

Settling-in Cambodia



What's Inside?



The Basics



Let's Talk About Culture



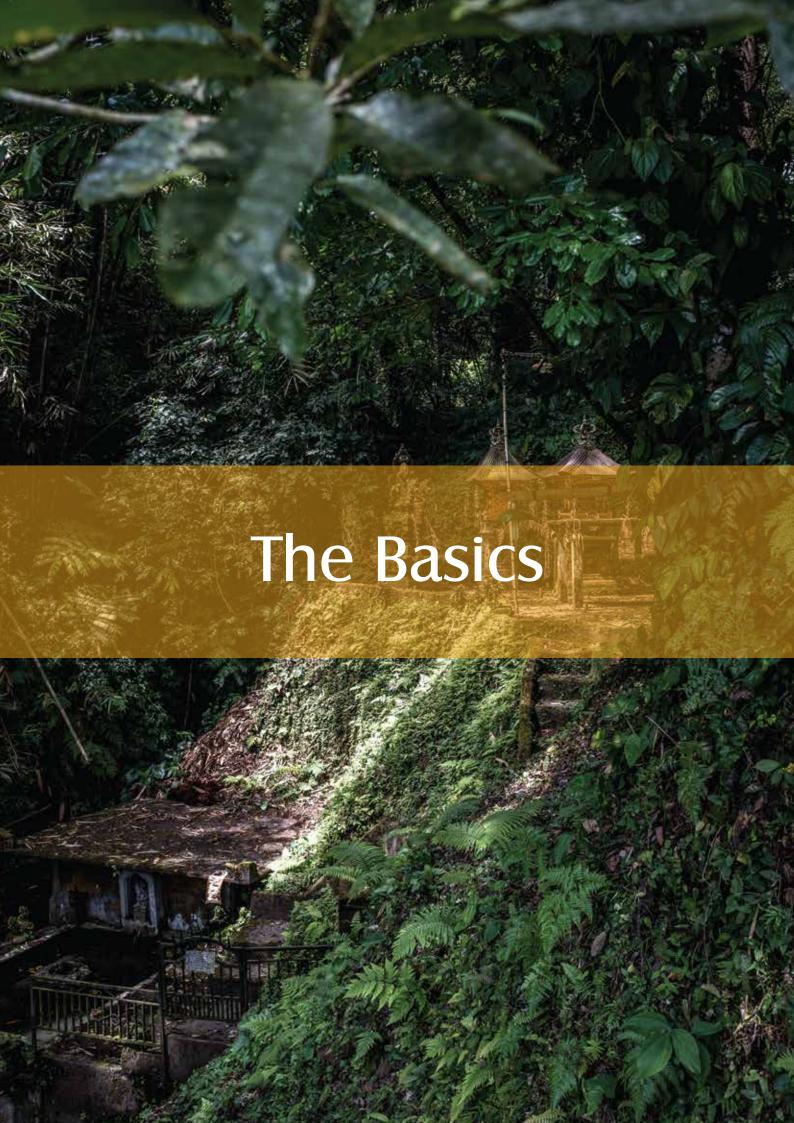
Settling in Tips



Let's Have Fun



Need Help?



About Cambodia

Cambodia is an incredibly beautiful country with famous breathtaking temples, fertile plains dotted with rice fields, and a history unlike any other. It has so much to offer the international traveler regarding a rich cultural, natural and historical heritage. Not only are there the world-renowned Angkor Wat complex and surrounding temples steeped in history and mystique, and its charming and pleasant capital Phnom Penh, but for those who enjoy relaxing on tropical beaches, Cambodia undoubtedly offers some of the most beautiful unspoiled beaches in the world. Offshore lie coral islands and exotic fish while inland indigenous flora and fauna, waterfalls and tropical forests all await discovery. Cambodia assaults the senses leaving memories of a once mighty country that stay in the mind undiminished by the passage of time. The sights and sounds of a unique land with a tragic past captivate more and more people every year and offer a genuine experience for all who are fortunate enough to discover Cambodia. In recent years, the infrastructures of the tour have been improved tremendously with the emergence of the international standard facilities such as world's renewed hotels' chains, various international flights, easy communication & transportation, and high-quality services. Without doubt, with its inherited wealth, Cambodia has enormous potential for tourism, either as an exclusive single destination or part of a tour in this Mekong region.



Cambodia's Facts & Figures

Land Area : 181,035 sq. kilometer

Population : 16,245,729 (2018 estimates)

Density : 81.8 per square kilometer

Government : Socialist Republic

Time Zone : GMT + 7 hours

Currency : Official currency: Cambodian riel (KHR), unofficial

currency: US \$

Religion : Buddhism 96.7%

Islam 2.0%

Folk religion 0.6% Christianity 0.2%

Eanguage : Khmer (official) 95%, French, English

Weather : Tropical humid climate

rainy (monsoon) season (May to November)

dry season (December to April)

Government & Politics : The signing of the Paris Peace Agreements in October

1991 launched Cambodia in the process of reconstruction after two decades of conflict and civil war. The process, which was backed by a United Nations presence until the first national elections in May 1993, facilitated the foundation of a constitutional monarchy with King Norodom Sihanouk as head of State and led to the

establishment of a power-sharing government.

Type: Constitutional monarchy, Parliamentary repre-

sentative democracy



Local Culture

Cambodian culture and tradition have had a rich, varied history dating back many centuries. Over the years, the Cambodian developed a set of unique tradition from the syncretism of indigenous Buddhism and Hinduism.

Cambodians have been raised to respect their culture. They are very traditional in their way of life. When the Cambodian meet the tourist, usually they will express in a friendly way of "Chumreap Suor".

Cambodians traditionally greet with a Sampeah, which involves pressing the palms together before the chest with a slight bow and welcoming with a polite 'Chumreap Suor.' Customarily, the higher the hands are held, and the lower the bow, the more respect is conveyed except when meeting elderly or government officials, between men. People often use handshake instead. Women usually greet both men and women with the same traditional greeting. People may think that is acceptable for foreigners to shake hands with a Cambodian, but it is more appropriate to respect the custom and respond them with a 'Chumreap Suor'.



Cultural Dos & Don'ts

Dos

Ask before taking a photo. Cambodians tend to smile when insecure, nervous, or uncomfortable; this shouldn't lead you to believe they are smiling for your photograph.

Dress modestly. Traditional garb is very conservative so be sensitive and cover your knees, shoulders, stomach, back and cleavage especially when you are visiting sacred sites.

Think twice about giving to children in the streets. Saying no to a child is hard, but encouraging them to continue to beg, as a way to support themselves, can be destructive to their future.

Think twice before visiting orphanages. Some are created just to fill the tourist demand to help orphans. 75% have living relatives and live in the orphanage just to support themselves with tourist's money.

Take of hat and shoes when entering pagoda, office, or someone's home. Making small donations while at pagodas is also acceptable.

Don'ts

Barter prices unnecessarily low. Bartering is a way of life in Cambodian markets, however, be respectful to the seller by offering a fair amount for their goods, it can be offensive to offer prices that are too low.

Lose your cool in public. Many Cambodians get uncomfortable or embarrassed if you get frustrated, it's just not socially acceptable so try to keep your cool in public.

Touch anyone's head. The head is the most sacred part of the body and is considered rude to touch.

Show the soles of your feet. Opposite of the head, the soles of your feet are considered dirty and not sacred, so try to keep them on the floor.

Females should never touch a male monk or hand anything to him directly.

Be afraid to ask questions and meet locals. Cambodians are a kind and accepting people, so if you don't understand something or are confused, just ask!



Getting Around

Private Car

Cambodia's road safety is notoriously bad, and traffic laws are poorly enforced, so extreme care should be taken when driving here. There are a lot of new drivers are on the road, and many young Khmers drive recklessly. Driving in the cities can be especially challenging. The rules of the road are habitually ignored and priority generally given to the most significant car.

