Takeo province is often referred to as the cradle of Cambodian civilization. Takeo province has several important pre-Angkorian sites built between the 5th and the 8th century. The provincial capital, Takeo town, is an easy-going place that possesses a fair amount of natural and manmade beauty. The natural beauty is in the Scenic River and lake area that faces a pleasant town parkway. The low-lying area seems to include much of the surrounding province area, which is probably why a kingdom that once had its heart here was referred to as Water Chenla. There seems to be water everywhere in the surrounding countryside during the rainy season.

The manmade beauty mostly comes from a series of canals and waterways that were cut through the surrounding countryside, many a very long time ago, connecting towns, villages, rivers, and Vietnam. Nearby Angkor Borei town (connected by water to Takeo town) may have been the heart of the Funan Empire, which is called the Cradle of Khmer Civilization by Cambodians. Much older than Angkor, the Funan empire had its heyday between the 1st and 6th centuries and stretched across a vast area, from South Vietnam through Thailand, down through Malaysia and into Indonesia. Bold, silver, and silks were traded in abundance in the Kingdom, or, as some say, the series of fiefdoms.

Although Cambodians claim Funan was created by Khmers, neighboring Vietnam argues that they were the people of origin. Archaeologists from the University of Hawaii of the USA have made research trips to Angkor Borei in an attempt to piece together the history and story, as well as relics, of the Funan period. In an odd recent twist, Reuters News Service reported in early November 1999 that locals saw the research team digging up ancient relics and figured the stuff must be valuable, so they started digging and looting objects from the area. Fortunately, the Cambodian government seems to be moving in on the problem quickly to try to save what they can of this important piece of Khmer heritage.

That was not the first time the locals have created problems in the piecing together of ancient history. Much of what did remain in the form of ancient ruins in Angkor Borei was destroyed not too long ago in the modern past. The officials that runs the museum that’s dedicated to the history of the Funan empire told that much of what was still standing from this period (from parts of ancient walls to partial structures) was thought to be useless by locals and was bulldozed and razed to make way for more useful modern day structures! Talk about having a bad track record. Fortunately artifacts and history have been put together in the museum.

Takeo Province is full of other interesting sights as well and because of the short distance and good road from Phnom Penh, all are great day trips. Some sights can be combined in a day trip. If you have a bit more time, spend an evening in Takeo town and take in all the sights. There is a pleasant little place to stay overlooking the river and lake area.

Takeo’s History

Takeo is a small province that is more or less Phnom Penh’s suburb to the south, though it's mostly rural. A number of old temples are situated here and make for worthwhile daytrips. The province is bordered by, clockwise from the north, Kandal, Vietnam, Kampot, and Kompong Speu. The main access is by National Highway 2 from Phnom Penh, and the railway. The eponymous provincial capital, is best used as a base to visit the old temples in the Angkor Borei area. It has less of a French legacy than elsewhere around the country.

Takeo is widely thought to be the birthplace of the Cambodian civilization as far back as the third century AD, Chinese traders described a Kingdom located in modern Takeo they called Funan. They said this was a Kingdom of walled cities peopled by farmers and artisans, as skillful in the craft of irrigation as they were in music and sculpture. Archeological evidence from the Angkor Borei ruins, where this Kingdom had its base, suggests the site may have been an important seat of civilization since as early as 400 BC. Sandwiched between Kandal, Kampot and Kompong Speu provinces, and sharing its south-east border with Vietnam, Takeo province is often overlooked by overseas tourists but still ranks among the most visited provinces due to the number of Khmer tourists who flock there each weekend to visit the temples, ruins and picnic spots dotted throughout it.

Among 24 provinces/Cities in Cambodia, Takeo is the oldest province rich in historic relating to the periods of Anachak Phnom and Chenla. Takeo province has 34 ancient temples left from our ancestors that are the heritages and the soul of Cambodian people. Takeo province has six ancient temples in good form and they are relating to the history such as Tourist Attractions in Takeo Province at blow.

