



ANGKOR WAT

# Angkor ...

Cambodia is fast becoming the 'en vogue' destination of South East Asia. The main point of interest for most visitors is the famous temple complex close to Siem Reap with Angkor Wat the undoubted highlight. However, there are many other temples in the Angkor region and our years of experience enable us to tailor your visit to suit your interests.

Few people fail to be impressed by Angkor Wat at sunrise or sunset. The magnificent carved faces of the Bayon are equally stunning, or Ta Prohm which remains much as Henri Mouhot must have found it, shrouded in jungle with trunks and roots of giant fig trees twisting amongst its stone pillars. Spend an extra day in Siem Reap and you will be able to venture beyond this 'Grand Circuit' and seek out some of the many other temples lying in tranquil clearings away from the main sites.

Driving several miles to the east of Siem Reap brings you to the Roluos

*Shrouded in jungle with trunks and roots of giant fig trees twisting amongst its stone pillars, it is an impressive sight.*

group of monuments. Built in the 9th century, they are the oldest structures in the area with their construction marking the beginning of Khmer classical art. To the north-east of the major sites lies the Banteay Srei temple. On a smaller scale than the other more famous temples, it is notable for its intricate relief carvings which are astoundingly well preserved. Banteay Samre can be visited on the same afternoon en route back to Siem Reap. Another Hindu temple, this time dedicated to Vishnu, Banteay Samre is remarkably similar in style to Angkor Wat although on a smaller scale.

Together with our knowledgeable local guides, Audley have developed a unique way of customising your visit to

try and avoid the crowds. With over a million visitors to Angkor each year the standard circuit can be a bit of a disappointment when you are just one of the masses. Many itineraries take a prescribed route and you may feel a little overwhelmed by the large tour groups following their flag wielding leader. Our guides know exactly how to time your visit to each of the magnificent temples and make it feel as though you are the only ones there. They will discuss your individual requirements with you each morning and set out the day's itinerary accordingly. We have trained them to be reactive to your needs and visits to a particular temple may be rescheduled if it is too busy at the first attempt.



RURAL SCENE

However, it is not just in Angkor that Audley leads the way with tours to Cambodia. The country is opening up to tourism and there is a good deal more to this remarkable destination besides the famous temples.

The country's capital, Phnom Penh was known as the "Pearl of the Orient" in its heyday and it is easy to see why. The wide riverside promenade with its manicured lawns and bright flowerbeds are watched over by ferocious

beach resort. There are a range of activities in the area including day trips to the islands of the Ream National Park. While the hotels of Sihanoukville cannot match the opulence of Thailand's southern beaches, it is nonetheless a great place to end a Cambodian trip with some rest and relaxation.

An exciting recent development is the opening up of Cambodia's north-eastern province of Ratanakiri. The capital town of Banlung, with its red dust

# and beyond

*Bizarre graveyards with their carved spirit guardians.*

statues and colonial architecture. The city has a fascinating array of sights including the Royal Palace, National Museum and the sombre Killing Fields on the outskirts of town.



SIHANOUKVILLE

To the south of Phnom Penh in the Kampot province are the Elephant Mountains, the colonial Bokor Hill Station and the lovely Sihanoukville

roads and wooden buildings is the closest you are likely to get to experiencing the American wild west in Asia! You can visit ethnic minority villages, towering waterfalls and the beautiful Boeng Yak Loam crater lake. It is possible to travel further afield to visit bizarre graveyards with their carved spirit guardians, remote villages, pepper, rubber and cashew plantations as well as boat trips through dense forest scenery. The north-east is still undeveloped but is an interesting destination for those prepared to set aside a few comforts for a couple of days. We recently visited the area making a thorough, first-hand inspection of accommodation, infrastructure and the main sights.

Cambodia need no longer be the brief "add-on" destination to holidays in Vietnam and Thailand. It has gradually begun to reveal its hidden secrets and is one of the most exciting destinations in South East Asia only now emerging from the traumas of its recent history.



### Travel File

A 14-night comprehensive tailor-made tour of Cambodia costs from £2,095 per person based on two people travelling. For further information on all aspects of travel to Cambodia please call our specialists on 01869 276 200.