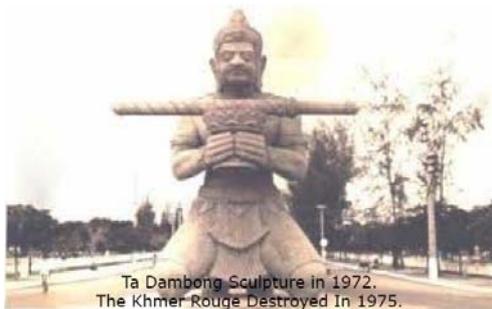


Introduction Of Battambang Province



Ta Dambang Sculpture in 1972.
The Khmer Rouge Destroyed In 1975.

Battambang is Cambodia's second-largest city and the capital of Battambang Province, which was founded in the 11th century. It is the former capital of Monton Khmer and lies in the heart of the Northwest of Cambodia. Until the war years, in which almost every infrastructure was destroyed it was the leading rice-producing province of the country.

The name Battambang or Batdambang, literally means "loss of stick" referring to a legend of the Preah Bat Dambang Kranhuong (Kranhuong Stick King). The population is nowadays around 250,000 people. It's a riverside town, home to some of the best-preserved, French colonial architecture in the country.

Until recently Battambang was off the map for road travelers, but facilities have recently been improved and it makes a great base for visiting the nearby temples, such as Phnom Banan and Wat Ek Phnom, as well as the closed by villages.

It's a secondary hub on the overland route between Thailand and Vietnam, and if the National Highway No 6 from Poi Pet to Siem Reap is ever upgraded it'll become an even smaller hub. The network of charming old French shop houses clustered along the riverbank is the real highlight here, and there is a number of Wats scattered around the town.

The small museum has a collection of Angkorian-era artifacts, and beyond the town there are a number of hilltop temples, yet more Wats and a pretty large lake. One of the more famous hills is Phnom Sampeau (Ship Hill) with the notorious killing caves.



Battambang did not give way to the Khmer Rouge movement after the fall of Phnom Penh, but it's been in the centre of the ongoing government Khmer Rouge conflict ever since the Vietnamese invasion in 1979 pushed the genocidal regime out of Phnom Penh and to the Northwest. Until the surrender deal of Ieng Sary (Khmer Rouge number three man based in Pailin), Battambang was the Khmer Rouge stronghold in the region.

In the earlier history Battambang flip-flopped back and forth between Thailand (called Siam before their 20th-century renaming) and Cambodia. It's been a part of Thailand most of the time since the 15th century, with Cambodia regaining control (more specifically due the French) in 1907. The Thais grabbed it again, with Japanese assistance, in 1941 and kept region in their camp until the World War II years in 1947.

The Allied Forces helped persuade the Thais that the region was originally part of ancient Cambodia and the world community would not take kindly to the Thais holding onto it further. Like the rest of the Northwest, there is still a lot of Thai influence apparent. The main currency is still the Thai Baht and many people are able to converse in Thai. But the area is very Khmer, with ancient Khmer ruins scattered around, and even the ways of life are much more similar to the rest of Cambodia than to Thailand.

Battambang city is a peaceful and pleasant place these days. The main parts of the city are situated closed to the Sangker River, a tranquil, small body of water that winds its way through Battambang Province. It is a nice, picturesque setting. As with much of Cambodia, the French architecture is an attractive bonus of the city.

Geography

The provincial capital of Battambang is the second largest city in Cambodia (2007 estimated population around 1/4 million people). It is located in one of the biggest rice-growing areas in Southeast Asia. The average altitude of the province is around 50m. The province is bordering to the North with Banteay Meanchey, to the West with Thailand, to the East and South with Pursat and the great lake Tonle Sap.

The country's total surface is about 11,702 sq/km and around 67.7 inh/sqkm. The city is on both the highway and railroad linking Phnom Penh with Thailand; after the outbreak (1970) of civil war in Cambodia, the Battambang-Phnom Penh road was a prime target of the Khmer Rouge insurgents, who, by capturing it, severed Phnom Penh from its major source of rice. Battambang was acquired by Thailand in 1809 and returned to Cambodia in 1907. The city has also a technical university.



