



Local Currency The national currency of Cambodia is the riel (R), but the US dollar is widely accepted. The most common riels are the 500 and 1,000 bills.

It depends upon the business, but the acceptance of credit cards and traveler's checks in cities and tourist destinations is getting to be more widespread.

Banks and licensed moneychangers are common in the cities and tourist destinations. No bank, business or money exchange will accept a US bill that has even the slightest tear. They deem the bill worthless if damaged.

Office/Telephone Facilities **Main Post Office:** Ekareach Street, intersection of Mittapheap Kampuchea-Soviet Street.

Internet / Public Telephone: There are a number of shops that cater to internet and phone calls. They have a good reputation for being fast and very inexpensive. In the beach area near the Golden Lions Circle you can find the Ocean Mart. Downtown Sihanoukville also has a good selection of businesses that offer internet service in addition to Wi-fi. You can check out the Starfish Bakery and Ana Internet.

Tourist Information **Tourist Police:** 012-882071. Tourist Police patrol most of the popular destinations like Serendipity Beach and Ochheuteal Beach.

Department of Tourism Sihanoukville: Sopheak Mongkul, Sangkat 2, Khan Mittaphea, Tel: 012 867874, Tel: 016390505, Te/fax: 034933894

Transportation Tourists are prohibited from driving motorcycles or cars.

Motorcycle Taxi (motodups): Tourists will always pay a higher rate than a local. The price will go up according to the number in your group. Set a price before you leave. Remember, you are dealing with the best businessmen in the country so make sure you are getting a fair deal.

Remok are a motorcycle with a cart that can carry up to 4 passengers.

They are covered so you will have a bit of relief from the sun and protection from any rain. They charge close to the same amount as a regular taxi.

Taxis can be hired at reasonable rates for a one way ride or for the day. They are readily available at the pier, throughout the town and at any of the tourist destinations you may decide to visit.

Useful Words

Hello	Sues dei
How are you?	Sok sabbai te?
Please	Soum
Thank you	Aw khun
You're welcome	Muhn ay te or Unjuhn
Yes	Ja (women) Baaht (men)
No	Ot te
Good bye	Leah sen heuy or Choum reap leah
Do you speak English?	Cheh niyeay pia'saa Anglais baan te?

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Sihanoukville Cambodia

Port Explorer

General Information

Set on the west coast of the country, half way between Thailand and Viet Nam, Sihanoukville is Cambodia's best beach getaway destination. There is a relaxed and laid back attitude here that brings on a feeling of peace and quiet.



