



ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

In cooperation with
Economic Cooperation Organization
(ECO) & ECO Member States

Foreword

Our cultural heritage is fragile property that can deteriorate both slowly and rapidly due to human and natural phenomena. Research and studies by the UN experts on tourism have shown that tourism guide-books can play an important role in educating travelers to respect heritage by increasing their awareness toward these important matters.

Addressing this vital issue, the 1st ECO High Level Expert Group Meeting on Tourism, held in Tehran (Dec. 11-13, 2006) assigned the task of preparation of the content of the 1st ECO Tourist Guide-Book to ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), to be developed in several stages, based on the information provided by the Member States.

Fortunately a few Member States responded enthusiastically to the ECI inquiry and sent the necessary information along with photos and vital documents. For those Member States who did not respond, the subsequent ECO meetings including the 19th Regional Planning Council (12-14 Jan. 2009; Tehran), 2nd HLEG Meeting on Tourism (11-12 June, 2008; Baku) and the 1st Ministerial Meeting on Tourism (20 Oct. 2008) delegated ECI to prepare the relevant materials on behalf of the concerned Members, based on available information.

While ECI appreciates the valuable trust put on its shoulder by the esteemed Member States to prepare such information, it welcomes all views and comments by all Member States for the completion of the 1st ECO Tourist Guide-Book.

Thank you.
ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

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Republic of Turkey

Turkmenistan

Republic of Uzbekistan

AFGHANISTAN

Introduction



Introduction

Afghanistan is considered one of the most ancient centers of culture and civilization in the world. It is located in South-Central Asia, bordered by Pakistan to the south and east, Iran to the west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north.

Rugged mountains called the Hindu Kush dominate the scenery of Afghanistan.

The westernmost extension of the Karakorum and the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush Mountains begin in the Pamirs and run in a southwesterly direction for about 1920 km, before petering out in the vicinity of Herat.

There is a short border with China to the far northeast, but in an extremely inaccessible terrain. The current boundaries of Afghanistan were established in the late 19th century in the context of rivalry with Britain and Russia. Modern Afghanistan became a pawn in struggles over political ideology and commercial influence.

When Alexander the Great entered the ancient country of Ariana, he found well established cities such as Herat and Kandahar, before founding some of his own, such as Ai Khanoum on the Oxus (Amu Darya River).

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Seleucid Empire - one of the successor states of the sprawling Macedonian Empire - was centered on the city of Balkh, and Afghanistan

became a political power in its own right.

The Timurid and Moghul, founders of one of the great civilizations of the world, have all left their mark there.

Indeed, the Emperor Babur, founder of the Indian Moghul dynasty, is buried in Kabul, amidst one of the most famous gardens in the world.

Since then the city of Balkh, near modern Mazar-e -Sharif, is known as "the mother of cities" (Umm al Bilad) because it maintained its status as an

important center of learning and culture through different historical epochs.

In the late 20th century Afghanistan suffered ruinous effects of prolonged civil war (the 90's), invasion by the Soviet Union (1979), and Soviet military presence (1979-89).

Afghanistan was once known as the "Orchard of Central Asia," but decades of war have uprooted

orchards and vineyards throughout the country. Droughts and floods create additional problems for Afghans who are trying to replant the sources of their former livelihoods.

For centuries, Afghanistan, as an ancient focal point of trade and migration has inhabited a mosaic of people with diverse cultures, religions and languages.

Afghanistan's ethnically and linguistically rich and mixed population reflects its important geo-strategic location.



Country Profile



Country's Official Name

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Flag Description

Black (hoist), Red, Green with a white emblem (the sign of the

Government) centered on the Red band; the emblem features a mosque with its mihrab facing Mecca encircled by a wreath on the left and right and by a bold Islamic inscription above.



Government Type

Islamic Republic

Legal System

Based on mixed civil and Shari'a law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction.

Executive Branch

The executive branch of the Afghan government consists of a powerful and popularly elected President and two Vice Presidents.

Cabinet: 25 ministers; under the new constitution, ministers are appointed by the President and approved by the National Assembly.



Elections: The President and two vice Presidents are elected by direct vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); if no candidate receives 50% or more of the vote in the first round of voting, the two candidates with the most votes will participate in a second round; a president can only be elected for two terms; election last held 9 October 2004.



Elections: last held 18 September 2005 (next to be held for the Wolesi Jirga by September 2009);

Judicial Branch

The constitution establishes a nine-member Stera Mahkama or Supreme Court (its nine justices are appointed for 10-year terms by the President with approval of the Wolesi Jirga) and subordinate High Courts and Appeals Courts.

There is also a Minister of Justice; a separate Afghan Independent

Legislative Branch

The bicameral National Assembly consists of the Wolesi Jirga or House of People (no more than 249 seats), directly elected for five-year terms, and the Meshrano Jirga or House of Elders (102 seats, one-third elected from provincial councils for four-year terms, one-third elected from local district councils for three-year terms, and one-third nominated by the president for five-year terms).

Note: on rare occasions the government may convene a Loya Jirga (Grand Council) on issues of independence, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity; it can amend the provisions of the constitution and prosecute the President; it is made up of members of the National Assembly and chairpersons of the provincial and district councils.



Human Rights Commission established by the Bonn Agreement is charged with investigating human rights abuses and war crimes.

Official Language and Local Dialects

Pashto and Dari are Afghanistan's official languages. Afghanistan's Constitution stipulates that all other languages are "official" in the areas in which they are spoken by a majority of the population; Dari and Pashto are official languages. Many Afghans are multi-lingual. Tajik and Turkic languages are spoken widely in the north. Local languages are Uzbeki, Nooristani, Pashaiei.



Capital City:

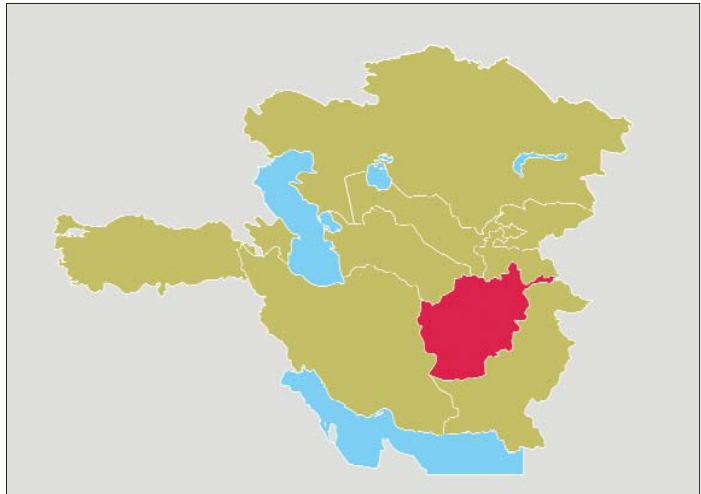
Kabul

Major Cities:

Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Mazar-e Sharif, Ningarhar

Name of the Provinces

1.Badakhshan, 2.Badghis, 3.Baghlan, 4.Balkh, 5.Bamian, 6.Dai 7.kundi,



8. Farah, 9. Faryab, 10. Ghazni, 11. Ghowr, 12. Helmand, 13. Herat, 14. Jowzjan, 15. Kabul, 16. Kandahar, 17. Kapisa, 18. Khowst, 19. Konar, 20. Kondozi, 21. Laghman, 22. Lowgar, 23. Ningarhar, 24. Nimruz, 25. Nuristan, 26. Oruzgan, 27. Paktia, 28. Paktika, 29. Panjshir, 30. Parwan, 31. Samangan, 32. Sare Pol, 33. Takhar, 34. Vardak, 35. Zabol.

Ethnic Groups

Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, Nurestani, Pashei

Country's Total Area:

650,000 sq km

Population

32,738,376 (July 2008 est.)

Climate

Arid to semiarid; cold winters and hot summers

Holidays & National Days

-Nowroze (March 21st) marks the first day of spring, the New Year Eid.

-Jashen-e-Esteghlal (Afghanistan's Independence Day) - August 19th

-1 May Labour Day.

-Eid al-fitr- After a month of Fasting (Ramadan),

-Eid al-adha- The 10th day of the 12th month of the Hijri calendar commemorates the Prophet Abraham's devotion to God.

-Ashura- The 10th day of the month Muharram is a day of mourning commemorating the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) grandson Imam Hussain at the battle of Karbala.

-Mawlood al-Nabi- The 12th day of Rabi al-Awal (in Hijri calendar) celebrates the Prophet's



birthday.

Time Zone:

GMT +4.30





The Silk Road

Afghanistan is considered one of the ancient centers of culture and civilization in the world and has played important role in the political, cultural, economic and spiritual development of Central Asia and beyond.

Scientific researches and archeological discoveries have proven that the ancient Afghanistan was the very first center of civilization and culture in Central Asia and the fifth one among the seven centers of world civilizations.

Due to its geographical location as a connecting bridge between centers of civilizations of China, India, Mesopotamia, Eastern Mediterranean coast, Egypt,

Greece and Rome, Afghanistan played a vital role in the integration of the various civilizations for centuries. It is for this reason that scholars and researchers entitled this country as "The Cross Road of Civilizations and Cultures".

Afghanistan has 50,000 years of archeological as well as 5,000 years of cultural, political and historical precedence and has witnessed five periods of civilizations. These periods according to chronological order are as follows: 1- Vedic Civilization, 2- Avestan Civilization, 3- Greco - Bactrian Civilization, 4- Greco - Buddhist Civilization, and finally the Islamic Civilization, which still exists in present day Afghanistan.

The most powerful and the most important empire in the history of Afghanistan was the Kushanid Empire which ruled Afghanistan as well as a great part of Asia from 40 AD to 220 AD. The founder of this dynasty was Kajula Kadific.

His son Vema Kadific came to the throne after the death of his father and conquered northern India and sent his envoys to the court of Trojans of Roman Empire to establish political and economic relations.



During this period, the Roman Empire controlled and dominated the eastern coast of Mediterranean Sea. The Romans were rich, luxurious and affluent during the reign of Trojans.

They were eager and enthusiastic for Chinese silk clothes as well as Indian spices and perfumes. Since the transit route was through Afghanistan, they could spend much gold

coins in exchange for their commodities sold in Afghanistan. At that juncture, the ancient city of Balkh was an international sojourn and a center of global trade market.

The most powerful and the greatest ruler of the Kushan Dynasty was Kanishka the Great. (121-160 AD). Kanishka defeated the Parthian in the northwest and captured eastern Turkistan (Present Sinkiang of China) and captured the famous cities of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan.

By doing so he established his rule and control over a great part of Asia' including India, Kashgarstan, Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran. Kanishka shifted his capital from the north Hindukush (Balkh) to the southern part of Hindukush. (Kapisa or Bagram).

Thus Bagram became his summer capital and Peshawar became the winter capital of his empire. During this period, indeed, four great empires were ruling nearly the entire ancient world. The Han Empire (25-220 AD) in China, Kushan Empire in the middle part of Asia and Sassanid Empire in Persia and Romans in Europe and Western Asia.

They had strong commercial relations with security prevalent among them.

Considering the highly developed fine arts and cultural blossoming during this period (Second Century AD), as a result of strong trade, good security and durable political relations among the Four Empires, one could audaciously argue that this era was one of the brightest periods in the political and cultural history of the world.

Certainly the great Silk Road was a major factor in connecting those three civilizations, and the Ariana (ancient Afghanistan) civilization was the joining

ring between the two cultures and civilizations of east and west. According to the famous and well-known historian, professor Arnold Toynbee, Ariana was the "Crossroad of Civilizations."

Based on this view, whatever the Britannica Encyclopedia says, as if the Silk Road connected two Chinese and Roman civilizations is unjustified and far from reality. Accordingly we could confidently

uphold this view that the Kushan Empire by ensuring the security of the roads and the political stability of the

entire region was one of the main founder of the Silk Road.



Useful Information

Best Time to Visit the Country

Afghanistan is a beautiful country with soaring mountains and steep plateaus. The terrain contains numerous mountain ranges, but also deserts, rivers, lakes, plains and forests.

Consequently the best time to visit the northern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan is summer. But spring is best time to visit Mazar-e-sharif, because in New Year (end of march) Afghan people come there to celebrate the Rose Festival (Jashn-e Gol-e-Sorkh).

The best time to visit southern and western provinces is spring, because the weather in these parts of Afghanistan is so hot during summer.

Visa Regulations

Remember to bring with you: passport, 2 extra passport photos, photocopies of passport and relevant visa pages, flight ticket, flight itinerary and proof of insurance.

You need a visa to enter Afghanistan and the authorities now require a letter of invitation from Afghanistan to establish your bona fides. Visas may be obtained at any Afghan Consulate or Embassy around the world. The basic tourist visa entitles a traveler to 30 days stay in Afghanistan.

It is recommended that this one-month visa be obtained prior to traveling to Afghanistan.

Customs Regulations


There is no customs duty on personal effects. However, check with the Ministry of Finance for prohibited and controlled exports and imports. For Example drugs and narcotics and


many other illegal things are illicit.

Ministry of Finance

 Pashtoonistan -Watt

Kabul, Afghanistan

 Phone: +93 (75) 200 4199

 Fax: (20) 2103 439

 E-Mail: Info@mof.gov.af

How to get there and away

Roads

Some highways connect the principal provinces of Afghanistan to neighbor countries and also traveling to Afghanistan by Taxi or Bus is also possible (your own car should have permit issued from Afghan officials).

For example Herat connected to Iran and Turkmenistan, Kandahar to Pakistan, Ningarhar to Pakistan, Nimrooz to Iran and Pakistan, Badakhshan to Tajikistan, Balkh to Uzbekistan.

The most dramatic way to enter Afghanistan is through the Khyber Pass, starting at Peshawar in Pakistan. The entire drive to Kabul, via Jalalabad, takes about eight hours. In Peshawar, you need to get a police permit to enter the border area - a condition strictly enforced.

The most exciting, though arduous route, is from Chitral over the 14,800 foot Dorah Pass. This three-day journey by horde takes you to Skarzer, a village close to the lapis lazuli mines of the Blue Mountain. This route has been used for millennia by traders bringing lapis out of Afghanistan, and you will see caravans of donkeys loaded down with blue stone.

The other main land route into Afghanistan involves crossing the Oxus from Termez in Uzbekistan, using the

bridge across which Soviet tanks poured in 1979, the grotesquely-named Friendship Bridge. In theory, an Uzbek and an Afghan visa are all you need to cross.

Air Travel

Ariana is Afghanistan's national airline. They run domestic and international routes, including flights to Ankara (Sat), Delhi (Wed, Sun), Dubai (daily), Dushanbe (Fri), Islamabad (Tues), Istanbul (Tues, Fri) Urumqi (Thurs), Tehran (Fri), Riyadh (Sat), Jeddah (Thurs, Sun), Kuwait (Tues), Moscow (Mon) and Frankfurt. Website: <http://www.flyariana.com>

Kam Air is Afghanistan's first private airline. They fly daily between Kabul and Dubai and to Almaty (Mon), New Delhi (Mon, Wed, Fri), Mashhad (Wed) and Istanbul (Fri). They operate between Kabul and Dubai.

Air Arabia also has Direct flights from Sharja, UAE to Kabul.

Azerbaijani Airlines has Flights run from Baku, Azerbaijan to Kabul.

Pakistan International Airlines flies three times a week between Islamabad and Kabul.

Indian Airlines operates a four-times-weekly service from New Delhi (Tues, Thu, Sat, Sun).

Kam Air

☎ Tel: +93 (79) 001-100

@ Email: info@flykamair.com

to book flight or check schedule, visit <http://www.flykamair.com/>

Airlines based outside Afghanistan that have flights to Afghan cities are as follows:

Air Arabia

Travel between 28 cities in the Middle East & South Asia with direct flights from

Sharja, UAE to Kabul.

Website: <http://www.airarabia.com>

Azerbaijani Airlines

Flies from Baku, Azerbaijan to 15 regional cities in Europe, Asia, & the Middle East. Flights run every Monday & Wednesday from Baku to Kabul.

☎ Tel 1: +994 (12) 493-4004

☎ Tel 2: +994 (12) 493-7121

@ Email: booking@azal.az

Website: <http://www.azal.az>

PACTEC INTERNATIONAL

This humanitarian organization flies individuals from Islamabad to Kabul once a week.

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 260-203

@ Email: airops-afg@pactec.net

Afghan Airports: <http://afghanairlines.tripod.com/airports/airports.html>

🚗 Travelling Around

By Land

Through Afghan tour, the Afghan tourism organization the tourists can take good advice and travel around. During the 1960s and 1970s, tourists travelled everywhere by bus. These routes - operated by the Millie Bus Company - are starting again and you can obtain their information from the Afghan Tourism Organization.

Most roads in Afghanistan are in dilapidated state. However repair work is being done on major roads with help from international community. Salang Tunnel, an important passage between Kabul and northern Afghanistan, has been cleared for traffic.

It has drastically reduced transport time from 72 hours to 10 hours. If driving yourself in the country, do remember that traffic drives on the

right and you would require an international driving permit.

City dwellers in Afghanistan travel by bus or bicycle. In countryside, where these means of transport are absent, people move from one place to the other by foot, donkey, horse or camel.

There are more than forty thousand taxis in Kabul. Fares are negotiated with the driver before boarding, and many buses are available inside Kabul and its suburban areas.

Minibuses to Jalalabad (200Afg, three hours) and the Pakistan border at Torkham (300Afg, 4½ hours) leave Begrami Motor Park on the outskirts of Kabul on the Jalalabad Rd (150Afg by taxi from Shahr-e-Nau).

A few vehicles also leave early just after dawn from Pul-e-Mahmoud Khan, close to the Id Gah Mosque, but note that all transport coming to Kabul from the east terminates at Begrami, and are not allowed into central Kabul for security reasons. The fastest way to get to the border is to hire a taxi outright for 2500 Afg.

Transport heading north through the Salang Tunnel departs from Serai Shomali Transport Depot, a 20-minute taxi ride to the Khair Khana district on the edge of Kabul. Minibuses from here travel to Mazar-e Sharif (500Afg, eight hours), Pul-e Khumri (200Afg, four hours), Samangan (300Afg, five hours), Kunduz (400Afg, 10 hours), and Faisabad (800Afg, 1½ days). Serai Shomali is also the place for more local transport to Istalif (30Afg, 1½ hours), Paghman (30Afg, 30 minutes) and Charikar (40Afg, 30 minutes).

To travel to Bamiyan, catch a minibus from Kote Sangi (sometimes called Pul-e-Socta) in west Kabul (400Afg, nine to 11 hours). Transport from here usually takes the southern

route through the Hajigak and Unai Passes - investigate security information before considering this route. At the time of writing the northern route via Shibar was preferred for security reasons. This may mean hiring a vehicle outright, or paying a supplement to the driver to use the alternate route.

Kote Sangi is also the terminal for minibuses heading for south to Ghazni, Kandahar and on to Herat, but for security reasons other routs are advised to be used.

Prices and times given here are for 16-seater Hi-Ace minibuses. Smaller Town-Aces fill up (and leave) quicker, and are slightly more expensive. Faster shared taxis also depart from the same terminals, and cost up to a third more.

It's not possible to arrange seats in advance. Long distance transport can start leaving from 5am or before, so arrive early.

The distances between Kabul and important cities and tourist centers are as follows: From Kabul to Herat 1050 km., to Bamiyan 260 km., Balkh 490km., Ningarhar 150 km.

By Air

Internal flights link the major cities, and travelers who can provide accreditation from NGOs can use Pactec air services. When arranging Kam or Ariana tickets, the actual flight coupons are only issued the day before the flight leaves. You can make a booking and pay for the tickets before - make sure you see your name being put on the flight manifest in the office and get a receipt. Kam Air flies to Herat daily and Faisabad twice a week.

Ariana Airlines have flights to Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Faisabad, Kandahar and Jalalabad.

☎ Money

Currency unit:

Afghani (Af.)

Different currency notes are (10, 20,50,100,500,1000 Afghani) and coins as (1, 2, 5 Afghani), and credit cards. Money transfer is available with Banks.

Banks

Afghanistan's Central Bank has licensed twelve commercial banks to date. Out of twelve, seven banks are full-fledged commercial banks and the remaining five are branches of foreign banks:

AIB Afghanistan International Bank

📍 AIB House, 1608, behind Amani High School, Wazir Akbar Khan.

Open Sun-Thurs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m to 1 p.m.

Kabul International Airport

📍 Great Massoud Road

Open 24 hours

Currency: US dollars

International Hotel

📍 Bagh-e Bala Road

Open 24 hours.

Currency: US dollars

ISAF HQ Kabul

Open 24 hours

Currency: Euro and US dollars

Afghan-American Trading Company

* Official representative of the Central Bank in the U.S. Offers free transfers of funds from the U.S. to Afghanistan

☎ Tel: (212) 594-6744

✉ Email: aatc1943@hotmail.com

Afghanistan International Bank

📍 Wazir Akbar Khan, Kabul

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 220-883

✉ Email: inayatullah.fazli@aib.af

Arian Bank

📍 Shahr-e- Naw

☎ Tel: +93 (79) 420-420

Azizi Bank

📍 Malik Asghar Square, next to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kabul

☎ Tel: +93 (0) 799-129-999

✉ Email: info@azizibank.com

Website: www.azizibank.com

Bank Melli Afghan

Close to Kabul Serena

☎ Tel: +93 (20) 210-1804

Habib Bank

Wazir Akbar Khan

☎ Tel: +93 (79) 572-754

✉ Email: blkcm@hotmail.com

Kabul Bank

📍 Shahr -e-Naw

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 285-285

National Bank of Pakistan

📍 Wazir Akbar Khan

☎ Tel: +93 (79) 021-710

✉ Email: nbpkl@neda.af

Website: www.nbp.com.pk

Punjab National Bank

📍 Wazir Akbar Khan

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 232-847



Standard Chartered Bank


📍 Wazir Akbar Khan



☎ Tel: +93 (79) 320-874

Western Union

* Western Union is available for cash transfers at three locations in Kabul:

 A.K. Rashidzada Corporation
Building 296, Street #13
Wazir Akbar Khan
 Tel: +93 (79) 325-777

Electronic Transfer Services
 92 Sarai Shahzada
 Tel: +93 (79) 325-777



Electronic Transfer Services
 Char Rahi Ansari North Western
Corner
(Next to Dunya Travel Services)
 Tel: +93 (79) 325-777
www.westernunion.com

Safety & Security


In forbidden areas there is no permission. In many other areas security guards are in services. 100 and 119 are police telephone numbers. However, travel remains relatively safe in the northeast and east of the country which means that Badakhshan - the area of the country that will become one of the world's most desirable travel destinations- is still accessible.


Security advices and information can be obtained from Afghan Tour and Afghanistan Tourism Organization (ATO) in Kabul.



The following two government organizations are the official tourism bodies in country:



Afghan Tourism Organization (ATO)
 P.O. Box 281
Kabul, Afghanistan
 Tel: 0093-020-2300338
Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism
Mohammad Jan Khan Watt, adjacent to Spinzer Hotel
Kabul, Afghanistan.

Embassy telephone numbers



1-Iran Embassy
 Charahi Sherpur, Kabul

 Phone: 02101393


2-Kazakhstan Embassy
 Street 10, Wazir Akbar Khan,
Kabul.
 Phone: 070277450

3-Consulate General of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan in
Mazar-e-Sharif
Directorate of Fuel and Gas
Compound
Mazar-e-Sharif/Afghanistan
 City: Mazar-e-Sharif
 Phone: (+92-51) 218934 via
Pakistan, 2055, 2115

4-Consulate General of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan in
Kandahar
 Shahr-e-Naw
Kandahar/Afghanistan
City: Kandahar
 Phone: (+92-81) 837715, 822443
via Pakistan
 Fax: (+92-81) 820066

5-Consulate General of the
Islamic Republic of Pakistan in
Jalalabad
 Naih-e-Som, Jalalabad/Afghanistan
City: Jalalabad
 Phone: (+92-91) 287660 via
Pakistan, 2753, 2010

6-Tajikistan Embassy
 Vazir Akbar khan street 10, flat 3
City: Kabul
 Phone: +93-230-0392
 Fax: +93-210-1080
 Email: kabultj@tojikiston.com

7-Embassy of Turkey
Shah Mahmoud Ghazi Khan
Street No. 134
City: Kabul
 Phone: +873-1740372

8-Embassy of Turkmenistan

📍 House 3, Street 10

Wazir Akbar Khan

City: Kabul

☎ Phone: (+93-20) 2101080,

☎ (+93) 70282008 mobile

9-Embassy of Uzbekistan

📍 Wazir Akbar Khan 13th Street,

3rd row, House 14

City: Kabul

☎ Phone: +93-20-2300124

📌 Health

All kinds of foods are healthy and there are transferable food. The drugs must be bought from the authorized drug stores. There are health centers in each province. Medications are inexpensive and readily available in Kabul, without a prescription.

The high passes of Badakhshan can cause altitude sickness, though doctors can prescribe acetazolamide to be taken to help acclimatization.

Dexamethasone, for acute edema (caused by the most severe form of altitude sickness), can be bought in Kabul. It must be emphasized, though, that a person suffering from altitude sickness must be taken down to a lower altitude as soon as possible.

Drugs only mask the symptoms.

Take plenty of oral rehydration salts to counteract the dehydration of the climate and diarrhea. Bottled water is available in the towns, but the staple drink is tea.

📌 Telephone Codes of Major Cities

Kabul	☎ 020
Herat	☎ 040
Mazar -e- Sharif	☎ 051
Kandahar	☎ 081
Jalalabad	☎ 091

📌 Major Travel Agencies

Anaar Travels

Opposite Indian Embassy

Interior Ministry Road,

Shahr-e- Naw, Kabul, Afghanistan

☎ Tel 1: + 93 (79) 308-303

☎ Tel 2: + 93 (79) 309-713

Email: contact@anaartravels.com

Website: www.anaartravels.com

The Great Game Travel Company

Afghanistan

Central Post Office

Kabul, Afghanistan

PO Box 361

Tel: +93-799-489-120

Email: kabul@greatgametravel.com

Website: <http://www.greatgametravel.com/>

Park Tourism Services

Park residence Building, Ansari

Aquare,

P.O. Box 5459, Shahr-e-Nau,

Kabul/Afghanistan.

☎ Tel: +93-20- 2200459,

Fax: + +873-761-270292873, -761-270292

Website: <http://www.tours@parktourism.com>

Afghan Travel Center

1 Mohammad Jaankhan Watt

Kabul/Afghanistan

☎ Tel: + +93 - 79388901

Arts & Crafts

Decorative Arts

Precious Gems & Stones

Afghanistan has stood at the crossroads of ancient Indian, Persian, European, and Asian civilizations for thousands of years. The remote and mountainous land of the Pashtun people lies along the silk and gem caravan trade routes, making it the gateway for conquests from Alexander the Great and the Moguls of India, to the Soviet Union of recent history.

Afghanistan's rugged Hindu Kush mountain range, and the region's fierce Chitral, or Nuristani Kafir indigenous inhabitants have made this foreboding land both a natural fortress, and a treasure-trove of under-exploited mineral wealth. A wide range of precious gemstones are found in Afghanistan, such as aquamarine, emerald, garnet, kunzite, lapis lazuli, ruby, sapphire, tourmaline, turquoise, and zircon.

Lapis Lazuli



Gemstone mining in Afghanistan dates back some 6,500 years, to the gem mines of Badakhshan Province and Panjshir (Bactria) valley.

One of the first gems to be extracted from this region was lapis lazuli, from the mines at Sar-e-Sang (Sare Sang) located in the Kokcha Valley of north-eastern Afghanistan.

Lapis lazuli from Badakhshan is still regarded as the world's premier source in terms of quantity and quality. Its name comes from the Latin, lapis, meaning 'stone' and the Persian word 'lazward' meaning 'blue'. It is used to make beads and

boxes, and is popular for men's jewellery. It is mined on the 'Blue Mountain' on the right bank of the Kokcha River. The mines occur at well over 11,000 feet on the mountain, and because of the cold temperatures they are worked only between June and September.

Ruby

Ruby, the 'King of Precious Stones' is mined at Jegdalek-Gandamak in Kabul Province. We know that in 1637 laborers toiled here for marble for the Taj Mahal



though there is uncertainty about when they first mined for ruby. The color of the Jegdalek rubies ranges from nearly colorless to a deep red, often purplish they are some of the best in the world.

Sapphire and ruby mining in Afghanistan has taken place at the Jegdalek mines for over seven hundred years. The Jegdalek-Gandamak mines are located in a remote and inaccessible region some 100 kilometers east of Kabul, and south of Jalalabad, in Kabul province. 75% of the production at the Jegdalek mines is in the form of pink to violet-pink sapphire, with rubies accounting for 15%, and the balance being blue sapphire. Much of the region's gem production is transported through the Khyber Pass to dealers in Peshwar, Pakistan.

Emerald

The most precious form of beryl, is found in the Panjshir Valley, the 'Five Lions Valley', in Parwan Province. The Hindu Kush has always been renowned for the mineral riches concealed within its mountains. In early times, the Panjshir Valley based its wealth on silver. In late 20th century, emerald was found in the Panjshir Valley in the craters caused by Soviet bombing; as a result, ad hoc mining for the stones began in earnest.

Local history says a young shepherd found the deposits in the early 1970s,



although there are references to emeralds in Pliny's Natural History, known as 'smaragdus' meaning 'green stones', coming from this region since the first century AD.

Wood Carving

Outside the cities ordinary Afghans continue to live as they have done since time immemorial, in traditional dwellings fabricated according to many regional variations from stone, wood, unbaked clay or mud with straw plaster.

In the rugged mountainous regions such houses are built in tiers, with the

roof of one house forming the yard of another, in order to leave as much as possible of the flat, fertile river valleys for farmland. The inner courtyards of these houses, functioning to provide the maximum privacy for the outside view, are frequently decorated with hand-carved walnut wood eaves and panels.



Hand-carved doors and window frames and wall and ceiling plaster incised and painted with flowers or pictures depicting daily life may also be found in many areas.

In Kabul such decorative wood carving is done by professionals, although with few



apprentices this craft is at risk of dying out.

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) has recently commissioned some instrument makers to do domestic architecture restoration work.



Art & Entertainment

Local art has spanned through many centuries. One of the most famous kinds is the Gandhara art between the 1st and 7th century based on Greco-Buddhist art. Since the 1900s Afghanistan began to use Western techniques in art.

Afghanistan's art was originally almost entirely done by men but recently in theater arts women have begun to take center stage. Art is largely centered at the Kabul Museum. Other well known forms of art in Afghanistan are Music and Poetry.

The art of making carpets has been prominent for centuries. Afghanistan is known for making beautiful oriental rugs. The Afghan carpet has certain prints that make them unique to Afghanistan.

Calligraphy

In the absence of figural motifs, which were frowned upon in Islam, calligraphy became, next to the geometrical ornament, the most important element of decoration. Here again

various techniques or styles were used. The angular, geometric Kufic script (after Kufa in Iraq) was well suited for monumental patterns and large, long surfaces.

The early austere Kufic developed into more decorative floral, foliated and plaited varieties. An angular version developed in Herat became known as Herati Kufic. The cursive scripts first used in manuscripts made their appearance in architecture, too. Their main types were the naskhi and the thulth.

Timur (Tamerlane), the founder of the Timurid dynasty, who conquered most of the old Sassanid Empire, India and Central Asia, had a high regard for men of learning, artists and artisans. He encouraged many such men in the conquered lands and dispatched them to his capital, Samarkand, where he had elegant buildings erected.

After Timur's death in 1405, Shah Rukh, who inherited most of the land of Persia set up his capital in Herat, which during 100 years of Timurid rule became the greatest centre of cultural activity, including arts, literature and architecture.

Shah Rukh's sons - including Baysunghur - were major patrons of fine arts in Herat, Fars and Samarkand. Baysunghur, who was appointed to the governorship of Herat by his father, established an important atelier for the production of finely illustrated



books and other outstanding works of art for buildings and a variety of projects.

He gathered the best artists and calligraphers in his atelier, called Kitabhkhana, which employed some 200 artists, including 40 master calligraphers. A report by the head

of the Kitabhkhana, Ja'far Tabrizi, datable to about 1433, is indicative of the atelier's activities: book production, designs for decorating tents, saddles, buildings etc. The illustrated books produced by this atelier rank among the finest ever produced, and include the famous Shahnameh, known as Baysunghur Shahnameh, completed in 1430.

The artists responsible for these books - originally sent to Samarkand by Timur - included the famous Abdulhay, Mir Khalili and Pir Ahmad. Baysunghur further attracted other master artists to his atelier in Herat; the books produced here now have pride of place in various libraries and museums in Iran, Turkey, Europe and America.

Art of Book and Miniature painting

In late 15th century under the long and stable rule of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, arts and culture flourished further and Herat became a renowned centre of excellence. Many famous artists, literati, builders and musicians flocked to the city.

The sultan and his able Vizir, Amir Ali Shir, generously patronized these

men. Thus in the last quarter of the 15th century many able painters were active in producing superb illustrated books,

including Kamale-Din Bihzad, the greatest master of Persian painting. His efforts elevated book illustration to its zenith.

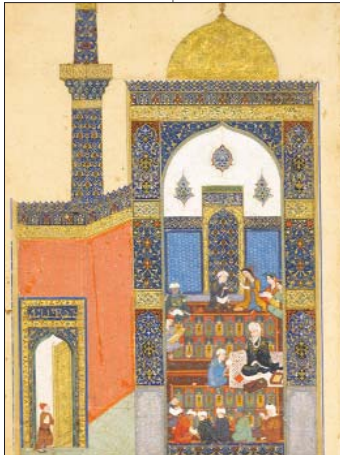
Surpassing all predecessors, Bihzad remains the unmatched master of Persian painting. In the cultural atmosphere of Herat Bihzad flourished as both a superbly talented painter and a master of spiritual learning.

He went beyond the visual appeal of painting to the deeper meaning of reflecting the text that he was illustrating, and thus had a particular mastery in depicting spiritual or Sufi narratives.

Bihzad - supreme in his design, coloring and fineness of brushwork - gave a dynamic and naturalistic touch to his paintings, which are unique in Islamic painting. One of the finest illustrated versions of Nizami's Khamse (the quintet) has been depicted by him, along with some of the important Persian classical literature such as Amir Khosrau Dehlavi's Hasht Bihisht (eight Paradise).

Monumental Painting

The arrival of glaze, sometimes in the 11th century, brought with it the use of color. Glaze was made of cobalt, sulphur, arsenic and various metal oxides. At first, small glazed bricks were used for inscriptions and epigraphic friezes to





decorate the mihrab niche and entrance gate, but from the 14th century onwards the use of color became virtually universal.

The first colors were white, turquoise and blue. The 15th century buildings, such as the Green Mosque in Balkh, the Shrine of Gazargah and the Mausoleum of Gawhar Shad in Herat, mark the peak of this technique.

Rare cases of wall painting have been found in form of frescoes in the palace of Lashkari Bazaar. Wall painting became more frequent only from 17th century onwards - it has been used in parts of Gazargah and Takht - i - Pul.

There was a wide range of ornamental motifs that basically fall into two categories, geometrical and floral/vegetal. Exceptionally, some Chinese motifs- clouds, dragons - could be found as well as landscapes in wall paintings.

Ceramics

Ceramic production in Afghanistan followed, it seems, the traditions of neighboring Central Asian lands, the Iranian plateau and the Indus valley. One of the earliest traces of pottery in prehistoric times has been found in Mundigak, crossroad of trade routes, near Kandahar.

Earthen wares, some goblets and beakers with geometric or animal decoration in black or brown on a lighter ground recall the early ceramics of Quetta and Kulli in Pakistan as well as those of Susa in the 3rd millennium BC. Just south of the upper Oxus Valley, the

Greco-Bactrian site of Ai Khanoum (late 4th century until c. 145 BC) has produced numerous shards that have been gathered into three main groups: the first relates to Persian wares of the Achaemenian period, with white and red slip decoration, and some new Greek shapes of fish dishes and craters.

The second group indicates closer relations with the Greek world of Asia Minor, with dark grey body and a black slip for small and large ewers, dishes and bowls. In the third group new large dishes with a black or white slip have been found as well as ewers with handles decorated with a female head.

The use of glaze appears with the Islamic period, when from roughly the 10th century slip-painting and sgraffito techniques begin to enhance dishes, bowls and pourers. The motifs range from complex squares and "s" shapes to



pseudo-Kufic lines.

As in neighboring lands from the 12th century, monuments were soon enhanced by glazed brick decoration. The most famous of such ornamentation in turquoise stands high on the minaret of Jam, which was erected in 1193-94.

During the rule of the Timurids in the 15th century, a series of monuments was erected in Herat, one of their capitals, such as the tomb and Musalla of Gawhar Shad, the forceful wife of Shah Rukh, son of Timur (Tamerlane).

The outer walls of the tomb are covered in *ban-nai* technique where plain brick is patterned in white blue, turquoise and black glazed bricks.

In the village of Istalif near Kabul the folk production of potters used to decorate attractive, if haphazard, turquoise glazed wares which attracted visitors before the recent wars. These included four-legged beasts and farm animals, figurines and common bowls and dishes.

Rugs & Carpets

Although the Turcomans of Afghanistan - the country's leading producers of carpets and rugs - are now a sedentary people, they were originally nomads, herding their flocks of sheep and goats across the rolling steppes of Central Asia.

They lived in yurts, those circular

domed tents seen from Outer Mongolia to the Caspian Sea. Not surprisingly, in this largely self-sufficient and ovine-based economy, wool was, and is, used extensively. Besides carpets and rugs, the Turcomans produced countless items made with wool for their daily domestic needs and yurt furnishings, due to wood and metal being extremely difficult to come by and, not being flexible, difficult to transport. A specially woven carpet, a *Purdah* - a piece, recognizable by

its cross design dividing it into four different panels, is hung from its upper corners to act as a sort of door into the yurt. Having no furniture, the nomads would store their clothes and household possessions in woven and knotted bags of different shapes and sizes, often of magnificent workmanship and design, each of which had a specific purpose.

Turcoman carpet designs are woven entirely from memory; graph paper patterns are used only when resuscitating old designs, or weaving totally new or non-traditional, therefore unfamiliar, designs. Originally, the patterns and designs used would very clearly signify the tribe and clan which wove the carpet. The width

of the carpet being woven determines the number of weavers needed. A carpet starts and ends in a band of flat weave called the *Kilim*. In some cases, this *Kilim* displays a design; in others, it is made up of lateral bands of color;





sometimes it is embroidered, sometimes plain, dyed or undyed.

The vast majority of Turcoman weavers are women and girls, though among the Turcomans, and especially among the Uzbeks, there is an increasing number of boys and youths who are learning this craft. They are usually unmarried, since the responsibilities of marriage force them to abandon this means of livelihood.

Afghan Embroidery

Afghanistan is a land of harsh steppes, of mountain valleys crisscrossed by irrigation channels sparkling in the sun: in this arid landscape the embroideries of Afghan women glow with color like bright exotic flowers. The embroidery of Afghanistan is the work of women and young girls.

In the privacy of their homes they decorate fabrics with threads of gold, silver, silk or wool.



Architecture & Archaeological Objects

Architecture

The region has made major contributions to the world architecture. UNESCO has acknowledged Afghanistan's role by declaring the Minaret of Jam and the Valley of Bamiyan as the "home of the famous Buddhas" and a "world heritage site", these ancient statues were destroyed by the Taliban.

Some of the most famous monuments of Islamic architecture are to be found in Afghanistan. The oldest surviving example of monumental Islamic architecture in Afghanistan is the mosque of Noh Gumbad (Nine Domes) near the town of Balkh, dating from the 9th or early 10th century.

The Noh Gumbad belongs to the transitional period of medieval architecture when pre-Islamic traditions began to mix with emerging new features, foreshadowing a new architectural style that later dominated the country in the 10th - 12th centuries.

The Shrine of Khoja Abu Nasr, called the Green Mosque, also near Balkh, is a late 15th century or possibly 16th century building with a large iwan flanked by

two truncated minarets and, behind it, an octagonal building with a ribbed dome on a high drum.

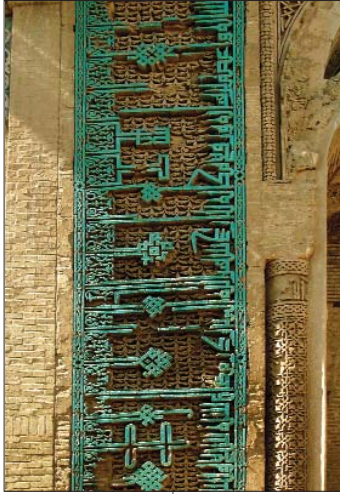
In the south of the country, the ruins of the city of Bost (Lashkargah) and of the palaces of Lashkari Bazaar date from the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century. The group consists of three palaces with courtyards, gardens and auxiliary structures inside a walled enclosure.

From the same period date the monuments in Ghazni, the tomb of Sultan Mahmud and two isolated towers. The tomb is a marble-faced sarcophagus decorated with superb calligraphy in Kufic and naskhi.

The towers were originally much higher but the top circular parts no longer exist. The towers are star-shaped with intricate decoration in monochrome small bricks and carved terracotta. The larger tower, of Masud III, is slightly older (between 1099 and 1114), the smaller one, of Bahramshah, can be dated to middle of the 12th century.

The 16th century mausoleum of Sultan Abdul Razzak is a plain brick structure with semi circular

corner towers and four iwans with high pishtaq walls. There is no decoration. In the desolate mountainous region of Ghor in the center of the country stands an isolated monument from the 12th century, The Minaret of Jam. With its 65-m height, it is the second tallest in the Islamic world.



in the Valley of Bamiyan the fortress of Shahr-i-Zohak was originally a pre-Islamic castle built probably in the 6th or 7th century and rebuilt in the 11th or 12th. The old city of Bamiyan, the ruins of which are known as the Shahr-i-gholgola (City of Murmurs), was built in the 11th century and destroyed, like Shahr-i-Zohak, by the Mongols of Genghis Khan.

In the west of the country and most exposed to Iranian influence is the city of Herat where some of the most outstanding monuments in Afghanistan can be found.

Friday Mosque now presents a picture of a 14th - 15th century building, but it bears the marks of many reconstructions that point to earlier origins, some of them going back to the beginning of the Islamic era. It is, basically, a traditional Iranian four-ivan



mosque. The mausoleum ascribed to queen Gawhar Shad is another fine example of Islamic late medieval architecture.

North of the city lies one of the most complex and interesting sites in the Islamic world, the Shrine of Khoja Abdullah Ansari, better known as the Gazargah (bleaching Ground).

The Shrine of Hazrat Ali in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif in the north is the last monumental building of any significance, built in the late 15th century, just before decadence set in. It has been rebuilt and restored several times.



An important place of pilgrimage, it shows strong Indian influence in its architecture. East of Balkh, the mosque of Takht-i-Pul has three domed halls with well preserved painted decoration on the inside, the style of which is a mixture of Indian and Islamic tradition.

Archaeology

Due to its strategic location at the heart of Central Asia, as a country which bridged the West to the East and a crossroad of various cultures, Afghanistan has been a major source of archaeological attraction for so long.

During the past fifty years, an ever-increasing number of archaeological expeditions have come to Afghanistan. As a result, the country's heritage has become ever more rich and varied, and new discoveries are being made each year. Many of these artifacts are displayed at the Kabul Museum. However many major sites have been identified in the country and as mentioned before new discoveries are on the way. The major archaeological sites are as follows:

Tepe Fullol

One of the most ancient sites in Afghanistan whose treasures were discovered in 1966. This discovery lifted the veil of an era hitherto completely unknown, that of the vast ensemble which covers Afghanistan, eastern Iran and Turkmenistan during the Bronze Age, in about 2,000 years BC.

Between the Indus Civilization and Mesopotamia, a "new" civilization emerged with its bronze seals, its composite statues of "goddesses" in abstract silhouette, its gold and silver cups decorated with animals set in landscapes, with its



troupe of strange creatures and bearded bulls, or geometric motifs, a distant echo of the Quetta ceramics.

After the digs at Mundigak, in the south, not far from Kandahar, which had revealed a veritable " Helmand Civilization " during the Bronze Age, Fullol showed the north, a few centuries later, to have a very particular culture whose very existence goes some way to explaining the dynamism of the Indus Civilization; and the excavations at Shortughai demonstrated that the two had had contact with each other.

Controlling the lapis lazuli sources in remote Badakshan (north of Afghanistan), this culture is connected with Sumer and Ur, or Mohendjo-Daro. To the south of the town of Baghlan, a single discovery also revealed a whole hitherto unsuspected trading network between the Near East, Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Indus Valley.

Ai Khanoum

The other major site in the middle-Oxus valley is the Greek city of Ai Khanoum, about a day's journey by car from Tolaqon. It is the only Greek city to have been excavated in Central Asia and it is almost certainly Alexandria-Oxania, one of Alexander's foundations. The evidence for this is that the Heroön (hero-shrine) is dedicated to Kineas, a thessalian name, and we know that Alexander discharged his Thessalian cavalry here.



Balkh (Bactra)

A mythical town, the place where the marriage of Alexander and Roxane took place in 327 BC, Bactra or Balkh was feted by the classical authors, the Chinese, the Arabs and the Persians as, " Balkh the Beautiful, Balkh the Mother of all towns ", before it was pillaged by Genghis Khan in 1220.

In 2004, after some chance discoveries of Hellenistic architectural features, near Balkh, at Tepe Zargaran, in about 7 meters below ground an accumulation of architectural blocks was uncovered. Many of these had originated from demolished Greek buildings, doubtless former neighbors, and had been used in the construction of a fortification.

Under the ramparts from the Kushan period, appears an enclosure wall doubtless from the Greek period, while a stupa established by the king Mega Soter (Vima Takto), in the middle of the

1st century BC, is the oldest Bactrian Buddhist monument. In the Balkh citadel, significant remains going back to the Achmenid period, (6th - 4th centuries BCE) are currently undergoing excavation.





Tilla Tepe

In 1978, Tilla tepe, the "golden hill", was to yield in the course of digs on a citadel dating back to the Iron Age, six tombs from around that time, in the north of Afghanistan, not far from Shebergan - six luxurious "barbarian" tombs, displaying unprecedented wealth. The tombs held five women and one man, and their bodies appeared dressed in clothes sewn with gold and encrusted with turquoise, garnet and lapis lazuli. Alongside these were classical intaglios showing Athena's profile, and an ivory comb decorated with incisions whose style point directly to Begram or Dalverzine Tepe.

Crowned with flora, fragile and delicate, alluding to the Three Kingdoms of Korea (1st to 7th centuries), the Bactrian Aphrodite has

the childish charm which evokes Sirkap and the Scytho-Parthian period. These objects are the echo of a nomadic society where luxury and refinement go hand in hand with tolerance, and curiosity about unknown cultures. The so-called Bactrian Hoard of 20,000 gold pieces, last put on public view in 1991 and since locked in the vaults of the National Bank within the Presidential Palace grounds, survived the turmoil and chaos of years of civil war and Taliban's rage, thanks to the courage and dedication of authorities in Kabul Museum.

The Tilla Tepe hoard is unique not only because of the high artistry of the objects, but also because it sheds light on the shadowy transitional period between the collapse of the Bactrians in the last years of the BC era and the rise of the nomadic Kushans during the early years of the common era.

Begram

On the site of the ancient Alexandria of the Caucasus, digs carried out by a French expedition in 1937 and then in 1939 revealed, in site II, the existence of two walled chambers, filled with artifacts from the Mediterranean, China and the Indian sub-continent - this was called the "Begram Treasure".

Gandhara Sites in Bamiyan

Bamiyan means "the place of shining light". At Bamiyan we encounter the Buddhist cave temples from several different periods. Bamiyan is located on what was once the border between the 12th and 17th tax collection districts [satrapies] (nomos) of the Persian Empire under the Achaemenid dynasty of Darius I.

It is unclear when Buddhism was first practiced in Bamiyan, but it quietly began to



root itself firmly in the north and south of the Hindu Kush during the Kushan

dynasty, and we know that from the second to the fourth centuries A.D., many Buddhist temples were established in the area. In antiquity, central Afghanistan was strategically placed to thrive from the Silk Road caravans. Camel caravans criss-crossed the region as they traded between the Roman Empire, China and India. And as they journeyed through the Hindu Kush Mountains they came upon Bamiyan - one of the wonders of the ancient world.

This heart of the now-forgotten Kingdom of Kushan was glorified by two colossal Buddha statues. They were carved into a cliff in the mountains that tower over the valley of Bamiyan, whose people were responsible for carving these wonders of the ancient world.

The larger statue stood at 53 metres (125 feet) above the town of Bamiyan - as high as a 10-storey building and is considered to be the most remarkable representation of the Buddha anywhere in the world. Once, it and its 38-metre-high companion were painted in gold and other colours, and decked in dazzling ornaments.



There were countless rich frescoes depicting the life of the Buddha and life

in the town of Bamiyan at the time, now never to be seen and studied. It was a place of pilgrimage, and there were 10 monasteries built into the cliff - the home of Buddhist monks.

In the northern Hindu Kush, the Buddhist archaeological sites closest to Bamiyan are the cave temples of Surkh

Kotal (3rd to 4th centuries) and Haibak (4th to 5th centuries). To the south of the Hindu Kush, monasteries already flourished at Kapisa-Begram, Shotorak, and Paitava (2nd to 4th centuries) and Buddhist temples



were established at Tepe Maranjan (4th to 5th centuries) in Kabul.

The center of Bamiyan's cultural legacy was formed by the two colossal Buddha images carved



at the eastern and western ends of a high cliff facing the central valley, and perhaps a thousand caves also cut into the cliff face and decorated with a rich variety of murals.

The Buddhist religious art of Bamiyan, which enjoyed a renaissance here after the collapse of the earlier Gandharan culture, was a unique synthesis appropriate to an area that has been called a cultural crossroads. Two colossal Buddhas which were mostly admired by Xuan Zang, the Chinese scholar-monk might have been constructed from the 5th to 6th century based on the grand conception of the Buddhist cosmology. The east colossal Buddha is the Sakya muni Buddha, the west colossal Buddha is Maitreya.



Music & Musical Instruments

Afghanistan's musical tradition is expressed through three outlets: the art of music specific to Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Kandahar, the modern genres of popular music on the radio, and a plethora of regional 'folk music' styles are characteristics of various ethnic groups inhabiting different parts of the country.

The music of Afghanistan is connected to the music of India and other Central Asian countries, though Iranian influences are also evident. The diversity of peoples including Tajiks, Pashtuns, and Uzbeks has given Afghan music a very rich musical heritage. In some ways, Afghanistan is a microcosm of all the different musical cultures in Islamic Asia, the classical pieces of Transoxiana (modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), the lyrical and spiritual poetry of India and Pakistan, the folk music of Turkmenistan, and a host of other styles from other cultures.

Whether at a home, a teahouse, a horse race, or a wedding, the same instruments dominate Afghan music.

Along with the *dutar* and *zirbaghali*, there are variations on the fiddle (*ghichak*), the flute (*badakhshani*), and cymbals.

The *rubab*, a lute-like instrument, is sometimes considered the national instrument of Afghanistan, and is called the "lion" of instruments. The most famous player of *rubab* is Mohammed Omar, while modern performers include Essa Kassemi and Mohammed Rahim Khushnawaz. Uzbeks and Tajiks share a preference for the *dambura*, which is a long-necked, plucked lute.

At home, women often play the *daireh*, a drum like instrument. Of course,

one of the most important musical mediums in Afghanistan is the human voice.

Afghan folk music is traditionally played at weddings, holidays such as the New Year celebration, and rarely for mourning.

Wedding music plays a vital part in Afghan folk music. There are traveling people known as Jat, related to gypsies, sell instruments door-to-door and play their own variety of folk music. The Jats frequently play for weddings, circumcisions and other celebrations as well.

Afghan songs are typically about love, they use symbols like "nightingale" and "rose", and references to folkloric literatures such as the tale of "Leyla and Majnoon" are abound.

The classical musical form of Afghanistan is called *klasik*, which includes both instrumental (*ragas*, *naghmehs*) and vocal forms (*ghazals*).

Many masters (*ostads*), or professional musicians, are descendants of Indian artists who migrated to the royal court in Kabul in the 1860s.

Radio broadcasting was introduced to Afghanistan in 1940 and fostered the growth of popular music. Modern Afghan popular music used orchestras

featuring both Afghan and Indian instruments, as well as European clarinets, guitars and violins. Parwin became, in 1951, the first Afghan woman to broadcast on the air in Radio Afghanistan, while Ahmad Zahir, Mahwash, and Biltun found large audiences.

Since the 1980s, Afghanistan has been constantly witnessing a never ending civil unrest in the country. As such, music has been suppressed and the recording for outsiders has remained minimal.

During the 1990s, the Taliban regime banned instrumental music and much public music-making. Many musicians and singers continued to ply their profession in other countries. Pakistani cities such as Peshawar, Karachi and Islamabad are important centers for the promotion of Afghan music.

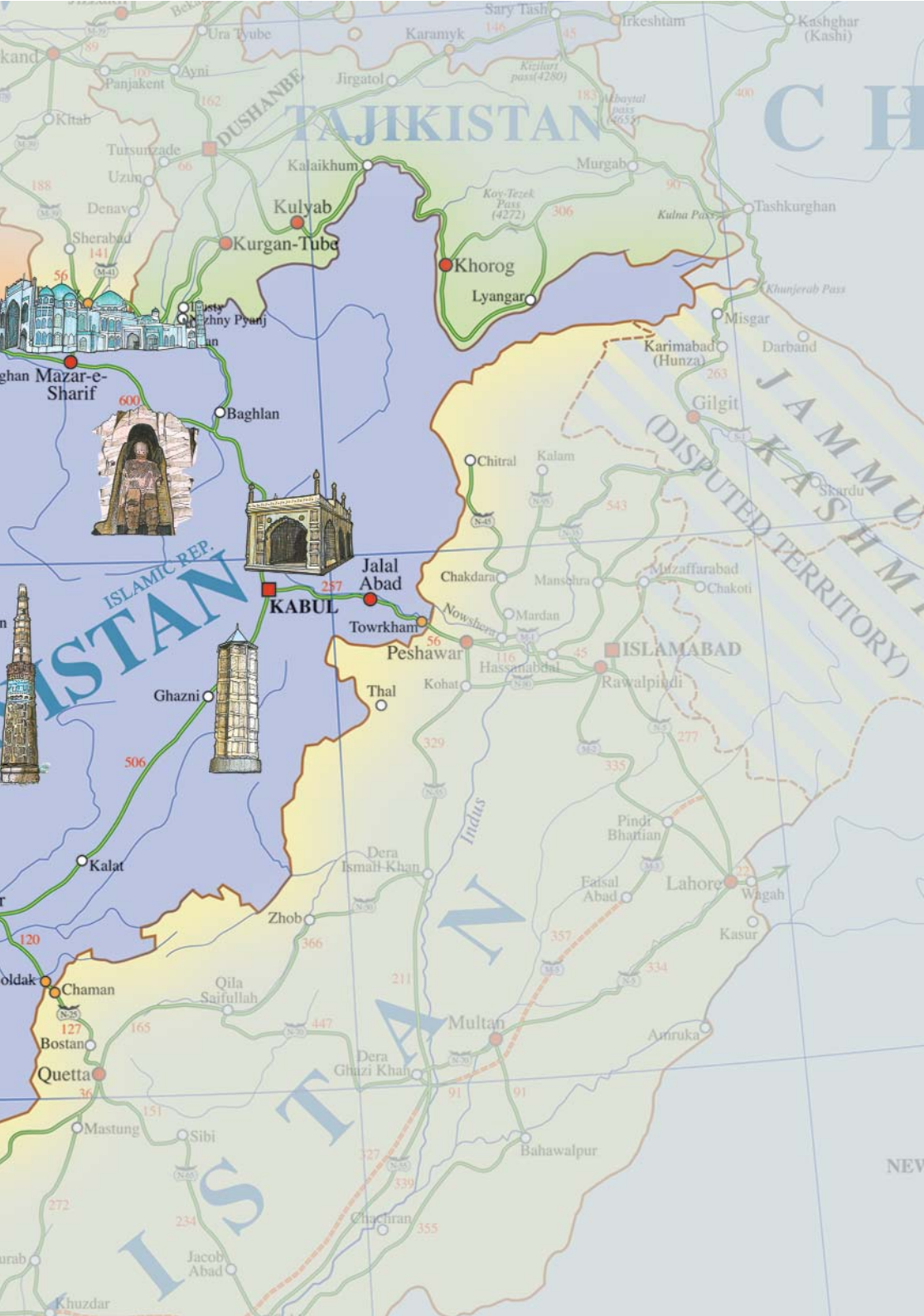
Kabul has long been the regional cultural capital, but outsiders have tended to focus on the city of Herat, whose musical culture is more closely related to Iranian music. Lyrics across the country are typically in both Pashto and Persian languages. Hindi songs from Bollywood films are also very popular in Afghanistan.



AFGHANISTAN

Map of Afghanistan





Ecotourism



Trekking in Afghanistan

The natural beauty of this country with its majestic mountains could turn it into a heaven for trekkers and fans with special interest in outdoor sports such as trekking and mountaineering.

Badakhshan, Afghanistan's most remote and beautiful province remained untouched by the Russians



and the lunatic rule of Taliban.

Its capital, Faisabad, is the starting point for trips to Lake Shiva and the Blue Mountain, the ancient world's only source of lapis lazuli. It is the jewel in the crown of Afghanistan's tourist attraction.

Badakhshan contains the following destinations for a traveler:

- 1- Faisabad: base camp for all travelers in the region
- 3- Sar-El-Sang (The Blue Mountain)
- 4- Lake Shiva
- 5- The Wakhan Corridor and Great and Small pamiir



To get to Sar-El-Sang (Blue Mountain), drive to Jurm and then follow the Kokcha River upstream for three hours. From Faisabad it is a one-day journey. The glorious Lake Shiva is one of the sources of the Oxus. Today a road takes you there in one day.

There is a Chaikhana (tea house) where the road meets the lake, or you can camp. The lake itself is an astonishing deep blue color.

A two -day trek around the edge is well worth making.

There is also a five- day trek to Lake Chaqmartin which lies between Buzai Gumbud and the Yuli Pass (4,872 m), which leads to China; Buzai Gumbud to

the lake is approximately 15 Km (10 miles). Near the Yuli Pass is the glacier that has been considered as the icy sources of the Oxus, and it takes three days to return to Buzai Gunbad from glacier.

Small Pamir: The Small Pamir is a self-contained ecosystem, a mountain area cut through deeply by the Waghjir River.

To the South lie the Karakoram Mountains and the Pakistani areas of Gilgit and Hunza; the famous Khunjerab Pass on the Karakoram highway into China lies about 50 km west of the Yuli Pass (4,872 m), the easternmost extension of this area.

The whole area contains peaks rising from 6,500 m to 7,000 m, with the highest peaks along the Afghan Chinese border well over 6,500 meters. The Small Pamir is separated from Syr Kul and the Great Pamir by a wilderness of peaks and lakes.

Travelling in Small Pamir

The Journey starts at Qala Panj and it is assumed that the traveler will be hiring horses and guides at Boroghil, there is a 3 day ride from Boroghil-Sarhad to Buzai Gumbud. Along the way are a number of camps.

The first Kyrgyz camps are at Ak Jilga (White Mare), and the others are named as follows: Kotali-Dalriz Pass, Baharak, Sang-i- Neveshta

(Inscribed Stone), Garbin Warm, Aveliz, Kyrchun, Ak Jilga (Mountain Camo), Buzai Gumbad/Waghjir Valley.

From Buzai Gumbad, the Waghjir Valley goes eastwards to the Chinese border at Yuli Pass, via Birgitikho, which is the Kyrgyz winter quarters. Allow 5 days to get to the Yuli Pass. (Count on eight or nine days on horse back to reach China from Buzai Gumbad).

From Buzai Gumbad the main Wakhan

Valley goes to Lake Chaqmartin via a series of campsites named Cheshmeh Arkhar), Hawz-i-Chaqmartin and Mynarah.



Mountaineering

Many people see Wakhan as a region for mountaineering. Nowshak (Nurshak) is the most famous and highest peak in Afghanistan at 7,485 meters. The way is not suitable for horses. Climbing and descending the peak generally takes 7 days. Another fine peak between Qala Panj and Boroghil is called Baba Tangi (6,421 meters), and

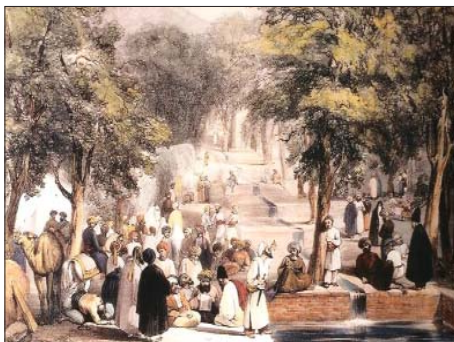
outside the Wakhan proper, in the Jurm Valley, stands Dari Sahir (6,428 meters), it is also a good challenge.

Top 10 Places to Visit

1-BABUR'S GARDENS,

Kabul:

Laid out by Babur, the founder of Moghul Dynasty, in the middle of the 16th century, the gardens include a summer pavilion added by Amir Abdur Rahman, a commemorative mosque built by Emperor Shah Jahan and the tomb of Babur himself.



2-ISTALIF, Outside

Kabul:

Istalif lies north of Kabul in Kuh Daman, a valley ringed by barren hills dotted with villages nestled within green orchards. It is one of the largest, most ancient and loveliest of them all.

Istalif is famous for its green and blue pottery and its picturesque bazaar. A visit to this place combines beautiful scenery with an introduction to Afghan Village life.

3-MASJIDE JAMI, Herat:

This great mosque, in the center of the city has been a place of worship since the time of Zoroaster. Rebuilt several times, the mosque now stands in perfect splendor since its most recent restoration which is drawing close to completion.

4-Gazargah, Herat:

This funerary compound (hazira) houses the tomb of renowned Sufi mystic and saint Khwaja 'Abd Allah Ansari, also known as the guardian pir (wise man) of Herat.

The shrine enclosing the tomb was commissioned by Timurid ruler Shah Rukh bin Timur (1405-1447) and completed by Architect Qavam al-Din Shirazi in 1425, as noted in the inscription on the southwest portal.



5-Minaret of Jam, Outside Herat:

One of the unique monuments of Islamic architecture, The minaret stands 65 m (213 feet) high and leans off the vertical.

Only the Qutb Minar in Delhi is higher. It belongs to the Ghoriid period, it is the only large scale building to have survived from that important period (12 to 13th century AD).

6-CHEL ZINA, Kandahar:

This interesting monument consists of 40 stairs leading to a chamber carved into rock. Inside is an inscription stating that it was built by Babur the founder of the Moghul Empire, and listing the domains of the Emperor.



Sulatan Husayn Bayqara. The turquoise pumpkin dome with its fluted tiling is very similar to the Mausoleum of Gawhar Shad in Herat. This shrine is dedicated to the saint Khwaja Parsa (d.1460), a theologian who taught at the madrasa near the site.

7-MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Balkh :

Mazare Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, is a major trading center famous for Karakul, a great variety of traditional Turkman carpets and high quality, long-staple cotton. The city is named for the magnificent shrine of Hazarate Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad, the Fourth Caliph of Islam. Hazarate Ali was assassinated in 661 and buried at Kufa, near Baghdad. Local tradition, however relates that his remains has been brought here in Balkh by his followers. All knowledge of the final resting place was lost until its existence was revealed and the great Seljuk Sultan Sanjar, ordered a shrine built here in 1136.



8-The Shrine of Khawja Parsa, Balkh:

The main sight of Balkh is the late 15th century (late Timurid) Shrine of Khwaja Parsa, built by

9-Giant Buddhas of Bamyam, Bamyam Valley, Hazarajat:

The Buddhas of Bamyam were two monumental statues of standing Buddhas carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamyam valley in the Hazarajat region of central Afghanistan, situated 230 km (143 miles) northwest of Kabul at an altitude of 2500 meters (8,202 ft). Built during the sixth century, the statues represented the classic blended style of Indo-Greek art.

10-Ghaaznavid's Minarets, Ghazni:

There are two minarets, which are capped with corrugated iron. Originally they were much taller and almost certainly served as the model for Minaret of Jam in Badakhshan. The more ornate one was built by Masud III (1099-1114), the other by Bahramshah, whose reign (1118-1152 AD) was terminated by Allauddin's victory.

1152 AD) was terminated by Allauddin's victory.

5 major cities

Kabul

Capital and legendary city of antiquity, abounds with the beauty of its ancient mosques, citadels, palaces and holy shrines. Throughout history, Kabul has been the major trading link between East and West, and remains today the central marketplace for all Afghanistan.

Places to See

Bala Hissar

The Bala Hissar or "high fort" of Kabul is seated on an eastern spur of the Sher Darwaza, bordering the old city. There are thought to have been walls on this position since at least the 6th century. Babur, the first Moghul emperor, who took Kabul in 1504, developed the site extensively during his reign and succeeding Moghul emperors continued his work.



Akbar, another Moghul emperor placed great importance on holding Kabul, as the northern key to India. Shah Jahan, who later built Taj Mahal at Agra, at the age of fifteen, impressed his father, Jahangir, by remodeling in excellent taste the quarters assigned to him in Kabul.

At its peak, Bala Hissar was of a size comparable to the great Moghul forts at Agra and Lahore, although its buildings were never as grand. It was divided into upper citadel and a lower fortified township, in which palaces and other buildings stood.

Baghe Bala

A graceful, many domed palace glimmers on a hill to the north of the city. This garden, just below the International Hotel, will soon take its place again as one of Kabul's most popular places. The site is still kept up and Afghans sit here contemplating the brown mountains beyond. To reach it, use the International drive and turn right into an area of pine trees, passing an old summer palace. At the end is a building - formerly the best restaurant in Kabul, (with a swimming pool), which is due for renovation.

Babur's Gardens

Laid out by Babur, the founder of Moghul Dynasty, in the middle of the 16th century, the gardens include a summer pavilion added by Amir Abdur Rahman, a commemorative mosque built by Emperor Shah Jahan and the tomb of Babur himself. Babur died in Agra in 1530 but he so loved these gardens that he asked to be buried here, a wish which was fulfilled by his afghan wife Bibi Mobaraka.

Bazaars

Kabul's bazaars attract a large number of visitors for shopping and sightseeing.

Mosques

Kabul has many interesting mosques. The most famous ones in the center of the city are: Masjide Pule Kheshti, Masjide Shahe Du Shamshira, Masjide Id Gah. Masjide Sherpur

Kabul Surroundings

Istalif

Istalif lies north of Kabul in Kuh Daman, a valley ringed by barren hills dotted with villages nestled within green orchards. It is one of the largest, most ancient and loveliest of them all. Istalif is famous for its green and blue pottery and its picturesque bazaar. A visit to this place combines beautiful scenery with an introduction to Afghan Village life.

Paghman

Paghman is the most favored summer resort of Kabul. The imposing victory arch, standing in the central square, was built by King Amanullah in commemoration of the War of Independence in 1919.

Kabul Museum

One of the richest treasuries of ancient art and archaeological objects in Central Asia. During the Afghan civil wars, it was heavily looted and it was feared that most of its objects on display had been destroyed by Taliban forces but fortunately it seems that much more of the contents have survived than it had been feared.



Herat

The history of Herat has been one of repeated destruction and reconstruction. Conqueror after conqueror, from the time of Alexander the Great, has taken it, destroyed it, and then rebuilt it. From 1040 to 1175 the city was ruled by the Seljuks who defeated the Ghaznavids. Herat was then captured by the Ghorids until the city fell under the control of the Khwarazm Empire.

In 1221, Herat was taken by the Mongols and Tuli, the son of Genghis Khan, ruled for some time, but the citizens revolted and killed the Mongol garrison. Extremely angered, Genghis Khan rode upon the city with 80,000 troops and besieged it for six months, leaving only forty people living. In 1245 Herat was given to the Kart Malikis.

Tamerlane destroyed Herat in 1381, however, his son, Shah Rukh, rebuilt it and started the cultural renaissance which made it the center of learning and culture. During the Timurid rule, the famous poet of Herat, Jami and the miniaturist, Bihzad were born, Queen Gawhar Shad's Musalla was built and Gazargah restored.

For the second time the city flourished. In 1718 the Afghan clan, Hotaki, struggled for Herat's independence which continued until 1880, when finally the city became an integral part of Afghanistan. With its monumental



buildings and splendid complexes, this beautiful city has been rightfully called "the Pearl of Great Khorasan".

Places to See

Citadel

This fort, originally built by Alexander the Great, suffered repeated attacks over the history, but still dominates the landscape of Herat. Held by Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Ghorids, Mongols, Timurids, the Safavids and others, the citadel is a reminder of the time of kings, conquerors and great pageantry.



Jame Mosque

This great mosque, in the center of the city has been a place of worship since the time of Zoroaster. Rebuilt several times, the mosque now stands in perfect splendor since its most recent restoration which is drawing close to completion.

Old Town & Bazaar

The fun way of getting around the Old Town, and perhaps out to Gazargah, is to use one of the horse drawn taxis that queue at the beginning of the road leading to the bazaar and citadel. The covered bazaar has gone, but arched mud brick tunnels lead off the main streets to more houses, surprising squares, turns, then more houses round an unexpected courtyard. The bazaar caters to all need: silk turbans, aluminum cooking pans, firewood, the motor trade, lorry motors changing car batteries, Wellington boots, bikes, plastic shoes, bright piles of oranges and popcorn. You should spend at least half a day here, alone or in small groups.

Gawhar Shad Mausoleum & Minarets

The five minarets are all that survive of the madrasa (theological college) of Gawhar Shad, the famous Timurid queen. Their chief glory was the tile work, and remains of blue and turquoise tiles can still be seen on them. The interior of the mausoleum is stunning - a set of interlocking niches painted in slightly faded colors. There are three graves: of Gawhar Shad, Huseyn Bayqara and a child. Leaning against the walls of the mausoleum interior are beautiful panels of carved marble, presumably screens from Musalla destroyed by the British.

Gazargah

A highlight of Herat is the Sufi shrine of Gazargah, a complex of buildings east of the city where Abdullah Ansari, the Sufi poet, is buried. Ansari lived between 1006 and 1089. The buildings were started under Shah Rukh. Remove your shoes at the portico. There is a hallway with a domed and painted roof.

On the left there is a mosque; on the right there is a staircase that leads to a

room containing a hair of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is housed in a circular cupboard that is covered in green cloth. The floor of the hallway is made up of beautiful worn white marble paving stones of various sizes and heights, hundreds of years old. The tiling of blue interlocking lozenges in the hall is magnificent and ancient.

Notice also the lovely plaques carved with lines of Persian poetry and Qoranic verses. In the courtyard are fine examples of the tile work known as *haft rangi*, or "seven colors", for which Timurid Herat was famous.

Minarte of Jam

One of the unique monuments of Islamic architecture, Minaret of Jam stands in a place so isolated that it was not re-discovered until 1934, when - it is said, a pilot spotted it from the air. Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The minaret stands 65 m (213 feet) high and leans off the vertical. Only the Qutb Minar in Delhi is higher.

It belongs to the Ghori period, it is the only large scale building to have survived from that important period (12 to 13th century AD).

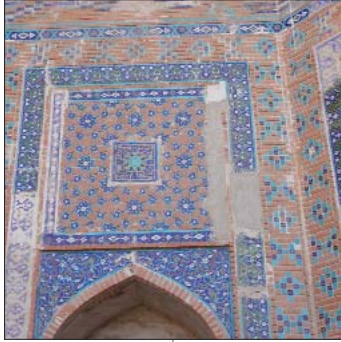
Kandahar

Kandahar, The birthplace and first capital of Afghanistan, founded by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747, is today the second largest city of Afghanistan, located in the Asian Highway halfway between Kabul and Herat.

The area is rich in ancient monuments and the city was razed to the ground by Arab invaders in 869AD, by the Ghori Sultan Alauddin in 1151AD and by Genghis Khan in 1221AD. The city

did not recover its former grandeur; however, it enjoys a strategic position in the century's economy. Kandahar is also the setting of two of Asoka's Rock Edicts (C. 3rd century BC) unearthed in the Zor Shah or Old City.

Places to See



Kherqa Sharif

This shrine containing the cloak of the Prophet Mohammad is the most sacred one in Afghanistan. This relic was brought to Kandahar by

Ahmad Shah Durrani.

Chel Zina

This interesting monument consists of 40 stairs leading to a chamber carved into rock. Inside is an inscription stating

that it was built by Babur the founder of the Moghul Empire, and listing the domains of the Emperor.

Other Interesting Sites:

Zor Shar (Old City), Haratji Baba Shrine, Baba Wali Shrine, Charsuq (Bazaar of 4 arcades).



Balkh

Balkh, today only a small town, is very famous for its glorious past. Zoroaster preached here sometime between 1000 and 600 BC. Rites celebrated at the shrine to Anahita, Goddess of the Oxus, attracted thousands during the 5th Century BC and Alexander the Great chose it as his base in the 4th Century B.C. Under the Kushans, when Buddhism was practiced throughout Afghanistan, many holy temples flourished in Balkh. The Arabs called Balkh the "mother of cities". By the 9th Century, during the rule of the Samanid Dynasty, about 40 Friday Mosques stood within the city. Balkh is the home of Rabia Balkhi, the first

women poet of Islamic period and Molana Jalaluddin Balkhi, the most distinguished Sufi poet. His Masnawi is considered as the greatest poem ever written in Persian language. Balkh's glorious history closed in 1220 when the mounted men of Genghis Khan rode through and left it utterly devastated. The city, nevertheless, lying on an important trade route recovered under the enlightened rule of Shah Rukh and his Queen Gawhar Shad, of Herat.

Places to See

Khawja Parsa Shrine

The main sight of Balkh is the late 15th century (late Timurid) Shrine of Khwaja Pars, built by Sulatn Husayn Bayqara. The turquoise pumpkin dome with its fluted tiling is very similar to the Mausoleum of Gawhar Shad in Herat. This shrine is dedicated to the saint Khwaja Parsa (d.1460), a theologian who taught at the madrasa near the site. No one in the west has ever been moved to erect such a magnificent memorial to a mere academic.

Noh Gonbad (Nine Domes Mosque)

This 9th century mosque was one of the best preserved and the earliest monuments of Islamic period. It had intricately carved stucco decorations of flowers and vines reaching up to its nine domes.

Mazar-e-Sharif

Mazar-e-Sharif, the capital of Balkh province, is a major trading center famous for Karakul, a great variety of traditional Turkman carpets and high quality, long -

staple cotton. The city is named for the magnificent shrine of Hazarate Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad, the Fourth Caliph of Islam.

Hazarate Ali was assassinated in 661 AD and buried at Kufa, near Baghdad. Local tradition, however, relates that his followers, fearing enemies may take revenge on the body, placed his remains on a white shecamel which wandered until she fell exhausted. On this spot the body was buried. All knowledge of the final resting place was lost until its existence was revealed and the great Seljuk Sultan Sanjar, ordered a shrine built here in 1136 AD.

Genghis Khan destroyed this building and again the grave laid unmarked until a second revelation during the reign of the Timurid Sultan Husain Baiqara. He ordered an elaborate shrine constructed in 1481.

None of the 15th Century decoration has remained but modern restoration has returned the building to its original beauty. Thousands of white pigeons make their home there. Amir Sher Ali Khan lies buried here with other members of Amir Dost Mohammad's family.

The largest tomb is that of the Amir's illustrious son, Mohammad Akbar Khan, who played a prominent role during the First Anglo-Afghan War of 1838 - 1842.

Mazar-e- Sharif is visited by countless pilgrims throughout the year and particularly on Nawroz (21 March) when the

great janda (religious banner) is raised to announce the beginning of spring and the coming of the New Year which is the most elaborately celebrated festival in Afghanistan.

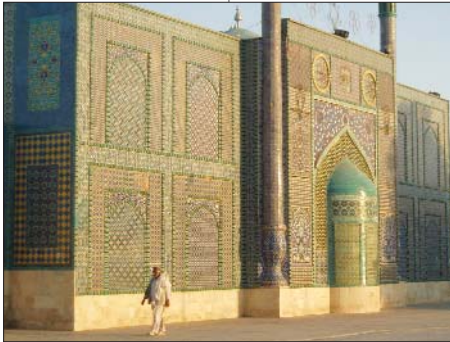
Road to Balkh

The road to Balkh crosses the Hindukush via Salang Pass through the highest tunnel in the world (3363m). A drive over this pass offers, besides scenic beauty, a thrilling experience of high altitude. En route about 240 km from Kabul (12 km from Pule Khumri) lies Surkh Kotal, site of a great religious temple, founded 130 A.D. by Kanishka the Great, king of the Kushans.

It is one of Afghanistan's most important archeological sites, which was finally burned by the Hephthalites, nomadic rivals and ultimate successor to the Kushans. 70 km further north lies Aibak, the capital of the Samangan province.

2 km nearby is an important Buddhist site, dating to the 4th Century, locally known as Takhte Rustam (Rustam's Throne) Rustam, the hero of Firdausi's great epic, the Shahnama (Book of Kings), written in Ghazni around 1010, married the beautiful daughter of the king of Samangan, Tahima.

The stupa cave crowns the hill in front of the monastery which was most probably destroyed by Hephthalites, around 460 A.D. 60km north lies Tashkurghan (Kulm)



Bamiyan

Bamiyan, with its archeological remains. The village lies about 2500m above sea level, 240km west of Kabul. The exquisite beauty of this valley is embraced by the snow capped range of the Kohe Baba mountains in the south and in the north by the steep cliffs in which massive images of Buddha are carved. The postal colors of its surroundings give visitors an impression of the magnificence and serenity of nature.

The area of Bamiyan developed under Kanishka the Great to become a major commercial and religious center and the smaller statue of Buddha (38 m high) was built during his reign. Two Centuries later the colossal Buddha statue (55 m high) was carved. Thousands of ornamented caves, inhabited by yellow robed monks, extended into Folladi and Kakrak valley, where a smaller statue of Buddha (6,5 m) stands. Bamiyan fell to Muslim conquerors in 9th Century.



Places to See

Share Gholghola

The Islamic City of Bamiyan was destroyed by Genghis Khan in 1221 in revenge of the death of his grandson Mutugen. The ruins of the citadel, called city of noise, still give evidence of its magnitude before Mongol devastation.

Bande Amir

Visitors to Afghanistan have marveled at the country's natural beauty. The formidable Hindu Kush, the vast Turkestan plains, and the seclusion of the southern deserts have impressed travelers from Alexander the Great to Marco polo.

It is the unspoiled natural beauty that forms the visitor's first and most enduring impression of the country. But of all the natural wonders of Afghanistan, the lake of Bande Amir is perhaps the most outstanding. Situated in the mountains Hazarajat at an altitude of approx.3000m, 75 km from Bamiyan, these majestic blue lakes is of legendary beauty.

Nuristan (City of Light)

Nuristan refers to the area of Laghman and Ningarhar inhabited by approx. 600.000 Nuristani. The area covers approximately 5,000 square miles with five main and numerous side valleys, each inhabited by a separate tribe speaking its own language, which, in many cases are mutually unintelligible and are grouped under the name

Dardic, within the Indo-European language family. The most recent classification of this subgroup gives six Nuristani languages: Ashkun, Kamviri, Kati, Prasuni, Tregami and Waigali.

There are many physical and cultural differences between the people of Nuristan and those living around them. Language is one. The fact that they prefer stools and chairs to a rug on the floor is another obvious difference.

Nuristani music is quite distinctive as are their instruments among which the harp is certainly the most noticeable. Alexander the Great invited the young Nuristani men to join his army for the Indian campaign.

They proved their fighting quality with distinction.

Many so-called "Greek" motifs and customs found in the Nuristani culture may well date from this experience.

Throughout the centuries that followed, the people of these mountains

successfully defied conquest and conversion even as Buddhism and Hinduism were replaced by Islam on the plains below. The Muslims labeled the Kafirs (unbelievers or infidels) because they worshipped a wide pantheon of nature spirits and practiced other customs incompatible with the Muslim religion.

In 1895 the army of Amir Abdur Rahman (the governor of Afghanistan) finally succeeded to subdue the Kafirs and converted them to Islam.

When his victorious army arrived in Kabul, the Amir announced that henceforth Kafiristan (Land of The Infidels) was

to be known as Nuristan (Land of Light).

A large part of Nuristan is inaccessible to all but those on foot for the Trails are so difficult and precipitous, the foot-wide bridges, 30 feet and more above angry frothing waters, are so dizzying that horses simply cannot maneuver.

Almost all Nuristani villages are built on the top of high peaks, the houses spill the mountainside, one on top of the other, the roof of one serving as the front porch and play ground of the house above.

Children play vigorous games on these roofs, hanging precariously over drops of many hundreds of feet, but rarely, so say their parents, do they plunge into the depths below.



Jalalabad

Jalalabad lies 150 km east of Kabul, passing Kabul Gorge, Naghlu, Sarobi and Darunta Lakes. The capital of Ningarahar province is an oasis ringed by mountains.

Palaces, large gardens and tree-lined avenues speak of its long history as a favorite winter capital.

Seraj-ul-Emarat, the residence of Amir Habibullah and King Amanullah was destroyed in 1929: the gardens however, retain vestiges of the past and offer a peaceful afternoon's stroll. The Mausoleum of both rulers is enclosed by a garden facing Seraj-ul-Emarat. Jalalabad is a junction and favored stopover for travelers to Nuristan and Khyber Pass.

Ghazni

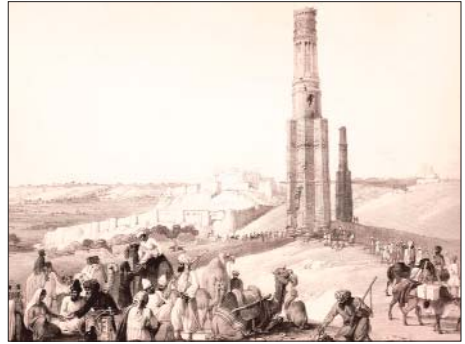
This Town is one of the main historical sights of Afghanistan, especially for

the Towers of Victory, or minarets. Ghazni, an important market town, particularly famous for embroidered sheepskin coats, was the dazzling capital of Ghaznavid Empire from 994 - 1160 AD encompassing much of northern India, Persia and Central Asia. Many campaigns into India were launched from here resulting in the spread of Islam to the East. This glorious city was razed to the ground by Arab invaders in 869 AD, by the Ghorid Sultan Alauddin in 1151 AD and by Genghis Khan in 1221 AD. The city did not recover its former grandeur; however, it enjoys a strategic position over the centuries old history.

Places to See

Ghaznavid's Minarets

There are two minarets, which are capped with corrugated iron. Originally they were much taller and almost certainly served as the model for Minaret of Jam in Badakhshan. The more ornate one was built by Masud III (1099-1114), the other by Bahramshah, whose reign (1118-1152) was terminated by Allauddin's victory. Just south of Masud's tomb are the remains of his palace, excavated by the Italians. Masud's tomb, beautifully carved out of marble, survives and is to be found just outside the town, on the road to Kabul.



Buddhist Sanctuary

The other highlight of Ghazni is the Buddhist sanctuary at Tepe Sardar, excavated by the Italians in the 1970s.

Sana'l Grave

Ghazni was famous for its poets, the most celebrated being Sana'i. He is buried near the river to the east of the city. As at Gazargah, the site has many other graves and the carving on their marble gives a good idea of the splendor of Ghaznavid art.



Citadel

One of the most imposing fortresses to be seen in Afghanistan, destroyed during the first Anglo-Afghan War, it was rebuilt, however, never returned to its previous splendor.

Helmand

Lashkargah-Bost

Lashkargah is the capital of Helmand Province, built around the Helmand Arghandab Valley.

Authorities seek to transform the deserts of the region into fertile fields as green as they were centuries ago before conquerors and anarchy consigned them to their present

barrenness. Ancient Bost, now lies south of the administrative center. Bost is recognized in the zoroastrian hymns of the Avesta in Achaemenid town lists and in 1st Century accounts.

These references, however, are vague but there is no doubt that the citadel was taken by Arab conquerors around 661 A.D. In the 9th Century, the city grew to become the second city of the southwest. From the 11th until the middle of the 12th Century Bost prospered as the winter capital of the Ghaznavids, was burned and looted in 1151 by the ghorids and then completely demolished by Genghis Khan in 1220.

Today the remains of the great palace of Masoud still give the visitor an idea of the splendour of the court of what was then the greatest Empire of the East.

The most remarkable monument is the magnificently decorated arch which has a span of 80 feet.

Places to Stay Accommodation

Lodging in Afghanistan falls into two categories: hotels and guest houses.

Hotels are as you experience them here; each room has its own full bathroom, and amenities generally include room service, a swimming pool or exercise facilities, and laundry services. Most

hotels have wireless internet access. Guest houses are generally less expensive than hotels because fewer amenities are offered; guests usually share bathrooms.

The latest addition to Afghan lodging

is the five-star Kabul Serena Hotel, which has four restaurants, a gift shop, fitness center, internet café, and meeting facilities.



Kabul Hotels

Heetal Plaza Hotel

📍 Add: End of Street 14, Wazir Akber Khan, behind mosque
 ☎ Tel: +93 (0) 7915-9697
 Website: <http://www.heetal.com>

Intercontinental Kabul

📍 Add: Baghe Bala Road
 ☎ Tel: +93 (20) 2201-321
 Website: www.intercontinentalkabul.com

Kabul Inn

📍 Add: Qala-e-Fatullah Khan Bazaar
 Near Zarghona High School
 ☎ Mobile: +93 (79) 569-355

✉ Email: kabul_inn@hotmail.com

Kabul Serena Hotel

📍 Add: Froshgah Street
 ☎ Tel: +93 (79) 9654 000

Fax: +93 (79) 9654 111
Email: info@serena.com.af
 Website: www.serenahotels.com/
 afghanistan/kabul/home.htm
Mustafa Hotel

Home to Kabul's famous Kebab night every Thursday.

Tel: + 93 (0) 70276021
Email: mustafa_hotel@hotmail.com
 Website: www.mustafahotel.com
Safi Landmark Hotel Suites

Shahr-e- Naw
Phone: (020) 2203131, 0799 600741

Fax: (020) 2203121
Email: furqan@landmarkhotelsdubai.com
 Website: http://www.landmarkhotelsdubai.com/landmark/newprojects.asp

Spinzar Hotel
Add: Next to the Ministry of Information and Culture, Asma-yee Wat
Tel: 070 27 4983

Guest Houses

Afghans 4 Tomorrow Guest House

Located near Kabul University
Email: sorayaomar0710@yahoo.com

Ajmal Wali
Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10, No 140
Tel: +93 (70) 277-657

Assa 1
Add: Off Flower Street
Tel: +93 (70) 274-364

Assa 2
Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, House 9, Muslim Street
Tel: +93 (70) 276-579

Bs Place
Add: Qali Fatullah
Tel: +93 (70) 276-416

Chez Ana, Media Action International Guesthouse

Add: Passport Lane
Tel: +93 (70) 282-699

Deutscher Hof Kabul (German Restaurant & Guesthouse, Lounge & Transportation Service)

Kal ahi Fatulah Str. 3; House 60
Tel: +93 (0) 79 322582

Website: www.deutscher-hof-kabul.de

Note: DHK is also a training center for cooks, waitstaff, and housekeepers.

Everest

Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10, No 192
Tel: +93 (70) 281-277

Faisal

Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 15, No 27
Tel: +93 (70) 274-696

Faisal Bilal

Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 15, No 73
Tel 1: +93 (70) 274-808
Tel 2: +93 (70) 281-413

Gandamak Lodge

Add: No 5 Passport Lane
Tel: +93 (70) 276-937
Email: gandamaklodge@yahoo.com

Global

Add: Flower Street
Tel: +93 (70) 281-907
Email: edward.dean@globalpsw.com.pk

Haseeb

Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 13, No 556
Tel: +93 (70) 274-986

Helsinki

Add: On way to the airport
Tel: +93 (70) 284-305
Email: osmankhaliq@hotmail.com

Hendokush

Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10

Z, No 9

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 279-558

House 150

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 278-734

Karwansara Guesthouse & Restaurant

📍 Add: 117 Interior Ministry Street

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 291-794

Le Monde (2 locations)

📍 Add: 7 Herati Mosque St, Shar-e-Naw

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 280-751

Website: <http://www.lemondeghk.abul.blogspot.com>

📍 Add: Behind Tafahusat, Mazar

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 049-970

<http://www.lemondeghmazar.blogspot.com>

✉ Email: lemondegoc@gmail.com

Marvellous

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10, No 214

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 275-519

Naween

📍 Add: Kolola Pushta

☎ Tel 1: +93 (70) 224-411

☎ Tel 2: +93 (70) 291-588

Park Residence

📍 Add: Shahr-e- Naw

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 275-728

Rabia Balkhi House

☎ Tel 1: +97 (70) 268-840

☎ Tel 2: +97 (79) 030-631

☎ Tel 3: +97 (79) 309-309

✉ Email 1: farid_roafi@yahoo.com

✉ Email 2: nehan_nargis@yahoo.com

✉ Email 3: seema@ghanis.org

Rose Valley

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 14, No 3

☎ Tel 1: +93 (70) 289-019

☎ Tel 2: +93 (70) 274-590

Sarwe Foshang Guest House

📍 Add: Kabul Shahr-e-now
West side of the Park

☎ Tel: 0202201629

Shamal

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 13, No 452

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 278-601

Silk Route

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10, No 138

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 275-800

Sultan

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 10

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 277-374

Taj Mahal

📍 Add: Vazir Akbar Khan, Street 15, No 128

☎ Tel: +93 (70) 275-830

Herat Hotels

Green Palace Guest House

📍 Jardeh Mahbas, Street No.2

☎ Tel: 224219

☎ Mobile: 0704 05095

Marco Polo Hotel

📍 Badmurghan Street

☎ Tel: 221944, 221947

☎ Mobile: 0704 03340

✉ E-mail: heratmarcopolo@yahoo.com

Website: www.heratmarcopolo.com

Balkh (Mazar-e-Sharif) Hotels

Mazar Hotel

Farhat Hotel

Kefayat Hotel

Barat Hotel

Bamiyan Hotels

Bamiyan Hotel

Next to governor's office on the town's main hill

☎ Tel: 23 00 33 8; 0702 76152

Bamiyan Heights Hotel

☎ Tel: 0088 216 211 97621

📍 Where & What to Eat

Afghan Food

Afghan cuisine is an appetizing cross between the flavors of the Mediterranean, Middle East, Iran and India. It contains several rice dishes that are often served with a assortment of thick, curried sauces cooked with lamb, beef and chicken. Spinach and eggplants constitute two commonly eaten vegetables. Traditional Afghan fare is rich in spices like as cardamom, which lends a sweet, aromatic quality to drinks and dishes.

A quintessential Afghan dish, Qabili Palao consists of raisins, carrots, and lamb with browned rice. Variations in the dish include the addition of sliced almonds or pistachios.

Another important savory dish is Aushak - a leek-stuffed dumpling that is served over a garlic yogurt sauce and layered with a thick ground-beef tomato sauce with dried mint and crushed red pepper sprinkled on top. Appealing to their meat-centric gastronomy, Afghans also enjoy kabobs, which are skewers of meat heavily marinated in a delectable concoction of herbs and spices.

Afghan desserts are robust in flavor, often drawing upon fragrant ingredients, such as rosewater and cardamom.

A popular treat is a creamy, custard-like dessert similar to the Italian Pannecotta with a crushed pistachio topping.

With its mélange of flavors, Afghan cuisine offers food to appease even the most demanding palate.



Afghan Cuisine

Did you know that Afghan cuisine may well have been one of the world's first experiments in fusion cuisines?

Afghan food combines elements of Indian, Persian, Mediterranean, Chinese and Turkish food to create memorable and delicious dishes.

From the traditional bread known as Naan to the elaborately flavored rice dishes known as Palao and the large variety of kebabs, Afghanistan's location as a crossroads of civilizations is evident in its food.

Additionally, Afghanistan's role as the heart of the Silk Road, a historic trading route, long allowed ingredients to flow from east and west and back. Without Afghanistan, Europeans may have never tasted carrots and tomatoes and would have gone without spices such as saffron, cardamom, coriander and cumin.

Restaurants in Kabul

International and Afghan dishes are readily available in many of Kabul's mod-

ern restaurants. Afghanistan is known for its variety of palaws (rice cooked with meat, chicken, or vegetables in



various ways), which are found throughout the country.

Afghan Kabob (charbroiled skewered meat), Bolani and Ashak (Afghan-style ravioli stuffed with leeks topped with yogurt and cooked ground beef) are a few of the many tasty dishes. Also refer to UN cleared restaurants.

L'Atmosphere

French cuisine

French & English menu

☎ Opening hours 10:00 -22:00

📍 St.4, Qala-e- fatullah 0799-300264

☎ Phone: 070-224982

☎ Phone orders

Dehli Darbar

Indian cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 10.00 - 22.00

📍 Moslim St. near Assa Guest House

☎ 0799-324899 0799-833238

Phone orders

Popolano

French cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 09.00 - 22.00

📍 Charahi Ansari Kabul 070-288116

☎ Phone orders

Lai Thai

Thai cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours

11.00 -21.00

📍 St.15 Vazir Akbar Khan House

No.124

☎ 070-297557 070-278640

☎ No phone orders/home delivery

B'S PLACE (Guest.House)

Italian, Mexican cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 11.00 - 23.00

📍 Str.2, Qala-e- fatullah House No.3

☎ 070-276416 070-276711

☎ Phone order

Elbowroom

Continental/European cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 10.30 - 22.00

📍 MOFA street

☎ 0799-352538 070-254432

Vila Velebita

European cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 10.00 - 22.00

📍 St. 10 Vazir Akbar khan

☎ 0799-160368

☎ No phone orders/home delivery

Istanbul

Turkish cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 08.00 - 21.00

📍 Macroian2, Matba block 104

☎ 070-200116 0799-356282

☎ Phone orders

Escalades

European cuisine

English menu

☎ Opening hours 10.00 - 22.00

- 📍 1st Qala-e-Fateullah
- ☎ 0799-473763

Golden Key

- Sea food restaurant
- Chinese cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 10.00 - 21.00
- 📍 St.13, Vazir Akbar Khan Kabul
- ☎ 0799-002800 0799-016591

Kulba Afghan

- Afghan, Italian cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 10:00 - 21.00
- 📍 Shar-e-now, Esmat Moslim St. 3rd floor
- ☎ 0799452151 070034979

Shar-e-Naw Burger

- Fast Food cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 09.00 - 21.00
- 📍 Shahr-e-naw, oposite park
- ☎ 0799-300797 070-255788
- 📞 Phone order

Everest Pizza

- Fast Food cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 09.00 - 21.00
- 📍 13 St.Vazir Akbar Khan, Kabul
- ☎ 0799-317979 070-263636
- 📞 Phone orders/ home delivery

Samarkand

- International cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 10:00 - 22:00
- 📍 Qala Musa, near Panalpina
- ☎ 0799-234646 0799-118460

Carlitos

- Mexican cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 10:00 - 22:00
- 📍 St. 15 Vazir Ak Khan

- ☎ 0799-159697 0799-167824

16. Kabul Inn

- International cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 10:00-22:00
- 📍 Qala-Fateullah, near Zarghoona school
- ☎ 0799-359355 020-2201407

RED HOT SIZZLIN

- International cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 11:00-21:00
- 📍 Old macrorian, ARC Yuksel Camp

TAVERNE DU LIBAN

- Middle Eastern cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 11:00-22:00
- 📍 St. 10 Vazir Akbar Khan

FLOWER STREET CAFÉ

- Californian cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 8:00 -17:00
- 📍 House No.57, Str#7
- Qala-e-Fatullah
- ☎ 070293124 0799356319
- 📞 Phone order delivery

SHANDIZ

- International cuisine
- English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 10:00 - 21:00
- 📍 Vazir Akbar Khan
- ☎ 0799-342928 070-284026

Deutscher Hof Kabul Restaurant & Guest House

- German cuisine
- German/ English menu
- 🕒 Opening hours 11:00 - 23:30
- 📍 Kalai Fattulah, Street 3, House 60
- ☎ 0799-322582

BAKU Azerbaijani

Azerbaijani cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 11:00- 22:00

📍 Street 15, Lane 5, House, 329 WAK

☎ 0799-083918 0799-827313

🚚 No phone orders/home delivery

CAFÉ ZARNEGAR

International (Buffet and a la carte)
cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 06.30 -22.00

📍 Kabul Serena Hotel, Froshgah Street

☎ 0799-654000 ext. 4553

🚚 Yes

SILK ROUTE

South East Asian cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 18.00 -22.00 Kabul

📍 Serena Hotel, Froshgah Street

☎ 0799-654000 ext. 4554

SERENA PASTRY SHOP

Freshly baked pastries and bread

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 07.00 -20.00

📍 Kabul Serena Hotel, Froshgah Street

☎ 0799-654000 ext. 4560

ANAR

Indian- Chinese cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 11:00-22:00

📍 St.14, Lane 3 WAK

☎ 0799-567291

TAVERNE DU LIBAN

International cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 11:00-22:00

📍 St.14, Lane 3 WAK

☎ 070-210651

KOREAN

Korean cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 11:00-21:00

📍 Str.2, house No.120, Karte-She,
Kabul

☎ 0799 199509 0799 007546

SUFI

International cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 11:00-22:00

📍 Aryoob Cinema, 2nd part of Karte
Parwan

Shamiana

Multi Cuisine

English menu

🕒 Opening hours 7:00-23:00

📍 Kabul City Center

☎ 020-2203131

Things to Buy



Handicrafts & Shopping

Afghanistan offers the visitor a rich selection of handicrafts.

Luxurious Afghan carpets, karakul coats, fur overcoats, embroidered material,

caps, and hand-woven silk fabrics and antiques are some of the items that tempt the traveler to lighten his or her wallet. Afghanistan's fruits and nuts are second to none in flavor.

Gemstones are also a major commodity.

However, travelers are urged to be cautious when purchasing items of questionable origin. Exportation of antiques requires authorization from the related authorities.

Purchase of artifacts belonging to the Kabul museum or national heritage of Afghanistan is punishable by law and artifacts will be confiscated.



Where to Buy



Kabul

While there are many places for visitors to shop in Afghanistan, Kocha-e-Murgha, or "Chicken Street," is the most famous and historic place for shopping in Kabul.

Boutiques carry postcards, maps, ashtrays and boxes made of the famous Afghan blue stone, Lapis Lazuli, antique musical instruments, and hand-made Afghan carpets. The carpets' designs, col-

ors and materials-sometimes wool, silk or a mix, are unique and quite remarkable.

Grocery stores in Afghanistan stock an assortment snacks from around the

world: fruit juice from Uzbekistan, jam from Pakistan, bottled water from Italy, cheese from Austria, and cereal from the United States.

Since Chicken Street is the main tourist market in the capital, you will likely be asked to pay a higher price, especially if you are not with a local guide. Remember that bargaining is part of the experience!

Other places in Kabul to shop include the Kabul City Center, Shahr-e-Naw Shopping Centers, Market-e-Jamhoryat, Afghan Super Store, Flower Street, and the new Kabul Mall.

Istalif is a district in Koh Daman valley which is 54 km from Kabul. This district is known for its blue pottery, ceramics, cotton prayer rugs, and intricately carved wooden chests.

People not only in Afghanistan but also around the world are familiar with the unique and dazzling products of this district.

The products sold in Istalif bazaar are also available in Chicken Street and Flower Street of Shar-e-Naw in Kabul City.

Herat: On the north side of Friday Mosque are the shops that sell handicrafts and antiques, some of which may be genuine. Herat's specialty is hand-blown blue glass, with bubbles which is a sort of rustic but attractive.

Mazar-e Sharif: Karakulum was the staple product of this area. This very tightly wound sheep's coat is rather a distinguished product. Ten days before the ewe is due to give birth, she is disemboweled and the unborn lamb is skinned.

It is used to be popular for the collars of western men's coats but is hardly ever seen on them now. Mazar is also the manufacturing center of the

beautiful stripped silk chapans.

Carpets and kilims have traditionally been major trade items for entire Central Asian region including the former Soviet Union's Central Asian lands. Mazar is famous for these sorts of commodities.

They also sell fine embroidery, including Arabian Nights embroidered leather slippers from Turkmenistan. It is an excellent place to go shopping.

Bamiyan: The old bazaar in Bamiyan ran along the road immediately below the large Buddha. It was destroyed by the Taliban as part of their persecution of Hazaras. According to some scholars (including Professor Yamaouchi from Japan) it is possible to find leather Bactrian manuscripts in Greek in the new bazaar. He recommends the following tests to see if they are genuine:

1. Do they smell of clay and earth?
2. Are they light?
3. Are they very dry? If the answer is yes, it might be genuine.
4. If a manuscript has oil on it, it has been forged.

Kandahar: The bazaars of Kandahar are famous for their fruits and handicrafts.

Etiquette- Do's and Don'ts

The Role of Hospitality

Hospitality is an essential aspect of Afghan culture. No matter who you are, if you visit a home you will be given the best the family has, this tradition has its roots in the idea of gaining honor.

The societies in Afghanistan have conventional rules of polite behavior and put much emphasis on correct behavior.

Honor in Afghan culture defines the reputation and worth of an individual, as well as those they are associated with.

The head male of a family is responsible for protecting the honor of the family. The issue of honor drives much of the behavior surrounding the protection of women, modes of dress, social interaction, education and economic activity.

Meeting and Greeting

- o When meeting someone the handshake is the most common form on greeting. You will also see people place their hands over their hearts and nod slightly.

- o enquiring about things like a person's health, business, family, etc is considered as a polite social behavior.

- o Women and men do not shake hands.

Mixing Between Genders

Free mixing between genders only takes place within families. In professional situations such as at businesses or universities, males and females may be co-workers, but are nevertheless cautious to maintain each other's

honor. Foreign females must learn to read the rules and live by them. Women must always dress properly to avoid unwanted attention.

Dressing modestly and conservatively is advisable.

Food and Drinking

Drinking alcoholic beverages in public is forbidden.

Religion and Culture

Respect the religion, sacred places and cultures of people.

Language Essentials

Accommodation

- Do you have any rooms available?:
Aya otagh-e khali darid?
- I'd like a ... room. (Single, shared):
man yak otagh-e mikhaham (yak nafari, moshtarak).
- How much is it for...? (One night, a week, two people):
baraye che ghadar gheimat darad? (yak shab, yak hafteh, do nafar)
- We want a room with a ... (bathroom, shower, TV, window). :
man yak otagh mikhaham ke daashte bashad. (Tashnaab, shawar, television, kelkeen)

Conversation

- Welcome:
khosh amadid
- Greetings:
ehteramat,
- Hello:
salaam
- good morning:
sob be kheir
- good day:
rooz khosh
- good evening:
shamkhosh/bekheir
- goodbye:
khoda hafez
- how are you?:
chetor hastid?
- fine and you?:
khoob hastam, shoma chetor hastiid?
- yes:
baleh
- no:
na/ nakhair
- please:
lotfan
- thank you:
tashakkor
- you're welcome:
ghabelesh nist

- excuse me/ I'm sorry:
bebakhshid/mazerat mikhaham
- I like...:
man khosh daram,
- what's your name?:
esme shoma chist?,
- my name is...:
esme man ast,
- where are you from?:
az koja hastid?,
- I'm from...:
man az hastam.

Directions

- Where is the...? :
.....kojast?(Hotel/taxi etc.)
- can you show me (on the map)?:
mitawanid rooye naghshhe be man neshan dahid/man ra rahnamayi konaid,
- is it far from here? :
aya az inja door ast?
- Go straight ahead:
mostaghim beraveed
- to the left:
be tarafe chap
- to the right:
be tarafe raast
- here:
inja
- there:
anja
- behind:
dar aghab
- in front of.....:
pishe rooye.../moghabele.....,
- far from.....:
door az
- near to:
nazdik be,
- opposite:
rooberooye

Health

- Where is the ...? (Chemist, dentist, doctor, hospital):
koja hast? (dawa khaneh, daktare dan-dan, daktar, shafa khaneh)

- I am sick:
man mariz hastam
- I have... (Anemia, asthma, diabetes):
man Daram (kam khooni, nafas tangi, maraze shaker)
- I am allergic to ... (antibiotics, aspirin, bees, peanuts, penicillin):
man be (antibiotics, aspirin, bees, peanuts, penicillin) hassasiyat daram.
- Antiseptic:
Antiseptic/zedde ofooni
- Diarrhea:
es-haal
- Medicine:
dawa
- sun block:
zedde aftar

Language difficulties

- Do you speak English?:
shoma englisi sohbat karde mitavanid?
- does anyone speak English?:
kee englisi yaad darad?
- I understand:
man fahmidam
- I don't understand:
man nafahmidam
- How do you say ... in (your language)? : what does ...mean?:
... chi ma'ni darad?
- Please write it down:
lotfan

Numbers

- 0,1...,10, 20,...,100,1000:
- yak(1), do(2), se(3), chahar(4), panj(5), shash(6), haft(7), hasht(8), noh(9), dah(10), bist(20), see(30), chehel(40), pinjah(50), shast(60), haftad(70), hashtad(80). Navad(90), sad(100), do sad(200), se sad(300),..., hazar(1000), do hazar(2000),...

Paperwork

- Name:
naam/esm

- Nationality:
melliyat/tabeiyat
- Date/place of birth:
tarikh/mahalle tavallod
- Sex/gender:
jensiat
- Passport:
passport
- Visa:
visa

Question words

- Who?: kee?/kodom kas?
- what?: chee?
- when?: key?/che zaman
- where?: koja
- which?: kodam
- why?: chera
- how?: chegoone/chetawr

Shopping Services

- Where is the...? :
Bank kojast?
(Bank: Bank, church:
■ kelissa, city center:
city center /markaz-e- shahr,
■ consulate:
ghonsoolgari,
■ embassy:
Sefarat, hotel: hotel,
■ lodging house:
mehman khaneh movaghtee,
■ mosque:
masjed,
■ market:
market/bazaar,
■ police: police,
police office:
■ hawzeh amniyati,
■ public telephone:
telephon-e- shahree,
■ public toilet:
tashnab shahree/
tashnab-e- omoomi,
■ tourist office:
markaz-e- touristi,
■ town square:

maidan-e shahr,

■ I'd like to buy...:

mikhaham ra bekham.

■ How much is it?:

chi gheimat darad?

chand ast?,

■ I don't like it:

man nemikhahamash,

■ May I look at it?:

mitavanam an ra bebinam?

■ I'm just looking:

faghat mikham an ra bebinam,

■ I think it's too expensive:

fekr mikonam kheili ghemmat

geran ast,

■ I'll take it:

man in ra mikham/ migiram.

■ Do you accept credit cards?:

aya credit card ghabool mikonid?

■ Do you accept travelers cheques?:

aya chek-haye safari/mosaferati gha-

bool mikonid?

■ More:

bishtar

■ Less:

kamtar

■ Smaller:

cochaktar/ khordtar

■ Bigger:

bozorgtar/ kalantar

Time & Dates

■ What time is it?:

chee vaght ast?/saa't chand ast?

■ Today:emroz

■ Tomorrow:farad/saba

■ Yesterday:diroz

■ Tonight:emshab

■ Morning:sobh

■ Afternoon:ba'd az zohr

■ Day:rooz

■ Month:maah

■ Year:saal,

■ Monday:do shanbe

■ Tuesday:se shanbe

■ Wednesday:chahar shanbe

■ Thursday:panj shanbe

■ Friday:jome'

■ Saturday:shanbe

■ Sunday:yak shanbe

Transport

■ Public transport:

transport-e omoomi

■ where is the ...?:

... kojast? istgah-e bus kojast?

■ Airport:

maidan-e havayee

■ Bus stop:

istgah-e bus

■ Train station:

istgah rail

■ What time does the ...leave?:

che vaght bus harkat mikonad?

■ What time does the ...arrive?:

che vaght bus miyayad

■ Boat:

keshti

■ Bus:

bus

■ Plane:

tayyareh

■ Train:

rail

■ What time is the ... bus?:

che vaght bus -e- avali miyayad?

■ First:

avali

■ Last:

akharee

■ Next:

ba'dee/deegar

■ I'd like a one-way ticket:

man ticket-e- yak tarafeh mikham.

■ Return ticket:

ticket-e- do tarafeh,

■ 1st class:

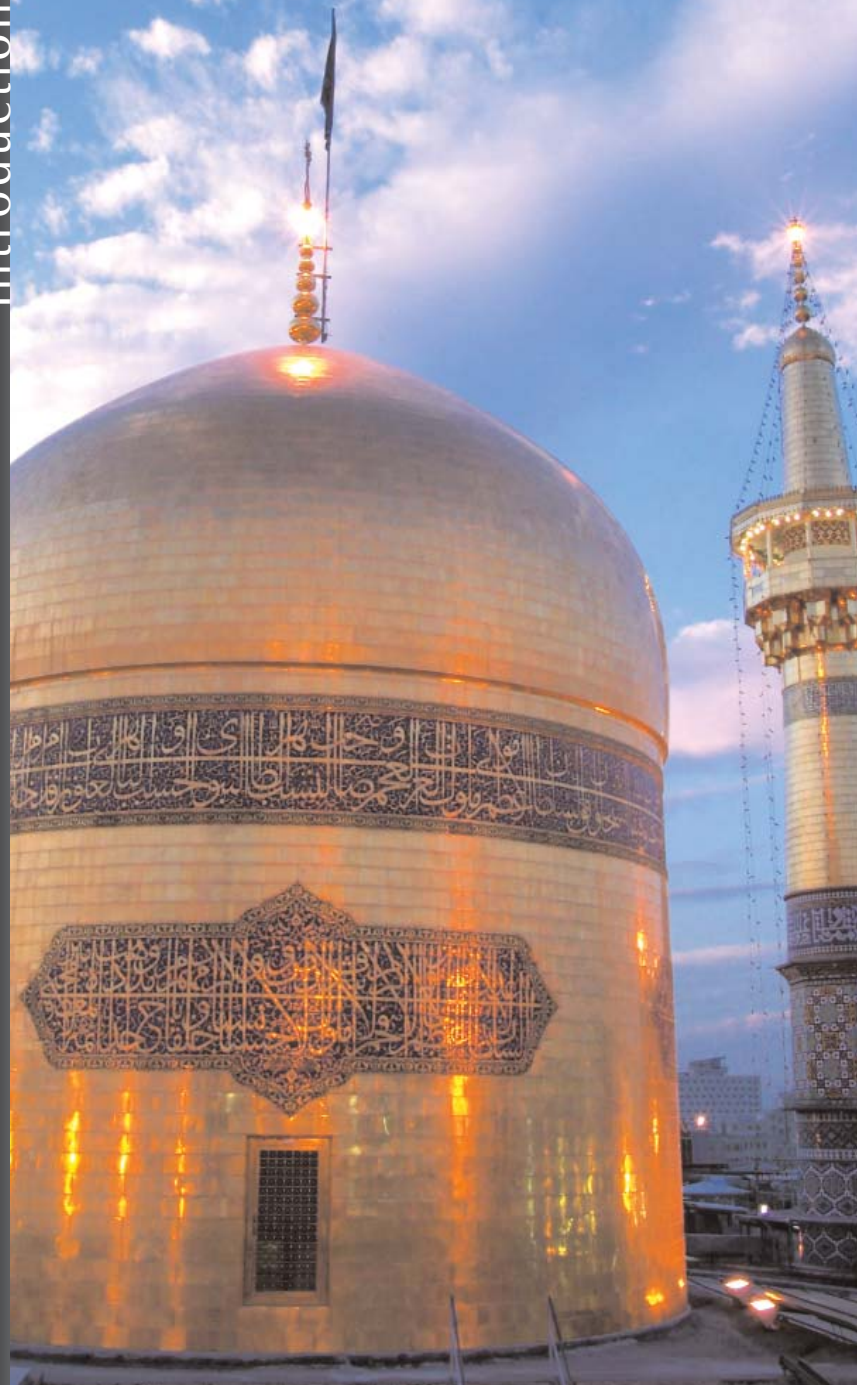
daraje-ye aval

■ 2nd class:

daraje-ye dovom

I. R. I R A N

Introduction



Introduction

Known as Persia until 1935, the name of Iran comes from an ancient term "a-eer-ya-nem va-ee-jo" in Avesta, the holy book of Zoroastrianism, meaning the land of the Aeers'.

This term refers to a certain plateau which the Indo-Iranians, a branch of Aryans selected for their settlement. By passage of time, the term "Aeer" changed to "Er" and later to "Ir". "Er" or "Ir", in the ancient languages of the time, meant "noble".

The official name of the country in the Sassanid period (400-600 A.D.) was Iranshatr or Iranshahr. "Shatr" or "Shahr" means country. Thus Iranshahr means The Country of The Nobles.

Iran lies down the northern temperate zone, between latitudes 25 degree north and 39 degree 47' north and between longitude 44 degree 02' east and 63 degree 20' east. It borders Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan,

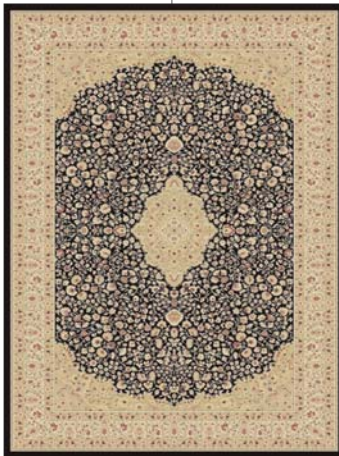
Armenia, Turkey and Iraq, and shares its 740 km Caspian Sea coast line with Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Russia.

Iran was a constitutional monarchy, but turned to Islamic Republic as desired by the people of Iran in 1979.

Iran has a very colorful and diversified landscape, ranging from high plateau to mountain ranges, and to plain bordering the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea.

Totally Iran has a border of 8731 km of which 2700 km go for water borders and 6031 km for land borders.

The highest point in Iran is Mount Damavand being 5610 m high and the longest river is the Karun River being 890 km long (only navigable river). The largest lake is the Orumiyeh Lake with an area of 4868 km and the largest island is Qeshm with an area of 1491 square km. The dominant color is a delicate high brown, like the coat of a deer, but the countryside can vary enormously according to the altitude and vegetation.



Country Profile



dom) in red is centered in the white band; Allah Akbar (God is Great) in white Arabic script is repeated 11 times along the bottom edge of the green band and 11 times along the top edge of the red band.

Official Website:

<http://www.mfa.gov.ir>

Official Website of The President of Iran:

<http://www.president.ir>

Government

(legal system, branches of the Government, etc.)

The form of government of Iran is that of an Islamic Republic, endorsed by the people of Iran on the basis of their longstanding belief in the sovereignty of truth and Koranic justice, in the referendum of 29 and 30 March 1979, through the affirmative vote of a majority of 98.2% of eligible voters, held after the victorious Islamic Revolution led by Imam Khomeini.

Executive Branch

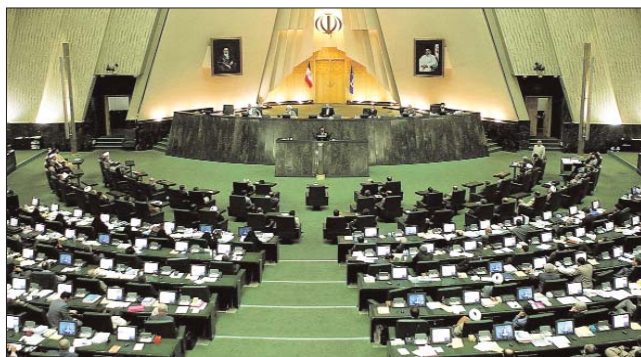
Chief of State: Supreme Leader (Supreme Leader appointed for life by the Assembly of Experts; Assembly of Experts are elected by popular vote for an eight-year term).

