GENERAL

where is cambodia on the world map

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Where Is Cambodia on the World Map? A Complete Guide

When you first glance at a world map, you might wonder, **where is Cambodia on the world map?**Cambodia is a small, but historically rich country in Southeast Asia that sits between Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Although it covers a modest area of about 181,000 square kilometers, its cultural heritage—most famously the Angkor Wat temple complex—makes it a key destination for travelers, historians, and geographers alike. This article will walk you through Cambodia's exact position on the globe, its neighboring countries, key geographical features, and why its location matters both historically and today.

Geographical Position in Southeast Asia

Geographically, Cambodia occupies a central spot in the Indochinese Peninsula. The country is bounded by the Gulf of Thailand to the south, Thailand to the west and northwest, Laos to the north, and Vietnam to the east and southeast. The Mekong River, one of the world's longest rivers, forms much of its western border with Thailand. In the north, the Tonle Sap River flows into the Tonle Sap Lake, a critical freshwater reservoir that supports millions of livelihoods.

To answer the question, **where is Cambodia on the world map?**you can locate it by looking for the following approximate coordinates: 12°N latitude and 104°E longitude. In a standard world map, you'll find Cambodia just below the equator, nestled between the larger neighbors of Thailand and Vietnam, with Laos to the north and a small border with Thailand's southern province of Phetchaburi.

Latitude and Longitude: Pinpointing Cambodia

Here's a quick reference for the country's coordinates:

- Latitude: 12°N (north of the equator)
- Longitude: 104°E (east of Greenwich)

These numbers place Cambodia squarely in the tropical zone, giving it a hot, humid climate with a distinct wet and dry season. The latitude also means that the country receives a relatively even distribution of daylight throughout the year, which is a key factor for its agricultural cycles.

Neighboring Countries and Borders

Cambodia's borders are a blend of rivers, mountains, and human-made demarcations. Understanding its neighbors helps you see why the country has been a crossroads of culture and commerce for centuries.

Thailand

Thailand lies to the west and northwest of Cambodia. The border is largely defined by the Mekong River, which flows in a meandering path. The Thai provinces of Buriram, Surin, Sisaket, and Ubon Ratchathani share the longest stretch of this international boundary. Historically, this area has been a conduit for trade and migration.

Laos

To the north, Cambodia shares a land border with Laos, stretching from the Mekong River in the west to the

Bolaven Plateau in the east. This region is characterized by dense jungle and the Mekong's tributaries, making it a natural barrier and a point of cultural exchange.

Vietnam

The eastern border with Vietnam is a mix of coastal plains and mountainous terrain. The coastline along the South China Sea provides both a strategic maritime advantage and a natural barrier against potential invasions from the sea.

Major Geographical Features

While the question **where is Cambodia on the world map?**can be answered with coordinates, a deeper understanding of its geography reveals why the country has such a distinct identity. Here are the most significant features:

Angkor Region

Located in the northwestern part of Cambodia, the Angkor region is home to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat. The area is a network of ancient temples, stone structures, and canals that were once the heart of the Khmer Empire.

Mekong River Basin

The Mekong River, one of the world's longest rivers, runs along Cambodia's western border. It is vital for agriculture, fishing, and transportation. The river's seasonal flooding creates fertile alluvial plains that support rice cultivation.

Tonle Sap Lake

In the heart of Cambodia lies Tonle Sap Lake, the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. Its water levels rise and fall dramatically with the monsoon, creating a dynamic ecosystem that supports fishing communities and wildlife.

Historical Context: Why Cambodia's Location Matters

Cambodia's position in Southeast Asia has played a pivotal role in its history. The country has been a nexus for trade routes between China, India, and the Malay Archipelago. Its strategic location also made it a focal point during colonial expansion and modern geopolitical struggles.

Trade and Cultural Exchange

From the 1st to the 12th centuries, Cambodia's access to the Mekong River and the Gulf of Thailand facilitated trade in spices, silk, and precious stones. Merchants from China and India would travel along these waterways, bringing with them new ideas, religions, and technologies.

Colonial Era

In the late 19th century, French colonialists established control over Cambodia as part of French Indochina. Its location between Thailand and Vietnam made it a buffer zone against potential British expansion from Burma and the Siamese influence.

Modern Conflicts

During the 20th century, Cambodia's geographic position made it a battleground during the Vietnam War and the Cambodian Civil War. Its proximity to Vietnam allowed the Khmer Rouge to receive support from the Vietnamese

Communist Party, while its border with Thailand provided a corridor for refugees and guerrilla fighters.

Traveling to Cambodia: Practical Tips

Understanding where Cambodia sits on the world map is helpful for planning your trip. Below are some essential travel tips that consider its geography and climate.

Best Time to Visit

- Dry Season (November–March): Ideal for temple tours and outdoor adventures.
- Wet Season (April–October): Less crowded, but be prepared for monsoon rains.

Getting There

Cambodia is well connected by international airports in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Major airlines offer direct flights from Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore, making the country easily accessible from neighboring Southeast Asian hubs.

Internal Transportation

Within Cambodia, you can travel by bus, train, or domestic flights. For scenic routes, consider a boat trip on the Mekong River or a ride along the coastal highways to see the diverse landscapes.

Visa Requirements

Tourists from most countries can obtain a visa on arrival at the airport or land border crossings. E-visa options are also available for certain nationalities, simplifying the entry process.

Why Knowing Cambodia’s Position Is Important Today

Beyond tourism, Cambodia’s location has implications for economics, security, and environmental stewardship. Its strategic position makes it a key player in regional trade corridors, such as the ASEAN Economic Community. Additionally, the Mekong River basin is a shared resource that requires cooperation among neighboring countries to manage water usage, fisheries, and flood control.

Economic Opportunities

The country’s proximity to major markets like Thailand and Vietnam allows for trade in textiles, agriculture, and manufactured goods. Its coastal ports also serve as gateways for maritime trade in the South China Sea.

Environmental Challenges

Shared river systems mean that upstream activities—like dam construction or deforestation—can impact Cambodia’s downstream ecosystems. International cooperation is essential for maintaining the health of the Mekong and Tonle Sap basins.

Conclusion

So, where is Cambodia on the world map? It sits in the heart of Southeast Asia, just below the equator, bordered by Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, with the Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake shaping its landscape. Its geographic position has historically made it a crossroads of culture, commerce, and conflict, and today it remains a vital link in regional trade and environmental networks.

Whether you’re a traveler planning a trip to the ancient temples of Angkor, a student of geography curious about the Mekong River, or a professional interested in Southeast Asian geopolitics, understanding Cambodia’s exact

location provides a foundation for deeper exploration. With its rich history and strategic importance, Cambodia continues to be a fascinating country to study and visit.

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