

Love Cambodia

Volunteers pack



Thank you for choosing to make a difference.

Volunteering is incredible on so many levels and something we encourage and love to see people do. However, at present we are not able to host short-term visitors and volunteers. We do value having people visit and had many great experience with short-term volunteers, but, at present it is not something we can offer at Love Cambodia.

If you are planning a placement of **3 months or more**, we can put you in touch with some wonderful people that we work with. These are longer-term placements, as they require more training and getting to know the people you would be working with. There would be the opportunity to work both with street children and with children in the rural villages.



For those hoping to help out in a meaningful way in a **short** amount of time, contact or drop into 'Concert Cambodia' on arrival, there website is

www.concertcambodia.org. They are a great organization who are set up to help people help.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE avoid walking into the nearest orphanage or school someone suggests of gives you a leaflet for in any of the main towns. Many of these are part of a huge problem Cambodia is facing. You can read more about scam projects further down in the pack

This pack is intended as practical advice to those planning to help out in Cambodia for the first time and is certainly not a set of 'rules'. The relevance of this information will inevitably vary depending on the individual, the accommodation and the type of work undertaken.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions at all...

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What should I wear?

The climate in Cambodia is tropical with wet season from September to January. Although it doesn't rain everyday in the wet season, some areas are susceptible to flooding. In the dry season, it can get incredibly hot in the day. Whenever you chose to visit; the streets of Siem Reap will either be dusty or muddy. It is important that your clothing is comfortable and you do not mind it getting muddy and possibly damaged.

For men shorts and T-shirts are fine. For women shorts and T-shirts are also fine. Please see the section "What cultural things do I need to be aware of?" for information on acceptable dress in villages and temples. We recommend having some longer trousers and long sleeve tops for the evening to minimize the risk of getting bitten by mosquitoes. Around town sandals are the best footwear. If you are involved in building project, or sports we recommend comfortable trainers.

Warning: If you have any cuts on your feet any open shoes will increase the risk of infection. Keep cuts clean and covered.

Some other things you might consider bringing:

- Sun hat
- Sun glasses
- A set of smart clothes (there are some nice restaurants here).

If you are staying longer you can also get laundry done. It usually takes about one day and comes back very clean and beautifully folded. This can be as cheap as \$1 per 1kg

Finally- don't worry too much if you forget something. There are plenty of relatively cheap markets here where you can buy clothes, hats, sunglasses and Mekong whiskey (with cobras and scorpions in!)

What do I need to bring?

The following is not intended to be comprehensive pack list, but may give you some ideas...

- Passport
- \$20(US) in cash for the visa (+ \$1 if you don't have a passport photo)
- Antimalarials (see section "Do I need any jabs or medication?")
- Citronella spray or a DEET based mosquito repellent
- Sun cream
- Money and/or bank cards
- A copy of your insurance policy details
- Thin sleeping bag or sleeping bag liner (depending on your choice of accommodation)
- Money belt
- Small gifts for street children and families
- Toilet paper and wet wipes
- Toiletries
- Day sack (small back pack for the day)
- Camera
- Torch
- Hand sanitizer



In Cambodia the mains sockets operate at 230V (50Hz) and require the European two pin plugs (see picture below). We recommend that you take precaution with any expensive electrical appliances which can be damaged by water as Cambodia is prone to heavy, tropical rainstorms. It is also important to be aware that expensive items (such as ipods, laptops, camera's and jewelry) are at risk of being stolen. Finally, be aware that perfumes and scented products may attract mosquitoes.

What is the Internet accessibility like?

Many hostels have free wifi for guests, some restaurants and coffee shops also have free wifi for customers. The wifi internet in some places is sufficient for skype calls. There are also a number of internet cafes with head phones, web cams and high speed internet. Internet cafes usually charge around \$1 for an hour.

How can I help me and my group stay safe?

In our experience (having lived here for a while), we have not experienced any problem with serious crime. However, as in any developing country there are some risks. Here are some precautions you can take:

- Always make sure someone in your group knows where you are at all times.
- Don't ride on the back of a motor bike.
- Do not travel alone at night.

Be careful of "distraction tactics" that thieves use on the streets when they are attempting to steal your personal possessions.

