

A ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

(From Thailand to Laos Border)
9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

PAILIN BORDER – BATTAMBANG – SIEM REAP – PREAH VIHEAR – STUNG TRENG – DOM KOLOR BORDER



I. HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit the Beautiful Colonial Town of Battambang
- Enjoy Mountain trek the Kulen Mountain Nature Trail
- Get to see Cambodia's rural countryside and take part in a cooking class at a local's home
- Explore the Angkor Archaeological Park, seeing other spectacular temples like the Preah Vihear located in a dramatic setting
- Cycle and kayak along the Sekong River of Stung Treng

II. ITINERARY

DAY 1

PAILIN BORDER – BATTAMBANG

During arrival at the border, pick up by local guide and transfer to Battambang province.

(-)
Overnight in Battambang

DAY 2

BATTAMBANG

Full day tour exploring Battambang on a local Tuk Tuk starting in the early morning. The Battambang province is famous for its rice fields, orchards and typical landscape. Visit different villages, see the life of a typical rural countryside. Learn the steps in making local food specialties such as rice paper, fish paste 'Prahoc' and sticky rice in bamboo 'Grolan'. Afterwards, visit Wat Ek Temple and if time permitted visit Wat Somrong Knong and get an insight about the memorial of the victims during the Khmer Regime

Then go to Phnom Banan of the 11th century, perched on a 400m high hill, allowing a beautiful panoramic view. The next stop will be at Phnom Sampeau. This route marks the front line of the Khmer Rouge. Up on the mountain lies the Killing Caves, the cruel witness to the turbulent past of Cambodia, you can stay and enjoy the eerie yet breath-taking view of the sunset and see bats flying out of the caves.

(B)
Overnight in Battambang

DAY 3

BATTAMBANG – SIEM REAP

Depart from Battambang after breakfast and travel north towards the Banteay Meanchey province to the jungle temple of Banteay Chhmar, famous for its signature faces of Jayavarman VII. After a nice lunch prepared by a local women's group, we start discovering the sleeping

giant of Banteay Chhmar. You see the magnificent carvings of Lokeshvara with 32 arms as well as the beautiful but ruined Hall of Dancers. After clambering about among this sleeping giant, we continue to explore the outer complex, including the outer gate of Ta Prohm, like a smaller cousin of the impressive Angkor Thom gates and protected by a moat, and the jungle-clad face-tower of Samnang Tasok. Afterwards, visit the local village and visit the Soiries du Mekong Silk Center, opened in 200, a silk-weaving school created to help empower local women improve their livelihoods and that of their family. Continue to Siem Reap.

(B)
Overnight Siem Reap

DAY 4

SIEM REAP

Today, experience trekking at the Kulen Mountain (60 km northwards from Siem Reap town), a site important for the Cambodians as the birthplace of the ancient Khmer Empire.

Hike through ever green forest, clamber through stone boulders, across a short bat cave and even take a dip on the clear water river. As you reach the top of the mountain, rangers will escort and share you some knowledge about forest and wildlife. This trail takes time around 3.5-4hrs. Get a chance to see a variety of wildlife, such as Silvered Languor, Pig-tailed macaque, Black giant squirrel, Variable Squirrel, Oriental Pied Hornbill and many other bird species, reptiles, amphibians and some insects.

Have a well-deserved break and enjoy a picnic lunch amidst the sound and ambience of the forest and the waterfalls. Return to meet your driver and depart by driving down the mountain. Continue with a short tour to Banteay Srei temple known as the 'Citadel of Victory', built primarily in red sandstone, a medium that lends itself to the elaborate decorative wall carvings. Back to Siem Reap town and relax at your hotel.

