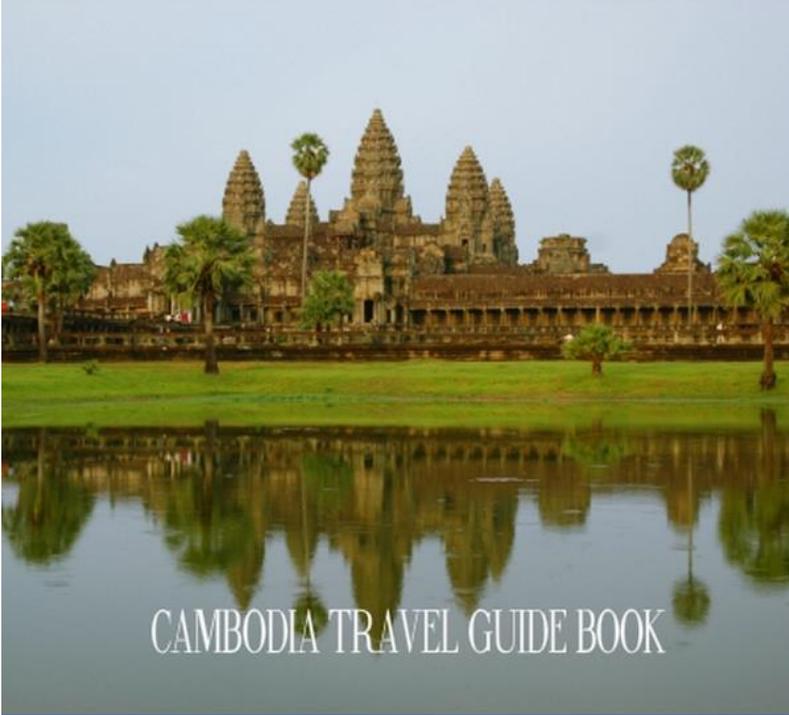


Angkor Wat Temple

By Anton Swanepoel

ANGKOR WAT TEMPLE

A Short Introduction



CAMBODIA TRAVEL GUIDE BOOK

Anton Swanepoel



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Anton Swanepoel

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Introduction

Magical Angkor Wat temple amazes more than 2 million visitors each year. However, there are more than 700 temples scattered around Angkor Wat and the nearby mountains and towns, with more than 50 temples in the Angkor Archaeological Park alone.

This book contains 37 pictures of Angkor Wat Temple, and is to serve as an introductory guide to this magnificent temple. The book will give you an excellent idea of what to expect when visiting this world-renowned temple.

Note, this book is not a full guidebook to all the temples in the Angkor Archaeological Park, but only highlights Angkor Wat Temple.

For visitors planning **one to three days** at Angkor Wat, check out [*Angkor Wat: 20 Must See Temples*](#). That book contains a 3-day itinerary of the top 20 temples you must see when visiting Angkor Wat. Each temple has a short description and suggested time to visit.

For visitors planning on spending more than three days at Angkor Wat and seeing more temples, check out, [*Angkor Wat Temples*](#). That book contains over 250 pictures, and covers 30 temples inside the Angkor Archaeological Park.

Alternatively, for travelers that wish to see more temples or temples off the beaten path, [*Angkor Wat Archaeological Park*](#) with over 50 temples and over 380 pictures is for you. Remember to allocate time for the attractions in [*Siem Reap*](#), the gateway city to Angkor Wat.

For details about visiting Cambodia, such as visas, inoculation, accommodation, etiquette, phone numbers for police and hospitals and more, see my book [*Angkor Wat & Cambodia*](#).

For readers thinking about visiting Kampot, Kep or Sihanoukville, see my book, [*Kampot, Kep, and Sihanoukville*](#), that contains over 300 pictures, and covers 95 attractions in and around Kampot, Kep, and Sihanoukville, with GPS coordinates and directions to them.

Alternatively, get the smaller books for the city you are going to.

Angkor Wat Temple

[Kep: 10 Attractions](#), [Sihanoukville: 20 Attractions](#), [Kampot: 20 Attractions](#).

If you intend to motorbike through Cambodia or Vietnam, see my books, [Motorbiking Cambodia & Vietnam](#), and [Vietnam Caves](#).

For a full list of **Cambodian** guidebooks click [here](#).

