



WEEKEND AWAY GUIDE

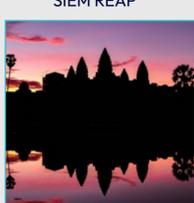
WELCOME TO THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA

A small gorgeous home to be explored in Southeast Asia, sits between Vietnam & Thailand. Cambodia dramatically suffered from the tragic genocide between 1975-1979 which widely shocked the world and sadly processed more than 2 millions of lives in the country.

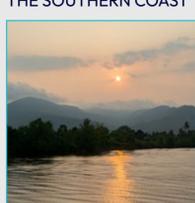
PHNOM PENH CAPITAL



SIEM REAP



THE SOUTHERN COAST



Why?

When people talk about the fame of Angkor Wat temple, it reminds about the rich civilization of The Khmer Empire dated to 802 CE until the fall of Angkor in 15th century. Nowadays, the entire area comprises 181035 square kilometer with the southern coastline of 443 square kilometer. The country's population is 15 million estimated in year 2017, with density of 82 people per square kilometer, basic income 3-5 US dollar per day, and 85% of the population relies on agriculture, farming and fishery.

12 Best Things to Do & See in Phnom Penh Capital

The capital is populated over one million and half, the bustling capital as well as the commercial hub of Cambodia. Situates at the conjunction of the Mekong, Tonle Sap River and Tonle Bassac, Phnom Penh features the significant cultural and historical Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum and religious Wat Phnom that was built atop the hill in the heart of the capital. In the deep sadness, the killing field of Cheung Ek and the transformed Tuol Sleng museum (S21 Prison) attract hundreds of tourists to witness its tragic sites before continuing to stroll around Tuol Tompoung (Russian market) for happy shopping and have some highlights of the daily capital activities with stopping at independent monument, yellow post office, local markets, active pagodas or at an art museum. The fresh riverside gives a pleasant walk overlooking Tonle Sap & Mekong as if taking picturesque photos of Royal Palace which should not be missed out. Along the riverfront, there are busy café, interesting boutique shops, restaurants, urban hotels and colonial buildings while at the other sides fulfill of colorful restaurants & bars which make the nightlife more cheerful.



1. THE ROYAL PALACE

The striking complex of buildings features the well-preserved Khmer architecture with a slight French touch, serves as the royal residence for Cambodia's king and situates at the river bank of the conjunction called "Chaktomuk". Being built between 1866 & 1870 and combines significant history, The Royal Palace complex is divided into several compounds which consist of the most interesting yellow Throne Hall, Palace of the Khmer King, Moonlight Pavilion, Stupas and especially The Silver Pagoda that houses various national treasures included The Emerald Buddha and its floor was greatly inlaid with more than 5000 silver tiles.

Note: Dressing must be appropriate, cover your shoulders and knees. Otherwise, you are not allowed to get in.



2. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CAMBODIA

Built between 1917 and 1924, this dark red buildings inspire Khmer architecture, traditional design and cultural awareness, the most extensive and significant cultural & historical museum that houses the finest collections of Khmer arts, including Buddhist and Hindu sculptures, Khmer ceramics, crafts, bronzes and ethnographic items from prehistoric (Funan and Chenla) and Khmer Empire period.



3. TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM

The former secondary school that was turned into the S-21 interrogation and detention center of the Khmer Rouge after the fall of Phnom Penh Capital in April 1975. With an estimated 20000 people were imprisoned and some were tortured to death, those were extremely tortured to name family members who were soldiers under The General Lon Nol regime, doctors, teachers, students, academics, engineers, government officials and even monks later then were arrested, tortured, interrogated then moved and executed at Cheung Ek. Visiting Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum is a bit depressing experience and it's not certainly recommended to those who traveling with children but it would fit to those really keen to witness this tragic history of the country.

Note: Dressing must be appropriate, cover your shoulders and knees. Otherwise, you are not allowed to get in.



4. THE KILLING FIELD CHEUNG EK

Huge graves of more than one million were exterminated from 1975-1979, those were prisoners relocated from Tuol Sleng detention center after the interrogation was witnessed. Most of dead bodies were government officials, former politicians, monks, teachers, engineers and so on. Locates 14km away from central Phnom Penh, today Cheung Ek is a memorial and one of the main tourist attractions of Phnom Penh, where tourists can still see the remnants of victims and bones in pits especially the broken and cracked skulls were stored in the Buddhist stupas that can be seen directly from the glassed-sides.



6. INDEPENDENT MONUMENT

With a 37m height in a style of Khmer architectural Angkor temple and was constructed in 1958, this Independent Monument is built to memorialize the victory of proclaiming the independence from France in 1953. Just across the street, it's the green park with notable memorial which houses Prince Norodom Sihanouk Statue and it daily attracts locals and outbound tourists to visit and capture its nice photos.



7. RUSSIAN MARKET (PHSAR TUOL TOMPOUNG)

The popular, bustling tourist market clusters local vendors selling various types of souvenirs including handicrafts, scarves, antiques, paintings, ceramics, clothes, silks, silver jewellery, bags, food stalls and so on. Locates along St 163 of Phnom Penh Capital, Russian Market should not be missed out when exploring Phnom Penh.



