

have fun help people.

Cambodia Rediscovered About your Program

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“There comes a point in a person’s life when you start asking yourself: what difference am I making in this world? I decided to put my time into something worthwhile.”

- Gayle Harrod

Cambodia Rediscovered

Introduction to Cambodia

Cambodia's turbulent recent history is important to understand in order to gain insight into the projects that we are undertaking. One of the world's most horrific periods of genocide and repression began in the 1970s when the Vietnam War spilled across the border. The United States bombed Cambodia relentlessly. Out of the chaos, Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge regime took control of the country. They emptied the cities, marching people off to rural work camps, and turned back the calendar to Year Zero. In an effort to create a primitive agrarian utopia, the Khmer Rouge purged the country of everything foreign or modern. They outlawed books, money and medicine, which meant a generation of people not allowed any education. They began mass executions. Approximately 2 million people (of Cambodia's then 8 million) were killed during this time. The Killing Fields were a number of sites in Cambodia where large numbers of people were killed and buried by the Khmer Rouge communist regime. The executed were buried in mass graves. In order to save ammunition, people were often executed using only sharpened bamboo sticks or hammers. The soldiers who committed the executions were mostly young men or women from peasant families.



Unfortunately, one of the most lasting legacies of the conflicts continues to claim new victims daily. Land mines, laid by the Khmer Rouge, the Heng Samrin and Hun Sen regimes, the Vietnamese, the KPNLF, and the Sihanoukists

litter the countryside. In most cases, even the soldiers who planted the mines did not record where they were placed. Now, Cambodia has the one of the highest rates of physical disability of any country in the world. While census data for Cambodia is sketchy, it is generally accepted that more than 40,000 Cambodians have suffered amputations as a result of mine injuries since 1979. That represents an average of nearly forty victims a week for a period of twenty years. The Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) estimates that there may be as many as four to six million mines and unexploded ordinances in Cambodia. In 1998, there were 1,249 known new casualties. While the Khmer Rouge were the worst offenders, deliberately targeting the civilian population with mines and booby traps, all sides have shown blatant disregard for the long-term consequences of the use of mines.



Furthermore, the blame extends beyond the warring factions. The Chinese, the Soviets, the Americans and a host of smaller nations continued to supply the weapons with callous indifference to the effects of their actions.

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Community

Globe Aware's Cambodia program is based in the bustling city of Siem Reap.

With a population of over 800,000 and its close proximity to the Angkor Wat ruins and the Tonle Sap Lake, Siem Reap has become a major tourist destination. The center of town is just a short stroll over the river from your accommodations and has a bustling nightlife, with plentiful cafes and bars for you to enjoy in your free time. Siem Reap is also scattered with impressive temples and pagodas that you may enjoy visiting. Many volunteer projects will be centered in rural villages, so you should have ample opportunity to experience all aspects of Cambodian life.



Expect to be immersed in a culture completely different than your own. There are a number of important things to keep in mind when you are a visitor in Cambodia:

- Don't touch another person's head, even if it is meant as a friendly gesture as the head is considered sacred
- Don't point your feet at a person or object.
- Don't get carried away with public displays of affection
- Do remove your shoes before entering private homes and wats (temples)
- Don't lose your temper and shout. You can often get your way faster by being persistently polite
- Don't climb on Buddha statues or photograph them without permission as they are all considered sacred
- Do dress neatly when visiting temples - wear a shirt and long pants when possible

In the last few years Siem Reap has become much more of a bustling, growing town. You will see new guest houses being put up everywhere, and streets in various stages of being paved. Traffic is fairly unruly and you will need to pay special attention when walking around the old market.



Projects and Expectations

Globe Aware works with a number of local aid organizations in Siem Reap.

Globe Aware's program is located in Siem Reap, the gateway to the famous Angkor Wat temples. Volunteers will participate in a variety of projects, including teaching English at a village English School. It provides English instruction to young people in a rural Cambodian village who otherwise have very little contact with native speakers. This is an incredibly meaningful experience and provides locals of this tourist-

based economy with unique job skills which they can later apply and have a better paid job, such as a tour guide. You as a native speaker are in a unique position to provide much sought-after practice and instruction.



Volunteers will have the opportunity to help in the construction of a chicken coop for a needy village family. A chicken coop will allow the family to harvest the eggs for a great source of protein as well as sell any surplus eggs for a profit.

