

# Silk Steps

EXPLORE AND EXPERIENCE



## Cambodia

*A magical kingdom lies within this extraordinary country, once ruled by the Khmer Empire between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century.*

Emerging from the jungle, the ancient city of Angkor unveils its true magnificence to those who explore it. Cambodia has its origins in Funan, a small port southeast of Phnom Penh used by merchants and pilgrims travelling between China and India from 300 to 600 AD. The French colonial presence is still recognisable in the capital, where the charm and sophistication of the people is clear to visitors.

Throughout the nation the influence from other lands is apparent, none more so than from India and this cocktail of cultures is reflected through the written word, religion, dance and architecture.

### WEATHER

The best time to visit is from October through to March. From May through to October, the country experiences heavy rainfall and temperatures soar. In the dry season, from November to January, the average is 27°C and then from January through to April both the temperature and humidity rise.



### WHEN IN CAMBODIA WHY NOT...?

**Sample delicious seafood overlooking the black sands at Kep.** Once one of Cambodia's main beach resorts, Kep was destroyed in fighting decades ago, and today it is an intriguing place where you can explore the remains of the town before enjoying a fresh seafood lunch overlooking the beach and the Gulf of Thailand.

**Discover little visited Monduliri.** This beautiful, unspoilt region of north east Cambodia is reached overland, but at the end of the journey you will be delighted by this sparsely populated province. You will discover endless thickly-forested rolling hills, hill tribes and waterfalls and the best way to get around is on the back of an elephant.

**Travel overland from Phnom Penh via Kompong Cham, Kratie and Stung Treng to Banlung.** You used to be able to reach the north east only by boat or plane from Phnom Penh to Stung Treng and Banlung. Now the road to Kompong Cham is a dream and even onwards to Kratie, home to freshwater dolphins, Stung Treng, a backwater with a fascinating market and Banlung, the base for visits to hill tribes and Virachey National Park, the road has improved dramatically.

**Be adventurous and take the boat across Tonle Sap Lake from Siem Reap to Battambang.** The boat from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh is on everybody's itinerary but few take the 4-hour boat journey to Battambang, much across vast Tonle Sap Lake. Battambang is a pleasant riverine town with colonial buildings and some little-visited Angkorian temples. From here you can drive south of the lake to Phnom Penh or cross the border into Thailand.

**Can't get enough of temples?** If temples are your thing, once you have exhausted Angkor you can take in more Angkorian-era temples south of Phnom Penh - Phnom Chisor, Tonle Bati and Phnom Da. The area around Battambang is also rich in temples including Wat Banan, Phnom Sampeau and Wat Ek Phnom.

**Visit the deserted hill station of Bokor.** Abandoned because of the fighting many years ago, the remaining buildings of this once popular French-built hill station are an intriguing place to visit. The road up is in a state of disrepair, but worth the effort as at the top you will discover an eerie array of villas, a church and a hotel and casino. Wander through the old casino and the experience is almost surreal - you can almost hear the roll of the dice, the tinkle of glasses and the laughter of the gamblers.

**Discover Preah Vihear.** This spectacular 11<sup>th</sup> century hilltop temple, in northern Cambodia, is more easily reached from the Thai border, but the adventurous will relish the overland journey from Kompong Thom. This is a chance to see remote areas of Cambodia, topped by ending up at this most magnificent of temples.



# Suggested Itinerary



Nights stay at:	
1	Phnom Penh
2	
3	Banlung
4	
5	Kampot
6	
7	Sihanoukville
8	
9	
10	Siem Reap
11	

## DISCOVERING CAMBODIA

Spend time discovering Cambodia, world-renowned as the home to the temples of Angkor, but with a wealth of sites throughout the country just waiting to be explored. Start in the capital, Phnom Penh, with its eclectic mix of traditional Khmer and French colonial architecture. Visit the collection of Angkorian artefacts in the National Museum and wonder at the gleaming Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda with its floor of solid silver tiles. Learn a little of Cambodia's recent history at Tuol Sleng, once a Khmer Rouge prison, and visit the killing fields at Cheong Ek.

