

Cambodia



Karma Cambodia Bike Tour

13 days Siem Reap to Phnom Penh

Angkor Wat - Mekong River - Phnom Penh - Southern Cambodia

This adventurous trip will take you cycling on the fun roads of Cambodia to some of the most spectacular temples in history and through the villages of smiling Khmer people. The majesty of the Angkor temples is lost on no one and you'll realise why after spending 3 days in and around the temples.

But there's more to Cambodia than just temples. Cycling the highways and byways we travel from west to east and then south to the beautiful Cambodian coastline visiting the charming capital Phnom Penh as well as smaller regional towns and witnessing all that Cambodia has to offer.



Itinerary

Day 1 | Siem Reap

We meet in the regional town of Siem Reap. People will be arriving at different times throughout the day so please meet in the hotel restaurant at 6 p.m. for the tour briefing before heading out for our first dinner together. (D)

Day 2 | Siem Reap | 40km

On our first full day in Siem Reap we will spend the day exploring some of the other temples cycling around the 40km 'mini circuit' including a detailed tour of the magnificent Angkor Wat. There are over 100 temples in the area so we will visit some of the most important and learn something of the history and importance of these temples. (B,L)

Day 3 | Siem Reap

Today will be a free day for you to return to the temples, explore some of Siem Reap's other sites, shop, or just relax by the pool. (B)

Day 4 | Kompong Thom | 70km

Rising early to watch the sunrise on Angkor Wat, continue on to the outlying temple Beng Melea. Beng Melea was only cleared recently and is amazing to visit to witness how the jungle can destroy a temple over the centuries. Beng Melea is also refreshingly free of tourists. The ride is beautiful, passing verdant green fields and lively villages. After completing the ride and visit we take our support vehicle to Kompong Thom, a regional town on the highway between Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. (B,L,D)

Day 5 | Kompong Thom to Kompong Cham | 76km

Leaving Kompong Thom by bus, we drive for a few hours as we head around the north side of Tonle Sap on our way to Kompong Cham, an important trade centre. After unloading the bikes we set out on a fantastic back road ride that takes in small village roads, tracks and very out of the way places. Expect to be the centre of attention in this area! Our hotel in Kompong Cham looks out over the Mekong River - what better place to enjoy a drink on the banks of this mighty river. (B,L,D)

Day 6 | Kompong Cham to Phnom Penh | 63km

Definitely a highlight day, we ride 63km on a quiet, mostly unpaved road that follows the Mekong River on its path towards Phnom Penh. Foreigners are extremely rare through these parts so expect a few surprised faces as you ride by. Our picnic lunch is a site in itself. Relax under the shade of a huge mango tree and enjoy your view of the Mekong. The final section of this day will be travelled in our support vehicle. (B,L,D)

Day 7 | Phnom Penh Free Day

A free day in Cambodia's capital to relax from the bike and explore the city's sites. You can visit Tuol Sleng, originally a school and then a jail of the Khmer Rouge, it is now a museum documenting the atrocities committed here during the short reign of Pol Pot. There are also the many markets and temples of Phnom Penh or relax in a riverside cafe. (B)

Day 8 | Phnom Penh to Takeo | 83km

Leaving Phnom Penh we stay off the highway and take a back road to the infamous Choeung Ek Killing Fields where thousands of people were murdered by the Khmer Rouge. No family in Cambodia was untouched by terror of the Khmer Rouge and places such as Choeung Ek are monuments to



those lost during this time. Back on the bikes we continue along a mixture of dirt road and highway to the quiet regional town of Takeo. (B,L,D)

Day 9 | Takeo to Kep | 100km

Taking back roads all day we take the long way to Kep. Kep is an interesting place in the modern world. In colonial times it was a famous French beach resort and now many of the buildings lie in ruins while a modern beach resort town goes around the ruins. (B,L,D)

Day 10 | Kep to Kampot | 25km

After a free morning for a swim or a stroll we will ride the short distance to Kampot, another quiet provincial town but some well preserved French colonial architecture. Kampot makes for a nice town to wander in the late afternoon or to enjoy a massage from the blind masseurs. There is a great selection of restaurants from Cambodia to Indian to western so we'll leave the dinner arrangements up to you. (B)

Day 11 | Kampot to Sihanoukville | 108km

It's the last and longest day of riding on the trip as we cycle 108km to the beach side town of Sihanoukville. Along the way we pass picturesque fishing villages, their river inlets full of colourful fishing boats. As we approach Sihanoukville there are a few small rolling hills to get over before we finally reach the beautiful beach for a well deserved swim. (B,L)

Day 12 | Sihanoukville Free Day

The day is yours to enjoy. Sick back on the beach or take a day trip out to the surrounding islands showing off your fantastic cyclist tan. In the evening we will meet for our last dinner to celebrate the end of a great trip through an amazing country. (B,D)

Day 13 | end

Today is the end of the tour. In the early morning we will depart Sihanoukville for the 4 hour drive to Phnom Penh. We should reach the Phnom Penh International Airport by midday so do not book your flights before 2pm if you wish to fly out today. If you want to stay longer in Sihanoukville or Phnom Penh we can help with hotel arrangements at a range of hotels. (B)

Tour Details

Style

Fully supported cycling tour

Inclusions

Angkor Historic Park, Choeng Ek Killing Fields, Tonle Bati temple, support vehicle, local guides, tour leader, most meals

Group Size

Minimum 3, maximum 14.

Accommodation

9 nights comfortable hotel, 3 nights guesthouse (all with private bathroom).

Due the nature of cycling trips we stay in some towns where the general standard of accommodation is quite low. In these places we have chosen the best possible place to stay - trust us there's nothing better!



Single Room

On Grasshopper Adventures tours single travellers do not have to pay any extra to join our trips - we will match you up with another same sex, single traveller. However, should you wish to choose to take a single room we are happy to book rooms for you for an extra charge. This single supplement is completely voluntary and only applies to hotel accommodation, on overnight train trips there are no single rooms available. We should point out that on occasion single rooms may not be available and in these instances you may need to share for a night or two - we will refund part of your single supplement in these cases.

Extra accommodation

We can book additional accommodation before the tour in Siem Reap or after the tour in Sihanoukville or Phnom Penh at competitive rates. Please book extra nights when you book your tour.

Arrival Details

Meeting Point - this trip will begin at a hotel to be advised. The hotel will a short way from the central Old Market area where there are many restaurants, internet cafes, travel agents, market stalls and banks. The hotel has comfortable rooms with private bathroom, air conditioning, TV and 24 hour reception. There is also internet and a restaurant at the hotel. From the airport there are prepaid cars (US\$5) and vans (US\$7) that will take you to the hotel. If you are bringing your own bike you might need to take a van. The hotel is well know and the drivers at the airport will know its location.

Food

Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners, plus cold water, fruit and biscuits on cycling days. You should consider bring some of your favourite energy snacks and electrolyte powder for the cycling days.

Cycling Days & Distance

8 days, 565km

Difficulty

Moderate - this trip involves some off road riding and/or longer days over 80km. Riders should be of reasonable cycling fitness.

Cycling Conditions

84% sealed roads, 16% dirt roads.

Road conditions in Cambodia have improved considerably over the past few years. This trip is mainly on recently made sealed roads with some stages on dirt roads. Road maintenance, however, is not always the best so you must expect random potholes, short sections of terrible surface and road works. In general this is a very flat ride with the only hills coming in the last 20km of the last day. Traffic is generally light but care must be taken with all those unexpected surprises like chickens, children and dogs running out in front

Bikes

You can bring your own bike for this trip. The best bike for conditions in Cambodia would be a good working mountain or hybrid bike with 21 gears or more and hybrid tyres to cope with the varying conditions. You should have your bike serviced by a professional bike mechanic before travelling to ensure that it is in good working order. While we do provide mechanical assistance and carry some spare parts during the trip you will need to bring spare parts (including tubes) for your bike as different bikes use different parts and we cannot guarantee that we will have a part to suit your bike.

Bike Hire

If you don't have a bike or don't want to bring your own you can hire a bike from us for the entire trip. We provide well maintained Trek 4400 mountain bikes in various sizes and will be responsible for any maintenance required during the trip for these bikes. All bikes are fitted with one bottle cage. Pannier racks are not supplied. For added comfort you may consider bringing your own seat and pedals which we can easily fit to your rental bike. Please note, renters will be liable for any damage caused to rental bike which is a result of riding accidents.



Helmets

For safe cycling we strongly recommend wearing a helmet whilst cycling on our trips.

Transporting Your Bike

Most international airlines consider bicycles as part of your regular luggage weight allowance, so you will need to pack light. The best way to transport a bicycle is to package it in a bike box. Most bicycle stores are happy to give away boxes for free. You will need to remove the front wheel (and sometimes the rear wheel), handle bars, pedals and seat post. Tape any loose parts to the bike frame and pack a few extras in the box such as your helmet. You can keep your box until the end of the trip to pack it for the trip home.

Support Vehicles

For the cycling days we will have the backup support of a small bus that will carry our luggage, snacks, water, and anybody not cycling. You can use the support vehicle whenever you feel like no longer cycling.

Travel Details

Visas

One month single entry visas can be easily obtained upon entry to Cambodia. Visas at the airport cost US\$20 and require one passport photo. You can obtain a visa in your own country if you wish. Before you travel check your passport to ensure that there is room for a visa and entry/exit stamps (at least 3 pages) and that it has at least 6 months validation remaining.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

Flights

International flights to the starting point and from the finish point are not included in the price of this tour. We can assist with the purchase of inter-Asia flights and/or provide advice if you are considering overland travel. All domestic flights as per itinerary are included.

Money

The official currency of Cambodia is the riel, however, the US dollar serves as a second currency and can be used in all situations. When going to Cambodia it is best to bring small denomination US dollars cash along with travellers cheques as your main form of money. Around Siem Reap Thai baht can also be used. Credit cards can be used in a few major centres, however, they should not be relied on as the main way you will access your money. There are now ATMs in Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville which dispense US dollars, however, this should not be relied on as your sole source of money.

For current exchange rates visit:

www.oanda.com

Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$20 for food and general living costs per day. Shopping money should be considered extra to this amount. It is customary to tip the guides and drivers in Cambodia. You should allow approximately US\$30 for tips. Note: this is a guide only, feel free to tip more or less (or nothing) depending on your satisfaction. If you think your tour leader has done a good job you may also tip him/her. Again this is completely up to you.

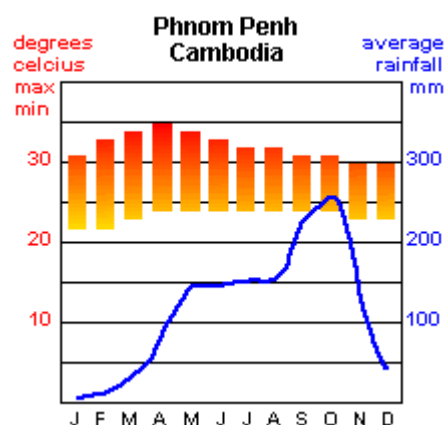


Health

There are no specific health requirements for travelling in Cambodia, however, we recommend that you visit a travel medicine doctor before travelling. You should carry a well stocked first aid kit with you when you travel. All Grasshopper Adventures Group Leaders are first aid trained, however, they are not permitted to distribute any medications.

Climate

Cambodia is a classic tropical climate with generally warm to hot days and warm nights. You won't need any warm clothing on this tour. The coolest months are November to January. During the wet season (May-Oct) it does rain most days but the rain generally falls in the late afternoon or night - after we have finished our cycling. The wet season is actually a fantastic time to visit Cambodia as the rain brings the fields and country to life. Endless green rice fields are a feature of this time of year.



Electricity

Cambodia works on a 220 volt system and uses American/Asian 2 flat pin plugs. For more on plug types visit the [World Electric Guide](#). You can easily buy an adapter in Cambodia for much cheaper than in your home country.

Packing

You should consider bringing the following items:

<p>Personal Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpack or small sized wheelee bag (some of the guesthouses we have do not have lifts so you may need to carry your luggage up some flights of stairs) • Long trousers • Shorts • Shirts • Hat • Sandles/light shoes • Swimming costume • Sunglasses • Light rain jacket • Toiletries • Small towel • Sunscreen • First Aid Kit • Mosquito repellent • Camera • Alarm Clock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport with 6 months validity and spare pages • Passport photo • Travel insurance details • Flight tickets • Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques • Phrase book <p>Cycling Gear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle • <i>if renting</i> - your own seat & pedals (optional) • Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. day pack, bum bag, handlebar bag • Helmet • Cycling gloves • Bicycle water bottle • Bike shorts with something to put on over the top while off the bike
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Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit.

Dress

Cambodia is still quite a conservative country. In rural areas and temples overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations.



Walking around a village in bike shorts is not appropriate so if you wish to cycle in just bike shorts you should have something with you on the bike to put on over the top such as long loose shorts or a skirt/sarong. A good solution to this is 'shy shorts' which combine cycling shorts with loose long shorts over the top. When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Sleeveless tops are not acceptable in temples.

Phrase Book

A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people that you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak English but away from these areas it is great to learn a few words of Khmer. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations

Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving items away to local people can create an expectation that a visiting foreigner equals free give away's. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. If you would like to donate anything to the communities that we visit we suggest that you give the items to Grasshopper Adventures which we will then pass on to development organisations, schools or whole communities. In this way items are distributed by those working in the communities who understand better the local needs.

Poverty

There is an enormous amount of poverty in Cambodia which you will see, particularly in tourist areas. If you choose to give something to a beggar you must bear in mind the value of money in the country you are visiting. Many beggars can earn more than those who work unskilled jobs. There are organisations in Cambodia who are working to alleviate this poverty issue and may be able to do more good with donations that you might like to make. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

Important

All information in these tour notes is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures.

