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Home > Southeast Asia >

These 3 Chefs Are Pioneering Vegan-Friendly Cuisine in Siem Reap



By **Green Queen Team**

Published on **Mar 10, 2021**

SOUTHEAST ASIA **TRENDS** **VEGAN DINING**

Last updated **Mar 11, 2021**



5 Mins Read

Vegan travel writer & luxury travel specialist Paul Eysers has called Siem Reap home since January 2014. He has personally visited over 130 luxury hotels and resorts throughout Southeast Asia, experiences he chronicles on his Vegan Food Quest blog and as a contributor to A Luxury Travel Blog, a leading online high-end travel publication. Through his writing, he hopes to raise awareness and increase the availability of vegan and plant-based food throughout the hospitality industry in the region. Occasionally, he even works with hotels and restaurants F&B teams, offering menu consultancy and general training on how to best address the needs of a growing audience of meat-free travellers and diners.

We asked Paul to recommend his favourite vegan-friendly chefs in Siem Reap, because, well, who better? Below he shares his picks and some context for the city's plant-based dining scene with Green Queen.

By Paul Eysers

As the home to Angkor Wat and the stunning jungle temples on the outskirts of town, Siem Reap in Cambodia is a bucket list destination for many. In recent years as tourist numbers grew, so did the availability of plant based food in line with the worldwide explosion in veganism. Sadly, COVID-19 has pressed the pause button for tourism which has seen hotels and restaurants in Siem Reap struggling to survive, with many closing permanently. Prior to this temporary tourism hiatus, there were five all vegan restaurants in town, but at the time of writing each and every one has closed their doors. However, all is not lost, there are still plenty of choices in town from accidentally vegan street food to vegan fine dining, meaning that vegans and plant based food lovers can still be sure to enjoy a variety of exciting options.

Three of our favourite plant based pioneers in Siem Reap are all talented Khmer chefs. During these tough times, they have continued to innovate and create a selection of plant based dishes which keep us coming back for more. They each have restaurants within a few hundred metres of each other yet all have their own unique styles. They seem to thrive on their communal success whilst inspiring each other to continue to raise the bar with new dishes and creations. In a competitive industry and in a town that is suffering economically, these 3 talented chefs have remained friends and support each other in any way that they can. For these reasons, it's hard not to like them, and when you add the fact that their food is pretty damn impressive it's easy to understand how they are managing to survive against all odds.



Chef Chantrea Khoy

Chef Chantrea Khoy at HOK Noodle Bar

Chef Chantrea Khoy is the executive chef at Treeline Urban Resort and HOK Noodle Bar. With plant based options throughout the hotel, including a vegan breakfast menu that features the most delicious 'Vegan Bangers and Hash', this is one seriously vegan friendly luxury hotel. It's one of our go to staycation spots and you can read a detailed review from one of our stays [here](#).



HOK Bangers & Hash

Diners at HOK Noodle Bar can choose from an exciting array of vegan dishes, with one of our favourites being a refined version of 'Nom Krok', which are a street food staple in Cambodia and Southeast Asia.

HOK Noodle Bar + Grill, Treeline Urban Resort: Achasva Street, Wat Bo Village, Siem Reap, Cambodia.



Chef Pola Siv

Chef Pola Siv at Banlle Vegetarian Restaurant

Chef Pola Siv is the owner and chef at Banlle Vegetarian Restaurant which is located in a converted Khmer wooden house, surrounded by an organic vegetable garden. We love the location and we love the vegan food at this veggie spot where the majority of the dishes are vegan.



Banlle's Nom Banh Chok

Pre COVID-19 the menu was full of dishes that appealed to tourists; burgers, banana flower fish and chips, pasta and pad Thai alongside a selection of Cambodian dishes. Chef Pola has flipped that during COVID-19 with the menu now packed with veganised Cambodian classics. His innovation and willingness to adapt now sees him with many more local diners which is great to see.

Banlle Vegetarian Restaurant: Street 26, Siem Reap, Cambodia.



Chef Seiha Chomnab

Chef Seiha Chomnab at JOMNO Street Food

Last and by no means least, is Chef Seiha Chomnab, the owner and chef at JOMNO Street Food, an omni restaurant with exciting vegan options. His creative style of presentation and 'East meets West' fusion cuisine looks good and certainly tastes good too. Regular specials are offered in addition to the a la carte menu and each of them is well thought out and perfectly balanced.



JOMNO Vegan Tuna

Our favourite dishes include taro cake with tofu in a light curry sauce and watermelon tuna with lentils, both of which feature in a short film we made alongside each of the chefs mentioned above.

JOMNO Modern Khmer Cuisine: Wat Damnak Road, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Siem Reap is home, and after more than five years of living here, our adopted hometown is as exciting as it was on the day that we arrived. The temples and surrounding jungle never fail to amaze us with their beauty and vastness whilst chefs like those mentioned above ensure that we are never short of delectable plant based food. Let's hope you add Siem Reap to your list and pay us a visit when travel is once again possible!

Follow A Vegan Food Quest on Facebook and Instagram for news and updates.

All images courtesy of Paul Eyres/Vegan Food Quest.



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Cambodia

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HOK Noodle Bar