

Excursion



Visiting Option

Option 1	Temple Tour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Angkor Wat – Temple of the Forest – Lunch (by ICERD organizer) – Banteay Srei – Pre Rup (Sunset) 	Start at 8:00 AM (From the hotel)
Option 2	Tonle Sap (the great lake) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tonle Sap – Preaek Toul Bird Sanctuary – Lunch (by ICERD organizer) 	Start at 8:00 AM (From the hotel)
Option 3	Local Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Siem Reap Mean Chey Agricultural Cooperative Unions – Lunch (by ICERD organizer) 	Start at 8:00 AM (From the hotel)

Angkor Wat

At 8:30 AM, we depart from the hotel to the Archaeological Park Entrance to purchase entry passes.

Continue to explore **Angkor Wat**, constructed over a period of 30 years during the reign of King Suryavarman II [AD1113], by some measures it is the largest religious complex in the world. Originally a Hindu mountain temple aligned to the spring equinox, around the C16th it was converted to a Theravada Buddhist monument, a capacity in which it continues today.

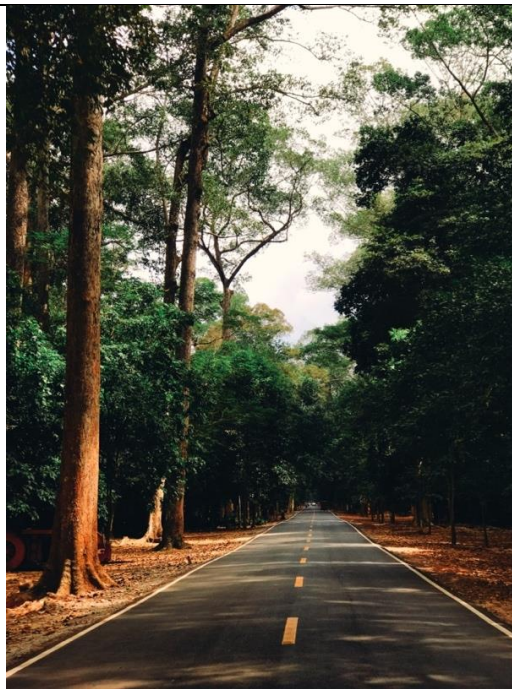
Explore the well preserved central complex and detailed bas-reliefs depicting scenes from Hindu mythologies and battles of the ancient empire. The beauty in balance and composition, combined

with its sheer vast scale ensure Angkor Wat's place as the crowning achievement in Khmer art and architecture. This is truly one of travel's remaining great adventures.

Temple of the Forest

After lunch break, we explore **Ta Prohm**, one of the largest Angkor temples Ta Prohm built under King Jayavarman VII in the late 12th century. It was originally dedicated to the King's mother in the Buddhist style but later converted to the Hindu style. Many of the figures of Buddha in niches were destroyed in the process and some converted to Shiva Linga (Hindu). The temple has remained in its collapsed state, part hidden by jungle and is most famous for the interplay between the giant tree roots and the stonework. Take your time to walk through the temple from the West entrance to the East entrance to meet again with our driver (walk 1–2 km).

Note: Touring programme can be adjusted depending on the length of visit at each temple.



Picture 1. Way to Angkor ruins



Picture 2. Morning at Angkor Wat



Picture 3. Ta Prom Temple (Temple of the Forest)

Note: For this visiting option lunch will be arranged by ICERD Organizer (Lunch Box or at the Restaurant nearby the temple)

Banteay Srei and Pre-Rup

In the afternoon, travel across ancient reservoirs (long since devoid of water), through pretty villages and rice paddies to **Banteay Srei** (constructed AD 967) some 37KM from Siem Reap. This beautiful pink sandstone temple is well-known for its intricate carvings, of which hardly any space is left untouched and its perfect state of preservation.

On your way back to town, visit the temple of **Pre-Rup**.



Picture. Banteay Srei village



Picture. Banteay Srei Temple



Picture. Sunset at Pre Rup Temple

Tonle Sap Lake (The Great Lake)

The great Tonle Sap lake is the richest fresh water fishing ground in the world, a national treasure producing an ever-changing landscape. The communities that live around the margins of the lake cope with huge seasonal variations in water levels by building their homes on floating bamboo rafts or 30ft stilts. It is well worth the extra effort to get away from the touristy village of Chong Kneas to the more genuine stilted villages – Kompong Khleang or Kompong Phluk (dependent on water levels) – for an understanding of contemporary lake life.