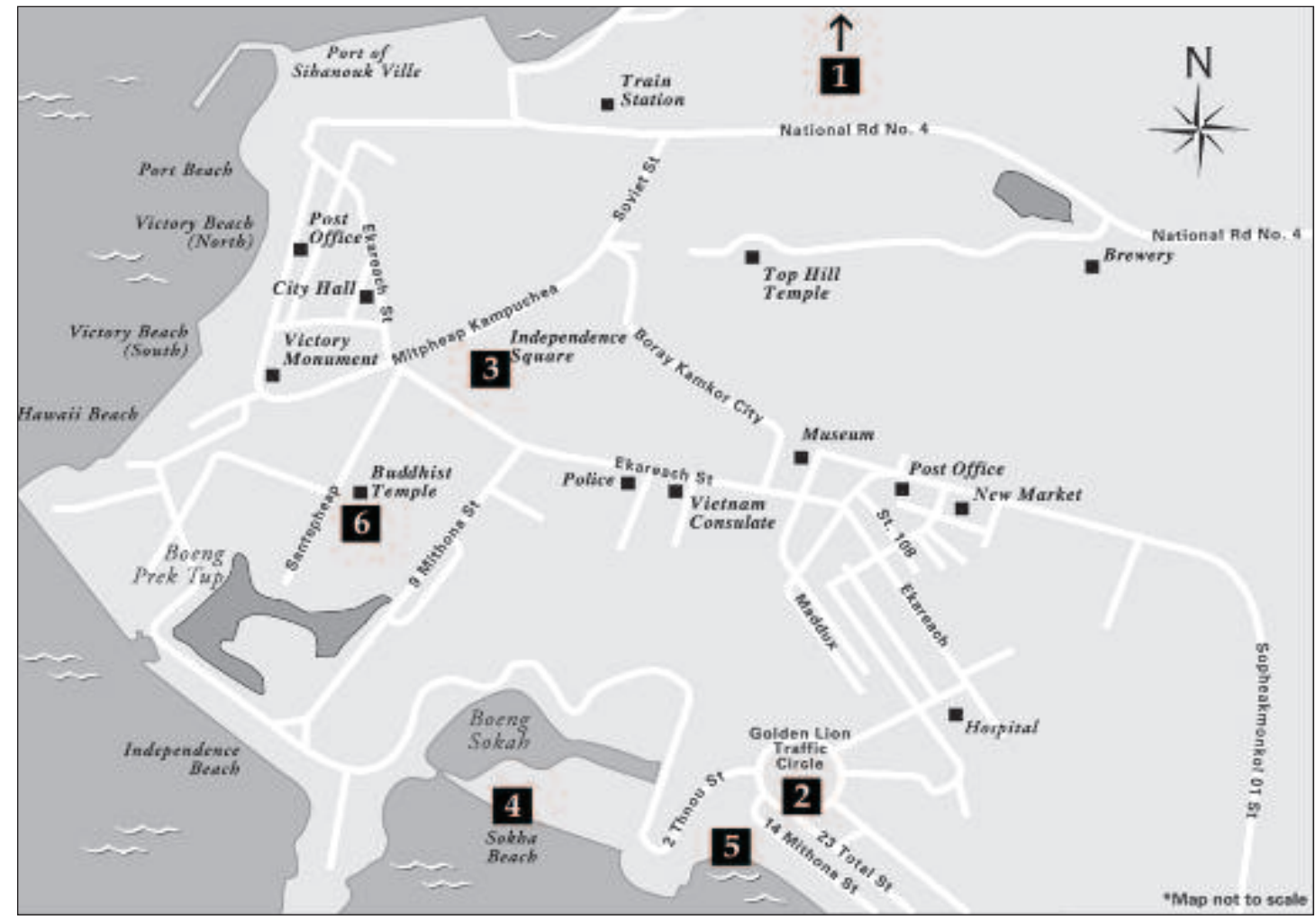
Compared with the rest of ancient and historic Cambodia, Sihanoukville is a brand new town. Named after Cambodia's King Norodom Sihanouk, it was originally built as a deep-water port in the 1950's. The city that grew up around the port was founded in 1964. It quickly became a bit of a boom-town for Cambodia's rich and famous.

In 1970 King Sihanouk was overthrown in a coup and civil war soon tore Cambodia apart. The town was renamed Kampong Som. During this very difficult time for Cambodia the beaches stayed empty.

Peace finally came in 1997. At first only a few brave and adventurous backpackers ventured out to Sihanoukville. But with over 30 million dollars of US aid to improve the road from Phnom Penh the city started to attract more and more visitors. Cambodians and foreigners alike have come to town to open bars, restaurants and hotels. Sihanoukville has been building and more travelers have been coming.

Don't let the modest size of the city fool you. There are a number of very nice and reasonably priced restaurants that are famous for the quality and freshness of their seafood dishes. Today the image and attraction of Sihanoukville is one of fun-in-the-sun for both Cambodians escaping the heat of Phnom Penh and foreign tourists alike. Not yet overblown with massive resorts or overrun by hordes of visitors, the city and surrounding beaches still offer a slower pace of life.

Places of Interest



1 Kampong Pier Tumnup Rolok is a small fishing port just north of the main harbor. Each evening around sunset the fishermen head out to sea in their colorful boats.

2 Golden Lions Monument is the most popular symbol of Sihanoukville. The monument and gardens that surround it were built in 1996. It is centered in a traffic loop and is easily accessible from one of the many Cambodian restaurants or bars that line the road.

3 Independence Square and Monument were built in 1985 in honor of those who died during Cambodia's earlier struggle for independence from the French.

4 Sokha Beach: Though the resort by the same name takes up the entire length, the beach is open to the public. Peaceful and quiet, the resort offers visitors good food and a refreshing bar.

5 Serendipity Beach is probably the most popular in the area. With wonderful sand and surroundings, it also offers a lot of small restaurants and bars with great seafood and cold drinks. Rumor has it that the beach got its name from a young American backpacker a few years back.





This is not a complete list of the beaches surrounding Sihanoukville. Tell your taxi driver what kind of beach you are looking for. Whether you want one with a lot of bars and restaurants or secluded and off the beaten path, you can find it in or around Sihanoukville.

