



# Angkor Temples

Angkor was the capital city of the Khmer Empire, which flourished from approximately the 9th to 15th centuries. The city houses the magnificent Angkor Wat, one of Cambodia's popular tourist attractions.

The word Angkor is derived from the Sanskrit nagara, meaning "city". The Angkorian period began in AD 802, when the Khmer Hindu monarch Jayavarman II declared himself a "universal monarch" and "godking". It lasted until the late 14th century, falling under Ayutthayan suzerainty in 1351. A Khmer rebellion against Siamese authority resulted in the 1431 sacking of Angkor by Ayutthaya, causing its population to migrate south to Longvek.

The ruins of Angkor are located amid forests and farmland north of the Great Lake (Tonlé Sap) and south of the Kulen Hills, near modern-day Siem Reap city.

The temples of the Angkor area number over one thousand, ranging in scale from nondescript piles of brick rubble scattered through rice fields to the Angkor Wat, said to be the world's largest single religious monument. Many of the temples at Angkor have been restored, and together, they comprise the most significant site of Khmer architecture.

## Visiting the Temples

Passes are sold in one-day (\$37.50), three-day (\$62) and seven-day (\$72) blocks. You do not have to use them on consecutive days. A photo will be taken on the spot for the pass, free of charge.

Visiting hours are 5:00AM - 6:00PM. Angkor Wat closes at 6:00PM, Banteay Srey closes at 5:00PM and Kbal Spean at 3:00PM.

Always carry your ticket. It will be checked upon each park entry and at major temples. There is a significant fine for not possessing a valid ticket inside the park.

A regular admission ticket is not required to visit Phnom Kulen, Koh Ker, but there is a separate entrance fee of \$20, \$10, respectively.

Appropriate attire when visiting temples in Angkor Wat is long pants (covering the knee) and shirts that cover shoulders. Skirts, small shorts, tank tops, and other items of revealing clothing are not allowed within temple grounds. Visitors can and are frequently turned away from temples when wearing revealing clothing.



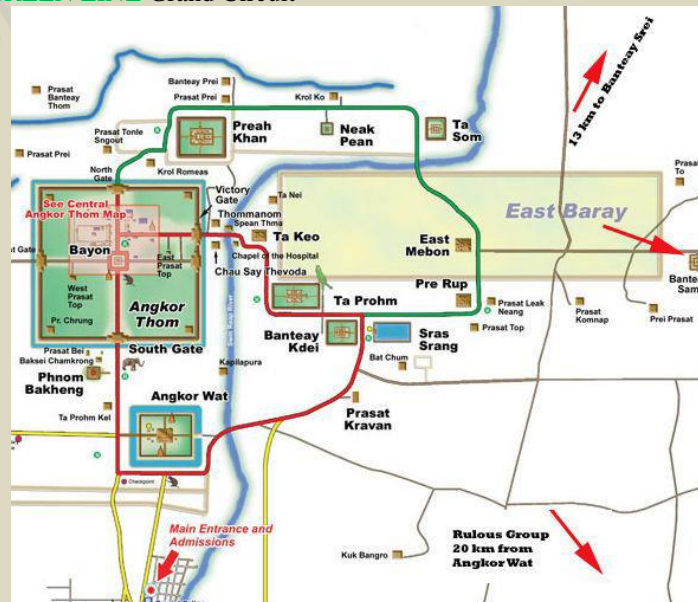
## Small Tour (1 day)

The Small Circuit takes in several of the major and minor temples in the area. Beginning at Angkor Wat and running for seventeen kilometers the circuit takes in the major elements of Angkor Thom, Ta Prohm, and Banteay Kdei, and some of the minor but interesting temples such as Bayon, The Terrace of the Leper King, The Terrace of the Elephants, the Twelve Prasats, Spean Thma and Sras Srang before returning to Angkor Wat.



## Big Tour (1 day)

The twenty-six kilometer Grand Circuit is an extension on the little circuit but taking in Preah Khan, Preah Neak Pean to the Eastern Mebon and the various monuments like Ta Som, Preah Rup, before returning to Angkor Wat. It is highly recommended for anyone spending three or more days in the complex. The Big Circuit encompasses a good representation of the rich variety of architecture here. **RED LINE** Small circuit. **GREEN LINE** Grand Circuit





## Bantey Srey, Kbal Spean ( 1 day)

Banteay Srei or Banteay Srey is a 10th-century Cambodian temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. Located in the area of Angkor, it lies near the hill of Phnom Dei, 25 km north-east of the main group of temples that once belonged to the medieval capitals of Yasodharapura and Angkor Thom. Banteay Srei is built largely of red sandstone. The buildings themselves are miniature in scale, unusually so when measured by the standards of Angkorian construction. These factors have made the temple extremely popular with tourists, and have led to its being widely praised as a "precious gem", or the "jewel of Khmer art."

