

Enchanting spots: Koh Mak, Thailand

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by velvet

tags: beach holidays, island getaway, Thailand, travel ideas



A special guest post by **Barbara Weibel**.

A Vacation Where No Building is Higher than a Coconut Tree

I stepped off the speed boat that had whisked me from the mainland of Thailand to Koh Mak, a tiny island in the far eastern Gulf of Thailand near the Cambodian border and realized I'd found paradise. Over the years I'd grown progressively disenchanted with Thailand's beautiful beaches, many of which have been ruined by crowds of drunken tourists, rows of high



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rises, and obnoxiously loud jet boats. But Koh Mak was different.

It had the same gorgeous, clear turquoise water and white sand beaches found on Koh Samui or Koh Phi Phi, with none of the downsides. Crowds were non-existent; the only time I saw more than a handful of people was during the speed boat arrival each day, and they quickly dispersed to their respective hotels and guest houses, leaving the beaches once again all but deserted. This idyllic situation will likely continue, as 95% of the island is still owned by a single family that is committed to keep Koh Mak from becoming another Pattaya, with its beer bars and sex trade.

The local governing body has banned quads, banana boats and jet skis, beer bars and brothels are not allowed, and no structure on the island is allowed to be higher than a coconut tree. There are currently only 30 accommodations on Koh Mak, ranging from beachfront resorts to simple guest houses to vacation rental homes that offer more privacy and space than the typical hotel or guest house.

It goes without saying that Koh Mak is not a destination for the party set, as it offers no nightlife to speak of. What it does offer is miles-long walks on ribbons of sand, hammock that swing between palm trees, fresh seafood served at oceanfront restaurants, virtually empty sand roads perfect for biking around the mostly flat terrain, and world class diving. If the rest and relaxation get to be too much, day trips to nearby Koh Chang and Koh Kut are always an option, but the rest and relaxation can be addictive. If you're like me, you'll never want to leave.

How to get to Koh Mak from mainland Thailand



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Take a bus from either Mo Chit station or Suvarnabhumi International Airport to Trat city. From Trat you will need to take a local taxi to the pier.

From Mo Chit Bus Station (not to be confused with the Mo Chit MRT subway station)

- ★ Fare: 248 Baht (~\$8 U.S.)
- ★ Travel Time: +/- 5 hours

From Suvarnabhumi airport bus terminal

Fare: 270 Baht (~\$9 U.S.)

Departures directly to Laem Ngop Pier: 08:15 and 10:15; departures to Trat city: 6:40, 10:10, 11:40, 13:10, 16:10, 18:10 (in Trat take taxi to pier).

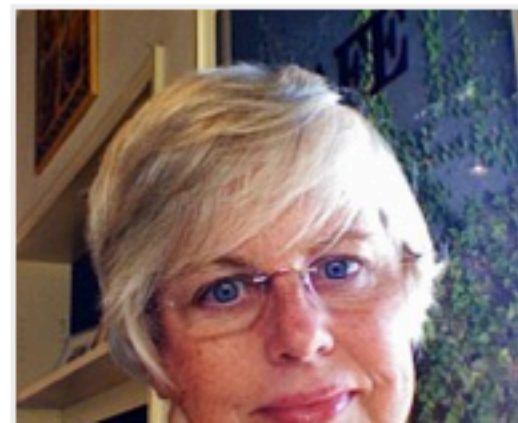
Boats sail to Koh Mak from Laem Ngop Pier in Trat. If you are taking a taxi or have rented a private van, make sure the driver understands that you need to go to Laem Ngop Pier rather than the pier that will take you to Koh Chang. Please note that only some resorts accept Master Card and/or Visa, and there are NO ATM's on the island, so plan to bring enough cash in Thai Baht to pay for food, incidentals, and accommodations that cannot be charged.

About this week's guest writer

After years of working 70-80 hours per week at jobs that paid the bills but brought no joy, a serious illness made **Barbara Weibel** realize she felt like the proverbial "hole in the donut" – solid on the outside but empty on the inside. After recovering her health, she walked away from her successful but unfulfilling career, sold or gave away most of her material possessions, donned a backpack and began traveling around the world in pursuit of her true



Good Time Resort, Koh Mak




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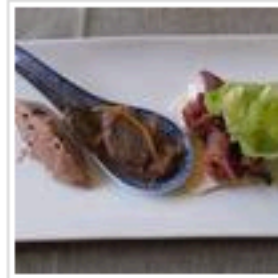
passions: travel, photography and writing. Five years later she is still traveling and writing her popular blog, **Hole In The Donut World Travel**. Weibel's trip to Koh Mak was graciously sponsored by **Good Time Resort**.



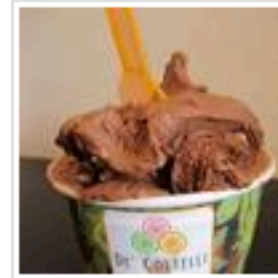
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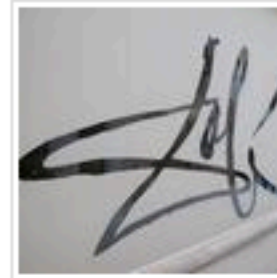
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