

## Mini Guide Cambodia

**The real Cambodian adventure begins with Eco-trails!  
(but before it does please double-check this mini guide)**

Svakum Pee Kampuchjea! Welcome to Cambodia!

Travel, health, money, visa, weather, luggage, Khmer language, all your essential info you need to know before travelling to Cambodia.

### Travel Insurance

It is strongly recommended to take a health and travel insurance when travelling abroad. At Eco-Trails Asia we recommend to all our travellers to take a full travel insurance (not just a supermarket one, but a professional comprehensive insurance policy that covers personal accidents, medical expenses, evacuation, repatriation, baggage loss and cancellation or curtailment of holiday. You should like to **add your international air tickets into the policy** as well as other parts of your holiday (not just your Eco-Trails trip). Please read the 'small print' to avoid unpleasant surprises.

If you already are an annual insurance policy holder always double-check that all the activities that you are planning to do are included. For example cycling, trekking, diving, off-road biking...The little extra amount spent on insurance may well be the best investment ever when the unwanted and unexpected happens. Let alone the fact that it adds to yours and ours peace of mind.

**Many insurance companies require you to take the insurance at the same time as you make the booking** or within a short time span. So if you intend to take the insurance policy, you should do so without delay. Best at the time of booking.

### Malaria

The risk of malaria applies only to certain areas and times of the year. We have a really good experience with the following website for a regularly updated **Malaria risk areas** (please choose Cambodia for the map to appear on your screen):

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>

Malaria is a disease caused by parasites which is transmitted by the bite by an infective Anopheles mosquito. Its symptoms include high fever, chills, and influenza-like symptoms. South-east Asia is one of the parts of the world where malaria occurs. However, the risk of acquiring malaria differs substantially from country to country and even from region to region. Malaria transmission is, naturally, connected with the presence of mosquitoes which is highest around freshwater and swamps in

particular. It is therefore necessary to take into consideration your itinerary, the season, and also your particular condition.

There is no vaccination against malaria. The only way to protect yourself when travelling to the regions with malaria occurrence is prevention. It may consist of chemoprophylaxis and mosquito avoidance measures. Please consult your travel medicine specialist regarding the chemoprophylaxis. Mosquito avoidance measures include wearing appropriate clothing to **cover exposed skin**, sleeping in a mosquito net, and **using insect repellent** with higher percentages (50% or more) of active ingredient (DEET) or a eucalyptus oil.

### Vaccination

Vaccination is certainly one of the matters that should be dealt with long before your departure. Vaccination can help you to avoid many unpleasant conditions while travelling while giving you more peace of mind. On the other hand it is not a good idea to have too many new vaccinations at once, especially if they are not targeted for your destination and activities. You may wish to speak with your **travel medicine specialist** before your holiday, especially when travelling to more remote and exotic parts of the world. In this article we outline a few useful tips.

Vaccination against yellow fever is required only if you are arriving from the several countries listed (those with occurrence of yellow fever). You may check the list of those countries on the web page of CDC (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention) to see if you may be required to get the yellow fever vaccine: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

Among other vaccinations, **tetanus, typhoid, and hepatitis A vaccines are recommended**. Some travellers also consider vaccination against hepatitis B, cholera, Japanese encephalitis and the rabies. The above information may not be complete and we do not guarantee its regular update. This article cannot replace consultation with your healthcare provider. If you are interested in vaccination you may wish to **speak to your travel medicine specialist at least 6-8 weeks before your holiday**.

### Luggage

Even though we always recommend you to travel with a small or **medium sized luggage** that is easy to carry, we know how hard it is to **pack lightly**. Here are some tips for you how to manage travel without any problems with your luggage and how to avoid coming with a massive backpack that is full of things that you won't need.

First of all, please check with your airline the luggage limits both in terms of its weight and dimensions, as different airlines may have **different limits for checked and cabin luggage**. Especially the Asian low cost carriers used for hopping around the area (whether domestic or to the neighbouring countries) usually offer flight tickets



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without any luggage included. Dealing with extra and/or overweight luggage at the airport is costly and can often incur higher price than the airfare itself. Please don't forget to clearly mark your checked in luggage with your name, address of the next hotel and with your phone number.

At certain places there may not be porters to carry your luggage. You may be required to carry your possessions over some distance, upstairs and back, etc. Think of this possibility at the time of packing and think of a **comfortable backpack** that supports your lower back. What to pack depends on which trip you choose. If you go for an active one with a lot of cycling and trekking, you may want to take sporty, breathable t-shirts. A rain proof jacket is always a good choice. We advise 'to tread lightly'. The climate is warm, it is easy to **have your laundry done at most places for a small fee** and you may find some tempting items to purchase to add to your wardrobe. So pack lightly!

If you do a lot of shopping it is a good idea to forward it to your home address or to the last hotel before leaving so you don't have to drag it with you and save the energy for trekking or cycling :).

To help you more with your packing below we included a Season/Weather guide for you:

### **Seasons and Weather in Cambodia**

The weather is another item to take into account while planning your trip. As one of our Cambodian friends said, there are three seasons in Cambodia - hot, hotter and the hottest ;-). It is close, but we differ between two main seasons in Cambodia:

**The dry season (around October to late May) and the wet season (starting from June or so to mid October).** With each season there are variations in temperature, with the final few dry months leading up to the wet season (March and May) and the early months of the wet season (June and July) usually being the hottest of the year with temperatures in excess of 35+°C at times.

