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AREA GUIDE

Cape Panwa, Phuket

An Advisor's Guide

50 min	15–20 min	13 km	Ao Yon	Nov 2026
AIRPORT	PHUKET TOWN	CENTRAL PHUKET	BEACH	UPDATED

Cape Panwa is the peninsula at the south-east tip of Phuket, about 12 km by road from Phuket Old Town. It is a small, quiet market of hillside and headland villas, a few resorts and low-rise condos. The water is calm, and the view runs across Chalong Bay and out towards Phang Nga Bay. The Phuket Aquarium and the island's marine research centre sit at its tip. The trade is distance: the airport is about 44 km away, and the long beaches on the Andaman side are a drive.

The lifestyle

The cape is a string of small bays. Panwa Beach, also called Khao Khad Beach, is the longest. It has a rocky bottom and mangroves at both ends, so it is a beach for walking, not swimming.

Ao Yon, just south of it on the Chalong Bay side, has two small bays of soft sand. Phuket 101 calls it one of the few Phuket beaches you can still swim from in the rainy season. Cape Panwa Beach, at the hotel of the same name, is kept for hotel guests. I would see any beach at low tide before buying above it.

The eastern side faces the sunrise. From the Chalong Bay side, you look across to Koh Lon and Koh Bon. Longtails at Ao Yon run informal trips out to both. For a sunset view, you have to go out. Baba Nest, the rooftop bar at Sri Panwa, takes outside guests from 5 pm to 8 pm by reservation.

The tip of the cape is given over to marine science. The Phuket Marine Biological Center, a government research station, has run the Phuket Aquarium there since 1983. It opens daily, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm, though parts of it were closed in mid-2026, so check before you go. The Royal Thai Navy's Third Naval Area Command has had its headquarters on the cape since 1997.

Up the hill off Sakdidet Road, the Khao Khad viewpoint is a free tower reached by about 200 steps. It looks north to Phuket Town and west to the Big Buddha. On a clear day you can see Phang Nga Bay.

Eating out means the resort restaurants and a few local places. Panwa House, a Sino-Portuguese mansion on Cape Panwa Beach, serves dinner to outside guests. For supermarkets, a mall or a hospital, you go into Phuket Town, 15 to 20 minutes away outside peak hours.

Who it suits

Cape Panwa suits the buyer who wants calm water and a sea view, with Phuket Town on hand. It works for full-time residents who value the main hospitals and Central Phuket within about 20 minutes. It works for families with children at HeadStart or Berda Claude, both about 13 km away. Boat owners have Chalong Pier and the Koh Kaew marinas within about 30 minutes.

It suits less well the owner who flies in and out often. The airport is about 50 minutes outside peak hours, which is fine four times a year and wearing at forty. It is also the wrong end of the island for the long Andaman beaches or the evening sun over the sea. Those buyers are better served on the other coast, in Bang Tao or Kamala.

The question I would ask before a viewing is which bay the house actually uses. A villa above Ao Yon and a villa above the mangroves of Panwa Beach are very different places to live.

The property landscape

The stock is small and varied. Pool villas sit on the hillsides and headlands for the view. There are resort-run villas, low-rise condos and a handful of villa estates around Ao Yon. Land comes up too, from hillside plots to headland parcels.

Land here is expensive. The Agency for Real Estate Affairs put Cape Panwa's market land price at ฿50 million a rai (about USD 1.5 million). The Nation reported the figures in November 2025. Bang Tao stood at ฿80 million (about USD 2.4 million) and Chalong Bay at ฿45 million (about USD 1.3 million). The official appraisal for Cape Panwa was ฿10 million a rai, a fifth of the market figure.

The cape is hilly, which makes sites harder to develop and service, and there are few large plots. The research centre, the aquarium and the navy also occupy parts of the cape. I would weigh what sits below and beside the view as carefully as the house itself.

Tenure follows the island-wide rules. Condos can be held freehold by a foreign buyer within the building's 49 percent foreign quota, with the money brought in as foreign currency. Villas sit on land, which a foreigner cannot own. They are usually bought on a registered lease of the land of up to 30 years, with the house owned outright. On a sloping site, ask your lawyer to check the title and what may be built; my guide to Thai title deeds covers what each document means.

Renting in Cape Panwa

I would expect long-term demand here to come from people who want quiet with the town nearby. That means families at the town-side schools, people working in Phuket Town, and retirees who want the hospitals close. Stock on the cape is limited, so the choice at any one time can be small.

For an owner thinking about short stays, the rule is the same as everywhere in Thailand. Lets under 30 days need a hotel licence, and many condos ban them outright. A twelve-month tenant is the simpler route for a private villa. More on how that works in Renting Long-Term in Phuket.

Getting around

Phuket Town is close by. Phuket Old Town is about 12 km by road, and Central Phuket about 13 km. Both are 15 to 20 minutes outside peak hours. Vachira Phuket Hospital is about 13 km. Bangkok Hospital Phuket, Bangkok Hospital Siriroj and Mission Hospital are 14 to 15 km, about 20 minutes.

