

Cambodia Traveler Tips

Our Personal Observations

Updated June, 2026.

Travelling in Cambodia is quite casual and easy. Much of our initial information relates to Siem Reap, unless otherwise specified. We will add to this list as we experience more. We have lived here for over 3 years and still have lots to see and learn.

** these are our personal experiences, so always double check with the relevant authorities as things may change, or be interpreted differently. We bear no responsibility should things be different**

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1. Visas and Arrival Forms

Don't get confused. There are 2 things you have to do.

One is to get a **Visa** either on arrival, or in advance online as an e-visa (link below)

Secondly you have to do an **arrival form**. These used to be the little paper forms that you fill out when entering almost every country, telling them all your flight details, how long you are staying and the customs declaration. Compulsory after 1 July 2024 you have to do these forms electronically. You fill them out on-line up to 5 days prior to arrival, capture a QR code and this is what you show to the Customs officer on arrival. This has nothing to do with our Visa! You can download the new app onto your phone.

You can fill it out for just yourself, or for your group (ie family) Be ready with all the stuff like flight numbers, passport numbers etc. This app can be found at <https://www.arrival.gov.kh> or in an app store

The official Government Website for all **Visa** information is <https://www.evisa.gov.kh/>

Our experience: We entered on an Ordinary Visa which we got on arrival. We had the choice of a Tourist Visa (30 days), or an Ordinary Visa. If you get a tourist visa, you “may” be able to extend it once, but no more than that, and it is single entry. So, the Ordinary Visa was important for us as we wanted to apply for a different Visa once in the country. The Visa cost us \$30 USD at the gate. Therefore bring US cash with you. You can apply for a visa online (called an e-visa, but only for tourism) at the above site before your trip, but we did on arrival as we couldn’t get the ordinary visa online. Getting the Visa on-line doesn’t appear to save a lot of time in the airport.

Our further Visas: We could have applied for a range of Visas, each with different rules. An employment visa is a bit complicated, the business visa didn’t suit, and a retirement visa was most suitable. This allows us multiple country entry/exits, and because we are over 55, we didn’t really have to provide any evidence of income, etc.

We went to a travel agent (Cam Smile Visa Service in Taphul Road Siem Reap) within a week of arrival, and paid a fee of \$290 each. These were bundled off to Phnom

Penh. In about 5 working days these were returned with a 12 month retirement visa attached to our passports. This has now been done a second time with no fuss and same cost. **** Note you are not allowed to do paid work or run a business on this visa****

2. Money

There is lots to consider here. How long you are staying, what you are going to pay for by credit card, and how you will get your cash. Again, our experience, but seek other advice too. Our situation may be slightly different, as we are here longer term, but more on that later

Currency: Both USD and Riel are accepted in most populated areas. In many of the cities you will find more things quoted in USD than local currency. That being said, there is apparently a push to edge out US Currency, but that won't happen in a hurry. General basic rule of thumb is that \$1USD = 4.000Riel, but some places use the actual conversion of up to 4,100Riel per USD. Until recently, everyone was super fussy about the condition of US currency. It had to be in perfect condition, or it would not be accepted. This is no longer the case. The country's Prime Minister gave a direction to all banks and businesses that they must accept US currency regardless of its condition... within reason.... If you do have any problems with notes not being accepted, go to a bank and get it changed, the banks MUST do so according to the directive.

Changing money, go to the big money changers, not tiny little booths. We used HK (Huy Kiang) in Sivutha Boulevard, always the busiest place. Make sure you get plenty of 1000, 2000 and 5000 Riel notes. Many places don't appear to have small change, plus these are the amounts you might want to use for tips.

Now we rarely use USD as cash, preferring to use local currency. We use USD if paying online or using any of the banking apps.

Autotellers

Recommend you go to the auto tellers out the front of the bank branches. Then if you do have a problem, you can go straight into the bank, as they have cameras focussed on each machine. Apparently there is higher risk using the standalone machines with skimming, etc. Again, when the money comes out count it, and check for imperfections. We withdrew early on in local currency, avoiding the hassle of changing it. However this was always withdrawing from our credit card, so a double whammy. International transaction fee, currency exchange rate into USD favouring the bank, and an auto teller fee. So, the more you withdraw to some degree, the cheaper it is...transaction fee the same if you withdraw \$100 or \$1000. Also if we needed to pay big amounts we just used our credit card, and it was always charged in USD. Once you withdraw local currency, because it is big notes, go straight into the branch and change a fair bit of it into smaller notes. It will be easy to have a very fat wallet with local notes.

