

Free Andaman Islands pdf

20th Anniversary (7th) Edition

Southeast Asia Pilot

by Bill O'Leary & Grenville Fordham

published by Phuket Publicity Services

- regional cruising guide • detailed charts
- all anchorages with co-ordinates • shoreside information

Detailed coverage of the Andaman Sea with Malacca Straits, Singapore, Malaysia (incl Borneo), Gulf of Thailand, Cambodia, Indonesia (incl Anambas), Palau and Australia (Cairns, Cape York & Darwin). **PLUS...** introductory chapters on Greater China (incl Hong Kong), Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Vietnam & The Philippines



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THE ANDAMANS

Nestled in the Bay of Bengal, some 420 miles NW of Phuket, the Andaman Islands are a captivating archipelago comprising 572 islands. They are the western boundary of the Sea named after them. Of their 8,000 sq km of land area, only a handful are inhabited with diverse communities, including indigenous tribes and settlers from various parts of south Asia. This Indian territory is a treasure trove of private pristine beaches, lush rainforests, vibrant coral reefs, and fascinating tribal cultures. For cruising yachtsmen, the Andamans offer an unparalleled blend of adventure, tranquillity, and cultural exploration.

Due to the 2004 Tsunami, the WGS84 is out by up to half a mile in this archipelago. The correction factor is 0.092°S 0.106°E. Depths in the central and south islands can now run up to two metres deeper. Paper and digital charts are inaccurate so, closer to shore, keeping a proper watch is mandatory. The fishing, diving, surfing, exploration and seclusion are extraordinary.

Best to visit between November and April, when the northeast monsoon ensures calmer seas and pleasant weather. During this period, the winds are steady, the skies are clear and the water visibility is excellent, making it ideal for diving, snorkelling and island-hopping.

January and February are the optimal cruising months, with steady 15-25 knot cooler northeast winds and sunny skies. March and April are the hotter drier shoulder months when the west coast reef breaks offer excellent solitary surfing. The southwest monsoon fully arrives from May to December bringing rough seas and torrential monsoon rain to the region. Visiting during the southwest monsoon months is possible

Andamans beach

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but not recommended. Most of our anchorages are best in the northeast wind high season, although there's plenty of safe shelter to be found in the southwest wind low season tucked in and around the east bays and estuaries.

The Andaman Islands are celebrated for their incredible biodiversity, both on land and beneath the sea. These islands are home to an array of exotic wildlife, including saltwater

crocodiles, dugongs, otters, endemic bird species and dense mangrove shoreline jungles. Below the surface, snorkelers and divers will enjoy thriving coral reefs teeming with tropical fish, manta rays and occasional seasonal whale sharks. Marine enthusiasts will find the protected national parks areas of Richie's Archipelago and Mahatma Gandhi Park particularly captivating.

Entry Requirements and Formalities

Port Blair, the capital, serves as the primary entry point for visiting yachts. As a designated port of entry for India, it is mandatory to clear Customs, Immigration, and the Harbour Master's office as first stop, before any exploratory cruising. Prior to arrival, yachtsmen must notify Indian authorities by submitting an Advance Notice of Arrival (ANA), preferably 15 days in advance, to the Port Management Board. The ANA should include vessel details, crew list and – most importantly – the intended itinerary.

Visiting yachts must anchor at the designated position and contact the Port Control via VHF (Channel 16). Customs, immigration and health officials will board the vessel for clearance. Ensure all documents, including passports, visas, vessel registration and crew details are readily available. Indian visas must be obtained for all crew before arrival.

If your paper work is not in order, or you are deemed rude by the officials, the clearance process can take up to a few days.

At worst, you could be detained or denied entry. You cannot just 'rock up' to the Andaman Islands nor bring contraband or unprescribed medications, including marijuana products or THC edibles, into this Indian port. Each cruising yacht must submit detailed itineraries and secure permissions for visiting specific islands. Regular daily position reporting to Port Control is mandatory, ensuring smooth communication with the authorities during your voyage. We strongly recommend using a local agent to assist with these processes to help make it as painless as possible.

Culturally, the Andamans are a fascinating blend, with indigenous tribes and settlers from mainland India shaping its identity. While a few of the tribal-inhabited islands, such as those of the Sentinelese, remain restricted to safeguard their way of life, other regions like Baratang offer visiting yachts the chance to explore stunning limestone caves and mangrove-lined waterways. The capital, Port Blair, is rich in history, with sites like the Cellular Jail standing as reminders of India's colonial past.

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View from South Point, Port Blair





PORT BLAIR

Port Blair is the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and serves as the primary entry point for international yachts.

The commercial port lacks designated dinghy docks so it's important to coordinate with local agents to arrange secure tie-up alongside for all visits ashore.

There are several supermarkets and fresh markets that cater for a variety of needs. If you can't find it in Port Blair you won't find it anywhere in the Andamans. A few local agents specialise in yacht provisioning services and will source high quality provisions with advance notice.

City Super Shoppee located in Aberdeen Bazaar, along with SKDS Supermarket on Dollygunj Road, Annachi Chennai Store in Minnie Bay and Grocery 4U stock a comprehensive range of mainland grocery items.

Fresh water is available with minimum supply of a ton and fuel can be delivered in any quantity. There are scant facilities for yacht repairs but local agents can source necessary spares and technical services.

The hospitality industry in Port Blair is constantly evolving, with new hotels and restaurants opening and existing ones upgrading their facilities and services. At the time of writing there are about 60 3-star, a dozen 4-star and three 5-star rated hotels and resorts in and around Port Blair.

The Veer Savarka International Airport (IXZ) is two kilometres south and serves Kolkota, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, New Delhi and Visakhapatnam. As of January 2025, the first direct international flights arrive at 10.40am three mornings a week from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Air Asia.

A PORT BLAIR off Haddo Wharf (first check in) 405 miles from Patong Bay, Phuket



11° 41.201N, 92° 43.273E

Port Blair provides a safe and convenient anchorage with good protection west of Chatham Island off Haddo Wharf in 10-15m. All visiting yachts are required to anchor near here to await clearance from the local authorities, including Customs, Immigration, Coast Guard, Harbour Master, and Forestry Departments. This clearance process can be tiresome and time consuming, and requires the ferrying of officials to and from your yacht.

As of July 2024, Port Blair is the designated official entry port of e-visa holders, better geographically streamlining the arrival processes for international yachts. It is recommended to contact Port Blair Port authorities on channel 16 at least six hours prior to arrival to coordinate the necessary entry procedures.

With the commercial ship traffic and crocodiles, it's not safe to swim anywhere near here.

B WEST ROSS ISLAND 2.5 miles from Haddo Wharf, Port Blair



11°40.523, N 92°45.625E

Anchor in 5-8 metres on sand just south of the NSCB Island Jetty. Ross Island, AKA Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, is three quarters of a mile east of the Aberdeen Jetty in central Port Blair and was the administrative base during the colonial era.

This is a good spot to access Port Blair CBD by dinghy without re-entering the main harbour. Ashore are plenty of peacocks, spotted deer and rabbits amid dilapidated overgrown centuries-old historical buildings.