Here the story why this temple come to be:

Once upon a time a mighty King ruled the area of Champassac, or Bassac, in the upper reaches of the Mekong. This King had a daughter, Princess Ak Or, who grew to be the most beautiful woman in the land. But when she fell in love, she fell for a man who was far below her station and their union dishonored the King and all her relatives. The King found out and fell into a rage. He had a raft built and stocked with unhusked rice, husked rice, corns, beans, sesames, salt and prahok (fish cheese)
and banished his daughter Ak Or and her lover by setting them adrift on this raft in the river. The raft drifted for a very long
time down the river and across a large sea before it ran aground against Phnom Borei, where no one lived. Ak Or and her
husband were still in love. They were just grateful to have been washed ashore somewhere which could support them. They
planted their crops and built a cottage. They decided they could find everything else they needed to survive by foraging in
the forest. But Ak Or was unhappy. She was homesick and began to regret ruining her reputation. She began to burn incense
sticks and candles every night before bed and praying for hours to the spirits, guardians of the mountains and it or forest
ghosts, believed to take care of wild animals in the forest and look after the lakes and the hills. She prayed to all these
beings for happiness and to provide them with enough to live on. Because prayer is powerful and Ak Or never missed a night,
before long she fell asleep and dreamed and the image of an honest man came into her dreams. In her dream, he kept his
face obscured, but she heard him clearly. "Do not worry," he told her. "Don't be frightened. I am an honest man who always
keeps his promises and I tell you that from today on I am watching over you and will help you. You will grow famous and
wealthy in this place. But I will not reveal my face to you." As soon as he left her dream, she woke up and told her husband
straight away, who was worried for her and filled with pity that she was so upset. From that day, she had her husband go
into the forest to find wood for their fire. The husband happily cut wood from a sweet smelling tree which grew there in
abundance. He put it in neat piles to be burned. One day, Ak Or went to see how their wood supply was going, and was
overjoyed, for she knew as soon as she saw it that all the wood was valuable sandalwood. But she didn’t let on to her
husband about her discovery, only smilingly telling him to work harder as they must have more wood. Ak Or’s husband loved
her very much, so he tried to please her. He went deeper into the forest, and one day there, he saw bright rocks lying on the
ground which were different to any rocks he had ever seen before. "These are pretty," he told himself, "I will take three of
them for my wife in order to set up a fireplace." The man took those rocks and put them in small shallow basket and carried
them home. When his wife saw them, she knew immediately that they were gold, but she did not tell her husband, saying
only: "These are so beautiful! If you see this kind of rock again, please bring them all home." The husband always took her
advice. He began bringing home chunks of gold along with bundles of sandalwood. One day, the princess decided they were
ready. The gold and precious wood was piled high. "Now I think I can place a high flag as a sign. There may be ships sailing
from other countries that will see it and come to buy from us." The ships came, the couple grew rich and famous, and within
a few years, other settlers came to join Ak Or and her husband. They themselves lived long and happily, producing many
children and grandchildren. Villages and districts developed, and all of these people loved Princess Ak Or and her husband,
who took the throne to rule over the land with his wife under the name Preah Bat Songkh Chak. The royal couple constructed
a huge fort out of bricks and stones and called its ramparts Da. The word Da means Rock. Since then the mountain has been
called Phnom Da (Rock Mountain) until this day.

When they had finished their walled city, Preah Bat Songkh Chak and Queen Ak Or ordered their subjects to build a small but
beautiful stone temple on the eastern top of the mountain to pay tribute to the honest man who had kept his promise and
redeemed Ak Or’s honor. That temple is called Prasat Phnom Da and stands to this day. And that is the legend of Phnom
beautiful stone temple on the eastern top of the mountain to pay tribute to the honest man who had kept his promise and

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**Geography Of Takeo**

Takeo province is 3,563 square kilometer big. It’s located in the South of the country bordering to the North and East with Kandal, to the West with Kampong Speu and Kampot and to the South with Vietnam. The low-lying area seems to include much of the surrounding province area, which is probably why a Kingdom that once had its heart here was referred to as Water Chenla. There seems to be water everywhere in the surrounding countryside during the rainy season.

Therefore the province consists of the typical plain wet area for Cambodia, covering rice fields and other agricultural plantations. The province also features one of the biggest rivers of the country (symbolizing the provincial border to the East), the Tonle Bassac (also known as the "Red River").

**Climate**

The country has a tropical climate – warm and humid. In the monsoon season, abundant rain allows for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops. This year-round tropical climate makes Cambodia ideal for developing tourism. Travelers need not to fear natural disasters such as erupting volcanoes or earthquakes, and the country is not directly affected by tropical storms.

Climate: Cambodia can be visited throughout the year. However, those plans to travel extensively by road should be avoided the last two months of the rainy season when some countryside roads may be impassable. The average temperature is about 27 degrees Celsius; the minimum temperature is about 16 degrees. December and January are the coolest months, whereas the hottest is April.