Our situation (as a retirement visa holder)

Having a long term visa means you can apply to have a local bank account. We went with one of the most popular banks that has many branches. (ABA Bank) By providing our passports with long term visas, plus a copy of our residential

lease (at least 6 months) we were able to open a local account. We had to deposit \$200, and the card fees were about \$5, but for that we got a banking app for our phone, and 2 cards with credit card attached. The app is fantastic and we can use it in most restaurants,(even the small ones, probably a byproduct of covid non contact requirements). The normal currency being USD but can opt to use Riel if needed. We use also the app to pay our rent, and buy groceries. We have not carried USD for many months, only using local currency for small purchases, ride-apps and restaurants. It earns interest!. No transaction fees, but there are a few cents withheld each month due to non declared tax status.... Oh well!

Transferring money. Every month we transfer from our (one of the big 4) Australian Bank to ABA bank enough for the month. It changes to USD and transfers to ABA. We limit the number international transactions as it costs to transact each time, but cheaper than the credit card withdrawals. We pay \$10 at Australian end, (update, our bank has now removed this charge) and \$10USD at Cambodian end, whatever the amount, plus of course the Australian banks currency offering (below the market rate) The money comes through about 3 business days later.

3. Local Transport

The first thing you will be hit with are taxi touters at the Airport (Siem Reap). Go to the taxi stand or to the shuttle bus stand and pay the standard ticket cost. Prices currently changing so google airport fares SAI to Siem Reap. Recommend a taxi or bus, not a tuk-tuk from the airport for space and comfort. Be prepared for the laminated card and hard luck story by the driver trying to secure them as a guide in the coming days (more of a driver than a guide)

Tuk Tuks. Out on the streets there are the typical tuk-tuk touters that never take “no thank you” as a final answer. Offering rides, or where do you want to go, or Angkor Wat tomorrow? All out to make a living in tough times. If you do take up one of these, ensure you agree on a price and destination before you get in the tuk tuk. Our biggest problem was we didn't know what a reasonable rate was....

Solution.. As soon as you rig up your mobile phone with a local sim card, get a ride share app. We use PassApp. This helps filter out the few that give the whole tuk tuk business a bad reputation. When you use the app you select mode of transport, and type your destination. Just like Uber, a driver will accept, and your price is predetermined. Double check that the vehicle arriving does have the same code number on its front as in the app. You can track them on a map on the app. You will soon learn these prices are way cheaper than what some of the tuk tuk drivers ask for..... however we nearly always tip a couple of thousand Reil more than the list price if the service is spot on. Make sure you have lots of small notes to pay.

Transport: Going to the temples

You can use something like PassApp to go to the temples, but it gets a bit complicated. We found it easier to engage one of the tuk tuk drivers in town, let them know what temples you want to see and how long you want to be out for, and ask for a price. Generally it is about \$10 to \$15USD for half a day. They are then happy to take you to the temples, sit around waiting for you, and then take you to other temples. Generally speaking these drivers are NOT tour guides. Some may give you a bit of information about the destinations, but if needed you might engage a guide at each temple (they are well identified with guide shirts and lanyards) Alternatively you might engage someone who runs temple tours, with a tuk tuk or car or mini bus, and a guide as well.

4. Riding Motorbikes/Scooters

A cheap and fun way to get about town and to the temples can be to ride a motorbike or scooter. (125cc is sufficient for local and temples, even for 2 people) Information about who can or cannot ride a motorbike is confusing, so best advice is to [think twice before doing so](#).

[Why?](#) Driving/riding/walking in Cambodia can be dangerous and unpredictable. In town cars and bikes stop all of a sudden, open doors without looking, indicate left and turn right, don't indicate at all, turn onto your lane against a red traffic light, overtake other traffic on the open road heading directly for you on the wrong side of the road, force you off the road. We have experienced all of these things, and even with full concentration things happen. Oh, and yes they drive on the wrong (right side) of the road compared to our country.

