Cambodia Discovery: Phnom Penh to Angkor Temples & Southern Coast – 10 Days

10D / 9N	Easy	Private	USD 924 / pax
Duration	Difficulty	Tour Type	Starting From

This 10-day Cambodian expedition reveals the nation's rich history, from the vibrant capital of Phnom Penh to the serene southern coastlines of Kampot and Sihanoukville, culminating in the awe-inspiring ancient temples of Angkor. Experience local life, explore historical sites, and relax by the sea on this comprehensive journey.

DESTINATIONS & ROUTE

Phnom Penh → Sihanoukville → Siem Reap

TOUR OVERVIEW

This extensive 10-day tour offers a deep exploration of Cambodia, starting in the historical capital of Phnom Penh and venturing through the less-traveled southern provinces before reaching the magnificent Angkor Archaeological Park. Designed for travelers seeking a blend of cultural immersion, historical insight, and natural beauty, this itinerary provides a unique perspective on the Kingdom of Wonder.

Journey Through Cambodia's Diverse Landscapes

The adventure begins with an introduction to Phnom Penh's royal heritage and colonial past, followed by a journey south to discover ancient pre-Angkorian sites near Takeo. Experience the tranquil charm of Kampot, renowned for its pepper farms and durian, then relax on the tropical beaches and explore the mangrove forests of Ream National Park near Sihanoukville. The route then leads inland through rural landscapes to uncover the hidden temples of Sambor Prei Kuk before arriving at Siem Reap.

Highlights of Ancient History and Local Life

In Siem Reap, dedicate two full days to the unparalleled wonders of Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, and other intricate temples, witnessing breathtaking sunrises and exploring jungle-clad ruins. Beyond the grand monuments, this tour offers opportunities to connect with local communities, visit floating villages on Tonle Sap Lake, and experience traditional Cambodian life, including an ox cart ride through rice fields. Practical elements like local transfers and expert guiding enhance the experience.

Who This Tour Suits

This itinerary is ideal for all travelers interested in a comprehensive Cambodian experience, combining major historical attractions with off-the-beaten-path destinations. Those with an appreciation for ancient history, diverse cultural encounters, and natural landscapes will find this journey particularly rewarding. A moderate level of physical activity is involved, including walking through temple complexes and optional cycling.

Practical Information

Accommodation includes 9 nights in hotels, with options for 3-star, 4-star, or 5-star properties. Daily breakfast is provided, along with other meals as specified in the itinerary. Transportation is primarily by air-conditioned vehicles, complemented by boat trips and a unique elephant ride. An English-speaking guide accompanies the journey, ensuring a smooth and informative travel experience.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

* Explore Phnom Penh's Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, and National Museum.

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* Discover pre-Angkorian temples at Tonle Bati and Angkor Borei by boat.
* Experience the serene coastal charm of Kampot and its famous pepper plantations.
* Enjoy a boat trip through mangrove forests in Ream National Park near Sihanoukville.
* Visit the historical Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek Killing Fields.
* Witness sunrise over the magnificent Angkor Wat temple complex.
* Cycle through jungle paths to lesser-known gates of Angkor Thom.
* Explore iconic Angkorian temples including Ta Prohm, Bayon, and Banteay Srei.
* Engage with local life in a Cambodian village and take an ox cart ride.
* Cruise Tonle Sap Lake to observe unique floating villages.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 Phnom Penh Arrival & Royal City Exploration

Meals: D | Stay: Katari Hotel (3)/Baitong Hotel & Resort (4*)/Palace Gate Hotel & Resort (5*)*

Arrive in Phnom Penh via an afternoon flight. The city blends traditional Khmer architecture with French colonial influences. Begin your exploration at the Royal Palace, constructed in 1866, a prominent example of Khmer design. Adjacent is the Silver Pagoda, also known as the Emerald Buddha Temple, housing numerous Buddha statues adorned with precious gems. Continue to the Independence Monument, commemorating Cambodia's liberation from French rule in 1954. Next, visit the National Museum, a distinct red building from 1917, which preserves over 5000 art pieces made from various materials like sandstone and bronze. Conclude the day with a stroll through the River Front park, offering picturesque views, and ascend Wat Phnom, the city's only hill with sacred sites. An evening walk along the Mekong River bank provides stunning night views of Phnom Penh.

Activities: Arrive in Phnom Penh.
Visit the Royal Palace compound.
Explore the Silver Pagoda.
See the Independence Monument.
Discover artifacts at the National Museum.
Walk through River Front park.
Ascend Wat Phnom.
Stroll along the Mekong River bank.