8. CENTRAL MARKET

In a very yellow dome shape mixing of French art decoration and was built in 1937, the dome of Central Market or Phar Thmei consists four long wings that gather hundreds of stalls displaying and selling many kinds of goods, local vegetables, meats, groceries, seafood, flowers, jewellery, clothes, brand/fake watches and many more. Central Market is considered as the most interesting center for browsing the busy local activities and also is the best place to hunt for different flavors of authentic local food unlikely Russian Market (Phsar Tuol Tompoung) which mainly focuses on souvenirs for tourists.



9. EXPLORING PHNOM PENH BY RICKSHAW (CYCLO RIDE)

In a slow pace, rickshaw or Cyclo is an ideal to explore the highlights of the bustling Phnom Penh Capital. The ride along The Riverside, with the glimpses of Royal Palace and passes Chaktomuk Conference Hall toward Independent Monument and ending the ride at Central Market will create a memorable experience for your journey to Cambodia.



10. CAMBODIAN LIVING ARTS

Founded by Arn Chorn Pond - the genocide survivor and musician, Cambodian Living Arts an innovative art centre that culturally makes Cambodian arts living through developing, educating, supporting and training the young generation in the art careers. If you want to discover the cultural heritage of Cambodia arts, Cambodian Living Arts offers a visit that you can grab the insight into Cambodia cultural arts or through visiting their evening's cultural art shows either in Phnom Penh or in Siem Reap.



11. PHNOM PENH RIVERSIDE & SUNSET CRUISE

The fresh riverside gives a pleasant walk overlooking Tonle Sap & Mekong as if having opportunity to take picturesque photos of Royal Palace. Along the riverfront, there are busy café, interesting boutique shops, restaurants, bars, urban hotels and colonial buildings while at the other side is always occupied by locals in the evening and some feeding pigeons. The boat excursion for the sundown is also an ideal to see the golden lights over Mekong & Tonle Sap and where you will gain the evening's fresh river-air after the exploration of the capital.



12. KOH DACH (THE SILK ISLAND)

Being famed for its fine silk productions, Koh Dach sits by the River Bank of Upstream Mekong in Kandal Province and the Island houses numerous silk communities where visitors can learn more about silk process, feeding worms, a reliable place purchasing silk items, scarves, Sarong, handicrafts as well as a great home for you to reveal silk weaving history in Cambodia. Besides silk weaving activities, visitors have chances to see authenticity of Cambodia including lifestyle, gardening activities, feeding animals and other interesting insights. Koh Dach or Silk Island is reachable by a short boat cruise or approx. 45 minutes by road from central Phnom Penh Capital.

15 Best Things to Do & See in Siem Reap

From the tomb raider temple “Ta Prohm” to the intricately carved Banteay Srei “The Pink Sandstone Temple”, the national park of Phnom Kulen waterfall and Tonle Sap floating villages are extremely attractive which truly inspire your journey more exceptional, relaxing, and discoverable.



1. ANGKOR WAT TEMPLE & THE SMALL CIRCUIT

The marvelous Angkor Wat - the world’s heritage listed by UNESCO in 1992 and the largest unrivaled monument in the world. Built by Suryavarman II in 12th Century, Angkor Wat is considered as one of the top destinations in Asia and is a must-see in your lifetime. Learning from your tour guide the amazing history, its ancestral incredible, architectural masterpieces and the finest carvings dates back to the Khmer Empire when it dominated the largest parts of Southeast Asia. Locates about 7km with 15 minute-drive toward northern Siem Reap, Angkor Wat temple is normally spent at least 2 hours to discover its amazing complex and it is programmed to combine the small circuit including Angkor Thom, South Gate, the smiles of Bayon temple, Baphoun... Ta Prohm temple adorned with the stunning giant trees.



2. KOMPONG PHLUK STILT HOUSES & MANGROVE

Kompong Phluk village is famed for its pleasant mangroves where you enjoy the rowing boat going closer to the lines of stilt houses arising from the water about 10m high then continue the canoe goes through the mangroves where you can catch beautiful photos and enjoy the serenity. Resume the boat excursion to visit Tonle Sap, learn about ecosystem, reveal lifestyle on the water and explore the surroundings. The village locates at the edge of Tonle Sap Great Lake which is widely known as the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia, just about 22km (30-40 minute-drive) from central Siem Reap. Tourists can access Kompong Phluk by overland from National Road 6, pass Bakong district onward direct to Kompong Phluk village or it is accessible by taking a local boat from Chong Kneas floating village through Tonle Sap Lake, which takes approx. 1 hour or 1.30 hours depends on the weather.

Note: Kompong Phluk is available in high water period from mid of September to January.