Humidity in Cambodia is at its height during March and May whilst the coolest months of the year tend to be between October and December. However, this is cool for Cambodia but far from chilly (**average temperatures 24°C - 26°C**). **The dry season lasts from October to May**, when the dry Northeast monsoon arrives, and is characterized by hot wind blowing across the entire country. The period from November to January is quite cool (high 20°C's) at night and early morning and it is the best time for the temples visit in the morning and heading back to the hotel for lunch and to relax by the pool and starting exploring the sites again in the late afternoon.

From January to May, Kep and Sihanoukville on the South coast are popular during this season as they bask in the brilliant sunshine and sea conditions are very favourable for sea side activities, scuba diving, snorkelling etc.

During the wet season the South-west monsoon blows to the North-east across the country and lasts from June to October, bringing with it rainfall. Across Cambodia, throughout much of the rainy season, daytime temperatures average between 25°C and 27°C. The early months of the **wet season** (May – July) remain very hot with infrequent rainfall usually in the form of short downpours. In the latter months (late July – September) the rains tends to become more constant and is heavy at times, especially in coastal and rural regions. Many roads become impassable. Even though the best dry season is from October – May, we still think travelling in June and July is enjoyable too. Some travellers welcome the short rain downpours as a refreshing break between the direct sun light and extensive heat.

### **Sun Protection**

To make the most of your holiday, do not forget to protect your skin from the sun. The extent to which you need to protect yourself from the sun depends on the destination, season, and planned activities. Your skin type plays an important role as well. The simplest way of protection is to cover up with clothing, including a hat and UV-blocking sunglasses. Also try to avoid direct sunlight between 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

However, we know that this is not always possible or appropriate. In that case chose a good sunscreen with **SPF30+**. If you spend your day on the beach, or if you are planning for activities that result in heavy sweating, you should chose a water-resistant product. Even those types of sunscreens do not last the whole day and should be reapplied every two or three hours. Keep in mind that you can get sunburn even through water and when the sky is clouded. Snorkelling can be particularly treacherous.

Please do not forget to **drink plenty of fluids**, water being the best option!

### **Money matters**

In Cambodia it may surprise you that all restaurants, hotels, shops and even the local markets display the prices in US Dollars. The ATMs offer cash withdrawal in USD or in the local currency (Cambodian Riel - KHR). Except for the very remote areas you will get around with American dollars with no need to change your currency to Riels.

### **Banks**

There are banks in all provincial capitals in the country, including Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Kampot and Battambang.

Banks offer the usual banking services - international currency exchange, cash advances on credits cards (most accept Visa card), telegraphic transfers, cash travellers checks and ANZ Royal Banks, Canadian and SBC Banks offer ATMs with international access.



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Most banks are open from 8:00 to 15:00 or 16:00PM, Monday through Friday. Some are open Saturday mornings until 11:30. ATMs are available 24 hours.

### **Money transfers**

'Immediate' money transfers can be done via Western Union or MoneyGram. Standard telegraphic transfers are offered by most banks.

### **Cambodian Currency**

US dollars are as commonly used as the Cambodian Riel and even Thai Baht is acceptable in many places. It is a good idea to bring along cash in USD. Beware, these must be in mint condition as Cambodians are really strict about the notes being torn or damaged in any way. Most hotels and many restaurants and shops set their prices in dollars. Small transactions are usually done in Riel.

Tip: Always carry some small Riel for motorcycle taxis, snacks, beggars and other small purchases.

### **Visa**

Please note that it is your responsibility to obtain a valid visa before joining an Eco-trails trip. Most travellers can get Cambodian visa on arrival at most ports of entry. You need to bring 2 passport photos and pay in USD. Please double check this information before you travel, as all depends on your country of origin and we do not keep an up-to-date information on visa services. E-visa service is also available so that you can get your visa beforehand.

You can apply for a Cambodian e-visa on the following website:

<https://www.evisa.gov.kh/>

### **Passports**

Please check that your passport is valid for a minimum period of 6 months after your planned departure from Cambodia.

### **Learn Khmer**

The Cambodian language is Khmer, which originates from Indic languages Pali and Sanskrit from India. Also, the Khmer language is influenced by spoken and written

Thai. Some technical terms are borrowed from French. Nowadays, English is widely spoken in hotels and business compounds (compared for example with Thailand). Learning a few words in Khmer is not all that difficult and may get you better bargains and even more friendly smiles!

Here are some useful Khmer words and phrases, written phonetically, that you may find useful. Khmer may sound confusing. But with a little patience and practice, you can get it right.

There are 33 consonants and 26 vowels. "Ai" is pronounced as in Thai; "ay" as in pay; "dt" takes the t sound while "bp" takes the p sound. "Oo" is pronounced as in cook and "ao" as in Laos.

English	Khmer
Hello	jum-reap soo-a
How are you?	tau neak sok sapbaiy teh?
Good morning	arun sour sdei
Good night	tiveah sour sdei
Afternoon	reah-trey sour sdei
My name is.....	k'nyom tchmouh...
Yes	baat
No	dteh
Please	suom mehta
Thank You	or-koon
Excuse me	sohm dtoh
Goodbye	joom-reap leah
I don't understand	k'nyom men yoo-ul tee
I want a...	k'nyom jang baan...
Water	teuk
Tea	tai
Rice (cooked)	bai
Rice (uncooked)	angkoh
Meat	saich
Fish	t'ray
Chicken	moan
Bread	num pung
Restaurant	haang bai



**Eco-Trails Asia Emergency Contact details**

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Have a fantastic time!

Your Eco-Trails team