

# Angkor Temple Guide

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### **About this Guide**

This guide to Angkor was produced by Peace of Angkor to give a simple to understand overview of Angkor and its history.

We have described a selection of the most interesting temples sites within the Angkor Archaeological Park .

The photography and information has been gathered by Dave Perkes during seven years of living and working in Siem Reap as a photographer and tour leader.

Extracts were taken from Dave's weekly "Temple Watch; articles in the Phnom Penh Post in 2008 and 2009.

Historical contexts Chhor Elit (Ta)

The concept and design of this E-guide was made possible by Warren Garber.

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## **CAMBODIA - One of the ancient world's greatest civilizations**

Cambodia is an amazing country with a history going back many hundreds of years. Cambodian culture has its origins in the South Indian traders who sailed to South East Asia as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Kampuchea developed in to a major trading nation; exploiting the wealth created by the fishing and farming around the Tonle Sap Lake. It was this wealth which enabled the Ancient Khmers to build great cities; temples, roads and sophisticated irrigation systems.

### **The great Khmer Empire.**

The Hindu settlers brought with them their religion and customs and built the first Pre-Angkorian city of Sambor Pre Kuk in the 7th Century.

The Hindu influence continued for hundreds of years. The Khmer God Kings built huge cities and temples on a grand scale. Gradually the Hindu influence diminished with The Khmer Empire becoming a Buddhist Kingdom in the 15th Century.

The Khmer Empire grew to a point where it extended over all of South East Asia including much of South Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. It had a powerful economy, fuelled by wealth from farming and fishing from the great Tonle Sap Lake.

### **The Empire Falls**

No one knows exactly why the great Khmer Empire collapsed. There are many theories for the decline; however it is most likely that the Khmer Empire outgrew its sustainability. Crops failed due to the inability to maintain the irrigation systems; due in part to wars between Siam and the Chams from central Vietnam.

The great cities and temples were eventually abandoned to the jungle and remained unknown by the outside world for centuries.

Although abandoned and derelict, there were still a minority of people living among these great ruins. Contrary to popular belief, Angkor Wat has always been occupied by monks and villagers; so was never abandoned.

### **The French Occupation**

In the 19th century, Cambodia became part of French Indochina; which covered all of Laos and Vietnam as well. Explorer Henri Mouhot gave himself credit for the re-discovery of Angkor in the 18th Century and was promoter of Angkor in Europe.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the French developed towns and improved the road system. Phnom Penh became a highly developed and sophisticated city and was known as the Pearl Of Asia.

A tourist industry built up around Angkor and Siem Reap in the 1950s and 60s. Travel was expensive; so only the wealthy could afford to come here.



*Harihara statue: Sambor*



*Battles depicted on bas reliefs*



The French influence can be seen all over Cambodia or Cambodge as the French called it. With the European styles of architecture and food Cambodia was one of the most advanced nations in Indochina.

The French influence continued until 1954 when Cambodia became an independent nation again under the popular King Norodom Sihanouk.

### **A humanitarian disaster!**

Sadly Independence did not bring stability and prosperity. War in Indochina in the 1950s and 1960s brought Cambodia into conflict; with illegal raids by the USA against the Viet Kong .

The damage was severe; but the great monuments of Angkor were spared. On 17<sup>th</sup> April 1975 Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge took over Phnom Penh and started a cultural revolution which ended in Genocide. Pol Pot followed the teachings of his idol Mao Tse Tung. He believed that an agricultural society; primarily growing rice, would make Kampuchea great again.

The Khmer Rouge forced an extreme form of Communism on its population. Millions of people were forcibly evicted from the cities to work on the land. Resistance was punished by death in the extermination camps and killing fields. Many thousands were senselessly slaughtered and millions perished due to famines, land mines and the civil war. The Vietnamese liberated Cambodia in 7<sup>th</sup> January 1979; but the Civil War continued until the death of Pol Pot of natural causes in 1997.

### **A New Beginning!**

Through the 1980s and 90s, Cambodia began to rebuild itself to its status as 'Nation Religion King ' with its constitutional monarchy and elections. The cities of Phnom Penh have grown and developed and tourism has played a big part in the economy of; what is still among the world's poorest nations. Improvements in infrastructure and the clearance of land mines have made many remote areas safe to travel.

Siem Reap has grown from a town to a city; but the charm old town still remains. The warmth and friendship of the Khmer people here has not changed a bit.



*French Colonial - Battambang*

### **WATS IN A NAME!**

For those curious about the meanings of the names of Angkor temples, here is a brief explanation for the most popular nomenclature.

**Angkor Wat** literally means Temple City. The **Thom** in **Angkor Thom** means big. The meaning of **Bayon** is unclear, but a plausible translation is Leading Sacred Amulet. **Prasat Bei** near the south gate of Angkor Thom means Three Towers. **Ta** in **Ta Prohm** means grandfather or old man. **Prohm** refers to the four-headed Hindu god Brahma. The original Sanskrit name Rajavihara means Royal Monastery. **Preah Khan** refers to the sacred sword used only by the king. The Sanskrit original name Nagara Jayashri means City of the Victor. Banteay in **Banteay Srey** means citadel. Srey originally meant wealth in Sanskrit, and the modern translation of the Khmer term means women. **Banteay Kdei** means Citadel of the Cells, referring to the monks' cells in the temple close to Ta Prohm. The name of the brick temple of **Pre Rup** on the Grand Circuit translates as the turning of the body to ash. Pre Rup is considered to be a funeral temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. The exact origin of **Ta Som** is unknown, but possibly means Old Man named Som.

# ANGKOR WAT



Built as a funerary temple for King Suryavaraman II; Angkor Wat represents the pinnacle of achievement of Khmer temple building. It is South East Asia's biggest tourist draw; being visited by more than two million tourists each year. Angkor's popularity is justified as it is the world's largest and arguably the most spectacular religious monument.

Angkor Wat is unusual as it faces West. Visitors usually enter across a 200 metre wide causeway spanning the moat, which extends 1.3 Kms wide by 1.5 Kms long

The upper level of Angkor Wat consists of 5 towers which represent the mythical Mount Meru. This was considered by Hindus as representing the centre of the known universe. The outer grounds represent the known world and the moat, the oceans.

Over one kilometre of spectacular carvings lie within Angkor Wat's outer galleries. It would be impossible to detail them all here.

