

PK04 - Remote Cambodia: with Preah Khan Kompong Svay, Sambor Pre Kuk and Koh Ker.

This adventurous tour visits some of the hidden wonders of Cambodia. You will see spectacular temple cities, hidden in the jungle and remote villages that see few outsiders.

Road conditions are challenging; but for those who have an adventurous spirit and flexible attitude; this tour is and its variants must be among the most exiting travel experiences in SE Asia!



Day 1 - Siem Reap to Kompong Thom with Sambor Pre Kuk

We depart Siem Reap at 7:30 am; drive on route 6 on good road to the village of Kompong Kdei. We have a short detour to the ancient bridge of Spean Praptos. With 22 corbelled stone arches it is the largest of all the Angkorian Bridges with an impressive Naga, (serpent headed) balustrade.

We continue in the direction of Kompong Thom, where we drive north to the ancient temple city of Sambor Pre Kuk. It is the oldest of all the pre Angkorian cities, pre-dating Angkor Wat by 600 years.. There are approximately 100 brick temples largely un-restored and in a lovely forested location well away from major towns. The ancient brick interiors are in surprisingly good condition; especially when considering the climate and the US bombing damage during the American War in Vietnam



Ancient Bridge Kompong Kdei



Tree clad temple N18 Sambor Pre Kuk



Harihara statue Sambor Pre Kuk

We return to the Main road and continue along route 6 to Kompong Thom. We check into our hotel then drive on to the Khmer Pilgrimage centre of Santuk Mountain. There are a number of Buddhist shrines and a new Pagoda. Approached by over 800 steps the climb is steep but the views over the flood plain of the Tonle Sap Lake at sunset can be dramatic. *Accommodation is in a/c hotel with en suite facilities.*

Day 2 - Preah Khan Kompong Svay

We drive north through some newly developing villages crossing many rivers on bridges through communities which have little exposure to outsiders and tourists. We take time to stop at some of these villages and see the rural life at its most basic.

As we leave the river valleys, we enter an area of forest which is only accessible through deep sandy oxcart tracks. There are few



villages here and it is possible that we may have to clear trees from the track and negotiate deep dry (hopefully) river gullies. The area is isolated in the wet season as flash floods make the route impassable. We arrive at the Village of Ta Seng around lunchtime. We make acquaintance with our homestay hosts, who live in a basic stilt house with communal living sleeping area. We have lunch under the house then continue to Preah Khan.



Lunch at village house

Preah Khan

Covering 25 square kilometres, this ancient temple city covered an area 5 times that of Angkor Wat. It was built in the Bayon style with a subsidiary Temple, Prasat Stung having a classic multi faced tower. We will try to reach the attractive Mebon Temple at the centre of the remains of the 3km long Baray or reservoir.



Preah Khan West Gate

We approach Preah Khan from the east, where a causeway and triple towered gateway gains access to the the Central Sanctuary. It has all the hallmarks of a classic Khmer temple site however it suffered badly at the hands of temple robbers in recent years who left parts of the site in ruins. Having said that it is such a vast site that one could spend hours exploring one of the most impressive of all the Khmer ruins with some beautiful carvings remaining.

The walk out to the West Gate will take you to an area that few visitors, ever have time to see. We will see it at its most photogenic as the walls turn red as the sun kisses the tree clad stones.

Accommodation is in basic home stay with no electricity at night and bucket shower.

Day 3 - Preah Khan to Koh Ker

This part of the Tour between Preah Khan and the Jungle Temple of Beng Mealea follows an ancient route which at the time of writing is in very poor condition; so expect the unexpected. Route 66 has gained notoriety in the past as being among the most difficult of all the Ancient routes with broken bridges and deep sand and mud. It has some spectacular ancient bridges and traverses an area of jungle which has only been the preserve of dirt bikers. The road is progressively being improved with good gravel for half the 50km route.

We head north on a tarmac road to Koh Ker. We will check in to a small basic guest house in the isolated village of Sray Yong. We will take the opportunity to drive the 10kms to Koh Ker for sunset.

Accommodation in basic guest house with no electricity at night and bucket shower

Day 4 - Koh Ker to Siem Reap and Pearng Kunmaou

We have an early start to get to the Ancient city of Koh Ker after or for sunrise. With over 30 10th century temples there is a lot to see here. We take a route to the west which allows the best views of Prasat Pram (5 towers) 2 being spectacularly clothed in tree vegetation. The highlight is Prasat Thom, the 40 metre high 7 stepped pyramid with its surrounding moat and brick sanctuaries.



We usually have lunch here and continue our visit to the Linga Temples which house the Largest Hindu Phallic symbols in the country. There are a number of charming atmospheric ruins and the Rahal Reservoir over 1 km in length which enables sightings of birds including Egrets, Jacana, Kites, Eagles and the occasional Hornbill.

We drive to a rarely visited site called Pearng Kunmaou. Few people have ever heard of it and due to previous difficulty of access, it gets virtually no visitors other than a few Buddhist Pilgrims. It is a set of impressive carved house sized boulders in a very strange landscape west of Kulen Mountain. The ancient carvings show many Buddha images and an immaculate reclining Buddha carved under a huge overhanging boulder. There is a small community who are happy to see visitors.

We return to Siem Reap in the late afternoon.



Vishnu carving Pearnng Kunmaou



Prasat Pram Koh Ker

Notes

Our community based tour, involves local villagers, to bring in tourism income to an area which has little contact with tourists.

This tour is a flexible full service tour. The customised Itinerary can be varied to suit the wishes of the client or agent. Most people who go on this kind of tour have visited Angkor before; so may have seen some of these sights on a previous visit.

It is recommended to book this tour at least 2 months in advance to ensure availability. Please contact us by email for detailed itinerary and quotation. We will meet our clients the day before (if practical) for a briefing and to discuss the itinerary and special needs.

Tour includes all transport, guiding, accommodation admission fees and food, The Angkor pass is not usually required. Drinking water will be provided; but other drinks and sundry items will be at the client's expense. Transport will be using 4WD vehicle. Space may be limited; so we will store your baggage securely if necessary while you are away.

The tour visits remote areas which have few medical facilities or infrastructure. Accommodation is basic in village home stays which are in a communal room. Bedding and mosquito nets are provided.

Food provided is simple and prepared using fresh ingredients. We are not able to provide full vegetarian or special dietary requirements; but will do what we can if we are given advance notice.

You must ensure you are medically fit and insured. Roads are poor in places; so expect extended periods of bumpy roads and possible delays. The exploratory nature of this tour means that the unexpected can happen; so we may have to make changes due to bad weather or roads.

Land mines are a risk off the roads or paths; so please take advice from guide.

The price is based on 2 or 3 persons using 4WD vehicle. We will quote for larger groups or single person if required.

Bring insect repellent, sunscreen and good footwear, (trekking sandals are OK)

Waterproofs or umbrella are recommended in Wet Season.

Mosquito protection is needed anti malarials' are recommended especially in Wet Season; May to November.

For pricing and schedule please see attached list