



ANGKOR

CHARITY ORGANIZATION

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1 VISITOR PACKET

VISITING CAMBODIA

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Country name: Kingdom of Cambodia.

Head of state: King Norodom Sihamoni.

Prime Minister: Mr. Hun Sen

Motto: Nation, Religion, King.

Capital City: Phnom Penh.

Government: Constitutional Monarchy.

Major Cities: Siem Reap province, Sihanouk Ville, Battambang, Kampong Chham.

Major Rivers/Lakes: Tonle Sap, Mekong, Bassac Rivers.

Airport: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap (International Airports).

Climate: Tropical Monsoon season: Wet season (May-October), Dry season (November-April).

Language: Khmer (90-95%), ethnic-Chinese, Cham, Vietnamese and hill tribes in north-east.

Guides: Government-licensed tourist guides (English, French, Japanese, German, Spanish, Italy, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Russian...).

Religion: Theravada Buddhism (95%), Islam, Christianity, Animism, Roman Catholic.

Population: 15 million.

People: 90% ethnic Khmers, 5% Vietnamese, 1% Chinese, 4% other.

Food: Fish and Rice.

Land Area: 181 035 Square kilometers (11,224 sq miles).

Currency: Riel (US\$ 1= 4000 Riels). US dollars are as commonly used as Riel.

Voltage: 220V/ 50 Hz.

Time: 7 hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).

Country code: 855.

Internet TLD: KH.

Business hours: Government office: 7:30-11:30 am, 2:00-5:00 pm (Monday–Friday).

Private office: 7:00 am–20:00 pm (Monday–Saturday).

GEOGRAPHY

Cambodia is a well-known country in **South-east Asia**, steeped in history and rich culture. But 2 decades of war destroyed nearly the entire society, including the social economic infrastructure and human resources that are the key factors in developing a country.

Land boundaries

It located in **South-east Asia** within the **Indochina** peninsula and is bordered between **Vietnam** on the east and south-east, **Thailand** on the west and south-west and **Laos** on the north-east. This region corresponds to the present area of mainland South-east Asia. The kingdom of Cambodia has made the agreements on political and development cooperation with these neighboring countries.

Dimension

Kingdom of Cambodia comprises **181,035 Square-kilometers** and has population of about **15** millions. Its shape is an almost-square polygon, with **Kampong Thom** province as its centre. It extends **440 kilometers** wide from the north to south and **560 kilometers** long from the east to west. Among the **10** member countries of the Association of South-east Asia Nations (**ASEAN**), Cambodia ranks eighth in land size and seventh in population. Its geographical location makes Cambodia as easily accessible Ecotourism destination for the traders in neighboring countries and other parts of the world. The country is situated geographically between the **10th** and **15th** parallels of northern latitude and the **102nd** and **108th** parallels of the eastern longitude.

Topography of land

Cambodia's surface is deep and plain at the center. It's surrounded by mountains and plateaus, which are the wind-breakers. In the south-western part lies the coastal area.



HISTORY

Carbon 14 dating of a cave at La ang Spean in northwest Cambodia reveals people who made pots were living in Cambodia as early as 4200 B.C.E. (Before the Common Era). Further archaeological evidence indicates that other parts of the region now called Cambodia was inhabited from around 1000-2000 B.C.E. by a Neolithic culture. Skulls and human bones found at Sam Ron Sen date from 1500 B.C.E. These people may have migrated from South Eastern China to the Indochinese Peninsula, although some scholars maintain they may have come from India. Scholars trace the first cultivation of rice and the first bronze making in Southeast Asia to these people. By the first century CE, the inhabitants had developed relatively stable, organized societies and spoke languages very much related to the Cambodian or Khmer of the present day. The culture and technical skills of these people of the first century in the Common Era far surpassed the primitive stage. The most advanced groups lived along the coast and in the lower Mekong River valley and delta regions in houses constructed on stilts where they cultivated rice, fished and kept domesticated animals. Recent research has unlocked the discovery of artificial circular earthworks dating to Cambodia's Neolithic era. The Khmer people were one of the first inhabitants of South East Asia. They were also among the first in South East Asia to adopt religious ideas and political institutions from India and to establish centralized kingdoms surrounding large territories. The earliest known kingdom in the area, Funan, flourished from around the first to the sixth century AD. This was succeeded by Chenla, which controlled large parts of modern Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The history and civilization of the Khmer began 1stA.D with its forerunners, the states of the **Funan** and **Chenla**. It reached its peak of dominance in the years **802-1432** with the Empire of Angkor. Thereafter the **Khmer Empire** went into a long and painful decline which was only relieved by a glimmer of its past glory during the rule of the **King Norodom Sihanouk** from (1941-1970).

Funan Empire (1st- 6th) “50 - 550 A.D”

The name of this empire was interpreted pretend by **Chinese**. It was heavily influenced by the **Indian** civilization in terms of customs, traditions, religions, and architecture. Funan was one of the earliest Indianised settlements in mainland South-east Asia. It was located in the area of the lower **Mekong Delta** of the Southern part of the Cambodia, Prey Veng province to-day. The inhabitants of this historic state are believed to have been a tribe which spoke a tongue from the **Mon-Khmer** family of the languages, which provides a linguistic source for the Cambodians as early as the beginning of the Christian-Era. The Funaneses were seafarers, merchants, and farmers. They were artistic and hard-working people. The people were described as crinkly-haired, brown-skinned, ugly and in the early encounters, unclothed.

Chenla Empire (550 - 766 A.D)

Civil war undermined the stability of Funan and by the early sixth century the central political power had shifted inland. Chinese records mention the emergence of a new state called Zhenla (Chenla) in the mid of the sixth century, situated on the Mekong in the area of central low land of **Mekong River** in **Basac, Wat Phu** in **Laos** and south-west of **Vietnam** to-day. It seems to have gained control of Funan and extended its territorial boundaries to border of today's Vietnam in the north-east and as far as Southern **China** in the North. Sometime in the 8 century, rivalry forced Zhenla to split into two parts, according to Chinese records. Zhenla of land and Zhenla of water.

The Khmer Empire of Angkor (9th–15th) (802 – 1432 A.D).

The generally accepted dates for the Angkor period are (802-1432). It began when **King Jayavarman II** returned from the court in **Java** in the year 790 AD. According to, the **Sdok Kak Thom** inscription, dating from the middle of the 11th century, some two hundred years after his reign. It says that he spent some time at the court of **Buddhist Shailendra Dynasty** in **Indonesia** before returning to Khmer. According to **Arab** merchant, the King of Shailendra Dynasty staged a surprise attack on the Khmer by approaching the capital from the river and the

Great Lake. The young Khmer King was beheaded and the Khmer became a vassal state of **Java**. So it could be that Jayavarman II was taken to **Indonesia** as a prisoner at that time. He repatriated to Khmer was to reject Javanese control over the Southern lands of Khmer. He asserted his control and power through military campaigns to extend the area of his territorial jurisdiction and to consolidate small principalities before establishing a capital of **Indra-Pura**. He then moved his base three more times. The reasons are for the better source of food. One of the locations was **Kutisvara** (Banteay-kdei temple), **Hari-Hara-laya**, **Amarendrapura** (Ak Yum Temple today) and the last capital was **Mahendraparvata**, Kulen Mountain today, 53 kilometers north-east of **Siem Reap**. The inscriptions say Jayavarman II proclaimed himself “**World Emperor**” in 802 AD. He unified the Khmer state, the declaration of its independence from Indonesia, and the beginning of Angkor period. At that time, Jayavarman II established a new religious belief, the **Devaraja** (God-King) cult. Soon afterwards he moved the capital back to Hari-Haralaya (Rolous-today) where he ruled until his death in the year 850. The successive kings after king Jayavarman II continued to unify and expand the Khmer Empire. The inscriptions give the name of 39 Kings from Angkor period. Seven of these, selected for worthy achievements and the mark they left on Khmer civilization.

