

MOMENTS on the road

Beyond Angkor:
A Journey of Compassion & Discovery in Cambodia (9 days)





ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

We love road journeys. They are by far our favourite way of traveling. We think the world of western China and the countries that border on this region – think Vietnam, Lao, Thailand, Myanmar, for example.

On the Road Experiences is all about sharing with like-minded travelers just how beautiful a road journey in these varied lands can be. Now turn the page to find out what we've come to love so much...




A young Buddhist monk with a shaved head, wearing an orange robe, is seated in a traditional building. He is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The background features large, textured stone pillars and a window with a wooden frame. The lighting is warm and dramatic, highlighting the textures of the stone and the monk's robe.

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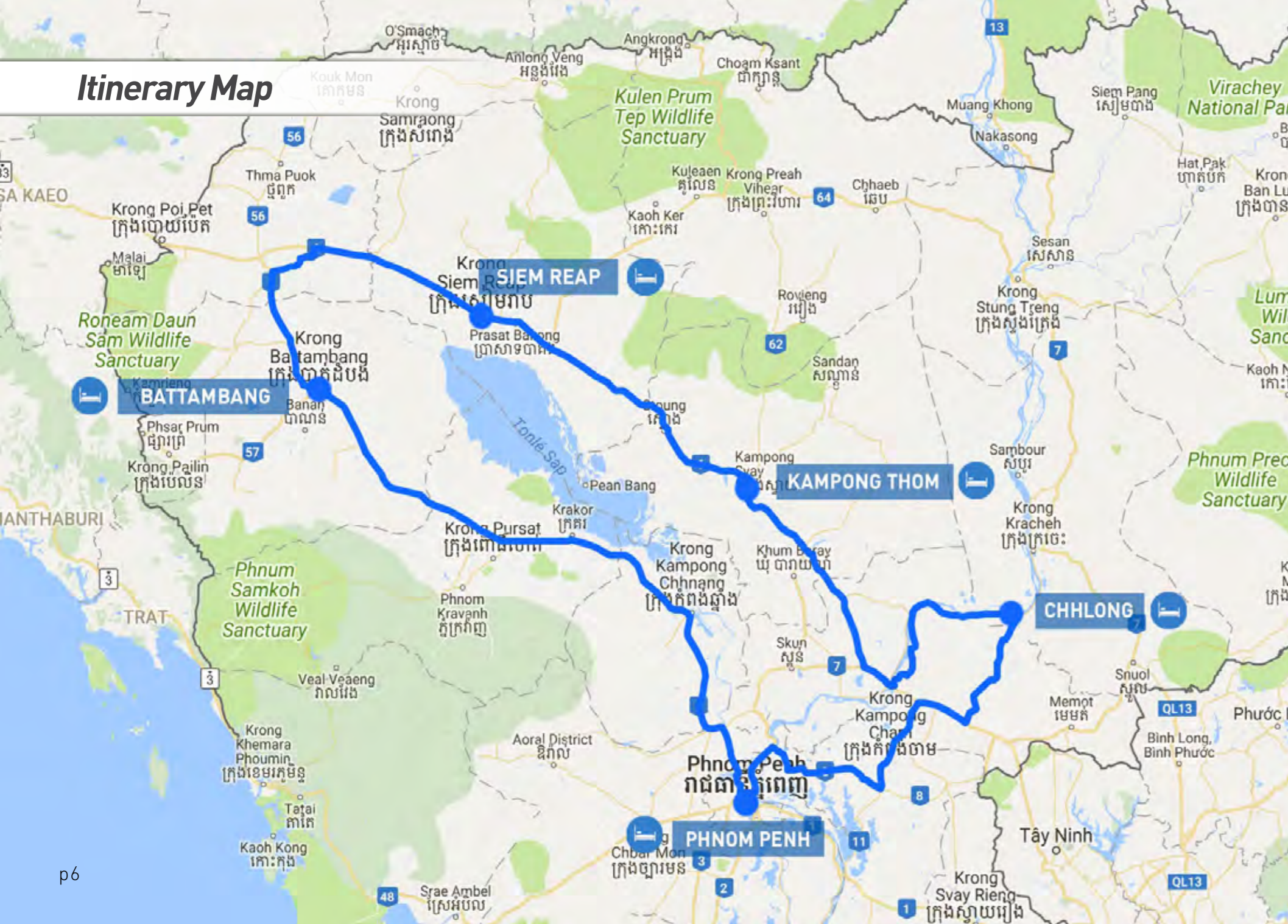
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Itinerary Map



