



Cambodia Cycling Challenge

Pre trip dossier current for departures in 2009

Welcome to RAW Charity Challenges... we hope that you enjoy exploring the world as much as we do. Get ready for an adventurous and life changing challenge with over 475km of cycling in one of the most interesting countries in Asia. There are a total of seven days of cycling with a varied route that provides plenty of contrasting sights along the way, starting with a visit to the magnificent temple complex of Angkor Wat. Cambodia is well known for its bicycles and cyclos and there isn't a better way to see a country and experience the lifestyles of everyday local village life than to travel through the country on a mountain bike. You'll be getting a rare opportunity to see the realities of this country in a way that few other tourists would.

Itinerary

Day 1 Siem Reap

You will be met in the arrivals hall by your RAW leader and transferred by private bus to our start hotel. You'll have time for a swim or to do some shopping. If you have enough energy you can head out to the main temple of Angkor Wat to watch the sunset. It is often hailed as one of the most extraordinary architectural creations ever built, with its intricate bas relief's, strange acoustics and magnificent soaring towers. Over dinner this evening there will be a group meeting where we will go over the challenge and the adventure that lies ahead.

Meals included: dinner

Day 2 Cycle around temples of Angkor & Banteay Srei

After breakfast we will be fitted with our mountain bikes and have a cycling safety briefing before setting out. We then cycle to the Angkor Wat complex for a morning exploration of Angkor Wat and the Bayon temples. The rest of today is free to explore the numerous temples that cover an area of 54 sq km's. The Khymer Empire was one of the most prosperous empires in SE Asia and dominated much of what is now Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand. The kingdom drew its religious and political inspiration from India. The literary language of the court was Sanskrit; the spoken language was Khmer. Massive temples from this period, including Angkor Wat and the Bayon at Angkor Thum, testify to the power of Angkor and the grandeur of its architecture and decorative art. The unparalleled achievements in art, architecture, music, and dance during this period served as models for later cultural development in Cambodia.

Angkor faded into obscurity after the capital moved south to Phnom Penh in the 15th century, probably due in part to frequent invasions by the neighbouring Thais. The jungle rapidly grew over the monuments. In the centuries that followed, frequent wars reduced the territory, wealth, and power of Cambodian monarchs. However, an independent state with its capital near Phnom Penh survived until the 19th century.

Continue exploring the temple area or visit the floating village complete with floating school, restaurant, catholic church and police station. Also take some time to cycle to the Land Mine museum - set up by Aki, a former Khymer soldier who over 9 years served in 3 different armies. In the Khymer Rouge his job was to lay 100 - 200 mines each night and then recover them in the morning. Today he goes out for 5 days at a time and clears around 30 mines a day using his feet and a stick.

Distance cycled approx. 82 km

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 3 Cycle to Kampong Cham

In the morning we start with a ride of some 40 km to the Tonle Sap lake and from there to the fabulous ruined temple of Beng Melea, still overgrown with jungle and very atmospheric with few visitors. Tonle Sap lake; this is largest freshwater lake in South-East Asia, to Siem Reap. The lake's waters control the flow of the Mekong and provide a living for thousands of people, as it is one of the world's richest sources of freshwater fish. After Beng Melea we board buses which will take us onwards to the capital city. Arrive in the evening in Kampong Cham, the second biggest

city of Cambodia and situated on the Mekong River.

Distance cycled approx. 40 km

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 4 Cycle to Phnom Penh

Today's route runs along the side of the mighty Mekong river all the way to the Town of Koh Kaong where we board buses for the last leg of our journey into Phnom Penh. After checking into our hotel the rest of the day will be free for you to look around the sights of the capital city. Phnom Penh is a fascinating city that still retains a lot of its colonial charm from its days as the French capital of Indochina. There will be time in the evening to have a drink in the famous Foreign Correspondents Club by the river. The sights of Phnom Penh, include the National Museum, Royal Palace and many Wats located in the city.

Distance cycled approx. 65 km

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 5 Rest day in Phnom Penh (shopping & site seeing)

We confront Cambodia's tragic past here, paying a visit to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, a former school which served as a Khmer Rouge torture centre. Phnom Penh has so many attractions, where you will have time to explore the Russian Market, Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and National Museum. You could also take a stroll along the river's famous Sisowath Quay and enjoy a coffee or cocktail at one of the many cafes while observing the bustling river traffic.