3. PHNOM KULEN WATERFALL

The fascinating waterfall is located in **Phnom Kulen** national park, about 57km with approx. 1 hour drive, Phnom Kulen is regarded as the holy mountain for religious significance to Hindus and Buddhists and was the significant home of the ancient Khmer Empire when King Jayavarman II proclaimed independence from Java in 804 CE. Walking up to the hilltop, there is the giant reclining Buddha statue where locals come to pray for happiness, standing with breathtaking, spectacular views and learn from your tour guide about historical site. Resume to walk passing small souvenir stores to witness religious Hindu of the riverbed of 1000 linga and observe the sacred pool before swimming, cooling off under the waterfalls and enjoying local food, fresh coconut under a cottage.

Phnom Kulen national park is also a great jungle spot for 1-2 nights adventure, camping and trekking or a fully guided classic trip can associate with Banteay Srei or Beng Mealea temple.



4. BANTEAY SREI TEMPLE

38km with an hour drive from central Siem Reap town, the intricately carved, beautiful red-pink sandstone temple of Banteay Srei (Or Citadel of the Women) is considered to be a Jewel of Khmer art which uniquely features elaborate decorations and its finest details, was constructed in 10th century before the incredible Angkor Wat, and dedicated to the Hindu good Shiva. Banteay Srei has come one of tourist’s favorite temples and this is also a must-visit if you plan for 2 day-discovery of Angkor Complex and it is extremely appropriate for those who are interested in the history, architecture, art and photography.



5. BENG MEALEA JUNGLE TEMPLE

A remote temple sits among the lush jungle, about 65km with 1h 20m drive passing countryside towards east-northern Siem Reap. Beng Mealea temple was constructed in 12th century by powerful Khmer King “Suryavarman II”, the same king who built Angkor Wat. The specialty about Beng Mealea is its serenity, very less touristy and you’re about the only tourists who visiting the temple when you arrive and it is really appropriate for photography. This overgrown temple provides real adventure from the beginning, you can grab the greatest orientation to unlock the history, walk through wooden path & the stunning tree roots, and climb over the ruined rocks enhanced by the vegetation & the tranquility. It is a worth visit with having a few stop on the way where you observe locals making bamboo sticky rice with a chance for tasting, stroll around local market and have 30 minutes at stone quarry to learn how ancient Khmer amazingly cut/dragged huge panels of sandstone to build the temple.



6. A BIKE RIDE TO COUNTRYSIDE

Away from the hassle Siem Reap city, you can make a gentle pace on mountain bike which is led by an escort guide and see beautiful hidden Cambodia countryside. Eventually, come across plenty of interesting farming & gardening activities depends on the season you visit the country, huge rice fields dotting with palm trees, cows and water buffalos. You will be always welcomed by kids with saying “Hello” to you. Your memorable ride takes you to see authentic Cambodia while you’re riding pass to interact local people, visit local market, have a lot of stop to take beautiful photos or try to make your Khmer conversation with the locals.



7. STROLLING AROUND PUB STREET

When the sun is set, walking from King Residence’s park to old market, you will absolutely hear noises of motorcycle, the sounds of chopping and the music starts to play. The colorful Siem Reap Pub Street clusters different classes of bars, restaurants, boutique shops, spa massage and offers variety tastes of Cambodian & Western cuisines, A glass of local beer costing \$0.50 or sipping cocktails at the bar corridor will make your evening cheerful and joyful or go to join the loud disco-music for funny dances at Temple Club.



8. SHOPPING AT ANGKOR NIGHT MARKET

While night markets are booming in Siem Reap, Angkor night market is the first original night market which is an ideal looking and walking around for shopping but don’t forget to bargain. It is the big night marketplace whose vendors sell plenty kinds of souvenirs, handicrafts, colorful Kroma (scarf) & silks, variety styles of clothes with elephant arts, handbags, statues, silver and bronze products, paintings and many more.



9. EAT LIKE LOCALS

To make your travel experience unique and more memorable, spending an evening to enjoy local BBQ at Road 60 or at Red Crab BBQ offers many different types of local meats and fresh seafood including crabs, shrimps, prawns, oysters, shells. Sitting around a gas-cooker BBQ pot or charcoal grill, you serve yourselves from vegetables, meat and sauces station to your table while the BBQ pot is starting to get lit and you make your own favorite sauces even a spicy one.

Eating fresh vegetables combines roasted beef dipping into fermented fish-sauce mixing with lemongrass, peanut, chili and lime is also recommended and it is easy find a place near central Siem Reap City. Cambodian hotpot provides a great experience in local family style which is not much different from BBQ style, it comes with its set with vegetables, sliced beef, soup-beef, eggs, noodles and sauces, and you can order extra vegetables and different meats as additional option.



