Touring the Kingdom of Cambodia

By Joe Keo
The Tattoo

Cambodia isn’t all rice paddies and dirt. It does have some interesting sites and a few mesmerizing tourist attractions.

Phnom Penh, the capital, is like New York City minus the tall buildings and put into a blender with rice and noodles. Mix it all together you get your typical Southeast Asian city.

Street carts everywhere, filled with fruits and vegetables, block the entrances into cell phone shops. Motorbike taxis and scooters and bicycle pedals cover the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be there – I was blown away.

I left a note under a stone that I had admired in postcards back home. Hopefully it’s still there. If it isn’t, I have videotaped proof that I left it there.

In the suburban Siem Reap, universities and street signs tout “Popular Brands.” Shops have signs touting “Big Boy,” “Wang’s Fortune,” “Popular Brands.” Billboards and street signs are in English, but they do not use the right script. I was even snapped some photos of Angkor Wat on a Wrigley’s Doublemint gum wrapper I had in my pocket and placed it underneath a stone.

I was surprised when a tourist asked to touch the temples. The fanning of their heavenly hands at the temples. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be there – I was blown away. It’s said to be the largest religious monument ever built.

I could see the main roads that connect the major cities and the many rice paddies of the area. Buses and trucks drove by, and there was no traffic. The temple’s many towers soar against the country’s mountainous evergreen forest, the central landmark. I was in a trance and my heart was beating fast.

I walked along a quiet road, and the only sounds were the sound of nature. It was beautiful, just like the black market, police and guards are on strict patrol throughout the area, and even some hold guns.

If you’re planning to visit Cambodia anytime soon, check out Siem Reap and the Angkor Ruins, or cruise the streets of Phnom Penh on the back of a motorbike.

You’ll see poverty-stricken areas, but you’ll also see some of the most beautiful sights in the world.

Nearby Angkor Thom (meaning “Great” or “Big Angkor”) was awesome. I had fun walking through some ancient ruins that I had admired in postcards back home.

There are as many perfect temples and monuments throughout the ancient city that I only got to see a handful. Seeing all of Angkor is said to take a month or more. I wished I had that much time, but I got sleepy after arbors.

Now a Buddhist pilgrimage and tourist attraction, it’s kept under constant watch and tight security.

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I was happy I had a chance to be there.

Cambodia isn’t all rice paddies and dirt. It does have some interesting sites and a few mesmerizing tourist attractions.

French tourists to tour buses stopped here and there, blocking local traffic and causing traffic jams. These tourists were classified as mere monkeys in their French accents and others walked around with cameras, taking photos.

The people in the city were friendlier and the monkeys more manageable. There was no hassling and I got some good deals on some hot street rice.

Only recently has the Cambodian government put a full task force on the job to conserve the temples.

Thousands of tourists from as far as Japan, Canada, France, India and Russia come to Cambodia to see this great achievement in ancient architecture.

When I climbed to the ancient Phnom Bakheng, I could see the temple on a hill, reorienting the city – I was blown away.

I thought to myself how lucky I was to have the one-occasion opportunity to be there, indulging in my culture.

The path was steep and steep. There were elephants that would bring you up, but I decided that I would get more of a workout hiking up it myself.

At the top, the views are comforting and cool.

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Near Siem Reap is a small city with the ancient city of Angkor Wat, the temple. It is heaven, just like the cities back home in America.

Cambodia online
For more information on Cambodia, you can check out these web sites:
http://www.military.com/cambodia/
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/cambodia
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/cambodia
http://www.houstonplanet.com/destinations/cambodia
http://www.livesize.com/cambodia
Library of Congress
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http://www.cambodiapost.com/
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