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AREA GUIDE

Kathu, Phuket

An Advisor's Guide

35–40 min	10 min	5 km	15 min	Nov 2026
AIRPORT	PHUKET TOWN	CENTRAL PHUKET	PATONG BEACH	UPDATED

Kathu is the green inland valley of Phuket between Patong and Phuket Town, an old tin-mining town with three golf courses. It is where many residents of the island live. QSI International School is in Kathu itself, Central Phuket is about 5 km away and Phuket Town about 8 km. The trade is the sea, which is a drive over Patong Hill, and an airport run of about 32 km. If you want schools, hospitals and shops within ten minutes, Kathu is one of the first places I would look.

The lifestyle

Kathu is also the name of the wider district, which includes Patong and Kamala. Property portals often file all three under it. This guide is about the inland part: Kathu town along Wichit Songkhram Road, the golf valley and the hills behind. The beach towns have their own guides, Patong and Kamala.

Kathu was the centre of Phuket's tin mining in the early 1800s, worked by Chinese migrants who brought their gods with them. The Kathu Shrine on Wichit Songkhram Road is where Phuket's Vegetarian Festival began in 1825. The shrine marked the festival's 200th year in October 2025. Kathu still holds its own procession and fire walk each year; the 2026 festival ran from 10 to 18 October.

Red Mountain Golf Club was built on a former tin mine and opened in 2007. Loch Palm Golf Club sits next door around Crystal Lake. Phuket Country Club, established in 1989, also has a Wichit Songkhram Road address. The three are 18-hole courses a few minutes apart, and some of Kathu's villas look onto their fairways.

North-west of the town, Kathu Waterfall drops in four tiers through forest, about 4 km by road from the shrine. Entry is free. It runs hard from about June to October and slows to a thin trickle from November to April.

Central Festival and Central Floresta, together Central Phuket, are about 5 km away on the Kathu side of Phuket Town. The cafés and restaurants of the old town are about 8 km. Patong is about 11 km over the hill, an easy drive for dinner.

Who it suits

Kathu suits families first. QSI International School of Phuket is in Kathu subdistrict, about 3 km by road from the town centre. The British International School, Phuket is about 10 km north at Koh Kaew. I cover both, and the rest, in my guide to international schools in Phuket.

It also suits full-time residents who work in Phuket Town or Patong. Golfers can play before work. Some buyers would simply rather have a larger house inland than a smaller one near the sand. Four hospitals are within about 7 km, which matters more to residents than to holidaymakers.

It suits less well the buyer who wants to walk to the beach, or the investor counting on holiday lets. Holiday demand sits on the coast, and the nearest beach is a drive over Patong Hill. Frequent flyers should note the airport run is longer than from Thalang or the northern beaches. The question I would ask is whether you want the sea every day or at weekends. If at weekends, Kathu works.

The property landscape

The stock is mostly houses. Thai housing estates sit alongside pool villa estates around the golf valley, some on the edge of the fairways. Condos make up a smaller share, and land comes up from time to time.

For a published number, FazWaz's Kathu page, viewed on 7 November 2026, lists 278 villas for sale. It gives a median asking price of about ฿15 million (approx USD 448,000), or ฿76,700 per square metre (approx USD 2,290). Treat it with care. These are asking prices, not sales. The portal's Kathu category also carries listings in Patong and Kamala, so the figure covers more than the inland valley.

The things I would weigh are specific to the valley. A fairway outlook and a quiet estate road are worth paying for. A house that backs onto Wichit Songkhram Road, or has steep hillside access, will sell to a smaller audience later. Your lawyer and surveyor should check the access road before you commit.

Ownership works as it does everywhere on the island. A foreign buyer can hold a condo unit freehold within the building's 49 percent foreign quota, with the money brought in as foreign currency. Villas and houses sit on land, so a foreign buyer usually takes a registered lease of the land and owns the house. Ask your lawyer to read the plot's title and the lease line by line, along with the estate's own rules.

Renting in Kathu

Tenants here are mostly residents. Families come for the schools; others work in Phuket Town, at the hospitals or in Patong. They tend to want twelve-month leases. I would expect demand to follow the school year more than the tourist season.

FazWaz publishes a median monthly rent of ฿30,000 (approx USD 900) for rental homes in Kathu, viewed on 7 November 2026. That figure covers every rental under the portal's Kathu heading, including Patong and Kamala. A pool villa on a golf estate will let well above it. Short lets of under 30 days need a hotel licence, and many condos ban them. So price a Kathu purchase on long lets. More on how letting works in Renting Long-Term in Phuket.

