



WORLD DISCOVERY
— HISTORY CULTURE WILDLIFE —

Images of Cambodia



Monks at Angkor Wat.

DAY 1 - Depart from UK.

DAY 2 - Arrive Phnom Penh.

On arrival in Phnom Penh you will be met outside customs by a representative of World Discovery and taken by private car direct to your hotel. After a morning rest, in the afternoon you will take a guided tour of Cambodia's capital city, including the **National Museum**, with its extensive collection of statues and artifacts from the Khmer Empire and earlier civilisations, and the **Royal Palace**, where you can visit the **Silver Pagoda**, so named because of the 5,000 silver tiles (each weighing 1kg) in the floor of the temple. Also on display is the holiest Buddha image in Cambodia, **Preah Keo**, the Emerald Buddha.

DAY 3 - Excursion to Takeo Province.

A day excursion from Phnom Penh to Takeo Province, often overlooked by tourists, but well worth the effort. There are ruins here that predate those of the Khmer, including **Phnom Da**, believed to be the oldest standing archaeological site in Cambodia, which you reach by boat. Visit also the Indian-style Asram Maharosei Temple, and then explore some man-made caves leading to holy shrines before returning to Phnom Penh.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 4 - Overland journey to Rattanakiri.

A long and tiring road journey today (the flights to Rattanakiri Province are no longer operating) will take you through Kampong Cham, Kratie and Steung Treng provinces (duration approximately 12 hours, with frequent stops to stretch your legs). Lunch will be taken at a local restaurant in Kratie. Your destination in Rattanakiri is **Banlung**, known as the 'Red City' due its deep red laterite soil. The next few days will be spent in this remote area of north-east Cambodia close to the borders with Laos and Vietnam, a fascinating region little visited by tourists. The rich and fertile lands are covered with rubber, coffee and sugar cane plantations, and fruits such as bananas and pineapples grow in abundance. On arrival check in at your guesthouse in time for dinner.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 5 - Ou Chum and Thmo Da waterfalls. Kachoun graveyards. Yeak Loam.

Today, after breakfast, your guide will take you to visit some stunning natural attractions in the area. Ou Chum and Thmo Da waterfalls are beautiful spots to relax. Next, enjoy a boat ride to the graveyards of the **Kachoun tribe**. Your guide will explain the special customs and history of this site. In this part of Cambodia, animism is more prevalent than Buddhism, and the dead are therefore buried rather than cremated. Return to Banlung to visit the extraordinary lake inside an extinct volcano at **Yeak Loam**. The lake's 3km circumference is lined with stands of bamboo and dense green forest and is incredibly peaceful, with just the sound of birds to break the silence. You can swim in the crystal-clear turquoise waters. Return to Banlung in the late afternoon.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 6 - Virachay National Park. Kreung and Brou villages.

After breakfast at the guesthouse, your guide will take you to the village of Taveng in the northern area of Rattanakiri Province. Here lies Virachay National Park. On the journey northwards you will cross different types of landscapes: primary forest, bamboo forest and 'African' bush. Stop at a few **Kreung villages** located quite far away in the forest. The Kreung people have a peculiar custom of erecting 'bachelor houses' standing on long bamboo poles. These houses will remain until the young man finds a wife; then they are destroyed. You will also visit a Brou village. The Brou are a Mon-Khmer people scattered in small pockets in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, driven by the southward movements of the Tais from China centuries ago. Return to Banlung for dinner and overnight.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 7 - Rubber tree plantation. Gem mine. Bai Srog Waterfall.

In the morning go with your guide to see a **rubber tree plantation**. The French planted numerous rubber trees that are still alive and in use today. Also visit the **gem mines**. Many local people earn incomes from hand-digging various precious stones. Be careful of the holes in the ground! Afterwards travel to the beautiful **Bai Srog Waterfall**, a seven-tiered fall in the middle of the jungle, where you can enjoy a swim if you wish. Return to Banlung for dinner and overnight.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch, dinner.

DAY 8 - Return to Phnom Penh.

After an early breakfast take the long overland drive back to Phnom Penh. Dinner is included on arrival.

Meals included: Full breakfast, dinner.

DAY 9 - By road to Battambang.