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Angkor Wat Temple

Angkor Wat Temple sit inside the Angkor Archaeological Park. The park stretches over 400 square km and contains some of the most magnificent temple remains of several capitals of the Khmer Empire that lasted from the 9th to the 15th century. The park is around 5km from the nearby town, Siem Reap, and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1992. The complex houses over 70 temples and sights. For the ultimate adventurer, see [Angkor Wat and Cambodia Temples](#). That book covers 63 of the attractions in the park. Both Buddhism and Hindu temples are found in the park, with many altered from Buddhism to Hindu, when the religion changed in the 13th century, with some changed back to Buddhism later.

The Angkorian period began in 790 when Jayavarman II became king. He established his capital in Hariharalaya, near the Roluos group temples. He later, after military setbacks, moved his capital to the Kulen Mountains, where in 802, he declared himself a God-King, and World-Emperor. The Angkor area continued to grow through the times, until 1431, when a rebellion led by Ayutthaya sacked Angkor, and caused the population to abandon the temples.

The Angkor Wat Temple is situated in the Small Circuit, also called Vong Toch. The small circuit starts at the T-junction right by the road that leads around Angkor Wat, and is 5km from national road 6 in town on the road that passes the ticket office. The small circuit road continues for 5.6km, where a T-junction is found by Srah Srang. The small circuit turns left and continues through Angkor Thom City, past Bayon and Angkor Wat temple, to loop back to the start point. At the T-junction at Srah Srang, if you turn right, you would follow the Grand circuit. Total distance of the small circuit is 17.3km with a loop from and to town making 27.3km.

Angkor Wat Temple Details

Date: First half of the 12th century.

King: Suryavarman II.

Religion: Hindu.

Style: Angkor Wat.

Time: Minimum 1 day, (suggests two half days, morning and afternoon).

Best time to visit: Early in the morning to catch the sun rising over Angkor, and late afternoon to get good pictures of the sun from behind you. To avoid the crowds, come at midday when everyone else is eating.

GPS: 13°24'45.2"N 103°51'34.1"E.

Angkor Wat (temple city) is 1.6km from the south gate of Angkor Thom City (main entrance), and is the most impressive temple in the park. The temple features on the national flag, and is a major pull for tourists to Cambodia. A 190m wide moat surrounds the complex that span an impressive 1.5km long x 1.3 km wide.

The temple is unlike other Angkor temples in orientation, facing west and dedicated to Vishnu, where other temples face east and are dedicated to Shiva. Some believe the west facing was that the temple served as a funerary temple, as the setting sun symbolizes the end of the cycle of life.

Angkor Wat is believed to represent Mount Meru, the center of the world in Hindu cosmology, with the temple's five sanctuary towers representing the peaks of the sacred mountain, while the moat represents the ocean that surrounds Mount Meru. Intricate bas reliefs that depict scenes from epic Ramayana and Mahabharata battles and events, as well as statues of female devas, draw visitors to the temple. The main entrance is on the western end by means of a 12m wide x 190m long bridge, where lions and Naga snakes guard the temple.

Angkor Wat Temple

The temple took only 35 years to build, and is an architectural wonder. The temple is in fact floating on an artificial island, with the massive surrounding moat, providing water to keep the temple floated in the dry season. This ingenious setup, allows the complex to be at ground level, without the need to be built on a mountain as other large temples, while not being affected by the shifting ground as it expands and contracts in the wet and dry season respectively.



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A 12m wide bridge span over the 190m wide moat.

After the gate, is a 350m processional causeway, elevated about 1½ meters, flanked by a library building on either side, followed by two pools.

Angkor Wat Temple



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Jan 2014.



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Workers cleaning the moat. December 2014.

Angkor Wat Temple



December 2014, moat full, and water clear. In the early morning, the sun comes up over Angkor, and is good for a view, but bad for pictures if you want to capture the iconic front, in the afternoon the sun sets behind this view and allows for excellent pictures of Angkor Wat's iconic front. Suggest to do two half days here, one morning with a sunrise; and one afternoon with a sunset.

Angkor Wat Temple



350m long causeway. The buildings on either side are libraries.



Library building, the North Angkor pagoda is to the far left, as well as the toilets, roadside Khmer restaurants, and an information office.