1. **Indravarman I** (877–889) built **Bakong temple**, a temple mountain.
2. **Yasovarman I** (889–910) built **Bakheng** as his state temple-mountain on a natural hill which located in the centre of capital **Yasodharapura**.
3. **Jayavarman IV** (924–944) built capital **Koh Ker**.
4. **Rajendravarman II** (944–968) built his state temple, **Pre Rup**.
5. **Suryavarman I** (1002–1050) he expanded the Khmer Empire reached its greatest degree of territorial expansion.
6. **Suryavarman II** (1113–1150) was one of the most brilliant of the Khmer rulers and the builder of the great temple of **Angkor Wat**.
7. **Jayavarman VII** (1181–1219) he undertook a massive building program and is accredited for constructing more temples, roads, bridges, and rest houses than all the other Kings put together. He was a devout follower of **Mahayana Buddhism** and this dedication permeated every aspect of his reign. The Kings of Angkor were the owners of the land and they alone could use it as they wished. They also had power over the water and thus procured the fertility of the soil, and the well-being of the country and of their subjects. In this way they controlled all the materials and intellectual resources of the state and its people.

Decline and Fall: After the death of **King Jayavarman VII**, Khmer forces began to be pushed back from their foreign conquests such as are **Champa** and **Sukhothai** in central **Thailand**. The 13th century was a time of the great change in the Khmer society, as well as in the south-east Asia in general. During the reign of King Jayavarman VIII (1243–1295) there was a strong resurgence of the **Hinduism** faction in the Angkor court and a vigorous reaction against **Buddhism**, which had held sway under Jayavarman VII. In the 13th century, **Theravada Buddhism** replaced **Hinduism** & **Mahayana Buddhism** as the spiritual foundation of the empire. The irrigation network was over worked and slowly starting to silt up due to the massive deforestation that had taken place in the heavily populated areas to the north-east of Angkor. Massive construction projects such Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom; no doubt put an enormous strain on the Royal coffers and on thousands of slaves and common people who subsidized them in hard work and taxes. Another important aspect of this period was the decline of Cambodian political influence on the peripheries of its empire. The constants quarrel between the leader and Royal family that became a more political football between its neighbors, **Siam** and **Vietnam**. The social infrastructure and cultural norms were destroyed, and a lot of people were caught as hostages and killed.

The Dark Ages: From 16th century until the arrival of the **French** in 1863, Cambodia was ruled by a series of weak Kings who, because of continual changes by dissident members of the Royal family, were forced to seek the protection-granted, of-course, at a price of either **Thailand** or **Vietnam**. With the reign of **King Satha** (1576–1595) began an eventful but troubled period for Cambodia. In the 17th century assistance from the southern Vietnam prince was given on the proviso that Vietnamese be allowed to settle in what is on the **Mekong Delta** region of Vietnam, at

that time part was **Kampuchekrom**. In the west, back then **Thai** controlled the provinces of **Battambang, Siem Reap** and **Angkor Wat** in 1794.

The western pilgrims to Angkor: The ruins of Angkor were reported by many foreigners as early as the 16th century. The earliest Europeans came to see **Angkor**. Numerous overseas traders from **China, Japan, Arabia, Spain** and **Portugal** resided in **Phnom Penh** and **Lovek** in the 16th century. The earliest and most detailed account of Angkor was by the Portuguese writer **Diego Do Couto**, who described about the daily life of Cambodian Kings in the 16th century. In 1585 came two Portugueses named **Antonio de Magdalena** and **Capuchin Friar**. In the 17th century, the Spanish visited Angkor Wat. **Marcelo de Ribadeneira** in a description of the Angkor published it in 1601. In the year 1606, **Christ oval de Jague** visited Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom City. Then the Japanese named **Kenryo Shimanoth** came to Angkor in the 17th century, 1632 A.D and he wrote about calligraphic characters, plan on a pillar on the second level of Angkor. He called Angkor, **Jetavana vihara**, a Buddhist site in **India**. Later on his son named **Morimoto URundayu** visited the great Angkor during the 17th century. **Charles-Emile Bouilleaux**, a French missionary, saw Angkor Wat in the year 1854. **Dr. A House**, an American missionary and long-time resident of **Saim**, wrote about Angkor Wat in 1855. **Do King**, an Englishman who traveled in **Indo-China** in 1857-8, detailed his journey in a paper read to the **Royal Geographical Society** in **London** in 1859. **Henri Mouhot**, a French naturalist, reported on his visit. At that time he planned his trip to the east he was living in **Jersey** with his **Scottish** wife. He gained the support of the **Royal Geographical Society** in **London**. He departed for **Singapore** in April 1853 and arrived in **Siam** in September. Three months later he set off on journey that continued until April 1860. During that time he spent two months in Cambodia, 3 weeks at Angkor. He surveyed and measured the temple of Angkor Wat and kept detailed notes on his observations of the ruins. He continued his work until November 1861 when he contracted a fever of malaria and died in **Luang Prabang** in **Laos** at the age of 35 years old. His notes were taken to **Bangkok** by his faithful servants and later sent his widow and brother in **Jersey** where they were published in 1864 called (**Le Tour du Mond**). In his diaries he claimed Angkor's ruins were grandeur than those of ancient **Greece** or **Rome**. He raved about a monument equal to the temple of **Solomon**, erected by some ancient **Michelangelo**. Cambodia was under the French protectorate in the year of 1864.

Cambodia in the French Rule: Cambodia's long period of bouncing back and forth between **Thailand** and **Vietnamese** masters ended in 1864, when French gunboats intimidated **King Norodom** 1860–1904 into signing a treaty of protectorate. French control of Cambodia, which developed as a sideshow to French-colonial interests in Vietnam, initially involved little direct interference in Cambodia's affairs. More importantly, the French presence prevented Cambodia's expansionist neighbors from annexing any more Khmer territory and helped keep King Norodom on throne despite the ambitions of his rebellious half-brothers. By the 1870s, French began pressing for greater control over internal affairs, and 1884, **Norodom** was forced into signing a treaty that turned his country into a French colony. This sparked a two-year rebellion that constituted the only major anti-French movement in Cambodia until after World War II. This uprising ended when the king was persuaded to call upon the rebel fighters to lay down their weapons in exchange for return to the pre treaty arrangement. During the next two decades, Cambodian officials, who saw certain advantages in acquiescing to French power, opened the door to direct French control over the day-to-day administration of the country. The French maintained and took care of Cambodian monarchy. They put a pressure on Thailand into returning **Battambang, Siem Reap**, and **Sisophon** in 1907 to Cambodia. **King Norodom** was succeeded by king **Sisovath** 1904–1927, who was succeeded by **king Monivong** 1927–1941. Upon king Monivong's death, the French-governor general named **Admiral Jean Decoux**, placed 19 year-old prince **Norodom Sihanouk** on the Cambodian throne.