10. THE CAMBODIAN LANDMINE MUSEUM

Founded by Khmer Hero “Aki Ra”, a very young soldier that joined in the army and planted many landmines during civil war that took place for years and later returned to clear thousands of unexploded landmines by hand with his homemade tools. Opened in 2007 with the significant support from oversea, Cambodia Landmine Museum mainly focuses to provide visitors the major education of clearing landmines in Cambodia, get to know the dangers of landmines, its impact to the country in the past, present and future as well as witnessing more about the victims who suffered from the landmines. A guided tour takes you around the museum area displaying variety of ordnance and hundreds of defused landmines, and they open to welcome any questions you have or you can volunteer to work in the museum or museum’s office and help teach English to children in the class at the back of the museum. Cambodia Landmine Museum locates along the way to Banteay Srei temple, about 45-minute drive from Central Siem Reap City. The museum opens daily from 7.30am to 5.30pm and the entrance fee is \$5.00 for adult, child under 10 years and Cambodian citizens are free of charge.



11. ANGKOR NATIONAL MUSEUM

This is a worth visit for those who really font of studying arts, cultural heritage, Khmer history and civilization. The museum houses eight galleries which are beautifully presented and wonderfully informative, a lot of artifacts and the history dated from the pre-Angkor time (1s – 8th century) to the Golden Era of the Khmer Empire (9th to mid-14th century). Most of the artifacts are discovered and transferred from The Angkor Conservation Site and the National Museum in Phnom Penh Capital. Angkor National Museum has a very strict policy that not allow visitors to take any pictures, learn from your tour guide to get more information and audio guides are available at the entrance in different languages. Angkor National Museum opens daily from 8.30am to 6.00pm and to 6.30pm in high season, the entrance ticket is \$12.00 for adult and additional \$3.00 for audio guide.



12. CAMBODAIN COOKING CLASSES

Once you’re done the major tourist attraction and don’t know what to do. Cambodian gastronomy can’t end without “Fish Amok” or “Cambodian Red Curry”, provides the half day to experience Khmer culinary including the famous main course “Fish Amok” or “Cambodian Red Curry”, a starter and a dessert. A guided market tour leads you through a local market to understand Cambodian trades, bargaining, collecting & buying local ingredients, spices, meat and vegetables. Additionally, a guided tour to rural gardens to where you can grab fresh vegetables, herbs, lemongrass and learning about local household is also available depends on the location of cooking station they provides. Everyone will have their own cooking station, you hand on everything in the following steps which are directed by your chef. The cooking class generally takes approx. 3 ½ to 4 hours included the time of eating your own creation you made and a recipe book or a certificate will be handed at the end of the class.



13. OXCART RIDE & WALKING TOUR OR GO FOR BIKING

A oxcart walking (or bike) tour can combine with a short ride on ox cart which only takes approx. 15-20 minutes and a long ride is not recommended. A local expert will guide you through a rural village, show you around and learn how the locals survive with their farms, animals and rice fields compare to a living in the city. It’s a great chance to meet a host family for chatting, witnessing lifestyle, routine, culture, superstition and enjoy welcome fresh coconut and farewell tropical fruits. There is plenty of time to take interesting photos of local activities, beautiful rice paddies and the picturesque landscape.



14. APSARA DANCE PERFORMANCE

This should not be missed out when you visit Cambodia. Apsara dance is the traditional performance that has such a long rich history that rooted from Angkor Era dated to The Khmer civilization whose Angkor Wat walls comprise hundreds of Apsara carvings, and Apsara dance was only performed for the Royal King. Nowadays Apsara dance performance is performed at some of restaurants, hotels and special outdoor events during the middle time of dining. Apsara dance performance normally combines with 4-5 different traditional shows such as Coconut Shell Knocking Dance, Fishing Dance... Apsara Dance is performed at the end of the show and overall, it takes an hour.



15. PHARE CAMBODIAN CIRCUS

A social business, Phare Cambodian Circus is the unique creative entertainment which is performed by young Cambodian circus artists with their energetic, exotic style and talent, followed by There are 3 sections for seating area “A”, “B”, “C” with different prices, Seat “A” lies with a few rows at the front of the stage, Seat “B” lines at the back of Seat “A” while Seat “C” is at left and right sides of the stage.

Note: Phare Cambodian Circus has a very strict policy of entering the circus tent, those who have arrived 1 minute late will be strongly asked to return for the next time. Being late can cause any inconveniences to the art performers because all lights outside the tent are off and can’t turn it on if you are late.

The Southern Coast

Sihanoukville, Kampot, Kep & Koh Kong

Cambodia's southern part consists of 443 square kilometers of the coastline with 4 provinces: Sihanoukville, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong - standing along the blue crystal sea overlooking forested islands while the undersea provides plenty of opportunities for diving and snorkeling to see the Cambodian underwater flora and fauna. The tasty fresh seafood and the instant fishing Kep crabs are a must-try followed by green Kampot peppers, dipping into local spicy sauces that makes your dishes more delicious.

From low, mid to high ranged, accommodating at beautiful resorts, bungalows, lodges or standard hotels at the mainland is a basic relaxing experience while the Koh Andet Island in Koh Kong, Koh Rong Samloem Island, Koh Rong Island, Koh Russey, Koh Sramauch provide ideals for a better beach experience or even make an exclusive beach holiday at the private island "Koh Song Saa" to capture the true sense of tranquility, nature, sunbathing, swimming and relaxing.

