

TRAVEL NORTH CAMBODIA THE SUSTAINABLE WAY FOR 7 DAYS

ITINERARY

Day 1-Siem Reap Arrival (D)

Welcome to **Siem Reap, the charming gateway to the famous temples of Angkor**. You will be greeted by your local English-speaking guide, who will lead you to your hotel.

Take a rest from your flight at the hotel or discover Siem Reap on a stroll through its **beautiful pagodas and the colorful market** on your own.

This afternoon will include a journey to get the first glimpse of the **legendary Angkor Wat**. Built during the reign of King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century, Angkor Wat was constructed based on the model of the temple mountain symbolizing Mount Meru, the 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. Angkor Wat is famous 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 featured on Cambodia's national flag because the temple symbolizes the soul of the Khmer people.

This evening, enjoy a **welcome dinner at HAVEN, a training restaurant for young adults** (orphans, half-orphans, and abandoned children), **who have aged out of their orphanages**. Through vocational **training in hospitality and cooking**, these young adults gain the life experience necessary to support a smooth transition from living in an institution to living in “the real world.” By dining at HAVEN, you will get to enjoy **flavorful Asian and Western food** – including many fresh vegetarian dishes – while also supporting a training program helping young adult orphans achieve and secure an independent future.

Overnight in Siem Reap

Day 2-Siem Reap (B)

After breakfast, visit the **ancient city of Angkor Thom**, the last capital of the Great Khmer Empire under the reign of Jayavarman VII. This **city is surrounded by a 26-foot-high wall forming a perfect square**. Enter the city through the ancient South Gate, an **impressive stone gate carved with elephants and four giant faces**. On each side of the entrance path a row of 54 gods and demons hold the sacred Naga snake.

From here, continue to **Bayon Temple** in the very 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.

In the afternoon discover the “gem” of the Angkor area, **the temple of Banteay Srei**. The temple is best viewed in the warm afternoon light. The so-called “**Citadel of the Women**” remains **the best preserved temple in Cambodia**. It displays some of the finest examples of classical Khmer art as this small temple is noted for its truly

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remarkable fine bas-reliefs. Banteay Srei is unique in that it is constructed of pink sandstone, which isn't seen anywhere else in Angkor.

Stop for a visit to **Banteay Srei Butterfly Centre (BBC)**, where you can see butterflies feeding and flying around while also witnessing the complete life cycle of many species. The exhibit consists of a netted tropical garden with thousands of free-flying butterflies, all of which are native species to Cambodia. **Revenue generated by tourist admissions at this site provides support for local poverty alleviation and conservation projects.**

Later, you will have the chance to stop at **local communities** along the way. Your guide will help you **interact with local community members** to learn about their ways of life. Seize the opportunity to **taste Palm Wine and Palm Sugar** (seasonal) as well as other popular local produce.

Visit **the Landmine Museum**, which promotes mine awareness. Mr. Aki Ra, the museum founder, was trained as a child soldier during the Khmer Rouge regime and today works as a de-miner. The museum also serves as **a rescue center for a number of landmine amputee children** who Aki Ra brought in off Phnom Penh's streets or from impoverished rural communities.

Overnight in Siem Reap

Day 3- Siem Reap (B/L)

This morning, explore the **temples of the Small Circuit** by a local 'remork' (similar to the Thai tuk tuk). The most **illustrious** of these temples is **Ta Prohm Temple**, built in the mid-**12th to early 13th centuries**.

Ta Prohm is unique in that it has been left largely as it was found: overgrown by jungle trees and vines, with many parts of the temple crumbling to the ground. This "**Tomb Raider Temple**," is one of the most picturesque and memorable of the Angkor temples. Your visit will also include **Banteay Kdei**, a Buddhist monastery from the late 12th Century, and **Srah Srang**, also known as the "pool of ablutions".

Around noon, break up your day with **lunch at Sala Bai** back in **Siem Reap**. **Sala Bai** is a school that focuses on training **Cambodians from poor family backgrounds** in the principles of hospitality in order to give them a future in tourism. You will have plenty of opportunities to talk to the students as they accompany you on a tour of the school after the meal. *(Note: Sala Bai is usually closed during national holidays and for the entire month of April over the Khmer New Year holiday.)*

In the afternoon, explore **the Grand Circuit Temples**. You can begin at **Ta Som**, a Buddhist temple built under Jayavarman VII. The temple has been left largely unrestored with numerous trees and vegetation growing amongst the ruins, including a sacred fig tree that straddles one of the entrance gates.

From Ta Som begin a visit to **a community project set up to protect and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of Baray Reach Dak**, the park's newly flooded north reservoir. The baray (artificial body of water) was only recently re-flooded in 2007 after heavy rainfall. Appreciate the nature of the baray with a **walk through the forest, accompanied by a community guide**. You will also have the unique opportunity to visiting the **Neak Poan Temple**, arriving as the ancient Khmer did by boat. The tour finishes at

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Preah Khan Temple. The temple was built approximately during the same period as Ta Prohm, and originally also served as a religious university. All aspects of the tour are run and managed by members of the community.