The Churning of the Ocean of Milk relief is one of the most important Hindu Legends. The image shows Vishnu standing on a turtle. This is being pulled in a tug of war by Gods and Demons holding a serpent (Naga). This celestial churning continued for a thousand years after which the ocean turned to the milk of eternal life.



*The Churning of the Ocean of Milk Relief*

The Third or Upper level was and still is the most important Buddhist place of worship in Cambodia. Originally reserved for the highest order of priests it was never intended for the large number of visitors that pass through it. New steps and walkways now aid access and visitor have a strict time limit.



*Apsara dance figures at Angkor Wat*



*The eight Armed Vishnu figure in the West Terrace of Angkor Wat .*

## ANGKOR THOM



*Angkor Thom Moat*

Angkor Thom was the centre of the 12th Century city of Angkor. With over one million people, it was the world's largest city. At that time London and Paris had around 30,000, people.

At the centre of the great city of Angkor lies the Bayon Temple. It has 52 towers with the huge serene faces of the Jayavarman VII. To the north of the Bayon is the great plaza adjoining 300 metre long Elephant terrace. It must have been a spectacular meeting place 800 years ago. Behind this are the ruins of the Royal Palace and the pyramid temple of Phiminakas.

The area to the east of the Royal Palace was a meeting place where thousands watched the entertainment and dancing on the huge Elephants Terrace. At the rear of the plaza are 12 towers the Prasats Sour Prat. Tight rope walkers used to perform across what is now the road to the Victory Gate.

The crowning glory is the huge dome of the Baphuon. This is under restoration at present and will be a spectacular sight when completed. The whole area is dotted with dozens of smaller temples all are of some interest.

## THE BAYON



The Iconic faces of the Bayon have always been a symbol of Angkor. Said to represent the faces of Jayavarman VII and the compassionate Buddha. These faces have been a fascination to all who visit this magnificent temple .

The Bayon Style is present in many of the temples and the bas Relief's are of particular interest as many represent daily life 800 years ago.

A keen eyed observer, or visitor with temple guide will see fishing and farming scenes, gamblers, births and other scenes. The relief here shows scenes that are still going on to-day. Note the cooking and domestic scenes and the fish being smoked on the bottom right.



## ELEPHANT TERRACE

To the north of the Bayon is the great plaza adjoining 350 metre long Elephant Terrace. This which must have been a spectacular meeting place 800 years ago. The Elephant terrace has reliefs depicting Elephants in procession and in battle. Three sets of steps, flanked by elephants heads, give access to the huge stage which was used for spectacular performances in the presence of the King.





## LEPER KING TERRACE



To the north of the famous Terrace of the Elephants is the Terrace of the Leper King. It dates from the Bayon period and was built in the late 12th or early 13th century. It has seven spectacular tiers of reliefs, depicting Apsaras and scenes from the king's court, as well as hundreds of human figures.

There is some speculation about the meaning of the terrace. At the top of the terrace is a statue that, when discovered, was covered in moss, giving the impression of leprosy. It was believed to represent Jayavarman VII. There is a legend, depicted in the Bayon temple that the king fought a giant snake that spat poison at him, and he contracted leprosy.



*The replica of Yama*

The original figure carved in the 14th century was moved to the National Museum in Phnom Penh and is now thought to be Yama, the god of death.

Behind the terrace lies an older gallery that was exposed during restoration work in the late 1990s. The hidden carvings are easily accessible down a narrow corridor, with modern concrete supporting the original structure.

The entrance has animal figures, including Mekong dolphins, crocodiles, fish and crabs. The narrow terrace zigzags behind, with hundreds of figures including spectacular nine-headed Nagas. Both the Leper King and Elephants terraces are best seen and photographed in the mornings



*Nine headed Naga or serpent hidden within the walls of the Leper King Terrace*

## ANGKOR THOM'S PEACEFUL REFUGES

At busy periods, Angkor can seem so overrun with tourists that it's hard to get away from the crowds. There are a number of places within Angkor that are hardly ever visited and yet have many of the elements of Khmer art, coupled with a peaceful atmosphere.

There is no need to stray far from the main temples either, as within Angkor Thom there are lovely sights that are ignored by most tour groups.

The Preah Pithou group is a charming set of pyramid temples in the forest, east of the Terrace of the Elephants. Visitors can still climb these monuments and wander around the forest, enjoying the atmosphere.

Behind the 12 towers of the Prasats Sour Prat are the north and south Khleangs, or store houses. the north Khleang still has some ancient timber lintels.

The East Gate is the only one of the five Angkor Thom gates that is traffic-free. It is the most atmospheric of all, especially early or late in the day, when it catches the sun's rays.

*The image on the right of an elephant passing under the East Gate, was taken by Dave as a commission in 2008*



## THE BAPHUON a giant 3D puzzle!



The 11th century Baphoun temple, south of the Terrace of the Elephants, was one of the most spectacular of all the Angkor temples. The three-tiered pyramid had a huge reclining Buddha on its western side and a meditating Buddha at its summit.

Attempts were made to restore this temple in 1918, but a series of disastrous collapses and dismantlement up to the early 1940s, left the temple in a

state of ruin with over 100,000 numbered stone pieces; but no plans, which were lost during the war. The vast 3D puzzle is still being pieced together today.

The Baphoun restoration is being carried out by the l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient and the French government. The public can now access the causeway and first level, where there are interesting displays on the restoration.

The site of the 70-metre long reclining Buddha is slowly being pieced together and can be seen to the west.

## TA PROHM – The Jungle Temple



"This huge temple complex looks very similar to when it was first discovered. The high lichen covered walls are distorted by the movement of the earth beneath. 800 years of history lie twisted and broken, with sinister root systems of huge trees enveloping doors and windows in a stranglehold. The distinction between organic and non-organic, become blurred in the green pallor of light from the jungle canopy. The intensity of the jungle sounds here can be almost deafening"

I wrote this after my first visit in 2002. Ta Prohm and the temples have changed a lot in the last few years and there are lot more visitors.

