

# About Asia



## **Detailed Itinerary Proposal for Paul Chen and Nancy Wei (2 pax) June 2008**

### **Itinerary**

Carefully planned to bring you the best of Cambodia  
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Illustrated itinerary  
Options and pricing, Inclusions, exclusions and settlement terms

### **Appendices**

Practicalities and travel tips  
Brief history of the Angkor temples  
Country information  
Further reading recommendations



10 March 2008

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## Carefully planned to bring you the best of Cambodia

Dear Paula and Nancy,

The itinerary I have drawn up for you is an initial proposal only for you to discuss although I have provided enough detail so that it becomes a useful working model which we can finesse over time

I have concentrated your time on Siem Reap province. Phnom Penh is not especially attractive (unless you enjoy chaos) but does have the energy of a fast developing SE Asian city. For visitors it cannot compare however to the sites and experiences of the northwest: Recently Angkor Wat was voted as the second 'Wonder of the World' for travelers behind only Machu Picchu of Peru and ahead of such places as the Taj Mahal, The Grand Canyon, Venice and Egypt's pyramids.

### I have used four criteria to guide me in structuring your itinerary:

- Enjoy the very best of Cambodia in a peaceful and unhurried manner undisturbed by the crowds of tourists.
- Discover the gems of Cambodia: rural scenery, people and lifestyles in various parts of the country
- Where practical visit monuments chronologically to develop an interest in the great Angkor empire story.
- Ensure you see places at the right times of day for photography

### A good guide

Only a decade ago the value of a good guide was measured in terms of personal safety and helping to navigate a country with little tourist infrastructure following years of civil war and unrest. Cambodia has since enjoyed a period of tranquility and is established as a safe place to travel. Last year nearly 1.7million visitors came to Cambodia. Today the true value of a good local guide is in their ability to get you away from the crowds and retain the mystery that is Angkor.



The temples are not difficult to visit. Grab a copy of 'Lonely Planet', jump on a bus with dozens of other tourists and there it is! To experience Angkor Wat in a manner which retains a full sense of wonder however requires careful planning and an intimate knowledge of the monuments and the country.

### Wander beyond the temples

As well as the 'must see sites' I am keen to show you as many different aspects of the country as possible by looking beyond the tourist honey pots to find the real Cambodia. For me the real gem of the country lies in its villages and rural lifestyle; especially in the generous and optimistic Khmer people.

### Travel slowly – see more

It would be a mistake with only a few days in Cambodia to rush around and try to 'see' everything. Even in Siem Reap province alone the Angkor Archaeological Park comprises the most important temples in the world and covers an area of 200km<sup>2</sup>. Without gaining an appreciation of the special characteristics and importance of each place, the monuments can quickly blur into just a sequence of piles of stones – welcome to what is termed *temple fatigue*.

We shall try to introduce you to the historical sites in a chronological sequence. There are two advantages; you will appreciate and learn far more about the civilization of Angkor expressed through architecture than simply 'wandering around temples' and you will more often get to see the key temples at unusual times of day. A standard itinerary is taught to many guides upon training. This is where the crowds are to be found; we aim to be elsewhere.

You should be able to follow the development of the Angkor Empire from Jayavarman II (802 AD) and Indravarman; Yashovarman (Bakheng), Suryavarman II (Angkor Wat) to Jayavarman VII, the most prolific builder who died around 1220.

#### Physical conditions

*For June: First light 5:14, sunrise 5:37, sunset 18:25, last light 18:48*

*The wet SW monsoon is becoming established.*

*Probability of precipitation on any given day is 60%*

*The temperature ranges from 24C (75F) to 33 (91F). Humidity is high at around 50-70% during the day and up to 80-90% at night making it feel hotter than it is.*

