

Part 288 for Cathy's blog

Thursday 7th August's to Sunday 10th August, 2025

Thursday 7th August, 2025.

Temple Day : West Baray and Ak Yum

We started with a quick motorbike lesson. Some turns and gear changes and then it was time for David to get on the back. The balance is different with a passenger, but we didn't fall over.

The main reason that I am learning is if something happens to David, I need to be able to get him to where a Tuktuk can take him off to hospital, and then I need to be able to get the bike home.

After our quick lesson, we rode around the West Baray. It is 7.8 by 2.1 km in size, one of the largest hand dug water storage reservoirs in the world. The banks around the Baray are 11.9m tall. In the "middle" of the Baray is a man made island with the West Mebon Temple on it.

We rode along a road new to us, through the village of Kouk Beng. Then we went onto the dirt road along the top of the banks of the Baray. There are several places you can get down to the water and we chose the largest road and found ourselves on the grassed "bottom" of the Baray.



This boat is in about 1m of water. The fishermen were wading across this area.

The crane in the distance is there for works on the temple (apparently you can ride out to it in the dry season, so we will investigate that idea!).



This is the grassed shallow east end of the Baray. That is Phnom Bakheng in the distance (it is the hill and temple that Lara Croft stood on, to overlook Angkor Wat in the Tomb Raider Movie).



And this is looking west, to where there is more water.



In the wet season, the water will fill this area and raise the water level to over 4m.

We were joined by a local who tried out (quite good) English and then offered to take us to the island (and the temple) and told us that times were really tough.

We have thought before, that there is some sort of class that the locals take, to teach them how to find the story that will convince the “tourists” to hand over money. Everyone seems to have a similar story and when it doesn’t work,

they resort to talking about how the local school needs money and /or English teachers.
It was hot, there in the sun, so we headed back onto the wall of the Baray, to continue our journey.



Riding further around, we found the sign for Kok Singh Temple, but even with some serious jungle exploration, we could only find these stones.





Research back at home tells us that there is not much to this temple (note there is no date given to it on the marker) but that someone has fenced off the land the temple is on (despite it being UNESCO Heritage listed).

There are houses quite a way down the track from near the marker.

More enquires reveal that there were several temples that were buried when the walls of the Baray were built (and that there will be no excavations to find them) and the Kok Singh temple is buried under the bank of the Baray.

Not sure what to believe.

Ak Yum is one of the buried temples, though. It is also one of the oldest temples in the Angkorian Empire. Apparently, what you can see of Ak Yum is only about one third of the original temple (the rest of which lies under the bank of the Baray).

Ak Yum lies on the south side of the Baray.



Ak Yum from the bank.



The tower of Ak Yum Temple.

Today's trip was 55km, which is one of our longer trips.

Friday 8th August, 2025.

Today we walked into town to get our Covid shots.

David stopped to chat with a cat.



Injections are given to foreigners at the Provincial Hospital, Building 15 (thanks to a local Facebook page for the information). We walked in, waited about 5 minutes, were found there by a worker, who set up the chairs for us and got the injections ready.

Another man filled out two slips of paper, writing in our passport numbers.

Then it was time for the injections (we took photographic proof for our queasy daughter but I won't trouble you with that!)

Then a long walk home in the hot sunshine (and still no rain).



A flower growing beside the new concrete road near our corner.

Off to language school in the afternoon for both of us and we stayed for the free class on measurement. There we met another Aussie, a young(ish) man who is travelling all over the place... heading to Laos next.

Saturday 9th August 2025.

Although it is still hot, we walked to Angkor, and could buy milk, but no coffee (not much coffee at all) or Vegemite.

We had a “splurge” tea, ribs (with sausage and stuffed jalapeños) and a bottle of red wine (from France) (at Lost City Pizza, tucked in beside the River Night Market).



Appropriate wine, don't you think?

Sunday 10th August, 2025.

We had a slow morning at home and then went out on the motorbike to “run a few errands”.

We went out to get petrol.

We got David’s new medicine.

We bought chicken rolls (\$1:50 each) for lunch.

At 2c per km running costs on the bike, and being only 3km from the petrol station, our daily expenses here are much less than a quick trip into Geelong or even taking the car out of our Melbourne City apartment.