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Tonle Sap Siem Reap Attractions by Lek Boonlert

Article published on November 28th 2011 | Destinations

Tonle Sap (also known as both â€œLarge Fresh Water Riverâ€• and as the more simple â€œGreat Lakeâ€ joint lake and river system that is both vitally important to Cambodia as a whole and one of the prime tourist attractions for visitors to the Siem Reap area. The largest fresh water lake in the whole of Southeast Asia, Tonle Sap Lake is also such an ecological hot spot that UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) had it designated as a biosphere back in 1997.

The extraordinary lake and river system is unique, given that the water flow actually changes direction not once but twice a year, and that the water in the lake portion expands and contracts in quite an extraordinary fashion when that transition takes place. It is during the months of June to October that the water flow reverses, filling and expanding the lake.

The lake itself is normally a hundred and sixty kilometres long, but expands to two hundred and fifty kilometres long (and a hundred kilometres wide) during the three months when its water intake expands dramatically, and also floods the forests and rice fields that surround it. It is during the rainy season that tourists staying at any Siem Reap hotel are best advised to take a trip to see the lake, as the water falls to such a dramatic extent in the dry season that it may not even be possible to get on the lake in those months. Leave your comfortable Siem Reap hotel behind and go see Tonle Sap!

Article Source:
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Article Keywords:
siem reap hotels,siem reap hotel,siem reap attractions destinations tours nightlife things to do,explore siem reap city getting around,siem reap tonle sap

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