

CAMBODIA

Kampot & Battambang



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Cave of
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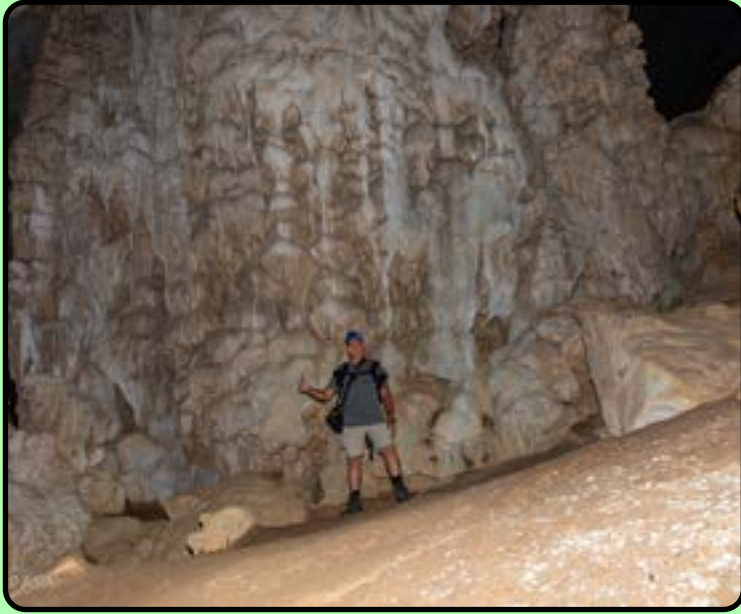
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FOREWORD



Thanks for downloading this FREE interactive travel guide. You've made an excellent choice if you plan on **GETTING OFF THE BEATEN TRACK** in (LOCATION). Before you delve into the content of this travel guide, please take a few minutes to read this foreword. It outlines how to make the best use of the information contained within.

First-hand experience: This travel guide has been put together using first-hand experience gained from traveling to, and exploring, all the locations presented within. The information and photos featured in my travel guides, have been collated over years of putting boots on the ground. There is no second-hand information, or information which is plagiarized from other travel sources, within this guide. Every cave, waterfall, river, viewpoint, jungle trail, temple site, guesthouse and restaurant presented, or promoted, I have been to and seen and/or experienced myself.

Getting off the beaten track: The primary focus of my travel guides is **ADVENTURE TRAVEL** (and activities) to locations which are non-mainstream tourist destinations. As an example, there is no information for the mainstream tourist locations of **CAMBODIA** (except as transit hub's before heading off to a more remote location) listed in this travel guide. As such, the information in this guide is directed towards travelers (not tourists) who

are keen for a bit of adventure - caving, climbing, jungle trekking, kayaking - in an off the beaten track location, of South East Asia. If these types of activities aren't to your liking, then this travel guide won't be much use to you. There's no information in here about the party towns in South East Asia.

Budget travel: Knowing the importance of making the most of your hard-earned currency, my travel links ([12GO ASIA](#)) and accommodation links ([AGODA](#)) are predominantly budget oriented. They provide a range of options for getting to a central hub, or base, from which you can make your daily explorations.

Independent sightseeing: Instead of going on group tours, I strongly promote the idea of renting your own vehicle (car or motorbike) and venturing out yourself. To help you get to the exact location, there's always a [GOOGLE MAPS](#) link to show the route from a hub (hotel or guesthouse) to the sightseeing attraction. If there's a local tour operator offering excellent adventure type tours, or activities, I'll provide links to their website. A good example of a great adventure tour operator is [GREEN DISCOVERY LAOS](#), who offer excellent caving, kayaking and trekking tours throughout Laos.

The Table of Contents: This is page four of the travel guide and has a sequential list of sections, which you can go to directly by clicking on the **GREEN** numbered tab.

YouTube Links: These take you directly to my YouTube Vlog ([Megaworld Asia](#)) where you can see short, high quality travel videos of the numerous attractions listed in my travel guides. If you enjoy the videos, please hit the like button and don't forget to subscribe to see my upcoming adventures.

