

Title:

Cambodia - Phnom Penh, Angkor Wat, Sihanoukville

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Summary:

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Cambodia is a land of incredible contrast. Thick forest, mountains and pristine rivers compliment amazing white beaches. When you get down to it, however, travelers know Cambodia for two things, Angkor Wat and the nastiest roads around. But, let's not get ahead of ourselves.

Phnom Penh

Phnom Penh is the capital of Cambodia. The city is a combination of old French beauty and modern condominiums. The city is full of amazing Wats [Buddist monasteries], including Wat Ounalom, Wat Phnom and Wat Moha Montrei. Modern buildings surround these monasteries and it's difficult to avoid a feeling that the old ways are being lost.

Still, the vibrancy of the city is impressive considering the fact that it was completely abandoned for three years in the last 70s. During this period, the Khmer Rouge tried to return the Cambodian people to their agricultural heritage and evacuated all cities. The only exception, of course, is Tuol Sleng, a high school used to torture and kill "enemies of the state." Just beyond the city, one will also find the infamous killing fields where thousands upon thousands were put to death.

Sihanoukville

Sihanoukville is a small, sleepy village on the Southwest edge of Cambodia. Fairly undeveloped, the area is an oasis similar to the beaches of Thailand. The difference, however, is the lack of tourists. Depending on the time of year, the beaches can be more or less empty and privacy assured. Rooms run between \$5 and \$15 a night and come with private bathrooms. If you are looking to lounge professionally, Sihanoukville is a very good place to do it.

Angkor Wat

Stunning. There is no other word for the temples of Angkor Wat. Angkor Wat is a temple surrounded by hundreds of others. Each is unique and worth a look. The most famous are Angkor Wat, Bayon and Ta Phrom. Angkor Wat is in the best shape as well as the most known. The Bayon is impressive, but the constant mob of tourist makes it a pain to visit. Ta Phrom is amazing because it has been left to the jungle, which is to say trees and the structure have become one in many areas. If you have seen Tomb Raider with Angelina Jolie, you have seen Ta Phrom. Personally, I prefer Angkor Wat to the Pyramids in Egypt.

Roads From Hell

Cambodian roads are evil. There is simply no other way to put it. The country is hit by monsoons every year and is still recovering from the Khmer Rouge. This combination has resulted in roads with huge potholes, missing bridges and pretty much the worst elements of Dante's Hell. Avoid them if at all possible!