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Return home or head to the coast?

Yes, it is possible...

In all our journeys, we strive to create experiences that allow you to slip “behind the curtain” and beneath the surface of a destination. We believe that the best kind of travel is not just about seeing, but also about learning, doing, tasting and feeling. This journey epitomises our approach.

Beyond Angkor’s route loops around Cambodia’s lush Central Plain, taking in lesser-known gems – charming Battambang and sleepy Chhlong, among others – as well as leaving time to explore Angkor Wat and the country’s capital, Phnom Penh. An optional extension will see you ending your journey on a gorgeous private island on the Cambodian coast.

As beautiful as the base itinerary is, it is our local partners that transform this journey into a truly meaningful experience, one that will linger in your memory for many years to come.

On the Road Experiences is proud to be working with a handful of the most inspiring individuals and organisations in Cambodia, all of which are working to overcome the challenges – whether social, economic or environmental – that their country faces.

Many of these challenges are the terrible legacy of the Cambodian genocide. In the late 1970s the Khmer Rouge killed several million people and devastated the lives of many more, creating fractures that still impact Cambodian society forty years on. The rebuilding continues.

In Phnom Penh we will learn how one non-profit is gradually transforming an impoverished part of the city. In Siem Reap and Battambang we will join dancers and train with circus performers, artists who are empowering young Cambodians and infusing their culture with a new energy.

In Kratie, we will see river dolphins swimming wild in the Mekong and discover how one NGO is working to conserve this endangered species. Even our luxurious island resort, Song Saa, has won awards for sustainability and community involvement.

We hope that this journey will enable you to step away from the everyday pressures of work and school for a few days, and to return feeling enriched and inspired by what you have experienced.

We hope that you will leave Cambodia with new insight into the forces that have shaped life here, and restored belief in the power each of us has to make a positive impact on our communities and the wider world. A journey of discovery in every sense of the word!



Journey of discovery





“

Cambodia's
BUSY
capital...”

Phnom Penh



“VISIT students
in PHNOM
PENH...”

“On the way to
CHHLONG ...”



A Cambodian main road



“ Farmer
KHMER women...”

Near Kratie



“MUSLIM and KHMER communities sharing villages along the MEKONG...”

“

LEARN about efforts
to support Cambodia's
Mekong DOLPHIN
population...”





“ Cambodia’s
U-BEIN BRIDGE, the
LONGEST bamboo
bridge in the world...”

“STUNNING TROPICAL
SUNSET...
near your hotel...”



“FEEL LIKE Indiana Jones! ...”



“Be AMAZED
by KHMER
heritage...”



New Cambodian Artists, The first and only all female contemporary dance company in Cambodia