Day 2 Southern Temples & Kampot's Coastal Charm

Meals: B,L | Stay: Borei Bokor Hotel (2) | Transport: Car, boat*

Depart Phnom Penh heading south this morning. Your first stop is Tonle Bati, where you can explore the compact yet scenic

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Angkorian temple of Ta Prohm. Nearby, relax by the river at bamboo shacks offering refreshments. Continue your drive to the tranquil town of Takeo. From Takeo, embark on a short boat trip to Angkor Borei, a town situated a few kilometers from the Vietnam border. Here, a small museum showcases reproductions of local sculptures and ancient artifacts dating back to the 4th century. Following this, another boat excursion takes you to the pre-Angkorian temple of Phnom Da and the nearby Asram Maharosei temple, notable for its challenging, rocky ascent. The journey then proceeds south along a scenic route towards Kep. This southern Cambodian coast, bordering Vietnam, was once a fashionable French colonial resort. Towns like Kep, Sihanoukville, and Kampot feature wide, tree-lined avenues, grand statues, luxury villas, and casinos, all overlooking the Gulf of Thailand. Spend the night in Kampot.

Activities: Visit Ta Prohm temple at Tonle Bati.
Cruise to Angkor Borei town.
Explore the Angkor Borei museum.
Take a boat trip to Phnom Da temple.
Visit Asram Maharosei temple.
Scenic drive to Kep.
Overnight in Kampot.

Day 3 Kampot's Flavors & Ream National Park

Meals: B,L,D | Stay: La Reserve Hotel (3)/Sokha Beach Resort (5*) | Transport: Road travel, boat trip*

Begin your day in Kampot town, the provincial capital, nestled on the Teuk Chhou River, approximately 5 kilometers from the sea. This charming provincial town, often called the 'Pearl of the Agate Coast' by the French, retains its colonial-era architecture and offers a glimpse into local life away from typical tourist paths. Kampot is renowned for its durian, considered superior to varieties from Thailand or Vietnam, and also cultivates a wide array of other tropical fruits like mangosteen, rambutan, and pineapple. The region is also the heart of Cambodia's pepper industry, with Kampot pepper farms celebrated for producing one of the world's finest peppers. Afterward, travel along the southern coast towards Sihanoukville, a popular Cambodian retreat. Enjoy a peaceful day exploring Ream National Park, located just 30 minutes from Sihanoukville. Here, take a boat journey through impressive mangrove forests, leading to a pristine tropical beach within the park. Relax and appreciate the natural beauty before continuing to Sihanoukville for the night.

Activities: Explore Kampot town.
Learn about Kampot's durian and pepper cultivation.
Travel to Sihanoukville.
Take a boat trip through Ream National Park's mangrove forest.
Relax on a tropical beach in the National Park.

Day 4 Sihanoukville Leisure & Return to Phnom Penh

Meals: B,L | Stay: Katari Hotel (3)/Baitong Hotel & Resort (4*)/Palace Gate Hotel & Resort (5*) | Transport: Road travel*

The morning offers free time for personal leisure in Sihanoukville. You might choose to relax on the beach, or for those seeking more activity, consider renting a boat to explore nearby coastal islands or further discover Ream National Park's mangrove

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forests and ecosystem. Please note that these activities are optional and not included in the tour price, but your guide will be available to provide helpful advice and information. In the early afternoon, depart from Sihanoukville for the return journey to Phnom Penh. The drive back provides an opportunity to observe Cambodia's spectacular rural landscapes as you traverse the countryside.

Activities: Free morning for relaxation or optional activities in Sihanoukville.
Travel from Sihanoukville to Phnom Penh.

Day 5 Phnom Penh's Somber History & Sunset Cruise

Meals: B,L | Stay: Katari Hotel (3)/Baitong Hotel & Resort (4*)/Palace Gate Hotel & Resort (5*) | Transport: Road travel, boat cruise*

Dedicate this day to understanding Cambodia's recent tragic history. Begin with a visit to Tuol Sleng Prison, known as S-21, the Khmer Rouge regime's most secretive detention center. This facility was designed for the interrogation and extermination of those deemed "anti-Angkar" elements. Continue to the Choeung Ek museum, also known as the Killing Fields, where approximately 17,000 individuals, including men, women, and children, who were detained and tortured at S-21, were transported for execution between 1975 and 1978. Following these somber visits, experience a different side of local life by shopping at Toul Tompong Market, often called the Russian Market due to its past prevalence of Eastern Bloc goods. Today, it's a vibrant hub offering local specialties and a glimpse into daily Cambodian culture. Conclude your day with a one-hour sunset cruise on the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers. Phnom Penh, situated at the "Four Arms" confluence where the Mekong and Tonle Sap meet, offers an ideal vantage point to experience the mighty Mekong. Board a beautifully restored wooden boat to admire the unspoiled riverbanks and observe traditional villages and ancient pagodas on the islands.

