

# CAMBODIA

## January 12-22, 2011

This trip takes us to the fabled Angkor Wat and associated temples, visiting all of the major sites and some off the beaten track. In Phnom Penh we will visit the Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng, the Khmer Rouge prison and torture center. The markets in Cambodia are wonderful, with all sorts of crafts; few tourists visit Phnom Penh so the markets still have utilitarian crafts gathered from villages rather than those mass produced for tourists. The riverside is very attractive now, with an esplanade and a number of excellent restaurants; our hotel is here, overlooking the river. We then travel east by van to Kampong Cham, a major rural center; the city itself has a number of attractions but it is the drive through the varied and interesting countryside that you will remember forever.

<u>November</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Night</u>
12 W	Gather at Amari Boulevard Hotel, optional group dinner.	Bangkok
13 Th	AM: Fly to Siem Reap Afternoon: Boat on Tonle Sap (The Great Lake). Evening: Group dinner (option).	Siem Reap (B)
14 F	AM: To Angkor Thom, the huge stone heads with the enigmatic smile. Midday is poor for photography and for discerning many intricate aspects of the carvings; we tend to leave the hotel by 7:30-8:00 AM, and return about 11:30 for lunch, shopping, a nap, then go out again in mid afternoon. Afternoon: Angkor Wat	Siem Reap (B)
15 S	AM: Banteay Sri, Elephant Terrace PM: Ta Prom, often called "the Jungle Temple," as huge trees grow over much of it, both holding it together and breaking it apart. Evening: Apsara Restaurant, Cultural program	Siem Reap (B,D)
16 S	AM: Baphuon, Terrace of the Leper King PM: a) To Bayon again, or to Prea Khan, Prea Neak Pean b) Cooking school option (about \$14)	Siem Reap (B)
17 M	AM: Fly to Phnom Penh Then: Lunch near the river, perhaps at the Bali Restaurant, then to National Museum and Orussie Market. Later: Sundowner on the Esplanade or Foreign Correspondents Club Dinner: Pondlok or elsewhere (option)	Phnom Penh (B)
18 T	AM: To Tuol Sleng, the Khmer Rouge prison and torture center. Then to the Killing Fields and memorial outside of town. PM: To Silver Pagoda in the Royal Palace, Psar Thmei Early evening: Boat tour on the Tonle Sap River.	Phnom Penh (B)

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| 19 F  | By van north and east along the Mekong River, stopping at hamlets and villages of interest. Skuon is known for fried spiders, huge ones. Evening: Dinner by the river (option)   | Kampong Cham<br>(B) |
| 20 Th | First: To the wet market, then to Phnom Pros and Phnom Srei. Afternoon: Wat Nokor, an 11th century Mahayana Buddhist temple which has been added on to and is now partially a modern Hinayana wat. Then along the river and the developments near the new bridge. Dinner outdoors by the bridge (option) | Kampong Cham        |
| 21 F  | Revisit market and downtown, then van to Phnom Penh for the afternoon flight to Bangkok. Evening: Group dinner (option)  | Bangkok<br>(B)      |
| 22 S  | Tour ends after breakfast.   |                     |

The cost of \$1,500 (begin in Bangkok) covers all air, hotels, airport transfers, Angkor admits, vans in Cambodia, and some breakfasts. Single supplement is \$310. It does not include most food, individual taxi, laundry, airport tax, visa, etc. A deposit of \$500 will hold a place; first paid, first accepted. The final payment is due November 15. Registration forms available on line or by mail.

I have lived for half of the past 20 years in Southeast Asia and taken groups to Peninsular Malaysia, Borneo, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India, and Myanmar. Some go to quite remote areas, including perhaps the only tours along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. I will be with you all of the time and there will be a Cambodian guide.

Weather in January should be clear and sunny, with day temperatures of 65-80 degrees.

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Cambodia was pretty much closed to tourism for more than twenty years; first the Indochina War, then the Khmer Rouge, and then the civil unrest of the 80's and early 90's. On my first trip in early 1999 it was not uncommon to see motorcyclists in Phnom Penh with an M-16 or AK-47 slung on their back. On my fifteen most recent trips I saw no weapons. Much better now.

The temples near Siem Reap (Angkor Wat, etc.) are perhaps the wonders of the world. But Cambodia is much more, beginning with the Great Lake (Tonle Sap) south of Siem Reap. There are water villages, gas stations, fish farms, and even small pig farms, all floating on the lake.

Ways of life in the towns and hamlets are interesting, as are the items of material culture. Certainly the market in Phnom Penh has an incredible array of utilitarian items for sale, something like Talaat Sou in Vientiane 8-10 years ago. Soon the authentic items will be gone.

I have been able to spend extended periods in Cambodia, going well beyond Siem Reap and Phnom Penh to look for interesting places, which are also not that difficult to reach and have good hotels and decent restaurants.

It should be a great trip. I feel comfortable in Cambodia now, and know my way around the places we will visit.