Volunteers may also participate in part of our reforestation efforts in villages around Siem Reap. Outside of the temple complex, trees are not protected. With the construction of new roads and the clearing of large expanses of land, erosion has become a problem. We are working with local villages to set aside protected areas for tree planting as well as alongside new construction.



As so many have been injured by landmines, or are victims of polio and other debilitating illnesses, volunteers may be able to assemble and distribute wheelchairs to needy recipients in rural villages. The wheelchair project will be possible based on availability of parts and in accordance with shipping and customs regulations. We assemble wheelchairs to donate to needy recipients from the countryside, when the wheelchair kits are available, which are subject to customs upon arrival at the border. The Cambodian government is under no obligation to give or abide by any timelines regarding

goods held at the border for inspection

Our other work focuses on a variety of educational outreach initiatives around Siem Reap. There is always the possibility of small projects to work on at the school as well. A set itinerary is created a couple of weeks before your arrival.



On occasion we are able to undertake the installation or repair of a water well. The amount of time it takes can vary greatly depending on the type of soil it is, how hard it is packed, how dry it is, the time to drill changes. Please be patient during such a project, as some of these aspects are difficult to know until we have the equipment in place that day. To get to the correct depth of the water table level, it could take anywhere from one hour to 3 days. If things go smoothly, a group can generally attend to one water well a day.



We understand your desire to know as much as possible about the project you will be working on. It is important to understand that projects are often not set in place until about two weeks prior, as they are based on factors such as which projects were finished by the last group, what supplies are available, how many volunteers are in your group, weather conditions, the changing priorities of the community, etc, and can even change upon arrival, for example based on the fitness level of the specific volunteer group and changing weather. Therefore its best to approach the experience with an open attitude, knowing you'll be working approximately 6.5 hours a day during the week days, usually concentrated earlier in the day, and you'll have a couple of hours of unstructured free time every day. There are usually three to four planned but optional leisure and cultural activities throughout the week. Communicate with your coordinator. If you find the work level is too much, or not enough, he or she will do as much as possible to work with you.

Special Note about Orphanages in Cambodia

Orphanages all over the world have real needs that can be very difficult to meet. In 2005 Globe Aware ceased trying to operate too closely in conjunction with them as many vulnerabilities rose to the surface for which we have not been able to find firm solutions. We do occasionally provide training and services in group settings (like sewing teachers, English lessons) or donations in the form of meals or educational materials. We have a firm policy against any volunteers working one-on-one with any children. We ask that if you ever witness anything that concerns you to please voice your concerns so that we can all work toward the best possible solutions.

Children should not be treated as an attraction. Understanding the real challenges that needy children face worldwide is important, and we are always seeking the best way to promote such awareness. There has been a tremendous amount of press on this issue since early 2012, highlighting instances where volunteers (in other organizations) were given access to orphans. Please contact us if you would like more information.

Ideally, there would be reliable child welfare services in Cambodia, but at this time, those services are simply not in place. It is a complex and sensitive issue. We do not want to abandon needy children or stop helping them, and we approve of occasional visits and help as one might visit ANY school for an English lesson or teaching a craft, but spending a lot of time with children who are in a situation like this can actually harm instead of help. The young child can grow attached to the person and then the volunteer leaves, leaving behind a sense of abandonment. There are organizations that, in light of this difficulty, actually espouse having nothing to do with orphanages whatsoever, such as www.orphanages.no/WhyShouldIVolunteer.html . Globe Aware has NOT taken this all or nothing approach, but this is a very current, controversial topic. We feel it is not a black and white issue. We are constantly trying to best define the safest way to contribute to the well being of the neediest children.

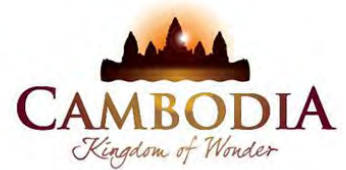
Our coordinator in Cambodia has been fully informed of these issues. Please be aware however, that culturally, in Cambodia this issue does not seem to have the same resonance as it does in the U.S., so you may find Cambodians dumbfounded over the controversy. We encourage discussions about this issue with the coordinator and anyone else. We are all hoping for the best path forward. Understanding the real challenges that needy children face worldwide is important, and we are always seeking the best way to promote such awareness.

We ask that if during your program you witness anything that is a cause for concern, please voice your concerns to the volunteer coordinator and let us in the home offices know as well. We hope you will understand that hearing directly from our volunteers is the most crucial part of what we do from our headquarters, and the source of all positive changes and progress!

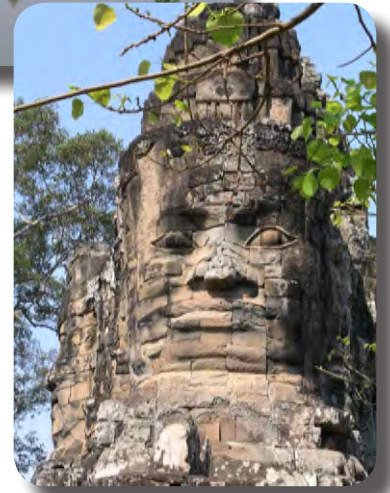
Leisure Activities

A visit to the Angkor Wat temple complex is the highlight of most people's trips to Cambodia

Several leisure and cultural activities are planned, but optional. A visit to the Angkor Wat temple complex is the highlight of most people's trips to Cambodia, do bear in mind that the entrance is at separate cost to the volunteer. A day will be set aside for this trip, though you could easily spend several days exploring some of the most spectacular temple ruins on earth. You will also be able to take a trip to the floating villages on the Tonle Sap Lake. You will have ample free time to enjoy the craft market and town center.



If during your free time you decide to wander and stroll through the old town, know that if you take a tuk-tuk, it should not cost more than \$1-\$2 from hotel to location.



Additional Packing Information

Please refer to the general orientation handbook for a general suggested packing list. Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, considering that you may get dirty doing volunteer work. You should not need to do laundry on a weeklong trip. It is ok to wear clothes more than once. Remember that modesty is essential in all of our program sites. Short shorts or skirts and skimpy tank tops are never appropriate. You may enjoy bringing games or books for free time.

***Important note:** During volunteer work projects, all Globe Aware volunteers are expected to dress respectfully and appropriately for the culture. This means its best to avoid wearing sleeveless shirts or tank tops (t-shirts are fine), please be mindful of low cut tops, and ALWAYS cover your legs at least to your knees. You may wear whatever you want during your own free time – you will see scantily clad tourists all over Siem Reap, though this is not particularly respectful.

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Essential Items:

- Bug Repellent with at least 20% deet
- Sunscreen
- Flashlight
- Water bottle
- Umbrella



Please note that the packing list is meant as a guideline. There is no single item that you can't live without for one week. Pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn't bring, weren't on the list, etc. Everyone has different opinions about essential items!

Accommodations

Your accommodations in Siem Reap are in a modest guesthouse, which you may think of as a “modest hotel.”



Your room will have an attached bathroom with flushing western toilet, sink and “Asian shower” (generally showers are not enclosed in the bathroom). Depending on group size, accommodations are generally two per room, divided by gender.

Upon arrival you will be furnished with several bottles of water in your room. We have a clean bottled water service deliver to the guest house where we stay, and volunteers can refill their water bottles from this at any time. We do NOT recommend drinking water from the tap.

The hot water in the rooms uses a system to which you may not be accustomed. First you will need to make the light switch to the bathroom is on. Then you will turn the dial to the #5. When you turn on the water it will be hot. You can always turn the dial to a lower number to lower the water temperature. Because of the heat, many volunteers say they end up preferring the room temperature water. PLEASE turn the dial OFF when you are finished or the electricity keeps running. It is a tank-less hot water system so it does NOT need any time to heat up prior to use. Likewise, though this may be different from how you do things at home, PLEASE turn off you're a/c when leaving your room. Electricity resources are much further stretched here than you may imagine.



Air-conditioning in the rooms is provided via “mini-split” wall units. There is a remote control which is used to turn it on. Your coordinator can show you how it functions. From experience, it works quickly, after turning on, it will get the room to its maximum lowest temp in about 10 minutes. However note that it only seems capable of getting rooms to about 78 or 79. You will note that if you go into shops or fancy hotels, the coolest temperatures are at a similar range. You are not likely to experience anywhere the kind of chilling air conditioning that some grocery stores and movie theaters provide in North America. Those volunteers who are especially sensitive to heat may enjoy having a personal mini battery operated fan.