Independence and Sihanouk's rule: **Prince Norodom Sihanouk**, of the **Norodom Dynasty**, was born in 1922, and received his education from French in **Saigon**. In 1941 he was crowned, at just 19, in succession to his grandfather by passing his father. The 19-year-old king very rapidly developed diplomatic skills. He became a determined opponent of **French** colonialism and adroit Champion of Cambodian Independence. In 1945 he accepted an offer of independence made by the **Japanese**, but Japan surrendered in the same year and was occupied

by French and **British** troops. In 1946 king Sihanouk reached in agreement with French where by Cambodia became a member of the **French Union**. In 1953 he succeeded in persuading French to grant him authority over the police, the judiciary and the army. In 1954 the French army was defeated at **Dien Bien Phu**, Vietnam. Independence was proclaimed on 9th November 1953 and recognized by the **Geneva Conference** of May 1954, which ended French control of **Indochina**. In 1955, Sihanouk abdicated, afraid of being marginalized amid the pomp of Royal Ceremony. He turned his attention to politics, winning every seat in the parliament. His newly established party was **Sangkum Reastr Niyum** (People's Socialist Communist Party) in September 1955. He became Prime Minister or Head of State for the next 15 years. During his period, after innumerable love affairs, he finally settled on **Monique Izzi**, the daughter of French-Italian father and a Vietnamese mother, as his consort. During his reign he constructed a lot of special social infrastructural buildings, 120 kilometers, especially schools and hospitals. He sent the young elite to France to study and train including **Saloth Sar**, who later called himself **Pol Pot**, as well as **Kiev Samphan** and **Ieng Sary**, who became communist in **Paris**, and later led the **Khmer Rouge**. Later on from 1960-1970, Sihanouk was in the uncontrolled political situation, and his country was in the doomed situation which fell in huge disaster. On 18 March 1970, the National Assembly voted to remove Sihanouk from office. When Sihanouk was on a trip to France, **General Lon Nol**, **Cheng Heng**, and **Prince Sisovath Sirikmatak**, **Sihanouk's** cousin, deposed him as Chief State, apparently with tacit US tacit consent. Sihanouk went into exile in **Beijing** and joined the communists. Following the Khmer Rouge Victory on 17th April 1975, Sihanouk was confined to the Royal Palace as a prisoner of the Khmer Rouge. He remained there until early 1979 when, on the eve of the Vietnamese invasion, he was flown back to Beijing. It was to be more than a decade before Sihanouk finally returned to Cambodia in 1993. On 24 September 1993, after 38 years in politics, he took on once again the role of king. On 7th October 2004, Sihanouk abdicated because of old age, failing health. His son **Sihamoni** ascended the royal throne.

The Lon Nol Regime (1970-1975): It was called **Khmer Republic**, Sihanouk was condemned to death in absentia, and an excessive move on the part of the new government that effectively ruled out any chance for compromise over the next five years. On the 18th March 1970 Lon Nol became the new head of state, he established a military court and expanded three-fold general mobilization decreed, the republic was suspended and a state of emergency declared. **Lon Nol** gave communist Vietnamese forces an ultimatum to withdraw their forces within one week, which amounted to a virtual declaration of war, as no communists wanted to return to the homeland to face the Americans. On the 30th April 1970, U.S and South Vietnamese forces invaded Cambodia in an effort to flush out thousands of Vietcong and North Vietnamese troops were using Cambodia bases in their war to overthrow the Southern Vietnamese Government. As a result of the invasion, the Vietnamese communist withdrew deeper into Cambodia, thus posing an even greater threat to Lon Nol Government. Cambodia's tiny army never stood on a chance and within the space of a few months, Vietnamese forces and their Khmer Rouge allies controlled almost half the country. The ultimate humiliation came in July 1970 when the Vietnamese seized Angkor Wat. In 1969 the USA had begun a secret program of bombing suspected communist base camps in Cambodia. For the next 4 years, until bombing was halted by the U.S congress in August 1973, huge areas of the eastern half of the country were carpet-bombed by U.S B-52s , killing them as many as 250.000 Cambodians and turning hundreds of thousands more into refugees. Undoubtedly, the bombing campaign helped the Khmer rouge in their recruitment drive, as more and more peasants were losing family members to the aerial assaults. While the final heaviest bombing in the first half of 1973 may have saved **Phnom Penh** from a premature fall, its ferocity also helped to harden to attitude of many Khmer Rouge cadres and may have contributed to the later brutality of the regime. People fled to the rural areas for the relative safety of Phnom Penh and provincial capitals. Between 1970-1975, several hundred thousand people died in the fighting. During these years the Khmer Rouge came to play a dominant role in trying to over throw the Lon Nol regime, strengthened by the support of the Vietnamese, although the Khmer Rouge leadership would vehemently deny this from 1975-1979 onwards. The country was in chaotic situation because of the upheaval politics. Lon Nol never succeeded in gaining the initiative against the Khmer Rouge, which pursued a strategy of rural attrition. Large parts of the countryside fell to the rebels and many provincial capitals were cut off from Phnom Penh. Lon Nol fled the country in early April 1975; leave Sirik Matak in charge, which refused evacuation to the end. **“I can't alas leave in such a cowardly fashion...I have committed only one mistake that of believing in you, the Americans use the words Sirik Matak poignantly penned to U.S ambassador John Gunther Dean.”**

Khmer Rouge (1975-1979): From early year (1975-1979) when Khmer Rouge controlled Cambodia, the better experience of the darkest years in Cambodia history. Its goal was to transform Cambodia into a **Maoist**, peasant dominated agrarian cooperative. Another aim was to remove all differences between town people and peasants by destroying the centers of mercantile and capitalist activity. After they occupied the country, they excavated the people from the capital city, province to rural camp to do slave labor in the rice-fields for 10-12 per a day. The political program of the Khmer Rouge consisted of a brutal restructuring of society on strictly **Maoist Lines**. The advent of the Khmer Rouge rule was proclaimed Year Zero. It was a regime of racial genocide, and attempted cultural annihilation from which the country recovering. There are no precise figures for the number of lives lost in “**Democratic Kampuchea**” under the Khmer Rouge during the 3 years 8 months and 21 days. The Foreign Minister, **Ieng Sary**, spoke privately of a figure of two million. The highest price in blood was paid by the official corps, the intellectuals and priests of all religions. Hundreds of thousands more died of execution, starvation, overwork and disease. Anyone who spoke a foreign language or simply wore glasses was held to be a subversive or a parasite and usually paid with their lives. On 6th January 1979, after three years of house arrest, **king Sihanouk** was to flown back to **Beijing** by the Chinese, and on 7th January the Vietnamese marched into Phnom Penh so as to topple **Pol Pot** regime and push them out of the country. The Khmer rouge, however, continued to attack Cambodia and thousands of landmines that killed and maimed Cambodia to-day.

A background of blood brother number one: **Pol Pot** was born **Salot Sar** in a small village near **Kompong Thom** province in 1925. As a young man he won a scholarship to study in **Paris** and spent several years there with **Ieng Sary**, who would later become foreign minister. It is here he is believed to have developed his radical **Marxist** thought, later to transform into the politics of the extreme Maoist agrarianism. Pol Pot who is associated with bloody madness of the regime he had led between 1975-1979, and his policies heaped misery, suffering and death on million of Cambodians. Even after being thrown in 1979 he cast a long shadow over the Cambodian for many of them, just knowing he was still alive was traumatic and unjust. He died on the 15 of April 1998. From year 1979-1989, Cambodia was named the **People's Republic of Kampuchea** (under the Vietnamese backed Phnom Penh Government). From the middle of year 1989, Cambodia was called the **State of Cambodia**. In 1993 Cambodia was named the **Kingdom of Cambodia**. The first election was set according to plan on 23rd - 25th May 1993. It was supervised and organized by UN peace keeping forces “U.S, Japan and Germany.” In 1993, Cambodia became a full member of **ASEAN**.