**Your itinerary at a glance**  
**Paul Chena and Nancy Wei (2pax)**  
**Ref:**



**Guide language**  
**APSARA PASS**

**Hotel Choice Event**

June Day 1	<p><b>Arrive into Phnom Penh during the morning (flight to be determined)</b>            Met on arrival with private transfer to your chosen hotel.            Lightly scheduled day to allow you to simply pick up on the atmosphere of this chaotic but fast growing city and recover from the very early start.  <b>PM Markets of Phnom Penh and Sisowath quay</b> where you can enjoy a private sunset boat cruise (weather allowing) on the Mekong as our welcome to Cambodia</p>	a/c car boat	English	Phnom Penh choice of hotel
Day 2	<p><b>AM: Khmer Rouge.</b> A tough beginning to understanding Cambodia. You will make more sense of modern Cambodia with a familiarity of the events of the late 1970s and how the country continues to recover from this tragedy. Visits to the Killing Fields and Toul Sleng (S21) where only 7 survived from 1000s incarcerated.  <b>PM: Jewels of the Capital.</b> National Museum for the best Angkor era art in the world. Wat Phnom, the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda.</p>	a/c car	English	Phnom Penh
Day 3	<p><b>Phnom Penh to Siem Reap by road.</b> Explore the villages, markets and rural scenery along NR6 (private transportation). Stop in Skoun to see (try?) the deep fried spiders, the ancient carving villages and the large markets of Kompong Thom. Jayavarman VII's wonderful bridge – still going strong after 800 years (and no cement!)</p>	a/c car	Driver only	Siem Reap choice
Day 4	<p><b>Hunter/gatherers on Tonle Sap to the first Angkor capital</b> By boat to Chong Kneas and Kompong Phluk to explore lifestyles on the margins of the great lake. Move through busy Chong Kneas which sees (too) many tourists to travel 80 minutes along the margins of the lake to Kompong Phluk. Meet some fishermen and families to understand a little more of their lifestyle on this richest of all fishing grounds. Reach the road head near the contemporary town of Rolous before exploring the earliest Angkor capital in the region [Hariharalaya AD881]. After an early start today we will finish the touring by mid afternoon.</p>	a/c car boats	English 7day Apsara passes	Siem Reap choice
Day 5	<p><b>AM: Angkor Wat temple.</b> One of travel's remaining great adventures: An optional pre-dawn start to catch the sunrise at Angkor Wat [AD1113] before exploration of this wonder of the world; the central complex and bas-reliefs. <i>Clearly if the weather is poor and a decent sunrise unlikely it is more sensible to head to the temple after breakfast at the hotel.</i>  <b>PM: Angkor Wat moat.</b> Walk around the perimeter of Angkor Wat for some wonderful scenes and photographic opportunities. Optional sunset at East Mebon [AD952], once an island temple in the centre of the immense Yashodharatataka reservoir and Pre-Rup [AD961] on the southern shore.</p>	a/c car	English	Siem Reap choice
Day 6	<p><b>Rural scenes and remote temples.</b> Full day out of Siem Reap: Across ancient reservoirs (long since devoid of water), through pretty villages and rice paddies to Banteay Srei [AD967] some 37km distant. The sacred Kulen mountain with fine river carvings and beautiful waterfalls. Local lunch before driving to the eastern extremity of the range for the mysterious Beng Mealea, blueprint for Angkor Wat.</p>	a/c car	English	Siem Reap choice
Day 7	<p><b>AM: Enchanting temples.</b> Walk through the forests to rediscover the mysteries of the temples away from the throngs of tourists. The incomparable Ta Prohm (AD1186-), unfinished Ta Keo (AD1000 -1025), Chapel Hospital, Chau Say Tevoda and Thommanon and the Victory Gate of the great walled city of Angkor Thom.  <b>PM: Jayavarman VII's masterpiece Angkor Thom.</b> Largest city in the world in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Including the much earlier Phimeanakas and Baphuon temples the terraces of the elephants and Leper King and Jayavarman's state temple of Bayon  <b>Evening: transfer</b> for your flight onwards (details to be determined)</p>	a/c car	English	Siem Reap choice

## Illustrated itinerary

### Day 1 –

#### **Arrive into Phnom Penh during the morning (flight to be determined)**

Met on arrival with private transfer to your chosen hotel.  
**PM Markets of Phnom Penh and Sisowath quay**

A deliberately lightly scheduled day to get used to the heat and humidity of Cambodia.

PM: After an early lunch we suggest that you use the time available to explore the markets of Phnom Penh at a relaxed pace.



It is worth simply taking a walk in Phnom Penh without aiming to see specific sites of interest. For amusement value find a large crossroads and watch hundreds of motor scooters all negotiate their way across with little regard to rules of the road.

We can arrange transport towards the end of the afternoon (or done easily through your hotel) to **Sisowath Quay** where you can enjoy a private sunset boat cruise (weather allowing) on the Mekong as our welcome to Cambodia



### Day 2

After breakfast you will meet your guide and set out to visit the **Tousseng Museum** and the **Killing fields**. The Killing fields are around 15km from Phnom Penh. These are essential places to visit for anyone interested in contemporary Cambodia. Some knowledge of the atrocities in the 1970's is essential for understanding the country today; it's land and people. The elimination of an entire professional class in the 1970s reverberates still in modern Cambodian society.