A fascinating spot but permission is required to anchor and explore ashore here.

RICHIE'S ARCHIPELAGO

Richie's Archipelago is a group of 17 varying sized islands located northeast of South Andaman Island. The main islands are Havelock (Swaraj Dweep), Neil (Shaheed Dweep), Outram, Henry Lawrence, Inglis, Wilson, Tarmugli, Chester and the Buttons (North, Middle and South).

They form part of the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park and are protected with varying degrees of official oversight. Please make sure your cruising itinerary is approved before anchoring anywhere in this National Park.

Some of these islands are completely off-limits to preserve their natural environment and biodiversity. At the time of writing the Button Islands fringing reef (especially Middle), the Tarmugli Island mangrove areas, Outram, Inglis, Henry Lawrence and Wilson are heavily restricted to day-tripping speedboat

tourists. Thankfully, cruising yachts carrying far less passengers are historically less restricted.

Havelock and Neil Islands are the most developed and accessible for day tripping tourists, offering accommodation, ferry connections and organised snorkelling, diving and hiking activities.

Richie's Archipelago is named after John Ritchie, a British marine surveyor who charted the Andamans in the 18th century. It is an administrative subgroup laying just 25 miles northeast of Port Blair and within easy reach for day-tripping speedboats.

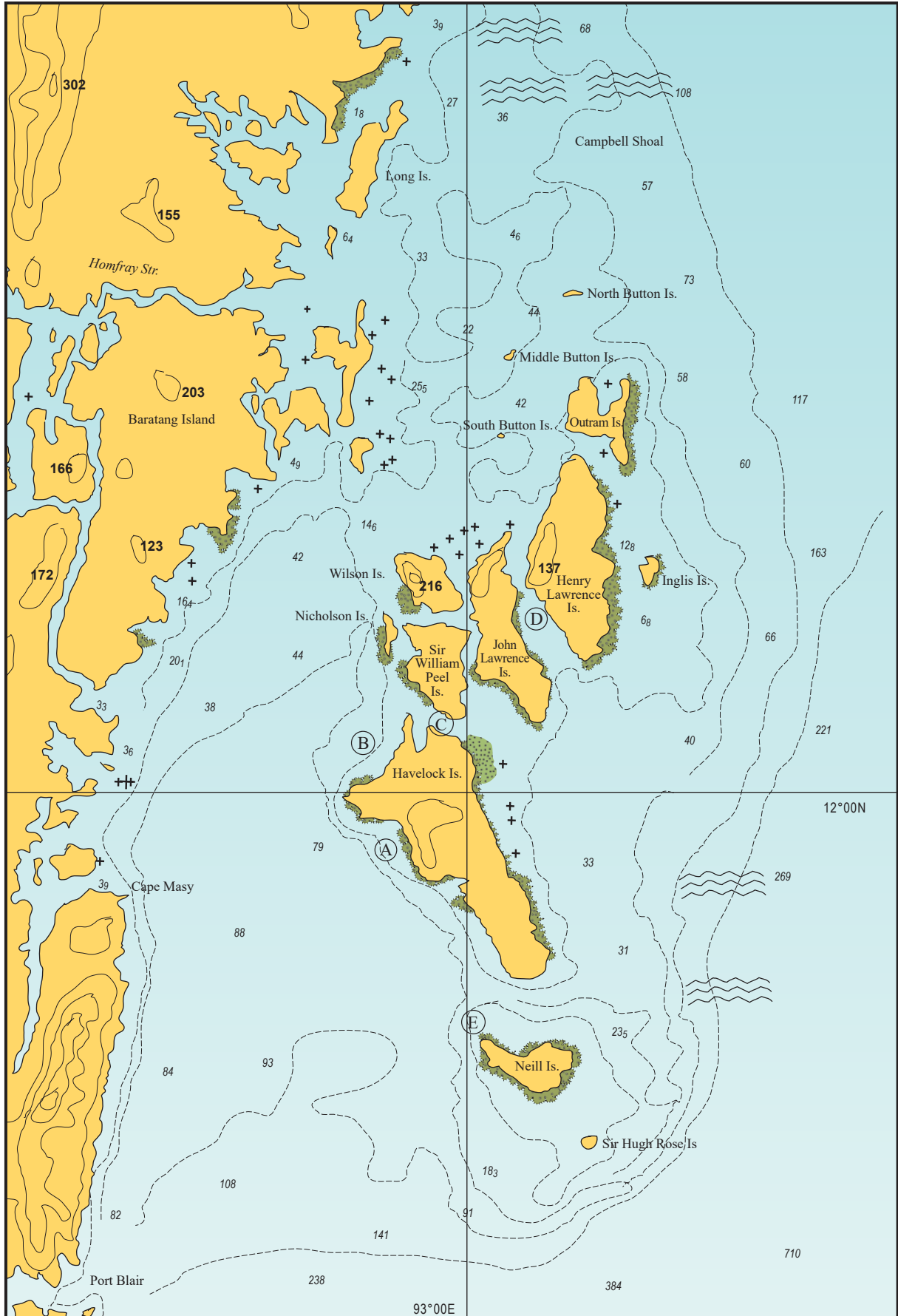
Radhanagar Beach, on Havelock – voted one of the best beaches in Asia – and historical Elephant Beach attract day-visitors from all around the world. Away from the crowds, Neil (Shaheed Dweep), Henry Lawrence and Outram Island offer excellent protection with plenty to do.

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Havelock Island



RITCHIE'S ARCHIPELAGO



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HAVELOCK & SURROUNDING ISLANDS

A HAVELOCK IS. NO.7 BEACH (Radhanagar Beach)
23 miles from Port Blair**11°58.806N, 92°57.178E**

Anchor in 5-12 metres off the Taj Exotica Resort just west of the small creek. The 7-kilometre main road behind the tree-line leads to Elephant Bay, Govind Naga Beach and the commercial ferry pier.

This beach was recognised as Asia's Best Beach and the 7th best in the world by Time Magazine in 2004. It is certainly not an exaggeration being blessed with silica white powder sands and the main swimming area protected by lifeguards. Can't have anyone drowning at "7".

Great snorkelling on the fringing reef both sides of this beach and, three miles southeast, is the massive mangrove haven of Prince's Inlet (Golug Ma) – perfect for dinghy, paddle boarding and kayaking explorations.

In April 2010 an American tourist was fatally attacked by a crocodile while snorkelling off the southern end of Radhanagar beach closer to the mangrove inlet. Following this tragedy, authorities occasionally restrict swimming when crocs are sighted. In November 2016, the beach was temporarily closed after local fishermen spotted big crocodile tracks on the beach. Thankfully the water here is so clear they can be spotted from a long distance – but they can swim faster than we can. Be croc aware.

B ELEPHANT BAY
26 miles from Port Blair**12°0.621N, 92°56.624E**

Anchor in 7-15 metres off the Sea-Walk stations each side of the fringe reef opening. Ashore in the high season are colourful floating jumping castles, jet ski operators and local boats. This popular day-tourist spot got its name historically from elephants being brought here for swimming and logging operations.

