

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR TRIPS TO CAMBODIA



## AIRLINES (DOMESTIC)

Cambodia Angkor Air is the only airline currently operating domestic flights in Cambodia. This airline uses French- Italian ATR turboprop planes (Avions de Transports Régionaux), a type of plane well suited for the local conditions, airports and distances. The configuration is 70-seats (ATR 72) in rows of 4 seats with a middle aisle. Entry-exit is at the back of the plane. Standard one-class configuration. Cambodia Angkor Air is majority-owned by Vietnam Airlines and also operates some international flights.

## AIRLINES (INTERNATIONAL)

The following airlines currently fly into Cambodia: Thai Airways, Bangkok Airways, Air Asia, Asiana Airlines, Cambodia Angkor Air, China Airlines, China Eastern Yunan Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Dragon Air, EVA Air, Jetstar Asia, Korean Air, Lao Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Shanghai Airlines, Silk Air and Vietnam Airlines.

## AIRPORT TAX

An international airport tax of USD25 per person is payable in cash in when departing Cambodia on an international flight. Departure tax is included in the ticket price on domestic flights.

## CLOTHING

Comfortable lightweight clothing in natural fabrics such as cotton is most suitable for traveling in Cambodia. The dress code is fairly casual as in most parts of the tropics but it is advisable to cover arms and legs in the evenings against biting insects. A lightweight raincoat and umbrella are a good idea in the rainy season and the umbrella can also offer useful shade from the sun.

Shoes (and socks!) must be removed before entering any religious building or private home. It is therefore useful to wear shoes without too many laces and which can easily be taken off. We provide small towels to clean your feet before putting back on your shoes.

## ELECTRICITY

Cambodia uses 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adaptor. Power outages are quite common but most hotels have their own generator.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Western style entertainment is slowly emerging in Cambodia but Phnom Penh and Siem Reap have a wealth of good restaurants and quite a few bars and nightclubs. In the rest of the country, entertainment is mainly confined to the hotels and mainly tourist-orientated restaurants.

## FOOD

As in many Asian countries, the staple food of the Cambodian diet is rice. This is usually served with dried, salted fish, chicken, beef or pork. Fish is often fresh from Tonle Sap Lake and is eaten with a spicy peanut sauce called *tuk Trey*. Popular dishes include *sam chruk*, a roll of sticky rice stuffed with soya bean and chopped pork, and *amok*, a soup of boneless fish with coconut and spices.

## HEALTH

No vaccinations are required except for yellow fever if you are coming from an area where the disease is present. However visitors should be inoculated against typhoid, cholera, hepatitis A & B, tetanus and polio. Malaria and Dengue Fever are present in Cambodia and it is advisable to take precautions especially if traveling off the beaten track. Please consult with your usual doctor or a doctor specialized in tropical countries before traveling.

## HOURS OF BUSINESS

Offices are usually open from Monday to Friday from 07:30 or 08:00 until 17:00 and often close for lunch between 12:00 and 14:00. Shops open early and close any time between 18:00 and 22:00. Most shops are open 7 days a week.

## INSURANCE

Medical facilities are rather limited in Cambodia and it is essential to take out a good medical insurance policy before traveling. Such an insurance should absolutely cover the cost of an evacuation flight out of Cambodia (most of the time to Bangkok or Singapore) which is sometimes necessary either on a regular flight or on a special flight. For adventure tours such as cycling, proof of purchase of a travel insurance policy will be required. In Siem Reap, the Royal Angkor International Hospital (affiliated with the Bangkok Hospital Medical Center) is the best choice, as is the International SOS Clinic in Phnom Penh.

## INTERNET

Internet access is available in every major city in Cambodia. In Phnom Penh and Siem Reap there are many Internet cafes from which to stay in contact with your home. In outlying regions, many hotels provide Internet access.

## LANGUAGE

Cambodia's national language is called Khmer and unlike the other languages of the region is not a tonal language. The written script originated in southern India. As in other former French colonies the educated older generation often speaks very good French while the younger generation prefers English. Outside the major centers of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap most people speak only Khmer but it is no problem to find somebody who is trained in basic English.

