

## Itinerary planning – general approach and my 'philosophy'

Its obviously a great idea to have a sense of the things you want to see and do. Or perhaps a specific wish list of items. In general, you have temples, the great lake Tonle Sap and an awful lot of non-temple activities to keep you occupied. In terms of making a specific daily itinerary, I would largely finalize that once you are in Siem Reap and then only one or two days at a time. Then you really know what you feel like doing the 'next' day. Then you know what kind of day you want each 'tomorrow' to be.

And don't forget, your driver is an excellent resource and great help in planning each day. You will be amazed how quickly your driver gets a feeling for what you like and what your tempo is in doing things. They have done this so often of course and with all kinds of guests with all kinds of interests that they do a fantastic job in helping you make the most of your stay whether its a short or long stay. In fact, some people just show up with very little preparation and still have a fantastic experience thanks to the experience of the drivers.

Siem Reap is the perfect place for a day by day kind of approach. Firstly, because that's the relaxed "chill buzz" the place has and secondly because its possible to arrange almost any tourist activity at the last moment. This is certainly true when it comes to seeing temples or Tonle Sap but also when it comes to most non-temple activities as well. And since its all going to be so new and different for most visitors (and I can promise you that for most people it will be very engaging and often even emotional), its really the kind of place where you only know what you are going to want to do 'tomorrow' once you have experienced 'today.'

Don't forget, the experience you gain each day, in terms of your tempo in visiting temples, how you are liking things, what you are liking more and what you may be liking less, how your traveling companions are finding things (especially important with kids or for example elder parents), or things you hear from fellow travelers, or things you see while going from place to place, will all feed into the ideas you get and the wishes you get for each new day. And your experienced driver is going to get to know you and he will be very valuable in making suggestions as you go from day to day.

Of course there's a minor 'exception' to this general approach: You may want to book certain non-temple activities which run at specific times or have limited capacity in advance especially in the high season (examples: quad riding, cooking classes, horseback riding, ultra-light flying, helicopter tours, a sunrise or sunset tethered balloon ride). But even most of these can usually be arranged two or three days ahead of time.

### Sample daily itineraries

We don't have any set planned programs since we are used to having independent travelers who like the freedom of independent travel versus a fixed tour with a set and rigid program. Most people who come, depending on their specific interests, generally split their time between the temples, a community on the great lake Tonle Sap, local sights, countryside tours, distant temples and maybe some other non-temple activities. So it is really up to the guest to decide based on time, interests and budget. And as stated, the drivers are great helpers in taking your general interests and helping mold that into an itinerary as you go along.

#### Day 1 or only 1 Day:

Small circuit temples (red route on [this map](#)) which includes many of the most famous and grandest temples like Angkor Wat, the Angkor Thom complex with many worthwhile sights, Ta Prohm and many others which the driver will know to recommend depending on your tempo, time usage, energy, interests and weather.

COST: \$15 base price which covers touring from 7AM - sunset with various supplements for starting early, mid-day extra return trip to town for breakfast/lunch/break and for a day including sunrise to sunset (see price overview last page). This is what the vast majority of guests do who only have 1 day or only want to do 1 day of temples.

It is possible to vary this itinerary by seeing fewer sights on the small circuit and including something from the grand circuit (green route on [this map](#) again) or even taking the pleasant 50 minute countryside drive further out to Banteay Srei. The first variation, including some grand circuit temples, only adds \$3 to the prices; including Banteay Srei will be +\$10.

#### Additional days:

For a 2 or more days you have many choices depending on your interests and partially depending on your

budget:

**A)** Grand circuit temples including beautiful ones like Preah Khan, Neak Pean, Ta Som, East Mebon, Pre Rup plus the 50 minute pleasant countryside drive out to Banteay Srei

COST: \$25 (plus possible supplements mentioned above); this is a common day for people to add sunrise; can also possibly combine with Kbal Spean for +\$5

Please note: some guests who make intense visits to the temples, spending a lot of time at each temple, or for example our photography enthusiasts, might do "Day 1" and "A" over three days.

