

Angkor and the Southern Coast

14-day tour visiting the heartland of the former Angkorean Empire in Siem Reap and Battambang, followed by a tour of Cambodia's beautiful Southern Coast



Day 1 - Arrive Siem Reap

Your itinerary begins in **Siem Reap**, the heartland of the former Khmer Empire and gateway to the temples of Angkor. On arrival, you'll be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

In the afternoon, embark on a tour of some of the earliest Khmer temples, what are collectively known as the **Roluos**. The Roluos date from the 9th and 10th centuries and, while not as immediately spectacular as the more famous temples of Angkor Wat and the Bayon, they provide a fascinating insight into early Khmer architecture, and will whet your appetite for the more dramatic sites to be visited over the coming days!

Day 2 - Angkor Thom and Angkor Wat

Today you visit the most famous and spectacular of the Khmer temples: Angkor Thom, centring on the Bayon, and Angkor Wat.

Angkor Thom, formerly the capital of the Angkor Empire, is a huge, walled and moated complex encompassing several structures, including the Bayon, Phimeanakas, and the Elephant Terrace. You'll likely recognise many of the sites from pictures of Angkor, notably **the Bayon** with its 37 face towers, almost as iconic as Angkor Wat itself.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.



Spend the morning exploring Angkor Thom at leisure. For lunch, you may wish to return to your hotel or head into town; it's best to avoid the midday heat in the summer, when it can get as hot as 45°C.

Late afternoon, begin your tour of the stunning **Angkor Wat**. You will need 4-5 hours to explore Angkor Wat in full. Your guide will be on hand to aid you in unpicking the temple's dense symbolism and many layers of meaning. Take things at your own pace and don't try to cover everything. In the early evening, find a comfortable spot to watch the sun as it sets over the temple.

Day 3 - Siem Reap; Ta Prohm, Banteay Temples, and blessing ceremony

In the morning you'll visit some of Siem Reap's more obscure and least-visited temples, including Banteay Samre and Banteay Srei, dedicated to the goddess Shiva, and Ta Prohm, the "jungle temple".

Tiny **Banteay Srei** is often referred to as the jewel of Khmer art, on account of its intricate design and spectacularly detailed carvings. It differs from other Angkorian temples in that it is constructed entirely of pink sandstone, a soft stone which is easily carved, hence the detailed wall murals that cover almost every section of its walls.

Popularly known as the 'jungle temple', **Ta Prohm** is almost as iconic as Angkor Wat. In its state of slow decay, the temple provides a good idea of how most of the Angkorian temples would have looked when they were first discovered by French archaeologists in the late 19th-century. Only minimal restoration work has been done to the temple structures, which have become intertwined with the roots and vines of the jungle, lending them an atmosphere of romance and mystery.

In the afternoon you'll have the opportunity to take part in a blessing ceremony at a local monastery, during which you'll be sprinkled with holy water in a ritual intended to rid you of evil spirits (no guarantees). The



ceremony is optional; you may prefer to spend the afternoon at Siem Reap's floating market or in visiting some of the temples not otherwise covered in your programme, of which there are many.

Late afternoon, relax with a Khmer massage before returning to your hotel. Evening at leisure.

Day 4 - Siem Reap to Battambang

Leave Siem Reap this morning for **Battambang**, a drive of approx. 2 and a half hours. Cambodia's second city, Battambang was founded in the 11th century, and is thus contemporary with Angkor Wat. Like Siem Reap, Battambang was at the very heart of the former Khmer Empire and boasts a number of temples which, despite being stunning in their own right, are overshadowed by those in nearby Siem Reap. Among the highlights are **Wat Ek Phnom**, an 11th-century temple built by King Suryavaman I, and **Phnom Banon**, notable for its magnificent sandstone towers and hillside location.



After checking in to your hotel, you'll have much of the morning and the afternoon to visit the Battambang temples in the company of your guide.

Day 5 - Bamboo train and village tour

After breakfast at the hotel, take a ride on the **Bamboo train**, or norrie, and travel 8km through scenic countryside to a village outside Battambang.

Designed to carry goods and people between Battambang and the surrounding villages, the rustic Bamboo train is a thrill, but don't expect a luxury ride; it consists of a few bamboo slats, four wheels and a tiny engine, and it moves at 15kmph—if you're lucky!

On arrival, you'll have time to explore the village at your own pace, including its workshops (wood carving is the local trade), rice paddies, and beautiful colonial-era homes, before heading back to your hotel in Battambang in the late afternoon. Evening at leisure.



Day 6 - Battambang to Phnom Penh via Pursat Province

Depart Battambang this morning for Phnom Penh. Along the way, you'll pass through **Pursat Province**, where you'll visit the floating village of **Kampong** for a taste of rural Cambodian life. You'll also have time to stop at **Oudong**, once the capital of Cambodia, and to explore the royal tombs at **Fortune Hill**.

Expect to arrive at your hotel in Phnom Penh, the present-day capital, late afternoon.

Day 7 - Phnom Penh tour

Phnom Penh is revealing of the great contrasts in Cambodia's history, from the glories of the Khmer civilisation to the tragedy of the country's 20th-century history. This morning you'll have the chance to learn more about the latter, with a visit to the notorious **Killing Fields** of the Khmer Rouge and the **Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum**. Together they provide a brutal but important insight into this dark period in Cambodia's long history.



