


# Four Reasons Why Cambodia Needs To Be on Every Traveler's Bucket List



**Shivani Vora** Contributor 

Travel

*I cover travel trends and wellness and family travel.*



## [Gallery: Four Reasons Why Cambodia Needs To Be on Every Traveler's Bucket List](#)

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Until recently, Angkor Wat has always been Cambodia's biggest draw. Situated in Siem Reap, the sprawling temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the largest religious monuments in the world and was originally built in the 12th century as a Hindu temple. Traditionally, travelers tack on a few days in Siem Reap to see the impressive site as part of a larger trip to Southeast Asia, according to Dianna Upton, a Cambodia expert at [Travel Beyond](#), a luxury travel agency in Wayzata, Minnesota. "It's always been included as part of a circuit of countries to hit in the region," she says.

Today, Cambodia is an add-on destination no more and has a fresh appeal that goes well beyond Angkor Wat: with a growing number of attractions from north to south and a new riviera to boot, the country is on the cusp of being Asia's next new "it" destination. "To see and fully appreciate the Cambodia of today, give yourself at least a week and ideally ten days," says Upton. "It's flourishing and vibrant and worthy of its own trip."

Below, four reasons why Cambodia should be on every traveler's must-visit list:

## SIEM REAP'S ART SCENE



An exterior shot of the One Eleven Gallery. (ANTAL GABELICS)

Siem Reap is home to a burgeoning contemporary arts scene that includes both local and expat artists. “You have great galleries displaying art and plenty of opportunities to meet with the artists themselves,” says local art specialist Robina Hanley. Through her company [Siem Reap Art Tours](#), Hanley offers behind-the-scenes private tours that take travelers to these galleries and even to the homes and ateliers of some of the hottest painters and sculptors in town. The tours are usually between three and four hours long and typically begin at her own gallery, [One Eleven Gallery](#). Here, travelers can sit back with a glass of wine or a gin and tonic (there’s a full bar) or even a coffee while Belgian artist Christian Develter presents his latest work- most recently, he created pieces based off of the facial tribal tattoos of the Chin Tribe in Myanmar who adorn themselves with designs like spider webs or the sun.

Other stops on the tour vary depending on the medium of art that Hanley's guests are most interested in. Some of her recommendations include Theam's House, built and operated by Lim Muy Theam. The sprawling home is full of works by contemporary Khmer artists and also has a museum dedicated to Cambodian artifacts and history. Not to mention, it's legitimately also Theam's house. "It's one of the galleries of its kind in Cambodia," Robina said. Theam's family escaped the reign of the Khmer Rouge and was one of the first to be admitted into France as refugees. There, Theam studied interior design but soon transitioned into making art on his own. He then returned to Cambodia in the 90s to teach the next generation of artists in traditional styles.

[Batia Sarem Gallery](#), open only since December, is another of Hanley's favorites. The art on display rotates: currently, for example, the gallery is hosting an exhibition of a husband and wife team, Svay Sareth and Yim Maline. Sareth is a talented sculptor, creating works that reflect his childhood under the Khmer Rouge, while Maline is proficient in many styles of painting and drawing. "They're very unique artists, and It's the first time they've ever had a show together," says Hanley.

Most of Hanley's tours end at [Treeline Urban Resort](#), located just by Siem Reap River, and a hotel cum art space in one. The public spaces are like museums and display works by renowned artists, both local and international. The kicker is a drink, maybe two, at the property's rooftop bar overlooking the city/