

## KIM IN CAMBODIA - NEWSLETTER (7) MARCH 2004

Hello to you all, here is me wishing you well from hot and bothered Cambodia, as today the temperature was well in the hundreds! I am enjoying a 3 week break from work - having fun, relaxing and traveling round the country with my friend Sam. I flew to meet Sam in Kuala Lumpur and we had a wonderful time exploring - KL is so very different to here, tones of shops, very clean and obviously affluent! It was great to spend time in a luxury hotel and for me rain was a wonderful feeling (not for Sam though) Malaysia was cooler than Cambodia, but more humid so we both had some adjusting to do - the air con and swimming pool helped a little! We visited the tallest building in the world - very impressive Petronas Towers indeed!! We did not do the tour in there, but went up the Menara tower to get a birds eye of the amazing skyline!

In Cambodia we spent 3 days in Phnom Penh - in which we visited the Killing Fields and Genocide museum, Royal Palace, Wat Phnom Pagoda and several of the busy markets! We ate both Khmer and Western food in many different settings, a favorite thing to do was happy hour at the posh FCC where half price cocktails were drank on the balcony whilst watching the sun go down and hundreds of people milling around the river front.

We have travelled in various ways - sometimes in style, most times not! - **Airplane, Taxi, Tuk-Tuk** (motorbike pulling small carriage for 2-4 people), **motorbike taxis** (sometimes we had a bike and driver each, other times we crushed on together - quite comfy really as you often see 4-6 people on one bike at a time!), **Cyclo, Express Boat, Small motorboat**, large passenger **ferry**, air-conditioned **bus, minibus** and by **bicycle** made for two :-



Now we are relaxing in my house in Chhlong - half way through our holiday. On Sunday we go to Kratie, then Phnom Penh before heading to the beach where we plan to chill and catch some rays! Sam seems to be enjoying it here, she is making friends with some of the locals and helping them to practice English - which can be a little entertaining at times. People tend to learn full sentences at a time, so when you don't understand one word in the sentence, they repeat the whole sentence over and over again! Its nice for me being 'home', and a great opportunity to have some real relaxation, as 2 hotels we have stayed at have had building sites next door!! However, in Chhlong there has been a wedding each day so the noise levels have been high from 5.30am to 11pm (ish), but bearable! My balcony is lovely and cool - good for reading and lazing in the hammock.

We travelled by fast boat to the town of Siem Reap to visit the pride of Cambodia - the temples of Angkor Wat. We had a comedy driver on the first day a guy called Raa (like the noise a tiger makes!), he was under 5 foot tall, so on the back of his motorbike, Sam (5ft7in) in the middle and me (5ft10in) at the back - we all got flies in our eyes! The next day we had a luxury tuk tuk to go round the temples, that was nice and comfy, most of all very cool! The temples are very impressive and interesting, but very tiring experience in the heat of the day! The hotel Borei Angkor was fantastic - luxury suite \$295 a night, pool, gym and very attentive staff, so we enjoyed our look round, before retreating to our \$15 guest house next to the building site! We went to a crocodile farm much to Sam's delight - hundreds of them crammed in small enclosures - quite a delicacy here on the menu! I chose to go to the famous Childrens hospital to hear about their work and went so far as donating blood as type AB is very much in need (and money!) We slummed it again in the luxury FCC in Siem Reap - very colonial indeed, shame we did not look the part (no white linen to wear!) We opted to travel back by bus and much to my annoyance got stung over breakfast by needing to pay a dollar for what usually costs \$0.25 - then realized that the town was called Stoung - so very appropriate name!

Coming back to Chhlong was a little tricky as we were both hungover from celebrating St Patrick's night in Phnom Penh - where we ended up in the main 'nightclub' here - the Heart of Darkness. We went out at 10pm and got back to hotel at 2am, then up at 6am to catch bus to Chhlong - bit much, but had a great time on night out, so was worth it!

Being off work for this length of time feels weird, we called at the office yesterday and got quite a welcome! I do think that I need this rest though, especially as the last week in work for me had been quite stressful on the course that I had organized. I am already feeling very refreshed and full of ideas to work full steam ahead when I get back to work. Kimry (midwife - who Iwork closely with) has had some strange developments lately - her mother, who she believed to have of been murdered in Pol Pot times has just appeared from Thailand where she has lived for the last 20 odd years - Strange or what??



So now - will say goodbye and wish you all well. This is a photo of me and the family that I live with - they are very nice. They have a gold smiths business in town, so that is how they get to own such a beautiful house!  
**GOODBYE FOR NOW,  
All my love, Kim (& Sam!)**