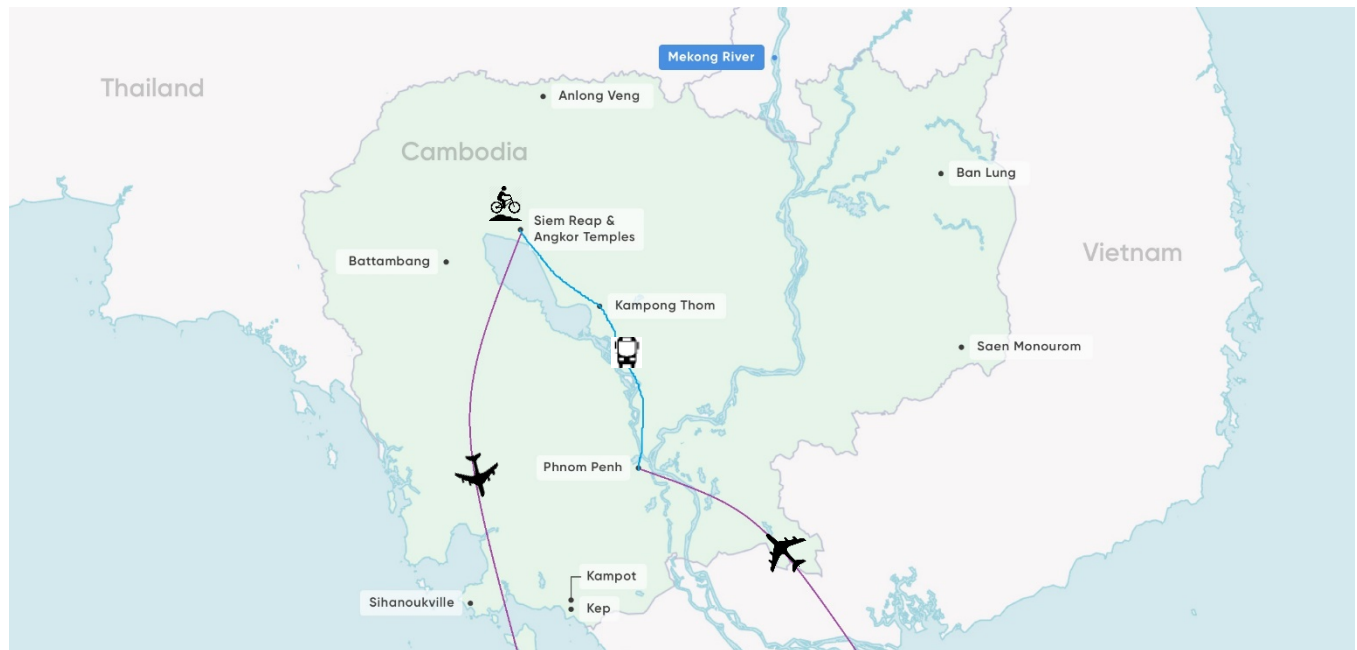


Cambodia - Culture & Service (10 days)



Departs anytime (2021-2022)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's aims, learning objectives and budget.

There is a magic about this charming yet confounding kingdom that never fails to delight. With this in mind, we have created a trip specifically designed for student travellers to expose them to ancient traditions and charming cultures that collide to create this authentic adventure.

This 10-day trip of Cambodia is for energetic students seeking authentic interaction with their Cambodian counterparts. As such, the focus of this trip is a challenging and very rewarding service component that will entail working alongside a local community, struggling to overcome deficiency and social neglect. This itinerary also includes a thorough exploration of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap as well as a plethora of highly enjoyable activities and excursions to make this journey truly unforgettable.




Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive Cambodia (*Phnom Penh*)



On arrival in Cambodia, we will be greeted at Phnom Penh International Airport by our tour leader before boarding our bus to travel to our hotel in the city's centre. En route, our tour leader will give us a quick *Khmer* (Cambodian Language) lesson and share with us some essential information about travelling in this friendly country.

Whilst temples are the first thing that springs to mind when people mention Cambodia, the country's urban areas can surprise with a sophistication that we will learn more about this afternoon. Phnom Penh is a city of motorbikes, whizzing through laneways without a thought for pedestrians who wander its powerful smelling markets as the sounds of life – of commerce, of survival – resonate through its streets. Once the 'Pearl of Asia' (depending on what history books you read!), the city, like two generations of Cambodians, has been to hell and back.