Your next adventure is just one click away

Safe travels,

MEGA

Kampot & Battambang

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**Your Next Adventure
Is Just One Click Away**

How To Use This Interactive Travel Guide

The Table Of Contents: To effortlessly move from the TOC to the page you want to view, simply click on the **page number**: 

YouTube Links: These will take you to a short highlights video, of the sightseeing attraction, in the section you're looking at:



Other Links: These take you to ancillary services such as recommended restaurants, or car and motorbike rental agencies, in the location you're traveling to:

ANCILLARY SERVICES

Travel Links: This takes you to **12GO ASIA**, an excellent travel group which provides a range of options for getting around the region:



The Table Of Contents: To move back to the TOC, click on the **yellow arrows**, at the bottom of each Page: 

Google Maps Links: These provide a route from a designated location (e.g., a hotel) to a particular sightseeing attraction:



Information Links: These links take you to information sites, such as Wikipedia or Wiki-voyage, to provide more in-depth info on a particular subject or location:



Accommodation Links: This takes you to the Agoda website to check accommodation availability and make bookings:



It's Time To Get Off The Beaten Track



KAMPOT - GENERAL INFORMATION

About: Kampot is a coastal province located approx. 150 km southwest of Phnom Penh. Due to the over-development of nearby Sihanoukville, it's becoming more popular with foreign tourists (and residing expats) looking for a more idyllic (less developed) location to spend some time on the southern coast of Cambodia. The main attractions are the riverfront area (eastern side), the nearby BOKOR NATIONAL PARK, and some interesting cave sites to the east of the city.

Getting there: The primary method of getting to Kampot, from PHNOM PENH, is by bus. In this regard, GIANT IBIS is one of the best bus companies in Cambodia and they provide comfortable transportation to most locations around the country. They also provide a pickup service from your hotel. The trip to kampot takes 3.5 hours with a 10 minute toilet stop at the mid-point of the trip. There is WIFI on-board the bus, but the connection is poor. **Click on the following link for transportation options from Phnom Penh to Kampot:**

Accommodation: The most popular accommodation area in kampot, is along the eastern river front where there's plenty of Guesthouses, hostels, and budget (2 star) options available. **Click the following link for a map of the riverfront area:**



Mid-range option: If you're looking for something a bit more comfortable (3 star) then the SUNNY HOTEL is a good choice. This hotel is just a five minute walk from the riverfront restaurant area. It's a Khmer style hotel with large, comfortable, a/c rooms and they also serve a reasonable standard of breakfast. For those who don't like climbing stairs with their bags, this hotel also has a lift. **Click the following link for booking inquiries at the Sunny Hotel:**



The riverfront road

KAMPOT - GENERAL INFORMATION

Getting around: The majority of tourists/ travelers coming to Kampot generally go with one (or both) transportation options. The first is the DIY approach: rent a motorbike (scooter) to get around independently. Most guesthouses will have motorbikes for rent, or can get one for you at short notice. The normal rental rate is USD 8 - 10 per day. The second popular option is to employ the services of local tuk-tuk for your sightseeing trips. Depending on where you're going (the distance) tuk-tuk hires can be USD 15 - 30 per day.

Kampot Riverfront: This is the main tourist/ foreigner area in Kampot. There's a 1 km strip along the eastern edge of the river which has been developed for walking/sightseeing, and eating, and drinking. The river's edge has a wide, paved walkway which allows plenty of views over the river and this is a popular location at sunset and in the early evening.

Night life area: There's plenty of bars, restaurants, and café's lining the edge of the riverfront road (south of ETANOU BRIDGE). There are also two parallel streets which run back from the riverfront road (opposite STARBUCKS FISH-MARKET) which have developed into an adult entertainment strip (girly bars). These are probably hangout locations for the resident expats who fled



Sihanoukville when the Chinese developers moved in there. Whatever the case, the riverfront strip is a good spot for some decent food (western & French) and a cold beer.

Best coffee spot: BROWN COFFEE is probably the best place in town for a good cuppa in air-conditioned comfort. They have an upstairs seating area which gives nice views across the river. [Click the following link for the location of Brown Coffee:](#)



KAMPOT SIGHTSEEING - BOKOR NATIONAL PARK

Kampot sightseeing: There are several interesting sightseeing attractions in and around Kampot. The most popular destination is the old French Colonial Hill Station in a mountainous area, 15 km west of Kampot, called BOKOR NATIONAL PARK. Other interesting attractions nearby to the east of Kampot PHNOM CHNNGOK CAVE and KAMPONG TRACH WATER CAVE.

