

# Rich Culture and Long History: The Landmarks of Cambodia

Cambodia is nowadays quite a famous tourist destination primarily because of its historical temples and many other important and fascinating places.



## Siem Reap

This city is in northwestern Cambodia, and is also called the gateway to the Angkor Wat region. It is a famous tourist destination with a number of places of interest in and around the city. The infrastructure and economy of the city is developing quite rapidly due to the increase in the number of tourists.

The meaning of the name Siem Reap is 'The Flat Defeat of Siam' and it basically refers to the conflict of the Siamese people and the Khmers. It is also said that this name arose out of the conflict of the Cambodian and Thai people. However, the name is a bit ironical as the Thai people defeated the Cambodians ultimately and controlled the city from 1794 to 1907.

Siem Reap has a unique, rich and cultural past. Its history dates back to the year 802. It was then inhabited by the Khmer tribe. Almost all the temples in the city were built in the 11th and the 12th centuries. During this time the city reached its highest peak in aestheticism and architecture. The temples and other monuments built during that time stand as a testimony to it. Even today they leave the tourists in great wonder and amazement.



## The Temple of Angkor Wat

Angkor Wat is a UNESCO world heritage site and the largest temple in the world. Cambodia became a colony of the French in the 19th century. They brought about a lot of changes in the living style as well

as the architecture of the country. It was the French only who were the pioneers in the discovery of Angkor Wat. The Hindus believed that the god lived on the five peaks of Mount Meru which was enclosed by the ocean. To create a replica of this geography king Suryavarman II, a Khmer king, built a temple with five towers surrounded by a moat. The construction began in 1140 and the temple later became famous as the Angkor Wat temple. From the time it was discovered it remains a great fascination for the Asian people. Since then it has been successful in luring the visitors from around world.

The **Terrace of the Leper King** and the **Terrace of the Elephant** are other famous temples in Siem Reap. The temples and architecture of Cambodia shows the brilliant sculptural skills of the craftsmen of that time.



### **Phnom Penh**

The city of Phnom Penh, formerly known as the 'Pearl of the East', is situated on the banks of the Mekong River. The city has a lot to offer to the tourists. Apart from various monuments, the city has all other things travelers seek in a city – restaurants, hotels, bars, pubs etc. Among the landmarks are the Royal Palace, the National Museum of Cambodia and the Olympic Stadium. The night life in the city is considered one of the best in the world with various pubs and nightclubs open to fun loving tourists.

One more place which is a hit with the visitors in Cambodia is the city of **Kampot**. Situated in the southern part of Cambodia, it is a seaside town. You can enjoy great panoramic views from the mountain tops. Also Kompong Trach caves are the major attraction in the city along with the pepper and durian farms. One can also enjoy boating and waterfalls in the city. Travelers can also visit the island of Koh Tonsay by boat. The trademark tasty local curry leaves the visitors amazed and awestruck.

All these lovely places make Cambodia a hot tourist destination. All kind of globetrotters can identify with the natural as well as architectural beauty of the country.....if you are looking for a destination with both the modern and traditional fervor....this is the right place!

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