General information about the provincial climate:
- Cool season: November- March (22-28c)
- Hot season: March- May (28c-36c)
- Rainy season: May – October (24-32c, with humidity up to 90%)
Population

The current population in this province is about 924,758 people or 6.4% of the country’s total population (14,363,519 person in Cambodia, 2007, provincial government data), with 445,000 male and 479,758 female. The population density is therefore 259.5 people per square kilometer.

Economy

Takeo’s economy consists basically of agricultural farming, fishery, rice and fruit cropping. Especially the rural households depend on agriculture and its related sub-sectors.

Shopping

As it is quite common in Cambodia even small cities, such as Takeo have at least one bigger market (some small marts too). So you may also find a market in Takeo centre, which is a busy area with local shops dealing the local daily consumer products, like fish, fruits, vegetables, meats and packed products (also a lot from Vietnam). Most of the food and drink shops are surrounding the market.

Handcraft Souvenir:

These are Khmer Hol, Phamoung and silk kroma designed and woven in Samroang district. These products can be bought in every tourist sports and local markets. They are available at Takeo market, Angtasom market, Samroang Yaong market and other markets in Takeo province and they are found on sale any where in Cambodian market throughout the country.

They are one of Khmer identities. However, they are woven in many provinces in Cambodia.

Some of these buskets are made in some district of Takeo province such as Tramkak, Samraong, Bati...They are produced with the best quality and are useful for home decoration and uses.

Please come and visit us and buy the cheapest price products with the best quality.
Tourist Attractions in Takeo

**Angkor Borie**

Angkor Borie is a town in the area of several ruins and archaeological digs. The area contains artifacts dating from the Funan (4th/5th century) and Water Chenla (8th century) as well as the later Angkorian period. The Prasat ruins on top of nearby Phnom Da are 11th century Angkorian. There is a small museum in the town.

**Chruos Phaork**

Chruos Phaork, Takeo is one of the well known natures and wildlife preserves in Cambodia. This serene and beautiful preserve is situated in the Pou Village in Preah Bat Choan Chum Commune. Chruos Phaork, Takeo is in fact located in the Kirivong District which, in general, boasts of grand sceneries and lovely foliage.

From the Provincial town the Chruos Phaork, Takeo is about 44 kms. Tourists will find sufficient conveyance and the journey is of a duration of 1 hour approximately. In this nature and wildlife preserve the tourists will get to see a lot of greenery. The flowers here are vibrant and colorful. Sometimes the tourists will find rare plants in the locale. It is indeed a delightful venture. Like most of the other natural and wildlife tourist attractions in Takeo at the Chruos Phaork too the tourists will find rare insects and birds too.

Chruos Phaork, Takeo is the perfect example of a well balanced bio-diversity. Flora and fauna live here in a kind of symbiosis. The tourists who have been to Chruos Phaork in Takeo love to come back and those who have not undertaken the journey should do so. If you are in Takeo then you cannot afford to miss the Chruos Phaork.

**Chup Pol Temple**

Chup Pol Temple, Takeo, popularly known as Chu Pol temple, is a coveted tourist spot. Cambodia is famous for its historical sites and edifices and Takeo is no exception. Chup Pol Temple, Takeo is one such structure that throws sufficient light on the historical and cultural aspect of the place.

Chup Pol Temple, Takeo is a sacred site and the tourists make sure that they include this site in their travel itinerary. There are several tourist attractions in Takeo and they are broadly divided into historical sites and natural and wildlife preserves. The Chup Pol Temple, Takeo belongs to the category of historical buildings and sites.

Chup Pol Temple in Takeo is located in the wonderful Daun Peang Village. This village is situated in the Baray Commune region in the Daun Keo District. The reason for the popularity of this site is not just the fact that it is a historical edifice but also because it is very conveniently located. It is one of the tourist attractions in Takeo that is not more than 3 kms from the Provincial town. By car it takes hardly 5 minutes and sometimes tourists also prefer to walk all the way to the temple so that enroute they can study the surrounding locale. Chup Pol Temple is located in Daun Peang Village, Baray Commune, Daun Keo District, about 3 kilometers (4mn) from Provincial Town. It is the Historical Sites and Buildings.

**Museum**

Museum, Takeo is located in the Ang Kor Bo Rey District. It is the only museum in the province and was built by the EUROP UNION. The Museum, Takeo is repository of many ancient items and relics of Phnom Da in 16th century. While researchers are intrigued by the display, the tourists are inquisitive and admire these exhibited objects. In recent years the Museum at Takeo has been quite a crowd puller.