Bokor Hill Station: It takes approximately one hour to reach the hill station area (1034 meters above sea level). Your best options for getting there are by renting a motorbike and DIY, or pay for a guided tour. NOTE: Using a local tuk-tuk isn't possible as the roads are too steep (the tuk-tuk doesn't have the power to get up there). Click the following link for directions from Kampot:



Lok Yeay Mao Monument: If you're on a guided tour, this location is normally the first stop on the way to the hill station. It's a large imposing statue and a site of religious significance for the locals (there's some kind of connection with Buddhism). Click the following link for the location:



Interesting artwork

Older Buildings: Directly across the road is some derelict buildings which, according to my tour guide, were built for the reigning king back in the 1930's. The closest building to the road (known as the Blue Temple) was the king's summer retreat and further down the track is the remains of what was a restaurant. An interesting aspect of both buildings is the artwork/graffiti which is on them. Click the following link for the location:



Lok Yeay Mao Monument

KAMPOT SIGHTSEEING - BOKOR HILL STATION

The top of the mountain: This area, at the top of the national park, has several sightseeing attractions and is where you'll spend the greater part of your tour. On the way you'll pass a significant amount of new development in the area (apparently paid for by Chinese companies) but most of it stands empty and is quite ugly. A lot of the historical buildings are near the cliff line, so an added bonus is the excellent views over the landscape, and ocean, far below. Note: The dry season (November - May) is the best time to visit for clear views. The rainy season is fogged in most of the time.

Wat Sampov Pram: After the new hotel, this is the first stop on the way to the top. There's a nice Buddhist Temple complex, at the edge of the cliff, built from the sandstone rock in the area. The Temple has an unusual name. When translated to English, it's name is the FIVE BOATS PAGODA. The reason for this odd name is the five aligned rocks, nearby the temple which have the appearance of the bow of a ship. This site is quite extensive and a walk along the cliff line provides nice elevated views over the temple headland. **Click the following link for the location:**



Old Catholic Church

The old Catholic Church: This is another historical structure, built by the French during the colonial era but is now largely abandoned and not used as a place of worship. The building is constructed from sandstone, gathered from the surrounding terrain. There's a trail behind the structure which takes you up to an excellent viewpoint, at the edge of the cliff line. **Click the following link for the location:**



The Five Boats Pagoda

KAMPOT SIGHTSEEING - BOKOR HILL STATION

Le Bokor palace: This FRENCH HOTEL is the primary attraction of a hill station tour. There are several other structures in the surrounding area, but this is the main attraction. It looks a bit dilapidated on the outside but, apparently, the rooms within are still luxurious. Unfortunately, the room rates for a night's stay are ridiculous - USD 2000 per night. To the rear of the building there's another viewing area along the edge of the cliff line, which offers fantastic views of the plains and ocean below. **Click the following link for the location of Le Bokor Palace:**



The khmer Rouge: There are some older buildings which date back to the 1930's which were built by the French. However, after the Khmer Rouge reign of terror end (1979) some of these buildings were occupied by the fleeing Khmer forces due to the remoteness and difficulty to access. What is generally not known, regarding the Khmer Rouge, is they continued fighting nationalist forces (a civil war) up until 1999. For twenty years after they were overthrown by the Vietnamese army, remnants of their forces survived in isolated areas of Cambodia (such as Bokor national Park) and continued their resistance.



KAMPOT SIGHTSEEING - CAVE SITES

Phnom Chnngok Cave: This is a small but interesting cave site, located 19 km to the northeast of Kampot City. To get there you'll need to rent a motorbike, or hire a tuk-tuk, for the outing. Note: at least half the distance is over bumpy, dirt roads. If you go in a local tuk-tuk, be prepared for a bit of an uncomfortable ride. **Click the following link for directions from kampot:**



On-site: The site is being developed by the locals for tourism. There's some restroom facilities at the parking area. The cave is situated inside a limestone peak and, as with most caves in this part of the world, there's a stairway up to the entrance. NOTE: There's an entry fee of 20,000 Riel (US 5).

The cave tour: From the top of the stairway up the limestone peak, there's another short stairway down into the entrance of the cave. As with most other caves in Cambodia, this one is another religious site. There's a large cave room with a small shrine on the cave floor. Compared with other larger caves in the region, this one is hardly remarkable. However, it's still an interesting site and worth a half-day tour from Kampot.



