

Firewall...

isn't quite one of the 'go there before you climb anywhere else' venues at Railay on the Phra Nang Peninsula, Thailand but it is home to one of the very best routes of F6a that exists just about anywhere on the globe! For a decade or more, the sun-rock location of Railay has been a magnet for 'off-season' climbing for Europeans and North Americans alike and it shows no sign of losing its attraction yet. Although the climate doesn't suit everyone, the climbing is pretty amazing and the situation leaves absolutely nothing to be desired. The joy of getting away for some routes in the sun when most of the rest of the world is shivering to death shouldn't be overlooked.



Featured Route: It's easy to wax lyrically about a route halfway around the world that only a handful of UK based climbers might ever do, but *The Groove Tube* (F6a) really is a stunner! The rock and the pro are both very good and the moves great but yet *The Groove Tube* is somehow still greater than you'd expect from a 25m single pitch.

Rest days are perhaps the major plus of a climbing trip to Thailand with anything from snorkeling or sight-seeing trips to remote islands on offer. The more adventurous can sign up for a 'try-dive' or a full-on scuba diving course, canoeing, jungle trek or elephant safari!

Tips: This is a JGDI pitch – just godda do it!

Clips: A single rope and a rack of clips plus a pair of flipflops, a half gallon of water and a belay buddy of course...

'Must Do's':

To be fair, nothing else at Firewall gets close to *The Groove Tube* at F6a. So check out the following instead...

Alternatives:

Ton Sai, just across the bay, has the awesome *Stagasauras* (F6a+) or the multi-pitch *Humanity* (F6a-6b+) to do at similar grades.

Rest Days:

Essential Beta

How to get there: A three-day trip for most visitors ends at Krabi. From there take a long-tail out to Railay itself or go via Songthsews (taxi) to Ao Nang and hence onto Railay via long-tail.

When to Visit: The 'off season' - late autumn through spring - is the usual time to visit. Flights for pre-Xmas trips tend to be more expensive. Expect 25+ deg heat and high humidity even in winter!

Where to Stay/Shop:

Accommodation at Railay is plentiful and includes anything from straw huts right through to a 5-Star hotel!

Which Guide: *King Climbers* (published by Somporn Suebhait – aka 'King') is the guide most visitors seem to use. It's currently in its 5th Edition. Alternatively, Sam Lightner's guide supports the local re-bolting efforts. Finally, check out the following website for general info <http://www.railay.com>.



Photos: Main: The main section of *The Groove Tube* (F 6a). Secondary: Ton Sai Bay, Railay with Ton Sai, Dum's Kitchen, Tyrolean Wall and Tiger Wall stretching away into the distance.