TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

pcgn
The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

CAMBODIA

Country name in English (PCGN recommended name)	Cambodia
Country name in Khmer (romanized in brackets)[1]	កម្ពុជា (Kâmpŭchéa)
State title in English (PCGN recommended name)	Kingdom of Cambodia
State title in Khmer (romanized in brackets)	ព្រះរាជាណាចក្រកម្ពុជា (Preăh Réachéanachâkr Kâmpŭchéa)
Official language	Khmer (khm)[2]
Script	Khmer
Romanization System	[BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Khmer](#)
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	KH/KHM
Capital (conventional name)	Phnom Penh
Capital in Khmer (romanized form in brackets)	ភ្នំពេញ (Phnum Pénh)[3]
Population	15,552,211[4]

Introduction

Cambodia is in southeast Asia, bordered to the west and northwest by Thailand, to the northeast by Laos, to the east by Vietnam and to the southwest by the Gulf of Thailand. A former protectorate of France, and occupied by the Japanese during World War II, Cambodia gained independence in 1953 when it became the Kingdom of Cambodia. The government was overthrown by the Khmer Rouge in 1975, and in 1976 the country was re-named Kampuchea (although this name change was not recognized by HMG). In 1979 the People's Republic of Kampuchea was established after the Khmer Rouge were defeated. In 1989 the country was named the State of Cambodia, until 1993 when the monarchy was restored and it became the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Geographical names policy

It is PCGN policy for Cambodia to romanize Khmer names, taken from official sources, ideally produced by the Cambodian Department of Geography, according to the BGN/PCGN (1972) Romanization System for Khmer (a modified version of Cambodia's Service Géographique Khmère (SGK) 1959 system), with the exception of the names of provinces and province centres, for which PCGN recommends using anglicised (simplified) spellings[5].

In 1995, the Ministry of Land Management and Urban Planning of Cambodia, Department of Geography, developed a new romanization system (modified in 1997) that is similar to the 1959 SGK system, but with no diacritical marks and a number of differences in the treatment of vowels. This new romanization system

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[1] Using the BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Khmer:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693723/ROMANIZATION_OF_KHMER.pdf
[2] ISO 639-2 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Factfile.
[3] It is PCGN policy is to recommend using the conventional name Phnom Penh rather than the romanized-Khmer spelling on HMG products.
[4] Cambodia National Institute of Statistics, 2019 figure https://www.nis.gov.kh/index.php/km/
[5] A list of the recommended anglicised spellings can be found on page 3.

has not yet been implemented in Cambodia and it will not be considered for adoption for HMG use until PCGN finds evidence that the new standardised system is officially in place and is being consistently used as a means of romanizing Khmer geographical names. Anglicised forms are commonly found in Cambodia, and until the new romanization system has been widely adopted, PCGN recommends that these spellings be used on HMG products for first-order administrative divisions and their administrative centres.

The NGA GEONet Names Server (GNS) may also be used as a source for names in Cambodia[6].

Language

Khmer is the official language of Cambodia[7]. It is spoken by the majority (96.3 %[8]) of the population. French, which was once the language of government, is now only spoken by some older Cambodians. English is used in the press and is the medium of instruction in some universities; street signs are often bilingual in Khmer and English.

Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings[9]):

The BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Khmer contains the basic Roman letters plus the following letter-diacritic combinations:

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Ă	0102	ă	0103
Á	00C1	á	00E1
Ê	00CA	ê	00EA
Ĕ	0114	ĕ	0115
É	00C9	é	00E9
Ĭ	012C	ĭ	012D
Ô	00D4	ô	00F4
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ŏ	014E	ŏ	014F
Œ	0152	œ	0153
Œ̆	0152+0306*	œ̆	0153+0306*
Ŭ	016C	ŭ	016D

* There is no single Unicode encoding for these letter-diacritic combinations.

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[6] Note that the PCGN-recommended anglicised names for the provinces (ADM1s) and centres (PPLAs) are recorded in the GNS as Conventional (C) names.

[7] https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5a40.html

[8] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cambodia/

[9] See www.unicode.org

Characters can be manually input into Microsoft Word documents by typing in these character codes and then holding down the ALT key and pressing /x/. The code will change to the required character. The letter can be copied and pasted into other programmes if required. Alternatively, the 'Insert – Symbol' command can be used; the code can be entered into the 'Character code' box which will show the corresponding letter. A GeoNames Soft-Copy Keyboard can be downloaded from the NGA website and used to enter the required letter-diacritic combinations for a particular region: http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/gns_services.html

Territorial and toponymic issues

Thailand and Cambodia dispute ownership of land near the 11th century border temple, Prasat Preăh Vĭhéar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site[10]. It is located in the Dangrek Mountains that form a natural border between Thailand and Cambodia. A 1962 International Court of Justice judgement awarded the temple to Cambodia and, as the dispute continued, this ruling was reiterated by a further ICJ judgement in 2013. On UK government products, the temple should be labelled using the Cambodian name **Prasat Preăh Vĭhéar** or with the English generic term **Preăh Vĭhéar Temple** if required.

