

# Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

The Glories of Central Asia

Notice the location of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – who their neighbors are.



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/494833077785883770/?lp=true>

# Physical Geography of Kazakhstan

- 9<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world
- the largest land-locked country
- vast steppe areas – horse was first domesticated in Kazakhstan
- cold climate

## Kazakhstan Travel Advice

- Exercise normal safety precautions
- International boundary
- Administrative boundary
- ★ National capital
- Administrative centre
- Other
- Other point of interest



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# Capital City

- The capital has recently (2019) been renamed Nur-Sultan. Before that, it was called Astana.
- It is a new city, built in 1997. (The traditional capital was Almaty, but that is too close to the borders of China and Kyrgyzstan....)
- Nur-Sultan is the second coldest capital city in the world. (The coldest is Mongolia's capital, Ulan Bator.)

# Nur-Sultan, the capital





Nazarbayev University, in Nur-Sultan, a city so cold that the entire university is enclosed. (The classroom buildings extend out from this enclosed plaza.)



You get to the outbuildings (dorms, faculty apartments, gym, shops, and clinic through what we Americans dubbed the “hamster tunnels.” (Note that we are wearing jackets in June!)







The steppes are so cold and snow-covered in winter that people train golden eagles to hunt with/for them. An eagle can find and catch small prey that blend in with the snow. The eagle shares its catch with its masters. The eagle is considered part of the family.



# Glacier outside of Almaty



# People of Kazakhstan

- Kazakhs, a Turkic people – 63% of population
- 130 other ethnicities, including Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, Germans, Tatars, and Uyghurs
- 70% of the population is Muslim; 26% Christian (Russian Orthodox); some Jews, Buddhists, and irreligious people













# Languages of Kazakhstan

- Official languages:
  - Kazakh (a Turkic language)
  - Russian (a Slavic language)
- English is now being taught as a 3<sup>rd</sup> language (of science and technology).
- Many minority groups speak other languages.
- In other words, most Kazakhstani people speak 3-4 languages!

This is what Kazakh looks like now – in the Cyrillic script.  
But there are plans to change to a Latin script (like English).

100 КІТАП

РУХАНИ  
ЖАҢҒЫРУ

**ЖАҢА ГУМАНИТАРЛЫҚ БІЛІМ  
ҚАЗАҚ ТІЛІНДЕГІ 100 ЖАҢА  
ОҚУЛЫҚ**



# Today's life in Kazakhstan.



Opera hall and  
indoor soccer stadium



And a shopping mall shaped like a yurt!



Nur-Sultan,  
Kazakhstan

# Physical Geography of **Uzbekistan**

- a land-locked country in the middle of land-locked countries
- in the middle of Central Asia, closer than Kazakhstan to traditional trade routes and civilizations
- Aral Sea (between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) used to be the 4<sup>th</sup> largest inland sea; now shrunk to 10% of its size





# Cities

- Much more densely populated than Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan is **the** most densely populated country in Central Asia
- Tashkent is the capital.
- Other important cities, such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva

Beautiful,  
modern  
subway station



Tashkent, Uzbekistan



# Fabulous Samarkand







# Bukhara



# People of Uzbekistan

- Uzbeks (a Turkic people) are the majority.
- But there are many Tajiks (a Persianate people). Uzbek sources say that the Tajiks are only 5% of the population; Western scholars say they are 20%-30%.





# Languages of Uzbekistan

- Uzbek is the official language (the second most widely spoken Turkic language – Turkish is the first).
- Russian is widely spoken as a second language.
- Many people speak Tajik (related to Persian), but the government does NOT encourage it.





Uzbek, like Kazakh, was written in the Cyrillic alphabet (derived from Russian). In 1992, right after independence, the language was written in a Latin alphabet.



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Antoniosantosg | Dreamstime.com

# Cooking rice





And baking bread!!

