

EXPLORE!

Cambodian Trails - Angkor and Beyond
12 days

Cambodia - Trip code TWC



Cambodian Trails - Angkor and Beyond

The iconic temples of Angkor lie scattered over a vast area surrounded by jungle. Trekking peacefully from temple to temple on footpaths known to few, we escape the crowds and see them in a different light. In Cambodia's far eastern province of Mondulkiri, we hike to waterfalls and tribal villages and enjoy the unique experience of a day walking with elephants at the Elephant Valley Project.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Angkor** - Temple to temple walks exploring this vast, jungle-engulfed site
- ★ **Elephant Valley Project** - Walk with a herd of 'retired' elephants and support this unique project
- ★ **Phnom Penh** - Explore the capital on foot and uncover the dark history of the Khmer Rouge
- ★ **Mondulkiri** - Walking in this far eastern province of jungle and minority tribes
- ★ **Irrawaddy dolphins** - Cruise to spot endangered freshwater dolphins

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Easy

Suitable for most people in good health, these easy walks are predominantly on good paths, at low altitude and on undemanding terrain. Previous walking or trekking experience is not necessary.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip Phnom Penh; afternoon walking tour

Our adventure begins in Phnom Penh, the Cambodian capital since the mid-15th century. Lying at the confluence of the Sap, Mekong and Bassac Rivers, the city is an engaging mix of tree-lined boulevards, colonial villas and vibrant markets that reflect the country's fascinating mix of ancient and colonial traditions. After a chance to settle in, this afternoon we take a leisurely introductory walking tour, beginning at the Wat Phnom temple and wandering down past the old Post Office building and Kandal market towards the riverside, where we can enjoy a drink in one of the many bars. Our walking tour today covers around 2 kilometres and is expected to take approximately one-and-a-half hours.



Accommodation: Asia Tune Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Visit the Royal Palace, 'Killing Fields' and markets

In the morning we plan to visit the Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda. Built by the French in 1866, this spectacular pagoda-style structure is without doubt one of Phnom Penh's most impressive sights. Our next stop is the energetic chaos of the Old Russian Market, renowned for its textiles, jewellery and antiques, it's also a good place to stop for some lunch. We then continue with a more sombre visit to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the 'Killing Fields' of Choeung Ek which are a gruesome reminder of life under the Khmer Rouge. Between 1975 and 1978 somewhere close to 17000 men, women and children were murdered here and its memorial stupa, a huge glass tower filled with human skulls, is a stark reminder of the scale of Pol Pot's atrocities. You should be aware that by their very nature Tuol Sleng and the 'Killing Fields' can be a distressing visit for some people.



Accommodation: Asia Tune Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Boat cruise on Mekong River to Koh Dach island

We set out this morning on a sort cruise on Tonle Sap and Mekong Rivers with a panoramic view of Phnom Penh along the way. Our destination is the riverine island of Koh Dach which translates as 'Silk Island' and is named after the many silk weavers who live here. Disembarking at Koh Dach market, we will take a small walking tour on the island and discover its silk weaving cottage industry, visiting artisans at work in their houses. This charming, secluded and sleepy island is small at just 30 square kilometres in size and offers a peaceful contrast to the bustle of Phnom Penh. We can enjoy some traditional Cambodian food at one of the local restaurants before catching the same boat back to the city.



Accommodation: Asia Tune Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive to Sen Monorom via rainforest and waterfalls

Departing the capital this morning we head first for the provincial capital of Kompong Cham, passing through a landscape of vast rubber plantations originally established by the French. Arriving in time for lunch, we take a walk down to the riverfront to visit the Bamboo Bridge, before continuing by road on to the 11th century sandstone temple of Wat Nokor. After a chance to explore the temple, we drive to Mondulkiri province in the far east of Cambodia. With thickly forested mountains, waterfalls and lush rolling hills, this region is one of the most sparsely populated in the country. Over 80% of the population here come from animist hill tribes with the majority being Phnong, who live off the land, still practicing shifting 'slash and burn' cultivation. They also plant rice, fruit trees, coffee, rubber and cashew nuts and hunt wild animals. Our base for the next three nights is the town of Sen Monorom, the only settlement of any note in the entire province.