## MONEY

The currency of Cambodia is called 'riel'. There is however no need to change your currency into riel as US dollars are the preferred currency and accepted everywhere. Please note that ripped, torn, or old bills will not be accepted. ATM machines, which distribute US dollars, are nowadays found in the main cities across the country and, of course, in abundance in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. Banks are open Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 15:00 and Saturday morning until 12:00. In the major cities there are exchange bureaus and most hotels will change US dollars although for other currencies it is usually necessary to visit a bank. Traveler's checks can be exchanged at banks and some hotels but can be difficult to change outside of the major cities. Visa Card and MasterCard are now accepted in many hotels, restaurants and shops in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. However, US dollars cash are still the most reliable form of money to carry. If you are traveling in a local tuk tuk, make sure to have the right amount of cash and change with you as the drivers are unlikely to carry lots of cash with them.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Normal print films are available in Cambodia but professional quality films (like slide films) are very difficult to find and it is better to bring your own. In cities like Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, digital photos can easily be downloaded and loaded onto a CD-ROM in case you run out of memory.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2010

January	1	New Year's Day
January	7	Victory over Genocide Day
February	14-16	Chinese New Year
March	8	International Women's Day
April	14-16	Khmer New Year
May	1	Labour Day
May	3	Royal Ploughing Ceremony

# EXOTISSIMO

TRAVEL Cambodia

Vietnam • Thailand • Laos • Myanmar • Indonesia

May	13-15	King Sihanouk's Birthday
June	18	Queen's Birthday
September	24	Constitution Day
October	7-9	Pchum Ben Festival
October	23	Paris Peace Accords
November	1	Former King Sihanouk's Birthday
November	9	Independence Day
November	20-23	Water Festival
December	10	Human Rights Day

## RELIGION

Buddhism is the dominant religion in Cambodia with 90-95% of the population being Buddhist. Islam is practiced by a small percentage of the population, mainly the Cham people residing near the Vietnam border, and Christianity and Hinduism are the religions of less than 1% of the Cambodian people.

## SAFETY

Despite its turbulent history, Cambodia is a safe country to visit. All tourist areas have been cleared of landmines and UXOs with a comparatively small portion remaining in the more remote areas. As a global rule, never leave your belongings unattended and always maintain eye contact and a firm grip on cameras and shoulder bags.

## SHOPPING

Cambodian handicrafts include silks, woodcarvings, rattan weavings, handmade papers and the *krama*, the traditional Cambodian scarf. Phnom Penh and Siem Reap's local markets are the best places for shopping and there are also dozens of charity-run shops throughout the country where you can shop for a cause. Ask your guide for more information.

## TELEPHONE

If you have worldwide coverage, you can bring your own mobile phone and use it to make domestic or international calls. Check with your mobile phone provider for the costs before using it abroad - it may be expensive.

Internet cafes offer the best deals with programs such as Skype providing cheap, decent quality overseas calls.

## TIME

Cambodia is GMT + 7 and does not operate a daylight-saving system.

## TIPPING

Tipping for good service is not expected but is always appreciated in a country where the average annual income is incredibly low compared to Western standards. It is customary to tip tour guides and drivers at the end of a tour. Hotel and station porters should also be tipped. Do not let a guide talk you into tipping more than you plan to. It is totally up to you who you tip, when and how much.

## TRAVELERS CHECKS

Banks such as ANZ Bank and ACLEDA will change your Travelers Checks for US Dollars but a commission applies (2% to 5%). Very few shops, hotels or restaurants accept Travelers Checks.

NOTE: Travelers Checks can be difficult to change outside of major cities.

## VISAS

Most visitors to Cambodia require a visa to enter the country and all travelers must have a passport valid for 6 months after their planned exit from Cambodia.

Most nationalities can get a visa on arrival at the international airports (Siem Reap and Phnom Penh) without prior registration. These Visa on Arrivals are valid for 30 days, single entry and cost USD20-25 and require one passport sized photo.

Electronic Visas are now available through the Ministry's website with a processing time of 3 days. A scanned copy of the passport and USD25 paid by credit card will issue an emailed visa which the traveler must print and bring with them. Most border crossings accept e-visas, however it is recommended to double check with the government or Exotissimo.

Visas are available at the Thailand/Cambodian checkpoints however scams are rampant and it is recommended to arrange visas in advance in your home country or through the e-visa program. Please be aware that there are currently no Lao visas on arrival available at the Cambodian/Lao border (while Cambodian visas are), so it is necessary to make arrangements in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap before you head up there.

## WEATHER

Cambodia has two distinctive seasons: Rainy from June to October and dry from November to May. Traveling during the rainy season has its benefits as the temple moats in Siem Reap are full, making for great photos. The rains are usually in the afternoon and last 2-3 hours. The dry season can be very dusty, but easier for walking through the jungle terrain around the temples. The temperature is fairly steady 30-35 Celsius during the day time, although November to January often has cooler temperatures.

## WATER

It is not advisable to drink tap water but bottled mineral water is safe and available everywhere. All hotels provide a complimentary bottle of local mineral water per person in the room. Ice cubes in drinks is generally OK in good standard hotels and restaurants but it is best to avoid it on street stalls or in country areas. Some minor stomach problems are always possible when travelling in exotic countries. Bring a supply of your usual anti-diarrhoea medicine.