People's Republic of Kampuchea / State of Cambodia (1979-1993)

On January 10, 1979, after the Vietnamese army and the KUFNS invaded Cambodia, the new People's Republic of Kampuchea was established with **Heng Samrin** as head of state. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge forces retreated rapidly to the Thai border. The Khmer Rouge and the PRK began a costly struggle that played into the hands of the larger powers China, the United States and the Soviet Union. A civil war was imposed on impoverished Cambodia that displaced 600,000 Cambodians to refugee camps along the border between Thailand and Cambodia. Peace efforts began in Paris in 1989 under the State of Cambodia, culminating two years later in October 1991 in a comprehensive peace settlement. The United Nations was given a mandate to enforce a ceasefire, and deal with refugees and disarmament known as the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

Modern Cambodia (1993-Present): On October 23, 1991, the Paris Conference reconvened to sign a comprehensive settlement giving the UN full authority to supervise a ceasefire, repatriate the displaced Khmer along the border with Thailand, disarm and demobilize the factional armies, and prepare the country for free and fair elections. Prince Sihanouk, President of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia (SNC), and other members of the SNC returned to Phnom Penh in November 1991, to begin the resettlement process in Cambodia. The UN Advance Mission for Cambodia (UNAMIC) was deployed at the same time to maintain liaison among the factions and begin demining operations to expedite the repatriation of approximately 370,000 Cambodians from Thailand. On March 16, 1992, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) arrived in Cambodia to begin implementation of the UN Settlement Plan. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees began full-scale repatriation in March 1992. UNTAC grew into a

22,000-strong civilian and military peacekeeping force to conduct free and fair elections for a constituent assembly. Over 4 million Cambodians (about 90% of eligible voters) participated in the May 1993 elections, although the Khmer Rouge or Party of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK), whose forces were never actually disarmed or demobilized, barred some people from participating. Prince Ranariddh's royalist FUNCINPEC Party was the top vote recipient with 45.5% of the vote, followed by Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party and the Buddhist Liberal Democratic Party, respectively. FUNCINPEC then entered into a coalition with the other parties that had participated in the election. The parties represented in the 120-member assembly proceeded to draft and approve a new constitution, which was promulgated September 24, 1993. It established a multiparty liberal democracy in the framework of a constitutional monarchy, with the former Prince Sihanouk elevated to King. Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen became First and Second Prime Ministers, respectively, in the Royal Cambodian Government (RGC). The constitution provides for a wide range of internationally recognized human rights. On October 4, 2004, the Cambodian National Assembly ratified an agreement with the United Nations on the establishment of a tribunal to try senior leaders responsible for the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge. Donor countries have pledged the \$43 million international share of the three-year tribunal budget, while the Cambodian government's share of the budget is \$13.3 million. The tribunal started trials of senior Khmer Rouge leaders in 2008.

ECONOMY

The economy of Cambodia at present follows an open market system (market economy) and has seen rapid economic progress in the last decade. Per capita income, although rapidly increasing, is low compared with most neighboring countries. Cambodia's two largest industries are textiles and tourism, while agricultural activities remain the main source of income for many Cambodians living in rural areas. The service sector is heavily concentrated on trading activities and catering-related services. Recently, Cambodia has reported that oil and natural gas reserves have been found off-shore. In 1995, the government transformed the country's economic system from a planned economy to its present market-driven system. [5] Following those changes, growth was estimated at a value of 7% while inflation dropped from 26% in 1994 to only 6% in 1995. Imports increased due to the influx of foreign aid, and exports, particularly from the country's garment industry, also increased.

After four years of improving economic performance, Cambodia's economy slowed in 1997-98 due to the regional economic crisis, civil unrest, and political infighting. Foreign investments declined during this period. Also, in 1998 the main harvest was hit by drought. But in 1999, the first full year of relative peace in 30 years, progress was made on economic reforms and growth resumed at 4%.

Currently, Cambodia's foreign policy focuses on establishing friendly borders with its neighbors (such as Thailand and Vietnam), as well as integrate itself into regional (ASEAN) and global (WTO) trading systems. Some of the obstacles faced by this emerging economy are the need for a better education system and the lack of a skilled workforce; particularly in the poverty-ridden countryside, which struggles with inadequate basic infrastructure. Nonetheless, Cambodia continues to attract investors because of its low wages, plentiful labor, proximity to Asian raw materials, and favorable tax treatment.

VISITING CAMBODIA

CURRENCY

The Cambodian currency is called **Riel**. However, US dollars are used as commonly as Riel. Depending on exchange rates, USD1 generally equals 4000 Riels. For up-to-date exchange rates visit: www.xe.com. A few pointers on using US dollars in Cambodia:

- Bring smaller denominations when possible! Small shops (i.e. local transportation or restaurants) might not have sufficient change to large notes.
- Check that your bills are in good condition, as bills with any rips or tears are not accepted.
- You will usually get change in Riel, so it might not be necessary to get any Riel in advance.

Credit cards & Traveler's Checks (in USD) can be used at some places in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, especially in high-end institutions. But you should always carry some cash.

HISTORY OF KHMER MONEY

If you thought the Riel had always been Cambodia's official currency, you are completely wrong. Instead, our currency has changed rather significantly throughout time, both in form and name. According to Global Financial Data, from the ninth to tenth centuries, Cambodia imported Pyu and Mon coins from the Mon kingdom of Dvaravati, whose remnants can still be found in the central part of present-day Thailand. For a fact, coins were not produced in Cambodia until the sixteenth century. In the 1850s His Majesty King Ang Duong of Cambodia (1841-1859) issued the first machine-made coins, known as Cambodian Tical. The Tical was divisible into 8 Fuang and 64 Att.

12 years after Cambodia became a part of the French Indochina, the Banque de l'Indochine was established. A branch was set up in Phnom Penh, which became the note-issuing bank for all of Indochina from February 22, 1891 to December 31, 1951. It is in this period that Indochina's currency, the Piastre, was introduced.

During the Second World War, French Indochina (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam) and Thailand, though occupied by Japanese troops, did not have Japanese occupation currency; rather, they paid a kind of ransom by creating domestic currency and giving it to Japan to pay for local expenses. The Piastre was divisible into 100 Cents.

After the war, France initially revalued the Piastre to equal 17 French Francs, but the Piastre was devalued back to its old level of 10 French Francs on May 11, 1953. On December 31, 1951 the exclusive privilege of banknote issue was transferred to the Institut d'Émission des États du Cambodge, du Laos ET du Viêt-Nam, which also had its headquarters in Phnom Penh. Although separate notes were issued for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, the notes were legal tender in all three states.

VISITING CAMBODIA

1- VISA ON ARRIVAL

A one-month tourist visa can be easily obtained on arrival from:

- **Phnom Penh International Airport**
- **Siem Reap International Airport**
- **Cambodia-Vietnam border**
 1. Bavet International Checkpoint
 2. Kha Orm Sam Nor International Checkpoint
- **Cambodia-Thailand border**
 1. Cham Yeam International Checkpoint
 2. Poipet International Checkpoint
 3. O'Smach International Checkpoint

You will need:

1. Passport valid for at least four (4) months from the expiry date
2. One recent photograph (4 x 6)*
3. Visa Fee payment: USD 20

*At the International Airport it is now possible to have your passport photo scanned for use on your visa. There is a \$2 charge for this service at the visa application counter upon your arrival. (Source: [Cambodia Airports](#)).