It was mandatory that the oldest province in Cambodia, Takeo has a museum. This is because out of the 24 provinces/Cities, Takeo has an ancient history and has been home to many settlers. Beginning from the Anachak Phnom period and extending upto the Chenla era, Takeo is now the favorite haunt of tourists. The intention of most of the tourists is to explore the province's history. Takeo province has 34 ancient temples and all of these are heritage spots. It is obvious that the region will have many relics that needed to be preserved. The Museum, Takeo serves the purpose of preserving the relics.

**Neang Khmao Temple**

Neang Khmao temple is located in Rovieng commune, Samrong district, off National Road 2, about 27 kilometers north of Takeo provincial town or about 52 kilometers south of Phnom Penh. This temple is inside Wat Neang Khmao.

Constructed of sandstone and brick in the style of Koh Ker, the temple was built by King Jayavarman IV (AD 921-941) in the 10th century for the worship of Brahmanism. The site originally consisted of three temples built side by side, however, only two are still standing, and both are heavily damaged.
There is a tale related to the Neang Khmao Temple in Takeo. Long time ago, there was a powerful King named Preah Bat Sorya Teyong, who stayed on the Chiso Mountain. One day, his 16-year-old daughter, Neang Khmao, went to Tonle Protron. Present over there was a handsome man, Bandit Srey, who instantly fell in love with her. He exhibited some magic, which made the princess fall in love with him. When the King came to know about this, he ordered that the princess be exiled, for which he built two temples. After being exiled, she met a monk named Keo, and fell in love with him. Later, Keo gave up being a monk to live happily with the princess in the temple. Since then this temple has been called the Neang Khmao Temple, Takeo. The Neang Khmao Temple, Takeo is located 52 kilometer south of Phnom Penh and is at a distance of 26 kilometers from the provincial town of Takeo. Hence, reaching this temple is not a problem at all.

Prasat Neang Khmao is located in Ro Vieng commune, Samrong district, Takeo province. The tale related to this temple is as the following: Then he told his daughter, Neang Khmao to live there. Since then, Princess Neang Khmao was very sad because of exiling and living alone and she never met her sweetheart who she heard nothing. At that time, there was a monk, Keo, who left home land to study magic. He was highly educated. He came back to home land and stayed in a place in Takeo province. The villagers dug a pond for him which was later called Srah Keo (Keo's pond) until nowadays. He stayed so long that he became well known in all villages and districts.

Having heard that, Princess Neang Khmao wanted to meet him in order to know about her sadness and happiness. So she asked the servants to arrange Royal seat on elephant's back to salute the teacher Keo. When she arrived she entered to salute the teacher Keo traditionally and she saw all appearances of teacher Keo so she forgot her old sweetheart and fell in love with teacher Keo. Since then the relationship between Princess Neang Khmao and teacher Keo was getting closer and closer that teacher Keo decided to leave from being a monk in order to be a layman to share happiness and pain with princess in the temple. Because of such a tale, that it was called Neang Khmao temple until now.

Phnom Ba Yang

Phnom Ba Yang is a historical site located in Sia village, Ro Vieng commune, Samrong district, about 43 kilometers south of Takeo provincial town or about 121 kilometers south of Phnom Penh. From Phnom Penh, take National Road 2 via Bati, Sam Raong, Daun Keo and Trang districts.

Ba Yang temple was built between AD 615 and 635 by King Pavavarman II on the top of Phnom Ba Yang, a 313-meter high mountain. Its diameter is 13 meters by 9 meters and it is 12 meters high. Constructed of laterite, brick and other stones, it is heavily damaged. Pieces of the temple litter the ground; the roof has collapsed, and the laterite rampart has been damaged. Ba Yang temple is a historical site that attracts both foreigners and Cambodians doing research about their ancestors. The road to the mountain, however, is old and difficult to access in the thick forest. The temple is reachable by climbing 390 steps. In addition to Ba Yang, there are four other temples on the mountain-Preah Kor temple, North Kanang temple, East Kanang temple and Kampoul Kanang temple. All are for Brahman worship and contain a Silva lingam.

Visitors to the site will come to understand how Cambodian history and culture was influenced by the outside world. Because without access to the mountain. However, the only people who will visit the site are researchers studying Cambodian history. In Kirivong District, there is a stream, Pha Oak, which flows 1,000 meters from its source to where people congregate to swim or bathe. The stream is 6 meters wide during the rainy season and 2 meters wide during the dry season. The sound of the water falling from the mountaintop is almost musical, and the scenery is beautiful.