[Travel Insurance](#). Read your policy very carefully. In our case, in the fine print we found the following that relates to us: To ride any motorbike we must have the relevant local licence (in Cambodia unclear if you do or do not need one for a 125 bike, but sure as hell it will be an escape clause for the insurance company if you don't have one). We must have an Australian Motorbike Licence (I have one, Cathy doesn't, so she can only be a passenger). We are not covered for riding any bike above 250cc. Of course not covered should we break the law, be affected by alcohol, etc, etc

Most importantly you **MUST** wear a helmet and have it properly secured. Apart from the obvious need for protection, you will be pulled over and "payment" required. There are regular spots now in Siem Reap where police gather and catch law breakers. Laws which are broken, such as doing a right turn against a no right turn sign can attract a \$25 fine. This is all above board, and they set up fine collecting booths with

relevant signage. Some random police still pull over people in other places and “payments” expected.

Licences: This is confusing. Some say you don’t need a licence to ride a scooter sized at or less than 125cc. Anything over 125cc you definitely need a licence. Apparently you need your country of origin licence (for motorbike), and an international licence for short term tourists (you get that in Australia, for example at RACV in Victoria). The confusion about 125cc relates to tourists being pulled over by police, who ask for a licence, and because you don’t have one, you may need to pay an “on the spot fine”. Note you cannot get a local licence unless you have long term visa and proof of residence (see below)

Our situation: To cover ourselves insurance and legally, we have done everything by the book. Bought a 125cc motorbike, including relevant paperwork. Applied for a Cambodian Motorbike Licence (proof of residency, proof of existing motorbike licence, eye check and fee payment) The process of getting the licence is a bit complicated, so happy to give more information if required. Cost was minimal, but getting through the stages was a little awkward.

We also purchased 3rd party insurance, (not expensive), just to avoid any protracted arguments with locals and the law. You can phone up the insurance hotline and they will talk with the relevant parties.

FYI it is actually written in the laws that both parties to an accident can “negotiate” a settlement on the spot, although recently the Government has stopped the practice where death, injury or serious law breaking is involved.

5. Visiting Temples (Siem Reap)

Tickets

You need a valid pass to visit any of the temples in the Angkor Archaeological Park area. This website has some good information:

<https://www.siemreap.net/guides/angkor/hours-admission/>

There are 3 different passes you can get as a tourist, 1 day, 3 days and 7 days. The 1 day is for only 1 day, the 3 day can be used for 3 days within a 7 day period, and the 7 days can be used for 7 days within a month. If you live in Cambodia with a relevant visa you can purchase a 6 month pass with unlimited entries for \$200USD, and after 2 years you can get an ongoing annual free pass. You can buy your tickets online, (Be careful dodgy websites similar to dodgy visa sites, so recommend the next option) or you can go past the ticket office out towards the temples on the first day. Check the link, because if you buy the ticket the afternoon prior you get extra entry.

Update: our pass: after receiving our second annual visa, we applied online for the special Angkor pass. (Free annual access to all Angkor sites) A bit of a fiddly website, but once we loaded our passport photos, visa photos and mugshots the process was complete. Within about 30 hours we were approved and an electronic pass was provided. This has been uploaded to our mobiles and is used at all temple control places.

Hints for Visiting

If you don't like the crowds, if you want the chance of people free photos, and if you want to avoid the heat, we suggest getting out and arriving at the temples by opening time (usually 730am, Angkor Wat opens at 500am for sunrise). For a while you may have special areas to yourselves before the big tour groups arrive. If you get early to the temples, see 2 or 3

temples in a morning, you can be back in town by lunchtime, have lunch and relax by the pool for the afternoon.

Take plenty of cold water. Find a shady spot to sit down for a rest and cooling drink before moving on. We recommend sitting at/on one of the many large window sills in the temples where you can catch a breeze.

Temples in other countries often require the removal of footwear before entering. You can wear shoes in most of the ancient temples in Cambodia (Except where there is a modern Pagoda inside) We recommend sturdy non-slip footwear if you are doing a bit of temple touring, especially if you want to climb some of the structures

When looking up, make sure you always look down too, every time you stop. There are nasty ginger ants that get on to your body and bite when unexpected. Careful sitting down or leaning on trees. As well as sunscreen something like Bushman's is also a great addition to your backpack/carry bag.

Be prepared for touts at the entrances to some of the bigger temples, trying to sell things from unofficial tour guides, books, postcards, photographs, etc. It is your call, however we strongly recommend DO NOT engage with or give anything (including lollies) to any of the children trying to sell things. It is widely publicised that children are kept out of school by their parents to go and sell things to tourists.

