

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Despite being one of the poorest nations on Earth, Cambodia is a relatively safe country with stable politics and a peaceful population. However, travelers should remain knowledgeable and understand all security threats before their arrival. The Kingdom isn't dangerous, as long as you follow sensible precautions and stay alert.

FESTIVAL WARNING

In the run-up to major festivals such as P'chum Ben or Chaul Chnam Khmer, there is a palpable increase in the number of **robberies**, particularly in Phnom Penh. Cambodians need money to buy gifts for relatives or to pay off debts, and for some individuals theft is the quickest way to get this money. Be more vigilant at night at these times and don't take valuables out with you unnecessarily.

CRIME & VIOLENCE

Hold-ups and motorcycle theft are a potential danger in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville. But there is no need to be paranoid, just cautious. Walking or riding alone late at night is not ideal, certainly not in rural areas.

Take sensible precautions to protect yourself and your belongings:

- ✚ use a hotel safe for your valuables
- ✚ minimise the items you carry with you. If you carry a bag, make sure the strap is over your shoulder, away from the road to deter thieves on motorbikes from snatching it
- ✚ take extra care at night and in isolated areas
- ✚ be particularly vigilant travelling at night by bicycle or motorcycle, especially if you're alone. Stick to well-used, well-lit roads and carry a personal alarm if possible
- ✚ avoid placing bags in the front basket of bicycles
- ✚ be wary of pickpockets, especially on public transport and in crowded areas
- ✚ if you travel by bus, make sure cash and valuables you have are secured. There have been incidents where passengers have had items taken from bags while asleep.
- ✚ throughout your stay, always keep a photocopy of your passport, airline tickets and credit card numbers. These documents should be kept in a safe place separate from the originals. You should leave valuables in hotel safety deposit boxes wherever possible.

Violence against foreigners is extremely rare, but it pays to take care in crowded bars or nightclubs in Phnom Penh. If you get into a stand-off with rich young Khmers in a bar or club, swallow your pride and back down. Many carry guns and have an entourage of bodyguards.

MINES, MORTARS & BOMBS

Never touch any rockets, artillery shells, mortars, mines, bombs or other war material you may come across. The most heavily mined part of the country is along the Thai border area, but mines are a problem in much of Cambodia. In short: do not stray from well-marked paths under

any circumstances. If you are planning any walks, even in safer areas such as the remote northeast, it is imperative you take a guide as there may still be unexploded ordnance (UXO) from the American bombing campaign of the early 1970s.

SCAMS

Most scams are fairly harmless, involving a bit of commission here and there for taxi or moto drivers, particularly in Siem Reap.

There is quite a lot of fake medication floating about the region. Safeguard yourself by only buying prescription drugs from reliable pharmacies or clinics.

Beggars in places such as Phnom Penh and Siem Reap may ask for milk powder for an infant in arms. Some foreigners succumb to the urge to help, but the beggars usually request the most expensive milk formula available and return it to the shop to split the proceeds after the handover.