Unfortunately, the last known ocean-swimming elephant 'Rajan' passed away in 2016. He was the last of his kind unique in their ability to swim in the sea, a skill they developed during their time employed in the logging industry having to swim between these islands.

With his passing, the era of swimming elephants was over. Today this beach is busy throughout the high-season days with glass-bottom boats, underwater sea-walking stations and life jacket-clad tourists snorkelling the reef edges.

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Havelock Light House



Ⓒ LACCAM HARBOUR

28 miles from Port Blair



12°02.568N, 9°58.862E

If coming from the east, keep well clear of Rosamond Shoal to anchor with the locals in 5-8 metres on sand behind the larger drying shoal and Havelock Commercial Pier.

Dinghy landing on sand is available either side of the smaller concrete pier west of the commercial dock. Govind Nagar Village is the primary settlement lining the northeast coastline of the island. The village has small stores selling essentials, including fresh fruit and veggies. Visiting yachts are now required to report to Havelock Port Control upon arrival. Ensure all necessary permits, including the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) are in order before entering the harbour.

Ⓓ KWANGTUNG STRAIT (West Henry Lawrence Is.)

36 miles from Port Blair



12°7.175N, 93°2.372E

The Kwangtung Strait is the protected navigable channel between the Lawrence Islands. This anchorage in 15-25 metres has good holding and offers security and tranquillity.

The area is super rich in biodiversity, making it a haven for birdwatchers and kayak enthusiasts. Dugongs are often spotted here moving in family groups around sunset close to shore. Fresh bait, bigger hook fishing during the first hour of the rising tide is good here.

Ⓔ NEILL ISLAND (Cape Mears)

19 miles from Port Blair



11°51.158N, 93°00.742E

When conditions permit, anchor in 5-12 metres off the all-tide Lakshmanpur Beach #1 at the north point of Cape Mears. Beach #2 features natural rock formations, including the famous coral bridge (Howrah Bridge). The main pier for Neill Island (now officially named Shahee Dweep) is in the reef channel about a mile east of here.

Basic supplies and fresh produce are available in local markets near Bharatpur and Govindhagar villages. There's a laid-back vibe ashore with budget-friendly guesthouses offering cheap rooms and local fare. Cycling around the island is worth a try for young knees. ATMs are rare here – so bring some cash.

Neill Island

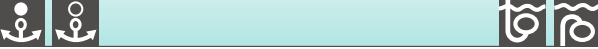
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NORTH HENRY LAWRENCE REGION

North Henry Lawrence Island region includes the Charka Juru channel, Grenville Point, Outram Island and Inglis Island. This area offers several exceptional year-round safe anchorages with plenty of snorkelling and secluded beaches.

(A) GRENVILLE POINT
40 miles from Port Blair




12°12.703N, 93°4.491E

Anchor in 18-22 metres east of Grenville Point (coincidentally this publication's co-author's name) in front of the stunning mid-tide-accessible silica sand beach.

This is an idyllic spot with excellent snorkelling and diving along the fringing reef on each side of the well-named point and in front of the beach.

Southeast is a massive mangrove forest bay fringed by reef with a small tidal creek perfect for dinghy exploration at high tide. There have been dugongs and a family-sized raft of smooth-coated sea otters reported mucking about inside this magic mangrove creek.


(B) SOUTH OUTRAM ISLAND
43 miles from Port Blair



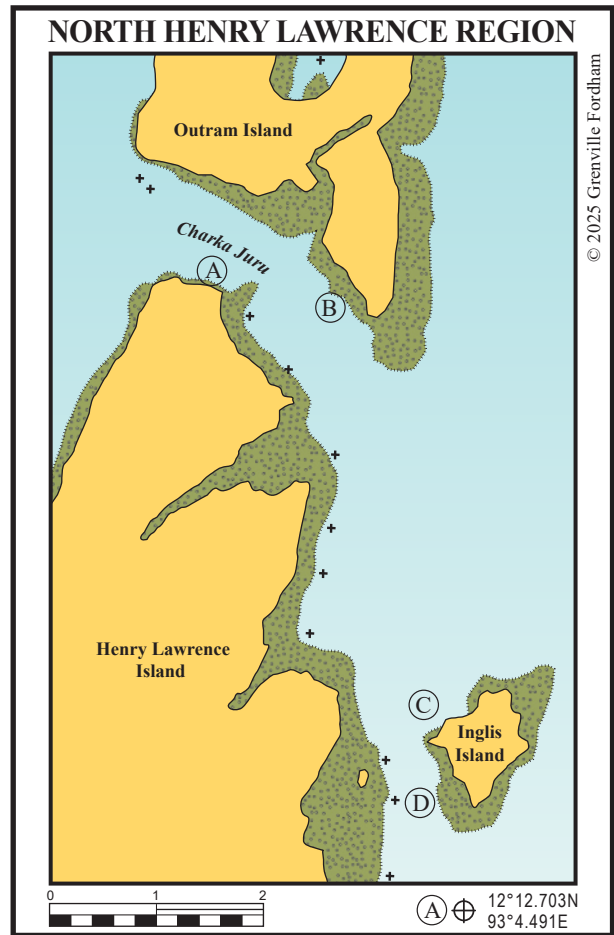
12°12.297N, 93°5.728E

A protected spot in 10-14 metres behind the long extended fringing reef. Good snorkelling and fishing and suitable for overnights in light conditions.

(C)(D) INGLIS ISLAND CHANEL (north & south)
45 miles from Port Blair



12°08.750N, 93°06.474E & 12°07.946N, 93°6.507E



The north anchorage is safely off the all-tide white silica sand beach that is secluded and well, simply stunning. Anchor west of the beach in 8-10 metres on sand. Best dinghy access is from the west and there is good snorkelling north and south of the beach protrusion.

The south anchorage is swinging distance off the fringing reef of Inglis Island. There is good snorkelling and fishing along this reef edge – but it's not suitable for overnight stays.

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Radhanagar Beach, Havelock Island



THE BUTTON ISLANDS

The Buttons (North, Middle and South) are a trio of small, uninhabited islands situated northwest inside Richie's Archipelago. They're renowned for their rich marine biodiversity, pristine coral reefs and gin-clear waters.

A SOUTH BUTTON ISLAND

38 miles from Port Blair



12°13.339N, 93°01.288E

Anchor well clear of the reef edge on sand in 25 metres. Good diving on the south and exceptional snorkeling all around this lighthouse island.

B MIDDLE BUTTON ISLAND

41 miles from Port Blair



12°16.327N, 93°01.380E

Anchor in 8-10 metres south of the island behind the extending fringing reef finger. All the Buttons are part of the Rani Jhansi Marine National Park and as such are protected. Plenty of fish and bird life all around this anchorage. This island is uninhabited.

