

Project Policy:

The following are essential guidelines for participating in any of our projects:

1. Volunteers need to act in a responsible and respectful manner whilst interacting with the local people, staff and other volunteers.
2. When working with any of our team in the countryside, you must dress appropriately, * see **Dress Code**.
3. If you are invited to join one of our teams into the countryside, please come prepared to deal with sun, dust, rain, and thirst. If you believe you will need any snack, please bring something along.
4. When you are working in the countryside, you will at times be asked to join in lunch which has been prepared by the local villager. The food is always fresh and well cooked so there is no need to worry. However, if you have dietary restrictions or serious concerns, you can decline. If you must decline, please do so in a respectful manner. If you do not eat what they provide it may be seen Cambodians would understand if you state that it would be against your religion or is a matter of health that you are not eating what they provided.
5. If you experience any improper treatment by staff or other volunteers, please report it to our management staff.
6. Handing out political or religious materials is forbidden and against our agreements with the government.

Basics:

Cambodians are very friendly and a smile goes a long way.

- Be respectful to elders.
- Shouting or public displays of over emotion are considered impolite.
- Remove your shoes before entering a temple or someone's home.
- Dress respectfully, especially when visiting temples.
- Do not point at someone with your naked foot and do not touch people's heads (including the children).

Dress Code:

Cambodia is a conservative country and we ask that you respect them by dressing accordingly. Siem Reap hosts many tourists and one of the major concerns to the Cambodian people is the liberal and inappropriate dress worn by tourists. Please do not be influenced by the liberal clothing of other tourists, use the locals as your fashion guide.

The basic rule is to cover your knees and shoulders, T-shirts covering the shoulders and anything that covers the knees are the bare minimum and acceptable. Modest, high cut sleeveless tops are acceptable. Men should always wear a top and woman should always wear a bra. Buddhism is an integral daily part of Cambodian life but you will rarely see them walk off the street into a Temple, they will wash and change into clean, conservative clothing before entering, and hats are not to be worn inside Temples.

Buddhist Monk Etiquette:

Buddhist Monks are very highly regarded in Cambodia. There are some basic rules when working with Buddhist Monks:

- Wait until a Monk acknowledges you before you acknowledge him.
- It is forbidden for a woman to touch a monk or even brush past his clothes, not even a hand shake!
- Try not to make the Monks feel uncomfortable by sitting next to them on public transport.
- A woman may not directly pass anything to a Monk, she must place it on a table for him to pick up.

- Monks in Siem Reap are fairly used to foreigners and will try to be tolerant and flexible, respecting our culture as we try to theirs.

Body Language:

Placing the hands together and bowing ones head is the normal greeting in Cambodia, however, many people will now extend their hand to shake yours. Be respectful by going that step further to immerse yourself into the Cambodian culture.

- Cambodians believe the head is holy and the feet are low and dirty. To touch someone on the head is an insult, and to point your feet at someone is also an insult. To point your feet at the image of Buddha is unforgivable.
- Never show anger or try to make someone look stupid, saving face is important and one should maintain a cool head.
- When bartering, do so with a smile – Cambodians are not aggressive barterers.
- Do not show public emotions towards your partner, hugging and kissing is seen to be inappropriate public behavior.
- The left hand should never be used for handshakes, eating or to exchange money or goods.

Toilets:

Guesthouses have western style flush toilets, where you can usually put the paper down the toilet. If you see a bin in any bathroom, it is there for toilet paper. If you feel this is unhygienic then consider the consequences of blocking the toilet. You may sometimes encounter a “squat” toilet. This is the norm style for locals. A scoop and water holding vessel is to be used to manually flush the toilet by pouring the scooped water down the toilet.

Cambodian Time:

In the Western world we are very hung up on time, with our meetings and schedules. Cambodian people do not stress over time and it is not uncommon for things to happen later than arranged. Just go with the flow and forget stress, it’s better for you anyway!

Photos:

Always ask permission before taking someone’s photograph. You can ask permission by saying, “Som tort rupe?” Children will be very interested to see their image on your digital camera and may rush to see it after the photo is taken.

Beggars and Hawkers:

- Try to be courteous to hawkers selling gifts to tourists. A polite “no, thank you”, or in Khmer, “awte arc oon”, and a smile is usually all that is needed to be left alone. Even though they may be poor, begging is an unsustainable activity. We strongly recommend you not give anything to beggars out of guilt. By being a volunteer you are providing them with a sustainable future.
- Giving sweets to children who have no access to tooth paste or brushes causes major problems, when you consider that they also have no access to dental care.
- Giving money to children makes them spend more time begging and prevents them from going to school. With no education, when they become older and “less cute” they earn less money and have no possibility of employment.

