

Highlights of Cambodia: Nature, Culture & Adventure | 14 Days



This beautiful, historical and cultural rich country Cambodia has a lot to offer with Angkor Wat, a national symbol of the country, is the largest religious monument in the world, majestic Phnom Penh and rural countryside are just unique.

Discover the temple complex of Angkor with a sunset visit and other the less-visited temples. We explore Battambang, a well-preserved colonial town before arrival in bustling Phnom Penh and we visit head to picturesque Kampot, a land of paddy fields and pepper plantations. We pause for lunch at Kep Bay to enjoy views across the Gulf of Thailand before transferring to tropical Koh Rong island. Returning to Phnom Penh we visit the Royal Palace and the sobering 'Killing Fields'.

Trip Highlights

- Exploring the temples of Angkor including Ta Prohm
- Visit the famous Kampot pepper plantations
- Relax and unwind on tropical Koh Rong island
- Jump aboard a bicycle rickshaw for a tour through the streets of Phnom Penh and along the banks of the mighty Mekong River
- Visit the sobering Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng Prison
- Cycle through the countryside of rural Battambang

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Siem Reap

Welcome to Cambodia! Upon arrival in Siem Reap a travel-to-nature Asia guide/representative will be at the airport to greet and take us to our hotel. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

We will be spending our next three nights here. Siem Reap is the base for exploring the fabled temples of Angkor, the ancient capital of the Khmer empire.

Accommodation: Suorkear Boutique & Spa

Day 2: Visit Angkor Temples & Bayon Temple

After our leisurely breakfast, our local guide will pick us to visit the famous Angkor Temples by local 'remork' (similar to the Thai tuk tuk). Start at the ancient city of Angkor Thom. Angkor Thom was the last capital of the Great Khmer Empire under the reign of Jayavarman VII. This city is surrounded by an 8m high wall, drawing a perfect square. Enter the city through the ancient South Gate, an impressive stone gate carved with Elephants and four giant faces. From here, continue to Bayon Temple in the exact center of the city. This 12th century masterpiece is a study in grandeur and is well-known for its 54 towers with enigmatic faces representing the 54 provinces of the Great Khmer Empire. The Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper King are also must-visits as they are both known for their intricate bas-reliefs.

Now we are ready for one of the highlights of South East Asia: Visit the magnificent Angkor Wat. Built during the reign of King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century, it is constructed following the model of the temple mountain symbolizing the Mount Meru, home of the gods. Inside the temple, the walls are covered with stone carvings and bas-reliefs depicting Hindu mythology and the wars Suryavarman II fought during his reign. Moreover, Angkor Wat is well known for the more than 2,000 Apsara dancers decorating the temple. Construction is thought to have taken around thirty years of intensive labor. Today, Angkor Wat is figured on Cambodia's national flag as the temple symbolizes the soul of the Khmer people. Overnight in Siem Reap.

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Accommodation: Suorkear Boutique & Spa

Meal: Breakfast



Day 3: Explore Beng Mealea & Boat Ride on Tonle Sap Lake (65 km | 1.20 hrs)

After breakfast, head out to the beautiful Cambodian countryside, as we will drive to the quiet Beng Mealea, around 65 km from Siem Reap. Feel like an explorer when we discover the completely overgrown temple. Undiscovered for centuries, Beng Mealea has only recently been made accessible and remains unrestored. It is one of the very few temples that actually give the opportunity to climb through it. After our adventurous exploration, enjoy a delicious packed lunch at a local house close to the temple site. In the afternoon, embark on an interesting boat trip on the Tonlé Sap Lake, where we will have the opportunity to learn about life on the lake. Tonlé Sap is South East Asia's largest freshwater lake with its size varying greatly depending on the season, as it is swelling to about four times its size during the wet season. Board a local boat and visit Kampong Phluck, a village where we will see houses on stilts that are submerged when Tonlé Sap Lake extends. On the way, you will pass floating houses and impressive flooded forests, portraying life on the water

NOTE: Due to low water levels during the dry season, the boat trip is only possible from June to March. However, an alternative floating village at Chong Kneas can be arranged instead. Overnight in Siem Reap.

