



POCKET

SIEM REAP & THE TEMPLES OF ANGKOR

TOP SIGHTS • LOCAL EXPERIENCES

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Welcome to Siem Reap & the Temples of Angkor

Siem Reap is the life-support system for the temples of Angkor – eighth wonder of the world – and a regional hotspot for wining and dining, shopping and schmoozing. Angkor is a place to be savoured, not rushed, and Siem Reap is the perfect base from which to plan your adventures.





Top Sights

Angkor Wat

The eighth wonder of the world. **p82**





Angkor Thom & Bayon

The enigmatic faces of the Avalokiteshvara. **p92**



Ta Prohm & the Small Circuit

The ultimate Indiana Jones fantasy. **p104**



Floating Villages of Tonlé Sap

Waterworld on the great lake. **p138**

Beng Mealea

A slumbering giant in the jungle. **p130**



Banteay Srei

The art gallery of Angkor. **p117**



FAR LEFT: JASON LANGLEY/GETTY IMAGES ©; JUP/GETTY IMAGES ©



Preah Khan

A fusion temple of Buddhism and Hinduism. **p111**



FAR LEFT: PIER GIORGIO CARLON/SHUTTERSTOCK ©; MARISHA, SL/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Phnom Kulen

The holy mountain of Mahendraparvata. **p122**

Koh Ker

A remote rival capital. **p126**



Siem Reap Activities

Adventures beyond the temples. **p32**



Roluos Temples

The early capital of Angkor. **p135**



Angkor National Museum

A showcase of Angkorian art. **p30**

Eating

Unlike the culinary colossi that are its neighbours Thailand and Vietnam, Cambodia is not that well known in international food circles. But Cambodian cuisine is also quite special, with a great variety of national dishes, some drawing on the cuisine of its neighbours, but all with a unique Cambodian twist.

The Staples

Freshwater fish forms a huge part of the Cambodian diet thanks to the natural phenomenon of Tonlé Sap lake. They come in every shape and size, from the giant Mekong catfish to tiny white-bait. Rice and *prahoc* – a fermented fish paste that your nose will soon recognise at a hundred paces – form the backbone of Khmer cuisine.

Cambodia in a Bowl

For the taste of Cambodia in a bowl, try the local *kyteow*, a

rice-noodle soup that will keep you going all day. Don't like noodles? Then try the *bobor* (rice porridge), a national institution, for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and best sampled with some fresh fish and a splash of ginger.

Unidentified Frying Objects

The fiercely omnivorous Cambodians find nothing strange in eating insects, algae, offal or fish bladders. They will dine on a duck foetus, brew up some brains or snack on some spiders. They

will peel live frogs to grill on a barbecue or down wine infused with snake to increase their virility. To the Khmers there is nothing 'strange' about anything that will sustain the body.

Best Khmer Fine Dining

Chanrey Tree Designer restaurant on the riverside offering contemporary Khmer cuisine. (p58)

Cuisine Wat Damnak Seasonal set menus are a sensation at this renowned restaurant. (p66)

Mahob Super-stylish restaurant that offers more than just the 'food' the name suggests. (p59)





JACKMALIPAN/GETTY IMAGES ©

Mie Cafe This understated wooden house is home to some of best fusion flavours in town. (p57)

Sugar Palm Chef Kethana's Cambodian flavours are world-famous after cooking with Gordon Ramsay. (p59)

Best Cambodian Eats

Amok It does what it says on the sign, dishing up some of the best *amok* (baked fish) in town. (p62)

Bugs Cafe Experience Cambodian creepy crawlies in every shape and size at this alternative eatery. (p55)

Pot & Pan Restaurant Classic hole-in-the-wall cheapie that punches above its weight for presentation. (p53)

Road 60 Night Market Live like a local and dive into the street barbecues of this popular night market. (p53)

Best International Restaurants

Flow Go with the flow and experience creative flavours in a contemporary setting. (p60)

Le Malraux Experience a slice of Provence in the back alleys of the Old Market. (p59)

Mamma Shop Authentic Italian cooking just like Mamma made, if your mamma happens to be Italian. (p59)

Vibe Cafe Healthy vegan creations, probiotic super-

shakes and guilt-free desserts. (p60)

Best Good-Cause Restaurants

Bloom Cafe This training centre has creative cupcakes that are works of art. (p53)

Haven Immensely popular training restaurant with 'honest' food blending East and West. (p58)

Marum Operated by NGO Friends International, this delightful garden restaurant offers creative Khmer cuisine. (p53)

Spoons Cafe A well-regarded training restaurant run by EGBOK (Everything's Gonna Be OK). (p58)

Drinking & Nightlife

The transformation from sleepy overgrown village to an international destination for the jet set has been dramatic and Siem Reap is now firmly on the nightlife map of Southeast Asia. You don't have to fight for your right to party here; it's rockin' every night and the revelry goes on from dusk until dawn.

Pub St & Around

The heaving 'Pub St' area makes Siem Reap feel more like a beach town than a cultural capital. Pub St is closed to traffic every evening as food carts, drink carts and scores of party people take over. Great spots running parallel to Pub St include the Alley, to the south, plus a series of smaller lanes to the north. Late night, the crowd wanders on to Wat Preah Prohm Roth St and, eventually, to Sok San Rd, where there are a number of

'late-night' (read 'early morning') bars.

