



# **CAMBODIA MADE EASY**

**The Compact Guide  
for Travel Agents**



# An Introduction



Photo by The Royal Sands Koh Rong

Found in the heart of Southeast Asia, Cambodia is a country steeped in rich history and vibrant culture. Renowned for the legacy of the powerful Khmer Empire, which dominated much of the region from the 9th to the 15th century, Cambodia's past still echoes through its landscapes. The most striking reminder of this glorious era is the iconic Angkor Wat. Situated near Siem Reap, this awe-inspiring temple complex is not only Cambodia's most significant landmark but also the largest religious monument in the world. Originally constructed in the 12th century as a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu, Angkor Wat later transformed into a revered Buddhist sanctuary. This UNESCO World Heritage Site stands as a monumental testament to the Khmer civilisation's extraordinary architecture and culture, captivating travellers from around the globe.



Ok Om Bok Lantern Festival

cultural richness that delights explorers.

However, Cambodia's allure extends far beyond Angkor Wat. The country boasts a stunning array of cultural and natural wonders, from charming villages and bustling markets to lush rainforests and pristine tropical beaches. Festivals like Bonn Om Touk, the water festival, and Pchum Ben provide deep insights into the Khmer people's traditions and spiritual beliefs. The Cambodian cuisine, with its unique and flavourful dishes, is yet another aspect of the

The warmth and hospitality of the Cambodian people add a special touch to any journey. Homestays and community tourism initiatives in rural areas offer travellers an authentic glimpse into Khmer life, making for truly immersive experiences. Cambodia is a land of diverse landscapes, ancient history, and untouched nature that leaves travellers with lasting memories.

In our Cambodia guide, we'll highlight not only the must-see marvels like Angkor Wat but also the hidden gems and essential travel tips to help your customers make the most of their Cambodian adventure.



Tatai River

## Important Basics for Travelling in Cambodia

### Buddhism: Core of Cambodian Culture

Buddhism plays a vital role in the daily life in Cambodia, making it important to respect the religion and adhere to local customs. When visiting temples or pagodas, always remove your shoes and hat before entering. Avoid touching religious objects, walk around Buddhist shrines and statues in a clockwise direction, and maintain a respectful distance from monks. Women, in particular, should refrain from direct contact with monks.

### Greet Like the Khmer

In Cambodia, greetings are exchanged with the traditional "sampeah," where you place your palms together in a prayer-like gesture and nod slightly. The higher your hands and the deeper your bow, the more respect you show. Learning a few basic words in Khmer is also a sign of respect for the local culture. For example, "sua sdey" means "hello", and "aw kohn" means "thank you". Both are pronounced just as they are written.

### Avoid Political Discussions

It's best to steer clear of political discussions, particularly those involving Cambodia's past or the Khmer Rouge.

Criticism of the royal family is also taboo, as they are highly respected in society.

### Maintain Personal Space

Cambodians value personal space and may feel uncomfortable if you stand too close. It's advisable to maintain a respectful distance during conversations.

### The Head is Sacred

In Cambodia, the head is considered the most sacred part of the body, so avoid touching it, especially on children.

### Peaceful Interactions

Cambodians highly value harmony, and losing your temper is seen as extremely rude. Avoid showing anger or frustration in public, and strive to remain calm and composed at all times.



# Cambodia Bucket List: Must-See Experiences for Your Clients

**A**t the top of any Cambodia bucket list is **Siem Reap**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the gateway to the Angkor Archaeological Park. Here, your guests will encounter the awe-inspiring temples of Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world, adorned with intricate carvings and majestic structures. The enigmatic faces of Bayon Temple, the jungle-clad ruins of Ta Prohm, and the delicate sandstone carvings of Banteay Srei will captivate them, each site narrating the rich history and architectural brilliance of the ancient Khmer civilization.

Another unmissable highlight is **Tonle Sap Lake**, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. A boat trip through its floating villages offers an immersive experience of local life, where stilt houses and vibrant floating markets bring the culture to life. The lake, surrounded by flooded forests, is a haven for diverse flora and fauna. The city of **Battambang** stands out for its cultural heritage and well-preserved French colonial architecture. A ride on the iconic bamboo train through picturesque landscapes and past ancient temples like Wat Banan is an unforgettable experience. Visiting the Phare Ponleu Selpak Circus, where talented performers breathe life into Cambodian culture through captivating shows, adds a unique touch to any itinerary. No trip to Cambodia is complete without exploring the capital, **Phnom Penh**. Highlights include the splendid Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda, with its floor of thousands of silver tiles. Cambodia's turbulent history is poignantly remembered at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the Killing Fields. The bustling street markets, riverside promenade along the Mekong, and the city's diverse culinary scene offer a deep dive into Cambodian daily life.



Bamboo train in Battambang

Nature enthusiasts should make time for **Koh Kong**, a province rich in untouched wilderness and biodiversity. The lush rainforests of the Cardamom Mountains are home to rare wildlife such as elephants and clouded leopards. Adventurous activities like kayaking, ziplining, and participating in conservation projects ensure an unforgettable experience. **Kampot**, a charming riverside town surrounded by verdant rice fields and karst landscapes, is another gem. Its colonial architecture, the historic Bokor Hill Station, and the renowned Kampot pepper, celebrated for its unique flavour, are all must-sees. For a more relaxed vibe, the coastal town of **Kep** is famous for its fresh seafood. A hike through Kep National Park and a visit to the bustling crab market are well worth it. Sun-seekers will find tranquillity on Rabbit Island, a serene escape with beautiful beaches. Finally, the perfect conclusion to an adventurous journey through Cambodia is a relaxing beach stay on the islands of **Koh Rong and Koh Rong Samloem**. Here, your clients can unwind on soft, white sands, swim in turquoise waters, and choose from a range of accommodations, from luxurious resorts to rustic eco-lodges. Whether snorkelling, diving, or simply soaking up the sun, a true tropical paradise awaits.