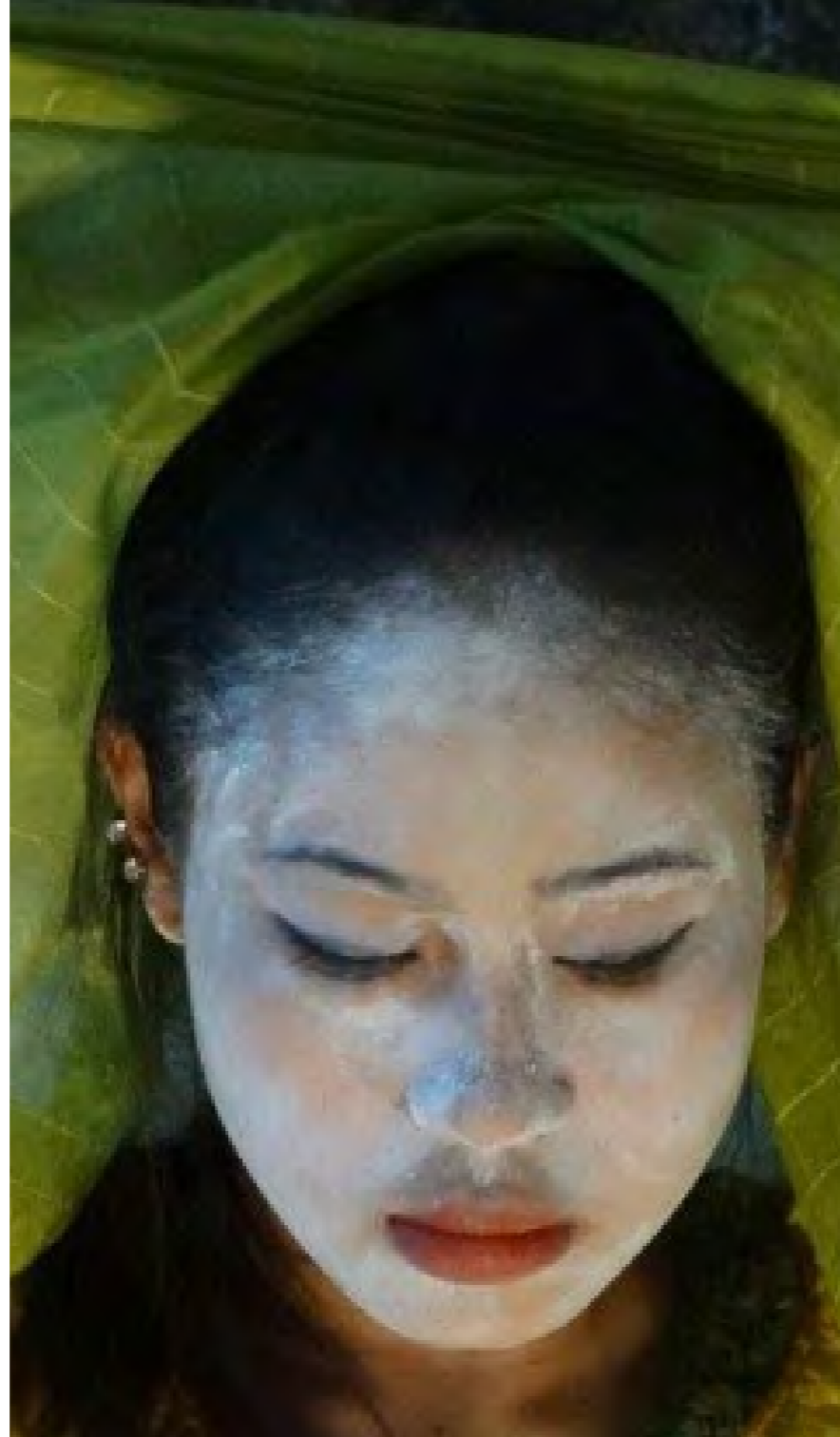
“ We call it APSARA FUSION...”

SORN Sreynit

Birthday: February 6th, 1995

Sreynith was born in the Kandal province and moved to Siem Reap with her parents and five siblings when she was young. As a typical story in Cambodia, her mother stays at home to care for the children while her father, the sole earner of the family, is a tuk tuk driver (motor taxi). With only 2 years education Sreynith's future was very precarious and uncertain, but luckily, in 2007, there was an open audition to study at the Siem Reap School of Arts and she was accepted to study Khmer classical dance. "I loved dancing and always had a dream to become a dancer," Sreynith remembers. Sreynith graduated in 2011 from the Siem Reap School of Arts.

