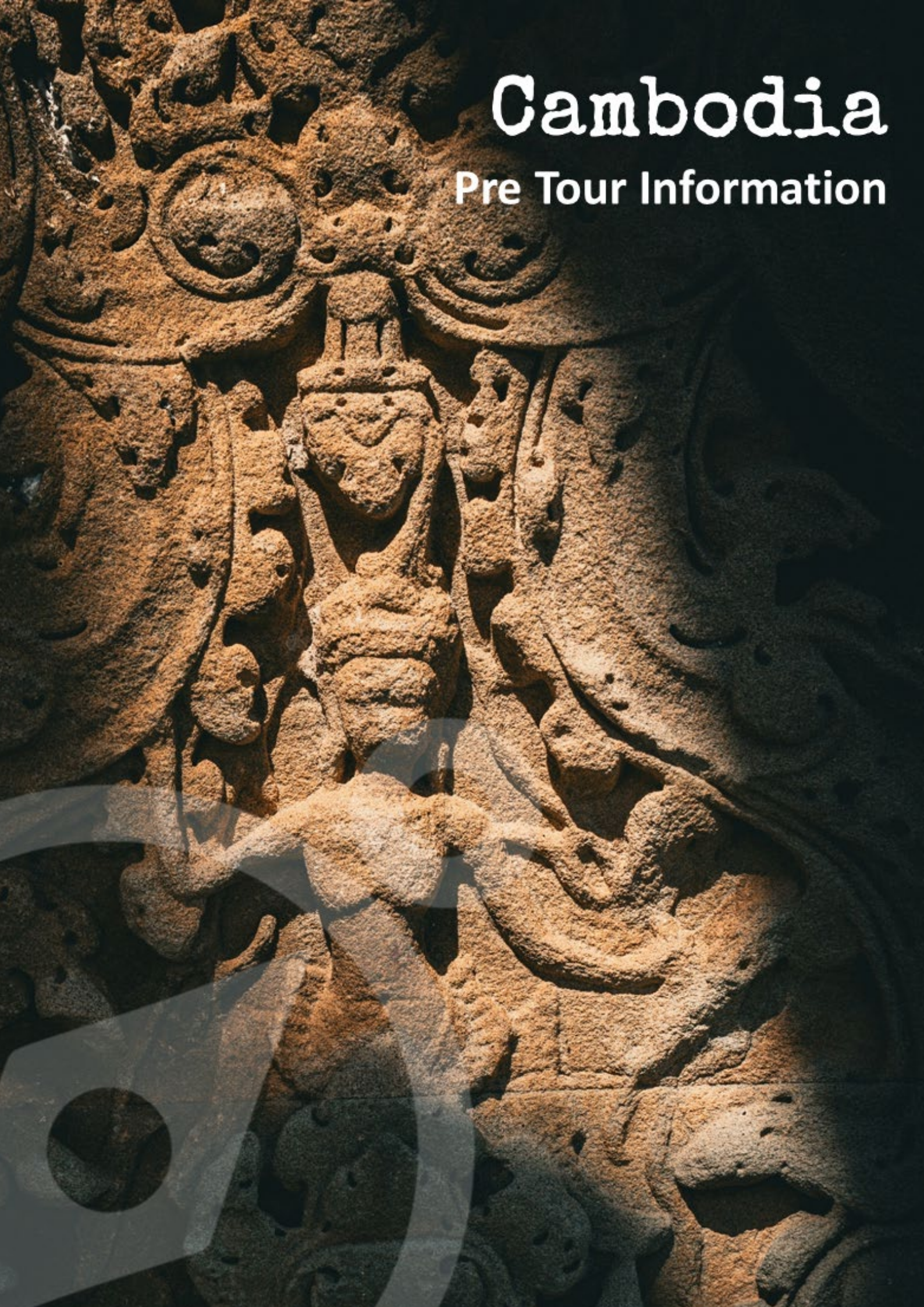

# Cambodia

## Pre Tour Information

# Introducing Cambodia...

Cambodia is a country of contrasts – majestic temples rise from tangled jungle while echoes of recent tragedy stir beneath the surface of vibrant street life. At the heart of it all is Angkor Wat, a vast sandstone temple complex so magnificent that it rivals Machu Picchu or Petra in scale and awe. As you explore centuries-old ruins, you'll also find a country pushing forward – its cities bustling, its cuisine flavourful and varied, and its people warm and welcoming.

Expect moody monsoons that turn rice paddies brilliant green, tuk-tuks weaving through lively markets, and sunsets that cast a golden glow on ancient stones. Cambodia will challenge, reward, and stay with you long after you leave.

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**Emergency Contact Procedure Reminder and Information**

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our guests is of paramount importance to us at Crooked Compass. We would like to take this opportunity to remind you about our emergency contact procedure and where to find your contact details, as well as provide guidance on what to do in different emergency situations.

**Local Crooked Compass 24/7 Assistance Contact** can be found on your detailed itinerary. This is the **first point** of contact for any concerns or queries whilst in destination for all types of assistance.

**Emergency Services** can be found here in this document.

Notify Crooked Compass (Non-Urgent)
For any non-urgent enquiries, please contact our office within Australian office hours (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5.30pm AEST) on +61 2 8089 1370 or via email info@crooked-compass.com

**Consular Assistance:** Please familiarise yourself with your local embassy's details before travel.

## Managing Expectations – Ancient Majesty & Raw Beauty

Cambodia is one of those places that gets under your skin in all the best ways. Golden temples, tangled jungle ruins, silky white beaches  and then there are the parts no one warned you about: visa booths that look like food stalls, menus that require imagination, and change given in a currency you've never seen before. But that's the beauty of it.

Here's what might surprise you, in the order you'll probably encounter it.

**The US dollar is the unofficial national currency**
Almost everything, from tuk-tuk rides to cocktails, is priced in USD. But don't expect change in dollars. You'll get riel, Cambodia's local currency, often in crumpled handfuls. It's legal tender, but not worth much outside the country. Bring small dollar notes and don't stress too much – it's confusing at first, but you get the hang of it quickly.

**You might still step on a landmine**
Don't panic. If you stick to known roads and tourist zones, you're perfectly safe. But wandering off-trail in border provinces (especially near Thailand) is still a no-go. Your guide knows exactly where not to tread. Do yourself a favour: follow them, not your inner Indiana Jones.

**The monarchy of scams**
Cambodia's scams are more playful than dangerous. Think: tuk-tuk drivers with temple tours that turn into shopping trips, or kids trying to "exchange" your coins. Guides are great at heading this off, and most locals are genuinely lovely  but if someone says something's "free," your wallet's probably about to be lighter.

**Don't point your feet at a monk**
Or Buddha. Or really anyone, if you can help it. Khmer etiquette puts a lot of weight on what your feet and head are doing. Take your shoes off when entering temples or homes, greet with a sampeah (palms together and bow slightly), and try not to tower over elders or monks. It's easier than it sounds and your guide will gently help the group get it right.

**The bathroom situation is... mixed**
Big cities and hotels? You'll be fine. Rural guesthouses, roadside cafés and markets? Squat toilets and BYO toilet paper. A small packet of tissues and hand sanitiser will make you feel like a genius.

**Transport is less "express" and more "event"**
Even short distances can take hours. Roads are being improved, but they're not there yet. Sit back, enjoy the scenery, and remember you're not on a deadline, you're on a journey. Bonus tip: motion sickness tablets are your new best friend.

**It's not just Angkor**
Angkor Wat is the headliner, but Cambodia's got range. Floating villages, forest temples, sleepy French-colonial towns, beaches with no beach clubs. Ask your guide about the lesser-known spots. Some feel like you've stepped into a postcard no one's ever mailed.

**Food is unexpectedly fantastic**
Khmer food doesn't shout. It whispers: fresh herbs, coconut, tamarind, grilled river fish. You'll get some familiar crossover from Thai or Vietnamese cuisine, but with its own twist. Dishes like fish amok and num banh chok are standouts. And don't knock the rice wine until you've tried it.

**English is not a given**
In cities, you'll get by. But once you leave Siem Reap or Phnom Penh, signage and menus can feel like riddles. Your guide will do the heavy lifting on translation but a few Khmer phrases and some charades go a long way.

**The islands are blissfully behind schedule**
Koh Rong and its sleepy sister, Koh Rong Samloem, are postcard-perfect and proudly off-grid. Expect patchy Wi-Fi, no ATMs, and lots of hammocks. It's the perfect breather after temple trekking, just don't expect a full spa menu and gelato bar.

**The history hits hard**
Places like the Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng are sobering but vital. Learning about the Khmer Rouge era adds depth to everything else you see. Go gently, ask questions, and know that your guide will give space for reflection.

**Rural charm comes with quirks**
In smaller towns or homestays, electricity might flicker, hot water might take its time, and the roosters start early. But that's the point. It's not staged. It's real and a welcome break from the over-curated "authentic experiences" found elsewhere.

**You come for Angkor. You stay for everything else.**
Cambodia has a quiet kind of magic. It doesn't shout. It hums. It lingers. It surprises you when a stranger insists you sit for tea, or when you realise your tuk-tuk driver is sharing family stories through your guide. Come curious. Come open. Leave changed – in the best possible way.

# General Travel Information

## Local Emergency

- Fire and rescue services: Call 118
- Medical emergencies: Call 119 or go to the hospital
- Police: Call 117 or go to the nearest police station

## Consular & Embassy Assistance

We strongly advise all travellers to take a proactive approach to their safety and well-being by familiarising themselves with the contact details and address of their local embassy within their destination before embarking on their journey. Knowing how to reach your embassy can provide invaluable support in case of emergencies, unexpected situations, or the need for consular assistance. This essential information ensures that you're well-prepared and equipped to navigate any challenges that might arise during your travels. Your embassy is your lifeline in a foreign land, offering guidance, assistance, and a sense of security while you explore new horizons.

## Staying in Touch

Before departing your home country, check with your phone supplier to see if it is compatible with the mobile phone networks in the countries that you are travelling to, and how much it will cost to use it abroad. In some of the more rural reaches of Cambodia, cell phone coverage is not possible.

### Phone & Internet

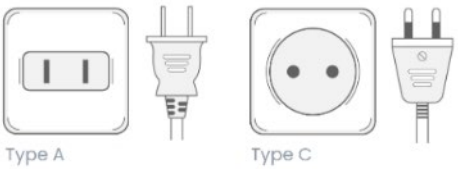
Local SIM cards are affordable and widely available at Phnom Penh and Siem Reap airports, as well as at mobile kiosks in cities and towns. You'll need to show your passport to register. Major providers include Metfone, Smart, and Cellcard, offering solid coverage in cities and along main tourist routes. Coverage can drop in rural or remote areas, especially around temple complexes or countryside villages.

If your device supports eSIM, several Cambodian providers, including Smart and Cellcard, offer prepaid eSIM activation online or via QR code at airport kiosks. This can be a convenient option if you'd prefer to avoid changing physical SIMs.

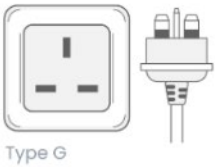
Wi-Fi is widely available in hotels, cafés, and restaurants in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and other urban centres. That said, speeds vary and may slow during peak hours or in smaller towns. For reliable access to maps, messaging apps or translation tools, purchasing a local SIM or eSIM with data is your best option.

## Electrical Voltage & Plug Adaptors

The standard voltage in Cambodia is 220 volts AC. The outlets and plugs used are mostly Types A and C. Type G (British style) is rare but may appear in some modern hotels or expat buildings.




If you don't have a multi-voltage travel adaptor, you can usually borrow or purchase one from your hotel's front desk. Universal plug adaptors are also widely available at airports and convenience stores.



Plug types can vary even within the same city depending on the building, so it's best to travel with a universal adaptor that includes a built-in voltage converter. These are compact, versatile, and ensure your devices stay charged wherever you are.

### Responsible Tourism

We believe strongly in low-impact or rather positive-impact tourism. Broadly speaking, this means that we aim to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

👉 Responsible Tourism (https://www.crooked-compass.com/responsible-tourism/)

## Facts & Figures

### Geography & Location

Cambodia is located in mainland Southeast Asia, bordered by Thailand to the west and northwest, Laos to the north, Vietnam to the east and south, and the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest. Much of the country is low-lying, with the Mekong River flowing through its centre and the Tonlé Sap Lake expanding during the wet season. The northeast features forested highlands and hilltribe regions, while southern Cambodia includes coastal plains and tropical islands.

### Population & Cities

Cambodia has an estimated population of over 17 million people. Phnom Penh, the capital and largest city, is the political and economic hub. Siem Reap, near the Angkor temple complex, is the tourism centre. Other key cities include Battambang, known for its colonial architecture and arts scene, and Sihanoukville, a port city on the coast that has undergone rapid development.

### Government & Economy

Cambodia is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The King serves as the head of state, while the Prime Minister leads the government. The economy is largely driven by agriculture, garment manufacturing, construction, tourism, and more recently, banking and real estate. Despite growth in urban centres, poverty remains a challenge in rural areas.

### Language

Khmer is the official language of Cambodia and is spoken by the vast majority of the population. English is increasingly common in cities and tourist areas, while French retains some influence among the older generation and in legal and diplomatic contexts.

## Useful Phrases

Hello: Sous-dey (SOO-suh-day)
Thank you: Orkun (AW-koon)
Yes: Baat (baht – male) / Chaas (cha – female)
No: Ot tey (Ot-tay)
Please: Som (Som)
Excuse me / Sorry: Sohm tou (SOM toh)
How are you?: Sok sabay? (SOK sah-BYE?)
I don't understand: Khnyom min yol te (K'NYOM min YOL tay)
Where is...?: …nou aena? (…noo ay-NA?)
How much is this?: Nih thlay pohnmaan? (NIH tlay pon-MAN?)

