

ASIA · HISTORY · SACRED SITES · CULTURE · ARCHITECTURE · FOOD



Cambodia

Sunrise behind Angkor Wat's towers is one of Southeast Asia's defining travel moments, yet Cambodia also offers the stilted fishing villages of the Tonle Sap, the sobering history of Phnom Penh and lazy riverside days in Kampot. Costs are low, and US dollars circulate alongside the riel.

**The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all but essential travel to parts of Cambodia.**

Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice.
FCDO advice last updated 19 March 2026.

 CAPITAL Phnom Penh	 CURRENCY Cambodian riel (KHR) £1 ≈ KHR 5,404	 LANGUAGE Khmer	 BEST TIME Nov–Feb
 DAILY BUDGET £25–£140 £ Budget-friendly	 PLUGS Type A, C, G 230V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 15h via Bangkok, Singapore or Doha ~£600–£1,050 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+7 standard time

Cambodia's story is written in stone at Angkor, the capital of a Khmer empire that dominated mainland Southeast Asia from the 9th to the 15th centuries; its temples near Siem Reap justify three days on their own. Most first trips run between Siem Reap and Phnom Penh, a 45-minute flight or five to six hours by road, with Battambang's colonial streets and countryside a natural detour. The south adds Kampot's pepper farms and river, the crab market at Kep and the islands off Sihanoukville. Visits to Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek in the capital explain the Khmer Rouge years, which still shape the country.

Comfortable travel costs little: a good guesthouse room, tuk-tuk rides and street food are cheap, though Angkor passes and boutique hotels in Siem Reap add up. Crowds concentrate at Angkor Wat for sunrise and at Ta Prohm mid-morning, so a driver who reverses the usual circuit pays off. Heat is the main challenge, with temperatures regularly above 35°C from March to May. The country suits first-time visitors to Asia as well as seasoned travellers, and many are struck by how young the population is, how warm the welcome feels, and how quickly parched brown fields turn green when the rains arrive.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

HISTORY

Angkor Wat and the Angkor temples

The world's largest religious monument, built in the 12th century, anchors a park of dozens of temples. Pair sunrise at Angkor Wat with Bayon's carved faces and the tree-strangled ruins of Ta Prohm; a three-day pass allows a sensible pace.
- 2

CULTURE

Tonle Sap floating villages

Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake swells several times over in the wet season. Boat trips from Siem Reap visit Kampong Phluk's stilt houses and flooded forest; go from about August to December, when water levels are high.

3

HISTORY

Tuol Sleng and the Killing Fields

A former school turned Khmer Rouge prison, Tuol Sleng documents the regime's victims in harrowing photographs. At Choeung Ek, south of the city, an audio tour leads around the mass graves and memorial stupa. Allow a sober half-day for both.

4

FOOD

Kampot and Kep

Kampot's riverside, French-era shophouses and pepper plantations make a slow, cheap base; Kampot pepper has protected geographical status. Drive up Bokor Mountain to the old French hill station, then eat fresh crab with green pepper at Kep's market.

5

BEACH

Koh Rong

Cambodia's second-largest island has white-sand beaches, clear water and glowing bioluminescent plankton at night. Fast boats run from Sihanoukville; stay on Long Set or Sok San beach for quiet, or Koh Touch for bars.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Phnom Penh

≈ 2.3 million people

The capital's riverfront, Royal Palace and Central Market reward two or three days, alongside the Tuol Sleng museum and the Choeung Ek killing fields on the city's southern edge.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Siem Reap

≈ 250,000 people

Angkor's base town has grown from a sleepy village into a hub of guesthouses, cooking schools and Pub Street bars, and it's flat enough to cycle out to the temples.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Battambang

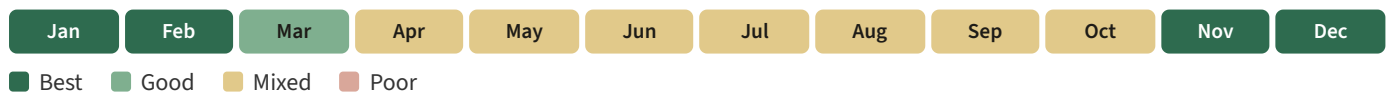
≈ 120,000 people

A relaxed riverside town of French-era shophouses, with Phnom Banan's hilltop temple, the bat exodus at Phnom Sampeau and village pagodas easily reached by tuk-tuk.

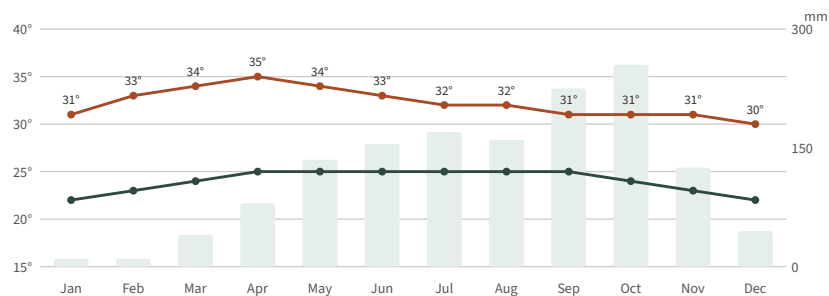
Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Cambodia

Best time: **Nov–Feb.**

**Average climate in Phnom Penh**

— High °C
 — Low °C
 ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Apr	Khmer New Year (Choul Chnam Thmey) Three days of family gatherings, temple visits and water-and-powder fights in mid-April; Siem Reap stages celebrations around Angkor, but many businesses close and Phnom Penh empties.
Sep–Oct	Pchum Ben During this 15-day festival of the dead, families take rice and offerings to pagodas before dawn for ancestral spirits; the final three days are a national holiday.
Nov	Water Festival (Bon Om Touk) Hundreds of long, painted dragon boats race on the river in front of Phnom Penh's Royal Palace over three days around the November full moon, with fireworks and illuminated floats.

