

*Kids & Schools Tools*

## *Angkor, Cambodia*

Angkor is one of the 21 finalist candidates in the campaign to choose the New 7 Wonders of the World. The winners of this unique vote will be announced on July 7, 2007 – 07.07.07 and will become part of history. They will be recognized as monuments that have truly global meaning as part of our common cultural heritage. We can all be proud of the 21 finalists, since each of them is a unique monument that belongs to its particular culture and country in a very special way.

Angkor is the most important monument of the south-east Asian Khmer Empire and the world's largest sacred temple complex, famous for its complex ornamentation and striking beauty. The temples at Angkor are spread out over around 64 km (40 miles) around the village of Siem Reap, about 308 km (192 miles) from the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh. They were built between the 8th and 13th centuries, and range from simple brick towers to huge stone temple complexes. There are two main sites where the Khmer temples are located. The first, smaller and older place is at Roluos, the first Khmer capital in the Angkor area, south-east of the village of Siem Reap. In the late 9th century, Yasovarman I moved the capital to around Siem Reap. This is a much larger site, where the majority of the Khmer temples are located. It is officially known as the City of Angkor. There are other temples located in the area and Khmer temples can also be found in many other parts of Cambodia, as well as China, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.

The most famous temple in Angkor is Angkor Wat, a huge pyramid temple built by Suryavarman II between 1113 and 1150, generally seen as the masterpiece of Khmer architecture. It is surrounded by a moat 173 m (570 ft) wide and about 6.4 km (4 miles) long. The bas-relief carving is of the highest quality and the most beautifully executed in Angkor. With its water moats, concentric walls and great temple mountain in the center, Angkor Wat symbolizes the Hindu cosmos, with its oceans at the periphery and the Meru mountain at the center of its universe. Some of the many other impressive temples include Ta Prohm, a very large temple complex built by Jayavarman VII in the later 12th century, enclosed by a moat—one of the most beautiful of the Khmer temples, as it is still surrounded by jungle; and the Bayon, a massive temple complex built by Jayavarman VII between 1181 and 1220 that features 1,199 m (3,936 ft) of beautiful bas-relief carving and mysterious Buddha faces carved on the third-level towers.

Like many other aspects of their culture, the Cambodians adapted Indian architectural methods and styles. Once the Indian influence on Cambodia weakened, by the 7th to 8th centuries A.D., Khmer architecture began to develop independently. It flourished under ambitious kings who ruled an empire rich in manpower and wealth. The Hindu religion played an important part in the Khmer temples. Jayavarman II (800 to 850 A.D.) introduced the cult of *devaraja* into Cambodia, which saw the king as a representative of the Hindu god Shiva. From then on, the temples were built to honor both the god and the king. It then became normal for each new king to build his own temple, which became his tomb after his death.

**Angkor is a great symbol of Beauty & Sanctity!**



If you want to find out more about the exciting campaign to name the New 7 Wonders of the World, please go to the New7Wonders website at [www.new7wonders.com](http://www.new7wonders.com).

**07.07.07**

**Official Declaration of the New 7 Wonders of the World**

**... be part of the making of history!**

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