Rooms include TV and electrical outlets. Electricity tends to be more fragile here, meaning if too many things are plugged in at once, a fuse is more likely to blow.

Wi-fi is provided and available at the guest houses where we house volunteers. Your coordinator will give you the password. It is generally not as fast as you may have experienced in offices, schools or homes in North America.

There's no electronic key card system in Cambodia. Keys are put on heavy, hefty wooden key fobs which are expected to be turned in at the front desk as you leave the building. You'll appreciate not having to carry them around.

Electricity

Electricity is 230V 50 Hz and plugs generally accept either North American styled flat or European round prongs. Check to make sure that your device can handle the higher voltage, or remember to purchase a travel voltage converter before you go.

Most modern appliances, such as cell phones, come with rechargers that can handle 110-250 voltage, in which case no convertor is needed. The guest house has primarily 2 North American style flat prongs outlets, in which case no adaptor is needed. However outside of the guest house, and even in some of the common rooms at the guest house, there are outlets with the two round prongs. You can easily find adaptors in the old market for a few dollars.



Food

Cambodian cuisine, though uniquely Khmer, draws heavily on the traditions of both its Thai neighbors and Chinese residents. The main national staple is rice, but French colonial influence has dictated that the Cambodians eat more bread--generally French-style baguettes--than any other Southeast Asian country. Because of the country's incredible richness in waterways including the Mekong, Sap and Bassac Rivers, not to mention the Tonlé Sap, freshwater fish and prawns are especially popular--in addition to which plenty of fresh seafood is available from the Gulf of Thailand. Beef, pork, chicken, duck and other poultry are widely available but generally more expensive than fish dishes. Num banh choc (rice noodle and fish soup) is a common and popular Cambodian breakfast.



Breakfast is served at the guest house. As you are ready in the morning, head downstairs and let the cook know you are ready for breakfast.

Please note that our program fee has been lowered to reflect the following: Lunches and dinners will no longer be provided on this program.

For years we have tried to arrange, as we do in all of our other locations, to have meals arranged and catered from a variety of sources. After twelve years of trying, we have to admit defeat. There are so many inexpensive, safe, wonderful, diverse, Khmer and cosmopolitan, safe and nutritious restaurants within such easy walking distance that they continually lure our volunteers from whatever has been planned. Rather than trying to have volunteers eat what we have planned, we have decided to lower our program fee to reflect the funds previously spent on meals, and allow volunteers to have lunch and dinner on their own. If you would like recommendations on what is safe, your coordinator will have many suggestions. But we know you will see what we mean when you arrive: it's a gastronome's paradise. Wonderful meals can be had anywhere from \$2.50 to \$7 per meal at almost every restaurant.

Donations

While Globe Aware feels that you are already contributing a lot just by participating in the program, we are often asked about special donations. Please be aware that you are in no means obligated to bring anything extra, but we provide this information for those who ask. We are currently working closely with an English school in a village outside of Siem Reap. They have seen a huge growth in numbers recently due to the desire and need for English in rural areas. That being said, the school is having a hard time supplying the students with basic school supplies. Pens, pencils, paper pads (small journal type books), and even dry erase markers for the teachers. Any basic teaching materials are also welcomed - vocabulary cards, flash cards (beginner level, such as colors, months, numbers, etc). Colored pencils, crayons, are useful for multiple activities with the students. Most of these items can be easily purchased in Siem Reap should you wish to buy it there instead of carrying it in your luggage. Your coordinator can help facilitate this.

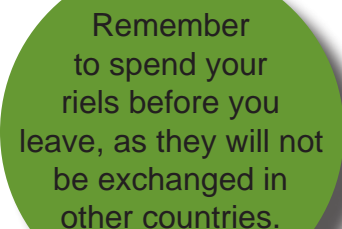
Weather

Cambodia's monsoon climate gives it two distinct seasons - a dry season from November and April followed by six months of rainy season. Rainfall is highest between May and June, and September and October. September has the most rain. Temperatures can approach 40 degrees Celsius in April, while the coldest month is January. Keep in mind that changing weather patterns affect all parts of the globe, and that it even in the rainy season, it doesn't usually rain all day, every day in the rainy season. A good rule of thumb is to know it is going to be hot almost any day you are in Cambodia, and the main thing that will vary are humidity levels. You might check the weather forecast on the internet prior to your departure.