For schools, HeadStart International School in Wichit and Berda Claude in Chalong are both about 13 km, around 20 minutes. QSI and Kajonkiet in Kathu are 16 to 18 km. British International School in Koh Kaew is about 24 km, around 30 minutes. My guide to international schools in Phuket has fees and curricula.

Phuket International Airport is about 44 km, around 50 minutes outside peak hours. Patong is about 26 km, around 30 minutes, and Laguna about 34 km, around 40.

Boat owners are reasonably placed. Chalong Pier is about 16 km by road, around 25 minutes. Royal Phuket Marina and Boat Lagoon at Koh Kaew are about 24 km, around 30 minutes. Ao Po Grand Marina, in the north-east, is about 41 km.

Ao Yon is a recognised anchorage, with moderately good shelter in both seasons. Some cruising yachts and charter operators are based there. Just north of the cape, Ao Makham is home to Phuket's deep-sea port. The Thaiger reported a new cruise terminal opening there in 2025.

Buying and renting here: the practical part

The essentials in brief; the detail belongs with your lawyer and in the dedicated guides. A foreign buyer can own a condo unit freehold within the building's 49 percent foreign quota, under section 19 bis of the Condominium Act. The purchase money must be brought in as foreign currency, under section 19(5), and documented. Thai nationals can own land freehold. A foreigner cannot, so villa purchases are usually a registered lease of the land, with the house owned outright.

Treat 30 years as the term. That is the maximum a lease can be registered for, under section 540 of the Civil and Commercial Code. Pre-agreed renewals are not enforceable as a right, per Supreme Court Judgment 4655/2566. My 30-year lease guide has the detail. Nominee company structures, where Thai shareholders hold land on a foreigner's behalf, are illegal and put the property at risk. Rental agreements over three years must be registered to be enforceable beyond three.

Use your own independent lawyer, separate from the seller's, and work through the due diligence checklist before any deposit. Transfer fees and taxes are set out in What Buying in Phuket Actually Costs, and the ownership options in Foreign Ownership in Phuket.

Selling in Cape Panwa

In my view the buyer for the cape chooses it on purpose, usually for the calm water or the town. A sale here is about reaching that buyer and being clear on the trade, especially the airport run.

If you own on the cape, I am happy to talk through what similar homes have sold for and how I would market yours. I can also talk through who is likely to buy it.

Cape Panwa: the questions I get asked

Is Cape Panwa a good place to buy in Phuket?

For a buyer who wants calm water, a sea view and Phuket Town within about 20 minutes, yes. For a buyer who flies often or wants long beaches and sunsets on the doorstep, Bang Tao or Kamala will suit better.

How far is Cape Panwa from Phuket airport?

About 44 km by road, around 50 minutes outside peak hours. Phuket Old Town is much closer, about 12 km or 15 to 20 minutes.

Can you swim at Cape Panwa?

Yes, at Ao Yon, which has two small bays of soft sand facing Chalong Bay and stays swimmable in the rainy season. Panwa Beach itself has a rocky bottom and mangroves, so it suits walking more than swimming.

Can foreigners buy property in Cape Panwa?

Yes, on the same terms as the rest of Phuket. Condos can be held freehold within the building's 49 percent foreign quota, with the money brought in as foreign currency. Villas are usually held on a registered lease of the land of up to 30 years, with the house owned outright.

What does land cost in Cape Panwa?

The Agency for Real Estate Affairs put the market price at ฿50 million a rai, about USD 1.5 million. The Nation reported it in November 2025. Bang Tao stood at ฿80 million and Chalong Bay at ฿45 million. Individual headland and sea-view plots can sit well above or below that figure.

Talk to me about Cape Panwa

I live in Bang Tao, on the other side of the island. Get in touch if you are weighing Cape Panwa against the Bang Tao side or the south. The same goes for a twelve-month rental, or my read on a specific villa or plot.

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Sources: The Nation, citing the Agency for Real Estate Affairs, Phuket land prices (12 November 2025). Phuket 101, Cape Panwa guide (updated 29 August 2026) and Khao Khad viewpoint guide (8 November 2022). Phuket Travel Secrets, Phuket Aquarium. Chope, Baba Nest booking page (5 pm to 8 pm, reservation required), checked November 2026. The Phuket News, Third Naval Area Command (12 March 2025). Southeast Asia Pilot, Ao Yon. The Thaiger, Phuket cruise terminal (4 July 2025). HeadStart International School address (Tes, checked November 2026). Road distances from OpenStreetMap routing (OSRM), checked November 2026. Civil and Commercial Code s.538 and s.540. Condominium Act s.19 bis and s.19(5). Supreme Court Judgment 4655/2566. This guide is general information, not legal or tax advice. Ownership structures, fees and taxes depend on your circumstances and change over time. Take independent legal advice before committing to any purchase or lease in Thailand.