The city orientation, a day trip of city highlights, islands boat discovery and a sunset boat cruise are optional touring activities which also give beyond to see the local culture, encounters and photography opportunity rather than just relaxing at the seaside. On the mainland, Ochheuteal, Otres and Independence beaches provide variety of beach breaks and seaside activities which overlooking the modern buildings and islands or grab an evening sunset boat party.



KOH RONG ISLAND & KOH RONG SAMLOEM

Sihanoukville houses some idyllic natural islands especially the well-known Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem - both are reachable by daily speed ferry and boats and takes approx. 45 minutes per way from/to the mainland. The rapidly developing Koh Rong Island is a bit crowded, bigger and much more popular than Koh Rong Samloem, and Koh Rong is the perfect spot for underwater discovery and snorkeling. Koh Rong Island offers wide range of better accommodation facilities, amenities and service quality while Koh Rong Samloem, Koh Russey, Koh Sramauch are quite suitable for those who looking for a quiet ambience.

Sihanoukville can be reached by daily flights either from Siem Reap or Phnom Penh and overland with 4-5 hours direct from Phnom Penh Capital.



KAMPOT & KEP

Next to each other, Kampot and Kep towns are still under the slow pace of development but its towns are more likely over-occupied during public holidays, national festivals and events. The coastal lines give a lot of opportunities for beach parties, beach sport activities, sunbathing and swimming while Kep's Rabbit Island provides a pleasant break on the white-sand beach and Kep National Park interacts active explorers to reveal its tranquil jungle trail by trekking which is also admired by the best breathtaking with panoramic view.

Beyond Kampot sunset boat cruise and mangrove exploration, Kampot is considered as the paradise of nature where Bokor Mountain emerges the spectacular mountainous landscape, the stunning view of the sky cloud, dotting with French colonial buildings, waterfall and the rich historical site. A day of bike ride is a great experience to see real countryside especially the famous Kampot pepper farms, cycle along the railway to Kampong Trach where visitors can stop for breathtaking, strolling within Kampong Trach caves and have a chance to swim in the blue water before the ride continues to the salt fields to observe the salt process.

Kampot & Kep is actually accessible by overland with approx. 3.30 hours from Phnom Penh or 2.30 hours from Sihanoukville and 60 minutes from Prek Chak Border Crossing (Vietnam's Ha Tien).



KOH KONG

Koh Kong is a green home for many species, wildlife and river while Cardamom Mountains, Botum Sakor National Park and Chiphat Village provide huge range of amazing adventures, biking, jungle trekking, camping, lush mangrove exploration and wildlife sanctuary. Koh Kong beach destination is unlikely popular like other beaches in Kampong, Kep and Sihanoukville but it is fairly acceptable if you have an over-stop before crossing the border to Thailand. Beyond, Tatai Waterfall is a nice place to cool down after a day discovery in Koh Kong as well as giving chances to take many beautiful photos. Besides, Koh Andet Eco Resort offers amazing, unforgettable experience for a pleasant stay among the nature, surrounded by rainforest and overlooking the serenity of Ta Tai River that you can enjoy swimming.

While the airport is being constructed in Koh Kong, the only way to get to Koh Kong is only by road which spends around 6 hours from Phnom Penh Capital, 5 hours from Sihanoukville and 20 minutes from Cham Yeam Border Crossing (Thailand's Hat Lek).

Battambang Province & Bamboo Train

Bordering Siem Reap with 2.30 hour drive, the largest rice-bowl Battambang truly emerges picturesque countryside while the colonial town remains French architecture, old yellow buildings and some of Angkorian temples are still in good condition including Banan and Ek Phnom temples. Featured by the significant Sangker River, the walkable riverside gives short highlights of evening activities and street food you may love to try.



BAMBOO TRAIN

The most interesting thing to do in Battambang is **BAMBOO TRAIN** – the unique creative bamboo platform attached motor-engine which runs over the train rails, provides beautiful landscape, fresh air and you absolutely have fun. Whilst, experience a short stay in a tranquil Battambang resort, there are still much more to be explored including the infamous Prahok market, observing rice wine & rice paper making, challenge the real taste of Cambodian bamboo sticky rice, visiting a host family with tropical fruit testing, grape plantation and the oldest wooden house dates back to the colonial era.



PHNOM SAMPOV

An active wandering at Phnom Sampov gives the best exploration while spotting on thousands of bats. The mysterious Phnom Sampov literally means “Mountain Ship”, set among countryside, surrounded by several mountains and it takes approx. 20 minute drive (12km) from West-south of Battambang City. **Phnom Sampov** is one of the major tourist attractions in the region, which houses some caves including the tragic killing caves with hundreds of victims lost their lives during Khmer Rouge Regime, Pka Sla Cave is known as the hermitage for nuns that clusters several caves admired by the serenity and nature which provide a nice walking tour throughout the caves. Atop Buddhist pagoda on the summit, travelers can enjoy the spectacular panoramic view and breathtaking or watching beautiful sunset, this religious site houses Buddha image and holds special festivals which gather local people and international tourists to pray for good fortune and happiness. At the end of exploring Phnom Sampov, travelers anxiously spend an evening to observe thousands of bats flying to their caves amidst the orange sky.



