

# EXPLORE!



BEST SELLER

DISCOUNTED

## Heart of Cambodia

CAMBODIA - TRIP CODE CD

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

---

This two week overland tour is an exploratory trip that delves deep into Cambodia, a country rarely explored outside of the iconic temples of Angkor. On this journey we meet locals in our village homestay in the countryside, motor upriver through the steamy jungles of the Cardamom Mountains and relax on the deserted white-sand beaches of Koh Rong Island. In between exploring the ancient temples of Angkor, we also visit two charity projects in Siem Reap that take fascinating and innovative approaches in tackling some of Cambodia's modern-day challenges.





**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 12  
Lunch: 2  
Dinner: 3

**TRIP STAFF**  
Explore Tour Leader  
Boat Crew  
Driver(s)  
Local Guide(s)

**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Boat

**ACCOMMODATION**  
5 nights simple bungalow  
1 nights simple homestay  
6 nights standard hotel

**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate

**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join trip in Siem Reap, the gateway to the iconic Angkor temple complex

Arrive in Siem Reap and check-in to the hotel, where the rest of the day is at leisure.

Siem Reap is the modern gateway to the ancient temples of Angkor, and while undoubtedly people flock here for the temples, the town itself is well worth exploring. Just a small village when the French 're-discovered' Angkor in the 19th century, Siem Reap has now ballooned in size to cater for every type of tourist and their budget. An evening stroll along its grid-like streets uncovers a lively foodie scene with restaurants and street stalls to cater for every palate, as well as a host of spas offering a traditional Khmer massage. The night market is a great place to haggle for a bargain, and then of course there is 'Pub Street' - a pedestrianised melee of neon lights, street performers, bars, restaurants and people. Not for everybody, but for most it's worth a visit for a chance to soak up Siem Reap's vibrant atmosphere.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Motherhome Inn (or similar)

**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE**



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

---

## DAY 2 - Explore the jungle temples of Angkor, watch the sunset at Pre Rup

This morning we visit the beautiful Angkor Wat for sunrise - the best known and most breathtaking of all the sights and a highlight of any visit to Angkor. Originally built as a funerary temple for Suryavarman II in honour of Vishnu, the temple is unique as it faces west - symbolically the direction of death. It is a very grand and imposing structure but its most stunning features are the extensive and intricately carved bas reliefs that stretch throughout the galleries and inner temples. Here we have the chance to enjoy a monk's blessing. This afternoon we continue our exploration with a visit to the temples of King Jayavarman VII, reputedly Angkor's greatest king. The fortified city of Angkor Thom which he had built at the end of the 12th century is enclosed by a square wall eight metres high with five 20 metre high monumental gates decorated with stone elephant trunks. Originally the moat was said to be inhabited by crocodiles and each gate was protected by huge statues of 54 different gods. The city contains another of Angkor's true gems - The Bayon. Not nearly as impressive as Angkor Wat from a distance, The Bayon is nevertheless incredible for its maze of corridors, gothic style towers and magical central temples with 1200 metres of the finest bas reliefs depicting scenes of everyday life in 12th Century Cambodia. Our day draws to close as we walk to Phimeanakas, located in the middle of the old Royal Palace area, and to the Terrace of the Elephants and the Leper King.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Motherhome Inn (or similar)

Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

## DAY 3 - Morning cycle to Hero Rats project and Re-Hash Trash. Free afternoon for further exploration

A change of pace this morning sees us setting off on two wheels, leisurely cruising along the quiet back streets and having a chance to witness the daily life of the locals, as we cycle away from the main tourist areas. Our first stop on this morning's cycle is the APOPO Visitor Centre, and here we learn of the fantastic work being done to clear the still-active land mines from the surrounding towns and villages. Cambodia is thought to have the highest ratio of mine amputees per capita in the world, with some 6

million mines believed to still be in the ground. APOPO have taken a unique approach to mine-clearance, training up so called 'Hero Rats' to sniff out landmines with their incredible sense of smell. The rats are too light to set off the pressure-activated mines and are trained to sniff only explosives rather than metal, thus working much faster than a conventional metal detector. We spend some time learning about the fascinating work being done here, along with witnessing a demonstration and having the chance to meet the surprisingly cuddly critters.

Next we cycle over to Re-Hash Trash; another fascinating initiative that has taken a novel approach to try and tackle the devastating effect plastic litter has had on Cambodia. This social enterprise has been set up to clear plastic from the streets and then transform it into anything from pieces of art to re-useable useful items like placemats and coasters. It also works to educate young people in the villages to provide them with transferable skills they can utilise when moving into adulthood.

We have the opportunity to try and create something for ourselves, before continuing our cycle through backstreets and alongside canals back to our hotel, where the rest of the afternoon is free.

The total amount of cycling is approximately four hours including the stops, covering a distance of 20 kilometres which is almost entirely flat.

