



GROUP TRAVEL 2008 PRE DEPARTURE INFORMATION GUIDE TO CAMBODIA

Thank you for choosing Jetabout Asia Vacations for your journey into Cambodia.

Cambodia's tragic past has until recently made this intriguing destination off limits to foreigners. Now, safe to visit, Cambodia reveals itself as one of Southeast Asia's most captivating countries, rich in culture and history, and home to the most remarkable temple complexes in all Asia. To assist with your travel arrangements we have prepared the following pre-departure information. Please read this carefully before you travel to Cambodia and be mindful of some of our suggestions while on the road.

WHAT TO EXPECT

For many, the name Cambodia (or Kampuchea as it was formerly known) conjures images of war, famine, Pol Pot, the notorious 'Killing Fields' and political instability. True, these events have all been a part of this nation's history and a number of the places you will visit (particularly around Phnom Penh) are reminders of Cambodia's tragic recent past. However, Cambodia has much more to offer the visitor.

Northwest of the capital near the town of Siem Reap visitors will see one of mankind's greatest architectural achievements. The magnificent temples of Angkor - of which Angkor Wat is the most famous - are permanent reminders of the incredible skill and dedication of the Khmer civilization as it existed from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. Forgotten and buried under dense jungle for hundreds of years, restoration of this 'lost city' only began in 1908. Angkor Wat is truly one of the great achievements of human civilization.

Visiting Cambodia's provinces rewards the visitor with a glimpse of Asia that very few westerners see; deserted beaches, shimmering rice paddies, abandoned hill stations, beautiful French-colonial architecture and rugged mountains all await the visitor with more time to spend in the Kingdom of the Khmers.

The travel industry is developing at a rapid pace in Cambodia, however it should be remembered that facilities and services do not always reach western standards. Traveling throughout more remote areas may involve bumpy road travel and the use of clean but basic accommodation.

RESPONSIBILITY

Information herein was correct at the time of preparation; however the rapid development of tourism in Cambodia has the potential to make some of the information in this guide irrelevant. This information is intended as a guide only and Jetabout Asia Vacations is not responsible for any inaccuracies. This document does not, in any way, alter the booking terms and conditions in our Jetabout Asia Vacations brochure. Please contact us with your comments if you find during the course of your travels that the information in this guide is incorrect or out of date.

VISA REQUIREMENTS & DEPARTURE TAXES

Getting your Cambodian visa is a simple and efficient process. Tourist visas for most nationalities can be obtained on arrival at Phnom Penh or Siem Reap airports for \$20USD cash. A visa form will be issued to you on the airplane or on arrival. You will also need one passport photo to accompany your visa application.

By visiting www.mfaic.gov.kh and by paying \$25USD by credit card, a 30-day tourist visa can be issued electronically within three business days (note that this visa is only valid for arrival at Phnom Penh and Siem Reap international airports).

A current list of Cambodian border crossings is listed below. Please note that visa cannot be obtained on arrival from all these border crossings

- Phnom Penh International Airport
- Siem Reap International Airport
- Cham Yeam (Koh Kong province), bordering Thailand
- Chorm (Oddar Meanchey province), bordering Thailand
- Daung (Battambang province), bordering Thailand
- Poi Pet (Banteay Meanchey province), bordering Thailand
- Prom (Pailin province), bordering Thailand
- Smach (Oddar Meanchey province), bordering Thailand
- Bavet (Svay Rieng province), bordering Vietnam
- Kaoam Samnor (Kandal province, on the Mekong River), bordering Vietnam
- Phnom Den (Takeo province), bordering Vietna,
- Trapaing Sre (Kratie province), bordering Laos
- Dong Kralo (Stung Treng province), bordering Laos

Travelers on the 'Mekong and Temples' and 'Inside Vietnam and Cambodia' Small Group Journeys can get their Cambodian visa on arrival at the Kaoam Samnor border post on the Mekong river on the day of the boat crossing from Chau Doc (Vietnam) to Phnom Penh. This is a straight-forward process and costs \$23USD.

Travelers on the 'Ancient Kingdoms Explorer' (which crosses into from Laos into Cambodia further up the Mekong at Voeng Kham) should obtain their visa in advance before departing their home country.

It is your responsibility to ensure all visa and entry requirements are met prior to arrival in Cambodia. Please allow \$25USD per person for international departure taxes, and \$6USD per person for domestic departure taxes. Departure taxes must be paid in cash.

ARRIVAL INSTRUCTIONS

The ground operator taking you through Cambodia is **Travel Indochina**.