Be wary of people offering to take your photos or trying to get you to go and see something within the temples. Best rule of thumb is to avoid anyone not wearing an official Apsara or guide uniform, and not wearing a lanyard. Otherwise it often ends in a request for a donation or payment.

Outside some of the temples can be found a sheltered hut with traditional musicians waiting for tourists to come along. When

sighted, traditional music begins. We feel that this is a worthwhile place to drop some money into the donation basket. These are musicians wounded by landmines, trying to make a living. Remember, even a donation of 1000 Reil goes a long way

Rules for Visiting

Temples are Holy places. As such it is reasonable to be asked to follow some modest and respectful rules. This site explains them well.

<https://justsiemreap.com/temple-guide/angkor-archaeological-park/code-of-conduct/>

Pretty much everything is covered in the link, just some of our pet peeves:

Modest clothing is important, covering knees (men and women), and shoulders. In some of the temples you will be challenged if your shorts are too short, etc. We have been surprised at what some people try to enter the temples with what they are/are not wearing, and by some females removing their modest coverings in order for a good photo shot.

Don't touch any of the wall carvings. This leads to deterioration. You will see some carving very shiny from many people touching them.

Keep the noise down. Yelling and loud chatter spoils the atmosphere of some of the places

Don't play with or feed the monkeys. The monkeys are known to get more and more daring, stealing tourist items, snatching food, and scaring the children. There have been attempts by the Apsara staff to remove such monkeys from the temple

areas. You need to avoid being bitten by the monkeys at all costs. (Rabies is a risk in this country)

Get the most from your temple visit.

A little bit of information goes a long way. Before you head out to each temple, google the temple name and read up about the temple. It tells you what to look out for, explains many of the carvings, and give you an idea of its purpose, who built it, and its history. (There are some glossy books available from the many touters for a good price, but the information on the internet is a good starting point)

If you have time, before you visit temples, take a couple of hours to visit the Angkor National Museum in Charles DeGaulle Road. \$12 USD entry. There is a separate hall with thousands of Buddhas, but the main areas feature artefacts and information about the temples throughout the history of the Empire. You will see timelines of when the temples were built, the evolution of the changing features of temples throughout the Centuries, and great descriptions about the carvings. You will see carvings of different deities, different clothing featured on the carving through the Centuries, and different styles of building. Well worth a visit if you want to be prepared and get the most out of the temples.

6. Food & Markets

Restaurants

Being a tourist town, Siem Reap has many restaurants, covering a wide range of cuisine. There are a few top-end restaurants but most are at the middle or low end, plus many street food vendors beside the river with their little plastic tables and chairs.

We will add a list of our favourites at a later date.

Pub Street is “the destination” for short stay tourists. The street is blocked off to traffic in the late afternoon, and pedestrians can walk past a number of large open style restaurants, all touting for your business, most offering cheap beer and Happy Hour (for lots longer than an hour). Tuk Tuk drivers gather at the road blocks touting for business for anyone who walks past. As a novelty, we have visited Pub street a couple of times, but we are turned away by the loud doof-doof music coming from some of the restaurants, and by the staff at each restaurant pouncing on you when you are trying to read the menu. Note since Covid, it is believed that many of these restaurants in Pub Street were taken over and are owned by one business called the Temple Group. They also have many hotels in the town, and a supermarket. We like to “spread the love” to other small businesses rather than all to such a large group.

Beyond Pub Street there are many restaurants in the side and back streets. Some of the more popular streets with a range of restaurants include Taphul Road, Sok San Road and Chocolate Road

Supermarkets

There are a number of supermarkets catering to the Western tourists and expats. You will find many western processed foods, fresh meat and vegetables, personal care products, snacks, coffee and importantly alcohol (at least half the price of alcohol in Australia) They accept local currency, USD, credit cards and local banking apps (such as ABA pay ...only people with local bank accounts)

Our main supermarket is [Angkor Supermarket](#), located on National Highway 6. (They also have a new supermarket in Sivutha Boulevard and another large supermarket on the road

opposite the National Museum). This supermarket is huge, with a great variety of almost everything we need to live day to day, and as well as food and toiletries, has stationery, cooking equipment, hardware items, crockery and cutlery, pet supplies, bedding, etc.