## Time Zone

Cambodia follows Indochina Time (ICT), which is GMT+7. The country does not observe daylight saving time.

## Religion

Around 97% of Cambodians identify as Theravada Buddhists, making it one of the most homogenous Buddhist populations globally. The remainder includes small communities of Muslims (Cham people), Christians, and animist hill tribes in the northeast. Religious customs are deeply woven into daily life and public holidays.

## National Holidays

Cambodia observes numerous public holidays; many tied to Buddhist and royal traditions. Major holidays include:

- **Khmer New Year (Chaul Chnam Thmey)** – Celebrated in mid-April, this marks the end of the harvest season. Expect water fights, games, and closures lasting up to three days.

- **Pchum Ben** – A 15-day religious period in September/October where Cambodians honour their ancestors by visiting pagodas and making offerings.

- **Water Festival (Bon Om Touk)** – Held in November, this lively event celebrates the reversal of the Tonlé Sap River and features dragon boat races and city-wide festivities, especially in Phnom Penh.

- **King Norodom Sihamoni's Birthday** (May 14) and **Coronation Day** (October 29) are also observed, with state events and public closures.

These holidays often involve travel, temple visits, and temporary closures of businesses and services, particularly in rural areas.

# Health & Safety

## Medical Supplies

This is one adventure where you don't want to forget your medications; it may be hard to get them in the remote reaches of Cambodia.

- Pack medications in your carry-on bag to avoid loss and to have them handy. Ensure any liquids or gels are less than 100ml.
- Keep medicines in their original, labelled containers for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- Bring copies of your prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name, to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.
- Carry a letter from your doctor explaining the medications you are using and that they are for personal use.
- Consider bringing a filled prescription antibiotic for gastrointestinal illness, electrolytes and motion sickness medicine if you are susceptible.

Crooked Compass highly recommends that you travel with your first aid kit.

Please refer to a travel vaccination specialist for the most up-to-date advice about vaccinations for your destination(s). We encourage you to check with your healthcare provider and take their advice based on your current state of health.

Please follow the link to check the TravelVax website:
👉 TravelVax (https://www.travelvax.com.au/)

## Medical Care

In major cities like Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, private hospitals and international clinics offer basic to moderate care for minor injuries or illnesses. For anything serious, facilities may be inadequate, and medical evacuation to Bangkok or Singapore is typically required.

## Water Safety

Tap water in Cambodia is not safe to drink. Always drink bottled water, which is widely available, or carry a refillable bottle and use boiled or filtered water where possible. Avoid ice unless you're confident it was made from purified water, especially in rural areas or small street stalls.

## Food Safety

Khmer cuisine is generally safe to eat, particularly in busy restaurants and hotels. Stick to freshly cooked dishes served hot and give preference to busy eateries where food turnover is high. Be cautious with raw vegetables, unpeeled fruit, and undercooked meat. In street food settings, watch how food is handled and avoid anything that’s been sitting out too long.

## Dietary Considerations

Managing special diets in Cambodia is possible, but it requires some awareness and flexibility. **Vegetarians** can usually find meals like tofu stir-fries, fresh vegetable curries, and rice noodle dishes, especially in places like Siem Reap or Phnom Penh, where restaurants cater to international travellers. However, many Cambodian dishes include hidden animal products such as fish sauce, shrimp paste, or pork broth – even in meals labelled "vegetarian." It's always worth confirming the ingredients directly with staff.

For **gluten-free** travellers, soy sauce and oyster sauce – both of which often contain wheat – are used in many local dishes, and cross-contamination is likely in small kitchens. **Dairy-free** travellers generally fare better, as dairy is not a common feature in Khmer cuisine, though powdered milk and condensed milk are sometimes used in drinks and desserts. **Vegan** travellers may face challenges, particularly in rural areas where English is limited and meat or fish-based stock is often used by default.

To stay safe and comfortable, it's helpful to carry a dietary card in Khmer explaining your restrictions. Major supermarkets in cities sell imported goods and snacks that meet a range of dietary needs. If your tour includes group meals, let your guide know in advance so they can assist. On more remote stretches of the trip, you may wish to bring essential items from home, particularly if your diet is highly specific.

Special dietary requests are required to be notified to us at the time of booking. Although we will use reasonable endeavours to accommodate requests, we cannot guarantee requests will be met by suppliers. It is your responsibility to check that meals and beverages do not contain any allergens.

# Safety & Security

## Reasonable Precautions

- Travellers are advised to exercise good sense, take some reasonable precautions and avoid irresponsible behaviour like carrying too much cash and displaying valuables like cameras, phones and expensive jewellery
- Always exercise caution
- Do not take unnecessary valuables with you
- A money belt or something similar, worn close to your body, is the best way to carry passports, airline tickets and money
- DO NOT leave any valuables in ANY hotel room, please use SAFETY DEPOSIT BOXES - items are left at the individual's risk
- Pickpockets operate everywhere, particularly in tourist areas and crowded markets. You must always exercise care
- Be aware that anything left unsupervised may be liable to theft

## Travel Advisories

Please use the link below to check the Smart Traveller website and register your travel:

👉 Smart Traveller (http://smartraveller.gov.au)

## LGBTQIA+

All travellers face risks overseas. Risks can be higher for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTIA+) people in some destinations. It's your responsibility to get the facts first and take steps to reduce your risks.

👉 Advice for LGBTQIA+ travellers (https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/before-you-go/who-you-are/LGBTQIA)

## Drug & Alcohol Policy

Under no circumstances are any illegal drugs allowed on any part of the trip. Anyone discovered in possession of any such drugs will be asked to leave the tour immediately without question or refund. Remote communities and some cultures are deemed as ‘dry’, meaning that no alcoholic drinks may be purchased or consumed. Please be respectful of this.

# Entry Requirements

**Crooked Compass does not provide visa or health advice. The information in this section is for general guidance only.**

**Please ensure you check and comply with visa requirements for the country you are visiting. For the most accurate and up-to-date information, contact your nearest embassy or consulate. If you need assistance, we recommend using a specialist visa agency such as CIBT Visas.**

## Visas

If applicable, you must obtain the appropriate visas before embarking on your trip. Country entry regulations can change daily; your travel agent can provide you with visa information. Please consult your relevant embassy for all details, such as opening hours or costs. Certain visas cannot be obtained on arrival, and during the peak months, it may take longer than normal to get them. Please allow extra time to do this. Crooked Compass encourages the use of a visa specialist service such as CIBT Visas to ensure you have the correct and up-to-date information surrounding visa requirements for your destination(s). Visa and other entry and exit conditions (such as currency, customs and quarantine regulations) can change at short notice.

