

Cambodia Encounters

Country(ies): Cambodia

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C minibus/car

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 6 days

Start Location: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

End Location: Siem Reap, Cambodia

Meals: Breakfasts - 5, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 1

Highlights:

Phnomh Penh - Toul Sleng Museum, Choeung Ek Killing Fields, Royal Palace & Silver Pagoda, spider market, Tonle Sap Lake, Kulen Mountain stay, Siem Reap - Angkor Wat temples, Ta Prohm, street food walk



Itinerary

Day 1: Your Cambodia adventure begins, transfers included

Once you arrive in Cambodia, one of our staff members will meet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel for the evening. Once you're settled in, we'll brief you on what you can expect over the next few days, before arranging a time to collect you tomorrow.

OVERNIGHT: Phnom Penh hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS:

Day 2: Exploring Phnom Penh's history

After breakfast at your hotel, the day begins with a sobering but essential journey into Cambodia's recent past. We will visit the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek, both grim reminders of the country's bloody history under the Pol Pot regime. While confronting the nature of these events can be distressing, the Buddhist memorial at Choeung Ek stands as a powerful testament, commemorating the 1.7 million victims of the 1975-79 period. This experience is a crucial part of understanding Cambodia's historical and cultural identity.

In the afternoon, we continue with a visit to the National Museum, also known as the Musee des Beaux-Arts. Designed by French archaeologist Georges Groslier in 1917, the building itself is a beautiful example of Khmer architecture. Inside, you'll discover a remarkable collection of Khmer art and sculptures from various eras.

The day concludes with a tour of the Royal Palace, built by King Norodom in 1866, and the magnificent Silver Pagoda. Situated within the palace grounds, the Silver Pagoda gets its name from its floor, which is composed of 5,000 silver tiles. The pagoda's incredible treasures include a 90kg solid gold Buddha statue encrusted with thousands of diamonds and a smaller 17th-century Buddha made of emerald and Baccarat crystal.

In the evening, you'll have the chance to explore the city at your own pace. A popular option is to visit one of Phnom Penh's vibrant night markets, where you can browse stalls selling local crafts and clothing, and enjoy a wide variety of delicious street food. You will spend the night in Phnom Penh.

OVERNIGHT: Phnom Penh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Visit the 'spider market' and explore Kampong Kleang on Tonle Sap Lake. Overnight at Kulen Mountain

After breakfast at your hotel, we will begin our journey north to Siem Reap by private car with your tour guide. This scenic drive will offer a glimpse of rural Cambodian life. Our first stop will be in the Skun district, often referred to as the "spider market," where you'll have the chance to see and, if you're feeling brave, even try local fried tarantula. Continuing on, we'll visit a stone carving workshop in the Santuk district, where you can see

artisans at work on beautiful Khmer sculptures. We'll also make a brief stop at the ancient Naga Bridge, a historic stone crossing with intricate carvings of the mythical serpent.

Our journey will then take us to Kampong Khleang, one of the largest and least-visited floating villages on the edge of Tonle Sap, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. Here, you will board a boat for an immersive trip, passing through a stunning submerged forest and floating houses that rise on stilts over the water. You will see firsthand how local communities have adapted to the lake's dramatic seasonal changes. The village is a fascinating and authentic insight into a unique way of life, with floating schools, markets, and fishing farms.

Finally, we will head to your countryside resort located at the foot of the sacred Kulen Mountain. This mountain is considered one of the most significant sites in Cambodia, as it is where King Jayavarman II proclaimed himself a "god-king" and established the Khmer Empire in the 9th century. The mountain is also home to a magnificent reclining Buddha and numerous ancient carvings. In the evening, you'll have the chance to enjoy a unique campfire dinner at the resort. Please note that this dinner is an optional extra and requires a minimum of four participants. You will spend the night at Thisak Resort.

OVERNIGHT: Thisak Resort

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Explore the Kulen Mountains. Visit the Tbeng community to learn about local life. Siem Reap Night Market (Street 60)

After breakfast, we'll drive up to the holy Kulen Mountains, known locally as Phnom Kulen. The sandstone from this mountain was the primary source of building materials for the vast temples of the Angkor Kingdom. Our first stop is the sacred site of The River of a Thousand Lingas, a unique archaeological site where hundreds of phallic carvings are etched into the sandstone riverbed, dating back to the 9th century. Further downstream, you'll also see large stone blocks carved with figures of Apsara dancers and Vishnu.

Next, we'll explore the mountain-top pagoda, home to ancient relics, statues, and a large reclining Buddha. Our final stop on the mountain is Kulen Waterfall, where you can cool off in the natural pool. It's also a perfect picnic spot, which is exactly what we'll do before heading back down.