Accommodation: Suorkear Boutique & Spa

Meal: Breakfast

Day 4: Drive Siem Reap - Colonial city of Battambang (77 km | 2.75 hrs)

After breakfast we head to the town of Battambang (pronounced Battambang). Cambodia's second-largest city, Battambang, is centred around an attractive riverside hub with traces of French elegance, friendly Khmer people and well-preserved colonial architecture. There are also some striking examples of Art Deco architecture; Central market, the Victory swimming pool and the train station to name a few. En-route we stop at the local market at Pouk. Cambodian markets tend to be fragrant affairs – on offer here is Cambodian 'cheese'; one of the strongest smelling cheeses around - perhaps because it is made entirely of fish! The local market is nonetheless a great insight into the daily life of the Cambodian people. We will also make a brief stop at the Angkor Silk Farm for a introduction into the life of a silkworm and the production process of this fine textile.

Accommodation: Classy Hotel & Spa

Meal: Breakfast

Day 5: Leisurely cycle ride through rural Battambang (otherwise explore on foot)

Today we cycle through countryside to explore Cambodia's rural way of life. Stopping at villages to see local cottage industries, traditional scarf weaving and traditional farming, there will be countless opportunities to interact with the villagers who may be surprised to see us travelling as they do, on a bicycle! We'll reward our morning's efforts with fruit and a refreshing coconut. The cycle is easy riding on flat terrain with lots of stops along the way. If you would like to opt out of the cycling and hop on a tuk-tuk instead please let the leader know at the beginning of the trip so alternative arrangements can be made.

Accommodation: Classy Hotel & Spa

Meal: Breakfast

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Day 6: Drive Battambang - Phnom Penh (293 km | 5.80 hrs)

Our destination today is Phnom Penh. En route to we have the chance to stop at a pottery village, a silversmith village and a marble handicraft workshop for an insight into local handicrafts and industry.

Phnom Penh was once considered as one of the most beautiful cities in the Orient, and despite its recent turbulent history, it still retains a colonial charm. Cambodia's capital is a bustling city, majestically located at the confluence of the mighty rivers of the Mekong and Tonlé Sap. Wide tree-lined boulevards and many colonial-era buildings reflect the glorious days and add to the allure of the city, where Asian and Western traditions meet in a fascinating way.

This afternoon we will be greeted by a driver who will take us on a tour to the most remarkable sights of Phnom Penh in a Cyclo, an original Phnom Penh means of transportation and a fun way to explore this lively city. First, visit Wat Phnom, which is situated near the northern boundary of the city. The site contains some good examples of Khmer architecture and statues.

Continue along the lively riverfront to the Royal Palace. This palace dates back to 1866 and houses the Silver Pagoda, named for the over 5000 heavy silver tiles that cover its floors. Its original name is Wat Prakeo, meaning Temple of the Emerald Buddha. In this temple you will view a collection of Buddhas in gold, silver, crystal, and bronze.

Then visit the National Museum, which was built in traditional Khmer style. It houses the world's foremost collection of ancient Khmer artistic, archaeological, and religious artefacts from the 4th to the 13th centuries. Over 5,000 pieces are on display, constituting the repository of the Kingdom's cultural wealth. In addition, the roof space is home to a large bat colony! Overnight in Phnom Penh.

Accommodation: The Plantation Urban Resort
Meal: Breakfast

Day 7: In Phnom Penh

This morning, gain insight into Cambodia's recent dark history on a visit to the remarkable Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, housed in the former school that was taken over by the Khmer Rouge and used as its main detention and torture center named 'S-21'. Further visit the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek. A grim, but important visit that will allow us to dig below the surface and understand Cambodia better.