History of Battambang



Background of Battambang In the past and the present, Battambang Past, Since when has the name & rsquo; Battambang & rsquo; been used?

The stone inscriptions discovered from the pre-Angkor and Angkor eras have as yet mentioned no villages or districts at that time that were called & rsquo; Battambang & rsquo; But we are not certain if the name was in use then or not. However, according to the document & rsquo; Mohachun Khmer & rsquo;, & rsquo; Srok Battambang & rsquo; literally meaning Battambang district, was used during the Angkor and post-Angkor eras. Where did this name come from? No answer has been given to this question in the ancient stone inscriptions; the only evidence is a

legendary story & rsquo; Ta Dombang Kranhuong & rsquo; Grandfather Kranhuong Stick, which, according to most Cambodians, dates back to the Angkor days. The story explains why the name & rsquo; Battambang & rsquo; or & rsquo; O'Dambang & rsquo; was used. There is another name: & rsquo; Preah Dambang & rsquo; that was given by the King Rama

I to a village, which goes by the name & lsquo; Sangke & rsquo;.

During the pre-Angkor and Angkor eras, the areas to the north and to the north west of the Tonle Sap Lake were known as the territories of Amogha Boreak and Bhima Boreak. During the Angkor period, the territory of Amogha Boreak was significantly prosperous because the land was so fertile that rice crops, fruit and vegetables grew well and yielded satisfactorily. Many Khmer people settled there as indicated by the existence of so many ancient temples in the area. With the exception of the temples of Banan, Ek Phnom, Ba Seth, Stung, Banteay Tey, Banteay Chmar, etc, other monuments, which were built by dignitaries and subjects at the time as places of worship to God and other deities of Buddhism and Hinduism, almost completely disappeared.

The following centuries, from the 15th to the 18th, saw the Battambang territory being invaded by the Siamese army, causing people to be forced into a miserable life, to experience painful family separation, and to lose their properties.



From late in the 18th century until early in the 20th century, the Siamese overran Battambang and placed it under the rule of the Lord Chaofa Ben family, which was later known as the Akpheyavong Family, for 6 generations ending in 1907.

Under the French-Siamese treaty of March 23, 1907, the Siamese had to return the territories they occupied for over a century to Cambodia: Battambang, Siem Reap Angkor, Serei Sophoan, and Chong Kal in exchange for the Trat province and the area of Dach Se (Lao territory) in the upper reach of the Mekong River. A few months later, **His Majesty Preah Bat Ang Doung Sisowath I** issued a Royal declaration No. 66, dated December 6, 1907 dividing the Battambang territory into 3 provinces: Battambang, Siem Reap and Serei Sophorn.

In 1925, the Battambang territory was re-divided into two provinces: Battambang and Siem Reap, with Battambang having two districts: Battambang and Serei Sophorn. Then in 1940, the province of Battambang consisted of 7 districts: Battambang, Sangke, Maung Russey, Monkol Borei, Toeuk Cho, Serei Sophorn, and Bei Thbaung.



Born 1840, died 1927

In May 1953, the administration of Poi Pet was founded and ordered under the district of Serei Sophoan. In July 1957, the district of Toeuk Cho was divided into two districts: Preah Netpreah and Phnom Srok. The district of Serei Sophoan was divided into two districts: Serei Sophoan and Banteay Chmar. In March 1965, the administration of Poi Pet, which was created in 1953, was elevated to the status of a district named O'Chrov. In July 1965, part of the territory of Maung Russey was separated to become the administration of Kors Kralor. In March 1966, another new district was founded: Thmar Pouk in the location of Thmar Pouk. Meanwhile, the district of Banteay Chmar was cut off from the province of Battambang for incorporation into the O'ddor Meanchey province, another newly founded province.