We also shop at [Asia Supermarket](#) in Sivutha Boulevard

There is also a warehouse style supermarket on the highway out to Phnom Penh, called [Makro](#). This is a fair way out of town, so we don't recommend it for tourists. However as expats, it is worth a ride out to see the range. Many things (brand names) are in bulk at cheaper prices. They also stock a range of electrical goods including washing machines, fridges, fans, cooking equipment and TV's. After we went to the store and understood their range, we use their online order and delivery service about once a month. This is for bulky items such as slabs of Coke Zero, Slabs of beer, loo paper, etc. Their sliced bread is the best basic sliced bread we have found in Siem Reap, so we order a few loaves for the freezer. In recent times Makro is suffering from lack of supplies and customers due to the ongoing border conflict.

Street Foods (snacks)

There are many little stalls selling snack street foods. These are regular established little businesses and usually only offer 1 or 2 types of snack. They can be found along the main roads, side streets and at the local markets. Most of the foods sold we would suggest are "low risk" foods, less likely to cause food poisoning. Little fried goods sweet and savoury, some types of sweet and savoury donuts, deep fried flat breads, coconut and palm sugar snacks, waffles, sweet little plain cakes baked in cast iron trays over coals, sweet corn on the cob, fried rice snacks, battered bananas, banana pancakes (like a square folded crepe). Many of these foods would cost about 2000 real (50 cents). Yes, many are fried but quite OK in moderation.

Local Markets

If you want to meet the locals and see the wide array of foods the locals eat, and the household things they buy, you need to visit the local markets. Remember that the closer the market is to the centre of town, the more tourist oriented it is, and you will hear from many “do you want to buy something, very cheap shirt, etc etc” The markets near us include:

Siem Reap Centre Night Market. This sells trinkets, clothing, jewellery, leather carvings. It generally opens up from afternoon. A few tour buses stop here, but it has many closed stalls. It used to be busier pre-covid. Geared for tourists but not as busy as the market over the other side of the river

Old Market Siem Reap. This sells the whole range including tourist items, cheap clothes, souvenirs and trinkets, local spices, kitchen ware and in the middle fresh food (veggies and meat) This almost backs onto Pub Street and catches many tourists walking into Pub Street or along the river. The main focus on the outside of the market is for tourists, and the centre more for locals, however we think locals generally go to other markets for fresh meat and veggies

Night Market. A few blocks in from the main street Sivutha Boulevard. This too is a shell of what it used to be pre-covid. It used to have a real entertaining vibe about it with street food stalls, etc. Now it has the normal market items of souvenirs, fabrics, etc. there are also a few massage places in this area, and we have observed some of the young ladies cornering any young men on their own, trying to get them to go to their massage shop!

Phsar Leu Thom They. This is the biggest market in Siem Reap, covering many acres, out on Highway 6. It needs a tuk

tuk trip out there if staying in the town centre, but at this market you will see and experience more than elsewhere in town. We recommend even hiring a tour guide to do a half day market tour, where you can be shown and explained most things, given samples of a range of foods, and learn a lot. Google Dani Jump Bees Unlimited Tours. We have been with him a couple of times to get the lay of the land there. Phsar Leu has clothing, material, household items, bulk stationery (good for donations to schools), snack foods, spice blends made on-site and of course fresh and sometimes live food. All forms of meat, seafood cleaned to order, frogs, snakes, turtles, fruit we have never seen, crocodile eggs, bakery products, fresh noodles and lots more. Each time we go we see new things.

[Phsa Kraom Market](#). This is “our” local market. Again a tuk tuk ride out if in town, but a 10 minute walk for us. We buy most of our fruit, vegies and eggs a couple of times a week from here, supporting the locals. We still are not brave enough to buy the fresh meats or seafood as it sits in the open and unrefrigerated for some time. This market also sells other household goods, clothes and material. We love this place and interacting with the locals where we can.

** we have also riden further out of town on our bike and visited other markets, where it seems we are the novelty at the market rather than what we are looking at, as the number of Westerners or tourists visiting are very few

7. Customs

[Footwear](#).

Wearing shoes into temples is quite OK, and wise considering the size of many of the temples and some climbing required.

Wearing shoes in peoples houses, school buildings and some official buildings is not allowed. Always look out for rows of shoes or shoe racks outside buildings, and avoid embarrassment removing your shoes if needed. It is a real custom in peoples homes not to wear shoes, and also in many of the salons, etc.