"Since joining NCA I am using my wages to learn English and I am teaching contemporary dance, encouraging creativity and spreading new ideas to youth at a local NGO. Rapidly I noticed myself becoming strong, confident and expressive. I am enjoying developing more creative work and experimenting with innovative movement."



NY Lai

Birthday: October 10th, 1997

Lai is NCA's latest asset, having known the other dancers since they were at the school of fine Arts. Lai is in the middle of 9 siblings. She has been with NCA for almost two years and has been working very hard to catch up with the other dancers. She is now part of the 4 principal dancers for all public performances.

Lai has developed a very lyrical personal style and stands out as strong character in demanding group work and duets.



KHON Sreynuch

Birthday: October 20th, 1996

Born in Kampong Cham province, Sreynuch moved to Siem Reap in 1999. There are 10 people in her family and as children they made money for school by selling fruit and souvenirs to tourists outside Cambodia's famous temple, Angkor Wat. In 2007 Sreynuch auditioned for the Siem Reap School of Arts and studied Khmer folk dance for four years.

"In working with the New Cambodian Artists I have experienced a whole different society then I had ever encountered, and I have met many different people. I have learned new techniques, the power of self-confidence, rhythm and musicality and how to use my body as a tool for expression. Also, I can notice that my body condition has changed a lot. Now I am a member of New Cambodian Artists, not just my body, but with my heart and soul."



KONG Seng Va

Birthday: January 8th, 1998

Born in Siem Reap, Seng Va is the youngest of seven siblings. At the age of 9 she started studying classical dance at the Siem Reap School of Arts.

As the youngest member of New Cambodian Artists Seng Va thrives with the experimentation and improvisation of the dance movements. Since joining Seng Va has had many opportunities to perform around the country. She remembers with joy visiting Kep on tour and "for the first time in my life touching the ocean."

Seng Va's time with New Cambodian Artists has opened her eyes to the world of modern performance and the opportunities it presents. Also, she has learned the importance of working together and sharing a vision, as well as being open minded and adaptable..

"I hope that more and more Khmer people will see how good it is to open doors and try new things. Eventually, I hope to travel the world and share our work overseas."





Phare Ponleu Selpak, the social circus



“

Visit Phare's
CIRCUS SCHOOL
and train with the
ARTISTS...”

Day-by-day



Day 1 Welcome to Phnom Penh

Arrive in Phnom Penh per your own arrangements. We will pick you up from the airport and take you to your hotel. You will have the remainder of the afternoon free to explore Cambodia's capital – join shoppers in the lively Central Market, stroll along Sisowath Quay or visit the Royal Palace.

In the evening we will meet for a welcome dinner and road safety briefing.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 0 km

Duration: 0 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 12m

Overnight: 12m

Hotel

Raffles Hotel Le Royal Phnom Penh [*****]

Day 2 Community support in the city

Today we will have an opportunity to visit an internationally recognized NGO where we will speak with the management team in regards to the challenges faced working within impoverished communities in Cambodia.

They will share the success of their holistic approach to poverty reduction which ensures children receive an

uninterrupted education, and families are set on a path to independence.

This day will be educational but will involve some hands on experience as well. However we need to be sensitive in order to minimize our impact. Please understand that the final itinerary and schedule will depend on the participants approval on that day.

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 0 km

Duration: 0 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 12m

Overnight: 12m

Hotel

Raffles Hotel Le Royal Phnom Penh [*****]



Day 3 Along the Mekong to Chhlong

Our first driving day takes us to Chhlong, a small town on the Mekong, 200km (5hrs driving time) northeast of Phnom Penh. Once a bustling port for French and Chinese traders, today decaying colonial-era villas line the streets.