#### **THE SECURITY OF REGULATION**

- 1- You must answer accordingly to my question-Don't turn them away .
- 2- Don't try to hide the facts by making pretexts this and that  
You are strictly prohibited to contest me .
- 3- Don't be a fool for you are a chap who dare to thwart the revolution .
- 4- You must immediately answer my questions without wasting time to reflect .
- 5- Don't tell me either about your immoralities or the essence of the revolution.
- 6- While getting lashes or electrification you must not cry at all.
- 7- Do nothing, sit still and wait for my orders . If there is no order , keep quiet . When I ask you to do something , you must do it right away without protesting
- 8- Don't make pretext about Kampuchea Krom in order to hide your secret or traitor.
- 9- if you don't follow all the above rules , you shall get many many lashes of electric wire .
- 10- if you disobey any point of my regulations you shall get either ten lashes or five shocks of electric discharge .

We support the School of Arts in Siem Reap. You will learn in your visits today that any type of artists; painters, musicians or dancers, were killed under Pol Pot's regime. They were considered a distraction of the ruling classes and as serving no purpose in a farming society. Of an estimated 3,600 professional dancers in Cambodia in 1975 only around 100 survived. Khmer classical dance faced extinction as much of the knowledge has never been written down but traditionally is passed from teacher to pupil. Through the School of Arts and other similar projects this part of the Khmer heritage is at least assured.



After lunchtime you will set out again to visit some of the city highlights including the **Royal Place** built in 1866 by King Norodom, and the **Silver Pagoda** located within the Royal Palace compound. The Silver Pagoda is so named because of its floor, which is made up of 5,000 silver tiles. Look out especially for the life sized gold Buddha encrusted with over 9000 diamonds

We shall then visit the **National Museum** which houses all the most important Khmer art and sculptures. It is unfortunate but due to looting it has been necessary to move many of the best pieces of artwork from the temples to this museum.

### Day 3 –

**AM: Your driver will collect you early from the hotel to ensure you arrive in Siem Reap not too late. There are many things of interest to see along the way.**

Your driver will collect you early from the hotel to give you time to have some stops along the way and still get to Siem Reap by late afternoon.

Around 60km from Phnom Penh we shall pass the town of **Skoun**. Good time for a late breakfast of fried tarantulas. The people of Skoun breed these large spiders especially for eating and you will see plates piled high with them.

Here is a picture of the one I ate. I managed a couple of legs (hairy) but then decided that I wasn't hungry enough for the abdomen and the cephalothorax. I was just about to send the spider on it's way (out the window) when Phalla said "don't throw it away - it's Tha's favourite". Tha is Phalla's beautiful wife. When we finally got to Siem Reap I gave her the spider. The legs went as sweets to the kids and the rest was gone in a mouthful. Yum!



Some 15km before **Kompong Thom** you will see some villages which specialise in stone carving. This all looks a little commercialized for tourists but actually these

villages have a long history of specialising in such stone carving skills.



The journey continues through the regional market town of **Kompong Thom** where we can take lunch.

Kompong Thom is a large market centre and boasts some interesting general and fruit markets as well as the 'villagers river market' where live snakes are sold (among many other oddities)



Aside from rural scenes the next point of interest along the route is at **Kompong Kdei Bridge** some 90 km from Kompong Thom. This bridge is still used today by the main Siem Reap to Phnom Penh road and was built by Jayavarman VII in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Notice especially the very fine Nagas and ballustrade along the bridge.

We spoke recently with an ex-Khmer Rouge soldier who was assigned to demolish this bridge with dynamite but couldn't bring himself to carry out the task and instead escaped overseas.



Onward past rice paddies and palm trees to Siem Reap and to your chosen hotel.

**Day 4 –**

**Am:** Travel to Tonle Sap early to explore the lifestyles of villagers on Lake Tonle Sap at Chong Kneas and Kompong Phluk. On the way to the lake you may optionally climb Phnom Krom.

**PM:** Investigate the earliest capital of the region at the Rolous group of temples.

We shall meet you after an early breakfast at the hotel and travel the short distance to **Tonle Sap** lake.

Tonle Sap is the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia.

Depending on the flood level of the Mekong the lake fills from or empties into the river for 6 months at a time. Beating to this seasonal rhythm the lake increases in area five-fold from 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> (1,000 square miles) to over 13,000 km<sup>2</sup> (5,000 square miles).

This pumping of water in and out of this heart of Cambodia maintains a rich level of nutrients enabling the lake to rank among the world's richest fishing grounds.

On the way to the lake you will pass through many fields of Lotus flowers (flower in March) but unfortunately the farmers do not seem to have planted so many this year.



*Phnom Krom and lotus fields in March*

Yashovarman who built the new capital at Phnom Bakheng also had four monasteries constructed on four surrounding hills so that no one in his empire could fail to see the power of the God-King. One of these is on **Phnom Krom** close to the high water level of Tonle Sap. Optionally you may climb Phnom Krom for a wonderful view of the margins of the lake.



From near the embarkation point for visiting **Chong Kneas** (floating village) we shall take a boat to travel around an hour and a quarter along the Northern margin of the lake to visit **Kompong Phluk** stilted village.

On the way out we can have a look around Chong Kneas to see an extraordinary lifestyle on water. All of life here takes place afloat; homes, farms, even the church and school are built on rafts. Unfortunately 98% of all tourists who come to the lake come to Chong Kneas so at times one can see more tourists than locals but we shall pass through and on to less visited places.



Nearby Kompong Phluk we can see the **flooded forest** which acts as a giant natural fish breeding ground during the maximum extend of the floodwaters in November. As the waters recede the young fish move out into the lake where many are trapped to provide a livelihood for the estimated 3,000 people who live in these nearby villages.

In Kompong Phluk you will have a chance to understand a little of the way of life on the margins of the great lake.



See my friend Andy Brouwer's excellent page on Kompong Phluk <http://andybrouwer.co.uk/phluk.html>

Note however that he approached the village by land via Rolous town but found the road bad.

When the lake has shrunk to expose the marginal rice paddies it gets increasingly difficult to transfer from the boat to the vehicle here. If necessary we shall retrace our steps to Siem Reap for lunch before driving out to Rolous in the afternoon. It is only a 25 km drive around to Rolous on a decent enough road (last 15km are on the highway linking Siem Reap to Phnom Penh).



### Introduction to the beginnings of the Angkor empire



15km to the East of Siem Reap lays **Hariharalaya**, the earliest Angkor capital in the region near the contemporary town of **Rolous**.

Immediately prior to and shortly after **Jayavarman II's** coronation as the first God-King in **Phnom Kulen** in 802 Hariharalaya was the centre of the first Angkor court.

We can explore the earliest large scale temples of the Angkor period and see an early use of various architectural forms, such as the Naga and the stepped, or tiered, temple mountain which become themes for many subsequent monuments.

The two most important temples in the Rolous group are **Preah Ko** and the very picturesque **Bakong**, the first temple mountain in the region. The moat of Bakong was cleared from weed only last year and is now a very photogenic place.



*Hariharalaya was first occupied by Jayavarman II in the early 800's AD on the rich rice growing lands of the flood margins of the great lake of Tonle Sap. He later moved his royal court to the Kulen uplands for his coronation as the first 'Devaraja' or 'God who is King' in a highly charged religious and state ceremony before returning the court to Hariharalaya. The major temples we can see at Hariharalaya were built by Indravarman I who succeeded the son of Jayavarman II in around AD 879*

*Jayavarman II is considered the first consolidating King of the Angkor civilization. Prior to his rule this area of Southeast Asia had seen several trading civilizations such as the Funan (based around the delta of the Mekong) and the later two Chenla states - always striving against one another and the Chams (early Vietnamese).*

*Under Jayavarman II's absolute rule Cambodia declared independence and over the next few centuries grew to encompass much of Southeast Asia. His key advantage was to present himself as a deity ruler with absolute power. He used religion to create a self sustaining system of lesser lords who in part supported him as a God and in return received authority from him along with gifts of land. Agricultural surpluses supported the whole system with part of every village's output being directed towards the centre through the local temple honoring the God-King.*

I propose we take plenty of time around the Rolous group. It is not one of the more visited groups of temples and is a beautiful spot to begin to consider the legacy of the Angkor builders and the scale of their achievements.

**Day 5 –**

**Am: Angkor Wat sunrise (local breakfast option or return to hotel for breakfast) and continue to explore**

**The moat of Angkor Wat and the twin temples of Yashodharatataka.**



An early (pre-dawn) start to witness and photograph the sunrise at **Angkor Wat**. Sunrise today is at 05:37 but the best light for photography is in the 30 minutes or so prior necessitating a start from the hotel shortly after 4:45.

**Rarely is it worth the special effort to get up pre-dawn in the middle of the rainy season – far better probably to head to the temple after an early but civilized breakfast**

You can opt to take a local simple breakfast with the guide near Angkor Wat if you prefer to not spend the time returning to the hotel for breakfast. After breakfast we shall begin to visit one of the wonders of the world; **Angkor Wat** built by **Suryavarman II**. It is the largest religious building ever constructed and in its size and architectural form is quite breathtaking.

If we can return quite early the temple should not be too busy but in any case your guide knows how to avoid the worst of the crowds. He will lead you through the temple and explain the mythology and history behind the most important of the 1200 square meters of exquisite bas relief carvings in the galleries.



In the afternoon we shall return to Angkor Wat to walk a little between the Laterite perimeter wall and the inside of the moat. There is always activity of interest on the waterways of these great temples: workers up to their waists clearing weeds, children swimming and diving, cows being tethered for grazing.



*Small girls in Angkor Wat*

We can either spend the rest of the afternoon at Angkor wat or head the short distance to the twin temples of **East Mebon** and **Pre-Rup** in the centre and on the Southern shore of the (now dry) **Eastern Baray (Yahodharatataka)** respectively. Built under Rajendravarman in the 10<sup>th</sup> century these temples afford nice rural views over the surrounding rice paddies.

**East Mebon** was once surrounded by the water of the East Baray. You will see immediately the more recent addition of steps, leading up to the original boat landing stages. Look out also for the evidence of the original stucco coverings of the brickwork.



*East Mebon*

The purpose of the giant Barays or reservoirs remains uncertain. It is generally believed that these man made bodies of water were for irrigation of the surrounding rice paddies, built as an effort at boosting the crops necessary to support a hierarchical society. More recent research however dismisses this idea as despite their huge size (7.8 x 1.5km) they are simply not large enough to have made a significant difference to the feeding of a million people.

More likely is their intention to provide a setting of grandeur and significance for temples such as the East Mebon where visiting foreign dignities could be in no doubt about the power and resources of the Angkor King.

### **Day 6 –**

**Full day out: Kulen mountain with fine river carvings and beautiful waterfalls. After a local lunch we shall continue in to the eastern extremity of the range to visit the mysterious Beng Mealea.**

A Full day away from Siem Reap today to see and experience rural Cambodia. We travel out (and back to the very beginning chronologically) to the **Phnom Kulen** in the morning to the site of the capital and coronation of the first Angkor King Jayavarman II. This remains the most sacred mountain in Cambodia as it is regarded as the birthplace of the country.

In the way, around 37km out of Siem Reap we shall visit **Banteay Srei**.



*Beautiful village near Banteay Srei*



The small pink sandstone temple of Banteay Srei is revered for the quality of its stonework and carved decoration. The temple was built not by a King but by one of his advisors. Such a degree of

wealth and power amongst the landed classes spelt trouble for the royal succession as rival parties backed their favourites upon the King's death. This first great dynasty of Angkor was to shortly come to an end with civil war.



In the Kulen Mountains the stepped temple itself, site of Jayavanman II's coronation, is difficult to reach. It is in a heavily land mined area of the forest on the highest area of the hills but we can take a short walk through the forest to see an extensive area of **river carvings** from this early period. Many lingas have been etched into the bedrock under water to purify and give power to the water that flows over them and onward to the fertile plain below.

The mountains are pleasantly cool compared to the plain and boast some lovely waterfalls. (you can swim so bring a towel)

Whilst there we will visit the mountain top and climb up to see a large reclining Budha, carved into a giant sandstone boulder in situ in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Near here there are various markets set out in the forest selling local crafts and foods.

After midday we can descend and drive on to Beng Mealea. This temple is in a very collapsed state and is still largely overgrown by the jungle. It is however a large temple and an important historical site; thought to be a 'blueprint' for Angkor Wat.



Beng Mealea is in a collapsed state and is still largely overgrown by the jungle. It is however a large temple and an important historical site; thought to be a 'blueprint' for Angkor Wat and built under the control of Suryavarman II.

**WARNING - It is especially important to stay on the paths in these more remote places. Although officially cleared of mines there is still a real life threatening risk if one wanders off the path.**



The countryside around Beng Mealea is picturesque and far enough away from Siem Reap to be virtually unaffected by the growing tourism to the country. There are plenty of opportunities on the journey to stop and look around, take photographs, understand the local agriculture and sample locally made sugar sweets.

### **Day 7 –**

**Jayavarman VII – the builder King**

**AM: Ta Prohm quite early to avoid the crowds. Walk from Ta Keo to the heart of Angkor Thom. PM: After lunch explore Angkor Thom. All travel by remorque.**

Early morning in Cambodia is beautiful and full of activity with people undertaking their labours before the heat of the day. If you are keen it might be nice to make this trip by remorque (Cambodian equivalent of the better known Thai tuk tuk). The smells, sights and sounds of the early morning can better be appreciated from this slower, more open air form of travel. Just a

note however that although the day will be warm, early morning in an open Remorque can be chilly. Alternatively we will travel by a/c van.

We shall begin the exploration of the incomparable **Ta Prohm** in the early morning when it is relatively peaceful.

This temple is my own personal favourite; left in an un-restored state the temple evokes a mysterious atmosphere with giant fig, banyan and kapok trees strangling the stonework.