The Tonle Sap Lake, along with the Tonle Sap River, forms a unique hydrological system as well as an enormously diverse aquatic ecosystem. Tonle Sap Lake acts as an extremely important fish breeding ground and flood leveler of the Mekong River system. This lake's importance reaches far beyond Cambodia.

Tonle Sap Lake Hydrology Cycle and Seasonal Biodiversity

The Mekong River is a transboundary river flowing through six countries with the total annual runoff of 475,000 million cubic meters and the total length of over 4,800 km, which makes it the 12th longest river in the world. After passing the last rapids at the northern part of Cambodia, the Mekong traverses a series of levees and empties into an extended floodplain.

Once the Mekong River flows down to Phnom Penh it is joined by the 120-kilometer long Tonle Sap River that links the Tonle Sap Lake to the Mekong River. Here the Mekong creates a wonder of the World. During the flood season (June to October) when the water level in the Mekong rises, it forces the Tonle Sap River to flow backwards into the Tonle Sap Great Lake.

The water flow from the Mekong to the Tonle Sap Lake occurs during the flood season when the rising water level of the Mekong River forces the Tonle Sap River to reverse its flow into the Tonle Sap Lake. The incoming water causes intensive flooding that extends the Lake over vast floodplains consisting mainly of forests, shrubs and rice field.

Periodic flooding that carries sediment-rich water from the Mekong to the Lake combined with the area's high biodiversity are the main reasons for the development of a unique and rich ecosystem. The Tonle Sap ecosystem is one of the most productive inland waters and one of the most fish-abundant lakes in the World where flooded forests and shrubs offer shelter and breeding grounds for fish and other aquatic animals. The total fish production from the Lake is about 230,000 tons/year, which forms almost half of Cambodia's total fish production.

Migration of different fish species between the Tonle Sap Lake and the Mekong River is extensive and diverse. During the inflow from approximately June to September there is mostly a passive migration of eggs, fry and fish to the Tonle Sap Lake and its floodplains. Later, fish follow the receding floodwater back to the Lake and finally back to the Mekong River.

Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

The Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve (TSBR), covering all of the lake plus a significant part of the floodplain, and divided into three zones: core zones, buffer zone and transition zone.

In the transition zone, sustainable natural resource management practices are to be established, while the buffer zone is an area where activities are to be compatible with conservation, in order to protect the core zones.

The three core zones are Prek Toal for bird colonies (21,342 ha), Boeng Chhmar as bird feeding areas (14,560 ha) and Stung Sen as unique gallery forests (6,355 ha).

Prek Toal is located at the Southwest corner of the lake. Access to the area is only possible by boats that takes one hour from Chong Kneas, Siem Reap province.

Between March and May, at minimum water level, the water retreats from the floodplain of inundated forest, leaving many small isolated deep pools of water. At this time, the marsh and

swamp, which appears by the lakeshore at the fringe of flooded forest serve as feeding grounds for large colonies of waterbirds.

The area is found to accommodate large population of waterbirds ranging from the World's most endangered species to vulnerable threatened and to common species. Parr et al, (1996) identified three endangered species, Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelicanus philippensis*), Greater Adjutant (*Leptoptilus dubius*) and White-winged Duck (*Cairina scutulata*); two vulnerable threatened species, Milky Stork (*Mycteria cinerea*) and Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilus javanicus*); and five near-threatened species, Oriental Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*), Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Asian Openbill (*Anastomas oscitans*), Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), and Greyheaded Fish-Eagle (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*).

Take the opportunity to pause at the stilted houses to learn how a subsistence fishing family lives, before continuing by boat along the margins of the lake.



Picture. Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary



Picture. Life on Floating village at Tonle Sap

Note: For this visiting option lunch will be arranged by ICERD Organizer (Lunch Box or at the Floating Village)

Agriculture Community – Siem Reap Mean Chey Agricultural Cooperative Unions

The Siem Reap Meanchey Union of Agricultural Communities established in November 2017 in Pong Village, Kantraing Commune, Prasat Bakong District, Siem Reap Province.

The Department of Agricultural Community Development and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries initially had 10 farming communities as members. In 2021, the union has member from 6 districts in Siem Reap such as Chi Kren, Sout Nikom, Prasat Bakong, Banteay Srei, Pouk, and Angkor Thom.





Picture. Farm Member of Siem Reap Mean Chey Agriculture Union

Note: For this visiting option lunch will be arranged by ICERD Organizer (Lunch Box or at the Restaurant nearby village)