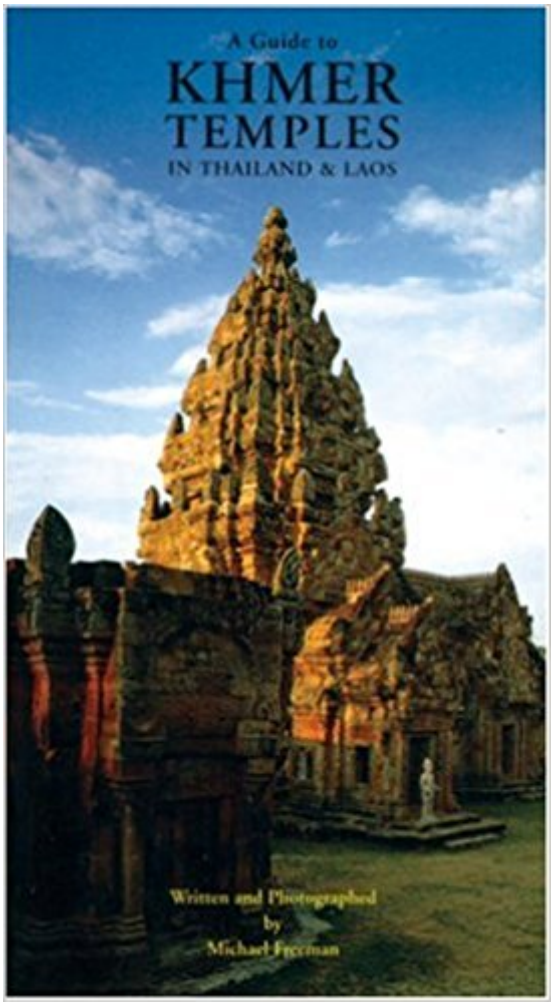
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Guide To Khmer Temples In Thailand And Laos



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Synopsis

Illustrated with detailed photographs and walk-through plans of every significant temple, Khmer Temples in Thailand and Laos is a comprehensive and practical companion to the magnificent sites of the former upland Khmer Empire, many of which have only recently become open to the public after excavation and restoration. Michael Freeman has specialized in Southeast Asia for more than ten years. His two most recent books on the area are Palaces to the Gods and Angkor: The Hidden Glories .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michael Freeman has been photographing Southeast Asia intensively for twenty years, and Angkor for ten, producing many books on the art history and architecture of the region, including Palaces of the Gods and Angkor: Cities & Temples. He is also the author of the Guide to Khmer Temples in Thailand and Laos, and was the first photographer to have prolonged access to Angkor after the country’s two decades of war.

Michael Freeman’s guide covers over fifty Khmer temples in Thailand and Laos, plus the border temples in Cambodia. (Angkor is not included; see the book "Ancient Angkor," by the same author, for complete information on Angkor.)The temples and their major features are described with quite a bit of detail for the major temples, and not so much detail for the less important ones. The book has all the features one would wish for in a good guidebook - maps, site plans, floor plans of the major temples, color photogaphs (Freeman is both the author and the photographer of the guide), hotels,

restaurants, and transportation. The first 50 pages give some very useful background on architecture, lintel styles, and the chronology of the temples. Suggested itineraries, temple rankings, and a glossary of general and architectural terms are also provided.According to the inside front cover, the Weatherhill edition on which I based this review was published in 1998, apparently with the same content as the original edition of 1996. I don't know if any more recent editions are available. The book's staying in print for over 7 years is proof of its popularity and usefulness. However, since things change rapidly in that part of the world, the reader may want to consider purchasing a more recent guide for up-to-date practical information. Freeman's guide, however, is still highly recommended for the core information that it provides about the temples themselves.

Useful guidebook, although with very personal comments, and unfortunately really badly drawn maps.

I recently took a trip to Thailand's northeast and found this guide to be indispensable. The book is incredibly comprehensive and covers essentially all important Khmer cultural heritage found throughout Thailand today. Each temple is covered in good detail, often with a ground plan, and Michael Freeman's photographs speak for themselves.A few minor suggestions if a second edition comes out: the hand drawn maps are not as useful as one would prefer, and including the GPS coordinates of each site would be a bonus (I used this book to find this out on my own using Google earth). Here and there are a handful of very minor errors: e.g., the Wat Mahathat plan is reversed (north is shown as south). To be sure, these are minor quibbles that don't detract from the book as a whole.A good book to complement this guide (if you are a serious architecture aficionado like myself) is "Buddhist Murals of Northeast Thailand" by Bonnie Pacala Brereton and Somroay Yencheuy, which discusses Buddhist temple architectural heritage in the same area covered by Freeman's book. I'd also recommend "Palaces of the Gods: Khmer Art & Architecture in Thailand" as another useful complement (that book includes photos by Freeman as well).

I've visited many of the temples Michael Freeman describes and have a huge soft spot for Northeast Thailand and Laos. This guide has enhanced my understanding of the places I've visited and provided some great incentives to visit more. I wish the guide had been available when I first started visiting the Khmer temples of Northeast Thailand. Michael Freeman's photographs and commentary are informative and interesting. There are good layouts and drawings of the individual temples and an excellent rating system which highlights not only the architectural and historical

importance of the temples but also the setting. The information on how to get to places and where to stay is useful and good for planning an itinerary.

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