

The Contrasts of Cambodia - From Dark History to Radiant Beauty

Cambodia represents a nation of stark historical and cultural contrasts, juxtaposing a tragic twentieth-century legacy with profound architectural and natural splendor.



Genocide Center, Choeung Ek

The Scars of the Past

We cannot speak about Cambodia without mentioning its dark history. In the 1970s, the country experienced a cruel genocide under the **Khmer Rouge** and their leader **Pol Pot**. Between 1975 and 1979, up to 3 million people - an incredible 21% of the population at the time - lost their lives due to forced labour, hunger, torture, and executions.

The so-called "**Killing Fields**" and the notorious **S-21 prison** in the capital **Phnom Penh** are silent witnesses of this time today. Intellectuals, ethnic minorities, and even people who merely wore glasses were systematically persecuted. This traumatic past shapes the country to this day, which is unfortunately also reflected in the education system and a relatively high illiteracy rate of around 20%.

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Killing Fields, Phnom Penh

"Never will we forget the crimes committed during the Democratic Kampuchea regime 1975-1979"



Killing tree

"Killing tree against which executioners beat children"

A Land of New Beginnings and Youth

Yet Cambodia is also a land of indomitable will to live and youth! About a third of its approximately 16.9 million inhabitants are between 15 and 24 years old. Despite their harsh past, the people greet you with incredible warmth. The economy is growing, driven by the textile industry, rice cultivation, and of course, tourism.



Hun Sen Norreay Primary School, Neareay, Kampot



Woman with Child, Svay Pao

Temples, Beaches, and Jungle

And what kind of tourism that is! The absolute highlight of any trip is, of course, Angkor Wat. This gigantic temple complex was built between the 9th and 15th centuries and is the largest in the world. Over 200 temples are spread across roughly 400 square kilometers! An unforgettable sight, especially when the sun rises over the ancient stones.



[Angkor Wat, Siem Reap](#)

Besides Angkor Wat, the country has so much more to offer: the lively capital Phnom Penh with the imposing Royal Palace (built 1866-1870), the huge Tonle Sap Lake, dreamy beaches with crystal-clear water on the island of Koh Rong Sanloem, or the pristine forests of Mondulkiri, where you can observe elephants in the wild.

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Royal Palace, Phnom Penh

We hope we could give you a small, honest glimpse into this fascinating country. Feel free to visit our website to discover the complete photo galleries.

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