

# Cambodia - A Taste of Southeast Asia

A nation spanning low-lying plains, the Mekong Delta, mountains, and coastline, Cambodia is a must-see for travelers in Southeast Asia. Its capital, Phnom Penh, is home to the art deco Central Market, the glittering Royal Palace, and the National Museum. Located in the northwest of the country, Angkor Wat is a massive stone temple complex built during the Khmer Empire.

Despite the country's economic challenges, Cambodia has been able to establish diplomatic ties with several countries. There are currently around 20 embassies in Cambodia, and it has a strong relationship with its Asian neighbors. It also maintains ties with the European Union, Japan, Canada, and the US. All these nations have provided aid to the country, helping to fund its social and economic infrastructure. The country's food culture is diverse, and it is easy to find something tasty in Cambodia.

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The country has extensive inland waterways that were once crucial for domestic trade. The Mekong River and the Tonle Sap River are navigable year-round, and many tributaries flow into them. With a maximum depth of 1.8 meters (6.5 feet), these waters are suitable for most ships. The Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, is located at the confluence of the Mekong, Basak, and Tonle Sap rivers.

Cambodia's largest lake, Tonle Sap, is the most striking geographical feature of the country. It measures more than 2,590 square kilometers in the dry season and a massive 2,605 square kilometres in the rainy season. It is devoted to wet rice cultivation and considered the country's heartland. Despite these challenges, the government is making progress and achieving positive change. It is a country in transition.

The country is home to a number of rivers and inland lakes. The Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers supply about 20 kilograms of fish per capita in 2000, which is about two ounces a day. The Tonle Sap River produces prahok, a delicious dish. There are also many tropical fruits and vegetables, as well as a wide variety of soups and noodles. The key ingredients for most Cambodian dishes are fish sauce, tamarind, oyster sauce, coconut milk, and black pepper. In 2003, Cambodia's political situation was unsettling, with national elections that failed to give a single party a two-thirds majority of seats to an opposition party. The government arrested and imprisoned opposition parliamentarians in an attempt to stop them from forming a new government. Despite these political challenges, the country's population has a robust economy and is home to some of the most delicious foods in the world.

Although the Cambodian riel is widely used, the government intimidates journalists and media outlets. The government has been known to shut down independent media outlets, especially those owned by the CPP. In fact, the last major newspaper, the Cambodia Daily, was shut down after the government imposed a tax bill. The company later reopened as an online news aggregator, and the Phnom Penh Post was sold to a Malaysian investor with Hun Sen ties.