Angkor Wat Temple



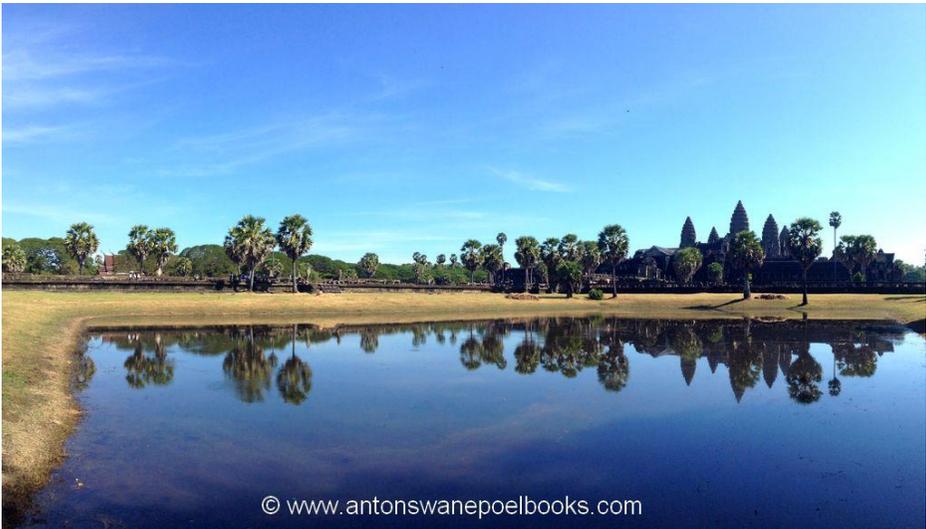
View of the front courtyard, from the temple towards the entrance.



Libraries and causeway running between them to the temple.



Angkor Wat Temple



Angkor Wat Temple



Angkor Wat Temple



The temple platform is 330m long x 255m wide.

Angkor Wat Temple



Angkor Wat Temple



Decorated ceiling tiles.

Angkor Wat Temple



Bakan

Originally, the principal sanctuary of Angkor Wat's uppermost terrace, called "Bakan", was open to the four cardinal points, and probably sheltered a statue of Vishnu. Later, when Angkor Wat became a center of Buddhist pilgrimage, the four entranceways into the central sanctuary were filled in with sandstone; each of the newly constituted walls was then sculpted with a relief of the standing Buddha. 20th-century investigations inside the sanctuary revealed multiple statue and pedestal fragments, of which two pieces are of particular note: a statue of the Buddha seated on a naga, which is now venerated in Bakan's eastern gallery, and a rectangular stone object thought to have served as a sarcophagus. A number of such objects, in which the corpse would have been placed in a foetal position, have been found in other Angkorian temples.



អង្គរវត្ត
APSARA

Please do not touch the reliefs

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Angkor Wat Temple



A 50m bas-relief showing the turning of the sea event. In total, there are some 600m of bas-relief and nearly 2000 apsaras.

Angkor Wat Temple





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Angkor Wat Temple



Buddha in central tower.

Angkor Wat Temple



Looking up at one of the corners of the central sanctuary.

Angkor Wat Temple



A 42m high central sanctuary, with Buddha statues, is situated in the middle of the Angkor Wat complex. Note, no hats or anything that covers your head are allowed (must be removed), and no open shoulders or pants and dresses that do not cover the knees. Tripods and video cameras are also not allowed.

Angkor Wat Temple



Inside the central sanctuary.



Angkor Wat Temple



Looking over the courtyard to the front gate of Angkor.

Angkor Wat Temple



Central tower on the top section of Angkor Wat Temple.



Saying goodbye to Angkor Wat temple is always difficult.

About the Author



Anton Swanepoel @ Pol Pot's house on the mountains in Thailand, and on his way to Preah Vihear Temple.

An ex software developer that left the corporate world, Anton for seven years worked as a technical diving instructor in the Cayman Islands. He is a Tri-Mix instructor for multiple agencies, and has dived to over 400ft on open circuit. While on Grand Cayman, he started his passion, writing, and currently has 20 books published.

In Jan 2014, Anton moved to Siem Reap, Cambodia, to go for his dream of being a full-time writer. Currently living cheaply off his savings, he loves to laugh, travel, and often worries too much.

Follow his adventures and share some laughs, tears, and moments of a lifetime. www.antonswanepoelbooks.com/blog.

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