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UGC Sponsored National Seminar on Foreign Direct Investment in Retail Trade -Opportunities and Challenges

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How to Reach Cambodia

By Air

Travelling to Cambodia by air is the easiest, with the country having international airports at its two main hubs — Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. They are both very well-connected to the region, with direct flights running to and from Thailand, Vietnam, China, Laos, Malaysia, Japan and South Korea. Flights from India to Cambodia generally have a layover at one of these countries, which is the defining factor of how long the journey ultimately takes. One of the quickest routes available is from Kolkata to Siem Reap via Bangkok, taking about 7 and a half hours. However, one can find many options from other cities too, such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune, Ahmedabad, Goa and more. The best airlines to take include Air Asia who offer some of the best rates, Thai Air, Malaysian Airlines and Singapore Airlines – all of which have high availability. While Air India, Vistara, Cathay Pacific, Emirates and Angkor Air are other great options.

Those who wish to start their holiday with a bang can opt to land at Siem Reap and explore Angkor Wat first. Or you could land at Phnom Penh and make your way to Siem Reap on tour, saving the wonder for last. Find a tuk-tuk or taxi outside either airport when you land to take you to your hotel, or check if your booking comes with shuttle services. Before you plan your dates, note that flights may cost more between November and March, the peak tourist season.

By Rail

A once-in-a-lifetime experience is always worth taking the time out for. And that's exactly what the train journey from Thailand to Cambodia is. The 6-hour journey is literally and figuratively a breath of fresh air, taking you through the scenic countryside of the two countries at a much slower pace than the more advanced railways around the world. But it isn't just the speed, the train itself is charmingly rustic, with simple wooden seats and open passageways.

If this sounds like exactly the kind of off-beat experience you've been seeking, make your way to the Hua Lamphong Station in Bangkok to the Aranyaprathet Station besides the Poipet Thai-Cambodia border. Once you arrive, it's a short tuk-tuk ride away from the actual crossing where you will pass through immigration. Taxis, tourist vehicles or tuk-tuks can then be hired to take you onwards to Siem Reap, Phnom Penh or Battambang. The train to Cambodia is minimally priced and does not require advanced booking.

By Road

If you wish to travel to Cambodia by road, you'll have to drive across one of the six border towns it shares with Thailand. They are open every day and even offer visas on arrival if needed. You can opt for taxis or rental vehicles to cross over by road, although many of these journeys are serviced by public and private bus operators.

The biggest of the road crossings is between Aranyaprathet/Poipet in Bangkok and Siem Reap, although direct buses are also available to Phnom Pehn. For those looking to enter close to coastal Cambodia, the Hat Lek/Koh Kong border is your best option. You'll cross over into the southern part of the country, near the Cardamom and Elephant Mountains, with the very same road eventually taking you all the way to Sihanoukville. The other popular road crossing connects East Thailand to Cambodia's Battambang region. It is much less crowded and far more relaxed and scenic as compared to Poipet.

For those coming in from Vietnam, the Moc Bai/Bavet border on the Ho Chi Minh - Phnom Penh Road is the common entry point. While for the beaches, you'd rather take the Xa Xia/Prek Chak border between Ha Tien in Vietnam and Sihanoukville in Cambodia.

By Sea

Yet another unique way to reach Cambodia is by boat, from the neighbouring countries of Laos and Vietnam. A water crossing exists on the Mekong, just north of Stung Treng. The journey by speedboat takes about an hour and a half. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese port of Chau Doc, about four hours from Ho Chi Minh, operates ferries making the 5-hour journey to Phnom Pehn.

Commutation in Cambodia

Air

Flights by Cambodia Angkor Air connect the main tourist regions of Cambodia — Phnom Pehn, Siem Reap and Sihanoukville. They are reasonably priced and provide swift journeys between destinations, especially good for those short of time. However, for other locations across the country one has to take the roads.

Available only between Phnom Penh and Siem Reap are chartered helicopter services, offered by two main operators. This is a costly mode to travel between the two cities, but as a one-off, it's a truly memorable experience.

Car

Travel around Cambodia in your own private vehicle, with fully licensed tourist car rental services that are safe and reliable, including an experienced chauffeur who is completely familiar with the landscape of the country. The price varies as per the route and distance to be covered, with most being pre-fixed. Shared taxis ply the roads of cities and towns and can be hailed when spotted.

Bus

Travel like a local! Take the convenient, affordable buses that connect all major destinations within Cambodia. The tickets can be easily purchased online, with multiple popular booking websites available. These are both public and privately-run services, while some companies put out minibuses for hire, especially suitable for small groups travelling together.

Moto Taxis

Motorcycle taxis are quintessentially Cambodian, just as in similar Asian countries. While cheap, it is best to fix a price before you hop on as there is no fixed system or rate that they follow. You can find motor zipping across every urban and rural region, but it is a preferable option mostly for solo travellers.

Tuk-Tuk

For two or more people travelling together, tuk-tuks are a great way to explore Cambodia, almost like a cultural experience in itself. You can even hire them on a per day basis, for convenient sightseeing. The average cost would be around INR 1100-1600.

Ferry / Boat

Ferries operate along the major waterways of Cambodia, between Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Battambang. These include regular and luxury boats, including one that travels from Ho Chi Minh. While the boat rides can be quite long, they'll give you a completely different view of this wonderful country.

Train

Not many tourists opt to travel around Cambodia by train as the connectivity simply isn't that strong. However, services do run between major stops like Phnom Penh, Battambang, Sihanoukville and Poipet at the Thai border.

Decided to wander across Cambodia? Book your tickets, accommodation or holiday package with Thomas Cook and surrender yourself to this charming country.

(Source: <https://www.thomascook.in/international-tourism/how-to-reach-cambodia> [1])

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