The secret passage

The secret passage: For the adventurous, there's a passageway which branches off this main cave room. In some on-line reviews this extra passageway is referred to as the secret passage. It meanders through a labyrinth of small tunnels, and eventually leads to another exit point at ground level. This is definitely adventure caving and using a guide, who knows the route, is recommended. NOTE: You should also have a headlamp, and using solid footwear is definitely recommended (not flip flops).



Phnom Chnngok Cave site

KAMPOT SIGHTSEEING - CAVE SITES

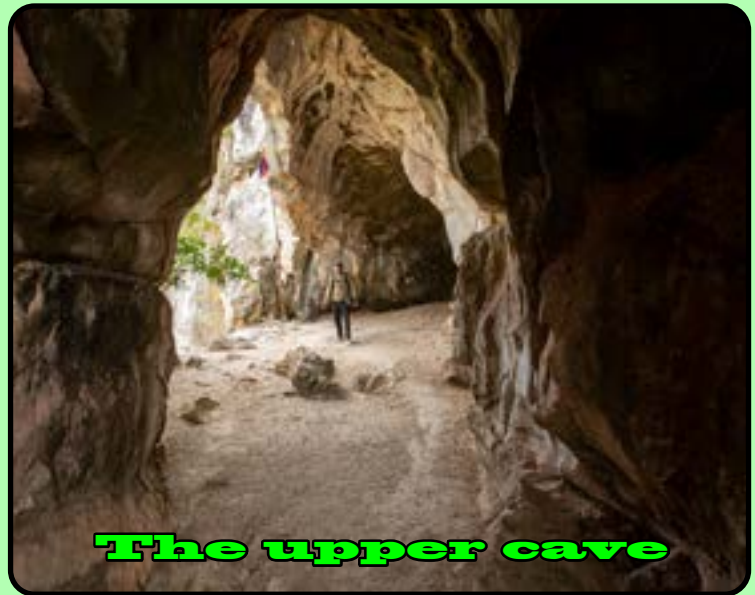
Kampong Trach Water Cave: This is another interesting cave site, on the grounds of a Buddhist Temple, located approx. 39 km east of Kampot City. This cave system is inside an isolated limestone peak and features a labyrinth of passages which fan out from a large central hole.

Getting there: As with Phnom Chhnngok Cave the only two options are to rent a motorbike and DIY, or hire transport (tuk-tuk or car) with a guide. The road out to the cave site is, for the most part, paved and not too rough. However, if you go with a local tuk-tuk, be prepared for some stretches of heavy dust in the dry season (November - April). **Click the following link for directions from Kampot:**



On-site: The site is well developed for tourism, and as a place of worship for the locals. There's a Buddhist Temple next to a large parking area, which also has local restaurants and restrooms nearby. Being a Buddhist Temple, there's no official entry fee but a donation is greatly appreciated after your visit.

The cave tour: From the parking area, directional signage takes you through a short tunnel which leads to a large, central hole in the mountain.



The upper cave

Around the outer edge of the hole, there are several religious shrines. There's also several passageways, with walkways and illumination, which fan out from this large central hole. The walkways are raised above the cave floor. During the rainy season the floor area fills with water, thus the name "Kampong Trach Water Cave."

The upper cave: If you have a guide, they will take you to the upper cave which around the back side of the peak. There's a short stairway up to some large caverns with a window which provides nice views over the surrounding plains.



Kampong Trach Temple

KAMPOT CAVE SITES - PHOTOS & VIDEO



Viewing window at Kampong Trach

Click the link to the right to see video highlights of Kampot Cave Sites:



Kampong Trach Water Cave

BATTAMBANG - GENERAL INFORMATION

About: BATTAMBANG is an off the beaten track location which a lot of people tend to miss. Most likely because getting there involves a lengthy road trip from either Siem Reap, or Phnom Penh. However, for those who can put up with the lengthy road travel a chilled out experience is on offer. Battambang is far less developed than Siem Reap and tourism still has a rustic feel to it. Although, that said, the word is out and greater numbers are heading there primarily for this very reason. The highlight sightseeing attraction is the dusk BAT CAVE exodus at Phnom Sampov Mountain.

