



Cambodia

855 / POP 14.9 MILLION

Includes ➔

| | |
|--|-----|
| Phnom Penh..... | 68 |
| Siem Reap & the Temples of Angkor | 85 |
| Northwestern Cambodia | 103 |
| South Coast..... | 111 |
| Eastern Cambodia | 127 |
| Understand Cambodia | 137 |
| Survival Guide | 143 |

Best Temples

- ➔ Angkor Wat (p94)
- ➔ Bayon (p98)
- ➔ Ta Prohm (p99)
- ➔ Banteay Srei (p102)
- ➔ Prasat Preah Vihear (p108)

Best Places for Cultural Connections

- ➔ Temples of Angkor (p94)
- ➔ Ratanakiri Province (p131)
- ➔ Battambang (p103)
- ➔ Monduliri Province (p134)
- ➔ National Museum of Cambodia (p69)

Why Go?

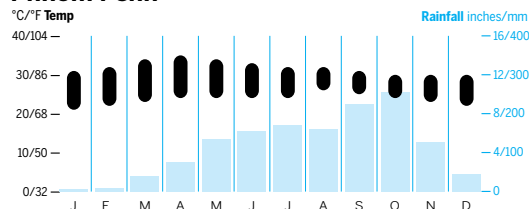
Ascend to the realm of the gods at Angkor Wat, a spectacular fusion of spirituality, symbolism and symmetry. Descend into the darkness of Tuol Sleng to witness the crimes of the Khmer Rouge. This is Cambodia, a country with a history both inspiring and depressing, a captivating destination that casts a spell on all those who visit.

Fringed by beautiful beaches and tropical islands, sustained by the mother waters of the Mekong River and cloaked in some of the region's few remaining emerald wildernesses, Cambodia is an adventure as much as a holiday. This is the warm heart of Southeast Asia, with everything the region has to offer packed into one bite-sized chunk.

Despite the headline attractions, Cambodia's greatest treasure is its people. The Khmers have been to hell and back, but thanks to an unbreakable spirit and infectious optimism they have prevailed with their smiles and spirits largely intact.

When to Go

Phnom Penh



Nov–Feb The best all-round time to visit with relatively cool climates.

Apr–May Khmer New Year falls in mid-April and the mercury regularly hits 40°C.

Jul–Sep Green season: rice paddies shimmer, clouds bring heat relief and prices plummet.

Don't Miss

Cambodia's nightlife is the stuff of legend. While other cities in the region tuck themselves into bed for the night, thanks to curfews and closing times, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap rumble on from dusk till dawn. Phnom Penh has a vibrant bar and club culture. The riverfront area is a good hunting ground for bars, but as the night wears on it is time to try other haunts such as popular St 278 or 'buzzin' St 51, home to Pontoon and the Heart of Darkness.

Up in sublime Siem Reap, one street boasts so many bars it's earned itself the moniker 'Pub St'. There is no easier place for a crawl in the region and draught beer is almost a giveaway at US\$0.50 a glass. Try alternative backpacker bars Angkor What? or the Warehouse, or something a little more refined such as Miss Wong.

ITINERARIES

One Week

Soak up the sights, sounds and smells of Phnom Penh, Cambodia's dynamic and fast-changing capital. Travel by road to Siem Reap, gateway to the majestic temples of Angkor, passing by the pre-Angkorian temples of Sambor Prei Kuk or taking a longer detour via the charming colonial-era city of Battambang. Explore Angkor in depth, as nowhere does temples quite like Cambodia.

Two Weeks

After exploring Phnom Penh and Siem Reap for a week, hit the provinces. Those heading to Thailand should head south to Cambodia's up-and-coming coastline. Soak up the languid charms of Kampot and Kep, then head to Sihanoukville, where dreamy islands lurk off-shore. Try some adrenalin adventures around Koh Kong before exiting the country. Laos- or Vietnam-bound travellers can easily spend a week in the wild east, trekking in Ratanakiri or Mondulakiri and tracking rare Irrawaddy dolphins on the Mekong River around Kratie or Stung Treng.

Essential Adventures

- ➔ **Chi Phat** Mountain bikes, treks, kayaks, birdwatching – it's all here at this pioneering ecotourism project.
- ➔ **Stung Treng** Kayak with rare Irrawaddy dolphins then continue down the Mekong amid enchanting flooded forests.
- ➔ **Veun Sai-Siem Pang Conservation Area** Trek into the jungle to observe rare gibbons in their element in Ratanakiri.
- ➔ **Koh Rong Island** Beachcomb the deserted sands and shores of this tropical island near the city of the same name.
- ➔ **Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary** Walk with elephants, mountain bike and trek in this WWF-supported program in Mondulakiri.

AT A GLANCE

- ➔ **Currency** Riel (r)
- ➔ **Language** Khmer
- ➔ **Money** ATMs common in major cities
- ➔ **Visas** Available on arrival for most nationalities
- ➔ **Mobile phones** Prepaid SIM cards are cheap, but you need a passport to register

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Area** 181,035 sq km
- ➔ **Capital** Phnom Penh
- ➔ **Emergency** Police ☎117

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-----------|---------|-------|
| Australia | A\$1 | 3580r |
| Euro Zone | €1 | 5440r |
| Laos | 1000K | 495r |
| Thailand | 10B | 1220r |
| UK | £1 | 6595r |
| USA | US\$1 | 3960r |
| Vietnam | 10,000d | 1880r |

Set Your Budget

- ➔ **Budget guesthouse room** US\$3–8
- ➔ **Local restaurant meal** US\$1.50–3
- ➔ **Beer in backpacker bar** US\$0.50–1
- ➔ **Moto ride** US\$0.50–1

Entering the Country

Fly into Phnom Penh or Siem Reap. Land borders with Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.