EACH CLIENT IS SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY VISAS BEFORE JOINING A TOUR. Crooked Compass does not accept responsibility for changes in regulations or requirements for visas. The information provided is given in good faith.

## Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all Crooked Compass itineraries. You must be covered for personal accident, medical expenses, cancellation, curtailment, repatriation, and more. In remote areas, your policy must include helicopter evacuation in case of emergency.

Be aware that many adventure activities – such as trekking, white-water rafting, or bungee jumping – are often excluded from standard insurance policies. If you plan to join such activities, please check your coverage or purchase additional protection. We also recommend keeping a photocopy of your insurance documents separate from the original while travelling.

### Global Rescue

Have you considered evacuation coverage? Crooked Compass partners with Global Rescue, a world leader in medical and security evacuation and advisory services. Unlike most standard travel insurance, Global Rescue offers field rescue from the point of injury or illness, anywhere in the world.

👉 Global Rescue

## Passports

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return
- Must have 4 blank pages
- By law, you must carry your passport at all times when travelling in Cambodia

We recommend you carry colour photocopies of key documents, including the photo page of your passport, plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards, and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel insurance plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

# Money Matters

## Local Currency

Cambodia's official currency is the riel, but in daily life, the US dollar plays an equally important role. Most prices are quoted in US dollars, and change is often returned in riel for anything under USD1. Banknotes are soft and lightweight – riel notes are printed in bright colours and are available in multiple denominations, though you'll find 500 to 10,000 notes the most common in circulation. The exchange rate is relatively stable, hovering around USD1 = 4,000 riel. You won't need to exchange much into riel, as USD bills are widely accepted. However, coins and very small denominations (under USD 1) are no longer commonly accepted, and change is typically returned in riel.

Be aware that some countries are more expensive than others and that if you are travelling through several, your expenses will vary enormously. Similarly, there will be some days when you spend nothing at all and others when you exceed your budget.

It is often a good idea to have a small amount of the currency of the country you are visiting before arrival. This will cover you for any initial expenses at or from the airport.

## Payment Methods

Cambodia operates on a dual-currency system, with US dollars widely accepted alongside the local riel. In cities like Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Battambang, you'll find ATMs on nearly every corner. These machines dispense either riel, US dollars, or both, and most accept international cards (especially Visa and MasterCard). ATM withdrawal fees are common, so it's worth checking with your bank about charges.

In rural towns and villages, however, ATMs can be scarce or unreliable, and card payments are almost never accepted, so plan to carry enough cash when travelling away from major centres. US dollars are preferred for transactions over USD5, while riel is typically used for change and smaller purchases.

Credit and debit cards are accepted in high-end hotels, restaurants, and some tourist-oriented shops, particularly in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Outside these areas, expect to pay in cash. Mobile payment platforms like Wing and ABA Pay are gaining ground among locals but are rarely used by foreign travellers.

**Notifying Card Providers:** Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges, such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank that you will be using your cards abroad.

## Tipping Culture

Tipping isn't compulsory but is genuinely appreciated in Cambodia. Small gestures of appreciation go a long way, especially in a country where many locals earn modest incomes (below USD 150 per month).

In local eateries, it's common to round up the bill or leave around 5-10% if service is good, though tipping is still discretionary. Upscale restaurants and hotels often include a 5% service charge, which may not reach the staff. At hotels, USD 1 per bag is customary for porters, and rounding up taxi fares or adding KHR 2,000-5,000 is welcome. Small offerings like 1,000-2,000 riel when visiting pagodas are a respectful gesture of thanks

**A note about tipping your guide and driver:** We realise that tipping is a sensitive subject for all travellers. While tips are widely accepted, they remain at your personal discretion. For private tours, our guide recommendation is USD 5-10 per person per day; drivers around USD 2-5.

## Everyday Expenses

If your tour covers accommodation, guides, activities, and breakfasts, you'll primarily need spending money for extras like lunches, dinners, drinks, small souvenirs, and tips. Always keep some small bills on hand for spontaneous purchases or tipping.

| Item | Price (USD) | Price (AUD) |
|---|---|---|
| Bottle of water | USD 0.60-0.75 | AUD 0.90-1.15 |
| Local street meal | USD 1-2 | AUD 1.50-3 |
| Mid-range restaurant meal | USD 3-5 | AUD 4.50-7.50 |
| Upmarket restaurant meal | USD 20+ | AUD 30+ |
| Local beer | USD 0.80-1.00 | AUD 1.20-1.50 |
| Coffee (café-style) | USD 2-3 | AUD 3-4.50 |
| Souvenirs | USD 2-15 | AUD 3-22.50 |

## Money Requested on Tour

Whilst every precaution is taken to ensure all services as per your itinerary are pre-paid before your arrival, in areas where tourism is still being developed, you may, on occasion, be asked for additional funds for incidentals such as fuel and water. Under no circumstances are you to part with cash to any crew or local person claiming to work for Crooked Compass. Should you be requested to provide such funds, please contact the emergency contact number immediately for support. Crooked Compass is unable to take responsibility without prior authorisation from head office for monies handed over to the crew or local persons.

# Getting There

## Airports

Cambodia's main international gateways are Phnom Penh International Airport (PNH) and Siem Reap–Angkor International Airport (SAI). A third, Sihanoukville International Airport (KOS), currently handles very limited international service and a small number of domestic flights. Many routes remain suspended or irregular following the pandemic and airline restructuring.

Arrival procedures are usually efficient. Visas on arrival and e-visas are both available at Phnom Penh and Siem Reap airports. You'll need a passport valid for six months, one passport photo, and USD 30-36 in clean cash. Be prepared for brief queues at the visa counter, especially during peak travel seasons. Immigration and customs checks are generally swift and straightforward.

On departure, it's recommended you arrive at least 2-3 hours early. As of now, departure tax is included in international flight tickets, so there's no fee to pay at the airport. Keep your printed or digital boarding pass and passport easily accessible – Cambodian airport procedures involve multiple document checks between the entrance and your gate.

## Border Crossings

Cambodia shares land borders with Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos, and has multiple overland crossings accessible to foreign travellers. At each, you'll go through passport control and a visa check.

The most frequently used crossing with Thailand is at Poipet–Aranyaprathet, which is busy and well-serviced. The Cham Yeam–Hat Lek crossing near Koh Kong is another route often used for access to the coast. From Vietnam, the Bavet–Moc Bai crossing is popular with travellers moving between Phnom Penh and Ho Chi Minh City. Cambodia's only land border with Laos is at Trapeang Kriel–Nong Nok Khiene, a more remote and quiet point of entry.

Not all land borders accept the Cambodia e-visa, so you'll need to confirm this in advance. During the wet season, some border roads, especially in rural and northern areas, may be affected by flooding or become difficult to navigate.

