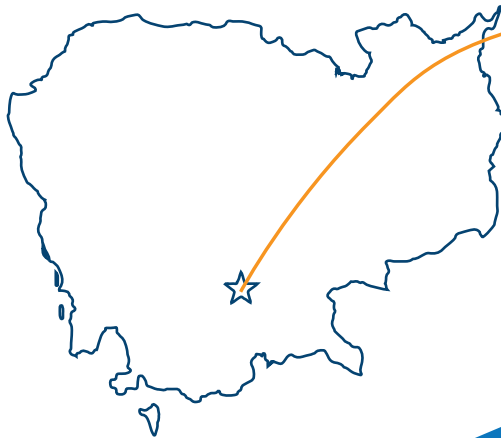


# CAMBODIA



CAPITAL:  
PHNOM PENH



LANGUAGES

KHMER

POPULATION OF  
16.9 MILLION

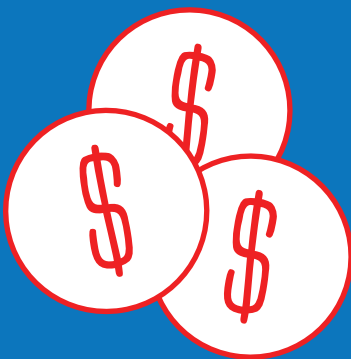


181,035 SQ KM  
IN LAND AREA



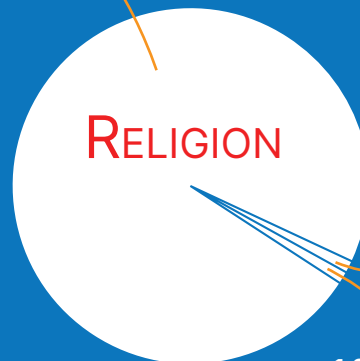
47%  
OF POPULATION  
ARE UNDER  
24 YEARS OLD

FAVOURITE SPORTS:  
SOCCER  
MARTIAL ARTS  
SEPAK TAKRAW  
(SIMILAR TO VOLLEYBALL)



CAMBODIAN RIEL

97.9%  
BUDDHIST



1% OTHER

MAJOR INDUSTRIES:  
AGRICULTURE  
TOURISM  
TEXTILES

# CAMBODIA



Students at LaValla school help to prepare food for a meal.



A student spends time in the recently completed physiotherapy room at LaValla

## Geography

The Kingdom of Cambodia is a Southeast Asian nation that borders Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. Cambodia has a tropical climate and experiences a monsoon season (May to November) and a dry season (December to April). The terrain is mostly low, flat plains, with mountains in the southwest and north.

## History

For 2,000 years Cambodia's civilization was influenced by India and China - it also contributed significantly to these countries as well as other Southeast Asian societies that are now part of Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. The civilization thrived during the Angkor period between the 9th and 14th century, resulting in amazing temple complexes such as Angkor Wat and the imperial capital of Angkor Thom. Following 400 years of decline, Cambodia became a French colony and during the 20th century experienced the turmoil of war, occupation by the Japanese, postwar independence, and political instability.

Between 1975 and 1979 the country was devastated by the reign of the Khmer Rouge, a rural communist guerrilla movement. The main goal of the regime, led by Pol Pot, was to create a socialist society where modern influences of the urban population ("New People") were to be eradicated in order to return Cambodia to a pre-modern society of "Old People". Consequently, it's believed up to 3 million Cambodians were killed due to execution, forced hardships, disease and starvation.

## Culture

Cambodia has the world's only national flag that incorporates an actual identifiable building into its design (Angkor Wat).

Much of Cambodia's cultural heritage was destroyed during the Khmer Rouge period. Today the country is experiencing a revival and rebuilding of traditional cultural values and practices, particularly in art, music and dance.

The Cambodian proverb "Fear not the future, weep not for the past" captures the general approach to life in the country. Given the tragedies experienced during the Khmer Rouge regime, many have demonstrated immense forgiveness to live harmoniously with those who were a part of the regime as well as those Khmer who may have lost loved ones. Cambodians also tend to have a stoic and cheerful demeanour. They rarely complain or show discomfort. People often smile or laugh in various scenarios, regardless of whether the situation is positive or negative.

## AMS Projects in Cambodia – LaValla

The Lavalla Project, a work of Marist Solidarity Cambodia, provides formal and inclusive education for children and young people with disabilities. As well the students have access to a comprehensive health and rehabilitation programme.

Lavalla Primary School was established in 1998 to cater for children and young people with physical disabilities. It is a government-registered school, enabling students to sit for the National Grade 6 Examinations.

Because all students have disabilities, they find that their lives are not defined by their disabilities so can live as normal young people and develop their individual talents. They also build up a resilience to cope with being disabled in the wider society.

Lavalla also has a comprehensive health and rehabilitation programme. Three physiotherapists are employed full time. A doctor is at Lavalla one day each week. Students also have the opportunity to accessing a wide range of health services – Dental, Optical, surgery, hearing, and prosthetics and other assistive devices to improve mobility.

## Further reading/resources:

CIA World Fact Book ([www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/](http://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/))

SBS Cultural Atlas ([www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au](http://www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au))

<https://asiasociety.org/education/cambodia-historical-overview>

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Cambodia>