Phnom Chiso (Chiso Mountain)

Phnom Chiso is a historical site located in Sia village, Ro Vieng commune, Samrong district, about 62 kilometers south of Phnom Penh or 27 kilometers north of Takeo provincial town. To reach the site, take National Road 2 to Bati district and Neang Khmao temple. Turn right at the sign for the site and head down the dirt trial for 5 more kilometers. Phnom Chiso is 130-meter-high Mountain.

Phnom Chiso temple was built in the early 11th century by King Suryavarman I (AD 1002-1050), who practiced Brahmanism. Constructed of sandstone and other stones, it is 60 meters long and 50 meters wide and sits atop a mountain. The temple is surrounded by two galleries.
The first gallery is 60 meters long on each side. The second, smaller gallery is in the middle, where there is the main worship place with two doors and a wooden statue. There are beautiful sculptures on the lintel and the pillars.

Phnom Chiso Pagoda was built in 1917, destroyed by war during the 1970s and rebuilt in 1979. Behind it is a hall called Thammasaphea, koh and a worship place. There is an ancient water tank made of concrete. People usually climb the staircase on the west side of the mountain, which has 390 steps and descend by the south side staircase, which has 408 steps. Another set of stairs in front of the temple links the temple to Sen Chhmos temple, Sen Phouvang temple and Tonie Om, a lake considered sacred by Brahmans and used for washing away sins. A large rock yard nearby about 100 meters long and 80 meters was once the site of several other temples, but only parts of these temples remain standing.

In addition, there is a mountain cave, Vimean Chan, located about 150 meters south of the temple. It is a quiet place for Brahmans or ascetics to meditate. During the Americans' war with Vietnam, the site was bombed, dislodging several large rocks that block the entrance to the cave today.

Hun Sen Phnom Chiso Agricultural and Tourist site is located in Samrong, Bati and Prey Kabas districts. It includes a 513 hectare paddy rice field of dry rice, a 1,386 hectares field of wet rice and three water basins - Thnos Ta Kong, Tuol Lok and Sen Pea Ream.

Phnom Chiso is very popular with visitors, especially during festivals, when it is very crowded. The top of the mountain affords visitors a panoramic view of Takeo Province rice paddies stretching for kilometers.

Phnom Da
Phnom Da is located in Prek Ta Pho village, Kok Thlork commune, Angkor Borei district, about 24 kilometers east of Takeo provincial town by water canal or about 102 kilometers south of Phnom Penh by the road. This part of the country is flooded six months of the year, during the rainy season, and dry the rest of the year. Phnom Da is a cultural, historical site that has been renovated to provide visitors a place to relax or research Cambodian history. The scenery is beautiful all year. In the rainy season, there is a vast water basin that produces lush, green rice paddies during the dry season.

Phnom Da temple was built on the top of a small hill in 6th century by King Rutravarman, who reigned during the Norkor Phnom period, according to the French historian Mibreno. The temple is 12 meters square and 18 meters high. It was constructed of laterite, brick and sandstone. A Brahman temple, it faces north towards Norkor Kok Thlork, which was the capital of Nokor Phnom at the time the temple was built. There is no rampart.

The temple's peak is damaged, and a sculpture depicting the story of Churning of the Ocean of Milk (Cambodian calls Ko Samutra Teuk Dos) has been broken into two parts. A lintel illustrates the figure of sleeping Vishnu. There are false doors on three sides and a real door that opens on the north side.

In the flank of the hill are five manmade caves that reflect the style of Phnom Da, which is similar to India style. In each cave, there is a Shiva lingam and Uma yoni, objects that Brahmans worship. During the Pol Pot regime, between 1975 and 1979, the caves were used as cremate places by the Khmer Rouge.

About 300 meters southwest of the temple is another smaller temple known as Asrom Moha Eysei. Built at the end of the 6th century in Zhenla Period, during the reign of King Pavavarman I, the temple has five windows and two doors. It is 5.5 meters square and 7 meters high, it is built in the Indian style and features a double wall of basalt that faces north. In 1992, a number of clergymen and nuns built a pagoda south of the hill. It is called Phnom Da pagoda. Nearly three decades of war have left the road from Phnom Chiso to Angkor Borei district in poor condition; during the rainy season, flooding makes it impassable. Nevertheless, the site attracts foreign tourists and many Cambodians interested in researching Cambodian history during the Koh Kok Thlork Period. After 1979, the Takeo provincial authority constructed a canal, Canal 15, which links Takeo provincial town to Angkor Borei district. This has made access easier since the road between Angkor Borei and Phnom Da is still difficult to travel, especially during the rainy season, when it floods.

