

High Season - Is it A Myth

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Although the number is greater in the traditional high season here coinciding with the European winter, more and more Europeans are finding their way here during the low season in an effort to make their funds last longer.

Tourism from Oceania has remained static over the past couple of years. Once again those government travel warnings have scared people and even those who make to the hotels here are reluctant to get out and explore the surrounding areas. This is good for the hotels, some have even been reluctant to dispel

tourist fears so as to keep them utilising the facilities of the hotel complex. But this is not new, when some friends of a Thai colleague visited my hometown in Australia many years ago, I went to meet them and show them around. They voiced the same concerns and said the hotel staff suggested they not go out at night.

Although tourist numbers have increased for the year 2002, one notices that the difference between arrivals in the "low" season and the "high" season only vary by twenty five percent. Also, while the least

number of people arrive in May and June, there is an upsurge again in July and August, which reflects the European holiday season.

Airlines of different countries have high and low season fares that vary according to their own citizen's travel habits. When compared to Thailand's high and low season formula you will find they don't correspond at all, except for a week or so around New Year. So at best you could say the true high season is only for one or two weeks around New Year and



that's it.

Friends visiting this month, still high season according to hotel pricing structure, are finding a host of vacant rooms in all price categories. Some places are full, but they have been quietly building a solid customer base over many years with good service and realistic pricing. Checking these places you will find that many of their guests are return visitors and as independent travellers account for 54% of all arrivals to Thailand and return visitors account for 49%, these are the ones to look after.

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