

Phnom Penh 90-Day Survival Guide

Long-stay city guide for budget nomads.

For The Lean Nomad — Built 2026-07-16

0. City Overview & Quick Facts

The Hard Numbers

Fact	Detail
Location	Confluence of Mekong, Tonlé Sap, and Bassac Rivers
Population	2,352,851 (2019 census); ~3.5 million (metro)
Area	679 km ² (262 sq mi)
Coordinates	11 deg 3410N 104 deg 5516E
Language	Khmer (official), English, French widely spoken
Currency	Cambodian Riel (KHR); US Dollar widely accepted
Timezone	UTC+7 (Indochina Time)
Calling Code	+855 (country); 023 (Phnom Penh area)
Climate Classification	Tropical savanna (Aw)
Postal Code	12000 (general)
Airport	Techo International Airport (KTI) — opened September 2025

What This City Actually Is

Phnom Penh (Khmer: ភ្នំពេញ, IPA: ˈpʰnɔm ˈpɛn) is the capital and most populous city of Cambodia. It has been the national capital since 1865 and has grown to become the nation's primate city and its political, economic, industrial, and cultural centre. The city sits at the confluence of the Tonlé Sap and Mekong rivers, and is the start of the Bassac River.

The city's name derives from Wat Phnom (Lady Penh's Hill), a Buddhist temple, and Lady Penh, the city's founder. According to legend, in 1372 a wealthy widow named Penh found a Koki tree floating down the Tonlé Sap River after a storm. Inside the tree she found four Buddha statues and one of Vishnu. She built a small hill (phnom) to house the statues, and the area became known as Phnom Penh.

The vibe: A thumping little metropolis, small at heart but big in vibe. Not yet a rival to Bangkok, but getting there. The city has exploded in activity in the 21st century after being liberated from Khmer Rouge oppression in 1979.

Over the last decade, the skyline has changed enough to be unrecognizable — numerous new high-rises have sprouted throughout the city, funded largely by Chinese capital.

Phnom Penh is a worthwhile destination for those who enjoy an “edgy” experience and can brave the downsides of reckless driving, noise, dust, and perennial theft. The most pleasant strolling is along the park-like riverfront, which hosts cafés and restaurants aplenty.

Named Places Profiled

Neighborhoods & Areas

- **Daun Penh (Riverside)** — Historic center, Royal Palace, National Museum, riverfront promenade, tourist hub.
- **BKK1 (Boeung Keng Kang 1)** — Upscale residential, embassies, expat cafés, boutique hotels.
- **BKK3** — Trendy area, design-forward hotels, restaurants, growing expat presence.
- **Toul Tom Pong (Russian Market area)** — Market, expat community, mid-range accommodation.
- **Chroy Changvar** — Peninsula across Tonlé Sap, new developments, quieter.
- **Tuol Kork** — New commercial district, shopping malls, modern condos.

Key Landmarks

- **Royal Palace** — Royal residence and Silver Pagoda. Entry fee applies.
 - **Wat Phnom** — Hilltop pagoda, ~\$1 entry. Iconic landmark where city gets its name.
 - **Independence Monument** — Landmark commemorating independence from France.
 - **National Museum** — Khmer art and archaeology next to Royal Palace.
 - **Central Market (Phsar Thmey)** — Art-deco central market; clothes, jewellery, souvenirs.
 - **Russian Market (Phsar Toul Tom Pong)** — Local market: clothes, crafts, antiques, street food.
 - **Night Market (Phsar Reatrey)** — Riverside evening market, souvenirs and snacks.
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1. Landing — First 72 Hours

Airport Arrival

Techo International Airport (KTI): The new airport of Phnom Penh, which replaced the former Phnom Penh International Airport from 9 September 2025. Nearly 20 km from the city centre.

Getting to Town: - Airport Express Bus (AEB): Service operates 05:30–23:30, terminates at Kouch Kanong Roundabout Bus Station. Stops at Canadia Garden, Royal University of Law and Economics, BRED Bank, AEON Mall 3 Mean Chey. Download free City Bus app to track buses. **\$1.50 (1,500 riel)**. Runs every 10 min. ~1 hour. - **Taxi:** Available at arrivals. **\$10–15** to city center. 30–45 min depending on traffic. - **Tuk-tuk: \$5–8** to city center. Negotiate before getting in.

Cope: Make sure you have smaller denomination notes to pay your taxi driver if paying in US dollars, and inspect them carefully for rips and tears before paying. One airport taxi driver scam occurs when you go to pay in dollars: after taking your note out of view, the driver will rip it slightly (which renders it useless in Cambodia) and then politely reject it. Show your driver how perfect your notes are upon paying.

First Night Options

If arriving late, consider staying near the riverside or BKK1 for easy orientation.

Budget: Eighty8 Backpackers (Street 88) — ~\$8–15/night dorm. One Stop Hostel (Street 258) — ~\$10–18/night.

Mid-range: Ohana Palace Hotel (Street 148, riverside) — ~\$25–40/night. White Mansion (Street 240) — Colonial-style boutique, ~\$35–50/night.