This afternoon there is the option to further explore the Angkor temple complex. Please note an additional Angkor pass will need to be purchased which will cover you for two further days of exploration - \$25 per person



ACCOMMODATION:  
Motherhome Inn (or similar)



Grade: Standard Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

#### **DAY 4 - Free morning in Siem Reap. Afternoon drive to Sambor Prei Kuk homestay**

We have another free morning to explore some more of Angkor's extensive temples, or perhaps experience a Khmer massage, partake in a monk's blessing or just sip a French coffee whilst soaking up Siem Reap's infectious atmosphere.

After lunch we leave the city behind, travelling for some time alongside the great Tonle Sap Lake as we drive to our homestay in the village of Sambor Prei Kuk. On arrival we will meet our host family and share dinner with them, sampling a variety of tasty Khmer dishes and learning a little more of traditional life in

Cambodia - a country that still relies heavily on sustenance farming outside its two main cities.

We overnight in a traditional Khmer wooden stilt house, staying with our host family. the accomodation comprises of twin-share rooms spread across a few of the village houses, with western-style toilets located in each house. All pillows, bedding and mosquito nets are provided, but showering opportunities will be limited - an Asian 'bucket' style shower is avaiable in most houses.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Sambor Preikuk Homestay (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Homestay**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER**

---

**DAY 5 - Visit the ruins of Sambor Prei Kuk before driving to Phnom Penh**

After a freshly prepared breakfast we bid goodbye to our hosts to explore the nearby ruins of Sambor Prei Kuk. This UNESCO World Heritage Site pre-dates the Angkor period, it is thought that some of the earliest buildings were constructed in the 7th century during the Chenla Kingdom. These red-brick temples, enveloped on all sides by leafy forests are each dedicated to the three Hindu gods Shiva, Bramha and Vishnu. Each temple features its own style of intricate carvings set into the sandstone, and the complex feels quite different to the Angkor temples we have visited just the day before.

After some time to appreciate the peaceful surroundings of Sambor Prei Kuk, we turn back onto the main road and head for the capital, Phnom Penh.

Located on the Mekong River the city has been the capital since 1440s. It is now a lively city with many French colonial buildings, busy markets, art galleries, temples and museums. This evening is free to explore this charming French colonial city - perhaps take a stroll alongside the Mekong stopping for street-food, or sip cocktails on the terrace of the FCC - Foreign Correspondent's Club.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Home Chic Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

## **DAY 6 - Explore Phnom Penh's Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda. Afternoon visit to the Killing Fields**

We spend the morning visiting the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda, a palace as equally impressive yet far quieter than its namesake in Bangkok. We continue onto Wat Phnom, the city's glittering centre piece and then the National Museum, a beautifully ornate building that houses a fascinating array of Khmer architecture.

After lunch we stop at the infamous 'Killing Fields' of Choeung Ek. Here we find the huge glass tower filled with human skulls, acting as both a memorial piece and a sombre reminder of the scale of Pol Pot's atrocities). We'll also visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, also known as S-21 (a High School which became the Khmer Rouge's main torture and interrogation centre). You should be aware that many people find Tuol Sleng and the 'Killing Fields' quite an emotional place to visit.



ACCOMMODATION:

Home Chic Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

## **DAY 7 - Drive and then motor boat to our Eco lodge in Chi Phat, Cardamom Mountains**

We drive out of Phnom Penh this morning as we head west into lush jungles of Koh Kong province. On arrival at Andong Tuek we transfer from road to river as we continue our journey by boat, cruising along the Preak Piphot River upstream to our final destination, the village of Chi Phat.

Nestled in the south-eastern corner of the Cardamom mountains, Chi Phat is a small palm-lined village embracing an eco-tourism initiative to bring the beautiful surroundings of the area to visitors in a sustainable and responsible way. The area is a nature-lovers paradise, Chi Phat hosts an incredible selection of flora and fauna, including the largest herd of wild elephants found in Asia.

After lunch we set off for a short nature walk to explore our surroundings, where there will also be the chance to take a refreshing dip in the Chhay Chrey rapids. For those feeling energetic, we can continue up to bold mountain for the one hour walk to the peak in time for sunset.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Sun Bear Bungalows (or similar)

Grade: Simple Bungalow



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

---

### **DAY 8 - Sunrise river cruise to spot birds and wildlife. Optional walking and swimming in the afternoon**

Rising early this morning we take a motorised sampan (a type of hollowed-out canoe) down the Piphot River toward the Stung Prat tributary. Enjoying our packed-breakfasts as the sun rises, we cut the engines and climb into traditional row boats to start our bird watching, with only nature's chorus as our soundtrack. At this time in the morning there is often mist rolling across the river, further adding to the atmosphere. Over 450 species of bird are found in this area, and this morning we hope to be able to spot eagles, hornbills, or the endemic Siamese partridge, along with macaques, gibbons and silver langurs. We take a break at the Island Lodge shelter where we can take a dip in the river before returning back to Chi Phat.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure, with options to explore the village further, enjoy a short trek in the surrounding jungles or hire bicycles.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Sun Bear Bungalows (or similar)