Activities: Visit Tuol Sleng Prison (Genocide Museum).
Explore Choeung Ek museum (Killing Fields).
Shop at Toul Tompong Market (Russian Market).
Enjoy a sunset cruise on the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers.

Day 6 Ancient Temples & Rural Journey to Siem Reap

Meals: B,L | Stay: Ladear Angkor Hotel (3)/The Aviary Hotel (4*)/Angkor Village Hotel (5*) | Transport: Road travel*

This morning, drive to Skuon town, famous for its unique local delicacy: sautéed spiders, which you can sample if you dare. En route, visit Sambor Prei Kuk, an archaeological site dotted with hundreds of pre-Angkorian temples. This site, part of the ancient Chenla Kingdom, spans nearly 1000 acres, enclosed by double walls, and features numerous temples and towers that predate Angkor Wat by several centuries. Despite challenging road conditions, the scenic blend of temples and forest makes the journey rewarding. After exploring this significant landmark, continue your journey towards Siem Reap, passing through various traditional Khmer villages. Along the way, make a stop to see the ancient "Naga Bridge" at Kompong Kdei, an archaeological marvel.

Activities: Drive to Skuon town and sample local delicacies.
Visit Sambor Prei Kuk archaeological site.
Travel through Khmer traditional villages.
See the Naga Bridge at Kompong Kdei.

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Day 7 Angkor Wat Sunrise & Temple Exploration

Meals: B,D | Stay: Ladear Angkor Hotel (3)/The Aviary Hotel (4*)/Angkor Village Hotel (5*)*

Begin your day before dawn to witness the iconic sunrise over Angkor Wat temple, accompanied by the sounds of birds awakening across the ancient Angkor landscape. Participate in a unique cultural experience by walking to a nearby pagoda to offer food to monks. After the monks conclude their breakfast, enjoy your own breakfast box on the pagoda grounds, with jasmine tea served in the peaceful setting. Take time to interact with monks and nuns, engaging in cultural exchange. Continue your temple exploration with a visit to the magnificent Ta Prohm, famously embraced by the roots of enormous fig trees and gigantic creepers. Explore Prasat Kravan, known for its distinctive brick sculptures, and Srah Srang, "The Royal Baths," once used for ceremonial bathing. Discover Banteay Kdei, surrounded by four concentric walls, and the temples of Thommanon and Chaosay Tevorda. Conclude the day with Banteay Srei, a favorite for its compact size, excellent preservation, and exquisite decorative carvings, followed by Banteay Samre, admired for its rose-colored sandstone walls and accomplished bas-reliefs.

Activities: Witness sunrise over Angkor Wat.
Offer food to monks at a pagoda.
Explore Ta Prohm temple.
Visit Prasat Kravan.
See Srah Srang ("The Royal Baths").
Discover Banteay Kdei, Thommanon, and Chaosay Tevorda temples.
Explore Banteay Srei and Banteay Samre.

Day 8 Cycling Angkor Thom & Sunset at Bakheng Hill

Meals: B,L | Stay: Ladear Angkor Hotel (3)/The Aviary Hotel (4*)/Angkor Village Hotel (5*) | Transport: Bicycle, elephant ride*

Start your day with an invigorating 45-minute bicycle ride to the World Heritage areas, taking less-traveled roads. Cycle through the jungle, passing local villages and shops, for a special and active exploration of Angkor's beautiful temples. Visit the West Gate of Angkor Thom, a less-discovered entrance for mass tourists. Explore the ancient capital of Angkor Thom, dating back to the 12th century, including its South Gate. Marvel at Bayon Temple, unique for its 54 towers adorned with over 200 smiling faces of Avolokitesvara. Discover Baphuon temple, a pyramidal representation of mythical Mount Meru, located just north of Bayon. See the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, the Elephant Terrace, and the Terrace of the Leper King. The tour continues with a visit to the famous Angkor Wat, a World Heritage Site since 1992, celebrated for its beauty and grandeur. Angkor Wat features the world's longest continuous bas-reliefs, depicting Hindu mythological stories. Conclude the day with an elephant ride up Bakheng Hill to visit Bakheng Temple, enjoying a romantic sunset view from its summit. In the evening, unwind with a one-hour foot massage and explore the lively Pub Street, offering various bars and shopping opportunities at the Angkor Night Market.