Accommodation: Mondukiri Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Walking with elephants at the Elephant Valley Project

Today we will visit the Elephant Valley Project, a unique initiative which takes care of several herds of retired, former working elephants and rehabilitates them back into their natural habitat. We will be able to enjoy a concept the project describes as 'walking with the herd', getting up close to the elephants as they roam free in their natural habitat. We expect to accompany the elephants for five to six hours, walking across open grassland and through the forests, taking in the views across the Otey River. Accompanying the elephants to enjoy a cooling wash in a nearby waterfall is often the highlight of a visit. Today's walk, in the company of elephants, is expected to take approximately five to six hours.



Accommodation: Mondukiri Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Hiking in the forests of Andong Kraloeng

To the west of Sen Monorom lie the forests of Andong Kraloeng, the setting for today's walk which is the most challenging of the holiday, due to the jungle terrain and possibility of mud if it has been raining. Driving first to the village of Veal Amerik (named after the Americans based here during the Vietnam war), the trail then leads us into a forest and towards a steep hill covered in towering clumps of Sra Lao trees and strangler vines that are home to black-shanked douc monkeys, giant squirrels and great hornbills. Following lunch at the Leng Kho Waterfall, we return to Veal Amerik this afternoon and drive back to the village of Andong Kraloeng, for the chance to swim at the Leng Kao falls. We return to the hotel via the Seima Protected Forest. Today's walk is expected to take approximately three hours but can be extended depending on the wishes and abilities of the group.



Accommodation: Mondukiri Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Drive to Kratie; explore the villages on Koh Trong island

Today we head for the banks of the Mekong and the town of Kratie, home to a group of rare Irrawaddy dolphins. We visit nearby Koh Trong island, an extremely peaceful place where we walk and observe local village life up close, visit a pagoda and a small floating village. There's also an option to rent bicycles. Returning to Kratie in the late afternoon, there may be time to walk up the many stone steps leading to Phnom Sambok, a temple occupying a prominent hilltop to the north of the town from where we can enjoy a panoramic view over the surrounding countryside. Today's walk on Koh Trong is for around two-and-a-half hours.



Accommodation: Oudom Sambath Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Early morning dolphin watching by boat; drive to Siem Reap

Kratie is sprinkled with an interesting collection of old French and Khmer style buildings, but the main attraction are the dolphins. Early this morning we take to the waters of the Mekong in small boats to search for some of the last freshwater dolphins left in the Mekong. Later this morning we drive (around six hours) to the town of Siem Reap, gateway to the stunning temples of Angkor.



Accommodation: Hollywood Angkor Boutique Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Walk at Kbal Spean; visit to Banteay Srei, Biodiversity Conservation Centre and Land-mine Museum

This morning we enjoy a gently ascending walk through the shade of the forest on the south western slopes of the Kulen Hills to the riverbed carvings of Kbal Spean. The site consists of a series of 11th century stone carvings of lingams (the phallic symbol of the Hindu god Shiva) and various Hindu deities, carved into the sandstone of the riverbed and banks. It is commonly known as the 'River of a Thousand Lingas' and has a very tranquil atmosphere. Our next destination is the nearby Centre for the Conservation of Biodiversity, Cambodia's first nature conservation and endangered wildlife rescue centre where we may see a number of the mammals that inhabit Cambodia's rainforest including the Pangolin, Palm Civet and Leopard Cat. Our next Angkorian site today is the temple at Banteay Srei known for the intricacy of its pink sandstone carvings. We end the day with a visit to the Cambodian Land-mine Museum, where education and support are provided for dozens of children whose bodies, hearts and minds have been affected by land-mines. Today's walk is expected to take approximately three hours.



Accommodation: Hollywood Angkor Boutique Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Temple to temple walking at Angkor

Today we have a full day to explore the temples of Angkor on foot. Following in the footsteps of the intrepid explorers of old along jungle pathways, we will escape the tourist crowds and approach the temples with a different perspective. It's the perfect way to take in the rich archaeological majesty of the area. We begin at dawn with Ta Prohm, the exquisitely ethereal 'Tomb Raider' temple that has been part consumed by the jungle, before we move on to Ta Nei and Ta Keo, one of Angkor's great temple-mountains and one of the first built entirely of sandstone. Following jungle pathways, we negotiate our way around the fortified city of Angkor Thom and stroll along the massive stone walls towards the city's spectacular centrepiece, the Bayon. One of the architectural gems of Angkor, this maze of corridors, temples and giant stone faces is also home to some of the finest bas reliefs anywhere in the city. Today's temple to temple walking is expected to take approximately five to six hours.