How much does Cambodia cost?

SHOESTRING £25 per person / day ≈ KHR 135,089 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £60 per person / day ≈ KHR 324,215 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £140 per person / day ≈ KHR 756,501 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
--	--	---

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Fish amok

Freshwater fish steamed in banana-leaf cups with coconut milk, kroeung spice paste and noni leaves until it sets into a fragrant, soufflé-like curry.

Lok lak

Cubes of stir-fried beef in a savoury sauce, served on lettuce and tomato with a lime, salt and black-pepper dipping sauce — often topped with a fried egg.

Num banh chok

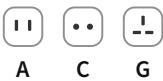
A classic Khmer breakfast of fresh rice noodles under a green fish curry, piled with raw banana flower, cucumber and herbs, sold by street vendors early each morning.

Getting around

Comfortable buses run by Giant Ibis and other firms link Phnom Penh with Siem Reap, Battambang, Kampot and Sihanoukville; book online or through guesthouses. Domestic flights connect Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Royal Railway's slow but scenic trains run from Phnom Penh to Kampot and Sihanoukville on a limited timetable. In towns, tuk-tuks are everywhere, and the Grab and PassApp apps give fixed upfront fares; fast boats serve the islands.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



230V — UK plugs fit

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police: **117**

Fire: **118**

Ambulance: **119**

To report a crime: in Phnom Penh, go to the Tourist Police at Street **598, 12107** (Tel **+855 (0)12 942 484**)

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

DIALLING CODE

+855

TIME ZONE

UTC+7 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Not traditionally expected, but appreciated: leave a dollar or two for good restaurant service, and tip guides and drivers at the end of a day.

ETIQUETTE

Cover shoulders and knees at temples, including Angkor, and remove shoes before entering pagoda shrine halls. Greet with a sampeah (palms pressed together), never touch anyone's head, and women should not touch monks.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Techo International Airport (KTI), Phnom Penh; Siem Reap–Angkor International Airport (SAI), Siem Reap

Visas & entry for Cambodia

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

You must have a visa to enter Cambodia as a visitor.

Tourist visas are valid for 30 days from the date of entry into Cambodia. Make sure your passport is stamped on arrival and keep the departure form. If you lose your departure form, you'll need to contact immigration officials before you leave the country to make alternative arrangements.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Japanese encephalitis

Measles

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

Low risk of malaria

- There is a low risk of malaria in Cambodia: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.
- There is a very low risk of malaria in the temple complexes of Angkor Wat and around Lake Tonle Sap, including Siem Reap: awareness of risk and bite avoidance recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Cambodia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Thu 29 Oct 2026	HM King Norodom Sihamoni's Coronation Day
Mon 9 Nov 2026	National Independence Day
Mon 23 Nov 2026	Water Festival
Tue 24 Nov 2026	Water Festival
Wed 25 Nov 2026	Water Festival
Tue 29 Dec 2026	Peace Day in Cambodia
Fri 1 Jan 2027	International New Year Day
Thu 7 Jan 2027	Day of Victory over the Genocidal Regime
Mon 8 Mar 2027	International Women's Rights Day
Wed 14 Apr 2027	Khmer New Year's Day
Thu 15 Apr 2027	Khmer New Year's Day
Fri 16 Apr 2027	Khmer New Year's Day
Sat 1 May 2027	International Labour Day
Fri 14 May 2027	HM King Norodom Sihamoni's Birthday
Thu 20 May 2027	Visaka Bochea Day
Mon 24 May 2027	Royal Ploughing Ceremony
Fri 18 Jun 2027	HM Queen Norodom Monineath Sihanouk the Queen-Mother's Birthday
Fri 24 Sep 2027	Constitution Day
Wed 29 Sep 2027	Pchum Ben Day
Thu 30 Sep 2027	Pchum Ben Day
Fri 1 Oct 2027	Pchum Ben Day
Fri 15 Oct 2027	HM King Norodom Sihanouk Mourning Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Khmer

ENGLISH	KHMER	SAY IT
Hello	ជំរាបសួរ	<i>chum-reap SOO-er</i>
Thank you	អរគុណ	<i>aw-KOON</i>
Please	សូម	<i>sohm</i>
Excuse me	សុំទោស	<i>sohm TOH</i>
How much is this?	នេះថ្លៃប៉ុន្មាន?	<i>nih tlai pon-MAHN?</i>

Know before you go

US dollars are used for most prices above a dollar, with riel given as change; bring clean, untorn notes, as damaged dollars are often refused.

Buy Angkor passes only from the official Angkor Enterprise ticket office or website, then start early to beat the heat, rest at lunchtime and return for the late-afternoon light.

Stick to marked paths around remote temples and in the north-west countryside, where landmine clearance is still under way, and check the FCDO travel advice before heading near the Thai border.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.