

Doi Inthanon National Park

North

Amidst its rugged mountain, the national park houses the country's highest peak Doi Inthanon. Its mountain range is watershed that originates many rivers, as well as Ping River that fills up power-generating Bhumiphol Dam. In its lush jungle, the park has many natural attractions including MaeYa Waterfall which is considered the country's most beautiful waterfall. Doi Inthanon National Park acquires total area of 482.40 square kilometres, covering parts of Amphoe Chomthong, Amphoe Mae Cham, Amphoe Mae Wang and King-Amphoe Doi Lo of Chiang Mai.

Doi Inthanon is one of the first 14 forests

of Thailand the government has decided to declare as a national park on October 7, 1959. The establishment of this national park was completed in 1978.

Geography

Rugged mountain envelopes the whole area supporting the country's highest peak Doi Inthanon to tower at 2,565 metres above mean sea level. Doi Hua Mot Luang is the second highest peak at 2,330 metres. Doi Inthanon is watershed jungle that fills up numerous rivers including Mae Klang, Mae Malo, Mae Pon, Mae Hoi, Mae Ya, Mae Cham, Mae Khan and tributary of Mae Ping River that fill up power-generating Bhumiphol Dam.





Climate

By its elevation of, it is rather cool all the year round. The humidity is very high that setting fire is quite difficult on the mountain. At the top, temperature drops lower than zero in winter and quite comfortable in summer.

Flora and fauna

Due to deforestation by hilltribe, some empty plains appear interrupting the jungle while treeless hills can be seen along the both side uphill. Doi Inthanon National Park comprises many forest types including hill evergreen forest, coniferous forest, deciduous dipterocarp forest and mix deciduous forest. They are homes to important plants such as *Tectona grandis*, *Hopea odorata*, *Shorea obtusa*, *Dipterocarpus obtusifolius*, *Diospyros mollis*, *Pterocarpus macrocarpus*, *Terminalia alata* and *Michelia floribunda*.

The forest is beautified by plenty of wild flowers such as *Vanda coerulea*, *Rhynchosstylis gigantea* and *Rhododendron moulemeinense*, Spagnum Moss can be found at high elevation.

Being treated by hunting and badly deforestation by hilltribe, number of wildlife in the park has fallen and large mammals had extincted from this forest. The remaining wildlife include Serow, Goral, Tiger, Chestnut-tailed Minla and Green-tailed Sunbird.

Attractions

◆ **Doi Inthanon Peak.** Presently, road to the mountain top allows visitors to access the peak conveniently by car. Anyway, naturalists who want experience conventional way to explore the peak can trek through the jungle from Mae Klang Waterfall and stay overnight in Karen village.

◆ **The cool and damp weather** that covers the peak all the time allows thick mosses to blanket all the tree's trunks, making the forest looked like dating back to million years ago.

◆ **Mae Klang Waterfall.** The waterfall is situated at the lower hill near the entrance gate. Tourist can use Chom Thong-Doi Inthanon Road. Turn left at kilometres 8, one kilometre from the main road.

◆ **Mae Ya Waterfall.** Situated in the southern part of the park, this big waterfall cascades through 260 metres long cliffs from Mae Ya Stream. Can be accessed via sub road, off Chom Thong-Hot Road.

◆ **Siriphum Waterfall.** It was named Siriphum to honour His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen. It is situated by kilometres 31 of Chom Thong-Doi Inthanon Road.

◆ **Vachirathan Waterfall** or Tat Khong Yong Waterfall. Originated from Mae Klang Stream, the 70 metres high waterfall is situated at kilometres 22 of Chom Thong-Doi Inthanon Road.

◆ **Caves.** There are numerous caves in the park. The most beautiful cave is Brichinda Cave. Situated on the eastern part of the park, the big cave houses beautiful formation of stalagmites and stalactites.

Getting there

■ From Chiang Mai downtown, motorist can go via Chiang Mai-Hot Road, turn right at kilometres 58, before Chom Thong Market, Doi Inthanon is 48 kilometres away. Get off and turn left at kilometres 8, Mae Klang Waterfall is a kilometre away.

