

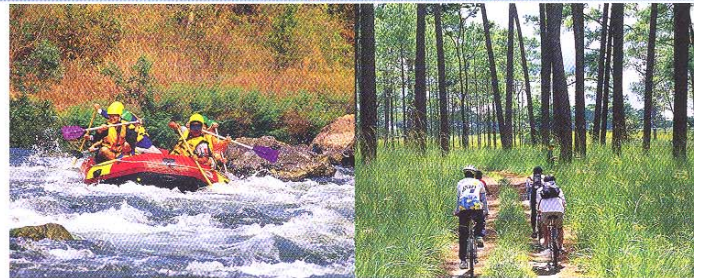
Exploring the National Realm in the rainy season

As the cool shower sprinkles across the mountains, grasslands, and forests, its freshness has brought the natural spirit back to life once again. The verdant meadow attracts a many animals, both large and small, to taste the first greenery of the season. Meanwhile, a wide variety of flora lively exhibit their colorful sweet blooms to brighten the entire area.

For those tree connoisseurs the very beginning of the season, is the opportune time to visit Phu Hin Rong Kla National Park, located between Phetchabun and Phitsanulok province. This place features its prominent morphology of a sandstone mountain with flat summit unique to the Northeastern part of Thailand. Besides this visitors can catch a glimpse of other natural wonders such as Lan Hin Pum (studding stone ground) and Lan Hin Taek (broken stone ground). More importantly, the rains will have awoken many sleepy flora flourishing across the sandstone ground. They include Pro Phu Miang (*Caulokaempferia alba*), thriving like the sea of flowers, Lin Mang Kon (*Habenaria rhodocheila*) bearing its orange posies along the soggy stone crevices, and Pro Hin (*Caulokaempferia saxicola*) that features miniature yellow blooms.

Apart from these graceful species, Phu Hin Rong Kla is entangled with historical background involving the fights between the Communist party of Thailand and the Thai government. With prized and verdant forest, wonderful cadcases, and beautiful pine forest, the area can attract visitors to come back time and again.

At Pa Hin Ngam National Park, the entire area now looks so fascinating with a large pink carpet of Kra Chiao Bua (*Curcuma sparganifolia*) flaunting their blooming flowers across the dry dipterocarp forest. Moreover, tourists can catch a glimpse of stone sculptured by nature in various eye-



striking shapes and forms standing majestically on the 200-rai Lan Hin Ngam. During the rainy season the insect-eating plants like Yat Nam Khang (*Drosera indica*) and the pitcher plants are found in abundance.

Those with adventurous minds can keep themselves thrilled with outdoor activities including rafting and cycling. The recommended zone perfect for safe rafting is at Hin Phoeng in Na Di District of Prachinburi. It is located in the area of the Sai Yai Ranger Station of Khao Yai National Park. There are many enjoyable rapids such as Wang Yao, Wang Bon, and Wang Sai. Rafting and swimming can be done within 2 hours and still can make for overnight stay at Khao Yai National Park afterward. An other activity is to bike around the pine forest at Salaeng Laung grassland in Phitsanulok province. The greenery of the pine forest comes with the fresh showers. The cycling trail covers about 14 kilometers, winding from Nong Mae Na to the Nang Phaya grassland.

For a safe journey, be careful while visiting the forest during the rainy season. Be careful of the torrential floods and be armed with a wide variety of water-proof equipped and clothing.