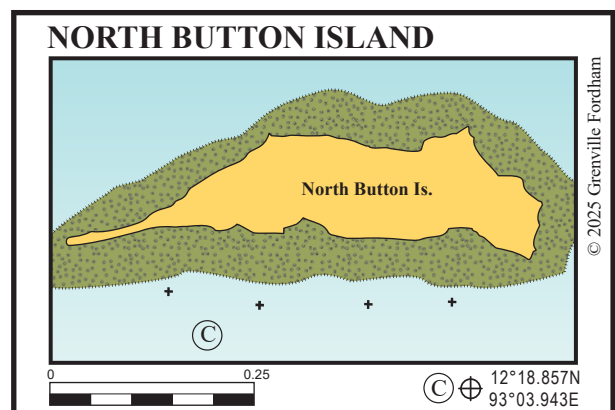
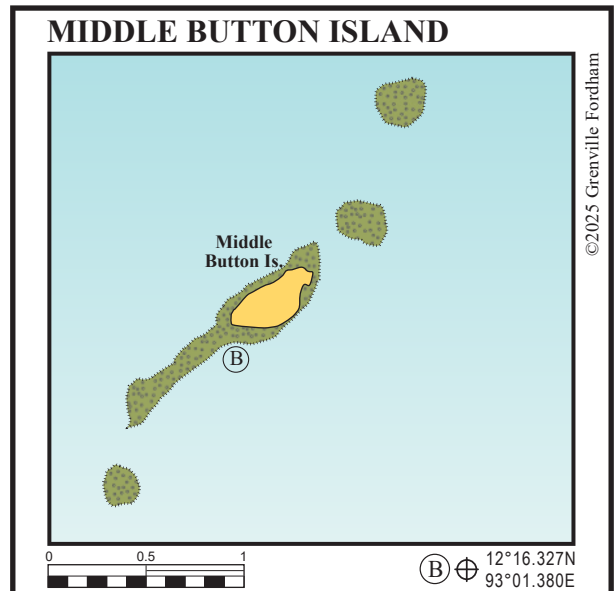
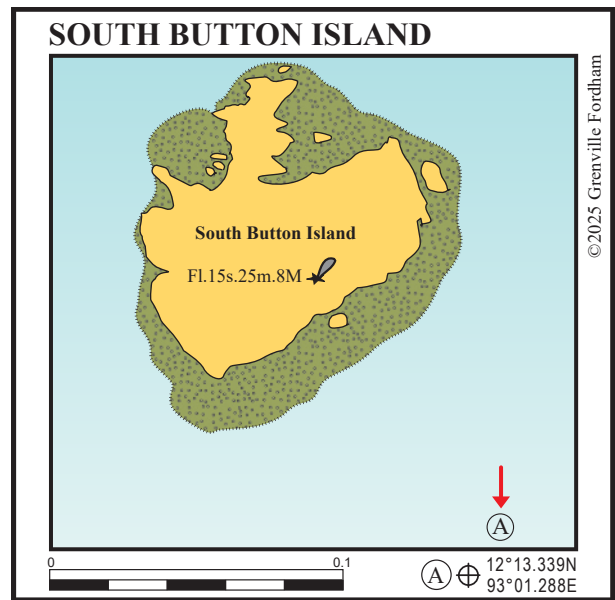
C NORTH BUTTON ISLAND

44 miles from Port Blair



12°18.857N, 93°03.943E

Anchor on sand in 12-16 metres off the fringing reef edge that runs straight east west. There's a mid-tide beach at the west end of the island and plenty to see snorkeling or diving off this gem.

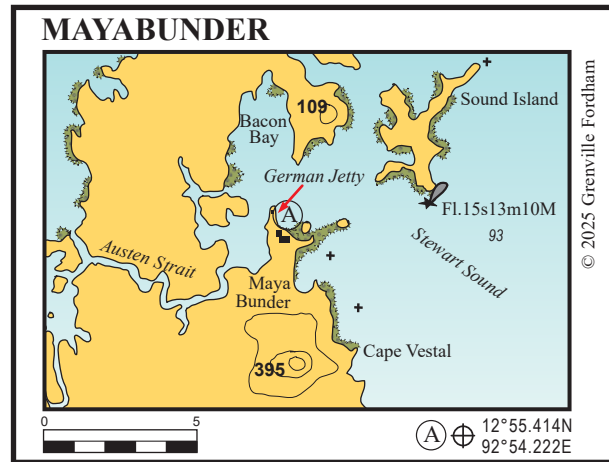


MAYABUNDER & AUSTEN STRAIT

About 80 miles north of Port Blair is Mayabunder, the administrative base and ‘tehsil’ (administrative area) for the north and middle Andaman district.

Authorities demand visiting yachts plying north report in here to the Harbourmaster. Let him know you’re coming in advance on VHF channel 16. The town offers basic amenities, including accommodation, eateries, fuel station and provisions.

The Austen Strait is narrow and long but navigable by dinghy. It has a low bridge close to town preventing larger vessels access. Beware: there are lots of saltwater crocodiles living in this waterway.



A MAYABUNDER
82 miles from Port Blair

A row of seven icons: an anchor, a house, a water drop, a menu, a bottle, a fork and knife, and a bus.

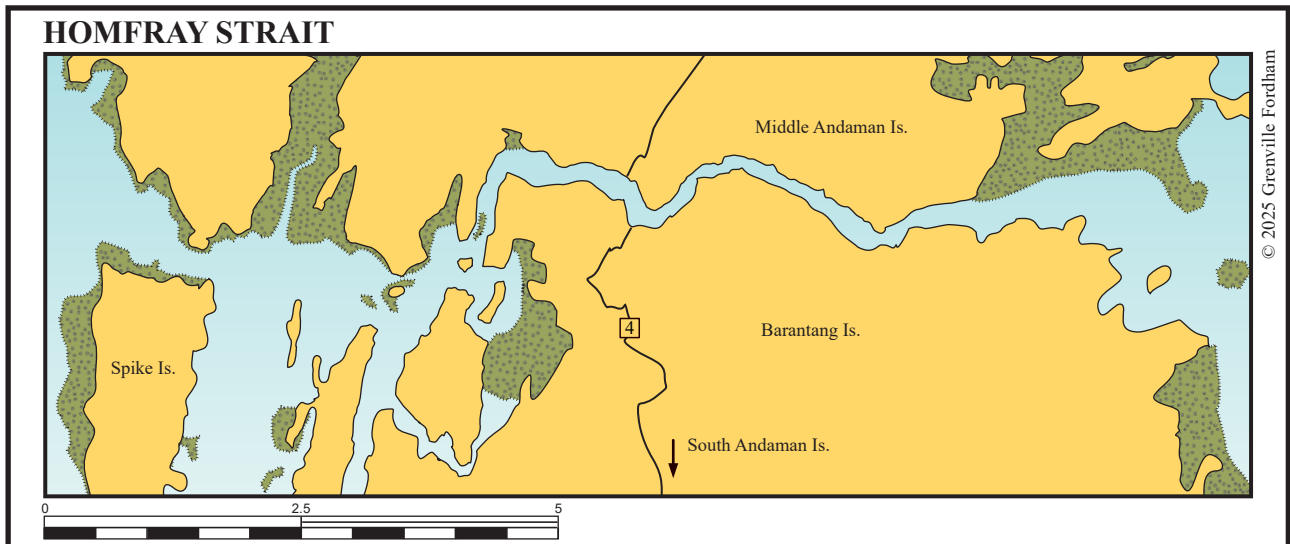
12°55.414N, 92°54.222E

When conditions permit anchor in 7-11 metres off the German Jetty north of the fringing reef or anywhere in a comfortable depth west or south of the commercial dock on the northeast corner. There is protection for your dinghy inside the main dock on the west end. The small town is rustic but has everything you’d expect. Ferries run periodically to and from Port Blair.

