

Cambodia – Heritage of the Khmer Empire

Tour Code CM

8 – 19 November 2016

A fabulous journey through the extraordinarily friendly country of Cambodia and to some of its lesser visited regions. We witness the great legacy of the Khmer civilisation with the splendour and awesome collection of temples at **Angkor**, a wonderful climax to the tour. We start in **Phnom Penh**, the lively capital with many French colonial buildings, busy markets, art galleries, temples and museums. In **Kampong Thom** we visit a stunning rarely visited pre-Angkorian temple plus traditional villages and markets as we journey north into the **Preah Vihear** province. We also take a boat trip on the **Tonlé Sap Lake**, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia and officially designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. We include the colonial era architecture and riverside setting of laid-back **Battambang**



Royal Palace, Phnom Penh
© www.syderimages.com

ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Phnom Penh via Bangkok

Morning departure from London Heathrow with Thai Airways UK for Bangkok.

Day 2 Fly to Phnom Penh. Afternoon tour

Early morning flight from Bangkok with Bangkok Airlines to Phnom Penh. 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. Our tour includes the National Museum with its impressive collection of Angkor sculptures and the Royal Palace with its stunning Silver Pagoda. Its original name is Wat Prakeo, meaning Temple of the Emerald Buddha. A welcome dinner has been arranged at a smart local restaurant. Two nights at the Anik Boutique hotel (B,D)

Day 3 In Phnom Penh

This morning there is the option to visit the infamous Killing Fields of Choeung Ek, a memorial to the horrors of Pol Pot's despotic regime and the 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'. Later we take a *cyclo*, an original Phnom Penh means of transportation and a fun way to explore this lively city and visit Wat Phnom temple which contains some good examples of Khmer architecture and statues. We also visit the busy market selling woven silks, cottons and basketry. Dinner at a traditional restaurant (B,D)

Day 4 Drive Kampong Thom. Visit Sambor Prei Kuk

We journey to Khampong Thom and visit the most important pre-Angkorian sites in the country that is enlisted to potentially become Cambodia's next UNESCO World Heritage Site; Sambor Prei Kuk. A collection of 7th century temples surrounded by the scenic Cambodian jungle and once capital of the Chenla kingdom (an empire that pre-dates Angkor) which was then known as Isanapura during the reign of King Ishanavarman. The villages around the temple complex still practice the ancient art of craft making, using materials such as bamboo and rattan. We will have the chance to visit and contribute to the sustainability of the people's livelihood as the local community will prepare a simple but very tasty lunch for us near the temple. Overnight at the Sambor Village hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Day 5 Drive to Preah Vihear. Visit Angkorian Temple

This morning we head north to Preah Vihear province, stopping off at the remote Preah Khan temple of Kampong Svay. Preah Khan, "the divine sword" and also known as Prasat Bakan, is one of the most important temples from the Angkorian period. It was the religious centre of the large city of Preah Khan that covered 32 square kilometres. The massive complex was originally constructed by Suryavarman I and it occupies an area of 5 square kilometres, comprises 4 enclosure walls, the central sanctuary, a baray and various buildings and basins. Two nights at the Preah Vihear Boutique hotel with dinner (B,L,D)

Patrick Syder Travel

Escorted Cultural Tours – Zenobia House, 23 Bowmans Close, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3SR
Tel/Fax: +44 (0)1903 879737 email: info@sydertravel.com www.sydertravel.com

Day 6 Visit Preah Vihear Temple

We have a visit to the incredible Preah Vihear temple this morning. The spectacular location in the Dangrek mountains close to the Thai border paired with a unique temple design are the reason UNESCO enlisted the temple as a World Heritage Site in 2008. The temple is known to have been dedicated to the god Shiva and thought to have been constructed in the reign of Suryavarman I (1002-50) We enjoy a picnic at the site before departing back down the mountain to our hotel and an afternoon at leisure in Preah Vihear (B,L,D)

Day 7 Drive to Battambang

An early start this morning for a long but exhilarating drive (6 hours) to Battambang. The riverside setting of Battambang, with its colonial architecture teetering into genteel disrepair and its laidback cafes makes for a perfect base to visit the timeless hilltop temples and atmospheric villages nearby. Two nights at the Bambu hotel. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 8 In Battambang

We start the day visiting Wat Kor temple plus a cluster of Khmer heritage houses that the village is known for. Built of now-rare hardwoods almost a century ago and surrounded by orchard gardens, they have wide verandahs and exude the ambience of another era. Later we visit an atmospheric, partly collapsed 11th Century temple, Wat Ek Phnom is surrounded by the remains of a laterite wall and an ancient baray (reservoir). The area is known for its high quality rice and we will learn how the locals produce rice paper, prahoc (typical Cambodian fish paste), grolan (sticky rice stuffed in bamboo) and other Cambodian treats. Dinner at the hotel (B,D)

Day 9 In Battambang. Drive to Siem Reap

After a leisurely morning in Battambang, perhaps enjoying the option to take a ride on the famous Bamboo Train, an original means of transportation on the old train tracks leading to Phnom Penh. Later we drive to Siem Reap, a perfect base to explore the spectacular temples and jungle ruins around Angkor. Three nights at the La Residence Wat Bo with dinner (B,D)

Day 10 and 11 Visit Angkor Temples

The highlight of the tour, these ancient Khmer ruins are one of the world's most magical and breathtaking archaeological sites. Our visits will include the majesty of the Bayon and Ta Prohm temples, to the captivating setting of Angkor Wat itself. We will also be able to venture to some of the more remote ruins such as Banteay Srei; with some of the finest examples of classical Khmer art in pink sandstone, and Ta Phrom; a 12th century temple unique in that it has been left largely as it was found ;overgrown by jungle trees and vines. Local restaurant dinners each evening including a traditional Khmer dance show on our final evening (B,D)

Day 12 Boat trip on Tonle Sap Lake. Fly Siem Reap to Bangkok

A morning boat trip on the Tonle Sap Lake; S E Asia's largest freshwater lake with its size varying greatly depending on the season. It provides a perfect breeding ground for fish and birds, and is one of the many reasons why the Tonle Sap Lake has been designated a UNESCO Biosphere; its floodplains host 'flooded forests' which spend much of the year under metres of water with only their top branches visible. The local population has also adapted to the unique ecology of the lake with floating villages and stilted houses. After a delicious lunch we return to Siem Reap and transfer to the airport for our flight to Bangkok (B,L)

Cost £1595.00 per person in a twin room (excludes international flights) Single supplement £240.00



Price includes -

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder FRGS
- ▶ Specialist Cambodian guides throughout
- ▶ All transportation in private a/c coach
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Quality local four star hotels on a half board basis
- ▶ Half board basis with dinners at quality restaurants
- ▶ Picnic lunches as indicated
- ▶ All airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities
- ▶ Bottled water daily

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, visa fees, drinks, guide and driver gratuities, international flights to Cambodia are not included in the land tour cost

(Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)