In the early years of the Khmer Republic, two new districts were established: Banan and Kors Lor. In all, up until this point, the province of Battambang consisted of 9 districts: Battambang, Sangke, Maung Russey, Mongkol Borei, Serei sophoan, O'Chrov, Peah Netpreah, Banan, Kors Lor, and two administrative territories: Bak Prea and Lovea. During the three years, eight months, and twenty days of the killing fields, as in other provinces across the country, Battambang saw its people evacuated from the city and towns and relocated to remote and mountainous areas. The province of Battambang, once known as the rice bowl of the country, was turned into a site of torture, killings, and starvation. The province then had no well-defined boundaries, because the leadership organization had included the province in the northwestern region, and they were Region 1, Region 3, Region 4, and Region 5. The names of some districts were still heard: Phnom Sampov, Battambang, Mongkol Borei, Sangke, Maung Russey, District 41, District 42, etc & hellip;

The province of Battambang was completely liberated from the genocidal regime on January 13, 1979. At that time, the leadership apparatus was called & lsquo; the People & rsquo;s Revolutionary Committee (of province, district, provincial town, commune-Sangkat). The People & rsquo;s Committee of commune-Sangkat was founded through the first-ever elections in 1983. Between 1979 and 1986, Battambang had 9 districts and one provincial town.

In 1986, three new districts were created: Banan, Bovel, and Ek Phnom. Until that point, Battambang had 12 districts and 1 provincial town: Maung Russey, Sangke, Banan, Ek Phnom, Battambang, Rattanak Mondul, Monkol Borei, Serei Sophoan, Preah Netpreah, Thmar Pouk, Phnom Srok, and Bovel.

In 1988, 5 districts were separated and incorporated into the newly founded province of Banteay Meanchey: Mongkol Borei, Thmar Pouk, Serei Sophoan, Preah Netpreah, and Phnom Srok. Until 1993, the province of Battambang had 7 districts, one provincial town, 53 communes and 10 sangkat. Under the new constitution, the provincial town of Battambang had its name changed to Svay Por district, while the 10 Sangkat were turned into communes, so that the province of Battambang then had 8 districts and 47 communes.

In 1998, following the integration of the Democratic Kampuchea, the province of Battambang saw part of its territory separated for the municipality of Pai Lin, while 4 new districts were established: Samlot, Kamreang, Phnom Proeuk and Sampov Loun.

In 2000, part of the district of Maung Russey was cut off to become the district of Kors Kralor, which consists of 6 communes. The district of Svay Por also changed to the district of Battambang, while the district of Battambang, which was located in Thmar Kaul, changed its name to Thmar Kaul district.

Today, the province of Battambang has 13 districts, 96 communes, and 741 villages, covering an area of 1,162,200 hectares with a population of 185.706 families or 955.104 persons.

Economy



The Battambang Rice were the principal exports of Cambodia, but exports fell sharply after the onset of the civil war, which put most of the rubber plantations out of operation. By the 1990s, however, rubber plantings had been undertaken as part of a national recovery program. When we talk about tropical fruits, the Battambang orange is the most farmouse among the people. Until recently, inadequate transportation hampered exploitation of the country's vast forests, but by the mid-1990s timber had become the largest source of export income.

Exploitation of mineral resources like phosphate rock, limestone, semiprecious stones, and salt supports important local mining operations. Inflation was 1.6% in 2002, whereas official unemployment figures amounted to 2.6%. Due to closed Thailand there is quite a lot of financial influx from foreign (Thai) investors.

Known as the Rice Bowl of Cambodia, indeed of Southeast Asia, the province has a strong agricultural economy with a great production of rice. In the 2006 rainy season 2,440.14 km² of rice, were cultivated for production and the average rice yielded 2.2 tons per hectare, with the total output standing at 536,830.80 tons. With the amount reserved for consumption, seeds, animal food, and waste during harvest, there were about 300,000 tons left for sale. In addition to rice, subsidiary crops were also planted include corn, red corn, cassava, sweet potatoes and many other crops including green beans and chilies. There was a total of 194 sq. mi. of industrial crops with ground nuts, soybean, jute, sugarcane produced. The Province also produces notable quantities of pineapple, sesame, grapefruit, oil palm and saffron. Besides arable farming, local people mainly indulge in livestock breeding, rice seed production, the production of animal fodder, etc while few operate animal breeding farms. Strategies laid out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, have intended to aid the transition from the tradition of growing long-term rice varieties to using medium- and short-term varieties and practicing nature-based intensive rice farming.

Battambang Province has 12 fishing lots and commercial fishing exceeded 7,000 tons in 2006 of which 990 tons of rice field fish were caught by local families. The province has 37 fishing communities, each with over 300 members.