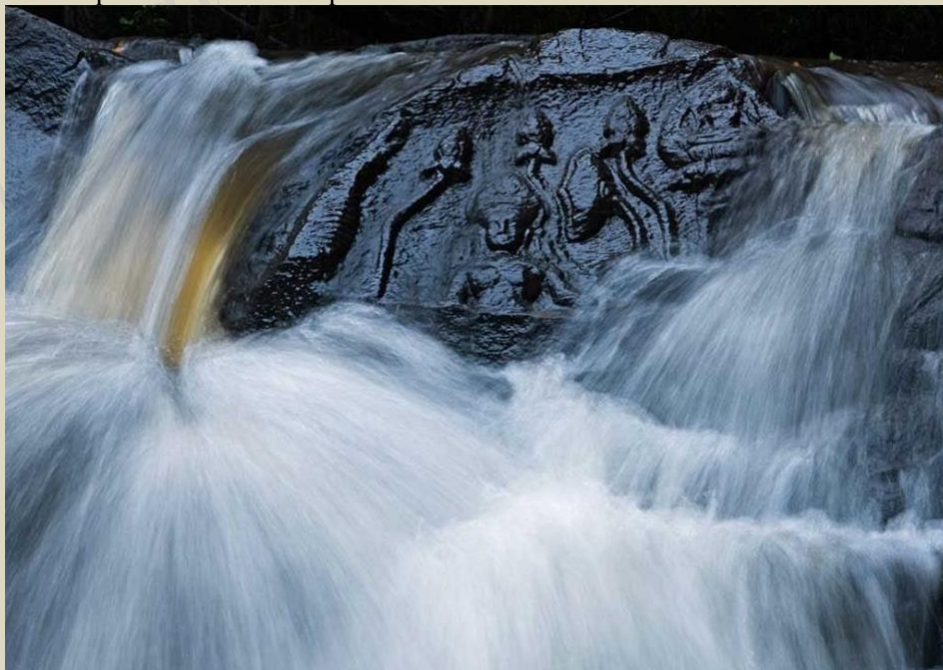


Banteay Srei on a dirt road. It takes from one to two hours to get there from the provincial town. The original River of Thousand Lingams, Kbal Spean is an intricately carved riverbed deep in the foothills of the Cambodian jungle. Lingams are phallic representations sacred to Brahmanism as symbols of fertility, and hundreds of them are carved into the rock here, as are several carvings of gods and animals above the small waterfall.

The area was rediscovered in 1969, when French researcher Jean Boulbet was shown the carvings by a local hermit.

A visit to Kbal Spean, a reference to the natural rock bridge, is one of the easiest ways to take a short jungle trek in the Angkor area. It is a 30- minute walk to the carvings through steamy forest and some curious rock formations. It is best to try to visit between July and December, at other times of year the river rapidly dries up.

The access to the trail is not permitted after 3:30pm. Food and drinks are available at the base of the trail.





## Phnom Kulen National Park (1 day)

A playground for locals, Phnom Kulen (literally Mountain of the Lychees) is a gorgeous day out. The main attraction is the waterfalls at the top of the Kulen Mountain. It is also a great picnic spot; well set up in Cambodian style with hammocks and shelters to keep you shaded from the sun. It's around 1.5-2 hours drive from Siem Reap and if you go all the way to the top by van or car, you need to get there early, as the road is one-way traffic only.

It is a very sacred site with multiple temples easily accessible. Two sites most noted are the Thousand Lingas at Kbal Spean, within the Kulen National Park site and Preah Ang Thom pagoda with its giant reclining Buddha. The area is a magnet to "kru khmer" (natural medicine doctors), and attracts people seeking blessings from its holy waters, particularly the potent life-giving waters at Kbal Spean, that are said to help couples conceive

### Admission and Hours

Phnom Kulen is within the Kulen National Park, which requires a separate ticket to the Angkor Archaeological Park. It's \$20 per person. If you're going to the top of the mountain by car, van or moto, you need to go up before 11am. The road is one-way traffic only and the traffic going up finishes early, so don't be late!



## Beng Mealea and Koh Ker (1 day)

Koh Ker not include on pass, fee \$10

Beng Mealea is a temple in the Angkor Wat period located 40 km east of the main group of temples at Angkor, on the ancient royal highway to Preah Khan Kompong Svay.

Koh Ker located at 120 km was the Capital of the Khmer Empire for a very brief period from the year 928 to 944 AD. In this short time; some very spectacular buildings and immense sculptures were built. Left to the jungle for nearly a millennium and mostly un-restored; this great archaeological site has been rarely visited until very recently. This remote area has no towns and only a small village in cleared forest nearby. The village of Sra Yong is a few kilometers away.



## Preah Vihear (1 day or 2 days, combined with Beng Meala and Koh Ker)

### Admission and Hours

Entrance fee \$10. A 4x4 or moto will be required to scale the steep road going up the hill, which you can arrange at the ticket office near the base of the hill; a 4x4 costs \$30 roundtrip and a moto \$10 roundtrip.

Prasat Preah Vihear is a Cambodian temple stunningly situated atop a 525-metre cliff in the Dângrêk Mountains, right across the border in northeastern Thailand. Preah Vihear is perched on a hilltop with a commanding view of its surroundings. Predating Angkor Wat by 100 years, the history of the temple/fortress is somewhat unclear, but it is known to be dedicated to the god Shiva and thought to have been constructed in the 11th century



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