



Cambodia



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Nick Ray, Jessica Lee

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Cambodia...	4
Cambodia Map	6
Cambodia's Top 10	8
Need to Know	14
If You Like.....	16
Month by Month	18
Itineraries	20
Off the Beaten Track ...	26
Outdoor Adventures...	28
Regions at a Glance....	33

ON THE ROAD

PHNOM PENH..... 36

Sights	40
Activities	50
Courses	55
Tours	55
Sleeping	56
Eating	62
Drinking & Nightlife.....	73
Entertainment	76
Shopping	78

Around Phnom Penh ... 88

Koh Dach	88
Udong	88
Tonlé Bati	90
Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre	90
Phnom Chisor	91
Kirirom National Park ..	91

SIEM REAP 93

Sights	95
Activities	99
Courses	101
Tours	102
Sleeping	103
Eating	107
Drinking & Nightlife.....	115
Entertainment	117
Shopping	118

Around Siem Reap ... 124

Banteay Srei District ...	124
Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary	126
Ang Trapeng Thmor Reserve	127
Floating Village of Chong Kneas	127
Kompong Pluk	128
Kompong Khleang	128
Me Chrey	128

TEMPLES OF ANGKOR 129

Angkor Wat 144

Angkor Thom..... 148

Bayon	149
Baphuon	154
Royal Enclosure & Phimeanakas	154
Preah Palilay	154
Tep Pranam	155
Preah Pithu	155
Terrace of the Leper King	155
Terrace of Elephants ..	155
Kleangs & Prasat Suor Prat	155

Around Angkor Thom.. 156

Baksei Chamkrong	156
Phnom Bakheng	156
Chau Say Tevoda	157
Thommanon	157
Spean Thmor	157
Ta Keo	158
Ta Nei	158
Ta Prohm	158
Banteay Kdei & Sra Srang.....	159
Prasat Kravan	159
Preah Khan	160
Preah Neak Poan	161
Ta Som	162
Eastern Baray & Eastern Mebon	162
Pre Rup	162
Banteay Samré	163
Western Baray & Western Mebon.....	163
Roluos Temples.....	163
Around Angkor	164
Phnom Krom	164
Phnom Bok	165
Chau Srei Vibol	165



PSAR THMEI P79,
PHNOM PENH



MAN IN TRADITIONAL
COSTUME, BAYON P149

Contents

UNDERSTAND

Banteay Srei	165
Kbal Spean	166
Phnom Kulen	167
Beng Mealea	168
Koh Ker	169

SOUTH COAST172

Koh Kong Province	174
Koh Kong City	174
Koh Kong	
Conservation Corridor	179

Preah Sihanouk Province184

Sihanoukville	184
Ream National Park	200
Kbal Chhay Cascades	201

The Southern Islands201

Koh Ta Kiev	201
Koh Russei	202
Koh Thmei	202
Koh Rong	202
Koh Rong Sanloem	206

Koh Sdach	
Archipelago	209

Kampot Province210

Kampot	210
Around Kampot	217
Bokor Hill Station	218

Kep	219
---------------	-----

Takeo Province224

Takeo	224
Angkor Borei	
& Phnom Da	226
Phnom Bayong	
& Around	227

NORTHWESTERN CAMBODIA228

Kompong Chhnang Province229

Kompong Chhnang	229
---------------------------	-----

Pursat Province232

Pursat	232
------------------	-----

Kompong Luong	235
Northern Cardamom Mountains	235

Battambang Province236

Battambang	236
----------------------	-----

Pailin Province248

Pailin	248
Samlaut	250

Banteay Meanchey Province250

Poipet	250
Sisophon	252
Banteay Chhmarr	254

Oddar Meanchey Province255

Anlong Veng	255
Dangrek Mountains	258

Preah Vihear Province258

Preah Vihear City	259
Prasat Preah Vihear	260
Veal Krous Vulture Feeding Station	263
Preah Khan	263

Kompong Thom Province265

Kompong Thom	265
------------------------	-----

EASTERN CAMBODIA270

Kompong Cham Province272

Kompong Cham	272
------------------------	-----

Kratie Province277

Kratie	277
------------------	-----

Stung Treng Province281

Stung Treng	282
-----------------------	-----

Ratanakiri Province285

Ban Lung	286
--------------------	-----

Mondulakiri Province294

Sen Monorom	295
Seima Protected Forest	301
Koh Nhek	302

Cambodia Today304

History306

Pol Pot & the Khmer Rouge Trials323

People & Culture326

Food & Drink336

Environment341

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Directory A–Z348

Transport358

Health366

Language370

SPECIAL FEATURES

Outdoor Adventure Guide28

Temples of Angkor Guide129

Food & Drink Guide336

Plan Your Trip

Itineraries



2
WEEKS

Cambodia Snapshot

This is the ultimate journey, via temples, beaches and the capital. It can be run in any direction, but it is best followed to the letter, starting in the capital, exploring the coastline and winding up at the world's most impressive collection of temples, Angkor.

Hit **Phnom Penh** for its impressive National Museum and stunning Silver Pagoda. It's home to the most eclectic dining scene in Cambodia, with fine-dining Khmer restaurants, an international

array of eateries and some safe street food eating. There's also superb shopping at the Psar Tuol Tom Pong, and a night shift that never sleeps.

Take a fast boat to the hilltop temple of **Phnom Da**, dating from the pre-Angkorian time, and then continue south to the colonial-era town of **Kampot**, which makes a good base for this area. From here, visit the seaside town of **Kep** (and Rabbit Island, just off the coast) and nearby cave pagodas. It is also possible to make a side trip to **Bokor Hill Station** or visit a pepper plantation.



Bayon (p149), Angkor Thom

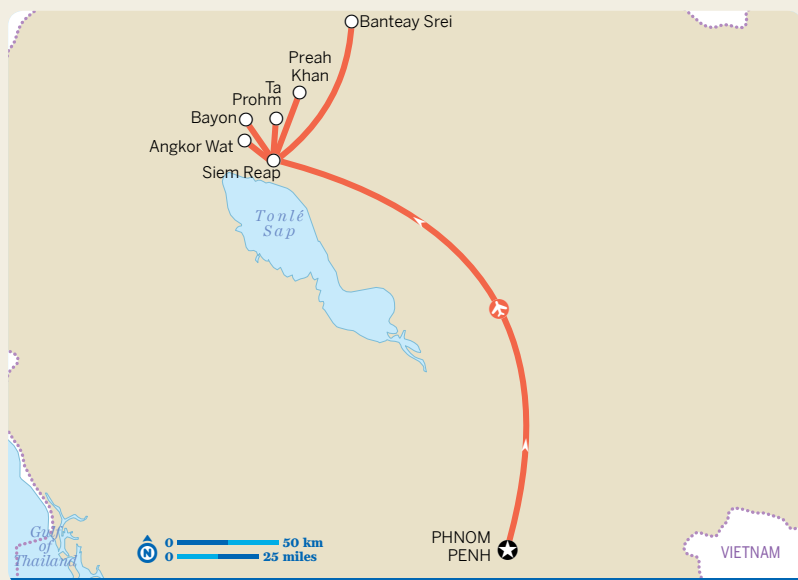
Go west to **Sihanoukville**, Cambodia's beach capital, to sample the seafood, dive or snorkel the nearby waters or just soak up the sun. Choose from party-central Serendipity Beach, chilled-out Otres Beach or the up-and-coming islands of Koh Rong or Koh Rong Sanloem. Back-track via Phnom Penh to **Kompong Thom** and visit the pre-Angkorian brick temples of **Sambor Prei Kuk**.

Finish at Angkor, a mind-blowing experience that few other sights can compare with. See **Angkor Wat**, perfection in stone; **Bayon**, weirdness in stone; and **Ta Prohm**, nature triumphing over stone –

before venturing further afield to **Kbal Spean** or jungle-clad **Beng Mealea**.

Save some time for soaking up **Siem Reap**, one of the most diverse destinations in Cambodia, with a host of activities on tap. Everything from cooking classes to Vespa tours is on offer, and some of these activities are a great way to punctuate the temple tours.

This trip can take two weeks at a steady pace or three weeks at a slow pace. Public transport serves most of this route, although some of the side trips will require chartered transport or a motorbike trip.



1
WEEK

A Tale of Two Cities

PLAN YOUR TRIP ITINERARIES

If time is tight, focus on the big hitters of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, gateway to the temples of Angkor. With two nights in the capital and three or four nights in Siem Reap, discover the best of modern and ancient Cambodia.

Start out in **Phnom Penh** with a look at Cambodia's contrasting history. Relive the glories of the past at the National Museum, home to the world's finest collection of Angkorian sculpture, and the Royal Palace, housing a glittering array of priceless artefacts. Discover a darker past with a visit to the Tuol Sleng Museum and the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek, both profoundly depressing places but essential to understanding the modern political landscape of Cambodia.

History aside, Phnom Penh is cool Cambodia, a dynamic if disorienting city of chic boutique hotels, funky fashion, contemporary cafes, fusion restaurants and hip bars, so spend at least two nights here to relish the scene.