VISITING CAMBODIA

2-E-VISA

Basic information is as follows;

Entry Type	Single entry only
Fees	USD20 + USD5 (processing charge)
Validity	3 months (starting from the date of issue)
Length of Stay	30 days (Can be extended)
Processing Time	3 business days
Requirement	A passport validity of more than six months balance at time of entry, a recent passport-size photo in digital format (JPEG or PNG format), a valid credit card (Visa/MasterCard).

(Source: [Cambodia Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation](#))

VISITING CAMBODIA

3- BUSINESS VISA

Many ACO visitors come for only a short time, less than a month, but others, such as volunteers, aim for a longer stay. In the first case, the standard 30 day tourist visa, which can be extended in-country once for a further 30 day period, is sufficient. For those who planned to stay for longer, a different Visa is required is a business visa. Although the business visa is only valid for 30 days, it is renewable.

How to get a Business Visa

While the standard tourist Visa can be applied for online, that is not the case for the business visa. You can only get a business visa through an embassy prior to the trip or on-arrival. For an on-arrival business visa you will need:

1. Your Passport with at least one page empty for the visa, and 6 months validity from date of entry
2. The Application form, provided at the airport
3. The application fee in \$US (currently \$25)
4. One (1) passport sized photo
5. A pen for filling out the form

Getting the on-arrival business visa

The process is exactly the same as applying for an on-arrival tourist visa, the single difference being that you tick the business visa box on the application form and indicate that you're planning to stay for more than 30 days. The form itself is simple and clear and, if you haven't brought a passport photo with you, the necessary image can be scanned from your passport for a small charge.

With the form completed and photo provided, it usually takes about 20 minutes before you've got your passport back, with the business visa secured inside it and you can move on through immigration and into Cambodia proper.

VISITING CAMBODIA

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Depending on your departure location, international flights to Phnom Penh usually have a stopover in Taipei, Paris or Hong Kong.

Location

Los Angeles, US
Los Angeles, US
Sydney, Australia
Sydney, Australia
London, UK
Hong Kong
Singapore

Suggested Airlines

EVA Airways (via Taipei)
Cathay Pacific Airways (via Hong Kong)
Singapore Airlines (via Singapore)
Malaysia Airlines (via Kuala Lumpur)
Air France (via Paris)
Cathay Pacific Airways or Dragon Air
Singapore Airlines

In addition to cash for the visa fee, it is also worth having small denominations of US dollars for your taxi ride to your hotel. The drivers might not have change for a USD20 or above bill.

In Siem Reap, a typical journey to your hotel costs around USD10 in a taxi, and will take about 15-20 minutes. There is no need to bargain or tip. Tuk-Tuks to the city are found inside the airport gates, and will cost about \$5. They are not as safe as taxis, especially at night.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Pre-travel Vaccinations & Preparations

We recommend you to check with your doctor prior to arrival about pre-travel vaccinations required for Cambodia (such as those necessary for protection from malaria, typhoid, tetanus, and hepatitis A & B). Malaria is not commonly present in Siem Reap, but if you plan to spend extended time in the rural remote areas, you should take appropriate medical advice.

In addition, it is probably a good idea for you to bring all essential medications with you. There are pharmacies in Siem Reap selling ordinary medicines, such as headache tablets, skin creams and diarrhea medications. U-Care is one of the more popular pharmacy chains in Siem Reap, with imported medicines, and English-speaking pharmacists.

You may find the following items useful when packing:

- Lightweight, loose-fitting cotton clothing
- Full-length trousers/ jeans/ skirts
- Long sleeves shirts for protection against sun and mosquitoes
- Umbrella or raincoat in the appropriate season
- Hat and high factor Sun block (SPF 30 or above)
- Insect repellent (with DEET)

Travel Insurance

Taking out a medical travel insurance policy BEFORE coming to Cambodia is recommended. For reference only, some providers are;

1. Patriot America Insurance - www.patriotamericainsurance.net
2. STA Travel - www.statravel.com/travel-insurance.htm
3. International SOS - www.internationalsos.com/en/

Staying healthy when you get here

Because of Cambodia's hot climate, it is extremely easy to become dehydrated. Bottled water is inexpensive and available everywhere. Drink as much as you need.

Restaurants in the city will typically serve safe drinking water, and using sealed bottles is recommended. It is advisable NOT to drink directly from the tap water.

CULTURAL TIPS

Visiting temples and pagodas, you should wear long trousers or a long skirt, and should have your shoulders covered. In the city, people tend to dress casually, but relatively conservatively. Jeans, long shorts, (and skirts for women) are common for all ages, as well as polo shirts, T-shirts and blouses or dress shirts. Women generally cover shoulders and knees, but tank tops are very common in the cities. Very short skirts or revealing tops are not appropriate, especially when at ACO. Flip-flops, sandals and comfortable athletic or walking shoes are all good footwear.

Being polite & culturally sensitive

- Touching the head of others is insulting, though this is not a problem with children.
- Tipping is not customary, but the staff will appreciate any extra money, especially in restaurants that benefit NGOs or charities.
- Getting angry or raising your voice is a surefire way to create trouble or cause embarrassment to all around. If there is a problem, take a deep breath and keep your sense of humor to diffuse the tension. It is usually best to be respectful at all times to avoid a confrontation.
- Most people wear sandals or flip-flops, but everyone should remove their shoes before entering houses or temples.
- Bargaining is a common practice in markets and street stalls, and also for fares on taxis or cyclos. Think of it as a dialogue for settling on a fair price for a service or item, not a way to scam either party. If you're new to the game, just ask for the price, suggest another price that is lower, smile, and let the dialogue progress.

VISITING CAMBODIA

ABOUT ACO VISITS

If you would like to visit ACO, please let us know as early as possible (preferably eight weeks in advance). Also, please check that your trip won't coincide with Cambodian public holidays, as many of our students will either return to their homelands or take a trip outside the city during this time.

Main Khmer Holidays

- April : **Khmer New Year**
- May : **HM King Sihamoni's Birthday**
- October : **Pchum Ben Festival**
- November : **Water Festival**

During some of the holidays - such as Pchum Ben Festival - most ACO students and staff return to their provinces. If you plan to visit ACO during a holiday, please get in touch with our sponsorship department to ensure the necessary arrangements are made.

A typical visit includes a full tour of the ACO facilities. If you are one of our sponsors, we may be able to organize an outing for you with your child and/or some of his/her friends for a fun activity (such as playing sports or shopping). We run a tight schedule academically and plan our sponsor visits to fit around study timetables.

We hope that your visit will help you get to know your sponsored child better and give you a rounded view of the life he or she leads and has led. Depending on the timing of the visit, you may also see the ACO kids performing their traditional dance and drama performances (Future Plan).

VISITING CAMBODIA

RULES & REGULATIONS

We try very hard to ensure that our visits that are supervised and fairly structured, both for your convenience and for the best interests of the children.

An ACO staff-member will always be present, both while you visit the facility, and if you take kids outside the facility. As well as providing supervision, our staff can help translate for the kids, explain about the ACO and Cambodian culture, and generally make your visit smooth and pleasant.