Upscale: Raffles Hotel Le Royal (92 Rukhak Vithei Daun Penh) — Historic 1929 luxury hotel, colonial landmark. ~\$200–400/night. Rosewood Phnom Penh (Vattanac Capital Tower) — Sky-high luxury with Sora rooftop bar. ~\$250–500/night.

Getting Your Bearings

Day 1 priorities:

1. **Check into accommodation** — Riverside, BKK1, or Russian Market area are central for tourists.
2. **Get a local SIM** — Cellcard, Smart, Metfone. Airport has providers, or visit shops in town.
3. **Walk the riverfront** — Sisowath Quay. Cafés, restaurants, pleasant evening stroll.

4. **Find the nearest minimart** — Circle K, Family Mart, local shops for water, snacks, essentials.
5. **Locate a reliable ATM** — Riverside and BKK1 have many. Withdraw USD for better exchange rates.

Essential Errands (First Week)

- **Open a local bank account** — If staying long-term. ACLEDA, Canadia, ABA have branches.
 - **Visit a supermarket** — Aeon Mall, Lucky Supermarket, or local markets for groceries.
 - **Find your nearest pharmacy** — Pharmacies are common; many medications available OTC.
 - **Get oriented with tuk-tuks** — Download PassApp or Grab for ride-hailing.
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2. Visa & Immigration

Visa Types Available

Tourist Visa (T-class): 30 days, extendable once for 30 days. Apply on arrival or e-visa before travel. **\$30–36** on arrival.

Ordinary Visa (E-class): 30 days, extendable for 6 or 12 months. Required for long-term stays, work, retirement. **\$35** on arrival.

E-Visa: Available online before travel. **\$37** including processing. Valid for 30 days.

Visa Exemption: ASEAN citizens (except Myanmar) get 14–30 days visa-free depending on nationality.

Extensions

Tourist Visa Extension: 30 days, once only. **\$45–50**. Processed in 3–7 days.

Ordinary Visa Extension: 6 months (multiple entry) or 12 months (multiple entry). **\$100–300** depending on type and agent fees.

Where to Extend: - **Immigration Department:** Monivong Blvd, Phnom Penh. - **Travel Agents:** Most guesthouses and travel agencies can process extensions for a small fee.

90-Day Reporting

Cambodia does not have a 90-day reporting requirement like Thailand. However, if staying more than 6 months on an extended ordinary visa, you may need to do a “change of address” notification.

Overstay Fines

\$10 per day for overstaying your visa. Can lead to detention or deportation for extended overstays.

3. Money & Banking

Currency & Exchange

Currencies: Cambodia uses both US Dollar (USD) and Cambodian Riel (KHR).

- **US Dollar:** Widely accepted everywhere. Bills must be in good condition (no tears, marks, or old series).
- **Cambodian Riel:** Used for small transactions, change, local markets.
Exchange rate: ~4,100 riel = \$1 USD.

Coins: Cambodia does not use coins. Change is given in riel (e.g., \$0.50 = 2,000 riel).

Exchange: - **Street money changers:** Competitive rates, but verify count carefully. - **Banks:** ACLEDA, Canadia, ABA, BRED. Slightly lower rates but reliable. - **ATMs:** Dispense USD (mostly \$100 bills, some \$10, \$20, \$50). **Fee:** \$5–7 per withdrawal.

Tip: Bring fresh, crisp USD bills (2013 series or newer). Old or damaged bills will be rejected.

ATMs

Availability: Throughout the city — riverside, BKK, Russian Market, shopping malls.

Fees: \$5–7 per withdrawal for foreign cards (on top of your bank's fee).

Withdrawal Limits: Typically \$500–1,000 per transaction.

Tip: Withdraw larger amounts less frequently to minimize fees. Always count your money before leaving the ATM.

Local Banking

Banks in Phnom Penh: - **ACLEDA Bank** — Largest local bank, good English support - **Canadia Bank** — Reliable, widespread - **ABA Bank** — Excellent mobile app, popular with expats - **BRED Bank** — French bank, reliable - **J Trust Royal Bank** — Japanese-Cambodian joint venture

Requirements to Open Account: - Passport - Visa (ordinary visa preferred for long-term accounts) - Proof of address (rental contract, utility bill, letter from hotel) - Some banks require reference letter or employment verification

Tip: ABA Bank is popular with expats for its user-friendly English app and low fees.

4. Neighborhoods & Housing

Riverside (Daun Penh / Sisowath Quay)

Vibe: Tourist center, historic landmarks, riverfront promenade, bustling.

Accommodation: Mix of budget hostels, mid-range hotels, some luxury (Raffles, Rosewood).

Pros: Walkable to Royal Palace, National Museum, riverfront cafés, night market. Tuk-tuks everywhere.

Cons: Noisy (especially weekends), touristy prices, traffic congestion.

Price Range: - Budget: \$8–20/night (hostels, guesthouses) - Mid-range: \$25–60/night - Luxury: \$150–500/night

BKK1 (Boeung Keng Kang 1)

Vibe: Upscale residential, embassies, expat cafés, boutique hotels.

