

# Sourcing from Cambodia

## PEPPER

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# 01

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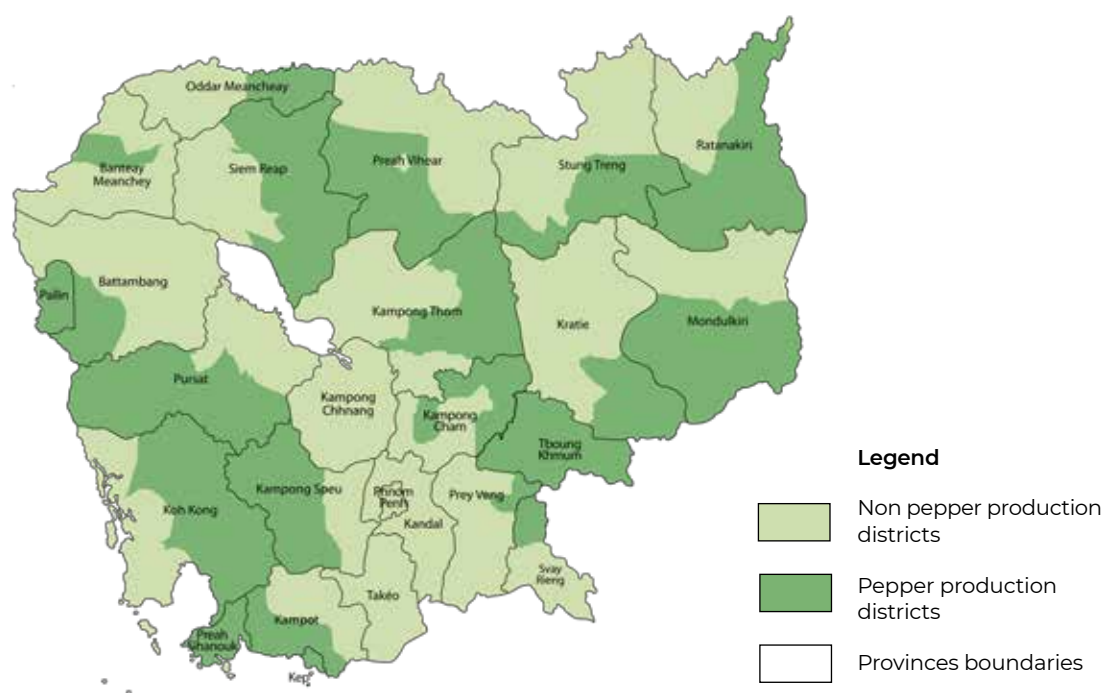
# Cambodia at a Glance

Cambodia has enjoyed over two decades of economic and urban development, averaging an annual rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 7% from 2010 to 2019. Growth is explained by favourable internal and external conditions.

The country has a young, growing population and an increasing middle class, which will fuel future consumption and investment. The Royal Government has embraced free market principles and sees the opening of the country to foreign investment as a priority. For example, selected investment projects – called Qualified Investment Projects (QIPs) – are offered several benefits, including tax holidays.

Cambodia also benefits from its strategic location, at the crossroads between major trading partners. The recent signing of free trade agreements (FTAs) is expected to connect Cambodia's economy to international markets. Examples of such agreements include the China-Cambodia FTA and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Volumes of international trade have been increasing, in part thanks to ballooning garment and footwear exports to major international suppliers. Exports rose by 17% between 2018 and 2019, from 12.7 to 14.8 USD billion. Imports also increased by 17%, from 17.4 USD billion in 2018 to 20.3 USD billion in 2019.