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Chester Island





HOMFRAY STRAIT & ANDAMAN STRAIT

The Homfray Strait and the Andaman Strait are two vital commercial waterways of the Andamans. They offer strategic navigation routes for vessels including cruising yachts. Both straits are known for their natural beauty, sometimes challenging conditions and importance as east-west transit points.

The Homfray is narrow and picturesque winding through dense mangroves and between Baratang and Middle Andaman Islands. The depth throughout ranges from 10-30 metres with the western end more treacherous with mud banks and occasional coral heads. Best entry or exit the western side with the rising

tide. There are a lot of crocodiles living throughout the strait, especially the western side where it opens up.

The Andaman Strait, also called the Middle Strait separates Baratang Island from South Andaman Island. It has depths between 5-15 metres, with shoals and coral patches that require cautious navigation. A ferry service connects the two sides of the strait carrying vehicles and passengers. It experiences significant tidal currents so it's suggested to seek a local pilot or to follow a local boat for safest navigation.

Both straits are an excellent adventure for cruising yachts seeking a blend of challenging navigation and exceptional natural beauty. Proper planning will ensure safe passage across either.

Andaman Strait Jetty

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INTERVIEW ISLAND

This untouched gem is located on the western edge of Middle Andaman and at 100 sq km, it's one of the largest uninhabited islands in the Andamans.

It's located about 30 miles north of the western side of the Homfray Strait and is blessed with pristine wilderness, rugged coastline and unique wildlife, most notably its population of around 50 feral elephants.

Established in 1985, the Interview Island Wildlife Sanctuary was created to protect the island's flora and fauna from deforestation and hunting. Whilst it is not a typical tourist destination, it holds interest for researchers and conservationists dedicated to studying and preserving its singular ecosystem.

A SOUTH REEF ISLAND
30 miles from Homfray Strait



12°47.341N, 92°39.863E

Anchor on sand in 5-10 metres inside this drying fringe reef cul-de-sac. This bay is protected and calm in most conditions, only open to rare direct southerlies. Great snorkelling and fishing around the edges of this reef. The only way in and out is north-south; there is no way to safely cross between South Reef and Interview Islands.


B INTERVIEW SOUTH WEST
31 miles from Homfray Strait



12°48.573N, 92°39.538E

Anchor on sand in 6-8 metres at the head of this naturally formed channel between the fringing reef. There is a small channel winding between coral easily distinguished on Google Earth that leads to a small beach and seasonal creek head. The fresh water run-off from these types of creeks is what causes sandy bottom kind to yachts. Coral can't be propagated with too much fresh water.

C INTERVIEW NORTH WEST
38 miles from Homfray Strait

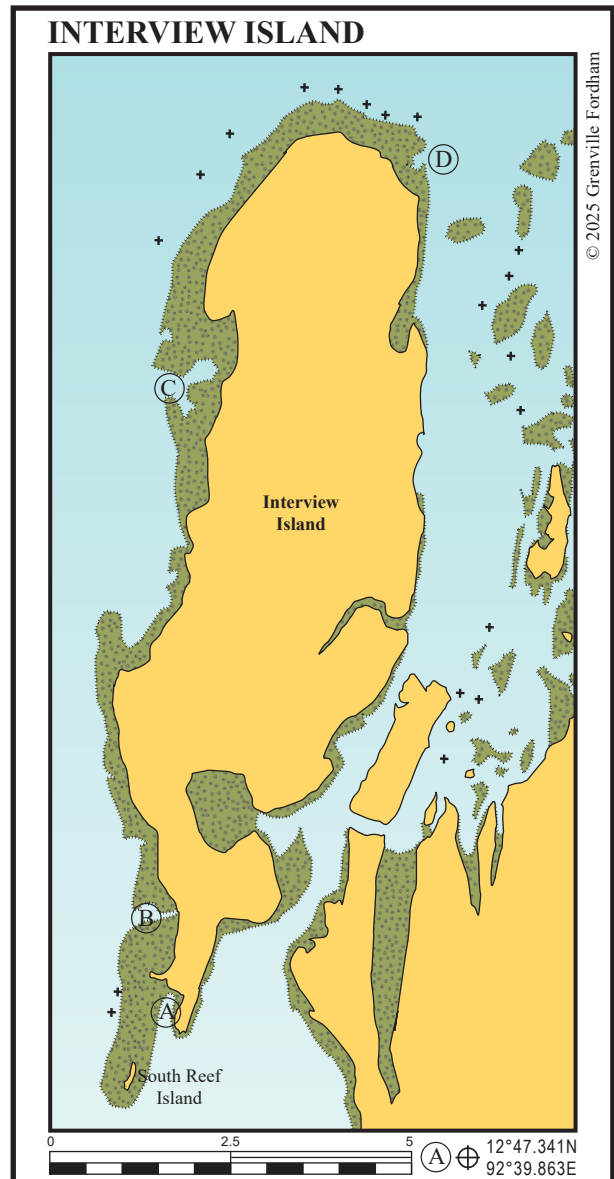


12°156.101N, 92°39.909E


Anchor anywhere inside the reef indent on sand in 5-15 metres. This spot has a wider entrance than the bottom two but narrows as the deepest channel turns northeast.

If your draft permits, the best spot is another 500 metres to a comfortable depth in the northern corner. Another exceptional overnight spot with great snorkelling and fishing options.

This anchorage was created by a confluence of creek heads but dinghy access ashore is tricky everywhere so you'll be restricted to high tide only.



D INTERVIEW NORTH EAST
46 miles from Homfray Strait



12°56.201N, 92°43.217E

This spot is a bit tighter all round but certainly worth it, if you've got good overhead light.

The 300-metre-wide entrance is deep and runs direct east west. Motor in 150 metres to give swing room to the reef edge that comes up fast from 8 metres. The basin has swing room for one boat only but is free from coral heads in the middle. If the sun is not directly overhead or behind, alternative anchorage is anywhere off the entrance away from the fringing reef in 20-30 metres.

There is a mile long mangrove creek accessible at high tide that is absolutely worth doing for the bird life alone.

NORTH REEF ISLAND

North Reef Island, on top of Interview Island, is one of the jewels of the Andamans. This secluded haven of only three and a half sq km is renowned for its pristine silica sand beach, vibrant coral reef, underwater topography and sea life.

This small island is so impressive and remote that it's become a favourite for the superyacht crowd and accessible via seaplane and helicopter for wealthy Indian tourists flying in for the day from Port Blair. North Reef Island is only 15 metres above sea level but has some of the most diverse tropical jungle in the region. Don't miss this spot.