After learning about some of Cambodia's tragic past it is time to put a smile back on your face and experience modern Khmer life. Return to central Phnom Penh for lunch at Le Lotus Blanc, a training restaurant for the humanitarian organization Pour un Sourire d'Enfant (for the smile of a child) that provides education and job training to street children that used to be scavenging the municipal dump, and give them skills and hope for a brighter future. Your visit helps support the training of these kids by being their guest. (Note: Lotus Blanc closes on Sundays and public holidays)

Enjoy an atmospheric sunset river cruise and watch how Phnom Penh's popular riverfront comes to life in the early evening. Overnight in Phnom Penh.

Accommodation: The Plantation Urban Resort
Meal: Breakfast



Day 8: Drive Phnom Penh - Kampot (153 km | 2.72 hrs) | Sunset River Cruise

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Leaving Phnom Penh we travel into rural Cambodia to Kampot which sits on a picturesque river. On the way we stop at Phnom Chisor mountain temple set on a hill with a magnificent view. The temple was built in the 11th century by King Suryavarman I. It is made of laterite, bricks and carved sandstone. Upon arrival we check into our centrally located hotel, our base for the next two nights, before boarding a local boat for sunset trip on the Kampot River. The river runs through the centre of the town and can flow in both directions as it is closely connected to the sea.

Accommodation: The Columns Hotel
Meal: Breakfast



Day 9: Explore fruit and pepper plantations; visit Kep

Today we venture out into the countryside to discover the highlights of the Kampot Province including local salt fields, rice fields, fruit and pepper plantations, and the Phnom Chhnork caves. Kampot is also famed for being one of the largest producers of the durian fruit; the durian, once opened, has a smell so pungent it is illegal to take indoors in some South East Asian countries!

After exploring the countryside we visit Kep "ghost town" - previously a popular seaside resort Kep now houses old resort buildings which have bullet holes from the Khmer Rouge period, a reminder of the not so distant past. Kep is once again regaining popularity with local tourists and you might like to join them in having lunch in the simple crab shacks that line the beach. Serving up the freshest seafood around the crab in Kampot pepper sauce is not to be missed!

Accommodation: The Columns Hotel
Meal: Breakfast

Day 10: Journey to Sihanoukville for speed boat transfer to Koh Rong Island

After breakfast we drive approx. 2.5-3 hours from Kampot to Sihanoukville, before taking a speed boat ferry transfer (approx. 45 min to 1 hour) across to beautiful Koh Rong Island, our home for the next 2 nights.

Upon arrival you will have free time to relax, refresh with a swim in the beach, or sip cocktails as the sun sets.

Accommodation: Sok San Resort
Meal: Breakfast

Day 11: Free day on Koh Rong island

Our resort is located on one of the island's most mesmerising and secluded white sandy beaches. Today you will have free time to relax on the beach and enjoy the crystal-clear ocean waters, try your hand at various optional activities on offer such as snorkelling, kayaking, and other water sports or just soak up the exotic tropical surroundings. Your leader will be able to advise during the trip of all options available to make the most of your free day.

Accommodation: Sok San Resort or similar
Meal: Breakfast

Day 12: Transfer back to the mainland and onto Phnom Penh

This morning we transfer back to the mainland by speed boat (45 min. to 1 hour) and drive on to Phnom Penh (approx. transfer time 5-6 hours) with a stop for lunch.

Located on the banks of the Tonle Sap and the Mekong River, Phnom Penh is home to 2.2 million of Cambodia's residents. Despite being the capital, it still retains a laid-back, typically Cambodian feel where the pace is slower than some might expect.

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We set out on a sunset cyclo again (bicycle rickshaw) lap of the town giving us a unique view of this bustling city and providing us with an easy orientation. Stopping to see some of the local street food being served on the waterfront, here we have the chance to try some local specialities. We continue on to finish at a restaurant serving tasty Khmer cuisine. There are also many waterfront bars worth a visit; the Foreign Correspondents Club (FCC) overlooking the Tonle Sap River is recommended.

