



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Cambodia – To the Temples and Beyond

14 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace - Busy

Tour Highlights

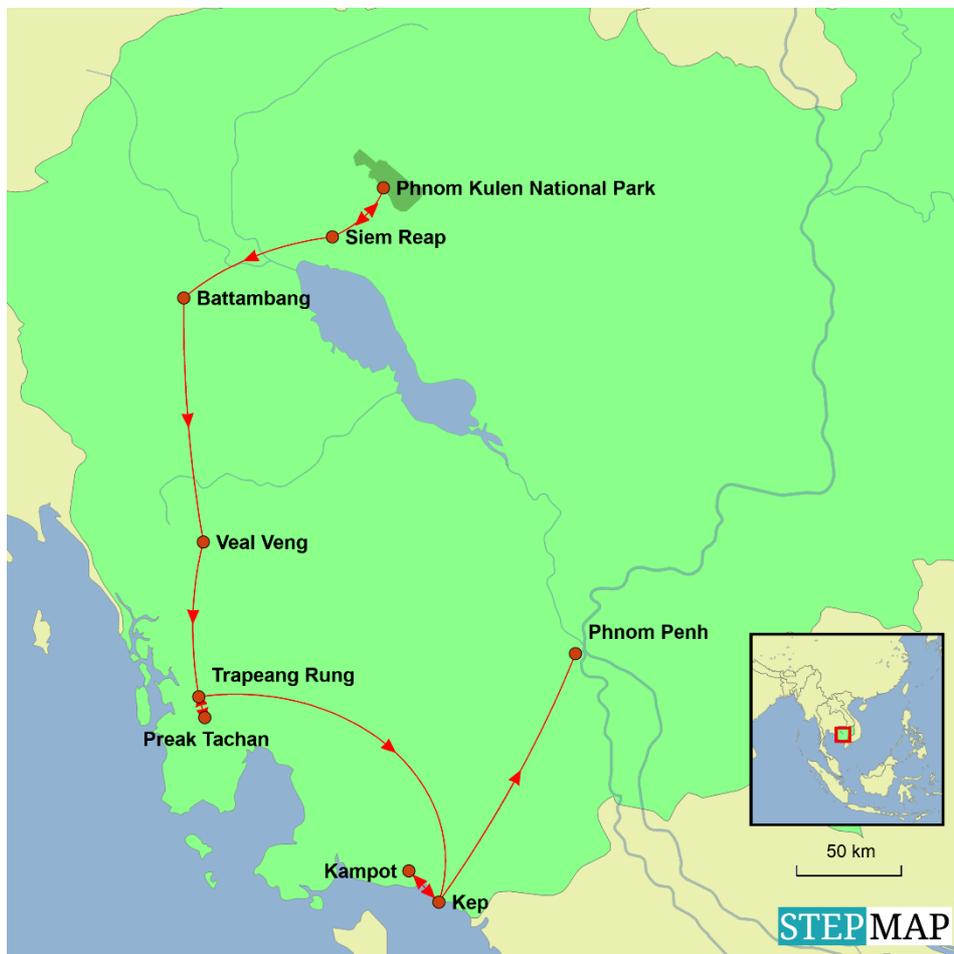
- ✓ Explore the magnificent temples of Angkor Wat
- ✓ Visit the UNESCO site of Phnom Kulen National Park
- ✓ Spend an evening at the famous Cambodian circus
- ✓ Spend time with the local people, staying in a local homestay
- ✓ Travel through the Cardamom Mountains, staying in a tented camp
- ✓ Discover Phnom Penh and the infamous Killing Fields





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Tour Map - Cambodia - To the Temples and Beyond Tour



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of comfortable hotels, a tented camp and a local homestay with shared facilities
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Siem Reap
End Point: Phnom Penh
Transport: Minivan, boat, bicycle, tuk tuk
Countries: Cambodia



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Cambodia - To the Temples and Beyond

On this 14-day tour discover what Cambodia has to offer beyond its spectacular temples. We start the journey in Siem Reap with a visit to the magnificent Angkor Wat and its overwhelming collection of temples. Scattered throughout a huge area of forest, they comprise one of the world's greatest man-made wonders. Travel to Battambang and explore the rural side of Cambodia before taking an exciting journey through the Cardamom mountains, where we spend two nights in the Cambodian jungle. Explore local villages and relax in the coastal province of Kep before ending the tour in Phnom Penh, where we learn about the country's dark history, as well as experiencing the lighter side of the city; it's bustling nightlife.

Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. On this tour for group size of 3 or more you will be accompanied by an English-speaking tour leader throughout, assisted where necessary by local English-speaking guides. If the group size is 1 or 2 then there will be no accompanying tour leader but you will still have the services of different local guides in each place.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Siem Reap Arrival

Welcome to Cambodia! Upon arrival in Siem Reap you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Depending on your time of arrival, there may be time to explore the city. Overnight at Kafu Resort or similar. No meals.

Day 2 – Siem Reap

After breakfast the day starts by visiting a Buddhist pagoda to witness a water blessing ceremony. The ceremony promises to deter malign spirits and bring good fortune in coming years. Sadok, a traditional gift of sugar, milk, tea and other items, is a made to the presiding monk. Thoroughly cleansed, we visit the spectacular jungle temple of Ta Phrom and the main temples of Angkor Wat. In the afternoon we explore Angkor by bicycle, riding past the King's Siem Reap residence, through the Royal Gardens, and along the Siem Reap River past private homes and small riverside markets. Crossing the river, we wind our way down red clay roads and small dirt trails, through a series of villages, and small farms, passing school children on their way home. We pedal our way towards the west edge of the Angkor Park. After a brief stop, we bypass the frequent crush of visitors exiting the park and instead follow single track lanes, past brilliant green rice paddies and family small holdings where life appears to have endured unchanged for generations. As the temples close to visitors, we follow park trails to view the historic site in twilight and then at sunset. Finally, we park our bicycles and take a peaceful Dragon Boat ride on the moat of Angkor Thom, with local delicacies and champagne served on-board, later returning to the hotel by car. Overnight at Kafu Resort or similar. (BL)

Please note: *When visiting temples or other religious sites in Cambodia, visitors are advised to follow a dress code consisting of long trousers or skirt which covers the knees as well as covered shoulders. Skirts, short shorts, tank tops and revealing clothing are deemed culturally insensitive and not allowed.*





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Please note: *The cycle ride is flat and covers approximately 20km in total. If you do not wish to cycle, a remok (tuk tuk) can be arranged. However, this may make following smaller trails more difficult. Please advise us at the time of booking.*

Angkor Wat

Prepare for divine inspiration! The temples of Angkor, capital of Cambodia's ancient Khmer empire, are a perfect fusion of creative ambition and spiritual devotion. The Cambodian god-kings of old each strove to top their ancestors in size, scale and symmetry, culminating in the world's largest religious building, Angkor Wat, and one of its weirdest, the Bayon. The hundreds of temples surviving today are the sacred skeleton of the vast political, religious and social centre of an empire that stretched from Burma to Vietnam and which, at its zenith, boasted a population of one million. The temples of Angkor are the heart and soul of the Kingdom of Cambodia, a source of inspiration and national pride to all Khmers as they struggle to rebuild their lives after years of terror and trauma. Today, they are a point of pilgrimage for all Cambodians, and no traveller to the region will want to miss their extravagant beauty.

Day 3 - Phnom Kulen National Park

After breakfast we leave Siem Reap, heading through the countryside to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Phnom Kulen. Here we visit Preah Ang Thom, which houses a large Buddha statue, as well as the Terrace of Sdach Kum Ling, a ruined brick-built temple covered by lava for hundreds of years. The site includes two waterfalls, and it's possible to take a refreshing swim before enjoying a local Khmer lunch. After lunch we take a scenic drive to Banteay Srei, loosely translated as 'Citadel of Women', which houses some of the finest and best-preserved examples of classical Khmer bas-relief. Later, we continue to the Cambodia Land Mine Museum. Part museum, but also part orphanage, school and clinic for mine victims. The work is overseen by Aki Ra, who as a child was forced by the Khmer Rouge to lay thousands of mines has devoted his life to clearing them. He has so far removed over 50,000. We end today back in Angkor, with sunset at Pre Rup Temple. Later, there's a chance to see a Cambodian circus. You will be picked up from your hotel at 7:30 pm by remok (tuk tuk) and taken to the Phare circus tent, located just outside of town. The show starts at 8:00 PM and lasts about an hour. Overnight at Kafu Resort or similar. (BL)