Intra Ngean Pagoda or Wat Intra Ngean, known as Wat Krom (lower Wat) by the locals. It is one of three pagodas in Sihanoukville. First built in the 1960s, the pagoda was destroyed during the civil war in 1975. The pagoda was completely renovated in the 1990s. It sits on a small hill offering a view of the town. The temple has paintings depicting the past life of Buddha and his teaching. This temple is close to the center of town.

Beyond Sihanoukville

Siem Reap is the small yet energetic gateway city to the ancient temples of Angkor Wat. Much of the architecture is in the French colonial style. The city is actually a group of villages that grew up around the Buddhist temple sites along the Siem Reap River.

Besides visiting the temples, you can tour the rice paddies and silk farms. There are a number of small fishing villages and a beautiful bird sanctuary close by.

Angkor Wat was only a myth and legend of an ancient city hidden under centuries of jungle growth. French colonialist in the 1860’s who were told the stories by the local villagers did not believe them.

But the amazing temple complex, built by Suryavarman II between 1113 and 1150, was very real. An amazing feat of artistic design, engineering and construction, the complex uses as much stone as the Great Pyramid of Egypt. Over one hundred years after its discovery the temple continues to amaze scholars, archeologists and tourist alike. It is truly a wonder of the ancient world.

Phnom Penh is the bustling capital of Cambodia, the cultural and economic hub of the country. The city has a wonderful blend of the ancient and modern, the good and the bad. The places at the top of your “gotta see” list are the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, Wat Phnom (a Buddhist temple) and on a more serious note, the Toul Sleng Genocide Museum and the Killing Fields.

Shopping in Phnom Penh offers a wide variety of beautiful hand-woven silks, jewelry, art and brilliantly handmade collectables.

Kampot is much less of a tourist destination. There are a lot of old French colonial period buildings, but overall the town is very laid back. Kampot is the gateway to the Elephant Mountains and the surrounding area. There are ancient caves, jungle trails, deserted beaches, river cruises and an abundance of gorgeous scenery. About an hour east by taxi, this is a great area to explore.

Bokor Hill Station is not far from Kampot. It has the reputation of being a strange and spooky place. The station, actually a group of beautiful old rundown buildings, was built on top of Bonkor Mountain by the French back in the 1920’s. It was to be their retreat and private hideaway for themselves and special guests. It was an escape from the hot and humid weather of the lowlands.

It has been abandoned for many years and is now a fog shrouded reminder of an elegant and exclusive lifestyle during the French Colonial time. When the clouds lift, the view all the way to the Gulf of Thailand is magnificent.

Caves near Kampot: The mountains that surround Kampot are formed primarily from limestone. There are a number of rather large and interesting caves that are open for exploration. Most of the caves have a Buddhist shrine either close by or inside. From the entrance of the Cave of the White Elephant you have a wonderful view if the beautiful Cambodian countryside.

Koh Tunsay: Known in English as Rabbit Island, it is easily accessible by getting a local boat from Kep, a fishing village on the coast next to Kampot. The trip only takes about 20-30 minutes. There are sandy beaches and lots of palm trees. There are few facilities on the island so bring what ever you may need in terms of food and water.



History

Despite the fact that archaeologists have discovered evidence of human habitation in some of the caves in Cambodia dating back as far as 4,000 years, very little is known about the people of the region until the beginning of the first century.

By this time the people had developed sophisticated tools and farming techniques. Great kingdoms such as the Funan were already established. They would rise and fall.

The name Cambodia (Kampuchea) comes from the name of the ancient kingdom of Kambuja which, beginning in the ninth century, ruled much of the countryside for almost 500 years.

In the late 1500’s Cambodia was caught between two powerful neighbors, Viet Nam and Siam (Thailand). Both countries were determined to conquer and absorb as much of Cambodia as possible.

In 1863 the King of Cambodia signed his country away to the French, under the guise of their offer of protection. The French soon turned Cambodia into a colony from which they would profit from the natural resources of the country. Cambodia, together with the other colonies of Laos and Viet Nam were formed into what was called French Indochina.

In the early days of World War II the Empire of Japan conquered Indochina. The Vichy government of France was able to continue the administration of Cambodia and other colonies due to France’s collaboration with Japan’s axis partner, Nazi Germany.