PREK TOAL BIRD

Additionally, Battambang has much more to explore despite there are many ancient temples and local attractions **Prek Toal bird** sanctuary is one of the major tourist destinations, it is the most important home for hundred species within Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, a great lush area houses many endangered water birds including darters, little cormorants, grey herons, greater adjutants, milky & painted storks, black headed ibis, spot billed ducks and other species that yearly migrate from different sites of The Great Lake to gather at Prek Toal sanctuary for breeding during the wet season which gives the best time to observe, learn and witness how those lovely birds are concentratively being protected.

How to get to Battambang!

1. Public Buses/VIP Mini Van

There are daily departures in morning or afternoon from Siem Reap/Phnom Penh to Battambang, it generally takes approx. 2 hours & half for Siem Reap to Battambang and 5 hours from Phnom Penh, and is now taking longer than usual while the national road is being renovated and widen. Mekong Express is the most reliable company for recommendation.

2. Local Boats

There is no standard speed boat operated from Siem Reap to Battambang (or Vice Versa). However, those engine-boats in local style are available for both public and private rental. To avoid disappointment, this interesting boat adventure is not a good experience to gain the sightseeing of Tonle Sap Lake due to the water level which causes the excursion taking much longer time to reach Battambang (generally takes around 7 hours in high water).

3. By Train

The Royal Railway has 2 schedules per week which runs with approx. 3 hours from Poi Pet to Battambang but you should check their facebook page for an accurate schedule and price.

4. Border Crossing (Poi Pet)

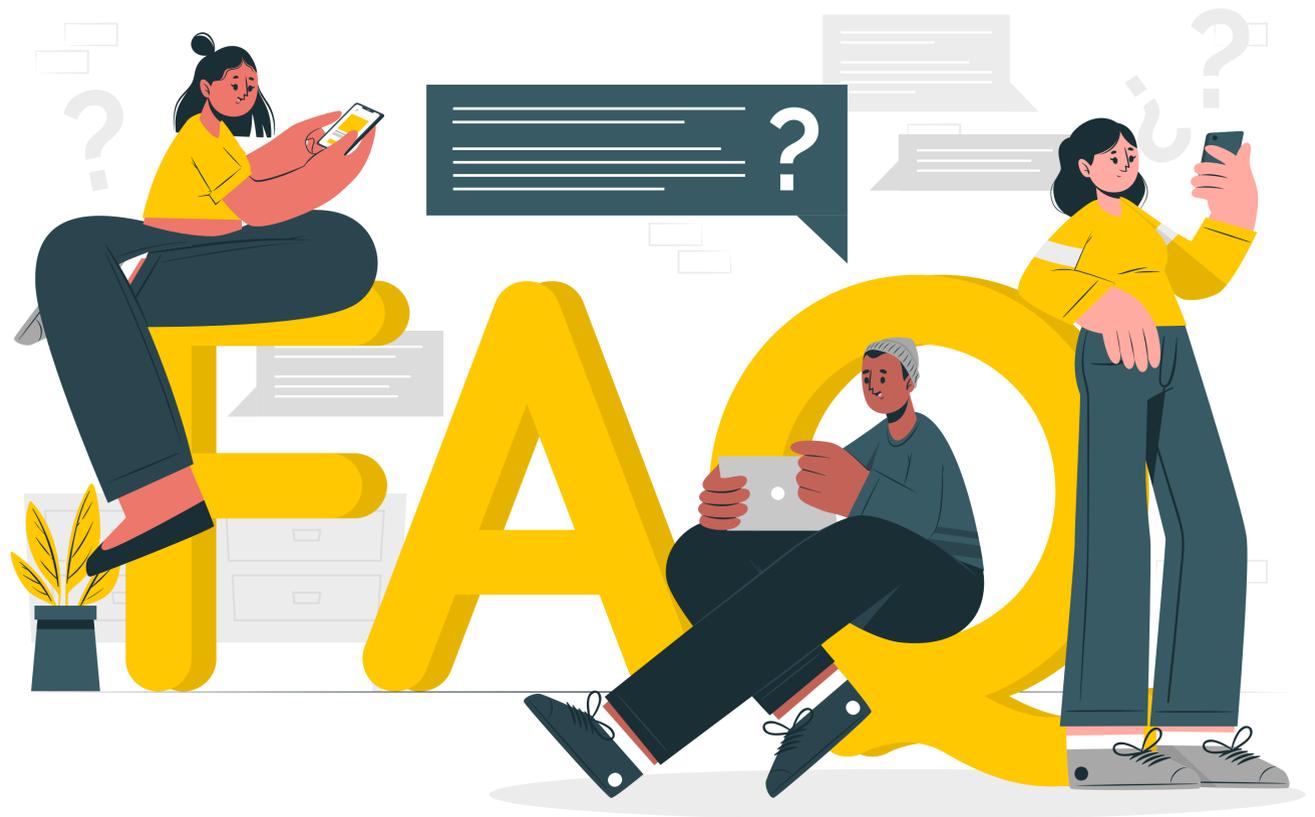
Once you're done the immigration papers at the international border crossing (Poi Pet), you can find daily public bus operated by Capital Tours which seems provide more choices for departures (3 ½ hours) but a private taxi (\$25-\$35) is also another option for a faster way to get to Battambang.

