

King Ling College

S.5 Grand Tour Report (Cambodia)

Class 5A Group 3



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Introduction

This Grand Tour provides an opportunity for us to explore different culture and discover new things.

Our Grand Tour's destination, Cambodia, is a country located between Thailand and Vietnam in the southern part of the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. Its average temperature is around 35°C to 40°C as it is just 10-13 degrees north off the equator. The climate is dominated by the annual monsoon cycle with its alternating wet and dry seasons. Thus, the best period for the tourists to visit Cambodia is March, which is suitable for the one who cannot adapt to extremely hot weather. Its agriculture is the major economic income for the locals and the country is located in the tropical area, and therefore it is famous for growing wet rice and rice paddies are seen in most farmland. We travelled to two cities in Cambodia, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

Our group investigated the food culture and architecture there, and so we would like to compare their differences between Hong Kong and Cambodia.

Methodology

Before the trip, we set up a set of questionnaire for interview. (For the interview question, please refer to Interview) During the trip, we interviewed the tour guide in Siem Reap about food culture. We chose to conduct interview because we believe that we can collect the first-hand information from the locals so as to minimize the errors. Also, through interview, we can have a deep conversation with the Cambodians.

Besides, several photos and videos were taken to reflect the culture of Cambodia. They help us to analyze and compare the food cultural between Hong Kong and Cambodia in an easier way. They also create a vivid and realistic image to the audience.

Photographs analysis



Chinese style rice cake appears in Cambodian supermarket.



Imported drinks such as Vita lemon tea are commonly found in Cambodian supermarket.



Different sauces are often found in Cambodian food for the set meal. The sauces are chilli sauce, fish sauce and garlic paste.

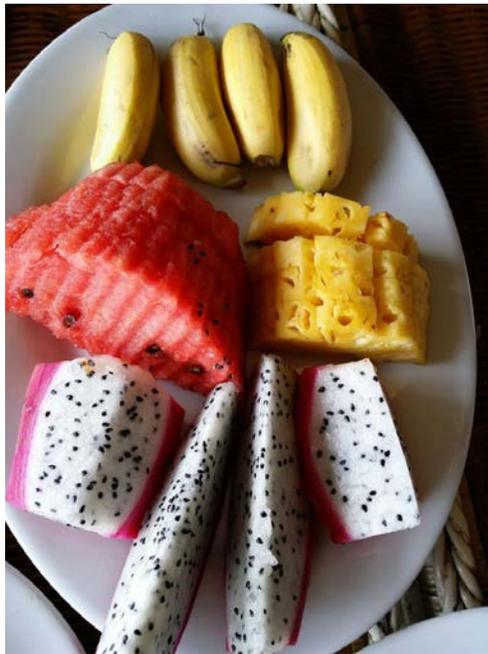


Milo is the most popular powder drink for Cambodian.



Cambodian green salad consist of onion, carrot, papaya and cucumber with a source which is sour and sweet.

Cambodia used to be a colony of France, so French bread (baguette) could be found in Cambodian street.



Banana, pineapple, watermelon and dragon fruit are the common dessert consume by Cambodian.

The chief is demonstrating how to open a young coconut.



Cambodia is located near the equator, the weather is hot throughout the whole year. In order to stimulate their appetite, they usually eat strong flavour food, pickled vegetables with different sauces, such as curry (Amok), sour and spicy soup. Moreover, the Khmer foods are abundant in herbs for seasonings, for example, finger root, black pepper and kaffir lime leaf. Also, tropical fruits like banana, pineapple, watermelon and dragon fruit are popular among the Cambodians.

Under the influence of globalization, food products from different countries are imported to Cambodian supermarket. So, it is not rare to find Hong Kong local brand products in Cambodia, such as Vita lemon tea, milk tea and Chinese rice cake. The most popular drinks among the locals is Milo, which is a product from Australian brand, Nestlé. These are good examples showing that globalization exists in Cambodia.

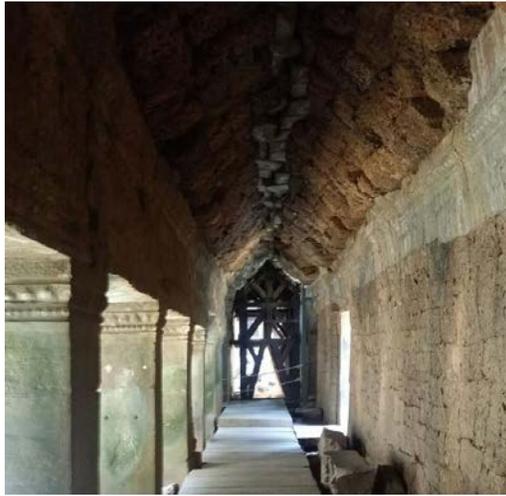
On the other hand, the culture of Cambodia is also affected by its history. As a former colony of France, we can see many French cuisines in the street, for example, nom pang (French baguette). The French introduced different types of non-native products like butter, coffee, and chocolate to Cambodia.



A door with the faces of two Buddha.



Many holes are found on the surface of a temple's wall.



Buildings with arches are often seen in Cambodia.



A deep water reservoir is commonly built to drain the rain water away.





A wall of a building showing the history and the story in the past.



Two local houses showing the living environment of the rich and the poor.

For the constructing materials, typical building ingredients are volcanic rocks, sand stones, woods and red and soft stocks. During the period of Angkor, only temples and other religious buildings were constructed of stone. Non-religious buildings such as dwellings were constructed of woods.

For the characteristic of the architecture, there are two forms of symmetry: mirror symmetry and rotational symmetry, such as the temple inside Angkor Wat and the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

Traditional Cambodian buildings are usually built based on the history of the country. For example, outside the Royal Palace, there is a door with the faces of 2 Buddhas. Besides, the walls of temples are carved according to the past history of Cambodia. There are also the evidences showing that the majority of the Cambodians believe in Buddhism.

What is more, the Cambodian architects mainly design the buildings for the purpose of making life more convenient. As shown in the photos above, a deep water reservoir is constructed so that excessive rain water can be drained away to avoid flooding. Moreover, the periphery of houses are constructed with arches. This aims at making the houses more firm so that they will not collapse. Holes are also commonly found on the surfaces of the architectures. This allows the Cambodians to hide their treasures inside.

Reflection

Day 1

Carina's reflection

The whole idea of grand tour was constructed 5 years ago. Everything seems so unrealistic when you have spent 5 years of time dreaming about how the trip is going to be, and in a dash, you are already in the airport waiting to get aboard and discover the mysterious land of Cambodia. My impression on Cambodia is a land of desolation, hotel room with no air conditioner and insects crawling through my face when I fall asleep. In fact, none of the above thing do really happen. My imagination is just too over aggressive. The first instant thing I noticed about was the weather. Passing through the door of the airport, it was another totally different world. Heat was invading inside my body, the temperature is real. For a few minutes, I became a melting ice-cream already. In fact, the same routine repeated for about 7-8 time, and I was like a ball of ice-cream deforesting and refrigerating again and again as we keep getting in and out the shuttle bus and the outside open-air sightseeing spot. The dramatic temperature changes was hard to adopt, but enduring is also a part of the journey and looking back, I could proudly told myself that I survive in such an adverse temperature, where is nothing I couldn't do actually.

The Royal palace we visit was gorgeous and magnificent, and some of the architecture there just simply left me to speechless, I was so happy to explore this hidden gem in Cambodia.

We have also went to see the supermarket there and feeling so surprised to see Vita lemon tea and milk tea was actually available in Cambodia too. However, what astonished we was actually the price of food there. Out of my expectation, the food are not cheap there. This remind me of our tour guide once told us that Cambodians salary was only around \$150 USD a month, as a result, people tend to work over-time or even get 2 or more jobs just to stay alive. Meanwhile, I was licking a \$1 USD dollar ice-cream and I suddenly feel the weight bearing of my ice-cream. 150 ice-cream is already equal to one month of salary there. This ice-cream may be the most expensive prestigious food that I have ever had in my life. Things come easy in Hong Kong, the worst thing we ever did was to take everything as granted, and this trip, do making me to rethink again for everything that I was owing now. And for that, I would like to say Thank You.

