

The Angkor and Jungle Tour – January 2015

Cambodian Motorcycle Adventures - <http://www.cambodiamotorcycleadventures.com/>

Tour Duration: 8 days/7 nights



Arrived in Phnom Penh on the afternoon of Tuesday 6th January, and took Billabong Hotel courtesy car to the hotel. Very busy traffic and took nearly an hour.

Unmemorable meal in the evening, but time for a massage ☺

The next day took a Tuk Tuk to The Killing Fields, which is a must but very harrowing. Pol Pot killed up to 2 million of his own people between 1975 and 1979 – anyone intellectual or in a profession was fair game for Pol Pot's ruralisation plans. Bald, glasses, speak a second language, then unlucky ☹. The Killing Tree against which babies were bashed to death just left one speechless.



After this visit we just had to lighten the mood and set off in the Tuk Tuk to the Russian Markets. Followed by a swim at the hotel and then the Romdeng Restaurant (run by students and their teachers) where Simon & John had Crispy Tarantulas followed by Red Fire Ant & Beef Stir Fry! Topped off with a few friendly beers in 104 (i.e. Pub) Street, and (yes), another massage.

Day 1 Kampong Cham (Thursday 8/1/15)

Tuk Tuks took us to the Splash Inn Hotel in Phnom Penh to meet guides Sam and Emily for the start of our motorbike tour, where we departed for Kampong Cham.



Riding a short distance northeast before crossing the Tonle Sap River on our way to the banks of the mighty Mekong River.

We stayed in the Daly Hotel in Kampong Cham – rooms nice, but otherwise a quite basic hotel without bar or food. There was a good massage for John just opposite though! Pleasant food from a restaurant run by a Frenchman just around the corner.



Day 2 Siem Reap (Friday 9/1/15)



Travel northeast to Siem Reap – a long (7.5 hour) and hot riding day to the Apsara Centrepole Hotel.

Unfortunately John did not recognise the signs of dehydration and was not too interested in food this night – and very early to bed (without even a massage). Fortunately, John feeling back to normal next day.

Day 3 Siem Reap (Saturday 10/1/15)



Today we took a packed lunch in the 4WD to visit the famous and majestic temples of Angkor. Being plebs whilst we found Angkor Wat magnificent the three hours spent there was sufficient to us. John told the guide after lunch that we wanted back to the hotel for a swim! This did mean we missed out on the “Tomb Raider Temple” – Ta Prohm at Angkor – oh, well, next time....

Time for a massage for John in the afternoon as well. Then a most pleasant meal, followed by a few beers, then off to friends of Sam’s to help celebrate his birthday.

Day 4 Battambang (Sunday 11/1/15)

Cruise southwest to Battambang taking in the scenic countryside, which is famous for its local produce and Colonial architecture. The Delux Villa, Battambang, was probably the most salubrious place we stayed in – lovely large rooms just alongside the beautiful pool.

The massage here was rather special, as also was the meal at the Jaan Bai (“rice bowl” in Khmer) Restaurant – this is the brainchild of Tara Winkler, founder of the Cambodian Children's Trust (CCT) in 2007, which supports children living in poverty. Tara was named

Young Australian of the Year in 2011 for her work. *“My hope is that Jaan Bai will not only create jobs for underprivileged youth but bring people to Battambang and boost the local economy”* says Tara.



Day 5 O'Som (Monday 12/1/15)

Journey southwest to remote O'Som, the gateway to the Cardamom Mountains, rarely visited by tourists – you can understand why from this photo!:

This was a very long day riding, with most of it on dirt roads like beaten-up fire trails, only with a steady stream of cars, trucks and buses. I don't think I have EVER been as filthy ☺.

Accommodation was in a home-stay/guesthouse. Room was fine (I had the deluxe, which just had a flooded bathroom floor, but it did have a bathroom!). Food was most acceptable and we chatted on over a few beers around the campfire.



Day 6 Koh Kong (Tuesday 13/1/15)



Travel continued south on the dirt roads through the mountainous jungle of the Cardamoms to Koh Kong, situated on the Gulf of Thailand. Accommodation was at the Thmorda Garden River Resort, Koh Kong. The rooms were fine, and the restaurant and bar location (over water) was magnificent. However, a very ordinary massage was followed by some very ordinary food. Plus, they only had a single bottle of red which was filthy – thanks to Em' for going out and picking up three bottles of most palatable

wine.

We visited the Koh Kong Casino in the evening, which is right on the Thailand border, where most of the clientele comes from – however, there were a total of less than 10 gambling in this great, imposing, barn of a place, and absolutely no one in the lounge area which had live entertainment!

Day 7 Kampot (Wednesday 14/1/15)

An easy cruise east to Kampot, famous for its world-renowned Kampot pepper with overnight stay at the Hour Keng Guesthouse. There was a hectic hour in the middle of the day whilst we were on the main port road into Phnom Penh, but we coped.

That evening we watched the fishing fleet depart for the nights catch during the cruise on the Kampong Bay River. This was John & Carol's 43rd Wedding Anniversary and John produced a bottle of champagne for a toast.



The cruise stopped at the turn-around point and a lot of the passengers (including John) took the opportunity for an impromptu swim 😊

The evening meal later included kilos of Pork Ribs – you've never seen so much meat on a "rib" – this was to die for.

John still found time for a massage later in the evening 😊



Day 8 Phnom Penh (Thursday 15/1/15)

A short ride from Kampot brought us to Kep for Brunch at a renowned seafood restaurant where we had a Seafood Buffet, including delicious Garlic Prawns and Blue Mana Crab.

We then continued on our way back to Sam & Em's base at their house in Phnom Penh. This was probably the most demanding day traffic wise, with a relatively high speed dash along the M3 which was chockers with bikes, cars, trucks, buses and lorries. After a late lunch at Sam & Em's, we took Tuk Tuks back to the Billabong for our overnight stay. This was the end of our magic eight day motorbike tour of Cambodia, which can be heartily recommended.

A most pleasant Italian evening meal at La Croisette, with a lovely bottle of South African Red, was followed by a few beers in The Bunny Bar in 104 (aka "Pub") Street, followed by a massage before bed.

On Friday 16th A leisurely morning around the pool at The Billabong and a bit of Central Market shopping was followed by taxi to Phnom Penh airport for flights back to Perth via Kuala Lumpur. John and Simon managed to get Business Class on the 5.5 hour red-eye KUL > PER leg 😊

More photos will be found at:

https://picasaweb.google.com/103938275599403104677/2015_0117Cambodia