### Pepper production districts in Cambodia in 2017 - 2018



# Cambodia Factsheet

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**Currency**

Riel (KHR): 1USD  $\approx$  4,100 KHR. Dollarised economy between 82 to 84%

**GDP**

27.08 USD billion (2019)

**GDP growth rate**

7.1% (2019)

**GDP per capita**

1,643 USD (2019)

**Official language**

Khmer, English widely used

**Capital city**

Phnom Penh

**Major cities**

Siem Reap, Sihanoukville, Battambang

**Government type**

Constitutional Monarchy

**Head of State**

His Majesty King Norodom Sihamoni

**Population**

16.49 million (2019), annual growth 1.4 %, <25 years old: 47%

**Economy**

Garments, Tourism, Construction, Agriculture

**Climate**

Wet season: May to October

Dry season: November to April, average temperature: 27°C

**Major religion**

Buddhism (95%)







Source: Unsplash

# Pepper

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Due to a favourable climate and soil, Cambodia is considered to be one of the best regions in the world to grow high-quality pepper.

Its production in the country has a long history, even preceding the great civilisations of Angkor a millennium ago. Chinese sources provide a detailed account of local pepper farms from the 13th century. In more modern times, the real “pepper fever” started with the arrival of French colonists at the end of the 19th century. The colonists were particularly interested in the coastal region of Kampot, in the southern part of Cambodia. Seeing the area ideal for pepper cultivation due to unique soil hydrology and weather conditions, they set up the production of a distinct type of pepper, called “poivre Indochine”, or Kampot pepper. The product was exported to be served in high-end French restaurants, where it became extremely popular with haute cuisine enthusiasts. This proved to be Cambodian pepper’s first successful entry onto the European

market. Sadly, the disasters of the Khmer Rouge regime almost interrupted pepper production entirely across the country. Luckily, however, this was offset by a revival at the end of the 20th century, as producer families returned to their ancestral lands and resumed production. Cambodian pepper is a high-quality product, and is cultivated mainly in the Southwest and Northeast of the country, across Tbong Khmum, Kampot, Kampong Cham, Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri provinces. Due to its unique flavour and aroma, Kampot pepper became officially recognised by the Cambodian government and the European Union as a protected Geographical Indication (GI) in 2010, due to its higher quality and production standards.

The harvesting period is from January 1 to May 31. Most of the pepper production is done on small-scale farms, with limited infrastructure and labour-intensive processes. These farms are organised into around 18 cooperatives and producer



associations. Some of the most relevant ones have their contact details listed below. On these premises, the pepper is first grown and harvested. Sprawled over wooden sheets, it is then sun-dried and washed through various cycles. It is hand sorted (a laborious process) and then either sold to middlemen or packaged and sold directly. Resorting to middlemen, who usually bring the pepper across the border informally to Vietnam and sell it on as a local product, is usually a poor choice for the Cambodian farmers who opt to do so, due to the extremely low profit margins and deep price fluctuations. After a steep rise in international prices (with a peak of 9/10 USD per kg in 2016), the value of pepper went down in following years, due to global oversupply, being only around 2 USD per kg as of 2020. Some larger companies in the meantime have invested in in-house processing facilities, such as Sela Pepper. They meet international export standards by offering local cleaning, steam-sterilising and lab-testing services. But, in any case,

they are among the exceptions in the Cambodian pepper industry.

Despite these shortcomings, Cambodian pepper has seen increasing influxes of Western investment, particularly in the cultivation areas of Kampot, Kep and Tbong Khmom. In Kampot and neighbouring Kep, the presence of a considerable expatriate community has helped set up several farms which combine Western know-how and capital with ancient Khmer traditions.

Compared to other agricultural products in Cambodia, the volume of pepper production and export is quite small. Most of the demand comes from abroad, with only 2-3% of it estimated to being consumed domestically. Its value for the local economy and prospective importers lies in its quality as a niche product with a rich history. Still, as of 2019, 16,586 tonnes of pepper were produced, over an area of 7,471 hectares. Out of a total of 1,760 tonnes of exported pepper, almost all of it was of the conventional type (1,600

tonnes), followed by organic (80 tonnes), GI Kampot (50 tonnes) and organic GI Kampot pepper (30 tonnes). Most of the conventional pepper is exported to Vietnam and, to a minor extent, Thailand. This is often done informally, which makes the collection of official statistics difficult. From these countries, it is packaged as a local product and exported on to the final import destinations, which include France and Germany. Only a fraction of the total pepper, the Kampot GI variant (around 100 tonnes), is exported directly from Cambodia to importing markets.

