

## Rayong & Koh Samet

### Introduction

Rayong located at Eastern board of Thailand, 179km by car from Bangkok. It consists of 3,552 square km area and 100 km of beach connect to the gulf of Thailand. The 10 islands group is abundant with marine resources. It contains many oddly shaped islands and rocks. The largest island is Koh Samet which is well known in South East Asia.

### Climate

The average temperatures are around 28 degree Celsius.

### Attractions

#### King Taksin Shrine

The shrine is located in front of Wat Lum Mahachai Chumphon, and commemorates King Taksin's brief sojourn in Rayong following the fall of the ancient Siamese capital of Ayutthaya in 1767 to invading Burmese. A Thai nobleman who escaped Ayutthaya before its fall, Taksin was acclaimed king in Rayong, and is remembered as the monarch who rallied the Thais, and expelled Burmese invaders before establishing a new Thai capital in Thon Buri, currently that part of Bangkok occupying the west bank of the Chao Phraya River. A large tree in front of the shrine is believed to have been the place where Taksin's elephant was stabled. The shrine is highly revered, particularly by Thais of Chinese ancestry, and traditionally attracts large crowds during Chinese New Year celebrations.

#### Wat Pa Pradu

This Ayutthaya period (1350-1767) temple enshrines a large Reclining Buddha image, unusual in that the almost 12-metre-long image reclines on its left side, not the more conventional right.

#### Phra Chedi Klang Nam

This 10-metre-high chedi is located on an islet at the estuary of the Rayong River. Annual celebrations in the vicinity each November feature exciting boat races.

#### Si Muang Park

Located in the town centre, behind the city hall, the park contains a Buddhist shrine in traditional Thai architectural style.

#### Sai Thong Beach

This fine sandy beach enjoys a peaceful and secluded setting . Bungalow accommodation is available. The beach is some 17 kilometres west of the provincial capital.

#### Ko Saket

This small island is some 10 minutes from Sai Thong Beach. Clear island waters permit fascinating underwater views of coral formations. Bungalow accommodation is available.

#### Phayun & Phala Beaches

Located in Ban Chang district, some 33 and 36 kilometres respectively from the provincial capital, both beaches are connected, peaceful and eminently suitable for swimming. Luxury hotel and economy bungalow accommodation is available.

#### Fruit Orchards

Fruits are famous in Rayong, particularly from mid-May until the end of June when durians, rambutans and mangosteens are available, of excellent quality and at reasonable prices. Several orchards in Rayong welcome tourists to visit and sample their succulent fruits. Please contact by telephone the following places for complete details: Supattra Land, (038) 615-670; Orchard Park, (02) 530-3860-3, (01) 211-7789; B.J. Garden Villa & Resort, (02) 279-9285-9 ext. 127; The Park, (02) 261-8414-6.

#### Mae Ramphueng Beach

This 10-kilometre-long beach falls within the Khao Laem Ya-Ko Samet Group National Park. It is eminently suitable for swimming and contains a particularly picturesque headland.

#### Ban Kon Ao

This fishing village, 22 kilometres from the provincial capital, is dominated by a hilltop temple. The area is subject to wind and sea erosion. Beachside palms appear to rise from sand pedestals bound together by tree roots.

#### Sopha Botanical Gardens

Located 17 kilometres from town, and near the ferry to Samet island, the gardens contain the most varied tree and plant collections in Thailand. Traditional Thai architecture helps beautify the area, besides displaying Thai antiques.

#### Khao Laem Ya-Ko Samet Group National Park

Khao Laem Ya is located on the mainland, some 6 kilometres from Ban Phe fishing village. Koh Samet, on which Thailand's most popular poet, Sunthon Phu, created his most famous work, Phra Aphai Mani, lies some 40 minutes offshore. The park also encompasses major mainland beaches and lesser islands to the east of Koh Samet.

#### Ban Phe

22 kilometres southeast of the provincial capital, this busy fishing community is the major point of departure for visitors to Koh Samet. Ban Phe is famous among Thais for its fish sauce and dried marine products.

### **Koh Samet**

This is Rayong's major attraction, a palmfringed tropical island with fine white sandy beaches to the east, and rocky headlands to the west. Snorkelling, windsurfing, swimming, sailing and sunbathing number among major beach activities. There is a large choice of accommodation facilities. Satellite and somewhat petite islands to the east include Koh Kudi, Koh Khangkhao and Koh Rusi.

### **Suan Son**

Located one kilometre east of Ban Phe, and also known as the Casuarina (pine) garden, the area is characterised by these shade-giving trees which line the beachfront road for about a kilometre.

The area is a favourite spot for picnics.

### **Laem Mae Phim**

Located 40 kilometres from the provincial capital, at Km 26 on the coastal road between Ban Phe and Klaeng, this popular beach attracts local tourists who frequent roadside vendors selling fruits, fried squid, skewered oysters and other local delicacies.

### **Mun Islands**

These 3 islands can be conveniently visited from Laem Mae Phim. Fine sandy beaches characterise the islands. Accommodation facilities are available.

### **Sunthon Phu Memorial Park**

53 kilometres from the provincial capital, on the road towards Klaeng, this memorial park is located at Kram village, the birthplace of the poet's father. Designated by UNESCO as an eminent classical poet, Sunthon Phu (1786-1855) composed his famous epic poem Phra Aphai Mani on nearby Samet island.

### **Khao Chamao-Khao Wong National Park**

This national park is located some 17 kilometres off Sukhumvit Highway at Km. 274, and some 76 kilometres from the provincial capital. The park contains numerous plant and tree species, colourful butterflies and birds, and a gently flowing eight-level waterfall.

### **How to get there**

There are 2 ways to travel to Rayong :

- **Car/Taxi**
  - from Bangkok by main road No. 3 or Sukhumvit road in 3 hours
  - You can hire a taxi from the Bangkok area to Rayong province for about 2,500 Baht.
- **Bus**

Air-conditioned coaches and non air-conditioned buses to Rayong leave Bangkok's Terminal on Sukhumvit Road (Ekamai) every day. For further please contact Bangkok 391-4900 (air) and 319-2504 (non-air) .

### **Festivals**

#### **New Year & Red Cross Fair**

Staged from December 28 until January 3, the event features special exhibitions and entertainment.

#### **Fruit Fair**

Generally staged during mid-May, the fair celebrates local tropical fruits, and features colourful floats, processions, beauty pageants and local produce.

#### **Phra Chedi Klang Nam Fair**

This annual celebration occurs during the twelfth lunar month at the time of Loi Krathong, Thailand's lovely 'Festival of Lights' and features exciting boat races.

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