Getting around

Distances below are by road from the Kathu Shrine, with rough times outside peak hours. Central Phuket is 5 km, about 7 minutes, and Phuket Old Town is 8 km, about 10 minutes. QSI is 3 km, about 5 minutes, and the British International School 10 km, about 15 minutes. Bangkok Hospital Phuket and Bangkok Hospital Siriroj are both about 5 km. Vachira Phuket Hospital and Mission Hospital are 6 to 7 km.

The airport is the longer run, about 32 km and 35 to 40 minutes. Bang Tao's Boat Avenue is about 22 km, 25 to 30 minutes. Patong Beach is about 11 km, roughly 15 minutes, over Patong Hill.

That hill road is the part to weigh. It is steep and winding. Phuket MP Somchart Techathaworncharoen cited 2,594 incidents and 25 deaths on Patong Hill between 2023 and 2025. The long-planned fix is the Expressway Authority's Kathu–Patong expressway. Phase 1 is 3.98 km of elevated road and tunnel,

costed at ฿16.757 billion (approx USD 500 million). In September 2026 the plan was to go to Cabinet around December 2026, start building in October 2027 and open in October 2031. It has been redesigned and delayed before.

If it is built, Kathu becomes a few minutes from Patong, which would add value. I would still price a Kathu house on today's road and treat the tunnel as possible upside.

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 under section 19 bis of the Condominium Act. That sits within the 49 percent foreign quota per building, with the money brought in from abroad as foreign currency and documented (section 19(5)). Foreigners cannot own land, so a house purchase is typically a registered lease of the land for up to 30 years (Civil and Commercial Code s.540). Treat 30 years as the term. In Judgment 4655/2566 the Supreme Court held pre-agreed renewals void, and my 30-year lease guide has the detail.

Holding land through a Thai company with nominee shareholders is illegal and puts the property at risk. I steer clear of it. Leases of more than three years must be registered to be enforceable beyond three. The full picture is in Foreign Ownership in Phuket: How It Actually Works.

Selling in Kathu

The buyers for a Kathu house are usually residents, often families tied to the schools. Present the property for what they compare: the school run, the drive to Central and the hospitals, and the estate itself. As with any sale through Butler Estates, the seller pays the fee and the buyer pays me nothing.

Kathu: the questions I get asked

Is Kathu a good place to live in Phuket?

For families and full-time residents, yes. QSI International School is in Kathu and Central Phuket is about 5 km away. Four hospitals are within about 7 km. For a buyer who wants to walk to the beach, the coast will suit better.

How far is Kathu from Phuket airport?

About 32 km by road from Kathu town, or roughly 35 to 40 minutes outside peak hours.

Which international schools are near Kathu?

QSI International School of Phuket is in Kathu subdistrict, about 3 km from the town centre. The British International School, Phuket is about 10 km north at Koh Kaew, roughly 15 minutes outside peak hours.

When will the Kathu–Patong tunnel open?

In September 2026 the Expressway Authority's plan was to seek Cabinet approval around December 2026. Construction would start in October 2027, with opening in October 2031. The project has been redesigned and delayed before, so I would not price a purchase on it.

Can foreigners buy property in Kathu?

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. Houses are usually held on a registered lease of the land of up to 30 years, with the house owned outright.

Talk to me about Kathu

I live and work in Bang Tao, about 22 km from Kathu town by road. You might be weighing Kathu against Phuket Town or the beach areas, or looking for a twelve-month rental near the schools. If you want my read on a specific house or estate, get in touch.

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Sources: Wikipedia, Kathu district (subdistricts Kathu, Patong, Kamala), checked November 2026. Phuket 101: Kathu Shrine (tin mining, Vegetarian Festival origin 1825, 2026 festival dates), Red Mountain Golf Club, Loch Palm Golf Club and Kathu Waterfall, checked November 2026. The Phuket Express, 21 October 2025 (200th festival at Kathu Shrine). Golfscape, Phuket Country Club (established 1989). Wikipedia, British International School, Phuket (campus address). FazWaz, Kathu villa sales and rental pages, viewed 7 and 8 November 2026. The Phuket News, 19 April 2026 (Patong Hill incidents). The Nation, 13 and 16 September 2026 (Kathu–Patong expressway cost and timeline). Supreme Court Judgment 4655/2566. Civil and Commercial Code s.538 (leases over three years) and s.540 (30-year maximum). Condominium Act s.19 bis (49 percent foreign quota) and s.19(5) (foreign currency). Road distances from OpenStreetMap routing, checked November 2026; drive times are rough and outside peak hours. 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.