Under HS Code 0904, exports have also increased impressively in recent years. The total value of exports shot up by around 250%, from 3.5 million USD in 2016 (438 tonnes) to 9.89 million in 2020 (3,482 tonnes). In 2020, top export destinations already included major European economies. 70 tonnes of Kampot pepper were exported to Europe. Germany was the top destination by value, importing amounts worth 3.35 million USD (1,088 tonnes), followed by Vietnam at 3.25 million (1,644 tonnes). Other relevant

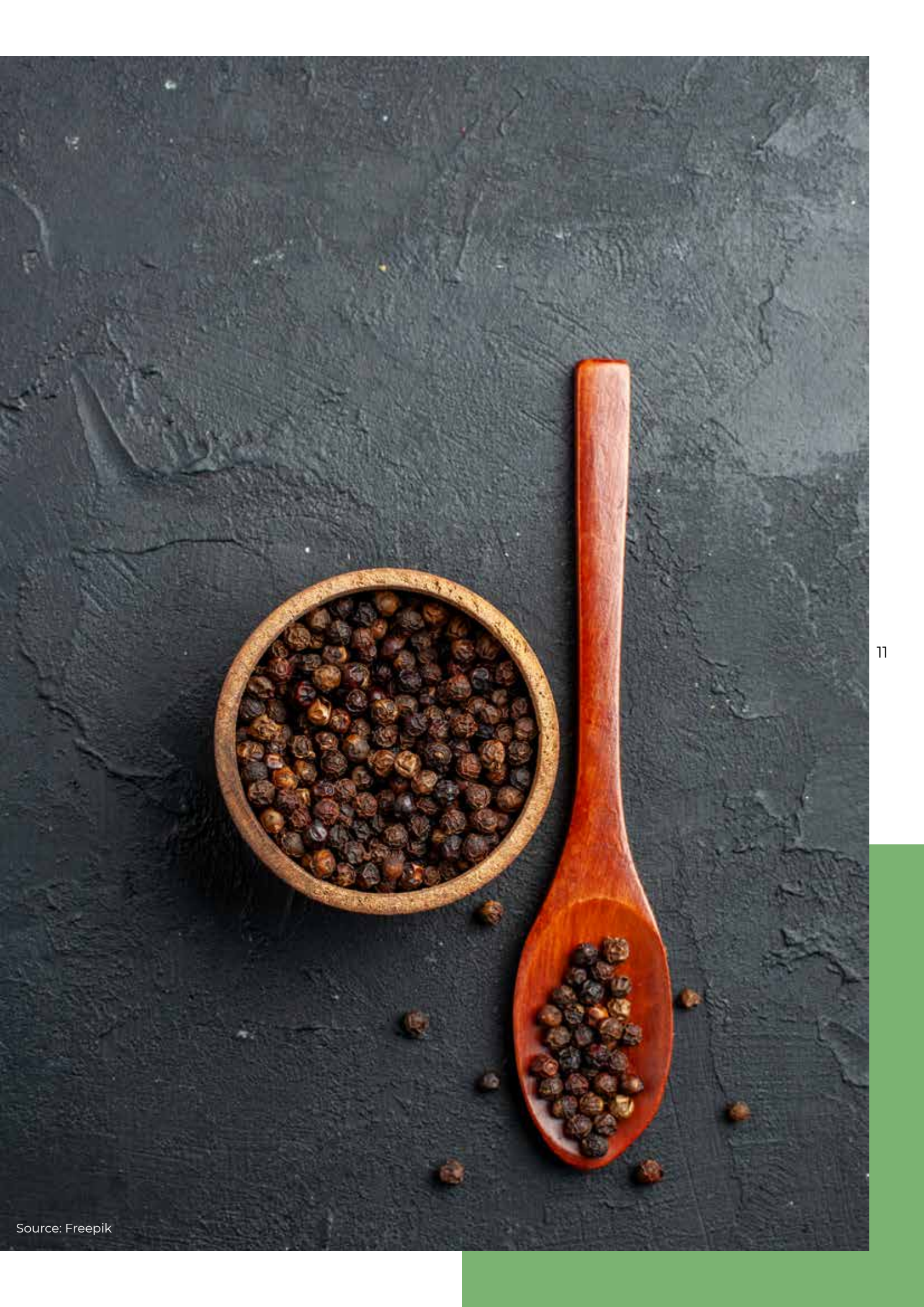
European importers are France and Belgium, with 0.9 (31 tonnes) and 0.3 million (16 tonnes) worth of imported value, respectively.

