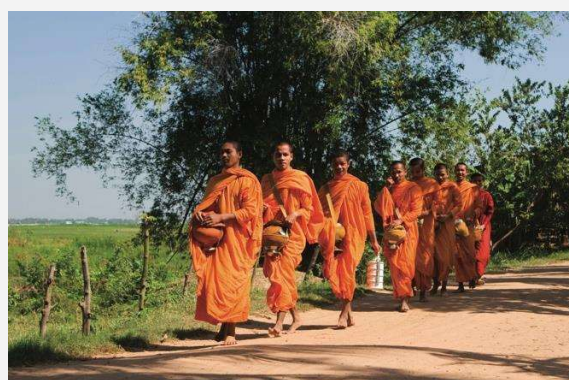


DIFFERENT TASTES OF CAMBODIA

11 DAYS / 10 NIGHTS

SIEM REAP – BANTEAY CHHMAR – BATTAMBANG – PHNOM PENH



I. HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the beauty of the Angkor Temples
- Travelling on the back side of Tonle Sap river to Battambang
- Explore the beautiful ruined Temple of Banteay Chhmar
- Experiences a local home stay

II. ITINERARY

DAY 1

ARRIVAL SIEM REAP

After arriving in Siem Reap, transfer to hotel and check in. In the afternoon we will pick you up by Tuk Tuk, Cambodia's unique public transportation. We travel to one of the earliest capitals in the Angkor area, known as Roluos Temples.

We begin with a visit to the brick temple of Lolei, originally set on an island in the center of the Indratataka baray (reservoir). We continue to Preah Ko (sacred cow), named in honor of Shiva's mount, Nandin. Originally coated in stucco and painted, there is still some of the ancient plaster visible on the rear towers. Finally, we encounter Bakong, the earliest of the Temple Mountains, which later became the signature of Khmer kings. It is a giant pyramid, its cardinal points marked by giant elephants.

(-)
Overnight in SIEM REAP

DAY 2

SIEM REAP

Full day Angkor Tour by bicycle. The crowning jewel of Khmer architecture, Angkor Wat is the national symbol and the highlight of any visit to Cambodia. The largest, best preserved, and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples, Angkor impresses visitors both by its sheer scale and beautifully proportioned layout, as well as the delicate artistry of its carvings. As you enter the main building, ascend through a series of galleries and courtyard before reaching the central sanctuary, which offers beautiful views back over the causeway and across the surrounding countryside.

On the way, stop to enjoy the intricate stone carvings that adorn nearly every surface. Along the outer gallery walls run the longest continuous bas-relief in the world, which narrates stories from Hindu mythology. Angkor Wat is stunning at any time of the day, but sunrise and sunset are especially beautiful times to watch the play of light on the stones.

Angkor Thom: the fortified city of Angkor Thom covers an area of 10 square km. Enclosed by a wall and wide moats, the city includes many of Angkor's most popular sights. Enter by the monumental SOUTH GATE over a causeway lined on either side by statues of demons and gods, each carrying a giant naga. Continue to the Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper Kings, former spaces for public ceremonies.

Visit the ruined Baphuon, Royal Enclosure and Phimeanakas before continuing to the mysterious Bayon Temple. In this temple, one of the most popular and compelling in Angkor, explore the galleries of beautifully preserved bas reliefs and ascend narrow stairs to reach the central sanctuary, where you will find giant stone faces smiling enigmatically down at you from every angle. Ta Prohm is one of the most popular attractions of Angkor as much of the jungle has not been cleared and it looks very much as most of the Angkor monuments would have appeared when European explorers first stumbled across them.

(B)
Overnight in SIEM REAP

DAY 3

SIEM REAP

By Jeep we journey north to Kbal Spean. The original 'River of a Thousand Lingas', Kbal Spean is an intricately carved riverbed deep in the foothills of the Cambodian jungle only discovered in 1969. The Khmers venerated its limestone bed with a riot of carvings, including thousands of lingams. A trip to Kbal Spean is one of the easiest ways to experience a short jungle trek in the Angkor area, as it is a steady but scenic climb to reach the river carvings.

We head to Banteay Srei, Angkor's ultimate art gallery. This petite temple is the jewel in the crown of Angkor-era sculpture. The elaborate carvings here are the finest found in Cambodia and the name translates as 'Fortress of the Women', thanks to the intricate detail here, considered too fine for the hands of a man. On the way back to Siem Reap, we visit the Cambodia Landmine Museum to learn more about the scourge of landmines and the shadow they cast over rural communities in Cambodia with a visit to this flagship museum promoting mine awareness and education.

(B)
Overnight in SIEM REAP

DAY 4

SIEM REAP

After breakfast boat trip to Kampong Khleang, one of the largest and least visited villages on the Tonle Sap Lake, situated around 55km from Siem Reap. It has a population of about 10,000 people, all of whom make a living from the fishing industry. We explore the canals (wet season) or streets (dry season) of this incredible town. We cruise into the open water of the great lake to see a small floating village and learn some more about this incredible natural flood barrier.

(B)
Overnight in SIEM REAP

DAY 5

SIEM REAP - BANTEAY CHHMAR

We leave Siem Reap after breakfast and travel north towards the Banteay Meanchey province to the incredible jungle temple of Banteay Chhmar, famous for its signature faces of Jayavarman VII.

After a nice lunch prepared by women's group in the restaurant, we start discovering the sleeping giant Banteay Chhmar. You see the magnificent carvings of Lokesvara 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.

By an ox-cart we travel from Ta Prohm Temple through the village to the Soiries du Mekong Silk Center, opened in 2001. This is a silk-waving school created to help keep women and their families in the village and improve their livelihoods. Soon after, they started sending their creations to France. Today, in the Banteay Chhmar region, around 100 persons are working for Soiries du Mekong. With this project, it is the families and the entire village that are developing and improving their lives.

We spend the night with a local family* as their guests to experience more of their lifestyle.

(B/L/D)

*Important note: Home Stay standard of accommodation is basic
Overnight in Banteay Chhmar based community

DAY 6

BANTEAY CHHMAR – BATTAMBANG

Breakfast in your homestay prepared from the local family. We then walk through the Banteay Chhmar local market. Before continue our trip to Battambang, we will visit the Banteay Torp Temple and observe village activities.

Transfer to Battambang

The Battambang province is known for its rice fields, orchards and the typical landscape.

After lunch we will take you to the "Bamboo Train", a simple construction with bamboo sticks as a base - a unique experience! In recent years, still could be driven across Cambodia with the bamboo train. For several years, this experience is only possible on an 8km stretch in Battambang, where the government can close this last little piece at any time.

The Town is famous for its French colonial architecture, fertile soil, and the rubies and garnets mined in this province, you will have chance to have a short stroll through the town see various art galleries and old colonial building our local guide will explain the important fact of each one of them, depend on time available we suggest you visit Kinyei café for tasty local coffee run by social enterprise

(B)

Overnight in Battambang

DAY 7

BATTAMBANG

In the morning enjoy a village tour by Bike (Alternatively Remork TUK-TUK)

With our local student guide, you will spend your day exploring the beautiful countryside around Battambang by bicycle. Visit with Cambodian families who produce traditional products (such as rice paper, dried bananas, and bamboo sticky rice) made in the same way they have been for generations. You will learn firsthand about everyday life in rural communities which make up over 70% of Cambodia's population.

Learn from local families about how they make traditional products such as rice paper, dried banana, bamboo sticky rice, fish paste and rice wine. Taste and experience the pleasures of these products fresh off the fire. Spend some relaxing time in a traditional Khmer house enjoying seasonal fruits and coconut water. Finish your morning tour by visiting a memorial site for the victims of the Khmer Rouge.

The ride is about 22km. It departs at 7:30am and returns around 12pm. The ride is suitable for all fitness levels.