Monks

You aren't meant to photograph monks unless you ask first. Females are not allowed to touch monks or their clothing, and it is suggested men don't either unless gestured for a handshake, etc, but unlikely to happen. In the mornings you will see lines of monks or pairs of monks doing the rounds at the shops or markets. They stop outside places, wait for the owner or worker to come out, a donation is made (these days it appears to be cash, but food used to be the main currency) after the transaction the monks perform a blessing. The person receiving the blessing bows slightly with hands clasped until completed. There is no upper or lower expectation on the level of donation.

Conversation.

Learn just a few words, and the locals generally love you using them. Also learn to do the greeting (the Sampea) putting your hands together, holding them below your head and bowing slightly.

A few words go a long way

Hello is Suer-Sdey (pronounced So.sdey)
Thank you is Orgun (pronounced Ahhkukn)
Good bye is Lea-hai

Don't feel offended if you are asked how old you are, where are you from, where are you going. The Cambodian people are just really interested in us foreigners and often ask us these questions. I had a ripper a few weeks ago, a local we stop and chat to said "David, what happened to your hair?" Nothing is off limits, and we had a good laugh.

Many of us are referred to as "Bong". It is simply a respectful term usually for someone older than them, such as Bong David and Bong Cathy.

8. Schools

Many schools run 6 days per week. There are a range of local schools, International Schools and schools operated by NGO's. Some tourists believe they can just drop into schools, maybe teach a lesson, leave a donation for the school or students and then leave. In reality this is disruptive to the student learning, and creates some security risks as well. Volunteer Tourism does occur in some schools, usually requiring a commitment of at least 3 months of volunteering, plus a weekly payment to the school from the volunteer.

Many schools will not allow unknown people to enter. Recent rumours about children being kidnapped have also increased school security. If you do have contacts within the school system, and really want to see a school in operation, contact these people or the NGO first to determine what you could do.

Some shonky operators such as out on Tonle Sap Lake will say they are a volunteer school, and will ask you to buy some rice from a store nearby at an exorbitant price, only to return the rice to the store and pocket the money themselves. You are better to go to a local market or store, buy some books and

paper or materials, and deliver to an NGO school (pre-arranged)

Be wary of people from outside the main City wanting donations, particularly of money, for their private school or orphanage. You need to verify their authenticity before you do!

NGO and Local Vocational Schools.

A number of organisations around Siem Reap are giving local young people opportunities to gain skill sets, learn English and to develop self confidence. The best thing we as tourists can all do it to patronise these businesses. Some we can recommend include: (and we will add more as we visit them)

- a. **Tevy's Place**, Street 26, Wat Bo. You can read the story about Tevy online, and what Tevy does now is to give young women the chance to learn some skills, and at the same time run a no-frills restaurant selling a range of traditional and other dishes, at a very reasonable price.
- b. **Spoons Restaurant** in Pave Road, near a number of foreign and local restaurants. A more expensive restaurant and cafe but still affordable. Serves traditional Cambodian dishes with a modern twist. We loved the meals, the presentation and the service provided here.
- c. **Bayon Pastry School**. 20 underprivileged young women a year are trained here. Started by a young lady who graduated from the famous Debrule school in Siem Reap (Hospitality School) All training and materials provided at no cost. They are trained theory, baking, pastry and personal development. Many then successfully gain employment after completion. The byproducts off their work can be found and enjoyed in the cafe or for lunch in the Bayon Pastry School in Taphul Road
- d. **Sala Bai Hotel and Restaurant School** on TonleSap Road. Goes out into the villages. Interviews prospective students, and every year they train 150 people., giving

priority to underprivileged children, with a focus on greater number of females. All training materials and uniforms provided at no cost. Lunches available most days. Can also stay at their hotel rooms, and/or visit their beauty salon. This is about 1km from the town centre, so a small tuk tuk ride or a stroll south down riverside.

9. Local events

We have experienced 2 types of events close to us that are significant for the local people. These are Weddings and Funerals. The first sign of such an event is the very loud speakers blaring traditional music or chanting. This can start just before sunrise and go all or part of the day, ending after sunset. The second thing you will notice are big white marquees set up on the street, in front of houses, or in blocked off laneways. They will have event seating (fancy chairs covered in white cloth and fancy tables, and there will be a community kitchens close by set up in another marquee. People will come day and night to be part of these events.

- a. Weddings: These can go for 2 to 3 days. Very loud music and guests all day and into the evenings. We are told weddings are mainly held outside of the wet season.
- b. Funerals: The very large coffin is usually visible just inside the property. Loud music interrupted with chanting and prayers through a loud speaker continues from sunrise until after dark. Those interested can read up about the Buddhist customs of funerals, in order to understand the long ceremony. Easily recognised as a funeral, most of the women wear white shirt tops to funerals

10. Weather

We are told there are 2 seasons in Cambodia. More recently due to changes in climate, it is suggested there are 3 seasons.