A NORTH REEF BAY 51 miles from Homfray Strait



13°04.679N, 92°42.916E

This is the preferred overnight spot for this island. Anchor in 5-18 metres on sand in the shelter between the north and south reef edges. Snorkelling, diving, fishing and beach walks are all good from here.

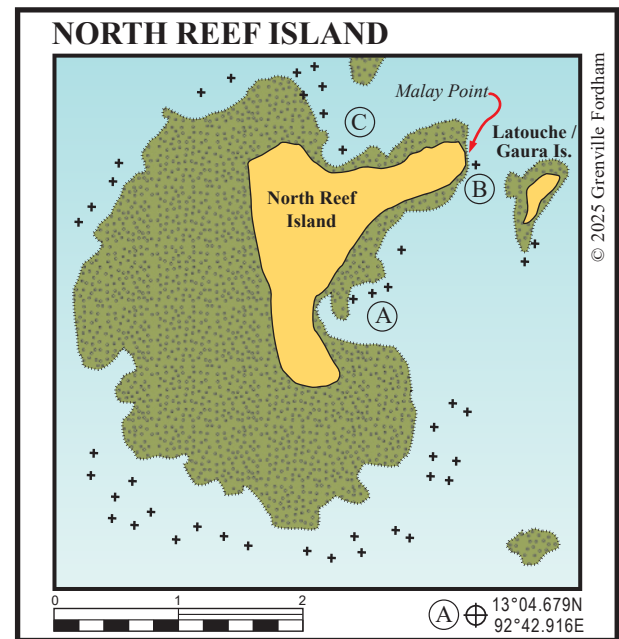
B MALAY POINT 51 miles from Homfray Strait



13°05.305N, 92°43.092E

A mile northeast is the deep channel between Latouche/Gaura Island and Malay Point. Anchor on sand in 12-18 metres half a mile south of Malay Point and half a mile west of Latouche/Gaura Island.

Great snorkelling around both islands with a good dive off the east coast of Latouche/Gaura. The fishing is excellent too.



C NORTH BAY 54 miles from Homfray Strait

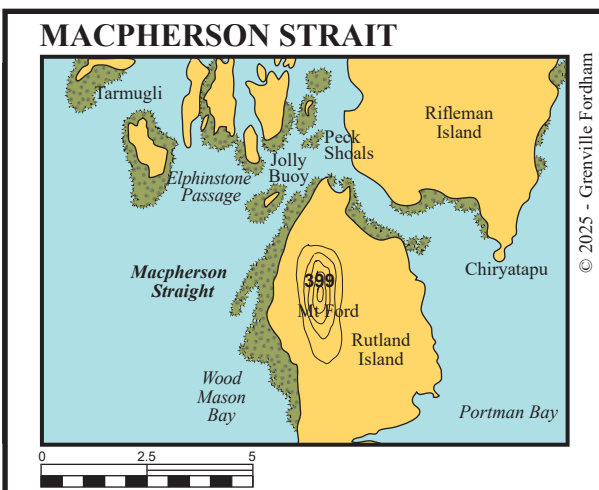


13°06.131N, 92°42.523E

This bay is capped by an oval-shaped 35 acre isolated, yet always submerged, coral patch starting some 450 metres north of the anchorage.

There's plenty of room around it in and out of the anchorage and it has some excellent fishing and snorkelling around the reef at low neap tides.

Anchor on sand in the middle of the bay right in front of the gorgeous all-tide beach. Much like the rest of the island, this spot is remarkable, except in a strong northerly. Don't stay overnight here from November to April.



MACPHERSON STRAIT

The Macpherson Strait separates South Andaman and Rutland Islands, as well as the Andaman Sea, from the Bay of Bengal.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Park encompasses parts of the strait, including areas Jolly Buoy and Tarmugli.

Currently foreign yachts are not permitted to anchor or pass through this strait. When this ban is formerly lifted, we will add a half dozen excellent Macpherson Strait anchorages to this guide.

Until then please seek clarification on this restricted region from the Chief Wildlife Warden for National Parks when checking in at Port Blair.

THE CINQUE ISLANDS

The Cinque Islands have six white silica sand beaches and half a dozen excellent anchorages, most on the north island. They form part of Richie’s Archipelago inside the ecological protectorate of Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park. Entry and overnight fees are levied during Port Blair check-in for all yachts intending to visit here on their itineraries.

The Cinques are renowned for vibrant marine life and the stunning 300-metre sand tombolo connecting the two land masses of North Cinque. The channel between North and South Cinque has excellent snorkelling but don’t attempt crossing through here on a keel boat, even at high tide. There are plenty of isolated Porites, Favia and Diploastrea hard-topped coral bombies littered in this channel. Even the locals take the long way around.


(A) NORTH CINQUE SOUTH BAY
25 miles from Port Blair



11°18.102N, 93°42.024E

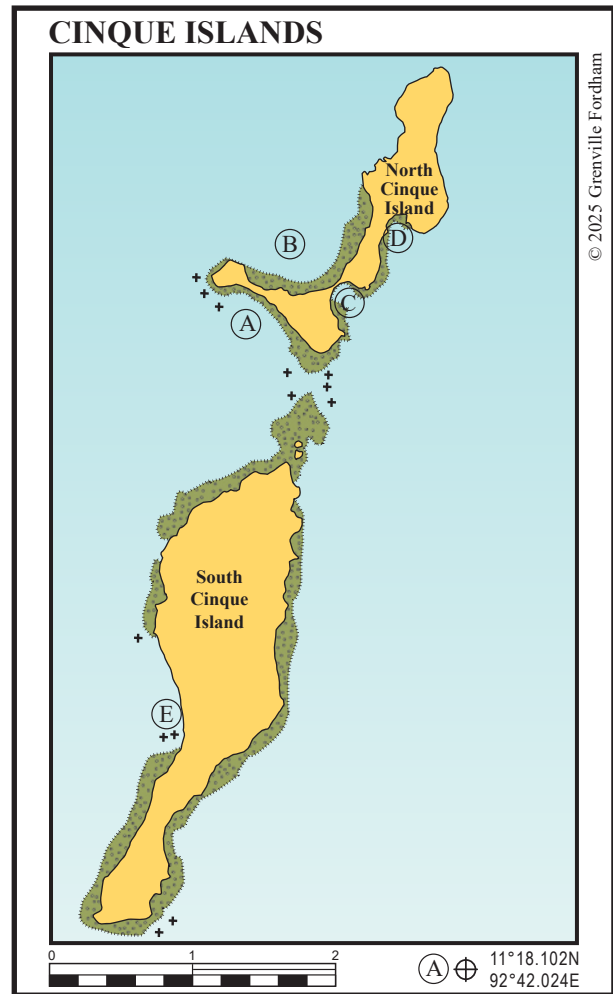
Anchor on sand in 8-16 metres off the fringing reef south of the west headland. Excellent snorkelling all around this reef edge.

(B) NORTH CINQUE WEST BAY
22 miles from Port Blair



11°18.752N, 92°42.392E

Great shelter in the southwest season. Anchor on sand in front of the tombolo in 7-12 metres. Good access ashore and as everywhere here great snorkeling.