When considering buying pepper from Cambodia, it is important to take note of product seals and certifications, particularly those indicating an organic origin. This is paramount when buying Kampot pepper. Examples of certifications to look for in Kampot pepper are: the seal of the local producer association – the Kampot Pepper Promotion Association (KPPA, details listed below), the Geographical Indication status by the Cambodian Government and its EU equivalent, ECOCERT France, and CORAA (Cambodian Organic Agriculture Association).

Cambodian pepper takes on different forms, depending on the time of harvesting and preparation. The KPPA explains the typical types of Kampot pepper and their ideal use in food preparation.







# Types of Pepper



## **GREEN PEPPER**

Green pepper is harvested while still young on the vine. Its mild pepperiness is ideal to use it with a grilled squid, shrimp or crab dish.



## **BLACK PEPPER**

Black pepper is obtained by picking the green berries and letting them dry in the sun. This type has a strong aroma. It can range from intensely spicy to mildly sweet, revealing hints of flower, eucalyptus and mint. Black pepper is eclectic and suitable with all kinds of dishes but is particularly good with grilled fish.





### **RED PEPPER**

This type can go with a wide range of food items, from meat seasonings to vanilla desserts. It is harvested when the berry is fully mature on the pepper vine. The aroma is powerful and fruity, with a hint of sweetness. This type is quite rare and more expensive than the others.



### **WHITE PEPPER**

White peppers are extremely rare due to the difficulty of harvesting fully mature pepper berries. They are similar to red berries, with the difference that their skins have been removed, which is a laborious process. The berries are soaked in water for a few days, where they develop an intense and delicate aroma. The strong taste carries a hint of fresh grass and lime.

# Company Profiles

The following section features selected Cambodian pepper-producing companies.

## Legend for Certifications

O Organic

PGI Protected Geographical Indication

KPPA Kampot Pepper Promotion Association

HACCP Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point

FFL Fair For Life



Source: Unsplash





## LA PLANTATION

Created in 2013, La Plantation, a family-owned project, produces, selects, processes, and exports the best quality spices and herbs from Cambodia.

To preserve the original taste of each spice, century-old traditions are followed at their farm in Kampot. New blends and recipes are developed every year, bringing the unique Kampot terroir to tables around the world.

La Plantation's production model respects fair trade principles and preserves the product quality and the aromas through on-site processing facilities as well as a short supply chain with trusted partners.

La Plantation's premium products and unique blends are currently exported to Europe, North America, and Asia.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Kampot Pepper

Recognized as one of the best peppers in the world, Kampot Pepper is grown traditionally and organically.

🌿 Yearly production 10 tons.

✅ Fair Trade, Organic, PGI

### Turmeric

Highly concentrated in curcumin, La Plantation turmeric develops a uniquely scented, peppery, and warm flavor with a sweet aroma close to orange and ginger.

🌿 Yearly production 3 tons.

✅ Fair Trade, Organic

### Cardamom

A wild species from Cambodia's tropical forest, Cardamom is harvested as a ripe fruit before being air-dried, the seeds extracted from their husk, and the best pieces selected by hand.

🌿 Yearly production >1 ton.

✅ Fair Trade

## CONTACT

<https://kampotpepper.com/en/> | +855 178 42 505 | [info@kampotpepper.com](mailto:info@kampotpepper.com)

Overlooking Secret Lake – Pepper Road Bosjheng Village – Kampot, Cambodia



## CONFIREL

Confirel was founded in 2001 with the mission to revive and promote natural Cambodian heritage and major natural resources while improving the living conditions of rural citizens.