The boundary alignment is also disputed in an area close to the Cambodian border town of Poipet[11]. The Cambodian name with the conventional name in brackets **Paôy Pêt (Poipet)** should be shown.

Other boundary disputes exist between Cambodia and Thailand, particularly along the Dangrek Mountains. The *de jure* boundary should be shown in each of these cases with the correct local names used on either side of the *de jure* boundary.

Administrative structure

Cambodia is divided into 25 first-order administrative divisions (ADM1s): the capital autonomous municipality (Khmer: *krŏng*) Phnom Penh, plus 24 provinces (Khmer: *khet*). As mentioned in the Geographical Names Policy section on page 1, the PCGN recommended name is the locally found anglicised (simplified) name for these names.

PCGN recommended name	Feature type	Co-ordinates	Khmer	BGN/PCGN romanization	ISO 3166-2 code
Banteay Meanchey	Province	13° 45' 00"N 103° 00' 00"E	បន្ទាយមានជ័យ	Bântéay Méan Choăy	KH-1
Sisophon	Centre	13° 35' 09"N 102° 58' 25"E	សិរីសោភណ័	Sĕrei Saôphoăn	-
Battambang	Province	12° 55' 00"N 103° 05' 00"E	បាត់ដំបង	Bătdâmbâng	KH-2
	Centre	13° 06' 10"N 103° 11' 54"E			-
Kampong Cham	Province	12° 05' 00"N 105° 35' 00"E	កំពង់ចាម	Kâmpóng Cham	KH-3
	Centre	11° 59' 36"N 104° 40' 00"E			-
Kampong Chhnang	Province	12° 10' 00"N 104° 33' 00"E	កំពង់ឆ្នាំង	Kâmpóng Chhnăng	KH-4
	Centre	12° 15' 00"N 104° 40' 00"E			-
Kampong Speu	Province	11° 30' 00"N 104° 20' 00"E	កំពង់ស្ពឺ	Kâmpóng Spœ	KH-5
	Centre	11° 27' 12"N 104° 31' 15"E			-
Kampong Thom	Province	12° 50' 00"N 105° 00' 00"E	កំពង់ធំ	Kâmpóng Thum	KH-6
	Centre	12° 42' 40"N 104° 53' 19"E			-

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[10] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1224
[11] A town popular with Thai gamblers.

PCGN recommended name	Feature type	Co-ordinates	Khmer	BGN/PCGN romanization	ISO 3166-2 code
Kampot	Province	10° 50' 00"N 104° 20' 00"E	កំពត	Kâmpôt	KH-7
	Centre	10° 36' 37"N 104° 10' 53"E			-
Kandal	Province	11° 25' 00"N 105° 00' 00"E	កណ្ដាល	Kândal	KH-8
Ta Khmau	Centre	11° 29' 00"N 104° 57' 00"E	តាខ្មៅ	Ta Khmau	-
Koh Kong	Province	11° 30' 00"N 103° 30' 00"E	កោះកុង	Kaôh Kŏng	KH-9
	Centre	11° 36' 55"N 102° 59' 02"E			-
Kep	Province	10° 30' 45"N 104° 19' 00"E	កែប	Kêb	KH-23
Krong Kep	Centre	10° 28' 58"N 104° 19' 00"E	ក្រុងកែប	Krŏng Kêb	-
Kratie	Province	12° 40' 00"N 106° 05' 00"E	ក្រចេះ	Krâchéh	KH-10
	Centre	12° 29' 17"N 106° 01' 08"E			-
Mondolkiri	Province	12° 45' 00"N 107° 00' 00"E	មណ្ឌលគីរី	Môndôl Kiri	KH-11
Sen Monorom	Centre	12° 27' 21"N 107° 11' 17"E	សែនមនោរម្យ	Sênmônoŭrôm	-
Oddar Meanchey	Province	14° 12' 00"N 130° 43' 00"E	ឧត្តរមានជ័យ	Ŏtdâr Méan Choăy	KH-22
Samraong	Centre	14° 10' 54"N 103° 31' 03"E	សំរោង	Sâmraông	-
Pailin	Province	12° 52' 00"N 102° 36' 00"E	ប៉ៃលិន	Pailĭn	KH-24
	Centre	12° 50' 56"N 102° 36' 33"E			-
Phnom Penh	Municipality	11° 33' 00"N 104° 52' 00"E	ភ្នំពេញ	Phnum Pénh	KH-12
	Capital city	11° 33' 45"N 104° 54' 58"E			-
Preah Sihanouk	Province	10° 40' 00"N 103° 45' 00"E	ព្រះសីហនុ	Preăh Seihânŭ	KH-18
Sihanoukville [12]	Centre	11° 38' 09"N 103° 30' 06"E	ព្រះសីហនុ	Preăh Seihânŭ	-
Preah Vihear	Province	13° 45' 00"N 105° 00' 00"E	ព្រះវិហារ	Preăh Vĭhéar	KH-13
Tbeng Meanchey	Centre	13° 48' 26"N 104° 58' 50"E	ត្បែងមានជ័យ	Tbêng Méanchey	-
Prey Veng	Province	11° 22' 00"N 105° 28' 00"E	ព្រៃវែង	Prey Vêng	KH-14
	Centre	11° 29' 13"N 105° 19' 31"E			-
Pursat	Province	12° 20' 00"N 103° 40' 00"E	ពោធិ៍សាត់	Poŭthĭsăt	KH-15
	Centre	12° 32' 20"N 103° 55' 09"E			-

