

# Intrepid Travel Language Guides

## Cambodian Language Guide Script

**Scott:** Ah.... Soo ee nih?

**Mot Suan:** Do you mean s'uh-ee nih? Are you asking 'what is this?'

**Scott:** (smiling) Well, yeah, I'm trying to!

**Mot Suan:** You were very close – to say What is this? You say tae saaey nih

**Scott:** tae saaey nih – right – thanks for that! So, what IS it?

**Mot Suan:** (laughing) I'm not sure if you will like it... fried spiders!

**Scott:** (laughing) I'm game for anything!

**Mot Suan:** (asks fried spiders in Khmer)

**Scott:** Hey, thanks for that – would you like to share them with me?

**Mot Suan:** Sure, come and sit over here, it's the place I have arranged to meet my group for dinner. I am a tour guide and I am meeting a group here in awhile. Are you Australian? There are a few Australians in this group you might like to meet.

**Scott:** That sounds great. I'll grab us a drink along the way.... Fried spiders... what do you drink with them? Oh and I'm going to have to try that – is that a pineapple on a stick?!?!?

**Mot Suan:** That's right – it's very sweet. This stall has beer or soft drink if you would like one.

**Scott:** Right, how do I say two please?

**Mot Suan:** This is som pii

**Scott:** som pii I don't suppose you could teach me a bit of Cambodian while we wait for your group?

**Mot Suan:** Sure, I like to try and practise my English as much as I can. Also, locals will like that you are trying to speak with them in Cambodian, not many foreigners speak the language.

**Scott:** Great so a language lesson over a feast of fried spiders, pineapple on a stick and beer – life doesn't get much better than this!

**Mot Suan:** You say khnhom chmoh scott Lok Scott

**Scott:** khnhom chmoh scott Lok Scott – and how do I ask a persons name – how do I say What is your name?

**Mot Suan:** This is tae neak chhmoh aavey? – so I would say tae neak chhmoh aavey? Lok Suan

**Scott:** tae neak chhmoh aavey?. What about I'm from Australia

**Mot Suan:** This is khnhom mok pi pro tes ou sra lii. I should help you with some Khmer greetings, the most traditional which I'm sure you have seen is the Som Pas – this is where someone holds their hands together and bows their head. This is a sign of respect and you say chhom reap suor which is Hello when you do it.

**Scott:** Som Pas, chhom reap suor – are there rules for this?

**Mot Suan:** If you hold your hands high and bow low this shows great respect and you should always return a som pas, it is considered very rude not to. Some Cambodian men might shake your hand instead, but a Cambodian woman will never do this.

**Scott:** Ok – so don't offer to shake a womans hand?

**Mot Suan:** No you should not do this. Also Cambodians are very polite – so when you are addressing a man you should say Lok – which is Mr so I would be Lok Suan

**Scott:** Lok Suan

**Mot Suan:** You say Lok Srey for a woman followed by her name –

**Scott:** Lok Srey

**Mot Suan:** Also, you might refer to an older man as Ta which is grandfather or Po which is Uncle

**Scott:** Ta, Po – what about grandmother or aunt?

**Mot Suan:** Grandmother is Yeay and aunt is Ming

**Scott:** Yeay, Ming

**Mot Suan:** Family is very important in Cambodia and we are all taught to respect our elders or important people like the Monks – that is why we say Ta or Po as a sign of respect. You might also use brother and sister – bang and bang srey

**Scott:** Bang and bang srey – how would I refer to a Monk?

**Mot Suan:** This is a good question – Monks are very important in Cambodia, the Wat or temple is usually the centre of village life and we refer to the monks as Venerable – in Cambodian this is preah dech preah kun

**Scott:** preah dech preah kun

**Mot Suan:** You should show great respect to monks and be very mindful when you enter a temple – remove your shoes and hat, don't touch the statues and if a monk is seated when he is talking to you don't stand above him – sit down also. Also you must ask permission if you want to photograph a buddha.

**Scott:** Right – got it. How do I say goodbye

**Mot Suan:** This is lea sen hauy

**Scott:** lea sen hauy. Ok – what about yes and no – as in yes please or no thank you?

**Mot Suan:** this is good, locals will appreciate this – yes is bat yes please is bat trouv kar

**Scott:** bat troov kar

**Mot Suan:** No is te and no thank you is ot te or kun hauy

**Scott:** ot te or kun hauy – so please is soum

**Mot Suan:** That's right – you might say soum for excuse me

**Scott:** soum tos. What about I don't understand

**Mot Suan:** this is khnhom min yol te

**Scott:** khnhom min yol te. Ok... what about Please Say that Slowly

**Mot Suan:** this is soum ni yeay yiit yiit

**Scott:** soum ni yeay yiit yiit – this is tricky! How about Where Is and Which Way to?

**Mot Suan:** As a tour guide I specialise in this – I can tell you where everything is!  
Where is  
é na

**Scott:** é na

**Mot Suan:** Which way to taé phlov muoy na tiw kan

**Scott:** taé phlov muoy na tiw kan. Ok – I think it's time for another round of spiders –  
which were crunchy and strangely satisfying – how do I say How Much is it? I'll go and get us some...