Leave Phnom Penh after breakfast by road to Battambang. In the afternoon visit the 10th century temple of **Wat Ek** located beside the Sangke River. The temple consists of small temples or 'prasats' on a platform with some carvings in pretty good condition. Continue to **Phnom Samphou**. In the troubles of the last century this was one of the government's strongholds against the Khmer Rouge. At the summit is a wat and a stupa. Also visit the nearby **Laan Thom** and **Laan Kirirum** caves. Laan Thom cave contains a reclining Buddha, but the contents of Laan Kirirum are more sinister; it was used as a mass grave by the Khmer Rouge. Return to Battambang.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 10 - By boat to Siem Reap.

Travel by boat along the Sanke River to Ton Le Sap Lake. Every 90 minutes or so the scenery changes along the way, from a thriving 'extended village' with many stilt homes and fishing nets, to the open plains for the seasonal jute crops, to wetlands providing a natural nursery for fish and birds. Light lunch will be served on board. Visit the floating village of **Chong Kneas**, an entire community built on boats, before reaching Siem Reap, gateway to the incredible temples of Angkor, the foremost archaeological complex in Asia.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 11 - Temples of Angkor.

During the next four days you will enjoy the most comprehensive exploration of this exceptional area, visiting all the major temple groups, as well as seeing something of the way of life in the surrounding countryside. Today you will be shown some of the earliest temples in the Rolous area, starting with **Preah Ko** (879 AD), **Bakong** (881 AD) devoted to Shiva, and **Lolei** (893 AD) built on an island in a reservoir; there are beautiful sandstone carvings in the temple's niches. The afternoon is devoted to the best known of all the temples, which has become a symbol of Cambodia - **Angkor Wat**. Built in the first half of the 12th century, this enormous temple maintains some of the most breathtaking murals in the entire complex. The Upper reaches of the complex represent the Hindu idea of heaven.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 12 - Angkor Thom. Ta Prohm.

Today's visits include some of the most majestic of Angkor's temples, mainly dating from the Kingdom of Jayavarman VII (1181-1219). We begin at the awesome **South Gate of Angkor Thom**, entrance to the great imperial city. Giants and gods line the road leading up to the gate, which is crowned with four large faces aligned towards the cardinal points. At the centre of Angkor Thom is **The Bayon**, one of the most popular attractions of Angkor, a temple-mountain containing many well-preserved bas-reliefs and its colossal carved faces staring out from the stone towers. **Ta Prohm** has been left more or less how it was discovered rather than tidy it up as at the other locations and the result is a romantic 'lost ruins in the jungle' atmosphere which transports you to the days of the intrepid Victorian explorers. Nowhere is the power of Nature more in evidence, with gnarled tree roots wrapped around crumbling columns and carvings, and walls leaning in all directions.

Meals included: Full breakfast

DAY 13 - Phnom Kulen. Banteay Srei.

In the morning drive out to the mythical birthplace of the Khmer Empire and source of the Siem Reap River. **Phnom Kulen** is the most sacred mountain in Cambodia as it was here that Jayavarman II declared independence from Java. At the top of the mountain there is a wat with a large reclining Buddha carved in sandstone. You will also travel to Kbal Spean, or 'River

of a Thousand Lingas', a riverbed full of carvings, mostly of lingas (the Hindu symbol of masculinity) and gods. Bathing in the river is believed to bring fertility and good luck. Return to Angkor in the afternoon to visit **Banteay Srei** (967 AD), one of the most exquisite of the Angkor temples. The most beautiful and intricate carvings can be found in this outlying temple. You will also visit the nearby **Banteay Samre**, which contains a central temple and two libraries.

Meals included: Full breakfast, lunch.

DAY 14 – Further Angkor visits. [Les Artisans d'Angkor.](#)

After breakfast visit **Preah Khan**, a vast temple around whose outer walls, 40 metres apart, are giant carvings of the Hindu deity Garuda. Also visit the **Neak Prean** temple, which consists of a central pool and four peripheral pools once used for purification rites. An island in the central pool contains a tower encircled by two 'nagas' (divine river serpents). Continue to **East Mebon** (952 AD whose four corners are guarded by stone elephants and **Prea Rup** (961 AD). In the afternoon, drive to a development project teaching young adults stone carving, wood carving and lacquer application; **Les Artisans d' Angkor** is a heart warming reminder that progress in Cambodia can go hand in hand with traditional crafts. Then return to Ton Le Sap Lake, the largest fresh water lake in South East Asia, for short boat trip between the floating homes and small fish farms to experience the daily life of the local people. Return to your hotel.

Meals included: Full breakfast.

DAY 15 - Depart for home.

In the morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Bangkok to connect with your flight home. Arrive London Heathrow in the evening.

Meals included: Full breakfast.