

The luxury travel mindset is changing, the 5-star hotel, once the luxury experience we all craved, but who knew that life is better in a Villa?

Publish in July 2, 2019

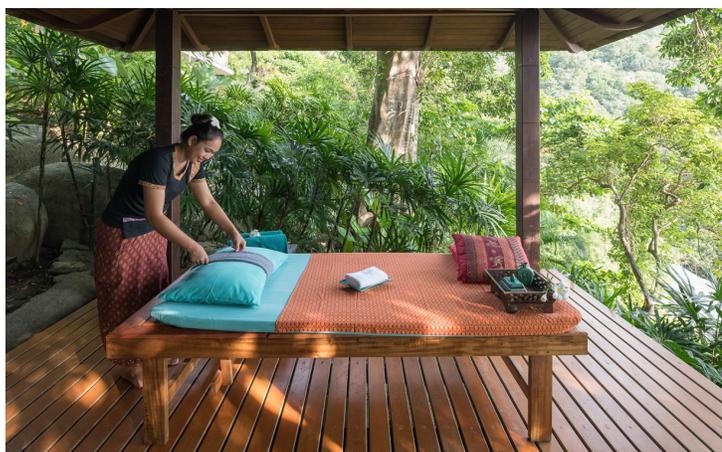
Known as the “Land of Smiles”, Thailand is an Eastern wonder in the corner of the Earth that offers boundless reasons to fall in love with its natural beauty, historical riches and cultural treasures.

Touted as one of the world’s most romantic destinations, a quick island hop over to Phuket is an absolute must when visiting this exotic bucket-list destination.

I was fortunate enough to experience this magical locale in the most luxe way possible; as a guest at Baan Banyan Villa, a privately-owned rental property where contemporary meets traditional Asian styles, blending perfectly with its natural environment.

Pictured above framed by Baan Banyan Villa’s majestic namesake, the gorgeous banyan tree that graces its property is just as spectacular as its top-rated onsite staff complete with Private Chef, Villa Manager and 2 housekeepers all providing us extraordinary service beyond our imagination.

Upon arrival we are greeted outside by the entire staff and offered a beautiful flower garland called a “Malai”, presented by our Villa Manager Bood as a form of good luck and respect followed by receiving a mind-blowing tour of **Baan Banyan Villa** our stunning “home away from home.”





Nestled into the hillside of Kamala Bay with breathtaking ocean views surrounded by nature with uninterrupted views of the Andaman Sea, this ultra-chic villa that accommodates up to 12 guests was our luxurious landing pad for three wondrous days to enjoy with my husband all to ourselves.

Built on multi-levels to take advantage of its expansive incredible setting, the idyllic design created an aphrodisiac privacy from every angle.

Having always stayed at five-star resorts and never experiencing “Villa Life” up until now, my state of “pinch me, I think I’m dreaming” was on constant replay as I revelled in my new vacation reality, feeling utterly spoiled in my newfound eye-opening appreciation of the “Luxury Villa” concept.

After our one attempt to leave the property and enjoy the beach at nearby boujee-style **Café del Mar Beach Club**, we couldn’t manage to tear ourselves away again from our Villa paradise. The rest of our stay we blissfully lounged in the lap of luxury enjoying the expansive infinity edge pool, ending each day with a Thai massage poolside serenaded by the gentle breezes and crashing ocean waves that intoxicatingly surrounded us.

Pure nirvana....

The travel industry is changing and so too are the mindsets and expectations of the everyday luxury traveller. Where the five-star hotel was once the luxury experience that we all craved, who knew that life is better in a Villa?

Eating like royalty, our Private Chef prepared utterly scrumptious cuisine with portion sizes enough to feed a large family, dining on delectable exotic fruits for breakfast, fresh caught White Snapper; a delicate white fish common to Thailand expertly deboned for lunch, and humongous prawns and crab for dinner, all complimented with an array of mouthwatering Thai specialty dishes with a presentation unsurpassed to any fine dining establishment.



Motivated by its impressive gym with beautiful native stonework carved right out of the mountain we worked out daily and then being a bath lover, I rewarded myself by enjoying the larger-than-life Jacuzzi tub in our Master Suite, bathing while taking in the magnificent ocean views.



There, in almost a meditative state surrounded by so much beauty, feeling blessed and completely spoiled I thought to myself, “Now this is the way to travel.” **Baan Banyan Villa** features the best of Thai hospitality traditions in an idyllic luxury villa environment and I will treasure this “Livin’ La Vida Villa” experience as one of my all-time favourites and coming from me, that speaks volumes.

Contributing Writer

Linda Cooper is an award-winning TV Host, Producer and Writer serving as a brand ambassador to worldwide travel on her national luxury lifestyle series “Travel Time with Linda” and as a contributor to several lifestyle and travel publications. Her specialties include television and in lifestyle publications include the travel; lifestyle; luxury; tourism; hotels; restaurants; food/wine; fitness; spas; and retail shopping industries.

Season One of ‘Travel Time with Linda’ aired nationally on AXS TV Network winning a 2018 Telly Award and is now available on Amazon Prime Video. Season Two returns to AXS TV Network featuring “Bucket-List Destinations” and airs nationwide Sunday mornings 8am ET and will soon be available on Amazon Prime Video.