Climate

Cambodia has a tropical monsoon climate. During the rainy season between mid-April and mid-October the Mekong swells and backs into the Tonle Sap (Great Lake), increasing the size of the lake almost threefold. Between November and April winds are less strong and there are higher temperatures (up to 35C).

General information about the climate:

- Rainy season: June - October (<31c)
- Cool season: November - February (>26c)
- Hot season: March - May: Temperature: from 28c - 35c

Population



The population census in 2007 shows that Battambang is a densely populated province with male 511,378 and female 525,145 and total population of 1,036,523 people. The population density is 68 per km², which is slightly higher than the national density of 64. The population of this province constitutes 6.9% of the whole Cambodian population. The percentage of female population accounts for 51%.

Shopping

Phsar Nath, In the centre of the town is the main Phsar (traditional market) and is geared to the locals, sporting the usual variety of fruits, vegetables, meat, clothes, sundries, food stalls, etc.

Gem dealers a couple of banks, photo shops and moneychangers line the streets that ring the Phsar. Phsar Leu, just south of town, seems to be the place to buy the local specialties: oranges and pomelos from Pursat province. The oranges are said to be the best oranges in the country. Chea Heang Drink Shop on the west side of Phsar Nath offers ice cream bars, cheeses, yogurt, wines, and other imported items.



Tourist Attractions in Battambang

Battambaq is home to some spectacular sceneries, which makes walking, tramping, and sightseeing a must for any visitor. numerous historic ruins are open to the public, one of which is **Wat Ek Phnom** which was built in the 11th century during the reign of Soriyavaraman I (1002 – 1050), but now sits within the grounds of a modern pagoda. The temple is surrounded by 18 Buddhist trees. The abundance of water in the form of lotus ponds, streams and the like give this place a relaxing feel. The temple and ruins lie 10 kilometers north of the Cobra River, and are at the bottom of a hill, hence only limited exercise is required to reach them. For a more enduring experience, **Phnom Banan** is a mountaintop temple built in the Angkor period. The temple is still in relatively good condition, however pillaging and looting was once rife in the area, and the effects of this are noticeable. Nevertheless, this is an excellent sight to see, and any tourists to the area should be sure to check out at least a few of the many temples, as they certainly build a cultural and historical awareness. Other attractions worth a note are the **Phnom Sampeou Mountain**, the **Kamping Puoy Reservoir** - an incredible engineering project, Wat Pee-Pahd - an important symbol of Buddhism in Battambang, and the Gold Buddha Hill. As you can see, a tourist will not be lost for things to do in the province.

Wat Ek Phnom



Adapts the architecture of 11th century and built in 1027 during the reign of King, Suryavarman I (1002-1050). It is located at Piem Ek commune in 14 kilometer from the provincial town.

It was built during the Bayon period and unfortunately is much worse for the wear than Phnom Banan. It's an interesting place, however, because there is a freshly constructed working temple right in front of the ruins. This temple, along with the temple ruins, is the center of holiday festivities for the people of the nearby village. They dress up in their Sunday best and have a celebration between the old and the new temples and climb all around the ruins with their

families.

The ruins are on a very small hill so there is no workout involved in viewing them much of the temple is in shambles and was heavily looted. There are still some sitting Buddha images intact higher up on the walls. On the inside is a carving of a tug-of-war with participants tugging away on a serpent. The participants on the left have lost their heads to looters (they lost face), with the guys on the right still having their heads intact.



Situated in 14 km north of the Cobra Bridge are the ruins of Ek Phnom (the road north of the Cobra Bridge snakes around a bit, but goes back to the river). As you are getting close to the temple, you will pass over a small concrete bridge. The road beyond will veer off to the right, but the modern temple is there to the left. Enter the new temple grounds and the ruins are located to the rear. Again.



Phnom Banan



Adapts the architecture of mid 11th century and the end of 12th century the temple was first built by King, Ut Tak Yea Tit Tya Varman II (1050-1066) and was built finally built by the king, Jarvarman VII (1181-1219). The temple is located on the top of approximate 400 meter heighten mountain at Koh Tey 2 commune, Banan District in 15 kilometer distance from the provincial town by the provincial Road No 155 parallel to Sang Ke River. At the mountain's valley, there are Ku Teuk and two main natural well, namely: Bit Meas and Chhung or Chhung Achey.

