Sultan to cede Pulau Pinang ("Island of the Betel Nut") to the British in exchange for protection against his enemies from Siam. The territory was covered with dense vegetation and so Light's first job was to clear the jungle. According to legend, Light filled cannons with gold and silver coins and blasted them into the tropical forest, as an incentive to his workers to clear the land in double quick time. Thanks to Light's vision, the island soon became a busy entry port for tea and opium trading between India and China, attracting over ten thousand traders and settlers of different origin.

Nowadays Penang is a fascinating mixture of past and present: colonial buildings, ancient temples and Clan Piers (Chinese fishing villages) rub shoulders with high rise buildings and shopping complexes.

#### Pearls of Penang

By air-conditioned motor coach

Duration 8 hours

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 80

Euros 99

Lunch included

Discover Penang, « Pearl of the Orient », on a Grand tour which will take you from the pier to the surrounding countryside and back to the city again.

The tour starts with a visit to Chew jetty, the early Chinese migrant settlement in Penang, the intricate stone carvings of the Khoo Kongsi, an ancestral Chinese clan house, the colourful little India and Peranakan Mansion. There your guide will give you an insight into the rich culture of the Peranakans or Straits born Chinese, whose ancestors intermarried with the local Malay population. The striking green mansion which houses the museum was the residence and office of Chung Kay Quee a prominent citizen and businessman who was one of the richest men in Penang in the late nineteenth century. The collection includes many precious antiques and artefacts and is a veritable treasure trove of Peranakan culture.

The tour continues towards the Snake Temple. This unique temple was built around 1850 to honour the memory of a Buddhist monk, Chor Soo Kong, who had a reputation as a great healer and looked after snakes in the jungle. Apparently, after the temple building was finished, the snakes came of their own accord and have stayed there ever since. The snakes are Pit Vipers and it is said that they are drugged by the heavy incense laden atmosphere and never bite anyone. Nevertheless, they have all had their venom removed just in case!

You will then drive back to town for your lunch at the famous E&O hotel.

The excursion ends with a visit to Wat Chayamankalaram to pay our respects to the world's largest reclining Buddha and Kek Lok Si, south Asia's largest Buddhist temple and then see some of the famous street arts in Georgetown before returning to the pier with a trishaw ride.

The Eastern & Oriental hotel is a time capsule which embodies the spirit of the Colonial era. For over a century the hotel was affectionately known as the E&O by generations of travellers and is a testament to the elegance and majesty of British colonial days. It has also come to represent Penang itself, its story inextricable woven into the island's history, its traditions an indelible part of many a traveller's treasured memory, its name synonymous with the magical island once known as the Pearl of the Orient.

Private Lunch at E & O Hotel require min 30 guests, less than this it will be their usual buffet lunch with other guests

Drinks are not included with lunch (they can be paid with \$ or € with the return change in local currency-MYR)



**Bukit Merah Orang-utan Island and charcoal factory**

By air-conditioned motor coach and by foot

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 40

Duration 7 hours

Lunch en route

Euros 79

Your guide will be waiting on the pier to welcome you, and you will travel together to Bukit Merah, about one hour's drive across the Penang Bridge. Here you will visit a colony of Orang-utans living on a small island which is part of the eco-friendly 7000-acre Bukit Merah Laketown Resort.

There are about 25 to 30 Orang-utans on the island and at least 10 to 15 of them were born on site. You will come into close contact with wild free ranging adults and younger orang-utans, although you are not allowed to touch them. Orang-utan means "Man of the Forest" in the Malay language and we do indeed have a lot in common. For example, Orang-utan mothers and children have an incredibly close bond; a mother Orang-utan will carry her baby for five years and nurse it until the age of seven. When you consider that female orang-utan's only start to breed at 17 and there is an 8-year gap between each birth you will understand the devastating effect of poaching on the community. Here orphan Orang-utans are nurtured and rehabilitated before being released into the wild.

Upon arrival you will board a lake cruiser to reach the island. As you step on to the jetty look up into the trees, you may see an Orang-utan swinging from the treetops or just taking a quiet nap. Orang-utans are the world's largest tree dwellers and build sturdy, comfortable nests which show a surprising degree of technical skill.

You will get to walk through a steel fenced tunnel and observe the animals. Tables will be turned with a vengeance as you watch these gentle apes roaming free in the trees, on the grass, by the lake, wherever they want, while you peer out from your enclosure. It is a truly humbling experience and one which raises the question of Man's treatment of his ape cousins. Let us not forget that we share nearly 97% of the same DNA.

Orang-utan island was created as a temporary holding facility for orang-utans rescued from illegal possession or trade before being released, as well as caring for those deemed unfit for an immediate return to the wild.

