

TRAVEL TIP

CAMBODIA



LANGUAGE

Khmer is the official language. English and French are popular second languages.



PASSPORT AND VISA

A passport with more than 6 months of validity remaining is required. If you plan to apply for a visa on arrival, kindly make sure that the passport has enough blank page(s) for the visa stamp(s).



CURRENCY

The local currency is the Riel. US dollar is widely accepted.



TIME ZONE & WORKING HOUR

Local time is GMT + 7 hours.



ELECTRICITY

Electricity in Cambodia is 220V; most sockets accommodate plugs with two flat pins. The following plugs are used:



TRANSPORTATION

Tuk-tuks (canopied trailer hitched to the back of the motorbike) are easily found and widely used by travelers for sightseeing. Public bus and metered taxi are available in main cities, but not very popular.



ETIQUETTE



Dos

Ask for permission before taking photographs of any Cambodian people or monks

Remove your shoes when entering a place of worship such as a pagoda/ temple when entering someone's home

Dress properly when visiting worship places

A respectful way of greeting another individual is to bow the head slightly with hands pressed together at the chest (known as "Sampeah").

Use both hands or right hand to give or to accept something from Cambodian people

Cover your open mouth when using toothpick, sneezing, coughing, and yawning

Don'ts

Don't use your feet to point at someone

Don't touch a Cambodian person on the head

Don't begin eating if you are a guest at a dinner and the host has yet to take a bite

Women should never touch male monks or hand something directly to them

Keep public displays of affection to a respectful minimum

Don't buy any wild animal products from villagers or support any manner of wild animal abuse



BEFORE TRAVELING

PACKING LIST

Light clothing made from natural fibers is best for the region. Some warm clothing may be needed for the months of December and January, when a light jacket is usually sufficient in the lowlands. Warmer clothing may be needed if traveling to the highlands. Note that most towns have markets where you can buy a warm jacket for a fraction of the price you would pay at home.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

There are no officially required vaccinations. However, travelers are advised to check with their doctor or local travel clinic regarding the advisability of inoculation against typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A & B and malaria. It is highly recommended that all travelers have comprehensive personal travel insurance to cover personal belongings, or unexpected costs in case of an accident or illness.

CUSTOMS AND FORMALITIES

Every passenger has to complete an immigration form and a separate customs declaration form for submission upon arrival. Any amount of foreign currency can be brought into Cambodia, but the amount of local currency (Cambodia Riel) must not exceed 100,000 riel per person.

CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Cambodia has a tropical climate that is warm and humid. In the monsoon season, abundant rain allows for the cultivation of a wide variety of crops, and the year round tropical climate makes Cambodia ideal for the tourism industry.

The climate is tropical and distinguished by three major seasons. The most pleasant for travel is the dry season from November to March, during which temperatures are cooler (average 20-28 C). The hot season lasts from April to May (average 30-35 C). From June to early October is the rainy season, during which temperatures are slightly cooler (average 25-30 C). Even at this time of year it rarely rains in the morning; most precipitation comes in the afternoon and, even then, only sporadically. Rainfall varies considerably from area to area. Whereas the seaward slopes of the south-west highlands (Sihanoukville and Kampot provinces) receive more than 5,000 mm of rain per year, the central lowlands average only about 1,400 mm.



WHILE TRAVELING

SAFETY

Ostentatious displays of money, jewelry, luggage and luxurious dress can encourage the wrong type of attention. When traveling, be aware of where your luggage is at all times - particularly your hand bag, camera, etc. Do not leave them unattended or hanging on the back of chairs in restaurants. Petty theft is also common on crowded trains, buses, and at supermarkets.

Important: You should take good care of all your belongings first; do not always rely on your guides or drivers, as their duty is not to take of your belongings during the trip but to help you get to and well understand your destinations. Lost items are not always found by local policemen, as the reporting procedures are quite complicated and take time. In case of any loss, do not submit claim to your local agent or tour operator as they are not the responsible party in this matter. While they may try to help you as much as possible so that you can submit a claim to your insurance company, local operators are not liable for this type of loss.

CURRENCY, EXCHANGE & ATM

The local currency is the Riel, although the US dollar is widely accepted throughout the country and in all major markets. In recent years, the rate of exchange has been floating at around USD1 = 4,000 Riels. Common Riel currency notes include denominations of 500, 1000, 2000, 5000 and 10,000 Riel.

WORKING HOURS

Local time is GMT + 7 hours. Most business offices are open from 8:00am to 12:00pm and from 1:00pm to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Banks generally operate from 8:00am to 3:00pm.

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS & AIRPORT TAXES

Cambodia has 3 international airports in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville. Airport departure tax for domestic and international flights is included in the airfare issued.

INTERNET

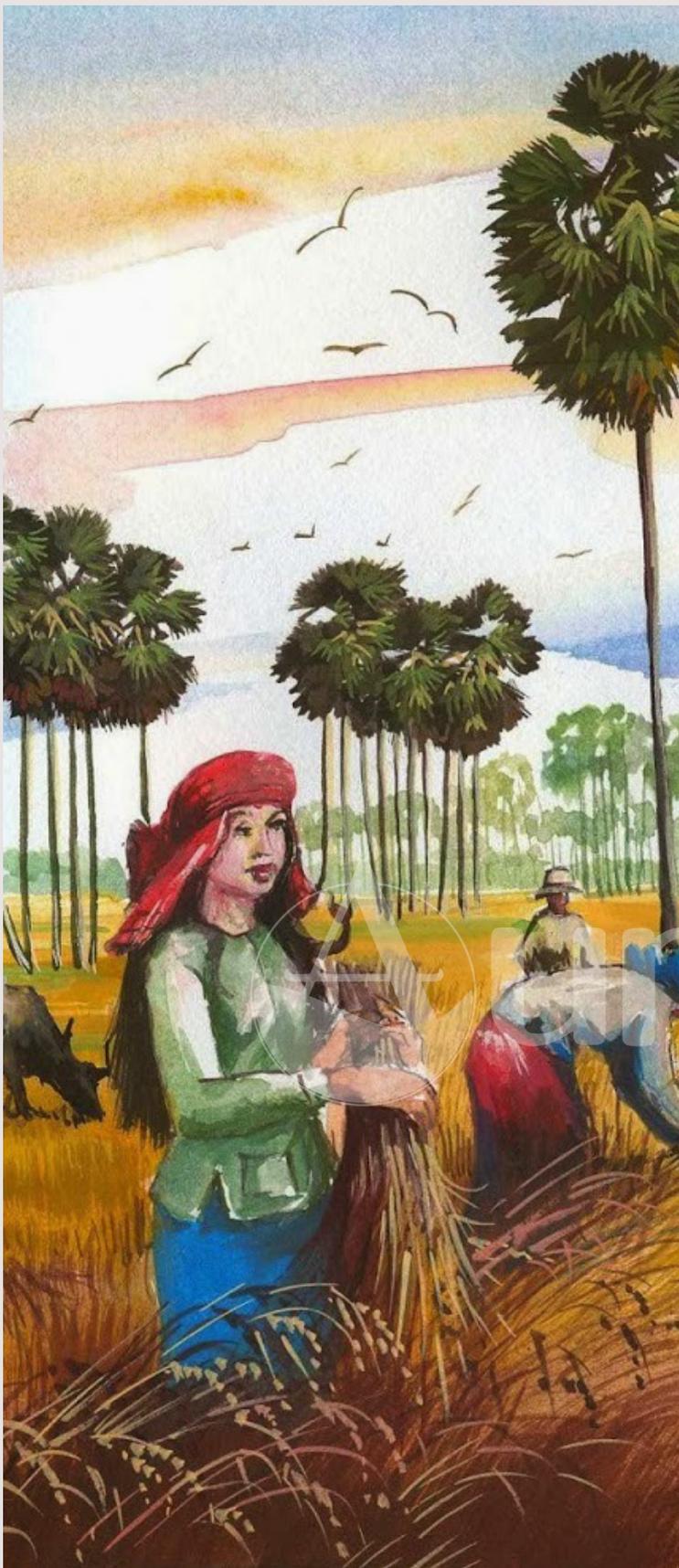
It is easy and cheap to access the Internet and email in Cambodia. There are plenty of internet cafes and many are open until late at night. Currently the typical cost is between 50 cents to 1 USD per hour, and falling.

POST AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

For international telephone access to Cambodia, dial your international access code followed by the Cambodian country code 855, then the domestic number within Cambodia that you wish to reach.

There are also four cellular phone service providers offering convenient communication via the GSM system, therefore many Cambodians now carry mobile phones. International Direct Dialing (IDD) calls and faxing are also available.





FOOD AND DRINKS

Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanoukville are three special places for connoisseurs of Khmer food. Rice and fish, together with an array of herbs, sauces and spices, are the basis of typical Khmer cuisine. Curries and soup with beef, pork, poultry and seafood can be bought from vendors along the streets. Cuisine from all over the world is also found in Cambodia's cities, with restaurants including European, American, Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Korean, Vietnamese and many others, so visitors will have many choices here.

SOUVENIRS

The Krama (a traditional cotton scarf) is one of the most popular, typical Cambodian souvenirs. This multi-purpose garment, similar to a sarong, is used for bathing, cleaning, protection from the sun and many other purposes in Khmer life. It is also one of the national symbols that distinguishes the Khmer people from their neighbors. Both cotton and silk Krama are available throughout local markets and souvenir shops. Ask the seller to demonstrate the proper way to wear the Krama so that you may carry and wear it yourself while sightseeing for a more elegant and traditional look.

TIPPING

Gratuities are a prime motivator for tour guides, as well as a major source of their income and therefore are commonly expected in the travel industry of Southeast Asia in general.

If you are pleased with the services provided by your tour guides and drivers, then a tip for their hard work and being away from home will be very much appreciated. Tips are expected by hotel, boat and restaurant staffs also.

All suggested tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars (do not use coins, personal or traveler's check for tips). Of course, whether you tip, how much you tip, and how you tip is always at your own discretion.

Tour guides and drivers

The following gratuity guideline is introduced solely for the convenience of our travelers.

If you are on private trip:

- US\$04-06/guest/day for local (city) guide

If you are on group trip:

- US\$04-07/guest/day for escorted (through-out) guide
- US\$02-04/guest/day for local (city) guide

Normally, drivers expect to receive half of the guides'

For biking/trekking trip: as guide and driver work harder than on regular cultural tours, you may consider tipping more in addition to the above tipping guidelines.

Hotel & Restaurant staffs

Most hotels and restaurants levy a 5% service charge, but this may not go directly to the staff. A tipping of 5-10% of the total bill is appreciated. If you stay a couple of days in the same hotel, try to tip the hotel cleaner, possibly US\$2-3/day/room. For hotel porters, US\$1-2/time/room is appreciated by those who have escorted you to your room and/or delivered your baggage.

Boat Cruise staffs

If you travel on a local basic boat, a suggested tip is from US\$1-2 per guest.

For an overnight boat trip, the suggestion is US\$20-50 for the entire boat cruise team depending on group size, or US\$3-5 per passenger.