Getting there: To get to Battambang, from Phnom Penh, most people will generally take a VIRAK BUNTHAM BUS directly to Battambang (up the western side of the Tonle Sap). From Siem Reap it's a three hour bus ride, also with VIRAK BUNTHAM (around the top of the Tonle Sap). [Click the following link for transport options from Phnom Penh:](#)

Flight & taxi: If you're tight on time, and you have the budget, you can also get a flight with CAMBODIA AIR (to the new airport at Siem Reap) and then take a TAXI to Battambang. NOTE: the distance from the new Siem Reap Airport to downtown Battambang is 209 km. [Click the following link for Cambodia Airlines:](#)

CAMBODIA ANGKOR AIR

The new airport update: The new SIEM REAP airport is shiny and clean but unfortunately, it's located fifty-five kilometers from the center of town. According to the taxi driver who picked me up from the airport, it was located there under direction from UNESCO. They wanted the airport, and any other future developments in the area, well away from the World heritage Listed Temple Sites.

The China connection: The airport was paid for by the Chinese Government. Additionally, according to my driver, the Chinese have also taken ownership of seven hundred hectares of land, close to the new airport. At some point and time, there will be more development in the area. A final kick in the guts to the locals is that the Chinese imposed a road toll on anyone using the road to the airport. Apparently, this wasn't mentioned during the planning and building stages.

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The new Siem Reap Airport

BATTAMBANG - GENERAL INFORMATION

Accommodation: There's plenty of accommodation options around the town center (near the river). A popular choice is the DELUX VILLA HOTEL. It's got large, comfortable A/C rooms, a nice swimming pool, but the Internet connection is poor. If you need transport for tours around Battambang, the hotel staff can easily arrange it for you. **Click the following link for booking inquiries:**



The river front: This is probably the main attraction of Battambang City. The river front has a developed walkway, very similar to Kampot, and a couple of bridges which connect one side of the city to the other. The walkway is a popular spot for locals exercising in the early evening. The Delux Villa Hotel is just a ten-minute walk from the river front and the route takes you down the main restaurant and café strip in the town.

Dusty streets: Additionally, being an off the beaten track location with fewer tourists, many of the streets are still unpaved and as such, there's dust blowing everywhere.

Where to get a coffee: An excellent cafe (only a 5 minute walk from the Delux Villa) is TOWN COFFEE. **Click the following link for the location:**



Where to eat: An excellent restaurant (near to Town Coffee) is the FLAVOURS OF INDIA. **Click the following link for the location:**



BATTAMBANG SIGHTSEEING - GENERAL INFO

Battambang sightseeing: The primary sightseeing attraction in the Battambang area is a limestone peak, called PHNOM SAMPOV, located approx. sixteen km from the city. There are several caves within this limestone peak but the two which draw most visitors are the KILLING CAVE, and the BAT CAVE.

Getting there: To get to Phnom Sampov, most sightseers will either rent a motorbike, or hire a tuk-tuk for the round trip. The cost for a tuk-tuk is relatively cheap, usually not more than 12 USD. NOTE: If you want an English-speaking guide, you'll need to pay a bit extra (20 USD) for the tour. Click the following link for directions to Phnom Sampov:



Phnom Sampov: A visit to this site is normally just a half day tour, or even less. Most sightseers will normally give themselves enough time to visit the Killing Cave, and then be in position for the highlight attraction, watching thousands of Bats exit a cave at dusk. If you want to see all the caves on the peak before the bat show, you'll need to give yourself a bit more time. A recommended time to depart Battambang, is 1.00 pm.



At the bat viewing area

On-site: When you arrive at the base of the mountain (bat viewing area), you then get hit with a choice of either hiking to the top or paying an additional 6 USD for a ride up. NOTE: Unfortunately, the Cambodians are a bit sneaky in this regard. They always fail to mention the additional, or hidden, costs one might encounter when arranging an outing. The steepness of the road makes it impossible for one of the Cambodian styled tuk-tuks (a 100 cc scooter with a single axle wagon hitched to the rear) to get to the top of the peak.



Phnom Sampov Peak

BATTAMBANG SIGHTSEEING - PHNOM SAMPOV

The temple at the top: There's a BUDDHIST TEMPLE at the very top of the peak, and this is a good place to start (everything from here is down-hill). There's a broad platform around the temple structure which provides a great vantage point for views across the surrounding plains.