Country's Official Name:

Islamic Republic of Iran

Flag Description:

Three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red; the national emblem (a stylized representation of the word Allah in the shape of a tulip, a symbol of martyr-





Head of Government:

President; First Vice President

Cabinet:

Council of Ministers selected by the president with legislative approval

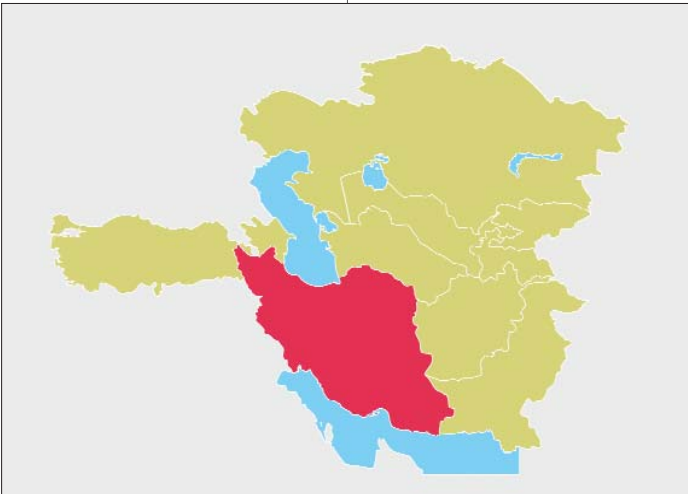
Three Oversight Bodies:

1) **Assembly of Experts**, a popularly elected body of 86 religious scholars constitutionally charged with determining the succession of the Supreme Leader (based on his qualifications in the field of jurisprudence and commitment to the principles of the Islamic revolu-

tion), reviewing his performance etc.

2) **Expediency Council** or the Council for the Discernment of Expediency, is a policy advisory and implementation board consisting of over 40 permanent members representing all major government factions and includes the heads of the three branches of government, and the clerical members of the Council of Guardians (see next);

Permanent members are appointed by the Supreme Leader for five-year terms; temporary members, including Cabinet members and Majles committee chairmen, are selected when issues under their jurisdiction come before the Expediency Council; the Expediency Council exerts supervisory authority over the executive, judicial, and legislative branches and resolves legislative issues on which the Majles and the Council of Guardians disagree and since 1989 has been used to advise national religious leaders on matters of national policy; in 2005 the Council's powers were expanded, to act as a supervisory body for the government.



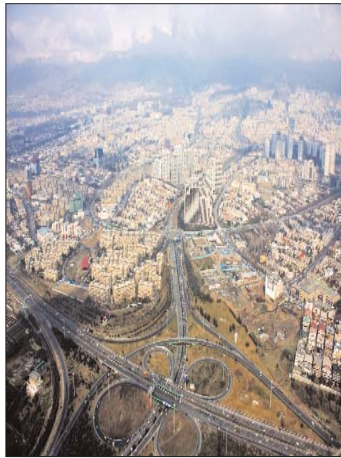
3) **Council of Guardians** of the Constitution or "Council of Guardians" or "Guardians Council" is a 12-member board made up of six clerics chosen by the Supreme Leader and six jurists recommended by the judiciary and approved by the Majles from a list of candidates recommended by the judiciary for six-year terms; this Council determines whether proposed legislation is both constitutional and faithful to Islamic law, vets candidates for suitability, and supervises national elections.

Legislative Branch

Islamic Consultative Assembly or Majles (290 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

Judicial Branch

The Supreme Court and the four-member High Council of the Judiciary have a single head and overlapping responsibilities; together they supervise the enforcement of all laws and establish judicial and legal policies; lower courts include a special clerical court, a revolutionary court, and a special administrative court



Official Language & Local Dialects

Persian and Persian dialects 58%, Azari and Turkic dialects 26%, Kurdish 9%, Luri 2%, Balochi 1%, Arabic 1%, Turkish 1%, other 2%

Capital City:

Tehran is the capital city of Iran and the heart of Tehran province. It is situated on the northern fringe of the great central plateau and at the foot of the southern slope of the impressive mountain chains of Alborz.

Tehran province has several archaeological sites clearly indicating settlements of several thousand years old. Until 300 years ago, Ray was the most prominent of the cities of the province. However, the city of

Tehran gained its special status as the capital city of Iran for the first time during the reign of Qajar dynasty, due to the development it had made by that time, and since then has been the political, cultural, economical, and commercial nucleus of Iran. During the past 200 years it has been home to many reputed scholars, writers, poets and artists, both those who have lived here and those who were born here. Tehran province enjoys considerable capabilities in terms of different dimensions of population, employment, production, agriculture, natural resources, and infrastructures.

Major Cities:

Tehran, Esfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, Tabriz

Name of the Provinces

1. Ardabil, 2. West Azarbaijan 3. East Azarbaijan 4. Bushehr, 5. Chahar Mahall va Bakhtiari, 6. Esfahan, 7. Fars, 8. Gilan, 9. Golestan, 10. Hamadan, 11. Hormozgan, 12. Ilam, 13. Kerman, 14. Kermanshah, 15. Khorasan-e Janubi, 16. Khorasan-e Razavi, 17. Khorasan-e Shemali, 18. Khuzestan, 19. Kohgiluyeh va Buyer Ahmad, 20. Kordestan, 21. Lorestan, 22. Markazi, 23. Mazandaran, 24. Qazvin, 25. Qom, 26. Semnan, 27. Sistan va Baluchestan, 28. Tehran, 29. Yazd, 30. Zanjan

Ethnic Groups

Persian 51%, Azeri 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%, other 1%

Country's total area in square kilometers

1.648.195 million sq km (the seventeenth country in the world)

Population

70.472.846 (2005)

Climate

mostly arid or semiarid, subtropical along Caspian coast

Holidays & National Days

1. Eid- e Nowrooz (New Year's Day)
21 March
2. Islamic Republic Day 1 April
3. Nature Day (13th day after the new year, end of festivities for Norouz)
2 April
4. Demise of Imam Khomeini Day (1989) 4 June
5. Revolt of 15 Khordad 5 June
6. Victory of the Islamic Revolution 11 February
7. Nationalization of Oil Industry

- 20 March
8. *Tasu'a of Imam Hussain (Date varies)
9. *Ashura of Imam Hussain (Date varies)
10. *Arba'een of Imam Hussain (Date varies)
11. *Demise of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Martyrdom of Imam Hassan Mojtaba (Date varies)
12. *Martyrdom of Imam Reza (Date varies)
13. *Birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Jafar Sadegh (Date varies)
14. *Martyrdom of Fatima (Date varies)
15. *Birth of Imam Ali (Date varies)
16. *Mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Date varies)
17. *Birth of Imam Mahdi (Date varies)
18. *Martyrdom of Imam Ali (Date varies)
19. *Eid ul- Fitr (End of Ramadan) (Date varies)
20. *Martyrdom of Imam Jafar Sadegh (Date varies)
21. *Eid ul-Adha (Ghurban) (Date varies)
22. *Eid al-Ghadeer (Date varies)



Holidays:

All governmental departments and most business centers in the country are closed on Friday. In Tehran Province all governmental departments are closed on Thursday, too.

Time Zone:

+3:30



The Silk Road

The Silk Road was created many centuries ago for the trading of silk and other goods between East and West and became an important channel for the transfer of ideas, languages, literature, as well as science and technology. As a result, the road to Persia became a symbol of humanity's desire to travel, to explore, and to learn from the diversity of the human experience.

Iran, heir to the ancient traditions of Persia, is located at the crossroads of East and West. As one of the countries along the ancient Silk Road, Iran has always played a major role in world history because of its unique position geographically and culturally. "Silk Road" in Iran was of special importance. Considering the role of silk in ancient times, it can be said that the history of Iran and the Silk Road were intertwined. The Silk Road connected old centers of Iranian civilizations that were located along the route. The trade and cultural exchange between the two great countries of Iran and China were carried out via the Silk Road.

At the beginning of the sixth century BC, the trade route started in Babylon, from where it passed through Opis/Ctesiphone (today Baghdad) and Egbatana (Hamadân) and modern Sâveh - the place where Marco Polo was to see the tomb of three Magi who had visited Jesus of Nazareth (Jesus Christ). Whatever the historical value of the story of the magi, they must have traveled along the Silk Road.

Silk, this delicate commodity would reach the markets in Persia and Rome through this long route came to be known as the Silk Road. The road stretched from the western gates of a city which is now called Hsian, in China's Shanxi province, and passed through the southern part of Gobi Desert to reach western Turkistan. It then passed through Sin Kiang and Kashghar to reach Jihun (Ceyhan) in Transoxania (Mavara-un-nahr). After passing through such major cities of the time such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Merv, the Silk Road then went through Faraghana Valley (today Uzbekistan) and Ishkashim and Khanduz (in today Afghanistan) and it reached the Iranian border.

In Iran, the Silk Road connected the cities of Tous, Neishabour, Damghan, Gorgan, and Rey before it divided in Qazvin. One of its branches went toward Azarbaijan and Trabazan, and the other branch ran through Hamadan, Baghdad and Mosoul, Antakya (Antioch) or Capadoccia and Sardis (near Izmir) to reach Istanbul and then Rome via the Mediterranean Sea. The Road with its branches, connected India to Tous, via Peshawar, Kheibar, Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. A vast part of this route was under the control of the Sogdian and the Ayghouri caravans.

It seems that as early as 2000 BC people knew how to produce silk. However one finds no evidence of silk during the Achaemenid era except for those Chinese

silks that reached Iran on the way west. King Darius the Great established military checkpoints on these roads to ensure the safety of the caravans. The road between the city of Shush and Sardis was the continuation of the Silk Road, which had been built to boost the silk trade between the East and the West. By playing a key role, Iran made great contributions to the booming of silk trade and to the exportation of this commodity to the West. During the Parthian era, the Silk Road was still an important route for the exchange of commodities between various countries. In this period Iran signed the first trade agreement with China, which was under the rule of Huns. Parthians made huge profits from customs duties levied on goods transported on the road that was stretched from Euphrates to Turkistan in China and then joined the Silk Road. The Parthian dynasty, which was in favor of expanding East-West



trade relations, closely supervised the Road. In fact it was the initiative of Parthian dynasty that secured this Road. The Middle Iranian Sogdian was the trade language through much of the Road's history. During its Golden Age, in the first millennium, this fabled network was an early link between the world's great civilizations, Greek, Roman, Persian, Indian and Chinese.

In post Islamic period there were roads that connected the Silk Road to the sea and great rivers in Transoxania and Mesopotamia through land routes. In the western parts of Iran, Kermanshah connected the Silk Road to Tabriz and Tbilisi in today's Georgia,

parallel to this route Hamadan was also connected to Ardabil via Tabriz.

In central Iran towards north, Ray (which was connected through side roads in Alburz Mountains to northern parts) reached Siraf, the important Iranian port in Persian Gulf via Kashan, Isfahan and Shiraz. Located in the south eastern angle of Caspian Sea, Damghan was the linking point of the route to Urganch in Khawrazm (in Turkmenistan), this route joined the road to Neishabur. Another road which located in the eastern parts of Iran, with a big diversion, connected Neishabur to Herat, Zaranj, Kerman and Shiraz.

Another route diverting to another direction, started from Merv and went through Tarmez, Samarkand and Atrar which was in turn another starting point for the Silk Road in the Far East.

Along these routes

there were Caravanserais known as Rabats and Iwans where travelers could rest, obtain their necessities for the journey ahead, unload their commodities and conduct trade and business. In order to give bearings and directions to travelers, domes had been built which served as best guides in snowy and stormy weather.

The construction and repair works of caravanserais and bridges were not classified as governments' responsibilities but it was local people sometimes governors (mostly well to do ones) who constructed these structures. This tradition was called *Abvab ol- Kheir* in Islamic Sharia.

Useful Information

☐ Best Time to Visit the Country

Being a vast country; Iran has regions with different temperatures even at a specific period of time. In fact it offers all sorts of climates and conditions.

Depending on the season and the areas you plan to visit, you need to pack accordingly. Spring and autumn are quite short seasons in Iran, between the heat of summer and the more changeable and often cold weather of winter.

Winter temperature often falls below freezing, while summers, can be unpleasantly hot.

In the northern coastal areas of the Caspian Sea climate is mild and humid.

The southern parts and the Persian Gulf region have always a hotter climate than Central Iran. North West Iran is about 10 - 15C cooler than the rest of Iran.

Weather can be humid, dry, hot or cold depending on where you are. Therefore you can enjoy from winter and summer sports at the same time within a few hours. Generally spring and autumn are the best time to visit Iran even if the weather may, on occasions, be a little uncertain with short lapses into either the cold of winter or the heat of summer. More accurate is mid-April to early June, and late September to early November.

☑ Visa Regulations

There is no gender or age limitation for entering Iran; you can travel Iran having a valid visa and passport.

Visa

Iran visa application form

Entry visa (single, double, multiple entry, work permit, tourist or pilgrimage) applies to foreign nationals who wish to travel to Iran on official business, trade negotiations, participation in seminars/ conferences (economic, cultural etc), work related issues, for sports activities, tourism or pilgrimage. To obtain an Iranian visa you may follow the below procedures:

" Go to the tourism and travel agencies of the country you are living in.

" Go directly to Iranian consulate in your country

" Send your documents to a reliable travel agency

Facilities Provided by the Consulates

Citizens of the Republic of Turkmenistan can travel to Iran for one month without a visa, having only their passport.

According to the bill issued by the Board of Ministers, citizens of the some countries including Central Asian ECO Member States i.e. Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan can receive a seven-day visa in less than two hours in Imam Khomeini, Mehrabad, Mashhad, Shiraz, Isfahan, and Tabriz airports. The visa fee is 50 dollars.

For more information please contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

☎ Tel: +98 21 33213255

☎ Fax: +98 21 33317203

Affairs Department:

Web: www.MFA.GOV.IR

Free Industrial and Commercial Zones

1. No visa is required for foreign tourists who enter the free industrial and commercial zones in the country.

2. The police force deployed in the free zone's entrance areas will stamp the "residence permit in the free zones" on the valid documents of travelers and tourists.

3. Foreign citizens are allowed to reside in the free zones for two weeks; however, the period can be extended up to three months. In case there is a need for a longer period of residence, the matter will be treated according to free zone's Executive Directive.

4. After arriving at the free zones, foreign citizens who intend to travel to other parts of the country should submit their applications for visa to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or its representative office in the free zone. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs or its representative office should answer his request within a week and notify the result on issuing the visa to the applicant.

Visa Types

Long-Term Visa

For receiving a long-term visa in Iran, you should submit the following documents to NAJA's General Department for Foreign Citizens in Tehran or other provincial capitals:

1. Application Form
2. Two pieces of new 3*4 photo
3. Pay 100,000 RIs to Bank Melli, Sepand Branch in Tehran, account No. 90107

4. Filled application form requesting long-term visa

5. Passport

6. Copies of your passport (identification information page, the page containing Iran's visa label and embossed stamp which shows the date of entrance, and the page showing the passport's validity date.

Multi-purpose Visa

For receiving a multi-purpose visa in Iran, you should submit the following documents to NAJA's General Department for Foreign Citizens in Tehran or other provincial capitals:

1. An official application from employer or educational centers
2. The original certificate from the Ministry of Finance and Economy indicating that the specific person has no tax debts.
3. Filling the multi-purpose visa forms
4. Passport
5. In case the form cannot specify the person's identifications, an attorney can fill the form as his representative

Transit Visa


1- Transit passengers and businessmen, who have a letter of invitation from an Iranian citizen, can reside in Tehran for 72 hours.

2- Transit passengers, who intend to travel to a third country and have taken their tickets beforehand, can have a transitory stay in Mehrabad Airport for 48 hours and leave the country from the same airport.

3- Passengers who enter the country using a transit visa cannot leave the country from the same border.

Passport Loss

In case your passport is lost, immediately report to the nearest police station. Then, go to NAJA's General Department for Foreign Citizens for receiving your exit permit.

 Tel: +98 21 88800000

 Customs Regulations

Government has the authority for customs affairs in Iran. Travelers and tourists' importing and exporting goods are duty-free unless they are considered as commercial commodities.

A. Entering travelers and tourists:

When arriving at Iran, you should receive a customs declaration sheet, which is distributed in the customs hall, and fill the form. Then, submit this declaration sheet to customs' evaluators and inspectors.

The following goods are considered as tourists' personal belongings, and importing them to Iran is duty-free:

1. Personal jewelry
2. A personal camera
3. A non-professional video camera and other portable video units
4. A Pair of binoculars
5. A portable musical instrument
6. A portable radio and cassette player
7. A portable PC
8. A first aid box
9. A camping tent with its basic tools
10. Sporting goods, e.g. for fishing, a small boat of less than 5.5 meters, ordinary water and skiing tools, tennis rackets, mountaineering tools, diving tools, bicycle, golf tools, and other similar goods.

11. Baby carriage
12. Wheel chair for the disabled

Note: Sending up to 80 dollars foreign goods by post to Iran is duty-free for each person.

B. Exiting travelers and tourists:

When leaving Iran, you should fill the customs declaration sheet, and submit it to the customs' evaluators and inspectors.

" Besides the goods they have brought to Iran, tourists can take the following non-commercial goods with them totally duty-free:

1. A carpet or two rugs of utmost 12 sq. meters
 2. All kinds of handicrafts
 3. Musical instruments
 4. Industrial products made in Iran
 5. Industrial products of foreign countries up to \$160 US
 6. All types of dried fruits and gifts
 7. Up to 150 gr. ready-made gold without a gem.
 8. Up to 3 kg ready-made silver without a gem.
 9. 3kg caviar sealed or packed by Shilat Co. and the note of purchase given by the airport's shop
- The tourists and travelers' importing and exporting of the following goods is forbidden:
1. Alcoholic beverages
 2. Gambling tools
 3. Firearms or any other kinds of weapons, and explosives
 4. Narcotic drugs
 5. Pornographic publications, pictures, movies, photos, and any other material which is against Iran's national and religious rules
 6. Tourists and citizens of common-

wealth countries, who are traveling to Iran, can export allowed goods from the country as much the currency as they have declared to the Iranian bank, i.e. for which they have currency declaration.

Exporting goods up to \$1000 for those who possess the qualifications, requires no declaration to the bank and they do not need the currency declaration.

7. Sending goods abroad by post is free if they are not considered a commercial commodities. These goods should not be among the forbidden, e.g. antique goods, genuine works of art, manuscript books, gold coins, and precious stones. Sending foreign products abroad by post should not exceed \$160 for each person. Moreover, it is forbidden to send hand woven carpets by post.

For more information on the latest bills and executive bylaws in customs affairs, please contact: Tehran's Customs Information.

☎ Tel: 82991,

☎ Public Relations: 8902002, and Importation Office: 88736090.

Web: www.irica.org.com

📍 How to get there and away

By Plane

Iran Air, has daily flights from Tehran and other big cities to major cities of the world.

A number of international airlines have daily flights to and from Iran.

Iran Air Offices around the ECO Region

Ashkhabad

☎ Tel: 510641-2

Baku

☎ Tel: 9475540

Istanbul

☎ Tel: 2250255-7

Karachi

☎ Tel: 515001,
516293

Tashkent

☎ Tel: 504444,
591374

Rates, information, and booking:

For getting information on ticket prices, schedules, flight hours, and other information, you can not only call the above offices but also you can contact with the followings:

Public Relations office of Iran Air in Tehran:

☎ Tel: 99116689

☎ Fax: 66031266

Central Sale Office in Tehran:

Web Site: WWW.IRANAIR.COM

✉ Email: MASTER@IRANAIR.COM

By Train

Iran's railroads are, in fact, a revitalization of the Silk Road, which connects the north, south, west, and east of the country. Tourists can enjoy traveling and cargo transportation as well as transit services using the following routes: European countries and Caucasia by Tehran-Tabriz railroad, Central Asian countries by Tehran-Mashhad-Sarakhs railroad, and countries in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean regions by Tehran-Bandarabas railroad.

" RAJA passenger trains provide regular services from Tehran to Turkey, Syria, and Turkmenistan.

Route No. 1: Tehran-Tabriz-Julfa: 884 kilometers, continued to Nakhjavan, azerbaijan.

Route No. 2: Tehran-Tabriz-Razi: 958 kilometers, continued to Turkey

Route No. 3: Tehran-Bandar Turkman: 461 kilometers, continued

to Turkmenistan

Route No. 4: Tehran-Mashhad-Sarakhs: 1047 kilometers, continued to Turkmenistan

Route No. 5: Tehran-Bandar Imam Khomeini (Imam Khomeini Port): 927 kilometers, continued to Persian Gulf region

Route No. 6: Tehran-Bandarabas: 1386 kilometers, continued to Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman

"Iran's Railroad Transit Lines:

1. Bandarabas-Sarakhs-Merv-Moscow
2. Bandarabas-Sarakhs-Merv-Almati-Beijing
3. Bandarabas-Julfa-Baku-Russia
4. Bandarabas-Razi-Bucharest-Belgrade
5. Bandarabas-Razi-Ankara-Istanbul-Sophia-Belgrade-Budapest-Vienna

" **Trans-Asia train:** This train goes to Almati in Kazakhstan and comes back to Tehran once a week. The distance of Tehran to Almati is 3,290 kilometers, and it takes 68 hours.

Transasia train connects Tehran, Mashhad, Sarakhs, Mary, Farab, Bokhara, Tashkent, and Almati. This route continues to Istanbul in Turkey. Traveling by this train to Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan requires visa for each respectively.

However, passing through these countries does not necessitate transit visa.

" **Tehran-Istanbul-Tehran train:** Tehran-Istanbul passenger train sets out from Tehran to Istanbul on Tuesdays. It passes 2966 kilometers

within 65 hours. During the way, passengers pass through Van Lake in Turkey by Fairy Boat Ship for 5 hours, and arrive at Heydar Pasha Station on Friday morning. This train arrives at Tehran on Thursday.

Iran's train has four-bed express wagons while in Turkey it is equipped with six-bed express wagons.

" For more information on departure schedule of international passenger trains of Tehran-Istanbul-Tehran and Tehran-Damascus-Tehran, please refer to "Essential Information."

RAJA Information Office:

☎ Tel: 55651610, 55651415-6

☎ Fax: 88844280

☎ Answering machine
tel: 88896820

Iran Access Web Site: www.iranaccess.com

✉ Email: RAJARD@NEDA.NET
Islamic Republic of Iran Railway
Web Site: www.irirw.com

✉ Email: Post.master@irirw.com

By Sea


Passengers travel by sea to Iran via Gulf of Oman, Persian Gulf, and Caspian Sea. The most important ports for touring in Caspian Sea are:

Ports in Caspian Sea: Anzali, Astara, Nowshahr, Bandar Gaz, and Bandar Turkman: Connected to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan

There are many companies involving in international sea transportation in Iran including The following:

Caspian Sea Shipping Company:

☎ Tel in Bandar Anzali (Anzali Port): 33801-4

 Fax: 34744

Web Site: www.khshco.com

Area of Activity: Caspian Sea, from Nowshahr and Anzali to Bandar Estrakhan (Estrakhan Port), Baku, Ashgabat, Krasnowodsk

By Roads

Since Iran has standard, high-quality roads with thick vegetation, memorable and beautiful landscapes, and climate condition variation, it has provided a good domestic and international transportation net for tourists.

The road network is extensive, with more than 51,300km (31,800 miles) of paved roads and 490km (304 miles) of motorways, but the quality is unreliable. The two main roads, the A1 and A2, link the Iraqi and Pakistani borders and the Afghan and Turkish borders. Traffic drives on the right.

Traveling between Cities

By Air

Iran Air runs services to Ahwaz, Esfahan, Kish, Mashhad, Shiraz, Tabriz, Tehran and Zahedan and other major cities.

Aseman Air and Mahan Air also run services to the major cities. The vast size of Iran makes internal flights the most practical method of transport.

By Train

RAJA Trains run a fairly comprehensive internal rail network. Major intercity trains operate on five main regional routes:

Azarbaijan route (Tehran - Jolfa);
Golestan route (Tehran - Gorgan);
Hormozgan route (Tehran - Bandar-e-

Abbas); Khorasan route (Tehran - Mashhad); and Khozetan route (Tehran - Khorramshahr).


There are some air-conditioned trains, and there are sleeping and dining compartments in trains.


For further details, contact RAJA website.

Bus


Intercity transportation in Iran is made by Benz and Volvo buses under an organization named "Cooperative." Central offices of these cooperatives in Tehran are located in South, East, and West Terminals.


South Terminal Information

 Tel: 550047-8


 Address: Besat Highway

East Terminal Information

 Tel: 77864010

 Address: Damavand St.


West Terminal Information

 Address: Northwest of Azadi Sq.

 Tel: 44659676


" The Organization of Traveling and Welfare Services (Patrol Unit) holds social, pilgrimage, promenading, and amusement tours with special transportation services.

for more information, please contact:

 Tel in Tehran: 77456040,
77441774, 77441774

 Fax: 77441775

" If you are interested in chartered bus, please contact

 Tel number in Tehran:

66800292,

66809196

 Fax: 66809196

Getting Around

Bus

Tehran has an extensive bus system, including double-deckers. They are widespread, cheap and comfortable, although services tend to be erratic. Tickets are bought in advance at kiosks.

Tramway and sub way

Sub way and tramway transportation is possible only in Tehran for the time being. The main three tram (electrically driven bus) routes are: Imam Hussein Sq.-Depoy Sharq, Imam Hussein-Khorasan, and Khorasan-Depoy Besat (from 6:00 am to 22:00). The sub way connects Imam Khomeini to Sadeqiye Sq., Mirdamad Station and Karaj.

Taxi

Taxis are available in all cities. The urban taxis (orange or blue) carry several passengers at a time and are much cheaper than the private taxis. Unofficial taxis should be avoided; use only legitimate taxis or those ordered through legitimate agencies. In most cities taximeters determine the fare which is paid in Iran's currency, Rial. However, the taxis which are not equipped with taximeters do have fixed specified fares.

Note: When you hire a whole taxi, you'd better ask the fare from the driver and come to an agreement with him before you get in the taxi.

Car hire

It is available in most cities and from airports. An International Driving Permit is recommended but it is not a legal requirement. Personal insurance is required.

Money

National Currency

Iran's unit of currency is Rial. Every 10 Rials makes a Toman. We have 10-Rial, 20-Rial, 50-Rial, 250-Rial, and 500-Rial coins. Also, 100-Rial, 200-Rial, 500-Rial, 1000-Rial, 2000-Rial, 5000-Rial, 10000-Rial, and 20000-Rial banknotes are used in the country. For the Iranian and foreign citizens' convenience, all Iranian banks change money free of charge to 200000-Rial, 500000-Rial, 1000000-Rial, 2000000-Rial, and 5000000-Rial traveler's checks.

Currency Exchange

The main foreign currency in Iran is mostly US dollar and Euro. However, English Pound, Japanese Yen, Persian Gulf countries' Rial, Drachma and Dinar, as well as other foreign currencies are changeable to Iran's currency in the banks and exchange shops. It is recommended that you change your money to US dollar or Euro before you travel to Iran.

Once you arrive in Iran, you can go to Meli Bank at the airport terminal and change your money to Iranian Rial. This bank works 24 hours a day.

Other currency branches of all Iranian banks, as well as the banks located in the hotels can do the changing. Authorized exchange shops do the changing as well.

The "exchange rate" of the foreign currency to Iran Rial in the banks is based on agreement, so there is no discrepancy between the rate in the banks and the free market.

The foreign currencies' official rates in Rial are daily announced in the banks.

For getting information on the currency rates via answering machine, call: 66731162.

Note 1: It is highly recommended that you do not change your money anywhere other than the banks and authorized exchange shops for you may experience some undesired accidents, e.g. there is the danger of robbing, pick pocketing, or getting counterfeit money.

There are people near the banks, commercial and financial institutes for changing currency; it is recommended that you do not make a deal with them.

Note 2: It is highly recommended that you keep the receipt till you leave the country when you change your money to Iran Rial.

This receipt not only indicates the legality of your purchase, but also enables you to change your extra Rials in the bank and receive your desired currency.

Credit Cards

Presently International credit cards are not accepted in Iran. For more information call:

Tel (Meli Bank Card Service Office in Iran): 33922690-1, 33900298, and 33912813

Travelers' Cheques

Travellers are not advised to take travelers' cheques unless it is a necessity as they can only be exchanged at the Bank Melli branches at the international airport in Tehran and in central Tehran.

Currency Restrictions

There is no restriction for entering

any amount of foreign currencies to Iran. You have to declare the amount of your foreign currencies to the Meli Bank clerk in the entrance spots so that the clerk writes it in your passport.

This is done, so that you will not face any problem in the customs when trying to take your currency or the goods you have bought out of the country.

Obtaining Cash

There are no limit to the amount of cash you can bring in to the country, you can also go to one of the branches of foreign currency banks in Iran during your stay, and open a foreign currency bank account or change your money to Iran's currency and receive traveler's checks.

When you change a foreign currency, you should keep the receipt till you leave the country.

ØSafety & Security

Iran is one of the most secure countries in the world.

Interior Ministry is responsible for maintaining domestic security, and the police are the executive arm of this Ministry.

Uniform color and class:

The color of the police uniform is green (olive green). The traffic policemen are in white hat.

The color of the police cars are dark green, and the traffic policemen cars are white with a dark strip on the car body.

In case you should need any security and emergency service, you can go to the nearest police station or contact:

The Police Central Unit in Tehran
☎ Tel: 66461307, 66400949, and
Traffic Police Central Unit in Tehran
☎ Tel: 66429999, 66429244.
Intercity S.O.S.
☎ Tel: 110

☎ Embassy telephone numbers

Country Code: ☎ 0098
Tehran Code: ☎ 021

I. R. Afghanistan-Tehran

☎ P.O.Box: 15875-3368 Chancery:
Corner of 4th, Pakistan St., Beheshti
Ave, Tehran

☎ Tel: +98-21-88735600,
88735040, 88737151
☎ Fax: +98-21-88735600

Consulate General of The I.R. of Afghanistan, Mashhad

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☎ Fax: +98-21-22546400

Consulate of The Rep. of Kazakhstan, Mashhad

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Kyrgyz Republic

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Ave, Nou Bonyad Sq., Tehran/Iran
country : Iran
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2287486, 2297729
☎ Fax : 98-21-2297729,2287486

I. R. Pakistan, Tehran

☎ P.O.Box: 11365-4551 Chancery:
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Hossein Fatemi Ave., Tehran/Iran
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☎ Fax: +98-21-935154

Consulate General I. R. Pakistan, Mashhad

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☎ Fax: +98-541-23389

Rep. Turkey, Tehran

☎ P.O.Box: 11365-8758 Chancery:
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☎ Fax: +98-21-33117928

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Ourumiyeh/Iran
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☎ Fax: +98-441-231800

Consulate General Rep. Turkey, Tabriz

No.516, South Shariati Ave.,
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Embassy Of Turkmenistan- Tehran

📍 Chancery: No.39, 5th Golestan
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☎ Fax: +98-21-22580432

Consulate General Rep. Turkmenistan, Mashhad

📍 No.34, Consulgari St., 10 Day
Sq., Mashhad/ Iran
☎ Tel: +98-51-47066
☎ Fax: +98-51-99940

Embassy of The Rep.Uzbekistan

📍 Chancery: No.6, Nastaran Alley,
Boostan St., Pasdaran Ave., Tehran/
Iran
☎ Tel: +98-21-22299158,
22299780
☎ Fax: +98-21-22299158

📍 Health

Limited malaria risk exists from March to November in rural areas of the provinces of Sistan- Baluchestan, Hormozgan and Kerman (tropical part); in some areas north of the Zagros mountains and in western and southwestern regions during the sum-

mer months.

Resistance to chloroquine and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine have been reported in the malignant falciparum strain.

The recommended prophylaxis is chloroquine in the vivax risk areas; chloroquine plus proguanil in the falciparum risk areas.

Food and Drink: Mains water is normally chlorinated, and whilst relatively safe, may cause mild abdominal upsets. Bottled mineral water is available and is advised for the first few weeks of the stay.

Pasteurized milk is available; unpasteurized milk should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from un-boiled milk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Practical Information Medical Centers, Dentist Offices, and Pharmacies

Iran provides low-cost health services while it has one of the world's most experienced medical experts.

Iran is a pioneer in providing people with low-cost oral and dental health services, and different cheap medical surgeries and drugs. There are professional physicians available in all major cities of Iran.

Vaccination of children and health examinations of students is free of charge and obligatory in the whole country.

Due to Iranians' belief in morality and Islamic rules, rarely the deadly disease of AIDS has been reported in the country.

Hence, people and tourists are quite safe. Hospitals and medical centers are specialized; however, they all give admission to emergency patients 24 hours a day.

Service hours:

Specialists and general practitioners' offices in dentistry and medicine: They are open from 8:00 to 21:00. Some physicians' offices are closed in the mornings since they are working in medical centers and hospitals. However, their offices are open all days of the week from 15:00 to 21:00 except on Thursdays and Wednesdays, when they are closed.

Medical centers and clinics: In the medical centers and clinics, physicians are working 24 hours a day, seven days of the week even on public holidays.

Pharmacies: They are open non-stop from 8:00 to 22:00. There are some pharmacies in urban areas which are open 24 hours a day. For getting information on these pharmacies' addresses, please call 191.

For getting information on the dosage of medicines, please call 66419304 in Tehran.

Also, for getting information on the list of non-prescription medicines please refer to the chapter entitled "Essential Information."

Costs: The fee for general practitioners and specialist physicians are less than 30,000 Rials and 80,000 Rials respectively.

☎Telephone Codes of Major Cities

International country code: ☎0098

Tehran: ☎021

Esfahan: ☎0311

Tabriz: ☎0411

Shiraz: ☎0711

Mashhad: ☎0511

☎Major Travel Agencies

1. Pasargod Tour

Mr. Ibrahim Purfaraj

☎Tel: 22048350-52,

☎Fax: 22059000

2. Caravan-e-Sahra

Mr. Sirus Etemadi

☎Tel: 88843390, 88811970,

☎Fax: 88303623, 88826036

@E-mail: caravan@caravansahra.com

Web: www.caravansahra.com

3. Tatilat

Mr. Davood Farzaneh

☎Tel: 22710191, 22717179

☎Fax: 22735222

@E-mail: Info@holidayiran.com

Web: www.holidayiran.com

4. Sharq Puya

Mr. Hadi Soleiman Zadeh

☎Tel: 88579901

☎Fax: 88366165

@E-mail: office@orientexplorer.net

5. Pardisan



Mr. Mostafa Shafiei Shakib

☎Tel: 66431270-2

☎Fax: 66427470


6. Iran Zigwart


Mr. Taghi Aghaei


 Tel: 77526252
 Fax: 77500617
 E-mail: aghaei@samapardaz. com

7. Vala Parsian Gasht

Mr. Hussein Memaripur

 Tel: 88516060-6


 Fax: 88748582

 E-mail: vala@pardisantour.com


Web: www.parsiantour.com

8. Iran Dustan

Mr. Sayid Ashraf Vaghefi

 Tel: 88714214, 88722975-77


 Fax: 88712927


 E-mail: info@idt.i


Web: www.idt.ir

9. Zaman-e-Parvaz

Mr. Ibrahim Mirpuriyan

 Tel: 88758504 (6 lines)


 Fax: 88758508


 E-mail: info@zamantour.com


Web: www.zamantour.com

10. Persia Tour

Mr. Sayid Abas Ali Emamiyeh

 Tel: 88692520

 Fax: 88694001

 E-mail: parsiantour@neda.net

Arts and Crafts

Decorative Arts



Jewelry

Local jewelry is one of the Iranians' traditional handicrafts, which are made in various shapes in Iran's northern and southern provinces.

The primary substances of these products are such metals as brass, copper, silver, etc. and such stones as turquoise, agate, jasper, etc. To make them, first the metal is melted in a furnace, then it is molded into a specific shape, e.g. circle, square, triangle, bush, fish, etc. Finally, the precious stones are placed on these handicrafts to form such beautiful jewelries as bracelet, ring, hairclip, necklace, earring, etc. Local jewelries are often made by the Turkmans in Golestan Province, as well as some parts of Khorasan Province, Sistan va Baluchestan, Kurdistan, and Kermanshah.



Ceramics

The word is derived from the Greek term, "Kermose;" whatever made from clay was called "Kermose" in the ancient Greece. The products which are generally made from compound soils (primary soils), then baked in a furnace, then enameled, and again baked are called "ceramic". Today, Iranian popular ceramics are in such different shapes as vase and plate with different cut and painted enamels. The main centers for producing ceramic products are Meibod in Yazd, Estehbanat (Estehban) in Fars, Zanuz in Azerbaijan, etc.

Ceramic Exterior Painting

Ceramic exterior painting, also called enamel painting, is one of the Iranians' beautiful and traditional handicrafts. In this art, the earthenware vessels are baked, enameled, and then painted. This work is much simpler than ceramic interior painting because it is easy to correct or change the painting.



Ceramic Works

Enameled Ceramic

Enameled ceramic is a traditional

Iranian handicraft. In this art, the earthenware vessels are made using different techniques such as painting on the enamel, seven-colored, and gold-plated techniques. The production process is like that of the gold-plated ceramic; the only difference is that in ceramic vessels seven colors, e.g. azure, turquoise-color, red, brown or black, yellow, and white, are used for ornamenting the product. Rey, Kashan, Jorjan, and Soltan-Abad are the main centers for producing this handicraft.

Pottery

Pottery is one of the beautiful and traditional handicrafts in Iran. In this art, different stuff, e.g. bowl, pitcher, etc. are made from baked mud. The products are called pottery if no enamel is used. Pottery is usually made from secondary soils, i.e. the ever-moving soils; therefore, they are less purified and more adhesive. The main soil used in this art is clay (the scientific name is earthen ware). This type of soil has different colors, e.g. from buff to red. The main centers for producing pottery in Iran are: Laljin in Hamadan, Qomshe (Shahrza) in Isfahan, Juybar in Mazandaran, Siyahkal in Gilan, Mond Gonabad in Khorasan, Estehban in Fars, Kalpurgan-e-Saravan in Sistan va

Baluchestan, Shahvar in Minab, Tehran, and Qom.



Carpet Weaving

The art of carpet weaving in Iran has its roots in the culture and customs of its people and their instinctive feelings. Weavers mix elegant patterns with a myriad of colors. The

Iranian carpet is similar to the Persian garden: full of florae, birds, and beasts.

The colors are usually made from wild flowers, and are rich in colors such as burgundy, navy blue, and accents of ivory. The proto-fabric is often washed in tea to soften the texture, giving it a unique quality. Depending on where the rug is made, patterns and designs vary. And some rugs, such as Gabbeh, and Gelim have a variations in their textures and

number of knots as well. The exceptional craftsmanship in weaving these carpets and silken textile thus caught the attention of famous travelers and exploreres such as Xuanzang, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, and Jean Chardin.

Traditional Cloth Weaving

This type of cloth is woven, designed and patterned by Zoroastrians of Yazd province. In traditional cloth weaving, the plain cloth is skillfully designed with making small ties on the surface of the cloth to make small or large circles simi-

lar to the sun, and then the cloth is dyed. The sizes of these ties are various, some are smaller than the tip of a needle and some of them are like big circles. There are a chain of stars or circles in a smaller size around the design. Today, the traditional cloth weaving is rarely done and it is gradually about to be forgotten. This art is used for making Islamic covering, scarf, and belt. The products are usually rectangular in brick-red background color with some citrons in the middle or in the corners. Yellow and light dots are used in the dark background to make the pattern seem embossed. The main center for producing these products is Pashki Village in Gilan.



Traditional Printed Cloth

This art is used for patterning and designing cloths. The designs and patterns are transferred onto the cloth by using a stamp which is usually made of such hard woods. A design may have five different colors. The colors used in this art are usually black, red, green, blue and yellow. This cloth is used for table cover, tablecloth, dress, etc. Isfahan and Damqan are the main centers for producing this type of cloth.

Architecture & Archaeological Objects

Iran's history remains visible in the country's many intriguing and important archaeological sites, its ancient and historical monuments, and its cities, which possess some of the world's most magnificent examples of Islamic art and architecture.



Archaeological findings in Iran have traced the record of human settlement in prehistoric time to the Neolithic age when human beings started to gather and store food and later the age of agriculture. Earthenware that have been found date back to 10,000 years ago, indicating that people living in the area at the time, had already invented the craft of pottery.

Objects found in Chogha Mish indicate that about 8,000 years ago people in Iran could already navigate and produce textiles.

In Sialk, near Kashan, remains of buildings have been discovered belonging to 5000 years ago, that display a remarkable architecture. At that time (5000 years ago) Iranian were already producing copper and using copper objects. During the 3rd millennium B.C Aryans migrated to Iran and soon writing and the signs, used for it were developed. Architecture made great progress, and Iranians became familiar with brass. In the 2nd millennium B.C iron was produced in this region and circa 1250 B.C glass was used in the building of Choghazanbil, not far from Susa in south western Iran. In the 1st millennium B.C Iranians made

great progress in architecture and town planning, as well as building dams, roads, and irrigation systems including Qanats (underground construction for channeling and reserving waters).

The Achaemenid era is the zenith of civilization of the ancient Iran as illustrated, even today, by the splendor of Susa and Persepolis (Takht-e- Jamshid). Stone work and stone carving became very popular, then, samples of which have been discovered, and they are masterpieces of these crafts. A very outstanding period of Iranian history and architecture began with the era of Sassanids in the 3rd century A.D. During 400 hundred years of Sassanid's rule over Iran colossal bridges were built a few of which still remain and some are even used today. Dam building was very common in this era, as well as the construction of splendid palaces and cities. Most of the archaeological

sites and objects that can still be seen in Iran has remained from this period, Palace in Bishapur, Tagh-e- Bostan in Kermanshah and Firouz Abad Palace are just a few examples of innovative monumental architecture in Sassanid Iran. After the emergence of Islam the development of art and architecture continued among the Iranian people who had accepted Islam as their faith.

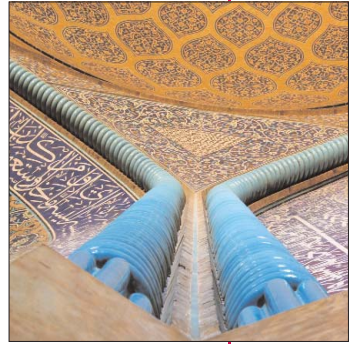
They expressed their dependence and love to their faith and culture through building magnificent mosques and sacred shrines, madrassas (tradi-



tional Islamic academies) and mausoleums of prominent personalities. The Mongol and Taimur's invasions were catastrophes that each in its turn disrupted, for a while, all cultural and academic progress. However the predecessors of these conquerors tried to amend the damages and Iranian culture witnessed its revival again. Soltaniyeh Dome from Ilkhanid and the Shrine of Imam Reza and Gawhar Shad Mosque in Mashhad are distinguished examples of Iranian Islamic architecture in those eras.

The Safavid era was a period of arts and crafts' revival. Ornamental arts, architecture, carpet-weaving... made stunning progress. Many of the great architectural masterpieces that can be seen in Isfahan, today, were built in this era: such globally renowned monuments as the Imam and Lotfollah Mosques, Khaju and Allahverdikhan Bridges, the Alighapu Palace etc, are the reminders of

this golden age of arts and crafts. It was during Safavid era that the first political contacts with the West were made and the western influence gradually appeared in the face of Iranian



art and architecture. The process of industrialization had resulted in a growing middle class which sought a modern rather than traditional life.

Middle class urban areas required a whole new stock of buildings, from dwellings to social institutions. Industrialization had brought about the manufacture and importation of all types of building materials and techniques, and it provided the economic mechanism to finance large amounts of construction. These were the practical conditions prevailing; and much ingredients for a productive aesthetic condition existed as well.

Music and Musical Instruments

Since Iranian traditional music can only be played by special Iranian instruments, these instruments have been and are still being made by Iranians. The paintings on the Chehel Sotun Walls in 1057 (lunar calendar) show women playing musical instruments; indicating the high regard which Iranians reserved for the music, that is why making musical instruments is still in vogue in the country. Some of the musical instruments made by artists are: lute, yaghut, tar, dotar, sitar, rebec, kettledrum, Kamanche, tonbak, santur, etc. For ornamenting the musical instruments such artistic works as inlaying, calligraphy, and painting are used.



Glass Blowing Work

Glass blowing work is one of Iran's original and traditional handicrafts. The Discovery of many glassware, which belong to the time of Parthians and Sassanids, shows that the history of glass blowing work goes back to that era.

Glass is a transparent, fragile substance composed of alkaline silicones; and glass blowing consists of the processes of shaping the melting mineral by heating it in a furnace at 1400 centigrade, and blowing into it using a special tube and other manual simple tools, as well as ornamenting it by painting, cutting, purifying, opaque-making, etc.

Tehran is one of the main centers for producing glassware. Meibod in Fars Province is another region where glass blowing has been in vogue from the past centuries up to now.



Painting on Back of a Glass

Painting on back of a glass is one of the Iranians' beautiful and traditional handicrafts. In this art, the back of the glass is painted. The history of this art goes back to the first half of the 12th century (lunar calendar).

Here, the artist makes use of small pieces of glass and draws inverted designs and colors. For painting on back of the glass, first the artist draws the design on a piece of kerk paper, and then transfers it on the glass using paintbrush and black ink.

It is very important to follow the perspective principles. After drawing the specific design, the artist starts coloring the glass with oil paint, and finally he uses stabilizers to fix the color and give a beautiful glossy appearance to the glass work. Tehran, and to some extent, Shiraz and Qazvin are the main centers for making this product.

Wood Carving

In this art, the wood is cut and carved using a horizontal cut machine. Valuable objects, e.g. some engraved designs on the throne and on the legs and joss stick holder belonging to Persepolis, shows the antiquity of the art. The primary substance used in this art is aspen wood. Hookah, the legs of a sofa and table lamps are made using this type of art.

Wood Engraving

In this art, embossed designs are engraved on the wood to make such

useful tools as box, a piece in chess or backgammon, dervish bowl, gates of sacred places, etc.

Historians consider wood engraving as one of the old Iranian grand industrial arts, especially from the time of Arabs' conquest of Iran.

The engraving of Aljaito Mosque in Soltaniye (1320 A.D) is made on such an excellent wood that it is still in the same shape and status as it used to be. Mazandaran province is one of the main centers for making this product.

Delicate Woodwork

Delicate woodwork is a traditional handicraft in northern Iran. In this art, which is an important and interesting branch of woodwork, the woodware is veneered with a specific design. This way, delicate woodenwares such as spoon, fork, chess board, various dishes, etc. are made with great care, beauty, and delicacy. Delicate woodwork is in vogue in Urmia, Sanandaj, and Rasht.

Traditional Printing

Traditional printing is one of Iran's

beautiful surface stitching handicrafts. It is a large, patterned, silk handkerchief which is used in local women's dresses as a headband, ribbon worn round the waist, or sometimes used for keeping a baby on women's back. Usually batik or traditional printing is used for patterning these handkerchiefs.



Stone Carving



In this art, the stone is engraved into the desired size and dimensions for specific purposes, e.g. designing stones for decorating the walls of the mosques, memorial monuments, and pedestals. The art is mostly used for making such tools as stone pot, ornamental frame, fireplace, or even a piece in a chess board. Great masterpieces like the walls in Achaemenid palaces in Persepolis, and delicate works like engraved ring gems or engraved verses of Holy Quran on the agate rings are outstanding examples of this ancient art in Iran.

Traditional Tile Working

Using enameled bricks has been one of the great changes in the history of architecture which lead to the production of a kind of beautiful tile. Over the years, changes have occurred in the production of these tiles to evolve this art to its present form. This art/craft is a branch of architecture. It has been mostly used in traditional, religious buildings, e.g. mosques, and memorial monuments of the past; nowadays it is much used in modern buildings.

Based on the type of production, traditional tile working falls into the following categories, each described above under a separate entry: gold-plated tile, inlaid tile, enameled tile, and seven-colored tile.

Maybe the history of enameled brick (tile) goes back to the time of Babel in the 2nd century BC. What we have from this type of tile belongs to of Achaemenid period, they have been found in most of buildings in Iranian Plateau, especially in Shush and Persepolis in the 5th century BC. Nowadays, this product is made in most Iranian cities, including Isfahan, Mashhad, Tehran, and Qom.

Seven-colored Tile Work

In this art, a kind of colored, ornamental tile is made by composing delicate, enameled mud bricks each of which forming a part of the whole design. The dimension of these tiles is 15*15 cm, and they are usually produced in seven col-



ors: azure color, turquoise color, red, yellow, henna color, black, and white. Isfahan, Mashhad, and to some extent, Tehran are the main centers for production of this type of tile.

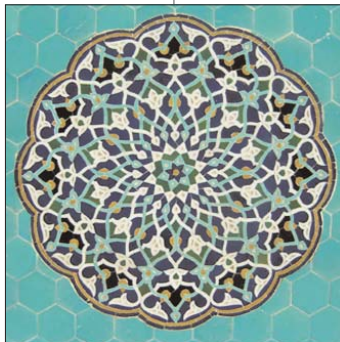
Inlaid Tile Work

In this art, pieces of various sizes of tiles are cut and put together, based on different designs and colors, to form a bigger piece. Inlaid tile has been known to Europeans as mosaic; however, inlaid tiles are more beautiful and stronger than mosaic.

Isfahan, Mashhad, and to some extent, Tehran are the main centers for making this product. White, dark blue, turquoise color, green, and orange colors are used in this art.

Tile Working

In this art, small pieces of tiles are put together. Composing tile and bricks in the facade, prevents expansion and contraction of the tiles in the cold and hot environment. This way, the enamels rarely fall or break into pieces. In this art such designs as various vertical, horizontal, and sometimes, oblique straight lines of 45 degrees as well as checkered patterns are used. Tile working is also used in Kufi Banaai (architectural Kufi) writings as a part of decoration in Islamic monumental architecture in Iran.



Gold-plated Tile Working

In this art, golden or green tiles or vessels are produced. Here, the artist adds heated materials and flint to pottery clay to make a hard and strong product which requires less temperature.

The main centers for making this product, which used to be produced in the past in great quantity, are Kashan, Rey, Jorjan, Saveh, Shush, and Neishabur.

Traditional Bookbinding

Iranians are excellent in this art because they put high values on books. This art is now used for binding old manuscripts. In this art, the binder fungicides the book, presses it using a press machine, lines it, and then sews the book. After lining, a sheet is pasted to the beginning and end of the book, and then the band is pasted to the back of the book. When done, the book is sent to a cover maker. Today, traditional bookbinding is used for restoring the old books in the precious manuscripts archive of Islamic Consultative Assembly.

Inlaid Leather

Inlaid leather is one of Iran's beautiful and traditional handicrafts. In this art, covers of a books, etc. are

made from patching pieces of leather. For making inlaid leather, appropriate types of leather such as goat leather and ewe leather are used.

Then, embossed designs of flower, bush, birds; or delicate and elaborate geometrical figures such as citron, semi-citron, oval, and circle; or animals' pictures are cut, arranged and pasted on leather.

Sometimes, the margins are covered by embossed, gold-plated designs or different colors.

There is another kind of inlaid leather in which strips of narrow, delicate leather are carefully pasted on the specific cover.

Mostly, the artists of Tabriz and Herat use this method to create fantastic inlaid leather book covers.

Persian Miniature

A Persian miniature is a small painting, whether a book illustration or a separate work of art intended to be kept in an album of such works, or comprise a part of the visual element of a classical literature.

The techniques are broadly comparable to the Western and Byzantine traditions of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts, which probably had an influence on the origins of the Persian tradition.

Although there is an equally well-established Persian tradition of wall-painting, the survival rate and state of preservation of miniatures is better, and miniatures are the best-known form of Persian painting in the West.

Miniature painting became a significant Persian form in the 13th century, and the highest point in the tradition was reached in the 15th and 16th centuries. The tradition continued under some Western influence and has many modern exponents.

The Persian miniature was the dominant influence on other Islamic miniature traditions, principally the Ottoman miniature in Turkey, and the Mughal miniature in the Indian sub-continent.

The themes of Persian miniature are mostly related to Persian mythology and poetry. Western artists discovered the Persian miniature around the beginning of the 20th century.

Persian miniatures use pure geometry and a vivid palette. The allure of Persian miniature painting lies in its absorbing complexities and in the surprising way it relates to the nature of art and the perception of its masterpieces.

Prominent Persian miniaturists include:

Kamal ud-Din Bihzad Herawi:

Leading miniaturist of the Timurid era, and founder of the Safavid school.



Reza Abbasi:

One of the most renowned Persian painters in the Safavid era.

Hossein Behzad:

Famous contemporary miniaturist

Mahmoud Farschchian:

Famous contemporary miniaturist

Museum of St. Petersburg and Washington's Freer Gallery of Art among many others.

Styles: Shekasteh, Nasta'liq, Naskh, Mohaqqaq

Most notable figures: Mir Ali Tabrizi, Mir Emad, Mirza Buzurg-i-Nuri,

Calligraphy

Will Durant the famous British historian writes: "Ancient Iranians with an alphabet of 36 letters, used skins and pen to write, Instead of earthen tablets". Such was the creativity spent on the art of writing. The significance of the art of calligraphy in works of pottery, metallic vessels, and historic buildings is such that they are deemed lacking without the adorning decorative calligraphy.

Illuminations, and especially the Quran and works such as the Shahnameh, Divan Hafez, Golestan, Bostan etc are recognized as highly invaluable because of their delicate calligraphy alone.

Vast quantities of these are scattered and preserved in museums and private collections worldwide, such as the Hermitage



Metal-Working

Different types of metals are used in various types of handicrafts produced in Iran. The most usual of these items are made out of copper which are commonly used in Iranian kitchens. The chief centers of the art of metal working are Isfahan, Shiraz, Kashan, Yazd and Kerman. Kitchen copper articles include: pots, pans, pails, large spoons, trays in very larger, medium and several sizes. The second category of copper items consists of picture frames, jewelry boxes, water-pipe pots, and copper statues of various animals, which have special artistic value.

spoons, trays in very larger, medium and several sizes. The second category of copper items

I. R. IRAN

Map of I. R. Iran





TURKMENISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF
IRAN

AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN

PERSIAN GULF

ASHKEHADAD

MASHHAD

ZAHEDAN

ABAN

AMM

PERSIAN GULF

Ecotourism



Iran is a vast country with great natural beauty and rich history. Because of its beautiful natural setting, it can offer a lively and interesting environment to the nature loving tourists. It has various natural attractions such as temperate forests in the north with high humidity and rainfall (1700 mm), deserts and salt lakes in the central part of Iran, high mountains (such as 5,604 meter-high Mount Damavand), glaciers and coastal areas. Considered

one of the five countries in the world with the highest biodiversity, Iran is home to 514 bird, 172 mammal, 199 reptile, 20 amphibian, 173 fish and 9000 plant species. Popular ecotourism activities in Iran include trekking in mountains, desert treks, bird watching in coastal areas and wetlands, and diving. There are a number of Natural Parks & Protected Regions such as, Golestan, Kavir, Lar, Khosh Yellagh, Bakhtegan and Bamoo that offer ecotourism attractions. Bakhtegan Lake is a place that must be visited by tourists especially in winter when the migrated flamingoes and birds from Russia accommodate themselves in here.

Gorgan-Golestan Forest (National Park)

It is the first area that has been designated as a national reserve in Iran. The park which has a unique situation in mountain terrain spans in bunchgrass steppe. Being in the eastern edge of the contiguous Caspian Forest, It provides abundant wild life such as one would expect to find in mountain, foothills & valleys with steppe and deciduous forest vegetation. Golestan Forest- Park, is situated between the cities of Gonbad Kavoos in Golestan and Bojnourd in Khorasan, and possesses many different kinds of plant and animal species and a very pleasant natural environment, It is considered as one of the most attractive forest-parks of Iran, possibly the world.



Kavir National Park

Kavir National Park is a protected ecological zone in northern Iran. It has an area of 4,000 square kilometers (1,500 mile). The park is located 120 kilometers south of Tehran and it sits on the western end of one of Iran's two major deserts, the Dasht-e Kavir (Great Salt Desert). Siakhuh (Black Mountain), a large, semi-circular rock outcropping sits in

roughly the park's center. The park encompasses landscapes of desert and steppes, and is sometimes known as "Little Africa," for its safari-like wildlife, including native goats, sheep, hyenas, wolves, gazelles, leopards, the rare Asiatic Cheetah, and the Persian Leopard. Other Iranian national parks and natural reserves are as follows: Sisangan National Park, Kavir National Park, Harra Forests near Qeshm Island-South Iran, Kharturan National Park-Wildlife Refuge and Biosphere Reserve, Naybandan Wildlife Refuge, Bafq Protected Area, Dar-e Anjir Wildlife Refuge, Oshtoran Mountain Protected Area, Hamoon Wetlands, Tandooreh National Park, Hara Protected Area, Gano Protected Area, Lar Protected Area, Central Alborz Protected Area, Khojir and Sorkhe Hesar National Park, Bakhtegan National Park, Anzali Lagoon, Port Anzali-Caspian Sea, Arasbaran Protected Area, Arjan Protected Area, Lake Urmia National Park, Miankaleh Protected Area, Touran Protected Area, Nazhvan Suburban Natural Park - near Isfahan, Bambo National Park - near Shiraz.

Dizin ski resort

Dizin is a ski resort situated to the north of Tehran in the Alborz mountain range. It is also the most important ski resort in Iran and the Middle East.

Mountaineering and Mountain Climbing

The long stretched mountain ranges having a number of peaks with an altitude of over 4000 m, and other mountains of Alam Kuh (4850 m), volcanic

peaks of Sabalan (4811 m) and Damavand (5671 m) are the main attractions for foreign climbers.

Rock Climbing

There are lots of walls for doing this kind of activity, among which Alam Kuh wall (over 650 m) situated in the altitude of 4200 m is taking highly into the consideration of foreign rock climbers.

Rafting

Long permanent rivers that stretch from the mountains to the fields give the possibility of kayaking, canoeing and rafting from mid spring until mid summer.



Scuba Diving

The limpid coastal waters of the Persian Gulf are the result of the coral coasts and Islands which offer excellent place for professional and amateur scuba divers.

Trekking

The existence of long stretched mountains, deserts and vast fields, low plains near the equator, which all result high difference in temperatures between two places at the same time, make it possible to do trekking in all the seasons in different mountainous and deserted regions of Iran.

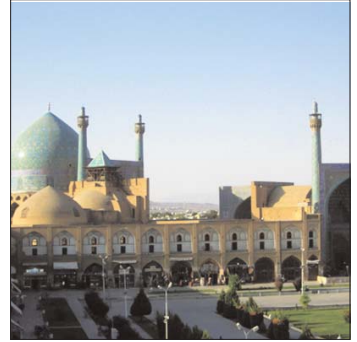
Desert Safari

Vast lands of clay, gravel, running sands, some are swampy and others are salty deserts. Pure silence, absolute peace, brown and white salty land in contrast, innumerable stars in desert sky vivid and far, are some remarkable characteristics of Iran deserts.

Top 10 Places to Visit

Naqshe Jahan Square Complex

Naqshe Jahan square (Imam square), built in 1000 (according to the lunar calendar), it has 4 fundamental structures including Abbasi Jame Mosque, Ali Qapu Palace, Sheikh Lotf-Allah Mosque, and the façade of Gheisarieh Bazaar.



Astane Qodse Razavi Complex

Astane Qodse Razavi is a complex of architecture and memorial monuments which consists of the sacred shrine of Razavi and the surrounding buildings and monuments.

This complex of monuments has been built through centuries for it is a highly respected place due to the spirituality and importance of the sacred shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH); therefore, it is considered as a selection of Iranians and Shiite's finest example of arts and architecture skills.

Urmia Lake

Urmia Lake is located in the east of West Azerbaijan province near the city of Urmia. This lake, which is the largest lake in the country, has an altitude of 1,267 meters above the sea. The lake is variably about 120 to 140 kilometers long, and 15 to 50 kilometers wide. The water is extremely salty; the amount of salt dissolved in the lake is twice as the amount in the oceans.



That is the reason why it never freezes. Local doctors prescribe the lake to their patients, especially to those who suffer from skin diseases. They have always paid attention to this lake for they believe that the mineral and salt existing in the water has a healing effect.

The medicinal mud of this lake is used for curing the diseases in the joints, nerves, muscles (because of infection or rheumatism), some women's diseases, as well as healing the pain caused by blows to the joints, bones, and soft organs in the body. The swimming period usually begins from the early June to the mid-August; from this time on, the water gets cold. This lake has many islands and peninsulas which appeal to the tourists. It has 102 small and large islands; the most important ones are Kabudan, Estak, Espir, and Arezu.

Chaqazanbil

Zigurat-e-Chaqazanbil is located 45 kilometers southeast of Susa. It is the only remnant parts of an ancient city (about 1,300 BC) called "Untashgal," which was two kilometers away from Dez River. It is the most important remnant of Elamite civilization.

This city has three interconnected, mud-brick walls. The main gate of the city is in the area surrounded by the large eastern wall. There are some remnants of the water filtrations which are considered as the oldest water installations. They are located between the second and the third walls.

There exists the main temple of Zigurat in the center of the area surrounded by the third wall. The main temple's dimensions are 105*105, and it is erected toward the four main directions. Millions of bricks have been used to build this temple in

five floors though only two floors have survived from the past. Save for the first and fifth floor, all other floors were filled with mud-bricks. The fifth floor, which is the highest place, was the place for keeping idols of gods and goddesses. The most important goddess of the time was called "Inshishunak," who was the special goddess of Susa City.

The bricks engraved in cuneiform on the walls of the temple, which have the same piece of writing, manifest the name of the king and the purpose for building the temple. The city

and the works belonging to Elamite civilization in Haft Tape (Seven Hills) in 640 BC were devastated by the Assyrians' raid (they are so called because their commander was Ashurbanipal), so the Elamite sovereignty was overturned after thousands of years of ruling. This collection is also registered by UNESCO as world heritage site.

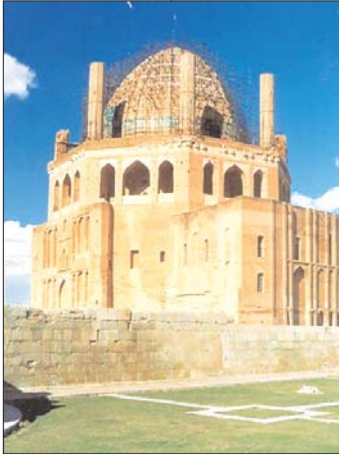
Sultaniye Dome

This monument is 35 kilometers away from Zanjan.

It is located in the town of Sultaniye, which is a manifestation of beauty, taste, and dignity. It was built by Sultan (king) Mohamed Khodabandeh (Aljaito) in 8th century Hijra (lunar calendar).

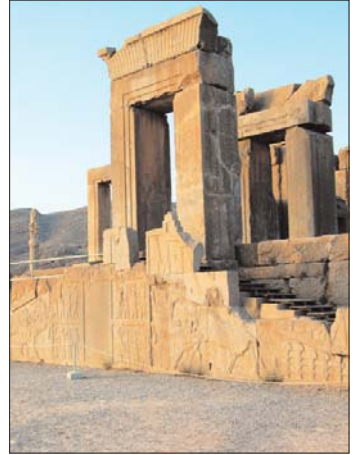
The building of this monument, which is unique in its type, has taken thirteen years. The plan of the monument is octagon

with eight verandas and eight minarets. The height of the dome is 48.5 meters and the diameter of the mouth is 36 meters. Therefore, it is the third dome in size after Santa Maria in Italy's Florence and Hagias Sophia in Turkey's Istanbul; however, it is the first large dome made from bricks in the world. This dome has two stages of decoration: in the first stage it is ornamented by bricks and tiles and in the second stage it is decorated by painting on the plaster and stone. This dome is also registered by UNESCO as a world heritage site.



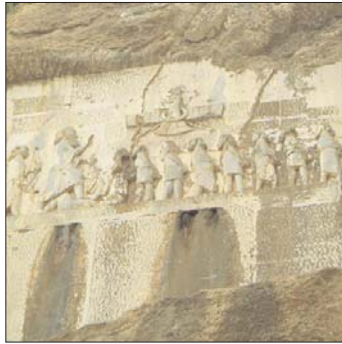
Persepolis

The ancient palaces of Achaemenid kings were built on a stony hill on top of Rahmat Mountain in the Marvdasht Plain. The construction of Persepolis palaces started in time of Darius the Great, (521 BC) and it continued up to 150 years after his death. The menstruation of Persepolis palaces is 125 meters square. The grandeur of these monuments fascinate every visitor to the place. This complex has been also registered by UNESCO as a world heritage site.



Bistun

Bistun is a rich complex of Iran's historic and literary works, which is located 20 kilometers east of Kermanshah on the slope of Bistun Mountain. This complex consists of Bistun inscription; the portrait of Parthian king, Gudarz the Second; the portrait of Darius the Great; Farhad engravings; Hercules' statue; the portrait of Parthian king, Mitridat and stones with Pahlavi



inscriptions. Bistun inscription, which was the most important design in this collection, was engraved on the stones in 522 BC on Darius command. It describes 25 years of Darius wars for holding the throne. There are writings on the margin of Bistun inscription in three languages: ancient Parsi, Elamite, and Akadian as well as the popular accent of the time, neo-Babel. The inscription, written in ancient Parsi in 44 lines, is engraved beautifully in cuneiform. Darius, in every refrain of the inscription, says, "King Darius states that." Repetition of this phrase gives a special dignity and grandness to the

style of the inscription. This complex has been also registered by UNESCO as a world heritage site.

Qara Kelisa, West Azarbaijan

Located south of Maku city in the northern Iranian province of West Azarbaijan is the massive St. Thaddeus Church, known as Qara Kelisa literally meaning black church. It is one of the oldest and most notable surviving Christian monuments of Iran. Armenians hold that Qara Kelisa is the world's first church and was constructed in 68 CE by one of the apostles of Jesus, Saint Thaddeus, who traveled to Armenia, then part of the Persian Empire, to preach the teachings of Christ. Qara Kelisa has been registered as the ninth Iranian historical-cultural heritage site on the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Heritage List.

Takht-e Soleyman, West Azarbaijan

Takht-e Soleyman is an outstanding ensemble of royal architecture, joining the principal architectural elements created by the Sasanians in

a harmonious composition inspired by their natural context. The archaeological site of Takht-e Soleyman, in north-western Iran, is situated in a valley set in a volcanic mountain region. The site includes the principal Zoroastrian sanctuary partly rebuilt in the Ilkhanid (Mongol)

period (13th century) as well as a temple of the Sasanian period (6th and 7th centuries) dedicated to Anahita. The site has important symbolic significance. The designs of the fire temple, the palace and the general layout have strongly influenced the development of Islamic architecture. The ensemble of Takht-e Soleyman is an exceptional testimony of the continuation of cult related to fire and water over a period of some two and half millennia.



Arg-é Bam, Kerman

Located in Kerman province of southeastern Iran, Arg-e Bam is the most representative example of a fortified medieval town built in vernacular technique. It is listed by UNESCO as part of the World Heritage Site "Bam and its Cultural Landscape". This enormous citadel on the Silk Road was built in the Sassanian period and remained in use until 1850 AD. It is situated atop an artificial hill in the northwest quadrant of the old city of Bam. The citadel complex occupies an area 315 meters wide along the east-west axis by 270

meters long along the north-south axis. On December 26, 2003, the Citadel was almost completely destroyed by an earthquake, along with much of the Bam and its environs. Prior to the earthquake, the fortress had possessed the distinction of being the largest adobe building in the world, recognized for its unbaked mud brick (khesht) and mud wall (chineh) construction.

Passargad

Pasargadae was

the first dynastic capital of the Achaemenid Empire, founded by Cyrus the Great in Pars, homeland of the Persians, in the 6th century BC. Its palaces, gardens and the mausoleum of Cyrus are outstanding examples of the first phase of royal Achaemenid art and architecture and exceptional testimonies of Persian civilization. Particularly noteworthy vestiges in the 160-ha site include: the Mausoleum of Cyrus; Tall-e Takht, a fortified terrace; and a royal ensemble of gatehouse, audience hall, residential palace and gardens. Pasargadae was the capital of the first great multicultural empire in Western Asia. Spanning the Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt to the Hindus River, it is considered to be the first empire that respected the cultural diversity of its different peoples. This was reflected in Achaemenid architecture, a synthetic representation of different cultures. The 'Four Gardens' type of royal ensemble, which was created in Pasargadae became a prototype for Western Asian architecture and design.

5 Major Cities

Tehran



Places to see

Darvazeh Tehran (Tehran's Gate) Sar-Dar Bagh-e Melli (National Garden Facade):

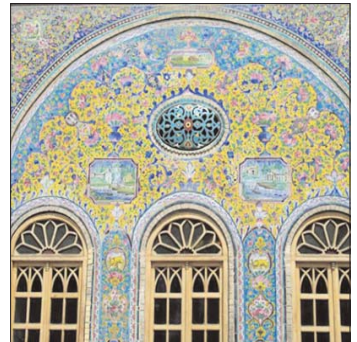
During Reza Khan's regim (in 1340 according to the lunar calendar), at the entrance of the old Mashgh square where it was the military place of Fath-Ali Shah kingdom and the Qajar's troops, a magnificent facade was built. After a little while most of Mashgh square was devotd to Bagh-e Melli (National Garden). Thus, this gate was known as Sar Dar-e Bagh-e Melli (National Garden's Façade).

Shams-Al-Emareh Palace:

Shams-Al-Emareh is one of the famous buildings of the old Tehran which was built by Naser-Al-Din Shah between the years 1282 to 1284 (according to the lunar calendar) in the east side of Golestan Complex of Palaces area. Mirror-works, paintings, plaster-works of this building are outstanding in Iran for showing the various and different indoor decorations.

Toghrol Tower:

Toghrol Tower is one of the most important grave towers of Iran. This tower with the inside sun-dried brick walls and outside brick look has a sunny shaped plan, and is made on a round platform. The tower's diameter is 21/20 meters and its height is 20/50 with the thick walls by 20/80 meters width. This building with the brick decoration at the top of the tower is one of the most beautiful grave towers which belongs to the Seljuk era.



Golestan Palace Big Hall:

Golestan palace complex is one of the memorials of Tehran's historical citadel, the place of the residence of Qajar dynasty, and of the oldest and the most beautiful buildings of the 200-year-old capital city. Golestan palace has several invaluable buildings such as Mirror hall, Museum Room, Ivory hall, Diamond hall, Brilliant hall, Dormitory building, Chador House, Karim Khani Privacy, Badgir (ventilation) building, Marble-bed veranda, White Palace, Anthropology museum). The fame of

Mirror hall besides its decorations is due to the famous painting that Kamal-Al Molk had painted in 1309 (according to the lunar calendar) the collection is kept in Golestan Palace at present.

Mosques

Imam Khomeini Mosque:

During the reign of Pahlavi, it was known as Shah (the King) Mosque. It is one of the biggest mosques of Tehran which is known as the Qajar dynasty's structures and its structure was completed in 1240 (according to the lunar calendar).



Shahid Motahari Mosque and Supreme School:

This school also known as Naseri or Sepah Salar old name is considered as one of the largest and most beautiful school in 13th Hijra century. The complex of this wonderful structure include the big dome, Shabestan (the place in the mosque for sleeping and night prayers), eight minarets, the suspended arch, and the colorful painted tile-works are considered as the supreme features of Iranian architecture.

Meusems

Museum of Azadi:

The building or the tower of Azadi is the symbol of Tehran with the height of 45 meters. was built in 1350 (according to the solar calendar). The design of the building is a derivation of ancient Islamic architecture; in this structure about 25 thousands stone pieces with 15 thousands

forms and sophisticated bow-shaped surfaces have been used. The east and the west sides are the big arches inspired from Kasra Arch and the Sassanid arches which represent ancient Iranian architecture. The north and the south sides are the broken bow-shaped alter-like structures which is

indicative of Islamic architecture. The tower is 45 meters high and there is a museum and an audio-visual center under this structure where the object and the works made in pre-christianity era up to the Qajar period are exhibited.

Ancient Iran Museum:

This museum exhibits the objects related to the pre-historic as well as historic art and civilization, dating back to 6000 years B.C. and Islamic era. Considering the value, importance, abundance and antiquity of the objects on display, it is one of the important museums of the world.

Glass and Earthenware Museum:

The building of this museum belongs to 80 years ago ordered by Ahmad Ghavam (Ghavam-Al-Sataneh) for his residence. This structure turned into a museum in 1355. The octagonal structure of this museum includes two floors and one basement. The brick sight of this building with different designs, geometrical and flower and bush paintings has created interesting shapes which is the reminder of Seljuk dynasty. The objects of this museum are glass and earthenware.



Isfahan

Isfahan, the capital city of Isfahan province is one of the prominent cities in Iran as regards to both industrial activities, beauty, cultural historic monuments and arts and crafts. Two times it was chosen as the capital of Iran, first time during Seljuq's and Deylaman's reign and second time in Safavid era in 17th century.

Places to See

Naghshe Jahan Complex (Imam square)

This place was built when Isfahan was selected as the capital of Safavid Empire. It is 507 meters long and 158 meters wide, it is located in the east of Chaharbaq Resort in Isfahan. The place is distinguished in Isfahan and Safavid architecture. There are three grand and beautiful monuments around this square which belong to the time of Safavid: Imam Mosque, Sheik Lotfollah Mosque, and Ali qapu Monument. The design on the façade of Qeisariye Bazaar on the other side of the square, and the way they are connected to each other and to the arches, make the square eye-catching and awesome. The square is surrounded by chambers in two floors which have been used for trade and business over the years. There are also three masterpieces in the three corners of the square which belong to the time of Safavid; they show the greatness of the Islamic and Iranians' art. Ali-qapoo with its paintings of Reza Abassi on the walls and the plaster works of the Sound Room, Imam Mosque with its 52-meter dome and the fully tiled 48-meter minaret, as well as Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque covered thoroughly with inlaid tiles have made the square and the surrounding monuments a manifestation of the Iranians' highly original and beautiful skill in architecture and Islamic art. That is the reason why UNESCO has registered Naqshe Jahan Square and the surrounding monuments as a world heritage site.

Bazaars

The most important bazaar in Isfahan is Gheisarieh bazaar which joins Naghshe Jahan square to Atigh (Ghiam) square. Many bazaars branch off this large bazaar such as: Nim Avard bazaar, Araban bazaar, Haronieh, Golshan, Mokhles, Samavar sazha, Maghsood Beik, etc. Also, around Naghshe Jahan square, there are famous bazaars such as Mesgarha (coppersmiths) bazaar, Tarkesh Doozha bazaar, Kolah Doozha (hat makers) bazaar, Lavafha (rope makers) bazaar, Ahangarha (blacksmiths) bazaar.



Chehel Sotoun Palace (Forty Pillars Palace)

The palace was built in 17th century A.D. It lies in the center of a garden covering 67,000 m². It has several halls and rooms which have been decorated with marble, impressive gilding, exquisite paintings, and animal statues. The palace also has a museum.

Ali Qapu

The palace was built during Safavid era in 17th century. It is a 6 storey palace, with the height of 48 m. This palace is located on the west of Imam Square. It used to have suitable facilities for receiving guests and foreign ambassadors who came to visit Shah Abbas I, the powerful Safavid king. Its plaster works and paintings by Reza Abbasi are considered as masterpieces of Safavid era.

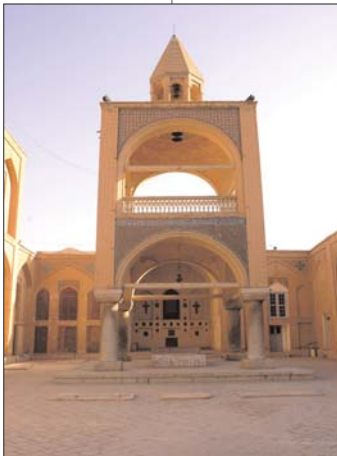
Imam Mosque

This impressive mosque too is located in Imam Square, and is one of the Islamic-Iranian architectural masterpieces. Its dome is 52 m high, and its minarets, 42 m.

It is a unique mosque for its beautiful tile works and decorative stones.

Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

This mosque which was constructed by the orders of Shah Abbas I of Safavid dynasty, is one of the most magnificent historic monuments of Iran, its dome is decorated externally and internally, with exquisite tile work.



Allah Verdi Khan Bridge

This bridge, with a length of 300 m and width of 14 m. is one of the most prominent historic monuments, thanks to its architectural style. It is unique in beauty, stability and grandeur, and is the largest bridge over the Zayandeh Rood River in Isfahan.

Pole Khaju (khaju Bridge)

The present bridge was built during the reign and by orders of Shah Abbas II of Safavid dynasty on Zayandeh Rood River. It is renowned for its magnificent architecture and delightful frescos and tile work.



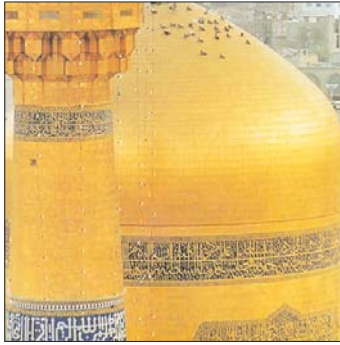
Menar Jonban (The Shaking Minaret)

This monument consists of a tomb with two minarets, which were constructed during the Mongol era.

When one of these minarets is shaken, the other and some parts of the building will also shake.

Vank Church and Meuseum

This church, located in Jolfa region of the city, is one of the most striking churches of the world, for its gilded ceiling and paintings. There is a museum in this church.



Mashhad

It is the capital city of Khorasan-e- Razavi province which lies 970 m above sea level and at a distance of 924 km from Tehran. It is one of the most important and large cities of Iran. The Holy Shrine of Imam Reza Complex is located in Mashhad making it a pilgrimage destiny for Shiite Muslims around the world.

Places to See

The Sacred Shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH)-Astane Ghodse Razavi

A grand collection of buildings that were constructed gradually around the Holy

Shrine of Imam Reza (the eight Shiite Imam). He is the only Shiite Imam whose tomb is situated in Iran, and Iranians feel great respect and devotion for him. This complex consists of the Shrine of Imam Reza, numerous courtyards and portals, Gawhar Shah Mosque, a library, the University of Islamic Sciences, and other buildings all of which have taken a long time to be built.

Beside the Shrine Gawhar shad Mosque which was built by Gawharshad Aqa, the wife of Timur's son, Shahrukh is one of the brilliant examples of Islamic Iranian architecture in the world. This mosque was built according to the plan of Iranian four-veranda mosques, i.e. it has a large courtyard in the center. The beautiful calligraphy on the mosque's walls have been executed by Baysunghur Mirza, Shahrokh's son. The most attractive part of this mosque is the southern veranda which is decorated with moqranas works and valuable inscriptions. There are two solid minarets in both sides of this veranda which are 6 meters thick and have the same height as the veranda. This mosque has been ornamented and renovated twice: once in the Safavid period in 1052 (lunar calendar) and once in Qajar era.

Besides, Astane Qodse Razavi has a rich library and museum. Astane Qodse Razavi Museum consists of three parts: Central Museum, Malakabad Museum, and Holy Quran Collection. This museum has such valuable works as the Imams' Holy Qurans, old books and manuscripts, inscriptions, and calligraphies by Alireza Abasi, Mir Emad, Ahmad Tabrizi and Kalhor as well as priceless carpets which date to Safavid period and the 11th to the 13th centuries (lunar calendar).

Pir-e Palan Dooz Tomb (Mashhad):

This tomb is located in the north section of Imam Reza's holy shrine, and contains a square building with an arch on top of it and a brick-made veranda in front of it; inside the tomb there is a dais with beautiful painting which gives the tomb an especial appearance.

The body of the building has had painting decoration from the Safavids era which been destroyed due to humidity and dampness. The whole building and its remaining parts is introduced to be from the Safavid era which was built in 985 (according to the solar calendar). The person who was buried there, was Mohammad Aref Abbasi one of the learned person from the Zahabieh dynasties with a nickname of Palan Dooz.

Ferdosi Tomb (Toos):

In north of Mashhad, and 24 kilometers far from it, the tomb and the resting place of this great Iranian epic poet, Hakim Abol-Ghasem Ferdosi is located. The interiors of the tomb has been completely changed in the process of rebuilding; the entrance of this place is built with two stairways against each other in the west, and its space expanded to 900 square meters. Inside the tomb, 20 marbled pillars in lower part and 8 pillars in the upper part have been installed. The design of this place has been inspired from the tomb of Cyrus the Great in Persepolis.



Akhorshah Abbas Safavi; "Hamam Shah" is a complex of various spaces. The biggest and the most beautiful parts of the bath is "Beineh" which was built in square plan at the beginning of the entrance. Eight stony pillars, two by two, each two of them 1/5 meters far from another are supporting the covered arch. Another important part of the bath is "Garmkhaneh" (the place that keeps the air and water of the bath warm) in which four pillars are supporting the roof. Besides, there are other places such as Khazaneh, Abdarkhaneh, and service in the bath.

Sheikh Faridedin Attar Neishaboori's Tomb (Neishaboor):

Amir Alishir Navaei the minister of the last Timurid governor built another building on Attar's grave that nowadays, the stood black stone of the epitaph has remained from it; at last, in 1341 (according to the solar calendar) the National Monuments Association completed the reconstruction of the ruined building and took measures for the tile-works. Attar's tomb has always been a tourists' attraction and a meeting place for his fans around the world.

Hamam-e Shah (The King Bath)

This bath was built in the big bazaar and next to Masjed Shah (Haftado do Tan) in 1027 (according to the lunar calendar) by Mehdi Gholi Beig Mir

Malek House (Mashhad):

Malek house is located in Imam Khomeini Street (the old Arg) and near the Organization of Financial and Economic Affairs. This building was larger in the past, whatever nowadays known as Malek house is the outside part of this house. The outside of this house contains two storeys and the big guest room of the house with the wooden and inlaid ceiling, and the beautiful plaster-worked fire place is located on the upper floor.



Ghadamgah Building (Neishaboor)

There is beautiful building from the eleventh century near Neishaboor.

This building with an eight corners structure, high verandas, and two storeys false arches, has seven-colored made of sun-dried bricks tiles, and beautiful plaster-works; apparently this building has been erected by order of Shah Abbas I and after the earthquake in 1084 (according to the lunar calendar), it was repaired by Shah Soleiman's order in 1091.

It is so-called Ghadamgah (the place of the steps) because there is a black stone where the big steps attributed to Imam Reza (PBUH) exist.

**Torghabeh (Mashhad)**

This city is located 18 kilometer southern west of Mashhad, on the way to Jagharagh and is restricted from the west to Binalood chains and from the north to Takht-e- Rostam Mountain.

Torghabeh has many gardens with various fruits and beautiful springs and a roaring river passes by it; in summer it has cool and pleasant climate. From the old times, this area was a center of attention for the residents and pilgrims of Mashhad.

Shandiz (Mashhad)

It is on of the summer resorts around Mashhad which is located in Torghabeh district and 30 kilometer west of Mashhad, and approximately 13 kilometers from Torghabeh on the way from Mashhad to Abardeh and Zeshk.

The springs and many gardens, the green and fresh atmosphere, the river and natural sightseeing, and pleasant climate specially the native handicrafts such as the fur and leather clothing, and wooden objects, baskets and other products of industries, and also the available facilities makes this summer resort an important place for tourists, pilgrims and Mashhad people.

Tondoreh National Park (Dargaz):

Tondoreh National park is located in 30 kilometers west of Dargaz city. This park is placed near Chehelmir place of pilgrimage, it is called the second worth visiting natural place of Iran.

This rocking-mountainous park is a suitable place for environmental researches ; besides, it contains unique and wonderful various plants and wild animals. Also, in this area, there is a castle 5 kilometers from Mohit Bani Chehelmir station, which dates back to the Parthians.

In this area, many wild animals are living such as rams, wolf, leopard, and various types of hunting birds.

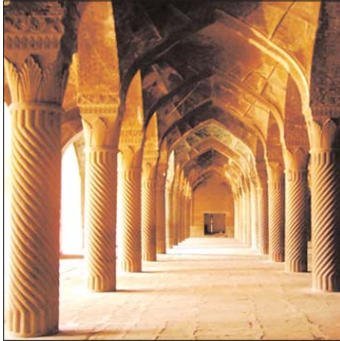
Shiraz

Shiraz is the capital city of Fars province. It is situated 1540 m above the sea level and lies at a distance of 895 km from Tehran. It is one of the most ancient cities of Iran. Cyrus the Great, the first Achaemenid king of Persia established his capital near Shiraz in 553 B.C.

Places to See

Persepolis (Takht-e- Jamshid)

Persepolis complex of palaces is considered as the historic marvel of Iran and the world. It consists of the Small Gate, or the Public's Gate, Apadana Palace, Tachar Palace, 100-pedestal Hall, Semi-opened Palace, Persepolis Treasury, Three-gate Palace, Stony Hill, the Memorial Monument of Ardeshir the Second, and Ardeshir, the Third, and Khashayar Shah (king) Palace. The Persepolis complex of palaces was burnt by Alexander the Great in 330 BC. One of the most well-known palaces in Persepolis is Apadana, which is the main entrance monument to Persepolis. This palace consists of a 36-pedestal central hall and three 12-pedestal verandas in the northern, southern, and eastern parts. The northern and eastern verandas are connected to the front yards by some stair-



cases. The height of the terrace in Apadana Palace is 16 meters and the height of the pedestals is 18 meters. A large part of Persepolis palaces has been constructed in black and white stones, and the stone reliefs depict different ceremonies of the Achaemenid courts.

Naghsh-e- Rostam

The bodies of several Achaemenid kings were buried in this cave-like tomb. There are seven reliefs dating back to Sassanid era, each of which depicts a battle or glorifies a Sassanid king. A Zoroastrian religious center, perhaps the most important in the world, is situated here.

Vakil Mosque

This grand mosque with its exquisite tile works, marbled pulpit, forty eight stone pillars, and firm roof, is considered to be one of the most interesting monuments of the Zand era.



Vakil Bazar

This bazaar which is constructed in the form of a cross has a fascinating architecture. Its roof, more than 10 m high, is one of the most remarkable achievements in beauty and durability.

This bazaar dates back to the Zand period in 18th century A.D (12 century Hijri).



Shah-e-Cheragh

It is the most important shrine in Shiraz. It belongs to Mir Sayid Ahmad, the son of the 7th Shiite Imam. The shrine has been renovated several times during the course of the history.

Hafeziyeh

It is the tomb of the great Iranian poet, Hafez. Hafez passed away in 1389 A.D. In 1773 A.D Karim Khan Zand reconstructed his tomb and it was later renovated several times. The present building was constructed in 1937.

The Tomb of Saadi

Saadi the famous Iranian poet and writer was born in Shiraz in 13th century A.D. After several years of travelling in various parts of Asia and Middle East, he returned to Shiraz and remained there until he passed away.

His tomb has been renovated several times and the present building was constructed in 1942.



Narenjستان

This building is outstanding as a masterpiece of plasterwork, in-laid work, mirror-work and paintings.

Darvaze Quran (The Gate of Quran)

This gate was built by Buwayids about 1000 years ago as an entrance to the north of Shiraz. It is a tradition of Iranian culture to pass the passengers underneath



Quran before setting out for a journey; so Karim Khan Zand put a volume of the holy Quran on the top of this gate after this tradition, which vouches wishes for a safe journey.

Bagh-e-Eram (Eram Garden)

With old impressive cypress trees and a building with beautiful mirror encrusted stalactites, Eram Garden is a place worthwhile visiting. It is famous for its unique plants and typical late Qajar palace.

It has been dedicated to Shiraz University.

Tabriz

Tabriz the capital city of east Azerbaijan province lies at a point of 1,366 m above the sea level and at a distance of 642 km from Tehran. It is one of the most famous cities in Iran.

Some historians estimate the historical record of the city to pre-Christian era and some believe that the city flourished only after Islam conquest.

However the archaeological excavations have reached this record up to 5000 years ago.

Places to See

Kaboud Mosque (Blue Mosque)

These are the remains of a grand mosque, a large part of which was destroyed in an earthquake in 1778, the impressive tile worked portal and exquisite inscriptions generally add to its magnificence.

The structure of the mosque dates back to 5th century.

El Goli

Covering an area of 54,675 m², this pond lies next to a green hill, 7 km southeast of Tabriz.

It provides a great opportunity for recreation. The garden and the park have been built around an artificial



pond. A hill in the eastern side of the park leads down through a stepped way to the pool. The pool itself is said to have been built at the time of Aq Qoyunlu kings in 15th century, however it was extended in Safavid era.

Tabriz Bazaar

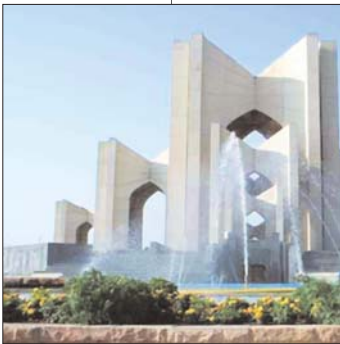
It is one of the most prominent bazaars in Iran, as regards to its archi-

tectural style, the numbers of Saras (trade-houses) and Rastehs (sections of bazaar) and also the volume of transactions. Its carpet and jewelry markets have become famous throughout the world.

Amir Nezam House

Amir Nezam House or the Qajar Meuseum of Tabriz, is a historical building in the Shesh-Gelan district, one of the oldest quarters of Tabriz. This monument was built in 18th century in the period of crown prince Abbas Mirza.

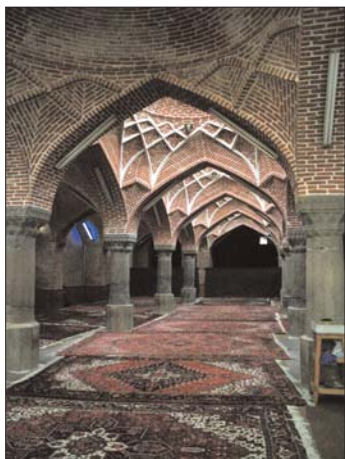
It was renovated by Hasan-Ali Khan Amir Nezam Garrousi, and it became his residency.



Mqbaratoshoara (Poets Tomb)

This is the place where famous personalities such as scholars (both in art

and literature field) are laid to rest, such as Homam Tabrizi, Khaghani Shervani, Zahirodin Faryabi, Sheykh Mohammad Khiyabani, Assadi Toosi, the famous contemporary Iranian poet Ostad Mohammad Hossein Shahriyar and many major prominent characters.



This building displays impressive decorations.

Jame Mosque

It is one of the oldest historical monuments in Tabriz which was the center of attention during Ilkhanid period. The high altar of the mosque was built in that period.

Saint Stephano's Church

This grand church is one of the most significant monuments in northwest of Iran, as regards to its historical and architectural aspects.

It has a Combination of Greek, Roman and Iranian architectural styles.

Constitution House

This house used to be a meeting place for the leaders of the constitutional Movement in Tabriz in late 19th century.

Kamals Tombs

Kamals Tombs are located in Baylankuh Street. The tombs of two men with the same name Kamal (Kamal Xocandi "Khojandi") a poet and Kamaledin Bihzad, the famous Master of Persian painting.

The tombs are located underground in the underground floor i.e. you must go about ten steps under the ground to visit the tombs.

There are also two statues of these two masters near the tomb.

Arg-e-Tabriz

This impressive monument which dates back to early 14th century is also called Majid-e-Alishah or Arg-e-Alishah.

It is the remaining parts of an imposing grand building in the town.

It was built on the site of a mosque which had been built 500 years ago.



📍 Places to Stay

Tehran

Esteghlal Grand Hotel

📍 Next to Vali-e-Asr Cross Rd, Chamran Exp. Way, Tehran.

☎ Tel: 021-22040021-5

Azadi Hotel

📍 Evin Intersection, Chamran Exp. way, Tehran.

☎ Tel: 021-22073021-9

Laleh Hotel

📍 Next to Water Organization, Dr. Fatemi Ave, Tehran.

☎ Tel: 021- 8966021-9

Tehran Grand Hotel

📍 No. 12, Motahari Street, Vali-e-Asr Ave, Tehran.

☎ Tel: 021-88718427, 88721656-60

Homa Hotel

📍 Khoddami Street, Vanak Square, Vali-e-Asr Ave, Tehran.

☎ Tel: 021-88773021-9

Mashhad

Homa Hotel (1)

📍 Ahmad Abad Square, Mashhad.

☎ Tel: 0511- 832001-9

Homa Hotel(2)

📍 Khayyam Boulevard, Mashhad.

☎ Tel: 0511- 7688859

Kowsar Hotel

📍 Beytol Moghadas Square, Mashhad.

☎ Tel: 0511- 52944, 3651140

Ghasr Hotel

📍 Imam Reza Street, Mashhad.

☎ Tel: 0511-8511126-9

Isfahan

Abbasi Hotel

📍 Madani Str., Isfahan.

☎ Tel: 0311-226010-9

Ali Qapou Hotel

📍 Chahar Bagh Abbasi St., Isfahan.

☎ Tel: 0311-231282-4

Kowsar Hotel

📍 Boustan Mellat Boulevard, Isfahan.

☎ Tel: 0311-240230-9

Tabriz

Tabriz Hotel

📍 Imam Khomeini Ave, Next to Daneshgah Square, Tabriz.

☎ Tel: 0411-3341081-9

Ark Hotel

📍 Ark Valley, South Shariati Cross Rd, Tabriz.

☎ Tel: 0411-5551277, 5531336

Shiraz

Hotel Homa

📍 Meshginfam Ave, Shiraz.

☎ Tel: 0711-2228010-14

Parsian Hotel

📍 Roudaki Street, Shiraz.

☎ Tel: 0711-330000, 331

Shiraz Eram Hotel

📍 Anvari T. Junction, Zand Ave, Shiraz.

☎ Tel: 0711-335292, 335108

📍 Where & What to Eat

There is an extensive list of Iranian restaurants throughout Iran. Persian cuisines are famous for their excellent taste of course. There are varieties of international and national dishes in Iranian restaurants. Therefore you have

a wide range of delicious choices at hand. Here are some of the important restaurants in Tehran, please note that hotels in major cities have internationally standard restaurants where you can have local traditional foods as well.

Kebab and Chelaw Kebab

They are Tehrani famous traditional dishes. Most of well known Kebab restaurants in Iran are located in Tehran.

Gaz

(Confectionary Made from Manna): It is considered as the monopolistic confectionary and souvenirs of Isfahan which is offered in different types such as: morsal and farinaceous in different shapes, and with pistachio, almond, and the combination of pistachio and almond; it is offered in different stores around the city.

Poolaki and Sugar Candy

Isfahani people usually prefer to use Poolaki while drinking tee instead of using cube sugar which is more pleasant and less harmful for the teeth; it can be bought from most of the super markets and confectionary.

Ferani

It is a kind of traditional Karamel cream in Isfahan that attracts most of the tourists. It is appealing and mostly is eaten by date juice or grape juice, with the combination of both, or with sugar.

Beryani (Roasted)

It is roasted with the neck mutton or kidney of a sheep, spearmint, saffron, cinnamon, salt, barberry, almond picks, onion, and spices, and attracts the guests' attention.

Northern Iran (Caspian Sea)

Apart from magnificent natural

scenery this part of Iran offers a wide range of traditional local dishes among which Ghelyeh Mahi (Fish Dish) and various Khoreshs (meat and chicken stuck juices) served with rice are most notable.

📍 Restaurants in Mashhad

Pesaran-e Karim Restuarant

📍 Next to Ghoba mosque, The 23 Khayam, Khayam Boulevard,
📞 Tel: 0511-7685053

Rezaee Restaurant

📍 At the corner o Kolah Dooz, Ab Kooh street,
📞 Tel: 0511- 8433857

Moeen Darbari Restaurant:

📍 Across fro the Bakhtar Hotel, Pasdaran street,
📞 Tel: 0511- 8785248

📍 Restaurants in Isfahan

Moharaja

📍 Bansico Bldg, Enghelab Square, Chahar Bagh Street, Isfahan.
📞 Tel: 0311-24985

Shahrzad

📍 Abbasabad, Chahar Bagh Street, Isfahan.
📞 Tel: 0311- 234474, 239109

📍 Where and What to Buy

There are various modern shopping malls in Tehran where tourists can buy everything from modern commodities to traditional Iranian handicrafts.

For Tourists who wish to buy traditional items Tehran Grand (Old) Bazaar is best place to go.

In all other major cities (Tabriz, Mashhad, Isfahan and Shiraz) local shops and Grand Bazaars can offer the same items to interested tourists.

Etiquette- Do's and Don'ts

The kind of Iranian clothing and covering differs according to the costumes and traditions of each region. The use of natural and bright colors is more common among the youngsters and the villagers. The history of ancient and Islamic Iran indicates that people never turn to nudity of body and soul.

The complete coverage of body is one of the moral and Islamic virtues of Iranian. The use of the loose clothes for covering women body in society and the use of scarf are two necessities. More than 60% of the world tourists in Iran are women.

These people prefer to use loose outfits and trousers for more comfort. Of course, wearing suits or a loose dress and trousers, and using a hat so that it can cover your hair is permitted. The aim of Islamic Hijab in Iran is the protection of body limbs and its inviolability against the strangers. The use of Shorts in the society is not permitted for men; however, its use, near the sea, is permitted.

Moreover, be sure that for finding any clothing and Islamic clothes you will not have any problems. Any kind of dishes is found in Iran. In different restaurants, various traditional, local, and western dishes are served.

Any kind of drinks is available except alcoholic drinks which are forbidden according to the Islamic laws. Therefore, the access to alcoholic drinks in places such as hotels, restaurants, tourist centers, etc. is impossible and its usage is forbidden.

Thus, it is advised that you restrain the transfer of any of such beverages.

In Iran, women and men common affairs are possible, and women can travel to Iran with safety and peace, but any physical touch between strange men and women is considered indecent.

Accordingly, it is advised that you restrain kissing or handshaking with opposite sex.

In Iran the access to the sea and swimming pools separately (for men and women) is possible.

And men and women can use these facilities according to areas allocated to them according to their gender.

Men and women, even if they are part of a family, cannot use public beaches and each of them should go to their own specific areas.

Language Essentials

Accommodation

- Do you have a vacant room?
Aayaaa otaa q darid?
- Double room
Otaa q-e do nafareh
- Single room
Otaa q-e yek nafareh
- Additional bed
Takht-e ezafi
- I want a room with (bathroom, shower, TV)
Otaa q ba dastshouiiie, hamam, televizion mikhaham.
- I have a reservation
man otaa q reserve karde boodam
- How much is it for? (one night, a week, two people)
Gheymate ootaa q beraye (yek shab, yek hafteh, do nafareh) cheghadr ast?
- Does the price include breakfast?
Aayaa gheyamte otaa q shamele sobhaneh ast?

Coversation

- Welcome
Khosh amadid.
- How are you?
Haletaoon chetor ast?
- I am fine
halam khoob ast.
- Pleased to meet you!
Az didanetan khoshvaghtam!
- Please
Khahesh mikonam
- Thanks
Moteshakeram
- Excuse me!
Bebakhshid!
- Hello
Salaam
- Goodbye
Khoda hafez

- Good morning
Sobh bekeyr
- Good night
Shab bekeyr
- Morning
Sobh
- Night
Shab
- Noon
Zohr
- Afternoon
Baad az zohr
- Today
Emrooz
- Yesterday
Dirooz
- Tomorrow
Farda
- Week
Hafteh
- Yes
Baleh
- No
Na, Nakhey
- What's your name?
Esme shoma chist?
- My name is ...
Esme man ast.
- Where are you from?
Az koja hastid?
- I am from
Man az hastam.
- I like
Man mikhaham.

Directions

- Where is the?
Kojast?
- How far is it to...?
Az inja ta cheghdr rah ast?
- I want to go to ...
Mikhaham beravam be....
- Here
Inja
- There
Anja
- In front of

Jeloye

■ Behind

Aghabe

■ Opposit

Rooberooye

■ far from

Door az

■ Near

Nazdike

■ Is it far from here?

Aaya az inja door ast?

■ Can you show me on the map?

Aaya mitavanid rooye naghsheh be man neshan dahid?

Health

■ Where is the (dentist, doctor, hospital, pharmacy)?

Dandan pezeshk, doctor, bimarestan, darookhaneh kojast?

■ I am sick.

Man mariz hastam.

■ I have ... (Anemia, asthma, diabetes).

Man kam khooni, tangi nafas, maraze ghand daram.

■ I am allergic to (antibiotics, aspirins, bees, peanuts, penicillin)

Man be (antibiotic, aspirin, badam zmini, penicillin) hasasiyat daram.

■ Antiseptic

Zede ofooni

■ Diarrhea

Eshaal

■ Medication

Dava

■ Sun block

Zede Aftab

Language Difficulties

■ Do you speak English?

Aaya shoma englisi sohbat mikonid?

■ Does anyone speak English?

Aaya kasi inja englisi sohbat mikonad?

■ I understand

Mifahmam

■ I do not understand

Nemifahmam

■ How do you say in your language?/ What does it mean?

Shoma be ... che migooiid?/Yani che?

■ Please write it down.

Khaاهش mikonam benevisid.

Question Words

■ What?

Che?

■ When?

Keey?

■ Why?

Chera?

■ Where?

Kojaa?

■ How?

Chetor?

■ How much?

Cheghadr?

■ How many

Chand ta?

Numbers

■ Yek (1),

■ do (2),

■ Se (3),

■ chahar (4),

■ panj (5),

■ Shesh (6),

■ Haft (7),

■ Hasht (8),

■ Noh (9),

■ dah (10)

■ Bist (20),

■ si (30),

■ chehel (40),

■ panjah (50),

■ shast (60),

■ haftad (70),

■ hashtad (80),

■ navad (90),

■ sad (100)

■ 1000,

Hezar,
 ■ 10000,
 dah hezar,
 ■ 100,000
 sad hezar

Paperwork

■ Name
 Naam, esm
 ■ Nationality
 Meliyat
 ■ Date/place of birth
 Tarikh/mahale tavalod
 ■ Sex/gender
 Jensiyat
 ■ Passport
 passport
 ■ Visa
 Visa

Shopping

■ How much is this?
 Gheymatash chand ast?
 ■ Do you have?
 Aaya shoma darid?
 ■ I'm just looking
 Faghat negah mikonam
 ■ What time do you open/close?
 Che saati baz mikonid/mibandid?
 ■ expensive
 Geran
 ■ Cheap
 Arzan
 ■ Size
 Andazeh
 ■ black
 Siyah
 ■ White
 Sefid

Useful Words

■ Big
 Bozorg
 ■ Small
 Koochak
 ■ Hot
 Garm/Dagh

■ Cold
 Sard
 ■ Good
 Khoob
 ■ Bad
 Bad
 ■ Enough
 Kafi
 ■ Open
 Baz
 ■ Close
 Basteh
 ■ Very
 Ziyad
 ■ Little
 Kam

Eating Out

■ Have you got a table?
 Aaya mize khali darid?
 ■ I want to reserve a table
 Mikhaham yek miz reserve konam.
 ■ The bill please
 Soorathesab lotfan.
 ■ Giyah Khar
 Vegetarian
 ■ Restaurant
 restooran
 ■ Waiter
 Gaarson
 ■ Menu
 Meno
 ■ Breakfast
 Sobhaneh
 ■ Lunch
 Nahar
 ■ Dinner
 Shaam
 ■ Glass
 Livan
 ■ Bottle
 Botri
 ■ Knife
 Kard
 ■ Fork
 Changal
 ■ Spoon

Ghashogh
■ Transport
haml va naghl
■ Airport
Foroodgah
■ Bus
Otobus
■ Bus stop
Istgah Otobus
■ Terminal
Terminal
■ Railway station
Istgah Rah Aahan
■ Taxi
Taxi
■ Ticket
Belit
■ Time table
Barnameh Harekat

KAZAKHSTAN

Introduction



Introduction

Kazakhstan is situated in Central Asia between 45° and 87° of East longitude, 40° and 55° of North latitude, deep in the Eurasian continent. With its territory of 2,724,900 sq km, it is the second largest among the CIS states and the ninth place in the world after Russia, China, USA, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, India and Australia.

Kazakhstan borders China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, the Russian Federation and the Caspian Sea.

The territory of the Republic stretches from Volga River in the West to the foothills of the Altai Mountains in the East, from West Siberian lowland in the North to the desert of Kyzylkum and the mountain range of Tien Shan in the South.

Kazakhstan is an ethnically diverse republic which gained independence from the former Soviet Union on December 16, 1991. The name Kazakh, which is of Turkic origin, is thought to mean "free man"; an appropriate moniker for a land historically populated by freedom-loving nomads.

For thousands of years, these nomads tended vast cattle herds, pasture lands and the fertile soils of the region's foothills and river valleys. Both the historic Silk Road and Sable Route, along which expensive furs

were transported, passed through the region making Kazakhstan an important cultural, trade and economic bridge between Asia and Europe.

Despite being the ninth largest country in the world, Kazakhstan remains, for many people, an unknown and enigmatic place. Even the well-travelled visitors will find many fascinations in Kazakhstan: mountain peaks covered with snow, vast highlands, deep rivers, parched deserts, endless fields covered with flowers and virgin forest reserves.

Kazakhstan's natural beauty is outstanding.

Much emphasis is placed on the preservation of the country's many natural reserves, national parks and their unique landscapes, fauna and flora. Kazakhstan is an excellent eco-destination. It is unspoilt, varied and beautiful.

It is not necessary to search the entire world for fascinating tradition, beautiful, pristine nature or a delicate mixture of

old and modern: simply visit Kazakhstan.

In Kazakhstan guests are made welcome as they experience the very heart of Eurasia.



Country Profile



Country's Official Name:

Republic of Kazakhstan

Flag Description:

It is a rectangular breadth of blue color. There is a sun in its center surrounded by 32 beams and a steppe eagle soaring beneath which are all in gold color. Near the hoist is a vertical strip with a national

ornament. The light blue background stands for the various Turkic peoples that make up the present-day population of the country.

Among these people blue has a religious significance, representing the sky god Cök-Tanry, "the eternal wide blue sky" and water as well. The light blue color also symbolizes cultural and ethnic unity of Kazakhstani people. The sun represents the source of life and energy. It is also a symbol of wealth and abundance; the sun's rays are like grain which is the basis of abundance and prosperity. People of different Kazakh tribes had the golden eagle on their flags for centuries. The eagle symbolizes the power of the state. For the modern nation of Kazakhstan the eagle is a symbol of independence, freedom and flight to future.



Government

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a democratic, secular, legal and social state whose highest values are an individual, his life, rights and freedoms. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a unitary state with a presidential form of government. The state power in the Republic of Kazakhstan is unified and executed on the basis of the Constitution and laws in accordance with the principle of its division into the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

President

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is the head of state, its highest offi-





cial determining the main directions of the domestic and foreign policy of the state and representing Kazakhstan within the country and in international relations. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan acts as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the state.

Government

The Government of Kazakhstan exercises executive power, heads the system of executive bodies and provides the guidance of their activities. The Head of government is appointed by the President when the candidature of the premier is approved by a majority in the Parliament. Ministerial cabinet of the government is appointed by the

President from the candidatures suggested by the premier.

Legislative Branch

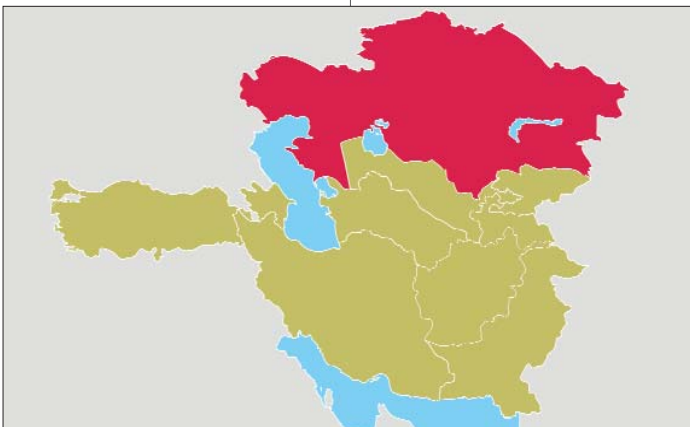
The legislative branch in Kazakhstan is presented by bicameral Parliament: Lower Chamber - Majilis, Upper Chamber - Senate. According to the Constitution Parliament is a high representative body of republic that realizes legislative functions.

Judicial Branch

Judicial power is realized through civil, administrative and penal procedure. Bodies of judicial power are the Supreme Court and inferior courts. Supreme Court is a high judicial body on civil, penal, economic and other cases jurisdictional to inferior courts, controls their activities and provides clarifications of judicial practice.

Official Language & Local Dialects

Kazakh is the official language spoken by over 52% of population. Russian is a means of interethnic communication in Kazakhstan, spoken by two-thirds of population and used in everyday business.



Capital City:

Astana

Major Cities

Astana, Almaty, Karaganda, Shymkent, Atyrau, Aktobe, Oskemen

Name of Provinces

Akmola, Aktobe, Almaty, Almaty Province, Astana, Atyrau, Baikonur, East Kazakhstan, Karagandy, Kostanay, Kyzylorda, Mangystau, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, South Kazakhstan, West Kazakhstan, Zhambyl.

Ethnic Groups

Kazakh (58.9%), Russian (25.9%), Ukrainian (2.9%), Uzbek (2.8%), Uighur, Tatar and German (1.5% each) and other groups (4%). There are more than 100 other ethnic groups living in peace in Kazakhstan.

Country's Total Area:

2,717,300 sq km

Population:

15.56 million EST.

Climate

Continental, cold winters and hot summers, arid and semiarid

Holidays & National Days

January 1 - 2	New Year
January 7	Orthodox Christmas
March 8	International Women's Day
March 22	Naoruz (celebration of Spring)
May 1	Unity Day of Peoples of Kazakhstan
May 9	Victory Day
July 6	Kazakhstan Capital's Day
August 30	Constitution Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan
October 25	Republic Day
December 16	Independence Day

Important Muslim holidays scheduled according to the lunar calendar with moving dates include:

Eid ul-Adha: (Feast of the Sacrifice): Islamic festival commemorating Prophet Ibrahim's attempted sacrifice of his son on Mount Moriah when God supplied a sheep instead.

Eid ul-Fitr (the celebration of end of ramadhan)

Time Zone:

GMT+4



Silk Road

For centuries, crowds of people speaking diverse languages filled the bazaars of Asia, and long caravans crept along dusty roads carrying precious gems and silks, spices and dyes, gold and silver and exotic birds and animals to Europe.

Yet the Silk Road was to become not only a great trade route but the melting pot of two very different civilizations; those of the East and the West, with their specific cultural traditions, religious beliefs and scientific and technical achievements.

Central Asia, situated between China and India in the east, bordering on the European world in the west, spreading between the Volga and Siberia in the north, and between Persia and Arabia in the south, for almost two thousand years stood at the crossroads of the world's great civilizations and cultures. Much has been lost in history.

The sands of time have covered many ancient towns, but the careful hands of archeologists and restorers have succeeded in finding and restoring for us rare treasures from the old cultures of the Semirechye (Seven

Rivers region) and Central Asia.

Branches and routes of the Silk Route didn't remain static over the course of time - they changed for various reasons: some of them gained significance and flourished, while others ceased to exist, causing the decline of the towns and settlements in their path. In the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.

the route passed through China to the west via the Semirechie and southern Kazakhstan.

The flourishing period of the Silk Road through Central Asia and Kazakhstan declined during the 8th-12th centuries.

The huge territory remembers the slow plodding of camel caravans, for thousands of years wandering the wide routes of the Great Silk Road.

This part of the road represents a unique complex of historical monuments, archeology, architecture, town planning and monumental art. The cities of Otrar, Taraz, Sairan (Ispidzhab), Turkestan (Yassy), Syab, Balasagyn and others were not only shopping centers, but centers of science and culture.



Useful Information

Best Time to Visit the Country

As summers are ferociously hot and winters bitterly cold, spring (April to June) and autumn (September to November) are the best seasons to visit Kazakhstan. In April the desert blooms briefly and the monotonous ochre landscapes explode in reds, oranges and yellows. Autumn is harvest time, when market tables heave with freshly picked fruit. If you do decide to battle the winter, be aware that many domestic flights are grounded and finding food can be a problem since lots of eateries close for the season.

Visa Regulations

In general, all foreign nationals are required to have business or tourist visas to enter Kazakhstan. To obtain a visa, foreign citizens should apply to a Kazakhstan diplomatic/consular institution in their country of residence. Documents required include:

- Copy of the first two pages of the valid passport (or international travel document)
- Copy of Kazakhstan visa support (invitation letter) with a notification of the visa support number by the Diplomatic-consular of the MFA (or the original individual invitation issued by the Police)
- Filled-in visa application form
- 1 passport-size photo
- Fee, payable on collection of visa

For 5 days transit visas, visa of the destination country and onward ticket (or a reservation)

The passport should not expire earlier than six months after the validity term of the requested visa. Other necessary documents will be determined by the consul at the time of application.

Visas are issued within 7 calendar days from the day of presenting all documents. Documents are accepted with a visa support letter from the Diplomatic-consular

service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In order to get single entry official, private, tourist or business visa to Kazakhstan at the Embassies of Kazakhstan, nationals of the following countries do not need letter of invitation (Kazakhstan visa support): Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Great Britain, Greece, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Iceland, Germany, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Portugal, Singapore, the USA, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, France, the Republic of Korea.

Citizens of the following countries do not need entry Kazakhstan visa to visit Kazakhstan: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine.

Customs Regulations

Duty Free

For persons of 16 years and older:
1000 cigarettes or 1000 gr. of tobacco products

A reasonable quantity of perfume for personal use

Residents: goods up to an amount of USD 1,000 for personal use only and weighing less than 50kg; Non-residents: goods up to an amount of USD 500; Should the value or weight allowances be exceeded by residents or foreign nationals, this should be reported to customs and the appropriate forms should be completed. Goods declared on this form must be taken back out of the country on departure by all visitors

Goods for personal use: clothing, toilet articles, personal jewellery, cameras, portable projection devices, video cameras, limited amount of films and accessories, portable music instruments, portable record players, portable recording and replaying equipment, portable radios, portable TV sets, portable typewriters, portable calcula-

tors, portable personal computers, binoculars, perambulators, wheelchairs, sports equipment, portable medical equipment and other goods obviously intended for personal use.

Import

Import is permitted if goods are intended for personal use and the use of the goods is not connected with making profit in any form. A customs declaration, which will be filled out on entry of Kazakhstan, or any other C.I.S. country must be kept carefully. When leaving Kazakhstan or any other C.I.S. country on an international flight, this declaration has to be handed over.

When travelling to other C.I.S. countries (except Turkmenistan) there will be no customs control. This will take place when leaving the other C.I.S. country on an international flight. Food products are allowed to be imported provided veterinary and phytosanitary regulations are complied with. Photographs and printed matter directed against Kazakhstan, live animals (subject to special permit), military arms and ammunition, narcotics (opium, hashish, etc.) are prohibited.

Export

Free export of clothing, toilet articles, personal jewellery, cameras, portable projection devices, video cameras, limited amount of films and accessories, portable music instruments, portable record-players, portable recording and replaying equipment, portable radios, portable TV sets, portable typewriters, portable calculators, portable personal computers, binoculars, perambulators, wheelchairs, sports equipment, portable medical equipment and other goods obviously intended for personal use.

Prohibited items include: arms, ammunition, precious metals, (gold, silver, etc.) and articles made thereof (also if containing precious stones and/or real pearls), antiquities and art objects (subject to duty and special permit from the Ministry of

Culture), furs. Carpets and jewellery items are prohibited unless accompanied by a document from the National Museum confirming that the articles are not antique. Except if such articles belong to the imported personal effects of the passenger (e.g. personal jewellery) and have been declared upon arrival.

How to get there and away

By Plane

The most important carrier is now Air Astana which flies to Almaty, Astana, Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau, Uralsk, Dubai, Moscow, Delhi, Beijing, Istanbul, Bangkok, Hannover, London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Seoul.

Lufthansa has also seven days flights to Almaty, from where you can go anywhere via local carrier SKAT, which flies to most cities in Kazakhstan. British Airways (Almaty-Heathrow route) and KLM now fly several times a week to Heathrow and Schiphol airports. Turkish Airlines has flights to Istanbul. There are twice a week flights from Seoul to Almaty; one is Asiana Air Line, and the other is Astana. Airbaltic also flies to Almaty.

By Train

Popular routes include Almaty to/from Moscow (77 hours), Novosibirsk (35 hours) and Ürümqi, China.

By Car

You can enter Kazakhstan by car through many of the border checkpoints on main roads into the country. However, be prepared to wait up to 24 (twenty-four) hours in the queues, with rather poor facilities.

By Bus

It is fairly easy to travel from Ürümqi to Almaty via sleeper bus, especially if you aren't in a hurry and don't mind living on a bus for a good 24 to 36 hours. The border crossing itself is a bit of a hike, and

you may be made to carry all of your belongings with you for quite a ways in some seriously warm weather.