Ed SHIELS

One of the Cinque Islands’ spectacular beaches



C NORTH CINQUE EAST BAY
22 miles from Port Blair



11°18.380N, 92°42.899E

When conditions permit this is the best spot. There's a 100-metre opening between the fringing reef to the centre of the beach. Approach slowly and carefully, with a good lookout, heading northwest until your comfortable depth in 5-9 metres on the sandy patch. The beach is all-tide access from this side.

D NORTH CINQUE GWALU BAY
23 miles from Port Blair



11°18.823N, 92°43.114E

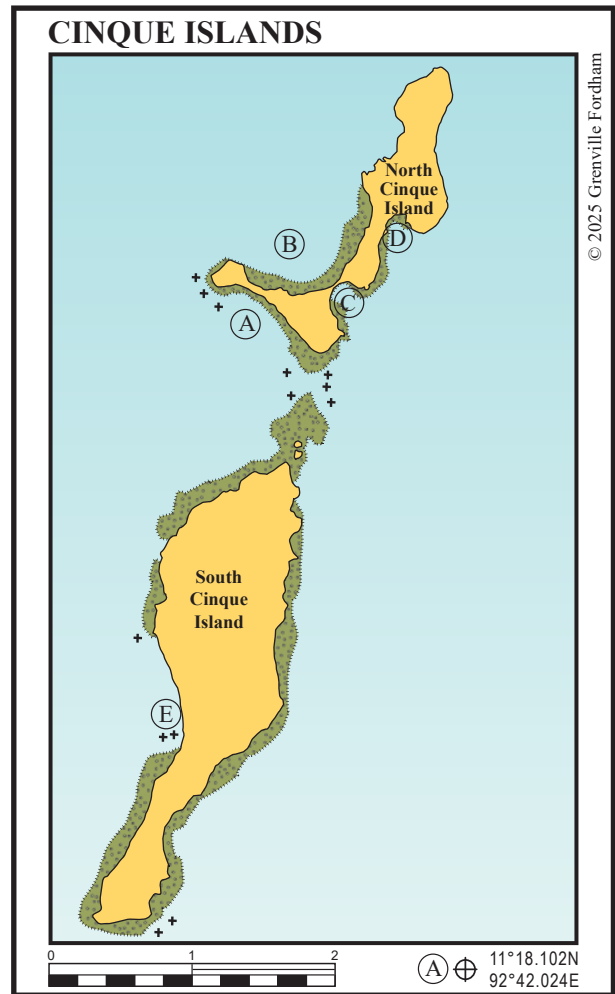
Gwalu Bay provides the best shelter on this side during stronger northeasterlies. Anchor on sand 200 metres off the beach in the west of the bay in 15-18 metres. On the west end of the beach is a 200-metre walking track across to the north side of the island and a half-kilometre easy rock and sand ramble to the tombolo at low tide.

E SOUTH CINQUE
25 miles from Port Blair



11°15.775N, 92°41.494E

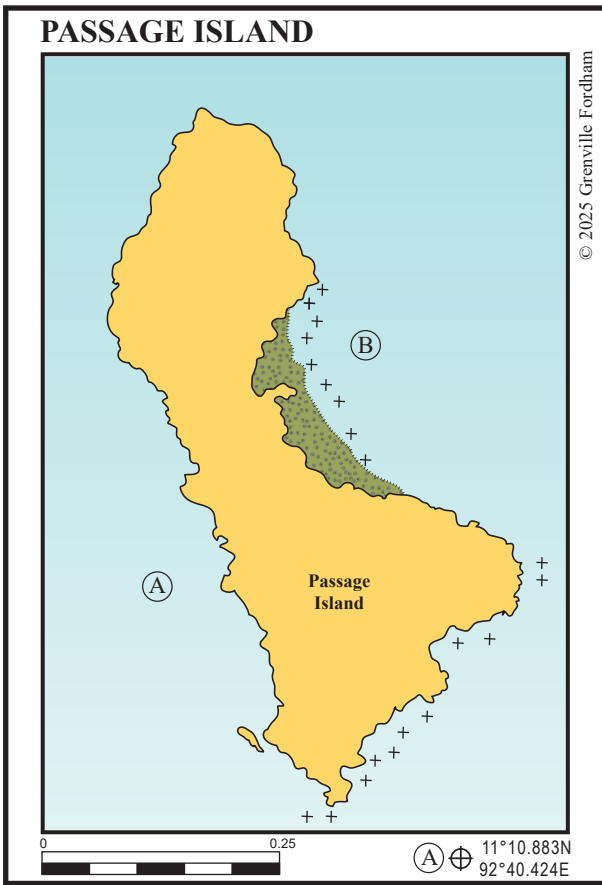
Anchor on sand north of the fringing reef at the south end of the beach in 5-12 metres. This 800 metre all-tide access beach is magic. Good walks and wildlife ashore and easy snorkeling off the fringing reef.



Diving in the Andamans

ED SHIELS





PASSAGE ISLAND & SISTERS ISLAND

Passage Island (CHA-GO-DA) and The Sisters are four and six miles south of South Cinque Island. They're surrounded by deep water where currents, overfalls and surrounding coral heads make them less attractive for longer stays for cruising yachtsmen. However, we've listed their three main anchorages because they're so isolated and beautiful. Well worth a stop if time permits.

A PASSAGE WEST
31 miles from Port Blair

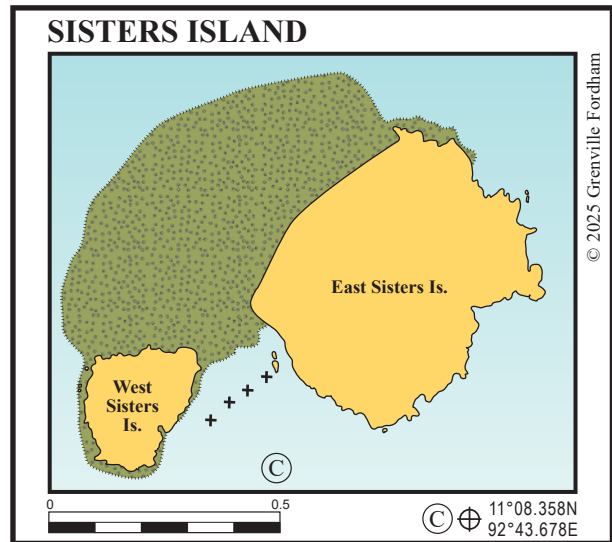
11°10.883N, 92°40.424E

For best protection in the northeast season, anchor off the fringing reef in 12-20 metres anywhere along this coast. No beaches but great snorkelling and fishing here.

B PASSAGE EAST
30 miles from Port Blair

11°11.110N, 92°40.698E

Anchor in the middle of the bay in 15-22 metres well off the fringing reef. There's a mid-tide beach but best not go ashore here if you don't want to scratch up your dinghy keel. Good snorkelling and fishing.



C THE SISTERS
32 miles from Port Blair

11°08.358N, 92°43.678E

Anchor on sand in 10-20 metres in the middle between East and West Sisters Islands. This spot is special but a bit exposed in all but the calmest conditions.