In the afternoon, we'll travel to the community of Tbeng, about 32km from Siem Reap. Here, you'll get a firsthand look at rural life, starting with a visit to a local vegetable garden and livestock area to learn about traditional agricultural practices. We'll also visit Damnak Thlork Vea Pagoda, where you will receive a blessing from a Buddhist monk. You'll also get to observe the traditional process of making mats and, on occasion, Khmer noodles, which you can then sample.

Before returning to the city centre, we'll visit a local's favourite night market, known as Plov Hockseb, or "Street 60." This is a vibrant, authentic market where you can discover a huge variety of Khmer street foods, fresh fruits, local beers, and if you're feeling adventurous, some protein-rich fried insects. We'll then return to Siem Reap for the night.

OVERNIGHT: Siem Reap hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Temple visits - Angkor Thom, Angkor Wat, Ta Prohm

After breakfast at your hotel, we will begin a full-day tour of the magnificent temples of the Angkor area, a truly unforgettable experience. Our first stop is the ancient city of Angkor Thom, entering through its impressive South Gate, which is famous for the colossal stone faces that greet you. Inside the city, we'll explore the mesmerising Bayon Temple, with its 216 enigmatic smiling faces, as well as the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, the Elephant Terrace, and the Terrace of the Leper King.

Next, we'll visit the most famous of all the temples, Angkor Wat. This architectural masterpiece, constructed in the 12th century, is the largest and most complete temple on the site, covering an area of about 210 hectares. You'll have plenty of time to explore its incredible bas-reliefs and intricate carvings, learning about its history as a Hindu temple dedicated to the god Vishnu.

The tour concludes with a visit to the atmospheric Ta Prohm. This temple is an incredible sight, as it has been left largely in its natural state, with enormous fig trees and gigantic creepers embracing the stone foundations. The intertwining of man-made and natural elements gives the impression of a lost world being reclaimed by the powerful forces of nature.

For dinner this evening, we will enjoy a delicious meal at Spoons Restaurant. This isn't just a place to eat; it's a social enterprise that supports underprivileged Cambodian youth by providing them with valuable hospitality training. By dining here, you're not only enjoying fantastic food but also directly contributing to a positive social mission.

OVERNIGHT: Siem Reap hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Bon Voyage! Airport transfer included

We hope that you had an amazing time in Cambodia! We'll transfer you to the airport to board your flight home. If you have a late afternoon or evening flight, or would like to add some extra nights in Siem Reap, then a range of additional half day tours are available, including a cooking class, cycling tour of some temples you've not visited yet, and a visit to the floating houses on Tonle Sap lake.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Extra day in Siem Reap - post-tour Half-day local village tour & cooking class Half-day silk farm tour
Half-day remote temples tour Half-day cycling tour of the temples Half-day tour to Tonle Sap Lake

Included:

- 5-nights accommodation in 4-star hotels
- All transport and transfers in private AC car/minibus
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of a local tour guide during sightseeing and activities
- Admission fees, with instruction where necessary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Phnom Penh historical tour
- Spider Market and 'Street 60' Market visits
- Tonle Sap Kampong Khleang Community Visit
- Kulen Mountain resort stay
- Tbeng Community Experience
- Angkor region Temples tour

Excluded:

- International Flights (available on request)
- Visas fees
- Travel Insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Single room supplements
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Optional tours
- Tips for tour guides and drivers
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Single Room Supplement (CASGCE)

Min numbers: 1

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing twin/double rooms. This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. If you are a single traveller and would be happy to share a room, let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you book then we will add the single room supplement to your booking and it will be payable with your balance payment unless we have arranged a room share for you by then. If a room share is arranged after you have paid the supplement then we will refund it to you. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

Extra day in Phnom Penh - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Siem Reap - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the local 4-star level on this tour. Hotel rooms all have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms.

All couples will be given a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

2. Transport

Our trips aim to feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. As this tour through Cambodia covers a relatively short distance and we want to be flexible with our stops between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, we only use private vehicles (minivan/minibus depending on the number of travellers).

3. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to making sure our small-group tours in South East Asia have low maximum numbers as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. Having a smaller group also allows us to be a bit more creative with the places you stay and activities you do, which may simply not be possible with larger numbers. The group size for this tour is therefore a minimum of 2 and maximum of 12.

At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

4. Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour throughout the year starting on Mondays. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 people. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request. Extra nights can be added to the start and/or finish of the tour if you would like to extend your time.

The tour can also be run privately on any other dates for any number of people. An additional supplement will be due for private departures, the amount depending on your dates and the number of people in your party.

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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