Sponsors and visitors **MUST** ask for our agreement for

- Visiting any of our facilities
- Taking photos of children
- Publishing any pictures or stories about ACO

We also request sponsors and visitors **NOT** to visit ACO, or to contact children or their families without our agreement.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Our **Child Protection Policy** consists of a series of guidelines, all of which help us provide the safest possible environment for the children to learn and grow. Having and enforcing such a policy is essential for any organization working with children. All of these guidelines are for the privacy and protection of the children, and we hope you will find them practical, as opposed to restrictive.

VISITING CAMBODIA

TIPS & BRINGING GIFTS**Gifts for Individual Child**

Rather than seeing sponsors as a source of money, we want our children to see each sponsor as a friend and mentor who care about them. Buying or bringing expensive items for the children can create problems, including feelings of inequality between the kids. We therefore ask that visitors limit the value of a gift to a child to **no more than \$30**.

Small, meaningful gifts are a better option than something expensive. The kids love English books, pens and pencils and any other stationery items, art supplies, hair bands, earrings, necklaces, board games, and sports items (such as balls, rackets, and hula hoops- tend to be very welcome. Clothing is popular, as well as useful.

Gifts for Groups or Donations

If you would like to donate something special to an entire class or group of children, please speak to us first. We can use gifts that are shared by everyone, such as iPads and tablet computers, laptop computers, cameras, board games, or other fun items.

Another way to provide extra help is to contribute to ACO projects or to help the families and communities. A sponsor may choose to provide a water well, filter to a village. While we ask sponsors not to make cash gifts to the child or their family, sponsors can fund such things as home repairs, education vouchers for the other siblings, healthcare for sick family members, or food packages. This form of creative giving can be a sustainable, meaningful way to be part of the child's community.

USEFUL INFORMATION
ABOUT SIEM REAP

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel & Guest House

Luxury (\$100 & above per-night)

Angkor Paradise Hotel**Range** : \$55-\$800

Address : # Nation Road No 6, Phum Sala Kangseng, Sangkat Svay Dangkoum, Cambodia.

Fax : 063-760-691

Telephone : +855 63-760-690

E-mail : info@angkorparadise.netWebsite : www.angkorparadise.net/**Heritage Suites Hotel****Range** : \$155 -\$575

Address : Wat Polangka - Phum Slok Kram, Siem Reap, Cambodia

Fax : 063-969-103

Telephone : 855 63-969-100

Website : www.heritagesuiteshotel.com/Email : sales@heritagesuiteshotel.com**Angkor Village Hotel****Range** : \$139-\$300

Address : Wat Bo village, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Fax : 063-963-363

Telephone : 063-965-561

E.mail : welcome@angkorvillage.comWebsite : www.angkorvillage.com**Amantara Hotel****Range** : \$300-1040++

Address : Airport Road # 6 , Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Fax : 063-966-789

Telephone : 063-966- 788

E-mail : angkor@amantara.comWebsite : www.amantara.com**Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor****Range** : \$261....

Address : 1 Vithei Charles de Gaulle, Khum Svay Dang Kum, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Fax : +855 63-963-168

Phone : +855 63-963-888

Web-site : www.affles.com**FCC Angkor****Range** : \$90-\$330

Address : Old French Quarter, Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Fax : +855 63-964-683

Phone : +855 63-963-342

Web-site : www.fcccambodia.com

FRANGIPANI VILLA HOTEL

Range : \$100-\$120
 Address : Wat Bo, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
 Telephone : +855 63-963-030/016-581-045
 E-mail : reservations@frangipanihotel.com
 Website : www.frangipanihotel.com

Mid-range (\$50-100 per night)**Kiri Boutique Hotel**

Range : \$40-\$100
 Address : Angkor High School, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
 Fax : 063-767-668
 Telephone : +855 12-448-456
 Email : info@kiriboutiquehotel.com
 Web-site : www.kiriboutiquehotel.com

La Noria Hotel

Range : \$49-\$69
 Address : East of Siem Reap River.
 Telephone : 063-964-242
 Email : info@lanoriaangkor.com
 Web-site : www.lanoriaangkor.com

Mysterès D'Angkor

Range : \$45-\$84
 Address : Behind Wat Polanka, Siem Reap, Cambodia
 Fax : 063-963-638
 Telephone : 063-963-639/012-537-715
 Email : info@thevillaparadiso.com
 Website : www.mysteres-angkor.com

Budget (under \$40 per night)**Mom Guest House**

Range : \$15-\$30
 Address : Wat Bo Road, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
 Fax : 063-964-037
 Telephone : 012-320-881
 E-mail : moms@online.com.kh
 Website : www.momguesthouse.com

Ponloue Angkor Siem Reap Villa

Range : \$10-\$35
 Address : #003, Sivatha Blvd, Siem Reap, Cambodia
 Telephone : 012-940-685
 Web-site : www.ponloueangkor.com
 Email : ponloue_ag@live.com

New Riverside Hotel

Range : \$15-\$40
 Address : Lok Ta Neauy Road, Siem Reap, Cambodia.
 Telephone : 012-550-055
 Email : booking_riverside@yahoo.com
 Website : www.newriversidehotel.com

**USEFUL INFORMATION
ABOUT SIEM REAP****ACCOMMODATION****Serviced Apartments**

For further information you can contact the Angkor Real Estate www.angkorrealestate.com

Please do note that the information above is only for reference and is based on our findings as at 1st January 2013.

It's best to make your own checks with hotels and travel agencies for any of your needs, but we hope that the information above will be useful, if only as a starting point.

USEFUL INFORMATION
ABOUT SIEM REAP**RESTAURANTS****Angkor Cafè Restaurant**

Address : In front of Angkor Wat Temple
Phone : 097-979-8816/063-963-574
Web-site : www.artisandangkor.com

Blue Pumpkin

Address : Sivatha Blvd, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Telephone : 063-963-574
Web-site : www.tbpumpkin.com

Butterflies Garden

Address : #535, Street 25, Wat Bo, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Telephone : 063-761-211
Web-site : www.butterfliesofangkor.com

Cassia Wine Bar-Restaurant

Address : Oum Khun Boulevard, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Telephone : 063-765-083
Web-site : www.cassiacambodia.com

FCC (Foreign Correspondent's Club)

Address : Pokambor Street near Royal Residence, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Telephone : 063-760-280
Web-site : www.fcccambodia.com

Viroth's Restaurant

Address : #99 Wat Bo Road
Telephone : 012-826-346
Web-site : www.viroth-restaurant.com

Red Piano Restaurant

Address : Pub Street
Telephone : 063-964-750/092-477-730
Web-site : www.redpiano.com

Madame Butterfly

Address : Road#6, on the Airport Road, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Telephone : 063-966-281/095-586-616
Web-site : www.madamebutterflyrestaurant.com

Champey Restaurant

Address : Pub Street near the Old Market, Siem Reap, Cambodia
Telephone : 063-964-713/078-845-936
Web-site : www.restaurant-siemreap.com

USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT SIEM REAP

ATTRACTIONS



Angkor Wat is the most famous ancient temple site in Cambodia, and visiting the ancient Angkorian temples is the reason most visitors come to Cambodia, and to Siem Reap. With its five lotus-like towers rising 65 meters into the sky, it is truly a monumental, and awe inspiring sight. This UNESCO World Heritage site was at one time the largest pre-industrial city in the world, and is considered one of the ancient wonders of the world. Angkor Wat is the crown jewel of any visit to the temples of Angkor. The ruins of Angkor Wat are located in the Angkor Archaeological Park, and the entrance to the park is located about 3km north of modern-day Siem Reap. There are no hotels within the park grounds, and most visitors to the ancient temples stay in Siem Reap, using it as a base from which to make daily visits to the temples. The most significant temple ruins are found 6 to 25km north of town, with the closest major temple being Angkor Wat. The Roluos Group of temples is 13km east of Siem Reap. It is best to arrange your tour of the Angkor Archaeological Park with a reputable tour agency and a knowledgeable tour guide. They can assist with purchasing the admission pass, and arrange the transportation you will need. There are also guidebooks available, which will help in understanding the history of the temples.

