

LAND OF THE KHMERS (14 days)

(Phnom Penh – Kompong Cham – Kompong Thom – Kampot – Sihanoukville – Battambang – Siem Reap)



Private tour (PDT-09): Daily departure from Phnom Penh with English or French speaking guide (other languages are on request and may be subject to supplements).

ITINERARY:

Phnom Penh – Arrival (-/L/D)

DAY 1 Transfer from Phnom Penh International airport to the hotel (rooms may not be ready until the afternoon). Lunch at hotel.

Afternoon, visit the Independence Monument, and the National Museum, also called Musée des Beaux-Arts. A French archaeologist and painter, Georges Groslier, designed it in Khmer style in 1917. The museum contains a collection of Khmer art - notably sculptures - throughout the ages. Visit the Royal Palace, built by King Norodom in 1866 on the site of the old town, and the Silver Pagoda. Located within the grounds of the Royal Palace, the Silver Pagoda is so named because of its floor, which is made up of 5000 silver tiles. The treasures include a solid gold Buddha encrusted and weighing 90kilos and a small 17th century emerald and baccarat crystal Buddha. End your afternoon with the visit of the Wat Phnom Temple, Phnom Penh's namesake. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at hotel.

Phnom Penh - Kompong Cham - Kompong Thom (B/L/D)

DAY 2 Breakfast at hotel. Depart Phnom Penh for Kompong Cham. Visit Wat Nokor Pagoda with its ancient temple and modern style pagoda (12th century). Brief tour of Kompong Cham to view examples of colonial architecture. Lunch at a local restaurant in Kampong Cham.

Depart by car to Kompong Thom. En route, visit of the Wat Kohear Nokor temple (11th century). You will also visit the nearby village and its pagoda where you can observe the daily life of the monks. Continue to Phum Prasat with its single ancient temple and the nearby modern pagoda. Arrive in Kompong Thom and check in at the hotel. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at Stung Sen Hotel (2-star, best available).

Kompong Thom - Phnom Penh (B/L/D)

DAY 3 Breakfast at hotel. Depart from Kampong Thom for Sambor Prei Kuk. Enjoy traditional daily life scenes of rural Cambodia. Visit the ancient capital of Chenla with its 100 temples dating back from the pre-Angkorian period.

Return to Kampong Thom for lunch at a local restaurant.

Drive back to Phnom Penh. Arrive in Phnom Penh and transfer to the hotel. Dinner and accommodation at hotel.

Phnom Penh – Kampot (B/L/D)

DAY 4 Breakfast at hotel. Depart from Phnom Penh for Kampot. En route, stop at Tonle Bati and visit Ta Prohm temple (12-13th century) and Yeay Peau temple (12th century). Visit the Prasat Neang Khmao, the temple of the Black Virgin (10th century). Visit a silk weaving village before proceeding to Takeo. Lunch at local restaurant.

Take a boat from Takeo to Phnom Da (please note that the speedboat does not have a cover or any shade – hat and sun tan cream essential). Visit Phnom Da temple, a pre-Angkorian laterite tower (6th century) and Asram Maharoseil (6th century), an Indian-style sandstone temple constructed in a style unlike any other temple in Cambodia (the climb up is easy as this particular Phnom (hill) is not very high. The path up to the temple is steep, over some big rocks). Return to Takeo by boat and continue to Kampot. Panoramic tour of the town check-in at hotel. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at hotel.

Kampot – Kep - Sihanoukville (B/L/D)

DAY 5 Breakfast at hotel. Drive to Kep, formerly known as Kep-sur-Mer. This beautiful coastal area was once the favorite holiday spot for Cambodia's French-influenced elite. Boat trip to Rabbit Island. Return to Kampot for lunch at local restaurant.

Drive along the coasts and the Damrei (Elephant) Mountains to Kompong Som (Sihanoukville) (96 km. 2 hours drive). Check-in at Sokha Beach Resort. Dinner and accommodation at Sokha Beach Resort.

Sihanoukville (B/-/D)

DAY 6 Breakfast at hotel. Day at leisure to enjoy the beach (vehicle and guide at disposal). Lunch not included. Dinner and accommodation at Sokha Beach Resort.

Sihanoukville – Phnom Penh (B/-/D)

DAY 7 Breakfast at hotel. Free at leisure to enjoy the beach (vehicle and guide at disposal). Lunch not included. Return to Phnom Penh in the afternoon. Dinner and accommodation at hotel.

Phnom Penh – Battambang (B/L/D)

DAY 8 Breakfast at hotel. Depart Phnom Penh for Battambang by overland. Stop at the Silversmith village, see the pottery manufactories in Kompong Chhnang and have a last stop to see a fish market. Lunch at local restaurant.

Arrive in Battambang, and check-in at the hotel. Orientation tour of Battambang town if time permits. Dinner at local restaurant. Accommodation at TE.O Hotel.

Battambang (B/L/D)

DAY 9 Breakfast at hotel. Visit the Provincial Museum then drive along the picturesque Sangker River to visit Wat Ek Phnom (11th century – Suryavarman I). Lunch at local restaurant.

Afternoon, visit Phnom Banon, with its five sandstone towers on top of a hill and enjoy a magnificent view of the surrounding plains. Return to Battambang for a walk through the town to discover its beautiful colonial architecture and the local market. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at TE.O Hotel.

Battambang - Siem Reap (by boat) (B/L/D)

DAY 10 Breakfast at hotel.