In the afternoon we will visit Wat Phnom located on a small hill overlooking the city where we will learn of the legend of Mrs Penh and the founding of the capital city in the 15th Century. This evening we will enjoy Khmer cuisine at a popular local eatery before a highly enjoyable *tuk-tuk* tour of the city's essential sights. *(meals: dinner)* **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Phnom Penh



This morning we set out to visit the infamous *Tuol Sleng* Interrogation Centre and the disquieting *Killing Fields* – both stark reminders of Cambodia's tragic recent history during the Khmer Rouge reign from 1975-1979. It was during this relatively brief time a little know teacher called Pol Pot instituted a reign of terror over the country and implemented a plan to turn Cambodia into an agriculture-based society, systematically emptying the cities and forcibly moving the people onto collective (state-owned) farms where they performed hard labour. It is estimated that during this time over a fifth of the country's population perished by overwork, starvation and execution.

Today we will also visit the city's vibrant *Russian Market*. Named because it was originally patronized by a largely Russian ex-pat population in the 1980s, this scorching bazaar is renowned for its handicrafts and antiques (probably fake mind you!), including miniature Buddhas, betel-nut boxes, silks, silver jewellery, musical instruments and so on.

As the sun sets, we take an evening boat cruise on the Mekong River to see the city skyline from another perspective and observe how the city is developing in all directions. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 3

Phnom Penh Siem Reap



After breakfast, we will begin our bus journey to Siem Reap – gateway to the *Temples of Angkor*. Whilst today's journey is a long one, it is also a chance for us to gain an insight into the rural conditions that are home to most of Cambodia's population. En route we will stop on a few occasions, our most anticipated rest stop being a break at a spider village where we can enjoy a local delicacy - fried tarantulas.

This afternoon we will arrive in the travel mecca of Siem Reap - the centre of Khmer pop culture and the place where the energy and vigour of this developing country are most evident. There will be ample time to enjoy a swim at our hotel pool before we venture out for a thorough exploration of Siem Reap and dine at one of its numerous restaurants. Tonight, we take in a performance of Cambodia's homegrown *Phare* circus, famous for its depiction of Khmer legends and folk stories, re-enacted along with fire sticks and acrobatic displays. This circus performance is highly

enjoyable and will provide us with an insight into this unique Cambodian art form. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 4

Siem Reap *(Temples of Angkor)*



This morning we will set out to explore the magnificent *Temples of Angkor*. These temples are unique; the ultimate expression of a past race of genius craftsmen; sublime and matched by only a few select spots on earth, such as Machu Picchu or Petra.

Journeying to the aesthetically and architecturally breath-taking Angkor Wat Temple, we will explore this massive three-tiered pyramid dedicated specifically by the Khmer King Suryavarman II to the Hindu god, Vishnu.

After lunch, we will visit the jungle temple - *Ta Prohm* over which nature has

well and truly run riot. This quiet, sprawling complex is only partially cleared of jungle overgrowth.

Intentionally left somewhat unrestored, large fig and silk-cotton trees grow from the towers and corridors offering some of the best photo opportunities at Angkor. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

Day 5

Siem Reap *(student-initiated activities)*

Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that your students might like to add to your Cambodian travel experience. These activities can be included based on students' knowledge of the country or their interests or passions for any aspect of a country's culture. These may include an introduction to a country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to local schools, an 'Amazing Race' style activity, outdoor educational pursuits such as hiking, cycling, kayaking or a plethora of cultural programs. Please contact us for further ideas.

Activity 1



Mountain biking: Siem Reap hosts several hidden riding trails that are ideal for exploration by students of all cycling competency levels. These paths also provide students with a great opportunity to visit local villages and gain an appreciation of everyday life. As part of our cycling activity, we will visit communities where life has changed little in decades, where horse & cart transport is common, and farming is still done by hand. Time can also be spent assisting villagers weaving baskets, fishing nets and thatched roofing. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Activity 2



Arts & Crafts: Over the course of history the artisans and craftsmen of Cambodia have created a style of arts and crafts that is truly unique and exquisitely Khmer. Today we will learn more about the arts of Cambodia during a visit to an artisan base where we may try our hand at painting, weaving or even carving. As part of this program, students will have the opportunity to attempt traditional lacquerware production, charcoal painting and bas-relief temple rubbing assisted by local artisans. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Activity 3

Remote temples & jungle exploration: There are literally hundreds of overgrown abandoned temples in the jungles and forests scattered around Siem Reap and further afield. Today we will venture out to explore the remote temples of *Banteay Kdei* and the unfinished *Ta Keo Temple*. During the final phase of its construction, *Ta Keo* temple was struck by lightning, which was taken as a sign of bad luck, upon which work was halted.



