

Reading

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Angkor, Cambodia

One of the 21 candidates to join the new list of the seven wonders of the world, Angkor in Cambodia truly represents its country and culture in a very special way. More than a million people visit the **temples** each year, each one amazed by what they see there.

The world's largest **sacred** temple site, Angkor is the most important monument of the Southeast Asian Khmer Empire. There were over 1000 temples in the area, though some today are just piles of bricks. The beautiful appearance of the temples that are still standing is partly due to the number of **carvings** on every inch of the site and the repairs that have been in progress since 1993. The temples are spread out over 64 kilometres around the village of Siem Reap, about 308 kilometres from the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, and were built between the 8th and 13th centuries. The Khmer temples, located in forests and on farmland, can be found on two main sites. The smaller and older

is at Roluos, the first Khmer capital in the Angkor area. In the 9th century, King Yasovarman I moved the capital to near Siem Reap, a much larger area where you can see most of the Khmer temples. Nowadays it is known as the City of Angkor.

By far the most famous temple in Angkor is Angkor Wat, which is a very big pyramid temple built by King Suryavarman II between 1113 and 1150. It is considered the best of Khmer architecture, and is surrounded by a **moat** of about four miles long. It was built to show people what the Hindu cosmos looked like, with the central towers representing the home of the gods, the walls the mountains circling the world and the moat the

oceans and seas of the world. There are other wonderful temples at this site, built by different rulers of the country; one temple has Buddha faces carved on the walls of the third-level towers, though it was only a Buddhist shrine for a short while.

Once **inspired by** Indian culture, the Cambodian architectural style began life looking more Indian than Cambodian. By the 8th century, however, the Cambodians had developed their own style and one king after another built temples to honour the god Shiva and himself. Each of these new temples became the place where the king was buried after his death.

A Make questions to go with the following answers.

- 1 More than a million people
- 2 1993
- 3 Phnom Penh
- 4 Angkor Wat
- 5 The place where he was buried.

B Match the words from the text with their definitions.

- 6 temples a holy
- 7 sacred b a deep wide hole round a building, usually filled with water
- 8 carvings c has taken ideas from
- 9 moat d buildings of religious importance
- 10 inspired by e faces or pieces of writing made by cutting stone or wood

..... / 10 marks