**B)** Beng Mealea and Rolous: \$40 (plus possible supplements mentioned above)

**C)** One of the stilted villages on the great lake Tonle Sap - Kampong Phluk or Kampong Khleang. Many guests include the temple Beng Mealea and Rolous (if they possess a still valid temple pass) on this day.

COST: \$25 - \$35 depending on which village and \$45 if including Beng Mealea (Please read my brochure about visiting the lake communities [here](#); it contains valuable info about which places to avoid and which to consider; plus possible supplements mentioned above)

NOTES: Boat tours of the lake communities cost around \$20 p.p. plus a \$1 - \$2 p.p. entry fee to the village area. Kampong Phluk has in some seasons the optional possibility to be rowed through the flooded mangrove forest in a small dugout canoe for \$5 - \$10 p.p. Beng Mealea has its own \$5 p.p. entrance fee. You will pass a small group of three pre-Angkorian temples called Rolous on the way but one needs a valid temple pass to visit these.

**D)** Phnom Kulen: Only accessible by car, cost from \$60 - \$65 depending if combined with other sights. Can be combined with Banteay Srei, Kbal Spean, Beng Mealea, Rolous or some combination of these or limited temples in the main temple area. Entrance fee to Phnom Kulen is \$20 p.p. Starting before 7AM is +\$5.

**E)** Visit [local sights](#) around Siem Reap and the silk village.

COST: \$20 with silk village and \$15 without silk village

(+\$3 for early starts between 04:40AM and 7AM which is really not necessary with this day program)

**F)** Countryside tours: There are various possibilities depending on the season. Costs from \$15 for countryside closer to Siem Reap and \$30 for countryside tours which are further away for example between Siem Reap and Rolous on the back roads which is further away. The Rolous countryside tour includes one 'forgotten' temple called Prasat Prei Monti near Rolous when that part of the road is accessible. A small ruin hidden in a stand of trees in the middle of countryside, Prasat Prei Monti is rarely seen by anyone except the few farmers who keep their cows or live nearby and this temple ruin does not require a temple pass, that's how forgotten it is. There is also a small non-ticket ruin on the outskirts of town called Wat Atvhea next to a small Buddhist monastery which can be included (plus possible supplements mentioned above). Please note, this tour can easily incorporate a stop at Savuth's home just outside Siem Reap.

**G)** Distant temples: These are unusual places that fewer to very few tourists go due to the distance and cost. Koh Ker is 2 hrs away and would cost \$90 by car plus \$10 p.p. for entry fees. Preah Vihear, an unusual mountain top temple on the Cambodia - Thailand border with breathtaking landscape views of Cambodia and Thailand is 3 hours away and costs \$110 - \$130 by car to the mountain base (depending on whether you only go to Preah Vihear or combine with Koh Ker and/or Beng Mealea) plus \$10 p.p. entry fee AND \$5 p.p. lift up and down the mountain road to the temple on the back of a motorbike or \$20 flat fee for multiple people together in a 4WD jeep or small truck. Starting before 7AM is +\$5. Preah Vihear can also be combined with a temple called Preah Khan Kampong Svay (not to be confused with Preah Khan amongst the main temples on the grand circuit). This is a lovely jungle temple ruin where almost no one ever goes. It's a lot of back country driving but provides a very unique jungle temple explorer experience. Cost is \$190 plus entrance fees as mentioned. A final possibility is visiting Banteay Chmar, around 2 hours from Siem Reap and also an area where hardly any tourists go – cost \$90.

**H)** Totally independent activities: See [this page](#) for a few suggestions

### **Not sure what to choose?**

In the past, I would suggest to those who were unsure how many days 'templing' they wanted to decide after

completing the first day. Then you would know better if you wanted another full day (or 2) of the main temples or something else. If wanting a second day of main temples you can just purchase another 1-day pass. Although you can still take this approach to planning, it used to be a lot easier when two 1-day temple passes cost exactly the same as one 3-day pass. However the prices went up as of February 1, 2017, with the 1-day pass at \$37 (from \$20!) and the 3-day pass at \$62 (from \$40) making the 3-day pass much cheaper than two 1-day passes (there is no 2-day pass by the way). So now, there is a financial consideration to deciding ahead of time if you want more than one day of temples versus waiting till you experience your first day.

Also, if you are interested in option “E) Distant temples” we can not always guarantee a last-minute driver who knows these areas well so this is something that ideally requires advance notice. Some independent activities may also require advance booking. And a final comment, most people with limited time, certainly 1 day or 2 days, usually don't return to town mid-day unless they really can't cope with the heat. It takes a lot of time out of the day and there are plenty of good places to lunch and have refreshments out among the temples.

Angkor Tuk Tuk Current prices 2017/18 (per tuk tuk not per person)

\* Base price starts at \$15 except for a sunset only tour (\$12). Since so many people only do the small or grand circuit we are trying to keep the most basic tour as inexpensive as possible. So we work with a few supplements for extras such as sunrise, extra long days, or temples off of the circuit.

\* Small circuit (Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Ta Prohm and other fascinating places along the [red route](#) depending on one's tempo and time usage): \$15 (incl Banteay Samre +\$2)

\* Grand circuit (Preah Khan, Neak Pean, Ta Som, East Mebon, Pre Rup often for sunset on this [green route](#)): \$15 (incl Banteay Samre +\$2)

\* Combining main temples on both circuits: \$18

\* Main temples on small or grand circuit plus Banteay Srei: \$25 (Kbal Spean +\$5 more)

\* Temples on small or grand circuit plus Rolous: \$25 (Rolous only on its own: \$15)

\* Sunset only (tickets pickup and/or sunset at temple): \$12

\* Beng Mealea: \$40

\* Kampong Phluk on the great lake Tonle Sap: \$25 (plus Beng Mealea: \$45)

\* Kampong Khleang on the great lake Tonle Sap: \$35 (plus Beng Mealea: \$45)

(Excluding approximate \$20 p.p. for village entrance and boat tour or \$5 p.p. Beng Mealea ticket)

Any of these can include Rolous temples if you have a valid temple pass and want to stop.

(NOTE: The drive to Beng Mealea by tuk tuk is about 2 hrs from Siem Reap plus the drive to a lake community if doing that. So in total it can be about 4 to 4.5 hrs cumulative driving if you include a lake village. Most of our guests do this by tuk tuk but if you prefer a car for this longer journey let me know. Costs will be between \$55 - \$70 and cut about 1.5 hrs from the driving time. The main drawback to the car is the speed at which the interesting countryside flies by making it hard to take photos, really appreciate the countryside life you pass or wave and interact with locals along the road, etc)

\* Tour of Siem Reap [sights and highlights](#): \$15 (including silk farm +\$5); Silk farm only: \$15

\* Airport or bus transfer: \$5

NOTES and supplements to above prices

\* Normal touring hours anytime you want from 7AM onwards thru to any time you want up thru sunset

\* Pickup before 7 AM: +\$3 (as early as 04:40AM for sunrise is possible)

\* If doing sunrise AND touring thru to the end of the day (past 4PM - 4:30PM) +\$5

\* Return trip to Siem Reap for breakfast, lunch, break and then return to touring: +\$3

Just ask if you have some other ideas. If interested in the very distant temples Koh Ker (2 hrs by car; \$90 - \$110) or Preah Vihear (3 hrs by car; \$120 - \$130), please ask. There are also possibilities for exploring the countryside, walking thru villages and in some seasons getting close up to the rice harvest or even trying your hand at fishing. Countryside tours are between \$15 - \$30 and the possibilities vary by season a bit so just discuss with Savuth when you are there.