

Amansara

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Set in spiritual Siem Reap, Amansara acts as a key cultural hub in Cambodia's most storied city, just 10 minutes from Unesco-listed Angkor Wat, giving guests privileged access to the world's largest temple complex. Once a residence for guests of King Sihanouk, Amansara's transformed 1960s New Khmer architecture today houses 24 sleek suites, a soaring circular dining room, curvilinear pool, holistic spa and state-of-the-art gym. The resort draws its name from two Sanskrit-derived words – aman (meaning 'peace') and apsara (the 'heavenly nymphs' of ancient Hindu mythology). Guests can travel to and from the temples in their own private remork (motorcycle-pulled cart), complete with an Amansara driver and guide.

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The resort draws its name from two Sanskrit-derived words – aman (meaning 'peace') and apsara (the 'heavenly nymphs' of ancient Hindu mythology). Built with 12 suites in 1962 by French architect Laurent Mondet, today the resort houses 24 suites, 12 of which have private swimming pools. Similar in design, each room enjoys an open-plan layout and a private courtyard.

Across a manicured lawn from the suites – and adjacent to the main 17-metre, curvilinear swimming pool – is the circular Dining Room with its soaring ceiling and shaded terrace. Serving a menu of Khmer and international cuisines, it includes a walk-in wine and cheese cellar and a casual lounging area. On the upper floor, the Roof Terrace offers a seasonal venue for early or late evening drinks and private dinners.

A variety of temple tours and customised excursions are available as part of the Amansara guest experience. House outings focusing on the temples surrounding Angkor Wat are conducted in the early mornings and late afternoons, utilising Amansara's own fleet of remorks (motorcycle-pulled carts), each with its own private driver and guide.

After energising days exploring the Khmer riches of Siem Reap, the Aman Spa – which overlooks an ancient rain tree – has four treatment rooms and an attached relaxation area, overlooking a reflection pond. Other resort facilities include a 25-metre lap pool, state-of-the-art gym, library and a gallery displaying local crafts and artwork available to take home.

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Once known as Villa Princièrè, this former royal retreat was built in 1962 by French architect Laurent Mondet. Quintessentially '60s in character, it originally featured 12 low-slung chalets spaced around a curved swimming pool and a shady lawn. Aman acquired the property in 2002 and meticulously reconstructed it, using old black-and-white photographs as a guide, eventually opening Amansara in December of that year.

Today, Amansara presents 24 suites, all with private courtyards and 12 with private plunge pools, measuring six metres by five metres. Similar in design, each suite enjoys an open-plan layout with terrazzo and timber finishes. A combined sleeping and living area features a king-size bed, a large writing desk and a sofa. Adjacent is a dressing area and an informal dining area. Down a few steps is the bathroom with twin vanities, a large soaking tub, a separate shower and floor-to-ceiling glass doors opening onto the courtyard.

Across a manicured lawn from the suites – and adjacent to the main 17-metre, curvilinear swimming pool – is the circular Dining Room with its soaring ceiling and shaded terrace. The focal point of the property, it serves a menu of Khmer and international cuisines and includes a walk-in wine and cheese cellar and a casual lounging area. As well as helping themselves to the home-baked cakes on display, guests can choose to dine poolside or in-suite. On the upper floor, the Roof Terrace offers a seasonal venue for early or late evening drinks and private dinners.

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Guests can also embrace the countryside around Siem Reap in a Jeep rally, take a cruise among the floating villages of Tonlé Sap lake, or enjoy breakfast, Khmer cooking classes and twilight dinners in a village house.

After energising days spent exploring the Khmer riches of Siem Reap, the Aman Spa – which overlooks an ancient rain tree – has four treatment rooms and an attached relaxation area, overlooking a reflection pond. Other resort facilities include a 25-metre lap pool, state-of-the-art gym, library and a gallery displaying local crafts and artwork available to take home. When the time comes to depart, Siem Reap-Angkor International Airport is 60 minutes away for onwards connections to Amansara's sister stays across Southeast Asian in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos.