

An invitation to experience
Cambodia's transformation
through the arts



CAMBODIAN
LIVING ARTS

Cultural Delegation

Arts for Transformation:
Celebrate 50 Years of Cultural
Resilience and Revival

November 15-24, 2025



An Invitation

This November, from the 15th to the 24th, we would like to invite you to be part of a remarkable journey that honors Cambodia's incredible story of cultural survival and renewal. This year's cultural delegation under the theme **"Arts for Transformation: Celebrate 50 Years of Cultural Resilience and Revival"** will explore how arts have not only endured but thrived in the face of unimaginable challenges in a post-conflict setting.

Fifty years ago, Cambodia faced one of its darkest chapters. Genocide resulted in the tragic loss of millions of lives. Civil and property rights were immediately abolished, and all public cultural expressions were prohibited. Ninety percent of Cambodia's musicians, dancers, teachers, and instrument makers were lost, causing deep trauma and damage.

Since 1979, we have struggled with the slow and challenging reconstruction of society, including the arts infrastructure. The impact of the genocide on the arts was profound, as most of our culture was passed down orally or through demonstration.

2025 is a milestone year and a remarkable journey for every Cambodian citizen worldwide, and through the diverse participation of stakeholders, Cambodia has found peace and thrived again. For the past remarkable three decades, we have seen progress, with a new generation of strong and creative Cambodians keen to rebuild society and revive their culture and arts. The emergence of young creatives and growing grassroots organizations demonstrates the crucial role of art in societal and cultural development. Cambodia has witnessed the remarkable emergence of a new generation of artists and cultural practitioners who have rebuilt and revitalized the nation's creative landscape.

Through our thoughtful curation, the cultural delegation is an opportunity to witness that reemergence firsthand. We will showcase a variety of activities, ranging from meeting our master artists who kept traditions alive to prevent them from disappearing, connecting with contemporary artists redefining Cambodian culture, and witnessing how the next generation of the Cambodian diaspora worldwide is reconnecting with their cultural roots, introducing unique creative ideas and a blend of cultural identities. This diversity reflects the global resonance of Cambodia's cultural tapestry. It demonstrates the role of art and creativity in this resurgence, with the vibrant art scene mirroring the inspiring energy of the Cambodian people, the country, and the Khmer diaspora today.

Over ten days, as we reflect on this transformation, we'll travel through three significant cities: Siem Reap, Battambang, and Phnom Penh. Each of these cities offers a unique perspective into Cambodia's cultural journey. From ancient temple complexes to contemporary art spaces, from traditional performances to new creative works, each experience reflects our journey of cultural preservation, renewal, resilience, and creativity that reflects the current society.

As we commemorate this significant milestone, we invite you to witness and celebrate the preservation of traditions and the growth of new artistic voices. We will celebrate how art has been a force for healing, memory, and hope, and how Cambodia's cultural identity continues to evolve in inspiring ways.

Join us on this transformative journey as we honor Cambodia's cultural legacy. For registration details or inquiries, please contact us at development@cambodianlivingarts.org. Together, we'll witness the power of arts in healing, preserving, and shaping our nation's future.



Phlocun PRIM
Executive Director
Cambodian Living Arts





Our Itinerary

This 9-day tour offers a unique opportunity to experience Cambodian life and culture through the lens of the arts and the artists, students, and leaders who are creating it. Our itinerary includes major highlights across Siem Reap, Battambang, and Phnom Penh, with some wonderful surprises along the way. Additionally, we plan a balance of optional activities and opportunities during your free time so you can dive deeper or explore independently. We work closely with our local artists and partners to ensure we provide you with a truly unforgettable, immersive experience.



DAYS 1-4

Our journey starts in Siem Reap, site of the breathtaking temples of Angkor. The province has a long, rich tradition of artistry, and given its historical significance, it is no surprise that it is home to many historical and cultural experts and traditional musicians.



DAYS 5-6

We travel on to Battambang, a charming and peaceful city with unique architecture and a lively visual arts scene. Battambang is also where our founder Arn CHORN-POND spent his childhood in the late 1960s and early 1970s.



DAYS 7-9

Phnom Penh is modern Cambodia's cultural, commercial, and political center, and home to CLA's main office and team. We complete our journey here, meeting some of the country's most innovative and recognized artists, as well as some of the young students of the next generation.

DAYS 1-4

Siem Reap



Famous for Angkor Wat, Siem Reap is also a center for the traditional arts, and home for many emerging artists and cultural practitioners. The country's premier travel destination, the city has something for everyone including spectacular sights, delicious cuisine, and unique entertainment.



ANGKOR GONDOLA TOUR

Angkor Gondola is a unique Khmer traditional boat service located by the South Gate of Angkor Thom on a small *baray*, a type of reservoir typical of ancient Khmer water management. Enjoy gliding gently along, as the sun begins to go down over the gate of Angkor Thom. After the boat, there is an option to take a gentle hike to the historical ruins of *Prasat Chrung*, where you can relax and watch the sunset.



Discover Angkor's Secrets and its community

Explore the immense temple complex of Angkor Wat, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This opportunity to travel back in time to the Khmer Empire serves as a great introduction to a number of Khmer artistic masterpieces set in stone and brick from the 9th to 14th centuries.

ANGKOR WAT

A must see for any visitor, Angkor Wat is surrounded by a moat and crowned by five lotus-like towers rising from ground level. The walls of the temples are adorned with bas-reliefs and carvings, depicting stories and characters from Hindu mythology and representing some of the finest Angkorian-era art.

TA PROHM

This temple has been relatively untouched in an effort to preserve rather than restore. The beauty of Ta Prohm is a result of the elements, with massive trees taking root on and around the ancient structures.

LARGE SHADOW PUPPETS

The art of large shadow puppetry is one of the Kingdom's oldest traditions, believed to have developed during the pre-Angkorian period. These large puppets are made of cowhide leather that is carefully cut by hand to make the characters and scenes from the Reamker, the classic Cambodian retelling of the Hindu Ramayana epic.

VILLAGE CONCERTS WITH THE KMMB

The Khmer Magic Music Bus, a program of CLA, arranges concerts in remote locations. You will join a KMMB Village Concert in the countryside outside Siem Reap, enjoying the show alongside the local community. The program will include a large shadow puppet performance.

Discover Floating Villages and Tonle Sap Lake

See the best of birding, wildlife, and nature, in the real places of Cambodia. Go places that are 'off the beaten track' such as wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas as well as the more famous 'must-see' destinations.



Diverse Performances and Experiences



AN UPLIFTING WORKSHOP AND LIVELY PERFORMANCE

All-female troupe Medha presents the aspirations, experiences, and relationships of young Cambodian women through traditional art forms - dance, drums, and chanting - original compositions and choreographies, and contemporary storytelling. These multi-talented performers will take you on an engaging and inspiring journey; you won't be able to stop yourself from clapping along with them!



ARTS COMMUNITY DINNER

Siem Reap is indeed the cultural hub of Cambodia, with plenty of temples and ancient history as well as a thriving community of cultural workers and artists. Along with a delicious dinner, we will bring you to meet artists, cultural entrepreneurs, performance troupes, and organizations working to transform the sector.



DAYS 5-6

Battambang



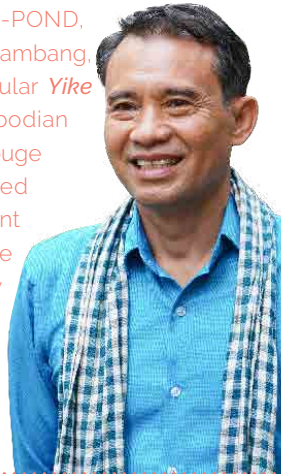
DAYS 5-6

Battambang



Arn's homeland

Our founder, Arn CHORN-POND, spent his early years in Battambang, where his family ran a popular *Yike* company, a type of Cambodian theater. During the Khmer Rouge regime, he was separated from his family and was sent to a child labor camp in the countryside. During our stay in Battambang, Arn will share on some of his memories of the city.



THE KHMER MAGIC MUSIC BUS

Arn spends much of his time in Cambodia touring with the Khmer Magic Music Bus, his latest CLA initiative to get traditional music out into villages that would otherwise lack access to it. Traditional songs and dances remain popular around the country, attracting young and old alike.

Battambang is known for its charming, laid-back atmosphere. Its beautiful architecture reflects the different phases of its history with New Khmer, French-Classical, and traditional Khmer homes and buildings lining either side of the river. Battambang is also Cambodia's visual arts and circus hub.

Emerging artists

Battambang captivates visitors with a buzzing visual arts scene, and is home to many young and emerging artists. A Battambang resident will guide you through its galleries and historic sites, meeting local artists and gaining insight into the life experiences that shape their emerging work. Phare Ponleu Selpak, an organization providing arts education to disadvantaged youth, is also based in Battambang.

Art for sale

For those interested in purchasing an original work to recall your artistic exploration of Cambodia, many of the visual artists we will meet will have work for sale. Most galleries are able to ship internationally.

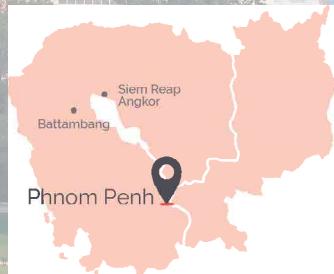


DAYS 7-9

Phnom Penh

Private Performance by Royal Dance School

HRH Princess Norodom Bopha Devi was one of the most renowned and beloved classical dancers of Cambodia. After she died in 2019, her brother Prince Tesso Sisowath was moved to preserve her legacy and established the "Norodom Bopha Devi Dance School". In this exclusive performance, the best students of the school will perform for you. We guarantee you will be captivated by the expressive movements, postures and intricate techniques of this UNESCO-listed art form.



DAYS 7-9

Phnom Penh

The country's capital and the base for most of our operations, bustling Phnom Penh has a lot to offer in history, culture, and entertainment. In the midst of rapid change, the city now has excellent restaurants and hotels, yet is still considered one of the friendliest capitals in Asia. This is an opportunity to see Cambodia come into its own.



EXPLORE THE COMMUNITY

You will meet Song Sopheak, a theater director and the founder of the Khmer Art Action theater company. We will visit the theater that Sopheak built for his community. Set in a clearing in the woods, this unique bamboo structure reflects Sopheak's passion for arts and creativity.



DAYS 7-9

Phnom Penh



CAMBODIA MUSEUM OF ECONOMY AND MONEY (SOSORO)

A museum with cutting-edge museography and features that are both modern and interactive. This has made the museum very appealing to the younger generation, who are eager to come and discover what SOSORO has to offer. The museum provides a comprehensive overview of Cambodia's entire history, demonstrating the interdependence of the economy, society, politics, and money over the last 2,000 years.



Riverside reflection

No trip to Cambodia would be complete without experiencing the famous Mekong River. As we near the end of our journey, the group will come together with some of the artists and partners we've met along the way at a beautiful riverside home for some final reflections.

Khmer Instrument Workshop

We provide participants with the opportunity to witness the real practice, technique, and process by which artists create Khmer musical instruments for a wide range of historic and traditional instruments. This is the main part of the trip where we want participants to experience the reality behind the stage where our artists are working to preserve and promote our historical musical instruments on a daily basis.