The bus trip and "baggage fees" are around US\$45. You can pick up your Kazakhstan visa at the embassy in Urumqi as well, but be prepared to chill for at least a week waiting, and be sure to get a copy of your passport before handing it over.

By Ship

As of 2007, there appear to be no scheduled passenger services across the Caspian. However, a ferry from Baku, Azerbaijan, to Aktau, Kazakhstan, runs once or twice a week across the Caspian Sea.

Traveling around

Flying saves time and takes the tedium out of Kazakhstan's long distances, but it is the least edifying and arguably the least safe mode of transport in the region. However, for some destinations, and in some seasons, flying is the only sensible option. Helicopters are often available to get to hiking and skiing destinations that are way off the beaten track. Trains are cheap, slow and easy going, but crowded, grotty and increasingly crime-ridden. Buses are the most frequent and convenient way to get between towns cheaply, and the best way to see what remains of the land of the nomads, though long trips can be tedious and cramped, and vehicles are prone to breakdowns. An option in many areas is to hire a car and driver: taxis and private citizens are often willing to take travelers between cities.

Money

The official currency is the Tenge (KZT), which is divided into 100 tiyin. ATMs are generally accessible in Kazakhstan and major European and international credit cards, such as Diners Club and Visa are accepted in central hotels, shops and restaurants. Travelers' cheques are cashed at large

hotels catering for foreigners and should be in US dollars.

Kazakhstan has the most advanced banking system in Central Asia, and credit card use is on the increase. Generally, though, you can't rely on anything but cash. US dollars are the easiest to exchange. Most banks will only accept new notes. Tipping is not common, although a few top end restaurants automatically add a 5% to 15% service charge to the bill. Tipping runs counter to many people's Islamic sense of hospitality and may even offend them.

Safety & Security

The general rules of safety in Kazakhstan are the same as in any other civilized country of the world.

In general this is a very friendly country where foreigners are respected as the hospitality is one of the Kazakh main traditions.

Fire brigade	☎01	☎101
Police	☎02	☎102
Ambulance	☎03	☎103

Embassy telephone numbers

Embassy of Afghanistan

☎C-10, Diplomatic small town, Astana
 ☎Tel.24-29-46
 ☎Fax: 24-30-25

Embassy of Azerbaijan

☎B-6, Diplomatic small town, Astana
 ☎Tel.24-10-97, 24-15-81
 ☎Fax: 24-15-32
 ✉E-mail: astana@azembassy.kz

Embassy of Iran

☎31-33, Luganskogo St. , Almaty
 ☎Tel.254-19-74/75
 ☎fax: 254-27-54
 Representation:
 ☎B-7, Diplomatic small town, Astana
 ☎Tel.24-25-11/12
 ☎fax: 24-15-37

Embassy of Kyrgyzstan,

📍 B-5, Diplomatic small town, Astana

☎ Tel.24-20-24, 24-20-40

☎ fax: 24-24-14

General consulate:

📍 30a, Luganskogo St., Almaty

☎ tel/fax: 91-66-10

✉ E-mail: gen.consul.kz@mail.ru

Embassy of Pakistan

📍 25, Tulebaeva St. , Almaty

☎ Tel.273-35-48; 273-15-02

☎ fax: 273-13-00

✉ E-mail: parepalmaty@hotmail.com

Embassy of Tajikistan

📍 Chubary microdistrict, Astana

15, Marsovaya St.

☎ tel/fax: 24-09-29

Representation:

📍 Village Baganashil, 16, Sanatornaya St., Almaty

☎ tel/fax: 269-70-59

Embassy of Turkey

📍 29, Tole-By St., Almaty

☎ Tel.278-41-65, 278-41-76/77

☎ fax: 278-41-68

✉ E-mail: almatyтуркбе@gmail.com

Representation:

📍 113, Abay Str., Astana

off. No 722-723

☎ Tel.32-54-57

☎ fax: 32-54-65

✉ E-mail: astanairtibat@gmail.com

Embassy of Turkmenistan

📍 64, Otirar St. Astana

☎ Tel/fax: 21-08-82

✉ E-mail: tm_emb@at.kz

Consular Department:

📍 1st floor, 76/109, Abay Str. Almaty

☎ tel/fax: 250-96-04

Embassy of Uzbekistan

📍 36, Baribaev St. , Almaty

☎ Tel.291-02-35,291-83-16, 291-06-44

Consulate department:

☎ Tel.291-78-86

☎ fax: 291-10-55

Health

All travelers arriving from a yellow fever area are required to have a certificate of inoculation. It is recommended that travelers to Kazakhstan immunize themselves against hepatitis A. Bird flu was discovered in poultry farms in Kazakhstan, but there have been no reports of human infection. Doctors and hospitals will expect payment in cash, regardless of travel health insurance. Blood screening is inadequate and HIV/AIDS is a risk due to contaminated blood or inadequate sterilization of instruments and syringes.

Telephone Codes of Major Cities

Astana (capital)	☎ 3172
Almaty	☎ 3272
Karaganda	☎ 321(2)
Pavlodar	☎ 318(2)
Shymkent	☎ 325(22, 2)
Aktau	☎ 329(2)

Major Travel Agencies

Alma Travel Agency

☎ Tel: +7 3272 72 - 48 - 40

☎ Tel/Fax: +7 3272 72-46-23

Web: www.almata.kz

✉ E-mail: info@almata.kz

Advantour Kazakhstan

☎ Tel: +7 727 317 7927, 291 2270

☎ Fax: +7 727 295 4466

Web: <http://www.advantour.com/>

✉ E-mail: Almaty@advantour.com

KazTourism Travel Agency

☎ Tel: +7 727 2960481, 2919416

☎ Fax: +7 727 2919963

✉ E-mail:kaztourism@yahoo.com

Dimal Travel Agency

☎ Fax: +7 727 275 11 73

Web: <http://www.dimal.kz>

✉ E-mail: da@dimal.kz

Arts & Crafts

Decorative Arts

Textile & Embroidery

Since ancient times, Kazakh women were decorating their clothes and home belongings with embroidery. They embroidered in silk and wool; they knew gold and small pearl embroidery. A very significant of the applied arts was patterned weaving. On the simple weaving looms women were making tufted and smooth carpets, patterned rugs, which served as the beautiful decoration of the houses. These things were famous for the perfection of pictures and colours. Bright look of the yurtas was provided by the patterned mats made with great taste and masterly from "chiy" interlaced with colourful wool threads.

Amongst women's household works and crafts we can emphasize production of felt goods, weaving, embroidery etc. Felt production is the most typical for Kazakhs. Production of patterned felt is famous in two types: "alakiiz" - putting the picture from the coloured wool to semi-ready felt; and "syrmak" - sewing the two-coloured felt on the inside side, and two same pictures of different colours are made, and the remainder of the second picture serves as the background for the first picture and vice versa. Felt is widely used very widely both for covering the yurtas and as the bedding of for other purposes.

Felt production is the simplest form of the wool use historically related to nomad and stock-raising mode of life: it is the real, very ancient property of Kazakhs. On the contrary, another form of wool processing (spinning and weaving) can be considered as the element borrowed from the settled culture. Kazakh embroidery is colored with the rainbow range and the dominant color is red. The most developed Kazakh ornamental motives are all possible combinations from horn-shaped curls, which form rhombuses, crosspieces and chains, which are the symbolical signs for wishing wealth, plenty of livestock, its safety from plague and other disasters.

Carpet Weaving

Kazakhs used felt for making floor carpets called tekemet and syrmak and wall carpets called tuskiiz. With the picture simplicity and relative scarcity of colors, patterned felt tekemets have a unique and very beautiful effect thanks to the scale of the picture, its decorative simplicity and faded softness of tones especially emphasized in the felt mats and wool mats with natural colors.

Syrmak is sewed from the patterned shapes of usually white and black felt. Tuskiiz were made of velveteen, velvet, silk and other textile. Kazakh sewed not only carpets but also asmaldyk (small carpets for decorating camels) at zhamchi (saddle-cloth



and horsecloth for saddles, cases for chests, coverlets, bed curtains, curtains, pillow-cases, towels).

Heart-shaped figures and plant patterns were embroidered on these things. All carpet things were made on the vertical and horizontal simple looms (ormek). From ancient carpets of Kazakh we know smooth carpets (alasha). 30-40 cm wide carpets were weaved on the looms, decorated with weaved pattern or vertical white, blue, yellow or brown stripes. Then they are sewed into the stockinet (4m x 2m).

Kazakh loved pile carpets. These carpets were considered the most expensive and valuable part of the marriage portion. Nowadays, in some regions of Kazakhstan, mainly in the south of the country, production of smooth and pile carpets is maintained, along with other traditional crafts

Jewelry

Jewelers produced rings, bracelets, ear-rings and brooches from silver and gold. The favorite metal of Kazakh jewelers was silver. They believed that silver possessed purifying, preserving and magic features. So, women were usually wearing three or four seal-rings and rings, which were the everyday jewels, except for massive rings worn primarily by the older women during celebrations. Even nowadays, silver things are used when wearing national costumes.

Jeweler's art, unlike the other types of Kazakh applied arts, which were used for household crafts, was professional and it was predetermined by the specifics of pro-



duction. Looking at the jewelry people could guess about the financial position, age and territorial belonging of a woman. Rich women could order the whole set of the jewels made in the same style. Girls from rich families had the complete set of silver jewelry, the total weight of which exceeded three kilograms.

The jewelers working with gold and silver were called "zergers" (the word "zer" means gold, golden jewelry). Zergers were working alone and they were hereditably handing down their skills. It is important to mention that Kazakh jewelers (zergers) perfectly knew the most complicated techniques of jeweler's art: stamping, engraving, embossing, pelletizing, filigree, cutting, darkening.

The main product of zergers was the jewels, which had great demand amongst all the social groups of the society and

it was predetermined not only by their aesthetic nature but also by the ritual functional meanings related to traditions, customs and religious ideas.

Embossing & Weapons

Since ancient times on the territory



of Kazakhstan, small plastics made from stone, bone, ceramics, metal, as well as crockery from clay, wood, leather and glass were popular. Wood and stone carving, leather processing and stamping, embossing as well as plaiting of mats were also very popular. Artistic tin and bronze molding was also developing.

Blacksmiths made labor tools: ploughs, ploughshares, sickles, shovels, ketmens, crowbars, tools for craftsmen and hunters and various household goods such as jugs, pots, candlesticks, supports for boilers in the form of a circle on a tripod.

Bronze was used for the production of boilers and altars with the sculptural images of the heads of sheep, goat or horse. Iron was used to make "adalbakan" used in the yurt as a support and a coat-hanger at the same time. Weapon production was one of the developed crafts for Kazakhs. Special steel was used for making so called curved sabres, which are called in the Kazakh folk epos "almas kylsh". Their hilts and handles were decorated with precious stones. Hilts were decorated with pattern, for example, with the picture of the head of an eagle. Kazakhs used to make many other kinds of weapons.



Carving

The developed types of Kazakh folk craftsmanship are wood carving, stone carving and bone carving. The most ancient monuments of stone carving are rock paintings. They are preserved in the rocks of the mountains in Central Kazakhstan, Altai, Tarbagatai, Alatau, on the northern slopes of the mountains of Ayaguz, Balkhash, Khantau, Karatau etc. Ancient stock breeders depict-

ed animals on the rocks (koulans, horses, antelopes, ibex, argali, maral, bulls) and mythological topics, sacrifice rituals, worshipping the heavenly bodies and other.

Kazakhs knew carpentry since ancient times. Carpenters were divided into "uishy" and "arbashy". Uishy (from the word "ui" - "house") constructed summer and winter houses and yurtas, put some fanciful carving on the dome poles, on the circle of the vault, on the door of the yurt. Carpenters who made two-wheel carts were called "arbashy". Carts were made mainly in the northern and north-eastern regions of Kazakhstan.

It was due to the availability of forest (timber) in these regions. Carving predominantly used circles (symbols of the moon, the sun and the heaven vault, which was worshiped in the old times).

Carving was used for decoration of furniture and household goods, cupboards, chests, supports etc. Wood carving was



supplemented with paintings. Wood carving is wonderfully matched with the encrustation with figured plates made of bones. Bones were used for making plates in the form of circles, triangles, quadrangles etc.

Horns of argali, saiga antelope and bull were widely used. People used them for making snuff-boxes, bowls, scoops, as well as figured plates for the encrustation of the furniture, crockery and musical instruments.

Nowadays these unique things of the folk applied arts can be seen not only in the museums of Kazakhstan but also in the collections of other countries. Thanks to the revival of craftsmanship, many of these things are made for sales as souvenirs or for portable exhibitions where they represent traditional national artistic culture.

Ceramics

It is well known that in late medieval cities of Central Asia handicraftsmen of various specialties were united in the professional organizations, which existed up to the Russian October revolution of 1917. The internal life of these guilds and mutual relations between their members were regulated



by special guidelines or codes of rules - risola - for many centuries.

It is known, that in the 19th century the city of Turkestan was a trading and an administrative center of the southern Kazakhstan

region with social institutions peculiar to the feudal city of the late medieval period and advanced craft manufacture. Like all other craft centers of

Central Asia the latter had professional organizations including the one for potters. It is a proven fact that on the site of the ancient settlement of old Turkestan, to the southwest of Ahmad Jassavi's mausoleum, there was a concentration of potter's furnaces in the 18-19th centuries. The findings con-

firm that some representatives of potters' shops in Turkestan enjoyed the right to have a personal brand by which they marked their products.

Hums (jugs and pitchers) proved to be most frequently marked production of the Central Asian potters. The hums

found in the area of the memorial complex of Hodzha Ahmad Jassavi are good examples. These hums have prints of stamps and inscriptions with the names of potters.

The stamps used to be marked in various ways, including graphic signs,

inscriptions drawn by hand, or imprints with various figures. At least a significant part of these conventional signs and images should belong to master ceramists and serve as their brand in order to differentiate their items from the products of other potters.

Kazakh Dwellings

Traditionally, Kazak people had a nomad and semi nomad life style. In winters they lived in stationary dwellings. Shoshala is one of the ancient types of stationary dwellings. It is a round, one room construction with a cone or spherical top. The form of the construction looks like a yurt. Round houses of yurt shape made of raw bricks were typical for the tribe saki, from the Syrdarya valley, in the 4th century BC. Shoshala were made of wood, raw bricks, and stones. There are other types of ancient, one room stone constructions, which are known as din (ding), uytas, still preserved on Kazakh territory.

For spending the winter Kazakhs chose mountainous areas or urems, which were rich in oil, fodder, water and protected from steppe winds. In these kinds of places winter auls were formed. These often were communities with many houses. In summer Kazakhs moved to djaylyau - pastures. Many auls were formed in Alpine meadows, mountains, valleys etc. Some auls had about 20 yurts, sometimes even more. The yurt is one of the most ancient types of transportable dwellings adapted to the nomadic life style. It was widespread among the nomadic and semi nomadic tribes of Eurasian steppes and has preserved its ancient shape until now.

Kazakh Clothing

In Kazakh national dress, national skills and creativity are clearly reflected. It possesses nomad influences in materials and style. Kazakhs have always cherished the use of the skins and furs of animals. From the skins, fur coats, ton, and shash, the outer clothing was made of furs of wild and domestic animals. The clothes had the following names: janat ton - raccoon fur coat, kara tulki ton - black-brown fox fur coat, kamshat



boric - beaver cap, bota ton - a coat from baby camel's skin, jargak ton- a coat made from young horse skins, and others.

When manufacturing clothes (dressing gowns, women's and men's trousers, head ware, dresses) satin and chain stitch (loop in loop), beading and precious stone embroidery were commonly applied. Mainly geometrical and plant patterns, as well as contour iconic images, for example, hunting scenes, were used in embroidery.

Many elements of national dress were made of leather, armiachin, felt and other materials. Cotton and silk were purchased in Central Asia. When Kazakhstan became part of Russia, Russian manufactured goods became popular, including cloth. Kazakhs

sewed traditional forms of clothes from Russian materials (chintz, heavy cloth, buckram and velveteen). Rich Kazakhs often used woolen cloth (sukno), felt, silk, and brocade).

The traditional outer clothes allowed free movement during long trips in the saddle, were warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The clothes for men and women were broad, long and tied at the waist with a sash.

Both men and women wore wide shirts with vertical openings in front, and loose trousers gathered at the ankles (sharovar). The upper clothes of men included a jacket, loose sleeves gathered at the wrist, and cloaks.

Fur coats were for the rich. The poor made do with tulups. Kamzols were light and lined with camel fur and sewn from purchased wool cloth (sukno), brocade and felt. Cloaks were sewn from textiles and Bukhara silk. In the winter, a warm lining of camel or sheep fur was attached. A shekpen sewn from sukno prepared from camel wool was worn over the shoulders. Men wore warm jackets made of camel wool gathered when their coats were trimmed.

Winter boots were high with a wide shin cover, worn over felt stockings. Summer boots had heels. Old women wore socks turned up. The shoes of young women were decorated with beads and embroidery. Old people preferred soft heelless boots. They wore leather galoshes over them. Poor and shepherds wore felt boots with leather

soles, and the poorest wore leather sandals with leather soles tied to the legs with small straps.

Decorations were varied - wonderful appliqué work was sewn on clothes, hats and shoes. Women wore gold, silver, copper, bronze, coral, pearl and colored glass. Bracelets, earrings and necklaces - flat forged rings and furs. Decorations were important. Rings, depending on the tradition form, had various names, for example the ring "bird's claw".

Necklaces were made from pearl, coral and beads. The waist was especially decorated for both men and women. Embroidery included silver badges and others. By the 1920s traditional dress had changed dramatically. Kazakhs now mixed with many other peoples, especially Russian. The transition in dress proceeded in fits and starts.



Architecture & Archaeological Objects

The North Kazakhstan is situated in the extreme south of the West Siberian lowland within the black earth zone, which defines its specialization in agricultural production. Petropavlovsk is an administrative centre of North Kazakhstan region. The city is situated on shore of Ishim, which is the left inflow of Irtysh. There are interesting landscapes, forest tracts and lake areas of Shalkar and Imantau nature zones. There are many places of historical and cultural value, very important for archeology, history, and architecture & monument art. In the aul of

Syrymber the country estate of Shokan Valikhanov, the first Kazak scientist was reconstructed, a fine memorial of the wood architecture of the 19th century.

You can see memorial monument, which was stated in honor of national heroes Karasay and Agyntay near Saumalkol. There are plenty of archeological objects (burial mounds, ancient cities of ancient settlements) in the regions of the Ishim, the Chaglinka, the Iman Burluk rivers. In the natural boundary Botay (Iman-Burluk river) more than 60000 objects were discovered, which let to suppose that the domestication of wild horse by the ancient Man started here about 5,5 thousands years ago. The part of the National park "Kokshetau" is situated on the territory of the North Kazakhstan.

The genetic fund of rare and extinct animals, the standards of nature complexes, the unique creations of nature and the resources of flora are carefully preserved. One can experience the joy of riding a horse; buy some native, handmade souvenirs. All the year round - dishes and drinks of kazak national cooking, Finnish and Russian banya. About 10000 auto tourists from Kazakhstan and Russia visit this region every year.

Music and Musical Instruments



Traditional & Religious Songs

Kazakh song is the inexhaustible treasury of the nation wisdom. It reflects different sides of labor activity, historical events that retain deep emotional experience in the memory of people. Numerous proverbs and sayings, poetic legends and traditions that describe the life of folk singers and poets, narrators and musicians reflect the love of Kazakhs to songs who consider songs their main spiritual treasure. Masterpieces include nameless songs, which occupy the huge part in the songs' culture, i.e. which were composed by an anonymous author and which went through the national interpretation "Yelimai", "Bir Bala", "Kargash", as well as the songs written by such authors as Abai, Birzhan, Akhan Sery, Zhayau Mussa,

Mukhit Meraliyev, Baluan Sholak, as well as Maira, Yestai, Amre, Kenen etc.

Their songs are the masterpieces of Kazakh national musical culture. More than 100 years passed, and their songs live still making people admire them. They are sung by many singers and are widely propagandized by the modern composers of Kazakhstan in opera and instrumental concerts. Birzhan-sal is one of the most prominent persons of Kazakh music of XIX Century. He is considered to be the founder of Kazakh national professional songs of Arka tradition. Birzhan concentrates brightness in his image typical for the Kazakh professional singer, representative of the unique artistic bohemia - sals and sery. It is natural that people added the word "sal" to his name because he is the people's favourite and artist.

Birzhan's songs constitute the classics of Kazakh music. The impact of the singer's

creativity on the Kazakh song is great. Birzhan's style is vividly concert and masterly bright, and it contains akyn invocatory words. His life and creative work inspired M. Tulebayev and K. Zhumaliyev to create the opera "Birzhan and Sara", which became the pearl of Kazakh opera. Amongst his songs the most popular is the song "Lyailim-Shyrak". In this song, the singer and composer expresses the admiration with the beauty of a girl. One of the favourite songs of Birzhan is "Aitpai" dedicated to the girl whose name is Aitpai.

One of the greatest Kazakh singers of the second half of XIX

century is Akhan-Sery. In his creative work the following songs are especially distinguished: the song devoted to his faithful horse "Manmanker"; "Nurila"; the song "Srymbet" that describes the love for the girl Zhamal; the song "Karatorgai" full of deep feelings, sorrows, thoughts about the vicissitudes of life; joyful song "Balkhadisha" about the beautiful girl; sorrowful monologue about the unrequited love "Makpal"; "Kulager" - the song devoted to the death of the favourite horse and describing deep feelings, presentiments, repentance, sorrow of the poet.

Famous Kazakh singer and composer Zhayau Mussa is very popular. Rich content of the songs and poems of Zhayau Mussa, in who's creating work critical observations, satire, landscape descriptions are mixed with the image of the difficult destiny of women, freedom hopes, and dissatisfaction motifs. Significant place is devoted to the love and civil lyrics, zhoktau and fables.

In the songs "Ak sissa", "Khaulau",

"Tolgau" and others there is the picture of social disparity, protest against the injustice. Poetical description is given to the lyrical feelings of the beloved in the songs "Sursha kyz", "Sholpan", "Saulem kyzdar", "Gaukhar kyz", the nature of the native land is shown in the songs "Bayanaul", "Summer Day", "Ulytau", "Saryn" and others.



Kazakh composer and singer Mukhit Meraliyev was a great singer and author of lyrical songs. He wrote the song "Zaresh" when he was quite old and the song was very popular. It was based on the legend about the deep sorrow of the father who lost all his

sons and his beloved daughter. The song very deeply describes the feelings of the father, his inconsolable grief. Fathomless sorrow of this song shocks your soul. "Zaresh" is more than just a song; it is a small unfinished requiem.

The song "Ainamkoz" gained a lot of popularity, one of the first songs of Mukhit, which narrates about a beautiful girl. Compositions of such a famous singer always conquered people with their soul and power. Baluan Sholak is a very talented singer and composer. His song "Galiya" dedicated to the beloved and describing the world of tender feelings and love is very popular as it contains the unique combination of melody and lyricism.

Madi Bapiuly is a prominent person in the national arts of the end of XIX century. He is the author of the wonderful songs "Karkaraly", "Shyrkynai". Although being difficult to perform, his song "Karakesek" was very popular; and only a singer with a strong voice and with mas-

terly vocal can sing this song. It describes the grief and sorrow, the ways to overcome them thanks to the passionate aspiration for light and freedom. It narrates about the fact that the powerful will is not broken, how it becomes stronger gradually gaining its force.

Ybyrai Sandybaiuly is the famous Kazakh singer and composer, the author of many popular songs: "Zheldirme", "Shalkyma", "Altybasar", "Kaldyrgan" and others. The most popular and frequently performed song "Gakku" is devoted to the beloved girl Kakima, whose beauty is compared to the grace of a white swan. The popular song "Zhiyrma bes" describes the lost youth and the old age that came with its sorrows and grieves. These songs are performed by the brightest modern performers of the Kazakh song.

One of the remarkable pages in the history of Kazakh traditional song of the beginning of XX century is the creative work of Maira Shamsutdinova. She was amongst several famous women singers who were performing the national professional songs. There are many songs composed by women, thought their participation in the public life in those times was within the social roles assigned by the mode of life and traditions.

The national professional song was formed within such institution as sal and sery. The possibility of a woman to become a professional singer is the evidence of her certain development stage. She achieves such a level when she gains popular independence, internal integrity that allows her existing without the dependence on the social



conditions. Maira's creating work, in spite of her popularity, is not known to full extent. But in all the parts of Kazakhstan her bright song "Maira" is sung. This song is the typical self-portrait of the author. However it does not inform about her belonging to a certain generation.

In the foreground you can hear the motif of her woman's attractiveness, and her calls to the contemporaries to have fun and to sing while young determine the general bright and joyful nature of the song, which contains not only popular similar melodies in kara-olen but also the aesthetics of Kazakh sal and sery, as well as their unique "epicureanism", the cult of youth and characteristic idleness. Roots of the spiritual culture of Kazakhs go into the depth of the centuries. Their oral folk creativity, the most ancient form of which is the songs of shepherds, which reflected the cults of animals and their patrons, as well as shepherd's labor.

Patriarchal and feudal mode of life, Kazakh traditions are vividly shown in the ritual songs, for example, in the wedding songs: the festive song of the wedding party, the song-dialogue of dzhigits and girls about the change in the fate of a bride, the bride's song-farewell to her native aul, the song-consolation, the song of the people from the bridegroom's aul who meet the bride etc. There are various ritual songs: songs-farewells, songs that inform about a sad event, song-sorrow about a person who died etc. Historical songs narrate about the national rebellions and their leaders - Srym

Datov, Isatai Taimanov, Makhambet Utemisov etc.

Modern songs of the Kazakhs have changed under the impression of the Russian, European and other cultures. In XX century the theatrical art appeared (in opera, operetta etc.), which took place not only within the classical repertoire but with the consideration of local national traditions. At present, significant scientific-research work is done for the fixation and renewal (existing in the rural area and used during several rituals) of the traditional and ritual songs, which are the unique part of the global cultural heritage. In order to support the national song heritage, republican competitions and festivals of the performers are regularly held.

Epos

Great part in the traditional culture of Kazakh people is occupied by the oral poetic art, which reflects their life, ideals and viewpoints. Basic genres of oral poetic arts (Kazakh folklore):

heroic, social-domestic and lyrical-dramatic epos, ritual and lyrical poetry, historical songs, pastoral, magical, wedding and funeral songs, fairy-tales, traditions, legends, true stories, aitys, proverbs, sayings, riddles, rhetoric genres etc. All these genres appeared in different times, each of them went through the longest way of development. History of Kazakh folklore is closely linked with the ethnogeny of Kazakhs lasting for centuries and mostly finished by the beginning of XV century. Folk



poetry was accompanying the nomads during their all lives. It reflected all the important events: birth and death, war conflicts and peaceful labour, holidays and roaming.

Amongst the traditional oral poetic arts the following is distinguished:

Epic Works

"Kyryk batyry" ("Forty warriors") is the epic collection that consists of forty sections about the deeds of forty warriors. And the performance of the poems of each section would last 7-10 days. It was written for the first time in 1942 from the words of narrator Muryn Zhyrau. "Kyryk batyry" refers to the epoch when the independent Kazakh political union did not yet exist and the tribe unions, which later con-

stituted the ethnical basis of the Kazakh nation, were parts of Gold Horde, Crimean and Kazan Khanate. In the epos every warrior represents power and courage of the nomads being the national ideal of the leader of the tribe union.

The epos idea is the protection of the country's independence, praising the fight against the fore-

ign invaders, promotion of the unity of the nation. It expressly reflects the morals and traditions of the Kazakh people, shows such qualities as courage, justice, wisdom, tenderness and love for the native nation. Study of these cultural artworks has a great meaning for the spiritual revival of the Kazakh nation, consolidation of the

historical self-consciousness and for the popularization of the nomad civilization heritage and of the whole Turk world.

Aitys (singing poetic competition)

In Kazakh culture, "yelendip" (song writer) deserved the title of "akyn" after participation in several competitions - aitys and after defeating one of the famous akyns (akyn is an improviser, the bearer of elevated high poetry). A real akyn was considered the one who defeated the rivals with artistic resourceful, witty improvisations.

Kazakh oral-poetic fund contains the various types of aitys:

1. Traditional zhar-zhar. Wedding song performed in turn by the chorus of young people and girls when a bride enters the house of her groom.

2. Spell "badik". It is performed by the men's and women's choruses in order to expulse the spirit of the disease "badik", as well as "badik-aitys" directly when girls and boys use the form of the spell "badik" for joyful song-poetic competitions.

3. "Kiym aitys" when the competing young boy and girl use the existing poems improvising the last lines.



4. Aitys of a boy and a girl, which has two types: kaiym aitys and aitys when the competing people improvise the text completely.

5. Riddle Aitys improvised with verse.

6. Competition in the performance of musical plays - kyuis (kyui tartys) or epos.

7. Aitys of the orator-sheshens and biis when solving various tribe disputes.

8. "Tak, pak, tas" when each participant tries to continue the verse pronounced by other participants of this poetic play trying to select the most successful rhyme and to complete the line.

9. Aitys of akyns, which requires high professionalism in poetic improvisation and extremely high level of the development of poetic tradition.

Aitys genre continues to live in Kazakh culture in our days. In all the times, Kazakh traditions of oral competitions reflected the reality, artistically reproduced the historical essence characteristic for this social and cultural situation. And in our days aitys traditions are the actualized culture of the past as it "mobilizes" the experience of the past for the sake of the present.

Competitions of akyn-improvisers are characterized by the width of not only voice (singing) but by the speech (language) diapason. The most prominent akyns received the titles "sal" and "sery" (Birzhan sal, Akan sery). Sals and serys were the performers and the bearers of the oral folk creativity of the nomad civilization and had the high status in the traditional Kazakh society. They were different from others not only by wearing different clothes but also by the unique behavior in the society. Sals and serys were always surrounded by the poet-improvisers, legend-tellers, wrestlers and musicians. The most prominent sals and serys with their retinues were always travelling along the steppe taking part in the people's feasts.

Thus, when coming to an aul, sals and serys were like peace bringers.

Taking into consideration all the mentioned features of aitys, which specify its uniqueness, we can refer aitys to the unique, authentic and the most dynamic types of Kazakh folk creativity. In principle, no other cultures have anything similar to aitys and this shows its uniqueness as a cultural phenomenon and confirms the contribution of the Kazakh tradition into the treasury of the global civilization.

Folklore

Since ancient times, poetic creativity entered the life mode of the Kazakh people. The works of the early and middle-age Turk literature referred to VIII-XI centuries are the evidence of the presence of the formed poetic traditions of Turk-speaking people who lived on the territory of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The most important feature of Kazakh oral creativity is improvisation. It was characteristic not only to the works of famous folk poets, but it also had wide population.

Kazakh folklore reflects the rich and many-sided experience of the people. Oral poetic creativity reflected the social consciousness of Kazakhs, their social and family mode of life in the conditions of the nomad patriarchal



feudal society. Unique genres of Kazakh oral poetry are in close connection with life of the people. Along with the fairy-tales, proverbs and riddles, significant place in Kazakh folklore before the twenties of XX century was occupied by the heroic and social epos, poetic competitions and various ritual songs.

Traditions and way of life of Kazakhs are reflected in the ritual songs, which would always accompany all the significant events in the life of the people: feasts, matchmaking and wedding, funeral and commemoration. Such ritual songs as toy

bastar, zhar-zhar, bet-ashar were very popular. Toy Bastar is the song announcing the start of the feast.

Zhar-Zhar is the wedding song performed by boys and girls. A bride sings about her destiny, that she now has to stay in someone's family, away from her native aul. Men (her bridegroom and his relatives) are striving in their counter song to persuade the bride in the necessity of the marriage, soothing her that in the groom's aul she will find the new family, and the husband's parents will replace her father and mother.

Bet-Ashar is the song accompanying the ritual of introducing a young bride to the relatives and friends of her husband. Its main content is the instructions to the bride who (in the conditions of the patriar-



chal feudal laws) had to obey to her husband, his elder relatives. The song yestirtu was performed when informing about the sad news (about death), and the song zhoktau is the song-mourning.

Ritual songs forming the necessary ceremonial link praised the personal qualities and merits of people, their humanity, honesty and labour. Kazakh fairy-tales often include such magic characters as one-eye giant, seven-head dragon, old she-ogre who would swallow people; zhez tyrnak is she-creature who would kill people with her metal claws.

They were representing evil that would hinder people to achieve their goals and that would make problems for people. But eventually people would win - some fighter for justice and truth. Some magic creatures were helping the people in the fight against evil: tausogar is the one who moves mountains; kolzhutar is the one who can swallow the sea, sakkulak is the one who can hear other ends of the world, zhelayak is the one who can cover long distances. Animals with supernatural properties were friends and assistants of people. Magic horse Ker-kula that would cover long distances had the ability to talk. Positive characters were also sheep, goat, camel and cow.

Along with fairy-tales about the animals there were fairy-tales about the everyday life, which contained not magic creatures but characters from the actual reality. Thus, the character in the fairy-tale "Ayaz Bii", which is popular among the people, was the



poor man who was smarter and wittier than khan and all his viziers and who became the khan himself thanks to his personal qualities. Many legends are connected with the names of nifty Zhirenshe and his wife Karlygash who would always win the khans with their quick wits, irresistible logics of their thoughts, and there are legends about Aldar-kose who thanks to his rich imagination, slyness and cunningness easily defeats those who have power and authority.

As we have already mentioned, the ideology of Kazakhs in different epochs, the fight for justice and good were reflected in many fairy-tales - magic fairy-tales and fairy-tales about the everyday life, diary-tales about animals - horse, sheep, camel, which are the friends of the people. Traditional and character-

istic form of Kazakh folklore was aitys - the song dialogue, competition of folk poets in improvisation. The best songs created during these competitions were transferred from one generation to another. The unique unrepeatable genre of Kazakh folklore is lyrical song, improvised song filled in with the feelings praising love, the beauty of a girl etc. Many talented akyns (poets-improvisers) would not only create songs and music but they were also the experts of eposes, legends, songs and traditions. Nowadays great attention is paid to preserving and reviving Kazakh folklore, local and foreign scientists conduct its study, fixation and publication. Maintaining traditions of akyns' professionalism, their concert activity, teaching students and conducting research studies on this

topic is one of the directions in the international cooperation of foreign companies, in particular, the representative offices of UNESCO in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Musical Instruments



Kobyz

Kobyz is a bow instrument with two strings. It was hollowed out of one whole wooden piece - juniper (arsha), maple, pine-tree and birch. The instrument consisted of three parts: head (bas), middle (base is keude) and lower part (ayak). The base is made in the form of an open bowl stretched down-side. This lower part of the instrument is covered with leather (sounding board). The support (tiek) is established on it.

Even in our days, the strings for kobyz are made of horse-tail. The bow has an arched shape and it looks like a bow weapon: the bun of horsehair is tied to both ends of the bent branch and fixed by the strong thread of camel wool. The performer enfold the bow from aside with his hand. The shaman instrument looked quite strangely: there were owl's feathers on the head, various metal plates in the form of horn curls and ringing bird images were hanging around the head; the mirror was located on the bottom of the bowl. All these were not just deco-

ration but the shaman signs-symbols. Kobyz possesses unusually rich and colourful timbre.

Zhetygen

Zhetygen is an ancient seven-stringed plucking instrument, which reminds of gusli or lying harp. The most ancient type of zhetygen looked like the prolonged box hollowed out of the wooden piece. Such zhetygen did not have the upper sounding board and pins. The strings were stretched by hand from the outer side of the instrument. Later the upper part of zhetygen was covered with the wooden sounding board. Assyks were out under each string from two sides. Moving them it was possible to tune the string. If assyks were drawn closer to each other the tune was rising, and if

drawn apart the tune was falling. String tuning was made by the pins and by moving the supports.



Sherter

Is an ancient stringed plucking instrument. Sherter is played the same way as the dombra. But sherter is much smaller than dombra, it had a short neck without the frets, it had different, stronger sound than dombra.

Sherter resembled kobyz because it was also hollowed out of the whole wooden piece, it had the bent shape and the base was covered with leather. Two strings were made of horsehair.

The instrument had just one pin; therefore both strings were put through the head, then one of them was attached to the pin and the other string

was attached to the head itself. Tuning of strings was related to the long shape of the instrument. The string fixed on the sherter head was stretched by hand and the second string fixed on the pin was tuned corresponding to the pitch of the first string. Sherter was mainly used for accompanying songs, tales and legends. It was popular amongst the shepherds.

Dombra



Dombra is the most widely used Kazakh folk instrument. Dombra can be met in each yurt; it was referred to as one the most necessary and obligatory things in the life of Kazakhs. The history of this instrument's origin goes into the depth of centuries. There are two types of dombra - western and eastern. Different shapes of dombra were caused by the features of two performance traditions. In order to perform fast, masterly tokpe-

kuis it was necessary that the left hand could easily move and slide along the neck. That is why the neck of western dombra was thin and long.

This technique could not be used when playing the eastern could not be used when playing eastern dombra with wide short neck. Sizes of instruments and shapes of the bases had an influence on the force of the sound: bigger size means louder dombra. The sound also depended on the technique of the right hand: in tokpe-kuis the sound was extracted on both strings with strong hand movements, and in shertpe soft plucking of strings with certain fingers was used. Thus, there is the close link between the shape of domra and kuis performed. Dombra could be not only two-string but also three-string. In the past three-string dombras could be met in different regions of Kazakhstan, at present they remain only in Semipalatinsk oblast.

Sybyzgy

Amongst the wind instruments sybyzgy was the most favourite instrument. It entered the musical life of the people. Sybyzgy helped the shepherds in solitude at the far-away grasslands. It brought joy to people during the evening hours of rest when the musicians were telling and playing beautiful ancient legends and stories.

Sybyzgy-players were always welcome to all toys and feasts. Wide popularity of sybyzgy was connected with the simplicity it was made. Sybyzgy was made of hollow reed tube, on which three holes were cut. It was easy and fast to make sybyzgy, but it was very difficult to play it. Sybyzgy kuis were usually two-voice melodies: the first voice was extracted from the instrument and the second voice represented the guttural sound of the musician-performer. It was necessary to master the technique of simultaneous performance of both voices. Besides reed sybyzgy there were also wooden sybyzgy.

Dabyl

Dabyl is a percussion instrument, the rim with a handle covered from both sides with leather. Usually the warriors were using dabyl (during the attack). It was the instrument with a very strong and loud sound, which served for making signals. In ancient times percussion instruments (dabyl, dauylpaz and shyndauyl) were widely used in the life of Kazakhs. Loud sounds of percussion instruments were calling the aul residents for hunting, for conducting religious rituals; and they were also informing about the forthcoming migration.

Uran

Uran is a wind musical instrument used by warriors. Two tubes of different length have three holes each. It is made according to the picture of the musician, researcher A. Eikhgorn who saw the Kazakhs using this instrument in 1880-es. Wind instruments were used by Turk people in very ancient times. Researchers claim that the origin of wind instruments is oriental as they had been found amongst the nations of Central Asia. Ancient wind instruments did not have holes and they were used just for signalling. After the holes had appeared on the tube wind instruments were enriched with additional technical capacities.

Asatayak

Asatayak is a percussion instrument. It looked like a baton - a stick with the flat head decorated with ornament and metal rings, pendants. It had open and acute sound. In order to make the sound louder, baksy were using konyrau - small bells fixed to the head of asatayak. When shaking the instrument, konyrau were amplifying the melody with the metal ring. Asatayak and dangyra (tambourine) were the attributes of shaman rituals. That was why they were not widely used

amongst the people. Already in the last century both instruments started to be forgotten gradually and they were replaced with kobyz, which took the role of these percussive instruments.

Dangyra

Dangyra is a percussion musical instrument. It represented a tambourine: the rim covered from one side with leather, inside of which there were small metal chains, rings and plates, sounding when the leather is stricken and during the movement there was an additional noise effect. Dangyra was an attribute of shaman rituals.

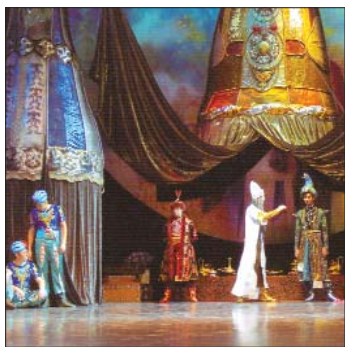
Popularity of musical art was promoted by constantly travelling around auls professional singers (olenshy, anshy) and musicians (kuishy). The most popular performers were those who could not only sing and play an instrument but also had the gift to improvise on important topics. Narrators and poets-improvisers when performing legends and fairy-tales, epic or historical legends were not only signing but also were narrating and they were playing an instrument. This all intensified their performance with expressive gesticulation and mimics.

The musical culture of Kazakhstan of the end of 19 - beginning of 20 centuries is characterized by the presence of the large group of talented composers, authors of many folk songs and instrumental works. The most prominent composers and musicians are dombra players Kurmangazy Sagyrbayev (1806 - 1879), Dauletkerei Shigayev (1820 - 1880), singers Birzhan Kozhagulov (1825 - 1877), Mukhit Meraliyev (1841-1918), Abai Kunanbayev (1845 - 1904), Zhayau Mussa Baizhanov (1835 - 1929), Akhansery Koramsin (1843 - 1916), Yestai Berkimbayev (1868 - 1946), kobyz player Ykhylas Dukenov (1843 - 1916).

Nowadays production of the folk musi-

cal instruments as one of the most interesting directions of the revived crafts and decorative production is developing because the further development of the concert activity of various professional ensembles continues. They have large demand not only amongst the specialists but also amongst the collector

Cinema & Theatre



Today's Almaty is a city of high theatrical culture. One of the oldest and most celebrated theatres of the country is the Abai Kazak Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. National operas and ballets - ABAI, DUDARAI, KAMAR-SULU, KYZ-ZHIBEK, AKSAK-KULAN , ALIYA - as well as classical creations of the world opera staged there have been a great success with the public. The names of the composers M. Tulebaev, E. Brusilovsky, L. Khamidi ,K. Kuzhamiarov, G. Zhubanov ,A. Serkebaev and E. Rakhmadiev are inscribed in the history of the Kazak operatic art with golden

letters.

The glorious traditions of the pioneers of the national operatic art - the famous singers K. Baiseitova and A. Kashaubaev, B. Tulegenova and R. Zhamanova, E. Serkebaev and R. M. Abdulin - are maintained by the representatives of today's generation of the musical culture, among whom particularly notable are the singers A. Dnishev and SH. Abilov. Immortal Kazak and foreign classics, as well as modern plays, are staged in the Auezov Kazak Drama Theatre whose high artistic reputation is closely linked with the name of prominent director A. Mambetov, Lermontov Russian Academic Theatre and Uighur and Korean drama theatres, the Academic Young People's Theatre and Puppet Theatre. The best creations of the Kazak Film Studio, set up in 1944, are known in the world cinema for their high and original artistry. Among the Kazak film-makers that received international acclaim, Sh.

Aimanov, the unforgettable master of directing, is especially prominent, many films get medals and grants. Almaty is closely linked with life and work of Dzhambul Dzhabaev, the akyn (folk poet - singer) who glorified it in his poetry, Mukhtar Auezov and Gabit Musrepov, the best representatives of the Kazak literature of the 20th century.

Among the contemporaries whose names are called with special pride are outstanding writers O. Suleimenov and R. Seisenbaev who were brought up on the literature heritage of the great Kazak thinker and poet, the founder and classic of the new Kazak written literature Abai Kunanbaev whose anniversary is widely celebrated by the world community in 1995.



Ecotourism

Kazakhstan has many possibilities for ecotourism development, due to its size and extreme diversity of landscapes. But, as in a majority of other countries, the potential sites for ecotourism development are located within natural territories with increased protection, or areas which have experienced little human visitation because of their inaccessibility.

From a practical point of view, natural territories with the highest potential for ecotourism development are located near Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan. There is an international airport and a large railway station in this city. Foreign embassies and consulates also are located there, as are representative offices of international and transnational companies and corporations. A sufficient amount of large and small hotels, restaurants and entertainment create possibilities for accommodating leisure tourists.

A belt of sand deserts begins within a one hour drive to the north from Almaty; whilst in a southern direction, there are diverse mountain landscapes. In the south, the city borders Ile-Alatausky National Park, whilst 20 km



Rafting

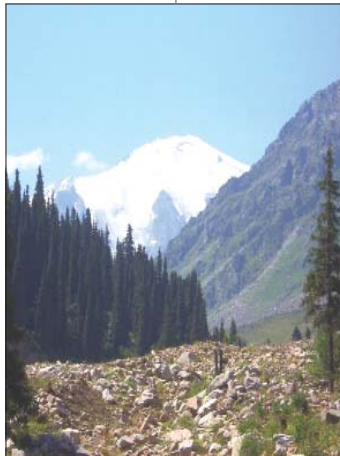
For the rafting on the Ili River you'll be provided with safety equipment, and Guides will give you safety instruction.

The Ili River is rated category 1 by international standards, which means that it is very calm.

Mountaineering

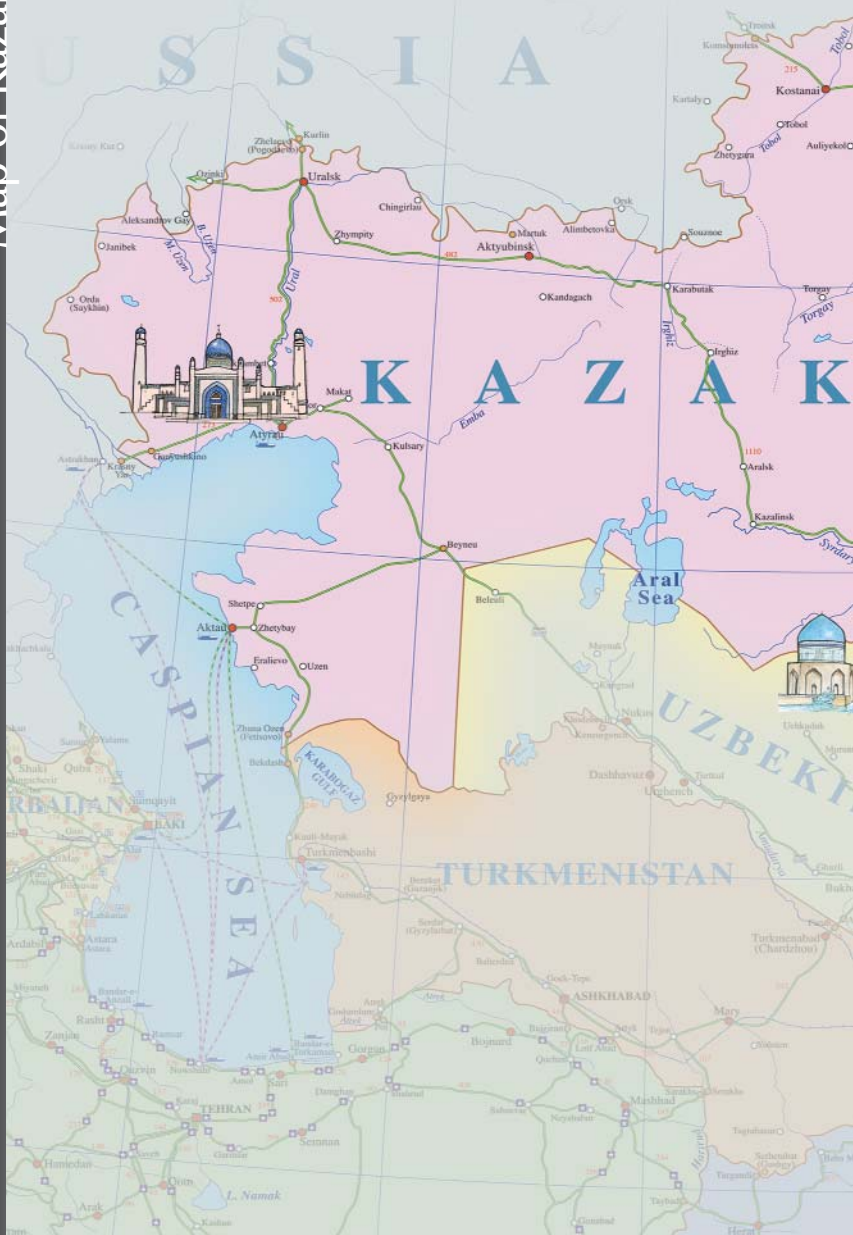
The Republic of Kazakhstan has unique mountaineering resources, among which are the Northern Tien Shan Mountains, located in Almaty Region. Another name for this place is

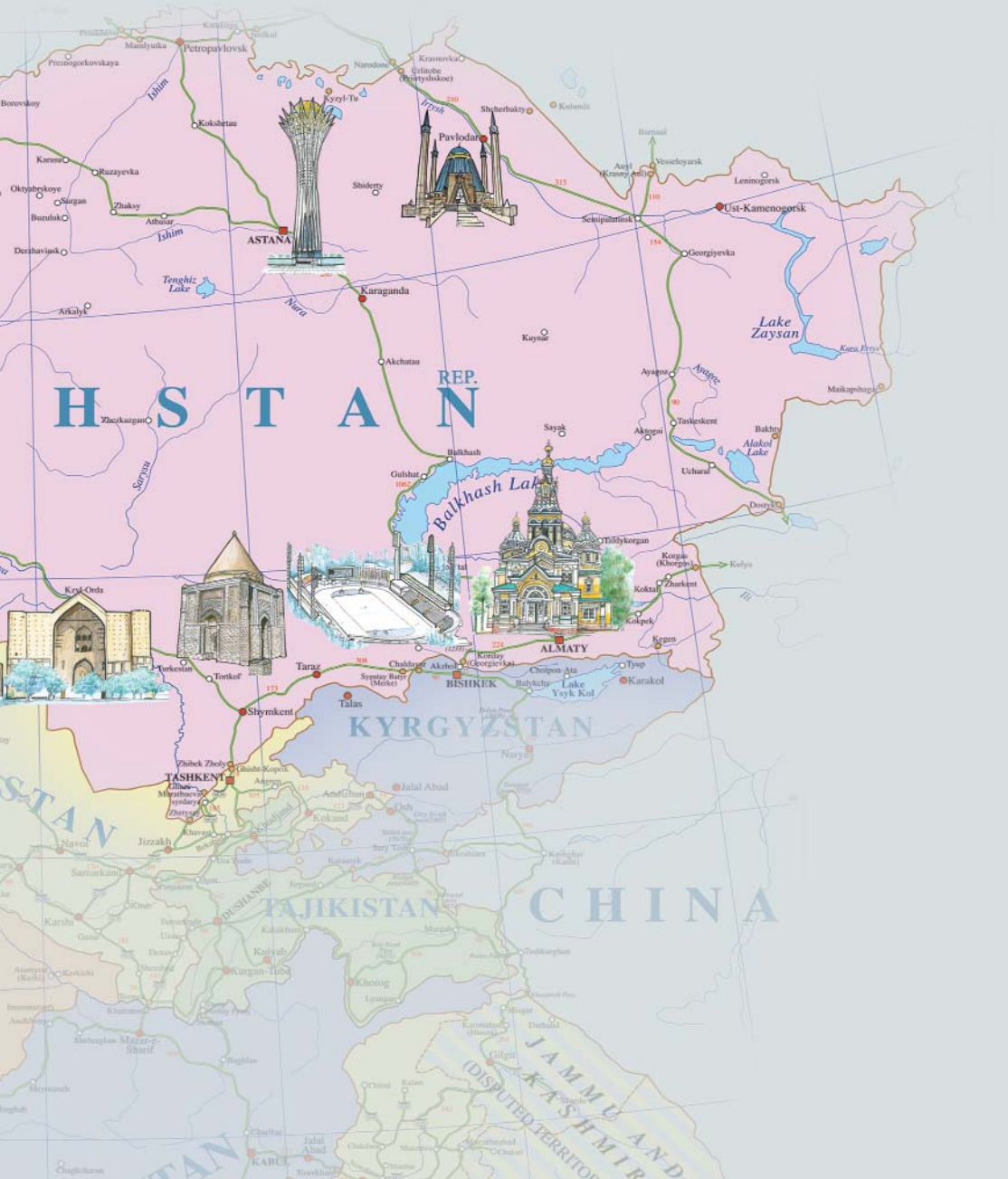
Zhetysu or Semirechie, meaning "Land of Seven Rivers" and it drains into Lake Balkhash. Zhetysu is Kazakhstan's pearl, a beautiful and unique place. Striking secrets are held here, where the routes and historic fates of many tribes and nations crossed in the distant past.



KAZAKHSTAN

Map of Kazakhstan





Top 10 Places to Visit

Zenkov Cathedral, Almaty



The Cathedral is one of the few tsarist-era buildings to survive the 1911 earthquake, despite the fact it is built entirely of wood and constructed without nails. It is also one of the eight most unique wooden buildings in the world. After the revolution it was used as historical museum, cultural center, and just in 1990 again it was given a status of a Russian Orthodox cathedral.

Arasan Baths, Almaty

Almaty's central bath-house is situated in a large, impressive dome-shaped building opposite Panfilov Park. Three types of bath are available at Arasan: Russian, Finnish and Turkish. The Russian and Finnish baths share the same plunge pool and you can try both on one ticket. The Finnish bath is dry while the Russian version is a sea of steam.

The Turkish bath consists of stone platforms heated to three different temperatures and plunge pool. Various kinds of massage are on offer.

Medeo & Chymbulak

The weekend playgrounds of Medeo and Chymbulak are in the foothills of the Zailiysky Alatau, 15km from Almaty. Situated at an altitude of 1700m (5576ft), Medeo consists of a smattering of buildings built around one of the world's largest speed skating rink, Chymbulak. Between October and May, half of Almaty seems to spend their weekend leisure time whizzing round the rink. Chymbulak, a further 500m closer to God, is one of Central Asia's top skiing spots. It will be hosting 2011 Winter Asian Games paving its way to host the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. The ski season lasts from November to April, though it's usually best in January and February. Further into the foothills is the picturesque turquoise Bolshoe Almatinskoe Lake. All three spots are good places to begin treks into the Zailiysky Alatau and the Küngey Alatau mountains. Regular buses run from Almaty to Medeo. The only way up from Medeo to Chymbulak is on foot (an hour) or by taxi or hitching.

Köl-Say Lakes

These three pretty green lakes lie amid the steep forested foothills of the Küngey Alatau, 110km east of Almaty. The lakes are strung along the Köl-Say River at an altitude of around 2000m. Camping and trout fishing are great. June and August are the best months to visit, but keep a close eye on the weather. Travelers can arrange helicopter excursions to the lakes from Almaty or reach them overland from Saty. The lower lake is accessible by vehicle but you're better off hiring horses in Saty. It's possible to trek from the pastures of the middle lake over the 3200m Sary-Bulak pass to the Kyrgyzstan village of Balbay on the shore of Lake Issyk-Kul. By horse, this can be

done in a day; on foot it takes two days. From the pass, there are fantastic views north towards the Kazak steppe and south into the Issyk-Kul basin.

Altyn-Emel (National Park)

It is situated 150 km from Almaty in South-Eastern Kazakhstan in Zhungar mountain region. This national park covers an area of 600 thousand hectares.

The area contains about 190 archaeological monuments of burial mounds and settlements of Bronze Age. It is an interesting combination of various topographies, has abundance of vegetation, animals and fish.

It has a rich fauna including snow leopard, wolf, fox, steppe cat and many others.

Aisha-Bibi Mausoleum, Taraz

Aisha-Bibi is an 11th or 12th -century mausoleum for an Uyghur noble woman located in the village of Aisha Bibi, 18 km west of Taraz. It is locally famous as a monument of love and faithfulness.

Aisha Bibi Mausoleum is the only monument in the whole Central Asia faced completely with fretted terracotta. It is included into the UNESCO list of the most valuable historical architectural monuments of the mankind.

Babadzhi-Khatun, Taraz

The Mausoleum of Babadzha-Khatun was built in XI century, and is famous for its 16-rib umbrella shaped dome. There is no second roofing of this kind in the Central Asian architecture. The figured brickwork decorates the walls of the Mausoleum.

Khodja Ahmed Yassawi Moseolum, Turkestan

Considered one of Kazakhstan's cultural treasures, the Mausoleum is considered something of a Mecca. Khodja

Ahmed Yassawi was a holy Islamic person and his huge, domed tomb is one of the most stunning architectural constructions in Central Asia, construction of which was begun by Timur in the 1390s. It houses a sacred two-ton vessel, made of seven metals and used for storing holy water.

Aksu-Zhabagly Nature Reserve

This beautiful 750 sq km reserve in the foothills of the Talassky Alatau range is one of the highlights of southern Kazakhstan and the easiest of the country's nature reserves to visit. For more than 70 years, the mountain woods have been safe from an axe. One cannot find another place with as many wonderful tree species and juniper woods. The Giant Aksu canyon 15 km long and 500 m deep has Tien-Shan brown bear, Siberia ibex and snow leopard.

Baikonur Cosmodrome

Lately, Baikonur space launch site has become very popular for space tourism.

This has been possible after opening the site more to the world community as a result of transparency policy pursued by Russia.. Building on this popularity and its rich culture in



exploring the space, Kazakh tourist operators are active organizing tours to Baikonur city. The fascinating tours offer a lot of opportunities to be familiar with the gates to the space, history of the space exploration, etc.

5 Major Cities

Astana

Places to see

Astana, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 1997, is situated on a picturesque bank of the Ishim River. Astana has become one of the largest business centers in the region.

Every year the city hosts various international industrial exhibitions, conferences, musical contests and festivals of the Kazakhstani people.

In 1999 by decision of UNESCO, Astana was awarded the title of World City. The city has an opera and Ballet Theater, a drama theater and a variety of museums. The monuments of Astana are a linking element between the new capital and its history, held in esteem by all the people of Kazakhstan.

Currently, many administrative buildings and business and entertainment centers are under construction in Astana.



Baiterek

Baiterek is the symbol of creation, independence and prosperity of sovereign state, its representation for many years. All citizens and guests of Astana admire the scenery of this architectural construction. Every night it blossoms out like a flower a fairy tale, pleases and enchants by its colors. Construction is 105 m high at the height of 97 m there is an observation place.

Presidential Cultural Centre

It is a multi functional scientific research and cultural-educational complex.



The complex comprises a museum with halls dedicated to ethnography, gold and precious metals, galleries, archaeology, history, art and etc., a library and a concert hall.



Duman Entertainment Centre

Duman is a many-sided palette of entertainments inviting guests for good family recreation and includes such



attractions as an oceanarium, 3D movie theater, theater, area for slot machines and interactive games, multifunctional sideshow venue, bowling, night club, casino, hotel, cafes and restaurants and an indoor aqua park.

Places to Stay

Akku Hotel

 22, Ruskulov St.
 Tel: +7 (7172) 15 27 22, 15 29 50



Comfort Hotel

 60, Kosmonavtov St., Chubary district
 Tel: +7 (717) 37 10 21

Okan InterContinental Astana Hotel

 90-8, Abai st.
 Tel: +7 (717 2) 30 10 00
 Fax: (717 2) 39 10 10
 E- mail: www.interconti.com

Hotel "Sunkar"

 51, Sembinova st.
 Tel: +7 (7172) 34 58 03, 34 55 02

Hotel "Intourist"




 8, Beibitshilik
 Tel: +7 (717 2) 15 22 73, 32 03 19, 32 01 30

Where & What to Eat




In general, Kazakhs prefer meat dishes. Favorite national dish of Kazakhs is beshbarmak. Such dishes of horse meat as kazy, karta, zhal, zhaya and of course, kumys (mare's milk) are favorite. Medicinal drink kumys (mare's milk) has curative qualities and effect and is used for treatment of lung and intestinal-gastric illnesses.

In many cities of the country there are many restaurants and cafes where you are offered the variety of dishes of the national, European and other cuisine



Astana Nur,

 3/2 Respublik Avenue, AREA
 Open : Daily, 11am-last guest
 Tel : 223 922 or 223 366

East-West,

 2/2 Kabanbai Batyr Avenue, AREA
 Open : Daily, noon-midnight
 Tel : 243 054




Egorkino,

 93 Auezov Street, AREA
 Tel : 32 38 78
 Website : www.egorkino.kz

Farhi,

 3 Bokeikhan Street (just off Kenesary), AREA
 Open : Daily, noon-last guest
 Tel : 321 899 or 320 406

Korolevskaya Ohota,

 Near the Eurasia 2 Trade Centre, Microdistrict 4
 Open : Daily, noon-midnight
 Tel : 34 18 17

What to Buy

Traditional souvenirs and crafts of Kazakhstan are handmade carpets and Felt goods, handmade dolls, rugs, and slippers made with boiled lamb's wool and natural dyes, handmade metal jewelry, including a "tumar", which is a pendant that opens like a locket, and Handcrafted leather chess sets in a leather folding case with a board pattern stitched on.

Almaty

Places to See



City of Apple-tree

It is not by chance, that a most beautiful city at the foot of the emerald Tien-Shan ridges is called "garden city". In spring, when a southern outskirts is buried in blossom of apple, apricot and cherry gardens, the city becomes a fabulous sight. Its magnificent green attire and the grand panorama of the mountains distinguish Almaty from other cities. Gardens, groves, parks, boulevards and flowerbeds occupy over eight thousand hectares of the city territory. Some historians argue that in ancient times, the trade settlement of Almaty was located along the famous caravan route of Great Silk Road.

In the 13th century it was destroyed by Chenghis Khan's horde. In 1854, not far from the ruins of the ancient town, there appeared the town of Verny. With the coming of the Soviet power, the town was renamed into Alma-Ata, and from 1929 to 1997 it was capital of Kazakhstan. In 1997 N. Nazarbayev, President of sovereign Kazakhstan decided to move the capital from Almaty to Akmola. Although it has lost the status of capital, Almaty remains the largest financial, economic and cultural center of Central Asia.

Almaty dwellers live at a height of 550 to 1,950 m above sea level. This is one of the few cities in the world which boast modern high-rise buildings in spite of seismicity and mountainous environment.

A. Kasteyev Arts Gallery

The museum contain over 20,000 storage units: paintings, graphics, sculptures, folk arts and crafts, scene paintings, etc. it has 14 halls intended for permanent expositions, periodic or mobile exhibitions. Its collections are a fine evidence of arts history of both the East and the West from ancient times to our day.

Cathedral

Svyato-Voznesenski Orthodox Cathedral (also called the Zenkov Cathedral) is built of wood, entirely without nails. Its wall paintings and screens were painted by local artist Nicholai



Chludov while the interior decorations were made in art workshops in Moscow and Kiev. Its height is about 50 meters. It is one of the eight most unique wooden buildings in the world. Of special interest is the fact that it survived the 1911 earthquake with a magnitude of 10 on the Richter scale. Used as a museum of local lore, history, and economy during the Soviet period, in May 1995 the Cathedral has been returned to the Russian Orthodox Church and restored.



Arasan - Baths

Almaty's central bath-house is situated in a large, impressive dome-shaped building opposite Panfilov Park. Three types of bath are available at Arasan: Russian, Finnish and Turkish. The Russian and Finnish baths share the same plunge pool and you can try both on one ticket.

The Finnish bath is dry while the Russian version is a sea of

steam. The Turkish bath consists of stone platforms heated to three different temperatures and a plunge pool. Various kinds of massage are on offer.

Central (Green) Bazaar

The Central Market, otherwise known as the Green Bazaar, brings to life the finest traditions of the Asian bazaar. Here you can experience a true taste of the East. This is not just a market, but a meeting-place of various Asian cultures in miniature.

You can sample the wealth of produce grown throughout Central Asia as many of the farmers have come from neighboring countries. In the bazaar's open courtyard there are numerous shashlyk stands, a flea market, flower stalls and a restaurant serving local dishes. The fruit and vegetables at the Green Bazaar are extremely good value in summer.

Almaty Mosque

It is the biggest in Central Asia. It can accommodate up to 10 thousand believers at a time.

Museums

Archeology Museum

📍 44 Dostyk at Shevchenko
 🕒 Open daily 10:00-18:00
 ☎ Tel.: 61-85-85

Central State Museum

📍 44 Furmanov above Satpaev St., near Republic Square
 🕒 Open 9 AM to 6 PM; Closed Tuesdays
 ☎ Tel.: 64-23-90.

Geology Museum

📍 69A Kabanbai Batyr Street.
 🕒 Open 9:00-18:00. Closed Sunday
 ☎ Tel.: 61-86-63

Museum of Kazakh Folk Instruments

This museum has over 1,000 exhibits in stock. The collection consists of about 60 types and varieties of



Kazakh folk instruments, including some that belonged to outstanding singers, improvisers, poets and composers.

If you press the button on each exhibit's case you will hear a recording of the instrument being played. The museum building is interesting in itself. Tapes of traditional Kazakh music, which can be bought at the museum, make a good souvenir.

Archeological Museum of the National Academy of Science

The museum is located on Dostyk Avenue which, architecturally, is one of the most beautiful streets in the city. The apartment complex accommodating the museum on one of its floors consists of three buildings and is called the "Three Athletes."

In front of the museum, is the Monument to Zhambyl - the famous Kazakh poet. The monument, built in 1997 in honor of the poet's birth, is based on a granite rock with a spring welling out and an old man with a dombra in his hands sitting at its foot. Open week-round, 10 am-5 pm. Admission charge.

Nature Museum

The Nature museum is a section of the Zoology Research Institute of the Academy of Science. It offers two displays: on paleontology and zoology. The paleontology section features some very interesting exhibits with fossilized skeletons of animals and petrified wood found in the territory of Kazakhstan dating back to early geological epochs.


The collection includes the original fossilized skeletons of dinosaurs, giant rhinoceroses, various species of proboscideans: mastodon, mammoth, elephant; ancient giant pigs; fossils of tortoise and others and will leave the visitor feeling as if he found a Jurassic park.


The display on zoology includes a great variety of birds, mammals, butterflies and other insects, snakes and reptiles inhabiting the Kazakh land.


Visitors can discover the wonders of a mountain lake, Central Asia steppe with herds of saiga and tugai thickets (steppe grove) through landscape dioramas. The museum is a delightful place for exploring the natural beauty of Kazakhstan. Open daily 10 am-4 pm.



Theaters

 Auezov-Kazakh State Academy Drama Theater

 Between Abai and Kurmangazy next to Zhandosov

 Tel.: 67-53-00 or 67-50-64.


German Theater

 64 D Rozybakiyev and Satpaev.

 Tel.: 46-57-74.


New Stage (Novaya Scena)


 103 Panfilov.

 Tel: 32-38-49.

Russian Drama Theater (Lermontov Theater)

 43 Abai and Ablai Khan


 Box offices are usually open from 10:00-18:00 with a lunch break between 14:00-15:00

 Tel: 69-56-56, 69-54-42 or 62-82-73.

Places to Stay

Hotel Almaty

 85 Kabanbai Batur str,

 Tel: +7 3272 720070.

Hotel Kazakhstan

 Dostyk ave 52,


 Tel: +7 3272 582270


Grand Aiser Hotel

 1 Pozharskogo str,

 Tel: +7 3272 503350

Kazzhol

 Cogol 127/1 (between Nauryzbat Batyr and Seyfullin)

 Tel: +7 3272 508941

Where & What to Eat

"Five fingers" a traditional Kazakh food. "Beshbarmak", a stew with leaves of noodles and pieces of lamb. "Baurzaki",

heavy, spongy bread dough cooked in deep fat (similar to a donut, but not sweet). "Plov", rice dish with meat and carrots or other vegetables. "Shashlik" is the tastiest Kazakh food.

It is a kebab that is made out of chicken or lamb. Shashlik is not fried, but is grilled over charcoal. Shashlik is popular throughout this part of Central Asia.

You can also easily find "doner kebab" or "shaurma" at any stand through the city. It is often the best food, and it is freshly prepared.

Korean Restaurants

One of the more Korean popular restaurants is in the square in front of the entrance to the Exhibition on Temirazova (a few blocks away from the Intercontinental and the new Holiday Inn).

Another popular Korean restaurant is a block north of (down from) Aiteki Bi/two blocks east of Park Panfilova in the ground floor of an apartment building.

Boudoir Modern International Restaurants

Bogenbai Batyr underneath the Kazpost (near Ablai Khan), open till midnight 7 days a week

Namaste Indian Restaurant

corner of Kosmonaft and Satpaeva (about mid-way between the Intercontinental and the Hyatt)

What to Buy

Handmade carpets, Felt goods, handmade dolls, rugs, and slippers made with boiled lambs wool and natural dyes, Handcrafted metal jewelry, Handcrafted leather chess sets in a leather folding case with a board pattern stitched on.

Taraz

Taraz was the economic, cultural and political centre of medieval state of Karakhanids up to XII century. In 1220, the city was conquered by the hordes of Chingiz-Khan and razed to the ground. Near the ruins of Taraz, the Kokands built the fortress at the end of XVIII century.

At the beginning of XIX century, not far from it, on the spot of ancient Taraz there took place the rapid development of the city named as Aulie-Ata "holy aged man".

In the town itself there were located caravanserais, workshops of craftsmen and stores of merchants.

Taraz achieved its violent growth in X-XIIth centuries, the testimony of which is the forked network of water pipes made of clay pipes, remains of architectural structures, pavements and paved streets, numerous handmade artifacts of skilful masters, which were found during excavations.

Places to see

Aulie-Ata of Karakhan Masoleum

Built in XI century above the grave of one of the rulers of Karakhanids' dynasty, the masoleum have a portal-and-dome structure. Inside the mausoleum the walls are made of brick of Katakhanids' period. There have been preserved the stepped gravestone.

Sha-Mansur Mausoleum

The 2nd small mausoleum of XIII century, Sha-Mansur Mausoleum was built above the grave of one of the viceroys of Mongol Khans who had been killed in 1262. It may be judged by the inscriptions preserved on the stone plate inside the mausoleum.

Babadzha-Khatun Mausoleum

Built in XI century, it has the marquee dome of unique construction.



Aisha-Bibi Mausoleum

Dating from the XII century, it is the only unique memorial in Kazakhstan, entirely faced with carved terracotta with the richest ornamentation in the form of tiles with 60 kinds of patterns, cornices and styled inscriptions.

Capitals and columns from terracotta blocks are covered as the entire wall with the thinnest paintings, which present the richest composition of motives of folk ornament. On one of the corner towers of mausoleum there preserved the lines from the old distich: "autumn... Clouds... The Earth is beautiful".

Places to Stay

Taraz Hotel

📍 Zhambyl Ave., 75A
 ☎ Tel: +7-7262-433811,
 +7-7262-433491, +7-7262457929.

Zhambyl Hotel

📍 Tole Bi Str., 42.
 ☎ Tels: +7-7262-452552,
 +7-7262-452551, +7-7262451750.

Shymkent

Shymkent is the capital city of South Kazakhstan Province, the most populated region in Kazakhstan. It is the third most populous city in Kazakhstan after Almaty and Astana. Shymkent was founded in the 12th century as a caravanserai (Silk Road Hotel) to serve the Silk Road town of Sayram, 10km to the east. Shymkent grew as a market center for trade between

nomads and settled people.

It was destroyed several times: by Genghis Khan, by soldiers from the southern Khanates and by nomadic attacks. Once part of the Khanate of Kokand, it became part of the Emirate of Bukhara in 1810 and was then annexed by the Russian Empire in 1864.

It was renamed Chernyaev in 1914 and renamed Chimkent in 1924. After Kazakhstan gained independence, the city was returned to its original name, Shymkent, in 1993 as part of the government's campaign to apply Kazakh names to cities.



Places to See

There are 8 parks and squares in the city, three of them were founded in the middle of XIX century and beginning of XX century. Kazakh and Russian drama theatres, philharmonic society named after S.Kaldayakov and three culture palaces are worth visiting. It is possible to watch modern movies in three cinemas. Unique exhibits of the times of Kangui can be observed in the oblast regional museum.

There is an art gallery and 28

libraries in the city. Especially popular places in the city are Abai Park, unique dendropark, hippodrome, famous zoo, as well as fashionable and popular Aqua-Park and "Fantasy World" Park. There is also the entertainment centre "Bamzik", ethnographic park "Ken-Baba" and Aqua-Park "Dolphin". Small citizens of Shymkent

can enjoy riding a train on the Youth Railway.

Shymkent Museum

If you are fond of old times and you reasonably think that in order to know the material and cultural history of South Kazakhstan, it is necessary to visit a museum, and then you must visit the recently rehabilitated Oblast Regional Museum of Shymkent City! Besides, you can visit the museum in the memory of the victims of political repressions dedicated to one of the most tragic pages in the history of Kazakhstan in XX century.

"Ken-Baba" Park

If it is a summer sunny morning and you want some coolness, the ethnic park "Ken-Baba" with a wonderful pond with swans will amaze you. The ethnic park is located in the very heart of Shymkent City where you can also taste any meals from the oriental and European cuisine (there are numerous cafes on the territory of the park).

And if it is a hot midday, together with the children you can go to the new aqua-park "Dolphin", which is located on the territory of Abai Park in order to spend some hours in the coolness of the big swimming pool.



Places to Stay

Hotel "Shymkent"

📍 Lenin Ave., 6-A.

☎ Tels: +7(32522)185345.

Hotel "Dostyk"

📍 Adyrbekov Str.

☎ Tels: +7-7252-548498, +7-7252-539973.

Hotel "Klara-center-Sapar"

📍 Address: Kazakhstan, Shymkent, Respubliki Str., 4.

☎ Tels: +7-7252-232333.

Hotel "Sapar"

📍 Kunayev Str., 17.

☎ Tels: +7-7252-535001.

Hotel "Makhambet-Sapar"

📍 Gany Ilyayev Str. 68/1.

☎ Tels: +7-7252-535113.

Where & What to Buy

Bustling Bazaar

Built on the crossroad of the medieval most important trade ways, Shymkent today is a vibrant capital of South Kazakhstan region, with a bustling bazaar and lively downtown. The central market (bazaar) is the biggest show in Shymkent.

The Bazaar spills over with fresh products and spices, cheap clothes and florid traditional shawls, dressing gowns and caftans together with wooden chests with colorful stamped-tin decoration! You may buy Ceramic Pottery, Plate, Dish, Kazakh jewelry and Kazakh rugs as souvenirs.

Turkestan

Turkestan is ancient town on the Great Silk Road which is 1500 years old. The town came into being in 490 A.D. The town of Yasa saw its greatest prosperity in the 7th century. At that time it was a motley, crowded maze with its abundant bazaars and endless caravans.

The first great Turkic Muslim mystic brought religious glory to the town. The mausoleum in honor of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi was built on a grand scale by Timur in the late 14th century (from 1389 to 1405). Today this is one of the largest, outstanding and best-preserved constructions of the Timurid period, considered to be Kazakhstan's greatest building and the most important site of Muslim pilgrimage in Central Asia.

Khoja Ahmed Yasawi died in 1166 and was buried with great honor in a small mausoleum erected for him, which subsequently became a place of mass pilgrimage and worship for Moslems.

The present mausoleum was built 233 years after his death under the order of Timur in the late 14th century. In

numerous bloody battles Timur destroyed the power of the Golden Horde and in honour of this victory he decided to build a new, grandiose memorial complex. Timur had died before it was completed and the front face was left unfinished. In the main chamber there is a vast bronze kazan (iron pot) for holy water. Kazan is the symbol of unity and hospitality.

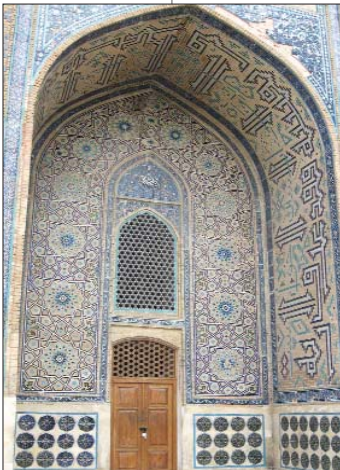
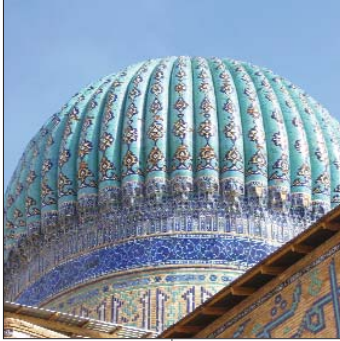
That's why special significance

was attached to its size and exterior. It has diameter 2, 45 m., weight - 2 tons and it is made of the alloys of 7 metals.

Architectural complex of Khodja Akhmed Yasawi is a striking sample of the Timurid architecture. Within its structure, the complex combines premises having various functions: jamaatkhana (gathering place),

gurkhana (burial-vault), the major and minor aksarais, library and etc.

Due to all these functions of one complex, scientists still argue concerning its name, so it has different names: mausoleum, mosque, memorial complex, khanaka. Each of these names emphasizes only one of the functions of this





immense complex and obviously does not reflect all services and rituals foreseen by it. Recently specialists began to prefer the name "khanagha" i.e. reception houses (monasteries) for dervishes. The UNESCO has included Turkestan (or rather Ahmed Yasavi Mausoleum) in the list of the world's heritage.

There are also monuments of architecture from the 19th c. in the region represented by mosques and Madrasahs, among which is the distinguished architectural complex Appak-Ishan, in the village of Charyn, as well as Orthodox churches built by Russian settlers.

In the steppe near Turkestan, on a hill, sits the Domalak-Ana mazar (tomb)(early 20th c.) It was built in honor of "the

Great Mother Babishar, daughter of Aksultan ". Domalak-Ana was a clairvoyant noted for her prophetic talents.


According to popular beliefs, the three Kazakh Zhuzes (tribes) are descended from her three grandsons Alban, Suan and Dulat. Dying Domalak-Ana asked to be laid on a white female camel.

Baidibek was a hero, who held a leading position in the unification of the Kazakh people and their struggle against their enemies. The mausoleum of Baidibek-Ata lies near the mausoleum of Domalak-Ana. Many people pay tributes of respect to their ancestors here.

Where to Stay


Edem Hotel

 b/nN Adirbekova Stree

 Tel: +7727 317 79 27

Yassi Hotel


 Square Tauke Khana

 Tel.: +32533 40183, 40185

 Fax: +32533 42492

Hotel Turan

 2, Esimkhana Str.

 Tel.: 41245 / 31825

 Fax: 41217 / 41012

Etiquette - Do's and Don'ts

Etiquette and cultural norms related to acceptable and unacceptable behavior vary between urban and rural Kazakhs. As a rule, rural Kazakhs tend to follow the cultural norms more strictly.

Greetings are rather formal due to the hierarchical nature of society. The common greeting is the handshake, often done with both hands and a smile. Kazakh men always shake hands with someone they know when they see each other for the first time in a day. Usually the younger man initiates this and shows respect by extending both hands and shaking the older man's hand. Since many Kazakhs are Muslim, some men will not shake hands with women, so be sensitive to these religious norms.

Once you have developed a personal relationship, close friends of the same sex may prefer to hug rather than shake hands. Most Kazakhs have a first and patronymic name (the father's name followed by a suffix -ich or -ovich for son of or daughter of, respectively). Wait until invited before using someone's first name, although the invitation generally comes early in the relationship. Both Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs remove their shoes when inside a house.

Guests always remove their shoes at the door and often put on a pair of slippers provided by the host or hostess. Central Asian streets often can be very dusty or muddy, so wearing shoes indoors is a serious social offense.

Whistling inside a house is unacceptable in almost all Kazakh homes. It is believed that whistling inside will make the owner of the house poor.

Kazakh people are known for their hospitality, respect for elders and peace and tolerance. Generosity and cordial behavior are common in both social and business fields. An invitation to the traditional Kazakh feast, dastarkhan, is the most popular form of Kazakh hospitality. Standards of dress and behavior are conservative and travelers should take care not to offend.

Tipping is not customary in Kazakhstan as a service charge is included in hotel and restaurant bills. There is also a fixed charge on taxi and railway transport. Small gifts (pens, company logo pins or books) are frequently given at the end of an initial meeting as a token of appreciation.

Business cards are widely distributed, both in Russian and English. Many people in Kazakhstan are Muslim so it is not uncommon for them to take breaks from work during the day for prayer; this should be taken into consideration when scheduling meeting times.

Language Essentials

Conversation

- Good morning!
 - Qayirly Tan [Ka-ihr-ly Tan]!
- Good Afternoon (formal)
 - Salamatsyz ba [Sala-maht-syz bah]
- Good evening (formal)
 - Qayirly Kesh [Ka-ihr-ly Kesh]!
- Good night (informal)!
 - Qayirli tyn!
- How are you?
 - Qalyрыз Kalai [Ka-ly-nyz Ka-lai]?
- What's new?
 - Qandai zhanalyk bar? [Qan-dai zhah-nah-lyk bahr]
- My name is...
 - Menym atym... [Meh-nym ah-tym]
- It is nice to meet you.
 - Sizben tanyskanyma ote kuyanyshтымyn.
 - [Syz-behn tah-nys-kah-nyh-ma au-teh kuh-ah-nysh-tyh-myn]
- Where are you from?
 - Siz qai elden keldiniz?
- Thank you!
 - Rakhmet! [Rah-k-met]
- Excuse me
 - Keshiriniz
- I don't understand
 - Tusinbedim
- Do you speak English?
 - Syz aglshynsha soileisesiz be?
- Welcome
 - Kosh Keldinizder
- Please come in and take a seat.
 - Zhogary shygynyz.
- It was good
 - Magan unady.
 - [Mah-ghan ooh-na-dyh].
- Family
 - Zhanyya
- Father, dad
 - Ake, ata

- Mother, mom
 - Ana, schesche
- Son
 - Bala (also means boy)
- Daughter
 - Kyz (also means girl),
- Brother
 - Aga
- Sister
 - Apke
- Cousin
 - Zhiyen
- Grandmother
 - Azhe [ah-ZHAY]
- Grandfather
 - Ata

- Aunt
 - Tate [tah-TYEH]
- Uncle
 - Koke
- My
 - menin
- Your
 - syzdyn
- His
 - onyn
- Her
 - onyn
- Its
 - sonyn
- Their
 - olardyn
- Life
 - Omir

Time & Dates

- Is there a garage?
 - Bul zherde garazh barma?
- What time is it?
 - Sagat kansha boldy? or: Sagat nische?
- What day is it?
 - Bugun aptanyн kai kuni?
- Monday
 - Duisenbi;
- Tuesday
 - Seisenbi;

- Wednesday
- Sarsenbi;
- Thursday
- Beisenbi;
- Friday
- Zhuma;
- Saturday
- Senbi;
- Sunday
- Zeksenbi
- When do we leave?
- Biz kashan zhol zhuremyz?
- When should we be ready?
- Biz kashan daiyn boluymyz kerek?
- When do we come back?
- Biz kashan kaitamyz?
- What time shall we meet?
- Kashan kezdeseyik?
- What time is it?
- Sagat nesche boldy?
- It is 9.30.
- Sagat togyz zharym
- It is 5.15 pm
- Sagat bes on bes minut.
- It is quarter to eight
- Segizde on bes minut qaldy.
- January
- kantar
- February
- akpan
- March
- nauryz
- April
- sauir
- May
- mamyr
- June
- mausym
- July
- shilde
- August
- tamyz
- September
- kyrkuyiek
- October
- kazan
- November

- karasha
- December -
- zheltoksan
- Spring
- Koktem [Kawk-TEM]
- Summer
- Zhas
- Autumn
- Kuz
- Winter
- Kys [Kyhs]
- Where is...?
- ... qaida? (The sentence structure puts interrogatives at the end)
- ... a hotel?
- Konak yui qaida? [Koh-nak oui qai-dah?]
- ... a restaurant?
- Meiramkhana qaida? [May-ram-khana qai-dah?]
- ... a library
- Kitapkhana
- ... a hospital
- Aurukhana
- ... a pharmacy
- Darikhana
- ... a movie theater
- Kinoteatr
- ... a museum
- Murazhai
- ... a grocery store
- Azyk tylik dukeni
- ... a post office
- Pochta bolymshesi
- ... a restroom
- Daretkhana
- ... the nearest bus stop
- Zhakyn zherdegi avtobus ayal-damasy
- ... the taxi stand
- Taksi toragy
- ... the train station
- Temir zhol vokzaly
- ... the airport
- Auezhai
- ... a barber shop
- Shashtaraz

- ... a dry cleaners
- Kiim tazalau
- ... a public swimming pool
- Kogamdyk bassein
- ... a parking lot
- Avto turak

Transport

- How do I get to downtown?
- Kalanyń ortalygyna kalai zhetе alamyn?
- Is there a park there?
- Ol zherde sayazhai bar ma?
- Is there a taxi stand?
- Ol zherde taxi turagy bar ma?
- Open
- Ashyk
- Closed
- Zhabyk

Shopping Services

- I need a...
- Magan kerek...
- a shirt
- zheide;
- pair of pants
- shalbar;
- pair of shoes
- ayak kiym;
- a dress
- koeilek;
- a hat
- kalpak
- a tie
- galstuk;
- a belt
- taspa
- Where can I buy a cell phone?
- Qai zherden uyaly telefon aluga bolady?
- Where can I buy a telephone card?
- Qai zherden telefon kartasy aluga bolady?
- Where is the grocery store?
- Azyk-tylik dukeni kai zherde?
- Where can I find meat?
- Kaizherde yet satady?

- Where are the vegetables?
- Kaizherde zhemister satady?
- Where do I find milk and eggs?
- Kaizherde sut zhene zhumyrtka satady?
- Bread
- nan
- meat
- et [yet]
- beef
- siyr eti
- lamb
- koi eti
- chicken
- tauyk eti
- pork
- shoshka eti
- apple
- alma
- pear
- almurt
- peach
- shabdaly
- watermelon
- karbyz
- melon
- kauyn
- How much is this?
- Bul kansha turady?
- That's too expensive!
- Bul ote kymbat!
- Thank you very much!
- Ulken rakhmet!

Colors

- blue
- kok
- yellow
- sary
- white
- aq
- black
- qara
- red
- qyzyl
- green
- zhasyl

Numbers

Cardinal numbers:

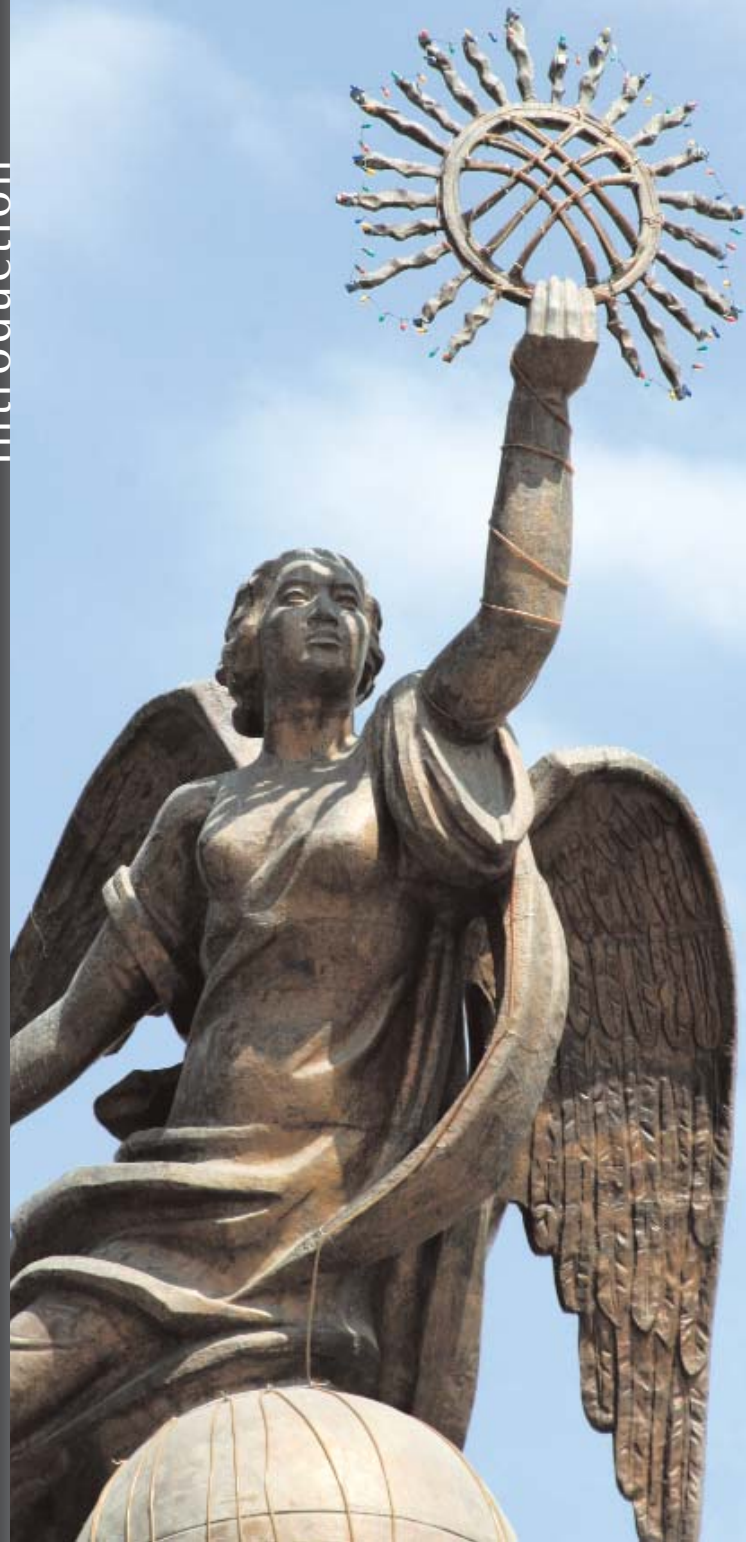
- One
- Bir,
- Two
- Yeki,
- Three
- Ush,
- Four
- Tort,
- Five
- Bes
- Six
- Alty,
- Seven
- Zheti,
- Eight
- Segiz,
- Nine
- Togyz,
- Ten
- On

Ordinal numbers:

- First
- birinshi [byh-ryhn-SHEY],
- second
- yekinshi,
- third
- ushinshi,
- fourth
- tortinshi,
- fifth
- besinshi,
- sixth
- altynshi, s
- seventh
- zhetinshi,
- eighth
- segizinshi,
- ninth
- togyzinshi,
- tenth
- onynshi

KYRGYZSTAN

Introduction



Introduction

Situated in 41°00'N latitude and 75°00'E longitude within the heart of Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country bordering Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The mountainous region of the Tian Shan covers over 80% of the country. Their sheer untouched beauty, largely free from ski lifts, funiculars, frequently used paths and observation platforms, stands majestic and intact.

The country is a land full of snow field and glaciers, cascading streams and rich green Alps. Kyrgyzstan is often called as "The Switzerland of Asia".

The permanent snows of Kyrgyz Ala-Too range are as close as they look, 40 km from the southern outskirts. Waterfalls rush down the canalized Ala-Archa River into the town.

The name Kyrgyz, both for the country and the people, means "forty girls" or "forty tribes", a reference to the epic hero Manas who unified forty tribes against the Mongols. The first written evidence of the Kyrgyz people as a nation is found in Chinese chronicles dated as far back as 2,000 BC.

They emerged from many ethoses

who settled in South Siberia and Central Asia.

In the 1-2 centuries BC, a part of the Kyrgyz tribes moved to Enisey and Baikal. It was there that the Kyrgyz tribes organized their first state and Kyrgyz

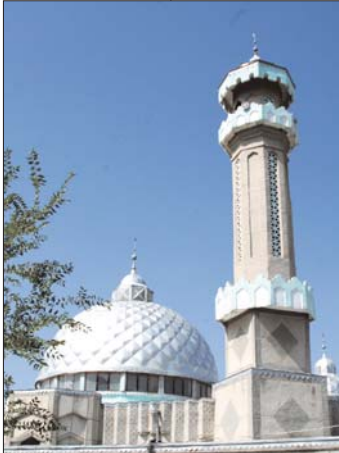
Khanate, which began the consolidation of the Kyrgyz nation and formation of its culture. The Kyrgyz written language emerged here, but was lost after the state was dismantled by conquerors.

However, the human memory was alive: the outstanding epic "Manas" is a genuine encyclopedia of the Kyrgyz history, society, habits and lifestyle of that time.

It is possible to say that the statehood of Kyrgyzstan was recreated thirteen years ago. Century-long hopes and expectations of the nation became reality through the route of sovereign and

independent development. Kyrgyzstan was the first Central Asian country to declare its independence in 1991 and emerge as a democratic and liberal reform-oriented country, providing a comprehensive program of market reforms.

Kyrgyzstan is a remote and mysterious place to many, yet one filled with exotic sights, colorful, pleasant and ruggedly beautiful scenery.



Country Profile



Country's Official Name:

Kyrgyz Republic

Flag Description:

Aspect: 1:2. It is a red cloth. In the center, there is a picture of a yellow sun with a symbolic image of Kyrgyz yurt. The red background symbolizes the valor and courage. The sun symbolizes peace and wealth, and yurt – is a symbol of the country and the world.

Official Website:

<http://eng.gov.kg/>

Government

(legal system, branches of the Government, etc.)



Executive Branch

The Government decides on all matters of state administration, except where powers of decision are assigned by the Constitution and laws to the competence of the President and the Jogorku Kenesh. President is the head of state and the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan is head of government, and of multi-party system in development.

Legislative Branch

Parliament "Jogorku Kenesh" - one-chamber parliament with 90 deputies

Judicial System

Justice in the Kyrgyz Republic is administered only by the court. Courts are independent and subordinated only to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and to laws of the Kyrgyz Republic. According to the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic judicial system in Kyrgyz Republic consists of: **Constitutional Court:** It is the highest body of the judicial power for the protection of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Law of the Constitutional Court was adopted on December 18,



1993. **Supreme Court:** It is the highest body of the judicial power in the sphere of civil, criminal, administrative legal procedure, and other cases foreseen by laws of the Kyrgyz Republic. **Local Courts:** They consist of district, city and province courts. The local courts are the basic link of the state judicial system. They act as a court of the first instance, and in accordance with procedure legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic they judge the majority of the civil, administrative, economic

and criminal cases. Constitutional law can establish specialized courts.

Official Language & Local Dialects

Kyrgyz: State language, Russian: official language

Capital City:

Bishkek

Major Cities:

Osh, Talas, Naryn, Jalalabad, Karakol, Cholpon Ata, Batken

Name of Provinces:

1. Chuy, 2. Jalal-Abad, 3. Naryn, 4. Osh Talas, 5. Issyk-Kul, 6. Batken

Ethnic Groups:

Kyrgyz 52.4%; Russian 18%; Uzbek 12.9%; Ukrainian 2.5%; German 2.4%; other 11.8%

Country's Total Area:

198,500 sq km

Population

est. 5,067,000 (2002)

Climate

varies regionally. The south western

Fergana Valley is subtropical and extremely hot in summer, with temperatures reaching 40°C (104°F). The northern foothills are temperate and the Tien Shan varies from dry continental to polar climate, depending on elevation. In the coldest areas temperatures are sub-zero for around 40 days in winter and even some desert areas experience constant snowfall in this period.

Public & National Holidays

January 1 - New Year

January 7- Russian Orthodox Christmas

Feb 23rd - Day of the Defender of Motherland

March 8th - International Women's Day

March 21 - Nouruz (Celebration of Spring)

March 24- National Revolution Day

May 1 - Labour Day

May 5 - Constitution Day

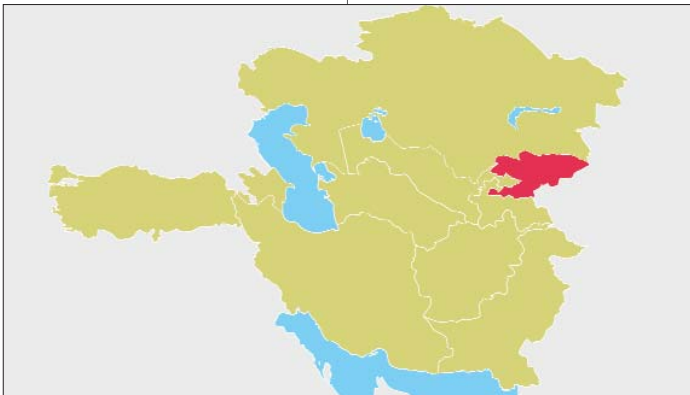
May 9 - Victory Day

August 31 - Independence Day

November 7 - Anniversary of the October Revolution

Important Muslim holidays, scheduled according to the lunar calendar, include: Orozo Ait (or Eid-ul-Fitr) and Kurban Ait (or Eid-ul-Adha)

Time Zone: GMT + 5





The Silk Road

The Great Silk road as a trading route appeared in the third century B.C. and existed until the 16th century. The ancient trading cities located along the Silk Road saw many devastating wars, invasions, fires, famines and diseases.

Most of those ancient cities have sunk into oblivion, having left ruins covered with legends to their descendants, others more than once burned to the ground, vanished and again revived to amaze the world with riches, massive domes, open-work terracotta, mausoleums and mosques.

From century to century, eastern markets with a multitude of languages bus-

tled with activity and for hundreds of years they carried precious silks and stones, spices and dyes, gold and silver and exotic southern birds and animals for sale to Europeans on dusty caravan roads.

The Great Silk Road was one of the most significant achievements in the history of World civilization. Established networks of caravan roads crossed Europe and Asia from the Mediterranean to China and served as the most important means of trade and dialogue between cultures of the West and the East from distant ancient times up to the Middle Ages.

The most extensive site of the Silk Road passed through the territories of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan. Caravans loaded with silk from China, spices and semi-precious stones from India, silver products from Iran, Byzantian cloth, Afrosyab ceramics and many other goods passed through the deserts of Kara Kum and Kyzyl Kum, through the oasis of Merv and Khorezm and the boundless steppes of the Sary Archa had to overcome the passes of the Pamir, Tien-Shan and Altai Mountains, and cross the Murghab, Amu Darya and Syr-Darya Rivers.

On the caravan routes rich cities, trade settlements and caravanserais began to arise and blossom.

Turkmenistan - Merv;
 Uzbekistan - Bukhara,
 Samarkand, Urgench, Khiva.
 Kazakhstan - Otrar,
 Turkestan, Taraz, and Ispejab.
 Kyrgyzstan - Jul, Suyab,
 Nookent, Balasagun,
 Barskoon, Tash-Rabat, Osh,
 and Uzgen.



European nations cooperated and communicated with the countries of Asia.

The Great Silk Road glows in the imagination as the world's richest exchange venue of trade and culture.

Caravans of camels, men and horses bore lazurite, silver and spices across thousands of miles, but the unseen interaction of ideas and religions was perhaps its greatest glory, enlightening civilizations from Beijing to Rome. Then as now, Kyrgyzstan stood at a crossroads, China's gateway to the west.

Hundreds of strong caravans survived the treacherous Taklamakan Desert in present day China and the onslaughts of bandits and slave raiders, only to risk the steep climb over the icy Torugart and Kok Art Passes into Kyrgyzstan.

Here, Tash Rabat caravanserai bears solitary witness to these extraordinary feats of blood, sweat and bravery. The current structure dates to the 15th century although the site is said to have been occupied since the 10th. Extraordinarily atmospheric, the valley now welcomes a new wave of visitors - tourists but still echoes to

the ghostly footsteps of Silk Road traders.



Osh, Kyrgyzstan's oldest city was always a crossroads trading centre. Heralded as a charmed and cultured place, rich in fruit and nut forests, it flourished during the heyday of the Silk Road. Its courts, palaces and academies were razed in the 13th century by Genghis Khan, but the pulse of 3,000 years of trade can still be felt in its vibrant bazaars.

Tangible evidence of Central Asia's medieval glory stands at Ozgon; known as Yu in Silk Road times, Ozgon reached its pinnacle as Mavarannahr, capital of the

Karakhanid Dynasty which brought Islam to the Kyrgyz in the 10th century. Here, three mausoleums and a minaret, all exquisitely carved in terracotta, are the lone relics of this sophisticated ancient epoch.



Useful Information

The country's climate varies by region. The climate is subtropical in the Ferghana Valley and temperate in the northern foothill zone. The lower mountain slopes have a dry continental climate, as they receive hot desert winds from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, whereas the highest mountain elevations have a polar climate.

In the valleys, the average daily temperature in July is 28° C (82° F). In January daily averages are as low as -14° C (7° F). Conditions are much colder at high elevations, where in July the average daily temperature is 5° C (41° F) and in January, -28° C (-18° F).

Precipitation is between 100 and 500 mm (4 and 20 in) in the valleys and from 180 to 1,000 mm (7 to 40 in) in the mountains. Siberian winds bring freezing temperatures and snow from November to February, with ferocious cold in the mountains. The average winter minimum is -24°C.

Throughout the country, springtime buds appear in April and May, though nights can still be below freezing. Mid-May to mid-June is pleasant, though many mountain passes will still experience snow.

From the end of June through the mid-August, most afternoons will reach 32°C or higher, with a maximum of 40°C in Fergana Valley towns such as Jalal-Abad; mountain valleys are considerably cooler.

Like most of the region, Bishkek gets most of its rainfall in spring and early summer. Of course in the mountains, the 'warm' season is shorter. The best time to visit is July to September, although camping and trekking are pleasant from early June

through mid-October.

Avalanche danger is greatest during March and April and from September to mid-October. Overall, the republic is best for scenery and weather in September, with occasional freezing nights in October.

Visa Regulations

OVIR Registration

OVIR is an abbreviation, which stands for the Visa and Registration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Kyrgyz law currently states that foreign visitors, including tourists, must register with OVIR within three working days of their arrival in the country.

General Visa Requirements

All foreign nationals, except nationals of the following countries, are required to have business or tourist visas to enter the Republic of Kyrgyzstan:

1. Azerbaijan Republic,
2. Republic of Armenia,
3. Republic of Byelorussia,
4. Georgia,
5. Republic of Kazakhstan,
6. Korean Democratic People's Republic,
7. Republic of Cuba,
8. Malaysia (with official and tourist purpose up to one month),
9. Republic of Moldova,
10. Mongolia (up to three months),
11. Russian Federation,
12. Socialistic Republic of Vietnam,
13. Republic of Tajikistan,
14. Republic of Turkey (up to one month),
15. Ukraine,
16. Uzbekistan
17. Japan.

In general, invitation letter from a registered tour operator is required to obtain the tourist entry visa for Kyrgyzstan. Nationals holding all types of passports of the following countries

may obtain Kyrgyz Visas in the overseas missions and consular offices within the Republic on their personal request for the period up to one month, and are exempted from registration with the law enforcement agencies:

(1) Australia; (2) Austrian Republic; (3) Kingdom of Belgium; (4) United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; (5) Federative Republic of Germany; (6) Greek Republic; (7) Kingdom of Denmark; (8) Ireland Republic; (9) Republic of Island; (10) Kingdom of Spain; (11) Italy; (12) Canada; (13) Republic of Cyprus; (14) Republic of Korea; (15) Duchy of Liechtenstein; (16) Great Duchy of Luxembourg; (17) Republic of Malta; (18) Duchy of Monaco; (19) Kingdom of Netherlands; (20) Kingdom of Norway; (21) New Zealand; (22) Portugal Republic; (23) United States of America; (24) Finland Republic; (25) French Republic; (26) Swiss Confederation; (27) Kingdom of Sweden.

These nationalities can also obtain a visa on arrival at Bishkek's Manas International Airport.

Upon arrival in Kyrgyzstan ensure that your passport is stamped to show the date you entered the country. You may encounter problems when leaving the country if you have entered the country by the trekking routes from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan bypassing staffed border crossings.

Where to Apply for Kyrgyzstan Visa

You can apply for the Kyrgyzstan visa anywhere Kyrgyzstan Embassy or Consulate exists. Nationalities that do not need letter of invitation can also

obtain a visa on arrival at Bishkek's Manas International Airport.

Application Requirements for Kyrgyzstan Visa

1. Visa support, if required
2. Valid passport;
3. Completed application form;
4. 1 passport-size photo;
5. Fee, payable on collection of visa

Customs Regulations Declarations

If you arrive at Manas airport you may enter through the Green Channel, (assuming it is operating at that time), which means you don't have to fill in a form ... although you may still have to answer questions verbally. In any case, Kyrgyz authorities do not insist that you keep a Customs form and show it on leaving.

If you arrive at other points you may, or may not, be asked to complete a customs declaration form. At Torugart you will have to complete one, but if you are arriving by road from Almaty, Tashkent or at Osh, then don't be surprised if you are not asked to complete one.

In Kyrgyzstan you only need to fill in one form ... you do not need to keep one and show it on leaving the country, even if the form says so. Officials will give you a second form if you ask for one – but they usually collect both from you and say you don't need it.

Duty Free

The duty free concessions are designed to apply for goods brought into the country for either personal use or for use by members of the traveler's family. As such, the list of goods includes things like TVs,

fridges, carpets, crystal ware etc. If the customs officials think that the goods are intended for sale, they can impose duties.

The following goods may be imported into Kyrgyzstan by travelers of 16 years or over without incurring customs duty:

1000 cigarettes or 1000g of tobacco products

1.5 lit of beverages

A reasonable quantity of perfume for personal use

On entering the country, tourists must complete a customs declaration form which must be retained until departure and then handed over on the international flight leaving any CIS country.

This allows the import of articles intended for personal use, including currency and valuables which must be registered on the declaration form. Customs inspection can be long and detailed.

Prohibited Imports

Weapons, ammunition and explosives, narcotics and drug paraphernalia, pornographic publications or other published material deemed harmful to state interests and any item prohibited elsewhere in Kyrgyz legislation.

Prohibited Exports

Meat and milk products, living animal, plants, chemicals and fertilizers drugs, weapon, pornographic publications.

Registering Souvenirs

When you leave the country, you have to fill in a customs declaration saying if you have bought any antique items etc. Although practically no-one

will tell you this when selling them to you, issues may arise mainly in relation to paintings, old jewelry or carpets / wall hangings, etc. The main issue is that you need permission to export antiques, or articles of historic and cultural value, (basically, but not exclusively, things over 50 years old).

Therefore, you need some proof that what you buy is not an antique – or, if it is old, that it is of no cultural significance – and you do this by registering your purchase with the Ministry of Culture and obtaining permission to export them.

Only then can you legally take them out of the country.

This permission is your proof that they are not “antiques” or “objects of cultural significance” according to the regulations. You need to show this registration certificate to customs when you depart from Kyrgyzstan (even if you leave via Almaty). Otherwise the goods may be confiscated (or you have to pay a “fine”).

How to get there and away

By Plane

Bishkek’s Manas airport is the main international hub although there are also flights to Moscow, Ürümqi and Dushanbe from Osh.

The national carrier, Air Company Kyrgyzstan (AC Kyrgyzstan) was formerly Alтын Air.

From Bishkek, Central Asian destinations include Tashkent (with Uzbekistan Airways, AC Kyrgyzstan), Ürümqi (Kyrgyzstan Air, China Southern, Esen Air) and Dushanbe (Tajik Air, AC Kyrgyzstan).

One-way/return airfares for Russia include Ekaterinburg (AC Kyrgyzstan,

twice weekly), Novosibirsk (AC Kyrgyzstan, thrice weekly) and Moscow (Aeroflot, AC Kyrgyzstan, Itek Air, daily).

Other international destinations reached directly from Bishkek are limited to Dubai (AC Kyrgyzstan, once weekly), Istanbul (Turkish Airlines, once weekly) and London (British Airways, four times weekly).

Between June and September, AC Kyrgyzstan also has a weekly flight to Hanover and Frankfurt for one way/return. Because flight choices are limited, many choose to fly to Tashkent, Almaty or Ürümqi (China) and connect from there. A transit visa will be required if you plan to leave these airports.

Note that it's only three hours by road between Almaty and Kyrgyzstan and KLM runs a free Bishkek–Almaty ground shuttle service for their customers, leaving Bishkek in front of the Dostuk Hotel on the day of flights at 6pm (transit visa required). A similar Lufthansa bus departs at 7pm from Grand Hyatt.

It's free if you buy your ticket in Bishkek, otherwise it costs. The bus leaves Almaty airport at 12.30am, arriving in Bishkek at 3.30am. The US\$10 international departure tax and 4% government tax is included in the ticket price.

Airlines in Kyrgyzstan

Aeroflot Russian Airlines:
<http://www.aeroflot.ru/eng/>
 British Airways:
<http://www.britishairways.com>
 Lufthansa:
<http://www.lufthansa.com>
 Turkish Airlines:
<http://www.thy.com/>
 Uzbekistan Airways:
<http://www.uzairways.com>

By Road Border Crossings

One thing to note is that transport along Kyrgyzstan's southern arm from Osh to Batken passes through the Uzbek enclave of Sokh so you'll need to get an Uzbek visa or hire a taxi to take you on a dirt road detour around the enclave.

To/From China

Of the two land crossings from China the 3752m Torugart Pass is the more complicated and expensive, requiring pricey, pre-arranged Chinese transport. The newer and easier border crossing is the Irkeshtam Pass linking Kashgar to Osh and the Ferghana Valley. It has none of the restrictions of the Torugart and you can take taxis, hitch on trucks or even cycle.

To/From Kazakhstan

Minibuses go directly from Bishkek to Almaty (250som, 4½ hours) every hour or two, as do private cars. There is a passport check at the border by the Chuy River and you will need a Kazakh visa. A back-door route into Kazakhstan is possible through the Karkara Valley. There's no through transport so you'll have to hire a taxi.

There is a new 96km 4WD road from near Cholpon-Ata over to Chong-Kemin Valley and beyond to Almaty but you need a 4WD for this rough route and as there's no border control, you'll have headaches getting a visa stamp. Trains run four times a week from Bishkek to Almaty and on to Moscow (train 17, Monday and Thursday; train 27, Wednesday and Saturday).

To/From Tajikistan

The main crossing for travelers is at the Bor Döbo checkpoint on the

Pamir highway, between Murgab district and Sary Tash. To travel on the Pamir highway a GBAO permit that says 'Murgab district' is required.

Another remote crossing leads southwest from the Pamir Alay Valley into the Garm Valley and on to Dushanbe, although this is currently closed to foreigners. From the Ferghana Valley it's possible to cross from Batken to Isfara (not Isfana) in Tajikistan.

To/from Uzbekistan

From Bishkek, buses go from the west bus station to Tashkent three times a day between 6pm and 9pm. From Jalal-Abad take a taxi or minibus to Khanabad (formerly Sovietabad) and cross by foot.

Note that the Kara-Suu border crossing is not open. From Osh take a taxi or minibus to Dustlyk/Dostyk and then get a seat in a shared taxi to Andijon.

Osh Guesthouse in Osh can help arrange a car direct to Tashkent or Andijon.

It is also possible to travel to/from Tashkent by rail but all pass through Kazakhstan necessitating a Kazakh visa. Remote border posts, for example at Karkara and along the Pamir highway, from Tajikistan may not stamp your visa with an entry stamp but you should insist that this is done, otherwise you'll have problems. Generally, entering the country has no difficulties.

Travelling Around

Bishkek is served by taxis, buses and trolleybuses. Public transport is cheap and generally reliable. Bishkek is an easy, inexpensive city to get around. It is on a grid and a relatively small capital city, so navigating on

foot or by car is easy.

The mountains to the south are nearly always in view.

Bishkek is wide and flat, and its "center" is regarded as the most interesting and the largest part of the whole city, mini-buses and trolleybuses usually run from 5:30 or 6:00 in the morning till 9:00 or 9:30 at night.

Taxis can be found in all major towns. They are readily available and cheap. Travelers must agree a fare in advance and not share taxis with strangers. As many of the street names have changed since independence, it is also advisable to inquire both the old and the new street names when asking for directions. It is best to name a landmark that is close to your destination.

Also, mentioning the intersection of two streets (like Chui-furusbekova) is better than saying "The Metro Pub". Car hire is not available. Cars with a driver can be hired in travel agencies by the trip, by the hour, by the day or week. A number of telephone taxis exists (order by phone at any time) such as: Super Taxi - Tel.: 152 , Express Taxi - Tel.: 156 and Taxi Salam - Tel.: 188.

Money

National currency is Kyrgyz Som. It is divided into 100 tiyin. Notes come in 1000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, five and one som denominations. Banks and licensed moneychanger booths (marked obmen balyot) exchange US dollars provided the notes are unblemished in near-mint condition and, if possible, post 2001. There are ATMs in Bishkek, Jalal-Abad and Osh that dispense both US dollars and som.

Traveler's cheques can be cashed in these places and in Karakol. You

will find that higher-priced items are generally priced in US dollars, although a few businesses in the hospitality industry fix their prices in Euros.

There is no black market for currency transactions. If you need to wire money, Money-Gram has services at main post offices and Western Union works through most banks.

Ø Safety & Security

Upon arrival, begin orienting yourself:

- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood by walking around in the daylight.

- Ask around about areas you should avoid at night.

- Do not walk alone at night.

- Note the address of your country's embassy.

- Locate the police station that serves your neighborhood.

- Identify the hospital emergency room nearest to your home and know what to do in case of an accident.

- Keep "emergency" numbers near your phone at home (see Emergency Telephone Numbers in communication section).

General Considerations

Never leave your bags unattended in public places, even if you are only walking away from them for a few minutes.

Always lock your door when you are leaving, even if only for a short period of time.

Never ever open your door to people you don't know even if they know your name. This applies to anybody even if they say they are from the police.

Always carry your passport with you. Also make a photocopy of your

important documents, and keep the copies at home or hotel room.

Try to avoid walking in the streets after dark all by yourself.

You might want to find someone to accompany you during your night trips.

Avoiding Theft

It is very important that you watch your belongings at all times, especially when you are at busy public places such as: "bazaars", stores, underground ways ("podzemka"), streets, etc. Beware pickpockets and bag slashers.

Try not to keep your wallet in the bag hanging on your back because somebody can cut the bag and take your wallet out. It is recommended that women wear their purses diagonally across the body, with the strap on one shoulder and the purse close to the body on the opposite side. Bags should be carried with a firm grip.

Do not display money, jewelry, or other valuable items. If you know you are going to carry a lot of money, it is better to divide it into several parts and put it into several different places in your purse, wallet, and on your clothes.

You should also avoid keeping large amounts of cash or other valuable items (such as expensive jewelry) in your apartment, or hotel room. Valuable items can be kept in the safe of the hotels or banks.


Another thing you can do to help safeguard your belongings is to be conservative in giving out your address, home number or even inviting people to your place.


We do not mean to give you the impression that everyone is trying to get hands on your money, but you

must exercise your judgment - unscrupulous individuals may try to take advantage of you as a foreigner who is unaccustomed to Kyrgyz social customs, and may not understand the language.

Embassy telephone numbers


Embassy of Azerbaijan


 Tel: (+996 312) 32 12 74

 Fax: (+996 312) 29 00 01


Embassy of Iran


 36, Razzakov St.


 Tel: (+996 312) 62 49 29, 22 69 64, 22 72 14

 Fax: (+996 312) 66 02 09


Embassy of Kazakhstan


 10, Togolok Moldo St.

 Tel: (+996 312) 66 00 51, 66 01 64, 66 04 15

 Fax: (+996 312) 66 01 64, 66 63 07

Embassy of Pakistan


 347à, Panfilov St.

 Fax: (+996 312) 22 72 09, 62 16 99

Embassy of Tajikistan


 36, Kara-Dariynskaya St.


Kok-Jar microraiyon

 Tel: (+996 312) 51 14 64


Embassy of Turkey


 89, Moscow St.


 Tel: (+996 312) 62 23 54, 62 03 78

 Fax: (+996 312) 66 05 19, 62 02 31

Embassy of Uzbekistan

 213, Tynystanov St.

 Tel: (+996 312) 66 20 65, 22 61 71, 66 30 78

 Fax: (+996 312) 66 44 03

Health

Emergency health care is available free of charge to visitors. However, although doctors are well trained and professional, facilities and specialties tend to lag behind what is available in the west. As in much of the former Soviet Union, doctors and hospitals lack the latest equipment and medicines and the hospitals' physical facilities can be run down.

But facilities are being improved and visitors can find a good level of care and treatment, especially in Bishkek.

In any case, travelers are advised to carry a well-equipped first-aid kit with prescriptions. For minor difficulties, visitors are advised to inquire to the management at their hotel or travel agency.

Diseases

Vaccinations required include: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A & B, Tetanus, and Typhoid and sometimes, there is risk of Malaria and Rabies.

Food & Drink

The water is generally bacteria-free; however, it does have a high metal content. Milk is pasteurized and dairy products are safe for consumption. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish.

Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Owing to the difficulty of obtaining a balanced diet in some parts of Kyrgyzstan, visitors are advised to take vitamin supplements.

