

INSIGHT GUIDES

LAOS & CAMBODIA



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How To Use This E-Book

Getting around the e-book

This **Insight Guide** e-book is designed to give you inspiration for your visit to Laos & Cambodia, as well as comprehensive planning advice to make sure you have the best travel experience. The guide begins with our selection of Top Attractions, as well as our Editor's Choice categories of activities and experiences. Detailed features on history, people and culture paint a vivid portrait of contemporary life in Laos & Cambodia. The extensive Places chapters give a complete guide to all the sights and areas worth visiting. The Travel Tips provide full information on getting around, hotels, activities from to culture to shopping to sport, plus a wealth of practical information to help you plan your trip.

In the Table of Contents and throughout this e-book you will see hyperlinked references. Just tap a hyperlink once to skip to the section you would like to read. Practical information and listings are also hyperlinked, so as long as you have an external connection to the internet, you can tap a link to go directly to the website for more information.

Maps

All key attractions and sights in Laos & Cambodia are numbered and cross-referenced to high-quality maps. Wherever you see the reference [map] just tap this to go straight to the related map. You can also double-tap any map for a zoom view.

Images

You'll find hundreds of beautiful high-resolution images that capture the essence of Laos & Cambodia. Simply double-tap on an image to see it full-screen.

About Insight Guides

Insight Guides have more than 40 years' experience of publishing high-quality, visual travel guides. We produce 400 full-colour titles, in both print and digital form, covering more than 200 destinations across the globe, in a variety of formats to meet your different needs.

Insight Guides are written by local authors who use their on-the-ground experience to provide the very latest information; their local expertise is evident in the extensive historical and cultural background features. All the reviews in **Insight Guides** are independent; we strive to maintain an impartial view. Our reviews are carefully selected to guide you to the best places to stay and eat, so you can be confident that when we say a restaurant or hotel is special, we really mean it.

Like all **Insight Guides**, this e-book contains hundreds of beautiful photographs to inspire and inform your travel. We commission most of our own photography, and we strive to capture the essence of a

destination using original images that you won't find anywhere else.

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A close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on the eye and cheek area. The person has traditional body paint applied to their face. The paint consists of several horizontal lines: a thick black line above the eye, a thinner black line below it, a large, textured yellow patch on the cheek, and two parallel lines below the yellow patch, one black and one red. The person's eye is dark and looking slightly to the right. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a white garment.

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The new travel website from Insight

Map Legend

City

	Freeway/Highway/Motorway
	Divided Highway
	Main Roads
	
	Minor Roads
	
	Pedestrian Roads
	Pedestrian Area
	Steps
	Footpath
	Railway
	Funicular Railway
	Tunnel
	Important Building
	Transport Hub
	Park
	Bus Station
	Tourist Information
	Main Post Office
	Cathedral/Church
	Mosque
	Synagogue
	Beach
	Statue/Monument
	Airport

Regional

	Freeway/Highway/Motorway (with junction)
	Freeway (under construction)
	Divided Highway
	Main Road
	Secondary Road
	Minor Road
	Track
	Footpath
	International Boundary
	State/Province Boundary
	National Park/Reserve
	Ferry Route
	Marshland/Swamp
	Glacier
	Salt Lake
	Airport/Airfield
	Church (ruins)
	Monastery
	Castle/Castle Ruins
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LAOS AND CAMBODIA

Ignored for decades, these two countries are emerging as amongst the most exciting travel destinations in Southeast Asia.



Together, Laos and Cambodia form the little-known hinterland of Indochina. In the colonial period they were considered backwaters by the French, who concentrated on exploiting the resources of Vietnam – the third and dominant country in French Indochina. During the turbulent years that followed independence, the United States waged a viciously destructive “Secret War” against the North Vietnamese Army and its Lao allies, the Pathet Lao, while Cambodia, having been illegally carpet-bombed by the US Air Force, was then “liberated” by the genocidal Khmer Rouge. Both countries experienced impoverishment and isolation from the outside world.



Nowadays both have put this brutal period behind them, although it has been a long and tortuous process for Cambodia. Opening their doors to the international community and to overseas visitors, the governments in Vientiane and Phnom Penh perceive tourism as a way to increase national development and assure a more prosperous future.

There are good reasons for linking Laos and Cambodia in a single guidebook. Both countries have a long tradition of Indic culture, as well as being closely related through Theravada Buddhism (northern parts of Laos are rather different in this respect, however) and long years of interaction with neighbouring Thailand and Vietnam. Each is startlingly beautiful and relatively undeveloped, populated by generous and friendly people, and home to some unforgettable sights. Their dependence on the mighty Mekong River and a shared colonial past further bind them, with both having benefited from the French culinary tradition – as Cambodia’s King Sihanouk once put it: “I am an anti-colonialist, but if one must be colonised it is better to be colonised by gourmets.” Today both countries are members of ASEAN, are developing and are increasingly prosperous. There has never been a better time to visit them.



Fisherman casting his nets.
Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

LAOS & CAMBODIA TOP ATTRACTIONS

A selection of the top sights of the two countries, from the haunting Plain of Jars to the romantic Luang Prabang, vibrant Phnom Penh and the unmatched splendour of Angkor.

Top Attraction 1



Angkor. Indochina's top attraction dates from almost 900 years ago, the golden years of the Khmer civilisation. The sprawling site is a unique repository of incredible craftsmanship on a staggering scale. The towers at Angkor Wat, the most famous site of all, appear otherworldly at sunset as they are flanked by hordes of flying foxes. [click here](#)

fotoLibra

Top Attraction 2



Vientiane. A smaller and more unassuming capital city would be hard to imagine. French-flavoured Vientiane extends languidly along the Mekong – walk along the river banks at sunset and enjoy a Bee Lao. [click here](#).

Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

Top Attraction 3



Luang Prabang. This beautiful royal capital is the religious centre of Laos. The old stupas and temples give the city a unique ambience, populated in part by hundreds of saffron-robed monks. [click here.](#)

Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

Top Attraction 4



Phnom Penh. Cambodia's animated capital is a city that has rediscovered itself. Wonderful restaurants, lots to see and a pleasant riverside setting. [click here](#).

Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

Top Attraction 5



The Plain of Jars. These mysterious giant stone vats are a highlight of any trip to Laos. Their origins are obscure, though one legend suggests they were built by giants to store rice wine. [click here](#).

Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

Top Attraction 6



Cambodian islands. For snorkelling, diving, camping and lounging on tropical beaches, there's no better place than the islands off Sihanoukville. [click here](#).

Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

Top Attraction 7



French colonial architecture. The French left more than baguettes and coffee. Numerous elegant villas, shops and administrative buildings remain throughout Indochina, and are well represented in cities like Vientiane, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Phnom Penh. [click here](#).

Peter Stuckings/Apa Publications

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