In the afternoon visit Phnom Banan, a beautiful and peaceful temple on a 400m hill, where is surrounding by fresh fruit straight from the tree taste (depending on season). Once at the top of the mountain, you can enjoy a wonderful view. On the way back your guide will bring you to visit vineyard and the only wine production in Cambodia.

Phnom Sampeou is the next destination—a natural rock formation consisting of a series of caves. This was a former stronghold of the Khmer Rouge. Some of the caves were used as “killing caves”; victims' skeletons are still preserved here, we can stay until sunset to see the bat came out of the cave

(B)
Overnight in Battambang

DAY 8

BATTAMBANG - PHNOM PENH

We leave Battambang the rice bowl of Cambodia and heading south direction Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital city. We pass through rice fields and local villages and turn off the main road to visit the floating town of Kompong Luong. The largest floating community on the Tonle Sap Lake, we explore by boat and experience life in a real floating community untouched by mass tourism. After that before arrive Phnom Penh, we will visit Oudong, an old capitol of Khmer Empire. We continue to Phnom Penh.

(B)
Overnight in Phnom Penh

DAY 9

PHNOM PENH

Full day city tour in Phnom Penh. Today you will discover Phnom Penh. The National Museum is the country's leading historical and archaeological museum. It was officially inaugurated by King

Sisowat in 1920. The buildings are inspired by Khmer temple architecture and house more than 14,000 items.

The Royal Palace is a complex of buildings, even though it is generally understood to be the royal abode of the King of Cambodia. The compound was the citadel of King Ponhea Yat (1393-1463) and rebuilt to its present state in 1886, when King Norodom (1834-1904) relocated the royal capital from Oudong to Phnom Penh. The buildings with beautiful towering spires are a great example of classic Khmer architecture found in Cambodia today. Inside the palace grounds, the noises from the street are silenced by the high walls surrounding the compound. While tourists cannot enter the area of the royal abode, visitors can gain entry to the Throne Hall (Preah Tineang Tevea Vinichhay) where coronations and official ceremonies take place, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Preah Keo Morakot), Stupas (Chedei), a Royal Dining Hall, the Chan Chhaya Pavilion and a French-style building that was a gift from Napoleon III.

Silver Pagoda: Originally a wooden structure, the palace was initially constructed in 1892 during the reign of King Norodom, but rebuilt to its present grandeur by King Norodom Sihanouk in 1962. The king spared no effort to make this a true embodiment of brilliant Khmer art. More than 5300 pcs of 1.125 kilo silver tiles are used to cover the floor of the Silver Pagoda, and the silver pieces collectively weigh over six tons.

Toul Sleng Genocide Museum (S-21): Learn about a chapter from Cambodia's more recent, tragic, past at the TUOL SLENG MUSEUM (Museum of Genocide). Formerly the Tuol Svay Prey High School, in 1975, this became the interrogation and torture facility for the Khmer Rouge regime at that time known as Security Prison 21, or simply S-21. Kept largely unchanged, this prison now showcases photographs and exhibits about the thousands of victims that passed through these doors only seven of whom came out alive.

(B)
Overnight in Phnom Penh

DAY 10

PHNOM PENH

After breakfast we travel out of town to the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek. Prisoners from Tuol Sleng followed this same route to their fate. An old Chinese cemetery, Choeung Ek was turned into an extermination camp for political prisoners. The remains of 8985 people were exhumed from mass graves and are kept in a memorial stupa here. Despite the horrors of the past, it is a peaceful place to go and a tranquil spot to reflect on the tragic events that engulfed Cambodia and its people.

After lunch (own arrangement) we board a boat for a look at rural Cambodia on the nearby island in the Mekong River called Koh Dach, also known as 'Silk Island'. The island has no cars to disturb the idyllic scene, where silk weaving is a key element of village life. Walking across the island, we'll pass by fruit orchards and vegetable farms on our way. We then return along the island's to reunite with our boat.

(B)
Overnight in Phnom Penh

DAY 11

PHNOM PENH

Free at leisure until departure flight to next destination

(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.