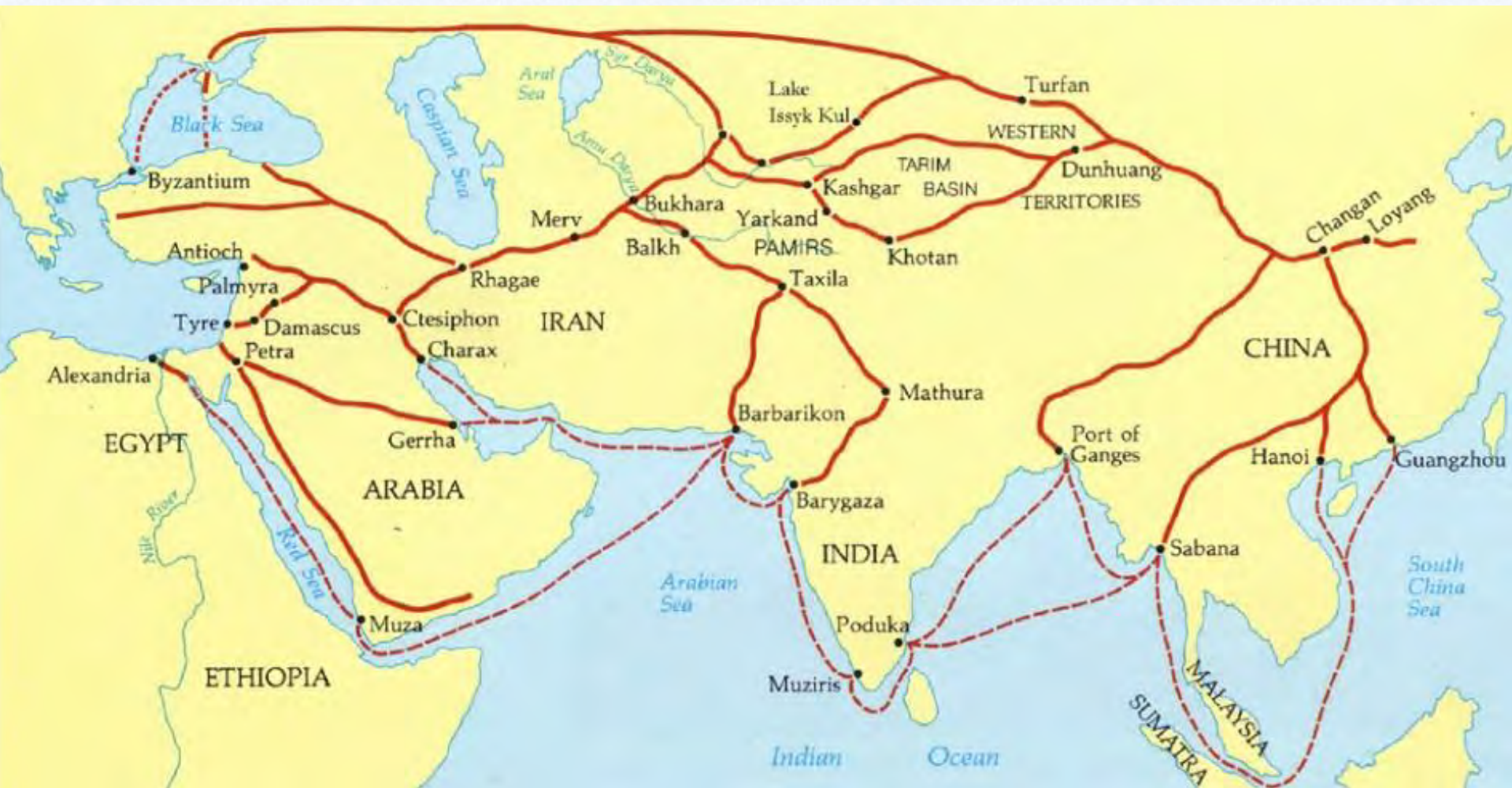


# History of Central Asia

- Part of the ancient/medieval Silk Road network linking various parts of Asia to each other and (indirectly) to Europe
  - Trade
  - Cultural ideas (including religion)
- Persian and Turkish cultural influences.
- Islam spread along the trade routes (which is why most Central Asians are Muslims)



# Medieval Silk Roads





A controversial  
figure: “Amir  
Timur”  
(Tamerlane)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timur>



# Hero to the Uzbeks

КИМКИ ЎЗБЕК НОМИНИ, ЎЗБЕК МИЛЛАТИНИНГ КУЧ-ҚУДРАТИНИ,  
АДОЛАТПАРВАРЛИГИНИ, ЧЕКСИЗ ИМКОНияТЛАРИНИ, УНИНГ  
УМУМБАШАРИЯТ РИВОЖИГА ҚЎШГАН ҲИССАСИНИ, ШУ АСОСИДА  
КЕЛАЖАККА ИШОНЧИНИ АНГЛАМОҚЧИ БЎЛСА, АМИР ТЕМУР  
СИЙМОСИНИ ЭСЛАШИ КЕРАК.

