



Temples of Angkor

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Why Go?

Welcome to heaven on earth. Angkor is the earthly representation of Mt Meru, the Mt Olympus of the Hindu faith and the abode of ancient gods. The temples are the perfect fusion of creative ambition and spiritual devotion. The Cambodian 'god-kings' of old each strove to better their ancestors in size, scale and symmetry, culminating in the world's largest religious building, Angkor Wat.

The temples of Angkor are a source of inspiration and national pride to all Khmers as they struggle to rebuild their lives after years of terror and trauma. Today, the temples are a point of pilgrimage for all Cambodians, and no traveller to the region will want to miss their extravagant beauty. Angkor is one of the world's foremost ancient sites, with the epic proportions of the Great Wall of China, the detail and intricacy of the Taj Mahal and the symbolism and symmetry of the pyramids, all rolled into one.

When to Go

Avoid the sweltering temperatures of March to May. November to February is the best time of year to travel, but this is no secret, so it coincides with peak season. And peak season really is mountainous in this day and age, where more than two million visitors a year descend on Angkor. The summer months of July and August can be a surprisingly rewarding time, as the landscape is emerald green, the moats overflowing with water and the moss and lichen in bright contrast to the grey sandstone.

Plan a dawn-to-dusk itinerary with a long, leisurely lunch to avoid the heat of the midday sun. Alternatively, plan to explore the temples through lunch, when it can be considerably quieter than the peak morning and afternoon visit times. However, it will be hot as hell and the light is not that conducive to photography.

The Angkor Wat International Half Marathon takes place annually in December, including the option of bicycle rides for those not into running.

