

◉ GET WETTER THAN WET

If you're going to be rained on, why not wallow in it? Time for a swim. You're wet anyway, so what have you got to lose? Admittedly, the sun lounger may lose its appeal when a storm brews overhead, but the rain here usually hammers down for an hour, then clears. Picture this. You're lying back catching some rays and the skies cloud over. The world turns a few shades darker and a cool breeze whispers across your skin, raising goose bumps. A few fat rain drops splash at your feet. Stand in the open appreciating being cool, then dip a toe in. Your body temperature has lowered, as has the air temperature, so the water feels warm. It's soothing, and the plinking of raindrops on the surface provides a musical interlude. If you time it right, you may be able to head back to the lounger once the downpour is done.

Swimming in the rain is such a popular pastime that there is a Facebook page for fans and the well-known (*sic*) Band of Clyde wrote a song about it.

Where: Lan Anh swimming pool complex on 291 Cach Mang Thang Tam, Q3. And if all else fails, there's a brewery on site

◉ LET IT SLIDE AWAY

Why just swim when you can party it up at Dam Sen Water Park? This place is fun no matter what the weather. With rides ranging from the multi slide, where you can set up friendly races on conjoined slides four across, to the Twister Space Bowl, a covered slide that spits you into a rounded funnel before depositing you, generally in an undignified manner, into the pool below. The newest ride is the Boomerang, a giant slide 12 metres in height and double that in width. According to the water park website, this is an "Indian weapon-shaped" ride. Thrill seekers fly down the steep ramp in a three-person raft, ending in a pool at the bottom, ready to do it again. Rain or shine, these rides provide hours of entertainment.

On all of the slides, keep your hands behind your head to avoid a nasty bump.

Where: 3 Hoa Binh, Q11. Visit www.damsenwaterpark.com.vn for more info

◉ DIVE INTO IT

If raindrops keep falling on your head making your eyes red, how about getting underwater? Scuba diving works in rainy weather. In the shallows, the rain can stir up sediment affecting visibility, but in a brief storm deeper dive sites are unaffected. Even during rain, the fish that you came to see stick around. If you're already underwater when the rain starts it will feel like day has turned to night as the sky darkens, turning the water scene into a mystical shadowy place, full of flitting dark shapes. It's a good idea to carry a torch for these dives. The sun won't be there to comfort you when you get back on the boat, but diving can be a great way to save a cloudy day.

With any sign of lightning you should get out of the water. Water conducts electricity



PHOTO BY NALISA LEKUTAI

and lightning is attracted to the tank attached to your back.

Where: Organise through Rainbow Divers in District 2. Visit www.divevietnam.com for more details

◉ GO FISH

Fish don't swim south in the rainy season, so consider a monsoonal fishing trip. It doesn't rain on fish, just on fishermen. Fishing in the rain can be uncomfortable for the person fishing, but it usually beats most other times to fish. The rain drops break up the smooth surface of the water reducing the penetration of light. Fish that shy away from bright light will come out to feed. Also, rain washes insects and other food sources into the water, giving the fish something to get out and about for. A prolonged heavy storm won't offer the best fishing conditions, but a brief downpour can have a positive impact on the conditions.

Dress dry. The one thing that can make a rainy fishing trip miserable is being wet. Invest in some wet weather gear or an extra large umbrella.

Where: Try the fishing park Thu Nga at 558/12 Binh Quoi, Binh Thanh, 8kms from the city centre. Undercover thatched huts sit over a murky pond and for a handful of dong, visitors are given an old school fishing rod, a prawn as bait, a hook and a float

◉ MUD WRESTLE

There are a few team sports that can also work in the rainy season. Our vote goes to rugby. This is a hard core sport at the best of times, so why not throw in the added challenge of adverse weather conditions? It may look a little more like mud wrestling by the end of the game, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Most spectators are unlikely to notice the difference.

Wet weather makes the rugby ball slippery, so expect lots of fumbles, increasing the wrestling opportunities.

Where: RMIT sports grounds. Check out the Saigon Rugby Club at www.saigonrfc.org

◉ GET A FIRM GRIP ON IT

If you're up for a round of golf, hit the course in the rain, suggests Chris Baldwin of TravelGolf. When it rains the clubs in Vietnam are wide open with no waiting, even on weekends. The rain is generally light and stops quickly, so grab a golf broly and away you go. When it's wet, the balls don't roll as far and won't spin as much. A champion golfer can adjust their game for all weather conditions. Learn some wet weather strategies and you may increase your competitive chances. Be careful of lightning, though — your club is a conductor rod.

Wipe your hands on a towel before every shot. This is not to keep your hands dry; it is to keep your grips dry. Non-slippery grips are the key to good rain golf and can prevent collateral damage from flying golf clubs.

Where: Try Song Be Golf Resort, 22kms north of the city centre; www.songbegolf.com

◉ STOP & SHOOT

If you struggle to get active in the rainy season, get inspired and photograph it instead. Bad weather can present the perfect opportunity to work your creative skills. Shooting in rain produces dramatic atmospheres and soft, blurred, romantic scenes. Lightning strikes, water drops, cloud formations and reflections can make stunning images. Rain also brings out adifferent behaviour patterns in people. Watching people through the lens in the rain can bring out some of the best portraits.

Your camera is going to need a raincoat. If you can't afford the fancy rain gear for your camera sometimes a plastic bag and a rubber band can do the trick. A lens hood can also help, providing you don't point your lens to the skies.

Where: Wherever you wander 