Grade: Simple Bungalow



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

---

### **DAY 9 - Leave Koh Kong Province and drive to Sihanoukville. Ferry to Koh Rong Island**

Departing the wilds of the Cardamoms this morning, we leave the jungle by river before driving to the lively coastal town of Sihanoukville. From here we board a public ferry to take the 45 minute transfer to the idyllic Koh Rong Island. We aim to arrive on the island in the early afternoon, where the rest of the day is free to explore our new surroundings or relax on the palm-fringed beaches.

Our accommodation here consists of a number of picturesque thatched bungalows set back from the sand, along with a beach-front restaurant, bar and a selection of hammocks to relax in.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Palm Beach Bungalow Resort (or similar)

Grade: Simple Bungalow



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

### **DAY 10 - A free day to relax on the beaches of Koh Rong Island**

Located 25 kilometres off of Cambodia's coastline, the sleepy island of Koh Rong feels far further away from the high rise hotels and lively nightclubs of Sihanoukville. By contrast, Koh Rong has no cars, no roads and just four villages, with the island comprising of a jungle-clad interior enveloped by white-sand beaches. More guesthouses are starting to pop up along the island's coastline as word of Koh Rong's beauty spreads, but today the island still offers a little slice of paradise away from the tourist masses. The day has been left free to relax on the beach and swim in the warm turquoise waters.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Palm Beach Bungalow Resort (or similar)

Grade: Simple Bungalow



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

### **DAY 11 - A further free day on Koh Rong. Optional snorkelling or boat trip**

Today is another free day. There are a number of excursions available including a hike to the nearby



village, a boat trip around the island with opportunities to swim and snorkel, or a fishing trip. Alternatively snorkels and masks are available to hire should you wish to snorkel in the tropical waters in front of the resort.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Palm Beach Bungalow Resort (or similar)



**Grade: Simple Bungalow**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

## **DAY 12 - Ferry and drive back to Phnom Penh. Free afternoon in the capital**

We leave Koh Rong this morning as we travel back to the capital, Phnom Penh. We catch a morning ferry back to the mainland before continuing by road, where we hope to arrive in the capital just after lunchtime. The remainder of the day is free, perhaps stocking up some last minute souvenirs at the eclectic 'Central Market'. We end our last night in Cambodia with a visit to the National Museum to witness a show at the incredible Plae Pakka Theatre performed by the Cambodia Living Arts Association. The skilled performers bring to life stories of Cambodia's history and culture through their traditional dance, costumes and acting.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Home Chic Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Standard Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

## DAY 13 - Trip ends in Phnom Penh

The trip ends in Phnom Penh after breakfast.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

---

## Trip information

---

### Country information

#### Cambodia

##### 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	Plugs	Religion	Language
+7	2 Pin Round	Buddhism	Khmer

---

### Budgeting and packing

#### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

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)

Chi Phat - Khmer massage US \$ 10, bicycle rental US \$5

Koh Rong - Boat and fishing trip US\$ 10, Trek to waterfall (including lunch) US\$ 7.50

## Clothing

Shorts and bare arms are not permitted in certain temples. A waterproof jacket is a must.

## Footwear

Comfy shoes or trainers with a good grip. Trekking sandals are a good compromise.

## Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

Should consist of a main piece of baggage and a daypack. You may have to carry your baggage on and off boats so don't overload yourself. We recommend a soft bag or rucksack as there are some journeys where hard cases are impractical.

## Equipment

Bring a torch, towel, binoculars, sunglasses and a good quality mosquito repellent (50% Deet is ideal). An umbrella can be useful in tropical conditions for both rain and to protect from the sun.

## 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\$50.

### International Departure Taxes

Airport taxes in Phnom Penh/UK are US\$25.

## Cambodia

### 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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£6	£10.00 - 12.00	£1.3	£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      ATM Availability

Large towns.

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

We stay in a variety of accommodation on this trip, ranging from city-centre hotels to beach-front bungalows and village homestays. In the cities, hotels are of a good standard with en-suite facilities and are well-located for exploring on foot. The homestay in Sambor Prei Kuk is simple, with a number of twin rooms with access to a western-toilet and all bedding and mosquito nets are provided. The lodge in Chi Phat comprises of a number of simple en-suite thatched bungalows, and on Koh Rong island, the accommodation is again en-suite bungalows set-back just a few metres from the white sandy beach.

---

## 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.

## Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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](http://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](http://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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## 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 complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## **Cambodia**

### **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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.



**AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS**