

CAMBODIA PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

TOURISM MAP OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA



Country Profile

Official Name: Kingdom of Cambodia

Population: 15.8 million

Capital City: Phnom Penh

Area: 181,035 sq km

Independence from France: 9 November 1953

People: Khmers (96%), minorities include Vietnamese, Chinese, many hill tribes, Chams

Religion: Buddhism (Theravada)

Language: Khmer

Currency: Riel

Time Zone: GMT +7 hours

International dialing code: +855

Electricity: 220V AC 50 Hz

Driving: Right hand side



Pre Departure Check List

- Travel Insurance
- Valid Passport (at least six months valid) and visa (or two passport pictures as well as 30US\$ for visa on arrival)
- Immunizations/Vaccinations
- Foreign currency (US\$) or ATM/VISA card
- Flight tickets
- Photocopy of passport either scanned into email account or separate from the original

Travel Insurance (Compulsory)

SR Angkor Travel will do everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. However, certain risks are involved and should be recognized by participants. Thus, we require all guests to purchase travel insurance prior to their trip. Travel insurance is a cost effective way of protecting yourself and your equipment in the event of problems due to cancelled trips, delays, medical emergencies, baggage loss or damage. It also gives you peace of mind for your trip.

Visa/Passports

A passport with at least six months validity is necessary. A visa is required for most nationalities and is available upon arrival at both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap International airports. A tourist visa costs 30 USD, business visa costs 35 USD. Two passport photographs should be submitted with the visa application form. A tourist visa can be extended from one month to three and a business one can be extended indefinitely. Cambodia also enforces a departure tax to pay on domestic and international flight which is included in the price of the flight ticket.

- Domestic – 6US\$
- International – 30US\$

Immunizations

Before travelling to Cambodia, it is important to ensure that you have adequate protection about disease. About two months before your holiday you should consult your doctor who will advise as to the whether you need vaccinations before you travel. These will vary depending on where you are planning on visiting. Bear in mind that there is a malaria risk in rural parts of Cambodia. In general, most visitors to Cambodia will require the following vaccinations:

- Hepatitis A and B
- Tetanus
- Typhoid
- Polio
- Diphtheria

If you have any special conditions or allergies that may require attention overseas, have your GP write a letter describing the nature of the condition and the treatment. Always carry the

letter on your person. It is also a good idea to bring your own basic medicine kit with you containing some basics like paracetamol and diarrhoea relief.

Suggested Packing List

- Personal clothing items, toiletries, medication
- Sunscreen/Sunhat
- Insect Repellent
- Light weight clothing (Summer months)
- Long sleeved shirts and pants (November to February evenings)
- Depending on the season, your activities and the region you will be visiting e.g. mountainous areas, it may be advisable for you to bring a jacket with you
- Camera
- Small daypack for day trips and overnight tours
- Water bottle and helmet (for cycling trips only)

The Khmer are a tolerant population and may choose not to point out improper behavior to its foreign guests, but you should dress and act with the utmost respect when visiting Wats (pagodas) or other religious sites (including the temples of Angkor). This is of the highest importance to Cambodians; proper etiquette in pagodas is mostly a matter of common sense. Unlike Thailand, a woman may accept something from a monk, but she should be careful not to touch him.

A few other Temple visiting tips:

- Do not wear shorts or tank tops, have your shoulders covered
- Remove your hat when entering the ground of the Wats
- Remove your shoes before going into the vihara (Sanctuary)
- If you sit down in front of the dais (the platform on which the Buddhas are placed), sit with your feet to the side rather than in the lotus position
- Never point your finger or the sole of your feet towards a person or a figure of the Buddha

Money

The official currency is Riel. American dollars are however widely accepted in Cambodia and even preferred in larger stores and supermarkets. However, small dollars and Riel is more practical and economical to use for smaller, day to day items.

ATM's are widely available in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Sihanoukville; the give out US dollars. However there are no ATM's out of these areas so it is recommended that you carry cash with you (in small notes as people may have difficulty in getting change).

Allow \$8 to \$15 per meal for additional lunches or dinners not included in the trip price. You may also want to have some money put aside to try some local foods at the markets.

Tips

Tippling is a personal matter, and passengers are encouraged to tip an amount they find appropriate. For your convenience we have included a tipping guide below; please however note that these amounts are suggestions. We encourage our passengers to reward guides based on their performance:

- Meals (restaurants): average amount is \$1
- Bellboy: average amount is \$1
- Chambermaid: average amount is \$1 per day
- Tips for guides are completely at your discretion, but here are some guidelines: \$1.50 to \$3 per day per person for guides (depending on group size), \$1 per day per person for drivers

Arriving in Cambodia

Climate

- November – February: Cool and dry
- March – May: Hot and dry
- June – August: Hot and wet
- September – Early November: Cool and wet

Maximum daily temperatures range from the high 20°C in January to more than 40°C in April. Daily minimum temperatures are usually no less than 15° C.

Cuisine and Drinking Water

Cambodian cuisine shares several similarities with other regional cuisine. The overall consensus is that Khmer cooking is similar to Thai cooking but with fewer spices, but we disagree! Khmer food is one of the oldest cuisines in South East Asia and usually consists of a plate of polished white rice and a topping. Some classic local dishes to try are Fish Amok - a type of curry, beef loc lac – Khmer style diced steak and the standard breakfast meal of baai sac jruk; basically rice with grilled pork served with an egg on top . Like all other Buddhist countries, vegetarian food is readily available in most restaurants. Phnom Penh and Siem Reap also have an abundance of great value western restaurants largely due to the NGO community and a few leftovers from the UNTAC days when the capital was full of western UN troops.

If you are a vegetarian, vegan, allergic to any foods or adhere to a special diet, please advise us prior to your trip so we can comply with your dietary requirements.

It is not advisable to drink tap water in any South East Asian countries. Bottled water is recommended but do check the expiry date before opening it. Ice is widely used in Cambodia and it is produced with treated water. You can buy bottled water easily and inexpensively for between 50 cent and 75 cent (2,000 Riel).

Cultural Differences

Experiencing cultural differences is one of the joys of travelling, and it is important that these differences are encouraged and respected. Things in Asia are done differently to the rest of the world and we ask you to please accept the differences and respect the cultural rules of the areas we travel to.

Saving Face and Manners

- Getting angry and showing it by shouting or becoming abusive is extremely impolite and a poor reflection on you. In addition, it is unlikely to achieve much.
- General Points of Etiquette
- As in Thailand, it is improper to pat children on the head
- If you would like someone to come over to you, motion with your whole hand held palm down - signaling with your index finger and your palm pointed skyward may be interpreted as being sexually suggestive
- When using a toothpick, it is considered polite to hold it in one hand and to cover your open mouth with the other
- When handing things to other people, use both of your hands or your right hand only, never your left hand (reserved for toilet ablutions!)
- Public displays of affection are considered to be quite offensive in Cambodia – defiantly no kissing! It is also extremely rare to see couples holding hands. On the contrary it is quite common to see friends of the same sex holding hands
- It is polite to remove your shoes before entering a house – look for shoes at the front door as a clue

Donations and Gift-Giving

Although there is a great amount of poverty in certain areas of Cambodia, please read the following points about donations and gift-giving.

- Do not give to begging children as it reinforces for these children that begging is an acceptable to make a living. However in many places, it is considered acceptable to

give to the elderly or disabled as there is no social security or other way these people can earn money.

- Giving money and goods away to random individuals can result in the local communities acting like beggars. It accentuates an unequal relationship between locals and visitors, with tourists being seen as purely 'money givers'. We do not want to encourage the development of a society that equates every human action as potential money making scheme – for example paying to take photographs.
- Do not give sweets to children in villages that we visit. Local people do not have access to dentists, nor can they afford them and again there is the issue of turning children into beggars. Pens, toothbrushes, clothing or other 'worthwhile' items are best distributed via a local charity, school teacher or community leader.
- Avoid feeling that you necessarily have to give 'material' things. The best giving can be sometimes be shared interactions: a smile, a joke, a sing-song, dance or playing a game. Giving something of your friendship, time and interest to interact with locals can be the best gift of all.

Post and Telecommunications

Post is now routed by air through Bangkok, which makes Cambodia a much more reliable place from which to send mail and parcels.

- Telephone connections to the rest of the world are widely available, however they aren't cheap.
- Numbers starting with 010, 011, 012, 015, 017 or 097 are mobile phone numbers
- Internet access is available in all major tourist places