In the afternoon, visit the capital's main attractions, including the **Royal Palace**, a curious mix of Eastern and Western design built in 1866 and still in use by the Cambodian royal family to this day; the **Silver Pagoda**, a spectacular temple complex rivalling Wat Phra Kaew in Thailand, and housing Cambodia's own Emerald Buddha statue; and **Wat Phnom**, the city's oldest shrine, dating back to 1373 (though it's been rebuilt multiple times since).

Day 8 - Phnom Penh to Kep

Leave Phnom Penh and journey south into **Takeo Province**. This a half-day drive, but with opportunities to stop along the way for lunch and to visit a number of Khmer temples, including Ta Prohm at **Tonle Bati**, **Yeay Peau** and, time-allowing, the hillside temple at **Chiso**. Time-allowing, you may also want to visit the limestone caves at **Kampong Trach**. Ask your guide if of interest.

Expect to reach Kep late this afternoon.



A former French colonial retreat, **Kep** is a pretty seaside town with an idyllic setting on the southern Cambodian coast, where it sits surrounded by mountains, forest, reefs and pristine beaches. Far from being a mega beach resort, the town receives very few visitors and centres on a single strip of restaurants and a small market. There is a public beach which is quiet except during the New Year festivities, and a small number of boutique resorts with private beaches, including the wonderful *Knai Bang Chatt*, where you stay this evening.

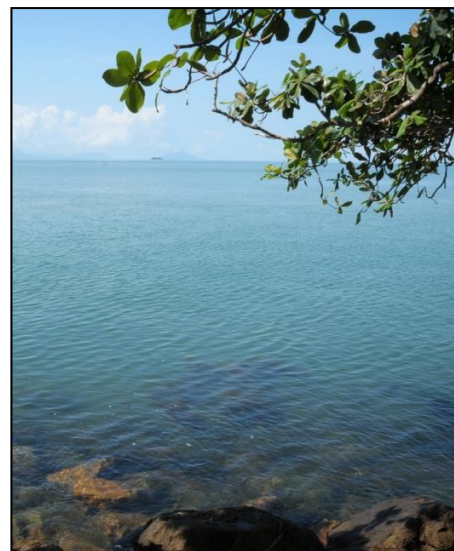


Day 9 - Kep

Today is at leisure to relax on the beach explore the surrounding region. You may like to visit **Kampot**, a former French settlement located a short distance from Kep. Its attractive canal and faded colonial houses have made it a popular spot for a day trip, with a few hours spent strolling along the canal a pleasant way pass an afternoon. Visits to neighbouring villages and fruit orchards are also possible from Kep. Let your guide know if you'd like to make a trip out of Kep and they'll be able to help you organise your excursions.

Day 10 - Kep to Sihanoukville via Ream National Park

Leaving Kep this morning, you'll drive to Sihanoukville, a major city in the Bay of Cambodia. En route you'll stop to explore **Ream National Park**, Cambodia's best marine reserve. Ream is vast (over 20,000 hectares) and encompasses a huge area of coastline. You'll enter the reserve via the Prek Tuk Sap estuary, and travel via boat through mangrove forest till you meet the sea. You'll have the early afternoon to explore the coast and forest on foot, and enjoy a cooked lunch on the beach, before meeting with your driver and continuing on to your beach hotel in Sihanoukville.



Sihanoukville is Cambodia's major beach resort. The city itself, which was mostly built in the 1950s, offers little in the way of historic attractions or culture, but its beaches are marvellous. Indeed, the Bay of Cambodia is widely considered one of the most beautiful in the world.

Day 11 - Sihanoukville

Today is at leisure; relax on the beach or take part in any of the available water spots. You might like to take a boat to a nearby island, especially if you intend to dive. Otherwise, the beaches at Sihanoukville are beautiful.



Day 12 - Sihanoukville to Koh Kong

Today you'll leave Sihanoukville for the town of **Tatai, Koh Kong** province, a drive of approx. 5 hours. On arrival at Tatai you'll be taken by boat to the 4 Rivers Floating Lodge, or similar, where you overnight (full board). Afternoon at leisure.

Day 13 - Koh Kong

This morning, enjoy a leisurely boat cruise into the mangrove forest, exploring its network of waterways. You'll stop at a local fishing community, where you'll be able to get a measure of day to day life on the river, and learn more about the different religious and ethnic traditions (this region is both Buddhist and Muslim; Khmer and Cham).

Return to the floating lodge in time for dinner.

Day 14 - Departure

After breakfast, return to Tatai by boat, where you'll be met by your guide and driver for the return transfer to Phnom Penh.

Alternatively, if you are continuing on to Thailand as part of your itinerary, from Koh Kong it is a short journey to the Thai-Cambodia border.



Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is from **£1,995 per person**, based on twin/double accommodation. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Twin/double accommodation (B&B basis; full-board in Koh Kong)
- Private transportation throughout
- All entrance fees
- Activities mentioned in itinerary
- Experienced regional guides

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Lunch and dinner to own account unless stated otherwise in itinerary

