

Rainy Season Blues

Contributed by John Cheshire

Every year in May the monsoon, or rainy season (...è tsuyu in Japanese), sweeps over the Japanese island of Okinawa. It's often said that this is a bad time for tourists to come. Although I'm not about to try to predict the weather, let's take a look at what we might expect from the Okinawan rainy season.

Between 1971 and 2000, the average rainy season started on May 8th and finished on June 23rd and lasted 46 days. The earliest start was April 20th in 1980, and the latest finish was July 9th in 1976. During the months of May and June, Okinawa typically receives about 20 inches of rain and experiences 25 rainy days.

{jumi [/adsensearticle.php]}

Currently I'm experiencing my second rainy season in Okinawa, and it is very different from the first one. Last year, in 2006, it rained almost every day, and we had nearly twice the average rainfall. Everything was wet all of the time, even the inside of my apartment. It was really depressing, and I wondered if I could go through it again. However, this year things haven't been so bad. It has rained on most days in the morning, but by afternoon it has usually cleared up and been nice. Unfortunately, if there is a dry rainy season, it means there may be water shortages later this year.

Visiting Okinawa during the rainy season probably isn't the best idea, but if you're lucky you will be able to experience the spring in Okinawa before the sweltering heat of the summer gets into full swing. You'll also probably avoid the typhoons that become common during the late summer.