Air Travel

Air travelers enter Cambodia through Phnom Penh's International Airport or Siem Reap Angkor International Airport. Both airports are quite modern. The two-storey one in Phnom Penh even offers a First/Business Class Lounge on the first floor at the International Terminal, near to the main boarding gates. Inside is an assortment of services and modern conveniences including wireless internet.

Train Services

After decades of neglect and damage from wartime, Cambodia's rail network is currently being reconstructed as part of the Trans-Asian Railway project.

Until recently there was just one train service remaining in Cambodia, from Battambang to Phnom Penh. Previously running every second day, in 2006 it went down to once a week, and in early 2009 it stopped running altogether. There are also currently NO trains on the Phnom Penh - Kampot - Sihanoukville route or on the Battambang-Sisophon route. There are now no regular passenger trains in Cambodia, only buses.

Boat Travel

There is a regular boat service across Tonlé Sap Lake from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap which takes around 5 hours. Boats are often very crowded and tourist rates are applied to foreigners – these can be double what the local's pay but are still reasonable. The boat ride isn't very scenic either so taking a bus is usually a smarter option.

Bus Services

Inter-city and international buses are run by separate companies at different locations throughout all major cites in Cambodia.. Luckily, most of the tuk tuk and motodop drivers are well-acquainted with where to take you as long as you give them the name of the company and address you are looking for.

Local buses can also provide an exciting means of travel and are good for those on a budget. The popular Mekong Express provides a luxury bus ride for just US\$7 between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap every day. There are other companies offering the same route as well.

Taxi Services

Meter taxis sometimes wait in tourist areas of all cities, especially at late night. More common are unmarked, unmetered taxis, which can be arranged through your hotel or travel agent and can also be found waiting outside major hotels. Taxi/car with driver costs \$25-\$35/day. Short jaunts around town run a minimum \$4-\$5.

Tuk-tuks

(Motorcycle trailers, 'Tuk-tuks,' moto-romauks) 'Tuk-tuks' have become quite popular in Cambodia. Tuk-tuks for hire gather in popular tourist areas and cost \$1-\$2 for short trips and \$10-\$15 for the whole day. Prices vary depending on the number of passengers and where you pick up the tuk-tuk. Make sure to keep your bag toward the middle of the tuk-tuk to protect against bag snatching.

Cyclos

The humble bicycle rickshaw known locally as the 'cyclo' can be romantic, even practical form of transportation, especially if time is not a factor. Cyclos are more comfortable on the nerves than motos, and the canopy offers a drier, more relaxed ride. A cyclo ride should cost about the same as a moto.

Food & Drinks

Food:

Rice is the staple grain, as in other Southeast Asian countries. Fish from the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers is also an essential part of the diet. The supply of fish and fish products for food and trade as of 2000 was 20 kilograms (44 pounds) per person or 2 ounces per day per person. Some of the fish can be made into prahok for more extended storage.

The cuisine of Cambodia contains tropical fruits, soups, and noodles. Key ingredients are kaffir lime, lemongrass, garlic, fish sauce, soy sauce, curry, tamarind, ginger, oyster sauce, coconut milk, and black pepper. Some delicacies are Num Banh Chok, Amok, and Ah Ping. The country also boasts various distinct local street foods, such as fried spiders.

French influence on Cambodian cuisine includes the Cambodian red curry with toasted baguette bread. The toasted baguette pieces are dipped in the curry and eaten. Cambodian red curry is also eaten with rice and rice vermicelli noodles. Probably the most popular dine out the dish, kuy teav, is a pork broth rice noodle soup with fried garlic, scallions, green onions that may also contain various toppings such as beef balls, shrimp, pork liver or lettuce. Kampot pepper is reputed to be the best in the world and accompanies crab at the Kep crab shacks and squid in the restaurants on the Ou Trojak Jet river. The cuisine is relatively unknown to the world compared to that of its neighbours Thailand and Vietnam.

Drinks:

Cambodians drink plenty of tea, grown in Mondulkiri Province and around Kirirom. Tai krolap is a strong tea, made by putting water and a mass of tea leaves into a small glass, placing a saucer on top, and turning the whole thing upside down to brew. When it's dark enough, the tea is decanted into another cup, and plenty of sugar added, but no milk. Lemon tea tai kdao kroich chhmaa, made with Chinese red-dust tea and lemon juice, is refreshing both hot and iced and is generally served with a hefty dose of sugar.

Regarding coffee, the beans are generally imported from Laos and Vietnam – although domestically produced coffee from Ratanakiri Province and Mondulkiri Province can be found in some places. Beans are traditionally roasted with butter and sugar, plus various other ingredients that might include anything from rum to pork fat, giving the beverage a strange, sometimes faintly chocolatey aroma.

Cambodia has several industrial breweries, located mainly in Sihanoukville Province and Phnom Penh. There are also a growing number of microbreweries in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Medical Care

Private and Int'l Clinics & Hospitals

The best known hospital for expats in the city is the Calmette Hospital.

Calmette Hospital

#03 Street 93 (Preah Monivong), Sraas Chak, Daun Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Phone: (855-23) 426 948

Fax: (855-23) 724 891

International SOS is the most highly regarded medical clinic in town. It provides emergency care and evacuation if needed and employs both international and Khmer doctors including a dermatologist, a paediatric nurse, general practitioners and dentists.

International SOS Cambodia Ltd

House 161, Street 51, Phnom Penh, Cambodia Phone: (855-12) 816 911 or (855-23) 216 911

Fax: (855-23) 215 811

Website: https://www.internationalsos.com/en/about-our-clinics_cambodia_35.htm

Another option for 24 hour service in English is the Naga Clinic. General services are offered as well are some specialized services.

Naga Clinic International Medical Centre

#11 Street 254, PO Box 1155, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Phone: (855-23) 211 300 or (11-811) 175 (emergency, secretary)

Fax: (855-23)-361 225

Email: info@nagaclinic.com

Website: http://www.nagaclinic.com/

Pharmacies

UCare is a chain of pharmacies throughout Phnom Penh and Cambodia. Beware if you are buying medicines at independent pharmacies – there have been reports of some expats receiving fake medicines in some establishments. Almost any drugs can be bought over the counter in Cambodia.

Medical Centers

Siem Reap has the international standard Royal Angkor International Hospital which is owned and operated by Thailand's Bangkok Hospital Group. The Royal Angkor offers a high level of care including a 24 hour Accident and Emergency service.

Royal Angkor International Hospital

National Route #6

Phum Kasekam Khum Sra Ngea Siem Reap, Cambodia

Phone: (855-63) 761 888

Email: info@royalangkorhospital.com/ Website: www.royalangkorhospital.com/

For more minor medical matters, visit the Naga Clinic on Hup Guan Street, behind Central Market. The doctor is Dutch and speaks Dutch, English, French, and German. His fees start at \$10 for a consultation.

Dentistry

Dental procedures are quite cheap no matter where you are in Cambodia. The facilities are not always what you are used to from back home but if you are in need of a quick clean or polish try the Pachem Dental Clinic.

Pachem Dental Clinic

242 Mondul Street Sieam Reap District Siem Reap, Cambodia

Phone: (855-63) 965 333 or (855-13) 838 803

Website: www.pachemdental.com/

Pharmacies

As in Phnom Penh, there are concerns that come along with buying your medicine; therefore Ucare is still your best choice when looking for a Pharmacy. One can be found in the Lucky Mall Shopping Centre on Sivatha Boulevard and there are others dotted about town.

Expat Housing in Cambodia

Phnom Penh is Cambodia's capital city, and home to approximately 1.6 million people. Located at the confluence of three rivers- The Mekong, Bassac and Tonle Sap- Phnom Penh is a vibrant city with a unique mix of French colonial and traditional Khmer architecture. As a result, the city retains a certain provincial charm, which combined with the energy of its rapidly growing economy and the warmth of the local population makes this a city that many expats fall in love with.

Most expats in Phnom Penh live in one of the following three Districts:

- Salakomreuk
- Wat Bo
- Mondul II

Temporary Housing

Expats living in Cambodia sometimes choose the option of serviced apartment rental as a cost effective solution and a good way to feel at home in Cambodia rapidly when landing in town. For stays of a day, a week, a month or a year, serviced apartments offer a spacious, flexible and cost effective solution.

Permanent Housing

Permanent Housing

Cambodia has 3 types of Properties to be rent or buy as a permanent home: stand-alone house, town house and apartment/condo. Apartments are usually fully furnished while houses/townhouses can be offered fully furnished or semi-furnished. Kitchen is usually equipped with cooking set (stoves and exhaust hood), oven and refrigerator. Washing machine and drying machine are usually provided in larger properties. A dishwasher is

International Schools

Most expats in Cambodia send their children to private school where they will be taught in English or French and study internationally recognized curriculum. Standards are generally high in the main international schools, which you can find more information on in the respective city sections. Do bear in mind that education is always a polemic subject and debates on the Cambodia expat forums reveal some wildly differing opinions on the international schools in Cambodia. You are advised to do your research and choose a school according to your expectations and the individual needs of your children.

The two main international schools based in Siem Reap are ISSR and The French School.

The International School of Siem Reap (ISSR)

Website: www.issr-cambodia.com

Located in the center of town close to the Old Market, the school accepts children from the age of 3 to 16. ISSR pupils follow the British National Curriculum and sit for internationally recognized IGCSEs at 16. The school is registered as a Cambridge International School and accredited by the University of Cambridge International Examinations Board. Annual fees start at \$1500 for half days at nursery and continue to rise to \$5800 for the senior years. Registration fees, enrolment fees and a charge for stationery are extra.

The French School of Siem Reap

Website: http://www.ecolefr-siemreap.org/html/

The school follows the French curriculum through maternelle (infant school), primaire, collège, and lycée. It is currently in the process of reapplying for recognition from the Ministry of Education in France. French is not a requirement prior to children at the maternelle level, but older non-French speakers will only be admitted at the discretion of the teachers. The school provides some teaching in English and Khmer. Fees start at \$820 per term for kindergarten, increasing annually up to \$1280 for lycée students, there is also an additional enrolment fee to pay of around \$500, as well as insurance charges per student.

The most popular international schools in Phnom Penh are listed below:

The International School of Phnom Penh (ISPP)

Website: www.ispp.edu.kh

Generally considered to be the best secondary school in Cambodia, ISPP takes students from ages 3 to 18 and teaches the International Baccalaureate, which is internationally recognised by all further education establishments throughout the world. The facilities are modern and the teaching of a very high standard. ISPP is a non-profit parent-owned association and fees are reviewed annually but are around \$15,000 per year.

Northbridge International School Cambodia (NISC)

Website: www.nisc.edu.kh

Another excellent school working teaching an International Baccalaureate programme for ages 3-18. Fees depend on the age of the child, rising as the child gets older. Top fees for 2013/14 are \$17,000 per year. NISC teachers are internationally qualified and recruited from all over the world. The school has a spacious campus with plenty of playing fields for sports minded children.

iCan British International School

Website: www.ican.edu.kh

An English teaching, co-ed school for children aged 18 months to 14 years. Fees range from \$3,500 for the nursery to \$9,300 for years 7, 8 and 9. The teaching programme is based on the English National Curriculum and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC).

Zaman International School

Website: www.zamanisc.com

Zaman is an independent international school with over 1,100 students from kindergarten up to the end of secondary school. This is the best choice if you wish your child to be taught in Khmer as well as English. The qualifications gained here are recognised by some, but not all, colleges in Englishspeaking countries. Consequently, the cost is significantly less, at around \$3,500 per year. Also, boys and girls are taught separately.

There are plenty other schools where lessons are taught in English or French. Some options to look into are listed below although this is by no means an exhaustive list:

<u>EtonHouse International School</u> – www.ehis.co <u>Lycée Française René Descartes de Phnom Penh</u> – www.descartes-cambodge.com <u>Logos International School</u> – www.logoscambodia.org

Daily Needs

Money & Banking

Tipping

Tipping is not a traditional custom in Cambodia, however tipping can make a big difference for someone in a country this poor. The Khmer people are known for their outstanding service and go out of their way to show hospitality so you can show your appreciation by tipping a small amount. As little as \$3 could be close to a whole days wages for some common laborers. At hotels there is commonly a service charge that never sees its way into the pockets of those actually performing the service, so try to tip the staff directly.

Dollars or Riel

You may have already heard that US dollars are widely accepted in Cambodia and is considered a common currency. However in order to stretch your money it is best to use both currencies in conjunction with one another. Be a Rate Watcher. The Riel fluctuates around the 4000r/\$1 mark, and most restaurants and shops that accept both currencies base their prices off of the 4000 to 1 conversion instead of changing the prices daily in accordance with the spot rate. So if exchange rates become favourable then it makes sense to exchange your Dollars and pay in Riel. However, if the rate falls below 4000 to 1 then just hold onto your dollars, as exchanging them will diminish your buying power. When bartering in the streets it makes sense to use Riel as arguing over \$0.25 can be confusing with a language barrier. Instead agreeing on prices in Riel will make it much easier as you will be arguing over 1000 Riel instead, which is a much more comprehensible number for everyone involved.

Household Appliances and Accessories

Electrical goods can be bought in the shops along Monivong Street, in the Sorya shopping centre, opposite the central market, and in other stores scattered around town. Water coolers can be bought from most electrical shops near the Central Market for approximately \$100.

Linens can be bought cheaply along Monivong Street. You can get expensive but good quality linen at IChing (Sisowath quay/ www.ichingdecor.com) or at Elsewhere (Villa Lanka Hotel. St. 282). Elsewhere also has clothes and babies clothing. For wholesale fabric, check out Olympic Market.

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Health Care

Both Phnom Penh and Siem Reap have hospitals offering high quality, international standard health facilities (see individual city section below for more detailed information). Conversely, outside the larger cities it may be harder to find reputable care. Most towns will have either a small hospital or a medical clinic for general care but may not be able to offer quality care medical emergencies. Finding medical care of any kind in rural areas may be difficult.

It is highly advisable that expatriates take out an insurance policy in order to ensure that the best healthcare Cambodia is available to them when they need it. Cambodia is still developing, so some treatments are not available even at the best facilities. Keep this in mind when buying travel insurance. Make sure that your policy includes medical evacuation coverage, which will pay for you to be transported out of the country for appropriate healthcare, should this be necessary. Also make sure your cover suits all unique requirements that you or your family may encounter, such as maternity.

Shopping

Most expats combine buying fresh local produce from the markets with supermarket shopping for household goods and imported produce. There are many supermarkets which cater to expat tastes. The supply of imported produce is inconsistent so if you see something that you love, stock up as you never know when you will see it again, it could be a few months. It is likely that you will need to go to a few different places to get everything you require. Below you will find a short list of supermarkets that will be a good place to start when first settling in Phnom Penh.

Super Markets

Lucky's – (Shihanouk Boulevard, and Paragon Shopping Mall)
Bayon and Thai Houk Suppermarket- (Monivong Street, near Central Market)
Sydney's – (Street 128, 500m from Monivong heading away from Central Market)
Pencil – (Norodom Boulevard, next door to KFC)
Veggy's – (Street 240)

Specialty Stores

AusKhmer/The Pantry Shop - (Street 105, 125Z) Specialty meat, cheese, wines, and catering

Dan's Meats – (Street 214, 51A) Butcher with fine meats and home delivery

Open Wine – (Street 19, near Street 240) Wide variety of wines and some food Red Apron

– (Street 240, close to junction with Street 19) Boutique wine shop

Other Shopping Areas

Central Market – Referred to as Psar Thmei, the Central Market is one of Phnom Penh's main landmarks and is hard to miss with its big yellow dome standing over the streets. You can find everything here including fresh fruits and vegetables, household appliances, electronics, crockery, souvenirs and clothes.

Sorya – This is a large air-conditioned shopping mall. A lot of Khmers come here to experience their first escalator ride! Lucky's Supermarket is on the ground floor, there is a quality electronics store on the 3rd floor, and the 4th floor has an athletics shop with everything from shoes and clothes, to board games and sports equipment. The shopping centre is located near the central market

Russian Market – Most Khmers know the Russian Market as Psar Toul Tompong, keep that in mind when trying to find your way here. The market is geared towards tourists so you will find cheap clothes, souvenirs and pirated DVDs. However you can also pick up household items, food, fresh produce and mechanical parts if you do a bit of searching.

Street 240 – A few designer boutique stores line this street between the streets of, 19th and Norodom. Expect these shops to be more expensive than the other local markets.

Beautiful Shoes- located at #138B, Street 143. A great place to buy shoes is at 'Beautiful Shoes' with prices around \$15. For around \$25 you can get a custom pair made to your specifications on leather, colour, and size. This is a great place to get shoes for the whole family as they are usually of very high quality.



Entertainment & Leisure

Swimming pools

If your home or apartment complex does not have a pool, don't worry, most hotels and guest houses in the city will let you use theirs for a small fee, or an advertised minimum spend.

Villa Lanka – (Street 278, near Wat Lanka) Very popular weekend getaway for families. Pavilion – (Street 19, near Sihanouk Blvd end) – Adults only with Wi-Fi. Intercontinental Hote I – (296 Boulevard Mao Tse Toung) Family friendly, slightly expensive Le Royal Hotel – (92 Rukhak Vithei Daun Pen) Family friendly, slightly expensive

Boat cruises

Boat cruises are very popular in Phnom Penh, especially at sunset when you can see the sun go down against the backdrop of the Phnom Penh skyline and the Royal Palace. Boats line the river near streets 136 and 130 and can be hired for \$10-20 per hour, depending on the size of the boat. An icebox is normally provided, with ice (for a small fee), and you can bring your own food and drink to enjoy.

Casino

Nagaworld - (End of Sihanouk Blvd near the riverfront)

Cinema

MetaHouse - (#6, Street 264)

MetaHouse is a multimedia arts centre with a terrace bar and frequent film screenings, comedy shows, and Karaoke.

The Flicks – #90, Street 136

Independent cinema with bookings available for parties.

Legend Cinema – 3rd Floor, City Mall, Street 217

Major Cineplex - Aeon Mall, Sotheros.

Golf

Garden City Golf Club – (#53, Monivong Blvd, Sangkat Srah Chok, Khan Duan Penh) Royal Cambodia Phnom Penh Golf Club – (National Route 4, 35km SW of Phnom Penh) Cambodia Golf and Country Club – (#56A, Street Samdach, Songkreach Tieng (222), Daun Penh)

Ranges

Int Driving Range – (Street 2004) Standard Range Parkway driving range – (113 Mao Tse Toung Blvd) Rooftop range



Emergency Contacts

Emergency

Toul Sleng Fire Department	023 723 555 / 012 786 693
Call from Stationary Telephone (FireFighter)	666 / 118
Call from Stationary Telephone (Police)	117
S.O.S Police	012 999 999
Traffic Police	012 896 628
Tourist Police	097 778 0002
Ambulance (S.A.M.U)	119
Call from Stationary Telephone (Hospital)	023 723 840
Calmette Ambulance (S.A.M.U)	023 426 948 / 023 724 891 /
	012 912 947 / 016 585 108 / 092 858 434
Russian Hospital Ambulance (S.A.M.U)	023 217764
Kossamak Hospital Ambulance (S.A.M.U)	016 909774
Blood Transfusion Center	023 215 949
Water Supply	023 724 046
Electricity (EDC)	023 723 871

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