

Help Sheet to Design a Tour for a Group Interested in the History of the Soviet Union

Background:

The Russian Empire conquered Central Asia in the late 19th century. After a brief period of autonomy during the Russian Revolution (1917), the Soviet Union established control there in the 1920s.

During the Stalinist, there was a terrible famine in the 1920s and '30s in which over a million people died in Kazakhstan alone. Political repression took other lives. Stalin also deported hundreds of thousands of people to remote areas of Kazakhstan (as part of a population policy to reduce the power of certain minority groups).

As part of the Soviet Union, both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan sent troops to fight in Europe during World War I. The countries also played an important role in the Cold War (notably the space race with the U.S.).

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan also bore the cultural imprint of years of Soviet rule. Russian was the most widely used language of education and public life, and after from the 1940s, both the Kazakh and Uzbek languages (Turkic languages) were written in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet. All forms of religious expression were outlawed, so people could not outwardly practice the Muslim religion of their forefathers.

Both countries received their independence in 1991 but still retain ties with Russia.

How to research the topic:

Look up more information about the history of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during the Soviet period.

Planning your itinerary:

Be sure to look up history museums, public places with war memorials, and etc. You will also want to visit Karaganda, the Soviet labor camp/museum in Kazakhstan. Visit some of these as part of your program.

Travel from place to place:

In planning your itinerary, you can take short regional flights to get to or from big cities that are far apart (e.g. from Nur-Sultan to Almaty or Tashkent). Be sure to check on Kayak.com or some other site to see if there are flights between cities that you want to visit. You don't want to waste time on travel from place to place, so find direct flights. You must somehow strike a balance in your itinerary so that your travelers can see as many places as possible but not so many places that they spend all their time traveling without enough time to see things.