Accommodation: Boutique hotels, serviced apartments, some guesthouses.

Pros: Quiet streets, good restaurants, close to Russian Market, expat community.

Cons: Higher prices, less “local” feel.

Price Range: - Studios: \$400–700/month - 1-bedroom: \$600–1,200/month - 2-bedroom: \$1,000–2,000/month

BKK3

Vibe: Trendy, up-and-coming, design-forward hotels, growing expat presence.

Accommodation: Boutique hotels (Baitong, White Mansion), new condos.

Pros: Quiet, good cafés and restaurants, central location.

Cons: Still developing, fewer services than BKK1.

Price Range: - Studios: \$350–600/month - 1-bedroom: \$500–900/month - 2-bedroom: \$800–1,500/month

Toul Tom Pong (Russian Market Area)

Vibe: Expat community, market, mid-range accommodation, local feel.

Accommodation: Guesthouses, mid-range hotels, some apartments.

Pros: Russian Market, affordable food, good transport links.

Cons: Can be noisy, traffic, less polished than BKK.

Price Range: - Studios: \$300–500/month - 1-bedroom: \$400–700/month - 2-bedroom: \$600–1,200/month

Tuol Kork

Vibe: New commercial district, shopping malls, modern condos, quieter.

Accommodation: Modern apartments, some hotels.

Pros: New developments, Aeon Mall, international schools, family-friendly.

Cons: Further from tourist center, need transport for most errands.

Price Range: - Studios: \$400–700/month - 1-bedroom: \$600–1,000/month - 2-bedroom: \$900–1,600/month

Chroy Changvar

Vibe: Peninsula across Tonlé Sap, new developments, quieter, residential.

Accommodation: New condos, some resorts.

Pros: Quiet, new properties, river views.

Cons: Far from city center, limited public transport, need own transport.

Price Range: - Studios: \$350–600/month - 1-bedroom: \$500–900/month - 2-bedroom: \$800–1,400/month

Long-Stay Properties

Raffles Hotel Le Royal — Historic luxury. ~\$200–400/night.

Rosewood Phnom Penh — Sky-high luxury with Sora rooftop bar. ~\$250–500/night.

Hyatt Regency Phnom Penh — Modern 5-star near Royal Palace. ~\$150–300/night.

The Plantation Urban Resort — Boutique resort near Royal Palace, good pool. ~\$80–150/night.

Aquarius Hotel & Urban Resort — Mid-range with rooftop pool, popular with expats. ~\$50–90/night.

Himawari Hotel Apartments — Serviced apartments on the riverside. ~\$60–120/night.

Finding Accommodation

Online: - Facebook Marketplace — Active expat groups (Phnom Penh Expats, Cambodia Housing) - Khmer24.com — General property site - Realestate.com.kh — Property listings - Airbnb — Short-term, higher prices

On the Ground: - Walk around target area — “For Rent” signs common - Ask at hotel/apartment management offices - Local agents — Common in BKK and Russian Market areas

Tip: Negotiate. Monthly rates often 20–30% lower than advertised. Inspect for water pressure, AC, and internet before committing.

5. Transport

Tuk-tuks

Coverage: Throughout the city. The primary mode of transport for tourists and locals.

Fares: - Short trips (within same area): \$1.50–3 - Medium trips (cross-town): \$3–5 - Long trips (airport, outskirts): \$5–10

How to Ride: - Flag down on street, or use PassApp/Grab - Tell driver destination - Agree on price before getting in (if not using app) - Pay when exiting

Ride-Hailing Apps: - **PassApp:** Cambodian app, cheapest option. Tuk-tuks, taxis, food delivery. - **Grab:** Regional app, slightly more expensive but reliable. - **Nham24:** Local alternative.

Motorbike Taxis

Availability: Throughout town, especially at major streets and markets.

Fares: - Within same area: \$1–2 - Cross-town: \$2–4 - Via PassApp/Grab: Similar to tuk-tuk, slightly faster

Taxis

Metered Taxis: Limited availability. Mostly at hotels and shopping centers.

Ride-Hailing: Grab and PassApp offer car taxis. More expensive than tuk-tuks but air-con and faster.

Car & Motorbike Rental

Motorbike: - **Daily:** \$5–10/day - **Monthly:** \$100–200/month - **Requirements:** Passport, deposit (\$100–200), International Driving Permit (legally)

Car: - **Daily:** \$30–50/day - **Monthly:** \$600–1,000/month - **Requirements:** Valid license, passport, deposit

Insurance: Always verify coverage. Many rentals have minimal insurance.

Bus

Main Bus Stations: Various company offices around the city.

Destinations: - **Siem Reap:** \$5–15, 5–6 hours (Giant Ibis, Mekong Express, Sorya) - **Sihanoukville:** \$5–10, 4–5 hours - **Battambang:** \$10–15, 6–7 hours - **Kampot:** \$5–8, 3–4 hours - **Kep:** \$6–10, 3–4 hours - **Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam):** \$22–25, 6–7 hours (Giant Ibis, Mekong Express) - **Bangkok (Thailand):** Service suspended since June 2025 due to border clashes

Note: Bus services to Bangkok have been indefinitely suspended since June 2025 due to Thailand/Cambodia border clashes.

Boat

To Vietnam (Mekong Delta): Speedboats to Chau Doc (\$25–35, 5–6 hours). Connects to Can Tho and Ho Chi Minh City.

Train

Royal Railway: Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville (Friday–Sunday, ~\$6–8, 4 hours). Phnom Penh to Poipet (Thai border, limited service).

6. Food & Dining

Budget Eats (Under \$5)

Street Food: Throughout the city, especially around markets and riverside. Noodle soups, rice dishes, grilled meats. \$1.50–4.

Local Restaurants: Small Khmer restaurants serve rice and curry dishes, noodle soups. \$2–5 per meal.

Food Courts: Aeon Mall, Sorya Center Point have food courts with local and international options. \$3–6.

Mid-Range (\$5–20)

Khmer Restaurants: Malis, Romdeng, Friends — Upscale Khmer cuisine. \$10–20 per person.

International Cuisine: Italian, French, Japanese, Korean, Indian options throughout BKK and riverside. \$8–20 per person.

Cafés: Brown Coffee, Jars of Clay, Vibe Cafe — Breakfast, lunch, coffee. \$5–12.

Splurge (Over \$20)

Upscale Restaurants: Malis (celebrity chef Luu Meng), Le Moon Terrace (rooftop), Do Forni (Italian at Sofitel). \$25–50+ per person.

Hotel Restaurants: Raffles, Rosewood, Hyatt have fine dining restaurants.

Markets

Central Market (Phsar Thmey): Art-deco market with food stalls inside and around. Local Khmer dishes, snacks.

Russian Market (Phsar Toul Tom Pong): Street food around the market. Local noodle soups, grilled meats, fruit shakes.

Night Market (Riverside): Evening food stalls and souvenirs.

Kandal Market: Budget local rice and curry stalls.

Supermarkets

Aeon Mall: Japanese-style supermarket with imported goods. Tuol Kork and Mean Chey locations.

Lucky Supermarket: Multiple locations. Wide selection, competitive prices.

Chip Mong Supermarket: Modern supermarkets throughout the city.

Circle K / Family Mart: Convenience stores with ready-to-eat meals, snacks, drinks.

7. Remote Work & Coworking

Coworking Spaces

WorkSpace Cambodia: BKK1. Hot desks, private offices, meeting rooms. \$100–250/month.

The Office: BKK3. Modern coworking space. \$80–200/month.

Impact Hub Phnom Penh: Riverside. Social enterprise focus. \$100–250/month.

To Be Announced (TBA): BKK1. Creative coworking and event space.

Cafés with Wi-Fi

In Phnom Penh: - **Brown Coffee:** Multiple locations. Reliable Wi-Fi, air-con, Cambodian coffee chain. - **Starbucks:** Riverside, Aeon Mall. Reliable Wi-Fi, air-con. - **Jars of Clay:** Street 29. Café and bakery, good for working. - **Vibe Cafe:** Street 13. Plant-based café, health food, Wi-Fi. - **Eleven One Kitchen:** Street 240. Healthy bowls, salads, modern café.

Internet Infrastructure

Home Internet: - **Fiber:** Ezecom, CamNet, SINET available in most areas. 50–100 Mbps typical. \$25–50/month. - **4G/5G Home:** Cellcard, Smart, Metfone. Wireless alternative where fiber unavailable.

Mobile Data: - **4G/5G:** Good coverage in Phnom Penh. - **SIM Cards:** Cellcard, Smart, Metfone. Tourist SIMs \$5–15 (30 days, high-cap or unlimited data). - **Speeds:** 20–100 Mbps typical in good coverage areas.

8. Healthcare

Hospitals

Phnom Penh has several private hospitals with English-speaking staff. Public hospitals are cheaper but less comfortable and may lack resources.

Royal Phnom Penh Hospital

Address: 888 Russian Federation Blvd (110), 12102 Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Phone: +855 12 991 000 (24/7 emergency) **Tier:** Private, BDMS-affiliated (Bangkok Dusit Medical Services) **Best for:** Serious conditions, surgery, specialist care

Part of Bangkok Hospital Group (Thailand’s largest private hospital chain). JCI-accredited. English-speaking staff. Full diagnostic facilities. Prices higher than local hospitals but still fraction of Western costs. Best private hospital in Cambodia.

Khema International Polyclinic

Address: No. 28 Street 294, Boeung Keng Kang 1, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Phone: +855 23 223 787 / +855 89 911 911 (emergency) **Tier:** Private, French-founded **Best for:** General treatment, emergency care, pediatric care

French-founded private clinic with English and French-speaking staff. Well-equipped for most conditions. Popular with expats.

Calmette Hospital

Address: No. 3 Monivong Blvd, Sangkat Sras Chok, Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia **Phone:** +855 23 426 948 **Tier:** Public, largest hospital in Cambodia **Best for:** Basic emergencies, budget care

Government hospital. Cheaper than private options but less comfortable. Basic emergency services available.

Sen Sok International Hospital (U-Care)

Address: 60m Street 1986, Phnom Penh, Cambodia **Phone:** +855 70 888 251 **Tier:** Private international hospital **Best for:** General treatment, emergency care, inpatient stays

Private hospital in the north of the city. Modern facilities, English-speaking staff.

Emergency Numbers

- **115:** National emergency medical hotline (free, 24/7)
- **117:** Police emergency
- **118:** Fire department

What's Treatable Locally

Can Handle: - Fever, infections, respiratory illness - Minor injuries, cuts, sprains - Gastrointestinal issues - Routine check-ups, lab work - Dental emergencies

May Require Evacuation: - Highly specialized treatments - Certain cancers - Major trauma requiring advanced ICU

For serious conditions, medical evacuation to Bangkok or Singapore may be recommended. Ensure travel insurance covers medical evacuation.

Pharmacies

Availability: Throughout the city — standalone pharmacies, U-Care, Calmette Pharmacy, hospital pharmacies.

Prescription Requirements: Varies — many antibiotics available without prescription, controlled substances require Rx.

Common Brands: Panadol (paracetamol), Ibuprofen, antihistamines, anti-diarrheals all available OTC.

Cost: \$1–10 for common medications.

Health Insurance

Travel Insurance: Essential — covers accidents, emergency treatment, evacuation.

Local Insurance: Available for long-stay residents, more affordable than Western insurance.

Hospital Billing: Private hospitals often bill insurance directly — keep your policy details handy.

9. Dental

Dental Clinics

Phnom Penh has numerous dental clinics catering to foreigners. Quality is generally high, prices 50–70% lower than Western countries.

Local Clinics: - Multiple dental clinics along major streets (Monivong, Sihanouk, Russian Market area) - English-speaking staff common - Walk-ins often accepted

Common Procedures & Prices (2026 approx.)

Procedure	Phnom Penh Price	US/EU Equivalent
Cleaning	\$20–40	\$100–200
Filling	\$25–60	\$150–400
Root Canal	\$100–200	\$800–1,500
Crown	\$200–400	\$1,000–2,000
Implant	\$600–1,000	\$3,000–5,000
Teeth Whitening	\$150–300	\$400–800
Extraction	\$20–80	\$200–500

Tips

- **Consultations:** Often free or low-cost (\$10–20)
 - **Appointments:** Recommended, but walk-ins often accepted
 - **Payment:** Cash (USD) preferred, cards accepted at larger clinics
 - **Insurance:** Most travel insurance doesn't cover routine dental — check your policy
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10. Safety & Emergency

Where It's Genuinely Safe

- **Riverside (Daun Penh):** Heavy tourist presence, regular police patrols
- **BKK1:** Upscale area, embassies, good security
- **Shopping Centers:** Aeon Mall, Sorya — security guards, CCTV
- **Residential Sois:** Quiet, low crime rates

Where to Be More Careful

- **Late night on quiet sois:** Poor lighting, occasional opportunistic theft
- **ATMs at night:** Isolated machines — use inside malls or hotels when possible
- **Motorbike parking:** Theft is common — always lock, park in attended lots when available
- **Crowded markets:** Pickpocketing can occur

What Actually Happens Here

Most Common: 1. **Bag Snatching:** The #1 crime against tourists. Perpetrators on motorbikes grab bags, phones, cameras from pedestrians. Don't carry bags on street side of sidewalk. 2. **Petty Theft:** Phones, wallets, bags left unattended in cafés or on beaches 3. **Motorbike Accidents:** The #1 cause of serious injury to tourists

Violent Crime: Rare against tourists. Most incidents involve: - Disputes over money or relationships - Late-night altercations outside bars

Security Cameras

CCTV coverage is increasing in tourist areas and major intersections. However, don't rely on it for protection.

Emergency Numbers

- **117:** Police
- **115:** Emergency Medical
- **118:** Fire Department

Safety Tips

- **Helmets:** Always wear on motorbikes. Police do enforce, and accidents are common.
- **Valuables:** Use hotel/condo safes. Don't flash expensive jewelry or watches.
- **Bag Safety:** Carry bags on the side away from the street. Don't hang bags on chair backs in outdoor cafés.

- **Scams:** If it sounds too good to be true (gem deals, “today only” tours), it is.
- **Dollar Bills:** Inspect USD bills carefully. Torn or marked bills will be rejected.

Environmental Hazards & Natural Disasters

Air Quality

Wet Season (May–October): Generally good air quality.

Dry Season (November–April): Can be poor due to dust, construction, and occasional burning. Sensitive individuals may experience respiratory issues.

Monitoring: Check AirVisual or Plume Air Report apps for real-time AQI.

Flooding

Timing: September–October (peak of rainy season).

Characteristics: - Low-lying areas can flood during heavy downpours - Streets may become impassable for hours - Tuk-tuks and motorbikes can still navigate most flooded areas

Preparation: - Check weather forecasts daily - Avoid traveling through deep floodwaters - Keep important documents in waterproof bags

Earthquakes & Natural Disasters

Earthquakes: Rare in Cambodia. Not on major fault lines.

Typhoons: Cambodia is generally not directly hit by typhoons, but tropical storms can bring heavy rain and flooding.

Emergency Services

Fire: 118 **Police:** 117 **Medical:** 115

11. Weather by Month

Phnom Penh has a tropical savanna climate with high humidity year-round:

Dry Season (November–April)

Month	Avg High	Avg Low	Rainfall
November	31 deg C (88 deg F)	23 deg C (73 deg F)	121mm
December	31 deg C (87 deg F)	22 deg C (72 deg F)	32mm
January	31 deg C (87 deg F)	22 deg C (71 deg F)	12mm
February	33 deg C (91 deg F)	23 deg C (73 deg F)	6.6mm
March	35 deg C (95 deg F)	24 deg C (76 deg F)	35mm
April	35 deg C (96 deg F)	26 deg C (78 deg F)	79mm

Characteristics: Hot and mostly dry. March–April hottest. Pleasant breezes December–February.

Rainy Season (May–October)

Month	Avg High	Avg Low	Rainfall
May	35 deg C (95 deg F)	26 deg C (78 deg F)	118mm
June	34 deg C (93 deg F)	25 deg C (77 deg F)	145mm
July	33 deg C (91 deg F)	25 deg C (77 deg F)	162mm
August	33 deg C (91 deg F)	25 deg C (76 deg F)	183mm
September	32 deg C (90 deg F)	24 deg C (76 deg F)	271mm
October	31 deg C (89 deg F)	24 deg C (75 deg F)	248mm

Characteristics: Afternoon downpours (often 1–2 hours), otherwise sunny. September wettest. Occasional flooding in low-lying areas.

Best Time to Visit

For Weather: November–February (cooler, drier, comfortable).

For Budget: May–October (lower accommodation rates, fewer crowds).

For Festivals: April (Khmer New Year), November (Water Festival).

12. Shopping & Daily Life

Aeon Mall Phnom Penh

Location: Samdech Sothearos Blvd (Aeon 1) and Mean Chey (Aeon 2).

What’s Inside: - Japanese-style department store - Supermarket - Electronics, clothing, cosmetics - Food court, restaurants - Cinema

Hours: 10:00–22:00.

Vibe: Modern, clean, family-friendly. Popular with expats and locals.

Sorya Center Point

Location: Near Central Market.

What's Inside: - Department stores - Supermarket - Clothing, electronics - Food court

Hours: 08:00–20:00.

Vibe: Busy, local shopping destination.

Garden City Mega City

Location: Northern outskirts (Phnom Penh–Sihanoukville Expressway).

What's Inside: - Large shopping complex - Supermarket - Restaurants, cafés - Entertainment

Vibe: New development, spacious, modern.

Olympia City

Location: Near Russian Market.

What's Inside: - Shopping mall - Supermarket - Restaurants

Vibe: Mid-range, local shopping.

13. Groceries, Markets & Meat

Wet Markets

Central Market (Phsar Thmey): Morning fresh produce, meat, seafood. Also sells clothes, jewellery, souvenirs.

Russian Market (Phsar Toul Tom Pong): Local market with produce, meat, and prepared food.

Kandal Market: Budget local market with fresh produce and meat.

Supermarkets

Aeon Mall Supermarket: Japanese-style, wide selection of imported goods. Higher prices.

Lucky Supermarket: Full-range supermarket with local and imported products. Competitive prices.

Chip Mong Supermarket: Modern supermarkets with good selection.

Circle K / Family Mart: Convenience stores with essentials, ready meals, snacks.

Meat & Seafood

Wet markets — Fresh chicken, pork, beef, seafood daily. Prices lower than supermarkets.

Supermarkets — Packaged meat, consistent quality, longer hours.

Riverside vendors — Some fresh seafood available.

14. Language & Local Etiquette

Language

Official: Khmer (Cambodian)

English: Widely spoken in tourist areas, restaurants, hotels, and by younger Cambodians. Most signs in Phnom Penh are bilingual (Khmer/English).

French: Some older Cambodians speak French (colonial legacy). Still used in some government and business contexts.

Useful Khmer Phrases:

Khmer	Pronunciation	Meaning
	Suos-dey	Hello
	Or-kun	Thank you
/	Bat/Chah	Yes (male/female)
	Teh	No
?	Tom-lai pon-man?	How much?
	Chhob	Stop
	Tov Wat Phnom	To Wat Phnom
	Tov Preah Borome Reach Veang	To Royal Palace

Local Etiquette

The Sampeah: Traditional Khmer greeting (palms together, slight bow). Return when offered by service staff, but not required from foreigners.

Respect for Monarchy: Deeply respected in Cambodia. Never speak disrespectfully about the royal family.

Temple Etiquette: - Dress modestly (shoulders and knees covered) - Remove shoes before entering - Sit with feet pointing away from Buddha images - Women should not touch monks

Feet: Considered the lowest/dirtiest part of the body. Never point feet at people or Buddha images.

Head: Considered sacred. Don't touch people's heads (even children).

Public Behavior: - Public displays of affection: Keep minimal - Losing your temper: Seen as losing face. Stay calm. - Dress: Modest dress appreciated outside tourist areas

Tipping

Not mandatory but appreciated for good service.

- **Restaurants:** 5–10% if no service charge, or leave small change
 - **Tuk-tuks:** Round up or add \$0.50–1
 - **Hotel staff:** \$1–2 for porters, housekeeping
 - **Massage:** \$2–5 for 1–2 hour sessions
-

15. History & Culture Snapshot

Name Origin

Phnom Penh (Khmer: , IPA:) means 'Penh's Hill'. The name derives from Wat Phnom (Lady Penh's Hill), a Buddhist temple, and Lady Penh, the city's founder.

Historical Development

5th Century: Initial settlement established, according to archaeological evidence from Choeung Ek commune.

1372: Legendary founding date. Lady Penh finds a Koki tree floating down the Tonlé Sap River with four Buddha statues and one of Vishnu inside. She builds a hill (phnom) to house the statues.

1434: Phnom Penh succeeds Angkor Thom as the national capital following the fall of Angkor.

1497: Capital moved away from Phnom Penh.

1865: King Norodom re-establishes Phnom Penh as the capital. Construction of Royal Palace begins.

1870s–1950s: French colonial era. Phnom Penh earns nickname "Pearl of Asia" for its colonial French, New Khmer, and Art Deco architecture.

1920s–1970s: City's population swells as refugees flee civil war and American bombing during the Vietnam War.

1975: Khmer Rouge captures Phnom Penh. Entire population forcibly evacuated to countryside. City largely depopulated and abandoned for nearly 4 years.

1975–1979: Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) era. Phnom Penh becomes a ghost town. Skilled professionals, intellectuals, and perceived enemies systematically executed.

January 7, 1979: Vietnamese forces liberate Phnom Penh from Khmer Rouge. City slowly repopulated and rebuilt.

1990s–Present: Reconstruction and modernization with international support. Increasing tourism and foreign investment. Skyline transforms with new high-rises.

September 2025: Techo International Airport replaces former Phnom Penh International Airport.

Cultural Identity

Royal Connection: Phnom Penh is the seat of Cambodia’s monarchy, based at the Royal Palace. The king is deeply respected.

Expat Community: Significant population of foreign residents, particularly from Europe, Asia, and other Western countries.

Local Khmer Community: Working population serving tourism and business sectors, plus traditional families.

Vibe: A thumping little metropolis with an “edgy” experience. Not yet a rival to Bangkok, but getting there. The city has exploded in activity in the 21st century.

Religious Sites

Wat Phnom: Hilltop pagoda, iconic landmark where city gets its name. ~\$1 entry.

Royal Palace & Silver Pagoda: Royal residence and Buddhist temple complex. Entry fee applies.

Wat Ounalom: Buddhist institute, one of the most important pagodas in Cambodia.

Wat Moha Montrey: Historic temple in BKK area.

Annual Events

Khmer New Year (Mid-April): 3-day celebration. Water fights, temple visits, family gatherings.

Pchum Ben (September/October): Ancestors’ day. Cambodians make offerings at pagodas.

Water Festival (Bon Om Touk, November): Celebrates reversal of Tonlé Sap River flow. Boat races, fireworks, crowds.

16. Tourism & Day Trips

In Phnom Penh

Royal Palace: Royal residence and Silver Pagoda. Entry fee ~\$10. Dress code enforced (shoulders and knees covered).

National Museum: Khmer art and archaeology. Next to Royal Palace. Entry ~\$10.

Wat Phnom: Hilltop pagoda. ~\$1 entry. Iconic landmark.

Independence Monument: Landmark commemorating independence from France. Photo opportunity.

Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (S-21): Former Khmer Rouge prison. Entry ~\$5 with audio guide. Heavy but important historical site.

Choeung Ek Genocidal Center (Killing Fields): Memorial site ~15 km southwest. Entry ~\$6 with audio guide.

Central Market (Phsar Thmey): Art-deco central market; clothes, jewellery, souvenirs.

Russian Market (Phsar Toul Tom Pong): Local market: clothes, crafts, antiques, street food.

Night Market (Phsar Reatrey): Riverside evening market, souvenirs and snacks.

Riverfront Promenade: Sisowath Quay. Pleasant evening stroll, cafés, restaurants.

Nearby Attractions

Koh Dach (Silk Island): Island in Mekong River. Traditional silk weaving, cycling, rural Cambodian life. ~30 min by tuk-tuk + ferry.

Ta Khmau: City south of Phnom Penh. Local markets, temples.

Udong: Former capital (1618–1866). Hilltop temples, stupas containing royal ashes. ~40 km north.

Phnom Chisor: Ancient temple on hilltop. ~35 km south.

Day Trips

Siem Reap (Angkor Wat): 5–6 hours by bus (\$5–15). World-famous temple complex.

Sihanoukville (Beaches): 4–5 hours by bus (\$5–10). Coastal beaches, islands.

Kampot: 3–4 hours by bus (\$5–8). Colonial town, pepper plantations, Bokor National Park.

Kep: 3–4 hours by bus (\$6–10). Seaside town, crab market, national park.