Day 2

Karina's Reflection

on the second day, we went to the killing field. It was a remarkable place that remembered the innocent genocide under the rule of Khmer's leader. It was dishearten that some people will pay for the black tourism, however, we did not treat ourselves as kids on the playground, we paid our best effort to respect the victims. During the visit to killing field, we saw the skeleton tower and their cranium showed how cruel the Khmer's soldiers were. The leaders of Cambodia government killed a lot of people just wanting to show how powerful they are. People could not rebel the leader because they would die even more tragically. This shows non-human of dictatorship and we should learn from the mistakes. After that, we went to the central

market and saw different souvenirs. Even though we didn't have enough time to walk through every places, we could still discover that the things were cheaper than Hong Kong. Although we were tired after visiting those places, we still believed that that day was fruitful.

Day3

Kelly's Reflection

On the third day of grand tour, we went to the Pouk Secondary and High School to exchange with their students, have fun together with them and experience the school life of Cambodia. We were so excited to meet the students there. We had a great time together. From the experience I had with the students over there, I had learnt many things. At first, we needed to find a partner and to communicate with them. Although their English was not good, I appreciated them so much because they tried their best to use their English to explain what they want to say. I also felt surprised about their learning atmosphere, they were so active that they would raise their hands up high and wanted to answer the question. It is such a big contrast to the situation in Hong Kong. What is more, they really respect their teacher and be polite to their teacher. They greet their teacher every time when they stand up and answer the question. Actually, I really yearn for the simple life they have in Cambodia. They had no fans or air - conditioning in their classrooms but they can still enjoy their lesson surrounded by the nature. They had less pressure and they enjoy their school life. Unlike Hong Kong students, each of them need to work hard to compete with each other which create a lot of pressure to the students. Cambodian students can enjoy the simple school life that we--the Hong Kong students would never enjoy.

I had a great time with Cambodian students on that day. This is a meaningful experiment for me to explore the big world.

Sandy's Reflection

This day, we went to visit the Pouk High School and joined the cooking school lessons in one of the local hotel. The school visit was so much fun as we were very glad to meet them and exchange our culture and traditional games with them. The school visit is also my most memorable activity in the whole trip.

Our team joined an English lesson with the local students. Seating in the same classroom, sharing a same learning atmosphere with the local students is so amazing and it makes me reflect a lot on our learning attitude. 38 degrees Celsius with no air-conditioner, the fan were not turned on, 3 people seat together and share a middle-sized table are the normal environment for them, however, these did not affect their learning attitude. Paying full attention on class and answering questions actively is really a good learning atmosphere I want to learn from them. It is very ironic that we have a better environment, learning materials and equipment than them, but our attitude is not equivalent to what we have, we seems do not care about much we have around and think everything we have are for sure. They will be sad because the teachers did not chose them for answering that question and we will be sad for being chose by the teachers to answer a question. They will greet their teachers every time before answering a question and we will not even stand up to answer a question.

Nowadays, it seems like studying and learning are for tests, examinations, HKDSE and complete with each other, we already lost

the passion of learning and just receive and digest everything that teachers gave us and put everything inside our head. I think it is time for us to learn their passion, the classroom atmosphere and attitude of learning from them, not just sitting in the classroom for 8 hours and waiting for the bell ring, but increase the interaction with teachers, rising questions and think about the purpose of learning and start to build up a good atmosphere in school.

Also, each of our teammates have a deep conversation with one local student. The partner of mine keep saying that our uniform is so beautiful that she wish she could have one. I never thought that the uniform we wear every day are something that they care and want, the small things we think are the big things they care. After talking to them, I think Hong Kong teenagers are already blessed and fortunate because of the higher living standard and we almost own everything that we want, so I think we should treasure everything that we have and live without weary of everything.

Wendy's Reflection

Among these five days, the most memorable part was visiting the Pouk Secondary & High School in the morning. We went for exchange with the Cambodian's students, experiencing a lesson of the school life in Cambodia and playing some traditional games of Cambodia afterwards.