- December to February, cool season
- March to June, hot season
- July to November, wet season

Having arrived in January, the temperature was warm, but tolerable. For 2 months we rarely saw rain except for 2 downpours. In March the temperatures climbed to high 30's every day, and overnights dropped to only 28 degrees. This year has been the hottest summer season on record here in Cambodia and some neighbouring countries. From July we had expected real rain season, but it hasn't happened properly yet by late August. Yes the countryside has greened up, but water reserves are still low. Increase in humidity is very noticeable, and the humidity lifts the "feels like" temperature up by about 10 degrees. Therefore be careful when looking at temperatures for the seasons. While forecasts of 30 degrees are common in the wet season, the humidity makes it seem hotter and more uncomfortable.

Coping Strategies and Hints for the weather

Plan temple visits for early mornings, whatever the season. Avoid the buildup of heat and get back to the hotel or accommodation and pool if you have one

Carry plenty of chilled water, or even freeze a small bottle or 2

We see a number of badly sunburnt tourists. Hats, sunscreen, sleeved shirts and yes, long trousers are the best. Enclosed shoes to protect the toes from sunburn.

If renting, one of the big bills is electricity. Avoid air conditioners at full blast unless you are willing to pay high electricity bills. We run the ceiling fans whenever home, and

only run the Airconditioner overnight in the bedroom. This brings down the temperature of that room by 7 or 8 degrees, but more importantly cuts the humidity in the room in half, resulting in a significantly cooler feeling room.

Consider buying some of the small dehumidifying containers to put into your wardrobes to reduce the chance of mouldy clothes. We are not sure how well they work, but have been using them for a month or so, and they have been removing moisture from the wardrobe (Some of the local western supermarkets have them, and only a couple of dollars each)

When planning your trips around the weather, particularly the wet season, don't totally rely on the weather apps. Many times it pours with rain and doesn't show up on the map, and other times the map shows heavy rain, with none actually happening. Either way, buy some disposable raincoats and carry them always. Generally speaking there are more showers and thunderstorms later in the day and overnight.

11. The New Siem Reap Airport

Siem Reap has a new International Airport. Known as Siem Reap International Angkor Airport, its code for bookings is SAI

This new airport opened on 16th October 2023. The old airport is no longer used for any international or local flights.

Costing over \$1.1 Billion US, and built and funded by Chinese companies. It has a 3.6km runway, and can accommodate up to 7 million visitors in this first stage of construction with an expansion to meet over 20 million passengers per annum by 2050. Early stages for much information, but there are already a number of transportation options. Important to note that this airport is much further away from the city centre than the

original airport. **The 50km trip is estimated to take between 60 and 90 minutes.** Bus services are running for about \$8USD per person, and private transfers about \$20 to \$30USD per person. Prices may change as more operators come on board.

Note: this distance is less favourable for a ride by tuk tuk to and from the airport due to distance and the busy roads. Heading back into Siem Reap city at dusk is a bit of a hair raising experience, especially when you reach Highway 6, with big trucks, busses and 4WD trying to muscle past on the road. Tuk Tuk are not allowed into the airport carpark area, so passengers need to walk across some land to access the main entrance to the airport. Here is a link to the airport website. <https://english.sai-airport.com/>

Our experience in November: We flew from and to SAI airport to travel to Laos. We used a friend's tuk tuk service to and from the airport, and agree it would not be our preference again. The airport looks great on the inside and outside. Very few shops and food outlets were operating at the time. The queue back into the country at Immigration was unacceptably slow.

The gates are a fair walk from/to the terminal after a long flight, with no travelators. Expect to walk up to 10 minutes to get to baggage claim and Immigration.

There have been quite a few negative social media posts about the airport, its service, its facilities and the distance from the city. The Government has committed to investigate and work towards making improvements.

12. Renting an Apartment

Finding an Apartment

Recommend you go through an agent. They can list your requirements and then take you around town to a range to choose from. We nominated things such as fully furnished, within 2km from town, swimming pool and 2 bedrooms, secure motorbike parking. We have observed on social media that sometimes making an agreement directly with an owner can in some cases lead to complications as things go wrong. Although the agents wash their hands of the deal once done, they will ensure that contracts are correct and dealt with correctly. Ensure the contract is in English, that it specifies the cost of electricity and water (Ours said 1000 Reil per kW hour, and \$5 per person for water) Rubbish collection is generally included. Sometimes regular weekly or monthly cleaning may be included.

