

TAT NEWSLETTER

Dear Esteemed Partners,

The paradise island of Phuket has welcomed the first group of tourists under the “Phuket Sandbox” programme since 1 July, 2021, serving as an initial pilot destination. The second reopening destination, Ko Samui under the “Samui Plus” model rolled out in mid-July. Following the Sandbox progress, coming up in August, other favourite destinations of many in Phang Nga and Krabi are in line to resume their tourism operations. On 22 July, 2021, the Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA) of Thailand approved in principle the new proposal to allow visitors entering and spending 7 nights in the “Phuket Sandbox” to have an option to move to another destination; such as, Ko Samui or Khao Lak or Ko Phi Phi. Visitors can once again enjoy the famed beaches, warm hospitality, and more attractions to complete their rewarding holiday.

Yours sincerely,

TAT Prague Office



Phuket + Surat Thani / Krabi / Phang Nga Sandbox’ Model Gets In-principal Approval



The Centre for Economic Situation Administration (CESA) at its meeting on 22 July, 2021, approved in principle a proposal that would allow tourists visiting under the Phuket Sandbox programme to extend their trip on a 7+7 basis. That is, they could stay in Phuket for 7 days and then visit another of the pilot destinations in which Thailand is reopening to tourism for at least 7 days, effective from 1 August, 2021. The other pilot destinations proposed are Surat Thani (Samui, Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao), Krabi (Ko Phi Phi, Ko Ngai, and Railay Beach), and Phang Nga (Khao Lak and Ko Yao).

Under the current Phuket Sandbox requirements, tourists must first stay in Phuket for 14 nights before they can travel to another destination in Thailand. Tourists wanting to stay less than 14 nights in Phuket can do so, but from Phuket they must leave Thailand for another country.

The new proposal would reverse the existing requirement that states tourists cannot stay in Phuket for only 7 nights and then move to another destination; such as, Samui or Phang Nga. Following the approval in principle of the proposal by the CESA, which handles economic and social rehabilitation following the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, provincial governors in each of the pilot destinations are to coordinate with the private and public sectors to create an understanding of what is being planned.

Each respective pilot destination is to prepare the necessary rules and regulations along the same standard as those for the Phuket Sandbox programme to ensure health and safety and to curb the spread of COVID-19 in these areas.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports and TAT are to submit full details of the plan to link tourism routes between Phuket and other pilot destinations for approval by the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA). Moving forward, they are also to prepare plans to open other potential destinations for approval by the CESA and CCSA.

‘Samui Plus’ Programme



The launching of the Samui Plus programme, under which Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan, and Ko Tao can be visited by fully vaccinated international tourists started on 15 July, 2021. These three islands are located in Surat Thani province. Tourists visiting Thailand under the Samui Plus programme can choose to stay in ‘Samui Extra Plus’ and ‘SHA Plus’ hotels for the first 7 nights and the remaining 7 nights, respectively. After this, they can travel to other destinations in Thailand. Both labels are officially approved in terms of hygiene and safety. The Samui Extra Plus hotels are formerly Alternative Quarantine (AQ) and have been specially assigned for the Samui Plus programme. SHA Plus-certified hotels mean they meet the necessary measures to control COVID-19, and also that 70% of their workforce has been fully vaccinated.

During the stay, the RT-PCR test will be conducted according to the length of stay (on Day 0, Day 6-7 and Day 12-13). On Day 0, the first RT-PCR test will be conducted at the ‘Samui Extra Plus’ hotel, and the traveller must wait in their room for the result. After receiving a negative test result, they can be at leisure in the hotel’s designated areas during Days 1-3. On Days 4-7, travellers can travel in districts of Samui according to the specified route and travel programme.

The second RT-PCR test will be conducted at the ‘Samui Extra Plus’ hotel on Day 6 or 7. With a negative test result, travellers can travel within Samui, Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao during Days 8-14. The third RT-PCR test will be conducted at the approved hospital on Day 12 or 13. Travellers can go from Ko Samui, Ko Pha-ngan and Ko Tao to other provinces in Thailand as long as they provide proof of at least 14 nights stay, 3 RT-PCR test results, and evidence of disease control according to the destination’s regulations.



The Progress of the Phuket Sandbox Programme



From 1-25 July, 2021, there have been 11,585 tourist arrivals to Phuket. Advance hotel bookings between July and September amount to 271,833 room nights.

In the flight schedule for Phuket International Airport between 1-31 July, 2021, are direct flights to Phuket operated by eight airlines. These are Singapore Airlines from Singapore, Etihad Airways from Abu Dhabi, EL AL Israel Airlines from Tel Aviv, Emirates from Dubai, Qatar Airways from Doha, Turkish Airlines from Istanbul, Thai Airways International (THAI) from Stockholm, London, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, Zurich, and Paris, and Gulf Air from Bahrain via Bangkok.

*‘Colourful Phuket’
Brings Back the Happiness*

The Festival begins with a grand opening at Patong Beach and the Phuket Old Town area. The Festival features an entertaining programme of fireworks, live music, sea sports, art installations, and food truck cuisine that runs right through to the end of July.