Apsaras Dance



Several restaurants and hotels in Siem Reap present Apsara Dance Shows, and Apsara Dance Dinner Shows are included in many tours. Most shows include the four genre of traditional Khmer dance: Apsara Dance, Masked Dance, Shadow Theatre, and Folk Dance. These are abbreviated dances for tourists, and unfortunately there is usually little or no explanation as to the origin and meaning of the dances. But they are still interesting and worthwhile to see.

Bayon Temple



The two must see ancient Angkorian temples are Angkor Wat and Bayon. The huge enigmatic stone faces of Bayon have become some of the most iconic and recognizable features associated with the ancient Khmer Kingdom and its architecture. The Bayon Temple is at the centre of the great walled city of Angkor Thom, which is at the heart of the Angkor Archeological Park.

Bayon has some 50 towers, with four huge carved faces on most of them. Each of the four faces is four metres high and oriented toward the four points of the compass. The faces all have the same strange smile and closed eyes, creating a mysterious and serene countenance, representing an all-knowing state of inner peace, and perhaps a state of Nirvana.

There is debate as to who the faces actually represent, and some theories put forward say that they are the face of a Bodhisattva (Buddhism's compassionate and enlightened being), or a combination of Buddha and Jayavarman VII. Bayon was constructed as Jayavarman VII's state-temple, and it represents the height of his massive building program.

Bayon is rich in decoration, and the bas-reliefs on the exterior walls of the lower level and on the upper level are outstanding. The bas-reliefs on the southern wall are of scenes from a sea battle between the Khmer and the Cham. However, it is not known if they represent the Cham invasion of 1177AD, or a later victorious battle for the Khmer. There are also interesting and extensive carvings of scenes from everyday life, including market scenes, religious rituals, cockfighting, chess games and childbirth. Of note are the unfinished carvings on some walls, which were probably not finished due to the death of Jayavarman VII.

Subsequently, Bayon underwent several additions and modifications under later kings, and some of the bas-reliefs on the inner walls were carved at a later date under the Hindu king Jayavarman VIII. The terrace to the east of the temple, the libraries, the square corners of the inner gallery and parts of the upper terrace appear to be additions that were not part of the original structure.

Since the Bayon Temple was constructed in stages over a span of many years, it appears to be somewhat of an architectural jumble. When seen from a distance, at first it can seem like a rather formless jumble of stone, but on the inside, there is a maze of galleries, towers and passageways on the three different levels. The best time for photographs is when the sun is rather low near sunrise and sunset.

Ta Prohm



The temples of Angkor Wat and the walled city of Angkor Thom are perhaps the most famous and best known of all the ancient temple sites. To the east of Angkor Thom is the third most important, and one of the most photographed of all the ancient temples due to its dramatic scenery. Ta Prohm is a quiet and sprawling monastery, and unlike most other sites, it has only been partially cleared of overgrowth, and has been intentionally left more or less the way it was originally found. Some walls and doorways of the ancient structure were left overgrown and gripped by huge trees and other

foliage. Flocks of parrots in the trees add to the atmosphere, and give the visitor the feeling of discovering a temple lost in the jungle. With this image in mind, it is not hard to imagine what the French naturalist Henri Mouhot must have felt when he 'discovered' the temple in 1860.

The monastery was one of King Jayavarman VII's first major temple projects, and was dedicated to his mother. It is estimated that at one time this vast 600-room monastery and the surrounding area had a population of over 70,000 people. The temple is 145 metres by 125 metres, It was home to high priests, monks, assistants, dancers and laborers, and was very wealthy with great stores of jewels and gold, and controlled an estimated 3,000 villages. It contains a maze of courtyards and galleries, and is well worth spending some time to explore its many dark corridors. Ta Prohm was used in both the movie and game of 'Tomb Raider', and has some of the best temple-in-the-jungle photo opportunities.

Ta Prohm is similar in general design to the temples of Preah Khan and Banteay Kdei, which were also built by Jayavarman VII at a later date. Preah Khan was dedicated to Jayavarman VII's father. Ta Prohm is an excellent example of the monastic complex style temples, and is a must to be included in any visit to the temples.

Phnom Kulen National Park



Situated about 50km north of Siem Reap, Phnom Kulen National Park is one of the most revered destinations in Cambodia, as it features Kulen Mountain. Once referred to as the Mount Mahendraparvata – the Kulen Mountain is a cultural and historical resort that marked the origin of Khmer empire in the 9th century when King Jayavarman II announced independence from Java and declared himself as the 'Chakravartin,' meaning the universal king.

Stretching for more than 13km down to the Angkor Plain, the Phnom Kulen is home to a slew of temple ruins and several centuries-old consecrated carvings as well as sculptures. Further, since most of the areas in Phnom Kulen are still untouched, this allows visitors to immerse in the cool, spellbinding attractions that nature itself offers by way of jungle-covered verdant surroundings, rivers and dazzling waterfalls. Phnom Kulen National Park.



One of the most noteworthy attractions of the park is the archeological site of Kbal Spean. Located in the western region of the Phnom Kulen mountain range, Kbal Spean alternatively referred to as the 'River of a Thousand Lingas,' is a carved sandstone riverbed that has numerous sculptures dating back to the 11th and 12th centuries. The inscriptions and mythological scenes carved out here have been categorized into three factors that illustrate the Hindu Trinity Gods: Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva.

Among the carvings that deserve special note are the engravings of Vishnu reclining on the serpent Ananta with his consort Lakshmi and a lotus flower protruding from Vishnu's navel holding the image of Brahma. Once used for baptism, the water in this area is considered sacred. Another attraction worth seeing in Phnom Kulen is Chup Preah – a plain with refreshing streams that meander into the mountain valley. This is truly a serene spot with a big 16th century Buddhist image, in addition to a tree about 15 metres high alongside it.

Equally interesting are Preah Ang Thom – a Buddhist temple that enshrines an enormous 17-metre long statue of a reclining Buddha and the Terrace of Sdach Kamlung – with a small wrecked brick temple at its centre. Studies reveal that this spot was covered by lava for hundreds of years. Aside these, there are two impressive waterfalls that form the focal point of Phnom Kulen.