Northern Nature

Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Mondulhiri & Kratie



The mother of nature in Cambodia, clusters from **Stung Treng** where the Mekong River, rapids, birds and mangroves meet when **Ratanakiri, Mondulhiri** to **Kratie** create an amazing journey to discover the rest of hidden specialty of Cambodia. From the natural volcanic lake “**Yeak Laom**”, the sleepy town to The Sen San River, the **ethnic minority** groups of Ratanakiri provides a great opportunity to witness ethnic activities, routine, ancestral believes, customs and culture in their notable villages while Kratie province gives unique chances to see the glimpses of **Irrawaddy** – the rare threaten freshwater **dolphins** in the world and **Koh Trong Island** of Kratie is still popular for authentic experience either by local bikes or horse cart ride with a stop for tasting pomelos and its neighboring Mondulhiri inspires overnights for the next day of playing with, feeding and bathing **elephant families** in pleasant river within Cambodia jungle and actually don't forget to go to bath under the most beautiful waterfall “**Bou Sra**” and take photos of the stunning views of Mondulhiri before leaving for the next destination.



Where is Cambodia?

Cambodia is in the tropical monsoon, situated between Vietnam and Thailand, and shares border with Laos at northern part, Southeast Asia. Cambodia covers 181,035 square kilometers of land and has a population of 15 million with density of 82 people per square kilometer.

Is Cambodia safe?

Yes, Cambodia is a truly safe country. There are occasional reports of petty theft and the occasional bar fight, but these can easily be avoided (especially the latter) if you exercise common sense. Do not leave your bag sitting at your feet while riding around in a tuk tuk or leave your expensive jewelry, cash or any valuable objects unattended in a hotel's room (better to keep it in a safety box). You will be warned not to carry much cash with you whenever you are on a trip. You don't have to worry about landmines when you travel with local tour guide, 90% of landmines have been disarmed since the war completely ended. However, you are not allowed to enter a zone where you can see warning landmine boards especially the areas in the jungles near the borders.



How to get to Cambodia?

● By flight:

Cambodia has two important international airports in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville & Siem Reap. If you travel from Europe, you always transit in Thailand or Vietnam and there are direct flights to Cambodia if you travel from Asia countries including Philippine, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam etc.

● By border crossing:

Thailand: Poi Pet (Aranyaprathet) in Banteay Meanchey, Cham Yeam (Had Lek) & Daun Lem (Ban Laem) in Koh Kong, O'Smach (Chong Jom) & Anlong Veng (Chong Sa Ngam) in Preah Vihear.

Vietnam: Ba Vet (Moc Bai) & Kaam Samnor (Ving Xuong) in Svay Rieng, Phnom Den (Tinh Bien) in Ta Keo and Prek Chak (Ha Tien) in Kampot.

Laos: Dom Kralor (Veun Kham) in Stung Treng.

● By speed boat:

Vietnam: If you visit Mekong Delta River & Can Tho in Vietnam, you can catch speed boats from Chau Doc border (Cambodia's site: Kao Orm Samnor) to Phnom Penh Capital. The boat excursion takes approx. 6 hours depending on the water level.

Who needs visa & how to get visa?

Some of **Asian passport holders** are officially allowed to enter Cambodia without visa and can stay in the country at least 15 days up to 30 days depending on ASEAN member-countries (Malaysia, Philippine, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam etc.) except Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan and Sri Lanka while most of **European passport holders** such as American, Canadian, French, Germany, Italian, Brazilian, Portuguese and Australian can obtain visa on arrival and online (e-visa).

Tourist visa for most nationality is available for 30 days either can be applied in advance (E-visa: \$36) or on arrival (\$30) at international airports in **Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville** and at border crossing including Poi Pet (Aranyaprathet), Ba Vet (Moc Bai) and Koh Kong (Had Lek).

You can apply for e-visa through government official website: <https://www.evisa.gov.kh>

Make sure your passport is valid for at least six months, has at least one blank page and need a passport-size photo. If you don't have this, you can pay a \$2 fee and they will scan the photo from your passport.

What's the weather like?

Cambodia geographically stays in tropical monsoon, dry (mid Oct to May) and wet (Jun to Oct) seasons but you probably experience a bit cool period at the end of December to early January. The Average temperature is from 34-37 degrees C in dry season while April to May sometimes reaches 40 degrees C. The rain begins from June and lasts through October, the rain is not constant, however, and may be characterized by afternoon or evening downpours. Some roads in the countryside will be impassable at this time as they get flooded or washed out.

When is the best time to visit Cambodia?