- Stepping on your toes
- Knocking into you
- Talking to you (girls may play with your rings and then attempt to steal them)
- Grabbing a man's private area (men walking alone are much more likely to be targeted)

Do I need any jabs or medication?

The following information is not intended to be a complete medical guide for volunteers, rather a brief summary of some of the health risks. We recommend that volunteers consult a doctor for specific information related to your trip and medical history. While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this information, Love Cambodia cannot accept any

liability for injury, loss or damage arising in any respect of any statement contained in this document.

General precautions:

To protect yourself against sun exposure, wear a sun hat and a high SPF factor sun cream in the day. Stay out of direct sunlight as much as possible. To protect yourself against illness caused by: poor hygiene, food and water-borne diseases; be careful of what you eat, drink and where you bathe. Water from the taps in Cambodia is not suitable for drinking; bottled water is readily available. The NATHNAC website (address below) has a useful section on general health issues.

Vaccinations for the following are recommended for travelers to Cambodia:

Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, Tuberculosis, Typhoid

Volunteers may also consider being vaccinated against:

Cholera, Japanese encephalitis, Rabies

For more information about the risks and precautions for each of these diseases please refer to the NATHNAC website.

We strongly recommend that volunteers bring and take antimalarials throughout the course of their stay and for the appropriate run-off period after they leave Cambodia (please check with your doctor):

- Most short term volunteers take Malarone. This has very few reported side effects.
- Doxycycline is a cheaper alternative to Malarone. If taken without food, it can cause nausea. Doxycycline also causes increased sun sensitivity.
- We do **not** recommend the use of Lariam due to the fact that larium-resistance has been reported in Cambodia. Furthermore, Lariam is known to have psychotropic side effects.

No anti-malarial is 100% effective. It is therefore important to take precautions against mosquito bites:

- Use a mosquito net at night.
- Wear mosquito repellent (especially at dawn and dusk); DEET-based products are known to be the most effective.
- Wear long sleeve clothing and long trousers in the evening.

For further information...

NATHNAC has excellent health information on Cambodia (and many other countries)

www.nathnac.org

Updated every couple of weeks, the World Health Organization has detailed and relevant health information:

www.who.int

What is the medical care like?

Before your trip, please make sure you have a travel insurance policy that is valid in Cambodia for the whole duration of your stay and covers the types of activities that you plan to do. Please inform us of your policy details prior to your visit (we need to know the company, claims phone number and policy number).

If you experience any illness during your stay please inform a member of Love Cambodia staff as soon as possible. Remember, symptoms which may appear trivial in your country of origin, could indicate something more serious in Cambodia (for example, flu-like symptoms could be due to Dengue fever or Malaria). It is important that we treat any illness seriously.

Siem Reap has an international hospital called “The Royal Angkor Hospital” which has both an ambulance and air ambulance service. Please check with your insurance company that their policy would definitely cover treatment in this hospital.

www.royalangkorhospital.com

What is the currency?

Cambodia uses US dollars and Reil. You will often pay for things and dollars and be given change in Reil. **1.00\$ = 4,000Reil**

How do I get a visa and how much does it cost?

Visa’s can be purchased on arrival at the airport. You have to fill out a short form for your visa and an arrival / departure card. Here are some tips:

- Purpose of travel put “voluntary charity work”
- For type of visa select “tourist visa”
- Address in Cambodia “Garden village, Siem Reap”

Depending on how busy they are it usually only takes 10-15minutes to obtain your visa. The tourist visa costs \$20(US):

It is important to have the \$20(US) with you in cash at the airport

If you do not have a passport photo they will take your photo at a cost of \$1

How will I get around?

There is a variety of transport available and this depends on the group size and where you want to go. In ascending order of price:

Walking|

Siem Reap is a relatively small city; most of the markets and restaurants are 10-15minute walk. However, it is unlikely that you will be able to walk to the project sites.

Rent a bike \$1 per day or \$2 per day for a mountain bike|

The cheaper bikes can be old and sometime poorly maintained. Before you rent, take a test ride and make sure you check the brakes! This is fun, but take care on the roads they are crowded and chaotic.

Back of a motorbike|

You may be offered rides on the back of a motor bike. Although cheaper than a tuk tuk we do not recommend this unless it is with someone who is known well to us.

Tuk tuk|

This is a fun way to get around. A tuk tuk can take up to 4 adults. The cost will depend on how far you want to go and whether you want the driver to stay with you and take you back. \$15(US) is a fair price for a tuk tuk driver for a day at Angkor Wat. Tuk tuks will probably be a good way to travel to and from projects. If you wish to do this, please let us know so that we can arrange drivers in advance and ensure that you get a fair price.



Minibus|

For larger groups it is possible to arrange a minibus.

Where can I stay?

There are many hostels and hotels in and around Siem Reap. We have listed two here to give you a sample of what is available. We recommend that larger groups arrange their accommodation in advance.

Garden Village |

This hostel is a 5 minute walk from the main tourist strip of Siem Reap. It has a friendly and lively atmosphere and a range of different rooms:

For just \$2 per night per person you can stay in a bamboo room. These rooms are on the top floor and therefore mosquitoes are not much of a problem. Each room has lights, a fan, sockets, mosquito nets over the beds and a padlock for the door. The toilets and shower facilities for these rooms are shared. There are a range of prices for other rooms depending what additional amenities you require; the most expensive room including hot water, tv, air conditioning and en suite are \$18 per night per room. Garden village also offers:

- Free lockers (in view of reception)- you need to bring a small padlock and key
- Bar with a snooker table, large screen TV, serving food and drinks
- Free wifi (there are also some computers)
- Bike rental \$1 per day
- Laundry for \$1 per 1kg

Angkor Wall |

Our TOP pick: Angkor wall is a small, clean and arty hostel with a peaceful ambiance. The whole premises are very clean and well equipped. Only a 2 minute walk from the main tourist strip of Siem Reap, it is a true sanctuary that is a welcome contrast to the hot, dusty and intense chaos of central Siem Reap. For just \$6 per night you can enjoy:

- Dorm rooms for 8 people (each bed has its own individual light)
- A clean bathroom including a shower with hot water
- Lockers (in the dorm room)- you will also be given a key if you wish to lock the dorm when you and your group are out
- A coffee shop with books and games



For more information and advanced bookings...

<http://www.hostelbookers.com/>

What is the food like?

Street vendors sell meals which are sometimes as cheap as 2000Reil (50 US cents). There are also many small street side cafes that sell a variety of Asian food; dishes usually range in cost from around \$1.50 to \$5

There are also many higher-end restaurants serving all sorts of food: Mexican, Italian, Indian, BBQ's (Prices usually range from \$3-\$10 per dish). There are a number of coffee shops which serve a variety of drinks and food. A cup of coffee will typically cost \$2-3

How much money will I need to bring?

This depends on where you stay, what you eat and what you wish to do in Cambodia. You need to bring \$20 as a minimum for a visa at the airport; but we recommend coming with more. You can withdraw from the ATM machines here; however, there is a local charge for most machines which will be added to any international charges your bank may incur. There are also currency exchange shops should you need to change money.

Use the information in this pack to help you decide on your budget for food, transport and accommodation (don't forget \$20 for your visa). Then add money for any additional activities you may enjoy:

- A day at Angkor Watt: \$20-\$40 Entrance fee + \$15 tuk tuk
- A visit to the museum: \$12 + \$5 tuk tuk
- Gifts: Small cheap gifts can be around \$1 but can also go up to \$10-\$30
- Massage: \$3-\$10 per hour
- Fish spa: \$2
- A meal and drinks at the Angkor bar \$10 (including a free show)

What cultural things do I need to be aware of?

The Cambodian people are genuinely friendly and helpful:

- In the city, Cambodian's are very used to seeing foreigners: Be prepared to be offered all sorts of things on the streets!
- Cambodian's in villages are not used to seeing foreigners and may stare and point; don't be offended... we do look funny to them.
- Bartering is fine and advisable (when done well it is friendly and builds a good rapport) try to find a fair price which is good for you and them.

- Dress modestly in villages and temples (Locals tend to define modest attire as that which covers your knees and shoulders. If you are working physically, they will understand if you wear shorts and cooler clothing).
- A little bit of language goes a long way

Useful Phrases:

Hello = **Sue-si-die**

How are you?/I am well = **Sok-sa-bi**

Good = **La-or**

Beautiful = **Sa-art**

Thank you = **Awkun**

What is your name? = **Chomor Ai?**

My name is... = **Knyom chomor...**

Good bye = **Leya hi**

What is “responsible tourism”?