Later we will explore *Preah Rup* Temple once used as a crematorium, then continue to *Preah Khan* Temple famed for its sprawling galleries and numerous hidden doorways. Other options include the huge and impressive *Beng Melea* Temple structure that has long been reclaimed by the jungle. During the day we will enjoy a picnic lunch before returning to Siem Reap. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 6
Siem Reap 🚗 Mt. Kulen



This morning we will enjoy a day trip to the sacred Cambodian site of Mt. Kulen. En route, we will stop at a landmine museum to learn of the terrible legacy of conflict in the last century. Here, we will see many inert examples of this terrible weapon that continues to cause suffering in Cambodia and throughout the world, as well as to learn of the efforts in eradicating them. Upon arrival at Mt. Kulen we will enjoy a picnic lunch before exploring the area. Some of the nearby attractions include a reclining Buddha, ancient riverbed carvings as well as magnificent waterfalls. It was on top of this

mountain that in 2012 a previously unknown city - complete with temples, waterways and roads - was discovered and has yet to be excavated. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

Day 7 & 8
Siem Reap *(community-building project)*



Today we will begin our two-day community service project where we will work alongside local people in a challenging community-service activity specifically initiated for our group. This project will entail a series of labouring tasks as we break into groups to erect scaffolding, assemble bamboo frames, hammering, sawing and transporting of materials. Over these days local tradesmen and our tour leader will be supervising and assisting us, often identifying students with particular skills to perform the more difficult or aptitude-orientated tasks. Groups will be rotated

throughout the project. The days will be long and the results rewarding as we see our project come to fruition and as curious locals from all around come to watch and assist us. *(meals: 2 breakfast, 2 lunches, 1 dinner)*

Day 9
Siem Reap *(Tonle Sap Lake, Phnom Krom)*



We take a morning boat trip on the Tonle Sap Lake to visit Vietnamese and Cambodian fishing communities who fled conflict to established themselves in drifting villages during wartime. Here we will learn of the floating lives of these inhabitants who live a subsistence lifestyle. Today we will also visit a floating school before stopping at Phnom Krom Hill to enjoy views across Tonle Sap Lake.

Our final evening's dinner will be a buffet-style affair and feature a traditional *Apsara* dance performance. Apsara dancing, a classical style dating back to the Angkorian era, nearly vanished in the 1970s when the Khmer Rouge regime decimated much of the country's infrastructure, culture and traditions. In more recent times, the dance form has made a comeback in Cambodia – the grace and charm of these performances matching perfectly with the sultry atmosphere that envelops a typical Cambodian evening. There will be a fun *tuk-tuk* ride around Siem Reap after dinner. *(meals: breakfast, dinner)*

Day 10

Depart Siem Reap 🏠 Home



There will be time for a final exploration of downtown Siem Reap before we prepare for our journey home. En route to the airport, we will visit a fascinating Khmer silk farm to learn how the silk that comprises Asia's famous fabric is produced. Here we will learn of the intricate processes of unwinding fibres, dyeing threads, spinning and weaving which explains why silk is no cheap commodity. From here will transfer straight to the airport where our tour leader will take care of our onward travel arrangements and wave us farewell. *(meals: breakfast) Flight details to be advised*



Summary

Grading

Moderate: Students & staff will be required to be in good health to get the most of this trip whilst anyone of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day. You will also be expected to work diligently during the days of the community service project. You will also be expected to be able to ride a bike. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

Modern air-conditioned bus, boat, bicycle.

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members travelling *free of charge*.

▲ [Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application](#)

Specific Trip Activities

PHNOM PENH

- Visit *Toul Sleng* centre
- 'killing fields' excursion
- Phnom Penh city tour
- *Russian Market* tour
- *Tuk-tuk* exploratory activity
- Evening boat cruise on the *Bassac* River
- Q&A session with Khmer Rouge

Collaborator and/or survivor [Please see below: 7 things to check before choosing a student travel company: #6](#). Does the program you're being offered match your students' learning needs?

SIEM REAP

- *Angkor Temples* excursion
 - Khmer performing arts circus activity
 - Apsara cultural dance activity
 - 2-day community service activity
- [Please see below: # 5 How authentic are your service-learning programs?](#)
- Silk farm activity
 - *Mt. Kulen* waterfall day trip
 - *Tonle Sap* Lake excursion
 - Student-initiated activity (options):
 - *Hands-on craft session with local artisans*
 - *Mountain biking activity (Day in the life of a Cambodian Village)*
 - *Remote temple exploration activity*

Cambodia - Culture & Service (10 days)

#Please contact [Student Educational Adventures](#) for a competitive flight quote for flights from your country.

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as described in the itinerary
- Professional *Student Educational Adventures* tour leader throughout trip & additional specialist guides
- Community project sourcing and arrangements
- Extensive destination-specific risk management and assessments
- Meals (along with drinking water) as listed and underlined in the daily itinerary
- 24 hours **IN COUNTRY** support from *Student Educational Adventures* staff
- Pre-departure support, briefings and planning meetings for students and parents
- All equipment
- Parental & student advice for vaccinations & equipment etc.
- Tips for local guides & drivers
- **Cost of the community project**

Exclusions

- International flights to/from Cambodia #
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- Cambodia Visa (if required)

7 things to check before choosing a student travel company



Choosing the right travel company is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your students. As you compare different school travel providers, you'll need to weigh up everything from staffing arrangements to overall trip cost – and, of course, educational value.

