



Know Before You Go
pre-departure guidance + checklist

Ayana
journeys

Welcome

This information pack is provided to help you prepare for your adventure, learn more about our approach to travel, and find out how you can maximise your experience in Cambodia. Here you will find everything to help you before your departure. The more you learn beforehand, the better your trip will be.

We're delighted you have chosen to explore Cambodia through Ayana Journeys, and we cannot wait to welcome you to the Kingdom of Wonder. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Happy travels!
The Ayana Team



Ayana Journeys: About Us

handcrafted travel for curious minds

We believe that travel should always benefit the places and people we visit. That is why all our tours are carefully handcrafted with a focus on education and meaningful connections with local people and their fascinating stories. We encourage you to visit with an open mind and an open heart. We promise, you'll leave learning new things, having experienced places other companies can't share with you, and new friends for life.

Responsible Travel

We strive to operate in the most socially responsible way we can, and we hope you can join us in being respectful towards Cambodian cultural norms and towards your host communities.

cultural etiquette

- Dress – Cambodia is a conservative country and whilst you may see travellers and young locals alike now wearing shorts and sleeveless shirts in cities or tourist sites, it is certainly not appropriate at places of worship (including temple ruins) or in rural areas. It is best to travel at all times covering your knees and shoulders, without revealing your belly or back. It can get hot at times of the year, so if you are wearing something more revealing, carry a shawl with you to cover up at times you feel you need it or it is culturally expected.
- Public affection – Kissing and cuddling in public is not common, and can embarrass many Khmer people. Please be discreet when showing affection to loved ones.
- Losing face – This phrase means when someone embarrasses you by pointing out you don't understand something, or are doing something wrong – in Khmer culture this is one of the most awkward social challenges that can occur, and makes people feel very uncomfortable. Be delicate when offering feedback, and at times of frustration remember to keep your cool and do not show you are angry or shout.
- Patting on head – The head is regarded as the most sacred part of the body and should not be patted as it is disrespectful.
- Soles of your feet – Feet are regarded as dirty, and you shouldn't point with them and should be cautious not to walk over people's food when they are dining on the floor.
- Shoes – It is commonly expected for you to remove your shoes when entering someone's home, and always before entering a functioning temple.
- Buddha & the King – Images of Buddha are sacred and your actions should be respectful. Many homes and businesses display a photo of the King, and these should also be respected.
- Photography - Always ask before taking a photo. Sometimes, cameras can get in the way of an organic experience, and at times Ayana will request no photos to be taken to be respectful of others and encourage more of an interaction with the people we meet.

ChildSafe travel

In Cambodia, and many destinations across the world, children can be at risk through irresponsible tourism. We support the ChildSafe campaign which is dedicated to protecting local children from exploitation. Follow these tips as you travel.

1. Think before buying from or giving to a begging child - By buying products, giving money or food to begging children you are maintaining this unsafe daily life and preventing them from accessing school or training; you also prevent organizations from effectively helping them leave the street to access support. This keeps them locked in the poverty cycle.
2. Think how to protect children from exploitative labour - Children and young people are exploited in work places around the world. Children may be exploited and forced to work which keeps them from attending school and is damaging to their healthy development.
3. Children are not tourist attractions – Visiting schools, orphanages, dumpsites exploits children and their families for the financial gain of the organisers and can lead to further exploitation. By visiting and photographing children and families in these situations you are reinforcing their feelings of inequality and detachment from society. Often poor living conditions are maintained to get sympathy and lure more money from tourists. Children can be at risk of abuse as visitors come into their home environment with minimal supervision by tour agency staff. By providing free clothes and food at dump sites, you will encourage more families and children to live in these surroundings. This may be taking the children away from a safer living environment elsewhere, and away from school.
4. Think before taking a child back to your hotel – You might want to help a child directly. Taking a child to your hotel room for food, to bathe themselves, or to rest is dangerous for you and the child. The child may then feel it is okay to go to rooms with adults, and the next time could be abused or raped. It puts you at risk of being accused of being a paedophile and getting in serious trouble with the law. This might send the wrong signal to the child as to why you have asked them back to your room and you may be propositioned. You put your personal belongings at risk.
5. Think when faced with a situation of potential sexual exploitation of children - If you witness a sex worker, who appears underage offering sex, or if you see an adult propositioning a child or if you are offered sex by a child, refuse and report it immediately.
6. Keep your eyes wide open – If you see a situation where you think a child is in danger, act immediately and call the 24 hour hotline.

National Police Line	+855 (0) 23 997 919
ChildSafe Phnom Penh	+855 (0) 12 311 112
ChildSafe Siem Reap	+855 (0) 17 358 758
ChildSafe Sihanoukville	+855 (0) 12 478 100
ChildSafe International Email	childsafefriends-international.org
APLE (Action Pour Les Enfants)	+885 (0) 92 311 511 reportabuse@aplecambodia.org

language

Cambodia's native tongue is Khmer ("kuh-MAI"), but many Cambodians also speak English, especially in the urban centers of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Many will be eager to practice English with you, and pleasantly surprised if you know even just some basic Khmer. We encourage you to learn some Khmer during your trip, as it will make your interactions with Cambodian people much more rewarding.

hello	sue-sa-dai
goodbye	leah-hi
how are you?	sok-sa-bai
yes	jah (f) / ba (m)
no	ot-eh