Phnom Kulen

Phnom Kulen (or Kulen Mountain) translates as "Mountain of Lychees". It is located in Svay Leu District roughly 48km north of Siem Reap. Phnom Kulen is an isolated chain of small mountain plateau of moderate height lying south of the Dângrêk Mountains and appears as a long silhouette on the horizon. Geologically Phnom Kulen is formed of sandstone and it was important as a quarry in Angkorian times. Kulen is now a protected area and as of 1992 has acquired World Heritage status from UNESCO. The Samré tribe was formerly living at the edge of Phnom Kulen, quarrying sandstone and transporting it to the royal sites at Angkor and beyond. The area is also easily defended as the infamous Khmer Rouge used the location as a final stronghold as their regime came to an end in 1979. Recently archaeologists have located some 30 temples on Phnom Kulen using helicopter-mounted lasers to measure variations in ground height through dense vegetation. Phnom Kulen is widely regarded as the birthplace of the ancient Khmer Empire. During the constructional period of the ancient temples in the ninth century, sand stones were brought from this sacred mountain to Angkor. It was here at Phnom Kulen that King Jayavarman II proclaimed independence from Java in 802 A.D. The site is known for its carvings representing fertility and its waters hold special significance to the people of Cambodia. Just a few inches under the surface of the water, over 1000 carvings of Yoni and Linga are etched into the sandstone riverbed. The waters are regarded as holy, given the sacred carvings which also include a stone representation of the Hindu god Vishnu lying on his serpent Ananta, with his wife Lakshmi at his feet. A lotus flower protrudes from Vishnu's navel bearing the god Brahma.

Cambodian Circus

Phare Ponleu Selpak means "Brightness of the Arts". This is a circus like none other and it's very different to a western style circus. Phare is a Cambodian non-profit art organization founded in 1994 by eight young



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Cambodians returning from refugee camps along the Thai border. The purpose is to improve the development of local communities by providing education and professional artistic training. The circus performers are very talented, passionate and have traveled all of the world giving performances. The shows are constantly rotating depending on the time you visit. All of their shows are fantastic and focus on both traditional and contemporary themes. Some people credit Phare with the rebirth of Cambodian dance and culture.

Day 4 - Siem Reap – Battambang (Approximate journey time: seven-hours)

After breakfast we take to the water at Siem Reap's pier, boarding the boat to Battambang. The route traverses Cambodia's largest lake, Tonlé Sap, and allows time to take in the life of lakeside villages. There is a lunch stop, but you may want to take snacks and water. On arrival in Battambang check-in to hotel accommodation. The rest of the day is free to relax. Overnight at Royal Hotel or similar. (B)

Day 5 - Battambang

Today we drive through the countryside to Ek Phnom, an ancient temple 15km north of the town, seldom visited by tourists. Along the way we pass many small villages and will perhaps have the chance to observe traditional culinary craft skills such as making kralan (bamboo sticky rice), fish paste, rice paper and banana paper. Afterwards we return to town and visit the campus of Phare Ponleu Selpak non-profit arts school. We stroll through the campus and see circus students learning new tricks, music students practicing beneath shady trees, and watch films produced by trainee animators. Later, after lunch at a local restaurant, the mood changes as we visit Phnom Sampeou's notorious 'Killing Caves'. Victims of the Khmer Rouge regime were executed here, their bodies thrown in the chasm. A glass memorial records these events, while the bones of just some of those murdered have been collected to stand as a reminder of the crime. The hill's summit offers commanding views over the Cambodian countryside and if you choose to stay until sunset, countless bats emerge from the caves to feed on the evening air. It's possible to watch the spectacle from a comfortable chair while enjoying a cold drink courtesy of some enterprising local entrepreneurs. After sunset, we'll head back to the hotel. Overnight at Royal Hotel or similar. (BL)

Day 6 - Battambang – Veal Veng, Pursat Province (Approximate driving time: four-hours)

Today we drive to the rural community of Osoam in Pursat province. Upon arrival we meet a community host and walk (or take a mototaxi) to visit the ethnic minority villages of Por and Chong. Here, as well as learning about the lifestyles of villagers, there's a possibility to see rare mountain crocodiles. Overnight at the local homestay (shared facilities). (BD)

Please note: *This trip doesn't have conventional lunch and dinner times. Food options are limited, so it is advisable to take some snacks. Those with binoculars should bring them.*

Osoam

Osoam is a rural community with 4 villages, made up of 327 families, located in the heart of the Cardamom Mountains. Osoam Cardamom Community Centre focuses on building a sustainable community through education programs (English and computers), vocational training, ecotourism and agriculture programs.

