

## Railay Article

Hi, my name is Joe and I love long walks on the beach at sunset. If you're like me in that way, go to Railay Beach, near Krabi town. Even if you're not as into those, I can guarantee that if you've come to live in or visit Southern Thailand and you're a human being who has eyes, then Railay Beach has something for you. I've seen at least 3 or 4 guidebooks that use a picture from Railay as the cover photo; it's that awesome. In fact, Railay was the only place in Southern Thailand that I had been to on my previous trip here and it's proximity to Surat was a huge draw for me in choosing to take the job at Super English. I spent a whole week there in 2009, and my wife Laura, Super teachers Ryan and Shelby, and I have just returned from a 4-day trip. Even with all the time I've spent there I'm still craving more.

Here is our guidebook worthy photo, go there and take your own.



(From Ao Phra Nang, the most beautiful beach I've been to)

Brittney just wrote a [great article](#) on how to get to and from Railay from Surat and our experience was similar to hers. If you end up on a local bus, it will make lots of stops and your journey will take an extra 1-3 hours. The four of us got a 7:30 AM bus from the corner of Talad Mai and Taled Kaset right across the street from Phantip. It cost 140 baht per person and it seemed to take a less direct route whilst picking up and dropping off a lot of people. Brittney's minivan seems to be a better choice and she had better luck than us for the final two legs of the journey, which is a tuk-tuk to the pier and the long tail boat into Railay, which cost us 100 baht each. We also waited an hour for our boat to fill up so it would leave until my wife got proactive and found a different boat about 2 minutes away. In summary, it took us about 6 hours and cost 340 baht to get there, but with some luck and a better planning and knowledge, you can cut that journey time nearly in half.

First up, you will want to look for lodging so you can drop your bags off and start the serious business of enjoying the splendor of Railay. If your boat drops you off on Railay West like ours did then you will be at beautiful sandy beach with pricy fancy resorts running the length of it. My first trip to Railay, I was spending dollars, not baht and traveling with my friend's family so we hit up the Railay Beach Resort and Spa. It's a massive resort that takes up the whole middle swath of the peninsula and we had a lovely time there but I'm guessing you aren't going to find anything cheaper than 3000 baht a night which is way out of most of our price ranges.

Cheaper beds abound on the East side of Railay, about a 10 minute walk from the West beach and also an equally likely location to be dropped off by your long tail. The beach isn't much but there is an awesome mangrove forest, beautiful limestone karst formations to look at, and a plethora of bars, restaurants, massage places, mini marts and places to stay. We choose the Diamond Cave Resort, which has quite lovely air-con bungalows for 600 baht a night. It is right under a massive rock wall which people climb, even at night, and has a great pool where we heard an Italian couple argue passionately for a solid 20 minutes (do the Italians know any other way to argue?).



(View from the East (Sunrise) Beach

The third option for lodging is a bit more rustic and very popular with the rock-climbing purists. It is called Hat Ton Sai and is a long sweaty walk from the West beach, an even longer walk through the jungle from the East side, or a short long tail ride from the West Beach. They have little bungalows deep in the woods plus more swanky stuff closer to the water and it has a much less polished vibe, which has its pros and cons depending on your preferences. I didn't look into the prices for places over there, maybe that could be a future blog or article topic for some enterprising young Super English travel writer.

Do you like rock climbing? Railay is a world-renowned hotspot famous for deep-water solo climbs where you can climb up with no ropes then drop into the ocean. There is also plenty of stuff for beginners and people of all skill levels in an absolutely stunning location. Rock Climbing guides and gear shops are as prevalent on Railay as dive shops are on Koh Tao; which means you can't miss 'em. I've never been climbing there but the Lonely Planet and your veteran teacher friends can certainly recommend some specific companies.



Thailand has some amazing beaches but Railay has my favorite, Ao Phra Nang. Massive karst formations are all around you, monkeys escort you there and there is a cave full of large wooden penises of all shapes, sizes and colors. What more could you want? It's also a great place to bathe after you get muddy on the jungle trek / scramble / rope climb to the viewpoint or the lagoon. If a picture says a thousand words, I'll go for two thousand here.



Once you've done some beach sitting, lagoon trekking, monkey spotting, cliff jumping, and maybe some rock climbing, you might be in the mood for a snorkeling trip. We got a flier handed to us and called a guy named Mr. Son who took us out to 4 different islands near Railay and cooked us dinner on the beach which was followed by a night time stop to swim in the phosphorescence. We had fantastic fish sightings and saw some beautiful beaches and ate some delicious tom yum goong and BBQ chicken, well worth the 650 baht. I'm sure there are multiple operations that do this year round as long as the conditions are good.

For food and nightlife, you can find a lot of options on the East Beach. We had a BBQ fish buffet one night and delicious Indian food another day. You can find Thai staples and Western food at most all places as well and a monkey might try to steal a morning mango from your breakfast joint and get chased off by a guy with a slingshot.

At least when we were at Railay, the nightlife seemed dominated by the Last Bar. It's the "last bar" when you are walking to the end of the beach and you can't really miss it. We got acoustic covers of American songs by a Thai guy whose accent was pretty spot-on and then he proceeded to DJ and lead a massive posse of fire show compadres who put on the best fire show I've ever seen accompanied by buckets and hookahs. Good times can and will be had by all at all hours of the day in Railay.

Getting home was much simpler and quicker and only cost us 10 baht more than getting there. I saw multiple travel agents offering 2 different leaving times to get back to Surat, 9:30 and 2:30. After asking 3 places, the cheapest place offered 350 baht to get all the way to Surat, long tail, tuk tuk and bus, all included. Door to door from our hotel to the Big House was about 4 hours. Not too shabby and a nice improvement from our journey there.

In conclusion, I'd like to introduce my new travel catchphrase.  
"Don't Delay, Go to Railay" (patent pending)