If you have arranged an arrival transfer you will find a representative from Travel Indochina waiting to meet you outside the airport (at the Siem Reap airport your driver may be as far as 50 meters away from the terminal exit). Please look carefully for a Travel Indochina sign with your name on it (not a hotel sign). If you cannot find a sign with your name please call our local office contact number (on your detailed itinerary) and our duty officer will advise you what to do.

INSURANCE

You must be comprehensively insured as a condition of traveling with Jetabout Asia Vacations. Insurance should include unlimited coverage for personal accident and medical expenses, full provision for evacuation and a minimum of \$25,000USD cover for repatriation expenses, baggage loss, and cancellation or curtailment of your vacation.

We will ask you to confirm your insurance details as part of our travel registration process at the start of your journey. If you do not have appropriate insurance we will insist you obtain insurance. We reserve the right not to provide the services booked with us until insurance is purchased.

Note that travel insurance may be 'attached' to your credit card, although usually such cover is effective only if your travel arrangements have been purchased with the card. Insurance cover from credit cards often does not include payment of medical expenses or emergency repatriation. Please check your policy carefully.

Please note that government regulations in Asia do not always require or enforce the possession of hotel, transport supplier and other supplier public liability insurance. Even when this insurance is in place, it can be for very limited cover only. Travel Indochina does its best to work with suppliers who possess public liability insurance; however this is not always possible. Regardless of length of stay and type of service, you must have adequate insurance to cover you in the event you suffer a medical problem while traveling.

MONEY

The official unit of currency in Cambodia is the riel, however United States dollar cash is accepted everywhere and can easily be used instead of riel. As you will accumulate riel as change from payments you make in \$USD, we recommend you change either nothing or very little (eg. \$10USD) into riel upon your arrival in Cambodia. We advise you to carry a mix of \$USD cash and travelers checks.

Please be aware that costs in Cambodia are significantly higher than in neighboring Asian countries. The cost of meals, transport, and shopping often takes tourists by surprise. Credit cards (Visa and Mastercard) can be used in only a limited number of shops and restaurants in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. A number of ANZ Royal and Canadia bank ATMs are installed in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Battambang and Sihanoukville allowing you to withdraw money (in \$USD) from your overseas account. Cash advances can also be obtained using Visa and Mastercards at exchange booths and banks in both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. We suggest you allow approximately \$7USD per person for a main course meal at a nice restaurant.

Current approximate exchange rates are:

- Riel 4,000 equals 1USD
- Riel 2,500 equals 1CAD

CLIMATE

There are two main seasons in Cambodia. From November to March temperatures are slightly cooler with little rain. From May to October is the rainy season where average temperatures in the day range from 75 to 95 degrees Celsius. During this period it rains for short periods of time in the morning or afternoon. At this time temple moats are full, the scenery is greener and there are fewer people at the temples. Rain rarely affects travel and many people prefer to visit at this time of the year.

BAGGAGE & CLOTHING

Standard sized bags (preferably soft bags), backpacks or soft cases only are permitted on our journeys. Your baggage should be clearly labeled and kept to a reasonable minimum. Luggage limits on airlines are strictly enforced and space on vehicles and trains is limited. Any flights booked through Travel Indochina (domestic and international) have a luggage limit of 20 kilograms per person. You may be required to carry your own luggage at times where porters are not available - you should be capable of carrying your own bags on and off trains, and up and down stairs. If you are doing lots of shopping during your travels, it may be necessary for you to forward any excess to the city where your tour concludes, or ship purchases directly home. Keeping the amount of luggage you carry in check will ensure your safety and comfort, and the safety and comfort of your fellow travelers. Porterage is not included in the cost of your journey. Please ensure you pay porters around \$1USD per person for carrying your luggage. Should you wish to avoid such payments, please carry and take responsibility for your luggage. For some of the longer more adventurous journeys passengers may like to bring an overnight bag when staying in towns and villages for only one evening. The bulk of your luggage may be left on your bus or boat.

Comfortable casual clothes made of cotton are best in tropical and semi tropical climates - packing one set of smart casual clothes is advisable. Laundry services are available throughout the country, although hotel laundry costs can be expensive. We suggest you include:

- Flat walking shoes and sandals
- Hat & sunglasses
- Jumper/coat
- Bathers
- Money belt
- Raincoat or umbrella
- Basic first aid kit (see below)
- Insect repellent
- Alarm clock
- Small torch
- Swiss Army pocketknife
- Power adapter
- Women's sanitary products

Please note that airlines insist all sharp items (knives, scissors, nail clippers etc.) are packed in your 'check-in' luggage. Alcohol is no longer permitted onboard domestic flights and must also be stored in your check-in luggage.