Money

Currency: The local currency in Cambodia is called the riel but you will use US dollars. The riel has devalued to the point that it is used only as change for amounts smaller than US \$1. US coins are not accepted anywhere.

Cambodia is unique amongst the locations where Globe Aware runs programs. Almost everything is priced in US \$. It is a good idea to have at least \$50 worth of local currency (riel) on you, which you can withdraw from the many ATMs in the old market area or at the airport. Locals often will not accept torn or old dollar bills for higher denominations (over \$20). Also, when paying for items, you may well get change in local currency.



Remember to spend your riels before you leave, as they will not be exchanged in other countries.

For the most part, Cambodia is an inexpensive place to travel. Entrance fees (particularly for Angkor Wat - around US\$26 a day, depending on the currency exchange, which fluctuates daily) can set you back a fair bit- and this cost is not included in your program fee. There are a handful of ATMs in Siem Reap. Cash advances on credit cards are available but fees may be high. Credit cards are rarely accepted anywhere other than tourist class hotels and boutiques.

****Also, a note for all program locations—it is a good idea that you call your bank and credit card companies before you depart and notify them of the country you will be traveling to and the dates of your travel so that they will allow charges and/or withdrawals internationally.****

Phone and Internet

Please do not plan to spend a lot of time on the phone or internet during your short volunteer week. You may make calls and check email during your free time, though you may find it is not all that convenient. There are numerous internet cafes scattered around Siem Reap. Many internet cafes will offer international calls at reasonable prices. Mobile phone service is growing rapidly, but landlines are not reliable.

Health

There are no vaccine requirements to enter Cambodia. Refer to the CDC's webpage for more information and recommendations on preventative measures: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destination-Cambodia.aspx>

Your Fellow Volunteers

You will receive a Fellow Volunteer Report attached to our "Ready, Set, Go!" email about 3 weeks before the program starts. It will include information on your fellow travelers, as well as their email so that you can start to get acquainted with them before you leave.

Your Coordinator: John Touch



John (Rithy in Khmer) has worked with Globe Aware for several years in both the position of driver and coordinator. Prior to moving to Siem Reap 15 years ago, he worked as a farmer in a small rural community. He has been working as a Tuk Tuk since moving to the city and continues to do this when not working with Globe Aware volunteers. John is passionate about his country and people and is loved by our volunteers. He's extremely outgoing and hard working and loves working alongside our volunteers - from hard manual labor to assisting in English teaching in schools. John is also the proud father of two children, a boy and a girl, both of whom he adores. John's phone number is +855 125 72412

Arrival and Meet-Up

Your coordinator will meet you in Siem Reap at the airport exit upon arrival, providing you have sent in your flight information. As a courtesy we suggest giving them a tip (\$5 is appropriate). Unless otherwise expressly arranged, he will then take you to the program site, and accompany you throughout the program. The airport is VERY small with only one pick up area, but there are often crowds of families waiting for arrivals, so don't be worried if you do not see your coordinator at first.

Your coordinator will meet you in Siem Reap at the airport upon arrival. Remember to send us your flight info!

You will be brought back to the airport the following Saturday. We leave the program at about 11am, at which time we can take you to the airport, unless you plan on continuing your stay in Siem Reap.

If we do not see you at the meet up point, our first step is to check with the airline to see if your flight was delayed. If it was not, our next call is to your emergency contact. Therefore if you have any sort of change in your arrival, please make sure to inform your emergency contact, as this is the first person that we will be contacting.

If you feel there is a problem with these arrangements, or you cannot meet the time schedule, please contact us at least several days prior to your departure, and we will try to resolve this the best we can. However, because of certain limitations, and strains on other volunteers, such requests should be made within a fair amount of time (at least one and a half weeks before the program date) and will be remedied to our discretion.


Emergency contact information is provided in your Ready, Set Go email about three weeks prior to your departure. If you do not receive this, PLEASE CALL US well in advance of your departure at 214-824-4562 so that you can have this urgent information.

Entering and Leaving Cambodia

A passport and visa are required to enter the Kingdom of Cambodia.