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[12] This is the conventional name.

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PCGN recommended name	Feature type	Co-ordinates	Khmer	BGN/PCGN romanization	ISO 3166-2 code
Ratanakiri	Province	13° 50' 00"N 107° 07' 00"E	រតនគិរី	Rôtânôkiri	KH-16
Banlung	Centre	13° 44' 22"N 106° 59' 14"E	បានលុង	Ban Lŭng	-
Siem Reap	Province	13° 30' 00"N 104° 00' 00"E	សៀមរាប	Siĕmréab	KH-17
	Centre	13° 21' 42"N 103° 51' 38"E			-
Stung Treng	Province	13° 45' 00"N 106° 15' 00"E	ស្ទឹងត្រែង	Stœng Trêng	KH-19
	Centre	13° 31' 33"N 105° 58' 06"E			-
Svay Rieng	Province	11° 10' 00"N 105° 50' 00"E	ស្វាយរៀង	Svay Riĕng	KH-20
	Centre	11° 05' 16"N 105° 47' 58"E			-
Takeo	Province	10° 55' 00"N 104° 50' 00"E	តាកែវ	Takêv	KH-21
	Centre	10° 59' 27"N 104° 47' 06"E			-
Tbong Khmum[13]	Province	11° 56' 00"N 105° 48' 00"E	ខេត្តត្បូងឃ្មុំ	Tbong Khmŭm	KH-25
Suong	Centre	11° 54' 42"N 105° 39' 30"E	ក្រុងស្ទង	Suŏng	-

Other Significant Locations

PCGN Recommended Name	Local Names	Location (coordinates)	Feature Type
Angkor Wat	Prasat Angkor Voat (Khmer)	13° 24' 46" N 103° 52' 01" E	Temple
Dangrek Mountains	Chuŏr Phnum Dângrêk (Khmer) Thio Khao Phanom Dongrak (Thai)	14° 21' 30" N 104° 30' 30" E	Mountains
Gulf of Thailand[14]	Ao Thai (Thai) Chhung Sâmŭtrôsiĕm (Khmer) Teluk Siam (Malay) Vịnh Thái Lan (Vietnamese)	39°42'38" N 044° 17' 35" E	Gulf
Mekong[15]	Mae Nam Khong (Thai) Mènam Khong (Lao) Lancang Jiang (Chinese) Mekong River (Myanmar) Mékôngk (Khmer) Sông Tiền Giang (Vietnamese)	41° 03' 26" N 029° 02' 36" E	River

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[13] The spelling for Tbong Khmum province and its centre, Suong, have been taken from maps produced by the National Institute of Statistics Cambodia in co-operation with the Statistics Bureau of Japan, and the reference to the Royal Decree in the Cambodia Monthly Legal Update, January 2014.

[14] Historically known as the Gulf of Siam.

[15] The Mekong flows south from China and Myanmar (Burma), along the Thailand/Laos border and then through Cambodia and Vietnam. The local language names may also be added to larger scale products.

PCGN Recommended Name	Local Names	Location (coordinates)	Feature Type
Paôy Pêt (Poipet)	Paôy Pêt (Khmer)	13° 39' 29" N 102° 33' 49" E	Town
Phnom Aural[16]	Phnum Aôral (Khmer)	12° 01' 55" N 104° 10' 14" E	Mountain
Preăh Vĭhéar Temple	Prasat Preăh Vĭhéar (Khmer) Khao Phra Wihan (Thai)	14° 23' 30" N 104° 40' 49" E	Temple
Tonle Sap[17]	Bœng Tônlé Sab (Khmer)	12° 55' 26" N 103° 54' 55" E	Lake

Useful references

BBC Country Profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13006539
CIA World Factbook – Cambodia: https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/cambodia/
International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/
Languages: www.omniglot.com
Cambodia National Institute of Statistics: https://www.nis.gov.kh/index.php/km/
Unicode Consortium: www.unicode.org
US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/

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[16] Cambodia's highest peak. Sometimes spelt Phnum Aoral.
[17] Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake.