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Cambodia



Where is Cambodia?

- **Location:** Southeast Asian country bordered by Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and the Gulf of Thailand.
- **Capital:** Phnom Penh (pronounced "Puh-nom Pen")
- **Fun Fact:** Home to the world's largest religious monument, Angkor Wat.
- **Size and Population:** Covers 181,035 square kilometers, with a population of approximately 17 million.



What is the weather like?

- **Tropical Climate:** Hot and humid year-round with distinct wet and dry seasons
- **Dry Season:** Lasts from November to April with temperatures ranging from 25°C to 35°C (77°F to 95°F).
- **Wet Season:** From May to October, with heavy rainfall, especially between June to September, and temperatures around 24°C to 30°C (75°F to 86°F).
- **Humidity:** High humidity throughout the year, especially during the rainy season.



Main Occupations

- **Agriculture:** A significant portion of the population (around 65-70%) is engaged in farming, with rice being the most important crop, along with maize, cassava, and rubber.
- **Services:** The tourism sector plays a vital role, along with growing hospitality and retail industries, especially in urban areas.
- **Industry:** Textiles, garments, and footwear are Cambodia's major exports, with the manufacturing sector expanding.
- **Construction:** The booming real estate and infrastructure sector has created many job opportunities in urban areas.



Language in Cambodia

- **Official Language:** Khmer is the national and most widely spoken language.
- **Minority Languages:** Over 20 languages are spoken, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Cham, and indigenous languages.
- **English:** Widely spoken in urban areas, especially in business and tourism sectors.



Culture and Religion

- **Religion:** The predominant religion in Cambodia is Buddhism, with around 95% of the population practicing Theravada Buddhism.
- **Traditional Culture:** Cambodian culture is influenced by Buddhism, Hinduism, and French colonialism, reflected in art, architecture, and festivals.
- **Festivals:** Important festivals include Khmer New Year, Pchum Ben (Ancestors' Day), and Water Festival, which celebrates the Tonle Sap river.
- **Music and Dance:** Traditional Khmer dance, such as Apsara dance, and gamelan music are integral parts of the culture.
- **Cuisine:** Cambodian cuisine is centered around rice, fish, and vegetables, with famous dishes like Amok (curry) and Lok Lak (stir-fried beef).



Major Festivals

Khmer New Year (Chaul Chnam Thmey) celebrated in April with three days of family gatherings, traditional games, and water fights. It marks the end of the harvest season, allowing farmers to rest and celebrate before the new agricultural cycle begins.



Pchum Ben (Ancestors' Day) is a major Buddhist festival in September/October where families offer food to monks and honor ancestors. It is believed that spirits of the deceased return during this time, and offerings help them find peace in the afterlife.

Water Festival (Bon Om Touk), held in November, featuring boat races and nationwide celebrations to mark the Tonle Sap River's reversal. The festival historically symbolized the strength of the Khmer navy and continues to bring communities together in gratitude for Cambodia's waterways.



Education in Cambodia

- **Literacy Rate:** Around 87.7% of adults are literate, but rural areas have lower literacy rates and gender disparities still exist with male literacy rate being higher.
- **Teacher Shortages:** Thousands of schools run multiple shifts due to a lack of teachers, especially in remote areas.
- **Learning Poverty:** Around 70% of 10-year-olds struggle with reading comprehension, with boys facing higher learning poverty than girls.
- **Girls' Education:** Only 37% of Cambodian women complete upper secondary school, with many dropping out due to poverty and traditional roles.





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www.uwsglobal.net



info@uwsglobal.net



0203 4570704

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133 Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7QA