BUTLER ESTATES



AREA GUIDE

Phuket Town, Phuket

An Advisor's Guide

35 min	3–4 km	20 min	15 min	Nov 2026
AIRPORT	CENTRAL PHUKET	PATONG BEACH	CAPE PANWA	UPDATED

Phuket Town is the working capital of Phuket, home to the province's main hospital and its government offices. The Sino-Portuguese shophouses of the Old Town sit at its centre. Its food helped earn Phuket a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy listing in 2015. Living in Phuket Town means living on the island as a resident. The beaches are 15 to 30 minutes' drive away. The property is mostly condos, townhouses and shophouses. For a buyer who would rather be five minutes from a hospital than five minutes from the sand, it deserves a proper look.

The lifestyle

The Old Town is the part most visitors see. Thalang, Dibuk, Krabi, Phang Nga and Yaowarat roads are lined with Sino-Portuguese shophouses and mansions from the tin-mining era. Many are now cafés, guesthouses and small museums, the Thai Hua Museum and Baan Chinpracha among them. The Baba culture of the Hokkien tin families still shapes the food and the festival calendar.

On Sunday evenings Thalang Road closes to traffic for the Sunday Walking Street, known locally as Lard Yai. Expect food and craft stalls, and crowds on a dry night. In October the Vegetarian Festival takes over for nine days. In 2026 it ran from 10 to 18 October, centred on shrines such as Jui Tui. More than 40 shrines joined the night procession on 11 October. For the farewell on 18 October, crowds lined Thalang Road, Phuket Road and Surin Circle. If you buy on one of those streets, that is part of the address.

The Michelin Guide Thailand 2026 gives One Chun on Thepkasattri Road a Bib Gourmand for its Southern Thai cooking. Moo hong, the slow-braised pork belly, and Hokkien-style noodles are the local staples. The noodle and breakfast shops open early.

Beyond the Old Town, Phuket Town is a practical place to live. Central Phuket, the Festival and Floresta malls, is about 3 to 4 km from Thalang Road. Saphan Hin park on the waterfront is the place to walk in the evening. So is the viewpoint on Khao Rang hill, about 3 km from the Old Town.

Who it suits

Phuket Town suits the buyer who lives here full time. Families on a school run, people who work in town, retirees who want a hospital nearby, and anyone who wants to walk to breakfast. It also suits Thai buyers and Thai-foreign couples who want to be near family and work. So does anyone who simply prefers a town to a resort.

It suits less well the holiday-home buyer who pictures the sea from the terrace. There is no beach in the town itself. The waterfront at Saphan Hin is a park and a working shore, and the swimming beaches of Kata and Patong are over the hill. It also suits less well the investor counting on holiday lets, because the holiday demand sits at the beaches. If the sea is the reason you are buying, start with my Patong or Bang Tao guides. If the hospital, the school and the paperwork matter more, town is the trade worth weighing.

The property landscape

Most property in Phuket Town is condos, townhouses and shophouses. Condos run from older low-rise buildings to newer high-rise blocks by Thai national developers. Most are built for people who live and work on the island. Townhouse estates and detached houses fill the suburbs around the centre, and pool villas appear further out.

C9 Hotelworks estimated 3,405 incoming residential units in Phuket Town, against 21,625 in Cherng Talay. The Bangkok Post reported the figures in January 2026. For a buyer, that means comparing any new unit against the resale stock in the next building before deciding.

The Old Town shophouses are their own category. They are narrow, deep buildings on land, often with a business on the ground floor and living space above. Old Town buildings can carry conservation controls on what you may change. Ask your lawyer and an architect what can be done to a building before you agree a price.

Tenure follows the building type. A foreign buyer can hold a condo unit freehold within the building's 49 percent foreign quota (Condominium Act s.19 bis), with the money brought in as foreign currency (s.19(5)). Ask for the building's quota position before you commit. Shophouses and townhouses sit on land, which a foreigner cannot own. A foreign buyer holds them through a registered lease of up to 30 years (Civil and Commercial Code s.540).

Renting in Phuket Town

The rental market in town runs on residents: hospital and government staff, teachers, families near the schools, and long-stay foreigners who prefer town life. Condos and townhouses on twelve-month leases are the core of it. I have not found a published Phuket Town rent figure I would put my name to. Ask for current comparables in the specific building or estate.

For owners, short-stay letting is a different business. Stays under 30 days need a hotel licence, and many condo buildings ban them. A tenant running a shop from a shophouse will often want a longer term. Leases over three years must be registered to be enforceable beyond three. More on leases and deposits in Renting Long-Term in Phuket.