This Angkor-era mountaintop temple is definitely worth a look. At the top are beautiful views of the winding Sangke River set amidst sugar palm trees, rice fields and small villages. To the south you will see a mountain range that features a crocodile shaped mountain. The temple itself is beautiful looking from the ground as well as the top. The structures are pretty much intact, but unfortunately like so many Khmer ruins, they have fallen victim to massive looting. Still, there are some interesting works to see. There are five temple structures, like Angkor, with the middle being the largest. (Use caution around the entrance to the center structure-there is a large hanging block-a headache-in-waiting for some poor soul). As with Preah Vihear Temple (close to the Thai border in the province of the same name), there are a couple of big guns on the mountaintop next to the ruins. The guns are still pointing down at the surrounding area as they were during the more recent years of the government-Khmer Rouge skirmishes. Its part of the sad irony of Cambodia that a place built for worship, harmony and tranquility was utilized as a place for making war. Looking down the hillside to the southwest you can see more of the ruins. As always, if you go looking around, STAY ON THE WORN PATHWAYS AND TRAILS- there may still be undiscovered landmines.



Nory (Bamboo Train)

"Nories", the Cambodian word for bamboo trains, are one of the "must sees" of Battambang, if only for their novelty value. Formed by two sets of railway wheels, a bamboo mat, and a generator, these are an impromptu way of traveling up and down the railway line in lieu of the real train. When the real train shows up, all the nories disappear. They are also a great way to see rural Cambodia well of the road network. When two Nories meet coming in opposite directions, the one with the lighter load is dismantled and removed from the track, allowing the other to pass. Powered by a small motor, they can carry motorbikes making a Nori ride easy to combine with a motodup (motorcycle taxi) trip.



Phnom Sampeou Mountain



Definitely worth a visit, it's about 15 km outside of Battambang city on the way to Pai Lin. Since its closer to Battambang than Pai Lin, we'll include it in this section, as it's a trip that a lot of locals take from here. However, if you are going to Pai Lin just saved it for a stop on the way. It's easy to do if you have your own motorcycle; if not you can negotiate a bit higher price and have the share taxi stop there an extra 100 baht should do it, but don't pay until you get to Pai Lin. Phnom Sampeu features an Angkor-era Baray-style pool; cave shrines with skulls and bones of Khmer Rouge victims and about seven hundred steps leading up to the main temple area, with its dynamite views. The mountaintop temple was built in 1964 and is a mix of old and new styles. As you approach the top, take the dirt path that you will see

forking off to the right. It leads to another hilltop temple area about 400 meters away. In the back of that, away from the view side, is a stairway leading down to a cave. Inside are some of the skulls and bones from this area are killing fields. Locals have brought them up here and set up a couple of shrines in caves for the spirits of the victims in the hope that they can finally rest in peace. It's another sobering place in Cambodia. A bit further down is a cave with some small stalagmites and stalactites. Continuing the cave circuit, there is another cave area off from these areas that has a reclining Buddha and more skulls and bones nearby. It's not a bad idea to bring a flashlight, although ladies working the temple have candles for a small donation. The stairway and the areas on the top are packed with Cambodians on holidays as they make the pilgrimage with family and friends to see this mix of the old, new and a part of the tragedy of the Khmer Rouge era. Also easy to get to (do not mean to imply that the road is good), just head out of Battambang on the road to Pai Lin about 15 km. As you approach, you'll see the mountain and temple at the top and think that you are going to run right into it. The town next to

the mountain has the same name. As you get into town you go by a school and small stands until you see a sign in Khmer and English (amazing) on the left for Phnom Sampeu. Turn left here and as you go toward the stairs you will note some bits of ruins on the left. Figure around 160 baht for the round trip moto-taxi.

The Phnom Sampeou is the natural resort located along the National Road No 57 (the former National Road No 10) at Sampeou commune (the high land having more than 100-meter height) approximately 12-kilometer distance from the provincial town of Battambang. On the top of Sampeou Mountain, there are temple and three natural wells, namely Laang Pkar Sla, Lo Khuon and Ak So Pheak. Next to Sampeou Mountain, there are some main mountains, the natural sites like Phnom Trung Moan, Phnom Trung Tea and Phnom Neang Rum Say Sork. These mountains related to the Cambodia folk legend of Reach Kol Neang Rum Say Sork.