Meals included: breakfast

Day 6 Phnom Penh – Takeo

It's an early start as we hit the bikes again for a day of riding Cambodia's highways. This morning we ride out to Choeung Ek, the most famous of the Khmer Rouge's many killing fields. After spending time here to take in this moving site we start our ride to Takeo, arriving in the afternoon in time for a look around this pleasant provincial town

Distance cycled approx. 83 km

Meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 7 Cycle to Kampot

We continue south today, riding on more flat easy roads through endless rice fields and waving children to Kampot, a pleasant town which sits on a picturesque river. In the evening boat trips can be taken into the mangroves or you can relax with a massage from a blind masseur at the Seeing Hands Massage Centre.

Distance cycled approx. 85 km

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 8 Cycle to Sihanoukville

Today we face a challenging ride but probably the most interesting for the variety of scenery. In the morning we ride flat roads under the gaze of the Elephant Mountains and within sight of the southern Cambodian coastline. As the day progresses and we get closer to Sihanoukville the roads become quite undulating with the last 20km holding a few challenging hills. Sihanoukville is the main port of Cambodia but with its beautiful beaches, islands surrounded by coral and cool



beachside bars you won't have any trouble relaxing tonight. Celebrate the completion of the challenge and say goodbye to our local team.

Distance cycled approx. 104 km

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 9 Transfer back to Phnom Penh / evening flight

Morning on the beach before a bus transfer back to Phnom Penh for evening flight to Singapore

Meals included: breakfast only

Joining Point Hotel in Siem Reap

City River Hotel 0511, Ahasva St

Wat Bo, Siem Reap

Phone: (855) 63 763 000

Finishing Point Hotel in Phnom Penh

Castle Hotel

Phnom Penh

Group Size

Maximum of 20 travellers per group

Accommodation

Hotels and guesthouses: The standard will vary according to where we are and we ask for your patience, as at times things do not work the way you are used to at home. Sometimes there may be no electricity, the plumbing may be temperamental, & there is only a squat toilet.

Meal Inclusions

Most meals included - see itinerary.

Transport

Private vehicle and support truck.

Physical Rating

Activities include long days of bike riding in conditions which are likely to be hot and muggy. You will raise your heart rate on these trips, so a good level of aerobic fitness is required.

Important Notes

1. Bikes

Please make sure that you let us know your height in cm's so that we can properly size you to the correct frame size.

The bikes that we provide are 21 speed Trek mountain bikes with front suspension and have a single water bottle carrier cage. There are no racks and we advise bringing a handlebar bag to carry personal items.



2. Bringing your own bike

Not a problem but any extra charges for taking it on the plane are your responsibility. It is best to pack your bike in a bike box available from any bike shop. We can then carry the box in the truck. Please note that while every effort is made to maintain all the bikes in good condition on each trip, we cannot guarantee that some small damage such as scratching will not occur as a result of the daily loading and unloading of bikes into and out of the support vehicle.

Please note - If you are bringing your own bike and it has disc brakes, hydraulics, rear suspension, oil units or special pumps for adjusting the suspension pressure, please make sure that you bring the necessary spares and parts with you.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips.

We strongly recommend that you take out insurance the moment you register for a trip as you are then covered should you not be able to go in the event of illness or accident. Please send these details (name of insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number) to RAW Challenges prior to departure.

We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader at the first group meeting. If you have credit card insurance your tour leader will require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Our preferred insurance company is CoverMore as they provide an excellent service. You can get a quote and apply on line directly by clicking on this link:

<https://b2c.covermore.com.au/index.jsp?alpha=AAV0231>

Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself.

It is your responsibility to arrange your Cambodian visa before you travel. The easiest way is via the online e-visa service offered by the Cambodian Government. Please visit the following site:

<http://evisa.mfaic.gov.kh/>

Health

All RAW travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our group leader, any traveller is unable to complete the



itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, RAW reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

Please let us know of any medical conditions on the registration form and if you are currently taking prescription medicine as it is important that our leader is aware of your circumstances.

We therefore ask that you read the itinerary in these trip notes thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts.

There are no specific health requirements for entry into Cambodia. However, you should consult your doctor or travel clinic for up-to-date information and prescriptions for vaccinations and anti-malarial requirements. **We would suggest that you are up to date with immunisation protection against typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis.** These countries are also a low risk malarial area and we recommend that you take a course of suitable malarial prophylactics. As some vaccinations require a course over weeks or months, contact your doctor as early as possible prior to departure. Generally, six to eight weeks' notice is adequate.

