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Eat elegantly near Angkor at The Dining Room in Park Hyatt Siem Reap

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The Dining Room, Park Hyatt Siem Reap

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The Pitch It's hot and dusty work seeing the ancient temples in Siem Reap, host city of the UNESCO Angkor archeological site, and after a day of exploring the temples, you might just want an escape from Siem Reap's dust and street noise. The elegant Dining Room at the Park Hyatt Siem Reap is such an escape, with a menu that offers Khmer and western dishes.

Order à la carte or choose a Khmer set menu to sample local dishes, which include roasted eggplant salad, chicken stir fry with a fish sauce from nearby Kampot, and a selection of desserts like pumpkin cake and cassava pudding. Set menu prices begin at US\$30. À la carte options include seafood amok with coconut milk (US\$25), a Khmer version of veal ossobuco (US\$29), and steak or seafood from the charcoal grill (starting at US\$25). There's an extensive cocktail and wine menu, too.

Several nights per week, the Park Hyatt hosts Apsara dance, which involves intricate finger and foot movements, and Bokator martial arts performances. The shows help resurrect these traditional arts almost lost under the Khmer Rouge regime. Tables surrounding the courtyard offer excellent views. (Note: Performances are a busy time for the restaurant and service can be slower.)

What We Love Executive Chef Pisith Theam is from Pouk, a village 20 minutes outside of Siem Reap. Using local ingredients and recipes, he creates delicious plates to appeal to a wide variety of tastes. Eating in the open air in the courtyard, with views of the reflecting pool and the banyan tree on an island in the centre, is romantic and serene. There's even a few swinging seats if you want to curl up and get cozy. When the temperature skyrockets, the Dining Room also has air conditioned indoor seating, and you can admire the courtyard through the large picture windows.

Don't Miss The decor at the Park Hyatt is beautiful — I especially love the statues cradling lotus flowers — and is extra special at Christmas time. Stop into The Glasshouse Patisserie for a look at the gingerbread house, a replica of the stately hotel building. Any time of the year, The Glasshouse is an ideal spot to cool off from the heat while still being able to watch Siem Reap's street life through the windows. Select a made-to-order sandwich, some of the best croissants in the city, or house-made gelato and sorbet. Be sure to try the passion fruit, made with fruits from Cambodia's Mondulkiri province.

Entrees from US\$21

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