Accommodation: Hollywood Angkor Boutique Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Sunrise walking at Angkor Wat; free afternoon in Siem Reap

Early this morning we will drive to the magnificent complex of Angkor Wat, to watch the warming glow of the rising sun bring life to what is without doubt the most breathtaking of all the jungle temple sites. Entering through the east gate on foot, we then enjoy an extended visit walking around a site that covers several square kilometres. Originally built as a funerary temple for Suryavarman II, in honour of Vishnu, it represents for many the pinnacle of Khmer art and architecture and little can truly prepare you for the initial sight of this stunning setting in the early morning light. This afternoon has then been left free to continue exploring more of the temples at your leisure or you may wish to spend some time in the pleasant town of Siem Reap which has a lively market and many shopping opportunities.



Accommodation: Hollywood Angkor Boutique Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Trip ends in Siem Reap

Our tour ends in Siem Reap after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

Walking grade

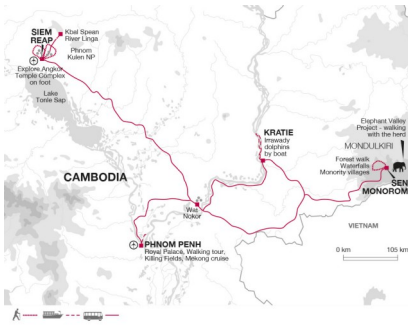
Easy

Trek details

We walk on 7 days with walks ranging from 1.5 to 5.5 hours. Many of the walks also involve sightseeing within these timings. In Mondulkiri there is a maximum elevation gain of 300m and we walk through jungle where paths may be slippery. Elsewhere the walking terrain is flat and going is easy although you should be prepared for heat and humidity. We have graded the walking as easy.

Max walking altitude (m)

900



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 11



Transport

Bus
Boat



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Trek
Guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel
3 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Cambodia Holidays & Tours

Climate

Cambodia is a hot and tropical country, being hottest in April and coolest in January (still high 20s). Although rainfall is at its maximum in October, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap receive very little rain compared to the coastal areas, and when it does rain it tends to be in the form of sporadic mid afternoon downpours. There is normally very little rain between December and March.

Time difference to GMT

+7

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Buddhism

Language

Khmer

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Phnom Penh - Sunset cruise US\$ 10 Siem Reap - Scenic helicopter flight over Angkor temples from US\$ 135-\$260; Apsara traditional Khmer dance and dinner US\$ 22, Tonle Sap boat optional US\$ 14; cookery class US\$ 12; National Museum Culture Show US\$ 12 (limited availability during low season May - September)

Clothing

You will need loose fitting, comfortable clothes for hot, humid conditions. Take a warmer layer (e.g. lightweight fleece) for evenings in Sen Monorom. A sunhat, long trousers and long-sleeved shirt are essential for protection from the sun. Please dress respectfully when visiting active temples and religious sites, covering your torso, shoulders and legs to below the knee. Take a swimming costume for the jungle waterfalls and some of our hotels have swimming pools.

Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight worn-in walking boots or shoes plus trainers and/or sandals for travelling and other sightseeing. Bring thick socks to wear whilst trekking in Mondulkiri as if it has rained there may be leeches. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. We recommend a soft holdall style bag for your main luggage as being the most practical.

Equipment

Bring a high factor sun cream, sunglasses, water bottle and a torch for use in power cuts and in dimly lit streets at night. Binoculars are useful for both wildlife spotting and looking at temple carvings.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly please allow about US\$40.

Country Information

Cambodia Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£6

Dinner price

£10.00 - 12.00

Beer price

£1.3

Water price

£0.6

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Riel.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

In Cambodia, US\$ is the most commonly used currency (small denomination notes are easier to use).

Where To Exchange

Large towns.

ATM Availability

There are ATMs in most towns and cities.

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are accepted in some large shops and restaurants in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Travellers Cheques

They can be hard to change outside of Siem Reap and Phnom Penh; we recommend them for emergencies only.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Your simple guesthouse in Sen Monorom has en-suite shower room with hot water and air conditioning. It has no restaurant but is excellently located in the town where there is a large choice of eateries.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Cambodia: A single visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, USA & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival. A passport sized photograph for immigration will also be required. Alternatively you can now obtain an e-visa prior to departure from www.mfaic.gov.kh All visa information should be confirmed with the relevant consulate.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Maximum altitude (m)

900

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, diphtheria and polio. Consult your GP regarding tablets advised for malaria. Though not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