We also recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements (such as a spare pair of prescription glasses). Please be aware that for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets/antibiotics etc. Your first aid kit should include:

- headache tablets
- diarrhoea treatment (both a blocker to bring relief from the symptoms and an antibiotic)
- band-aids
- antiseptic for cuts & scrapes
- lip balm
- insect repellent
- high factor sunscreen.

Given the physical nature of this challenge we strongly advise bringing some sachets of an oral rehydration solution (available at chemists) as this aids recovery following activity and dehydration and also helps replace lost body salts should you suffer from 'gastro'. Just add a sachet to your water bottle each day. Please scroll down to the Special Safety Notes below for information on dehydration.

If you are 65 years or older a completed Medical Certificate is required. Please fax this through to 03 9597 0797 prior to departure.

Physical Preparation

In order to physically prepare yourself to cycle long hours in the saddle for up to 7 hours on successive days it is so important that you undertake a fitness program. Getting yourself fit is all part of the Challenge and one that you'll benefit from long after your trip is over. It is really worth putting in the effort before you go to condition the body (backside, neck, shoulders & leg muscles) as it means you'll enjoy the event rather than it being a struggle.

For a fitness program & advice click here: <http://rawchallenges.com/guide-to-cycling.php>



Build up your base endurance by long and frequent bike rides which will ensure that you are in peak condition for the challenge. You can also mix this up by taking other forms of regular exercise which you currently do such as yoga, spinning classes, walking and swimming.

Money Exchange

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: <http://www.oanda.com/>

Cambodia: \$1 AUD = approx. 2666 Riel (*updated 9th Dec*).

Officially the Cambodian Riel is the unit of currency. Unofficially however, \$US runs the country and is the currency you should bring, mostly in cash. Clean bills of small denominations are best. Travellers cheques can be difficult to change. ATM's are appearing in larger cities. Credit cards can be used to advance cash in banks in major towns but attract a high fee. We recommend that you don't use money changers on the street.

When changing money try and get a mix of denominations (your leader will advise you on this). Keep smaller notes with you when on the cycle ride as it can be difficult to change larger notes once out of the city.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Any tip that you wish to give to your local guides or leader in recognition of excellent service is always appreciated. We recommend approx. US\$30 to go into a kitty to be distributed to the local team at the end of the trip. Usually we do this on the last night at the celebration dinner.

Emergency Funds

Please also make sure you have access to an additional USD\$400, to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or an outbreak of bird flu) necessitate a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence but it is well worth being prepared!

Keeping in touch - communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road. Email cafes are commonplace throughout the regions we visit. If someone wishes to contact you in an emergency we recommend that they refer to our Emergency contact. We don't recommend that family and friends try to contact you through hotels, as they are subject to change and the reception staff may not speak English.

Emergency Contact

In the case of a genuine crisis or emergency, please call RAW Challenges Melbourne Office. Tel: +61 3 9597 0799. Outside of office hours please call 0413 703 632



Your fellow cyclists

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience.

Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part.

Group Leader

All RAW group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends.

While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects.

When we are cycling children will ask you for pens, money etc. It is always hard to resist giving them small gift. **However we ask you not to do this as it encourages a culture of begging** and often parents will take their children out of school and get their children to prey on tourists. Ask your leader what is the best way to give.

A couple of rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for RAW travellers. RAW's philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make our destinations such special places. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. **Our group leader has the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.**

What To Take

You should pack as lightly as possible. Your main luggage will be transported for you on all cycling days in the support vehicle. You will only need a day pack to carry your personal items when cycling. You are expected to carry your own luggage on & off the bus and though you will not be required to walk long distances with your luggage we recommend keeping the weight under 12kg. **Suitcases are not recommended as they are awkward to store in the support vehicle.**

Most travellers carry their luggage in a backpack, although an overnight bag with a shoulder strap would suffice if you travel lightly. Smaller bags with wheels are acceptable, although we recommend your bag has carry straps as well.