Accommodation: The Plantation Urban Resort

Meal: Breakfast

Day 13: Depart Cambodia

The tour ends this morning in Siem Reap after breakfast. We transfer you to the airport for your onward journey back home or elsewhere.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin-Sharing accommodation in all Hotel/Resort as mentioned or similar
- Daily breakfast throughout the trip, 1 Picnic lunch on day 3 & 1 welcome Dinner
- All sightseeing and long-distance transportation in a private air-conditioned vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-van etc. depending on group size). This includes toll taxes, parking, allowance for the driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver
- Boat ticket Sihanouk Ville – Koh Rong Island – Sihanouk Ville
- Visit the Temples by Tuk Tuk
- Visit by Bambou train in Battambang
- Sunset boat cruise in Kampot
- Visit by private local boat on Tonle Sap Lake / Kampong Pluk stilts Houses
- Transfer from Kampot – Koh Rong Island – Phnom Penh by private car without guide
- A professional English speaking guide
- Tour with entrance fees as specified
- Mineral water during excursion 3 bottles/Person/Day

- Government tax and service charge

Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance & vaccinations
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Tips for trip leader/guide, driver, hotel staff, and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, telephone calls and other unforeseen expenses
- Items/services not listed in the "included"
- Compulsory gala dinner on Christmas or New Year (if applicable)
- Extra expenses/payment for 'Optional' activities/programs if participated

Accommodation

Suorkear Boutique Hotel & Spa, Siem Reap

The 4-star Suorkear Boutique Hotel & Spa Siem Reap is located 3 km from the centre of Siem Reap and a couple of minutes' drive from Siem Reap Art Center Night Market. Business travelers will appreciate conveniences like free WiFi throughout the venue and access to a video projector, a slide projector and a cinema projector.



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Classy Hotel & Spa, Battambang

Situated 200 meters from Colonial Building in Battambang, Classy Hotel features a restaurant, bar, and free WiFi throughout the property. Some rooms include a private bathroom with a hot tub, while others have bathrobes and slippers. Some units have a seating area to relax in after a busy day. Views of the pool, river, or garden are featured in certain rooms.

The Plantation Urban Resort, Phnom Penh

Plantation creates authentic experiences for our guests through the promotion of cultural exchange, architectural heritage and local arts. We are centrally located in Phnom Penh, situated directly behind the Royal Palace. We feature two outdoor swimming pools and guests can enjoy meals at the in-house restaurant or have a drink at the bar. Free WiFi is available throughout the property.

The Columns, Kampot

The Columns is located on a quiet tree-lined street in the heart of old town Kampot. Our historic French Colonial houses have been restored to their original charm but with the addition of modern functionality and comforts. The relaxing atmosphere and central location make for an ideal place to stay while exploring the town and its surroundings.

Sok San Beach Resort, Koh Rong Island

Sok San Beach Resort is a traditional yet modern Khmer-style hotel located on one of the most beautiful islands of Cambodia. Within less than an hour from the mainland, we are a secluded yet convenient seaside retreat. With pristine white sandy beaches, turquoise water, and a tasteful blend of nature and comfort, it is the perfect escape from the world.

Group/Individual

On this trip you will be traveling privately with your family & friends. Our representative/tour partner will look after your transfers to and from the airport and will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trip.

Accommodation – Hotel, Resort

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a fine heritage hotel in another or a family-run guesthouse or lodges in a smaller town. Accommodation in remote areas tend to be basic and may not have western amenities.

Single Accommodation

Single (room) supplements are provided on request (single supplement charge applies) and are subject to availability.

Food & Transport

Daily breakfast is included throughout the trip.

Food is cheap in Cambodia and you can generally avoid the spicier dishes if you wish. Cambodian food is all about contrasts: sweet and bitter, salty and sour, fresh and cooked. It shares many dishes with its neighbors, and you'll find noodle soup similar to Vietnamese pho, the refreshing salads and sour soups of Thailand, Indian-inspired curries, and noodles and stir fries handed down from years of Chinese migration. From Cambodia's days as a French Indochina colony, there's a national love of coffee, pâté, and good bread. Baguettes are served with soup, made into sandwiches, and sold by men riding bicycles carrying baskets of long loaves. Western food is also available in most of the places visited.

