



Eastern Cambodia

POP SIX MILLION / AREA 68,472 SQ KM

Includes »

Kompong Cham Province.....	245
Kratie Province.....	250
Stung Treng Province...	254
Ratanakiri Province.....	258
Mondulkiri Province.....	267

Best Places to Eat

- » Destiny Coffee House (p247)
- » Nature Lodge (p270)
- » Terres Rouges Lodge (p262)
- » Red Sun Falling (p252)
- » Le Tonlé (p256)

Best Places to Stay

- » Tree top Ecolodge (p261)
- » Terres Rouges Lodge (p261)
- » Elephant Valley Project (p259)
- » Nature Lodge (p269)
- » Koh Trong Community Homestay I (p254)

Why Go?

Home to diverse landscapes and peoples, the 'Wild East' shatters the illusion that the country is all paddy fields and sugar palms. There are plenty of those in the lowland provinces, but in the northeast they yield to the forested mountains of Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri Provinces, both up-and-coming ecotourism areas.

Rare forest elephants and vocal primates are found in the northeast, and the endangered freshwater Irrawaddy dolphin can be seen year-round near Kratie. Thundering waterfalls, crater lakes and meandering rivers characterise the landscape, and trekking, biking, kayaking and elephant experiences are all taking off. The rolling hills and lush forests also provide a home to many ethnic minority groups, known collectively as Khmer Leu (Upper Khmer) or *chunchiet* (ethnic minorities).

Picture it: this all adds up to an amazing experience.

When to Go

The elevated provinces of Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri are a few degrees cooler than lowland Cambodia; they're good places to escape the heat from March to May. Mondulkiri is particularly beautiful at the tail end of the wet season from September to November, when wildflowers give colour to the landscape.

When it comes to meandering along the Mekong, the ideal time is the dry season when the water levels drop. This makes dolphin-spotting around Kratie and the Lao border that much easier and reveals the Ramsar-recognised wetlands between Stung Treng and the Lao border.



Eastern Cambodia Highlights

- 1** Observing elephants in their element at the **Elephant Valley Project** (p259) in Mondul Kiri

2 Diving into the crystal-clear waters of the crater lake of **Boeng Yeak Lom** (p259) in Ratanakiri
- 3** Catching a glimpse of the rare freshwater **Mekong Irrawaddy dolphin** near Kratie (p255) or O'Svay (p257)

4 Experiencing the 'real Cambodia' on bike, foot or kayak along the **Mekong Discovery Trail** (p253) around Kratie and Stung Treng
- 5** Soaking up the charms of relaxing **Kompong Cham** (p245), gateway to historic temples, lush countryside and friendly locals