Before deciding on an apartment, go back a couple of different times of the day to check if excessive noise, lots of traffic, accessibility, etc. Take note if there are small convenience stalls, etc around, and in some cases if there is a dirt road that may be an issue when rain season happens.

Hints while living in an apartment.

We only used tap water for washing, cooking and showering. The landlord arranged for a constant supply of the big blue bottles of water, at a cost of \$1USD to replace.

Cooking gas as it ran out the landlord would order replacement for us. Usually arrived within a few hours, even on Sundays, and about \$15 per medium sized bottle. These last us about 6 months

Ensure you have a good sized freezer in your upright fridge. Come wet season when the rains are unpredictable, it is good to have a few portioned bits of food in the freezer to avoid going out due to last minute rains

Grocery shopping can be at the local market, western supermarkets, and food delivery. We would visit the Western supermarket weekly, and tuk-tuk back home with the shopping for a couple of dollars. For bulky items, (slabs of beer and drinks, etc) we would order online from Makro, delivered the same day or next day and ABA pay.

For stocking up on storage containers and cooking implements, try the \$2 Japanese shop, or Angkor Supermarket National Road 6. Buy a few ice block trays. Keep a stock of ice cubes in the freezer

Cooking. Most apartments do not have an oven/stove. Usually restricted to bench top gas, microwave and rice cooker. Our greatest purchase was an air fryer, (Makro for less than \$100) allowing us to cook things such as roasted meat, scones, snacks, vegetables, marinated chicken wings and ribs, etc.

Consider buying a couple of clothes racks. You will need to frequently air off sweaty clothing, and in the wet season you may need to dry your clothing inside.

13. Facebook Pages

There are many useful Facebook pages that can assist tourists and expats. These can be a great resource when trying to find information, ranging from recommendations for medical care, tourism ideas, sourcing food and household goods, and even employment (such as in education)

Do a search for what sort of page you want, and join. We access a number of pages, mainly expat pages and tourist pages for ideas where to go. Note many of the tourist pages are run by people from other countries and sometimes linked to tourism companies.

Special note: Some Facebook pages here do have people making toxic and inappropriate comments on just about everything that is posted. You can choose to ignore, or ultimately block these people. It seems there are many instances in Facebook pages right across South East Asia, usually from bored and unintelligent FaceBook Keyboard warriors. Admins don't appear to care, so these posts go unchallenged.

Also note that while it is good to ask for advice on these pages, you will get a 360 degree spectrum of answers, so by all means use Facebook as a starting point, and then go to experts or relevant websites for correct information.

14. Vaccinations

Many people ask on Facebook what vaccinations are required. Answers go from none at all through to every vaccination under the sun. Our advice, go to your local GP (our GP is also provides a doctor with travel protection advice). Your own GP will take into consideration your own medical history, your general health, etc. It will also depend on how long you are travelling, time of the year and the remoteness of your travel)

Get this advice well before you travel, as some vaccinations require multiple shots for complete protection. Also keep a record of when you had each vaccination, to ensure you have boosters when required.

We were able to get 12-month boosters as required at a local Siem Reap hospital (Neak Tep). The prices were on par with what we paid in Australia, so dont expect them to be as cheap as other medications.

FYI because of our age and length of stay, we have had the following: Tetanus (combined with whooping cough and

Diphtheria), Rabies (3 shots), Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Japanese Encephalitis.

15. Medical

It goes without saying, maintain a healthy diet and exercise, which can be harder in this climate. Beyond that, a few tips:

Pharmacy.

You can buy most prescription drugs over the counter at one of many pharmacies across town. If you have existing medication, take a picture of the prescription or the package to take to the Pharmacy. We have some of the drugs way cheaper than in Australia, and some just as expensive (because they are not Government subsidised here) They also dispense some of the drugs by tablet or foil out of the box, so choose how many you need to buy. Other first aid supplies and creams are available, and some of the pharmacists in town are very knowledgeable about what people should be using or taking according to their condition. You can go to a clinic or hospital, but generally they charge more for the medication, but at least you will be getting doctor advice

Hospitals.

TBA