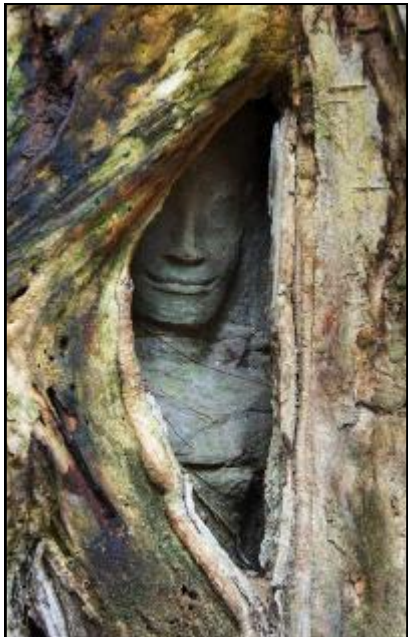
When the early 20th Century temple restorers started work in Angkor, it was decided to leave the ruin of Ta Prohm un-restored to give an impression of what it was like to discover a lost temple.

Safety considerations for the large numbers of visitors that come here has meant that some restoration has been inevitable. The fabulous tree roots and atmosphere are Cambodia's biggest tourist draw after Angkor Wat.





## LITTLE GEMS IN THE JUNGLE !



A hidden Gem within Ta Prohm, is this figure of a Hindu Deity clothed in tree roots. It is in an area frequently visited; but is so small and hidden that most visitors are unaware of its presence .

Having a guide who is prepared to take you to the places other tours don't go; mean that you will see these fascinating relics. that most visitors miss!



### The Apsara queens

One of the most exciting finds within Angkor are two figures said to represent the first and second wives of king Jayavarman VII. They are tucked away in a small chamber in a hidden corner of Preah Khan

The figure shown of Jayavarman's first wife was discovered with a diamond in her navel. This was subsequently replaced with a glass one.

A similar figure of Jayavarman's second wife can be found in an adjoining chamber. Both these escaped the attention of the Khmer Rouge by being hidden in the collapsed chamber. These figures are hard to find; so an experienced tour guide is needed.

### In Search of a dinosaur!

One of the mysteries of Angkor is a carved figure of a dinosaur in Ta Prohm, which looks very like a stegosaurus. There is some speculation as to its origin. Some say it was an original carving. I do not believe that that the ancient Khmers would have known of it.

Was it carved by a temple restorer as a bit of a joke; or has Cambodia got the equivalent of the Scottish Loch Ness Monster?

The figure is situated in a quiet part of Ta Prohm and is easily missed by the casual visitor. With the aid of a detailed plan of the Temple, I found the carving on the east side of the West Gopura to the right of the entry tower. It certainly looked like a dinosaur and appeared very authentic.

After research, I found fanciful accounts on the web of humans existing with dinosaurs that were quite amusing. The most likely conclusion is that it must be a Sumatran Rhino or an insect eating Pangolin.





## PREAH KHAN - Temple of the Sacred Sword



Situated north of the great city of Angkor Thom, Preah Khan, or Temple of the Sacred Sword, is among the largest and most complex of all the Angkor temples. Dedicated to the father of Jayavarman VII, it was a very important monastic complex, and it has been estimated that more than 70,000 people lived and worked within its walls.

Most visitors traverse the temple east to west or vice versa, and with many narrow passages and secret chambers, Preah Kahn is a delight to explore. Many parts of the temple are in ruins with spectacular trees to rival those at Ta Prohm

The Halls of the Dancers to the east, and the north temple have the best reliefs and door lintels. A two-storey building to the northeast is unique in that it has round columns looking more Greek or Roman than Khmer.



*One of the many Garudas that surround the inner walls*



*The eastern quadrant of the inner sanctuary showing the round columned building.*

After its decline and abandonment; Preah Khan was re-discovered and restored in the late 19th century.

During The Khmer Rouge era it was used as an army base. The more observant visitor will see the damage done by armoured vehicles to the paving and walls at some of the entrances. There was further restoration completed in 2006 and new visitor centre opened in 2009.



## BANTEAY KDEI The Citadel of the Cells



*The five towers of Banteay Kdei*

Banteay Kdei is a 12th Bayon Style monastic complex which has a lot of the atmosphere of its famous neighbour Ta Prohm but few of the crowds. Adjoining Srah Srang Reservoir, Banteay Kdei is best approached from the east in the morning.



*Monks passing a huge buttressed tree in Banteay Kdei*

The four faced Bayon style gate glows in the sun with dappled light from the overhanging trees. You enter via a causeway which leads to a low platform; Terrace (or Hall) of The Dancers. The complex inner structures are in a partially ruined state.

The East Gopura (entrance) to the third enclosure of Banteay Kdei has a statue of Buddha sitting in meditation with a wooden Wheel of Life behind it. Beyond here a passage traverses the entire complex to the small centre shrine. Some of the complex inner structures are in a partial ruined state. The central towers have been supported by wires to stabilize them.

To the west a massive buttressed tree is reflected in the moat which is usually full at the end of the rainy season (August to December). You can either continue to walk to Ta Prohm which adjoins the temple to the west, or walk south around the moat and return to your starting point.



*Buddha in meditation*

## PRASAT KRAVAN



To the east of the Small Circuit; you can see a 10th century brick temple of Prasat Kravan. The five small towers are often ignored in favour of the larger offerings round Angkor. The detour is worthwhile; to see the brick relief's, which are unique in Angkor.

Prasat Kravan, like most of the earliest temples, was constructed of bricks bonded with a mortar made from vegetable glue and covered with stucco. It is remarkable how this method of construction survived so well over the centuries.

There are areas of original bricks still in place; however the base, adjoining platforms and much of the exterior of the towers, were rebuilt in the last century using new bricks. The chimney like towers; are open to the sky. Canopies would have been suspended from brick hooks, to protect the statuary below.



The central tower of Prasat Kravan houses three reliefs depicting the Hindu God Vishnu. The left hand one shows Vishnu spanning the Universe. The central relief shows an eight armed Vishnu surrounded by dozens of mostly male figures. The right hand relief shows Vishnu riding a Garuda (part man part bird). The northern tower contains a representation of Lakshmi the goddess of wealth.



*The triple reliefs of Vishnu in the centre tower of Prasat Kravan*

## TOMMANON & CHAU SAY THEVODA



Leaving Angkor Thom by the Victory Gate there are two temples to north and south of the road; Thommanon and Chau Say Thevoda.

Thommanon to the north, is a minor jewel, being beautifully restored in the 1960s. The small temple buildings are in the style of Angkor Wat. Thommanon has reproductions of the original wood ceilings in the central tower. These are unique in Angkor. There is a finely carved lintel with 4 armed Vishnu above an internal doorway.

Chau Say Thevoda is very similar in style and has a causeway leading to the Siem Reap River .





## OTHER NOTABLE TEMPLES AROUND ANGKOR



*Ta keo the unfinished temple*

### **Ta Keo**

This pyramid temple with five towers, is set in a prominent corner between Angkor Thom and The East Baray. It is an impressive structure; however it was never completed. Its unfinished nature was due to it being hit by lightning during construction. This was considered to be a very bad omen.

### **East Mebon and Pre Rup**



*Pre Rup*

Situated in the centre of the now dry Eastern Baray, this 10th century brick temple has a classic pyramid form with five towers. East Mebon had a decorative covering of Stucco, over the centuries the plaster washed away leaving the underlying bricks exposed

Pre Rup is virtually identical to the East Mebon with five brick towers in a quincunx formation. The name refers to the turning of the body to ash after cremation.

### **Baksei Chamkrong**



This is a magnificent small pyramid literally in the shadow of Phnom Bakheng.

It is dedicated to the Hindu God Shiva. Its name means "the bird which shelters under its wings". This refers to the legend of King Yasovarman escaping from battle, being saved by a huge bird which hid him from view.

This temple is built of brick over a laterite base and dates from the 10th century.

## Preah Neak Pean



This unique temple named after entwined serpents; was originally in the centre of the reservoir adjoining Preah Khan. It was originally dedicated to the Buddha and modified by Jayavarman VII and re-dedicated to Lokeshvara. It has a set of four square basins, surrounding a larger pool with a central shrine. Four fountain heads are in the forms of a lion, horse, elephant and man.

## Phnom Bakheng



Phnom Bakheng; was built at the end of the 9th Century as the principal temple of the new capital, Yasodharapura. Phnom Bakheng is a symbolic representation of mount Meru and was dedicated to Shiva.

The temple is a very popular sunset point. With an average of 3000 per day watching sunset it can get very crowded. At other times it is quiet.

## Prasat Bei

Prasat Bei is a small temple with 3 towers on a laterite pediment near the Angkor Thom moat . Only the central tower; which has an impressive doorway; was ever completed. Inside is a stone base for a statue and a modern interpretation of a Apsara dancer scrawled on the inner wall! On the approach are two platforms; alongside the moat of Angkor Thom One has a doorway and a small perfectly preserved Linga in the style of those at Koh Ker though a fraction of the size. The other is smaller and the both look almost like a half size temple models .

## Spean Thma



Not a temple; but an literally an “Old Stone Bridge”. It is in dilapidated condition with trees growing out of it. Some of the vaulted archways are intact but the missing feature is the river, which has changed course and is now 5 metres below running parallel to this bridge.

You can find Spean Thma next to the steel road bridge on the way to Ta Keo.

## Banteay Prei



This attractive temple is located on a low hill north of Preah Khan. Banteay Prei is a quite a large site with low rambling buildings with low stooped passages and doorways

It has not been restored has a very mysterious feel. The site is dominated by a huge banyan tree which grows out of the centre on the sanctuary. It is a lovely spot in late afternoon.

## BANTEAY SREY - citadel of Women



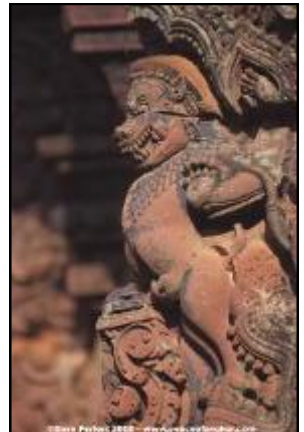
A favorite of whoever visits it; this small Hindu temple of Banteay Srey has the finest of all the carvings of the temples of Angkor. It is made of rare pink sandstone; which the source is unknown.

The carvings and reliefs have a unique three dimensionality about them. The stone used is incredibly fine grained; which allowed the artisans to create a masterpiece.

The temple is surrounded by laterite walls; with a causeway and moat that leads to the central Sanctuary. Within the sanctuary are a number of diminutive buildings and shrines. All have low doorways and tiny windows giving the impression that this is a temple in miniature.

The central sanctuary has been off limits for several years to protect the delicate stonework.

Banteay Srey is popular with tour groups taking advantage of the morning light; which emphasizes the pink sandstone as the sun rises above the forest. You have to get there early; to avoid the crowds!





## PHNOM KULEN



This is the most sacred of all Khmer Pilgrimage sites situated in a picturesque location just over 1 hour drive from Siem Reap. Approached by a scenic mountain road it gives some of the best landscape views in the Area.

The falls are a popular bathing place for local families. At festival times the Wats and Reclining Buddha are a place of great atmosphere. There is an area of Hindu Lingas on the riverbed; though nothing as extensive as Kbal Spean. Above the falls there are a number of temple sites and carved animal figures scattered around on the top of the hill.

The upper falls are easy to see and are used as a swimming pool. The Water thunders over the edge down a couple of steps to the main falls which are spectacular.

Access to the falls are down some newly built wooden steps. These are in good condition; however getting to the most spectacular part of the falls involves wading through fast flowing water and slippery rocks in the rainy season. In the Dry season It is a lot easier but of course the falls are less spectacular then.

Admission for foreigners = \$20

Peace of Angkor include the pass fee in our tour price.





## KBAL SPEAN - the valley of a 1000 Lingas.



Kbal Spean is an ancient Hindu pilgrimage site in the jungle on the south side of Kulen Mountain. It is commonly known as the valley of a 1000 Lingas; due to the presence of the over a thousand lingas. The lingas in Kbal Spean were carved in the riverbed between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13 centuries. They were believed to fertilize the water of the Siem Reap River.



These Hindu phallic symbols are often represented standing on the Yoni or womb. They are always oriented with the drainage channel of the Yoni facing north. At Kbal Spean, the lingas are aligned to the compass; with some arranged in groups of 5; representing the 5 peaks of the mythical mount Meru.

The waterfall here is best seen at the end of the rainy season. At the top of the falls are numerous carved figures and animals with splendid Vishnu Figures.



