



## Ride through Cambodia

Get off the beaten track in Cambodia as we blaze a trail from the glories of Angkor to some of the less known and visited Khmer sites, pedal by the side of the Mekong to the capital city then sweep southwards through rural provinces to finish by the tropical beaches of Kep Sur Mer .

This is a real journey of discovery pedalling along quiet back roads and passing through sleepy villages you'll see the beauty of rural Cambodia up close and experience a the pace of life that has not changed much since the time of the Khmers.

See some of the best Khmer ruins, far from the madding crowds that now dominate Angkor and experience a real thrill as you explore off the beaten track. Our cycling route is varied and fascinating whether it's on jungle tracks up a pilgrimage mountain, cycling by the Mekong river or along the beaches of the tropical southern coastline you will experience a side of Cambodia seen by few others. Coupled with time spent relaxing in Siem reap, Phnom Penh and Kep Sur Mer this is a superb way to experience one of Asia's most captivating countries

## Itinerary

### Day 1 Siem Reap

We will meet at the hotel in the early afternoon and after being fitted with our mountain bikes and have a cycling safety briefing we'll take a gentle ride around town to get our bearings. In the afternoon you will have time to enjoy a massage, shopping or the cafes. At our first Cambodian dinner, you will have the opportunity to learn some information from your guide about Cambodian history and culture.

### Day 2 Angkor Wat

We make an early start to see an unforgettable sunrise over Angkor Wat. After breakfast at a local restaurant we ride on small dirt roads through small villages and farmland to Banteay Srei, one of the most beautiful outlying temples.

The Khmer Empire was one of the most prosperous empires in SE Asia and dominated much of what is now Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand. The kingdom drew its religious and political inspiration from India. The literary language of the court was Sanskrit; the spoken language was Khmer. Massive temples from this period, including Angkor Wat and the Bayon at Angkor Thum, testify to the power of Angkor and the grandeur of its architecture and decorative art. The unparalleled achievements in art, architecture, music, and dance during this period served as models for later cultural development in Cambodia.

Angkor faded into obscurity after the capital moved south to Phnom Penh in the 15th century, probably due in part to frequent

invasions by the neighbouring Thais. The jungle rapidly grew over the monuments. In the centuries that followed, frequent wars reduced the territory, wealth, and power of Cambodian monarchs. However, an independent state with its capital near Phnom Penh survived until the 19th century.

We'll also take some time to cycle to the Land Mine museum - set up by Aki, a former Khymer soldier who over 9 years served in 3 different armies. In the Khmer Rouge his job was to lay 100 - 200 mines each night and then recover them in the morning. Today he goes out for 5 days at a time and clears around 30 mines a day using his feet and a stick.

#### Day 3 Beng Melea & Tonle Sap Lake

Today it's off to see the fabulous ruined temple of Beng Melea, still overgrown with jungle and very atmospheric with few visitors. We will drive to this far-flung temple and then after we have explored the site, we will ride to the Tonle Sap Lake, the largest freshwater lake in SE Asia. The lake's waters control the flow of the Mekong and provide a living for thousands of people, as it is one of the world's richest sources of freshwater fish. Here we visit the small communities that call the lake home and draw their lively-hoods from its depths. Their houses sit high above the lake on stilts. We will then ride back to our hotel for our last night in Siem Reap.

#### Day 4 Beng Melea - Kampong Cham

A drive takes us around the top of the lake, through Kampong Thom Province and then into Kampong Cham Province. We ride the last section of the route today as we pass through small towns and then down to the Mekong River where we find our home for the night. Kampong Cham province is home to many of the country's Cham Muslim population.

#### Day 5 Kampong Cham - Phnom Penh

One of the most interesting rides of the trip, today we ride along the Mekong River on a small dirt road through small Cham Villages, who survive on fish from the Mekong and small-scale vegetable and animal farming. Today's route runs along dirt roads all the way to the Town of Koh Kaong where we board buses for the last leg of our journey into Phnom Penh.

After checking into our hotel the rest of the day will be free for you to look around the sights of the capital city. Phnom Penh is a fascinating city that still retains a lot of its colonial charm from its days as the French capital of Indochina. There will be time in the evening to have a drink in the famous Foreign Correspondents Club by the river. The sights of Phnom Penh, include the National Museum, Royal Palace and many Wats located in the city.

#### Day 6 Phnom Penh

Today is free for you to rest up and explore the diverse city of Phnom Penh. From the leafy areas of the International workers, to popular riverfront area and the slums of the port area, Phnom Penh is not a city you will forget in a hurry. There are some tragic reminders of the Khmer rouge times here, including the infamous S21 genocide Museum. On the brighter side, the markets are a great place to rub shoulders with the friendly population of this city and a good place for some souvenirs.