Phnom Ta Mao (Zoo)
Phnom Ta Mao (Zoo) is located in Tro Paeng Sap village, Tro Paeng Sap commune, Ba Ti District, Takeo province. Phnom Tamao can be accessible by the National Road No 2 in 40-kilometre distance from Phnom Penh. Then turning right more five kilometers by a trail, it takes 45-minute drive from Phnom Penh. Phnom Ta Mao is a varied site consisting of temples, mountain, nature and a big zoo in Cambodia. Phnom Ta Mao has 2,500-hectar land area called forest-protected area; in this area, the Department of Forestry has taken 1,200-hectar land area for planning trees and 70-hectar land area for organizing zoo.

The 70-hectar land area consisting of five mountains namely: Phnom Ta Mao, Phnom Thmor Dos, Phnom Phdan Poan, Phnom Chhoy and Phnom Bang. Among the five mountains, two mountains have ancient temples are:
After ascending the throne of Cambodia in 1181 A.D., Jayavarman VII embarked on a massive program of construction and public works. The temple was dedicated to Brahmanism, the temple made of Thmor silt and red-solid brick, located on the peak of 30-meter mountain of Ta Mao, near Ta Mao pagoda. Now, the temple is damaged and is almost unrecognizable.

Thmor Dos Temple (is located at Phnom Thmor Dos): The temple is located on a 35-meter mountain of Thmor Dos, Northwest of Ta Mao temple and was built in 11th century. The temple made of Thmor silt mad red-solid brick. Now, most of the temples are damaged. The people want to go to this temple to worship than Ta Mao temple. In addition, Phnom Ta Mao has a big zoo in Cambodia; the zoo is under the supervision of the Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and has 84 varieties of animals and birds; two kinds of them are brought from abroad. There are 150-fourfooted animals consisting of 38 kinds. - There are 300 birds consisting of 38 kinds. - There are 30 reptiles consisting of eight kinds. All these animals are brought here by the Ministry of Agriculture and by seizing from offenders who illegally traffic in wild animals through out Cambodia. To take care these animals, we need to expend US$ 120 per day for food, and 22 staff and workers are working there.

The average number of tourists visiting Phnom Ta Mao is 500-600 visitors per week; but during the festivals, there are 7,000-8,000 visitors per week. The local people of four communes around the Phnom Ta Mao are earning money from selling food to tourists. We can extend package-tour program to the above two resorts because these resorts are the popular sites for local and international tourists, and their location is near Phnom Penh. As the sites can attract many tourists, we expect to lure investors to invest in tourist facilitation and constructing the trail from the national Road No 2 to the resorts. The Department of Forestry has a project on constructing an inside trail linking from Tonle Ba Ti to Phnom Ta Mao in Six-Kilometre distance.

Phnom Ta Mao (Ta Mao Mountian)
Phnom Ta Mao is located in Tro Paeng Sap Villag, Tro Paeng Sap commune, Bati district, about 40 kilometers south of Phnom Penh, off National Road No. 2. Turn right at the sign and travel another 5 kilometers down a dirt trail. The site features mountains, the biggest national zoo and ancient temples. There are five mountains at this site - Phnom Tamao, Phnom Thma Dos, Phnom Pdaov Pun, Phnom Chhoy and Phnom Bang. The entire site covers 2,500 hectares, most of it is the protected forest area. The Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Forestry has taken over 1,200 hectares for planting trees and the zoo.

Phnom Ta Mao National Zoo covers 70 hectares and is under the supervision of the department. It features 84 varieties of birds, quadrupeds and reptiles. The animals, which include alligators, elephants, lions, tigers and bears, were collected by the Ministry of Agriculture. Some were recovered from people illegally trafficking wildlife in Cambodia.

The two ancient temples of Phnom Tamao are:

- Tamao Temple (Phnom Tamao): Tamao temple was built in 11th century, during the reign of King Suryavarman I and Udayadityavarman II (AD 1050 - 1066) as a place for Brahmans to worship. Tamao Temple was made of silt stone and red solid brick, but is now nearly unrecognizable. The temple is located near Tamao pagoda on the top of Phnom Tamao, which is about 30 meters high.