ИСЛОМ КАРИМОВ

IF SOMEBODY WANTS TO UNDERSTAND WHO THE UZBEKS ARE ,  
IF SOMEBODY WANTS TO COMPREHEND ALL THE POWER, MIGHT,  
JUSTICE AND UNLIMITED ABILITIES OF THE UZBEK PEOPLE, THEIR  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT, THEIR BELIEF IN  
FUTURE, HE SHOULD RECALL THE IMAGE OF AMIR TEMUR.

ISLAM KARIMOV

# However:

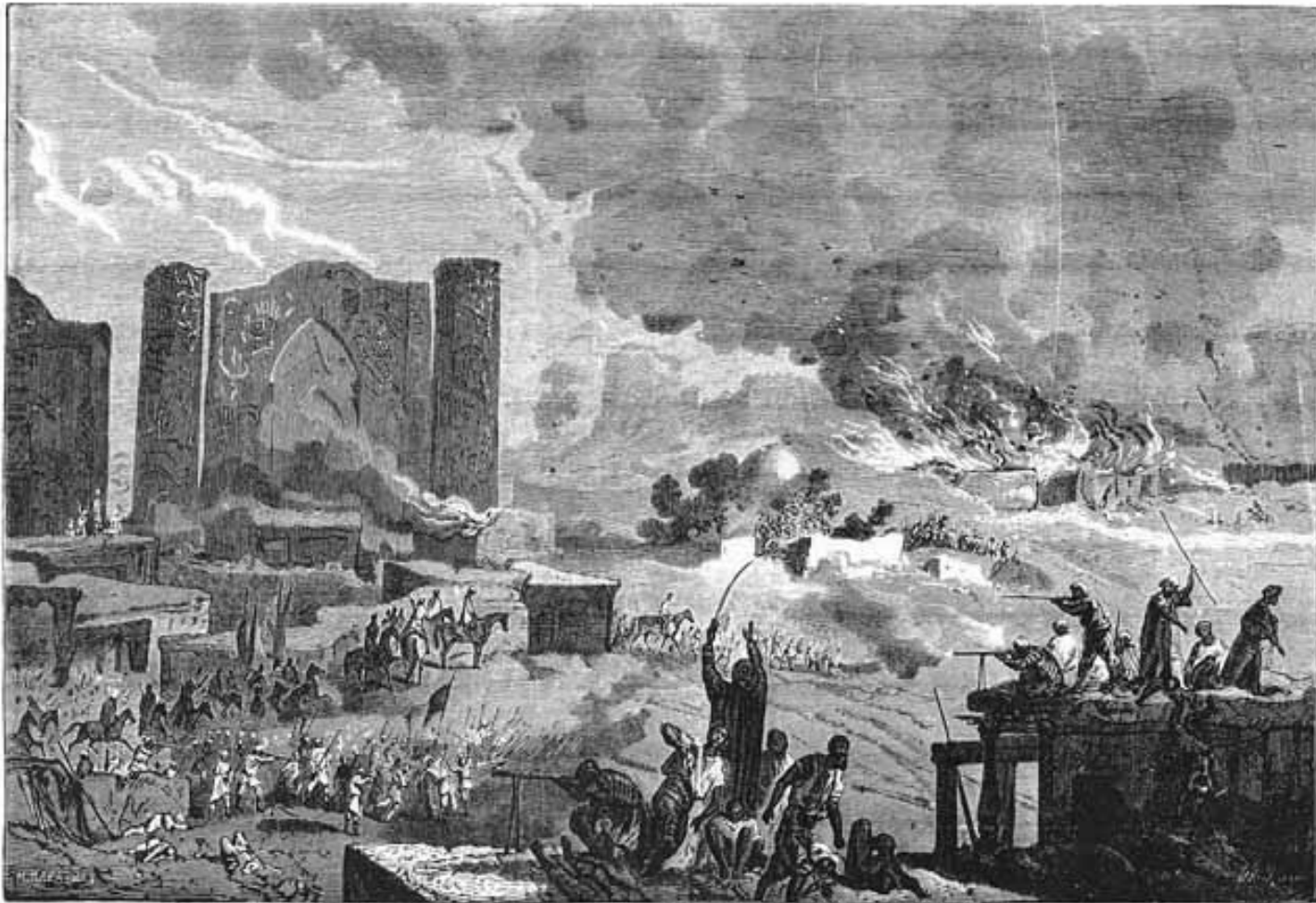
- His armies are estimated to have killed 17 million people.
- He destroyed great Islamic cities (to make his city – Samarkand – the greatest).
- He made towers of thousands of skulls in Persia – modern-day Iran. (How do you think Tajiks in Uzbekistan, who are a Persianate people, feel about the national hero of Uzbekistan?)



Uzbekistan, at the heart of the Silk Road, was a thriving culture with rich and diverse traditions.



# Russia conquered Central Asia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Защита Самаркандской цитадели. Рисунок Н. Курганова, гравюра И. Житомирова.

[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosyjski\\_podb%C3%B3j\\_Emiratu\\_Buchary#/media/Plik:Defence\\_of\\_the\\_Samarkand\\_Citadel.JPG](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosyjski_podb%C3%B3j_Emiratu_Buchary#/media/Plik:Defence_of_the_Samarkand_Citadel.JPG)



After the Russian Revolution (1917), the region became part of the USSR.



# Under the Soviet Union:

- Borders of the states were drawn – Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were republics within the “Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.”
- The Cyrillic alphabet was introduced for both languages.
- Both republics participated, as part of the Soviet Union in World War II and the Cold War.



# Memorial in Tashkent to Uzbeks who died in WWII – grieving mother & eternal flame. (Not pictured: lists of dead.)



# Kazakhstan especially suffered under Soviet rule.

- 1932-1933 famine – 1,500,000 died
- 1931-1959 – over 1 million political prisoners sent to Karlag (labor camp); many died.
- From 1937 deportations of ethnic groups began (with Koreans moved from Russian Far East to Kazakhstan).
- 1950s and '60s – other groups encouraged to move there (Ukrainians, Germans, Russians, etc.)



## ЖЕРТВЫ ГОЛОДА 30-х годов XX века



1991 – fall of  
the Soviet Union  
Uzbekistan  
became  
independent  
August 31, 1991

Islam Karimov, first president,  
ruled 1991-2016





Kazakhstan was the last of the 16  
former-Soviet republics to declare  
independence – Dec. 1991

Nursultan Nazarbayev became the  
first president – and ruled until  
March 2019!

In this big tower (right), Kazakhstani school children measure their hands against a casting of the leader's hand.







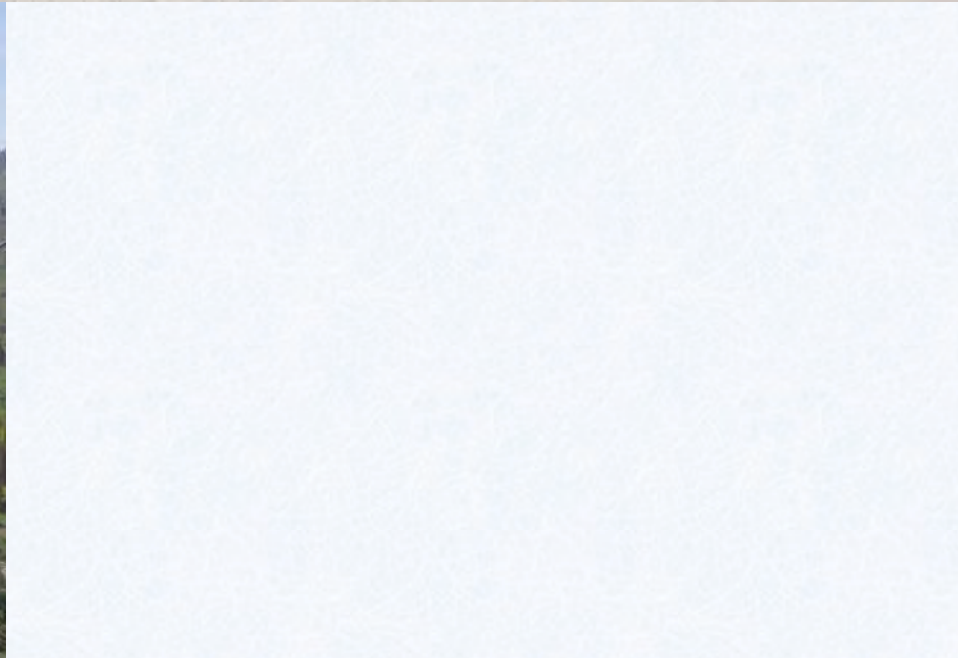
Nazarbayev University is named after him.

The capital city of Astana has now been renamed Nur-Sultan (Nazarbayev's first name).



Today both places are stable -  
and very friendly to Americans!





If Central Asia is not on your  
bucket list,  
it should be!!!