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## Self Guided trips Cambodia

Come and see the real Cambodia by bike. If you are not a group tour sort of person, then you will appreciate our self guided tours. Travel at your own pace and discover this unique country of your own accord.

A RAW Travel Self Guided Cycle Trip will give you the freedom that you as an individualist desire, while negating the frustrating lost and confused moments. With our accurate directions, concise notes and helpful flashcards, you can't get lost. We transfer any surplus luggage to your finish point. We organise any necessary vehicle transfer links. We book clean, friendly well run and character filled accommodation. We offer a support line you can call to get instant help on any directions or problems you may have and we provide a mechanic who can get to you in a few hours to repair any major bike faults.

These tours take the hit and miss out of bike touring. Our support services ensure that you are never more than a call away from safety and assistance. Cambodia is perfect for self supported and self guided tours. It is mainly flat, populated by hospitable and friendly people and there are lots of small roads free of traffic. Best of all, the more you cycle, the more delicious Cambodian food you can eat!

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## Frequently Asked Questions

Why take a self-guided trip over an independent cycling trip?

Independent cycling trips take a lot of time, money and effort to research destinations and routes. Also, most independent cyclists are hesitant to get off the main highways and roads because the small dirt roads aren't usually on maps. On our self-guided tours we have done all the difficult research for you so you can spend your holiday cycling rather than scratching your head and looking at the map.

How will I find the way?

We will provide you with Detailed Directions and Trip Notes that give you step-by-step directions.

What if my bike breaks or I get lost?

Help is always just a phone-call away. We will provide you with a phone and all the phone numbers you need to help you whether you have bike problems, health problems or you get lost.

What about the bikes?

We provide you a correctly sized bike from our fleet of Trek 4400 mountain bikes, all of which are well maintained in our Phnom Penh workshop. (See the picture later in these notes). Bikes come with waterbottle cage and pannier.

What we provide:

- Detailed trip itinerary notes (with tips and insights from experienced travel cyclists) With turn by turn instructions, distances and interesting sights along the way

- Bikes

Good quality mountain bikes with front suspension

- Panniers

Waterproof bags that attach to the bicycles to carry your gear

- Helmets

Certified to US standards

- Main luggage transfer and/or storage

Do you have big bags that you don't want to carry with you on your bike?

We can transport it anywhere you want it to go, or store it for you back in Phnom Penh.

- Phone and sim-card

Borrow one of our phones in-case of an emergency

- On-call mechanic and assistance

Major problem with the bike along the way? We can send someone to fix it.

- Ability to book any transport or accommodation you may want along the way

## Accommodation

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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

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Most meals are not included in this trip as you are travelling independently, so this gives you more flexibility over your eating times. Modern Cambodian food is of a good standard and a mixture of different influences from Thailand, Cambodia and France. In the larger towns and cities there is a good variety of international dishes available and Phnom and Siem Reap in particular have a number of excellent eateries serving every manner of cuisine. Smaller towns and villages will usually only offer local food but there is always good nutritious food available.

## Transport

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Any transport required is generally by private vehicle. Your luggage will be sent ahead of you to your next accommodation each time.

## Physical Rating

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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 and confidence in travelling by yourself. As these trip are non -vehilce supported you need to be able to ride the distances stated in your itinerary for each day. Be prepared for moderate to strenuous physical activity as you will be cycling for between 5 and 7 hours each day on average and pre-trip training is recommended to get the most from your adventure. Heat is often the biggest factor that you will contend with in Cambodia and early starts are recommended each day to make the most of the cooler mornings. Terrain is varied but generally on sealed roads and no technical skills needed to enjoy the trip.

## Safety

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The security situation in Cambodia has improved greatly in the past decade and the main towns and cities do not pose any particular threat to visitors. Caution is still urged if you are venturing out late at night in cities and like anywhere else petty theft does occur. In the rural areas you are unlikely to encounter problems when riding but you should be vigilant with your personal belongings and the bike - locking it securely to a post or fence whenever it is not in use. All travellers and particularly females are advised to travel where possible groups of two or more.

## Visas

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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

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### 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 provide a single pannier to carry personal items. They have a light tread pattern for less rolling resistance.



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?

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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):

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#### 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
- - A padlock for securing your luggage during transfers is essential

## Local Dress

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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

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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

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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 experience 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

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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

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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.

## Emergency Funds

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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

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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

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In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call the RAW Office. Tel: +61 3 9597 0799. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632

## Responsible Travel

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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

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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

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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 essential for securing your luggage when transferring between locations.

Please also note that our local Manager 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

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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 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

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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, 1/24 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.

