

STAR CLIPPER

7-NIGHTS SOUTHERN ROUTE:

Fall 2017 - Winter 2018

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

All tours are accompanied by English speaking guides. The length of the tours is given as an indication and may vary depending on road and weather conditions and of course the pace of the group.

Fitness requirements depend on the chosen activity; for excursions involving hiking, snorkelling and boating an average to good physical condition is needed.

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 ADANG, BUTANG GROUP, KO ADANG /
KO BUTANG THAILAND PENANG, MALAYSIA**

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.

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.



Penang Grand Island Tour**By air-conditioned motor coach****Minimum 20 participants, maximum 80****Duration: 7 hours****Euros 120****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 first stop, at the Peranakan Mansion in Georgetown, 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 to the fascinating Entopia Butterfly sanctuary which has its own hatchery and science centre. The sanctuary is home to over 7000 butterflies, bred in captivity ; walk in their midst as they flutter around a magical Garden of Eden, alighting from time to time to sip nectar from the tropical plants.

You will also stop at a typical Malay village; immerse yourself in the tranquil, timeless atmosphere and learn about the traditional lifestyle of the villagers, before setting off for 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 and enjoy a taste of the colonial past with a trishaw ride and a spot of 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, before returning to the pier.

- 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.
- Drinks are not included with lunch



Penang National Park Jungle Trek**By air-conditioned motor coach, by foot and by boat****Minimum 10 participants, maximum 30****Duration: 6 hours****Euros 97****Picnic included****Good fitness level required!**

Pantai Kerachut may be the smallest rainforest National Park in Malaysia, but it offers an amazing variety of local flora and fauna (417 flora and 143 fauna species). After a 30 minute drive, you will reach the park entrance. The hike begins with a climb up a steep flight of steps, after which you will cross a stream, and follow a track to the highest point of the park where you will enjoy a well-deserved panoramic view. On the way back down you will see many different varieties of trees with botanical tags so you can identify the various species. Look out for the famous *Eurycoma Longifolia*, locally known as Tongkat Ali, which is said to have aphrodisiac qualities. You will also see carnivorous Pitcher plants (monkey cups) as well as ferns (some like the *Selaginella* are purported to have anti-cancer properties), wild Bamboo orchids and tropical hard woods. If you are lucky you will catch a glimpse of some shy Dusky Leaf or Spectacle monkeys or long tailed macaques. Wildlife also includes squirrels and other small mammals. The last part of the trail involves a steep descent into the Pantai Kerachut valley. One of the attractions is the Meromictic lake, visible for only six months of the year. A meromictic lake has different layers of water that do not intermix. The bottom layer of sea water is normally warmer than the surface level which consists of fresh water. The salt water, which has more density, stays at the bottom.

As you continue along the beach you will see a turtle hatchery. This sandy beach is also the resting place of the Green Turtles which come ashore to nest between the months of April and September. From here you will take a boat to Monkey beach, so called because of the crab eating Macaques that live there. This beautiful stretch of white sand at the edge of the forest is the ideal spot to enjoy your specially prepared picnic box.

The boat will then take you for a short ride to Teluk Bahang where your motor coach awaits.

- The tour includes a round trip transfer by coach between the pier and Teluk Bahang, a 2 hour walk from the entrance of the park to Pantai Kerachut and a return by boat to Teluk Bahang Muka Head (Monkey Beach).
- The picnic lunch will include a sandwich, bottle of water and piece of fruit.



Bukit Merah Orang-utan Island and Charcoal Factory

By air conditioned motor coach and by foot

Minimum 15 participants, maximum 40

Duration: 7 hours

Euros 115

Lunch en route

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 Kuala Sepetang, a small fishing village at the entrance to the largest natural swamp forest left in Malaysia. Here we will take a stroll down an 800m boardwalk which cuts through the forest. The boardwalk gives everybody the opportunity to "trek" through the forest in relative comfort and observe migratory birds, monkeys and mud crabs. Long tailed macaques, leopard cats, otters and pangolins as well as reptiles, bats and many other species are as well living in the mangrove swamp. Unfortunately the Mangrove is also home to mosquitoes, so be sure to bring insect repellent.

After the walk we will proceed 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.



Malaysia Cooking Class

By air – conditioned vehicle and by foot

Minimum 4 participants, maximum 14

Duration 4 hours

Euros 110

Lunch included

Meet Pearly Kee, a Nyonya (descendant of Straits born Chinese) and a passionate advocate of Nyonya culture and cooking. She established the Penang Home-cooking school with the aim of teaching the traditional art of authentic Peranakan cuisine. She is a wonderful character with a wealth of anecdotes to share as well as some invaluable tips on buying produce and cooking delicious food. The class is open to everyone, whatever your ability and you will grow in confidence under Pearly's benevolent supervision. Classes are tailor made to suit your individual needs so if you are allergic to a certain category of food, please don't hesitate to let her know. The tour begins with a visit to the wet market where you will join Pearly buying ingredients, sourcing products and tasting the wares on offer, which is a lesson in itself.

Back in the kitchen you will learn the basics of peeling, chopping, dicing and sautéing ingredients before combining it all to make a delicious Peranakan meal which you will eat together after the class.

This tour is a real culinary experience and you are sure to remember Pearly and her cooking tips when you get back home and surprise your friends with some delicious new recipes.

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 rain-forest 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



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

Koh Panyi & James Bond Island

By speed boat

Minimum 20 participants, no maximum

Duration: approx. 5 hours

Euros 110

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, tidal conditions permitting, 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 lunch at one of the little restaurants where you will be served local dishes. Afterwards there will be some free time for you to relax and swim or 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 speed boat ride may get a bit bumpy in rough seas.
- Drinks are not included with lunch.
- The exact duration of the tour depends on sea conditions and currents.



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 snorkeling, 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. You can swim in the hong at high tide. 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 Similans 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 the occasional tourist, 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.