Activities: Cycle to Angkor Thom's West Gate.
Explore Angkor Thom, including South Gate, Bayon Temple, Baphuon temple, Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, Elephant Terrace, and Terrace of the Leper King.
Visit Angkor Wat temple.

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Elephant ride up Bakheng Hill for sunset.
Enjoy a 1-hour foot massage.
Walk around Pub Street and Angkor Night Market.

Day 9 Tonle Sap Lake & Village Immersion

Meals: B,L,D | Stay: Ladear Angkor Hotel (3)/The Aviary Hotel (4*)/Angkor Village Hotel (5*) | Transport: Road travel, ox cart, boat*

Today offers a chance to experience authentic Cambodian village life and contribute to local communities. Begin with an early drive through rural villages, past rice plantations, and herds of livestock. Photo stops are available along the way. Upon arrival at a local village, meet your host family for the day. This program supports the family and creates opportunities for the entire community. Engage in daily village tasks, which vary by season, from rice planting to harvesting, sorting, and husking. Visit a local school and pagoda, interacting with friendly children to help them practice English and gaining insight into Buddhism's role in Khmer daily life. Experience a traditional ox cart ride through the Khmer Village, enjoying views of rice fields and palm trees in the fresh air. Conclude the day with a boat trip on Tonle Sap Lake, cruising past unique floating villages complete with schools, restaurants, and hospitals.

Activities: Drive through local villages.
Meet a host family and participate in daily tasks.
Visit a local school and pagoda.
Take an ox cart ride through a Khmer village.
Boat trip on Tonle Sap Lake to visit floating villages.

Day 10 Beng Mealea Exploration & Departure

Meals: B,L | Transport: Motorbike, transfer by vehicle

Embark on a journey west to the Beng Mealea district this morning. Beng Mealea temple is situated at the base of Phnom Kulen's southern cliff, approximately 40 kilometers east of Angkor, along the route to Preah Khan. Historically, it served as the starting point for a canal leading to Tonle Sap Lake, likely used to transport sandstone blocks from nearby quarries for constructing Angkorian monuments. En route, experience a twenty-minute motorbike ride into a bamboo forest from the village, revealing a series of Angkorian reliefs carved into Phnom Kulen's southern cliff. The quality and preservation of these works are remarkable, their isolated location making them even more precious as an undiscovered site in the Angkor area. Continue to Beng Mealea temple itself, a 12th-century structure encircled by a moat nearly the size of Angkor Wat, yet almost entirely enveloped by jungle. Though some carvings have been plundered due to its remote location, the temple's atmospheric, jungle-clad ruins remain captivating. Afterward, transfer to Siem Reap airport for your departure, bidding farewell to your Cambodian guide and driver.

Activities: Travel to Beng Mealea district.
Motorbike ride into a bamboo forest to see Angkorian reliefs.
Explore Beng Mealea temple.
Transfer to Siem Reap airport for departure.

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- v 9 nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast.
- v Full board meals at local restaurants as mentioned in the program.
- v Airport transfers and transport by air-conditioned vehicles as per program.
- v Sightseeing and entrance fees as specified.
- v Boat trips as mentioned in the program.
- v Local English speaking guide as per program.
- v Bike usage and 1 hour foot massage.
- v Elephant ride up Bakheng Hill (one way).
- v Cold water and towel during tours.

NOT INCLUDED

- x Visa fee: 25$.
- x International air tickets in-out Cambodia.
- x Other meals and drinks not specified.
- x Personal expenses and tips.

PRICE INCLUDES

- v 9 nights hotel accommodation with daily breakfast.
- v Full board meals at local restaurants as mentioned in the program.
- v Airport transfers and transport by air-conditioned vehicles as per program.
- v Sightseeing and entrance fees as specified.
- v Boat trips as mentioned in the program.
- v Local English speaking guide as per program.
- v Bike usage and 1 hour foot massage.
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- v Cold water and towel during tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Tour Code: IMP-7EC0EF3162F2