Engaged in sustainable rural development, Confirel has developed numerous brands and product lines including palm sugar, Kampot pepper, herbal teas, mango (dried, puree, chips, and more), as well as vinegar, palm wines and spirits, candy, and more.

Through their broad product line which is available in many Asian countries, Europe, and North America, Confirel promotes authentic Khmer products and Khmer values.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Thnot Palm Sugar

Gained from the sap of the palm tree, palm sugar has a distinctive sweet flavor with caramel undertones.

- 🌿 Yearly production 300 tons.
- ✅ Organic, PGI, HACCP, Halal, FFL (fair for life)

### Kampot Pepper

Known as one of the best peppers in the world, Kampot Pepper is grown in the south of Cambodia.

- 🌿 Yearly production 40 tons.
- ✅ Organic, PGI, HACCP, Halal

### Mango Puree

Fresh frozen mango puree made out of 100% natural mango fruit cleared from the fiber.

- 🌿 Yearly production 70 tons.
- ✅ Organic (on demand), PGI, HACCP, Halal

## CONTACT

<https://www.confirel.com/en> | +855 23 890 093 | [export@confirel.com](mailto:export@confirel.com)

No. 138 Bis, Prey Chisak, Chom Chao, Por Sen Chey, Phnom Penh, Cambodia





## SELA PEPPER Co., Ltd

Sela Pepper Co., Ltd specializes in both organic and conventional pepper products. It operates a pepper processing plant in the Cambodian province of Tbong Khmum, equipped with high-end facilities and an in house laboratory and Sela Pepper has certified with BRC, ISO 22000:2015, ISO 14001:2015, Organic (EU, USDA, and JAS), Halal and OU Kosher. The company works closely with 600 farmers who follow with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and organic standard.

Sela Pepper is a well-established brand that can be found not only in most Cambodian supermarkets, but is also being exported to Europe, the USA, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, and Thailand.

The Company aims to promote organic farming in a sustainable manner and to explore domestic and global markets for the organic products they produce. Major emphasis is placed upon improved living standards for small and marginal farmers through fair trade practices.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Cambodian Pepper

Black, red, and white dried pepper corns, both organic and conventional, including ground pepper.

🌿 Daily production capacity 10 tons of pepper.

📄 BRC (Bureau Veritas), ISO 22000:2015, ISO 14001:2015, Organic (EU, USDA, and JAS by Control Union), Halal, and OU Kosher

### Marinated Pepper

🌿 marinated pepper 30tons  
Fresh Green Pepper and Salt

📄 BRC, ISO 22000:2015, ISO 14001:2015, Organic (EU, USDA, and JAS), Halal and OU Kosher

### Sauces & Spreads

Variety of Pepper-based sauces and spreads to accompany meals. Mayo Pepper, Black Magic, Black Honey, Double shot (Sriracha)

### Kampot Natural Sea Salt

Sea salt gained in adjustable grinders.

## CONTACT

www.selapepper.com | sales@selapepper.com | T: + 855 23 986 101 | F: +855 23 986 103

No.23, Corner St.55 & St.254, Sangkat Chaktomuk, Khan Daun Penh, Phnom Penh



## MAU - CAMBODIAN SPICES AND FRUITS CO., LTD. THE PEPPER HILL

MAU Cambodian Spices and Fruits, the mother company to The Pepper Hill farm produces and supplies certified-organic Kampot Pepper and collaborates with Kampot Pepper farms where quality enhancement, climate-smart agriculture techniques, and risk reduction through diversification is promoted.

Environmentally sound production, socially responsible employment, and business partnerships through contract farming activities are at the core of MAU's activities. In recent years, MAU has diversified and included durian, long pepper, sacha inchi, and chilis into their product range.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Kampot Pepper

GI-certified and organic certified gourmet dried Black, Red, White Kampot Pepper. Worldwide renowned for its high quality and unique aroma.

- 🌿 Black, red, and white 6 tons
- 🌿 Green Kampot Pepper 2 tons
- ✅ EU, USDA, JAS certified organic; GI-certified

### Fermented Pepper

Developed and introduced in Cambodia by Kamya, Fermented Pepper is preserved, salted, green (Kampot) pepper with a mild taste.