This region is home to the Cham people, a Muslim community living alongside the Buddhist Khmers – you might spot village mosques on today's drive. After arriving, you can enjoy the hotel grounds or explore Chhlong to get a feel for small-town life, Cambodian-style.

Take a soccer ball on your evening stroll, you might find some young soccer players to play with.

In the evening we will enjoy a dinner at the hotel.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 290 km

Duration: 5 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 360m

Overnight: 360m

Hotel

Le Relais de Chhlong,
Chhlong (***)

Day 4 Dolphin Conservation in Kratie

Today we will have an early start for the short drive to Kratie, 40km northwest of Chhlong. The route passes through beautiful rural scenery and past villages of stilt houses – a great start to the day!

In Kratie, we will visit the Cambodian Rural Development Team (CRDT). The organisation's CEO will give us an overview of their work in Kratie Province, where CRDT runs several projects, including one scheme focusing

on conserving endangered Mekong river dolphins.

After this introduction we will board a boat to see the dolphins in their natural habitat – the murky waters of the Mekong. As we go, we will learn more about the dolphins, their habits and threats to their survival.

We will continue to the small island of Koh Trong for a home-cooked lunch. After eating, our guide will take us around the village to learn about the local community's way of life, and to visit a school and the local pagoda. In the afternoon we will return

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 80 km

Duration: 2 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 17m

Overnight: 20m

Hotel

Le Relais de Chhlong,
Chhlong (***)

to the mainland and drive back to our hotel in Chhlong via the Roka Kandal Pagoda, an appealingly simple pagoda and one of the oldest in the country.

Day 5 Along the Mekong to Kampong Cham and further to Kampong Thom

It is a leisurely drive to Kampong Thom. The road meanders along the Mekong to Kampong Cham.

Kampong Cham is not a tourist destination at all, but has its own quaint charm. Before lunch we have time to explore the town and have a look at what we call Cambodia's "U-Bein Bridge". This is the

longest bamboo bridge in the world, rebuilt every year once the rainy season passes and the Mekong subsides to reveal the sandy banks below. Almost a kilometer long and made entirely of bleached bamboo poles, the bridge remains until it is washed away every year when the Mekong surges again.

We will cross the bridge for a short drive on Koh Pen, along shaded lanes, with wooden houses on stilts tucked amidst the palm and sandalwood trees and great bursts of bougainvillea.

Returning to the mainland we start driving towards Kampong

Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 200 km

Duration: 5 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 70m

Overnight: 70m

Hotel

Sambor Village, Kampong
Thom, (***)

Thom where we will stay overnight.



Day 6 Feel like Indiana Jones at Bang Mealea on the way to Siem Reap

The roads get busier today as we make our way to Siem Reap. En route we will visit a spectacular sight: Beng Mealea. Located 68km northeast of Siem Reap, this is one of the most mysterious temples at Angkor, as nature has well and truly run riot amidst the ruins.

This long-lost temple, built in the 12th century following the same floorplan as Angkor Wat, is the ultimate Indiana Jones experience. Beng Mealea is enclosed by a massive moat measuring 1.2km by 900m. Another one-hour drive will bring us to Siem Reap.

The rest of the day relax at the hotel or to start exploring the temples around Angkor Wat.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 150 km

Duration: 3 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 20m

Overnight: 20m

Hotel

Anantara Angkor Resort, Siem Reap (*****)

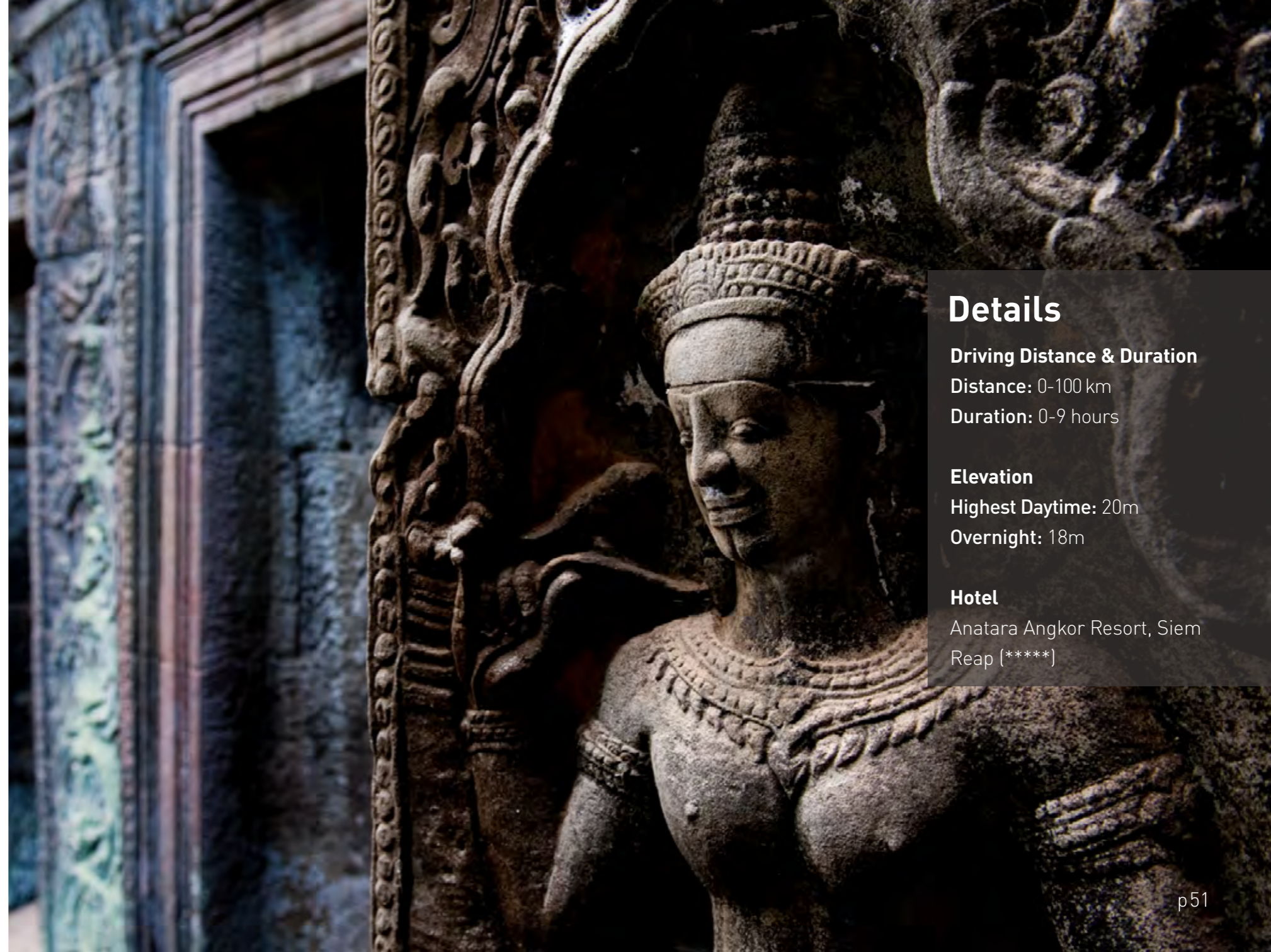
Day 7 The Arts and Angkor

Today we will spend the day exploring the Angkor archaeological site. One of the most important sites in South-East Asia, the ruins sprawl across a huge area. We recommend either cycling or taking a tuk tuk, in order to save your energy for the temples themselves.

In the afternoon we will join a fantastic initiative based in Siem Reap, the New Cambodian Artists, a contemporary dance group. Nestled back in the calm residential streets of the city is the new dance studio of the New Cambodian Artists. The group is currently made up of five female dancers who train in both classical Cambodian dance, known as Apsara dance, and contemporary dance, inspired by modern dance methodologies of the Western canon. They describe their style as "Apsara fusion".

New Cambodian Artists presents a platform for expression, creativity and growth for young artists in Siem Reap.

Despite the negative stigma sometimes associated with pursuing dance outside of the classical tradition in Cambodia, there is power to be found in the diligence and discipline of working for a dream. The company also maintains a focus on education and learning with the dancers working with select visiting choreographers to explore new movement styles. "If they are strong, they can be role models. If they become role models, more people, especially young women, can look up to them".



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 0-100 km

Duration: 0-9 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 20m

Overnight: 18m

Hotel

Anatara Angkor Resort, Siem Reap (*****)

Day 8

Take part in a Circus in Battamabang

This morning we will need to depart early in order to reach Battambang and Phare's circus training school before lunch.

Phare Ponleu Selpak is a non-profit organization that has focused on improving the lives of children and young adults since 1994. The seed of Phare Ponleu Selpak was planted in 1986, in the Site II Refugee Camp on the Thai-Cambodia border. In the camps, nine young Cambodians began taking drawing classes with Veronique Decrop, a french worker. The sessions worked as art therapy, allowing the children to express through art the emotions that they couldn't put into words.

In 1992, the young group returned from the refugee camps in Thailand to try to rebuild their lives in Cambodia. The country was still recovering from decades

of civil war, and the city of Battambang was worst than most. At that time, many of the children in Battambang were suffering from trauma, poverty, and abuse. In 1994, the group of young men from the refugee camp came together again to create Phare Ponleu Selpak. They wanted to help reintegrate the children and rebuild society.

In the beginning, the organization offered drawing classes out of a single building. That original building still stands on campus today. But a much bigger organization has grown up around it.

Today we will tour this school and learn about the students backgrounds before joining a circus workshop with the performers.

In the evening we will share a traditional Khmer dinner and see the artists in action.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: 170 km

Duration: 3-4 hours

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 40km

Overnight: 40m

Hotel

Maisons Wat Kor,
Battambang, (***)

Day 9 Return home or head to the coast?

Today we will make our way back to Phnom Penh. We will take you to the airport and you can continue your journey home, though – should your time permit – we can also arrange an extension of your trip on Cambodia's beautiful coast.

In fitting with the themes of our trip, we have partnered with Song Saa, a gorgeous private Island Resort. Through integrated hospitality, design, property, solar energy and investment enterprises, as well as a standard-setting foundation, Hong Kong-based Song Saa Collective combines ethics-led business practices and needs-based activism to honour the past and build better futures throughout Southeast Asia and beyond.

Song Saa's first venture, the award-winning Song Saa Private Island, opened in 2012 and pioneered conservation-based luxury tourism in Cambodia's Koh

Rong Archipelago, working with surrounding villages, the Cambodian government, financial investors, donor partners and broader stakeholders to improve local livelihoods and preserve the region's marine life and rainforests.

With this knowledge and experience, the Song Saa Collective has created a 21st-century business model that employs business as a positive-and-profitable agent of change. It is currently developing a 200+ hectare bio-reserve outside Siem Reap that will include a Song Saa resort, ecological and cultural conservation initiatives, and a solar project that will supply power to rural communities. The Collective also works with local weavers and artisans to create textiles and ceramics and will be launching an ethical fashion collection in 2017.

A wonderful way to wrap up your journey through this beautiful country.



Details

Driving Distance & Duration

Distance: NA

Duration: NA

Elevation

Highest Daytime: 20m



Choice of Cars

We include in the package price an SUV we procure from Avis or Hertz or another reputable car rental company. Most of the SUVs are Toyotas, but on occasion Mitsubishi's or other brands may also make an appearance. For some itineraries, we are able to offer you an option to upgrade your car to the new models from Audi.

We wish the car rental markets of Southeast Asia would be more developed and we could give you more choice, but this is not so: since we want to provide well-maintained and well-insured cars, the choice is rather limited.

But SUVs are in fact the right choice for driving journeys in this part of the world because they are spacious enough to accommodate a lot of luggage, photography equipment, and

good-and-bad-weather gear. Also, they reinforce the feeling of adventure, exploration and discovery...which is, in the end, the mood of journeys in this region, no matter how comfortable or even luxurious the night's hotel may be.

What's more, they offer sufficient clearance when required and thus add a sense of safety and all-round ability. (4-wheel drive capability is hardly needed in China these days since all roads are either very well-paved or, with good gravel, offer solid support.)

And so SUVs from reputable brands are our car of choice!

**“ ANY car,
as long as
it is an SUV ”**



Adventures and Discoveries in Local Cuisines

While this itinerary is not one of our 'Foodie'-themed journeys, we do believe that each one of our journeys should introduce you not only to hidden gems of cultural and scenic beauty, but that sampling local cuisines is also a must.

Wherever you travel with us, we will order, with very few exceptions, dishes fresh and on location with an emphasis on local produce. It is not uncommon for our guides to venture into the kitchen to pick this, that or the other vegetable and to ask the cook to prepare them in the finest possible way. (On occasion we do pre-order a meal: this will normally be the case only for special occasions!)

Wine and beer is always included in our meals for you to enjoy. (When we travel into high-altitude, we suggest moderation!)

Finally, if you have special dietary requirements are particularly interested in the culinary aspect of one of our journeys, please let us know.

For private journeys, we can, of course, tailor the meal experience to your taste (and budget).



What's Included / Best Months to Go...

Generally speaking, our journey packages and prices are all-inclusive. Once you've paid and you arrive at the starting point, you really won't have to take out your wallet again.

- **Cars** – a modern SUV is provided for all driving days, expertly maintained and serviced by Avis Cambodia, and covered by the best insurance available.
- **International Journey Host, Guide and Support Vehicle** – you will be accompanied by a registered Cambodian tour guide, an On the Road Experiences host and a fully equipped lead car with a local support driver. In Cambodia we might also have 1 government minder in the lead car.
- **Routes** – A well-researched itinerary and carefully crafted journey experience. You will receive a detailed route book before your departure. We will also supply each car with a pre-programmed GPS and printed maps. (The GPS maps are not yet ideal in Cambodia though.)
- **Driving License** – All arrangements, fees and permits for driving in Cambodia are included
- **Fuel & Tolls** – we provide petrol for the car throughout the journey and pay all tolls



- **Airport Transfers** – all airport transfers are included
- **Permits and logistics** – all entry, border crossing and road permits are included.
- **Hotels** – the best available or five-star accommodation is included in each overnight stop

- **Meals** – breakfast (a choice of Western and Local is provided), and lunch and dinner are included on all driving days, as are drinks. Meals on non-driving days as specified above. Prepare for a culinary adventure!
- **Goodies** – you will enjoy an On the Road Home-Away-from-Home Kit containing wet towels, anti-bacterial gel and basic toiletries, and a daily picnic basket containing fresh fruit, fruit juice, water, and a mixture of sweets and nibbles

- **Other Essentials** – we provide each car with walky-talkies
- **Travel Insurance** – including 24-hour medical assistance, evacuation and repatriation emergency service
- **Tips & Entrance Fees** – basic tips and entrance fees for jointly attended activities are included
- **Activities, Meals, Transport** during 'free times' as indicated in this Journey Dossier

What's Not Included

The only items not included in our prices are flights to from Phnom Penh, your visas, and personal purchases (e.g., gifts, souvenirs).



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“ A picture is worth a thousand words. True, but when it comes to a road journey, moving images are priceless. Please visit : <http://www.ontheroadexperiences.com/en/video-gallery> ”





ON THE ROAD EXPERIENCES

BACK ROADS | HIDDEN GEMS

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