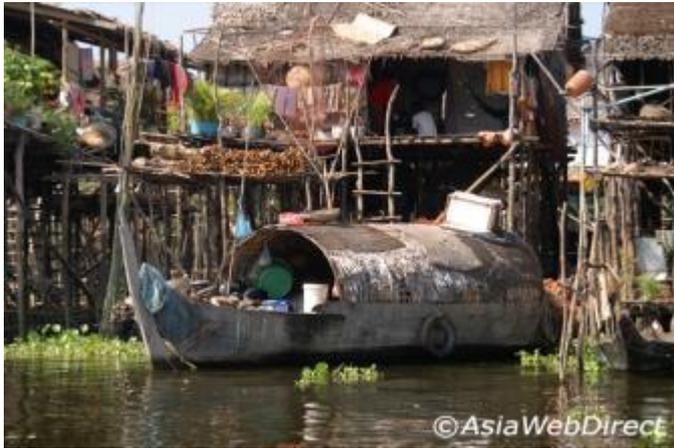
Banteay Srey Butterfly Centre



Banteay Srey Butterfly Centre (BBC) is one of the most visited tourist spots in the country, with the largest butterfly exhibition in the Southeast Asia. A visit to Banteay Srey Butterfly Centre is a great way to take a short break from the temple tours and spend some time in spectacular surroundings filled with rare and vivid butterflies. Situated about 25km from Siem Reap, it is a project with a difference, as the centre also contributes to the welfare of the community by training local people to rear butterflies for sale locally exhibits as well as abroad. In other words, it has been primarily developed as a poverty mitigation project, and the revenues generated by way of admission fees and butterfly farming are used to employ impoverished people in Siem Reap's remote villages.

Most significantly, the centre and its activities render a livelihood to poor families without causing any species extinction or destruction to the natural habitat. In a way, the project itself is a nature conserving initiative that educates people on the importance of raising income through the preservation of nature.

Tonlé Sap Lake



The Tonlé Sap Lake is the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. During the dry season the lake drains into the Tonle Sap River which flows into the Mekong River. But in the rainy season (June to October), the huge amount of water in the Mekong causes the Tonlé Sap River to reverse its flow. The combination of water flowing into the lake, and the backup of the Tonle Sap River swells the lake to 5-times its size in the dry season. This increase in size floods the surrounding floodplain and forests, creating an incredibly diverse and rich eco-system

Tonle Sap Floating Villages



There are actually several so-called floating villages located on, and around the Tonle Sap Lake (Boeung Tonle Sap) and they are all somewhat different. The Tonle Sap Lake is the largest feature of the map of Cambodia, and is an important natural resource in terms of fishing and wetlands.

In the rainy season, the Mekong River backs up into the lake, and it swells to more than 5 times its size in the dry season, flooding the surrounding forests and plains. Of course the best time to visit 'floating villages' is during the wet season when the water is high. You can try a 'do-it-yourself' tour, but it can be a hassle, and there are stories of people having problems trying to do it themselves. The four main 'floating' villages are listed below.

Cambodia Landmine Museum



During Cambodia's three-decade-long conflict, approximately six million landmines were planted in the nation, and the Landmine Museum represents an agonizing window into the realism of the country's landmine situation. This museum was founded in 1997 by Aki Ra, with the prime objective to make the country safe through the removal of mines from wherever he could find them. Aki Ra was forced to work as a mine layer by the Khmer Rouge, planting landmines from an age as young as five. Later, as part of the United Nation's endeavor to restore peace in the country during the 1990s, Aki Ra got the opportunity to work as a de-miner. Though the UN left the country in 1994, he continued the mission in his own way, even though it was not according to international demining standards. Initially, Aki Ra turned his own home located on the outskirts of the Siem Reap into a museum displaying decommissioned bombs, landmines and other explosive weapons that he had unearthed since 1995. In 2001, a Canadian photojournalist Richard Fitoussi founded the Cambodia Landmine Museum Relief Fund (CLMMRF) in Canada to promote as well as raise funds for Aki Ra's work. From legal and monetary support to providing an NGO license for the museum's relief facility that serve as a safe residence for disadvantaged children, the CLMMRF became instrumental in realizing most of his goals. He also was able to find a better venue for the museum that was officially opened on April 22, 2007.

Angkor National Museum



Opened in 2007, the museum houses many archeological treasures and cultural relics from the Angkorian and pre-Angkorian periods. The tour of the eight galleries begins with a short orientation presentation. The galleries include 1,000 Buddha Images, Pre-Angkor, Religion and Beliefs, The Great Khmer Kings, Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Story from Stones, and Ancient Costume. Tour guides and audio tour guides in various languages are available here.

Opening Hours: 09:00 - 20:00.

Location : 968 Charles de Gaulle Road.

Tel : +855 (0)63 966 601.

Price Range : Entrance fees are USD\$3.00 for Cambodian and USD\$12.00 for non-Cambodians.

Siem Reap War Museum



Outdoor displays of old, rusted and broken down military hardware taken from the battlefield are featured at this museum. Equipment on display includes old tanks, artillery guns, rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns, small arms, mines and bombs. There is also an old Shenyang J-6 jet fighter, and an XU-814 Mil Mi-8T helicopter. Unfortunately, as with the rest of the things on display, they are in very poor condition. There is an admission fee. **Location:** Off road No. 6, on way to airport.

Cambodia Cultural Village



Cambodia Cultural Village first opened to public in late 2003. Covering a total area of 52 acres, this theme park showcases the traditional Cambodian way of life, and the local customs and practices of the various ethnic groups in the country. It is home to more than 10 villages, showing off the different cultures and characteristics of 19 Cambodian races. The shows include Apsara dances, traditional wedding ceremonies, circus acts and an elephant show.

Opening Hours : 09:00 - 21:00.
Telephone : +855 (0)63 963 836.
Price Range : Entrance fee \$12.00

**USEFUL INFORMATION
ABOUT SIEM REAP****EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES****1. International Dental Clinic**

- Address : #545, National Road 6A
- Telephone : 063-767-618
- Website : www.internationalsos.com

2. khmer-China Hospital

- Address : Sivatha Blvd.
- Telephone : 012-596-686/011-565-737

3. Ly Srey Vyna Clinic

- Address : # 113 National Road No 6 (Airport Road)
- Telephone : (+855-11) 990-988
- Web-site : www.lysreyvynaclinic.com

4. Neak Tep Clinic

- Address : Ta Nuey Road
- Telephone : (+855-17) 928-655/ 063-654-5500
- Web-site : www.neaktepclinic.com

5. Royal Angkor International Hospital

- Address : Road No 6 (Airport Road)
- Telephone : (855-63) 764-091

**USEFUL INFORMATION
ABOUT SIEM REAP****EMERGENCY CONTACT ADDRESSES**

- Police 012-856-385
- Tourist Police 012-402- 424
- Tourist Office 012-402-424/509-00
- Ambulance 119 or 023-724-89
- Fire Department (855-12) 784-464
- US Embassy (855-23) 728-000
- British Embassy (855- 23) 427-124
- Australia Embassy (855- 23) 213-470
- France Embassy (855-23) 430-020
- Chinese Embassy (855-23) 720-920
- Japan (855-23) 217-161
- Canada (855-23) 213-470
- Vietnam (855-23) 726-274
- Thailand (855-23) 726-306
- Singapore (855-23) 221-875
- North Korea (855-23) 217-013
- Laos (855-23) 983-632
- Bruei (855-23) 211-457
- Switzerland (855-23) 219-045
- Germany (855-23) 210-912

Main Source: www.cambodia-tourism.org/trip-planner/emergency-number/

USEFUL LINKS

- www.tourismcambodia.com
- Everything to help you organize your stay in Cambodia
- www.lonelyplanet.com
- Online info, plus a popular printed travel guide about Cambodia
- www.expats-advisory.com/cambodia
- Articles about current events, and forums for culture and art events, activities, or social gatherings in Phnom Penh
- www.travelfish.org
- User-driven forum that provides reviews about hotels, hostels, and tours around Asia

We look forward to seeing you at ACO!