From the capital, take the 30-minute flight northwest to **Siem Reap**, or take a day-long road trip if you want to see more of the Cambodian countryside. The first order of business is to spend a couple of days touring the nearby temples of Angkor, including the headline names like **Angkor Wat**, **Bayon** and **Ta Prohm**. Make sure you also allow some time to catch some of the support acts, like beautiful **Banteay Srei** and enormous **Preah Khan**. Add some activities to the mix with a zipline adventure at Flight of the Gibbon Angkor or a quad-bike ride through the rice fields.

Or you could simply relax and enjoy fine dining and the lively bars in the town of Siem Reap. From authentic Khmer countryside cooking to fine French cuisine, the gastronomic scene in Siem Reap is something to be savoured. Extend your nights out here by exploring the lanes and alleys around Pub St. Visit one of the sumptuous spas in town to round out your stay.

If you decide to travel overland between these two cities, the months from July to December are best for this – during this time the landscape is lush and green.



AMR CHASEM WWW.FOOLFANTASY.COM / GETTY IMAGES ©



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Top: Banteay Srei (p165), empires of Angkor;
Bottom: Independence Monument (p45), Phnom Penh

4
WEEKS

The Big One

Cambodia is a small country and even though the roads are sometimes bad and travel can be slow, most of the highlights can be visited in a month.

Setting out from the hip capital that is **Phnom Penh**, pass through the bustling Mekong town of **Kompong Cham** before heading on to **Kratie** for an encounter with the elusive Irrawaddy river dolphins. Then it is time to make a tricky choice to experience the beauty of the north-east. To ensure maximum time elsewhere, choose between **Ratanakiri Province** and the volcanic crater lake of Boeng Yeak Lom, or **Mondulakiri Province** and the original Elephant Valley Project. Both offer primate experiences for those who fancy a bit of monkey business along the way. If you have a bit of extra time up your sleeve, you could combine the two in a grand loop, now that the road between Sen Monorom and Ban Lung is in good shape.

Next up, head to the south coast. Take your time and consider a few nights in **Kep** or on one of the nearby islands, and a boat trip from **Sihanoukville** to explore the up-and-coming islands off the coast. Turning back inland, check out **Kirirom National Park**, home to pine trees, black bears and some spectacular views of the Cardamom Mountains.

Then it's time to go northwest to charming **Battambang**, one of Cambodia's best-preserved colonial-era towns and a base from which to discover rural life. Take the proverbial slow boat to **Siem Reap**, passing through stunning scenery along the snaking Sangker River, and turn your attention to the **temples of Angkor**.

Visit all the greatest hits in and around Angkor, but set aside some extra time to venture further to the rival capital of **Koh Ker**, which is cloaked in thick jungle, or **Prasat Preah Vihear**, a mountain temple perched precariously atop a cliff on the Thai border.

Overlanders can run this route in reverse, setting out from Siem Reap and exiting Cambodia by river into Vietnam or Laos. Entering from Laos, divert east to Ratanakiri before heading south. Getting around is generally easy as there are buses on the big roads, taxis on the small roads and buzzing boats on the many rivers.

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Top: Floating village (p229) near Battambang;
Bottom: Elephant Valley Project (p298),
Monduliri Province



Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/MRT/MTR station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Skytrain/Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Nick Ray

Coordinating writer, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Temples of Angkor, Eastern

Cambodia. A Londoner of sorts, Nick comes from Watford, the sort of town that makes you want to travel. He lives in Phnom Penh with his wife, Kulikar, and children, Julian and Belle. He has written for countless guidebooks on the Mekong region, including Lonely Planet's *Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos & Northern Thailand* and *Myanmar* books, as well as *Southeast Asia on a Shoestring*. When not writing,

he is often out exploring the remote parts of Cambodia as a location scout and manager for the world of television and film, including everything from *Tomb Raider* to *Top Gear*. Motorbikes are a part-time passion and he has travelled through most of Indochina on two wheels.

Read more about Nick at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/nickjray>



Jessica Lee

South Coast, Northwestern Cambodia. Jess first journeyed to Cambodia in the late '90s and fell for its vine-wrapped temples and palm-studded rice-field vistas. She's criss-crossed the country several times since then and this welcome return to the nation saw her exploring remote temples in some of Cambodia's most far-flung corners and checking out the fast-changing scenes upon the

sand of the South Coast's islands. Jess is also an author on Lonely Planet's *Turkey, Egypt* and *Vietnam* titles. She blogs about travel at www.roadessays.wordpress.com.

Read more about Jessica at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/jessicalee1>

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