ELECTRICITY

The electrical standard in Cambodia is 220 volts at 50Hz. Electrical plugs of the two-rounded pin type are the most commonly required. You will need to purchase a power adaptor suitable for this region prior to your departure. You may want to bring a small hair dryer - not all hotels provide one.

HEALTH

Travelers to Indochina should take precautions as they would elsewhere in Asia. In remote areas medical facilities can be particularly basic. Some of the diseases known to exist in Indochina include malaria, hepatitis A & B, typhoid, tuberculosis, Japanese encephalitis, dengue fever, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, rabies and HIV/AIDS. We recommend you take adequate preventative measures to minimize your risk of exposure to these health risks. We are a travel company and we are not qualified to provide detailed medical information appropriate to your individual needs; it is recommended you consult with your local doctor or a specialist travel medical centre for current health information on vaccinations and medicine for your trip at least one month prior to departure.

We suggest you bring:

- Aspirin or paracetamol
- Antihistamine
- Cold & flu tablets
- Diarrhea medication
- Nausea medication
- Rehydration sachets
- Insect repellent
- Antiseptic & bandages
- Sunscreen & lip balm
- Antibiotics (discuss with your doctor)

As part of our registration process at the start of any trip with Travel Indochina, you will be asked to declare any serious pre-existing medical conditions or allergies.

FOOD/ WATER

Cambodian cuisine is closely related to the cuisines of neighboring Thailand and Vietnam. Until the 16th century Cambodian and central Thai food was quite similar, however the Portuguese introduction of chillie (from Brazil) to Ayuthaya (then Thailand's capital) led to a divergence in national staples; the Thais developed a preference for spicier, chillie-based foods, while the Cambodians continued to use a spice paste (called 'kroeung'), comprising of milder flavorings such as lemongrass, galangal, ginger and cardamom.

Common ingredients include vegetable, freshwater fish, pork, chicken and sometimes beef. No traditional Cambodian meal is complete without a soup dish. Some distinctly Cambodian dishes include 'samlor ma chou kroeung' and 'samlor kor ko' soups, the 'chas kroeung' stir-fry and fish 'amok'. The pungent 'prahok' fish stock is usually included in these dishes. Rice, of course, is eaten with most meals. In cities such as Phnom Penh there are large numbers of ethnic Chinese who have brought their own influences to the Cambodian diet.

Breakfast is included each day on our tours and is usually a buffet/ continental style mix. It is recommended you drink only bottled water, throughout Cambodia.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Touristed areas in Cambodia are safe by world standards, but the usual commonsense safety precautions should be adhered to. Tourists should stick to set travel arrangements and avoid unknown areas. It is not safe to walk the streets of Phnom Penh at night as street lighting is poor and robbery is not uncommon. We recommend you keep jewellery to a minimum, and leave items of value in your hotel's safety deposit box. Always keep a photocopy of your passport, airline tickets and credit card numbers, and a detailed record of your encashed traveler's checks.

POST & COMMUNICATION

International mail generally takes seven to ten days to reach its destination. Prices are equivalent to western postal charges. Reverse charge (collect) calls are not possible from Cambodia. International phone and fax fees on fixed lines are expensive (especially in hotels) and vary between \$4USD and \$6USD per minute. In both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap there are numerous internet cafes providing email services and internet phone call services. Using these internet phone services is the cheapest way of calling overseas (or locally).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Print film such as Kodak, Konika or Fuji is widely available and costs approximately \$4USD per roll. Cambodia has good and fast processing facilities. A roll of 24 exposures can be developed for approximately \$4USD. Slide film and Hi8/V8 video cassettes are not widely available in Cambodia. The x-ray machines at all airports are film-safe. There are now a number of photo shops in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap which can burn digital images on to a disk and which sell memory cards.

HOTELS

The hotels we use have private western style bathrooms, hot water, air-conditioning, satellite television, IDD telephones, laundry, and other facilities. Generally they have swimming pools. Where possible we endeavor at passenger request to accommodate couples in double rooms. Please note however that on occasions during your journey, this may not be possible and a twin room will be provided.

Check in and check out times can vary but most hotels in Vietnam require guests to check out by 12 noon and do not allow check in until 2pm. Many hotels may allow an earlier check in or later check out subject to availability on the day.