There's a massive 250-acre rectangular coral patch running north east on the other side where only the highest bombie tops dry on the lowest tides.

The reef edges have excellent snorkelling and fishing. East Sister has a sand beach with access in front of the anchorage on the west end that runs some 700 metres out of sight further northeast. It's a good walk each way or to enjoy a sunset.



YACHTS/AVI ARGENBERG - CREATIVECOMMONS LICENSE

Mangrove tree on Havelock Island beach

NARCONDAM ISLAND

Narcondam Island is remote and largely uninhabited. It's approximately 140 miles northeast of Port Blair. It's an extinct volcano rising 700 metres above sea level. The 7.5 sq km, largely cone-shaped, island is known for its rich biodiversity and is a designated wildlife sanctuary. It was recently proposed for inclusion in UNESCO's list of world heritage sites. Most notably the Narcondam Hornbill is endemic to the island and is classified as endangered.

(A) NARCONDAM SOUTH BAY

138 miles from Port Blair



13°25.822N, 9°415.430E

Best protection in strong northeasterlies is found here in 16-20 metres on rock, sand and broken coral off the southern cliffs.

(B) NARCONDAM MANTA BAY

138 miles from Port Blair



13°25.831N, 94°15.851E

Anchor east of the crag in 16-22 metres on rock, sand and broken coral. Schools of manta rays frequent this anchorage.

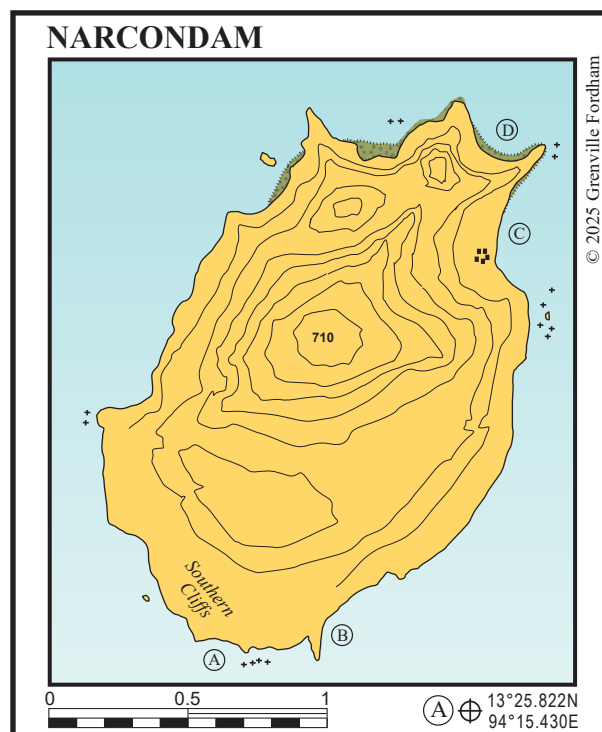
(C) NARCONDAM POLICE POST BAY

141 miles from Port Blair



13°27.383N, 94°16.592E

Anchor in 6-10 metres in the south of the north bay in front of the police station. The dozen army and police officers do two-month stints and will make you welcome, as long as you have all your paperwork in order.



(D) NARCONDAM NORTH BAY

142 miles from Port Blair



13°27.802N, 94°16.514E

This is the best anchorage when conditions permit. Anchor in 12-18 metres off the fringing reef and beach in the northeast bay. A picturesque spot with good snorkelling.

Basin, south side, Narcondam Island

ROHITJAHNAVI – CREATIVECOMMONS LICENSE





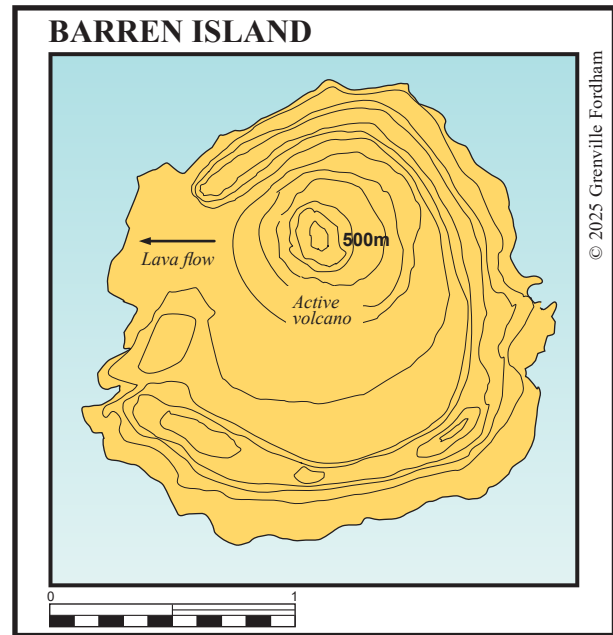
LITTLE ANDAMAN

Down at the southern end of the Andaman archipelago, Little Andaman Island offers a secluded escape, rich in natural allure and cultural intrigue. This largely undeveloped and uninhabited island is the fourth largest group, spanning some 734 sq km.

It's a haven of lush tropical forests, sprawling beaches and dramatic waterfalls. Its rugged, untouched landscape contrasts with the busier northern islands, appealing to those in search of quieter spots.

The main anchorage is at Hut Bay, the island's administrative settlement, where yachts can find good shelter and reasonable holding on sand off the port entrance. Little Andaman is separated from its northern counterpart by the Duncan Passage, a deep and navigable channel approximately 30 miles long, known for its strong tidal currents and occasional rough weather.

While crossing, sailors should be mindful of local fishing activity and the seasonal presence of whales. The island itself boasts highlights like Butler Bay, a crescent-shaped beach popular with surfers and the serene Whisper Wave Falls. Beyond its natural beauty, Little Andaman is home to the Onge people, one of the region's indigenous tribes, whose preserved culture adds a unique dimension to any visit.



BARREN ISLAND

Barren Island is a geological wonder, rising dramatically from the Andaman Sea as a solitary, volcanic sentinel. Located some 70 miles northeast of Port Blair, it is the region's only active volcano and a striking sight close up.

Its barren, ashen slopes and steaming crater create an otherworldly atmosphere, while the surrounding seabed, shaped by ancient lava flows, has given rise to an exceptional underwater ecosystem. The island's surrounding waters are deep, with limited options for anchoring due to steep drop-offs with black volcanic mud dust and strong currents. Anchoring serenely here is a 'dark art'.

This volcanic pinnacle boasts gin-clear underwater clarity all around with vibrant marine life that's exceptional for divers and snorkellers. The sporadic coral colours against the black sand and lava backdrops are works of art.

Best timed on neap tides or during the hour at both ends of the tide there's tranquil diving opportunities close to shore. Keep your eyes looking to the deep. This is the place you'll likely spot manta rays, giant paddle-tailed barracudas, schools of big-eyed trevally and yes... bigger sharks.

Visitors' permits are required due to its protected status and the fact that it might just 'go off' again sometime soon.

Whether admired from sea level or explored beneath the surface, it is singular and mesmerising. Barren Island volcano will leave an indelible impression as a raw and powerful testament to the dramatic forces of nature.