Important Note: *The Kulen Mountain trek last approximately 3.5 – 4 hours. Be ready with hiking shoes, insect repellent spray and comfortable trekking clothes.*

(B/L)
Overnight in Siem Reap

DAY 5

SIEM REAP

Today, by private vehicle, proceed to the Southern Gate of Angkor Thom or the 'Great City'. At the southern gate of Angkor Thom, you will marvel at the imposing 23m (75-foot) high stone faces of Avalokiteshvara, featured in the Tomb Raider movie. At the center of this citadel lies the state temple of Bayon. This temple-mountain, built at the end of the 12th century, is adorned with hundreds of gigantic stone faces. This tour also includes the Terrace of Elephants, the Terrace of the Leper King and the 12 identical towers of Prasat Suor Prat. Later in the day you will discover the most famous temples from the 11th century: Baphuon, Phimeanakas, North Khleang and South Khleang.

Then visit Ta Prohm. It is unforgettable due to the massive trees with thick roots that entangle the walls. They were left here intentionally by the archeologists working on the site to serve as a reminder of how the original discoverers found it and other temples. We then explore the magnificent Angkor Wat, built under Suryavarman II. This day concludes with panoramic views of the Sunset on Angkor Gondola boat.

(B/L)
Overnight in Siem Reap

DAY 6

SIEM REAP

Learn to make traditional Cambodian cuisine in a rural village in a fully hands-on interactive cooking class. Start with a visit to a local family to learn about cooking in a traditional Khmer household, local food customs and superstitions. Take a short walk in the village to visit a local family's garden and see where the ingredients growing. Learn about food superstition and beliefs. Enjoy the meal you just cooked in a lovely pavilion perched over a fishpond surrounded by flowers and fresh herbs.

In the afternoon visit the great Tonle Sap Lake, situated about 55 kilometers from Siem Reap town. Embark on a boat trip to one of the largest and less visited villages on the Tonle Sap Lake, Kampong Khleang. Enjoy a unique experience seeing the floating village and houses built on stilts existing in this great lake. Hop on-board a traditional wooden boat and gain an insight into the daily life of the locals.

(B/L)
Overnight in Siem Reap

DAY 7

SIEM REAP – PREAH VIHEAR

After breakfast check-out from the hotel and drive overland to Preah Vihear province. Along the way, you will stop at Beng Mealea temple; this temple is still partly buried under vegetation; consisting of perfectly squared-off sandstone building blocks. Enjoy a picnic lunch before continuing the trip.

On arrival at Preah Vihear, check-in your hotel then head to see Preah Vihear temple, situated spectacularly atop a 525-metre (1720 ft) cliff in the Dangrek Mountains. The Temple is composed of a series of sanctuaries linked by a system of pavements and staircases over an 800-metre long axis and is built with a clear view of the plains from where it stands. Preah Vihear temple has been listed and declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO on 08 July 2008.

(B/L)
Overnight in Preah Vihear

DAY 8

PREAH VIHEAR – STUNG TRENG

Today we will head to the province of Stung Treng (4 hours approximately). Experience an authentic rural Cambodia in this province, where everything is untouched by major tourism. Enjoy the off the beaten path experience and enjoy the peacefulness of the countryside.

In the afternoon enjoy a half day biking and kayaking tour. Start by cycling along the Sekong river and visit a village where hand-made noodles are made. Continue to the 'Mekong Blue' where the Stung Treng Women's Development Center is located which aims to help less advantaged women and children.

Start kayaking crossing the Sekong river and paddle to the other side to visit the Hang Khou Ban Laos villagers, a place famous for producing Krolan (Sticky Rice). Watch as villagers cook this very popular travel snack in its bamboo packaging. See the sunset as you Kayak back to town and observe the fishermen on the river.

(B)
Stung Treng is less developed for tourism, therefore expect local standards.
Overnight in STUNG TRENG

DAY 9

STUNG TRENG – DOM KROLOR BORDER

Get a chance to taste a real local Cambodian breakfast where your guide will take you, located near to a local market. Continue overland until we reach the Cambodia-Laos Border.

(B)

— END OF SERVICES —

*Program is subjected to change without prior notice due to unexpected weather phenomenon or changes by the airlines for their schedule or flight cancellations.

**When visiting temples, like Angkor Wat and others, visitors are asked to dress more modestly.