## FAQs: Answering the Most Important Questions to Travel Smart

### Phnom Penh or Siem Reap: Which is the Better Arrival Point?

Your choice depends on your guests' travel plans. If Angkor Wat is their primary destination, it's best to fly directly to Siem Reap to save time. However, Phnom Penh offers better international connections and is an excellent starting point for a more extensive round trip through Cambodia. Combining both cities is also a popular option for a well-rounded experience.

### What are the Top Sights in Cambodia and How to Get Around?

Cambodia's must-see destinations include Angkor Wat, Phnom Penh, Kampot, Sihanoukville and its islands, Battambang, Ratanakiri, and Tonle Sap Lake. The most efficient ways to travel between these sites are by domestic flights, reliable car transfers, buses, or tuk-tuks. For those seeking adventure, motorcycles are popular for independent travel, and boat tours offer a scenic way to explore certain routes.

### What are the Important Nuances in Khmer Culture?

Khmer culture is deeply rooted in hierarchical respect, with titles preceding names and a strong adherence to the guidance of elders. Daily life is influenced by Theravada Buddhism, and traditional attire, such as the 'sampot', along with the 'sompae' greeting, reflects the values of modesty and respect. Social harmony is crucial, and confrontations are generally avoided.

### Is Cambodia Safe for Solo Female Travelers?

Yes, Cambodia is considered a safe destination, including for women travelling alone. To ensure a smooth experience, it's recommended to choose accommodations with good reviews and in safe locations, or ask your trusted travel partner for advice.

### What are the Recommended Combination Trips?

Cambodia is well-connected to neighbouring countries, making it ideal for multi-country itineraries. You can easily travel from Phnom Penh to Ho Chi Minh City, from Siem Reap to Bangkok or Luang Prabang, and from Stung Treng to Pakse in Laos. These routes are perfect for exploring multiple Indochina destinations in one trip.



# The Real Cambodia: Expert Tips from Our Team

## 📍 A Colourful Cultural Canvas

**N**arith, our Head of English-Speaking markets and MICE, has a deep appreciation for Cambodia's cultural treasures. He recommends, "Travellers must experience the **Apsara dance** performance in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap, which offers a captivating glimpse into Cambodia's rich heritage through graceful movements, elaborate costumes, and traditional music. Another highlight is the **Phare Circus** in Siem Reap or Battambang, known for its vibrant blend of traditional and modern storytelling, acrobatics, and music, all while supporting disadvantaged youth through the performing arts." Narith also suggests a stay in a village like **Chambok** near Kirirom National Park for an authentic glimpse into rural Cambodian life.



Phare Circus

## 📍 Serene Sanctuaries and Nature's Nook



Photo by The Royal Sands Koh Rong

Miles of white sand at The Royal Sands Koh Rong resort

**F**or insights into Cambodia's natural beauty and serene beaches, Chenda, our Head of Russian and European Markets, is your expert. She highlights, "The magical sunrise over **Angkor Wat** as a must-see spectacle. For a tranquil retreat, I recommend **Koh Rong** and **Koh Rong Samloem**, where pristine beaches and crystal-clear waters await. At night, the glowing planktons create a mesmerising natural display. For those eager to explore Cambodia's diverse flora and fauna, hiking through the **Cardamom, Kulen, or Bokor Mountains** offers the chance to spot rare wildlife such as elephants and clouded leopards in one of Southeast Asia's most biodiverse rainforests."



Abandoned Christian church on top of Bokor hill

## 📍 From Chilling to Thrilling Adventures

**O**ur Assistant Managing Director and thrill-seeker, Villy, has adrenaline-filled recommendations for the adventurous traveller. He suggests, "Exploring the mysterious abandoned French colonial buildings of **Bokor Hill Station**, where old casinos, churches, and hotels surrounded by breathtaking views create a profound and memorable experience. For an additional thrill, I recommend a kayak tour on the **Mekong River** near Kratkann, where paddling on tranquil waters provides the opportunity to spot the endangered Irrawaddy dolphins. The **Phnom Chhngok cave temple**, nestled in the limestone karst landscapes around Kampot, is also a must-visit for adventure enthusiasts."

## 📍 A Khmer Culinary Quest



Traditional Fish Amok

**F**or our Managing Director and a true foodie, Vothy suggests savouring Cambodia's traditional culinary delights. **Fish 'amok'**, a fragrant fish curry steamed in banana leaves, is a must-try, offering a unique taste of Cambodia with its blend of fresh fish, coconut milk, and traditional spices. For breakfast, **'nom banh chok'** — rice noodles with fish-based curry sauce and fresh herbs — is an excellent and flavourful start to the day. I also highly recommend **'Kampot' pepper crab** from Kep, where freshly caught crabs are cooked with aromatic 'kampot pepper'. Not to be missed, **'bai sach chrouk'**, a thinly sliced pork marinated in delectable garlic and coconut milk, grilled, and served with rice.



# In Best Hands: DTH Travel — Your Reliable Partner in Cambodia

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## Our Team in Cambodia



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