The Cambodian's students and we were so enthusiastic to meet each other. After we found a partner and greeted with each other, we needed to have an English lesson. In that lesson, I had learnt many things which are different from Hong Kong students having lessons and it made me reflect a lot on our learning attitude. Although their English was not good at all, they tried their best to communicate with us and explain what they want to say which I appreciated. They were so active

to raise their hands up and answer the questions. When they answer the questions, they always greet their teacher first. They are so polite and respect to teachers. It is such a big different from Hong Kong.

What is more, I enjoyed their learning atmosphere. Their school life is so simple, with less pressure, and have close relation with teaches and the principal, just like family. Unlike to Hong Kong students, they have jam-packed schedule and need to work very hard. The monster parents always give their students with high expectations and want them to “win at the starting line”. We lost passion of learning as we like a machine that just receiving and digest everything the teachers gave us.

Also, Hong Kong students are lucky that receive 12-year free education. But for the students in Cambodia, it seems they do not have such subsidy in education. Some of them are poor that they cannot afford such high fee. So, they lost the opportunity for studying in school.

Cambodia is a worth-learning place. I reminded myself that I should always be thankful as I am much more blessed with my life when compared with them. I think we should treasure everything we owned.

Day 4

Katie's Reflection

In this trip, the most memorable part was visiting the Angkor Wat, which was regarded as the most majestic architecture in my mind. We spent the whole day for this visitation from dawn till dusk. Although it was an exhausting walk in the Angkor Wat, it's time for me to praise the Cambodian ancients for contributing to this miracle. Instead of high

technology in construction methods, they used their own technology knowledge to build the greatest temple in the world. All the architectures were perfectly bonded together by using the unknown binding agent, which the moderns still could not find out. It revealed that the knowledge of the ancients was not worse than ours. Since it was entitled to the world heritage, which bring fame and profit to the country. Not only the Cambodians, it was the tourists' responsibilities to protect the heritage, if we wanted to visit it again in the future.

Judy's Reflection

On the fourth day, my classmates and I went to the Angkor Wat to see the historical architecture there. It is a temple complex in Cambodia and the largest religious monument in the world. This day was a great day that I enjoyed so much.

What surprised me the most was not the beautiful views in the Angkor Wat, but the children there. When I arrived the Angkor Wat at around 530am, a boy who carried a bag on his neck asked me to buy some souvenirs from him so that he could earn money to support his family. This makes me reflect on my own life. What am I doing at 530am in Hong Kong? Definitely sleeping because I am not required to wake up so early to work. I believe that the boy is not the only child who needs to work at such a young age in today's world. Many of them are not able to enjoy their childhood. Therefore, I am reminded that I should always be thankful as I am much more blessed with my life when compare with them. Besides, I should treasure everything that I own, especially the time spends with my family and friends. It is hoped that the living of the boy can be improved in the future

Amy's Reflection

The schedule of the fourth day of our trip was to visit the famous Angkor Wat, the largest cloister in the world.

We woke up very early in the morning at about 5:00a.m to see the sunrise in the Angkor Wat. We followed the tour guide to the three most famous places of shooting the sunrise so as to let us to admire the most beautiful angles of the sunrise in Angkor Wat. Immediately after the sunrise viewing, we explored the inside of the libraries which was built in pairs and each side of the path, and next the majestic temples (Bayon Temple and Ta Prohm Temple), the imposing tower (Chest Echo Tower), galleries (the first level gallery and second level gallery), the gates (the south gate and victory gate), and the terrace (terrace of the elephants). I was startled with what I saw. The crafts, the artistry, the columns, the hallways, the murals, the towers, the ceilings, the vastness, the statues, and everything within there were all impressive, stunning and magnificent. At last, the tour guide leaded us to the Pre Rup temple to see and admired the beautiful and splendid sunset.

In this tour, we are honored to be offered chances to visit the Angkor Wat (one of the world heritages). It was such a precious experience to admire the authentic and majestic beauty of the Angkor Wat and explore Cambodia's most famous temple complex and all of its wonder. We have also learnt the fascinating history behind this incredible site and the architecture characteristics of Khmer architecture. Apart from our observations, the tour guide also provided some background information, such as the architectural materials, history, legends of the

temples and buildings, and some concepts of their religion which could assist our understanding of the Cambodia culture.

Besides that, I had witnessed some children (at the age about five to seven) selling some postcards and souvenirs to some of us and other tourists. A child begged us and others to buy the souvenirs, but only the few would buy them, and many would just ignore him. I know that Cambodia was a not very rich country, but I had never expected that Cambodian children, who were just at the age about five, needed to work for earning a living for themselves and their family. Comparing us with them, although we born in a much more comfortable environment, with sufficient materials or even luxuries, we would always complain about things that might be not perfect or not meeting our standard. More importantly, we did not treasure things that we have while people in Cambodia or other places might have to spend a lot of efforts to get it. Thus, I think we all learnt that we should treasure things that we have after this tour, and we should never forget how lucky and blessed we are to be born and raised in Hong Kong.

Findings of the interviews

Q: What are the traditional foods in Cambodia?

A: Mainly fish and herbs. The reason is because fresh water fish is abundant in Cambodia and we can see fresh water fish everywhere.

Q: Are herbs commonly found in Cambodia?

A: Herbs are also commonly found in Cambodia. People will grow herbs at home in rural area, such as lemon grass, Hong Jiang.

Q: what is the staple food found in Cambodia?

A: Rice is the staple food, and noodles are mainly eaten between meals. We usually eat 3 meals a day, including breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Q: Do the locals prefer Western style or Chinese style food?

A: Cambodian style and Chinese style are mainly found.

Q: As we know that most of the Cambodian believe in Buddhism, what kind of food they should avoid eating?

A: Most of the Cambodians believe in Theravade Buddhism, this religion does not require much restrictions, so pork, beef, chicken and goose meat can be consumed daily. For water, we mainly drink well water in rural area and underground water in urban area.

Q: Are there any differences in the eating habit of Cambodians in different regions?

A: Not much. But, the region itself may have its own local signature dish.

Q: Is eating insect popular in Cambodia?

A: We are not picky about food and we will eat most of the insects, for example, grasshopper, spider, pupae and silkworm chrysalis we will all consume.

Q: What are the common cooking methods used in Cambodia?

A: Boiling, for example: boiling sour spicy soup. Shallow frying and grilling is also common.

Q: is there any specific eating etiquette in Cambodia?

A: We will respect the elderly, if we are attending a wedding celebration in Cambodia, we will let the elderly to eat first, and it is impolite to start a meal before everyone is united together.

Q: Is there any traditional food in different festivals?

A: In the festival Pchum Ben (a 15 day Cambodian religion festival, which the local pay respect to deceased relatives of up to 7 generation), it is similar with the Qing Ming festival in China, meat dumpling and banana dumpling are consumed (a dish which is made of glutinous rice, pork, green bean paste and wrapped in banana leaf). The festival is usually celebrated in late September or early October.

Q: What are the Cambodian signature food?

A: Smelly fish. This is a dish which every Cambodian should know how to eat. The fish is soaked in water and let it decompose. When it is ready to consume, it is washed in water to remove the salt. The washed fish is combined with salt and stored in a jar. Every dish eaten is accompanied with this fish. The function of smelly fish is to stimulate appetite.

Summary

The Cambodians have similar eating habits and cooking methods with the Chinese, both of them are mainly using natural ingredients, like some herbs, rather than some refined product. On the other hand, the way Cambodians consume fish differs from Hong Kong's, they love eating strong flavor fish, which is a fish using a lot of herbs, while the Chinese tend to consume mild flavor fish, which retains the freshness of the fish. Moreover, the Cambodians prefer using less healthy cooking methods such as grilling and shallow frying to stimulate their appetite, however the Chinese pursue healthier cooking methods, like boiling and steaming, to stay in good shape. Also, the Pchum Ben festival in Cambodia is similar with the Dragon boat festival in China. Both of them eat meat dumpling during the festivals. However, Cambodia style of banana dumpling is sweet in taste but for Chinese style, it is mainly savory in taste.