Avoid the line for Angkor Wat's top tier

Crowd management is a critical part of the Angkor experience, especially if you visit at peak times in dry season, generally from mid-December up until Chinese new year. Everyone wants to visit the area’s namesake temple, immense Angkor Wat. Assuming they’re not afraid of heights, most people also want to climb up to Angkor Wat’s third tier to admire the views. But only 100 people are allowed up the one wooden staircase to the third tier at a time, and this means there is almost always a long line. Want to avoid wasting time in line? Aim your visit for around 1 PM. There might still be a short line, but it’s likely to be in the newly formed shade of the temple so you won’t get too hot or sunburned while you wait. Angkor Wat is busiest in the morning because so many people want to watch the sunrise reflected in the lotus pools at the front of the temple. After trying to photograph the spectacle, the crowds make their way in to explore the rest of the temple. Late afternoon can also be busy at Angkor Wat, and the line to the third tier starts to get long again. 1 PM is your sweet spot.
Answers from the local expert

When is the best time to visit?

Afternoons.

How much does it cost?

About KHR37 - KHR72.

All temples within the main Angkor complex can be seen for the same price, a $37 1-day ticket, $62 3-day ticket, or $72 7-day ticket.

Do you have any tips?

You’ll see several monks at Angkor Wat. Don’t take their photo without their permission.

Is there an official website?

Yes, you can visit www.tourismcambodia.org
About the local expert

Local recommendation from
Johanna Read

Johanna Read is a Canadian freelance writer/photographer specializing in travel, food and responsible tourism. Based in Vancouver, she loves the city’s ocean location and fabulous food. Find links to her articles for in-flight magazines, Fodor’s, USA Today, and others at TravelEater.net.