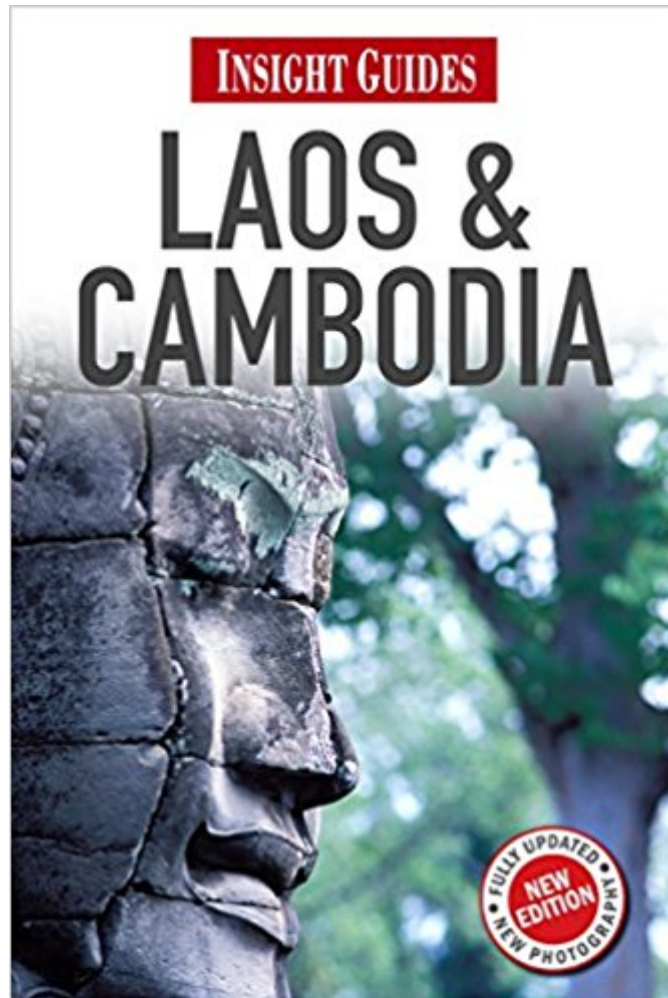




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# Laos & Cambodia (Insight Guides)



## Synopsis

Insight Guide Laos and Cambodia is the only full color travel guide to these two fascinating countries, and its lively narrative and stunning images provide both inspiration and information to plan a memorable trip to Indochina. The Best Of section shows you the unmissable sights and experiences – Angkor, the region's most spectacular sight, as well as the two contrasting capitals: laid-back, French-influenced Vientiane in Laos and Phnom Penh, Cambodia's animated capital on the banks of the Mekong River, plus markets, temples, relaxing beaches and islands. Lively features focus on the two countries' history and culture, while the Places chapters show you where to go in Laos and Cambodia, with beautiful photography, insightful descriptions of all the main attractions, and detailed, full color maps for easy orientation. The Travel Tips section provides practical information for planning a trip and getting around once you're there, plus our independent reviews of selected hotels and restaurants lead you to the most authentic establishments, full of local character.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Andrew Forbes graduated in Chinese Studies from the University of Leeds before completing an MA in Islamic Studies and a Ph.D. in Central Asian History. He lectured in East African History at the University of Khartoum (1977-78) and in Islamic Studies at the University of Aberdeen (1982-88). He has traveled extensively in Asia and Africa and has worked with Insight on more than 30 guides. Currently he is editor of Crescent Press Agency and of Pictures From History, an online image

library specialising in historical images of Asia. David Henley is a professional photographer and travel writer based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where he has lived with his wife and family for more than 20 years. He has worked with Insight on more than 30 guides, as well as writing and providing images for a wide range of other publishing houses and publications. He has traveled extensively in Asia, and is currently Managing Director of CPA Media Ltd (Crescent Press Agency) and of Pictures From History, an online image library specialising in historical images of Asia. Adam Bray has contributed to more than 25 books on travel in Southeast Asia and has reported on his discoveries of ancient Hindu temples and jungle adventures with lost tribes for the likes of CNN, CNNGo, the BBC and National Geographic Traveler. Travels further abroad have taken him to visit Rwanda's mountain gorillas and report from New Zealand's Hobbit holes for SyFy. Adam currently resides in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Simon Stewart is an English freelance writer based in Bangkok, who has lived and worked in Southeast Asia for 10 years. His stints in Cambodia and Laos included. He divides his time between university lecturing and travel writing and has written for a variety of publications, on topics ranging from cycling and backpacking to adventure and high-end tourism within Southeast Asia.