Phnom Trong Morn Trong Tea

Phnom Trong Morn Trong Tea, Battambang is one of the places which is filled with abundant number of flora and fauna and are well liked by the nature loving tourists in particular. This is the place which comes as one of the important tourist destination where you are going to enjoy a whole days' trip and find it to be a place to remember for a long time for its endless beauty. The place is widely popular for its rich treasure of natural vegetation. Phnom Trong Morn Trong Tea is a place belongs to the category of Nature wildlife and Preserves.



So, the adventure loving enthusiasts find the place to be of great value and arrange frequent trips to this scenic destination. The place boasts of various types of wild animals that are provided natural surroundings. The actual location of Phnom Trong Morn Trong Tea is in the region of Samnagn Village which is located in the Phnom Sampeou Commune. This place is situated in the district of Banan. This place is very popular as a great spot for natural beauty. As you plan for a visit to this place during your trip to Battambang, you must start your journey in the Provincial Town.

There are transportation modes available for the tourists which will bring you to the entry point of the Phnom Trong Morn Trong Tea. It is approximately 15 kilometers away from the Provincial Town and it is going to take about forty minutes to get to the actual destination. The journey is going to be a nice one filled with lots of excitement and fun. You are going to enjoy the trip if you really love to be a part of adventure trip. As you step inside the preserve area you are going to be amidst various types of wild animals in their natural habitats. It is the place which is well known for adventure and excursion trips that are arranged by various tourist agencies. The best part is that you are going to enjoy them in their natural surroundings.

Kamping Pouy Reservoir



Kamping Pouy Reservoir is located between two mountains Phnom Ku or Phnom Ta Ngen and Phnom Kamping Pouy - in Ta Nget Village, Ta Kream Srok commune, about 35 kilometers west of the provincial town. This gigantic civil-engineering project was central to the Khmer Rouge's plan to irrigate the countryside around Battambang. Tragically, the construction of the Kamping Pouy Reservoir resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of people. Unlike the victims of S21 and Choeung Ek most of the deaths on the Kamping Pouy project were caused by malnutrition, disease, overwork or mistreatment. The deaths were in short, preventable.

A gripping, visceral and painfully honest account of life in Battambang under the Khmer Rouge was written by Haing S. Ngor, the Cambodian doctor, actor and community worker who won an Oscar for the film *The Killing Fields*. His book *Survival in Cambodia's Killing Fields* is perhaps the most eloquent account of day-to-day life during the Pol Pot period. It is laced with insights into the Khmer psyche and is ultimately a heartbreaking read. Kamping Pouy Reservoir is 6meters long and 1,900 meters wide. During the rainy season the Reservoir can hold 110 million cubic meters of water, which is used primarily for agriculture. Kamping Pouy Reservoir is vital to this area. It is now a popular picnic site for residents of Pai Lin and Battambang because of its fresh air. Lotus flowers grow in the water and nearby you can buy lotus seeds to eat (they are delicious and taste a bit like sweet, uncooked peas). Takream Commune in Banann District is the nearest settlement.



Sek Sark Resort



Sek Sark is the natural resort, which has been popular since before the civil war time. Sek Sark stretches along the river bank full of plant, trees and bamboo-green nature in 500-meter length. Regarding to Sek Sark, tourists can also visit other attractive sites like Pich Chenda, Dangtung water bubble amd Laang Spean Andoeut site Sek Sark located in Treng commune, Rotanak Mondul District in 50-kilometer distance southwest of the provincial town of Battambang along the National Road No 57, the former National Road No 10.

Sek Sark, Battambang is one of the beautiful places that a nature loving traveler will like to explore. This is a natural resort which has remained a popular tourist spot for a long time. It is popularly known as the Sek Sark Resort and the area lies on the banks of a river. The area is filled with lots of trees and green vegetation making it a scenic paradise. Sek Sark, Battambang is a well known place which became famous especially during the time of Civil War.