- 🌿 Fermented Pepper 2 tons
- ✅ EU, USDA, JAS certified-organic

### Long Pepper

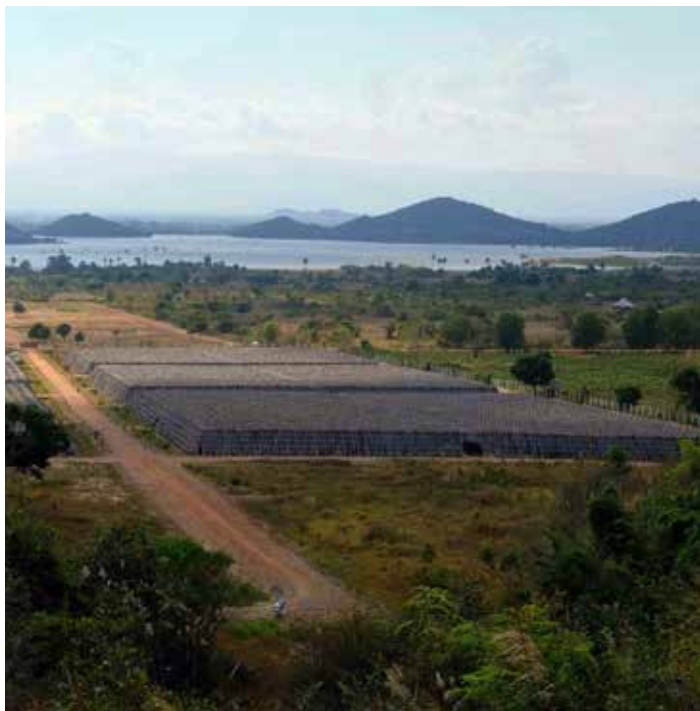
- 🌿 Long Pepper 2 tons
- ✅ EU, USDA, JAS certified-organic

## CONTACT

<https://www.facebook.com/thepepperhill> | +855.95.970.144 | [andreas@groetschel.de](mailto:andreas@groetschel.de)

O'thom Village, Kaunsat Commune, Teuk Chhou District, Kampot Province, Cambodia





## PEPPER BAY

Pepper Bay is a Kampot pepper and spice producer merging traditional cultivation methods and ancestral know-how with modern quality standards. To prevent damage to the peppercorns and to ensure unrivaled flavor, a significant part of the production process is done by hand. Kampot pepper is therefore not only the rarest, but it is also the most controlled pepper in the world.

Pepper Bay, puts a strong emphasis on producing the best quality products and chefs and amateurs around the world alike recognize their products for their exceptional quality. Pepper Bay's farm is certified organic and the fair trade accreditation process has been initiated. Respect for people, for the environment, and sustainability are driving factors in their business model.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Kampot Pepper

Black, red, and white dried Kampot Pepper.

🌿 Yearly production 5-10 tons.

🏆 PGI, Organic EU & USA

### Long pepper

Best quality, flavor conservation, and aspect of dried long red pepper (whole, pearls, flowers).

🏆 Organic EU & USA

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## CONTACT

<https://www.facebook.com/pepperbaykampot> | +855 12 760 323 | [pepperbaykampot@gmail.com](mailto:pepperbaykampot@gmail.com)

Bosnhehn Village, Konsat commune, Toekchhu District, Kampot Province, Cambodia



## SOTHY'S PEPPER FARM

For a century considered a unique product and since 2010 recognized by WTO with the Protected Geographical Indication seal due to its unique climatic conditions and territory.

As a member of the Kampot Pepper Promotion Association, Sothy's Pepper Farm vouches for a chemical-free production and processing process of pepper as well as the natural soil the pepper is grown on.

Sustainable, eco-friendly production of the renowned Kampot Pepper is achieved by means of solar electricity for the farm, as well as solar hot water and a solar cooker.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Kampot Pepper

Black, Red, and White Kampot Pepper, and salt-preserved Green Pepper.

🌿 Own production 1 ton plus 2 tons added from the Kampot Pepper Promotion Association

🌱 **Ecocert, PGI**

### Fruits

Supplementing the pepper production by growing fruit trees: bananas, durian, jackfruit, mangoes, rambutan. Produce sold to visiting tourists.

## CONTACT

<http://mykampotpepper.asia/> | +855 88 9513 015 | [sothy@mykampotpepper.asia](mailto:sothy@mykampotpepper.asia)

Sothy's Pepper Farm, Road # 1333, Phnom Voar Region, Kep Province, Cambodia





## SINDORA GARDEN OF PEPPER

Sindora was launched in 2015 with the mission to restore the ecosystem and create a forest conservatory on 10ha of degraded land in Kampot that was a previously dense forest.

The main objective through reforestation is to gather as many local forest trees as possible, ultimately providing a place where a wide variety of seeds will be available for possible other reforestation projects.

To date, about eighty species are growing in Sindora's garden. 100% natural agriculture practices are employed staying true to the objective of bringing life back to soils.

The sale of Sindora's premium pepper is meant to fund the ecosystem restoration project, all sales are therefore at the service of the project.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Kampot Pepper

Premium Kampot Pepper – Black, Red, and White.

The Pepper is the fruit of Piper Nigrum, a forest climbing vine native to Kerala – India – introduced in Cambodia centuries ago. Cultivated, it grows on posts 3.5 m high under shade. Black, Red, and White peppers are fruits of the same plant harvested at different stages of maturity and processed specifically.

🌿 Yearly production +/- 1 ton.

🏆 PGI, Ecocert, KPPA

## CONTACT

<https://www.sindora-kampotpepper.net/> | +855.12.846.251 | [stephanearchi@hotmail.com](mailto:stephanearchi@hotmail.com)

Othom Village, Konsat commune, Tekchou district, Kampot province, Cambodia



## KCCV PLANTATION CO., LTD

KCCV is one of Cambodia's main fruit, vegetable, and spice producer, servicing many national supermarket chains and exporters to Asian markets.

Committed to the improvement of sustainable food systems through respectful environmental practices and the promotion of eco-friendly farming, the aim of improving the quality of life of farmers and stakeholders is one of KCCV's key missions.

KCCV refrains from using any chemical or toxic substances on their farms to maintain the soil as organic as possible, and opt for natural pepper production methods to minimize their carbon footprint.



## MAIN PRODUCTS

### Pepper

Natural Dried Black Pepper (seeds or powder)

🌿 Yearly production 200,000 tons.

### Cashew Nuts

Natural Harvested Cashew Nuts. Roasted and salted.

### Dried Mango

Naturally delicious, sweet, and tangy dried mango.

### Dried Longan

Dried longan ideal for cooking purposes or as a healthy snack.

## CONTACT

<https://bit.ly/3b20S2x> | +855.23.632.3666 | sothavuthchheng@gmail.com

Phom Pray Klar, Khom Krang Mnak, Srok Ang Snoul, Khandal Province, Cambodia



# Other Contacts

## SECTOR STAKEHOLDERS

**Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations**

<https://www.camfeba.com/>

**Cambodia Chamber of Commerce**

<https://www.ccc.org.kh/>

**Cambodia Development Resource Institute**

<https://cdri.org.kh/>

**Cambodia Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture**

<https://cpsa-growasia.org/en/>

**Cambodia Pepper and Spice Federation**

<http://cpsfnet.org/home>

**European Chamber of Commerce in Cambodia (EuroCham)**

<https://www.eurocham-cambodia.org/>

**GRET – Professionals for Fair Development**

<https://www.gret.org/>

**HEKS/EPER**

<https://en.heks.ch/>

**Kampot Pepper Promotion Association**

<http://www.kampotpepper.biz/>

**Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries, Department of Agro-Industry**

<https://web.maff.gov.kh/?lang=en>

**Cambodian Ministry of Commerce**

<http://www.moc.gov.kh/en-us/>

**Deutscher Genossenschafts- und Raiffeisenverband**

<https://www.dgrv.de/en/>



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