## Internal Flights & Luggage Allowance

Domestic flights in Cambodia are limited but convenient. The key routes connect Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville. Airlines such as Cambodia Angkor Air, Lanmei Airlines, and Sky Angkor Airlines operate these routes with a reliable frequency. Flight durations are short – usually under one hour and while delays are uncommon, the rainy season may affect schedules. Aircraft are often smaller and include turboprops, so cabin space may be tight. Baggage allowances typically include 7 kg for cabin baggage and 20-23 kg for checked baggage, though it's wise to check with your specific airline before flying. Limits are usually enforced, and excess baggage fees can be high, so it's best to weigh your bags before departure. Always check with your airline for the most up-to-date baggage allowance information.

Many of our tours run without changes, but please be advised that due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances, domestic internal flights may not always run to schedule or on time. Your trip leader will keep you informed of any schedule changes as they happen.

## Climate

Cambodia's landscape is defined by flat, low-lying central plains framed by surrounding uplands. The Mekong River and Tonlé Sap Lake heavily influence regional weather and seasonal flooding.

The country has a tropical monsoon climate, with a wet season from May to October and a dry season from November to April. In the central plains, including Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, daily maximum temperatures typically hover around 30 °C, with consistently high humidity. Afternoon downpours are common during the wet season, while the dry season brings intense sun and dusty winds.

In the northeast highlands, such as Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri, higher elevation results in cooler nights (around 22 °C), average highs near 34 °C, and more rainfall, up to 2,200 mm annually. Roads in these regions can become impassable during peak monsoon months.

The southwestern coast and Cardamom Mountains receive some of Cambodia's heaviest rainfall, exceeding 2,500 mm per year, especially between June and October. While inland areas tend to dry quickly, remote trails and forest paths often remain muddy or washed out.

Although the wet season may seem off-putting, it brings vibrant green landscapes, fuller rivers, and cooler afternoons – particularly welcome in temple zones like Angkor.

| Month | Record high (°C) | Average high (°C) | Daily mean (°C) | Average low (°C) | Record low (°C) | Average rain (mm) | Precipitation days | Relative humidity (%) | Sunshine hours |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jan | 32.6 | 31.4 | 27.4 | 21.6 | 15.6 | 15.0 | 3.9 | 63.8 | 9.1 |
| Feb | 35.2 | 33.6 | 29.2 | 22.7 | 16.1 | 10.6 | 2.8 | 58.8 | 11.1 |
| Mar | 37.3 | 35.2 | 31.2 | 24.9 | 18.5 | 34.2 | 8.0 | 58.7 | 11.3 |
| Apr | 36.9 | 35.0 | 31.5 | 26.0 | 20.5 | 93.4 | 15.5 | 64.5 | 12.3 |
| May | 35.8 | 34.1 | 31.1 | 26.2 | 21.4 | 122.7 | 19.9 | 71.3 | 12.3 |
| Jun | 33.6 | 32.2 | 29.4 | 25.1 | 20.9 | 138.1 | 20.2 | 77.2 | 11.9 |
| Jul | 32.6 | 31.3 | 28.6 | 24.5 | 20.4 | 142.0 | 21.3 | 79.5 | 11.7 |
| Aug | 32.9 | 31.4 | 28.6 | 24.6 | 20.3 | 174.2 | 21.2 | 79.1 | 11.6 |
| Sep | 32.2 | 31.0 | 28.4 | 24.5 | 19.8 | 213.1 | 23.9 | 81.2 | 10.7 |
| Oct | 31.5 | 30.7 | 28.0 | 23.8 | 18.6 | 178.3 | 20.9 | 80.4 | 10.0 |
| Nov | 31.4 | 30.6 | 27.6 | 23.0 | 17.9 | 73.6 | 12.0 | 77.3 | 9.5 |
| Dec | 31.1 | 30.1 | 26.6 | 21.5 | 16.2 | 27.4 | 5.2 | 71.0 | 8.2 |

## Seasonality

Cambodia has four distinct seasons: cool dry, hot dry, hot wet, and cool wet.

**Cool Dry Season (November–February)**

This is Cambodia's most comfortable travel period. Daytime highs typically range between 25 °C and 30 °C, with low humidity and nearly clear skies. Early mornings and evenings can dip below 20 °C, especially in the highlands, so bring a light jacket or scarf.

**Hot Dry Season (March–May)**

Temperatures climb rapidly, with daily highs regularly reaching 34-36 °C, particularly in inland areas like Battambang and Kampong Thom. Humidity increases by late April. Roads are dusty, and rivers begin to shrink, but travel remains generally easy. Lightweight clothes, strong sun protection, and ample hydration are essential.

**Hot Wet Season (June–August)**

The southwest monsoon brings frequent, intense afternoon downpours. Daytime temperatures stay between 30 °C and 34 °C, accompanied by very high humidity. Rural travel can be hampered by flooded roads and muddy paths. Despite this, landscapes are lush, and temples are relatively uncrowded.

**Cool Wet Season (September–October)**

Rainfall tapers off through October. Temperatures moderate to 26-30 °C, with fresher breezes later in the day. Flooding remains possible but conditions are improving. It's a transitional window of lush scenery, low tourist numbers, and variable weather.

# Travel and Terrain

Cambodia's geography is shaped by vast lowland plains, thick jungles, and seasonal wetlands. The central heartland, where Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are located, is largely flat and easy to traverse, though conditions shift dramatically during the wet season. To the east, forest-covered highlands rise into Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri, while the Cardamom Mountains in the southwest bring steep gradients, dense jungle, and some of the country's most remote roads. The Mekong River and Tonlé Sap Lake dominate transport routes in central Cambodia, influencing not just travel but local rhythms of life. Your journey through Cambodia will involve a mix of sealed highways, dusty backroads, and occasional boat rides – each revealing a different face of the country.

## General Road Conditions

In major centres like Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, sealed roads are generally in good condition, though congestion, inconsistent signage, and a mix of motorbikes, tuk-tuks, and livestock can make city driving chaotic. National highways linking key towns are paved but can still be rough in parts, particularly where recent monsoon rains have eroded shoulders or created potholes. Once you move into rural areas, especially toward the northeast or the Cardamom Mountains, roads become narrow, unsealed, and uneven. During the wet season, flooding and mud can significantly slow progress. Despite this, road travel offers rewarding views: wooden stilt houses, water buffalo wading through rice paddies, roadside vendors selling sugarcane juice, and temple silhouettes in the haze.

## Main Travel Routes

The primary overland route runs between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, a journey of 5-6 hours by road, passing through Kompong Thom and agricultural plains. The route to Sihanoukville from Phnom Penh travels southwest, cutting through foothills and jungle-covered valleys, with scenic stretches but occasional delays due to roadworks or landslides. Roads into Battambang and onward to the Thai border are mostly sealed but remote. Cambodia's rail network is minimal, with one functioning passenger line between Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville – slow but scenic. Travel by riverboat between Siem Reap and Phnom Penh is seasonal and scenic, but subject to water levels.

## Remote Areas

The most demanding terrain is found in the northeast provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulkiri and in the southwestern Cardamom Mountains. These regions require longer travel times, and in some cases, a 4WD vehicle. During the rainy season, some roads become impassable due to landslides or flooding, and jungle tracks may be submerged. Access to remote villages or wildlife sanctuaries often involves crossing rivers by raft or narrow bridges. If your itinerary includes these areas, you'll need to be prepared for slow progress, basic infrastructure, and unpredictable delays.

## River Crossings & Water Travel

The Tonlé Sap Lake and the Mekong River play key roles in rural transport. Seasonal boat journeys are a memorable part of travel, particularly between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap but depend on water levels. Ferries and longtail boats are still used in many places where roads haven't reached. In floating villages like Kompong Phluk, entire communities live by boat, and water-based travel is a way of life.

## Passes and Jungle Trails

Trekking in Cambodia's jungle regions, particularly around the Cardamom Mountains or Virachey National Park, can be tough going. Trails are often narrow, humid, and slippery after rain. While most treks stay under 1,000 metres, the heat and terrain can be physically demanding. Wildlife sightings and remote village encounters make the effort worthwhile, but guides are essential for navigation and safety. In forested areas, trails are often overgrown, and conditions can change rapidly after storms.

## Weather Impact on Travel

Cambodia's tropical climate means that travel is shaped heavily by the seasons. During the wet season (June–October), afternoon downpours can flood roads, wash out rural tracks, and delay overland journeys, especially in the northeast and highland areas. Even sealed highways may suffer erosion or temporary closures. During the dry season, dust becomes the main obstacle. Winds kick up red soil on unpaved roads, and visibility can drop quickly. River travel is also seasonal, as water levels drop by March, affecting boat routes on the Tonlé Sap and Mekong.

Please note that while we have given guidelines in our itinerary, getting from one place to another can take longer than expected. A short drive on the map might turn into a slow crawl due to congestion, road conditions, road closures, or random delays. Roads that were operating at the time of printing your documentation may no longer be accessible at the time of travel, and a one-hour journey may turn into a four-hour expedition. Travel times vary not just because of distance but also because of road conditions and traffic behaviour.

## Suggested Packing Items

As you will experience high humidity, intense sun, and seasonal rains, we suggest packing lightweight, breathable layers. Handwashing is common, so choose quick-drying fabrics. Loose, modest clothing is respectful and essential at temples – shorts and tank tops are not appropriate. A scarf or sarong is useful for covering shoulders or legs. Merino clothing is excellent for temperature regulation and multi-day wear without odour. Prepare for occasional power outages, muddy tracks, and dusty tuk-tuk rides. A sun hat and insect repellent are essential.

**Travel Documents & Money:**
☐ Passport (with photocopies)
☐ Travel insurance (with photocopies)
☐ Airline tickets (e-ticket number)
☐ Cash in AUD & your local currency (small denominations for tipping)
☐ Credit Card & ATM Card (See Money Matters section)
☐ Money belt or secure travel pouch
☐ Printed copy of your Cambodia e-Visa (if applicable)

**Luggage & Bags:**
☐ 1 soft-sided bag (medium size approx. 80-100 litres) – for group tours
☐ Daypack (10-20 litres) – for daily essentials like water, camera, and snacks
☐ Lightweight reusable shopping bag (for markets or day use)
☐ Dry bag or large zip-lock bags (to protect electronics from rain/humidity

**Clothing & Footwear:**
☐ Shirts: A mix of short and long-sleeved breathable fabric (cotton/linen)
☐ Pants: Loose-fitting, lightweight trousers (avoid tight jeans for comfort)
☐ Comfortable walking or hiking shoes (sturdy for uneven terrain)
☐ Socks (moisture-wicking recommended)
☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
☐ Lightweight scarf or shawl (for religious sites, sun, or dust protection)
☐ Light rain jacket or windbreaker with hood (for unexpected cool weather)
☐ Light cotton or wool sweater (for cooler evenings)
☐ Swimsuit & cover-up
☐ Comfortable sandals or flip-flops (for beach and casual wear – not for sightseeing)
☐ Sunglasses
☐ Long skirt or temple-appropriate outfit (for visiting pagodas – women)
☐ Lightweight long-sleeved shirt (for sun and temple modesty – men)

**Health & Personal Care:**
☐ Prescription medications (enough for the trip)
☐ Sunscreen & lip balm (high SPF)
☐ Insect repellent
☐ Electrolyte tablets or powder (prevents dehydration from heat)
☐ Reusable water bottle with filter

☐ Personal first-aid kit (pain relievers, Band-Aids, antihistamines, diarrhoea relief, rehydration salts, etc.)
☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush/comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, etc.
☐ Hand sanitiser & antibacterial wipes
☐ Pocket-size tissues (for toilets without paper)
☐ Wet wipes or facial mist (refreshing after sightseeing in the heat)
☐ Dramamine or motion sickness bands
☐ Anti-fungal powder or cream (helps with heat rash/skin issues in humidity)

**Tech & Gear:**
☐ Camera (with spare batteries & SD cards)
☐ Charger for devices & power bank (for areas with limited charging access)
☐ Plug adaptors
☐ Small flashlight or headlamp
☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses
☐ Multi-port charger or compact power strip

**Optional Items**
☐ Gifts from home (for hosts or guides)
☐ Small notebook & pen (for journaling or note-taking)
☐ Snacks or energy bars (useful during long travel days)
☐ Small padlocks (for securing luggage)
☐ Earplugs (useful for light sleepers)
☐ Binoculars (for sightseeing or wildlife viewing)
☐ Sewing kit & hand wash laundry soap (e.g., bar of sunlight soap)
☐ Travel journal
☐ Hand fan or battery-operated mini fan
☐ Travel towel (quick-dry – useful if staying in basic accommodation)
☐ Compact umbrella (for sun and rain protection)

**Footwear:** You'll be on your feet a lot during this trip, often walking over uneven paths, slippery temple stones, muddy rural trails, and hot, dusty streets. We recommend sturdy walking shoes, lightweight hiking boots, or supportive sports shoes with good grip and closed toes. Footwear should be breathable, quick-drying, and broken in before arrival.

## Regional Variation

In places like Siem Reap, temple visits involve frequent removal of shoes, so it helps to wear shoes that are easy to slip on and off. In the northeastern highlands (Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri), especially during the wet season, paths may be muddy or washed out – ankle-high waterproof boots or trail runners are strongly recommended.

## Baggage Whilst on Tour

Our baggage allowance policy stipulates that each traveller is allowed to bring no more than 20kg of luggage per person. To ensure smooth logistics and efficient use of space in our vehicles, we recommend opting for a soft-sided bag, as it offers greater flexibility when packing the vehicles. This is particularly important for group tours and larger private groups. It's important to note that some of the accommodations you may be staying in might not have lifts or porterage services available. Being able to manage your luggage is crucial.

# Culture & Etiquette

Cambodia's cultural roots lie in the legacy of the Khmer Empire, which dominated mainland Southeast Asia from the 9th to the 15th centuries. The grandeur of Angkor Wat and other ancient sites still shapes national identity today. Centuries of artistic, architectural, and spiritual development under the Khmer were followed by French colonial influence and, tragically, the Khmer Rouge era. Since then, Cambodia has re-emerged with resilience, blending deep cultural pride with a modern openness visible in religious festivals and Phnom Penh's café scene.

## Social Interactions

Cambodians tend to be soft-spoken, polite, and reserved. Respect is paramount – it's best to greet with a slight bow and palms together (a sampeah) rather than a handshake, especially when addressing elders or monks. Public displays of affection are generally frowned upon, and loud or confrontational behaviour is considered very disrespectful. When visiting someone's home or entering a shop, removing your shoes is customary. Physical contact with the head (considered the most sacred part of the body) is taboo, and pointing your feet at people or religious icons should be avoided.

Gender roles are still traditionally defined, particularly in rural areas, though women are highly respected as keepers of tradition. Visitors should dress modestly, particularly women – sleeveless tops or short skirts can draw unwanted attention in non-tourist areas.

## Religion & Traditions

Theravada Buddhism is deeply embedded in everyday life. Monks in saffron robes are a common sight, and many men spend time in the monkhood at some stage in their lives. Karma and reincarnation influence behaviour, actions are seen as building one's spiritual merit. Religious holidays such as Pchum Ben (Ancestors' Day) and Khmer New Year are major cultural events, and during these times, temples are vibrant with offerings and family gatherings.

Monks should not be touched by women. If offering something, place it within their reach rather than handing it directly. Also note that religious chanting and ceremonies may be happening even in casual settings; be still and respectful during these moments.

## Dining Customs & Gift-Giving

Meals are communal and often shared. Dishes are placed in the centre of the table, and each person helps themselves with rice served as the base. Eating with the right hand or spoon (rather than fork only) is the norm, and finishing all food on your plate is seen as polite. Slurping soup is acceptable – a sign of enjoyment rather than rudeness.

If invited to someone's home, bringing a small gift, such as fruit or sweets, is appreciated. Gifts are usually presented with both hands. Don't wrap items in white paper, as this colour is associated with mourning.

## Unusual Customs

You may notice many homes or businesses display small spirit houses – ornate miniature structures placed in yards or near entrances. Cambodians leave daily offerings (like incense, fruit, or drinks) to appease spirits and bring good fortune. Another custom that might surprise you: it's considered bad luck to whistle indoors at night, as it is believed to summon ghosts.

## Dressing Respectfully

Dress codes are generally relaxed in beach towns, but in cities, villages, and especially religious sites, modesty is expected. Shoulders and knees should be covered when entering temples or monasteries. A sarong or scarf is handy for quick cover-ups. Lightweight, loose-fitting clothes work best in the humid climate. In more conservative areas, men should avoid going shirtless and women should avoid revealing tops or shorts, even in the heat.

Please use your discretion and be sensitive to cultural differences in the countries you visit, in particular, visits to religious buildings and when taking photographs. Your tour leader will advise you of any specific customs to observe.

## Photography

Please remember, we are guests in the countries through which we travel and may sometimes inadvertently cause offence by taking photographs or video without first asking permission. It is forbidden by law to take photos or videos at borders, as they are considered active military zones. We encourage you to take photos of the busy lives of the locals; however, please ensure you are respectful of local requests and guidelines surrounding photography and videography.

# Daily Life & Essentials

## Accommodation

Across Cambodia, you'll stay in a mix of city hotels, boutique guesthouses, and rural lodgings. In places like Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, 4-star hotels usually come with strong air conditioning, hot showers, and staff who are friendly and helpful, if sometimes relaxed in pace. Rooms are clean and spacious, though don't expect Western-style polish at every touchpoint.

In smaller towns or countryside areas, guesthouses tend to be more basic. Air conditioning may be swapped for a ceiling fan, and hot water might only be available at certain times of day. You'll often get a "wet room" bathroom where the whole floor gets soaked during your shower. Pack waterproof sandals and don't leave anything on the floor.

Eco-lodges and traditional stilt houses near rivers or rice fields are comfortable but close to nature. You might hear frogs at night, wake up to the sound of monks chanting at sunrise, or share your space with the occasional gecko. Mosquito nets are often provided, and some rural areas don't have great mobile coverage or strong Wi-Fi.

You may also come across traditional Khmer stilt houses in rural areas, where homestays offer a glimpse of everyday village life. These wooden houses are built off the ground for airflow and flood protection, with simple rooms, mosquito nets, and shared bathrooms. In quieter regions like Kampot or Koh Kong, riverside bungalows and eco-lodges are common, made of timber or bamboo and set among rice paddies, rivers, or jungle. These often use solar power and may have basic facilities like bucket showers or fans instead of air conditioning. In towns with colonial history, such as Battambang, heritage villas from the French era are often converted into boutique hotels with tiled floors, shaded courtyards, and traditional charm.

Power outages happen, especially during the dry season. Most hotels have generators, but it's still smart to carry a torch or headlamp. Beds tend to be firm. If you prefer a softer mattress, ask for an extra blanket or a second pillow.

Check-in usually starts around 2 PM, with check-out by 11 AM. During public holidays or religious festivals, staff might be stretched, and alcohol may not be available in some accommodations. It's best to check in advance if your visit falls around Khmer New Year or Pchum Ben.

## Cuisine

Cambodian food is built around balance – mild spice, fresh herbs, and subtle flavours, usually anchored by rice. Fish is a key ingredient, thanks to the country's rivers and lakes, especially the Tonlé Sap. You'll see **fish amok** on nearly every menu: a soft, coconut-based curry with freshwater fish, steamed in a banana leaf. Other popular dishes include **lok lak** (peppery stir-fried beef with lime dipping sauce), **samlor machu** (a tangy soup), and grilled skewers with pickled vegetables.

Meals are usually served family-style, with several small plates shared among diners. Rice is served with almost every meal, often twice a day. Soups, stir-fries, and dipping sauces are common accompaniments. Cambodian food isn't as fiery as Thai or as sweet as Vietnamese, but fermented ingredients like **prahok** (a type of fish paste) give many dishes a deep, savoury base. You might not always see it, but you'll taste it.
Street food is safe to try if it's hot and fresh. You'll find stalls selling grilled meats, fried bananas, noodles, and icy fruit shakes. Cambodians love their coffee strong, served over ice with condensed milk. Beer is cheap and

widely available, and fresh coconuts are sold by roadside vendors – often chopped open with a machete while you wait.

Breakfast tends to be early, often based on rice, noodles, or baguettes with egg and chilli sauce. Lunch is served around midday, with dinner from 6 to 7 PM. Kitchens in smaller towns often close soon after dark, so don't leave dinner too late.

We've carefully chosen the restaurants and local food outlets for your group meals and consider these establishments safe to eat at; however, be very careful with food sold from vendors on the street, and with uncooked fruit and other foods. Fruit that you peel yourself is usually safe - avoid lettuce and other unpeeled produce.

## Shops & Souvenirs

Cambodia's markets are where daily life and traditional craft come together – colourful, loud, and packed with everything from fried snacks to handwoven scarves. In city markets like Phsar Thmey (Central Market) in Phnom Penh or Psar Chas (Old Market) in Siem Reap, you'll find an array of souvenirs: krama scarves, silver jewellery, hand-carved wooden Buddhas, stone statues, lacquerware, and locally made soaps and candles. Many of these items are produced by artisans using skills passed down through generations.

Textiles are a great buy, especially Khmer silk, often dyed with natural pigments and woven by hand. Look for scarves, table runners, or raw fabric sold by the metre. Palm sugar, Kampot pepper, and dried mango also make good edible souvenirs, though you'll want to check customs regulations if you're planning to bring them home.

In smaller towns, markets are more local – plastic sandals, knock-off electronics, and buckets of live fish but you may still find handmade baskets, woven mats, and ceramic pots if you look around.

Bargaining is part of the process in most open-air markets. Start by offering about 30% less than the first price and negotiate with a smile. Vendors expect some haggling, but if the item has a set tag or is in a more boutique-style shop, the price is likely fixed.

Cash is the rule, not the exception. Even in cities, credit cards are accepted mainly in larger shops, malls, or hotels. U.S. dollars are used widely, but change may be given in riel. Small notes ($1 and $5 bills) are especially useful.

Shops tend to open early and close around sunset. Outside the cities, most close by 6 or 7 PM.

Please note that any artefacts you purchase during your Crooked Compass tour are solely your responsibility, including transport, potential damage, insurance, and compliance with local quarantine and customs regulations. You must personally arrange for their shipment according to official fumigation and cargo rules. Do not give money to your guide or any local individual to handle this on your behalf unless they represent a registered international courier service with verifiable insurance and tracking. Crooked Compass cannot be held liable for the transport, delivery, or any issues arising from goods you purchase and arrange independently during the tour.

## Toilets & Bathrooms

In cities and tourist areas, most hotels, restaurants, and cafés have Western-style flush toilets with seats. These are generally clean and come with toilet paper, but it's still a good idea to carry your own – especially when

you're out for the day. In rural areas, roadside stops, and some smaller guesthouses, you'll often come across squat toilets – ceramic or concrete footpads over a bowl in the floor. Flushing is usually done using a bucket of water and a scoop, which is kept nearby.

Bathroom setups in hotels vary. It's very common to find wet room designs, where the shower isn't separated from the toilet area, so the entire floor gets wet when you bathe. Drains are built into the tiles, and floors can stay damp for hours. Bring waterproof sandals or flip-flops and keep your toiletries and clothing off the floor.

In more remote areas or basic homestays, toilets may be outdoors or in detached outhouses with simple plumbing. Water pressure can be weak, and hot water might not be available, particularly if electricity is limited or solar heating is used. In eco-lodges, expect colder bucket showers and compost toilets in some cases.

You won't always find soap or hand dryers, so carry hand sanitiser or travel-sized soap. It's also useful to keep a small pack of tissues or toilet paper in your day bag, as public bathrooms often run out.

💡 *Pro Tip:* Always carry toilet paper, hand sanitiser, and a small bottle of water just in case!

## Recommendations

To better understand Cambodia's complex history and resilient spirit, it's worth spending some time with stories told by Cambodians and those who've lived or worked in the country.

### Reading

***First They Killed My Father*** by Loung Ung
A powerful memoir of a child survivor of the Khmer Rouge, written with honesty and clarity.

***When Broken Glass Floats*** by Chanrithy Him
A deeply personal and harrowing account of surviving the Khmer Rouge, told through a child's eyes.

***A History of Cambodia*** by David Chandler
The definitive historical overview, from ancient Angkor to the present day.

***Cambodia's Curse*** by Joel Brinkley
A journalist's critical look at the country's recovery and political realities after decades of conflict.

***In the Shadow of the Banyan*** by Vaddey Ratner
A beautifully written novel based on the author's childhood during the Khmer Rouge years, blending memory, mythology, and a deep love for Cambodia.

***River of Time*** by Jon Swain
A memoir from a journalist who lived through Cambodia's fall to the Khmer Rouge. Poetic and devastating, with moments of deep humanity.

### Viewing

***The Missing Picture*** (2013)
A poetic and original documentary using clay figures and archival audio to recreate memories of life under the Khmer Rouge. Thoughtful and visually powerful.

***First They Killed My Father*** (2017)
Angelina Jolie's film adaptation of Loung Ung's memoir, filmed entirely in Cambodia with local actors. Emotional and beautifully shot.

***Don't Think I've Forgotten: Cambodia's Lost Rock and Roll*** (2014)
An energetic, music-filled documentary that uncovers Cambodia's vibrant 1960s rock scene and its cultural revival.

***Angkor Awakens*** (2017)
A wide-ranging documentary exploring Cambodia's generational trauma, political change, and hopes for the future.

***Ruin*** (2013)
A haunting yet beautifully shot narrative film following two young lovers on the run across Cambodia's backroads. Visually striking and minimalist.

***Apsara*** (1966)
A rarely seen gem by Norodom Sihanouk, blending classical Cambodian dance, courtly drama, and national pride – an evocative time capsule of pre-war culture.

***Chef's Table Noodles – Nite Yun*** (Netflix, Season 1)
A short, engaging look at Cambodia's street food culture and the personal stories behind each dish.

## Final Word

Cambodia leaves a deep impression – not just for its temples or history, but because of how much life continues to thrive between the shadows of the past. You'll walk through ancient ruins still claimed by the jungle, stand quietly in places marked by grief, and then find yourself laughing with locals over grilled corn on a roadside.

What stays with most travellers isn't just Angkor Wat at sunrise, or the haunting silence of Tuol Sleng, but the everyday moments in between: monks collecting alms in the morning light, the scent of lemongrass rising from a family kitchen, children waving from passing bicycles. There's a strength here, quiet but constant, in the way people rebuild, welcome strangers, and carry their stories forward.

You'll leave with more than photos – you'll leave with echoes, impressions, and a sense of perspective that stays long after the trip ends.

At Crooked Compass, we believe in taking you beyond the ordinary, uncovering the stories, landscapes, and traditions that many travellers miss.

We'd love to hear about your experience! If you enjoyed your journey, please consider leaving a Google review to help fellow travellers discover what makes Cambodia and Crooked Compass special. You can share your thoughts here:
👉 Review us here

We also encourage you to share your photos and stories with us on social media so we can follow along on your adventure!

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**Instagram:** @crooked_compass #FollowADifferentPath #crookedcompass