Last year I visited Laos and the previous year it was Cambodia, and before these tourist trips I by (after first searching in book shops in Chiang Mai) had bought travelers guides printed by other firms than this actual Book. But when I later from received an Insight Guide for a third Country, I liked it so much, so that I then ordered the actual Insight Guides *Laos & Cambodia*, to be used when next time visiting these Countries. What I especially like in the *Insight Guides Laos & Cambodia* are their good Cards, that is Cards which among other for example also are showing Cities, and their names, of many of the Cities in the neighboring Countries, as many of the other travelling guides doesn't do. And when I was in Laos it showed up that the travelling guide, *The Rough Guide to Laos*, which I then used, on the small Cards for each of the Counties in Laos, there not even were shown the Cities in the neighboring Counties. Very frustrating, especially when being a place and asking help about which way to go, and nobody understand a single word of what are told, and then not having the possibly by pointing on a Card, if the actual City should be laying in another Country or County, and then not are shown in the actual Card. All of my other traveler guides of course consist in being a single book for a single Country, but I've found this Book covering 2 Countries to be fine. But concerning Angkor Vat, which is a big special visiting place, about this I bought an extra book which I read before the journey. As well as I know from my 5

“Insight Guides”, besides being the best travelers guides, when it comes to the Cards, they also are in the top of quality when we are talking about the Pictures, or the History. And actually I don’t owe a single total Historical Book about Laos, so in this Book there were some new Historical details which I first now heard, among other that during the Vietnam War, USA on Laos, that not was fighting, dropped around 3 Tons of air Bombs pr. Citizen; actual the World Record. And that yearly still around 300 Persons are killed or wounded by these Bombs. And concerning Cambodia we among other learns that when Vietnam crashed the Khmer Rouge, who among other had killed around 2 to 3 million Citizens, then during the following more than 20 years, USA, England, Thailand, and China, was sponsoring the Khmer Rouge for their fighting against Vietnam! Among other we in the book learn about the Mekong River, and the big Fish in the River, but actually I didn’t find mentioned something about the very strange and extremely big ones, which maybe more are kind of snakes or lizards than fish. A Thailand friend of mine, a chief Policeman, on a wall is having a big Picture, showing many American soldiers (during Vietnam War, and probably by The Golden Triangle) standing holding such one, around 8 meter long (26 feet) (26 feet). And nearly each year we in the TV are seeing Thais and Laos standing by the Mekong waiting to see such one crossing the water surface. And each time this Picture makes me start thinking on the Chinese Snake figures we are seeing by all of the Temples. But if searching after special old places to visit in Laos, to me the number one is the ancient Luang Prabang City - by also reading in Thailand Historical Books - where I by a mistake, not yet have been, but is hoping soon to see. And by UNESCO World Heritage Site the Luang Prabang is considered the best preserved Town in Southeast Asia. But as the first place to visit in Cambodia it of course is Angkor, most known for the Angkor Wat. It is extremely large, and concerning Angkor, the book in the text, especially concerning its History, is telling us much, but here it would help with the small Card, covering Angkor, being bigger, and also more Pictures would for getting a better idea about the place. But of course we can buy single opening Cards where we are paying for getting into the very big district covering Angkor. When we were there 2 years ago we used many hours, by car driving, just travelling around in Angkor. A few years ago I read that Angkor Wat is the biggest Temple in the World, and 8 times as big as the number 2, which is a Temple in South America. And by being there is fantastic, by seeing so enormous many faces equal to the one on the front page, and where I previously thought that there only existed a single one, or a few such stone faces. And then instead it turned out to be the same big stone face anywhere, and on many places 4 faces pointing in the 4 different directions. And as a side remark it’s strange that back in History the Danes nearly 1,000

years ago concurred the German peninsula Rājāgen, and there they then found a big Good figure with 4 Faces, which they then crashed into the sea. But concerning Angkor, as written in the Book, there up to the year 1,300 ac. lived around 1 million Citizens, and many Historians writes that the big Kingdom then collapsed because of the transport and communication problems, and if they had Cars, then the World's biggest City and Kingdom back there in 1,300 ac would not have collapsed. But there is much more in the History about the Khmers Kingdom between 800 and 1,300 ac. than what we possibly can get in this Book. But what I would call the number 2 place to visit in Cambodia is the Tonle Sap, Cambodia's Great Lake. On the Card it looks like the River from the Lake to the Ocean is around 150 miles long, but when we were out in the Lake, we then were told that in some month each year there are connection between the Lake and the Ocean, so that they can sail to the Ocean and there from the Ocean comes water to the Lake. Probably due to a little different in the high position between the Lake and the Ocean, and then in the dry months then the Lake being a bit lower than the Ocean. But it was a strange around 60 miles long Lake to be sailing in, which we can't get any ideas about by looking at the Card, or the Pictures in the Book. A Lake with shrubbery, and many remote nooks, where people are living in sailing wood Boats, and out in the middle of the Lake laying a bigger wood Boat with shopping and even rearing Crocodiles. I admit that I came with some side telling, besides what written in the Book, but in any case it's an excellent traveler guide.

Insight Guides Laos and Cambodia (2013) is a sturdy, glossy, well organized 376 high quality page guide book. Colorful maps (including a helpful fold out map of Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia - great for calculating distances) and even more colorful pictures make this book beautiful to look at, but not suitable for lugging around in a backpack. The over abundance of photos makes the book heavy and limits actual travel information (which is what a traveler wants). However, the History sections, particularly The Rise and Fall of the Khmer, are fascinating reading along with sections on Population Society and Economy. Is Insight Guides Laos and Cambodia a good read? Yes. Could I use this as my sole guide book? No, but it will make a pretty coffee table book.

"insight Guide" books are the best. I bought my first book in 2011 when we went to Belize, Guatemala & the Yucatan. It was easy to reference during our trip. Easy to read. Full color photos & maps, Broken down into regions, the history, the people, weather, events, dos & don'ts, currency, hotels, transportation, restaurants, street food, laws. I wouldn't buy any other.

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