☎ Telephone Codes of Major Cities

International country code:	☎ +996
Bishkek	☎ 312
Jalal-Abad	☎ 372
Kara Balta	☎ 313
Karakol	☎ 3746
Osh	☎ 322

🏠 Major Travel Agencies

The Celestial Mountains Tour Company

☎ Tel: +996 312 212562
 ☎ Fax: +996 312 610402
www.celestial.com.kg,
www.tours.kg
 📧 E-mail: tours@celestial.com.kg

Advantour Kyrgyzstan

☎ Tel: (996 312) 900592
 ☎ Fax: (996 312) 311170
<http://www.advantour.com/>
 📧 E-mail: Bishkek@advantour.com

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Arts & Crafts

Since ancient times, Kyrgyz people have led the life of nomadic herdsmen. A complementary source of livelihood was hunting. The nomadic way of life required portable dwellings - felt yurts - as well as loose-styled clothing practical for riding and domestic articles made mainly of wood and leather. A substantial part of the Kyrgyz daily life was occupied by-home crafts, particularly those connected with processing



of livestock breeding products (wool, leather, rawhide, bone, gut string, horn, hoof, etc.).

Although the Kyrgyz practiced bailer and trade with neighboring peoples, their economy was basically communal subsistence. Kyrgyz decorative-applied arts were tied to the processing of animal husbandry products, gathering food and medicinal herbs, raising livestock and melting metals.

A closed subsistence system was a characteristic feature of making home crafts: a family gathered raw materials that they manufactured into products that were then

consumed by the extended family or traded in bazaars. Any member of the family could participate in this process or use the products manufactured by the group.

While producing their handicraft, Kyrgyz people were not only striving for providing their daily living needs but for the fulfillment of their spiritual ones as well. Love for beauty was conveyed in the decoration of articles, in their artistic designs and in their functionality. Traditional Kyrgyz ornamentation is a particular sphere of culture, a specifically figurative language with a highly practical value.

The nomadic tenor of life put limits on Kyrgyz craftsmen. Nevertheless, any articles they handled were sealed with the marks of creative work. The exterior and interior decoration of the yurt, the clothing and furnishings, women's adornments and equestrian trappings bear the signs of a nomadic culture and of high aesthetic values - Kyrgyz utensils convert into pieces of art and serve to integrate life.

The main motifs, themes and designs of Kyrgyz ornaments are in direct correlation to the world of spirits and objects - animals, plants, natural and spiritual phenomena that surround and inspire a human being. Inside the national consciousness, applied arts are inseparable from daily rhythms of beauty and usefulness.

The sources of the Kyrgyz arts have a four millennia history that began in the Minusinskaya Depression in the ancient motherland of the Kyrgyz people - the Yenisei River Valley of Siberia. Petroglyphic art and geometrical designs on utensils and weapons dating back to the Bronze Age represent the first attempts of ancient artists to render the nature and daily life of a human being.

More than a millennium ago, the Kyrgyz people migrated from the Siberian steppes to Tien Shan Mountains and since that time have participated in the historic development of the land now known as Kyrgyzstan.

Although they were mounted nomads in the heritage of Huns, Turks and Mongols, the Kyrgyz claimed the Celestial Mountains as their own and developed a unique

pastoral transhumance that has given the land of the Kyrgyz a spirit of ageless, creative human courage in the face of great trials, 'flint spirit is embodied in the mythic hero of the eponymous epic "Manas."

While remaining nomads, the Kyrgyz traded with neighboring sedentary village peoples. Like actors on a historic stage performing their entrances and exits, Kyrgyz people recorded in their national memory and preserved in their folkloric art the cultural influences of their past.

Many cultures came into contact with the Kyrgyz throughout their long history. The ancient stales of the Scythians, Sakas, Sarmatians and Usuns may have disappeared; the flourishing Karakhanid and Uyghur urban cultures may have turned into mighty stone monuments and ruined mud walls; the Great Silk Road may have become a dirt goat track through disuse; hundreds of great cities may have fallen to Mongols and Timurids; and dozens of forgotten ethnic groups may have drowned in rivers of their own blood; but the bearers of the ancient Kyrgyz Tien Shan culture remained and recorded these influences in their ornamental arts.

Much was imprinted from these cultures into Kyrgyz ornamentation. The motifs of the shyrduck and tushkiiz patterns reveal zoomorphic styles of the ancient Sakas and Usuns.

Images of the Soghdian sacred bird, the pheasant, date from the VI-VII cen-

turies. The Seasoned ornamental circles of VII-VIII century provenance, the Karla's geometrical lines from the VIII-X centuries, the Arachnids' rosette of the XI-XII centuries, the timeless Chinese symbol of prosperity, the Bronze Age ancient artists' representation of sheep horns, and many other designs can all be found in Kyrgyz folk art.

Employed in quotidian routines, the decorative-applied arts interpenetrate the whole life and history of Kyrgyz nomads.

When you enter the nomadic dwelling of a livestock breeder, his yurt meets you with painted patterns of decorative ribbons and the ornaments of a carved or felt door - eshik tysh- from afar.

Inside the yurt every detail of decoration on every article of clothing and everyday use fuse and complement each other with picturesque designs,

forming that unique ensemble that amazes you with its variety of tinctures and voices, intrinsic to everything handmade by Kyrgyz craftsmen.

The variegated designs of shyrdacks and alakiizes flow across the floor, the patterns mutating in flowery ornaments of tushkiizes and sleeping mats, which then transformed into the lines of ashkhana

chiy and tekche - suspended shelves made of cloth and reed. Patterned ribbons- terme, kadjars and besh keshte - coil round a yurt, binding the wooden joints of the dwelling.

Opposite the entrance, visitors could



see a chest, the *sunduk*, proudly bearing the symbol of the family's prosperity. Open the chest and appreciate the wife's dowry, the possessions she brought to the marriage, treasures made by the women of her family.

Packed inside the *sunduk* are quilts - *tushuks* and *kuraks* - designed with patterns of multicolored cloth patches; and pillows - *djazdyk* and *chavadans* - sacks for clothing woven with woolen yarn.

Braided strips and tassels - *djel boo* and *tegerich* - hang from the domed ceiling of the yurt, dangling down from the arched vault of the *tunduk*, the cross beams that open the yurt to the heavens above. Stamped patterns adorn the utensils for drinking: the leather pialas (drinking cups without handles) and the vessels for *kumyz* - the *koinoks* and *kerkers*.

Designs are also embroidered on clothing, carved on wooden dishes and poles (*ala-bakans*). These all create the unique world of a nomad. This universe, wherein every ordinary thing turns into a symbol, is intimately and deeply connected to the high traditions of antiquity. The nomad's world is filled with poetry and beauty, elements sorely lacking in our own everyday, disconnected and disassociated modern life.

This clause seeks to explore the magical world of the Kyrgyz nomad by describing the main kinds of Kyrgyz applied arts and the sources of ancient Kyrgyz ornamentation. Beyond the catalogue of artifacts is a hidden world of centuries-old wisdom and deep, creative beauty that must live to be properly understood.

Main varieties of Kyrgyz decorative arts include:

- Funerary Arts
- Patterned thick felt carpets and domestic appliances
- Patterned weaving
- Woolen carpets with pile
- Wicker ware of patterned *chiy* reed
- Embroidery
- Leather products
- Wood carvings
- Ornamental metalworking

Funerary Arts



The decorative ornamentation of mausoleums, called *gumbez*, including figured bricklaying, ornaments decorated with designs, bone carvings, clay modeling, and architectural monuments are included in funerary arts.

Kyrgyz Thick Felt

Articles made of thick felt-carpets, bags, sacks for storing domestic articles, clothing for the ever changing mountain climate and the "skin" of a yurt- formed the most important part of a nomad's routine life. Felt is made of

pressed sheep, goat or camel wool, although only a very rich person could ever afford camel wool felt.

Kyrgyz felts were always valued due to the high quality of the time-tested tradition of felt manufacturing. Once the felt rolls are compressed, they are spread out and designed with ancient techniques, such as the sewing together of cutout patterns (mosaic), the in-filling of colored patterns (appliqué) and fancy thread stitching.

Kyrgyz felt products are richly decorated with designs; their patterns reflecting the environment, plants and animals and cosmological and religious conceptions. The names of the patterns themselves reveal their connections to the natural realm.

A hornlike design is named *kochkor muyiiz* (ram's shorn), a trident-karga *tyr-mak* (raven claws), a fork-stick is *acha bakan* (a pole used to remove the felt covering, *koshma*, from the smoke-hole of the yurt); and an almond-shaped pattern is called a *badam* (almond).

To produce felt, the wool is washed, dried and then whipped by long willow sticks on an outspread hide. The beaten wool is then laid out in flattened layers on a mat woven of *chiy* reeds.

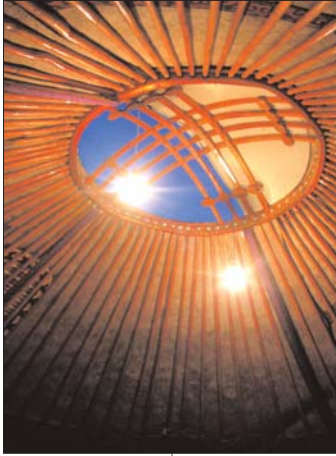
The wool is sprinkled with hot water and folded into a roll along with the reed mat; the roll is then tied round with ropes (arkans) and dragged along by hand, by foot, or behind a horse for about an hour, while two or three persons repeatedly step on the roll to compress the wool.

The roll is then unfolded, re-sprinkled with hot water, folded and dragged again. The process is repeated several times until the felt attains the desired thickness and the wool fibers are tightly compacted to become waterproof.

In some places of Kyrgyzstan, mainly in the south, after an hour of preparatory dragging by foot, the thick felt is loosed from the mat and continues to be pressed by hand. Often the roll is compressed with the help of two ropes: one of them unwinds while the other winds up the roll of *chiy*.

Sometimes a donkey or horse is used in

this process, while the Kyrgyz people of the Chinese Xinjiang Kyzyl-Suu region use a yak.



Alakiiz (variegated felt)

A pattern of colored stripes is transferred onto the wool by spreading dyed strips out on the mat before the roll is folded. The design is imprinted into the felt to form blurry-edged "lye-dyed" images, giving the carpet a wild and colorful look.

The method of manufacturing these large ornamental carpets is conventionally called "mosaic". The pattern is transferred onto two layers of felt of contrasting, vivid colors and then the outline is cut out. The felt is divided into layers and afterwards is sewn together so that some pieces form the pattern and others the background or field.

A twisted woolen double braid is

sewed between the contrasting pieces. The braid differs in color from both the pattern and the field and makes the design expressive by providing a three-dimensional relief. The carpet composition consists of the central field and the outer skirting with a color range that varies across the different regions of Kyrgyzstan.

Usually carpets have two dominant colors: red and blue, brown and blue, brown and orange, red and yellow or brown and white. The color combinations of the skirting do not usually complement the colors and tints of the central field, but rather contrast and sometimes even clash according to western tastes.

Carpets and floor coverings made according to the mosaic technique of pattern and field form a "psychedelic" composition where the field and the pattern vibrate with the intensity of the contrasting colors. At other times, the colors vary only in hue and one can hardly differentiate the pattern from the background.

Kyrgyz Terme

This kind of design weaving is the most laborious. Terme means "assembled" or "prefabricated", reflecting the main technique used in the cloth manufacturing.

Thicker and coarser yarns than those used for kadjara or besh keshte are taken for the warp. Warp threads, forming the pattern, are gathered together by twos on a stick (tergitch). While the cloth strip is woven, the ornamental threads are kept aside until they enter the process to form the design.



Usually a one-sided patterned cloth is manufactured, although double-faced strips (eki djiuzduu) are used to form bands (djel boo) that decorate the yurt and hang down from the domed ceiling.

The terme pattern is formed by the combination of two colors: red and blue, orange and brown, red and brown, blue and orange, etc. Terme composition always comprises one or two borders. The ornamental elements used to decorate the cloth are: tai taman (track of a foal), tailak taman (track of a colt), djolbors tynnak (tiger's claws), kara kash (black eyebrows), koshkor muiuz (sheep's horn), chychkan izi (track of a mouse), etc. This method differs from ferine cloth in that kadjary using thinner yarn. The cloth decoration necessarily includes either wide, single-colored strips interlaced with narrow ornamented ones, or wide patterned strips divided by narrow, single-colored ones. The ornament is formed by the alternation of one or several patterns, the edges laced with two or three narrow strips of some other color. The main colors are red, blue, orange, white and brown. The field is usually red and bears patterns of blue or white colors. Sometimes the field is brown and bears ornamental designs of red or blue colors.

Large patterns used are: kochkor muiuz (sheep's horn), kyial (fantasy), it kuiruk (dog's tail), badam (almond), as well as elongated geometrical figures such as diamond, square, triangle, etc. Such patterns as tarak (comb) and tumartcha (amulet) are widely used.

Kyrgyz Besh-keshte

This third kind of design weaving refers to a specific style of embroidery in a satin-stitch on a white or yellow-brown background. The Kyrgyz craftswomen explain the name of the cloth (five embroideries) to refer to the five necessary patterns (terk, tegerek, kochkorok or kaikalak, it taman, and chuurtma), or for the five primary colors used (red and blue are basic, while yellow, green and brown are complementary).

The composition of the cloth pattern is intricate, comprising either a continuous and uninterrupted pattern, or groups of smaller and larger patterns divided by transversal patterned stripes. The field is made of undyed light woolen or cotton threads.

This cloth is mainly used in Osh and Talas provinces to sew sacks for storing articles (chavadan), saddle-bags (kurdjun) suspended bags (bashtyk), rugs (djuk djabuu), yurt decoration strips (boa, tegiritch, kerege tangu) and floor carpets (shalcha). Floor carpets, sewn of alternate strips of besh keshte and kadjary, and sometimes terme, are highly valuable.



Kyrgyz Patterned Weaving

From ancient times, Kyrgyz people have preserved the secrets of processing wool (taar) for outer garments and everyday life items. Thick, coarse yarn was used to make household sacks (kap), saddlebags (kurjun) and floor carpets.

More delicate yarns were manufac-

tured for table-cloths (dastarkhan), usually striped or plaid. Strips of embroidered undyed wool cloth (eshik tysh) veiled the entrance to the yurt. Hand-colored pieces were used to manufacture outer garments.

Kadjary cloth strips are used in the same way as terme cloth: the narrow ones fasten the wooden parts of a yurt's framework to the overlaid pieces of felt, whereas the wide ones are used to decorate the yurt (tegiritch). Strips are also used to sew various articles such as carpets (shaltcha), saddle-bags (kurdjun), bags for smaller articles (bashtyk), horse-cloth (at djabuu) and other everyday articles.

Kyrgyz crafts women produce three

kinds of patterned wool cloth: terme, kadjary and besh keshte that differ in technique, ornament and color range. Kyrgyz people call patterned cloth strips, boo. The width of a strip (from 4 up to 70 cm) is determined by its practical application. The narrowest strips (tizgitch boo) fasten dome poles and the edges of the lattice walls of the yurt (kerege).

Wider strips (djel boo) are woven

through the sustaining poles of the yurt itself. Tuurduck boo and eshik boo fasten felt blankets (koshmas) that cover the movable dwelling. Wide strips (kerege tangu) decorate the yurt from the outside. Strips are also sewn together to make rugs (shaltcha).

For clothing, the northern Kyrgyz

generally use sheep and camel wool, while in southern Kyrgyzstan cotton and silk are also used. Washed and carded wool is stretched into tight twisted plaits and spun into a yarn ball with a spindle (iyik). After dyeing, the yarn is woven on a wooden frame loom (ermek).

The main parts of the loom include a sword-shaped wooden shuttle (kylych) used to pull the weft and beat each row up against the previously woven row: a frame harness (kuzuk): a plank (takta) acting as a second harness and a "dilator" preventing the warp threads from getting entangled. Weaving is usually carried out on warm days, placing the loom outside the yurt in the open air.

Working at such a loom is very laborious. Usually two women work to weave the weft yarn through the warp threads.

A weaver calculates the width of patterned strips and the number and colors of the warp threads, according to a planned design. In order to obtain patterned cloth that can serve to decorate the dwelling, women work for hours, eventually stopping at the end of the day without a break.

Mats woven out of the stalks of this prairie plant are known by all peoples of Central Asia. Kyrgyz people use them primarily to line the latticed framework (called kerege) that forms the circular walls of the yurt.

A long patterned mat (chymyrgan or kanat chiy), with dominating scarlet and blue colors, fences and separates the wooden parts of the yurt from the felt covering (koshma - tuurduk). Sometimes the mat is 8 meters long while the height is 150-160 centimeters. Depending on the diameter, several mats are used to encircle the yurt.



The patterns are mainly geometrical: diamonds, squares, octagons, triangles, zigzags and crosses, to name the simple ones. Patterns are widely used - they are it kuiruk (dog's tail), kochkor muiuz (sheep's horn), karga tyrmak (raven claws), karkyra (flight of cranes), djagalmat (bird).

Many patterns are the symbols of daily utensils and articles: tabak oyu (a round dish), kazan kulak (a cauldron handle), ooz komuz til (a mouth harp's tongue), kerege kez (an eye hole in the wall of a yurt), ala monchok (variegated beads) omurtka (spinal bone), etc.

Patterned mats produced by-Kazakh masters are also similar to Kyrgyz ones. There is a saying that Kazakh and Kyrgyz are kin with the difference that the Kazakhs are nomads who traverse the steppes horizontally, while the Kyrgyz are nomads who move vertically from valley to mountaintop. Their traditions and language (Qipchaq Turkic) are very close.

A special loom is used to weave chiy mats. It consists of two vertical poles with forks at the ends, where a cross pole is placed. Woolen yarn is thrown over the cross pole while the ends are coiled over stone weights.

In the course of manufacturing, a plain mat (ak chiy) reed stalks are placed in an alternating series of heads and tails laid out in opposite directions.

Threads from both sides are thrown over to the opposite sides to secure the stalks. Some stalks are twined round with a thread to make the mat more durable. Every stalk in a patterned mat is threaded round with wool of different colors in order to create a certain pattern.

The chiy reed is also used in manufacturing the thick felt and as a "ground cloth," or underlayer for felt carpets, insulating the yurt from the damp ground. Patterned mats (ashkhana chiy) serve as a folding screen inside the dwelling, separating the house house's corner.

They are also used to form the backing of the felt curtain at the entrance to the yurt. Patterned mat weaving (ala chiy, chymyrgan chiy) is a very laborious art which is why relatives and neighbors are needed to assist a craftswoman (chymaktchy).

Kyrgyz Embroidery

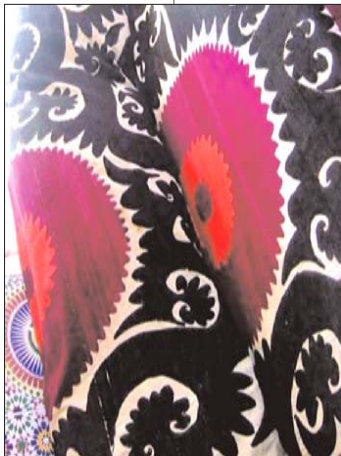
Embroidery art in Kyrgyzstan has ancient roots. Kyrgyz embroidery (sayma) is stitched with woolen and cotton threads onto felt (koshma), leather, velvet and woolen or cotton fabrics. Embroiderers (saimatchy) use a square wooden frame (kergich) as an embroidery hoop to stretch out the cloth.

In the decoration of many embroideries of the XIX and

beginning of the XX centuries a dark-red color on a black field prevails with insertions of white, yellow and sometimes blue and green colors.

Many ornamental motifs in the embroidery of fabrics, though having much in common with other kinds of Kyrgyz decorative-applied arts, actually look different from those on felt or in carvings.

Embroidery decorates a lot of articles used in everyday life and for some solemn occasions. These are mostly articles that decorate the yurt: djabyk bash (decoration strips), eshik tysh (the outer side of the entrance curtain), tekche (suspended shelf-cloth), ayak koitchu (suspended shelf), ayak kap (clothes bag), kuzgu kap (mirror strap), kaitchy kap (scissors strap), tabak kap (dish strap), kashyk kap (spoon strap), chaineik kap (kettle strap), ashkhana bashy (the top side of the ashkhana chiy); keptchuk (horse tackle, a saddle blanket); beldemchi (a lady's skirt), chach kep or kep takyia (a lady's cap); duriya (a kerchief); men's trousers, etc.



KYRGYZSTAN

Map of Kyrgyzstan





Ecotourism



Kyrgyzstan is one of the last few unpolluted places on our planet that along with its beautiful alpine scenery has preserved its nomadic traditions, rich heritage and cultural continuity that date back many thousand of years. The ecological wealth and diversity and the cultural heritage of Kyrgyzstan are suited to understanding man's relationship with nature. Living in a mainly mountainous country,

Kyrgyz people have always moved great distances according to a way of life requiring seasonal migrations.

The Naryn River, Kyrgyzstan's largest river, originates in the mountains in the northeast and flows westward through the middle of the country. Naryn then enters the Ferghana Valley and crosses into Uzbekistan, where it joins with another river to form the Syr Darya, one of Central Asia's principal rivers.

Chu River, in northern Kyrgyzstan, flows northward into southern Kazakhstan. Issyk-Kul, the largest lake in Kyrgyzstan and one of the largest mountain lakes in the world, is located at an altitude of 1,607 m (5,273 ft) above sea level in the northeastern portion of the country. Kyrgyzstan's mountain lakes are an annual refuge for thousands of migrating birds, including the mountain goose and other rare species.

Kyrgyzstan's landscape, blessed and bedeviled by a dramatic range of weather conditions and altitudes, supports an astoundingly rich diversity of plant and animal life. Forests occupy 4% of the country's land area. Coniferous trees such as the Tian-Shan white spruce grow along lower valleys and on north-facing mountain slopes.

Many rare animal species inhabit the woodlands, including the Tian-Shan bear, the red wolf and the snow leopard, which are protected by government decree. King of the mountains, the graceful, swift snow leopard - packed with muscle and sporting a long tail for balance - is finely honed to survive in snow-bound peaks. Other animals in Kyrgyzstan include deer, mountain goats and mountain sheep.

Marco Polo sheep, their horns comically coiled, tread the high mountains along with the world's largest ibex whose horns can reach 60 inches. The Tien



Shan brown bear and grey wolves patrol the valleys near Bishkek and Karakol. But the visitor is most likely to see marmots - bundles of fur with shrill shrieks - and, if you're lucky, the giant (Menzbier) marmot which lives only in the Tien Shan.

Kyrgyzstan is renowned for its botanical diversity, with some 400 species exclusive to this country. Varieties of tulip, orchid and wild onion are unusually abundant and alpine plants, such as edelweiss are the trekker's constant companion.

The rare aigul flower grows in the Alai Range. The south boasts globally important forests - including rare types of walnut and pistachio - testament to the untouched wildness of this extraordinary land.

Trekking & Walking

Climbing and trekking can take you way beyond 4000 m above sea level. Kyrgyzstan is a must for the most extreme climbers in the world. The northern Tien-Shan's highest summit is Peak Pobeda (7439m); first climbed in 1943, Pobeda is the most northerly 'seven thousand metres plus' peak on Earth.

Not far from Peak Pobeda rises Khan Tengri (7010m), "Lord of the Sky", this towering pyramid first climbed in 1936, each summer attracts climbers from all over the world.

Northernmost part of the Pamirs, forms part of Kyrgyzstan's southern border with Tajikistan.

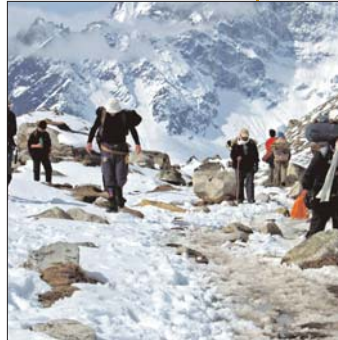
The main ridge of the Tian-Shan



extends along Kyrgyzstan's eastern border with China, on a northeastern axis.

Victory Peak (known as Pik Pobedy in Russian and Jenish Chokosu in Kyrgyz) is the highest peak in the Tian-Shan system at an elevation of 7,439 m (24,406 ft).

Located on the Kyrgyz-China border in northeastern Kyrgyzstan, Victory Peak is also the highest point in Kyrgyzstan and the second highest peak in the former USSR. A series of mountain chains that are part of the Tian-Shan system, including the Alatau



ranges, spur off into Kyrgyzstan.

Most of these ranges run generally east to west, but the Fergana Mountains in the central portion of the country run southeast to northwest. The Fergana Valley in the west and the Chu Valley in the north are among the few significant lowland areas in Kyrgyzstan.

In the south of Kyrgyzstan in the Pamirs is Peak Lenin (7,134 m), with easy routes up its broad face that attract climbers going to this altitude for the first time. High altitude climbing in Kyrgyzstan shows great potential for growth and with no climbing fees and easy access the area could become a destination similar to Nepal and Pakistan.

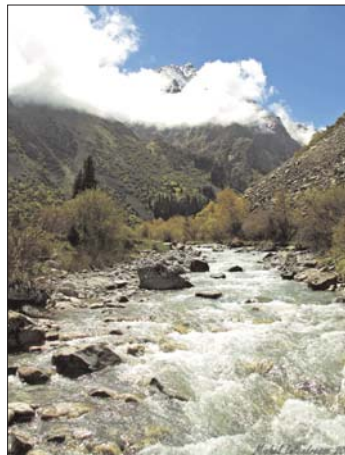
Ala-Archa National Park

Ala-Archa is a Bishkek's climbing and hiking centre. It hosts world class ice, rock, mixed alpine climbing, walking, trekking and mountaineering possibilities including hikes to glaciers and waterfalls. Ala-Archa is a well-known place to take walks amid unspoilt nature, relax by a waterfall and enjoy a picnic in the summer or visit climbers' graveyard.

Experienced hikers can climb up to the Ak-Sai Canyon and Ak-Sai Glacier surrounded by region's highest peaks.

Amazing landscapes, fresh air and coolness of the mountains along with short distance makes Ala-Archa overcrowded on weekends and holidays while on work days you can hardly meet any people. Be aware that

the ice cold and beautiful Ala-Archa River, flowing along the gorge can be wild and dangerous at the beginning of spring and in early summer.



Alay Valley

The far southern arm of Kyrgyzstan is the exclusive turf of trekkers and mountaineers, consisting mostly of the heavily glaciated Pamir Alay range, a jagged, 500km-long seam running from Samarkand to Xinjiang.

The range is threaded right up the middle by the muddy Kyzyl-Suu River to form the 60km-long Alay Valley, the heart of the Kyrgyz Pamir.

The Alay Valley is the main access point for mountaineering expeditions into Tajikistan's High Pamir – to 7495m Koh-i-Samani, 7134m Koh-i-Garmo or 7105m Peak Korzhenevskaya.

Access from Kyrgyzstan is along the A372 from Osh, via Sary Tash and the 3615m Taldyk Pass. This is also the main route into Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan region. It's



possible to access the valley from Dushanbe in Tajikistan via the Garm Valley as well.

A trip into the Alay region is not a lightweight jaunt. There is little traffic on the main roads and food supplies are limited, even in summer.

From October to May the A372 is often closed by snow, and even in summer snow and rainstorms can appear without warning. The best trekking months are July and August.

Inylchek Glacier

This is a unique alpine area that captures imagination even of seasoned trekkers and alpinists. Squeezed in between the huge icy ranges with peaks in excess of 5,000m-6000m high (some still unclimbed) is the Inylchek glacier, one of the largest glaciers in the world: its length is 60km, its depth is 540 meters and the glaciations area is 583 sq.m.

The Mertsbacher Lake exemplifies a phenomenon characteristic of arctic zones of the Polar Ocean: large chunks of ice detached from the Inylchek glacier float on the lake surface like polar icebergs.

This area resembles the one of lunar landscape surrounded by high and steep peaks. Looming over the icy snake of the glacier are the Pobeda peak (7,439m), the highest peak of the Tien-Shan mountains, and the exotic pyramid of the Khan-Tengry peak (6,995m).

Boom Gorge

At the eastern end of the Kyrgyz Range – converging together through this narrow canyon are a highway, a railway, and the Chu River. Most people simply drive through and don't stop – passing over “Red Bridge”, which crosses the Chu



River at the mid-point of the Gorge and onto Issyk Kul.

To the west from here you can see the Konorchak canyons. The road is lined with statues of Snow Leopards, Eagles and Stags and an occasional “pioneer”. The Bishkek Balykchi railway also travels through the gorge – rising high above the road.

There are walls designed to prevent landslides cascading down onto the road below – but despite these, occasionally landslides do manage to close the road for a time. The gorge offers plenty of opportunities for rafting, camping and trekking. It also offers possibilities for White Water Rafting.

Rafting

There are a wide range of rivers which provide the possibility for challenging routes for those with all skill levels, from novice to experienced. There are quiet rivers, flowing through beautiful mountain landscapes, as well as rapids of different levels of difficulty.

The level of difficulty on each river can vary depending on local conditions, such as the amount of melt water descending from the thawing glaciers. At the height of the summer, the water level of some rivers can actually vary on a daily basis.

The rafting season is usually between April and October, but can vary accord-



ing to the particular river. The end of August and September is the best time on some rivers. The water level in the rivers rise in the spring – with ice melting which adds to both the volume and speed of the water flowing downstream – and falls in the autumn.

The most popular rivers are the Chui, Chon Kemin, Kekemerren, Chatkal and Naryn. There is a camp on the Chui River near the Boom gorge – and this area is designated as the "National White Water Arena" and serves as a training ground for the whole of Central Asia.

There are a number of firms in Kyrgyzstan which specialize in arranging rafting tours. And it is necessary to have special clothing and insurance cover for rafting.



Horse Riding

The horse is a major feature of Kyrgyz culture. Young boys learn to ride almost as soon as they can walk.

It is not surprising, therefore, that horse riding tours, or itineraries with opportunities for some horse riding are popular.

Horse riding is possible just about anywhere in the country.

Most of the horses used for tours are "working horses" – the local people use them for travelling when looking after their livestock in the mountain jailoo. Take time to become acquainted with your mount.

Kan-i-gut Caves

Eighteen kilometers from the settlement of Samarkandyk, in the Batken oblast, on the slopes of a spur of the Turkestan ridge of mountains, lies the mysterious and legendary cave of Kan-i-gut.

From as early as the 10th and 11th centuries silver and other minerals were extracted from the caves ... and at one time the cave was known as the "Mine of Death". In the days of the Kokhand Khanate, criminals sentenced to execution, political enemies of the authorities and others were sent here to work in the mines.

They were turned loose in the labyrinth of caves, which stretches for over three kilometers, and if they returned without precious metals, they were either killed or sent back to look again. Once they entered the caves - there was no way to emerge again. Many invented tales to astound their goalers - and hopefully earn themselves a release - including stories about a sleeping camel with jewels as eyes, a mysterious green plant that grew underground, walls made of silver bricks, and terrible creatures which acted as guardians protecting the caves treasures. The mines are now all but exhausted.

In 1896 two Russian amateur geologists were sent to explore the cave by the then governor of Turkestan. Their account of their visit includes a description of what they encountered. The expedition wasn't exactly well equipped by modern standards with just one rope, some candles, a primitive lantern, a shovel and some smoked fish.

They negotiated with some local shepherds who agreed to show them the caves - but warned them of the dangers of getting lost, or confused, in the labyrinthine maze of which the cave consisted. They were told stories of how a party of five once descended ... never to return ... their skeletons still adorning one of the cave's galleries. The shepherds also told them of the ancient accounts of magical forces which protected the many treasures which lay within.

The explorers said that the entrance to the cave reminded them of a gothic temple, or cathedral. They proceeded onwards, into the darkness. Although remembering that many individuals had been lost in these caves before them, they carried on and penetrated deep into the system.

During the Soviet period, further explorations were carried out, including an expedition in 1920 which lasted some 20 days, and which discovered a second entrance to the system. Several maps of the system were created ... and various caverns were given picturesque names: "Red Water Pool"; Skeleton Hall; "Bridge of Sighs";

"Bottom of the second Precipice"; "Camel Grotto"; Dragon's Labyrinth" ... and so on.

In 1972, 1976 and 1984 further expeditions took place, and although the mines may have been worked out the caves still managed to reveal many treasures. A horde of 23 square coins from the 18th and 19th centuries was discovered.

The caves have not yet revealed their full extent ... although more 30km of tunnels have been explored; it is thought that many more remain to be discovered.

Akturpak Cave

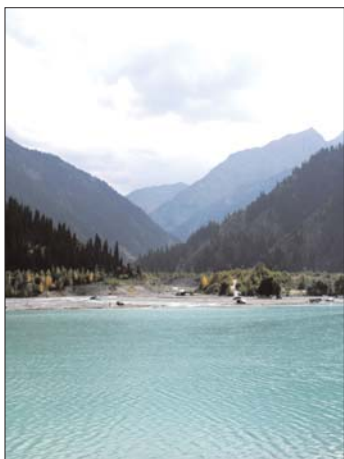
Near to the village of Alturpak in the Kadamjay district of Batken oblast, there is a cave said to be very beautiful with walls displaying a variety of colors, as if crystal. The air in the cave is considered to be for the treatment of bronchitis, asthma and allergies – although there is no actual scientific research to support this claim.

The local people decided to build a sanatorium nearby for those seeking treatment utilising the power of this natural remedy with the help of local akims, deputies and local entrepreneurs. The cave has been fitted with electricity and water. The sanatorium, which is not yet complete, has a capacity for just 20 people – although plans exist to double this.



Top 10 Places to Visit

Issyk-Kul Lake



Enclosed on all sides by the snowy peaks of the Tien Shan Mountains, Lake Issyk-Kul literally meaning “hot lake” is said to be the world’s second-largest alpine lake or second highest navigable lake in the world after Lake Titicaca in South America. The lake never freezes even in the depths of winter due to some thermal activity, strong winds, physics of deep water and unique micro-climate over the lake.

In lake flows 180 large and small rivers, but there is no streams flowing out of the lake. That is why the water is slightly salty.

Called " Pearl of Central Asia", the lake changes color from pale green to turquoise blue depending on the day time and sun

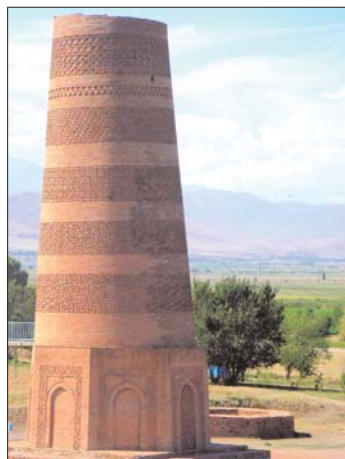
position. One would be astonished with its size and scenery of huge celestial snow-capped mountain peaks shining from across - in fact one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. The area around the lake is well known for its beautiful sandy shores among locals and people from Kazakhstan and Russia, most of the resorts and hotels are on the north shore of the lake.

Burana Tower

75 km east from the city is a 25m-high tower, which dates from the 11th century and is all that remains of the ancient city of Balasagyn. Some centuries ago the tower was 44 metres high, but after an earthquake in early 1900, the upper part fell down.

The tower and a mosque were located in the city centre of Balasagyn town - one of the centres of Karahanid state.

The large area around the town was enclosed with 2 rows of fence, that still visible from the top of the tower. Nowadays there is a small museum of Burana, represented with the tower, the remains of three tomb mausoleums, and other exhibits, such us: stone sculpture - Balbals, petroglyphs, coins and other things founded during scientific explorations.



Ak Beshim

It is a site of ancient settlement dated to 6-12 cc, located 6 km to south-east of Tokmak township. Ak-Beshim was attributed to the types of towns typical for middle century Central Asia. Archaeological digs show the remnants of residential constructions, crockery, coins, items of art and other archaeological monuments. Also a temple of two buddhas, filled with remnants of sculptures, painting and building materials has been discovered.

Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain

Sulaiman-Too Sacred Mountain Kyrgyzstan dominates the Fergana Valley and forms the backdrop to the city of Osh, at the crossroads of important routes on the Central Asian Silk Roads. For more than one and a half millennia, Sulaiman was a beacon for travelers revered as a sacred mountain. Its five peaks and slopes contain numerous ancient places of worship and caves with petroglyphs as well as two largely reconstructed 16th century mosques. One hundred and one sites with petroglyphs representing humans and animals as well as geometrical forms have been indexed in the property so far. There are 17 places of worship, which are still in use, and many that are not. Dispersed around the mountain peaks they are connected by footpaths. The cult sites are believed to provide cures for barrenness, headaches, and back pain and give the blessing of longevity. Veneration for the mountain blends pre-Islamic and Islamic beliefs. The site is believed to represent the most complete example of a sacred mountain anywhere in Central Asia, worshipped over several millennia. In 2009, Sulaiman-Too was inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage List.

Konorchek

On the way to Issyk-Kul lake, right on the exit from Bo'om valley, one can see red aeolian (wind) outcroppings, looking like some fantastic skyscrapers - but this is only allusion to Konorchek.

Konorchek itself is much further up to the mountains, it consists of the entire system of large and small sinuous and deep canyons with vertical walls. Some parts of the canyons have its own names and refer to the scenery:

Hiroshima, bob-sleigh, skyscraper, fairy tail, grand canyon and aeolian castles. They are all the products of erosion which lasts 1.5-2 million years.



Gumbez Manas

An interesting memorial, concerned with poetical legend, is situated 20km to the North-East of Talas, at the foot of the Manastyn-Chokusu Mountain, on the bank of the Kenkol mountain river. According to legend, many centuries ago, the legendary hero of the Kyrgyz epos - the warrior Manas - was buried here. The memorial is called the Gumbez ("Mausoleum") of Manas. The "Manas" Epos is the cultural heritage of the Kyrgyz people, which keeps on amazing mankind so many centuries after it was created. The epos is considered to be a sort of encyclopedia of the Kyrgyz people's life, evidence of its ancient history. There is nothing like it

in the world, neither in verbal, nor in written form, where the historical, cultural, ethnographical aspects of one nation's lifestyle, traditions and customs are reflected.



Son Kul Lake

The largest lake in Naryn area is Lake Son Kul, lying at 3016 meters amongst steppe vegetation. It is 29 km long, 18 km across and 13 meters deep. The lake is home to countless wild geese, ducks and other waterfowl. It is one of the loveliest spots in Kyrgyzstan surrounded by alternating white peaks, staying on the shore you can easily count the sheep on the opposite side of the lake. The lake's color changes from violet to dark blue to pink, depending on the time of day and the weather. There are no solid

buildings in this area - shepherds come here in June and stay in yurts all summer long. The only place to stay here is a tent or, so called, "Yurt Inns" where you will be provided with sharing accommodation in yurta and traditional meals.

Tash Rabat Complex

Tash-Rabat was constructed in the 15th century, on the ancient trade route from Central Asia to China, and was a resting place for merchants, ambassadors, travelers and other wanderers. It is the largest structure built of stone from Central Asian architecture of that epoch. It is notable not only for its size and building materials, but also for its special layout, based on perfect symmetry. Lost among the primeval wilderness, far from inhabited locations, the caravanserai looks unbleached, monumental and unassailable. About 520 km from Bishkek and at an altitude of about 3500m above sea level is the ancient caravanserai of Tash Rabat. This is a carefully restored stone building that once housed an inn on the Great Silk Road. The archaeological evidence suggest that the site was constructed in the 10th century for both resting and worship and would have served to protect caravans to and from China from both the ravages of the weather and of bandits. A centrally domed space is surrounded by some 30 or 31 smaller domed rooms, including a kitchen. Across the large open central space from the entrance is the "Khan's seat". It is possible to wander through the warren of small rooms that would have housed the guests. There are stories of a tunnel leading under the hillside for some 100 meters from the building to a lookout post on the other side of the hill. Maybe one of the reasons it has retained its character is that it is set on the main road from Bishkek/Naryn to Torugart, but some 15 km up a side valley. For many years the turn-off was not sign-posted and so travelers simply passed by unaware of what they were missing.

Uzgen Architectural Complex

On the right bank of the Kara-Darya, in the country's south, there stands one of the most ancient cities in Kyrgyzstan - Uzgen with the 2,000-year history. In its central part is the Uzgen historical and architectural complex of the 11th - 12th centuries. It consists of three mausoleums conditionally named Northern, Middle and Southern.

They are attached to each other and look like a uniform building with portals arranged in line. To the north of the mausoleums there is a minaret. These monuments are considered the classics of Karakhanid epoch. There the governors of Karakhanid dynasty are buried. The earliest monument is the Average mausoleum. It is slightly taller than the others. It is the only mausoleum of the time of Karakhanids with two portals; its ornament is made of burnt bricks. The Northern mausoleum was constructed in 1152-1153. It is tiled with beautifully carved ganch and terracotta as well as the relief brick ornament. The portal of the Southern mausoleum constructed in 1187 is covered with carved terracotta. The minaret was constructed in the middle of the 11th century. This slender conic tower is covered by the ornament made from shaped brickwork.

Arslanbob

The vast tracts of woodland with nut and fruit trees in the valley of the River Arslanbob are the largest of their kind in the world, measuring over 600,000 hectares. One of the legends says that Alexander the Great once led his troops to these parts. Up to 1,500 tons of walnut is harvested each year in the Arslanbob valley, besides 5,000 tons of apples, pistachio and cherry plum. People are grateful for these generous gifts of nature and seek to preserve their source. Already for many years the Arslanbob area (which means the "King of Forests" in Kyrgyz) has been a forest zone protected by the state.



Shah-Fazil Mausoleum

The mausoleum belongs to the complex of cult structures of Karakanid epoch 11th century. The complex consists of the holy Mount Archa-Mazar with Alamberdar mausoleum (19th century) as well as the cave of the saint eremite, the place of execution of 2,700 soldiers of Islam, 18th -19th - century mosque, vertically positioned stone, Shah-Fazil mausoleum (11th century), Safed-Bulon mausoleum dated the 19th century. Shah-Fazil mausoleum is the most valuable. There are no similar monuments in Central Asia. Its square structure looks like a massive truncated pyramid with original stepped drum and tall dome resting on it. The interior of the mausoleum from floor to ceiling is covered with fine ganch carving. The complex erection is connected with the legend about the coming of Arabs headed by Shah-Dzharir - grandson of the Prophet Muhammad - for the purpose of Islam propagation. The infidels attacked Moslems during the praying and cut off their heads. The black-skinned bride of Shah-Dzharir, Safed-Bulon, was the heroine who buried all of them. The

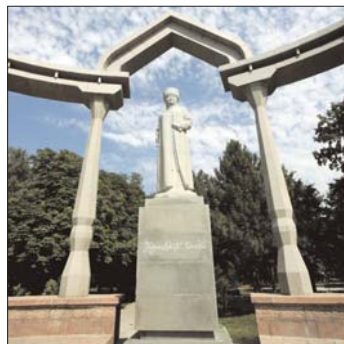
Allah blessed her and she turned into white-skinned. Safed-Bulon means the White Woman. The cause of Shah-Dzharir was continued by his son, Shah-Fazil. He punished the infidels and went on spreading the religion in those lands. The entire complex is a Muslim relic, the place of worship of many pilgrims.

5 Major Cities

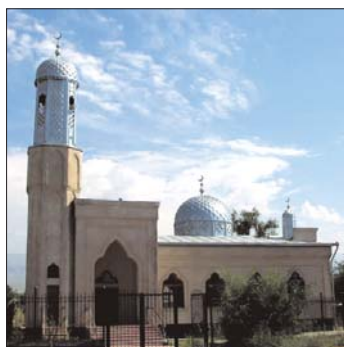
Bishkek - The Capital

Bishkek, the capital of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, with a population of about 1 million, is situated in the north part of the country (Chui-Region).

Especially the centre is heavily influenced by the Soviets, and you can enjoy quite a number of typical soviet-style architecture (Philharmonia – concert hall, government building, Historical Museum, Monument for the Great War of the Native Country) and also modern monuments pointing out the traditional Kyrgyz culture (Monument of Manas, Monument



of Independence, as well as many statues of Akyns, Manas'chi and local governors of different periods). The city is famous being one of the greenest in the world, due to its countless parks and alleys, which make the town a nice place to live also in the heat of the summer.



Places to See

Museum Historical Museum

Formerly known as "Lenin Museum" it is located on Ala-Too Square and is open from Tuesday to Sunday.

Exhibitions include stones with rock paintings from Saimaluu-Tash; armor and everyday objects dating from the Bronze Age; excavated nomadic adornments dating from 1st to the 5th centuries (AD); Turkic stone culture collection; Talas stones with runic lettering; ceramic, glass and metal articles and numerous ancient coins.

There are rich ethnographic collections of objects from the late 19th and early 20th centuries including felt, wool, chiy, leather and wood created by Kyrgyz artisans; Kyrgyz embroidery, weavings, national dress, original female adornments and highly artistic horse harness supplies.



Museum of Fine Arts

The Museum of Fine Arts (196 Sovietskaya St; Tue-Sun 9-17:00) is dedicated to Kyrgyz folk and applied art and Russian and Soviet art. The museum began as the State Picture Gallery and was located in the St Nicholas Church in Oak Park. The church now houses the Gallery of the Artists Union.

The building was constructed in 1974 as one of the projects in the grand scheme for improving the capital, it features a yurt and permanent shrydaks and other traditional craft exhibition.

The full collection numbers some 17,500 works. There are also several galleries of paintings from the soviet period, replicas of Egyptian, Greek and classical Western sculptures and a collection of linocuts based on the Manas epic by Herten.

Open Air Sculpture Museum

Inaugurated in 1984 to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Kyrgyz Republic, sculptors from all over the Soviet Union submitted pieces for the theme of "Peace and Labour". Locations: 346 Frunze St.



Frunze Museum

The museum traces the life and career of Mikhail Frunze and is purported to incorporate the actual house where he was born and brought up (though some suspect this may not be the exact house). There is an exhibition of the achievements of the city and "Kirgizia" during the Soviet period.

Natural Beauties

Oak Park

This began as an oak grove planted by Alexei Fetisov in 1890. It is located between Prospect Chui and Abdumomunova west of Sovietskaya.

Ala-Archa Gorge

Bishkek is located at the foothills of the Terskey Alatau, and there are lots of picturesque and recreational areas in its suburbs. One of the recreational areas is Ala-Archa gorge, which in Kyrgyz means bright juniper. Justifying the name, juniper is growing all over the place, and is food for birds in the surrounding area. The Alamedin River, flowing along the gorge is beautiful. Ice cold, it can be wild and dangerous at the beginning of spring and in early summer. The region has many climbing routes of high com-

plexity, and peaks with altitudes from 4,000 m to 5,000 m above the sea level. Ala-Archa gorge is a favorite place where tourists, climbers, and citizens of Bishkek used to rest and train for climbing.

Panfilov Park

This was once called Red Star Park because of the pattern made by its network of pathways, but renamed in honour of the war hero whose statue can be found at the Eastern end of the park.

The park is filled with amusement rides for children and a small Ferris wheel. It is located behind the White House.

Kemal Ataturk Park

This park used to be called Drujba (Friendship) Park but was renamed in honor of the founder of modern Turkey. Inside is a memorial to fallen soldiers of the Afghanistan war. It is located on Akhunbaeva between Molodezhnaya and Malybaeva St.

Prospect Erkindik

Now called Prospect Erkindik - (Freedom Avenue) it was originally named in 1902. The main part of the street marks a promenade under the silver poplars planted in 1883 over a filled-in streambed. It is a favourite spot to simply stroll in the evenings and weekends. The street is flanked by old buildings and a number of monuments. It is located in Railway Station down to Jibek Jolu Prospect.

Molodaya Gvardia

Once a streambed filled by Army engineers, it was converted to a boulevard with a number of monuments. It is located in railway line to the Northern edge of the city.

Monuments

Erkindik (Ala-Too Square):

Statue of Freedom, Unveiled in 1999 to commemorate the eighth year of independence, this represents a Kyrgyz woman holding a flame-ringed tunduk.

Martyrs of the Revolution (Prospect Chui-Sovietskaya):

Urkuya Salieva (1910—1934), and early socialist organizer in Southern Kyrgyzstan — apparently murdered by “rich peasants.”



Victory Monument (Victory Square): completed in 1984, a woman stands over the eternal flame, waiting for her son or husband who will not return home from the Great Patriotic War. A wistful reflection on the great cost of victory.

Toktogul Satylganov (Sovietskaya): South of the Opera and Ballet Theatre. The poet, singer and instrumentalist lived from 1864 until 1933.

Manas Sculptural Complex (Philharmonia): The legendary hero Manas on his magical horse Ak-Kula slaying a dragon. Below him are his wife Kanykei and the wise counsellor Bakai. Busts of several 20th century manaschy are nearby.

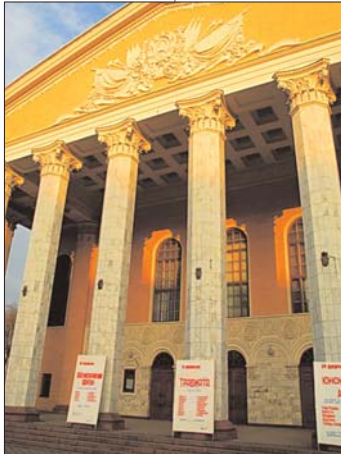
Theaters

Performances often start at 5:00 pm, but in the height of the season there may be only one or two performances a week. Excluding special shows, tickets are available at the door.

Opera and Ballet Theatre

Named after Abdylas Maldybaev, the theatre has resident opera and ballet companies with occasional guest companies. Season is usually autumn to spring but there are often performances during other times of the year as well.

📍Add: 167, Abdyrahmanova St.
☎Tel.: 661548



Kyrgyz Drama Theatre

The resident company performs a range of local and international plays.

Performances are in Kyrgyz or Russian.

📍Add: 273, Panfilov St., behind the Government House
☎Tel.: 665802, 216958

Russian Drama Theatre

A range of local and international plays in Russian.

📍Add: 122, Tynystanova St. - Oak Park
☎Tel.: 662032, 621571

Drama Theatre

A small, intimate, theatre with a company performing a range of local and international plays.

Performances are in Kyrgyz or Russian and often international.

📍Add: Chernyshevsky Library between Theatre of Opera and Ballet and Russian Drama Theatre

Puppet Theatre

📍Add: Sovietskaya-Michurina

Performances:

Sundays at 11:00am.

Kyrgyz State Philharmonic

There are two concert halls featuring classical, traditional Kyrgyz, and pop concerts and a variety of shows.

📍Add: 253, Chui Prospect
☎Tel.: 212262, 212235

The Conservatory

Concerts by students and professors

📍 Add: 115, Jantosheva St.

☎ Tel.: 479542

Where and What to Buy

TSUM is the biggest supermarket in Bishkek which offers everything from toiletries to new electronics. Souvenirs are located on the fourth level (some negotiation is expected). Beta Stores is on Chui Av. / Isanova St.

Intersection and Europa supermarket (Pravda St. / Toktogula St. 5 minutes walk from TSUM) also have souvenirs but they can be overpriced.

Iman

Kyrgyz souvenirs, crafts, rugs etc.

📍 Add: 128, Chui Av.

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 21 24 05

Kiyal

Kyrgyz souvenirs, crafts, rugs etc.

📍 Add: 202, Chui Av. (Osh market, Kiyal factory)

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 24 28 78, 65 14 42, 64 01 80

Tumar

Ceramics, wood and metal Kyrgyz national souvenirs, rugs, etc.

📍 Add: 36-2, Togoloka Moldo St. / Chui Av. intersection

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 21 26 53

✉ artsalon@tumar.kg
www.tumar.kg

Art Gallery

Paintings of Kyrgyz artists, pottery, souvenirs.

📍 Add: 57, Manas Prospect / Kievskaya St., intersection

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 62 27 91

Gallery-M

Paintings, sculptures, rugs, carpets.

📍 Add: 13, Molodaya Gvardia Av.

Belek

Felt items, chiy, ceramics, wooden items, paintings, leather, pottery, antiques.

📍 Add: Chui Av., "libirs" industrial complex building ground floor.

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 66 13 02

Saimaluu-Tash Art Gallery

Felt items, pottery, ceramics, chiy, paintings. Big variety of souvenirs dedicated to the Saimaluu-Tash rock paintings gallery.

📍 Add: 78, Pushkina St., Ala-Too Square

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 62 04 13

Astral De Luxe

Kyrgyz national souvenirs, wooden items, pottery, ceramics, paintings, leather, embroidered items.

📍 Add: 140, Chui Prospect.

☎ Tel: (+996 312) 21 18 16

Asahi

Big variety of woolen and silky carpets (hand made only). Silver, wooden and felt items, pottery, chiy, antiques.

9am-9pm in summer, 9 am-8pm year-round

📍 Add: 136, Chui Prospect

☎ Tel/fax: (+996 312) 66 57 10

✉ info@asahikyrgyz.com

**Where & What to Eat
Kyrgyz National Cuisine**

Kyrgyzstan stood on the crossroads of the Silk Road, and the caravan routes which crossed the territory carried not only goods for trade, but also brought examples of various cultures: Turkish, Persian, Arabian, Indian,

Chinese, Russian, and European and these mingled with the culture and traditions of Central Asia.

As a result Kyrgyz cuisine has absorbed elements from all of the cultures with which it came into contact, and although many dishes that you will find are common throughout Central Asia, it is still possible to find examples that have preserved their original, national identity.

In many areas, such as Bishkek, Russian cuisine is common, but it is now possible to find examples from all over the world, including the all embracing “European”, Indian, Korean, Turkish and Chinese cuisines. Outside the cities local dishes, (such as Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Dungan) are more common.

Although most Kyrgyz are Muslims, there are some traditional dishes which are not strictly halal – such as Olovo or Kuiruk Boor.

It is said that the food in Central Asia falls into three different types: the subsistence diet of the once nomadic peoples such as the Kyrgyz (mainly meat, milk products and bread); the diet of settled Turkish peoples (the Uzbeks and Uighurs) including pilaffs, kebabs, noodles and pasta, stews and elaborate pastries and breads; and dishes which come from the South (Iran, India, Pakistan and China) with more seasoning and herbs.

In Kyrgyz culture many dishes used to have special, ritual importance, and be connected with particular calendar holidays. Although these dishes are of great interest, unfortunately, many of them are being forgotten, and have fallen into disuse whilst some, which formerly had ritual contents, have lost their initial meaning and are progressively turning into every-day dishes.

Meat is central to Kyrgyz cooking - the nomadic way of life did not allow for the growing of fruit and vegetables – which means that vegetarian visitors may find it difficult to find dishes that, meet their needs. Men are often considered to be the best cooks – many think that women spoil food cooked for others – although in the yurt the kitchen implements etc. are all stored on the women’s side of the yurt and hunting and implements to do with shepherding and livestock on the men’s side.

In many ashkana’s (tea houses or cafes) and restaurants the chefs are men. Women cooks are more commonly encountered in those establishments serving Russian or European cuisines. Russian dishes such as Shchi or Borsh can be found in many places but staple items are Central Asian dishes such as manti, samsa, ploff, shashlik and laghman.


Traditionally the Kyrgyz are a very hospitable people. If a Kyrgyz family invites you for a meal then you should take a small gift – nothing lavish, for example fruit or flowers. Take your shoes off when entering the house. Picnics, especially, are served on a dostorkon, (a large cloth laid out on the ground around which the gathering sits - with your feet either to your side or away from the dostorkon), but don’t be surprised if this happens indoors as well.

Handle the food only with your right hand. At the end of the meal bring your two hands up to the face and drag them down as if washing the face and recite the word “omin” – the Muslim equivalent of “amen”. In many homes, (unless strict Muslim ones) eating will also involve drinking. One of the most essential features of Kyrgyz cuisine is that dishes should


preserve their taste and appearance. For example, there are almost no dishes comprising puree, minced, or chopped meat, (although there are a few exceptions.) Also, Kyrgyz dishes tend to have a plain taste; sauces and spices are used in only small batches, although spices are used more often in the South. Sauces are intended only to bring out the taste of the dish – not to change it.

Restaurants


"Hilal"

 Add: Chui Street half a block west of Molodai Gvardia (by Osh Bazaar)
Inexpensive Turkish food including the "Iskender Kebab" with sliced meat, yogurt sauce, ketchup and bread; and the "Doner Kebab" with sliced meat, ketchup, mayonnaise and fries. They also have pizza.

"Yusa"

 Add: Between Moskovskaya and Bekonbaeva 2 blocks east of Erkindik
Excellent mid-priced Turkish food including levash (huge hollow hot thin bread) with green yogurt and other sauces. Outdoor and indoor seating.


"Cafe Altair" (aka "Starry Maestro")

 Add: Chui Street half a block west of Turusbekova (and the American Pub)
Mid-priced and good value Chinese food for dining in or take out. The Egg fried rice is excellent.


"Peking Duck"

 Add: Chui street half a block west of Molodai Gvardia
This new Chinese Restaurant features indoor and outdoor seating only a few minutes' walk from Beta Stores


Jalal-Abad Cafe"

 Add: Kievskaya & Togolok Moldo
Indoors a fairly blase Kyrgyz Restaurant but in the summer it is one of Bishkek's "Chaikhana's" (Outdoor Tea-house) which serves inexpensive Kyrgyz and other local food. Come early in the week for a full menu.


"Avrasia"

 Add: Chui near Osh Bazaar (half a block west of Molodai Gvardia)
Nice outdoor seating under trees in the summer.


"Faeiza"

 Add: Jybek Jylu (just west of Turusbekova)
Ordinary atmosphere but considered to have the best plov in town.

"Express Cafe"

 Add: Moscovskaya (half a block west of Sovietskaya - near the ACCELS office)
a popular good mid priced place to have lunch. Great Plov and good location

"Consul"

 Add: Orozbekova & Frunze
Central Asian and Russian food catering to higher budgets.

Where to Stay

Hyatt Regency Bishkek Hotel

 Sovetskaya 191

Jannat Hotel

 Aaly Tokombaeva St.*****

Golden Dragon Hotel*****

 60 Elebaev St.

Hotel Ak Keme ****

 Prospect Mira 93

Demi Guest House ***

📍 10 Ahunbaeva St.

Grand Hotel ***

📍 53a Bakayev St.

Osh

Osh is the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan – reputedly 3000 years

old. Archaeologists have found artifacts dating back to about the fifth century B.C. One claim that is often heard is that Osh is “Older than Rome”. There are several legends about the origin of the city – including claims to having been founded by Solomon or Alexander the Great. Even if such a grand personage did not establish

Osh, its position at a crossroads along the ancient trading routes that became known as the Silk Road almost guaranteed that it would become a major settlement. Osh is mentioned in the greatest epic of the Kyrgyz People - Manas - where the wise man Oshpur was a tutor of Manas. In the period between the 10th and the 12th centuries it was the third city of the Fergana Valley , and in 1762 it joined the Khanate of Kokand and became one of the six trading centres



within the Khanate. Assimilated into Tsarist Russia, the city expanded onto the left bank of the river and European style houses started to appear.

Places to See**Aravan**

Aravan is a predominantly ethnic-Uzbek district center 23 km west of Osh and home to petroglyphs (carved stones) called ‘The Celestial Horses of Davan’. The petroglyphs, which date from the first century BC, are carved on a near-vertical rock face next to a cemetery and represent solar symbols and the legendary Fergana horses which were much sought after by Chinese emperor Wu-Di in the second century BC.

The site was archaeologically researched from the 1930s to the 1980s, and excavations at the foot of the rock produced evidence of animal sacrifice sites. Today, the horse carvings and nearby spring are still a local pilgrimage site and there is a small mosque.

As a matter of fact, there are far more modern-day graffiti than ancient petroglyphs on the rock since a local superstition considers it as a luck-

bringer to have your name eternalized on the rocks. There is said to be caves with more petroglyphs close to the sanatorium of Aravan, so bring a maglite or torch if you plan to look for those.

The Celestial Horses site itself is just near the local hospital when you are about to enter Aravan, on your right side when coming from Osh. The green wooden gate has a sign saying (in Kyrgyz) 'Dül at. Ziyarat zhai'. It can be done as a half-day excursion from Osh. Shared taxis (inexpensive, about half an hour) for Aravan stand on Alisher Navoi küçasi, about 100 m west of the crossing with Kurmanjan Datka.

Solomon's Mountain

In the center of the city is Sulaiman Too ("Solomon's mountain"), which dominates the city. Up until the sixteenth century it was known as "Bara Kuch" – or "Nice Mountain". It was given its new name because the Muslim prophet Suleyman Sheikh was buried at the foot of it, and since that time it assumed a Holy significance and many believers make a pilgrimage here. Also, some Muslims apparently think that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is supposed to have once prayed here.

There is a path walkway around the mountain, which makes an interesting walk. Along the way you will probably see pilgrims praying at a little cave. Inside the cave, water droplets drip from the roof, and it is said that these are the tears of Suleyman. Pilgrims come to pray to relief from illnesses and for help in solving problems.

For some reason (apparently, in profile some people think it resembles a pregnant woman lying down – but you have to be some distance away and in the direction to see this), it is also revered by many women who have been unable to bear children. At the top of a short (30 minute climb) is a flagpole and a mosque built in 1497 by the 14 year old Babur who had been recently crowned the King of the Fergana Valley – and later went on to become the founder of the Mogul dynasty in India – destroyed and rebuilt twice it is another center for pilgrimage.

In later life, Babur was abdicated and wrote his memoirs in which he mentions the Suleyman mount (and his building projects on it); the river, overlooked from both banks by gardens and a red and white stone which was used as handles for knives. He also tells of a meadow with a wide stream flowing through it and apparently it was a standing joke to carry people who fell asleep in the meadow across three streams to the other side.

Statue of Kurmanjan Datka

In the city, there is a statue of Kurmanjan Datka – the "Queen of the South" who opposed Russian expansion in the region and her figure is featured on the 50-som note. There is also a statue of



Lenin. Nearby is a war memorial that bears the inscription (in Russian and Kyrgyz) “No One is Forgotten – Nothing is Forgotten”.

Shaïd Tëpa Mosque

It is the largest mosque in Kyrgyzstan. The original wooden building was constructed between 1908 and 1910, but was closed by the Soviets. It was reopened in 1943 in a surprising act of religious tolerance by the then Soviet government. Recently it has been renovated and has space for some 5000 worshippers.

Uzgen

Some 55 kilometers north-east of Osh – with a predominantly Uzbek population, Uzgen was an important center on the trade routes between the Ferghana and Semirechye (Seven Rivers region). Uzgen became a highly developed town in the Karakhanid epoch and developed into a large trading and handicrafts centre.

At that time there were a large number of mints producing coins and about 900 coins have been identified as being minted in Uzgen around the turn of the millennium. The ancient city of Uzgen was located on a high bank of the Kara-Darya River and consisted of three shakhristans, of which only hills and ruined walls remain.

However, an 11th century minaret survives and three Mausoleums dating from the 11th and 12th centuries – They are acclaimed to be one of the unique architectural sites of medieval Central Asia. The complex has been recently restored and is featured on the back of the 50 som note. A little to the North East are the petroglyphs of Kara Dzhar.

Places to Stay

Hotel Osh Nuru

1 Bayalınova St.

Hotel Tesu

5 Sayboyu St.

Guesthouse Barak-Ata

22/1 Sultan İbrahimov St.

Where & What to Eat

Art Cafè Bravo

4 Kurmanjan Datka St.

Tel: (+996 3222) 5 75 042

Jalal-Abad

Jalal-Abad is the administrative,

economic and cultural centre of Jalal-Abad oblast

(province). It lies in the south of the Kugart valley, in the foothills of the Babash Ata Mountains to the North. The climate is noted for dry, hot summers, warm and

sunny autumns with rare rain bursts and winters are warm with high humidity. The region is a centre for fruit and vegetable growing. One of Kyrgyzstan's main branches of the Silk Road passed through Jalal Abad and the region has played host to travelers for thousands of years, although little archaeological remains are visible today – except in some of the more remote parts of the oblast – such as Saimalu Tash and the Chatkal valley. These have included travelers,



traders, tourists and pilgrims (to the various holy sights) and sick people visiting the curative spas such as in the Ayub Tau Mountain, at the altitude of 700 m above sea level some three kilometres out of town.

Hozret-Ayub-Paigambar Spa

Abad is often used in Asian place names to refer to the person who founded the community. It is said that Jalal Abad was named after Jalal ad din, who was renowned for setting up caravanserais to serve travelers – and especially many pilgrims who came to the holy mountain. In early 19th century the small Kokand fortress was built, and a small village (kishlak) grew up around this. The local people were engaged in agriculture, trade and provided services to the pilgrims visiting the spas. Then, in the 1870's, Russian migrants came to the region. They set up a garrison town and military hospital.

Jalal-Abad developed as a market town. Where cattle were bought and sold



and so became known as a place of interaction between agricultural and nomadic peoples. The town had medieval narrow curved streets and the houses were surrounded with high clay walls. Only mosques were decorated with colorful ornaments. In 1916 a railway was built from Andijan to Jalal-Abad.

When the Soviets established their power in the region, great importance was attached to the Jalal-Abad spas. Health resorts were built and both agriculture and the food industry developed rapidly. The city underwent a major period of reconstruction in the 1950's.

Nowadays Jalal-Abad is home to enterprises in the oil, construction, wood processing, electro-technical, light and food industries. There is a thriving market – and a local shop, which specialises in things like “walnut jam” – made from immature fruits (before the husks have formed) and honey. As in all former Soviet towns the main street was called Lenin Street – and in Jalal-Abad it has retained its name, fountains and statue of Vladimir Illych. Jalal-Abad is famous for its spas. There is a legend that the water from the Hozret-Ayub-Paigambar spa cured lepers. According to the legend there was a grave, a mosque and the khan's palace near the spa.

Jalal Abad sanatoria, “Kurort”, is based on one of the spas on one of the hills overlooking the town – the waters are salty, but people came a long distance to collect bottles of it.

Near the entrance to the Kurort (the health resort) is a cafe with a fine view over the town – the “Ikram-Ajy” Panorama, at a height of 1000 meters, with a complex that consists of a “national crafts hall”, souvenir shop and an entertainment hall. From here you can appreciate how green the city is as the trees rise above the low-rise building. The spas are also the sources for sev-

eral different brands of mineral water. There is also a historical and cultural museum. Near the bazaar is a shop, which sells a local delicacy – walnut jam. The “fruits” are taken from the tree before the hard husk has formed and boiled. The fruit is whole and suspended in a sweet syrup, rather than a thick jam. They also sell things like walnuts in honey. In the bazaar it is possible to buy all sorts of fresh fruits and a wide variety of nuts.

Besh Aral

Besh-Aral Zapovednik (Bio-diversity Reserve) is situated in the Chatkal Valley of the Jalal-Abad Oblast 340 km from Jalal-Abad, the oblast centre, and 25 km from Kanysh-Kiya in the Chatkal Rayon centre. It represents a mountain region with undisturbed wild landscapes, turbulent rivers, picturesque alpine meadows and clear mountain air, and a great diversity of plants and animals. The Reserve (with a total area of 63200 hectares) was created to preserve the habitat and to restore the populations of several endangered species found in the Western Tien Shan. In particular the Menzibir’s marmot and the Kauffmann and Greig tulips. There is a wide variety of both plants and animals, due to the different reliefs, remoteness and difficult access. (Although an ancient link of the Silk Road passed through the Chatkal valley, access is over either the Kara-Buura pass (3305 m), or the Chapchim pass (2841 m) by gravel roads that are often impassable during winter and spring.

The reserve occupies the mountain slopes of the western end of Chatkal valley that includes a number of landscape types - meadow-

steppe, alpine-meadow-steppe, high mountain-steppe, mountain coniferous forest, and mountain deciduous forest. It is host to three state forests : the Ken-Bulun, Barkyrak and Arab forests. Deciduous forests comprise trees such as walnut, apple, pear, almond, maple, hawthorn and also an undergrowth of shrubs such as honeysuckle, cotoneaster, Meyer’s currant, laxative buckthorn, spirea and dog rose to mention only a few. Woodlands of poplar, birch and willow are found on the floodplain along the river valleys, with an undergrowth of sea buckthorn, honeysuckle, willow, cotoneaster, dog rose, and the dove-coloured blackberry.

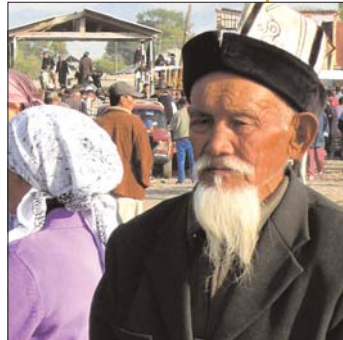
Amongst the herbs growing here are liquorice, yarrow, St. John’s wort, and many grasses.

The mountain coniferous forests comprise stands of juniper on the

North facing slopes at elevations of 1700 to 3000m with trees between 4 and 7 m. high, and also spruce, with an undergrowth of mainly honeysuckle, barberry, spirea

and dog rose. Meadow-steppe species grow in the open areas; and shade-loving forest grasses and mosses under the juniper trees.

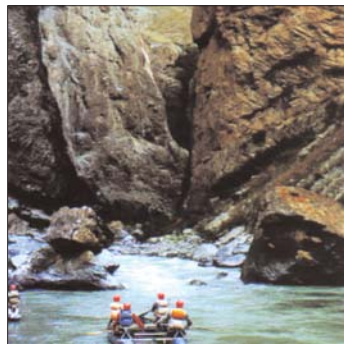
In the Soviet period the reserve was important for livestock breeding with large numbers of cattle that spent summers on the high pastures and for haymaking.



The decline in the number of sheep grazing here since the fall of the USSR has been instrumental in the restoration of the biodiversity and the recovery in numbers of Menzbir's marmot. Agriculture has not recovered since the demise of the Union – although fruit trees are reported to give good yields. The major areas of walnut and other fruit trees are in the western end of the Chatkal Valley, which is accessible only by horseback.

Chatkal

Located in the Western Tian Shan mountain range, the River Chatkal flows for 189 kilometers in a remote valley in the extreme West of the country. It is flanked by the 120 km long mountain range of the same name and the Chandalash range. Walnut groves with Semyenov's maple and less frequently ash and tree-like hawthorns are spread along the lower slopes of the Chatkal River, which flows to Uzbekistan.



Traces of early human habitation have been found in cave sites (such as the Obirakhmat and Khodjakent grottoes) where hunting tools, stone-processing sites and petroglyphs from the Neolithic period have been discovered.

Minerals were extracted from various sites during the Bronze Age (about 3000 BC); first non-ferrous, then ferrous metals were extracted.

Huge burial mounds with bronze vessels have been found dating to this period. Archaeologists have discovered evidence of nomadic cattle-breeders in the area dating from the early Iron Age. In the lower reaches of the Chatkal River over 2,000 burial mounds, 30 "tepe" and 3 ancient settlements have been found.

During the Kushan-turk period (dating from the 4th to the 7th centuries), the region was already densely populated. In addition to the nomadic herds-men, pastoral agriculture and settlements developed - towns grew up. Some of the main trade routes of the Silk Road passed through the region. A number of local products were



exported far and wide, including silver from the Talas and Chatkal river basins, Sal ammoniac and mercury, cattle and walnuts from the Aslanbob region.

A little South-West of Djani Bazar is the site of an ancient settlement Changar Khan dating from between the 10th and 12th centuries. Near by is the gumbaz (mausoleum)

of Idris Baygambar – dating from the 19th century.

To the North East lies the site of the town of Arlankent, which dates from between the 7th and 12th centuries and was the main town of the region – which at that time was known as Djydgul.

The town is mentioned in several chronicles dating from the Middle Ages.

Also to the North, in the gorge of Kuru-Tegerek, archaeologists have discovered ancient mining excavations and the site of the ancient settlement Kurbes Kan.

The Chatkal River is often used for rafting expeditions and the mountains are used by athletes from the former Soviet countries for ‘high altitude’ training and the mountain slopes are often used by skiers.

Naryn

Naryn is a long, thin town set between high, steep cliffs of the fast flowing Naryn River. Naryn River is the longest river in Kyrgyzstan, (535 km in length) and is in fact a river famous from antiquity. Its ancient name is the Syr-Darya and like its northern twin, the

Amu-Darya, it flowed into the Aral Sea. Nowadays, extensive cotton farming in neighbouring countries

absorbs most of its waters, so that the Aral Sea is drying up.

It is possible to travel from the town to the source of this once famous river. Downstream, in Kyrgyzstan, the river is used extensively for hydroelectric power generation and it flows into the giant Toktogul

Reservoir that you would see if you used the main Bishkek-Osh road. Naryn city still houses an army base and headquarters for the customs at Torugart - and so camping on the hills overlooking the town is forbidden.

Naryn is known mainly as a stopping point for travelers on the way to/from Kashgar, and unfortunately many guidebooks published in the West are not very complimentary about the town.

The region offers many possibilities for trekking and if you are not in a hurry to pass through on your way to China, Naryn could serve as a centre to explore this unspoilt and largely unknown region of the Central Tian Shan .

The modern town of





Naryn was founded in 1868 as a Russian garrison town and much of the current town is post-war. Early settlements have been found in caves near the town of Naryn , however, there are stories which suggest that the name itself is quite old.

One picturesque Kyrgyz story tells of a herder who had sold his cattle in the Andijan region (now in Uzbekistan) and on his return, exhausted, he settled down for the night at a place called Jailoo (“pasture”) and turned his horse free. The horse wandered and fed at a place called Arpa (“barley”). When the man tried to corral the horse the next day it ran away. He chased it and when he caught it he killed it and cooked its meat.

He left the head behind and called the place At-Bashi (“Horses head”). He ate the meat along his journey and called the place where he had his last meal from the carcass Naryn - which was the name of the dish he had cooked - a sort of soup with finely cut meat.

If you find these places on the map, you will see that they are quite far apart - the man went a long way to sell his cattle and chased the horse for quite a distance! Another source suggests that the name comes from the Mongolian word for “sunny”, and another from the Chinese for “narrow”.

In November 1920, Naryn was the scene of a battle between the soldiers of the revolutionary communist Red Army and a band of White Russians led by two “kulaks” (rich peasants), one from Tokmak and the other from Naryn.

They captured the commander of the Red Army local contingent – and killed Orozbekov, the local Party Chairman, before leaving for Tokmak and Pishkek. They were defeated ten days later in a battle at Shamshy pass, and again few days later back at the Dolon pass. There is a memorial to the fallen in the town.

Situated about 350 km from Bishkek and 200 km from the Chinese border at a height off 2800 m .

Naryn can be very cold, especially at nights. In fact it is known as the coldest town in Kyrgyzstan and temperatures in winter have been known to fall to -40°C. The average annual temperature is -6°C . In summertime, however, the days can be very hot and dusty.



The town has suffered considerably from the economic decline that followed the independence. The government established a Free Economic Zone in 1991 to provide favourable conditions for investors as a measure to develop the economy of the region.

Kyrgyz is the first language of the population and it is not unusual to find people who cannot speak Russian.

Tash Rabat

About 520 km from Bishkek, 125 km (1.5 hours), from Naryn, 17 km from the end of the paved road (just after the emergency airstrip) 90 km (1.5 hours) short of the border at Torugart and at an altitude of about 3500m above sea level is the ancient caravanserai of Tash Rabat. According

to one author, this is probably the best-preserved Silk Road site you will find and “no other retains as much of its original atmosphere”.

This is a carefully restored stone building that once housed an inn on the Great Silk Road.

Its date of origin is strictly unknown - but there is archaeological evidence to suggest that the site was occupied in the 10th century. Set some 15 km up a small, beautiful valley in the foothills of the Tian Shan, embedded against the hillside.

There is evidence that it was a place of both rest and worship and

would have served to protect caravans to and from China from both the ravages of the weather and of bandits - from before the time of either Tamerlane or Genghis Khan. Maybe one of the reasons it has retained its character is that it is set on the main road from Bishkek/Naryn to Torugart, but some 15 km up a side valley – the Kara Kojun Gorge.

For many years the turn-off was not sign-posted and so travelers simply passed by unaware of what they were missing.



Language Essentials

Conversation

■ Do you speak english?
An-glees-che bi-le-siz-bi

■ Do you understand?
Tu-shun-dung-uus-buu

■ How are you?
Kan-dai siz?

■ How much?
Kan-cha

■ I don't understand
Tu-shun boim

■ I need a doctor
Da-ri-ker ke-rek

■ I understand
Tu-shun-doim

■ My name is
Men-im atim

■ Please repeat
Kai-talap koichoo

■ Bill
talon

■ exchange office
akcha al-mashti-roo

■ fire!
ot!

■ go away
ket

■ good
jak-shi

■ goodbye
jak-shi kal

■ guest
house qonoq iy

■ hello
sa-lam alei-koom

■ help!
jar-dam ber!

■ hotel
mei-man-ka-na

■ left
solgo

■ right

onggho

■ meat

et

■ milk

suit

■ money

ak-cha

■ no

jok

■ no problem

ech nerse emes

■ ok

maqul

■ please

chaqeruu

■ police

mee-leet-see-ya

■ road

jol

■ sorry

kech-ir-esiz

■ stop

tokto

■ street

ku-chu

■ tea

chai

■ thank you

rakhmat

■ thank you very much

chong rakhmat

■ that will do

bolot

■ thief!

oo-roo!

■ today

boo-goon

■ tomorrow

er-teng

■ yesterday

ke-chee

■ water

soo

■ when?

ka-chan?

■ yes

o-ba

Week Days

■ Monday
Doo-shum-boo
■ Tuesday
Shei-shem-bee
■ Wednesday
Shar-shem-bee
■ Thursday
Bei-shem-bee
■ Friday
Joo-ma
■ Saturday
Ee-shem-bee
■ Sunday
Jek-shem-bee

Numbers

■ 0
nol
■ 1
beer
■ 2
ekee
■ 3
ooch
■ 4
tert
■ 5
besh
■ 6
al-ti
■ 7
je-tee
■ 8
se-geez
■ 9
to-guz
■ 10
on
■ 11
on beer
■ 20
jeer-ma
■ 30
o-tooz
■ 40
kirk

■ 50
e-loo
■ 60
al-ti-mish
■ 70
je-tee-meesh
■ 80
ek-sen
■ 90
tok-son
■ 100
jooz

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.1 billion to 1.2 billion. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to reach 1.5 billion by the year 2015 (UNESCO, 2003).

There are many reasons for the increase in illiteracy. One of the main reasons is the lack of access to education. In many developing countries, the majority of the population lives in rural areas where there are few schools and no teachers. This makes it difficult for children to attend school and learn to read and write.

Another reason for the increase in illiteracy is the high cost of education. In many developing countries, the cost of education is very high, and many families cannot afford to send their children to school. This is especially true for girls, who are often kept at home to help with household chores or to care for younger siblings.

There are also cultural reasons for the increase in illiteracy. In many developing countries, there is a strong emphasis on oral tradition and storytelling. This makes it difficult for people to learn to read and write, as they are not used to written language. In addition, many people in these countries do not see the value of education and do not want their children to go to school.

The increase in illiteracy has serious consequences for the development of a country. Illiterate people are unable to read and write, which makes it difficult for them to find work and improve their living standards. They are also unable to understand government policies and laws, which makes it difficult for them to participate in the political process.

There are many ways to reduce illiteracy. One of the most important is to improve access to education. This can be done by building more schools and training more teachers, especially in rural areas. It is also important to make education free and compulsory for all children.

Another way to reduce illiteracy is to make education more relevant to the needs of the community. This can be done by teaching practical skills and knowledge that can be used in the workplace. It is also important to involve parents and the community in the education process.

Finally, it is important to change the cultural attitudes towards education. This can be done by showing the value of education and the benefits of learning to read and write. It is also important to encourage parents to send their children to school and to support their education.

Reducing illiteracy is a challenge, but it is one that must be met if we want to see real progress in the world.



Introduction

Pakistan is situated between 23° - 35' to 37° - 05' north latitudes and 60° -50' to 77° - 50' east longitudes. The country is bounded to the west by Iran, to the southeast by India, Afghanistan to the Northwest, China to the Northeast and the Arabian Sea to the South. The great mountain ranges of the Himalayas, the Karakoram, and the Hindukush form Pakistan's northern highlands of North-west Frontier Province and the Northern Areas. Punjab province is a flat, alluvial plain with five major rivers dominating the upper region eventually joining the river Indus flowing south to the Arabian Sea. Sindh is bounded to the east by the Thar Desert and the Rann of Kutch and to the west by the Kirthar range. Balochistan plateau is an arid tableland, encircled by dry mountains.

Pakistan traces its history back to at least 2,500 years BC, when a highly developed civilization flourished in the Indus Valley.

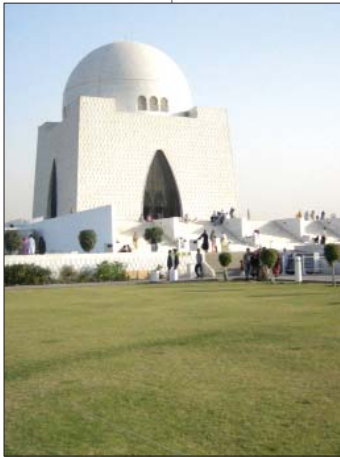
Excavations at Harappa, Moen-jodaro and Kot Diji have brought to light evidence of an advanced civilization flourishing here even in most ancient times. Around 1,500 BC, the Aryans overwhelmed this region and influenced the earlier civilizations, whose center moved to the Ganges valley, further east. Later, the Persians occupied the northern region between 5th century BC and second century AD. The

Greeks came in 327 BC, under Alexander of Macedonia, and passed through like a meteor. In 711 AD, the Arabs, led by Muhammad Bin Qasim, landed at Debal near modern Bambhore and ruled the lower half of Pakistan for 200 years. During this time, Islam took roots in the soil and influenced the life, culture and traditions of the people. From 10th century A.D. onwards, a systematic conquest of South Asia by the Muslims from Central Asia began and lasted up to 18th century A.D., when the British colonized the Sub-continent and ruled for nearly 200 years. In 1930, the well-known poet/philosopher, Dr. Mohammed Iqbal conceived the idea of a separate

state for the Muslims of the Sub-continent, and in 1940, the All-India Muslim League adopted the famous Pakistan Resolution. After seven years of untiring struggle, under the brilliant leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Pakistan emerged on the world map as an independent sovereign state on August 14, 1947.

Modern Pakistanis are a blend of their

Harappan, Indo-Aryan, Indo-Iranian, Saka, Parthian, Kushan, White Hun, Afghan, Arab, Turkic, and Mughal heritage. Waves of invaders and migrants settled down in Pakistan through out the centuries, influencing the locals and being absorbed among them. Thus the region encompassed by modern-day Pakistan is home to the oldest Asian civilization.



Country Profile



Country's Official Name:

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Flag Description:

Dark green with a white vertical bar, a white crescent and five- prolong star in the middle. Green is a traditional Islamic color and the crescent and star are also Islamic symbols. The white stripe represents the non-Muslim, minority, religious groups in Pakistan. According to modern meaning, the green represents prosperity; white symbolizes peace; the white crescent represents progress; and the white star represents light and knowledge.

Official Website:

www.pakistan.gov.pk

Government

Pakistan has a federal political structure, and has a parliamentary form of the government; a Parliament consisting of two houses - the Senate and the National Assembly. The Senate is mainly advisory. The National Assembly is the working body of the Government. The Prime Minister is the head of the Government and is elected by the Assembly. The Cabinet and the Prime Minister are responsible to the National Assembly. The Senate, National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies jointly elect the Head of State (President), also for a five-year term.



Parliament and Federal Government

The bicameral federal legislature is the Majlis-i-Shoora (Council of Advisers), consisting of the Senate (upper house) and National Assembly (lower house). Members of the National Assembly are elected by universal adult suffrage (over eighteen years of age in Pakistan). Seats are allocated to each of the four provinces, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Islamabad Capital Territory on the basis of population. National Assembly members serve for the





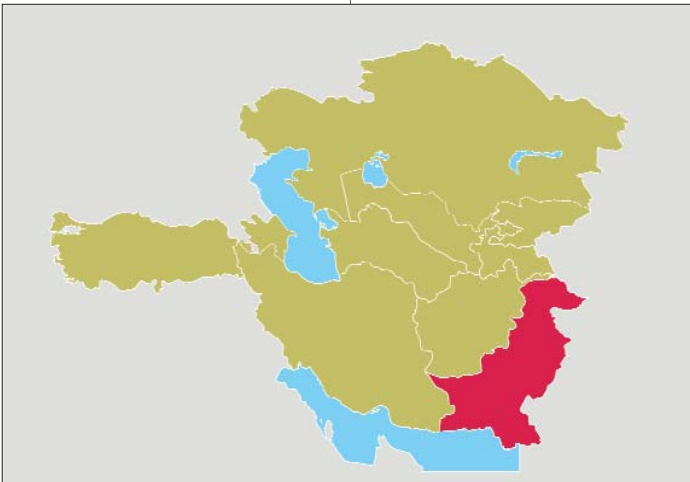
parliamentary term, which is five years. Although the vast majority of the members are Muslims, about 5 percent of the seats are reserved for minorities, including Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs.

The President from among the members of the National Assembly appoints the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister is assisted by the Federal Cabinet, a council of ministers whose members are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister. The Federal Cabinet comprises the Ministers, Ministers of

State, and Advisers.

The Senate is a permanent legislative body with equal representation from each of the four provinces, elected by the members of their respective provincial assemblies. There are representatives from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and from Islamabad Capital Territory. The Chairman of the Senate, under the constitution, is next in line to act as President. Only the National Assembly can approve the federal budget and all finance bills. In the case of other bills, the president may prevent passage unless the legislature in joint sitting over rules the president by a majority of members of both houses present and voting.

Other offices and bodies having important roles in the federal structure include the Attorney General, the Auditor General, the Federal Land Commission, the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC), the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman).



Provincial Government

Pakistan's four provinces enjoy considerable autonomy. Each province has a Governor, a Council of Ministers headed by a Chief Minister appointed by the Governor, and a Provincial Assembly. Members of the provincial assemblies are elected for five years by universal adult suffrage. Provincial assemblies also have reserved seats for minorities.

Judiciary

The judiciary includes the Supreme Court, provincial high courts, and other lower courts exercising civil and criminal jurisdiction. The Chief Justice, other Supreme Court judges and, the Provincial High Court Judges are appointed by the President of Pakistan. The Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court are eligible to work until the age of sixty-five. The Supreme Court has original, appellate, and advisory jurisdiction.



Official Language & Local Dialects

Urdu, the national language, is spoken throughout Pakistan. English is extensively used in official and commercial circles. Provincial, regional languages are Sindh, Siraiki, Balochi, Punjabi and Pushto. Other regional languages; Balti, Shina, Brushuski, Chitrali, Kalashi, Kohistani, Hindko, Potohari, Kashmiri, Brahvi are spoken.

Capital City

Islamabad is the best planned and the capital city of Pakistan. It was built in 1960's. It is located in the Potohar Plateau in the northwest of the country and covers an area of 906 Sq. Km or 350 square miles.

Major Cities

The major cities of Pakistan are Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Hyderabad, Multan, Sukkur, Quetta and Peshawar.

Name of the Provinces

Administratively the country is divided into four provinces, Punjab, Sindh, Northwest frontier province (NWFP) and Balochistan.

Federally administered tribal areas (FATA) and Northern Areas are federally administered areas.

Balochistan

Balochistan is the largest among Pakistan's Provinces and its Provincial Capital is Quetta. It covers an area of 347,190 Sq Km approximately but, smallest in terms of population.

Punjab

Punjab means "The Land of five rivers", and is the most fertile and heavily populated province of Pakistan, covering an area of 205,345 Sq. Km and its provincial capital is Lahore.

Sindh

The Southern Province of Pakistan, Sindh takes its name from Sindhu, (an old Sanskrit name of the River Indus). It covers an area of 140,914 Sq. Km. Karachi is the Capital of Sindh and is the largest seaport of Pakistan.

NWFP

The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is Pakistan's most diverse province; covering an area of over 74,521 Sq Km. Peshawar is the Provincial Capital of NWFP.

FATA

There are also seven political agencies termed Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) within which the laws of Pakistan do not apply. Unfortunately, tourists are discouraged from visiting these areas, which are all in the north-west of the country. FATA Covers a total of an area of 27,220 sq. km.

The Northern Areas

Northern Areas are divided into the administrative districts of Diamir, Ghanche, Ghizer, Gilgit, and Skardu.

The Northern Areas are governed directly from Islamabad.

The northern areas with their high

altitude mountains of the Himalayas, Hindukush and Karakoram ranges attract mountaineers and trekkers. These ranges have five peaks out of the total fourteen peaks on earth, rising above 8000 meters including the second highest peak K-

2. The Northern Area covers a total area of 72,496 Sq Km and its capital is Gilgit.

Ethnic Groups

Pakistan's ethnic diversity is obvious and yet accurate numbers have been elusive.

Pakistan's census and rough estimates vary, but the consensus is that the Punjabis are by far the largest group, and that Pukhtuns (also known, as Pashtuns and Sindhis are the next two largest groups.

The Punjabi population is estimated to comprise 44.15% of the national total.

The Pashtuns are the second largest group at roughly 15.42% followed by Sindhis at 14.1% and the Baloch at 3.57%.

Seraikis, a group seen as transitional between Punjabis and Sindhis, make up 10.53% of the population.

The other main ethnic groups



include the following: Brahui, Kashmiri, Hindko, Chitrali and the various people of the Northern Areas who together total roughly 4.66% of the total population.

Country's Total Area

796,096 sq. Km.

Population

Population of Pakistan is estimated at 156.77 million in 2006-07, growing at an annual rate of 1.8 per cent.

Climate

Pakistan has well defined seasons. Winter (December - February), Spring (March - April), Summer (May - September) and Autumn (October - November).

During summer in central and southern parts of the country, the temperature may rise to 45°C. However, the northern regions have very pleasant weather during summer.

Between July and August the monsoon brings an average 38 to 51 cm of rain to the plains and 152 to 203 cm in lower Himalayan valleys of Murree, Kaghan, Swat and Azad Kashmir.

Holidays & National Days

The detail of Public Holidays to be observed in the offices of the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments during the calendar year are as follows:

Eid-ul-Azha*: 9 & 10 Zil Haj

Ashura*: 9 & 10 Moharrum

Kashmir Day: 5th February

Pakistan Day: 23rd March

Eid Milad-un- Nabi*: 12 Rabi ul Awal

Labour Day: 1st May

Independence Day: 14th August

Eid -ul- Fitr*: 1st & 2nd Shawal

Iqbal Day: 9th November

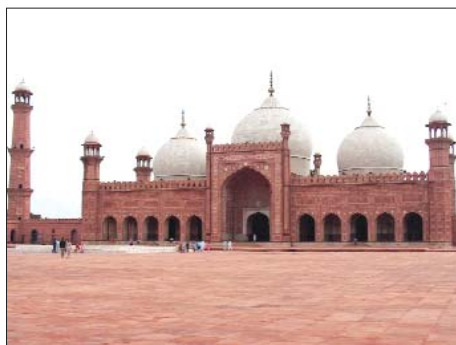
Quaid-e- Azam Day/ Christmas: 25th December

Day after Christmas: 26th December, (For Christians only)

* Subject to Appearance of Moon

Time Zone

Pakistan standard time is GMT plus 5 hours. It gets dark at about 5.00 p.m. in winter and 7.30 p.m. in summer.



The Silk Road

One of the world's oldest civilizations, a fabled high valley of vast glaciers and snow-capped peaks, the legendary gardens of Shalimar and a famed mountain pass whose name is synonymous with adventure are just a handful of the Silk Road attractions of Pakistan. For centuries, part of the Silk Road wound its way south from Central Asia, across some of the highest mountains in the world, down through what is today Pakistan and then curved east into Hindustan or continued south to the Arabian Sea.

Pakistani authorities are reviving the old trade routes. These efforts received a boost with the opening two decades ago of the Karakoram Highway which joins the remote northern reaches of the country with the Chinese Muslim autonomous region of Xinjiang. It is popular with backpackers and well-heeled tourists alike. Visitors to Pakistan seeking cultural attractions have much to see among the remains and ruins of Moenjodaro, Taxila and early Muslim or Mogul civilisations, while adventure tourists can enjoy jeep safaris, trekking, or mountaineering.

The Hunza Valley in Pakistan's far north was heavily travelled for thousands of years by traders making their way between China and the Indian subcontinent. Apart from its stunning beauty, the valley contains old forts and the Ganesh Rocks where travellers carved graffiti in half a dozen ancient tongues.

Taxila, near Islamabad, is known as the 'Lost Link of The Silk Road' and once was home to a Buddhist seminary which attracted students from as far away as Greece and China. The city is a treasure house of art of the Gandara, or Greco-Buddhist style - considered among the great archaeological finds of the world.

Peshawar and the nearby Khyber Pass, located in north-western Pakistan, form the gateway to South Asia for travellers

from the mountains and steppes of Central Asia and were both key to Silk Road trade. Peshawar still boasts some of the most fascinating bazaars in the region and museums with many Gandaran pieces. A steam train safari operates monthly as a revival of the old train route which was envisaged to reach Kabul.

Lahore is Pakistan's cultural heart, with a proud blend of Sikh, Mogul, British colonial and present-day architecture which perfectly reflects the city's rich past. Other attractions include the famed Shalimar Gardens, the Royal Fort, the Badshahi Mosque and the Tomb of Jehangir.

Rawalpindi and Islamabad are twin cities, with the former dating from centuries past and the latter the modern capital of Pakistan. Rawalpindi was a leading trading centre in ancient times and today has many monuments, buildings and bazaars worth a detour.

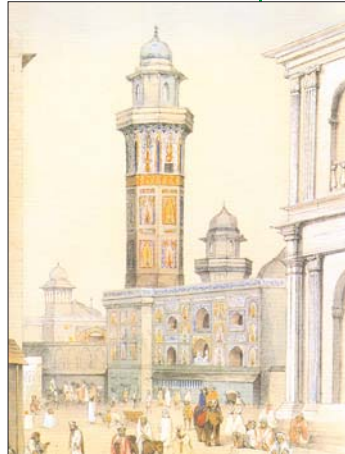
Skardu Valley is a gateway for trekkers and mountaineers heading for K2 and boasts the world's greatest concentration of high peaks.

Swat Valley was a major centre of the Gandara civilisation and is a popular year-round holiday destination.

Kaghan Valley is an unspoiled and picturesque valley famous for its Saiful-Maluk lake.

Chitral Valley lies at the base of Tirish Mir Mountain in the Hindu Kush.

The Salt Range offers a unique landscape in Punjab Province.



Useful Information

Best Time to Visit the Country

The climate in Pakistan is so varied that, no matter what time of year you go the weather will be pleasant. The country is at its most colourful in spring (March to May, when flowers bloom) and autumn (mid-September to mid-November, when the leaves change and fall). For trekking and mountaineering, June to September is the recommended time.

Visa Regulations

Pakistan's Visa Policy reflects governments policy of liberalization and openness with a view to making it tourist friendly country. Envisage Pakistan as a country where visitors are welcomed. Policy goes beyond the principle of reciprocity. It puts Pakistan much ahead of many countries in promoting tourism and investment.

Visa on Arrival (VOA) is granted for one-month validity and multiple entries for Group Travel through designated Tour Operators to Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, UK and USA.

Pakistan missions abroad have been authorized to grant tourist/visit visa for a month's validity and stay with double entry.

Group tourists from India will be allowed 30 days visa instead of 14 days through designated Tour Operators.

Working visas are granted to foreign technical personnel and managers for the purpose of transferring skills and

know-how. Working visas can be issued for a period up to 5 years. Ministry of Tourism's Representative is a member of the team that issues working visa.

Customs Regulations

Tourists are allowed to bring in the following items without duty; Personal clothing, hand bags, travel goods and toiletries; medals trophies or prizes; jewellery not exceeding Rs.1000/-; 01 watch and 01 travelling clock; spectacles and physical aid; 01 cigarette lighter and 02 fountain pens; 01 pen-knife and similar items of personal use; 01 electric iron and 01 electric shaver for men and 01 hair dryer for female tourists, 01 still camera and 10 rolls of film; 01 ordinary cinematography camera with projector and two rolls of films; 01 pair of binoculars; 01 portable musical instrument; 01 portable sound recording apparatus; 01 portable typewriter; 01 invalid chair in use; toys and prams for the accompanying children; games supporting requisites including sporting fire-arms and cartridges in reasonable quantity of production of an arms license issued by Pakistan authorities; 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 01 pound of manufactured tobacco or assortment of both not exceeding 01 pound in weight; foodstuff including confectionery and non-alcoholic beverage not over Rs.100; gifts and souvenirs costing not over Rs.1000/-; 01 video camera fitted with VCR or a video camera and VCR with an endorsement by Pakistan customs on the passport.

Import of liquor is not allowed, however, if a tourist brings in some quantity by mistake, he/she should declare it to the Customs Officer who shall return the liquor against a receipt and retain to the tourist on his/her departure from

Pakistan. Non-Muslim foreign tourists can purchase liquor from an authorized vendor in Pakistan (usually 4 or 5 star hotel) against a permit; this permit can be obtained from the Excise and Taxation Officer of the respective area. Hotels having a liquor-vending license can also sell liquor to Non-Muslim foreign tourists staying in the hotel. Please note that drinking at public places is prohibited.

A tourist may import a vehicle without duty under a Carnet-de-passage en doune for the period of 3 months against an undertaking before the Customs Officer at entry point that he/she will not transfer the ownership of the vehicle during his/her stay in Pakistan. Details of the Custom Regulations are available at the Website: www.cbr.gov.pk/newcu/Travellers/default.asp

How to get there and away

Pakistan as a vacation land has a variety of tourist attractions, which include archaeological sites, historical monuments, hill resorts, beaches, ancient and modern cities, greenery and scenic beauty. To a lover of sports and outdoor activities, Pakistan offers excellent opportunities for angling, deep-sea as well as fresh water fishing, mountaineering, trekking, skiing, scuba diving and boating etc.

By Air

Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta and Faisalabad are the main gateways to Pakistan by air that have International Flights. PIA has direct connections to major destinations in USA, Europe, Middle and Far eastern countries.

Website: www.piac.com.pk

By Train

Pakistan has train links with India and Iran. Tourists can travel to India from Lahore to Delhi and from Khokharapar to Monabao. Iran is linked from Zahidan to Quetta.

Website: www.pakrail.com

By Road

Pakistan has Road Links with Afghanistan through Torkham Border and Chaman Border, China through Karakoram Highway at khunjab pass, India through Wagha Border, Lahore and Iran through Taftan Border.

Website: www.nha.gov.pk

By Sea

Presently no such service is available.

Traveling around

Air

Pakistan's National Airline, PIA, serves 38 domestic Airports with scheduled connections, including multiple daily flights between major cities of Karachi, Quetta, Multan, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar. Three private airlines, Air Blue, Aero Asia and Shaheen Air also operate on domestic routes. PIA has daily flights linking to the northern tourist towns of Gilgit and Skardu with Islamabad and Chitral with Peshawar. All flights to Northern Pakistan are subject to good weather conditions.

Road

Pakistan has an extensive network of roads and highways, linking cities and towns with each other, like the Grand Trunk Road (GT Road) with Lahore and Peshawar and Super Highway and the National Highway links Karachi with the interior of Sindh and Punjab while the Indus Highway links Peshawar with the southern Punjab and western parts of

Sindh. The RCD Highway links Karachi with Quetta and Taftan. Karakorum highway the 8th wonder of the world connects the Northern Areas through Islamabad, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Bisham, Chilas, Gilgit, Hunza, Sust and Khunjrab pass. A world-class Motorway connects the cities of Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad, with extension up to Peshawar. Karachi - Gawadar Coastal highway connects Karachi with far-flung coastal areas of Balochistan province.

Website: www.nha.gov.pk

Public Transport

Taxis, 3-wheeler auto rikshaws, vans, buses, tongas (horse driven carriage) are used to travel within the city/town/village limits where as intercity airconditioned, non-air conditioned buses, vans and coaches are available from the main city bus terminals.

Train

Pakistan has over 12,700km of railway network. The main lines run from Karachi to Peshawar connecting important cities of Hyderabad, Rohri, Sukkur, Bahawalpur, Multan, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Taxila and Peshawar. Another main line links Quetta with the rest of the Country. A number of trains run between Quetta and Karachi via Sukkur.

Website: www.pakrail.com

Money

Basic unit of currency is Pak Rupee that is equal to 100 paises. Currency notes of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000 and 5000 Rupee are in use. Coins of one, two and five Rupee are in circulation. Pakistan observes floating exchange rate system. Master, Visa and American Express credit cards are widely accepted in major cities.

Safety & Security

Pakistan is a stable, safe and tourist friendly country. While traveling in the country, seek advice from tourist offices and embassies about which areas are safe. Unfortunately tourists are discouraged from visiting FATA, which are all in the northwest of the country.

Embassy telephone numbers

Afghanistan Embassy

House No.8, St.90, G-6/3,

Tel: 051-2824505-6

Fax: 051-2824504

E-mail: agckarachi@yahoo.com

Iran Embassy

Plot No. 222,238, St. No.2, G-5/1, Diplomatic Enclave

Tel: 051-2276272 Fax: 051-2824839

Azerbaijan Embassy

H. No.14, St. 87, G-6/3, Attaturk Avenue,

Tel: 051-2829345, 051-2823455

Fax: 051-2820898

E-mail: azeremb@isb.paknet.com.pk

Kazakhstan Embassy

House No.11, St.45, F-8/1

Tel: 051-2262926 Fax: 051-2262806

Website: www.kazakhembassy.org

Kyrgyzstan Embassy

15/1, Main Khyaban-e-Ghazi, Phase-V, DHA, Karachi

Tel: 021-5374447, Fax: 021-5374448

E-mail: gckgirp.karachi@mail.cu

Turkmenistan Embassy

House No.22-A, Nazim-uddin

Road, F-7/1

☎ Tel: 051-2274913

☎ Fax: 051-2278799

✉ E.mail:trkmen@comsats.net.pk

Turkey Embassy

📍 Diplomatic Enclave-I, Street 1,

☎ Tel: 051-2088800 Fax: 051-2088888

Website:www.turkishembassy.org.pk

Tajikistan Consulate

📍 H.No. 14, St. 87, G-6/3, Ataturk Avenue,

☎ Tel: 051-2829345, Fax: 051-2820898

✉ E.mail:azeremb@isb.paknet.com.pk

Uzbekistan Embassy

📍 House No.2, St, 2, F-8/3, Kohistan Road,

☎ Tel: 051-2264746 Fax: 051-2261739

✉ E.mail:zbekemb@isb.comsats.net.pk

Health

There are no such foods which may be avoided for sanitary reasons; however, it is advised not to take food from street vendors and low standard restaurants. Pakistan enjoys a vast network of Health care facilities. These include well established Hospitals, Dispensary and Basic Health Units (BHU) throughout the country in public and private sectors.

Allopathic and Traditional Herbal medicines are widely available. Bottled mineral water is readily available in Pakistan. Tourists may use mineral water or purification tablets to drink normal tap water.

Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for travelers arriving from

endemic zone. Vaccination against Cholera, Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio is recommended. Malaria risk exists in Pakistan throughout the year. Chloroquine resistant Phalciparum is also reported. All foreigners coming to stay in Pakistan for over one year require AIDs-free certificate.

Telephone Codes of Major Cities

Karachi	☎021
Hyderabad	☎022
Multan	☎061
Quetta	☎081
Gwadar	☎086
Peshawar	☎091
Faisalabad	☎041
Lahore	☎042
Jhelum	☎0544
Gujranwala	☎055
Islamabad	☎051
Abottabad	☎0992
Gilgit	☎05811
Skardu	☎05831
Chitral	☎0943

Major Travel Agencies

Travel Walji's Ltd.

📍 Khayaban-e-Suhrawardy, P. Box No. 1088, Islamabad.

☎ Tel: (92-51) 2870201-9

☎ Fax: (92-51) 2270753, 2828264

✉ Email: info@waljis.com.pk

<http://www.waljis.com>

Sitara Travel Consultants (Pvt) Ltd.

📍 Waheed Plaza, 3rd Floor, 52 West Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, P.O. Box 1662, Islamabad, Pakistan

☎ Tel: (92.51) 2873372-75 or 2274892-93

☎ Fax: (92.51) 227.9651 or 227.9676

✉ Email: islamabad@sitara.com
http://www.sitara.com

Nazir Sabir Expeditions

📍 House # 434, Street 2, G-9/3,
P. O. Box 1442 Islamabad - 44000
Pakistan

☎ Phone: (92-51) 2252553,
2252580, 2853672

☎ Fax 2250293

✉ Email: nazir@nazirsabir.com,
www.nazirsabir.com

Adventure Tours Pakistan

📍 PO.Box 1780 Islamabad
☎ Tel: +92 51 2260820, 2252759
☎ Fax: +92 51 2264251
✉ Email: info@atp.com.pk or
enquiry@atp.com.pk
http://www.atp.com.pk

Rakaposhi Tours (Pvt.) Limited

📍 12-C, 31st Commercial Street,
Phase-5,
☎ Tel: +92 21 586 4949
☎ Fax: 5870652
✉ Email: rtl@fascom.com

Hindukush Trails

📍 Mountain Inn, Chitral.
☎ Tel: 0933-412581, 051-2275031
☎ Fax: 0933-412668
✉ Email: info@hindukushtrails.com
maqsoodul_mulk@hotmail.com

Indus Guides

📍 17 Sarwar Road, Lahore Cantt.
☎ Tel: (092-042) 6640917, 6681276
☎ Fax: (092-042) 6673806, 6278949
✉ Email: Indus@brain.net.pk

Karavan Leaders (Pvt.) Limited

📍 F-26, Commercial Phase-I,
LCCHS, Cantt. Lahore.
☎ Tel: (092-042) 5729380,
5723264, 5738704, 5728705
☎ Fax: 5729380

Sehrai Travel & Tours

📍 Saddar Road, Peshawar Cantt.
☎ Tel: 0092-91-5272084, 5272085

PTDC TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES (TICs) IN PAKISTAN

For information, local assistance, planning your holidays and booking hotels, motels, transport and tours, please contact any of the following Tourists Information Centres (TICs):

Abbottabad

📍 Club Annexe, Jinnah Road,
☎ Tel: (0992) 9310168

Multan

📍 Sindbad Hotel, Nishtar Chowk,
Bahawalpur Road,
☎ Tel: (061) 9201291

Bahawalpur

📍 PTDC Motel, Club Road,
Near D.C.O. Office,
☎ Tel: (0621) 9250168,
☎ Fax: 9250171

Peshawar

📍 Benevolent Fund Building,
Saddar Road
☎ Tel & Fax: (091) 9211826

Gilgit

📍 PTDC Motel, Chinnar Inn,
Babar Road,
☎ Tel: (05811) 54262
☎ Fax: 52650

Quetta

📍 Muslim Hotel, Jinnah Road,
☎ Tel: (081) 2825826

Islamabad

📍 Agha Khan Road, Markaz F-6,
Super Market,

Tel: (051) 9212760, 9202766
Fax: 9204027

Rawalpindi

Flashman's Hotel, The Mall,
Tel: (051) 9272016, 9272004-11

Islamabad

Islamabad International Airport,
Near International Departure
Lounge,
Tel: (051) 9280563

Saidu Sharif (Swat)

PTDC Motel, Opp: Swat Serena
Hotel,
Tel: (0946) 9240259
Fax: 9240156

Karachi

Shafi Chambers, Club Road
Tel: (021) 9202971,
Fax: 9206376

Skardu

PTDC K-2 Motel,
Tel:(05831) 50291-2
Fax: 50293

Lahore

66-D-I, Gulberg-III,
Tel: (042) 5756737,
Fax: 5760062

Taxila

PTDC Motel, Opp: Taxila
Museum,
Tel:(051) 9314206

Lahore

Allama Iqbal International Airport
Opp: International Arrival Lounge,
Tel: (042) 9240023

Thatta

PTDC Hospitality Complex
Tel: (0298) 920039

Moen-jo-daro

Opp: Moenjodaro Museum,
Tel:(074) 4080082

Small-Scale Business Opportunities

Keeping in view the Custom Regulations the tourist can bring limited quantity of souvenirs, handicrafts, daily use products, edible items, toys, electronic items etc. Articles or goods brought in commercial quantities in excess of the items allowed in baggage rules are released only on payment of fine equal to 30% of the value of articles or goods in addition to the applicable duty and taxes.

Arts & Crafts

Decorative Arts

Stone Work

Pakistan has gained a prominent position in the international market for supplying a wide variety of gemstones and mineral specimens. The northern area of Pakistan is enriched with the variety of mineral treasures that include:

Peridot	Emerald
Aquamarine	Tourmaline
Topaz	Ruby
Sapphire	Garnet
Red spinel	Pargasite
Actinolite	Diopside

Most of the gemstones are pegmatite-related, such as aquarium, tourmaline, topaz, garnet, and apatite. Some of the gemstones are hydrothermal and / or metamorphic in genesis such as emerald, ruby, sapphire, Pargasite, rutile, azurite and pink topaz. The pegmatites are generally composed of feldspar (albite and microcline), quartz, biotite, muscovite and tourmaline. The important gemstones of

Pakistan are listed below:



Emerald

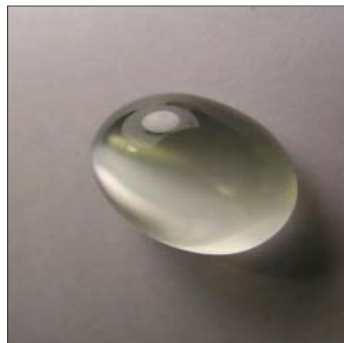
Emerald is the green variety of beryl. In Pakistan, it is found in the talc carbonate schist in swat. The specimen range between low quality pale green to green hue marred by numerous inclusions. It has a fine quality of an exquisite bluish or yellowish green shade and is highly transparent.

Aquamarine

Aquamarine is the blue variety of beryl. Pakistani aqua marine has a light green and blue coloration, and the crystals are well shaped. Dusso aquamarine crystals are very large in size ranging from 1cm to 8 cm in width and up to 15 cm long.

Peridot

Peridot is the gem variety of olivine. Gem quality peridot occurs in pockets and veins located in the shear zones of serpentinized dunitic rocks at Sapat, Naran, Kaghan valley.



The peridot crystals range in colors from light yellow green to deep yellow green, with some that are light green in color.

Ruby

Ruby mineralization in Pakistan occurs in the dolomitic marble in an extensive belt of more than 100km in the Hunza valley. The well-formed crystals are pink to a fine red in color.

Tourmaline

Tourmaline includes elbaite, indicolite and the most valued bright red variety, rubellite. Some varieties of tourmaline shows more than one color, with at least three being reported in one particular specimen. Large, well shaped, gem quality crystals up to 800 grams in the weight are found in the Gilgit and Skardu areas.



Topaz

Topaz is a popular and a durable gem. In Pakistan, topaz occurs as euhedral crystals in pegmatite in Gilgit and Skardu districts. Topaz crystals may be found in yellowish brown, golden color, honey yellow, and champagne.

Wood Carving

Pakistan has a rich tradition of wood-carving and architecture. The strong, rich, dark and grainy wood of the walnut tree is considered ideal for this carved work. The fame of woodcrafts and wood carving rests on the use of Walnut Wood as raw material. The carving is done skillfully in a variety like "Padri" where it is not deep; see through, undercut and deep carving

with indigenous tools.

A variety of articles both decorative and utilitarian, ranging from smaller items like bowls, trays, cigarette boxes, wall panels, writing desks, table lamps to screens, bedstead, chest of drawers, side boards and furniture etc are crafted to meet contemporary demands. The important traditional designs are lotus, Dragon, Darbar, Rezkar, Poshkaar.

Jewelries

The art of Pakistani jewelry is a blend of Mughal jewelry and the modern jewelry. Pliny described the sub-continent as a 'treasure trove... with its rivers full of precious stones'. The wealth in natural resources as well as the love of ornamentation contributed to the richness of the repertoire of forms of jewelry worn by men and women alike from early historic

times. This did not change under Mughal rule; the Mughal emperors were themselves passionate collectors of fine jewels and jewelry. As the Mughal Empire grew, the riches of the annexed states were added to the royal treasuries. This increased wealth, combined with the personal interest and patronage that the Mughals awarded to the arts and crafts, attracted craftsmen to the workshops that were attached to the royal provincial courts. European posts were being established along the coast of the sub-continent. Travelers came to visit Mughal courts, and left detailed accounts of the life they saw there. Asian craftsmen traveled to European cities and returned with new ideas and techniques.

Monumental Painting

It is a graphic art consisting of an artistic composition made by applying paints to a surface. In Pakistan monumental paintings can be found at different monumental sites. The work inside these monuments is hand crafted and represents the culture of the country. Although this art is rare in Pakistan however such paintings can be found in the National Monument located in Islamabad.

Calligraphy



Sadeqain (1930-1986) was an untraditional and self-made, self-taught painter and calligrapher. His forte is his creation of mysterious - almost mystic - environment, which he achieves with his bold, uninhibited use of media, colors and lines.

Sadeqain was a prolific artist; he experimented with book titles, portraits, sketches, and caricatures and did a lot of Quranic calligraphy, but he seems to be at his best while depicting Ghalib. Whether it is due

to his extreme devotion to Ghalib, or his profound interest in Urdu poetry (Sadeqain himself was a fine Urdu poet and published two poetry collections), he seems to be at his artistic best while painting Ghalib.

According to Aslam Kamal, "They say that Deewan e Ghalib is a Revelation. Don't know whether it's true but Sadeqain's work on Ghalib is sort of a stamp of approval to this belief". His early mural, based on the dignity of labour is housed in the Mangla Dam, near Islamabad. Later he painted a mammoth ceiling for the Lahore Museum based on poet Iqbal's verses evoking the spirit of man to triumph over odds. While working on his second ceiling at the Freer Hall in Karachi, the painter fell ill and died leaving the work incomplete. During his life Sadeqain became a cult figure with a large following from all walks of life. In the 70s he got nation-wide fame for his rendering of Quranic verses. Sadeqain was one of the few artists who continuously received State support and was equally admired by the people. Despite the divided opinion, his influential position in art history cannot be denied. He came from a long line of master calligraphers and was perhaps ideally suited to bridge the gap between modernity and tradition.

Miniature Painting

This art is unique and miniature paintings are actually a copy that reproduces a person or things in greatly reduced size. In Pakistan miniature paintings cover the Mughal life styles and natural landscape. Miniature illumination is also found in these paintings.

Bookbinding

This craft is not new in Pakistan and people from ages are attached with this craft. The craft of bookbinding requires skillful hands. There are jobs available for bookbinders in the public sector as well. In Pakistan you may also find machines

that perform the task of bookbinding and skillful hands operate them.

Leatherwork

Leather is a matter created through tanning of hides, pelts and skins of animals. It is a very important clothing material in Pakistan and also exported to Europe and USA. In Pakistan the following leather decorative techniques are practiced:

Leather dying
Leather painting
Leather carving
Leather stamping
Leather embossing

Rug Weaving

Rug weaving art existed in Pakistan before 1947. This craft is still operated on traditional handlooms but in the same way it is also industrialized. The latest development in this industry is enormous, but each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Europeans and Americans like the hand woven carpets and rugs of Pakistan.

Embroidery

It is the ornamentation of fabric with needlework. This work is done in all the four provinces of Pakistan, northern areas and AJK. In Sindh embroidery is done on cloths, caps, pillows, bed sheets, table and chair covers etc. Balochi embroidery is also famous throughout Pakistan.



Printed Cloth

In galaxy of arts and crafts of Sindh, the Ajrak, a woven cloth or textile with dominant hues of rich crimson and deep indigo and decorated with fascination of colors happens to be the centuries-old exclusive expertise of the Sindhi artisans. It is an all-purpose cloth used as Turban, Kamarband, Bed sheet, Coverlet, Towel as well as shoulder cloth etc. The women use it as Dupatta, Shawl, Chadar and sometimes convert it into hammock for a child, slung from a tree. Sindhis show reverence to this cloth and avoid using it as Dhoti. The people of Thar have an Ajrak with different print called "Maleeri Ajrak" which they use in ceremonious way.

Textiles

The ancient people of Moen-jo-daro, Harappa and Taxila were quite aware of the knitting of the cloths from cotton; silk fibers and the evidences are available in the museums. Most of these clothes were Hand knitted and also by traditional Hand looms. In Pakistan textile of all kind i.e., silk, wool, linen, cotton, and synthetic fibers as rayon, nylon and polyesters are manufactured and exported to various countries. Textile industry is well established in Karachi and Faisalabad.

Glass & Glass Ware

In Pakistan the craft of glassware is practiced before the division of the sub-continent and the glimpses of these can

be seen on the ancient tombs and shrines of Makli, Badshahi Masjid, and particularly Sheesh Mehal and other Mughal architectural sites.



Truck Art

Anyone who has traveled to Asia will be familiar with the way people like to decorate their vehicles. But in Pakistan, it is elevated to an art form ... The trucks, many of them old Bedford Rockets, provide a moving canvas for the artists, who compete to see who can execute the most daring and outrageous designs. Buses too enjoy the same lavish outpouring of primitive aesthetic pattern, color and form.

Truck / Bus decoration evolved here in the decade of the 70's when ownership moved away from the elite to the working class. While this art form traces its immediate origins to the decorative horse drawn carriages made for the gentry during the Raj, its basic expressiveness stems from the rural craft / art ethos of embellishing objects with garish

rudimentary designs to brighten up a drab rustic existence or as a reflection of their inner exuberance.

Noteworthy here is the progression in this art form with the relocation of these craft artists to urban city centers. While the thrust is still on crude primal art, the influence of producing work in urban centers has brought noticeable change in use of materials, concepts and imagery.

Through the years, the materials used have developed from wood and paint to metal, tinsel, plastic and reflective tape in fluorescent and radium colors and the very fancy incorporation of full lighting displays. While trucks are mainly decorated with painted images on wood panels, the steel bodies of buses respond very well to the sticky plastic "chamak patti" medium.

The self adhesive, multi colored, reflective plastic tape or "chamak patti", available in large rolls is the primary art material with which the bus is decorated. Line drawings of patterns are stenciled onto the vinyl material and cut as per design requirement and pasted onto the bus exterior.

This expertise extends to an amazing variety of floral, geometric, all over, corner as well as border patterns, idyllic landscapes, attractive female faces, exotic birds, fish, tigers and lions and also weaponry, rockets and landmark heritage sites.

Truck art is denigrated to a lower form of craft art expression here, mainly because the



workers are unlettered artisans with next to no concept of formal art academics. However, they are proficient in the technical application of this art, which indicates that it is not dearth of artistic talent but lack of requisite education, which prevents an artisan from becoming an artist.

Architecture & Archaeological Objects

The areas of this earliest Paleolithic culture has been located in the Potwar Plateau, which appears to have been the earliest home of Homo Erectus and Homo Habilis outside Africa, roughly in the time range of the 1st Glacial and interglacial phases of the Pleistocene Age. Though their own remains have not so far been found in the areas, the crude stone tools used by them for their livelihood, and termed as Pre-Soan tools by anthropologists and archaeologists have been found in abundance, these hominids roamed about here for many thousands of years, and towards the end of the Ice Age they were showing progress towards life in settled communities and a culture called Mesolithic. With advents of agriculture the stone tools refined towards Neolithic specimens.

It was probably at this point that they learnt sowing and harvesting the crops on limited scale to supplement their diets from food gathering and hunting. This germinal but far-reaching development

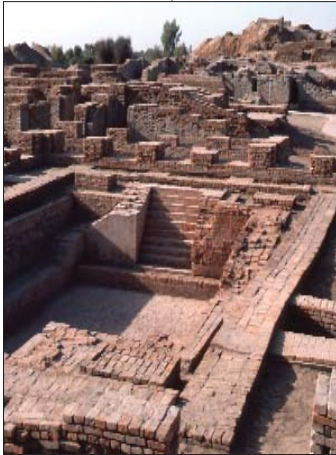
changed the life pattern and created need for making baskets, earthen cooking pots, and for wearing skin and coarse fiber clothing. Through constant experimentation, permanent shelters were also created in the shape of huts built of mud with rubbles.

The beginning of organized social living and division of labour comes dramatically to our knowledge at Mehrgarh in Kacchi Plain south of the Bolan Pass in Balochistan. Some low and high cultural mounds were recognized as the abode of this prehistoric community, which have

been scientifically excavated during the past two decades. The discovery of an organized community life in seventh millennium B.C. on the soil of Pakistan is of immense significance, as very few ancient places in the world have shown so remote cultural antiquity.

The traits of early agricultural economy so introduced and developed continued during the two millennia whose traces have

been discovered from Anjira, Rana Ghundai, Periano Ghundai, Dabar Kot, etc., in Balochistan; Amri, Pandi Wahi, Kohtras, Buihi, Kot Diji, etc., in Sindh; Sarai Khola, Jalilpur and Hakra sites of Bahawalpur in the Punjab; and Ghaligai, Lewan, Gumla, Rehman Dheri, etc. in N.W.F.P. the distribution of these sites, spread over almost the whole of today's Pakistan, shows that the dissemination of this prehistoric culture was a uniform phenomenon throughout, which developed later on into the chalcolithic era when the change over from stone to cop-





per and bronze took place in the fourth millennium B.C.

From the mosaic of these nascent agrarian cultures emerges in full bloom the Bronze Age phenomenon of an organized society over the cast regions embracing the plains of the Punjab and Sindh, which has been named the 'Indus Civilization'. Harappa and Moen-jo-daro were the two 'capital' cities of this civilization; there were numerous towns and villages belonging to it spread over the vast regions.

Today, through the constant and consistent efforts, Archeologists have gathered information about this civilization, which flourished for well over one thousand years. A study of the excavated remains of the buildings in both of the cities and elsewhere reveals that these civilized people had evolved a refined style of architecture according to the standard of that period.

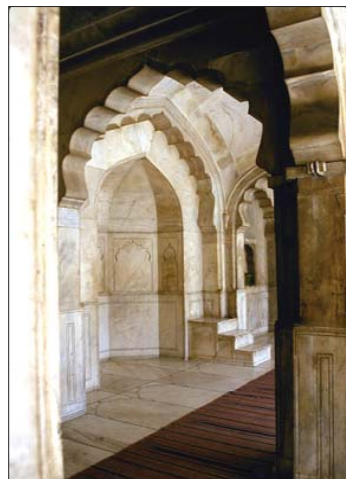
The brick buildings were of several stories and were often palatial. The fortified metropolis of Moen-jo-daro consisted of public building now identified as the Great Bath. These remains indeed prove eloquently the unique nature of town planning and community organization and are an extraordinary example of a civilization based on an agrarian economy combined with an urban political structure.

The nature and extent of the objects of daily use as well as those of artistic finish provide an evidence of their resourcefulness and proficiency, which their artists and craftsmen have achieved. While the painted and plain pottery and bronze and copper utensils show their utilitarian nature, objects dart like the King Priest, the Dancing Girl and, above all, the carved steatite seals evidently prove the artistic taste of the patron and the height of skill of those who made them.

The imperial Mughals introduced a much refined and sophisticated socio-cultural pattern in the society. The way of life so introduced was happy assimilation of Iranian and local traits and traditions. Babur, a product of Samarqand and Farghana, paid attention towards laying out gardens at several places of his newly conquered territory.

History reveals that one such garden was laid in the Salt Range area and was named as Bagh-i-Safa. Only traces of this van-

quished garden are left now. No other building of his, or for that matter, of his successor Humayun is known to exist now in Pakistan, except the ruined Bara-dari at Lahore erected by Kamran Mirza within a cast enclosed garden. This must have been on the



lines of the pleasure garden erected by his father. It remained popular among the royalty as a favorite resort where many later emperors and their entourages stayed.

However, Akbar, the real architect of the Mughal empire, built a number of buildings in Lahore of which the fortifications of the fort with impressive gateways and the palaces within it are remarkable specimens of an architectural style which is termed as an admixture of the Hindu-Jaina and Iranian characteristics. His son and successor Jahangir added a few more Buildings within and without the fort. Jahangir is essentially known for his love for fine arts of painting and literature. His Tuzuk (Memoir) is a sumptuous piece of Imperial prose writing.

Of the architectural accomplishments, the Maryam Zamani Masjid and the tomb of Anarkali, both at Lahore, are significant examples of majestic but robust architecture. While the latter is an embodiment of majesty and grandiose representing a link between the Lodi, Suri and the Mughal architectural characteristics, the former presents a unique feat of color presentation of fresco art. Incidentally, here in this Masjid we meet for the first time in Pakistan the earliest example of the double dome.

Indeed Lahore and Thatta are the two celebrated historic

cities where the most sumptuous representation of Islamic architecture of the grand Mughals is found in such abun-

dance. The sumptuous palaces in the Lahore Fort, the Shalimar, the mausoleums of Jahangir, Nurjehan and Asif Khan, the Badshahi Masjid, all at Lahore, and a galaxy of Funerary memorials, the Dabgaran Masjid, the Shah Jahan Masjid at Thatta and Makli, and a number of Religious and secular monuments spread over the various parts of Sindh are some of the best specimens of the art of building created during the period which show the height of tasteful patronage and the skill and proficiency of the master-artists and artisans.

These imperial patrons of art and culture patronized almost all art forms: painting, calligraphy, coinage, armory, and other minor arts. They established imperial libraries and studios to create best specimens of these arts.

Music & Musical Instruments

Music



The music of Pakistan is probably one of the most diverse selection of music in the whole world within one country; being at the crossroads of Central Asia, Iran, the Middle East and India. Pakistan has developed a multitude of different types of music and sounds. Major influences of Pakistani music are Arabic, English, Indian, Persian and

Portuguese. Pakistani genres like sufi rock and bhangra have become popular throughout the world.

Classical Music

Unpopularity of classical music is due to the increased globalization; the young generation in Pakistan is more influenced by the western genres such as pop, rock and hip hop, which are currently flourishing in Pakistan.

However, it can be said that if Pakistani music were to be represented by a pyramid, classical music would be the base holding it up. Ghazal is the name of a poetic form, but musically "Ghazal Gayaki" refers to the form of music in which a poem is sung. Some of the most famous Ghazal gayak's are:



Amanat Ali (late)
Ghulam Ali
Iqbal Bano
Munni Begum,
Mehdi Hasan
Farida Khanum
Nayyara Noor
Abida Parveen
Malika Pukhraj
Tahira Sayyed
Mehnaz
Naheed Akhtar
Tarannum Naz
Tina Sani
Gulshan Aara Sayyed

Qawwali Music

One of the most dynamic and popular types of Pakistani music is qawwali, which has been internationally popularized by stars like the Sabri Brothers, Aziz Mian and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Qawwali is a form of Sufi music and exists in multiple forms.

Amir Khusrau is said to have invented qawwali in the 13th century; the legendary poet and composer is also said to have invented the tabla and sitar.

Some of the most popular

Qawwali singers are:

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (late)
Sabri Brothers (late)
Aziz Mian Qawal (late)

Folk Music

Folk music has been influential on classical music, which is viewed as a higher art form.

In Pakistan, each province has its own variation of popular folk music. Well known Pakistani folk artists include:



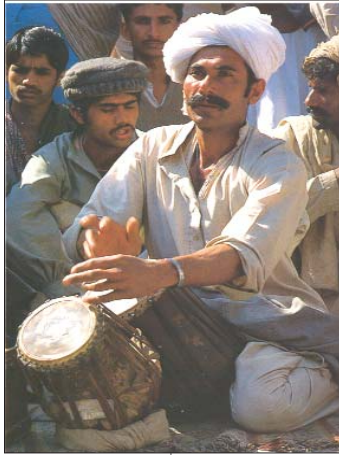
Reshma

Shaukat Ali
Mai Bhagee (late)
Pathane Khan (late)
Alam Lohar (late)
Musarrat Nazir
Zarina Baloch (late)
Atta-ullah Khan Essa khelvi

The most popular artist to be known for mixing his music with folk and classical types was Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

Balochi

The music of Balochistan province is very rich and full of varieties due to the many different types of languages which are spoken in the province, including Balochi, Pushto, Brahui, Persian and Saraiki. Balochi music stems basically form persian music.



Pushto

This music is commonly found in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and North West Frontier Province, which includes genres such as the Tappa, Charbeta, Neemkai, Loba, Shaan and Badala.

Punjabi

Music from the Punjab province includes many different varieties. The traditional music utilizes instruments like the dhol, flute, dholak, and tumbi. The most commonly recognized form of Punjabi music, bhangra, is based on drum rhythms of the dhol.

Sindhi

Music from Sindh province is sung in Sindhi, and is generally performed in either the "Baits" or "Wae" styles. The Baits style is vocal music in Sanhooon (low voice) or Graham (high voice). Wae instrumental music is performed in a variety of ways using a string instrument. Wae, also known as Kafi, is found in the surrounding areas of Balochistan and Punjab.

Rock Music

Rock music in Pakistan has become very popular. A landmark event occurred in 2003 when the Pakistani group Strings's song, Najane Kyun became a featured single on the Urdu Soundtrack for Spiderman 2.

The Pakistani band Junoon popularised a genre of music called Sufi rock (influenced from legend Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan) that blended traditional Pakistani folk and Sufi music with western rock.

Popular Pakistani rock bands Include:

Junoon
Noori
Aaroh
Call
EP
Fuzon
Roxen
Karavan
JAL
Hadiqa Kiyani
Ali Zafar
Atif Aslam

Musical Instruments



Sitar

The sitar is a plucked stringed instrument. It uses sympathetic strings along with a gourd resonating chamber to produce a very lush sound. Predominantly used in Pakistani classical music.

Tabla

The tabla is probably the most popular Pakistani percussion instrument used in classical and popular music.

Harmonium

A Harmonium or Reed Organ is a free-standing musical keyboard instrument similar to a pipe organ. It consists of free reed pipes and sound is produced by air being pushed or sucked over reeds resulting in a sound similar to that of an accordion.

Ektara

Ektara (also called iktar, ektar or gopichand) is a one string instrument used in Pakistan. It literally means single-stringed (ek = one, tara = string). In origin the ektara was a regular string instrument of wandering bards and minstrels, and is plucked with one finger.

Sarangi

The Sarangi is a bowed string instrument. Among all Pakistani instruments, it is said to most resemble to the sound of the human voice. Sarangi music is often vocal music. It is rare to find a sarangi player who does not know the words of many classical songs.

Bansuri

Bansuri or flute made of hollow bamboo stick with 6 holes in it. It is widely used as a musical instrument in mountainous and plain areas in the northern and southern parts of Pakistan. It is very popular in Kashmir as else where its very popular instrument among the shepherds who take their cattle including goats and sheep from mountain. Sain Allah Ditta Qadri is known for his flute playing, and Salamat Hussain is a meritorious flutist who has won the President's Pride of Performance medal.

Cinema and Theatre

Pakistan's film industry known as "Lollywood" is based in Lahore.

Films are produce in Urdu and in some



regional languages. Nowadays film industry is in crisis and produces very few films. Theatre in Pakistan has been given a professional and commercial face by private production companies that attempt to infuse theatre as a cultural norm in the country.

In this respect, the capital generation has been exceptionally successful, through the support of the Government and Private Investors, to give a platform to the youth to showcase their talent.

GEO FILMS launched the First of its productions *Khuda kay Liyay* (in the name of God) on July 16, 2007.

The film has proved to be a Milestone in the revival of the Cinema Industry of Pakistan. But unfortunately, commercial theatre is now in decline even though the number of theatregoers is steadily increasing.

Each and every script has to be cleared by the Punjab Arts Council (PAC).

Consequently, not many new scripts are being written for commercial stage plays.

Actors innovate their dialogues on the spot and it is their quick wit that people come to see.

Lahore has five private (Tamaseel, Mehfil, Naz, Crown and Alfalah) and one government theatre (Alhamra).

In Lahore, the popularity of performances can be adjudged by the fact that most of the audience come from other cities.

The theatres are packed on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays

Quranic Arts

In Islam calligraphy decorates Masjids, pottery, metalwork, and textiles, as well as books.

In Pakistan, calligraphy has also attracted many skilful hands. Khurshid Alam Gauhar Qalam is one of the world-famous practitioners of this art. He has also written extensively on calligraphy:

the Higher Education Commission in syllabi has prescribed five of his books for B.A.

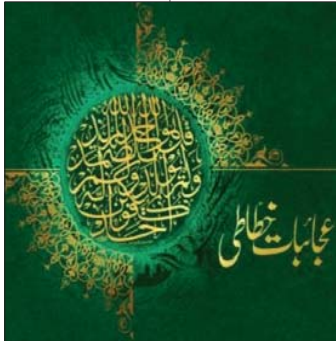
(fine arts) and M.A. (fine arts). His

latest book, "Pearls of Calligraphy", contains, as the title suggests, specimens of some of the finest pieces of calligraphy done by him over the years. The Holy Quran scribed by Gauhar Qalam, which is kept in 30 showcases at the Faysal Masjid, Islamabad, is an outstanding piece of

406 styles. At the time of the extension of the mausoleum of Syed Ali Hajveri at Lahore, he scribed Surah-e-Rehman over a total length of 308 feet and Darood-i-Taj over 108 feet, which could be a world record of wall calligraphy.

He is the only calligrapher from Pakistan whose work is on permanent display in the British Museum.

Islamic art and architecture, works of art and architecture created in countries where Islam has been dominant and embodying Muslim precepts in its themes.



PAKISTAN

Map of Pakistan





Ecotourism



Ecotourism, also known as ecological tourism, is a form of tourism which appeals to the ecologically and socially conscious travelers.

Generally speaking, ecotourism focuses on local culture, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth, and learning new ways to live on the planet; typically involving travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions.

Ayubia National Park

At an average elevation of 8000 feet above sea level, Ayubia National Park is located between Pakistan's most popular hill stations, Murree and Nathiagali.

Superb scenery, pine forests, green mountain slopes, clear water streams and

lots of wild flowers and colorful butterflies combine together to offer an enchanting panorama.

The Tour will take you to a hiking trip to Ayubia National Park during the summer holidays.

You will drive to Ayubia from Islamabad and enjoy the beautiful scenery enroute. After check in at the hotel, you will be free to acclimatize yourself to the mountain environment.

Next day you will do the pipeline walk through the National Park area and climb the Mukshpuri Top (elevation 9800 feet). On the way, you are likely to see hundreds of wild flowers and colorful butterflies. You will also have superb views overlooking Kashmir and Abbottabad.

White Water Sports

The rivers of Pakistan spread like a net through its length and breadth. Right from the heights of the Karakoram, the Himalayas and the Hindukush, Pakistan's rivers change its courses and flows until they all meet the mighty Indus, at different points, which ultimately falls into the Arabian Sea.

These rivers are ideal for all types of water sports like, rafting, canoeing, boating and sailing. Following rivers in the



Northern Pakistan, are open for water sports, besides the Indus, the Ravi and the Chenab in NWFP, Punjab and Sindh provinces;

Indus (from Jaglot to Thakot)
Kunhar (from Naran to Kaghan)
Swat (from

Bahrain to Saidu Sharif)

Panjkora (from Dir to Batkhela)
Hunza (from Aliabad to Gilgit)

Wetlands & Historical Sites of Salt Range

The Salt Range comprises two rows of low lying rugged hills that run east to west between the Soan and Jhelum rivers from the Grand Trunk Road, near Jhelum city to the River Indus, near Kalabagh. This area is said to record 600 million years of Earth's history.

Its name comes from the vast deposits of rock salt exposed and mined at Khewra.

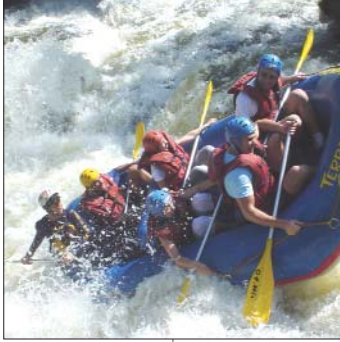
The salt was left behind when the sea, which extended over the Indus plains and the Potowar plateau, evaporated 600 million years ago.

The rocks and fossils found around the salt range provide a complete record of the history of Earth. Layers of rock in the range have been tipped vertically or in some places are inverted, so that the older fossil-strewn layers now lie on the surface.

The tour will take you to Khewra, the largest Salt Mines in the world, the fort and temples of Hindu Shahi period (8-10 century A.D.) at Katas and Malot and the beautiful lakes at Kalar Kahar, Uchali, Khabaki and

Jhalar which attract thousands of migratory birds each year.

This tour will also give you a chance to take a close look at the typical village lifestyle of Northern Punjab.



Marine Turtles & Mangrove Forests

A drive to the beaches of Hawks Bay and Sandspit (near Karachi) is one of the greatest sources of pleasure to a nature lover. This unique tour will take you to the shores of the

Karachi coast where the Green Turtle and Olive Ridley are found during the nesting seasons on the beaches of Hawks Bay and Sandspit.

During autumn, after the monsoons when the sea is calmer the visitors sit quietly on the beach on a moonlit night and watch to see the turtles come up and repeat what they have been doing for generations.

That is, laying their eggs and leaving them in the enclosing warmth of the soft sand for the heat of the sun to incubate till young hatchlings, perfect miniatures of the adult, emerge and scramble to the sea.

The tour will also take you to Somiani Bay Mangrove Forest that is

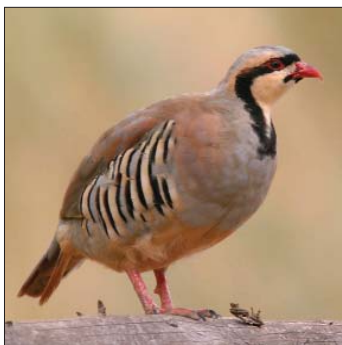


the breeding ground for fish and shrimps and home to many resident and migratory birds.

Bird Watching

In the northeast of Karachi, forming the end of the chain of the great lakes lies the beautiful fresh water lakes of Haleji and Keenjhar in the district of Thatta. Some forty thousand birds including over 70 species of waterfowl find refuge over here during the winter months.

These lakes can be regarded as one of the most important wintering areas for waterfowls in Eurasia. Flamingos, Pelicans, Purple Gallinules, Ducks, Coots, Herons, Pheasants, Tailed Jacanas, to name but a few can be observed undisturbed in their natural habitat.



Besides providing you with an excellent opportunity for bird-watching, our tour will also allow you to explore the historical monuments of Thatta and Chaukandi.

Thatta has the largest necropolis in the world with beautifully engraved sandstone on the graves. The Shah Jehan Mosque of Thatta, built in the mid 17th century A.D., has 99 domes and is considered a masterpiece of Mughal architecture.

Indus Blind Dolphin

Indus is one of the greatest rivers of the world. It originates high in the mountains of Tibet and flows through Ladakh and Pakistan before flowing into the Arabian Sea. On its 3200 kms journey it passes through the great Himalayan and Karakoram ranges, the fertile plains of the Punjab and the vast desert of Sindh.

Near the great Nanga Parbat (8126 m), it forms the borderline between the Asian and Indian continental plates. The Indus is blessed with a rich variety of wildlife throughout its journey.

Among these are various resident and migratory birds, mammals, reptiles and fish. The Indus Blind Dolphin is one of its most famous inhabitants. Through this tour, we will take you to Taunsa Barrage, which is a two and a half hour drive from Multan.

From Taunsa Barrage, you will travel down the river Indus on a traditional fishing boat where you will catch unforget-



table glimpses of rural life in the Southern Punjab and the innumerable species of birds that stops by in these areas on their north-south migratory route.

You will also have the opportunity to see the remarkable blind dolphin skirting to the surface near your boat.

The boat safari will end at Ghazi Ghat Bridge from where we will drive back to Multan.

Trekking

The Northern Areas of Pakistan are rightfully becoming recognized as one of the most rewarding trekking destinations of the world. Trekking and hiking in the rugged mountains and verdant valleys of Gilgit are allowed only in the "open zone" which extends up to 16 kms.

Short of the control line on the Kashmir border from May to September, as most of our Northern Areas are snow bound during the winter months. Yet, there are certain valleys where trekking can be enjoyed in winter as well because the snow conditions in these valleys are quite suitable for it and there is no danger of avalanches.

Main attractions are the pristine mountain valleys free of any tourists, abundant wild life sightings including Himalayan Ibex, Blue Sheep, Snow Cocks and maybe the ever elusive Snow Leopard, if one is lucky.

K-2

Four of the world's greatest mountain ranges, the Karakoram, the Hindukush, the Himalayas and the Pamirs converge in the north of Pakistan; covering an area of 40,000 sq. km. Almost 37 of the world's 100 highest peaks, including K-2 (8611 Mt./second highest in the world), are located in these mountains.



Five of these peaks are over 8000 meters and about 108 over 7000 meters. In no other part of the world can be found such a complex of mountain ranges, glaciers, valleys and mountain folk. Each range is daunting in itself and worthy of exploration. Together, they represent the most

interesting and exciting mountain destinations to be found anywhere in the world!



Top 10 Places to Visit

Umerkot

Umerkot is famous in the sub-continent as the birthplace of the Mughal Emperor Akbar (in 1542). This Rajput fort is situated at one end of Tharparkar desert that is over 28,000 square km in area. The Thar Desert is surrounded by rising sand and hills and is a continuation of the Rajasthan arid zone. Tharparkar has a unique folklore, landscape, flora and fauna or rather a culture of its own. It provides a distinct facet and an absorbing study of social culture, east of Indus. Umerkot is famous for beautiful embroidery.

Until recently a community of Jogis or snake charmers lived here. Umerkot is also famous for a small museum devoted to Akbar's life. Further down the road, there is another prosperous town Islamkot. The Rajputs who came and settled down here, have strong resemblance to Rajasthan dwellers. On the way to Virwah, 68 Km from Islamkot, the traveler comes across "Abhe Ka Thar" goth of the Bheel Tribe and Bhelwah of the Moro - This area is noted for succulent fruit. Nagar Parkar is 23 Km south of Virwah and in the northeast Somi Ji Veri. Enroute to Chachro is the Peacock bird region.



Moen-jo-daro (Larkana)

Moen-jo-daro is considered as one of most spectacular ancient cities of the world and is located at a distance of 27 km from Larkana. It had baked mud-bricks buildings, an elaborate covered drainage system, a large state granary, a spacious pillared hall, a college of priests, a palace and a citadel.

Harappa, another major of the Indus valley civilization, was surrounded by massive

brick wall fortification. Other features and plan of the city were similar to that of Moen-jo-daro. The Kot Diji culture is marked by well-made pottery and houses built of mud-bricks and stone foundations. Moen-jo-daro has been included in UNESCO's list of the World Heritage sites.

Harappa

Harappa was about the same size as Moen-jo-daro 550 km to the south. They are the two largest of the excavated Indus civilization cities and have been called twin capitals. Moen-jo-daro is more exciting to visit but at Harappa there is a good museum and you can explore the confused ruins of the citadel and defensive wall.

Together with Moen-jo-daro and an unknown number of towns in the Indus Valley, Harappa flourished in the 3rd millennium B.C. relics of a citadel, drains, granaries brick kilns and fortifications can be discerned. Each grave so far excavated

has yielded many objects that with personal articles; toys and weights are exhibited in the small local museum.

Taxila

Some 35Km northwest of Rawalpindi, on the way to Peshawar is Taxila, world famous for its archaeological sites, dating back to the 5th century B.C. The city flourished for a thousand years and was famous as a centre of Gandhara art of architecture and sculpture, education and religion in the days of Buddhist glory. Visit to the museum is a must for visitors. Taxila has been included in UNESCO's list of the World Heritage sites.



Northern Areas

Among the hill resorts in the Northern Area is the Gilgit Valley; it is accessible by air from Islamabad as well as by KKH (Karakoram Highway), 628 Km from Islamabad. There are regular buses, minibuses and air-conditioned Coach Services.

Gilgit is famous for its fruit orchards, trout fishing and as a base for mountaineering.

North of Gilgit and touching China is Hunza Valley famous for longevity of life of its people, delicious fruits, and the magnificent peaks, including Rakaposhi (7788 metres).

One may now travel on KKH and cross over Khunjerab Pass for traveling to China in conducted tours and transport run by Pakistan Tours Ltd.

There are many worth visiting places

in the northern areas of Pakistan. These sites/valleys have always been a great attraction to tourists from all over the world. Hiking, trekking, mountaineering, and skiing are the major attractions for adventurers. People fond of appreciating the natural sites have always been attracted to the Northern Areas.

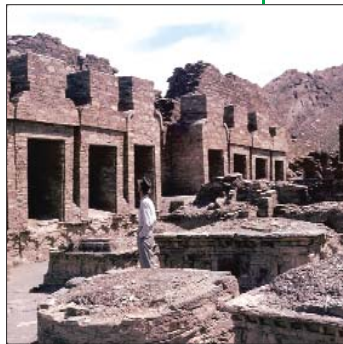
Worth visiting valleys of Pakistan include:

- Naran/ kaghan Valley
- Swat Valley
- Malam Jabba
- Kalaam
- Chizer Valley
- Skardu
- Chitral Valley
- Hunza Valley

Takht-i-bahi

Situated at a 160-meter high hill, are the remains of Buddhist Monastery at Takht-i-bahi, about 80 km from Peshawar.

Takht-i-bahi has been included in UNESCO's list of the World Heritage sites. In this site, fragmentary sculptures in stone and stucco were produced which indicate



the highly developed sculptural scene of their creators, dating back to the 2nd century AD. Many of the sculptures can be seen in Peshawar Museum.

Lahore Fort



The Mughal Emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar held his court in Lahore from 1584 to 1598 AD. He built the massive Lahore Fort in 1566 AD on the foundations of an old mud fort dating back to 1021 AD and enclosed the city within a red brick wall boasting 12 gates.

The Royal Fort is rectangular in shape (380 x 330 meters). Two main gates are located alongside the center of the western and eastern walls. Every succeeding Mughal Emperor as well as the Sikhs, and the British in their turn, added a pavilion, palace, gate or wall to the Fort.

The complete tour of the Fort takes around one and a half hour. Lahore Fort has been included in UNESCO's list of the World Heritage sites.

Shalimar Gardens

Five kilometers east of the Old City of Lahore on the GT Road are the famous Shalimar Gardens, laid out by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1642 AD. The Gardens are spread out in typical Mughal style and are surrounded by high walls with watchtowers at the four corners.

Originally, the Gardens were spread over seven ascending terraces, but only three remain now, which cover an area of about 42 acres. Brickwork of the floors of the three terraces has been restored according to the original patterns, which differ on each terrace.

At the end of the first terrace, there is a marble pavilion under which water flows and cascades down over a carved, marble slab creating a waterfall effect.

Across the waterfall, is a marble throne. At the end of the second terrace, is a beautiful structure called "Sawan Badhon", a sunken tank with niches on its three sides.

Water cascades down from it in sheets in front of the niches, producing the sound of the falling rain.

In the olden times, oil lamps were placed in the niches, which reflected myriad colours, through the water. Shalimar Gardens have the



privilege of being the stage of many important state receptions.

Outside its walls, the annual Mela Chiraghan (Festival of Lamps) is held during the month of March.

Special lights on the first and the second terraces of the Gardens have been installed and the area is illuminated half an hour after sunset. Shalimar Gardens have been included in UNESCO's list of the World Heritage sites.



Their picturesque headgear is made of woolen black material decked out with cowries' shells, buttons and crowned with a large colored feather.

The Kalash people love music and dancing particularly on occasions of their religious festivals.

Makli

The Makli Hill near Thatta town has the world's

largest necropolis,

said to contain more than one million graves over an area of 15 Sq. Km. Here in eternal sleep, lie kings and queens, saints and scholars philosophers and soldiers of a bygone era - an era known for its culture and learning.

The gravestones and mausoleums at Makli are masterpieces in stone carving, representing different eras and dynasties, distinguishable by the styles of their ornamentation.

The mausoleums cover the Summa period (14th to 16th centuries), the Tarkhan & Arghum period (16th century), and the Mughal period (16th to 18th centuries).

Kalash Valley

One of the major attractions of Chitral is the Kalash valley - the home of Kalash or "Wearers of the Black Robes", a primitive pagan tribe. Legends say that five soldiers of the legions of Alexander of Macedonia settled in Chitral and are the progenitors of the Kalash.

Over 3,000-strong Kalash live in the valley of Birir, Bumburet and Rambur, south of Chitral.

Bumburet, the largest and the most picturesque valley of the Kalash, is 40 km from Chitral and is connected by a jeep able road. The Kalash women wear black gown of coarse cloth in summer and hand-spun wool dyed in black in winter.



5 Major Cities



Islamabad

Islamabad the capital of Pakistan is a well-planned modern city with large public buildings, Convention Center, Pakistan Folk Art Museum, Pakistan Museum of Natural History attractive Parks and Lake, wide boulevards, beautiful Shah Faisal Masjid and well laid out shopping centers.

The Rawal Dam is a popular picnic spot. There are top and medium class hotels and motels as well as a camping site.

275 Km to the northwest of Lahore is Rawalpindi. It is fast developing into a large modern city. It has many playgrounds, a

pleasant club, an army museum, a number of good hotels and restaurants and a huge Ayub Park. Rawalpindi is the last halting post leading to the numerous holiday spots and hill resorts of the north, such as Murree, Nathiagali, Ayubia, Abbottabad, Swat, Kaghan, Gilgit, Hunza, Skardu and Chitral.

Murree & Galliat

About 64 Km from Rawalpindi, situated at an altitude of 2286 metres (7,500 feet) above sea level is Murree where lofty peaks tower above green pine covered slopes. It is one of the most popular summer resorts in Pakistan. The Gallies are quaint little hill resorts northwest of Murree and there is a motor able road running through them all. Murree and the Gallies offer horse riding, golf, chair, lifts and pine shaded walks.

Karachi

Karachi is the capital of Sindh Province. It is a busy centre of commerce and industry. It has big port and the largest city of Pakistan having an international airport. It has many pleasant attractions like sunny, sandy beaches, deep-sea fishing, yachting, golf and horse racing. Besides rush-taking shopping markets, you can buy indigenous handicrafts, beautiful woven, hand made rugs / carpets, jewelry, garments, cloth, pottery and a lot more.



Places to See

Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Founder of Pakistan

The mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah is yet another monumental palace situated in the east of M. A. Jinnah Road. The marble work on the

tomb offers a great luminous scene at dusk, while the recently built garden is a good example of modern architectural planning resulted in fast completion. There are graves of his sister, Shireen Jinnah and Fatima Jinnah, his right hand, Liaquat Ali Khan.

National Museum

The National Museum is situated off I.I Chundrigar Road, the busiest commercial hub of the city. Here one can see the rich collection of items in galleries named after the Indus Valley Civilization, Gandhara sculpture, Islamic art, besides rare manuscripts, ancient coins and paintings.



Chaukundi Tomb (Bin Qasim Town)

About 27 Km out of Karachi on the National Highway on a high ground area a cluster of an un-usual grave built in the shape of slabs upon slabs of rectangles, hence the name four sided. These date back to 16th-18th centuries. The distinguishing feature of these graves is the superb carving and engraving of the sandstone slabs with various floral motifs and designs of jewellery for females and of horses and swords for males.

Lahore

Lahore is "the city of gardens" and the capital of the Punjab. It is an ancient town, rich in historical monuments, including some of the finest specimen of Muslim architecture the Badshahi

Masjid of Emperor Aurangzeb, the Wazir Khan Masjid, the Shalimar Garden of Emperor Shahjahan, Emperor Jehangir's Mausoleum and the royal Fort of Akbar with its fabulous Hall of Mirrors. Lahore is considered to be the cultural capital of Pakistan because of its numerous colleges, places of learning,

sports activities and frequent stage plays etc. The museum in Lahore is considered to be the best in the sub-continent. It houses the statue of fasting Buddha beside a host of priceless relics.

The Horse and Cattle Show is an annual event of Lahore held at the Fortress Stadium every spring. It is a pageant of equestrian sports, folk dances,

music and tattoo parades. Lahore is at its best in spring and autumn.

Places to See

Badshahi Masjid (Built in 1673)

Considered the World's largest, living, historical Masjid. This Islamic centre was constructed using an attractive blend of white marble and red sand stone. The poet, philosopher "Iqbal" is buried at its footsteps.

Jehangir's Tomb (Built in 1637)

Presenting a matchless display of mosaics and inlays, the tomb of the fourth Mughal Emperor is set magnificently in the clam surroundings of symmetrical gardens. An old traveller's motel leads to the stately entrance of the tomb.

Shahi Hammam (Royal Bath)

Built during the period of Emperor Shah Jahan, it was used as a public bath containing cold and hot water and steam baths.

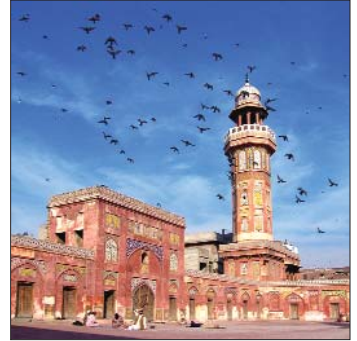
Wazir Khan's Masjid

Hidden within the old city, this beautiful Masjid is called "the Architectural ornaments of Lahore".

It was built in 1634 A.D and is decorated with mosaics and frescoes of infinite variety and colours.

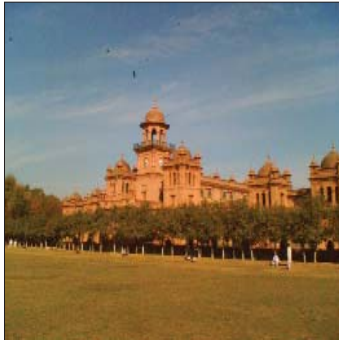
Anarkali Bazaar

Anarkali bazaar is located on Mall Road, Lahore. It is one of the oldest surviving markets in South Asia, dating back at least 200 years. Anarkali Bazar is a famous and popular market in Lahore, Pakistan. The old Anarkali Bazar is converted to Food Street and New Anarkali as Shopping Market. The market derives its name from a nearby mausoleum thought to be that of a slave girl named Anarkali, buried alive by the order of the Mugal Emperor Akbar for having an illicit relationship with the Emperor's son, Prince Salim, later to become Emperor Jahangir.



Food Streets

A traditional bazar of old Lahore named Gawalmandi and old Anarkali bazar has been converted into Food Streets. Here tourists can enjoy the real Lahori food like Nihari, Haleem, Fish, Sri Payay, Taka Tak and many more.



Peshawar

Peshawar is the provincial capital of the North West Frontier Province. About 172 Km west of Rawalpindi/Islamabad by road and about half an hour by air lies the last major town of Pakistan, the ancient and legendary Peshawar city, of the proud Pathans of interest in Peshawar city are the Balahisar Fort, Qissa Khawani Bazar, Chowk Yaadgar, Mahabat Khan Masjid, Bala Hisar Fort and the Museum.

Places to See

Qissa Khawani Bazaar

Qissa Khawani Bazaar is a famous bazaar of Peshawar, NWFP, Pakistan. The Qissa Khawani Bazaar or the romantic 'Street of Story-tellers' extends from west to

east in the heart of the city of Peshawar. The cosmopolitan character of Qissa Khawani Bazaar is lined with its traditional kehwa khanas, Tikka Kabab, Chapli Kabab and dry fruit shops along with modern show rooms of leather ware and bright colored garments. In days gone by, the bazaar was the site of camping ground for caravans and military adventures. The professional storytellers recited ballads and tales of war and love to mobs of traders and soldiers.

Today the storytellers and the art of story telling have gone but the atmosphere of the bazaar is still the same. Bearded tribesmen bargain with city traders over endless cups of green tea. People from everywhere visit the crowded street.

Afghans, Iraqis, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Afridis, and Shinwaris move around with ease and grace in their colorful native robes. It was the site of a massacre when British soldiers fired upon a crowd of unarmed protestors in 1930.

Masjid Mahabat Khan

The Masjid built in 1630 AD by Mahabat Khan, the Mughals' governor of Peshawar is a marvellous piece of architecture, though lost its original glory, long ago. This was yet another feather in the cap of Engineer Emperor, Shahjehan (1628-1658-AD). It is still one of the impressive religious buildings, situated in the Andar Shahar Bazar.



The Peshawar Museum

To see the most invaluable collection from various archaeological sites, one must visit the Peshawar Museum. You can see relics of different civilizations, especially Gandhara period (300 BC-300AD) on display in scientifically arranged galleries. The treasure trove tells you the untold history of the region.

Islamia College, Peshawar University

Islamia College is a historical place. Founded by Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan, an educationist of British period, the College later served as awareness creator among the populace, willing to fight for the cause of freedom. Some of the most renowned personalities were students of this prestigious institute, which later became a part of Peshawar University.

Some of the most renowned personalities were students of this prestigious institute, which later became a part of Peshawar University.

Khyber Pass:

The most famous pass of the world, the Khyber Pass is 56 Km from Peshawar. It has been, throughout South Asian history, the most important gateway to the plains of the sub-continent both for migration and invasion.

Quetta

Situated at an elevation of 1677 meters (5,500 ft), Quetta is one of the best-known hill resorts and also the provincial capital of Balochistan. Winters are severe but summers are delightful. The Quetta valley abounds

in fruit orchards. There are several comfortable hotels and fine golf course. It has three large craggy mountains. Chiltan, Zarghun and Koh-e-Murdar, that seem to brood upon this pleasant town.

There are other mountains that form a ring around it. Their copper red and russet rocks and crests that are powdered with snow in winters add immense charm to the town. Quetta can rightly be called the fruit basket of Pakistan. Plums, peaches, pomegranates, apricots, apples, guavas (locally called zaitoon), some unique varieties of melon like "Garma" and "Sarda" and cherries, pistachios and almonds are all grown in abundance. Some pistachios also grow in Qila Saif Ullah. Saffron grows very well on mountains around 5000 ft (1524 metres) high and it is being cultivated on a commercial scale here.

Tulip is an indigenous flower of Pakistan. The yellow and red varieties of tulip grow wild around Quetta. Quetta is connected to the rest of the country by road, rail and air. The R.C.D. Highway connects it to Karachi and then on (via Koh-e-Taftan) to Tehran, Iran, 1435 Km away. The road to Sibi connects it with Punjab and upper Sindh. The road via Loralai - Fort Munro - D.G. Khan and Multan is a short route for Punjab. The Chaman Road is a link between the county and the Afghan border. Quetta is linked by PIA with Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad by daily flights.

Places to See

Bolan Pass

If you have a passion for smelling history through places, you must visit the Bolan Pass, where several armies from Central Asia and north intruded into the lands of un-divided India through centuries. The picturesque hilly road welcomes you with cool breeze.



Hanna Lake

If you wish to enjoy excursion just near the city, you must go to Hanna Lake, 10 km, from Quetta and very close to the Urak.

The turquoise water of lake is a real contrast to the brownish green hills that surround the area.

Hazarganji Chiltan National Park

Spread over 38,429 acres at a height of 221 to 3264 meters above sea level, the Park is 20 km from Quetta, in south-west direction. There you can see a variety of wildlife. The most distinctive is Markhor, erroneously considered as ibex by the locals, because of its resemblance.

There are 225 species of plants in Hazarganji Chiltan National Park, including wild almond, juniper, pistachio, wild olive and various useful shrubs.

Khojak Pass

This Pass will lead you directly to the Chaman Border of Afghanistan, 153 km from Quetta. The scenic beauty is simply enthralling. The border journey is to be materialised through Khojak Sheela, a 4 km long tunnel, at an elevation of more than 1945 meters above sea level.

Mehrgarh (Distt. Kachhi)

The oldest settlement (7,000 B.C), remains of which were discovered in the district Kachhi of Balochistan, the pioneer of the Indus Valley Civilization. The evidence of crop cultivation, animal husbandry and

human settlements have been found in Mehrgarh. The inhabitants of Mehrgarh used to live in mud-brick houses and had learned to make pottery around 6,000 B.C.

Pishin Valley

Filled with numerous fruit orchards, the Pishin Valley is 50Km away from Quetta. These orchards are irrigated by 'karez'. There is yet another attraction of cool waters, i.e. man-made lake with Bund Khushdil Khan. A wide range of ducks provides enticing beauty during winters.

The Gorges

Being the most arid province, Balochistan receives very low rainfall. Natural springs used for supplying water to other places have been very common. But for now, most of the springs are artificially made by boring holes into rocks. They are called 'KAREZ'. There are more than a dozen gorges

(Tangi in local language) around Ziarat, formed by Karez water.

Urak Valley

Driving through wild roses and fruit orchards, you may reach the Urak Valley at a distance of 21 km from Quetta. The abundance of delicious fruits makes it a real fruit land or Samaristan.



Ziarat

122 Km from Quetta is Ziarat, a pleasant hill resort, about 2440 meters above sea level. Reasonably priced accommodation, including a PTDC Motel Complex and rest houses are available. Ziarat valley has some of the

world's oldest Juniper forests.

Places to Stay

KARACHI

(City Code 021)

AVARI TOWERS KARACHI

✚ Fatima Jinnah Road,
P.O. Box 15503
☎ Tel:111-282-747
☎ Fax:5680310,5683756
✉ Email:towers@avari.com

PEARL CONTINENTAL

✚ Club Road,
☎ Tel:5685021,111-505-505
☎ Fax:5682655,5681835
✉ Email: pchk@hashoogroup.com

KARACHI SHERATON HOTEL & TOWERS

✚ Club Road, P.O. Box 3918
☎ Tel:5681021-22,5633333

☎ Fax: 5633225-26
 ✉ Email: asel@cyber.net.pk

KARACHI MARRIOTT

📍 Abdullah Haroon Road
 ☎ Tel: 5682011, 5680111
 ☎ Fax: 5689510, 5680981, 5670111,
 ✉ Email: gmkmh@hashoogroup.com

REGENT PLAZA

📍 Main Shahrah-e-Faisal,
 ☎ Tel: 5657000, 5631500-50 111-111-774
 ☎ Fax: 5613521-3
 ✉ Email: rpcc@cyber.net.pk

MEHRAN

📍 Shahrah-e-Faisal,
 ☎ Tel: 5660851-62, 111-909-909
 ☎ Fax: 5677019
 ✉ Email: info@hotelmehran.com

AIRPORT

📍 Star Gate Road,
 ☎ Tel: 4570141 to 45
 ☎ Fax: 4578401
 ✉ Email: skyroomskarchi@yahoo.com

EMBASSY INN

📍 100-B, SMCHS Nursery, Main Shahrah-e-Faisal,
 ☎ Tel: 4535461-70
 ☎ Fax: 4526797
 ✉ Email: embassyinn@cyber.net.pk

DAYS INN

📍 164-B Shahrah-e-Faisal,
 ☎ Tel: 4388140-08
 ☎ Fax: 4388130, 4559745
 ✉ Email: daysinn@dayinn.com.pk

CARLTON

📍 DC-5 Off Zulfikar, Street-5 Phase-VIII, D.H.A
 ☎ Tel: 5849172-86, UAN 111 727 272

☎ Fax: 5849170-71, 5857825

LAHORE

(City Code 042)

AVARI LAHORE

📍 87-Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam
 ☎ Tel: 6366366, 111-282-747
 ☎ Fax: 6365367, 6369999
 ✉ Email: gmlhe@avari.com

PEARL CONTINENTAL

📍 Shahrah-e-Quaid-e-Azam
 ☎ Tel: 6360210-19
 ☎ Fax: 6362760, 6364362
 ✉ Email: gmpchl@hashoogroup.com

THE GRAND

📍 9-Davis Road,
 ☎ Tel: 6303402-4
 ☎ Fax: 6360734

HOLIDAY INN,

📍 25-26 Egerton Road,
 ☎ Tel: 6310077
 ☎ Fax: 6314514-15
 ✉ Email: holiday@brain.net.pk
 Website: www.holidayinn.com

SUNFORT

📍 Commercial Liberty Zone, Liberty Market, Gulberg-III
 ☎ Te: 5763810-19
 ☎ Fax: 5754277

LEADERS INN

📍 6-Montgomery Road,
 ☎ Tel: UAN 111-404-111
 ☎ Fax: 6300756, 6311617
 ✉ Email: info@leadersshotel.com
 Website: www.leadersinnhotel.com

AMBASSADOR

📍 7-Davis Road,
 ☎ Tel: 6316820-32

☎ Fax: 6301855,6301868, 6301862
✉ Email :ambsales@pol.com.pk

KASHMIR PALACE

📍 14-Empress Road, Shahrah Bin Badees
☎ Tel: 6316700-04
☎ Fax: 6316709

BEST WESTEN

📍 36-Liberty Market, Gulberg-III,
☎ Tel: 5758811-20
☎ Fax:5712800

ISLAMABAD

(City Code 051)

ISLAMABAD MARRIOTT

📍 Agha Khan Road, Shalimar 5,
☎ Tel:111 22 33 44, 2826121-35
☎ Fax: 2820648,2201071
✉ Email: marriott@isb.paknet.com.
pk

ISLAMABAD SERENA

📍 Khayaban-e-Suhrawardy,
☎ Tel: 2874000 Fax: 2871100
Website: www.serenahotels.com
✉ Email: Islamabad@serena.com.pk

BEST WESTERN

📍 6-Islamabad Club Road,
P.O.Box 2319
☎ Tel: 2277460-68
☎ Fax: 2271538-9
✉ Email:bestwesternisb@hotmail.
com

CROWN PLAZA

📍 E-99, Jinnah Avenue,
Blue Area
☎ Tel:2277890-910
☎ Fax:2273967

HOLIDAY INN ISLAMABAD

📍 Civic Centre, Melody Chowk

☎ Tel: 2827311-20,111273273
☎ Fax: 2273273,2824021
✉ Email: holiday@isb.comsats.net.
pk

PAK PALACE,

📍 Club Road, Near Rawal Dam
☎ Tel: 2279926, 2875862
☎ Fax: 2279903
✉ Email: info@pakpalace.com

MARGALLA

📍 M-2, Near, Convention Centre,
☎ Tel:2276500-4
☎ Fax:2274054
✉ Email: isb@hotelmargla.com

ENVOY CONTINENTAL

📍 111-East, Fazal-e-Haq Road
Blue Area,
☎ Tel: 2273971-7,2273922
☎ Fax: 2273045
✉ Email: info@envoyhotel.com.pk

MARINA INTERNATIONAL

📍 109-E,Jinnah Avenue,
Blue Area,
☎ Tel: 2271309,2206901-8
☎ Fax: 2876061
✉ Email: htmarina@comsats.net.pk

Peshawar

(City Code 091)

PEARL CONTINENTAL

📍 Khyber Road, P.O.Box.197
☎ Tel:5276361-69
☎ Fax:5276465, 5262461
✉ Email: pchp@hashoogroup.com
Website: www.pchotels.com

SHIRAZ INN

📍 University Road,
☎ Tel: 5845544-7
☎ Fax:5840497
✉ Email: shirazinn@netzone.net.pk.

GRAND

📍 University Road, Near Tamwan Chowk

☎ Tel: 5844353-58

☎ Fax: 5844359

✉ Email: hotelgrand@yahoo.com.

GREEN'S

📍 Saddar Road, Cantt

☎ Tel: 5276037, 5274304, 5270182-83

☎ Fax: 5276088

✉ Email: greens@brain.net.pk.

CITY VIEW

📍 City Tower, University Road

☎ Tel: 5842319-20

☎ Fax: 5842357

NORTH WEST HERITAGE

📍 Near Firdus Chowk, G.T. Road,

☎ Tel: 2215881, 2216479, 2561602,

☎ Fax: 2565688

✉ Email: asifkhansheritage@hotmail.com.

PARK INN

📍 Khyber Bazaar,

☎ Tel: 2560048-49, 2569563

☎ Fax: 2566448

ROSE

📍 Khyber Bazaar, Shoba Chowk

☎ Tel: 2550755-57

☎ Fax: 2551283

✉ Email: rosehotelpeshawar@yahoo.com.

SPOGMAY

📍 Namak Mandi

☎ Tel: 2213255, 2211749, 2216961

☎ Fax: 2214955

✉ E-Mail: Hotel.spogramy@yahoo.com

AMIN

📍 G.T.Road,

☎ Tel: 2218215-19

☎ Fax: 2563686

Quetta**QUETTA SERENA**

📍 Shahrah-e-Zarghoon

☎ Tel: 2820071-84

☎ Fax: 2820070

CROWN WELL

📍 Agha Siraj Complex, M.A. Jinnah Road,

☎ Tel: 2833374-6,

☎ Fax: 2820224

GARDENIA RESORT

📍 Askary Park, KAirport Road,

☎ Tel: 2820297, 2827543

☎ Fax: 2823148HR

LOURDES

📍 Staff College Road

☎ Tel: 2822352, 2829656-60, 2843391

☎ Fax: 2841352

QASR-E-NAZ

📍 Jinnah Road,

☎ Tel: 2822419, 2822821,

QASR-E-`GUL

📍 Suraj Ganj Bazaar,

☎ Tel: 2835245-46

☎ Fax: 2825192

ISLAMABAD,

📍 Jinnah Road,

☎ Tel: 2820705, 2824006

BLOOM STAR

📍 Stevard Road,

☎ Tel: 2833350-52

☎ Fax: 2833353

SUN RISE

📍 Natha Singh Street, Masjid Road,

Link Liaquat Bazar,

☎ Tel: 2834012

☎ Fax: 2834051

📍 Where & What to Eat

Islamabad

DRAGON CITY

☎ 108-W, Blue Area, Jinnah Avenue

☎ Tel: 2876541,2876546

NEW KABUL

☎ Plot No. 17, Shop No.2, Jinnah Super Market,F-7 Markaz,

☎ Tel: 2650953

OMAR KHAYAM IRANIAN

☎ Blue Area, Plot 46, Shop No.11, Behind PIA Office

☎ Tel:2825428

PAPPA SALLIS

☎ Shop No.1, Block 13-E, F-7 Markaz,

☎ Tel:2650550-3

☎ Fax: 2651555

USMANIA

☎ 13-West Blue Area,

☎ Tel:2872535,2873245

☎ Fax: 2274450

Lahore

CAFÉ ZOUK

☎ 43-L Complex Plaza, M.M. Alam Road Gulberg-II

☎ Tel:5750272, 5750282

LAHORE CHATKHARA

☎ 167-P, Gulberg-II,

☎ Tel: 5757840

SALT 'N' PEPPER

☎ 48, Commercial Zone, Liberty Market, Gulberg-III

☎ Tel:5752893-94

TAI WAH CHINESE

☎ 78-E.I,Gulberg-III

☎ Tel:5714988, 5753478

Karachi

BAR B.Q. TONIGHT

☎ 5/1, Boating Basing, Clifton Block-5,

☎ Tel: 5371673, 5832841, 5867280

☎ Fax: 5376963

CHINA TOWN

☎ 7/3,Block-2 Khayaban-e-Saadi, Clifton

☎ Tel:5860528, 5860528, 5374423

☎ Fax: 5867802

☎ Email: Chinatown@ cyber.net.pk

CLIFTON GRILL

☎ Plot No. 2-A, Block-3, KDA Scheme NO.5, Clifton,

☎ Tel: 5371473

☎ Fax: 5371474

www.chiftongvill.com

☎ Email: diftongrill@hotmail.com

LAL QILA

☎ 10/A, Muhammad Ali Memorial Co-operative Housing Society, Main Shahrah-e-Faisal,

☎ Tel: 4527250, 4388363-4

☎ Fax: 4395860,

SALT' N' PEPPER VILLAGE

☎ 3-B,Beach Avenues Phase-VI,DHA, Opp. Khayaban-e-Iltahad

☎ Tel:5843121-22

☎ Fax:5840952

Peshawar

BALANA

☎ Opp: Runway Tambwana Stop University Road,

☎ Tel:5844667,5844967, 5700241

☎ Fax: 5840294

Web: www.balana.com.pk.

Email: balana@cybal.net.com.

HABIBI

Gulabad, Near Phase-III,
Hayatabad Chowk, Jamrud Road,
Tel: 5701717, 5701818

SHIRAZ

University Road,
Tel: 5702019, 842029, 5702031

SILVER DRAGON

University Road,
Tel: 5850854, 5850859

Main Pakistani Dishes and their Ingredients

Nargisi Kofta.

Minced mutton
Onions
Cloves of Garlic (ground)
Inch Pieces Ginger
Salt to taste
Gram flour
Hard-boiled eggs
Eggs Beaten
Turmeric Powder
Water
Red Chilli powder to taste.

Seekh Kabab

Ground beef
Curd
Ground Cloves.
Ground Black Pepper
Ground Cardamom

Biryani

Rice
Meat
Milk
Medium Onion,
fried brown

Ground garlic
Cardamoms
Pinch of Saffron
Soaked in hot water
Salt to taste

Chappal Kabab.

Minced beef
A few spring Onion, Chopped finely
including the stems.
Pomegranate Seeds (Crushed)
Few finely chopped coriander leaves
Medium tomato
Mutton fat frying
Salt to taste.

Machli (Fish) Curry

Large Pomfret Fish
Coconut
Red Chillies
Cooking Oil
Onions
Coriander Powder
Tomato
alt to taste

Murgh Tikka

Medium sized Chicken, Quartered
Red Chili powder
Ground Garlic
Ground ginger
Lemon Juice

Biryani

Rice
Meat
Milk
Medium Onion, fried brown
Ground garlic
Cardamoms
Pinch of Saffron Soaked in hot water
Salt to taste

Badam Kheer

Almonds
Sugar
Rice

Rose Water (Optional)
Milk, Cooking Fat
Pistachios
Silver leaves for garnish

Shahi Tukra

Slices of Bread
Unsweetened Condensed
Milk
A few sliced Almonds
A few sliced Pistachios
Cooking fat for frying
Sugar
Milk
Pinch of Saffron
Crushed Cardamoms

Firni

Milk
Sugar
Silver leaves for garnishing
Long Grained Rice
Pistachio nuts

Nehari

Beef (bong gosht)
Oil
Onion
Nihari Mix
Ginger & Garlic
Flour & Warm Water

Sajji

2.5 or 3 Kg Leg of Lamb
Lemon Juice
Garlic Paste
Salt & Black Pepper
Ground Coriander
Nutmeg
Ground Cumin
Yogurt
Cooking oil

Bihari Kabab

Thin sliced beef
Coriander
Red Pepper Powder
Garam masala

Onion paste
Mustard Oil
Yogurt
Fried Hand Crushed Onions
Grinded Papaya

Things to Buy

Pakistan is a treasure house of exquisite handicrafts made by craftsmen who devoted their lives to cloth weaving, pottery, metal work, woodwork, stone carving and decorative items big or small.

Pottery here is a living history, a traditional craft that became an art, with its origins going back to 3,000 years B.C. Today, each region of Pakistan claims its own special jars and jugs and sturdy terracotta.

Where to Buy

Pakistan is a shoppers' paradise for woollen Carpets, Rugs, Marble Products, Onyx, copper and brass items, woodwork, Embroidered Clothing and ready-made garments. Almost all of these items can be purchased from the Main Markets of all of the Major cities.

Etiquette- Do's & Don'ts

The Pakistani people are well known for their tolerance, hospitality and cheerfulness.

The National Anthem: When the national anthem is played, at any social gathering and at public events or in cinemas, you are expected to stand. The best guide is to check what other people are doing and follow it.

Religion

Respect Religion, sacred places, norms and cultures of people.

Social Etiquette

Do not take photographs of women.

Do not shake hands with women. Drinking at public places is prohibited.

Avoid nudity at public places.

Language Essentials

Accommodation Rihaish

- Do you have any rooms available?
kyaa apke paas kamra hai?
- I'd like a Room
Mujhay aik kamra chahiyay
- How much is it for?
Kitney ka hai?
- We want a room with a (bathroom, shower, TV, window)
Humain kamra chahiyay jisme (bathroom, shower, TV, khirki ho)

Conversation

- Welcome
Khush aamdeed
- greetings
Mubarik
- hello
hello
- good morning
subha bakhair
- good day
din bakhair
- good evening
shaam bakhair
- goodbye, how are you?,
khuda hafiz, aap kaisay ho?
- fine and u?
Theek houn aur aap?
- yes
ji
- no
nahi
- please
meharbani
- thank
shukriya
- you
Koi baat nahi
- you're
- welcome

Baat cheet

- excuse me/I'm sorry,
maaf kijiyaay ga/ mujhay afsos hai
- I-like...what's your name?,
maen chahta houn.....,
- aap ka naam kyaa hai?
- my name is...
mera naam.....hai
- where are you from?
aap kahan say ho?
- I'm from....
mein....say hun

Directions

Raasta

- Where is the...?,
Kahan hai....?
- can you show me(on the map)?
Kyaa ap mujhay deekha sakte ho(
naqshay per)?
- is it far from here?
kyaa yeh yahan say duur hai?
- Go straight ahead
seedha aagay jayen
- to the left
ultay haath per
- to the right
seedhay haath per
- here
yahan
- there
wahan
- behind
peechay
- in front of
samnay
- far from
duur
- near to opposite.
kareeb

Health

Sehat

- Where is the...?(chemist, dentist,
doctor, hospital)
...kahan hai? (dawakhana, daantoun
ka doctor, doctor, hospital)

- I am sick
mei beemar hun,
- I have...(anemia, asthma, diabetes)
mujhay(anemia, damah, sugar) hai
- I am allergic to...(antibiotics,
aspirin, bees, peanuts, penicillin)
mujhay allergy hai(antibiotics,
aspirin, bees, moongphali, penicillin
)say
- antiseptic
anticeptic
- diarrhea
dust
- medicine
dawa
- sun block.
sun block.

Language Difficulties

Zabaan ki Mushkilat

- Do you speak English?
Kyaa aap English boltay hain?
- does anyone speak English?
Kya koi English bolta hai?
- I understand
Mein samajhta hun
- I don't understand
mein nahi samajhta
- how do you say..in (your lan
guage)?, what does...mean?
aapki zaban mei kaisay kehte hain?
is ka kyaa.....matlab hai?
- please write down.
Likh deyaain.

Numbers

- 0, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10
Zero,aik,do,teen,char,panch,chay,saat
,aath,no, dus
- 20,30,40,50,60,70,80,90,100
Bees,tees,challis,pachas,saath,sattar,as
si,naway,so
- 200,300,400,500,600,700,800,900,
1000 Ginti
Do so, teen so, char so, paanch so,
chay so, saat so, aath so, no so, haz
aar

- Paperwork
Kaghzi Karwai (paperwork)
- Name
Naam
- Nationality
qoumiyat
- date/place of birth
tareekh/jae-e-paidaish
- sex/gender
jins
- passport
passport
- visa
visa

Question words

Sawalia Alfaaz

- Who?
Koun?
- what?
kyaa?
- When?
kab?
- where?
kahan?
- which?
kounsi?
- why?
kyun?
- how?
kaisay?

Shopping services

- Where is the...?

(Bank, church, city center, consulate, embassy, hotel, lodging house, Masjid, market, police, police office, public telephone, public toilet, tourist office, town square)

Kahan hai....?(bank, girjaghar, shehr ka markaz, consulate, safaratkhana, hotel, lodging house, masjid, market, police, thana, public telephone, public toilet, mehkmay-e- sayahat, town square)

- I'd like to buy..., how much is it?
mein khareedna chahta hun..,

kitne ka hai?

- I don't like it, may I look at it?
mujhay pasand nahi,
kyaa mein dekh sakta hun?
- I'm just looking, I think its too expensive
mein sirf dekh raha hun, bohot mehnga hai,
- I'll take it, do you accept credit cards?
mein ley loonga, kyaa aap credit card letay hain?
- do you accept travelers cheques?
kyaa aap travelers cheque's letay hain?
- more, less
Zyada, cum
- smaller
chota
- bigger
barha

Time & Dates

Waqt or Tareekh (Time & Date)

- What time is it?
Time kyaa horaha hai?
- today
Aaj
- tomorrow
aane wala kul
- yesterday
guzra hua kul
- tonight
aaj raat,
- morning
subha
- afternoon
dupehr
- day
din
- month
maheena
- year
saal
- Monday
peer
- Tuesday

mungal

■Wednesday

budh

■Thursday

jumairaat

■Friday

jumma

■Saturday

hafta

■Sunday

itwar

Transport

■Public transport, where is the...?,
(airport, bus stop, train station)

kahan par hai?,

(airport, bus stop, train station)

■what time does the...leave/arrive?

(boat, bus, plane, train)

kiss waqt chalay gi/pohonchay

gi?(kashti, bus, jahaz, train)

■What time is the...bus?

(first, last, next)

Kia waqt hai...bus Ka?

(pehli,aakhri,agli)

■I'd like a... (one-way ticket, return
ticket, 1st class, 2nd class)

Mujhay chahiyay...(yuk tarfa, Aane

Jane ka ticket, 1st class, 2nd class)

■Certain words in spoken URDU lan-
guage are same as in the English lan-
guage e.g. Transport for transport,
Time for time, Date for date,
Shopping for shopping etc.

TAJIKISTAN

Introduction



Introduction

The Republic of Tajikistan is a newly-independent state. It is located in Central Asia between latitudes $36^{\circ} 40'$ and $41^{\circ} 05'$ North and longitudes $67^{\circ} 31'$ and $75^{\circ} 14'$ East, on the same latitude as Greece, Southern Italy and Spain.

It encompasses an area of 143,100 km stretching 700 km from east to west and 350 km from north to south.

The country borders the People's Republic of China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

South-eastern Tajikistan is only separated from Pakistan by a narrow strip of Afghan territory of 15-65km wide.

The terrain in the west of the country is hilly desert and semi-desert.

To the east the elevation rises to form the highest mountain systems in Central Asia - the Tien Shan and the Pamirs.

Mountain peaks are the source of numerous tributaries which flow into Tajikistan's main rivers - Syr Darya, Panj and Vakhsh (the Amu Darya begins at the merging of these two rivers).

Most of the border with Afghanistan follows the Panj and Amu Darya Rivers. Three majestic mountainous ranges mark the country: the Tien

Shan, the Alai and the Pamir Darvoz, with elevations ranging between 300 and 7,495m above sea level.



Country Profile



Country's Official Name

Republic of Tajikistan.

Flag Description

The flag of Tajikistan consists of three horizontal stripes - the top stripe is red, the middle is white and the bottom stripe is green. The white stripe is double the size of the others. In

the middle of the white stripe and flag there is a yellow/gold crown with seven, five-point stars over top of it. The red stripe represents happiness, white: good luck and prosperity and green: a green grass, happy life. The crown and stars symbolize Tajik sovereignty, the union of workers and the unity of Tajikistan's social classes.



Official Website:

<http://www.mid.tj/>

Government

(legal system, branches of the Government, etc.)

Government Type

Presidential Republic

Executive Branch

The Government of the country consists of the President - the head of the Government, the Prime Minister, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Ministers, ministers and various committees and agencies.

Legislative Branch

According to the Constitution of Republic of Tajikistan, the highest legislative and representative body of the country is the Parliament of Republic of





Tajikistan - Majlisi Oli, which consists of the upper chamber - Majlisi Milli and the lower chamber - Majlisi Namoyandagon.

The members to Majlisi Milli are elected at a joint meeting of people's delegates of Dushanbe city and its districts, Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region and its cities and districts, Khatlon Region and its towns and districts, Sogd Region and its cities and districts as well as Rayons (districts) of Republican Subordination and its cities and dis-

tricts for the five year term.

Official Language & Local Dialects

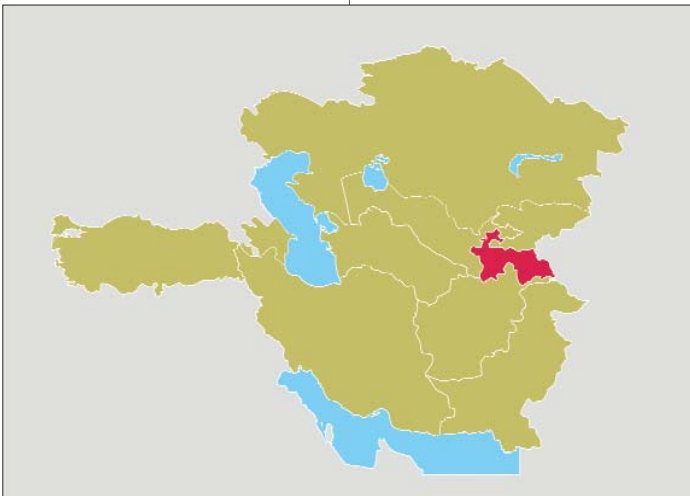
Tajik (official), Russian widely used in government and business, Uzbek

Capital City

Dushanbe

Major Cities

Tursunzade, Panjikent, Kurgan-Tyube, Kulyab, Nurek, Istravshan, Hissar, Khorogh, Isfara, Khofarnihon, Faizobod, Rasht



Provinces

Khatlon, Sugd, Velayate- Kuhistoni- Badakhshon, Navahi- Atrafe- Dushanbe

Ethnic Groups

Tajiks 80 %, Uzbeks 15,3%, Russian (3.5%) others (7.%)

Country's Total Area

143.100 sq. Km

Population

More than 7 million

Climate

Tajikistan enjoys 250-300 days of sunshine a year. Mid-altitude continental, hot summers, mild winters, semi-arid to polar in Pamir Mountains.

Spring brings mild temperatures and frequent heavy showers. Summer is sweltering hot, temperatures around + 45° C are not uncommon. In winter, temperatures in the capital and the southern lowlands hover around freezing from 1° to 6° C.



Public Holidays

Tajikistan uses the western calendar for all official and most common occasions

1. New Year's Day (according to Gregorian calendar) January 1
2. International Women's Day March 8
3. Navruz (Persian New Year) March 20- 22
4. Victory Day May 9
5. Independence Day September 9
- 6.* Eid-i-Ramazon (end of Ramadhan) Dates Varies
- 7.* Eid-i-Kurbon (The Feast of Sacrifice) Dates Varies

Time Zone:

GMT +5

The Silk Road

The territory of Tajikistan from the most ancient times has laid on the important historical routes of the Silk Road connecting the East and the West helping not only to exchange goods but also ideas, cultures and people. Very famous objects along the entire Silk Road were the weapons made by Soghd craftsmen. Very popular were leather products and jewelry, silk fabrics and colored salts. Soghd exported amazing "golden peaches", white and yellow cherries, sheep and graceful swift-footed racers. According to ancient sources, there were the following sectors of the Silk Road which crossed Tajikistan. Soghd route went from Samarkand to Kokand through Penjikent and further on the road leading to Fergana valley through Varz, Ura-Tyube, Khujand, Konibodom and Isfara. The other route sometimes called "Karotegin" connected Termez and Kashgar (China) through Hissar and Dushanbe.

Khatlon route branched from

Karotegin to the south and led from Dushanbe to Balkh (Afghanistan) up to the southern Silk Road line. The route called "Pamir" led from Balkh

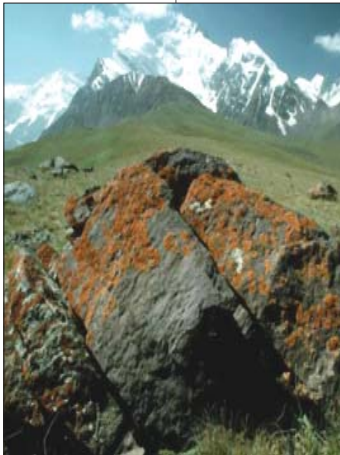
(Afghanistan) to Khorog and was further split into other routes.

Tajik cities on the Silk Road are precious pearls framed by picturesque landscapes. Among them are Penjikent, Ura-Tyube and Khujand. More than 20 centuries ago those cities were

famous for their crafts, culture and well-developed trade.

The ancient roads were traveled by numerous caravans, which stopped in caravanserais and exchanged the brought goods in Oriental markets.

In this connection it is possible to find the elements of the most different legends, rituals, and religions in the culture and crafts of Tajikistan.



Useful Information

Best Time to Visit the Country

As summers are ferociously hot and winters bitterly cold, spring (April to June) and autumn (September to November) are the best seasons to visit Tajikistan, especially for the Tajik Ferghana Valley, Dushanbe and southern part of the country. But if you are planning to go to the mountain (trekking, hiking, climbing, jeep-tours etc.) the best time for the visit is second part of June- early October. When you go to the mountains, always be prepared for abrupt changes in the weather. Bring good raingear (especially in May, early June and in late October), a fleece and thermal underwear

Visa Regulations

Any person traveling to Tajikistan requires a passport or equivalent document and valid entrance visa (except for the citizens of some former USSR countries), issued by the competent authorities of Republic of Tajikistan representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or its offices abroad. Passport should be valid for at least 6 months after date of departure. A letter of invitation (or Confirmation of invitation) is necessary for visits to Tajikistan. You must obtain this before you apply for your visa. Tajikistan issues visas upon arrival at the Dushanbe Airport, or second option for obtaining your visa - at a Tajik Embassy. When you arrive at the Dushanbe Airport, go to the consular office before you clear passport control. You will need to present your passport, your Confirmation of invitation (letter of invitation), and the appropriate visa fee. You should also carry a few passport photos. Depending on what flight you

arrive on, you may have to queue to get your visa. Tajik visas cannot be obtained at land borders, so if you are arriving overland you must obtain your visa in advance from an embassy.

There are some possible options for obtaining your visa at a Tajik Embassy (Consulate):

- "Apply personally at the Tajik Embassy in your country or in a country near you;

- "Apply to a Tajik Embassy by post;

- "Apply in the Tajik Embassy (Consulate) In Almaty, Astana (Kazakhstan), Ashgabat (Turkmenistan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) or Tashkent (Uzbekistan) if you are in Central Asia before you cross the Tajik border.

The following documents should be submitted in order to obtain visa:

- "Two fully completed visa application forms. Please, note that the answers to question #14 on the visa application will be reflected in the issued visa;

- "Three passport size photos;

- "Valid passport: Passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of departure;

- "Copy of invitation (Confirmation of invitation) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan or Ministry of Interior. This permission is issued on the basis of a local company's or individual invitation or a visa request;

- "Cover letter of request from your organization or travel agency. Embassy reserves the right to request for additional documents;

- "A money order or company check payable to the Embassy for visa processing;

- "In case of applying by mail, applicants should enclose a completely self addressed, stamped return envelope or prepaid waybill, bearing the account number and showing themselves as both shipper and recipient regardless of

delivery address.

You should check with the embassies what their normal procedure is for postal applications. Issued visas are not refundable. An express visa costs double the amount and may be immediately issued. For any additional information about the visa procedure please contact embassies. Without a visa, travelers cannot register at hotels and may be required to leave the country immediately via the route by which they entered. Visitors from other CIS countries are now also required to obtain a visa before traveling to Tajikistan. However, citizens of Russia, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan do not need a visa. If travelers plan a longer stay, they may apply for a longer visa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after arriving in the country.

Customs Regulations

Every baggage is subject to customs' check at the point of entry. The following goods may be imported into Tajikistan by persons of 18 years of age or older without incurring customs duty:

- "200 cigarettes or 100 cigars or 500 g of tobacco products
- "2 liters of beverages
- "A reasonable quantity of perfume for personal use

- "Other goods for personal use only

Visitors may be allowed to import certain articles subject to be exported. Carrying narcotics, arms and ammunition are strictly prohibited. Visitors can export souvenirs to their respective countries. The export of antique belongings and cultural valuables requires special permission. The import of local and foreign currency is unlimited, subject to declaration on arrival. Export of foreign currency is limited to the amount declared on arrival, or maximum 2,000 USD per person without acknowledgement of the origin. It is advisable to

keep entry custom declaration till the time you leave the country.

How to get there and away

By Road

There is a reasonable road network in Tajikistan (29,000 kilometers of roads). The Republic can be approached by road from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and China. Cars with a Tajik registration, however, are not allowed to enter Uzbekistan, unless the vehicle belongs to the government. If you are arriving at a land border, you must obtain your visa in advance. Visas are not issued at any land border in Tajikistan. So if you hire a vehicle and driver or take a seat in a shared taxi, it is likely that they will only take you as far as the border. You will have to walk across the border (a couple of hundred meters) and get another vehicle on the other side. If you have heavy bags, you can pay a baggage handler with a wheelbarrow or cart to transport them for you. Roads in Tajikistan are classified into four types: state roads (highways) for general use; inter farm roads linking agricultural enterprises; industrial roads and privately constructed roads. The road network is unevenly distributed over the territory of Tajikistan. In the valley of Syrdarya (Sughd iyskaya Oblast), Hissar, the Vakhsh Valley and Kulyab region, there is a very extensive road network and most roads are well surfaced. In the Gorny Badakhshan, Garm and Zeravshan regions, where the terrain is mountainous, the road network is small and most are poorly surfaced or not surfaced at all. About 30 % of state roads are surfaced with asphalt. There are bus services between the major towns when the roads are open. Taxi

and chauffeur-driven cars for hire can be found in all major towns. Travelers are advised to agree on the fare in advance. As many of the street names have changed since independence, it is also advisable to ascertain both the old and the new street names when asking direction. Rental cars are not available. In theory, it is possible to bring or buy one's own vehicle. Drivers should have an International Driving Permit and have arranged insurance departure.

By Air

The national carrier is "Tajikistan Airlines". International Dushanbe Airport (airport code DYU) is in the south of the city (journey time: 10-15 minutes from the center of the town by public transport). Bus, minibus (marshrutka) goes toward the city center. Taxis are also available (journey time: 5- 10 minutes). Airport facilities include first aid, left luggage, post office, restaurants, snack bars, tourist information. There are direct flights from Munich (Germany), Moscow (Domodedovo Airport, Russia), Novosibirsk (Russia), Ekaterinburg (Russia), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Sharjah (United Arab Emirates), Istanbul/Sabiha Gokceh International Airport (Turkey), Tehran (Iran) to Dushanbe Airport by "Tajikistan airlines".

For obtaining flight information from Moscow, Orenburg, Ekaterinburg, Novosibirsk (Russia) to Khudjand (airport code KHU), contact:

☎ Tel: +992/3422/6-34-98, 6-44-17, 6-02-49, +992/3451/5-67-55, 5-9968,

☎ Fax: + 992/3451/5-95-95

✉ e-mail: info@Sughd avia.com

State Company "Tajikistan Airlines".

If you wish to book a ticket, we recommend you to have direct contact

with "Tajikistan Airlines" offices or use a travel agent in the country of departure. "Tajikistan Airlines" has an extensive network of air services in the center of Tajikistan. This includes Khudjand (50 min), Kulyab (40 min), Khorogh (50 min, one of the most technically demanding regularly scheduled flights in the world), Vanch (30 min) and Penjikent to Dushanbe. Tickets for the flights to Khorogh are only at sale at the airport early in the morning the day before departure. Be aware that flights are grounded at the first sign of bad weather. Charter flights by plane and helicopter are possible. Charter flights operate on a set timetable, but only fly on weeks where there are sufficient passengers (most of them are local "shop tourists"). Contact the local booking office to inquire about flights on a specific date.

By Train

Trains is the most reliable way of reaching Dushanbe for those not arriving by air i.e. not coming from Moscow or the sub-continent. Passenger's railways are, however, restricted at present. Dushanbe is connected to a spur of the Trans-Caspian Railway, which winds down to the Afghan border in Uzbekistan before heading north towards Dushanbe. The journey from Dushanbe to Moscow takes 4 days. Owing to the complex and mountainous geography of Tajikistan, railways were not widely developed in the country. The total length of railways is 474 kilometers. More than half is in the south, where Dushanbe and the industrial plants and towns of Hissar, Vakhdat (formerly Kafirnigan), Tursunzade, Yavan, Kurgan-Tyube and the Vakhsh Valley were connected to the rest of the for-

mer Soviet Union via Termez in Uzbekistan.

Some 168 kilometers of railway in Sughd iyskaya Oblast (formerly Leninabad) mostly form part of the rail network that connects the Ferghana Valley to the rest of Uzbekistan. Kanibadam in the north of the country can be reached directly from Samarkand in Uzbekistan. A spur from Kurgan-Tyube to Kulyab and back by train now is possible once a week. All rail beds are single track and designed for use by diesel-electric traction.

By Car

Driving your own vehicle to Tajikistan is possible but it usually takes more time due to the paperworks involved. You may, however, consider buying a car on arrival. Yet, the easiest way to get around via road is to pay someone to drive you. Head for any large baazars, bus terminals or train stations, and look for minibuses (marshrutka) or taxis waiting for passengers.

Minibuses follow a fixed route and usually have a set price per seat. You can get on or off anywhere along the route. Flag down a minibus by standing by the roadside and extending your arm. After you get on, pay the fare to the driver or conductor, who usually sits in the front or by the door. When you want to get off, tell the driver to stop. For a more convenient and slightly more expensive option, head for the bazaar and negotiate with a taxi or car driver to take you exactly where you want to go. Before getting into the car, make sure the driver understands where you want to go, and negotiate the fare.

Taxis in Tajikistan do not have

meters, so it helps if you have an idea of what the fare should be before you open negotiations.

☞Money

In November 2000 Tajikistan began issuing its own money- Somoni (subdivided in 100 dirams). Notes come in 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 1 Somoni denominations. Dirams, also issued as notes, are in denominations of diram 50, 20, 5 and 1.

At the end of 2001 new coins were introduced 1, 3, 5 Somoni and 50, 25, 10, 5 dirams denominations. Banks, exchange offices, tourist hotels have exchange desks where you can exchange hard currency (US dollars or Euro are best, other hard currencies are in theory acceptable), Russian rubl, Kazakh tenge, Kyrgyz som, Uzbek sum for local money. All bills are normally settled in cash. US\$ 100 bills are most efficient to carry, but bring some smaller denominations for travel and personal exchange within the country. Officially all banks and exchange offices must give you exchange receipt. Traveler's cheques can not be used for payment in Tajikistan yet.

Local Agroinvestbank, Orienbank, offers credit card services, and a very few local businesses have started to accept payments made with major credit cards (VISA and MasterCard/Maestro), but you should not fully rely on that. There are Western Union offices in some cities and towns. the import of local and foreign currency is unlimited, subject to declaration on arrival. Export of foreign currency is limited to the amount declared on arrival or maximum 2,000 US\$ per person without acknowledgement of the origin.

It is recommended that all currency

be declared on arrival and a customs declaration be obtained. If you are planning to visit the Pamirs make sure you change money before arriving in the region, because, in principle, it is possible to change cash US dollars in Khorogh or Murgab but at a fairly low rate. Banking hours: 8-00 - 17-00 Monday to Friday. At ATMs, cash can be withdrawn in US dollars, Russian rubls or Tajik somoni.

Safety & Security

The overall security situation in Tajikistan is one of relative calm and safety. Restaurants, markets, museums, etc. are all considered safe. It is a good idea to carry your local money (Somani) in one pocket and hard currency in another. Do carry a photocopy of your passport (apart from your passport and wallet) to speed reissue of your passport in case of lost.





Crimes should, in principle, be reported to the police (militia). You will have to write a detailed account of what happened. Do not try recovering stolen property yourself. Standard emergency telephone numbers, with free calls from public telephones in most sizeable towns of Tajikistan include 01 for the police, 02 for the fire brigade and 03 for an ambulance.

The Traffic Police (GAI in Russian or BDA in Tajik) have checkpoints at many cities and at regular intervals along all highways. If driving the vehicle you may be pulled over by them several times in a day.




It is nothing personal. First shake hands and say hello, then show them all your papers. If you go trekking, it is recommended to arrange a reliable local guide or/and go with several hikers.

Embassy telephone numbers





Embassy of Afghanistan

 734025, Dushanbe, Pushkin St.34
 Tel: +992/37/2-21-64-12,2-27-60-54
 Fax: +992/37/2-21-60-72,
 E-mail: afembt@tjinter.com





Embassy of Iran

 734025, Dushanbe, Bokhtar St. 18
 Tel: +992/37/2-21-00-72,2-21-00-73
 Fax: +992/37/2-21-04-54,2-51-00-89





Embassy of Kazakhstan

 734025, Dushanbe, Prof. Khuseinzade St. (formerly Kirov) 31/1
 Tel: +992/37/2-21-11-08, 2-21-18-38
 Fax: +992/37/2-21-89-40
 E-mail: dipmiskz@tajnet.com


Embassy of Kyrgyzstan

 003, Dushanbe, Studencheskaya St. 67
 Tel: +992/37/2-21-68-12, 2-24-63-84
 Fax: +992/37/2-24-26-11
 E-mail: kyremb@tajnet.com

Embassy of Pakistan

 734025, Dushanbe, Dostoevskiy St. 1-3
 Tel: +992/37/2-24-68-39,2-223-01-77
 Fax: +992/37/2-21 -17-29
 E-mail: majeed@tojikiston.com or parepdsh@ tajik.net

Embassy of Turkey

 734024, Dushanbe, Rudaki Ave. 15/2

☎ Tel: +992/37/2-21-00-36, 2-21-14-85

☎ Fax: +992/37/2-21-03-06,2-51-00-12

✉ E-mail: turkdusa@tajnet.com or tcbe.dushanbe@turkemb.tajik.net

Embassy of Turkmenistan

☎ 734013 Dushanbe, S.Gani St. 21

☎ Tel: +992/37/2-21-55-37,2-21-75-87

☎ Fax: +992/37/2- 23-03-24

Embassy of Uzbekistan

☎ 734001 Dushanbe, L.Sheroli (Formerly K.Marx) St. 15

☎ Tel: +992/37/2-24-43-59,2-21-21-84

☎ Fax: +992/37/2-24-43-59

✉ E-mail: ruzintaj@rambler.ru

Health

No special immunizations are required for travel to Tajikistan, but you should be current on routine immunizations however potential risks include: hepatitis A&E, altitude sickness, diphtheria, tetanus, measles, poliomyelitis, typhoid, undulant fever and a slight risk of malaria in the south.

The Government of Tajikistan requires visitors who remain in country for more than 90 days to present a medical certificate showing that they are AIDS-free, or to submit to an AIDS test in Tajikistan.

This testing requirement has not been implemented, but could be done at any time. Travelers are advised to take antibiotics and any prescription medicines, contact lens solutions and first-aid kit containing basic medicines and water treatment tablets.

Fees for health insurance are rec-

ommended. Travelers should assess the risks and take appropriate precautions before and during their stay. This is even more important for those who plan to travel outside the major cities. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilized.

Milk is pasteurized and dairy products are safe for consumptions. Only eat well cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit palled.

Prospect Medical Clinic

☎ 33 Sanoi St., Dushanbe

☎ Tel: +992\37\2-24-30-62\92

Telephone Codes of Major Cities

Country Code	☎ 992
Dushanbe (Capital)	☎ 37
Istravshan	☎ 3454
Khujand	☎ 3422
Khorogh	☎ 3522
Kurgan-tube	☎ 3222

Major Travel Agencies

Avesto

☎ 42/2, Abuali ibn sino St. Dushanbe

☎ Tel: +992/37/ 235-40-44, 235-90-24

✉ E-mail: avesto@list.ru

Website: www.avesto.by.ru

Intorist Tajikistan

☎ 22, Shotemur St., Dushanbe

☎ Tel: +992/37/ 221-32-44, 221-69-46

☎ Fax: +992/37/221-52-36,221-52-37

✉ E-mail: hotel@tojikiston.com

Arts and Crafts

Decorative Art

The art culture of the country reaches back to more than 8000 years ago. First on the rock images discovered by archeologists in Shakhty Grotto in Gorny Badakhshan (the Pamirs) at the altitude 4,100 m above sea level. They belong to the so-called "marcan-suf" culture, most high-mountainous culture of the Stone Age in the world. The Tajiks had a rich and old cultural history as witnessed by the excavations at north Tajikistan (wild ram's head cast of bronze - 3rd century BC, a magnificent example of Scythians "animal style", at south Tajikistan (gold buckle from Parkhar 1st - 2nd century), at Penjikent (wall paintings, wood-carvings and clay sculptures - 7th century A.D), the architectural monuments of Samarkand, Bukhara, Istravshan, Khudjand and by many illuminated manuscripts.

Prior to the spread of Islam in Central Asia during the eighth century, artists and artisans were not limited in the choice of subject matter for the decoration of their walls, textiles, costumes, jewelry and everyday objects of wood, metal and clay. Patterns and motifs reflected ancient and deeply embedded animist and shamanist beliefs and traditions from the nomad world, as well as the long-term cross-cultural aesthetic influences of Persia, Europe, China and India, and the religious influences of Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. The brilliant period for the art of the 6th through the first decades of the 8th centuries was interrupted a little later in the late 8th century by the Arab

conquest followed the islamization of the western Central Asia. Later on, the art in Tajikistan became more and more decorative like that of the whole Islamic world. Under Islam, decoration became predominantly geometric and ornamental, composed of stylized plants and geometric patterns. It's worth mentioning that Early Muslim art of the Arab Caliphate was fed not only by the Byzantine and Iranian but also the Sughdian and Tokharistanian culture and artistic traditions.

On-rock image of Paleolithic Age, monumental wall paintings and lace carving of Middle Age, miniature paintings and masterpieces of applied art - all these are part



of historical cultural processes in Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, in which the Tajik masters were active participants.

However, the art of illustration and decoration of illuminated manuscripts which had attained perfection in the middle Ages, gradually declined, while the masters of decorative art working on architectural monuments confined themselves to the use of conventional devices. It was only in such crafts as metalwork, pottery and embroidery associated with the manufacture of household objects, that the national tradition flourished. For many centuries up to the Soviet times, the creative talent of the Tajiks found its outlet only in an unusually wide range of folk art.

Soviet policy set out to transform traditional craft workers into workers for the state. Existing craft guilds were reformed as profes-

sional unions and craft workers themselves gradually came together, first into ateliers and workshop cooperatives and then, with the introduction of modern machinery, into factories. Women's labor was required in the economically vital cotton fields, resulting in less time at home. Skills such as wood and ganch carving, brass work, leatherwork, embroidery and weaving, practiced in the towns and villages have been retained and even encouraged, the survival of others was threatened by factory-made goods. Craft-based pottery in particular has suffered

from the introduction of aluminum, enamel and factory-made chinaware.

After Russian Revolution in 1917, contemporary figurative art was born appropriate to the new times, asserting Communist ideals of transformation deconstruction of life. In the 1920s publication of the first political, agenda posters and illustrated books in the Tajik languages as well as the organizations of professional raining in oil painting, drawing and round sculpture were all connected with Samarkand, then the capital of Uzbekistan, of

which the Tajik Autonomous Republic was a part.

The local masters began to learn about western art through Russia, and internationalization of the Tajik culture began in the turn of XIX-XX centuries. Painting by oil on a canvas became one of the main conductors of European art practice. Painting in workshops and in many genres such as



portrait, still-life, and sculpture and monumental art developed gradually. During 20-40 of XX century the art went through a transitional stage from a traditional national plastic system with planar image to an absolutely opposite principles of European art culture. Modern Tajik art was generated in the middle of the century. Soviet Tajiks studied modern arts, ballet and classical music in Russia (Moscow, St-Petersburg /formerly Leningrad/) and Latvia (Riga), promoted the secular Persian-Tajik literature classics, social realist painting and built out a republi-

can network of theaters, museums and libraries. Now, about two hundred fifty artists live and work in Tajikistan. Their works has been represented in National Museum named after K. Behzod and various modern art galleries in Dushanbe and Khudjand . The architectural appearance of Dushanbe differs from other cities of Central Asia. Main Heroes of the Tajik people are the Persian speaking poets; Rudaki, Firdousi, Ayni, coryphee of science Avicenna (Abu Ali Sino).

Many local inhabitants know and can read by heart fragments from classical Tajik poetry. During the 90 years of XX century, Tajik culture aspired to revive its own great spiritual traditions. In various regions of the country monuments of the outstanding figures of the Tajik culture like Abulkasim Lahuti (sculptor Milashevich), Mirzo Tursunzade in Tursunzade (sculptor A.Bicasiyon), Bobojon Gafurov's bust in Dushanbe (sculptor Ivanov) were erected. The artist K.Nodirov created a panel "History of Tajikistan" for the B.Gafurov museum in Khudjand.

In 1999, new monumental ensembles were created, in connection with the celebration of the 1100 anniversary of Samanid State. In Dushanbe, the memorial "Vakhdat", (architect B.Zuhurdinov, sculptor I. Cerbel and in Kurgan-Tyube- the monument of Ismail Samani on a horse (sculptor A.Bicasiyon) were erected. The significant contribution of Tajik fine art in XX century have been made by such masters as M.Khoshmuhamedov, A.Khaydarov, A.Kamelin, R.Rakhimov, P.Falbov, S.Kurbanov, S.Sharipov, M.Beknazarov, and also A.Sayfutdinov,V.Odinaev, R.Safarov, A.Mirshakar, M.Kholov, F.Khojaev, N.Narzikbekov, A.Akilov and many others.

The ethnic variety of regions of Tajikistan is reflected in its national art. There are many ancient centers that have preserved traditional crafts: Khudjand , Kulyab, Istravshan (formerly Ura-Tyube), Kanibadam, Isfara, Darvaz, Karategin, the Tajik Pamirs, Hissar, Karatag etc. Nowadays, alongside the traditional crafts, skilled craftsmen even more often use original mixed technique, and their works become intricate in form. The artists fall outside the customary limits, enriching inner contents of their works.



Embroidery

Wonderful monuments of carving, remnants of ancient embroidery, majestic paintings and other pieces are evidence of the high interest in art and handicrafts. Until recently there were blocks of weavers, potters, braziers, and smiths in the towns. Within the last 100-200 years, the Tajik handicrafts have not remained unchanged.

Nevertheless, some of the ancient handicrafts, especially the more artistic types have been preserved. Embroidery in particular may be seen on

clothes (waist shawls, women's dresses, and embroidered skull-caps) and on everyday domestic articles. A distinguishing feature of the applied arts of Tajiks is the extraordinarily rich development of decorative patterns and the scarcity of pictorial subjects as a result of Islam's prohibition of the depiction of living creatures.

Woodwork

Wall painting, wood and plaster carving can be found in house decorations. In the northern towns of Khudjand (formerly Leninabad), and Istravshan (formerly Ura-Tyube), great attention was paid to the painting of ceilings, and in the western town of the Bukhara- wall painting. Both forms of interior decoration are found in Samarkand. The best way to see both ancient and modern applications of fine wood cutting and ornamental painting is in private homes in mahallas (districts), mosques and in teahouses. Centers of woodcraft are Istravshan and Isfarain in the north. Almost all the houses in towns and villages had Ivans (verandas) with a figured column topped by a carved beam. The doors and wooden shutters, which originally substituted for windows, were also carved.

Pottery & Metal Works

One of the oldest and most popular handicrafts is pottery. The production of own temperature ware was a fundamentally efficient process. Low firing temperatures and short firing times limited the amount of fuel required important in dry areas of Tajikistan where surplus of vegetation was not to be wasted and fuel often had to be painstakingly gathered and carted from a distance. In the hot, dry summers of Tajikistan, porous earthenware kept water and liquid milk products cool through transpiration and evaporation. The water ewers, jugs and drinking pitches produced today are practically indistin-



guishable in body and form from artifacts excavated. Archaeological records bear witness to the popularity of ceramic miniatures and toys in Tajikistan. Excavated toy figurines and whistles dating from hundreds or thousands of years ago differ little in form and inspiration from those still made today, particularly for the traditional spring solstice celebration of Navruz celebrated on 21 March. Favorite subjects include birds, sheep, dogs, horses, fish and mythological beings. There is a legend that potter is connected with fire, and it was always considered that half the creation of a Pot is the craftsman's work and half is through the magic of the fire. In the towns and large villages, pottery was usually a man's occupation. In the southeastern mountainous region potteries were made by women. The potter's wheel was turned by foot. Most popular, was pottery made in Khujand and Istravshan. Good pottery was also produced in the Isfara Valley (Kanibadam and Chorku) and the Karatag Settlement in the Hissar Valley. The range of objects made by the potters was very wide and included dishes of various sizes and shapes, cups - large and small, with and without stems, curved and straight, diverse earthenware jars, bowls, wash-tubs, and jugs. The ornamentation and color schemes differed with each region. Decoration, if applied, was incised, appliquéd, mounded, drawn or painted using solutions of suspensions of ground red and ochre-colored oxides and other minerals. It was only in the ninth and tenth centuries that potters

began to use glazed ceramic. Glazed ceramic technologies were adopted in Central Asia with the advent of Islamic culture from the southwest. Potters producing glazed wares decorated many of their dishes, bowls and other vessels with vibrant, bright flowers and vegetal motifs. These often mirrored or complemented the designs and colors of the embroidered, woven and printed textiles, which brought warmth, brightness and tradition to festive occasions and the interiors of homes across the region. The most common traditional method of glaze decoration is single-fired under glaze painting. In the under-glazed technique the decoration was painted on the dry, unfired pot, which is then covered with a transparent glaze and fired. A fundamental feature of ceramic glazing technology was the use of alkaline glazes made from a pure silica sand or ground, fired quartz as the primary raw materials with plant ash as the flux. The plant ash, high in sodium and potassium, enabled firing at relatively low temperatures (900-1,000C) and was obtained from a range of arid-environment plant. Today production of glazed earthenware has decreased considerably due to the abundance of cheap factory made crockery. Ceramics were important in many celebrations that are characteristic of Tajik culture. When a girl was married, her relatives used to present her with various items of pottery. Families also used to purchase significant amount of new pottery for the wedding feasts, which occurred over a number of days with much food, music and many guests. Besides, local neighborhood (mahalla) communities purchased pottery to be used by people living within the mahalla for wedding ceremonies and other neighborhood national festivities and receptions. Metalwork, to include copper and bronze chasing, and jewelry making were of high quality. Metal chasing was concentrated in the towns, and used for the ornamentation of jugs for water and tea, hand-wash basins, trays, various bowls, plates and big copper pails.

Jewelry

Various combinations of coral, mother-of-pearl, pearls (in the more expensive articles), and precious and gem stones (rubies, emeralds, sapphires, garnets, rock crystal) were widely used in the making of jewelry. Highly prized among the stones was carnelian, to which salubrious properties were attributed and turquoise. The gem stones were usually polished and not faceted. The technique of jewelry ornamentation varied to include chasing, repose, filigree, pierced and niello work. In Bukhara enamel work was also done. Belts with large ornamented buckles and sewn-on medallions, finger rings, hilts and scabbards and horse-harnesses were made for the Emir and his officials. A great many women's decorations were manufactured, such as various head pieces, diadems, head bands, all kind of pendants suspending from the head-dress, ear-



rings of different shapes, throat bands, short and long necklaces of one or many strands, figured amulet cases, necklaces of coins, bracelets, rings, and plait adornments. Rich oriental robes, belts, women's dresses, head bands, double braid stitched onto the front of the dress, sleeve edgings, tiubeteikas (skull-caps), boots, slippers, as well as horse-cloths and shabracks were all embroidered in gold.

Needle Work

Needlework is doubtlessly the most popular form of Tajik applied art. The embroidered articles were usually made for weddings and were the most valuable and essential part of the dowry. They included suzani - the world's finest and most beautiful textiles, a full ornamented cloth of rectangular shape, which you'll find in almost every village or mahalla home; ruidjo - a wedding-bed sheet with an ornamental frame of FU shape, creating an arched form similar to the mihrab with embroidery across the top and both sides; joinamaz (prayer mat with its mihrab-(arch) shaped center is an important inclusion as devout Muslims are required to pray five times a day) - much smaller in size than ruidjo; takya-push - pillow cover or the bride's bed. The embroidery motifs on ruidjo varied, but were typically massed flowers including rosettes, almonds, seven-colored blossoms, ivy, leafy sprays and cherries. Generally the ornamented joinamaz is characterized by simplicity



and intimacy. It is only used in the moments of prayer and meditation. Among the patterns forming the figure of a niche one can often see such symbolic elements as a pomegranate (another symbol of happiness and fertility; various kinds of worms and centipedes, believed to be helpful in the fulfillment of one's wishes; a snake, the horns of a Billy-goat. The emblem of hospitality - a teapot and a samovar - had already originated in the Soviet time. During the wedding celebrations, the walls of the bride's room were covered with suzani and display of decorative embroidery was also important for holidays and festivals. Suzani may also have served as screens of women not wishing to be seen by men other than their husbands and close family. The term suzani derives

from suzan, the Farsi word for needle, and is used generally to describe a Particular family of embroideries as well as specifically to describe some of the largest of these, which are mainly used as wall hangings. The suzani is a work of art created out of the artist's heartfelt devotion, this devotion is clearly apparent in their beauty, in the care lavished on their execution, and in their enduring cultural and personal significance to their makers and users. Suzani is made on hand-woven cotton (karbos), satin or silk, almost always is lined and is edged with a strip of black cloth or braid. Suzani has many local peculiarities of pattern, technique and

coloring in different parts of Tajikistan. Previously no large-sized embroidery was made neither in the southern mountainous regions (Western Pamirs, Darvaz, Karategin) nor the upper reaches of the Zeravshan River. At present, large-sized embroidery is beginning to be made in Kulyab, Darvaz, and Karategin and in the Zeravshan Valley as well.



Skull-caps

Small-sized embroidery has long been used both in the valleys and mountains of Tajikistan. The Tajiks of the valleys embroidered various handkerchiefs, towels, small bags for tea (choikhalta) and combs, and peshi-kurta (double braid trimming the neck opening). In the mountainous regions, embroidery of head and waist handkerchiefs was not used. But, they had their own typical small articles such as bride's veils, breast-pieces and head bands, the ornamentation of which strikingly resembled that of Slavs. Embroidered skull-caps (tiubeteikas) have always been popular among the Tajiks. Men and women wear them on weekdays and on holidays, with a national costume

and a European suit. Tiubeteikas produced in different districts vary widely in form and ornament. Not long ago, one could tell a resident of a particular district by type of skull-cap he wore. In the recent years, however, all kinds of tiubeteikas, especially those made in the plain country, have spread all over Tajikistan and have become a sort of national head-dress. The skull-caps for the bride and bridegroom are particularly lovely. These skull-caps are still favored even by young people who have gone over to very modern dress. The most popular embroidered skull-cap among the other tiubeteikas is chusti (after the village of Chust in the Ferghana Valley). These are black-and-white men's skull-caps embroidered with white silk against a black background. They have a traditional pattern: bodom (almond) or kalamfur (pepper pod) placed in each of the four segments of the cap. The skull-cap has a square form. Iroki, square, flat-topped tiubeteikas beautifully adorned with a bright floral ornament, are very popular among women. The technique of embroidery resembles the Russian cross-stitch. In the Pamirs many people wear round flat-topped tiubeteikas with a broad cap-band ornamented with one or two rows of colorful braid, in the ornamentation of these skull-caps there are also many variants among which we may notice Pamirs embroidery with geometrical design. And finally, we must mention the famous gold thread tiubeteikas. These skull-caps made by old masters are round and flat-topped. They have no lining or braid, but embroidery covers the whole crown leaving no open space. Gold is often combined with silver forming a bright lustrous surface, which is animated by colored spots of pulakcha.

Printed Cloth

The embroidered patterns differed not only in each region and period, but also in the diverse types of embroidery. Typically embroiderers use brightly colored silk threads to work their decorative magic on plain grounded cloths.

Cotton is inexpensive and offers a sturdy base through which a needle can be passed repeatedly without causing unacceptable damage. Silk on the other hand is expensive with its production requiring considerable investment of time and effort. Moreover, its smoothness, luster and glorious color-reflecting properties are ideally suited to embroidery, which adds strength as well as value to unadorned cloth. It is not uncommon to find old stitching bright and intact on a fragile, disintegrating ground cloth.

Today, women dye their silks themselves, producing soft shades of yellow (from onion skin), orange (from rayon root), purple (from cherry), brown (from walnuts), grey-brown (from walnut flowers), and grey (from usma leaves).

Printed cloths were wide-spread in the old days. Cloth-printers stamped their patterns with a carved wooden block on natural hand woven cotton cloth called - karbos -



and later on factory-made calico. By combining different elements, they made innumerable ornamental compositions in red and black (the main colors), sometimes adding green, blue and yellow. Cloth-printing was developed mainly in the valley towns and villages. Decorative cloth designing is one of the oldest kinds of handicraft.

Abr- Fabric

Even before Central Asia was conquered by the Muslims, the ancestors

of the Tajiks, and Sughdians, who lived in Zandona Village in the suburbs of Bukhara, manufactured fabrics noted for their high artistic quality. Besides cotton cloths, Tajik weavers manufactured silk fabrics with figured patterns made by a special method. Such patterns are called "abr".

Their characteristic features are blurred designs with their peculiar toning resulting from the diffusion of two colors. The largest center of abr-fabric manufacturing is the northern region of present-day

Tajikistan namely Khujand (formerly Leninabad); while in the south, abr-fabric, especially silk alocha, were made in Karatag, which

was also famous for other articles. In many mountainous regions - the

Western Pamirs, Darvaz, Karategin, the northern regions of Kulyab and the upper reaches of Zeravshan River - women knit men's and women's hose of colored wool with diverse patterns often representing stylized objects. Especially famous are the beautiful stockings of the Pamirs Tajiks, nowadays, alongside with traditional crafts, skilled craftsmen even more often use original mixed techniques, and their works become intricate in form.

The artists fall outside the customary limits, enriching inner contents of their works. Every large Tajik bazaar has a small handicraft section, generally offering elaborately decorated coffers or "sunduk", wooden cradles, textiles and ceramics.



Carpets

Carpets, runners, curtains and various types of cushions essentially took the place of furniture in Central Asia.

Carpets were divided into three types on the basis of the purpose to which they were put; wall carpets; floor carpets and runners; and, lastly, the felt rugs which were placed under the most richly decorated carpets.

Carpets and carpet goods particularly from Kayrakkum are sold throughout the world. Widely using modern patterns and color combinations, Tajik' carpet-makers maintain a perfect harmony and balance between the form and colors which makes Kayrakkum carpets so original and elegant.

Costumes

Richly embroidered in tinsel, silk or wool both by hand and by special chain stitching machines, embroidered garment continue to be cherished particularly in the south-eastern mountain ranges of Tajikistan.

Men's garments are simple in cut and less varied where the undergarments consist of a shalwar (trousers) drawn in at the waist and a tunic-like shirt over which a robe is worn.

Men's belts, whether made of leather or fabric, are ornamented with massive silver buckles. Tajik youth prefer brighter colors whereas older generations prefer moderate tones, while the elderly dress in fabrics of a dark or pure white shade. Although sharp contrast is essential, the gamut of favored colors is broad, vivid and cheerful and never garish.

Ceiling Painting

Painted wood ceiling is an ancient art among Tajiks (and Persians) in Central Asia.

Masterpieces can be seen in mosques, palaces and other buildings in Khudjand.

Architecture & Archaeological Objects

Unlike the official court architectures, the national architecture has never experienced periods of crisis. The houses of town's people have kept the traditional design during many centuries. However, in residential architecture of different regions of the country, it is possible to find many characteristic features, peculiarities of design solution and art traditions. The majority of Tajiks live in kishlaks (a type of rural settlement). Tajik families are usually big and 5-6 children in the family are quite normal. Kishlaks in the mountains differ substantially from those of the plains. Kishlaks in the plains are large (200-700 households), while the mountainous ones, lying in narrow valleys or on slopes, are smaller and consist of no more than 15-20 households. Many houses in the kishlaks on the slopes of the mountains are located one above the other, and due to lack of land, the roof of the lower building is used as the yard of the upper house. Because of the scarcity of good timber, roofs are flat. Also, high sloping roofs are not necessary here because there is low precipitation. In some dwellings there are two courtyards. Behind the entrance is the main courtyard, where family life is centered. Leading off is a second, similar courtyard reserved for the women. Today, most homes have a single courtyard where family and



guests gather more easily, but a clear distinction still remains between public and private space. In the kishlak's

dwellings, rooms are largely without furniture, which is stiffly the case in traditionally decorated homes, with the exception of a carved and painted sunduk, or dowry chest piled high, with kurpacha and kurpa (quilted blankets) and covered with an embroidered cloth. Embroidery has always been important in the ornamentation of Tajik houses. Inside the house,

every part of the wall is filled with embroidered articles of different purpose and use. Niches in the walls are covered with special embroideries. Embroidered strips, zardevori, hang along the upper part of three walls - the two longitudinal and one end-wall. Suzanis are usually placed on the wall facing the entrance, so that they should be the first thing one could see while entering the room. In the town's dwelling there are western-styled tables and chairs, glossy glass-fronted cabinets and machine woven carpets as well as hangings. The principal building material is loess. It is cheap, viscid and stable, and always at hand. It is used in the form of broken pakhsa-ciay, clods filled with rubble, adobes, clay mortar, greasing and plaster. Wood is also made use of, but thriftily. Although there are ample reserves of stone, it is seldom used as construction material on account of its instability in the highly-seismic zones of Tajikistan. Climate

played a substantial role in determining the architecture in the area. One can spend approximately eight to nine months a year in the open, especially in the valley, mostly guarding oneself from the intense heat than from the cold. Hence the existence of closed-in courtyards, roofed ivans, semi-open upper balkhona (verandas), indicates the importance of green plantations and the flowing water of the irrigation ditches and basins. Numerous monuments of the architecture of the Tajiks (18th - the beginning of the 20 century) give an idea of its national roots. The structure of the most of the quarter mosques lacks strict canons binding the initiative of



masters. Houses, which are adapted to the peculiarities of life, beliefs, and traditions, played an important role in the national Tajik architecture. In the Northern Tajikistan houses and groups of houses are found around a yard planted with greenery. In the mountains of Zeravshan and the Yagnob Valley, the densely built stepped villages consist of a joined single roof with a heath.

There is a rich legacy of traditional Pamiri architecture in the Tajiks Pamirs, which is a source of great pride. An ancient tradition among the people of Badakhshan, one noted by the Greek historian Herodotus (484-420 BC), is that God shares a house with its inhabitants. Hence, the people have special reverence for their home. They take great pride in decorating the interior and investing various parts of it with religious significance.

The traditional Pamiri house is known as the cheed or the house of the followers of truth. It is built in such a way as to reflect a sacred character, in which the occupants feel surrounded by an atmosphere of divine blessing and guidance from the beginning to the end of their lives. Traditionally the house was built of cedar, but today it is more likely to be made from the wood of mulberry or apricot trees. The central room is organized around five wooden pillars ("sutun") which represent the prophet and the Imams of Islam: Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), Imam Ali, Imam Hussein, Imam Hassan and Hazrat Fatima. Carpets and mattresses take the place of furniture and also serve as decoration along with panels, wood-cutting and hand-colored photographs _ the most prominent likely to be the family elders and the Aga Khan.

The design of the cheed divides it into four main parts to which the people have traditionally attached special symbolic significance. For example, the wooden ceiling consists of four sections symbolizing four cosmic elements of earth, water, air and fire from which the world was believed to have been created. The main premise "chorkhona"- cheed achieves 100 sq. m in space, and was in the past covered under the roof of large patriarchal family of 50 persons sheltering under its roof. Light smoked orifice on a roof, which fulfilled the functions of a sun clock, sufa along walls, some pillars - supporting the roof, one of which was called a pole king ("szo-sutun"), were the embodiment of welfare in the house and it was the picture of the Pamirs houses,

the similarity to which can be found in the architecture of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Trans-Caucasian.

Petroglyphs in Tajikistan

Pamir area is the richest in rock drawings in Tajikistan. In total the archaeologists have found more than 50 places. The most known are those nearby Ishkashim village. Some drawings are at the height of 3,200-3,300 m above the sea level. The drawings are either chipped out on the surfaces of granite rocks by means of a stone or scratched with a knife (the later ones).

The scenes basically depict hunting mountain goats, yaks, deer - the running hunters with bows and dogs. The average size of the drawings is 10-20 cm in length. The largest of them is 80 cm, the smallest - 6 cm. Very often petroglyphs show the images of rhubobs, the favorite musical

instrument of local residents. There have been found about 300 of them. Nowhere else are there so many of those. The reason is probably the national folklore of Pamir people where rhubob was a personification of a human being. 30 km from Khorog in the end of the mountain gorge there is Vybist Dara area also famous for its collection of petroglyphs. There have been discovered four groups of rock drawings. Unlike the majority of hunting drawings found in Pamir the ones found in Vybist Dara show humans and ornaments. The most ancient group of the drawings is dated the second half of 1,000 B.C. A lot of petroglyphs are in the Eastern Pamir near the remains of Bazar-Dara, the ancient



city of miners. "Chipped out" there are the images of two-wheeled horsed chariots, mountain goats, an archer dressed in a peaked cap. The images are dated to the Bronze Age.

Music & Musical Instruments

In Tajikistan there are different styles of music, which are conditionally subdivided into three schools: Northern (Sughd region), Central (Hissar, Kulyab, Garm), and the Pamirs (Badakhshan). The Tajik national music differs by large variety and riches of genres: epic, labor, customs, lyrical works and instrumental music. By the end of XIX-XX centuries the Tajik national music in cooperation with classical professional Tajik musicians produced its own canons. National music of the Tajiks was transferred orally from generation to generation and devel-

oped as one voice creativity. The musical traditions of Tajikistan in many respects are unique, diverse and distinctive. The set of instruments includes: string - rubob, setar, dutor, dumburak, tambour. bow instruments - ghijak; wind- instruments - nay, kamay, surnay; dulcimer - chang; percussion instruments - doyra, tavlak (Clay kettle drum), kayroq (stone Castanets); zang (bells) and some others. In "Gurminj Museum" in Dushanbe, created by the People's Actor of the Republic of Tajikistan G. Zavqibekov in 1990, valuable ancient instruments (more than 200 units) which have been collected by the actor since his childhood are on display.

Skilled instrument-makers gain wide

popularity and respect and are remembered for years. The entire work of a craftsman is unconsciously, and sometimes consciously, determined by the tradition in accordance with which all instruments are produced. A good craftsman neither looks for new shapes, nor departs from what was inherited from predecessors. He only strives to come closer to the ancient original, to make an exact replica of the initial pattern. In making an instrument, the emphasis lies on the organic relationship between shape and ornament. To give a special magic force to the instrument, it is essential that the instrument should form a union with the ornament. When holding such an instrument in their hands, the musician becomes akin to a priest through whom supreme powers descend to Earth, and the act of playing is transformed into a rite.



Frequently, the performer of music and singer act as one person. In vocal culture of the Tajiks there were peculiar manners of singing: *ishkami* (abdominal), *binigi* (nose), *gulugi* (throat). Music and song play an important role during wedding and funeral ceremonies. Funeral songs are recited from the moment of death until burial and in some cases for three days following the funeral, reminding the bereaved of the sanctity of human life and its transitory nature. Some mourning songs performed by women at funerals are exclusively performed in Tajik Badakhshan and are completely different from funeral songs performed elsewhere in Tajikistan. It's called *Doyrabozi*, and is accompanied only by the sound of a tambourine.

Songs are completely monophonic (i.e., consisting only of one line of melody), but instrumental music often includes two-part polyphony (music in more than one voice, or part). Short musical phrases may be repeated many times and varied slightly each time. There were various musicians association -*t'sozanda*", *"mavihigions"*, *"makomists"* in the middle Ages. Today professionals' united in *"Composers' Union of Tajikistan"*. Professional music of the Iranian peoples is ancient, refined, and polyhedral, retaining religious and spiritual coloring and is closely connected to national customs and traditional folklore. The invention of various musical instruments is attributed to the poets and musicians. The authors of many vocal works were the poets too. Top of classical musical art of Tajiks is *"Shashmakom"* (*"Six makoms"*). It consists of complicated cyclical vocal-instrumental



poems executed on the texts of the Tajik poetry of X-XX centuries, containing in itself 252 classical tunes, which prior to the beginning of XX century were transmitted from the musician to the musician without musical fixing. The musical entry to six existing ones in Tajikistan makoms have formed the following categories: *"Buzruk"*, *"Rost"*,

"Navo", "Dugoh", "Segoh" and "Irok".

This great tradition of classical music in IX-XIX centuries is retained by an ensemble "Shash Makom" named after F.Shakhobov, which in 1999 has marked its 50th anniversary. It consists mainly of the young singers and musicians, who went on tour to many countries around the world. At shashmakomists competition in Iran, they won the first prize (1998).

A popular Tajik genre is "Falak". "Falak" is a musical poetic genre of lyrical and philosophical tendency and one of the most wide spread and original genres of Tajik traditional vocal-instrumental music. Literally "Falak" means "firmament", "cosmos", "universe" and such meanings of this term as "world", "time", "destiny", and "fate". For Tajiks "Falak" represents a living creature from whom he asks forgiveness and to whom he confesses and addresses his pleas. The main forms of "Falak" are "Falaki dasht" (literally "Free Falak") and "Falaki roghi".

The first one is performed by a soloist free form without any musical instruments accompanying it. The second one is performed also by soloists accompanied by musical instruments (nay, ghijak, rubob, setar, dutor) or performed by a group of singers and musicians. The subject of the song is not very important, what matters is the expression of sorrow and anguish of a lonely human heart. It may be a cry for love or for the warmth of home.

There is only one kind of song which

never sung during festivals -the mado. One mado can last for more than an hour. It is a religious narration, which is listened to attentively and seriously. In the moonlight, the motionless figure of the listener looks like wooden carvings.