This immersion into the Orang-utan world is a unique and thought-provoking experience.

It is fitting that Walt Disney's famous Jungle Book ape with his toe tapping song "I Wanna be like you" was an Orang-utan, and after this visit we can reply in all sincerity "you already are".

The next stop on the agenda is to a nearby charcoal factory to see how old tree trunks from the Mangrove forest are turned into charcoal. The charcoal is still produced using old kilns and production methods which have not changed since World War II. The wood is smoked and dried before being transformed into high quality charcoal which is mainly exported to Japan.

That will be your last visit before returning to the ship.

Drinks are not included at lunch (can be paid with € or \$ return change in local currency)

This tour includes several transfers :15-minute drive from Georgetown to Penang bridge, one hour to Bukit Merah, 30 minutes by boat to eco land

You will have to go through immigration, that might be time consuming, please be patient

Orang-utan sightings cannot be guaranteed as the animals are in their natural habitat.



**Penang Hill Nature walk, temple and colonial museum**

By air- conditioned motor coach

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 40

Duration 7hours

Euros 98

Lunch included

Depart from pier for a 30 minutes' drive to the hill train station and ascend the 720m high Penang hill by funicular train to the summit of the hill also known as Bukit Bendera. The summit offers a magnificent panoramic view of Georgetown, the mainland and Penang Bridge.

A few minutes' walk from the Top Station of Penang Hill Funicular Railway marks the starting point of the 1.6km long The Habitat nature trail. A trail that meanders below three of the hill's oldest historic bungalows, and through the entire stretch of The Habitat themed park. Several themed gardens charmingly line the way and include the Colour Garden, Butterfly Bank, Fragrant Garden and Ginger and Palm Grove. Educational signs are positioned unobtrusively along the way in such a way to educate you on the flora, fauna and history of the pathway, but not in such a way to spoil your experience.

You will then enjoy the fantastic view from the 230m long canopy walk, across the hills to the state of Kedah, with multiple viewing platforms, and the circular treetop walk which is also the highest viewing platform on Penang island. Designed to handle up to 120 people at a time, it offers mesmerizing 360-degree views of Penang, including George Town, and serves as the highest public viewing point on the island.

Lunch will be taken at the summit before descending to visit the Kek Lok Si temple, largest in South Asia and the Penang colonial museum.

Express lane included at train station up to Penang hill (10minutes ride)

Tea or coffee is included at lunch

During the visit at Penang hill you will be accompanied by a Nature Guide

It's about 3 degrees cooler than the places near the coast.

Additional notes :

The Natural trail walk is an easy going flat walk, along the old former British irrigation canals

The Canopy walk is around 230-meter-long swing bridge (also easy doable for everybody)

The Circular tree top includes climbing up around 30 meters above the ground (70 steps)



### Ko Adang, Butang group, Thailand

Located 43 km west of Tarutao and 80km from Pak Bara, Ko Adang island is 30 square kilometres in size and is composed of dense forest and freshwater streams. Thanks to the year-round supply of fresh water, the island is a valuable nesting area for the green sea turtles which come ashore between the months of September and December to lay their eggs.

Star Clipper will anchor in front of a beautiful sandy beach.

### Ko Rok Nok, Ko Lanta National park, Thailand

Ko Lanta National Park is made up of a collection of islands surrounded by beautiful coral reefs. Ko Rok Nok is one of the 15 islands which make up the Lanta group. One of the highlights of Ko Rok Nok is the stunning powder white beach. On the north side of the island you can gaze at coral reefs and multi-coloured fish in the limpid blue water.

### Phang Nga Bay, Thailand

Phang Nga Bay, shielded from the ravages of the Andaman Sea by Phuket, offers the visitor a strange and wonderful seascape. The area covers some 400 square kilometres of coast between Phuket and Krabi, punctuated by sheer lime stone cliffs reaching up to 300 metres in height, covered with lush jungle vegetation. The Bay is said to have come into being about 12 thousand years ago, when mountain ranges were suddenly flooded up to their summits by a dramatic rise in sea level.

### Koh Panyi & James Bond Island

By speed boat

Duration approx. 5hours

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Euros 115

Asian snacks included

Leave the Star Clipper behind and cruise through picturesque Phang Nga Bay with its dramatic limestone islands, before reaching James Bond Island, one of the locations featured in the film "The Man with the Golden Gun". After a brief stop on the island, the trip continues through the bay until you reach Koh Panyi village, one of the region's typical Muslim villages. En route you will cruise through mangrove swamps and get the opportunity to explore some remarkable grottoes.

Koh Panyi village was founded in the eighteenth century by Nomadic Malay fishermen; it was built on stilts in the shallow waters of the bay because at that time only people of Thai origin were allowed to own land. You will get the opportunity to look around and learn about everyday life in the village.

Enjoy Asian specialities at one of the little restaurants where you will be offered a buffet of local dishes. Afterwards there will be some free time for you to explore the village some more. You will then leave Koh Panyi and journey back to the ship through Ao Phang Nga.

Refreshments will be served on the tour boats throughout the excursion (toilets are available on the boats).

The tour is by speed boat only, it is operated accordingly to tide and water condition level

The tour direction can be reversed

The speed boat ride may get a bit bumpy in rough seas

The tour includes 2 stops where you will get off the boat, other sightseeing is from the boat

The exact total duration of the tour depends on sea conditions and currents

Soft drinks are provided on the speedboat

Soft drinks, water and tea are included at the local restaurant

Restaurant is traditional, simple and basic

Be ready for a possible wet landing at James Bond island

No swimming opportunity during the tour



### Koh Hong, Thailand

The Koh Hong archipelago is a group of small islands lying between Krabi and the northern part of Phang Nga Bay. In contrast to northern Phang Nga Bay, the water here is clear enough for snorkelling, with good visibility at slack water in the springs or during a neap tide. The island Koh Hong is so named because of its large internal lagoon, accessible only by dinghy across a shallow reef during tides above 1 meter. This large hong (Thai for room) has a small entrance at the north of the island, which sometimes has gill nets strung across it during low tide. The hong, about 200 meters across, is one of the biggest in the area. Sheer cliffs on all sides make it a picturesque backdrop for shutterbugs. Star Clipper will anchor south of the island before a white silica sand beach broken up by monolithic rocks that provide shade all day. Fringed by a coral reef, this is one of the prettiest bays in the area.

### Similan Islands, Thailand

Diving enthusiasts rave about the Similan islands and their incredible underwater panorama. The water is so clear here that you can see to depths ranging from 2 to 30 metres. The Similan islands are also known as Ko Kao or Nine islands, because the name "Similan" derives from the Malay word Sembilan, meaning nine, and there are a total of nine islands, each with its own designated name and number.

Ko Bon, Kop Ba-Ngu, Ko Similan, Ko Pay, Ko Miang (which is composed of two islands set close to each other), Ko Payan, Ko Payang and Kop Hu Yong.

Apart from park officials and tourists, these islands are uninhabited. The islands are particularly well known for the 32 indigenous and migratory bird species to be found there, as well as reptiles, amphibians and mammals such as the bush tailed porcupine and flying lemur. Koh Similan is the island with the most sheltered bay and boasts a beautiful white sandy beach and interesting forest walks. A climb to the top of the distinctive rock formation overlooking the north end of the beach is well worth the effort. There is excellent snorkelling to be enjoyed around the rocks on the north side of the bay. Visitors often come from the mainland to spend the day in the archipelago.

Depending on weather & tidal conditions the ship anchors either off Ko Similan (island 8) or Ko Miang (princess island 4)

### Elephant Camp & Bamboo Raft Experience

By speed boat and van

Minimum 20 participants, maximum 44

Duration 7h30

Lunch included

Euros 138

Your guide will pick you up straight from the ship and take you to Tap Lamu Pier by private speed boat.

From here you will board the airconditioned van for a 20-minute drive to the Rafting Station.

After 40 minutes of Zen like tranquillity, floating down the river on your bamboo raft and admiring the scenery, it will be time to get back on the van and drive to Khao Lak Hill for a buffet lunch at a local restaurant.

The Elephant camp is a 15 minutes' drive from the restaurant. Here you will be able to interact with the elephants: feed them, bathe with them, and take some wonderful photographs as well as picking up some interesting facts about these gentle giants.

It all started with a village chief who ran a one-man campaign to rescue baby elephants. He was having a hard time scraping together the money to feed them until a local businesswoman stepped in and came up with the idea of raising money to feed the elephants by opening an elephant camp for tourists. The camp started out with 4 elephants who were recently joined by a fifth inmate whose owner no longer wished to keep him. There is no way these elephants could survive by themselves in the jungle as they have been brought up by humans since they were born. The elephants are well taken care of and unlike in other camps, they are unfettered and are not forced to work or made to carry tourists on their backs.





Time permitting, we will also visit the Sea Turtle Conservation Centre where turtle eggs are taken to hatch in safety and the young turtles are nurtured until they are strong enough to be released.

Lunch includes soft drinks and water

Soft drinks and water are available on the speed boat

This tour is not recommended for people with walking difficulties, disabled visitors or pregnant women

The speed boat ride can be bumpy in rough seas

1h30 transfer by boat to Tap Lamu pier and back

Each bamboo raft can carry just two passengers

You will spend one hour at the elephant camp

Take swimming clothes and beach towel with you