During the Trip to Battambang, you will find Sek Sark is located at Treng commune which lies in Rotanak Mondul District. This place is located at a distance of 50 kilometer away from the provincial town of Battambang and you are to take the National Road No 57 in order to reach the Sek Sark Resort. This road was previously known as the National Road No 10. The journey through this road is going to be beautiful and for this reason, it is expected that the whole trip is going to be enjoyable and filled with lots of fun and excitement.

In the region of Sek Sark in Battambang, you will find large number of vegetation which consists of herbs, shrubs, trees of

different species and bamboo trees. The bamboo trees that are available in the area are of 500 meters of height grabbing the tourists' attention. The place is one of the popular excursion destinations where adventure loving enthusiasts love to come and enjoy their expedition.

Sek Sork is one of the significant Battambang Attractions, where you will like to visit some other sites that are located in the adjacent areas. There are other interesting places like Po Pus Pich Chen Da, Dong Tong and Sa Ang speak. These are the places which are of tremendous historic importance and are thus included in the heritage trips. These places are some of the important sites where civilization came into existence in the pre-historic periods. All these places are situated in about five to six kilometers away from one another.

Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

Prek Toal is an entire village, Koh Chi Vang commune, Ek Phnom district, like most floating village, it is a sophisticated and bustling township of fisher-folk, boat builder and businessmen, providing everything which a town on dry land can provide it population. You can travel there by boat from/to Battambang and from/to Siem Reapp. One boat costs \$70-80, so it is better to go in large group.



The 'bird sanctuary' at the Prek Toal core area of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve is home to 120 bird species, many endangered has been called "the single most important breeding ground in Southeast Asia for globally threatened large water birds." The Biosphere covers 31,282 hectares at the northwest tip of the Tonle Sap Lake and plays host to species including Greater and Lesser Adjuncts, Black-headed Ibis, Painted Stork, Milky Stork, Spot-billed Pelican, Grey-Headed Fish Eagle and many more species. Of the three Biosphere core areas on the Tonle Sap Lake, Prek Toal is the most accessible from Siem Reap and the most popular with birdwatchers. The best time of year for viewing is the dry season when flocks of migratory birds congregate at Prek Toal. As the dry season progresses and the water recedes, the number of birds increases but the travel to some of the more important viewing areas becomes more difficult.



Most people arrange a trip to Prek Toal through their guesthouse or a tour operator. To do it yourself, take a moto or taxi from Siem Reap to the Phnom Krom/Chong Khneas boat dock. Arrange a boat to the Prek Toal Environmental Research Station (starting at \$35-\$45 return,) and then from the Research Station a \$5 entrance fee and \$15-\$25 for a guided boat tour of the sanctuary. The Research Station has information on the area's flora and fauna. There are also basic overnight accommodations at the Research Station if you want to stay the night to take full advantage of the sunset and early morning viewing hours.



River Sightseeing & Boat Rentals

Just north of the Cobra Bridge, on the west bank, you will see a lot of boats hugging the riverbank. You can hire a non-motorized small wooden boat for around 4,000 Riel, and a motorized boat (if available) for around USD5 an hour. It's a pleasant way to see the river life around Battambang town. There is also a boat you can take to Siem Reap for a smooth alternative to the lousy highway (see Coming and Going section).



Wat Gahndahl



Located on the east bank of the Sanke River, the temple is a simple and run down place. There is an unusual wall mural on the outside of the temple that features a progressing story of a bad dude that apparently killed his own mother and finally had to board a boat bound for hell. Strange, indeed.

The interesting feature of this Wat is the Angkor replica about 110 meters across a dirt path from the rear area of the temple. It was built in 1969 over a small concrete pool and is the pride of the monks staying there. They say spirits and relics of deceased monks are housed inside. Battambang is not short on temples and you will see many more around town and on the way to the sights outside of town.



Wat Gahndahl is a religious center and a temple considered to be one of the major tourist attractions in Battambang. The city of Battambang is known for a number of ancient temples and religious places. The travelers must pay a visit to all these places. The temples and other interesting places can be explored by various day trips and excursion tours to the surrounding places.

The ancient temple is situated at the Eastern shores of the river and an interesting place to be visited by the religious as well as regular travelers. The temple features an interesting structure especially the exterior parts. The structure of the temple was constructed in 1969 on a small concrete pool. The outside walls of the temple show a strange local story. According to the legends, there used to be a bad boy who killed his mother and as a consequence of that had to go to hell by boarding a boat. This story is engraved on the walls of the temple.