Beer Gardens

There are dozens of beer gardens around Siem Reap that are great places for a cheap beer and local snacks. All serve up ice-cold beer, some in 3L beer towers complete with chiller. The best strip is known locally as 'Cambodian Pub St'.

Hostel Bars & Happy Hours

Hostels bars are a big thing, drawing backpackers to

guzzle shooters and play drinking games until the wee hours. Most bars have happy hours, as do some of the fancier hotels. Hitting the happy hours at some of the ritzier hotels is a good way to experience the high life on the cheap.

Best Cocktails

Asana Wooden House This unlikely countryside house in the city turns out some of the most authentic Cambodian cocktails in town. (p66)

Barcode Leading gay bar in town for classy cocktails and a nightly drag show. (p68)





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Menaka Speakeasy Lounge

This 'secret' speakeasy is hidden behind an Old Market cafe and pays tribute to the golden era of Cambodian rock 'n' roll. (p68)

Miss Wong Experience the sassy Shanghai of the 1920s at this sophisticated cocktail bar with designer gins. (p66)

Picasso A convivial U-shaped bar that has cheap and cheerful cocktails during happy hour and all night Wednesdays. (p67)

Best Late-Night Spots

Angkor What? The original Pub St bar and still going strong after two decades of late-night drinking. (p68)

Laundry Bar Funky tunes, leather couches and subtle lighting, this is the place for grown-ups seeking to escape Pub St. (p67)

Soul Train Reggae Bar A eulogy to Bob Marley and friends, this bar is about as chilled as it gets in Siem Reap. (p67)

Temple Club Another long-timer on Pub St, the volume always seems to be turned up to '11' here. (p70)

X Bar As the night wears on, all-night drinkers are drawn to the rooftop X like moths to a lamp for breezes, buckets and a skateboard ramp. (p68)

Top Tip

When Cambodians propose a toast, they usually stipulate *ha-sip pea-roi* (50%) or *moi roi pea-roi* (100%), referring to the amount of the drink you need to finish. This is why Cambodians love ice in their beer, as they can pace themselves over the course of the night.



Shopping

Despite the rough edges Siem Reap offers some smooth shopping opportunities. It is a hub for handicrafts produced by local artisans. There are also lots of good-cause shops where your purchasing power can make a difference to development. Kandal Village is an up-and-coming shopping destination with boutiques, galleries and cafes.



Local Products

Cambodia is famous for its exquisite silk, much of which is still traditionally hand-woven, and there are some famous silk weaving centres around Siem Reap. There are many skilled stone and wood carvers and silversmiths, and popular keepsakes include busts of Jayavarman VII and statues of Hindu deities.

Markets

When it comes to shopping in town, Psar Chaa is well stocked with anything

you may want to buy in Cambodia, and lots you don't. Angkor Night Market is a popular place on the Siem Reap shopping scene and is well worth a browse to take advantage of cooler temperatures.

Shopping for a Cause

Several shops support Cambodia's disabled and disenfranchised through their production process or their profits. This is a worthy way to contribute to community development in Cambodia and shops

sell everything including silk items, T-shirts, jewellery, handmade cards and more.

Temple Sellers

Don't forget to save some spending for the temples, as many of the villagers sell handicrafts, books and T-shirts and need a piece of the action. Some visitors get fed up with the endless sales pitches as they navigate the ancient wonders, while others enjoy the banter and a chance to interact with Cambodian people.



KONSTANTIN AKSENOV/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

Shopping for a Cause

AHA Fair Trade Village

Extensive handicraft market supporting local producers from around Siem Reap Province. (p73)

Made in Cambodia Daily market at King's Road that promotes local artisans and their handmade wares. (p75)

Rajana Quirky boutique selling everything from original T-shirts to recycled jewellery. (p75)

Saomao Social enterprise with original jewellery made from bomb casings and old bullets. (p75)

Sra May Pick up a cotton *krama* (checked scarf) to protect from the elements at this social enterprise in Kandal Village. (p76)

Best Galleries

Eric Raisina Couture House

Eric Raisina creates 'haute texture' fashion with his original creations. (p74)

McDermott Gallery

Haunting images of Angkor produced in signature sepia from American photographer John McDermott. (p77)

Theam's House Original lacquerware creations and innovative art, set in one of the most beautiful gallery spaces in Cambodia. (p73)

Best for Silk

Angkor Silk Farm See the silk process from cocoon to creative clothing at this signature silk farm from Artisans Angkor. (p48)

IKTT A Japanese-run silk farm that creates beautiful

traditional patterns using traditional methods. (p77)

Samatoa Experimenting with lotus, banana stem and more, Samatoa creates original soft silks with their own textures. (p73)

Soieries du Mekong Featuring handwoven silk creations; proceeds from sales help the remote Banteay Meanchey Province community. (p74)

Markets

Angkor Night Market The original night market and still the best despite many imitators, there is no need for air-con after dark. (p73)

Psar Chaa The Old Market is the commercial heart of downtown Siem Reap and offers a blend of local life and tourist kitsch. (p74)