Health & Safety

inoculations + medication

There are no specific vaccinations required for Cambodia. However, we strongly recommend that before you travel you visit a travel nurse to seek professional advice well before your trip. You should also review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-date information and recommendations for Cambodia. You should pack a personal first aid kit to travel with you, ensuring you bring necessary prescriptions or other over-the-counter medications from your home country that you may need, with you. Our guides all have first aid training however they are not allowed to issue medication. Reliable pharmacies can be found in large cities.

food

Whilst travelling in rural areas, a variety of food choices can be limited, and vegan options can be challenging to source. It is important that you tell us before you arrive if you have any strict dietary requirements so we can try to cater to your needs. Coming with an open mind to trying new foods will help make your visit more enjoyable. If you know you'll crave some home comforts, many Western shops in Siem Reap or Phnom Penh will sell what you're looking for, or to be safe you may wish to bring them with you.

sun

Cambodia is generally a hot and humid country, and even those who are used to the heat or sun, may find the heat exhausting at times.

- Exhaustion – Heat exhaustion symptoms include fatigue/weakness, muscle cramps, a weak and quickening heartbeat, dizziness, nausea, cool and clammy skin, headache, and a dry mouth. Avoid the midday sun when it is at its strongest, and drink lots of fluids.
- Dehydration - In hot and humid climates the body's cooling system is over worked and loses large amounts of fluids and salts (electrolytes). Make sure you drink plenty, including coconuts which are full of natural electrolytes or salt rehydration sachets.
- Sunburn - Be sure to protect your skin against strong rays by bringing sun protection lotion with you (you can buy it in Cambodia but it tends to be more expensive and its availability is inconsistent).

Travel Logistics

money

Cambodia uses two currencies: Khmer Riel and US Dollars (notes only). Khmer Riel is used for small change, normally denominations under \$1, and is very useful when shopping in rural areas, or at a market. It is recommended that you withdraw USD from ATMs in the country, as almost all transactions are done using this currency. ATMs are now readily available in most towns, but bank charges will apply. Make sure you update your home bank in advance of your travel to Cambodia (or anywhere overseas) as if you don't they may block your account to prevent fraud. Travellers cheques can often be challenging to change in Cambodia; we wouldn't recommend carrying money in this capacity. In locations such as Phnom Penh, Siem Reap or Sihanoukville, paying by credit card is increasingly available too.

electricity

Cambodia uses two pin plugs. Adapters are quite rare to come by, so if you have appliances that don't have two pins, it is best to bring a multi-adapter with you. Power cuts are often frequent, especially in rural areas, and in very rare areas electricity is not used by some families.

passport + visas

Many countries are eligible for visas on arrival, which can be purchased for \$25 and lasts for 30 days. An e-visa system has recently been introduced, and enables you to purchase your visa in advance of your visit, for \$35. Pay attention to which border crossings you are able to use the e-visa. Whenever you travel, make sure you have at least 6 months left on your passport validity, and a return flight is recommended to avoid challenges on arrival.

insurance

Personal travel insurance is a requirement for Ayana Journeys trip participants, and you will be required to send us the details of your policy in advance of your arrival, so we can easily access the information in the event of an accident or emergency. Please ensure your cover includes comprehensive medical care and emergency evacuation. In the past, many of our guests have found World Nomads offers the appropriate cover for our tours.

What to Pack

Clothing

- Comfortable shoes with grip (e.g. for walking on rough or muddy terrain)
- A second pair of flip-flops or sandals
- Socks and underwear
- Loose, lightweight long sleeved shirts (for evening / sun protection)
- Loose, lightweight t-shirts & shorts or trousers
- Swimwear
- A hat that shades your eyes from the sun, or covers any bald spots!

Travel items

- Money belt
- Sunglasses
- Sun protection cream
- Insect repellent
- Torch (flashlight)

Medical

- Basic first aid kit
- Personal medication
- Re-usable water bottle
- Camera
- Plug adaptor
- Earplugs if you are a light sleeper

Documents

- US dollars (small bills are useful)
- At least 2 passport sized photos
- Insurance information
- Photocopy of your passport

Learn Before you Leave

As all Ayana Journeys' tours have a focus on education, allowing you to connect with Cambodia through a deeper understanding of the country, its people, culture, challenges, and opportunities, we recommend you do a little reading before you visit.

Suggested reading:

- Cambodia: Tales from a Stricken Land, Henry Kamm
- Cambodia Now: Life In the Wake of War, Karen J. Coates
- First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers, Loung Ung
- Despite Good Intentions: Why Development Assistance to the Third World Has Failed, Thomas W. Dichter
- Golden Bones: An Extraordinary Journey from Hell in Cambodia to a New Life in America, Sichan Siv

To Do: Pre-Departure Checklist

Item	Done? ✓
Complete the trip registration form and pay your deposit (no trips are confirmed until these are returned to Ayana)	
Send Ayana Journeys insurance policy details (including emergency evacuation coverage)	
Visit your local travel doctor for any vaccinations or medications you may require	
Ensure your passport is current and does not expire within the next six months following your estimated return date home	
Return a signed copy of our Release and Waiver of Liability form (include a scanned copy of your passport)	
Pay the remainder of the cost of your trip 4 weeks before departure (we'll send you a reminder)	
Make use of our recommended reading list and educate yourself about Cambodia	
Book your flights!	

Contact

For more information to help plan your trip, or if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Email	contact@ayanajourneys.com
Telephone	+855 (0) 894 111 30
Skype	ayanajourneys

During your trip, we'll also provide you with a list of emergency contact details.

Happy Travels!