Much is known about Ta Prohm from the Sanskrit inscription on its stonework. 3,140 villages were assigned by Jayavarman VII to support the temple. Nearly 80,000 people worked directly in support including 2,740 officials and over 600 professional dancers. Among the property owned by the temple was a set of golden dishes weighing almost half a ton.



Leaving the temple we shall begin to walk from Ta Keo through to the heart of Angkor Thom by either the Victory or ghost gate.

In the afternoon we can begin our exploration of the great city of **Angkor Thom** at the 23m high **South Gate**.

Angkor Thom was built by arguably the most important (and certainly the most prolific builder) of the Angkor God Kings: Jayavarman VII.

The city covers an area of around 10 square km and is surrounded by an immense moat 100m wide, which in its time housed thousands of crocodiles for protection.

Inside the moat is an 8m high laterite wall, unbroken aside from 5 gates. Around the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Angkor Thom was the largest city in the world and the centre of an empire stretching throughout SE Asia.

At the centre of the city lies **Bayon**, the royal temple famously decorated on every one of its 54 towers with giant stone faces. The bas-reliefs of Bayon are more accessible than those of Angkor Wat for most visitors as they depict everyday scenes from the empire of Jayavarman VII. Thus, moving along the galleries one can gain a sense of life under this greatest of Khmer Kings.



We will continue North from Bayon to take in the **terraces of the elephants** and **leper King** opposite the 12 laterite and sandstone towers of **Prasat Suor Prat**. Between the terraces and the towers there is a huge open area which serves to remind one of the purpose of the terraces. On these elevated positions the King would greet visiting dignitaries and impress them with the might of his civilization arrayed on the parade ground before them.



Behind the terraces lies **Phimeanakas**, the golden temple with its beautiful man-made lakes or 'baths' within the walled grounds

Remember to save \$25 cash per person for the international departure tax in Cambodia airports

## Options and Pricing, Inclusions and exclusions

Just to avoid any confusion: the tours we make for our guests are all customised to suit their requirements and timings. We do not run any pre-arranged group tours. Thus the arrangements detailed in this itinerary are for you alone and remain flexible to your requirements at any time.

<b>Phnom Penh Hotel</b> 2 nights	<b>Siem Reap Hotel</b> 5 nights	<b>Whole itinerary price per person US\$</b>
<a href="#">Raffles Hotel le Royal</a> 5* (Landmark room)	<a href="#">Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor</a> (Landmark room)	<b>1,331</b>
<a href="#">Amanjaya</a> 4* (Junior suite)	<a href="#">La Residence d'Angkor</a> (5*)	<b>1,039</b>
<a href="#">Amanjaya</a> 4* (Junior suite)	<a href="#">Hotel de la Paix</a> (5*)	<b>1,039</b>
<a href="#">Amanjaya</a> 4* (Junior suite)	<a href="#">Sokha Angkor</a> (5*)	<b>867</b>
<a href="#">Anise Hotel</a> (3*)	<a href="#">Auberge Mont Royal</a> (3*)	<b>715</b>

<b>Included in ABOUT ASIA price:</b>	<b>Excluded from ABOUT ASIA price:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation and transfers in private air-conditioned with dedicated driver or remorques as noted</li> <li>• Accommodation with breakfast</li> <li>• Private boat tours</li> <li>• Expert local english speaking guide as specified</li> <li>• Admission fees to indicated sights</li> <li>• Gov't tax and service charge</li> <li>• Luggage handling and drinking water</li> <li>• 24/7 support from the ABOUT ASIA team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visa fee on arrival US\$20.00/pax (if applicable)</li> <li>• Int'l airport departure tax US\$25.00/pax</li> <li>• Int'l air tickets to/from Cambodia</li> <li>• Insurance of all kinds</li> <li>• Meals aside from those specifically included</li> <li>• Additional tour required beside above sights</li> <li>• Tip, drinks, personal expenses and others</li> </ul>

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## Settlement terms

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At ABOUT ASIA we prefer to conduct business in a rather 'old fashioned' manner. If you decide that you would like to do the itinerary then just let me know and we will go ahead and make all arrangements. There is no need for a deposit against services we book. If you say that you are coming then that is good enough for me. However I do ask that our customers enter into a 'Gentleman's agreement' in return. In effect should we incur unavoidable charges due to any sufficiently late change of plans (hotel and other services may charge us one day penalty for a late cancellation for example) you agree to cover these costs in a full and timely manner.

Of course cancellations happen and our good relationships with hotels and guides throughout Cambodia often enable us to avoid charges but this is not always the case, especially in the high season.

Settlement is usually best effected by one of two methods:

1. Cash in US\$ on arrival
2. Bank wire transfer in US\$ settling before arrival date. I have included our banking details on a separate page for easy printing.

## **Banking details for remittance to ABOUT ASIA Co. Ltd**

Please arrange settlement by bank transfer as detailed below ensuring you cover all your own (senders) bank charges:

Intermediary Bank FIELD 56A	DEUTSCHE BANK TRUST COMPANY AMERICAS ROUTING NO. 021001033 60 WALL STREET, NEW YORK 10005-2858, USA SWIFT CODE: BKTRUS33
Account with Institution FIELD 57A	ACC NO. 04422382 CAMBODIAN PUBLIC BANK PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA SWIFT CODE: CPBLKHPP Address: Villa 23, Vithei Kramounsar (street 114), Phnom Penh.
Beneficiary Bank account Account number	Booth Andrew John (AAT) 020.02.30.03975.9

Many banks can not remit funds directly to the Cambodian Public Bank. This is why we use Deutsche Bank as an intermediary to forward funds on to us at the Cambodian Public Bank. Just ask your bank to remit funds to the Deutsche Bank Trust company specified above with full details and they will know what to do.

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## Practicalities and travel tips

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### **Visa Application and Passport validity**

You will each need the following on arrival at the airport in Cambodia:

- US\$20 in cash, spare passport photograph, completed visa application form (simple form available on arrival)

The procedure takes between 5 and 20 minutes depending on the number of people applying from the flight.

Alternatively you can apply for an [electronic visa](#) at least 3 business days before travelling

The following passport holders DO NOT require a visa: Malaysia » Singapore » Philippines » Laos

Please ensure your passport has at least 6 months unexpired validity when travelling

### **Health care/clothing**

I am sure you have planned appropriately for protection from malaria but in any case don't forget to bring some good anti-mosquito with DEET. The best protection is always to not get bitten in the first place so I always recommend wearing appropriate clothing around dawn and dusk especially :

- Long, lightweight and light coloured trousers and shirt sleeves, socks with closed shoes (training shoes or similar rather than sandals). During the day generally shorts/skirts/T-shirts or polo shirts and sandals are fine.
- Incidentally do not wear leather soled shoes for climbing the temple steps. They are steep! <http://www.asiatravel-cambodia.com/cambodia-travel-tips/steepsteps.htm> Better are rubber soled shoes.
- Top tip: pack some handy-sized sealed packs of moist baby wipes. You can put a packet in your pocket or camera bag and they are excellent for cleaning the hands if we are to try locally prepared food when on the move. Incidentally they are also good for refreshing the face and back of the neck when things get hot.
- [Cambodia is hot all year round](#) (around 20 to 36C but feels hotter with the humidity). You will need sunscreen and sunglasses. A hat or cap is not a bad idea and again a light coloured one reflects the heat better than a dark coloured one.
- Pack some aspirin or other headache remedy. A jetlagged body thrust into the heat and light = headache.
- There are good pharmacies and reasonable medical care in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh but scarce elsewhere.

### **Drinking water**

Don't worry about this – we will always have plenty of bottled and ice cold drinking water wherever we go

### **Photographic**

If you have not succumbed to the digital revolution please note that although ordinary film is plentiful and easy to purchase in Cambodia more specialist film such as Velvia or Provia slide film is better brought from home and kept in the coolness of the hotel room. You can get these more professional films here but the handling of them can not be guaranteed.

A tripod is essential for high quality images of the temples. They can be quite dim inside.

Rain is unlikely between November /April but likely between May/October. In the event that we do get caught out in a shower, pack a small plastic bag that you can pop your camera into. Everything else will dry out in no time!

### **Money matters**

US\$ is the currency of choice. You need them for Visas, departure taxes, eating and drinking, tipping and souvenirs. Credit cards are accepted in the larger restaurants (but even then not in all). There are ATMs in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh which dispense US\$ (sometimes!).

Do not bring too many large denomination bills. Plenty of US\$1s and US\$5 is better. Large bills invite the following:  
Lots of change back in Riels (don't want)

Change back in fake US\$ bills (definitely don't want – there are some good fake notes around in Cambodia)

You can carry a few Riels with you for trinkets, postcards, etc. but you can not take them out of Cambodia so don't accumulate too many. Leave any spare Riels with us for the Charitable Foundation please

### **Security**

Cambodia is a safe place to travel (aside from landmines in off the beaten track areas). In a poor country such as this however common sense is needed regarding the display of wealth. Whereas threats against the person are extremely rare petty theft is not. It is a good idea to keep a photocopy of your passport in a separate place.

### **Torch/flashlight**

Small one can be useful for pre-dawn and after dusk adventures

### **Communication**

Plenty of internet shops at reasonable rates (also with cheap international telephones) SKYPE access available.