Option I (Mid July – Mid Feb)

Travel by private boat to Siem Reap along the Sangker River: enjoy unspoiled landscapes and traditional daily-life scenes. Stop at Cheur Khmao Pagoda, “Black Wood Pagoda”, in Bak Prier floating village and cross the floating village of Prek Tuol. Picnic lunch on board.

Continue by boat across the Tonle Sap Lake to Chhong Kneas floating village. On arrival transfer to Siem Reap and check-in at hotel.

Option II (Feb-Jul)

Depart from Battambang to Siem Reap via Sisophon by overland transfer. Lunch at local restaurant in Sisophon. Continue to Siem Reap. Arrive in Siem Reap and transfer to hotel. Dinner at accommodation at hotel.

Siem Reap (B/L/D)

DAY 11 Breakfast at hotel.

Visit the Roluos Group. The monuments of Roluos, which served as the capital of Indravarman I (reigned 877-89), are among the earliest large, permanent temples built by the Khmers and mark the beginning of Khmer classical art. Preah Ko erected by Indravarman I in the late 9th century dedicated by the King to his ancestors in 880. Bakong the largest and most interesting of the Roluos group temples, with his active Buddhist monastery just to the north of the east entrance. Lolei built on an islet in the center of a large reservoir (now rice fields) by Yasovarman I, the founder to the first city at Angkor. Lunch at hotel.

In the afternoon, continue your temple tour. See the unique interior brick sculptures Prasat Kravan, the Srah Srang reservoir (known as “The Royal Baths” was once used for ritual bathing), Banteay Kdei (surrounded by 4 concentric walls), Eastern Mebon (guarded at its corner by stone figures of harnessed elephants, some of which are still in a reasonable state of preservation) and the mountain-temple of Pre Rup until sunset. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at hotel.

Siem Reap (B/L/D)

DAY 12 Breakfast at hotel.

In the morning, visit the most famous of all the temples on the plain of Angkor: Angkor Wat. The temple complex covers 81 hectares and is comparable in size to the Imperial Palace in Beijing. Its distinctive five towers are emblazoned on the Cambodian flag and the 12th century masterpiece is considered by art historians to be the prime example of classical Khmer art and architecture. Angkor Wat’s five towers symbolize Meru’s five peaks - the enclosed wall represents the mountains at the edge of the world and the surrounding moat, the ocean beyond. Lunch at hotel.

Visit the South Gate (with its huge statues depicting the churning of the ocean of milk), the ancient capital of Angkor Thom (12th century), Bayon Temple (unique for its 54 towers decorated with over 200 smiling faces of Avolokitesvara), the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, the Elephants Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King. Sunset at Angkor Wat. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at hotel.

Siem Reap (B/L/D)

DAY 13 An early bird special:

Transfer to the archaeological site for the sunrise from the Phnom Bakheng, one of two hills dominating the plain of Angkor, from where you will have a spectacular view of the Western Baray and Angkor Wat (Diethelm Travel recommendation: Access is steep and may be slippery especially after rains. Not recommended for elderly people). Or sunrise at Srah Srang. Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Morning, transfer to Preah Khan. Built by the King Jayavarman VII, Preah Khan is, like Ta Prohm, a place of towered enclosures and shoulder hugging corridors. Unlike Ta Prohm, however, the temple of Prea Khan is in a reasonable state of preservation and ongoing restoration efforts should maintain and even improve this situation. Continue to Neak Pean, a fountain built in the middle of a pool (representing the paradisiacal Himalayan mountain-lake), and Ta Som. Lunch at hotel

Afternoon, continue the temples tour: Takeo, Thommanon, Chau Say Tevoda and Ta Prohm, one of the most beautiful temples in the area, as it has been relatively untouched since it was discovered and retains much of its mystery. Its appeal lies in the fact that, unlike the other monuments of Angkor, it was abandoned and swallowed by the jungle, looking very much the ways most of the Angkor temples appeared when European explorers first stumbled upon them. Dinner at local restaurant and accommodation at hotel

Siem Reap - Departure (B/L/-)

DAY 14 Breakfast at hotel.

In the morning, drive to the typical Khmer countryside and visit Banteay Srei temple (10th century), regarded as the jewel in the crown of Classical Khmer Art. Continue to visit Banteay Samre, one of the most complete complexes at Angkor due to restoration using the method of “anastylosis”. The name Samre refers to an ethnic group of mountain people, who inhabited the region at the base of Phnom Kulen and were probably related to the Khmers. No inscriptions have been found for this temple, but the style of most of the architecture is of the classic art of the middle period similar to Angkor Wat. The proportions of Banteay Samre are splendid. A unique feature is an interior moat with laterite paving, which when filled with water must have given an ethereal atmosphere to the temple. Lunch at hotel

Visit to “Les Artisans d’Angkor - Chantiers Ecoles” of Siem Reap and time at leisure at a local market (if time permits).

Transfer to Siem Reap International Airport for departure flight to the next destination.

Our tours are inclusive of transfers and tours with local English or French speaking guides (guides in other languages are on request and may be subject to supplements). Private boat from Battambang to Siem Reap, 1 FOC based on 15 paying pax minimum. Accommodation in shared twin rooms at indicated hotels or similar, meals as specified in the program (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner), entrance fees, service charges, room tax and baggage handling. Not included are Christmas and New Year’s Eve Dinners. NOTE: A passport photo must be attached to multiple day entrance passes to the Angkor complex. Visitors can have their picture taken at the entrance checkpoint at no extra charge, however we recommend that you bring along a photo prior to arriving in Cambodia.