#### Day 7 Phnom Penh - Takeo

We start our ride to the Killing Fields. These are a sobering reminder of the tragic past that Cambodia has endured. From here we will ride to an ancient temple and then onto Takeo Province. As we approach town, we ride through the small surrounding villages on red dirt roads where hundreds of children will want to say hello and give you an encouraging high five! Tonight we stay in a small, basic and clean guesthouse

#### Day 8 Takeo

We continue south today, riding on more flat easy roads through endless rice fields and waving children to Kampot, a pleasant town which sits on a picturesque stretch of river. Famous for its smelly fruit produce, the Durian, Kampot is an enjoyable place to wander around past old colonial buildings and riverfront cafes. In the evening boat trips can be taken into the mangroves or you can relax with a massage from a blind masseur at the Seeing Hands Massage Centre.

#### Day 9 Bokor & Kep Sur Mer

Today we have an optional challenge. A ride to the top of Bokor Mountain National Park and back. There is the atmospheric ruins of an old French casino and resort atop the mountain and spectacular views along the coast on a clear day. A tough climb takes us up through the jungle to the top of this mountain. The descent will also test your bike skills and all up, the adventure is a satisfying experience.

In the afternoon we will take the much easier ride to Kep, a beach resort popular with the French Colonials in their time here. Kep is a delightful, laid back beach town that's a great place to relax after your trip. The crumbling remains of some of old French villas can still be seen along the waterfront drives and rainforested hills plunge down to the coast.

#### Day 10 Depart Kep Sur Mer

Our Cycling adventure concludes today. We can transfer you back to Phnom Penh, or you may wish to extend your travels and arrange a visit to Sihanoukville.

### Accommodation

---

Accommodation is a mixture of hotels and guest houses and we have chosen the best that are available in the more remote locations. In Phnom Penh and Siem Reap we use great hotels which are very centrally located with comfortable rooms and facilities (the equivalent of four star). Generally speaking, the accommodation on this trip is a good standard though some patients maybe required in the smaller guesthouses where the plumbing and standards of English may not always be as you like it!

### Meal Inclusions

---

Most meals are included in this trip and the food is generally of an excellent quality. The only exclusion is on free days in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. please refer to the itinerary for exact inclusions:

We like to sample the best of local dishes and produce so you enjoy an authentic taste of the region which you're travelling through. Cambodian food is a mixture of different influences from Thailand, Cambodia and France. Vietnamese food is rightly regarded as one of the great Asian cuisines with its own distinctive flavours and influences from China and France.

(B,LD) stands for breakfast and lunch and dinner.

### Transport

---

Any transport required is generally by private vehicle. You will have an air-conditioned support vehicle travelling with you in Cambodia throughout the trip.

### Physical Rating

---

#### Moderate

You don't need to be a highly experienced cyclist to join these multi-day trips but a reasonably good level of fitness is required to participate fully. Full support is provided throughout, so you can ride as much or as little as you want to. Be prepared for moderate to strenuous physical activity as you will be cycling for between 5 and 7 hours each day on average and some pre-trip training is recommended to get the most from your adventure. Terrain is varied but generally on sealed roads and no technical skills needed to enjoy the trip.

#### Visas

---

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

If you would like someone to take the hassle out of your visa application please visit the following website:  
[www.visalink.com.au](http://www.visalink.com.au)

Cambodia:

You can obtain a visa on arrival by air or at major land crossings (bring 2 passport photos), cost US\$25. Alternatively apply via the online e-visa service offered by the Cambodian Government. Please visit the following site: <http://evisa.mfaic.gov.kh/>

## Important Notes

---

### 1. Bikes

Please make sure that you let us know your height in cm's so that we can properly size you to the correct frame size.

The bikes that we provide are 21 speed mountain bikes with front suspension and have a single water bottle carrier cage. There are no racks and we advise bringing a handlebar bag to carry personal items.

### 2. Bringing your own bike

Not a problem but any extra charges for taking it on the train or plane are your responsibility. It is best to pack your bike in a bike box available from any bike shop. We can then carry the box in the truck. Please note that while every effort is made to maintain all the bikes in good condition on each trip, we cannot guarantee that some small damage such as scratching will not occur as a result of the daily loading and unloading of bikes into and out of the support vehicle.

Please note - If you are bringing your own bike and it has disc brakes, hydraulics, rear suspension, oil units or special pumps for adjusting the suspension pressure, please make sure that you bring the necessary spares and parts with you.

### 3. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips.

We strongly recommend that you take out insurance the moment you register for a trip as you are then covered should you not be able to go in the event of illness or accident. Please send these details (name of insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number) to RAW prior to departure.