You may purchase a Cambodian visa for \$30 USD that is valid for one month upon arrival at the Siem Reap and Phnom Penh airports. You will be given visa application papers on the plane. Please make sure you fill out your visa saying you are a visiting tourist, rather than for business purposes. Work visas are intended for those coming for paid work, and are subject to paying payroll taxes.

The visa requires a passport-sized photograph, which you can bring with you. For a fee of \$2 USD, you can have the immigration personnel copy the one from your passport. Your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months after arrival.



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Alternatively, the Cambodian government has launched e-Visa service, which enables you to apply for a Cambodia tourist visa online: <https://www.evisa.gov.kh/>. We highly recommend this route as it can save you time standing in line at the airport upon arrival after a long flight. All you need to do is complete the online application and pay with your credit card. You will receive your e-Visa via email within 3-4 days. A passport validity of more than six months at the time of entry is required, as well as a recent passport sized photo in digital format (JPG or PNG). Read the photo requirements carefully, as they will not process applications that fail to follow the photo guidelines. The fees for the e-Visa come to a total of \$40 USD (\$30 for visa, \$7 for processing fee, and \$3 for credit card fee).

You must print the e-Visa out and bring it with you. DO NOT glue the visa into your passport – as this may be refused at immigration and will result in you having to apply for a visa on arrival at the airport.

The previous departure tax of \$25 USD is now included in your airfare. A departure tax is charged on all domestic and international flights. For domestic flights in Cambodia, you may be asked to pay a \$6 USD departure tax.

*Many places in Cambodia accept the USD as common currency. The bills must be crisp and without tears or marks. There are places in Siem Reap where you can trade in torn or marked bills, but there is a fee charged depending on condition of the bills.

Safety and Security

Cambodia is a safe and friendly country, with the usual exception for large cities late at night, and unobserved luggage or wallets. Be discreet with your possessions, especially cash and cameras, and as always, take extra care in all poorly lit or more remote areas. It is a good idea to keep a copy of your passport with you and keep your original in the safety deposit box at your accommodations.

It is unfortunately a common occurrence in Southeast Asia to be approached by individuals selling adult services to locals and foreigners. You will see that almost every guesthouse has notices stating that they are not responsible for any theft that takes place for those who bring guests in to their room in this manner.

There are a number of scams to which one may be subjected, such as a child approaching a foreigner to ask for milk. They accompany you to the store to buy milk. Once you've left, they return to the store, sell the milk back to the store and split the money between parent and store owner. Others may claim one of their family members is moving to your state/country and wants advice and ask you to come with them. You should be vigilant, especially if you are traveling alone. It is never a good idea to hand money out in the street to anyone, nor accompany those you don't know somewhere else, however safe or friendly they may seem (i.e. children).

Cambodia suffers from a legacy of millions of land mines left during the war years. However, to tourists that stay "on the beaten path," land mines present a minimal to nonexistent threat, as populated areas and their environs have been thoroughly de-mined. For further information on safety and security and travel conditions in Cambodia, visit the State Department's website at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1080.html

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency, keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements, and help your friends and family get in touch with you in case of an emergency. The link to STEP is <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Global Entry

Global Entry is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. Due to sequestration, long lines have been reported at customs and immigration when coming back into the United States. Global Entry approved travelers are able to use the automated kiosks at immigration to reduce wait times considerably. For more information, visit <http://www.globalentry.gov/>

In Case of Emergency

United States Embassy : Phnom Penh, Cambodia
#1, Street 96 (Near Wat Phnom) Sangkat Wat Phnom Khan Daun Penh
Tel: 855-023-728-000 Fax: 855-023-728-701

Further Readings

- Lonely Planet Cambodia is a comprehensive guidebook that provides information about history, culture, etc. as well as where to stay and eat and what to see.
 - For background into the Angkorian Khmer civilization, try Angkor: An Introduction by George Coedès. The site is brought alive by Mark Stamen's Passage through Angkor, one of the best photographic tributes to Angkor.
 - Nayan Chanda's Brother Enemy provides insight into Cambodia and Vietnam's descent into war, and the role played by China, the former USSR and the USA.
 - Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia by William Shawcross documents the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodian territory.
 - A Dragon Apparent by Norman Lewis and River of Time by Jon Swain take the reader back to a now-vanished Indochina.
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