Fly north to Banlung in Rattanakiri province, home to several hill tribes, delightful waterfalls, a little-visited

national park and gem mines. Return to Phnom Penh and drive south to the sleepy riverine town of Kampot with its faded colonial architecture. From here drive up to the eerie hill station of Bokor, long abandoned, with derelict villas, church, hotel and casino and stunning views over the coastline below. Drive along the coast to Sihanoukville, Cambodia's only beach resort and either relax on one of the sandy beaches, hire a boat to go out to one of the islands or visit nearby Ream National Park.

Take the excellent road back to Phnom Penh and fly to Siem Reap, your base to explore the nearby magnificent temples of Angkor. Wonder at vast, Angkor Wat, the intricate bas-reliefs on the walls of the Bayon, the roots of fig trees supporting the temple of Ta Prohm and delightful Banteay Srei.

**Cost per person** (based on two people travelling in a twin/double room)

**FROM £1,262**



# Hotel Selection

The choice of hotels in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap is endless and those detailed below are recommendations only. We can book most hotels throughout Cambodia, so please contact us if you would like alternative hotels.

## PHNOM PENH

An excellent standard hotel, in a peaceful area close to the river, park and Wat Phnom, the **Sunway** is a good base for a stay in Phnom Penh as it is accessible to many sights and to the restaurants along Sisowath Quay. The standard of facilities and service is international, but the welcome is Khmer.

At the heart of Phnom Penh is the luxury boutique hotel, the **Amanjaya**, which combines the highest standards of comfort with traditional Khmer décor. The 21 rooms are all beautifully decorated and all have a balcony or terrace overlooking the river. It is an oasis of tranquility at the heart of the busy city and within walking distance of the major sights and a huge choice of restaurants.

## BANLUNG

Accommodation is limited in remote Banlung, so we recommend the **Terres Rouges Lodge**, a wooden traditional house with a huge terrace overlooking the garden and lake, once the residence of the governor of the province. The rooms have a fan and private bathroom and the lodge is decorated with Khmer artefacts and memorabilia from French colonial times.

## KAMPOT

This charming riverine town is not well served with hotel accommodation and the town centre **Hotel Borei Bokor** offers simple rooms, all with air conditioning and private bathroom and friendly service. It is located close to the river and within walking distance of the few restaurants in town.



## SIHANOUKVILLE

The family-run **Seaside Hotel** is located right across the road from sandy Ochhoetel beach on the edge of town and is popular with weekenders from Phnom Penh. The exterior resembles a pagoda and the rooms are modern and comfortable. As well as being ideal for the beach there are several excellent seafood restaurants within walking distance and it is possible to hire a boat to reach the small offshore islands.

The superior standard **Sokha Beach Resort**, built in low-rise Khmer style, has its own private beach and landscaped gardens and is the best hotel in town. All rooms have wooden floors and have their own balcony. An ideal place to relax or explore the nearby islands or Ream National Park.

## SIEM REAP

Located at the heart of Siem Reap, the **Day Inn Angkor Resort** is popular with visitors to the town and temples. All the rooms have their own balcony overlooking the delightful garden and swimming pool and the rooms are large, stylish and bright.

Part of a small chain of French hotels, the **Victoria Angkor** is centrally located opposite the Royal Gardens with tastefully furnished rooms with classic furniture and wooden floors. All rooms have a balcony overlooking the hotel gardens and swimming pool.

### A Silk Steps inclusive holiday price includes:

- Private return transfers between airports and hotels (unless otherwise specified)
- The services of English speaking guides and representatives at each stage of the tour. Between most places you will travel unescorted
- Accommodation in a standard room (shared twin) with private facilities (unless otherwise specified) with breakfast
- Government taxes and compulsory service charges
- All tours and sightseeing as specified, inclusive of entrance fees
- Economy class air travel within all countries on the scheduled services of the national or domestic carrier as specified in each tour
- The services of our local representative

### Extras

- International flights - please contact us for up-to-date prices
- Travel insurance
- Meals - unless otherwise stated
- Optional sightseeing other than specified
- International airport departure tax payable overseas
- Visa fees
- Single supplement (on request)