Cambodian Expenses

Siem Reap town:

- The official currency is the Riel, although \$USDollars are used in many hotel and restaurant transactions
- The Riel is used as small change: 4,000 Riel = \$1 US dollar
- We recommend you exchange some [\$50 or less] \$USD for Riel upon arrival. It will give you better bargaining power
- Local transport [Moto] costs an average of 2000 Riel for a short journey, \$8 -\$10 USD all day
- Tuk-Tuk transport costs an average of \$1 - \$2 USD for a short journey, \$12+USD all day
- Taxi costs approximately \$25 USD+ all day
- Bicycle Hire for an average of \$2 - \$4 USD all day
- Food sold by street vendors are very inexpensive, 500 – 4,000 Riel
- A meal at the market can be inexpensive, ranging from \$1 - \$3 USD
- Meals in a restaurant range from \$3 - \$20 USD
- Bottled water is available all over town and range in price from 500 Riel to \$.50 USD. They can be purchased by the 6 pack for a reduced cost.
- There are lots of ATMs in town
- We recommend you avoid the use of Travelers' checks. They can be difficult to cash, you must show your passport, and with access to ATMs, there is no real need to trouble yourself with them. Cashing them you may have to pay a percentage commission
- ATMs spit out USDs
- Visa withdrawal can be found with a 0% commission fee at the USB bank
- Money transfer facilities are available in town
- Laundry service is available all over town and most charge \$1 USD per kilo
- Various types of massage techniques are available from \$3 to \$30 USD per hour. The best, from a charitable stand point, is 'Seeing Hands Massage', an organization supporting the local blind community.
- A one day pass to the Temples of Angkor costs \$20 USD. There is also a 3 day pass for \$40 USD, or a week pass for \$60 USD

Keeping in Touch

Internet cafes:

Many guesthouses, hotels, bars and cafes have internet access and/or Wi-Fi. There are numerous Internet Cafes around town, some faster than others. Access can be very slow compared to Western standards. You will need to bring your patience with you if you intend to do a lot of e-mailing, work on facebook, etc. Price ranges from \$.50 USD to over \$1 USD per hour.

Telephone:

Telephone services are available in internet cafes. Be careful which café you use as the prices vary drastically. Some places charge \$2 USD per minute for international calls others use a different system where calls are as low as 500 Riel per minute. The connection is not as good as you are used to at home, there is usually a delay, but good enough to communicate. We would suggest setting up a Skype account before you arrive as this is the cheapest way to make phone calls back home.

Mobile phone:

Siem Reap is set up for mobile phone connectivity. Check with your provider to see that you are set up with international roaming and that your phone will work in Cambodia. Many people bring their own mobile phone and purchase a SIM card locally for around \$3 - \$10 USD. This will give you a

Cambodian phone number, international text messages are then fairly cheap, and it is a convenient versatile way to stay in touch with home. You may want to consider buying a phone and SIM card upon arrival, if your phone from home is not compatible with working in Asia. A basic phone may cost you \$30 USD.

Post:

The main post office is on Pokambor Avenue near the Foreign Correspondents Club [FCC]. It is open from 07.30 to 17.30 everyday. They offer general postal and parcel services. The postal service is slow and by no means reliable. If you have something important to send, or receive, there are other parcel services in town, such as DHL (012-879020).

TV:

Siem Reap is fully equipped with cable TV with English language programs. You can keep up with world news on BBC World or CNN, watch movies and sitcoms.

Newspapers and magazines:

The Cambodian Daily is the local English language newspaper, and the Cambodge Soir is the local French language newspaper. International papers include the Bangkok Post, the Nation and the Herald Tribune. International papers are usually available after 11.00AM. The Bayon Pearnik magazine is full of local information and humorous news stories, and is available free at guesthouses and restaurants.

Language Guide:

English is widely spoken in Siem Reap, but it is always good to know some basic Khmer (Cambodian language) phrases:

Hello - so sa dai
How are you? - sok sa bai?
Thank you - arc-oon
Please - som
Excuse - me som dtoh
Do you speak English? - niak jek ong-layh
Do you have...? - niak mien..... dtay?
What's your best price? - niak dait pohn maan?
Never mind - meun ey dtay
Beautiful - sa-aat
The bill please - som ket loi