- Thma Dos Temple (Phnom Thma Dos): Thma Dos Temple is northwest of Phnom Tamao on the 35 meter-high Phnom Thma Dos. The temple was built in the 11th century and is constructed of silt stone and red solid brick. Much of the temple is 7.5 meters squar and 13 meters high. Its design is adapted from Khliang style. This temple is more popular with visitors than Tamaao temple.

Ta Pruhm Temple
This temple, adapted from Bayon Style, was built during the late 12th and early 13th centuries, during the reign of King Jayavarman VII (AD 1181 - 1120) as a place of worship for Brahmans and Buddhists. The temple is 42 meters long, 36 meters wide and 11 meters high. Today the temple body, the gallery, the wale, the (gateway) and the moat surrounding the temple are heavily damaged. The temple was constructed of brick and laterite and devided into many rooms.

The outsite wall is decorated with bas-reliefs illustrating the Brahman story about the celestial nymph. In site the temple are five rooms and a 13th century Buddha statue that faces east. Ta Pruhm is the modern name of a temple at Angkor, Cambodia, built in the Bayon style largely in the late 12th and early 13th centuries and originally called Rajavihara. Located approximately one kilometre east of Angkor Thom and on the southern edge of the East Baray near Tonle Bati, it was founded by the Khmer King Jayavarman VII as a Mahayana Buddhist monastery and university. Unlike most Angkorian temples, Ta Pruhm has been left in much the same condition in which it was found: the photogenic and atmospheric combination of trees growing out of the ruins and the jungle surroundings have made it one of Angkor's most popular temples with visitors.

After ascending the throne of Cambodia in 1181 A.D., Jayavarman VII embarked on a massive program of construction and public works. Rajavihara ("Royal temple"), today known as Ta Pruhm ("ancestor Brahma"), was one of the first temples founded pursuant to that program. The stele commemorating the foundation gives a date of 1186 A.D. The temple's main image, representing Prajnaparamita, the personification of wisdom, was modeled on the King's mother. The northern and
southern satellite temples in the third enclosure were dedicated to the King's guru and his elder brother respectively. As such, Ta Pruhm formed a complementary pair with the temple monastery of Preah Khan, dedicated in 1191 A.D., the main image of which represented the Bodhisattva of compassion Lokeshvara and was modeled on the King's father.

The temple's stele records that the site was home to more than 12,500 people (including 18 high priests and 615 dancers), with an additional 80,000 souls in the surrounding villages working to provide services and supplies. The stele also notes that the temple amassed considerable riches, including gold, pearls and silks. Expansions and additions to Ta Pruhm continued as late as the rule of Sridravarman at the end of the 13th century. After the fall of the Khmer empire in the 15th century, the temple of Ta Pruhm was abandoned and neglected for centuries. When the effort to conserve and restore the temples of Angkor began in the early 20th century, the "cole franaise extreme-Orient decided that Ta Pruhm would be left largely as it had been found, as a "concession to the general taste for the picturesque." According to pioneering Angkor scholar Maurice Glaize, Ta Pruhm was singled out because it was "one of the most imposing [temples] and the one which had best merged with the jungle, but not yet to the point of becoming a part of it".

Nevertheless, much work has been done to stabilize the ruins, to permit access, and to maintain "this condition of apparent neglect." As of 2010, however, it seems authorities have started to take a more aggressive approach to restoration. All the plants and shrubs have been cleared from the site and some of the trees are also getting removed. A crane has been erected and a large amount of building work is underway to restore the temple, with much of the work seemingly just rebuilding the temple from scratch as at other sites. Wooden walkways, platforms, and roped railings have been put in place around the site which now blocked some of the previously famous postcard photo opportunities. The design of Ta Pruhm is that of a typical "flat" Khmer temple (as opposed to a temple-pyramid or temple-mountain, the inner levels of which are higher than the outer). Five rectangular enclosing walls surround a central sanctuary. Like most Khmer temples, Ta Pruhm is oriented to the east, so the temple proper is set back to the west along an elongated east-west axis.

The outer wall of 1000 by 650 metres encloses an area of 650,000 square metres that at one time would have been the site of a substantial town, but that is now largely forested. There are entrance gopuras at each of the cardinal points, although access today is now only possible from the east and west. In the 13th century, face towers similar to those found at the Bayon were added to the gopuras. Some of the face towers have collapsed. At one time, moats could be found inside and outside the fourth enclosure. The three inner enclosures of the temple proper are galleryed, while the corner towers of the first enclosure form a quincunx with the tower of the central sanctuary. This basic plan is complicated for the visitor by the circuitous access necessitated by the temple's partially collapsed state, as well as by the large number of other buildings dotting the site, some of which represent later additions. The most substantial of these other buildings are the libraries in the southeast corners of the first and third enclosures; the satellite temples on the north and south sides of the third enclosure; the Hall of Dancers between the third and fourth eastern gopuras; and a House of Fire east of the fourth eastern gopura.

