



CAMBODIA - CAMBODIA CLASSIC 4N / 5D



ITINERARY

Journey to the capital city of Phnom Penh and the ancient city of Angkor, home to beautiful ruined temples in this 5 day tour exploring both the ancient, and the modern history of this fascinating country.

Highlights:

Explore the majestic Angkor Wat and the 12th century city of Angkor Thom

Photograph the mysterious Ta Phrom engulfed by huge tree roots

See the giant smiling stone faces of the Bayon temple

Visit the 3 temples of the Roluos Group, the oldest temples in Angkor

In Phnom Penh, witness stark reminders of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge



Day 1: Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh is a chaotic, energetic and fascinating city where motorcycles weave in and out of traffic, vendors hawk their wares, and pedestrians stroll along the river. Visit the temple of Wat Phnom, the Royal Palace, the adjacent Silver Pagoda, and the National Museum. Spend some time shopping for bargains and souvenirs at the art deco Central Market or in the labyrinth of stalls at the sprawling Russian Market.

Overnight in Phnom Penh.



Day 2: Phnom Penh - Siem Reap

Fly from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap and spend the next three days exploring the beautiful Angkor temples. Angkor Wat is the largest, best preserved, and most religiously significant of all the temples. It is accessed via a long causeway that enters into a series of courtyards, the walls of which are covered in intricate stone carvings of celestial dancers. Along the outer gallery walls runs the longest continuous bas-relief in the world, which narrates stories from Hindu mythology including the famous Churning of the Ocean of Milk.

The fortified 12th century city of Angkor Thom covers an area of 10 square kilometres and has many stone temples and other features to explore including the Terrace of the Elephants, the Terrace of the Leper Kings, the ruined 11th century Baphoun temple, the Royal Enclosure and the Phimeanakas temple. Also visit the Bayon temple, one of the most beautiful temples known for its giant stone faces smiling enigmatically down at you from every angle.

Overnight in Siem Reap.

Day 3: Siem Reap

Banteay Srei is a beautiful 10th century Hindu temple built from deep red sandstone and covered in exquisitely preserved delicate carvings. Unlike most of the temples of Angkor, the mysterious Ta Phrom has been largely left to the clutches of the living jungle and huge tree roots have wound themselves around the crumbling ruins. It looks very much as most of the Angkor monuments would have appeared when European explorers first stumbled across them. Also visit Banteay Samre, a mid-12th century temple dedicated to the god Vishnu. In the evening watch the sun set over the Cambodian countryside from the upper terraces of an ancient temple.

Overnight in Siem Reap.

Day 4: Siem Reap

Start the day with a visit to Chau Say Tevoda, a 12th century Hindu temple that is dedicated to Shiva although most of the carvings are of Vishnu. Just to the north is the Thommanon temple which mirrors Chau Say Tevoda, as it was built around the same time and has a similar plan. Many of Thommanon's carvings are in excellent condition and the colours of the ancient sandstone contrast with the vivid green of the jungle.

Ta Keo was the first Angkorian monument to be built entirely of sandstone and is dedicated to Shiva. The summit of the central tower is 50 metres high and is surrounded by four lower towers. Banteay Kdei, also known as the "Citadel of Monks' cells" is a massive 12th century Buddhist temple surrounded by four concentric walls which has not been restored and allows the visitor to experience what it may have looked like originally. Just opposite is Sras Srang, a baray (reservoir), with a tiny island in the middle where only the stone base remains of what was once a wooden temple.

Also visit the 10th century temple of Prasat Kravan whose five brick towers were built for Hindu worship and are notable for the bas-reliefs cut into the bricks on the interior walls.

Fly from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh and overnight.

Day 5: Phnom Penh

At the notorious Tuol Sleng Museum in the city of Phnom Penh visitors learn about a chapter from Cambodia's more recent and tragic past. Formerly the Tuol Svay Prey High School, in 1975 it became the interrogation and torture facility for the Khmer Rouge regime. The prison now showcases photographs and exhibits of the thousands of victims that passed through the doors. Just outside Phnom Penh in a rural setting, the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek provide a stark reminder of the atrocities under the Pol Pot regime. Thousands of people were killed here between the years of 1975 and 1978 and buried in mass graves.

Visit Wat Phnom, the birthplace of the capital; according to legend, Phnom Penh was founded here when a woman named Penh found four Buddha statues and built the temple to house them.

Depart from Phnom Penh.