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The Land Where Buddha Walked By Victoria Krasnyuk



“Do you want to hold a snake or a scorpion? We have different types,” a black-haired man, who looked about forty, asked me in broken English. At first, I did not understand what he was saying. “I’m sorry?” I asked. “Come, we have a farm here,” he said pointing in the direction of a home-made sign on which something was written in Thai and just a couple of words in English. The “snake farm” was not immediately noticeable because of the tropical bushes. “Let’s go!” the snake tamer beckoned me relentlessly. “Not the most popular place,” I thought.

At that time, I knew only two things about Thailand: one, it is the land of smiles, and two, the Thai use snakes in cosmetics and alcohol. I followed the skinny man. My curiosity and desire to take photos took over. “We have pythons and krait and other local fauna, as well as the king cobra, Thailand’s most dangerous snake,” the man continued, listing all his friends. He had four fingers on one hand and only three on the other. “Look, the cobra bit me several times. If you don’t stop the poison in time, you can die,” the man explained. I refused to pick up this not-very-friendly animal but put a scorpion in my palm. That also raised my adrenaline level. This was my first acquaintance with the “land of smiles”.

Koh Samui is a paradise island lost in the Gulf of Thailand and the Pacific Ocean. It is located between Thailand and Cambodia. This is a great place for exotic lovers. This small island, with an area of 228.70 square

kilometers, can be circled in an hour on a bike. We’ll take a tour of the island.



Terracotta Wat Sila Ngu Temple

The amazingly beautiful terracotta temple of Wat Sila Ngu, was built by hand. The temple is made of unbaked clay while beautiful bas-reliefs on the walls and carved wooden shutters complement its splendor. Above the entrance, Rahu devouring the sun is watching over you. On the left, sea demons stuck their heads out of the stormy waves and a huge fish swallows someone. On the right, the warriors of the monkey god Hanuman are fighting. On every centimeter of the wall or ceiling everything comes to life and something magical and important unfolds. Only Buddha painted in gold sits motionless at the far wall of the temple.

In general, all Buddhist temples are similar. Some of them are just constructed more skillfully than others. Temple Wat Sumret



Temple Wat Sumret

is the oldest temple on Koh Samui. The highlight of the Temple Wat Sumret is an ancient Buddha statue. It is perhaps the oldest one in Thailand. According to the legend, it is about 1,000 years old and carved of a single piece of marble. There is also a small room here; the locals call it “the secret room of Buddha” containing about 80 statues of a pot-bellied Buddha in various poses and interpretations. The energy of this place is felt inside the room.



Big Buddha Temple

Big Buddha is located on the top of a tiny island Fun connected to the main island by a narrow causeway. A gorgeous view of the water area of two islands opens from the height of the pedestal. It is unbearably hot and those who go up the long stairs need to go barefoot. However, the monument is not only an attraction for visitors. Colorful monks in orange robes walk around and religious rites are performed. There is a functioning Buddhist temple and a school attached to the Big Buddha statue.

Not far from their brother sits the Goddess Guan with 18 arms, in a pose of calm and serenity. This is Wat Plai Laem temple. She is the protector of the weak, therefore she holds various types of weapons in her hands. The temple was built on piles in the middle of an artificial reservoir and decorated with statues and frescoes depicting deities and mythological creatures. Peace and tranquility are added to the temple complex by the pond that surrounds it.



Wat Plai Laem Temple



Wat Phra Phutthabat Temple

Buddha's footprint is a religious shrine. Wat Phra Phutthabat temple contains one of the most revered footprints of Buddha's foot - over 300 years old. In order to see the shrine, which is located in a small dilapidated temple, you need to overcome 150 steps leading up through the jungle. Therefore, for Buddhists, pilgrimage to the foot of Buddha is a strength test and a symbol of faith.

It should be noted that these relics are not taken literally, they symbolize the spiritual path. They remind people that when Buddha was a man in his physical incarnation on earth, he showed people the spiritual path along which they should go in search of enlightenment.

The island is not only temples, but also many beaches. The Silver Beach is the most beautiful beach on the island, but also the most crowded. However, there is another beach in the northeast of the island, and it is quite difficult to get to it. It has two spits, a



The Beach

clean shell beach and a beach with white fine sand. They are separated by large stones, and the bay where this beach is hidden is also surrounded by natural boulders. On one side, the place is surrounded by dense vegetation of different heights with coconut palms and tropical bushes. On the other side there are an incredibly beautiful sea and some rocks. This beach is located in the Choeng Mom area.

Still, there are more places filled with tranquility and peace of mind.



Buddha's Magic Garden

Buddha's Magic Garden is one of them, a place with a glimpse of mysticism. It is located on one of the highest mountains of the island, more than 600 meters above sea level. Nim Thongsak was an ordinary farmer planting durian but in the last years of his life (and he was, at that time, 77 years old) he began to carve his works of art out of stones right in the middle of the jungle near Tar Nim Waterfall. During some years (and he did it until he was 91), he worked on the top of the hill, creating a park of strange characters erected according to Buddhist scriptures. There is a feeling that the sculptures are about to come to life and shake themselves free of the centuries-old layer of moss.

When visiting Thailand, you must also visit this beautiful paradise island of Koh Samui.

Victoria Krasnyuk's bio

Victoria is a professional photographer working in CA, USA, and St. Petersburg, Russia. She believes that her photographs are a bridge connecting the viewer with her view of the world.