We can say peak season (November to February) is the best period for your holiday trips to Cambodia but if you don't want to see much crowd and get annoyed to push your way out, green season (June to October) would be an ideal as the best time in your mind to visit Cambodia when every things look green, wet, cool off and very less touristy.

Do I have to use local currency in Cambodia?

You don't have to do exchange money when you arrival in Cambodia. The exchange rate is always behind a scam at the border crossing especially at Poi Pet. US dollar is largely accepted in Cambodia. One US dollar is equal 4000 Riel in the local currency. You will get small change in Riel if purchased items cost less than a dollar.

What kinds of clothing are suitable?

People should wear whatever they are most comfortable in but a fair amount of modesty should be exercised. Importantly, when visiting religious temples, women should cover their shoulders and properly dress below knees especially when visiting Royal Palace in Phnom Penh and at Angkor Wat in Siem Reap. To show your respect to the locals when visiting their villages or you are invited to visit their home, you are highly advised to address appropriately (not too revealed). Swimwear is acceptable on the beaches and at hotel's poolside.

What to bring along?

A hat is also recommended to keep the hot sun off your face, apply sunscreen when go on the beaches, visit Angkor temples as most of them are exposed in the open, apply insect repellent when you go for adventure trips through the jungle, mangroves or at countryside for overnights. Walking shoes, sneakers and sandals are good for sightseeing tours while strong footwear is highly recommended for remote adventures, trekking and hiking. As it is tropical monsoon and to keep you rehydrate, you should bring extra bottles of water with you. Mini first aid kit is also essential.

Drinking water in Cambodia

It is not recommended to drink tap water in Cambodia. Filtered water is a better option, try to use a refillable canteen or water bottle rather than buying bottled water. Remember to avoid ice in drinks if you don't really know where it's manufactured. Bottled water can be found and purchased at local stores and many at the street sides, and at mini marts.

What is an ideal budget for accommodation?

That entirely depends on your style of travel and the level of comfort that you are accustomed to. You can easily find **guesthouses** from as \$9-\$15 (Fan or Air Conditioning) while **hostels** are ranged from \$5-\$8. **Standard accommodation** is start from \$20-\$30, **mid-range** from \$35-\$55, **comfort** is from \$60-\$120 and **luxurious comfort** is from \$130-\$360 and **top luxury** is up to \$400-\$1200.

What's the best way to get around?

The **Romork** (or tuk tuk) is affordable with fun and very popular in Cambodia. You come across Romorks all the way out when you come out of the exit gate at airport. For short distance from your hotel to pup street or super markets, the charge is about 2-3 bucks and a full day service is from \$15-\$25 depending on places you go but for long distance from 45km up, **air conditioning car** should be an ideal. The most comfortable and escape from the heat, air conditioning cars are the best option, and price is \$30-\$45 for general tourist attraction sites. **Electric-bike** or **bicycles** are available for rent at the central area. **Mountain bike** cost \$5-\$7 and Electric-bike is \$8-\$12 per day. Motorcycle is not allowed to rent for tourists.

Is a visitor required to have a local tour guide?

No, a guide for the Angkor Complex is not required and it is an entirely up to visitors to decide if they need guide service or not. A guide will definitely enrich your experience and can offer you detailed cultural, historical information and save much of your time on considering or researching but may prefer to go without a guide. A local English speaking guide service is generally charged from \$35 per day without sunrise or adventure/remote trips. Tour guide service can be arranged by your hotel, guesthouse and other local travel agencies.

How much is Angkor pass, how does one get it and how is it used?

The Angkor Wat pass can be purchased at the toll booth en route to Angkor Archaeological Park. There is always queue, payment is made in cash and they will take photo for you. Once you get the pass, make sure you keep it with you safely (or use name tag) because you have to show your pass to authority guards at the entrance of each temple.

- A). 1-day pass is USD 37
- B). 3-day pass is USD 62 (Valid within 10 days)
- C). 7-day pass is USD 72 (Valid within 30 days)

Temple hours: The Angkor Wat complex opens at 5:00am and closes at 6:00pm. Banteay Srei closes at 5:00pm and Kbal Spean closes at 3:00pm, so plan your itinerary carefully.

Passes are not required for the following, however there is a toll levied Phnom Kulen (\$20), Koh Ker (\$10), Beng Melea (\$5), Preah Vihear (\$10), Sambor Prei Kuk (\$10), Banteay Chhmar (\$5) and Preah Khan Kampong Svay (\$5).

What should one bring to give to the kids?

Bringing things and hand out at random is never a good idea, as it just encourages begging and an jealousy. Purchasing items from street children is just to enhance them to stay on the streets, missing school and missing out on make education. If you wish to help out children in Cambodia, arrange to visit a school or an orphanage and bring supplies directly to them. You can buy school supplies and toys at the local markets or a stationary nearby. Not only this benefits the local business but also you can purchase those items in a fair price and you won't have to fill your suitcase with items from home. If you will be visiting a home of the locals, bring them some household items such as soap, shampoo, cooking oil, salt, soup base etc. which will be more useful than a decorative object.