One of the most impressive features at Kbal Spean was the carving of Vishnu on the rocks by the upper cascade. It was hacked off in 2003 by robbers. An ugly scar remained until August 2006 when a new replacement carving was added. The new carving has blended in well as you can see by the recent photo.

Kbal Spean is looked after very well. The way marked trail is a very attractive route through atmospheric jungle. The path is steep; with some well maintained steps. Sounds of birds and wildlife with hundreds of butterflies enhance the visit which is at its best in the rainy season or early in the Dry season May through to December.

From February the river dries up and the falls become just a trickle; so we stop running tours until the end of April or when the river starts to flow.

The \$20 Angkor pass is needed for this site which closes at 3pm

## THE ROLUOS GROUP



Situated to the East of the Angkor Park the Roluos group of temples were one of the earliest of the Khmer Capital cities. The Bakong, pictured above, is a highly significant pre Angkorian site; built in the 9th century by King Indravarman I

The temple surrounded by a moat has a five stepped pyramid with a lotus flower tower at its summit. This tower was an addition built in the 12th century in Angkor Wat style.

Two other temple sites: Preah Ko and Lolei were built at the same time. Preah Ko, the temple of the Sacred bull, consists of three brick towers with a Nandi or Sacred Bull sculpture in front. The brick towers have impressive lintels, Apsaras and the remains of some the original decorative stucco .



*Preah Ko stucco and towers*



## **SUGGESTED ITINERARY for a three day Angkor Temple visit**

### **Day 1**

We suggest you visit the city of Angkor Thom first. It is surrounded by a moat and covers an area of 9 sq kms within the high walls. At its centre is the Bayon with its multi faced towers and one and a half kms of bas reliefs which depict 12th Century life.

The Elephants terrace, Terrace of the Leper King and Phiminakas pyramid are popular sights and are worthwhile spending time. Angkor Wat best seen after sunrise and again later in the day.

Angkor Wat is big; so we recommend taking at least 2 to 3 hours to enjoy it. The east and south sides are less busy. A guide will enhance your experience and literally brings the stones of Angkor to life, with stories and explanations of the bas relief's and the functions of the buildings.

### **Day 2**

The Grand Circuit takes in many sites of greater Angkor. The most rewarding strategy is to start off with Sunrise at the Traditional sunset point of Phnom Bakheng. Moving anticlockwise around the Circuit you can visit the famous jungle temple of Ta Prohm, Prasat Kravan with stunning interior brick carvings.

There are many other temples on this route which are of interest. The finale to the day would be Preah Khan which is a fabulous and vast temple 2nd in size to Angkor and a very complex partial ruin with some spectacular buildings with trees growing through them.

### **Day 3**

There are a number of smaller and less visited sites within Angkor Thom which are very atmospheric and photographically rewarding. The Preah Pithou group has some fine buildings which are tucked out of sight is a favourite within Angkor Thom. The East Gate, which lies at the end of a dusty track is a place of exceptional atmosphere especially towards the end of the day.

It is worthwhile visiting Angkor Wat before Sunset to see the grey stone growing pink as the sun sets.

Most people like to return to Angkor Wat at least once to see it at different times of the day. There are many other sights within or without the Angkor Park.

Banteay Srey with its fabulous carvings can be combined with a visit to Roluos group. Some of our tours to Beng Mealea and Kbal Spean visit Banteay Srey as well.

## THINGS TO DO OTHER THAN TEMPLES

It is well worthwhile taking time off from the temples to visit Siem Reap Old Town and Markets and the National Museum. Opened in 2008 this new museum has an impressive collection of ancient artifacts with well presented Audio visuals to give a sound overview of Cambodian Culture.



*Silk weaver at work*

The craft workshops of the Artisans d'Angkor, the IKTT Institute of Khmer Textiles and Silk Farm are well worth a visit. If you have children the Cambodia Culture Village is a fun place to spend an afternoon. Intended for Cambodians it is more a place of entertainment than high culture; with shows and music every afternoon.

### The Lake

Our tours to the Tonle Sap Lake are very interesting and give you a chance to see a very different life of the fishing communities on the lake; as well as have a change from temples for a while.

We are running trips to Kompong Phluk, and Kompong Khleang. The Prek Toal Bird sanctuary is a must for birdwatchers from December to March. Outside this time; the village is an interesting destination in its own right.

### Meeting Cambodians

Our guides and drivers are keen to promote a good understanding of Cambodian life. It is not usual for our tour guests to be invited into local homes and join in celebrations or weddings. By staying more than just a few days; visitors can develop new friendships.



*Family tour guests joining in a village wedding!*

## WE RUN TOURS TO OTHER PARTS OF CAMBODIA TOO!



*On tour on the Tonle Sap Lake*

We regularly visit are: the jungle temple of Beng Mealea, The 10th Century Khmer Capital of Koh Ker and the Hindu site of Kbal Spean. All three sites can be visited on an exciting two day adventure; Koh Ker Explorer; staying in a remote village near Koh Ker.

We are running occasional trips to the spectacular mountain temple of Preah Vihear. It is a 2 day expedition to one of the wonders of Cambodia with an opportunity to visit some of the Khmer Rouge military sites.

Other areas of interest are Sambor Pre Kuk and Santuk near Kompong Thom (3 hours by road) and Banteay Chhmar a huge and remote Temple to the north. It can be visited in 1 day; but it is best seen by taking our 2 day tour which allows more time.



## **GENERAL ADVICE AND INFORMATION**

For 4 to 7 day visit you will be able to see most of the main Temples of Angkor and some of the more remote sights. Most visitors are surprised at the size and complexity of these huge monuments. The whole of the ancient city of Angkor covered well over 100 sq kms, with more than 100 sites. Those who stay only three days, often wish they had allowed more time!

### **Temple Passes**

You can get a 3 or 7 day Temple Pass to all the major sites and a few of the outlying ones. A 7 day pass leaves plenty of scope for relaxation in the afternoons when the light can too harsh for the best photography.

The temple pass prices are \$20 1 day, \$40 3 day and \$60 7 days. The pass allows unlimited access to all temples on the Angkor Park during opening hours (sunrise to 5 or 6pm) plus several outside e.g. Banteay Srey and Kbal Spean

### **Transport and Guides**

Most people us taxi or tuk tuks hired by the day. The drivers will wait while you visit the temples. Our guides are experts in the Architecture, Khmer history and culture and will enhance your visit and bring the stones of Angkor to life!