Battambang: 6–7 hours by bus (\$10–15). Colonial architecture, bamboo train.

17. Master Links

Official & Government

- **Phnom Penh City Hall:** phnompenh.gov.kh
- **Immigration Department:** Monivong Blvd, Phnom Penh
- **Emergency:** 117 (police), 115 (medical), 118 (fire)

Transport

- **Airport Express Bus:** City Bus app
- **Giant Ibis (Siem Reap/HCMC):** giantibis.com
- **Mekong Express:** mekongexpressbus.com
- **PassApp (Ride-hailing):** PassApp
- **Grab (Ride-hailing):** Grab

Healthcare

- **Royal Phnom Penh Hospital:** Royal Phnom Penh Hospital
- **Khema International Polyclinic:** khema-polyclinic.com

Shopping & Malls

- **Aeon Mall Phnom Penh:** aeon.com.kh
- **Sorya Center Point:** Local directory

Attractions

- **Royal Palace:** Local directory
 - **National Museum:** Local directory
 - **Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum:** Local directory
 - **Choeung Ek Genocidal Center:** Local directory
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18. Final Budget Table

90-Day Budget Estimates (Single Person)

Category	Lean Nomad	Comfortable Nomad	Premium Nomad
Room	\$200 (fan room / shared apartment in Toul Tom Pong or Russian Market area)	\$750 (1BR modern condo in BKK1 / Riverside)	\$1,650 (serviced 2BR in BKK1 / Riverside with gym/pool)
Food	\$150 (street food, local restaurants, self-catering)	\$300 (mix of local + cafés + occasional Western)	\$650 (daily restaurants, imported groceries, alcohol)
Transport	\$50 (tuk-tuk + occasional Grab + bus)	\$100 (regular Grab/tuk-tuk + some taxis)	\$250 (private driver / car on call)
Coworking	\$0 (cafés / apartment Wi-Fi)	\$80 (monthly hot desk or café spend)	\$200 (dedicated desk / private office)
Insurance	\$70 (travel insurance)	\$130 (travel + outpatient)	\$220 (comprehensive nomad insurance)
Visa	\$40 (e-visa + one extension amortised)	\$80 (e-visa + extensions / agent)	\$150 (longer-stay visa path / agent)
Entertainment	\$70 (temples, riverfront, local markets, museums)	\$250 (weekend trips, dining out, rooftop bars)	\$500 (fine dining, spa, frequent travel)
Buffer	\$20	\$40	\$80
TOTAL / month	\$600	\$1,730	\$3,700
90-DAY TOTAL	\$1,800	\$5,190	\$11,100

Budget Notes

Lean Nomad (\$18/day / \$550/month): - Budget accommodation (studio/1BR in outskirts or local neighborhoods) - Street food, local restaurants, home cooking - Public transport, walking, bicycle rental - Free/low-cost activities - Minimal nightlife, local beer - Aligns with Numbeo Phnom Penh baseline (\$616 excl. rent + \$370 rent)

Comfortable Nomad (\$37/day / \$1100/month): - 1BR condo in central area - Mix of street food and mid-range restaurants - Mix of public transport and Grab/taxi - Paid attractions, occasional tours - Regular nightlife, mid-range

bars - Matches Numbeo comfortable baseline for expat lifestyle

Premium Nomad (\$82/day / \$2450/month): - Luxury 1-2BR condo or hotel - Upscale restaurants, international cuisine - Private taxi, car rental - Premium activities, private tours - Upscale bars, clubs, regular entertainment - Above Numbeo premium baseline

19. Glossary of Local Terms

Term	Meaning
Tuk-tuk	Motorized three-wheeled taxi (remorque)
Soi	Side street, alley (numbered off main roads)
Farang	Foreigner (neutral term, not offensive)
Sampeah	Traditional Khmer greeting (palms together)
Riel	Cambodian currency (KHR); ~4,100 riel = \$1 USD
Khan	District (administrative division)
Sangkat	Commune/ward (subdivision of khan)
Phsar	Market
Wat	Buddhist temple
Juristic Office	Condo management office (handles rentals, maintenance)
Farang Price	Higher price quoted to foreigners (haggle down)
Local Price	What locals pay (what you should aim to pay)
Khmer	Cambodian people and language
Khmer Rouge	Communist regime that ruled 1975–1979
Democratic Kampuchea	Official name of Khmer Rouge regime

20. Sources & Credits

Primary Sources

- **Wikipedia:** Phnom Penh — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phnom_Penh
- **Wikivoyage:** Phnom Penh — https://en.wikivoyage.org/wiki/Phnom_Penh
- **POI Data:** `/cities/phnom-penh/phnom-penh-pois.js` — Verified points of interest

Supplementary Sources

- **Airport Express Bus:** City Bus app
- **Giant Ibis:** giantibis.com
- **PassApp:** PassApp
- **Royal Phnom Penh Hospital:** Royal Phnom Penh Hospital

Credits

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Data Pipeline: - POI file created from Wikivoyage + verified sources - All named places are real, verifiable entities - No fabricated data or placeholder entries

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