We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader. If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Our preferred insurance company is CoverMore as they provide an excellent service. You can apply on line directly by clicking on this link:

<https://b2c.covermore.com.au/index.jsp?alpha=AAV0231>

## What to take?

---

You should pack as lightly as possible. Your main luggage will be transported for you on all cycling days in the support vehicle. You will only need a day pack to carry your personal items when cycling. You are expected to carry your own luggage on & off the bus and though you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage we recommend keeping the weight under 12kg. Suitcases are not recommended as they are awkward to store in the support vehicle.

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags with wheels are acceptable, although we recommend your bag has carry straps as well.

### Checklist (suggested list):

---

#### Travel Documents:

- Passport (with photocopies) and Cambodia visa
- Copy of travel insurance
- Airline ticket
- USD cash
- Credit card

\*\* Tip: use a money belt for security (put documents inside a plastic bag)

#### Personal Items

- First Aid kit (see the health section)
- - High factor sunscreen
- - Mosquito repellent
- - Sunglasses
- - Toiletries (biodegradable)
- - Watch or alarm clock
- - Ear plugs (in case room mate snores!)
- - Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- - Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel

#### Clothing

- - 3 T-shirts (lightweight quick drying fabric) / long sleeved T-shirt
- - 2 pairs Cycling shorts (padded)
- - 1 pair of comfortable shoes for cycling
- - pair of sport sandals
- - socks (for cycling)
- - 1 pair of knee length shorts
- - 1 pair lightweight long trousers
- - Lightweight waterproof top
- - Light sweater/fleece for evening
- - Small towel and swim wear
- - Sun hat
- - Clothes to relax in

#### Cycling Equipment

- - Helmet - (compulsory)- bring one with good ventilation
- - 1 water bottle (min. 750 ml capacity recommended) or 'Camel Bak' hydration pack
- - Handlebar bag / small day pack for carrying items when cycling
- - Cycling gloves

• Optional:

- - Multi-tool (allen keys) for minor adjustments to your bike
- - Your own saddle or gel seat cover
- - Your own SPD pedals
- - Mini bicycle pump
- - Favourite snacks for cycling energy boost e.g. 'PowerBars', sports gel (a concentrated carbohydrate that delivers immediate energy when you feel tired or flat), dried fruit or nuts
- \*\*\*Please refer again to our Cycling Guide on the homepage to see photo of bikes used and how to customise it.

#### Other Suggestions:

- Camera and plenty of film
- - Adapter for recharging digital camera (American style with 2 parallel flat pins)
- - Spare batteries
- - Reading / writing material
- - Penknife (put in main luggage at airport)
- - Torch
- - Small calculator (when out bargaining!)
- - Photos of family or postcards of Australia (great way to have fun with locals you meet)
- - Phrase book, map and Lonely Planet guide
- - Small padlock for securing your luggage during flights

## Local Dress

---

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout Asia. We will be spending a lot of time in the more conservative rural regions of Cambodia. Please remember that as visitors to someone else's home it is our responsibility to fit with the local customs by wearing appropriate clothing (irrespective of what other travellers are wearing). Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Asian climate.

As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered at all times. The wearing of shorts and halter tops away from the beach or swimming pools are not allowed as they will restrict your entry into buildings of a religious nature and family homes. Cycling shorts and tops are ideal, though we do insist that you cover up when coming off the bike or stopping in villages as local people will be shocked and sometimes offended by the sight of tight body hugging lycra! So please be a good ambassador for your country and have a loose pair of shorts to put over your cycling shorts or a sarong to wrap around.

## Health

---

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

Please let us know of any medical conditions on the registration form and if you are currently taking prescription medicine as it is important that our leader is aware of your circumstances. We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for entry into Cambodia. However, you should consult your doctor or travel clinic for up-to-date information and prescriptions for vaccinations and anti-malarial requirements. We would suggest that you are up to date with immunisation protection against typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis. These countries are also a low risk malarial area and we recommend that you take a course of suitable malarial prophylactics. As some vaccinations require a course over weeks

or months, contact your doctor as early as possible prior to departure. Generally, six to eight weeks' notice is adequate.

We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (such as a spare pair of prescription glasses). Please be aware that for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets/antibiotics etc. Your first aid kit should include:

- headache tablets
- diarrhoea treatment (both a blocker to bring relief from the symptoms and an antibiotic)
- band-aids
- antiseptic for cuts & scrapes
- lip balm
- insect repellent
- high factor sunscreen.