Mobile phone signal in many areas and commonly used. HOWEVER your phone will not work here.

### **Gifts**

Pens/pencils and notebooks are a good idea for the local children. Please no sweets – tooth decay is a problem with sudden onset of tourist sweets but no culture of teeth brushing.

## Brief History of the Angkor temples

Over 200 square kilometres of North-western Cambodia is dominated by temples unrivalled in their architectural greatness. The city of Angkor Thom, surrounded by 12km of crocodile infested moat and an 8m high laterite wall, was once the greatest city in the world with a population in the 12<sup>th</sup> century 20 times that of London.

2km to the South of Angkor Thom lays the awesome and imposing moat and entrance to Angkor Wat, one of the Wonders of the World and the largest religious building ever constructed. To awake in the dark, journey through the stillness and relative cool of the Cambodian night and watch the first light of dawn silhouette the 5 towers of Angkor Wat remains one of travels most inspiring adventures.

Power of the Angkor Empire originated from kings who were regarded as Gods on earth. Their omnipotence and organisation dominated much of Southeast Asia between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries evidenced by the countless temples, reservoirs, bridges, hospitals and road houses still being discovered in the jungles of Cambodia.

In 1431, the capital was sacked by the Siamese after a long siege and abandoned in favour of a new site 200km to the East on the banks of the Mekong River. Modern day Phnom Penh grew up close by to the South and the old capital was largely forgotten.

Barely a hundred and fifty years later early Portuguese traders heard rumours of a vast, ancient city in the jungle to the North of the Great Lake. Buddhist pilgrims continued to visit the temples throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Indeed a Japanese pilgrim made annotated maps of the temples which survive in a 1715 copy. In the 1860s John Thompson took the first photographs of the temples and a French botanist, Henri Mouhot was largely responsible for raising awareness of the temples in Europe.

Mouhot's detailed accounts of the monuments often portrayed as a 'rediscovery' by the French who took control of Cambodia shortly thereafter, brought the attention of the world to bear on Angkor Wat. Just as the 20<sup>th</sup> century age of air travel made more possible visits by tourists to see these wonders for themselves so the violence of the Vietnam War, Khmer Rouge and Cambodian civil war made travel all but impossible. Not until the mid 1990's has stability and peace returned to Cambodia sufficiently to permit easy travel to the temples.

Visitor numbers now exceed one and a half million and the biggest threat to the structure of the temples since the Siamese invasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> century is recognised

## Quick country facts

Geography		People		Economy	
<a href="#">Location</a> latitude	10-15°	Population	13.7m	Per capita GDP	US\$357
Location longitude	102-108°	Population growth	1.7%	GDP Growth rate	6.9%
Borders Thailand, Laos, Vietnam		Average pop density	75 pp/km <sup>2</sup>	GDP composition	
Frying pan topography, flat central river basin of alluvial deposits		Ethnicity: Khmer	96%	- Agriculture	20%
<a href="#">Climate</a> is tropical: Hot and humid		Under 24 yrs old	60%	- Fisheries	9%
Wet SW monsoon	May-Oct	Religion: Theravada Buddhism	95%	- Forestry	2%
Dry NE monsoon	Nov-Apr	Languages: Khmer	95%	- Industry	29%
Forest – protected	25%	Infant mortality rate	95/1000	- Services	34%
Forest - other	36%	Life expectancy cf. nearby Malaysia	54.4 yrs 72.0yrs	Unemployment rate	0.8%
Cultivated	15%	Literacy rate (15-44)	79%	Labour force participation	74%
Scrub land	8%	Enrollment for Primary education	81%	Poverty rate	36%
Fishing concessions	6%	Enrollment for secondary education	26%	Employed in agriculture with no basic services	70%
Urban	6%	Enrollment for high school	9%	Electricity	220v 50Hz
Agricultural concessions	4%	Genocide: 30% killed between 1975-9 in Khmer Rouge uprising		Households with access to electricity	15%
Land mine/UXO areas	0.6%				

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## Further reading recommendations

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### Books

Ancient history  
Ancient history  
Contemporary history

The Civilization of Angkor  
A History of Cambodia  
The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and ...

Charles Higham  
David P. Chandler  
Ben Kiernan

Guidebook to the temples

Angkor

Dawn Rooney

### Web resources

[Our own website](#) – lots of useful information (we hope)

[Illustrated temple glossary](#) – with link to concise printable version

[Andy Brouwer's Cambodia Tales](#) - An excellent and extensive collection of observations on Cambodia from Andy's many trips there

[Gordon Sharpless](#) – well informed and no-nonsense guide to travel in Cambodia