

Doi Inthanon National Park

Amidst its rugged mountains, the national park contains the country's highest peak Doi Inthanon. Its mountain range is a watershed from which many rivers originate, as well as Ping River that fills power – generating Bhumibol Dam. In its lush jungles, the park has many natural attractions including Mae Ya Waterfall, which is considered the country's most beautiful waterfall. Doi Inthanon National Park covers a total area of 481.89 square kilometres, including parts of Chom Thong, Mae Chaem, Mae Wang and Doi Lo districts of Chiang Mai province. Doi Inthanon is one of the first of fourteen forests of Thailand the government decided to declare as a national park on October 7, 1959. The establishment of this national park was completed in 1972.

Geography

Rugged mountains envelop 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 in the park at 2,330 metres above mean sea level. Doi Inthanon is a watershed jungle that fills up numerous rivers including the Mae Klang, Mae Malo, Mae Pan, Mae Hoi, Mae Ya, Mae Cham, Mae Khan and a tributary of the Mae Ping River that fills the power-generating Bhumibol Dam.

Climate

Due to its elevation, it is rather cool all the year round. As the humidity is very high, setting a fire is quite difficult on the mountain. At the top, the temperature drops below zero in winter and is quite comfortable in summer.

Flora and Fauna

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

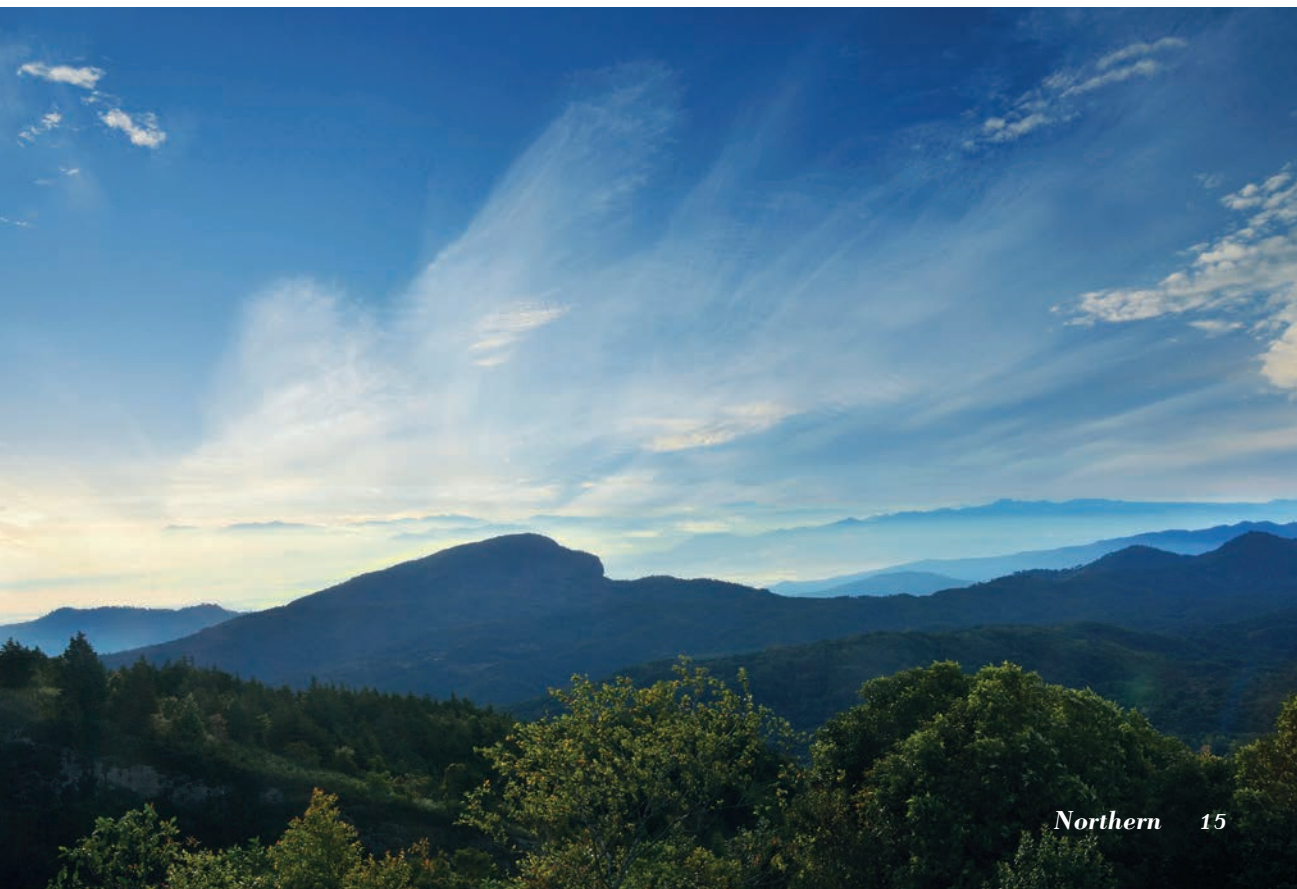


alata and *Michelia floribunda*. The forest is beautified with plenty of wild flowers such as *Vanda coerulea*, *Rhynchostylis gigantea*, *Rhododendron moulmianense* and sphagnum moss can be found at the highest elevation.

Depleted by hunting and badly affected by deforestation caused by hill tribes, the number of wildlife in the park has fallen and large mammals have become extinct in this forest. The remaining wildlife includes Tiger, Southwest China Serow, Chinese Goral and Northern Red Muntjac. Special kind of birds such as Green-tailed Sunbird, Chestnut-tailed Minla, Babblers, Dark-throated Thrush, Chestnut Thrush, Ashy Woodpigeon, Eurasian Woodcock, Rusty-naped Pitta and Ashy-throated Warbler.

Attractions

◆ **Doi Inthanon Peak.** Presently, the road to the mountain top allows visitors to access the highest peak conveniently by car. Additionally, naturalists who want to experience the conventional way to explore the Doi Inthanon 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 the trunks of all the trees, making the forest look quite prehistoric.

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

◆ **Mae Ya Waterfall** is situated in the southern part of the park. This big waterfall cascades over 260 metres high cliffs from Mae Ya Stream. It can be accessed via a sub road, off Chom Thong-Hot Road.

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

◆ **Vajirathan Waterfall or Tat Khong Yong Waterfall** is a 70-metre high waterfall, originating from the Mae Klang Stream and situated at the 22nd kilometre of Chom Thong-Doi Inthanon Road.

◆ **Kio Mae Pan Nature Trail,** One of the most beautiful nature trails in Thailand. The trail passed montane rain forest and sub-alpine forest with many fern, flowers, birds, mammals, insect, waterfall and great viewpoint.

Getting There

- From Chiang Mai, take the Chiang Mai-Hot route. After reaching the 58th kilometres, before Chom Thong Market, turn right onto the Chom Thong-Doi Inthanon Road, Doi Inthanon is 48 kilometres further on.

