

LOCAL LIVING IN THE NORTH

Day	Location	Activity	Learning Focus
1	> Siem Reap	Welcome to Cambodia! Arrival at Siem Reap Airport and transfer to reflection centre. Evening orientation*	Orientation; preparing and setting intentions.
2	Siem Reap	Introduction to Cambodia's 20 th century history with visits to Siem Reap Killing Fields and Landmine Museum.	Khmer Rouge history and its impact on modern day Cambodia. The on-going trials and ideas of 'justice'
3	Siem Reap	Mighty Temples of Angkor and visit to the Phare Social Enterprise Circus	Ancient Khmer history and religion. Mass tourism at world heritage sites
4	> Samrong	Morning meeting with education NGO. Transfer to rural town of Samrong (approx. 2 hrs)	(Challenges to) education and the experience of young people in Cambodia
5	> Banteay Chmar	Meeting with environmental activist monk. Transfer to rural homestay community (approx. 2 hrs)	Challenges to environmental conversation in Cambodia; deforestation and logging
6	Banteay Chmar	Learning about village life and taking part in research project	Daily life in a Cambodian village. Community tourism & voluntourism, incl. pros/cons
7	> Home	Traditional blessing followed by reflections. Transfer to Siem Reap (approx. 3 hrs) and departure*	Reflections and transference

Day 1: Arrive into Siem Reap International Airport in the late afternoon, where your PEPY Tours trip leaders will greet you. Transfer to a tranquil inter-faith reflection centre on the outskirts of the city to check in and freshen up, before enjoying our first taste of Cambodian food! This evening we will gather together for a welcome orientation, where there will be an opportunity to think about our apprehensions and goals for the journey ahead, and what we are most looking forward to experiencing and learning. *

Example framing questions: Why did I come on this trip? What do I hope to learn from my time in Cambodia? What can I bring to this experience? How can I make the most of this learning opportunity? How can I support my peers?

Day 2: Understanding Cambodia's 20th century history is crucial to understanding its present day, so today we'll be taking a sobering look at the Khmer Rouge regime. We'll begin our day with an introductory overview of key events, before visiting the famous Landmine Museum. Founded by a child soldier turned expert de-miner, this incredible place offers a powerful opportunity to learn about both the Khmer Rouge and the legacy of landmines in Cambodia.

After lunch we'll return to the reflection centre to learn about the important human rights advocacy work that takes place here. **There may also be a chance to assist the team in building locally-designed wheelchairs to be distributed to landmine victims and other disabled individuals living in rural areas**, before spending some time reflecting on all that we've learned today. After dinner this evening there will be a chance to test out our new Khmer skills with a visit to the Siem Reap Night Market!

Example framing questions: What happened in Cambodia during the 1970s? What impact does the Khmer Rouge period continue to have? How has Cambodia sought to recover from this period? Has there been 'justice', and according to whose definition? What does 'human rights' mean? How might access to (or protection of) human rights differ from country to country? Why haven't all countries signed the agreement against the use and production of landmines?

Day 3: A trip to Cambodia wouldn't be complete without visiting the mighty Temples of Angkor! We'll start our day by watching the sun rise over the magnificent Angkor Wat, before exploring its intricate carvings and hidden corners. After breakfast at a local restaurant we'll spend the day exploring the Archaeological Park's most beloved temples, including the many smiling faces of Bayon and the increasingly tree-root strangled Ta Prohm (also known as the 'Tomb Raider' temple).

This evening we'll visit the **Phare Ponleu Selpak Circus** – an organization training talented but vulnerable Cambodian youths to become professional performers.

Example framing questions: What is ‘mass tourism’ and can we see any examples of it at the Angkor Temples? What benefits do the popularity of the Angkor Temples bring to local people? What could the advantages/disadvantages of ‘mass tourism’ be? What could happen if a heritage site isn’t carefully managed? How important is it to understand local culture and customs when we travel?

Day 4: This morning will be devoted to learning about education in Cambodia, and thinking about how young people’s experiences here may compare to our own school lives. We’ll learn some facts and figures, weigh up different approaches to making improvements, and perhaps even have the opportunity to ask questions to a local educational organisation.

After lunch we will hop in the bus and wave farewell to Siem Reap, as we make our way west to the sleepy rural town of Samrong. Along the way we will make a stop at the Angkor Silk Farm, a local social enterprise preserving traditional weaving techniques almost lost during the Khmer Rouge, as well as offering employment in rural communities. **As the sun sets in Samrong this evening there may be a chance to visit the town’s small street fair – a real taste of local living!**

Example framing questions: What are the key challenges for young people to access quality education in Cambodia? Why do so many young people drop out of school? What role do NGOs (local and international) play in the current education system? If I want to support improvements in education in Cambodia, what should I do?

Day 5: After breakfast at a local restaurant we will meet with a group of Buddhist monks (one of whom is a UN award-winning environmental activist) who have dedicated their lives to conserving the illegally-logged jungles in this province. This is a unique opportunity to learn about the threats posed to Cambodia’s nature and wildlife, and the very real dangers of environmental conservation. **During the course of the morning there may be an opportunity to help the monks as they ordain and plant trees.**

After lunch it's time to get back in the bus and make our way to the rural village of Banteay Chmar, which is home to both a Community Based Tourism initiative and some exceptionally beautiful Angkorian temple ruins. Here we will be hosted by local families and stay with them in their traditional wooden houses on stilts, though all meals will be shared together at the community centre.

Example framing questions: Why are Cambodia's jungles and forests being illegally logged at such a rapid rate? What are the key challenges to preserving them? What role do local authorities play in environmental conservation in Cambodia? What is 'Engaged Buddhism' and what role can it play in addressing social and environmental issues?

Day 6: 80% of Cambodia's population live in rural areas, so our focus today will be understanding day-to-day life in a typical countryside community. This may entail dividing up into small groups and researching a particular topic (eg. 'farming'), with an opportunity to deliver feedback over lunch. We will also spend some time thinking about the impact of tourism on communities like Banteay Chmar, and consider different perspectives in weighing up potential advantages and disadvantages.

As the sun sets we will gather together for a magical candle-lit dinner among the temple ruins, accompanied by live traditional music courtesy of the community's musicians. What better way to spend our last evening in the 'Kingdom of Wonder'?

Example framing questions: How does life in Siem Reap compare to life in Banteay Chmar? How might your opportunities differ in each place? Why has this local community set up a tourism project? What are the benefits of this, and could there be any down sides?

Day 7: This morning there will be a chance for us to reflect on our adventure together, and consider all that we've learned and experienced. **Afterwards there may be time for a traditional Buddhist blessing** before we gather our bags and head back to Siem Reap, ready for our trip home.**

Cambodia!



Example framing questions: What has most surprised me about Cambodia? Have any of my opinions or perspectives shifted? What have I learned about myself? How will this experience influence my future behaviour or choices?