Please note: tour guides are not stationed at the temples; they have to be booked in advance.

### **Accommodation**

Siem Reap has a broad range of Accommodation from Budget to 5 star luxury. Mid range hotels in the \$30 to \$60 range represent best value; some even have swimming pools. We can assist with getting accommodation within any budget.

## **WEATHER**

Cambodia has a tropical monsoon climate with two distinct seasons. The dry season starts from November to April. Hardly any rain falls and skies are usually clear. Humidity is much lower, evenings are pleasant and in December and January early mornings sometimes feel a little chilly. It is still very hot during the day with temperatures averaging 28-30o Celsius or mid 80s Fahrenheit. By February and certainly March; temperatures can rise to the mid 30s Celsius 95oF.

The Rainy Season: May to November can bring many rewards. Although the weather is humid; the temples and countryside look quite stunning. The rains usually occur in the afternoons and evenings and take the form of intense thunderstorms The temperatures are a little lower 28 —32 o C but the humidity can make it. feel much hotter.

## **MONEY**

The riel must be the only currency named after a fish! The almost worthless riel is caught by the million and used for Prahok (fish paste) and cattle feed.

Take ample amounts of US Dollars. They are the most widely used currency in Cambodia. It really isn't worth changing local currency when you arrive, as riels are just used for small change

There are no coins; just low value notes; 100r = \$0.025. Virtually all businesses convert riels at the following rate \$1=4000r, For example when changing dollars and are expecting \$1.25 in change you would get \$1+1000r(25c)

Some areas near Thailand use Thai Baht, though you would get a worse exchange rate US\$ Travelers cheques are the best ones to have. Commission rates for T/Cs are 2- 4%. In practice the 4000r to the dollar rate is still being used for convenience

**ATMs** are Becoming widespread They all dispense cash in US \$ the ANZ royal Bank brought the first ATMs to Phnom Penh in November 2005; many branches of Canadia and Acleda banks now have them. There ATMs in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap Airports. Also some convenience stores U Care pharmacies and a few Caltex filling stations have ATMs.

The ATM network is expanding rapidly; but unreliable electric supplies and lack of internet in rural areas mean that its going to take many years for full coverage; so don't expect ATMs outside of tourist areas.

It is also possible to get cash on Visa card. Use the right bank and you can get 0% commission. There are limits to the amount of cash that can be withdrawn. Credit cards are becoming more accepted here; usually in large shops International Hotels. Although they are not supposed to, many charge up to 5% per transaction.

## **ELECTRIC SUPPLY**

The Voltage: is 220v AC with two pin Euro or Asian style sockets. There are no common standards; but universal adaptors will con with most plugs .

The reliability of supply in the main cities can be erratic; but power cuts are not usually common, In rural areas. mains electricity is non-existent,; some small towns and villages have generator power; but only between dusk and 9 or 10pm .

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

Visas can be obtained on entry to Cambodia at airports and many overland crossing points.

Tourist visas cost \$20 and are valid for one month. They can be renewed once for an additional month for approximately \$40 - \$45

**E visas** cost \$25 and are available online. These can be used on most land crossings including the popular Poipet route. They eliminate the Visa scams at that crossing. and reduce queuing time at Airports. Check the E Visa Web site for latest details.

**Visas for Malaysian and Singaporean** citizens are not required.

**Visas from Bangkok:** Getting a visa from the Cambodian Embassy in Bangkok is now inconvenient since it moved location well out of the city centre. As with some overland entry points they ask extra fees of \$5 for express service.

**Sri Lankan Citizens** need a letter of authorization from your Government to enter Cambodia. You will be refused entry if you do not have this document.

## **FLIGHTS TO AND FROM CAMBODIA**

Flights are best booked well in advance. Most people fly through Bangkok, Seoul, Singapore or Kuala Lumpur. Costs vary a lot with the best deals in secured well in advance. Holiday times like Christmas and Easter are much more expensive and are often booked up weeks in advance.

### **Flying From Malaysia, Singapore & Thailand**

There are some good deals to Siem Reap through Air Malaysia via Kuala Lumpur International Airport KLIA. For International flights using Malaysian Airlines you

can check in at KL Central Station which is the city Transport hub. The fast KLIA Express takes less than 30 mins and cost 35MYR

### **Budget Airlines**

Air Asia and Jet Star Asia are now operating from Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Bangkok at discount prices. This has significantly reduced the cost of a short break from Malaysia and Singapore! To get the best price it is best to book well in advance. A new Low Cost terminal KLCC for Air Asia opened at the end of May 06.  
•There are direct buses to KLCC from KL Sentral Station: 1h 15mins for 9MYR.

### **Flying via Bangkok**

You can fly direct to Siem Reap from Bangkok using Bangkok Airways costs to Siem Reap are not as competitive as flying to Phnom Penh. Bangkok International Suvarnabhumi Airport opened in September 2006; This is 30kms from the old Don Muang Airport which is still being used for some domestic flights.

There is a hefty \$25 departure tax from Cambodian Airports for international flights and a variable rate for internal. This applies to PP to Siem Reap (Flights are approx \$60-\$70 + tax)

There is a departure tax from Cambodian Airports for internal flights. Phnom Penh to Siem Reap is \$7

### **OVERLAND TRAVEL WITHIN CAMBODIA**

Now that the roads are improving; travel by bus on main routes are now more reliable and faster. Off the main roads there is little or no public transport. Only a few percent of Cambodian secondary roads are paved. Travel to most places in the Dry Season is possible; but in the rainy season some routes become difficult or impassable.

...  
**Buses from Siem Rep to Phnom Penh** take around 5 - 6 hours and cost between \$5 and \$12. There is usually a 1/2 hour stop in Kompong Thom or Skun (depending on bus Co)

The main Bus station is 3 KMs east of town. It is a very chaotic entry to Siem Reap. Some of the better bus companies have now moved to their own facilities. Mekong Express and some other bus companies have better organized facilities elsewhere. Please let us know which Company you are using to assist us in your pick up.

...  
**Taxis to and from Phnom Penh** cost \$60 for the journey which takes 4-5 Hours  
Taxi: Departures are flexible; allow 4.5 hrs for the journey .