Getting around

From Thalang Road, Vachira Phuket Hospital is about 2 km away. Bangkok Hospital Phuket on Hongyok Utis Road is about 3 km, and Mission Hospital Phuket on Thepkasattri Road about 3.5 km. Each is under ten minutes outside peak hours. Central Phuket is about 3 to 4 km. The Phuket Provincial Land Office on Damrong Road is under 2 km. The Immigration Office, on Phuket Road near Saphan Hin, is under 3 km.

For schools, HeadStart International School in Wichit is about 4.5 km and Kajonkiet International School in Kathu about 7 km. British International School Phuket in Ko Kaew is about 12 km, roughly 15 minutes. UWC Thailand in Thalang is about 24 km, roughly 30 minutes. More in my international schools guide.

The airport is the long run: about 32 km north, about 35 minutes outside peak hours. The beaches are on the far side of the hill. Patong is about 16 km via Kathu and Kata about 15 km, both about 20 minutes. Nai Harn is about 17 km, roughly 25 minutes, and Bang Tao about 24 km, roughly 30 minutes. Cape Panwa, on the east coast, is about 12 km, roughly 15 minutes.

Town traffic at school and office hours is heavy, and those 20-minute drives take longer. Parking in the Old Town is tight, so check where you would park before buying a shophouse without its own space.

Buying and renting here: the practical part

The essentials in brief; the detail belongs with your lawyer. A foreign buyer can own a condo unit freehold under section 19 bis of the Condominium Act, within the 49 percent foreign quota per building. The purchase money must be brought in from abroad as foreign currency and documented (section 19(5)). Land cannot be owned by a foreigner. A townhouse or shophouse is typically held through a registered lease of the land, of up to 30 years (Civil and Commercial Code s.540). Holding land through a Thai company with nominee shareholders is illegal and carries real risk. I steer clear of it.

Price any lease on its 30 years. Renewal options are a contractual promise, not a registrable right. In Judgment 4655/2566 the Supreme Court held pre-agreed renewals void. My 30-year lease guide has the detail, and Foreign Ownership in Phuket: How It Actually Works covers the rest. Transfers and leases are registered at the Land Office on Damrong Road, a few streets from the shophouses. Your lawyer handles the registration.

Selling in Phuket Town

Buyers in Phuket Town tend to be people who will live in the property, Thai and foreign. They compare location, building and price against nearby resale and the new supply coming through. For a condo, know whether your unit can transfer freehold to a foreign buyer, because that widens the pool. For a shophouse, the buyer is weighing the street and the business it could hold as much as the rooms. Buyers pay me nothing; the seller pays.

Phuket Town: the questions I get asked

Is Phuket Town a good place to live?

For residents who want hospitals, schools, government offices and a real food scene close by, yes. It suits less well a buyer who wants to walk to the beach, since Kata and Patong are about 20 minutes away by car.

How far is Phuket Town from the beach?

From the Old Town, Kata and Patong are each about 15 to 16 km, roughly 20 minutes outside peak hours. Nai Harn is about 25 minutes and Bang Tao about 30. Cape Panwa, on the east coast, is about 15 minutes.

Can foreigners buy property in Phuket Town?

Yes. A foreign buyer can own a condo unit freehold within the building's 49 percent foreign quota, with the money brought in as foreign currency. Townhouses and shophouses sit on land, so they are usually held through a registered lease of up to 30 years.

Can a foreigner buy a shophouse in Phuket Old Town?

Not the land. A foreigner can take a registered lease of up to 30 years on a shophouse. Old Town buildings can carry conservation controls, so check what can be changed with your lawyer and an architect before agreeing a price.

Which hospitals are in Phuket Town?

Vachira Phuket Hospital on Yaowarat Road is the province's main public hospital. The private Bangkok Hospital Phuket is on Hongyok Utis Road, and Mission Hospital Phuket on Thepkasattri Road. All three are within about 3.5 km of the Old Town.

Talk to me about Phuket Town

I live in Bang Tao, about half an hour from the Old Town. Get in touch if you are weighing town against the beach areas, or want a twelve-month rental near a school or hospital. I am also glad to give my read on a condo or shophouse.

Rex Butler, Managing Director

+66 93 760 8561 | rex@butlerestates.com | butlerestates.com

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Sources: Wikipedia, Phuket Old Town (checked November 2026). TAT News, December 2015 (UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy) and 27 October 2026 (Vegetarian Festival dates, shrines and farewell). Window on Phuket, Sunday Walking Street (checked November 2026). MICHELIN Guide Thailand 2026, One Chun (checked November 2026). Wikipedia, Vachira Phuket Hospital (checked November 2026). Bangkok Post via The Phuket News, 15 January 2026 (C9 Hotelworks estimates of incoming units). 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). Locations, distances and drive times: OpenStreetMap and OSRM routing, rounded, checked November 2026. 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.