**Mot Suan:** This is taé vea thlay pon maan

**Scott:** taé vea thlay pon maan. And Too Expensive?

**Mot Suan:** Don't worry – they won't be! But for other things you can say thlay nas

**Scott:** (laughing) I know... thlay nas. How would I ask for the bill at a restaurant?

**Mot Suan:** You would say kith luy

**Scott:** kith luy

**Mot Suan:** That's right. Also, a small tip is always appreciated as local salaries are very low.

**Scott:** That's good to know – and I've been told I should tip tour guides also....

**Mot Suan:** (smiling / laughing) Yes, we also appreciate this!

**Scott:** Ok – to help me count out my tip – how do I count to ten?

**Mot Suan:** this is muoy pii bey

**Scott:** Whoa – show down – or should I say... soum ni yeay yiit yiit – one at a time!

**Mot Suan:** one muoy

**Scott:** muoy

**Mot Suan:** Two pii

**Scott:** pii

**Mot Suan:** Three bey

**Scott:** bey

**Mot Suan:** Four buon

**Scott:** buon

**Mot Suan:** Five pram

**Scott:** pram

**Mot Suan:** Six pram muoy

**Scott:** pram muoy

**Mot Suan:** Seven pram pii

**Scott:** pram pii

**Mot Suan:** Eight pram bey

**Scott:** pram bey

**Mot Suan:** Nine pram buon

**Scott:** pram buon

**Mot Suan:** Ten dob

**Scott:** dob. About the number of fried spiders I've eaten! How do I say I like this?

**Mot Suan:** You say khnhom choul chet vea

**Scott:** khnhom choul chet vea What about I don't like this....

**Mot Suan:** this is khnhom min choul chet vea te

**Scott:** khnhom min choul chet vea te .....The pineapple wasn't for me...

**Mot Suan:** (laughing) yes, they are very sweet.

**Scott:** Just a bit! Now, I know to not drink the water and to be very careful of what I eat...

but I also know how easy it is to get sick while here, so how do I say hospital and doctor.

**Mot Suan:** Well, I hope you won't need them but hospital is mon tii pet

**Scott:** mon tii pet

**Mot Suan:** Doctor is kru pet

**Scott:** kru pet. What about police?

**Mot Suan:** I'm SURE you won't need that one, Cambodia is very safe – but if you do – polis

**Scott:** polis. Now I know your group will be here soon, I've just got a few more words if that is ok?

**Mot Suan:** Sure – go ahead, I'm enjoying this!

**Scott:** Ok – how do I say Have you a room?

**Mot Suan:** This is taé nak mean bontob te.

**Scott:** taé nak mean bontob te.. What about May I see it?

**Mot Suan:** It is a good idea to see the room before you book it – some of the smaller hotels and hostels are not great... you say taé khnhom som meul vea ban te. Also, you should try to bargain on the room price.

**Scott:** taé khnhom som meul vea ban te. What about bus, train, taxi and boat

**Mot Suan:** Bus is baas

**Scott:** baas

**Mot Suan:** train is ror tes phleung

**Scott:** ror tes phleung

**Mot Suan:** For taxi's you must negotiate a price before the trip – there are no meters in taxis. taxi is taksi But there are also tuktuks – which are bikes or motorcycles – again you should bargain with the driver before you get in, but they are cheaper than the cars.

**Scott:** Right –bit like Thailand. Boat and ticket?

**Mot Suan:** Boat is touk

**Scott:** touk What about ticket?

**Mot Suan:** This is som bot

**Scott:** som bot. Ok my friend before I buy us another round of beer my final words are today, tomorrow, yesterday and now – I find these useful for booking things!

**Mot Suan:** (laughing) Yes, I can see how these would be useful! Today is thnhay nih

**Scott:** thnhay nih

**Mot Suan:** Tomorrow is thnhay saaék

**Scott:** thnhay saaék

**Mot Suan:** Yesterday is msel menh

**Scott:** msel menh

**Mot Suan:** Now is ey louv

**Scott:** ey louv

**Mot Suan:** Very good! Just in time, here come a few of my group, that man is the Australian I think you will like.

**Scott:** Great, I'll get us some more beer – thank you very much for my lesson!

**Mot Swan:** My pleasure!