Your local host at Osoam was born and raised in the local village community. While he or she was trained in hospitality and tour guiding, their English may not be of the same standard as in Siem Reap or Phnom Penh. They are able to communicate and are wonderful people who are very experienced with the community, living in the local area and trekking trail as well.

Day 7 - Veal Veng – Trapeang Rung, Koh Kong (Approximate driving time: five-and-a-half-hours)

After breakfast, say goodbye to the community and drive to Koh Kong province. There's time to relax at the lodge's lounge in Trapeang Rung before embarking on the one-hour journey over the Preak Tachan River. On arrival, check-in at the camp's comfortable safari-style tented accommodation. In the afternoon there's a guided hike through the wildlife-rich jungle surrounding the camp. Overnight Cardamom Tented Camp. (BD)



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Day 8 - Preak Tachan

After early breakfast, join Wildlife Alliance Rangers as they embark on a patrol through the dense forest following a network of abandoned poaching and logging trails. Look out for wildlife along the way. The half-day hike stops at the Ranger Station where confiscated snares, traps and improvised hunting rifles are displayed. After a local Khmer lunch and a refreshing swim in the river, kayak along Prek Tachan back towards camp. Dinner and overnight at Cardamom Tented Camp. (BLD)

Please note: *For those not confident in paddling their own kayak a motorboat option available.*

Day 9 - Cardamom Departure – Kep (Approximate driving time: four-hours)

This morning early risers are invited to take a self-guided hike on the trails surrounding the camp. At around 10:00am we head back to Trapeang Rung and continue on to Kep. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel accommodation where the rest of the day is free to relax. Overnight at Raingsey Bungalow or similar. (B)

Day 10 – Kep – Kampot - Kep

Today we explore Kampot by bicycle. The journey takes you through rice paddies, durian and rambutan orchards, all against the backdrop of the mysterious Elephant Mountains. There's time to stop at villages and meet and speak with local people. Your guide will help translate and if you've learnt a few words in Khmer people will always be delighted to hear you try them out! Our destination is a stretch of rapids on the Kampot River. Here we stop and enjoy a picnic lunch. After a swim in the cool waters we're picked up and taken back to the hotel. Overnight at Raingsey Bungalow or similar. (BL)

Please note: *If you'd prefer not to cycle, the route can be done by car. A small supplement will apply. Please let us know at the time of booking.*

Day 11 - Kep

Today is free to relax or explore independently. Overnight at Raingsey Bungalow or similar. (B)

Day 12 - Kep – Phnom Penh (Approximate driving time: four-hours)

Today we travel to Phnom Penh, on arrival checking-in to hotel accommodation and relaxing for the rest of the afternoon. In the evening there's a guided opportunity to experience local street food in the busy riverside area. The guide will explain more about the culture and history of street food, and explain how it's prepared. Taste different specialties such as kralan (bamboo sticky rice), turmeric cake and other local snacks. There's a short stop at a market to where fresh fish, snails, frogs, crabs, pork, chicken, duck are all for sale. Later, call in at Koh Pich, a favourite spot where young people meet up. Here things get interesting... Try fermented fish paste or even deep-fried tarantulas, crickets, bugs or snakes. Choose to return to your hotel or continue the culinary adventure late into the night on your own. Overnight at Anise Villa Boutique Hotel or similar. (B)

Phnom Penh

The name of this city cannot help but conjure up an image of the exotic. The glimmering spires of the Royal Palace, the fluttering saffron of the monks' robes and the luscious location on the banks of the mighty Mekong – this is the Asia many dreamed of when first imagining their adventures overseas. Cambodia's capital can be an assault on the senses. Motorbikes whiz through laneways without a thought for pedestrians; markets exude pungent scents; and all the while the sounds of life, of commerce, of survival, reverberate through the streets. But this is all part of the attraction. Once the 'Pearl of Asia', Phnom Penh's shine was tarnished by the impact of war and revolution. But the city has since risen from the ashes to take its place among the hip capitals of the region, with an alluring cafe culture, bustling bars and a world-class food scene.



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Day 13 - Phnom Penh

After breakfast, presuming you're still hungry, we embark on a guided city tour. First stop is the 14th century stupa and small pagoda of Wat Phnom. This is the tallest religious structure in the city and the oldest building in Phnom Penh. We continue to the Royal Palace, built in 1866 under King Norodom. Adjacent to the palace is the Silver Pagoda, named after its floor of 5,000 silver tiles. We call in at the National Museum, notable for its collection of Angkorian artefacts. Lunch is taken at Friends Restaurant which provides underprivileged street children an opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the hospitality business. All profits are reinvested into the restaurant's training programme. In the afternoon we explore bleaker aspects of Cambodia's past, visiting Choeng Ek and its infamous Killing Fields, and the brutal Tuol Sleng prison where thousands perished in the country's darkest days. Overnight at Anise Villa Boutique Hotel or similar. (B)

Please note: *When visiting the Royal Palace, long trousers, over-knee skirts and covered shoulders are required. Those wearing short skirts, small shorts, tank tops and other items of revealing clothing will be denied entry.*

Phnom Penh

The name of this city cannot help but conjure up an image of the exotic. The glimmering spires of the Royal Palace, the fluttering saffron of the monks' robes and the luscious location on the banks of the mighty Mekong – this is the Asia many dreamed of when first imagining their adventures overseas. Cambodia's capital can be an assault on the senses. Motorbikes whiz through laneways without a thought for pedestrians; markets exude pungent scents; and all the while the sounds of life, of commerce, of survival, reverberate through the streets. But this is all part of the attraction. Once the 'Pearl of Asia', Phnom Penh's shine was tarnished by the impact of war and revolution. But the city has since risen from the ashes to take its place among the hip capitals of the region, with an alluring cafe culture, bustling bars and a world-class food scene.

Day 14 - Phnom Penh Departure

Transfer to the airport for your departure flight. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers

All accommodation

Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader (please note local 'station guides' will be used for each location when the group size is 1-2 travellers. The same guide/tour leader will be used throughout when the group is 3 or more travellers)

Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)

Transport, including travel by minivan and river

Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights

Any airport taxes

Tips

Travel Insurance

Visas

Drinks





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Important Information

Foreign Government Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to any of the areas we visit in Cambodia. It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation. Rooms on this tour usually come with private bathrooms. When necessary air-conditioning will be provided. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar. Some smaller guesthouses and the tented camp will not have these facilities.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £6

Dinner £10-£12

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Water £0.60

Beer £1.30





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Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practice in Asia. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. As a rough guide, drivers can be tipped between \$2-4 per day and guides between \$7-15 per day – these figures are per group, not per person.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: There is a reasonable network of ATMs across the region in larger towns and cities which accept internationally issued cards.

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Larger hotels take Visa or Mastercard

Local Currency: Cambodia Riel (KHR)

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US Dollar

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Most nationals including UK, EU and US visitors require a visa for entry to Cambodia. This can be obtained in advance from a Cambodian embassy or currently on arrival at Siem Reap airport. The visa will be valid for 30 days and cost 30 USD. One passport sized photograph will be required, but we suggest you travel with a couple of spare photos just in case this requirement changes. An electronic e-visa applied for in advance is now also a possibility. Please visit the link below for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cambodia>

Visa regulations change frequently so please check for the most up to date information from your relevant embassy.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.



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We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages for each country visited, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Asia, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations.

For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication will also be required and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The climate in Cambodia can, roughly said, be divided into two different seasons: the monsoon (rainy) season (June to October) and the dry season (November to May). There are four different periods throughout the year:

November – February: Cool and dry
March – May: Hot and dry
June – August: Hot and wet
September – October: Cool and wet

Maximum daily temperatures range from the high 20°C in January to more than 40°C in April. Daily minimum temperatures are usually no less than 15° C except in the mountain areas in north Laos where temperatures can be lower than this.

Most people will want to travel during the dry season, with November to February being the peak tourist period, but we believe there is a lot to be said for travelling off season. If travellers visit between July - September, although there is a chance it will rain (likely only once per day and for a short time), the country will be at its greenest and even in the more touristy places (Angkor Wat, Luang Prabang etc.) there will be far fewer visitors, making it a much more authentic experience.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. The temperature can be cold at night, especially from November to February, so please bring some warm clothing with you. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy.



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Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. Please bring a torch or head torch for this tour as electricity outages can occur.

Footwear

Comfortable and sturdy walking shoes are recommended. When travelling lighter sandals are a good option.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack or soft type bag, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Electrical supply is 220V and plugs generally have two-prong round or flat pins.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated 14 November 2019

