

Self-catering for an affordable Phuket island holiday

 By [Brian Berkman](#)

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One of the many great things about a holiday in Thailand is starting your day with a Massamum Curry and knowing that the greatest risk to your person is being struck by a falling branch in the forested Nai Yang Beach. Other than seeing the planes arrive over the ocean and dip low behind the trees, there is nothing to indicate that Phuket's brand new airport is, literally, five minutes away.



No visa required

Thailand is among the most affordable international destinations for South Africans because the Rand is about twice as strong as the Thai Baht and we don't need to purchase visas. Staying in self-catering accommodation not only gives you the flexibility to dine as you please but also a significant cost saving. I recommend [Dewa Nai Yang Beach Resort](#), inside the Sirinath National Park in Phuket, Thailand's largest island.

Three things make cooking for yourself there easier: the well equipped kitchen and dining space in Dewa's Residence Family Suite, grocery deliveries from the Tesco Lotus supermarket and the easy walking proximity to the weekend market where you will find everything you need from aubergines to calamari at prices considerably less than in South Africa. We purchased large chicken satay (cooked kebabs with a spicy peanut sauce) for R7.50 each at the market.





A vast breakfast buffet is included in your stay at Dewa and if, like me, you like to eat spicy food at any hour, I recommend you also start your breakfast with a curry. Dewa has a full American style breakfast, pancakes and waffles and classic Asian items along with freshly cracked coconuts and sliced black-speckled dragon fruit and even sushi along with a bean-to-cup coffee machine that dispenses all espresso and milk-based beverages.

The best thing about the family-friendly Dewa Resort is its proximity to a vast and wonderful swimming beach, literally across the road. Get to the beach early in the morning to watch the longboats leaving for their catch of the day or late in the afternoon to watch the sun set, as many locals do. Fortunately the trees provide shade but because the beach is in a national park there aren't the traditional beach amenities like recliners and umbrellas for hire or food and massage on the beach, although these are just a short walk away.

Book boat-based activities

We took a Dewa-arranged long boat excursion into the deep sea to snorkel which was a highlight of our visit. Dewa also offer trips to Similan Island and Hong By Starlight, a must-do sea kayak guided exploration of tidal caves while in Phuket. Expect to pay about R1,000 per person for the snorkelling and about R2,000 per person for the full-day trips.



That said, there are many free activities including bikes, yoga and gym classes, Thai language lessons and Trial Scuba diving in the hotel pool and live music in the evenings. There are also complimentary daily shuttles to the vast and upscale Central Mall, into Old Phuket to see the historic buildings and to the very popular Patong Beach area of Phuket. A taxi back from Patong Beach, if you decide to stay and party the night away, will cost around R450.

Hot and dry or hot and wet

South East Asia basically has two seasons: hot and dry and hot and wet. The average temperature for Phuket is 32 degrees and it is humid all year around. We were there in April, just before the wet season, and it is hard to imagine that the Andaman Sea, which was mirror smooth when we visited, becomes a surfers' paradise in the wet season.

Dewa is the type of resort that has something for everyone. If you want to spend the day at the pools or having spa treatments you can do that or if you want the privacy and exclusivity of a pool villa and private walled garden so that you never have to leave your villa, you can do that too. We chose Dewa because it was near the airport and we had an early-morning flight. Rather than spend many hours of our last day in Thailand sitting in traffic we had a leisurely breakfast and reached the airport in five minutes. Rates from about R1,500 per room.

ABOUT BRIAN BERKMAN

Brian Berkman can be contacted on 083-441-8765 or email Brian@BrianBerkman.com.

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