To help you choose with confidence, we've created a checklist of seven essential factors to consider when you're assessing travel companies. You'll be pleased to know that these factors are a feature of every trip we run.

1. Does your travel provider have a truly local presence?

You might not know it, but many school travel companies have no local presence in the countries they send your students to. Behind the façade, these providers are marketing companies who outsource their trips to in-country operators – often importing a foreign manager at your schools' expense. Value for money aside, running trips in this way has far-reaching consequences in an emergency, when access to language skills and local knowledge are vital.

To make sure you're getting a genuinely local experience, it's important to choose a bonafide in-country travel company who has a real local presence in the country you're travelling to. For example, we use our own in-country supervisors and tour leaders to manage the school trips we run. As local experts, they travel with you and your students throughout your entire trip and are responsible for every aspect of your students' wellbeing.

2. Is your school trip *really* of value to your students?

A trip abroad with friends will appeal to any young person, and many will relish the chance to explore a world away from home. But to be of real and enduring educational value, a school trip should challenge students beyond the kinds of basic touristic experiences they might just as easily have on a family holiday.

To this end, your school travel provider should provide a customised itinerary that shows quality and depth of engagement. We tailor each of our itineraries to push students beyond a surface-level exchange and maximise their time in-country so they're learning the whole time they're travelling. Our activity-rich programs are big on cross-cultural interaction, team-building and authentic local experiences. We also include community service projects wherever possible, which make our trips not only highly educational but life-changing, too.

3. Is the person leading your students up to the task?

The best people to lead you through a country are the folk who live there. But on top of having expert local knowledge, the people leading your students should also be expertly trained to deal with young student travellers. A tour leader who's up to the task can teach across the full range of personalities, interests and abilities found among every student group.

For this reason, we make sure our tour leaders have at least three years' experience leading student groups before they go in-field with yours. And they're more than just guides – they're also teachers, translators and troubleshooters. Our tour leaders will welcome you warmly when your group arrive, manage all of your trip logistics, and work responsibly to make sure you and your students always stay healthy and safe.

4. How safe is your travel provider, really?

While some travel companies offer a 24-hour call centre, there's no substitute for having local people by your side and looking after you where you are. Local staff know the lay of the land, how to access the best medical attention in times of crisis and which dialect or language to speak when you need it most. This is especially important outside of major cities, where major providers' services can be limited.

Our in-country staff and tour leaders not only access the best international providers (such as SOS, Global Rescue and Columbia Asia), but also complement these with expert knowledge of the nearest and most appropriate medical attention within every local area. So, if a worst-case scenario happens – when you need to communicate with non-English speaking doctors; when a comprehensive first aid kit won't do the job; or when the phone number of an international medical provider just isn't sufficient – you can be sure your student group is in the best of hands, no matter where they are.

5. How authentic are your service-learning programs?

Today, having students raise money for their overseas trip is a common way for schools to give back to the places they visit. However, exchanging skills – and smiles – with local communities can leave a positive legacy that's even more powerful.

Fundraising, while well-intentioned, can be in vain if it's not done in consultation with local communities. To make sure your impact isn't simply an add-on, choose a school travel company that facilitates projects that solve real community problems and which help build local capacity.

Take our community service projects, for instance. We develop them through extensive cooperation with local people's committees, NGOs and women's organisations to ensure your students' altruism has a lasting impact. All our service components are meticulously planned, designed to be meaningful and transparent, and, most importantly, provide tangible long-term benefits for communities.

6. Does the program you're being offered match your students' learning needs?

No two school groups are the same, which is why no two school trips should follow the same itinerary. Check that the travel company you choose offers a customised program that's flexibly designed to match your students' unique interests. In our experience, nothing inhibits a successful trip more than 'off the shelf' programs with generic activities.

For this reason, each trip we run is tailored to your school's curriculum and your students' distinct learning needs. We also like to involve students in co-designing their itinerary. Prior to their trip, we run a series of student-initiated activities to promote agency and collaboration, setting them up for success once they're overseas.

7. Is the tour priced competitively?

A foreign travel experience for your students needn't cost the earth. And while variations in destinations, flights and trip durations add complexity to the task of pricing your trip, the school travel company you choose should offer you that transparency, without question.

Alongside integrity in pricing sit sound educational outcomes. If your trip provider can't quantify how your students will benefit from the trip, then you might ask whether they're the right fit for you and your school.

Because we operate entirely in-country, with exclusively local staff, our overheads are significantly lower compared to those of other travel companies. With us, your money goes directly toward creating your tour, rather than to overseas administration costs or third-party suppliers.