NOTE: The primary advantage of paying the extra for the ride to the top is you'll save yourself quite a bit of time and also lose less perspiration. The distance from the BATS VIEWING AREA to the top of the peak is 1.3 km. Depending on your level of fitness, the walk up could take 25 minutes. Click the following link for directions:



The caverns below: After taking a few minutes to admire the Buddhist Temple, you can descend into the caverns directly below. There's a long stairway which takes you to the bottom of the caverns. On the way you pass under a large natural stone archway before arriving at the floor area. It's quite a picturesque spot with high karst walls surrounding a floor area, with tree growth, which is open to the heavens. The trail continues up the far side of the cavern and eventually leads back out to the temple.



The caverns below



The Buddhist Temple at the top

BATTAMBANG SIGHTSEEING - PKAR SLAR CAVE

Pkar Slar Cave: This cave is situated approx. one hundred meters down the hill from the temple at the top. It's the least visited of all the cave sites, simply because most sightseers only have time for the Buddhist Temple at the top and the Killing Cave before getting in position for the Bat Cave. The entry area, before you walk down the stairs, has some drinks sellers and a nice seated Buddha Statue nearby. **Click the following link for the location of Pkar Slar Cave site.**



On-site: The caves at Pkar Slar are smaller than the other sites. However, the Buddhist Temple grounds within the hollow is worth looking at. A stairway takes you down into another hollow which has a large upright Buddha and rows of smaller statues off to the side. There are three small caves which branch off from this central hollow. All have religious shrines within. The caves are a bit of a squeeze in a couple of places (you'll need to crouch down to go through some of the smaller tunnels). One of the caves has a room with a few resident bats. If you're tight on time, you don't really miss anything by not going through them.



BATTAMBANG SIGHTSEEING - THE KILLING CAVE

The Killing Cave: This site is approx. 400 meters down the hill from Pkar Slar Cave. Aside from the Bat watching station, this is the most popular cave site on the peak. It has a gruesome history attributed to the Khmer Rouge. **Click the following link for the location of the Killing Cave:**



The hole: If you're on a guided tour, your first stop will be the "hole." This is an opening in the cave roof where 8000 poor souls were pushed to their deaths. If you stand at the edge of the hole, you can clearly see the bottom of the cave some twenty meters below. After visiting the hole, the guide will take you past the Buddhist representation of hell. I've seen a similar display in Phang-Nha, Thailand albeit on a much bigger scale. Briefly, it's a display of figurines showing what awaits people in hell for their sinful activities.

The mausoleum: There's a long stairway that takes you to the bottom of the main cave. This internal area has a mausoleum of piled up bones and skulls, which serves as a memorial to those who perished. Aside from the mausoleum there's not really much to see in this main cave. There's a smaller cave room at the rear with some resident bats.



The dark cave: If you're a keen spelunker, there's also a smaller cave on the left of the stairway, which leads down to a large room full of bats. If you're not that keen on dark caves, then it's probably better to give this one a miss. The access to it is down a steep set of steps. There's no lighting in this cave so you'll need to have your own to explore it. **Click the following link to see a short video about the killing cave:**

Video: The killing Cave of Battambang



BATTAMBANG SIGHTSEEING - THE BAT CAVE

The Bat cave: This is the final stop on a tour of Phnom Sampov and the highlight. It's at the base of the limestone cliff so it's pretty much a natural progression. If you've started at the top, and work your way downhill, you'll be here at the end of the day. The cliff line facing the road has some religious artwork carved into rock face. To the right of the stonework there's a large opening along the cliff face where, once the sun is well down, millions of bats will exit from. **Click the following link for the location of the viewing area:**



Bat watching station: The locals have everything set up nicely so you can watch the show in comfort. Get there early (5 pm) for a front row seat, and you can enjoy a bit of barbecued chicken and a cold beer while you wait for the bats to do their thing.

The bat exodus: The bats normally start appearing at between 17.45 - 18.15 pm. The variation in time depends on the time of the year. Once the sun sets, and dusk falls over the landscape, the bats will begin exiting the cave for their nightly foraging. It begins as a trickle but soon explodes into a river of bats flooding out.



The exodus normally lasts about thirty minutes. It's quite an amazing site and definitely the highlight attraction of trip to Battambang. **Click the link below to see a full video of the caves of Kampot & Battambang. Note: the footage of the Bat exodus is at the end of the video:**



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