Vegetarian food is widely available; however, the offering will be fairly similar in most places. Please advise at time of booking if you have any dietary requirements.

For airport, sightseeing transfers, and for long drives we use a private air-con car, jeep, van depending upon group size.

Weather

The weather will be hot and humid throughout with daytime temperatures usually 28C-34C (82F-93F). It

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is only a little cooler at nights. The dry season is late October to May and the monsoon is normally between May and October; though there is an obvious transitional time between those settled periods. The dry season has hot days and generally clear skies, though you can expect the odd shower. The monsoon is characterised by short, sharp bursts of rain and is generally overcast all day though this does not detract from the enjoyment of the place; you just need to take an umbrella or buy a cheap poncho locally.

Baggage Allowance

The standard baggage weight limit on international flights (generally from Europe) is one checked baggage of 25kg (55lb) and hand baggage 7kg (15lbs). But if your journey involves domestic connecting flights weight limit can be limited/restricted. We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Luggage allowances for both hand and checked luggage are subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure or purchasing your flight tickets.

ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passport & Visas

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for EU passport holders, and other nationalities should check with the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visas are required to enter Cambodia if you are German and for most other nationalities. Visa information/regulation might change; therefore, for the latest information on applying for a visa please follow these links for more information.

An electronic visa (e-Visa) is also available and you can find further information on this link: www.evisa.gov.kh. Please note, e-Visas are not accepted at all border checkpoints when travelling overland.

Please note: Visa regulations can change without notice, therefore please check the current regulations or contact us.

Vaccination & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad and enjoy holidays to the fullest.

There are no required vaccinations. However, recommended vaccinations include hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid, cholera, hepatitis B, Japanese encephalitis, rabies and tuberculosis. You will also need a yellow fever vaccination certificate if you're arriving from a country with risk of yellow fever transmission or transiting for more than 12 hours through a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. Please confirm your vaccine recommendations and requirements with your doctor or travel clinic.

Dengue fever, a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes, is a known risk in places visited. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available, so take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Local Time

GMT + 7 hours.

Electricity

230 volts AC, 50 Hz. There are three plug types in Cambodia - A, C and G. Plug type A is the plug which has two flat parallel pins, type C plug has two round pins and plug type G is with three rectangular pins, in a triangular pattern. There are recharging facilities at most of the hotels, the electricity supply is not 100% reliable.

ATM | Credit Cards

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ATMs are available in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and in some other major towns. While using ATM please be mindful of your surroundings.

Not all ATMs and banks accept foreign debit and credit cards. Check with your bank before you leave. Credit cards are not widely accepted, but some hotels and businesses in larger cities will accept them.

The US dollar is the main currency in Cambodia but the Cambodian Riel is becoming more widely used. Change of less than \$10 will generally be given in Riel at a rate of around 4000 Riels/US\$1.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need to bring some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other personal expense, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Though it totally depends on individual but generally an approximate (rough estimate) amount of Euro 180 (US\$200) per person, per week should be sufficient (more if you enjoy a few beers); however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount. Or if you are the one frugal with money probably allocating less would also be suffice.

Optional Tours may be offered in some city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each optional tour/activity will be arranged locally by our local partner/guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Tipping

Generally tipping is not expected in Cambodia, but it's always appreciated. If you are happy with the service, you are welcome to tip. This will include tips for drivers, porters and other hotel staff, local sightseeing guides/escort.

Itinerary Change

In case of some unusual events/incidents the order of programs (sightseeing, excursions etc.) might have to change in order to accommodate the local situations. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the overall integrity of your trip.

The domestic airlines (if your itinerary involves) may change their schedule frequently and, in such cases, our local partner/guide will inform you about the changes.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend to get a full coverage (comprehensive) travel insurance plan. And please make sure to keep/carry a hard-copy of your travel insurance documents on your person while on tour. It's prudent to check thoroughly the inclusions and procedure to file claims prior to purchasing insurance coverage. travel-to-nature Asia will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to purchase appropriate travel insurance from the date of booking.

Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.