Prasat Sneung

The Sneung temples are divided into two parts - East Sneung and West Sneung. The East Sneung temple is located in Sneung Pagoda, Sneung Commune, Banan District, about 22kilometers southwest of the provincial town. The temple, constructed of bricks on a hill, is 30meters long and 20meters wide. It features three separate shrines and is similar in style to other temples built during the 12th century. Behind the temple is a newer temple. The West Sneung temple is constructed of sandstone and is located near National Road 57 (The former National Road 10)



Gold Buddha Hill

This one is for your journey to Sisophon if you are heading that way (60 km or so from Battambang). It's easy to spot from the road. See the Sisophon section for more details.



Pich Chenda



One of the popular tourist attractions in Battambang is Pich Chenda. Most of the tourists like to visit this premier destination which lies along most of the other tourism sites like Sek Sork and Dang Tung. The Pich Chenda destination is 44 km or (2h) from Provincial Town. The nature wildlife and Preserves, Location: Treng Commune, Rattanakmundul District and one can reach via road transportation from the heart of the Cambodian city. Most of the tourist avail tour packages especially during the winter or the autumn season. At this time of the year the weather is milder and cooler making traveling a pleasurable experience for the tourists and family vacationers.

Wat Pee Pahd



Wat Pee- Pahd, Battambang is one of the cultural heritage spots of the city. The Wat Pee-Pahd, Battambang brings to the foreground the rich cultural heritage which is associated with the city. The Wat Pee-Pahd, Battambang is one of the best among the many Battambang Tourist Attractions and visited by thousand of tourists round the year. The Wat Pee-Pahd, Battambang is actually a Buddhist Temple which is situated between River Road 1 and River Road 2 in the city of Battambang.

The tourists who embark on Battambang Tours should keep the Wat Pee- Pahd, Battambang in their itinerary. The country of Cambodia has a strong connection with the religion of Buddhism and many of the Cambodian cities have a collection of Buddhist temples. As the tourists enter the temple they will find that the interior section is wonderfully decorate and consists of some intricately carved statues of the Buddha.



Ba Set Temple



Ba Set Temple was built during the reign of King, Soriyak Varman I (1002–1050) and located on a hill at Ba Set village, Ta Pon commune in 15-kilometre (9 mn) distance from the provincial town. Ba Set temple adapts the architecture of 11th century temples. Next to the temple, there is a pond having 20-metre (66 ft) length 12-metre (39 ft) width and 10-metre (33 ft) depth. The pond is never dry, even in the dry season. In rainy season, the water level is higher than usual.

Phnom Kdaong

Phnom Kdaong How to go: 14 km (1h) From Provincial Town. Location: Description: Nature wildlife and Preserves, Location: Kdong Village, Phnom Sampeou Commune, Banan District.

There are several limestone hills in the Battambang area of Cambodia. The most famous hill is Phnom Sampeou, where the "killing caves" are located.

Phnom Kdaong is the hill immediately to the south of Sampeou. When driving from Battambang you turn left just before Sampeou.



On the east side we had to climb a long flight of steps to reach the small caves. The first cave, Laang Kess has brightly painted statues

Museum of Battambang

The Museum of Battambang Province located downtown is relatively small but very interesting indeed. Many lintels are exposed as well as Buddha statues, figurines



Wat Dahm-rei-saw (White Elephant Pagoda)

Situated between Roads 2 and 3, this ornate temple is worth a look, especially during the Khmer New Year festivities when it becomes the happening place in town for festivities. Entertainment, classical dancing and plenty of water and powder being thrown by the masses in search of fun and good luck for the coming year.

Banteay Sat

Banteay Sat How to go: 105 km (2h) From Provincial Town. Location: Description: Historical Sites and Buildings, Location: Koh Village, Kaoh Chiveang Commune, Ek Phnom District.

Dang Tung

Dang Tung How to go: 54 Km (3H:20mn) From Provincial Town. Location: Description: Nature wildlife and Preserves, Location: Dangng Tung Village, Phlov Meas Commune, Rattanakmundul District.