Art & Architecture Tour

Phnom Penh is rich in artistic and cultural sites which Delegates will have the chance to explore in the company of the artists and cultural leaders who have shaped them. Key stops include Cambodia Museum of Economy and Money, a classic example of 1960s New Khmer Architecture and a long-time home to a diverse arts community, as well as the Royal University of Fine Arts, a beautiful 100-year old campus in the center of the city providing over 1000 students a fitting locale to learn dance, music, visual arts, sculpture, architecture, and more.





EXPLORE EXTRAORDINARY CULINARY EXPERIENCES

A new culinary complex, unique in South East Asia, has opened outside of Phnom Penh. Two antique wooden houses from the 1930s from Battambang and Siem Reap have been dismantled, rebuilt, and repurposed. Chef Nak's five-course meal at this lovely new establishment has already been named one of the 14 best dining experiences in the world by Travel and Leisure Magazine. Chef Nak's passion for Cambodian food and commitment to its preservation, development, and global promotion began as a child, when she absorbed her mother's love of cooking.



With all of its wonderful sights, adventures and people – focused around the arts of Cambodia, it was an experience not otherwise possible to normal tourism.”

- Martin Noretzky

“This trip was life changing for me in so many ways. The richness of the experience is almost overwhelming!”

- Jessica Wasilewski, 2017 Delegate

CLA TEAM

Many of our team members will be present during the Cultural Delegation, including our Executive Director, Founder, and some members of our Board of Directors. You will get a chance to meet CLA's front-line staff and learn more about our work, placing the thought-provoking experiences from our trip into context.

ARTFUL ACCOMMODATION

As you journey through Cambodia's art scene, we will accommodate you in some of the country's charming hotels. There will be plenty of time to unwind and sample Cambodian hospitality at its finest, where you will enjoy a blend of iconic hotels that are renowned for their heritage, art, and architecture. Or, take a break by the pool or visit a relaxing spa. Whatever you need, we've got you covered.

CHILD PROTECTION

Cambodia is a developing country with many vulnerable children. We take child protection exceptionally seriously, and all our staff have taken part in Friends International Child Safe training. Our hotels are all endorsed by Friends International Child Safe. We do not include orphanage visits in our itineraries. For further information on child protection in Cambodia, please visit friends-international.org

COSTS

\$5,500 per person for your trip costs + a minimum donation of \$1,000 to Cambodian Living Arts (\$1,500 for a couple)

** There is no single supplement for this trip*

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

- Accommodation (in high-end boutique hotels)
- All breakfasts, at least 7 lunches and at least 8 dinners when the group is together.
- All group activities
- Entrance tickets
- Guide Fees
- Angkor Wat Temple Complex pass
- Domestic travel in private air-conditioned bus with driver
- Unlimited filtered water during the visits

EXCLUSIONS

- International and Domestic Flights
- Airport transfers
- Visas - entrance into Cambodia
- Medical Vaccinations
- Travel insurance
- Occasional meals when the group is not together
- Tips for guides
- Personal expenses (drinks, laundry, etc.)

Cultural Delegation

CONTACT US

To sign up or for more information, please visit our website at:

<https://www.cambodianlivingarts.org/en/news/cultural-delegation/>

We also organize custom art-focused trips for families and school groups at any time of year. If you'd like to experience the arts and culture of Cambodia with us for a day, or a whole immersive trip, please contact us and we will help make your next trip a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

MORE ABOUT CAMBODIAN LIVING ARTS

Our mission is to be a catalyst in a vibrant arts sector, inspiring new generations. We aim to promote creativity and innovation in the arts sector, build links with our neighbors in the Asian region, and support arts and culture education in Cambodia. We believe that through creativity we can each expand our potential as human beings.

We have been working in Cambodia since 1998, and are a registered US non-profit organization with Section 501(c)(3) status.



.....
© Photo Credits: Chean Long, Long Lysong, Craze, Mckay Savage, Choeun Socheata, Keat Sokim, Anders Jiras, Sangker Gallery, Laura Petit, Belle.

CAMBODIAN
LIVING ARTS