Checklist

Travel Documents:

- Passport (with photocopies) and Cambodia visa
- Copy of travel insurance
- Airline ticket
- USD cash
- Credit card

** Tip: use a money belt for security (put documents inside a plastic bag)

Personal Items

- First Aid kit (see the health section)
- High factor sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (biodegradable)
- Watch or alarm clock
- Ear plugs (in case room mate snores!)
- Plastic bags for wet or dirty clothing
- Wet wipes or antiseptic hand gel

Clothing

- 3 T-shirts (lightweight quick drying fabric) / long sleeved T-shirt
- 2 pairs Cycling shorts (padded)
- 1 pair of comfortable shoes for cycling
- pair of sport sandals
- socks (for cycling)
- 1 pair of knee length shorts
- 1 pair lightweight long trousers
- Lightweight waterproof top
- Light sweater/fleece for evening
- Small towel and swim wear
- Sun hat
- Clothes to relax in

Cycling Equipment

- Cycle helmet - (compulsory)
- 1 water bottle (min. 750 ml capacity recommended) or 'Camel Bak' hydration pack
- Handlebar bag / small day pack for carrying items when cycling
- Cycling gloves

Optional:

- Multi-tool (allen keys) for minor adjustments to your bike



- Your own saddle or gel seat cover
 - Your own SPD pedals
 - Mini bicycle pump
 - Favourite snacks for cycling energy boost e.g. 'PowerBars', sports gel (a concentrated carbohydrate that delivers immediate energy when you feel tired or flat), dried fruit or nuts
- ***Please refer again to our Cycling Guide on the homepage to see photo of bikes used and how to customise it.

Other Suggestions:

- Camera
- Adapter for recharging digital camera (American style with 2 parallel flat pins)
- Spare batteries
- Reading / writing material
- Penknife (put in main luggage at airport)
- Torch
- Small calculator (when out bargaining!)
- Photos of family or postcards of Australia (great way to have fun with locals you meet)
- Phrase book, map and Lonely Planet guide
- Small padlock for securing your luggage during flights

Local Dress

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout Asia. We will be spending a lot of time in the more conservative rural regions of Cambodia. Please remember that as visitors to someone else's home it is our responsibility to fit with the local customs by wearing appropriate clothing (irrespective of what other travellers are wearing). Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Asian climate.

As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered at all times. The wearing of shorts and halter tops away from the beach or swimming pools are not allowed as they will restrict your entry into buildings of a religious nature and family homes.

Cycling shorts and tops are ideal, though we do insist that you cover up when coming off the bike or stopping in villages as local people will be shocked and sometimes offended by the sight of tight body hugging lycra! So please be a good ambassador for your country and have a loose pair of shorts to put over your cycling shorts or a sarong to wrap around.

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling.

Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.



Your leader will accompany you on all included activities however during your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your group leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your RAW itinerary, and RAW makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time.

Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

A thorough **cycling safety briefing** will be given prior to setting off about the bikes (changing gears, brakes etc), Cambodia road rules, cycling on the right hand side of the road, cycling in a group and general hazards to look out for.

Dehydration

Dehydration is the biggest risk when undertaking a physical challenge such as trekking over undulating terrain. It is so important to be aware of your fluid intake especially at altitude and to constantly drink water throughout the day (even when you do not feel thirsty). Symptoms of mild dehydration include:

- flushed face
- extreme thirst, more than normal or unable to drink
- dry, warm skin
- cannot pass urine or reduced amounts, dark, yellow
- dizziness made worse when you are standing - weakness - cramping in the arms and legs
- sleepy or irritable
- headaches
- dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva

The simplest way of monitoring your fluid intake is by checking the colour of your urine. If it is clear or slightly yellow you are well hydrated but once it is a dark yellow you are in the danger zone and need to increase your fluid intake immediately. Ensure that you bring some Gastrolyte sachets as these help your recovery after trekking with the replacement of electrolytes. Gastrolyte is also the recommended treatment for dehydration caused by diarrhoea ('gastro').

RAW Challenges Newsletter

We have a free email newsletter full of travellers stories and experiences as well as news on new trips that we are running. Please send us an extract from your travel journal at the end of the trip. We would also love to receive any photos after the event as we are starting to build up a travellers album for each of our destinations on our website. We need resolution of around 1MB. Please could you send a CD to: RAW Challenges Photo album, 2/24 Bay Road, Sandringham, VIC 3191. If you have any suggestions to add more information to our trip dossier that you think other travellers would find useful please email: adventure@rawtravel.com. And of course email us if you have any questions leading up to the event.

HAVE AN AMAZING ADVENTURE!

The information in this trip dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and RAW Challenges.