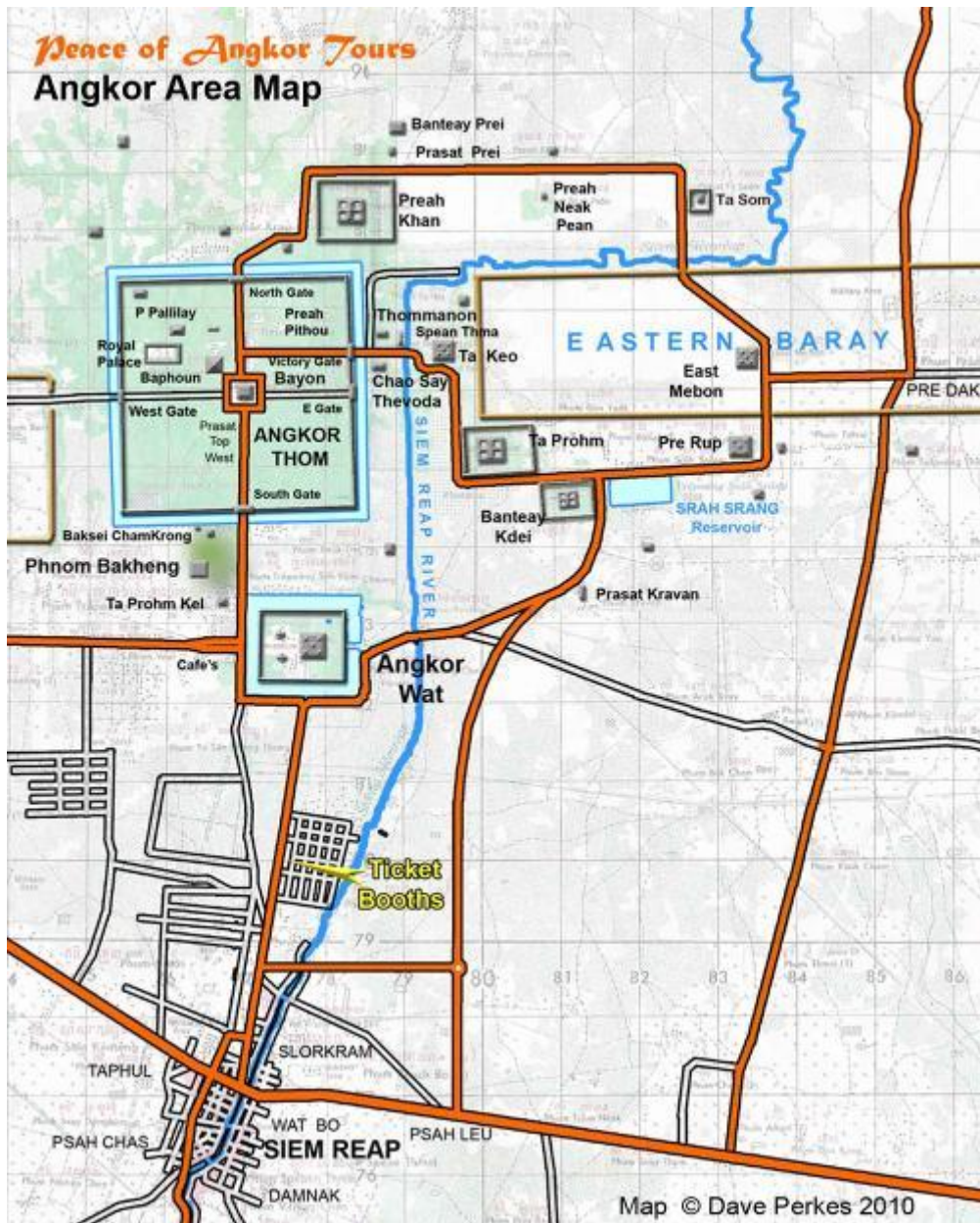
Up to 4 passengers. An English Speaking driver will cost \$10 more

It is also possible to go by road or take a boat to Battambang and continue to Phnom Penh by bus; allow 2 days to do this

...  
**Fast ferries** do the PP SR run in around 6 hours. Boats are running daily but due to competition by the buses there are less of them. The boats have a car service to pick up passengers from their hotels in Siem Reap 5:30 am. The quality of serves have deteriorated to the point where they are not very reliable or comfortable .



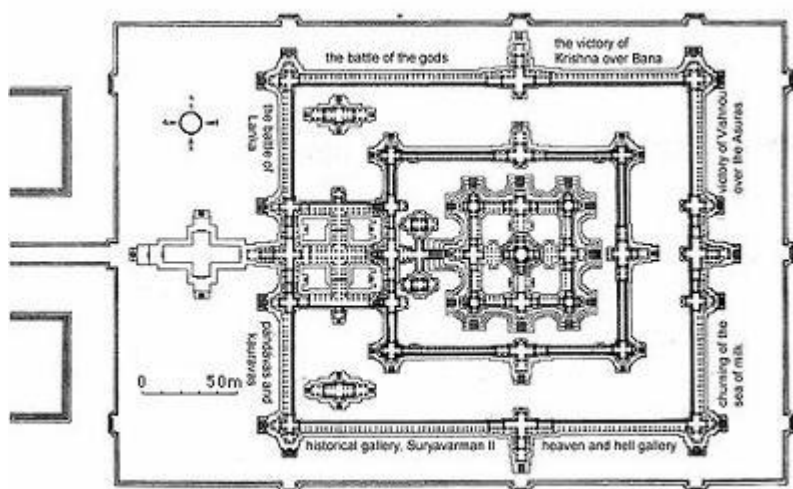
## Angkor Area Map



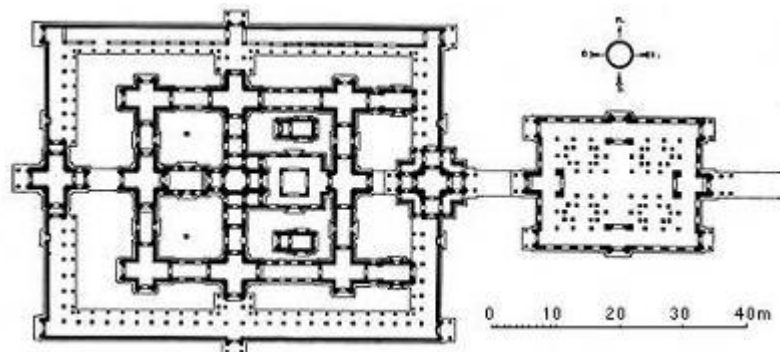


# ANGKOR TEMPLE PLANS

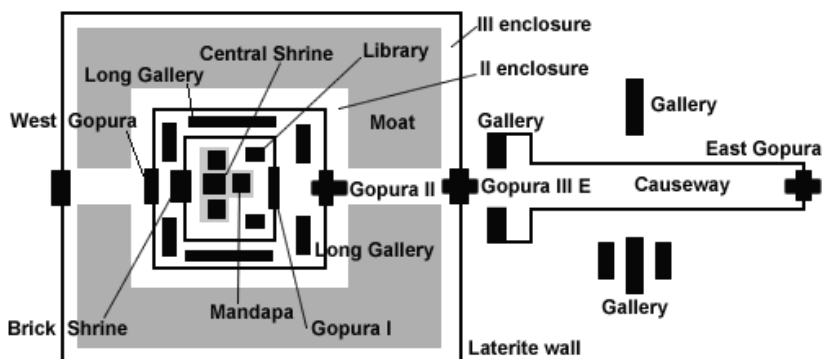
## Angkor Wat Central Sanctuary



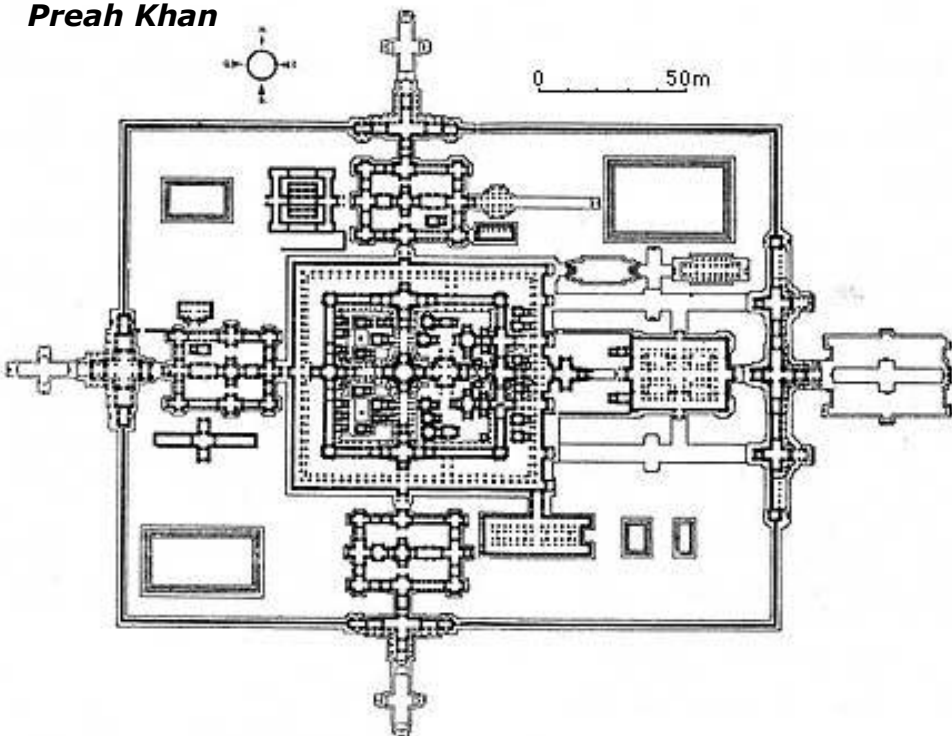
## Banteay Kdei



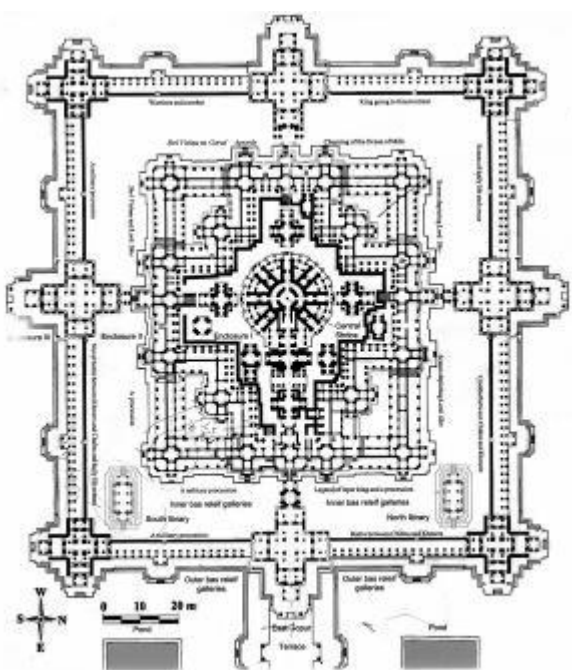
## Banteay Srey



***Preah Khan***



***The Bayon***



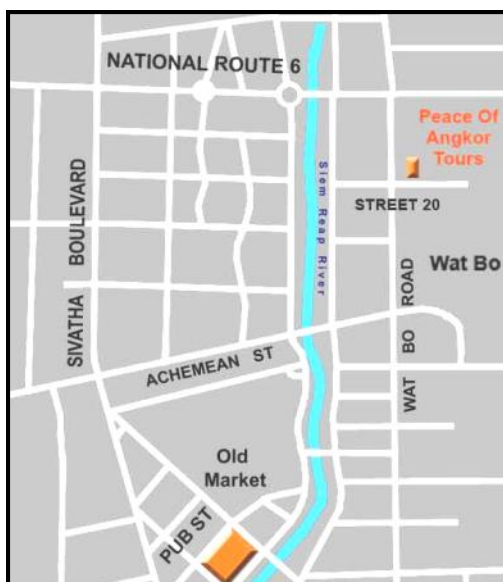


## *Peace Of Angkor Tours*

**WE TAKE YOU TO PLACES  
NORMAL TOURS DO NOT GO!**

Fully customised itineraries including:  
Koh Ker - Preah Kahn Kompong Svay  
Preah Vihear - Sambor Pre Kuk ruins  
Kratie, Mekong River and Dolphins  
Tonle Sap Lake & Bird watching tours

**Experience the photographic  
adventure of a lifetime!**



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[www.peaceofangkor.com](http://www.peaceofangkor.com)

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