MASSAGE SERVICES

Many countries in Asia are deservedly renowned for their massage techniques and the quality and value for money of these services. Unfortunately, many massage parlors including some in otherwise 'reputable' hotels are also linked to the paid sex industry. We advise you to check carefully before using massage services in Asia.

TRANSPORT

When traveling by road our ground operator generally uses late model air-conditioned minibuses. The best vehicles available are always used. Larger vehicles are used for bigger group sizes. Modern sedan cars are used when there are only one or two people in the group. Planes used on domestic routes are generally modern and well maintained. Sometimes schedules change and this can result in alterations to your flight times and tour arrangements. There is only a limited railway network in Cambodia and use of the train is not recommended for safety reasons.

TOUR LEADERS/ GUIDES

Providing the group tour reaches a minimum of seven passengers a western tour leader will guide your entire journey through Cambodia. All our tour leaders have an in-depth knowledge of Cambodia and an enthusiasm for the country that is contagious. Your tour leader is your link with Cambodia and is there to ensure the smooth running of the trip. Your tour leader will also try - wherever practicable - to cater for your individual interests. Local English speaking guides also accompany you on your tour. They impart local information about history, customs and culture that can only come from living in the area. Generally we have a different local guide for each city or region we visit and so local guides are usually only with the group for one to two days.

LOCAL TIME

Cambodia is:

- 12hrs ahead of Canada Eastern Time
- 15hrs ahead of Canada Pacific Time
- 12hrs ahead of US Eastern Time
- 15 hrs ahead of US Pacific Time

GROUP DYNAMICS

Our small group journeys provide you with a good balance of group activity and personal discovery. Travelers need to be aware of certain personal responsibilities when traveling with a group. Simple things like being ready at agreed times and keeping to schedule will ensure the smooth running of the program. Furthermore, the traditions and culture of the country you are visiting should be respected. Correct behavior includes wearing the appropriate dress when visiting religious sites and refraining from making comments or acting in a manner that would be viewed as unacceptable by your fellow group members or by the local people in the country you are visiting. Please ask your tour leader for further clarification of the issues mentioned above.

LANGUAGE

The official Cambodian language is Khmer and most westerners will have a very difficult time trying to understand written or spoken Khmer. French is sometimes understood by the older generation but English is becoming more widely spoken throughout the country, especially in tourist areas.

IMPORTANT DATES AFFECTING TOURING, AND COMPULSORY MEALS

1 Jan. - International New Year's Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

7 Jan - Victory Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

21 Feb - Makha Buchea Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

08 Mar - International Women's Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

14 -16 Apr - Khmer New Year

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed. The Royal Palace in Phnom Penh will be closed for periods of time.

1 May - International Labor Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

13 -15 May - King's Birthday

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed. The Royal Palace in Phnom Penh will be closed for periods of time.

19 May - Visakha Buchea Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

23 May - Royal Ploughing Ceremony

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

18 Jun - Queen Norodom Monireath Sihanouk's Birthday

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

24 Sep - Constitution Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

29 Sep - 01 Oct - Pchum Ben Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed. The Royal Palace in Phnom Penh will be closed for periods of time.

29 Oct - King Coronation Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed. The Royal Palace in Phnom Penh will be closed.

31 Oct - King Sihanouk's Birthday (retired king)

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

10 Nov - Independence Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

11 - 13 Nov - Water Festival Ceremony

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed. The Royal Palace in Phnom Penh will be closed in the afternoon. There will be very large crowds on the riverfront in both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap and some road closures.

10 Dec - Human Rights Day

Public holiday. Banks, public offices and some business will be closed.

GROUND OPERATOR CONTACT DETAILS

The ground operator taking you through this fascinating part of the world is **Travel Indochina**. Travel Indochina has been running tours to Asia since 1993, and offers unique, innovative and exciting itineraries that allow you to experience the best a destination has to offer as well as giving you plenty of free time to explore.

TRAVEL INDOCHINA (PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA)

43-44 Street 108, Sangkat Wat Phnom

Khan Daun Penh

Phnom Penh

Tel: +855 23 991 978

Fax: +855 23 991 979

24 hour emergency from inside Cambodia: 012 222 595 (Phnom Penh)

24 hour emergency from inside Cambodia: 012 222 377 (Siem Reap)

TRAVEL INDOCHINA (SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA)

Shop 9A Sivatha Boulevard

Mondol II Village

Svay Domkom Commune

Siem Reap

Tel: (855) 63 760 792

Fax: (855) 63 760 793

24 hour emergency from inside Cambodia: 012 222 595 (Phnom Penh)

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