The important contribution to the development of professional music of XX century was made by such composers as S.Balasanyan, A.Lensky, Z.Shakhidi, A.Hamdami, S.Sayfutdinov, Y.Sabzanov, Sh.Sayfiddinov, who actively worked in all genres of European

classical music (opera, ballet, instrumental, modern music) retaining national traditions of musical culture.

The work of the well known modern composers D.Dustmuhammadov, Sh.Pulodi, Y.Mamedov, Z.Mirshakar, T.Shakhidi, L.Pulatova, Z.Nishanova etc. has received recognition in the country and

abroad. Popular Tajik music is diverse, but European and American culture has not almost left decisive influence on its development. It is subjected to the influence of the oriental groups, first of all from Iran, Turkey, and India. Band "Dale", "Shams" and "Avesta" are the most renowned bands among the Tajik variety groups, which have won popularity in many countries. Their music is based on the original interpretation and modernizing of oriental melody. Cassettes and CD with famous and popular Tajik music can be found in the bazaars and city's kiosks. Specific feature of the Tajik music is its extreme variety, complexity,



the beauty and refinement of rhythms, connected with developed dancing art.

Some of the typical Tajik national dances have simple names like "Dance with a jug" ("Argusht bo kuza"), "Dance of a shepherd", "Dance of a shepherdess", "Meeting", "Dance with a dish" ("Tavakbozi"). There is even a dance connected with funeral ceremony (poyamal). From immemorial times, there are dances - pantomimes imitating movements of animals and birds ("Sherbozi" or "Dance of a Lion", "Ukobbozi or "Dance of an Eagle", "Rubohbozi" or "Dance of a Fox", "Laklakbozi" or "Dance of a Stork"). There are dances, which imitate everyday labor ("Gilem Viff" or "Carpet Creation", "Shibits" or "Making Wool Small"); sometimes they represent humorous scenes of everyday life.

Battle dances ("Shamsherbozi", "Kordbozi", "Kaltakbozi - with sabres, knife, canes), dances accompanying by own accompaniment on musical instruments ("Arghusht bo dutor" or "Dance with Dutar", "Raks bo Ghijak'tor "Dance with Ghijak"), Comic dances on stilts, on wooden horse - "Aspakbozi, dance in a mask of an old man and others. In the Tajik dance, the main attention is focused on movement of the hands, head and shoulder girdle, and the improvisation is one of its characteristic features. A typical dance form involves the performer stepping out and swaying the top half of the body. After two beats of the music, the dancer begins to move forward slowly and then more quickly after eight beats. Each wedding ceremony is likely to be animated by a small folk orchestra.



Cinema & Theater

November 7 is the Day of the Tajik theatre. The sources and archaeological findings confirm the existence of theatrical traditions in the epoch of antiquity and Middle Ages. Tragic and comical theatrical masks, statuette of maskharaboz (national actor - comic) were found in medieval settlements of Sughd and Bactria. The performance skill of the story-tellers of sacred

histories (maddoh) was highly appreciated at the court of the governors.

In XI century, the great poet Omar mentioned the existence of national doll urban theatre Z'chabozi, which built its Performances on the basis of combination of Singing, music, dances and games. In XIX-XX centuries there were forms of traditional oral professional national theatre, where the pantomimes both in masks and in a conditional _ realistic manner were played.

The performances of oral traditional theatre maskharaboz on various holidays in remote settlements and large cities were also popular. Musical theatre (mainly singing-dancing groups of the Pamirs) and choreographic theatre (choreographic female ensembles of Bukhara, other centers of northern Tajikistan) have been kept up to now. During the first decade of XX century amateur theatres appeared in Central Asia, and in 1919 professional theatres of European schools were founded in Kanibadam, Istravshan, Khujand and Isfara. In 1929 the State Tajik Drama Theatre (now Tajik

Academic Theatre named after A.Lahuti) was opened in Dushanbe.

In 1940 on the basis of the Tajik musical theatre the Theatre of Opera and Ballet named after S.Ayni was set up and the world fame was brought by a star of international ballet, the great Tajik ballerina Maiika Sabirova (1942-1987). The outstanding Tajik figures of theatre H.Gadoev, A.Burkhanov, M.Kasimov, M.Vakhidov, F.Kasimov, T.Fazilova, A.Muhamadjanov, A.Bobo-kulov, H.Mavlianova, O.Sabzalieva, L.Zahidova, B.Abdurazzakov and many others have won broad popularity in the country and abroad. Youth Theatre named after M.Vakhidov and puppet-show "Lukhtak" continue to bring up new generation for substitution.

Many well-known dramatic masterpieces of A.Pushkin, M.Bulgakov, G.Anuya, dramatization Durrenmat, M.Frsh, I.Babei, and also Tajik plays are staged in the Russian Drama Theatre named after V. Mayakovsky.

The history of the Tajik cinema began in the end of 20-30th of XX century. The first film-plot in Tajikistan was shot in 1929, and first full-length silent films have appeared in the beginning of the 30th of the XX century: "Honorary Right", "Emigrant" by K. Yarmatov, "The Alive God" by M.Werner etc. In 1935 the technology of sound cinema was mastered and the significant works were created, such as "Garden" by N.Dostal or "The Friends Meet Again" by K.Yarmatov. The classics of Tajik cinema the epic film "Destiny of the Poet" by B.Kimyagarov



has become a classic of Tajik cinema, which has received the main prize of the Cairo filmfestival "Golden Eagle". "Banner of the Smith" (50-60s of XX century), "Legend about Rustam", "Rustam and Sukhrob", "Legend about Siyavush" (in 70s), also have won many prestigious premiums. Late in 70s and early in 80s the "Tajikfilm" industrial basis considerably extended, where the talented artists were gathered. At film-studio alongside with the association "The Game cinema", "Cinema periodicals", the association of "Nonfiction film", was set up which have enrolled well-known cinema producers.

During the 80s the studio "Tajikfilm"

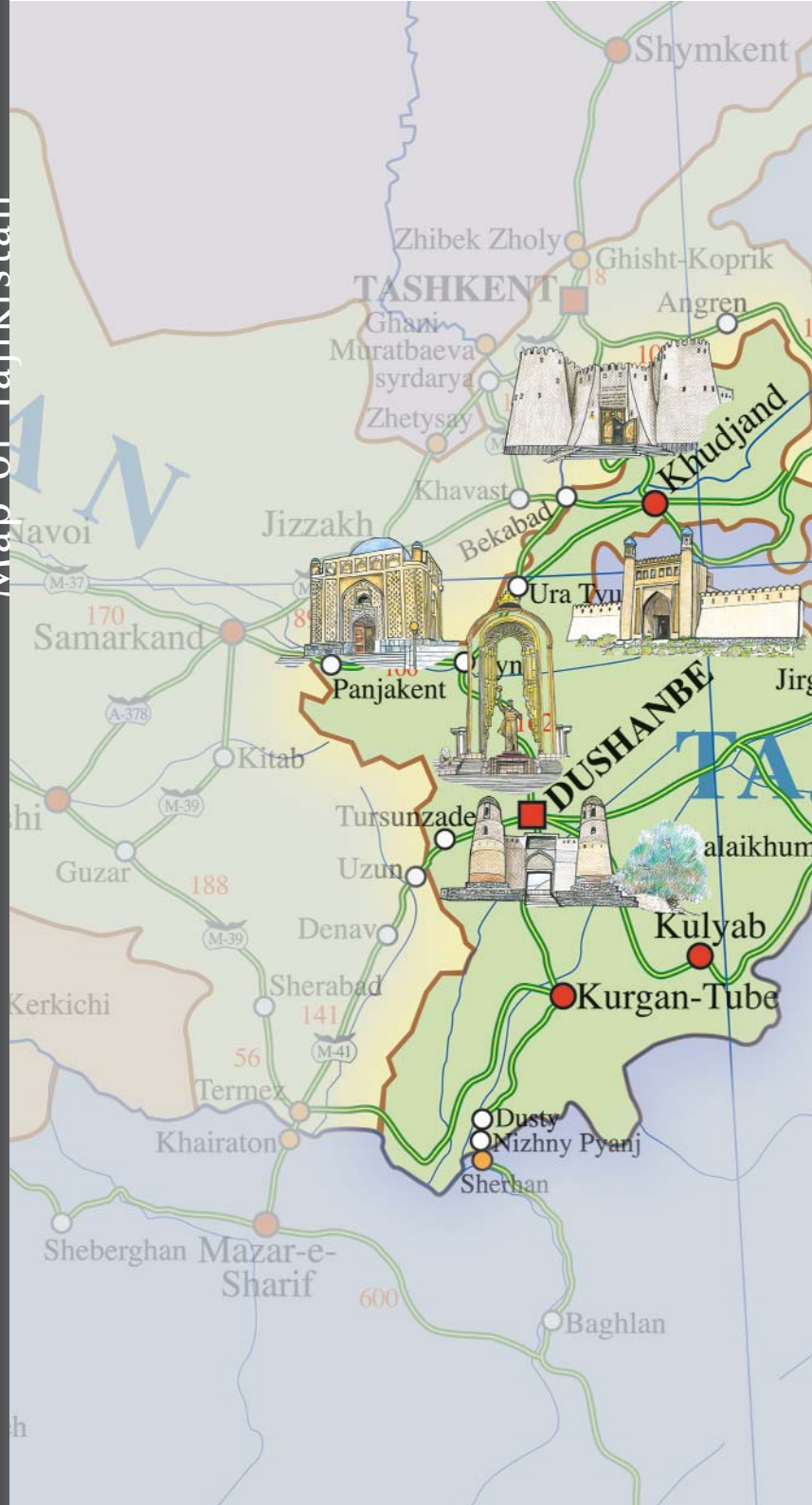
manufactured a lot of interesting, experimental films, which have won prizes at international festivals ("Adonis XIV", "Clay Birds". "Tornado", "Imam al-Bukhari" by B.Sadykov, films by D.Khudoyazarov). It was the hour of triumph for the Tajik television cinema - "Bratan (Brother)" by B.Khudoyazarov, "Time of the Yellow Grass" by M.Yusupova, and

"The Stars Shine above Tandur" by S.Rahimzoda).

Along with it, the new short films successfully were screened on the international stages such as "Waking Dream" by S.Hakdodov, "Well" by J. Usmanov. The Tajik cinema in the 90s is known all over the world. For the last ten years cinema producers of the country have won numerous awards abroad (Venetian, Moscow, Berlin and other film-festivals).

TAJIKISTAN

Map of Tajikistan



Talas

KYRGYZSTAN

Dolon Pass (3038)

539

Naryn
Turugart pass (3752)

Jalal Abad

35

Andizhan

25

Osh

121 A-373

Kokand

Chiyrchik pass (2402)

Taldyk pass (3619)

160

Sary Tash

146

45

Irkeshtam

Kashghar (Kashi)

Karamyk

gatol

Kizilart pass (4280)

REP.

TIJKISTAN

183 Akbaytal pass (4657)

400

Murgab

CHINA

Koy-Tezek Pass (4272)

306

Kulna Pass

90

Tashkurghan

Khorog

Lyangar

Khunjerab Pass

Misgar

Darband

Karimabad (Hunza)

Gilgit

JAMMU AND KASHMIR (DISPUTED)

263

Chitral

Kalam

N-95

543

Skardu



Ecotourism



Beautiful and remote, three major Silk Road routes ran through Tajikistan's present day territories. These ancient routes highlight the Tajik contributions to commerce and culture of the time, particularly between the 5th and 12th centuries.

The country consists of almost entirely folded mountains, although the country can be divided into four regions:

the Fergana Valley to the north; the Hissar and Vakhsh Valleys to the south; the Pamir Mountains to the east which rise to 7,500m and the Gorno-Badakhshan Oblast which is a plateau at 3,650m; and, the Zeravshan and Hissar Ranges, which run east to west in western Tajikistan.

There are opportunities for alpine mountaineering, rock climbing, hiking, horse or camel riding, historical exploration, cultural experiences or simply relaxing among the majestic mountains and lakes.

Mountaineering

Tajikistan is 93% mountainous with more than half of the country sitting at altitudes over 3,000m above sea level. Several well-known mountain peaks are over 7,000m, such as Ismoili Somoni Peak 7,495m.



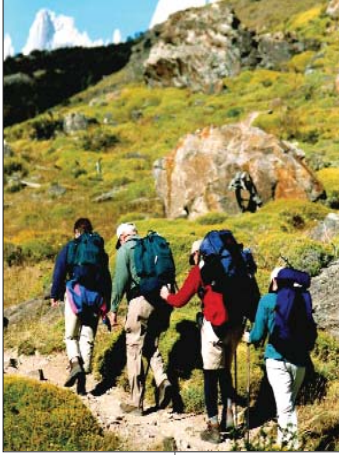
There are many other peaks with over 6,000m height and there are mandatory fees for obtaining the right to climb peaks higher than 6,000m - US\$100 per person - and US\$50 per person for peaks lower than 6,000m and for hiking.

There is also a mandatory environmental fee of US\$1 per person per day for hiking and mountain-climbing. Popular routes include: Pamir Mountains, Fan Mountains and Muzkol Range.

Hiking

Hiking is mostly done in the vicinity of Dushanbe and surrounding districts (Varzob, Karatogh, Shirkent and Romit Gorges), and in Kuhiston (the region covering Turkestan, Zarafshon and Hissar ranges).

The Fan Mountains (Payron, Mar-guzor, Alauddin Lakes, and Iskandarkul Lake) are situated to the west of Kuhiston and there are dozens of tourist routes and several permanent hotels and camps established in Dushanbe, Varzob Gorge, on Iskandarkul, Alauddin and Marguzor Lakes, and on the shores of the man-made Qayraqqum reservoir near Khujand (formerly Leninabad).



Pamir. The whole country can be viewed as a series of river valleys, with tons of water flowing every second, west to east, into the plains and deserts of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. This terrain is a kayaker's dream, with rafting possibilities for every level of experience. Kayaking or white water rafting trips are only possible for those who can bring their own rafts. Biking, paragliding, downhill skiing and other exotic forms of recreation are also possible.

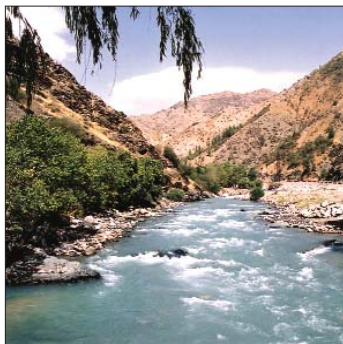
Kayaking & White Water Rafting

Besides hiking and mountaineering, there is the possibility for this area to develop water tourism such as rafting since the country is rich in water resources.

Two of Central Asia's mighty rivers, the Amu Darya (Oxus) and Zerafshan, have their sources in the glaciers of the



Top 10 Places to Visit



VARZOB

Varzob Gorge is near the Tajik capital, which is the favorite place of the recreation of the town's people, with many centers and recreation zones. There are plenty of excellent choices for hikes in beautiful landscape. Varzob is known as a small district in the river basin of the same name intersecting a central part of a southern Hissar Slope Mountain Range. In the lower watercourse of the Varzob River, under the name of Dushanbinka comes a wide flatness, on which the city of Dushanbe is located, and

lower, to the west of the capital, on the right it runs into the Kafirnigan River. The valley of the Varzob River from its riverhead, up to the outflow to the flatness makes 72 km. The flora and fauna of the basin of Varzob River is rich and diverse. The maples, archa Ouniper, apples, hawthorn, alycha (cherry-plum), walnut, arbo-real-shrub vegetation are widely spread here. Varzob Lake - a dumpy water reservoir situated 11 km north of the city center - is popular with locals for swimming.

Guzgarf Waterfall

Near Dushanbe, in the right side of the gorge of the Varzob River, there is Guzgarf Waterfall, the most beautiful waterfall of Hissar Slope. The violent river has sawn through for many centuries a vertical rock wall and rushes down from 30 meters height. The multi ton mass of water is scattered below on myriad of drops, iridescent sparkling on the sun. The walking track to it begins from 21 kilometers of Varzob Gorge. It takes two-three hours walking (about 8 km) from here up to the waterfall. April - May is the best time for a trip to the waterfall. At this time there are lots of red tulips, the hedge roses and other plants flowering on slopes of mountains.

Besides the Guzgarf Waterfall, the gorges along the Siama (55 km from Dushanbe), Ojuk, Kondara, Maykhura and Takob Rivers running into the Varzob River, are also very popular. All this gorges are unique and beautiful.

Siama River

It is famous for its light-blue, crystal pure water, birch groves and by currant bushes, which in autumn give abundant berries. The light-blue river begins at altitude of 3,300 meters from glacier the Medvejiy Castle and at a distance of 21-kilometer of its course makes a jump downwards more than two thousands meters. It is possible to trek in 3 or 4 days from the Siama Canyon to Iskanderkul Lake.

Karatag Mountain

Considered "The Pole of Precipitation", it is located at an altitude about 3,000 meters in upper reaches of other inflow of Varzob -Maykhura. Perhaps this is the

place with the highest snow avalanche activities in all mountains of the Republic. In winter the height of snow cover reaches up to three-five meters here.

The remarkable locality of this gorge is the six-kilometer tunnel through the thickness of the mountain, the construction of which began some years ago. After completing the tunnel construction, it will allow all-the-year-round use of the Dushanbe-Khudjand highway connecting central and northern parts of the Republic.

Ojuk Gorge

Slopes of Ojuk Gorge, stretching to north-east in tens of kilometers running deep into the mountains directly from the Varzob Settlement are twined with vines, and you can also see apples and alycha islets, but, certainly, the main sight of this gorge is numerous plane-trees. The gorge has received its name from Ojuk inflow, running into the Varzob River. Moving up in gorge you can come to Semiganch Kishlak (village), which is glorified by the remarkable varieties of grapes. Semiganch means "Gold Treasure" in Russian.

Takob Ski Base

Locted in Safed Dara, meaning "white gorge" above Takob Kishlak is a center of mountain ski sports in the Republic, situated at altitude of 2,200 meters above sea level, about 60 km north-east of Dushanbe. The Takob ski base is situated 11 km further east

near the Safed Dara Kishlak. Ski base operates during the winter month and has a small hotel. Snow lies here seven months a year. In winter it has clear, windless weather. There is a lot of sun. There are two primitive lifts. It is possible to go by public 4WD vans from

Dushanbe's

"Vodonasosny bazaar" to the base on Friday afternoon and back way to the city on Monday early morning. Except for winter months, the ski base is a starting point for an easy 4-5 hours hike to the beautiful Obi-Safed Canyon and its shepherd camps. From Obi-Safed it is two days hike and one pass to cross to the Romit Gorge.



Khojaobigarm Resort

42 kilometers from Dushanbe, a road from Gushary Kishlak goes to the left to Khojaobigarm resort (1,790-1,960 meters above sea level). From the highway the resort can not be seen. Main medical remedy of the resort is mineral water related to low mineralized nitric-silicic terms of sulfate-hydro-carbonate-sodium-calcium structure with temperature from +



65 up to + 96 degrees of Celsius, used for baths. Another powerful medical remedy is high thermal (+ 92 degrees by Celsius) air vapor mixture with the radon contents. The important medical factor is also high-mountainous climate with moderate hot summer, snowy, but without severe frosts in the winter dry air. Over 30 varieties of medicinal plants grow in the territory of the resort, which are widely applied in medicine. Varzob is obliged its water riches to glaciers located at altitude up to four thousand meters in Hissar Mountain Range. There are public transport services from Dushanbe to Varzob Gorge departing from a bus stand well known as "Vodona-sosnaya" next to Varzob Bazaar in the north of the city.



YAGNOB

The valley of the Yagnob River situated about 100 km north from Dushanbe, at the border of mountains and deserted plains. The maximum absolute altitude comes to 5,145 m in the Zeravshan Range in the upper reaches of the Yagnob. The river-bed of the Yagnob is situated at the altitudes of 2,200- 2,800 m, the bottom of the valley being practically not discernible.

The uniqueness of the Yagnob Valley is determined in many respects by its objective natural isolation. The relations with the outer world are considerably impoverished. The nearest locality equipped by electricity and having a dirt road accessible to vehicles is the Margib kishlak. Up the valley next to this kishlak, there are narrow canyons that practically divide the Yagnob and the outer world. The main roads linking the Yagnob to the outer world are mountain paths open only during the summer. In the winter, paths are covered with snow; furthermore, they are situated in a zone of permanent snow avalanches activity. Yagnobis stay completely isolated from the whole world during about eight months a year. The Yagnob Valley in its upper part is an example of an isolated peripheral area - refuge of the ethnos and its environment, of ancient cultural landscapes.

The history of the people inhabiting Yagnob has common roots with well-known and formerly powerful Sughdiana - ancient Central Asian State (7 - 6 centuries B.C to the 7th century A.D), first of all because of closeness of the ancient Sughdian and Yagnobi languages. The natural isolation of the Yagnob Valley was conducive to give possibility to ancient Sughdians to stay (or perhaps to refuge) there. They appertain to the Eastern-Iranian language branch; in the course of historical processes they were assimilated step by step by peoples appertaining to the Western-Iranian language group, and after that by the Turkic-speaking peoples. In the whole, the ancient period of development of Yagnob reveals itself in full measure in social and cultural population features remained until our days, the social forms of organization; family, clan, village community have an ecological character, they are engendered by the necessity of adapting to environmental conditions.

Each settlement represents, as a matter of fact, 1-2 (sometimes 3) clans:

- Avlods extending their genealogy to a certain well-known ancestor -founder of the clan. A rather important element of Yagnobis organization is the So-called "sada" or "makhalla", i.e. associations on the basis of neighborhood. Within the framework of "sada" many important economic problems were solved, preparing and organizing the festivities, construction and maintenance of buildings, etc.

In Yagnob, it is not done for women to cover themselves by shawls, as it is accepted in Muslim countries. Men are disposed to come into contact, they like to talk politics over a cup of tea, to joke and they are very hospitable as a whole. Dwelling houses are very tidy, but low, practically without windows, with a high doorsill, with a minimum of decorations and excesses.

Yagnobis do not use alcoholic drinks in effect, they do not smoke, and various herbs growing in Yagnob are widely used in food. They fall ill very seldom. Ancient, pre-islamic beliefs in holy rocks remained up to now. There is a column having cult significance in the kishlak Sokan. In 1970 approximately 3 thousand people were evicted from Yagnob Valley to the other parts of Tajikistan (Zafarobod rayon and to the vicinities of Dushanbe). The reason was acquisition of manpower in new-established cotton-growing districts. From the end of 1980-es the people have began to return progressively to their native land. For a long time their status was formally illegal



there since they were registered in effect in other places. After publications in the media concerning the unique Yagnobi people and subsequent officials, homecoming to the Yagnob Valley became more appreciable in 1990. In the period of the USSR collapse the homecoming process was slowed down.

In our days about 300 persons are living in Yagnob permanently and about 1,000 coming for the summer with shepherds. The preservation of cultural arable farming traditions, architectural and other historical-cultural features of Yagnobis require urgent measures to be undertaken. Now it is hard to say which one of the existing well-founded forms of preservation would be the most acceptable for Yagnob. Only one thing is clear; to wit the Yagnob phenomenon is to be the subject of future detailed studies within the framework of different programs, international ones as well, as preservation of unique nations, ethnic groups and their living environment.

ROMIT

The Romit Gorge begins 45 kilometers to northeast from Dushanbe, with numerous recreation zones, thermal springs, protected woodlands and beautiful mountain rivers. The lower Romit Gorge is a popular weekend hangout for

Dushanbe citizens. From Dushanbe to Romit you have to drive to Vahdat Settlement (formerly Kafirnigan or Ordjonikidzeabad) and at 37 km from Dushanbe, at furcation turn to the left and continue your ride along the right shore of the Kafirnigan River.

Yavroz

Holiday center "Yavroz" is located at 50 km from Dushanbe (direction to Romit Gorge) at the altitude 1,150 meters above sea level. It is famous for its own thermal spring, which contains silicic acid, boron, hydrogen sulfite, and radon.

HISSAR

The regional center Hissar is located in 25 kilometers to the west of Dushanbe, and just in 7 kilometers south of Hissar, near the site of confluence the Hanaka River to the Kafimigan River, there lies the remains of a fortress tower above the valley which is known under the title "Hissar Fortress". This well protected fortress was a residence of a governor of Bukhara Emir - Hissar Bek (barony) in XIX century. In its early nineteenth century heyday, the town had some 15,000 inhabitants and maintained trade contacts with Afghanistan,

China, Arabia and India. Inside the fortress, there was a pool and a garden, and opposite there was a market, caravan shelter and a lot of small shops. The gate of the fortress with portal and arch, old one-storied madrasa and the two-storied building of new madrasa of XVIII-XIX centuries have lasted till the present day.

Mahdumi Azam mausoleum is located not so far dating to XVI-XVII centuries, in which there is simple alabaster gravestone of local Sufi teacher. It is still a place of worship. The fortress was occupied in 1924 by basmachi (local bands of freedom fighters, today they would be called mujahed) leader Ibragim Bek until the Red Army destroyed it completely. Only the gate remains though you can still clearly see the structure of the fortress when you climb up the hills.

The building of Madrasa Khuhna ("old madrasa") now is a museum with ancient utensils, a "model Tajik national room", jewelry and an interesting archaeological map of Tajikistan. The present "Hissar Fortress" was opened in 1982, with the most recent restoration carried out in 2001. Today this place is also popular for visits during marriages. The colored ribbons that people attach on the trees symbolize prayers and an example of the animist influence.

50 meters from the gate of the fortress there is a national teahouse, the interior of which is magnificently decorated by the national masters. If you do not prefer sitting inside the house, you can drink tea and eat directly in open air under shadow of two huge plane- trees, age of which are not less than 500 years, and which are remarkable monuments of nature themselves.

An asphalt highway leads to the "Hissar Fortress", by which from/to Dushanbe or from/to Tursunzade you can reach there in 20-30 minutes by public transport or shared taxi. In Hissar town, take the shared taxi from the bus station and ask for the kala (in Tajik) or krepost (in Russian).



TURSUNZADE

The Tursunzade Town (formerly Regar) is located in picturesque gorge of the western part of the Hissar Valley between the Karatag and Shirkent Rivers at altitude of 750 meters above sea level in 57 km to the west of Dushanbe. From the northern part tower Machitli Mountain Range, from the south - Babatag Mountain Range. The climate here is moderate with hot dry summers and mild winters. In summer temperature reaches + 40 degrees C and more. In winter average temperature is about + 2 degrees C. The modern city has arisen on a place near Regar station of the railway Termez-Dushanbe in the 30s of XX century. The historical name of Regar has originated from the word "reg", that in translation means clay for manufacturing ceramic items.

Archaeological excavation of these places testify to high skill of the local potters, who produced perfect creations from clay - utensils, facing materials for architectural structures, burned bricks and other. By the way, the work of these craftsmen can be seen in the unique architectural monument - Khoja-Nahshron Mausoleum, which is located in 15 km to the southeast of modern Tursunzade. This craft was called "Regarri" in antiquities dated IV-I centuries BC. The art of the local craftsmen was known far away from Regar during Kushan Empire period. At the beginning of XX

century, regar population accounted a thousand people. In 1938 cotton gin building was constructed in the town. In 1979, Regar was renamed into Tursunzade. Modern Tursunzade is a large economic and cultural center of Tajikistan.

Bazaar

A two-kilometer highway connecting TADAZ with the city brings us directly to the city center, where the market is located. Here it is possible to see traditional items of the local craftsmen. National household tools are produced in smith's workshops; skilful needle works of women will offer perfect



copies of a national wear. The items of clay utensils impress you with the variety and color that they show, and certainly does the, national cuisine. Hardly someone will leave the place not trying tasty viands. Tursunzade is famous for its grapes and rice.

KARATAG SETTLEMENT

Many years ago center of silk weaving production was in Karatag Settlement.

This settlement is located not far

from Tursunzade and is 48 km east of Dushanbe (turn north from the main road to Tursunzade at Shakhrinau Settlement). The bright, colorful silk fabrics of local production were known for their best quality and were in great demand in Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey in ancient times.

In former times, Karatag was a summer residence of Hissar's Beks. After the severe earthquakes in 1907, the residence became Dushanbe Kishlak, which later became the capital of the country.

Today, there are holiday houses, summer camps for children and adults in Karatag Gorge. Hiking and trekking in the Karatag River Valley are very interesting, especially excursion to picturesque wood groves near Payron and Timurdara Lake (l, 970 meters above sea level). Timurdara Lake is near Karatag River (about 1 hour of walk), but it is rather high from the bottom of the valley. Near Labijoy Kishlak (25 km from Karatag settlement up on the river) there is a charming grove, where the nightingales sing, and there are a lot of a wild grapes, apples, and mulberry trees. Karatag is famous as the national poet of Tajikistan Mirzo Tursunzade was born in this settlement in 1911.

ISTRAVSHAN

This city (formerly Ura-Tyube, Uroteppa) is situated northwest of Tajikistan, 73 km near Khudjand . The town is one of the most ancient urban settlements in Central Asia, dating back to the first millennium BC. The recorded history of Istravshan dates back to VI century BC when the region was a province of the Persian Empire under the Achaemenids.

Scholars may recognize the region under its classical name of Kiropol, as described by Strabo (Kiraskhata, according Ptolemy, Kurukada in Persian and Kurushkada in Sughd ian languages). It was fortified by three rows of walls and the citadel was surrounded by wall 6,000 m long.

From the 2-151 century's BC to the 1-2nd centuries AD, much of what is now Istravshan was known as Ustrushana, the capital of which was Penjikent. It was a trading center and benefited greatly from its position as an important staging post on the commercial roads that linked the civilizations of East and West, through Khudjand, Samarkand, Bukhara and the Ferghana Valley.

In the epoch of the Arab invasion, Istravshan became a province of the Arabian Caliphate in 822 AD; the region became a commercial and cultural center of the medieval East. Muslim ideology and religion blended with local traditions to develop new types of structures (the mosque, madrasa, mau-soleum, minaret) The specific features of these buildings developed on the basis of progress made in portal and vaulted structures.

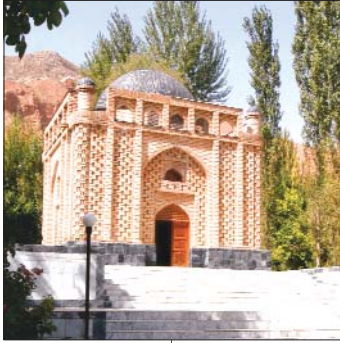


PENJIKENT

This is the name of the town in the north of Tajikistan, located on the right bank of the Zeravshan River 60 km to the east of Samarkand.

Zeravshan Valley from the ancient times is known as Sughd or Sughdiana. The inhabitants

of the valley were Sughds - the direct ancestors of the modern Tajiks.



NUREK

Nurek is situated 68 km southeast of Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, on the bank of the turbulent Vakhsh River. The town has been built up in the place of a small kishlak (village).

Vakhsh River

The river is only 525 km long, but thanks to its steep gradient (850 meters), it is tenth among C.I.S. Rivers according to its energy potential. An irrigation and power-generating hydraulic complex has been constructed to create a reservoir affording seasonal and partial long-term regulation of the Vakhsh and Amudarya rivers, which is necessary for irrigation, power generation, and water transport.

Dam

The main sight on Nurek's outskirts is, of course, the 310-m clay-core gravel-fill dam, the volume of which is

56 million cubic meters. It blocks the turbulent Vakhsh in the narrowest part of Pulisangin Gorge where the river thundered and foamed as if to justify its name ("vakhsh" means "wild", "indomitable").

Nurek dam is spectacular. The deep blue reservoir itself

is a good place for a swim and relaxation if you want to escape the heat in Dushanbe or when you come from the Pamirs or southern Tajikistan. There are several tracks leading down to the lake about 15 km south of Nurek, beyond the Sebiston Pass. On the bank of the reservoir, there are some basic resorts that might have boats for rent.

Nurek Water Reservoir

The Nurek water reservoir is 70 km long and 2 to 5 km wide. Its pure, transparent water is sometimes light-blue, sometimes aquamarine as if it has imbibed in all the colors of morning sky and the purity of the Pamir's glaciers where the Vakhsh River begins. This reservoir has made it possible to extend the irrigated areas in the southern cotton growing regions of Central Asia to a great extent. Dushanbe and Nurek are connected by asphalt road. Nurk town has a hotel.



Special permission from the Ministry of Interior is required if you plan a personal visit to the Nurek Power Plant.

5 Major Cities



DUSHANBE

The capital of Tajikistan (Stalinabad until 1961) is situated in the center of the Hissar Valley, 812 meters above sea level, on the junction of the Varzob and Luchob Rivers. The snowcapped Hissar mountain range rises to the north and east of the city, and on the south it is bounded by the Kafarnigan River. Dushanbe has lots of nice examples of pastel-colored Soviet-era buildings, with their typical mixture of Oriental and Socialist architecture (for example the Majlisi Oli or Parliament building,

Firdousi Library, Lakhuti Theater, Ministry of the culture building). There are souvenir shops on the corner of Rudaki Ave.

89 and Ismail Samani Street, in an Art gallery, which exhibits and sells the work of local artists. Dushanbe is situated in the center of the Hissar Valley, 800m above sea level.

Although it is a young city, the first records of the existence of Dushanbe date from 1676 when it was a village on the crossroads of caravan routes connecting the Hissar Valley with Bukhara and Samarkand, the Pamirs and Afghanistan.

The Tajik word "Dushanbe" means Monday as the weekly bazaar was held in the village on Mondays. Dushanbe is a member of the International Federation of Sister-Cities (IFSC) and has 14 sister-cities: Ankara (Turkey), Boulder (USA), Klagenfurt (Austria), Lahore (Pakistan), Lusaka (Zambia), Mazar-e-Sharif (Afghanistan), Minsk (Belarus), Monastir (Tunisia), Roytlingen (Germany), Sana (Yemen), Shiraz and Tehran (Iran), St. Petersburg (Russia) and Urumchi (China). The capital has a public transport- station system with electric trolleys, petrol and natural gas buses. Buses and trolleys (buses which run on electric tram lines) are very cheap (fare for trolleys and buses is 40-60 diram at the time of writing), but slow and crowded.

Pay the conductor as you enter - the fare is usually stenciled on the window. There is no subway system. Taxis are not difficult to hire. Private cars operate as cabs and are generally safe; It is also possible to hire a car and driver by the week or month.

Taxis can be found near hotels, bazaars, airports, bus, train stations and other prominent places. You can flag a taxi down by standing by the side of the road and extending your arm.

The most common way to get around the town is by marshrutka, which are minibuses that follow a fixed route. Although numerous streets have new names now, most people - including taxi and marshrutka drivers - are still more familiar with the Soviet ones.

Natural Beauties

Ramitsky Reserve

It is located 70 kilometers northeast of Dushanbe. For wild life fans this place is just what they need. The place near the reserve in the Sardaimien and Sorbo interflaves is also unique and interesting.

Very few people know about it and tourists rarely visit it. But if you manage to get to this heavenly sunny spot with dark blue transparent rivers, mountain woods, bright sub alpine flowers, waterfalls, snowfields, little-known passes you may consider yourselves extremely lucky.

Cupola Sangin Mosque, XII, XVI Centuries

It is situated in Hissar historical-cultural conservation. The mosque Sangin is of central cupola mosques type. The main area of premises of khonako is surrounded by the open arch gallery from two sides. Under-cupola premise of khonako is of cruciform composition, formed by deep arch niches along the sides of the under cupola square. On the level of under cupola constructions four resounders are fixed in the shape of ceramic vases without bottom, immured into the brickwork for strengthening the acoustics.

Originally the mosque was building in XI-XII as central cupola built "chortok". In XV-XVI the arch gallery from the south and east parts was added. The walls are half made of stone, and the building's facade and the cupola are made of burnt brick, that's why it's called "stone mosque". Researchers:

Caravanseraï

Another remarkable structure of Hissar complex is the caravanseraï "Khishtin" (12th - 18th centuries) which means "made of bricks". At first sight this is an ordinary building. What is so remarkable about it? The thing is

that by the 20th century the caravanseraï represented only the remains of foundation and burned-brick walls fragments no higher than 1 m. The original view of the building could only be seen in the picture taken in 1913. Having started the picture in details, the restorers got down to work the results (renovating and restoring the caravanseraï) which you can see today.

Old Madrassa

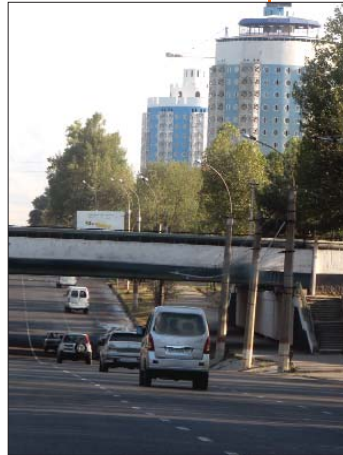
Old madrassa or "Medresei-khuna" (16th - 17th centuries) is a brick structure with the portal entrance crowned by a dome. When inside one can see a wide yard surrounded on the perimeter with cells. In the early 20th century 100 to 150 students studied there. The classes stopped only in 1921.

The library of Old Madrassa has also survived. New madrassa - Medresei-nav (17th -18th centuries), unfortunately, has been completely destroyed. Only the two-storied facade has remained. Both madrassas are very similar to architectural structures of Samarkand and Bukhara of those times.

Mahdudi Azam Mausoleum

It is located in the Hissar Historical Cultural Preserve and comprises of three cupolas.

The most ancient element is a



small dome/gurhona with four arches constructed in the 11th century. The Mausoleum was restored in 1990 and hosts a museum on the history of Islam.

Mausoleum of Mirzo Tursunzade

Created in 1981 over the grave of the distinguished Tajik poet, Mirzo Tursunzade in Dushanbe, the monument consists of three open-book pylons, decorated with light marble, representing the clear thoughts and deeds of the poet.

Palace of Unity

Also referred to as "Vahdat Palace", is located near the prestigious Hotel Avesto, the Embassy of Uzbekistan, and the presidential palace. It is the headquarters of the ruling People's Democratic Party, and is also used to host international conferences.

Firdausi Republican Library

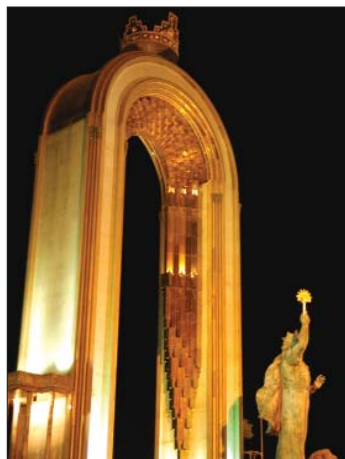
The library building was constructed in traditional Tajik style in a combination with the elements of modern architecture. It stores two million books in many languages of the world.

The most treasured are books written by the peoples of Ancient Orient, two thousand manuscripts of Rudaki, Firdausi, Ibn Sino, Saadi.



Ismail Samani Monument

This is a 40m high monument in Dushanbe, built to the memory of Ismail Saman-Khuda, founder of the Samanid dynasty in the 10th century. The base is paved in granite slabs and contains a permanent exhibition on the Samanids while the upper part of the statue is coated in gold.



Squares

Sadriddin Aini Square

There stands the writer's monument opened in 1978 when entire country was celebrating his 100th jubilee. The statute of Sadriddin Aini is surrounded with all characters of his books. Aini square also hosts:

- " Bekhzada Republican History,
- " Local Lore and Fine Arts Museum
- " The Botanical Garden of Tajikistan Academy of Sciences: containing the collection of unique trees and plants from all over the world.

Moscow's 8th Centennial Square

One of the most beautiful places of the city, surrounded by Indian lilacs. In the center of the square there is a big fountain; it is favored by students, artists, musicians, and actors.

Dousti (Friendship) Square

The largest and the most elegant square in Dushanbe. In the center stands Ismail Samani monument; nearby is the museum constructed in the honor of the 1100th anniversary of Samanid state. There is also the House of Tajikistan Government.

Putovsky Square

It is decorated with beautiful fountains, colorful flowers and magnificent spruces. The Presidential Palace is located right there.

Theatres

Ayni Opera & Ballet Theatre

📍 Rudaki Ave., 28 ,
📞 Tel: + 992/37/2-21-62-91, 2-21-80-47

Russian State Drama Theatre

Named after V. Mayakovsky and located in the center of the capital on the right side of Prospekt Rudaki, this theatre is the center of Russian culture in Tajikistan.

There is also Tajik State Academic Drama Theatre named after A.Lakhuti.

Children's Puppet Theatre

"Lukhtak"

📍 Shotemur St. 54/1,
📞 Tel: +992/37/2-21-66-97

Museums

National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan

📍 5 Rajiabov Street,

📞 Tel: + 992/37/2-2713-50,
www.afc.ryukoku.ac.jp/tj/

National Museum of Tajikistan

Opening hours may vary

📞 Tel: + 992/37/2-23-22-72, 2-21-60-36, 2-27-15-08

Museum of Musical Instruments

📍 Address: Bokhtar St. 23, next to the "rayonniy sud" or district court,

📞 Tel: +992/37/2-23-32-10

Museum of Musical Culture

108 Shakhidi Street.

Tea Houses

"Rokhat" Teahouse

📍 Rudaki Ave., near the President's palace. 84,

📞 Tel: +992/37/2-21-76-54, 2-24-62-54

"Saodat" Teahouse

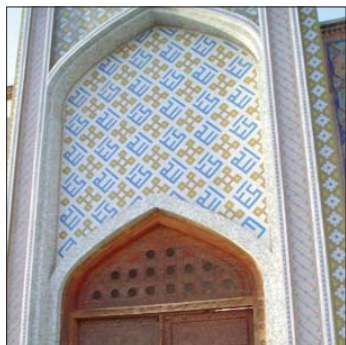
Rudaki Ave., 120, opposite Medical University

KURGAN-TYUBE

Kurgan-Tyube is an important industrial and cultural center of the Vakhsh Valley and the administrative center of Khatlon Oblast (province) lays 99 km south of Dushanbe. According to one data, Kurgan-Tyube has arisen in VII century, according to another data, much later.

Today, it is a provincial town. Useful information about history of the town and region can be found in the Regional Historical Museum, which was opened in 1983. Local airport is located near the town.

Close to Kurgan-Tyube, at the bank of the Vakhsh River, there is an interesting historical place - ruins of the ancient city Lagman (X-XIII centuries). In the 40 of XX century archaeologists surveyed



the ancient city and have found here pipes of the ancient water supply system, well laid out by bricks, and fortress walls with towers.

Buddhist Monastery Adjina- Teppa

Dating from the 5th - 8th centuries, 12 km to the east of Kurgan-Tyube, there is Ajina-Tepa (hill) ("A Witch's Hill"). The fortress of rectangular shape has two parts - the monastery and the temple. A large cruciform mortar is located in the temple yard. The monastery was built from raw brick and blocks and covered by arches and cupolas. The walls and halls of the

temple are decorated with numerous sculptures of Buddha and Bodhisattvas among which was included a 12m statue of Buddha laying in Nirvana.

In the 60s of the last century, archaeologists dug out this huge figure of lying Buddha, which today can be seen in the National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan in Dushanbe. Most findings at this site were shipped to the St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) at Soviet times or are on display in the Dushanbe's museums. There are also miniature paintings reflecting various scenes of the life of Buddha in this place.

Mausoleum of Khodja Mashad

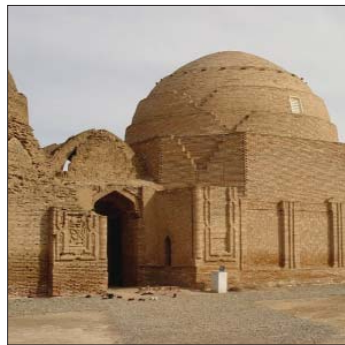
This is a unique monument of oriental architecture and is located in Saiyod village in the Shahritus district. Built in the 10th century, it originally had only one central building, some parts of which have been preserved.

During the 11th - 12th centuries, a new dome-shaped building was adjoined to the mausoleum with a dense decorative arcade in the facade with ornamented brickwork and terracotta fretwork in the style of the Ismail Samanid Mausoleum. The dome-shaped structure was connected to the first building by a portal with the brick-laid arch behind it.

Takht-i-Sangin ("Temple of Oks")

In 1976, archaeologists began excavation on the site of ancient settlement Tahti Kubad (34 km from Kabodian settlement at the confluence of the rivers Vakhsh and Panj).

That stone settlement which the archaeologists named Takht-i- Sangin turned out to be really unique. In the very center they found an ancient temple which got a name "the Temple of Oks". It used to be devoted to the Divinity of the river whose cult had existed there since the old days.



The amazing findings were discovered in the huge temple constructed in the 4th - 3rd centuries B.C. which continued to exist in the first the decades of our era.

"The Temple of Oks" has survived in a very good condition. During 15 years of excavation in Takht-i- Sangin the archaeologists extracted more than 5 thousand objects of Greek-Bactrian time.

After all this time the archeologists and the scientists finally came to the opinion that there is a direct connection between Amu Darya Treasure ("The Treasure of Oks") in the British Museum and "the Temple of Oks" in Takht-i-Sangin since the place of treasures discovery and the location of the temple are the same, and all treasure items are of ceremonial value.

It might have happened that the treasures were moved from the temple in troubled times and hidden nearby in the river-bank. The ruins of Takht-i- Sangin today can be seen in the picturesque valley of the rivers Panj and Vakhsh, and "the Temple of Oks" treasures - in metropolitan Museums.

Chali Char Chashma

Chali Char Chashma ("44 springs") is located 12 km from Shaartuz village and is widely known in Tajikistan as well as in Uzbekistan.

There, right at the foot of a small hill in the midst of the heated desert, five large water springs break into 39 smaller ones. All springs merging form

a 12-13 m channel inhabited by a plenty of fishes. The water of the 17 sources is believed to be curative.

Each of them has its own name and curative properties. On the territory of Chali Char Chashma there is also a small hill with a small mausoleum on top.

KULYAB

From the capital of the republic in direction to the southeast up to Kulyab, there is about 200 km of an asphalt highway. The mountains and valleys, nationalities, having lived in the territory of modern Kulyab and its vicinity are mentioned in ancient sources, by antique, Arabian and Persian authors.



Mausoleum of Amir Saeed Hamadoni

You can get acquainted with the historical past of the land in the Historical Museum named after S. Valizade, located in the Central park of the city. In the park there is a two storied mausoleum and the

burial place of the famous Persian-Tajik scientist, poet, philosopher and thinker Mirsaeed Hamadoni, and his successors. He lived in XIV century and was known for his books on philosophy, sufism, ethics, and didactics.

The Mausoleum has a portal cupola structure with an asymmetric plan. The building is made from burnt bricks on glue grout and the cupolas are made with alabaster grout. The central hall is covered by twin domes. The Mausoleum has been renovated several times.

Khoja-Mumin Salt Peak

20 km to the west of the town rests this unique natural monument - Khoja-Mumin Salt Peak, raising in height over a kilometer and going into the entrails of ground almost by 4 km. According to modern evaluations of the geologists, Khoja-Mumin stores about 50-60 billion tons of common salt. Khoja-Mumin is also famous for its curative springs, which are over one hundred sixty. Another Khoja-Mumin's- miracle is its caves, the largest of which is almost 350 meters of length, and which is glorified by its "musicality".

Mausoleum of Khoja Durbod

XI-XII centuries, 6 kilometres from the Saiyod village, is one of the unique masterpieces of ancient architecture. It is unique by its unusual planning, square outside and octagonal inside. If the mausoleum "Khodja Durbod" was built from the burnt brick, then the mausoleum "Khodha Sarboz" (XI-XII) near Saiyod, was built from the raw brick. It has square planning and dome-shaped ceiling containing eight sails and apertures.

KHUDJAND



Khujand is the second largest city in the country. It's also one of Tajikistan's oldest towns, founded by Alexander the Great more than 2,500 years ago. Commanding the entrance to the Ferghana Valley, Khujand enjoyed great prosperity and its riches spawned palaces, grand mosques and a citadel, before the Mongols steam rolled the city into oblivion in the early 13th century.

In XVIII-XIX centuries Khujand grew extensively and became one of largest cities of Central Asia, in spare not less than Kokand and Bukhara. In 1886 the city was

joined to Russia, and then destructive intertribal war of Bukhara and Kokand for Khujand were stopped. In 1913 the first power station was put in to operation in the city. In 1929 the part of territory of the Uzbek SSR, into which then included Khujand district and city, was transferred to the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. At that time the population of the district constituted hardly more than 250 thousand people. In January 9, 1936 Khujand was renamed into Leninabad, in honor of Lenin. The city bore this new name until 1990, when the ancient historical title - Khujand was restored to it.

Now the city is the large industrial center of Tajikistan producing two-thirds of Tajikistan's GDP, with 75 % of the country's arable land and one-third of the population. Modern Khujand is a cozy, green city, with a lot of parks and squares and hospitable inhabitants. The Syrdarya River flows directly in the center of the city and its convenient shores are perfect places for rest and swimming. By the way, Khujand is the unique city in Tajikistan located by a large river.

Panjshanbe Bazaar

It is one of the main sights of Khujand, attracting attention by its multicolored, exotic sounds and odors, variety abundance of fruit and vegetables.

Mausoleum of Shaikh Muslihiddin, XII-XIV-XVI Centuries,

It is situated near the market and is linked with the Muslihiddin Khujandi, the ruler of the city, poet, famous sheikh of XII and the beginning of XIII. Mausoleum is a unique monument of architecture. After its destruction in XIV and XVI, the new building with the original structure of Khonako was constructed. After numerous renovations and repair, mausoleum has another appearance.

It is two storied portal building with dome, with central two colored cruciform hall Zieratkhona, and two colored cupola Gurkhona. On Gurkhona in the centre there is wooden threaded headstone -Sagona, coated with thin geometric threads with flora ornamentation on the edges.

Take a look at the wooden carvings inside the side halls.

The neglected, mausoleum was built in XIV century. The 21 m-tall minaret was added at the end of XIX century.



Fortress Gates to Khujand City, VII-XV Centuries, Citadel of Khujand

According to the manuscripts, Alexander the Great built the town within 17-20 days in order to defend from the Sakes, and it is called Alexandria Eshata. In the following historical epochs it was political, administrative, commercial, economical and cultural centre of Khujand area in Sugd region. During archaeological excavation, the cultural strata of VII-XV centuries were found. Medieval gates- the city's oldest remains- are the formless earth-baked walls of the citadel (X century), which once boasted seven gates and 6 km of fortifications. The citadel

was restored in 1999-2000.

Museum of Archaeology and Fortifications

The reconstructed eastern gate houses the Museum of Archaeology and Fortifications (just near the Hotel "Leninabad"), which has some interesting 19th century photos, old pottery and plans of the original citadel.



KHOROGH

The town of Khorogh, is the capital of the Kohistan-i Badakhshan or "Badakhshan Mountain" (Russian: Gorno-Badakhshan) region in Tajikistan. Khorogh is situated 2,200 m above sea level in Pamir

Mountains (ancient Mount Imeon) along the Pamir Highway. The highway is very difficult to pass in both directions, especially during winter and spring.

It is connected to the capital city of Dushanbe toward the west, and to the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to the east and north. Pamir Botanical Garden and Khorogh Park worth visiting.

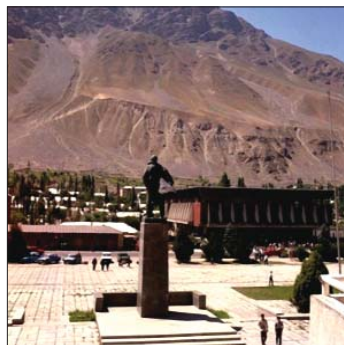
📍 Where & What to Eat

Tajik cooking has a rich tradition of many centuries. The original ways of life, customs, character of people, professional activities, and the climatic conditions are reflected in them. That is why this is an integral part of the national culture. As before, nowadays the preference is given to the meat and dairy or meat and vegetable dishes and to animal fat. Mutton, beef, chicken and turkey are favorites. Horsemeat is used in limited quantities as well as rabbit and duck. Pork dishes are not present in traditional Tajik cuisine. The absence of pork dishes is connected with the religious customs of Muslims. Sheep and animal fat (sheep, beef, and goat), kunjut, linseed (sesame, zigir) oil and butter have been used for a long time for cooking. Cotton and sunflower oils are used often. Olive and corn oil are used in limited quantities.

A constant component of nutrition is sour-milk products: katyk (a form of yogurt made at home), chakka katyk or sour-milk separated from whey, sometimes dried into balls and reduced with water, is a Central Asian method of preserving milk products without refrigeration. It keeps the product well and makes a good spread, and can serve as salad dressing), sour-milk, kaymak (local type of cream), cottage cheese and others. Kefir, a thick drinkable yogurt, is often served with breakfast. Serving katyk for guests is still common as it symbolizes the frankness of the host's soul with reference to the guest. It is difficult to imagine a Tajik menu without fruits and vegetables. Tajikistan is famous for the best quality fruits.

All meat, meatcereals and other dense dishes are served with cut or whole fresh vegetables and katyk. There is a special place in the menu for baked goods and meat dishes: different kinds of lepyoshka (wheel of chewy bread), samsa (or sambusa), Mantu (steamed meat-stuffed dough, like pot-stickers), and baked meat.

Any meal begins and ends with tea. The meal begins with sweets (candies, caramels, and honey), baked and fried goods and also fruits, fresh vegetables, melons and watermelons, dried fruits (kuraga -dried apricots, raisins, almonds, and pistachios). At the end of meal they serve the traditional plov (rice cooked with mutton, grated carrots, and onions), Mantu or other "main" dishes. Plov (consisting of rice, meat, carrots, onions, oil (fat) fried and steamed, preferably over an outdoor fire in a deep pot) is the most popular and favorite dish of Tajiks. Laghman is similar to shurpa, but comes with noodles. Ugro has noodles



made of unleavened dough.

Shavlia is one of the ancient and favorite dishes of Tajiks. It is cooked in the same manner as plov is, but shavlia is more liquid and sticky than plov.

Bean dishes (peas, bean, green gram /mash/, and lentil) are rather popular in Tajik families now.

Shashlyk (skewered chunks of mutton grilled over charcoal, served with raw sliced onions) lamb baked in tandyr, and kazy are very popular.

Restaurants in Dushanbe

AL-SHAM

📍 11 Academician Rajabovs Street

☎ Tel: +992 37 227 12 00; 227 20 94

Cuisine: Arabic

DEHLI DARBAR

📍 88 Rudaki Avenue

☎ Tel: +992 37 224 66 11, 221 88 63

Cuisine: Indian

EURASIA

📍 81 Rudaki Avenue

Cuisine: European

GREAT CHINEESE WALL

📍 88 Rudaki Avenue

☎ Tel: +992 37 224 56 23

Cuisine: Chinese

GEORGIA Cafe

📍 29 Rudaki Avenue

☎ Tel: +992 37 227 81 02

Cuisine: Georgian

Things to Buy

Ceramics, metal ware, jewelry, wooden articles, embroidery (Clothes, Skull-Caps and embroidered Sacs for Cosmetics), knitted, silk woven and straw-woven goods as well as stone-works.

TURKEY

Introduction



Introduction

Turkey, a country of utmost strategic importance in the world due to its geopolitical location, is on the cross-roads between the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, which are referred to as the "Lands of the Old World". This country, enjoying a wealth of divine gifts of all kinds of scenic wonders, is a unique bridge between all faiths as well as Eastern and Western civilizations.

Turkey is located in the temperate zone between the 36 and 42 degrees of northern latitudes and 26 and 45th degrees of eastern longitudes; and there is a time difference of 76 minutes between its eastern-most and western-most tips. Turkey is linked to the oceans through the Black Sea, Marmara and Mediterranean Seas, which encircle it on three sides. It is like a neighbor to the entire world and has been the epicenter of major trade and migration routes throughout history. The Black Sea is linked to the world via the Straits and momentous shipping routes pass through the Marmara, an interior sea. The country borders Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iran to the east, Bulgaria and Greece to the west, and Iraq and



Syria to the south.

Turkey is a member of a variety of international organizations such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, World Trade Organization (WTO), Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, and the Economic Cooperation

Organization (ECO) and it is also a candidate for full EU membership.

Turkey, rectangular in shape, has a surface area of 814,578 square kilometers. In this respect, it is greater than all of its neighbors except Iran, and all European countries except the Russian Federation. The land segment on the European continent with 3% of its total

area is called Thrace, and the remaining 97% landmass in Asia is called Anatolia. The length of the land borders of the country is 2,875 kilometers; its coastline is 8,333 kilometers long, while its landmass is approximately 550 kilometers wide and about 1,500 kilometers long.

Country Profile



Country's Official Name:

Republic of Turkey

Flag Description:

Red with a vertical white crescent & white five-pointed star centered just outside the crescent opening.

Official Website:

<http://tourismturkey.org>

Government Type

Democratic, secular and social Republic

Legal System

The legal order of the Republic of Turkey is secured by executive procedures such as laws, by-laws, statutes and decrees, with the Constitution being first and foremost. The executive branch also contributes to the securing of this order through its regulatory procedures such as general directives, circulars, and budgetary instructions. The regulatory procedures of the executive branch and the administration are of general characteristics and encompass all the organizations of the State. These procedures may also be related to specific subjects, institutions, local administrations and private institutions as well.



Branches of the Government

Legislative Branch

Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) or Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (550 seats; members elected for five-year terms)

Executive Branch

It comprises of the President, as the head of the State, and the Council of



Ministers. The institutions of higher education, the professional organizations qualifying as public institutions, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, the Atatürk High Institution of Culture, Language and History, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs are also included in the executive body.

Judicial Branch

Judicial power is exercised by independent courts. The principle of supremacy of law and the independence of the courts and judges is fundamental. The judiciary is divided into three in the forms of legal, administrative and special judiciary. The military courts are classified as military judicial bodies. The high courts specified in the Constitution comprise the Constitutional Court in charge of constitutional adjudication, the Supreme Court of Appeals in charge of legal judicial adjudication, the Council of State in charge of administrative adjudication, the Supreme Military Court of Appeals and the Supreme Military Administrative Court in charge of military adjudication, and the Court of Jurisdictional Disputes in charge of juris-



ditional disagreement. The Judiciary Chapter of the Constitution also includes the Supreme Council of Public Accounts (the Audit Court) and the Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors.

Official Language & Local Dialects

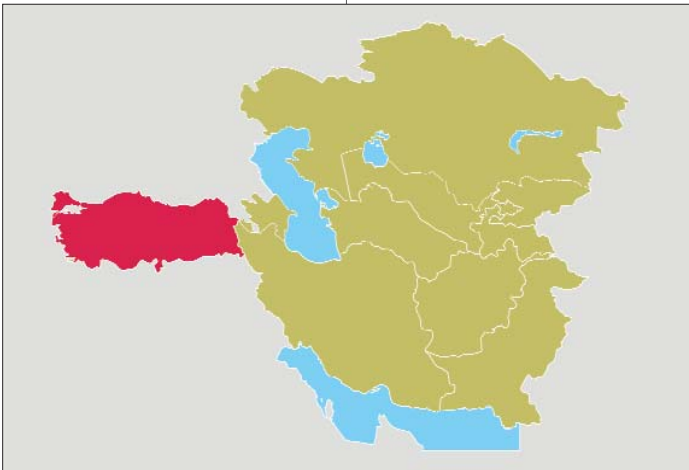
Turkish

Capital City

Ankara

Largest City

Istanbul



Major Cities

Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Adana, Trabzon, Malatya, Gaziantep, Erzurum, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Konya, Mersin, Eskişehir, Diyarbakır, Antalya and Samsun

Name of the Provinces

The territory of Turkey is subdivided into 81 provinces for administrative purposes. The provinces are organized into 7 regions. The regions include: The Marmara Region, The Aegean Region, The Mediterranean Region, The Central Anatolia Region, The Black Sea Region, The East Anatolia Region, and The Southeast Anatolia Region.

Ethnic Groups

Turkish 80%, Kurdish 20%

Country's Total Area

814,578 sq km

Population

71,892,808 (July 2008 est.)

Climate

Turkey is such a large country with such diverse terrain that the climate varies greatly from one region to another. The south Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Turkey have a typical Mediterranean climate with hot summers and mild winters. As you head towards İstanbul, summers become shorter and the winters colder. The Black Sea coast is Turkey's wettest region, and the only region which receives rainfall throughout the year. The eastern part can receive up to 2,200 mms annual rainfall, with warm summers and mild winters. In central Anatolia the summers are hot and dry and the winters cold, and as you head east towards Eastern Anatolia the summers become milder and the winters harsher-temperatures can drop as low as -30 C to -38 C in the mountains and snow may lie on the ground 120 days of the year.

Holidays & National Days

1 January: New Year's Day

23 April: National Sovereignty & Children's Day

19 May: Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth & sports day

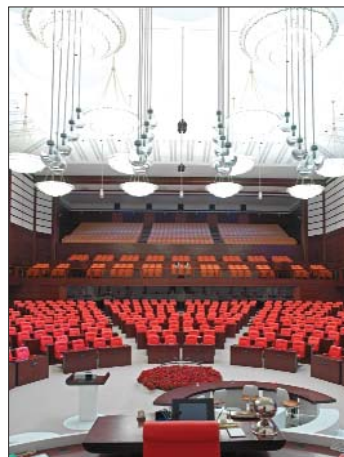
30 August: Victory Day

28 - 29 October: Republic Day

Eidul-Adha, Eidul-Fitr: Ramadan feasts scheduled according to the Lunar Calendar

Time Zone

GMT +2



The Silk Road

As the gateway to both the East and the West, depending in which direction one is travelling, Turkey has been a centre for cultural and commercial exchanges through the ages and has seen many great civilizations rise and fall. The ancient trade route of Silk Road linking China to the West originated in Xi'an; it was actually a caravan route and played an important part in the exchange of both goods and thought between the two great civilizations of the time, China and Rome. In ancient times, a regularly maintained network of roads and highways in Anatolia assured swift and safe travel - whether it was a caravan loaded with precious goods or a military expedition bent on conquest or punishment.

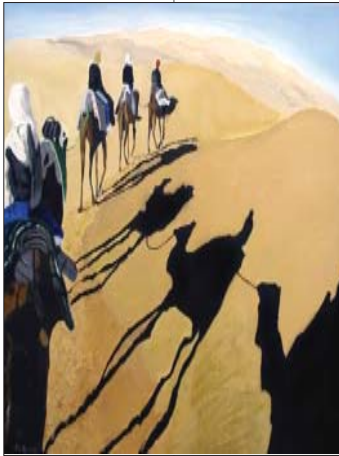
The caravan routes transporting silk, china, paper, spices and precious stones from one continent to the other followed several itineraries in Asia before arriving in Anatolia, which served as a bridge linking it to Europe via the Thrace region. These caravan routes later acquired the name of silk roads and Anatolia constituted the crossroad of these routes.

By the 13th century, the ruling Seljuks realized the value of The Silk Road trade to the economy. They encouraged it by cutting customs duties and establishing an insurance

scheme to safeguard commerce. It was also during Seljuk rule that a chain of caravanserais were built across Turkey at a distance of a day's trek, providing accommodation and safety for travelling merchants. These days, some 200 caravanserais from those times survive in Anatolia, some of which have been restored for use by modern-day Silk Road travelers.

The major cities lying on the Silk Road Anatolia were, in the north: Trabzon, Gümüşane, Erzurum, Sivas, Tokat, Amasya, Kastamonu, Adapazari, İzmit, İstanbul and Edirne; and in the south: Mardin, Diyarbakır, Adiyaman, Malatya,

Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Nevşehir, Konya, Isparta, Antalya and Denizli. Another frequently used itinerary is known to be the one between Erzurum, Malatya, Kayseri, Kırşehir, Ankara, Bilecik, Bursa, İzmit, İstanbul and İstanbul.



Useful Information

Best Time to Visit the Country

Spring (April to May) and autumn (September to October) are the best times to visit, since the climate will be perfect for sightseeing in İstanbul and on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, and it will be cool in central Anatolia, but not unpleasantly so. Visiting before mid-June or after August may also help you avoid mosquitoes. If your primary drive is for beach-bumming, mid-May to September is perfect for the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts, if a little steamy out of the water. The Black Sea coast is best visited between April and September - there will still be rain but not so much of it. Visit eastern Turkey in late June to September, but not before May or after mid-October unless you're prepared for snow, road closures and bone-chilling temperatures.

With the exception of İstanbul, Turkey doesn't really have a winter tourism season. Most accommodation along the Aegean, Mediterranean and Black Sea and in some parts of Kapadokya is closed from mid-October until late April. These dates are not set in stone and depend on how the season is going. High season is from July to mid-September, and prices are at their peak.

Anticipate crowds along all coastal areas from mid-June until early September. You will need to plan ahead when travelling during the four- or five-day Kurban Bayramı, as banks shut and ATMs may run out of cash.

Visa Regulations

Some visas can be granted on arrival or by prior application at the country's embassy or consulate, or sometimes through a specialized agency with permission from the issuing country of departure.

Customs Regulations

The following items may be brought into country duty free :

- 1) Goods used for clothing & travelling
- 2) Electronic Goods
- 3) Musical instruments
- 4) Sports & game instruments
- 5) Animals
- 6) Necessary medical items
- 7) Consumer's goods
- 8) Necessary kitchenware

How to get there and away

By Air: Turkish Airlines (THY) has scheduled flights to the Turkish centers such as Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Antalya, Adana, Trabzon and Dalaman from principal capitals and major cities of the world. Most of the major airlines have flights in and out of Turkey.

By Sea: Apart from numerous cruises in the Mediterranean, several foreign shipping companies have regular services to the ports of Trabzon, Samsun, İstanbul, Dikili, İzmir, Çeşme, Kuş adası, Bodrum, Marmaris, Antalya, Alanya, Mersin and İskenderun. There are several car ferries for tourists who wish to bring their cars while sightseeing: Connections run from Venice, Ancona, Brindisi, and Bari to İstanbul, İzmir, Çeşme, Kuş adası, Marmaris, and Antalya.

By Rail: Train journeys can be made to Istanbul directly from and via some of the major cities in Europe.

By Road: There are scheduled bus services between Turkey and Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, and Greece as well as Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Syria.

Travelling Around:

Turkish Airlines (THY) provides an important network of domestic flights from the international airports of Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Trabzon, Dalaman and Antalya to all of the major Turkish cities. For timetables, prices and reductions, enquiries can be made at THY agencies. There are bus connections to and from airports and city terminals.

The preferred means of transport in Turkey is by coach, and the air-conditioned intercity coach services are comfortable, fast and inexpensive. Each town has a bus station (otogar), where each bus company has its own office, where you can make reservations and buy tickets. Alternatively you can buy tickets from local travel agencies. Train services in Turkey are generally quite slow and the southwest of the country is not covered by the rail network at all. There are good services, however, between Istanbul and Ankara and the overnight sleeper services are both comfortable and convenient. You can buy tickets and make reservations at local train stations or through travel agents based in Turkey.

Within towns and between local villages, there are local bus services as well as the dolmuş services. These

are shared taxis, usually a minibus, and sometimes a large car, which operate along set routes, picking up and setting down passengers as they go. There is a set fare depending on how far you are travelling and you pay this to driver. They are an inexpensive way of getting around. The name, 'dolmuş', literally means 'stuffed'-from the fact that they do not have a set timetable but wait until they are full before setting off. Taxis are easy to spot as they are all bright yellow in color. All have a meter, and you should ensure that this is switched on at the beginning of your journey. There are two tariffs 'gündüz' for journeys which take place during the daytime and 'gece' for those which take place at night, which are charged at a higher rate.

Money

The unit of Turkish currency is Turkish Lira.

1 Turkish Lira = 0.611883 US Dollars

It's best to wait until you get to Turkey to exchange money for Turkish Liras. Exchange rates outside of Turkey are usually not as good as those inside Turkey.

The easiest way to get cash Liras is to stick your home bank card or credit card into a Turkish ATM.

You can exchange foreign currency cash at a Currency Exchange Office. The best currencies to carry for changing to TL are Euros, US dollars & UK Pounds.

Safety & Security

Organized crime is a problem in Turkey at the present time with criminal groups being currently active in casinos, nightclubs & elsewhere. Street crime figures are relatively low in Turkey.

It is strongly recommended that you leave your passport in the hotel safe.

What to do if you are a victim of crime in Turkey?

Call the police immediately. The numbers are:

Police:	☎155
Tourism Police:	☎0212 527 4503
Emergency:	☎112
Fire:	☎110

Embassy telephone numbers:

Embassy of Afghanistan, Ankara

☎Cinnah Caddesi, No. 88
 Cankaya
 ☎Tel: +90-312-442-2523
 ☎Fax: +90-312-442-6256

Embassy of Azerbaijan, Ankara

☎Diplomatic Site, Baku Sokak. 1,
 Oran
 ☎Tel: +90-312-491-1681, +90-312-491-1682, +90-312-491-1683
 ☎Fax: +90-312-492-0430

Consulate General of Azerbaijan, İstanbul

☎Sumbul Sokak 17, Levent 1,
 İstanbul
 ☎Tel: +90-212-325-8042, +90-212-325-8045
 ☎Fax: +90-212-284-957

Embassy of Iran, Ankara

☎Tehran St. No. 10 Kavaklıdere,
 PO Box 33, Ankara
 ☎Tel: +90-312-4682821
 ☎Fax: +90-312-4682823

Embassy Kazakhstan, Ankara

☎066450 Kilik Ali sokak No 6,

Or-An Diplomatik Sitesi Cankaya,
 Ankara

☎Tel: +90-312-491-91-00, +90-312-419-82-66,
 ☎Fax: +90-312-490-44-55

Kazakhstan Consulate General, İstanbul

☎Florya caddesi, No 62 Senlikkoy,
 İstanbul
 ☎Tel: +90-212-662-53-47
 ☎Fax: +90-212-662-53-49

Embassy of Kyrgyz Republic, Ankara

☎11 Boyabat Sokak, Ankara
 ☎Tel: +90-312-4468408
 ☎Fax: +90-312-4468411

Kyrgyz Consulate General, İstanbul

☎7 Lamartin Caddesi, İstanbul
 ☎Tel: +90-212-2518370
 ☎Fax: +90-212-2356767

Embassy of Pakistan, Ankara

☎37, Iran Caddesi, Ankara
 ☎Tel: +90-312-4271410, +90-312-4271413,
 ☎Fax: +90-312-4671023

Pakistan Consulate, İstanbul

☎Cengiz Topal Caddesi, Gulsen Sokak No.5, Beyaz Ev - III, Atiler, İstanbul
 ☎Tel: +90-212-3584506, +90-212-3584507
 ☎Fax: +90-212-3584508

Pakistan Consulate, İzmir

☎Otoplaza Is Merkezi 2818 Sokak No. 1 Daire 133/A Halkapinar, İzmir
 ☎Tel: +90-232-4591616, +90-232-4462333, +90-232 4694232
 ☎Fax: +90-232-4490107

Embassy of Tajikistan, Ankara

📍 M. Gandhi Cad 30, 06700, Ankara

☎ Tel: +90-312-446-1602

📠 Fax: +90-312-446-3621

Embassy of Turkmenistan, Ankara

📍 M. Gandhi Cad 30, 06700, Ankara

☎ Tel: +90-312-446-1602

📠 Fax: +90-312-446-3621

Embassy of Uzbekistan, Ankara

📍 Sancak mahallesi, 211, Sokak No3, 06550 Yildiz-Cankaya, Ankara

☎ Tel: +90-312-441-38-71

Consulate General of Republic of Uzbekistan, İstanbul

📍 Sehit Halil Ibrahim Caddesi, No 23, Istinye, İstanbul

☎ Tel: +90-212-323-20-37

📺 Health

Turkey has a large health sector with high standard private health care available at reasonable cost in main cities.

Food and Drink: Water is chlorinated in towns & cities, but it is advisable to drink the widely available bottled mineral water. Eat only well - cooked meat & fish.

Vaccination: Vaccinations against tuberculosis & hepatitis B are sometimes recommended.

📺 Telephone Codes of Major Cities

International phone code for

Turkey: 📞 +90

Adlyaman 📞 416

Ankara 📞 312

Antalya 📞 242

Aydin 📞 256

Denizli 📞 258

Diyarbakir 📞 412

İstanbul (Europe) 📞 212

İstanbul (Asia) 📞 216

İzmir 📞 232

Mardin 📞 482

Muğla 📞 252

Nevşehir 📞 384

Rize 📞 464

Şanlı Urfa 📞 414

Trabzon 📞 462

Van 📞 432

📺 Major Travel Agencies

Ankara:

📍 Onur Sokak No: 68/5 Maltepe

☎ Tel: (312) 232 21 56

Antalya:

📍 İsmet Paşa Caddesi, İzzik Han

B Blok Kat : 1 No: 13

☎ Tel: (242) 248 38 85

İstanbul:

📍 Cumhuriyet caddesi No: 87/7

Elmadag

☎ Tel: (212) 240 25 23

İzmir:

📍 Akdeniz Caddesi Dede İsmail Hani

No:10 Kat4

☎ Tel: (212) 483 99 57

Navigatour Travel Agency:

📍 Sehit Muhtar Cad

No: 7/2 Taksim İstanbul info@navigatour.com

☎ Tel: + 90 212 36 15 71

Pride Travel:

📍 İncili Cavas Sakak, Ates Pasajı

No: 33 Kat 2 Sultanahmet İstanbul

☎ Tel: + 90 212 52 70 671

Arts and Crafts

Decorative Arts

The decorative arts, which were brought from Central Asia to Anatolia, achieved importance in the Seljuk and Ottoman eras, and reached the Republic era with an accumulation throughout the centuries. A department of Turkish Decorative Arts was established at the State Academy of Fine Arts in 1936, and training commenced in gilding, calligraphy, marbling, miniatures and tile design. At present, branch education in decorative arts is being carried out in three universities in İstanbul and İzmir (Mimar Sinan, Marmara and 9 Eylül Universities). Besides, the General Directorate of Fine Arts, affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, organizes many activities to keep the traditional Turkish decorative arts alive. A "Turkish

Decorative Arts Exhibition" has been organized annually since 1986 to motivate artists in this branch to develop a contemporary synthesis in harmony with today's sense of art, and also to display their latest creations.



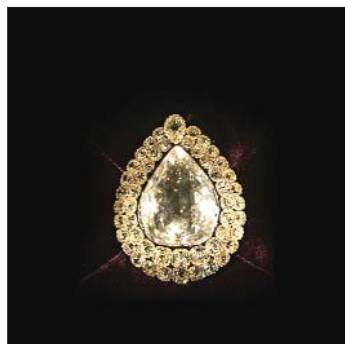
Stone Work

Stone works belonging to Emevi, Abbasi, Memluk, Seljuk, Ottoman periods, some of which have motifs and some of which have figures, but all of which have writings have been gathered in Turkish and Islamic Works Museum. Unique and elite samples of stone art of Seljuk Period, grave stones on which hunting scenes, fairy creatures such as sphinx, gryphon, dragon, early - period stone works with kufi writings, inscriptions written in different methods that are projections of Ottoman calligraphy art are important both in quality and in quantity.

Jewelries

The bracelet is a very ancient form of human adornment, and the designs of the earliest surviving examples suggest that, like so many other types of jewelry, they were originally a form of talisman or magic charm.

The first bracelets were made of wood, stone, and soft metals occurring naturally in their metallic state, primarily gold and copper. As technology developed over the millennia it became possible to extract and



work silver and other metals. Today bracelets are as popular as ever. Stylistically they fall into two categories, what we might call the classical imitating old forms, and modern designs in abstract and original styles.

Wood Craft

The Kayseri Ethnographic Museum contains extensive wood examples. The Anatolian region is endowed with many forests, which constituted the majority of vernacular architecture. In the arts, the inlay or mother-of-pearl was common in Ottoman and Moorish furniture. Wood was also formed into works of filigree producing a "hanging lace" effect. Finally, wood was covered with gilt or simple engraved.

Ceramics

This process involves richly decorating ceramic, tile or porcelain pieces then covering the design in a thick glaze. This style, produced most often in İznik and Kütahya, had its peak between the 14th and 17th centuries. Three regions in Turkey are prized for their ceramic production: İznik, Kütahya and Çanakkale. In the first years of the Republic, ceramicists were also sent abroad besides artists specializing in other branches of art. İsmail Hakkı Oygar, Hakkı İzer and Vedat Ar, who were among the first ceramicists to be trained abroad, took up ceramics in a different manner than the traditional concept, which was about decoration and ornamentation, and headed

towards original work when they returned home. The contemporary approach brought by İsmail Hakkı Oygar to the art of ceramics registered significant development in the works of his followers. A ceramics atelier was established at the State Academy of Fine Arts in 1929 with the contributions of artists, and ceramics training started. The first private ceramics studio was established by Füreyya Koral in the mid-1950s; and many artists such as Füreyya Koral, Sadi Diren, Nasipî yem, Bingül Başarı r, Candeğer Fürtun, Atilla Galatalı , Beril Anı lanmert, Hamiye Çolakoğlu, Zehra Çobanlı and Jale Yılmazbaşı ar produced world-class works of art since 1949.



Calligraphy

In general, skilled handwriting involving Arabian letters comes to mind when calligraphy is mentioned. This art has evolved following a lengthy development of Arabian letters

which took place between the 6th and the 10th centuries. Turks became interested in calligraphy after they arrived in Anatolia and experienced their brightest period in this field during the Ottoman era. The style and approach of Sheik Hamdullah, who is regarded as the founder of the Turkish art of calligraphy, endured until the 17th century. Hafız Osman (1642-1698) bestowed the Arabian script its most mature form in terms of aesthetics and all of the calligraphers from that time on were his followers.

The Turkish art of calligraphy kept its

vitality in the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, but upon the adoption of the Latin script which replaced the Arabic one in 1928, it ceased to be a widespread art and became merely a traditional art taught in specific institution.

The last grandmaster of Turkish calligraphy was Hattat Hamid Ayaç. Ayaç, who was born in Diyarbakır in 1891, was among the pioneers to introduce zincography and steel gravure techniques, in other words, embossed and luxury printing techniques as well as engraving pictures or scripts on steel sheets. Thousands of examples of his exquisite calligraphy exist in the unmatched scripts in Şişli Mosque, one of the newest mosques in İstanbul, and also in many houses, lounges, and workplaces in Egypt and Iraq as well as other places in the world. Ayaç, who spent a long and fruitful life, trained a great number of students coming from the entire Islamic world, and even from Japan.

Book Binding

The great love of flowers ensured that they would never be absent from book bindings.

The floral motifs can be seen both in traditional decoration style and the naturalistic style which emerged in the 16th century.

Paintings

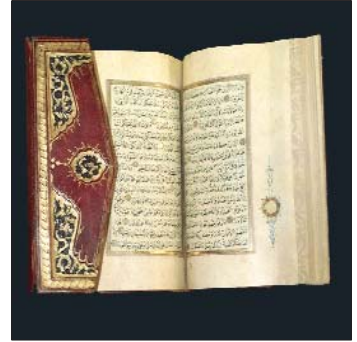
Painting in the western sense started to develop in Turkey in the nineteenth century. Artists such as İbrahim Çallı, Hikmet Onat, Namık İsmail, Avni Lifiç and Feyhaman Duran, who went to Europe to further their studies in art in the 1910s, acquired the techniques of impressionism as well as symbolist interpretations albeit being educated at the Cormon Atelier. These artists, known as the "1914 Generation", became the first academicians to train the painters of the Republic era in the Fine Arts Academy.

Extensive research carried out by Public Centers (Halkevleri) on Anatolian peoples' art and culture in the 1930s influenced many artists and caused them to deal with the issues raised in the wake of the findings of the research.

Illumination

Known as 'tezhip' in Turkish, this is an old decorative art. The word 'tezhip' means 'turning gold' or 'covering with gold leaf' in Arabic. Yet 'tezhip' can be done with paint as well as with gold leaf. It was mostly employed in handwritten books and the art of illumination has been practiced as widely in the West as it has in the East on the edges of calligraphic texts. East in the Middle Ages in particular it was widely used to decorate Christian religious texts and prayer books. Gradually however, picture illustrations became more popular, and illumination became restricted to decorating the capital letters in main heading.

Among the Turks, the history of illumination goes back to the Uyghurs, and first began to be seen among the Uyghur people in the 9th century. The Seljuks then brought it to Anatolia, and the art saw its culmination in Ottoman times.



Mameluke artists in 15th century Egypt developed their own style, and great advances in the art of illumination were made at the same time in Persia and then in such cities as Herat, Hiva, Bukhara and Samarkand which were ruled by the Timurs.

The style that developed in Herat later had great influence on the Persian art of illumination. As a result of growing ties with Persia in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Ottomans adopted many of the features of the Herat School in their own work, and created new syntheses. In the 18th century, the Ottoman art of illumination began to fade, with crude decoration replacing the classical motifs.

Miniatures

Usually small in size, miniatures are typified by sumptuous ornamentation coupled with detailed elements. Particularly important to Ottoman art are the works of the *Zubdat-al-Tawarikh* and the artist *Levni*. Elements used include the arrow point illumination and the marbling of paper.

Leather Work

Leather work, one of the oldest arts in the world, today, still maintains its tradition of production which was yielded through centuries in Anatolia, the motherland of the world's oldest civilizations. For the people who started the civilization history of which we are a part today, covering themselves was undoubtedly one of the most important

need, and leather was a natural clothing material. That's why the history of leather reflects the history of humans. Leather appeared as an extremely important raw material required in every area in the civilizations of the regions extended from Mediterranean basin, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, to Iran and Middle Asia. All strong and useful clothes, boots, mount/load/carrriage animal cars' leather works, whips and bags were always made of leather.

Embroidery

The art of embroidery, which belongs to an ancient tradition with roots



extending from the dawn of history to the present day,

has traditionally occupied an important place in Turkish life. Needlework found a particularly wide range of applications, among the Ottoman Turks, especially in the court and its circle which produced embroidery of such high quality that it has all the characteristics of fine art. This is true even of terms used in the daily life of the palace, such

as men's and women's garments, for example robes, kaftans, underclothing, a variety of decorated headscarves, numerous kinds of headgear, such as head bangs called *kaş tı bastı*; and, also waist bands, belts, and handkerchiefs. The most striking examples of Turkish embroidery, however, are those that were used in the furnishings of the palaces—divan and cushion covers, floor coverings known as *nihale*, wall and door curtains, and covers for the

throne. Embroidery, however, was not an art limited to the palace.

On the contrary, because textiles of all kinds were so closely connected with the Turkish way of life, embroidery was produced and used at every level of society, from the most exalted to the humblest. Whether made for a sultan or a peasant, it added color and beauty to everything from military campaign tents to the most delicate hand towel.



Textiles

Turkish fabrics are unique in weaving features, materials used and designs reflecting Turkish taste. Research on the subject identified about six hundred and fifty names such as Kadife, Atlas, Gezi, Canfes, Selimiye, Hatayi, Catma, Seraser, Sevayi, etc. The main material was silk with gold and silver threads, rich in motifs such as flowers (tulips, carnations, roses, spring blossom, and hyacinth), trees (apple, date palm, cypress), animals (peacock, deer), crescent moon, star motifs, fruit (pomegranate,

apple, date, artichoke, pineapple), etc.

Textiles were given great importance in the Ottoman court and were registered as belonging to the treasury. The demand by members of the court for luxury fabrics was an influential factor in the increase in production and rise in quality. The gold and silver threads used in textiles had to be drawn in workshops (simike-shaneler) under direct state control and bear the official control seal. The state was responsible for pressing the cloth after it had been removed from the loom. The cloth was finally measured, its length checked and stamped, and permission was given for its sale. All this was carried out by officials (muhtesip) under state supervision. The state was also assisted in this work by the control exercised by the guilds over their own members. There can be no doubt that these various controls provided the basis for the excellence achieved in 16th century fabrics.

Rug Weaving

Turkish carpet making holds an important traditional and cultural perspective on the values of Anatolia throughout their creation. As such, their preservation and display is of utmost importance in the hopes of disseminating this beautiful form of art.

Archaeological evidence shows flat-loom weaving in Anatolia since the Neolithic period. Thus, the Turkic peoples in this region were one of the first peoples to utilize flat-loom weaving. The plethora of colors used - along with countless variations on designs-reflect the cultural and economic values of the rugs produced. The quality of wool, the mastery of technique, the particular colors used, the types and sources of dyes all point to ways of determining these social, anthropological and economic histories. The motifs and colors typical of Turkish carpets and kilims constituted an important medium of expression for the weaver and his community. The values of the period to which it belonged may be reflected in the twist and quality of the wool, the manner in which the dye was manufactured and from what plants or insects it was produced, the

fineness or looseness of the stitch and, most important of all, the symbolic significance of the motifs and the aesthetic dimensions of the stylization. Turkish hand-woven carpets may thus be regarded as source material for the study of the anthropology, ethnology and ethnography of the periods to which they belonged, as well as of the general technical and economic background. Carpet-weaving, carried out on various types of looms without the benefit of modern appliances and demanding most meticulous handling at every stage of its production, from the preparation by the old traditional methods of the warp, weft and knot to the application of the natural dyes, is one of the few Turkish handicrafts to have continued with the same scrupulous application to detail right up to the present day.

Glass Arts

Turkish glass works never held a primary role in the retinue of the craftsman; however, examples of stained glass and mirrors appear in Topkapi.

More important, was the carving of rock-crystal into flasks, jugs and other decorative or serving pieces.

Metal Working

The Anatolian region is well-stocked with silver mines, and gold was readily available from the Near East. Jewelry of gold and repoussé of silver and other metals was and still quite popular. Braziers and bath bowls used in bath houses also employed this art. Typical motifs included calligraphy and arabesque or floral designs.

Marbling

The art of marbling on paper, or 'ebru' in Turkish, is a traditional decorative form employing special methods. The word 'ebru' comes from the Persian word 'ebru,' meaning 'cloud.' The word 'ebru' then evolved from this, assuming the meaning 'like a cloud' or 'cloudy,' and was assimilated into Turkish in the form 'ebru.' Marbling does actually give the impression of clouds. Another possible derivation of the word 'Abr' is from the Persian 'âb-rûy,' meaning 'dignity'.

Although it is not known when and in which country the art of marbling was born, there is no doubt that it is a decorative art peculiar to Eastern countries. A number of Persian sources report that it first emerged in India. It was carried from India to Persia, and from there to the Ottomans.



Architecture

The Turks produced masterpieces of architecture during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. The monumental buildings created by Turkish architects since the eleventh century have a distinguished place in the heritage of world architecture. The Selimiye and the Suleymaniye Mosques built by Mimar (Architect) Sinan, who is the symbol of Ottoman architecture, are masterworks reflecting the degree of maturity which the Ottoman architecture had reached in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in dealing with space and mass compositions. In fact, classical Ottoman style puts forth universal leaps and values.



The Early Republic Period Turkish architecture which was dominated by the First National Architectural Movement until 1930, developed as a continuation of Ottoman architecture. Architects of this period erected public buildings to serve the needs of the major Anatolian cities in the wake of the Turkish War of Independence.

These architects who seem to have borrowed certain elements of Seljuk and Ottoman architecture, and who were led by Kemaleddin Bey and Vedat Tek, assigned special importance to facades which they decorated, sometimes elaborately, with stone carvings and ceramic tiles. The public buildings, some of which are standing today, reflect the peculiarities of the First National Movement. After the 1930s, foreign architects began to dominate architectural activities.

They brought functional designs and an austere look to buildings. Flat roofs were preferred; the facades were bereft of ornaments; large windows were used and almost invariably, buildings were erected in a design of which simplicity and function were given top priority.

Most of these foreign architects also worked as instructors and professors in schools of architecture and thus trained a new generation of architects. Meanwhile the Turkish architects of the 1930s mostly followed these imported masters.

Archaeological Objects

The Archaeological Museum of İstanbul, with its vast collection of antiquities, mainly from Anatolia and the neighboring regions in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, is one of the most outstanding museums in Turkey. Objects of archaeological importance discovered within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, were first brought to İstanbul in 1846, and stored in Hagia Eirene and the Cinili Kosk, the Tiled Pavilion, situated within the precincts of Topkapı Palace. The modern history of the Museum began in 1881, when Osman Hamdi Bey, an archaeologist and a sophisticated artist, was appointed as director. Same year, the construction of the present building was started and enlarged with further additions in 1902 and 1908.

The museum was opened to public in 1891. In 1991 a new gallery was added to the main building and opened in 1994.



Music

Turkey-rich in musical heritage-has developed this art in two areas, Turkish classical and Turkish folk music. Through the centuries many instruments have been used in Turkish music, such as the Ud, Tanbur, Kemançe, Ney, Kanun, Kudüm, Bendir, Tef, Halile, Lavta, Santur, Rebab, Musikar, Çeng and Sinelkeman.

The various types of Turkish music differing in modes and pitch include tunes and spirituals and are classified as Kar, Nakış Murabba Beste, Ağır Semai, Yürük Semai, şarkı , Peş rev, Saz Semai, Taksim, Gazel, İlahi and Kaside.

The history of Turkish music, especially in regard to melodic variations, can be divided into four periods. The first is the formation which goes back to the years 1360-1453, when the Turks adopted Islam.

After the conquest of İstanbul, but prior to the period of classical music, Ottoman music was influenced by Byzantine music, mainly in the years 1640-1712. The greatest proponents of the Ottoman style after the exemplary classical music created by İttri were Ebubekir Ağa, Tab'i Mustafa Efendi, Küçük Mehmet Ağa, Sadulla Ağa, Padişah III Selim and İsmail Dede Efendi. The period from 1955 onwards has been designated as the reform period.

Intended reforms in the field of music during the Republican period led to debates on the subjects of European, Turkish, polyphonic and monophonic music. During this peri-



od composers who were noted for their work included Refik Fersan, Cevdet Çağla, Sadettin Kaynak, Selahattin Pınar, Suphi Ziya Özbekkan, Lem'i Atlı , Rauf Yekta, Suphi Zühdü Ezgi, Hüseyin Saadettin Arel and others. Currently, three groups represent Turkish music. The first group favors polyphonic music. The second group prefers an individual interpretation of classical music. Numbered among this group were the Nevzat Atlı ğ chorus, Bekir Sıdki Sezgin, Meral Uğurlu, Niyzi Sayın, Necdet Yaş ar, İhsan Özgen, Erol Deran, Cinucen Tanrı korur and others. The third group preserves traditional ties coupled with high quality and includes Yalçın Tura, Mutlu Torun, Ruhi Ayangil and others of the "new wave." Turkish music is a product of Turkish thoughts and feelings and of migrations and changing geographical positions. It expresses the changes in the ways of life of the Turkish people throughout history. Ballads and songs are especially important. Turkish folk music encompasses all natural and communal events.

It branches out into "Kırık Hava" and "Uzun Hava" and makes use of wind, string, and rhythm instruments. From 1926 onwards various state enterprises have conducted research into Turkish folk music.



Cinema

The first film showing in Turkey was held in the Yıldız Palace in 1896. Public shows by Sigmund Weinberger in the Beyoğlu and Sehzadebasi districts followed in 1897. The first Turkish movie, a documentary produced by Fuat Uzkı nay in 1914, depicted the destruction of the Russian monument in Ayastefanos by the public. The first thematic Turkish films were "The Marriage of Himmet Aga" (1916-1918), started by Weinberger and completed by Uzkı nay, "The Paw" (1917) and "The Spy" (1917), both by Sedat Simavi. In 1922 a major documentary film, "Independence, the İzmir Victory," was made about the first war of Independence.

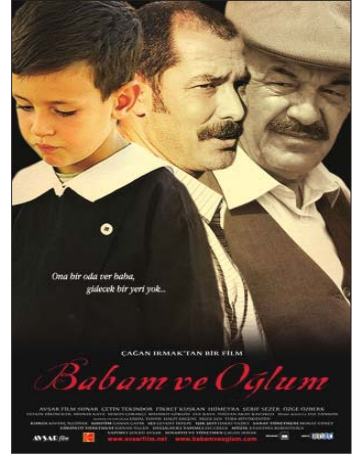
The same year, the first private studio, Kemal Film, commenced operations. From 1923 to 1939, Muhsin Ertuğrul was the only film director in the country. He directed 29 films during this period, generally incorporating adaptations of plays, operettas, fiction and foreign films.

The years between 1939 and 1950 were a period of transition for the Turkish cinema, during which it was greatly influenced by the theater as well as by World War II. While there were only two film companies in 1939, the number increased to four between 1946 and 1950. After 1949, Turkish cinema was able to develop as a separate art, with a more professional caliber of talents. Between 1950 and 1966, more than fifty directors practiced film arts in Turkey. The number of cinema-goers and the number of films made record a constant increase, especially after 1958.

In the 1960s, cinema courses were included in the programs of the theater departments in the Language, History and Geography faculties of Ankara and İstanbul Universities and in the Press and Publications High School of Ankara University.

A cinema branch was also established in the Art History Department of the State Fine Arts Academy. The Union of Turkish Film Producers, and the State Film Archives also were established in the 1960s. The State Film Archives became the Turkish Film Archives in 1969. During the same period, the Cinema-TV Institute was founded and annexed to the State Academy of Fine Arts. In 1962, the Cinema-TV Institute became a department of Mimar Sinan University. In 1970, the numbers of cinemas and cinema-goers rose spectacularly.

After 1970, a new and young generation of directors emerged, but they had to cope with an increased demand for video films after 1980. Increased production costs and difficulties faced in the import of raw materials brought about a decrease in the number of films made in the 1970s, but the quality of films improved. On January 23, 1986, a new cinema law aimed to ensure support for those working in cinema and music.



Theatre

As elsewhere in the world, two elements have been influential in introducing the theater into the life of the Turks: rituals and religious ceremonies from pre-historic times and tales, legends and various other events from everyday life.

The first theater was a product of these events as they were staged on various occasions. In Turkey, folkloric theatre of this nature still exists in rural areas. Puppet plays, Karagoz shadow shows, the Meddah (story-teller) and Orta oyun (a kind of Ottoman style dance), all of which have folkloric aspects, remained common in everyday life until the period of westernization.

With the proclamation of the Tanzimat in 1839, a series of changes took place in state and social life, one of which was the establishment of the Turkish National Theater.

During this period contacts were established with the western theater, which were encouraged by the imperial palace and high-ranking state officials. The close interest of the imperial circle in theater led to the relatively easy acceptance of theater by society.

The library of Mehmet II included a great variety of theatrical works. High-ranking state officials promoted western theater in Turkey and lent their support to these developments. While Ottoman intellectuals

adopted western theater, traditional Turkish theater was neglected.

This led to a lack of national character in early Turkish theater. Development in this field was generally the result of merely passing on experience. Cemil Paşa, who headed the İstanbul Municipality from 1913 to 1914, pioneered the foundation of a conservatory, in which the theater and music departments were named "Darulbedayii Osmani." The departments were directed by Andre Antoine until he returned to his own country at the outbreak of the first World War.

State theaters were founded by legislation on June 10, 1940, and were affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Later, State Theaters were attached first to the prime ministry and then to the Ministry of Culture.

After the formation of the State Theaters, a number of theaters in Ankara opened their curtains during 1948 - 1949. Seven years later, on

October 5, 1956, the Chamber Theater came into being. That same year, the Halkevi became Ankara's third theater, while the New Stage started in the 1960 - 1961 season and later the Altındağ Theater on March 27, 1964.

The first regional theatrical activities started during the 1956 - 1957 season. The opening of the Adana and İzmir state theaters was followed by the opening of the Ahmet Vefik



Paşa Theater in Bursa. The Atatürk Cultural Center in İstanbul opened in 1969. Until it acquired its own company in 1978 - 79, the state theater organized continuous tours to İstanbul.

Following the proclamation of the Meşrutiyet (constitution), play-writing developed greatly.

Under the Republic, the City Theaters staged the plays of famous Turkish play writes such as Halit Fahri, Vedat Nedim, Musahipzade Celal, Ömer Seyfettin, Yakup Kadri, Abdülhak Hamit, Cevdet Kudret, Faruk Nafiz and Hüseyin Rahmi.



This aptly reflects the bureaucratic nature of the empire, with its stress on writing and registering. Turkish calligraphers contributed to the development of new and more ornate styles of calligraphy.

Each of the sultans had their own monogram in stylized script, called a Tugra. Sultan Ahmet III and Sultan Bayezit II were skilled calligraphers.

Many of the greatest works were preserved in the extensive Ottoman archives and can be seen at Topkapı Palace and İbrahim Paşa Museum (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts).

Quranic Arts

Islamic Art varies substantially from Western Art due primarily to restrictions in the Koran on depicting the human form. Rather than being representational of the profane world, the perfection of Ottoman art lies in the pure balance of color, line and rhythm in geometric patterns and designs.

Of the Ottoman arts, Calligraphy was the most important. Such mundane items as tax reports, property deeds and imperial edicts became exquisite works of art.



Ecotourism

National parks

The first national park in Turkey was established in 1958. Since then their numbers have increased to 39. Some of these parks, which were initially established for archaeological and historical purposes, are at the same time rich habitats where biological diversity is being protected.

The Olympus - Bey Mountains National Park in the province of Antalya in the Mediterranean region, for example, contains a wealth of flora and fauna, which are either endemic or relic distributions, in

addition to important archaeological ruins. The Köprülü Canyon National Park in the same province is the home of *Cupressus sempervirens* forests. Natural forests of this tree no longer occur elsewhere in the world.

In addition to its archaeological and geological treasures, this park also contains a large number of endemic plants and rare animal species.

Although the majority of the national parks are found in forest lands, there are also a number which are established in areas where steppe-type vegetation predomi-



nates. Examples are Munzur Valley (eastern Anatolia), Başkomutan, Göreme, Bogazköy - Alacahöyük (all in Central Anatolia), and Nemrut Mountain (Eastern Anatolia - Adiyaman).

Among the national parks, the famed Kus Cenneti National Park is characterized by a particularly significant ecological structure. The Kus Cenneti National Park is one of the many prime quality wetlands in Turkey and is located in the southern zone of the Marmara region.

As of 2008, there are 39 National Parks all around Turkey, and their total surface reaches 877.771 hectares (2.169.011 acres).

Wildlife Reserves

In addition to National Parks, there are 35 areas that have been specifically preserved in order to protect endangered species of flora and fauna. Some of them are used for scientific research and educational studies.



TURKEY
Map of Turkey





Top 10 Places to visit

Aya Sofya Museum



The Basilica of St. Sophia, now called the Aya Sofya Museum is unquestionably one of the finest buildings of all time. The remarkable structure with its 56m high immense dome is a museum today in which you can see both Christian and Islamic art holding a superb collection of ceramics, metalwork, miniatures, calligraphy, textiles, and woodwork as well as some of the oldest carpets in the world. There are good examples of the Byzantine mosaics as well. For about 1000 years this was the largest church in the world, and glory of the Byzantine Empire.

Efes

Efes is considered one of the great outdoor museums of Turkey and one of the world's spectacular historical sites. It is located on the south of İzmir's Selçuk County. The city was famed for the Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which was destroyed by a mob led by St. John Chrysostom in 401 AD. Today's archaeological site lies 3 kilometers south of the Selçuk district of İzmir Province. The ruins of Efes are a favorite international and local tourist attraction such as Odeion, a semi-circular structure known also as the Small Theatre, Temples of the Goddess Rome and of Divine Caesar, Prytaneion, The Pollio Fountain, Temple of Domitian, The Gate of Heracles, Curetes Street, Trajan Fountain, Temple of Hadrian, Latriana, "Houses on the slope", Library of Celsus, Marble Street, Efes Theatre & Efes Indoor Museum, Cave of the Seven Sleepers and the House of the Virgin.

The Blue Mosque

Known as the 'Sultan Ahmet Mosque' by local people, it was built by Sultan Ahmet in 1609 and completed in 7 years, although foreigners

have taken to calling it the 'Blue Mosque' because of the beautiful blue İznik tiles decorating the interior. The architect who oversaw its design was Sedefkar Mehmet Aga, better known as a student of Sinan (the greatest architect ever seen in the Ottoman Empire). Not only was it built to serve as a mosque, but its huge surrounding complex



also held a medrese (theological school), turbe (tomb), hospital, caravaserai, primary school, public kitchen and market, although the hospital and caravanserai were destroyed in the nineteenth century.

After the public kitchens were destroyed in a fire in 1970, they were restored and incorporated into the School of Industrial Art. It presently serves as the Dean's Office for the Marmara University.

Bergama

The site of the once celebrated city of Bergama, former capital of a kingdom that was one of the most important in Asia Minor, is situated near the modern town of Bergama. The remains of the Roman city are for the most part underneath the modern dwellings, while the earlier Greek city with the imposing ruins of its royal stronghold occupies

a magnificently impressive situation on the summit and the terraced slopes of the hill east of Bergama. Yacht charters and sailing holidays are perhaps the most suitable method of discovering these ancient sites in Turkey. Especially the luxurious gullet cruises or blue cruises are ideal. The main yacht charter bases can be found in the ports of Bodrum and Marmaris.

Kapadokya

Called Cappadocia in ancient times, Kapadokya occupies the center of Turkey, the region between the Black

Sea in the north and the Taurus Mountains, between the capital Ankara and the city of Malatya to the east. Famous for its spectacular natural rock formations and valleys, Göreme National Park, as it is known today, is strewn with underground cities, stone chapels, monasteries and dwellings that were hewn out of the weirdly eroded volcanic rock from as long ago as 400 BC. Thousands of years of wind and rain erosion on a landscape of soft volcanic stone topped with hardened lava

caps has created a fascinating landscape of rock cones and pinnacles that are known as Fairy Chimneys. The Valley of Fairy Chimneys is the most popular area, roughly within the triangle formed by the three main towns of the region, Avanos, Ürgüp and the main transport hub of Nevşehir.

Outside the triangle to the south are the remarkable

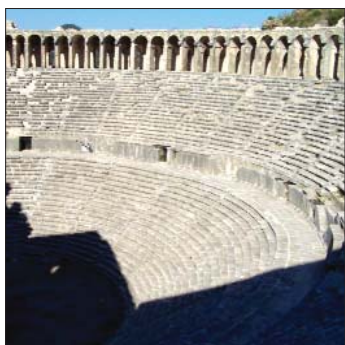
underground cities of Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı, where layers of tunnels and an intricate system of caves hid generations of settlers and sheltered early Christians fleeing persecution. The Ilhara Canyon is another religious hideaway with more than 100 painted churches and about 4,000 dwellings carved into the rock walls or concealed within the cliffs; its river bed and lush vegetation stand in stark contrast to the dusty, seemingly barren land above. Cave dwellings, ancient monasteries and painted chapels are well camouflaged, with entrance ways that are



barely noticeable among a landscape of perforated cliff walls and rock fissures. Houses of volcanic stone blend unobtrusively into the natural surroundings, pigmented in natural shades of ochre and yellow, to pinks, greys and greens, and many people still inhabit the cones and chimney formations. In tourist towns such as Göreme, delightful little hotels and pensions are built partially into the rock or are housed within a rock cone and offer cave-style rooms.

Sardis

Sardis lies in the territory of ancient Lydia, overlooking the Gediz River, where evidence has been found of human activity as early as the Paleolithic period (ca. 50,000 B.C.). Archaeological highlights of Archaic date include the royal burial mounds at Bin Tepe, city wall, and gold-working installation on Pactalus River; important monuments of Roman, and Byzantine date include the bath-gymnasium complex, synagogue, and row of shops adjoining the synagogue. Over 11,000 objects have been inventoried by the archaeological exploration of Sardis since its founding in 1958; a selection of the more important finds are on display in the Archaeological Museum of Manisa.



Aspendos

An ancient city in southern Turkey, Aspendos is best known for its well-preserved theater. The theater of Aspendos, one of the main tourist attractions in southern Turkey, was a gift to the city by two men, Crispus Crispinus and Crispus Auspicatus, brothers, during the reign of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (161-180). The building was designed by an architect named Zeno. Its forty rows of seats were made of marble. The capacity was about 15,000 people, who could watch a tragedy, comedy, or a gladiatorial contest. That the gift of the Crispus brothers was rather exceptional, becomes obvious when we take into account that 15,000 people was also the capacity of the theater of Miletus, which was a metro pole.

Mediterranean Coast

The coastline along the Mediterranean Sea is an alluring destination, renowned for its magnificent scenery with picturesque coves and rocky headlands, turquoise waters, golden beaches and pine forests. The beautiful landscape, where the Aegean meets the Mediterranean is the beginning of the

Turquoise Coast, dominated by the mountains of the Taurus range whose cliffs plunge into the sea of intense blue. Further along the Mediterranean one reaches the Turkish Riviera as it is known, the region of Antalya; and together these make up the tourism capital of Turkey. Simple villages share the water's edge with sophisticated resorts, and fishing vessels and pleasure yachts mingle together in the sheltered harbors. Endless days of sunshine make it a paradise for boat cruises, sunbathing and swimming and numerous water

sports, and there are a variety of restaurants and bars to round off a day on the water. The coast also boasts a rich cultural legacy from early civilizations and is imbued with history and legend, found in ancient cities and at sites such as the fires of Chimaera at Olympus, and numerous ruins dotted about the countryside.

Muğla Province

Muğla is the ideal destination for those who want everything at once. It is one of the many ancient cities of the Caria region, today Aegean region of Turkey. The most beautiful holiday resorts of Bodrum, Marmaris, Datça, Köyceğiz and many others are all within the borders of Muğla province. There are many quality holiday villages, comfortable hotels and hospitable guest houses in Muğla and here you may enjoy every type of hol-

iday, except for winter sports. The landscape is perfectly mingled with dozens of historical sites, such as Labranda, bearing the traces of past civilizations of Anatolia. The beaches are available for any type of water-sport, as unspoiled bays and clear waters await you in Muğla. In the city center there are picturesque views with the traditional architecture of Turkish houses and an Aegean type of living. The international airport of Dalaman (a town of Muğla) is the main one in the region.



Pamukkale

Pamukkale, meaning "cotton castle" in Turkish, is a natural site and attraction in southwestern Turkey in the Denizli Province.

Pamukkale is located in Turkey's Inner Aegean region, in the River Menderes valley, which enjoys a temperate climate over the greater part of the year.

The ancient city of Hierapolis was built on top of the white "castle" which is in total about 2700 meters long and 160m high. It can be seen from the hills on the opposite side of the valley in the town of Denizli, 20 km away.

5 Major Cities

Ankara



Ankara is the capital of Turkey and the country's second largest city after İstanbul. As with many ancient cities, Ankara has gone by several names over the ages: here in the homeland of many civilizations and the historic battle ground between East and West, the Hattis, Hittites, Phrygians, Galatians, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks and Ottomans all fought their for

their sovereignty and established their rule. In the 11th century, migrating Turks from the east made the plateau their own. Ankara is an important commercial and industrial city. It is an important crossroads of trade, strategically located at the center of Turkey's highway and railway networks, and serves as the marketing center for the surrounding agricultural area.

Ankara's Natural Beauties

Ankara has many delightful parks and open spaces established in the early years of the Republic in accordance with Atatürk's belief in the importance of trees and natural beauties. The most important of these parks are: Gençlik Park (with an amusement park), the Botanical Garden, Seğmenler, Anayasa, Kuğulu, Abdi İpekçi, Güven, Demetvler, Cemre, Kale, Anıt, Kurtuluş (for ice skating) and Altın Park (fairground) and Atatürk Orman Çiftliği (Atatürk Farm & Zoo).

Ankara's Monuments

Ankara Castle

The foundations of the citadel or castle were laid by the Galatians on a prominent lava outcrop, and the rest was completed by the Romans. The Byzantines and Seljuks further made restorations and additions. The area around and inside the citadel, being the oldest part of Ankara, contains many fine examples of traditional architecture. There are also recreational areas to relax. Many restored traditional Turkish houses inside



the citadel area have found new life as restaurants, serving local cuisine, music and of course, Rakı . The citadel was depicted in various Turkish banknotes during 1927-1952 and 1983-1989.

Kalecik Castle

Kalecik Castle is 78 km from Ankara on the road to Çankırı . The castle with the magnificent spectacle of the modern town was founded upon a cone shaped hill. It is connected to the mountains in the southwest by a ridge and sit alone high above the plain formed by the Kızı lı rnak (Red River).

Anitkabir

The mausoleum of the founder and leader of Republic's, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was built on the hill of Rasattepe. The architecture completed in 1953 and Atatürk was removed from the temporary burial site at the Ethnographic Museum and brought here with great ceremony on the same year. The building has a remarkable entrance, is a synthesis of antique and modern architectural themes, and also is a proof of the classiness and strength of Turkish architecture. There is the tomb of İ smet İnönü, the first prime minister of the Turkish republic and the president after Atatürk's death, opposite to Mausoleum. A number of Atatürk's personal belongings are exhibited here in Anitkabir.

Temple of Augustus

Located in Ulus Square, the Roman Temple of Augustus was built by the Romans in the 2nd century AD, and contains the best-preserved copy of Emperor Augustus' last will and testament, inscribed on the vestibule walls. The temple itself is in ruins and is not

open to the public, but together with other Roman ruins in the vicinity (including the Roman baths and the column of Julian) it is an exciting port of call for classical history addicts.



Atakule

Atakule is modern side of the appearance of today's Ankara. The 125-metre tower stands 118.2 meters above the ground, and the 600 sq.

meter multi-purpose hall and a revolving restaurant at the top of the tower. The lookout terrace at 104m is open everyday from 09.30 to 23:00. Here offers a spectacular view of the entire city.

Roman Theatre

The remains, the stage, and the backstage can be seen outside the castle. Roman statues that were found here are exhibited in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. The seating area is still under excavation.

Roman Bath

The bath was built during the reign of Emperor Caracalla in the 3rd century AD to honor Asclepios, the God of Medicine. This bath has all

the typical features of a classical Roman bath: a frigidarium (cold room), tepidarium (warm room) and caldarium (hot room). Today, only the basement and first floors remain.

Column of Julian

The column, popularly known among the locals as the Belkıs Minaresi (literally the "Queen of Sheba Column", for reasons unknown), was erected to commemorate a visit to Ancyra by the Roman emperor Julian in A.D. 362. The Corinthian capital dates to the 6th century; the stork's nest, a permanent crowning feature, is of more recent vintage.

Ankara's Museums

Museum of Anatolian Civilizations

It houses a marvelous and unique collection including Paleolithic, Neolithic, Hatti, Hittite, Phrygian, Urartian, Roman works, and showpiece Lydian treasures.

Ethnography Museum

Opposite the Opera House on Talat Pasa Boulevard is the Ethnography Museum. There is a fine collection of folkloric artifacts as well as fine items from Seljuk and Ottoman mosques.



Atatürk's House

This museum is on the grounds of the Presidential Palace in Cankaya and was Atatürk's house after the founding of the Republic.

The house is much as it was in Atatürk's day, with additional photographs recording important events.

Painting and Sculpture Museum

This museum is close to the Ethnography Museum and houses a fine collection of Turkish art from the late 19th century to the present day. There are also galleries for visiting exhibitions.

Museum of Liberation

The museum is close to Ulus Square in a building that was originally the first parliament building of the Turkish Republic.

The War of Liberation was planned from here and the photographs and items of the exhibition record that period. And in another display are wax figures of all the presidents of the Turkish Republic.

Museum of the Republic

Housed in the second parliament building of the Republic, close to the Museum of Liberation, the exhibition here records important events in the early days of the Republic.

Natural History Museum

It contains some fascinating exhibits and dioramas detailing the (often extinct) wildlife of Anatolia, as well as a large collection of fossils and minerals.

Most interesting are the fossilized footprints of humans who walked the Anatolian steppes 25,000 years ago, and the skeleton of a Maras elephant which lived in the area 193 million years ago.

Ankara's Art Galleries

Ankara is a center for opera and ballet, jazz and modern dance, and home of the prestigious Presidential Symphony Orchestra. Ankara also has a large number of theatres with many ambitious productions. In addition to exhibitions at public and private galleries throughout the city, exhibitions are also held at the Atatürk Cultural Center.

The city has many cinemas showing the best Turkish and foreign films, and there are a number of film festivals on various themes throughout the year. Every year in April/May the city hosts an International Arts and Music Festival, with performances by the finest Turkish and foreign musi-

cians.

The April 23rd Children's Festival is also quite an event, with groups of children from all over the world taking part. Altın Park is home to the Ankara Fairgrounds; beautiful fairs are held year-round here.



Ankara's Mosques Koçatepe Mosque

This is the largest and most notable mosque in the city. Located in the Koçatepe quarter, it was constructed between 1967 and 1987 in classical Ottoman style with four minarets. Its size and prominent location have made it a landmark for the city.

Hacı Bayram Mosque

This mosque, in Ulus, next to the Temple of Augustus, was built in the early 15th century and subsequently restored by Sinan in the 16th century, with Kütahya tiles added in the 18th century.

The mosque was built in honor of Hacı Bayram Veil, whose tomb is next to the mosque.



Yeni (Cenab Ahmet) Mosque

This is the largest Ottoman mosque in Ankara and was built by the famous architect Sinan in the 16th century.

The mimber (pulpit) and mihrap (prayer niche) are of white marble, and the mosque itself is of Ankara stone (red porphyry), an example of very fine workmanship. The mosque is on Ulucanlar Avenue.

Alaaddin Mosque

This mosque is inside the Citadel walls. It has a carved walnut mimber, the inscription on which records that the mosque was built in the 12th century by the Seljuk ruler, Mesut.

Ankara's Bazaars

Bazaars are set up in almost every district on different days of the week. In addition to fresh vegetables and fruit, clothing, decorative accessories, antiques, stationery and many other things are sold at very reasonable prices.

The Bazaars are open from 09:00 until dark. Recently, many stands have started to offer credit card facilities, which also increase interest in Bazaars.



Ankara's Old Bridges

Akköprü is a historical bridge in Yenimahalle district of Ankara, crosses the Ankara River in front of Varlık neighbourhood.

It is the oldest bridge in Ankara and still in good condition. The neighborhood around the bridge was also named 'Akköprü'.

The area is home to the great Atatürk Cultural Centre and Ankamall shopping centre, the biggest mall in Ankara.

Places to Stay

When in town, besides starred hotels, you can also try a special category hotel which are usually small hotels decorated in the traditional way.

There are also many youth hostels around the country. Below you can find a list of selected quality hotels in Ankara.

Sheraton

📍Noktali Sokak Kavaklıdere

☎Tel:0312 4576000

Very good 5* tower hotel in the city center.

Hilton

📍Tahran Cad.

No:12Kavaklıdere

☎Tel:0312

4550000

Very good 5* hotel in the city center.

Swissotel

📍Josemarti Cad.

21.Sok.

No:2Cankaya

☎Tel:0312

4093000

Very good 5* hotel in the city center.

Dedeman

📍Akay Cad. Buklum Sok.

No:1Akay

☎Tel: 0312 4168800

4* superior hotel near the city center.

📍Where & What to Eat

There are many good restaurants in Ankara where you can try Turkish cuisine and local drinks.

Usually the food in Turkey is quite cheap, but there are fine and expensive restaurants as well. Below is a list of some of the selected restaurants in Ankara.

Zenger Paşa Konak

📍Doyran Sok. No:13 Ankara

Kalesi - Ulus

☎Tel:0312 3117070

Over the average good dining in a old mansion of the citadel, mainly meat dishes.

Mezzaluna

📍Iran Cad. Turan Emeksiz Sok.

No:1 Kavaklıdere

☎Tel:0312 4675818

Expensive fine dining in the city center, Italian cuisine.

Pinapple

📍Ugur Mumcu Cad. 64/B Gazi osman Paşa

☎Tel:0312 4465327

Over the average good dining, mainly meat dishes, fish too.

📍Where & What to Buy

The Kızılay area of Ankara also features more than its share of shopping opportunities, which tend to be grouped around the Atatürk Bulvarı and the Gazi Kemal Bulvarı. Here, the department store of Gima is a good place to start and sells everything from groceries and cosmetics, to high-street fashion, souvenirs and confectionary, including Turkish delights. Nearby, a further selection of shops lines much of the Gazi Mustafa Kemal Bulvarı, while on the end of the Tunali Hilmi Avenue, the Karum shopping centre is well worth a look, as is the Atakule Tower in the Cankaya quarter.

The Atakule Tower features impressive views across central Ankara and even comes with its very own revolving restaurant. The Castle (Kale) in Ankara has served as a trade centre for the city for literally centuries and offers a unique shopping experience, with local traders selling hand-woven Turkish carpets and rugs, leather goods and a range of antiques. On the outskirts of Ankara and along the highway, the Anka Mall, the Armada, the CEPA and the Galleria shopping malls are all excellent, with the Armada recently ranking as the 'Best Shopping Mall in Europe'.

İstanbul

The former capital of three successive empires, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman, İstanbul today honors and preserves the legacy of its past while looking forward to a modern future.

It is İstanbul's variety that fascinates its visitors. The museums, churches, palaces, grand mosques, bazaars and sights of natural beauty seem innumerable.

Reclining on the western shore of the İstanbul Strait, watch the sun setting. It is when you can see why İstanbul is truly one of the most glorious cities in the world.

The city has been chosen as joint European Capital of Culture for 2010. The historic areas of İstanbul were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1985.



İstanbul's Museums

Topkapı Palace Museum



Built by Mehmet the Conqueror as a Sultan's Palace, the Topkapı Sarayı consists of a sprawling collection of buildings arranged around several interconnecting courtyards. Magnificently situated on one of the seven hills of İstanbul, it was the seat of the Ottoman Empire for almost four centuries. No expense was spared in decorating the palace and exquisitely designed rooms, intricately detailed fountains and gateways, and the splendid Treasury, housing one of the greatest collections of treasure in the world, afford insight into the opulent lifestyle of the sultans of the Ottoman Empire.

Calligraphy Museum

The Beyazid Medrese, restored and reorganized as the Turkish Calligraphy Museum, has interesting and valuable examples of the Turkish art of the pen, Korans, imperial seals, diplomas, Hilye-i serif (descriptions of the Prophet), equipment and apparatus for calligraphic writing, samples of bookbinding, holy relics and miniatures, especially from Ottoman and Seljuk periods.

Archaeological Museum

Built by the end of 19th century, it includes the exquisite Tiled Kiosk and the

Museum of the Ancient Orient and houses a large collection of artifacts and works of art belonging to ancient Greek, Roman and other Anatolian civilizations dating back to the 6th century BC.

Modern Arts Museum

Opened its doors in December 2004 thanks to Eczacıbasi family, this is the first and only Modern Arts museum in İstanbul . It's housed at renovated old docks in Karaköy district facing Topkapı Palace, with a rich library, exhibitions, photograph gallery, sculpture courtyard, Movie Theater, cafe and souvenir shop. One can find in this private museum almost everything on modern Turkish Arts.

Fine Arts Museum

On the order of Atatürk, this museum was opened in 1937 in the crown prince suites of Dolmabahçe Palace. It was the first art museum in Turkey and only one in İstanbul until recently. The permanent collection presents a panoramic view of the Turkish plastic arts and also includes works of world famous artists, an impressionist collection, sculptures and works of military painters.

Carpet & Kilim Museum

This museum is located in the Hunkar Kasrı (royal residence), which stands north of the Sultanahmet mosque (known as Blue Mosque) complex. Hunkar Kasrı was the place where the Sultan used to rest before he would join the prayer in the mosque. The museums has unique pieces of old Ottoman rugs and kilims.

City Museum

On display are paintings depicting the social life of the Ottoman period

in İstanbul, calligraphy, textiles, 18th and 19th century porcelains made in the imperial workshops of Yıldız Palace, various glass objects, calligraphy equipment and other objects of daily life.

Sadberk Hanım Museum

Founded by the Vehbi Koç Foundation in 1980 in the historical Azaryan residence along the İstanbul Strait, this museum is a beautiful three-story "yali" (old Ottoman house) and houses a rich collection of Anatolian-based works of art, antiques and relics dating from 6000 BC.

It is the first private museum of Turkey opened by Koç family, the richest of Turkey.



Museum of Turkish & Islamic Art

The grand 16th century palace of the sultan's Grand Vizier, İbrahim Paşa, today houses the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, containing what many consider to be the finest collection of Islamic artifacts in the world.

It contains more than 40,000 examples of Selçuk, Mamlük and Ottoman Turkish art, including ceramics, Koran cases, calligraphy, textiles, metalwork and illuminated manuscripts.

Its antique carpet exhibit is renowned; the carpets, kilims and prayer rugs forming one of the richest and oldest collections in the world.

İstanbul's Mosques

Süleymaniye Mosque

The largest mosque of İstanbul with four minarets, this outstanding piece of architecture was built in the 16th century for Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. Standing on a hilltop of the ancient city over the Golden Horn, it contributes gracefully to the city's skyline. The tombs of the Sultan, his wife Hürrem and Mimar Sinan are found within its compounds. The Süleyman's mosque is closed for restorations since 2008, and most probably it will be re-opened in 2010.



Eyüp Mosque

The first mosque built after the conquest of İstanbul, the great Mosque of Eyüp lies outside the city walls in Eyüp district, near the Golden Horn, at the supposed place where Eyüp (Eyyub el Ensari), the standard bearer of the Prophet Muhammed, died in the Islamic assault on Constantinople (İstanbul) in 670. Today it's considered a pilgrimage site.

Fatih Mosque

Built over the ruins of the Church of Apostles, Fatih Mosque bears the name of the Ottoman conqueror of İstanbul, Fatih Sultan Mehmet. The mosque is the site of his mausoleum. Its vast size and its great complex of religious buildings, including medreses, hospices, baths, a hospital and a library, make it well worth a visit.

Dolmabahçe Mosque

It is one of the highly decorated Baroque-style mosques. The circular arrangement of the windows, which resembles a peacock's tail, is an unusual sight relatively unknown among the architects of mosques.

Zeyrek Mosque

Used to be a three-church monastic complex to serve as a dynastic mausoleum, it was converted to a Medresse and subsequently to a mosque. One part of the Zeyrek Camii is still used for Muslim worship. Zeyrek Mosque is selected as 100 most endangered sites of the world by World Monuments Fund.

İstanbul's Palaces

Yıldız

The Yıldız palace is known as the fourth Ottoman palace built in İstanbul after the



Conquest. Set in a very large park of flowers, tulips, plants and trees gathered from every part of the world, containing a pool and green houses, the palace grounds offer one of the most beautiful panoramic views of the İstanbul Strait.

Ihlamur Kasrı

Lovely imperial rest house built in the midst of Linden trees, where you can have a cup of Linden tea. The pavilion was built by Sultan Abdülmecit as a resting villa where he was also receiving some of his guests including the French poet Lamartine. It's opened as a museum in 1987.

Beylerbeyi

Beylerbeyi was initially the residence of the Governor General in charge of Anatolia, but was rebuilt in the style of Dolmabahçe and Çiragan palaces as a royal palace as the summer residence of the sultans. The palace is in neo-baroque architecture with a traditional Ottoman house plan. The palace is located at Beylerbeyi neighborhood, north of Üsküdar district, next to the intercontinental suspension bridge built in 1974.

Maslak Kasrı

Sultan's hunting lodge and a resting place, Maslak Pavilion is a combination of several kiosks built during the times of Sultan Abdulaziz (1861-1876). 5 of the Kiosks have survived until our days. The complex was opened as a museum in 1986.

One of the pavilions of the palace now serves as a cafeteria.

İstanbul's Bazaars Kapalıcarsi (Grand Bazaar)

The Bazaar is one of the oldest and largest covered markets in the world. Built in the 15th century as a complex of 3,000 shops selling raw materials to be used in clothes manufacturing, the Bazaar's fine shops and exotic atmosphere, mingling the ancient and new,

make it a "must-see" in İstanbul. It's divided into many sections such as leather, rugs, souvenirs, copper, antiques, textile etc. There are 18 gates and 60 streets inside.



Misir Carsisi (Egyptian Spice Bazaar)

Built in the 17th century next to the Golden Horn, the Spice Bazaar is the second largest covered bazaar in İstanbul. Originally housing shops selling medicine and spices, the Spice Bazaar continues to fulfill its original function. This distinguished example of Ottoman architecture continues to sparkle with life even today.

Sipahi Carsisi (Arasta Bazaar)

The Bazaar is located behind the Blue Mosque in the old city center, just next to the entrance of the Mosaics Museum. Unlike Grand Bazaar, Arasta Bazaar is a small and simple traditional market in İstanbul. There are about 40 shops lined on both sides of a street, selling traditional items.

Places to Stay

Besides starred hotels, there are many special category hotels too. These are usually restored old buildings and decorated in the traditional Ottoman way.

They have a limited number of guest rooms and are very stylish. Below is a list of selected quality deluxe, five star, four star superior, and special category hotels in Istanbul.

Ciragan Palace Kempinski


 Ciragan Cad. No:32 Besiktas

 Tel: 0212 3264646

Palace hotel on the Bosphorus, a Leading Hotel of the world.

Ritz-Carlton

 Suzer Plaza Elmadag

 Tel: 0212 3344444

Luxury highrise hotel overlooking the Bosphorus, in the city center.

Hyatt Regency


 Taskisla Caddesi Taksim

 Tel: 0212 3681234

Fine hotel in the city center.

Barcelo Eresin Topkapi


 Millet Cad. No:186Topkapi

 Tel: 0212 6311212

Five star hotel near ancient city walls.

Hilton İstanbul


 Cumhuriyet Caddesi Harbiye

 Tel: 0212 3156000

Fine hotel overlooking the Bosphorus, near the city center.

Sheraton İstanbul

 Buyukdere Cad. No:49 Maslak

 Tel: 0212 2850900

Highrise hotel near business district, ex Maslak Princess hotel.

Where & What to Eat

There are many good restaurants in Istanbul where you can taste Turkish cuisine and local drinks.

Usually the food in Turkey is quite cheap, but there are fine and expensive restaurants as well especially along the Strait and in some of the neighbourhoods. Below is a list of some of the selected restaurants in Istanbul.

Reina

 Muallim Naci Cad. No:44

Ortakoy


 Tel: 0212 2595919

Expensive fine dining on the Bosphorus, mainly Mediterranean food.

360

 Tel: Istiklal Cad. Misir Apt. No:32

K:8, Beyoğlu


 Tel: 0212 2511042

Expensive fine dining in the city center, great city view from the roof.

Vogue

 Suleyman Seba Cad. BJK Plaza A

Blok K:13 Besiktas

 Tel: 0212 2274404

Expensive fine dining with Bosphorus view from the roof, International food and Sushi.

Beyti

 Orman sokak No:8 Florya

 Tel: 0212 6632990

Above average good dining for over 60 years, meat dishes.

Kosebasi

 Camlik Sok. No:15 3.Levent

 Tel: 0212 2702433

Above average good dining, meat dishes.

Hamdi

📍 Next to Spice Market Eminonu

☎ Tel: 0212 5280390

Average priced good dining, meat dishes.

📍 Where to Buy

Historical Shopping Malls

1. Grand Bazaar (1461), Old city
2. Egyptian Bazaar (1660), Eminönü
3. Mahmutpaşa Bazaar (1462), Eminönü
4. Tahtakale

Modern Shopping Malls

1. Akmerkez (1993), Etiler
2. Astoria Shopping Mall, (2008), Esentepe
3. Atirus Shopping Center (2005), Büyükçekmece
4. Atrium Shopping Center (1989), Ataköy
5. Aymerkez (2002), Mimarisanan
6. Beylicium (2005), Beylikdüzü
7. Beylikdüzü Migros Shopping Center (1997), Beylikdüzü
8. Capitol Shopping Center (1993), Altunizade
9. Carousel Shopping Center (1995), Bakirköy
10. Capacity shopping mall (2007), Bakirköy

İzmir

The Aegean shores of Turkey are among the loveliest landscapes in the country. The magnificent coastline, lapped by the clear water of the Aegean



Sea, abounds in vast and pristine beaches surrounded by olive groves, rocky crags and pine woods.

Whether you prefer idyllic fishing harbors, popular holiday villages or the remains of ancient civilizations attesting to more than 5,000 years of history, culture and mythology, this region offers a holiday with something for everyone - nature lovers, sun worshippers, photographers, sports enthusiasts, sailors and archeologists.

Along the whole length of the coast, accomadation to suit every taste and price range can be found. Known in Turkish as "Beautiful İzmir", the city lies at the head of a long and narrow gulf furrowed by ships and yachts.

The climate is mild and the summer, the constant and refereshing sea breezes temper the sun's heat. İzmir is the 3rd largest city in Turkey.

The original city was established in the 3rd millenium B.C. at which time it shared with Troy the most advanced culture in Western Anatolia.

It is believed that Homer resided here.

İzmir's Natural Beauties

Balçova is on the road to Çeşme.

It is one of Turkey's largest thermal spas, with excellent facilities for guests.

Yamanlar Peak is the highest hill of the city with a crater lake which lies in

Karsiyaka district.

The district stands to the north shore of the İzmir Gulf and is one of the residential centers of the city. It has many old houses and mansions with large gardens, but lately many new apartments have been built along the waterfront. Çamaltı, 15 km west of Karsiyaka, is the area of coastal marshes and salt fields that is preserved as an important bird sanctuary - the İzmir Bird Paradise.



The enthusiasts can watch over 200 bird species including many domestic, summer immigrant, winter immigrant, and transit species pulling for a stop here such as flamingoes and pelicans. Yamanlar Çamlığı is a pine forest near the lovely Lake Karagöl 40 km. northeast of Karşiyaka, is a popular picnic spot that also has restaurants and a swimming pool. Belkahve is the highest point above İzmir, overlooking the Gulf of İzmir is a relaxing spot to enjoy a cup of Turkish coffee.

The Çeşme Peninsula, lapped by the waters of the Aegean Sea, Çeşme Peninsula lies west of İzmir. It is one of Turkey's most beautiful coastal stretches surrounded by clear blue sea, with a landscape of aniseed, sesame and artichoke fields dotted with fig and gum trees. In the unspoiled bays you can swim in absolute peace. Today the town is a popular holiday resort and visitors will find excellent holiday accommodation, restaurants, and sports and entertainment facilities. Thermal baths offer a health-oriented escape from modern life.

The very popular holiday center of Ilica boasts an excellent white sandy beach and the outstanding facilities of the Altın Yunus Marina and Holiday Complex. The bay here is ideal for water sports specially windsurfing and sailing. The thermal baths around Ilica are very popular, the best being located on Şifne Bay.

Tourists are attracted by the variety of accommodations at Ciftlik and by a long, sandy beach (Pirlanta Plaj), just outside the town to the southwest. Tursite camping facilities are available to the south, and nearby is one of the area's best beaches, the Altinkum Plaj (Golden Sand Beach). Windmills, some of which have been converted into attractive restaurants, dot the hill above Alaçatı, a delightful and typical Aegean town. Alaçatı lies to the south inland from Ilica and the coast. A couple kilometers to the south is a good beach. Many lovely bays along the coast southeast of the town are accessible only by yacht, ensuring peaceful and relaxing anchorage in this popular sailing region known in ancient times as Clazomenae, Urla İskeleyi offers a marina as well as plentiful accommodation in all price ranges. Restaurants on the top of Güvendik hill afford a marvelous view of the bay and its islands. The prosperous little fishing village of Çeşmealı is notable for its simple yet excellent fish restaurants.

İzmir's Museums

The Archeological Museum, near Konak Square, houses a superb collection of antiquities including the statues of Poseidon and Demeter which, in ancient times, stood in the Agora

Next to the Archeology Museum, the Ethnography Museum contains folkloric artifacts, which include a fine collection of Bergama and Gordes carpets, traditional costumes

and camel bridles (Closed on Mondays). The Atatürk Museum is situated on Atatürk Caddesi in an old İzmir house used by the founder of the Turkish Republic. It exhibits photographs of the leader as well as some of his personal effects. (Closed on Mondays).

The Fine Arts Museum, located in Konak, displays the works of famous Turkish painters (Closed on Mondays). The Selçuk Yaşar Art Museum is a private museum on Cumhuriyet Bulvarı with a collection of 20th-century Turkish art (Closed on Sundays).

The Natural History Museum in Bornova acts as a natural reserve of the Aegean Region landscapes' historical preservation (Closed on

Sundays).

The Odemis Archaeological Museum is about 60 km east of İzmir and displays regional artifacts (Closed on weekends).



The Tire Archaeological Museum is about 50 km east of İzmir (Closed on weekends).

İzmir's Monuments

Saat Kulesi (Clock Tower)

Symbol of İzmir, Saat Kulesi stands at Konak Square. It was

a gift from Sultan Abdülhamid and was built in 1901 in an elaborately decorated late-Ottoman style.

Asansör Quarter

The old Asansör Quarter is filled with old restored houses. Dario Moreno Sokağı is the main pedestrian street to the Asansör itself, which is an elevator, built in the 19th century. At 51 meters in height, it provides access between the

lower and upper streets. Top of the Asansör offers a beautiful view of İzmir.



Bayraklı

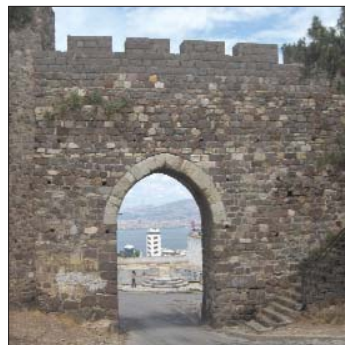
Excavations here have unearthed a temple dedicated to Athena and the wall of the Ionian city which flourished there between the 7th & 5th centuries B.C.

At around 205 meters high hill of

Bayraklı, there are some ruins belonging to the tomb of king Tantalus, a mortal son of Zeus, from 7th century BC.

Kadifekale (Mt. Pagos)

Here stand the impressive ruins of a castle and its walls built by Lysimachus in the reign of Alexander the Great and which still dominate İzmir today. The castle offers an excellent vantage point to enjoy a magnificent view of the Gulf of İzmir.



Agora

Agora or ancient market place in Namazgah Quarter was first built during the rule of Alexander the Great. Like all other Agoras of the ancient world, it was a meeting place for all commercial, political, and religious activities for the local people. It was surrounded mostly by state buildings on a rectangular plan with a large central courtyard and a covered stoa around it. What is left is the rebuilding after the devastating earthquake in 178 A.D.

Kizlaragasi Han (Inn)

A fine example of 18th-century Ottoman architecture of the period was built as a caravanserai. Kizlaragasi Han, being also close to the port, was an important trades point in İzmir until the developing of transportation technologies and opening of new trade routes, at certain times it even served as a local stock exchange. After 19th century the Inn was mainly used for storage of the goods instead of caravans' stop. Kizlaragasi Han was restored in 1993 as a tourist spot, and converted into a handicrafts sales center. There is a small cafeteria in the open-air courtyard where you can relax and have a Turkish tea or coffee.

Alsancak District

Alsancak district, called Punto in old times, is one of the centers of İzmir and an elegant and exquisite residential area. The neighborhood stretches from the waterfront, called Kordon which is lined up with nice and fine restaurants, to the inland.



Along the waterfront, it has a nice pedestrian promenade where one can enjoy fine shops and fine dining without the traffic noise, looking at the Aegean. Many buildings and churches with their authentic architectures remaining from these years can be seen in the backstreets. Atatürk Museum, Museum of History and Arts, Selçuk Yaşar Museum of Arts, Railroads Museum, Museum of Arts and Sculpture, Museum of Commercial History, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality Museum of Metropolitan History and Archive can be found in this district.

İzmir's Art

The İzmir Cultural Center hosts opera and ballet performances as well as musical concerts. The city is home to the Aegean Philharmonic Orchestra and boasts a thriving theatrical community.

For many years İzmir has enjoyed a reputation as a cosmopolitan city. During the annual İzmir International Festival, international and local artists perform at various venues in the city and surrounding area, including the theatre at Efes.

Take a horse-drawn carriage along the promenade during the day and afterwards spend the evening in the lively atmosphere of the bars and cafes around Kordonboyu, Passport Pier and Karsiyaka.

İzmir's Bazaars Kemeralti Market

The historical Kemeralti neighborhood in Konak district is the best known local shopping market in İzmir.

Besides vaulted and domed shops of the past, here you can find modern business centers, stores, movie theaters, and cafeterias.

All kinds of traditional Turkish handicrafts as well as daily shopping needs are sold here.

Mayors' Building (Hukümet Konagi) is at the entrance of Kemeralti from Konak.



Havra Street

Havra is an important street of historical Kemeralti neighborhood.

Local people come here to get

their fresh vegetables, fruits, fish and meat. The street gets its name from many Jewish Synagogues (Havra in Turkish) built here.

There are nine Synagogues on this street but only four are operative today, Talmud Torah is the oldest of nine in this street.

Places to Stay

Swissotel Grand Efes

📍 Cumhuriyet Meydani Alsancak

☎ Tel: 0232 4839761

Good 5* hotel facing the bay, in the center, ex-Efes hotel, opening in March 2008.

Mövenpick

📍 Cumhuriyet Bulv. No:138 Pasaport

☎ Tel: 0232 4881414

Good 5* hotel in the center, ex-Mercure hotel, opening in February 2008.

Hilton

📍 Gaziosmanpaşa Bulv. No:7 Çankaya

☎ Tel: 0232 4976060

Highrise 5* hotel overlooking the bay, in the city center.

Ontur

📍 Gazi Bulv. No:130 Çankaya

☎ Tel: 0232 4258181

Local 5* hotel, near the city center.

Princess İzmir

📍 Balçova
 ☎ Tel: 0232 2385151
 Local 5* hotel, thermal pools, away from the city center.

Balçova Thermal

📍 Balçova
 ☎ Tel: 0232 2590102
 4* hotel, thermal pools with treatment center, away from the city center.

Kordon

📍 Akdeniz Cad. No:2 Pasaport
 ☎ Tel: 0232 4848181
 Good 4* hotel facing the bay, in the center.

Palm City

📍 Mürselpasa Bulv. No:149
 Kahramanlar
 ☎ Tel: 0232 4458080
 4* hotel, near the fair grounds.

Aksan

📍 Gaziler Cad. No:214
 Kapılar
 ☎ Tel: 0232 4417061
 Average 4* hotel.

Karaca

📍 Necatibey Bulv. 1379 Sok. No:55
 Alsancak
 ☎ Tel: 0232 4891940
 Good 3* hotel in the center.

📍 Where & What to Eat

There are many good restaurants in İzmir where you can taste Turkish cuisine and local drinks, as well as fresh fish and typical appetizers of the Aegean region.

Usually the food in Turkey is quite cheap and very good quality. Below is a list of some of the selected restaurants in İzmir and environs such as Kuş adası, Çeşme and Foça.

Deniz

📍 Birinci Kordon No:188/B Alsancak
 ☎ Tel: 0232 4644499
 Over the average good dining along the Aegean, good sea food and appetizers.

Derya

📍 Üçkuyular vapur iskelesi
 ☎ Tel: 0232 2781311
 Over the average good dining on the Aegean, good sea food.

Balık Pisiricisi

📍 Veli Usta Birinci Kordon No:212/A
 Alsancak
 ☎ Tel: 0232 4642705
 Average priced good dining along the Aegean, fish restaurant.

Mercan

📍 10. Sok. No:98İnciralti - Balçova
 ☎ Tel: 0232 2590128
 Over the average good dining, good sea food and appetizers.

Altinkapi

📍 1444 Sok. No:14/A Alsancak
 ☎ Tel:0232 4222648
 Average priced, good Döner kebab and meat dishes.

Asansör

📍 Dario Moreno Sok. No:76 Karatas
 ☎ Tel: 0232 2612626
 Average priced good dining in a historic building, nice city view.

📍 Where to Buy

1. Agora (2002), Balçova
2. CarrefourSA Shopping Center (2000), Karşıyaka
3. EGE Park (1999), Mavişehir (previously EGS Park Mavişehir), Karşıyaka
4. Forum Bornova Shopping Center (2006), Bornova
5. Tesco-Kipa Shopping Center, Balçova

6. Tesco-Kipa Shopping Center (1999), Çiğli

7. Konak Pier, Konak Pier (2004), Konak

8. Özdilek (2001), Balçova

9. Palmiye Shopping Center (2003), Balçova

10. Park Bornova Outlet Center (2004), (previously EGS Park Bornova (1998) and EGS Outlet(2000)

Antalya

What could be more appealing than dreamlike landscapes, grandiose mountains and the magnificent colors of the sea and plants? Then contrast the lively holiday life with the quiet of ancient ruins and you have a perfect vacation. Surrounded by amazing scenery of sharp contrasts, Antalya, Turkey's principle holiday resort, is an attractive city with shady palm-lined boulevards and a prize-winning marina. In the picturesque old quarter of Kaleiçi, narrow, winding streets and old wooden houses abut the ancient city walls.

Antalya's Natural Beauties

The region around Antalya offers sights of astonishing natural beauty as well as awesome historical remains. You can walk behind the cascade, a thrilling experience, at the Upper Düden Waterfalls, 14 km northeast of Antalya. On the way to Lara Beach, the Lower Düden Waterfalls plunge straight into the sea. The nearby rest area offers an excellent view of the falls; the view is even more spectacular from the sea. Kurşunlu Waterfalls and Nilüfer Lake, both 18 km from Antalya are two more places of superb natural beauty.

The sandy Lara Beach lies about 12 km to the east. Closer to Antalya, but to the west, the long, pebbled Konyaaltı Beach offers a view of the

breathtaking Taurus mountain range. A little further the Bey Dağları (Olympos) National Park and Topçam Beach provide more splendid vistas. There are camping grounds at the north end of the park should you decide to linger amid the natural beauty. For a panoramic view of the area, drive to the holiday complex on top of the Tünektepe Hill.

Saklı kent, 50 km from Antalya is an ideal winter sports resort on the northern slopes of Bakırlı Mountain at an altitude of 1750-1900 meters. In March and April you can ski in the morning, eat a delicious lunch of fresh fish at Antalya's marina and sunbath, swim or wind surf in the afternoon. The wildlife (deer and mountain goat) in Düzlerçami Park, north of Antalya are under a conservation program. On the way you can stop at the astonishing 115 meter deep Güver Canyon.

On the eastern side of Çan Mountain, 30 km from Antalya, the Karain Cave, which dates from the Paleolithic Age (50,000 B.C.), is the site of the oldest settlement in Turkey.

Although the little museum at the entrance displays some of the finds, most of the artifacts are housed in various museums throughout Turkey.

Much of the land around the city of Antalya is occupied by limestone formations, with two notable ones located a short distance north-west of the city. Visitors making the short trip to



the Kirkgöz and Pinarbasi springs are sure to be impressed by the natural beauty of these eroded formations and the soothing sound of the water. Patara is a flourishing coastal Mediterranean city within the Antalya Province and located directly to the south-west of the city itself. Famed for its stunning golden sandy beachfront, the attractions of Patara are very much based around its gorgeous coastline and expansive natural harbour.

The ruins of Patara are also very special and stand close to both the seafront and River Xanthus, consisting of an excavated theatre, temple and ancient town walls. 35km southwest of Antalya is Kemer resort carved from Turkey's pristine pine-shaded Mediterranean coast. It is a favorable seaside location with little habitation and a modern resort town of white concrete buildings. With virtually nothing to offer in the way of quaint old buildings, photogenic winding streets or archeological ruins, people come to Kemer for sun and sea. The beaches are mostly of large pebbles and stones, although the ones near the yacht marina and Yörük Parki (an anthropological park with a Turkish nomad theme) are of sand. Kemer can be a base for exploring nearby sites like Olympos, Phaselis, Termessos, Perge and Aspendos, but Antalya is more centrally located and, overall, has more to offer.

Antalya Museums Museum of Archaeology

It is a facility displaying a large collection of ancient objects from various historical periods. From the prehistoric age there are ceramics and idols, while from the Phrygian period there are bowls, parts of weapons and bones. There are also pieces from the Bronze, Roman and Byzantine periods on show.



Antalya Museum (Antalya Müzesi)

The city's only major museum is home to a collection of displays and exhibits, featuring items from various different historical eras that were found in and around Antalya. Included among the artefacts are Roman sculptures, coins of Greek and Roman origin, and ethnographic pieces from Ottoman times. Antalya Museum is split into various themed sections and includes a prehistory section, the Gallery of the Gods and the Sarcophagus Gallery.

Karain Cave Museum

The museum is small but impressive all the same, with its displays of archaeological finds from the Lower and Middle Paleolithic eras. This popular attraction is actually to be found on the very same site that yielded the finds on display, and experts say it was once inhabited by prehistoric men.

Alanya Museum of Ethnography

Part of the same facility as the Archaeology Museum, the Ethnography Museum is based in an adjacent building and is home to a collection of pieces

dating from the Seljuk, Beylik and Ottoman periods. Among the most notable items on display are Ottoman carpets and a coin collection, the latter featuring pieces dating to ancient Greek times.

Atatürk's House Museum

This house is best known for providing hospitality to the Turkish Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, during his visit to Alanya on 18 February 1935. The building was donated to the Ministry of Culture for use as a museum by Rifat Azakoğlu, its former owner. On the ground floor, visitors can view a variety of objects and documents relating to Atatürk, including photographs and personal belongings.

Suna & Inan Kirac Kaleiçi Museum

The Suna and Inan Kirac Kaleiçi Museum is to be found within the very centre of the city's historical Kaleiçi quarter and lies next to the Hesapci Sokak. This beautiful mansion has been completely restored and inside you will discover a series of lifelike dioramas and Ottoman treasures. The exceptional Turkish ceramics in the adjacent former Greek Orthodox Church of St. George (Aya Yorgo) may also be of interest.

Antalya's Monuments

Hadrian's Gate

On the eastern side of Antalya's Old Town (Kaleiçi) there are some large portions of ancient wall that date back to both Roman and Hellenistic times. One of the most significant sections is punctuated by Hadrian's Gate, which was built to honour Emperor Hadrian on his visit in 130 AD. The gateway is made from marble, features three arches and is flanked by two splendid towers.

Kesik Minare (Truncated Minaret)

This beautiful landmark is part of a 2nd century AD building that was originally a temple. In the Byzantine period, the structure became a church. Later still, in the Ottoman period, the Kesik Minare became a mosque. This is when the minaret was added. Despite suffering damage in an earthquake, the minaret retains much of its original beauty.

Yıvlı Minare (Fluted Minaret)

Yıvlı Minare, also known as the Fluted Minaret, stands an impressive 38 metres / 125 feet high and was constructed originally as part of a mosque commissioned by Seljuk Sultan Aladdin Keyyqubad during the 13th century. The minaret, which is popularly considered the city's most striking landmark, is decorated with brown tiles and mounted on a large square base.



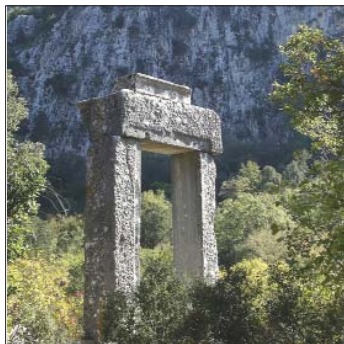
Perge

Perge was an important city in Pamphylia (today's Mediterranean region). The attractions include: ruins of the ancient theater; the "U"- shaped stadium with the capacity of 12,000 spectators; the remains of the first church built in Perge and a square agora (market place) surrounded by Corinthian style column capitals with the round temple of Tyche in the middle; a basilica, another structure from Christian Era with three entrances; a wide main

street with shops on both sides, a good example of a Roman Bath and Gymnasium in the southern part of the city, and monumental gates which later were converted into a court of honor.

Side

One of the best-known classical sites in Turkey, was an ancient harbor whose name meant pomegranate. Today a pretty resort town, its ancient ruins, wot sandy beaches, numerous shops and extensive tourist accomadation attract throngs of visitors. There are numerous cafes and restaurants with a view of the sea, and the shops that line the narrow streets sell typical Turkish handicrafts including leather goods and Turkey's famous beautiful gold jewelry. The magnificent theater of the ancient city, built on colonnaded arches, is the largest in the whole area. Other monuments include the agora, Temple of Apollo near the sea, a fountain and necropolis. The extensive Roman baths, now a museum, houses one of Turkey's finest archeological collections.



Termessos

The ruins of the city of Termessos are perched on a 1,050-meter high plateau on the west face of Güllük Mountain (Solymos) found in Mt.Güllük National Park northwest of Antalya. The most significant remains of the site are the fortified city walls, towers, king's road, Hadrian's gate, agora, stoas, gymnasium, heroon, odeon, a theatre with a capacity of 5,000 spectators, tombs, temples, houses, shops, cisterns and drainage system and a nature and wildlife museum. All of this is located in dense vegetation, sur-

rounded by typical Mediterranean flora. A wild and splendid landscape surrounds the monumental traces of the city.

Selge

An important Psidian city, Selge is located within Köprülü Canyon National Park to the east of Antalya. The ancient site is reachable by a winding mountain road. The city walls, towers, cisterns, temple of Zeus, agora, stadium, theater with a capacity of 9,000 people carved into boulders, nymphaeum (monumental fountain), baths, gymnasium and necropolis still remain from this commercial city that stood at an elevation of 950 meters.

Çıralı

Known in ancient times as Olympus, the ancient and remote city of Çıralı - with its picture-perfect scenic beauty, natural wonders and mystifying history is an irresistible vacation destination in Turkey. Set in the tempting Mediterranean clime, Çıralı has everything to tempt all kinds of visitors. The site is fascinating, not just for its ruins that are fragmentary and widely scattered amidst the thick greenery of wild grapevines, flowering oleander, bay trees, wild figs and pines, but for its archeological

site just inland from a beautiful beach along the course of a stream which runs through a rocky gorge. Today, Çıralı is a popular place for young people or budget travelers which overnight at small camping sites or pensiyons, or in their tents. There are several attractions nearby, such as Chimaera site.

Phaselis

The ancient city of Phaselis dates back to the 6th century and was originally a base used by Alexander the Great during the winter season. The decaying remains include temples, a theatre, an archway, an amphitheatre and an aqueduct. There is also a small museum onsite offering background on the city.

Antalya's Aqua Parks

Dolphinland and Aqualand / Antalya Beach Park

The Beach Park's Aqualand offers the very best way to cool down during the hot Turkish summer months and boasts a series of enormous waterfalls, along with fast water slides of up to 100 metres / 328 feet in length. Also part of the same complex and located on the Antalya beachfront itself, Dolphinland has become a major family attraction in the city and features regular shows with performing dolphins and sea lions, as well as a pair of white whales.

Dedeman Aquapark

The Dedeman Aquapark is reputed to be the biggest water park in the whole of the Middle East and perfect for a family day out. There are an enormous number of exciting water slides here and also

plenty of places to eat, relax and sunbathe. The Dedeman Aquapark is easy to reach and connected by regular dolmuses, which travel between the Fevzi Çakmak Caddesi and the Lara Plajı.

Places to Stay

1. Adam and Eve hotel, 500 Rooms including 27 suites, Each room with minimum 64 sqm and 15 sqm balcony facing the fascinating Mediterranean

2. If you would really like to spend your holiday in a magnificent and mesmerizing ambiance, Adonis Hotel is waiting for you at the point where dreams do come true.

3. Adora Golf Resort Hotel is situated in Belek Tourism Center which is very famous with its nature, magnificent flora and unique bird species.

4. Akka Hotels Alinda Beach welcomes you to all inclusive holiday



Where & What to Eat

7 Mehmet

Atatürk Kültür Park No:333

0242 2385200

Over the average good dining, both meat dishes and sea

food with appetizers.

Lara Balik

Eski Lara YoluBarinaklar - Lara
0242 3241575

Over the average good dining, fish restaurant.

Antalya Balik Evi

Eski Lara YoluLara
0242 3231823

Over the average good dining, fish restaurant.

Club 29

📍 Kaleiçi Yat Limani Kaleiçi

☎ 0242 2416260

Expensive fine dining in the old harbor, international kitchen.

Gizli Bahçe

📍 Dizdar Hasan Bey Sok. No:1

Kaleiçi

☎ 0242 2448010

Over the average fine dining in the old harbor, international kitchen.

Where & What to Buy

Modern Shopping Centers

- 1- Migros
- 2- She-mall
- 3- Laura
- 4- G-mall
- 5- Deepo

Adana

Set in the heart of the Çukurova (Cicilian) Plain, Turkey's fourth largest city, Adana is nestled in the most fertile agricultural area of the whole country which is fed by the life-giving waters of the Seyhan River. Situated 30 kilometers inland from the Mediterranean coast, Adana is the fifth most populous city of Turkey (after İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Bursa). Due to its being in the heart of that fertile center Adana has been an important city for many civilizations for centuries dating back to the Hittites.

Adana has a great tourism potential with the thousands of years historical background, immense works of art that have come from the past up to now, the natural beauty of Yumurtalık Karataş coast, the green plateaus of the Toros Mountains, healing water, the variety of the plant and animal species. The Toros Mountains that cover the north and west part of our province have a convenient natural environment for mountain sports, trekking and hunting tourism. With countless plateaus it is too convenient for the plateau tourism development. The lagoons and the places overgrown with rushes which the rivers create provide countless opportunities for the eco tourism. As the summers are very hot it has soon become obligatory for the people of the region to spend the summers in the plateaus. In the plateaus there are alternative tourisms like camping, health tourism, river and canoe tourism, cave tourism and hunting tourism.



For most Turkish people, the word 'Adana' associates with Kebab, şalgam, cotton, oranges and very hot weather. Adana is a very well developed and a modern city. It carries all of the typical features of a contemporary metropolitan city. People from all over the World may find several facilities in the city with its plentiful shopping malls, markets, cinemas, concert halls, night clubs and restaurants.

Places to See

Adana's Natural Beauties

The nearest beaches with accomodation facilities are at Yumurtalık, where an ancient harbor castle dominates the picturesque fishermen's wharf and at Karataş. Tuzla Bird Heaven is one of the biggest natural bird park carries thousands of different birds. There are also Adana Central Park, Adana Aquapark, Carreta Seashore Park and Sevgi Adası (Love Island).

Adana's Museums

Regional Museum

This museum includes a conference hall, laboratories, storerooms, a library and administrative sections and halls of archaeology and ethnography. The total number of works in the museum exceeds eighteen thousand, and there is an archive containing 449 volumes of canonical records.

Misis Mosaic Museum

Misis is 27 km. to the east of Adana. An excavation was carried out on the western side of Misis barrow in 1956. A mosaic floor of a mosque dating from

the 3rd Century AD Late Roman period was found. After the mosaics had been repaired and cleaned they were covered with a glass construction, they were opened to the public as a museum in 1959. The mosaic depicts the domestic and wild animals, which Noah took into his ark. Flower and geometric designs enhance the beauty of the mosaic.

Karatepe Open Air Museum

The museum is along the Osmaniye road beyond the Toprakkale Pass, a side turning branches off on the left to

Karatepe (Black Hill), some 28km north on the right bank of the Ceyhan Nehri. Here you can see the remains of a late Hittites city: walls, gates, castle, towers, etc. Little survives of the buildings within the town.



Archeological Museum

The Archeological Museum in Adana contains a fine collection of prehistoric pottery from Cilicia, some Hittite items and interesting Turkish ethnographic material. It was built in 1924 and the museum is considered to be a museum of the whole region, because the ancient artifacts exhibited were found not only during the excavations in the Adana area but also were excavated in other towns.

Ethnography Museum

It is in the center of Adana, in the Kuruköprü district. There are antiques from the Çukurova Turkoman tribe and also Islamic stone antiques, Turkish carpets, swords, manuscript books and

tombstones are exhibited. The building itself is interesting as well since it was built as a church by the Crusaders.

Atatürk Culture Museum

It is a house of masonry and timber and was built in the 19th century where Atatürk stayed as a guest on 15 March 1923. This building was converted into a museum in 1981.

Adana's Mosques

Ulu Cami

The building carries the architectural features of the Mamluk Seljukid and the Ottoman Periods. This mosque is the greatest and oldest building of Adana.

It is famous for the 16th century İznik tiling used in its inner space. Its minaret is a unique sample with the Mamluk effects it bears and with its orthogonal plan scheme. The mosque and its complex were damaged by the earthquake in 27 June 1998. It restarted functioning in 2004 after its restoration by the General Management of the Foundations between 1998 and 2004.



Adana Yağ Camı (Old Mosque)

The mosque has been converted from a church by Ramazanoğlu Halil Bey. Later, his son Piri Mehmet Paşa has built its minaret and madrasa. It is in the Seljukid Grand Mosque style. The entrance door is of yellow and black colored stone and is an important work of art.

Adana's Monuments

Taşköprü (Stone Bridge)

Built by Hadrian and repaired by the Byzantine emperor Justinianus I, the 310-meter-long Taşköprü (Stone Bridge) span the Seyhan River which bisects the town. Today, only 14 of the original 21 arches remain. The bridge was a vital contribution to the trade routes throughout ancient Anatolia and Persia. Today, it is one of the symbols of Adana.

Varda (German) Bridge

It is a historic railway bridge in Karaisalı, which is a district of Adana. The railway bridge is at the vicinity of the Hacıkırı village. It was built in 1903 by the Germans, so people also call it the German Bridge.

Büyük Saat Kulesi (The Great Clock Tower)

It is a large clock tower located on the Ali Münif Street and its image can be found in the city's coat of arms. The tower is composed of stone blocks and 32 m high. There are many historical buildings and tombs of local governors next to the Büyük Saat.

Anavarza Ruins

Beside the Sumbas Çayı, near the village of Anavarza in Upper Çukurova, to the east of the Seyhan-Kozan road, lie the easily recognizable walled ruins of Anazarbus. There are extensive remains of the fortress, the arch of victory, castle, pillars, two pools with mosaics a Roman stadium, a theater, an aqueduct, several churches and a fine gate to the south.

Kastabala

Located in Adana, Osmaniye 15. Km, It was a great Roman city, established during the 1st century B.C. Among the rocks are streets, places from the 6th century, a theatre, a castle and graves. Kastabala had a great importance in antiquity because of its Temple of Artemis.

Sar Ruins, Tufanbeyli

Shar or Sar is an ancient city which has Hittite, Roman and Byzantine remains; its most important antiquity is Also Gate.

Magarsus Ruins

In this ancient harbor-city, remains from the Roman period including Margasus Castle, Atehama temples and a theatre could be found. Bird paradise on Akyatan Lake is a must-see; here there are also Caretta and Green Turtles. There are many kinds of fish in Tuzla and Karataş. Another ruin in this city is called Malos.

Kozan Castle

70km northwest of Adana, Kozan occupies the site of ancient Sisium and in the 19th century was still known as Sis. The fort, on a hill-top southwest of the town, dates from the Byzantine period. Kozan Castle was built on an ancient road and had a great strategic importance. It was an important center of Christianity because the celebrations of

producing baptsimoil were held once in every three years in the castle. There is also a mosque, Hoshkadem Mosque, built in 1448, and it is a truly impressive building. It is a typical example of Mamelük architecture with its two colored portal architecture, made of solid rock and with one external gallery over its minaret.

Yılanlı Kale (Snakes Castle)

About 11km

East of Misis, on the steep southern bank of the Seyhan, a figure of the Hittite king Muwatalli can be seen carved into a smooth rock face rising above the river. On the top of a steep-sided



crag on the north bank stands Yılanlı ("Snake's Castle"), a stronghold and Crusader castle of the 12th century. According to legend it was the residence of Şeikh Meran, half man, half snake, who was killed in the baths at Tarsus while seeking to carry off the king's daughter.

Yumurtalık Ruins

An important harbor-city, it was most populated during the 1st century B.C. The city ruins include Ayas Castle, Süleyman Tower and the Marco Polo Portside.

Adana's Bazaars Kazancılar Çarşısı

The old covered bazaar can be founded around the Büyük Saat with the Çarşı Hamamı (Turkish Bath of the Bazaar).

Ramazanoğlu Bazaar

Located in the Ramazanoğlu complex, it has been the center of trade since the 16th century. In earlier times, there were shops walled on three sides and open on the fourth; ateliers and khans, and special goods were offered. Now there are only two covered markets, the portal of Gön Khan and Bazaar Turkish bath.

Places to Stay**Adana Hilton**

📍 Sinanpasa Mah. Hacı Sabancı Blvd.
☎ Tel: +90-322-355-5000
☎ Fax: +90-322-355-5050

Seyhan

📍 Turhan Cemal Beriker Blv
☎ Tel: +90-322 457 5810
☎ Fax: +322 454 2834

Sürmeli Hotel

☎ Tel: +90-322-352-3600 (pbx)
☎ Fax: +90-322-352-1945
✉ E-mail: salesadana@surmelihotels.com

Otel Seyhan

📍 Turhan Cemal Beriker Bulvarı No:18
☎ Tel: +90 322 455 30 30 (20 Hat pbx)
☎ Fax: +90 322 454 28 34
✉ E-Mail: info@otelseyhan.com.tr
rezervasyon@otelseyhan.com.tr

Inci Hotel

📍 40 Kurtuluş Cd, Döşeme
☎ Tel: +90-322-435-8234?

Where & What to Eat
Adana Lezzet Ev Yemekleri
Lokantası

Turkish Cuisine
📍 Kurtuluş Mah. 9 Sok. Çiçek Apt.
No:1
☎ Tel: +90-322-459-4494

Eyvan Kebap

Kebap House

📍 Turgut Özal Bulvarı Polisevi Kavsağı

☎ Tel: +90-322 365 55 55 / 365 00 79 / 365 33 33

✉ Email: info@eyvankebab.com

Nihat Restaurant

Int'l Cuisine

📍 Şakir Paşa Havaalanı, Seyhan Merkez

☎ Tel: +90-322-435-7797

Akoluk Alabalık

Seafood

📍 Cemal Gürsel Cad. 6. Sok. No:10/B

☎ Tel: +90-322-359-5476

Alp Tavuk

Fast Food

📍 Levent Mah. 1. Sok. No:68, Yüreğir

Merkez

☎ Tel: +90-322-346-2593

Alpedo Dondurma

Ice Cream and Dessert

📍 Toptancılar Sitesi Ceyhan Yolu Üzeri

5. Blok No:62,Ceyhan Merkez

☎ Tel: +90-322-346-7033

Where & What to Buy

1. CarrefourSA Shopping Center
2. Galleria Adana
3. Maltepe
4. M1 Tepe Shopping Center

Etiquette- Do's and Don'ts

While some major Turkish cities are Westernized, Turkey is still a Muslim country so it's important to learn about their etiquette.

What to Wear

For business occasions, wear a suit and tie. In cities like İstanbul where the summers get really hot, it is usually acceptable not to wear a tie. If you want to pay a visit to religious places like mosques, churches and the like, it is better to have a scarf for the respect of the place.

Other than these, you could wear as you wish. Shorts and short sleeves are acceptable everywhere in the country.

Food/Drinks

Try to eat everything on your plate. Some hosts might be offended if you don't. Put your knife and fork side-by-side on your plate to indicate you are done.

According to a law recently introduced, smoking is banned in public places including restaurants. So be aware not to violate this law. Pay for the meal if you initiated the invitation. Splitting the bill is not traditionally done in Turkey.

Reciprocate if someone invited you out for a meal. Invite them out to a meal in return before you leave Turkey.

Tipping

DO leave a modest tip at a restaurant. Tips aren't expected, but they are appreciated.

In fancy restaurants, you may leave a 10%-15% tip.

Gift Giving and Accepting Gifts

DO remember that Turkey is a Muslim country and not everyone drinks alcohol, so keep that in mind before purchasing an alcoholic beverage as a gift.

Body Language and Gestures

Be aware that in more rural areas, men and women are expected not to touch. Even shaking hands can be taboo. DON'T point at someone with your finger.

Greeting

DO shake hands upon meeting someone. Shake hands with everyone present, including the children, and shake hands with the elders first.

Language Essentials

Basic Turkish Words

- yes
evet
- no
hayir
- hello
merhaba
- ok
tamam
- Mr
bay
- Mrs
bayan
- child
çocuk
- thank you
teshekkür ederim, teshekkürler,
sagol or mersi
- please
lütfen
- goodbye
hoshça kalin or bye bye
- sorry / excuse me
pardon / affedersiniz
- good morning
günaydin
- good evening
iyi akshamlar
- good night
iyi geceler
- good
iyi
- bad
kötü
- big
büyük
- small
küçük
- average / medium
orta
- a lot / very / too
çok

- a little
az
- slow
yavash
- quick
hizli / çabuk
- hot
sicak
- cold
soguk

- entrance
girish
- exit
çikish
- push
itiniz
- pull
çekiniz
- open
açik
- closed
kapali
- right
sag
- left
sol
- straight on
dogru
- near
yakin

- far
uzak
- up
yukari
- down
ashagi
- broken
bozuk
- but
ama
- here
burada
- there
orada

Turkish Question Words

- How?
Nasil?
- Who?
Kim?
- What?
Ne?
- Where?
Nerede?
- When?
Ne zaman?
- Why?
Niye? / Niçin? / Neden?
- Where to?
Nereye?
- Which (one)?
Hangi(su)?

In Case of Emergency

- Help!
Imdat!
- Stop!
Dur!
- Fire!
Yangin!
- police
polis
- accident
kaza
- sick / ill
hasta
- dentist
dish hekimi
- doctor
doktor
- hospital
hastane
- pharmacy
ezcane
- medication
ilaç
- fever
atesh
- headache
bash agrisi
- pain
agrim

- diarrhea
ishal
- Call the police!
Polis çağrin!
- Call an ambulance!
Ambulans çağrin!
- Where is the nearest hospital?
En yakin hastane nerede?

Money Matters

- money
para
- paper money
kagit para
- coins / small money
bozuk para
- bill
hesap
- receipt
makbuz
- free
bedava
- bank
banka
- foreign exchange office
döviz bürosu
- ATM
bankamatik
- cash money
nakit
- credit card
kredi karti
- cheque
çek
- tax included
KDV dahil
- tax excluded
KDV
- deposit
depozito

Useful Everyday Phrases

- How are you?
Nasilsin?
- I'm fine.
Iyiyim.
- Do you speak English?

İngilizce konuşuyor musunuz?

■ Pleased to meet you.

Memnun oldum.

■ Please speak more slowly.

Lütfen, daha yavaş konuşur musunuz.

■ I don't understand.

Anlamıyorum.

■ Please write it down for me.

Lütfen yazar misinizi

■ Can you help me?

Bana yardım edebilir misiniz?

■ Where is/are ...?

... nerede?

■ Where are the toilets?

Tuvaletler nerede?

■ How much is it?

Bu ne kadar?

■ Where do I pay?

Kasa nerede?

■ What time is it?

Saat kaç?

Accommodation

■ bathroom

banyo

■ bed

yatak

■ breakfast

kahvaltı

■ dinner

akşam yemeği

■ double room

çift kişilik oda

■ hotel

otel

■ lunch

öğle yemeği

■ room

oda

■ room service

oda servisi

■ single room

tek kişilik oda

■ swimming pool

havuz

Getting Around

■ airport

havalimanı

■ avenue

cadde

■ bus / coach

otobüs

■ bus / coach station

otogar

■ bus stop

otobüs duragi

■ car

araba

■ car park

otopark

■ driver

şoför

■ fare

ücret

■ ferry

vapur

■ lake

göl

■ map

harita

■ passenger

yolcu

■ plane

uçak

■ platform

peron

■ port

liman

■ quay

iskele

■ river

nehir

■ road

yol

■ sea

deniz

■ sea bus

deniz otobüsü

■ ship

gemi

■ station

istasyon

■street
sokak
■subway / underground
metro
■taxi
taksi
■ticket
bilet
■ticket office
billet gishesi
■timetable
tarife
■train
tren

Shopping

■cheap
ucuz
■expensive
pahali
■discount
indirim
■receipt
fish
■size (clothes)
beden
■size (shoes)
numara
■rent
kira
■high quality
kaliteli
■this one
bunu
■that one
shunu
■How many?
Kaç tane?
■How much? (price)
Kaç para?
■carpet
hali

Colors

■black
siyah
■blue

mavi
■brown
kahverengi
■green
yeshil
■orange
turuncu
■pink
pembe
■purple
mor
■red
kirmizi
■yellow
sari
■white
beyaz

Shops

■antiques shop
antikaci
■bakery
firin
■bazaar
pazar
■book shop
kitapçı
■hairdresser
kuaför
■leather shop
derici
■market
çarshi
■newsstand
gazeteci
■patisserie
pastane
■post office
postaci
■shoe shop
ayakkabici
■stationer
kirtasiye
■tailor
terzi

UZBEKISTAN

Introduction



Introduction

Situated on 41 00 N, 64 00 E, Uzbekistan is in central Asia between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, the Aral Sea, and the slopes of the Tien Shan Mountains. It is bounded by Kazakhstan in the north and northwest, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the east and southeast, Turkmenistan in the southwest, and Afghanistan in the south. If there was a Hall of Fame for Central Asian cities, Uzbekistan would own the top-three entries: Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva. The names practically epitomize the region.

They sometimes overshadow country's other attractions, which include dazzling bazaars, ancient fortresses like the one at Nurata and an impressive array of largely unsung natural attractions.

Uzbekistan has been home for many ancient civilizations, such as the Bactrian and the Khorezm, Sogdiana and the Parthian. The Great Silk Road stretched across this land, running from China to the Mediterranean. Thousand of years ago, fabulous cities with beautiful palaces, grand mosques, high minarets and madrasahs were built on this land.

The territory of modern-day Uzbekistan and its close neighbors have witnessed many empires rise and fall. The Sogdians, the

Macedonians, the Huns, the Mongolians, the Seljuks, the Timurids and the Khanates of Bukhara, Khiva and Khorezm all held sway here at one time or another.

The centuries old feudal disintegration and internecine wars led to the annexation of Turkestan (the name of the land used in that time) to Russia between 1868 and 1876, the Bukhara and Kokand Khanates recognized their vassalage to the Russian Empire. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia also affected Central Asia giving rise to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist

Republic in 1924.

Being one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union it was governed by the Communist Party. Uzbekistan proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union on 31st August 1991 and since then it has been reviving its national statehood.



Country Profile



Country's Official Name:

Republic of Uzbekistan

Flag Description:

The flag of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of blue, white and green stripes, separated by two narrow red stripes. A crescent and three rows of twelve stars are situated on the left side of the upper blue stripe. The blue color symbolizes the sky and water as the principle sources of life. The National flag of Amir Timur was also blue in color. The white stripe is the traditional symbol of peace and of moral and spiritual purity. The green stripe symbolizes nature, the new epoch and abundance in the countries where the majority of the population is Muslim. Besides that, this is in harmony with the modern movement of Greenpeace, which protects nature. The red separating stripes symbolize the current of vital energy in any living body and also connect our pure and noble thoughts with the sky and the earth. The crescent of the new moon, along with its traditional historical symbolism, is at the same time a symbol of the birth of republic's independence. The symbolism of twelve stars is connected historically with the solar calendar year, which begins from Navruz and embodies the twelve principles laying in the foundation of state management.



Government

President

The President is the head of state and executive power and acts as the guarantor of the observation of rights and freedoms of citizens, the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The President takes necessary measures to defend the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the country and also represents





the Republic of Uzbekistan inside the country and in foreign relations. The President sets up the apparatus of executive power and leads it, guaranteeing the coordination of higher organs of power and administration in the republic, ministries, state committees and other organs of state administration of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The President is the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Head of Government:

Prime Minister: Prime Minister who is appointed by president

Cabinet of Ministers: Cabinet of Ministers appointed by the president with approval of the Supreme Assembly.

Legislative Branch

(Status of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan)

The supreme state representative body shall be the Bicameral Supreme Assembly or Oliy Majlis that exercises legislative power. The Oliy Majlis shall consist of two chambers — the Legislative Chamber (the lower chamber) and the Senate (the upper chamber). The term of powers of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis are five years.

Judicial Branch

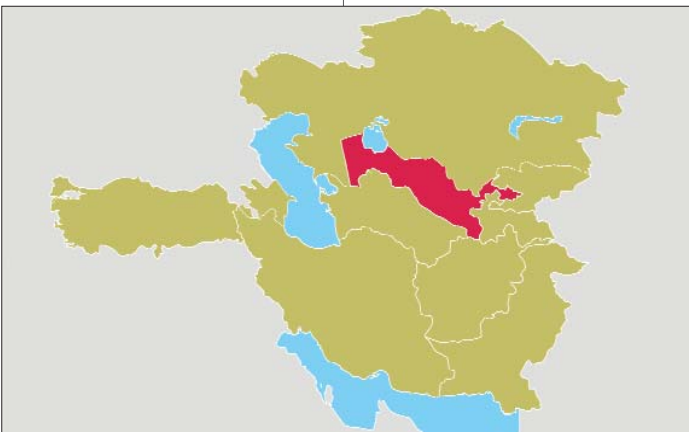
Supreme Court (judges are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Supreme Assembly)

Official Language

Uzbek

Capital City

Tashkent



Major Cities

Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Ferghana

Name of the Provinces

Andijan, Bukhara, Ferghana, Jizzakh, Qashqadaryo, Samarkand, Surhondaryo, Sirdaryo, Namangan, Horazm, Navoi, Tashkent and Republic of Karakalpakstan

Ethnic Groups

Uzbekistan has a wide mix of ethnic groups and cultures, with the Uzbek being the majority group. Uzbeks (80%), Russians (5.5%), Tajiks (5%), Kazakhs (3%), Tatars (1.5%), Karakalpaks (2.5%), Others (2.5%)

Country's Total Area:

447,400 sq.km

Population:

2009 est. 27,606,000 million

Climate

The climate of Uzbekistan is extremely continental with a great number of sunny days. The average monthly temperature in January ranges from -10C to +30C. Summer is hot and dry. The average monthly temperature in July varies from +35C to +45C. Autumn is relatively warm and is the season when delicious fruits and vegetables are in abundance in the numerous bazaars (markets). The average annual temperature is 13 0C.

Public Holidays

January 1 - New Year

January 14- Day of defenders of the Native land

March 8 - Women's Day

March 21 - Navruz (Celebration of Spring)

May 9 - Day of memory and honor

September 1 - Independence Day

October 1 - Teacher's Day

December 8 - Constitution Day.

Important Muslim holidays, scheduled according to the lunar calendar with moving dates include: Eid ul-Adha: (Qurbon Hayit)-(Feast of the Sacrifice) - Eid ul-Fitr: (Ramadan Hayit)-(Celebration of the end of Ramadhan)

Time Zone

+ 5 GMT



The Silk Road

The cities of modern Uzbekistan sparkle under the bright sun like pearls scattered along the Silk Road. The country is especially rich in historical artifacts.

Life always boiled there, new cities emerged older ones quickly grew, trade and crafts developed. All of that was possible due to the country's favorable position in the picturesque oasis right in the center of the Silk Road routes.

The first caravans on the Silk Road appeared in 138 BC when China opened its borders for trade. In the 4th century Sogdians established their trading colonies along the trade routes leading to China.

They existed along the entire eastern line of the Silk Road from Samarkand to Xi'an in China.

From Central Asia and further to China the famous "Heavenly racers" (Fergana horses), carpets, linen and woolen fabrics, semiprecious stones were exported.

One of the main roads crossing Asia from east to west started in Xi'an, the capital of ancient China, and followed to its northwest borders along the Gobi desert, across Tarim Basin, and then it crossed Eastern Turkestan.

Having crossed the Tien Shan part, the caravans went across Fergana Valley and Tashkent oasis to Samarkand, the capital of Sogdiana, Bukhara, Khoresm and further to the Caspian Sea coast. Some caravans from Samarkand headed to Bactria and after crossing the Kashkadarya River valley reached Termez. From there after crossing the Amu Darya they went to the South to Bactra and India.

Another branch of the road from Tarim went around the Taklamakan desert from the south and after passing Khotan and Yarkand led to Bactra (northern Afghanistan) and Merv. From there through Persia and Syria it reached the Mediterranean, so the part of the goods got to Rome and Greece by sea.

In this way such known Uzbek cities as Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Tashkent, Termez, Urgench, and Fergana served as land beacons along the Silk Road.

The blossoming oases cities growing along the Silk Road became international transshipment points and were considered the vital centers of trade, crafts, and cultural exchange.

The advantageous position of the cities made them attractive to various conquerors.

The territory of modern Uzbekistan was conquered a number of times by various Forces. but the destroyed caravan roads were revived, and the settlements and cities along them were built with well-groomed gardens and arable fields; the memory of that is stored in the ancient walls of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva. The ancient cities rich in fine architectural monuments preserve the memory of many centuries.

Useful Information

Best Time to Visit the Country

Large areas of Uzbekistan are desert. Summer is long, hot and dry; spring is mild and rainy; autumn has light frosts and rains; and winter, although short, is unstable with snow and temperatures below freezing. From June to August average afternoon temperatures hit 32°C or higher. The average annual maximum temperature is 40°C in June. Most rain falls in March and April. The summer furnace of 35°C days lasts 40 days from mid-July to the end of August. The worst of winter lasts 40 days from Christmas to the first week of February. For our purposes, the high season is spring (mid-March to the end of May) and autumn (September to the beginning of November). Summer is from June to August, and winter is from December to February.

Visa Regulations

All visitors to Uzbekistan must carry a passport that is valid for the period of their visit no matter of what nationality they are. All except those who are nationals of CIS require visas. The exceptions to this are nationals of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan who are required to obtain a visa to travel to Uzbekistan. Transit passengers who have proof of onward journey do not need a visa if they are continuing in the same flight or on the next available flight to their destination. Their movements however, are restricted to the designated transit area. Visa applications must be made to an Uzbek embassy. If there isn't one where you stay, applications may be sent to the Uzbek authorities in Tashkent and entry is allowed if you have a pre-

arranged visa waiting for you at the Tashkent airport. Several airlines need documentation showing the same before they let you fly into Uzbekistan. Also, you must have travel insurance. Electronic visa application is also available at <http://evisa.mfa.uz/>. For more information and the latest on visa information since rules are liable to change, contact the Uzbek diplomatic mission in your country.

Customs Regulations

The following goods may be brought into the country without incurring customs duty: 1000 cigarettes or 1kg of tobacco products, 1.5 litres of alcoholic beverages, perfume for personal use and other goods for personal use not exceeding a total value of US\$10,000. All valuable items, including cameras, computers and jewellery should be declared on arrival and you must take them out of the country with you otherwise duty will be charged. Items that cannot be imported include: firearms and ammunition, drugs, live animals, fruits and vegetables and photographs and printed matter which are considered politically objectionable. Items that require certification and special permission for export include objects more than 100 years old and/or having cultural significance. Precious metals and stones, furs, firearms and ammunition cannot be exported.

How to get there and away

There are numerous international airlines which travel to and from Uzbekistan.

The railway network links all the major cities and most towns too. Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, Nurkus and the Ferghana Valley are connected by rail. First class train travel is quite

comfortable but the lower classes, which are inexpensive, are usually very crowded. Don't leave your luggage unattended and carry your own food. Traveling by road is probably the best way to get around Uzbekistan. Long-haul limited-stop buses are roomy and comfortable. Short distance buses pick up passengers in the course of the trip and are usually smaller. Coaches may be state run or privately owned. Minibuses are fast and furious as they hurtle down the road from destination to destination. Taxis are slightly more expensive than buses and infinitely more comfortable. Negotiate the price before hitting the road. Not all taxis are registered; if possible hire one that is. Few people choose to drive their cars into Uzbekistan – one's likely to get tied up in knots weaving in and out of the rule booklet. Car-rental shops have still not come up in Uzbekistan.

Information About Tourism in Uzbekistan:

<http://www.tourism.uz>

<http://www.tour.uz/>

<http://www.tours.ru/country/uz>

<http://www.tours.ru/firms/db/default.asp>

By Air

If arriving by air, your grand entrance into Uzbekistan will most likely occur at Tashkent International Airport (37-40 28 01, VIP 37-54 86 48). A few flights from Russia arrive in regional hubs such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Urganch. The numerous aviakassa (private ticket kiosks) scattered around major cities can help book international tickets on Uzbekistan Airways and other airlines. Uzbekistan Airways has convenient booking offices in Tashkent and all regional hubs. A second international booking office in Tashkent is located

on the ground floor of the international terminal. It's not a bad idea to reconfirm international tickets with Uzbekistan Airways a week or two before your departure in high season.

Getting Around

Tashkent has a public transport network that is inexpensive and very efficient. Taxis, trams, trolleybuses, buses and a good underground railway make getting around in Tashkent easy. Tashkent has a three-line rapid transit system built in 1977, and expanded in 2001 after ten years' independence from the Soviet Union. Uzbekistan is currently the only country in Central Asia with a subway system, which is promoted as one of the cleanest systems in the former Soviet Union. The stations are exceedingly ornate. For example, the station Metro Kosmonavtov built in 1984 is decorated using a space travel theme to recognize the achievements of mankind in space exploration and to commemorate the role of Vladimir Dzhaniyev, the Soviet cosmonaut of Uzbek origin. A statue of Vladimir Dzhaniyev stands near one of the station's entrances.

There are government-operated trams, buses and trolley buses running across the city.

Money

All payments must be made in "Sum", the national currency of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Currency exchange offices are available in every city of Uzbekistan. All foreign currencies may be converted in main offices of banks. Preferred currencies - US dollars and Euros. Reform policies have brought the black market and bank rates to similar levels, so there is no longer any desperate need to


change on the black market, although this may be the quickest (or only) way of getting sum for US dollars, especially in the provinces. Credit cards are accepted at an increasing number of midrange and top-end hotels. A select few ATMs can be found in Tashkent. In the provinces, MasterCard users should look for Asaka Bank for cash advances, while Visa and Amex holders will usually (but not always) be able to get cash advanced at National Bank of Uzbekistan (NBU; full branch list at eng.nbu.com/branches). The NBU is also usually the best bet for cashing traveler's cheques. Be sure to list your travelers cheques on your customs declaration form or you won't be able to cash them. Hotels, guides and other businesses catering to tourists often list prices in US dollars, but (in theory) it is illegal to pay for goods and services in anything besides Uzbek sum.

Safety & Security


Individual safety boxes are not always available in Uzbekistan hotels. An essential part of your luggage is a comfortable money wallet, which may be worn under your clothing. At all times you should carry your main documents (i.e. currency, traveler's checks, air tickets, passports, visas etc.) While it is highly unlikely you will encounter any physical danger, minor thefts in crowded public places may occur and every precaution should be taken to avoid losing anything of value. In accordance with local laws, you will be required to hand in your passport to the hotel reception on arrival to allow registration of your passport details by the hotel. Your passport will normally be available again after a few hours. Do not forget to collect it before departure.

Embassy telephone numbers

Embassy of Afghanistan

 6, Murtazaev St. ("Kazakhstan" cinema)

 Tel: (+998 71) 234 84 32, 234 84 58

 E-mail: afgemuz@online.ru


Embassy of Azerbaijan


 25, Shark Tongi St. (Oliy Madjlis building)

 Tel: (+998 71) 273 61 67

 E-mail: posol@ishonch.uz

Embassy of Iran


 20, Parkentskaya St.

 Tel: (+998 712) 268 69 68

 Fax: (+998 71) 120 67 61


Embassy of Kazakhstan


 23, Chehov St.

 Tel: (+998 71) 252 16 54, 236 09

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Embassy of Kyrgyzstan


 30, Samatov St. ("Urtak" factory),

 Tel: (+998 71) 237 47 94


Embassy of Pakistan

25, Chilanzar ("Chilanzar" shopping complex)

 Tel: (+998 71) 244 20 73, 244 86 40

 Phone: (+998 71) 120 75 67

Embassy of Tajikistan


 61, Abdulla Kahor St.

 Tel: (+998 71) 254 99 66, 254 25 51

 Fax: (+998 71) 254 89 69

 E-mail: temb@online.ru

Embassy of Turkey

 87, Gulyamov St. (Republican Office of Public Prosecutor)

☎ Tel: (+998 71) 233 80 37, 237 21 04, 233 21 07

Embassy of Turkmenistan

☎ 16, Tarobiy St.

☎ Tel: (+998 71) 120 52 78, 120 52 81

Health

You will be traveling in areas which are largely free of major infectious diseases, so there are no official vaccination requirements for foreign visitors. However, we strongly advise you to consult your physician or Vaccination Centre for current health warnings and recommended vaccinations. As it is practically inevitable in areas where water is high in mineral and metallic salts (as is the case with Central Asia) one should be prepared for minor gastric conditions.

Consult your physician or pharmacist for recommended remedies. Throughout the areas you will be travelling, one of the main health warnings is dehydration. At all times maintain a steady intake of non-alcoholic liquids. Sunburn is another major problem. Bring adequate sun-tan lotion and a wide brimmed hat. If desired, you may also bring a supply of vitamins, throat lozenges, throat gargle to prevent basic infections, cold/flu tablets, aspirins, Band-Aids, antiseptics and antibacterial cream.

If your doctor has prescribed any medication, make sure that you have sufficient supplies to last the duration of your holiday. Important: Please, ensure that you carry in your hand luggage any medicine you may require in case your suitcase is separated from you.

Telephone Codes of Major Cities

Country Code ☎ 998

Tashkent ☎ (+998 71)+7
digits telephone number

☎ (+998 712)+6
digits telephone number

Andijan ☎ 742

Samarkand ☎ 662

Bukhara ☎ 652

Ferghana ☎ 732

Termez ☎ 7622

Namangan ☎ 692

Nukhus ☎ 61

Major Travel Agencies

Uzbek Travel Agency

☎ Tel: + 998 (71) 245 4744

☎ Mob: +998 (93) 381 1109

www.glo-con.com

Dolores Travel Services

☎ Tel: +99871 1208883

☎ Fax: +99871 1208873

www.sambuh.com

Roxana Tour

☎ Tel: (+998 71) 235 70 98, 235 90 82, 234 70 70

www.roxanatour.com

✉ E-mail: info@OrexCA.com

Advantour Uzbekistan

☎ Tel: +998 71 1503020

☎ Fax: +998 71 1503021

www.Advantour.com

Arts & Crafts

Decorative Arts

The art culture of Uzbekistan is based on all the best achievements of the Uzbek people throughout history. National arts and crafts occupy a prominent place in the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan. In the Middle Ages, Uzbek arts developed in the context of the art of tracery, which had become prevalent. The extensive national crafts and arts include engraving on copper, wood, and plaster-based material; jeweler's arts; carpet making; ceramics; ornamental embroidery, gold embroidery; decorative currying of tanned leather; silk spinning; making of decorative braids; inlaid works on musical instruments; painting on papier-mache; creation of decorative boxes for local tobacco; baskets, cradles, chests, and many other types. Throughout the centuries, the national Uzbek crafts and arts have both risen and declined, but the handing down of artistic traditions from one generation to the next has never stopped. Uzbeks have a vast variety of decorative arts some of which include:

Silk Production

Although the production of silk fiber and making of clothes is basically automated today, almost all silkworm breeding in Uzbekistan occurs within individual farms, where most of the cocoons are still bred as they have been, perhaps, since the 4th century. Silk material for making clothes is woven out of several wound threads of fiber. On the whole, about 30,000 tons of cocoons are produced in Uzbekistan every year. The biggest silk weaving factory is in Margilan.



Uzbek Suzanne

Uzbek embroidery varies by purpose and is divided into embroidery of small household objects, and embroidery of clothes. However, the leading type of embroidery is undoubtedly Suzanne. The name is derived from the Tajik word meaning "needle". Suzanne is an embroidered piece of cloth used as a wall decoration. The biggest Suzannes are 2-3 meters long, and up to 2 meters wide. Suzanne is embroidered in the original way of filling most of the area of the piece with patterns, leaving little background. Large Suzannes are made up of fragments, which have been separately embroidered previously. The patterns of embroidery were created by artists who placed them with a sharpened straw called a "kalam". The artists knew many different styles of ornamentation, and varied them to create new combinations, with carefully chosen colors.

Uzbek Suzanne may be said to be the national art form, having its own style,

developed over the centuries.

Every school of embroidery has its own local traits. Uzbek embroideries mainly depict the vegetable kingdom: luxuriant gardens and flower beds. While becoming familiar with Uzbek Suzannes it is impossible to find two pieces alike, in spite of the similar patterns and colors. The variety of ornamentations and their combinations is what the art of Suzanne is based on. Today, embroidery is continuing to be developed, both in hand-made and industrial forms.

Uzbek Duppi

One of the most popular and widely practiced national applied art forms of Uzbekistan has always been the Duppi, which is a soft or hard scull-cap with a soft lining. The Duppi is an integral part of the Uzbek national costume and is worn in modern everyday life, as it was in the past. The name "Duppi" derives from the Turkish word meaning "a top, a summit". It is not only the Uzbek national headgear. It is worn by other peoples in Central Asia, in Afganistan, Iran, Turkey, Sinkiang, by the Tatars of Povolzhie, and by the Bashkirs. The Duppi is divided into types for men, women, children and old men. Old women don't wear the headgear. Duppis are made of two or more layers of fabrics, all quilted and



stuck with silk or cotton threads. In most cases, ready-made caps would be embroidered with silk, gold or silver threads.

Duppis differ in shape, pattern, and color depending on the region where they are made.

Thus, within the tradition, a wide variety of patterns embroidered on Duppis have been developed throughout the centuries.

Blue Ceramics

Rishtan is one of the most famous and oldest centers of ceramics in Uzbekistan. Its clay is suitable for making a whole variety of ceramic goods. That wonderful reddish-yellow clay is found in deposits 1-1.5 meters deep and 0.5-1-5/8 meters thick in

almost the whole Rishtan area. The fine quality of the clay allows it to be used without preliminary refinement and without adding any other types of clay, as potters from other regions needed to. As well as the clay, the potters of Rishtan extracted various dyes, quartz sand, and fire-clay from the mountains.

Rishtan's blue ceramics has wide a variety of forms. There are various shapes of Lyagans (big dishes), different bowls for milk and

food, vases and jugs for fruits and water, and Hums (big containers) for cereals and oil. The repertoire of ornamental patterns in Rishtan ceramics is

one of the richest in the world. There are geometrical and plant patterns, signs and symbols, and images of various subjects. Paying tribute to tradition, Rishtan ceramists are easily changing both the interpretation of forms and ornamentation. The ceramists aim to develop something new. Laborious, detailed restoration of traditional forms and ornaments, unquestionably yields a more active display of individual artistic initiative and a widening of the techniques and patterns used.

Architectural-Decorative Art

Architectural-decorative art holds a prominent place in the arts and crafts of Uzbekistan. Principles of ornamental construction and profound knowledge of the plastic and artistic properties of local building materials that were well-known throughout the Middle East, such as ganch (a sort of alabaster), wood, stone, ceramics, constitute the time-tested fundamentals of this ancient art. The world famous architectural monuments of Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, and other cities of Uzbekistan testify to the professional mastery of mediaeval artists and architects, ornamental designers and calligraphers, engravers and ceramists.

Wall painting & Sculptural Carving

In Uzbekistan, wall painting and sculptural carving as well as ornamental carving and painting have been practiced since ancient and early mediaeval periods. Nakkoshi - Masters of ornamental painting usually practiced ganch and wood architectural painting simultaneously. Carved wood played a considerable role in the architectural decor in Uzbekistan and was also much used in the production of household goods. In ornamental flat-relief carving, with all its richness and diversity, masters distinguish between three main compositional groups: baghdadi, islimi, and pargori. Each is characterized by particular ornamental motifs and compositional constructions, as well as by carving techniques and effects of patterned relief. The best varieties of local wood are used. Modern masters also use some imported varieties. Nowadays Uzbek masters of wood-painting produce mostly decorative

goods: polygonal and round tables, stools, screens, cabinets, frames, caskets. Pumpkin is a popular material for various articles, but the most popular are snuffboxes made from pumpkins specially cultivated for this purpose. Uzbek snuffboxes vary in shape, size, and decoration. Their production involves a sophisticated process of painting, patterned toning and polishing, finishing with noble metal and colored jewels.



Decorative Leather Working

Decorative leather working in Uzbekistan was highly developed in the past, when natural leather goods such as clothes, footwear, articles of military, hunting, and horse outfit and equipment, home utensils, travelling accessories, were everyday necessities for farmers, townsmen, soldiers, or nomads. Leather-dressers were skilled in the different top quality methods of dressing, and mastered the secrets of natural vege-

tative tanning and coloring, which is why they produced such beautiful supple leather. From the skins of donkeys and horses, Bukhara and Samarkand masters made the famous turquoise-green shagreen; from goat and sheepskin, thin color morocco's; from cowhide thick color tuft; from sheepskin various types of rawhide, such as suede. A wide range of articles was produced from these kinds of leather, from purses and belts to large chests and suitcases. Stamping is the most complicated and impressive type of leatherwork, associated with morocco and yuft. Cold leather stamping was used in the making of suitcases and chests.

Jewelry

One of the most developed genres of folk art that deserves special mention is the jeweler's art. Its rich traditions rooted in antiquity, it is nonetheless alive and as popular as ever today and evolving constantly under modern masters. Jewelry is the main artistic accessory to clothes, especially for women. Masters or zargars mostly created pieces from silver, less often from gold, combining noble metals with various jewels: precious, sparkling, such as ruby, emerald, sapphire; semiprecious, matt, opaque, but of bright and rich colors, such as pearls, turquoise, cornelian, jasper, corals, as well as multicolored sparkling glass pieces, and mastic beads that came into common use from the second half of 19th century.

Music and Musical Instruments

Central Asian classical music is called shashmaqam, which arose in Bukhara in the late 16th century when that city was a regional capital. Shashmaqam is closely related to Azeri and Uyghur muqam; The name, which translates as

six maqams refers to the structure of the music, which contains six sections in different musical modes, similar to classical Persian music. Interludes of spoken Sufi poetry interrupt the music, typically beginning at a low register and gradually ascending to a climax before calming back down to the beginning tone.

The classical music in Uzbekistan is very different than that of the pop music. Poetry is where some of the music is drawn from. Those that perform the pieces are fluent in speaking both Uzbek and Tajik. In some instances of the music the two languages are even mixed as one in the same song. In the 1950s the folk music became less popular, and the genre was barred from the radio stations. They didn't completely dispel the music all together, although the name changed to "feudal music". Although banned, the folk musical groups continued to play their music in their own ways and spread it individually as well. Many say that it was the most liberated musical experience in their lives.



UZBEKISTAN

Map of Uzbekistan





Syr Darya

Balkhash

Syrdarya

Shu

Kzyl-Orda

Kentau Zhanatas

Gulshat (1062)

Burubaytal

Turkestan

Tortkol'

Taraz

Sypatay Batyr (Merke)

Shu

Korday Pass (1233)

BISHKEK

Shymkent

Talas

duk

Muruntay

KYRGYZ



TASHKENT

Angren

Ghazni

Muratbaeva

syrdarya

Zhetysay

Koprik

Khudjand

Kokand

Andizhan

Jalal Abad

Osh

Chir-Yechik pass (2402)

Ghazli

Navoi

Bukhara

Alat

Samarkand

Karshi

Guzar

Uzun

Denav

Sherabad

Termex

Khairaton

Atamyrat (Kerki)

Kerkichi

Imamnazar

Andkhvoy

Meymaneh

Baba Morghab

Jizzakhi

Khavast

Tursunzade

Uzun

Denav

Sherabad

Termex

Khairaton

Atamyrat (Kerki)

Kerkichi

Imamnazar

Andkhvoy

Meymaneh

Baba Morghab

Imamnazar

Andkhvoy

Meymaneh

Baba Morghab

Sheberghan

Mazar-e-Sharif

Baghlan

Meymaneh

Baba Morghab

Koprik

Khudjand

Kokand

Andizhan

Jalal Abad

Osh

Chir-Yechik pass (2402)

Taldyk pass (3619)

Sary Tash

Karamyk

Jirgatal

Kizilart pass (4280)

Muboytal pass (6053)

Koy-Tezek Pass (4272)

Murgab

Khorog

Lyangar

Kulna T

Karimat (Hunza)

Chitral

Kalam

543

(DIS)

(DIS)

Ecotourism



The active forms of ecotourism are rafting, hiking, trekking, rock climbing, speleology, horseback riding, and mountaineering which make 60 percent of all tourism in Uzbekistan.

Locals, and also tourists from many other countries prefer the above mentioned activities in Uzbekistan Mountains near Tashkent. Historical-cognitive tourism amounts about ten percent.

Inactive forms of eco-tourism attract less than 30 per cent of tourists.

Mountaineering

Hiking

Many beautiful places in Uzbekistan Mountains can only be reached by hiking, and enthusiasts regard hiking as the best way to see nature. It is seen as better than a tour in a vehicle of any kind (or on an animal) because the hiker's senses are not intruded upon by distractions such as windows, engine noise, airborne dust and fellow passengers.

Hiking over long distances or over difficult terrain does require some degree of physical ability and knowledge.

Trekking



Trekking combines hiking and camping in a single trip. A backpacker hikes into the backcountry to spend one or more nights there and carries supplies and equipment to satisfy sleeping and eating needs. A backpacking trip includes at least one overnight stay in the wilderness (otherwise it is a day hike).

But long-distance expeditions may last weeks or months, sometimes aided by planned food and supply drops.

People are drawn to backpacking primarily for recreation, to explore places

that they consider beautiful and fascinating, many of which cannot be accessed in any other way.

A backpacker can travel deeper into remote areas, away from people and their effects, than a day-hiker can.

Trekking Options

Winter backpacking, Animal packing, Thru-hiking, Ultralight backpacking.

Mountain Climbing Options

Rock climbing, Bouldering, free climbing, Top roping, Ice climbing, mixed climbing, Scrambling (somewhere between hill walking and rock climbing)

Other Activities Canyoning, Waterfalling.

Snowboarding & Snow-skiing

Chimgan-Beldersay

It is the main skiing area in Uzbekistan, which is located in the mountains of Western Tien-Shan (90 km far from Tashkent). Chimgan is the best spot for family leisure with children, Beldersay is more appropriate for skilled skiers and snowboarders. There are two double-chair ski lifts and some hoop lifts in Chimgan and Beldersay.



Heli-Skiing

Uzbekistan has the advantage over the other regions of Heli-skiing on the territory of the former USSR because of sunny, warm and fine stable weather. Heli-skiers make descends from summits of Ugam, Pskem and Chatkal mountain ranges (on the altitude 3000-4000 m.). The amplitude of descends 1,3 – 2 km; the length of the descending 5-10

km. Usually heli-skiers make 4-6 descends per day. The flight time from the hotel to the landing place 5-30 min.

Tourists are accompanied with 2 guides. Each tourist must have his own special equipment (ski, beacons, first-aid medical set).

Helicopter grounds are located near the hotel. The best time for skiing – late January – March.

Rafting

Rafting along the rapid Chatkal River is the favorite activity of extreme travelers. As contrasted with the routes down the Chatkal River, which involve parts, located on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, all routes of Oyga'ing, Pskem, Ugham and Ahangaran rivers are entirely located on the Uzbek territory.

The length of rafting route along the Ugham is 11 kilometers. The route starts from "Kristall" boarding house and finishes in the creek of the river where it flows into the Hojent water reservoir. On this section raft-men usually make a double trip down the river.

The number of obstacles makes your experience really exciting: in some spots the stream will press you against the rocks, in others you'll need to raft sideways; and all the way down there are above-water rocks and submerged stones.

All this is aggravated by the rapid current. However, in case of emergency situation, prompt mooring and urgent landing can be made at any length of the route.

Top 10 Places to Visit

Registan Square, Samarkand



During centuries Registan Square was the center of Samarkand. The word Registan means “sand place”. Registan ensemble consists of three Madrasah: Ulugbek Madrasah, Sher – Dor Madrasah and Tilla-Kari Madrasah (gold covered).

Ulugbek Madrasah was built by the Ulugbek’s order and guidance. Two years later, the ruler of Samarkand Yalangtush Bahadur ordered

to build the copy of the Madrasah, and the second Sher-Dor Madrasah was built opposite it. The only difference was that it had two more winter teaching halls, but the main structure was the same as in Ulugbek Madrasah. Several years later, the same ruler of Samarkand ordered the third Tilla-Kari Madrasah.

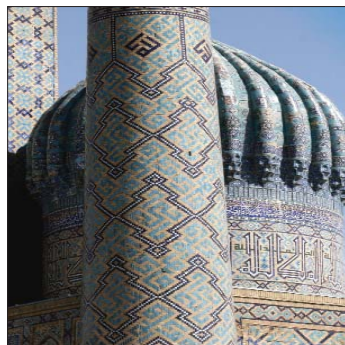
It’s outward is the same as those two other medresses, but coming in you’ll see a one story building.

Only Tilla-Kari Madrasah was built like medresse, but was used mostly as mosque; just looking at minarets can see this, Tilla-Kari has low minarets to call people to pray.

In 17th century Tilla-Kari mosque and Madrasah was the biggest mosque in Samarkand. Right up to 19th century Madrasah and Madrasah-mosque was used by purpose, and only from the beginning of 20th century till now they serve as monuments. “Eden of Ancient East”, “Precious Pearl of Islamic World”, “Rome of East”, “Rui Zamin”-“Face of Earth”-with such magnificent names poets, historians, medieval geographers of Iran, India, China, Byzantium, Egypt called Samarkand described it.

Even though of such magnificent description Samarkand saw many sites of fire and destructions, which left their sign in history.

During centuries Samarkand was aggressed by different nomadic and half nomadic people, which often were destroying, sacking, and leaving ruins after them.



Bazaars in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara

Whichever cities you visit while you are in Uzbekistan, ensure that you spend an evening at the bazaar. The hub of social and economic life, bazaars have the hum, the buzz and the bristling bustle of Uzbek life like no other venue.

Amidst swathes of slinky silks, mountains of luscious fruits and stacks of exquisite carpets and colourful rugs, over endless cups of tea at the chaikhanas, men and women meet to share the day's gossip in merry camaraderie.

The Chorsu Bazaar in Tashkent, the main bazaar near the Bibi

Khanym mosque at Samarkand and the ancient domed bazaars of Bukhara all have that vibrancy.

Sarmish-Say Plan

The best examples of petroglyphs of all epochs are concentrated in the picturesque canyon, that has rather limited conditions for the building of settlements, but is most suitable for the rock art activity and, probably, for the collective rituals. Also, there are single petroglyphs and simple compositions of the common contents (depictions of ani-

mals and scenes of hunting) found on separate stones near the sources of water, along the transit mountain routes and on the tops of hills or mountainous stones dominating there. Nevertheless, despite of the high concentration of petroglyphs and other monuments within the

complex, the landscape to a considerable degree kept its desert virgin character. In addition to the petroglyphs, there is a cave used by primitive people. Many complicated paths connect rooms located under ground, which was an ideal place to stay cool during the hot summer days and warm during cold winter nights



Complex of Sultan Saodat - Termez

The cult-memorial complex of Sultan Saodat was developed during the period of 11-17th centuries at the graves of the Termez sayyids. It had a number of cult structures added at different times: mausoleums, mosques and hanagoh, built on the perimeter of an elongated courtyard with a combination of integral and short compositions. The most ancient part was a three-part frontal opening the south-



west part of the complex to the courtyard side. Here are located two large one-chambered, square-domed mausoleums.

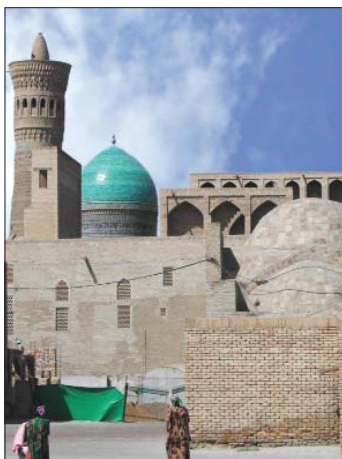
They are joined with an aperture terrace with a mihrab placed between them, which was used as a funeral prayer mosque.

Researchers have dated this ancient group to the 11-12th c. or the middle of 11th c.

Museum of Applied Arts

Uzbekistan has museums in plenty, theatre, the opera and ballet flourish; it's emporiums stock ware from various regions of Uzbekistan.

Don't miss the Museum of Applied Arts where crafts from all over Uzbekistan are displayed in quiet rooms with muted lighting.



Poi-Kalyan Ensemble, Bukhara

It is the main ensemble in Bukhara center, situated on the way to trade crossing of "four bazars" and Poi-Kalyan means "the pedestal of the Great" (it means "the pedestal of Kalyan minaret").

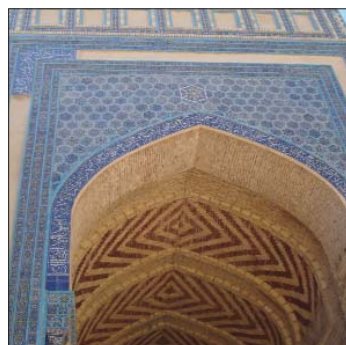
Ensemble consists of 4 monuments: Kalyan mosque and Mir-Arab Madrassah – faced to each other with main fronts; between them is Kalyan minaret; to the south of Mir-Arab there is small Amir-Allimkhan Madrassah.

Labi Hauz Plaza, Bukhara

The name «Laybi-khauz» means «at reservoir». According to the old legend, for a long time knan gardener Nodir Divan-begi could not buy a lot for planned building, where a house belonging to an unaccompanied woman was located.

Yunus-khan Mausoleum, Tashkent

Besides Shayhantaur ensemble on the Navoi avenue there is a mausoleum of



Tashkent ruler Yunus-khan (1415 – 1487).

It is situated on the territory of Shayhantaur cemetery. It represents T-shaped khanaka-mausoleum.

The main south facade has portal with low wings; on the facade, as in the corners of cruciform hall with north-ledge half-octagon niche, there are two-storied hudjras.

The hall is opened with three-sides doorways, covered with sphero-conal dome on cross archs; second-storied hudjras are covered with cupolas on the multi-row thyroid pendentives.

The outer dome hall was reconstructed in 1970.

The windows are decorated with wood and ganch panjara, there are fragments of ganch girikh (a geometrical ornament) on the archs and mukannas-stalactites (decorative ganch arrangement of cupolas) in the hall.

Its sizes are 21,5x20,5, building width – 16 m, the hall – 7x7m.

Museum of Fine Arts

The Museum of Fine Arts, one of the oldest in Uzbekistan, and has one of the richest collections of art in all of Central Asia.

Shakhi-Zinda, Samarkand

On south-east slope of Afrosiab is situated one of the notable architectural ensemble of Samarkand, Shakhi-Zinda necropolis. It consists

of 11 mausoleums, built gradually during 14-15th centuries in series. Entrance portal Shakhi-Zinda completing all ensembles is the latest construction.

The entire ensemble is divided into three parts: Entrance chartak (consisting of Hudjras, summer mosque, Davlyat Kushbegi mosque and mausoleum that had for a long time the name Kazi-Zade Rum), Middle chartak (consisting of mausoleums Emir-Zade, Emir-Husein, Shadi-Mulk, Shirin-Bibi-aka, Octahedron, Usto Ali, Burunduk, Hudjra, Kusama ibn-

Abbasa mosque, Ziarathani and Kusam ibn-Abbas mausoleum.) and upper chartak (consisting of Tuman-aka mosque, Tuman-aka mausoleum, nameless mausoleum 1360-1361, Hodja Ahmad mausoleum.)



Ichon Qala, Khiva

The sights of Khiva are concentrated in the Ichon Qala, the historical center.

of the buildings are decorated with majolica tiles and paintings of scenes from nature. The Islam Khodzha minaret, the Toshi Khovli Palace, the Juma Mosque and the mausoleum of Pahlavon Mahmud the philosopher are a few of Khiva's main attractions.

5 Major Cities

Tashkent

From old times, Tashkent has been a large scientific and cultural hub, and now is the symbol of peace and friendship.

Tashkent enjoys an invaluable place and profound role in the history of national statehood, as well as in the social and political life of Uzbekistan.

It did contribute much to the development of world civilization and is rightfully named as the "Gate of the Orient". The excellent look of the Uzbek blooming capital, its grand constructions, wonderful nature and pictorial places that worth even more attract tourists.

This city of 2.3 million is surprisingly green, thanks to its beautifully laid-out parks and its glistening fountains. The new discoveries and sources are testimony to the fact that the culture of the Uzbek capital was well-known as far back as from the ancient times.

In the year 2009, the 2200th anniversary of Tashkent was widely celebrated with active participation of UNESCO.

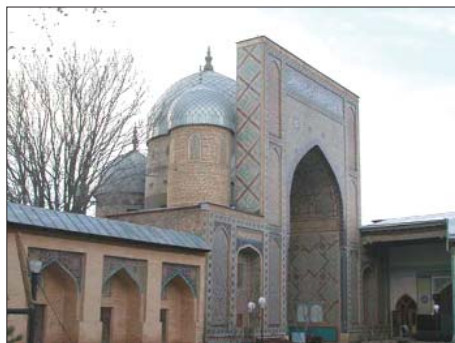
Anbar-bibi Mausoleum

In Zangi-ata village of Tashkent region there is a monument of the end of 14 – beginning of 15 century – this is Anbar-bibi mausoleum (or Kambar-ana) -the wife of Zangi-ata. In legends she also is called Anbar-bibi - this saint woman was patroness of women and mothers.

Anbar-bibi mausoleum is situated on the cemetery to the southwest from Zangiata mausoleum. Two stepped headstones situate in the mausoleum-over the burial place of Anbar-bibi and Ulugpashi.

Mausoleum is one chamber, portal domical kiosk, like cube with cut corners and small portal prominent from it.

Niches with flat end faced on the sides of front, this is unusual form, and probably it was caused because of change in design during the construction.



Barak-khan Madrassah

Barak-khan madrassah is dated to the architectural monuments of 16-17 centuries.

The construction of this monument took place during different time spans. The first building of 15 century presents centric mausoleum located in the

eastern corner of the building. The second building of 1530 is a large mausoleum-khanaka, crowned with double cupola on the crossing archs (outer – Kok Gumbaz is lost). It is admittedly devoted to Tashkent ruler from Sheybanid dynasty Suyunij-khan (Ulugbek's grandson). The third stage is a transformation of memorial complex in madrassah built in the middle of 16 century under Suyunij-khan's son Nauruz-Akhmed, named Barak-khan.

The madrasah differs from traditional typical buildings, but keeps the main principle of organization around open yard.

The decoration is unique for Tashkent: the niche portal is crowned with arch "kolabkari", timpan and pilons are reveted with majolica and brick



mosaic, hudjra's windows are decorated with ganch panjaras of different paintings of geometrical orna-

ment. In 1935-36 and 1955-56 the archeological researches were held and in 1955-1963 Barak-khan madrassah was restored with the participation of Usta Shirin

Murodov, who reconstructed the portal arch.

Shayhantaur Ensemble

At the beginning of 13th century on the eve of Mongolian conquest Tashkent oasis was destroyed by Khorezm-shah Muhammad. During 14th-15th centuries the city again obtained it's meaning as a trade and cultural center in the context of rise of Timur and Timurids Dynasty. The city afresh was built up and expanded to

the south and east, behind its walls and the construction of the cultural complex of the respected grave of Havendi Tahur sheikh began to develop.

The cult of sheikh was praised by his offspring Hoja Ahrar, who was the head of clergies in the government of Timurids from second half of 15th century.

In 15th century



the mausoleum of Havendi Tahir sheikh was built, the basis of planning for which is longitudinal axis two chamber mausoleum complex, typical for Central Asia at the end of 15th century.

Present monument raised in 18-19 centuries on the foundation of mentioned monument of 15th century, with prior planning. Mausoleum was built from burnt bricks.

Tashkent TV Tower

The TV Tower is the highest construction in the Central Asia. with overall height of 375 meters.

The lattice styled tower trunk is supported by three inclined slips, which ensure the building's steadiness and give an impression of lightness. At the heights of 100 metres and 220 metres the tower is girdled with 5 telecasting stations for 5 television Programmes, radio broadcasting station and a meteorological station. There is also an observation deck, where you can enjoy magnificent views of the city.



Exhibition Hall

There is an exhibition hall in the center of the city. It was opened in 1974. The exhibits in the Exhibition Hall of Uzbekistan Artists Union change continually. Light, roomy halls are put not only at famous artists disposal, but that of young artists as well.

The central hall exhibits the sculptures and graphic works. There are halls of painting and applied art around it. The building itself is interesting as well. There is a tracery summer gallery around it. National decoration, chiaroscuro, and colors have been used on the façade. There is a stand on the ground floor where one can buy works of art. There is another hall in the open air. It is a small park with original sculptures. On warm sunny days the works of artists and sculptors are exhibited in the park.



Khast-Imam

An interesting ensemble was erected in a place called Khast-Imam. The ensemble comprises the Barak-Khana Madrassah of the 16th century, Teleshayakh Mosque, part of which houses an important religious library, the 16th century Kaffal-Shashi mausoleum, which was built over the grave of Abubekr

Mukhammad Kaffal-Shashi, and the Imam al-Bukhari Institute.

Kukeldash Madrassah

Kukeldash Madrassah is one of the few remained architectural monuments of Tashkent. It was built in the second half of the 16th century in the time of Abdulla khan (1557-1598) was under the Leadership of Kulbobo Kukeldash who was a vizier, a scientist and a poet.

Madrassah Kukeldash is under the authority of Religious

Board of Mawarannahr Moslems, and at present it is a regularly acting mosque. There is a primary school, which teaches the basis of Islam.



soleum-this is a multistage longitudinal pivotal mausoleum- complex, typical for Timur's time. In the time of Ulugbek a portal to the mausoleum was built(first half of 15 century). Now only the basis of the building-portal, ziarathona and gurhana (burial-vault) in the graduated building have remained. Double

cupolas on arched canvases cover buildings; in ziarathona have five low arches, next mausoleums of Tashkent were built after this model. 16-hedron arches comprised the

space under cupola . Outside cupolas lifted on the drums-cylindrical over ziarathona, 12-hedron over gurhana. Unique details remained: carved marble headstone of Zangi-ata and remains of abacus in gurhana, mosaic mihrab in

Zangi-ata

The names of Temur and Ulugbek

connected to the construction of Zangi-ata mausoleum in the vilage, called later Zangi-ata (Tashkent region). According to the legend, in 90s of 14 century Temur ordered to build a mausoleum over the grave of a saint, sheikh Ayhoja, called in his life time Zangi-ata (the father of life).

Zangi-ata mau-



ziarathona, and mosaic panel on the portal. The building is made of baked bricks. Mausoleum-complex consists of the yard, surrounded with hujra, madrassah, built in 18-19 centuries, in 1870 in the southeast a mosque was built and in 1914-1915 a minaret wa built in front of the mosque.

Samarkand

The Capital of Timur

Samarkand is situated in the valley of the river Zarafshan. It is the second largest city of Uzbekistan and is of the same age as the city of Babylon or Rome. The history of Samarkand is about 2,500 years old and has witnessed a lot of upheavals during the times of Alexander the Great, the Arabic Conquest, Genghis-Khan Conquest and lastly Tamerlane's. Hence, the culture of Samarkand was developed and mixed together with the Iranian, Indian, Mongolian and a bit of the Western and Eastern cultures. Majestic and beautiful city Samarkand has a marvelous and attractive power. Poets and historians of the past called it "Rome of the East, The beauty of sub-lunary countries, The pearl of the Eastern Moslem World". Its advantageous geographical position in Zarafshan valley put Samarkand to the first place among cities of the Central Asia.

Places to See

Bibi Hanim Mosque

Its construction was started in 1399, after successful campaign of Timur to India. The mosque was constructed in 5 years. Architects, artists, masters and craftsmen from many eastern countries were involved in construction. Grandiose buildings occupied rectangular yard with size of 130×102 meter. On its west side towarded the main mosque, on north and south sides were small mosques.

The spacious inside yard was covered by marble flagstones and enclosed with sheltered gallery for pilgrims. The entrance to the court was decorated by a high portal with two round minarets that were 50 meters in height. The out side wall of the buildings was decorated with multicolored glazed bricks, which made intricate geometrical ornamented design and religious aphorisms. Magnificent and rich decoration of inside buildings consisted of majolica mosaic, carved marble, stamping on papier-mâché, gilded design.

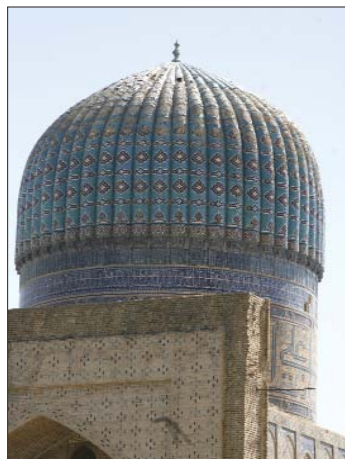
Gur-Emir

Gur-Emir means "grave of Emir". Gur-Emir Mausoleum was built in 1404 for Timur's grandson Muhhamed Sultan.

He was assumed to become heir of throne after Timur, but in 1404 he died and Timur ordered to build a big mausoleum for his beloved grandson.

In 1405 Timur died in Otrar city and his sons decided to move his body and bury him near his favorite grandson. From that time this mausoleum was called "burial-vault of Timurids". Here two sons of Timur were buried-Shahrukh and Miranshah, also second grandson Ulugbek are also buried.

Gur-Emir Mausoleum consists of several



parts: yard of Muhammed Sultan ensemble, to the right of mausoleum hanaka (the place where Muslims can pray), to the left is medressah and in the center the mausoleum itself was decorated from each side with minarets. Unfortunately neither the medressah nor hanaka have survived.

Every headstone is made from marble, only Timur's headstone is from nephritis, it was brought by order of Ulugbek and put on grave of Timur. All headstones in upper mausoleum are preserved very well, but in lower parts because of floods almost all of them were destroyed. Lattice ornamentation that was carved on all headstones was made from marble by Ulugbek order in 15th century.

Ulugbek's Observatory

Among historical monuments of Samarkand, observatory have a particular place, constructed by Ulugbek in 1428-1429 on one of the hill-tops, at the bottom of Chupanat altitude.

According to Babur's words, who saw the observatory, it was a three-storied building of round plan with 46 meters in diameter, 30 meters in height. The building is covered with beautiful glazed tiles. In the main hall, huge instrument was placed for observations of Moon, Sun, and other stars of the vault of heaven. Observatory was such a unique construction for its time.

The basis of observatory was giant goniometry (vertical circle), radius of circle was equal to 40,212 meters, and the

length of arc was 63 meters. The main instrument-sextant-was oriented with amazing exactness by line of meridian from south to north.

This has been testified by modern astronomers Kastalsk and Sheglov. Sizes of the main instrument, well planed construction, scientific knowledge of Ulugbek and his companion-in-arms provided amazing exactness of astro-nomic observations.

Contribution to the creation of an astronomic catalog-"Zidji-Gurgani", known as "Star tables of Ulugbek" belongs to Ulugbek. A lot of great scientists were working on it for a long period and finished it in 1437.

After Ulugbek's death, the observatory was destroyed and robbed. Only in 1908 archaeologist Vyatkin found the first document mentioning the location of observatory. Unfortunately only

underground part of sextant and basis of the building were saved.



Afrosiab Museum

Afrosiab-is the name of a mythical king of Turan and one of the legendary heroes

of "Shahnameh", the great epic poem of the famous Persian poet Ferdosi.

Archaeological excavation of Afrosiab started at the end of last century, after the inclusion of Central Asia to Russia.

On the site of ancient settlement were found wonderful example of earthenware ornamental crockery, many terracotta statuettes, glassware, different working tools, women accessories, coins, and etc. Archeological findings give a

clear image of the way of life in ancient Samarkand during many centuries of its existence.

The city was enclosed with strong defensive walls inside of which were citadel-(shahrisatn), cathedral mosque, dwelling houses and craft workshops.

The territory of the city was crossed by straight paved streets and divided into blocks-(Guzars). The museum is built on the territory of Afrosiab. Where archaeological findings of 4th century AC till 13th century AC existed.

Several buildings dated 6-7th centuries A.D were constructed. Their walls are decorated with highly artistic wall paintings made with glue colors on loam stucco.

Where to Stay

Hotel President Palace

53, Shohrukh st.

Afrosiyab Palace

2 Registanskaya st,

Hotel Malika

37, Khamraev Street

City Hotel

19 A University Boulevard st,

Bukhara

Bukhara is one of the most ancient cities of Uzbekistan, situated on a sacred hill, the place where sacrifices were made by fire-worshippers in springtime. This city was mentioned in the holy book of "Avesta". Bukhara city is assumed to be founded in the c. 13th B.C. during the reign of Siyavushids who came to power 980 years before Alexander the Great. The name of Bukhara originates from the word "vihara" which means "monastery" in Sanskrit. The city was once a large commercial center on the Great Silk Road. Bukhara lies west of Samarkand and was once a center of learning renowned throughout the Islamic world. It was here that the great Sheikh Bahautdin Naghshbandi lived. He was a central figure in the development of the mystical sufism approach to philosophy, religion and Islam. In Bukhara there are more than 350 mosques and 100 religious colleges. Its fortunes waxed and waned through succeeding empires until it became one of the great Central Asian Khanates in the 17th century. Bukhara with more than 140 architectural monuments is a "town museum" dating back to the Middle Ages. 2,300 years later, ensembles like the Poi-Kalon, Kos



Madras, Ismail Samani Mausoleum and the Kalian Minaret are attracting a lot of attention. The city consists of narrow streets, green parks and gardens, historical and architectural monuments belonging to the different epochs, but located very close to each other.

Kalyan Minaret

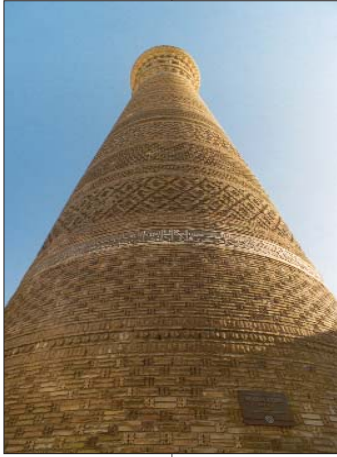
From the beginnings of Islam, there have been three types of mosques: Juma mosques, which are intended for the large crowds that come to Friday services, Namazga country mosques (musalla idgoh), which are used by the male population of both the

city and the surrounding countryside to celebrate the two Muslim holidays Qurban and Ramazan, and Guzar mosques, which are designed to be used as daily mosques in residential neighbourhoods. We know very little about the 13th century Juma Mosque in Bukhara, for it has been rebuilt completely since the time of its original construction.

In any case, it had a vast courtyard surrounded by galleries. However, the minaret which was built in 1127 A.D. and called the Kalyan (Great) Minaret, has survived. It still dominates the skyline of Bukhara, astonishing all visitors who see it with its magnificent flawless shape. The minaret was designated to summon Muslims to prayer five times a day. Normally, each mosque had its own minaret, but the main minaret was situated near the Djuma Mosque. It was from the gallery, at the top of the minaret, that the muedzin summoned the believers to

prayer at the top of his voice.

The Kalyan Minaret was built twice. The fact is it collapsed just before it was completed the first time, probably because of the builders did not take into account the soft ground underneath, due to the many cultural layers beneath the city. A new, more durable foundation was laid for the minaret and, by 1127 A.D, the construction of this second minaret was completed. According to some contemporary writer «there was nothing like this minaret, for it was built very beautifully». Indeed, the forty-eight m tall Kalyan Minaret is a flawless exam-



ple of both civil engineering and superior architectural creation. The baked bricks it is made from form a monolithic circular tower that narrows from its thick base to its top. The body of the minaret is topped by a rotunda with 16 arched fences, from which the muedzins gave the call to prayer. In times of siege or war, warriors used the minaret as a watchtower. Earlier, the

minaret apparently had another round section above the rotunda, but now only the cone-shaped top is left. The baked bricks, from which the minaret is made, are the main feature of its architectural design. The body of minaret is belted with narrow ornamental strings made of bricks. They are arranged in a chessboard order, either straight or diagonally. A frieze with inscriptions goes around the minaret upon a muqarnas (stalactite) cornice. The frieze is covered with blue glaze, which was used widely in the architectural decoration of Bukhara at that time.

Chor – Minor

In the eastern part of Bukhara there is an unusual monument. This is Chor – minor. “Chor minor” means “four minarets”. Essentially it serves as a part of large Madrassah, built by rich Turkman Niyazkul. The Madrassah is demolished, but Chor – minor is on the square among dwelling houses. To the right of the entrance inside there was written a Persian quatrain, pointing out the date of building – 1807. On the first floor in Chor – minor there is a hexahedral entrance vestibule, which has four-side opening embrasure; on the second one, there is a square guard lodging, from which you can get into four minarets with sky-blue domes.



Miri-Arab Madrassah

It is one of the best monuments of Bukhara architecture school in 16th century. Architecture and decoration of Miri-Arab madrassah was distinguish by highest culture and taste. At present in this monument, which underwent catastrophic destruction, portal and whole northern wing of main facade were restored up, cupola and yard-arcades construction were strengthen.

Near Miri-Arab Madrassah is Amir-Alimkhan Madrassah. It was built in the end of 19 – beginning of 20 centuries, using an unusual shape. From 1924, the monument served as urban library. «Noble Bukhara», as it was called, always was one of the major centers of science and knowledge in the East and had a large book-depository.

Samanids Mausoleum

The Samanids Mausoleum reveals the genius of a plain design. This is seen in its composition and the balanced design of its facades and interiors. It is composed of a semi-spherical dome resting on a cube. All of the facades are identical and marked with three-quarter domed columns on the corners. There is an upper armature and a central entrance with a visible horizontal dividing line. The core is characterized by regular kiln-dried bricks, forming horizontal, vertical, and diagonal patterns on the walls. There are also separate details in the shape of disks or rosettes. Analysis shows that all elements in the Mausoleum are based on squares and diagonals: the elements form geometrically digressive lines. The same uni-



fication is seen in the architectural forms and kiln-dried brickwork in the interiors. The architectural design of the Samanid mausoleum is entirely unique. It owes much to pre-Islamic Soghdian architecture, which used four-arch domed compositions and diminished forms on the top of buildings, including disks and rosettes on the decoration of columns (as can also be seen in the section between the dome and the drum of the interior). Although this building is connected with pre-Islamic architecture, it also anticipates the emergence of a new architectural style with comparatively small dimensions; the Samanid

Mausoleum is full of magnificence and feeling of moving from this world to the world that lasts forever.

Chashma-Aiyub

On the way to park exit;

you can see one more interesting monument – Chashma-Aiyub. It was repeatedly rebuilt during 14 – 19 centuries, with its multicells mausoleum; it has a shape of oblong prism, covered with cupolas over apartments of different sizes and shapes. Double cupola with cone calotte, raised on cylindrical drum, marked itself as the main apartment with wellspring source. Hence the name Chashma-Aiyub (spring).

Ulugbek Madrassah

Ulugbek Madrassah was founded in 1417, as the inscription on the bronze plate of door runs says. The name of the master in the portal who built this

monument – Ismail ibn Takhir ibn Makhmud Ispfargoni. It is possible he was a grandson of one of the masters, who had been captured by Timur in Iran and left their names on the portal of Gur-Amir complex in Samarkand. Bukhara Madrassah is the first Madrassah, built by Ulugbek. It is comparatively small, but has great forms. This is a building with two-ayvan square yard, surrounded by two-storey hudjras, with darskhana cupola halls and mosque on the cross of the entrance hall.

Magoki-Attori Mosque

The Magoki-Attori Mosque in the city centre is an example of an urban mosque in a residential quarter. The mosque was built on the site of the pre-Islamic Moh temple.



Excavations have revealed the fact that even under the Samanids there was a six-pier mosque, which apparently was also domed. However, it was rebuilt substantially in the 12th century; the floor level was upgraded and the main facade received a new design that survives with little damage only. By the sixteenth century, the thickness of cultural layers had increased so much that mosque seemed to sink deep into the soil and its facade was unearthed only as a result of excavations carried out in the 1930s. The facade of the mosque is asymmetrical. To the right it has a portal with a recessed vault, fringed with rectangular strips; the architectural decora-

tion is composed of covered bricks which form geometric shapes and tiles of carved terra-cotta bearing vegetation patterns. Carved terracotta is also used in decorating the pillars and the vaults of the arches, combined with vegetation patterns with inscriptions covered with blue glaze tiles. All in all, the Magoki-Attori Mosque is an excellent example of Central Asian architecture during the Kara-khanid epoch.

Sitorai- Mokhi-khosa Palace

It is the only remained sample of Bukharan Emir country palaces. Sitora Mokhi-Khosa Palace was quartered on two territories. Old palace of Abdul-Akhad-khan (1892) is a traditional three-house complex with one- and two-storey building in the spirit of bukharian dwelling houses. New Sayid-Alim-khan Palace



(1917) has pavilion, some isolated yards, thrown about in large park, they have right-angled lay-out “chorbag”, “birun” - is for spectacles; “darun” – reception-room; “garem”- main apartment, “khazina” - store-house, hayvonatkhona, zoogarden and isolated cottages. You should pay a special attention to the “White hall”, its walls are decorated with tracery fretwork on ganch, drawn on mirrors, made out by famous Bokharan master Shirin Muradov. While building one of emir palaces, he injured his hands forever. Palace villas and arbours between park lawns built in 1917-1918, have the seal of European architecture and eastern style. So the first palace was built in eastern and European style. In this hall there is an exposition of things, which were presented to Bukharan khans by different ambassadors. In next palace you can see a gold-embroidery chapans of Bokharan Emirs, implemented in the beginning of 20 century (in the beginning of the century only men has right to embroider chapans in gold, that is why all clothes, presented in the hall, was made by men). Besides emir chapans clothes of different families presented, by clothes amount you may judge family status. Passing the garden paths, you get to “maidenly pond, near it is a pavilion, where khan concubines lived. Straight before the pond, there is summer khan arbor, where he spent his leisure.

Abdullaziz-khan Madrassah

Opposite Ulugbek Madrassah there is Abdullaziz-khan Madrassah. Abdullaziz-khan built it in 1651 – 1652 and it is the last large Madrassah in Bukhara. The building is typical by composition, with four-ayvans yard, but with unordinary divergent fan of hudj groups after side ayvans and cupola buildings on the central axis. It is very interesting to notice the improvent of living lodgings, which consisted of entrance hall and hudjras, and were equipped with free-places, attic storeys, wall niches for bed clothes, dishes, decorated in conformity with the taste of inhabitants, who rented these apartments during their study. Away from Poi-Kalyan

ensemble we can see trade arcades, belonging to the end of 16 century Taki-Telpak Phurushon and Taki Sarraphon. Head-dresses were sold in Taki-Telpak furushon : skull-caps embroidered with beads, brocade and silk, fur-fox hats, turbans. Currency transactions were accomplished under Taki Sarraphon dome, shroffs mediates in international trade affairs. The cupolas are inimitable in their architecture and constructions. The most expressive of them is Taki Sarraphon with cruciform passage through central hall and apartments behind its beveled corners: in one room there was mosque, in another – the entrance into old Saraphon baths, in other two ones – usurer stores. Constructive basis is four massive crossing archs, you can see inside and outside.

Jami Mosque

Straight before the entrance into Ark, you can see the ayvan of palace mosque – Djami, it was built in 18 century like type of large quadrant mosque: four-pillared winter garden, surrounded by three-side ayvan. Design of interieur is typical for 19 century – beginning of 20 century. Last repairment was made in 1910-1920 with the participation of famous Uzbek master Usto-Shirin Muradov, making out fretwork on ganch. Architectural ensemble Lyabi-hauz is formed with three large monumental buildings: Kukeldash Madrassah in the north, khanaka and Nodir Divan-begi in the west and in the

east. From the south the square was closed with Trade Street. The center of old Bukhara large ensemble became a reservoir.

Khosh Madrassah

Kosh means «double». Ensemble includes 2 buildings: Modari-khan Madrassah and Abdullah-khan Madrassah. The buildings stand on narrow street sides, faced portal to each other. Modari-khan Madrassah was built in 1566 - 1567 A.D. The date is pointed out with poems on majolica paintings over entrance. It is the modest model of Madrassah with gorgeous-faced main facade. He built abdullah-khan Madrassah in 1558 – 1590. It is one of outstanding Central Asian architectural work. Here architector bravely deviated from canon rules in planning, moving capacities asymmetrically beyond the rectangular building outlines, including new forms in usual composition. So there was appeared inside yard a spacious hall with cupola on twelve-sided light drum, it is known as «Abdullah-khan sky-light». The hall combines 20 huydjas, situated in 2 tiers.

Khiva

Built as an "open air museum", Khiva is more than 2500 years old. It's located on the territory of Kyzylkum desert, 450 km. from Bukhara. In fact, Khiva is made up of Madrassahs, mosques and minarets such as the tall and beautiful Islam-Khoja minaret, plus having the most number of minarets in Asia, the most



remarkable being the Kalta-Minor minaret (1835) which it is still standing. The Juma Mosque which has an amazingly 218 ornate carved wooden columns is another of the main attractions.

Khiva has managed to retain its exotic image of an Oriental town in the older part of the city called Ichon-Qala. Ichon-Qala is a place where all the monuments of architecture are located. Among them there are the Juma Mosque, Kunya-Ark citadel and the Tosh-Khovli Palace, residence of the Khan, which had been preserved intact along with its ornate gates. Besides, Ichon-Qala displays simplicity and monumentality of medieval architectural forms, the delicateness of woodcarvings, and skilled interweaving of ornamentation. The silhouettes of its towering minarets, hemmed in by clay built houses with their flat roofs and surrounded by the fortress's powerful clay built walls, give a clear idea of a typical Central Asian feudal city.

Citadel of Kunya-ark

According to historical evidence, in 1686, Arang-khan began the construction of the citadel Kunya-ark at the western gates of Ichan-kala. The ark presented a complex multi-yard composition, containing a house for khan, the members of his family, and dignitaries. From the large numbers of constructions of the ark only several buildings of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century were preserved.



Palace of Piurulla-bai

In the shady garden, out of limits of Ichan-kala the palace of Piurulla-bai was built in the beginning of the twentieth century. It consists of the palace itself with a garden, Isfandiyar-khan's waiting room, a court and additional constructions. An unadorned wall with surrounds the palace topped by cogs. There are four yards, around which traditional two-storied houses with high and low aivans were built. The features of the Khorezm country estates are shared by the palace. On the northern side is a garden with a havuz (pond) attached to it. The khan's waiting room is in the eastern part. It is a compact freestanding construction, of the modern European type, with painted walls and ceilings.

Minaret of Islam Khodja

The Minaret of Islam Khodja, built near the madrasah is the highest structure in Khiva, and has become its symbol. The minaret is 44 m. high; the diameter on the foundation is about 10 m. The shaft of the minaret diminishes in its diameter as it rises, and produces an unusual impression. Decorative belts of blue and white ceramics alternating with ochre bricks adorn the minaret. It is topped by arched lantern and golden crown.

Places to Stay

Hotel Malika

Located outside of Ichan Qala next to the bazaar

Hotel Kheivak

Hotel Malika

Kheivak is a new hotel, built in 2008 by Malika Hotels Chain. The hotel is located in Ichan Qala, the historical fortress of Khiva, next to the Islam Khoja minaret.



Hotel Asia

Located at the entrance to Ichan Kala

Hotel Orient Star

Located inside Close to Kuk Minor

Hotel Shaxrizoda

Located inside Ichan-Kala fortress

Nurata

Once known as Nur, this ancient town was founded in 327 BC by Alexander the Great. The remains of this military fortress rise up above the town. The fortress is situated on the south of modern Nurata. It represents one of the most ancient and significant archaeological monuments of the region. The fortress consists of several parts, with Shahristan (the inner town) 500x500 meters in



size, which was surrounded at that time with a large wall and towers. The construction of a fortress at Nurata had a definite purpose, as the town was set in a strategic place at the border between an agricultural area and a wild steppe.

Termez

The main holy place of Termez is the Mausoleum of Hakim at-Termizi, a well-known theologian of the IX c., considered to be as a sacred protector of the city. He was the author a num-

ber of compositions of a mystic-philosophical character and was the founder of the dervishes order. "Hakimi" is considered one of the twelve sects of mysticism." He was buried near the citadel of medieval Termez, probably near to hanaqoh. Later, a mausoleum of baked brick was built above.

Sultan Saodat Complex

The cult-memorial complex of Sultan Saodat was developed during the period of XI-XVII c. at the graves of the Termez sayyids. It had a number of cult structures added at different times: mausoleums, mosques and hanaqoh, built on the perimeter of an elongated courtyard with a combination of integral and short compositions.

Where to Stay

Hotel Meridian

📍 Location: 23, Alpomish Str.

Hotel Akmak Kholis

📍 location:44, Sobir Termiziy Str.

Hotel Ulugbek

📍 location:13a, F. Khojaev Str.

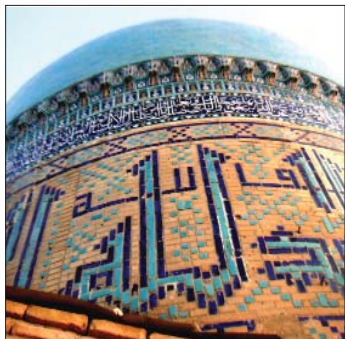
Shakhrisabz

Always an important stop on the branch of the Great Silk Road that led south to the sea, Shakhrisabz is today a popular one or two day trip from Samarkand or a detour on the way to Bukhara. Situated in a fertile plain, with the Gissar mountains as a spectacular backdrop, Shakhrisabz looks back over one thousand years of history. Shakhrisabz means Green City and indeed, as you look down from the pass over the plains, green and lush are words that spring to mind. The drive there takes you through a wealth of orchards, fertile fields and vineyards.

The architectural landmarks of Shakhrisabz are at least 500 years old with the famous Ak Saray Palace and the Jahangir Mausoleum built in the late 14th and early 15th centuries.

Among the most important historical monuments are the Shamsiddin Kilab Mazar, the Kok Gumbaz Grand Mosque, and the Gumbazi Saidan Mausoleum. They all date back to Timurid times. The local bazaar and the city's ancient bathhouse, both from the 15th century are also stopovers on the grand tour. Shakhrisabz is a traditional centre of folk art and is renowned

for its distinctive embroidery style, a very complex flat stitch that covers the base fabric entirely. The embroidering ladies from Shakhrisabz and their purses and pillows are famous not only throughout Uzbekistan where they are a fixture at every craft fair.



Kok Gumbaz Mosque and Doru Tilovat

The mosque was built by Ulug Bek near the original mausoleums of Sheikh Shamsuddin Kulal, teacher and spiritual



mentor of Timur, and Timur's father Amir Taragay. The tombstone of the Sheikh is said to have curative effects and it is decorated with opulent marble ornaments.

Doru Saodat (Seat of the Mighty)

Amir Timur had this complex built for his son Jahanghir, who died at the age of 22.

Later Omar Sheikh, another of Timur's sons, was buried here. The powerful ruler wanted this very site to be his own resting place and had the design ready and orders given for its construction but for many reasons his last will was not respected.

Where to Stay

Hotel Orient Star

📍 Location: 26, Ipak Yuli Str.

What to Eat

Cuisine of Uzbekistan

One particularly distinctive and well-developed aspect of Uzbek culture is its cuisine. Unlike their nomadic neighbors, the Uzbeks have had a settled civilization for centuries. Between the deserts and mountains, in the oases and fertile valleys, they have cultivated grain and domesticated livestock.

The resulting abundance of products has allowed the Uzbeks to express their strong tradition of hospitality, which in turn has enriched their cuisine. The seasons, specifically winter and summer, greatly influence the composition of the basic menu. In the summer, fruit, vegetables and nuts are ubiquitous. Fruit grows in abundance in Uzbekistan - grapes, melons, watermelons, apricots, pears, apples, cherries, pomegranates, lemons, persimmons, quinces and figs.

Vegetables are no less plentiful, including some lesser known species such as green radishes, yellow carrots, and dozen of pumpkin and squash varieties, in addition to the usual eggplants, peppers, turnips, cucumbers and luscious tomatoes.

The winter diet traditionally consists of dried fruit and vegetables, and preserves. Hearty noodle or pasta-type dishes are also common chilly weather fare. In general, mutton is the preferred source of protein in the Uzbek diet. Fatty tailed sheep are prized not only for their meat and fat as a source of cooking oil, but for their wool as well.

Beef and horsemeat are also consumed in substantial quantities. Camel and goat meat are less common. Uzbek dishes are not notably hot and fiery, though certainly flavorful. Some of their principle spices are black cumin, red and black peppers, barberries, coriander, and sesame seeds. The more common herbs are cilantro (fresh coriander), dill, parsley, celeriac, and basil. Other seasonings include wine vinegar, liberally applied to salads and marinades, and fermented milk products.

The wide array of breads, leavened and unleavened, is a staple for the majority of the population. Flat bread, or "non", is usually baked in tandoor ovens, and served with tea, not to mention at every meal. Some varieties are prepared with onions or meat in the dough, others topped with sesame seeds or kalonji. Central Asia has a reputation for the richness and delicacy of its fermented dairy products. The most predominant are katyk, or yogurt made from sour milk, and suzma, strained clotted milk similar to cottage cheese, which are eaten plain, in salads, or added to soups and main dishes, resulting in a unique and delicious flavor.

Etiquette- Do's and Don'ts

Banquet and Etiquette

Tradition demands that the table be covered with food at all times. When guests arrive, all cold food items are on the table, served on small plates, namely the appetizers, salads, cakes and cookies and a fruit arrangement in the center. Only completely empty serving plates are cleared. Guests' plates are changed after every course.

The handshake

Men will always shake hands with other men. Even if you are not introduced to everyone, a simple handshake substitutes for a formal introduction. A woman visitor may not receive a handshake unless she herself extends her hand. Women will often greet you with a big hug, and definitely with a handshake.

For the winter traveler, gloves should be removed when shaking hands.

Etiquette is important and strictly followed. There are a multitude of ways to greet strangers, acquaintances, or even lifelong friends.

The kiss on the cheek

Close friends or family members of the same sex will often greet each other with a more vibrant display of affection than a simple handshake. Kissing is the most common greeting seen among people of the region, and depending on where you are traveling, this is most often done two or three times on alternating cheeks. However, when a pair is exceptionally happy to see each other, or when

one is showing a deep respect for the other, the exchange will most definitely continue past the requisite two- or three-kiss norm. As a sign of respect, elders will often receive a kiss from their less mature counterparts, whether acquainted or not.

The "silent bow"

One of the most beautiful features of Central Asian culture is found within one simple little gesture, this "silent bow". Often accompanying the handshake, men will place their left hand over their hearts and offer a slight, almost indiscernible, bow to their counterpart in a gesture of deep respect.

This subtle bow or slight inclination of the head is also displayed in a variety of other exchanges among people. However, when not shaking hands, it is the right hand that is placed on the chest. You will most definitely encounter this when someone is offering thanks, saying good-bye or parting ways, or even when a younger man passes an elder in the street and wants to show his respect.

Language Essentials

- Greeting
- Uchrashuv, salomlashuv
- Hello!
- Assalomu alaykum!
- Good afternoon!
- Salom!
- Hi!
- Qalaysiz!
- Sir
- Janob
- Madam
- Khonim
- Sit down, please
- Marhamat, otiring
- What is your name?
- Ismingiz nima?
- I am glad to meet you!
- Tanishganimizdan khursandman!
- How do you do?
- Ishlaringiz qalay?
- Very well, thank you
- Juda yaxshi, rahmat
- Parting
- Khayrlashuv
- Good bye!
- Khayr!
- Good luck!
- Khayr!
- See you soon
- Tez orada ko'rishguncha
- Expressing Gratitude
- Minnatdorchilik
- Thank you!
- Rakhmat!
- Please!
- Iltimos!
- Thank you very much!
- Ko'p rahmat! (most common) Katta rahmat!
- You are welcome
- Arzimaydi
- Agreement, Disagreement
- Rozilik, norozilik

- Well, O.K
- Mayli, yaxshi
- Yes, of course
- Ha, albatta!
- Right
- To'g'ri
- Come in
- Kiring!
- Just a moment
- To'khtab turing (most common) Bir daqiqa
- Of course, not
- Yo'q, albatta
- I don't know
- Bilmadim
- Apologies and words used after apologies
- Kechirim so'rash va undan keyin javob beriladigan so'zlar
- I am sorry
- Uzr or Kechirasiz
- I'm very sorry
- Ming afsus
- That's all right
- Hechqisi yo'q
- Never mind
- Ahamiyat bermang
- Do you speak English?
- Siz Inglizcha gaplashasizmi?
- I (don't) speak.
- Men... gapiraman (gapirmayman)
- I speak a little
- Men ozgina... gapiraman
- Do you understand me?
- Siz meni tushunayapsizmi?
- (tushundingizmi)
- I (don't) understand you
- Men sizni tushunayapman
- (tushundim),(tushunmayapman,tushunmadim)
- Speak slower please
- Sekinroq gapiring
- I understand Uzbek but I cannot speak
- Men Ozbek tilini tushunaman ammo gapirmayman
- What's the Uzbek for?

Bu O'zbekchada nima deyiladi?

Interrogative words

Savollar beradigan suzlar

■ Who?

Kim?

■ What?

Nima?

■ Where?

Qayerda?

■ When?

Qachon?

■ Why?

Nega? or Nimaga?

■ How much?

Qancha? (for price) or Nechta? (for quantity)

In the city

Shaharda

■ Where is...?

... qayerda joylashgan?

■ How can I find...?

... qanday topsam boladi?

■ How can I get (something)?

Qanday olsam bo'ladi?

■ How can I reach (somewhere)?

... qanday borsam boladi?

■ This way?

Bu tarafgami?

■ On the right

O'ngga

■ On the left

Chapga

■ I'm looking for the... (street, house)

Men... (kochani, uyni) qidirayapman

In a Hotel

Mekhmonkhonada

■ Take me to the... (hotel, airport, restaurant)

Meni... (mekhmonkhonaga, aeroportga, restoranga) olib borib qo'ying

■ Where is the hotel situated?

Mekhmonkhona qayerda joylashgan?

■ Drugstore

Dorikhona

■ Shop

Magazin (do'kon)

■ I (We) need a single (double) room

Menga (Bizga) bir kishilik (ikki kishilik) khona kerak

■ Give me please the key to my room

Khonamning kalitini bering iltimos

■ What floor is my room on?

Khonom nechinchi qavatda joylashgan?

■ The room (doesn't) suit me

Khona menga ma'qul kel(ma)yapti

In a shop

(Do'konda)

■ Where can I buy?

Qayerda sotib olсам boladi?

■ I want to buy...

... sotib olmoqchiman

■ How much does...cost?

... necha pul? or qancha turadi?

■ How much should I pay?

Necha pul tolashim kerak?

■ Show me...

Ko'rsating menga...

■ Have you...?

Sizda... bormi?

■ Where shall I pay?

Qayerga to'lashim kerak?

■ Where is the exit?

Chiqish qayerda?

Days of week

Hafta kunlari

■ Monday

Dushanba

■ Tuesday

Seshanba

■ Wednesday

Chorshanba

■ Thursday

Payshanba

■ Friday

Juma

- Saturday
Shanba
- Sunday
Yakshanba

Numbers

Raqamlar

- 1
Bir
- 2
Ikki
- 3
Uch
- 4
To'rt
- 5
Besh
- 6
Olti
- 7
Yetti
- 8
Sakkiz
- 9
To'qqiz
- 10
O'n
- 20
Yigirma
- 30
O'ttiz
- 40
Qirq
- 50
Ellik
- 60
Oltmish
- 70
Yetmish
- 80
Sakson
- 90
To'qson
- 100
Yuz
- 1000
Ming

TURKMENISTAN

Introduction



Introduction

Turkmenistan is situated in the western part of Central Asia between 42° – 48' to 35° – 08' north latitudes and 50° –27' to 66° – 41' east longitudes. To the north is Kazakhstan, in the east and northeast lies

Uzbekistan, in the south are Iran and Afghanistan and in the west are

Azerbaijan and Russia via the Caspian Sea. About 80 % of the territory is plain with dominating deserts and 20% is occupied with mountains. The entire central part of the country is occupied by one of the largest sand deserts in the world, the Karakum Desert. About four-fifths of the country is

steppe that is part of the southern portion of the vast Turan lowland. The Kopetdag Mountains fringe the Karakum Desert along the country's southern border with Iran.

Turkmenistan is an independent state founded in 1991 after the disintegration of the USSR and five years later it attained a unique political status which was recognized by the United Nations Organization. The founder of the state, the national leader of Turkmenistan, President Saparmurat Turkmenbashy, specified the character of his country and its place in the sophisticated geopolitical space by capacious formulation "permanent neutrality".

Turkmenistan is a country of the

oldest civilizations having made a significant contribution to the development of the world culture.

Modern Turkmenistan borders were first to appear in the world along with India and Middle East. Historical sources prove that in the III-II millennium BC two big states, which consolidated nations living far from each other in the desert and river valleys, were established on the territory of present-day Turkmenistan.

Known as Scythians, Massagets, Saks, Dakhs in the whole Asia and Europe, their ancestors had created powerful, mighty states uniting many peoples in different period of time. In all, Turkmens established over seventy

big and small states throughout their legendary history in all parts of Asia and Eastern Europe. Turkmens have at all times remained courteous people devoted to the traditions of hospitality. They treat a guest as the messenger of Allah.

Hence, there is a proverb: "The guest is higher than father". Being people of word and honor, Turkmens had always fulfilled the obligations under treaties and agreements concluded with other states." If any Turkmen gives his word, would break it in no way, even should it threaten his life and freedom", wrote a traveler in the remote past with amazement and without envy.



Country profile



nifies hopes of the Turkmen people for a bright future and each of the stars represents one of the five Turkmen Provinces: Ahal, Balkan, Dashhoguz, Lebap and Mary. The vertical red strip contains five basic Turkmen carpet patterns and two crossed olive branches reflecting Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality.

Official Website:

<http://turkmenistan.gov.tm>

Government Type:

Turkmenistan is a Presidential republic and the government is divided into three branches: the executive branch headed by the president, the legislative branch consisting of the National Assembly (Milli Majlis) and the judicial branch embodied in the Supreme Court. A People's Council nominally has the ultimate power to oversee the three branches. A Council of Elders exists as an advisory body to the government, everyday affairs of which are conducted by a Cabinet of Ministers appointed by the president.

Official Language & Local Dialects

Turkmen is the national and official language throughout Turkmenistan. Russian is also widely spoken.

Capital City

Ashgabat



Country's Official Name:

Turkmenistan

Flag description

It is straight dark emerald green with a white crescent moon and five white stars, a vertical red stripe on the left, at the flagstaff. The crescent moon in the upper left-hand corner of the green background sig-





Major Cities

Balkanabat, Dashhoguz, Mary, Turkmenbashi, Turkmenabat

Name of Provinces

Administratively the country is divided into five Provinces: Ahal, Balkan, Dashhoguz, Lebap and Mary.

Ethnic Groups

Turkmen 85%, Russians 7%, Uzbeks 5%, other 3%

Country's Total Area

Kilometers: 488,100 sq. km

Population

6.7 million EST.

Climate

Turkmenistan enjoys dry, continental climate, with very hot summer (rarely below 35°C and sometimes up to 50°C in the south east regions of the Karakum Desert). Turkmenistan enjoys annually average 250 days sun. In the south of Turkmenistan the climate is also slightly more continental than in the north and temperature seldom drops below -5°C. Northern areas on the Uzbek border and Khorezm (Dashhoguz) can become very cold in winter with temperatures dropping below -20°C. There is snow in the north and above 1.000m in the mountains in January and February.

Public Holidays

New Year's Day (Christian New Year):
January 1

Navruz-Bairam (Persian New Year):
March 21, 22

Victory Day: May 8

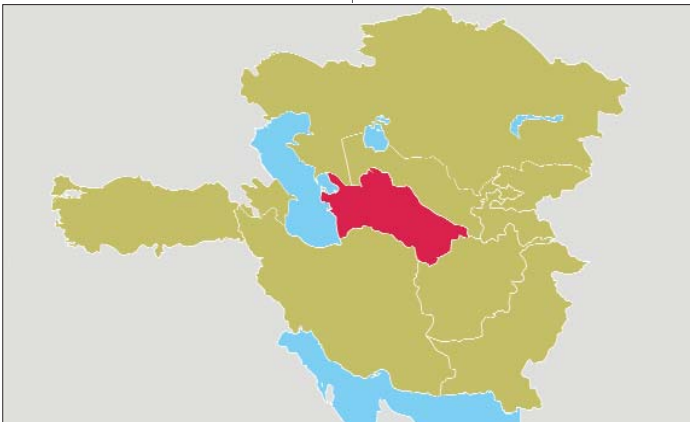
Independence Day: October 27 & 28

Neutrality Day: December 12

Kurban-Bairam (The Feast of Sacrifice):
Will be determined by the Government,
Approx. 3 days

Time zone:

GMT +5



The Silk Road



The Silk Road was never a single-path route. Its system included some branches of caravan roads which passed across different mountain passes bypassing deserts.

The Silk Road originated in Chang'an, the ancient capital of China, and went along the northern Tien-Shan to Dunhua, the city near the Great Wall of China. There the single road split bordering the Taklamakan desert from the north and the south.

The northern way went through Turfan to the Ili river valley.

The Middle road (the so-called Southern way) led from Zhang Qian to the southern coast of Lake Issyk Kul- via Khotan and Yarkand, and reached Bactria (northern Afghanistan).

There the Southern route split in two other roads: one followed to India, the other to the West and Merv where it merged with the Northern route. Further it passed via Nissa, the capital Parthia, Iran, Mesopotamia, Bagdad, went to Damascus and reached the Mediterranean. And finally, the third, the most difficult was called the Northern or the Steppe route.

Having crossed the Tien Shan, a part of caravans went via Fergana valley and Tashkent oasis to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khorezm and reached the coast of the Caspian Sea.

A part of caravans from Samarkand headed to Bactria and after crossing the Kashkadarya Valley led to Termez. Then caravans forded the Amu Darya and went to the Middle East and India.



Beside the three main lines of the Silk Road, there were also other roads by means of which all those three lines were interconnected.

The Caucasian Silk Road started in ancient Samarkand. It went to Khorezm, followed around the Caspian Sea, crossed the steppes of North Caucasus, and then went down to the city of Tskhum. From there trade caravans crossed the Black Sea to reach Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium.

The important road went from the Bottom Volga region along the western coast of the Caspian Sea through the Caspian Iron Gate, the city of Derbent, to the south, to ancient Albania and Parthia connecting the northern and main routes of the Silk Road.

With time the routes underwent changes as it was required by political situations. So, in the 4th -8th

centuries the main route included Syria - Iran - Central Asia - Southern Kazakhstan - the Talas valley - the Chuya valley - the Issyk-Kul hollow - East Turkestan. The branch of that route, more precisely, another route went to the line from Byzantium via Derbent to the Near-Caspian steppes - Mangyshlak - Near-Aral - Southern Kazakhstan.

That can be explained by the fact that Turkic khagans started to control the trade there.

So, the sector crossing Central Asia became especially busy. Rich cities,

merchants and craftsmen settlements, caravanserais started to appear and prosper. In Turkmenistan it was Merv, Urgench; in Uzbekistan — Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva; in Kazakhstan — Otrar, Turkestan, Taraz, Ispedzhab; in Kyrgyzstan- Dzhul, Suyab, Novokents, Balasagyn, Barskoon, Tash-Rabat, Osh, Uzgen.

Today they form the necklace along which main tourist routes around Central Asia pass.

Not so long ago the countries-participants of the Silk Road such as China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and others, have decided to jointly apply for UNESCO in order to designate the Silk Road as World Heritage Site.



Useful Information

☐ Best Time to Visit the Country

As summers are ferociously hot and winters bitterly cold, spring (April to June) and autumn (September to November) are the best seasons to visit Turkmenistan. In April the desert blooms briefly and the monotonous ochre landscapes explode in reds, oranges and yellows. Autumn is harvest time, when market tables heave with freshly picked fruit. If you do decide to battle the winter, be aware that many domestic flights are grounded and finding food can be a problem since lots of restaurants close for the season.

🇹🇲 Visa Regulations

All foreign travelers to Turkmenistan require a visa. Travelers from countries, which have a Turkmenistan embassy, consulate or diplomatic representative, must purchase their visa in their home country or in any Turkmen embassies located close to their home country/location before departing for Turkmenistan. Otherwise, they will be sent back on the next available flight.

The prerequisite for obtaining visa is having a Letter of Invitation (LOI) approved by the Turkmen Government. It is required to submit a passport copy of the traveler to the State Immigration Service of Turkmenistan to get an approved invitation letter.

In order to get a letter of invitation confirmed by the Turkmen Government, you're required to provide your travel agency with the following personal details including Full Name, Date of Birth, City and Country of Birth, Citizenship, Passport

Number, Date of passport issue and expiration, Gender, Occupation and Place of employment, Previous visits (year/month), Port of Entry, Date(s) of Entry and Departure, Cities and Sites you wish to visit, City/country where you will obtain visa, Fax number for sending visa support letter, Short program & hotel to stay, Invitation Approval.

🇹🇲 Visa Application

The approval process requires approximately up to 3 weeks. With the approved copy of the letter of invitation plus your passport with at least six months remaining validity and at least one blank visa page for visa to be issued, you can apply for your Turkmen visa at any Turkmen Consulate worldwide by yourself. Usually each Consulate has its own application form which you should request by mail or fax when you make your enquiries.

Visa issuance takes between 1-5 working days. Normal visa processing usually takes 3 working days. Urgent issuance can be done within a day at an extra fee. Some Embassies can issue the visas by mail using courier services at your cost.

For stays up to 10 days, you can obtain the visa at Ashgabat airport by paying the visa cost in cash (needs to be arranged in advance). Further extensions depending on your letter will be charged again. Visitors could also purchase a visa from the local authorities on arrival.

However, again a letter of invitation from a company registered in Turkmenistan, endorsed in writing by the Turkmen Immigration Office, is required and must be presented to the immigration officers on arrival. Please note that according to a new

decree, the State Committee for Tourism & Sport of Turkmenistan will issue TRAVEL ENTRY PASS for every tourist to pass on them by the travel agencies' representative before passport control on each border.

Also, all tourists must be registered at City Tourism Board by payment. Sometimes this fee is included in the tour cost. Please note that some Turkmen Consulates and the Consular Office at Ashgabat airport require the original of your invitation letter as well as a direct confirmation by the inviting organization.

Visa Types

Tourist Business Visa

To obtain a business visa, presenting the invitation letter from the person or company to be visited in Turkmenistan, certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ashgabat is required. If the applicant is traveling as a tourist and will not be meeting anyone in Turkmenistan, she/he must contact the Ministry of Tourism (Tel: +99312-35-47-77 fax: +99312-39-67-40) which will assist in planning the visit and will provide the letter, certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Travel Pass and Arrival Tax / Travel Card

In addition to your visa, entry to Turkmenistan using a Tourist visa is subject to a Travel Pass, a green document, which is delivered to the relevant border post by your guide, stamped by the passport control upon entry and exit.

You have to pay for the cost of the Travel Pass or Travel Voucher. Therefore, keep money at hand. Delivery of the Travel Pass by other

means is not possible. Please note that without the Travel Pass, the Tourist visa is invalid and you may be refused entry to or exit from Turkmenistan. As of 01/03/2003, all foreign visitors are subject to a further arrival tax based on which a beige color Travel Card will be issued. This charge is payable in cash upon arrival by each individual traveler.

Police / OVIR Registration

All travelers with a tourist or business visa are now requested for a Police / OVIR registration without considering the length of their stay in Turkmenistan. Registration could be handled by some travel agencies paying an additional cost for each person. The registration process takes 1/2 working days. Please note that the OVIR offices are closed on Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

Transit Visa

Transit visas for 3-7 days are available at all Turkmen Consulates upon presentation of valid onward visas or relevant ticketing where applicable. Approval process takes about 10-14 working days similar to tourist visa.

Most of the time the application must be made in person, but the Consulate will not request you to give up your passport during the approval period.

Important Notes:

No transit visas are available at any Turkmen border points including Ashgabat airport.

The transit period starts the day the visa is endorsed at the border and is NOT calculated by the hour. (i.e. the entire arrival day counts as a whole day, so is the departure day leaving

you one day to cross the country)

It is not possible to travel to restricted areas and areas except for the transit route on transit visa unless they are specifically indicated on the visa (this also concerns the border areas of Kunya-Urgench and Dashhoguz and the routings leading towards them).

For international trains passing Turkmenistan's eastern periphery, no transit visas are officially required if a through ticket can be shown.

It is not possible to extend transit visas under normal conditions.

Ashgabat's Saparmurad Turkmenbashi Airport has a transit area for passengers on international flights not requesting any transit visa.

Nature Reserves / Border Zones

For travelers intending to visit Turkmenistan's fascinating Nature Reserves and the relevant border zones, please note that as a rule these have to be specified in your invitation letter prior to your arrival. If properly indicated in your invitation letter, border permits can then be obtained through your travel agency upon arrival in Ashgabat against a charge. Anyhow, upon request, the issuing Embassy will include the border areas (e.g. Dashhoguz) in your visa free of charge.

Permits to visit the Nature Reserves and protected areas (Zakazniks) of Turkmenistan are subject to approval by the Ministry of Environment and are subject to a fee and up to 14 days processing. Please note that especially in the summer months, most reserves are not allowed to be visited.

Restricted Zones

The Government of Turkmenistan has designated many areas throughout the country as "restricted zones,"

particularly the border areas next to Iran, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, the entire region of Dashhoguz (including Dashhoguz city) and areas of the Caspian coast.

Travel to these areas by foreigners is forbidden without special permission from the Government of Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan Airlines, the national airline, will not sell a ticket to any traveler who intends to travel to a "restricted zone" without proof of permission from the government.

Travelers who wish to visit a "restricted zone" must have a valid passport and visa and must apply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a special permit. There is a minimum processing time of 10 working days for these permits.

Foreign Vehicles

Travelers on their own vehicles should indicate their intention when making the arrangements for the visa support letter. Although the car is not included in the visa, significant transit and entry fees are payable upon entry to Turkmenistan at the Transport Department for both Tourist and Transit visa holders.

The amount of these fees varies for motorcycles, larger 4WD and Minibuses depending on your vehicle and routing and is payable in cash upon arrival.

Important Notes:

It is usually not possible to know in advance how much exactly the fee will be.

The key factor in the calculation of the fees is usually whether your vehicle is categorized as a private car or a truck. Unless you have a serious loading area, you can insist on the lower

fees for a private vehicle.

In case of doubt, the documents can be extended / amended in Ashgabat and at the Transport department in other Turkmen cities.

The 3rd party liability insurance fee charges is mandatory even if relevant international documents are presented.

"Carnet de Passage" is usually not required for entry to Turkmenistan.

Approval for off-road routings needs to be applied for in well advance.

Even if in transit, border assistance for the documentation is highly recommended. It is available at a fee.

Customs Regulations

On entering the country, tourists should complete a customs declaration form that must be retained until departure. This allows the import of articles intended for personal use including currency and valuables which must be registered on the declaration form.

It is advisable when shopping to ask for a certificate from the shop, which states that goods have been paid for in hard currency. Presentation of such certificates should speed up customs formalities.

Duty Free

The following goods may be imported into Turkmenistan by tourists aged 17 and older without incurring customs duty:

Tobacco.....200 cigarettes or 200g of tobacco

Perfume.....Reasonable for personal use

Cameras.....No restrictions

Film.....Reasonable for personal use

Gifts.....Reasonable quantity

Other.....Personal belongings up to a value of TMM500

Currency.....No restrictions

Imports

Import of military weapons and ammunition, narcotics, pornography, poisons, printed, audio and video materials and other information sources containing information that can do harm and damage to economic and political interests of Turkmenistan, its national security, health and morality of population is prohibited.

Import regulations in Turkmenistan are subject to change at short notice and travelers should contact the embassy before departure for up-to-date information.

Exports

Same as prohibited imports, as well as lottery tickets, carpets, works of art and antiques (unless permission has been granted by the Ministry of Culture) and furs.

How to get there and away

By Plane

Turkmenistan Airlines, the national airline, currently flies to Abu-Dhabi, Birmingham, Delhi, Karachi, Kiev, London, Moscow, Frankfurt, Istanbul and Tashkent and uses the most modern aircrafts. Turkmenistan is also served by other international carriers such as Iran Air, Lufthansa, Pakistan International Airlines, Turkish Airlines, Ukrainian Airlines and Uzbekistan Airways.

Lufthansa and Turkish Airlines fly 3 and 5 times a week respectively, reaching Ashgabat late at night, with Lufthansa stopping over in Baku

(Azerbaijan). The Turkish airlines flight is usually more competitive, but reaches & leaves Ashgabat more inconvenient hours. There are daily connections to Moscow and one or two flights to the other Central Asian capitals and Kiev.

The baggage allowance on the small planes is only 10 kg with strict limits on the size of luggage and there is also an occasional hand luggage limitation of 5 kg. Advance arrangements should be taken if you happen to carry outside baggage on smaller planes or you should pick the flights with larger planes.

Airlines in Turkmenistan

Turkish Airlines:

<http://www.thy.com/>

Lufthansa:

<http://www.lufthansa.com>

Iran Air: <http://www.iranair.com/>

Turkmenistan Airlines:

<http://www.turkmenistanairlines.com/>

British Airways:

<http://www.britishairways.com>

Uzbekistan Airways:

<http://www.uzairways.com>

Armenian Airlines

Pakistani International Airlines

Airport Information Desk

Located at the new airport

☎Tel: (993-12) 51-00-16, 51-00-24

International Ticket Office

Located at the old airport

☎Tel: (993-12) 35-48-57

By Train

Only international trains bound for Dushanbe continue crossing the Uzbek-Turkmen periphery between Turkmenabat and Dashhoguz. No Turkmen Transit visas are required for travelers with through ticketing. The

local Trans-Caspian railway crosses the entire south of Turkmenistan from the Caspian to Turkmenabat where you will connect to Tashkent. Despite the opening of the Sarags railway crossing into Northern Iran, potentially linking Central Asia with Istanbul, no through service is available yet and one has to cross the Iranian border by taxi or bus. The railway network runs fairly well and most trains have reasonable standards.

By Ship

Turkmenistan can be accessed by boat across the Caspian Sea year-round on the daily car & railway ferry traveling between Baku and Turkmenbashi. Unfortunately the Azeri-run ferry has no regular schedule and arrivals and departures have to be planned with one or two spare days. Further, there is a weekly Russian ferry to Astrakhan, in the Volga region, also with a rather vague schedule.

There used to be river-boats between the south-eastern city of Atamyrat and Turkmenabat, but these have been suspended with the opening of the local railway covering this end of the country.

By Road

Turkmenistan is connected by road to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Iran. The crossing into Iran is only open to nationals of the CIS and Iran. Bus services are available to the capitals of all the neighboring republics and north across the Karakum Desert to Kunya-Urgench with connections to Urgench and Khiva in Uzbekistan. A service also runs between Ashgabat and Mashhad in eastern Iran. Frequent urban and domestic Bus and Minibus services run reasonably well and are cheap, usually starting at

the nearest corresponding railway or bus-station; Nevertheless - again - there are only few scheduled departures.

It is also possible to travel by your private car but it requires considerable preparation:

American or Japanese cars are not recommended because it is difficult to obtain spare parts and have repairs made as petrol and repair stations are much less extensive, especially in highways and roads beyond the boundaries of larger cities. Better choices are simpler European, Turkish or Russian-made cars.

Check that your car is in good repair before you embark on your journey, paying particular attention to the suspension (be prepared for a bumpy ride).

Take two full extra cans of petrol with you - you may need them when searching for petrol stations. Take a tool kit as well.

Have road maps available.

Travelling by car is relatively safe. Crimes are not very frequent, but you are advised not to stop or to stop overnight in deserted places far away from towns.

If you feel that you cannot, or do not want to cover the distance to Ashgabat without an overnight stop, try to arrange to stay at a hotel in one of the main cities en route.

Once you arrive in Turkmenistan, you do not need to register your car if you intend to use it for less than a year there. If this is the case, you should tell the customs officer at the checkpoint on the NIS border that you will take the car back within the year and he will put a special stamp in your customs declaration.

If you are going to use the car for more than a year, you will have to

register the car and pay an import tax. But hefty fees and long lasting procedures are applicable for entry by private vehicles into Turkmenistan which depending on the routing and vehicle varies in charge.

Travelling between Cities

Turkmenistan Airlines also fly regularly to major towns and cities within Turkmenistan, such as Mary, Turkmenbashi, Dashhoguz, Turkmenabat, Kerki (Far East) and Balkanabat. Local flights are reasonable and have a good safety record on their frequent scheduled flights between Ashgabat and Turkmenistan's regional centers. Since 2002, the flights from Ashgabat to Dashhoguz and Turkmenabat are mainly operated by Boeing 717's.

Getting Around

The most secure and time effective option is to find a car and driver through the CU, which maintains a list of reliable drivers. Alternatively, you may consider driving yourself once you feel comfortable with the rules of the road.

Bus

Public transport is by (trolley) bus. If you do not speak the language, you will find it difficult to use public transport (at least until you are familiar with the alphabet) because the name of all routes are of course in Turkmen and Russian. It is not easy to work out how to reach your destination, even though the driver announces each station. If you are planning to use the same public transport route regularly, i.e. the route from home to workplace, ask an associate to accompany you on your first couple of return

journeys. You can sometimes buy maps in the kiosks situated close to the bus stops where you can also buy tickets.

Public transport is not expensive. You will need to use one ticket per journey on the bus or trolley and to validate this, you should punch it in one of the machines attached to the inside of the vehicle. Buses and trolley buses operate daily from 6.00 am to 1 am.

Taxi

It is not particularly easy to identify a 'taxi' on the street, since many 'taxis' are now private citizens using their own cars to make some extra cash.

Hiring a 'chastnik' has become a more acceptable alternative means of getting around, particularly in the main cities, although you should always exercise caution when using their services.

You will find most official taxis (often yellow cars) outside the hotels, at the airport or through the phone book. Taxis can also be hailed on the street. It is recommended to be vigilant about security when taking a taxi:

Don't get into a car which has other people riding in it.

Keep a keen eye on the route and your possessions.

It is best not to use a taxi too late at night.

Taxis use meters which do not always work and no longer use fixed tariffs. It is worth negotiating the fare before you make the journey, as this is the accepted practice.

On average, the fare per kilometer is twice as high at night than during the day. It is worth checking with business colleagues or hotel staff what they think the cost of the journey should be.

Car rental

Many of new hotels have their own fleet of cars which are available for hire, with or without a driver. If you do not know the city, it is sensible to hire a driver, at least at the beginning of your visit. If you decide to rent a car without a driver, consider these points:

Both your domestic and international driving licenses are valid in Turkmenistan.

Never drink and drive in Turkmenistan - you will be fined or charged, because it is considered a serious offence.

If you have an accident, you should wait for a traffic policeman to arrive on the scene without moving the cars involved, so that he can make the necessary assessments and write a report. This police procedure is necessary for insurance purposes (the report has to be made available to your insurance company).

Road signs mainly correspond to the international standard of pictograms - or can be easily worked out - although there are some which are in Russian script.

☪ Money

National Currency

The local currency is Manat. All financial transaction on the territory of Turkmenistan should be carried out in Manats, although joint-ventures which include most hotels and restaurants are allowed to deal in a foreign currency.

Currency Exchange

The preferred hard currency is US Dollars and visitors carrying other currencies may find it hard to change them.

It is advisable to take new, clean US Dollar notes in small denominations. Foreign currency can be changed at banks and major hotels. Foreigners are expected to pay all travel and hotel bills in hard currency and prices bear little relation to what locals are expected to pay.

Credit Cards

Major Credit Cards are accepted in Ashgabat (Visa Card, Master Card and Euro Card) and not at all outside the capital.

Travelers' Cheques

Currency regulations in Turkmenistan allow the tourists to bring unlimited amount of foreign currency or traveler cheques, but have to be declared upon entry into Turkmenistan.

Also, only travelers' cheques drawn on banks with reciprocal arrangements with the Turkmen National Bank are accepted.

Currency Restrictions

The import and export of local currency is prohibited for foreigners. Import of foreign currency is unlimited and export is limited to the amount declared at the time of import. Banking hours: 09.30-17.30 Monday to Friday.

Obtaining Cash

If you run out of cash, there are a couple of reliable methods which you can try to obtain funds from an account in your home country. You can obtain cash on your Visa credit or debit card or your Master Card, at the Vneshekonom Bank and hotel exchange offices displaying the Visa or Master Card signs.

The commission will vary and will

be anything up to 5%. Bear in mind that your bank will charge you a handling fee. You can also obtain a cash in advance using your American Express card as a guarantee for a personal cheque at the Vnesheconom Bank.

Safety & Security

Visible police and military presence in Turkmenistan is common. Both uniformed and plainclothes officials frequently ask to see passports, visas, migration cards and SSRF registrations. Travelers should ask to see identification if they are not certain that the person requesting the information is an official.

Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of military or security interest, such as government buildings, may result in problems with authorities. Visitors should ask whether buildings may be photographed.

Embassy telephone numbers

Country Code: 993
Ashgabat Code: 12

Afghanistan Embassy

Ashgabat, Gerogly 14
Tel: 395820, 395821(22)
Fax: 395823

Iran Embassy

Ashgabat, Tegeranskaya 3
Tel: 344611
Fax: 341920

Kazakhstan Embassy

Ashgabat, Gerogly 14
Tel: 398111
Fax: 393159

Kyrgyzstan Embassy

- 📍 Ashgabat, Gerogly 14
- ☎ Tel: 355506
- 📠 Fax: 392064

Pakistan Embassy

- 📍 Ashgabat, Kemine 92
- ☎ Tel: 512317, 512388
- 📠 Fax: 512304

Tajikistan Embassy

- 📍 Ashgabat, Gerogly 14
- ☎ Tel: 393431, 469030
- 📠 Fax: 393174

Turkey Embassy

- 📍 Ashgabat, Shevchenko 9
- ☎ Tel: 510011, 354118
- 📠 Fax: 510894

Uzbekistan Embassy

- 📍 Ashgabat, Gerogly 50A
- ☎ Tel: 362006
- 📠 Fax: 342432

Health

It is essential to observe the same health precautions in Turkmenistan as for any country.

One should not drink tap water. Hence, hot tea, coffee and bottled drinks are safe to consume. It's also advisable to avoid meat- fish or poultry which have not been well cooked, unwashed fruits, raw vegetables and non-pasteurized dairy products. It is recommended to buy all food products in local supermarkets.

It's better to have a well-equipped first aid kit as well as most toiletries.

Before visiting Turkmenistan, you may need to get some vaccinations and medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination.

It is advised that you see a health-care provider who specializes in Travel Medicine at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect and to start taking medicine to prevent malaria, if needed.

Even if you have less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see a health-care provider for needed vaccines, anti-malaria drugs and other medications and information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

Find a travel medicine clinic near you. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with any doctors you are currently seeing for other medical reasons.

If your travel plans will take you to more than one country during a single trip, be sure to let your health-care provider know so that you can receive the appropriate vaccinations and information for all of your destinations. Long-term travelers, such as those who plan to work or study abroad, may also need additional vaccinations as required by their employer or school.

Telephone Codes of Major Cities

Ashgabat	📞 12
Dashhoguz	📞 322
Mary	📞 522
Turkmenbashi	📞 243
Turkmenabat	📞 422

Major Travel Agencies**Ahal Syyahat**

- ☎ Tel: (99312) 35-05-90, 27-37-67
- 📠 Fax: (993-12) 35-25-64

✉ E-mail: infoahalttravel@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.ahaltourism.com>

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📍 108, Makhtumkuli St.
☎ Tel: (99312) 35-29-14, 35-07-97
☎ Fax: (993-12) 39-33-55
✉ E-mail: ayan@online.tm
Website: <http://www.ayantravel.com>

DN Tours

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dntours@online.tm
Website: <http://www.dntours.com/>

Latif Travel Agency

☎ Tel: (99312) 41-50-77
✉ E-mail: latif@online.tm
Website: <http://www.turkmenistan-latif.com>

Arts & Crafts

Decorative arts

Jewelries



Turkmen jewels, which constitute a delicate art full of secrets with a very long past, are one of the most important elements of Turkmen culture. Works of gold and silver produced by the Turkmen jewellers of the past have reached the present day as a masterpiece. The manner in which precious stones were placed on them, their geometric shapes and the forms given to them cause feelings of amazement and admiration in those who watch them. The originality of Turkmen handicrafts is a distinct feature of Turkmen culture that sets it apart from the cultures of other nations.

The products of the Turkmen art of jewel-making not only embellish women but also convey various magical meanings which are believed to protect people who wear those jewels from the evil eye and diseases. Although they did not know the properties of the stones they used, the Turkmen jewellers of the past believed that these stones had a beneficial impact on human health. For this reason, jewels for Turkmen women have always been a source of moral strength. Turkmen masters have not forgotten their art during the years that have passed; on the contrary, they have developed it a little bit more every day and have trained students who have surpassed them. Old masters, spending great labor together with their students, have produced more beautiful works every day patiently. For this reason, the works of Turkmen masters are fascinating and attractive to people today. Turkmen jewels remind one of Iran outfits of past warriors. The silver "Cuppa" which is shaped like a dome, the "Chekkelik" with its silver hangers running down to the cheeks, and the "Yeginlik" with a hanger on the back of the neck was military headwears. The broad chest ornaments "Gulyaka", "Dagdan" and "Bukuv" with their silver "Abases" were reminiscent of the chest amours of soldiers. Turkmen silver masters produced various ornaments for children and horses as well as for women. They made knives, knife-handles and cases, wallets and bags.

Ceramics

A large area of Turkmenistan is covered by desert. From earliest times, people settled in the river valleys, Caspian Sea littoral and mountain foothills, where there was water. Some of the earliest relics of past civilizations dating back to 4th and 3rd millennia BC are round ceramic bowls intended for ritual ceremonies. They were modeled by hand from red clay and decorated with symbolic drawings like crosses, curves and stylized animals. In the 2nd millennium BC, the complex Bronze Age civilizations of Margiana produced clay seals, developed ceramics and outstanding

metalwork. Further inventions in technique produced more sophisticated material, such as the 3rd century BC Parthian ivory ritons from Nissa. In the later 3rd century BC, the arrival of Alexander the Great and his Greek soldiers brought new cultures and influences to the area, which was assimilated by local craftsmen. There are considerable evidence of the quality of metalwork, ceramics and stucco from sites such as Merv, from the 3rd century BC to the 13th century AD although the Mongols efficiently destroyed most of the surface traces of that magnificent and cosmopolitan city.

Carpet Weaving

Carpet making is one of the oldest arts in Turkmenistan and the region. For a Turkmen, carpet making has the same importance as the pyramids do for Egypt. Archaeological data places carpet making on the territory of Turkmenistan as early as the 6th century B.C. The remains of a carpet which archaeologists found in 1940's at Altai is 2500 years old. Research shows that the design is very similar to the carpets of today. It took centuries for these designs to develop and the decoration of the carpets is extremely original, reflecting stylized articles of the real world surrounding nomadic livestock-breeders. Ornaments are geometric and love of deep, rich red is an artistic tradition of the carpets. The art of carpet weaving was passed from generation to generation and today one can single out several types of Turkmen carpets, each having individual ornamentation. The



five traditional designs form part of the country's state emblem and flag. For Turkmen nomads, the carpets were extremely important, covering wagon floors and forming collapsible walls, protecting them from the cold.

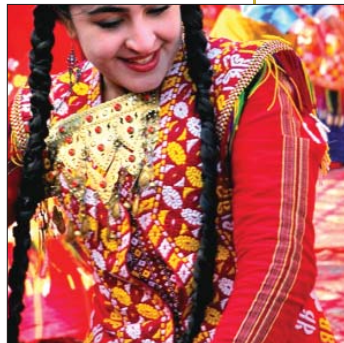
Turkmen carpets have centuries-old history. They are mentioned in Zoroastrian Avesta, in works of Homer and Herodot, in ancient Sanskrit epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, in Shahnameh by Ferdousi, in One thousand and one nights and other ancient and medieval writings. Italian traveler Marco Polo referred to Turkmen carpets

as the most thin and beautiful handicrafts. Turkmen carpets have been also represented in pictures of the Italian Renaissance artists. Today, carpet making has become a professional art. Like the Turkmen ancestors, natural dyes and Sargin sheep wool (the smoothest to the

touch) are still used. The 15 carpet-making factories employ about 10,000 people and put out 41,000 square meters of carpets a year.

Embroidery

Embroidery is one of the most ancient folk crafts of Turkmen women. Skills are passed from mother to daughter. During the Soviet period, ancient meth-



ods of dyeing were forgotten and replaced with synthetic chemicals. After obtaining Independence, Turkmen women embarked the process of reviving old traditions using natural mineral dyes. The most popular fabric is Keteni, which is woven from handspun silk on very simple, ancient, home made horizontal looms. Embroidery decorates such domestic items as table cloths, napkins, bags and dresses.

Architecture & Archaeological Objects

Turkmenistan has some of the most fascinating monuments of Central Asia's Islamic and pre-Islamic architecture. Turkmenistan's heritage sites are beyond comparison not only for their age, but also for their original state - almost unspoilt by later reconstruction and restoration.

You can stroll around the magnificent city-sites of Ancient Merv and Nissa, breathe history in the ancient capital of Khorezm, Kunya-Urgench or join the archaeologists and witness history in the writing in Zoroastrian Margush. Come and visit the Sufi philosopher's shrines of Meane Baba or Abu-Fazid in their simplicity and ancient beauty and travel the times amidst the ruins of medieval Dehistan in the western plains of the country.



Music and Musical Instruments

The music of Turkmenistan originated in the oral traditions of professional singers and shamans called Bakshi, who acted as healers and magicians and travelled among the nomadic tribes of Central Asia with simple instruments such as the two stringed Dutar, the Gyjak and the drums.

Basic melodies were handed down and the Bakshis would embellish these with their own particular interpretations. Rhythms would symbolize aspects of the meaning, for example the beat of a horse's hooves or the patter of a carpet being woven. Different instruments were played in the various geographical regions, the pipes in the mountains or the haunting Gopus in the desert. Vocabulary for music and carpet production were often interwoven.

During the 19th century, Russian musicians annotated folk melodies and published them in "The Asian Music Magazine" printed in Astrakhan in 1816. The first descriptions of the Dutar and Tuyduk, traditional instruments were included. After Turkmenistan became part of the Soviet Union, Russian musicians began arranging and recording the folk music. Klenovsky brought a concert of these arrangements to Moscow.

In 1928 Uspenski and Beliyev published "Turkmen Music" in Moscow to great critical acclaim. With the Turkmen composers benefiting from education in polyphony

and composition, new genres were available to express their traditional melodies. In 1935, An Arts College for Musicians and Artists and in 1940, a Union for Composers were opened in Ashgabat. These included names such as Chary Nurymov, Nury Halmammedov, Rejep Allayarov, Beli and Nury Muhatov. Since Independence, there have been 60 music schools in Turkmenistan, three colleges and the National Conservatory which was set up under the Directorship of Rejep Allayarov in 1993.

Turkmenistan's national poet is Makhtumkuli Feraghy, from the 18th century, who wrote four line "qoshunk" lyrics. The Central Asian classical music tradition Mugam is also present in Turkmenistan by name as the Mukamlar. It is played by a dutarist and a gidjakist or by an ensemble of just dutarists.

Musical Instruments

Dutar

The Dutar is the most representative instrument of Turkmen folk music. It is used in many styles, ranging from the Mukamlar and saltiklar to the kirkklar and navoi. These are performed by professional musicians called Sazanda.



Tuyduk

Tuyduk is a wind instrument (similar to Zurna). Tuyduk is played in a ritual of inviting guests for a celebration which has survived from ancient times. Two Tuyduk players stand in front each other, point their instru-

ments upwards and play in unison.

While doing this, they perform magic circular movements which remind us of the possible connection of this ritual to shamanism.

Cinema & Theatre

The first theatre in Turkmenistan was built in Ashgabat in 1926 to stage the plays in Russian language. It housed an orchestra of 46 players and music and opera were regular features. The plays were collaborative and all the producers, writers, painters and musicians were involved

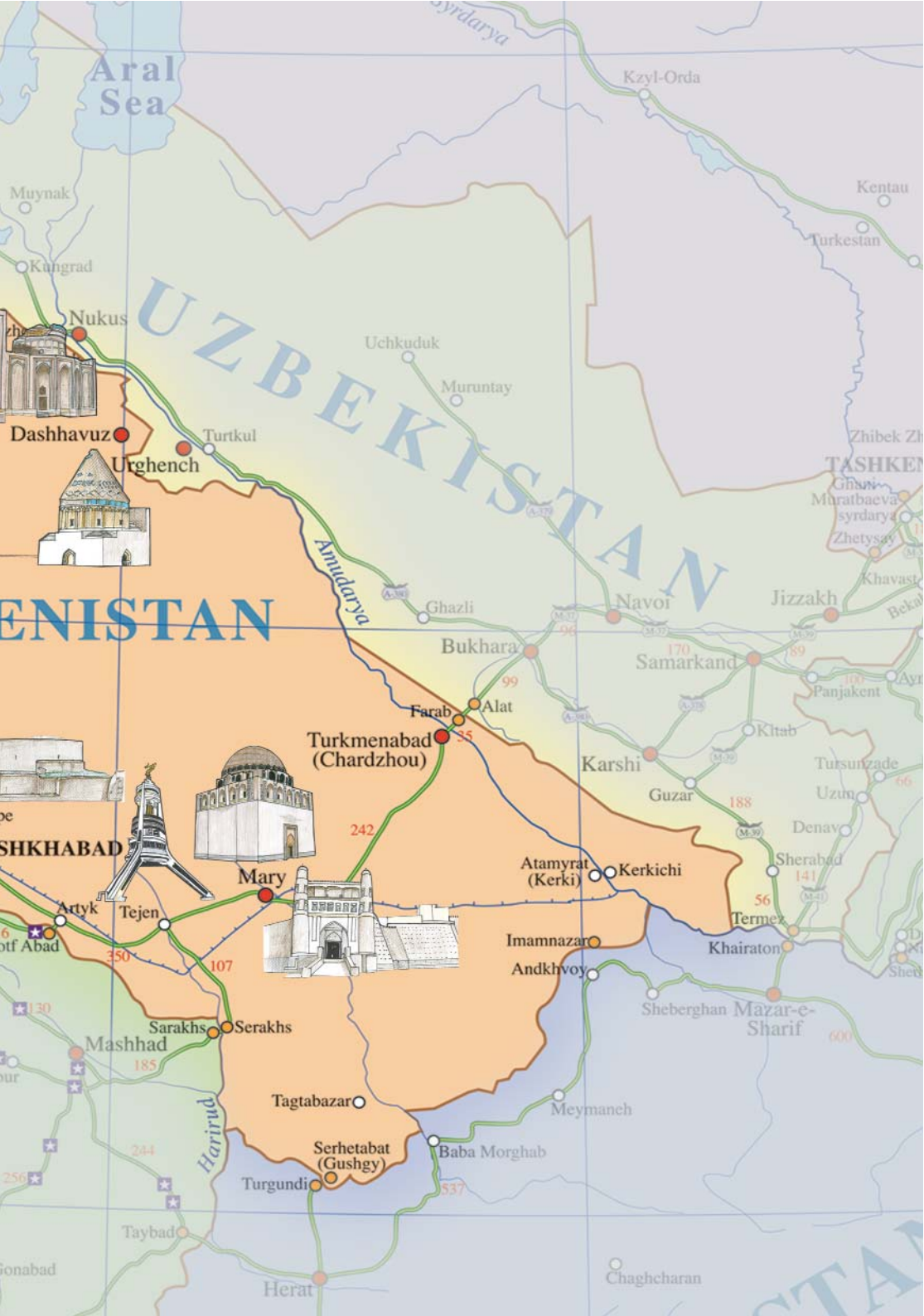
in the rehearsals and three days before performance all the officials were invited so they were genuinely and positively joint productions. Both classical and contemporary repertoires with many plays are being commissioned.



TURKMENISTAN

Map of Turkmenistan





Aral Sea

UZBEKISTAN

ENISTAN

SHKhabad

TASHKENT

Turkmenebad (Chardzhou)

Mary

Mashhad

Serhetabat (Gushgy)

Herat

Kzyl-Orda

Kentau

Turkestan

Uchkuduk

Muruntay

Zhibek Zh

Ghori

Muratbaeva

Syrdarya

Zhetysay

Khavast

Bekal

Jizzakh

Bukhara

Samarkand

Panjakent

Ayr

Tursunzade

Uzun

Denav

Sherabad

Termez

Khairaton

Sheberghan

Mazar-e-Sharif

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Shek

Atamyrat (Kerki)

Kerkichi

Imamnazar

Andkhvoy

Meymanch

Baba Morghab

Turgundi

Taybad

Chaghcharan

UZBEKISTAN

Ecotourism



canyons and flower-covered valleys of the soft ridge of the Kugitang Mountains topped by Ayrýbaba - with 3,137 m Turkmenistan's tallest peak.

Kugitang is also well known for its dinosaur plateau with 438 well preserved fossil dinosaur footprints, in addition to its caves that are considered to be the most beautiful and interesting caves of the former Soviet Union.

The mountains can be explored on various trekking and climbing trips along the range.

The National Natural Park includes healing sulfur springs and thicket of trees called Unabi with a disinfectant air-cleaning feature. Fruits of these unique trees have been famous for being used by local population as medicine for heart, kidneys, liver and stomach diseases since ancient times. Scientists call Unabi, near the village Koyten, "a drugstore in the open air".

Specialists have no doubt that if done the right way the future park may become a place of real pilgrimage for true lovers of exotic nature from all over the world.

Located in the far south-east of Turkmenistan, Kugitang and its dinosaur footprints can best be reached by air from Ashgabat or by train from Bukhara and a minimum of three days should be allowed to go wildlife watching and to visit the plateau and its caves.

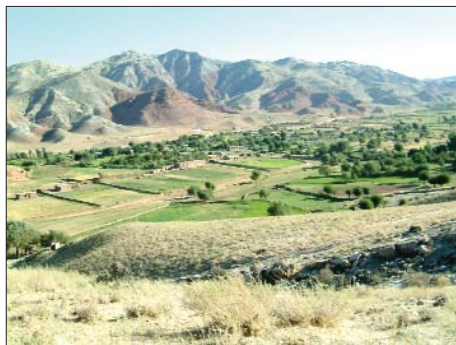
Karakala Reserve

The unique valleys and climate in the region of Karakala Nature Reserve are of major importance for some of the last remaining Persian leopards inhabiting its ridges. The World Wildlife Fund is currently involved in a protection project executed by

Turkmenistan's deserts, steppes and mountains have some of the most remarkable features found on the planet. Their colors, vastness and fascinating animal and plant life are exclusive to Turkmenistan.

Kugitang Mountains Trekking

Kugitang Nature Reserve was created to protect the largest remaining Markhor populations in Central Asia. These endangered long-horned mountain goats as well as a large number of Urials (a rare mountain sheep species), inhabit the steep



Turkmenistan's ecological societies. Karakala is renowned for its exceptional botanical collection at the grounds of the research station. There is excellent trekking, climbing and wildlife watching in the captivating canyons and river valleys of the reserve and the nearby Moon Mountains.

A 5 hours drive from Ashgabat the Karakala Reserve requires min 2-3 days to be visited. With an experienced guide it is also possible to hike across to the meadows of the Nokhur tribe region through the Aidere and Sumbar gorges on 3-day trek. Special documentation should be arranged at least 14 days before arrival.

Sekizyap - Bakcha Horse Trek

Sekizyap valley to the west of Ashgabat, accented by its beautiful gorges and its wonderful waterfall, has tremendous riding, trekking and fishing opportunities. On the beautiful and elegant Akhal Teke horses, the national symbol of Turkmenistan, you can ride through the valleys of the Sekizyap River up to the vast plateaus which

invites the rider for a gallop along the beautiful hillsides and small villages. The waterfall can be reached after a longer trek some of which has to be made by foot.

Sekizyap is 3 hours west of Ashgabat and you need at least 2-3 days to explore the area on horseback. Turkmenistan's horses are some

of the most elegant creatures on the planet and have claimed their fame throughout Asian history. The experience of riding these beautiful hot-blooded animals in their native setting of endless plains and valleys is something no visitor of Central Asia should miss.



Top 10 Places to Visit

Nissa Archaeological Site, Ashgabat

18 km to the west of Ashgabat can be found the towering ruins of Nissa the capital city of ancient Parthian state which existed between 1,000 B.C. and 1,000 A .D. In the 3rd century B.C. New Nissa was a capital of Parthian state, and Old Nissa fortress was considered an imperial residence. Old Nissa was rich in temples and palaces. But now, only the findings of archeologists testify about the territory's former majesty - fine horn-shaped ivory vessels (ritons), unique documents of the 2nd - 1st centuries B.C. written by means of a brush on clay fragments , amazing white marble sculptures etc.



Merv Historical Site, Mary

Merv oasis (40 km from Mary) is one of the most ancient territories of Central Asia where Omar Khayyam, Samani , Imamaddin - Isphahani and other great thinkers of the Middle Ages used to live. Most part of the unique historical monuments were heavily destroyed, some of them remind sagged hills but nevertheless Merv remains as one of the most marvelous examples of architecture.

The most interesting monument is the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar Dar-al-Akhir. This amazing landmark is almost 40 m high. The originality of this medieval "skyscraper" is highlighted by its legendary dome constructed from two thin brick shells. The site includes many archeological masterpieces.



Serhetabat (Kushka), Mary

About 200 historical and architectural monuments are concentrated around well known Serhetabat (Kushka). The most famous among them is Abiverd - one of cities of Northern Khorasan which was repeatedly mentioned in chronicles. There is also Altyn-Depe Fortress (3rd - the2nd millenium B.C.),

the ancient settlement Gara-Depe famous for its art monuments (3rd millennium B.C.) as well as archaeological site Namazga-Depe (3rd - 2nd millennium B.C.).

Kunya-Urgench Historical Site, Dashhoguz

In 102 Km northwest Dashhoguz capital lies Kunya-Urgench Historical Site. In the Middle Ages, a powerful, state controlled by Khorezm Shah was located in Kunya-Urgench. This city was destroyed in 1388.

On Kunya-Urgench territory, there are numerous fabulous archaeological and architectural monuments, presenting considerable scientific and cultural value.



od of its boom fell on the period of Khorezmshah dynasty rule. The full area of city was about 200 ha.

and was protected by means of a double ring of walls. Dakhistan did not last long, though. When the armies of Genghis Khan came there, they saw a city already dying. After Mongolian invasion the life in city went on from 13th through 14th centuries, and in the 15th century the life in

Dakhistan-Misrian disappeared for good. Numerous ruins of various buildings testify about its former majesty.

The monuments survived include the well-known Shir-Kabir mausoleum, two 25 m minarets, the portal of the cathedral mosque,

the remnants mud-brick clay city walls, the ruins of caravanserais and the mausoleums on Mashad necropolis.

Dakhistan, Turkmenbashi

Towering over an absolutely flat, waterless and clay plain of Balkan, which was earlier known as Misrian Valley, are the mysterious and mystical ruins of ancient Dakhistan - the most remote and isolated city. Once it was a prospering medieval city on the caravan route.

Dakhistan emerged in the late 8th and early 9th centuries, the peri-



Repetek Reserve

Nature enthusiasts thrill to see exotic flora and fauna located in the Repetek Reserve's modern research center. Repetek Reserve, located in the central part of the East Karakum Desert, was founded in 1927, covering 34,600 hectares of a typical sand desert.

The territory represents a sand plain with large sand ridges and valley shaped depressions. The travelling sand dunes (barkhans) have only sparse vegetation. Repetek is one of the few places in the Karakum Desert where desert forest in the valley shaped depressions with black saxaul (*Haloxylon aphyllum*).

Kow-Ata Underground Lake

Kow Ata is an unusual natural site in the biggest cave of the Kopetdag Mountains, located about 107 km southwest of Ashgabat. The Turkmen name Kov-Ata means "father of caves".

At a first glance, this underground area looks like a magnificent auditorium: the overall length of the cave is 230 m, its height goes up to 20m and its width is at some 57m.

The bottom of the cave is covered with lumps of lime. Its warm and running water is clear and emerald colored. Even in artificial lightning, tiny stones on the bottom can be seen.

As you approach the lake, you will feel the air becoming damper and warmer. The water has a constant temperature 33- 37°C. Chemical analysis has shown that water contains a complex combination of chemical elements- 30 of which have been found to date. The cave is open daily from 9.00 AM till 6.00 PM.



Sarakhs Ancient Settlement

The former major trading center on the Great Silk Road between Nishabur and Merv, Serakhs lies in the middle of a small oasis in the upstream of the river Tejen. In the middle of the first millenium B.C., there stood the first settlement surrounded by a wall now called "Old Serakhs".

With the coming of Islam, the city became one of the significant centers of trade; the local architects and builders became famous all over Central Asia. The city's pride is the mausoleum of Abul-Fazil also known as the mausoleum of Serakhs - baba.

The mausoleums of Yarti - Gyumbez and Allamberdar (Al'mutasir) are also worth seeing.

Amul Settlement, Turkmenabat

The ruins in the ancient settlement of Amul used to be the fortress of Amul's ruler. It is located near Turkmenabat entrance about 10 km from the city center.

In the 10th century, the ancient settlement was a walled fortress surrounded by a wide moat filled with water.

Each side had a gate, each gate was safeguarded by warriors day and night.

Inside the fortress, there was a square, barracks and food warehouses, houses of the governor's relatives and associates and the palace with a fine garden. The prison was also there. From west and east, the fortress was surrounded by the dwellings of merchants and craftsmen.

Now the tourists like to visit the remains of the fortress which is regarded as a valuable historical and archeological monument. In the vicinities of Turkmenabat, there is a museum-city of Atamurat where you can see the mausoleums of Allamberdar and Astana- baba which to the present day remain the place of pilgrimage for many believers.

Gaurdak

The city of Gaurdak is in the extreme eastern part of Turkmenistan between the Amu Darya and Uzbekistan practically at the foothills of the Pamir. The

majestic landscape of this area is extremely beautiful: there is a whole complex of interesting and beautiful gorges, waterfalls and caves.

Kugitang reserve located directly on the border with Uzbekistan is a major geological research center which takes pride in a rocky plateau with hundreds of dinosaurs' traces.

According to scientific researches, more than 150 million years ago during Jurassic period the plateau used

to be a bottom of an extensive sea lagoon which dried up but it's wet sand similar to concrete preserved the traces of all the animals who happened to cross it.



5 major cities

Ashgabat

Places to see

Arch of Neutrality

This monument has become an urban symbol which serves as a powerful reference point in the city. The inspiration for the Arch of Neutrality was the traditional Turkmen trivet - a stable tripod, used for holding a boiler, under which a fire is kindled. There are the viewing sites, located on different levels, where a perfect panorama of Ashgabat opens up. Visitors are transported to the first level by funiculars. There, at a height of 21.5 m, there is a circular cafe-bar with a panoramic view. The transparent lift takes visitors to 50 meters, where the upper viewing platform is situated. The Arch of Neutrality reaches a total of 75 meters, making it the highest construction in Turkmenistan, above the 600-year-old Kutlug Timur minaret.



Earthquake Memorial

Next to the Arch, the memorial was constructed in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Ashgabat's tragedy. The Memorial is topped by a huge bull holding the Earth on the tips of its horns and on the back of its neck.

According to Turkmen legends, when this bull gets tired he tosses the Earth from one horn to the other and so an earthquake occurs on the surface. On the inside the Memorial has a photo display of Ashgabat before and after the earthquake, as well as a present day city.

Independence Tower

The tower stands on the southern outskirts of the city against the backdrop of the nearby mountains. This 118 m high structure is set in a fine garden embellished by a hundred fountains different in size and design. The Tower is guarded by a dozen of huge bronze statues of representing the most significant Turkmen chieftains and literary characters. Inside the tower visitors can familiarize with an informative display of Turkmen national values such as oriental arms, old coins and paper money.

Independence Park

Being in the city center, the park is notable for its largest fountain topped by the statue of ten Turkmen pedigree horses. The monument was unveiled in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Independence

Nader Shah Fortress

About 22km to the south of Kaka region, there is a fortress of the great ruler "Nader Shah". The fortress was built by the order of Nader Shah himself in the 18th century. It was built in

rectangular form with the walls reaching to one thousand meters at length and 3m at height, surrounded by water channels. There are 12 round orifices in every corner of the walls which

were once used for protection. The southern walls of this historical fortress were damaged by inundation but other walls have been preserved until now. On the northern corner of the fortress, there is a hill with the height of 10m and 20m in diameter. The whole fortress and its surroundings can be seen from this hill. There are ruins of the palace in the inner part of the fortress. The fortress gives a beautiful view to Kopet-Dag Mountains.



Sheikh Alov Mausoleum

23 km from Ashgabat to the south west in Bagyr village is the mausoleum of Sheikh Abu Ali Dakkak built during 12th century in the honor of the same person who was originally from Iran. There are a

lot of legends about this legendary person. One of which tells when Sheikh Alov was only 7 years old, he helped Hazret Ali (PBUH) to spread Islam in south Turkmenistan. Later Sheikh Alov became the follow of the School of sufism. Close to the mausoleum, one can see the sacred water spring and wish tree.

Mane Baba Mausoleum

The mausoleum is situated in a small village named Mane in Kaka region of Turkmenistan. It was built during the

reign of Seljuk Empire in 11-12th centuries.

This mausoleum was constructed over the grave of Abu Said Maneyi, the famous follower of Sufism and great philosopher in Eastern litera-

ture who lived during the period of 968-1049. Approximate time of its construction is estimated to be the middle of 11th century.

Abu-Said Meihene Mausoleum

The burial place of Abu - said Fazlulla Abul - Khair from Meihene (Khorasan area). The well-known mystic and poet, the founder of Persian sufism, he worked in the late 10th - early 11th centuries (died in 1049). In his quatrains he was the first to express Sufism in poetry.

Abul - Fazl Mausoleum

Constructed in the 11th - 12th centuries above the tomb of Muslim mystic Abu - Fazl, it is famous for its magnificent proportions and the decor which

put it in line with the most significant monuments of medieval architecture not only in Sarakhs oasis but also entire Central Asian region. Abul - Fazl mausoleum located 300 meters to the south the powerful citadel of Old Sarakhs is a bright specimen of Sarakhs architectural school which was notorious worldwide in the Middle Ages. Being rather small, the mausoleum amazes with its monumentalism, refinement of forms, completeness and harmonious proportionality of design built exactly in the year of 1024. Today Abul - Fazl mausoleum is one of the main relics of Turkmenistan.

Geok-Depe Fortress

Geok-Depe is a fortress from the nineteenth century where a particularly bloody battle (1881) was fought between the Turkmen and the Russians who were attempting to take over Turkmenistan. In 1995, a mosque was built to commemorate the battle of Geok-Depe.

Anau Depe Settlement

20 minutes by car from Ashgabat to the south east, this site includes the remains of the Bronze age settlement Anau-Depe and Anau Fortress. The site includes a great wall and a ditch. Some skeletons of children, the remains of the painted ceramics, decorated with the geometrical ornament and the most ancient remains of the camels were discovered at the time of excavations. Anau Fortress already existed during the Parthian period /3d c BC- 3d c. AD/.

The mosque, constructed in the 15 c., is located in the southern part of the fortress. Its lofty, powerful outlines were visible from a great distance. One curious feature of the mosque is the mosaic decoration above the entrance, depicting two enormous 8-9 m dragons facing each other.

The mosque was destroyed by 1948 earthquake. Childless couples bring children's clothes here as an offering and baby dolls are swaddled and left in tiny hammocks slung between two sticks.

Altyn-Depe

Altyn-Depe (the Golden Hill) is an ancient settlement of the Bronze Age (3,000 - 2,000 B.C.) on the territory of ancient Abiverd. Today Altyn - Depe is nicknamed "Turkmen Stonehenge". Shapeless pise-walled hills of Altyn -Depe different in terms of area and height are scattered around vast territory. All these architectural symbols are interconnected by some uniform system. They form original inscriptions or patterns which are distinctly seen from above.

Like many other temples of Mesopotamia, the temple in Altyn - Depe was devoted to the god of the Moon. This huge complex included numerous storehouses, the house of Supreme priest and a tomb of a priestly community. All this evidently speaks that the civilization of Altyn - Depe developed in close contact with the main cultural centers of ancient Orient.



Abiverd

Abiverd ancient settlement is one of eight historical reserves of Turkmenistan along with Kunya-Urgench, Nissa, Merv, Dakhistan etc. The ruins of Abiverd are located between Ashgabat and Mary. Ancient Abiverd was one of the major centers of Northern Khorasan. At that time, Abiverd was an impregnable fortress protecting the townspeople from the attacks of nomads. The fortress had the only gate from the southwest.

Inside, in the center, next to the square, there was a mosque erected in the early 15th century. During the examination of Abiverd ruins, it was established that in southeastern and northwestern parts of the city there were craftsmen quarters. Today Abiverd looks like a relatively small town and only smooth silhouettes of ancient structures quietly remind about its dramatic history, its former power and luxury.



Yakhtang

In fact, yakhtang was the first "refrigerator" ever. This unique structure from mud bricks looks like a huge clay oven (10 m in height). By the way, when the structure was actively used, it was even higher - up to 30 m. In the Middle Ages, yakhtangs were used to store foodstuffs. Indeed, when you get inside of such storehouse, you feel the cold air. The similarity between yakhtang and a hearth is not accidental; the history has preserved its national name - "Tandyr Khadzhimelek".

Natural Beauties

Nokhur Area

Visually, Nokhur is unlike any other site found in Turkmenistan. Rich in history, nature and tribal custom, Nokhur is set 1,100 m above the Karakum Desert

in the cool mountain valleys of southwestern Turkmenistan. Nokhur people have maintained a highly homogeneous society based upon ancestral rights and tribal custom. Varied images in the

stunning silk embroideries sewn by local Nokhur women, indicating their particular tribe, make Nokhur silk renowned throughout the country. The Nokhur felts are also thought to be exclusive to this region. They differ from customary Turkmen felts with their original designs and Zoroastrian ornaments symbolizing the worship of fire and the cult of fertility. Constructing their homes from the stones found around the area, the Nokhur people have decorated their simple homes with handcrafted wooden columns and capitals unique only to this clan of people. Accented by two small flowing streams, the flora and fauna of this region is exceptional. There are mountain goats, Urial mountain sheep, wolves, foxes, jackals, porcupines, and even snow leopards in these mountain-ridges.

Hippodrome

Ashgabat hippodrome is located on the city's eastern outskirts. The Akhal Tekin oasis has long been famous for

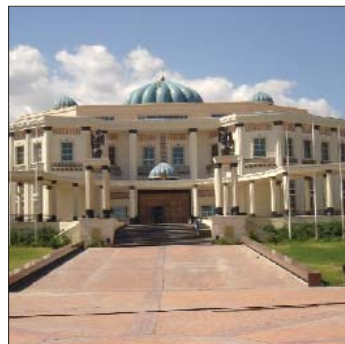
breeding horses. Experts say that nowhere in the world man's efforts succeeded in breeding such a beautiful, tireless, intelligent and noble animal as the Akhal Tekin horse. Horse breeding has been an ancient tradition in Turkmenistan since the time of Parthia /the 3d c. BC till the 3d c. AD. This breed was developed over more than three thousand years and influenced the development of horse breeding throughout the world. This ancient breed served as a genetic fund for other breeds. The visitors can observe horse racing at the Ashgabat hippodrome.

Museums

Turkmen History Museum

This excellent small museum houses archaeological finds from sites around Turkmenistan. The collection of items from Nissa is particularly interesting. Do not miss the display of ivory ritons. The model of Nissa is very helpful to anyone who intends to visit the site. Address: 1 Shevchenko Street; Hours: Daily 10:00am to 6:00pm, closed Monday;

☎ Tel: +993-12-35-45-54; 35-51-38



National Museum of History and Ethnography

The Museum was opened in November 1998. It has a rich collection of ancient artifacts from Turkmenistan. More than 500,000 exhibits are displayed here in 9 halls. The highlight of the museum is a collection of ivory, discovered during the excavations at the Old Nissa, residence of Parthian kings from the Arshakid Dynasty. Museum has a souvenir shop. Hours: Daily 10:00am to 5:00pm, closed Tuesdays.

Museum of Fine Arts

This museum houses an eclectic mixture of fine arts and crafts. Most surprising are the Renaissance paintings and sculptures. More interesting to visitors are the rooms filled with carpets and jewelry of the various Turkmen tribes. Address: 84 Mahktumkuli Prospect; Hours: Daily 10:00am to 5:30pm, closed Tuesdays.



Carpet Museum

This museum has a large, impressive collection of antique carpets and also the largest Turkmen carpet in the world. Groups may reserve in advance for a tour (10 or more people) and reduced entry fees. Please note there are charges for pic-

ture taking and video taping. Next door is the museum shop. Carpets purchased here will also receive a license and permit (which you will be charged for) for airport customs. Address: 5 Gorogly Street; Hours: Daily 10:00am to 6:00pm, closed for lunch between 1:00 and 2:00pm and closed Sundays.

Charjou Historical and Ethnographical Museum

This museum possesses an interesting collection of artifacts from the Lebap Province, which also included cities on the Silk Road.

📍Address: Charjou, 35 Shaidjanov Street; Hours: Daily 10:00am to 5:00pm, closed Mondays;

☎Tel: (+993-422) 4-80-79.

Turkmenbashi Ethnographical Museum

Although the history of the city begins in 1717 when the Russians marched on Khiva, the museum has interesting artifacts from the Seljuk Empire when Genghis Khan invaded from the steppes through Trans Caspia (The region east of the Caspian).

📍Address: 2 Magtymova Street, Turkmenbashi; Hours: Daily 10:00am to 5:00 pm, closed Mondays;

☎Tel: (993-222) 7-62-13

National Museum

The National Museum includes household objects, national costumes, examples of Turkmen musical instruments, hand-written books and displays of traditional life. Hand-crafted carpets are amongst the finest examples of Turkmen national art with dark red and brown shades ornaments and colors differing depending on the local traditions of different Turkmen tribes and regions.

There are a number of examples of Turkmen female dress, primarily bridal

costumes, embroidered fabrics, and gilded silver jewelry featuring precious stones, stamping and engraving. Special silver ornaments which were made for the famous Ahal teke horses can also be seen. A restored zergyar's (jeweller's) workshop is of special interest here.

📍Address: Berzingi, Novo Firuzinskoye Chausse; Hours: 10:00am to 5:00pm except Tuesdays;

☎Tel.: 48 90 20, 49 20 21, 48 90 19

Studio Juma

Studio Juma is a museum for sculptor Juma Jumadurdy. Juma Jumadurdy was born in 1937, graduated from Art College in Ashgabat in 1962 and joined the Artist's Union in 1963. He was secretary of the Artists Union during the 60's and a key figure in the flourishing of the arts during this time. His work is richly inventive with a strong national theme and he has been influential in the forming of the particular Turkmen school.

Mosques

Seyit Jemaliddin Mosque

12 km to the east Ashgabat lays the medieval city of Anau. Some of the ancient constructions have been saved here, most famous of which is Seyit Jemaliddin Mosque. It is a medieval mosque constructed in the 15th century. Unfortunately, Ashgabat earthquake destroyed the building down to the ground. Today it is shown to tourists in the restored version.

The mosque consists of 17 rooms: there is a square hall crowned by a dome resting on four big arches. The hall's walls are divided into three tiers. Two extensive deep niches lead to the terrace. The spiral stairs leading to the galleries of the second and third floors as well as the roof are located in the

hall's corners. A big Aivan stands in the mosque's yard from the northern side.

The mosque's originality is in its decorative finish. The inscription about the facade says that the building was erected during Abul-Kasim Babur's rule (Khorezm, 1447-1457). The main portal arch is decorated with the figures of mythical dragons.

According to historians, the magic dragons were placed to guard "The House of Jemal" from evil spirits.



Ruhy Mosque

Ruhy Mosque is the biggest mosque in Central Asia. Twenty thousand men and woman can pray here at the same time. The floor of the mosque is covered by handmade Turkmen praying mats and an enormous eight-sided carpet decorates the very centre of the mosque.

It has four minarets and golden dome located in the central upper part of the mosque. The

height of each minaret is 91m and the dome is 50m covered with the gold. The mosque is surrounded by big beautiful fountains and gardens.

There is a huge underground parking area for about 100 buses and 400 cars. The total area of this complex is 36ha.

Geokdepe Saparmurat Haji Mosque

Geokdepe - Mosque, fortress ruins and cemetery 40 minutes by car to the west of Ashgabat. This site includes the remains of the ancient fortress Geokdepe and modern Saparmyrat Haji Mosque.

Geok-Depe is a fortress of the 19th century where a particular bloody battle took place between the Turkmen and the Russians in 1881 where Russian made an attempt to take over Turkmenistan. In 1996, the magnificent mosque was built to commemorate the battle of Geok-Depe.

Khalimberdy Ishan & Namazga Mosque

At the foot of the Kopet Dag Mountains, there is another historical monument, Namazga Mosque. Namazga is a specific mosque usually built in the outskirts that serve for assemblies of town dwellers twice a year, on the days the main Muslim holidays.

The Namazga of Bagir/Nisa had been built probably in the end of XIII- beginning of XIV century and represented a domed chamber open to outside. The big mosque of Khalimberdi Ishan (the end of XIX - beginning of the XX c.c.) is very interesting.

he most attractive thing there is mihrab/ altar niche, in the decoration of which the motifs of typical Islamic floral ornament and Parthian architecture with its Hellenic traditions interlaced.

Ertogrul Gazi Mosque

Located on the eastern outskirts of Ashgabat, the Turkish styled mosque named after Ertogrul Gazy was inaugurated in 1998.

In design, this white marbled building reminds of the well-known Blue Mosque of Istanbul. It can hold up to 5,000 believers. The mosque is notable for its rich interior decoration and fine stained glass windows.

Bazaars

Tolkuchka Bazaar

Tolkuchka is the market located at the northern outskirts of Ashgabat. The total area is 40 hectares. It is divided into several sections.

The traditional Turkmen handicrafts sector has a big choice of modern and ancient carpets laid out in a large sandy compound or draped over racks and walls, carpet items such as chival, torba, khurdjun, felts, traditional hand made silk, jewelry, traditional fur hats "Telpek", made of sheep skin, traditional modern and ancient Turkmen costumes. The bazaar is in full swing every Sunday from 7:00am to 2:00pm and on a slightly smaller scale, on Thursday and Saturday.

Theaters

Mollanepes Theatre

📍79, Kemine Str.
☎Tel: 356958

Pushkin Drama Theatre

📍11 Gurokli Str.
☎Tel: 351139

Alb Arslan

📍115 Makhtumkuli Str.
☎Tel: 391640

Makhtumkuli Theater

📍74 Azadi Str.
☎Tel: 354186

Puppet Theater

📍Atamurat Niyazof
☎Tel: 418003

Turkmen Painters Union Gallery

📍33 Zhitnikov Str.
☎Tel: 395439

Dashhoguz



Places to See

Tyurabek-khanym Mausoleum

Tyurabek-khanym was a real historic figure, a Mongolian princess, the favorite daughter of the governor of Golden Horde - Uzbek-khan and the spouse of his deputy in Khorezm Kutlug Timur. Tyurabek - khanym was the patroness of women. Eventually she was canonized

and declared a saint. The Mausoleum indeed is the most magnificent structure in the entire country. Amazing in its beauty and grace, it is the structure with the richest interior and exterior finish, with surprisingly open and light

hexagonal hall with the area of about a hundred square meters, decorated with carved mosaic.

It is crowned with a huge dome and is probably the most perfect dome in the entire Central Asian Turan. The dome is tied on the top according to the tradition of that time. The inner part of the dome is covered by a fine mosaic panel with the ornament consisting of stars and flowers.

The panel is a masterpiece of Oriental art which is equal to none in all medieval architecture.

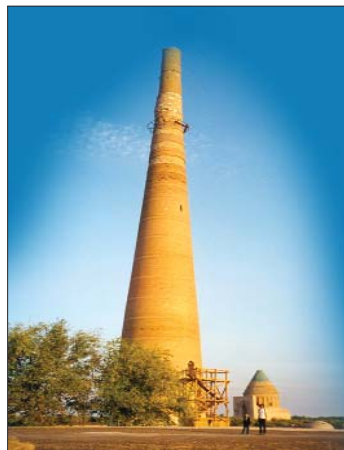
Long time ago, above the building on a high drum with twelve apertures, there was a dark blue glazed tabernacle . Unfortunately, it cannot be seen now: the structure was heavily damaged. But the tomb of Tyurabek-khanyim has always been the center of mass pilgrimage.

Kutlug-Timur Minaret

Grandiose, majestic, powerful ... There even more epithets addressed to this unique structure of the Middle Ages. And it deserves it! 60 - meter high minaret of Kutlug-Timur is the highest monument in Central Asia even in comparison to the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar.

The minaret is shaped like a conic column. Slim tapered circular trunk is divided by eighteen belts (strips) painted by an ornament and three belts of inscriptions in Kufi. In the past the minaret had a wooden Iranian lantern which had burned during a fire.

To get to the top, you should use a spiral staircase of 145 steps but the staircase was only accessible from the roof of the mosque which does not exist anymore. The Minaret of Kutlug-Timur is deprived of the rich decor of Central Asian minarets of the 11th - 12th C. and the dome, being a valuable specimen of architecture, had suffered heavily and was restored later .



Sultan Tekesh Mausoleum

Near the minaret of Kutlug-Timur, there is the mausoleum of Sultan Tekesh - one of a few survived monuments of pre-Mongol Urgench. The people call it Sherepbaba and Gyok-Gumbez .

Together with the mausoleum of Il-Arslan, they constitute the necropolis of one of the ruling Khorezm clans. The Mausoleum of Sultan Tekesh once towered at the height of 30 meters and was used as a beacon in the desert. The exhausted travelers in the heated desert saw it from a distance and understood that their long journey was coming to an end. The massiveness and art expressiveness of this monument is often compared to another masterpiece of the 12th century - the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar in Merv. Both structures towered above ordinary houses and were the so-called "symbols of authority".

Arslan Mausoleum

This unique architectural construction also called the mausoleum of Fakhreddin Razi has survived by a miracle. It had been constructed before the Mongol invasion to Urgench. The form of the mausoleum is distinguished by precision and simplicity of composition: a cube with a 12-side drum prism on it and external dome in the form of 12 - side tabernacle. The mausoleum was manually decorated with a relief carved terracotta expressed in an intricate ornament: vegetative and geometrical patterns. While decorating, a special medieval technique was applied. Raw bricks lying on the ground were covered with clay which was used for creating the most complicated relief ornament. Then the entire composition was cut in seams between the bricks and fired to be further assembled on facade. So the mausoleum of Il-Arslan in an absolutely unique building of the epoch testifying about the achievements of medieval architecture. 700 years have passed but this decoration still causes admiration with its perfection.

Mamun Minaret

During excavation works of a hill near the mausoleum of Il-Arslan, the remains of the minaret which had fallen only about a hundred years ago were found. In 1900, the local residents found a foundation lead slab with a text saying that the minaret had been constructed in 1011 by the order of Mamun Shah. Obviously the remains of the mosque, adjoining to it is dated the same year.



Najmeddin Kubra Mausoleum

Najmeddin Kubra is the founder of the dervish order "Kubraviya" in Islam. This place is considered holy and pilgrims visit here often. The Mausoleum includes 4 domed premises: the lobby, two assembly rooms and Gurkhanu - a hall in the center of which a beautiful gravestone with a high obelisk used to be. Unfortunately, when the dome fell down, about fifty years ago, these obelisks were heavily damaged and are waiting for restoration.

Dashmechet Madrasah

80 m to the east of Najmeddin Kubra Mausoleum lays Dashmechet Madrasah. The building was erected in 1907-1908 for Mohammad-Amin. The Madrasah is a one-story, brick-lined building with a high portal and four decorative towers on the corners. 19 living rooms surround the yard on the perimeter. It also has a mosque.

Dashkala Ancient Settlement

The ancient settlement of pre-Mongol Gurganj - Dashkala is a polygon, surrounded by a deep moat and a high rampart. At its base lie the ruins of a burnt-brick wall. In Dashkala, there are also the ruins of the gate of caravanserai, the remains of Mamun Minaret and Juma Mosque. The fragment of the gate of caravanserai is covered by a decoration from fancy carved little bricks of natural beige color with pattern inserts of dark blue, white and turquoise from the outside.

The majority of researchers agrees

that this gate is too fancy for a caravanserai and most likely used to belong to the palace of Khorezmshahs or a major Madrasah. The only known fact is that it had been deliberately destroyed and later, the caravanserai was built around the survived portal. The ancient settlement of Dashkala existed in Mongolian, Timurid and post Timurid periods.

Izmukshir

A well-known monument of Kunya-Urgench, Izmukshir - was the ancient city of Zamakshar, the birthplace of great philosopher of the 10th century Az - Zamakshari. Magnificent and picturesque fortress ruins of Khorezmshah Empire have survived on its territory.

Mary

Places to See

Abdullakhan - Kala

Abdullakhan - Kala fortress is connected with the name of Shahrukh - Timur's son. It was one of his first constructions on the territory of New Merv. It was completed very quickly. From outside, the fortress was lined with mud bricks. The inner space was finished with little square bricks. The walls were furnished with ledges. 44 watchtowers of bended shapes crowned the fortress. The fortifications were surrounded by huge (up to 30 m in width) moats filled with water. All this proves that Abdullakhan - Kala had an important strategic value and was perfectly designed. There were holes for gun shooting, galleries and other protective means. It made Abdullakhan - Kala an impregnable fortress.



Aivans of Askhabs

This poetical name was given to the mausoleum complex of the so-called Askhabs - the "associates" of Prophet Mohammed: Bureid ibn Al Hussein Al-Aslami and Al-Hakim ibn Amr Al-Gifari. After death of Askhabs, their tombs became local sanctuaries. In the 15th century, Timurids constructed a religious complex around them. The tombs from black marble are decorated with exquisite relief carving with vegetation ornaments and inscriptions. They tower in the center of the mausoleum. Behind the tombs, there are two restored Aivans two. They stand side by side and are oriented exactly to the south. On the photos of the late 19th century, it is clearly seen that their original height was about 12 meters, decorated by blue and turquoise tiles. In the middle of the back wall of the mausoleum, the word "ALLAH" is written in Kufi and on the sides, there are several squares positioned diagonally. The tombs are still

the place of worshipping. So, near the Aivans the sites for reception of pilgrims with open-air cooking facilities and a covered water storage constructed at the same time were provided.

Gyaur – Kala

Gyaur - Kala was one of the most powerful ancient structure with the area over 300 hectares. The walls of Gyaur - Kala are square with the hills of towers put at identical distance from each other. The length of each wall is about 2 km. there are remains of the roads leading to the four gates. The road from the south to the north goes directly from the southern gate to the ramparts of Erk - Kala opening way to the citadel and runs further around it to the northern gates. The ruins of Gyaur - Kala comprise the city of Margian Antioquia constructed in the traditions of antique architecture. The founder of the city was Seleukid king Antiochus Soter (280-261). Being in Margian, he ordered to surround the oasis with a 230 km wall and to found the city of Antioquia. The wall of Antiochus protected the lands of Merv from the desert sands and at the same time from aggressive nomads. Its remains can be found in the north of Mary oasis.

Durnali

The ancient settlement of Durnali is located at 25 km from Gyaur - Kala Fortress. There you can see numerous ruins of the 9th -12th century structures. However, the settlement has even more ancient history. Once there had been a major Parthian city surrounded by powerful fortress which was restored in the Middle Ages.

The fortress had a regular rectangular shape (roughly 180?160). On its corners and along the walls strong towers used to stand. The fortress could accommo-

date a plenty of townspeople behind the walls: the number of loopholes reached five hundred; there was also a top level with castellation behind which the warriors could hide. The inner territory of the fortress is practically empty. The only ruins of some big building can be seen closer to its center. The coins dated the 1st - 2nd centuries found there testify to Durnali's age.

Akuili - Koushuk

2 km from the ancient settlement of Durnali are the rulings of a medieval keshk Akuili-Koushuk. It is ? one of a few well -preserved castles of that period. The premises on the ground floor are almost all intact; the second floor is half destroyed. Keshk is of a rectangular form and made of mud bricks. The external walls of the second floor are corrugated. In the center of the keshk is a square hall too levels high. On the center from the hall on the left and on the right, there are five rooms, both on the first and on the second floors.

Gebekly Ancient Settlement

The ancient settlement of Gebekly is related to the early Parthian period. It is located 32 km from Gyaur - Kala. This small ancient town grew near an abandoned village of Margians behind the fortifications of Antiochus (Gyaur - Kala). Gebekly was surrounded by a square fortress having the only entrance in the form of a ramp. There the archaeologists found fragments of pottery and some jewelry which testify about the developed crafts.

Kharam - Keshk Castle

Kharam-keshk is the single castle of dekhkan estate near Gyaur - Kala. It used to be a dwelling house in the 9th - 13th centuries. The remaining parts of the castle made of mud

bricks are the half -sanded ground floor and the remnants of the second with corrugated walls. In the center of the castle, there was a big square hall topped with a dome. It was connected to the other rooms of the castle.

Ekedeshik Cave Settlement

This cave has been mentioned in many Turkmen legends and tales. Some of them say that caravans of camels going in two lines could enter and exit the cave. It is hard to prove this now. However, it has been proved that the cave was formed inside of a hill. The constructions inside it are dated at 14th-15th centuries. The house inside the cave was dug out - no materials were used.

Some walls are furnished with shelves - probably for decoration purposes.

Scientists consider that cave was a home for a plenty of families. By the way, "Ekedeshik" means "one hole ". It justifies the presence of the only entrance to the cave settlement. Ekedeshik is a unique and original ancient monument which has miraculously survived on the territory of Turkmenistan.



Gonur - Depe

Not so long ago, in 1990s, archaeologists opened up a huge necropolis related to the 2,000 - 1,000 B.C. in Mary oasis. There was a capital city now called Gonur - Depe with its palace and several temples capable of competing with the structures of Assyria and Babylon.

But in this "capital" was not the residence of a ruler but most likely of a spiritual leader - the supreme priest. In this sense Gonur was a spiritual and religious center of Margush country where people made pilgrimages, brought gifts - fruits of their work. Whether Gonur was the only center of such nature is an unanswered question. In Gonur - Depe, entombments, numerous utensils, mirrors, cosmetic vessels, silver ornaments, alabaster and ceramic vases and a variety of other objects were found whose age is estimated as 3,000 B.C.



Kyz - Kala

While travelling in Mary oasis you frequently see silhouettes of hills-fortresses which have stacked from time. These are numerous manors-kesks of medieval feudal lords. The biggest of them are historical landmarks Major and Minor Kyz - Kala.

Major and Minor Kyz - Kala are relatively small fortresses with corrugated, as if pleated, walls. They were put on earthy ramps with a slight inclination. The small windows are hidden in the pleated walls. From

above, the walls were furnished with loopholes which have not practically survived. The rooms on the ground floor were lit with the help of five windows. The staircase leading downwards passed through the arched corridor.

The second floor layout can be only imagined by means of separate fragments. The second floor also had at least five rooms which were located around the inner yard. Minor Kyz - Kala stands approximately hundred meters to the south from Major Kyz - Kala; its layout was the same but it has survived in far worse condition. The corrugated facade can be seen only on the eastern side of the structure.

Sultan - Kala

In the 11th -12th centuries, Merv became the capital of Great Seljuk state and reached the highest prosperity. By the order of Seljuk sultan, Melik Shah, the city was surrounded by a fortification and moat. This fortress with the area of over 400 hectares is known as Sultan – Kala, the Fortress of Sultans. In the northeastern part of Sultan – Kala, Shahriar- ark citadel with palace complexes of sultans, administration buildings and a military barracks was constructed.

Mohammed ibn-Zeid Mausoleum

Mohamme ibn-Zeid Mausoleum is an outstanding monument of Sultan - Kala. It is relatively small but arouses admiration by its original architectural solution. The interior of the mausoleum

has a unique wall inscription in Arabian language. The letters skillfully carved from burnt bricks boldly stand out on the background of the vegetative pattern made of plaster.

It is a magnificent architectural complex known to the entire Muslim world as Mohammed ibn-Zeid Mausoleum and is by right recognized as one of the best examples of Islamic architecture. The mausoleum is topped with domes, one of which higher than the others. The architectural style of the 12th century monument is amazing in its harmony and simplicity.

Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum

The most majestic architectural monument of Merv is Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum also known as Dar-al-Akhyre (The Other World). It vividly reflects the greatest achievements and prosperity of Seljuks. Sultan Sanjar

Mausoleum is located in the center of ancient settlement of Sultan - Kala. Nearby there are big monumental buildings - the palaces of Seljuk rulers and a mosque.

Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum is a true medieval skyscraper of cubic shape crowned by a two-level dome with turquoise encasement. Under the dome run three-leveled galleries in the form of alternating openwork arches. The dome symbolized the firmament and "floated" in the air.

The architecture of Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum amazes with harmony and symmetry of proportions. Its walls are



thick at the base. The overall wall length is 27 meters. The height of the mausoleum is 38 m. The mausoleum was constructed by the order of Sultan Muizzeddin Sanjar. He was buried in 1157. However, in 1221 when Mongolian armies besieged Merv, the remains of the sultan body were reburied in an unknown time and place. So there is emptiness under the tombstone of the mausoleum. But the Arabian inscription on its facade says: "This place is ennobled by the remains of the one who was called Sultan Sanjar from the descendants of Turks-Seljuks... He was Alexander the Great of his time; he was the patron of scientists and poets and was accepted by Islamic world in the state of prosperity and happiness owing to sciences and arts".

The mausoleum is a place of pilgrimage of thousands of believers let alone the fact that it is the main attraction for foreign tourists. By the way, there is a legend of Sultan Sanjar Mausoleum ... «once upon a time he fell in love with a heavenly magic woman - peri. In reply to his proposal the peri said: "I can be yours on the condition you fulfill my three requests. The first: you can't embrace my waist. The second: you are not allowed to look at my feet when I run. The third: you can't watch me brushing my hair. Sultan Sanjar accepted the conditions and married the peri. But his curiosity was so strong that he broke all his three promises. When he embraced the fine maiden's waist he found that peri had no bones. When he looked at her feet when she was running the sultan understood that peri was flying above the land and finally he discovered that the magic woman had to remove her head in order to brush her hair. Having learned about the broken promises the peri got terribly; she turned into a white bird, and soared high in the sky. Sultan Sanjar tearfully begged her: "I shall die if I don't see you again". Disappearing in clouds the bird replied: «If you want to see me, you should build the highest and the most beautiful building in the center of the city. Do not forget to leave a hole in the dome. Every Friday I shall look inside and you will see me. So it was because of the peri that this mausoleum was built".

Mosques

Talkhatan - Babab Mosque

30 km from Old Merv is the medieval settlement of Talkhatan. Talkhatan - Baba Mosque was constructed in the Middle Ages on the local cemetery there. The mosque looks like a high regular rectangular. It does not have traditional canopies or columns. The three sides of the mosque are absolutely blank walls. The main facade is marked by three arches. The middle arch is the widest. It corresponds to the central compartment of a building. The two smaller ones correspond to the building's sides. Thus, the mosque is as though divided by arches into three compartments. Equilibrium and harmony are enhanced by the bright ornamentation of the walls and homogeneity of external and inner decor with application of burnt bricks.

Yusuf Hamadani Mosque

This complex was built on the burial site of Abu-Yakub Yusuf ibn Ayub born in the city of Hamadan (Iran). Above his tomb, the mausoleum was erected - which has not survived to date. The destroyed structure was partially restored

and reconstructed in the 19th century. The tomb of the dervish is symbolized as a crypt from black marble decorated with a floral ornament and inscriptions. There is a chapel in the western corner of the mausoleum with central Aivan. It is the basic part of the complex. Today Yusuf Hamadani mosque is an important Muslim temple, the place of worshipping.

Turkmenabat Places to See

Allamberdar Mausoleum

The Mausoleum of Allamberadar (Almutasir) is an 11th century monument. The building of the mausoleum is the largest among the existing early structures of Northern Khorasan. Its architecture reflects specific features of Central Asian monumental architecture of the "Golden Age" (the epoch of Seljukids): First, the significant sizes of a building; Second, an unusual facade decoration.

The facade of the mausoleum is richly decorated with an ornamental laying with fancy carved little bricks. The portal stands out from the basic building massive. A pure brick texture of the entire interior makes the mausoleum look slightly strict and solemn. Inside the mausoleum there is only one room with a false gravestone - the archeologists have not found any burials under and around the monument.

Astana-Baba Mausoleum

The mausoleum is a part of the memorial complex consisting of a mosque and a tomb. As a matter of fact, they are several buildings constructed in various periods. They stay

so closely to each other that it is difficult to imagine the original shape of the structure. The mausoleum of Astana - Baba is an 11th - 12th century monument. It is the place of "zyuarat" - a regular ritual of worshipping of holy men observed by visiting pilgrims. No one knows for sure who Astana-Baba was. But the place where the mausoleum stands is considered sacred and healing. Thousand of sick people gather there annually to receive long-awaited healing.



Astana-Baba complex includes the mausoleums of Zed-Ali and Zuveid-Ali. The legend about them runs: «The ruler of Balkh (medieval Khorasan) had a beautiful daughter Zuveida. She married the viceroy of the territory but soon after the wedding she died. The mournful father brought the best masters from Merv and Samarkand so that they construct a beautiful mausoleum in his daughter's memory. However, the mausoleum collapsed right after it had been built. The same happened to another one and so did to the third. The father was desperate but soon afterwards he saw an old man in his dream. The old man advised him to erect the mausoleum from clay and the water brought from Mecca. The inconsolable father did as he had been told. The earth was

mixed with the clay brought from Mecca and the water from Mecca was poured in to a well and was used for construction. Soon the mausoleum was completed and after the death of the ruler his body was buried next to his daughter". Therefore, the water in the well of the mausoleum of Zeid-Ali and Zuveid-Ali is considered holy.

Dayakhatyn Caravanserai

Dayakhatyn (Bai-Khatyn) is an 11th -12th century monument. It stood on the medieval road from Amul (Turkmenabat) to Khorezm. Today only the vast ruins of the caravanserai mud-brick rabat remind of that time. Once, the rabat was reinforced with circular towers.

Arches, vaults and domes of the caravanserai were laid from burnt bricks. The walls of the facade are lined with bricks in the original ornamental style. The local residents name this caravanserai "Bai-Khatyn".

Turkmenbashi

Places to See

Dakhistan



Towering over an absolutely flat, waterless and clay plain of Balkan Province, known earlier as Misrian Valley, are the mysterious and mystical ruins of ancient Dakhistan. Once it was a prospering medieval city on the caravan route. The name Dakhistan originated from dakhhs - the tribe which used to inhabit the place. Dakhistan emerged in the late 8th and early 9th centuries, the period of its boom fell on the period of Khorezmshah dynasty rule. The full area of city was about 200 hectares and was protected by means of a double ring of walls. Dakhistan did not last long, though. When the armies of Genghis Khan came there they saw already dying city. After Mongolian invasion, the life in city went on in the 13th - the 14th centuries and in the 15th century; the life in Dakhistan-Misrian disappeared

for good. Numerous ruins of various buildings testify about its former majesty. The monuments survived include: the well-known Shir-Kabir mausoleum, two 25 m minarets, the portal of the cathedral mosque, the remnants mud-brick clay city walls, the ruins of caravanserais and the mausoleums on Mashad necropolis. A few caravanserais located around this ancient settlement behind the fortification mark the sites of several city gates and the directions of caravan routes leading from the city: the south gate led to Persia and Turkey; the eastern - to Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv; the northern - to Russia and Europe.

Shir-Kabir Mausoleum

6 km from Dakhistan lies the ancient Mashad entombment - a Muslim necropolis with the well-known mausoleum of Ali ibn Sukkari or "Shir - Kabir" in the center. The buildings of the Shir-Kabir mausoleum and mosque are related to prestigious Serakh architectural school.

The walls of the building from square mud bricks were decorated from the basis up to its dome with carved ganch with curls, leafy patterns and Kufi inscriptions, painted in dark blue, red and pistachio -green colors. Shir-Kabir is sometimes called a mosque "on wooden columns". It is the oldest survived mosque on the territory of Turkmenistan.

A unique carved mihrab (chapel) pointed at Mecca consisting of three niches one inside the other prove that this mausoleum was mainly used as a mosque - not just a tomb. Unfortunately, Shir-Kabir was repeatedly subject to reconstruction; its interior decor elements dated 10th century have survived. The interior decorations still say about former majesty and beauty.

Tasharvat Caravanserai

38 km from Balkanabat near Tasharvat water spring are located the picturesque ruins of Tasharvat caravanserai. It stands on one of the ancient caravan routes - numerous branches of the Great Silk Road.

The building of the caravanserai is a rectangular fortification with a stone wall with the ruins of a residential building inside. The first mentions of Tasharvat were found in 1871-1872. The scientists believe that the building was still inhabited in the end of the 19th century.

Parau-Bibi

Parau-bibi is a little white mosque considered one of the most honored pilgrim places of Turkmenistan. It stands all by itself on one of the Kopet Dagh rocks. According to a legend, Parau-bibi was a beautiful girl who lived in a village. One day the people decided to buy-off their safety and hand her to the oncoming enemies. She managed to escape. Parau-bibi hid in the mountains and started praying. Eventually the rock opened and hid her forever. This place now is marked by a mosque. Parau-bibi was the patroness of pregnant women and children in Turkmen mythology. Before labor woman observed a special ritual.

The women from entire Turkmenistan gather there and ask her to help them: they beg for beauty, a good husband and children. A curved staircase leads to the mosque. Halfway there, you can see the prints in the rock - they were left by Parau-bibi's knee, elbow, finger and forehead. Young pilgrims touch them and pray.

Another story tells that the crescent stones lying at some distance used to be melon slices which panicking Parau-bibi threw to the approaching enemies.

There is a tradition to step on them. If a stone starts rotating after a young woman steps on it - everything is going to be good. If it does not, a woman should come to this remarkable place again next year.



📍 Places to Stay

The Ak Altin Plaza Hotel

- 📍 Add: 141/1 MaKhtumkuli Avenue, Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: 36-37-00
- 📠 Fax: (99312) 36-34-94
- ✉ Email: akaltyn@online.tm

Grand Turkmen Hotel & Casino

- 📍 Add: 7Georgly St. , Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: 51-20-50
- 📠 Fax: 51-12-51
- ✉ Email: grandhtl@online.tm

President Hotel

- 📍 Add: 54Archabil Ave., Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: (99312) 400-000
- 📠 Fax: (99312) 400-041; 400-222
- ✉ Email: presidenthotel@online.tm

Sheraton Grand Turkmen Hotel

- 📍 Add: 7 Gerogly St., Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: 51-20-50
- 📠 Fax: 51-20-48

Four Points Ak Altyn Hotel

- 📍 Add: 141 Makhtumkuli Ave., Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: 51-21-81
- 📠 Fax: 51-21-77

Hotel Nebitchi

- 📍 Add: Berzengi, Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: 51-02-07, 51-02-09

Hotel Nissa

- 📍 Add: Turkmenbashy Ave., Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: 42-93-10
- 📠 Fax: 42-93-08

Hotel Turkmenistan

- 📍 Add: 19 Neutral Turkmenistan Str., Ashgabat
- ☎ Tel: (+993-12)35-06-30
- 📠 Fax: (+993-12)35-05-33

🍴 Where & What to Eat

Turkmen Cuisine

It is well known that culinary traditions of various nations develop under the influence of two conditions: historical and geographical. A nomadic lifestyle, severe conditions of living in the desert affected the culinary traditions of the Turkmen. The main feature of the national cuisine is simplicity and affordability in terms of both products choice and cooking methods.

The most popular dish in Turkmenistan is pilav. It is cooked from lamb, carrots, rice and onions. Shurpa is another widespread dish -mutton broth with potatoes and tomatoes. Turkmen have a special attitude toward bread. Cooking national bread - chorek - is an art in itself. Tandyr (a clay oven) where chorek is baked is considered the most sacred place in a house and chorek itself has been always honored as a protecting charm. As any other country in Central Asia, Turkmenistan is unprecedentedly rich in delicious fruits and vegetables. World famous are Turkmen melons with their honey odor which were exported even during pre-Islamic times.

Turkmen national cuisine has a lot in common with cuisines of other Central Asian countries, Uzbek and Karakalpak in particular. However, it differs from them in a number of features. It is mainly distinguished by a variety of fish dishes owing to the country's proximity to the Caspian Sea. Unlike Uzbeks and Tajiks, Turkmen people use much less vegetables. Radish and tomatoes are used more often. Onions is a must. It is eaten raw and used as a seasoning. Pumpkins and carrots are rarely used. Turkmen spices slightly differ from the ones used in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. They widely use red and black pepper, mint, wild parsley, azhgon, buzhgun (galls of a pil-

tachio tree). Instead of curcuma, Turkmen use saffron and garlic.

Bread & Dishes Cooked with Dough

Turkmen cuisine is distinguished by various dishes made from flour. Traditional bread is called chorek. Very popular are various flatbreads from the sour dough (katlama), patties (gutap) with different stuffing; meat cakes (etli nan). Unleavened dough is used for cooking pel'meni (borek) and noodles (unash) seasoned with sour milk. Modern Turkmen cuisine is known for its dough-meat dishes. For example, there is an analogue of Kazakh beshbarmak - "gulak", "belke", "kurtuk". Manty is called "berek". Turkmen just invented their own names for themselves. This is why many people think they are completely different dishes.

Soups

Turkmens have variety of soups most popular of which include Shurpa, Shurpa-mash (soup with mash), Dogroma Shurpa, Nokudly Shurpa (pea soup with mutton), Unash (bean soup with noodles), Umpach-zashchi (soup with flour), Gara Shurpa (soup with tomatoes), Mastava (soup with rice and vegetables), Kyufta Shurpa (soup with meat sausages).

Meat Dishes

Cattle husbandry has resulted in the meat dishes being the most important in the national cuisine. Turkmen prefer mutton to all other meats. Besides, they use a lot of chicken meat and do not eat horse meat and pork at all. Turkmen cook basically on mutton fat and sesame oil which they use not only at cooking meat dishes but also farinaceous and sweet ones.

The most widespread meat dishes

are: chorba, gainatma, dograma, pilav, govurma, govurdak, shashlyk (kebab). Besides mutton game meat is very popular: partridges, hares, goitered gazelles.

Meat is cooked in a traditional way - small pieces of meat are fried in their own fat. (Turkmen call it "govurma" - a dish similar to Kazakh and Uzbek "kavurdaku"). "Govurma" is used as a basis for subsequent preparation of various dishes. "Govurma" is considered one of delicious dishes eaten both cold and hot. "Govurma" is used for cooking a soup called "Gara Shurpa".

Turkmen also roast meat on hot coals (kebab - a shashlyk). The national Turkmen shashlyk (kebab) is named "keyikgzheren kebab" - a shashlyk from a young mountain goat meat. There are also dishes from boiled and stewed meat.

Turkmen as well as Tajikistani often bake meat in tandyr. But Turkmen people have their own cooking ways which cannot be found anywhere else. The result from specific natural environmental conditions: high ambient air temperatures, dry hot winds and heated sands. For example Turkmen dry meat in the wind under the scorching sun. This kind of dish is called "kakmach". The Tekins (one of Turkmen nationalities) cook "garyn". A mutton bowel rubbed with salt and spices is stuffed with finely cut pieces of meat and fat. Then the bowel is sewn up and buried inside heated sand during daytime and in the evening it is tied to a high pole until it is completely dry. Then the meat inside acquires a special pleasant flavor and can be stored for long time.

Fish Dishes

Fish dishes are popular among Turkmen living on the shores of the Caspian Sea. They mainly use sturgeon, beluga, herring, stellate sturgeon and as

well as sea and river pike perch, catfish, mullet, sazan and kutum. Even pilav there is cooked with fish. The basic condition for cooking Turkmen fish dishes is the availability of absolutely fresh just-caught fish. A fish is roasted on a roasting-jack, fried in cauldrons, dried, stewed, boiled. Fish is normally served with sweet-sour sauce and spices. Salmon in Turkmen cuisine is often used for cooking shashlyks ("balyk shara") and for "govurdak". Fish is cooked in the same way as meat. For "balyk shara" marinated pieces of fish are put on a roasting-jack alternating with onion rings and roasted on heated coals. For "balyk gavurdak" (as well as for ordinary "gavurdak") small bones-free pieces of fish are fried in own grease in a cauldron. Sometimes a little amount of sesame oil is used. Other fish dishes - "gaplama", "ch-yome", "balyk berek", "balykly yanakhly ash" - are much more complex. Some of them remind cooking of pilav and manty which are normally cooked from meat; others are similar to none.

Poultry Dishes

Trans-Caspian Turkmen are known for great dishes cooked from water fowl - ducks, geese.

Stewed Stuffed Poultry is a traditional dish of Trans-Caspian Turkmen. You can try it in any restaurant.

Dairy Dishes

Turkmen prefer camel and sheep milk. It is used as the basis for fermented dairy products. The most known Turkmen dairy products are "agaran", "chal", "kara gurt", "telemeh", "sykman", "sargan". Cow milk is used for making creamy and melted butter, sour milk ("gatyk"), a special kind of sour milk- "suzmeh" and original cheese called "gurt"; "Peinir" cheese is

made from goat's and sheep's milk. Camel milk is used for making Turkmen favorite beverage "chala". Most dairy products are served with soups and main courses.

Traditional Holiday Dishes

It is a well known fact that central Asian people consider pilav as the King of feasts. It is not absolutely so. Except pilav, Turkmen also cook other celebratory dishes which their ancestors preferred for especially important events. To be on guest of honor at such a feast is a fantastic opportunity. Some of these magic dishes are Kazanlama, Dzhazhyly bukche, Turkmen Pilav and Dograma.

Sweets

Turkmen sweet dishes are very similar to those cooked by Uzbeks: navat (baked sugar) and bekmes (a brew from watermelon and grape juices). The only unique national Turkmen sweet dish is a special type of halva made from the roots of a liliaceous plant called cheresh. It is boiled down with grape, watermelon, melon etc. juices and spices until jam-like mass.

Restaurants in Ashgabat

Ahal

Italian cuisine, Wide selection of pasta, meat, chicken and seafood dishes, Cozy dinning room atmosphere. Visa accepted with a service fee, Moderately priced.

📍Add: Berzengi Road

Ak Altyn Plaza Hotel Restaurant

Indian cuisine, Selection of steak, pasta and chicken, Pleasant environment, On the weekends, chamber and jazz groups perform, Visa accept-

ed with a service fee, Moderately expensive.

📍Add: Ak Altyn Plaza Hotel, 141 Makhtumkuli Avenue

Altyn Turkmenistan

American and Middle Eastern dishes, Selection of kebabs, steaks, chicken and omelets in a pleasant setting, Azeri, Turkish and Western music with dance performers, Visa card accepted, Moderately priced.

📍Add: 19 Neutral Turkmenistan St.,
☎Tel: 35-65-69

Ankara

Turkish dishes, Typical Turkish kebabs and salads in rustic surroundings, No credit cards or dollars accepted, only manats. Inexpensive.

📍Add: Gagarin Street (road to the airport)
📍Add: former Teremok Cafe at the Eternal Fire square

Florida Restaurant

Turkish and European cuisine, Large menu of chicken, lamb, fish and beef dishes in pleasant surroundings, with a separate casino. No credit cards accepted, Moderately expensive.

📍Add: Florida Restaurant, 2nd floor, 4 Gerogly Street

Nissa

Italian cuisine, Wide selection of pasta, meat and seafood dishes, as well as good pizza, European style dining room overlooking the swimming pool, Visa card accepted, Moderately priced.

📍Add: 186, Atabaev St.,
☎Tel: 41-68-75

Mizan

Turkish and European cuisine, Large menu of beef, lamb and chicken dishes, Pleasant environment, No credit cards

accepted, Moderately priced.

📍Add: Mizan Business Center, Berzengi,
☎Tel: 51-86-14

Parfia

Iranian and Russian cuisine, Iranian pilaf and Russian borsch are the daily menu specials, Cozy environment and good location in downtown, Moderately priced.

📍Add: Central Library at the Neutrality Arch square

Pizza Haus

Turkmen private pizzeria with Turkish and Italian cuisine, Large menu of beef, lamb and chicken dishes, Pleasant environment, No credit cards accepted, Moderately priced.

Location: 72-A Makhtumkuli Street (opposite the Central Department store)

Sheraton Grand Turkmen Restaurant

Turkish cuisine, Large buffet of Turkish main dishes and salads, Entertainment on the weekends, Separate bar and casino, No credit cards accepted, Moderately expensive.

Location: Emperyal Grand Turkmen Hotel, 7 Gerogly Street

Where to Buy

In Ashgabat, the Sunday Market or commonly known, as Talkuchka is the best place to buy the misleadingly named Bukhara rugs, which are actually made in Turkmenistan. There is a shop in the Art Gallery, which sells traditional Turkmen handicrafts, silver and costumes including the distinctive Turkmen sheepskin hats. The central bazaars in Ashgabat and other cities are also a good place to buy curios. Shopping hours: 09.00-18.00 Monday to Friday. Bazaars open at dawn.