King Norodom Sihanouk was placed on the throne by the French in 1941. It was not until 1953 that the King was able to wrest independence for Cambodia from the fading colonial power.

As France withdrew from Indochina the United States slowly became involved in the former colony of Viet Nam. Cambodia tried desperately to remain neutral. But large areas in the east of the country, along its border with Viet Nam, were being used as bases from which the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong were

launching attacks against US forces inside South Viet Nam. Cambodia’s only deep-sea port, Sihanoukville, became an important link in the Communist’s chain of supply.

In 1969 the United States unleashed a massive bombing campaign upon North Vietnamese military forces which had turned eastern Cambodia into their safe haven. The secret bombing would last over a year and lead ultimately to the 1970 invasion of Cambodia in a US effort to destroy North Vietnamese troops based there.

After years of guerrilla war led by the Paris-educated, hard line communist Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge fought its way to power in 1975. For the next four years Cambodia (renamed Kampuchea) would be brutally occupied by this communist regime.

Mercifully the rule of the Khmer Rouge came to an end and the good people of Cambodia are today continuing to rebuild their proud culture and beautiful country.



Shore Excursions

To make the most of your visit to Sihanoukville and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For Information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

- When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.
- Remember to take along plenty of sun-screen and bottled water.



Local Customs

The people of Cambodia are warm, friendly and very polite. The concept of saving or losing “Face” is extremely important. As a guest in their country it is necessary to understand that to argue with or be critical or to embarrass someone in public will cause them to lose face. On the other hand, to publicly compliment or praise someone for their help or a job well done, is highly prized by the recipient.

Buddhism is the major religion of Cambodia. If you are planning to visit a wat (Buddhist temple) be sure to dress respectfully. Tank-tops or shorts would not be appropriate. Be sure to always ask permission before taking a picture of a Buddha. They are deemed sacred.

Bargaining is an accepted practice in Cambodia. It is always done in a friendly and polite manner.

Tipping: There is no set standard for tipping, but it is accepted and appreciated. Keep in mind that the median annual income in Cambodia is about \$500 (US). If someone provides you with exceptional service, what to you may seem like a small tip is in fact generosity and a compliment.

Local Cuisine: Think...seafood. Sihanoukville has a reputation for some of the best seafood dishes in Cambodia. A number of restaurants have tanks with live fish. But it doesn’t matter much where you go ... the selection of fish, crab and shrimp is always fresh.

Cambodian dishes are greatly influenced by Thai, Chinese and Indian cuisine. Prahok, a fish paste, and kapi, a shrimp sauce, are used a great deal in soups and stir-frying. Many types of noodles are available and of course rice is a staple. Indian curry and chili, brought by the Portuguese in the 1600’s, are both widely used.

A very popular base that is found in many different Cambodian dishes is called “kroeung”. It combines into a paste spices such as cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg together with garlic, lime and shallots.

Chinese style roasted duck is often served durring festivals.

Some of the most popular dishes in Cambodia are Amok Trey (fish in coconut milk and curry then wrapped up with banana leaves and steamed) and Ansom Chek (rice cake and bananas wrapped in banana leaves).

By the way, if you happen to be eating a bowl of rice with your meal and you are using chop-sticks be sure not to stick them straight up in the bowl and leave them there. As is the custom with sticks of insense in a temple, this would be a sign of mourning.

Beer is a very popular drink in Cambodia. There are reportedly prehistoric cave paintings in caves deep in the jungles that portray men drinking coconut beer. Today the most popular Cambodian made beers are Anchor, Bayon and Tiger.



Shopping Facilities

First...a friendly word of warning. Cambodia is internationally known for its rare artifacts and archeological wonders. If you are offered something that looks like a real artifact, or even a poor replica, ask for the “Replica Documentation”. It is against the law to buy or sell Cambodia’s beautiful archeological treasures.

The shopping in Sihanoukville can not compare with that of Phnom Penh. It is not a shopping destination, but there are a couple of interesting places that you might want to visit.

On the second floor above the Starfish Café there is a shop run by Rajana, the Cambodian Arts and Crafts Association. They have a wide selection of handmade jewelry and crafts together with hand-painted art work and beautifully hand-woven cloth.

Downtown on Ekareach Street you can find wonderful silk, jewelry and carvings at Khmer Artisans.