



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 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

Today is arrival day. There is no activities included. Please meet up with your guide at the hotel's foyer at 5:00pm for bike fitting and brief about the trip. Tonight you will be treated to a traditional Khmer meal and will have the opportunity to hear some of the history from your guide.

Meals: Dinner

Day 2: Siem Reap

A very early start will take you to an unforgettable Angkor Sunrise and We will go back to the hotel for breakfast before jumping on the bikes to visit the most important temples are Angkor Temples. Tha Prom, Bayon, Elephant Terrace, Angkor Wat and We will have lunch at a small restaurant in the vicinity of the temples. Return to the hotel in the afternoon. Evening is on your own leisure.

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 3: Kampong Thom

We start with a ride along the Siem Reap River and it's not long before the bustle of Siem Reap fades and we find ourselves cycling through open countryside, with farmers hard at work and children waving. We cycle on small dirt roads today, some in good condition, some in average condition. We reach the moss covered, shady temple of Beng Melea around lunch time and after losing yourself in this amazing structure, we will have a picnic lunch, before we board the vehicle to travel to our home

for the night, Kampong Thom.
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4: Kampong Cham

We start with a short drive, then we hit the bikes again and cycle down a well made secondary road, past various plantations, including cotton and rubber. The fertile soil of the Mekong Basin and the comfortable climate are perfect for these crops. In the afternoon we pass a disused US-Era Air Strip before we make a small descent into Kampong Cham on small dirt paths.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5: Phnom Penh

This morning we follow the Mekong River as we cycle through Cham Muslim areas. Formerly a Hindu Kingdom that spanned much of what is now Southern Vietnam and Cambodia, the Champa Kingdom declined after a number of fierce battles with the Khmer and Vietnamese. They are thought to have converted to Islam after their King converted in or around the late fourteenth century. Today, Cham people are scattered across their former domain, usually earning a living from fishing. We eat our lunch in the grounds of a modern, river-side temple before we board the vehicle for the drive into Phnom Penh. Phnom Penh with its broken charm is a busy city and is quite a change from the sleepy countryside that you have experienced.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6: Phnom Penh

Today is a rest day, you are free to explore the city such as the Royal Palace, Wat Phnom, Toul Sleng Museum, Killing Field...

Meals: Breakfast

Day 7: Takeo

We leave Phnom Penh early in the morning as farmers are bringing their produce in and factory workers are making their way to work. We cycle a network of small roads and at times larger highways to reach Takeo, a small provincial capital with a simple guest house.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8: Kep

Another early start puts us on a recently completed highway towards the Vietnamese border. With minimal traffic today, you will be able to enjoy the scenery and return all the hellos that are thrown at you by children along the road. We take a small dirt road then another minor highway to reach the coast. Kep was a popular spot with the French during Colonial times. The sea breezes and hilly coast was agreeable with them and there are still quite a few buildings from that time. The fresh seafood is a must and a ride or walk around the hill behind the hotel gives terrific coastal views.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9: Kampot

A sleep in today is well earned. The morning offers a great opportunity to explore Kep. Take a walk around the beach, up through the shady hills or simply relax with a book by the pool. Late in the morning we will take a boat out to Rabbit Island for a swim in the crystal clear waters and a fresh lunch. After returning to the mainland, we will take a short ride in Kampot, another quiet provincial capital, set by a river in the shadow of the imposing Bokor Mountain.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 10: Sihanouk Ville

We start today with fresh legs after our rest. We cycle past Bokor Mountain, often still covered in mist.

We then travel along the coast, past mangroves and small fishing villages with brightly colored fishing boats. We will have a flat ride today before meeting the first hills of the ride. We then take another secondary road to avoid the traffic and ride the rolling hills that are the start of the Cardamon Mountain Range. In the late afternoon, white sand and blue water will signal your arrival at the headland before Sihanouk Ville. We have one last hill and then a rolling finish down to our hotel. Tonight we stay just a block back from Orchateul Beach and enjoy a celebratory dinner to finish.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11: Sihanouk Ville

Enjoy your free day today on the beach

Meals: Breakfast

Day 12: Departure day

Free morning in the Sihanouk Ville and we drive back to Phnom Penh in the afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast

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 patience 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.

Please note B, L, D 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 are 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

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 24 speed Trek 4400 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.

They have a light tread pattern for less rolling resistance.



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 online 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 and 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
- - 1 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 or faxed through to 03 9787 0136 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 and 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

Cambodia: \$1 AUD = approx. 4000 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 because travellers cheques can be difficult to change. ATM's are appearing in larger cities and 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) may 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 9787 4366.

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 people 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 a 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.

RAW Travel has taken an active approach to helping communities in destinations that we visit and raising money for grass roots projects aimed at alleviating poverty and conservation of the natural environment. For more details please visit our website where we have a download document detailing our responsible travel practice and philosophy:
<http://rawtravel.com/respravel/responsibletravel.pdf>

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 cycling in hot climates. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake especially if 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 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, Suite 1 7 Davies Ave, Mount Eliza, VIC 3930.

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. And of course email us if you have any questions leading up to your trip.

The information in these trip notes has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Travel.