On the way back to Siem Reap, your timing will be just right to catch the beautiful evening light from **Pre Rup, a pyramidal temple surrounded by rice fields.**

Overnight in Siem Reap

Day 4 -Siem Reap - Battambang (B/L/D)

After an early breakfast, embark on a **boat trip** that will take you on a **fascinating journey across Tonlé Sap Lake to Battambang on a private boat.** You will pass **floating villages and flooded forests**, portraying life on this body of water in the heart of Cambodia. Packed lunch will be served onboard.

Tonight, a special visit awaits you at **Phare Ponleu Selpak School of Music, Visual & Performing Arts.** Phare Ponleu Selpak combines the arts **to provide education, support, and entertainment to surrounding poor communities.** This project is a success story of how humanitarian aid work can turn into a display of zest for life, genuine warmth, and creativity. A visit to one of its circus shows will leave you with a lasting memory of the wonderful participants and should not be missed when in Battambang. (Note: The circus performance is only performed regularly on each Monday & Thursday. On other days private performances are available upon request and for a supplemental fee).

Overnight in Battambang.

Day 5-Battambang (B) A day for biking!

Today, have a fun morning **cycling around local villages with Soksa Bike**, a social enterprise set up to **provide scenic and informative bike rides through the local countryside.** During the 18-mile cycle tour, there are plenty of stops where you will learn about the **locally produced rice paper, prahoc**, (typical Cambodian fish paste), grolan (sticky rice stuffed in bamboo), and other Cambodian treats. The local **countryside is beautiful**, and the Battambang area is known for its high-quality rice and oranges.

In the afternoon, explore another side of Battambang. Take a **relaxing cyclo ride through the town with an audio set** providing an informative guide to the history of the town. For 2½ hours, you can sit back as your cyclo driver takes you around the colonial streets, markets, and temples. You will have many opportunities to get off the cyclo and walk around the points of interest before moving on to the next stop.

Overnight in Battambang

Day 6-Battambang – Siem Reap (B/L)

Head to the Bamboo Train station. **The Bamboo Train** was set up by villagers **to facilitate the transportation of goods and people** as there are no regular trains running any longer. The “train” itself is very basic: **one bamboo platform on 4 wheels is activated by a small motor.** Sitting on the platform (we will provide some cushions for your comfort), you will **travel 5 miles through beautiful landscape and rice paddies** (depending on the season) to the next station. Its like a **roller coaster-like ride without the rises!**

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This afternoon, you will be transferred back overland to Siem Reap (duration = 3 hours). Upon arrival, you will check in to your hotel.

Overnight in Siem Reap

Day 7-Siem Reap - Departure (B)

Breakfast at your hotel. Enjoy a leisurely day to do more sightseeing or some personal shopping at Siem Reap's colorful markets.

We suggest you visit **Artisans d'Angkor**. The organization was established in 1992 in order to support Cambodian arts and crafts, and **to help young people find work in their local villages by continuing the practice of traditional arts**. Discover how wood and stone carvings, lacquering, gilding, and silk paintings are created.

Transfer to the airport for your individual departure flight.

DETAILS

- ❖ **Tour duration:** 7 days
- ❖ **Price:** starting at \$1003 per person (based on 2 people sharing a double-occupancy room)
- ❖ **Group Size:** 1 person minimum
- ❖ **Start on:** All year long - The rainy season starts in May/June and lasts until the end of October. Rain showers usually only last 1-2 hours and occur in the afternoons, so it is easy to plan visits accordingly. Advantages to traveling during this season include: clean and refreshing air, less crowded sites, and lush green vegetation
- ❖ **Country visited:** Cambodia
- ❖ **Comfort level:** Standard to Superior
- ❖ **Level of difficulty:** Easy
- ❖ **Transport:** Bamboo local train and private vehicle with driver
- ❖ **Accommodation:** 3-star hotels – 4-star and 5-star hotels by request only
- ❖ **Additional Information:** The boat trip on **Tonlé Sap Lake** is only possible in the high water period from July to December as water levels are too low during the dry season and transfer times can be extremely long. From January to June, an alternative transfer by road is available.

❖ **Passport and visa:**

You will need a valid passport and a Cambodian visa to travel to Cambodia. Tourist and business visas are valid for one month beginning with the date of entry into Cambodia. Note: [Cambodia offers online visa processing](#).

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Source:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1080.html#entry_requirements

❖ **What's included:**

- Accommodation in a shared twin or shared double room in selected hotel
- Meals as mentioned in the program
- English-speaking local guide
- Tours and transfers as mentioned by private air-conditioned vehicle unless stated otherwise
- Entrance fees for mentioned visits
- Private boat trip as indicated in itinerary
- Daily drinking water and cold towels

❖ **What's not included:**

- Any surcharge/extra fees for visit of the Angkor Historical site imposed by the Apsara Authorities in Siem Reap, which are subject to change without prior notice
- Meals other than those mentioned
- International flight
- Personal expenses and travel insurance

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