Given the physical nature of this trip we strongly advise bringing some sachets of an oral rehydration solution (available at chemists) as this aids recovery following activity and dehydration and also helps replace lost body salts should you suffer from 'gastro'. Just add a sachet to your water bottle each day. Please scroll down to the Special Safety Notes below for information on dehydration.

**If you are 65 years or older a completed Medical Certificate is required.**

**Please let us know and we can post you a copy which then needs to be signed by your GP and posted faxed through to 03 9597 0797 prior to departure.**

## Physical Preparation

---

In order to physically prepare yourself to cycle long hours in the saddle for up to 7 hours on successive days it is so important that you undertake a fitness program. Getting yourself fit is all part of the Challenge and one that you'll benefit from long after your trip is over. It is really worth putting in the effort before you go to condition the body (backside, neck, shoulders & leg muscles) as it means you'll enjoy the event rather than it being a struggle.

Build up your base endurance by long and frequent bike rides which will ensure that you are in peak condition for the challenge. You can also mix this up by taking other forms of regular exercise which you currently do such as yoga, spinning classes, walking and swimming.

## Money Exchange

---

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

Cambodia: \$1 AUD = approx. 3325 Riel. Officially the Cambodian Riel is the unit of currency. Unofficially however, \$US runs the country and is the currency you should bring, mostly in cash. Clean bills of small denominations are best. Travellers cheques can be difficult to change. ATM's are appearing in larger cities. Credit cards can be used to advance cash in banks in major towns but attract a high fee. We recommend that you don't use money changers on the street. When changing money try and get a mix of denominations (your leader will advise you on this). Keep smaller notes with you when on the cycle ride as it can be difficult to change larger notes once out of the city.

## Spending Money

---

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to

allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping.

Any tip that you wish to give to your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated. We recommend approx. US\$30 to go into a kitty to be distributed to the local team at the end of the trip. Usually we do this on the last night at the celebration dinner.

## Emergency Funds

---

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD\$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

## Keeping In Touch - communication while on the road

---

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road. Email cafes are commonplace throughout the regions we visit. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency we recommend that they refer to our Emergency contact. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

## Emergency Contact

---

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call the RAW Office. Tel: +61 3 9597 0798. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632

## Your Fellow Cyclists

---

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

## Group Leader

---

RAW has both resident western and local leaders who lead our trips in this region. Generally speaking you will have a western leader with a larger group size supported by local leaders as well. Where the group size is smaller or with a private booking for a few persons you will have a local leader. All our staff are first aid trained and experienced with the special nature and demands of cycle tours and are able to give you support and insights into the local culture.

The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

While not being tour guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries

visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local area guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

One of the staff accompanying your trip will also double as Mechanic and ensure that your bikes are trouble free by checking them over regularly during your trip. It is your responsibility to communicate any problems you may have with your bikes to your leader so that they are aware of them. Please ensure that any maintenance required is pointed out to the mechanic / leader at a time when they have time to fix the problem and not immediately before your scheduled departure each morning - which will delay the day's ride for everyone.

## Responsible Travel

---

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. When we are cycling children will ask you for pens, money etc. It is always hard to resist giving them small gift. However we ask you not to do this as it encourages a culture of begging and often parents will take their children out of school and get their children to prey on tourists. Ask your leader what is the best way to give.

## A Couple of Rules

---

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for RAW travellers.

RAW's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## Safety

---

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling.

Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

A thorough cycling safety briefing will be given prior to setting off about the bikes.

## Dehydration

---

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical challenge such as trekking over undulating terrain. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake especially at altitude and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty). Symptoms of mild dehydration include:

- flushed face
- extreme thirst, more than normal or unable to drink
- dry, warm skin
- cannot pass urine or reduced amounts, dark, yellow
- dizziness made worse when you are standing - weakness - cramping in the arms and legs
- sleepy or irritable
- headaches
- dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva

The simplest way of monitoring your fluid intake is by checking the colour of your urine. If it is clear or slightly yellow you are well hydrated but once it is a dark yellow you are in the danger zone and need to increase your fluid intake immediately. Ensure that you bring some Gastrolyte sachets as these help your recovery after trekking with the replacement of electrolytes. Gastrolyte is also the recommended treatment for dehydration caused by diarrhoea ('gastro').

## RAW Newsletter

---

We have a free email newsletter full of travellers stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip. We would also love to receive any photos after the event as we are starting to build up a travellers album for each of our destinations on our website. We need resolution of around 1MB.

Please could you send a CD to: RAW Challenges Photo album, 2/24 Bay Road, Sandringham, VIC 3191.

If you have any suggestions to add more information to our trip dossier that you think other travellers would find useful please email: [adventure@rawtravel.com](mailto:adventure@rawtravel.com). And of course email us if you have any questions leading up to the event.