Ta Pruhm has few narrative bas-reliefs. One explanation that has been proffered for this dearth is that much of the temple's original Buddhist narrative artwork must have been destroyed by Hindu iconoclasts following the death of Jayavarman VII. At any rate, some depictions of scenes from Buddhism mythology do remain. One badly eroded bas-relief illustrates the "Great Departure" of Siddhartha, the future Buddha, from his father's palace. The temple also features stone reliefs of devatas (minor female deities), meditating monks or ascetics, and dvarapalas or temple guardians. The trees growing out of the ruins are perhaps the most distinctive feature of Ta Pruhm, and "have prompted more writers to descriptive excess than any other feature of Angkor." Two species predominate, but sources disagree on their identification: the larger is either the silk-cotton tree (Ceiba pentandra) or thitpok Tetrameles nudiflora, and the smaller is either the strangler fig (Ficus gibbosa) or Gold Apple (Diospyros decandra). Indulging in what might be regarded as "descriptive excess," Angkor scholar Maurice Glaize observed, "On every side, in fantastic over-scale, the trunks of the silk-cotton trees soar skywards under a shadowy green canopy, their long spreading branches trailing the ground and their endless roots coiling more like reptiles than plants."

**Tonle Bati**

Tonle Bati is a popular lake and picnic area that has bamboo shacks built out over the water that people can rent out for eating and while away the day. It's generally a weekend getaway spot, which means it's nice and quiet during the week. Locals swim there, but the water does not look real inviting. There are all kinds of food and drink stands that sell everything you need for a picnic along the lake. Note that there are tours that follow you when you arrive on weekends and try to get you to go to their own place. It's best to pass right by them and find a spot on your own. Check prices beforehand on everything, they are famous for handing you an outrageously high bill when you depart. Tonle Bati is a place of worship and features two ancient temples, Ta Pruhm and Yeay Peov, and a pagoda, Wat Tonle Bati, which was built in 1576.

**Wat Phnom Khleng**

Wat Phnom Khleng, a Buddhist pagoda built in 1753, is a natural cultural site located in Prey Slek commune, Trang district, about 12 kilometers south of Takeo provincial town near National Road 2. It was a popular place for taking oaths and praying. During the Khmer Rouge regime it was used as a hospital. The red gravel at the foot of the mountain was dug to repair and construct a nearby trail. The entire site covers 11 hectares, Phnom Khleng is the middle. The hill is 30 meters high, and at the top is a new pagoda built in 1992 sponsored by Prime Minister Hun Sen.

The site attracts mostly local visitor who are superstitious and who are looking for a nice place to relax. At the top of the mountain is a granite stone from which water flows all year. Local people believe that the stone is magical.
Yeay Pov Temple is behind Wat Tonle Bati, about 100 meters from Ta Pruham temple. Constructed of sandstone in the 12th century, it is 7 meters square and faces east. Apart from the temple is a house on the bank of Tonle Bati, about 200 meters from the temple once was used by the Royal family during holidays. Today this place houses the offices of Bati Tourism Company, which controls the 9.3 hectare site. The company has erected 48 resting cottages with zinc roofs and another 40 cottages with leaf roofs along the riverside. The company has also built nine restrooms, and other restrooms are available at local people's residences.

In addition, there is also a natural lake that is 7,000 meters long. During the dry season, the lake is 1,000 meters wide and 1 to 2.5 meters deep. During the rainy season, it swells to 1,500 meters wide and is about 4 meters deep. There is a fee to enter the site. The cost for Cambodian is 1,000 riel (USD 0.25) for motorbikes and 2,000 riel (USD 0.50) for cars. The fee for resting cottages is 5,000 riel (USD 1.25) per cottage. Foreigners are charged USD 2 per person. Food can be purchased at the site. The site is very popular, attracting 500 to 600 Cambodians and 100 foreigners to visit there per week. During holidays and festivals, the number of visitors can reach 9,000 per week. The site also provided employment opportunities and a good living for the people of the nearby Thnal Teaksin and Tonle Bati villages.