A simple and widely used definition of responsible tourism is: “Making better places for people to live, and better places for people to visit”. Responsible tourism therefore encompasses a wide range of social, economic, political and environmental issues. As a small charity, we have been learning how some of these issues impact the work that we have been trying to do in Cambodia. We have, and will, continue to make every effort to ensure that we initiate and support projects that are consistent with the principles of responsible tourism: Therefore, whatever you find yourself doing here, we are committed to ensuring that the time and energy you invest make a positive difference to the lives Cambodians.

So what responsible tourism issues might you need to be aware of as a volunteer in Cambodia? Take a moment to look at the picture that was taken on the street in Siem Reap...



What do you think this child was doing when we met him? Why is he wearing a T-shirt saying “I could be your son”?

The child was begging. The emotive T-shirt is a sign that this child been sent by adults to beg- and more worryingly, adults who know how to manipulate tourists to give money. Some

people will spot this straight away- but eventually someone will pass by who is moved by the T-shirt and gives money.

It is important to realize that if you give money to a child begging on the streets:

- The child will not be allowed to keep the money and it is very unlikely that much, if any, will be spent on the child (someone will almost always watching and keeping careful track of things)
- The money the child can collect is likely keeping that child on the streets longer as the child will be deemed lucrative.
- The money is propagating a broader culture of begging that endangers children in the short and long term.

Strategic begging:

The child in the “I could be your son” T-shirt is an example of how the begging culture has become strategic. Remember that the children have a huge amount of experience at getting money off tourists. Here are some examples of things that we have observed, things which may make you feel uncomfortable:

- Young girls begging carrying a baby (often asking for baby milk, which they will later resell)
- Beggars deliberately acting miserable in the presence of tourists (then reverting to normal cheerful behavior when tourists are out of sight)
- Young boys may approach you when you are eating (they will sometimes interact a bit and may even recite facts and figures that they have learned in a hope to impress)
- Some children may stand for a long time in silence and watch you eating (this makes people feel very uncomfortable, and perhaps embarrassed by the fact that they are not giving)
- Some children may resort to rude or demanding behavior, especially if they suspect that you are not going to give them money.

Don't be phased by these things; think about the child with a bigger view of what is best for them. So, is there any way to help?

- Talk to them and listen to them
- If you buy food for them, **open it** before giving it to them (even if they ask you not to!)
- Buy things that cannot be re-sold

One of the saddest shocks we have encountered in Cambodia and have discovered to be a problem the world over is scam orphanages and schools. It seems incomprehensible to think that anyone would exploit children for money this way, but it happens and we must be aware of it.

Be-ware be-wise: Scam orphanages and schools

You can research into this quite easily through the Internet; there are many online videos and news reports that investigate it. In brief, they look the same as any other genuinely struggling poor orphanages or schools and both the adults and children will be equipped with a convincing story to break your heart. The bit that IS heart breaking is the story they give will be true for someone near by.

Tell-tail-signs:

- Children approaching you in town or at Angkor Wat with information or a leaflet.
- Culture shows staring the children
- Tuk-tuk drivers offering to take you to one (often on commission)
- Either no school books or school books with ant real work in them
- Taking you to buy rice from somewhere they know on the way
- Place that happen to on main roads that tourist use.

It is however, almost impossible to tell, as they are driven to convince you and look like the real thing. When you visit try to avoid them no matter how convincing. Interestingly, many of the scam places wont actually want you staying more than a few months for fear of you working them out. The other approach is to volunteer somewhere you have a pre-existing link with.

If you are reading this, you clearly want to make a positive difference and certainly do not want to be adding to the exploitation of children. So, please try to use your head as well as your heart when investing somewhere.

Volunteering and supporting is a big part of how we can make this world a better place. We certainly do not want to put you off, but rather equip you to volunteer wisely.

For more information...

Watch the youtube movie “People & Power: Cambodia’s orphan business”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hf_snNO9X8

For more information about “responsible tourism” the International Centre for Responsible Tourism has some very useful information and resources on their website:

<http://www.icrtourism.org>

Show LOVE Bring HOPE give SUPPORT ...wisely!